William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Long Range Interpretive Plan

November 2008

Prepared for the National Park Service by Ron Thomson, Compass

Table of Contents

PART 1:

INTRODUCTION.....4
PARK ENVIRONMENT.....6
PURPOSE & SIGNIFICANCE.....12
PRIMARY STORIES.....14
AUDIENCES.....18
AUDIENCE EXPERIENCES.....22
ISSUES.....24

PART 2:
INTRODUCTION.....28
ACTIONS RELATED T O PARK IDENTITY.....30
ACTIONS RELATED TO COMMUNITY AUDIENCES….33
ACTIONS RELATED TO INTERACTIVITY……35
ACTIONS RELATED TO EDUCATORS……..38
ACTIONS RELATED TO NEW PARKING……..40
ACTIONS RELATED TO EASTERN NATIONAL…….41
ACTIONS RELATED TO RESEARCH……....42
ACTIONS RELATED TO COLLECTIONS……..43
ACTIONS RELATED TO STAFFING/TRAINING……44

IMPLEMENTATION CHARTS……...45

PARTICIPANTS.....51

APPENDIX 1
Tangibles and Intangibles.....53
APPENDIX 2
Criteria.....55
APPENDIX 3
Centennial Goals.....56

Part 1

The Foundation

Introduction

The Long Range Interpretive Plan

A Long Range Interpretive Plan (LRIP) provides a 5-10 year vision for a park's interpretive program.

A facilitator, skilled in interpretive planning, works with park staff, partners, and outside consultants to prepare a plan that is consistent with other current planning documents.

Part 1 of the LRIP establishes a foundation on which proposed personal services and interpretive media can be built. It identifies themes, audiences, desired audience experiences, and issues that interpretation should be designed to address. It offers a brief history of planning relevant to interpretation and a summary of existing interpretive media.

Part 2 recommends a mix of services and facilities that will achieve the interpretive goals and mission described in Part 1. It includes an action plan that assigns responsibilities and offers a schedule for progress.

When appropriate, Appendices provide more detailed discussions of specific topics.

The completed LRIP forms a critical part of the more inclusive Comprehensive Interpretive Plan (CIP).

The Planning Process

The process used to produce an LRIP proceeds step-by-step with a series of workshops that build on the results of previous discussions.

The first workshop focuses on Part 1: The Foundation—basic ideas that provide a firm footing for park management. Discussions blend the past with the present, focusing on the

immediate challenge of designing a compelling interpretive program that reflects current conditions and targeted audiences.

The second workshop selects the best interpretive tools and techniques—everything from publications, exhibits, and ranger-led programs to media releases and interpretive sales items—to complete The Foundation, recommending specific actions linked to focused goals.

A final workshop decides who will take the lead in accomplishing each action item and when it will become a priority for action.

Park staff then assume responsibility for reviewing and updating the plan annually.

The Park in 2008

Existing Conditions

During planning, and before recommending new projects and programs, it is important to review an inventory of existing interpretive programs, facilities, and media, and have some sense of condition, additional resources that might be needed to preserve the status quo, and plans for the future already in motion.

Park staff prepared the following summary:

Education Center

The Taft education center opened in 1999 and contains:

- An information desk that is staffed 362 days per year
- An Eastern National sales outlet
- Public restrooms
- An animatronic robot of President Taft's son Charlie Taft
- A temporary exhibit gallery
- A classroom
- A 14-minute orientation film
- A computer
- Curatorial storage

Alphonso Taft Home

The birthplace and boyhood home of William Howard Taft has been restored to its 1857–1877 appearance. Four furnished rooms reflect daily family life during that period. Most of the furnishings are period pieces.

Ranger-led theme-related tours of the furnished rooms are offered on the half hour to walk-in visitors as well as groups by appointment.

In seven of the rooms, exhibits designed by Harpers Ferry Center highlight Taft's life and career. These exhibits feature many original Taft artifacts.

A family movie and an audio program about Taft's campaign are available in the house.

The home also contains a small meeting room and a multi-purpose room.

Neighborhood Tours

Guided tours of the Taft neighborhood are offered to visitors in the spring and summer.

Special Events and Off-site Programs

Easter Egg Hunt
Public Service Recognition Day
Black History Month
Native American History Month
Women's History Month
Hispanic Heritage Month
4th of July Concert & Ice Cream Social
Constitution Day
President's Day
Victorian Christmas

Off site programs are offered to senior centers, civic organizations, social clubs, historical societies, and civic & social service organizations

Educational Programs

The park currently offers several curriculum-based educational programs for grades K–12 as well as higher learning institutions.

In addition, three to five curriculum-based field trip programs will be developed that address national and Ohio state academic

standards. The programs will be ranger-led and focus on law, family values, human history, natural history, and the arts. They will be offered on a regular scheduled basis for which educational groups will be able to sign up in advance.

To support the educational group visits, a curriculum guide is being designed to enrich student learning by audience participation. The curriculum follows a set scope and sequence through the grades and includes pre -, on-, and post-site visitor activities. It complies with the national academic standards and guidelines for excellence in education materials facilitating easy integration into the classroom. When completed, the published curriculum will be distributed to teachers and sold in the gift shop.

Additionally, on-site and off-site teacher-training workshops will be offered for teachers to learn how to use Taft National Historic Site (WIHO) curriculum. The workshop will be designed to increase teachers' overall knowledge and comfort in using WIHO's curriculum guide as a teaching tool and resource. The workshops also will provide guidance for structuring quality field tips to the historical site. Teacher workshops are offered on themes and curriculum related to WIHO.

Prior to school visits to the park, park rangers will visit the school, when possible, to conduct hands-on educational activities with the children.

Junior Ranger Program

The site has on-site and web-based Junior Ranger programs. When fully developed, these activity-based, family oriented programs will be of varying lengths and for different groups. They will focus on the history, law, and humanitarian efforts of William Howard Taft.

