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Get ready to pitch in

United Way seeks volunteers for Park Strip rehab work in August

The improvements are needed. The design looks good. The new walkway, trees, landscaping and seating areas will add a lot to the Delaney Park Strip, Anchorage's favorite downtown gathering spot.

And with the United Way's generous pledge of 5,000 volunteer hours of free labor, the rehab of the Park Strip will get under way this summer.

Thank you to the United Way, which has adopted the project to commemorate the nonprofit's 50th anniversary. Congratulations to the municipal parks staff for designing improvements that will add to -- not limit -- the openness of the Park Strip. And thanks to the Anchorage Parks Foundation for helping with the cash to buy materials for the project.

This summer's work will be the start of an overall project to clean up, spruce up and build up public use of the 14 blocks of green between Ninth and Tenth avenues. The city is still working on final designs, but this year's plan includes building a 20-foot wide brick pathway set back from Ninth Avenue, behind maple trees and other greenery, to shield walkers, strollers and bikers from the traffic. United Way volunteers will put in the walkway in August, with the trees to come next spring.

The August work party also will plant crab apple trees where the G Street walkway crosses the Park Strip, with flowering shrubs and seating areas on the work list too.

A word to the wise for volunteers: Get in shape for the lifting. The city estimates the new walkway, between I and E streets, will need 100,000 bricks set in place.

BOTTOM LINE: Mark your calendar for the United Way's Park Strip rehab days, Aug. 10-13.