



Gateway National Recreation Area

Open Houses

Please join us at one of the open houses to learn more about the draft plan, ask questions and share your comments.

Tuesday, August 20, 2013

4:00 to 8:00 pm

Ryan Visitor Center, Floyd Bennett Field
Flatbush Avenue
(before Gil Hodges Bridge)
Brooklyn, NY

Wednesday, August 21, 2013

3:30 to 7:30 pm

Fort Hancock Chapel
(approximately 4.5 miles from
the entrance booths)
Hartshorne Drive
Sandy Hook, NJ
No public transportation available

Thursday, August 22, 2013

4:00 to 8:00 pm

Fort Wadsworth
120 New York Avenue
Staten Island, NY

Tuesday, September 10, 2013

4:00 to 8:00 pm

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Visitor Center
Cross Bay Boulevard
Queens, NY

Thursday, September 12, 2013

3:30 to 7:30 pm

Fort Hancock Chapel
(approximately 4.5 miles
from the entrance booths)
Hartshorne Drive
Sandy Hook, NJ
No public transportation available

Visit the park's website at
<http://www.nps.gov/gate> for
additional information about the
events and weather alerts.

Discovering Gateway – A New Future

It was a bold idea: bring national parks closer to people in cities. Forty years later, that bold idea continues to evolve at Gateway National Recreation Area (Gateway; the park), the country's first urban national recreation area. Gateway was established in 1972 with the dream of bringing a National Park Service (NPS) experience to the New York metropolitan area. In the 21st century, the needs and expectations for a national park experience have changed—and so must Gateway.

Today, Gateway is at a crossroads and a new vision is necessary to shape the park's future. This new vision is found in this Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement (GMP/EIS). This newsletter is an abridged version of the Draft GMP/EIS. It is intended to provide some background to the draft plan and a complete description of the NPS's preferred alternative for future management of the park without reading the full draft plan. While this newsletter provides a complete description of the preferred alternative, the full text of all other sections can be found in the Draft GMP/EIS. The sections not provided in this newsletter include the following: park description, complete description of the management alternatives, affected environment, environmental consequences, user capacity, consultation and coordination efforts, and appendices.

A GMP helps park managers focus on what is most important in carrying out a new 20-year vision for Gateway and the mission of the NPS. Prepared over the last four years, the draft plan contains various ideas for future management of the park. Some



of these came from the public and park partners, and others build upon earlier successes or from lessons learned by day-to-day management of the park since 1972 as directed by the 1979 General Management Plan. Gateway faces many practical challenges in fulfilling responsibilities for natural resources and historic structures, landscapes, and visitor facilities.

This Draft GMP/EIS will guide long-term decision-making about how the NPS will balance preservation and visitation at Gateway. It presents alternative approaches to resource conditions and public use, and it assesses the potential impacts of the alternatives on park resources, visitor experience, and the surrounding area. The plan is available for public review for two months. We welcome your comments on this summary document or on the full-text version of the plan. To read the full plan, to request a hard copy, or to submit comments, please visit www.parkplanning.gov/gate. Your thoughtful comments are important to us and will make a difference as we finalize the plan in the coming year.

Imagining a New Gateway

Gateway covers more than 40 square miles in New York and New Jersey. The park is split into three different areas in Monmouth County, New Jersey, and the New York City boroughs of Brooklyn, Queens, and Staten Island. The park manages 21,680 acres of land and waters and has three administrative units: the Jamaica Bay Unit, Sandy Hook Unit, and Staten Island Unit.

Gateway's first GMP was finished in 1979. Almost 35 years later, the world is a different place, with constantly changing ideas and expectations for leisure services and information. New studies have led to a better understanding of the significance of Gateway's natural and cultural resources and current threats. In addition, the needs of visitors are very different today than they were a generation ago. The U.S. population is growing older and more diverse, children are spending less time outdoors, and technology is bringing rapid changes. Recent events such as Hurricane Sandy have brought a new reality and urgency to find ways to protect, improve, and sustain the health of our natural and cultural resources while still providing a great place to relax and have fun. New opportunities to work cooperatively with New York City have emerged and the value of parks in urban areas to enhance quality of life is finally being recognized.

Gateway needs a new GMP now because new issues and ideas have emerged in recent years that the 1979 GMP does not address because they were not anticipated when the plan was prepared. Many of the 1979 GMP's recommendations were implemented, others are no longer appropriate because of changing conditions and circumstances, and some have not been implemented due to funding limitations.

Planning Challenges

General management planning offers a structured decision-making process that encourages and considers ideas and comments from many different people and groups. Throughout development of the GMP/EIS, the planning team used a variety of scoping techniques to identify the issues related to management of the park, the range of management alternatives that should be considered in the GMP/EIS to address those issues, and the range and nature of impacts that should be used to evaluate and compare alternative management actions. Scoping occurred internally with NPS staff and externally with other public agencies, partner organizations, and interested citizens. The planning challenges identified during the public and internal scoping and analysis stages include the following:

Responding to Climate Change and Sea-level Rise

Climate change refers to changes occurring in the earth's atmospheric, hydrologic, and oceanic systems, which could alter the landscape, natural and cultural resources, and facilities of Gateway. The issues and potential future threats associated with a changing climate have been considered since the early stages of the GMP/EIS process. Gateway staff worked with academic partners to better understand these issues and how park management would need to adapt in the future. Gateway has been experiencing changes due to frequency and intensity of recent storm events, such as Hurricane Sandy. The majority of the park's natural and cultural resources are adjacent to the ocean and other water bodies. Some of these places have already experienced increases in storm flooding. The GMP/EIS provides considerations for climate change, and proposes measures for adapting natural and cultural resources, recreation uses and infrastructure.



Preserving Gateway's Heritage

Gateway possesses more than 800 historic buildings, structures, landscapes, and archeological sites with hundreds of additional individual features that contribute to the character of these special places. When Gateway was established in 1972, the historical significance of its buildings, structures, and landscapes was not clearly understood. Many of these inherited buildings and structures were already in poor condition. Repairing, painting, and other maintenance today is a serious challenge

given the resources' numbers and current condition as well as competing funding and staff priorities. Currently the museum collections are overcrowded in places that do not meet professional museum standards. This contributes to deterioration of the collections and does not allow for access by staff, students, and scholars for academic research. The GMP/EIS will set priorities for preserving and managing the park's cultural resources in a sustainable manner.





Addressing Marine Resources and Water Quality

Two-thirds of Gateway is covered by water—more than 17,500 acres of bay and oceanic waters that are part of larger systems influenced by land uses and activities taking place outside the park. Previous uses of park lands have left a legacy of impacts on the health and ecology of park natural resources. When the park was founded, saltmarshes had been filled, Jamaica Bay had been dredged, and native forests and vegetation had been covered in impervious surfaces. Despite many years of efforts to improve conditions, water quality is still threatened in all units, especially Jamaica Bay. Many activities in adjacent communities contribute to the problem. The beaches and bays are prime habitats for birds, shellfish, and plants as well as the most popular visitor areas for all types of water-based recreation. Degraded water quality hurts fish and wildlife and results in beach closures, shellfish consumption bans, and unsafe conditions for water activities.

Ocean resources, including natural marine resources and submerged cultural resources, are at risk due to a variety of threats. Natural sediment transport, which affects shoreline and beach dynamics, is affected by activities outside the park boundaries. Most of the park's ocean shoreline is affected by conditions updrift of the park's boundary and the effects of structures at or near the boundary. The presence of engineering structures, both within and external to Gateway, have produced positive and negative results, including erosion and impacts on habitat and navigation channels. The GMP/EIS will provide direction for preserving and managing the natural resources of the park in a sustainable manner and will provide direction for encouraging collaboration and stewardship.



Accessing the Park

Access to Gateway is predominantly automobile dependent. Several areas of the park are not conveniently accessible by public transit. This poses a challenge to many visitors, especially lower-income and transit-dependent populations. Visitors are interested in other options for reaching the park, but there are limited formal designated bike or water routes and few parking or docking facilities to support them. Connections from communities in the region to the park are not adequate. There is a need for improved, safe trail connections between park sites and between park sites and communities to provide seamless, safe, direct access alternatives. The GMP/EIS will address visitor access to and within the park in order to improve visitor experiences and improve connections between park sites and between park sites and the larger community.



Engaging New Audiences

Gateway does not have a strong identity as a unit of the national park system. This makes it difficult to promote experiences consistent with other national parks, and the park is often confused with city and state facilities. Visitation at Gateway does not reflect the ethnic, racial, or socioeconomic diversity that now characterizes the U.S. population and the communities adjacent to the park. In addition, the boom of electronic technology, especially with children and teens, is changing expectations for the types of activities offered and how the park should provide information and deliver programs. The GMP/EIS will include strategies for promoting a national park experience and engaging new audiences.



Providing Appropriate Facilities

Park resources, visitor safety, and visitor experience have suffered because of the lack of adequate operational facilities in appropriate locations. Over the years, many visitors have expressed concerns about park infrastructure being in a state of decline and there is a park-wide demand for more user comforts—shade, playgrounds, benches, bike racks, picnic areas, water fountains, facilities for large family groups, and good food. Although there is a growing interest in water recreation opportunities, there are limited facilities and a need for designated water trails (blueways), lockers, boat rentals, and launch sites. Park maintenance and public safety functions are scattered throughout the park and are often located at sites and facilities that were not intended for such uses or are not in the optimal location. Gateway strives to be a leader in environmental sustainability. However, park day-to-day operations do not always reflect this value. The GMP/EIS will identify strategies for providing high-quality facilities for both visitors and park operations.

Foundation for Planning

Park Purpose

Gateway National Recreation Area provides a national park experience in the country’s largest metropolitan area. The park preserves a mosaic of coastal ecosystems and natural areas interwoven with historic coastal defense and maritime sites around New York’s Outer Harbor. Beaches, marshes, waters, scenic views and open space offer resource-based recreational opportunities to a diverse public, recognizing the importance to preserve these special places for future generations.

Coastal Defense Fortifications and Military Areas

Significance Statement

Forts Hancock, Tilden, and Wadsworth compose one of the largest sets of military installations and distinctive fortifications in the country, dating from pre-Civil War through the 20th century. These installations represent a long period of military presence and served as the defense of New York City, America’s largest city.

Fundamental Resources and Values

- Coastal defense resources, including earthworks, associated structures, museum collections, and archeological sites, for the following:
 - Fort Hancock
 - Endicott/Taft-era batteries
 - Parade Ground, including Officers’ Row, barracks, and cultural landscape
 - Nike Missile Launch and Radar Sites
 - Fort Tilden
 - Battery Harris
 - Battery Kessler
 - Construction Battery 220
 - Nike Missile Launch Site
 - Fort Wadsworth
 - Battery Weed
 - Endicott-era batteries
 - Fort Tompkins
 - Torpedo-storage Building
- Connections to national defense history

Interpretive Theme

Two Centuries of National Defense.

For over 200 years, places in Gateway were critical to the defense of New York Harbor and played a significant role in the development of the military technologies and strategies used to protect our nation. The changing nature of our national defense reveals stories of triumph, struggle, and everyday life as well as the contrast of innovation and obsolescence. Today, the remaining fortifications, structures, and historic landscapes are a visible reminder of the importance of preparedness and defense then and now.

Coastal Systems and Natural Areas

Significance Statement

Gateway contains an assemblage of coastal ecosystems formed by natural features, both physical and biological, that include barrier peninsulas, estuaries, oceans, and maritime uplands. The habitats that compose these ecosystems, so rare in such highly developed areas, support a rich biota that includes migratory birds, marine finfish and shellfish, plant communities, and rare, threatened, and endangered species. These features provide opportunities to restore, study, enhance, and experience coastal habitats and ecosystem processes.

Fundamental Resources and Values

- Beaches/dune system at Bergen Beach, Breezy Point Tip, Fort Tilden, Great Kills, Jacob Riis Park, Plumb Beach, and Sandy Hook
- Natural Areas at Breezy Point Tip, Crooke’s Point, Floyd Bennett Field, Fort Tilden, Great Kills, Hoffman and Swinburne Islands, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and Sandy Hook
- Jamaica Bay waters, including inlets, submerged lands, and Dead Horse Bay
- Sandy Hook maritime forest
- Beach experience, including access to ocean surf
- Direct sensory experience with natural elements
- Public access to bay and ocean shorelines
- Darkness and night sky

Interpretive Theme

The Natural Wonders, Dynamics, and Challenges of an Urban Estuary. The natural resources of Gateway are remarkably diverse given their location in the nation’s most densely populated urban area. The mosaic of coastal habitats is a refuge for both rich and rare plant and animal life intrinsically governed by the rhythms, processes, and cycles of nature, yet also continually shaped by people and the surrounding built environment. These resources provide unique and surprising opportunities for experiencing the wildness of



the natural world while within the city’s limits, and a model for studying, managing, and restoring urban ecosystems.

Maritime Resources

Significance Statement

The maritime resources of Gateway include the oldest continuously operating lighthouse in the United States and the first federally sponsored lifesaving station in the country. These resources served to protect ocean commerce and enhance the safety of the busiest American seaport.

Fundamental Resources

- Sandy Hook Lighthouse
- Spmaceti Cove Life Saving Station



Interpretive Theme

Maritime Heritage.

Since the days of European exploration and colonization, Sandy Hook has played an important role in facilitating navigation and commerce in and out of New York Harbor. Its maritime resources illustrate the evolution of navigation aids and coastal rescue, in part via the oldest lighthouse in the United States, one of the original lifesaving stations built by the federal government, historic United States Coast Guard structures, and a relatively safe natural harbor that has provided refuge to generations of mariners. Dedicated and heroic individuals ensured that the Sandy Hook Lighthouse served to guide ships in all seasons and under all conditions.



Diverse Recreation Opportunities

Significance Statement

The vast and diverse park resources at the gateway to the most densely populated region of the United States provide an abundance of outstanding recreational and educational opportunities.

Fundamental Resources and Values

- Feelings associated with open space in a high-density area
- Views of New York Outer Harbor
- Recreation experiences including the following:
 - Nature observation such as bird watching, contemplation of physical environment, quiet, astronomy
 - Water-based activities such as surfing, boating, fishing, and swimming
 - Walking/hiking, biking, and horseback riding on trails
 - Picnicking
 - Visiting historic sites

Interpretive Theme

Recreation and Education: Quality of Urban Life for All Visitors.

The human need for recreation and renewal has resulted in an evolving history of traditional and innovative uses of the park’s lands and waters to improve the quality of urban life. Intrinsically connected to the diverse population of the New York metropolitan area, Gateway’s resources provide unique opportunities for outdoor recreation and rejuvenation in a densely populated and largely impacted metropolitan area. It is an outdoor laboratory for learning and discovery, where academic facts and knowledge can be observed in real settings. The park’s open spaces and wide horizons offer opportunities for resource-based recreation as well as contemplation and reflection.

Other Important Resources and Values

Many resources and values are determined to be important in their own right even though they are not related to the park’s purpose and significance. These resources are particularly important to park management and planning and will be considered during the general management planning process.

- Civil and military aviation history resources at Floyd Bennett Field and Miller Field
- Historic landscape at Jacob Riis Park, including the beaches, boardwalk, and bathhouse
- Pre-contact archeological sites; historic archeological sites related to domestic and Military occupations of park lands, and submerged resources



Management Alternatives

There are many different ways to protect natural areas at Gateway, preserve its historic buildings, and provide fun and educational activities. In a general management plan / environmental impact statement (GMP/EIS), these different options to fulfill the park’s purpose and achieve a new vision are called management alternatives. Alternatives provide a different focus for the park and emphasize different priorities. All the alternatives meet the park’s purpose, laws, and policies—they just do it in different ways. These alternatives represent the combined planning efforts of NPS staff and the contributions of academic institutions, other government agencies, stakeholder groups, local residents, park users, and interested individuals. Not all ideas and suggestions will be reflected in the alternatives; many are specific actions that could happen as part of implementation of the final GMP/EIS.