Website

The park's website will contain descriptions of all the education activities available through the WIHO. It will announce special events and post photo albums of activities at the park.

The Junior Website will include interactive activities for participants to learn about WIHO, whether they plan to visit the park, have visited the park, or may never visit the park. Curriculum/lesson plans also will be available for teachers and others to download and use with their groups.

Human Resources

The park maintains a priority for filling positions, including new positions. The division of interpretation will continue to emphasize to park management the importance of park interpretation as their role of providing interpretive and education opportunities to park visitors.

The division seeks the best balance of permanent, seasonal, and intern staff, as well as the balance between full-performance park rangers, park guides, specialists, supervisors, administration, and management, needed to provide a high level of programs and services to visitors.

Employee Development

Schedule requirements and budget limitations impact employee development opportunities. The division will provide opportunities for employees to obtain tools and skills needed to improve the quality of visitors and employee experience. Staff are trained to effectively foster stewardship in response to operational needs.

The Servicewide Interpretive Development Program provides additional opportunities for staff to enhance their interpretive skills. Materials received from the reviewers of the products submitted for certification provide staff with peer-to-peer feedback.

Fiscal Management

Approximately 98% of the interpretive budget goes toward covering staff costs. Interpretive planning must dovetail with park wide strategic planning so that the division considers and incorporates issues identified by all park operations. A base increase is expected in fiscal year 2009.

Collection Access

The park plans to catalog the collection using standardized electronic, professional on-line resources including the National Park Service Voyager catalog, the OCLC, and the Cincinnati Public Library. This will allow WIHO staff, national NPS staff, and national and international public audiences easy access to related subjects.

Collection Management

The library will acquire items that are currently missing from collection and newly published items to assure completeness to the body of literature about WIHO and related subjects. In addition, items in need of preservation will receive treatment in order to make them accessible to library users and assure their preservation into the future.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site Museum Collection

WIHO's museum collection contains 12,000 artifacts associated with the history and prehistory of the site. Cultural museum objects are available to interpreters for study in the development of programs. Archival collections provide primary documents for use by staff and researchers. In addition, the museum's historic photograph collection provides images for staff to use in the development of programs and media.

Park Partnerships

Individual and collective actions will identify and address issues of public concern. Civic engagement can take many forms—from individual volunteerism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to work with others with commonalities to solve a problem. Partnerships consist of interacting with an institution of representative democracy. A partnership encompasses a range of activities. There are many great community partners, but not all will be right for the site.

The park is creating opportunities to develop partners in stewardship with the following:

Mt. Auburn Community Council; Mt. Auburn Chamber of Commerce; Behringer-Crawford Museum; the Taft Museum; Museum of Natural History and Science; Cincinnati Museum Center; Ohio Historical Society; Brent Wood Recreation Park; the University of Cincinnati; and has developed a cooperative agreement with Northern Kentucky University Latino Students Affairs Department. We worked closely with staff at Harriet Beecher Stowe House, Mt. Airy Fire Marshall, The Good Shepherd Church, and New Prospect Baptist Church.

Purpose & Significance

Park Purpose

Public Law 91-132, dated December 2, 1969, authorized William Howard Taft National Historic Site in order to "preserve in public ownership historically significant properties associated with the life of William Howard Taft." More specifically, the "historically significant properties" referred to the Taft house and grounds located on Auburn Avenue in Cincinnati.

Alphonso Taft purchased the two-story, circa 1840s brick home on Auburn Avenue in 1851 and built an addition onto the rear of the house. Alphonso's wife Louise gave birth to William Howard Taft in the house on September 15, 1857. Young Will Taft lived on Auburn Avenue until he left for college in 1874. Taft served as president of the United States from 1909-1913, and chief justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1921-1930.

The site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is within the Mount Auburn Historic District.

In addition to the language contained in the legislation that created the park, workshop participants discussed the dual conservation and use mission associated with any unit of the National Park System.

> ". . . to promote and regulate the use of the Federal areas known as national parks, monuments, and reservations hereinafter specified by such means and measures as conform to the fundamental purposes of the said parks, monuments, and reservations, which purpose is to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."
>
> *The National Park Service Organic Act, Aug. 25, 1916*

As parks fulfill the educational mission implied in the Organic Act and specifically included in the Historic Sites Act of 1935, they forge emotional and intellectual connections between the past and present.

Workshop participants also discussed the evolving role that urban national parks, like William Howard Taft National Historic Site, play in the contemporary life of the nation. In the 21st century, they help create a sense of place and neighborhood pride, encourage civic engagement and community dialogue, and generate local as well as national tourism.

Park Significance

Park significance identifies those aspects of an NPS unit that make it nationally noteworthy.

William Howard Taft National Historic Site is nationally significant because of its association with William Howard Taft, president of the United States from 1909-1913 and chief justice of the United States Supreme Court from 1921-1930, making him the only person to head both the executive and the judicial branches of national government. Taft's attitudes on public service and his love of the law are especially evident in his public life.

The history of the Taft family, and William Howard Taft in particular, parallels important national developments including the growth and evolution of the Republican Party, the transformation of the U.S. into a world power with global interests and international trade networks, continued racial tensions, and industrial growth with corresponding debates over corporate power and labor rights.

Primary Stories

All parks have a variety of stories to tell. Primary stories, however, are closely linked to a park's national significance. They merge the park's tangible and intangible resources into statements that express meaning and relevance to contemporary audiences (see Appendix 1 for workshop-generated lists of tangibles and intangibles).

Bottom line, when interpretation focuses on these primary stories, audiences better understand why the park is a national treasure included in the National Park System.

In the past, the park focused on William Howard Taft's family life and social environment, the extended Taft family, and Taft's public life and career including any impact that he has had on contemporary life.

