

Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument

General Management Plan

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



You're Invited!

The National Park Service (NPS) is requesting input on the General Management Plan (GMP) at the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument (national monument) located in Birmingham, Alabama. As a new park unit, the national monument has the need to develop a comprehensive GMP, which is a broad document that identifies long-term goals for the park and guides management of the visitor experience, park facilities, and operations at the park. Please help inform management of this outstanding resource by participating in the planning process and attending the virtual public meeting. This newsletter will let you know what the park has been up to, provide background on the planning process, and let you know when public meetings will occur and how to provide your comments. Thank you for being involved in this process!

Project Overview

In 2017, Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument was created by presidential proclamation to commemorate, preserve, and interpret the struggle for human and civil rights that played out in Birmingham in the 1950s and 1960s. Several prominent historic structures and landscapes that were pivotal to the events of 1963 sit within the national monument boundary and will be vital to the success and continued relevance of the monument, including the 16th Street Baptist Church, St. Paul United Methodist Church, Kelly Ingram Park, the Colored Masonic Temple, and the A.G. Gaston Motel. The NPS also seeks to work in partnership

with other important civil rights sites in Birmingham as part of future operations, such as Bethel Baptist Church and sites associated with the larger civil rights historic district. The Birmingham Civil Rights Institute is also an important cultural and educational research center and NPS partner site within the boundary of the national monument that reaches approximately 150,000 visitors each year through a variety of programs and services. Of the sites within the monument, only the A.G. Gaston Motel is directly managed by the NPS. The NPS owns one half of the motel complex and manages it in partnership with the City of Birmingham, which owns the other half. Partnering with the City of Birmingham, local churches, universities, and other organizations

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to commemorate and preserve the history of Birmingham's role in the national struggle for civil rights is essential to the park. Preservation and interpretation of the A.G. Gaston Motel and related sites in Birmingham are dependent on these partnerships.

General management planning is required for every park managed by the NPS. This GMP will ensure that the national monument has a defined direction for resource protection and visitor use. It will help focus management actions on reasons the park was established and the resource conditions and visitor experiences that should be achieved and maintained over time. While it will provide targeted management guidance for the A.G. Gaston Motel as the core resource under NPS ownership, it will also consider the visitor experience across the monument more broadly, including collaboration with partners that operate related resources within the park boundary. The plan will consider previous planning work, public input received during other planning processes, and planning priorities consistent with the national monument's purpose. The plan will provide guidance on administrative uses, visitor services, treatment of historic and non-historic structures, parking, walkways, and other considerations, including any future development or rehabilitation needed within the monument.

This newsletter presents potential management options for the future of the national monument. Below each figure are questions that we would appreciate getting your thoughts on that will help inform the planning for the overall national monument and the A.G. Gaston Motel specifically. We value your input and thank you for your time in providing feedback.

Planning for Visitation at the National Monument

The Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument is comprised of a collection of sites with a rich history. The A.G. Gaston Motel will be restored, in partnership with the City of Birmingham, to provide visitors a chance to experience the motel and its historic setting from the spring of 1963. The NPS also aims to work with other sites within Birmingham to provide interpretation and programs that explore the civil rights movement and Birmingham's history. The GMP will provide guidance on how NPS and partner organizations will cooperatively provide a cohesive visitor experience within the monument boundary. NPS plans to provide technical and funding assistance, as appropriate, to partner organizations and to work with them to coordinate a range of components that support visitation including:

