

looking to the future, a glimpse at the past



Photo of Downtown Missoula taken from Mount Jumbo

Missoula
Redevelopment Agency



Introduction

The Missoula Redevelopment Agency has been working to change the face and the character of downtown Missoula for the last 25 years. On June 30, 2005, the revenue coming to the MRA for downtown ceased. There are several large projects that were started prior to June 30 that will be completed before the summer of 2006. This publication is an attempt to explain the why, what, and how of the City's very successful effort to reverse the decline of the historic heart of Missoula.

Through the decade of the 1970s, Missoula's downtown, like most downtowns in the United States, experienced a period of decline as a result of suburban growth and the creation of malls. The older infrastructure no longer met the needs of businesses and shoppers who were lured away by new stores located at the outskirts of the urban core. Vacant buildings were beginning to outnumber those housing successful businesses. Missoula's leaders decided that something needed to be done to reverse this cycle.

The City created the MRA in 1978. Urban Renewal District I was formed and, in 1980, the Redevelopment Agency began receiving revenue to reinvest in the newly created district. The money that MRA receives after a district is created is simply the growth in property taxes that occurs because of new development or an increase in property value. Property owners pay no new or additional taxes as part of a tax increment district; however, they do benefit substantially because that growth in their property taxes that comes to MRA is spent in their neighborhood rather than being disbursed throughout the City and County.

The State law permits the creation of urban renewal districts in areas that are declared blighted. Several factors determine the designation of blight. These include poor streets and utilities, changing development patterns that cause migration out of an area, dilapidated buildings, and code violations, just to name a few. Clearly, Missoula's changing development patterns and shopping preferences devastated downtown, making it difficult for owners to maintain buildings that were vacant or rented at below market rates. The legislative requirement for the use of tax increment funds is that there must be public benefit. Founded on promoting sound reuse of the built environment, MRA eventually expanded its mission to restoring the riverfront and renovating Missoula's grandest buildings. The MRA and the City Council attacked the problem on as many fronts as the law would permit and a number of different programs were developed.

MRA funds assisted with the restoration of building facades; helped bring buildings into compliance with life safety codes through the installation of sprinklers and required exits; upgraded utility lines; assisted in the pavement of dirt alleys; repaved downtown streets; and finally, accomplished an array of public projects that enhance not only the downtown but the entire community. MRA funds have helped build and improve Missoula's extensive system of open space, creating a necklace of parks and trails on both sides of the river. Some of these projects include the Ron McDonald Riverfront Trail System, the bicycle/pedestrian bridges across the Clark Fork River, Caras Park, the Clark Fork Natural Park, Bess Reed Park, Evelyn Borg-Johnson Park, McCormick Park, and Kiwanis Park. These funds have also been instrumental in the creation of public gathering spaces such as Farmers Market Plaza, Bank Street Plaza, the Caras Park pavilion, and the Missoula Carousel.

Public and private partnerships are a critical ingredient in MRA's success in downtown. MRA and the Missoula Parking Commission worked together to construct the parking garage on Main and Ryman and several public parking lots. MRA partnered with the Missoula Downtown Association to enhance Caras Park, initiate an effort to have the downtown declared an historic district, and to purchase street and sidewalk amenities. MRA collaborated with the City and State to leverage funds and enhance projects where MRA was not the primary funding source. The Orange Street Bridge

reconstruction exemplifies a project where MRA funds were used to beautify the bridge and ensure good pedestrian walkways.

In the 25 year life of this District, tax increment revenues increased to over \$3,000,000 a year resulting in over \$20,000,000 of tax increment invested back into the downtown area. Most of the buildings have been renovated or brought up to code, many of which would not have been possible without the use of MRA funds. That expenditure has been multiplied by an investment of monies from other sources totaling in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The investment in the downtown is important, but the real success story is told when you visit the farmer's markets on Saturday, attend one of the multitude of events in Caras Park, take a child to ride the carousel, take a walk or ride your bike on the trail system, wander around downtown and visit the shops, art galleries, and restaurants, or just sit back and enjoy all of the activity on any given day. ■



MRA Board: Front (L to R): Karl Englund; Nancy Moe, Vice-Chair
Back (L to R): Rosalie Cates; Daniel Kemmis; Hal Fraser, Chairman

Previous Board Members

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Linda Hensley

Joan Jonkel

Ron MacDonald

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Al Sampson

Donna Shaffer

Leon Stalcup

Francis Superneau

John Toole

Previous Directors

Geoff Badenoch

Les Prentice



Missoula Redevelopment Agency



MRA Staff: (L to R): Ellen Buchanan, Kari Nelson, Chris Behan,
Lesley Pugh, Tod Gass and Jilayne Lee.

