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PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

For immediate release through November 30, 2017

Residents invited to comment on plan for new park near Southgate Mall

Public comment accepted through November 30, 2017

Missoula Parks and Recreation invites residents to comment on the draft master plan for the new Montana Rail Link Park, a new 4.5-acre park planned for the corner of South Av. and Johnson St. Public comment on the proposed master plan will be accepted through Thursday, November 30, 2017.

Parks and Recreation and the Missoula Redevelopment Agency have been actively soliciting public comment on the plan since it was presented at a neighborhood open house earlier this month.

The park design is based on input gathered at an August, 2017 public design workshop where neighborhood residents participated in group activities to share their vision of the park. Workshop participants identified flexible open space, safety and accessibility as main values and interests. Residents ranked a playground, picnic shelter, restroom, large open lawn, off-leash dog area, community gardens and a multi-use sports court as high-priority amenities for the new park.

Based on public input and guidance from Franklin To The Fort and Southgate Triangle neighborhood leadership teams, City staff designed the current concept plan for MRL Park. The draft master plan incorporates the neighborhood's stated priorities, including a playground, picnic shelter, off-leash dog area, community gardens, large open turf area and numerous trees.

A master park plan is a comprehensive, community vision for park which guides park future development. Earlier this year, the City acquired a 12-acre parcel at Johnson and South from Montana Rail Link for \$2 million, a price substantially below market value, using 1995 Open Space Bond funds for the park and urban renewal district funding through the Missoula Redevelopment Agency for the remainder of the parcel.

The sale and donation by Montana Rail Link of the 12 acres will allow the City to fill in the last missing link in the Bitterroot Trail between downtown Missoula and Hamilton, and build a park at the junction of two neighborhoods that have a shortage of open space and parks. In addition, the railroad has agreed to support a bicycle-pedestrian railroad crossing at Central Avenue, adjacent to the new park, supporting citizen goals for active transportation, connectivity, access and parkland service.

To view the draft master plan and comment, please visit www.missoulaparks.org. For additional information, contact Patrick McGannon, Parks and Trails Design /Development Coordinator, via [email](#) or phone Patrick at 552-6261.

[November, 2017 Open House presentation and plan overview](#)

[Draft master park plan](#)

[Public comment form-printable PDF](#)

[Public comment form-MS Word](#)

[August, 2017 Design Workshop presentation](#)

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