



Request for Public Comment

Section 4(f) of the US Department of Transportation Act- *de minimis* Finding

MD 145 (Paper Mill Rd.) at Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail (NCR Trail) Pedestrian Crossing Safety Device Installation and Improvements, Baltimore County

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (SHA) is proposing installing pedestrian crossing safety devices at the Torrey C. Brown Rail Trail (NCR Trail) crossing of MD 145 in Baltimore County. This project would impact the NCR Trail, which is owned and managed by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and protected under Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (Section 4(f)).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE PROJECT

Why is this work necessary and what improvements are proposed?

The intersection of MD 145 and the NCR Trail needs enhancements due to pedestrian safety concerns. There have been complaints from the community and city officials about poor sight distance for motorists approaching the NCR Trail crossing along MD 145. It creates unsafe conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists using the trail. Crash Data analysis indicates that, there were a total of nine accidents in this area, two of which involved pedestrians. Unfortunately, one of these incidents resulted in fatality, involving a bicyclist, and the other resulted in a pedestrian injury. As a result, SHA is proposing to install new pedestrian crossing safety devices at this location. The proposed work includes installation of the following elements:

- Pedestal poles with rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) on the westbound side of MD 145 just prior to the NCR trail crossing
- A mast arm RRFB signal on the eastbound side of the trail to provide advanced warning to motorists approaching the trail crossing due to the limited sight distance
- Ground mounted signs and posts to warn motorists of the upcoming trail on the eastbound and westbound sides of MD 145 just prior to the NCR trail crossing
- Video detection/Thermal Sensors to activate advanced warning signal when pedestrians and bicyclists are at the trail crossing of MD 145
- Accessible pedestrian signal (APS) pushbutton
- Installation of a concrete pad for the pushbutton
- Conduit, handholes, and a metered service pedestal
- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) sidewalk upgrades

Why are comments being requested?

23 CFR 774.5(b) of Section 4(f) allows the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to determine that certain transportation uses of Section 4(f) land would have no adverse effect on the protected resource. With respect to publicly owned parks and recreation areas, a finding of *de minimis* impact may occur if a transportation project, including any proposed mitigation, does not "adversely affect the activities features and attributes" of the Section 4(f) resource. When this is the case, public notice and opportunity for public review and comment on the finding is required. In addition, the finding of FHWA requires written concurrence from the officials with jurisdiction over the resource. Before concurring, the officials with jurisdiction must consider any public comments received.

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

The installation of the safety enhancements at the intersection of MD 145 and the NCR trail would impact land owned and managed by DNR. The impacts to DNR property would occur adjacent to MD 145 along both the eastbound and westbound sides of the roadway. See the attached map showing the proposed improvements and the impacted areas of the trail property.

On the eastbound side of MD 138 there would be 203 square feet of permanent impact and 388 square feet of temporary impact on the NCR Trail property. The permanently impacted property is currently an undeveloped area with grass. The area would be graded and the existing grass cleared to construct the new signal pole and cabinet.

On the Westbound side of MD 145, 136 square feet of DNR property would be permanently impacted by the installation of the signal pole and an additional 912 square feet of DNR property surrounding the installation would be required for temporary access to complete the construction. The impacted area is undeveloped land with grass and trees nearby.

In all impact locations, trenching would be needed to bury conduit and install the pole foundations. Impacts would consist of a minor change in the visual appearance of the DNR land due to the removal of small amounts of vegetation and the installation of new equipment. While the proposed improvements would result in minor impacts to the NCR Trail property, they would also benefit trail users by enhancing the safety of the intersection and trail. Therefore, the proposed action is not expected to adversely affect the activities, features and attributes of the NCR Trail.

SHA, through this notice, is notifying the public that it will request that FHWA make a *de minimis* (or minor) impact finding, in accordance with Section 4(f). With this notice, the public is afforded the opportunity to provide comments on this finding. Following this public notice, DNR will be informed of SHA's intent to seek a Section 4(f) *de minimis* impact finding.

