



L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

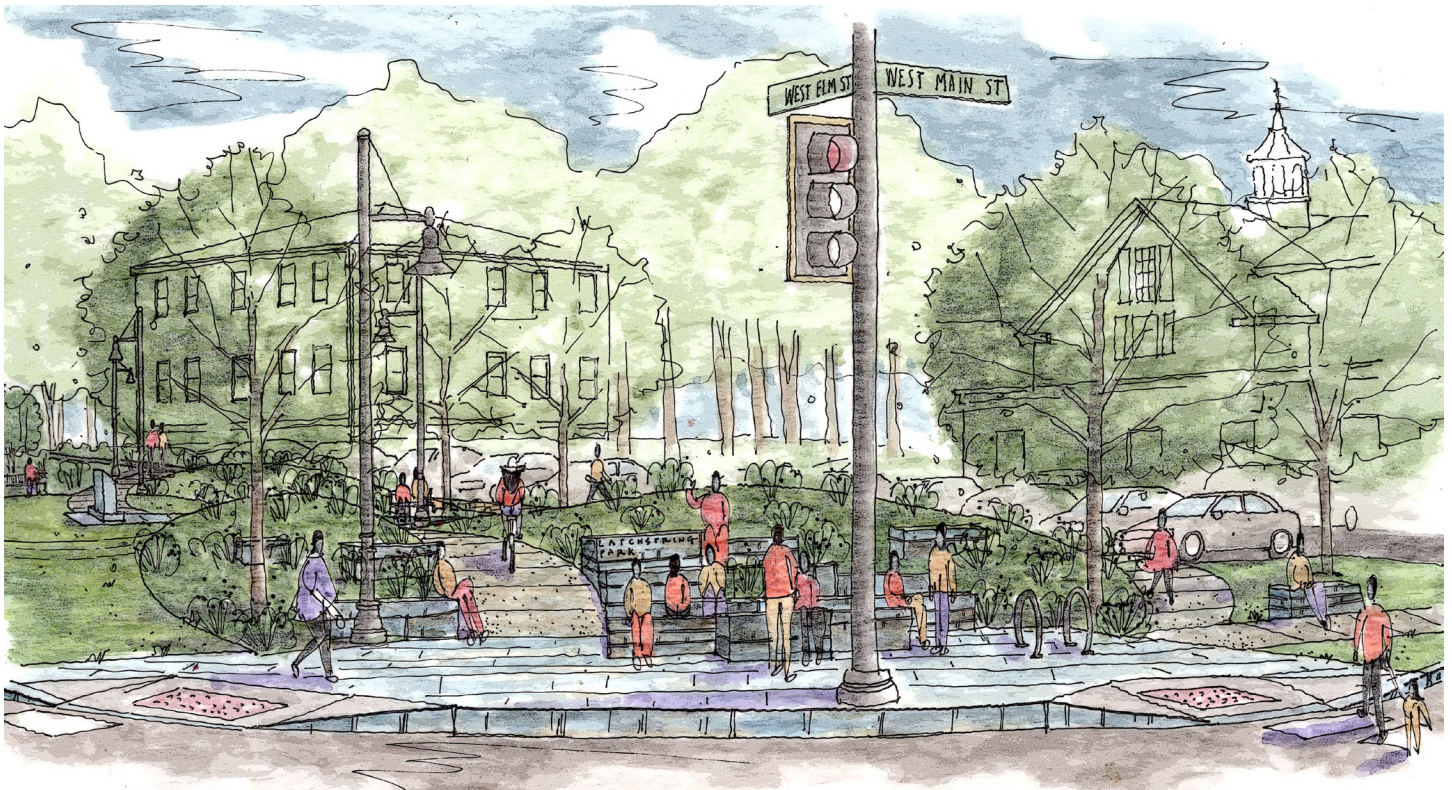
YARMOUTH, MAINE

VISION AND GOALS

Creating a warm and welcoming space for Yarmouth will improve the safety, function, and aesthetics of Latchstring Park, making it accessible to people of all ages and abilities for generations to come. Inviting visitors to enjoy the upper village while having access to parks and green spaces is particularly important for maintaining a thriving downtown.

Latchstring Park is currently an underutilized pocket park located in the hub of the upper village. We envision it becoming a place that will appropriately honor our Latchstring award winners while serving as a true park for visitors and residents. We hope to activate this corner to allow quieter places for friends to gather, keep children safe while passing through or spending time, and draw more customers to local businesses and restaurants.

