

Chapter 4. Alternatives

Introduction

This chapter describes the no action alternative, three action alternatives, and the preferred alternative for consideration for the new visitor center/contact station and park facilities.

Under the no action alternative, the visitor center and other park facilities would remain in their current locations, and the present level of use, management, operations, and maintenance would continue. Three action alternatives were identified by the A/E team and NPS to address the purpose and need for the project. A preliminary evaluation of alternatives was conducted during the February 2011 field investigations using the project objectives to determine the qualities that were needed to meet the project goals. The no action and three action alternatives were evaluated for their compliance with the park's GMP and CLR, other relevant laws, regulations, policies, and guidance, and with the project's goals and objectives.

A preferred alternative was developed through the NPS's Value Analysis (VA) process. The objective of the VA process was to determine the most appropriate and beneficial alternative that meets the needs of the NPS and park, and that is compatible with the Nicodemus NHL and Nicodemus NHS. The preferred alternative presents the NPS preferred management action, and defines the rationale for the action in terms of resource protection and management, visitor use, operations, cost, and other applicable factors.

Potential Alternatives

Four alternatives were identified for consideration for new park facilities to include visitor, administrative, interpretive and maintenance facilities. Each alternative incorporates the project program as described in Chapter 2. However, the program is organized slightly differently based on the alternative.

The potential alternatives include a no action alternative, and three action alternatives: Alternative 1 - Townsite; Alternative 2 - Township; and Alternative 3 - NHS Historic Buildings. The no action alternative provides a baseline for evaluation and comparison of all alternatives. Each action alternative proposes an approach to the site and building development of a new visitor center or visitor contact station, and new administrative and maintenance facilities. The character of the visitor, administrative and maintenance buildings varies, based on site and programming. Each alternative incorporates the project goals and objectives, and proposes the character, size and siting of the proposed buildings. However, certain design opportunities are specific to a given alternative.

Each alternative accommodates the site program, either using a combination of on-street and off-street parking, or by incorporating all parking on the property. Two parking templates, Parking A and B (Figure 16. Parking A and Figure 20. Parking B) illustrate the parking lot size needed to meet the project program. Each alternative notes which parking template is applicable.



