

Alternatives Comparison

A comparison of the alternatives and the degree to which each alternative fulfills the needs and objectives of the proposed project is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Alternatives Comparison

Comparison Factor	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
<p>Improve Efficiency of Park Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a centrally-located facility for contacting visitors Improve the sustainability of NPS operations with an energy-efficient building 	<p>The Township Hall is centrally located in Town but does not provide the facilities necessary for NPS. The Township Hall is not energy efficient and separates the interpretive staff from the visitor staff. This objective is not fulfilled under the No Action Alternative.</p>	<p>Alternative 1 would construct new facilities within the Townsite and provide a centrally-located facility. The new visitor contact station and administrative building would be an energy efficient building. This objective would be accomplished under Alternative 1.</p>	<p>The new facilities would be located in the Township but outside of the Townsite under Alternative 2, and so would be less centrally located than under Alternative 1. The new facilities would be energy efficient and improve the sustainability of the NPS operations. This objective would be partially filled with Alternative 2 with the exception that the facility would be not centrally located.</p>	<p>Alternative 3 would construct a visitor contact station in the Townsite which would be centrally located and sustainable. Alternative 3 would fulfill this objective.</p>
<p>Provide for Visitor Enjoyment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide visitors a convenient and easily-accessible visitor center Expand visitor center amenities to provide additional opportunities to educate, inform, and improve the quality of the visitor experience in the park 	<p>The Township Hall is accessible to visitors but lacks the space and design layout necessary to effectively meet visitor needs, which diminishes the quality of the visitor experience. NPS would not be able to fulfill this objective under the No Action Alternative.</p>	<p>The new visitor contact station under Alternative 1 would be easily accessible and convenient and would allow for additional opportunities to improve the quality of the visitor experience. This objective would be met under Alternative 1.</p>	<p>The visitor center in Alternative 2 would fulfill the objectives in a manner similar to Alternative 1, and would potentially have more amenities due to the larger visitor center proposed in Alternative 2. The visitor center would be easily accessible, but would not be as convenient as in Alternative 1.</p>	<p>The new visitor in Alternative 3 would fulfill the objectives in a manner similar to Alternative 1.</p>

Comparison Factor	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1 (Preferred Alternative)	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Protect Cultural and Natural Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect park cultural resource values • Return a cultural resource to its intended function 	The no action alternative would not adequately fulfill this project objective. The conditions of historic buildings and structures would not be improved. The Township Hall would not be returned to its intended function.	Alternative 1 would protect park cultural resource values by allowing for increased interpretation of the NHL buildings and returning the Township Hall to its intended function. This objective would be fulfilled under Alternative 1.	Alternative 2 would protect park cultural resource values by removing NPS operations from the historic site and returning the Township Hall to the Town. This objective would be adequately fulfilled by Alternative 2.	Alternative 3 would return the Township Hall to its intended function and fulfill this objective. The First Baptist Church would be rehabilitated to allow for its use as the administrative building. This would improve the cultural resource but would change its intended function. This objective would be partially fulfilled under Alternative 3.

Mitigation for All Alternatives

NPS places strong emphasis on avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potentially adverse environmental impacts. To help ensure the protection of natural and cultural resources and the quality of the visitor experience, the following protective measures and best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented as part of the selected action alternative (Table 3). NPS would implement an appropriate level of monitoring throughout the construction process to help ensure that protective measures are being properly implemented and are achieving their intended results.

Table 3. Mitigation Measures For All Action Alternatives

Resource Area	Mitigation
General Considerations	<p>Where necessary for resource or visitor protection, work areas would be identified with construction fence, silt fence, or some similar material prior to any activity. The fencing would define the work zone and confine activity to the minimum area required. All protection measures would be clearly stated in the construction specifications, and workers would be instructed to avoid conducting activities beyond the work zone. Disturbances would be limited to areas inside the designated construction limits. No machinery or equipment would access areas outside the work limits.</p> <p>Construction equipment staging would occur within previously disturbed areas as much as possible. All staging and stockpiling areas would be returned to preconstruction conditions following construction.</p> <p>Contractors would be required to properly maintain construction equipment (i.e., mufflers and brakes) to minimize noise.</p> <p>All tools, equipment, barricades, signs, surplus materials, and rubbish would be removed from the project work limits upon project completion.</p>
Visitor Experience, Public Health, Safety, and Park Operations	<p>Visitors would be informed in advance of construction activities via the park website and visitor center. Visitor access to buildings would be prohibited during removal of hazardous materials.</p>
Visual Resources	<p>The facility would be designed to blend in with the landscape with minimal visual intrusion.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p>All activities would comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation (48 FR 44716, revised).</p> <p>Archeological resources in the vicinity of project activities would be identified and delineated for avoidance prior to project work.</p> <p>The park would continue to coordinate with the SHPO and the MWRO throughout the course of the project to protect and mitigate cultural resources affected by the preferred alternative.</p> <p>Should any archeological resources be uncovered during construction, as appropriate, work would be halted in the area and the park archeologist, SHPO, and appropriate Native American tribes would be contacted for further consultation.</p> <p>Park cultural resource staff would be available during construction to advise or take appropriate actions should any archeological resources be uncovered during construction. In the unlikely event that human remains are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (1990) would be followed.</p> <p>NPS would ensure that all contractors and subcontractors are informed of the penalties for illegally collecting artifacts or intentionally damaging archeological sites or historic properties. Contractors and subcontractors also would be instructed on procedures to follow in case previously unknown archeological resources are uncovered during construction.</p> <p>Equipment and material staging areas would avoid known archeological resources.</p>

