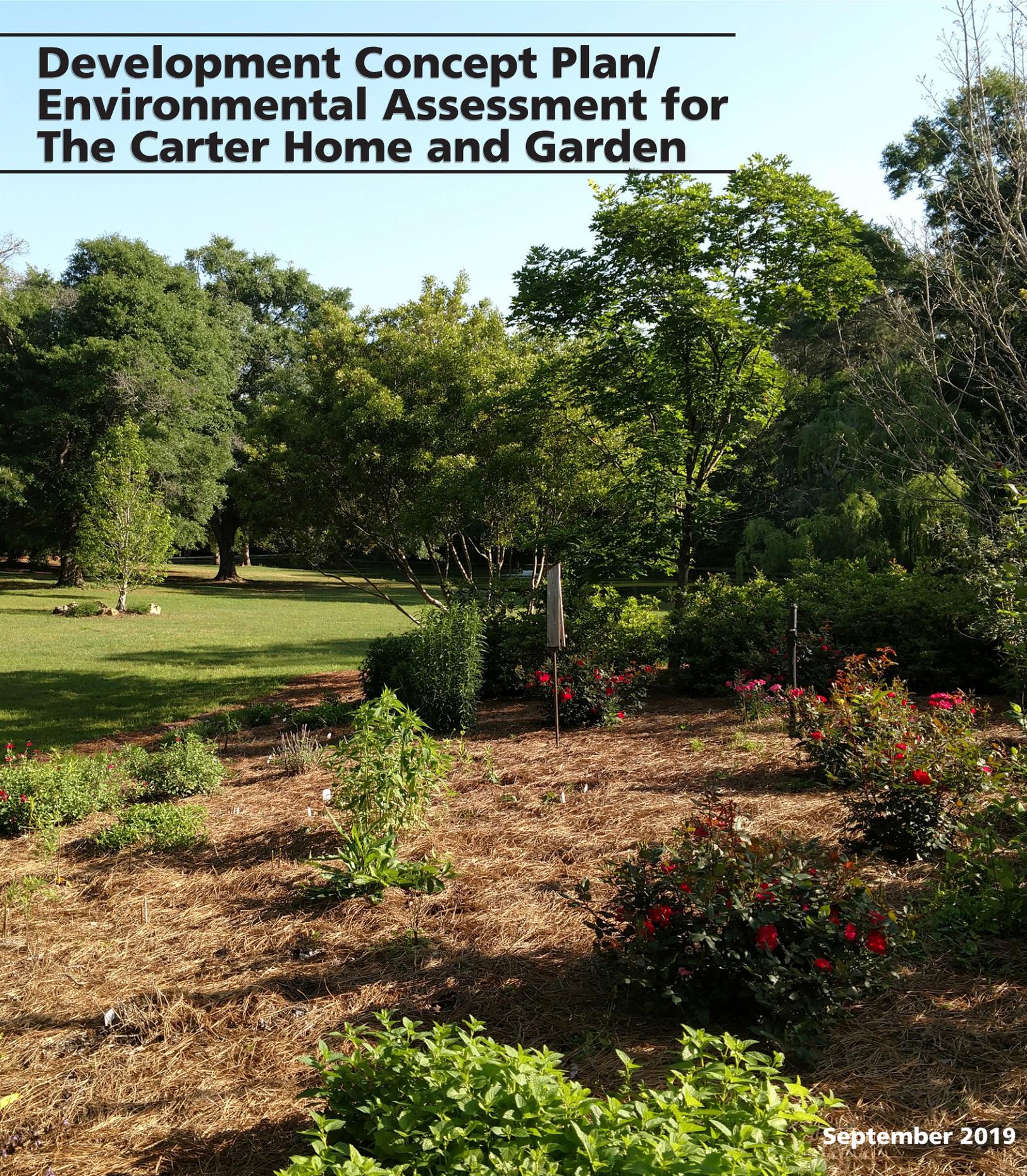




Development Concept Plan/ Environmental Assessment for The Carter Home and Garden



How to Comment on This Plan

The National Park Service (NPS) welcomes comments on this plan and will accept them for 30 days following the official public release. To respond, please submit written comments by the following means. The preferred method for receiving comments is through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) system.

Internet Website

The NPS PEPC website is <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/JICA>.

Click on the “Open for Comment” link on the left side of the page to access the online document.

U.S. Mail

Written comments can be mailed to the park at:

Superintendent, Jimmy Carter National Historic Site
Re: Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment for the Carter
Home and Garden
300 N. Bond St.
Plains, GA 31780

Reviewers are encouraged to use the PEPC website to comment and access the document if possible. Please submit only one set of comments.

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. Although 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.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CLR	Cultural Landscape Report
dBA	weighted decibels
EA	Environmental Assessment
ft.²	square feet
GSA	General Services Administration
IVUMC	Interagency Visitor Use Management Council
JICA	Jimmy Carter National Historic Site
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHS	National Historic Site
NPS	National Park Service
PARC	Protected Areas Research Collaborative
PEPC	Planning, Environment, and Public Comment
PSU	Pennsylvania State University
TAG	Transportation Assistance Group
VUM	Visitor Use Management



Chapter 1: Purpose and Need for the Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment

1

Introduction

Jimmy Carter National Historic Site Development Concept Plan/Environmental Assessment (EA) (the plan/EA) addresses new visitation, changing visitor use patterns, and shifting management of the Carter Home and Garden (see figure 1). This plan/EA was prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and implementing regulations, 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 and NPS Director's Order (DO) 12, and the NPS NEPA Handbook (NPS 2015a).

This chapter describes why the National Park Service (NPS) is taking action at this time. The plan/EA evaluates alternatives and management actions at Jimmy Carter National Historic Site (NHS) and analyzes the impacts that could result from the implementation of these alternatives. Upon conclusion of this plan/EA and decision-making process, one of the alternatives, or a combination of actions from the alternatives, will become the long-term management plan.

Purpose and Need for the Plan/EA

The purpose of this plan/EA is to develop a strategy for public access and preservation of the Carter Home and Garden to interpret for future visitors, the Carters' lives in the Plains community and the home's specific role in their social and political legacy both locally and globally.

The plan/EA is needed to address a range of opportunities associated with the National Park Service undertaking public visitation at the Carter Home and Garden in the future including:

- Ensure the Carters' vision of their lives in Plains is conveyed to visitors through the cultural landscape, the residence, and objects within the residence.
- Identify potential impacts to the site's cultural and natural resources due to public visitation and develop mitigating strategies to ensure the Carters' experience at the site is preserved for future generations.
- Identify necessary infrastructure improvements to support visitor use and NPS operations within the site.

Park Purpose, Significance, and Selected Fundamental Resources and Values

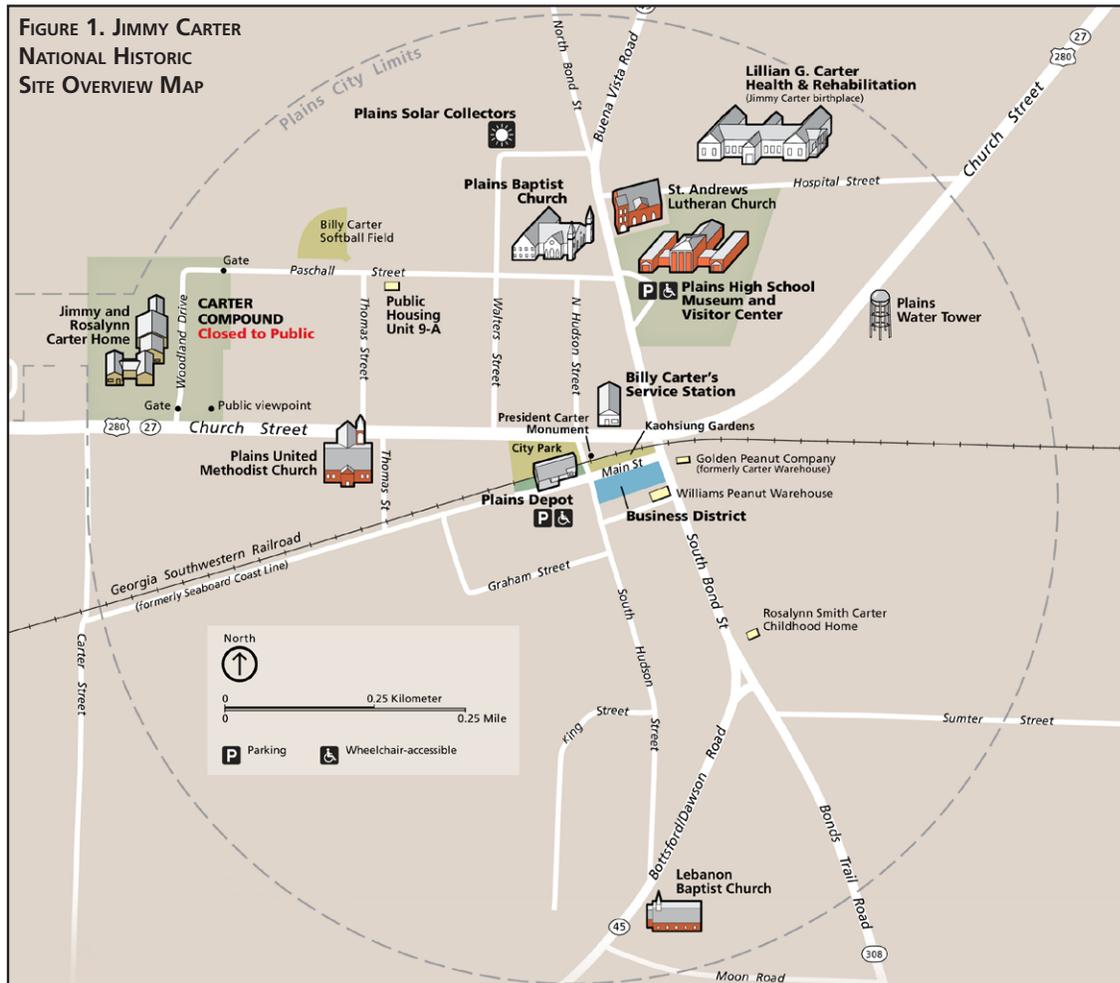
The park’s purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values, as well as statutory mandates and NPS *Management Policies* (NPS 2006), are identified in the park foundation document (NPS 2013) and shape and guide what this plan proposes. The purpose of the Jimmy Carter NHS is

“to benefit, inspire, and educate present and future generations of people by interpreting the broad stories of Jimmy Carter’s life, preserving the resources associated with those stories, presenting the history and evolution of Plains as a small rural Georgia town and its influence on Jimmy Carter, and interpreting Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter’s impact on the global community.”

The park is significant for many reasons, including its status as home to President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter, the profound and enduring connection the Carters have with their hometown and the influence the community has made in their lives, and the historic structures and landscapes within the community, park, and preservation district.

The Carter Home and Garden (identified as “Carter Compound” in park legislation, publications and maps) is one of the park’s fundamental resources and values and merits primary consideration during planning and management processes because it is essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining park significance. Similarly, the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site General Management Plan (1993) identifies the Carter Home and Garden as a cultural resource and assigns the park “to provide for the opportunity in the future to present the Carter [Home and Garden] to the public as it was in Jimmy Carter’s lifetime.”

For more details on the park’s significance and fundamental resources and values, see the park’s foundation document.



The Planning Process

The process employed in creating this plan/EA is sequential, and the presentation of the plan/EA follows the stages in this process. It began with collecting, reviewing, and defining key information about the Carter Home and Garden and its function and identifying available areas that could be utilized to support visitor use. This information was used to identify issues and criteria that the proposed action needed to address. In the subsequent and central stage of the process, an interdisciplinary team identified potential actions and tested them against the purpose and need of the plan, environmental issues, and selection criteria developed for the decision-making process. As part of civic engagement, the park held two open house meetings in November 2018 to seek comments on initial alternative concepts from the local community. Meetings were held at Plains High School and comments were taken in PEPC. Input from the public will also be sought as a part of the review of this plan.

Project Area

The project area for the plan covers the Carter Home and Garden, one of four separate units that makes up Jimmy Carter NHS. The property is located off of West Church Street (U.S. Highway 280) on the outskirts of Plains, Georgia. It includes the Carters' residence and grounds (including walking trails), the Carters' Memorial Garden, and the Gnann property (currently occupied by the U.S. Secret Service). As the primary residence of the former president and first lady and the present headquarters for the U.S. Secret Service, the property is currently closed to public visitation (see figure 2).

Scope of the Environmental Assessment

The extent and nature of environmental issues and alternatives that should be considered during the NEPA review were considered early in the process. Issues were identified to help emphasize the important environmental concerns related to the proposal and to help identify impact topics and focus the impact analysis.

