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Missoula County

Media Release

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Missoula County Awarded Grant for East Missoula Community Challenge

East Missoula residents and visitors will see a 24-hour pop-up park in their community on Saturday, Oct. 7, thanks to a \$10,000 AARP grant. The [AARP Community Challenge Grant](#) funding will be used to demonstrate how pedestrian-oriented infrastructure improves public safety, creates a stronger sense of place and provides opportunities for people to gather and interact.

“This program is a great way to bring several community partners together to envision an engaging space in East Missoula,” Karen Hughes, Community and Planning Services’ Assistant Director, said. “Ultimately, the hope for this project is to help build momentum and support for redevelopment of Highway 200 through East Missoula.”

East Missoula is experiencing increased economic and recreational activity - from redevelopment of East Broadway and the construction of Missoula College to the west, to development of the riverside amphitheater and redevelopment of the mill site to the east. Local residents envision redevelopment of the Highway 200 corridor, which bisects their community, to a modern standard with curb, gutter, walkways, lighting and bicycle facilities.

This demonstration project will show, just for a weekend, what those improvements might look like. Thanks to the owners of Ole’s Country Store, the temporary park will be situated along a small segment in the middle of town. Business owners and residents will have the opportunity to provide feedback as to how their community center can be improved to provide adequate access for businesses, safe passage for all users of the transportation corridor, and a more inviting and thriving community center.

More specifically, the AARP grant is funding supplies needed to temporarily delineate a new access configuration along Highway 200 near the center of East Missoula, adjacent to Ole’s Country Store. This configuration will create better squared off corners that make turning off Highway 200 onto the slanted streets of East Missoula easier. Additionally, the park will exhibit what this roadway might look like with bicycle and pedestrian facilities. It will also create a temporary gathering space where folks can grab a bite to eat, spend time and visit with neighbors, learn about local efforts to plan for future growth and development, and share their thoughts and ideas about the new configuration.

The Missoula County Community and Planning Services (CAPS) department and the City of Missoula’s Transportation Planning Division applied for the grant in July to complement and implement outcomes from previous efforts, including the New Mobility West technical assistance project and a Highway Safety Audit, conducted by the Montana Department of Transportation.