



June 25, 2013

**ACTION MEMORANDUM TO THE SECRETARY**

From: Victor M. Mendez  
Administrator  
X60650

Prepared by: Joyce A. Curtis  
Associate Administrator for  
Office of Federal Lands Highway  
X69472

Subject: Distribution of Excess Public Lands Highway Discretionary  
Program Funds

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**ACTION REQUIRED**

I request that you approve \$4,515,509 in excess Public Lands Highway Discretionary (PLHD) Program funds under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, and extended in the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2011, Part II (Extension Act), title I of Public Law 112-30, to 15 projects in 8 States.

**SUMMARY**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reviewed the highly qualified un-awarded applications received for discretionary funding on the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 PLHD Program to determine how to best distribute the remaining funds. We recommend awarding funds to highly qualified applicants that did not originally receive a FY 2012 PLHD grant. This maximizes the number of projects selected by starting with the smallest request and continuing down the list of highly qualified projects. This approach fully funds 15 projects. I request your approval to allocate \$4,515,509 from the PLHD Program to the projects recommended in Attachment 1. For your reference, Attachment 2 includes the remaining projects.

**BACKGROUND**

The purpose of the PLHD Program was to provide funding for transportation planning, research, and engineering and construction, of highways, roads, parkways, and transit facilities

that are within, adjacent to, or provide access to Indian reservations and Federal public lands, including national parks, refuges, forests, recreation areas, and grasslands.

The FHWA issued annual calls for PLHD projects. States submitted project applications to FHWA, and projects were selected on the basis of need as determined by the Secretary. The recipients had the rest of the year the funds were provided, plus 3 more years, to obligate. At the end of that "current plus three" year period, the funds that had not been obligated were combined with the new authorized funds and provided to new projects as part of that year's competition.

Since this program was not continued under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act, there is no opportunity to add unobligated funding to the competition for new projects. At the end of FY 2015, all PLHD funds will lapse.

In determining how to distribute the remaining PLHD funds, FHWA reviewed and rated all the project applications received for discretionary funding on the FY 2012 PLHD Program according to project selection criteria. The projects were rated as highly qualified, qualified, and not qualified. To maximize the impact of this program, based on the funding available, and fund the highest number of eligible projects, the highly qualified projects were sorted from the lowest to the highest according to their requested amount. In particular, projects with the lowest requested amount of funding were selected. Due to the funding limitation, a limited number of applicants were contacted to determine the project's viability. Using this approach, a total of 15 projects were identified as highly qualified and viable projects.

The recommended projects align well with the selection criteria. Projects selected include those that strongly support strategic transportation goals and priorities of Federal land management agencies and Indian tribes; emphasize safety, state of good repair and livability; and are ready to advance upon award.

Our Office of the Chief Financial Officer has reviewed these recommended awards and has confirmed that funds are available to make the awards.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

I recommend you approve the 15 projects described in Attachment 1. The FHWA intends to allocate the excess PLHD Program funds when projects are ready to obligate.