Washington Avenue



View to Townsite from Highway 24



Washington Avenue



View of Townsite from Highway 24



View of Townsite from Fourth Street

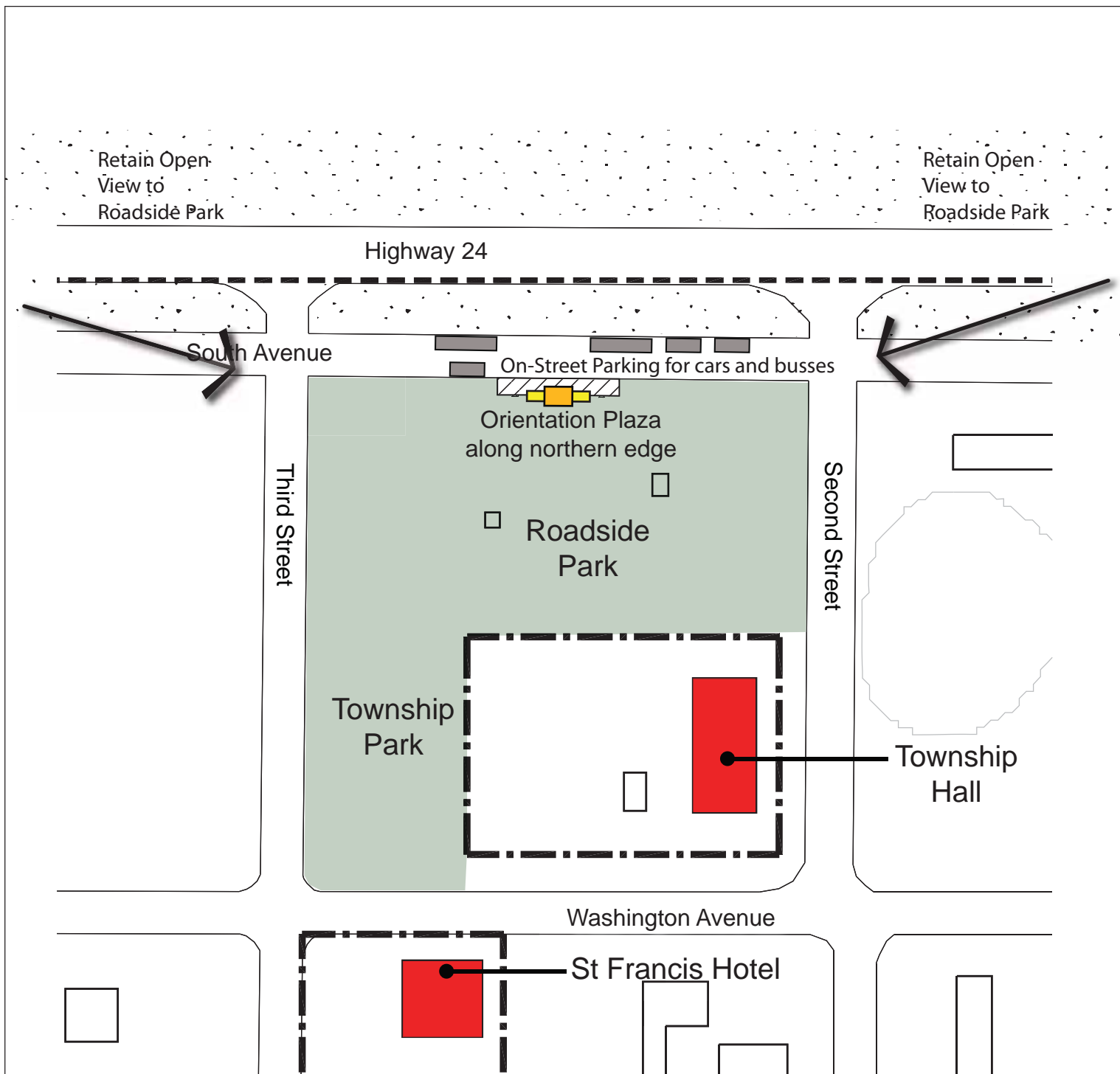


View to Nicodemus School

Attributes Common to All Action Alternatives

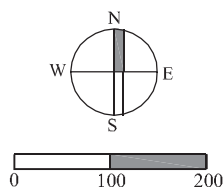
The following attributes are integral to the program for all action alternative for the new visitor and associated facilities. These attributes are part of each action alternative.

- Township Hall would be returned to the Nicodemus community for their use. The building would not be used for any functions or space related to park facilities;
- All proposed facilities, regardless of their arrangement, potential location, or size, would use the same program (Chapter 2);
- Park operations would be the same, regardless of which alternative is evaluated;
- Same level of rehabilitation would occur in each of the NHS buildings per agreements with the property owners. The exception is the A.M.E. Church, which would remain as a spiritual area as defined by the GMP;
 - o The A.M.E. Church has undergone significant stabilization since 1996 but the work was intended for emergency stabilization. Permanent rehabilitation of the exterior is highly recommended within the next 5 years.
 - o Exterior rehabilitation of the other four NHS buildings should take guidance from the 2010 Historic Structure Report and should respond to interpretive planning, updated code requirements, current condition and visitor experience.
 - o Interior rehabilitation, where programmed, will need to address ABAAS requirements in addition to the exterior rehabilitation requirements above.
 - o All work should conform with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings.
- Roadside Park would serve an interpretation/orientation role (Figure 13. Roadside Park Orientation Plaza);
- A trail network would be part of each action alternative, and would include connections to the South Fork Solomon River and Scrugg's Grove;
- Contributing features and archeological resources would be protected. Archeological investigations would be required for all work undertaken;
- Outdoor lighting at the new visitor facility would be limited to the amount necessary for security and safety;



Legend

- Roadside Park Kiosk
- Bus Parking
- NHS Building
- National Historic Landmark District
- National Historic Site



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FIGURE 13		
TITLE OF PROJECT VISITOR CENTER SITE SELECTION STUDY		
TITLE OF DRAWING Roadside Park Orientation Plaza		
NAME OF PARK NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE		
REGION MIDWEST	COUNTY GRAHAM	STATE KANSAS

Roadside Park

In each action alternative, Roadside Park would serve in a visitor orientation/interpretation role. The orientation plaza/roadside kiosk would serve as part of the park's interpretive program and would be integrated with the driving tour and walking tour. A new orientation kiosk and small plaza would be located at the north edge of the park along South Avenue where it is easily visible from Highway 24. This site would serve to orient visitors once they arrive in Nicodemus or if they arrive at times when the visitor facilities are not open. On-street parking for busses, recreational vehicles, and private vehicles would occur on South Avenue, with easy access to Highway 24 from Stockton or Hill City. Additional parking would be on second or third Street. The orientation kiosk and plaza would be developed with the approval of the Township (Figure 13. Roadside Park Orientation Plaza).



