ERRATA AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

SOUTH ENTRANCE FEE STATION RECONFIGURATION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ZION NATIONAL PARK
SEPTEMBER 2018

The following errata and response to public comments together with the Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and the Environmental Assessment (EA) describe the final decision of the National Park Service (NPS) for the South Entrance Fee Station Reconfiguration Zion National Park (ZION).

ERRATA

These errata are to be attached to the South Entrance Fee Station Reconfiguration EA dated August 2018 and are intended to correct or clarify statements in the EA other than typographical and minor editorial errors and to address substantive comments on these documents received during the public review period.

A) Alternatives Carried Forward: Alternative B – South Entrance Fee Station Reconfiguration (Pg. 4): Replace current text with revised text.
Current Text:

C. Culvert Replacement
To correct the culvert issue, the northernmost culvert would be removed and replaced with a sixty (60) inch concrete box culvert (with headwalls) and the southernmost culverts would be replaced with a thirty-six (36) inch corrugated metal pipe.

Revised Text:

C. Culvert Replacement
To correct the culvert issue, the southernmost culvert would be removed and replaced with a sixty (60) inch concrete box culvert (with headwalls) and the northernmost culverts would be replaced with a thirty-six (36) inch corrugated metal pipe.

B) Alternatives Carried Forward: Alternative B – South Entrance Fee Station Reconfiguration (Pg. 4): Replace current text with revised text.
Current Text:

2. Fee Booth Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements
Two existing fee booths would be removed and replaced with ~~three (3) or~~ four (4) larger fee booths.

Revised Text:

2. Fee Booth Facilities and Infrastructure Improvements
Two existing fee booths would be removed and replaced with four (4) larger fee booths.

C) Alternatives Carried Forward: Figure 3. Alternative B – South Entrance Fee Station Reconfiguration (Pg. 8): Revise figure.
Current Figure:

Figure 3 illustrates four (4) traffic lanes extending beyond the intersection leading to the Visitor Center, two (2) entering the park (northbound) and two (2) exiting the park (southbound).

Figure 3. Current

Revised Figure:
Figure 3 illustrates three (3) traffic lanes extending beyond the intersection leading to the Visitor Center, one (1) entering the park (northbound) and two (2) exiting the park (southbound). The middle lane will serve as a left hand turn lane for vehicles traveling to the Visitor Center before exiting the park.

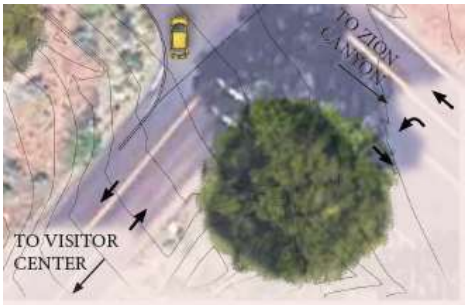

Figure 3. Revised

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC COMMENTS

ZION issued a press release on August 20, 2018 announcing the public review period for the South Entrance Fee Station Reconfiguration. The EA was made available for public review in digital format and hard copy (upon request) from August 20, 2018 to September 3, 2018. Nearly 400 members of the public and various agencies were notified of the EA's availability. Three hundred and twenty five (325) notifications were sent via email and sixty-two (62) notifications were mailed to other agencies, elected officials, and affiliated Native American tribes.

In response to the EA review notification, twenty-six (26) comments were received from the public. All comments will be maintained in the project decision file.

Substantive comments are those that: 1) question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the NEPA document; 2) question, with reasonable basis of the environmental analysis; 3) present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the NEPA document; or 4) cause changes or revisions in the proposal. No received comments warranted development of an additional alternative or reconsideration of alternatives that were considered but

dismissed. Therefore, the alternatives remain as described in the EA and no changes were made in the assessment of environmental consequences.

Many comments recommend assigning vehicle entry lane designations and integrating intelligent transportation systems. Other comments discuss issues already adequately covered in the EA or fall outside of the scope of the EA, such as comments encouraging additional infrastructure for vehicular parking, assigned entrance fee rate, and focusing on trail repairs throughout the park. These comments pertain more to overall management of visitor use in the park. Although these comments do not directly correlate with the project objectives described in this EA, park management officials find the opportunity to respond to these comments valuable and chose to address these comments in the *Visitor Use Management* section of this Errata.

The public comments and responses are summarized as follows:

Design & Construction

Comments

1. Commenter expresses concern over the shade structure extending over the employee/express entrance lane and exit lane. Commenter recommends the shade structure be removed over the described vehicle lanes to accommodate oversized vehicles/loads.

2. Commenter expresses concern over the traffic flow arrows illustrated in Figure 3. Alternative B South Entrance Fee Station Reconfiguration and recommends the arrows designate appropriate turning lanes.

