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INTRODUCTION

The alternatives presented in this document establish broad guidelines for achieving the purpose of New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park. This section discusses the potential impacts of implementing each alternative. Each analysis is followed by a conclusion statement that assesses and quantifies the nature of the impacts. In addition, information on cumulative impacts, unavoidable adverse effects, and other consequences is provided for each alternative.

Individual projects called for in this plan, such as the construction of a visitor center, will require additional environmental analysis and documentation to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). These compliance actions will be initiated when construction details are more fully defined.

RATIONALE FOR IMPACT TOPICS

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park is a non-traditional unit of the national park system. The unit contains no firm boundaries, and its sphere of influence potentially extends over much of the New Orleans metropolitan area. The park's primary resources — jazz and the environs in which it evolved — are likewise non-traditional. The impacts topics selected for this analysis reflect these conditions and largely revolve around the issues identified in the “Purpose of and Need for the Plan” and “Affected Environment” sections. Resources and environmental concerns that are not appreciably affected by alternative actions have been eliminated from further consideration and comparative analysis.

IMPACTS DISMISSED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The alternatives presented in this document would not have discernible negative impacts to the following resources.

Floodplains and Wetlands

The entire greater New Orleans area is in a floodplain; however, numerous flood preventive measures have been developed to protect the city. The National Park Service would follow procedures already in place for evacuation in times of flooding. All park artifacts would be placed in areas where they were protected from flood damage. The National Park Service would ensure that any activities undertaken would conform to established regulations.

Water Resources / Air Quality

The construction of park facilities could result in impacts from water runoff. This impact would be temporary and would be mitigated by using silt fencing, retention ponds, and other site-specific containment measures. All disturbed areas would be revegetated so that no long-term siltation impacts from runoff would occur.

Temporary impacts to air quality could be caused by construction and demolition of facilities. These would primarily involve temporary increases in particulates (fugitive dust) and vehicle emissions (where motorized equipment is used). Mitigating measures (such as watering to keep the dust down) would be taken to limit even temporary and localized impacts.

Mardi Gras, jazz festivals, and other programmed events could draw sizable numbers of visitors in motorized vehicles. These visitation levels could raise vehicle emissions to levels that exceeded attainment standards. However, these temporary increases in emissions would be localized and short in duration.

Non-events related park to visitation should not significantly add to air emissions in New Orleans because

- a substantial amount of park visitors would be using existing public transportation or would be walking

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- a significant number of park visitors would have come to the city for reasons other than just a park visit

If these assumptions were to prove incorrect when the park begins operations, monitoring would be undertaken to determine the extent of added air emissions coming from park visitation and corrective measures would be developed.

Vegetation and Soils

In each alternative, the total disturbance to vegetation and soils would be very minor (less than 2 acres). Most disturbance, if not all, would take place in previously disturbed areas, further reducing the overall impact. Mitigation techniques would be used to reduce impacts to the minimum necessary to accomplish the objective. Mitigation would include carefully selecting sites, salvaging topsoil and plant material, and rehabilitating disturbed areas. Should facilities be removed, the disturbed areas would be rehabilitated and revegetated with native plants.

Threatened, Endangered, and Species of Special Concern

Consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the state of Louisiana indicated that no federally or state-listed threatened or endangered species or state species of concern were located in the park environs.

Environmental Justice Policy (Executive Order 12898)

Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations,” requires all federal agencies to incorporate environmental justice into their missions by

identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and policies on minorities and low-income populations and communities.

For the purpose of fulfilling Executive Order 12898, in the context of National Environmental Policy Act, the alternatives addressed in this plan were assessed during the planning process. It was determined that none of these actions would result in significant direct or indirect negative or adverse effects on any minority or low-income population or community.

The following facts contributed to this conclusion:

- The developments and actions found in alternatives would not result in any identifiable adverse human health effects. Therefore, there would be no direct or indirect negative or adverse effects on any minority or low-income population or community.
- The impacts to the natural and physical environment that would occur due to implementation of any of the alternatives would not significantly or adversely affect any minority or low-income population or community.
- The alternatives would not result in any identifiable effects that would be specific to any minority or low-income community.
- The planning process has had a public participation process and has equally considered all public input from persons regardless of age, race, income status, or other socioeconomic or demographic factors. This process included interested individuals and groups representing local community populations.

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE A: NO ACTION

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Analysis

Archeological Resources. Under alternative A there would be no further development or construction. Therefore, potentials for disturbing intact archeological resources would be low. If ground-disturbing actions were to become necessary, NPS policies for identifying, evaluating, and, where possible, avoiding or mitigating damage to resources would be followed.

Cultural Landscape. Alternative A would have no impacts to the Vieux Carré cultural landscape or on other historical settings associated with New Orleans jazz.

Parades. Developing cooperative agreements to streamline the parade permit process and obtaining financial support to defray parade costs would remove or reduce some of the growing barriers to parading. This would benefit this important tradition by making it easier for participating groups to organize and conduct parades. However, these actions would be taken only as funding permitted.

Communities, Historic Structures, and Landmarks. Developing a cultural resource data base and resource management plan, as funding permitted, would help locate, preserve, and maintain resources by identifying management needs and by establishing priorities.

Completing the NHL theme study, as funding permitted, would benefit preservation efforts by identifying properties having landmark status and defining the qualities that make them significant.