We have discovered many qualities that make this park so unique; the bookend to our village with the size and charm of one of our most visible green spaces. By treating Latchstring Park as integral to the Main Street experience, we will embrace the goals of the Open Space plan, calling on parks to “attract people to downtown and village areas....On their own, these spaces are great places to meet friends, bump into fellow community members or have lunch outside.”



L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE

HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF THE LATCHSTRING PARK TASK FORCE

In Fall of 2018, a group of neighbors organized a cleanup of the park. We spent a Sunday morning digging out debris, including pieces of a stockade fence, an old car battery, leaves and branches. Following the cleanup, we began looking at the park's use and potential for improvement. Latchstring Park was largely dilapidated, resembling more of a parking lot than a park. The rear of the park was particularly neglected.

We noted that the parking lot was frequently used as a cut-through for traffic to avoid the light at the intersection of Elm and Main Street, which was dangerous for pedestrians. Working with the council and the town manager, barricades were placed along the side of the park facing Patty Lane to ensure the safety of pedestrians walking and biking in the area. It was at this time, Summer of 2019, that the council voted to establish the Latchstring Park Task Force with the charge of making recommendations for improvement to the "safety, function and aesthetics" of the park.

The Latchstring Park Task Force began working in the Fall of 2019, largely in agreement that we as a community benefit from small green spaces along Main Street that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities. We agreed that these spaces enhance the experience of living and working in Yarmouth.

Our initial challenge was to balance the need for parking with the value of the green space, trees, and enhanced aesthetics. In early 2020, Josh Tompkins fortunately joined the work of the Task Force. Josh is a talented Landscape Architect in private practice here in Yarmouth. With his expertise, we developed a design concept that meets this challenge and accomplishes the need for parking, while creating a recognizable park: a place for people to gather and relax in close proximity to homes and businesses.

Over the last eighteen months, the design concept has been extensively reviewed by town staff, the Economic Development Advisory Board, neighbors, businesses and many others in the community. It has been endorsed by the Bicycle & Pedestrian Committee and the Parks & Lands Committee. In response to the feedback received during this public process, the design concept was thoughtfully revised and ultimately presented to the Town Council.

After multiple iterations, the design concept was endorsed by the Town Council on February 25, 2021. As part of their endorsement, the Town Council voted to extend the work and adapt the mission of the Task Force to include raising the funds needed to detail and implement the design for construction, in accordance with the Design Concept and without impact to the Town budget.

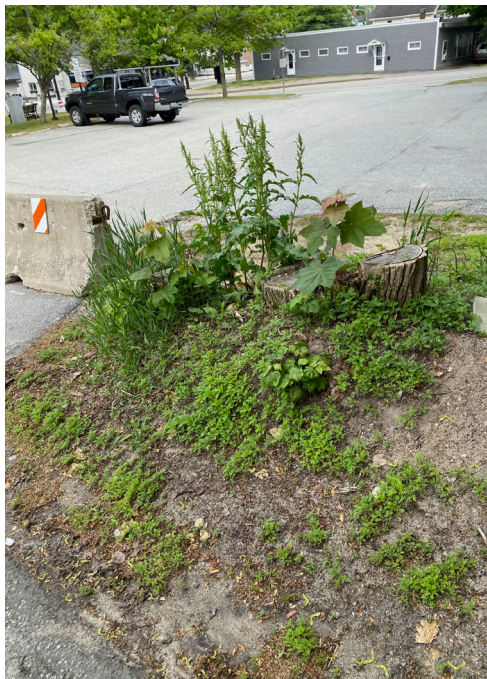
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CURRENT CONDITIONS IMPACTING SAFETY, FUNCTION, AESTHETICS

Historically the parking lot has been used as a cut through to avoid the traffic signal, and the current configuration lacks safe and accessible passage for visitors. Additionally, the curb cut on West Elm contributes to traffic impediments close to the intersection.

Severed by the parking lot, the minimal park space is uncomfortably surrounded by asphalt. The benches are oriented toward the traffic on a graded slope, making it noisy and difficult to carry on a conversation. The existing trees are not cared for, leaving many of them unhealthy and dying. There is visible rusted rebar protruding through the crumbling concrete, a non-functioning lamp post, and the rear of the park is home to debris and tall weeds.



