



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Zion National Park
Springdale, Utah 84767



IN REPLY REFER TO: L7617

June 13, 2011

Subject: Kolob Terrace Road Rehabilitation

Reference: Request for Comments on Proposal (Scoping Comments)

Dear Interested Party:

Zion National Park (ZION or park) is beginning an environmental assessment to evaluate the potential impacts from the proposed resurfacing and rehabilitation of 9.8 miles of the Kolob Terrace Road. The project is divided into two sections (see attached figure). The first section, referred to as Kolob Terrace Road South or Zion Route 12, extends from the southern park boundary 4 miles north to where Washington County maintenance begins. The second section, referred to as Kolob Terrace Road North or Zion Route 14, extends 5.8 miles within the park boundary. The road provides access to some of the higher elevation portions of the park, as well as private land.

The proposed project is not a major road replacement with associated re-routing, etc. The proposed project is being considered to address deficiencies in the condition of the road and safety concerns. The current pavement is aged in many locations, which has led to surface cracks, rutting, buckling, and unraveling of the pavement edge. Years of chip-seal patches with no road base layer, along with increased heavy truck traffic due to housing construction on private property, have impacted the road surface to an unacceptable and potentially unsafe level. Continued crack seal, blade patches, and pothole and edge repair are not keeping up with increasing wear, and fail to protect it from surface water runoff. Some vehicles are driving outside of the road pavement, which is causing damage to park natural and cultural resources. Portions of the road are very narrow, which is a contributing factor to unraveling of the pavement edge and a safety concern due to large vehicles that use the road to access areas north of the park boundary.

The width of the Kolob Terrace Road is currently from 19 to 22 feet. Improving the safety and maintenance of Kolob Terrace Road requires increasing the width of the road to the extent practical. A 22-foot pavement width with no grade change is proposed for the south section of the road. However, because of the narrow road bench from the base of Maloney Hill through the Black Canyon to the northern end of the project, the park is proposing to maintain a 20-foot pavement width for this section. In addition, a number of site-specific repairs are proposed to address subgrade failure, drainage improvements, poor sight distance, and closure or improvement of several informal pullouts. Curve widening and other improvements are proposed for the Smith



Mesa Overlook, Maloney Hill Switchback, and Wildcat Canyon Trailhead Switchback. The proposed project would be completed as soon as funding becomes available, and construction is expected to take one year.

The National Park Service encourages public participation throughout the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. There will be two opportunities to comment formally on the project—once during initial project scoping and again following release of the environmental assessment. The park is currently in the scoping phase of the proposed project and invites the public to submit written suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding the project.

If you wish to provide information for the environmental assessment, we encourage you to submit comments online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/zion>, and select the link for Kolob Terrace Road Rehabilitation. Comments may also be mailed to:

Zion National Park
Kolob Terrace Road Rehabilitation
Springdale, UT 84767

Please submit all comments before July 18, 2011.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

We appreciate your input on this project. If you have any questions, please contact Kezia Nielsen, Environmental Protection Specialist, at kezia_nielsen@nps.gov or (435) 772-0211.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jock F. Whitworth
Superintendent

