

# MISSOULA



MISSOULA'S  
DOWNTOWN  
MASTER PLAN

# North Riverside Parks & Trails Design Plan Report

November 2020



## 01: INTRODUCTION & PROCESS

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*Chapter 01:*

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# 1. INTRODUCTION & PROCESS

## INTRODUCTION

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*Parks and open spaces are an important aspect of urban life. Spending time in nature enhances creativity, increases well-being, and reduces stress. The pandemic outbreak in 2020 had many immediate impacts. The ability to get outside, enjoy nature, and take a walk in the fresh air have never been more essential.*

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The design for the North Riverside Parks and Trails is an important component of the Downtown Master Plan adopted in November 2019. The Clark Fork River and the system of parks along its banks are an integral part of Downtown Missoula’s identity. People celebrate the river as a place to play, learn, contemplate life, and build community. The North Riverside Parks and Trails Plan will help make tomorrow’s riverfront even more vibrant, accessible, sustainable, and green.

Missoula’s Parks and Recreation Department and Downtown Partnership have continued the planning and design effort after the Downtown Charrette with the multi-disciplinary design team led by Dover, Kohl & Partners. The design effort occurred over two phases: the concept design and schematic design development. This plan offers detailed design ideas and strategies to enhance the connection, circulation, and programming in Caras, East Caras, and Bess Reed Parks.

### GOALS FROM THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

- “Front” the River
- Enhance Existing Parks — Re-Imagine Caras Park, Activate the Underpasses, Provide Better, and Accessible River Access
- Maintain a Healthy River and Improve Water Quality — Integrate Green Infrastructure into Parks and Public Projects, Extend the Shared-Use Path Network, and Widen Facilities
- Celebrate and Protect the River — Accommodate Natural River Processes
- Add Activities and Multifunctional Spaces that Appeal to People of all Ages, Especially Kids and Teens (ice ribbon and water playground)
- Build an Indoor Farmers Market Pavilion, Plant Street Trees, and Increase the Urban Forest
- Become a Green City Through Sustainability Initiatives



# PROPOSED PARKS AND GREEN SPACE IN DOWNTOWN MISSOULA

The map below summarizes the proposed enhancements and additions to Downtown's park system.

-   
 Existing River Access
-   
 Enhanced River Access
-   
 Proposed River Access\*
-   
 River Activity Enhancement
-   
 Multifunctional Space
-   
 Social Gathering
-   
 Dog park
-   
 Pocket park



## 01: INTRODUCTION & PROCESS

### CONNECTING MISSOULA'S RIBBON OF PARKS

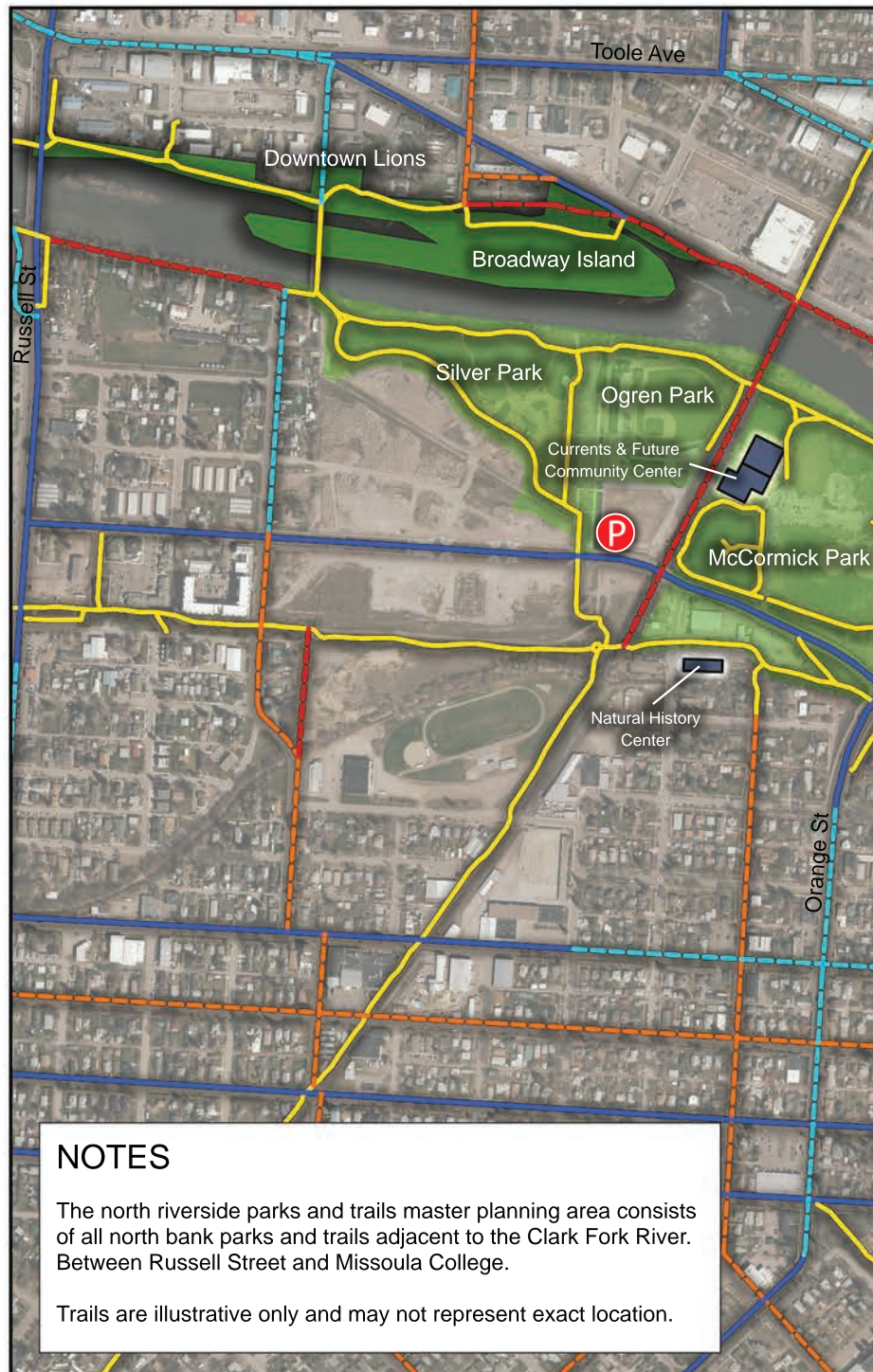
Ron's River Trail runs along the north bank of the Clark Fork River from Russell Street to Missoula College. The trail forms the backbone of the ribbon of parks along the Clark Fork River.

In 2017 the trail was named after Ron MacDonald, who served as a board member of the Missoula Redevelopment Agency for over twenty years. He was a strong advocate for the development of Missoula's riverfront parks and trails, and his vision is represented in the many parks and trails along the river.

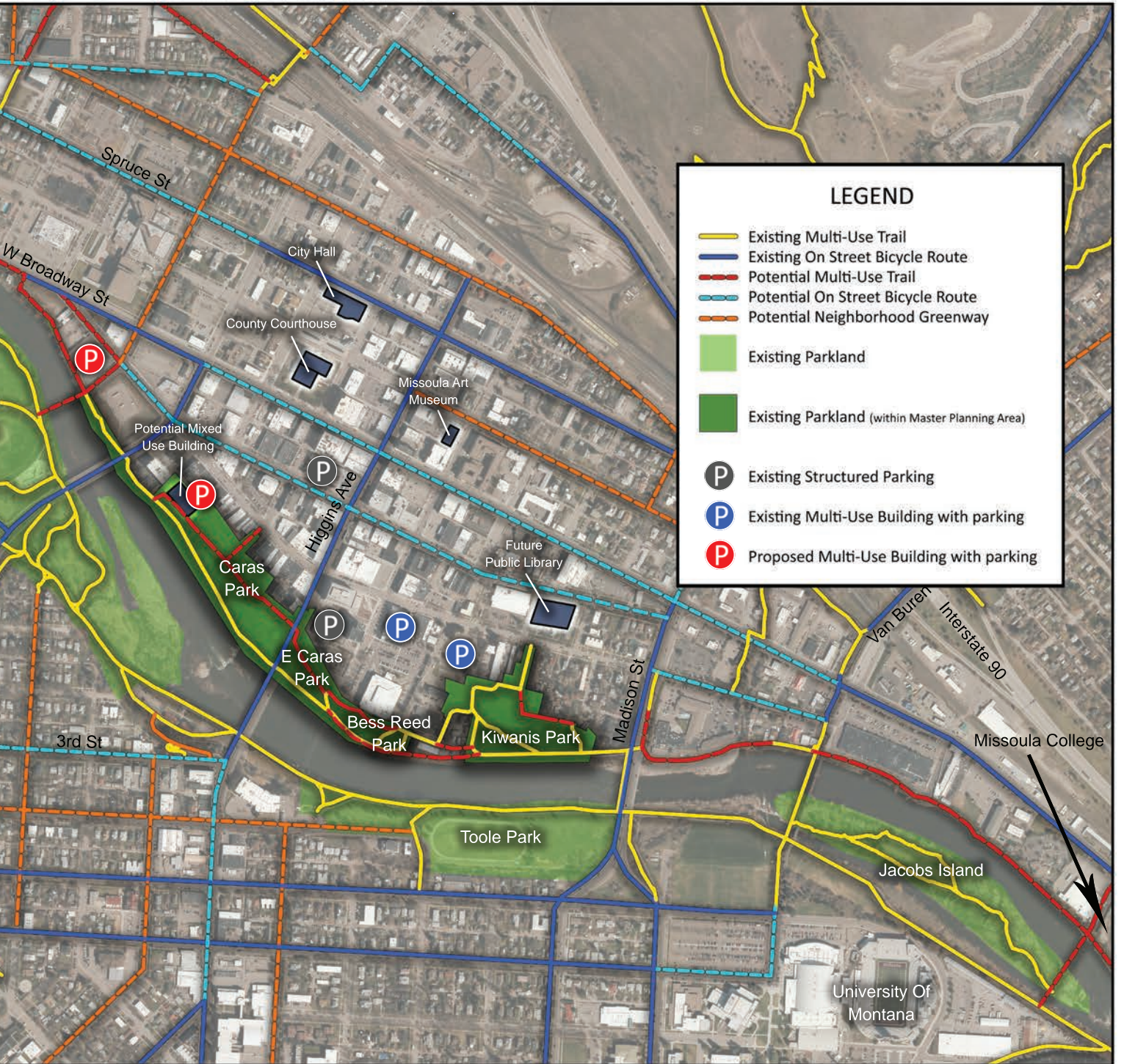
The community's goal for the riverfront trail system is for a continuous trail on the north and south banks of the river, with multiple connections across the river. These trails will link the ribbon of parks together and provide multiple routes for pedestrian and bicycle commuting and recreation.

The overview map illustrates current and potential trail connections, as well as greenways and on-street bicycle routes. Also included are potential future mixed used buildings with structured parking. The ultimate vision is to create a downtown transportation system that is efficient and safe for all modes of transportation: vehicles, bicyclists & pedestrians.

Figure 1.1: Downtown Parks & Trails Overview Map



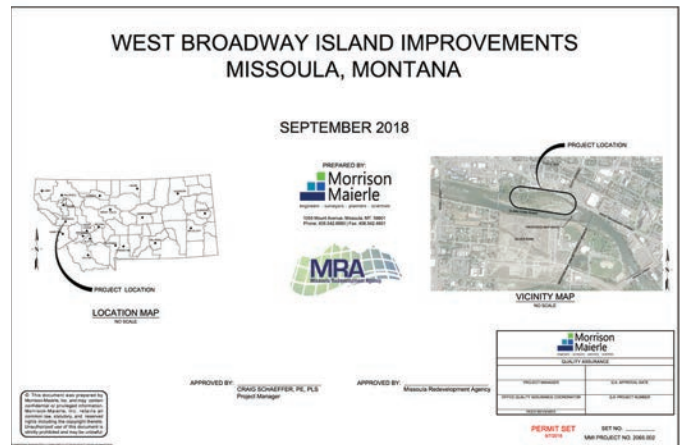
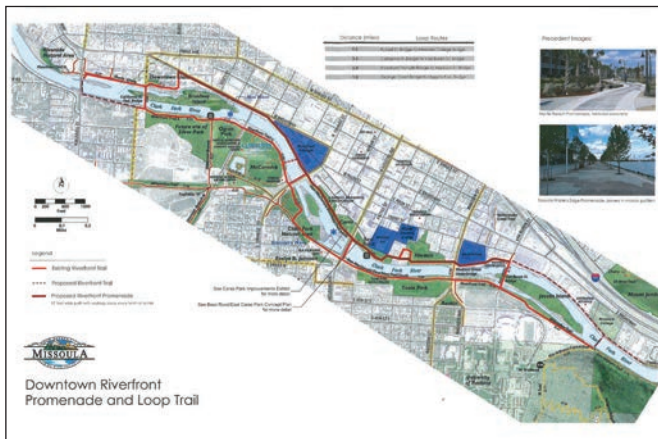






## PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORTS

Numerous plans and studies have been conducted for the parks and open space system in Missoula. These documents have compelling ideas to improve access to the river while fortifying the bank structure, enriching existing facilities, enhancing water quality, providing riparian habitat space, and proposing new programming for parks. It is important to highlight that these concepts and plans are still in progress and form the backbone for park space, river accessibility, and enhancements in Downtown Missoula.



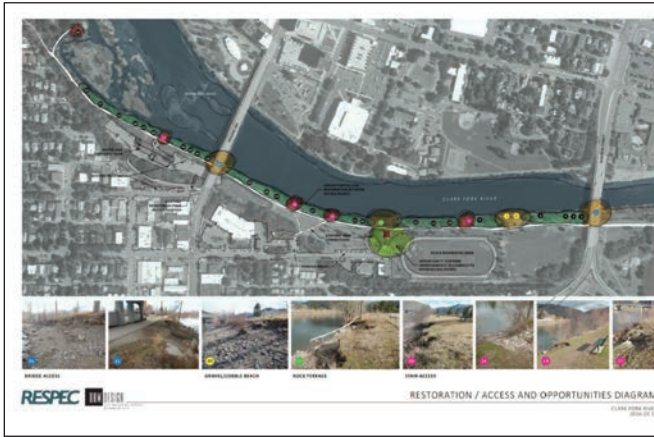
### DOWNTOWN RON'S RIVER TRAIL (RIVERFRONT) PROMENADE AND LOOP TRAIL:

This plan proposes enhancements to a portion of Ron's River Trail on the north side of the Clark Fork River that will make the path a minimum of 16 feet wide with numerous seating areas. The existing shared-use paths are strategically extended to create multiple complete loops along the riverfront. The plan also proposes multiple bridges and the utilization of existing greenways to better connect outlying neighborhoods to Downtown and vice versa.

### WEST BROADWAY ISLAND

The West Broadway Island plan proposed repairs and upgrades to the existing bridge across the irrigation canal at the south end of Burton Street and the construction of a new pedestrian bridge along West Broadway. The plan was implemented in 2019. The upgrade made the old bridge safer for pedestrians and made it accessible for people with disabilities. A trail was extended along the irrigation canal between the two bridges. Improvements on the north side of both bridges were installed to create better access between the bridge entrances and West Broadway Street.





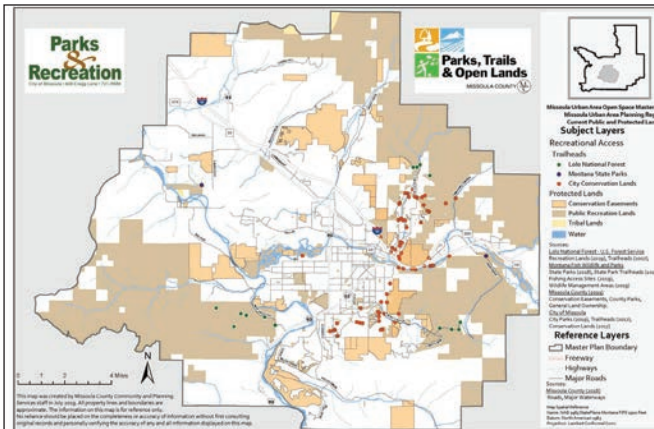
### CLARK FORK SUSTAINABLE ACCESS (SOUTH RIVERBANK)

As river use has increased significantly, there has been a loss of riparian vegetation and bank erosion. The Clark Fork Sustainable Access plan was created with the goal of restoring destabilized banks and constructing sustainable access points along the south bank of the Clark Fork River in the heart of Downtown Missoula.



### EAST CARAS AND BESS REED PARKS PLAN

The concept master plan for East Caras and Bess Reed Parks enhances the existing busy marketplace with new paving and lighting, the addition of flexible plaza space, and seat walls. The design integrates fitness areas, passive recreation, and stormwater management devices. Overall, the plan improves river access and creates a more pedestrian friendly space.



### 2019 PARKS, RECREATION, OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS PLAN

The new master Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails (PROST) plan for the greater Missoula valley and urban area ('Missoula Urban Area') replaces the 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan and the 1995 Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan with 2006 Update. It will stand as a blueprint for the next 10 years of parks, open space, and recreation services to residents.



### 2015 CITY OF MISSOULA URBAN FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

The 2015 Urban Forest Plan envisions a healthy, vibrant, safe, and sustainable urban forest for current and future Missoulians. The plan sets management goals and recommendations for Missoula's urban forest.

## **PARK BACKGROUND & HISTORY**

### **THE HISTORY OF THE CLARK FORK RIVER**

One cannot talk about parks and open space in Missoula without mentioning the Clark Fork River running through the heart of Downtown. The Salish and Kootenai native tribes initially lived in this area hundreds of years ago. The new settlement and developments in the 1880s put heavier demand on resources like water and land. The riverbanks were utilized by the loggers for timber and farming. Since then, trade, ranching, mining, and power generation took place around the river. These activities brought economic growth but had negative influences on the health of the river and surrounding ecosystem.

The use of the river has since shifted from industrial to human-centered and ecologically restorative activities, particularly within the past 10 years. The river is now healing from past degradation thanks to considerable community effort. The Three Rivers Collaborative, a community group made up of local businesses, non-profits, and agencies, focuses on preserving and enhancing the Blackfoot, Bitterroot, and Clark Fork Rivers in and around the Missoula valley. Today the river in Downtown supports robust recreational activities such as fly fishing, floating, and surfing. Yet portions of the riverfront parks could be more connected to the river and surrounding areas, as well as more inviting to pedestrians and cyclists.

Businesses have historically put their backs and parking toward the river. To truly celebrate the river, the entire length of the waterfront should be treated as an amenity and protected. Opportunities should be explored for existing and new development to better engage the river and the parks along it. This can be done by facing the river with dining areas, shopfronts, and pedestrian friendly spaces, while balancing human use with ecological preservation.