Missoula

Redevelopment Agency

missoula redevelopment agency 1981 - 1985

Red Rooster Trading Co. (After)



The restoration of the historic Smith Drug into the Red Rooster Trading Company won a State Historic Preservation Office award for excellence. MRA's participation included emergency exiting, sprinkler system, and interest subsidy in the facade restoration.

Smith Drug (Before)



MRA assisted in the restoration of this façade and emphasized the historic character of the structure including awnings, paint, signage and new masonry work. In subsequent years MRA helped the Depot in projects that included structural and renovation work, fire suppression, and expansion of the restaurant and parking lot.

Depot Restaurant



Sheraton Hotel



MRA was successful in obtaining a \$2.2 million Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) and used \$200,000 of tax increment funds to aid in the construction of the seven-story, 200-room Sheraton Hotel. The Hotel observed its grand opening in the fall of 1984. Some amenities include banquet and meeting facilities for up to 600 people, restaurant, lounge, and nearby Bess Reed Park. 150 permanent jobs were created in downtown Missoula by this project.

Missoulian Newspaper



A new publishing facility for the Missoulian daily newspaper, owned by Lee Enterprises, commenced construction in 1984. MRA assisted in right-of-way improvements and utility relocation. Lee Enterprises granted the City a recreational easement along its riverfront property, adding to public access and recreation along the river.

Central Square (Before)



This three-story commercial office building was one of the first major projects undertaken by the MRA. The Agency prepared and monitored an Urban Development Action Grant for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to assist in the financing of the project.

Central Square (After)



MRA Projects from 1981-1985

Acapulco Restaurant • Belmont Hotel • Central Square • Chausee' Jewelry • Comfort Inn • Creek Crossing • Crystal Theatre • Depot Restaurant • Downtown Parking District • Eye Care Northwest • Garden City News/Sharon Apartments • Golden Pheasant Building • Greyhound Depot • Higgins Building • Milwaukee Depot • Missoulian • Mullan Building • Musicians Union • Office Supply • Palace Hotel • Park Hotel • Riverfront • Sheraton Hotel • Smith Drug • Top Hat • Trappings • Western Montana Clinic • Wyckman's

1986 - 1990 missoula redevelopment agency

Caras Park (Before)



After constructing the Park in the late 1980s, subsequent improvements included installation of stair towers on both sides of the Higgins Avenue bridge, performing arts shelter, pavilion, river overlook, public art, Ron MacDonald Riverfront Trail map and dedication plaque, and various lighting and upgrade projects.

Street Trees



In 1990, MRA began planting street trees throughout the Urban Renewal District. The current inventory of MRA-planted trees is now over 500.

Riverfront Parks



MRA participated in the construction or renovation of most of the riverfront parks that line the Ron MacDonald Riverfront Trail System. These include Bess Reed Park, Kiwanis Park, Caras Park, John Toole Park, McCormick Park and the Clark Fork Natural Park.

Caras Park (After)



Central Park Parking (Before)



This 300 space parking structure was built in 1990 through the use of tax increment bonds. It won local and state awards for appropriate new construction in a historic district, as well as a national award for design excellence of an urban parking structure.

Central Park Parking (After)



The Trailhead



The Trailhead (Before)



MRA assisted The Trailhead with historic renovations at three different locations. First, at the corner of Third Street and Higgins Avenue; second, in its renovation of Missoula's first Buick dealership at the corner of Pine Street and Higgins Avenue (picture); and at its current location at 221 E. Front Street, which was formerly the Missoula Mercantile Warehouse.

Missoula Children's Theatre



A key component of this project was the purchase of the former Central School by the City of Missoula through MRA. MCT renovated the former school and constructed an addition housing a theatre. MRA provided improvements including installation of new sidewalks, sprinkler systems, and water, gas electric and sewer service.