Continuing to emphasize the preservation of historic jazz sites and structures would benefit the resources by helping to maintain their integrity. Renovating and adaptively using structures could provide more locations for jazz performances or education, which would help

ensure the continued maintenance and use of these structures.

The renovation of historic structures could result in adverse impacts such as the loss of historic fabric. However, the use of replica or historically compatible replacement fabric, construction methods, and other preservation techniques would minimize or mitigate these impacts (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

Developing partnerships to continue research, collect oral histories, and make archives accessible to researchers would continue to yield information needed for managing resources and establishing their historical contents. However, these actions would take place only as current operational funding levels permitted. The status quo levels of funding would prevent an aggressive approach to historic preservation, which would result in the deterioration or loss of historic fabric and the loss of historical informants due to attrition.

Conclusions

Cultural resources would benefit minimally. Damage to archeological sites would be avoided. The parade tradition would be supported. Preserving historic properties would be emphasized.

Current operational funds and staffing would be insufficient to prevent significant negative impacts to some jazz cultural resources.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Implementing alternative A would cause no adverse impacts to natural resources.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Analysis

Access, Circulation, and Parking. Continuing to rely on the existing transportation

infrastructure and park facilities would afford visitors cost-effective ways to access and circulate through the park, especially in the Vieux Carré area.

Depending on self-guided auto and commercial bus tours would permit some visitor access to activities and sites outside of the Vieux Carré. Touring sites outside of the Vieux Carré by foot would continue to be difficult since many of the resources are scattered throughout the city.

Interpretation. Continuing not to have a centralized and easily accessible visitor center would limit the park's ability to provide interpretive services and would restrict direct contact between the park interpretive staff and visitors. Limited staffing and funding would only allow the basic history of jazz to be conveyed.

Pursuing limited partnerships with other entities would slightly increase interpretive opportunities, but these would not always be in the direct control of the National Park Service. Interpretive opportunities would be available through partners. Participating in special events such as Jazz Fest would enhance the visitor experience for some individuals, but these events would emphasize performance, rather than interpretation.

Education. Supporting non-NPS educational activities through partnerships would continue to benefit young musicians and students. Targeting selected audiences (such as low-income or those with little previous experience in music) would allow disadvantaged audiences to have greater access to jazz instruction. However, there would be little direct control over program quality. NPS objectives would be met by the selection of partners and negotiation over program content and guidelines, rather than by direct program design and quality assurance. Working closely with the New Orleans Jazz Commission would help coordinate these activities and maintain partnerships.

Visitor Services. Continuing to provide visitor services such as orientation, restroom facilities, and visitor safety and protection through non-NPS entities could limit the quality of the visitor

experience. Providing orientation and visitor information through limited personal and nonpersonal media would not convey the full range of jazz opportunities. There would not be a single location to serve as a focal point for jazz-related information and programs. Some visitors would continue to be unaware of the park and its purpose. The lack of coordinated visitor services would reduce the potential for a high-quality visitor experience for many individuals.

Carrying Capacity. Although no carrying capacity data exists for the park, some park service-sponsored events might create limited crowding, traffic, congestion, or intrusions into local communities. These adverse impacts would be localized, short in duration, and infrequent.

Conclusions

The visitor experience would benefit minimally. There would be no impacts to current visitor access, circulation, or parking, because they would remain the same as current conditions.

Interpretive services would benefit slightly from gradual increases in funding. Jazz education could receive moderate benefits, depending on staffing, funding, and NPS priorities, and on the selection of quality partners.

The Park Service would not be in direct control of visitor services, which could adversely impact the quality of the visitor experience.

The park would not be able to fulfill its interpretation and education goals, and thus its mission, due to limited staffing and funding.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Analysis

The current development and annual operation budget of \$612,000 would have a negligible impact to the local economy. Continuing the status quo funding levels would allow only basic park programs and operations to be carried out. The low level of operations and minimal budget

and staff would prevent the fulfilling the park's mission. The expectations of Congress and the public, including the local community, other New Orleans residents, and the jazz community and jazz fans would not be met because the park would be unable to completely fulfill its mission.

Since New Orleans, with its many attractions (including the Vieux Carré), is already a destination for large numbers of tourists, and there is already a thriving tourism industry in New Orleans, the park would not be expected to draw large numbers of additional visitors to the New Orleans region. Many visitors might not even know that the park existed prior to their visit to New Orleans. However, drawing upon the numerous visitors that come to the Vieux Carré, it would be expected that large numbers of visitors would visit the park (albeit probably for a short duration of time) and many regional residents would be exposed to park-supported programs related to jazz. The park might enhance business opportunities in the immediate vicinity of North Rampart Street by attracting more tourists to this portion of the Vieux Carré and the nearby neighborhood.

Relatively few individuals and firms would benefit economically from the development and operation of New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park, although these benefits might be significant for those affected. The overall dollar impact would be minimal because of the large size of the New Orleans regional economy.

Continuing a National Park Service presence would have positive social impacts for park visitors and for the local community by drawing some attention to and legitimizing the historical significance of New Orleans jazz.