Figure 1.2: Historic Photos of Clark Fork River



## EVOLVING CARAS PARK

Caras Park used to be under water when the main river channel ran up to the edge of the Historic Wilma Theater. Caras Park became an event venue in the early 1980s. The Parks and Recreation staff, together with the assistance from the Missoula Redevelopment Agency and the Missoula Downtown Association launched the first Out to Lunch Summer Series in 1986. The Missoula Downtown Association has since then managed the popular program for more than 35 years.

The Montana Rep Riverfront Summer Theatre and Out to Lunch events brought more people to the park. Seating areas and a ring of green spaces were created as a response to the growing attendance. The brick plaza area was built next. The construction of the Ryman Street entrance and parking lots along the riverfront then followed. The restroom and storage structure were built in 1986 and expanded in 2004.

The pavilion tent structure's appearance has changed three times over the years. The original orange and brown tent was purchased from a traveling circus in the early 1980s. It was replaced with a blue, turquoise, and white striped tent in the late 1980s and was in place for nearly 10 years. The current pavilion structure was constructed in 1997 and connects the park history with a circus tent aesthetic. From informal and temporary to a more permanent structure, Caras Park's structures are always evolving and adapting to the community's needs.



Figure 1.3: Evolution of the tent structure



## PUBLIC PROCESS TO DATE



### ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE

One of the five “Big Ideas” that emerged from the Missoula Downtown Master Plan was to “Enhance Parks and Public Spaces & Better Utilize the River.” Over 3,000 individuals participated in developing the downtown plan vision and people strongly noted the desire to improve access, increase winter activities, and improve the trails in the North Riverside Parks.

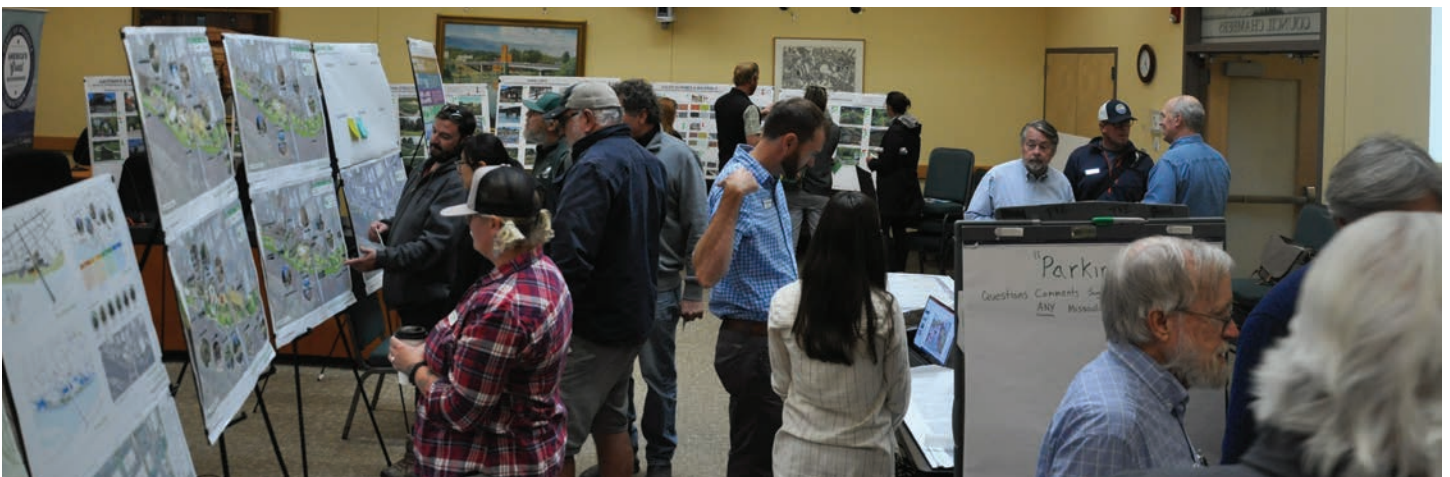
The planning effort for the North Riverside Parks and Trails continued after the Downtown Master Plan effort. In September 2019, members of the Dover-Kohl planning team returned to Missoula to engage the community in a week-long public design charrette. The planning team presented initial findings, gathered feedback, and worked on potential designs for North Riverside Park and Trail Plan. The goal during this time was to identify key priorities and to build consensus on a vision and direction for the future of North Riverside Parks and Trails.

Over the course of the charrette, the design team heard from over 200 participants during public workshop sessions and from online engagement. After six months of continuous improvement and updates, the schematic plan was revealed to the public online and received over 294 responses between May 11 and June 2, 2020. As of July 31, 2020 the eleven project films had received 2,474 views, an impressively high number for a municipal park plan. The plans remain online and the viewership will continue to grow as the project advances.

## TECHNICAL MEETINGS

From Tuesday September 18 to Friday September 20 2019, the planning team held on-site meetings, phone calls, and interviews with a variety of stakeholders in Missoula to learn how current efforts, concerns, and future goals might be included as a part of the North Riverside Parks & Trails Plan. These groups included:

- North Riverside Parks & Trails Design Team
- Park Operations
- Caras Park Contractors/Vendors/Carousel
- Police & Fire Department
- Downtown & Front Street Businesses
- Clark Fork River Market
- Green Infrastructure & Utilities
- River & Levee
- Parking & Transportation
- Blue Ribbon Committee

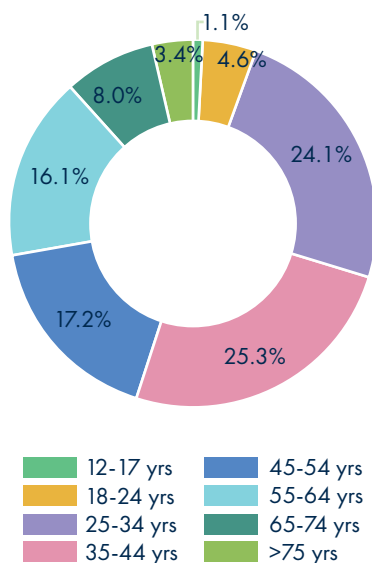


**VIRTUAL PUBLIC REVEAL**

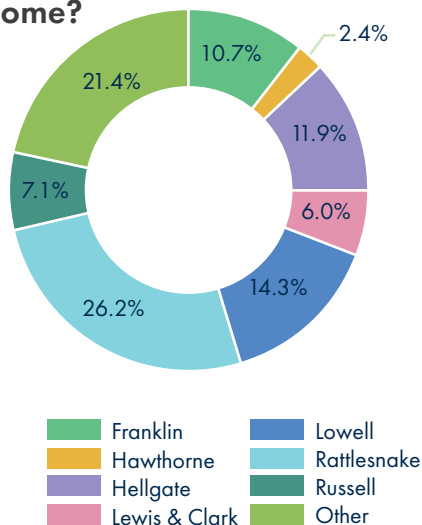
The virtual “Out to Lunch Launch” of the North Riverside Parks and Trails Master Plan was on Wednesday May 13, 2020. It allowed the public to explore and comment on the new Caras, East Caras, and Bess Reed Parks plans. The reveal included a series of eleven films describing in detail the public input that the team received, the plan for the parks, and how the upgrades to the parks will help public health in a time of pandemic.

*The following is a summary of input from participants on engagemissoula.com from May 11<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Participants shared their input regarding Caras, East Caras, and Bess Reed Parks online.*

**What is your age?**



**What is the closest elementary school to your home?**



**What proposed features/improvements do you like best in east caras park?**

- 1 Riverfront promenade
- 2 Updated park pathways
- 3 Multi-use lawn space
- 4 Updated market plaza
- 5 Artwall around substation
- 6 Seasonal restroom
- 7 Big art in park

**What proposed features/improvements do you like best in bess reed park?**

- 1 Rain garden and
- 2 Riverfront promenade
- 3 Updated park pathways
- 4 ADA river access
- 5 Demonstration garden
- 6 Outdoor exercise
- 7 Wedding/event pavillion

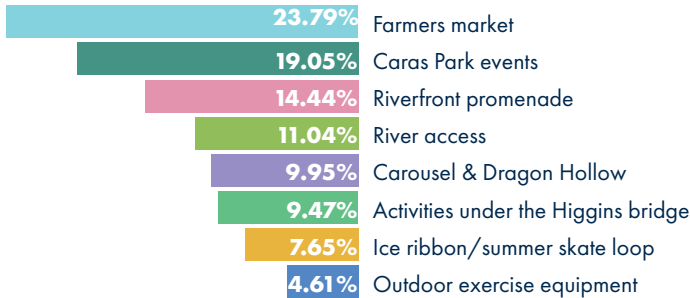
**What proposed features/improvements do you like best in caras park?**

- 1 Riverfront promenade
- 2 All seasons restrooms
- 3 Updated amphitheatre
- 4 Raised multi-use lawn
- 5 ADA river access
- 6 Ice ribbon/skate loop
- 7 Ryman street gateway

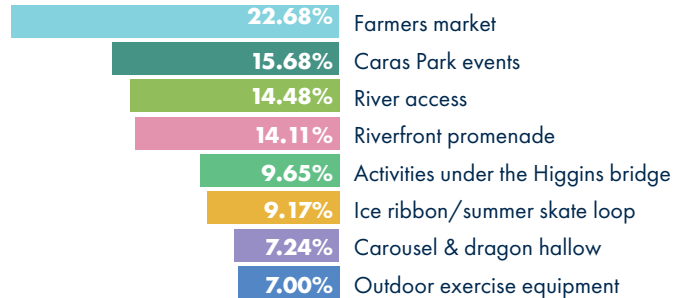
Note: All the features are ranked in descending order.



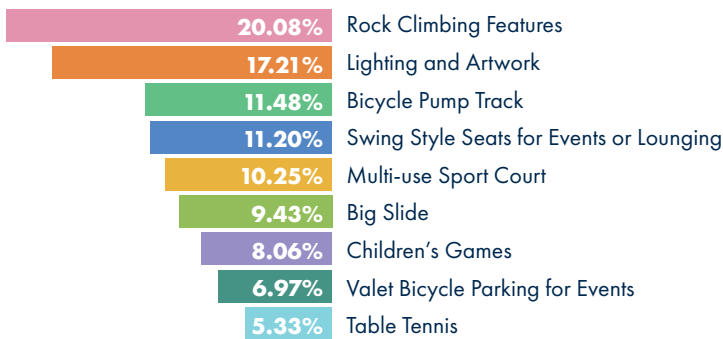
### What features would you most likely bring your out of town guests to?



### What features would you most likely use as a resident?



### What features would you most likely use under the Higgins Ave bridge?



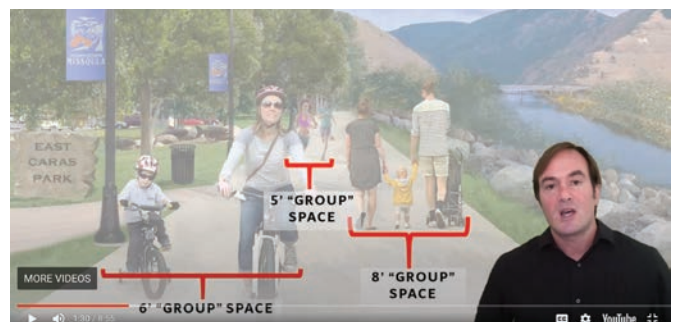
### What excites you the most?



### Presentation videos posted at the engagement website



**290+** **2,474+**  
ONLINE PARTICIPANTS VIEWS



WHAT I WOULD CHANGE ABOUT THE DESIGN AND WHY:

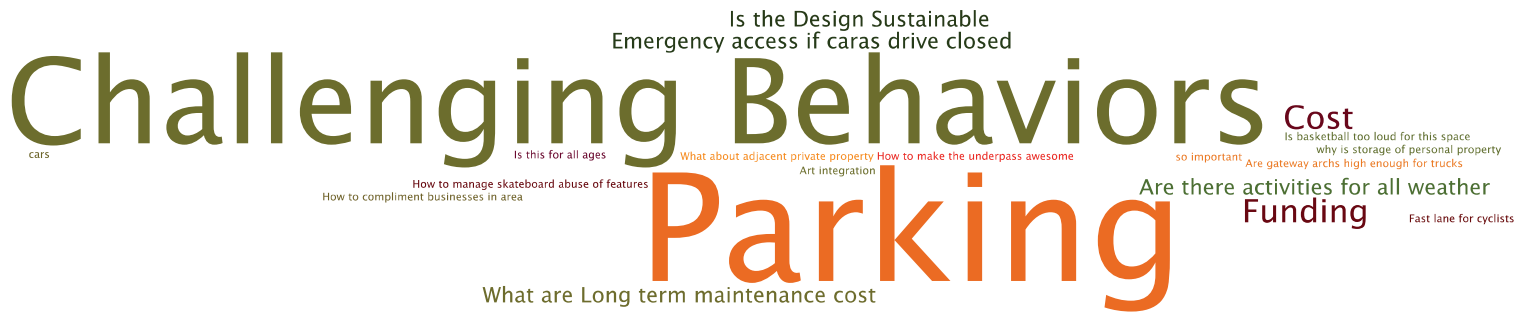


WHAT, IF ANY OTHER FEATURES, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THESE PARKS?



Note: The word clouds summarize responses to some of the questions in the online survey. The larger text represents responses that were included more often

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DESIGN THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED:



IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE?

More year round restrooms throughout missoula





# DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Fronting the Clark Fork River in downtown Missoula, the North Riverside Parks and Trails are some of the most popular destinations in Missoula. They have evolved into Missoula’s premiere town square; it is a place for the community to gather for special events and

connect with their neighbors, and a place to celebrate the beauty of the river. Our design started with a SWOT analysis to identify the opportunities, factors of influences and to minimize risks.



Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Carousel for Missoula and Dragon Hollow is a popular destination</li> <li>• The Wilma Theater</li> <li>• The Farmer’s Market attracts people to the park</li> <li>• Brennan’s Wave</li> <li>• Waterfront location</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large area of surface parking</li> <li>• Proximity to the electrical substation</li> <li>• No direct ADA access</li> <li>• Poor circulation &amp; entrances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convert surface parking</li> <li>• Update the parking structure into mixed use</li> <li>• Restaurants and businesses have the opportunity to face the river</li> <li>• Become a hub for downtown community events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flooding of the river</li> <li>• Erosion and degradation of water quality</li> </ul>

## **ENHANCE THE FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMMING**

The North Riverside Parks are important event venues for downtown. Each year approximately 75 events are held under the pavilion in Caras Park. The seasonal farmers market at East Caras Park is also extremely popular with residents and visitors.

As the park attracts more people, there is a growing need to enhance the event space infrastructure. There is often not enough seating for events. There have been requests for a multi-functional green space that is level enough to host other types of activities such as outdoor yoga classes. During the public process, residents proposed additional uses for Caras Park as well, including an indoor market that supports local artists, farmers, and more, and an open lawn area where people can play active lawn-based games. The community discussed making the park

friendly to visit year-round, including the idea of accommodating ice skating on leisure ice or an ice ribbon.

## **CELEBRATE THE RIVER**

The juxtaposition of town and nature is a treasured experience and setting for many in Missoula. River access is one of the top reasons that bring people to the North Riverside Parks. However, as more people are drawn to the river, informal uncontrolled access poses a threat for erosion and degradation of water quality. Downtown depends on the River and has benefited from its improved health and water quality, which must be balanced with people's enjoyment of the natural amenity. The plan designates managed river access points to protect the natural edges of the river.





## 01: INTRODUCTION & PROCESS

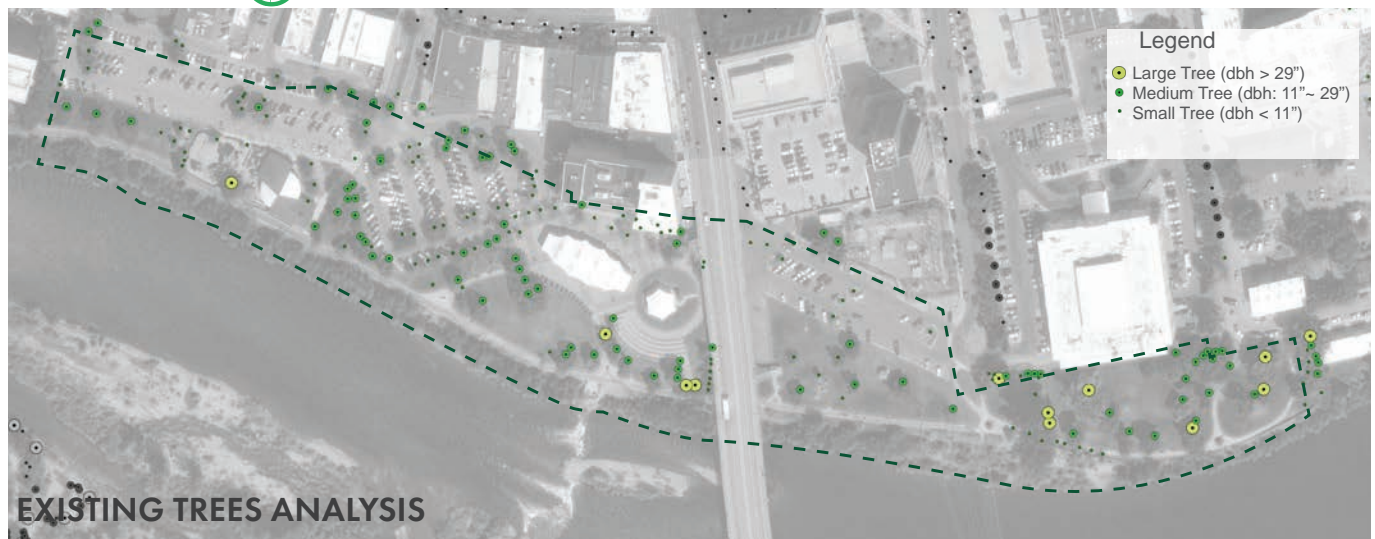
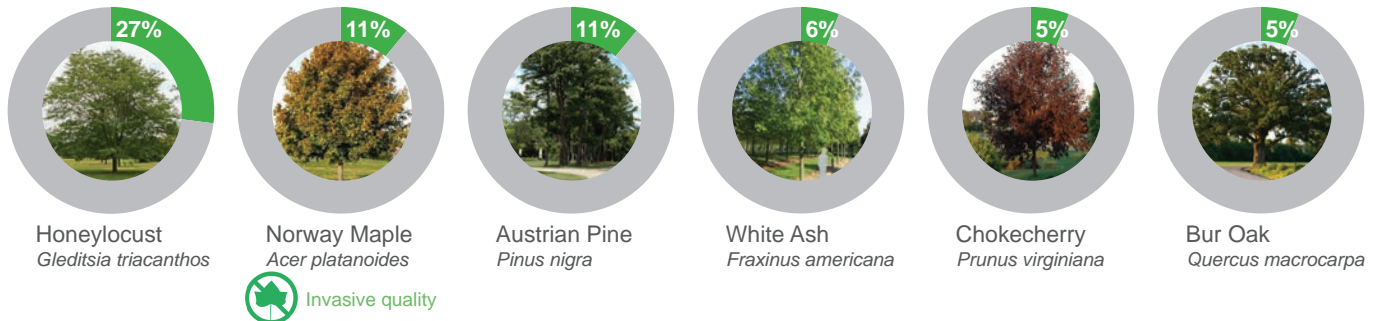
### SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

