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PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS COMING TO SILVER PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

Wyoming Street to Connect Orange and Russell Streets, Silver Park to be Completed

The riverfront neighborhood between Orange and Russell streets will see major changes this summer as the City's Missoula Redevelopment Agency completes a new City park and extends Wyoming Street from the civic stadium to Russell Street.

Construction started in earnest this week and will disrupt travel on the Riverfront and Bitterroot Branch trails as well as under the railroad trestle between McCormick Park and the civic stadium. The results will be well worthwhile, easing east-west traffic with another collector street, bringing a 173-space parking lot into service for the civic stadium and the area and completing 14.5-acre Silver Park.

"The east-west connection of the street will relieve traffic congestion on South Third Street and possibly West Broadway," said MRA director Ellen Buchanan. "And it gives access to the stadium. There's public benefit all the way around."

The project is financed by \$5.7 million in tax-increment revenue bonds sold recently. It encompasses

- **Building Wyoming Street from the end of Cregg Lane to California Street, completing its connection between Russell and Orange streets.** The street will be an urban street with diagonal parking and 16-foot sidewalks in a planned two-block commercial area at the east end, then pass through two blocks of planned residential area.
- **Replacing the railroad trestle.** To allow the street to pass underneath the railroad trestle, the project will include replacement of the old wooden trestle with a new bridge. The City

will own the new bridge, and Montana Rail Link will retain ownership of the tracks on top of it.

- **Completing Silver Park.** The 14.5-acre park already has a main riverfront trail with timber frame shelters along it and a boat ramp. Construction throughout the summer will bring a series of internal trails; a large informal play area; a timber frame pavilion with gathering space; public art; and a timber frame picnic shelter. More parking will be added on the east side of the park, serving the park and the civic stadium.

Many of the materials used in the project are recycled. Missoula College's heavy equipment program students are screening dirt piles to be reused as topsoil. Sinker logs from the old Milltown Dam area will show up in timber frame structures. Wood waste and foundation material from the old sawmill will also be reused in the development.

LS Jensen Construction will build the section of Wyoming Street. Frontier West will replace the railroad trestle. Quality Construction will complete Silver Park.

Time schedule:

- The trestle will be closed during the last two weeks of April. The replacement will be completed June 1.
- The new parking lot will be completed by June 1.
- The extension of Wyoming Street will be completed in September.
- Silver Park will be completed in November.

Closures:

- The Bitterroot Branch Trail between the Riverfront and Milwaukee trails will be closed during the initial part of the project, likely until June 1. The north-south connection detour will take place through the Clarkfork Natural Area. Advanced detour signs with maps will be posted at all points leading to and at the specific points of detour.
- The boat ramp will be closed through approximately June 1.

The project has been made possible by years of hard work and "a very smart and courageous board," Buchanan said.

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