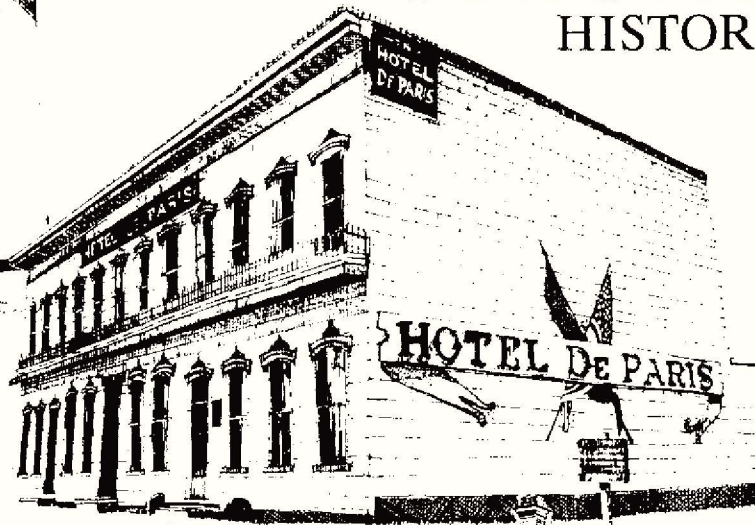


# GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME HISTORIC DISTRICT-COLORADO

SUMMARY  
DRAFT STUDY OF ALTERNATIVES



J.W. Board  
12-18-2002



summary  
study of alternatives

draft  
July 1989

**GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME HISTORIC DISTRICT • COLORADO**

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR / NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

## INTRODUCTION

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### BACKGROUND, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as a national historic landmark on November 13, 1966, thus recognizing the historic district as nationally significant. These resources have been categorized in the national historic landmarks program as representing the interpretive themes of *Westward Expansion* (subtheme – *The Mining Frontier*) and *Architecture* (subtheme – *Historic District, Renaissance Revival through Second Empire*). Since then a number of other structures in the Georgetown-Silver Plume area have been placed on the National Register.

In the autumn of 1979, the National Park Service initiated the first phase of a reconnaissance survey of Georgetown and Silver Plume as part of a statewide Colorado reconnaissance survey. The Georgetown-Silver Plume survey, which was completed in November 1980, reaffirmed the national significance of the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District and reiterated the above-mentioned interpretive themes.

Since 1980, nearly \$6 million has been invested by the state of Colorado, local governments, and private parties in the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District to preserve and enhance the historical aspect of these communities. Undeveloped land has been purchased as open space to protect architectural integrity, and the Georgetown Loop restoration project was completed in 1984. Bonds have been issued for various improvements, and many historic buildings have been renovated. Beyond the work by individual property owners, it now appears that efforts of the state and local communities may have reached their limit.

In 1987 the Colorado State Fifty-Sixth General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution No. 1032 to support further study by the National Park Service. In September 1988 the president signed the Interior Appropriations Bill, and in that bill was a directive from the Congress to the National Park Service to prepare a study of alternatives.

Local and county officials formed the America's Mining Frontier Task Force (hereafter known as AMFTF) in anticipation of the NPS study in order to develop local consensus on the long-term future of the Georgetown-Silver Plume area. The task

force submitted a draft report to the National Park Service in May 1989. (Note: Information has been extracted, paraphrased, and/or particular philosophies and ideas adopted from the task force's report for use in this document; this is indicated by highlighting the task force name in boldface type).

The *Study of Alternatives* is limited to the Georgetown-Silver Plume reconnaissance survey study area, which encompasses the communities of Georgetown and Silver Plume, Colorado, along with the Georgetown Loop historic mining area and viewsheds of these resources. The study elaborates on the information contained in the reconnaissance survey and also includes the following:

- a general description of resources, their condition, and their significance
- present ownership of resources
- existing and proposed uses and their effects on the resources
- feasible alternatives for the management, preservation, interpretation, and use of resources, including a no-action alternative

- a preliminary analysis of the economic, social, cultural, and environmental impacts of the alternatives

The study will determine if federal action is necessary for adequate resource protection and preservation and will evaluate alternatives available to the federal government and other entities to assist in the management and protection of the cultural assets of the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District.

## REGIONAL SETTING

The Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District and study area is approximately 50 miles west of Denver on Interstate 70 (I-70), which parallels Clear Creek east of the Continental Divide. Georgetown and Silver Plume are both in Clear Creek County. The historic district is nearly 5 miles long, stretching from Georgetown Lake up the valley to the south and west to about 3/4 mile west of Silver Plume. The valley rises from an elevation of about 8,450 feet to 9,280 feet over this distance and is flanked by mountains that rise another 1,000 feet to 3,000 feet above the valley floor. The area is walled by evergreen forests that are dotted by the talus slopes of past mining operations and by areas of massive rock outcrops. The towns of Georgetown and Silver Plume cover the entire

300- to 2,000-foot width of the valley floor with a gridwork of streets and houses.

## ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The communities of Georgetown and Silver Plume have been designated by the Department of the Interior as a nationally significant cultural resource. For the last two decades the local communities as well as the state of Colorado have been committed to the goal to preserve this resource. Many noteworthy accomplishments have occurred – the restoration and successful operation of the Georgetown Historic Mining and Railroad Park by the Colorado Historical Society and financially supported by the Boettcher Foundation; the restoration and operation of the Hamill House by the Georgetown Society; the adaptive use of the old Clear Creek County Courthouse by the Community Center, Inc.; the reopening of the Hotel de Paris as a house museum by the Colonial Dames of America, Colorado Chapter; the renovation of the Silver Plume Bandstand and operation of the George Rowe Museum by the People for Silver Plume, Inc.; the pride and work by individual owners in maintaining their property; and the preservation and zoning controls supported by local citizens and officials to protect the historical qualities of Sixth Street in Georgetown and Main Street in Silver Plume,

residential neighborhoods, and viewsheds on the surrounding mountains [AMFTF].

Behind the impetus for additional external assistance is the growing recognition that the grass roots movement and existing sources of funding have just about been depleted in the development and promotion of Georgetown-Silver Plume as a cultural attraction to future visitors. Local citizens and their elected officials have expressed concern about how cultural resources can be preserved when the financial resources of the towns, county, and state have been stretched to their limits. Although noteworthy efforts have been made to identify, evaluate, and register cultural resources, the lack of local level planning for such resources, the shortage of funds and sufficient levels of continued technical assistance, and the necessity for operation and maintenance for existing historic sites/attractions have either caused projects to languish or not be undertaken. Much has been done to preserve significant cultural resources in the two communities, but much more remains to be accomplished [AMFTF].

While many citizens want future economic development and tourism growth for private and public benefit, there is a strong underlying concern that large numbers of visitors attracted to a potential federally designated site would have a negative effect on the

quality of life in the two communities. Much anxiety has already been caused over the possible plan to widen I-70 to six lanes. While no firm plans have been announced or monies appropriated, the citizens of both communities are preparing for a protracted campaign to ensure proper input in the state highway department's planning phase for the interstate project. Construction is underway to replace the existing Georgetown/I-70 interchange [AMFTF].

If the Congress should ultimately decide that the National Park Service play a significant role in Georgetown-Silver Plume's future, public concerns have been raised about the extent of federal involvement; possible controls, rules, and regulations; possible transfer of private property to the federal sector; removal of existing revenue-producing properties from the tax rolls; loss of autonomy and control by the existing local government; and the issue of who will be responsible for providing improvements to the local infrastructure, which could result from federal level development. Further, local citizens and public officials want to know who would decide what level of development might possibly be pursued in Georgetown-Silver Plume – local citizens, the National Park Service, the Congress, or a combination of these. Some citizens want to know what effect such development would have on the local mining industry and who controls that

effect [AMFTF]. This *Study of Alternatives* assesses these and other issues and concerns raised during the study process and suggests strategies to resolve them.

### **THREATS TO THE ENVIRONMENT**

The resources of the study area include the surrounding environment, specific sites and structures, and the national historic landmark represented by the towns of Georgetown and Silver Plume. The aesthetic quality of these resources has already been adversely affected by a variety of visual intrusions, such as the power lines over Griffith Mountain and the I-70 highway corridor. The existence of these intrusive developments may lend a sense of legitimacy to other similar encroachments, and is therefore a threat to the future integrity of the resources. Land use development patterns have divided Georgetown into distinct older and newer sections. While this in itself is not detrimental, the location of newer development areas between I-70 and the core resources in both Georgetown and Silver Plume effectively screens the resources and inhibits public recognition of their presence. These development areas – mainly highway commercial zones – have generated traffic congestion and many commercial and business signs, especially along the Frontage Road in Georgetown. Such highway commercial development creates visual

confusion and increased vehicular activity, which in turn affect scenic quality and threaten visitor safety. The effective enforcement of land use goals and regulations is, itself, threatened by periods of decreased economic activity, where the long-term land development goals are often traded for short-term cash infusions.

Narrow streets, reduced speeds, heavy pedestrian traffic, and lack of parking facilities in both Georgetown and Silver Plume make circulation a major threat to the development of study area resources. I-70 provides excellent access to the study area, but the local street systems, traffic signals, and parking facilities throughout the study area are deficient. Points of traffic congestion in Georgetown include the Frontage Road/I-70 intersection (a four-way stop) and the Frontage Road/Sixth Street intersection (a three-way stop); at times the sign-controlled intersections cannot maintain smooth traffic flow.

Water pollution of groundwater by acidic mine drainage, heavy metals, and sedimentation or turbidity is currently a threat along the Clear Creek drainage. These mining-generated pollutants have been identified downstream as near as Idaho Springs (less than 15 miles away), where the Environmental Protection Agency and the

state of Colorado are undertaking cleanup operations.

The resultant threat of an inadequate water supply to support both local residents and tourists also exists in the study area. This potential lack of water was pointed out in an impact study for the Georgetown Loop Railroad performed by Dames and Moore in 1985. The study noted that local water supplies would be adequate until 1994, provided all the water system improvement projects then scheduled were carried out. The study also noted that sewage treatment facilities in 1985 were nearly at capacity and could accommodate only a 1 to 6 percent increase in tourism. Because the Georgetown treatment facilities also serve Silver Plume, the lack of excess sewage treatment capacity at Georgetown is a threat to the expansion of the tourism industry in the entire study area.

Several implied economic threats could have detrimental effects on the study area. Possible scenarios include the loss of funding for the continued preservation and development efforts locally; liability issues associated with developing tourism at areas where potential hazards (e.g., mines, shafts, equipment) are part of the resource; saturation of the tourist market by similar or competing developments nearby (i.e., Idaho Springs, Central City/Black Hawk); and the general economic situation of the state and the nation, which can

have serious implications for a single-focus marketplace such as the Georgetown-Silver Plume study area (which depends so heavily on tourism) through fluctuations in disposable income, labor force, and oil and gasoline prices.