MRA Projects from 1986-1990

Bess Reed Park • Big Sky Chili • Brick Pavers • Burlington-Northern Depot • Capital Building • Caras Park Tent • Central Park Parking Structure • Circle Square Building • County Courthouse • Creative Concepts • Crossings - Public Art • Crystal Theatre • Dajon Enterprises • Depot Restaurant Expansion • Downtown Alleys & Sidewalks • Downtown Street Trees • Florence Weston • Garden City Floral • Garlington, Lohn & Robinson • Giant Associates • Glacier Building Alley • Goldsmith's Bed & Breakfast • Greenleaf Cafe • Higgins Stairtower • Hoffmann Building • Humble Building • Independent Oil Station • JRJ Partnership/ Gordon-Prill • Kadena's Take-Away • Kerr's Draperies • Kite Building - Public Art • Milwaukee Station • Missoula Children's Theatre • Missoula County High Schools • Montagne Building • N. Higgins Ave. Parking Lot • New Era Bicycles • Northern Pacific Depot • Pattee St. Apartments • Public Art Committee • Returnings - Public Art • Riverbank Beautification • Riverfront Lift Station • Riverfront Surveys • Ryman St. Property • Shack Restaurant • South Shore Lights • Spiker Communications • Stoverud Clock • Sun Mountain Sports • The Trail Head • Toole & Easter • Uptown Cafe • Weston Building • Williams Law Firm • Worden, Thane & Haines • Worden's Market • Youth Home Mural • Zimorino Brothers

missoula redevelopment agency 1991-1995

A Carousel for Missoula



In 1995, Missoula celebrated the opening of the first hand-carved wooden carousel created in this country since the Depression. The MRA assisted by providing \$120,000 to the construction of the building that houses the carousel and gift shop. The MRA's contribution represented the largest individual funding source for this project, but there was tremendous public support for the effort including donations of materials, labor, services and money. In 2004, MRA also provided additional investment for improvements to enhance the safety of the building and surrounding plaza.

"The Missoula Redevelopment Agency has been a statewide leader in urban revitalization, and every Montana community wants to replicate Missoula's success. Downtown is the true heart of this community; it's alive with people, places, art, history, culture, and entertainment. The MRA Board of Directors and Staff had a vision, carried out that vision, and completed a long-term plan that created Montana's most amazing downtown. The community should be proud of MRA's accomplishments."

- Linda McCarthy

Executive Director, Missoula Downtown Association

Florence Building



Vacant in the 1980s, the Florence Hotel building has undergone substantial historic renovation to reclaim its prominence in downtown. The Hotel has been converted to retail space on the ground floor and professional office space on the upper floors. Areas in the building such as the original lobby, the McLeod Room, and the Governor's Room have been restored to their original character. MRA later assisted in replacing the aging sidewalks along Higgins Avenue and Front Street.

Hellgate High School



In 2000, a bond issue was passed to finance the renovation of the Missoula County Public High Schools, including the Hellgate HS auditorium. However, the budgeted funds did not cover all of the upgrades and features a modern auditorium ought to have. In 2003, MRA augmented the auditorium renovation by providing funds for improved seating and stage lighting. MRA also assisted in replacing 414 windows with historically appropriate windows in the Hellgate HS building in 1993.

Riverfront Place (Before)



The MRA provided tax increment assistance for the construction of a new office building on West Front Street. The four level, 33,000 square foot building was completed in late spring of 1995. This project represented the first major, privately-owned new construction in the downtown area in nearly 10 years.

Riverfront Place (After)



MRA Projects from 1991-1995

222 E. Pine St. • 228 N. Higgins • A Carousel for Missoula • Avalon Cafe • Bagels on Broadway • Bank of Montana • Bicycle Racks • Bikecentennial • Bluebird Building • Buckley Apartments • Capers Catering • Caras Park Kiosk & Overlook • Cattin' Around - Public Art • Circle Square Building • Courthouse Gazebo & Windows • Cowell Trust • Crystal Theatre • Depot Restaurant Building • Dolack Gallery • Double J L Corporation • Downtown Streets • E. Front St. Sidewalk • Florence Building • Forkenbrok Building • Fox Site Trail • Fox Theatre • Giant Associates • Gilligan's Rentals • Golden Pheasant Building • Great Northern Building • Hansen's Ice Cream • Hellgate High Windows • Howard's Apartments • Jay's Bar Building • JKW Investments • KLS Partnership • Leary/White • Locomotive 1356 • Mammyth Bakery/Cafe • Missoula Art Museum • Missoula Children's Theatre • Montana Building • Montana Pizza (Godfather's) • Mortan, Inc. • Mountain Line • North Shore Lighting • Northwest Distributing • Ogg's Shoes • Old Town Cafe • OZ Partnership • Parkside Townhomes • Perfect Ten Building • Pine St. Tavern • Radio Central Building • Red Rooster Trading Company • Riverfront Place • Ron's Roost • Schubert Buildings • Smith Hotel Demolition • South Shore Park & Sewer • South Side Neighborhood • SSS Investments Building • Street Furniture • Sutton West Gallery • Tangles Salon • Thrifty Travel Building • Touch America • Union Hall Building • Uptown Diner • Western Federal Savings • Weston Building • Williams, Ranney P.C. • Worden's Market • Wright Leasing • Wyckman's Office Supply • Zimorino's

