



Publication of East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan and Environmental Assessment

Dear Friends:

On behalf of the National Park Service, I am pleased to share with you our plan for managing the East and South Barracks at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site.

Established in 1948 through a bi-state grassroots effort, Fort Vancouver National Historic Site is the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area's only national park. Over the years, the park has become ever more vital as an important symbol of this region's unique heritage. For over 60 years, we have told the compelling stories of the colonial period in the Northwest, including contact with indigenous peoples, the fur trade, and the establishment of the first permanent U.S. Army post. With the creation of the Vancouver National Historic Reserve, we expanded our programs, research, and stewardship to protect and interpret the 20th century American experiences specific to this site: homefront efforts for two world wars, the Great Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, and other vital aspects of the military post. We have served many generations of visitors, and that visitation has grown substantially, now hovering at almost 1 million annually. We currently host 20,000 students a year on educational trips and programs. In 2003, the park became responsible for what I believe is the most important historic home in the Pacific Northwest, the McLoughlin House in Oregon City, Oregon, home of Dr. John McLoughlin, known as the Father of Oregon.

On the cusp of the National Park Service's 100th anniversary, it seems auspicious that we embark on public planning for the future of East and South Vancouver Barracks. For almost a century, the National Park Service has held true to its mission of "protecting and preserving in perpetuity" our nation's most precious places. The National Park System is made up of magnificent, breath-taking places, as well as places that speak to the inspiring people and indelible moments in our history. Places such as Gettysburg, the Liberty Bell at Independence, USS *Arizona*, the Statue of Liberty, Mesa Verde, Bunker Hill, Yellowstone, Women's Rights, Little Bighorn, Ford's Theatre, Manzanar, Mount Rushmore, Brown v. Board of Education, Flight 93, Everglades, and the White House, are all part of the National Park System and help define us as a people and a nation. The place-based educational programs of the National Park Service immerse the public in this vibrant system, so both adults and youth may establish their own connections to the cultural and natural history of our national treasures.



Barracks buildings along south side of parade ground in the East Barracks

The U.S. Congress acted in 1961 to ensure that the historic East and South Vancouver Barracks would eventually relinquish from the U.S. Army to the National Park Service. The current post to park transfer achieves this vision, and ensures that the rich history of the military post will be continued. As story tellers, educators, and scientists,

National Park Service employees are ready – with support from partners, volunteers, and others – to keep this place alive.

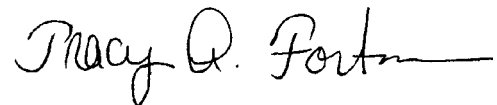
This newsletter summarizes the preferred alternative for the East and South Barracks, which is our draft plan for the preservation and reuse of the structures and grounds. This alternative reflects many of the ideas you shared with us early in this planning process. Now, we invite you to review our plans for the future and let us know what you think.

The preferred alternative, as well as the other alternatives and an analysis of their environmental effects, are described in more detail in the East and South Vancouver Barracks Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment. This document is available on our project website (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/fova>). You may submit your comments on the draft plan at that same website, or mail the comment form included in this newsletter.

We also invite you to join us for public meetings to be held on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 from 12:00-2:00 p.m., with a site tour from 12:30-1:00 p.m., and on Thursday, February 23, 2012 from 6:00-8:00 p.m., with a site tour from 5:30-6:00 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the Red Cross Building, 605 Barnes Street, Vancouver, WA 98661. At these meetings you will have the opportunity to discuss the Draft Master Plan/Environmental Assessment and provide comments directly to National Park Service personnel.

I welcome your continued participation in this effort, as together we shape a strong, thoughtful future for these historically-significant public lands. We look forward to protecting and enhancing the site's resources as part of the National Park System, ensuring public use and enjoyment of this special place!