THE PLAN

maintain long-term vitality.

post lamp

planting

bench

post lamp

small gathering area

lawn

temporary seating

monument

bench

post lamp

planting

planting

post lamp

gathering area and seating

bike racks

bench

accessible aisle

accessible parking

PATTY LANE

WEST ELM STREET

WEST MAIN STREET

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

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IMPROVING AESTHETICS, FUNCTIONALITY, AND SAFETY

Improving aesthetics:

Grading will provide a flat lawn amenable to a variety of social gathering and programming opportunities. The gently mounded vegetated areas offer spatial definition, interest, and separation between the park and vehicular activity.

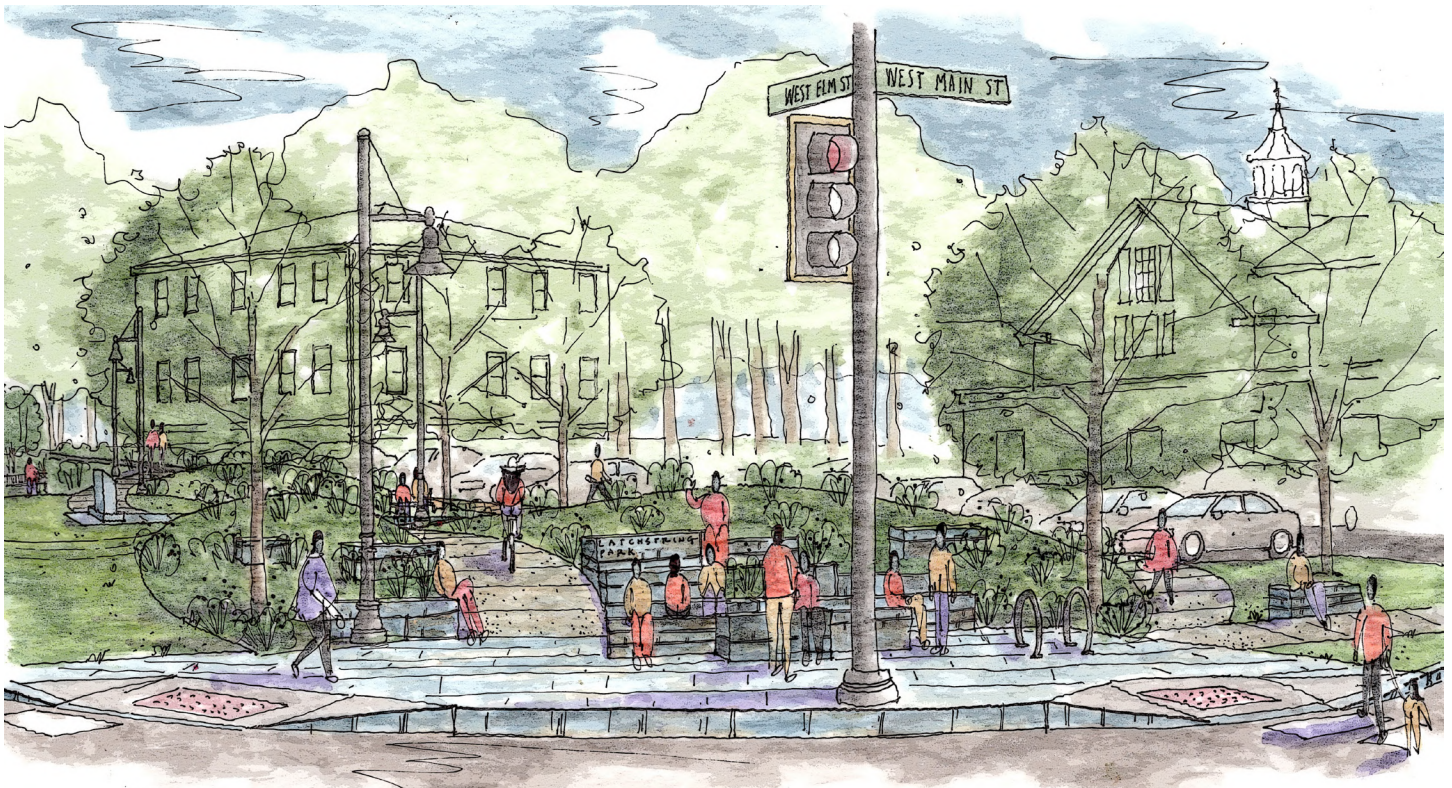
Relocating the parking to the side creates one larger contiguous green space, effectively doubling the area available for people to enjoy. Recapturing the lost area at the back of the park allows for a layered mix of plantings, providing a green buffer between public and private space.

