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Plymouth's new Greenways path open to the public

ADAM JACKSON
 Tribune Staff Writer

PLYMOUTH

The warm sun beaming down on her stroller gave 14-month-old Julia Guerrero a snugly place to coo and play Tuesday afternoon.

Her mom, 24-year-old Cathy Guerrero, also had a great place to play in the sun Tuesday -- along the new Plymouth Greenways recreational trail system.

"I've been out here just about every day this week," Guerrero said. "I get a little exercise, and she gets some new things to look at.

"She's always happy when we're out here."

Happiness is an emotion Plymouth officials are hoping many users of the

new 2.2-mile pathway will experience, now that the \$1.5 million project has finally opened to the walkers, joggers and bikers it was built for.

And not a minute too soon, Mayor Gary Cook said, noting that public anticipation for the opening of the trail has been running high.

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"The construction people were complaining because it was hard to keep people off of it while they were building it," he said. "I think it is going to be a tremendous addition to the parks system."

The concept for the trail has been under way for more than five years, with most of the money for the creation of the trail coming from a \$1.2 million grant from the Indiana Department of Transportation. Other funding came from city sources and private donations.

In return for that cash, residents now have access to a 10-foot-wide, fully paved path that winds from its starting point on Jefferson Street northward through a wooded glade that parallels picturesque ponds and the Yellow River.

The trail loop then continues north through Centennial Park, cuts east along the river again, curves gently past the sledding hill on the east end of the park before crossing the river and heading behind the River Park neighborhood before cutting south past Riverside Elementary, turning west past the front of the school, and intersecting with itself at the intersection of Randolph and Baker streets.

Plymouth Parks Superintendent Mike Hite said the public reception of the project has been extremely positive, even as workers are putting the final touches on the trail. Remaining work to be done includes trailside landscaping and grass planting, along with minor finishing work to some of the strategically placed rest areas scattered along the path.

While that is being wrapped up, there is only one other thing to be done with the trail -- get out and enjoy it, no matter what the weather.

"We are going to do our best to make this a year-round trail," Hite said. "We are going to try to keep it plowed in the winter, and keep people coming out."

Which means that, be it a beautiful walk or bike ride, the trail will always be ready to provide a healthy interlude for people of all ages -- and for Plymouth Fire Chief George Cook, something for him and his family to do on Thanksgiving besides let the turkey settle around their waistlines.

"We had a houseful of babies over the holiday," he said with a laugh. "So we were out there pushing strollers."

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