

## **Mill River Park, Taunton**

**Who:** The City of Taunton, MA Gateway Park Initiative, Taunton River Steering Committee, Horsley Witten Group

**What:** The City of Taunton worked with state, regional, local, and non-profit partners (Taunton River Steering Committee, facilitated by Bridgewater State College) to repurpose a former police auto impoundment area, located in a corner of a paved municipal parking lot below and behind Taunton City Hall and the Taunton Police Station. This area of the lot sloped toward the river, contained broken and degraded pavement, was a sediment collection point for the parking lot, and was surrounded by invasive plants and vegetation. The auto impoundment area was also a source of stormwater loading to the adjacent Mill River, resulting in water quality and habitat degradation. The Mill River flows directly into the federally designated Wild & Scenic Taunton River. This source of river pollution was transformed into a public park with green infrastructure based stormwater treatment features, improved parking, lighting, and transportation safety features, and, educational signage explaining the features of the park.



**When:** The park construction was completed in 2011.

**Where:** Allens Avenue, off of Spring Street, behind the Taunton City Hall and Taunton Police Station.

**Why:** The site was selected as a potential demonstration project as part of the second phase of the Taunton River Watershed Study (undertaken by the Horsley Witten Group on behalf of the above-mentioned Steering Committee). The site was in need of a way of managing and treating stormwater runoff from the upgradient parking lot, enhancement of the vegetative buffer between the parking lot and the river, and an invasive species management plan.

**How:** The \$1.24 million cost of the park was paid for entirely by grants, nearly 80% of which came from the state's Gateway Park Initiative, and the other 20% from the federal Community Development Block Grant Program.



**Benefits:** The social, economic, and environmental benefits of the Mill River Park project include:

- Mitigation of a source of chronic stormwater pollution to the Mill River, a major tributary of the Wild & Scenic Taunton River, and located in an MS4 area
- The repurposing of a blighted area and source of pollution into an accessible public park in an Environmental Justice area, immediately adjacent to the downtown and center of City government
- Removal of invasive plant species, invasive species management plan, and restoration of the riverbank resource area
- Improved fisheries and wildlife habitat and connectivity
- Reduced risk of localized flooding due to unabated stormwater flow