Roadside Park



Nicodemus Housing Authority complex



Township Hall

Alternative 4 – No Action Alternative

The no action alternative provides a basis for comparison with the action alternatives, including the preferred alternative, and with the respective environmental consequences. The no action alternative would continue to use existing buildings (historic and non-historic) to accommodate the visitor, administrative, and maintenance program. Township Hall would continue to provide visitor facilities, and the Nicodemus Housing Authority complex would continue to provide facilities for administrative and maintenance functions. Administrative and maintenance facilities would continue to expand as needed, and as space becomes available at the Nicodemus Housing Authority complex, recognizing that no long-term lease arrangements may be available. Stabilization and rehabilitation of the Nicodemus NHS buildings would continue as part of the no-action alternative.

Township Hall currently serves as the Visitor Center. The main space is occupied by a small film viewing corner with eight seats, a ten-panel interpretive display, two exhibit cases, a passport stamping station, a bookstore with seating, a sales desk, and office space for up to three interpretive staff. The stage has only a small break area for administrative functions, leaving the remainder of the building for community use. Two restrooms are located on the stage level, and a half-basement is situated under the stage, where interpretive and maintenance equipment and supplies are stored. The foyer has two closets where tables and chairs for events are stored.

The Township Hall/Visitor Center (hall/center) is open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily except for Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years' days. The hall/center is made available for public/Township functions upon request. This is generally limited to funeral dinners, Christmas tree trimming, and Homecoming Celebration events, constituting in total up to 40 hours per year.

The park administrative offices are located in two leased units of the Nicodemus Housing Authority public housing complex. Maintenance materials are located in outbuildings on the site of the AME Church, which NPS owns, and garage space associated with the leased administrative offices.

Under the no action alternative, the NPS, in consultation with the community, would develop a use strategy for the hall/center including improvements to the structure, stage, accessible restrooms, and interpretive exhibits. The hall/center would provide continued NPS presence and, consequently, ensure public access to one of the five buildings in the park. The other four NHS buildings would be closed to the public, although plans would be in place for their stabilization and/or rehabilitation (recommended by the 2010 Historic Structure Report).

The park would need to consider whether current park offices in the Nicodemus Housing Authority complex would remain or if a new administrative facility would be identified or constructed. Because current park plans call for increased staffing including interpretative staff, additional space for park operations would be needed.

Alternative 1 – Townsite

Alternative 1-Townsite proposes to integrate a new visitor contact station and all associated visitor, administrative, and maintenance facilities within the Town of Nicodemus, and the NHL boundary. This alternative proposes all separate facilities, with the NHS buildings serving as part of the interpretive program. It also proposes accommodating all new facilities on a single property, either one or two acres in size.

Site

The site development focuses on locating the visitor contact station at a corner with a visual relationship to the NHS buildings on Washington Avenue, and set in a manner compatible with the NHS buildings. This alternative proposes to locate visitor facilities so as to not interrupt the view of the NHS buildings as seen from Highway 24, keeping the Townsite frontage and the agricultural lands immediately adjacent to the Townsite free of development. It also proposes to locate any new buildings so as to not obscure views among NHS buildings.

This alternative is possible on a site ideally having a minimum of one acre; however a larger site would accommodate the full site interpretive program. Two potential site layouts are illustrated (Figures 14. Townsite-Two-Acre Parcel and Figure 15. Townsite- One-Acre Parcel): a two-acre parcel and a one-acre parcel.

Both potential layouts propose the use of three small buildings sited in a manner similar to the historic placement of the NHS buildings on their sites. The visitor contact station, and administrative and maintenance facilities would each have separate buildings, and a minimum of a one acre site would be available for the interpretative program (Figure 15. Townsite-One-Acre Parcel).

Where necessary, buildings, the maintenance yard, and site interpretive area would be screened and buffered by a wind row. Parking for visitors and administrative staff would be located between the administration building and visitor contact station, with additional parking on the street.

