



NPS: M. Quinn

“We share Desert View as a symbol to bond the peoples of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The Watchtower serves as a connection to embrace the heartbeats of our peoples and visitors far and wide with the heartbeat of the canyon...We are still here.” - Inter-tribal Advisory Council Vision for Desert View

We Need Your Input!

The National Park Service (NPS) is requesting your input in developing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for proposed actions at Desert View within Grand Canyon National Park. Your participation is vital to our planning process. There are many ways to be involved, including attending one of the Public Scoping Meetings and submitting comments on the proposed action (see “How to Comment” on page 2).

Desert View

Located at the southeast boundary of Grand Canyon National Park, Desert View functions as the east entrance to the park and provides many visitors with their first introduction and orientation to some of the park’s most significant resources - including the Desert View Watchtower (a National Historic Landmark) and its surrounding historic district as well as spectacular views of the Painted Desert and the Little Colorado River gorge. The area also serves as the first stop for information, restrooms, water, food, souvenirs, and gasoline to visitors entering the park from the east along Arizona Route 64 and provides convenient access to some of the neighboring tribal lands.

In 2015, the NPS acquired management of the Desert View Watchtower and began a comprehensive historic preservation project for this National Historic Landmark. The Watchtower was designed by Mary Jane Colter, and her well-documented intent was to communicate the ancient architecture and cultures of Native people of the southwest to visitors to the South Rim. Today, the Desert View Watchtower continues its role in conveying to visitors the long history and diverse cultures of Grand Canyon National Park. As the anchor for the Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage site, it also represents an important and continuing cultural partnership for the NPS.

Purpose and Need for Action

The purpose of this project is to increase opportunities for first-voice tribal interpretation, improve visitor orientation, and enhance the overall visitor experience at Desert View in Grand Canyon National Park.

Specifically, action is needed at this time to a) address visitor orientation issues at Desert View related to only-partial implementation of a 2002 plan, b) proactively respond to increasing visitation at the site, and, perhaps most importantly, c) embrace a unique opportunity to engage with associated tribes and embrace their interest in partnering with the park to provide first-voice interpretation at Desert View. This proposed action also provides the NPS with the opportunity to implement the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act whose purpose is “to enhance and integrate Native American tourism, empower Native American communities, increase coordination and collaboration between Federal tourism assets, and expand heritage and cultural tourism opportunities in the United States” (PL 114-221).

The NPS is partnering with the following entities to transform Desert View into an Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site: representatives from the Kaibab Band of Paiute Indians, Havasupai, Hopi, Hualapai, Navajo, Zuni, and Yavapai-Apache tribes; the Grand Canyon Association; the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA); the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and park concessionaires.

Public Scoping Meetings

FLAGSTAFF
February 20, 2018
6:00-8:00pm (MST)
DoubleTree
1175 W Route 66
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

SOUTH RIM
February 21, 2018
4:00-6:00pm (MST)
Shrine of the Ages
20 South Entrance Road
Grand Canyon, AZ 86023

WEBINAR
February 27, 2018
4:30-5:30pm (MST)

Scoping meetings will follow an open house format with a presentation and an opportunity to speak with NPS staff before and after the presentation.



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NPS: Maci McPherson



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Next Steps

Following the public scoping period, the NPS will analyze and consider all feedback and begin preparation of the environmental assessment.