Management Zoning

Each day, Gateway staff members make hundreds of decisions that influence how facilities and resources like buildings and beaches are cared for. Should a grassy area be mowed or allowed to grow wild for wildlife habitat? Should a new segment of trail be paved for bikes or left as a natural surface for walking? In order to help guide the appropriate locations and types of use for these activities in a big park, Gateway staff relies on GMP management zones. These zones give people an understanding of where certain activities are and are not allowed. They also tell park managers where development can and cannot be added and the intensity of management that is appropriate in different parts of the park.

Management zones are descriptions of desired conditions for park resources and visitor experience in different areas of the park. The type, size, and location of the different zones correspond to that specific alternative. While some zones in the action alternatives are the same in terms of their location, what may actually happen in each zone would vary among the alternatives. Not all activities and facilities appropriate in a management zone may be allowed or developed everywhere a management zone occurs. Because the management zones describe new alternatives, they have not been applied to alternative A. A full description of the zones is provided in the Draft GMP/EIS.



Marine

- Waters managed to protect and enhance the ocean and bay environments and provide opportunities for water-based visitor use and recreation.
- Activities are regulated to protect elements of the natural environment, prevent visitor conflicts and enhance public safety.
- Use levels would be expected to range from low to high and would be influenced by adjacent zones and time of year.



Recreation

- Park areas that accommodate a variety of recreation activities for fun, learning and physical activity.
- These areas offer a broad range of outdoor, educational, and interpretive experiences.
- High use levels would be expected especially during the summer months. Encounters with other people would be common.
 - **Community Activity Subzone** - This subzone supports large group gatherings such as sports leagues, community activities and special events. These places require more intensively managed facilities and landscapes.
 - **Active Beach Subzone** - This subzone offers traditional summer beach activities including swimming and sunbathing.



Natural

- Open, undeveloped areas managed to preserve natural resources while allowing for the enjoyment of the outdoors and nature.
- Visitors would enjoy the quiet, solitude, and sense of connection inspired by the natural world.
- Programs and facilities would facilitate nature study, interpretation and other passive activities. Moderate use would be expected at centralized activity areas and points of entry.
 - **Sensitive Resource Subzone** - These natural areas receive the highest level of protection, scientific investigation and monitoring and are sites for current and future restoration efforts. Public access is restricted to minimize impacts.



Historic

- These areas include fundamental and historic sites, structures and cultural landscapes linked to Gateway’s history.
- Resources in these areas are the focus of interpretation and preservation projects and are managed to ensure the long-term protection of their historic integrity.
- Visitor use would be managed to minimize impacts on the resources while providing opportunities to learn about their associated events and history through tours and interpretive media.
 - **Ruins Subzone** - This subzone contains historic structures and landscapes in very poor condition. These structures and landscapes are allowed to decay naturally. Some areas may be improved for interpretation. The majority of these areas would be fenced to limit public access or stabilized for safety.



Developed

- These areas support visitor and administrative functions of the park and its partners.
- Infrastructure and facilities support maintenance, orientation, education, interpretation, lodging and transportation.
- Visitor access would vary throughout this zone with some areas receiving intensive visitor use and others having limited or no public access.

Alternative A

Continuation of Current Management Practices (No-Action)

This “no-action” alternative is required under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) and serves as the baseline for evaluating and comparing the other proposed alternatives. The following description is a summary of alternative A. A complete description of alternative A can be found in the Draft GMP/EIS.

Gateway would continue to manage park resources and visitor use as it does today, with no major change in direction. Decisions would be based on existing conditions and available information, but would continue to lack a comprehensive planning framework that addresses the full range of contemporary and potential future issues. The park’s enabling legislation, the existing General Management Plan (NPS 1979), and other implementation plans would continue to guide management decision-making.

The park would continue to meet day-to-day operations, management, legal, and regulatory requirements based on existing plans and the availability of funds. Improvements to natural and cultural sites and visitor facilities would include only projects that are already approved and fully funded, or compatible with the current direction of park management. NPS would continue to collaborate with local, county, and state officials on an as needed basis to address common regulatory, policy, and management issues. Existing partnerships and cooperative relationships that support ongoing management would continue.

Recreation and Visitor Experience

Under this alternative, the visitor experience would remain segmented with each of the three units independently serving local residents and visitors at specific locations. Efforts to reopen areas of the park that were damaged by Hurricane Sandy and to provide services and visitor facilities would continue. The ongoing structural assessments and recovery efforts may result in temporary shifts of current management and visitor access. Existing interpretive, educational, and management programs providing a range of services to visitors



would continue, adjusting for Hurricane Sandy limitations. Visitors would continue to enjoy a variety of traditional beach-oriented and other recreational activities at open areas.

Gateway would continue to provide comfort stations, lifeguards, food and beverage service, camping, and ferry operations where those services currently exist. Funded planning projects to improve and expand trail systems and camping areas would continue. Existing campsites would remain in their current locations.

The four visitor centers at Fort Wadsworth, Sandy Hook, Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge and Floyd Bennett Field would continue to provide orientation, information, interpretive programs, and exhibits and serve as both destination and points of departure for day visitors, tours, and school groups. Traditional ranger-led activities and curriculum-based educational programs would continue to be available. Current efforts to make more people aware of the presence of the national recreation area would continue. The park’s informational website, exhibits, brochures, and other publications would continue to be available.

Natural and Cultural Resource Management

Natural resource management programs would continue, many in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations. Existing programs would focus on protecting sensitive species, monitoring conditions, mitigating external threats, controlling non-native species, and restoring habitats impacted by man made structures or activities.

Historic structures and landscapes continue to be managed through maintenance and repair where feasible and when funding becomes available. Existing programs providing basic protection to the park’s cultural resources would continue consistent with applicable federal and state laws and NPS policies. Some coastal defense fortifications continue to have vegetation removed on a limited basis while others will continue to further deteriorate and be impacted by natural processes. The Sandy Hook Lighthouse continues to be maintained in good condition with support from partners. Museum collections and archives would continue to be moved from Sandy Hook and consolidated with collections currently maintained in their current location at Fort Wadsworth.

Existing operation and transportation infrastructure would be maintained at current locations. Maintenance functions, equipment, and facilities damaged as a result of Hurricane Sandy would continue to be evaluated and possible replacement and relocation explored. Gateway visitors would continue to be automobile dependent and people without cars would continue to be reliant on limited direct bus and ferry service.



Planning Considerations Common to Both Action Alternatives

There are a number of overall desired future conditions and management approaches that would guide the park regardless of the action alternative selected. These desired conditions guide actions taken by NPS staff on such topics as natural and cultural resource management, park facilities, and visitor use management. A full description of the desired conditions common to both action alternatives is included in the Draft GMP/EIS. A summary is provided below:

Responding to Climate Change

Climate change refers to changes occurring in the earth's atmospheric, hydrologic, and oceanic systems, which could alter the landscape, natural and cultural resources, and facilities of Gateway. Gateway would implement sustainable strategies and establish programs to assess, interpret, and respond to the impacts of climate change and work to:

- proactively plan for and adapt to the effects that may be realized from climate change, including the loss of shoreline, altered ecosystems, cultural resources, loss of recreation sites and park facilities, and disruptions in visitor use;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- explore the use of solar and other types of energy generation for operations;
- educate NPS staff, its partners, and the public on the topic;
- improve energy efficiency; and
- undertake research and monitoring to expand understanding of climate change and how systems respond.

Cooperative Stewardship and Marine Resources

Two-thirds of Gateway is covered by water—more than 17,500 acres of bay and oceanic waters that are part of larger systems influenced by land uses and activities taking place outside the park. The long-term management of natural resources and ecological processes within these waters will not be sustainable without the control of contaminant inputs and other human-caused disturbances.

Under all the alternatives, Gateway will work with partners to support a cooperative stewardship approach that considers natural and marine resources and ecological processes holistically. Gateway would develop with local, state, and federal partners, a marine and estuarine resource management plan to identify baseline and desired conditions to improve management of fish and shellfish resources, submerged aquatic vegetation and marine species. The plan would evaluate user capacity and identify types and levels of marine recreational uses necessary to improve the quality of park resources, reduce crowding and conflicts between uses, and provide a full range of visitor experiences. The Draft GMP/EIS contains additional information about strategies for salt marshes, estuarine shorelines, water quality enhancements, and other topics.

Multiple Day Experiences

Gateway is a large park with thousands of acres spread out among three sites in two states with additional adjacent parklands managed by local and state agencies. All of these places provide a variety of things to see and do that can't be experienced in a single day. The alternatives will propose different types of camping and lodging, varied use levels and a range of supporting facilities that may be appropriate. In the future, Gateway will work with partners to develop and offer a variety of overnight accommodations such as camping, youth and elder hostels, eco-friendly lodges and small inns, where appropriate at each

unit. These overnight lodging facilities will be similar to those found in other national parks throughout the country.

Preserving Heritage

Finding viable contemporary uses for hundreds of historic structures and landscapes is a priority preservation strategy for Gateway. Some of these park's most well-known places like Battery Weed, Officers Row, and the Floyd Bennett Field Hangars are elaborate stone and brick structures. Repairing, painting and other maintenance today is a serious challenge given their numbers, current condition, and competing funding and staff priorities. For all action alternatives, the park will pursue public-private partnerships that assist with the reuse of these places for visitor services such as lodging, administrative and partner needs and recreation business opportunities.

Some structures and landscapes, primarily the coastal defense batteries, are in very poor condition and the costs to repair, stabilize and preserve these resources are extreme. Under all the alternatives, these resources would become ruins and allowed to decay naturally returning to their component elements by the forces of nature. Gateway would prioritize documentation of these places and use innovative interpretive media to provide information and virtual access.

Information, Orientation and Wayfinding

The park, in conjunction with others would improve orientation and wayfinding to and throughout Gateway, including signs, maps and other information. Different types of facilities (e.g. kiosks, contact areas) would welcome and orient visitors to Gateway and surrounding partner parklands to improve the sense of arrival. The park would take advantage of technological innovations in interpretive media, social networking and communications in order to connect with broader audiences.



Alternative B: Discovering Gateway (NPS Preferred)

Overview

This alternative provides the widest range of activities and most recreation opportunities in dispersed locations throughout the park. New connections would be forged with park lands and communities adjacent and nearby Gateway. This alternative offers the most instructional programming and skills development and draws people into the park to increase awareness and enjoyment of Gateway’s historic resources and the natural environment. More convenient and affordable park access is developed through trail connections, bicycle infrastructure, public transit, and waterborne transportation. This alternative prioritizes joint management and operations for visitor services, orientation, programs, and facilities with New York City and other partners.

Jamaica Bay Unit

Under this alternative, Jamaica Bay will be Gateway’s premier outdoor recreation destination. The park lands at Jamaica Bay would provide an unmatched variety of recreational, interpretive and educational opportunities for New York residents and park visitors. New activities, programs and enhanced facilities will attract users of all neighborhoods, backgrounds, and ages, drawing a diverse audience of local residents, national and international visitors to enjoy all of the park’s offerings. Areas within the Jamaica Bay Unit including Floyd Bennett Field and the Rockaway peninsula parks (Jacob Riis Park, Fort Tilden, and Breezy Point Tip) would emerge as destinations for daily use and multiple day experiences.

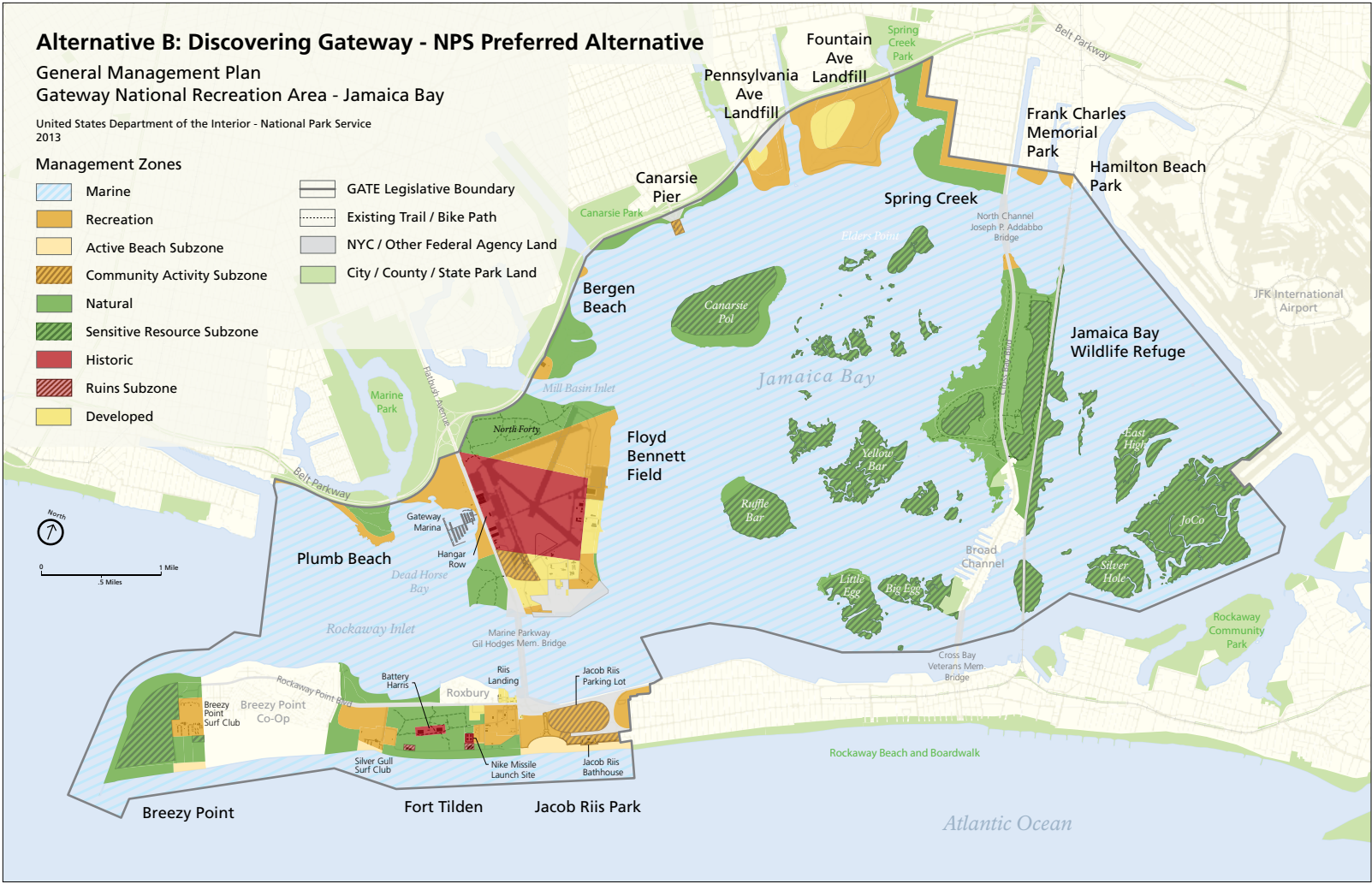
Recreation and Visitor Experience

In partnership with New York City and other groups, the NPS would attract neighborhood, regional and distant visitors with new and improved amenities and recreation facilities (e.g., trails, camp sites); improved community-based recreation such as sports leagues and event spaces; and enhanced interpretive and environmental educational programming. With development of water trails, water skills programming, equipment rentals, and the expansion of beach access, the Jamaica Bay Unit would be established as a popular recreation destination for water-based activities. The combination of improved transportation infrastructure and widespread outreach and promotion, would ensure that these new opportunities for outdoor recreation, learning and skill building are accessible and popular among diverse audiences.

Under this alternative, the park lands would provide opportunities for youth and families to experience nature and to develop the skills and knowledge that would foster lifelong enjoyment of the outdoors. Improved and expanded facilities including trails, overlooks, viewing blinds, kayak launch sites, outdoor classrooms and campsites would provide more convenient access to natural areas and facilitate the exploration of Gateway’s varied natural environments. These resource-based experiences would be complemented by opportunities to experience and learn about history and the park’s significance through guided interpretive activities, interpretive media, and educational programming.

