



# Construct Multi-Use Pathway in Hatteras Island District

## Public Review Newsletter

February 2023

### You Are Invited To Participate

Cape Hatteras National Seashore (the Seashore) has completed an environmental assessment (EA) to construct a multi-use path along Lighthouse Road in the Hatteras Island District and is inviting your input on the EA. Your participation is important to our planning process.

#### Background

Connectivity in and near the Seashore is important to provide access and opportunities for the benefit and enjoyment of visitors. Lighthouse Road provides access from North Carolina Highway 12 (NC12) and the village of Buxton to popular areas within this park district.

A bike path was identified in the Park's 1984 General Management Plan (GMP) which presented the need for a "bikeway" within the seashore and included Lighthouse Road as the location for this path from NC 12 to the Cape Point Campground. It has been over 38 years and the seashore consistently receive requests from the public to construct a pathway along the road shoulder.

Based on public input and discussions among the planning team and subject matter experts, the EA analyzed a full range of alternatives for the construction of a new multiuse pathway. Two alternatives were retained for full analysis to



determine their impact to resources and are highlighted in the following pages.

#### Impact Topics:

The EA analyzed the following resource impact topics:

- cultural landscapes
- vegetation
- visitor use and experience
- wetlands and water resources

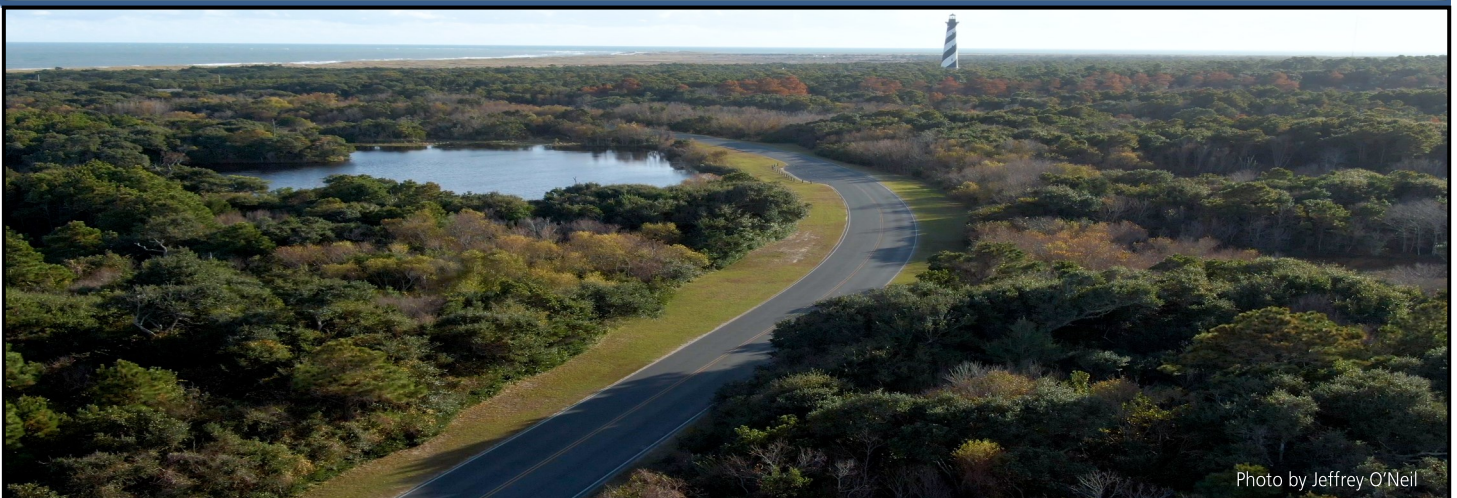


Photo by Jeffrey O'Neil





Photo by Jeffrey O'Neil

## No Action Alternative A – Current Management

- A multi-use pathway would not be constructed along Lighthouse Road.
- Pedestrians and bicyclists would continue to use the existing road or road shoulder to access the park's popular use areas from NC Highway 12.
- Extensive mowing along the road shoulder would continue.
- No holistic public interpretation or immersive access along the move path of the lighthouse and no general park information, safety messaging, and resource information for current visitors to experience outside of the Lighthouse District.
- Invasive plant management would continue as current management and funding allows.



Photo by NPS

### Impacts of Alternative A:

- Actions would not have negative Impacts to cultural landscapes but alternative would not enhance the story of why and how corridor was created and why its preserved.
- Actions would continue to have direct negative impact to vegetation from pedestrians traveling within the grassy road shoulder from trampling.
- Actions would likely result in long-term negative impacts to visitor use and experience as visitor conflict between motorized and non-motorized users would cause the quality of the visitor experience to decline along this road corridor and could compromise the safety of park visitors.
- Actions would allow the wetland function within the project area to continue to exist in its present state with no new impacts.