Attachments

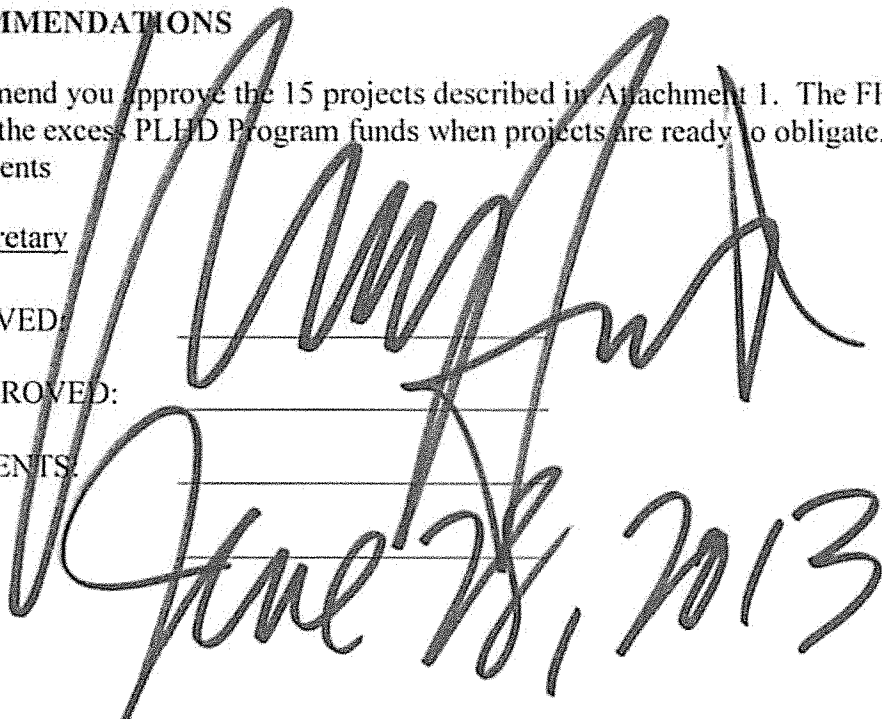
The Secretary

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

DISAPPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_

COMMENTS: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_



**Public Lands Highway Discretionary (PLHD) Program, Highly Qualified Recommended Projects**

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
Minnesota	The Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Education Station Improvements will provide safe visitor access to and information about a significant destination, the Sherburne NWR. Specifically, the project includes construction of turn lanes from a county road, a short entrance road, a parking area, and informational signage. The Education Station will provide refuge visitors from near and far a centralized location to obtain information, participate in environmental	Highly Qualified	This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses safety outcomes because it will improve the safety of visitors entering and exiting the county road from the refuge by building turn lanes onto a county road and making parking and entrance road improvements. The project is also Highly Qualified because it aligns well with livability and will provide access improvement that, along with the longer-term plan, will create a visitor center at the site which would include many new opportunities for recreation and education.	\$100,000

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
	<p>education/interpretation programs, and begin to explore a wild place with globally rare oak savanna habitat and associated wildlife. Besides appealing to local families and student and civic groups, this facility is expected to attract travelers using major nearby highways (including US 169 and US 10) as well as the Scenic Mississippi section of Minnesota's Great River Road.</p>			
Ohio	<p>Refuge Auto Tour and County Line Road Improvement Project will improve road conditions and promote increased visitation and access Ottawa NWR. The 130,000 visitors each year contribute millions of dollars to the local economy. As visitation increases to</p>	Highly Qualified	<p>Refuge Auto Tour and County Line Road Improvement Project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses safety outcomes because it will enhance and improve the road surface conditions. The additional pull-off parking will promote safer conditions for pedestrians outside their vehicles viewing wildlife in the adjacent managed wetlands. The</p>	\$133,600

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	the refuge and surrounding area, the impacts to county roads in and around the refuge result in deteriorating road conditions and subsequent road closures. In addition, flooding and burrowing animals have created additional hazardous road conditions.		project is also Highly Qualified because it aligns well with the state of good repair criterion. Making these repairs will lead to a longer lifespan and reduced maintenance costs. Currently the auto tour overtops during high water leading to damage, the proposed project would eliminate this safety and maintenance concern.	
Minnesota	The County Highway 7 Roadway Improvement will make needed improvements to County Highway 7, the primary public access to Minnesota's Agassiz NWR, which receives visitation near 23,000 people a year. The project includes the planning, engineering, and construction required to rehabilitate the highway's gravel surface, replace any damaged culverts and	Highly Qualified	This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. Not only would the project repair deficient infrastructure such as drainage, but the applicant predicts annual maintenance costs would be greatly decreased by this intervention. The application also addresses the livability criterion, as the project would improve access and ride quality to the Refuge.	\$145,000

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
	rehabilitate ditches as necessary.			
Maryland	The Public Safety and Recreational Opportunity Enhancement of Maple Dam Road project will involve planning and design/engineering services for raising 1.4 miles of an existing county road, installing box culverts, and adding a pull off to provide wildlife viewing opportunity along this heavily used road within Blackwater NWR. This project will address safety by reducing road flooding and maintaining secondary access routes for isolated rural communities faced with climate change and sea level rise. The	Highly Qualified	This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses safety outcomes because it will provide a reliable evacuation route and address flooding dangers. The project is also Highly Qualified because it aligns well with the livability priority criterion and will provide multiple transportation modes for visitors and cyclists, enhancing a growing tourism industry in an economically depressed area of Maryland's eastern shore. Completion of this project will also reduce maintenance costs and maximize the road's lifetime.	\$150,000

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	project will also enhance a thriving nature tourism industry by providing a wildlife viewing area and safe road conditions, and will restore hydrological connectivity to thousands of acres of tidal marsh on Blackwater NWR.			
Washington	The Hard Creek Bridge Repair Restoration will use funds to repair the Hard Creek Bridge on Cascade River Road that was damaged by a landslide in 2010. The bridge is now a one-way bridge and will be restored to two-way traffic. Cascade River Road is the only access to areas of the North Cascades National Park, trailheads, and campgrounds.	Highly Qualified	This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. This project meets the priority administrative selection criterion of safety because it will replace a bridge damaged in a landslide in 2010. While traffic has been restored to the bridge, it is single lane. Replacing the bridge will bring it back to full capacity as a primary access road to the North Cascades National Park and several trailheads. This is a modestly scaled project that will have a significant impact on traffic flow in the North Cascades National Park and Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, and is ready to advance upon award.	\$187,000

