

Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument, Alabama

General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment

National Park Service
US Department
of the Interior



We need your input!

The National Park Service (NPS) is seeking your input on the General Management Plan (GMP) and associated Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument (monument). NPS has prepared these two documents and we now request your input.

The NPS will be accepting public comments on the GMP and EA from **October 21, 2022 through November 21, 2022**. Your comments and input are fundamental to our planning and environmental review process. You can submit your comments electronically or by mail.

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/BICRFINALGMP>

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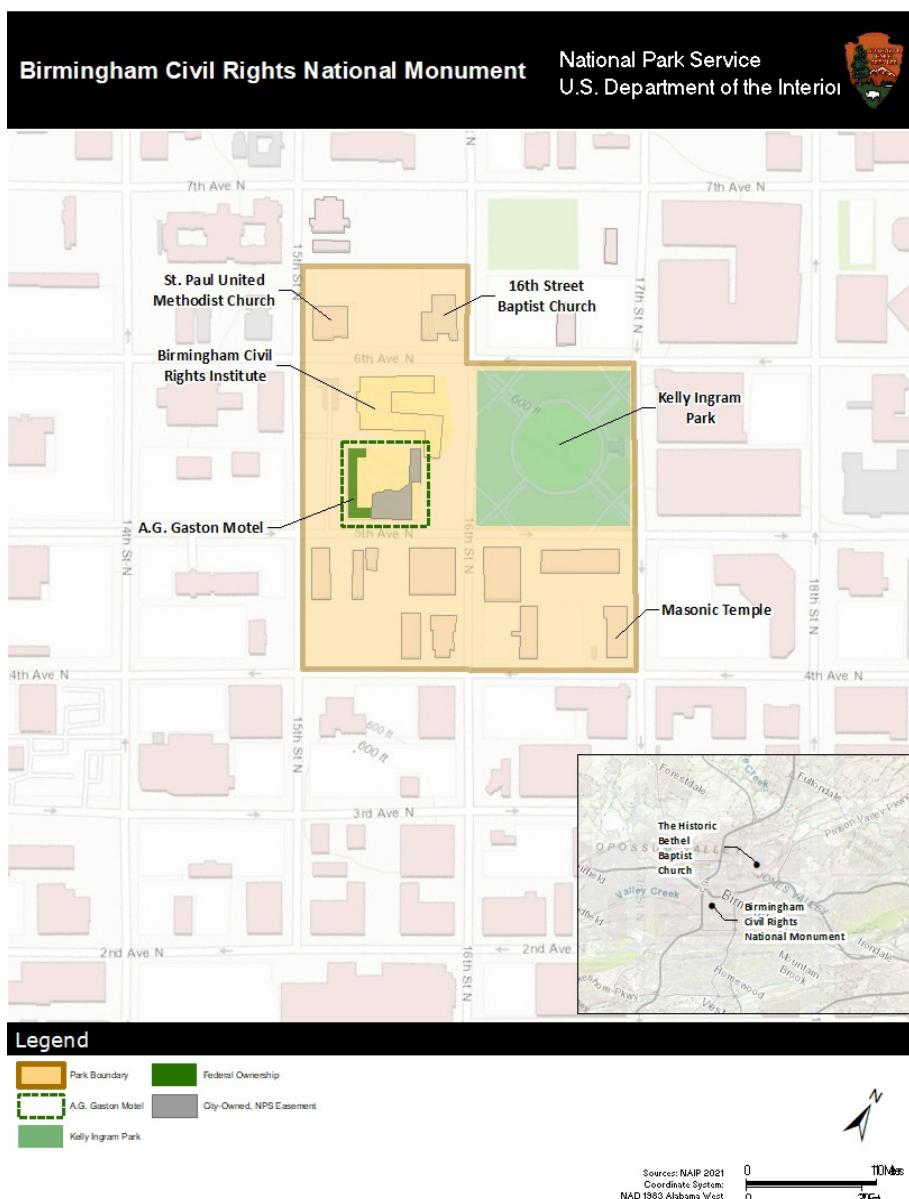
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Overview of the Plan

As a new unit of the NPS with limited planning guidance, the agency has determined that a comprehensive GMP is needed to establish a management philosophy and framework for future decision-making at the park. Broadly, this document identifies long-term goals and management actions that seek to improve visitor experience, management capabilities, and facilities in a way that is consistent with the character-defining aspects of the associated historic district and cultural landscape and protect the resources within the monument boundary in collaboration with partners.

