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City of Duluth Communications Office

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SUBJECT: 1st Street from Mesaba to 24th Avenue East to Convert to Two Way Traffic

BY: Kate Van Daele, Public Information Officer

1st Street from Mesaba to 24th Avenue East to Convert to Two Way Traffic

[Duluth, MN] –First Street from Mesaba to 24th Avenue East will convert to two-way traffic as a part of a phased process beginning on Monday, September 14. Currently, the direction of flow on First Street is inconsistent, changing from a one-way to two-way at four locations: at 6th Avenue West, 3rd Avenue East, 8th Avenue East, and 24th Avenue East. This creates confusion for unfamiliar motorists and makes east-west circulation difficult in the City's central business district, especially when normal conditions are disrupted by construction or emergency closures on parallel streets.

The City of Duluth completed a consultant traffic study in 2019 to convert the currently multi-directional First Street traffic to consistent two-way traffic from Mesaba Avenue to 24th Avenue East. The benefits of the project are: More direct access in the Downtown, Medical and eastern residential areas, along with better circulation between the three areas;

- More direct access in the Downtown, Medical, and eastern residential areas, along with better circulation between the three areas;
- Improved business visibility and access;
- Reduction of travel speeds expected between 5 to 10 mph;
- Improved pedestrian safety due to reduced speed, elimination of wrong-way drivers, and changes in traffic control devices;
- Reduced driver delay time given traffic control changes and the ability to take more direct routes to destinations. Reduced response time is also a notable benefit for emergency services.

The project was approved by the Duluth City Council on June 22. The work will involve signage changes, centerline striping, and intersection traffic control changes. Please see the details below.

Timeline

The field work to convert 1st Street to two-way traffic will start Monday, September 14th. A contractor will be performing pavement marking removal from 24th Avenue East to 8th Avenue East. This work will require No Parking between 21st Avenue East and 14th Avenue East to remove the parking edge line. No Parking will be posted Friday, September 11. City crews will then start striping, signage, and intersection traffic control changes on the medical district segment from 8th Avenue East to 12th Avenue East (already temporary two-way traffic), along with 12th Avenue East to 14th Avenue East. Crews will then move to the residential segment between 14th Avenue East and 24th Avenue East and finish with the downtown segment between 3rd Avenue East and Mesaba. Several blocks will be closed at a time to make the changes, but the intersections will remain open for traffic to continue to flow on the avenues. If any additional no parking is required to implement the changes on any of the blocks, signs will be posted at least 24 hours in advance to notify the public.

Intersection Traffic Control Changes

5th Avenue West: Traffic Signal will be covered for 90 days (with the intent to remove at the end of the 90 days), and stop signs will be installed on all legs creating an all-way stop condition.

1st Ave East: Traffic Signal will be covered for 90 days (with the intent to remove at the end of the 90 days), and stop signs will be installed on all legs creating an all-way stop condition.

2nd Avenue East: Traffic Signal will be covered for 90 days (with the intent to remove at the end of the 90 days), and stop signs will be installed on all legs creating an all-way stop condition.

14th Avenue East: All-way stop will be converted to through stop condition.

Striping Changes

A double yellow centerline will replace the white skip between 6th Avenue West and 3rd Avenue East and 8th Avenue East and 14th Avenue East. The residential segment from 14th Avenue East to 24th Avenue East will be converting to alternate side parking and will have no centerline or edge line striping.

Signage Changes

Signage changes will include rotating the signs on the lower side of 1st Street for the new direction of travel. Two-way signs will be installed along the entire route to help notify the traveling public of the change in traffic flow. Traffic Control Change Ahead signs will be installed ahead of the intersections where traffic signals are being removed to remind the traveling public of the change to stop signs.

Parking Changes

There will be several loading and truck zone changes in the downtown segment to accommodate businesses. The residential segment from 14th Avenue East to 24th Avenue East will be converting to alternate side parking to allow for improved snow plowing during winter months. Residents on these blocks will need to follow the alternate side parking schedule, which can be found on the city's website.

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