



## Fort Missoula Regional Park PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY AND FAQ • APRIL, 2015

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In April, 2015, Parks and Recreation and Missoula County Parks and Trails hosted an open house to accept public comment on and answer questions about construction and improvements at Fort Missoula Regional Park. Special thanks to all who participated in the April 2015 workshops and public open house. As we work to bring our park plans from 30% to 100% design detail, input from our park stakeholders, regular user groups, neighbors and park visitors is important. The FMRP Design Team appreciates your time and participation.

During the public open house, participants were encouraged to complete a questionnaire about the FMRP. Below are some of the questions and comments we received, along with responses from the Design Team.

### What did Open House participants like best about the plan for FMRP?

- This long-awaited project is finally coming to fruition.
- Trail connections to existing & proposed trails that include the Missoula to Lolo Trail.
- Thoughtful circulation patterns for both pedestrian and bicycle use.
- Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Era architectural style reinforces the rich history of Fort Missoula.
- Updated sports fields.
- Dog park.
- The history at Fort Missoula is very interesting.
- The plan includes lots of open space.
- The park plan, design efforts, management, and opportunity at FMRP

### What are the priorities for the design team as the project approaches the construction phase?

1. Designers have placed a high priority on efficient & thoughtful circulation patterns for bicycle, pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
2. There is considerable Open Space in the current plan. The large center area is approximately 18 acres. Additionally, the large expanse of multi-use fields will provide considerable open space for a variety of uses.
3. The Historic Preservation Committee will review CCC Era-style structures for interpretation of period architecture.
4. Per the guiding principles of the Fort Missoula Regional Park Plan, adequate parking with emphasis on shared perimeter parking has always been a priority. Considerable resources and time have been

spent on “right-sizing and locating” of all FMRP parking. When needed for major events, partnerships and alternative transportation such as bussing will enhance park access and limit impacts to residents, long term maintenance, and green space.

## Annexation Issues

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Following public hearings, City annexation of the park *only* is now complete. FMRP will be a highly-developed park, built for typical urban use, to urban standards. The entire Park will be managed and maintained by the City, with the County portion under an inter-local agreement for management by the City. Annexation addresses park-wide design standards, public safety, maintenance and management of the Park.

Citizens and local governments are committed to ensuring public safety in our parks and trails. CPTED (pronounced SEP-ted), or Crime Prevention through Environmental Design, is a critical component of public safety in parks. The City has a CPTED officer who will work with park designers to ensure law enforcement considerations are integrated into the park design. City Parks and Police regularly work together on public health and safety, through these CPTED principles.

In addition, FMRP annexation allows police to enforce City park ordinances, regulations, and standards uniformly and comprehensively to the entire FMRP, regardless of the underlying ownership. This allows the entire park to operate under the same set of rules, with a consistent set of policies for enforcement across the entire park.

Annexation streamlines 911 emergency services’ (Fire, Police, ambulance) response to the park—which would enhance visitor safety.

## Traffic and Parking

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### How will traffic concerns on South Avenue be managed?

As part of park annexation, the City has also accepted South Avenue. City Engineering is working toward a traffic analysis to determine need, which will assist in procuring funding for improvements. The City’s goal is to incrementally improve South Ave to include a complete street (pedestrian, vehicle, and bike uses) and appropriate traffic calming. The 2014 County Parks and Trails Bond funds cannot be used to rebuild South Avenue.

Four access points into the park will help disperse traffic and limit park through-traffic. Access points include:

1. South Ave. parking area between Suzanne Court and 31st: Will provide primary access to the Softball complex, dog park, walking paths and picnic shelters.
2. Old Fort Road parking area: Will provide primary access to the Softball complex, tennis courts, dog park, bocce, croquet and pickleball courts, picnic shelters and walking path.

3. New park access at South and 33rd: Will provide primary access to multi-use sports fields, and trails.
4. New park access at South and 36th: Will provide the most direct access to multi-use sports fields, trails, picnic shelter, and connection to the our historic and cultural neighbors including the Historic Fort Missoula Museum and Rocky Mountain Museum of History.

#### **Proposed Roundabout at South Av. and 33<sup>rd</sup> Street**

After consultation with neighbors and a comprehensive public process, the 2008 and 2012 approved FMRP Master Plan identified a roundabout at 33rd and South Avenues as a preferred means to manage traffic on South Avenue.