1996 - 2000 missoula redevelopment agency

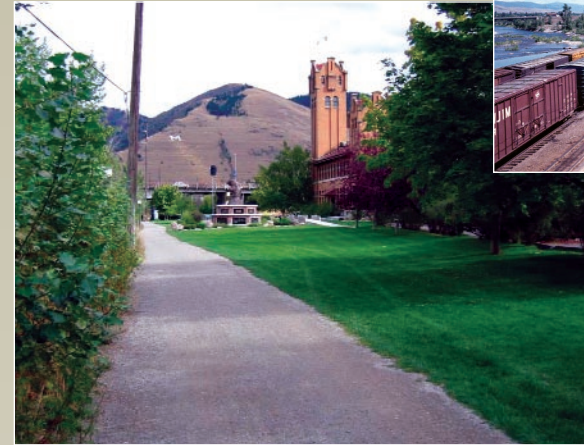


Headquarters Building (After)

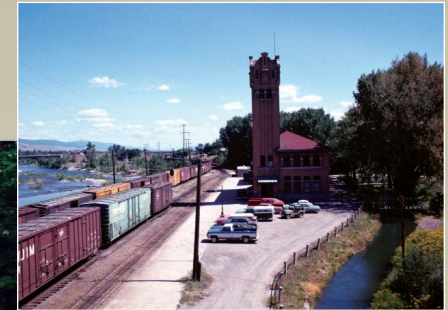
In the 1950s, two adjacent structures, the Headquarters Men's Club and Daily Meats, were joined to create one structure. Built in the early 1880s, the Headquarters Building is likely the oldest standing commercial structure in Missoula. The Daily building was built in the 1920s. The building won the Best Restoration - Commercial Building award from the Missoula Historic Preservation Commission.



Boone & Crockett Club (After)



Boone & Crockett Club (Before)



In 1996, MRA helped remodel the second floor of this historic building, which is now the home of The University of Montana's O'Connor Center for the Rocky Mountain West. In 2003, MRA invested additional funds in a project that added a "connector" link to the building that was originally built as two structures. Additionally, the interior of the ground level was remodeled and fire code issues were addressed.



Mountain Line Transfer Center

MRA participated in the new Mountain Line Transfer Center by providing funds toward the demolition of the former Fire Station No. 1 building and moving the transfer station from its former location on Broadway.

This project converted a vacant historic structure into 60 units of income-qualified housing. This is the largest single housing project undertaken in the downtown. The project won the 1996 Historic Preservation Award for Best Adaptive Reuse-Commercial.