With these basic stories as a starting point, workshop participants suggested ways to merge the park's tangible resources and related factual information with the intangible ideas associated with Taft and the site, including the many ways that the site's Mount Auburn location is representative of trends evident in the histories of many urban areas (East to West migration, expansion of cities into new neighborhoods, changing transportation patterns, development of a middle class, and growth in civic, cultural, and humanitarian institutions).

Five storylines emerged from the discussion.

Great Expectations: Taft's Family Influences

> "You expect great things of me, but you mustn't be disappointed if I don't come up to your expectations."
>
> *William Howard Taft to his father, 1874*

Like most of us, William Howard Taft is a case study in the influence of upbringing and home environment—many of the personal values that William Howard Taft exhibited in his adult life can be traced to his years on Auburn Avenue.

This storyline focuses on Taft's years as a child and young man living on Auburn Avenue. It explores the influence of his parents and the general nature of his family life, exploring lessons that might be learned from the refurnished rooms in the house. To the extent that family relationships are knowable, from correspondence and memoirs for example, they will be used to humanize the Taft home and grounds.

Although other aspects of Taft's life and public career can be adequately told in other locations, the Taft house has an advantage that makes this story so powerful, a sense of authentic place with settings that elicit family history.

Great Expectations: Taft and Leadership

> "Never has there been a candidate for the Presidency so admirably trained in varied administrative service."
>
> *Theodore Roosevelt about Taft, 1908*

Taft's tenure as president proved that it can be difficult to predict greatness—although he appeared to be an ideal successor to President Theodore Roosevelt, groomed for national leadership by a variety of well-performed government positions, Taft was more likely to reflect rather than alter the course of history, and serve from a sense of duty rather than passion.

This storyline focuses on the many administrative positions held by Taft, culminating in the presidency, and encourages exploration of Taft's style of leadership. It is as much about the expectations of others as his own passions. Rather than simply

provide a chronology of service and accomplishment, this storyline looks at how Taft achieved success, or failed to reach political goals. It links Taft's personal characteristics—like duty and integrity—to his record in office. And it invites dialogue on what contributes to success as a leader.

Great Expectations: Chief Justice Taft

> "Presidents come and go, but the Supreme Court goes on forever."
>
> *William Howard Taft*

After a lifetime of serving in positions others thought he should hold, Taft's appointment as chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court rewarded him with the highest position in the profession he loved the most—the law—and provided him with opportunities to use the legal system to wrestle with pressing issues of his day.

This storyline explores Taft's interest in the law. It focuses on his personal ambition to serve on the Supreme Court rather than to live up to the expectations of others. It provides another opportunity to look at the most important legal issues of the day, and consider how the court and Taft, as chief justice, attempted to find legal resolution. It opens the door to comparison of executive and judicial power.

Recurring Issues

As a public figure, Taft struggled with and influenced a variety of issues that are still part of the public dialogue—immigration, global trade, international relations, race, labor relations, and corporate power to name a few.

This storyline helps to bridge the gap between past and present. It opens discussion of Taft's life and times by exploring issues that recur throughout U.S. history.

Rather than imply that nothing changes, however, this storyline compares the early 20th century with today. This story firmly plants Taft into historical context, and discusses him as a product of his times. But it also invites on-going discussion of national issues and, as appropriate, introduces other Taft family politicians elected to office throughout the 20th century.

A Place for Dialogue

> "The task of the historian…may be more to create safe spaces for local dialogue about history and for the collection of memories, and to ensure that various voices are heard in those spaces, than to provide an original interpretation of the past or to translate the latest professional scholarship for a public audience."
>
> *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* by David Glassberg

William Howard Taft National Historic Site not only embraces the traditional preservation mission of the National Park Service, offering an historic neighborhood a sense of place and a source of pride, but also serves as a center for education, civic engagement, and community dialogue on national issues.

This storyline explores the basic and evolving nature of an urban, national historic site within a 21st-century context. It discusses how and why William Howard Taft National Historic Site was created, and how it fits into the larger National Park System.

But it goes beyond tradition and illustrates how historic sites can support and serve their neighborhoods, particularly in locations, like Mount Auburn, that are recognized by the National Register of Historic Places. It suggests a paradigm for civic engagement that invites dialogue and respects a variety of perspectives.

Audiences

In order to design the most effective interpretive programming and select the best interpretive techniques, it is critical to identify intended audiences, both existing audiences who actively use site interpretive programs AND potential audiences that well-planned interpretation might encourage.

The term audience is used purposefully in this document. In the 21st century, all national parks communicate with both on-site visitors as well as others who have not or cannot “visit” a park’s sites. Increasingly, for example, the Internet is a source of both information and interpretation. While many who use their computer as a gateway to a site or region will eventually visit, that is not universally true. In addition, for reasons of time and budget, outreach and school programs might be conducted off-site. News and magazine articles as well as television and radio programs reach millions who fall outside the technical definition of "visitor." And, any park associated with a heritage area or historic district has a significant number of neighbors who live within the region and should be the recipients of interpretive information and programming.

Snapshot of Existing Audiences

Park staff provided a snapshot of the park’s current audiences.

Annual visitation averages roughly 17,000.

Many on-site visitors fit the general profile of NPS visitors—white and middle to upper class.

School groups account for between 2,500 and 3,000 on-site visits. Third and fourth grade classes are the most likely to visit, but students from K through 10 take advantage of the educational programming of the park. Currently, a group of neighborhood students drop into the park informally after their school day is over.

Park staff invite local community groups to use site facilities for meetings.

Other groups with noticeable presence include families, seniors (often in small groups), service and scout groups, and local/regional visitors who come to the site for special events. Christ Hospital is just a few blocks away and some visitors to the hospital discover the park and stop to take a look.