Ensuring safety:

The illuminated 8' multi-purpose accessible pathway will provide safe pedestrian passage for all ages and abilities, connecting both the parking and the residential neighborhoods to commercial activity on Main Street. Defining Patty Lane and adding advisory bike lanes increases safety while accommodating emergency vehicle width and access. Setting the parking spaces back from Main Street activity allows safe entrance onto Patty Lane.

Enhancing function:

Relocating the Latchstring Award monument to the center of the park creates a natural, visual focal point. Additionally, this placement optimizes capacity (e.g. honoring recipients or volunteers). Locally sourced salvaged granite and town standard benches in both sun and shade will allow for a variety of seating options for gathering. Shifting the parking to the side increases the available short term parking, including one new ADA space with abutting access aisle. Parking configuration allows for park maintenance and snow storage.



L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

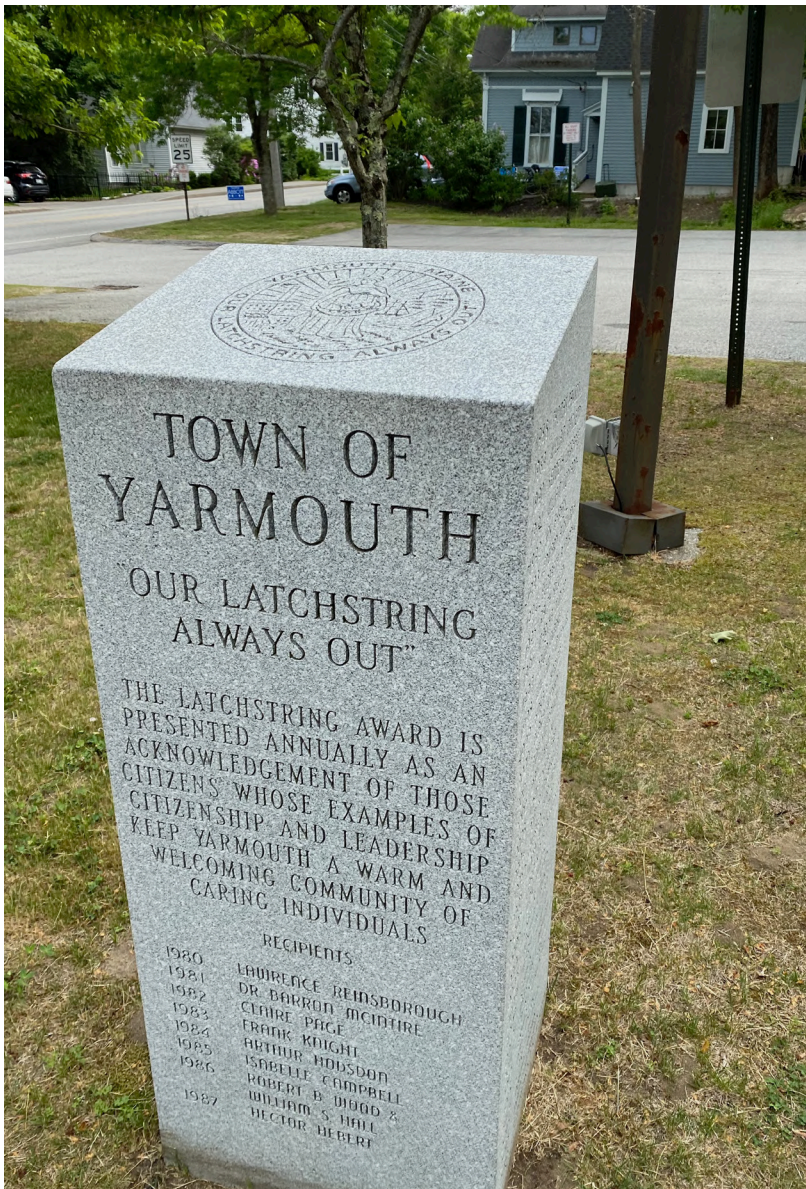
YARMOUTH, MAINE

THE LATCHSTRING AWARD

Yarmouth is a town with a rich history of volunteerism and community engagement. We feel strongly that the Latchstring Park should be a place of pride in which to applaud these contributions.

