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## **City of Charleston Awarded 2021 AARP Community Challenge Grant for Philip Simmons Park Improvements**

**Charleston, S.C.**—The city of Charleston Parks Department was selected as a 2021 recipient of AARP’s Community Challenge Grant, which will facilitate a number of improvements to Philip Simmons Park in Charleston’s Eastside neighborhood, including an overhaul of the existing irrigation system, installation of a Wi-Fi hotspot and added seating areas, landscaping enhancements and more.

**Why it matters:** Located at the intersection of Columbus and America Streets, Philip Simmons Park is one of four quadrants that come together to form Hampstead Mall, the oldest public green space in Charleston and a point of civic pride among Eastside residents.

Using the \$12,000 in AARP grant funds, paired with more than \$7,000 raised by Eastside residents, the city will begin a process of enhancing the historic park and thereby ensuring that its value to the surrounding neighborhood remains intact for years to come.

**What to expect:** The full range of improvements, which are set to be completed by November 2021, include lawn renovations and additional plantings beneath the existing grand live oak trees, refurbished pathway systems throughout the park, installation of new seating areas and trash receptacles for park patrons, an overhaul of the existing irrigation system and installation of a Wi-Fi hotspot.

The conceptual design for the project was completed by the city Parks Department in collaboration with neighborhood residents and stakeholders, including the Eastside Garden Club, St. John’s Chapel and Second Saturday, a monthly litter pick-up organized by Eastside residents. Other partners include the Eastside Community Development Corporation and Hampstead Trust for the Public Realm, a new non-profit formed with the goal of improving local parks and supporting local businesses along Columbus Street.

Fundraising for the remaining renovation efforts is ongoing and contributions can be made at [www.friendsofkcb.org](http://www.friendsofkcb.org).

**About the AARP Community Challenge:** The AARP Community Challenge is a grant program to make tangible improvements to communities that jump-start long-term change. It is part of AARP’s nationwide Livable Communities initiative, which supports the efforts of

cities, towns, neighborhoods, and rural areas to become great places to live for people of all ages.

To learn more, visit [aarp.org/livable](http://aarp.org/livable).

**What they're saying:** Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg said, "Rich in history and rightly a source of civic pride for all our East Side residents, Hampstead Mall is one of Charleston's great hidden treasures. I thank both the AARP and neighborhood residents for their generosity, and look forward to the next steps in our ongoing work to reimagine and reenergize this remarkable city space."

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