Sincerely,



Tracy Fortmann, Superintendent



Oak grove in East Barracks was first noted in the early 19th century

Overview

As the early terminus of the historic Oregon Trail, and the first major U.S. Army post in the Pacific Northwest, the historic East and South Vancouver Barracks represents critical aspects of the nation's history. This collection of resources tells nationally significant stories about American Indian history and culture, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC), and more than 160 years of continuous U.S. military operations. Last fall, the U.S. Army initiated relinquishment of the East and South Barracks to the National Park Service (NPS), including the lands, buildings, and other improvements. The relinquishment ends the longstanding military presence at Vancouver Barracks. At this important moment in the ongoing history of the site, the National Park Service must carefully plan for the preservation and reuse of the East and South Vancouver Barracks.

Previous plans have established broad direction for managing Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Building on this broad direction, the East and South Vancouver Barracks Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment provides more focused guidance for this particular part of the national historic site. It is the first plan to discuss specific strategies for reusing historic buildings, accommodating increased public access, and managing future site design and development of the East and South Barracks. For example, the plan identifies which buildings the National Park Service intends to use to meet current and future needs, and it recommends buildings that are suitable for adaptive reuse by other entities. It also describes strategies to preserve and restore important aspects of the cultural landscape, and to safely accommodate increased public use through changes to access and circulation.

The plan is intended to be flexible, offering future managers the background and guidance necessary to make knowledgeable decisions about how best to manage the barracks.

The Vancouver Barracks Vision

The National Park Service, NPS partners, and members of the surrounding community defined the following vision for Vancouver Barracks. This statement, which guided development of this Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment, describes in broad terms the desired future conditions for Vancouver Barracks.

Located in a thriving metropolitan area along the Columbia River, the Vancouver Barracks is a nationally significant resource and a treasured part of its local community. An intricate mosaic of stories and well-preserved structures, landscapes, and archeological resources, the barracks provide rare opportunities to engage diverse audiences in the dynamic history of the Pacific Northwest. Through the adaptive reuse of historic military structures and a lively mix of educational, commercial, recreational, and cultural activities, the Vancouver barracks model environmental and cultural stewardship and fosters deep connections between people and place.

Alternatives Considered

The East and South Vancouver Barracks Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment considers four alternatives for the protection, use, and management of the East and South Vancouver Barracks. Each alternative aims to satisfy the vision described above in different ways. The four alternatives are:

Alternative A, The Extension of Current Management Practices in the East and South Barracks (No-action Alternative): This alternative describes current conditions and the application of current management practices to the East and South Barracks. The no-action alternative assumes the absence of more specific guidance contained in this Master Plan.

Alternative B, A Vibrant, Urban District in a Historic Setting: Similar to the Officers' Row and West Barracks models, alternative B would focus on creating a vibrant urban district in the East and South Barracks that would complement downtown Vancouver and the surrounding community with a variety of land uses, including retail, office, and residential.

Alternative C, A Sustainable, Historic Campus for Public Service (Preferred Alternative): The preferred alternative is the NPS proposed course of action. The primary intent of the preferred alternative would be to create a dynamic, sustainable public service campus where the multilayered history of the East and South Barracks is preserved and interpreted.

Alternative D, A Historic, Educational Campus for All: Through a targeted adaptive reuse strategy, alternative D focuses on encouraging educational, community, and nonprofit uses that support the focused interpretation of site-specific history, including Hudson's Bay Company (ca. 1829-1860) history south of East 5th Street and military history north of East 5th Street (ca. 1901-1948).



View of the south face of the three ca. 1905 Infantry Barracks located along the edge of the historic Parade Ground



Interior view of the former Quartermaster Storehouse, built 1906



Ca. 1935 view of buildings 993, 991, 989, and 987, facing southwest across the Parade Ground

The Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative is the focus of this newsletter. It represents the NPS proposed course of action for management and reuse of the East and South Vancouver Barracks. Through a structured group decision-making process, NPS staff and partners selected the preferred alternative from a range of draft alternatives developed earlier in the planning process. Potential impacts to the human and natural environment were considered, as well as how well each alternative satisfied the goals of the plan, and initial cost estimates. The planning team chose the alternative that best supports the NPS mission, the purpose of Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, and the goals of this *Draft Master Plan*. The preferred alternative includes the following set of potential future actions.

