April 25, 2022

Re: Panoramic Trail Closure – Mt. Tam State Park
Guardrail Replacement Project, County Project 2019-11

To Whom It May Concern,

This advance notification is intended to solicit public comments regarding the temporary closure of a portion of Panoramic Trail in Mount Tamalpais State Park in September 2022 during work activities.

The County of Marin Department of Public works is the design phase of a highway safety improvement project that involves the replacement the existing metal beam guardrail located on Panoramic Highway at Mountain View Avenue (Mile Post 2.26). In order to support the guardrail on the slope, a retaining wall will be constructed behind the guardrail. A portion of the Panoramic Trail is located downhill of the work area. In the interested of public safety, the County has requested the trail closed during pier drilling operations only.

The project is expected to begin in September 2022 and last for a total of 6 weeks. The trail closure duration would only be for 2 to 3 of those weeks. Traffic delays are not expected to be more than 5 minutes at any time. Working hours are Monday through Friday, 7:00am to 5pm. A second notification will be sent two weeks prior to the construction start date and will provide more detailed scheduling information.

Please review the enclosed documents and provide written comments via US mail or email to pbuckley@marincounty.org, by May 15, 2022.

Sincerely,

Philip A. Buckley
Senior Civil Engineer

Department of Public Works
PO Box 4186
San Rafael, CA 94913

cc. Michelle Squyer
California State Parks
Section 4(f) Memorandum
Guardrail Replacement Project, Federal Project ID: HSIPL – 5927 (123)

The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable Federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried-out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 USC 326.

Section 4(f)

Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966, codified in federal law at 49 U.S.C. 303, declares that "it is the policy of the United States Government that special effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the country side and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites." Section 4(f) specifies that the Secretary [of Transportation] may approve a transportation program or project...requiring the use of publicly owned land of a public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge of national, State, or local significance, or land of historic site of national, State, or local significance (as determined by the federal, state, or local officials having jurisdiction over the park, area, refuge, or site) only if:

• There is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that land; and

• The program or project includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the park, recreation area, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or historic site resulting from the use.

SAFETEA-LU Section 6009(a) amended existing 4(f) legislation to allow the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to determine that certain uses of 4(f) land will have no adverse effect on the protected resource. De minimis impacts are defined as those that do not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes of the 4(f) resource.

This document describes how the Marin County Guardrail Replacement project's impact on Mount Tamalpais State Park qualifies for a de minimis impact finding.

Description of Proposed Action

The Marin County Department of Public Works proposes to replace nonstandard guardrails at 13 locations throughout Marin County. The work proposed will replace guardrail end treatments and existing guardrails that are lower than the minimum guardrail height. Work will also include a 302 linear feet of soldier pile retaining wall at Panoramic Highway Mile Post 2.26 to support the replaced guardrail & meet design criteria. All guardrail replacement and wall construction activities are occurring within the limits of Marin County right-of-way.

The proposed guardrail work consists of removing and replacing non-standard guardrail in accordance with Caltrans standard plans and specifications.
Retaining wall work consists of drilling piers with a bucket or auger type drill typically mounted on an excavator. After excavation into bedrock is completed, soldier piles shall be placed and blocked in the center for the holes. Concrete placement up to the adjacent grade shall start as soon as possible after the drilling. Wood lagging will be installed, and the wall will be backfilled. After the lagging is installed, drainage panels will be installed between soldier piles. Reinforcing steel (rebar) is then placed between soldier piles. Finally, shotcrete is placed, and the wall finished.

To facilitate construction, the contractor will utilize traffic control closures of the lane adjacent to the guardrail/wall shoulder. Flaggers will direct alternating two-way traffic in the opposite lane. Traffic controls will result in minor detours (up to 5 minutes) during working hours Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Changeable message signs (CMSs) will be used to display the dates of closures. One travel lane will always be left open.

Construction equipment will include the use of an excavator, pile driver, skip loader, transfer dump trucks, concrete truck, and work pickup trucks.

Construction is anticipated to begin in September 2022 and will last approximately 90 days. Approximately 8 employees will be required on-site during construction activities. In accordance with Marin County Ordinance for construction activities and related noise, all project work will take place Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. All proposed work will be within the County Right of Way (ROW).

During Construction, methods to reduce erosion and sediment control will be used. The contractor will be required to produce and submit a Water Pollution Control Plan to prevent contamination of storm drains and waterways.

