



## Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Governor Deval L. Patrick  
Lieutenant Governor Timothy P. Murray  
Secretary Ian A. Bowles

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### Patrick-Murray Administration Announces Five Grants for Gateway City Parks

BOSTON — July 7, 2010 - The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) today announced five grants totaling \$6 million for projects that will enhance parks and recreational facilities in cities across the Commonwealth.

The grants were funded through the Gateway City Parks program, which supports significant park projects for underserved urban populations. The five communities receiving Gateway City Parks grants announced today are **Chicopee, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Pittsfield and Taunton.**

"I know from growing up in Chicago that parks make a big difference in city life," said Governor Deval Patrick. "These Gateway City Parks projects will invigorate neighborhoods and improve the lives of our residents."

"Through the Gateway City Parks grant program, our administration is making investments to create clean and improved facilities so urban communities can enjoy recreational opportunities within their own neighborhoods," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray.

"Demonstrating Governor Patrick's commitment to improving the quality of life for Massachusetts residents, these grants help urban communities preserve and improve outdoor recreational space for children, families and individuals to enjoy for years to come," said EEA Secretary Ian Bowles.

In recognition of the vital role that public parks play in maintaining the health and economic wellbeing of urban areas, the Gateway City Parks initiative is a hallmark of Governor Patrick's unprecedented commitment of state support for urban parks, habitat protection and preservation of working landscapes. Twenty-two Massachusetts cities are eligible for the program, which targets communities with populations greater than 35,000 and median household incomes, per capita incomes and educational attainment levels below the state average.

Gateway Cities is a flexible program, providing municipal officials with a menu of funding options for all phases of park development. Funding can be used for activities and costs, such as brownfield assessment and cleanup, park planning and recreational needs assessments - including the development of Open Space and Recreation Plans - activities not previously eligible for state parks funding. Cities can also use the grants for acquisition, design and construction of parks, greenways and other recreational facilities.

Funding for this grant program comes from the Energy and Environment Bond Bill signed by Governor Patrick in August 2008.

"I greatly appreciate the Patrick Administration's commitment to improving the quality of life in our Gateway Cities. The Pittsfield Common was once a site of much activity and with these improvements, it will be again," said Sen. Benjamin B. Downing.

"This is great news for Lawrence. Groundwork has a solid track record of creating parks and green spaces that add so much to the quality of life in the city," stated Sen. Sue Tucker.

"This is going to be a great project for the city of Fitchburg," said Sen. Jennifer L. Flanagan. "I am thrilled that the Administration has again looked beyond Boston and has chosen to fund this worthy undertaking in North Central Massachusetts. This will certainly improve the quality of life for the residents and I look forward to seeing the completed project."

"I am excited that the City of Lawrence will be receiving these funds to pay for work on the Spicket River Greenway, said Rep. Barry Finegold." "This grant will continue to help with regional growth and prosperity in Lawrence, and improve the lives and futures of its residents."

"Szot Park is Chicopee's premier flagship park and the opportunity to make this a green facility to conserve energy and water bodes well for the city's future," said Chicopee Mayor Michael Bissonnette.

"I am excited to be able to work once again with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs as well as other local environmental and economic groups to create an attractive corridor along the Mill River," said Taunton Mayor Charles Crowley.

"This project will open the doors to community recreation and neighborhood revitalization. The Riverway is a true asset and, with this partnership, all will soon realize Lawrence's gem," said Lawrence Mayor William Lantigua.

"The First Street Common park rehabilitation is a critical project in the renewal of our downtown. When completed, this park will be a destination for families and will offer enjoyment and recreational opportunities in all seasons," said Pittsfield Mayor James Ruberto.

"I am pleased that the Patrick Administration has demonstrated time and time again a commitment to smart growth in our state's Gateway Cities. The investment by the Commonwealth in Fitchburg to build the Gateway Park will unlock private investment in the surrounding mills and provide a tremendous recreational asset for the city residents," said Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong.

"We are thrilled to be part of the Gateway Park project in Fitchburg. Assisting the city and its partners in integrating the river into the fabric of a vibrant downtown epitomizes what we hope to achieve through our community conservation efforts," said Andy Kendall, president of The Trustees of Reservations. "Parks and open space are an integral part of the social, economic, and environmental health of Massachusetts' communities. It's important to The Trustees that people across the Commonwealth – from urban centers, to small towns, to rural areas – have access to parks and outdoor recreation areas."

"The Mill River is a hidden gem running through Taunton," said Robb Johnson, program director for The Nature Conservancy. "This beautiful park will help protect it by reducing impacts from untreated storm water, while also anchoring the City's long-envisioned riverwalk. It's a win-win for the environment and the people of Taunton, and demonstrates what we hope can be repeated elsewhere along the river."

"We have thousands of ardent stewards who have been working with us for nearly a decade to clean the river banks and streambeds. These same residents and youth are the best assurance for long-term care of the Greenway and will provide stewardship for the Spicket River Greenway for decades to come," said Groundwork Lawrence Executive Director Heather McMann.

"This project was a partnership from the beginning," said Janet Morrison, executive director of the North County Land Trust. "In addition to the named partners, due credit must be given to the seller's of the park land, Wachusett Development and Construction Company, for their patience in working with us and their generous donation of \$18,000 for the park, and to the Fitchburg Greenway Committee, whose support and advocacy for the park was invaluable."

**The following cities received grants through the Gateway City Parks initiative:**

**Lawrence** - A \$2.6 million grant to design and construct the Spicket River Greenway, 2.5 miles of riverfront paths. The Greenway will connect neighborhoods and six existing parks - including the recently completed Manchester Street and Dr. Nina Scarito Parks. The project is a partnership with the city of Lawrence and Groundwork Lawrence.

**Fitchburg** - A \$1.1 million grant for construction of a new city park. The project includes the creation of a trail network, construction of a small parking lot, installation of picnic tables, benches, lighting and trash receptacles, and the planting of trees, shrubs and grass. Work is expected to begin this fall and be completed by the end of June 2011. The project is a partnership among the city of Fitchburg, The Trustees of Reservations, the North County Land Trust and the Nashua River Watershed Association.

**Taunton** - A \$942,000 construction grant to convert a portion of an existing parking lot into a public park along the Mill River in downtown Taunton. The project includes the installation of plants to treat storm water, construction of a recreational trail and creation of a green space. The design includes a state-of-the-art low impact development system to treat storm water, which was previously flowing from the large parking lot directly into the Mill River. Plans also include a wider unpaved buffer to the river and replacing invasive species with native plants. Construction is expected to begin in October and finish by the end of June 2011.

**Pittsfield** - An \$885,000 construction grant to fund the First Street Common rehabilitation project, which is expected to begin in October and finish by the end of June 2011. Pittsfield's First Street Common park project is a multi-phase endeavor to rehabilitate this downtown open space. Phase one of the project includes the demolition of the existing playground/picnic area and skate park along the northern boundary of the park. A new playground area will be constructed in the northeast corner, along with improvements to the park entrance at Wallace Place.

**Chicopee** - A \$332,500 construction grant for the rehabilitation of Szot Park Stadium. The project includes the installation of new energy efficient stadium lighting and an irrigation system designed to reduce water consumption and improvements to address field drainage issues.

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