

**EVALUATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF A
DE MINIMIS FINDING TO SECTION 4(F) PROPERTY
FOR PUBLIC PARKS, RECREATION LANDS, AND
WILDLIFE AND WATERFOWL REFUGES**

ARDOT Job 061756

FAP STPU-0062(57)

Saline County



Shamrock Park

City of Shannon Hills

May 2023

Federal Highway Administration

Arkansas Department of Transportation

What is Section 4(f)?

Section 4(f) is part of a law that was passed to protect public parks, recreation areas, wildlife/waterfowl refuges, and important historic sites from being harmed by transportation projects.

Does Section 4(f) apply to Shamrock Park?

Metroplan, in conjunction with The Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has proposed a project that involves the Shamrock Park property in the City of Shannon Hills, Arkansas. Section 4(f) protections are applicable because Shamrock Park is a publicly accessible park managed and used for recreational purposes.

Certain types of Section 4(f) impacts can be recognized as "*de minimis*", which means relatively minor. The intent of this evaluation is to demonstrate that impacts to Shamrock Park will be relatively minor. We can have a *de minimis* finding on projects that meet the conditions shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1	
When Can We Use a <i>De Minimis</i> Finding on Section 4(f) Properties?	Does it Apply to This Project?
Did we specifically design the project to protect the park as much as possible? Did we use mitigation and enhancement where it was suitable?	Yes
Did the officials with authority over the park have a chance to consider this information and agree that the project will not greatly harm the characteristics that make the park important?	Yes
Did the public have an opportunity to review and comment on the effects of the project on the park and the characteristics that make it important to them?	Yes

What is the proposed project?

The Shannon Hills Drive bridge over Otter Creek is in poor condition. Metroplan, in conjunction with ARDOT and FHWA, is proposing to replace the bridge and shift the centerline of Shannon Hills Drive to the north to facilitate staged construction of the new bridge over Otter Creek.

Why is Shamrock Park Important?

Shamrock Park is owned and managed by the City of Shannon Hills. Recreation activities in the park include walking, biking, picnicking, playing basketball, and using playground facilities. Amenities in and near the project footprint include:

- Picnic tables and pavilions (see **Figure 1**)
- Playground equipment (see **Figure 2**)
- Three parking lots, including a main lot on the west side of the park (see **Figure 3**), an unpaved area next to the basketball court (see **Figure 5**), and a secondary parking lot on the east side of the park.
- Pedestrian/bicycle paths (see **Figure 4**)
- Multi-Use field (see **Figure 4**)
- Basketball court (see **Figure 5**)



Figure 1. *Photograph courtesy of Google Earth, April 2023*



Figure 2. *Photograph courtesy of Google Earth, April 2023*



Figure 3. *Photograph courtesy of Google Earth, April 2023*



Figure 4. *Photograph courtesy of Google Earth, April 2023*



Figure 5. *Photograph courtesy of Google Earth, April 2023*

Can we avoid the park?

There are no feasible and prudent alternatives to replacing the existing bridge without impacting park land. Shannon Hills Drive is an essential route connecting the City of Shannon Hill's Ward 1 in the east to Wards 2 and 3 in the west. To maintain access to emergency services and essential resources for residents in Ward 3, the new bridge would be constructed offset of the existing bridge alignment to manage access across Shannon Hills Drive during construction. To facilitate this shifted alignment, right-of-way (ROW) and a temporary construction easement would be required from Shamrock Park.

What will the project do to the park?

The new bridge and roadway improvements on Shannon Hills Drive would require the conversion of approximately 0.4 acre of park property to transportation ROW and approximately 0.03 acre for use as a temporary construction easement. As shown in **Figure 6**, the acreage that would be converted to transportation ROW would be located north of the existing Shannon Hills Drive bridge. The temporary construction easement would be located in the main parking lot on the west side of the park.

Impacts resulting from the project construction would include:

Adverse Impacts:

- Approximately 0.4 acre of the approximately 9.2-acre Shamrock Park property would be converted to transportation ROW and approximately 0.03 acre would be used for a temporary construction easement.
- Access to the basketball court parking lot may be temporarily limited during construction.
- Noise levels would temporarily increase during construction.

Beneficial Impacts:

- The new bridge would replace an existing bridge that is in poor condition and would have a more distinctive appearance.
- The sidewalk improvements on both sides of the proposed Shannon Hills Drive Bridge would increase pedestrian mobility and provide a future connection to the Southwest Trail along Otter Creek.
- The bridge approach modifications would increase vehicular safety.

What did we do to reduce harm to the park?

The following measures were included in the proposed project to reduce harm to the park:

- The transportation ROW and temporary construction easement in the main parking lot were minimized to the greatest extent practicable.
- Access to all parking spaces in the main parking lot and access to park amenities would be maintained during construction.
- The centerline to Shannon Hills Drive was shifted north to facilitate staged construction of the new bridge and to allow one lane of traffic to remain open during construction.