Latchstring Park takes its name from our town motto, “Our Latchstring Always Out.” It is intended as an acknowledgement of those citizens whose examples of citizenship and leadership keep Yarmouth a warm and welcoming community of caring individuals. This seems fitting since the park sits at a gateway into Main Street and is a place where we celebrate the recipients of the Latchstring Award with a monument in their honor. Since 1980, the Town Council has annually recognized citizens of Yarmouth who have contributed their time, efforts and concern for an extended and exemplary period for the benefit of the residents of Yarmouth.

The monument will be placed centrally for visibility and prominence, with plenty of space for the annual award ceremony to occur on site.



L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE

BUDGET

Professional Services	\$10,000
Fundraising Campaign Expenses	\$2,000
Construction	
Site Preparation, Demolition, Earthwork and Drainage	\$71,000
Roadway, Parking, Sidewalks, Pathways and Stonework	\$148,000
Site Furnishings and Lighting	\$27,000
Planting, Lawns and Irrigation	82,000
Continued Park Maintenance	\$10,000
Total Project Budget	\$350,000

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why renovate Latchstring Park?

The park has long been neglected and is currently more parking lot than park. In its existing condition and configuration, it is unsightly and unsafe for pedestrian passage; it is also not an inviting environment for people to gather. Improving Latchstring Park meets the policy objectives expressed in both the Comprehensive Plan and the Open Space Plan. Additionally, reducing the impervious surface contributes to a reduction of heat island effect in this important Main Street location, a space where people walk and gather, in close proximity to a nursing home population; all vulnerable to increasing high summer temperatures. The renovation will result in an increase in the usable area of the park, reduce the amount of impervious surface, and shift the usable space to the rear of the park away from the noise and traffic along Main Street. The renovation provides a permanent solution to the cut through traffic in the parking lot that had been a chronic problem until the town installed temporary barriers along Patty Lane.

What will this campaign fund?

We have committed to designing, renovating and maintaining the Latchstring Park without impact to the town budget. Our goal has been to raise the necessary funds for complete renovation and ongoing maintenance. Funding will replace a neglected, inefficient space by creating a vibrant, warm and welcoming park accessible to people of all ages and abilities, while establishing more efficient parking for patrons of neighboring businesses.

Will the traffic pattern be changed?

No. Patty Lane will remain two-way traffic, with recommended pedestrian and bicycle lanes. The entrance at W Main will meet town standards to accommodate entering and exiting vehicles, including emergency services. The curb cut on W Elm will be eliminated to allow for the shift of parking and increased green space.

Will there be parking?

Yes. Throughout the design process, considerable effort was made to meet the need for improving the park while retaining and enhancing the available parking. Currently, of the 15 spaces, only seven are two hour spots available to patrons of Main Street businesses. The plan includes 11 two hour spots, one of which is handicap accessible, all available for people using the park or neighboring businesses.

Who created the park design?

Collaboration through public meetings involved the community, town officials, Latchstring award winners, the Task Force, and most importantly Josh Tompkins. A licensed Landscape Architect in the state of Maine, he holds fifteen years of experience with a diversity of project types ranging from private gardens to public parks. Josh read about our efforts in the initial Forecaster article and reached out to help; he lives in Yarmouth and owns a small practice in town.

Will there still be a holiday tree?

Yes. We will have the opportunity for an illuminated, seasonal tree in the middle of the lawn space, the trunk secured in a small recessed chamber.

What are the options for making a gift and donating to this effort?

Glad you asked! Donations can be made to the Town of Yarmouth, with designation to Latchstring Park. Cash, checks or credit cards are accepted and you may donate in person, online, or via mail. You may also donate from a retirement fund, or through our non-profit partner Frank Knight Foundation. For more information please see How to Give.

Will donors be recognized?

Yes. All donors, unless anonymous, will be recognized for their contributions and will receive a letter of acknowledgment for their tax-deductible contribution.

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

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QUOTES FROM LETTERS OF SUPPORT

“It is important to improve the current green space, located on a busy corner of Yarmouth, while creating pedestrian friendly walkways and a quiet location for relaxation and meditation for all ages.”

—Pam Adams, 2015 Latchstring Award Winner

“Having recently taken a tour of the Park and seen first hand the plans that have been developed...offers a safer and more efficient use of a small space while retaining a majority of available parking spaces. This improved space will be accessible to people of all ages and abilities, recognized as a true park - a place worthy of acknowledging our Latchstring Award winners. I am excited by the work that has gone into this project, and know this will be a wonderful upgrade to the top of Main Street.”