As with other NPS units, virtual and Internet audiences are increasing.

Some visitors actually "collect" national parks and arrive intent on stamping their NPS passport while others have a goal of visiting all presidential sites.

> "Individuals understand places differently depending on how they have experienced them, and this experience in turn is shaped by their social characteristics such as age, gender, race, class, and physical condition."
>
> David Glassberg in *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*

Targeted Audiences

This section of the LRIP recognizes that interpretive techniques and audiences are inter-related—some interpretive tools are better adapted to, or appeal to, particular audiences. So, although all audiences are welcome and invited to participate in the park's interpretive programs, workshop participants felt that several audiences should receive specific attention during the life of this LRIP, and that planning should develop interpretive media with direct appeal to the following groups (see Appendix 2 for criteria used to select targeted audiences and prioritize audience experiences and issues). These targeted audiences are a mix of both existing audiences who might benefit from

additional interpretive attention and potential audiences who do not use the park in large numbers but might, with appropriate interpretive programming, be attracted to the site.

Workshop participants felt strongly that during the life of this LRIP, interpretive programming should seek to expand use by reaching out to . . .

- educators and school groups not only the K-10th grade students already served but also high school and college students.

- community and regional audiences who participate in special events and community groups, particularly those with missions that parallel the goals of the NPS.

- more diverse audiences, particularly audiences that are representative of the Mount Auburn community, including African Americans.

As the park makes progress serving the groups listed above, several additional audiences might be targeted including . . .

- virtual audiences and those who use the Internet; seniors; young professionals; women's groups; and groups reached via Convention and Visitors Bureau promotions.

Accessibility and Audiences

The NPS is committed to developing a comprehensive strategy to provide people with disabilities equal access to all programs, activities, services, and facilities. As part of that effort, NPS staff at Harpers Ferry Center developed "Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media" and made them and other resources available via their website (www.nps.gov/hfc/accessibility/index.htm).

As parks revise or rehabilitate existing interpretive programming or develop new media, they should consult these guidelines.

Audience Experiences

While primary stories focus on what audiences will learn as a result of interpretive programs and media, audience experiences explore what audience will do. What types of activities will reinforce site significance? How might the design of interpretive programs and media invite audience involvement and, as a result, reinforce certain key elements of the park's stories?

John Falk and Lynn Dierking, in *The Museum Experience*, argue that visitors are strongly influenced by the physical aspects of museums, including architecture, ambience, smell, sound, and the "feel" of the place.

Workshop Discussions

As is the case at all units in the National Park System, the staff at William Howard Taft National Historic Site are committed to providing accurate and high quality interpretive programs.

In addition, workshop participants identified several other types of audience experiences that would enhance interpretive effectiveness and help all on-site audiences feel welcome.

Specifically, over the next 5-10 years, the park will focus on providing opportunities for audiences to . . .

- reflect on Taft's life, explore the issues of his times, discover relevance to their own lives, and participate in dialogue about the issues that Taft faced in public and private life, all within welcoming, accessible, and interesting venues and facilities.

- interact with interpretive media that are hands-on/minds-on and engaging.

- connect all the pieces of the Taft site (the house, grounds, education center, and particularly the Mount Auburn neighborhood), and connect the Taft home to other attractions in Cincinnati.

- enjoy a balance of on-going and predictable interpretive programming and media AND changing exhibits and programs that offer fresh insights and encourage return visitation.

- picture themselves in another time period or historic setting and use all their senses to form intellectual connections with Taft objects as well as his words and speeches.

> "You owe so much to his influence that you might be thought a striking exemplification of the influence of heredity, and the environment which surrounded you in living in the same atmosphere, and breathing the same air—an inspiration to everything that was good."
>
> *Louise Taft, in 1902, reminded William Howard of his father's influence*

- look carefully at the way the Taft home and the Mount Auburn neighborhood are presented and learn how to discover more on their own.

- interact with park staff who are knowledgeable and adept in sharing information.

- recognize how change (physical, intellectual, and socio-economic) has affected Mount Auburn.

- place Taft's life into historical chronology.

Issues

In order to develop the most effective interpretive programs and media, park staff must address the realities of the real world, including issues that are closely linked to providing desired audience experiences.

Local Issues

During a scoping trip designed to lay the groundwork for this LRIP, park staff identified several issues that the planning process should address. During the initial workshop, a larger group of park staff and partners revisited that list and suggested priorities.

Specifically, the LRIP will attempt to help the park with the following:

- Although William Howard Taft National Historic Site soon will celebrate its 40th anniversary, the site still is not a well-known attraction locally or nationally. Visitation, in general, is far below site capacity. Appropriately nestled in its historic Mount Auburn neighborhood, the site would benefit from heightened identity, connections with other Cincinnati attractions, and greater outreach to the surrounding community.

- The timing of this LRIP also is auspicious thanks to a recent property exchange that modified the site footprint—new parking and connecting access will provide additional opportunities for interpretation of the site landscape and interpretation of how all the pieces of the site (landscape and neighborhood, education center, educational programs, historic house furnishings and exhibits) work in tandem.

- While Taft's historic connections to the area have been the focus of interpretive attention for many years, the site's relevance to current park neighbors is less evident.

Although the major elements of site significance are easily described in factual terms, the LRIP offers the opportunity to explore the meaning of significance via the application of the traditional interpretive question—so what, why should contemporary audiences care whether William Howard Taft served as president, chief justice, lived in a large house, etc.?

> "In designing public programs to elicit the memories attached to local places, we must ensure that the multiple voices of the community be represented."
>
> David Glassberg in *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life*

- In addition, the discussions of site audiences that occur early in the LRIP planning offer the opportunity to consider not only how existing audiences might be retained but also how new audiences can be nurtured via targeted interpretive efforts.