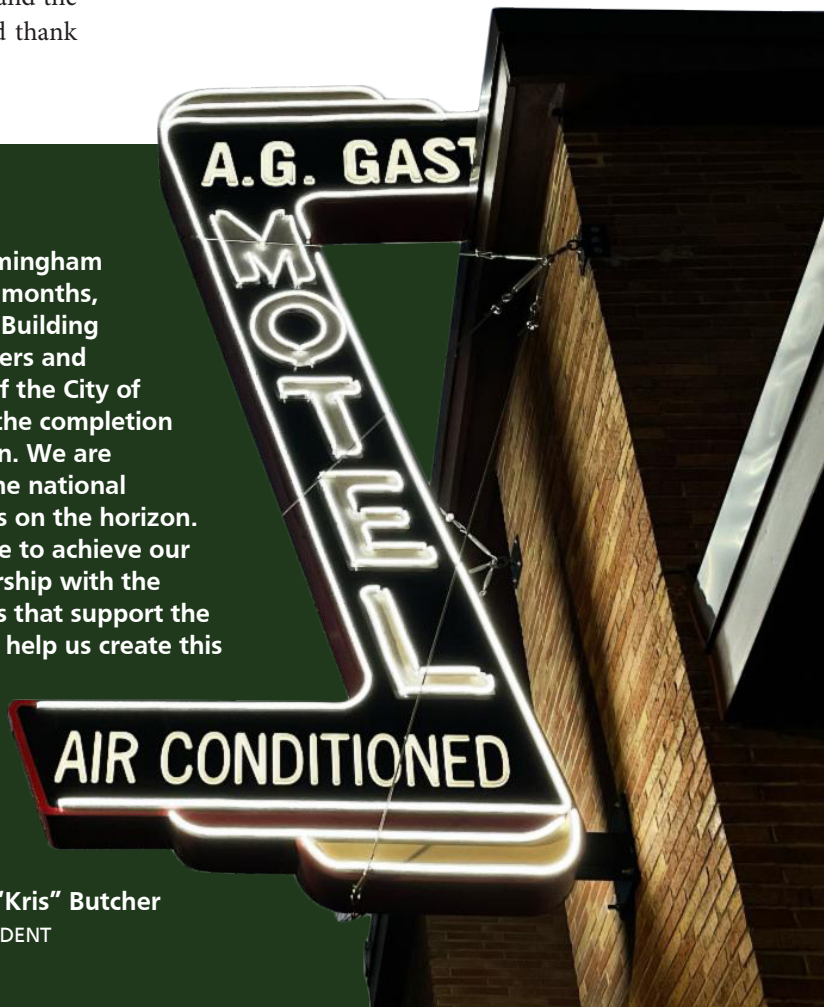
- NPS branded interpretive materials and wayfinding signage;
- A primary visitor contact station with:
 - Ticketing/reservations for all sites;
 - Map and brochure directing visitors to other important sites within and outside the monument boundary;
 - Tour and program schedule information;
 - Ranger-led tours;

Superintendent's Corner

This is an exciting time in the young life of Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. In the last 12 months, we moved into new office space in the Forbes Building on 4th Avenue, hired several new team members and most excitingly, due to the significant efforts of the City of Birmingham and their contractors, celebrated the completion of Phase 1 of the A.G. Gaston Motel restoration. We are working diligently to establish operations at the national monument, and there are many exciting things on the horizon. And like our past successes, we will not be able to achieve our future goals without collaboration and partnership with the City of Birmingham, the amazing organizations that support the national monument, and you. We need you to help us create this plan that will guide the future of the national monument for years. Please take a few moments to review this material and let us know your thoughts about what you want to see in your national monument.



Kristofer "Kris" Butcher
SUPERINTENDENT



- Coordinated ticketing, as applicable, to sites requiring a fee and/or reservation;
 - Visitor services, such as restrooms, water, and weather protection;
 - Food service, space allowing; and
 - Giftshop/bookstore.
- Supplemental visitor services at partner sites (e.g., parking, transportation, giftshop/bookstore, refreshments, tours);
 - Improved access and enhanced safety within the national monument;
 - A coordinated youth training program, internships, and other opportunities through partners in youth engagement; and
 - Work with the City of Birmingham and other partner organizations to protect the historic character of the national monument and its vicinity.

The below figure shows the monument including the partner sites. When thinking about the future of this area, NPS would like feedback on the following questions:

- 01** Where would you prefer to start your visit to the national monument and why? Three alternative locations are being considered:
- Option 1 – A.G. Gaston Motel;
 - Option 2 – Birmingham Civil Rights Institute;
 - Option 3 – proposed annex to the 16th Street Baptist Church.
- 02** What changes need to occur in the downtown area to improve access to the site and the experience of visitors?
- 03** How would you like to experience the national monument if you only had one day? What if you had multiple days?

