

Tony Hawk foundation gives \$10,000 grant for Frankie Fortuna skate park

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Plans to upgrade the city of Leominster's only skateboard park have received some high-profile support.

Skateboarding legend Tony Hawk's foundation, [The Skatepark Project](#), donated \$10,000 toward the effort to build the Frankie Fortuna Memorial Skate Park on Johnson Street, in Leominster's French Hill neighborhood.

The grant is "great news" for a project that has "so much energy" behind it and will benefit kids and adults alike in Leominster for years to come, city grant administrator Wendy Wiiks said Monday afternoon.



The renovation project for the skate park — which abuts Frances Drake Elementary School on Johnson Street — will include not only a revamped skate park that encompasses both the current skate park and the adjacent tennis courts, but also the planting of six to eight trees and the addition of a parking lot.

The total cost of the project is estimated at \$367,000, Wiiks said. The state last fall provided a \$248,115 grant through the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities program. According to Leominster Mayor Dean Mazzarella, the city has committed an additional \$119,000 for the project.

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SAMPLE SKATEPARK CONCEPT DESIGN - SR133-01



Visitors to the Leominster Recreation Department's Facebook page said they liked this design from Spohn Ranch Skateparks for the Frankie Fortuna Memorial Skate Park. *Submitted Graphic*

The Skatepark Project's donation gives a boost to the efforts by the Leominster Recreation Department, which will oversee the new skate park, to raise \$150,000 for "additional enhancements above and beyond what we had planned previously," Wiiks said.

The new skate park will be named for Francis "Frankie" Fortuna, a 19-year-old Leominster man who was struck and killed in November 2015 on Mechanic Street in Leominster while walking to work. The man accused of striking and killing him with his vehicle, Connor Hartman, was sentenced in 2017 to 18 months' probation and at least 100 hours of community service.

Fortuna frequently visited the Johnson Street skateboard park, so family and friends have worked for about five years on the project as a way to honor him.

Spohn Ranch, a skate park design and build firm in Los Angeles, has been chosen to come up with plans for the new skate park. The designs will be finished by June, Wiiks said, with the project going out to bid in July and construction to be completed by June 2022.

Along with the contributions from the state and city, Fortuna's family and friends have also raised more than \$15,000 through fundraisers like motorcycle runs and skateboard challenges.

Additional fundraisers are underway, including an online auction of handcrafted skateboard decks designed by Massachusetts artists. The auction will run April 16-30; the link can be found on the "Remembering Frankie Fortuna" Facebook page.

"I've seen a lot of projects over the years, and this has been the most grassroots and community project that I've seen," Wiiks said.

Wiiks thanked the Fortuna family, friends of Frankie Fortuna, and the experts and enthusiasts have stepped up to join the skate park committee and work on fundraising.

"It's just been a huge cooperative effort," she said. "This is going to be a project that will benefit Leominster for a long time. There's just not a public facility around like that."

Donations for the Frankie Fortuna Memorial Skate Park can be made through the City of Leominster's webpage (www.leominster-ma.gov, click on "Recreation" under the "Services" menu) or through the Fortuna family's GoFundMe page (<https://gofund.me/25fbe717>).

More on the skate park project is available at frankiefortunaskatepark.com.

Note: *This story has been updated to correct the name of the Skatepark Project.*