Conclusions

A relatively few individuals and firms would benefit economically from the development and annual operating budget of \$612,000. The park might stimulate business activities in certain areas of the Vieux Carré area. Jazz events, developed through partnerships, might increase visitor spending. However, compared to the

existing volume tourism and associated spending, these increases would be nominal.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Analysis

Retaining the park headquarters on Canal Street and continuing to share support services with Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve would limit the park's ability to carry out its function. There would be no centralized visitor center/administration facility beyond a small, staffed information area and administrative offices. Office and storage space would remain insufficient. The presence of the National Park Service, and the park, would be overshadowed by the surrounding environment. This would inhibit the park's ability to make an impact and limit its role in interpreting jazz resources, educating the public, and preserving jazz-related resources, and therefore, its mission.

Gradual increases in park operating funds would have a negligible benefit on park administration and operations.

Conclusions

Park administration and operations would negligibly benefit from gradual increases in funding through time. The increases would be insufficient for the park to fully achieve its mission.

PARTNERSHIPS

Analysis

Developing partnerships would not be a priority. Partnerships relating to jazz performances, events, and educational programs would be sought and maintained as funding permitted and would continue to moderately benefit the park's visitor experience.

Conclusion

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Partnerships would have minimal to moderate beneficial effects on park activities.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Currently, the understanding and appreciation of jazz and the jazz heritage is being promoted by the National Park Service, schools, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental entities. This is resulting in an enhanced awareness of this musical art form. Alternative A would continue this process.

The efforts of the Park Service and other preservation partners to help preserve neighborhoods and sites associated with early jazz might be enough to outweigh the outside forces of change, decay, and decisions by individual owners that threaten these fragile

areas, although the overall negative impacts from growth, development, and the effects of aging might still result in a loss of tangible resources related to early jazz history.

UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE EFFECTS

The level of funding and staffing would prevent aggressive historical research and preservation of historic structures. Significant historic structures would not be identified and many would deteriorate, possibly vanishing from the historic scene. Informants with firsthand knowledge of jazz and its evolution would be lost through attrition.



Original Dixieland Jazz Band

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE B: NPS PERSONAL SERVICES EMPHASIS

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Analysis

Archeological Resources. Landscaping and other ground disturbance associated with the renovation of the Old U.S. Mint could adversely impact unknown archeological resources by disturbing the integrity of archeological deposits. However, by identifying and evaluating archeological resources and implementing measures that would avoid or mitigate their disturbance, the adverse effects of ground disturbance would be eliminated or minimized (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

Cultural Landscapes. The Old U.S. Mint is a prominent feature in the Vieux Carré. Renovating the Mint would be a positive impact in that it would help perpetuate the function of the structure as a public building as well as maintain its physical appearance. Adding more parking

spaces on the Vieux Carré side of the building could create a minor adverse visual impact.

Parades. Developing cooperative agreements to streamline the parade permit process and obtaining financial support to defray parade costs would remove or reduce some of the growing barriers to parading. This would make it easier for participating groups to organize and conduct parades, helping continue this important cultural tradition.

park service-sponsored music instruction and interpretive programs would also benefit the parade tradition by fostering an understanding and appreciation of this tradition among future participants and audiences.

Increased staffing and funding would also benefit parading by allowing more resources to be directed at preserving this tradition. NPS facilitation of parading events would benefit the

tradition by providing centralized coordination, which currently is sometimes lacking.

Continuing the New Orleans parade tradition would benefit jazz musicians by providing a venue for them to gain experience and exposure. It would positively benefit local communities and groups by providing a forum to express group identity and maintain the connections these groups and individuals have to the New Orleans jazz tradition.

Communities, Historic Structures, and Landmarks. The emphasis on preserving structures and sites associated with early jazz would benefit these resources by maintaining and preserving the physical integrity, appearance, and “feel” of structures, landmarks, and landscapes that comprise historical jazz communities and settings. The adaptive use of the Old U.S. Mint by the National Park Service would benefit it by helping ensure its continued use as a public building as well as its preservation. Renovating and adaptively using other structures could provide more locations for jazz performances or education, which would help ensure the continued maintenance and use of these structures.

The renovation of historic structures could result in adverse impacts such as the loss of historic fabric. However, the use of replica or historically compatible replacement fabric, construction methods, and other preservation techniques would minimize or mitigate these impacts (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

The proposed curatorial storage facilities at the Mint would have a positive impact by providing a safe and secure storage area for jazz-related artifacts, documents, and memorabilia and by making these objects more available for exhibit and research.

The emphasis on continuing research and collecting oral history interviews would fill information gaps and preserve firsthand knowledge relating to the evolution and development of jazz. These efforts could yield important information such as the past appearance and configuration of structures, the previous uses of structures and settings, or a

structure’s or site’s association with prominent jazz personages. This information would allow for more accurate renovation and would more clearly define the roles and contexts of structures, landmarks, and communities linked to the jazz tradition. However, even with the emphasis on research and interviews, the funding and staffing levels of this alternative might not be sufficient to prevent the loss of information due to deterioration and attrition, which would be a irreversible adverse effect.

Conclusions

Cultural resources would benefit in the short and long term. Many tangible and intangible features that characterize New Orleans jazz (e.g., the parade tradition and historic structures) would be supported or preserved. Continuing research would yield important historical and information that would facilitate the management jazz cultural resources.

Adverse impacts resulting from landscaping and renovation would be avoided or mitigated by carrying out cultural resource compliance. Adding parking spaces to the U.S. Old Mint could be a minor, negative visual impact. Funding and staffing levels might not be sufficient to prevent negative impacts resulting from the loss of oral history informants and some structures.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Implementing alternative B would cause no adverse impacts to natural resources.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Analysis

Access, Circulation, and Parking. Continuing to rely on the existing transportation infrastructure and park facilities would afford visitors cost-effective ways to access and circulate through the park, especially in the Vieux Carré area.

The addition of park service-sponsored tours to sites in outlying historical communities would supplement existing self-guided and commercial bus tours and would enhance opportunities to access these areas. Publicity advertising events would enhance visitor awareness of the locations of events throughout the city, which would enhance access to sites and events.

Locating the visitor center in the Old U.S. Mint would provide easy access to visitors touring the Vieux Carré on foot. Orientation and program/events information distributed at the visitor center would assist visitors in locating and gaining access to jazz activities throughout New Orleans.

Interpreting and providing access to jazz activities and sites outside the Vieux Carré would enhance visitor circulation by providing alternate or new interpretive locations, which could relieve pressure and congestion around well-known sites in the Vieux Carré.

As visitation increased, minor adverse impacts to circulation might occur at the Old U.S. Mint. The increased numbers of visitors arriving at the Mint by bus could cause congestion and safety issues at drop-off locations. Coordinating with city officials to regulate traffic could resolve or reduce many of these problems. The need to park buses could reduce the number of existing vehicle parking spaces, effectively limiting access to the Mint by visitors arriving in motorized vehicles. Redesigning the Mint's grounds and

adding parking spaces could mitigate the adverse effect of crowding and congestion stemming from bus arrivals.

Interpretation. A visitor center with centralized interpretive functions would enhance the visitor experience in numerous ways. Presenting a wide range of personal interpretive programs and "informances" would allow the park to interpret the basic history of jazz at a wide range of levels and in ways that would appeal to the park's eclectic audiences. Structuring personal programs so that they matched park interpretive themes would reduce competition with non-Park Service events and would help achieve park interpretive goals.

Holding onsite and offsite programs and events throughout the city and at varied times would give visitors the flexibility to match their interests and the time they have scheduled for their visits with presentations and events. Publicizing events through various media and interpretive handouts would heighten public awareness of events and would enhance visitor opportunities to appreciate and learn more about jazz.

Employing well-trained musicians and interpreters would ensure that visitors received high-quality programming that balanced entertainment and interpretation. However, engaging well-trained musicians/staff and developing high-quality programs could be costly and time-consuming and would require considerable coordination and teamwork between NPS staff, performers, and partners. Presenting high-quality programming could be limited by available funding and staffing priorities, or it could require that funding and staff be diverted from other important program areas to maintain high programming standards.

Interpretive performances would also provide opportunities for young musicians to find encouragement and employment playing traditional and less commercial forms of jazz, which could enhance support for lesser-known forms of jazz. The magnitude of these impacts would depend largely on staff and partnership support of these activities.

Onsite and offsite personal programs would also allow informal contacts between NPS staff/volunteers and visitors. For many visitors

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this form of contact would be a key element in a high-quality visitor experience.

Modestly upgrading interpretive media and exhibits in cost-effective ways would moderately enhance the park's ability to communicate the park's purpose, significance, and interpretive themes, which in turn would underscore the park's identity and mission.

Providing upgraded exhibits, opportunities for informal contact with NPS staff and volunteers, and interpretive media and brochures would allow visitors with limited time to become more informed about the origins and history of jazz. The opportunity for visitors to purchase literature or interpretive memorabilia at a modest sales area would be meaningful to many visitors. Purchased items could provide additional information or remind visitors of their park experiences well after their visit, and thus could positively reinforce their overall visitor experience. Developing an internet web site for the park would provide basic park information that could be obtained globally.

Education. The increased number of onsite and offsite educational programs would enhance opportunities for reaching a wide range of students and perpetuating the New Orleans jazz tradition. Coordinating NPS programs with ongoing curricula in local schools and institutions would make programs relevant to students. Targeting disadvantaged groups would provide important educational opportunities for groups with limited resources.

Working closely with the New Orleans Jazz Commission and employing professional musicians to assist in educational programs would provide a high-quality, fostering atmosphere for students and potential musicians. Music appreciation classes would produce larger audiences for traditional and less commercial forms of jazz. Targeted partnerships would improve access to jazz education for those with little previous experience. The positive impacts of educational programs would be limited, however, by available NPS funding and staffing.

Visitor Services. Providing orientation and events information in an accessible and central

location would help visitors plan their visits and activities. A comprehensive orientation to the park and the surrounding environs could reduce visitor confusion and frustration. Providing a prominent meeting area would help groups to coordinate their activities, while the presence of restrooms, a modest sales area, exhibit rooms, and theaters would represent features much of the public has come to expect at national parks.

Carrying Capacity. Carrying capacity data for this new park is incomplete. Implementing the actions under alternative B, however, would be expected to increase visitation in areas such as the Old U.S. Mint, at some sites in historic jazz communities, and at certain jazz programs/events. Overcrowding, traffic congestion, public safety, vehicle emissions, noise, and unwanted intrusions into local communities could result. These adverse impacts would probably be limited in duration and minor to moderate in intensity. The development of resource condition / visitor experience indicators and standards and a monitoring program (to be developed after the implementation of this plan) would mitigate or eliminate most of these adverse impacts. Working with local authorities to resolve traffic congestion and visitor circulation problems could also mitigate these adverse impacts.

Conclusions

The visitor experience would benefit in a number of ways. Conducting a wide variety of programs throughout the city would create greater access to jazz events. Presenting a range of high-quality personal programs would allow audiences to attend events that matched or challenged their interest levels. Innovative educational programs would provide high-quality opportunities for young musicians and students.

Increases in visitation could create minor to moderate adverse effects on the park carrying capacity, many of which could be mitigated.

Positive impacts would be limited by the availability of NPS funding and staff.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Analysis

Spending approximately \$3.3 million on construction and other development-related activities would have short-term, positive benefits in the form of increased jobs and construction. These benefits would not occur all at once but would be spread over the life of the development project. Relatively few individuals and firms would share in these benefits.

Increasing the park's staffing levels to 12 full-time equivalent positions would benefit the local economy by creating a need for housing, goods, and services, although the impact would be minimal. Park expenditures for goods and services, stemming from its annual budget of \$960,200, would also moderately benefit the local economy.

Since New Orleans, with its many attractions (including the Vieux Carré), is already a destination for a large number of tourists, and there is already a thriving tourism industry in the city, the park alone would not be expected to draw large numbers of additional visitors to the New Orleans region. Many visitors to the region might not even know the park existed prior to their visit to New Orleans. Drawing upon the numerous visitors that come to the Vieux Carré, however, it would be expected that large numbers of visitors would visit the park and many regional residents would be exposed to park-supported programs related to jazz. Because of the extent of programs and exhibits, some visitors might make the park the focus of their visit or choose to extend their visit to take advantage of what the park has to offer. The park would definitely enhance business opportunities in the immediate vicinity of the Mint by attracting more tourists to this portion of the Vieux Carré and the nearby neighborhood.

Developing and operating the park would have a positive social benefit on the local community. The NPS presence would be an attractive

Impacts of Alternative B: NPS Personal Services Emphasis

addition for the neighborhood around the Mint because of the interpretive, educational, and recreational opportunities it would offer. The park would be an open, accessible, and attractive place for the people of the local area. Increased cultural/historical awareness and improved visitor experiences would result. It is expected that the park might attract a large amount of use from neighborhoods and other New Orleans residents, as well as from the many tourists who visited the Vieux Carré.

Conclusions

A relatively few individuals and firms would benefit economically from the \$3.3 million development budget and the \$960,000 annual operating budget for the park, and these benefits might be significant for those affected. However, the overall dollar impact would be minor due to the large size of the New Orleans regional economy.

While fulfilling its NPS mission, the park would be expected to become a valued neighbor in the local community. The park's facilities and programs would provide positive social benefits for both visitors to the park and residents of the local community.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Analysis

Renovating the Mint would result in up to 3,000 square-feet being designated for offices and support areas such as a storage, a library, and research activities. Implementing alternative B would cost approximately \$3.3 million for development and \$960,000 for annual operations. These funding and staffing levels would permit the park to address the management goals presented in this plan, which could allow the park to achieve its mission.

Conclusions

Administration and operations would benefit from expanding the total funding base to approximately \$4.2 million and increasing

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staffing levels to 12 full-time equivalent positions, which would potentially permit the park to achieve its mission.

PARTNERSHIPS

Analysis

Developing partnerships would not be a priority. Seeking and maintaining limited partnerships relating to jazz performances, events, and educational programs would continue to moderately benefit the park's visitor experience, but the bulk of the programming would be executed by the Park Service.

Conclusion

Partnership would have minimal to moderate beneficial effects on park activities.

OTHER IMPACTS

Cumulative Impacts

Currently the understanding and appreciation of jazz and the jazz heritage is being promoted by the National Park Service, schools, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental entities. This is resulting in an increased awareness of this musical art form. Implementing alternative B would have a beneficial effect by helping this process to accelerate.

Under alternative B the efforts of the Park Service and other preservation partners to help preserve neighborhoods and sites associated with early jazz might be enough to outweigh the forces of change, decay, and decisions by individual owners that threaten these fragile areas, although the overall impact might still be a loss of tangible resources related to early jazz history.

Unavoidable Adverse Effects

Some historic structures and other cultural resources would be lost due to deterioration and attrition. Any archeological sites encountered during ground-disturbing activities and requiring mitigation through excavation would constitute an irreversible loss since excavation destroys the resource as a database (unless mitigated).

The Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and Maintenance and the Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

Developing a visitor center and other park facilities for public education and enjoyment could result in the removal of 1 acre or less of vegetation and soil from natural productivity.

Constructing park facilities and wayside exhibits could create increased noise, dust, and the disruption of visitor access and circulation, which would adversely effect the visitor experience. These would be temporary impacts.

Impacts of Alternative B: NPS Personal Services Emphasis

Under alternative B approximately \$1.5 million dollars would be spent in renovating the Mint and \$1.85 million would be used to develop and install interpretive materials and displays. These costs would be irreversible.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVE C: PARTNERSHIP EMPHASIS (PROPOSED ACTION)

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Analysis

Archeological Resources. Rehabilitating Perseverance Hall No. 4 and the Caretaker's House could adversely impact unknown archeological resources. Expanding Perseverance Hall No. 4 into a visitor center complex could also impact archeological resources, as could landscaping and other ground-disturbing activities associated with these actions. Any renovation, landscaping, or ground disturbance resulting from the expansion of the visitor center complex and surrounding area could also adversely impact unknown archeological resources. However, by identifying and evaluating archeological resources and implementing measures that would avoid or mitigate their disturbance, the adverse effects of ground disturbance would be eliminated or minimized (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

Cultural Landscape. Rehabilitating and expanding Perseverance Hall No. 4 and other proposed renovations would have positive impacts to the Louis Armstrong Park. Upgrading these structures and landscaping the grounds would enhance the attractiveness of the park as a setting for public gathering and enjoyment. Perseverance Hall No. 4 and the Rabassa House are national register properties. Rehabilitating these structures could affect qualities that make them significant. Carrying out National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) section 106 compliance would result in the avoidance or mitigation of any adverse effects that the proposed renovations might have on these properties.

