



FAIRFAX COUNTY PARK AUTHORITY

12055 Government Center Parkway, Suite 927 • Fairfax, VA 22035-5500
703-324-8700 • Fax: 703-324-3974 • www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks



October 4, 2013

Virginia Department of Transportation
4975 Alliance Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Attention: George Hoddinott, NEPA Specialist

Re: **Intersection of Braddock Road and Pleasant Valley Road (Route 620)**
State Project #: 0620-029-017, P101
UPC #: 103318
County: Fairfax County
Project Description: Braddock Road at Pleasant Valley Road Intersection Improvement
Project Limit—From: 0.124 miles West of Route 609 Pleasant Valley Road
Project Limit—To: 0.076 miles East of Route 609 Pleasant Valley Road

Subject: **SECTION 4(f); DE MINIMIS CONCURRENCE**

Dear Mr. Hoddinott:

The Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) understands that the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is proposing to improve Route 620 (intersection of Braddock Road and Pleasant Valley Road) in Fairfax County, Virginia. The proposed project involves constructing a 100 foot inscribed center diameter (ICD) roundabout, from 0.124 miles West of Route 609 Pleasant Valley Road to 0.076 miles East of Route 609 Pleasant Valley Road. The center will be shifted to the southwest and a raised central island with landscaping will be needed to increase conspicuity, improve deflection and improve speed control. Additionally, a northbound right-turn bypass lane will be added to maximize the functional life of the roundabout. The improvement will be approximately 0.2 miles and involve reconstruction (without added capacity) of the existing facility.

Under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, FHWA may approve a transportation project requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park or land of a historic site that is listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places only if: (1) there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and, (2) the project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park or historic site resulting from the use; or the project has a *de minimis* impact on the property.

FCPA owns three of the four parcels required for the placement of the roundabout project. The land is identified in the Fairfax County Tax Administration records as:



If accommodations and/or alternative formats are needed, please call (703) 324-8563, at least 10 working days in advance of the registration deadline or event. TTY (703) 803-3354.

- (1) Mountain Road District Park, Tax Map 43-1-((1))-3A;
- (2) Rock Hill District Park, Tax Map 43-1-((1))-10
- (3) Elklick Preserve Park, Tax Map 43-3-((4))-A.

VDOT is requesting concurrence from the FCPA regarding certain aspects of compliance with Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act; namely, that the impact of permanent easements fee takes, and temporary construction easements at Mountain Road District Park, Rock Hill District Park, and Elklick Preserve Park for the construction of the roundabout will not adversely affect the activities, features and attributes that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f) as a publicly owned park and recreational area. If FCPA concurs with this determination, it is FHWA's intent to make a Section 4(f) *de minimis* finding for the fee takes, as well as the permanent and temporary construction easements from Mountain Road District Park, Rock Hill District Park, and Elklick Preserve Park as permitted by the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, 49 USC 303).

The estimated area of impact to parkland is approximately 2.5 acres. The project will require approximately 1.4 acres of fee takes, 0.8 acres of permanent easements and 0.3 acres of temporary construction easements. FCPA staff reviewed the potential impacts on parkland from the proposed project based on the preliminary plan provided by VDOT as requested as the owner of the park properties protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. Comments to VDOT's letter, dated June 20, 2013, were provided by FCPA in a letter dated July 8, 2013. In reply to the July 8, 2013 FCPA letter, and as a good faith effort to minimize impacts to the three FCPA owned park properties under the Section 4(f) review VDOT proposed to take the following actions to further reduce impacts to the park properties in an email dated September 13, 2013:

- (1) Delineate wetlands for Mountain Road District Park, Rock Hill District Park, and Elklick Preserve Park;
- (2) Define and construct two commercial entrances in accordance with VDOT standards along Braddock Road and Pleasant Valley Road, aprons and culverts will be included if needed;
- (3) Provide grading for a future right-turn lane to the new commercial entrance along Braddock Road.

Mitigation efforts related to previously identified FCPA concerns such as impacts from additional utility easements on plant/tree communities, re-establishment of the conservation and/or trail easement, relocation of fencing are not specifically addressed in the September 13, 2013 VDOT email. However, FCPA assumes that VDOT will address these issues including completion of the hydrology and hydraulics analysis of the globally rare wetlands and completion of field technical studies with the Virginia Natural Heritage Program staff for the extent of rare plant species and communities in a responsible manner as part of future environmental assessments and the design-build contract as the project progresses such that all regulatory requirements and mitigation efforts will be satisfied. Base on the preliminary design

information provided by VDOT it is unclear as to where the commercial entrance will be located in relation to the grading of the future right-turn lane along Braddock Road. FCPA staff assumes that VDOT will address this issue, in conjunction with the design of the median breaks and striping, as part of the future design-build process such that it meets VDOT standards.

With the provision of the agreed upon mitigations by VDOT under the Section 4(f) review process and a commitment to achieve any additional impact mitigation required to comply with other environmental regulatory requirements during the design-build process, FCPA concurs with VDOT that the proposed work entailed in this project, which will use property from Mountain Road District Park, Rock Hill District Park, and Elklick Preserve Park in the form of fee takes, permanent and temporary easements will not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of the parks in accordance with the Section 4(f) review within the project area.

Respectfully,



Cindy Messinger, Acting Director
Fairfax County Park Authority

Copy: Sara Baldwin, COO/Deputy Director
Michael Frey, Supervisor, Sully District
Harold Strickland, Park Authority Board, Sully District
David Bowden, P.E., Director, Planning and Development Division
Cindy Walsh, Director, Resource Management Division
Sandy Stallman, AICP, Manager, Park Planning Branch
Julie Cline, AICP, Manager, Land Acquisition and Management Branch
Pat Rosend, AICP, Senior Park Planner, Park Planning Branch
Cynthia McNeal, P.E., Supervisor, Land Acquisition and Management Branch