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MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION PRESS RELEASE

Residents invited to Westside Park and Playground Grand Opening October 29

Missoula Parks and Recreation and its partners invite residents to celebrate the grand opening of the all-new school-age playground at Westside Park on Saturday, October 29, from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., rain or shine. Kids and their families will have a blast with entertaining games and activities for all ages, delicious concessions and a dance party with local DJ “Professor Of Fun” Coach Shane. The celebration is free.

Mayor Jordan Hess will kick off the event with brief remarks and donor recognition at 4 p.m. The project was made possible by a \$1 million grant from the Dennis and Phyllis Washington Foundation and many private and public partners, including the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund, the Giuliani family, the Tykeson Family Foundation, the Sunderland Foundation, Providence St. Patrick Hospital, Missoula County Public Schools and the North Missoula Community Development Corp.

Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler says the project has been in the works since the fall of 2018, when 300 Lowell Elementary School students visited playgrounds across Missoula to help shape the design of their own new play space. “This playground comes from an incredible student, parent, neighborhood, and community effort,” said Gaukler. “The power of public-private partnerships to make our community healthier, more livable and inclusive is astounding.”

The new playground’s inclusive design allows children of all ages and abilities to play together. It contains unique features like a multi-level climbing structure dubbed Lowell Mountain and a massive net climber, which allows children to climb and explore on an elevated rope grid.

Other park improvements include new basketball and multi-sport courts, turf play areas, new pathways throughout the park and additional trees and landscaping. Phase 1 of the Westside Park Project, including a new preschool-age playground, picnic shelter, hand-washing station and restroom enclosure, opened in 2021.

The project’s total cost was approximately \$2.75 million. The City’s \$350,000 contribution was funded by developer impact fees and the City’s Capital Improvement Program.

Westside Park is located at 1100 Sherwood Street. Non-scary Halloween costumes are welcome and encouraged at Saturday’s celebration. (Small children will be in attendance. Prop or real weapons, bloody or gory costumes are not permitted.) Learn more about the project at www.missoulaparks.org or phone 406-721-PARK (7275).

END