- 04** What would be your preferred way to experience the resources of the national monument if given an option between 1) an entirely self-guided tour to all sites, 2) an NPS ranger-led tour that provides interpretation of all sites, or 3) a representative of each site that provides interpretation of the specific story at each location?
- 05** How would you prefer to access more distant locations in the city related to the civil rights story? Would you like to be able to park your car at each site or park once and take a shuttle/trolley?

Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument Visitor Services

National Park Service
U.S. Department of Interior



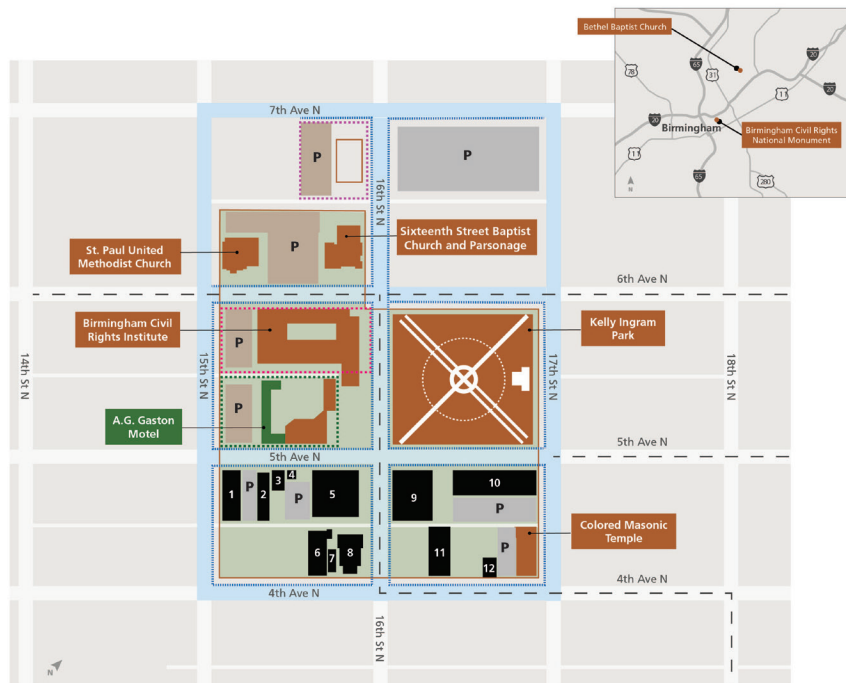
LEGEND

Visitor Services

- BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS NATIONAL MONUMENT
- PRIMARY VISITOR CONTACT - OPTION 1
- PRIMARY VISITOR CONTACT - OPTION 2
- PRIMARY VISITOR CONTACT - OPTION 3
- STREETScape ENHANCEMENT
- UNIVERSAL ACCESS ROUTE
- PARTNER SITE PARKING
- PUBLIC PARKING
- SHUTTLE LINK

Sites

- Civil Right March Route
 - National Park Service
 - Partner Sites
 - Proposed Expansion
 - Non-contributing Structures
- | | |
|----|-------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Birmingham Tobacco & Grocery |
| 2 | Park Plaza Apartments |
| 3 | Citizen Drug Building |
| 4 | WENN Radio Sign |
| 5 | A.G. Gaston Building |
| 6 | J.M. Bail Bonding |
| 7 | Gay Office Supply |
| 8 | Metropolitan AME Zion Church |
| 9 | Post Office Garage/Shores-Lee Law Offices |
| 10 | Freedom Manor |
| 11 | Infinity Club Connection |
| 12 | Taxi Stand |



Planning for Visitation at the A.G. Gaston Motel

The NPS and City of Birmingham are working together to restore and reopen the A.G. Gaston Motel. While the monument contains multiple sites of historic significance, specific operational decisions are required for the A.G. Gaston Motel because it is the only site in which the NPS has ownership interest and can direct development. We are working to prioritize a range of uses for the motel that would be carried out in conjunction with the City of Birmingham, including interpretation, visitor services (including food services), and administrative uses, as well as potentially other non-visitor uses compatible with the historic significance of the building.



