



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK  
P.O. BOX 129  
GRAND CANYON, ARIZONA 86023-0129



IN REPLY REFER TO:

A8815 (GRCA 8211)

**FEB 15 2008**

Dear Interested Party:

Subject: Review of Environmental Assessment – South Rim Visitor Transportation Plan

The National Park Service, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service (Kaibab Forest), is proposing a visitor transportation plan for the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park to address the most pressing traffic, parking, and visitor access issues in Grand Canyon Village.

An environmental assessment/assessment of effect (EA), issued on February 15, 2008, evaluates four alternatives for addressing the purpose and need for action: Alternative A is the no-action alternative; alternative B is the preferred alternative and is outlined in more detail below; alternative C emphasizes providing visitor parking near Tusayan south of the park boundary; and alternative D emphasizes providing visitor parking inside Grand Canyon National Park at Canyon View Information Plaza (CVIP), where the park's visitor center is located.

All action alternatives would incorporate adaptive management approaches to meet objectives of the plan and would be implemented in phases over time. The National Park Service would initially implement physical improvements (e.g., parking lots) that address the highest need while at the same time investing in operational strategies (such as improvements to shuttle bus operations, new directional signs and improved website information). The National Park Service would closely monitor the successes of these changes to confirm their achievement of project objectives before taking any additional actions. Elements common to all action alternatives include:

- new visitor tour bus parking;
- enhancement of the park shuttle bus system;
- modifications to the South Entrance Station;
- improvements to Grand Canyon Railway loading and unloading operations;
- improved shuttle bus and tour bus access to Yaki Point;
- new parking and visitor facilities at CVIP and improved trails, signage and shuttle bus access at Mather Point; and
- expanded strategies for managing the transportation system to aid visitors with trip planning, facilitate traffic flow and improve directional and informational signage.



The action alternatives differ primarily in their approach to where development would occur (inside or outside the park) and how visitors would arrive (either by private vehicle or shuttle). The action alternatives all provide for an increase in visitor parking to meet projected demand, while maximizing the use of existing parking lots in Grand Canyon Village. They do not preclude other future transportation systems from being implemented, including those that may be required in the future for substantial increases in visitation.

Alternative B would achieve all of the project objectives while also ensuring a high level of resource protection. This alternative emphasizes collaboration with adjacent communities, businesses, partners, and other agencies to address South Rim transportation needs. Key elements of alternative B include:

- vehicle access to the park's visitor center at CVIP;
- 600-900 visitor parking spaces at CVIP, 40 commercial tour bus parking spaces and a drop-off area, and parking for RVs;
- up to 400 visitor parking spaces in Tusayan;
- re-routing South Entrance Road south of CVIP and removal of vehicles at Mather Point to enhance visitors experience and improve safety;
- enhancement of the park's shuttle bus system;
- six entrance lanes at the South Entrance Station.

Initial phasing would likely include up to 600 parking spaces and facility improvements (food/snacks, theater, bike rental) at CVIP; a pilot shuttle bus program to Tusayan to test need, feasibility and desire by the visiting public and local business community; and improved management of Grand Canyon Railway passenger loading and unloading at the historic Grand Canyon Depot.

This planning effort was initiated in March 2006 with a public scoping letter and public meetings, with additional requests for comments on preliminary alternatives in August 2006. Responses to this scoping effort were used during the preparation of the EA. The National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service encourage your review and comment on the EA. The EA will be on public review for 30 days. The document is available electronically on the web and can be downloaded from the park's website (<http://www.nps.gov/grca/trans.htm>) or reviewed online at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca>. Comments can be submitted online at this same web address (<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/grca>, the preferred method) or mailed to Steve Martin, Superintendent, Grand Canyon National Park, Attention: Office of Planning and Compliance, P.O. Box 129, Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023. Comments will be accepted through March 19, 2008.

*Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.*

Two public meetings, in an open house format, will be held in conjunction with the release of the EA, one in Tusayan, Arizona, the other in Flagstaff, Arizona. The public is encouraged to come at any time during the meetings to visit information stations, speak with National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service representatives, pick up written information and provide comments in an informal setting. Meeting times and locations are as follows:

March 12, 2008      5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Grand Canyon Squire  
Inn – Best Western  
Anasazi Room  
Tusayan, AZ 86023  
928-638-4071

March 13, 2008      5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Coconino National Forest  
Supervisors Office  
Conference Room  
1824 S. Thompson  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001  
928-527-3600

Should you have any questions, please contact Vicky Stinson, Project Manager at 928-774-3026.

Thank you for your interest in Grand Canyon National Park.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Martin". The signature is stylized with a large, bold "S" and a cursive "Martin".

Steve Martin  
Superintendent