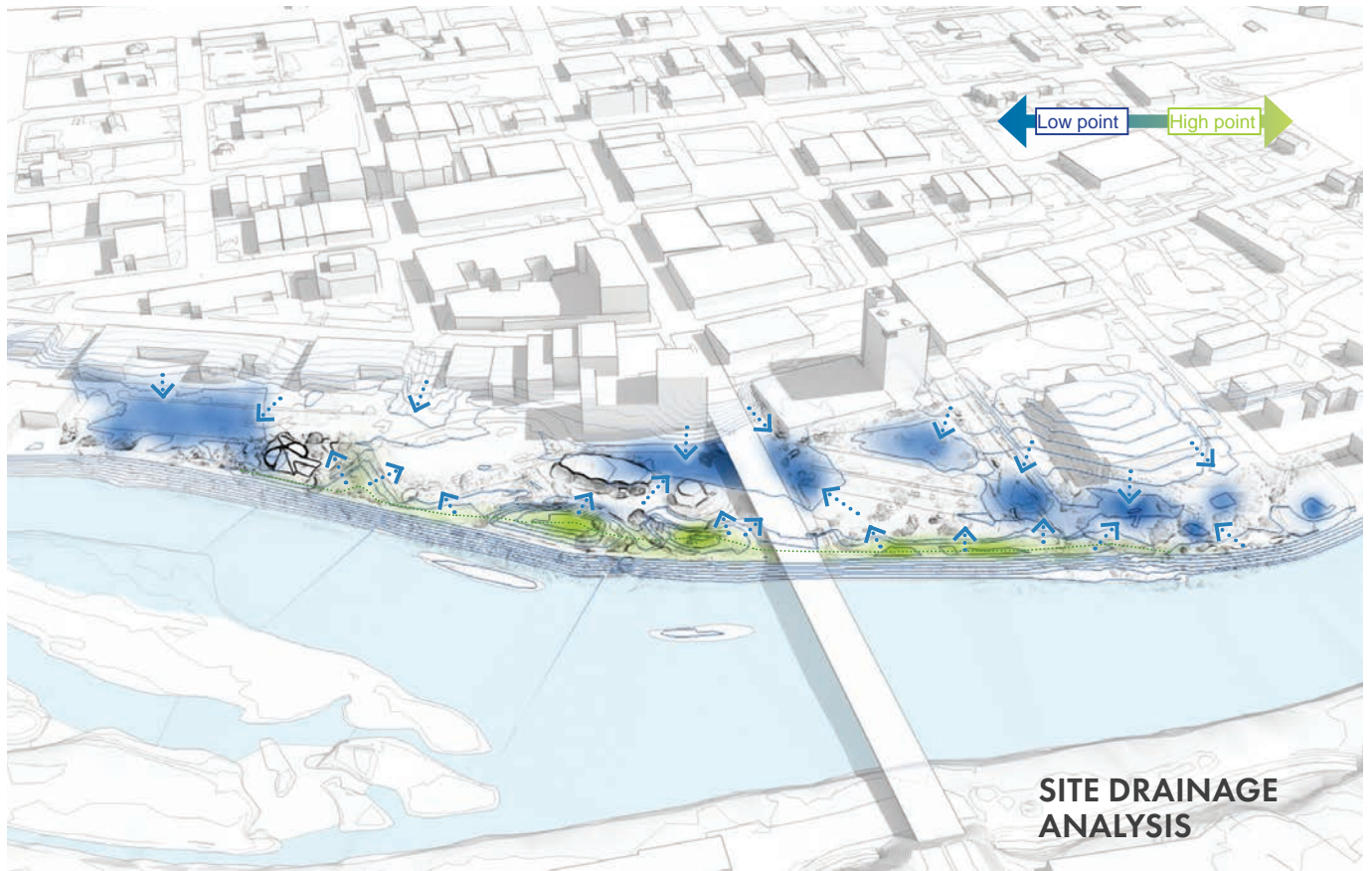
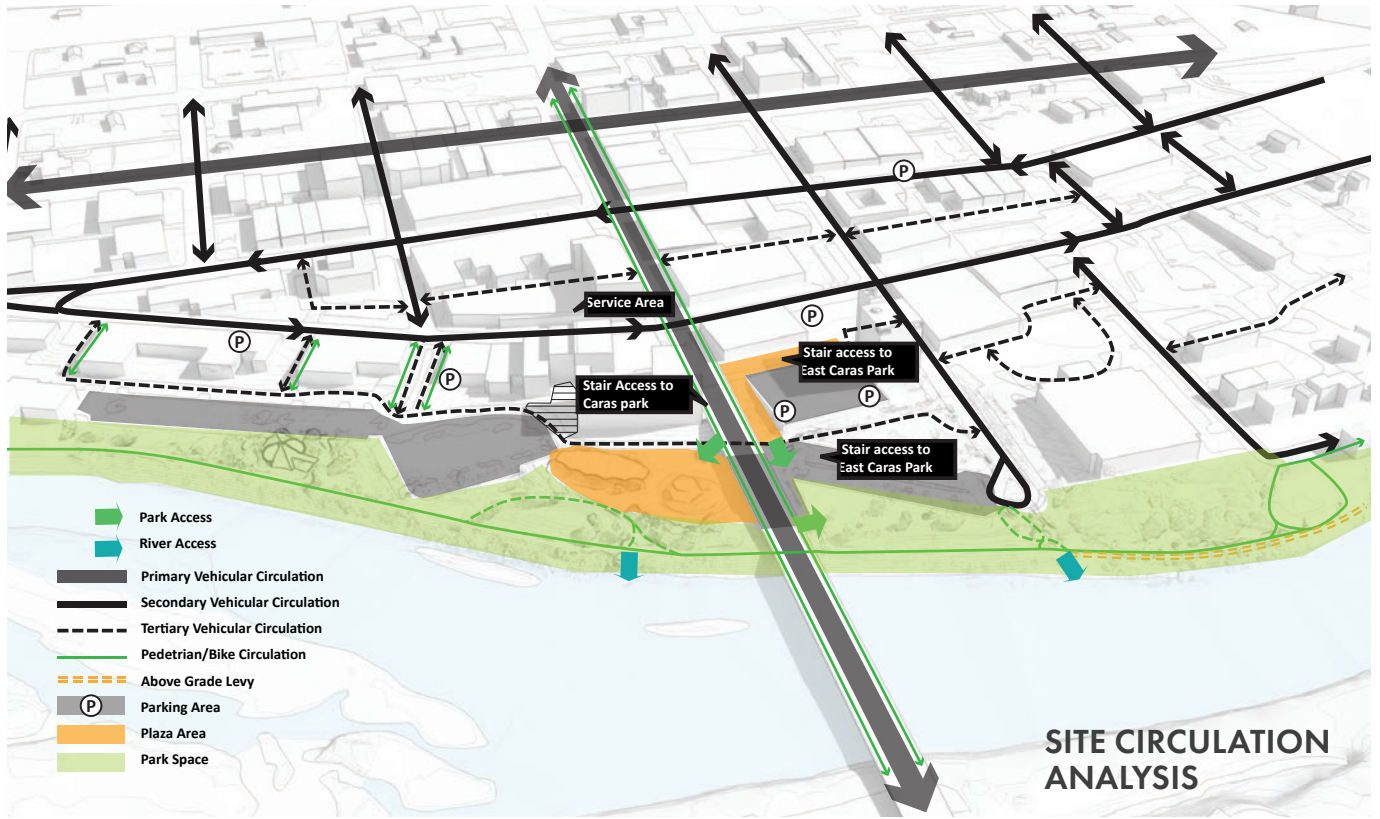
Parks should be an integral part of the overall stormwater management system of our landscape and can be designed without adversely impacting the quality of the land. Green infrastructure can filter and absorb stormwater and be designed as a park amenity with co-benefits for wildlife, recreation, and interaction with nature. Mature large trees should be protected and healthy new trees should be added thoughtfully to complement the design. The creation of new green space along the river can help enhance water quality, and when designed with natural river processes in mind, help mitigate the effects of flooding both Downtown and downstream. Bioretention areas and rain gardens can be created in strategic

locations in the North Riverside Parks to collect and treat stormwater before it enters the river.

### INCREASE PARK SPACE AND REDUCE SURFACE PARKING

The North Riverside Parks have a significant amount of surface parking that serves the park, the farmer's market, and nearby businesses. Community members voiced that the areas of surface parking occupy some of the prime waterfront locations in Caras Park and should be better utilized. If these parking spaces are consolidated into a mixed use building with structured garage, space could be freed up within the park to accommodate additional park uses and reduce the amount of impervious surface adjacent to the river.









Ice Ribbon





2.

*Chapter 02:*

.....  
**DESIGN IDEAS**



## **CARAS, EAST CARAS & BESS REED PARKS DESIGN**

The following pages illustrate the overall proposed short-term and long-term improvements to the North Riverside Parks. These are then followed by a more detailed look at each segment of the parks with visuals and graphics highlighting the design concepts.

### **NEAR-TERM VISION**

Short-term planning ideas for Caras, East Caras and Bess Reed Parks focus on incorporating winter activation programming, improving ADA accessibility, activating the Higgins Ave Underpass, improving river access, and upgrading the area around the pavilion and gazebo. A new raised multi-use lawn and amphitheater adjacent to the bandshell will increase the events capacity and enhance the quality of park experience.



Figure 2.1: Caras Park in midterm





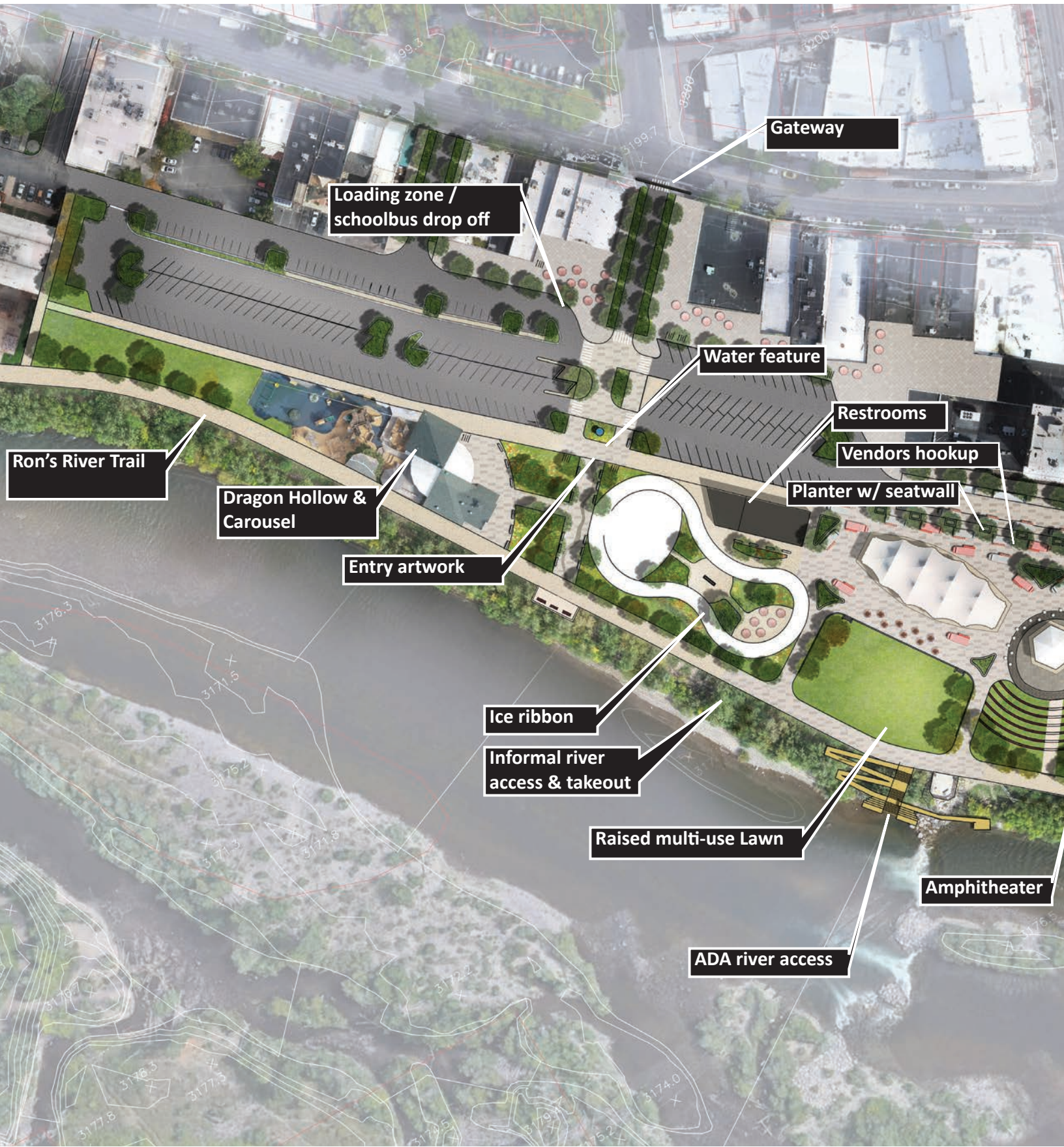
Figure 2.2: Caras Park existing condition





## 02: DESIGN IDEAS

### NEAR TERM PLAN







Gateway

Parking garage

Public art

Stairs & slide

Play space

Electrical substation

Ron's trail to  
Kiwanis park

Seat wall

Green and art wall to  
screen substation

Demo garden

Restroom

Outdoor gym

Plaza and parking

Vendor & seats

Holiday Inn Outdoor Patio

Historic Grist Mill

Park entry plaza

Rain garden

Bronze fish sculpture

Potential future  
trail extension

Public art with ADA  
ramp to bridge

Parkour gym

Wedding pavillion

Water access

0 60 120 180 240 ft.





### LONG-TERM PLAN

The long-term plan relocates the parking to a mixed use community center with structured parking in the west corner of Caras Park. The community center functions as an arts and crafts indoor market space, an incubator for local entrepreneurs, and provides additional space in downtown for housing, commercial, and retail. With the parking relocated, the existing surface parking areas can be transformed into park and green space.



Figure 2.3: Caras Park in midterm





Figure 2.4: Caras Park existing condition





## 02: DESIGN IDEAS

### LONG TERM PLAN







Gateway

Existing parking garage

Public art

Existing parking garage

Stairs & slide

Play space

Green and art wall to screen substation

Seasonal Restroom

Ron's river trail

Outdoor gym

Plaza and parking

Park entry plaza

Holiday Inn outdoor patio

Rain garden

Bronze fish sculpture

Public art with ADA ramp to bridge

Underbridge activation

ADA river access

Potential future trail extension

Wedding pavillion

0 60 120 180 240 ft.



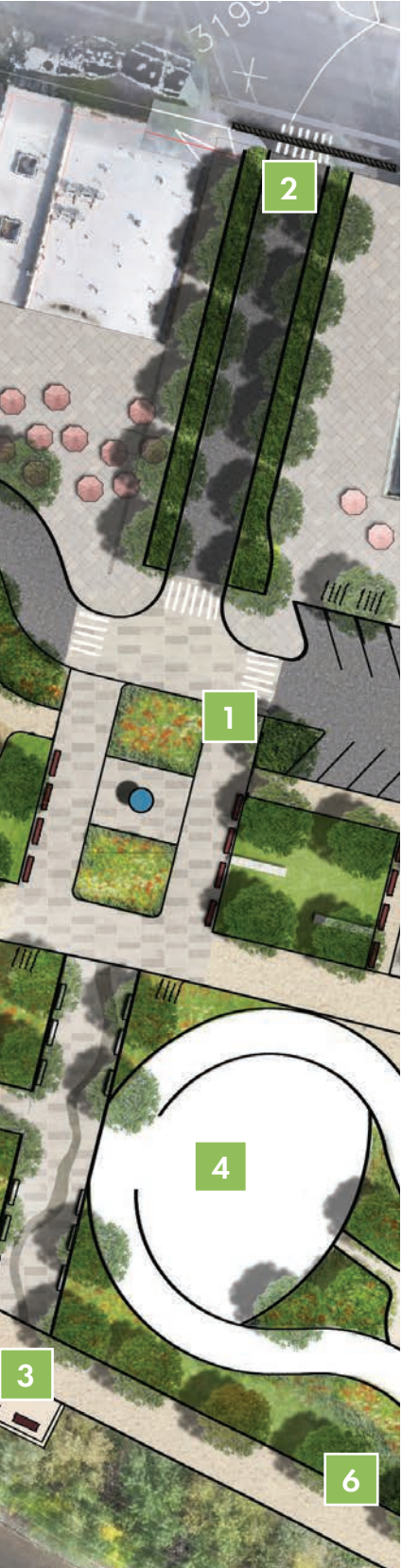


## 02: DESIGN IDEAS

### CARAS PARK IN DETAIL







1 Entry art & lighting feature



4 Ice ribbon



2 Entry gateway



5 Nature play



3 Riverfront lookout



6 Riverfront promenade





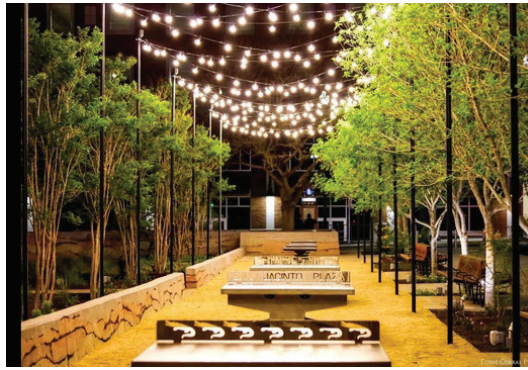
CARAS PLAZA IN DETAIL







1 Ping pong table



4 Raised multi-use Lawn



2 Water access



5 Seating edge



3 Updated paving for plaza space



6 Amphitheater seating

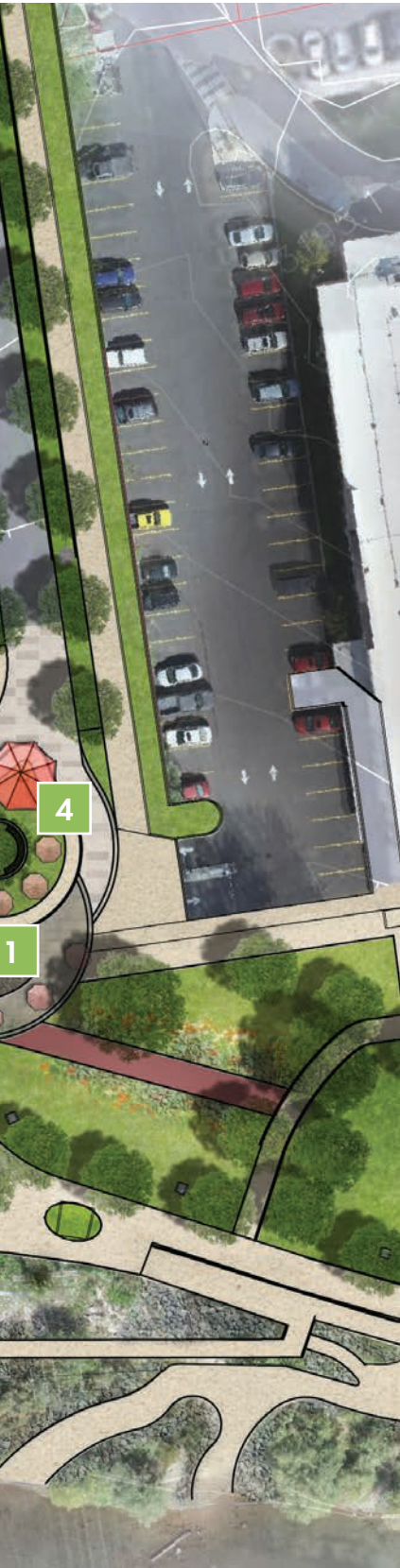




EAST CARAS PARK IN DETAIL







1 Entry art and lighting feature



4 Roundabout plaza



2 Underpass multi-use court



5 Parkour



3 ADA ramp & big art



6 Market Space











1 Garden path



2 Boardwalk & rain garden



3 Wedding pavilion



4 Patio dining



5 Shared street/woonerf



6 River access





# 5 BIG IDEAS

## CARAS, EAST CARAS & BESS REED PARKS DESIGN

### **BIG IDEA 1:**



#### **A PARK FOR EVERYONE AND FOR ALL SEASONS**

The parks should be accessible and safe for everyone. They should be designed for personal safety and include lighting, visibility and the concept that there are “Eyes on the park”. Parking is essential to access and needs to be included, even if it is restructured. In addition, a downtown circulator bus can help to get people to the park and allow better use of the other parking structures. Bike racks should be included throughout the parks and should match needed capacity for events and everyday use. Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall will have different types of uses. The parks should be a destination point that can attract people all year even when there are not events or festivals and help to produce revenue for the shops nearby. There should be places for people to change clothes, for users ranging from brides to surfers.