This document also fulfills the park's legal requirements for planning, which are identified in the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 [Public Law 95-625] and 54 United States Code [USC] 100502, and agency planning policies that are outlined in NPS Director's Order 2.



The primary physical resource under direct management of the NPS is the Gaston Motel, which is in a state of disrepair and requires treatment before it can be opened to the public. The GMP incorporates treatment recommendations for the structure, addresses future development needs, and serves as the implementation plan for the desired conditions and management strategies identified during the plan development process. Furthermore, the national monument has multiple community partners and sites, many of which are part of the national monument but remain under private ownership. The document presents a range of management strategies for the NPS to support partner organizations in restoring, maintaining, and providing interpretation and visitor services at sites throughout the monument boundary. Because NPS direct management authority extends only to the portions of the Gaston Motel that are under federal ownership, any strategies or recommendations articulated in the plan for sites outside NPS management would be implemented in collaboration with monument partners.

Figure 1: Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument Site Location

MONUMENT-WIDE MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

Desired Conditions provide a foundation for future decision-making by defining end-state goals that support the management vision for the national monument.

Management Strategies are specific actions that park management intends to implement to achieve the desired conditions for visitor experiences, cultural resources, and community and partner engagement.

MONUMENT-WIDE DESIRED CONDITIONS

Visitor Experiences

- Visitors to the national monument have a seamless experience between NPS and partner sites.
- Visitors understand the connection of the national monument to the broader civil rights movement.
- African American storytelling traditions and methods, such as oral storytelling, intergenerational activities, and media, are reflected through interpretation.

Cultural Resources

- Preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures and cultural landscapes are conducted in a manner consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards.
- Improvements to historic structures and cultural landscapes are coordinated through the NPS and partner organizations.
- The historic neighborhood character is preserved to the extent practicable, inclusive of the streetscape and building form and scale.

Community/Partner Engagement

- A strong partnership with the city of Birmingham is sustained in the cooperative management of the Gaston Motel.
- Collaboration with stakeholder partner organizations provides technical and other assistance where appropriate.
- Residents and youth are engaged in the active preservation, interpretation, and stewardship of national monument sites.

MONUMENT-WIDE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Visitor Experiences

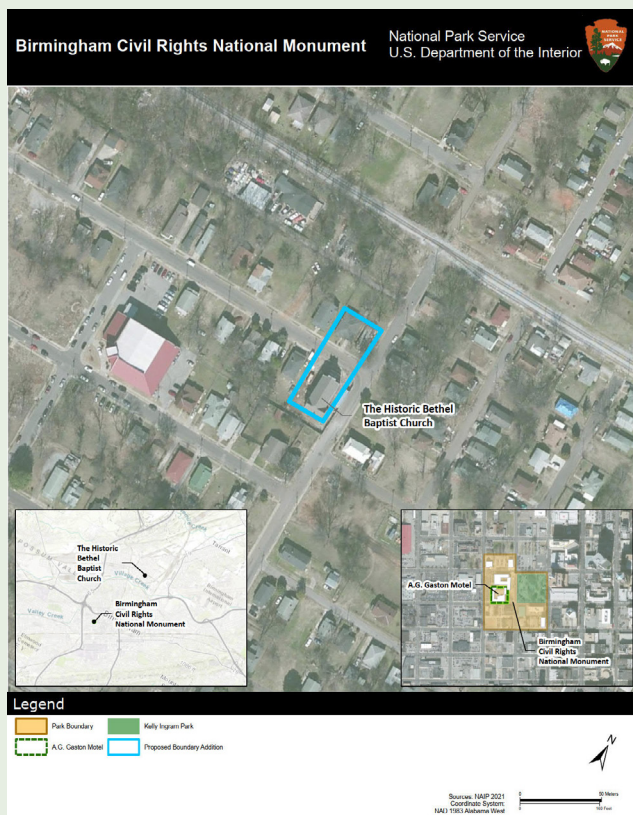
- Equity and inclusion themes would be woven into interpretation and themes throughout the monument.
- The Gaston Motel would serve as the primary visitor contact station and "point of arrival" for the monument.
- The NPS would develop a coordinated strategic interpretive plan that would provide cohesive interpretive support and resources for partner organizations and others in the national monument boundary.

Cultural Resources

- The NPS would support any city of Birmingham-led efforts to develop Character-based Design Guidelines to ensure consistent development within the national monument Boundary.
- The NPS would provide technical assistance and preservation guidance in the development of an oral history collection.
- The NPS would provide technical assistance and preservation guidance for a collection storage strategy for partner sites.

Community/Partner Engagement

- A Visitor Services Leadership team, comprising a representative from each partner organization, would facilitate collaboration and information sharing among all partners.
- NPS staff would facilitate relationships with larger NPS programs and civil rights grants that support community efforts for neighborhood preservation and revitalization.
- BCRI Legacy Youth Leader program, NPS interpretation internships, and other partners youth engagement activities would be coordinated to provide training in interpretation and internships for youth from the local community.



PROPOSED BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT

The GMP includes the proposed boundary expansion of the national monument to include the Historic Bethel Baptist Church site, consistent with the NPS Management Policies. The proposed boundary adjustment would include the Historic Bethel Baptist Church, Parsonage, and Guard House(see figure 2).

Figure 2: Proposed Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument Boundary Adjustment

A.G. GASTON MOTEL MANAGEMENT CONCEPT

A.G. GASTON MOTEL DESIRED CONDITIONS

- The rehabilitation of the Gaston Motel historic structure and cultural landscape provides for uses that support a consistent experience for visitors and reinforce the larger interpretive and preservation goals for the site.
- The rehabilitation of the Gaston Motel historic structure and cultural landscape is consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's standards.
- The NPS-owned 1954 portion of the Gaston Motel historic structure is rehabilitated to accommodate interpretation, visitor support, and administration.
- The motel courtyard cultural landscape is rehabilitated for interpretation and visitor services.
- The Gaston Motel and its interpretation support a vibrant and cohesive neighborhood. The Master Suite, the site of the 1963 "War Room," where leaders of the direct-action campaign held most of their strategy sessions, would provide an opportunity for a quieter, more contemplative, and less-social experience.

A.G. GASTON MOTEL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- A cooperative management agreement between the NPS and the city of Birmingham would detail roles and responsibilities in the management of the motel.
- The first floor of the NPS-owned part of the motel would be rehabilitated and restored to provide orientation and information, interpretive, administrative, and visitor services spaces, as shown on figure 3.
- Guest rooms and the Master Suite on the second floor would be restored to provide approximately 1,500 square feet of interpretive spaces, as shown on figure 4.
- The program of uses for the city-owned part of the motel would be determined by the city of Birmingham in coordination with the NPS.
- An interpretive plan and exhibit design would be developed to include the Gaston Motel and courtyard, with specific guidance for desired interpretive experience.
- The character-defining features of the courtyard would be restored and reconstructed to the 1963 condition.

