



Envision the Future of Acadia National Park's Transportation System

Acadia National Park Transportation Plan – Preliminary Concepts Newsletter

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to announce that, following the initial public scoping conducted last summer, the National Park Service (NPS) has reached an important milestone in creating a shared vision for managing congestion and improving safety in Acadia National Park.

This newsletter presents preliminary concepts that describe different ways of providing safe and efficient transportation and a variety of high quality experiences to visitors within Acadia, while ensuring the protection of park resources and values. Last summer we invited you to aid us by envisioning the future of transportation at Acadia. In addition to reading the first newsletter, many of you participated in open houses and submitted comments via letters, comment cards, and the NPS project website. Many of you expressed very specific ideas and concerns about the park and its future. Your feedback was instrumental in helping the planning team develop the range of preliminary concepts.

At this time, we want to share our progress with you and hear your ideas on the preliminary concepts before we proceed further. In this newsletter, you will find a number of ways to contact us and access information. Your review and comments on the preliminary concepts will help us hone and refine these options and guide the planning team in developing a preferred alternative.

We also invite you to join us at open house events in Prospect Harbor on November 2 and Bar Harbor on November 3 where you will be able to learn about, discuss, and comment on the preliminary concepts.

I want to emphasize that we have not identified a preferred alternative nor analyzed in detail the impacts of the preliminary concepts that have been developed at this stage of the planning process. Once the preliminary concepts described in this newsletter are fully developed into formal alternatives, one of these alternatives could be selected as the NPS preferred alternative; or a new alternative could emerge that combines elements from some or all of the preliminary concepts.

As we move forward in exploring different ways to manage the park for the future, I hope you will stay connected and be an active participant in this important planning process. With your continued interest and support, we will develop a plan that enhances your experience of Acadia National Park while preserving its unique natural and cultural heritage.

Thank you for your interest and participation in the development of the transportation plan. We hope to hear more from you soon!

Kevin B. Schneider
Superintendent
Acadia National Park

We are Listening

We are very interested in hearing from you and getting your ideas on the preliminary concepts. We will be accepting feedback from October 12 to November 30, 2016. The planning team is seeking public input on the specific management strategies presented in each preliminary concept. Please keep in mind when commenting that the unique content of comments received, rather than the number of times a similar comment was heard, is what will help refine the preliminary concepts into alternatives.

There are a number of ways to participate in this process and make your voice heard. You may submit your comments electronically by scanning the code below or visiting the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ACADTransportationPlan>

Once on the website, select "Open for Comment" to provide your thoughts on the preliminary concepts.

Comments may also be submitted in writing to the following address:

Acadia National Park
ATTN: Transportation Plan
PO Box 177
Bar Harbor, ME 04609



The park will be accepting comments through November 30, 2016. Please submit all comments via the PEPC website, standard mail, or during the open house event.

You're Invited

The National Park Service will be hosting open house events on November 2 in Prospect Harbor and November 3 in Bar Harbor. The purpose of the open house is to present the preliminary concepts and receive public feedback. Please join us and share your ideas on the preliminary concepts at the following locations:

Prospect Harbor, Maine Wednesday,
November 2, 6:30-8:30 pm
Peninsula School
71 Main Street (Route 186)
Prospect Harbor, ME 04669

Bar Harbor, Maine Thursday, November 3, 6:30-8:30 pm
Mount Desert Island High School
1081 Eagle Lake Road (Route 233)
Bar Harbor, ME 04609

What is PEPC?

Public involvement is a critical part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) project planning and development process. To provide information and collect public input, the NPS Planning, Environment and Public Comment (PEPC) website is used for many planning projects. Planning information, updates, meeting notices, and documents can all be found on a park's PEPC site. When documents are open for public comment, comments from individuals, civic groups, public agencies, and governing bodies can be submitted on the site. PEPC allows NPS staff to gather and consider public comments in a cost-effective and timely manner. Comments are stored in a secure database as part of the official administrative record for the plan. Public comments and the names of those making comments may be released to the public at the end of the comment period in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

A specific PEPC site for the transportation plan has been created for this planning effort. Check it out at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ACADTransportationPlan>

What is the Purpose of the Plan?

- Establish desired conditions for natural and cultural resources and visitor experiences throughout the park.
- Identify strategies to address parking and roadway capacity limitations and associated impacts to resources, safety, and visitor experiences.
- Evaluate and establish guidance to improve safety and reduce conflicts among oversized vehicles (e.g., buses, RVs, campers), motorcycles, bicyclists, and passenger cars operating on park roads.
- Identify potential transportation infrastructure improvements to increase safety and enhance resource stewardship, sustainability and NPS operational efficiency.

Why is the Plan Needed?

- High volumes of people accessing the park during the summer season and expanding shoulder season cause congestion on roads and exceed parking capacity in specific locations and at specific times, causing reduced level of service and safety concerns.
- The quality of the visitor experience is diminished as a result of congestion on roadways and crowding at specific attraction sites and during peak use times/seasons.
- During peak use times, demand for transportation-related services exceeds the available infrastructure and service capacity.
- Transportation infrastructure and high volumes of visitor use causes impacts on natural and cultural resources of the park.
- The narrow character and alignment of the park's historic roads can create conflicts between different user groups (e.g., large vehicles and cyclists).
- The Schoodic district may see significant increases in use, and alternative transportation options and infrastructure capacity may not be sufficient to handle demand.