Many structures, both publicly owned (state, city, and county) and privately owned (organizations), are facing deterioration because of inadequate funding to perform necessary maintenance activities. The effects of the harsh mountain climate and the lack of adequate annual maintenance might result in the loss of these fragile structures. For the most part, the privately owned structures are adequately maintained, but individual owners often lack sufficient knowledge of the technical preservation methods necessary to maintain the architectural integrity of residences or businesses. They also lack the funds to hire technical preservation specialists for consultation on their preservation efforts. This situation could lead to the individual structures inadvertently losing much of their historical integrity.

Perhaps the greatest single threat to the study area is the potential to diminish the quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Georgetown and Silver Plume through development drawing an increased number of visitors to the area. This desired increase in trade and tourism could require residents to sacrifice

some of the lifestyle amenities for which they moved into the area.

## THE ALTERNATIVES AND THEIR ANALYSIS

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### INTRODUCTION

In order to meet the management, preservation, and interpretive needs of the study area's significant cultural, natural, scenic, and recreational resources, six basic alternatives were formulated. These alternatives range from no federal action to the creation of a national park system unit consisting of the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District.

Each alternative describes how management and operations would be accomplished, how the resources would be managed and interpreted for visitors, what future development would be undertaken, and what the estimated costs would be. An analysis of potential impacts on management and operations, resource management, interpretation and visitor use, and development is also included for each alternative.

Any future NPS involvement in the study area in the form of national park system unit designation, funding, and/or technical assistance, other than under existing programs, is subject to congressional mandate.

### ALTERNATIVE 1: GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME GUIDE THEIR OWN DESTINY

#### Description

Implementation of this alternative involves the continuation of individual option and choice for the preservation, management, and interpretation of the character and cultural resources in the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District. This would be accomplished within the framework of existing local guidelines, ordinances, and regulations as well as those state and federal historic preservation laws that might affect designated national historic landmarks. The alternative emphasizes maximum local control over the future of Georgetown-Silver Plume. This is the no-action alternative.

#### Management and Operations.

Management of the cultural properties in the historic district would continue under the various owners, as well as public and private entities that currently own and manage them subject to future property transfers by private individuals. Organizations include the Georgetown Society, Inc.; People for Silver Plume, Inc.; Colonial Dames of America,

Colorado Chapter; and the Colorado Historical Society.

Other lands and resources in the study area would be managed by present owners, including federal, state, county, city, and private interests. Mining operations on patented and unpatented claims would continue subject to existing local, state, and federal regulations.


Financial considerations would be of primary importance in the ongoing management of significant cultural resources in the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District. Local individuals and organizations would continue to work within funding constraints of existing federal, state, and local preservation programs. The Georgetown Society, Colonial Dames, and People for Silver Plume would continue appeals for funds to cover annual operating expenses and any new projects outlined in their organizational goals. Funds could be raised, as currently done, through the sales of handicrafts, literature, tours of the historic properties, and the sponsorship of special events and festivals. Other sources of financial assistance would include bequests and donations from local subscribers, individuals,



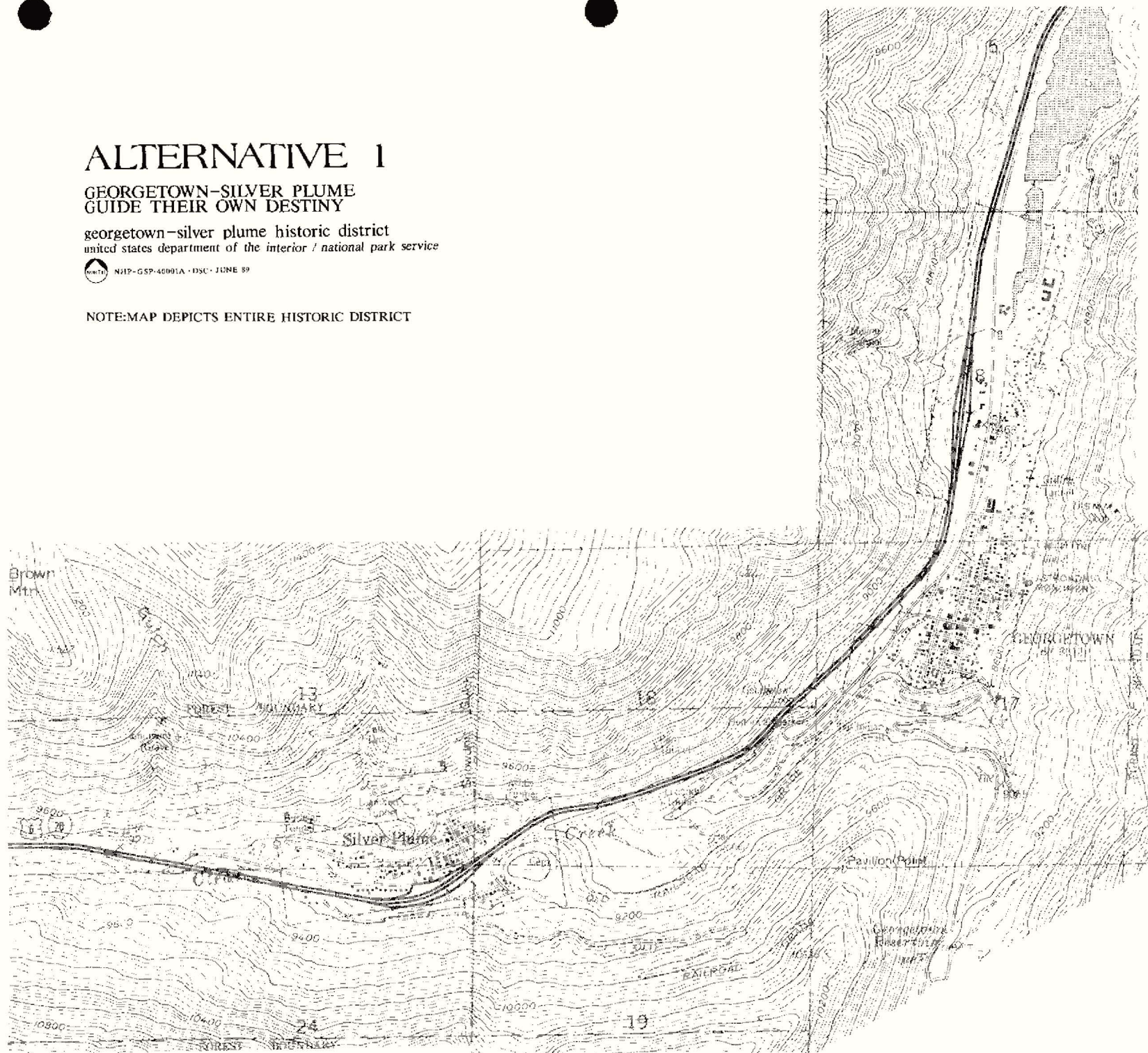
# ALTERNATIVE 1

## GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME GUIDE THEIR OWN DESTINY

georgetown-silver plume historic district  
united states department of the interior / national park service

 NJP-GSP-40001A - DSC - JUNE 89

NOTE: MAP DEPICTS ENTIRE HISTORIC DISTRICT



and foundations. In addition, the communities of Georgetown and Silver Plume as well as the Colorado Historical Society would probably continue their support of specific cultural properties. Local preservation interests would continue to seek local as well as external assistance for future acquisitions, preservation activities, and operations.

**Resource Management.** Under this alternative, significant cultural resources within the historic district, such as the Hamill House, Georgetown Loop Railroad, and the Hotel de Paris, would continue to be preserved by individuals and local entities as they deem appropriate. The Colorado Historical Society would continue to reconstruct the Lebanon Mill as funding permits, but it is uncertain if any preservation work would be done at the Pohle House. Also, no apparent commitment has been made to restore privately owned properties, such as the Georgetown Public School, or other significant cultural resources.

**Interpretation and Visitor Use.** Visitors would continue to enjoy the restored historic properties in the two communities (e.g., Hamill House, Hotel de Paris, and Georgetown Loop Railroad) but without any comprehensive interpretive programs. Also, many visitors would continue to be attracted by the special events such as the Fourth of July

and Christmas Market, which showcase the communities during the year.

Interpretive services would continue to be conducted by individuals or entities as they deem appropriate for visitors to the two communities. Possible future cooperative arrangements between the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Clear Creek County, and Georgetown might result in new walking trails in outlying areas.

**Development.** Further development would be subject to existing local ordinances, regulations, and plans. Based on past activities as well as existing plans and the recommendations stemming from the task force report, the two communities would probably try in the future to address the need for improved visitor facilities, orientation operations, and improved visitor circulation.

#### **Impacts**

No properties would be removed from the local tax rolls and no private property owners would be displaced.

Community resources have been strained by the development and operation of key resources in the national historic landmark. Further outside assistance is uncertain at this time. Current funding might not permit

enlarging the staff to properly administer and interpret the historic sites. The lack of an "umbrella" organization to guide and increase preservation activities would continue to hinder the two communities.

Constraints in private or public funding could cause a decrease in the basic maintenance of significant cultural properties. Impacts on cultural resources because of a possible lack of sustained revenues would include limited archeological and historical research. This would result in insufficient information to preserve and interpret Georgetown-Silver Plume's past, including not only its mining history but also its social aspects. Adequate funding would not be available to complete the restoration of the Silver Plume school building or to complete the interpretive displays at the George Rowe Museum in this alternative. The Georgetown Public School would continue to deteriorate. As ridership increased on the Georgetown Loop Railroad, declines in paid attendance at the Hamill House and Hotel de Paris might continue or even escalate, adversely affecting future operating budgets.

Interpretation would continue on a piecemeal basis with no unified thematic approach; therefore, visitors would not get the complete story of the significant events, and most importantly, themes featuring the communities' past.

There would be minimal impact on the socioeconomic environment under existing management. Tourism would probably continue to grow as traffic volume increased on I-70, thereby generating increased sales tax revenues. Greater traffic volume on I-70 might lead to increased noise, visual, and emission impacts.

Despite local ordinances and land use controls, pressures might emerge to permit large-scale, incompatible commercial or housing development to enhance the tax base. Local preservation bodies might not have the financial or human resources to stem future deleterious developmental pressures.

Mining exploration and operations would continue subject to existing regulations.

#### **Cost Estimates**

No additional federal funds would be expended under this alternative.

