



An Introduction to Preliminary Alternatives

November 2013

In response to input from the public, the U.S. Forest Services (USFS), Garfield County, Bryce Canyon City, Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), the Federal Highway Administration, and National Park Service (NPS) staff, Bryce Canyon National Park is pleased to announce the development of preliminary alternatives for the proposed construction of a multi-use visitor path connecting Bryce Canyon City to Bryce Canyon National Park. This document provides a brief introduction to these preliminary alternatives. More information will become available with the forthcoming Environmental Assessment, scheduled to be released for public review in 2014.

No ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The No-Action Alternative assumes that no path would be constructed. Existing conditions such as traffic congestion, user conflicts, and multimodal safety issues would continue and possibly worsen as visitation continues to increase. Bikes would continue to share the road with other vehicles, and no major physical improvements for pedestrian circulation would be made.

COMMON TO ALL ACTION ALTERNATIVES

Action alternatives refer to the potential construction of a multi-use visitor path and the different places that path could be located. Regardless of which alternative is selected, the following list summarizes what elements would be common to all action alternatives:

- The path would provide front-country access only. The path would not be constructed in any portion of recommended wilderness or adjacent backcountry areas.
- The path would not be attached to the road, with minor exceptions when absolutely necessary. On-street bike lanes may be addressed in the future by a separate project.
- The path would only allow non-motorized uses, except devices that accommodate mobility impairments.
- Amenities such as bike racks, signs, and benches would be incorporated at key locations along the path.

OVERVIEW OF PRELIMINARY ACTION ALTERNATIVES

The two preliminary action alternatives vary by how the path would fit into the natural landscape and by how far the path would meander away from existing roads. Each would have different impacts to resources and would facilitate different visitor experiences.

Alternative A, the Topographic Alignment, would fit into the natural topography and utilize corridors that have been previously disturbed to the greatest extent possible in order to reduce the amount of new disturbance and cut and fill required to construct. It would also meander away from the main park road in order to further separate users from vehicles and provide maximum, direct access to key visitor destinations such as the North campground, General Store, the Lodge, and Sunrise and Sunset points.

Alternative B, the Road Corridor Alignment, would be designed as a detached path, separated from but adjacent and parallel to the main park road and Highway 63. For example, it would follow the main park road to Bryce Point, as well as the Lodge Loop; however, it would not connect directly to destination like the General Store and Sunrise and Sunset Points. Instead, it would connect to low-speed, existing park roads in order to provide this access, such as those roads to Sunset Point and Sunrise Point Loop Road.

The two actions alternatives are depicted on the map on the following page.

NEXT STEPS

The National Park Service is conducting an environmental assessment (EA) to analyze the potential impacts of each alternative to confirm which alternative is environmentally preferable. The preferred alternative will likely be a combination of these two distinct alternatives. Throughout this refinement process, the National Park Service will continue to work with Bryce Canyon City, Garfield County, UDOT, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Federal Highways Administration to further develop the concepts described in this summary to study their potential effects and to choose the best alignment. Input from other agencies, tribal organizations, and the public will continue to be critical as lead agencies make final decisions about the specific location and design of the multi-use visitor path. The EA will be available for public review in the spring of 2014. Pending the results of the EA process, construction on the path is expected to begin in 2015.

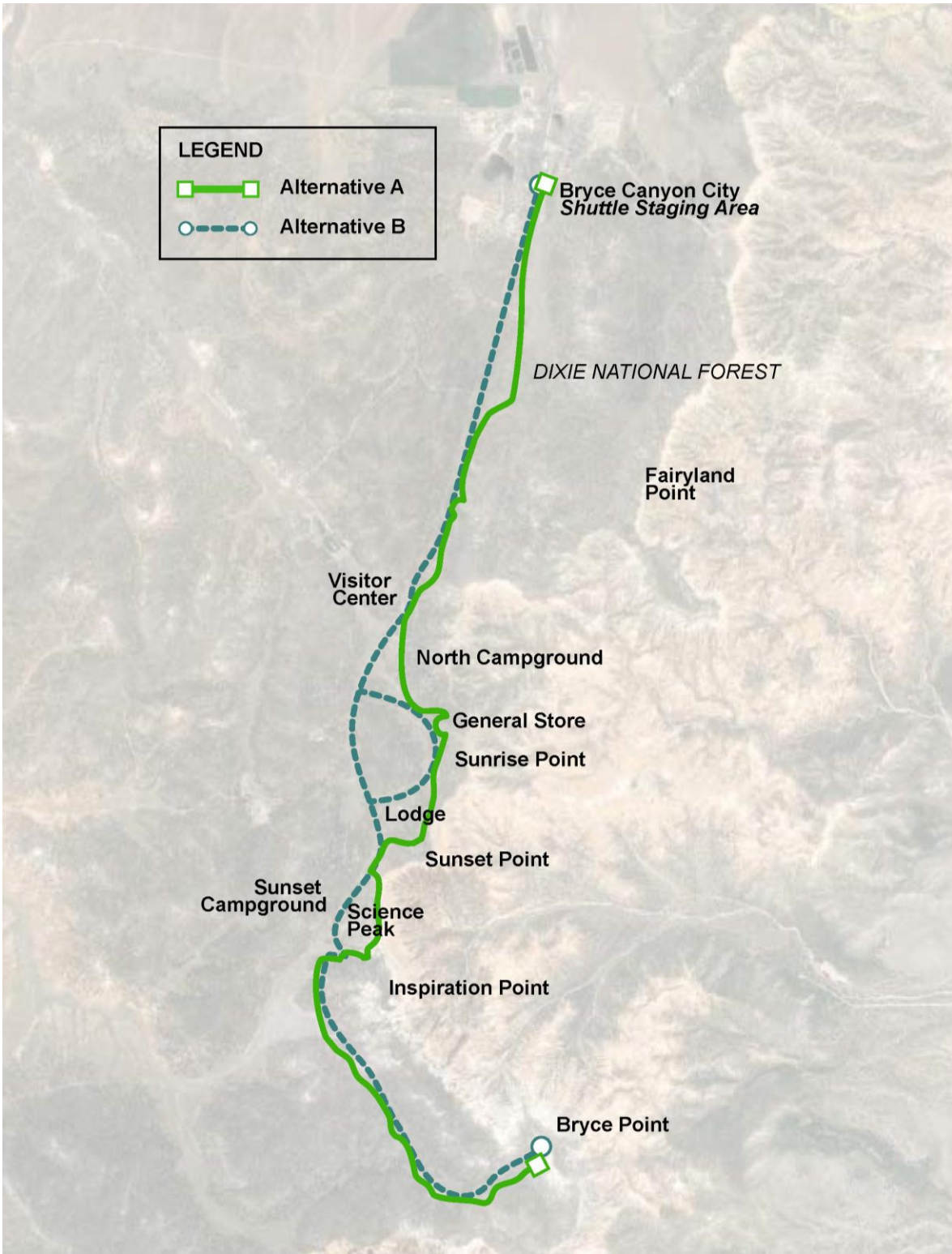


Figure 1: Action alternatives