What are Alternatives and How are They Developed?

Once the NPS planning team has reviewed comments on the management strategies presented in these preliminary concepts, we will begin assembling them into a full range of reasonable alternatives, which are required when preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS). Reasonable alternatives propose different ways to fulfill the purpose and need of the plan, while minimizing impacts to park resources. Reasonable alternatives must also demonstrate economic and technical feasibility and exhibit common sense.

The process being used to develop a range of alternatives for the Acadia National Park Transportation Plan incorporates public input received during scoping for this planning effort. The National Park Service received about 300 correspondences from individuals and organizations, expressing a wide range of ideas for future management. Many of these ideas included options for resolving important issues facing the park. These ideas have been used to help develop the range of preliminary concepts presented in this newsletter. These preliminary concepts will be refined into formal alternatives.

It is important to note that a preferred alternative has not been identified at this stage of the planning process. Once fully developed, one of these preliminary concepts could be selected as the NPS preferred alternative; or a new alternative could emerge that combines elements from some or all of these preliminary concepts.

Please Share Your Thoughts

We invite you to review this newsletter and offer your comments, especially on the specific management strategies presented in each preliminary concept. Public comments will be used to refine and finalize these preliminary concepts into the range of formal alternatives that will be presented and their effects analyzed in the draft plan/EIS. In particular, we would appreciate your responses to the following questions.

1. Which specific strategies in the preliminary concepts do you think should be carried forward to best achieve the purpose and address the need for the plan? Why do you think these strategies should be carried forward?
2. Which specific strategies in the preliminary concepts do you think would not achieve the purpose and address the need for the plan? Why do you think these strategies should not be carried forward?
3. Are there other strategies that should be included in the preliminary concepts that are not already presented? If so, which strategies and why should they be considered?
4. What other comments or suggestions do you have?

Fundamental Resources and Values

Acadia National Park is a special place where the scenery, natural and cultural resources, and access provided by roads, trails, and other facilities provide visitors with opportunities for enjoyment of the area that are distinctly different from those found in other parks. In developing the preliminary concepts, the planning team considered management goals and desired conditions for eight fundamental resources and values identified within the park:

1. Visitor Experience
2. Network of Historic Roads
3. Cultural Landscapes
4. Ethnographic Resources and Values
5. Mosaic of Habitats Supporting Diverse Flora and Fauna
6. Clean Air and Water
7. Scenic Resources and Values
8. Legacy of Conservation Ethic and Philanthropy

Any management or operational changes should be compatible with attaining these goals and desired conditions, which are described on the opposite page.

Area-Specific Desired Conditions

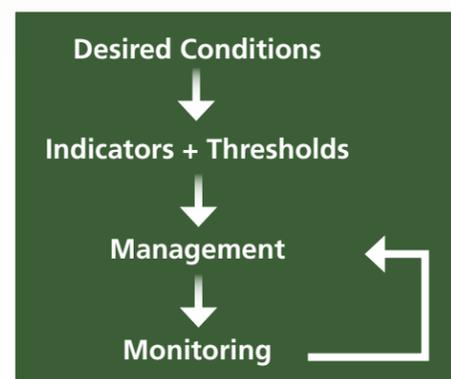
The park's fundamental resources and values, as described in the park's foundation document, generally apply to the entire park, as do their desired conditions. As stated in *NPS Management Policies 2006*, desired conditions are "a park's natural and cultural resource conditions that the NPS aspires to achieve and maintain over time, and the conditions necessary for visitors to understand, enjoy, and appreciate those resources." However, some areas of the park have more specific management goals that warrant tailored management strategies. For instance, Schoodic Peninsula would continue to provide opportunities for lower-density recreation than areas on eastern Mount Desert Island (such as Sand Beach and Cadillac Mountain).

Because of these differing mandates and geographical separations, the preliminary concepts presented in this newsletter are presented by each park district--Schoodic and Mount Desert Island. The preliminary concepts outlined in this newsletter are geographically separated as such.

Indicators, Thresholds, and Monitoring

As part of the planning process, the National Park Service is working to establish indicators and thresholds to monitor how well the proposed management strategies are meeting desired conditions. In some cases, park managers may choose to implement certain management strategies (referred to as **adaptive strategies**) only when certain triggers or thresholds are met.

Desired conditions are statements of aspiration that describe resource conditions, visitor experiences and opportunities, and facilities and services that an agency strives to achieve and maintain in a particular area. **Indicators** are specific resource or experiential attributes that can be measured to track changes in conditions so that progress toward achieving and maintaining desired conditions can be assessed. **Thresholds** are minimally acceptable conditions associated with each indicator



Please note that the NPS planning team is in the early stages of developing indicators, thresholds, and monitoring methods. The specific details relevant to this plan will be available for public review as part of the draft plan and environmental impact statement.