—Art Bell, 2017 Latchstring Award Winner , Maine State Representative, House District #47

“It is difficult to see how a more convincing case could be made for the adoption of the Latchstring Park Improvements Plan than the language of the Yarmouth Open Space Plan. It will benefit abutters...residents of all ages and abilities...the school children making their way to Handy’s from school, those such as myself who will seek it out as a destination, as a resting spot and place of contemplation at the heart of the Upper Village, and as a starting point for quiet walks within the Village, for the neighboring businesses...for the residents of Coastal Manor who will have an enhanced opportunity to enjoy fresh air and the physical and psychic benefits of green space, and for the Town as a whole, marking as it does the heart of the Upper Village, an anchor for our Main Street improvements, and a welcoming entry to our Town for those coming from inland....on behalf of all past, present and future Latchstring Award recipients, we will take pride in this park with its renewed life.”

—Edward J. Ashley, 2018 Latchstring Award Winner

“The existing grassed area is small. One of the significant benefits of the new design is that it significantly increases the green space. Equally important it moves the usable space away from Main Street. Even on a winters day with no leaves on the trees there is a noticeable drop in noise and intrusion of the traffic as you move back into the lot. A strategic combination of grading, shrubbery, and use of monolithic items such as granite blocks (which I understand has been discussed) could dramatically change the ambience of this space. I will admit that I have never been too impressed with Latchstring Park. After spending some time there this week and looking at the concept plan I have realized that it could evolve into a small oasis at a prime location.”

—Geoff Shallard, 2003 Latchstring Award Winner

“The Town, the Village Improvement Society, residents, business owners and developers have all played a part over the years in making many substantial enhancements to the green spaces and structures along Maine Street....Moving forward with these landscape improvements for Latchstring Park would certainly be in keeping with all the past efforts made while reclaiming this site as an attractive green space for the western end of Main Street. The overall goal is to provide attractive, safe, pedestrian friendly places for residents, those who work in town and visitors to spend their time. Josh has designed a very attractive landscape plan for this site which includes a significant amount of green space, seating, plantings, trees, and an adequate amount of parking, and a more fitting site to honor the Latchstring Award recipients. Josh’s design truly reads as a Park plan that represents the character and feel of the Village.”

—Eileen Butler, 29 Baker Street

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

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“We support the proposed project at Latchstring Park. Improving the aesthetics at this corner and carving out some additional green space on this side of town are big wins.”

—Caitlin, Keith & the O & E Team, Business owner Owl & Elm, Main Street

“I’d like to pass on my full support for the proposed Latchstring Park restoration project. I think that the team has done a very thoughtful job of balancing interests and values in their proposed plan.”

—Dan Ostrye, 2013 Latchstring Award Winner, Chair Bike Ped Committee, Complete Streets Advisory Council

“A reimagining of this space is long overdue...Reducing the amount of pavement in this park should make the space more inviting for pedestrians and kids on the way home from school. The redesign looks like a much more efficient use of space and will certainly make this corner more inviting.”

—Heather Veitch, Main Street Business Owner, Gingham

“I appreciate that the plan takes a fairly awkward open space with seating on a rise exposed to traffic on all sides and turns it into a more beautiful natural sheltered place where people can gather, eat a meal, visit with one another, or have a peaceful break. I think this is especially important in light of the nursing home residents, visitors and staff nearby so they can have some more functional relaxing green space with seating and semi-private, distinct areas to take a break in, to sit beneath some shade trees and have those quiet places for conversations. The close proximity to several eating establishments, bookstore, and 317 music lessons and our newfound appreciation for places to eat and gather outside make this location particularly exciting for an upgrade....investments in our common green spaces brings people together in ways that support our community and storm water runoff, and sometimes important sighting in nature that enrich all our lives.”

—Josh Royte, 2008 Latchstring Award Winner, first Open Space Guide author, former Parks and Lands Committee Chair, former Conservation Committee Chair, and Open Space Planning Team Chair

“Latchstring Park...is currently very tired and underutilized because it is just not inviting. It can be so much more; this is an opportunity to create an enhanced space to the upper village. The Yarmouth citizens coupled with many professionals have collaborated on doing just that. Plans were made and amended multiple times as they sought feedback from the community, both citizens and business owners. A huge amount of thought and revisions have gone into the visual appeal, usability, and safety of this space. The latest plan I saw is quite wonderful.... Green space is a win win!”

