



**Public Works Department**  
444 West Grand Avenue  
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495  
(715) 421-8205  
wirapids.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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To: News Editors

Contact: Joe Terry

Phone: 715-421-8255

E-mail: [jterry@wirapids.org](mailto:jterry@wirapids.org)

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## **Phase 1 of East River Bank improvement project begins week of May 7**

Wednesday, May 2 – The Wisconsin Rapids community vision to enhance and improve ways for residents, visitors and businesses to interact with the network of public spaces within the Downtown Riverfront District edges a step closer to reality: The extensively conceived and designed East River Bank improvement project gets under way on Monday, May 7.

Contractor crews will begin south of the Riverview Expressway and work their way to the north to downtown through the construction season. Completion of this phase of the overall riverbank improvement project is expected by September 28.

Work for the overall Riverbank Improvement Project primarily focuses on the East River Corridor, from Riverview Expressway to East Grand Avenue, and includes riverbank stabilization with rip rap, re-grading, installation of a new kayak/canoe launch and shade structure in Demitz Park. An under bridge trail connection is being added so pedestrians and bicyclists may safely get between the north and south sides of the Riverview Expressway safely as well as a trail along 2nd street from Mead Street north. Separately, a recreational trail will also get paved this summer along the 1st Street north corridor to Biron.

The community regards creating a space that incorporates the iconic Wisconsin River for social, civic and business interaction as a key to economic development. It is estimated that other Wisconsin communities that have enhanced their waterfront areas have seen an average of a \$7 return on investment for every dollar put into such projects.

To help support this Phase 1 East River Bank improvement, Wisconsin Rapids in 2016 applied for and was awarded a grant of nearly \$700,000 from the State of Wisconsin Department of Natural

Resources Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. This program was created to preserve valuable natural areas and wildlife habitat, protect water quality and fisheries, and expand opportunities for outdoor recreation.

“As a community, we are proud that the State of Wisconsin recognizes that our plans for growth, development and prosperity in the Downtown Waterfront District are viable and worthy of support,” said Wisconsin Rapids Mayor Zach Vruwink, “A vibrant central place not only benefits Wisconsin Rapids residents and visitors but the broader region as a whole.”

Weekly updates for the East River Bank project will be posted on City website, [www.wirapids.org](http://www.wirapids.org), For more information, call 715-421-8205.

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