Roundabouts have been found to calm traffic, while minimizing car exhaust and frustrations of waiting at a traffic light. Compared to other types of intersections, roundabouts have demonstrated safety benefits. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, roundabouts provide a greater than 90% reduction in fatalities, a 76% reduction in injuries, 35% reduction in all crashes. Slower speeds are generally safer for pedestrians.

Roundabouts facilitate traffic flow, while allowing users, particularly those making left-hand turns, to access the park interior, multi-use sports fields, walking trails, and shelter plaza area. Many sports field users, like soccer or lacrosse participants, will likely continue through the roundabout to South and 36th, for more direct access to parking.

City Engineering and FMRP Design Team members will work closely to determine if a roundabout is the best application on South Ave. Regardless of intersection type, 33rd will be designed to meet the goals of safety, all transportation modes, and neighborhood connectivity.

#### **How is traffic managed within the park?**

The park interior includes a narrow, meandering road design to encourage low traffic speeds. The four park entrances described above will help disperse traffic and limit park through-traffic.

The park is designed to keep similar facilities together to reduce pedestrian crossings within the park.

Pedestrian and bicycle paths are adjacent to but separate from vehicle circulation patterns to prevent user conflicts. Internal circulation paths will accommodate multiple user types with wider paths, bike lanes, running lanes and sweeping curves to promote traffic flow.

#### **Will there be safe bike routes from Downtown & UM to Fort Missoula Regional Park?**

With the completion of the Missoula to Lolo Trail, Missoula County and City residents will have a continuous trail from Hamilton to Missoula that will connect with the south end of the existing Bitterroot trail system.

Future plans are in place to provide a connector trail from the south side of Larchmont Golf Course to Fort Missoula Regional Park. When the above trails are complete, there will be a continuous bike pedestrian trail from Downtown Missoula and UM to the Fort Missoula Regional Park.

In general, users could access the Milwaukee Trail from where their trip originates and connect with the Bitterroot Trail near McCormick and Silver Parks. Continuing south on the Bitterroot Trail, users will connect with the Missoula to Lolo Trail and spur into Fort Missoula Regional Park. At the intersection of Reserve Street and Old U.S. 93, trail users will have a crossing bridge over Reserve Street expanding and connecting the trail system to the south.

## **Park Facilities**

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### **Will the various shelters be signed and named?**

Yes. In addition to basic signage, a way-finding system with maps and feature identification will be included in the park design.

### **Will tables and chairs be available for weddings or special events?**

Currently, there are no plans to provide tables and chairs; however, public feedback could change this policy. Generally, private event amenities will be the responsibility of the site user. Standard Parks and Recreation picnic tables will be provided. Power outlets, potable water, restrooms and trash bins will be provided at the shelters.

### **Will (portable ice or natural ice) for ice skating be provided at the large community shelter or nearby?**

Possible ice skating was identified as a design consideration under a covered shelter as an additional design detail in the master planning phase. We are currently researching viability of ice.

### **Will there be service road access to the shelters?**

Yes, limited service road access to the shelters will be provided for maintenance and emergency vehicle access. Site/park users will have service road access when needed for social events, mobility needs and moving of equipment for special events.

### **What is the process of renting and reserving the sport fields/shelters?**

Contact the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department at 721-PARK. Visit [www.missoulaparks.org](http://www.missoulaparks.org) to learn more.

### **Will barbeque stations be provided at the shelter sites or nearby?**

Barbeque stations are planned at some locations.

### **How will shared field use be managed among the user groups for sport needs and dimension needs?**

Field use and dimension accuracy will be managed as they are today. User groups participate in pre-season meetings. Conflicts, needs and user group field dimension needs are generally addressed in these meetings or by the Recreation Manager. Each sport has national, regional, and sometimes international requirements for dimensions. Staff will use various tools to assist in accuracy. Initial

construction will have very strict specifications for design and construction. Any facility or field-related improvements that do not meet specifications will be corrected.

#### **Why does the plan include so many soccer fields?**

FMRP fields are multi-use – meaning they can be used for a variety of different sports - and are needed to meet Missoula’s current demand, which exceeds the number of available fields. During the master planning phase, citizens repeatedly requested additional multi-use sport fields for local play and for the ability to host tournaments.

Right now, due to the limited number of sports fields in Missoula, public fields are being “overplayed”—in other words, the turf grass can’t withstand current level of use without sustaining damage and increasing maintenance costs.

Increasing the number of multi-use sport fields to a total of 9 will help meet the demand for additional turf time for local teams, open play and tournaments. These additional fields will help disperse turf play time and promote best turf management practice, including field rest, to provide a high quality user experience.

