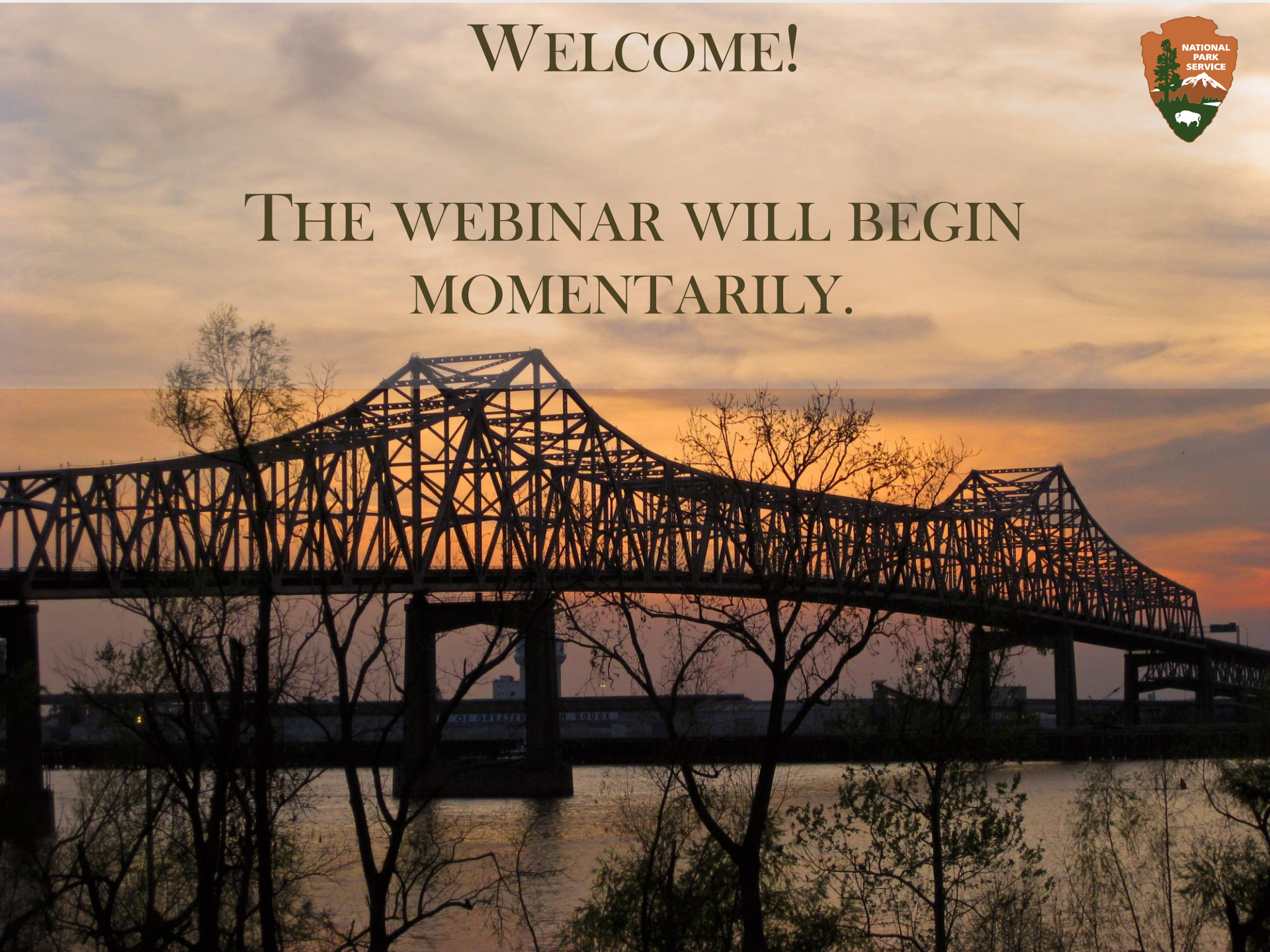
Welcome!

The webinar will begin momentarily.



Welcome!

Visitor Services Strategy
Virtual Public Meeting
Natchez National Historical Park

September 10, 2020
12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. CT

September 10, 2020
5:30 – 7:30 p.m. CT

Virtual Meeting Orientation

Comments & Questions – raise hand OR type in the chat box

We will answer questions after the presentation

Unmute audio to speak (press *6 if calling by phone; press mute button if joining by computer)

Share your ideas!