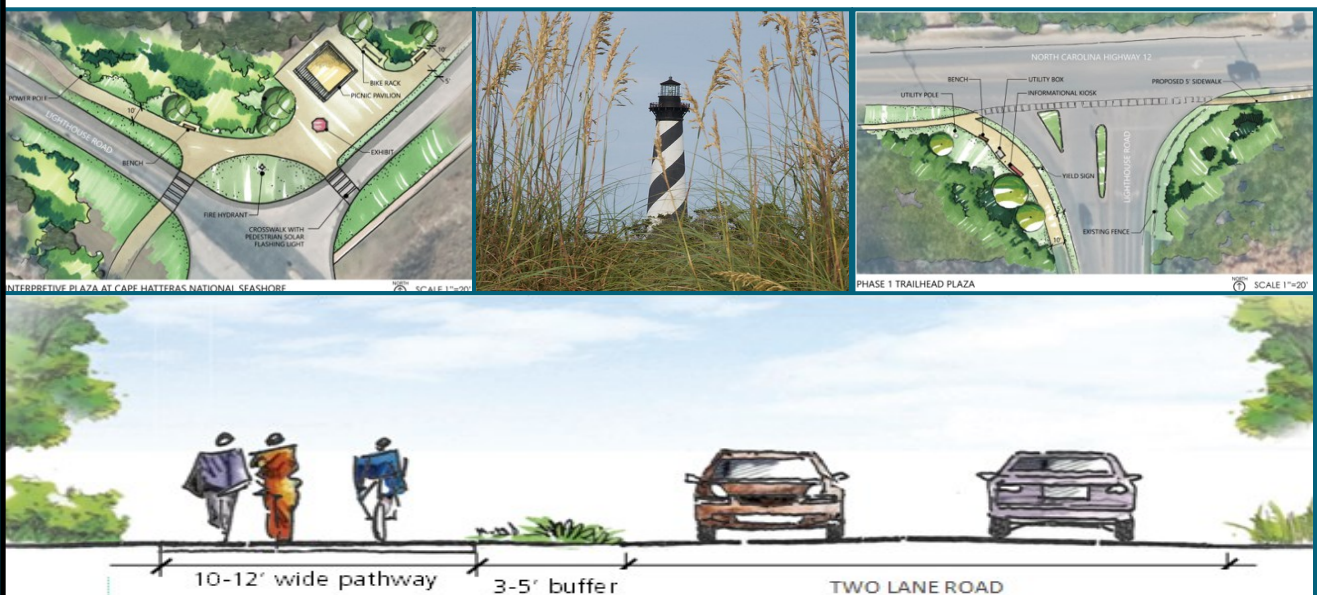
Photo by NPS

## NPS Preferred Alternative B – Construct a Multi-use Pathway

- A 1.6-mile-long paved multi-use pathway would be constructed on one side of the road in two segments.
- Elements of the pathway include wayfinding signage, benches, bollards, and the reconfiguration of the seashore entrance for intersection improvements and connections to local sidewalks.
- A standard 5' vegetative buffer parallel to Lighthouse Road from Highway 12 to the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and beach access areas would be created to enhance safety.
- The multi-use pathway would follow American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) standards with a minimum of 10' width for two way bike travel.
- An interpretive plaza with comfort station and picnic tables, benches and bike racks would be constructed.
- This alternative would allow bicycles, electric bicycles, and motorized wheelchairs on the new pathway .
- This alternative would not allow equestrian use on the new pathway.

### Impacts of Alternative B:

- Actions would cause beneficial impacts to cultural landscape by providing interpretive messaging on the Lighthouse move which would enhance the story of why and how the move corridor was created and preserved.
- Actions would cause permanent impacts to ~1.84 acres of vegetation, which is only a 0.01% of the seashore's total vegetative areas.
- Actions would include treating invasive phragmites within and adjacent to project area which would have a long-term beneficial impact to vegetation.
- Actions would cause temporary negative impacts to visitors during construction activities from one lane closure or sound impacts, lasting for only a short time (i.e., hours or days).
- Actions would cause long-term beneficial impact to improve visitor use and experience and create a safe separated pathway identified in the 1984 GMP to key destination areas.
- Actions would cause long-term beneficial impact to visitors to tangibly experience a powerful story by exploring a section of the move path and better understand this important part of the lighthouse's history.
- Actions would cause permanent impacts to 0.168 acres of wetlands from the construction of the new pathway but project actions but would not impact the long-term viability of the wetlands or water resources in the project area.





# The Bike Rule

- The EA was prepared to meet the requirements of 36 CFR § 4.30 (the Bike Rule), which contains regulations that manage bicycle use, including electric bicycles, within national park system units.
- The Bike Rule requires a special regulation to authorize bicycle use on new trails (or pathways) outside of developed areas.
- A planning document, such as the EA, must evaluate the suitability of existing pathway surfaces and soil conditions for accommodating bicycle use, including any maintenance, minor rehabilitation, or armoring that would be necessary to upgrade the pathway to sustainable condition.
- Alternative B would allow bicycle and electric bicycle use on the proposed multi-use pathway. The multi-use pathway would be considered a new trail under the Bike Rule.



## How to Comment



Public participation is an important element of the planning process, and we welcome your comments on what is presented in the EA.

**Please share your comments no later than March 28, 2023  
online at [https://parkplanning.nps.gov/  
CAHA\\_multiuse\\_pathway](https://parkplanning.nps.gov/CAHA_multiuse_pathway) or mail your comments to:**

**Superintendent  
1401 National Park Drive  
Manteo, NC 27954**

*You should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. You may request that the NPS withhold your name and/or address from public disclosure. If you wish to do this, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment and make such a request by checking the box "keep my contact information private" on the website. The NPS will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law, but Individuals should be aware that the NPS may still be required to disclose personal identifying information.*