Goals and Desired Conditions

Visitor Experience



Goal	Desired Conditions
Provide for a range of opportunities to experience the landscape that provide high quality, resource-related visitor experiences while ensuring a safe and positive social environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors are provided with opportunities for safe, convenient, and sustainable access to park resources and experiences. The park's transportation system provides access to opportunities for a range of experiences to learn, explore, protect and enjoy park resources; transit options are convenient and timely. Visitors have a variety of high quality experiences in settings with a range of high to low visitor density. High quality programs, services, and facilities are accessible to all people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors have the opportunity to experience high quality natural and cultural resources without crowding, congestion, or visitor conflict. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor experience is not degraded by the scale and number of vehicles. Views from and to transportation corridors are dominated by a natural landscape. Visitors experience dark night skies and an environment that is dominated by natural sounds. The number and size of all vehicles does not exceed the road and bridge design capacity and parking capacity, to ensure visitor safety and reduce visitor conflicts. Traffic is predominantly free-flowing.

Network of Historic Roads



Goal	Desired Conditions
Protect the aesthetic and historic values of historic roads within the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park's historic roads retain their overall design and character-defining features. The historic road network retains its intended historic uses, including private automobile touring. The original intent and historic significance of Park Loop Road and other historic roads are conveyed to visitors.

Cultural Landscapes



Goal	Desired Conditions
Protect, preserve, and rehabilitate the cultural landscapes of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The historic attributes and uses contributing to the park's cultural landscapes will be preserved and protected.

Ethnographic Resources and Values



Goal	Desired Conditions
Protect and preserve the cultural heritage of the park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The integrity of ethnographic resources and values is safeguarded to preserve significant attributes and uses that contribute to historical significance.

Mosaic of Habitats Supporting Diverse Flora and Fauna



Goal	Desired Conditions
Protect and preserve park's natural resources, giving priority to those that are exceptionally fragile or significant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitor-related impacts (such as from roadside parking) are minimized. The park protects a mosaic of habitats that supports an associated abundance of flora and fauna, including terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. The park's transportation system is designed to ensure the protection of federally, state, and locally listed species and locally rare or significant species and habitats. Sensitive natural areas are restored, where possible. Natural processes are safeguarded to preserve natural ecosystem integrity. The natural processes that connect the hydrologic and other natural features and systems of the park are unhindered by transportation-related use, management, and infrastructure.

Clean Air and Water



Goal	Desired Conditions
Maintain or improve air and water quality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The park continues to manage transportation activities/systems within the park in accordance with its classification as a Class I area under the Clean Air Act. The physical, chemical, and hydrological properties of the park's streams, river, lakes, and other water bodies reflect natural water quality conditions that meet or exceed applicable water quality standards.

Scenic Resources and Values



Goal	Desired Conditions
Preserve opportunities for visitors to enjoy the park's scenery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Views of the natural environment and cultural landscapes are protected. Conditions are consistent with the goals articulated in the park's vista management plan.

Legacy of Conservation Ethic and Philanthropy



Goal	Desired Conditions
Foster a continued legacy of conservation ethic and philanthropy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation system is reflective of and carries forward the park's historic conservation ethic and is supported by philanthropy and partnerships.

Preliminary Concept Development

With the goal of protecting the park's fundamental resources and values, the planning team developed several preliminary concepts for management of the Schoodic Peninsula and Mount Desert Island. These preliminary concepts are comprised of various management strategies that were developed by the National Park Service and refined through public and stakeholder input. Please note that costs and fund sources for implementation of the management strategies will be developed later in the process. The preliminary concepts represent the diversity of suggestions received to date. This newsletter also outlines the No Action Alternative, which reflects a continuation of current management practices within the park.

No Action

Summary

This preliminary concept represents the continuation of current management practices related to natural and cultural resources, visitor use, traffic and transportation, operations, and maintenance of infrastructure and facilities within Acadia National Park. Please note that the following description of "no action" is only a subset of current management practices. It is used to compare specific management strategies that are proposed in the other preliminary concepts.

Adaptive Management Strategies

Not all management strategies in this plan would be implemented immediately. Some of the preliminary concepts include specific adaptive strategies that would be implemented if and when triggers or thresholds are reached, to continue to maintain desired resource conditions and visitor experiences. This adaptive management approach is a systematic way to improve and maintain conditions by learning from management outcomes.



No Action: Parkwide	
Visitor Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors would continue to find relatively static information about the park and its transportation options online. This information is updated if needed due to park alerts but is not subject to more frequent updates.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicycle use would continue to be allowed on paved roads, carriage roads on park property, parking areas, and designated unpaved roads and trails.
Commercial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All park roads would remain closed to commercial vehicles, with exceptions for vehicles making deliveries to the park and concessions and commercial use authorization holders conducting authorized business. Other exceptions specific to geographic areas are noted below.
Public Transit Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking lots and turnouts would generally remain their current size and the same locations. Changes would be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Public transit service would continue to be evaluated annually for opportunities to better serve park visitors and neighboring residents within the constraints of existing funding.

No Action: Schoodic Peninsula	
Visitor Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The primary location for visitor orientation for this district would continue to be Schoodic Woods Campground.
Entrances and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors would continue to enter the park along Schoodic Loop Road. Park passes would remain available at the Schoodic Woods Campground.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schoodic Loop Road would remain a two-lane one way roadway, except for two-way access to and from Frazer Point.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal visitor parking would continue to be at the day use lot at the Schoodic Woods Campground, Frazer Point, and Schoodic Point. Existing parking would continue to be managed to protect resources, and informal parking along Schoodic Loop Road would not be allowed. Parking at the Schoodic Education and Research Center (SERC) campus would continue to be managed by Schoodic Institute.
Public Transit Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transit service would continue to be provided from Winter Harbor to Schoodic Point, Birch Harbor, and Prospect Harbor.
Commercial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All park roads would remain closed to commercial vehicles, with the exception of commercial use authorization holders and those traveling to and from SERC.