Meet the Team

- Park Staff
  - Kathleen Bond, Superintendent
  - Jeff Mansell, Historian
  - David Slay, Chief of Interpretation
  - Amy Gordon, Administrative Officer
- Region Staff
  - John Gerbich, Planning Portfolio Manager
  - Bill Stevens, Chief of Commercial Services
- WASO PPSS Staff
  - Wendy Berhman, Planner
- Denver Service Center Staff
  - Tara Pettit, Project Manager
  - Aleksandra Pitt, Project Specialist
  - Elizabeth Oliphant, Project Specialist
  - Monica Vigil, Project Specialist

What Do We Mean When We Say Visitor Services?

Commercial Services –examples include tour companies, food and beverage providers

Services provided by NPS – examples include new waysides for interpretation, picnic tables

Meeting Purpose

Share park purpose

Share plan purpose, guidelines governing visitor services, and NPS ideas for potential new services.

Gather suggestions for other possible visitor services and feedback on ideas presented

•Copyright ©2020, Visit Natchez. All Rights Reserved.
•

Agenda

Park Overview

Plan Purpose

Policy and Guidance

NPS Ideas

Questions

Your Ideas

Next Steps

Park Overview

Park Purpose Statement

Natchez National Historical Park preserves and interprets the complex history and material culture of all the peoples of Natchez, Mississippi, emphasizing European settlement, African enslavement, the American cotton economy, and the Civil Rights struggle on the lower Mississippi River.

Welcomed 180,000 visitors in 2019

Park Overview

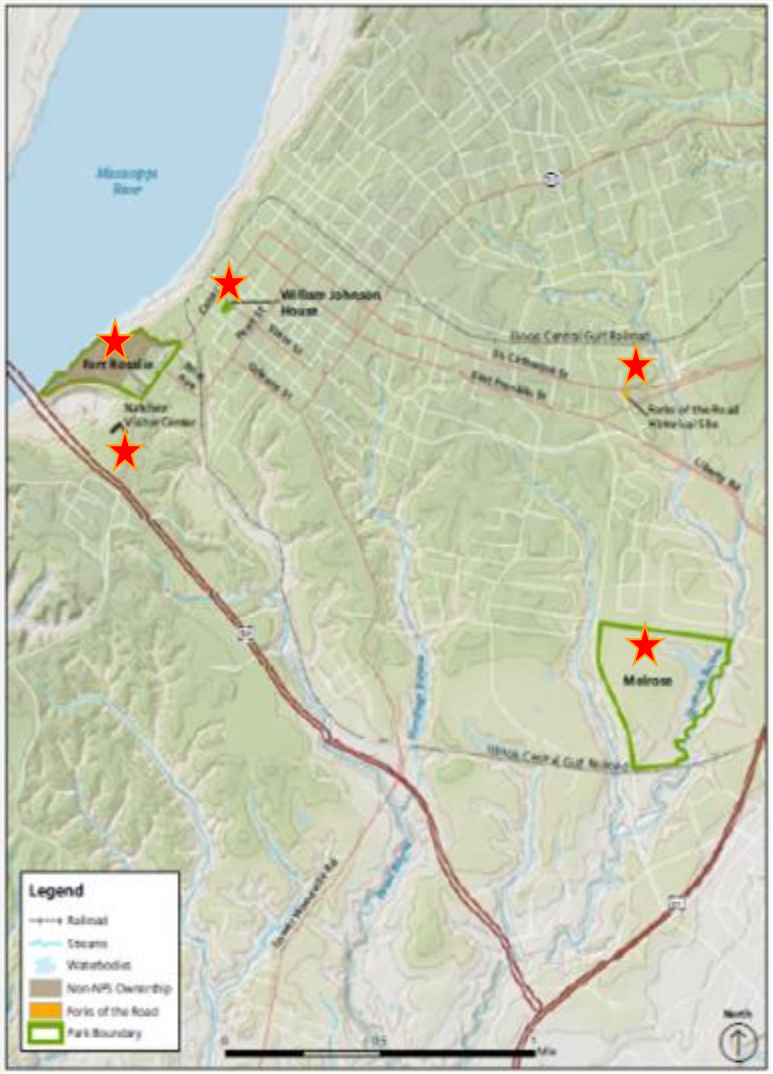
Natchez Visitor Center

Fort Rosalie

Forks of the Road

Melrose

William Johnson House



Natchez Visitor Center

640 S. Canal St

Urban location adjacent to downtown

25,000 square feet

NPS administrative offices

Eastern National Gift Shop

Tour & Event ticket sales

Travel Information

Transferred ownership to NPS July 2020

Fort Rosalie

- Urban location adjacent to downtown
- Bluff overlooking Mississippi River
- European settlement
- Special programming
- Interpretive waysides
- Picnic tables

