



City of Columbus  
Mayor Michael B. Coleman

## Department of Public Service

Mark Kelsey, Director

August 17, 2011

Alan McKnight  
Director, Columbus Recreation and Parks  
1111 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43205

Attn: Alan McKnight  
Director, Columbus Recreation and Parks

Re: FRA-23-2369 (PID 87779)  
Section 4(f) Coordination – Highbluffs Park

Dear Director McKnight:

The City of Columbus, Department of Public Service, is planning to widen and improve the section of North High Street between Northwoods Boulevard and Lazelle Road in an effort to better serve the needs of the traveling public and surrounding community. The need for traffic and pedestrian improvements to North High Street is based upon projected volume increases in vehicular and pedestrian traffic over the next 30 years.

The proposed project extends from Northwoods Boulevard to Lazelle Road, for a total of approximately 4,365 feet (0.8 mile). The planned improvements include pavement widening and replacement, providing new curbs and sidewalks, ADA-compliant curb ramps, replacing traffic signals, removing the traffic signal at Northwoods Blvd (south) and installing a new traffic signal at Northwoods Blvd (north), replacing/rehabilitating existing underground utilities and constructing a new storm sewer system.

The proposed project will create improved access to Highbluffs Park (located in front of 8315 Linton Blvd) through sidewalk improvements and improved pedestrian crossings. Additionally, approximately 0.031 acres of new permanent right-of-way and 0.125 acres of slope easement will be required from Highbluffs Park.

### Section 4(f) Property

The proposed project will affect a publicly owned recreational resource (Highbluffs Park) that is protected under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966. The use of federal funds subjects the proposed undertaking to the requirements of Section 4(f). This federal law protects publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and public or privately-owned historical resources.

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Director's Office  
Office of Support Services  
311 Service Center  
Division of Mobility Options  
Division of Design and Construction  
Division of Planning and Operations  
Division of Refuse Collection

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The identified 3.26 acre Highbluffs Park is operated by The City of Columbus Department of Recreation and Parks. Highbluffs Park includes an asphalt loop walking path. Future improvements to the Park include picnic facilities.

Due to the scope of the proposed project and the presence of a Section 4(f) property, measures to minimize harm have been developed. In accordance with 23 CFR 774.3, these measures create a *de minimis* impact on the property. A *de minimis* impact is one that will not adversely affect the features, attributes, or activities qualifying the Section 4(f) property (Highbluffs Park) for protection.

#### Measures to Minimize Harm

The following measures to minimize harm have been developed as commitments that will be incorporated into the construction plans and the environmental document:

- Access to Highbluffs Park facilities will be maintained at all times during the duration of construction activities;
- The disturbed grassy area will be re-graded and reseeded.
- Any tree disturbed by construction will be replaced with a Red Oak.

Based on the proposed scope of work and the above information, the following assessment has been made with respect to the proposed transportation improvement:

- The proposed undertaking includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) property (Highbluffs Park) and has been developed in consultation with the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department;
- The primary functions and components of the recreational resource will not be substantively impaired by the proposed project;
- The location and amount of permanent right-of-way and easements needed for construction activities will not create permanent adverse physical impacts nor permanent interference with the activities or use of the recreational facilities within Highbluffs Park, in whole or in part;
- Considering the avoidance, minimization, and enhancement measures incorporated into project development, the proposed undertaking will not adversely affect the features, functions, and attributes that qualify Highbluffs Park for protection under Section 4(f);
- The proposed scope of work and the magnitude of changes to the Section 4(f) property is minimal and the assessment of impacts and proposed mitigation, in regards to maintaining access and safety, are considered to be reasonable and acceptable.

There must be documented agreement of the appropriate Federal, State, or local officials having jurisdiction over the Section 4(f) property regarding the above conditions and assessment. If you concur with the conditions and assessment of impacts in regards to the proposed undertaking, please sign and date on the line provided below and return this correspondence at your earliest convenience.

If you concur with our assessment, please sign this letter and return it to the following address at your earliest convenience:

Mark Kelsey  
Director, Department of Public Service  
109 N. Front Street, Room 320  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

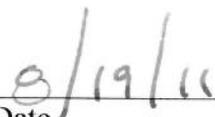
Sincerely,



Mark Kelsey, Director  
Department of Public Service

Columbus Recreation and Parks Concurrence:

  
Signature/Title

  
Date