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
Washington	<p>The Prince Creek Dock Replacement will use funds to award a contract for the construction of a new public ferry dock. The existing dock infrastructure is unserviceable and unsafe for passenger ingress/egress from ferry to dock, and a new dock will meet the ongoing demand of the commercial ferry service and recreational boaters. This dock will provide public access to US Forest Service and National Park Service lands including: Prince Creek, Moore Point &amp; Flick Creek Campgrounds, Lake Chelan Sawtooth Wilderness Area and Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, and the remote town of</p>	Highly Qualified	<p>This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The application addresses major safety and livability concerns, and the new dock will allow public passenger ferry access to National Forest as well as National Recreation Lands and the remote town of Stehekin.</p>	\$200,000



STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
	Stehekin, WA.			
Michigan	The Gabriel Road improvement project will address access issues into the Shiawassee NWR by reconditioning and paving the existing poor quality route from the city of Saginaw to the Refuge and resolve drainage issues in the low-lying areas along the route. The project will benefit recreational development to the area's largest NWR.	Highly Qualified	This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses livability outcomes because it will encourage pedestrians and cyclists to visit nearby Saginaw. Raising the standard of the road would likely help to draw more visitors to the Refuge's Learning Center. The project is also Highly Qualified because it aligns well with the priority criterion of state of good repair and will improve an existing road and make it easier to travel during excessively wet and dry weather.	\$234,295

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
California	Additional Adjacent Parking Area at the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument Visitor Center will construct additional adjacent parking facilities (25 parking spaces) at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM)/ US Forest Service National Monument Visitor Center. Funds would be used to implement the construction phase of a project designed, engineered and vetted under previously received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding. This project will improve visitor services, safety and livability for residents within the nearby communities who traverse this route	Highly Qualified	This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses safety outcomes because it will address hazards associated with visitors crossing a 55 mph highway from the current overflow parking location. This project is also ready to advance, with environmental and design work completed using Bureau of Land Management and ARRA funds.	\$250,000

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	daily, and will provide the economic benefits of construction employment in the short-term, as well as the long-term economic benefits of improving visitor services at this national and international tourist destination.			
California	The Northside School Class I Bike Path, Cool, CA, project is designed to provide a safer route for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel along SR-49 and SR-193 to access the Auburn State Recreation Area , Northside School, and the commercial center in the unincorporated town of Cool, population 3,800. Funds will be used for right of way (including utilities) and	Highly Qualified	Northside School Class I Bike Path meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses livability outcomes because it will create the first bike/pedestrian connection between a school, Reclamation lands and a nearby small town. The application specifically ties the path into livability benefits for schoolchildren, Reclamation visitors and commuters. The project is also Highly Qualified because it aligns well with the safety criterion, allowing bicycles and pedestrians a safer, separated facility. Given the strong livability benefits, exceptional leveraging and community support and the small project request, this project is Highly Qualified to receive PLHD funding.	\$300,000

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
	<p>construction of a separated 8-foot wide multi-modal Class I facility approximately 1.8 miles in length. The Project will greatly enhance the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians traveling along the two State highways. The Project also promotes livability by providing a healthy transportation option for local residents to access the natural resources and recreational opportunities of the 35,000-acre Auburn SRA, owned/managed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.</p>			

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
Wisconsin	<p>Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTP) for Forest Highways in the Eastern Region of the US Forest Service will use funds develop 12 Long Range Transportation Plans for each of the Region's Forest Highways Programs. Forest Highways are the primary transportation system that provides access to and through our National Forest System, and these planning documents will enable better investment decisions for planning, infrastructure preservation, and construction on transportation related assets within the Forest Highways transportation system.</p>	Highly Qualified	<p>This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The planning documents produced through this project will enable better investment decisions for planning, infrastructure preservation, and construction on transportation related assets within the Forest Highways transportation system, including 15 National Forests in 12 different States in the Eastern region. The actual project selection process that is directly linked to the goals of these LRTPs will include safety and good road maintenance and improvements as two of the most important selection criteria. The project addresses livability, highlighting increased transportation choices along improved corridors and increased accessibility for drivers as well as non-drivers.</p>	\$300,000

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	<p>They will take into consideration a myriad of topics including, but will not be limited to; assessment of existing conditions and trends; asset management analysis; forging urban connections and access to priority recreational sites; internal and external outreach activities; and will culminate with the creation of a 5-year program of projects. These LRTPs will ensure public dollars are utilized wisely and in an effective manner.</p>			
Washington	<p>The Old Blyn Highway Traffic Calming project will add safety enhancements along a half mile section of Old Blyn Highway, a rural arterial providing direct access to the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe's governmental</p>	Highly Qualified	<p>This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. This project meets the priority administrative selection criteria of safety and livability because it will create a corridor that is safe and inviting for non-drivers. There will be several pedestrian</p>	\$359,914

