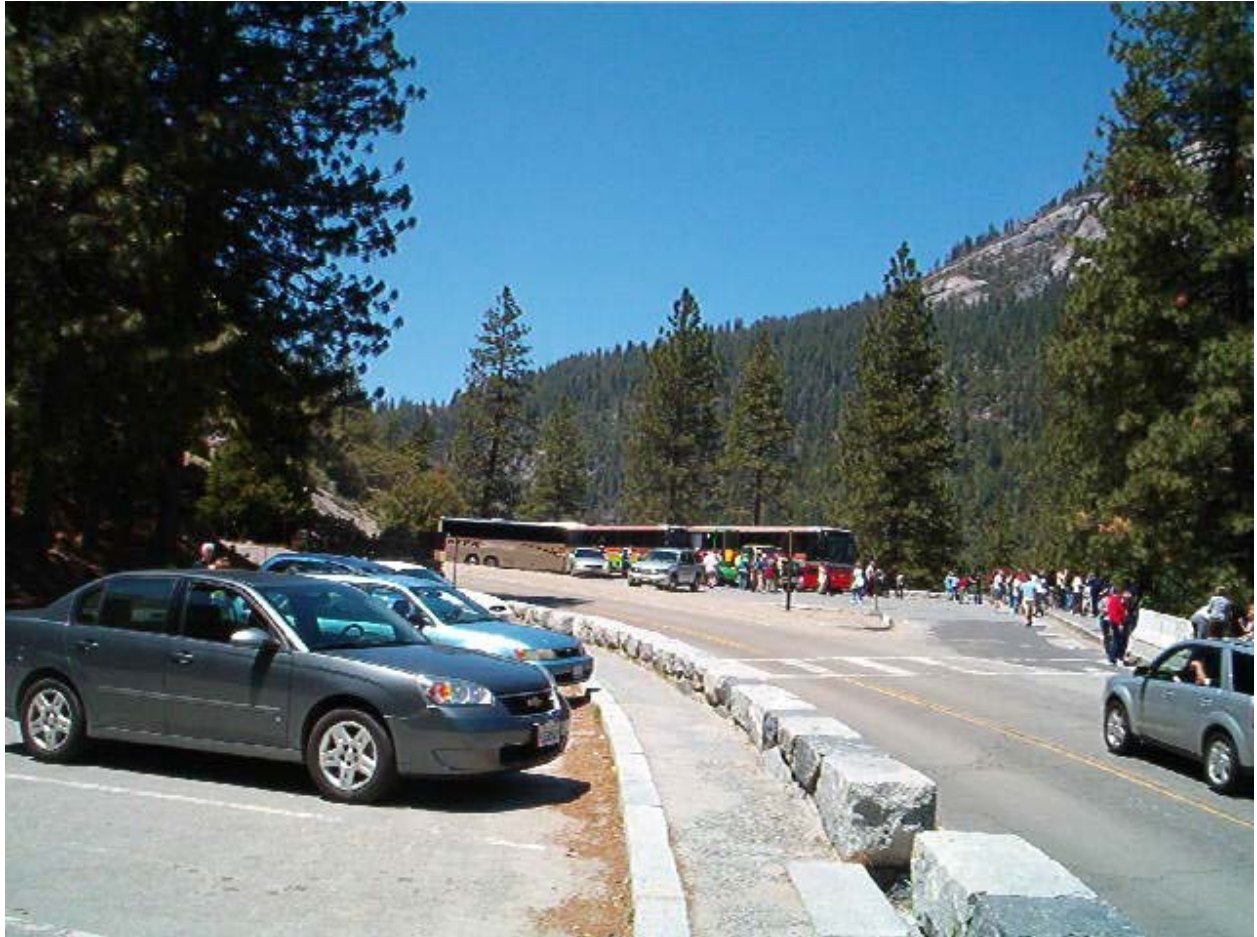


TUNNEL VIEW OVERLOOK REHABILITATION ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



PUBLIC SCOPING AND CONCERN SCREENING REPORT

September 2007

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Introduction

During the summer of 2007, the National Park Service conducted public scoping as part of the early development of the Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation Environmental Assessment. The primary purpose of public scoping in a planning effort is to compile ideas, interests, and concerns from members of the public to help shape responsible plans for Yosemite National Park.

The purpose of the Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation Project is to remedy long-standing vehicle and pedestrian safety issues, to correct drainage deficiencies, to provide clear circulation patterns for pedestrians and vehicles, to restore and maintain viewing opportunities for visitors, to provide accessibility to viewing areas for visitors with disabilities, and to correct safety problems associated with the existing Inspiration Point trailhead, while preserving the naturalistic, rustic character and integrity of this historic site. This Public Scoping Report is a summary of the comments received during the public scoping period from June 4, 2007 through July 9, 2007. It serves as an essential tool for development of alternatives for the Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation.

Public Scoping Process Summary

The National Park Service initiated public scoping for the Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation on June 4, 2007. The public scoping period lasted for 36 days. During public scoping, the National Park Service solicited comments from members of the public in order to understand the spectrum of concerns, interests, and issues that need to be addressed in the planning process.

Announcement of the public scoping process was conducted through the following means: 1) a press release describing the intent to begin the public involvement through comments on the proposed project was issued on May 18, 2007. The announcement was published in the *Mariposa Gazette* and the *Sierra Star*; 2) the June 21, 2007 Yosemite National Park Electronic Newsletter, emailed to a list of approximately 7,000 people, included an announcement of the public scoping period; 3) the May 2007 Planning Update included information about the project and an invitation to the monthly Yosemite Open House; 4) the scoping period was announced on the park's Daily Report; and 5) the scoping period was announced via the park's website. Invitations to public meetings held on June 26, 2007 in Oakhurst and June 27, 2007 in Yosemite Valley were included in the above announcements.

Members of the public were encouraged to submit comments in a variety of ways. Individuals could submit comments at the public scoping meeting held in Oakhurst on June 26, 2007, and at the Open House held in Yosemite Valley on June 27, 2007. These events were advertised along with the public scoping period in local newspapers, on the park's website, and through the park's mailed and electronic Planning Update newsletter. Fliers were also posted in locations around the adjacent communities, informing members of the public of the planning events.

Public meetings consisted of an introductory presentation on the planning process, followed by focused discussions with the NPS planning team. The public meetings also included exhibits about existing site conditions, environmental considerations, cultural resource concerns, transportation issues and construction and design procedures. Fact sheets for the project were also made available and can be found on the park's website at

<http://www.nps.gov/archive/yose/planning/tunnelview/>. Comments were received via email, at public open houses, and through the U.S. mail and included the following general comments.

Throughout the scoping period, the National Park Service received 10 public scoping responses, including eight from individuals, one from the chair of the Sierra Club's Yosemite Committee (Sierra Club Fresno Chapter), and one from the Chairman of the Yosemite-Mono Lake Paiute Indian Committee. Each response from the public was carefully reviewed and individual ideas were identified and assigned a code according to the subject matter. These discrete individual ideas are known as *public comments*. During the scoping process a total of 57 public comments were generated from the letters, emails, and direct submissions at the public meetings.

Public comments were then grouped into what are called *concern statements*. These public concerns identify common themes expressed by individuals or groups requesting particular lines of action by the National Park Service. A total of 20 public concern statements were generated from the 57 total public comments.

This Public Scoping Report presents the public concern statements with one or more representative quotes taken from public comments that accompany and support each public concern, conveying the author's thoughts on how, when, where, or why the concern should be addressed. For the purposes of this report, the supporting quotes are just a sample from all comments received on a particular theme of concern. A given public concern can reflect one or many supporting comments.

In addition to presenting the concerns identified in public scoping for the Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation, this report provides an explanation of the comment analysis process, which includes the analysis of individual comments and the development of concern statements. This report also includes a description of the next step in the comment analysis process, called the *concern screening process*, which will integrate public comments into the planning framework. The concern screening process will begin after the publication of this Public Scoping Report.

Concern Analysis and Screening Process

Comment Analysis Process

The letters, emails and direct submission represented in this Public Scoping Report were analyzed using a process initially developed by the United States Forest Service, Washington Office Ecosystem Management Staff, Content Analysis Team. For the last seven years, this system has been refined by the NPS and used to analyze comments for nearly all planning efforts in Yosemite National Park.

The comment analysis is comprised of three main components: a coding structure, a comment database, and the narrative summary contained in this report. Initially, a coding structure is developed to sort comments into logical groups by topics. Code categories are derived from an analysis of the range of topics covered in relevant present and past planning documents, National Park Service legal guidance, and the letters themselves. The purpose of these codes is to allow for quick access to comments on specific topics. The coding structure used was inclusive rather than restrictive—every attempt was made to accurately code all comments, including those that may not have pertained directly to the Tunnel View Overlook Rehabilitation project.

The second phase of the analysis process involves the assignment of codes to comments made by the public in their letters, emails and direct submissions. For each comment in a piece of

correspondence, codes are assigned by one reader, validated by a second reader, and then entered into a database as verbatim quotes from members of the public. The database, in turn, is used to help construct this Public Scoping Report.

The third phase includes the identification of public concern statements and the preparation of this narrative. Public concerns are identified throughout the coding process and are derived from and supported by quotes from original letters. These public concern statements present common themes identified in comments. Each statement is worded to give decision-makers a clear sense of what action is being requested. Public concern statements are intended to help guide the reader to comments on the specific topics of interest. They do not replace the actual comments received from individuals. Rather, concern statements should be considered as an efficient and effective way of accessing information contained in original letters and the coded comment database. All comments are captured in public concern statements, whether they were presented by hundreds of people or a single individual. To view the original letters, emails, and faxes in their entirety, visit the park's website at <http://www.nps.gov/archive/yose/planning/tunnelview>.