Parades. Developing cooperative agreements to streamline the parade permit process and obtaining financial support to defray parade costs would remove or reduce some of the growing barriers to parading. This would make it easier for participating groups to organize and

conduct parades, helping continue this important cultural tradition.

Music instruction and interpretive programs would also benefit the parade tradition by fostering an understanding and appreciation of this tradition among future participants and audiences.

The funding and staffing levels of this alternative would also benefit parading by allowing more resources to be directed at preserving this tradition. The centralized coordination of parading events would benefit the tradition by providing a level of organization that currently is sometimes lacking. Using open areas on the grounds of the visitor center complex as staging areas for parades would provide an additional focal point for these activities.

Continuing the New Orleans parade tradition would benefit jazz musicians by providing a venue for them to gain experience and exposure. It would positively benefit local communities and groups by providing a forum to express group identity and maintain the connections these groups and individuals have to the New Orleans jazz tradition.

Communities, Historic Structures, and Landmarks. The emphasis on preserving structures and sites associated with early jazz would benefit these resources by maintaining and preserving the physical integrity, appearance, and "feel" of structures, landmarks, and landscapes that comprise historical jazz communities and settings. Preserving and adaptively using historic buildings could provide more sites for jazz performances and instruction, which would help ensure the continued maintenance and use of the structures. The oversight and guidance provided by the New Orleans Jazz Commission would facilitate these efforts.

The adaptive use and renovation of historic structures would ensure the continued existence

of these buildings, however, renovation could result in adverse impacts such as the loss of historic fabric. The use of replica or historically compatible replacement fabric, construction methods, and other preservation techniques would minimize or mitigate these impacts (see NPS 1990d for guidance).

The proposed curatorial storage facilities would have a positive impact by providing a safe and secure storage area for jazz-related artifacts, documents, and memorabilia and by making these objects more available for exhibit and research.

The emphasis on continuing research and collecting oral history interviews would fill information gaps and preserve firsthand knowledge relating to the evolution and development of jazz. These efforts could yield important information such as the past appearance and configuration of structures, the previous uses of structures and settings, or a structure's or site's association with prominent jazz personages. This information would allow for more accurate renovations and would more clearly define the roles and contexts of structures, landmarks, and communities linked to the jazz tradition. However, even with the emphasis on research and interviews and the funding and staffing levels of alternative C, informants and structures still could be lost due to attrition, especially if viable, long-term partnerships were not maintained.

Conclusions

Benefits to cultural resources would be similar to those under alternative B.

Adverse impacts resulting from landscaping and renovation would be avoided or mitigated by carrying out cultural resource compliance.

Funding and staffing levels would permit these actions to proceed at a moderate to progressive pace, but still might not be sufficient to prevent negative impacts resulting from the loss of oral history informants and some structures.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Implementing alternative C would cause no adverse impacts to natural resources.

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Analysis

Access, Circulation, and Parking. Continuing to rely on the existing transportation infrastructure and park facilities would afford visitors cost-effective ways to access and circulate through the park, especially in the Vieux Carré area. Tours to sites in outlying historical communities would enhance opportunities to access these areas. Multifaceted publicity advertising events would enhance visitor awareness of the locations of events throughout the city, which would enhance access to sites and events.

Locating the visitor center at Perseverance Hall No. 4 would provide easy access to visitor touring the Vieux Carré on foot. Orientation and program/events information distributed at the visitor center would assist visitors in locating and gaining access to jazz activities throughout New Orleans.

Providing access to jazz activities and sites outside the Vieux Carré would enhance visitor circulation by providing alternate or new interpretive locations, which could relieve pressure and congestion around well-known sites in the Vieux Carré. Employing high-quality multimedia interpretive exhibits that highlight jazz sites and locations throughout New Orleans would urge some individuals to visits these locations, which could enhance visitor circulation.

As visitation increased, minor adverse impacts to circulation might occur in the vicinity of Louis Armstrong Park. The increased numbers of visitors arriving at the visitor center complex by bus could cause congestion and safety issues at drop-off locations. Coordinating with city officials to regulate traffic could resolve or reduce many of these problems. Using the parking lot adjacent to Louis Armstrong Park for

public parking would also relieve some traffic congestion.

Interpretation. The Perseverance Hall visitor center complex, with its centralized interpretive functions, would enhance the visitor experience in numerous ways. Presenting a wide range of personal interpretive programs, “informances,” and experiential, interactive media exhibits would allow the park to interpret jazz at a wide range of levels and in ways that would appeal to the park’s eclectic audiences. Using the open areas in the visitor center complex as sites for “informances” and parades would provide a centralized location for visitors to participate in programs. This would benefit visitors who are not inclined to visit outlying areas, or who have limited time to spend in the park.