New multiple day experiences would be developed and promoted on NPS and New York City park lands throughout Jamaica Bay. A variety of camping options from special programs in unique locations to a variety of tent, structural and RV sites would enhance the national park experience. Lodging accommodations in historic buildings and associated support areas would be explored.

A multi-use trail network would be created throughout the area and would cater to different physical capabilities and recreation interests. The existing trail system would be greatly expanded and would provide paved as well as soft-surface trail experiences. The extensive network of trails would provide connections from adjacent parks and neighborhoods by tying into the Jamaica Bay Greenway.





Resource Management

Partners sharing the NPS vision for a healthy and restored Jamaica Bay are numerous. In both action alternatives, NPS would continue cultivating and leveraging partnerships to accomplish natural resource objectives. Improving water quality within Jamaica Bay would be prioritized along with restoring marine resources and degraded stretches of coastal habitats. In conjunction with partners, NPS would produce a system-wide study of wetlands throughout Jamaica Bay that would determine the extent of freshwater wetland habitat projects. This study would identify the relationship of these wetlands habitats at park areas throughout Jamaica Bay and the appropriate habitat restoration that should occur.

Natural resource protection and restoration efforts in the Jamaica Bay Unit would focus on softening hardened coastal edges, restoring wetland and coastal habitats, and creating additional freshwater wetlands. Increased use would be balanced with additional monitoring and management of wildlife and habitats. NPS would work closely with New York City and other landowners to build the resiliency of coastal habitat and to improve conditions along the entire Rockaway coastline. Together the agencies would produce a holistic shoreline management plan that would help guide recovery efforts and future uses and development.

Historic structures and landscapes would be stabilized, and preserved for recreation, visitor services, education, and sustainable energy. Creative solutions would be found to continue use and adapt to future flooding, storms and other climate change related events. Mobile technology and other innovative media would enrich communication about the park land's history and significance.

Transportation

Through improved bike infrastructure, public transportation, and park shuttles, access to and within Jamaica Bay would be made affordable and convenient to more people. In partnership with its New York City partners, NPS would complete and expand the Jamaica Bay Greenway and trail network. The Jamaica Bay park lands and surrounding communities would also be connected via a system of land-based shuttles as well as water trails, water taxis and ferry service.

Plumb Beach

Recreation Zone

Plumb Beach would serve as a new orientation portal providing information on sites and activities for the Jamaica Bay park lands. The NPS would work with the NYCDPR to improve connections to outlying neighborhoods and other nearby park lands including Marine Park and Floyd Bennett Field. A water trail to Marine Park and Dead Horse Bay would be explored. Circulation and site improvements would enhance safety and enjoyment of the Jamaica Bay Greenway.

Beach uses would be maintained and improved as a launching site for human-powered boating and wind sports. New visitor amenities such as bathrooms, rentals (bikes and wind sports), food trucks, and launching areas would be developed. The existing building would be rehabilitated to accommodate administrative uses such as storage and a ranger office. Additionally, the building could be improved to offer limited visitor amenities such as food, restrooms, equipment rentals, and/or supplies for beach recreation (e.g. sunscreen, umbrella rental). The building could be jointly managed by the NPS and New York City.

Natural Zone

Beach/dune habitats would be protected and maintained. Formal trails would be established through the natural area to prevent trampling of vegetation, reduce impacts to wildlife, and ensure that restoration efforts are successful. Plantings of native coastal trees and shrubs and well as other techniques would help stabilize eroding natural areas.

Floyd Bennett Field

Recreation Zone and Community Activity Subzone

Floyd Bennett Field would become a bustling park and Jamaica Bay's premier destination for year-round outdoor recreation, community activities and environmental education. Much of the airfield's currently underused open spaces and structures would be energized and accommodate community events, outdoor recreation, skill development programming, entertainment, and learning. An extensive trail system would cater to hikers, bikers and nature lovers while water trails and launch sites would invite visitors to explore Jamaica Bay on kayaks, canoes, sailboards and other non-motorized boats.

In partnership with others, NPS would develop new recreation opportunities and host a wide range of activities and instructional programming. Recreational uses of the airfield would be offered year-round and cater to a diversity of visitors and skill levels. New opportunities for outdoor skill building (e.g., learn to camp, stargazing) and hands on environmental education would be explored.

The greatest amount and widest spectrum of camping facilities would be developed to attract a variety of overnight users. This diversity of camping opportunities would include instructional programs and equipment rentals to help people build new skills and confidence in sleeping overnight in the great outdoors. In addition to camping, overnight lodging would be developed in cooperation with park partners and to the greatest extent possible, utilize an existing historic building.

An area along Hangar Row would be designated as flexible open spaces intended to accommodate community activity such as picnics and group gatherings, and events. These areas could also be used for community uses such as gardens, markets, educational events and outdoor concerts





and performances. Community activity spaces would be primarily located along Flatbush Avenue. Hangar B would be rehabilitated for an entertainment venue.

With more miles of hiking and biking trails and new signs, maps, multiple trailheads and a variety of trail features, Floyd Bennett Field would accommodate different skill levels and user groups. Connecting the airfield’s main visitor facilities and internal trail network with the Jamaica Bay Greenway would ensure convenient trail access to the park.

The arrival sequence to the park would be improved with increased access to the airfield’s main visitor facilities off Flatbush Avenue. Through improved circulation and way finding signs, a more welcoming sense of arrival would be established near the Ryan Visitor Center. Improved wayfinding, interpretive and orientation facilities and materials would orient visitors to the resources that can be found throughout Jamaica Bay and Gateway

Improved transportation infrastructure would likely be divided between the Recreation Zone and the Developed Zone. Floyd Bennett Field would be established as the most accessible park in the Jamaica Bay Unit, and the airfield would serve as a multi-modal transportation hub developed to provide transportation access and visitor distribution (via public transportation, shuttles, bikes, water taxis, etc.) to park lands throughout Jamaica Bay.

Marine Zone

The marina would offer more public uses, including boat rentals, water-based recreation, and boating/sailing lessons. The enhanced marina area would serve as the Jamaica Bay unit’s primary portal for experiencing the bay by water. The marina would serve as a water-based access point for ferries, water taxis, and other boats. Guided interpretive boat tours as well as a designated water trail would encourage people to explore the airfield and other Jamaica Bay resources from the water. Additionally, greater shoreline access and several launch sites for human-powered boats (e.g. kayak, canoe) would create more boating and fishing opportunities.

Natural Zone

Habitats would be managed to improve resilience and healthy environments as part of the larger Jamaica Bay system. The restoration of freshwater and saltwater wetland habitat would be explored in portions of the North Forty natural area and along the shoreline. The shoreline would return to natural (soft) conditions through the removal of bulkheads and other hardened structures and allow natural sediment transportation processes to occur. The park would explore the development of a wetlands interpretive center with partners. This center would highlight fresh and saltwater wetland environments and may include an interpretive and environmental education center, trails and boardwalks, outdoor classrooms, observation facilities, interpretive media and educational exhibits.

Upland forest management would continue within areas of the North Forty not designated for wetland habitat, and expanded visitor use in the North Forty would be compatible with the protection of the remaining species-rich forest. Grasslands habitat would be managed and maintained for grassland birds.



Nature-based recreation and environmental education programming would be expanded. Along soft-surface trails, people would encounter facilities such as blinds, scopes, observation decks, and boardwalks. Along with interpretive materials, these facilities would be designed to facilitate nature study, wildlife observation, and immersion in a natural setting. Environmental education programming, as well as guided tours, would feature equipment rental facilities (e.g., bike, binocular, or tent rentals) developed to allow visitors to try new activities and to facilitate “gateway” experiences of the outdoors.

Historic Zone

The character-defining cultural landscape elements that reveal the airfield’s historic municipal period (such as Ryan Center, Hangar Row, and runways) would be preserved and interpreted. The open pattern of the airfield landscape would be preserved through the maintenance of low vegetation and appropriately-scaled recreation facilities.

The historic aviation buildings along Flatbush Avenue known as Hangar Row would be rehabilitated for an aviation interpretive center and feature aviation exhibits, aircraft collections, and flexible interior and exterior space and would provide space for community activities, informal gatherings, interpretive programs, and special events. The historic plane collection would be relocated from Hangar B to Hangar Row. The expansive views of the bay and orientation to the airfield’s cultural landscape would be enhanced by elevated areas such as the Ryan Center tower, a tethered balloon, or other related facilities.

Developed Zone

The eastern portion of the airfield would accommodate a variety of visitor services, transportation infrastructure, and operations and maintenance facilities. Uses in this zone would complement other uses on the field.

Visual shields would block views from maintenance and other functions, reducing impacts from these uses on visitors. Circulation throughout the airfield would be improved for operations, especially trucks and vehicles traffic. A separate access entrance would be designated for commercial, operational and maintenance vehicles that allows for



direct access to the Developed Zone. Dilapidated and underutilized buildings in this one may be demolished and the spaces would either be reused to accommodate operations and maintenance or restored as natural habitats.

The park would explore development of alternative energy and opportunities for more sustainable operations, including waste management. A new composting facility that processes food waste, vegetation, and other organic matter from concession stands, restaurants, groceries and other sources in and around the park and local vicinity would be considered.

Bergen Beach
Recreation Zone

New connections would be explored from Bergen Beach to McGuire Park, Paerdegat Basin Park, Eco Park and Flatlands, Bergen Beach and Mill Basin neighborhoods. A new water trail would be developed to Paerdegat and Mill Basin inlet. Vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access from the Jamaica Bay Greenway and Belt Parkway would be improved.

The NPS would maintain equestrian use and facilities. The NPS would work with the concession-run business to reduce impacts on the area’s habitats through the designation of equestrian trails and improved signs and wayfinding. The park would be open to additional types of visitor uses in addition to equestrian uses and new facilities would be developed to accommodate expanded uses. Such facilities could include trails and picnic areas. A trail would be developed that provides access to the bay for fishing, walking and nature study. Additionally, the park could serve as another destination for water-based sports and provide launching sites, storage, shuttles, and equipment rental.

Natural Zone

Visitor uses would be expanded to include nature-based recreation opportunities. The condition of coastal habitats would be improved through increased restoration efforts as well as more tightly controlled visitor use. Bioengineering techniques would be used to stabilize eroding natural areas with plantings of native coastal trees and shrubs. Beach/ dune habitats along with fringe wetlands would be protected and maintained. Visitor and equestrian use would be limited to designated trails to prevent trampling of vegetation, reduce impacts to wildlife and ensure restoration efforts are successful.

Canarsie Pier
Recreation Zone – Community Activity Subzone

Canarsie Pier would become a vibrant destination for community-oriented events as well as water-related recreational activities. This site would serve as a new orientation portal for the Jamaica Bay park lands and Gateway. Given the park’s close proximity to New York City’s Canarsie parks, NPS would work closely with NYC agencies on programming, transportation and other management issues.

The pier and its outlying spaces would be improved to better accommodate community events such as concerts, markets, and festivals. Additionally, spaces for picnics and group gatherings would be expanded and enhanced through shade trees and other plantings. The existing contact station could be adaptively reused to support community use and to provide expanded visitor amenities. Along the coast on either side of the pier, the NPS and its partners would develop improved spaces for fishing, kayaking, and other human-powered watercraft. Improvements would include lessons and a designated instructional and beginner paddling zone as well as equipment rentals.

Canarsie Pier would serve as another Jamaica Bay hub for waterborne transportation and water trail connections to other park lands. A launch site would provide access to a designated water trail for human-powered boat exploration. Additionally, ferry and/or water taxis access would be explored for both transportation and a launch site for guided Jamaica Bay boat tours. The NPS would work with NYC agencies to improve connections from Canarsie Pier to New York City’s Canarsie Park and to improve trail linkages to the Jamaica Bay Greenway.

Natural Zone

Restoration projects to the east and west of the pier would strive to create a healthy shoreline habitat and an intertidal area. Signs, trails, and clear beach and water access points would be developed in order to control visitor traffic and minimize disturbance to the coastal habitat.

Pennsylvania Avenue and Fountain Avenue Park
Recreation Zone

The former landfills at Pennsylvania Avenue and Fountain Avenue would be transformed into new park areas for recreation, community activities and outstanding views of Jamaica Bay. Former service/haul roads at each park would be converted into a multi-use trail system. Facilities such as viewing platforms and/or overlooks would offer distance views of Jamaica Bay. New visitor amenities such as restrooms, orientation and gathering areas would be developed. At the Pennsylvania Avenue Park, the NPS and partners would explore the potential of establishing a ferry portal and/or water taxi stop and would develop a launch site for human-powered watercraft. Physical connections between each of the areas and their neighboring communities as well as nearby park sites would be improved.

Developed Zone

Renewable energy development, such as solar, would be explored at both Pennsylvania Avenue and Fountain Avenue Parks. Additionally, areas for recreational activities and community activities would be provided. At Fountain Avenue Landfill, the NPS would explore the potential of a community gathering space with associated facilities that could accommodate outdoor concerts and performances.



Frank Charles Park
Recreation Zone

Existing recreation uses at Frank Charles Park would be maintained and the park would remain an active community destination. The NPS and NYCDPR would work closely together on programming and other management issues at Frank Charles Park. As existing facilities are in need of replacement, NPS would develop shaded and flexible gathering areas as well as creative play structures for youth. Water access from the park to Jamaica Bay would be improved with trails, fishing access and boat launching/landing sites. Fringe wetlands would be protected and habitat along the shoreline improved.

Hamilton Beach Park
Recreation Zone

Hamilton Beach Park would continue to provide open space and outdoor recreation opportunities for the communities outlying the park. New shaded picnic areas would be created in order to improve community-gathering areas. Water access from the park would be improved with trails, fishing access and boat launching/landing sites. Fringe wetlands would be protected and habitat along the shoreline improved.

Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge
Natural Zone and Sensitive Resources Area Subzone

The refuge would remain a popular destination for nature study, environmental education and nature-based interpretation while offering considerably more opportunities for nature-based and water-based recreation. Habitats at Jamaica Bay Wildlife refuge would be protected and maintained. Habitats would be managed to support a diversity of migratory birds. Migratory bird identification, counting and research would be increased.

Programming at the refuge would be expanded with an emphasis on engaging youth and families. In partnership with other, NPS would pilot a series of educational and stewardship experiences and programs that could be replicated in other areas. Efforts would also be made to tie the refuge programmatically into other park sites within the bay and their environmental education and nature activities so that complementary programs are offered across the bay. An expanded network of trails, boardwalks and nature study facilities (e.g. scopes, blinds, observation decks) would facilitate self-guided exploration as well as interpretive tours and educational programming throughout the Natural Zone.

Multi-modal transportation to and from the refuge would be improved. Greenway connections would link the refuge with Sunset Cove Park and other NYCDPR and NPS sites. Water-based shuttles could physically tie programming at Jamaica Bay Refuge with the proposed wetlands interpretive center at Floyd Bennett Field and other environmental and interpretive facilities ringing the Bay.

Marine Zone

Water quality would be improved throughout the Marine Zone. Aquatic and benthic habitat restoration projects would continue to be studied, explored and implemented with partners.

The refuge would also be established as a portal for accessing Jamaica Bay waters. Additional water-based interpretive and recreation facilities would be developed including water trails, kayak instructional programming, equipment rental, offshore docks and additional landing/launch sites. NPS would work closely with NYCDPR to improve Sunset Cove Park and other areas as access points for water-based exploration of the refuge and Jamaica Bay waters. A designated water trail that hugs the shoreline with several launching points would allow visitors to venture into the bay and experience many of Jamaica Bay Unit's districts from the water. Primitive camping may be permitted on Canarsie Pol and would be limited to NPS (or partner)-guided camping trips.

