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# North Brookfield moving on multiple tracks for town renewal

By John McClintock  
Special correspondent

NORTH BROOKFIELD – As part of the evolving plan for North Brookfield's revitalization, the Friends of the Town House and Downtown Development Committees announced they will soon be applying for an \$8,000 grant to be used to begin the town's renewal project.

Those funds will update part of the North Brookfield Open Space and Recreation Plan. When complete, that plan will include strategies to upgrade the Town Common, town park and connections between the Rail Trail and other historic/scenic trails in town. The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission will help secure additional funding for 2020 to follow through with a community survey, public forum and an evaluation of compatibility with state standards, as well as helping to develop a vision statement to engage the entire community in town development over the next seven years.

Because of the wonderful work being done, North Brookfield is

now an Age Friendly Community, and with the help of CMRPC, it has applied for a \$10,000 Tufts Momentum Grant to assess needs and develop an action plan to become designated a Dementia Friendly Town. With this new status, the town can apply for Community Challenge Grants offered through the American Association of Retired Persons, which will be used to obtain senior exercise equipment as well as for accessibility improvements at the Town Common and historic Town House.

Efforts are now underway to get the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan started. Funding will be announced soon, and town officials hope to use that funding to tie all the ongoing community projects together. Complete Streets funding of up to \$400,000 per year will become available in two rounds (May and October). Phase one of the town plan, its policy statement, has been accepted. Phase two, a survey of sidewalks, crosswalks, parking and roads, has been started and is ongoing. With help from CMRPC, the town has until June of next year, to develop a priority plan, which is a spreadsheet listing

projects by priority and cost. Phase three, the grants funding, has been applied for.

The CMRPC team is also looking into grants/awards for Safe Routes to School, sidewalks, roads, water, sewer and vital street work. They're interested as well in funding from Small Town Regional Assistance Program grants, which provide up to 1 million dollars for shovel ready projects.

All of these plans and projects are being coordinated by the North Brookfield Downtown Development Committee.

The CMRPC is coordinating with the Friends of the Town House and Downtown Development committees to find supplementary funding sources to help the town match available grants to projects to get the best results from efforts being made. The Downtown Development Committee and municipal authorities are extremely grateful for the generous support and leadership offered by the CMRPC, and look forward to continuing cooperation with it as North Brookfield moves toward completion of this tremendous town renewal effort.

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IN THE JANUARY 2020 ISSUE OF THE



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