Holding onsite and offsite programs and events throughout the city and at varied times would give visitors the flexibility to match their interests and the time they have scheduled for their visits with presentations and events. Publicizing events through various media and interpretive handouts would heighten public awareness of events and would enhance visitor opportunities to appreciate and learn more about jazz. Developing partnerships among public and private entities and combining funding sources would allow a substantial number of jazz-related events and programs to be presented, creating even more opportunities for visitor participation. Failure to develop partnerships and share funds would limit these opportunities.

Employing well-trained musicians and interpreters would ensure that visitors received high-quality programming that balanced entertainment and interpretation. The potential for forming partnerships, combined with leveraging public and private funds, would facilitate engaging well-trained musicians and interpreters and would provide the resources needed to develop high-quality and well-coordinated interpretive programs.

Using partnerships and leveraged funds to sponsor interpretive performances would expand opportunities for young musicians to find employment in atmospheres that fostered growth and development. Encouraging young musicians

to explore and expand upon their jazz roots in turn could enhance support for both traditional and lesser-known forms of jazz.

Onsite and offsite personal programs would also allow informal contacts between interpreters and volunteers and the public. For many visitors this form of contact would be a key element in a high-quality visitor experience. The potential funding levels under alternative C would encourage that personal programs would be adequately staffed.

Providing interpretive media and exhibits that employed state-of-the-art, interactive multimedia equipment (as called for under phase 2) would greatly enhance the ability to communicate the park’s purpose, significance, and interpretive themes. This, in turn, would underscore the park’s identity and mission. Such interactive exhibits could also be used to recreate jazz settings (e.g., participating in a jazz parade) that would allow visitors to participate in jazz events in a virtual reality-like environment. This would greatly enhance the visitor experience for individuals not having the time or inclination to seek these experiences in person and for individuals having disabilities that would otherwise prevent their participation.

Offering the opportunity to purchase literature, videos, compact discs, and interpretive memorabilia from a well-stocked sales area would be meaningful to many visitors. Purchased items could provide additional information on jazz or remind visitors of their park experiences well after their visit, and thus could positively reinforce their overall visitor experience. Similarly, being able to access a wide range of interpretive information, sheet music, archives, and information about jazz over the internet, as called for in alternative C, would have strong appeal for many and would greatly enhance the park’s ability to interpret New Orleans jazz globally.

Education. The potential increase in the number of onsite and offsite educational programs under alternative C would greatly enhance opportunities for educating a wide range of students and perpetuating the New Orleans jazz tradition. Coordinating NPS programs with

ongoing curricula in local schools and institutions would make programs relevant to students. Targeting disadvantaged groups would provide important educational opportunities for groups with limited resources.

Developing a formal partnership with FM radio station WWOZ and relocating its broadcasting facilities to a larger facility would enhance the station's ability to broadcast educational jazz programs. This, in turn, would offer the public greater exposure to jazz.

Employing professional musicians to assist in educational programs would provide a high-quality, fostering atmosphere for students and potential musicians. Music appreciation classes would eventually yield larger audiences for traditional and less commercial forms of jazz. Targeted partnerships would improve access to jazz education for those with little previous experience. Developing partnerships and leveraging funds could allow existing educational programs to expand considerably and new ones to develop; the absence of partnerships and shared funds would limit the positive impacts of jazz educational programs.

Visitor Services. Providing orientation and events information in an accessible and central location would help visitors plan their visits and activities. A comprehensive orientation to the park and the surrounding environs could reduce visitor confusion and frustration. Providing a prominent meeting area would help groups to coordinate their activities, while the presence of restrooms, a well-stocked sales area, exhibit rooms, and theaters would present features that much of the public has come to expect at national parks.

Carrying Capacity. Carrying capacity data for this new park is incomplete. Implementing the actions under alternative C, however, would be expected to increase visitation in areas such as the Louis Armstrong Park, at some sites in historic jazz communities, and at certain jazz programs/events. Overcrowding, traffic congestion, public safety, emissions, noise, and unwanted intrusions into local communities could result. These adverse impacts would probably be limited in duration and minor to

moderate in intensity. The development of resource condition / visitor experience indicators and standards and a monitoring program (to be developed after the implementation of this plan) would mitigate or eliminate most of these adverse impacts. Working with local authorities to resolve traffic congestion and visitor circulation problems could also mitigate these adverse impacts.

Conclusions

The benefits to the visitor experience would be similar to those under alternative B

Increases in visitation could create minor to moderate adverse effects on the park carrying capacity, many of which could be mitigated.

Positive impacts would depend on whether and to what degree cooperative partnerships were developed, and the extent public and private funds were shared and leveraged.

SOCIOECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Analysis

Expending \$5.3–\$6.3 million in construction and development in phase 1 and \$4.8 million on phase 2 would have positive economic benefits on the local economy in the forms of increased jobs and development. These benefits would not occur immediately but would extend over the life of the development project. Relatively few individuals and firms would share in these benefits.

Increasing the park's staffing levels to 14 full-time equivalent positions would benefit the local economy by creating a need for housing, goods, and services, although the impact would be minimal. Park expenditures for goods and services, stemming from its annual budget of \$1.1, would also moderately benefit the local economy. Outside funding, in addition to federal funds allocated to the park, would be required to accomplish some aspects of alternative C.