Spring Creek
Recreation Zone

Spring Creek would serve as a new orientation portal for the Jamaica Bay park lands and provide access to the bay. New facilities would be developed to invite recreational use and to promote exploration of the Spring Creek area. Proposed new facilities would include trailheads and parking areas, orientation kiosk, trails, and picnic areas. Facilities to encourage water access would also be developed such as boat launch and landing sites, observation deck, and fishing access areas. A multi-use trail network would be established and would facilitate recreation within the park and improve neighborhood connections to outlying park sites and communities. Connections to the Jamaica Bay Greenway would be improved.

Natural Zone

Efforts to control and eradicate Phragmites and other invasives would be increased and complemented by native plantings. Monitoring and assessment of the saltmarsh and forested areas would be ongoing and these habitats would be protected and maintained. To prevent trampling of vegetation, reduce impacts to wildlife and ensure restoration efforts are successful, social trails would be eliminated and access would be limited to designated trails.



Jacob Riis Park
Recreation Zone and Community Activity Subzone

Jacob Riis would be transformed into a multi-season community activity area and a destination for both beach and water-based recreation. The park would attract and invite more community use and water-based and beach recreation with expanded facilities for community activities such as shaded picnic areas, sports fields, and more educational, arts, and entertainment programming.

A wide variety of water-based recreational experiences, from traditional beach uses at a guarded swim beach, to learn-to-swim programming, splash parks, and a water skills park appropriate to the coastal location would be offered. The parking lot would be redesigned to potentially accommodate sports fields, courts, camping, an entertainment venue, transportation, as well as flexible open spaces for group gatherings. Physical connection between Jacob Riis and the other park lands on the Rockaway Peninsula would be improved through a shuttle, linkages to public transportation, and bike infrastructure.

The Jacob Riis bathhouse would be rehabilitated to accommodate visitor and community uses such as performances and events as well as group gatherings while providing a shaded indoor space and basic amenities for beach goers. Interpretive programming at the site and digital media would be expanded to communicate the story of the



bathhouse, recreation on the Rockaways as well as climate change. Any offices, restaurant, or more permanent uses would be relocated to the second floor of the building. The boardwalk and other cultural landscape features associated with the bathhouse would be maintained (with the exception of the parking lot as noted above). The NPS would use portable and mobile facilities to the extent possible to meet visitor needs (e.g. mobile equipment rentals, food trucks).

Fort Tilden
Recreation Zone

Fort Tilden would become a destination for natural immersion activities. New overnight options, expanded programming and recreation opportunities would promote the Rockaway park lands as a premier multi-day excursion. The parade ground area would become the hub for lodging and activities that supports the recreation and interpretive uses of Fort Tilden. Select rehabilitated buildings would provide overnight accommodates and visitor amenities needed to support overnight stays such as food service and equipment rentals. A variety of camping opportunities and support facilities would be developed including instructional programs and equipment rentals.

The trails network throughout Tilden would be expanded and some trailheads and segments of the trails would be located within the Recreation Zone. Equestrian uses and facilities would be explored. Flexible open spaces would accommodate group gatherings as well as informal, recreation such as picnicking. Additionally, the parade ground area becomes the park’s staging area for instructional programming, equipment rentals, and guided tours. The buildings would continue to accommodate community groups and could support additional interpretive exhibits and educational programming in the future.

More public uses, including boat rentals, water-based recreation, boating/sailing lessons, and fishing access, would be considered on the inlet. Riis Landing and other established access areas would serve as portals for experiencing the bay by water. Guided interpretive boat tours as well as a designated water trail would encourage people to explore the Rockaway Peninsula and Jamaica Bay.

The Silver Gull Beach Club use would be maintained. Public use of the beach club would be expanded to include water-based and beach recreation opportunities such as educational and interpretive programming and guided kayak tours and lessons.

Natural Zone
Coastal habitats and processes would be restored, protected and monitored. Habitat value of the Rockaway Inlet side of Fort Tilden would be studied and coastal habitat and wetland projects would be initiated, where appropriate. Opportunities for environmental education programming and nature study would be promoted.

The ocean and bay shorelines would offer a natural coastal experience more than other Gateway beaches. Appropriate access points and visitor amenities would be developed to support increased beach use. An improved trail system with trailheads and a robust backcountry trail experience along designated routes would invite exploration of Tilden’s natural environments and cultural resources. Tent camping and appropriate support facilities would be introduced for overnight stays within the Natural Zone.

Historic Zone
Fort Tilden would be the primary location for interpreting Gateway’s coastal defense story within the Jamaica Bay Unit. Through enhanced interpretation, the site would offer a greater appreciation for the role of the fort in protecting New York. Battery Harris would be stabilized and the existing overlook would be improved and interpretive media and programming would be expanded. The Nike Missile site would also be stabilized and interpreted. Access to, and interpretation of, these resources would be improved through an expanded trail network, enhanced interpretive media, and increased programming.



Developed Zone
Circulation between Riis Landing and Fort Tilden and other park lands on the Rockaway Peninsula would be improved through shuttles, safer road crossings, and bike infrastructure. Fort Tilden would act as the orientation portal for park lands on the Rockaway Peninsula and provide information on resources and opportunities offered throughout Gateway. Additionally, trailhead and parking areas would feature orientation media. Riis Landing would continue to serve as a ferry landing and kayak launch site. The buildings at Riis Landing would be adaptively reused and leased for community and other uses. Operations moved from the Nike Missile Site at Fort Tilden would be relocated to Riis Landing or other locations within the Jamaica Bay Unit.

Breezy Point Tip
Recreation Zone and Active Beach Subzone

The Breezy Point Surf Club use would be maintained. Public use of the beach club would be expanded to include water-based and beach recreation opportunities such as educational and interpretive programming and guided kayak tours and lessons.

Natural Zone and Sensitive Resources Area Subzone
Breezy Point Tip remains a natural area open to limited nature-based recreation. Habitats would be maintained, protected and enhanced through monitoring and restoration projects. Efforts to control and prevent invasive species in the freshwater wetland areas would be increased. Fishing access would be maintained. The area would continue to offer a quiet, natural immersion experience. NPS would with partners to offer limited environmental education and natural resource stewardship volunteer opportunities.



Sandy Hook Unit

Sandy Hook would remain a popular beach recreation destination where visitors find a variety of opportunities to have fun and enjoy the natural environment. New and expanded trails, boating launch sites, camping facilities and interpretive programs facilitate the coastal experience. Connections with neighboring communities including orientation, land and water trail systems, and linkages to related interpretive sites would provide for a richer experience at Sandy Hook.

A variety of transportation systems would be developed to make Fort Hancock and the entire Sandy Hook peninsula more convenient to access. Within Fort Hancock, ferry service would be expanded to include summer weekdays, shoulder seasons and special events. Additionally a seasonal water ferry/taxi connection would be explored from other communities and NPS sites. Opportunities to provide private/transient water access and dockage at Sandy Hook would also be evaluated.

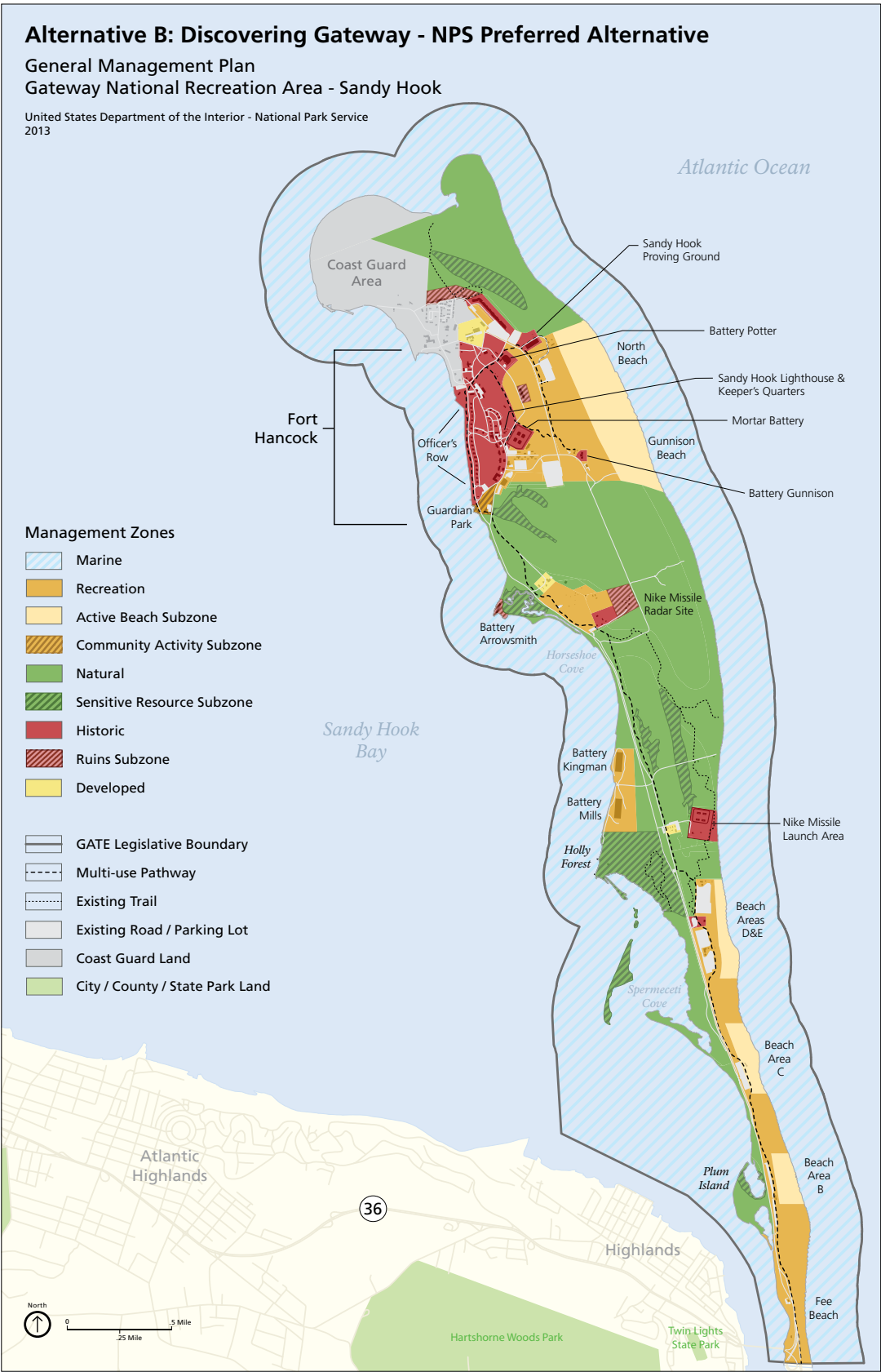
A shuttle system would relieve parking issues and traffic congestion and provide convenient access to the park. The shuttle would collect visitors from surrounding towns, transportation stops and the ferry terminal and drop them off at Sandy Hook’s beaches and activity nodes. Opportunities would be explored with partners to extend public transit service into Sandy Hook, and initiate a transit shuttle to connect the Highlands. Interpretive media would be incorporated into both the on ferry service and/or internal landside shuttle system.

An expanded multi-use path network would traverse more of the peninsula and accommodate cross-island travel so people could explore both the ocean side and the bay side. Designated on-street bike routes from the Highlands would connect with regional trails serving the park unit. Bike access would be encouraged to/from and within Sandy Hook, with bike rental stations at parking facilities near the park entrance and within the park.

Parking options would be evaluated for remote intercept parking lot(s) outside of the Sandy Hook boundary with transit shuttle and/or bicycle connections provided into the park. Advanced traveler information systems would be improved with partners.

Recreation Zone and Active Beach Subzone

Active beach recreation, including swimming on lifeguarded beaches, would continue. The location and size of these areas could change in the future depending on changes along Sandy Hook’s Atlantic coastline. Visitor services and facilities would be redesigned to be more resilient to storms and flooding. At North Beach, expanded and improved facilities would be able to accommodate more Fort Hancock use.



The Kingman and Mills batteries area would be developed as a recreation activity center. Trails would extend from the batteries allowing for exploration of the bayside shoreline and inland natural environments. The batteries would also serve as a launch site for water-based exploration with equipment rentals, instructional programming, piers, and launch sites.

Also, guided programming, interpretive media, and exhibits would reveal the history of the batteries. Finally, the batteries and coastal landscape could also accommodate camping. Additional camping opportunities would be explored at several locations within the Recreation Zone.

Historic Zone

The Fort Hancock Area would become a premier New Jersey shore destination for outdoor recreation and historic interpretive experiences. The widest variety of potential adaptive reuses for the Fort Hancock buildings would be considered ranging from lodging to restaurants, conference space, and offices. The cultural landscape within the Fort Hancock area would be maintained. Areas within the cultural landscape would be rehabilitated to function as flexible open space areas for relaxation, gatherings, picnics, and community events.

Nike Missile Launch and Radar Site would be stabilized and interpreted. New opportunities for guided and self-guided exploration of the area would be created. Batteries Potter, Gunnison, McCook, and Reynolds (Mortar) would be preserved and interpreted through guided tours and/or interpretive media. Additional batteries within the Fort Hancock area would be stabilized, opened to visitor access and interpreted, including off site through digital media and/or exhibits.

Natural Zone and Sensitive Resource Subzone

Habitat conditions of the forest, shrub, and wetland habitats would be improved. Current natural resource management practices would be maintained and protection, research, and monitoring of sensitive habitat areas like the beaches on the northern tip and the maritime forest would be increased. The mosaic of coastal habitats would provide unique opportunities for experiencing and learning about natural systems and native plant communities.

A variety of natural immersion experiences would be created to increase visitor awareness and enjoyment of the natural environments including nature study, wildlife viewing, camping, and instructional programming.

Marine Zone

Water quality would be improved throughout the Marine Zone. Aquatic and benthic habitat restoration projects would continue to be studied, explored and implemented with partners.

Sandy Hook would be a popular recreation area for boating, wind sports as well as water-based interpretation and nature study. Water-based recreation would be encouraged through expanded guided tours via boat or kayak. Interpretive boat tours could link Sandy Hook physically and thematically with other NPS and local sites. Additionally, NPS would offer more instructional programming to introduce people to these sports and to build skills. This could include swimming, surf, kite boarding and kayaking lessons. Additionally, instructional and/or beginner zones would be designated offshore in order to create more comfortable learning environments.



A designated water trail focused on Sandy Hook Bay would provide a water-based connection between Fort Hancock, Highlands and the southern portion of the Sandy Hook peninsula. Several launch sites along the bay coastline as well as boat rentals and instructional programming at the Kingman and Mills recreation site would support travel along the water trail. An ocean water trail would be developed offshore and would link coastal features and attractions extending from Beach Area B to North Beach. Equipment rentals, boat storage facilities and shuttles at the beaches would facilitate the water-based exploration of Sandy Hook.

A mooring field would be developed within the Sandy Hook Bay. Moorings would encourage day and/or overnight trips to Sandy Hook and allow for greater physical and programmatic connections to other sites within the NY Harbor area as well as nearby New Jersey communities.

Staten Island Unit

Recreation and Visitor Experience

Improved trailheads and more miles of trail within and between the Staten Island sites as well as picnic areas, camping facilities, and interpreted historic sites would create more recreation opportunities. Opportunities to access and experience Gateway waters would also be increased. Water trails, interpretive boat tours, launch sites, and expanded beach and fishing access would encourage exploration of the coastline and New York Bay. These water trails and guided tours would facilitate paddling from Fort Wadsworth out to Hoffman and Swinburne islands and/or down the coast to Miller Field and Great Kills Park. The NPS would evaluate the possibility of developing overnight accommodations and expanded the locations and types of camping available throughout the Staten Island Unit.

Resource Management

Habitats and current natural resource practices would be maintained including controlling invasive species, planting trees and monitoring beach erosion. Cultural resources would be preserved, stabilized and maintained, where appropriate.

