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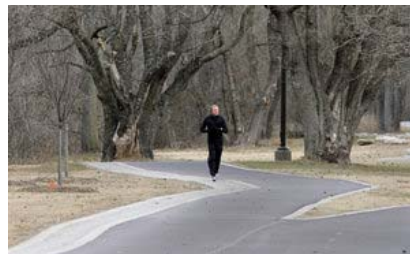


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River Parks trail upgrades nearly done

The project, which skips the segment near I-44, is expected to be finished within a few weeks.



A lone jogger runs the upgraded River Parks trail recently just north of 41st Street along Riverside Drive in Tulsa. Work is progressing on revamping the trails from 58th to 71st streets, but it may take several weeks to finish, depending on the weather. MICHAEL WYKE/Tulsa World

By DEON J. HAMPTON World Staff Writer
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Cyclists and pedestrians will soon be able to ride and walk along the revamped River Parks trail on Riverside Drive, officials said.

River Parks Authority Executive Director Matt Meyer said reconstruction crews are working to complete the renovation project along the east bank of the Arkansas River from 58th to 71st streets.

Tom Cain, job superintendent for Crossland Heavy Contractors, said about three-tenths of a mile of trail stretching from 58th Street to just south of 61st Street is in need of asphalt.

"We're hoping within the next couple of weeks to have the asphalt in," he said. "Once the asphalt is in, we'll unofficially open the trail."

Cain said the trail project will not necessarily be done when the asphalt work is complete. Crews also need to do some landscaping, construct rest areas and install a water fountain.

Neither Meyer nor Cain cared to predict exactly when the asphalt work will be complete. That, they said, depends on the weather.

"It's about a day's worth of work," Cain said. "But we have to have a 50-degree ambient temperature to start putting this polymer asphalt down."

Joe Sawyer of Broken Arrow said he has ridden his bike and run the trail from 11th through 71st streets several times.

"I'm glad they spent the money, and it's money well-spent," said Sawyer, who visits the trail four times a week when it's warm.

Tulsa Stephanie Castell said she runs 2 to 3 miles on the trail three times a week with her golden retriever.

Castell said she likes the trail's new look, especially the mile markers.

In 2007, the George Kaiser Family Foundation announced that it would privately fund a three-year, \$12.4 million project to transform the trail into a landscaped, dual-trail system for pedestrians and cyclists on the banks of the Arkansas River between 11th and 71st streets.

Meyer said crews are temporarily skipping reconstruction of a mile of the trail along Riverside from 48th to 58th streets because of a construction project on Interstate 44.

World staff writer Kevin Canfield contributed to this story.

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