



**City of Missoula, Montana  
City Council Committee Agenda Item**

**Committee:** Climate, Conservation and Parks

**Item:** Northwestern Energy Overhead Utility Easement East Caras Park and Riverside Parking Lot

**Date:** April 26, 2022

**Sponsor(s):** David Selvage; Ian Ortlieb

**Prepared by:** David Selvage

**Ward(s) Affected:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 4
<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 5
<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 3	<input type="checkbox"/> Ward 6
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> All Wards	<input type="checkbox"/> N/A

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**Action Required:**

Request Council approve grant of easement and authorize the Mayor to sign.

**Recommended Motion(s):**

I move the City Council: approve the grant of an overhead utility easement to NorthWestern Energy through City property used for East Caras Park and Riverside Parking Lot and authorize the Mayor to sign.

**Timeline:**

Committee discussion:	May 4, 2022
Council action (or sets hearing):	May 9, 2022
Public Hearing (if required):	<a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>
Final Consideration	<a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>
Deadline:	<a href="#">Click or tap here to enter text.</a>

**Background and Alternatives Explored:**

NorthWestern Energy is requesting a new overhead utility easement across city properties used for East Caras Park and Riverside Parking Lot. The City Parks and Recreation Board and the Parking Commission have respectively reviewed and recommended approval of the new easement. The proposed easement will not reduce the number of parking spaces in the Riverside lot. The proposed easement will result in placement of a large utility pole in East Caras Park such that the overhead lines that will restrict future development of the properties. The utility lines to be placed on the new pole currently travel west from the Downtown Substation, crossing Beartracks Bridge, Caras Park, Brennan's Wave, and the Clark Fork River coming to a pole that is west of the Boone and Crocket building. The project will consolidate the overhead utility line crossings of the river to the upstream side of Beartracks Bridge. The main public benefit is to the views from and within Caras Park and nearby downtown businesses that have views of Caras park and river. The proposed new utility line is planned to be back over 20' from the existing Ron's River trail to accommodate planned widening. The requested new power line is not in material conflict with the adopted master plan for East Caras Park regards future improvements.

Subsequent to constructing the new power lines, the old power lines will be removed from over Beartracks Bridge, Caras Park and the Clark Fork River. The new easement requires removal of

three trees for which Northwestern Energy will may payment to the City Forestry Funds for the lost tree value. New park trees will be planted as part of park restoration scheduled to occur in 2023. The easement request is related to NorthWestern Energy's Downtown Substation project.

**Financial Implications:**

None. Northwestern Energy, by separate agreement, will be obligated to reimburse the City for costs to restore the parklands they use. City Parking Commission expects a limited disruption of public parking services to occur at the time NorthWestern Energy makes the physical line connections from the remodeled substation through the properties and over the Clark Fork River.

**Links to external websites:**