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	campus. Funds will be used to construct traffic calming measures, including two speed table crosswalks with pedestrian actuated warning lights, additional speed limit and pedestrian crossing signage, roadside landscaping, and asphalt overlay.		safety elements added - speed table crosswalks, pedestrian warning lights, and additional signage. This project, administered by the Washington Department of Transportation, will improve pedestrian access along Old Blyn Highway, providing increased access to the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribal lands and government offices in addition to the local community center, public library and a handful of tourist attractions. This project has strong support from the Tribe in addition to being well leveraged and ready to advance upon award.	
Minnesota	The Saint Croix River Boom Site Roadside Recreational Area Enhancements will improve a national historic landmark located along the scenic byway on Trunk Highway 95 and in the Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway, a national park. One of only two national historic landmarks in the entire Saint Croix River watershed (Minnesota and Wisconsin), the site	Highly Qualified	This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses state of good repair by stabilizing and rehabilitating deteriorating historic infrastructure. The project also generally addresses safety and livability criteria. This project will improve the accessibility of paths and stairs designed as early as the 1930s and will improve safety, interpretation, historical integrity and local environmental quality.	\$500,000

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	<p>was originally developed as a National Youth Administration project in the 1930s, and is currently in disrepair; some of its cultural and natural resource assets have been degraded. Funds will contribute to a number of components of the overall project, including planning/designing the site, restoring recreational facilities, improving public safety, and addressing environmental degradation.</p>			
Oregon	<p>The Lolo Pass Road Access Alternatives Study requests funds to study more reliable alternative access points to public and private lands and determine whether any are feasible. This study is in response to the</p>	Highly Qualified	<p>Lolo Pass Road Access Alternatives Study meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses livability outcomes because it will provide reliable and permanent access to the surrounding area for seniors, non-drivers, economically disadvantaged, etc.</p>	\$520,000



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	<p>damage created in January 2011 when a 300-foot section of Lolo Pass Road (a Federal Forest Highway) was completely destroyed by the Sandy River during a flood event, cutting off the only winter access to National Forest lands and 250 private homes. The damage was repaired using County, Federal Emergency Management Agency, and Federal Highway Administration funds, but access to these public and private lands might be cut off again for an indefinite period of time after the next event if the County does not have sufficient funding to fix it again. More flood events like this are expected.</p>		<p>Additionally, it will ensure that access to the Mt. Hood National Forest will be continuously maintained.</p>	

STATE	DESCRIPTION	RATING (Highly Qualified; Qualified; Not Qualified)	BASIS FOR SELECTION	REQUESTED AMOUNT
Washington	<p>Denny Creek/ Franklin Falls Trailhead Improvements will complete planning and new construction for parking at the Denny Creek / Franklin Falls Trailhead along the I-90 corridor. Managed by the Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie (MBS) National Forest this project addresses these safety issues while improving the livability of the recreational area by completing Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the three phase project. Phase 1 is to complete the National Environmental Protection Act process, and Phase 2 will construct parking areas A, B, and C to calm the traffic flow near the trailheads, increasing awareness of drivers of pedestrians present.</p>	Highly Qualified	<p>This project meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses livability outcomes for its elements regarding Americans with Disability Act accessibility, traffic calming, and multimodal transportation. The project is also Highly Qualified because it aligns well with the state of good repair criterion. Should these parking lots not be constructed, the current road would quickly deteriorate as tourists park along the road and shoulder. The project also generally discusses safety. Not only will the parking lots now be safer for pedestrians and drivers, but the constructed trails will keep pedestrians off of the major road.</p>	\$522,000

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California	<p>Tuolumne Grove Parking Area will reconstruct the Tuolumne Grove Trailhead Parking Area along Yosemite National Park's Tioga Road, one of America's National Scenic Byways. This parking area provides pedestrian access to the Tuolumne Grove, comfort stations, informational exhibits, and parking for trailheads. The existing parking area has many deficiencies such as pedestrian-vehicular conflicts, confusing signage and parking layout, poor geometry and sight distance, and inadequate drop off for tourist buses. Funding will be used to provide a one-way loop for tourist bus and</p>	Highly Qualified	<p>Tuolumne Grove Parking Area meets the eligibility criteria for the PLHD program. This project is Highly Qualified and is recommended for funding because it met several of the criteria; identified specific outcomes; and included supporting documentation that clearly demonstrated how project outcomes met Federal land management agency or Indian tribe transportation goals and priorities. The project addresses safety outcomes because it will improve sight lines and pedestrian facilities to make the parking area safer for pedestrians and motorists. The project is also Highly Qualified because it aligns well with livability, as the parking area will improve access to hiking trails.</p>	\$613,700

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	passenger drop off, revised signage and striping, and a safer intersection with Tioga Road that provides increased sight distance for pulling in or out of the parking area.			
			<b>TOTAL</b>	