—Diana Hibbard, long time resident Baker Street

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE

QUOTES FROM TOWN COUNCIL PUBLIC COMMENT / February 4, 2021

“Latchstring Park...is a very important park for the town...it is one of the truly first things you would look at when you enter the village district.”

Also suggested adding in-ground stand for a holiday tree and supports the use of volunteers for maintenance.
—Deb Hopkins, 2000 Latchstring Award Winner

“Beautiful plan, flexible, durable, solves a lot of issues, works, thinks it is a great plan, looking forward to it.”
—Sarah Witte, Neighbor and local Landscape Architect

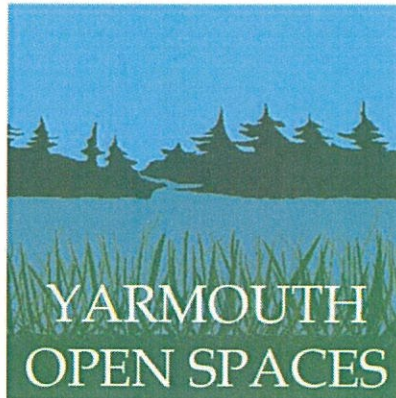
“Super supportive...excited...huge improvement of a degraded park/parking lot.”
Also preferred idea of dead end street, but likes street being marked for safety.
—Patrick Jackson, Abutter

“Wonderful project...great plan.” Park renovation plan is “attractive and appropriate, much better use of space, planned parking is adequate.” Quoted the town parking study, saying there are “950 spaces on Main Street and 500 are available at any time” as evidence that there is sufficient parking in Yarmouth; went on to note that parking is available but often not “right in front” of where people are going, offered to help.
—Matt Teare, Neighbor and Main Street Property Owner

“Proponent of this plan...currently the park is not welcoming to visitors or Latchstring Award winners...Great job..Beautiful..Gateway Into Town...On balance a really nice plan.”
—Tamson Bickford Hamrock, Main Street Property Owner, former Town Councilor, daughter of Erv Bickford (2012 Latchstring Award Winner and former Town Councilor)

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE



January 8, 2021

Town of Yarmouth
c/o Town Manager, Town Council
200 Main Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096

RE: Latchstring Park Proposal

Yarmouth's Parks and Lands Committee (PLC) met on Wednesday, January 6, 2021 and a discussion on the Latchstring Park proposed renovations was presented by the Latchstring Park Task Force representatives Susan Prescott, Joshua Tompkins, Jackie Schumacher, and Linda Grant.

Following the comprehensive presentation, a statement was made by the PLC.

The Parks and Lands Committee resolves, unanimously, that the proposed Latchstring Park rehabilitation and reconfiguration will be a major asset to the Town of Yarmouth and is in accord with the provisions of the 2019 Open Space Plan. We support this project and hope the funds can be raised and/or appropriated to realize this project.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karyn A. MacNeill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karyn A. MacNeill, CPRP
Yarmouth Community Services Director

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE

February 17, 2021

Nat Tupper, Town Manager
Yarmouth Town Council
200 Main Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096

RE: Latchstring Park Proposal

Dear Nat and Council Members,

Yarmouth's Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee met on Monday, February 8th and discussed the proposed renovations to Latchstring Park following a presentation from Latchstring Park Task Force representatives Susan Prescott and Joshua Tompkins.

Following that presentation the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee voted to support the overall renovation plan that was presented for the following reasons:

- The renovation results in a 36% increase in the useable area of the park, a 50% reduction in impervious surface and shifts much of that useable space to the rear of the park, away from the noise and traffic along Main Street.
- The renovation provides a permanent solution to the cut through traffic in the parking lot that had been a chronic problem until the Town installed temporary traffic barriers along Patty Lane. We would recommend that the sidewalk in front of the parking spaces be connected to Main Street.
- The renovation will create an inviting space at the beginning of the Main Street commercial district that will complement the other inviting open spaces along Main Street, including the Village Green, Town Hall, Merrill Memorial Library, NYA Greens. This creates an inviting environment and convenient resting spaces for folks all along our commercial district.
- The sidewalk connection through the park will create a safe and inviting route for users who access the Village from Hillside, Church and Baker Streets. We do recommend the addition of advisory lane markings along Patty Lane to continue the bicycle and pedestrian connection beyond the park limits.
- The renovation includes a dedicated handicap parking space and accessible pathways. We do encourage inclusion of accessible tables within the park to further enhance the accessible nature of the space. This is of particular importance given the proximity of the park to the Coastal Manor facility.

