



Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study

March 2013

Study Process

The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument has experienced increased visitation over the years and faces challenges presented by traffic congestion (especially during special events), limited parking, and the narrow and deteriorating tour road. A series of studies, beginning in the 1990s, evaluated these conditions, culminating in the Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study. The National Park Service (NPS) study team developed a range of transportation options to address transportation issues and identified feasible solutions.

These options take into account previous studies and planning efforts, such as the park's General Management Plan (GMP) and the 2005 Environment Assessment (EA) to rehabilitate the tour road, and also draw upon refinements developed during this study. Some options are intended to enhance or expand current roads and parking lots, while others explore alternative transportation measures. This newsletter presents the options and the evaluation process to identify those with the best potential to meet the park's transportation goals.



Project Kickoff Workshop

Project Goals

- Goal 1:** Reduce operation and management requirements through asset management.
- Goal 2:** Exercise management practices to solve short-term transportation problems.
- Goal 3:** Develop transportation alternatives that protect resource values and enhance visitor experience.
- Goal 4:** Recognize opportunities to improve public and community support.

Seven Options Identified for Detailed Analysis

The study team employed a two-step screening process to evaluate, refine, and compare transportation options. The screening process narrowed the field to those considered most likely to successfully address the project goals. The first level, referred to as initial screening, was intended to identify "fatal flaws" by rating each initial option using a "pass," "neutral," or "fail" system. The second level applied more rigorous criteria, resulting in seven options that best capture possible solutions.

Option I: Repair the Tour Road and Reconfigure Parking – repair and rehabilitate the tour road to a uniform 20-foot width; better accommodate oversize vehicles; optimize existing parking.

Option II: Widen the Tour Road and Expand Existing Parking Lots (4R Project) – reconstruct and widen the tour road to 24 feet; increase parking at the visitor center and Reno-Benteen Battlefield.

Option III: General Management Plan (GMP) Tour Loop via I-90 Frontage Road – extend tour road from Reno-Benteen Battlefield to I-90 (one-way loop); repair and rehabilitate the tour road to a uniform 20-foot width; seasonal shuttle tours; expand parking.

Option IV: Management Improvements – lower cost/lower impact operational changes focused on improving visitor experience; improve signage/wayfinding; use Visitor Use Assistants to mitigate congestion at peak times.

Option V: Seasonal Transit from Offsite Staging/Parking to Visitor Center – optional shuttle during peak season; improve signage/wayfinding; lower cost/lower impact operational improvements; include all components of Option I.

Option VI-A: Seasonal Transit from Offsite Staging/Parking to Reno-Benteen Battlefield – optional shuttle (dedicated fleet) during peak season; construct additional shuttle stops along the tour road; improve signage; lower cost/lower impact operational improvements.

Option VI-B: Peak Days Transit from Offsite Staging/Parking to Reno-Benteen Battlefield – optional shuttle (utilize locally available fleet) on peak days only as a special events management strategy that could be implemented in combination with other options or as pilot for full-seasonal transit options.

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Comparative Evaluation

Following refinement of the options, the study team conducted a comparative analysis of each option. The evaluation scored each option to identify the most promising transportation solutions. Evaluation criteria were built upon the initial screening criteria and incorporated additional parameters for financial feasibility, park management, general impacts on cultural and natural resources, general impacts on visitor experience, and other considerations.

Option I Option II Option III Option IV Option V Option VI-A Option VI-B	Criteria for Evaluation of Options		
	<u>Resource Impacts</u>	<u>Visitor Experience</u>	<u>Costs</u>
	Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Vehicle Emissions Footprint	Delay and Congestion Parking Availability Safety Improvement Convenience and Comfort	General Impacts to Park Staff & Management Total Cost of Ownership Revenue Funding Sources & Cost Sharing

Outcome and Next Steps

The comparative evaluation of each option determined that Options I through VI-B may be feasible for future implementation. The National Park Service will further evaluate funding availability, impacts to the park, and the ability of the options to address existing and future transportation needs. The NPS anticipates implementing elements of Options I, IV, and VI-B in 2013. This newsletter and the final Alternative Transportation Feasibility Study are posted on the project website for reference. See the Planning, Environment & Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/libi>.

Thank you to all who participated in this process. We appreciate your support during this opportunity to address congestion and safety issues on park roads and at parking areas in Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument.