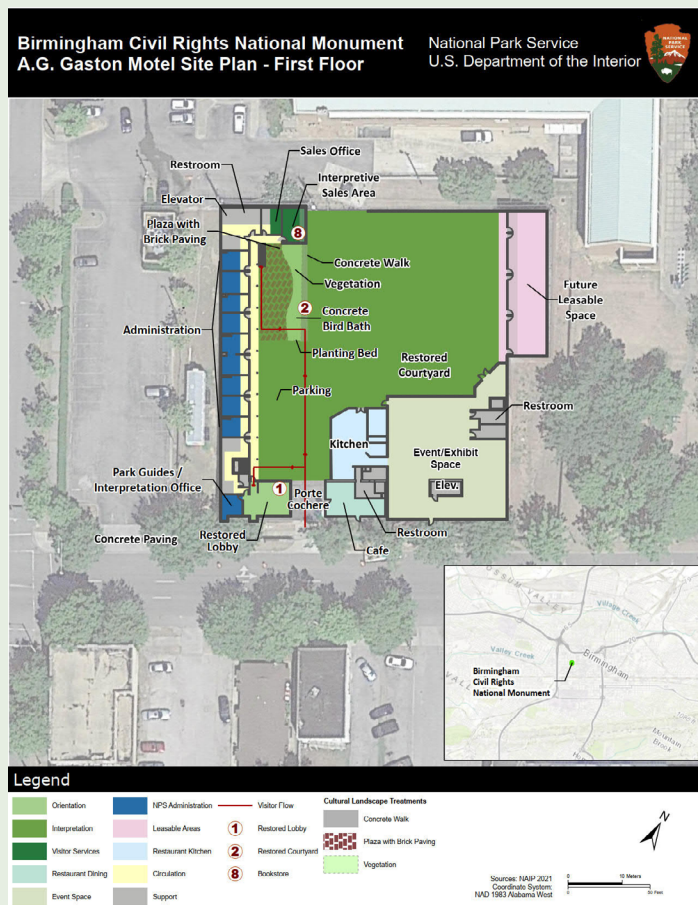


Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan for First Floor of A.G. Gaston Motel