Alternative Concept

Under the preferred alternative, the East and South Barracks would become a “multiagency campus” and a model in integrating sustainability with historic preservation and rehabilitation. The focus would be on attracting tenants to help defray costs, particularly federal and other public agencies whose work complements the mission of the National Park Service. Sustainability, education, and public service are all key parts of this alternative, with an emphasis on interpreting the Hudson’s Bay Company history, subsequent U.S. Army periods, and the continued federal ownership of this site. This alternative also emphasizes educating the public on sustainable practices.

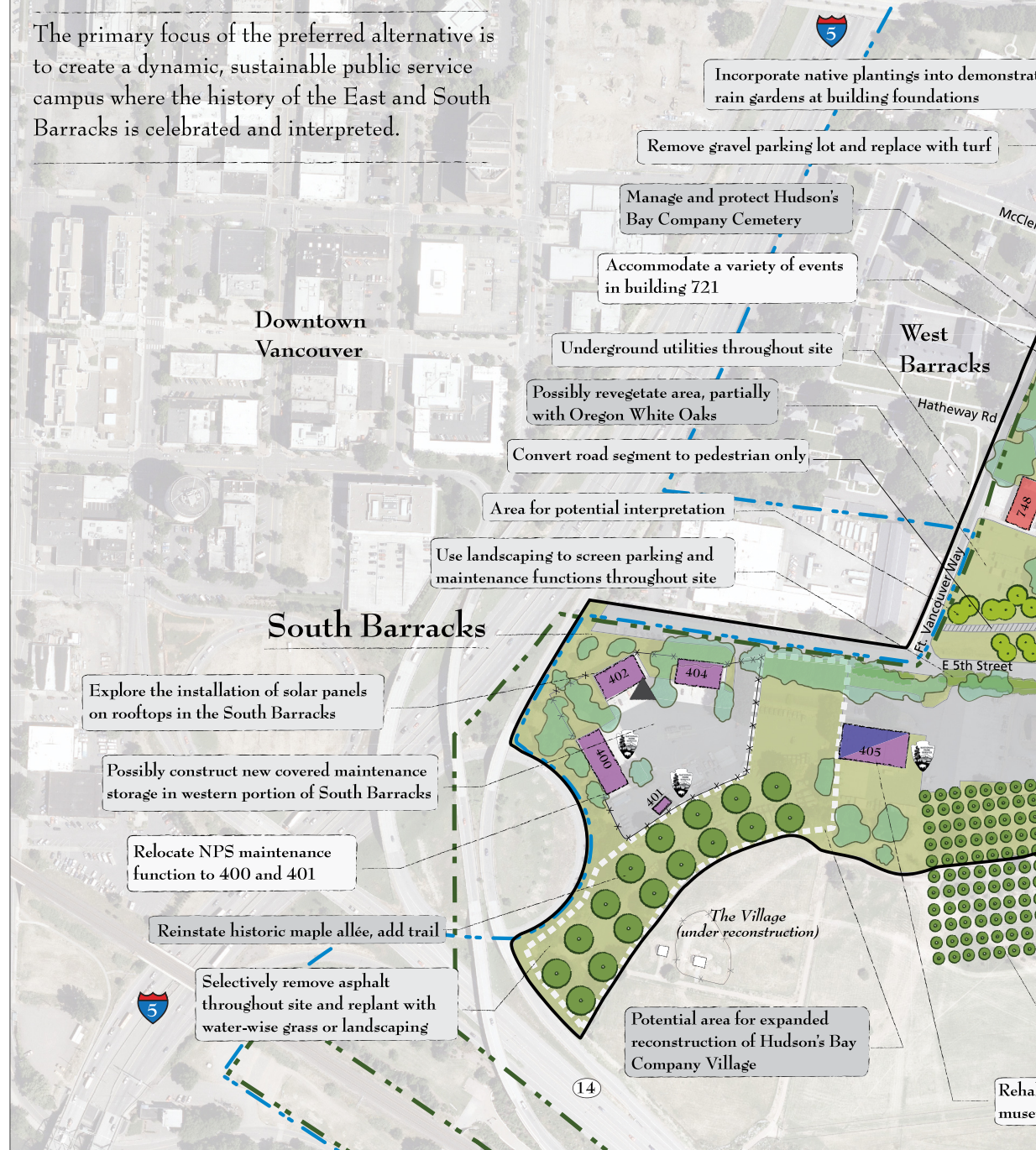
Adaptive Reuse of Buildings

Under the preferred alternative, headquarters for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, other NPS administrative uses, and certain interpretive functions would be relocated to building 993 or another historic building that is in a prominent position along the historic parade ground. Buildings 400 and 401 in the South Barracks would be retained for NPS maintenance use and storage. Building 753 may also be used for NPS maintenance storage. Building 405 would be rehabilitated as a regional museum management facility for the National Park Service, NPS partners, and the public.

The National Park Service would make a number of other buildings available for use by Historic Reserve partners or other entities: for example, by attracting public agencies and other organizations with missions that

Alternative C (Preferred Alternative) – A Sustainable, Historic

The primary focus of the preferred alternative is to create a dynamic, sustainable public service campus where the history of the East and South Barracks is celebrated and interpreted.



Legend

- Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Boundary (existing)
- National Historic Reserve Boundary
- Project Area
- Fence
- Existing trees
- Potential location for new trees
- New landscaping
- Potential road conversion to pedestrian only
- New public restrooms

Proposed Building Reuse

- Lodging
- Retail
- Office
- Interpretation/Visitor Service
- Arts/Events/Community
- Maintenance/Storage Building
- For primary use by NPS
- Potentially for partner use

Historic Campus for Public Service



Building Reuse and Site Improvements

East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan Fort Vancouver National Historic Site

National Park Service • U.S. Department of the Interior
Denver Service Center • September 2011

All boundaries are approximate. This graphic is intended for illustration only. Please refer to text in the Master Plan for full description of alternative treatment actions.