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The Council on Environmental Quality defines the Environmentally Preferable Alternative as "...the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in the National Environmental Policy Act § 101." Section 101 states that, "...it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to:

1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations;
2. Assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings;
3. Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences;
4. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity and variety of individual choice;
5. Achieve a balance between population and resource use, which will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities; and
6. Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources."

This means that the environmentally preferable alternative is the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment. It also means it is the alternative that best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources. The identification of the "Environmentally Preferable Alternative" was based on an analysis that balances factors such as physical impacts on various aspects of the environment, mitigation measures to deal with impacts, and other factors including the statutory mission of the NPS and the purposes for the project.

Although an environmentally preferable alternative is identified, it may not be the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative is the alternative NPS believes would best fulfill its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical, and other factors.

While the no action alternative would maintain existing conditions, it would not be considered the environmentally preferable alternative because it would not meet environmental goals in the same manner as the other alternatives. Although it would not result in new disturbance to natural or cultural resources, the no action alternative would not preserve important cultural landscape or historic structures as well as the other alternatives because of the continued use of the Township Hall by NPS in one of the historical structures. The no action alternative would also not include restoring a significant historical structure to

its intended use. The no action alternative would continue to prevent the community from using the Township Hall, and the park would continue to function with inadequate space, and would be limited to no opportunities to enhance interpretive media. The no action alternative is not the environmentally preferable alternative because other alternatives better protect, preserve, and enhance historic, cultural, and natural resources. With regard to NEPA Sections 101 and 102(1), the no action alternative is not the environmentally preferable alternative for the following reasons: 1) it would not meet the stewardship responsibility for protecting park resources (goal 1); 2) it would not meet the intention to return a cultural resource to its intended function (goals 4 and 5); 3) it would not improve visitor safety or access, or protect environmental and cultural resources (goals 2, 3, and 4); and 4) it would not preserve the historical structures and cultural landscape of the park (goal 4).

Alternative 1, the preferred alternative, would include returning the Township Hall to its intended function and protect and enhance historic and cultural resources within the NHL with increased interpretation (goals 1, 4, and 5). The alternative would improve visitor access, use, and understanding with the construction of a visitor center in the Townsite (goals 1, 2, and 3). Alternative 1 meets the provisions of NEPA Section 101 goals for these reasons. NPS determined that the environmentally preferable alternative is Alternative 1 because it surpasses the no action alternative, and the other alternatives on meeting the goals of NEPA Section 101.

Alternative 2 is very similar to Alternative 1 and would include restoring the Township Hall to its intended function, protect and enhance historic and cultural resources, and improve visitor access, use, and understanding (goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). Alternative 2 would meet many of the NEPA Section 101 goals and would protect, preserve, and enhance historic resources better than the no action alternative or Alternative 3. Although very similar to Alternative 1, Alternative 2 would impact more vegetation, be less centrally located, and may potentially encroach on a riparian corridor and so would not be the environmentally preferable alternative.

Alternative 3 would not be the environmentally preferable alternative because it would alter the First Baptist Church for park use and therefore would not preserve a cultural resource (goal 4). It would restore the Township Hall to its intended function and improve visitor access, use, and understanding with the construction of a new visitor center contact station (goals 1, 2, 3, and 5). Although it meets many of the NEPA Section 101 goals, Alternative 3 would not be the environmentally preferable alternative because it would alter a cultural resource and would not meet goal 4 of NEPA Section 101.

Impact Summary

A summary of potential environmental effects for the alternatives is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Impact Summary

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Archeological Resources	Because there would be no ground disturbance, the no action alternative would have no new effect on archeological resources and there would be no cumulative effects.	Alternative 1 includes ground-disturbing activities with the potential to encounter and adversely affect previously unknown archeological resources. Potential adverse impacts would be minimized by preconstruction surveys and monitoring in areas with high potential for artifacts. With the mitigation measures, Alternative 1 would have local long-term minor adverse impacts on archeological resources.	Under Alternative 2, the effects on archeological resources and mitigation measures would be the same as Alternative 1. With mitigation measures, Alternative 2 would have local long-term minor adverse impacts on archeological resources.	Under Alternative 3, the effects on archeological resources and mitigation measures would be the same as Alternatives 1 and 2. With mitigation measures, Alternative 3 would have local long-term minor adverse impacts on archeological resources.
Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes	Because current management practices and maintenance capabilities would continue under the no action alternative, the alternative would have no new impact on historic structures or cultural resources. The no action alternative would have no cumulative impacts.	Alternative 1, would have a parkwide long-term minor adverse impact on the cultural landscape due to the construction of additional buildings in the Townsite. Rehabilitating the NHL structures would have a long-term beneficial effect on historic structures. Cumulative effects would be local, minor to moderate, and adverse for cultural landscapes and beneficial for historic structures.	Under Alternative 2, the effects on historic structures and cultural landscapes would be the same as those under Alternative 1, and would result in a beneficial effect on historic structures and a long-term minor adverse effect on the cultural landscape. Cumulative effects would be parkwide, minor, and adverse, with parkwide beneficial effects.	Under Alternative 3, converting the First Baptist Church to administration buildings and constructing a new visitor contact station would have a local long-term moderate adverse impact on historic structures and cultural landscapes. Cumulative effects would be local, moderate, and adverse.