Determination of topics for impact evaluations were identified based upon the following:

- federal laws, regulations, and executive orders, including NEPA guidance documents;
- NPS *Management Policies* (NPS 2006);
- public scoping input; and
- relevance of proposed actions to park resources.

When an alternative is selected and approved, implementation of that alternative will depend upon future funding. The approval of a plan does not guarantee that the funding and staffing needed to carry out the plan will be forthcoming. Full execution of the approved plan could occur many years in the future.

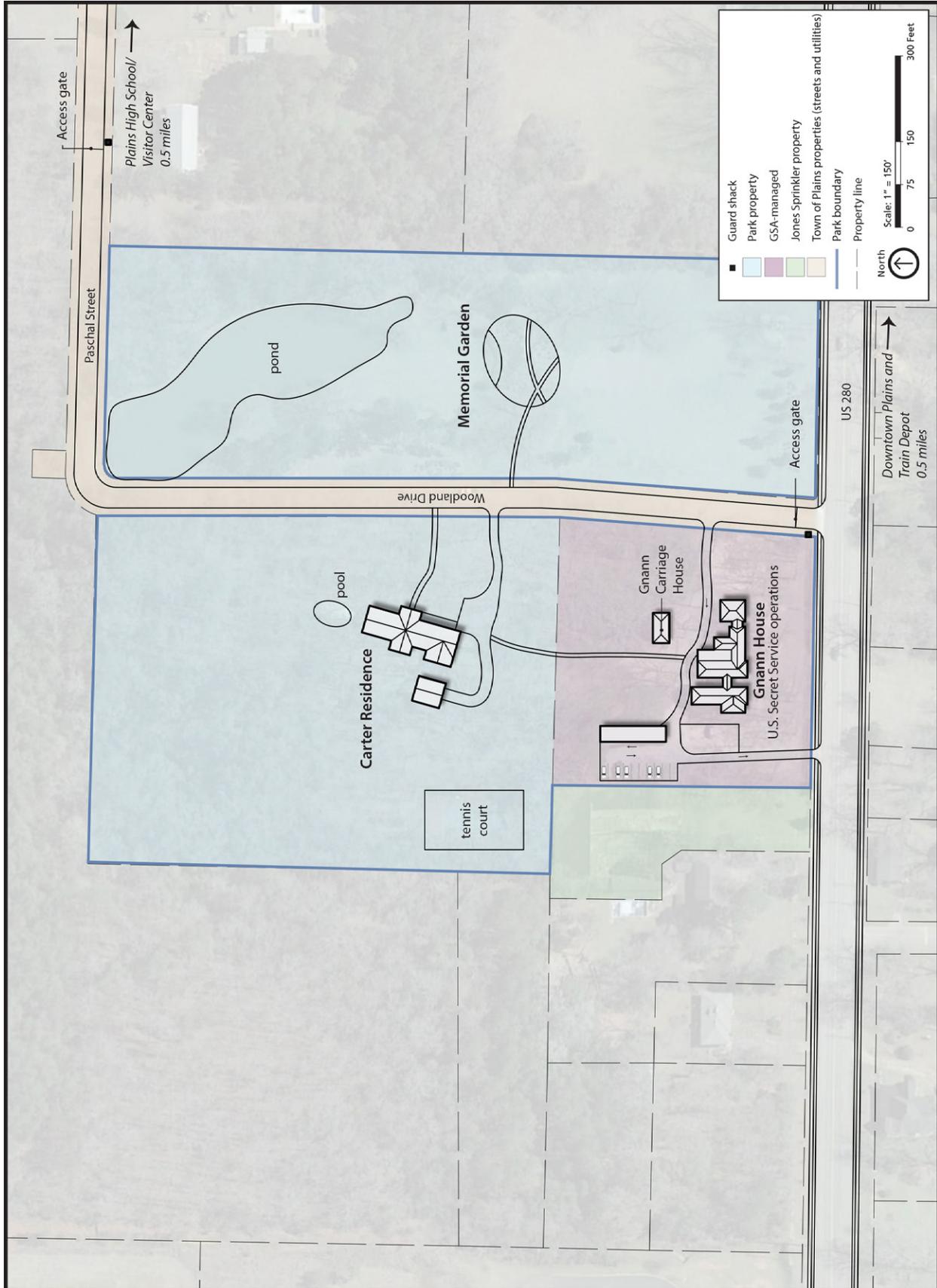
Implementation of the approved plan/EA could also be affected by other factors. Once the plan/EA has been approved, additional feasibility studies and more-detailed planning and environmental documentation may need to be completed before any proposed actions can be carried out.

Issues and Impact Topics Retained for Analysis

“Issues” or “environmental issues” can be problems, concerns, conflicts, obstacles, or benefits that would result if the proposed action or alternatives, including the no-action alternative, were implemented. Issues may be raised by the National Park Service, other agencies, tribal governments, or the public.

Impact topics represent resources that could be affected, either beneficially or adversely, by implementing the proposed alternatives. The National Park Service used an interdisciplinary review process as well as existing studies and data to determine which resources would likely be affected by this project. The following topics were carried forward for further analysis in this environmental assessment.

FIGURE 2. PROJECT AREA MAP



Cultural Landscapes

The entire project area is a cultural landscape. The proposed project would selectively introduce new paths, pavement, and benches, thereby impacting the circulation and spatial organization of the site. This would also result in the loss of minimal nonnative vegetation. Potential impacts to the cultural landscape may be of concern.

Archeological Resources

There are archeological resources found on the site that could affect decisions made in this report. In preparation for actions described in this planning document, a “Geophysical Survey and Systematic Archeological Survey of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Home and Garden” is being conducted by The Secretary of the Interior qualified architects using shovel test surveys of the site to identify potential archeological sites. Damage to archeological resources would be avoided or mitigated.

Historic Structures

The Carter Residence, Gnann House, and Gnann Carriage House are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, so damage to any of these structures would be a concern. Preservation of the Carter Residence is a goal of this project. The proposed project would include transitioning the Carter Residence into a historic house museum and adaptively reusing the Gnann House and Gnann Carriage House—the former as a visitor center and staff offices and the latter for storage. The Carter Residence and Gnann House would both receive accessibility upgrades at entrances, and the latter would receive additional accessibility improvements (e.g., doorways, interiors, exhibits) to prepare it for use as a visitor center.

Visitor Use and Experience

Visitor access to a diverse range of opportunities and experiences is important at Jimmy Carter NHS. A key experience and one of the primary purposes of this project is to provide visitor access to the Carter Home and Garden. Therefore, conducting a detailed analysis of the environmental impacts related to visitor access on this property is necessary to make a reasoned choice between the alternatives.

The park received 60,000 to 70,000 visitors in 2018. With most of the visitor interest expected to be around the currently closed Carter Home and Garden, the park infrastructure is likely to become stressed. As such, the quality of visitors’ experiences will be negatively impacted as they are subjected to a lack of parking and long lines at visitor contact stations and restrooms.

Issues and Impact Topics Considered but Dismissed from Analysis

National Park Service planning projects identify issues and evaluate associated impacts. Issues are retained for consideration and discussed in detail if

- the environmental impacts associated with the issue are central to the proposal or of critical importance;
- a detailed analysis of environmental impacts related to the issues is necessary to make a reasoned choice between alternatives;
- the environmental impacts associated with the issue are a big point of contention among the public or other agencies; or
- there are potentially significant impacts to resources associated with the issue.

The National Park Service used an interdisciplinary review process to determine which resources could be affected by this project. It should be noted that all of the park’s resources and values are considered important and are managed accordingly, regardless of whether or not they are retained in the impact analysis of this document. The dismissal of an impact topic from detailed analysis only means that the topic is not relevant to consider for the particular actions proposed within this plan/EA.

Museum Collections

The park’s museum collections include furnishings and other personal belongings of the Carters stored inside their residence, items within Plains High School Museum and Visitor Center (Plains High School), and other objects stored elsewhere. Some collections items could be at increased risk of damage and loss as a result of opening the Carter Residence to public visitation and during planned relocation of selected items to the curatorial facility at Plains High School. However, NPS staff would continue to manage, protect, and appropriately curate the park’s collections items in conformance with all NPS policies and guidelines. Transport of items from the Carter Residence for storage at the Plains High School facility would be carried out with particular care to avoid or minimize damage. A historic furnishings report is also scheduled that will provide additional guidance for the management of the site’s furnishing and other items. Because of these protection measures and ongoing efforts to monitor the condition of collections items on exhibit or in storage and prevent potential adverse impacts occurring from visitor use or other factors, the topic of museum collections was dismissed from further analysis in this plan/EA.

Visitor Use Management

Visitor use management is the proactive and adaptive process of planning for and managing characteristics of visitor use and its physical and social setting and using a variety of strategies and tools to sustain desired resource conditions and visitor experiences. Visitor use management is important because the National Park Service strives to maximize opportunities and benefits for visitors while achieving and maintaining desired conditions for resources and visitor experiences in a particular area. Managing visitor access and use for visitor enjoyment and resource protection is inherently complex. It requires NPS managers to analyze not only the number of visitors but also where they go, what they do, their impacts on resources and visitor experiences, and the underlying causes of those impacts. Managers must acknowledge the dynamic nature of visitor use, the vulnerabilities of natural and cultural resources, and the need to be responsive to changing conditions.

This plan/EA employs the visitor use management framework and the visitor use management planning process to develop a long-term strategy for managing visitor use in the park (see figure 3). The general planning process used for this plan is described below and is consistent with the guidance outlined by the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council (IVUMC, www.visitorusemanagement.nps.gov). “Indicators and thresholds” and “visitor capacity” are two important pieces of the visitor use management framework being applied in this plan.

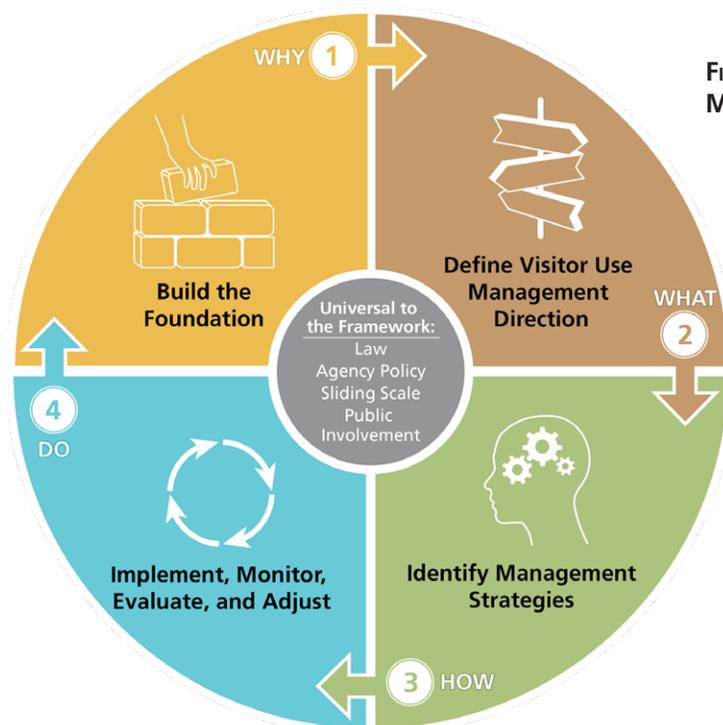


FIGURE 3. OVERVIEW OF VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT PLANNING PROCESS

Desired Conditions

Desired conditions are defined as statements of aspiration that describe resource conditions, visitor experiences and opportunities, and facilities and services that an agency strives to achieve and maintain in a particular area. They describe what conditions, outcomes, and opportunities are to be achieved and maintained in the future, not necessarily what exists today. Desired condition descriptions help to outline what a particular area will look, feel, sound, and function like in the future. They do not answer the questions of how conditions will be maintained or achieved. Desired conditions were developed by park staff to help guide the plan alternatives and provide a foundation for this plan/EA. The desired conditions for the Carter Home and Garden are linked to the fundamental resources and values and based on prior planning and guidance as well as the purpose and enabling legislation.

Plains Community. Through the Carter Home and Garden and other local sites, visitors from near and far, no matter their background, have the opportunity to experience the community-oriented lives of the Carters in Plains. The community itself has a clear understanding of the Carter Home and Garden and its role in the broader Plains story that is being told by multiple organizations and people.

Carter Home and Garden. Features on the property remain in keeping with how the Carters designed the site—as a place for both refuge and recreation. Visitors gain a sense of what life on the Carter property looked and felt like and an appreciation for the natural world as experienced by the Carters. Infrastructure added to accommodate visitation is done in a way that does not compromise the design intent of the cultural landscape or the Carter Residence.

