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Press Release

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Montana State Stimulus Funds Bring Four New Playgrounds To Missoula

Citizens Invited To Playground Design Workshop

The state legislature has awarded the City of Missoula \$380,000 in stimulus funds for four new playgrounds in city parks, and citizens are invited to help design the new play areas at a Playground Design Workshop on Saturday, January 16. The Workshop will meet from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at St. Joseph Elementary School, 503 Edith. Parks and Recreation plans to start construction on the four playgrounds this spring.

The project will replace deteriorating playgrounds at Boyd, Sacajawea and Marilyn Parks and build one new playground at Lafray Park. The Design Workshop will give children and adults a chance to look at options and share their ideas for playground equipment, layout, colors, benches, trails and other amenities. The workshop is geared for children ages kindergarten and older as well as adults. The workshop will feature games and playground activities for kids and a fun collaborative process for adults. Participants should plan to stay for the entire workshop. Refreshments will be served, and children must be accompanied by an adult.

Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler says the Design Workshop is an opportunity for citizens to improve their own neighborhoods and help promote a healthy community. "Our staff and consultants are really looking forward to this workshop. Neighborhood parks, and specifically playgrounds, are essential for healthy communities. Through play, children develop physically, emotionally and mentally. Parks and playgrounds connect kids to their environment and socially to their neighbors, and having kids and adults help design the playgrounds together is an added bonus. Building park infrastructure that engages

children in active play is good for the community," she says. "Playgrounds, parks and livable communities create healthy kids, promote neighborhood and community pride, as well as encourage jobs and economic growth."

Gaukler says three of the four new playgrounds are located in densely-populated neighborhoods and all four parks have been identified as priority areas for playground replacement or installation. CTA Architects Engineers has been selected by the City as the design and engineering firm for the project. For more information and project updates, visit www.ci.missoula.mt.us/playgrounds or www.missoulaparks.org. The City is seeking partners to expand the new playgrounds by sponsoring additional play features or amenities in order to serve more of Missoula's children. For more information, please contact Parks and Recreation Director Donna Gaukler at 552-6265 or dgaukler@ci.missoula.mt.us

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