- The LRIP comes at a time when the park is ready to consider additional perspectives on the traditional park stories, to empower local residents to connect with the site, to evaluate existing programs and media, and to explore the use of "new" interpretive techniques including technology.

- In changing times, as schools place increased emphasis on testing and commit fewer resources to off-site programming, the LRIP will set aside time to re-evaluate and, if necessary, adjust the site's educational program keeping it a vital element in the site's overall interpretive program.

- Park staff understand that the LRIP and the process associated with preparing a final plan are a valuable mechanism for creating a shared vision. The team

building that is a hallmark of the LRIP process will provide a common direction to interpretive efforts and help park staff present a clear vision to external partners and stakeholders. And once that shared vision emerges, the LRIP will support additional funding requests.

- As is often the case, funding and staffing are a challenge for the park. Partnerships and funding initiatives promise to help the park achieve its interpretive goals, and need to be factored into all discussions of action feasibility.

Servicewide Initiatives

In addition to local issues, the National Park Service has announced several Servicewide initiatives that individual parks should monitor.

- The Future of America's National Parks: Summary of Park Centennial Strategies (see Appendix 3 for a list of goals)

> "National Park Service leaders . . . will review and update their centennial strategies each year in support of a second century of preservation, conservation, and enjoyment"
>
> "The Future of America's National Parks"

- Interpretation and Education Program Business Plan

- Interpretation and Education Renaissance Action Plan

In each case, these initiatives contain goals that often mesh with local objectives. As calls for Servicewide projects are announced, this LRIP provides fertile ground for initiative ideas.

Part 2

Taking Action

Introduction

Part 2 of the LRIP describes the actions that park staff and partners will take, over the next 5-10 years, to build on the Foundation described in Part 1.

This plan is intended to be a dynamic document that responds to changing conditions. Assuming that the staff revisit the plan's contents on a regular basis, they can make adjustments, remove accomplished tasks, and move new projects up in priority.

Each action item included in Part 2 is bulleted in the plan narrative and listed in an implementation chart near the end of this document. Next to each action included in the chart is the title of the person(s) responsible for making sure the item moves forward, and the fiscal year or years when progress is expected.

It is critical to note that staff also can and should take advantage of new opportunities as they surface. No plan can foresee every eventuality. As structured, this LRIP provides a framework for considering interpretive proposals as they emerge. The consensus developed in Part 1 can function as a yardstick against which new ideas are measured. The overall architecture of the plan, based on Foundation discussions, provides priorities that can help move interpretive programming in a consistent direction despite changing times and the emergence of new ideas.

Organization of Part 2

Part 2 is organized to reflect priorities identified by park staff. Specifically, this part of the plan focuses on actions related to the park's desire to:

- Heighten the park's visibility and sharpen its identity in the community and region.

- Explore the park's relevance to community and national audiences.

- Encourage more use by diverse community and national audiences.

- Provide more opportunities for audiences to reflect on Taft-related issues.

- Provide more opportunities for hands-on/minds-on interactivity.

- Encourage more educators and schools to use the park's interpretive opportunities

- Consider the interpretive needs associated with the property exchange, development of new parking, and changes in on-site visitor circulation.

Actions Related to Park Identity

Despite the fact that the park has existed for decades, the need to sharpen its identity remains. To help community and national audiences understand the park's mission and what it has to offer, staff will:

- Reach out to local opinion leaders who can help strengthen ties between the park and the community. Provide them with information about the park and invite them to park events.

- Form a Community Advisory Group designed to offer advice and feedback on park activities and help demonstrate that the park is a "safe" place for community dialogue on issues. The Community Advisory Group might suggest topics for dialogue.

- Expand community outreach by identifying additional organizations that have missions similar to the NPS or that have historic connections to the Tafts or Taft family values. Open dialogue with these groups and invite members/leaders to visit the park and use the meeting space in the education center.

  In conjunction with these outreach efforts, prepare basic interpretive materials that explain the NPS/park mission and that connect park stories to the history of community groups (a women's group might, for example, learn about the Taft women or a church group about the Tafts' religious beliefs). These materials will be available at community meetings and could take the form of a site bulletin, short audiovisual program, mini-exhibit, or brief interpretive talk.

  Adopt an "opportunistic" attitude toward outreach, i.e., respond to opportunities as they arise but sustain focus by using Part 1 of this plan as a yardstick (particularly

"Primary Stories" and "Audiences") for assessing the types of outreach that are most appropriate.

- Join or reconnect with strategically selected local organizations—choose organizations like the Convention and Visitors Bureau with a complementary mission or groups that provide a service important to park outreach (promotion of tourism or historic preservation, for example). Develop cooperative agreements or more formal partnerships as appropriate.

- Participate in "fam" tours (familiarization tours) offered by others to local hospitality industry employees. Be creative in offering on-site experiences that will be memorable.

- Continue to offer festivals and special events, usually six per year, that attract community audiences and relate to park stories. Look for a limited number of new opportunities to add a park component to on-going festivals sponsored by others.

- Maintain and expand a media and community contact list and ensure that publicity for special events is distributed broadly. Use community advisors to suggest and develop new channels of communication.

- Develop a stronger brand identity and expand site identity to include a statement of relevance. It isn't enough to say that the park includes the birthplace and boyhood home of Taft, president and chief justice. The park identity also might allude to the park's programs for local schools, dedication to the preservation of Mt. Auburn as a vibrant community, and availability as a venue for civic dialogue. Perhaps suggest that the site continues the Taft tradition of nurturing public and community service, i.e., Taft National Historic Site: Continuing a Tradition of Service.

- Send staff to cable network training (the local program called Media Bridges) so they can learn to produce media for cable (and in-park) use.

- Investigate listings on widely used GPS units to see how to access the park. If the park is not easily accessed, seek help from Harpers Ferry Center to make changes.