Carter Residence. The fullness of the Carters' lives is apparent in the prolific work they have done, their love for and commitment to the Plains community, and the energy and passion that the Carters brought to everything they did and everyone they met. Objects within the residence retain their integrity, and their meanings are understood so that through them, visitors have the opportunity to learn about the Carters' lives. This would include their experiences before, during, and after the presidency; the friends, family, and distinguished guests who were welcomed to their Plains residence; and the body of work that the Carters coordinated and conducted from their residence, such as working with The Carter Center, humanitarian work around the world, writing, woodworking, painting, recreation, and much more.

Memorial Garden. The garden is managed sustainably using principles of environmental stewardship valued by the Carters, specifically Mrs. Carter's commitment to pollinators. Visitors are able to learn about the native plants and species in the garden, gain a sense of serenity when visiting the garden, and have opportunities for meaningful commemoration of the Carters.

Indicators and Thresholds

Monitoring is the process of routinely and systematically gathering information or making observations to assess the status of specific resource conditions and visitor experiences, and is a critical step in successfully implementing any visitor use management (VUM) plan. A monitoring strategy is designed and implemented to generate usable data for periodically comparing existing and desired conditions, assessing the need for management actions, and evaluating the efficacy of management actions. A well-planned monitoring strategy provides for transparency, communication, and potential cost savings through efficiencies and possibly cost sharing. It includes the selection of indicators, along with establishment of thresholds or objectives, and any needed triggers. It also includes routine, systematic observations or data collection of the indicators over time as well as associated documentation and analysis.

Indicators, thresholds, monitoring protocols, management strategies, and mitigation measures would be implemented as a result of this planning effort and are described below. Indicators would be applied to the action alternatives described within this plan. They translate desired conditions of the environmental assessment into measurable attributes (e.g., percent of ornamental plants damaged) that, when tracked over time, evaluate change in resource or experiential conditions. These are critical components of monitoring the success of the plan and are considered common to all action alternatives. Thresholds represent the minimum-acceptable condition for each indicator and are established by considering qualitative descriptions of the desired conditions, data on existing conditions, relevant research studies, professional judgement of staff from management experience, and scoping on public preferences. A trigger is defined as a condition of concern for an indicator that is enough to prompt a management response to ensure that desired conditions continue to be maintained before the threshold is crossed.

The following are indicators park staff identified to be the most important to maintain desired conditions for visitor experience and natural and cultural resources. Additional details on the visitor use monitoring strategy are included in appendix A.

1. **Indicator:** Percent of ornamental plants removed or damaged by visitors.
2. **Indicator:** Area of vegetation loss.
3. **Indicator:** Number of incidents of unendorsed activities and inappropriate behavior.

Visitor Capacity

Visitor capacity is a component of visitor use management and is defined as the maximum amount and types of visitor use that an area can accommodate while sustaining desired resource conditions and visitor experiences, consistent with the purpose for which the area was established. Visitor capacity is used to inform and implement the management strategies selected as part of the plan.

The primary goal of this planning effort is to preserve the fundamental resources and values of Jimmy Carter NHS while still achieving the plan purpose and need, and visitor use management is one component. By establishing and implementing visitor capacities, the National Park Service can help ensure that resources are protected and visitors have the opportunity for a range of high-quality experiences. Through this planning effort, the park has an important opportunity to proactively safeguard the highly valued experiences and resources throughout the park unit. Visitor capacity is described in chapter 3.



Chapter 2: Alternatives

2

Introduction

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act requires that federal agencies explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives to the proposal, and briefly discuss the rationale for eliminating any alternatives that were not considered in detail. This chapter describes the no-action alternative and an action alternative that would meet the purpose and need of this management plan.

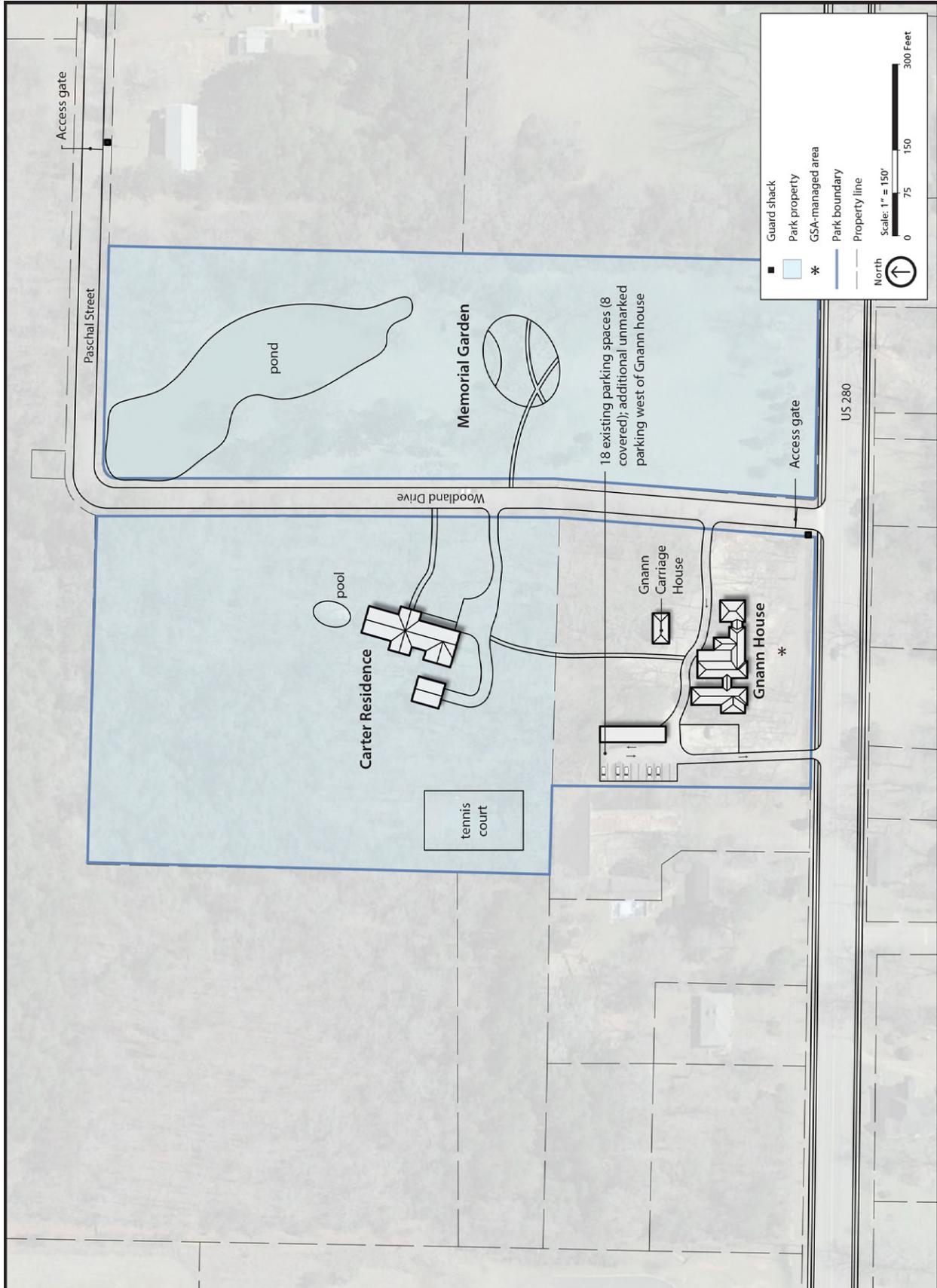
Alternative 1 (the no-action alternative) would continue current management and provides a basis for comparing the effects of alternative 2 (the preferred alternative). The action alternative—which is also the preferred alternative for this plan—is based on recommendations of an interdisciplinary planning team, including President and Mrs. Carter, visitor use management surveys conducted by a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit partner, and from public feedback. Alternative 2 highlights a range of strategies designed to improve the visitor experience and expand visitor opportunities and facilities at the Carter Home and Garden.

In addition to detailed descriptions of the alternatives, this chapter also describes resource indicators and thresholds for visitor use management, visitor capacity, and mitigation measures. The impacts of implementing each alternative are discussed in “Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences.” Visitor use management monitoring strategies are included in appendix A.

Alternative 1 (No Action/Current Management)

Under alternative 1, the Carter Home and Garden would remain closed to public visitation, and current management practices would continue. Overall, there would be less reliance on changes to infrastructure and greater reliance on indirect management strategies, such as additions and revisions to education and interpretation surrounding the Carters, their home and garden, and the U.S. Secret Service. Visitors would continue to learn about the Carter Home and Garden at Plains High School. There would be no visitation of the interior of the Carters' residence or grounds; these resources would be managed for emergency needs and preservation only. A Historic Structures Report and a Historic Furnishings Report would need to be undertaken, even though the residence would not be open to visitation. The contents of the residence would enter the park museum collections and be moved from the residence to an expanded curatorial facility at Plains High School. The Memorial Garden would continue to be maintained and preserved. Upon the passing of the Carters, the U.S. Secret Service would vacate the Gnann House (currently owned by the General Services Administration [GSA]), potentially taking with them security features from the property, and the buildings (Gnann House, Gnann Carriage House, outbuildings, and security features) and grounds would continue to be shuttered to public use. Current legislation directs the General Services Administration to transfer the Gnann House property to the Secretary of the Interior when the U.S. Secret Service use is no longer necessary. Under alternative 1, the National Park Service would request that the General Services Administration no longer transfers ownership of the Gnann House property to the Secretary of the Interior. Site security may still be warranted when the U.S. Secret Service withdraws, such as the addition of contracted security services and retained or new cameras and lighting (see figure 4).

FIGURE 4. ALTERNATIVE 1: NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE



Alternative 2 (Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative)

The preferred alternative is defined in U.S. Department of the Interior NEPA regulations as the alternative that the National Park Service determines “would best accomplish the purpose and need of the proposed action while fulfilling its statutory mission and responsibilities, giving consideration to economic, environmental, technical, and other factors” (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 46.420(d)). Identification of a preferred alternative is within the discretion of the National Park Service. The recommended preferred alternative is the action alternative 2 because it would best address the purpose and need for action.

When identifying a preferred alternative, it is important to note that no final agency action is being taken. The purpose of identifying a preferred alternative is to let the public know which alternative the agency believes would best meet the purpose and need for the plan at the time an environmental assessment is released.

Alternative 2 was developed based on input from President and Mrs. Carter, public listening sessions, NPS staff expertise, and knowledge and understanding of strategies that have proven successful at addressing similar issues at other parks throughout the national park system. Under alternative 2, the park would open the Carter Home and Garden to the public, thereby introducing visitors to the Carters’ property and way of life.

Development and realization of all improvements under the preferred alternative would comply with findings of the cultural landscape report (currently underway) and the completion of both a Historic Structure Report and Historic Furnishings Report.

Carter Residence

Under the preferred alternative, the Carters’ residence would be opened to guided tours, with at least one entrance made accessible and new interpretive elements (e.g., signage, waysides) installed to share and interpret the Carters’ lives and their connection to the residence and Plains community. The interior and exterior of the residence would be preserved. The park would limit what personal items visitors could bring inside the house (e.g., no food/drink, no large bags) and what they could do (e.g., few if any photographs), instead providing a secure location (e.g., lockers) elsewhere for visitors to store items.

The contents of the Carter Residence would enter the park museum collections and be moved from the residence to an expanded curatorial facility at Plains High School, while any construction repairs are underway at the residence. Some objects would be replaced with replicas, some would remain in storage, and others would be moved back to the residence for public tours.

In addition, the park would consider actions to preserve and protect the Carter property. Two guard shacks would remain on the property to preserve the landscape and interpret the U.S. Secret Service’s involvement in the property. Dependent upon the exit strategy for the U.S. Secret Service, the park would retain other security equipment the U.S. Secret Service does not remove, such as cameras and lights as well as the “Nixon fence” surrounding the Carter Residence. If existing security systems were removed, the park service would install new systems to secure the Carter Home and Garden, including the Memorial Garden area. Contract security would be hired as needed to protect the property.



Gnann Property (Post-Acquisition of Jones Sprinkler Property)

Current legislation directs the General Services Administration to transfer the Gnann House property to the Secretary of the Interior when use by the U.S. Secret Service is no longer necessary. To improve transportation and access to the site, the park would pursue purchasing the adjacent “Jones Sprinkler” property to the west of the Gnann property. Most visitor development would occur within this combined area. If acquired, the Jones Sprinkler property would provide land on which to develop an expanded parking lot serving personal vehicles and buses to the west of the Gnann House. Additional development of a new staff parking lot to the north of the Gnann House and new or refined walkways between the parking area, Gnann House, Carter Residence, and Memorial Garden would occur on the Gnann property. The Gnann House would be converted into a visitor center and staff offices, acting as the primary visitor contact station (for tour tickets, restrooms, and park orientation) and embarking point for tours of the property and as the main office setting for staff. The Gnann Carriage House would be developed as a storage and maintenance area for park staff. The park would add additional pavement around the property where needed to support visitors and tour groups. A few picnic tables would be added near the Gnann House for picnicking and group gatherings, with informal picnicking to be allowed on other green spaces for visitors with blankets.

