

## How 2 parks, one vacant lot and a bridge in West Yarmouth may become a park with new views

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### AI-assisted summary

- Three town-owned properties in West Yarmouth may be combined to create one nature-based park.
- The new park, to be named Chase Brook Park, would connect the existing Mill Creek Park and Chase Brook Park, and a vacant lot, with a pedestrian bridge.
- Funding for the \$1.5 million project, if approved, would come from sources including town funds and grants.

The sites of a [former night club, a motel and a 1750 boarding house](#) will be turned into one nature-based park on three town-owned properties on Mill Creek, an estuary of Lewis Bay, along Route 28 in West Yarmouth. The planned transformation has taken 27 years.

The existing Mill Creek Park and [Chase Brook Park](#) will be connected with a pedestrian bridge over Chase Brook to a vacant parcel in the middle, where the former Yankee Village Motel stood.

The Yarmouth Select Board approved renaming the new combined park as Chase Brook Park.

The spring town meeting will be asked to approve funding for the park project. Greene said those amounts include \$820,000 from the town's CPA money, \$373,000 from the capital improvements budget and \$368,755, a repurposed balance from the motel purchase.

“It’s an environmental home run,” Nathan Whetten, senior project manager for the Yarmouth Department of Public Works and the project manager, said on a tour of the properties on Feb. 11 with Yarmouth Community Development Director Karen Greene, who oversees the project.



### **Town: Environmental benefits**

Both officials said the town is excited to introduce the nature-based park concept that involves replacing invasive species with native plants. Removing invasive plants also will open the expansive view over Mill Creek from existing outlooks at the two pocket parks.

“It will let people traveling on Route 28 know that they are close to the water,” Greene said. “It will be a benefit to the town and visitors,” she said, noting that many cars stop in the two parks’ parking lots now.

The project’s environmental benefits will include improving the surrounding water from nitrogen pollution, creating a low-mow maintenance area and possibly allowing shellfishing again, which has been prohibited, Whetten said. Other improvements to the combined park will include a birch tree grove along Chase Brook, a meadow, new gravel paths, and new benches and picnic tables.

The Hyannis Park Civic Association, to the west of the park, will help provide educational signs about the native plants and history of the park area. Some neighbors have photos dating to the



1950s, Whetten said. The neighborhood is pleased to see the park improvements because they had concerns about the motel's septic system, he said.



### **Years in the planning West Yarmouth**

The site's transformation began in 1997 when Rascals nightclub burned down at 261 Route 28 and became Chase Brook Park in the early 2000s with Community Preservation Act money and the help of many local donations, Whetten said. A sign at the park lists all the donors.

In 2008, the town acquired with CPA money a parcel east of Chase Brook Park at 281 Route 28 where a 1750 boarding house was in disrepair and in foreclosure. It was demolished to create the current Mill Creek Park that has a parking area and a lookout.

In between the parks was the Yankee Village Motel at 275 Route 28, which town meeting approved in 2018 and was purchased in 2020 for more than \$1 million from combined CPA funds and a [Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities](#) (PARC) grant.

The motel's "onerous septic system" was removed and thus ridding 97% of nitrogen-loading pollution, Whetten said. The building was demolished and asphalt removed, leaving a large open lot.

"We're excited to be contributing to reducing nitrogen pollution," Whetten said. The town's current sewerage project, "is a huge step forward."

### **Permissions sought for the project**

Whetten said state environmental regulators have granted permits for the entire site. The Cape Cod Commission also recently exempted the project from review as a development of regional impact.

The commission “determined it was not going to create an impact,” he said. “We’re not building anything to create undue hardship.”

The next permit needed is from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the bridge. The application has been submitted and Whetten does not expect a problem with approval

Last fall, the town also received \$434,000 for the water quality improvements for the project from the [Southeast New England Watershed Implementation Grants](#) program, administered by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The total estimated cost of the project is \$1.5 million, Whetten said, which does not include eliminating the invasive species over three years. He is looking into other grants.

[Brittany DiRienzo](#), Yarmouth’s conservation administrator, who also has been advising on the park project, said invasive species take about three years to be replaced with native plants with deep roots. The tall wheatlike invasive phragmites at the park, and prolific all over the Cape, are most responsible for blocking the water views, Whetten pointed out.

### **Maintenance for the park, once completed**

[Christine Marzigliano](#), vice chair of the Community Preservation Committee and representative to the Open Space Committee, has been involved with the parks project since she applied for the CPA money to buy Yankee Village Motel in 2017. She said this week that she is most concerned keeping up the maintenance of the passive parks like the one being developed. A memo for the project has listed \$25,000 for that purpose.

The town would like to start the Chase Brook Park plan this fall and complete it by next summer, Whetten said. “The ultimate goal is to create low maintenance parks with no mowing,” he said, and the town is supportive of doing similar projects that will improve the environment.

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