Forks Of The Road

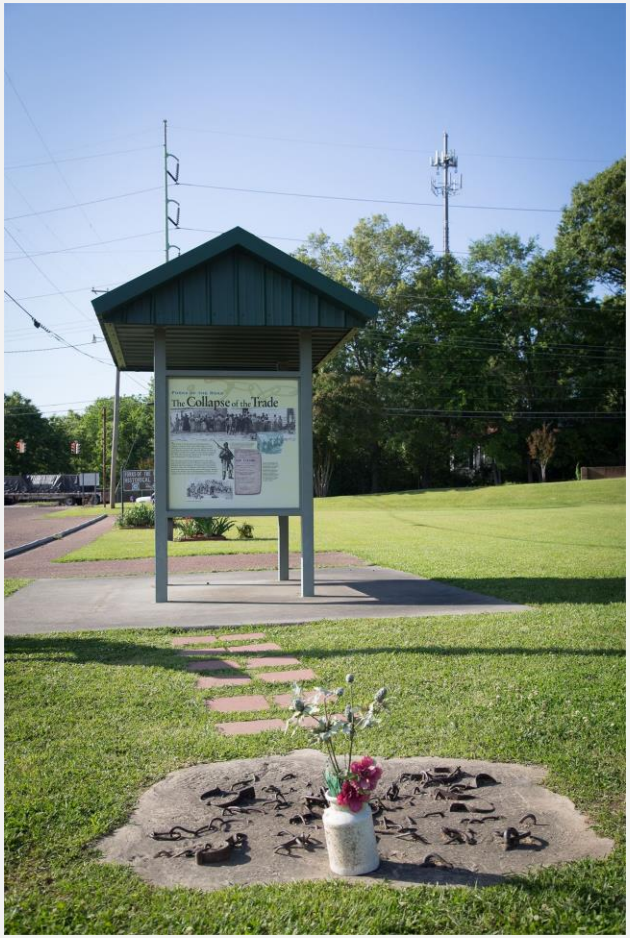
Suburban location - 1 mile from downtown

Primary slave market for the Deep South

Interpretive display

Transferring city-owned parcels to the NPS

Acquisition for additional parcels ongoing



Melrose

Suburban location – 2 miles from downtown

15,000 square foot mansion and 80-acre estate

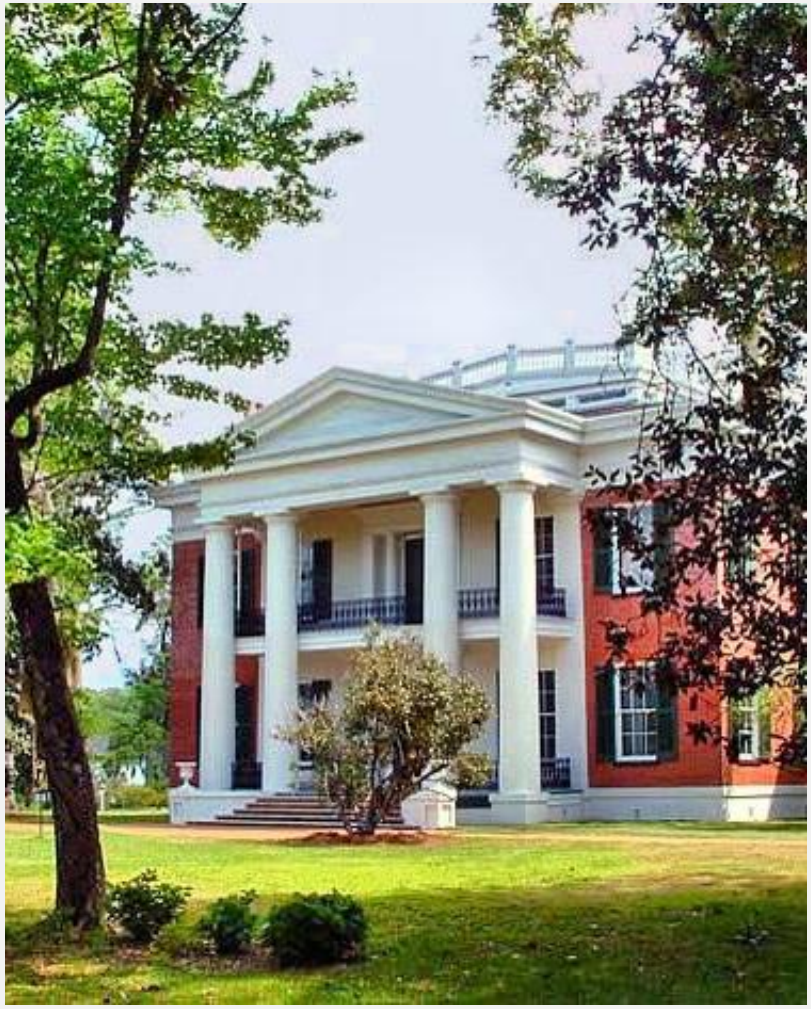
Guided home tour (fee)