Adaptive Reuse of Buildings *(continued)*

are compatible with that of the National Park Service to occupy office spaces. In addition to office use, a healthy mix of other uses, such as retail and nonprofit functions, would be encouraged in order to integrate this area with the rest of the Historic Reserve.

Cultural Landscape Treatment

Over time, the cultural landscape would be rehabilitated to create a public agency campus and to support increased visitor use. Major objectives of landscape rehabilitation would include the depiction and interpretation of historic conditions, with a focus on HBC history south of East 5th Street, and early to late military history in the East Barracks.

The military landscape north of East 5th Street would be preserved, rehabilitated, and interpreted. The National Park Service would seek to adjust historic site boundaries to include the western side of Fort Vancouver Way so that the National Park Service would own and be responsible for all HBC cemetery grounds.

As feasible, continued restoration of the HBC landscape south of East 5th Street would include: extending ongoing reconstruction of Hudson's Bay Company Village elements into the South Barracks, expanding the existing HBC garden and orchard, reconstructing the summer house and a historic maple allée, and establishing an interpretive loop trail along a former road, which would connect visitor areas from different parts of the historic site.

Development Character

Newly designed features such as shuttle stops, crosswalks, plazas, lighting, benches, street trees, picnic facilities, bike racks, and other site furnishings would be permitted, and designed in accordance with accessibility standards and compatibility with the historic setting. The National Park Service would explore the use of sustainable technologies in ways that do not intrude on the cultural landscape, but still provide opportunities for educating the public on these practices. In order to make the site more attractive and efficient, utility lines would be replaced, improved, and buried underground, and landscaping would be installed strategically throughout the site.



The south facade of building 987, a 1907 Infantry Barracks

Construction Activity

Subject to additional decision making and compliance, certain structures may be removed to restore the cultural landscape, enhance visitor experience, and improve access and circulation. New building construction would be limited, and proposed only if it is essential to support public use, enjoyment, and understanding. The National Park Service would also encourage methods of building maintenance and rehabilitation that maximize resource protection, energy efficiency, and water conservation, as feasible.

