



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

**Committee:** Climate, Conservation and Parks  
**Item:** Mayoral Approval of U.S. Economic Development Administration to Fund a River Access in Caras Park  
**Date:** August 31, 2022  
**Sponsor(s):** Missoula Parks and Recreation  
**Prepared by:** Morgan Valliant  
**Ward(s) Affected:**  
 Ward 1                       Ward 4  
 Ward 2                       Ward 5  
 Ward 3                       Ward 6  
 All Wards                       N/A

**Action Required:**  
Review and approve acceptance of a federal grant to construct a hardened river access in Caras Park in Downtown Missoula.

**Recommended Motion(s):**  
I move the City Council: Approve the Mayor to sign a grant agreement with the US Economic Development Administration to accept \$1,220,304.00 in federal grant funds to build a sustainable and accessible river access in Caras Park in Downtown Missoula.

**Timeline:**  
Committee discussion: 8/31/22  
Council action (or sets hearing): 9/12/22  
Public Hearing (if required): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)  
Final Consideration: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)  
Deadline: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Background and Alternatives Explored:** For the past decade, the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department, the Clark Fork Coalition, and the Missoula Water Quality District have collaborated on a comprehensive project to develop a sustainable, intuitive river access system, while also restoring dozens of unsustainable user-created river access points, in downtown Missoula. Design of this project has been funded through a MT. State grant and the 2018 Open Space Bond. As the project has progressed, Caras Park, which receives more than 500k visitors per year, was identified as a location where a large accessible river assess point could be built. This river access will be built on a US Army Corps of Engineers levee currently managed by the City’s Stormwater Division. Locating this future river access point on an already highly altered and engineered riverbank provides opportunities to increase public access, safety, and aesthetics with negligible environmental impacts. At this site, we can also construct accessible ramps to the river at ADA compliant grades. The future Caras Park River Access will truly connect Missoulians of all backgrounds and abilities to the Clark Fork River. The larger Clark Fork River Access and Restoration Project is still underway, and we anticipate final designs for additional river access points (of varying sizes) along with restoration and/or stabilization of over 600 liner feet of eroding bank, to be available for public comment in Fall 2022.

**Financial Implications:** The total cost for final engineering, permitting and construction of this project is estimated at \$1,525,380.00. The City's required match for this grant is \$305,076.00. We currently have \$150,000 of this match committed from the Missoula Downtown Association. Additional match allocations from project partners, the Missoula Redevelopment Agency, Missoula Parks District, Conservation and Stewardship Mil Levy, and the 2018 Open Space Bond are being finalized. Upon project completion on-going maintenance of this river access will be assumed by the City.

**Links to external websites:**

<https://www.engagemissoula.com/clark-fork-river-restoration-access-project>