Self-guided grounds tours

Exhibits

Picnic tables

Eastern National Gift Shop



William Johnson House

- Urban location in downtown
- Johnson home & McCallum House
- Exhibits
- Eastern National Gift Shop
- Restrooms
- Self-guided Tour

Plan Purpose

Plan Purpose: What does a Visitor Service strategy do?

Identifies opportunities to enhance the park's mission and the visitor experience through public/private partnerships

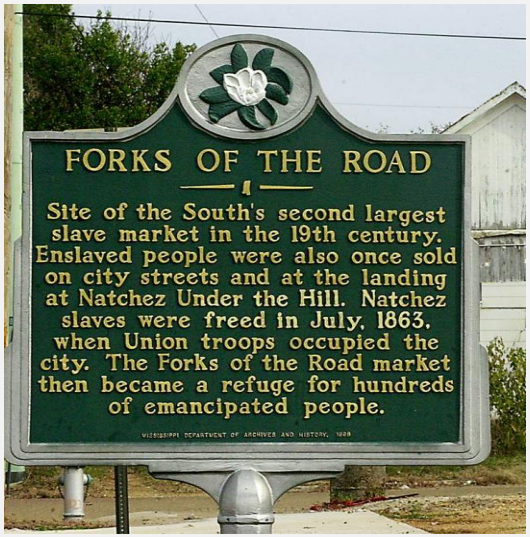
Outlines and prioritizes short- and long-term strategies to provide visitor services

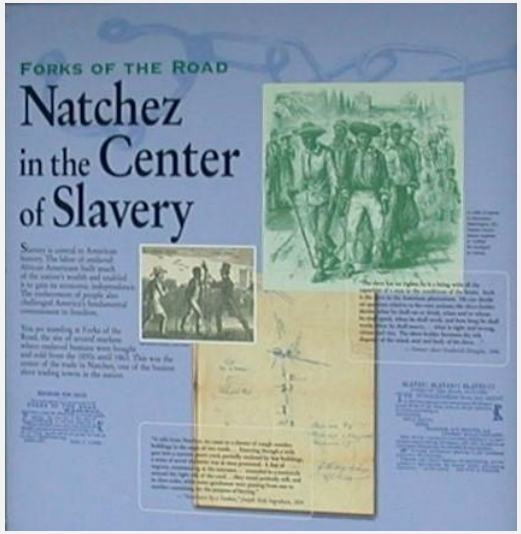
Provides a framework for evaluating existing and potential commercial service opportunities

Gathers suggestions for new commercial services based on engagement with community stakeholders, visitors, and staff

Why Now?

Natchez
Visitor Reception Center


FORKS OF THE ROAD
Site of the South's second largest slave market in the 19th century. Enslaved people were also once sold on city streets and at the landing at Natchez Under the Hill. Natchez slaves were freed in July, 1863, when Union troops occupied the city. The Forks of the Road market then became a refuge for hundreds of emancipated people.


