

## FRANKLIN COUNTY

# Big grants to help realize skate park, pool

State program doles out \$400K each to Greenfield, Buckland for big-ticket projects; Whately and Orange also get grants

By **MARY BYRNE**  
Staff Writer

A skate park in Greenfield and a community pool in Buckland are among the four Franklin County projects that are one step closer to fruition thanks to state grants funding park and open space projects.

Greenfield and Buckland each received \$400,000 through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) program, while Whately received \$62,588 and

Orange, \$83,449.

"I am just so ecstatic for Western Mass.," said Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore, who is also a member of the Buckland Recreation Committee. "To be recognized by Boston is always a good thing."

## Greenfield

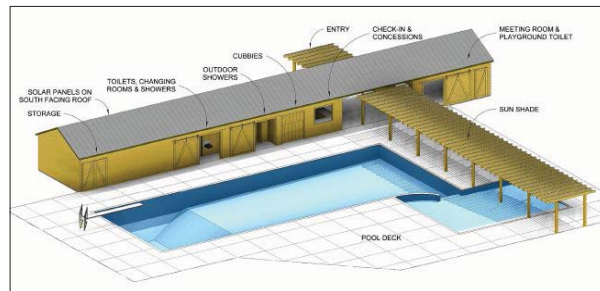
Moore said securing the \$400,000 grant, which will go toward the design and construction of the skate park proposed for the upper section of the Chapman and Davis street parking

lot, was "completely amazing."

"It has been a tremendous effort by community members and the city in supporting this project," Moore said.

Moore previously said the total estimated cost of the skate park project is \$775,000, which the city expects to fully fund with the PARC grant, a city match (from capital funding) of \$350,000, plus donations and fundraising.

So far, just over \$30,000 has been raised toward the project, she said, though money generated by the Greenfield Soapbox Race still needs



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

**A conceptual drawing of the community pool project in Buckland, which was awarded a \$400,000 state PARC grant.**

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to be added to the total.

“Any additional funds will help with amenities,” she said.

In a city press release, Mayor Roxann Wedegartner said the skate park will provide children “with an opportunity for growth, skill development and socialization in a park they will enjoy for years to come.”

“This project is the direct result of unwavering community dedication and involvement on many levels” Wedegartner said.

The skate park, which has an estimated completion date of June 2023, will replace the former 17,000-square-foot skate park at the back of what is now the Olive Street Apartments.

“To say I’m pleased,” Moore said, “is a complete understatement.”

## Buckland

Town Administrator Heather Butler said the \$400,000 PARC grant, which will help fund construction of a new community pool and pool house, should allow the town to move into the design and engineering phase of the project.

Butler explained that a replacement for the town pool, which was closed in 2016 for safety reasons, has long been a priority.

“The original community pool was such a source of community pride and a real focal point for the residents,” Butler said. “When that had to be removed for safety reasons, I think that the idea of replacing it was immediate, and they have been working consistently toward a new pool every day since.”

The cost was originally estimated at around \$1.2 million — about \$1.1 million of which the town has thanks to the PARC grant, a \$150,000 Annual Town Meeting allocation and community donations — but that was almost five years ago, she explained.

“A lot has happened in the last five years — a lot has happened in the last two years — that has impacted construction costs in general,” Butler noted.

A more updated cost estimate will come

with the design phase.

Selectboard Chair Zack Turner said he was on the Recreation Committee about 20 years ago when the Buckland Recreation Area was in need of a “huge overhaul.” Although no longer on the committee, he’s excited to see the community pool get rebuilt.

“The pool is the cornerstone of Buckland,” Turner said. “I couldn’t be happier that we’re going to see it back to its former glory.”

Butler said that ideally, construction of the new pool will begin next spring.

## Orange

The \$83,449 PARC grant that Orange received will help fund the Butterfield Park renovation project, according to a state press release.

Alec Wade, Orange’s community development director, worked with five Ralph C. Mahar Regional School seniors to apply for the grant.

In a presentation earlier this year, the students explained to town officials that the court’s basketball hoops are rusty and unstable, posing both a health and safety risk. Additionally, the court itself is cracked and uneven.

Wade could not be reached as of press time on Wednesday for more information.

## Whately

The town’s \$62,588 grant will go toward safety and accessibility improvements at Herlihy Park, according to the state press release.

The project will include accessibility improvements to restrooms, the pavilion and concessions area, along with work on the driveway and parking lot, the release states. At a Selectboard meeting in June, members discussed the need for parking lot paving in particular.

Town Administrator Brian Domina could not be reached for more information on Wednesday.

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STAFF FILE PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

**The upper parking lot between Chapman and Davis streets in Greenfield is slated for a new skate park that will get a strong boost from a \$400,000 state PARC grant.**