No Action: Mount Desert Island	
Visitor Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors would continue to gain in-person information about the park and its transportation options primarily at the Hulls Cove Visitor Center.
Entrances and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The existing nine motor vehicle entrances to Park Loop Road would remain. The National Park Service would continue to direct visitors to the Hulls Cove, Cadillac Mountain, Sieur de Monts, and Stanley Brook entrances as the primary entrances to Park Loop Road. The Sand Beach Entrance Station would remain.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The National Park Service would continue to provide information about bicycling during periodic "car free" mornings on Park Loop Road and the road up Cadillac Mountain.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors would continue to have the option to use many parking lots off of Park Loop Road and other areas of Mount Desert Island on a first-come, first-served basis. Informal parking along the right lane of Park Loop Road would continue to be allowed along certain segments. Restrictions and prohibitions could be implemented, on a case-by-case basis, if needed.
Park Loop Road Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The segment of Park Loop Road between Jordan Pond House and the Hulls Cove Visitor Center would remain two-way. The east segment of Park Loop Road would remain one-way in a clockwise direction, from near Cadillac Mountain to Stanley Brook Road.
Public Transit Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transit service would continue to be provided along multiple routes, servicing locations such as Hulls Cove Visitor Center, Bar Harbor's Village Green, Park Loop Road, Northeast Harbor, and Bass Harbor.
Commercial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All park roads would remain closed to commercial vehicles, with exceptions for concessioner buses on Park Loop Road and Cadillac Summit Road, and commercial use authorization holders.

Area-Specific Management Strategies

As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, the preliminary concepts presented in this newsletter are presented by each park district--Schoodic and Mount Desert Island. On Mount Desert Island, the focus of the preliminary concepts is on the frequently visited eastern portion of the district, especially around Park Loop Road.

The maps on pages 5 and 6 of this newsletter provide geographic reference points for many of the areas noted in the preliminary concepts in the pages that follow.

A Road with Many Names

Park Loop Road is known locally by a number of different names along different segments of the road. Relevant management strategies included in the preliminary concepts use those local names to refer to specific areas or segments of Park Loop Road. To clarify which management strategies applies in which locations, those local names are shown on the map below.



Eastern Mount Desert Island



Schoodic Peninsula



Management Strategies Common to All Preliminary Concepts

Some general management strategies are likely to be employed under any future management scenario. These strategies are considered practical, common sense approaches to park management and are grounded in NPS policy and best practices. These are strategies that will help ensure that goals and desired conditions are met.

Visitor Orientation

The park would provide enhanced pre-trip planning information about car-free options to access and explore the park. Improved trip-planning information that gives frequently updated information on the congestion and bus occupancy levels also would be provided.

Adaptively Responding to Changing Visitor Use Patterns

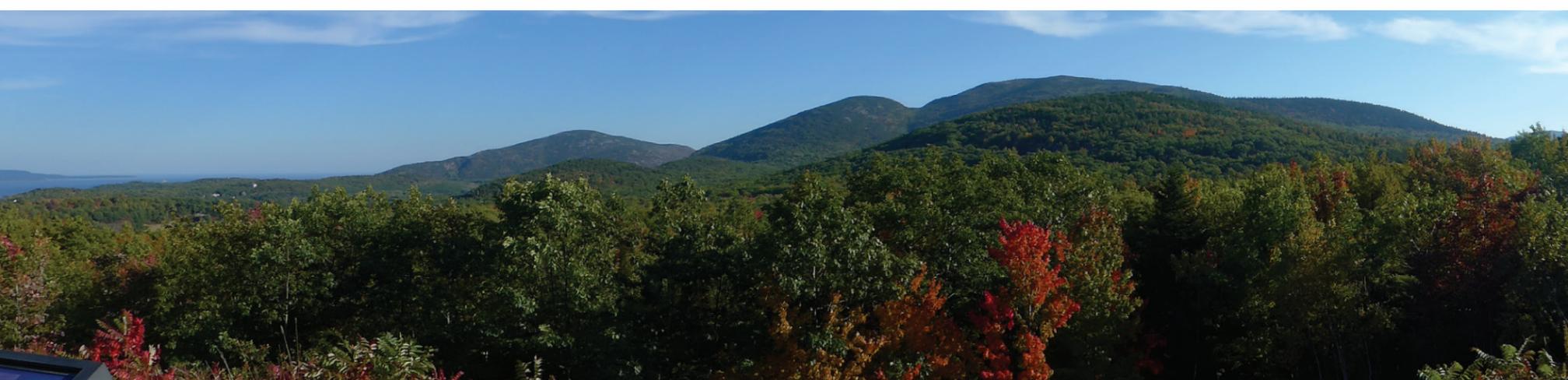
Many of the strategies identified in this newsletter are focused on managing transportation and visitor use in the most popular areas of the park such as along the Park Loop Road and Cadillac Mountain. Using an adaptive management framework, the park will monitor for changing visitor use patterns and resource conditions elsewhere in the park and implement other strategies as needed in those areas to ensure desired conditions are being achieved. Those strategies may include a reservation system to better manage queues for popular bus routes, adding additional parking lots (beyond those proposed in the preliminary concepts outlined below) into a reservation system, or working with partners such as the Maine Department of Transportation on improving the safety of roadside parking near trailheads along state highways. Some of the adaptive strategies, such as reservation systems, would only be implemented during peak seasons, and others could be phased in over time.