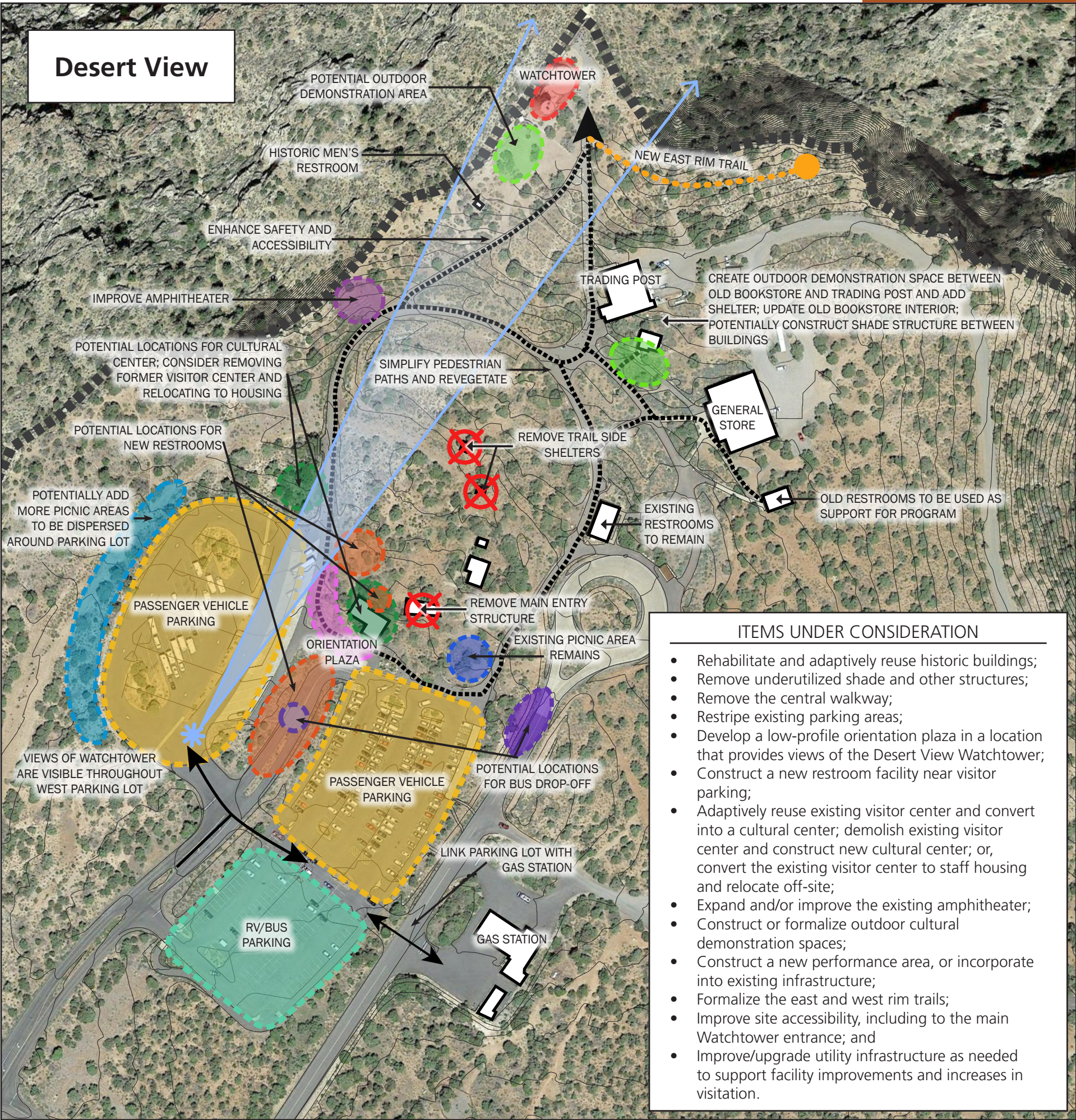
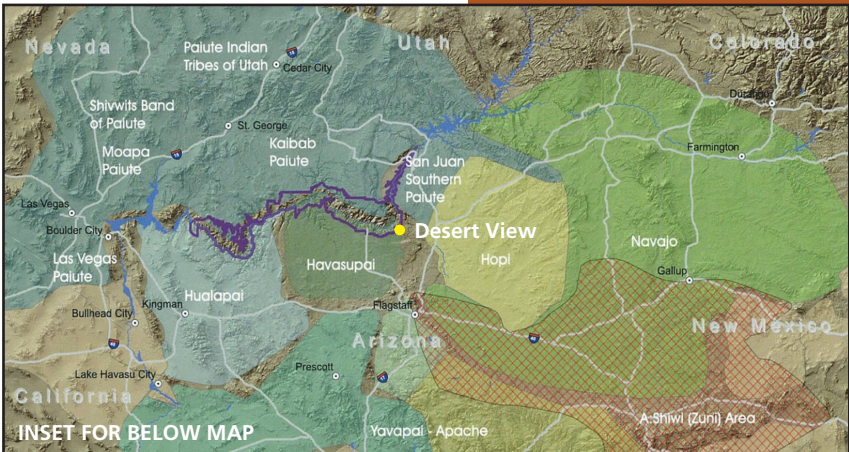
There will be a second opportunity for public comment on the EA in fall/ winter 2018, with the intent to arrive at a final decision by early 2019.

The Proposed Action

Map of Grand Canyon's traditionally associated tribes, with Desert View. Depicts each tribe's range of cultural homeland relative to Grand Canyon.

Given the purpose and need outlined in "Purpose and Need for Action" on page 1, the NPS is proposing to transform Desert View from a traditional scenic overlook and visitor services area into an Inter-tribal Cultural Heritage Site.

As part of this effort, the NPS is proposing to expand opportunities for cultural and educational programs and demonstrations, special events and exhibits, and personal interactions with tribal representatives and artisans. In addition and in support of these programs, the NPS is proposing some modifications to existing infrastructure onsite as well as some potential new construction within the existing developed footprint at Desert View, including the actions outlined in the map below.



ITEMS UNDER CONSIDERATION

- Rehabilitate and adaptively reuse historic buildings;
- Remove underutilized shade and other structures;
- Remove the central walkway;
- Restripe existing parking areas;
- Develop a low-profile orientation plaza in a location that provides views of the Desert View Watchtower;
- Construct a new restroom facility near visitor parking;
- Adaptively reuse existing visitor center and convert into a cultural center; demolish existing visitor center and construct new cultural center; or, convert the existing visitor center to staff housing and relocate off-site;
- Expand and/or improve the existing amphitheater;
- Construct or formalize outdoor cultural demonstration spaces;
- Construct a new performance area, or incorporate into existing infrastructure;
- Formalize the east and west rim trails;
- Improve site accessibility, including to the main Watchtower entrance; and
- Improve/upgrade utility infrastructure as needed to support facility improvements and increases in visitation.

The proposed action is the initial NPS proposal to address the purpose and need for action. Following the public scoping period, the NPS will consider all comments and may identify and develop alternatives to this proposed action that will be carried forward for analysis within the EA. The NPS will not select an alternative for implementation until after the analysis of the alternatives and their potential impacts have been documented and additional public review completed, anticipated in fall/winter 2018.

How to Comment

Submit comments on the proposed plan via the NPS planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/DesertView/CHS>, in person at public scoping open house events (see schedule on page 1), or write to: Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Attn: Desert View EA, PO Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023. The preferred method for submitting comments is on the project website listed above. The public scoping period extends from February 5 - March 6, 2018.