Development and realization of all improvements to the Gnann property under the preferred alternative would comply with findings of the cultural landscape report (currently underway—includes the Carter Home and Garden) and the completion of a Historic Structure Report for the Gnann House and Gnann Carriage House.

Acquisition of the adjacent “Jones Sprinkler” property would necessitate a minor boundary revision to the park legislative boundary (see figure 5). A minor boundary revision requires certain provisions be met and may not always be feasible.

Gnann Property (Pre-Acquisition of Jones Sprinkler Property)

If purchase of the adjacent “Jones Sprinkler” property is not reasonably feasible, parking for visitor and bus traffic would be developed onsite by reconfiguring the existing Gnann House employee parking area on the west side of the building (see figure 6).

FIGURE 5. ALTERNATIVE 2: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE, POST-ACQUISITION

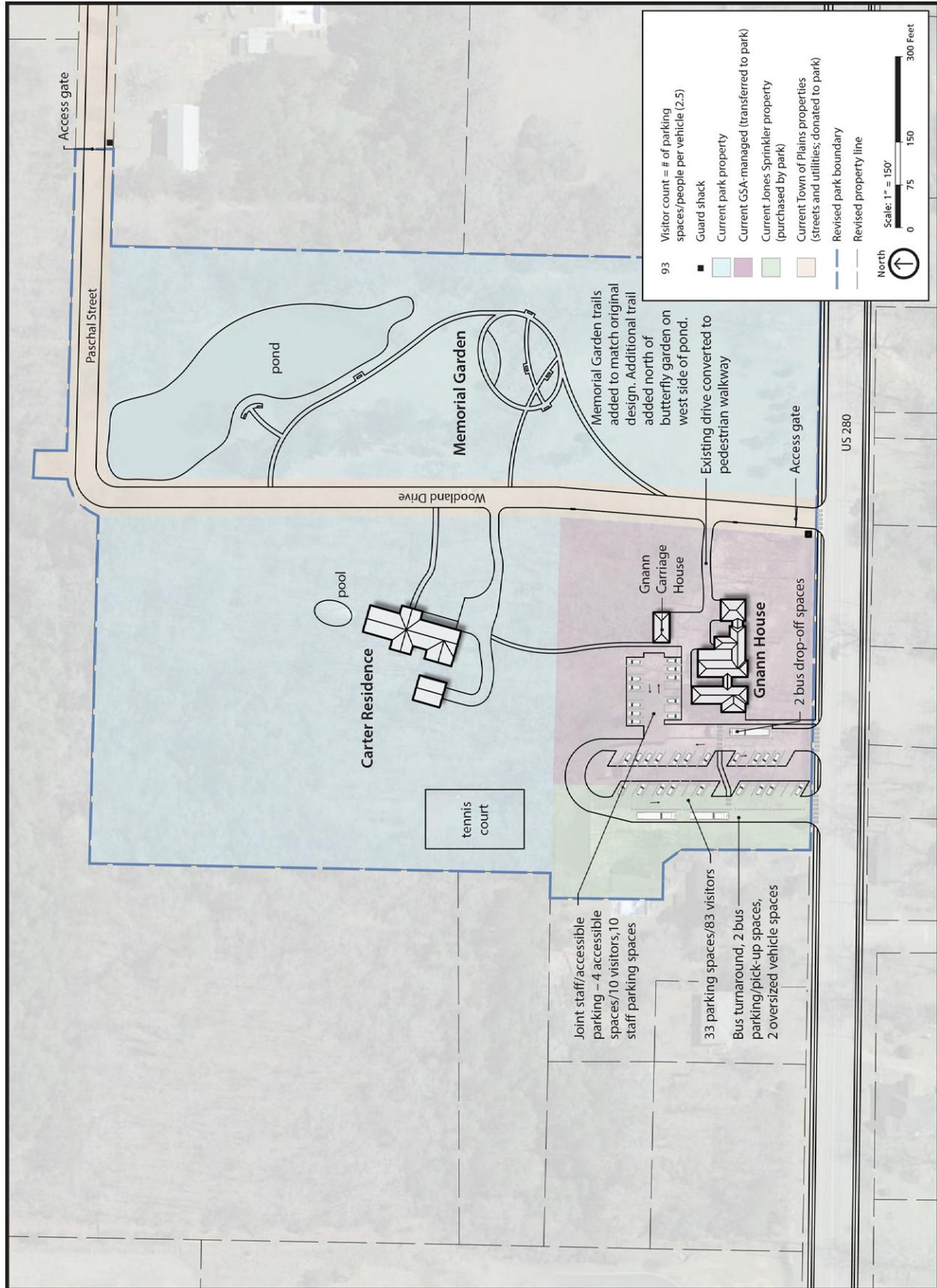
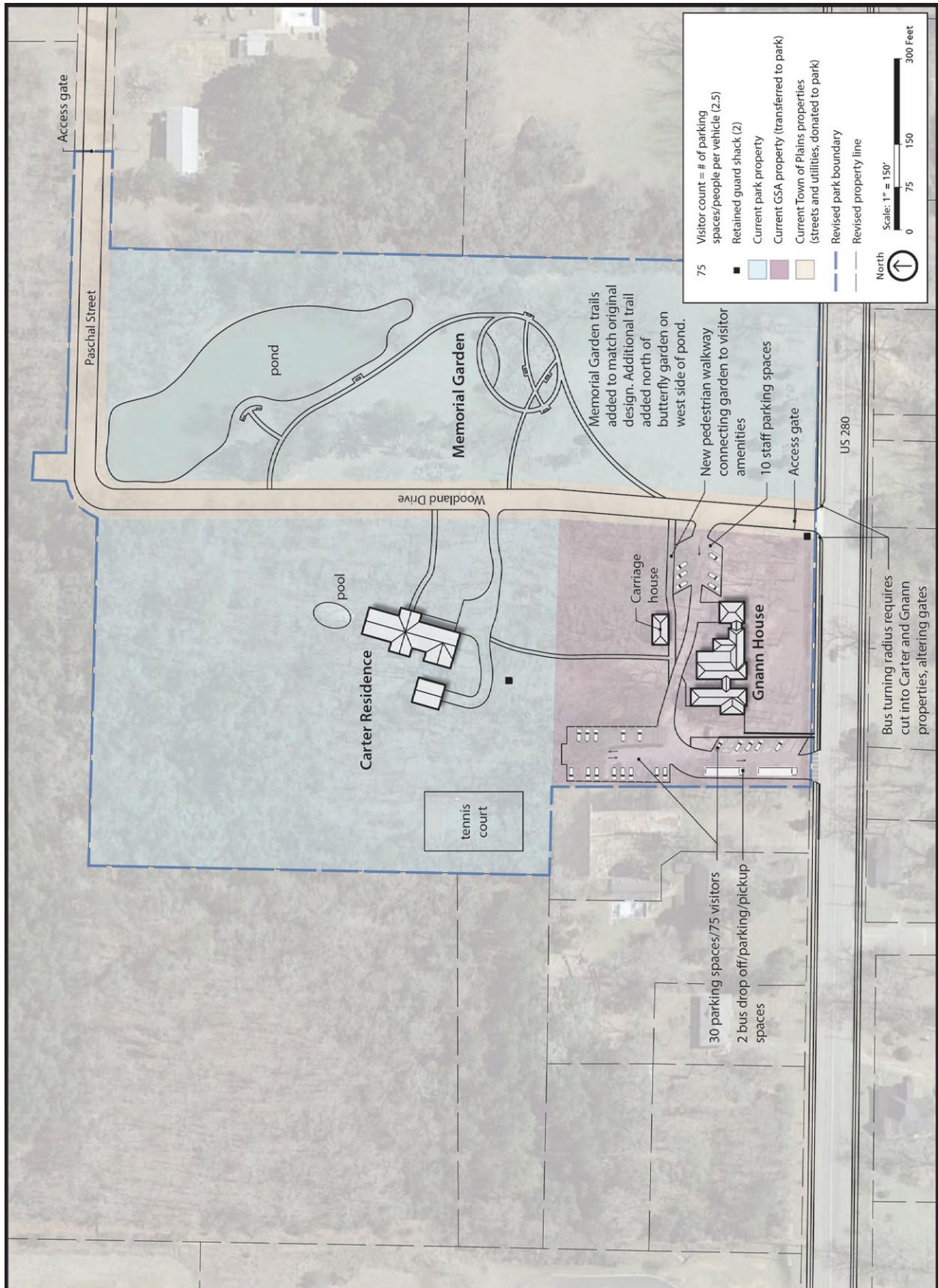


FIGURE 6. ALTERNATIVE 2: PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE, PRE-ACQUISITION



Tours

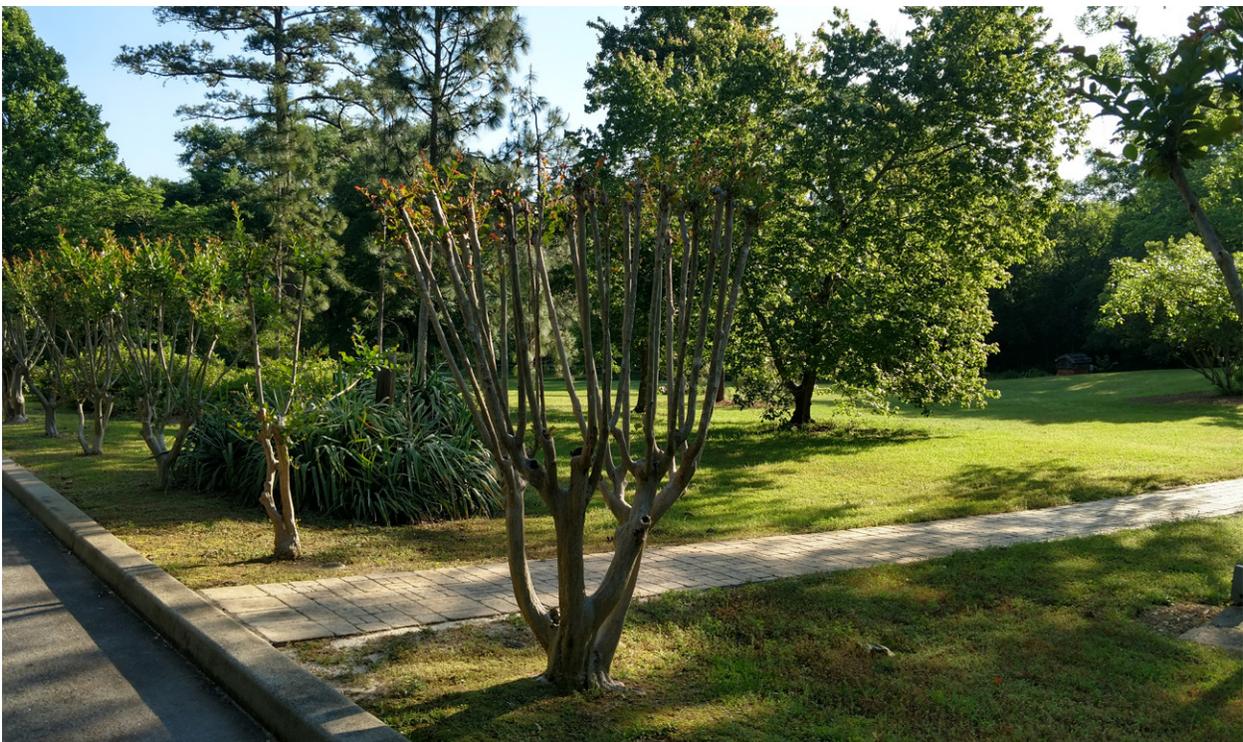
Guided tours of the Carters' residence would initiate at the Gnann House and would proceed to the accessible entrance of the Carter Residence. The tour includes the tennis courts, house, garage woodshop, back patio and pool. Tour groups would be six visitors plus the guide, while school groups would be increased to 12 visitors. School groups would be allowed 24 visitors per property location (house, tennis courts, garage etc.), with 12 visitors inside the house at a time. The residence tour would be streamlined for these larger school groups to minimize circulation issues and resource damage. The house and garage woodshop would allow for 100 visitors per day.

Memorial Garden

To protect the cultural landscape and define visitor circulation, the National Park Service would fully realize the original 2007 design plans for the Memorial Garden. An accessible path would be established from the butterfly garden (in the center of the Memorial Garden) towards the Gnann property, and a few benches would be installed in the garden for visitors to rest and admire the landscape. The memorial area would have a small amount of new paving added and would be protected to preserve a sense of respect (signs would be kept to a minimum). A new meandering path would extend from the butterfly garden north along the west edge of the pond, with a few new benches added in key locations. Visitors would be allowed to periodically fish the west side of the pond during special events, while the east side of the pond would be off-limits and swimming would be prohibited (e.g., discouraged through the use of signs) The pond edge would be stabilized as appropriate with materials consistent with the cultural landscape.

Visitation for the site would be monitored, managing for 200 visitors per day, although special events would allow for 500 visitors. Tours of the Memorial Garden would be self-guided, and the park would identify the best areas for visitors to gather.

The Memorial Garden would be protected to retain its significance; however, the park would set allowances for a maximum amount of acceptable visitor damage, after which additional management actions would be undertaken. Please refer to the visitor use monitoring strategy in appendix A for additional management actions. For instance, no more than 10% of ornamental plants could be damaged by visitors. No more than one visitor-created path leaving the designated path every 100 linear feet would be allowed. No more than 6 ft.² of vegetation loss would be allowed. Management would rotate areas for group gathering and ensure group stops on tours occurs on durable surfaces (e.g., sidewalk, Woodland Drive, tennis court).



Other Related Actions

Elsewhere in the park, other actions would support those taking place at the Carter Residence and improve park management and operations. Jimmy Carter National Historic Site would expand the museum collections space at Plains High School to accommodate curatorial support of the new collections of Carters' belongings, and a cultural landscape report is underway for the Carter Home and Garden. In addition, the park would explore acquisition of Woodland Drive and Paschal Street (dividing the house and grounds) and the utility right-of-way interior to the property.

Management and Operations

Monitoring of the Carter Residence and the Memorial Garden would occur once per week and continuously via observation. Assessment of resource damage (e.g., memorial area, ornamental plant damage, vegetation loss) would similarly occur once per week and continuously via observation. See appendix A for indicators monitored weekly. A full inventory of cultural artifacts would be undertaken each year, with a daily visual check mornings and evenings.

Mitigation Measures Related to Project Implementation

For the action alternative, best management practices and mitigation measures would be used to prevent or minimize potential adverse effects associated with activities proposed in this plan. Mitigation measures undertaken during project implementation would include, but would not be limited to, those listed below. The impact analysis in "Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences" was performed assuming that these best management practices and the following mitigation measures would be implemented as part of the action alternative.

General

- A project orientation would be provided to all staff and construction workers to increase their understanding of and sensitivity to the environment and minimize their impacts.
- All environmental compliance will be completed and documented prior to beginning construction projects.
- The project area would be monitored to ensure that impacts stay within the parameters of the project area and do not escalate beyond the scope of the environmental assessment.
- Construction limits would be flagged and fenced to protect cultural landscape features.
- The project contractors would be required to conform to all applicable permits or project conditions. All construction equipment would be stored within the delineated work limits.
- All tools, equipment, barricades, signs, surplus materials, and rubbish would be removed from the project site upon project completion.
- Nonvegetation construction debris would be placed at least daily in refuse containers and disposed of at least weekly. No refuse burying or burning would be allowed.
- Contractors would comply with applicable federal regulations on the storage, handling, and disposal of all hazardous materials and waste. Provisions would be made for storage, containment, and disposal of hazardous materials used on-site.
- To minimize the possibility that construction equipment could leak fluids, introduce noise pollution, or emit pollutants, equipment would be frequently checked to identify and repair any leaks, mufflers would be checked for proper operation, and only equipment that is within proper operating specifications would be used.

Vegetation

- Temporary barriers would be installed to protect the natural surroundings (including trees, plants, and root zones). Any native vegetation to be preserved within the project area and would be clearly identified by marking, fencing, or another appropriate technique prior to any construction activities.
- Prior to entry into the park, heavy equipment would be steam cleaned to prevent importation of nonnative plant species and inspected to ensure that hydraulic fittings are tight, hydraulic hoses are in good condition and replaced if damaged, and there are no petroleum leaks.
- Removal of vegetation would be done in a manner that would not affect vegetation not proposed for removal.
- A contractor damage clause for impacts to trees/vegetation not within the project area would be part of the construction contract.
- Salvage of topsoil and duff would occur in and adjacent to the project area, and salvage of vegetation would occur to the degree possible, staff time and need permitting.

Soils

- A grading and erosion and sediment control plan would be prepared by the contractor to minimize erosion during construction.
- Any imported soils, fills, or aggregates would be checked prior to delivery to ensure they are free of deleterious materials. Sources of imported materials would be compiled by construction contractor and submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.
- If needed, weed-free clean fill and topsoil would be used.
- Erosion control measures, including approved siltation control devices, would be used in construction areas to reduce erosion and capture eroding soils.

Water Quality

- A stormwater pollution prevention plan would be prepared by the construction contractor and implemented for construction activities to control surface runoff, reduce erosion, and prevent sedimentation from entering water bodies during construction. In addition, this plan would address hazardous materials storage, spill prevention, and response. The plan would be submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.
- Best management practices would be followed to stabilize the site, prevent erosion, and convey stormwater runoff to existing drainage systems, keeping contaminants and sediments on-site. Best management practices include silt fences and hay bales placed at the foot of slopes and at other locations to contain excavated material and to filter sediment from stormwater runoff, and temporary seeding of slopes for short-term restabilization.
- A comprehensive spill prevention/response plan would be developed that complies with federal and state regulations and addresses all aspects of spill prevention, notification, emergency spill response strategies for spills, reporting requirements, monitoring requirements, personnel responsibilities, response equipment type and location, and drills and training requirements. The spill prevention/response plan would be submitted to the park for review/approval prior to commencement of construction activities.
- Temporary sediment control devices would be employed as needed, such as filter fabric fences, sediment traps, or check dams.
- Stockpiled soil would be covered throughout the duration of the project with semipermeable matting or plastic or another type of erosion control material.
- Silt fencing or biodegradable sediment logs would be retained in disturbed areas until stabilization (by revegetation).

Air Quality

- All construction equipment, diesel trucks, and generators would be equipped with best available control technology for emission reduction of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter.
- Idling of construction and personal vehicles would be reduced or eliminated whenever possible.

Acoustic Environment/Soundscape

- Standard noise abatement measures would be followed during construction. All construction equipment would have functional exhaust/muffler systems. Other measures may include: the use of best available noise control techniques wherever feasible; the use of hydraulically or electrically powered impact tools when feasible; or the use of hand tools when feasible.
- The idling of motors would be limited except as necessary.
- To the extent possible, all on-site noisy work above 76-A weighted decibels (dBA) (such as the operation of heavy equipment) would be performed between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to minimize disturbance to nearby neighbors.

Health and Safety

- Measures would be implemented to ensure employee and visitor health and safety. Measures may include, but are not limited to, noise abatement, visual screening, and directional signs that aid visitors in avoiding construction activities.
- An emergency notification plan would be developed that complies with park and federal requirements and allows contractors to properly notify park, federal, and/or territorial personnel in the event of an emergency during construction activities. The plan would address notification requirements related to such events as fire, personnel and/or visitor injury, and releases of spilled materials. The plan would be submitted for park review and approval prior to construction.

Historic Structures/Cultural Landscape/Archeological Sites

- In general, all reasonable measures would be taken to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects on cultural resources in consultation with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer and other concerned parties as appropriate.
- All areas selected for construction (e.g., new trails, parking areas) would be surveyed for cultural resources to ensure that resources, if identified in the area of potential effects, are adequately protected by avoidance or, if necessary, that appropriate mitigation measures are completed prior to construction disturbance.
- If previously unknown archeological resources were discovered during construction, all work would cease in the immediate vicinity of the discovery until the resources are assessed and documented. If the resources could not be avoided or preserved in situ, an appropriate mitigation strategy would be developed, following prompt notification and consultation with the state historic preservation officer, and other concerned parties, as necessary.
- Undertake the preservation and rehabilitation of cultural landscapes in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, and other applicable law and policy (e.g., Architectural Barriers Act).
- Whenever possible, modify project design elements to avoid adversely affecting cultural landscapes. Careful design would ensure that new construction would minimally affect the scale and visual relationships among significant landscape features. The topography, vegetation, circulation features, and land use patterns of the cultural landscape would be minimally affected. If necessary, vegetative screening would be used, as appropriate, to minimize visual impacts on cultural landscapes.
- Undertake the preservation and rehabilitation of National Register listed or eligible structures in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (1995)* to ensure that the character-defining features and integrity of the structures are minimally affected. Other law and policy will be adhered to as applicable (e.g., Architectural Barriers Act).
- Evaluate any materials removed from historic structures during rehabilitation efforts to determine their value to the park's museum collections and/or for their comparative use in future preservation work at the site.
- Protect historic furnishings and other objects and collections items in accordance with all approved NPS curatorial policies and guidelines. Collections items would be professionally and securely handled and packaged for curatorial storage.



Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

3

Introduction

As identified in chapter 1, cultural landscape, historic structures, archeological sites, and visitor use and experience are the impact topics being analyzed for the proposed alternative. This chapter describes the affected environment (existing conditions in and around the project area) for these impact topics and how the existing conditions would be impacted as a result of implementing the alternatives. Cumulative impacts resulting from the incremental impacts of the alternatives when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions are also considered.

Affected Environment

Historic Structures/Cultural Landscape/Archeological Sites

The present project area encompasses the Carter Home and Garden unit of Jimmy Carter NHS, consisting of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Residence, the Gnann House, the Gnann Carriage House, and the cultural landscape. Jimmy Carter NHS was created and administratively listed in the National Register of Historic Places on December 23, 1987. With the establishment of the Jimmy Carter NHS, the National Park Service undertook restoration, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts throughout the historic site to interpret the locations that were important in Jimmy Carter’s life. The Plains Historic District was also created to preserve the rural Georgia location of the national historic site and protect it from inappropriate development. Along with the Carter Home and Garden, other noncontiguous NHS parcels in the Plains Historic District include the Plains Depot and Plains High School. The national historic site and preservation district were established by federal legislation to “(1) preserve the key sites and structures located within the historic site associated with Jimmy Carter during his lifespan; (2) provide for the interpretation of the life and Presidency of Jimmy Carter; and (3) present the history of a small rural southern town” (NPS 2015b).

The Carter Home and Garden is recognized as nationally significant for its association with President Jimmy Carter, who was the 39th president of the United States (1977–1981). The resources of the national historic site primarily represent Jimmy Carter’s life in Plains and the nearby community of Archery where the Carter Boyhood Farm is located. The Plains Depot, his home on Woodland Drive, and the Gnann House reflect significant places associated with his adulthood in Plains, his presidential campaign, and his residency after leaving the White House.

Units of the national historic site celebrate Carter's many achievements by displaying the important influences that molded his character and career as Georgia state senator, Georgia governor, United States president, and following his presidency, humanitarian and Nobel Peace Prize winner. Carter and his wife Rosalynn continue to promote and foster altruistic work throughout the world through The Carter Center (NPS 2015b).

The Carter Residence on Woodland Drive is the only house Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter have ever owned. Architect Hugh Gaston designed and built the house in 1961 according to the Carters' specifications, and the features and furnishings reflect Jimmy Carter's political career and his family's practical lifestyle. The Gnann House and its associated carriage house, adjacent to the Carter Residence, is locally significant. The federal government purchased the Gnann House for the U.S. Secret Service detail assigned to the family after the Carters returned from Washington in 1981. The house and U.S. Secret Service compound represent the period of Jimmy Carter's retirement from the political arena (NPS 2015b).

The Carter Residence is a one-story ranch style house with an asymmetrical floor plan and low-pitched, side gable roof. Character-defining architectural elements include a variety of materials (brick and board and batten siding), windows, gable roof with asphalt shingles, brick chimney, and screened porch (enclosed with glass in 1974). Colonial Revival-style elements include the paneled front door, sidelights, boxed eave, and cupola vent over the original garage. A one and-one-half story garage attached to the west elevation has a side-gable asphalt shingle roof and board and batten exterior siding. The garage was converted to an office and another garage was added west of the original of similar size, style, and materials. A driveway leads to the new garage's single bay entry. The upstairs of this garage is used as guest quarters and Jimmy Carter's woodworking shop is located on the first floor. The house and garage addition create an L-shaped brick patio. A 3-foot-high wall on the north side of the patio and a covered walkway on the south side link the rear door of the house to the garages (NPS 2015b).

The Gnann House, constructed in 1920, is a one-story, vernacular Colonial Revival house of wood frame construction. The building has a rectangular plan with an asphalt-shingled hipped roof and two hipped-roof rear extensions. The building's exterior is weatherboard with a brick foundation. The Gnann Carriage House (1920) is presently a two-story, hipped roof garage. The first floor of the front elevation is asymmetrical with a garage door for vehicle entry (NPS 2015b).

The Carter Residence and the Gnann House retain integrity with only minor changes made to the properties since their construction. The entire Carter Residence and Gnann property (including U.S. Secret Service headquarters) are enclosed by a cast-iron security fence (the Nixon Fence), while the Memorial Garden and pond are protected by a low, split-rail fence built by President Carter and Billy Carter. Minor additions were made to the rear of the Gnann House (NPS 2015b).

The Carter Home and Garden totals almost 14 acres. Woodland Drive extends through the center of the rectilinear-shaped site in a straight alignment. The northeast section of the property contains a pond (constructed after 1974) immediately surrounded by open lawn with thick woodlands to the east. A wood shake and cobblestone springhouse supplies water to the pond, with a row of azaleas next to the pond. A garden (Memorial Garden), also added after 1974, is located south of the pond at the midpoint between the pond and West Church Street. An ashlar pavement path divides this garden into quadrants. The pond and garden comprise the designed landscape at the Carter Home and Garden. Contributing structures include the cast iron security fence, tennis court, and pool. A cultural landscape report is underway (draft document scheduled for the fall of 2019) that will provide further description and delineation of contributing landscape features, patterns of circulation, spatial organization of the property and other distinguishing elements. It will also include recommendations for management and treatment of the cultural landscape (NPS 2015b).

The intersection at West Church Street serves as a controlled access point to the property. An interpretive overlook is located at the far southeast corner of the site and is accessible via a public sidewalk on the north side of West Church Street. The overlook with brick access path leads to a wider overlook space with interpretive panels set on a wooden deck enclosed with a wood rail fence. Adjacent areas are somewhat open, though woodlands in the direction of the residence prevent any views into the private residential landscape (NPS 2015b).

Visitor Use and Experience

Introduction. This section describes elements of visitor use and experience at the Jimmy Carter NHS that may be affected by the management alternatives. The description of these elements is based on the best professional judgment of NPS staff and public scoping for this plan.

The following visitor use and experience elements will be discussed:

- Visitor access, information, and circulation
- Diversity of visitor experience and opportunities
- Quality of the visitor experience

Information about the above elements corresponds to subtopics analyzed in the Environmental Consequences Section and the type and level of impacts addressed.

Overview of Visitor Use and Experience. Visitor use refers to human presence in an area for recreational purposes, including education, interpretation, inspiration, and physical and mental health. Visitor experience is the perceptions, feelings, and reactions that a visitor has before, during, and after a visit to an area. Visitor use and experience at Jimmy Carter NHS is unique in that park locations are woven throughout the town of Plains, Georgia. Further, President and Mrs. Carter still live onsite in the Carter Residence. The site includes the Carter Residence, the U.S. Secret Service residence, and adjacent commemorative space. The Carter Home and Garden is not currently open to public visitation. However, visitor use data collected at other Jimmy Carter NHS locations and visitors' perception of the residence can be used to make assumptions about the Carter Home and Garden visitor use and experience.

Since 2005, the park has experienced declining visitation. In 2018, the park was visited by 51,680 people compared to 94,945 visitors in 2005 (see figure 7). This could be contributed to a decreased population in Sumter County since 2005 or the aging population that lived through Carter's presidency.

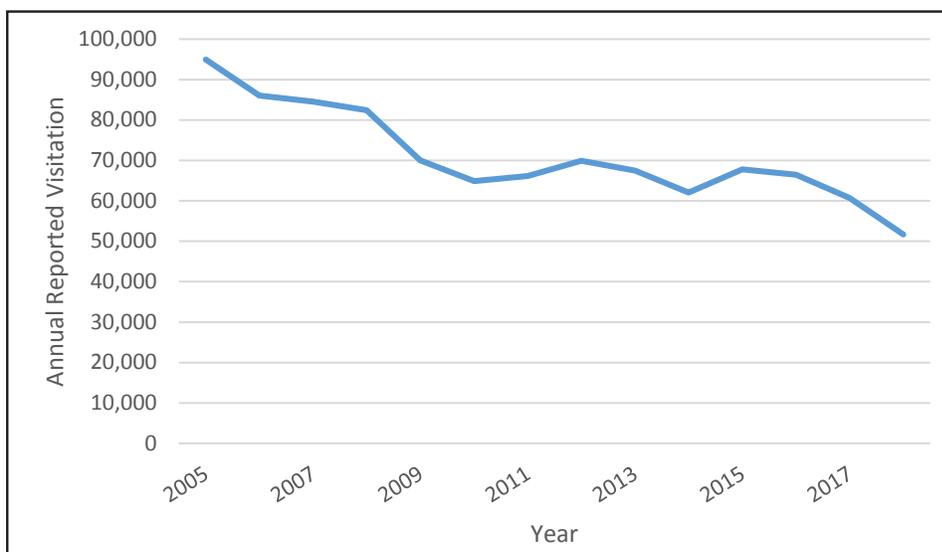


FIGURE 7. ANNUAL REPORTED VISITATION TO JIMMY CARTER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE (2005–2018)

According to a 2017 Transportation Assistance Group (TAG) report conducted by the U.S. Department of Transportation Volpe Center, the majority of visitors are students on educational trips, older adults and retirees, families, and people on regional group tours. Visitation rates vary throughout the year because of weather, vacation patterns, and school trips. Figure 8 displays the average monthly visitation since 2005, showing that September and the spring months are the most popular times of the year. January and the summer months may have lower visitation because of colder temperatures and the lack of school visits, respectively.

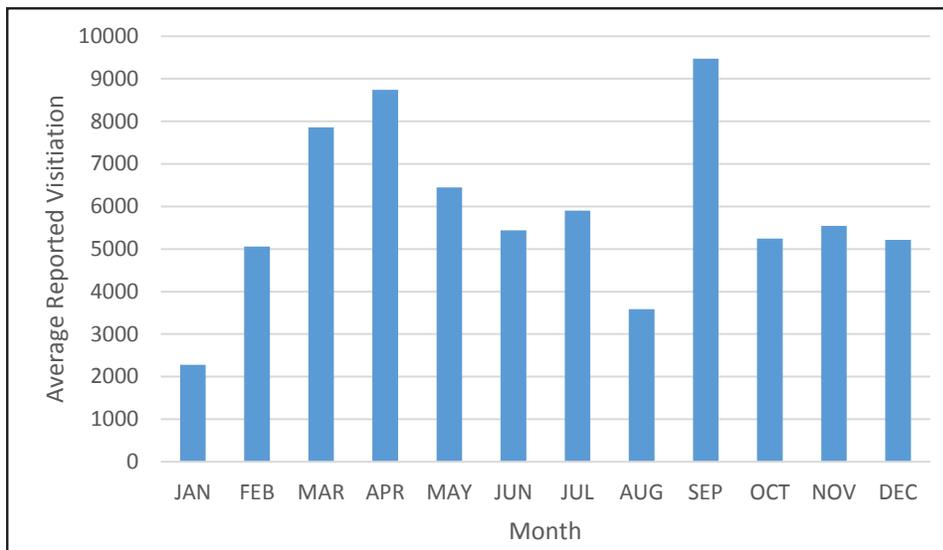


FIGURE 8. AVERAGE MONTHLY VISITATION TO JIMMY CARTER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE (2005–2018)

The TAG report and stakeholders estimated that the majority of visitors to Jimmy Carter NHS and the town of Plains come from outside the South Georgia region, many from the northern part of Georgia or other parts of the Southeast and Florida on day or overnight trips (Markiewicz & Fisher 2016).

Researchers at the Protected Areas Research Collaborative at Pennsylvania State University, in conjunction with managers at the park, conducted a visitor use study from 2017 to 2018 to better understand the essential components of the visitor experience at the site. The study found that most people visiting Jimmy Carter NHS were first-time visitors, in groups of two to three people, and white, with a median age of 63 and about evenly split male/female. Those surveyed in the study were primarily motivated to visit the park to learn about the Carters’ legacy, lives, and values (Miller, Rice, Taff, & Newman 2018). It is important to note that this study did not capture information about school groups because of Office of Management and Budget age restrictions.

Visitor Access, Circulation, and Information. The 2018 visitor use study found that the majority of visitors use the park website to plan their visit (51% of respondents). Visitors travel to the park and the city of Plains by personal vehicle, the SAM Shortline excursion train, or motor coach/school bus (for group trips or special events) (Markiewicz & Fisher 2016). The Carter Home and Garden, which does not have existing public parking, is located approximately half a mile from Plains High School and half a mile from the SAM Shortline platform. Research suggested this could be a feasible distance for visitors that are able and interested in walking (Miller, Rice, Taff, & Newman 2018).

The 2018 visitor use study found the average duration of time spent at the park is just under three hours. The top three locations that visitors toured were the Plains High School Museum and Visitor Center (96.2% of visitation per visitor group), the Carter Boyhood Farm (64.8% of visitation per visitor group), and the Plains Depot (56.4% of visitation per visitor group) (Miller, Rice, Taff, & Newman 2018). Despite only being viewable from a sidewalk afar currently, the Carters’ residence is the fourth most popular attraction of 16 locations (40.3% of visitation per visitor group). Visitors seem to prefer visiting sites in the following order: the Plains High School Museum and Visitor Center first, the Plains Depot second, the Carter Boyhood Farm third, and the Carter Home and Garden fourth. When asked about future desired experiences at the Carter Home and Garden, visitors preferred a ranger-led tour through the Carter Residence along with an option of being able to explore on their own. Most visitors would likely not use virtual experiences. Visitors expressed less certainty about future use of the residential grounds and other nearby sites.

The TAG report found that visitors have difficulty navigating among park sites and Plains attractions, even when they were within walking distance of one another. Barriers to navigation in the downtown Plains area include the SAM Shortline train obstructing the views between the train platform and the Plains Depot; and trees blocking the view from downtown of Plains High School. National Park Service signage only exists at Plains High School, not at the train platform or the Plains Depot.

Visitor Experience and Opportunities. The historic site consists of the Plains Depot, Jimmy Carter’s Boyhood Home, Plains High School, the Carter Home and Garden, and 100 feet of scenic easements along both sides of Old Plains Highway west of Plains. The park unit includes the historic site, the preservation district, and 650 acres of various agricultural lands in and around the incorporated city of Plains, Georgia. Visitors have several options for touring the park. A ranger-guided walking tour of Jimmy Carter’s Boyhood Farm is offered on weekends and gives insight to Jimmy Carter’s youth. Additionally, there is a cell phone audio tour, adult/senior group tours, and a number of educational programs offered for school groups.

The park also hosts or participates in special events throughout the year, including Peanut Classic Baseball Tournament, National Park Service Week, Old Farm Day, NPS Founders’ Day, Plains Peanut Festival, Arts in Archery, and Community Christmas Sing in December.

Quality of the Visitor Experience. Overall, visitors self-reported the quality of their experience at the park as very high for a number of variables elicited in the 2018 visitor use study. Visitors’ most important motivations for visiting the site include learning about the Carters’ values and lives, commemorating their legacy, and learning about their national and international work. However, lower-rated variables of visitor experience included: to potentially see or meet Jimmy Carter; to escape from answering emails, texts, or phone calls; to improve physical health; and to bring family closer together. According to the 2018 visitor study, the park appears to be providing good levels of service, with opportunities to expand paved pedestrian paths and walking/audio tours as potential visitor services.

While the information above informs visitor use and experience at Jimmy Carter NHS, the impact analysis in the “Environmental Consequences” section addresses alternatives affecting the Carter Home and Garden, the focus of this plan.

Environmental Consequences of the Alternatives

Methodology

The National Park Service based the following impact analyses and conclusions on the review of existing literature and Jimmy Carter NHS studies; information provided by experts within the National Park Service; professional judgments and park staff insight; and public input.

To better understand the essential components of the visitor experience including visitor motivations, demographics, as well as perceptions of future opportunities at the site, the National Park Service collaborated with researchers at the Protected Areas Research Collaborative at Pennsylvania State University. The findings were incorporated into the development of the preferred alternative (Miller, Rice, Taff, & Newman 2018).

Cumulative Effects Scenario

CEQ regulations, which implement the National Environmental Policy Act, require assessment of cumulative impacts in the decision-making process for federal projects. Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of who undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor, but collectively important actions taking place over a period of time.

