



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area
401 West Hillcrest Drive
Thousand Oaks, California 91360-4207

In reply refer to:
D18/Solstice Canyon

July 11, 2006

Stefanie Edmondson, AICP, Associate Planner
City of Malibu
23815 Stuart Ranch Road
Malibu, CA 90265

SMMC
Attachment
7-31-06
Item 10b

Dear Ms. Edmondson:

The National Park Service is aware of an application to the City (Coastal Development Permit No. 05-087 and Lot Line Adjustment No. 02-002) to allow lot line adjustments on four adjoining parcels. No new parcels would be created and no new development is proposed at this time. The location is accessed from Wilmott Lane.

The National Park Service appreciates the opportunity to participate in the public review process for the lot line adjustment. We provide comments on the effects of private and public land development in the Santa Monica Mountains at the invitation of state and local units of government with authority to prevent or minimize adverse uses. We respect the rights of land owners to develop their properties consistent with federal, state, and local laws. In providing comments, we assume a neutral position and do not support or oppose land development. To this end, we wish to bring to your attention a proposed segment of the Coastal Slope Trail that crosses the subject property. We encourage the City to work with the landowner to secure a public right-of-way over this existing, but unofficial, segment of the Coastal Slope Trail. Background on the Coastal Slope Trail and the subject segment follow.

The Coastal Slope Trail is a long-envisioned regional trail conceptualized to provide continuous views toward the Pacific Ocean coastline along the Santa Monica Mountains, and to provide an alternate route to the California Coastal Trail during high tide. The trail has also been envisioned as one of the main trunks of the Santa Monica Mountains trail system. The Coastal Slope Trail is referenced in trail planning documents dating back to at least the mid-1970s. At that time, the Trails Coordinating Committee of the Santa Monica Mountains State Parks Advisory Committees began preparing what resulted in the 1979 draft document, *Conceptual Trail Network for the Santa Monica Mountains*. Thereafter, the Coastal Slope Trail has been included in virtually all coastal-oriented planning documents with a trail planning component, including but not limited to, the following documents.

- 1982 Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area General Plan
- 1986 Los Angeles County Master Trails Plan
- 1997 Santa Monica Mountains Area Recreation Trails (SMMART) Report

- 2004 Draft City of Malibu General Plan Amendment—Revised Trail Maps for Trails Master Plan
- 2005 Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Interagency Trail Management Plan Draft Trail Maps

In particular, the City's draft Trails Plan placed as top priority a proposed contiguous trail running east-west across the city as a way to connect between the City's neighborhoods. At the time, the trail was referred to as the Coastal Slope Trail. Currently, the draft trail maps now refer to the trail as the Malibu Pacific Trail to avoid confusion with the alignment of the conceptual Coastal Slope Trail on state or federal parkland north of the City. In some places, the Malibu Pacific Trail and the Coastal Slope Trail coincide, including a segment across the subject property. The joint alignment of the two trails will be referred to as the MPT/CST in this letter.

The proposed MPT/CST alignment in the vicinity of the subject lot line adjustment would complete public access from Latigo Canyon Road to federal parkland in Solstice Canyon. The alignment would travel along Wilmott Lane to a point where the trail makes use of a road bed associated with the old County Road, an alternative vehicular coastal route prior to construction of Pacific Coast Highway. The old roadbed then connects with existing public trails in Solstice Canyon. The full length of the alignment from Latigo Canyon Road to the Solstice Canyon public trail is approximately 3,520 feet.

The subject MPT/CST segment represents a critical link in the overall MPT/CST trail system. Indeed, the segment was regularly used as a recreational route between Escondido Canyon and Solstice Canyon. When the National Park Service assumed management of Solstice Canyon in 1998, park law enforcement noted extensive use of the trail as an unofficial entrance into Solstice Canyon. In compliance with federal public land management laws requiring entrance into federal parkland only at designated access points, and in deference to the neighboring private landowners, the public was discouraged from using the trail by posting it as closed to the public.

Please note, however, that current management of the park trail network does not reflect trail network planning goals to secure a public right-of-way over the existing unofficial trail route from Latigo Canyon Road to Solstice Canyon. The alignment follows a canyon between two ridgelines and makes use of an existing road and an old road bed. The steep mountainsides surrounding the route would make an alternative trail alignment very difficult and expensive to construct, with considerable natural resource impacts. Therefore, it would be practical to use the existing routes that are of reasonable grade and have been impacted by human use in the past. Additionally, the existing route would have minimal impact on the residential use of the four lots. The full alignment is approximately 0.6 miles. The distance along the old "Roosevelt Highway" is just 0.3 miles and parallels the subject property boundary at a distance of approximately 60 feet south of the boundary. The topography places the trail well below the more desirable building areas.

We hope a public right-of-way for this segment of the Malibu Pacific Trail/Coastal Slope Trail can be arranged. My staff is available to assist the City in this trail planning project, if

National Park Service
Stefanie Edmondson, City of Malibu CDP 05-087, Lot Line Adj 02-002

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needed. Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions, please call
Melanie Beck, Outdoor Recreation Planner, at (805)370-2346.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Woody Smeek". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Woody Smeek
Superintendent

cc: Joe Edmiston, Executive Director, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy
Honorable Jeff Jennings, Malibu City Council