**Description of Section 4(f) Resources**

The only Section 4(f) resource within the project vicinity is Mount Tamalpais State Park. Mount Tamalpais State Park is a California state park, located in Marin County, California. The primary feature of the park is the 2,571 ft Mount Tamalpais. The park contains mostly redwood and oak forests. The mountain itself covers around 25,000 acres. There are about 60 miles of hiking trails, which are connected to a larger, 200 miles (320 km) network of trails in neighboring public lands. The park received 564,000 visitors in as of 2003. Muir Woods National Monument is surrounded by the state park. California State Parks are the officials with jurisdiction over Mount Tamalpais State Park.

The Panoramic Trail which is located within Mount Tamalpais State Park is approximately 50 feet down from the guardrail replacement and wall construction at Panoramic Highway Mile Post 2.26.

**Potential Impacts to Section 4(f) Resources**

The Panoramic Trail is one trail within the Mount Tamalpais State Park. In order to safely construct the retaining wall at Panoramic Highway Mile Post 2.26, the County has requested Mount Tamalpais State Park to close Panoramic Trail between Canopy View Trail and Redwood Trail temporarily during working hours of the pier drilling which is
estimated to last three (3) weeks. The trail will remain open after working hours and on weekends. Since the trail is located downhill of the work area, the closure is requested for public safety in order to mitigate the risk of any objects rolling down to the trail during the drilling of approximately 42 wall piers. A County inspector will be onsite during all construction operations to ensure that erosion and sediment controls are in place and safety precautions and procedures are being followed.

The proposed closure will impact the trail connection of the Redwood Trail from Nature Friends Tourist Club of San Francisco off Ridge Avenue to Panoramic Trail where there is no trail detour available. During closures Panoramic Trail access will still be available from shoulder parking spaces on Panoramic Highway near the site and from the State Park parking lot located near Mountain Home Inn. The wall and guardrail construction limits are approximately 300 feet long. Signs will be placed denoting the closure for a total of 600 feet of trail. The signs will be taken down after hours and on weekends.

**Exceptions to Section 4(f)**

There is a temporary occupancy exception to the requirement for Section 4(f) approval identified in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 23 CFR 774.13 (d). However, discussions with State Parks indicate that because there will be interference with the trail during those 3 weeks, the temporary occupancy criteria cannot be met.

**De Minimis Impact Finding**

With the measures described below in place, the project as described above would have no adverse impact on the attributes, features and activities of Mount Tamalpais State Park. There would be no permanent or temporary work within the park, apart from signage to indicate that the trail is temporarily closed which would be removed once the closure is lifted. One trail would be closed for an estimated three weeks, but all other trails within the park would be unaffected.

The trail will remain open when no ground disturbing activities are occurring.

There is no work or disturbance of the trails proposed that would require restoration.

**Mitigation Measures**

The County of Marin will notify potential trail users via a letter roughly 2 weeks prior to the start of path restricting construction activities. The letter will provide a description of the project, the dates of constructions, and a map of the closure that shows alternate trail access routes. The letter will be mailed to a number of local stakeholders including State Park & National Park officials, local Mount Tamalpais hiking clubs, local businesses, the neighborhood Community Association, and property owners within 500 feet of the work area.

The state park website will have a notification about the short-term closure and physical “trail temporarily closed” notifications will also be posted in the parking pullouts & trailheads adjacent to the trail segment. The County Department of Public Works website will also have information with regarding the trail closure on the projects page.
Public Consultation

A de minimis impact finding requires the public to be afforded an opportunity to review and comment on the effects of the project on the protected activities, features, or attributes of the Section 4(f) property. Public to be notified for consultation via a letter to stakeholders. The notification will be posted on the Marin County Department of Public Works website.

After the public consultation is completed, this document will be updated to summarize any comments received.

Documented Agreement with Officials Having Jurisdiction over the Resources

California State Parks are the Officials with jurisdiction over Mount Tamalpais State Park including the Panoramic Trail that will be temporarily closed during construction. Following the public consultation, State Parks will be contacted to concur that the project with mitigation as described above will not adversely affect the activities, features and attributes of the Park. With this concurrence, attached to this document, the de minimis impact finding will be complete.

Conclusions

The proposed closure of Panoramic Trail in Mount Tamalpais State Park will have no adverse effect on the activities, features or attributes of the Park and therefore qualifies for a de minimis Section 4(f) impact finding. This finding is considered valid unless new information is obtained, or the proposed effects change to the extent that a new analysis is needed.

Please call me at (415) 419-6841 if you need more information.

Sincerely,

Philip A. Buckley
Senior Civil Engineer, Department of Public Works

Attachments:

Figures: Guardrail Project Vicinity Map
         Mt. Tam/Muir Woods Trail Map
         Panoramic Trail Map Regional Location Map

Appendix A. Construction Plan with Typical Cross Section