In short, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee supports the renovation of Latchstring Park and looks forward to collaborating with the Task Force as the design evolves and funds are raised. We recognize that it may take time to bring this project to fruition, but encourage the Council to support the plan as it will encourage community support and motivate volunteers to work towards making this dream a reality.

Respectfully submitted,



Daniel P. Ostrye – Chairman
Yarmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee.

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE



Yarmouth Village Improvement Society
P. O. Box 282
Yarmouth, Maine 04096

May 5, 2021

Latchstring Task Force
Yarmouth, ME 04096

Dear Task Force Members:

The Yarmouth Village Improvement Society supports with enthusiasm the proposed design and concept for a new Latchstring Park to anchor Yarmouth's Main Street at the corner of Main Street, West Main Street and West Elm Street. Based on our excitement for the benefits that the improvement will bring to the community, the Society pledges \$100,000 to support the project.

The Society, referred to locally as the VIS, was organized in 1911..."to protect and improve the natural advantages and the pleasing symmetry of Yarmouth, to excite and foster an interest and love of said town and to engage in any work that will aim to accomplish this end". The initial project for the group was the development of Yarmouth's first public park, the Village Green in front of the Grand Trunk Depot in the central part of Main Street. The project enhanced the community and most of all provided a town green space for citizens to gather and enjoy. Since those early years, the VIS has continued to initiate, collaborate, provide financial means and hands on assistance to ensure that Yarmouth has public areas that bring pride and enjoyment to residents and visitors alike.

Latchstring Park has been in the VIS vision for several years as a site that could be improved for the welfare of the community. When the Latchstring Task Force was created by the Town Council, a VIS member was included on the committee. The proposed new design will not only improve the aesthetics of the site, but has taken into consideration necessary safety issues. The impact on park users includes an increase in green space and shifts the usable space away from the noise and traffic of this busy corner.

This project, when completed, will not only be an enhancement for today but also into the future for all to enjoy. The VIS is proud to be a part of making this a reality for Yarmouth.

Sincerely,

The Board of Trustees of the Yarmouth Village Improvement Society.

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE

HOW TO GIVE

Thank you for taking the time to learn about our history, progress and vision. Your thoughtful review and donation are welcomed as we work to bring this idea to realization.

Our efforts have been driven by citizen initiative to improve a public space through public service without impacting the town budget. We have already benefited greatly through the culmination of countless volunteer hours and the generous support of the Village Improvement Society, and we thank you for considering how you can contribute to the vibrancy of this important corner of Yarmouth.

Susan Prescott, Chair
Jackie Schumacher, Secretary

Josh Tompkins, Landscape Architect
Linda Grant, member

With our appreciation for the collaboration and assistance of:
Karyn MacNeill, Director of Yarmouth Community Services
Rob Waeldner, Town Council
Alex Jaegerman, Town Planner (Retired)
Richard Plourde, Town Council
Scott LaFlamme, Director of Economic Development

For any questions regarding this project or donations, please contact:
Susan Prescott (207) 831-5080

All donations can be made through the Town of Yarmouth and Yarmouth Community Services, with designation for Latchstring Park:

- Drop by: Town Hall, 200 Main Street
- Online: www.yarmouthcommunityservices.org
- Mail: Town of Yarmouth
Latchstring Park
200 Main Street
Yarmouth, ME 04096

If you are donating from a retirement fund, please contact:
Dawn Madden at Town Hall: (207) 846-9036

Donations requiring a 501c3 status can be made to:
Frank Knight Foundation
Latchstring Park
PO Box 56
Yarmouth, ME 04096

*For more information, contact Rebecca Rundquist (207) 712-6430

L A T C H S T R I N G P A R K

YARMOUTH, MAINE

Suggested levels of giving:

<input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000	Name <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000	Address <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000	City <input type="text"/> State <input type="text"/> Zip <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	Signature <input type="text"/>

We are grateful for donations of any amount. Thank you!

Town of Yarmouth 200 Main Street Yarmouth, ME 04096
