



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

Committee: Climate, Conservation and Parks

Item: Higgins Waterfront Easement

Date: January 7, 2026

Sponsor(s): Nathan McLeod

Department or function: Parks and Recreation

Prepared by: Nathan McLeod

Ward(s) Affected:

- Ward 1
- Ward 2
- Ward 3
- All Wards
- Ward 4
- Ward 5
- Ward 6
- N/A

Action Required:

Approve and Authorize the Mayor to sign the easement.

Recommended Motion(s):

I move the City Council: Approve and authorize the Mayor to sign the amended and restated conservation easement with Higgins Waterfront, LLC, for the property located at 500 S. Higgins, east of the Beartracks Bridge, immediately south of and adjacent to the Clark Fork River.

Timeline:

Committee discussion: January 7th 2026
 Council action (or sets hearing): January 12th 2026
 Public Hearing (if required): [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
 Deadline: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Background and Alternatives Explored:

The City currently holds a conservation easement (recorded in 1984 and amended in 1988) across the Higgins Waterfront property for public access and recreation. The Milwaukee Trail runs through this easement and is part of the City's active transportation network.

In 2025, as part of the Clark Fork River Restoration and Access project, the City improved the riverbank underneath the beartracks bridge and relocated the Milwaukee trail further away from the riverbank to provide more space adjacent to the river for safer egress from the water.

The restated easement allows for the new trail alignment under the bridge be widened and connected to the trail on the Higgins Waterfront Property. This work will be completed as part of the approved Capital Improvement project (CIP) to reconstruct and widen the Milwaukee trail through the Boone and Crocket property.

The restated easement allows for the trail to be reconstructed across the Higgins Waterfront

property including widening of the trail, upgraded lighting, and providing riverbank restoration. This will be part of a future project pending funding.

A wider easement allows the city to advance several goals related to riverbank protection, active transportation, and trail user safety. Higgins Waterfront supports these improvements that are compatible with potential future redevelopment of its property and has signed the restated easement.

Financial Implications:

The city has incurred the following costs related to securing the restated conservation easement:

Survey & Easement Exhibit creation (part of approved CIP: TA Grant-Milwaukee Trail Widening):
\$10,022

Due diligence costs related to finalizing the easement (Paid out of annual PD#1 Operating):
\$5,000

Links to external websites: