

# MANCHESTER DAILY EXPRESS

**FREE**

**WEDNESDAY**

**MAR. 28**

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# FROM TO GROSS GREEN

Common areas such as this one at the corner of Canal and Commercial streets will get landscaped under 'Walkable Neighborhoods.'

## 'Walkable Neighborhoods' program starts blooming

By DAN MAGAZU

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Spring is shifting into full gear, and so is a new program that aims to clean up and landscape the city's green spaces.

The 'Walkable Neighborhoods' program solicits the help of local businesses in converting many of the city's public areas from eyesores to beautiful spaces sporting

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grass and flowers.

The program was unveiled by the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce in

February.

Mike Skelton, the chamber's director of economic development and advocacy, said that nearly a dozen businesses have expressed interest in adopting a spot.

"We're planning on work beginning toward the end of April and early May, when the planting season is peaking," Skelton said.

Green Horizons Landscaping of Hopkinton has agreed to act as the chamber's prima-

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# Walkable

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ry landscaper.

"They are really perfect for the job, and have offered to provide work at a slightly discounted price," Skelton said.

Local businesses are encouraged to adopt a spot, and either landscape it themselves or pay for it to be landscaped.

Skelton said that officials at the Hilton Garden Inn, near Merchantsauto.com Stadium, have adopted a strip along South Commercial Street.

The staff of Brady-Sullivan Properties is looking at an area where Commercial Street and Canal Street connect on the city's North End.

Also, officials at NeighborWorks Greater Manchester, a non-profit housing group, have chosen the Parker Street Bridge.

"Right now, we're in the process of finding more spots," Skelton said. "We want to spread them out, so we are looking for some spots on the West Side as well. We

hope people will call in and suggest some areas to look at."

To get the word out, the group has set up a booth at today's BizFest trade show inside the Center of New Hampshire Radisson Hotel on Elm Street.

The chamber is also sending out letters to over 1,000 local businesses.

"So far, interest in the program has far exceeded our expectations," Skelton said. "It's a matter of following

through, and matching people up with spots that meet their investment."

Skelton said the goal is to get 12 to 15 areas landscaped this year.

"It's important to start at a level that's manageable and creates a foundation," Skelton said. "Then we can build on that each year."

For more info on the Walkable Neighborhoods program, contact the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce at 666-6600.