### **BIG IDEA 2:**



#### **ENHANCE ECOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS, IMPROVE VIEWS AND ACCESS TO THE CLARK FORK RIVER**

At present the river can often only be glimpsed. At the same time vegetation stabilizes the riverbanks and provides valuable urban wildlife habitat. Enjoyment of the river builds a wider environmental ethic. Formal access points and untrammled nature will allow people to enjoy views and access the river while protecting the river’s edge from informal “rabbit paths” to the water. These formalized access points also improve the environmental performance of the park with the creation of water catchment and infiltration areas and the need for less herbicides and pesticides.

### **BIG IDEA 3:**



#### **UPDATE MATERIALS, ELEMENTS, AND LANDSCAPING**

Materials and landscaping in the park can be updated to give a fresh look that represents Missoula’s natural aesthetic including the use of more native plants that are drought-resistant, support local pollinators, and have a local authenticity. Art and interpretive features that reflects the full range of culture and history of the area can be woven into the park through materials, art, sculptures, and signage. Green infrastructures can be implemented that are more sustainable, better for the climate, help improve the local environment, and reflect the goals outlined in Missoula’s Conservation & Climate Action Plan.



## **BIG IDEA 4:**



### **IMPROVE GATEWAYS AND CIRCULATION**

Accommodate the increasing use and activities on the trail system by widening the pathways to be 14'-18' wide, filling in gaps in connections to surrounding areas east and west of the parks and creating a two-way loop around Caras, East Caras, and Bess Reed park with a trail on river. Improve the entrances and access to the park from Front Street, Higgins Avenue, Pattee Street, and Ryman Streets including ADA access. There should also be ADA access to the river. Ryman Street should be improved and made into a Great Street leading to the Caras Park. An electronic kiosk or app could show when parking is available in the park BEFORE someone pulls in only to find that there are no spaces available.

## **BIG IDEA 5:**



### **SUPPORT EXISTING USES AND DESIGN MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACES**

Multi-functional spaces are more apt to be used throughout the year. They should be constructed of durable materials that are easy and inexpensive to maintain. Strategically plan to phase in improvements so as to not overwhelm any one budget. Continue to maintain and enhance Out to Lunch Series, Downtown Tonight Summer Series, Garden City Brewfest, River City Roots Festival, the Clark Fork River Market, while also fostering new events and activities. Local shops and restaurants on the river should also be supported.



# BIG IDEA 1: A PARK FOR EVERYONE & ALL SEASONS

## A PARK ACCESSIBLE FOR EVERYONE

People should be able to arrive to the North Riverside Parks by car, transit, bike, or on foot. All the trails that surround the site should connect to the North Riverside Parks and move people logically and enjoyably to the next segment of the trail. Connections are needed from the north, west, and east of the North Riverside Parks. The City's Parks and Recreation Department has marked the existing path network and the design for the North Riverside Parks weaves those connections through the plan. Ron's River Trails should be connected along the entire length of the river from Russell Street to Missoula College.

In the downtown core the trail should be 16-18' wide to accommodate a high level of year-round use. Urban commuter trails should be hardscaped for ease of maintenance and improved accessibility. To create more pleasant pedestrian routes, trails and sidewalks within the urban core should include wayfinding signage, benches, lighting, and shade trees.

As a city park, the park must meet Federal, State, and Local access requirements. Universal design in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) acknowledges that most of us, at some time in our lives, will need to travel along sidewalks and paths with wheelchairs or strollers. To minimize pedestrian inconveniences, all paths and sidewalks must provide minimum clear zones for walking. Utility equipment like transformers, lift stations, utility meters, and other such machinery should be located away from the primary pedestrian paths. Ideally, utilities should be grouped and shielded from view to eliminate visual blight.

The park should contain hard and soft surfaces, benches, and gathering spaces under ample tree cover or shade structures. The proposed riverfront terrace includes an ADA accessible ramp to allow users with mobility impairments a way to get down to the water. Stairs to the river provide seating space for people to linger or gather with a good view of Brennan's Wave.







Figure 2.5: Existing trail along the river



### EQUITY AND CULTURE

The riverfront green space and trails provides a public gathering venue for all residents and visitors. The plan proposes an ice ribbon and a community center that offers year-round activities. Ideally the year-round community center would provide a welcoming place with events and activities for people without other places to go, including LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender), and specific racial and ethnic groups including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color).

Art installations that celebrate Missoula's culture and history in accordance with the city's Downtown Heritage Interpretive Plan should be encouraged and incorporated into the parks. Plan elements like city-wide pathway connections, pavilions for social gatherings, ADA access to the riverfront, and ADA access enhancements to amenities, could help remove barriers and fully engage underserved populations, protect and enhance health equity, enhance community support and understanding for all (particularly those who often experience discrimination), and enhance economic health and opportunity, especially for low to moderate income residents.



Figure 2.6: Artful crosswalk in Missoula



Figure 2.7: 2019 Indigenous Peoples Day celebration



Figure 2.8: Proposed ADA access to the river



## WINTER ACTIVATION

A frequent mistake made in winter cities is to over-emphasize the impact of the weather, using it as a rationale for why they don't have great public spaces and winter activities. Winter parks can allow people to enjoy the snowfall, sledding, cross-country skiing, and ice skating. Winter activation helps attract people to the park and supports downtown businesses year-round. Music can be programmed all winter long. Park cafés should stay open in the evening and offer outdoor seating which helps keep things lively after sundown. Holiday-themed markets are found in many places for several weeks before the Christmas holiday. Winter carnivals are a tradition that can help cure the winter doldrums of late January or February. Torchlight parades, ice sculpture exhibitions and even dogsled races are possible. During existing winter events such as the parade of lights, the parks can offer a wintertime destination for participants and spectators.

Darkness, as much as cold and snow, can limit people's enjoyment of the outdoors during winter. The North Riverside Parks should include a well designed system of pedestrian lighting, and could include artistic lighting such as edison lights strung across walkways and entrances and twinkling holiday lights in trees, creating an overall ambiance of delight and pleasure that will make people want to spend time outside even when it is chilly. Different types of activities and events should be combined so they can build off of each other. Combining the ice ribbon, an outdoor café, children's play area, and food or holiday markets will entice people to stay for a few hours or more, even when it's cold and dark outside. Fire pits near the ice ribbon can offer passive visitors a place to relax and warm up while observing others skating on the ice ribbon.



Figure 2.9: Ice ribbon in Herriman City in winter



Figure 2.10: Ice ribbon in Herriman City in summer



Figure 2.11: Splash pad near the ice ribbon in Herriman City



### ICE RIBBON DESIGN IN CARAS PARK

One of the new features envisioned for Caras Park is an ice ribbon to help activate the park throughout the year. This rendering visualizes the ice ribbon design in both summer and winter. In the summer, the ribbon can be a draw for those on roller blades or skates, small bikes and trikes. The ice ribbon should be designed in a way that could be utilized all year round.

Movable ramps and pump track features can be placed on the summer skate ribbon that provide children and adults a fun and exciting option to skate or bike on.

The interior of the ribbon can have plaza space with seating and fire pits in the winter. In the summer the interior portion of the ribbon can have an artistic and interactive water feature.



Figure 2.12: Movable ramp in summer



Figure 2.13: Ice Ribbon in winter





Figure 2.14: Ice Ribbon in summer





## BIG IDEA 2: ENHANCE ECOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS, IMPROVE VIEWS AND ACCESS

### SUSTAINABILITY & NATURAL PROCESS

River access is one of the top reasons that people visit the North Riverside Parks. However, as more people are drawn to the river, informal uncontrolled access points pose a threat for erosion and degradation of water quality. Downtown depends on the river and has benefited from its improved health and water quality, which must be balanced with people's enjoyment of the natural amenity. The schematic design designates river access points and protects the natural edges of the river so access can happen in a concentrated and controlled manner.

Vehicle and equipment maintenance, trash disposal, and pesticide applications should be restricted in areas adjacent to the river. Untreated runoff should be prevented from draining into the river. Downtown's wide right-of-ways can provide space for significant green stormwater infrastructure elements to capture and treat runoff. This infrastructure can also direct runoff to parks and greenspaces where the water can be further treated before it enters the river. The use of new piped stormwater systems to the river is discouraged and retrofitted stormwater treatment at outfalls is recommended.

To help treat and reduce runoff from downtown, a stormwater infiltration gallery will be installed beneath the park to help reducing runoff into the river by infiltrating it into the ground



Figure 2.15: Recreational activities on the Clark Fork River



## IMPROVE VIEWS & ACCESS

As a visitor walks towards the river from the end of Ryman Street and into Caras Park, the topography rises before it drops near the riverbank. Because of the unique site condition, the views to the river in Caras Park are mostly blocked. Numerous residents voiced the desire for improved views to the river. Feedback was also received from the Blue-Ribbon committee that the park can benefit from a flat lawn space. The existing green space next to the pavilion sits on a knoll, and the slope of the lawn restricts the type of activities that can take place.

The proposed design replaces the knoll with a flat lawn that is raised several feet above the Caras Plaza. The elevated lawn enables direct views to the river and at the same time works as a multifunctional space for both passive and active uses such as outdoor events and classes, Frisbee, and soccer. The path along the west and east side of the lawn leads visitors to the widened riverfront promenade and riverfront terrace.



Figure 2.16: Current views & access to the river



Figure 2.17: Current views & access to the river plan



Figure 2.18: Proposed access to the river



### PROPOSED RIVERFRONT TERRACE

The proposed riverfront terrace includes an ADA accessible ramp to allow users with mobility impairments to get down to the water. Stairs to the river provide seating space for people to linger or gather with a good view of Brennan's Wave.



Figure 2.21: Proposed riverfront access





Figure 2.20: Existing Riverfront





### SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

In order to protect the health of the river, stormwater runoff should be treated before draining into the river. Designing and building sustainably will ensure the longevity of public investments and reduce maintenance of infrastructure.

**Soil cells** are built under the pavement surface and provide increased soil volume and reduced soil compaction, which promotes healthy tree root growth. Soil Cells allow for larger species trees to be planted, maximizing shade and decreasing heat island effects. They reduce infrastructure damage, provide stormwater retention, and encourage more diversity in tree species.

**Pervious pavers** allow stormwater runoff to infiltrate, reduce flooding and brown water runoff into major water bodies. Pervious pavers can be used in sidewalks, street furniture zones, dining areas, entire roads, parking lanes, or gutter strips. It also adds design aesthetic and character.

**Bioswales** are shallow landscaped areas that capture, treat, and infiltrate stormwater runoff. The bioswales treat and drain the first flush of stormwater that is often the most polluted in any storm event; they also slow runoff velocity and clean water by recharging the underlying groundwater table.



Figure 2.23: Pervious pavers with tree wells



Figure 2.24: Bioswale filters stormwater



Figure 2.22: Tree wells with Soil Cells

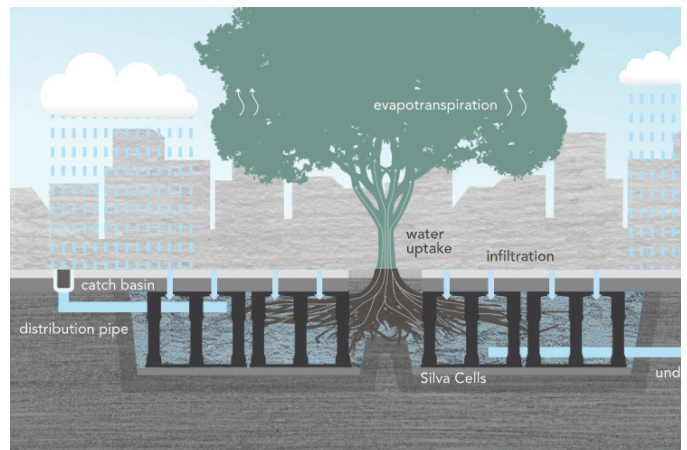
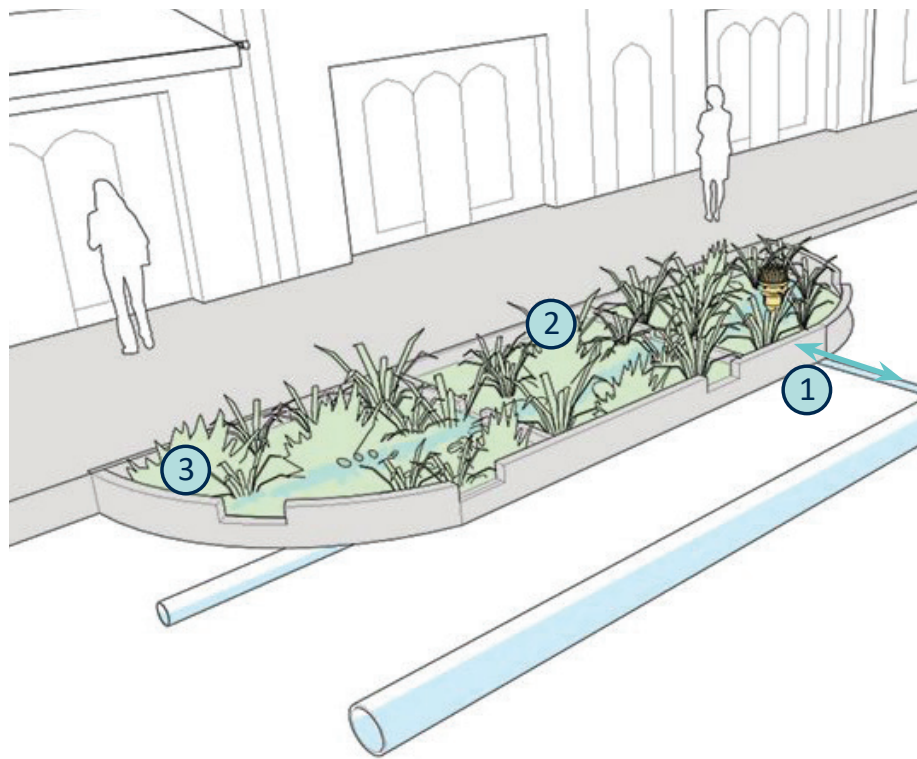


Figure 2.25: Soil Cells diagram



Sustainability is a guiding principle of the North Riverside Parks and Trails Plan. The plan strives to continue the commitment to city adopted plans such as the Zero by Fifty Plan, Conservation & Climate Action Plan, and follows framework guided by SITES.



#### FEATURES:

1. Construct a deep curb to connect the swale to a parallel utility line below the roadbed.
2. Bioswales should be composed of diverse, native vegetation.
3. Curb cuts should be at least 18 inches wide and spaced 3–15 feet apart.
4. Raise the overflow/bypass drain system approximately 6 inches above the soil surface.
5. Discourage pedestrian trampling.
6. Maintain a 5-foot minimum clearance from the groundwater table.
7. Bioswales require appropriate media composition for soil construction.

Urban Street Design Guide,  
NACTO, October 2013

Figure 2.26: Bioswale bulb-out. Image courtesy of National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

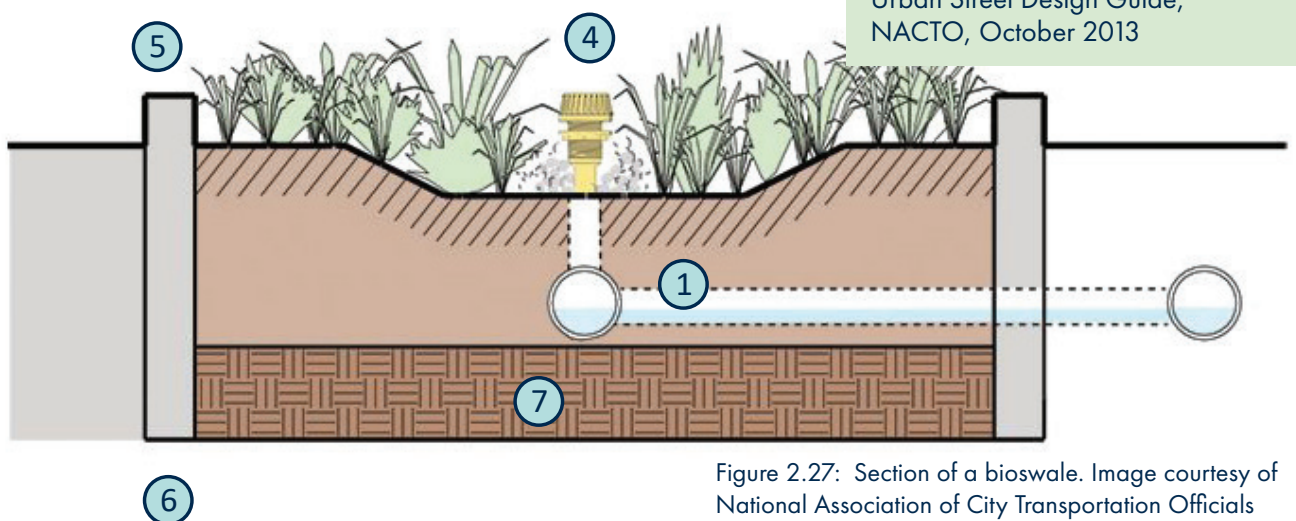


Figure 2.27: Section of a bioswale. Image courtesy of National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)



### WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

A rain garden can capture stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces such as parking lots, patios, sidewalks and plazas and is an example of low impact development (LID). A rain garden is an indented area that is usually about 8 inches deep that holds and filters stormwater instead of going directly into a storm drain and into the nearest water body.

