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City of Duluth - Parks and Recreation

411 West First Street • Duluth, Minnesota 55802
218-730-4309 • www.duluthmn.gov

*For more information contact Kate Van Daele,
Public Information Officer at 218-730-5309*

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SUBJECT: A Portion of the New Cross City Trail Segment will Temporarily Close for Contaminant Remediation Work

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

A Portion of the New Cross City Trail Segment will Temporarily Close for Contaminant Remediation Work

[Duluth, MN] The City of Duluth announced Friday, September 25 that a portion of a newly constructed segment of the Cross City Trail will temporarily close from April of 2021 until July of 2022. The temporary closure is necessary to permit safe completion of contaminant assessment and remediation activities that need to be undertaken in close proximity to the new trail.

The new 2.4-mile segment of the Cross City Trail extends from the vicinity of the Heritage Sports Center in Lincoln Park to the park at the center of the Irving Park neighborhood. Construction of the trail itself will be completed as soon as directional signage and fencing is installed.

“This new trail is really beautiful,” Director of Property, Parks, and Libraries Jim Filby-Williams said. “We look forward to having the public getting to see and enjoy it.”

A portion of the segment just northeast of the former Verso paper plant closely skirts an area of the St. Louis River known as Erie Pier Ponds. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the US Environmental Protection Agency, and the City of Duluth are partnering to undertake contaminant assessment and remediation activities in this area, both in the water and along the adjoining shoreline. The magnitude of remediation activities and their proximity to the new trail require a complete closure of public access to the area in April of 2021 until the completion of the project, which is anticipated to be in July of 2022.

The portion of the Cross City Trail to be closed will be approximately 0.8 miles from the 40th Avenue West Bridge over I-35 southwest to Recycle Way. Signs and barriers will mark the closed area. Detour signs at 40th Avenue West and Recycle Way will advise people how to use existing roads to navigate around the temporary closure. The remaining 1.6 miles of the new Cross City Trail segment will not be effected by the temporary closure at Erie Pier Ponds.

The new Cross City Trail segment will soon be accessible to the public. Until interagency contamination remediation is complete, the City advises users to avoid potential exposure to hazardous contaminants in the Erie Pier Ponds area by staying on the paved trail, and resisting the temptation to walk on social trails to the shoreline. The City also asks users to avoiding skin contact with water and soils. The City will install warning signs at appropriate locations advising users of the potential hazards and how to avoid them.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency is managing a \$16 million in-water contaminant remediation project at Erie Pier Ponds as part of the cleanup of the St. Louis River Area of Concern. Construction is expected to begin in April of 2021 and will be completed by July of 2022. A separate and substantially smaller remediation project will be undertaken on a thin strip of land between the shoreline of Erie Pier Ponds and the newly constructed trail.

When complete, the Cross City Trail will be a 10.3-mile multi-purpose, non-motorized, wheelchair-accessible, paved trail system that will connect the Lakewalk and Canal Park in downtown Duluth to the Munger Trail and Waabazheshikana – The Marten Trail in far western Duluth.

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New Cross City Trail Segment



Location of Contaminant Remediation Activities