Preliminary Concepts for the Mount Desert Island District

MDI-1: Increased Public Transit and Parking Reservations

Summary	Key Elements
<p>This preliminary concept allows visitors to experience a congestion-free visit by providing enhanced options for car-free mobility in the park and better information about congestion conditions. Safety concerns are addressed by providing increased alternative transportation options, reducing the amount of right lane parking along Park Loop Road, developing a new parking lot to replace informal parking along Route 233 at Eagle Lake, and working with the state to consider viable parking improvements or relocations along state roads.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to better disperse vehicle use throughout the day and season and provide visitors greater assurances of travel plans during their trip planning, reservation systems would be established during peak use times for private vehicle access to the Cadillac Mountain summit, as well as for parking at Jordan Pond House and Sand Beach. Most right lane parking on the one-way section of Park Loop Road would be eliminated to improve traffic flows and allow for passing of bicycles and vehicles travelling at low speeds. Public transit service would be expanded throughout Mount Desert Island to facilitate access to those areas previously accessed from right lane parking. In order to better manage the volume and timing of commercial tour vehicles entering the park, a commercial tour vehicle reservation system would be established for tour bus access past the Sand Beach Entrance Station and/or to the Cadillac Mountain summit.

MDI-1: Increased Public Transit and Parking Reservations	
Management Strategies	
Entrances and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private vehicle access to Cadillac Summit Road would be facilitated by a reservation system during the peak season. Public transit service to the summit of Cadillac Mountain would be implemented if and when funding becomes available to support it. Vehicle size restrictions would be implemented for Cadillac Summit Road, consistent with the width and alignment of the historic roadway.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicyclists would be allowed on the entirety of Park Loop Road at all times.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most right lane parking on the one-way section of Park Loop Road would be eliminated to improve traffic flows and allow for passing of bicycles and vehicles travelling at low speeds. Informal parking along Route 233 would be replaced with a new parking area and trail connection into the carriage road system to improve safety along the state highway. Parking at Bubble Pond would be prohibited during operation of the Island Explorer. Reservations would be required to park at the Jordan Pond House parking lots during peak use times. Reservations would be required to park at the Sand Beach parking lots during peak use times.
Park Loop Road Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as no action.
Public Transit Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A bus-only connection from Park Loop Road to Blackwoods Campground would be established to provide shorter travel times and increased frequency for the Sand Beach Route. The frequency of the Jordan Pond House, Southwest Harbor, and Brown Mountain routes would be increased during peak periods.
Commercial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A reservation system would be implemented for commercial tour vehicles traveling on Ocean Drive. A reservation system would be implemented for commercial tour vehicles traveling to the summit of Cadillac Mountain.



Preliminary Concepts for the Mount Desert Island District

MDI-2: Traffic Metering and Parking Reservations

<p>Summary</p> <p>This preliminary concept improves visitor experiences and reduces congestion on Park Loop Road by metering the number of private vehicles on Ocean Drive during peak season and consolidating tour bus operations. Visitor safety would be improved by eliminating the right lane parking along Ocean Drive, by metering the number of cars on Ocean Drive, by designating hours for bicycle use on Lower Mountain Road, and by implementing vehicle size restrictions, consolidating bus operations, and designating hours for bicycle use on Cadillac Summit Road.</p>	<p>Key Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During peak use times, access to Ocean Drive by private vehicles would be metered to ensure free flowing roadway conditions and adequate parking availability for visitors. • Most right lane parking on the one-way section of Park Loop Road would be eliminated to improve traffic flows and allow for passing of bicycles and vehicles travelling at low speeds. • The frequency of the Sand Beach and Loop Road transit routes would be increased to partially offset vehicles displaced by the removal of right lane parking. • In order to better disperse vehicle use throughout the day and season and provide visitors greater assurances of travel plans during their trip planning, reservation systems would be established during peak use times for private vehicle access to the Cadillac Mountain summit and parking at the Jordan Pond House. • Commercial tour vehicle access to Park Loop Road and Cadillac Mountain would be replaced with a concession bus operation to provide consistent orientation and information to visitors and provide a means to more closely coordinate the timing and volume of tour buses entering the park. Large tour groups arriving to Mount Desert Island on a commercial tour bus or by cruise ship would transfer to the concession bus in order to access the park.
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MDI-2: Traffic Metering and Parking Reservations