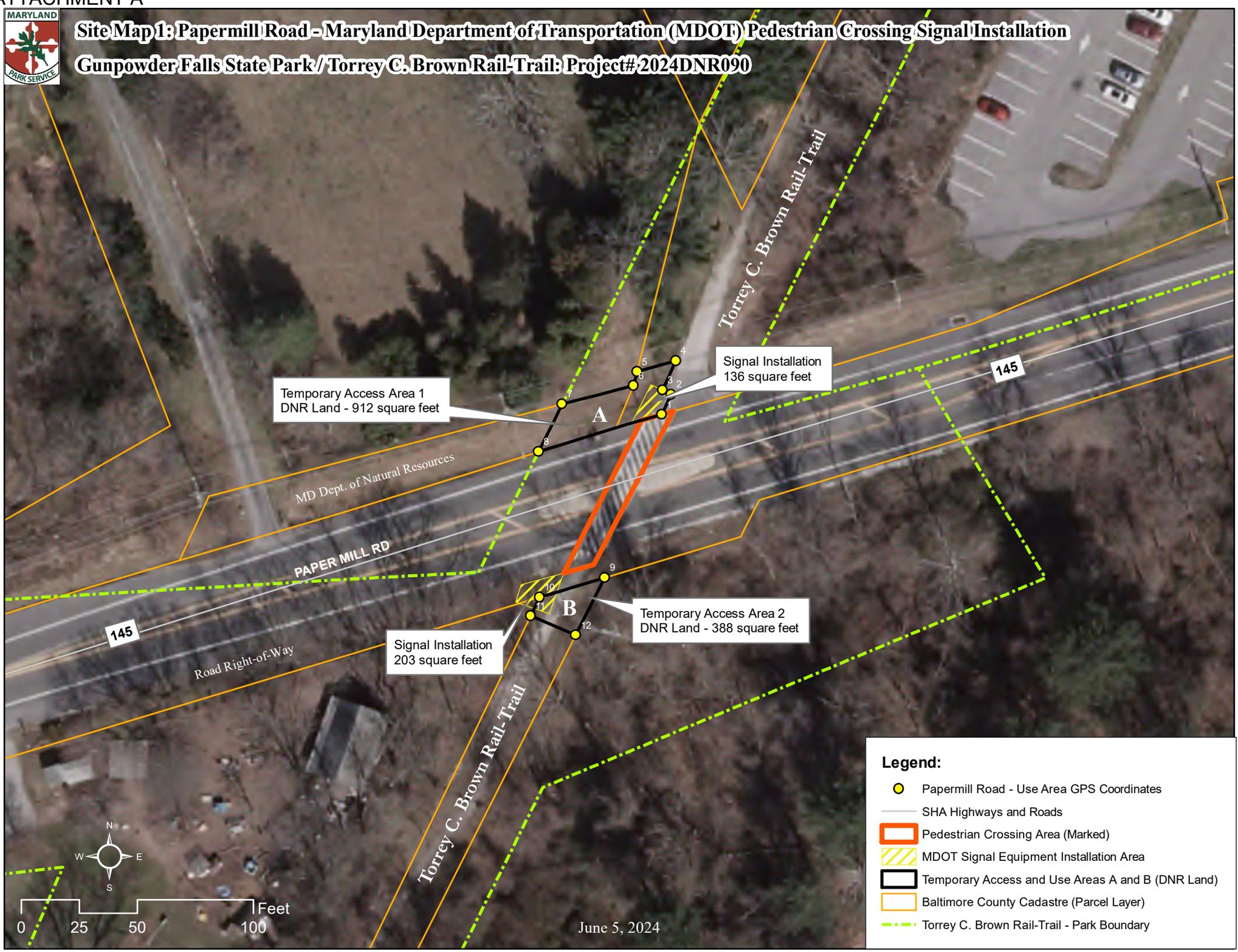
How do I comment?

Please contact Mr. Justin Humenny, SHA Project Manager at (410) 545-7619 jhumenny.consultant@mdot.maryland.gov, or Mr. David Light, SHA Environmental Manager at (410) 545-8040 or dlight@mdot.maryland.gov; or visit us at www.roads.maryland.gov.



Site Map 1: Papermill Road - Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) Pedestrian Crossing Signal Installation

Gunpowder Falls State Park / Torrey C. Brown Rail-Trail: Project# 2024DNR090



Temporary Access Area 1
DNR Land - 912 square feet

Signal Installation
136 square feet

Signal Installation
203 square feet

Temporary Access Area 2
DNR Land - 388 square feet

Legend:

- Papermill Road - Use Area GPS Coordinates
- SHA Highways and Roads
- Pedestrian Crossing Area (Marked)
- MDOT Signal Equipment Installation Area
- Temporary Access and Use Areas A and B (DNR Land)
- Baltimore County Cadastre (Parcel Layer)
- Torrey C. Brown Rail-Trail - Park Boundary

June 5, 2024