



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

Central Federal Lands Highway Division

February 8, 2016

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In Reply Refer To:
HFPM-16

**Subject: Public Scoping Meeting for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail,
Buckman Road Segment, Retracement Trail Project**

Dear Interested Public:

This letter initiates a 30-day public scoping period for El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (NHT), Buckman Road Segment, Retracement Trail Project (hereafter “the Project”). The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Central Federal Lands Highway Division (CFLHD), in cooperation with Santa Fe County, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), United States Forest Service (USFS), and National Park Service (NPS) which jointly administers the NHT with BLM, is proposing the development of a trail following a portion of the congressionally designated route of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT along Old Buckman Road (County Road (CR) 77) and the creation of a multi-use trail along CR 62 and Caja del Rio Road linking the oldest segment of El Camino Real to the Santa Fe River Trail. El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT is the earliest Euro-American trade route in the United States and it was added to the National Trails System in 2000.

The purpose of the Project is twofold: (1) to increase access to federal lands between downtown Santa Fe and recreation areas located west on the Caja del Rio Plateau and (2) to develop NHT retracement trail opportunities for the public in accordance with the purposes of the NHT and the National Trails System Act. The trail, which would be approximately 15 miles long, would be located on BLM, USFS, City of Santa Fe, and Santa Fe County lands. The Project would improve the safety of pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian access to lands managed by BLM and USFS and to the Santa Fe Municipal Recreation Complex on Caja del Rio Road.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, FHWA, as the lead agency, is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) to evaluate potential impacts to the natural and human environment that may result from Project alternatives. These alternatives include the No-Action and the Proposed Action. Modifications to the Proposed Action may result from public input, including issues or concerns identified during development of the EA.

There will be two opportunities to comment formally on the Project – once during the initial scoping period and again following release of the EA. The agencies are currently in the scoping phase, which is the process that leads to the identification of the issues to be addressed and the range of actions and alternatives to be analyzed in the EA. It is a process, not an event, which continues throughout the planning process and results

in the identification of the proper scope of the analysis. As part of this process, the agencies will hold a public scoping meeting regarding the Project. This meeting will provide an opportunity for the public to learn more about the Project; to discuss route alignment, construction details, resource mitigation, and safety concerns; and to address other questions or concerns that you may have about the Project. Comments received will be incorporated into the planning process and used to develop the scope of the EA.

You are invited to attend the public scoping meeting about the Project that will be held on February 17, 2016 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Nancy Rodriguez Community Center, 1 Prairie Dog Loop, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87507.

Proposed Action

The Project involves the development of a trail retracing a portion of the congressionally designated route of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT along Old Buckman Road (CR 77) and the creation of a multi-use trail along CR 62 and Caja del Rio Road linking this oldest segment of El Camino Real to the existing Santa Fe River Trail – a segment of El Camino Real NHT which is currently being developed and continues along the Santa Fe River to the historic Santa Fe Plaza. The Project is the result of a multi-year partnership between Santa Fe County, City of Santa Fe, BLM, NPS, and USFS. A Development Concept Plan for this segment of the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT was completed in 2014; a public meeting to support the development of the plan was held in December 2013.

This Project would include the construction of an approximately 15-mile long trail retracing a portion of El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro NHT and connecting trail. The segment of trail located on City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County lands would be an asphalt path. The segment of trail on BLM and USFS lands would be natural surface and would not be paved. Improvements would include new trail alignments, clearing and grubbing, linear earthwork grading, earth surfacing, wayfinding and interpretive signage, and limited livestock grazing fence relocation. Improvements would connect existing trail systems and provide access to and improve the Headquarters, Dead Dog, and Diablo Canyon trailheads. The Project does not include highway improvements, except as necessary, to provide for the multi-use trail at existing road crossings.

Comments

If you have any information or comments regarding the Project, you may submit written comments to the following address:

FHWA Central Federal Lands Highway Division
Attention: Tom Puto
12300 West Dakota Avenue, Suite 380
Lakewood, Colorado 80228

Comments will also be accepted at the public scoping meeting. To be most helpful in addressing issues and concerns for the development of the EA, you should provide your comments by March 17, 2016. If you require additional information about the Project, please see the Project website (http://www.santafecountynm.gov/open_space_and_trails_program/flap) or contact Tom Puto, Project Manager, at (720) 963-3728.

Please note that the name and address of the person submitting comments must be included. Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record for this project and will be available for public inspection.

Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, those who submit anonymous comments will not have standing to appeal the subsequent decision under 36 CFR215, if the NEPA documentation results in an appealable decision.

Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any persons may request the Agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that under the FOIA, confidentiality may be granted in only limited circumstances such as to protect trade secrets.

The EA will be available for review and comment electronically and by hard copy for anyone who specifically requests that it be mailed to them.

We greatly appreciate your interest in the management of public lands and hope to see you at the upcoming meeting on February 17, 2016 from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Nancy Rodriguez Community Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Puto". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom Puto
FHWA, CFLHD Project Manager

Enclosure: Proposed Action Map

Figure 1. Proposed Action Map