Cumulative impacts were considered for both the no-action and action alternatives. They were determined by combining the impacts of the alternatives proposed in this document with the impacts of other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

With regard to NPS projects and actions, and other non-NPS projects and actions affecting the project area, the original construction of the Carter Home and Garden and the Gnann House and associated carriage house are the only actions in the recent past that affected this part of the Plains community. Aside from the improvements being proposed in this plan, no current or reasonably foreseeable NPS projects or actions, or non-NPS projects or actions, are expected to affect the project area.

Environmental Consequences

Historic Structures/Cultural Landscape

Alternative 1 (No Action/Current Management). Under alternative 1, no substantial changes would occur to alter the character-defining qualities contributing to the significance of the Carter Home and Garden. The Carter Residence, the Gnann House, and other contributing structures and cultural landscape features would be preserved in accordance with the *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, including the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. Completion of a Historic Structures Report and Historic Furnishings Report for the Carter Residence would provide further guidance for preserving the architectural character and features of the house and the furnishings and other objects that reflect the Carters' domestic use and interior house décor. Because the Carter Home and Garden would remain closed to public visitation and current management practices would continue, there would be little anticipated disturbance of the residence and other associated resources because of visitor use. The residence would nevertheless require ongoing preservation maintenance and monitoring to ensure that it retains its historic architectural integrity from the damaging effects of weathering and other potential threats that could diminish its historic character and materials. Furnishings and other contents of the residence would be moved from the residence and curated as part of the park museum collections in an expanded curatorial facility at the Plains High School. The Memorial Garden would continue to be maintained and preserved. These actions would have beneficial impacts on the long-term or extended preservation of the Carter Home and Garden and its contributing buildings and cultural landscape resources.

The U.S. Secret Service would vacate the Gnann House upon the passing of the Carters, and the buildings (Gnann House, Gnann Carriage House, outbuildings, and guard shacks) and grounds would continue to be closed to public use. The National Park Service would request that the General Services Administration not transfer the Gnann House property to the Secretary of the Interior. Final disposition of the Gnann House and its associated buildings is therefore undetermined. However, preservation of the locally significant property in accordance with the Secretary's Standards, should that occur, would have beneficial impacts on its historical integrity and historical associations with the Carter Home and Garden.

Cumulative Impacts — No past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions were identified that could result in cumulative impacts on the Carter Home and Garden.

Conclusion — No substantial changes would occur to alter the character-defining qualities contributing to the significance of the Carter Home and Garden under alternative 1. The Carter Residence, the Gnann House, and other contributing structures and cultural landscape features (e.g., Memorial Garden) would be preserved in accordance with the Secretary's Standards, and with guidance provided by a scheduled Historic Structures Report and Historic Furnishings Report for the Carter Residence. Because the Carter Home and Garden would remain closed to the public, there would be little anticipated disturbance to the house and other associated resources as a result of visitor use. Furnishings and other contents of the home would be moved from the Carter Residence, accessioned into the park's museum collections, and treated in accordance with best practices for museum collection care and the NPS Museum Handbook. The above actions would have beneficial impacts on the ongoing preservation of the Carter Home and Garden and its contributing buildings and cultural landscape resources.

Alternative 2 (Historic Structures/Cultural Landscape/Archeological Resources). Under the preferred alternative, both the interior and exterior of the Carter Residence along with the associated cultural landscape would be preserved and maintained in accordance with the *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, including the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. All improvements would also be undertaken in conformance with recommendation of a cultural landscape report (currently underway); a scheduled Historic Structures Report; an Historic Furnishings Report; an Historic Furnishings Plan; and a pending archeological survey.

The residence would be opened and made accessible for guided public tours originating at the Gnann House, and new signs and wayside exhibits would be installed to interpret the Carters' lives and their connection to the home and the Plains community. In addition to the house, visitor tours would include the tennis courts, garage woodshop, back patio, and pool. Although there is a potential for visitor use to result in limited deterioration of historic building materials and fabric as a result of wear and tear, NPS plans to manage visitation and monitor the impacts of visitor use would assist overall preservation objectives and mitigate potential resource damage associated with visitor use. With adherence to these protection measures and guidance documentation, only minimal or limited adverse impacts on historic buildings and cultural landscape features are anticipated.

Furnishings and other contents of the Carter Residence would be stored in an expanded curatorial facility at the Plains High School, while any needed construction repairs are underway at the residence. Some objects would be replaced with replicas, some would remain in storage and others would be moved back to the residence for interpretive purposes. These measures would assist efforts to protect historic furnishings and objects and would have limited if any adverse impacts on these collections items.

The Gnann House and Gnann Carriage House would be transferred to the National Park Service following the end of U.S. Secret Service activities and rehabilitated and adaptively used as a visitor center, offices, and storage/maintenance space. New staff parking, walkways, and picnic areas would be developed on the property. As part of other efforts to preserve and protect the integrity of the Gnann House and overall Carter property, two U.S. Secret Service guard shacks would remain, including one at the park entrance gate, to preserve these contributing cultural landscape features and interpret the U.S. Secret Service's involvement with protection services for the property. Although some of the existing security equipment may be removed, the park would retain cameras, lights, and the security fence around the Carter Home and Garden. These measures would provide added security for protection of the property and help to deter vandalism. New construction and rehabilitation of the Gnann House property would be carried out in accordance with the Secretary's Standards and a scheduled historic structure report, resulting in overall beneficial impacts on the preservation of character-defining historic building and cultural landscape features.

The National Park Service would fully develop earlier design plans for the Memorial Garden to protect the cultural landscape and define visitor circulation. An accessible path would be established from the butterfly garden (in the center of the Memorial Garden) towards the Gnann property, and a few benches would be installed in the garden for visitors. A small amount of new paving and a meandering path would be added. The pond edge would be stabilized as appropriate with materials consistent with the cultural landscape. Visitation for the site would be monitored and capped as necessary to minimize visitor use impacts to vegetation and other cultural landscape features. These measures would result in beneficial impacts on protecting the character of the Memorial Garden cultural landscape.

Cumulative Impacts — No past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions were identified that could result in cumulative impacts on the Carter Home and Garden.

Conclusion — Proposed preservation actions and planned opening of the Carter Home and Garden for public visitation are anticipated to have only limited or minimal potential for adverse impacts on historic buildings, archeological resources, and cultural landscapes. Visitation would be monitored and managed as necessary to minimize adverse visitor use impacts. All proposed actions would be carried out in accordance with the *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, including the *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, along with a scheduled Historic Structures Report, Historic Furnishings Report, and Historic Furnishings Plan for the Carter Residence. Adherence to measures intended to protect and preserve the Carter Home and Garden would not disturb or alter the character-defining features of the site's contributing buildings, archeological resources, and cultural landscapes, resulting primarily in beneficial impacts with only limited or minimal potential for adverse impacts on historic properties. Follow treatment recommendations in the (to be completed) cultural landscape report and continue Section 106 consultation for related undertakings.

Visitor Use and Experience: Effects of Alternative 1 (No Action)

Analysis. Under the no-action alternative, the Carter Home and Garden would remain closed to the public. There would be no change to visitor use or visitor experience as it currently exists. Visitors would continue to have access to the Plains Depot, Jimmy Carter’s Boyhood Home, Plains High School, and 100 feet of scenic easements along both sides of Old Plains Highway west of Plains. Visitors would continue to be limited to viewing the Carter Home and Garden from a sidewalk afar. Under alternative 1, no improvements to city walkways and pedestrian connections between park units would be made, impacting recreational opportunities and connectivity at the park.

Cumulative effects. The Carter Home and Garden is not currently open to the public and construction changes to the site have been undertaken only by the Carter family. Current management actions would continue to protect the cultural landscape features, while keeping the site closed to public visitation. Since no new actions would be commenced, there would be no cumulative additive effect.

Conclusion. Since no new strategies are proposed under the no-action alternative, there would be no new beneficial impacts on visitor use and experience.

Visitor Use and Experience: Effects of Alternative 2 (Preferred)

Analysis. Under alternative 2, the Carter Home and Garden would open to public visitation, thereby introducing visitors to the Carters’ home and way of life. Interpretive themes at Jimmy Carter NHS include how life in rural Georgia in the 1930s shaped Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter’s attitudes, work ethic, family, spiritual, and community viewpoints and how the life stories of President and Mrs. Carter can inspire and motivate visitors to positively contribute to society in their own unique ways.

Opening the Carter Home and Garden to public visitation would improve the visitor experience by expanding and diversifying opportunities at the park. Opening a new area would likely result in an overall increased visitation to the unit, as visitor surveys have indicated it is one of the most popular areas to visit in the park. Considering the decreasing visitation trend over the past ten years, drawing new park visitors is a beneficial impact.

Carter Residence. Opening the Carter Home and Garden for guided tours, including new interpretive elements and at least one accessible entrance, would provide more opportunities for visitors to learn about the Carters’ way of life and would be inclusive for people with mobility challenges. Tour groups would include no more than six visitors plus the ranger and no more than 12 visitors for school groups, with no more than 100 total visitors per day. Keeping tour groups at these sizes would enhance the visitor’s interpretive experience and interaction with the residence. Since average daily visitation is less than or close to the daily capacity, there would be no adverse impacts to visitors. Select collections from the Carters’ belongings would be added to the Plains High School museum collections space, enhancing the visitor experience at that site. The two U.S. Secret Service guard shacks that would remain, including one at the park entrance gate, provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the U.S. Secret Service’s involvement in the property. Opening the Carter Residence for public tours, adding new museum collections at Plains High School, and preserving two guard shacks would be a beneficial impact for the visitor experience.

Gnann Property and Memorial Garden. The expanded parking lot under the preferred alternative would provide more spaces for personal vehicles and buses to park west of the Gnann House. This would improve circulation and visitor access to the site. Temporary adverse impacts to visitor experience could occur during development and construction of the parking lot expansion, including safety concerns, noise pollution, dust, debris, and a diminished quality of the viewscape. However, the park can mitigate these impacts by following the general and health and safety mitigation best practices outlined in chapter 2.

This alternative creates additional recreational opportunities for visitors including added picnic tables and informal picnicking allowed on green spaces near the Gmann House; new or refined paths between the parking area, Gmann House, Carter Residence, and Memorial Garden; new paths and benches in the garden; and fishing allowed at the west side of the pond during special events. Development of accessible paths would offer opportunities for visitors with mobility challenges to enjoy the Memorial Garden. While parking lot construction could be a temporary adverse impact on visitor use and experience, with health and safety mitigation practices in place the impact would be minimal. An expanded parking area, added picnic tables, fishing opportunities, and new or refined paths would enhance visitor use and experience, create additional recreation opportunities, and provide overall beneficial impacts.

Cumulative effects. Alternative 2 includes strengthening pedestrian connections between the Carter Home and Garden and other park units such as the Plains Depot and Plains High School. This would enhance visitor recreation opportunities and connectivity between park units. Enhanced pedestrian facilities encourage active transportation throughout the park and the associated health benefits of physical activity. Walking as a mode of transit also provides an alternate opportunity to experience the various park units and the town of Plains on foot, as President and Mrs. Carter have throughout their lives. This reflects the park's significance since President and Mrs. Carter have a profound and enduring connection with Plains, Georgia, and Sumter County; they have drawn on their experience with the people, land, and community to advocate for local, national, and international issues. The relationship between the community and President and Mrs. Carter has successfully preserved the historic structures and landscapes within the community, park, and preservation district, reflecting every chapter of the Carters' lives, careers, and continuing legacy.

The contributions of the cumulative impacts scenario would largely be long-term and beneficial to the visitor experience because of increased visitor opportunities within the park and enhanced connectivity throughout the park and the community of Plains. Given the importance of the Carters' connection with the town of Plains, opening their home to public visitation would ensure the relationship is sustained well into the future.

When the effects of the preferred alternative are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future impacts, the total cumulative impact on visitor use and experience would continue to be beneficial. The incremental impacts of the preferred alternative would contribute to the beneficial impacts that are already occurring.

Conclusion. Opening the Carter home and garden to public visitation would result in overall beneficial impact for visitors and provide them with opportunities to connect with a former president and learn about President Carter's way of life and legacy.

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Chapter 4: Consultation and Coordination

State Historic Preservation Office

In a letter dated July 15, 2019, the National Park Service notified the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division of the initiation of the environmental planning process for the Carter Home and Garden and Gnann property. The participation of the agency was welcomed. The National Park Service will seek formal Section 106 consultation following completion of the plan and as specific project proposals stemming from the plan reach more detailed design development stages. The park received a response on August 7, 2019. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division will work with the park as reports and recommendations are finalized.