## **ALTERNATIVE 2: GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME EMPHASIZE THEIR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Description**

This alternative deals with the diverse influences that collectively guided the evolution of Rocky Mountain mining communities. The evidence of these formative influences endures today through the natural environment and the many historic structures in the study area. These tangible elements are the resources that portray and explain the story of the development of Georgetown, Silver Plume, and other such mining communities. The approach of this alternative would be unstructured and informal. Visitors would be able to conduct their own tour of the resources through a variety of separate recreational opportunities that are interwoven with the specific resources throughout the study area to tell the story of mining community development in the Rocky Mountains.

Under this alternative, the study area would be developed into the subunits of Georgetown, Silver Plume, the Georgetown Loop, and the surrounding natural environment. The various existing and potential historic and natural resources in each of the subunits would be interconnected by a network of pedestrian-oriented passive and


active recreational opportunities. In turn, this network would connect to various historic or recreational developments adjacent to the overall study area. Visitors would be able to choose and pursue their recreational experience and at the same time be exposed to the variety of resources and interpretive information that describes this theme.


**Management and Operations.** Currently, several governmental entities are involved in the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District. Each municipality has taken the responsibility of preserving those things critical to the preservation of the district. The recreational/interpretive/natural resource aspect of the district, although mentioned in the community plans for both towns, is not really given the direction necessary to accomplish the goals set forth by this alternative. Several additional groups or committees exist that function within the district with goals similar to this alternative, but with expanded or restricted areas of concern. Those groups include the Saxon Mountain/Georgetown Lake Committee, Historic District Public Lands Commission, and Clear Creek County Recreation and Trails Committee. These groups coordinate and implement various recreation plans within the historic district [AMFTF].

# ALTERNATIVE 2

## GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME EMPHASIZE THEIR RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

georgetown-silver plume historic district  
united states department of the interior / national park service

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 HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

NOTE: MAP DEPICTS ENTIRE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

### RECREATION

- TRAILS
- MINING INTERPRETATION
- SCENIC OVERLOOKS
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATION

### SILVER PLUME

- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- VISITOR ORIENTATION
- HISTORIC BUSINESS DISTRICT
- INTERPRETATION
- RESIDENTIAL

### RECREATION

- TRAILS
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATION
- SCENIC OVERLOOKS
- LAKE
- SCENIC ROADS
- FISHING

### RECREATION

- TRAILS
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATION

### CONTEMPORARY GEORGETOWN

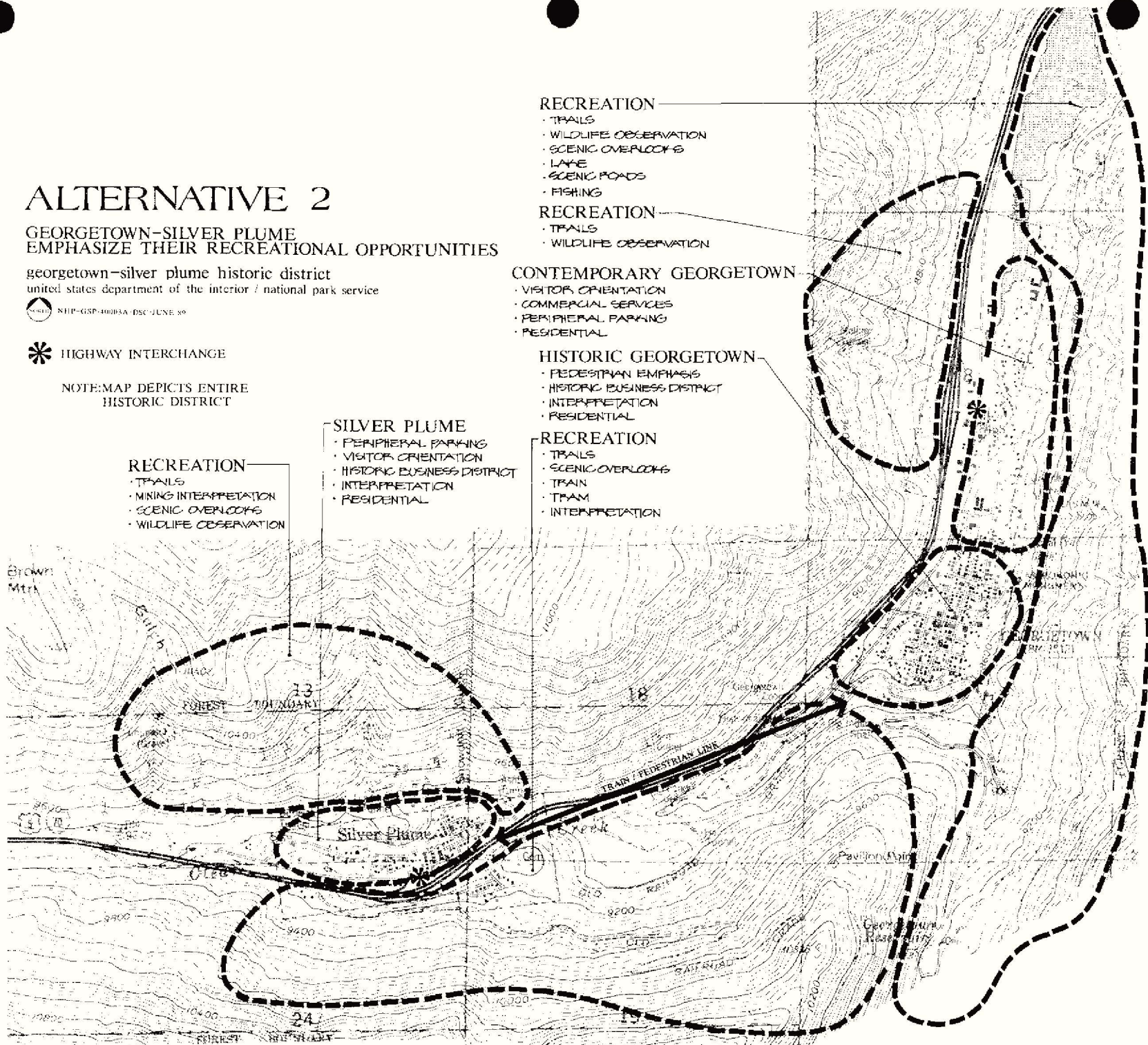
- VISITOR ORIENTATION
- COMMERCIAL SERVICES
- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- RESIDENTIAL

### HISTORIC GEORGETOWN

- PEDESTRIAN EMPHASIS
- HISTORIC BUSINESS DISTRICT
- INTERPRETATION
- RESIDENTIAL

### RECREATION

- TRAILS
- SCENIC OVERLOOKS
- TRAIN
- TRAM
- INTERPRETATION



Under this alternative, the National Park Service would not have a physical presence or funding responsibility in the study area, and would limit its participation to technical assistance provided under existing programs.

Given the study area's size, the number of landowners and government or agency jurisdictions involved, and the potential to incorporate the study area with surrounding recreation facilities, a single responsible agency to oversee the development and operation of the Georgetown-Silver Plume study area would be desirable. The jurisdiction having common interest throughout the study area would be Clear Creek County, so there might be merit in establishing such an umbrella agency at that level of government. This commission or board could take several forms, but it should, at a minimum, be representative of the governments, agencies, foundations, organizations, and individuals having property interests in the study area that relate to recreation and tourism development. The commission or board should also have some managerial powers to schedule development work, seek funding, and regulate the facility. The commission or board should establish recreation goals and guidelines for natural resource protection that would be uniform throughout the area [AMFTF]. Funding would most desirably be accomplished through user fees, bed taxes, sales tax, and

donations. It is envisioned that the board members having vested interests in the success of this venture would donate their time to this effort.

**Resource Management.** The identification of existing and potential resources is the initial step in the development of the study area. Several of these have already been identified by the National Register of Historic Places and by current preservation efforts. Many significant resources have not had the benefit of a sponsor or sympathetic owner, and therefore face the risk of being lost to dilapidation and neglect. The preservation, protection, and restoration of historic, natural, and cultural resources are essential to the success of this alternative because it is these tangible examples of the mining history that will convey the interpretive theme(s) and reinforce the visitor's experience. These resources must be integrated into a cohesive unit or network, which, in this case, would be centered on recreation as the initial attraction of visitors to the study area.

**Interpretation and Visitor Use.** The overall theme of this alternative is to explain the evolution of mining towns in this region. The interrelationship of the various cultural, natural, and economic elements of such mining regions are tightly woven, giving rise to several subthemes as one reviews the history and development of the area.

Suggested themes would include the following:

Natural Environment

Geology

Botany

Zoology

Local History

Cultural Evolution

Social Evolution

Economic Growth and  
Development

Mining and Its Effects on the  
Environment

Natural Environment

Social Environment

Cultural Environment

Economic Environment

The orientation of the visitor would be accomplished by way of interpretive signs throughout the study area. The emphasis would be to provide a pedestrian-oriented experience that would link the various resources using a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities designed to attract a cross-section of visitors. The visitor would be exposed to the full range of features and history provided by the study area based on his/her particular selection of recreational activities. Explanatory signs and maps would be incorporated with the more "conscious"

visitor pursuits such as shopping, hiking/backpacking, sight-seeing, fishing/ice fishing, organized tours, photography, bicycling/mountain bicycling, horseback riding, picnicking, mountaineering, bird-watching/wildlife viewing, or even cross-country skiing throughout the study area [AMFTF]. Other recreational opportunities, such as tram rides, scenic or wildlife overlooks, and local and cultural events, could be developed and presented at historically significant sites throughout the area and supported by interpretive signs. Emphasis would be placed on the mining heritage here, but it should also relate to the surrounding mine development areas, including both boom towns and ghost towns, which were equally or more significant in the area's growth and history.

**Development.** Several facility deficiencies would have to be addressed to successfully implement this alternative. Access to the study area is good (via I-70), but circulation within the towns could be improved. Infrastructure elements such as water and sewer system capacities, parking facilities, and additional site furnishings such as benches, lights, trash containers, drinking fountains, and public toilets would also require installation or improvement. Based on the pedestrian-oriented concept, there would be a need to provide trail and walk routes through the area, improve existing park

facilities, and provide visitor contact stations. Reconstruction of some historic facilities such as the Silver Plume Tram and the Silver Plume Pavilion might be desirable, along with newer facilities such as cross-country ski trails and wildlife viewing platforms. Safety should be of primary importance under this concept of primarily self-guiding tours. An inventory of mine shafts, tunnels, and adits must be conducted and steps taken to seal these openings for visitor safety. In the towns, flood control measures might be required to protect residents, visitors, and resources. Attention must be given to accessibility by the handicapped, and some modifications of existing curbs, walks, and building entries would be necessary to accomplish this.

#### **Impacts**

No properties would be removed from the local tax rolls, and no private property owners would be displaced.

The costs of facility development would be borne locally through private funding, donations, fees, or such avenues as benefit districts.

Vehicular traffic locally, both in the towns and on I-70, would likely increase, dictating that future improvements to circulation systems,

including I-70, be undertaken sooner than anticipated.

Vehicular noise would likely increase, as would noise from the loop railroad, if visitation increased as a result of the improvements proposed under this alternative.

There would be less residential privacy, especially in the historic neighborhoods, because of increased pedestrian traffic. Options on self-guiding tours and recreational activities would open the entire district to visitors, to the potential detriment of local lifestyles.

Expanded recreational opportunities would appeal to a broader segment of the tourist population, increasing both visitation and tourist spending, and thereby increasing local and county governments' shares of sales tax revenues.

Employment opportunities would be created at a variety of levels under this alternative, including seasonal and permanent maintenance and service jobs, construction, and rehabilitation of facilities.

Greater demands would be placed on public facilities and utilities, including an increased need for water and sewer capacity, more and better sidewalk and street routes, parking

areas, parks, public restrooms, traffic signals, and police protection.

Opportunities would be enhanced for the creation of "spin-off" or support businesses such as tours, restaurants, and ski rentals, which would broaden the local business community and provide a stronger foundation for the continued development of the study area facilities.

Creation of another layer of bureaucracy at the county level might cause some resentment locally, since the county would now be directly involved in raising, controlling, expending, and administering funds in an area where they have had little influence, interest, or impact in the past. This might be construed as an encroachment by the private preservationists who have already invested heavily in the area's historic properties.

Liabilities arising from the more dangerous aspects of the study area, such as open mine shafts, might drive up the cost of liability insurance for the governments in the district. This would also bring up the question of what party would have overall responsibility for any accidents that might occur in the district. Would it be the individual property owner on whose grounds the accident occurred, or would it be the entire district's responsibility, through their management board and the county government?

Maintenance costs throughout the district would increase as a broader range of facilities are brought into the system. This would place a continuous drain on revenues generated and fees paid, making it continually harder to stretch the money to cover all the necessary maintenance. It is likely that a saturation point in recreational offerings could and would be reached under this concept, and that all programming and development should be undertaken with this potential in mind.

Mining exploration and operations would continue subject to existing regulations.

#### **Cost Estimates**

No additional NPS funding would be expended under this alternative. The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management might be requested to make additional expenditure of funds as well as state, county, and local government agencies.

#### **ALTERNATIVE 3: GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME INCREASE THEIR ECONOMIC VIABILITY**

##### **Description**

This alternative would attempt to capitalize on the distinctive resources of the


Georgetown-Silver Plume area to attract an increased level of recreational visitors and expenditures to the communities. Economic development and diversity would be encouraged, while preserving cultural and historic resources at the highest possible level of integrity. The study area's economic potential would be maximized through the use of some of the existing historic structures for commercial purposes, as well as through the development of new appropriate and compatible enterprises. This alternative would be largely dependent on entrepreneurship and innovation from private individuals and groups. A fundamental consideration that would pervade all potential plans and actions that might stem from this alternative is the perpetuation of the unique and special quality of life currently enjoyed by residents in the study area. Depending on the success of the private ventures within the study area, this alternative could be expected to provide a major stimulus for the economic revitalization of Georgetown and Silver Plume.


**Management and Operations.** The management of specific facilities and resources under this alternative would be largely the responsibility of private individuals and groups. There would be no NPS presence in the study area, although the agency could provide funding and technical assistance within the limits of existing

# ALTERNATIVE 3

## GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME INCREASE THEIR ECONOMIC VIABILITY

georgetown-silver plume historic district  
 united states department of the interior / national park service

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 HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

NOTE: MAP DEPICTS ENTIRE  
 HISTORIC DISTRICT

### SILVER PLUME

- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- VISITOR ORIENTATION/SERVICES
- RESIDENTIAL
- SPECIAL CULTURAL EVENTS
- OVERNIGHT LODGING

### RECREATION

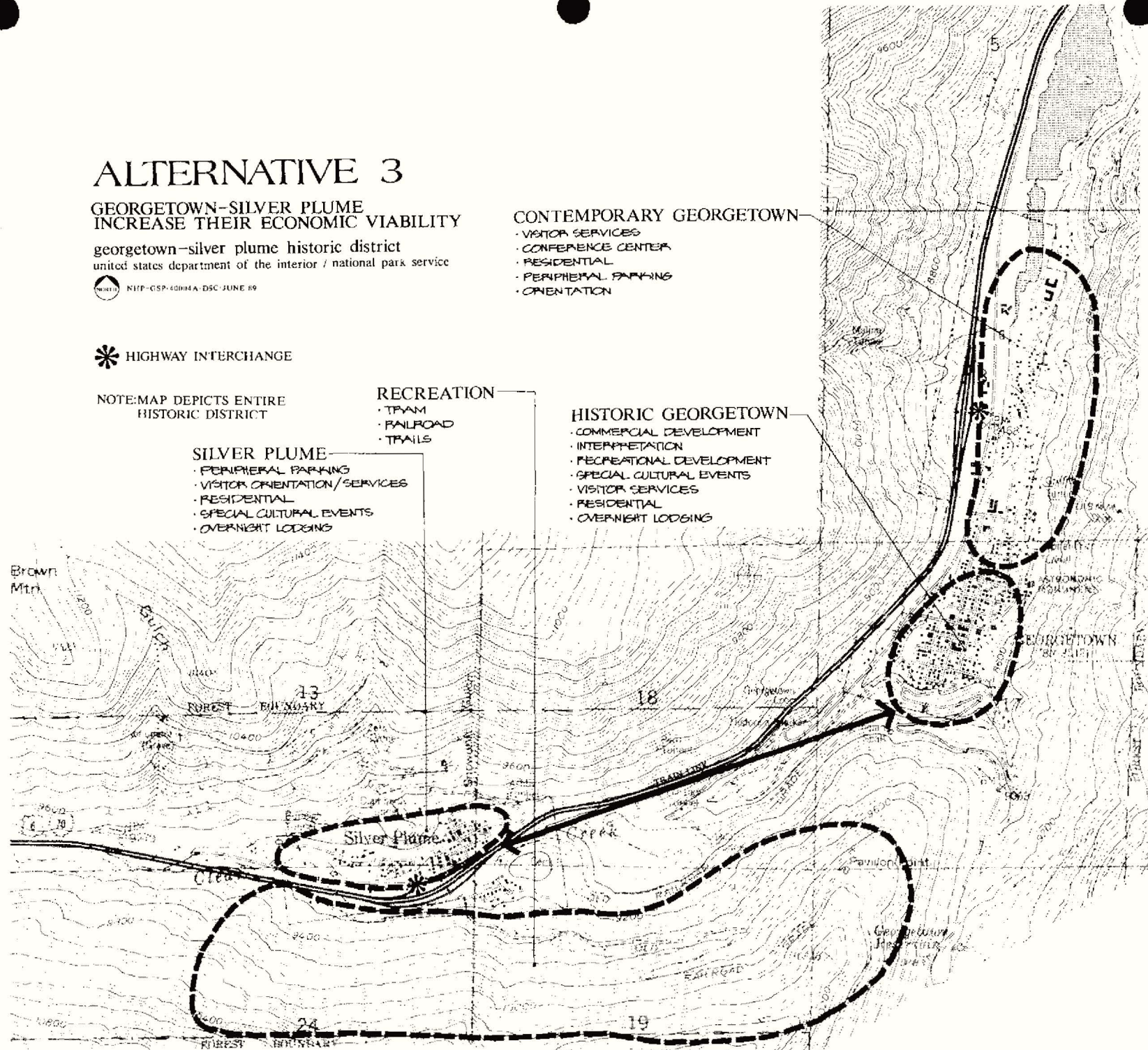
- TRAM
- RAILROAD
- TRAILS

### HISTORIC GEORGETOWN

- COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT
- INTERPRETATION
- RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- SPECIAL CULTURAL EVENTS
- VISITOR SERVICES
- RESIDENTIAL
- OVERNIGHT LODGING

### CONTEMPORARY GEORGETOWN

- VISITOR SERVICES
- CONFERENCE CENTER
- RESIDENTIAL
- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- ORIENTATION





programs, such as the National Historic Landmarks Fund, grants-in-aid program, and HABS/HAER recording.

A Board of Economic Development and Resource Preservation would be established to coordinate and oversee activities relating to the attraction of business and tourism to the communities, as well the protection of the area's historic, cultural, and natural resources. The board could consist of between five and fifteen individuals who would be selected from government agencies, the business community, preservation organizations, and private citizens [AMFTF]. Responsibilities of the board might include the following:

- Monitor the availability of funds from government and other sources that could be used to advance historic preservation, tourism, or economic development. When appropriate, the board could initiate the application process for such funds.
- Monitor the proposals and actions of the public and private sectors to ensure that all initiatives are compatible with established comprehensive land use and resource preservation guidelines.
- Communicate and coordinate with government agencies such as the Colorado Tourism Board, the Economic

Development Agency, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development on matters relating to the concerns of Georgetown and Silver Plume.

- Actively seek to identify and attract businesses and private interests who could provide a positive impact on economic or preservation activities.

**Resource Management.** Resource management strategies under this alternative would be designed to encourage recreationists to visit Georgetown and Silver Plume and to remain there for extended periods of time. The resources of the study area would be managed to instill in visitors the perception of the study area as an enjoyable place to visit on a regular basis. Several tactics might be employed to achieve this goal.

The rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of selected historic structures for commercial purposes would be encouraged. In addition, historic resources that have been lost could be reconstructed to expand the range of visitor options. Any potential adaptive reuse would adhere to the preservation and design standards as established by the local communities. The design of historic buildings that are to be reconstructed would be carefully researched to ensure their authenticity as compared to the original structures. Original

site locations would be used wherever possible.

An initiative would be implemented to encourage nationally known companies to locate franchises in the study area. Local individuals would be eligible to compete for these franchises. Such businesses, which would provide products or services required by the average traveler and recreationist, would be promoted in ways that would tend to attract motorists off I-70 and into the communities. The franchises would be required to locate in rehabilitated or compatible-appearing buildings within the historic district. Parking space for the establishments would be designed to not intrude on the historical ambience of the towns. By locating such businesses within the historic district, the I-70 motorist who was unfamiliar with the area would be exposed to the resources of Georgetown and Silver Plume. This exposure should encourage a portion of the motorists to explore the district before returning to the freeway, or to return to the area another time. The development of franchise businesses near the freeway interchange and at locations outside the historic district would be discouraged or prohibited, as this would not tend to stimulate exploration of the communities.

