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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: UPDATED: City of Duluth Announces Guidelines for Use of City Parks and Trails during COVID-19

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

**City of Duluth Announces Guidelines for Use of City Parks and Trails during Pandemic
Playgrounds closed, portable toilets removed, additional paved bike/ped trails available**

City of Duluth Parks and Recreation has released guidelines advising citizens how to use City parks and trails in a manner that will reduce the transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

“Being active outdoors is an especially effective way to maintain mental and physical health during a stressful period like the one we are experiencing now,” said Parks and Recreation Manager, Jessica Peterson. “The new guidelines are intended to equip residents with specific practical tips to help them enjoy our parks and trails as safely as possible.”

The guidelines build on direction provided by the National Recreation and Parks Association. The City advises residents to:

- Refrain from using parks or trails if they are exhibiting symptoms.
- Follow CDC’s guidance on personal hygiene prior to, during, and after use of parks or trails.
- Be prepared for no access to public restrooms, potable water, or protection from the elements.
- Observe CDC’s minimum separation of six feet from other individuals at all times.
- While on trails, warn other users of their presence and step aside to let others pass.
- Follow CDC guidance on the maximum advisable size of social gatherings.
- Reduce crowding and travel by sticking to close-to-home parks and trails.
- Select alternatives to crowded parks and trails like the Lakewalk.
- Minimize use of high-touch park amenities such as benches, picnic tables, trash cans, and railings.
- Obey all closures of community centers, playgrounds, and restrooms.

To make the social distancing guidelines more concrete, the City has released an infographic showing what it means to maintain a six-foot minimum distance in parks. Six feet is about the length of a pair of skis or a bike. Maintaining six-foot separation on the ten-foot-wide Lakewalk requires users traveling in opposite directions to walk single file at the edges of the trail when passing.

In association with the new guidelines, the City has closed all 38 City playgrounds, effective immediately.

“At this unusual moment, there is no acceptably safe way for children to use City playgrounds,” said Peterson. “With so many playgrounds spread across such a wide area, it is not possible to sanitize equipment frequently and intensively enough to prevent disease transmission.”

City staff will be out this week signing the closure of playgrounds and removing portable toilets. Previous closures of community centers and restrooms remain in place.

For ideas on parks and trails to visit, residents can find a city-wide outdoor recreation map and park profiles in the Parks and Recreation section of the City of Duluth website. Alternatives to the Lakewalk include:

- The portion of East Skyline Parkway that is closed to motor vehicle traffic from Hawk Ridge to Seven Bridges Road. The closed portion on the east side will be extended one mile to a point beginning just above the first bridge on Seven Bridges Road.
- The Campus Connector Trail.
- A half-mile portion of Lincoln Park Drive will be closed to motor vehicles to provide additional room for bike and pedestrian use.
- The Cross City Trail from Bayfront Park through Lincoln Park and above the Fairmount neighborhood.
- Portions of the Munger State Recreation Trail that are clear of snow.

The mission of Duluth Parks and Recreation is to promote the health and well-being of our community, environment and economy by facilitating recreational opportunities and coordinating the enhancement of our parks, facilities and natural

resources now and into the future.

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