3. Commenter questions the function of the pavement markings immediately adjacent (right) to the employee parking spaces.

4. Commenter expresses concern with the size of the turnaround area being too small to accommodate vehicles with an extended wheelbase and vehicles hauling trailers.

5. Commenter expresses concern over the length of the traffic island to accommodate stacked fee booths in the future. Commenter clarifies that the findings from a report dated March 8, 2016 by Jonathan Upchurch state that for the staked lanes to operate effectively, sixty feet (60ft.) of spacing from window to window is recommended.

6. Commenter recommends empty conduit be placed to serve locations of potential future fee booths for stacked lanes.

Response

1. The design of the shade structure extends to cover all four (4) vehicle entry lanes to meet the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration Interstate vertical clearance standard of sixteen (16) feet for structures occurring over a roadway. For the very rare case that will most likely involve a piece of construction equipment exceeding the clearance height, the outgoing lane will be stopped in order to allow the vehicle to enter the park. The shade structure will not extend over the outgoing or vehicle exit lane.

2. The pavement arrows on the proposed design have been corrected to illustrate the existing traffic flow pattern. Existing conditions will not be altered during this project. Refer to the **C. Alternatives Carried Forward Figure 3** in the Errata above for additional details.

3. The black and gray parallel lines immediately below (or east) of the employee parking spaces represent on-grade pavement markings to delineate the pedestrian crosswalk from the parking spaces to the fee booths. The diagonal lines to the right (or north) of the employee parking area is the area designated as a turnaround area for passenger vehicles. Refer to **Design & Construction: Response #4** for additional details.

4. The turnaround area included in this assessment was primarily designed to provide cars and small trucks (passenger vehicles) the opportunity to turnaround. It is recognized that RVs and other oversized vehicles will not be able to navigate through the turn and will continue to be directed on proper egress using current protocols. Designing the turnaround to accommodate oversized vehicles represents a larger obstacle and was not addressed due to the location of existing infrastructure in relation to the identified needs and objectives. Although an oversized turnaround areas falls outside of the scope of this assessment, solutions resolving this issue would be incorporated in future planning efforts. Future design work would also evaluate the radius of any island curbing to ensure the proposed turnaround is useable by as many vehicles as possible while minimizing any proposed expansion of the roadway.

5. Traffic islands will be built according to the current design specifications for the selected alternative. Increasing the size of the traffic islands to support stacked lane would not occur until conditions warrant modification. Construction details for the optional stacked fee booths would be designed in future planning efforts. However, placement of a stacked lane appears to fit most appropriately immediately north of the second fee booth from the east. Empty utility conduits will be installed during the implementation of Alternative B in the event stacked lanes become necessary. This scenario also holds true for the second booth from the west. However, an evaluation of the employee parking area would first need to verify that adequate space exists to operate and turn vehicles around prior to the construction of a stack fee booth in second vehicle entry lane from the west.

6. Spare conduits for power and communications are integrated into the design of the South Entrance Fee Station to allow for future development needs. Refer to **Design & Construction: Response #5** for additional details.

INTEGRATE INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

COMMENTS

1. Commenters request the integration and utilization of a variety of automation technologies at the South Entrance Fee Station. Examples of recommended technologies, include magnetic strip, barcode, or quick response (QR) code scanners, equipping the NPS Annual Pass to operate in conjunction with automated gates, and installing keypads to enter confirmation codes.

RESPONSE

1. Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) encompass a broad range of wireless and wire line communications-based information and electronic technologies to help manage traffic

congestion and improve safety, such as the electronic/automated entry systems recommended by commenters. Currently, ZION employs a variety of ITS tools to help manage travel and traffic, park entry, and public transportation. Examples include dynamic messaging signs, highway advisory radio, and social media applications. Automated entry systems and automated fee/fare payment systems are identified needs at ZION. Some of these system are currently being tested in various NPS units but none have been universally approved across the NPS. The added entrance booths at ZION provide the time and flexibility to take advantage of opportunities to incorporate additional ITS applications as approvals, funding, and capabilities are attained. The new entrance stations will have the appropriate infrastructure (power, wiring, etc) to support ITS applications. Please visit the NPS Transportation Program and the NPS Federal Lands Transportation Program for additional information on NPS transportation initiatives, challenges, and long range planning. A report prepared by the National Transportation System Center (September 2011) detailing ITS systems used in the National Park System and other Federal Public Lands can be located in the Resource Library.

Providing access to our national parks is important and planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining accessible environments and experiences for a wide range of visitors requires continual attention. The NPS strives to be a beacon of equality, where everyone is encouraged and able to share and enjoy park services, activities, and programs. The NPS recognizes that access to technology and technological literacy remains challenging for some individuals. Any technologically based system at ZION would be coupled with mechanical and universally accessible systems so as not to be inadvertently prohibitive for some users. Annual pass use also requires the card holder to present photo identification upon entry to verify ownership. Such verification may or may not be available in systems technology in the near future. Please visit the America the Beautiful – Annual Pass website at Recreation.gov and the ZION Annual Passes website for additional information.