An aggressive marketing campaign would be implemented to promote the Georgetown-

Silver Plume area as a viable and interesting alternative for the expenditure of leisure time and money. Special target markets for the campaign would be the Denver metropolitan area and the greater Rocky Mountain region. Other target groups would include those with a special interest in the history of the western United States, the mining industry, or railroading. The study area would be promoted in regional newspapers, general interest magazines, and possibly on local radio or television. Other target markets could be reached through advertisements and articles in magazines and newsletters that are popular with members of the special interest groups named above. Additional promotions could be mailed to individuals whose names can be obtained from the mailing lists of historical societies and clubs. Promotional literature would be published and then distributed through regional chambers of commerce, tourism agencies, hotels, restaurants, and recreational facilities [AMFTF]. Literature would also be provided to travel agents and tour guides, as well as to professional educators of all levels.

Cooperative marketing agreements should also be pursued with other regional recreation facilities and attractions to include information on Georgetown-Silver Plume in their promotional activities. Every effort should be made to get materials on the study area included in the information/orientation

packets for conferences, retreats, and special events that are held in Denver and in surrounding mountain communities.

The local business community would be encouraged to develop programs that would both complement and expand on the formal marketing program as outlined above. Businesses might wish to consider subsidizing a portion of the preservation and operating costs of local historic properties in order to lower admission fees. Businesses might also wish to sponsor more special events such as the Christmas Market to attract more visitors to the communities.

The operators of historic properties should consider developing discount admission packages to their facilities. Admission discounts for senior citizens and large groups should also be considered.

**Interpretation and Visitor Use.** The principal interpretive theme that would be emphasized under this alternative is the importance of business and tourism in the evolution of the Georgetown-Silver Plume area. Mining, cultural heritage, social life, natural resources, and other topics would be interwoven within the principal emphasis as important subthemes.

The villages of Georgetown and, to a lesser extent, Silver Plume were once an important

commercial hub and service center of an extensive Rocky Mountain mining district. A comprehensive selection of merchandise from all over the nation was available in the communities. As the supply and demand for silver and other minerals began to decline, the need for the goods and services of support businesses also waned. Business establishments began to close as the fickle prosperity of the mining industry moved on to the next boom town. Soon, the only commercial enterprises that remained were those few that were necessary to support the remnants of the once-burgeoning population.

Although mining had been the historical mainstay of Georgetown and Silver Plume, private entrepreneurs quickly developed initiatives to capitalize on the extraordinary scenic beauty of the area, as well as the inherent intrigue of a 19th-century western mining town. Recreational rail excursions originated in Denver and transported tourists to Georgetown and on to Mt. Evans. Numerous hotels and rooming houses provided accommodations for tourists from Colorado's Front Range, the United States, and Europe. The efforts of these early travel agents were embellished by journalists and artists who romanticized the mountains, the Indians, and even the hardships of life in a mining town.

The orientation of visitors to the resources and heritage of Georgetown and Silver Plume would be accomplished through a multifaceted interpretive program. Informational and interpretive signs and displays would be erected throughout the study area. Both guided and self-guided tours of the historic district would be offered. Special cultural events that are relevant to the historic culture of the communities would be presented on a regular basis.

**Development.** As the economic vitality alternative would likely spur new development, both communities would need to assess the adequacy of current land use controls and resource protection mechanisms. The communities should evaluate long-range protection goals in consideration of the elements of the alternative. Current comprehensive land use and resource protection plans might require revision to ensure the preservation of historic assets and the perpetuation of the unique quality of life.

The types of development that might be associated with the implementation of this alternative are many and varied. The attraction of nationally known franchises could manifest itself in the form of dining and/or lodging establishments. Some of these businesses might be able to locate in rehabilitated historic structures. Local property owners might wish to consider

converting privately owned residences to bed-and-breakfast inns.

Among the several types of museums that could be considered for development by both the public and private sectors are the following:

*A general theme* museum could interpret all aspects of the history of the study area. The museum would complement the programs currently being provided by facilities such as the Hamill House and Hotel de Paris.

*A mining museum* could be developed to depict the history of ore and mineral extraction in the Georgetown-Silver Plume area. The theme of such a museum might even be expanded to include the history of mining in Colorado. In addition to traditional displays and audiovisual media presentations, a mining museum might include see-and-do activities for the visitors (e.g., panning for gold). The museum could integrate its programming with the tours that are currently being offered at the Lebanon Mine complex to provide recreationists with a broader educational opportunity.

*A wax museum* or similar facility might be designed to tell the story of the study area in a style featuring integrated

educational displays, including historic artifacts, life-like human statues, and scenic dioramas.

*A railroad museum* might be established featuring the artifacts pertaining to the style and content of the local area railroads located in the former Colorado and Southern Railway Station. A locomotive and car exhibit could be placed just outside the building. Although there is a good railroad museum with national recognition in Golden, the possibility of a narrowly focused museum related to transportation in the district and surrounding mining areas has promise. It would be a complement to the Loop Railroad and would use the historic Colorado and Southern Railway Station itself [AMFTF].

Other recreational developments might include the reconstruction of the aerial tram that formerly ascended Leavenworth Mountain and the reconstruction or adaptive reuse of the Argentine Central Railroad right-of-way.

The communities could also consider the construction of a small conference/retreat center. It could be a separate development, or it could be combined with a visitor information center, an existing motel or restaurant, or a future motel or restaurant.

The increase in visitation that would be expected to accompany the implementation of this alternative would require several modifications and additions to the current physical infrastructure of the communities. To mitigate the effects of an increase in intracity traffic volume, peripheral visitor parking would be encouraged. This would require the construction of a parking facility on the outskirts of the historic district. Sidewalks and/or trails would be constructed for those visitors who chose to walk through the communities. A shuttle system would need to be provided for those individuals who are mobility impaired or who prefer to be transported to various attractions [AMFTF]. Consideration could be given to re-creating period vehicles for use as shuttles.

Other visitor facilities and conveniences that would have to be added or improved include public restrooms, drinking fountains, orientation signs or kiosks, trash receptacles, benches, and lighting [AMFTF]. The capacities of water and sewer systems might also need to be expanded. All development should consider the needs of the handicapped.

Finally, an increase in the level of commercial and recreational developments might result in an increase in the population of the study area, necessitating additional housing opportunities (both single family and

multiunit dwellings), which would create more congestion in the area.

### Impacts

No properties would be removed from the local tax rolls, and no private property owners would be displaced.

Implementation of this alternative would have several impacts on the communities of Georgetown and Silver Plume. The most obvious impact would be an increase in the level of recreation visitation and the attraction of new businesses. In addition, this alternative would allow Georgetown and Silver Plume to help determine and plan for growth and the direction of their future.

Historic and cultural resources that are currently being subjected to varying degrees of neglect and degradation would be preserved and enhanced. Adaptive reuse of historic structures would facilitate their preservation and upkeep. The coordination activities of the Board of Economic Development and Resource Preservation would serve to diminish the unnecessary duplication of efforts on the part of the various preservation groups. The costs associated with the rehabilitation and maintenance of historic structures would continue to be a significant consideration in the budgets of

local governments and preservation organizations. However, a portion of this burden could be assumed by the local business community in the form of subsidies. Further, businesses that were housed in historic structures would assume responsibility for the protection of those facilities.

Implementation of this alternative could result in a number of significant fiscal impacts on the study area. An expanded commercial base, combined with an expected increase in tourism, should serve to create economic growth in the communities. As the National Park Service would not maintain a presence in the historic district, there would be no purchase or condemnation of property by the federal government. Thus, no land would be removed from the county's tax rolls. The rehabilitation of historic buildings, as well as the construction of new buildings, could generate short-term economic benefits associated with construction-related activities. The establishment of new commercial enterprises might also require the rezoning of some lands. This rezoning might be accompanied by a modification of assessment on the land, possibly causing property or tax values to rise or fall.

The attraction of new businesses to the study area could result in the creation of new jobs in the study area. This would also add to the

economy, while potentially reducing the unemployment rate of Clear Creek County.

An increase in the number of business establishments and the volume of recreation visitation would likely require improvements to the infrastructure of both Georgetown and Silver Plume. These improvements would require an initial capital outlay, but should be offset in the long term by an increase in tourism expenditures. An increase in tourism might also require the hiring of additional civil servants (police officers, street maintenance workers, etc.) to ensure that community services are maintained at appropriate levels. The increase in tourism might also lead to further traffic congestion and circulation difficulties.

An increase in visitation to Georgetown-Silver Plume could contribute to additional traffic volume along I-70, although any amount should be largely negligible. An increase in recreational use could also cause numerous unpleasant incidents such as trespass and vandalism. Problems such as these can often be diminished by effective interpretive programs, which can create a respect for resources and mitigate many of the negative impacts that are often associated with visitor use. Further, interpretation would enhance the visitor's understanding of the resources and heritage of the study area. To reduce the risk of liability and tort claims, the

infrastructure of the communities, as well as any facilities that might tend to attract recreational use, should be carefully evaluated to identify and correct any conditions that could present a danger to visitors.

The current lifestyle of the communities could be modified by an increase in visitation. The initiatives proposed under this alternative have the possibility of creating population growth, increasing the demand for housing and the enrollment of the school system.

Implementation of this alternative could increase noise and air pollution in the study area. A resurgence in mining activities could potentially degrade the visual quality of the area. Mining also has the potential, if not properly monitored, to cause negative impacts on water supplies and other natural resources in and around the communities. There should be no significant impact on the wildlife in the study area.

Mining exploration and operations would continue subject to existing regulations.

#### **Cost Estimates**

No additional federal funds would be expended under this alternative.

## **ALTERNATIVE 4: GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME BUILD ON THEIR PAST**

### **Description**

The roots of Georgetown and Silver Plume are firmly planted in silver mining. With the demise of silver mining the roots did not die -- they simply lay dormant for awhile, waiting to provide nourishment to the people who love the small town way of life and the beauty of the Rocky Mountain setting. The people of Georgetown and Silver Plume have adjusted and found new ways to sustain their coveted lifestyle without losing their understanding and love of the past that shaped their towns. This alternative proposes to sustain this dynamic way of life which reveres the past, lives in the present, and looks to the future.

**Management and Operations.** Management of the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District would continue at the local level. Local planning and review boards have been responsible for implementing zoning controls to preserve the historic setting of Georgetown and Silver Plume. They have also supported the efforts of individuals and organizations to obtain funding for historic preservation and to manage the historic landmark resources. Unfortunately, actions are often scattered because there is no comprehensive plan of action or a single body to coordinate efforts.

