COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

CITY OF DES MOINES CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE	Number:	**26-281**	Meeting:	**August 3, 2026**
	Agenda Item:	**42**	Roll Call:	**26-0907**
	Submitted by:	**Benjamin R. Page, Parks and Recreation Director**		

AGENDA HEADING:

Resolution authorizing future trail and parks closures by Director of Parks and Recreation Department.

SYNOPSIS:

Recommend authorizing temporary, future trail and parks closures by Director of Parks and Recreation Department for the purposes of maintenance, repair, and third-party development to best protect the health and wellbeing of members of the public.

FISCAL IMPACT: NONE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Chapter 74 of the Municipal Code gives the City of Des Moines Parks and Recreation Director responsibility for the maintenance and repair of City parks and recreational trails, and maintenance and repair of a City park or recreational trail can require that all or part of the park or trail be temporarily closed to the public.

- The need to temporarily close a park or trail can also arise suddenly due to climatic events, utility failures, geotechnical issues, etc., with immediate action needed to protect the health and wellbeing of members of the public who use the parks and trails.

- State of Iowa law requires a resolution for the temporary closure of parks and trails.

- The City's trails and parks often coexist with private and public utilities and private development, which result in construction impacts to parkland, trails and trail corridors, and other park grounds and facilities.

- The Parks and Recreation Department has a permitting process in place supported by Chapter 74 of the Municipal Code to allow the use of parks and trails for special events. In 2025, 42 trail use events hosting more than 24,000 participants were issued permits. We are on track to reach nearly 90 permitted trail use events hosting more than 33,000 participants in 2026.

- A Trail and Sidepath Impact Permit was developed to support clear communication between the Parks and Recreation Department and third parties that may need to impact a trail, trail corridor. Compliance with the permit enables permitted events to not be unexpectedly

impacted while also supporting the need for third-party maintenance, repair, or development and proper restoration.

- The Trail and Sidepath Impact Permit completed a two (2)-year pilot period in 2024 and 2025. Increased compliance with the impact permitting process has reduced unanticipated and undeclared impacts. In 2024, 26 impact permits were issued. In 2025, 36 trail impact permits were issued. Thus far, 29 trail impact permits have been issued in 2026, demonstrating continuous growth in compliance.

- In 2025, bicycle and pedestrian infrared counters recorded more than 3.36 million uses of Parks and Recreation trails, an average of over 9,200 uses per day. With recent levee, park, and trail improvements continuing to be completed, the annual trail use is expected to continue increasing.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION(S): NONE

BOARD/COMMISSION ACTION(S): NONE

ANTICIPATED ACTIONS AND FUTURE COMMITMENTS: NONE

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