Management Strategies	
Entrances and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During peak use times, private vehicles entering Ocean Drive would be allowed past the entrance station until pre-determined thresholds of parking occupancy and roadway volumes were reached. Additional vehicles would be allowed through as capacity permits. Information about wait times at the entrance would be provided by various means. Drivers could choose to wait or divert, if necessary, off Park Loop Road at Schooner Head Road or sooner at Sieur de Monts. • Adaptive Strategy: A private vehicle reservation system for Ocean Drive could be implemented if the queues occurring under the metering system become unacceptably long or otherwise unmanageable. • During peak use times, private vehicle access to Cadillac Summit Road would be by a reservation system. • Vehicle size restrictions would be implemented for Cadillac Summit Road, consistent with the width and alignment of the historic roadway.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicyclists would be allowed on Lower Mountain Road (i.e., the two-way section of Park Loop Road) and Cadillac Summit Road during designated times that correspond with low vehicle use such as during early morning and late afternoon.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right lane parking on the one-way section of Park Loop Road would be eliminated. • Reservations would be required to park at the Jordan Pond House parking lots during peak use times.
Park Loop Road Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as no action.
Public Transit Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The frequency of the Sand Beach and Loop Road transit routes would be increased.
Commercial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial tour vehicle access to Cadillac Summit Road and Park Loop Road would be replaced with concession contracts.



What do the terms “reservation system” and “metering” mean?

Both are strategies to manage the number vehicles and people accessing an area of the park at a given time to ensure desired conditions are met.

Under a reservation system (as proposed for parking lots under the MDI-1, MDI-2, and SCH-1 preliminary concepts, and Park Loop Road under the MDI-3 preliminary concept), a set number of vehicles would be allowed to enter a road or parking lot, per day or per hour. Reservations would be available through a third-party vendor such as Recreation.gov. Using a web-based system, visitors would be able to view in advance all available reservations days/times and choose the one best for them based on availability and their travel plans.

Under a metering scenario (as proposed under the MDI-2 preliminary concept), vehicles are allowed to enter a roadway until a pre-determined threshold (e.g., number of parked vehicles) is met. At that point, drivers would queue and wait until space is available for new vehicles. Congestion and wait times would be monitored and information would be provided to arriving visitors through means such as variable message signs, social media, and smartphone apps.



Preliminary Concepts for the Mount Desert Island District

MDI-3: Vehicle Access Reservation System

<p>Summary</p> <p>This preliminary concept improves visitor experiences, reduces congestion on Park Loop Road, and creates a safer experience for bicyclists by making the entire Park Loop Road one way, reversing the one-way travel on Park Loop Road to counterclockwise, and consolidating entrances to the park.</p>	<p>Key Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new entrance station at Paradise Hill Road (i.e., the segment of Park Loop Road from Hulls Cove Visitor Center to Route 233) would be established as the primary gateway into the park with a secondary entrance station at Stanley Brook Road. During peak use times, all other existing entrances would be used as exit points only for private vehicles, and entrances and exits for buses, commercial service vehicles, and emergency responders. • To better manage and distribute the overall volume of vehicles on Park Loop Road, private vehicles would obtain an advanced reservation to proceed past the Paradise Hill or Stanley Brook entrance stations during peak use times. Also during peak use times, a supplemental reservation system for Cadillac Mountain would be established to ensure parking availability and greater assurances in advanced trip planning. • The two-way section of Park Loop Road between Cadillac Mountain and Jordan Pond House would become one way to improve safety for bicyclists. • The one way direction on Park Loop Road would be reversed to counter clockwise in order to allow bicycles and slow-moving vehicles to travel in the right hand (ocean side) lane. This strategy would reduce travel speeds immediately adjacent to the popular Ocean Path and improve the scenic driving experience for visitors. • Right lane parking would be allowed between Sand Beach and the Sand Beach entrance station. A path paralleling the right lane parking in this area would be constructed to facilitate safe access to the beach and Ocean Path. • Commercial tour vehicle access to Park Loop Road and Cadillac Mountain would be replaced with a concession bus operation to provide consistent orientation and information to visitors and provide a means to more closely coordinate the timing and volume of tour buses entering the park. Large tour groups arriving to Mount Desert Island on a commercial tour bus or by cruise ship would transfer to the concession bus in order to access the park.
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MDI-3: Vehicle Access Reservation Systems	
Management Strategies	
Entrances and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park entrances would be consolidated to new entrance stations at Paradise Hill Road and Stanley Brook Road. Other existing Park Loop Road access points would be used as exit points only. • Private vehicle access to Park Loop Road would be by reservation during peak use times. • A supplemental reservation system would be established for private vehicle access to Cadillac Summit Road, with a new entrance station for validation of reservations. • Vehicle size restrictions would be implemented for Cadillac Summit Road, consistent with the width and alignment of the historic roadway.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicyclists would be allowed on all sections of Park Loop Road during all hours. • Bicyclists would be allowed on Cadillac Summit Road during designated hours to reduce conflicts with motorists.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal parking along Route 233 would be replaced with a new parking area at the Liscomb gravel pit and an accompanying trail connection into the carriage road system to improve safety along the state highway. • Right lane parking on Park Loop Road would be eliminated except for a northbound section of the road near Sand Beach. A path paralleling the right lane parking in this area would be constructed to facilitate safe access to the beach.
Park Loop Road Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The two-way section of Park Loop Road between Cadillac Mountain and Jordan Pond House would become one way. • The direction of the one-way circulation on Park Loop Road would be reversed to become counter-clockwise.
Public Transit Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to Loop Road, Jordan Pond House, and Sand Beach routes would be made, necessitated by the one-way loop change. • A bus-only connection from Blackwoods Campground to Park Loop Road would be established to provide shorter travel times and increased frequency for the Sand Beach Route. • The frequency of Southwest Harbor and Brown Mountain routes would be increased during peak periods.
Commercial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial tour vehicle access to Cadillac Summit Road and Park Loop Road would be replaced with concession contracts.