# ALTERNATIVE 4

## GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME BUILD ON THEIR PAST

georgetown-silver plume historic district  
united states department of the interior / national park service

89-13 NHP-GSP-4002A-DSC-JUNE 89

\* HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

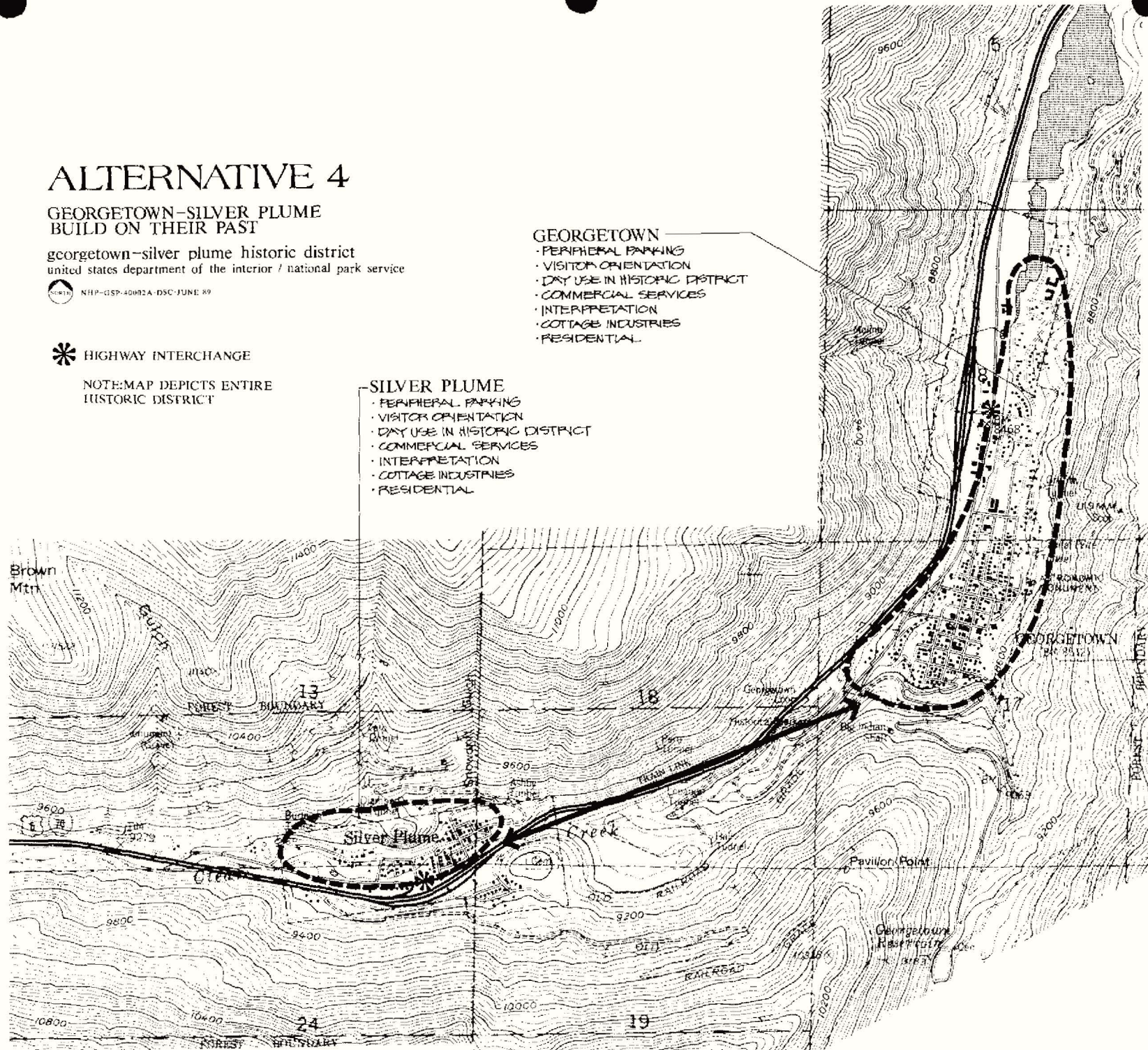
NOTE: MAP DEPICTS ENTIRE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

### GEORGETOWN

- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- VISITOR ORIENTATION
- DAY USE IN HISTORIC DISTRICT
- COMMERCIAL SERVICES
- INTERPRETATION
- COTTAGE INDUSTRIES
- RESIDENTIAL

### SILVER PLUME

- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- VISITOR ORIENTATION
- DAY USE IN HISTORIC DISTRICT
- COMMERCIAL SERVICES
- INTERPRETATION
- COTTAGE INDUSTRIES
- RESIDENTIAL



This alternative proposes that a foundation or commission be formed that is made up of a representative cross-section of townspeople, local and county governments, and any other affected groups or individuals. The responsibility of this group would be to consolidate and prioritize preservation needs and proposals for development, ensure that existing zoning controls are implemented, and ensure that available funding is applied to actions in a logical order.

Through a legislative effort, the National Park Service would provide a one-time funding in the range of \$500,000 to be applied to the most urgent preservation and use needs. These funds would be administered by the Park Service through the foundation or commission. Legislation would be required because the Park Service does not have the financial resources required to implement this alternative. The Park Service would also provide technical assistance upon request and within the framework of existing grants-in-aid programs. This alternative includes the option of the state's participation in providing all or a portion of the one-time funding assistance.

**Resource Management.** Preservation of cultural resources would be a high priority. The proposed foundation or commission would coordinate the preparation of an analysis of all cultural resources, their

significance, and their condition. Resources would be prioritized on the basis of significance and need for treatment. Available preservation funding would then be allotted on the basis of this systematic analysis.

To maintain the present quality of life enjoyed by the residents of Georgetown and Silver Plume, measures to control development and population growth should be implemented. Zoning regulations now in effect would be continued and strengthened as necessary. Visitation, while welcome, would also be subtly regulated in order to sustain the ambience for which visitors come to the area and which is important to the well-being of the residents.

Natural resources are an integral part of the setting and the attraction of Georgetown and Silver Plume. Existing measures would be continued and strengthened to ensure the protection and conservation of these resources.

**Visitor Use and Interpretation.** People would be encouraged to visit Georgetown and Silver Plume. Through interpretation, visitors would have the opportunity to learn the history of the towns (historic district) and that these are dynamic, functioning towns. The people living here are proud of their heritage, love their way of life, and want to share it, but at the same time, they do not want it changed

significantly and do not want to be looked at as a curiosity or an exhibit.

Orientation would be provided at the entrance to each town to inform visitors of the opportunities available, where to go, and to respect the privacy and property of the residents while enjoying the towns.

In order to fully develop the story of Georgetown and Silver Plume, the following interpretive themes or topics should be covered:

Geology – primarily as it relates to the presence of commercial ores and topographic challenges to mining and settlement

Natural environment – as it relates to sustaining settlement of the area; presence of basic needs (water, food, and building materials); its effect on the miners (isolation, beauty, and avalanches)

Mining – discovery, development, processing; includes the interrelationship with nearby mining areas (Black Hawk, Central City, Idaho Springs, and Leadville)

### Mining Era

- Lifestyles of the miners
- Social diversity
- Ethnic composition and diversity
- Absentee mine owners and backers
- Individualism
- Boom and bust periods
- Transportation – trails, roads, and railroads
- Effects of mining on the natural environment

### Community Development – past, present, and future

- Physical – commercial enterprises, homes, and schools
- Social – activities
- Tourism – attracted by the beauty of the Rocky Mountains, interest in mining, and the excitement of riding the Georgetown Loop Railroad
- Lifestyle – changes, similarities, effects of development and tourism

**Development.** New visitor use facilities would be limited to those for daytime activities. Orientation facilities would be placed near the entrance to both Silver Plume and Georgetown, and peripheral parking and restrooms would be provided at each orientation facility. Adequate walkways

would be provided to encourage people to walk to and through the towns. Handicap access would be provided either through a shuttle system or by designating parking space in each downtown area.

Cottage industries such as crafts or other small-scale activities would be encouraged to increase economic diversity and community stability.

### Impacts

No properties would be removed from the local tax rolls, and no private property owners would be displaced.

Establishment of a local commission or foundation would allow for autonomous management by all interested parties and provide a coordinated and cohesive approach to preservation, development, and interpretation.

One-time funding from the National Park Service would provide a good start to resolving preservation needs, but it might be difficult to obtain ongoing funding for preservation, development, and visitor services.

Prioritizing preservation needs would ensure that the most critical resources are given

immediate attention as funds become available.

Regulating growth might limit opportunities for economic development of the communities.

Comprehensive interpretation would not only provide visitors with an understanding of the history of Georgetown and Silver Plume, but also instill the idea that these are living, dynamic towns and that property and privacy of the residents must be respected.

An increase in information and orientation might bring more visitors to the historic district, which in turn might increase problems of vandalism, noise, and congestion, and put additional strain on city services (water, sewer, police, etc.). Effective interpretation as noted above would mitigate some of these effects.

Implementation of circulation and peripheral parking proposals would mitigate downtown congestion and parking problems.

Mining exploration and operations would continue subject to existing regulations.



## Cost Estimates

Through additional legislation, funds would be made available to the National Park Service to provide a *one-time grant* in the range of \$500,000 to provide seed money for the foundation or commission.

### **ALTERNATIVE 5: GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME PRESERVE THEIR PAST WITH NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ASSISTANCE**

#### **Description**

Implementation of this alternative involves the identification and preservation of the diverse cultural resources in the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District. This alternative would concentrate on those resources that represent the evolving Rocky Mountain mining activity and its supporting infrastructure. Visitor understanding and appreciation of America's frontier mining past would be enhanced. The development of the two communities from 1859 to the present would be emphasized and interpreted.

**Management and Operations.** Congress would designate the Georgetown-Silver Plume National Historical Park, which would be administered by the National Park Service. If this were to occur, the National Park Service

would prepare a general management plan as well as other appropriate planning documents with full public involvement to determine specific needs for the newly authorized national park system unit.

NPS presence in the Georgetown-Silver Plume area would consist of a leased or purchased site from a willing-seller or donated to the National Park Service for administrative headquarters/visitor center and preservation/maintenance building(s). These activities might be housed in one or more structures. The minimum physical presence would be preferred with the fee simple acquisition of a site being used only as a last resort. This office staff might include at the maximum a maintenance crew, and interpretive, preservation, and administrative staffs.