The site program would accommodate vehicular and pedestrian circulation for visitors and NPS staff, areas for interpretation, and area for the building program. The existing asphalt paved and gravel roads within the Townsite and Highway 24 would serve as vehicular routes, and would be shared by vehicles and pedestrians for circulation as traffic volumes are low, and few sidewalks occur, which is a characteristic of the Townsite.

- New park facilities would be located on a one to two acre site within the Townsite;

- All facilities would occur on one property;
- Visitor contact station would be at a corner with a visual relationship to NHS buildings;
- Administrative and maintenance facilities would be in separate buildings;
- The building setback from each street would be similar to the setback of the Nicodemus NHS buildings;
- A single parking area would be located on-site, screened from the NHS buildings and would be shared between the visitor contact station and administration building, and includes a total of twelve (12) spaces, one of which is accessible (Figure 16. Parking A);
- Bus and recreational vehicle parking would be provided on the street;
- Three (3) parking spaces would be provided at the maintenance/storage facility.

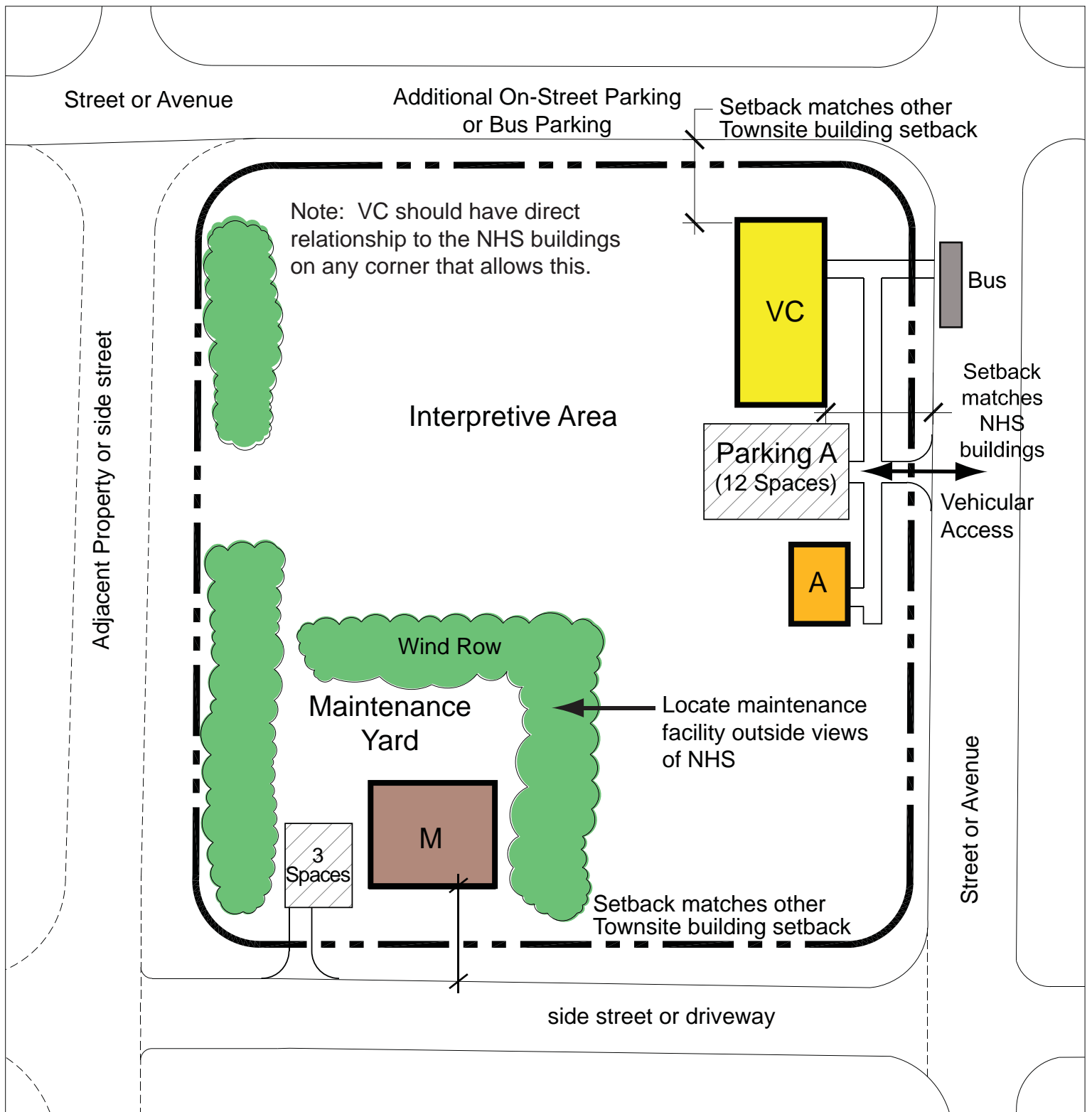
Buildings

Three separate buildings are proposed for this alternative. Each would respect the size, scale and orientation of the Townsite buildings. To be compatible with the existing NHS buildings, buildings would be rectilinear in plan and set back from the street in a manner that is similar to the arrangement of the NHS buildings. The visitor contact station would be placed near a corner with an orientation towards the Nicodemus NHS buildings.

Buildings would be of materials complimentary to those used historically. They would be detailed in a contemporary manner utilizing the materials common to the existing Nicodemus NHS buildings (simple, locally extracted materials in an unadorned fashion). Limestone is the most consistently used material in the existing buildings and is a likely candidate, given its availability and durability.

A new visitor contact station is proposed of a size and scale that would be in context with the NHS buildings. This would lessen the impact within the NHL (Figure 4. Building Program - Visitor Contact Station). The visitor contact station would include:

- approximately 3,100 square feet to accommodate the visitor contact station program for orientation and information, AV/video space
- no dedicated space for an exhibit area / exhibits at the NHS buildings
- The space reduction recognized in the visitor contact station occurs due to the reduction or elimination of the following spaces from the visitor center program:
 - o AV/Video Area is reduced to 200 SF (reduction of 340 square feet assumes a small, non-dedicated area for an AV / Video experience)
 - o Conference, Library & Resources Area - 252 SF
 - o Chair Storage - 42 SF



Legend

- VC Visitor Contact Station - 3,000 SF
- M Maintenance Building - 2,500 SF
- A Administration Building - 900 SF

- Bus Parking
- Automobile Parking



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FIGURE 14

TITLE OF PROJECT
VISITOR CENTER SITE SELECTION STUDY

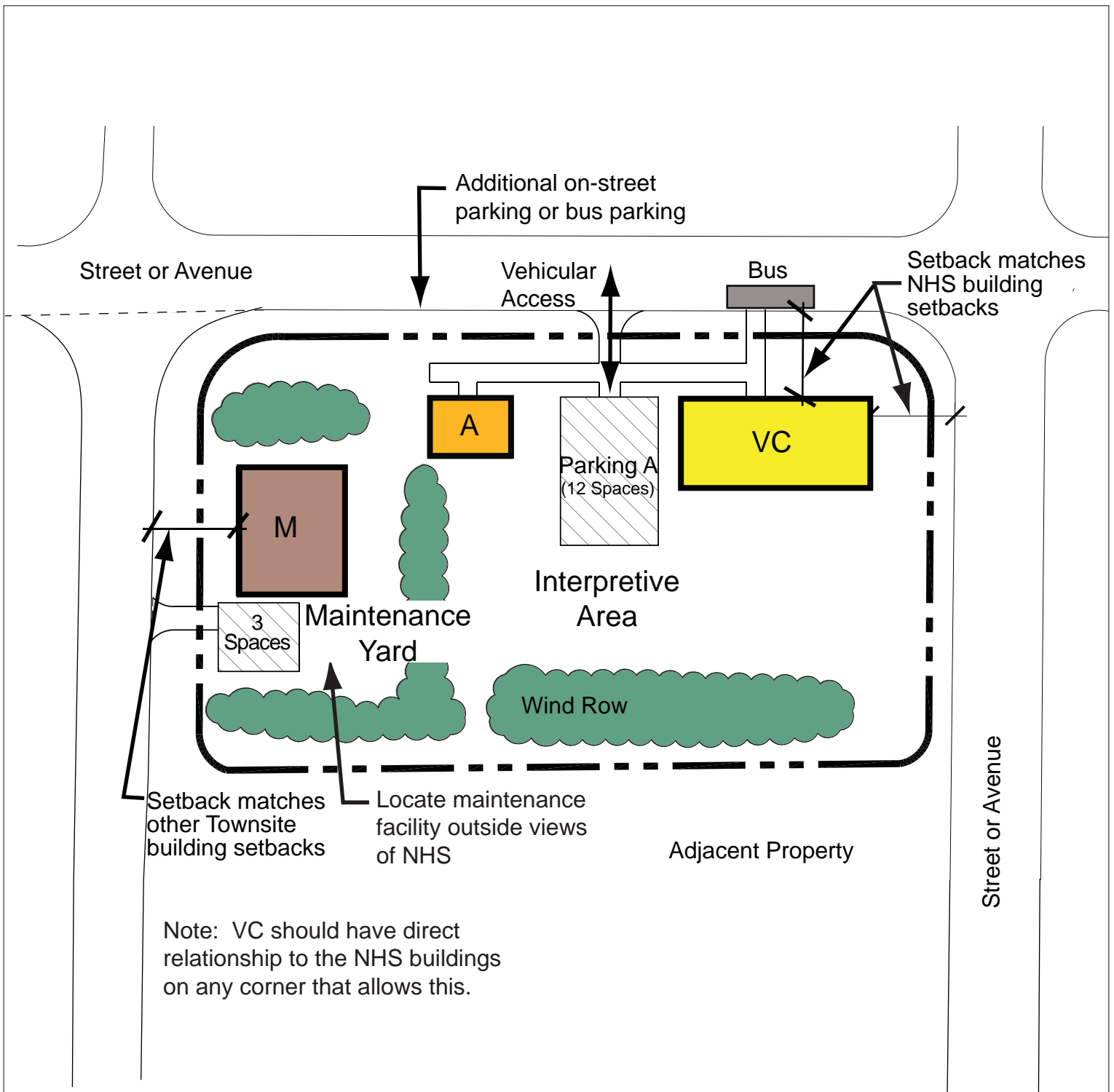
TITLE OF DRAWING
Townsite - Two-Acre Parcel

NAME OF PARK
NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

REGION
MIDWEST

COUNTY
GRAHAM

STATE
KANSAS



Legend

- VC Visitor Contact Station - 3,000 SF
- M Maintenance Building - 2,500 SF
- A Administration Building - 900 SF

- Bus Parking
- Automobile Parking

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FIGURE 15		
TITLE OF PROJECT VISITOR CENTER SITE SELECTION STUDY		
TITLE OF DRAWING Townsite - One-Acre Parcel		
NAME OF PARK NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE		
REGION MIDWEST	COUNTY GRAHAM	STATE KANSAS



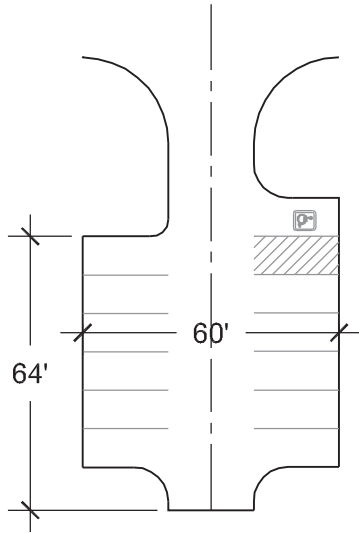
Views of Townsite

The administrative facility would be a separate building that would include offices and support spaces for a total of three (3) full time staff, and one (1) part time-staff. (Figure 4. Building Program - Visitor Contact Station).

- approximately 900 square feet is proposed to accommodate park administrative staff offices, and support spaces such as a restroom, break room, and janitor closet.

Maintenance facilities would be located separately from visitor and administrative facilities and would include a small staff area, garage, and space for storage and equipment for three vehicles (Figure 4. Building Program). The maintenance facility would be:

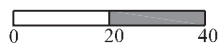
- approximately 2,585 square feet to accommodate staff area, storage and equipment
- located in a separate building, due to the types of noise and storage activities required.