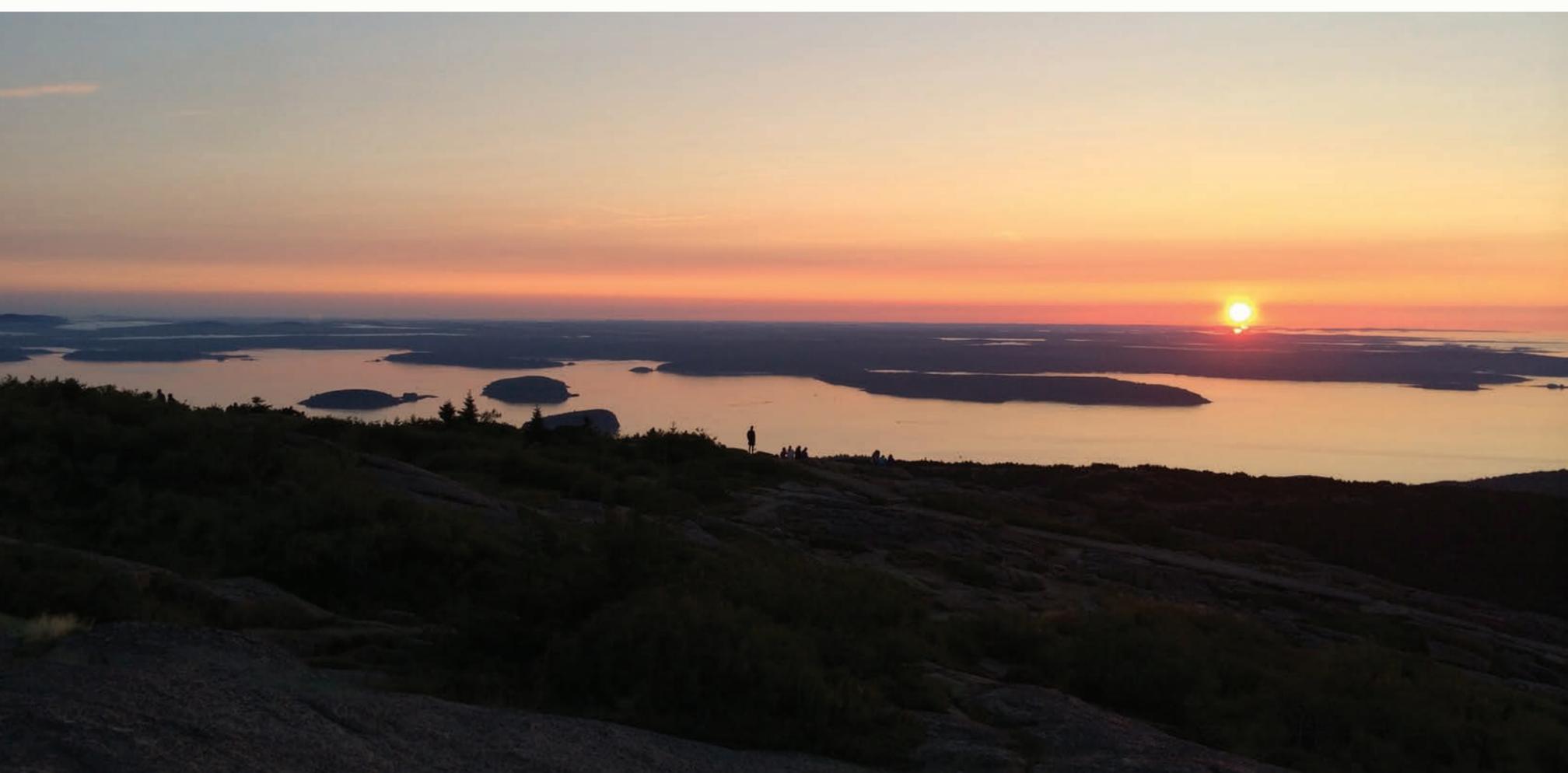


Preliminary Concepts for the Mount Desert Island District

MDI-4: Park Loop Road Public Transit

<p>Summary</p> <p>This preliminary concept enhances visitor experiences, reduces congestion, and improves safety by making the entirety of Park Loop Road two way and, during peak seasons, by replacing private automobile access with a concession operation for both scenic tours and rapid shuttle service. During the shoulder seasons, private vehicles would be able to access Park Loop Road and attractions through a metered system, and circulation would remain two-way.</p>	<p>Key Elements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of Park Loop Road would be converted back to the historic two-way circulation pattern to facilitate efficient and flexible travel options for visitors. • During the peak season, access to Park Loop Road would be by transit only, with both shuttle and tour buses. While buses would be wheelchair accessible, a permit would be available to visitors with disabilities to access Park Loop Road in their own vehicle. • The Hulls Cove Visitor Center would serve as a transportation hub for shuttle and tours. Parking would be expanded at Hulls Cove in addition to expanded parking at remote locations such as the Acadia Gateway Center or other private or public facilities. • During the shoulder season, private vehicle access to Park Loop Road would be metered. • Passengers on commercial tours would be transferred to concessioner buses.
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MDI-4: Park Loop Road Public Transit	
Management Strategies	
Entrances and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park entrances would be consolidated to new entrance stations at Paradise Hill Road and Stanley Brook Road. Other existing Park Loop Road access points would be used as exits only. • During the peak season, private vehicle would continue to Wildwood Stables via the Stanley Brook entrance. • During the shoulder season, Park Loop Road would be managed much the same as in MDI-3. While reservations would not be required, vehicles volumes may be metered at the Paradise Hill and Stanley Brook entrance stations if parking occupancy and roadway volume thresholds were reached.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicyclists would be allowed on Park Loop Road and Cadillac Summit Road.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hulls Cove Visitor Center would be a transportation hub for shuttle and tours. Remote parking locations from which visitors would arrive at Hulls Cove transportation hub could include Acadia Gateway Center or private or public facilities. Parking capacity at Hulls Cove Visitor Center and the Acadia Gateway Center would be optimized, with additional parking at locations to be determined. • A passenger drop off area and a new parking lot would be constructed at the end of Schooner Head Road, with a pedestrian connection to Sand Beach and the Beehive Trail. • Informal parking along Route 233 would be replaced with a new parking area and trail connection into the carriage road system to improve safety along the state highway.
Park Loop Road Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There would be two-way traffic circulation on the entirety of Park Loop Road.
Public Transit Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sand Beach route would be replaced with a route to Blackwoods Campground and one to Sand Beach via the Schooner Head Road drop-off area. • The frequency of Southwest Harbor and Brown Mountain routes would be increased during peak periods.
Commercial Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial tour vehicle access to Cadillac Summit Road and Park Loop Road would be replaced with concession contracts.



Preliminary Concepts for the Schoodic District

Schoodic 1: Peak Season Reservation System	Summary This preliminary concept provides an opportunity for visitors to experience the peninsula in the same way they do now with many visitors choosing to access the district in their personal vehicles. If warranted (due to increases in visitation), visitors may need to acquire an advance reservation to drive on Schoodic Loop Road.	Key Elements If thresholds related to visitor experiences and resource conditions are exceeded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reservation systems would be implemented during the peak season for private vehicles traveling on Schoodic Loop Road and for those parking at the Schoodic Woods day use lot.
