

Mayor Scott Avedisian and state Department of Environmental Management Director W. Michael Sullivan, Ph.D., announced today that DEM has awarded the city a grant of up to \$100,000 to construct a walking path along the eastern shore of the Pawtuxet River in East Natick Village.

The project calls for construction of a 1,700 linear foot, passive riverside trail and installation of a boat launch/landing for canoes and kayaks within view of the historic P&W Railroad Trestle. The main segment of the trail will provide ADA-compliant accessibility to a scenic river overlook and accessible fishing area at the juncture of the Meshanicut and Pawtuxet rivers. The remainder of the riverwalk will be a seasonal nature trail with a natural, cleared path along the Pawtuxet's banks to minimize potential impacts to the floodway.

The project will also have an educational component, including the installation of bluebird houses and/or wood duck boxes to promote nesting of the species. Interpretative signage panels will include information on a variety of topics, such as water fowl habitat, the history of the trestle, the East Natick Village community and safe kayak and canoe usage.

Avedisian said that the riverwalk, located adjacent to the Father Tirocchi Field and the state's Washington Secondary Bike Path, will complement and enhance existing recreational opportunities while providing easy access to the Pawtuxet River.

"The East Natick Village Association identified a Pawtuxet riverwalk as one of their highest priorities when they updated their Master Plan in 2009," Avedisian said. "The financial support from DEM is essential, and I thank Director Sullivan for recognizing the merits of this project. I'm sure this will be a popular site for local residents as well as those who currently use the bike path."

"When the East Natick Village Association started to update their Master Plan in 2009, they asked me to participate in the discussions with the Gifford Design Group," said Ward Eight Councilman Ray Gallucci. "After many meetings, one of the first recommendations was to improve the river access, because the Pawtuxet River is a natural resource which was never utilized. Our recommendation was to construct a riverwalk and install a boat launch/landing area for canoes and kayaks. This financial support from DEM is very much appreciated. I would like to thank Director Sullivan, Mayor Avedisian, Warwick's Office of Community Development Director Kevin Sullivan, the Gifford Design Group and the East Natick Village Association."

According to Warwick's Office of Community Development Director Kevin Sullivan, who prepared the grant application, a local non-profit organization has offered to help maintain the trail on a volunteer basis.