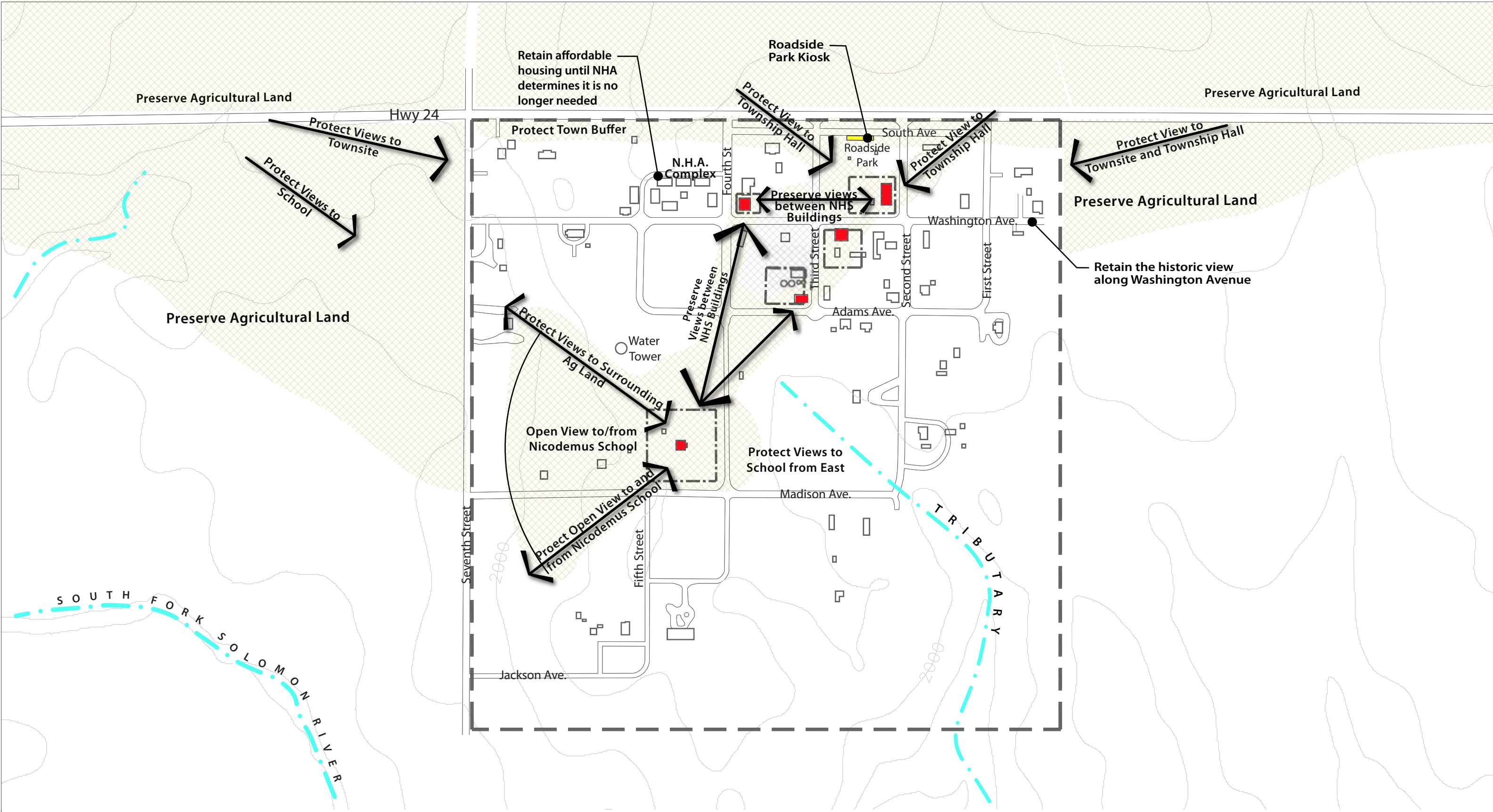
Parking - A

- 12 Parking Spaces (9' x 20')
- Includes 1 Accessible Parking Space & Aisle
- Two-Way Drive
- Approximately 4,000 SF
- Bus parking accommodated on-street
- 3 spaces for maintenance accommodated at maintenance facility
- Alternative 1 - Townsite






FIGURE 16

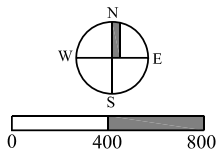


January 2012	TITLE OF PROJECT VISITOR CENTER SITE SELECTION STUDY		
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK	TITLE OF DRAWING Parking - A		
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Legend

-  National Historic Site Building
-  National Historic Landmark District
-  National Historic Site
-  Existing Stream / River
-  Areas and Views to Protect



January 2012		FIGURE 17	
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR		TITLE OF PROJECT VISITOR CENTER SITE SELECTION STUDY	
NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK		TITLE OF DRAWING Alternative 1 - Townsite	
		NAME OF PARK NICODEMUS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE	
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