

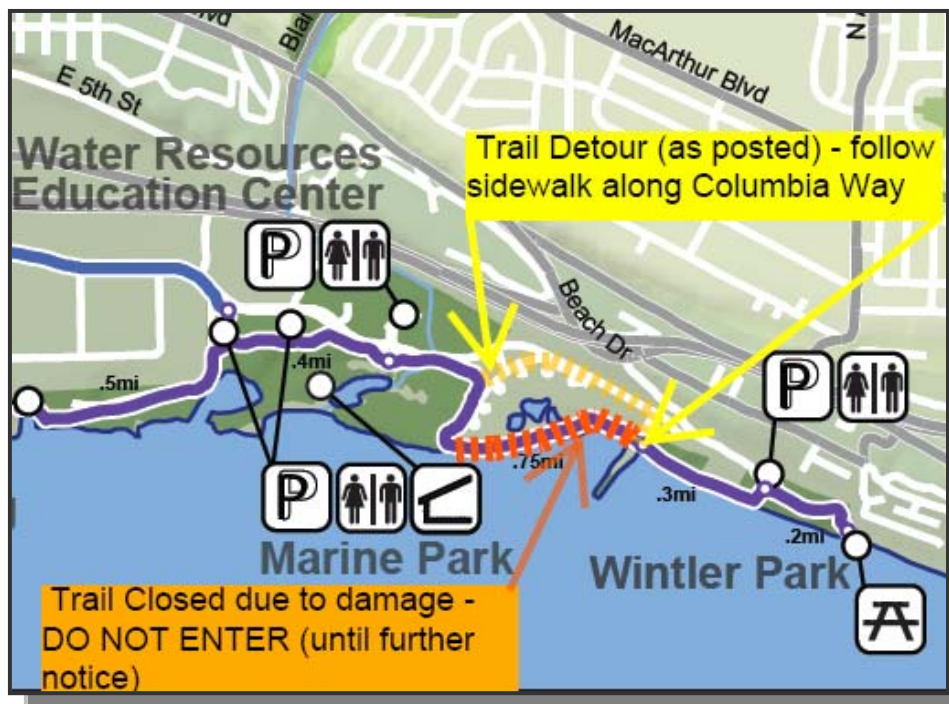
28 September 2011

Columbia River Waterfront Renaissance Trail Trail closure – Tidewater area

This fact sheet is an update of the trail damage and closure along the Waterfront Trail. This page will be updated on a regular update with repair status and anticipated timelines for re-opening the trail.

Trail Damage

The Waterfront Trail was damaged during the 2011 spring high floods along the Columbia River. As spring snow melt and rain events increased water levels, the river rose to levels the highest they have been since 1997. The waterfront trail near the Tidewater Cover area was built in 1999, therefore this is the highest water levels at this location since the trail installation. Erosion is also caused by wave action, both from boat activity and wind. Refer to the map below for location of damage and closure information:



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Description of damage:

The water levels that affected the trail this year rose to an elevation of over 20 feet above sea level. The river flow inundated the Tidewater Jetty (approximately the southern 50 feet of jetty) and allowed for the river flow to erode the bank along the trail section, as noted. The trail is built on existing grade (with a gravel subbase), which is primarily sand. The sand was placed several decades ago as part of Columbia River dredging projects. Sand, without significant plantings, is at high risk for erosion when significant flow is directed at the bank.

■ **West erosion area –**

- The area right in front of Tidewater Condominiums was the first area of erosion due to the flood events. The beach access/overlook was undermined and broke into the river. City crews removed a portion of the walk but as water levels exceeded recent elevations, the remainder of the walk was at risk and subsequently was undermined. This area was closed off in May.
- The bank area and shoulder along the trail just east of the overlook was the next area affected by continued high levels and flows. The velocity of the flow eroding the sand and pulled at the bank stabilizing from the original trail construction. This portion of the trail has minimal damage to the trail itself, although there is now a significant drop off adjacent to the trail edge. This erosion was one of the factors to limit public access to the trail where citizens and dogs may try to access the beach area down the steep slope, continuing the erosion and threat to the trail structure.

■ **East erosion area –**

- The eastern erosion area is in front of the office building west of the Tidewater Jetty (near the eastern closure area). To the user on the trail, the damage is not visible. Unfortunately, due to the eddy effects of the high water flows, the river eroded up to 5 feet of sand from underneath the trail. The area near this overlook, by the stairs to the office, is at high risk for structural damage if the trail continues to be open for public access and use.

Due to these combined public safety risks, barricades, fencing and signs (in three languages) have been installed to keep the public off this section of trail to minimize injury and continued potential damage to the trail structure.

Alternate routes

The public may still use the trail through Marine Park and by the Water Resources Education Center. The public can follow the posted detour (orange) signs along Columbia Way to access the Tidewater Jetty and Wintler Park. The public is asked to not trespass onto Tidewater Condominium property to try to access the trail. The beach area is open, when water levels permit, to the public, as per the posted park rule signs. The public is requested to stay off the trail between the posted closures to minimize addition damage to the erosion areas.

Trail repair status

The City of Vancouver owns the land under the trail and the trail structure itself, therefore is taking steps to determine the best solutions to repair the trail for public use. Given limited available funds, the City is taking all measures necessary to determine the most cost efficient methods to repair the trail sections to comply with expected levels that meet expectations for safe public access to the trail. The city is interested in opening the trail for public use on this high use trail as soon as possible, but need to comply with several steps prior to completing the repairs:

- **Design solutions** – the city has contracted with shoreline engineering experts to provide options to consider for trail repairs. A variety of repair techniques will be considered, as well as the installation techniques.
- **Permits** – the repair of the trail will require the city to obtain a series of permits, being that the trail is adjacent to the Columbia River and within the 100-year floodplain. Permits will be required from local, state and federal agencies. Fortunately, the City staff has been in communications with all levels of agencies since the damage occurred so they are aware of the issue and are partners to expedite the permits, where feasible.
- **Resources** – the flood damage did not trigger any emergency levels that would make natural disaster funding available for this work, therefore, the city must use its existing available resources to identify repair options. The available funds are extremely limited for this work. Therefore a thorough analysis of options, in coordination with permitting requirements, is important to best utilize the funds and resources available to the city.

Timeline for repairs

There is no set timeline for the repairs at this time. The City will continue to work with the permitting agencies to determine appropriate repair strategies and timing of the repairs to minimize negative impacts to the river (including the salmon runs). This page will be updated with information as the timelines are clarified with the agencies and the funding availability.

Additional questions

Citizens may have additional questions about the trail closure, repair and timeline. Those questions can be directed to the Parks Manager, Jane Tesner Kleiner at jane.kleiner@cityofvancouver.us or call at 360-487-8313.

This information will be posted on our **Current Project** web page. Please check this link in the future for updates and more information, as it is available.

http://www.cityofvancouver.us/parks-recreation/parks_trails/planning/projects.asp

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