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Montana Department of Transportation to Improve Missoula 5th, 6th Streets
Crews will resurface roads, paint new lines

MISSOULA, Montana (September 17, 2020) – More improvements are coming to Missoula’s Riverfront neighborhood. The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) is launching the Missoula S 5th and 6th project to resurface the roadway and improve pavement lines. Starting September 21, Knife River crews will begin major construction on South 5th Street W and South 6th Street W between Higgins Avenue and Russell Street. Work is expected to wrap up in October.

“We have heard positive feedback from residents about the changes that have been made to these roads,” John Schmidt, Missoula District Construction Engineer, stated. “This project will build on the City of Missoula’s work and once this project is complete, travelers will experience a much smoother ride on 5th and 6th street with clearer roadway lines.”

In order to complete this work and to prevent damage to personal vehicles, on-street parking is currently not permitted in the project area during work hours, which are generally Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Access to residents and businesses will remain open throughout this work.

Preliminary work began on Monday, Sept. 14 with the clearing of low hanging tree branches. During the week of September 21, crews will start the mill and fill process. This involves grinding down the first layer of damaged pavement and repairing roadway ruts and cracks. Once complete, an overlay of fresh asphalt (the “fill”) is placed on top of this newly smoothed surface. In early October, residents can expect striping, or painting of new road lines.

In the fall of 2019, changes were made to the lane configurations along South 5th Street W and South 6th Street West, which included wider parking lanes, buffered bike lanes, a single driving lane, and added turn lanes at the signalized intersections. This work was completed through a close collaboration between MDT and the City of Missoula. A study of safety and operations deemed that the two travel lanes were not necessary to accommodate the number of cars on those streets and were contributing to a number of safety issues; including pedestrian crossing and bicycle access challenges.

Since last fall, residents have reported feeling much safer crossing the streets and bicycle use on these streets has increased. The City of Missoula, with the help of some neighbors, has identified changes to the striping that will be made after MDT’s upcoming pavement preservation project. The new lines will be simpler, with a striped buffer on one side of the bike lane, wider parking lanes, and cleaner approaches to the major intersections.

The Montana Department of Transportation reminds everyone to remember the Three S's of work zone safety: speed, space and stress. Slow down when approaching work zones and follow posted speed limits. Leave adequate braking room between vehicles and don't pass on the shoulder. Finally, stay patient, pay attention and plan for delays. Fines double in work zones.

Those looking for updates or information on this project are advised to email kristine@bigskypublicrelations.com. Weekly updates on construction will be sent to all who have registered. Questions about construction can also be directed to the project hotline at (406) 207-4484.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided upon request. Persons who need an alternative format should contact the Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation, 2701 Prospect Avenue, PO Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620. Telephone 406-444-5416 or Montana Relay Service at 711.

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