Rain gardens can be planted with various perennials that adapt well to wet conditions and soak and filter pollutants from runoff. The rain garden depicted in Bess Reed Park is an example of how to incorporate pedestrian connections through the rain garden utilizing a boardwalk.

Perennials best suitable for this rain garden are the ones that are native and attract bees, butterflies and other local pollinators. These include, but are not limited to, Prairie Coneflower, Purple Coneflower, Smooth Blue Aster, Maximilian Sunflower, and Blanketflower.



Figure 2.28: Bess Reed Park Rain Garden with Boardwalk





Figure 2.29: Bess Reed Park existing conditions





## BIG IDEA 3: UPDATE MATERIALS, ELEMENTS, AND LANDSCAPING

### THE NEED FOR AN UPGRADE

All materials have a life cycle and wear and tear occurs constantly. As an example, the canopy of the Caras Park bandshell and stage were built in 2011, and while the concrete stage has weathered well, the canopy has experienced faster deterioration. The large pavilion canopy is almost 25 years old. A new canopy and an upgraded and expanded electrical system are needed. Planning for material updates is important as the materials and landscape elements are the face of a park. Replacing the materials can give the park a new look within a relatively short period of time.

Materials and landscape elements respond to the changing need of the users. The appearance of the pavilion area, for example, has changed over the years. It started as an informal and temporary space that has evolved into the more permanent structure seen today as a response to increased and more diversified use over time. As the functions and programming are updated in the park, the changes to materials, elements, and landscaping will become inevitable.

Another important upgrade will be to the mostly unseen infrastructure and utilities in the park. Updates to the sound system, lighting, and utility connections for vendors should be incorporated at the time of other material updates.



Figure 2.30: Wear and tear with pavers



Figure 2.31: The bandshell in earlier days



Figure 2.32: The bandshell now



The visual preference survey posted during the public events and online surveys contained a list of different types of paving types. The public picked stone pavers as their first choice.

Other elements such as benches were also surveyed to find the community's preferences.



Top 

Stone Pavers



Picnic Tables



Covered Benches



Artistic Bike Rack



Decomposed Granite



Movable Metal Tables & Chairs



Swinging Benches



Small Bike Rack



Wood Mulch



Stone Table & Chairs



Park Bench



Bike Rack



Stone Pavers



Gliding Tables & Benches



Charging Benches

0

4

No change



### CARAS PARK PLAZA UPDATE

The pavilion area can be given a fresh new look by painting the structures and replacing the paving materials. A raised, multi-use lawn can provide a new place for people to play and gather.

The proposed flat lawn will also provide better connection between the Caras Plaza, Ron's River Trail, and the Clark Fork River.



Figure 2.33: Caras Park Plaza proposed design





Figure 2.34: Caras Park Plaza existing conditions





### BANDSHELL AREA UPDATE

The bandshell area can also be updated by replacing the concrete structured seating area with a new amphitheater consisting of concrete benches in a terraced lawn. The new design has less concrete, more green space, and will be more accessible for all users.

The current lawn surrounding the bandshell will be replaced with paving to better accommodate the high-impact use during performances.

Stand-up tables on the north side of the bandshell will provide people an informal place to stand and to set down their drinks and food while watching performances.



Figure 2.35: Bandshell area proposed design





Figure 2.36: Bandshell area existing conditions





### ACCOMMODATE NEW NEEDS

The Out to Lunch summer series was first introduced to Caras Park in 1986. The park has been constantly adding new features and elements to support this and other activities for decades. Additional seating and a ring of green space were created in response to the growing lunch attendance. The brick plaza area was built next. The pavilion structure was constructed in 1997, and the concrete performance stage and canopy were built in 2011. The improvements and new programs are continually attracting more and more visitors to the park in return.

Caras Park has been home to more than 1,000 events in just the past 12 years. Some of these events draw hundreds, even thousands of people to the park. The pavilion and bandshell area can get very congested and there is often not enough seating for these larger events.

The 2020 pandemic increased the need for people to be outside while maintaining healthy social distancing. The public space should be designed in a more generous manner that keeps social distancing requirements in mind. The North Riverside Parks new design should have increased park space and seating capacity.

The design should also take into account the numerous vendors that utilize the park. There are often not enough electrical outlets at events. Missoula Made Fair, for example, is an event that only happens in Caras Park. More than 120 vendors attended the last Made Fair. The current infrastructure in the park restricts the growth of events like these.



Figure 2.37: Events in Caras Park



Figure 2.38: Made Fair at the pavilion



## MORE SEATING FOR EVENTS

The new design intends to add approximately 850 more seating spaces and 35 additional electrical hookup spaces to the current layout.

~849

More Seating

~35

Electrical hookups

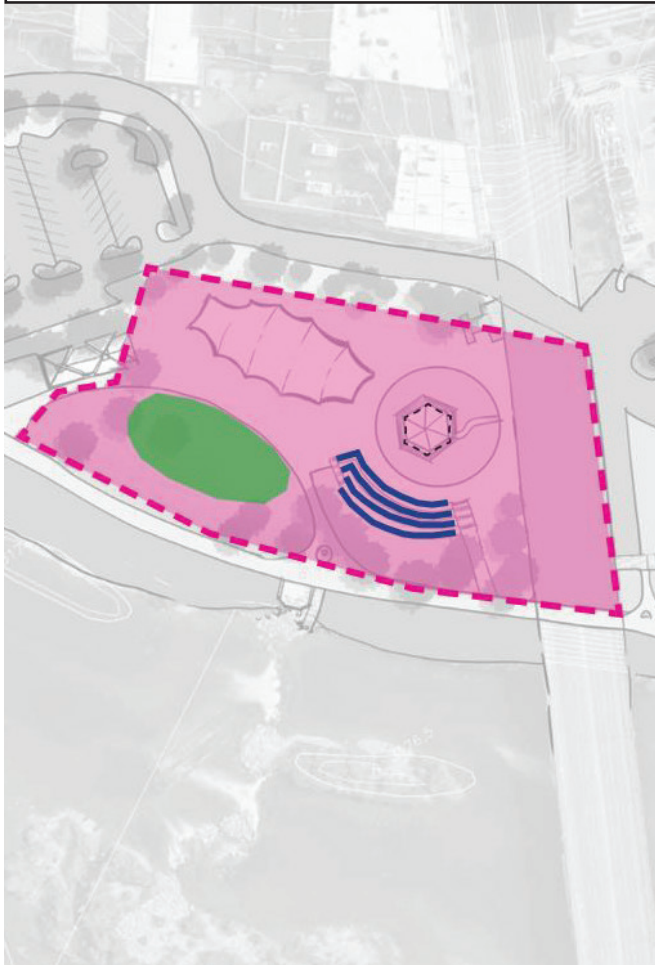
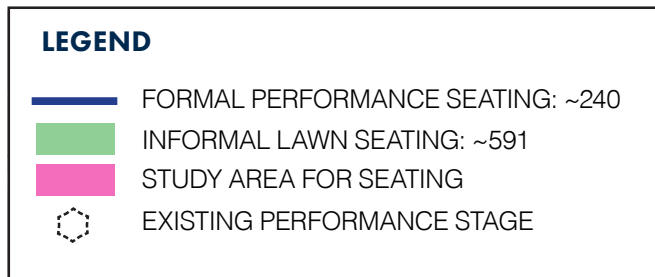


Figure 2.39: Seating diagram existing

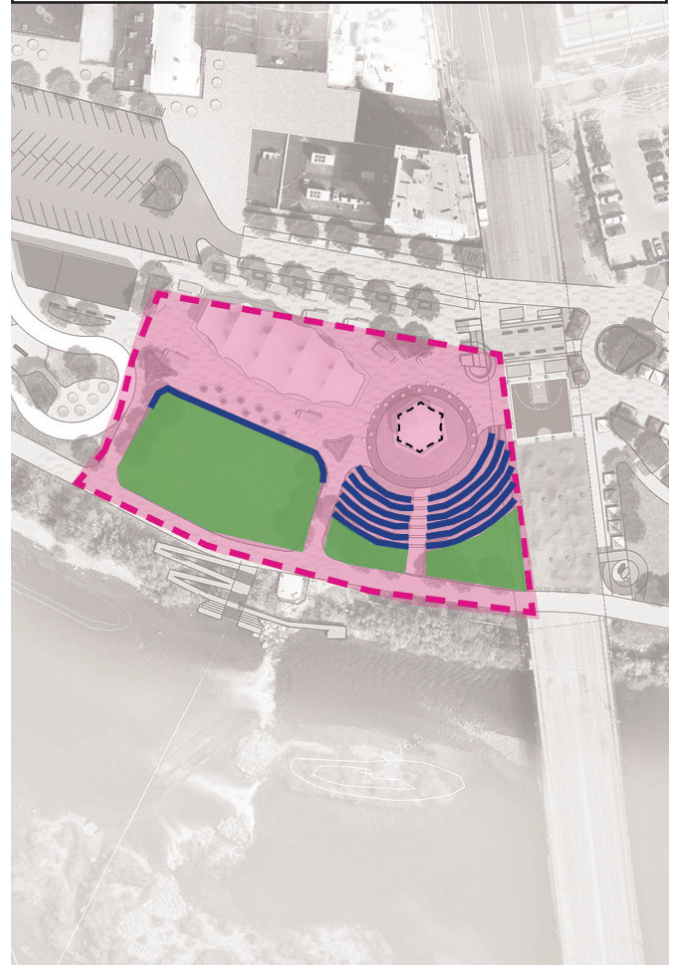
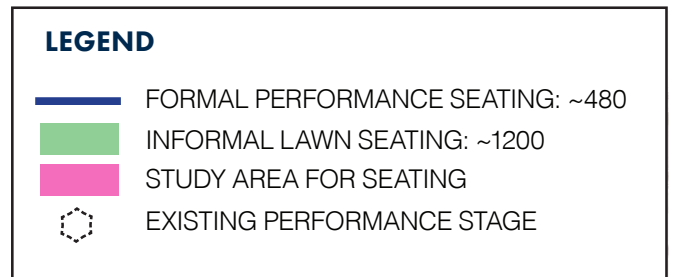


Figure 2.40: Seating diagram proposed



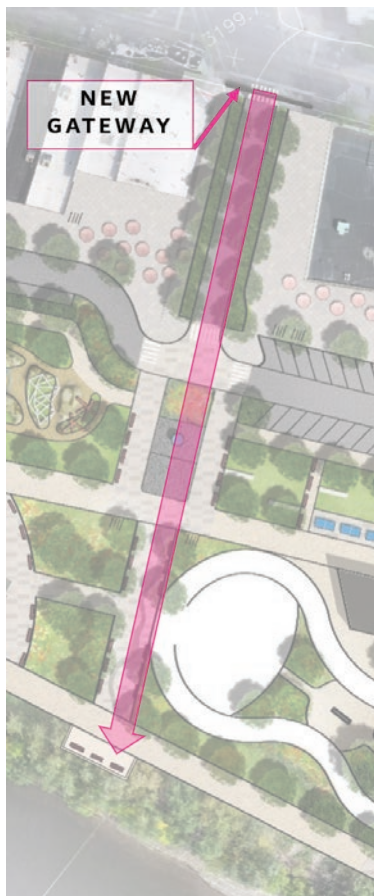
# BIG IDEA 4: IMPROVE GATEWAYS & CIRCULATION

## MAJOR ENTRANCES AND GATEWAYS

The entryway to a park gives an important first impression and needs to make people feel welcome. The design focuses on three main entrances and gateways to the park: Ryman Street, Higgins Avenue, and Pattee Street. Overall, the new designs create a more friendly entry experience for bikers, walkers and vehicles.

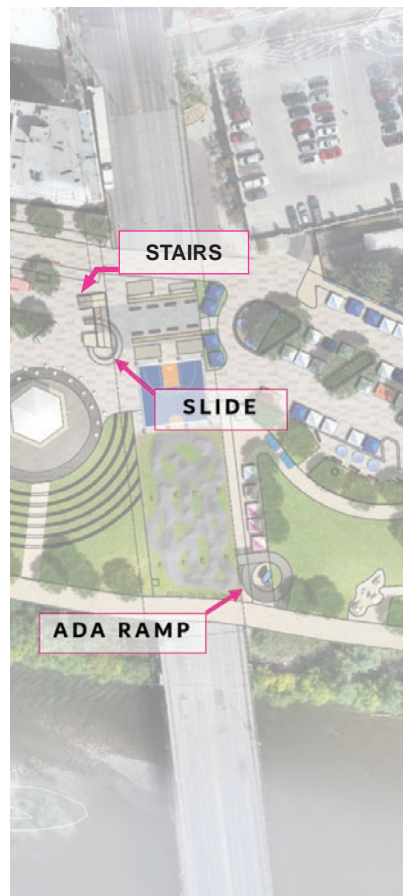
### Ryman Street

A new Ryman Street gateway is proposed in the design. The sidewalks along Ryman Street are widened to create a pedestrian promenade that connects visitors directly to Ron's River Trail.



### Higgins Avenue

The new design includes an ADA ramp, stairs and a slide entry on the Higgins Avenue Bridge, providing a fun and unique experience, and accommodating the needs of different users.



### Pattee Street

A new entry plaza is proposed at the end of Pattee Street where people can linger and gather. The design also proposes a new Pattee Street gateway similar to the one at Ryman Street.





## RYMAN STREET ENTRANCE

Currently parking is the first thing a visitor encounters when they arrive at Caras Park from Ryman Street. There is no direct connection from Ryman Street to the park. The existing layout is confusing for both pedestrians and vehicles. The existing signage is auto-oriented and lacks a unified identity. New gateway signage can create a sense of arrival and strengthen the experience of a space.



Figure 2.41: Caras Park parking lot near Ryman Street



Figure 2.42: Caras Park Ryman Street entrance



Figure 2.43: Caras Park Ryman Street proposed entrance



## 02: DESIGN IDEAS

### PREVIOUS PLANNING EFFORT

#### BESS REED PARK ENTRANCE

The parking lot in East Caras Park is also where the Clark Fork Market is held. A common entry to this area is from Pattee Street. A new entry plaza is proposed at the end of Pattee Street where people can linger and gather with streetscape improvement such as widening the sidewalk and adding more street trees. There can be additional lighting and seating areas for people to enjoy as well. When no events are taking place the street and parking area still function great for vehicle circulation and parking.



Figure 2.45: Bess Reed Park proposed entrance





Figure 2.44: Bess Reed Park entrance existing condition





## 02: DESIGN IDEAS

### WAYFINDING & INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE

The central island on Pattee Street that vehicles use as a turnaround can be activated with features for people to enjoy such as adding a place for vendors and including seating.

A big art installation can be integrated into this area as well. Ultimately, the design for art in the park should be inspired by and come from local artists.

As the North Riverside Parks and Trails plan is implemented a comprehensive interpretive plan will be developed. The themes that will be included in the parks are outlined in the Missoula Downtown Heritage Interpretive Plan.

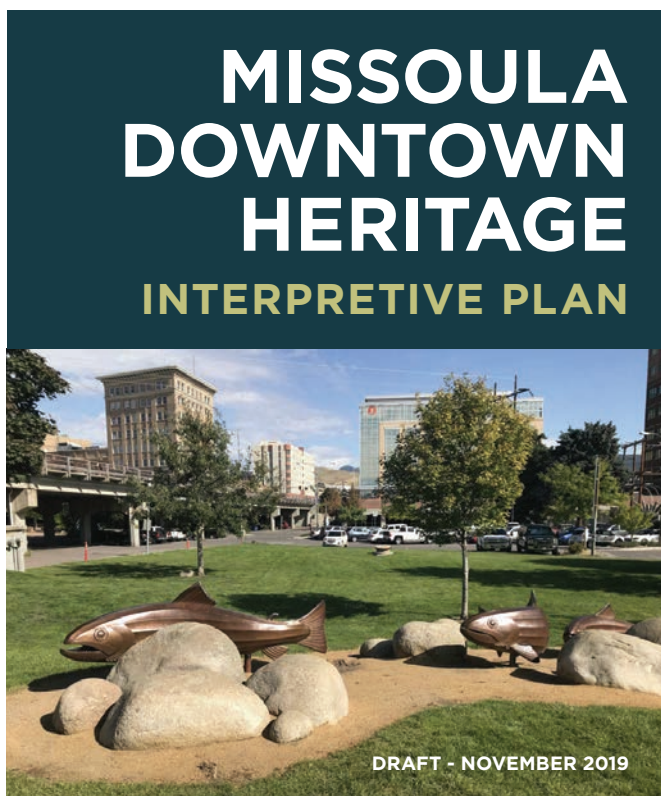
Wayfinding signage will allow park visitors to easily find and navigate the parks and trails, and will be integrated into the overall wayfinding plan for the Missoula downtown area. The City of Missoula Wayfinding Plan provides guidelines for signage throughout the city.



Figure 2.46: Plan for the Bess Reed entrance



Figure 2.47: A character photo for the central island space





## SCREENING THE SUBSTATION

The area near the electrical substation is another opportunity for the site to benefit from the application of art. The infrastructure could be masked with native plantings and murals to create a more visually appealing scene without interfering with the operation of this important utility. A partnership between NorthWestern Energy and the art community will guide the process of designing and implementing this improvement.



Figure 2.48: Existing condition near the electrical substation



Figure 2.49: Murals and planting near the electrical substation



### PEDESTRIAN & BIKE CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

One way to improve pedestrian circulation is to create a loop within the park so that bikers and pedestrians can enjoy the park safely without vehicular traffic conflicts.







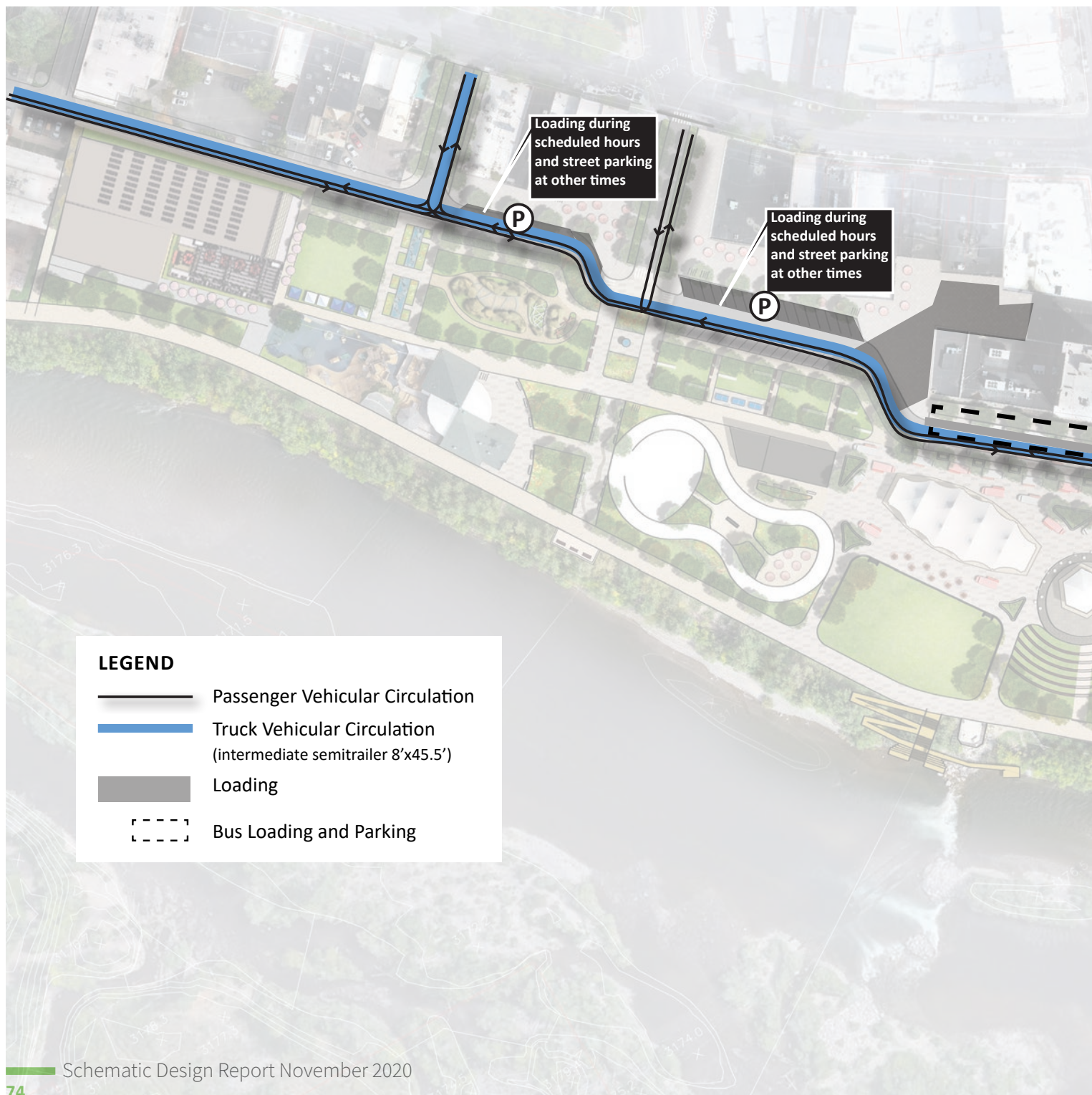
0 60 120 180 240 ft.





### VEHICULAR CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

This diagram shows the new vehicular circulation: Carousel Drive is redesigned as a shared street to encourage businesses to front the park.









## 02: DESIGN IDEAS

### HIGGINS AVENUE UNDERPASS POSSIBLE USES -CLIMBING GYM AND PLAY SPACE

The underside of Higgins Avenue is currently used for parking. The drab, unfriendly space creates a major barrier and divide between Caras and East Caras Parks. During events it is a “dead zone”, when vendors set up near the bridge they report decreased sales and less traffic. The plan envisions more active uses that create opportunities for this underutilized space. The rendering to the right shows one potential scenario that turns a portion of this space into an active playground. The colors and design elements draw inspiration from and celebrate the native cultural heritage in the community. Murals, lighting, and play equipment make the space safer and more inviting. Seating is also provided for a place to rest. The playground provides a family friendly place for visitors to the market.

The underbridge space can also be a good location for storage. Storage space can be placed behind the climbing structure.



Figure 2.50: Higgins Avenue underpass existing condition



Figure 2.51: Higgins Avenue underpass with play features







HIGGINS AVENUE UNDERPASS POSSIBLE USES -PARKOUR

The public voiced their desire for a parkour gym space under the bridge during the public reveal. Parkour is the art of running, jumping, and climbing through obstacles with speed and efficiency. The parkour gym could activate the underutilized underpass space and protect users from some elements of harsh weather.



Figure 2.52: Parkour gym examples

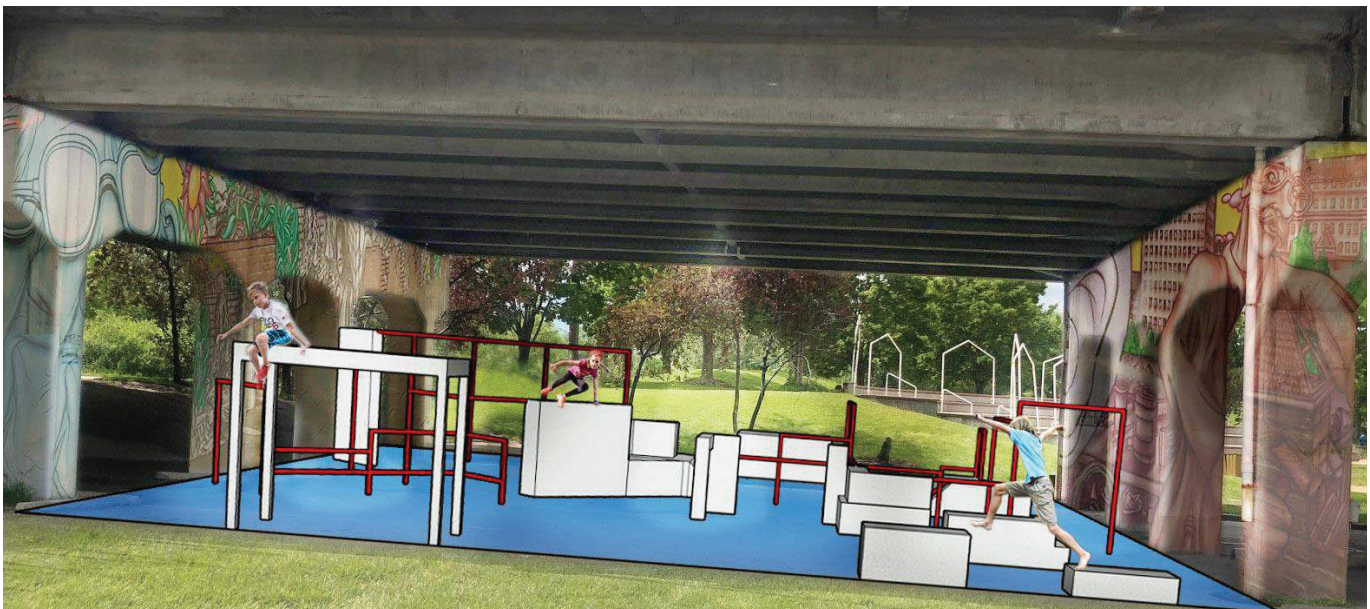


Figure 2.53: A possible design for the Parkour gym under Higgins Avenue Bridge



HIGGINS AVENUE UNDERPASS OTHER POSSIBLE USES



Figure 2.54: Murals



Figure 2.58: Art installations



Figure 2.55: Hopscotch



Figure 2.56: Hanging chairs



Figure 2.57: Ping pong table

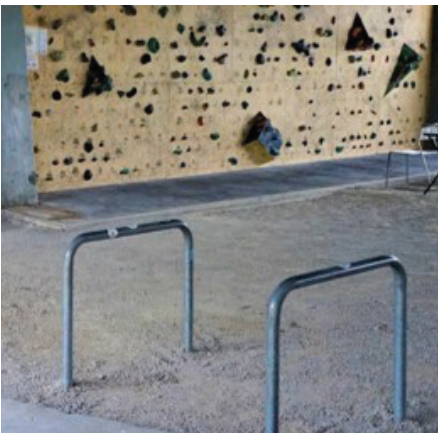


Figure 2.59: Bike racks



Figure 2.61: Curling/skating

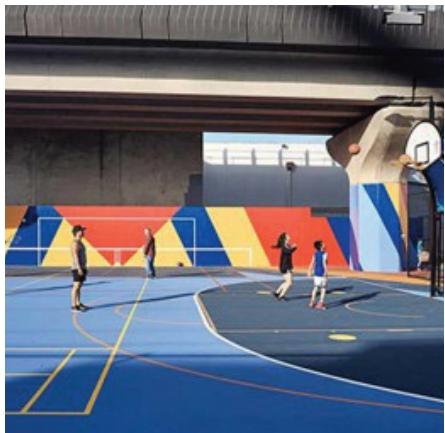


Figure 2.60: Sports field



# BIG IDEA 5: SUPPORT EXISTING USES AND DESIGN MULTI-FUNCTIONAL SPACES

## DESIGN FOR MULTI-FUNCTIONAL USE

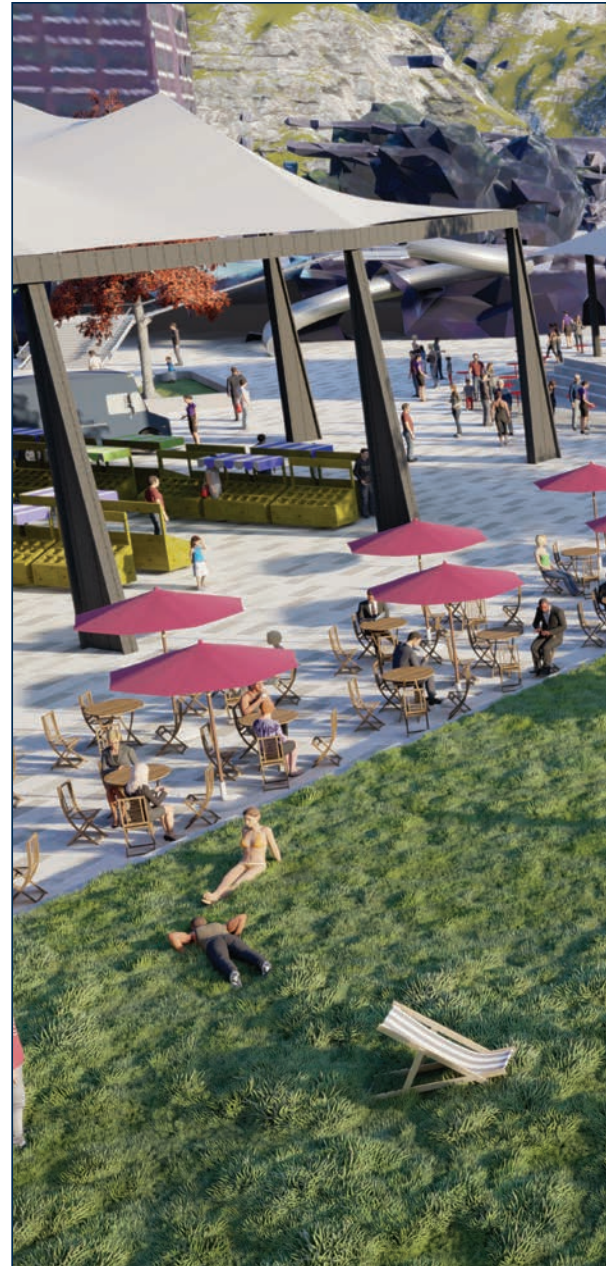
With the limited room available within Downtown Parks and the need to incorporate a wide variety of uses and activities, it is essential that the spaces within the parks have the ability to serve multiple functions at different times, both within a single day and across all seasons. This flexibility will allow the parks to adapt to changing needs over the coming years and will limit areas of the parks from becoming underutilized.

The parks are host to a wide variety of successful events in addition to their daily function as a place to relax and recreate, and the plan must support all of these needs. Areas designed for recreational activities must also be able to accommodate the regularly scheduled weekly events and special events held less frequently.

Designing multi-functional spaces requires thinking ahead to anticipate the needs of different uses and ensuring that by providing the infrastructure necessary for one use, another use is not restricted. For example, areas for parking should be designed to accommodate market and food truck events with proper spacing and access to utilities. On a smaller scale, gardens with retaining walls or raised planters should be designed as a comfortable place to sit as well.

The results of the visual preference survey confirm the desire for multi-functional spaces within the parks with a multi-use lawn as the highest ranked desired park use.

A raised lawn between the pavilion and riverfront promenade creates a continuous, open space. From lounging and throwing a frisbee to accommodating the growing events held at the pavilion, this lawn area is designed to accommodate a wide range of uses and activities throughout the year.









### CAROUSEL DRIVE: A SHARED STREET

Another example of incorporating multi-functional spaces into the plan is rethinking Carousel Drive between the Wilma Theater and the Caras Park Pavilion.

Carousel Drive is envisioned as a continuation of the park space – bringing the park directly to the Theater and activating this under-utilized space. Carousel Drive currently serves as an important circulation route for cars and deliveries. By transforming Carousel Drive into a woonerf, or shared street space, the plan retains this circulation function while being more welcoming to pedestrians and extending the park. The pavement materials signify a unified space between park and alley. The commercial space in the Wilma is opened up and maximizes its adjacency to the park, and additional on-street parking is provided.



Figure 2.62: Proposed Carousel Drive design during normal hours in the near term





Figure 2.63: Carousel Drive existing condition





### CAROUSEL DRIVE: DURING SPECIAL EVENTS

During large events and other special occasions, Carousel Drive can be closed to traffic to function as an extension of the pavilion plaza, creating a more inviting and clearer connection between Caras and East Caras Parks under the Higgins Avenue bridge.

The multi-functional spaces in the plan build upon the successful functions of the park today and provide the flexibility and space needed to accommodate the park's many popular and growing events.



Figure 2.64: Proposed Carousel Drive during special events in the long term





Figure 2.65: Proposed Carousel Drive design during normal hours in the near term





# PARKING

### CURRENT CONDITIONS

A significant portion of both Caras and East Caras Parks are dedicated to surface parking lots today, providing a much needed supply of parking for the parks and Downtown. As the demand for high-quality park and event space in Downtown continues to grow, the use of limited prime riverfront land for the single-purpose of storing cars will likely need to be rethought. The conversation on parking in the North Riverside Parks is part of a larger story that must take into consideration the greater Downtown area and larger transportation network.

### SHORT-TERM

- Implement park improvements that do not remove parking
- Develop employee parking strategies
- Better utilize nearby existing MPC facilities

### MID-TERM

- Provide new temporary and shared parking options nearby
- Transform some of the parks' parking into park and green space
- Implement shared use pathway connections to improve alternative transportation into downtown.

### LONG-TERM

- Create replacement parking in new mixed-used buildings that include structured parking
- Transform the remaining surface parking into park and green space

### ACCESSIBLE PARKING

- Maintaining and improving accessible parking within the parks is a top priority within every phase of this plan.



Figure 2.66: Parking currently takes up a large portion of Caras and East Caras Parks



## DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN

A large area of surface parking can be destructive to the vitality of the park. However a park “for everyone” means there must be some parking available for various needs. The Missoula Downtown Master Plan addresses parking by organizing the downtown on the basis of parking sheds – walkable sectors that

address their parking demand collectively with garages. Parking should ideally be located on-street and in mid-block garages where they can be shared by multiple users. A structure is recommended at the western side of the park that would offer a combination of parking structure, year-round community center, restaurant, shopping destinations, and Downtown living.



Figure 2.67: The Downtown Master Plan illustrates possible locations for new parking garages. This includes one in the western portion of Caras Park.



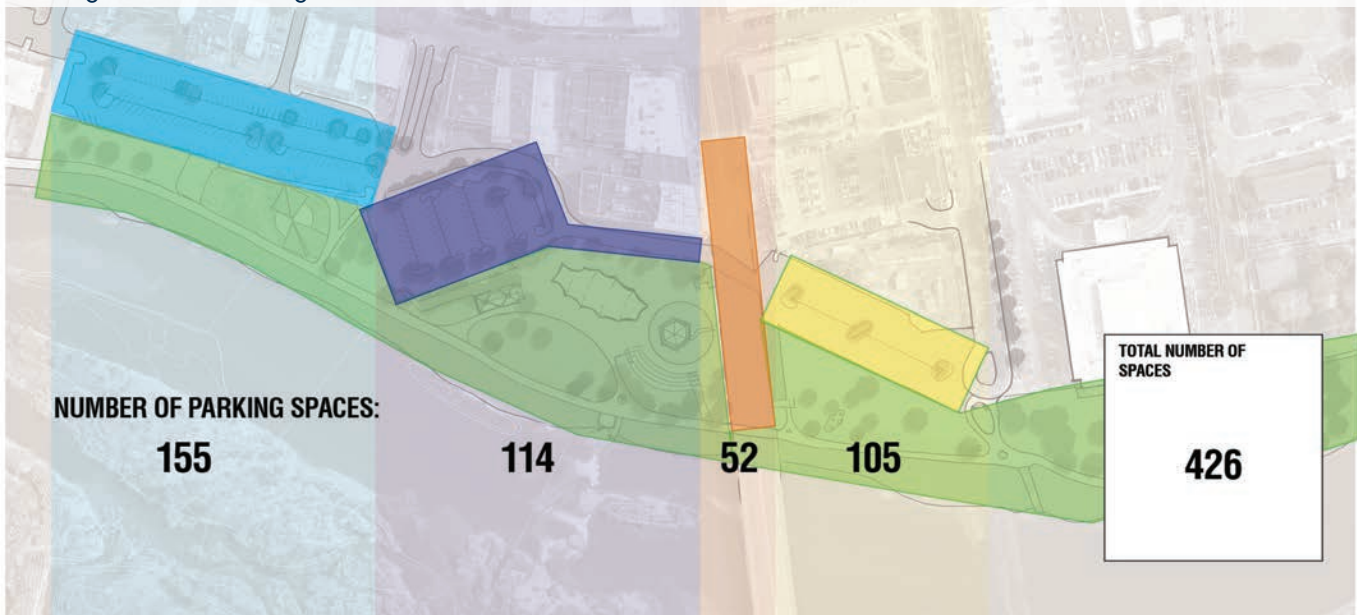
### APPLYING THE PARKING STRATEGIES

The parking strategies of the Downtown Master Plan, as they are applied to parking in the North Riverside Parks, are spread across three time frames. In the short-term, park improvements that do not impact parking can occur as policies and utilization of other downtown parking locations are enhanced. With guidance from the Missoula Parking Commission and the opportunities to relocate parking to other areas of Downtown Missoula, surface parking can be transformed into green space and other park amenities. In the long-term, with the creation of new or the expansion of existing parking structures, the remainder of the surface parking in Caras Park can transition into high-quality park amenities for residents and visitors. The long-term full build-out of the park plan will likely require consolidating parking in new parking garages in key locations across the Downtown, including one within a new, mixed-used building on an existing surface parking lot within Caras Park.



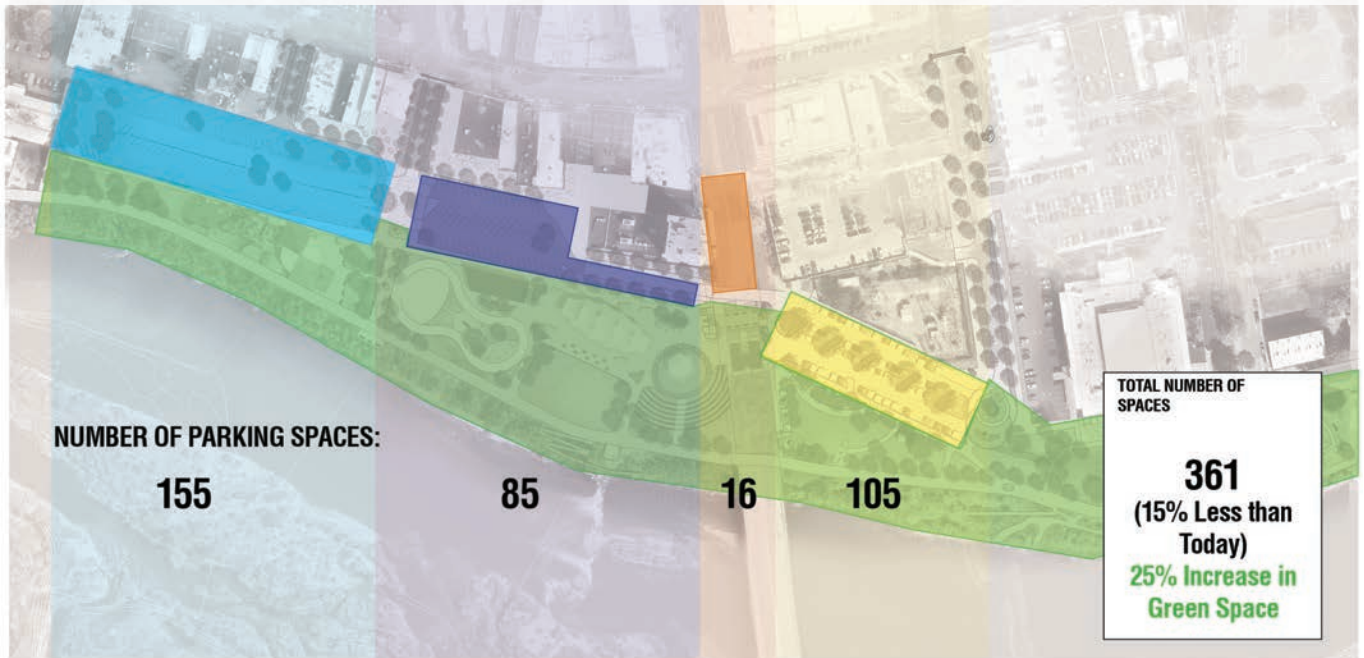
Figure 2.68: Potential mixed-use building with parking and community facility in Caras Park (Long-Term Scenario)

#### Parking Estimates: Existing Conditions

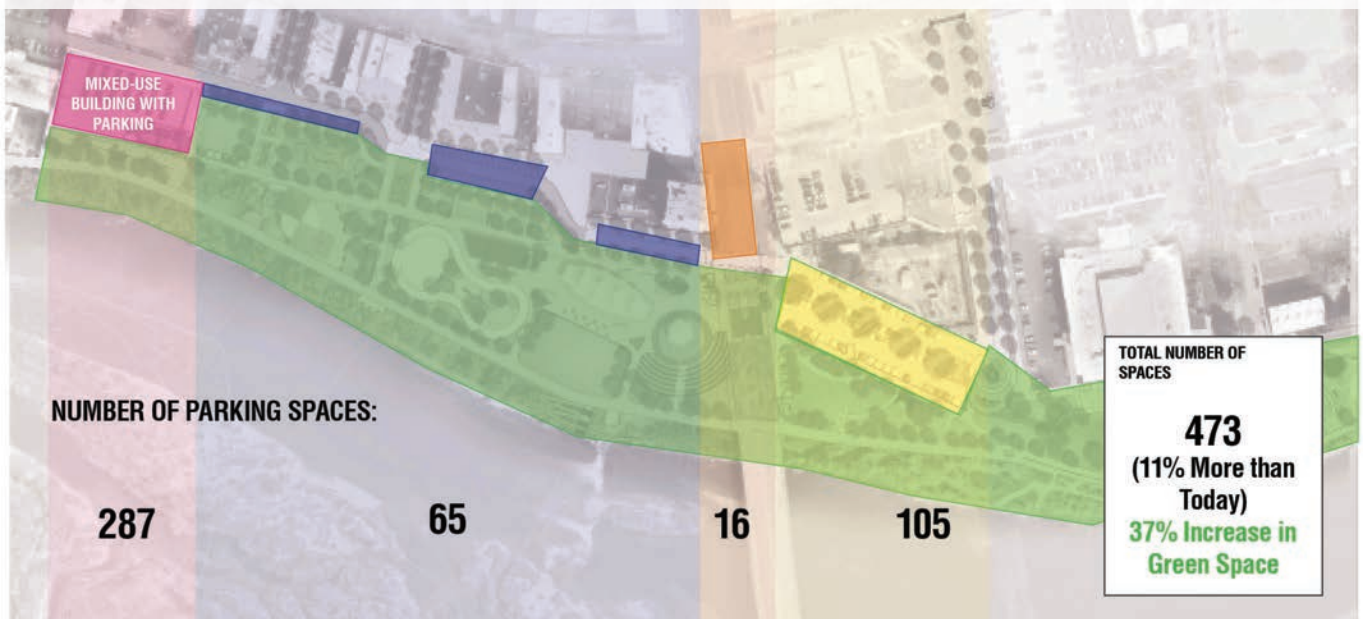




Parking Estimates: Possible Mid-Term Scenario



Parking Estimates: Possible Long-Term Scenario





# IMPLEMENTATION

## PARTNERS AND FUNDING

The North Riverside Parks and Trails Design Plan advances adopted plans and aligns itself with other City and community projects including the Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area, the Downtown Missoula Master Plan, City accessibility plans, the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Plan, and various other Downtown Partnership initiatives.

This design plan has multiple partners and public support by involving a steering committee comprised of Downtown business owners, nearby residents, historic preservationists, ecologists, representatives from the arts and culture communities, and park users (both passive and active).

The project leverages outside funding and is not necessarily reliant on property taxes in accordance with state and federal guidelines which make the park eligible for funding. The park plan also lends itself to charitable and philanthropic participation. The park plan is fiscally sustainable in that it adds amenities that are expected to collect user fees. The project preserves and enhances the Missoula community and neighborhood values and increases Missoula's economic vitality by offering a regional destination that is not out-of-scale with its surroundings. The year-round community center could be designed in a way to accommodate vital community and cultural services such as childcare services, homelessness, mental health counseling and monitoring, and social connections for people ordinarily disenfranchised from typical park activities. The year-round community center is planned to be over 40,000 square feet and could host a variety of social services and health-related programs.

Upon adoption of the plans and before implementation of improvements, construction documents will be developed. As the plan moves from visionary to implementation, another public process involving stakeholders will take place. It is at this stage that the details of utilities, waste management, signage, lighting, snow storage, etc. will be designed.



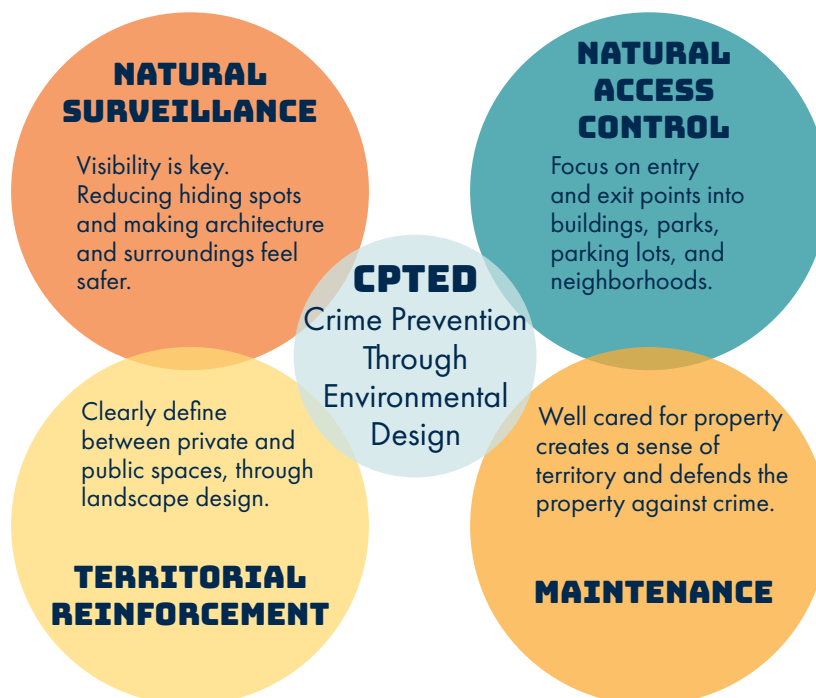
## EXPLORE COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVES

Public space safety improvements can be shaped by new guidelines, including updated and more inclusive Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles (which work by increasing the chances that a crime will be deterred by the presence of bystanders). The North Riverside Parks Plan supports multiple uses at different times of the day (to play, exercise, relax, attend events, and connect with nature) and includes facilities designed for use by people of many ages, abilities, and cultures. Community organizations and leaders in Missoula can work with the City and police department to improve safety and strengthen community ties through the use of community policing, restorative justice methods, and CPTED strategies updated to reflect best practices for safety and inclusivity.

A community engagement process can identify appropriate programming details to enhance community safety. Common programming includes enhanced relationships and

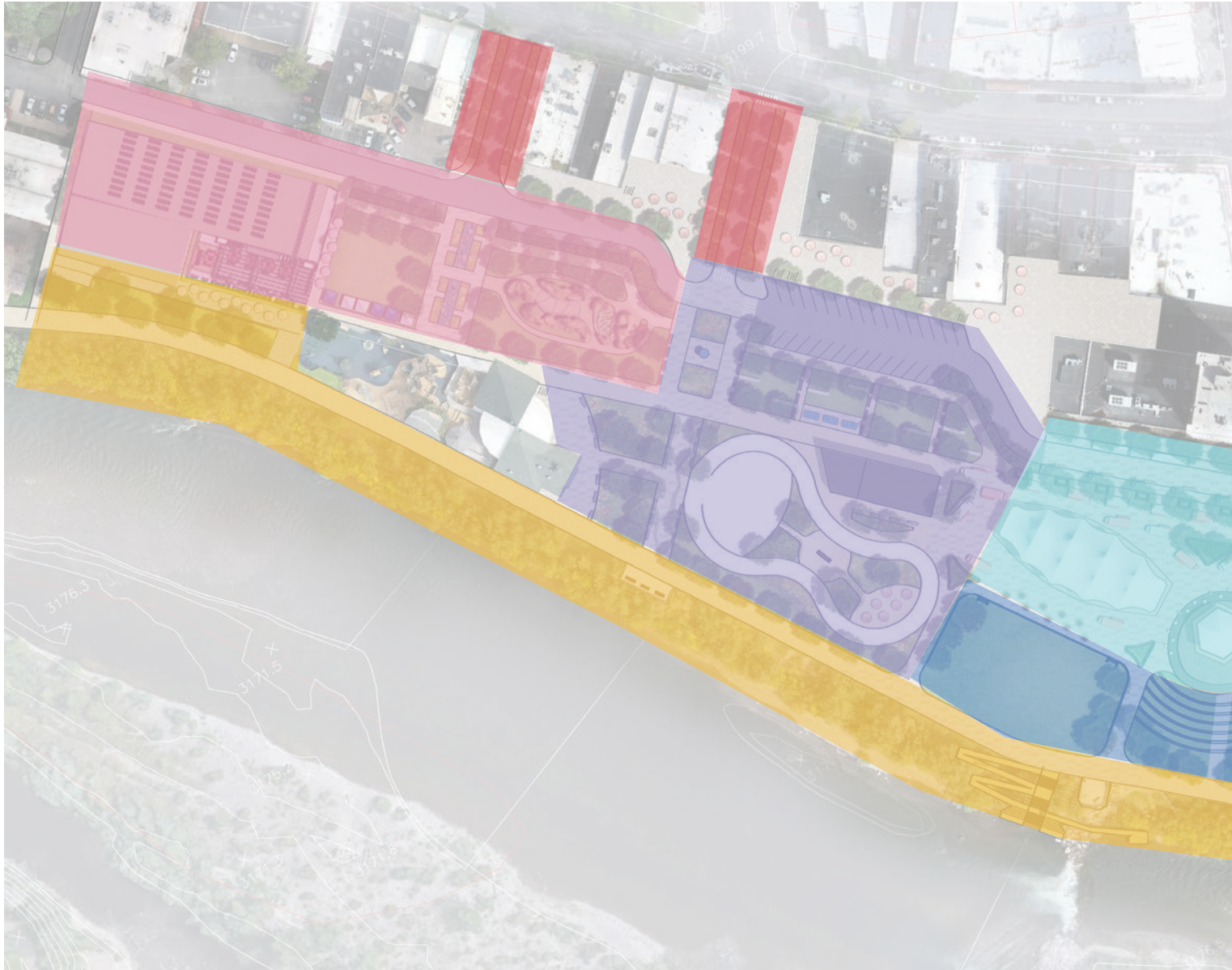
employment pathways between downtown businesses and non-profits serving at-risk youth in the region and locally and strategies to reduce turnover among community resource officers. It is important to ensure adequate staffing and ongoing relationships between the police and community. Funding for additional resources to accommodate more activities in the North Riverside Parks can be generated by accompanying increases to general fund revenues. Funding for new, expanded, or improved facilities can be generated by a Capital Improvement Program or Impact Fee.

The park design should reduce isolated places where crime can take place unseen. Safety can be increased by conducting studies on problem crime areas, initiating community engagement, and “eyes on the street” programs. More active storefronts and ground floors promote walkability. Community members can work with the police department to create safer streets.



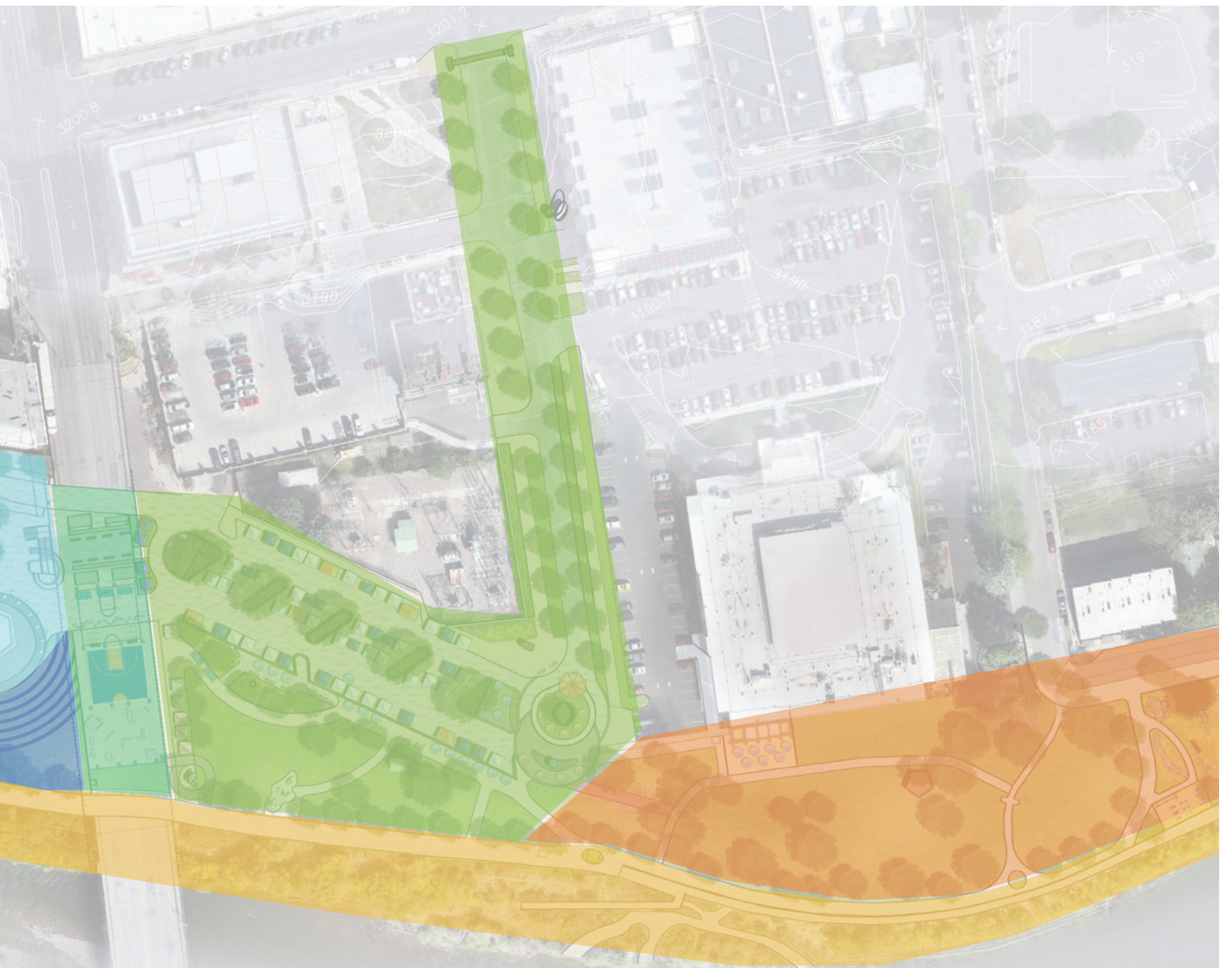


**PHASING PLAN**



<p>This diagram shows the different phases of implementation.</p>	<p><b>Parking Expansion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking &amp; traffic reconfiguration</li> <li>• Pedestrian pathways</li> <li>• Parking garage/ community center in mixed-use building</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ryman St Entrance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian entry</li> <li>• Traffic reconfiguration</li> <li>• Entry signage</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ice Ribbon</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skate ribbon</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Restrooms</li> </ul>	<p><b>Events Lawn</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raised lawn</li> <li>• Amphitheater</li> <li>• Stormwater infiltration</li> <li>• Update pathways</li> </ul>





Caras Park	Higgins Underpass	East Caras Park	Promenade	Bess Reed Park
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carousel Dr. updates</li> <li>• Update plaza</li> <li>• Bandshell paving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian access from bridge</li> <li>• Underpass activation</li> <li>• Lighting</li> <li>• ADA ramp</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking &amp; plaza</li> <li>• Park signage</li> <li>• Art/sculptures</li> <li>• Substation screening</li> <li>• Restroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Riverfront promenade</li> <li>• River access</li> <li>• Riverbank restoration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patio expansion</li> <li>• Pathway reconfiguration</li> <li>• Gazebo</li> <li>• Exercise equipment</li> </ul>









*Chapter 03:*

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**3. Downtown Lions & Kiwanis Parks**



## DOWNTOWN LIONS & KIWANIS PARKS

### BACKGROUND

According to the Master Parks and Recreation Plan for the Greater Missoula Area, parks less than 5 acres in size are considered neighborhood parks and are designed to serve the residents of the neighborhood immediately adjacent to the park.

