



## Worcester receives grant for beautification of former Green St. parking lot

By Nick Kotsopoulos | Worcester Telegram | November 16, 2019

WORCESTER - The city has received a \$3.5 million MassWorks Infrastructure Program grant to support the reconstruction and beautification of the former General Pickett Municipal Parking Lot on Green Street, which will be turned into a gateway to the Canal District and the new Polar Park.

The grant will support site preparation and construction for the project, which includes reconfiguring the parking lot with new street paving, relocation of utilities and the installation of concrete sidewalks with granite curbs.

The former 65-space parking lot at 45 Green St. is on the south side of the railroad underpass that leads into the Canal District. The plans are to renovate the lot into a pedestrian-friendly park and

plaza that will serve as one of the main entrances to Polar Park.

It will be linked to the ballpark by extending Summit Street, which runs between Ash and Gold streets, north to the Pickett lot.

To make that possible, the Worcester Redevelopment Authority has acquired several properties in the area of Gold, Plymouth and Washington streets and had them demolished. The city's Off-Street Parking Board has also transferred control of the parking lot property to the city manager's office. The parking lot was closed in September.

In announcing the grant, Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito, Mayor Joseph M. Petty and City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. said the Pickett project aligns with the city's Downtown

Urban Revitalization Plan and will help cultivate a safe, vibrant and economically strengthened downtown.

In addition to serving as a gateway to Polar Park, which will become the new home of the Boston Red Sox top minor-league team, the plaza will also provide access to an adjacent office building that will be constructed beyond the ballpark's left-field wall.

The state has made a series of investments in the Canal District to improve and accelerate the growth of that area.

The Baker-Polito administration has supported the new Fidelity Ice Rink, the public market at Harding Green, The Edge at Union Station student housing, a \$35 million multiyear commitment to support the relocation of the Pawtucket Red Sox to Worcester and a variety of road reconstruction and streetscape projects.

"As a Central Massachusetts native, I know firsthand how valuable this MassWorks grant funding is for projects across the city of Worcester," Polito said in a press release. "We

have been pleased to serve as a partner to the city of Worcester in its expansive redevelopment projects, and this MassWorks project will continue to maximize our ongoing collaboration."

Petty said the Pickett Plaza is going to be a welcoming northern entrance to the ballpark and Canal District as a whole.

"As our city grows it is imperative that we invest in our public spaces," the mayor said. "Through creative placemaking we're ensuring that this public space will be utilized year-round, not just during the baseball season."

Augustus said the city is grateful to the continued support the city has received from the Baker-Polito administration through the MassWorks Infrastructure Program grant.

"The redeveloped lot will activate an underutilized parcel and reinvigorate it will (sic) retail and entertainment opportunities, food and beverage purveyors and a water feature paying homage to the historic Blackstone Canal," Augustus said.