Visitor Use and Experience

The National Park Service would strive to create visitor experiences that foster a sense of interconnectedness with other National Historic Site and Historic Reserve resources. Public access would be increased under the preferred alternative as a large number of buildings would be rehabilitated for occupancy, visitor use, and interpretation. Visitors would enjoy diverse interpretive opportunities to learn about the layered history of the site, as well as the work of agencies on campus and how sustainability can be pursued in a historic context.

Interpretive exhibits would be encouraged in rehabilitated historic buildings to relate military and American Indian history. In the South Barracks, the museum facility in building 405 would provide the public with increased opportunities to appreciate and learn about the region's archeological resources and other collections. The National Park Service would promote the use of building 410 for retail and visitor services, so it would serve as a central gathering place for the high number of visitors to building 405, the Discovery Trail, and Fort Vancouver. Public restrooms would be made available in building 410 and in key buildings throughout the site.

Access, Circulation, and Parking

Throughout the site, circulation for pedestrians and motorists would be enhanced over time to create a welcoming, safe, and sustainable environment. In order to structure a more coherent experience for motorists and pedestrians, the National Park Service would consider reducing paving, removing the majority of barricades and fences, repairing and extending sidewalks, adding a trail spur, redesigning certain internal roads, and improving wayfinding. These proposed improvements would be further developed during future study, design, and construction. As part of all changes to circulation, the National Park Service would explore the use of sustainable practices and materials in ways that respect the cultural landscape.

Historic Site Operations

The National Park Service would seek to increase staffing levels to accommodate expanded operations and needs. Additional positions may include staff for business management and/or planning, cultural resource management, maintenance, events, communications (web, media, etc.), special project teams, and law enforcement. Other entities will help pay the costs of rehabilitation (through initial investment or lease rates), as well as operations and maintenance. Over time, lease revenue at the East and South Barracks should offset much of the expense to the government.

Opportunities To Be Involved

The Draft East and South Vancouver Barracks Master Plan and Environmental Assessment is now available for public review through March 5, 2012. A limited number of hard copy documents are available at the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site Visitor Center. You may download the document and submit your comments at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/fova>. Comments may also be submitted using the comment form included in this newsletter, by mailing the completed form to:

National Park Service – Denver Service Center
Tom Gibney
12795 West Alameda Parkway
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

We will address your comments in the final decision document. In addition, please join us for a series of public meetings. Public meetings will be held on Wednesday, February 22, 2012 from 12:00-2:00 p.m. with a site tour from 12:30-1:00 p.m., and on Thursday, February 23, 2012 from 6:00-8:00 p.m., with a site tour from 5:30-6:00 p.m. Both meetings will be held at the Red Cross Building, 605 Barnes Street, Vancouver, WA 98661.

What Happens Next

We have accomplished a lot since we began planning! Please see the timeline below to discover where we've been and what happens next.

Where We've Been—

- ☑ Project kick-off
- ☑ Internal scoping with historic site staff and partners
- ☑ 30-day public scoping
- ☑ Evaluate scoping comments
- ☑ Identify issues and opportunities for the plan to address
- ☑ Develop range of draft alternatives
- ☑ Select preferred alternative
- ☑ Prepare Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment





View of building 721, a 1904 Auditorium

Where We Are Now—

- ☐ 30-day public review of Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment (review period concludes on March 5, 2012)

What Happens Next—

- ☐ Analyze public comments.
- ☐ Prepare final decision document and Master Plan
- ☐ Submit final decision document to Pacific West Regional Director
- ☐ Sign decision document
- ☐ Notify public of decision
- ☐ Implement the plan

**For More
Information**

You can obtain more project information and updates, sign up for the mailing list, and submit comments online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/fova> or by calling the park at (360) 816-6212.

National Park Service
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site
612 E. Reserve St.
Vancouver, WA 98661

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



**East and South Vancouver Barracks
Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment**