



**City of Missoula, Montana**  
**Item to be Referred to City Council Committee**

**Committee:** Parks and Conservation

**Item:** Schmidt Road- Milwaukee Trail to Mullan Road Connector Public Trail Easement Open Space Acquisition

**Date:** October 21, 2020

**Sponsor(s):** Grant Carlton

**Prepared by:** Grant Carlton, Open Space Program Manager

**Ward(s) Affected:**

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

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**Action Required:**

Set a public hearing for adoption of a Resolution that authorizes the expenditure of up to \$25,000 of the City's portion of the 2006 Open Space Bond funds to purchase a perpetual public trail easement that will provide a critical connection between the Milwaukee Trail corridor and Mullan Road and Trail.

**Recommended Motion(s):**

I move the City Council: Set a public hearing to adopt a resolution to expend up to \$25,000 of the City's portion of the 2006 Open Space Bond funds to purchase a perpetual public trail easement that will provide a critical connection between the Milwaukee Trail corridor and Mullan Road and Trail.

**Timeline:**

Referral to committee:	October 19, 2020
Committee discussion:	October 21, 2020
Council action (or sets hearing):	October 26, 2020
Public Hearing:	November 9, 2020
Final Consideration Deadline:	November 23, 2020

**Background and Alternatives Explored:**

This open space project proposes expending up to \$25,000 of the City's remaining share of the 2006 Open Space Bond for the purchase of a perpetual public trail easement across the Schmidt Road property that will connect the Milwaukee Trail to Mullan Road and Trail. The Schmidt Road parcel consists of approximately 8.5 acres of land owned by Delbert Fox. The property is bisected by an unimproved section of the Milwaukee Trail and extends to Mullan Road (and trail) west of Reserve Street and north of the Clark Fork River. The ultimate vision entails development and construction of a shared-use path in line with the currently developed segments of the Milwaukee Trail.

The Schmidt Road parcel provides a critical connection that will allow future trail users to travel from the Milwaukee Trail corridor to Mullan Road and Trail. The developed portion of the Milwaukee Trail is a highly used non-motorized transportation and recreation shared-use path that currently extends west from the intersection with the Bitterroot Trail near the center of

Missoula and terminates near the Clark Fork River just beyond Reserve Street. This project will build upon and bolster many years of open space acquisitions, planning efforts, and community investment in extending the Milwaukee Trail. This important connection will link the growing Mullan area with City-owned open space along the Clark Fork River as well as to services and amenities in and near Missoula's urban core, including places of employment, businesses, schools, and parks.

In 2016, the City acquired the 4.6-acre Kolendich property along the southern bank of the Clark Fork River in order to connect the developed portion of the Milwaukee trail to the Clark Fork Islands (former Clouse Property) and ultimately across the Clark Fork River corridor. Additionally, the Missoula Parks and Recreation Board adopted the Clark Fork Islands Recreation and Special Resource Management Plan in July of 2020, which specifically contemplates the extension of the Milwaukee Trail by linking the Kolendich property to the Clark Fork Islands to the northwest side of the river corridor, via a planned bridge, and ultimately to Mullan Road by utilizing the Schmidt Road property. There is currently a planning effort in process for the Mullan area (Mullan Area Master Plan), and significant growth is anticipated for the area. As development spreads and population increases in Missoula, especially in the Mullan area, it is becoming increasingly important to provide non-motorized transportation infrastructure and recreational opportunities that connect Missoula's urban core to growing neighborhoods outside the urban core. The project is also consistent with and furthers the national Rails-to-Trails effort creating a cross country trail system, The Great American Rail Trail, and also re-establish connectivity along the historic Milwaukee Road railroad corridor. The project support the BUILD grant goals of connectivity.

The 2019 *Missoula Urban Area Open Space Plan* ("Open Space Plan") provides a vision for continuing to expand upon our open space and trail system throughout the greater Missoula area. The Open Space Plan focuses primarily on the protection of five broad categories of open space, and corridors, such as the Milwaukee Trail, comprise one of those categories. The Open Space Plan lists connectivity as a "priority consideration for future open space planning," stating that "Expand(ing) existing commuter networks (Bitterroot Branch, Milwaukee Trail) to under connected sectors of town and extend(ing) the networks to provide non-motorized access to surrounding...recreation areas" are primary implementation objectives. Additionally, the *Activate Missoula 2045 Missoula Long Range Transportation Plan* (LRTP), adopted in March 2017, recognizes non-motorized projects can have an impact on overall system efficiency, functionality, and safety. The LRTP states, "The shared use pathway system along the...Milwaukee Trail [is a] vital component of the bikeway network." The *Master Parks Plan and the Active Transportation Plan* also identify the expansion of the non-motorized commuter trail network, and specifically the extension of the Milwaukee Trail from Reserve Street to Mullan, as a high priority.

Article II, Section 2.1 of the April 5, 2007 *Interlocal Agreement between the City of Missoula and the County of Missoula Related to Open Space Acquisition and Use of Open Space Bond Proceeds* (Interlocal Agreement) establishes the general purposes of the 2006 Open Space Bond. The Schmidt Road Milwaukee Trail to Mullan Road Connector project will carry out the purposes of the Open Space Bond by protecting open space; providing a key connection in a future publicly accessible recreational and commuter trail; and paying non-personnel related transaction costs and other project costs. The project received a recommendation for approval (a vote of seven in favor; one opposed) from the City's Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) for funding up to \$25,000.

#### **Financial Implications:**

Missoula Parks and Recreation is requesting up to \$25,000 from the City's portion of the 2006 Open Space Bond to purchase a perpetual public trail easement across the Schmidt Road property owned by Delbert Fox. Development and maintenance of the trail is not included in the acquisition cost.

<b>Schmidt Road Trail Easement Acquisition Budget</b>	
Public Trail Easement Acquisition	\$15,000
Transaction Costs*	\$10,000
<b>Total 2006 OS Bond Request</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

\*Transaction costs are estimated at this time, but are not expected to exceed \$10,000.