- Heighten the NPS presence in Mt. Auburn by experimenting with additional community tours (see also the Community/Relevance section). Include these tours in a menu of items that park staff offer to groups or as a part of special events.

- Use costumed interpretation, perhaps by having staff, dressed as a Taft servant, field hand, nanny, cook, law clerk, neighbor, etc. as a special feature for special events or group visits. These historical characters would expand the circle of Taft acquaintances and explore additional influences on Taft during his formative years.

- Create a simple flier that describes what the park offers (tours, talks, costumed interpretation, meeting space, educational programs, etc.). Distribute to local groups.

- Expand educational programming with neighborhood schools (see also the Education section).

- Work with the Friends of William Howard Taft NHS to reinvigorate and fund the park's newsletter. Determine a regular schedule (perhaps quarterly) for the newsletter and coordinate preparation and distribution (both paper and electronic) to both Friends members and community partners.

Actions Related to Expanding Community Audiences and Exploring Relevance

Over the years, many community residents have assumed that the park, with its obvious emphasis on the Tafts, is irrelevant to them. In order to demonstrate how stories from previous centuries can be relevant to contemporary life, park staff will:

- Ensure that all existing and new interpretive programming will consider relevance. Everyone planning interpretive media will be challenged to ask and answer the "so what" question. Why should contemporary audiences care about the park's stories?

- Develop programs rooted in community narratives. This can be done by inviting neighbors to share community stories via oral histories, photos, letters, newspapers, etc. The park can sponsor special days when neighbors come to the site to share community history with not only park staff but other community members as well. With permission of the owners, these materials can be copied/recorded and integrated into future programs, publications, exhibits, etc.

- Increase interpretation of Mt. Auburn, stressing neighborhood transitions that have occurred over time.

  Several interpretive techniques could prove effective in interpreting the park's surrounding neighborhood, and staff should experiment to see which methods are best received. New programming might include:

  - Creation of additional walking tours of the neighborhood stressing preservation and community evolution. These tours could be led by

rangers/volunteers, perhaps in conjunction with special events or at times of predictable demand.

However, since it may not be clear exactly when an audience for these community tours will surface, non-personal, self-service media may offer more promise for expanded programming. Staff should consider revising and updating an existing neighborhood tour, or explore the use of some form of emerging technology.

In order to attract families and children, the park will consider storytelling, focused on community history or events, on afternoons or weekends.

- Ask the proposed Community Advisory Group (see above) to suggest issues of interest and develop interpretive programming focused on those topics.

- Recruit and train community docents to help with neighborhood tours and to help locate content for interpreting the neighborhood.

- Develop a youth docent program, students from local schools who will be trained to offer tours to younger students.

- Sponsor or co-sponsor programs designed to trigger civic conversations on contemporary, community topics.

Actions Related to Interpretive Interactivity and Recurring Issues

Park staff feel that the interpretive programming at the site would benefit from increased hands-on/minds-on interactivity.

As a result, staff will:

- Develop new interactive exhibits based on ideas generated in-house (see below) as well as concepts suggested by exhibit designers with experience in hands-on displays, perhaps at an on-site mini-charette.

  Existing suggestions for interactive solutions include:

  1. An adaptation of the existing educational program, "Man of Many Hats," for use with other audiences.

     This could be accomplished in a variety of ways. For example, a variety of hats could be displayed in the education center. There, visitors will learn of the many roles that William Howard Taft played in life. Life size figures showing Taft wearing different hats might be used to invite visitors to pose with Taft, or have cutout faces behind which visitors can pose for photos.

     During the house tour that follows this orientation, visitors will be reminded of the hats and the roles that they represent. Hat symbols integrated into exhibits throughout the house would reinforce this interpretive device.

     By finding and using embossing machines throughout the house, visitors also might "collect" hats on a short Taft biography. This would encourage visitors to explore more of the house on their own.

2. An interior adaptation of the official seals currently displayed outside the education center. The original idea included inviting visitors to make rubbings of those seals. However, since the seals are metal, they get too hot in sunny weather to be touched by visitors. Replicating the seals inside, distributing them throughout the site, and providing rubbing materials would reinforce Taft's multi-faceted biography.

3. Additional exhibits, carefully designed to match the appearance of existing house displays, could introduce issues that are still part of the national or international dialogue.

   This proposed "Room of Reflection," would require careful planning in order to avoid imposing 21st-century attitudes on the past. It could include short video programs, with supporting text and images, to explain each issue in terms contemporary to Taft. It then would ask visitors who have watched the program to think about how they feel about the issue and also pick, from several choices, how they think Taft felt, or what position he took.

   A timeline could be developed to reinforce the notion that certain issues have entered the political dialogue at multiple times throughout the nation's history.

   Visitors would be encouraged to leave behind a tangible expression of how they feel, perhaps via a comment box, comment register, short letter/postcard, or even a voting device that keeps a tally of attitudes. This should occur in a quiet space conducive to reflection.

In order to link the "Room of Reflection" to other in-house exhibits, some sort of logo could be developed to flag additional information about a highlighted issue.

By offering a number of issue stations, the "Room of Reflection" will give visitors freedom of choice—they can gravitate to and explore those issues that interest them the most. And, depending upon the issues highlighted, the exhibits could serve as icebreakers for community dialogue.

Park staff might experiment with any of these ideas to determine which would work best, perhaps beginning with a pilot program that focuses on one issue that is already discussed in existing exhibits. If successful, additional issues could be developed based on input from the park's Friends or Community Advisory Group.

Actions Related to Educators/Schools/Youth

Recognizing the value of reaching out to area schools and educators, even in times of austere budgets and growing demand on in-class time, park staff and partners will seek to enrich the educational experience by offering a mix of on- and off-site programs including:

- A series of lesson plans expanded to cover all grades, K-12. That means finalizing lessons for 3-6 and middle/high school students (content already is in development).