The majority of park activities would be conducted by cooperative agreements with state, county, and local governments, private organizations and individuals, and other federal agencies. The National Park Service would provide technical and preservation assistance to maintain the cultural resources of the community based on a priority system that favors those structures listed on the national historic landmark form or individually on the National Register of Historic Places. Preference would be given to those preservation projects in which NPS

funds could be supplemented by additional funding from state, county, and local governments, private organizations and individuals, and/or other federal agencies. Individual structures would remain under the various owners as well as public and private entities except for any that might be donated or willing-sold to the National Park Service [AMFTF].


Under this alternative, organizations such as the Colorado Historical Society, the Georgetown Society, People for Silver Plume, and Colonial Dames would continue as viable, active organizations. However, the National Park Service would spearhead the creation of a commission to coordinate the activities of these groups. This commission would also include representatives from local, county, state, and federal governments and the private sector. The purpose of the commission would be to coordinate all preservation efforts and to act both as a clearinghouse and fund-generating organization for community preservation efforts.


**Management and Operations Option A:** The National Park Service would not participate in the establishment of a coordinating preservation commission; instead, this would be accomplished by existing agencies and organizations. The National Park Service would not take an active role in Georgetown-Silver Plume, and

# ALTERNATIVE 5

GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME  
PRESERVE THEIR PAST WITH  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ASSISTANCE

georgetown-silver plume historic district  
united states department of the interior / national park service

 NHP-GSP 40005A-DSC-JUNE 89

 HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

NOTE: MAP DEPICTS ENTIRE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

INTERPRETATION

- TRAILS
- MINING

SILVER PLUME

- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- VISITOR ORIENTATION
- COMMERCIAL SERVICES
- INTERPRETATION
- PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES
- RESIDENTIAL

HISTORIC GEORGETOWN

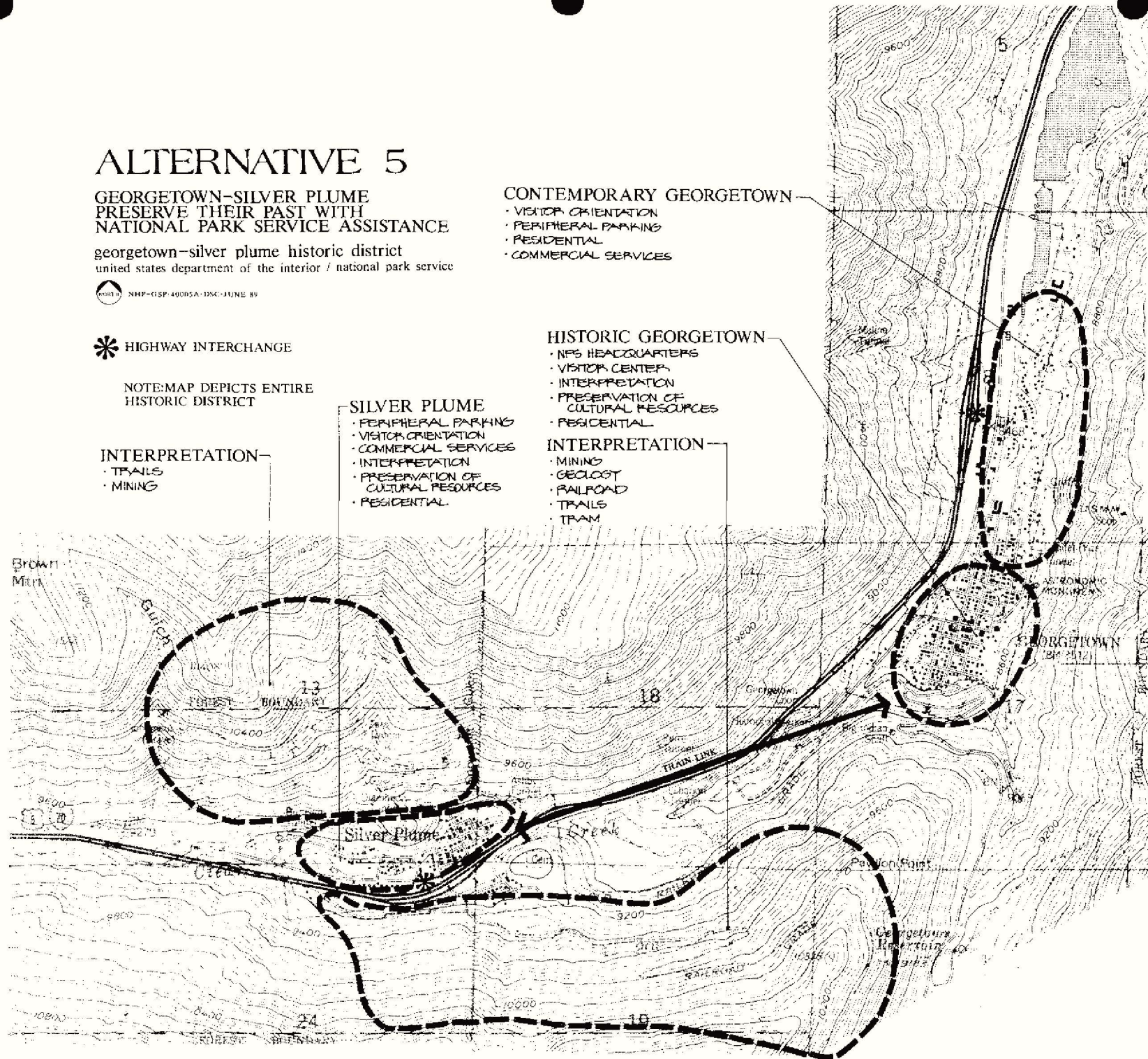
- NPS HEADQUARTERS
- VISITOR CENTER
- INTERPRETATION
- PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL RESOURCES
- RESIDENTIAL

INTERPRETATION

- MINING
- GEOLOGY
- RAILROAD
- TRAILS
- TRAM

CONTEMPORARY GEORGETOWN

- VISITOR ORIENTATION
- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL SERVICES



no NPS funds would be expended to preserve local resources. This area would not be a unit of the national park system; instead, another federal, state, county, local, semiprivate, or private sector entity would accomplish the goals outlined in this alternative.

**Management and Operations Option B:**

The National Park Service would acquire on a willing-seller basis all cultural resources necessary to efficiently and effectively manage the Georgetown-Silver Plume National Historical Park. This would include, but not be limited to, resources listed on the national historic landmark nomination form and National Register of Historic Places.

**Resource Management.** This alternative involves the complete identification and inventory of cultural resources, including prehistoric and historic period archeological materials, within the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District – mines, miner's cabins, mill and smelter sites, roads, trails, and railroad beds. Once these sites and structures were identified, efforts would be undertaken to protect and preserve significant resources.

Currently identified resources such as the Hamill House, Georgetown Loop Railroad, and Hotel de Paris would continue to be managed by existing organizations unless they were donated to the National Park Service. In addition, these organizations

could receive technical assistance and funding through cooperative agreements, legislative action, or existing programs, such as the National Historic Landmarks Fund, Historic Preservation Fund, and federal tax incentives. Preservation needs for the communities' cultural resources would be prioritized in order to effectively and systematically protect individual resources in a comprehensive manner. Natural resources would be preserved to protect the visual and scenic quality that exists today in Georgetown and Silver Plume.

**Interpretation and Visitor Use.** Interpretive services would be coordinated to provide visitors with an understanding of the geological processes that resulted in the rich mineral deposits in the area and the subsequent exploitation of these resources by 19th- and 20th-century miners. In order to fully develop the story of Georgetown and Silver Plume, the following interpretive themes or topics should be covered:

**Geology** – describe the natural process that resulted in the precious ores and the variety of valuable minerals being deposited in the valley of Clear Creek.

**Natural Environment** – describe the natural resources (water, food, and building material) and how this contributed to the development of the

mining district. Also describe the effects of isolation, natural beauty, and natural threats (i.e., avalanches) on the people that lived and worked in these communities.

**Mining** – describe the discovery, development, and processing of minerals in the Rocky Mountain mining community, including the interrelationship between all the mining communities in Colorado.

**Other Aspects of Mining Frontier** – discuss social and economic aspects of the miners, mine managers, and mine owners. Describe the ethnic diversity of the mining community and the contributions of each ethnic group to the growth and development of the two mining communities. Describe the development of the business community that provided support for the mining development along with the creation of a transportation system of roads, trails, and railroads that opened the mines to the commercial markets. Describe the role of individuals and corporations in the development of mining industry along with the economic growth and decline of the industry. Describe the effects of mining on the natural environment.

Visitors would be encouraged not only to visit the major attractions like the Georgetown Loop Railroad, Hotel de Paris, and Hamill House, but also lesser known resources in the area and other Colorado mining communities. This could take the form of walking tours and interpretive talks.

Orientation would be provided at the entrance to each town where the visitor would be informed of the various opportunities available and the need to respect the privacy and property of the residents while enjoying the towns.

**Development.** The park boundary would consist of the present national historic landmark designation. Because only little or no land would be purchased by the National Park Service, cooperative agreements with other managing agencies would be necessary to protect the resources. Visual easements and existing and possibly new zoning restrictions would be used to protect the historic scene.

Federal funding would be used mainly for the preservation and restoration of extant cultural resources in the historic district. No funds would be used for reconstruction of structures and features that no longer exist.

Orientation facilities would be developed near the entrance to Georgetown and Silver Plume from I-70. The administrative

headquarters/visitor center and preservation/maintenance building(s) might be located in historic structures adaptively used or as part of the orientation facilities. Parking and restrooms would be provided at each orientation facility. Handicap access would be provided either through a shuttle system or by designated parking spaces near the cultural resources. A trail system would be developed using the historic alignment of the Argentine and Central Railway, Colorado and Southern Railway, and other historic transportation routes.

**Development Option A:** The feasibility of restoring the Georgetown Railroad Station (if extant) for use as a visitor center would be studied. The feasibility of having the Georgetown Loop Railroad extended to the historic station would also be studied. In addition, a study could be conducted on the feasibility of restoring the historic tram system.

### **Impacts**

The historic district and national historic landmark would receive better, more professional preservation and protection than under existing conditions.

Visitors would gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the area's heritage and the

role of Georgetown and Silver Plume in the broader context of U.S. history.

The identification of currently unevaluated cultural resources such as archeological materials could lead to their protection and preservation for future generations to appreciate. Funding for the cultural resources of the two communities would be greatly enhanced.

If this alternative were implemented, the costs and annual allocation of funds for a Georgetown-Silver Plume National Historical Park would divert limited NPS funds from existing parks that contain similar resources and prove a continual drain on these funds. This would also obligate valuable federal human resources in terms of personnel and expertise to these communities for a long-term commitment.