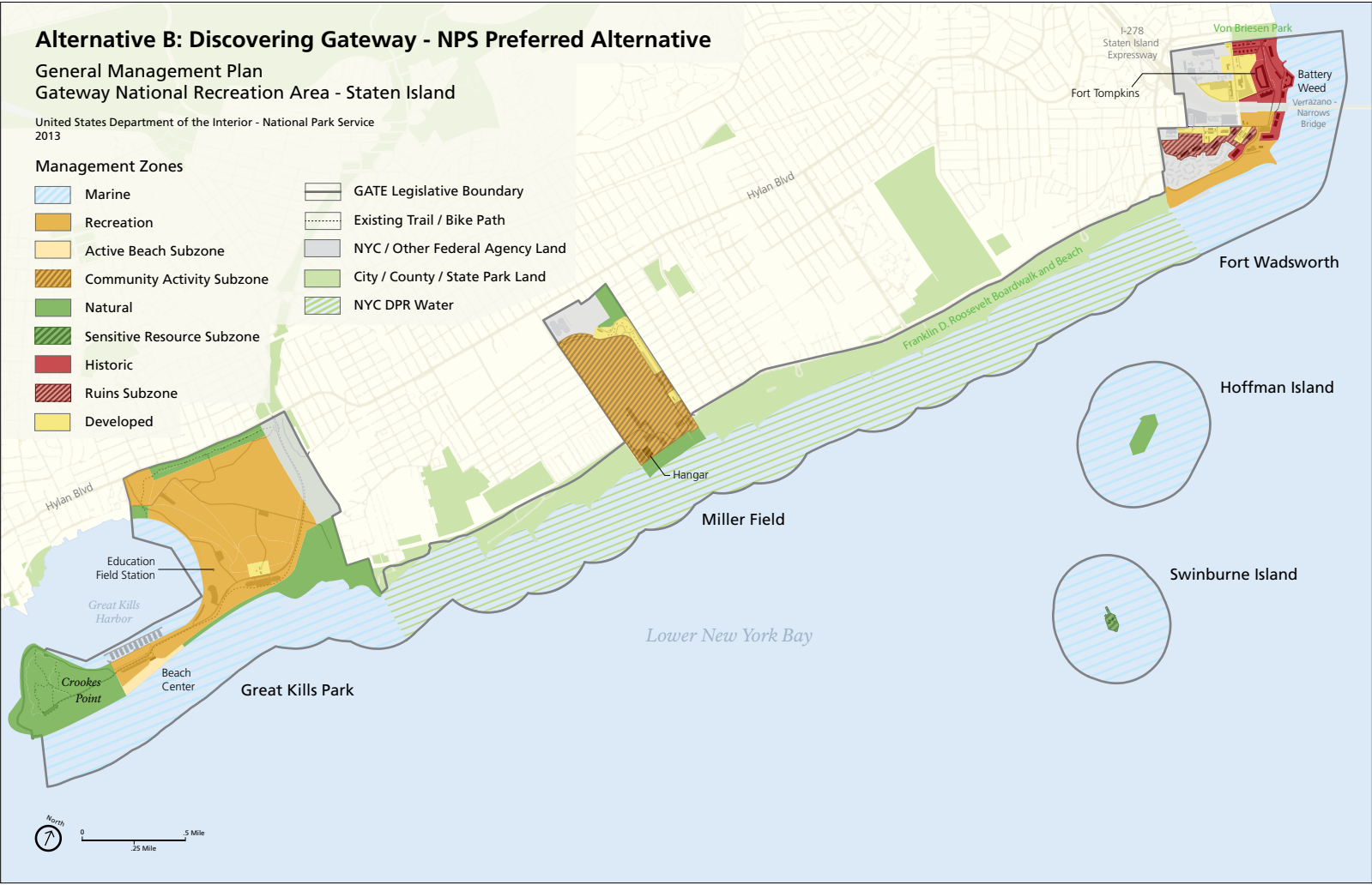
Access and Transportation

Improved public transportation and an expanded greenway, as well as, shuttles between the sites would make access more convenient. Also, bike infrastructure would be developed throughout the unit including a bike-sharing system, maps, and convenient bike parking to encourage more bike use at the parks and provide convenient connections with other Staten Island trail systems. A shuttle system linking the Staten Island Unit park sites with Saint George Ferry Terminal would be considered as a means of promoting sustainable access and a first point of visitor orientation to the Staten Island Unit from those arriving via the Staten Island Ferry.

Fort Wadsworth
Recreation Zone

Fort Wadsworth would become a destination for both outdoor activities and community use and would offer a wide range of recreation facilities as well as interpretive experiences. Expanded trails and interpretation, access to the water, and improved facilities, would enhance opportunities to recreate in a scenic setting amidst the impressive coastal defense batteries. Camping facilities would be expanded and include a variety of different types of camping closer to the coastline and for various skill levels.

A multi-use trail system would be developed that connects to the New York City Greenway (NYC Greenway) and adjacent neighborhoods and cater to different physical capabilities and recreation interests. The NPS would work with NYCDPR to expand the greenway so that it links Fort



Wadsworth, Miller Field, and Great Kills Park together. The NPS would work with partners to develop a multimodal transportation system including improved public transit, bike paths, and a shuttle, that would link Fort Wadsworth with the Staten Island Ferry and other areas.

Biking and water-based recreational activities such as kayaking and fishing would be encouraged through instructional programming designed to introduce people to these sports and to build skills. Instructional and/or beginner zones would be designated offshore in order to create more comfortable learning environments. Equipment sharing and rentals would encourage visitors to try new activities and to facilitate “gateway” experiences of the outdoors. (e.g., bikes, binoculars or tent rentals).

Visitor orientation would be improved with new signs and wayfinding, Fort Wadsworth would be more visible and clearly identified as a park welcoming to visitors. A new contact station, possibly at the Gate House, would be developed in order to improve the sense of arrival and better orient visitors.

Historic Zone

At Fort Wadsworth, interpretive programming and media related to the fundamental resources would be increased, allowing for a more in-depth and richer experience of the site’s cultural defense resources and cultural landscapes. Battery Weed and Fort Tompkins would be preserved and open to more regular visitor use. Public access to both forts would be increased and interpretive programming of these resources would be expanded. The Battery Weed seawall would be repaired and fortified to protect the resource from storm surges. Additional batteries would be stabilized and their unique features incorporated into the recreational and interpretive trail system.

Natural Zone and Marine Zone

Natural resource protection of offshore habitats would be maintained within the Marine Zone. In cooperation with partners, NPS would take recommended measures to improve water quality within the bay.

Opportunities for water-based recreation would be greatly expanded at Fort Wadsworth. These activities would include greater fishing access,

a coastal water trail extending to Great Kills and the islands, human-powered boat launch sites, and equipment rental. From Fort Wadsworth, a water trail would lead out to an offshore dock positioned nearby Hoffman and Swinburne Islands for distant wildlife observation.

Hoffman and Swinburne islands would remain natural areas. The wildlife and habitat value would be monitored and studied. NPS would explore the possibility of creating guided tours for limited visitor use. Through guided tours or self-guided boat trips along a marked water trail, visitors could gain greater access to the islands. NPS would explore the feasibility of developing a dock on Hoffman in order to allow visitors on the island. Alternatively, an offshore, floating dock would be developed to accommodate distant wildlife observation. In particular, the impact of increased use of the islands would be monitored and the degree of access adjusted as needed.

Developed Zone

The park’s administration and operation functions and facilities would continue at Fort Wadsworth. Park housing would be maintained. The character-defining features of Mont Sec and New York Avenue would be preserved and both avenues would be incorporated into the visitor experience of Fort Wadsworth through improved wayfinding signage and interpretation.

Miller Field

Recreation Zone and Community Activity Subzone

Miller Field would remain a vibrant center for community-based recreation tailored to youth and their families. Fields designed for a range of sports uses including soccer, softball and pee-wee leagues would be upgraded to better accommodate intensive use. In both alternatives, NPS would explore management of the ball fields and sports leagues with another entity. The NPS would explore opportunities to introduce more children and their families to the NPS, and other parks and experiences Gateway offers.

A multi-use Perimeter Trail would circumnavigate the entire park and connect the forest with the bay. Walkability throughout the park would be improved by expanding the width of multi-use paths and retrofitting park roads to slow traffic and include sidewalks or designated bike/walk



ways. An active nature-based recreation experience that would appeal to youth and their families (e.g. bike trails/facilities, play features, nature adventure zone) would be offered and complement the sports league use.

The NPS would work with partners to host concerts, performances, tournaments and events. The community gardens would be expanded to accommodate more use. Additionally, the picnic and group gathering around the contact station would be expanded and improved. The hangar area would be redeveloped as a community activity area and could include a picnic pavilion, trailhead, and community event space. The hangar would be stabilized and new uses sought.

NPS would work with partners to develop more direct public transit routes that serve Miller Field. A bike-sharing terminal at Miller Field would encourage bike travel along the NYC Greenway up to Fort Wadsworth Park, and the NPS would work with partners to establish a designated bike route to Great Kills Park.

Natural Zone and Marine Zone

A kayak launch site, and kayak instructional zone would be developed on Miller Field’s coastline. The Miller Field launch site would be an access point to the buoyed interpretive water trail that extends from Fort Wadsworth to Great Kills. The dune habitat along Miller Field’s shoreline would be protected and maintained. Formal access points to the beach and shoreline would be established to protect the dune system.

Developed Zone

The park housing on Miller Field and the Visitor Contact Station would be maintained. Location of maintenance and operations area will be identified upon further study. Maintenance area will be located to complement recreational opportunities.

Great Kills Park

Recreation Zone and Active Beach Subzone and Marine Zone

The Great Kills Harbor would become a destination for a variety of water-based recreational activities. Recreational opportunities such as a marina, kayak concessions, water trails, instructional boating

zones, sailing lessons, equipment rental, and tours would be offered. The feasibility of “boatels” or other water-based accommodations would be studied. Supporting facilities such as boat storage and other amenities would be appropriately located. A wide-variety of water-based recreational experiences from traditional beach uses at a guarded swim beach, to learn-to-swim programming, and kayaking lessons would be offered. Expanded visitor amenities would be developed in conjunction with the harbor. Circulation and pedestrian access between the beach center and harbor would be improved.

A variety of new camping opportunities would be developed at multiple sites throughout Great Kills. RV, structural, walk-in tent, and drive-in tent camping options would be offered. Additionally, flexible open spaces to accommodate picnicking, discovery zones for youth, and other unstructured recreational activities would be created. The Education Field Station would be enhanced with a trailhead, outdoor classrooms, camping facilities, and a nature playground to create a fun and safe way for youth to connect with nature.

The popular multi-use pathway would be expanded to create a system of looped routes. Internal park trails would also tie into proposed community bike routes and the NYC Greenway. The NPS would coordinate with partners to complete missing pieces of on- and off-street trails and bike routes for connecting Great Kills to Miller Field. Improved bike infrastructure including bike rentals, maps and wayfinding, and bike parking facilities would also encourage park access by bike. Finally, the park would work with partners to determine the feasibility of introducing ferry service to Great Kills Marina that would provide links to other Gateway sites.

Natural Zone

Current natural resource practices would be maintained including controlling invasives, planting trees and monitoring beach erosion. NPS would work with neighbors and partners to implement solutions for improving resiliency of beach/dune habitat of Great Kills and further east along Staten Island coastline. Habitat restoration efforts would continue on Crooke’s Point.



Alternative C: Experiencing Preserved Places

Overview

This alternative provides the most opportunities for independent exploration and “wild” experiences that immerse visitors into natural areas, historic sites and landscapes. Natural systems, historic sites and landscapes receive the highest levels of preservation and restoration in this alternative. This alternative increases the visibility, enjoyment and protection of coastal resources and focuses resource management on beach and dune ecosystems and coastal defense landscapes. New recreational programming emphasizes low impact activities that facilitate enjoyment of historic settings and natural areas and emphasize opportunities for education and interpretation through hands-on learning and stewardship opportunities. This alternative maximizes sustainable operations and concentrates activities, access and facilities in distinct locations in order to improve operational efficiency and energy conservation.

Jamaica Bay Unit

Visitor Use and Recreation

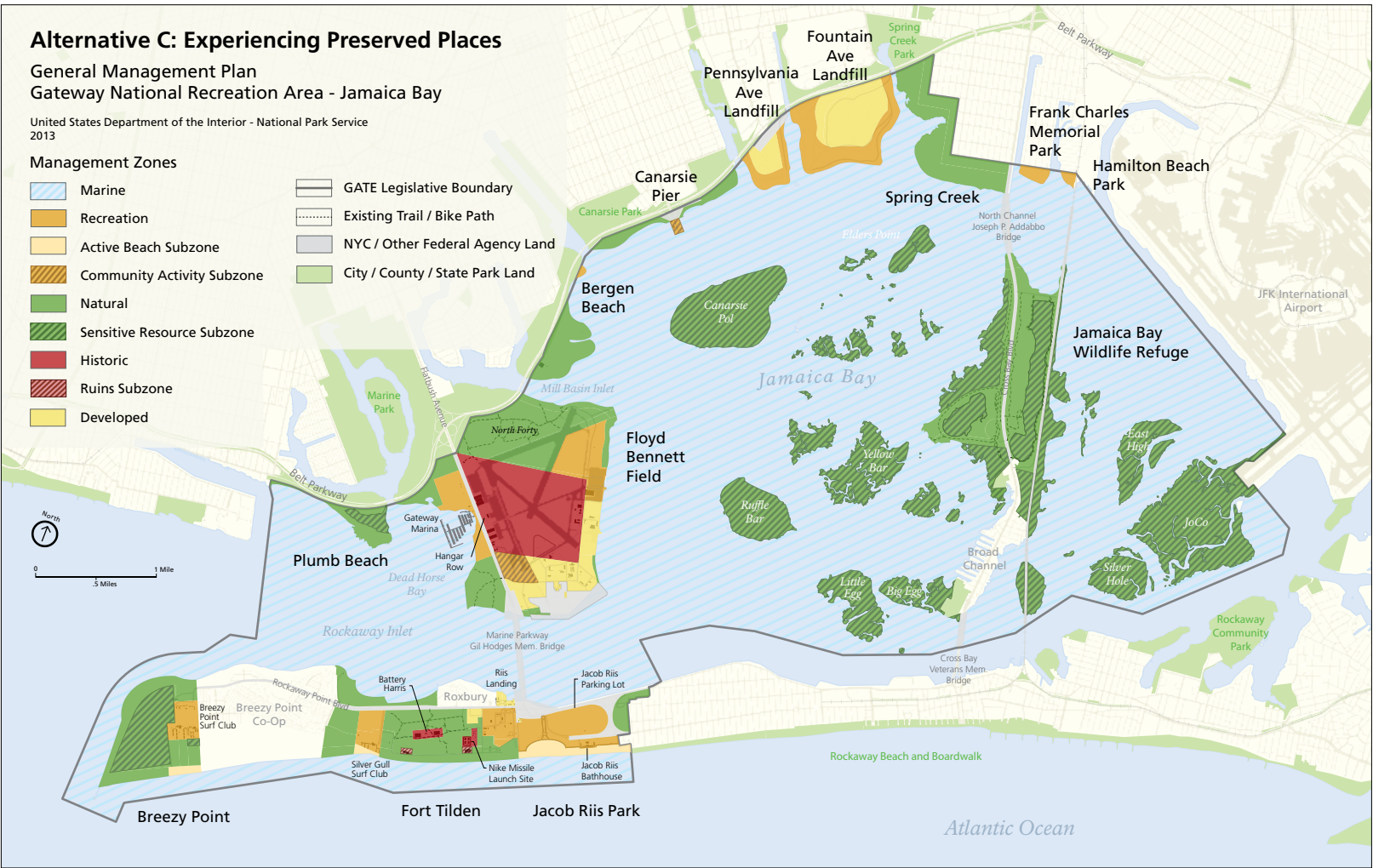
Throughout the Jamaica Bay Unit, such as Breezy Point, Fort Tilden, the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge, and Floyd Bennett Field, visitors would find open, protected natural areas. In these area visitors can retreat into natural environments; experience the sounds, smells, and views; and learn about healthy habitat remnants that are unique within the New York City metropolitan area. Clusters of recreation facility development throughout the unit’s park lands including trail networks, campgrounds, and observation platforms would encourage independent discovery and facilitate outdoor recreation. All new facilities would be designed to be “light on the land” and minimize impacts on natural and cultural resources.