#### **What is Pickleball?**

Pickleball is a combination of tennis, badminton and ping-pong and is played with a whiffle ball on a short court. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in the nation, and local enthusiasts have worked with Parks and Recreation to create an active pickleball league and extensive programming. It’s less strenuous than tennis, and is well-suited to youth and adults of all ages and abilities. The master park plan includes pickleball courts.

## **Park Operations**

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#### **How will the application of turf chemicals and herbicides be managed?**

State and federal regulations, along with Parks department policies, strictly govern the use of turf chemicals of all types. These regulations protect park users, groundwater, other vegetation and the soil. Parks and Recreation’s top priority is to reduce or eliminate the use of turf chemicals whenever possible. Best practice design standards, including proper selection of seed, soil, nutrients, and irrigation, are the first step in reducing turf chemicals. The department’s [turf management plan](#) outlines the many factors for best turf management techniques and chemical use reduction.

#### **Where are you going to store maintenance equipment?**

Maintenance equipment will be stored on-site at the maintenance and storage facility located in the southeast corner of the park, just west of Community Medical Center on Fort Missoula Road. The maintenance structure is scheduled to be built within the first phase to assist with construction and maintenance as the park is developed.

## Maintenance Costs and Revenue

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**What is the management plan for increased park acreage? How will this affect current Park and Recreation staffing levels?**

A [Maintenance Impact Statement and Pro-forma](#) were completed before the Missoula County Commission voted to place the Parks and Trails general obligation bond on the ballot. These studies provided information on expected maintenance costs and potential revenue generation from FMRP. The study showed that additional funds were necessary to maintain FMRP, largely because we are adding 92 new acres of parkland. Tournaments, leagues and programmed services costs, including maintenance for these services, will be recovered by revenue generated from fees, sponsorships and concessions.

An additional maintenance program with staff and equipment will be created to maintain Fort Missoula Regional Park. Current City Park maintenance schedules and resources will not be decreased.

**Is there a completed market analysis on the demand for increased soccer and diamond sport facilities?**

Yes, the 2004 Master Parks and Recreation Plan identified an increased need for soccer and diamond sport facilities. As mentioned above, a [pro-forma for FMRP](#) has also been completed.

## Sustainability

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The City and County will follow best practices for managing water on site. All improvements will be reviewed by the relevant permitting agency. We share your goal of protecting Missoula's water.

Best practices to limit park water consumption: limiting bluegrass to sport fields, using native or xeric trees and shrubs, providing sophisticated irrigation systems, and managing storm water runoff with vegetated swales.

**Where is the water supply for park irrigation?**

There are at least five options under consideration and all are being researched so as to minimize long-term costs. Options include treated water from the wastewater treatment plant, installing underground wells, transfer of water rights from others, participation in the County irrigation ditch system, and public water (Mountain Water Company.) All options have pros and cons.

**Who oversees the water and sewer management for the Park? How have stakeholders been involved?**

All FMRP restrooms will be connected to City Sewer or will be self-contained vault toilets for year round use, similar to a state park facility. Various permitting agencies will review systems and processes for water use and management. The Target Range Sewer & Water Board (TRS&W) has been involved in the planning process. When the plans are at 65% design detail, the TRS&W Board will have the opportunity to review proposals for water and sewer management.

**Will labeled recycling and trash bins be provided at the shelters and throughout the park?**

We are researching options to further improve recycling. A successful and cost efficient recycling program is dependent on the commitment of all park users to follow the recycling protocol. Compliance by users is the greatest challenge as sorting of trash causes considerable cost to the public and risk to park employees.

**Will park lighting meet the “dark skies” standards?**

Yes, park lighting will be dark-skies compliant to reduce light pollution and energy use.

**Additional FMRP Design considerations related to sustainability:**

*Design:*

- Orientation of buildings to manage solar gain
- Possible solar panels for security lighting restrooms, shelters, and pathway lights
- Efficient automated irrigation systems utilizing rain sensors
- Low flow toilets and flush-less urinals

*Structures and infrastructure:*

- Research local sourced and sustainable materials and products.
- Could cellulose insulation be utilized as an alternative to fiberglass insulation?

*Recycle/Reuse:*

- Reuse asphalt from road bases and new parking lots
- Incorporating recycled/reuse/or locally sustainable resources into site amenities & structures where appropriate (recycled steel, wood)
- Collect and reuse storm water runoff to supplement landscape watering needs and naturally infiltrate water back into the system.