



May 14, 2014

Lesley Mace
Project Manager
Colorado Department of Transportation
1480 Quail Lake Loop
Colorado Springs, CO 80906

**RE: The City of Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
I-25 / Cimarron Street (US 24) Interchange Design-Build Project**

Thank you for the opportunity over the past several months to review and provide comment on the Midland Trail Relocation and the noise impact along America the Beautiful Park (previously known as Confluence Park). As you are aware, we took your findings through a three-step process: an internal review by Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services staff members, a public presentation of the information to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on March 14, 2014, and a second presentation for action to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on April 10, 2014. We are pleased that there was close consensus between both staff and the Board on the following key issues:

Midland Trail Realignment:

As part of the I-25 Environmental Assessment, previous action was taken by the Parks Advisory Board on December 12, 2002 regarding the realignment of the Midland Trail. The Board approved the relocation of the trail from its current location to the north bank of Fountain Creek. This will close the Midland Trail connection under the interstate. The Colorado Department of Transportation is proposing to make these changes as part of the I-25 / Cimarron Street (US 24) Interchange Design-Build Project.

Because portions of the Midland Trail were constructed using funds allocated by the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, the impacts to the trail require CDOT to conduct a "Section 6(f)" evaluation for realignment and reconstruction. Section 6(f) requires that any permanent impact to an encumbered property be mitigated at least on a one to one basis with similar quality and value. CDOT will assure that there is an equal value exchange for the Section 6(f) property acquired. Such exchange will be valued according to the requirements of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 for both the property acquired and for any properties used as a part of the payment. Appraisals are conducted as part of CDOT's right-of-way process.

In addition to the trail relocation, CDOT will construct a pedestrian bridge across Monument Creek to complete the trail system. The proposed bridge will be a standard continental pedestrian bridge structure. The City of Colorado Springs has agreed to and will be responsible to maintain the relocated Midland Trail as a Section 6(f) encumbered property in perpetuity.

Noise:

As part of the I-25 Environmental Assessment, previous action has been taken by the Parks Advisory Board on December 12, 2003 regarding the noise impact from the proposed interchange improvements. The current Parks Advisory Board,

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as reflected in their formal vote, concurred with the previous Board's action that the visual quality, views into and out of America the Beautiful Park (previously known as Confluence Park), were of much higher importance than noise mitigation. The Parks Advisory Board acknowledges that CDOT will not construct a noise mitigation wall in this location. However, the Parks Advisory Board does request a solid guard rail along I-25 to obscure the lower half of cars passing the park and possibly soften tire noise.

CDOT will continue to integrate Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services staff members in the interchange design reviews to ensure compatibility of the Interchange improvements with the America the Beautiful Park and Trail network. We are excited about the collaborative process that has transpired to date and recognize the enhancements this project will provide to our community.

If any changes occur as part of the design build process, CDOT will present the changes to the Parks Board for consideration and approval.

If you have any additional questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 719.385.6501.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Palus". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Karen Palus
Director