FORKS OF THE ROAD
Natchez in the Center of Slavery

NPS Goals for Park Visitor Services

Provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all, regardless of physical ability, financial means, or cultural tradition

Support the park in providing a diversity of visitor opportunities and experiences

Support the park in educating park visitors about park purpose, significance, and fundamental resources

Ensure visitor health and safety

Policy and Guidance

What Are Commercial Services And What Do They Do?

Any compensated activity or service that occurs in a park (e.g., walking tours, rentals, food service, etc.)

Provide services to park visitors that are not provided directly by the National Park Service

May help increase visitation and visibility of the park

May improve visitor access and experience

May benefit community and visitors through improved NPS visitor services

Determining Which Commercial Services to Offer?

- The National Park Service Concessions Management Improvement Act of 1998 issues two primary criteria for determining which commercial services can be offered in the park:
- **Appropriate:** *Can the park authorize this service without compromising the reason it is a unit of the national park system?*
- **Necessary:** *Why is this service important for the park?*

Appropriate Criteria

- Does not exclude the general public from participating in limited recreational opportunities
- Consistent with laws, regulations, and policies
- Does not cause unacceptable impacts to park resources or values
- Does not compromise public health and safety
- Consistent with the park purpose and significance
- Does not unduly conflict with other park uses and activities

Necessary Criteria

Contributes to visitor understanding and appreciation of a park's purpose and significance

Enhances visitor experiences consistent with the park's purpose and significance

Provides an essential service or facility not available within a reasonable distance from the park

Assists the National Park Service in managing visitor use and educating park visitors

NPS Ideas

NPS Initial Ideas for Visitor Services

Commercial Services Ideas

- Tours (walk, bike, golf cart, etc.)
- Ticket sales
- Limited Food and Beverage
- Expanded RV Amenities
- Retail
- Recreation Equipment Rental
- Lease Space

Questions

Questions

Your Ideas and Feedback

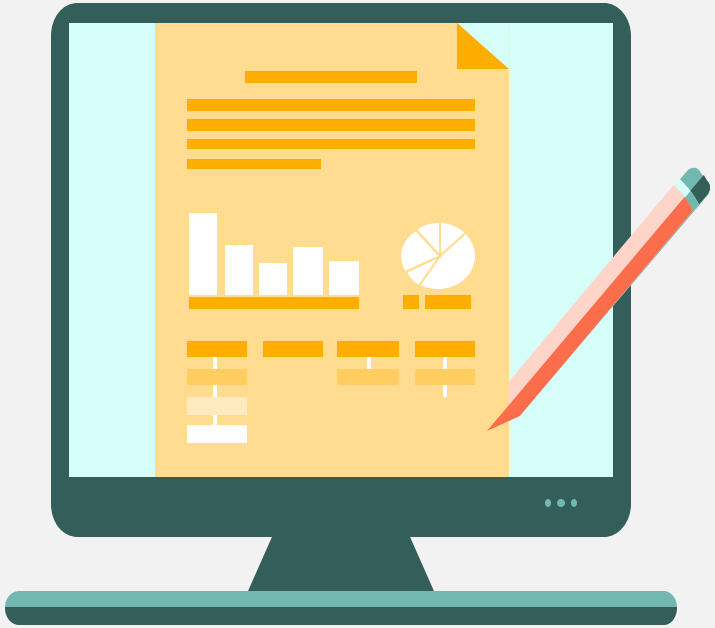
Share Your Ideas

What new visitor services should be offered in the park? And where?

How can you and your business help us meet the park's mission through visitor services?

Do you have other thoughts that you would like to share with us?

How to Provide Feedback After this Webinar

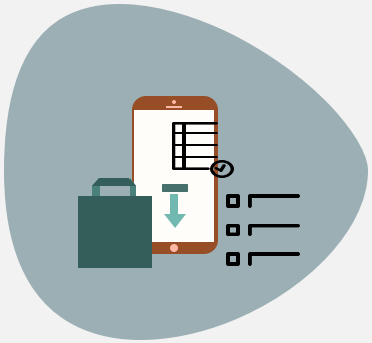


Please provide any additional comments by **October 2, 2020**

At the park planning website https://parkplanning.nps.gov/NATCVSS

Next Steps

Next Steps



Review suggestions

Incorporate feedback from public and business community into analysis

Identify implementation challenges and opportunities

Share key recommendations from the strategy with the public (this winter/spring)