Recreational Opportunities & Access

Comment

1. Commenter requests additional information on the impacts of the project to the popular recreational (climbing/bouldering) area commonly referred to as the "Globe" and access following construction.

Response

1. Ultimately, the proposed project will result in the roadway shifting closer to the popular recreational (climbing/bouldering) area. Access to the "Globe" may be restricted throughout the construction period (Fall 2019 – Spring 2020) to ensure the safety of employees and visitors. Upon project completion, no further closures of the area are currently anticipated.

Vehicle Entry Lane Designations

Comments

1. Commenters suggest implementing a variety of vehicle entry lane designations, to include: vehicle type, payment method, prepaid visitors, and duration of stay.

2. Commenter recommends expanding the times allotted to expedite prepaid visitor traffic through the employee vehicle entrance lane from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on days experiencing elevated visitor volumes to operate as such on a full time basis.

3. Commenter recommends increased pronouncement and/or visibility of the employee entrance lane.

RESPONSE

1. – 3. As discussed in the ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND DISMISSED section of the EA (pages 12 – 14), a variety of vehicle entry lane designations were analyzed to determine the configuration that will yield the largest reductions to the length of the vehicle queue and wait times. The analysis demonstrated that dedicating an express lane for prepaid visitors or by vehicle type does not increase the overall capacity of an entrance station and will not reduce existing wait times or vehicle congestion.

The NPS preferred and selected alternative, Alternative B, provides three entry lanes without designation and one employee lane that will serve as an express lane for prepaid visitors on days that are expected to have increased visitor volumes. Current visitation patterns do not warrant full time staffing of an express lane. As conditions warrant and to facilitate current park entry demands occurring outside of the anticipated express lane schedule, ZION officials will continue to adjust express lane intervals. Extending the hours of the express lane would be considered should high visitor volumes persist. ZION may also consider additional visitor entry systems and lane designations should future visitation patterns deviate from the conditions analyzed in this assessment.

Visibility of the employee entrance lanes will be increased as part of this project by shifting the position employee lane gate arm toward the southern edge of the traffic island. Repositioning of the gate arm will immediately alert vehicle operators to the lane restriction. Existing signage positioned immediately south fee booths also demarcates the easternmost entrance lane for employee use.

VISITOR USE MANAGEMENT

COMMENTS

1. Commenter recommends increased visibility of the pedestrian entrance signage.

2. Commenter encourages increasing the infrastructure at the ZION East Entrance to support additional vehicle entrance lanes.

3. Commenters express concern over facilitating increased vehicle entry and encourage additional infrastructure for vehicle parking throughout ZION, removing vehicle parking restrictions near the ZION Lodge, and/or issuing after hour passes to access designated parking areas along Zion Canyon Scenic Drive.

4. Commenter suggests developing a strategy to permit non-motorized bicycles through the ZION Mt. Carmel Tunnel.

5. Commenter recommends reviewing the strategies implemented by Rocky Mountain National Park to address concerns related to vehicle parking and traffic congestions at ZION.

6. Commenter requests additional information of the ZION Visitor Use Management Plan and questions whether the additional vehicle entrance lanes will be warranted based on the outcome of the planning effort.

RESPONSE

1. – 6. Concerns regarding the impacts of increased visitation, parking availability, and the fees associated with park entrance have been noted but fall outside of the scope of this EA. ZION management officials are currently working to develop additional strategies to address increasing visitation, traffic congestion (to include interruptions resulting from oversized vehicles), and parking needs within park boundaries as well as with the Town of Springdale and Rockville. Recommendations for entrance lane designations, intelligent transportation systems (electronic/automated entry systems), and increased parking infrastructure have been documented and forwarded to the ZION Visitor Use Management Plan Task Force. Please visit the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov to learn more about the development of the ZION Visitor Use Management Plan and find ways to participate in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

A number of infrastructure projects are currently in the preplanning and conceptual design phase that would address many of the concerns expressed above. To stay informed on upcoming park project information and associated compliance at ZION, please consider adding your name to the ZION Group project compliance email list. To add your name to the list, send an email with your: 1) first and last name; 2) mailing address; and 3) preferred e-mail address to zion_group_project_compliance@nps.gov and enter "**ZION Group Email List Request**" in the subject line. Your mailing address will only be used if the park is unable to distribute correspondence electronically. Should you wish to remove your name and contact information from the ZION Group Project Compliance email list, send a request to the email address listed above and enter "**Remove from ZION Group Email List**" in the subject line.