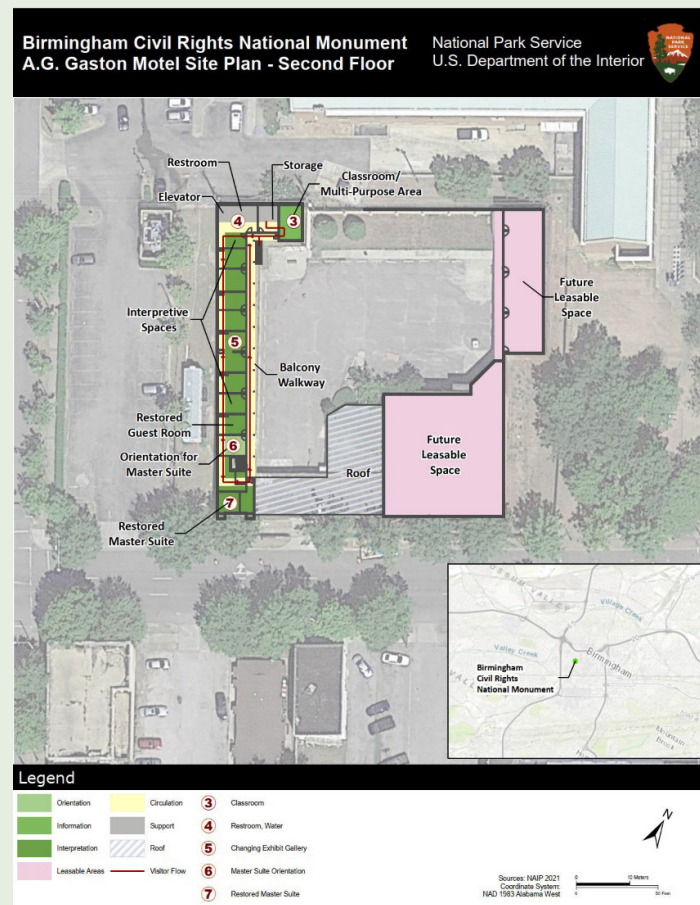
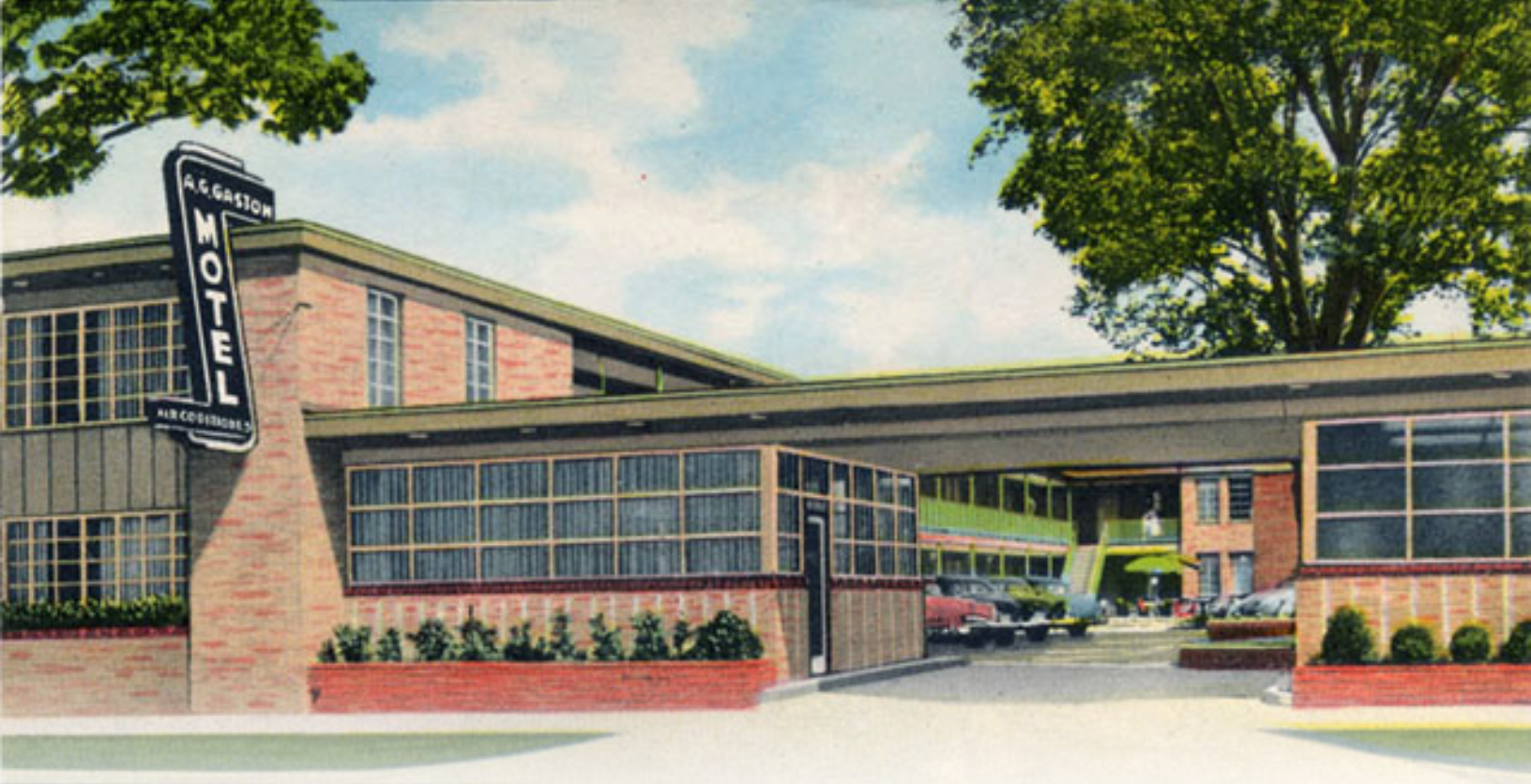


Figure 4: Proposed Site Plan for Second Floor of A.G. Gaston Motel



How to Comment

The NPS is excited about this new national monument! Your comments and input are fundamental to our planning and environmental review process. You can submit your comments on the GMP and associated EA electronically or by mail.

The 30-day comment period ends on **November 21, 2022**.



Notes: Comments will not be accepted by fax, e-mail, 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.

We Want Your Feedback



Submit comments electronically at the project website link below (preferred method).

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/BICRFINALGMP>



Submit written comments by mail to:

Superintendent Kristofer Butcher
Attn: Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument
Environmental Assessment for the GMP
National Park Service
1914 4th Ave. N. Suite 440
Birmingham, AL 35203