This alternative would focus on engaging visitors, communities, and partners in participatory science, education, and natural resource stewardship while creating opportunities for self-guided exploration of the area’s natural environmental and historic settings. The NPS and partner stewardship programming would harness volunteer energy and work toward improving water quality and habitat conditions throughout Jamaica Bay. In addition, increased monitoring, research, volunteer programs, and collaboration with regional partners would continue to address water quality issues, habitat restoration, and stewardship.

Resource Management

Under alternative C, natural resource restoration projects would be widespread throughout the Jamaica Bay Unit. Ongoing restoration, research, and environmental protection projects would be broadened, expedited and strengthened by outside funding, and the involvement of additional partners and the broader scientific community. Management would focus on protecting and restoring natural conditions throughout the unit including hassocks and water quality within the bay, freshwater marshes at Breezy Point and Tilden’s scrub/shrub-dominated covered dunes and grassy/forb-dominated fore and inner dunes. This more robust natural resource management would be complemented by expanded outreach, environmental education programming, citizen science, and volunteer stewardship projects. Along with this enhanced natural resource management would come expanded opportunities for nature-study, environmental educational and participatory natural resource stewardship programming.

In alternative C, the protection, preservation, and interpretation of the unit’s coastal defense fortifications, aviation structures, and cultural landscapes would be substantially increased. The aviation history at Floyd Bennett Field would be preserved and showcased. On the Rockaway Peninsula, preservation and interpretation of Fort Tilden’s cultural landscape, batteries, the Nike Missile site, and the Jacob Riis landscape would round out the predominantly natural resource-based recreational experiences found throughout the unit and result





in richer communication about the area’s history. Extensive preservation and interpretation projects at Fort Tilden’s Battery Harris and the Nike Missile site would lead to improved access to the fundamental cultural resources and enriched communication about the site’s coastal defense history.

NPS would work closely with the NYCDPR and other landowners to build the resiliency of coastal habitat and to improve conditions along the entire Rockaway coastline from Breezy Point Tip to NYC Rockaway parks. Together the agencies would produce a holistic shoreline management plan that would help guide recovery efforts and future uses and development. The effects of climate change and these park lands’ vulnerability to future storms would continue to be studied.

Transportation

Similar to alternative B, but with less of an emphasis on waterborne transportation, management would make accessing the Jamaica Bay sites more convenient by establishing an interconnected system of trails and greenways, introducing bike-sharing stations, improving shuttle services between districts and linking to public transit stations. A transportation hub would be created at Floyd Bennett Field to improve access and circulation and to promote multi-modal options.

Plumb Beach
Natural Zone

The beach would be managed for nature-oriented, low-impact activities such as wildlife observation and environmental education. A designated natural area with interpreted nature trails and outdoor education facilities would provide more opportunities for volunteer projects, environmental education programming, and quiet nature study. The NPS would tie programming at Plumb Beach into New York City’s environmental education programming at the Salt Marsh Nature Center in Marine Park. Similarly, the NPS and its partners would expand and offer volunteer and educational programs. The NPS will work with the NYCDPR, to improve programmatic and stewardship opportunities with adjacent neighborhoods and other nearby park lands including Marine Park, Floyd Bennett Field, and Dead Horse Bay. The NPS would work with New York City and NYCDOT to improve conditions of the parking lot. The existing building would be rehabilitated to accommodate administrative uses and to support restoration efforts (e.g., tool storage) and stewardship projects and programming. The building would likely be jointly managed by the NPS and New York City.

Social trails would be eliminated and access to the Natural Zone would be controlled in order to prevent trampling of vegetation, reduce impacts to wildlife and ensure restoration efforts are successful. NPS would minimize disturbance to the saltmarsh and intertidal habitat by reducing foot traffic and limiting travel to a designated trail corridor. Additionally the saltmarsh and eastern end of beach would be evaluated to better understand its potential habitat value. Bioengineering techniques would be used to stabilize eroding beach and dune areas with plantings of native coastal trees and shrubs.

Sensitive Resources Subzone

Access to the Sensitive Resources Subzone would be limited to guided tours, volunteer stewardship projects, research and educational programs. Through signs and increased enforcement, the NPS would prevent illicit damage to horseshoe crabs and other wildlife.

Floyd Bennett Field
Recreation Zone

Floyd Bennett Field would become a destination for learning about and experiencing aviation history and participating in nature-oriented activities and experiences. NPS would focus on providing opportunities for self-guided exploration of the field’s natural resources and expanding opportunities for natural immersion, and interpretive and educational programming.

New recreation development would be clustered in order to minimize impacts on the natural environment and to maximize the amount of space devoted to either habitat restoration and/or historic preservation. Overall, in this alternative, new recreation development is minimized and the NPS focuses more resources on expanding interpretive and educational programming.

Smaller-scale, concentrated camping areas would be established with the highest level of consideration to green design that serves as both an educational and recreational opportunity. NPS and its partners would offer skill building camping programs with a focus on encouraging independent exploration and healthy outdoor recreation. In this alternative, facilities would be designed and scaled to provide visitors quieter, more secluded nature and overnight experiences than offered in alternative B.

The arrival sequence to the park would be improved with increased access to the airfield’s main visitor facilities off Flatbush Avenue. Through improved circulation and wayfinding signs, a more welcoming sense of arrival would be established. Improved transportation infrastructure would likely be divided between the Recreation Zone and the Developed Zone. Floyd Bennett Field would be established as the most accessible park in Jamaica Bay and the airfield would serves as a multi-modal transportation hub developed to provide transportation access and visitor distribution (via public transportation, shuttles, bikes, water taxis, etc.) to park lands throughout Jamaica Bay. Connecting the airfield’s main visitor facilities and internal trail network with the Jamaica Bay Greenway would ensure convenient trail access to the park. Improved wayfinding, interpretive and orientation facilities and materials would orient visitors to the resources that can be found throughout Jamaica Bay and Gateway. The marina would serve as a water-based access point for ferries, water taxis, and other boats.

Natural Zone

Habitat protection and wetlands restoration would be extensive. Within the North Forty and Mill Basin area, the shoreline would be softened through the removal of impervious surfacing and the restoration of former saltmarshes, sandspits, and intertidal mudflats. Additionally, more freshwater wetland habitat would be created than in alternative B. There would also be extensive restoration of former saltmarshes, sandspits, and intertidal mudflats. Areas south of Dead Horse Bay would be restored as tidal mudflats.

Existing grasslands habitat would be managed and maintained for ecological function and values. Grassland habitat would be actively managed to support butterfly, moths, bluebird and grassland-dependent birds including migrants (e.g. Bobolink) that use the Floyd Bennett Field grasslands as stop-over sites. Managed lawn in certain areas would be allowed to convert to natural meadows and when building or impervious surface removal allows, new areas of grassland would be established elsewhere on the site.

Portions of the North Forty would be converted to freshwater wetland habitat. Areas not converted or restored to wetland as part of the wetland interpretive center, would continue to be managed as upland forest. Expanded visitor use in the North Forty would be compatible with the protection of the remaining species-rich forest in the North Forty including successional maritime forest. Shrubland communities found in the back dune areas Floyd Bennett Field area including the Northern Bayberry Dune Shrubland and Northern Beach Heather Dune Shrubland would be protected and maintained.

Under alternative C, more extensive habitat restoration and habitat construction would occur than under alternative B. Aside from these trail corridors, new built visitor facilities will be minimal and limited to small-scale, low impact developments such as viewing blinds and observation platforms. The public would experience the new and restored habitat via trails and boardwalks. Under alternative C, the center would serve as an area where volunteers are trained for natural resource stewardship projects throughout Jamaica Bay.

The zone would be open to nature-based recreation along designated, soft-surface trails. The area would provide a venue for both environmental education programming and volunteer stewardship projects. Volunteers would be tasked with projects such as monitoring, native plantings and weed control. As in alternative B, visitors would encounter facilities such as blinds, scopes, observation decks and boardwalks along the trails. Along with interpretive materials, these facilities would be designed to facilitate nature study, wildlife observation and immersion in a natural setting. A limited number of low-impact camping facilities would be sited in the Natural Zone.

Marine Zone

Along stretches of coastline that are not targeted for restoration, access to and recreational use of the shoreline for fishing, nature study and kayaking/boating would be increased. Like in alternative B, a water trail would be established offshore and NPS and its partners would offer boat tours that allow visitors to experience the airfield and Jamaica Bay by water.

The Gateway Marina would offer more public uses, including boat rentals, water-based recreation, and boating/sailing lessons. The enhanced marina area would serve as the Jamaica Bay unit’s primary portal for experiencing the bay by waters. Guided interpretive boat tours as well as a designated water trail would encourage people to explore the airfield and other Jamaica Bay resources from the water. Additionally, greater shoreline access and several launch sites for human-powered boats (e.g. kayak, canoe) throughout this zone would create more boating and fishing opportunities.

Historic Zone

Compared to alternative B, more of Floyd Bennett Field would be dedicated to historic preservation and aviation interpretation with larger portions of the airfield’s cultural landscape preserved and more character-defining landscape elements would be restored. Through cultural landscape restoration of select character-defining features and the adaptive reuse of historic aviation structures along Hangar Row, the experience of Floyd Bennett Field would be enriched through interpretation and immersion in a preserved historic setting.

The Aviation District would be energized and activated with abundant visitor use and interpretive experiences. The rehabilitated hangars and cultural landscape would feature aviation exhibits, aircraft collections, and flexible interior and exterior spaces and would provide space for community activities, informal gatherings, interpretive programs, and special events. Prominent buildings and character-defining cultural landscape elements that reveal the aviation history of the airfield (such as Ryan Center, Hangar Row and runways) would be preserved and interpreted.

The period of significance for this cultural landscape would be the Municipal Airport Era. Current development located within this Aviation District that is not compatible with the airfield’s historic character would be removed and the uses would be relocated to areas outside of the zone. Alternative C would include the preservation and, in some cases, restoration of many more character defining features of the cultural landscape such as vegetation, lighting, circulation patterns and entrance sequence to the Ryan Center, small-scale features and these features would be interpreted for visitors. Within the Aviation District, adaptively reused historic hangars, new structures, events, and exhibits, as well as preserved cultural landscape elements such as the runways, would create venues for interpreting a wide variety of topics from natural resources and habitat restoration to aviation history.

The historic aviation buildings along Flatbush Avenue known as Hangar Row would be rehabilitated to provide a range of visitor activities and uses that could include exhibits, informal gatherings, interpretive programs, and special events. The historic plane collection would be relocated from Hangar B to Hangar Row. Current uses of Hangar B would be relocated to Hangars 3 and 4. Future uses of Hangar B would continue to be explored and may include the rehabilitation of the hangar and site for an entertainment venue.

Developed Zone

Like in alternative B, a portion of the airfield would be designated as a Developed Zone that would accommodate transportation infrastructure as well as operations and maintenance facilities. In areas not needed to support operational or visitor uses, impervious surfaces would be removed and grassland or other native vegetation would added.

Existing maintenance facilities would be reconfigured in the Developed Zone and new maintenance areas and storage and operation facilities would be developed in order to care for new recreation facilities, accommodate increased visitor numbers, and protect and preserve both natural and cultural resources. These new and expanded operations and maintenance facilities would be clustered in one area.

The NPS and New York City would continue evaluating the technical and environmental feasibility of siting a facility in the park that would process food waste, vegetation, and other organic matter from concession stands, restaurants, groceries, and other sources in and around the park and local vicinity.

A separate access for commercial, operational and maintenance vehicles that allows for direct access to the Developed Zone would be maintained. Uses by other agencies would be screened in order to minimize its visual impact on any visitor uses that would occur in the southern portion of the airfield. Some uses may be permanently removed from the airfield in the future.

**Bergen Beach
Natural Zone**

Bergen Beach would be managed as a natural area with opportunities for quiet, nature study, research, volunteer stewardship, environmental education, and interpretive programming. Existing equestrian facilities would be removed, relocated, or repurposed, and the equestrian use areas would be restored to natural conditions. The park would be made more accessible and would cater to nature study. Facility development and programming would facilitate nature-based activities such as volunteer stewardship projects, guided nature tours, research, and self-guided nature study as well as permitted research. Bergen Beach will be designated as a research area for urban ecology and the study of other relevant research topics. Additionally, the area will be a center for volunteer stewardship projects and training as well as environmental education programs. A limited number of backcountry camping sites would be developed.



To prevent trampling of vegetation, reduce impacts to wildlife and ensure restoration efforts are successful, visitor use would be limited to designated trails within the Natural Zone. Trail development may include the addition of interpretive media as well as observation facilities such as viewing blinds.

Natural conditions would predominate at Bergen Beach and NPS and its partners would spearhead a number of restoration projects to protect and enhance the area’s coastal habitats. More extensive beach/dune habitat restoration would be undertaken including bioengineering techniques would be used to stabilize eroding natural areas with plantings of native coastal trees and shrubs. Beach/dune habitats along with fringe wetlands would be protected, maintained, and restored. Efforts to control and eradicate Phragmites and other invasives would also be increased.

Pennsylvania Avenue and Fountain Avenue Parks
Recreation Zone

Under alternative C, the Pennsylvania Avenue and Fountain Avenue Parks would be developed for recreation and community use and would offer a wide range of recreation facilities as well as community gathering spaces. At the Pennsylvania Avenue Park, the existing roads would be converted into a multi-use trail system. Facilities such as viewing platforms and/or overlooks would be developed to take advantage of the elevation and the views of Jamaica Bay. Other facility development would be basic visitor amenities such as restrooms and orientation and wayfinding signs. All new development on both sites would be designed to respect the sensitivity of the cap and other infrastructure. Vegetation and native habitats established at the parks sites would be protected, maintained, and interpreted.

Outreach to surrounding communities and creative programming led by the NPS and its partners would foster lasting engagement and would attract more local residents to Jamaica Bay park lands. Physical connections between the Pennsylvania Avenue Park and its neighboring communities as well as nearby park sites would be improved.

Developed Zone

Renewable energy development would be explored at both Pennsylvania Avenue and Fountain Avenue Parks. While visitor access will be limited to guided tours, the NPS would incorporate renewable-energy development into its interpretive media.

Spring Creek
Natural Zone

Spring Creek would act as a gateway to Jamaica Bay for adjacent communities and provide convenient access to the water and expanded recreation opportunities. Under alternative C, more extensive habitat enhancements would take place at Spring Creek, including more native plantings and ongoing monitoring and assessment of saltmarsh and forested areas. Under this alternative, the NPS would work with the NYCDPR to improve habitat conditions along the natural corridor connecting Spring Creek with New York City park lands.

Jacob Riis Park
Recreation Zone and Active Beach Subzone

Jacob Riis Park would remain a destination for high-quality beach recreation activities. Riis would remain an active beach destination and would offer additional community recreation opportunities as well as nature and water- based recreation facilities. Facility development would be significantly less intensive than alternative B and larger areas of the park would be managed as flexible open spaces and/or natural areas.

Active beach use would be maintained and the visitor experience would be expanded with the development of a trail system, nature play features (e.g., dune playscapes), and boat launch. Additionally, shaded spaces for picnicking and gathering would be developed.

Even more impervious surfaces would be removed in this alternative and more of the park would be converted to flexible open spaces that can still accommodate recreation uses, but are more resilient to storm surges. Additionally, portions of the parking area would likely be converted to natural habitat and flexible open space.

The NPS would work with partners to adaptively reuse the bathhouse for a wide variety of uses, ranging from visitor amenities to interpretive exhibits to park operations. Interpretive programming at the site and digital media would be expanded to communicate the story of the bathhouse, recreation on the Rockaway Peninsula, and climate change.