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Visual Resources	The no action alternative would have no effect on visual resources and there would be no cumulative effects.	Constructing a new visitor contact station, administration building, maintenance yard, and parking areas would result in a local long-term moderate adverse impact to visual resources. Cumulative effects would be parkwide, long-term, minor, and adverse.	Under Alternative 2, the effects on visual resources would be the same as those under Alternative 1, and would result in a local long-term moderate adverse impact to visual resources. Cumulative effects would be parkwide, minor, and adverse.	Constructing a new visitor contact station would result in a parkwide long-term minor adverse impact to visual resources. Cumulative effects would be parkwide, minor, and adverse.
Visitor Experience	The no action alternative would have no new effects on the visitor experience. Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial with no contribution from the no action alternative.	Under Alternative 1, the new visitor contact station would substantially improve the ability of park visitors to interact with the park and would provide the educational, interpretive, and informational opportunities and materials needed by all visitors to better enjoy the park. There would be a parkwide long-term beneficial effect to visitor use and the quality of the visitor experience. Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial. Alternative 1 doesn't preclude the addition of trails and views to the Townsite.	Under Alternative 2, the effect on visitor experience would be the same as that under Alternative 1, with additional benefits from the addition of trails and overlooks to the Townsite. Overall, there would be a parkwide long-term beneficial effect to visitor use and the quality of the visitor experience. Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial.	Alternative 3 would have a local long-term minor adverse effect on visitor experience from the change in use of the First Baptist Church, but would also have a parkwide long-term beneficial effect from the construction of a new visitor center contact station. Cumulative effects would be local, moderate, and adverse, with a beneficial contribution from Alternative 3.

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Transportation	The no action alternative would have no new effect on transportation and would not contribute to the parkwide minor adverse cumulative effects of past, current, and reasonably foreseeable actions.	Constructing additional visitor parking would have a short-term local minor adverse effect on transportation during construction and a parkwide long-term beneficial effect on transportation following construction. Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial.	Constructing an entry/exit point off of U.S. Highway 24 and a new pedestrian path would have a local long-term minor adverse effect on transportation, but overall, the new parking lot for visitors would have a parkwide long-term beneficial effect on transportation. Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial.	Under alternative 3, the effects on transportation would be the same as those under Alternative 1 and would result in long-term beneficial effects on transportation. Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial.
Public Health and Safety	The no action alternative would have no new effect on public health and safety, but would continue to contribute to local moderate adverse cumulative effects.	Alternative 1 would result in long-term beneficial effects on public health and safety by meeting current building codes and providing a safe environment for visitors and park staff. The cumulative effects would be beneficial.	Alternative 2 would have local long-term beneficial effects on public health and safety from the construction of a new visitor center and administration building, and would have a parkwide long-term minor adverse effect on public health and safety from the increase in pedestrian activity along U.S. Highway 24.	Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 1 and would result in long-term beneficial effects on public health and safety. The cumulative effects would be beneficial.

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Park Operations	<p>The no action alternative would have no new effects on park operations.</p> <p>Cumulative impacts would be parkwide, moderate, and adverse.</p>	<p>Although new facilities would increase some maintenance activities, overall, having new facilities would improve park operations by having better-designed and consolidated facilities. New facilities would have a parkwide long-term beneficial effect on park operations.</p> <p>Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial.</p>	<p>As under Alternative 1, there would be some increased maintenance associated with new facilities under Alternative 2, including maintaining the new trail. Overall, the new facilities would have a parkwide long-term beneficial effect on park operations.</p> <p>Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial.</p>	<p>As under Alternatives 1 and 2, there would be some increased maintenance associated with new facilities under Alternative 3. Overall, the new facilities would have a parkwide, long-term beneficial effect on park operations. Cumulative effects would be parkwide and beneficial.</p>

	No Action Alternative	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Socioeconomics	The no action alternative would have no adverse impact on socioeconomics and no cumulative effects.	The relocation of the visitor center out of Township Hall would have a local long-term minor adverse effect on the socioeconomics of the town and a regional long-term beneficial effect. There would be no cumulative effects.	Under Alternative 2, the socioeconomic effects would be the same as those under Alternative 1 and would result in a local long-term minor adverse effect on the socioeconomics of the town and a regional long-term beneficial effect. There would be no cumulative effects.	Under Alternative 3, the socioeconomic effects would be the same as those under Alternatives 1 and 2 and would result in local long-term minor adverse effects and regional long-term beneficial effects. There would be no cumulative effects.