Palace Apartments



MRA Projects from 1996-2000

100 E. Broadway St. Alley Paving • 121 Hickory St. • 140 W. Pine St. • 180-210 S. 3rd St. W. • 1st Baptist Church / School • 201 - 211 W. Broadway • 224 E. Pine St. • 228 N. Higgins Ave. • 319 W. Pine St. • 323 W. Pine St. • Bernice's Bakery • Birnbaum's Broadway Frame • Bitterroot Flower Shop • Boone & Crockett Club • Broadway/Higgins Project • Broadway/Rattlesnake Trail • C.O.A.D. Housing Grants • Caras Park Pavilion & Stairs • Catalyst • City Hall Remodel • Clark Fork Natural Park Gateway • Dajon Parking Lot • Desmonds • Downtown Alleys, Pavers & Streets • Elks Lodge • Far East Foods • Fire Station #1 • Gardengate • Gleim Building • Goldsmith's Ice Cream • Hathaway House • Headquarters Building • Higgins Avenue Plaza • Hilda Street Ditch Crossing • Human Resource Council Grants • Import Market • Iron Horse Pub & Grill • Johnston Building • Kadenas Restaurant • Kiwanis Park Lighting • Knights of Columbus • Lucy Building • MacArthur, Means, & Wells • MacKenzie River Pizza • Masonic • Temple Building • McCaffery Building • Millstone and Trail Markers • Milwaukee Railroad Right of Way • Missoula Art Museum • Missoula Children's Theatre • Missoula Textile Services • Montana Building • Moose Lodge • Mountain Line Transfer Center • Northside Railroad Crossing • Palace Apartments • Paradigm Architects • Partnership Health Center • Press Box • R.S. Federal Courthouse • Redbird Restaurant • River Street Family Estate • Rys-Sikora Apartments • S. 3rd St. W. Alley • Salvation Army • Senior Citizen Center • Short Stop Gas Station • Simons Building • Spiker Communications • Streetscape Amenities • Studebaker Building • Swift Building • Trappings • W. Railroad St. Parking Lot • Wilma Building • Worden House

missoula redevelopment agency 2001 - 2005

Millennium Building (Before)



Millennium Building (After)



The Millennium Building was the first new office building constructed in the Downtown since the Riverfront Place was erected in the 1990s. In the spring of 2002, MRA and the Missoula Parking Commission completed construction of the public portions of the project and dedicated the Bank Street Pedestrian Mall and Francis Superneau Parking Structure. MRA's assistance totaled \$327,529.

Orange Street Bridge



MRA made a commitment of \$800,000 to the Orange Street Bridge project and financed the Orange Street Bridge Pedestrian Underpass, making the bicycle and pedestrian facilities safer and more pleasant to use. Originally designed as a plain concrete bridge, MRA funded amenities to help the bridge's appearance fit with downtown. They included lighting, expanded sidewalks, decorative railing, pier coatings and bronze medallions.



Missoula Bicycle Works (Before)

MRA provided \$6,548 in assistance to renovate this building for a new bicycle business. This money was used to restore the historic facade, refinish the windows, and add new lighting and signage.



St. Patrick Hospital (Before)



St. Patrick Hospital (After)



St. Patrick Hospital worked with MRA staff for over a year on planning the construction of this facility to house Hospital medical staff, the Western Montana Clinic, and new diagnostic and treatment centers. MRA financed the demolition of the old Broadway building and assisted with relocating and upgrading utilities and making improvements to the public infrastructure.

Evelyn Borg Johnson Park



This new park incorporates colorful landscaping, a meandering trail for better pedestrian accessibility, and an elevated stairway to provide a safer and more convenient connection to the Ron MacDonald Riverfront Trail System.

Missoula Bicycle Works (After)

133-135 West Main



MRA assisted in two phases of the redevelopment of this historic brick building. The first phase included facade restoration and emergency exiting upgrades. The second phase included renovation of the interior street level and second floor.

MRA Projects from 2001-2005

1144 W. Broadway St. • 124 W. Pine St. • 133-135 W. Main St. • 140 W. Pine St. • 603 Woody St. • A Carousel for Missoula • Atlantic Hotel • Badenoch Recognition Project • Bank St. Pedestrian Mall • Basketball Courts Improvements • Bess Reed Park Boat Ramp • Bob's Sew & Vac • Boone & Crockett Club • Brennan's Wave • Caras Park Restrooms & Trail Paving • Civic Stadium • Clark Fork Commons • Cottonwood Trail Bridge • County Courthouse Remodel • DeMarois Building • Ditchstone Building • DoubleTree Hotel • Downtown Alleys • Downtown Historic Survey • Downtown Street Trees • Evelyn Borg Johnson Park • Executive Plaza • Florence Building • Fox Site • Fox Site Remediation • Goldsmith's Bed & Breakfast • Heart of Missoula Murals - Public Art • Hellgate High Auditorium • Hickory-Orange Trail Paving • Higgins Ave./Pine St. Water Line • iConnect Fiber Hotel • Jay's Bar Building • Kiwanis Park • LA Design • Laurie Lane Studios • Le Vasseur St. Sidewalk • Lennox Flats • Locomotive 1356 Repairs • Macy's Awning • Madison St. Pedestrian Bridge • McAdams Property • McArthur, Means & Wells • McCormick Park Aquatics Center • McCormick Park Lighting • Meadowsweet Herbs • Millennium Building • Missoula Art Museum • Missoula Bicycle Works • Missoula Federal Credit Union • Missoula Library & Garden • Montana Antique Mall • Montana Building • Montana Natural History Center • Monte Dolack Gallery • MRL Pedestrian Bridge Study • N. Higgins Ave. Street Redesign • Northside Railroad Crossing • Orange St. Bridge & Amenities • Paoli Building • Peak Development • Pearl Café & Bakery • Performing Arts Center • Poverello Center • Proper Shoppers - Public Art • Railroad St. Restoration • Rockin' Rudy's • Ron MacDonald Plaque • Sean Kelly's • Silver's Lagoon • Skatepark • Spruce Rooms • St. Patrick Hospital • Streetscape Amenities • Studebaker - Public Art • The Trail Head (221-229 E. Front St.) • University Apartments • Warehouse Mall • Wilma Building • Woody St. Parking Lot • Worden's Market