Similar to alternative B, portions of the Jacob Riis parking lot would be adaptively reused for transportation facilities such as shuttle parking and a bike sharing station. The majority of the parking lot not needed for parking and transportation would be converted to flexible open spaces or natural habitats. In this alternative, NPS and partners would also investigate the possibility of using a portion of the parking lot for renewable energy development. Physical connection between Jacob Riis and the other park lands on the Rockaway Peninsula would be improved through a shuttle, linkages to public transportation and bike infrastructure.

Fort Tilden
Natural Zone

The park would be a destination for both nature-oriented recreation and historic interpretive experiences. Within the Natural Zone, Fort Tilden’s largely undisturbed plant community with scrub/shrub-dominated covered dunes as well as grassy/forb-dominated foredunes and interdunes, would be protected, monitored, and enhanced. The beach intertidal zone, supratidal zone, and the grassy areas would continue to support marine invertebrates and other native wildlife. Visitors find opportunities for a diversity of opportunities to explore the site’s natural environments and enjoy a quiet immersive experience in a predominantly natural area.

Beach and dune habitats would be actively restored following damage from Hurricane Sandy. As the scrub/shrub-dominated covered dunes as well as grassy/forb-dominated fore and interdunes are reestablished, these habitats would be protected and monitored. In alternative C, research of these habitats would be increased and Fort Tilden would become another center for volunteer-based stewardship, monitoring, and restoration projects.

Overall, facility development would be significantly less than alternative B. Many visitor amenities would be provided on a seasonal basis using mobile facilities. Limited, low-impact camping opportunities would be developed in the Fort Tilden backcountry. Fort Tilden’s existing equestrian facilities would be improved and used to accommodate trail rides throughout the park. The trails network throughout Fort Tilden would be expanded and some trailheads and segments of the trails would be located within the Recreation Zone. Improved trail system with trailheads and a robust backcountry trail experience along designated routes. Expanded interpretation along trails and interpretive programming would highlight both the natural and cultural resources. Fort Tilden remains an unguarded beach and offers more of a natural coastal experience than other Gateway beaches. Shore Road would be converted to a trail providing convenient access to the beach. Limited fishing access would also be provided. Fort Tilden would host a number of volunteer stewardship projects throughout the year.

Habitat value of the inlet side of Fort Tilden would be studied. If warranted, coastal habitat and wetland projects would be initiated. This area could also present opportunities for environmental education programming and limited public access for nature study.

Recreation Zone

Under alternative C, the Silver Gull Beach Club would be maintained. However, public use of the beach club would be expanded to include water-based and beach recreation opportunities such as educational and interpretive programming and guided kayak tours and lessons. NPS would work closely with concessionaire to ensure that future development of the beach club is more resilient to storms.

Historic Zone

At Fort Tilden, cultural resource preservation and stewardship projects as well as enhanced interpretation of the Fort’s landscape, batteries and Nike missile site compliment the natural-resource based recreational experiences found elsewhere in the Jamaica Bay Unit.

Under alternative C, the Historic Zone is larger and preservation efforts are more extensive than in alternative B. Preservation projects under alternative C encompasses the batteries as well as the Nike Missile site and the Parade Grounds. Additionally, volunteers and partners would be engaged in the preservation of the cultural resources within the Historic Zone.

Battery Harris would be stabilized and made accessible. The battery’s existing overlook would be improved and interpretive media and programming would be expanded. The Nike Missile site would also be stabilized and interpreted. Interpretation and programming at the missile site would be more extensive than in alternative B. Maintenance facilities would be moved out of the Nike Missile site to allow for interpretation and visitor access. Access to and interpretation of these resources would be improved through expanded trail network, enhanced interpretive media, and increased programming.

The cultural landscape of the parade ground would undergo significant preservation projects under alternative C, so that it would evoke the look and feel of the historic period. This would involve the removal of incompatible modern uses such as the athletic fields and ball fields. Depending on the results of the damage assessments of the parade ground, the buildings would continue to be adaptively reused be to support visitor facilities as well as community uses. Some rehabilitated buildings could provide overnight accommodates and visitor amenities needed to support overnight stays such as food service and equipment rentals. Additionally, the buildings would continue to accommodate community groups and could house additional interpretive exhibits and educational programming in the future. The parade ground would serve as a primary center for historic preservation volunteer and training projects. Additionally, the history of Fort Tilden would be interpreted through interpretive media and exhibits as well as guided programs.

Circulation between Riis Landing and Fort Tilden and other park lands on the Rockaway Peninsula would be improved through shuttles, safer road crossings, and bike infrastructure. Fort Tilden would act as the orientation portal for park lands on the Rockaway Peninsula and would provide information on resources and opportunities offered throughout Gateway. A visitor contact station would be established within an existing building. Additionally, trailhead and parking areas would be provided.

Development Zone

Riis Landing would continue to serve as a ferry landing. Additionally, buildings at the site would be preserved and adaptively reused. Operations moved from the Nike Missile site at Fort Tilden would be relocated to Riis Landing or other areas. The buildings at Riis Landing would be preserved and leased for community and other uses.

Breezy Point Tip

In both alternatives, Breezy Point Tip remains an undeveloped natural area open to limited nature-based recreation. The Breezy Point Surf Club would be maintained. However, public use of the beach club would be expanded to include water-based and beach recreation opportunities such as educational and interpretive programming and guided kayak tours and lessons. NPS would work closely with concessionaire to ensure that future development of the beach club is more resilient to storms.

In this alternative, Breezy Point Tip would be managed as a natural area with a greater emphasis on protecting the significant shorebird and marine bird/waterfowl habitat. The area’s unique combination of marine/exposed ocean beach/dune system with somewhat secluded back dunes and palustrine wetland swale features, as well as its salt panne pools would be monitored, protected and enhanced.

Sandy Hook Unit

Visitor Use and Experience

Sandy Hook’s beaches, forests, wetlands, and waters would serve as living laboratories where visitors and volunteers would be engaged in participatory science, education and stewardship. These programs would nurture personal connections with the coastal environment and inspire greater appreciation for the park’s historic significance. Recreational uses would be maintained along the beach and bay.

Resource Management

Protection and restoration of the beach dune community as well as forest, shrub and wetland habitats at Sandy Hook would be increased in this alternative. To reduce impacts on these sensitive and rare habitats, access would be tightly controlled and restricted in some cases. Aggressive control of invasive species, strengthening healthy communities and repairing beach erosion would be management priorities. Additionally, research and monitoring of the unit’s habitats would be increased.

Historic preservation efforts would be most widespread in this alternative with the largest number of projects to stabilize, preserve, and interpret both historic structures and cultural landscapes. At Sandy Hook, historic preservation training programs would be offered and people would find opportunities to engage in volunteer stewardship projects. Students, partners, and volunteers trained at Sandy Hook would be mobilized to participate in historic resource stewardship projects throughout Gateway.

With its lighthouse, lifesaving station, and long coastline, Sandy Hook would emerge as Gateway’s focal point for maritime heritage interpretation. The preservation of these iconic structures along with expanded programming, activities, and interpretive media would engage visitors in the park’s maritime story.

Transportation

A variety of transportation systems would be developed to make Fort Hancock and the entire Sandy Hook peninsula more convenient to access. Within Fort Hancock, ferry service would be expanded to include summer weekdays, shoulder seasons and special events. Additionally a seasonal water ferry/taxi connection would be explored from other communities and NPS sites. Opportunities to provide private/transient water access and dockage at Sandy Hook would also be evaluated.

A shuttle system would relieve parking issues and traffic congestion and provide convenient access to the park. The shuttle would collect visitors from surrounding towns, transportation stops and the ferry terminal and drop them off at Sandy Hook’s beaches and activity nodes. Opportunities would be explored with partners to extend public transit service into Sandy Hook, and initiate a transit shuttle to connect the Highlands. Interpretive media would be incorporated into both the on ferry service and/or internal landside shuttle system.

An expanded multi-use path network would traverse more of the peninsula and accommodate cross-island travel so people could explore both the ocean side and the bay side. Designated on-street bike routes from the Highlands would connect with regional trails serving the park unit. Bike access would be encouraged to/from and within Sandy Hook, with bike rental stations at parking facilities near the park entrance and within the park.

Parking options would be evaluated for remote intercept parking lot(s) outside of the Sandy Hook boundary with transit shuttle and/or bicycle connections provided into the park. Advanced traveler information systems would be improved with partners.

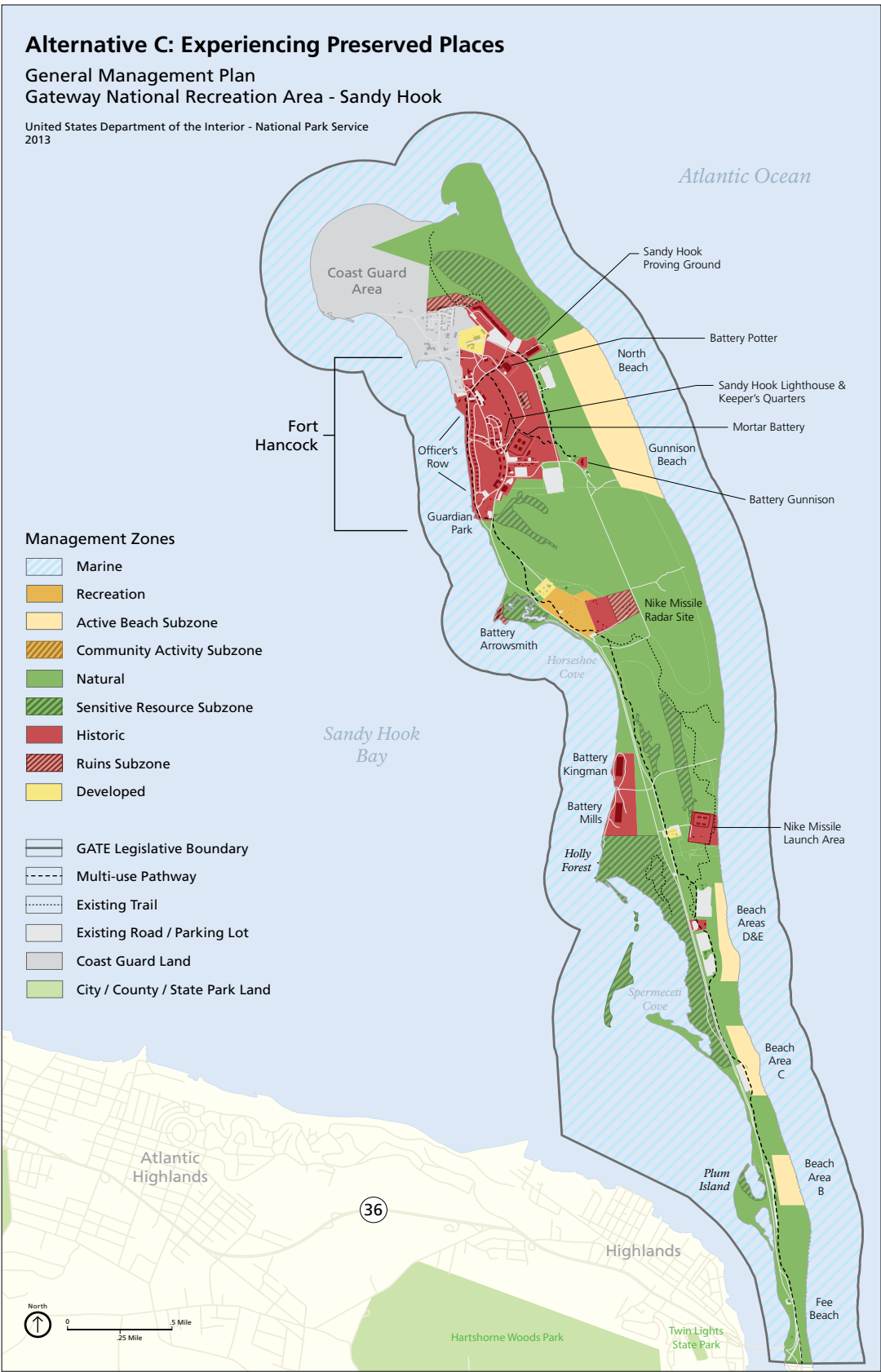
Historic Zone

The preserved and interpreted historic setting of Fort Hancock would provide for a variety of historic interpreted experiences. Additionally, the area would draw people interested in learning more about historic preservation and participating in hands on preservation projects. In alternative C, there would be a greater emphasis in also preserving and interpreting the Fort’s cultural landscape and in expanding historic interpretive and educational programming at Fort Hancock. Additionally, in alternative C, the interior of buildings within Fort Hancock would be more intensively restored to their period of significance.

The cultural landscape within the Fort Hancock area would be maintained and the preservation of additional character defining features would reinforce the military character and function of the fort. Along with preservation efforts, the features of the cultural landscape would be interpreted and revealed to people visiting Fort Hancock through new programming, interpretive media and educational programming.

Additional batteries within the Fort Hancock area would be stabilized open to visitor access and interpreted. Batteries that would be preserved and interpreted through guided tours and/or interpretive media could include Batteries Potter, Gunnison, McCook, and Reynolds (Mortar). Along with the structures themselves, the historic setting of some of these batteries would be preserved to more accurately represent the historic period. Additionally, volunteer stewardship projects would engage people in the hands on care and preservation of these structures.

An interpretive Battery Trail would extend from Fort Hancock and allow for self-guided exploration of the fortifications. The Battery Trail would



provide greater access to the coastal defense structures within the Fort Hancock area and would provide a trail connection south to Batteries Kingman and Mills and north to the ruins of Batteries Morris and Urmston. The trail experience would be enriched by interpretive media of the structures and Sandy Hook’s history (e.g. wayside signs, brochures).

Batteries Kingman and Mills would be stabilized, open to visitor access, and interpreted. Along with the structures themselves, the historic setting of some of these batteries would be preserved to more accurately represent the historic period. Additionally, volunteer stewardship projects would engage people in the hands-on care and preservation of these structures. Sandy Hook interpretive programming and media would also be expanded to incorporate these batteries.

The Nike Missile radar site would be converted into an interpreted, visitor-ready site. In alternative C, there would be more extensive preservation efforts, interpretation and programming related to the Nike Missile infrastructure on Sandy Hook than in alternative C. Alternative C would be more robust and the Nike Missile launch site would be converted into a primary interpretive destination. The interworkings of the launch site and the radar site would be interpreted. Preservation and restoration efforts at the launch and radar sites in combination with interpretive media would reveal what the site looked like during the Cold

War era and allow visitors to visualize how Sandy Hook was employed to defend New York City over periods in U.S. history.

Recreation Zone and Active Beach Subzone

Recreational uses would be maintained. Redevelopment of the beach centers following damage from Hurricane Sandy would be dependent on an assessment of their vulnerability to future storms. Under alternative C, the redeveloped beach centers would all utilize portable architecture technologies and as a result would offer fewer amenities than those in alternative B and would be suited for seasonal use only.

Access to the beaches and between the beaches and other destination on Sandy Hook would be improved through the development of additional modes of transportation. A land-based shuttle would provide more convenient access to the beaches and would link the beaches with Fort Hancock and the bayside visitor amenities. The shuttle would also provide connections to nearby communities and carpool parking areas. The addition of east and west lateral trail connections would facilitate travel from the Oceanside to the Bayside. Additionally, implementation of a bike sharing system on Sandy Hook would encourage bike travel along the peninsula along with expanded ferry service and the shuttle would reduce car-dependency among park visitors.

Camping opportunities would be more widely distributed throughout the park than in alternative A, but less so than in alternative B. Sites would be concentrated in fewer locations than in alternative B in order to minimize impacts and would include designated backcountry / beach camping, walk-in tent, drive-in tent and RV.

Natural Zone and Sensitive Resources Subzone

Coastal bay habitats would be improved through ongoing restoration projects. Control of invasive species within the Natural Zone and Sensitive Resource Area subzone would be increased. Monitoring and study of the Holly and Eastern Red Cedar Forests would be increased.

