



MISSOULA DOWNTOWN ASSOCIATION  
BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT  
MISSOULA DOWNTOWN FOUNDATION

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Local & State Media

## **MDA TO FOREGO OUT TO LUNCH & DOWNTOWN TONIGHT FOR 2020; REPLACE LARGE GATHERINGS WITH SMALL POP-UPS IN CARAS PARK**

With a focus on community health and safety and compliance with State of Montana and Missoula City County Health Department Reopening Guidelines, the Missoula Downtown Association (MDA) will cancel the annual Out to Lunch and Downtown ToNight Summer Series for 2020.

The openness of Caras Park and the popularity of Out to Lunch and Downtown ToNight make it nearly impossible to implement all the guidelines needed to produce the events in a manner that allows the Missoula City County Health Department (MCCHD) to accurately trace contacts of an attendee diagnosed with COVID-19. The admission-free and open-seating amenities do not lend themselves to ticketing and assigned seating.

“We appreciate the leadership and guidance provided by the health department,” said Linda McCarthy, Executive Director of the Downtown Missoula Partnership. “The need for more structure around assigned seating and the ability to mandate and enforce physical distancing at an event like Downtown ToNight is incredibly challenging, especially for a small organization that relies so much on volunteers and sponsors. We want to do what is best for Missoula, so we will re-structure our summer experiences to encourage smaller gatherings in this moment.”

The MDA will adjust its summer programming to reduce the risks associated with mass gatherings and places of assembly. Starting next week, Caras Park will be home base for ***Downtown Missoula Pop-Ups*** in 2020, as a substitute for the fully-programmed Out to Lunch and Downtown ToNight. On Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, a small group of vendors will be open and serving the community in a safe and appropriately-distanced spaces. Live music, children’s activities, and tabling sponsors will not be included this year.

***Downtown Pop-Ups*** will start Tuesday, June 16 in Caras Park and will take place:

- Tuesdays from 5-8 pm
- Wednesdays from 11am-2pm
- Thursdays from 5-8 pm

If things go well, ***Downtown Pop-Ups*** could be expanded into other Downtown parks. Some examples might include the Missoula Art Park, Circle Square, Silver Park or Ogren Park.

“We want to create a smaller, more intimate experience that supports our Downtown businesses and economy, while also doing all we can to reduce the spread of the virus in our community,” said McCarthy. “It’s how we are going to move forward in the midst of this pandemic and do all we can to make lemonade out of lemons.”

To learn more about **Downtown Pop-Ups**, visit [www.missouladowntown.com](http://www.missouladowntown.com), follow MissoulaDowntown on Facebook or Instagram, or contact the Downtown Missoula Partnership Office via email ([info@missouladowntown.com](mailto:info@missouladowntown.com)) or phone (406-543-4238).

*Downtown Missoula: Connecting Our Community!*