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Appendix A: Visitor Use Management Monitoring Strategy for Indicators, Thresholds, and Visitor Capacity

Indicators, Thresholds, Monitoring, and Management Strategies

This section provides additional information about the monitoring strategy as it relates to the visitor use management (VUM) framework for the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site/Environmental Assessment Plan/Environmental Assessment (EA) (the plan/EA). For additional resources in the VUM Framework please visit the following web address: <http://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/> for a full description of the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council (IVUMC).

Monitoring is the process of routinely and systematically gathering information or making observations to assess the status of specific resource conditions and visitor experiences and is a critical step in successfully implementing any VUM plan. A monitoring strategy is designed and implemented to generate usable data for periodically comparing existing and desired conditions, assessing the need for management actions, and evaluating the efficacy of management actions. A well-planned monitoring strategy provides for transparency, communication, and potential cost savings through efficiencies and possibly cost sharing. A monitoring strategy includes the selection of indicators, along with establishment of thresholds or objectives, and any needed triggers. It also includes routine, systematic observations or data collection of the indicators over time and associated documentation and analysis.

Indicators, thresholds, monitoring protocols, management strategies, and mitigation measures would be implemented as a result of this planning effort and are described below. Indicators would be applied to the action alternative described within this plan. Indicators translate desired conditions of the environmental assessment into measurable attributes (e.g., percent of ornamental plants damaged) that when tracked over time, evaluate change in resource or experiential conditions. These are critical components of monitoring the success of the plan/EA. Thresholds represent the minimum acceptable condition for each indicator and were established by considering qualitative descriptions of the desired conditions, data on existing conditions, relevant research studies, professional judgement of staff from management experience, and scoping on public preferences. A trigger is defined as a condition of concern for an indicator that is enough to prompt a management response to ensure that desired conditions continue to be maintained before the threshold is crossed.

The interdisciplinary planning team considered the central issues driving the need for the plan/EA and developed related indicators that would help identify when the level of impact becomes cause for concern and management action may be needed. The indicators described below were considered the most critical, given the importance and vulnerability of the resource or visitor experience affected by types of visitor use. The planning team also reviewed the experiences of other park units with similar issues to help identify meaningful indicators. Not all of the strategies related to the indicators, thresholds, and visitor capacity would be implemented immediately, rather as thresholds are approached or exceeded. Those strategies identified for use as needed are labeled as management strategies in each of the appendices. The impact analysis is included in chapter 3 so that the park can employ those as necessary to achieve desired conditions.

- Percent of ornamental plants damaged
- Amount of vegetation loss
- Incidents of unendorsed activities

Indicator 1

Percent of ornamental plants removed or damaged by visitors.

Threshold. No more than 10% of ornamental plants damaged by visitors.

Rationale for Indicator and Threshold. Providing access to these cultural landscapes could result in some plants being damaged by trampling or removal by visitors for individual purposes. This indicator addresses those plants that are contributing features to the cultural landscape. The park would focus on monitoring the percentage of ornamental plants damaged by visitors. By monitoring this indicator, the park would be able to track resource damage. There would be a range of acceptance depending on site, area, or zone.

Monitoring Guidelines. Monitoring for this indicator would occur as a part of regular park operations once a week and through observations and routine staff monitoring.

Management Strategies:

- Educate visitors not to remove vegetation
- Signage such as leave no trace and education on sensitivity of resources
- Cameras to monitor behavior
- Preservation maintenance plan

Indicator 2

Amount of vegetation loss.

Threshold. No more than 6 ft.² of vegetation loss.

Rationale for Indicator and Threshold. This indicator measures multiple issues of concern including vegetation trampling, overuse, degradation of natural resources, safety concerns, and visitor experience. It was chosen to address both thinning vegetation on the park grounds and impacts to trails. This indicator would provide the park with the opportunity to monitor crowding and congestion on the grounds. Monitoring this indicator and threshold would also allow for a greater understanding of visitor use patterns such as busy times of the year and the specific location that congestion is occurring. The threshold is based on sensitivity of resource, amount of use, size of the site, and tolerance of impact.

Monitoring Guidelines. Monitoring for this indicator would occur once a week and through observations and routine staff monitoring.

Management Strategies:

- Educating visitors to stay on the path through verbal education, printed material and signage.
- Educate staff about appropriate places to gather for programs.
- Rotating areas used for educational and visitor gathering spots to minimize impacts.
- Locate gathering spots on durable surfaces (i.e., paved surfaces, such as Woodland Drive).
- Signage in accordance with the cultural landscape report.
- Where appropriate, designate gathering areas to accommodate group talks.
- Create physical barriers (e.g., ropes, low fencing) to separate visitors from sensitive or recovering resources.

Indicator 3

Number of incidents of unendorsed activities and inappropriate behavior.

Threshold.

- No more than one incident of theft inside the Carter home
- No more than one incident of graffiti on the gravesite

Rationale for Indicator and Thresholds. Damage to historic sites and cultural resources can occur through both intentional and unintentional means. Both can cause impacts that influence the integrity of these resources. The indicator would be sensitive to capture new activity around historic and cultural resources that will be open for visitor access. By setting thresholds fairly low, managers will take actions to discourage the number of inappropriate incidents.

Monitoring Guidelines. Monitoring will be conducted by tour guides and their observations during tours, plus daily sweeps. Park staff will also conduct daily monitoring of the gravesite.

Management Strategies:

- Education about sensitive resources in and around the home
- Education about penalties for taking objects from the home
- Educate staff about awareness of visitor behavior
- Security cameras and/or lighting to monitor visitor behavior
- Limiting bags and backpacks in the house
- Motion sensors to keep visitors in designated areas
- Plastic barriers or roping to protect resources
- Increase staff and/or volunteers
- Contracted security staff

Visitor Capacity

Overview

The Interagency Visitor Use Management Council and Framework Guidance defines visitor capacity as the maximum amounts and types of visitor use that an area can accommodate while achieving and maintaining the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that are consistent with the purposes for which the area was established. Visitor capacities were identified using best practices and examples from other plans and projects across the National Park Service. Based on these best practices, the planning team describes the process for identifying capacity using the following guidelines: (1) determine the analysis area, (2) review existing direction and knowledge, (3) identify the limiting attribute, and (4) identify visitor capacity.

Through this planning effort, the park has identified a number of strategies associated with the plan alternatives to directly address the key issues; these strategies then inform the associated visitor capacity for the Carter Home and Garden. This site is not currently open to the public, so current use levels do not exist to be used as a baseline; instead, capacity levels have been set based on professional expertise, comparative analysis of similar historic site tours, and the limiting attributes described at the site. Associated monitoring and additional strategies and actions needed to manage to these visitor capacities can be located with the indicators and thresholds (this appendix) and below with the identified capacities. Not all of the strategies related to the indicators, thresholds, and visitor capacity would be implemented immediately, rather as thresholds and/or capacities are approached. This appendix documents the considerations and processes used to identify and implement visitor capacity for two analysis areas as described below.

The Analysis Area

The Carter Home and Garden was divided into two analysis areas, based on the natural dividing line of Woodland Drive that bisects the property along a North South axis. Woodland Drive, and a section of Paschal Street, were closed to vehicular and pedestrian traffic by the U.S. Secret Service after the Carter's returned to Plains from the White House. These are the original neighborhood streets dividing separate parcels purchased by the Carters. Property to the west of Woodland Drive contains the original parcel where a residence was constructed in 1961 by President and Mrs. Carter. Two parcels to the east of Woodland Drive were purchased at a later date to develop the gardens and pond in place today. For these key areas, a detailed analysis has been conducted to identify the visitor capacities. The visitor capacities would be used to implement management strategies for these sites as part of the plan. The following two key areas were identified:

1. Carter Residence and associated structures, including outdoor areas and trails (parcel west of Woodland Drive and north of the Gnann property), and
2. Memorial Garden and grounds, including pond (parcel east of Woodland Drive and south of Pashcal Street).

To fulfill the requirements of the 1978 National Parks and Recreation Act (54 United States Code 100502), visitor capacity identifications are legally required for all destinations and areas that this planning effort addresses (IVUMC 2016). Together, the above areas comprise all of the visitor use areas within the project planning area. Future monitoring of use levels and indicators would inform the National Park Service if use levels were at or near visitor capacities. If so, management strategies as outlined in this plan would be taken.

Review of Existing Direction and Knowledge

Jimmy Carter NHS context. During this step, the planning team developed desired conditions, indicators, and thresholds, with particular attention to conditions and values that must be protected and are most related to visitor use levels. Desired conditions for these areas can be found in chapter 1 of this plan. For each key area, relevant indicators are listed. The associated thresholds can also be found in the previous section of this appendix.

The amount and timing of visitor use at the Carter Home and Garden will influence both resource conditions and visitor experiences. Peak visitation during two seasons, spring and fall, is expected to concentrate visitor use at the Carter Home and Gardens. Surveys conducted by Pennsylvania State University indicate that this park site will be the most visited unit at the park once it is opened (Newman 2019). Setting visitor capacities are beneficial to the ability of the National Park Service to maintain desired conditions for resources and visitor experiences consistent with the purposes for which the park was established.

Identify the limiting attributes. This step requires identifying limiting attributes that most constrain the analysis area's ability to accommodate visitor use. The limiting or constraining attributes may vary across the analysis area and are described under each key analysis area. This is an important step given that an analysis area could experience a variety of challenges regarding visitor use issues, natural resources, and cultural resources.

Identify visitor capacity. To identify the appropriate amount of use at key analysis areas, summaries from previous steps were reviewed to understand current conditions compared to desired conditions for the area. Visitation data collected annually by NPS staff to track levels of visitor use parkwide and by area was used as a data source. The project team also collected annual visitation data for fourteen similar National Park Service historic site tours (e.g., Harry S. Truman National Historic Site and John Fitzgerald Kennedy National Historic Site) and consulted with National Park Service staff at two similar park units (Carl Sandburg National Historic Site and Lyndon B Johnson National Historical Park).

Analysis of Key Areas

Carter Residence and Associated Structures.

Review of existing direction and knowledge — Under the proposed action, this analysis area includes guided public tours of the residence, including the house, garage woodshop, back patio, pool and tennis courts. No self-guided tours would be allowed of either the residence or grounds in this zone. It is expected that this tour will receive high interest from visitors and school tour groups (Newman 2019).

Limiting attributes — The most limiting attributes constraining visitor use levels in this zone are the desired visitor experience and cultural resource impacts from visitor use. The desired visitor experience is for visitors to understand “the body of work that the Carters coordinated and conducted from their residence.” The residence is typical for the time of construction and has narrow doors, hallways and other small spaces. The ability to move visitors safely and effectively through these narrow spaces, in such a way that “objects within the residence retain their integrity, and their meanings are understood so that through them, visitors have the opportunity to learn about the Carters’ lives” naturally limits the number of people that can be present at one time. It would be difficult for park staff to communicate with and keep track of larger tour groups; this would result in higher potential for damage or theft of museum collections within the residence.

Visitor capacity — Activities associated with the proposed action provide the opportunity to increase visitation since the resource is not currently open to the public. Guided tours of the residence will allow for up to a maximum of six visitors per tour. School groups will be guided on a shorter tour with a direct pass through of the residence, so the maximum number of participants can be increased to 12 students per group. Total visitor capacity per day will be 100 visitors. Tours will be free and the park will continue to assess the effectiveness of tour size and frequency to ensure desired conditions are met. If needed in the future because of increasing visitation, the park will further evaluate the potential need and operations for a ticketing system to better manage the pacing and flow of visitation into the residence.

Memorial Garden and Grounds.

Review of existing direction and knowledge — Under the proposed action, this analysis area includes ranger guided and self-guided tours of the gardens east of Woodland Drive. This analysis area includes the commemorative memorial space, butterfly garden, historic plantings, lawn areas and fishing pond. Despite not being open to the public, 40% of all visitors view the property from the adjacent sidewalk (Newman 2019).

Limiting attributes — The most limiting attributes constraining visitor use levels in this zone are the desired visitor experience to “gain a sense of serenity when visiting the garden and have opportunities for meaningful commemoration of the Carters,” and the protection of the natural and cultural resource of the historic garden plantings. Larger groups have the potential to negatively impact a serene commemorative experience. Crowding in the analysis area would also hinder the ability of rangers to monitor impacts to plantings and vegetation such as visitor cuttings and trampling.

Visitor capacity — Activities associated with the proposed action provide the opportunity to increase visitation since the resource is not currently open to the public. Some garden tours for visitors and school groups would be offered, and the analysis area would be open to the public for self-guided tours. Visitor capacity was identified by park staff as 200 people per day and 1,200 people per week. Special events will allow 500 people per event. Entry to the area for guided or self-guided tours would be free. If needed in the future because of increasing visitation, the park will further evaluate the potential need and operations for a ticketing system to better manage the pacing and flow of visitation to the Memorial Garden and Grounds.



As the nation’s principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under US administration.

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