Schoodic 2: Peak Season Car-Free Access	Summary This preliminary concept more fully embraces opportunities for car-free transportation in this district by providing additional incentives for alternative transportation options and, if needed due to increases in visitation, placing limitations on those who continue to access the district by car.	Key Elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schoodic Loop Road would be restriped to separate bicycle use from motor vehicles. If thresholds related to visitor experiences and resource conditions are exceeded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Schoodic Loop Road would be primarily by bicycle and public transit.

Schoodic 1: Peak Season Reservation System	Schoodic 2: Peak Season Car-Free Access
Management Strategies	
Entrances and Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptive Strategy: If warranted due to increased visitation, a seasonal reservation system would be established to manage the number of vehicles traveling on Schoodic Loop Road each day. An entrance station would be constructed to validate reservations and allow for access to SERC.
Circulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The one-way portion of Schoodic Loop Road would remain as two lanes, shared by motorists and bicyclists. The speed limit on Schoodic Loop Road would be reduced.
Bicycle and Pedestrian Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pedestrian trail would be constructed from SERC to Schoodic Point to provide a safer pedestrian connection.
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adaptive Strategy: If warranted due to increased visitation, aseasonal reservation system would be implemented for the use of the Schoodic Woods day lot.
Public Transit Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public transit operations would remain as is.





Acadia National Park
Maine

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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Next Steps

The planning team will analyze public comments on the preliminary concepts to determine necessary refinements and create formal alternatives. The team will then evaluate the potential impacts of the alternatives before the National Park Service identifies the preferred alternative. The preferred alternative is the alternative that the agency believes would best accomplish its goal of protecting the fundamental resources and values of the park. The preferred alternative may be a combination of management strategies from the range of alternatives, rather than simply identifying one of the alternatives as the agency's preferred approach. Public comments on the specific management strategies within each preliminary concept will help inform this decision.

After the analysis and identification of a preferred alternative, the range of alternatives will be presented in the draft plan/environmental impact statement (EIS) for public review. Public comments on the draft plan/EIS will then be used to further refine the preferred alternative prior to finalization.

The following table provides an updated planning schedule, including opportunities for public input.

Planning Schedule

Milestone	Schedule	Public Input
Public scoping	Summer 2015	Thank you for your input! In case you missed it or would like to reference it during this comment period, the first public newsletter remains available at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ACADTransportationPlan
Analyze public comments and develop a range of preliminary concepts		
Public review of the range of preliminary concepts	Fall 2016	Review the preliminary concepts newsletter, attend the open house, and provide your comments.
Analyze public comments and prepare the draft plan/EIS		
Public review of the draft plan/EIS	Winter 2017	Review the draft plan, attend the open house event, and provide your comments.
Analyze public comments and prepare the final plan/EIS	Spring 2017- Summer 2018	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ACADTransportationPlan
Release the final plan/EIS and the Record of Decision	Fall 2018	



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Thank you for your interest in the Acadia National Park Transportation Plan!