  As part of this process, staff will integrate the results of proposed (summer of 2008) focus groups with students.

- Teacher training designed to introduce the park, explain what is available from the park, and explore how to use the park to meet educational standards of learning.

  This training will be created with input from a new Advisory Group of Educators. With this group's input, the workshops will meet the requirements for Continuing Education Units (CEUs).

- A strengthened relationship with the nearby Mount Auburn International Academy including a request for access to the academy's video conferencing facilities as a means of communicating with city educators.

- An incentive that will encourage families of students that participate in park lessons to visit the park. This could include special visitation days that highlight student work.

- A strategy to locate funding that will help sustain the park's program to pay for transportation of students to the park (roughly $10,000/year at current levels).

- Explore the basic design of the park's summer camp program including who the program serves and strengthened links between the park's summer camp program and the interpretive stories and experiences identified in Part 1 of this plan, as well as Servicewide interpretive goals.

- Explore distance learning opportunities adopted by other NPS areas.

Actions Related to Parking & Walkway

Since the new parking lot for the site will re-orient the way visitors enter the site and change the circulation pattern after they leave their vehicles, park staff will make several adjustments to assist with wayfinding and provide a positive initial on-site experience. Staff will:

- Locate funding for, design, and install a site map where the walkway to the education center leaves the parking. This map will show the entire site plus a portion of the surrounding neighborhood. It will provide a basic introduction to what there is to see and do on-site, show the pathway to the education center, and invite all visitors to begin there.

- Develop signs to direct visitors from the new parking to the educational center.

- Re-install the existing wayside exhibit that interprets the Taft House grounds.

- Consider using a portion of the property adjacent to the parking for outdoor interpretive activities, festivals, etc. This will move potential use impacts from the proximity of historic resources to a location that is disturbed already.

Actions Related to Eastern National

Eastern National, the park's cooperating association, can make additional contributions to the park's interpretive program by:

- Working with park staff and perhaps the park's Friends group and Community Advisory Group to develop and sell a park handbook, including a section on the history and evolution of Mt. Auburn.

- Include issue-related items in the park's sale inventory (see Recurring Issues in Part 1).

Actions Related to Research

The park needs additional research or background information in order to accomplish certain action items included in this LRIP. Specific projects include:

- Research that summarizes the court cases decided by the Taft Court. This might be accomplished via an intern involved in legal education and raises the possibility of additional links with local institutions of higher ed.

- Development of a timeline that tracks certain recurring issues over time.

- Adapting an existing database to link recurring issues as well as the park's primary stories to particular days of the year. This will allow staff to discuss what happened on September 15, for example, Taft's birthday.

- If the park decides to pursue programs using period clothing and 3rd person interpretation, background materials must be gathered and prepared for training.

- If the park decides to pursue the "Room of Reflection," background information will be needed to accurately present the issues interpreted.

- Explore with HFC ways to design both formative and post-occupancy evaluation of new or proposed media.

Actions Related to Collections

While there may be a variety of actions contained in the park's collections management plan, the LRIP planning process specifically identified the need to support interpretation by:

- Resuming purchase of Taft papers microfilm.
- Find funding for a microfilm printer.

Actions Related to Staffing & Training

In order to accomplish elements of this plan, park staff need to take the following actions relative to staffing and training:

- Participate in Media Bridge training provided by the local public access station. This training will prepare staff to develop public access media as well as expand their ability to create in-house media programming.

- A program of period clothing and 3rd person interpretation will require training in how to wear clothing appropriately and develop the skills associated with costumed interpretation.

- Develop a program to train community and youth docents.

Actions Related to Park Identity

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Reach out to opinion leaders	Ed. Spec.	X	X	X	X	X	
Form Community Advisory Group	Chief of Interp.			X			
Expand community outreach	Chief of Interp.			X	X	X	
Reconnect with community organ.	Chief of Interp.	C & VB	Others	X	X	X	
Continue special events	Park Ranger	X	X	X	X	X	
Maintain/expand media contacts	Chief of Interp.	X	X	X	X	X	
Develop brand identity	Chief of Interp.						X
Attend Media Bridges	Interp. staff		X				
Investigate GPS listings	Curat. Assist.	Invest.		Implem.			
More community tours by staff/add period dress/ offer menu of prog.	Chief of Interp. & Park Ranger	Tours	Clothing				
Expand programs with local schools	Ed. Spec.	See	Ed.	Actions			

Actions Related to Expanding Community Audiences, Exploring Relevance

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Make programs relevant	Chief of Interp.	X	X	X	X	X	
Develop programs using community narrative	Park Ranger			Gather info.	Use		
Revise community walking tour brochure	Ed. Spec.			X			
Recruit/train community docents	VIP Coord.	X					
Develop interactive exhibits	Park Ranger		Fund charette	Fund ideas	Implem.		

Actions Related to Education

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Finalize new lesson plans	Ed. Spec.		X	X	X	X	
Develop teacher training	Ed. Spec.			X			
Create Advisory Group of Educators	Ed. Spec.		X				
Strengthen ties with MAIAcademy	Ed. Spec.			X			
Develop family incentive	Ed. Spec.	X					
Locate funding for transportation	Ed. Spec.	X					
Modify summer camp	Park Ranger	Redefine					
Explore distance learning	Ed. Spec.				X		

Actions Related to Parking

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Add signs and interp.	Chief of Interp.			X			
Re-install existing wayside	Chief of Interp.	X					
Develop options for use of green space	Chief of Interp.		X				

Actions Related to Sales

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Develop park handbook	Chief of Interp.					X	
Add issue-related sales items	Park Ranger	X	X	X	X	X	

