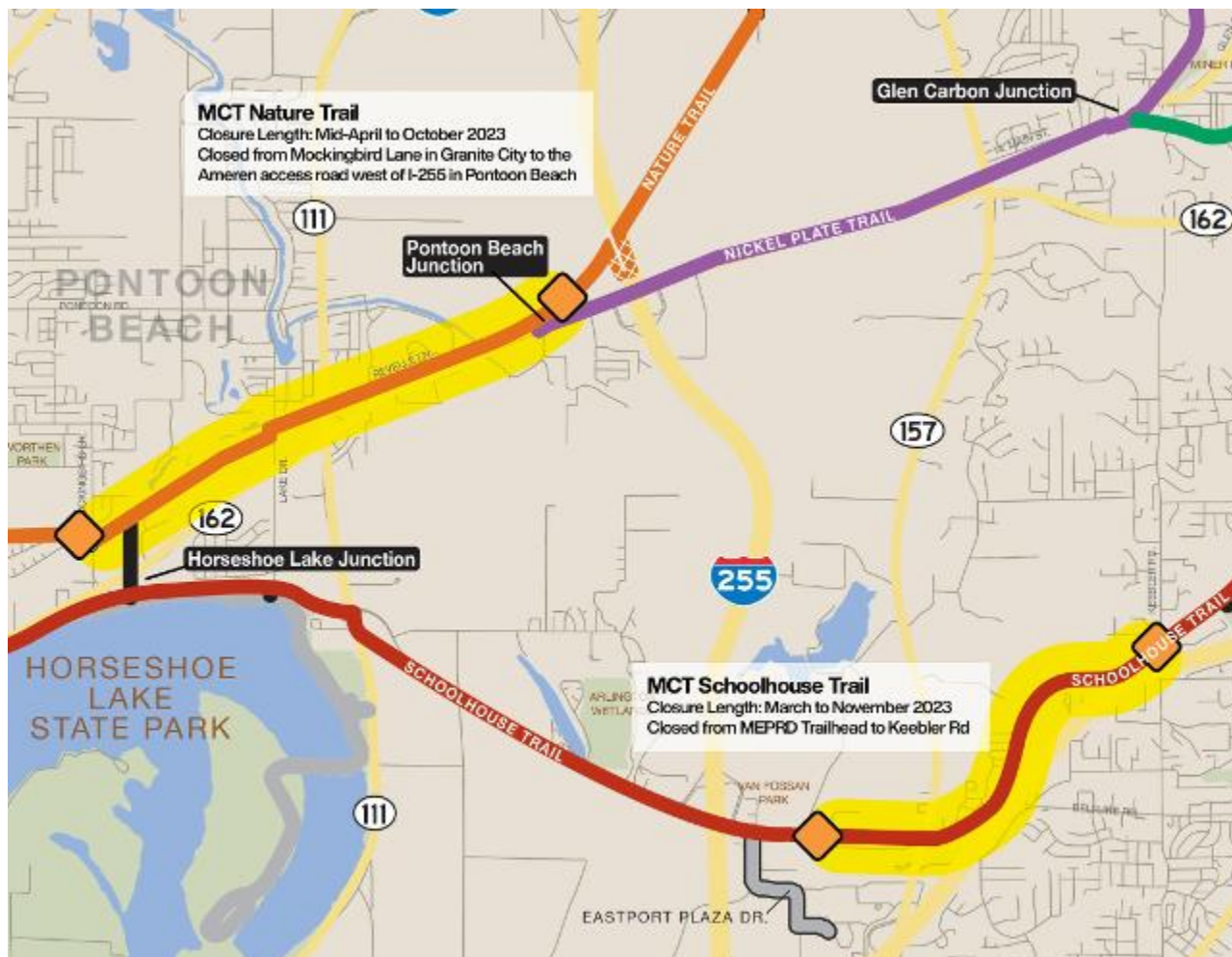# Segments Of The MCT Trails Will Be Temporarily Closed

by Ellie Carrow
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MADISON COUNTY - Although significant enhancements are being made to the 138 miles of scenic Madison County Transit (MCT) Trails this year, progress will create temporary closures. Visitors should prepare to take alternate routes to avoid closures as work on the MCT Schoolhouse Trail and MCT Nature Trail will close segments

between now and the end of the year. The projects will temporarily reduce access to several loops, a beloved feature of the MCT Trails.

MCT Schoolhouse Trail Tunnel

Work on the highly anticipated MCT Schoolhouse Trail tunnel under IL-157 in Collinsville has officially begun. The crossing on IL-157 near Horseshoe Lake Road requires trail users to cross multiple lanes of traffic, forcing bicyclists and pedestrians to stop and wait for a safe time to cross the state highway.

Currently, the MCT Schoolhouse Trail is closed from Keebler Road to an area just east of the Metro East Parks and Recreation District (MEPRD) office, however construction crews may be present in areas west of MEPRD up to Freedom Drive. Trail users should obey all trail closure signs and barricades as there are no alternate routes or trail tie-ins between Keebler Road and the MEPRD Trailhead. On June 1, construction of the tunnel under the roadway will close IL-157 at Horseshoe Lake Rd to all traffic for 30 days. A signed detour for motorists will be available.

"Safety is our top priority," said MCT Managing Director SJ Morrison. "MCT has always been committed to as few at-grade trail crossings as possible and we're proud to be working with MEPRD, the City of Collinsville, and IDOT to construct an even safer way for MCT Trails users of all ages and abilities to cross IL-157."

The 10' x 12' precast concrete tunnel will be approximately 120-feet long, will have a cast-in-place floor for a smoother ride, and will be equipped with lighting and cameras. Construction is scheduled to be complete in November of this year.

"The City of Collinsville is a strong supporter of MCT's plan to build a tunnel under IL-157," said Collinsville City Manager Mitch Bair. "This tunnel will not only make the MCT Schoolhouse Trail safer, but it will also have a positive impact on future development, and supports Collinsville's goal of improving and expanding access to the trails throughout the City."

The $2.4 million project is funded by MCT with support from an MEPRD Bikeway Grant.

MCT Nature Trail Closure

A section of the MCT Nature Trail will be temporarily closed starting in mid-April for Ameren work between Mockingbird Lane in Granite City and the Ameren access road

west of I-255 in Pontoon Beach. Barricades and signage will be placed to warn trail users of the closures. Trail users should not bypass the closure signs for any reason. Work is scheduled to be completed by October of this year.

Loops Affected by Closures

The MCT Trails form a series of interconnected loops that allow trail goers to run, bike, rollerblade, or jog seamlessly from one trail to another without seeing the same scenery twice. Six of the seven MCT Trails loops will be affected (the 15.3-mile, 17.6-mile, 22.9-mile, 25.7-mile, 26.1-mile, and 31.1-mile loops), due to the closure of the MCT Schoolhouse and MCT Nature Trail.

To learn more about MCT or the MCT Trails, visit www.mct.org or email info@mct.org for information.

Madison County Transit (MCT) provides multi-modal transportation services for Madison County, Illinois. MCT operates a fixed-route bus service, connecting to MetroLink; express weekday commuter service directly to and from downtown St. Louis; and seasonal express service to the Muny. For elderly and disabled residents who are unable to use the fixed-route buses, MCT provides complementary paratransit service. MCT is also responsible for the construction and maintenance of more than 138 miles of bikeways that comprise the MCT Trails system, as well as overseeing RideFinders, the St. Louis region's FREE carpooling and vanpooling program.