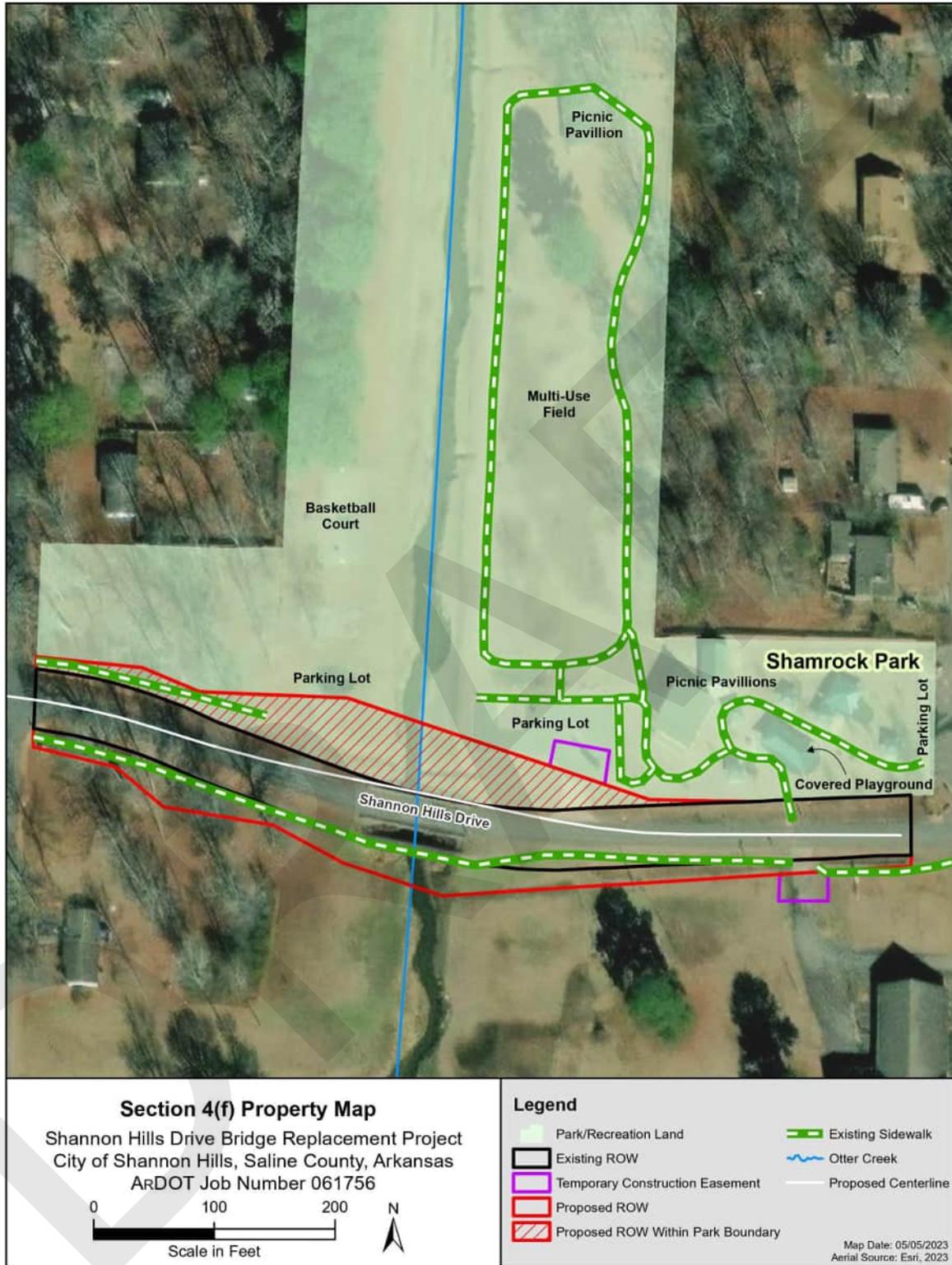


Figure 6

How did we involve the public in this evaluation?

Note for Draft. A brief discussion of the actions for providing the public opportunity to review and comment on the impacts to the Section 4(f) property and any other coordination relevant to the Section 4(f) property will be inserted here. Example:

A public notice in the Saline Courier newspaper on [insert date] invited the public to review and comment on the proposed project's effects on Shamrock Park. The Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation document was available on the ARDOT website and at the Mabel Boswell Memorial Library. The public comment period occurred from [insert dates of 15-day comment period]. [Indicate whether or not public comments were received; summarize received comments if applicable and provide in Appendix].

The City of Shannon Hills officials agreed that this project would not have a harmful effect on Shamrock Park. A copy of the concurrence is included in **Appendix A**.

What is the decision?

This evaluation concludes that the proposed project would not adversely affect the protected features, qualities, or activities that qualify the park for protection under Section 4(f), thus qualifying for a *de minimis* finding on Shamrock Park.

**APPENDIX A
CONCURRENCE STATEMENT**

DRAFT

City of Shannon Hills

I concur with the assessment and the proposed minimization and mitigation aspects to Shamrock Park as detailed in the enclosed Section 4(f) Evaluation and Documentation of De Minimis Findings to Section 4(f) Property for Public Parks, Recreation Lands, and Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges.

_____ Signature

_____ Title

_____ Date