Actions Related to Research

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Court case research	Chief of Interp.		X				
Develop timeline of issues	Chief of Interp.		X				
Adapt database to daybook	Chief of Interp.					X	
Gather info for period clothing	Park Ranger	See	Above				
Gather info for interactive exhibits	Park Ranger	See	Above				
Explore formative/post evaluation	Chief of Interp.			X			

Actions Related to Collections

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Resume purchase of Taft microfilm	Chief of Interp.	X	X	X	X	X	
Purchase microfilm printer	Chief of Interp.		X				

Actions Related to Staffing & Training

Action	*Who?*	*FY09*	*FY10*	*FY11*	*FY12*	*FY13*	*Future*
Participant in Media Bridges	Chief of Interp.	See	Above				
Training for period clothing	Park Ranger	See	Above				
Train docents	Ed. Spec.	See	Above				

Participants

Maureen Andreadis, Social Studies Consulting Teacher, Cincinnati Public Schools

Tanya Battle

Stanley Broadnax, President, Mt. Auburn Community Council

Penny Carnes, Mt. Auburn

Dwendolyn Chester, Deputy Director, Community Development, City of Cincinnati

Elizabeth Daigneault, Visitor Research Coordinator, Cincinnati Art Museum

Frances Harmon, Friends of William Howard Taft

Judi Hart, Education Specialist, Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park

Ray Henderson, Chief of Interpretation, William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Paula Marett, Park Guide, William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Nichole McHenry, Park Ranger, Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site

Charlotte Morris, Administrative Officer, William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Reginald Murray, Park Ranger, William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Priscilla Nash, Executive Committee, H.C. Family & Children First

Nashid A. Shakir, Cincinnati Community Representative

Derrick Shelton, Director, International College Preparatory Academy

Alan Tucker, Administrative Assistant, William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Sam Vaughn, Park Planner, National Park Service, Harpers Ferry Center

Robin White, Superintendent, William Howard Taft National Historic Site

K. Wood, Training Specialist, William Howard Taft National Historic Site

Ron Thomson, Facilitator/Writer

Appendix 1
Tangibles and Intangibles

During the process of developing interpretive themes, workshop participants brainstormed two lists.

On the one hand, they identified "tangible" resources—objects, places, people from the past, or events (historical or natural) closely associated with the park.

Because they are equally important, a parallel list of "intangibles"—processes, ideas, relationships, concepts, and values—suggests more universal stories that resonate with a wide spectrum of audiences.

Workshop participants used both of these lists to develop significance statements and storylines.

Tangibles Associated with the Park

Taft House and grounds
Artifacts owned by the Taft family
Period artifacts
Audio recordings of Taft and period speeches, music, etc.
Mount Auburn neighborhood
Education Center
Permanent and temporary exhibits
Special events
Rangers, staff, volunteers, and partners
Eastern National, the park's cooperating association, and other partners

Intangibles Associated with the Park

Many of the intangibles associated with the park have positive and negative aspects, and balanced interpretation of Taft that places him into historical context will avoid both presentism and nostalgia.

Family upbringing, home environment, influence of values
Public service, desire to finish the job, efficient administration
Love of the law, integrity
Duty—to family, country, humanity

Expectations of others
Personal connections, social and political networks
Population mobility, new urban neighborhoods, urban expansion
Increasing affluence, expansion of the urban middle class
Historic context, multiple points of view, different perspectives
"Progressive" and "conservative" politics, change but . . .
Race and gender

Appendix 2
Criteria Used to Suggest Priorities

Workshop participants considered the following criteria in suggesting priorities:

- Cost, including staff time
- Impact, i.e., numbers of audience members served
- Impact, i.e., contribution to interpretive mission
- Safety or legal concerns
- Opportunity at hand—staff capabilities, partner willingness to help, materials and resources readily available, etc.
- National or local initiatives, political considerations

Appendix 3
Centennial Strategy Goals

Anticipating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service (2016), the Secretary of the Interior prepared a report, *The Future of America's National Parks*, and in 2006 presented it to President George W. Bush. That report contained the following goals:

Stewardship
The National Park Service leads America and the world in preserving and restoring treasured resources.

Provide inspiring, safe, and accessible places for people to enjoy.

Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

Set the standard of excellence in urban park landscape design and maintenance.

Assure that no compelling chapter in American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.

Serve as the pre-eminent resource laboratory by applying excellence in science and scholarship to understand and respond to environmental changes.

Encourage children to be future conservationists.

Environmental Leadership
The National Park Service demonstrates environmental leadership to the nation.

Reduce environmental impacts of park operations.

Inspire an environmental conscience in Americans.

Engage partners, communities, and visitors in shared environmental stewardship.

Recreational Experience

National parks are superior destinations where visitors have fun, explore nature and history, find inspiration, and improve health and wellness.

Encourage collaboration among and assist park and recreation systems at every level—federal, regional, state, local—to help build an outdoor recreation network accessible to all Americans.

Establish "volun-tourism" excursions to national park for volunteers to help achieve natural and cultural resource protection goals.

Expand partnerships with schools and boys and girls associations to show how national park experiences can improve children's lives.

Focus national, regional, and local tourism efforts to reach diverse audiences and young people and to attract visitors to lesser-known parks.

Education

The National Park Service fosters exceptional learning opportunities that connect people to parks.

Cooperate with educators to provide curriculum materials, high-quality programs, and park-based and online learning.

Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

Promote life-long learning to connect through park experiences.

Impart to every American a sense of their citizen ownership of their

national parks.

Professional Excellence

The National Park Service demonstrates management excellence worthy of the treasures entrusted to our care.

Be one of the top 10 places to work in America.

Use strategic planning to promote management excellence.

Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

Model what it means to work in partnership.

Make national parks the first choice in philanthropic giving among those concerned about environmental, cultural, and recreational values.

All planning processes, including preparation of LRIPs, should consider these goals and, as appropriate, help park managers reach Servicewide objectives.