Under alternative C, the visitor experience of the bayside would be expanded to include more opportunities for nature study, environmental education programming and volunteer, natural resource stewardship. Throughout the Natural Zone, access would be restricted to designated trails and recreation areas to reduce impacts to the natural resources. Within the Sensitive Resource Subzone, visitor access would be highly restricted and limited to guided tours.

The existing multi-use path network would be expanded to include direct connections to the bay. The paved multi-use path would link into a network of soft surface trails that allow for self-guided exploration of the bay and inland natural environments.

Opportunities for self-exploration, facilities, media and programming that facilitate nature study and wildlife observation and enrich the visitor experience of Sandy Hook’s natural environments would be expanded. An interpreted nature trail would lead people through the various habitats. Alongside the trail, facilities for observing natural and wildlife would be developed such as observation blinds, scopes, and species lists. NPS would work with partners to offer expanded wildlife-observation and nature study programming (e.g. seasonal events, ID workshops). Additionally, NPS and their partners would engage volunteers in monitoring, species counts and habitat restoration projects. Shaded areas would be developed on the bayside to accommodate groups and allow for picnicking in a natural setting.

Current protection, monitoring and study of the beach/dune habitats would be increased. Access to the Holly Forest, dunes, and saltmarshes would be increasingly restricted in order to minimize habitat impacts. Management would encourage invertebrate and shore bird use of the intertidal zone.

Marine Zone

The Atlantic Ocean waters off Sandy Hook’s beaches would remain a protected natural area while accommodating water-based recreation. Conditions within Sandy Hook Bay would continue to be monitored and ongoing efforts to protect offshore habitats would be maintained.

Interpretive media and programming related to Sandy Hook’s coastal habitats and maritime and coastal defense heritage would be expanded. This would include tying interpretation of Sandy Hook’s cultural resources into other regional sites such as Twin Lights. Interpretive boat tours would also physically link Sandy Hook with other maritime and coastal defense sites.

Water-based recreation would be encouraged through expanded guided tours via boat or kayak. New launch/landing sites would be developed, however, to a lesser degree than in alternative B.

Natural resource protection of offshore habitats would be maintained within the Marine Zone. Research and monitoring of these habitats and wildlife would be increased. The use of offshore artificial reefs to increase habitat and reduce wave action in eroding beach areas would be evaluated.

Staten Island Unit

Visitor Use and Experience

The Staten Island Unit would provide opportunities to experience nature, explore Fort Wadsworth’s coastal defense heritage, and recreate in historic and natural settings. Park managers would preserve historic structures and landscapes that tell the story of continuous military and civilian use of the fort and tie thematically with other parks and historic sites within New York Harbor. Recreational uses throughout the Staten Island unit would be maintained, and enriched by expanded interpretive and educational programming. Participatory cultural resource stewardship programming in which partners and volunteers would engage in the hands-on preservation of the coastal defense structures would be introduced at Fort Wadsworth. Likewise, Great Kills would offer new opportunities for nature study, environmental educational, and participatory natural stewardship programming.

Resource Management

Natural resource stewardship would be prioritized at the Staten Island districts. The NPS would focus resource protection efforts on improving beach/dune habitat at the unit and working with neighbors and partners to expand and care for the coastal stretch of protected wetlands and beach/dune habitat.

Historic preservation at Fort Wadsworth would be a management priority and preservation trainings and workshops would enable volunteers and partners to contribute to the preservation of Fort Tompkins and select Endicott/Taft-era batteries. In this alternative, more of Fort Tompkins would be opened, preserved, and interpreted. Also, interpretation of Fort Tompkins, Battery Weed, and the Endicott/Taft-era batteries would be enhanced through a Coastal Defense Trail. The trail would wind through and among the historic structures offering excellent views and interpretive media along the route.

Transportation

Similar to alternative B, improved public transportation and an expanded greenway, as well as, shuttles between the sites would make access more convenient. In addition, bike infrastructure would be developed throughout the unit, including a bike-sharing system, maps, and convenient bike parking, to encourage more bike use at the parks and provide convenient connections with other Staten Island trail systems.

Fort Wadsworth
Historic Zone

Fort Wadsworth would become a destination for interpretive experiences in a preserved historic setting. The cultural landscape surrounding the batteries and ruins would be preserved to a greater degree than in alternative B and more accurately reflect the fort’s periods of significance. The coastal defense structures at Fort Wadsworth would become a focal point for participatory stewardship and a learning laboratory for hands on historic preservation. Visitors would experience the history and discover the coastal defense structures through increased interpretive programming and expanded interpretive media. A new “Coastal Defense Trail” would be developed among the batteries and offer expanded interpretation and up close experiences of the coastal defense resources. Additional foot trails would also be re-established at Fort Tompkins.

Similar to alternative B, Battery Weed and Fort Tompkins would be preserved and open to more regular visitor use. However, in alternative C, NPS would increase the level of access to these structures and expand interpretive and education programming of the two fortifications. Fort Tompkins would be rehabilitated to serve as a visitor facility that orients visitors, includes interpretive exhibits and hosts educational programs. The Battery Weed seawall would be repaired and fortified to protect the resource from storm surges.

With the exception of the primary coastal defense structures (Weed and Tomkins) that are already interpreted, the following batteries would undergo minimal stabilization and would be featured interpretive stops along the Coastal Defense Trail: Duane, Caitlin, Torpedo, Bacon, Barbour. Some of these batteries would be made more visible by clearing vegetation from them. Those left covered in vegetation would be used to interpret the relationship between natural and cultural resources and to demonstrate how, overtime, some of the defense structures came to serve as habitat. In addition, overlooks would be developed on some of the batteries to facilitate, access, and frame cultural landscape vistas.

The cultural landscapes of Mont Sec and New York avenues would receive more extensive preservation treatments in alternative C and both avenues would be incorporated into the visitor experience of Fort Wadsworth through improved wayfinding signage and interpretation.

Recreation Zone

As in alternative B, visitor orientation within the entire park would be improved. NPS would establish multiple new contact stations in order to improve the sense of arrival and better orient visitors.

With improved signs and wayfinding, Fort Wadsworth would be more visible and clearly identified as a park welcoming to visitors. The NPS would work with the NYCDPR to expand the greenway so that it links Fort Wadsworth, Miller Field, and Great Kills together. Carolina Street would be closed to cars and converted into a bike/pedestrian route. Multi-modal transportation systems including public transit, bike paths, and a shuttle would link Fort Wadsworth with the Staten Island Ferry. At Fort Wadsworth and the other Staten Island park sites, the NPS would work in cooperation with NYCDPR to develop bike-sharing stations. These rental opportunities along with improved wayfinding and signs would encourage an promote bike travel through and between the park units.

Existing recreational facilities would be expanded to accommodate greater recreational use. Existing camping facilities would be expanded and include campsites closer to the coastline.

Natural Zone

The beach/dune habitat along Fort Wadsworth’s coastline would be protected and enhanced through park and volunteer stewardship projects. The NPS would build resilience by working with partners and volunteer stewards to restore dune habitat along Fort Wadsworth coastline.

Access to the water would be maintained and new opportunities for water-based recreation would be introduce. This would include to greater fishing access, a human-powered boat launch site and boat-based interpretive tours. From Fort Wadsworth, a water trail would lead out to an offshore dock positioned nearby Hoffman and Swinburne Islands for distant wildlife observation. The interpretive water trail would also link to launch sites at Miller Field and Great Kills Harbor.

The NPS and its partners would work together to offer guided boat tours to interpret Fort Wadsworth, other NPNH coastal defense resources and natural resources from the water.



Hoffman and Swinburne Islands

Hoffman and Swinburne islands would be managed for their natural and cultural resources and no visitor access would be permitted on either island. The island’s wildlife and cultural resources could be viewed from the water. The wildlife on the islands and the islands’ habitat value would be monitored and study (e.g. heron rookery and seal haul out).

Miller Field

Recreation Zone - Community Activity Subzone

Miller Field would remain a vibrant center for community-based recreation tailored to youth and their families. Fields designed for a range of sports uses including soccer, softball and pee-wee leagues would be upgraded to better accommodate intensive use. In both alternatives, management of the ball fields and the sports leagues would be transferred from the NPS to another entity.

A multi-use Perimeter Trail would circumnavigate the entire park and connect the forest with the bay. Walkability throughout the park would be improved by expanding the width of multi-use paths and retrofitting park roads to slow traffic and include sidewalks or designated bike/walk ways. An active nature-based recreation experience that would appeal to youth and their families (e.g. bike trails/facilities, play features, nature adventure zone) would be offered and complement the sports league use.

The visibility of the NPS would be increased at Miller Field through improved signs and wayfinding. The NPS would take advantage of the busy park to introduce more children and their families to the NPS, and Gateway’s NPS outreach would target sports leagues and families and inform them about the other parks and experiences Gateway offers.

The NPS would work with partners to host concerts, performances, tournaments, and events on the field. The community gardens would be expanded to accommodate more gardeners. Additionally, the picnic and group gathering around the contact station would be expanded and improved. The hangar area would be redeveloped as a community activity area and could include a picnic pavilion, trailhead, and community event space. The hangar would be stabilized and new use sought.

Ingress/egress circulation patterns, lot configurations, and wayfinding would be modified to address recurring congestion. Local transit access and bus connections to Staten Island Railway at New Dorp, Eltingville Transit Center, and Saint George/Staten Island Ferry Terminal would be promoted and the NPS would work with partners to develop more direct public transit routes that serve Miller Field. A bike-sharing terminal at Miller Field would encourage bike travel along the NYC Greenway up to Fort Wadsworth and the NPS would work with partners to establish a designated bike route to Great Kills.

Natural Resource Zone

A kayak launch site, kayak instructional zone, and boat rental concessionaire would be developed on Miller Field’s coastline. The Miller Field launch site would be an access point to the buoyed interpretive water trail that extends from Fort Wadsworth to Great Kills Park. The dune habitat along Miller Field’s shoreline would be protected and maintain. Control access with a well-defined trail from the greenway and parking area to the water.

Developed Zone

The park housing on Miller Field and the Visitor Contact Station would be maintained. Location of maintenance and operations area will be identified upon further study. Maintenance area will be located to complement recreational opportunities.

Great Kills Park

Natural Zone and Sensitive Resources Subzone

At Great Kills Park, the valuable natural resources including maritime forest and shrublands and over wash dunes and beaches would be protected and restored. More extensive habitat enhancement and restoration efforts would take place across the Great Kills park site than in alternative B. NPS would focus resource protection efforts on improving beach/dune habitat on the site and work with neighbors and partners to expand the stretch of protected wetlands and beach/dune habitat up Staten Island’s coast. This wetland protection effort would include the reestablishment of saltmarsh. The former ball fields and model airplane would be removed and the area would be restored to restore maritime shrubs, forests, and wetlands as well as beach/dunes. Aggressive invasive species control would also be enacted throughout the Natural Zone and Sensitive Resource Subzones.

The park would also encourage more extensive study of geomorphology and beach erosion than in alternative B. NPS would work with neighbors and partners to implement solutions for improving resiliency of beach/ dune habitat Great Kills and further east along Staten Island coastline.

The natural zone offers an abundance of opportunities for nature based recreation and environmental education programming. Within both the Natural Zone and the Sensitive Resources Subzone, volunteer stewards would be engaged in habitat restoration and monitoring projects.

The Great Kills Education Field Station would be enhanced to include more programming and exhibits, an outlying interpretive nature trail network and outdoor classrooms in order to better facilitate environmental education and field learning.

Miles of soft-surface trail and associated nature observation facilities such as blinds, towers, and boardwalks would encourage nature study and self-guided exploration of the park’s existing and restored natural environments.

New camping opportunities and overnight accommodations would be developed within the Natural Zone. There would be an emphasis on introductory and intergenerational programs that teach camping skills.

Recreation Zone

New and improved facilities would expand recreation opportunities at Great Kills Park. Water-based recreation would be expanded at the Great Kills Harbor and marina to support boating and fishing including instructional programming, equipment rental and guided tours.

The popular multi-use pathway would be maintained. Additionally, the multi-use path would connect with the soft-surface trails that traverse the Natural Zone.

The guarded swim beach, beach access, and the beach center would be maintained. Expanded shade and picnic facilities would be developed to complement the beach experience.

Accessing the park would be made more convenient by an NPS shuttle that links surrounding communities and park lands. In addition, the NPS would coordinate with partners to complete missing pieces of on- and off-street trails and bike routes for connecting Great Kills to Miller Field. Finally, improved bike infrastructure, including bike rentals, maps, wayfinding, and bike parking facilities, would encourage park access by bike.

Next Steps and Plan Implementation

The GMP/EIS will be made available for a 60-day review and comment period to federal, state, and local agencies and all other interested parties, including organizations, businesses, interested individuals and stakeholders, and the general public. Comments will be accepted electronically through the NPS PEPC website or in the form of written letters that must be post-marked by the due date shown on the PEPC website.

Once the comment period has closed, the NPS will evaluate all comments received. Following public review of the GMP/EIS, the NPS, as the lead agency responsible for development of the GMP/EIS, will select an alternative for implementation. This “selected alternative” may be the same as the NPS-preferred alternative, may be another alternative examined in the GMP/EIS, or may have a combination of features, after which a final GMP/EIS will be prepared.

The final GMP/EIS will report on the results of agency and public comments on the draft GMP/EIS and will identify the NPS-preferred alternative, including any changes that may have been made as a result of agency and public comment. The final GMP/EIS will be released for a 30-day no-action period. The availability of the final GMP/EIS will be announced to agencies and the public and will be noticed in the *Federal Register*. No sooner than 30 days after the release of the final GMP/EIS, the Northeast Regional Director may sign a record of decision selecting an alternative for implementation as the approved GMP for Gateway. The availability of the signed record of decision will be noticed in the *Federal Register*, after which the NPS would proceed to implement the approved GMP contingent on available funding. By virtue of recording this selection in a record of decision, this alternative will become the park’s new GMP.

How to Provide Comments

Comments on this newsletter and the Draft GMP/EIS are welcome and will be accepted during the 60-day review and comment period. During this period, comments may be submitted using one of the methods noted below.

Online

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/gate>

We prefer that readers submit comments online through the park planning website identified above so the comments become incorporated into the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment system. An electronic public comment form is provided through this website.

Mail

Superintendent
Gateway National Recreation Area
210 New York Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10305

Hand Delivery

Comments may be dropped off at park headquarters (address above) or at an open house. Before including your address, telephone 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.

Stay Connected

The Gateway website is the best place to stay connected with the GMP. Check out the General Management Planning section for updated and expanded information on GMP activities. Join the electronic mailing list. Sign up on the website to receive **e-blasts**. You can follow Gateway National Recreation Area on Facebook. On Twitter, check us out @GatewayNPS. **Gateway is also on Twitter! You can follow us at www.twitter.com/GatewayNPS.**

Planning Process for the General Management Plan

Estimated Time Frame	Planning Activity	Ways to Be Involved
Summer 2009	Scoping – identify concerns, expectations, and comments related to the site with the public, government agencies and other stakeholders.	Review newsletter and send us your ideas and concerns. Attend an Open House, learn about the project and voice your ideas and concerns.
Fall 2010 - Summer 2012	Develop and Present Preliminary Alternatives – Outline different possible futures for the park and provide opportunities for review and comment by public, partners, government agencies and other stakeholders.	Review newsletter and send us your ideas and comments. Attend an Open House, comment on concepts and management alternatives.
Summer 2013	Prepare and Distribute a Draft General Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement - Review and comment by public, partners, government agencies and other stakeholders.	Attend an Open House and share your comments. Review the Draft <i>GMP/EIS</i> and provide written comments.
Fall 2013	Revise Draft Plan and Prepare a Final General Management Plan/ Environmental Impact Statement.	Review the Final <i>GMP/EIS</i> .
Fall 2013	Implement the Approved Plan – Prepare and issue a “Record of Decision” and implement plan as funding allows.	Work with Gateway to implement the plan.



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