Left, the A.G. Gaston Motel before exterior renovation.
Above, the motel after exterior renovation.

The below figure shows the A.G. Gaston Motel, highlighting some of those proposed uses and how they might be accommodated within the building footprint. When thinking about the future of this site, NPS would like feedback on the following question:

Given space limitations, what types of interpretive and educational experiences would you prefer were provided at the restored A.G. Gaston Motel? Options the NPS is considering include:

- Historically accurate recreation of what the site looked like in spring of 1963, when the significant historic events were taking place
- Flexible outdoor space for gatherings or special events
- Changing exhibits that feature a range of topics related to the history of the site
- Permanent exhibits specifically related to the Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, including oral histories of those involved in the events in 1963

Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument A.G. Gaston Motel Site Plan

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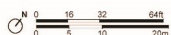
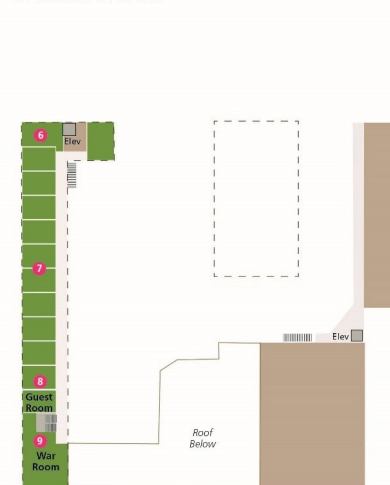
LEGEND

- 1963 BUILDING
- NPS OPERATED
- INDOOR VISITOR SPACE
- OUTDOOR VISITOR SPACE
- SUPPORT SPACE
- VISITOR EXPERIENCE
- Orientation
 - 1 Restored Lobby
 - 2 Information Desk
 - 3 Restored check-in
- Interpretation
 - 4 Restored coffee shop
 - 5 Restored dining room (with option for food service)
 - 6 Restored courtyard
- Visitor Services
 - 7 Water
 - 8 Restrooms
 - 9 First Aid
 - 10 Bookstore
- Education
 - 11 Classroom
 - 12 Changing exhibit gallery
- Interpretation
 - 13 Restored Guestroom
 - 14 Restored War Room

FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



The Path Forward

This civic engagement comment period represents another opportunity for the public to be involved in the planning process for the new park. Once NPS has gathered input on potential management actions at the national monument, including the A.G. Gaston Motel, the agency will develop a draft version of the GMP to share with the public for additional feedback and comment, likely by the end of the summer. This will also include additional consultation with interested stakeholders and other agencies, such as the Alabama Historical Commission. Important steps in the planning process are outlined below, along with anticipated timelines for completion.



How to Comment



On the web (preferred method) at:
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/BICRGMP>



By email at: bicr_information@nps.gov



By mail: Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument General Management Plan Superintendent Kristofer Butcher
1914 4th Avenue North, Suite 440
Birmingham, AL 35203

The 30-day public comment period on the GMP starts June 7, 2021 and ends on July 10, 2021.

The NPS will also hold two virtual meetings to provide members of the public the opportunity to learn more and ask questions about the project.

Please register to attend the online Zoom meetings at:

<https://linktr.ee/BICRGMPMeetings>

Or join by phone:

Wednesday, June 16	Thursday, June 17
▪ Call: 346-248-7799	▪ Call: 346-248-7799
▪ Webinar ID: 835 8009 0520	▪ Webinar ID: 832 4938 2764

While all comments are welcome and appreciated, here are some suggestions that will best contribute to helping shape the future of the monument:

- Focus on the questions presented above
- Be specific as possible in your suggestions
- Include any questions about the process that remain unanswered for you

**WE WANT YOUR
FEEDBACK**

NOTE: Comments will not be accepted by fax or any other way than those specified above. Please also note that your entire comment—including personal identifying information such as your address, phone number, and e-mail address—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. Comments submitted by individuals or organizations on behalf of other individuals or organizations will not be accepted.