Public Art

Mayor John Toole established the Missoula Public Art Committee in 1985 to develop, review, and advocate for public art projects for the City of Missoula. The City Council and the Missoula Redevelopment Agency have included funds for public art as part of the construction of many private and public projects. The Committee has worked to develop a formal structure in which to create, develop and maintain public art as well as further public accessibility to the arts.

Returnings



Artist: Jeffrey Funk

A "play-sculpture" located on the east side of the Higgins Street Bridge in Caras Park.

Cattin' Around



Designer: Mike Hollern

A sculpture located at the Main Street entrance of the Central Park Parking Structure, home to the Missoula Parking Commission.

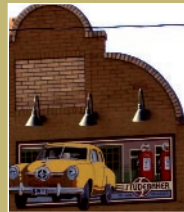
Bike Racks at Caras

Designer:
Bob Atkinson

One of the many pieces of functional art located throughout the Downtown.



Studebaker



Artist:
Stanley C.
Hughes

A mural located on the east wall of the historic Studebaker Building at 216 W. Main Street.

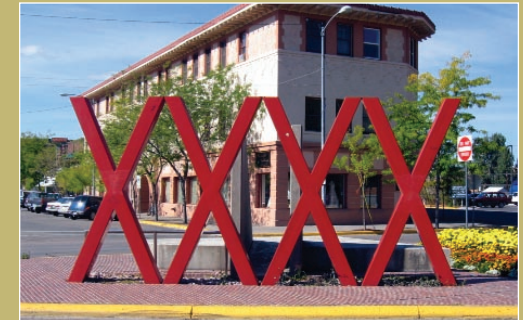
Proper Shoppers



Artist: Tom Rippon

A sculpture cast in bronze from a ceramic form located at the Mountain Line Transfer Center at 200 W. Pine Street.

Crossings



Artist: Taag Peterson

A sculpture representing railroad themes located at the north end of Higgins Avenue.

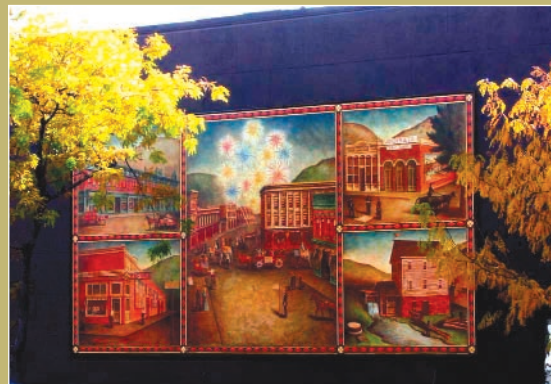
Millstone



Artist: Allan
Mathews

Millstone located in east Caras Park, salvaged from the original flour mill built in 1865.

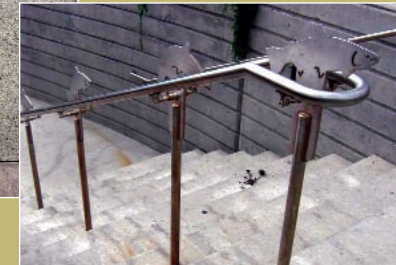
Heart of Missoula



Artist: Hadley Ferguson

Murals depicting historic Missoula located at the corner of Broadway & Higgins Avenue on the Allegra Printing building.

Footprints & Fish Railing



Designed by:
Dennis Greeno

Two of many artistic details located at the Bank Street Pedestrian Mall.

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