



Request for Public Comment

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act- *de minimis* Finding

*MD 500 at Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park
in Prince George's County*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Maryland Department of Transportation's State Highway Administration (MDOT's SHA) is considering roadway and pedestrian improvements along MD 500 from MD 208 to the DC Line in Prince George's County. This project is located adjacent to the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park which is a publicly owned public park protected under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE PROJECT

Why is this work necessary and what improvements are proposed?

The purpose of the project is to provide an improved corridor for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists. The scope of work consists of providing landscaped medians and bicycle compatible shoulders, reconstructing sidewalks, drainage and stormwater management (SWM) facilities, as well as reconstructing signals and pedestrian lighting. MD 500, south of MD 208, borders the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, a resource owned by Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). Due to the need to provide new stormwater management facilities and to repair existing failed drainage outfalls within the Park, MDOT's SHA would need to purchase fee simple right-of-way and would require temporary construction easements from M-NCPPC.

Why are comments being requested?

Based on 23 CFR 774.3(b), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) can determine that certain transportation uses of Section 4(f) land will have no adverse effect on protected resources. With respect to publicly owned parks and recreation areas, a finding of *de minimis* impact may occur if a transportation project does not "adversely affect the activities, features and attributes" of the Section 4(f) resource. When this is the case, the finding of FHWA requires written concurrence from the official(s) with jurisdiction over the resource. In addition, public notice and opportunity for public review and comment on the finding is required.

What are the impacts to protected Section 4(f) resources?

The improvements along MD 500 will require temporary easements and purchase of fee simple right-of-way from the Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park, owned by M-NCPPC. Although the need for right-of-way from the Park is considered a "use" as defined by Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act (1966), there will be no negative impact on activities, features, and attributes that qualify the recreation area for protection under Section 4(f). MDOT's SHA, through this notice, is notifying the public that it will request FHWA to make a *de minimis* (or minor) impact finding, in accordance with Section 4(f). M-NCPPC, as officials with jurisdiction, concurred with the *de minimis* finding on June 10, 2016. The public is requested to provide comments on this finding.

How do I comment?

Please contact Kurt Walcott, Project Manager, (410) 545-0082 or toll-free (866) 462-0020, kwalcott@sha.state.md.us or Caryn G. Brookman, Environmental Manager, (410) 545-8698 or toll-free (866) 527-0502, cbrookman@sha.state.md.us; www.roads.maryland.gov.