If there were increased tourism to the area, local services (water, sewer, street repair, trash) could be marginally affected, thus requiring the upgrading of these services. A potential growth in visitation could affect the perceived "Georgetown lifestyle" by increasing the incidents of trespassing, littering, vandalism, and loss of privacy. These potential incidents could be mitigated by park interpretation and increased law enforcement. Air and noise pollution in the park could be slightly increased.

Increased tourism to the national historical park could bring additional dollars to the local economy and create new jobs and markets for local crafts, thereby providing a catalyst for economic growth and development.

This alternative would increase federal involvement in the community in that the government would take an active role in all aspects of community life affecting the Georgetown-Silver Plume National Historical Park.

There would be no impact on local tax roles if the option was selected that the National Park Service would only lease land or work through cooperative agreements.

This alternative would reduce duplication of effort by the various preservation organizations and be more cost-effective in raising funds for preservation work and in prioritizing preservation needs.

Generally, mining would be permitted within the national historical park where there are valid existing rights to the mineral estates, unless the government purchased all mineral rights in the area. The National Park Service would not purchase existing mineral rights, but would oppose the issuance of permits, leases, and claims – e.g., for further mineral rights.

### **Cost Estimates**

In order to implement option B, Congress would appropriate to the National Park Service up to \$5 million for development and up to \$500,000 annually for staff and maintenance needs.

### **ALTERNATIVE 6: GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME USE THE PAST TO BUILD THEIR FUTURE**

#### **Description**

Under this alternative, a select core area within each community would be restored and/or reconstructed and set aside as a museum "entity." With their heavy emphasis on interpretation through living history, these areas would be physically defined to interpret the expanse and extent of the types of businesses and services found throughout the respective communities during the mining heyday of 1859-93. The management goal would be to provide visitors an insight into the sights, sounds, smells, and overall environmental context and lifestyle found during this historic period. This approach would be primarily commercial in orientation using an area along Sixth Street in Georgetown and Main Street in Silver Plume. Existing residential neighborhoods and commercial areas outside the defined area

would maintain their status quo. In addition, the railroad would be extended into town to interpret its significant historic role in a stronger manner.

**Management and Operations.** Under this alternative, management and operation of the area could be undertaken either by the National Park Service as a national historical park (with possible private concessions or leases) or by a private entrepreneur with no congressional designation. The goal under the former would be educational while the latter would be more commercial in nature. In either case, appropriate land and structures would be purchased for development as required.

A strong central entity would be required for ownership, development, and overall management to ensure economic vitality and a coordinated development/interpretive program. The state would retain ownership and current concession operation of the railroad.


Privately owned structures would be privately managed, provided they were consistent with management goals as outlined by mutual agreement.


**Resource Management.** This alternative would require the collection of all available documents, photographs, drawings, artifacts, and other research tools. Authenticity and

# ALTERNATIVE 6

## GEORGETOWN-SILVER PLUME USE THE PAST TO BUILD THEIR FUTURE

georgetown-silver plume historic district  
united states department of the interior / national park service

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 HIGHWAY INTERCHANGE

NOTE: MAP DEPICTS ENTIRE  
HISTORIC DISTRICT

### SILVER PLUME

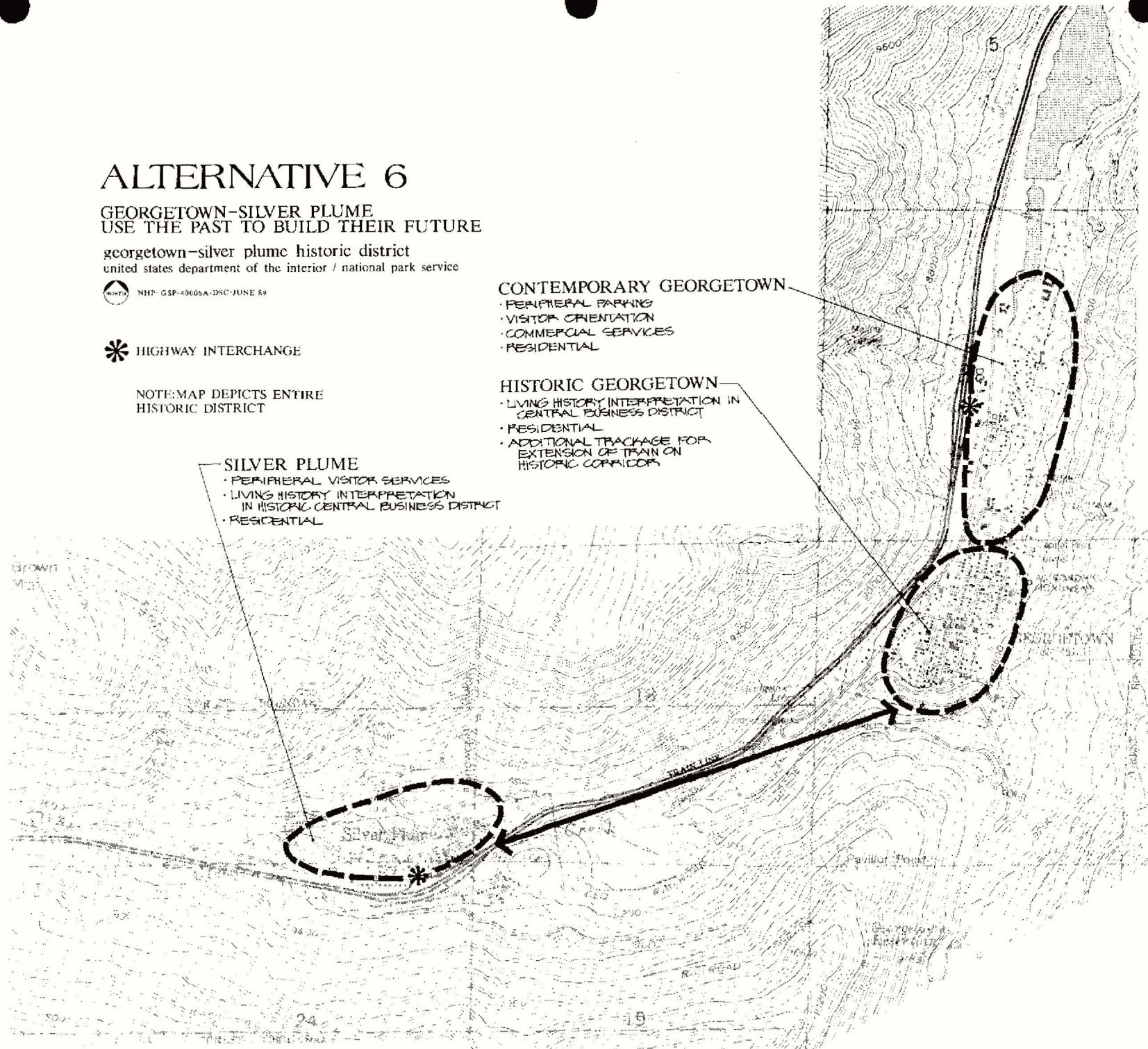
- PERIPHERAL VISITOR SERVICES
- LIVING HISTORY INTERPRETATION  
IN HISTORIC CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- RESIDENTIAL

### CONTEMPORARY GEORGETOWN

- PERIPHERAL PARKING
- VISITOR ORIENTATION
- COMMERCIAL SERVICES
- RESIDENTIAL

### HISTORIC GEORGETOWN

- LIVING HISTORY INTERPRETATION IN  
CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT
- RESIDENTIAL
- ADDITIONAL TRACKAGE FOR  
EXTENSION OF TRAIN ON  
HISTORIC CORRIDOR



economic success in undertakings of this nature require extensive historical research and documentation. Existing buildings within the defined zone would be preserved and/or restored while missing historic structures on currently vacant (but historically developed) land would be reconstructed. Together, they would provide the visual backdrop for a restored city center. Businesses would operate within these structures to portray late 19th-century commercial and service industries. Many of these could be active undertakings as well as *museum* services.

**Interpretation and Visitor Use.** Living history would be the key interpretive element for this alternative. The interpretive objective would be the portrayal of Georgetown and Silver Plume's silver mining history, their growth and development, and commercial support systems. Architecture, the types of *business enterprises* and their products and/or services, people, and dress fashions would all contribute to this portrayal. Wayside exhibits throughout the core and outlying areas would interpret remaining structures. Ongoing restoration and interpretive programs throughout the communities would be unaffected directly.

Interpretation of the railroad would further define the link between the railroad and the towns' development.

**Development.** The majority of development under this alternative would be concentrated in the *core interpretive city center(s)*. Existing structures would undergo building preservation and/or restoration, while missing structures would be reconstructed as required. Together these structures would provide a re-created historic scene, sufficient in scope to meet the interpretive objectives. With the increased level of visitation, additional visitor support services would be required – remote parking, comfort stations, fountains, and trash collection. Additional trackage would be required for extension of the railroad into downtown Georgetown.

Development under this alternative would be coordinated with existing local review commissions, but because of reconstruction, would extend beyond the restraints of their current guidelines. Within the select areas, private ownership and development would be encouraged. Preservation efforts throughout the remainder of the towns would continue as they exist today with current review board authority.

### Impacts

The overall impact of this alternative would be significant in that it would severely change the character and lifestyle of both communities. The trade-off would be one of

giving up this lifestyle for one with a potentially higher degree of economic success.

A significant amount of local control would be lost, in both ownership and political clout, and a certain number of structures could be removed from the local tax rolls if the area was owned by the National Park Service. This would be offset by payment-in lieu-of-taxes. Development of this alternative under private stewardship would remove no structures from the local tax base, but it would alter and possibly expand the revenue source for sales tax.

This alternative would ensure the preservation of local historic and cultural resources. The initial development efforts would provide additional construction-related jobs – jobs that would not inherently be filled by local tradespeople.

The identification of currently unevaluated cultural resources could lead to their protection and preservation for future generations to appreciate. Funding for the cultural resources of the two communities would be enhanced.

It is anticipated that this alternative would result in increased tourism and tourist industry related jobs in the service sector. There would be no major change in employment, but a

shifting of existing employment patterns could result.

### **Cost Estimates**

If this alternative was undertaken by a private entrepreneur, there would be no cost to the federal government. However, if the National Park Service was responsible for implementation of this alternative, the cost could be up to \$10 million for development and \$1 million annually for operations and maintenance. Some of these costs could be recouped by the government if the Georgetown-Silver Plume Historic District became a fee collection area.

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural and cultural resources. This includes fostering wise use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical 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. The department also promotes the goals of the Take Pride in America campaign by encouraging stewardship and citizen responsibility for the public lands and promoting 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 U.S. administration.

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