Because New Orleans, with its many attractions (including the Vieux Carré), is already a

destination for a large number of tourists, and there is already a thriving tourism industry in the city, the park would not be expected to draw large numbers of additional visitors to the region. Many visitors might not even know the park exists prior to their visit to New Orleans. Drawing upon the numerous visitors that come to the Vieux Carré, however, it would be expected that large numbers of people would visit the park. Many area residents would likewise be exposed to park-supported programs related to jazz. Because of the extent of programs and exhibits at the park, some visitors might make it the focus of their visit or choose to extend their visit to take advantage of what the park has to offer. The park would definitely enhance business opportunities in the immediate vicinity of North Rampart Street by attracting more tourists to this portion of the Vieux Carré and the adjacent neighborhoods.

The development and operation of this park would have a positive social benefit on the local community. An underutilized portion of Armstrong Park would be committed to the use and purposes of New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park. The Park Service presence would be an attractive addition for the neighborhood because of the interpretive, educational, and recreational opportunities it would offer. The park would be open, accessible, and an attractive place for the people of the local area. Increased cultural/ historical awareness and improved visitor experiences would result. It is expected that the park might attract a large amount of use from the neighborhood and other New Orleans residents, as well as from the many tourists who visited the Vieux Carré.

Conclusions

A relatively few individuals and firms would benefit economically from the \$10.1–\$11.1 million development budget and the \$1.1 million annual operations budget for New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park. These benefits would be significant for those affected. However, the overall dollar impact would be minimal due to the large size of the New Orleans regional economy.

While fulfilling its NPS mission, the park is expected to become a valued neighbor in the local community. The park's facilities and programs would provide positive social benefits for both visitors to the park and local residents.

ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

Analysis

Rehabilitating and expanding Perseverance Hall No. 4 would provide a consolidated visitor center/administrative headquarters for the park, which would supply the needed office, maintenance, and storage space for park operations. Relocating radio station WWOZ could provide additional office space. Renovating other structures in the complex such as the Rabassa, Reimann, and fires houses could provide additional administrative space. However, these structures might not be renovated or might not be acquired.

Carrying out development in two phases would have several benefits. Phase 1 funding (ca. \$5.3–\$6.3 million) would be provided largely through appropriations administered by the National Park Service and would furnish basic interpretive and administrative facilities for the park. Phase 2 funding (ca. \$4.8 million) would come from private and partnership sources and would be used to develop the visitor center's multimedia, interactive exhibits and to support onsite and offsite interpretive and educational programs. Phase 2 fundraising, conducted by the Park Service, New Orleans Jazz Commission, and other partners, would enhance prospects for securing funds to be leveraged.

Developing partnerships and alternative funding sources under phase 2 could take time. Phasing development would allow basic services to be put in place immediately, while partnerships and outside funds were sought out and identified.

Employing 14 full-time equivalent positions would benefit operations by supplying the expertise and staffing levels needed to carry out the park mission.

Conclusions

Administration and operations would benefit from expanding the funding base to approximately \$10.1–\$11.1 million and increasing staffing levels to 14 full-time equivalent positions and by providing adequate visitor use and administrative facilities.

Phased development would permit the prompt implementation of basic interpretive services, providing time for partnerships to be developed and alternative funding sources to be secured.

Funding and staffing levels would be sufficient for the park to achieve its mission, but they would depend on partnerships and leveraged funds.

PARTNERSHIPS

Analysis

Developing successful and long-term, multi-faceted partnerships and securing alternative funding through shared and leveraged funds would greatly benefit the park and its resources. Creating partnerships and sharing funds would allow resources to be combined, which in turn would permit more expanded development, interpretation, educational, and visitor services. Partners and shared funds would permit the park to achieve its mission. Failing to develop long-term, stable partnerships and funding sources would limit operations and could preclude the park attaining its mission in the foreseeable future.

Conclusion

Long-term, reliable partnerships would allow the park to provide a wide range of high-quality services and to achieve its mission. Failing to develop long-term partnerships would have the opposite effect.

OTHER IMPACTS

Cumulative Impacts

Currently, the understanding and appreciation of jazz and the jazz heritage is being promoted by the National Park Service, schools, the private sector, nonprofit organizations, and other governmental entities. This is resulting in an increased awareness of this musical art form. Implementing alternative C would have a beneficial effect by helping this process to accelerate.

Under alternative C the efforts of the Park Service and other preservation partners to help preserve neighborhoods and sites associated with early jazz might be enough to outweigh the forces of change, decay, and decisions by individual owners that threaten these fragile areas, although the overall impact might still be a loss of tangible resources related to early jazz history.

Unavoidable Adverse Effects

Some historic structures and other cultural resources would be lost due to deterioration and attrition. Any archeological sites encountered during ground-disturbing activities and requiring mitigation through excavation would constitute an irreversible loss since excavation destroys the resource as a data base (unless mitigated).

Some historic structures and other cultural resources, such as archeological sites and oral history informants, could be lost due to deterioration and attrition.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Relationship Between Short-Term Uses and Maintenance and the Enhancement of Long-Term Productivity

Development of a visitor center and other park facilities for public education and enjoyment could result in the removal of 1 acre or less of vegetation and soil from natural productivity.

During the construction phase for park facilities and wayside exhibits, the visitor experience could be adversely affected. In the long term, however, the visitor experience would be enhanced.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitments of Resources

Under alternative C approximately \$10.1–\$11.1 million dollars would be spent in renovation and in providing interpretive exhibits and educational and visitor services facilities. These costs would be irreversible.