Downtown Lions and Kiwanis Parks are considered neighborhood parks. Because of their proximity to downtown, the library, university, Clark Fork River, Ron's River Trail, and other community parks, they should be designed to complement the other parks in this plan, as well as serve the recreational needs of residents immediately adjacent to the parks.



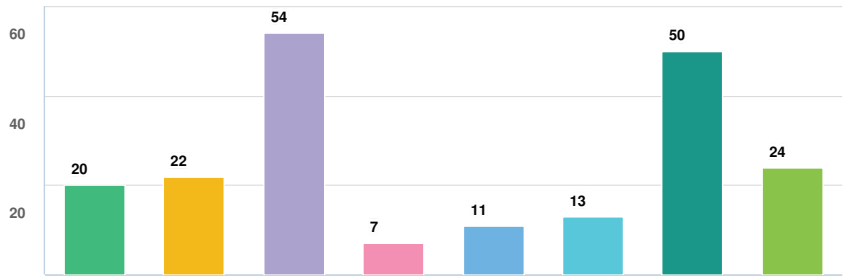


## PUBLIC PROCESS

Dover Kohl & Partners were hired to lead the design of Caras, East Caras, and Bess Reed Parks, while the design process for Kiwanis and Downtown Lions Parks was led by Missoula Parks and Recreation staff.

Feedback from the various stakeholder meetings, public open houses and online reveal were used to inform the design of these parks.

Q1 What features would you most likely use in Kiwanis & DT Lions Parks? (pick 3)

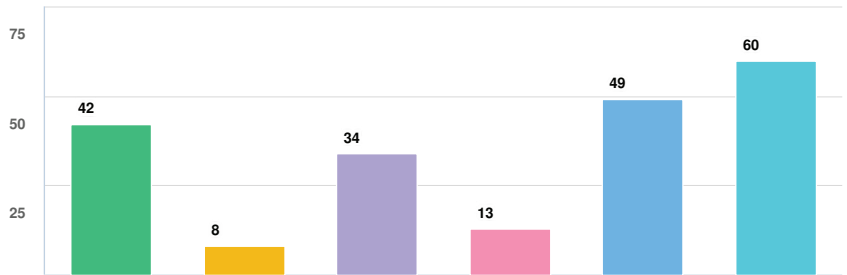


**Question options**

- Picnic Pavilion
- Playground
- Ron's River Trail
- Volleyball Courts
- River Surfing Wave
- Tennis/Pickleball Courts
- River Access/connectivity
- Multi-Use Lawn

Mandatory Question (73 response(s))  
Question type: Checkbox Question

Q2 What excites you the most about the Kiwanis & DT Lions Plans? (pick 3)

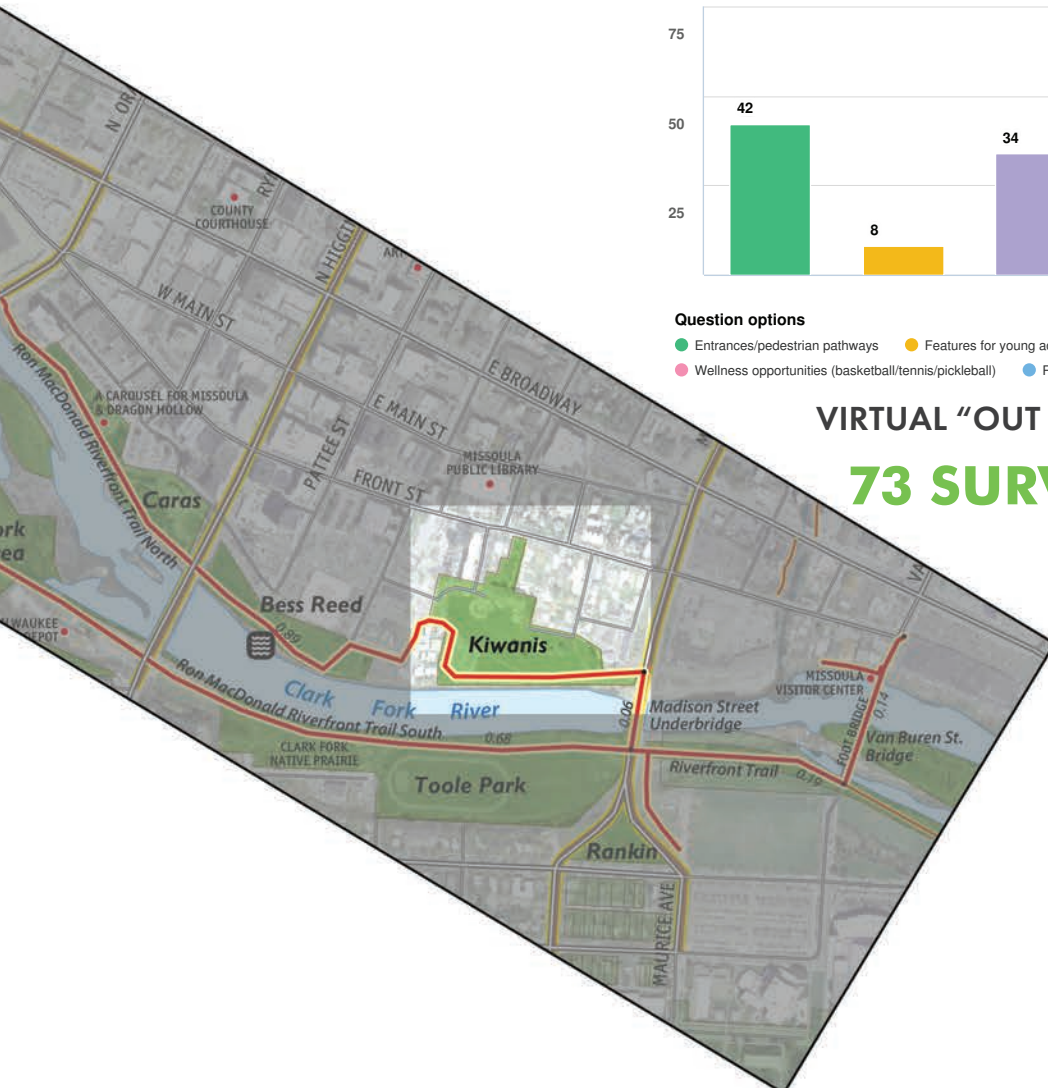


**Question options**

- Entrances/pedestrian pathways
- Features for young adults/tweens/teens
- Open lawn for relaxing/sports/games
- Wellness opportunities (basketball/tennis/pickleball)
- River Access/connectivity
- Ron's River Trail Connections

## VIRTUAL "OUT TO LUNCH LAUNCH"

# 73 SURVEY RESPONSES





## KIWANIS PARK

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

In 1934 the Kiwanis Club transferred park land to the City of Missoula for use as a public park and playground.

In 1976 Land & Water Conservation Funds were granted to further develop Kiwanis Park. Part of the LWCF agreement is that the entire park will be managed for outdoor recreation in perpetuity.

Kiwanis Park is in the Heart of Missoula neighborhood. ROAM student housing and the Missoula Library are adjacent to the park. Many people use the park entrance on Front Street to connect to Ron’s River Trail, the Madison Street pedestrian bridge, and the University of Montana.

The park contains a mutli-use lawn, tennis courts, a sand volleyball court, basketball court, a playground, and picnic pavilion.

Ron’s River Trail forms the southern border of the park along the river. On the eastern edge of the park, the trail’s terminus is under the Madison Street bridge at a popular river access site. To the west the trail wraps around private property, and becomes an on-street route along Levasseur Street.



Figure 3.1: Kiwanis Park existing conditions







### 03: Downtown Lions & Kiwanis

## KIWANIS PARK PLAN





Figure 3.2: Kiwanis Park Conceptual Master Plan





**KIWANIS PARK IN DETAIL**



The Kiwanis Park Master Plan expands on a history of active use. Community members and neighbors expressed a desire for the Front Street entrance to the park to be improved into a formal gateway. The trail should be widened and connect all the way to Ron’s River Trail to provide a more direct route of travel from Front Street to the University of Montana on the south side of the river and from Downtown to the river.

Additional recommendations are to add pickleball courts to the existing tennis courts, an additional sand volleyball court, and an area for yard games such as bocce ball. Additional trees should be located throughout the park, as well as places to rest and watch the river.

Ron’s River Trail should be widened to at least 16’ and extended to better connect with Bess Reed Park to the west and Missoula College to the east.



## KIWANIS PARK IN DETAIL



1 Park Gateway



5 Bocce Ball Court



2 Basketball Court



6 Playground



3 Tennis & Pickleball



7 Picnic Pavilion



4 Volleyball Courts



11 Multi-Sport Lawn



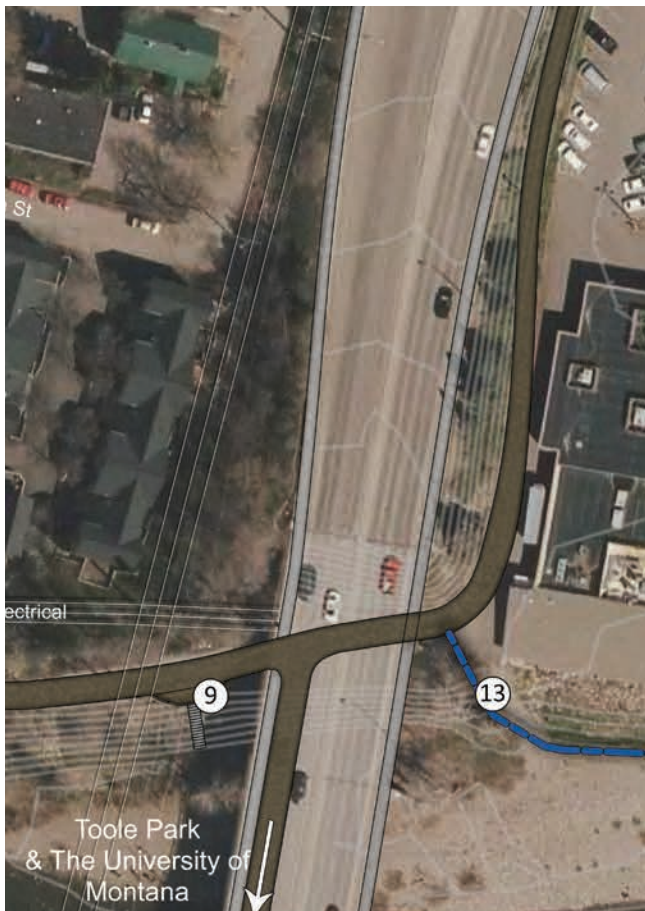
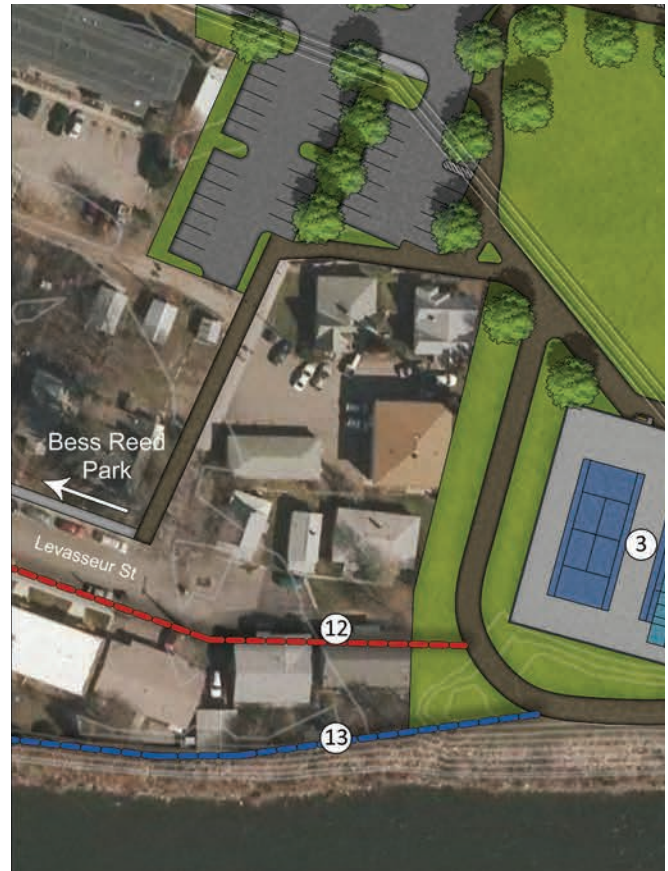
### 03: Downtown Lions & Kiwanis

#### KIWANIS PARK IN DETAIL

The existing trail route between Bess Reed and Kiwanis Park can be confusing, especially to visitors or people unfamiliar with the trail network.

Both year-round and seasonal trail connection options should be developed to keep Ron's River Trail along the river wherever possible.

As property ownership changes and urban infill increases density in downtown, there is potential for connecting Ron's River Trail directly west of Kiwanis park.



In the near term a seasonal trail could be created along the river side of the floodwall connecting Bess Reed and Kiwanis Parks. This trail would have to allow seasonal flooding and would likely be closed during high water in the spring.

A similar seasonal trail connection is needed to the East of Kiwanis Park, in front of the Double Tree Hotel. This would connect Ron's River Trail to the existing Van Buren Pedestrian Bridge, Eastgate Shopping Center, The University of Montana, and Missoula College.



## KIWANIS PARK IN DETAIL



9 River Access



12 Potential Trail Connections



10 River Overlook



13 Potential Seasonal Trail Connection

Expansion of Ron's River Trail should take into account current and future needs for river access and places for users to stop and enjoy the river. The trail should be 16-20' wide to allow enough space for the different types of trail users.

Trails that allow seasonal flooding must be constructed in a way that does not compromise the health and flow of the Clark Fork River.



# DOWNTOWN LIONS PARK

## CONTEXT MAP

Downtown Lions Park, West Broadway Island, and Silver Park are connected by Ron’s River Trail and the California Street pedestrian bridge. The bridge provides an important connection across the river and gets substantial year-round use.

This portion of the downtown parks plan contains some of the last remaining floodplain in the downtown area. As recreational use of the river increases, these critical floodplain and riparian habitat areas must be protected, and the human use should be appropriately managed.

Ron’s River Trail should be connected east to Caras Park and Downtown. This trail should be separated from Broadway with a buffer or grade change and follow ASHTO guidelines.



Figure 3.3: Downtown Lions Park context map





Figure 3.4: Downtown Lions context aerial









Figure 3.6: Downtown Lions existing condition



**03: Downtown Lions & Kiwanis**

**DOWNTOWN LIONS PARK PLAN**





Figure 3.7: Downtown Lions Conceptual Master Plan





## DOWNTOWN LIONS PARK IN DETAIL



The West Broadway Corridor is an area of Missoula with a lot of potential future growth. Much of the new development in this neighborhood is in the form of multi-family housing.

The increased density of the neighborhood will result in higher use of Downtown Lions Park and ultimately a desire for more park amenities. Amenities such as a playground, a community garden, and picnic shelter are particularly desirable park features for residents of multi-family complexes with limited outdoor space. The park amenities shown in the master plan will increase desirable behavior in the park and also increases natural surveillance or “eyes on the park” which helps reduce undesirable behavior and is critically important in this area.

In addition to park features, the plan calls for additional park and trail lighting and managing vegetation to create open site lines. The park design follows Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles (CPTED) which emphasizes designing the built environment in a way that naturally helps manage behavior in public spaces.



# DOWNTOWN LIONS PARK IN DETAIL



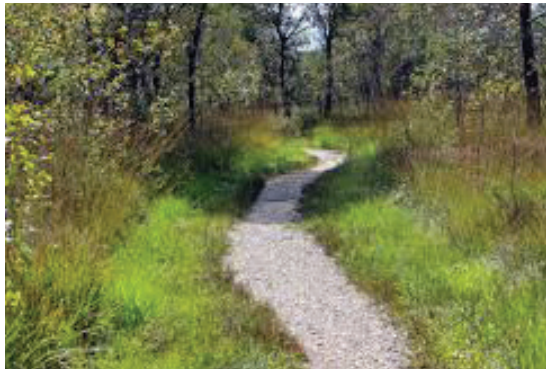
1 Playground



5 Park Kiosk



2 Trail & Park Lighting



6 Natural Surface Trail



3 Picnic Pavilion



Trail Connections



4 Community Garden



River Access



**DOWNTOWN LIONS PARK IN DETAIL**



The riparian area along the Clark Fork River is an important floodplain and wildlife habitat. This beautiful riparian habitat is a unique and special feature in Downtown Missoula. As river recreation increases, it is important to manage and provide for diverse recreational access, while protecting the river and riparian habitat.

Recreational river use has exploded over the past few years. Providing additional areas for users to access the river will help to spread the human impact over several locations and help reduce negative effects such as erosion to any one spot.

The portion of the river between Downtown Lions Park and West Broadway Island is unique to town as it provides an area of calm slow water. The Flynn Lowney spillway creates an opportunity for another recreational surf wave. Enhancing the existing irrigation headgate and installing a fish screen is an important opportunity which helps to further the goal of protecting and enhancing the Clark Fork River.



## DOWNTOWN LIONS PARK IN DETAIL



1 Trail & Park Benches



8 River Access



2 Trail & Park Lighting



9 Fish Screen



6 Natural Surface Trail



10 Pedestrian Bridge



7 Surf Wave



Ron's River Trail