Screening Public Scoping Concerns

The purpose of the screening process is to identify whether a concern pertains to the purpose and need for the project and the level of action required by the planning team. All concern statements and supporting quotes presented in this document have been analyzed by park staff and assigned screening codes according to the criteria described below. Screening codes indicate how concerns will be addressed by the proposed project. When screening a public scoping concern, each supporting quote must be examined for the presence of a rationale (the “why”) supporting the requested action. All identified public concerns, whether supported by the comments of one person or many, are considered. This report includes the results of the screening process.

Screen #1 identifies public concerns that do not meet the purpose and need of the subject planning process, or are non-substantive, and, therefore, do not warrant further consideration. These public concerns do not require management consideration. Any concern for which an affirmative answer can be given to one of the following questions falls in this category:

- 1.1 Is the concern outside the scope of the proposed action? (i.e., out-of-scope)
- 1.2 Does law or policy already decide the concern? (i.e., out-of-scope)
- 1.3 Is this the wrong planning level for a decision on this concern? (i.e., out-of-scope)
- 1.4 Would acting on the concern place untenable restrictions on management, conflict with approved plans, or entail significant and reasonably foreseeable negative consequences? (i.e., effectively out-of-scope)
- 1.5 Is the concern a simple editorial correction? (i.e., no response needed)
- 1.6 Is the concern an unsupported personal opinion (i.e., a question, problem, suggestion, or interest, with no supporting “why”); or a simple statement of fact with no request for action, stated or implied? (A non-substantive concern)
- 1.9 Out-of-Scope but take to Management for consideration for any reason

Concerns that do not reasonably match the above criteria are considered within the scope of the subject plan, could be substantive, and are passed on to screen #2.

Screen #2 defines concerns and comments that fall within the reasonable scope of the project and will be addressed in its compliance document (EA or EIS):

- 2.0 Scoping concern defining an issue already to be addressed within the scope of the planning document, as initially described to the public
- 2.1 Review concern requesting a technical correction (an EA or EIS)
- 2.2 Review concern requesting an action that can be addressed in FONSI (EA), or by rewriting document text for substance or clarification (DEIS, FEIS, ROD)
- 2.3 Review concern requesting an action adequately addressed in the planning document (EA or EIS (including alternatives considered and dismissed); still may need a response in the *Response to Public Comment*)
- 2.8 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project, as initially defined, that now will be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.
- 2.9 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project as initially defined that will not be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.

Screen #3 defines concerns and comments that fall within the reasonable scope of the project and will be addressed in its compliance document (EA or EIS) and are coded using the same structure as that of Screen #2. However, these concerns may warrant further consideration by the management team:

- 3.0 Scoping concern defining an issue already to be addressed within the scope of the planning document, as initially described to the public
- 3.1 Review concern requesting a technical correction (an EA or EIS)
- 3.2 Review concern requesting an action that can be addressed in FONSI (EA), or by rewriting document text for substance or clarification (DEIS, FEIS, ROD)
- 3.3 Review concern requesting an action adequately addressed in the planning document (EA or EIS (including alternatives considered and dismissed); still may need a response in the *Response to Public Comment*)
- 3.8 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project, as initially defined, that now will be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.
- 3.9 Scoping concern defining an issue expanding the scope of a project as initially defined that will not be included in the project scope on the decision of the project manager.

Screen #4 defines substantive concerns that need to be reviewed by park management. As defined in the National Park Service Director's Order #12 Handbook (*Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making*) and Council of Environmental Quality regulations, a concern is "substantive" if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

- 4.0 Scoping comment that expands, with reasonable basis, the scope of the project as initially defined to the public
- 4.1 Questions, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of information presented
- 4.2 Questions, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of analysis presented
- 4.3 Questions or helps clarify, improve, or evaluate, with reasonable basis, the appropriate use or span of the park's authority (this includes appropriate scale of planning, public involvement, and legal authorities)
- 4.4 Presents a reasonable new alternative (i.e., not included or considered and dismissed)
- 4.5 Calls for, with reasonable basis, or results in a modification of the proposal
- 4.6 Calls for or would require, with reasonable basis, additional analysis

- 4.9 A substantive concern on which the project manager makes a decision without management review when an issue raised has been sufficiently discussed with the management team

Using this Report

This report presents public concerns arranged by topic, along with a representative sample of supporting quotes and the concern screening code. The following list of acronyms has been developed to maintain brevity and should assist the reader in reviewing the report.

List of Acronyms

EA – Environmental Analysis

EIS –Environmental Impact Statement

FONSI –Finding of No Significant Impact

NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act

NPS –National Park Service

ROD –Record of Decision

Planning Process and Policy

Clarity of Planning Documents

The National Park Service should use the name “Discovery View” rather than “Tunnel View” for the project area.

"Use the name Discovery View rather than Tunnel View."

(Individual, El Portal, CA, Comment #5-1)

Screening Level 2-2 - Requests action to be addressed in FONSI (EA), or by rewriting document text for substance or clarification (DEIS, FEIS, ROD)

Relationship to Other Yosemite National Park Plans

Yosemite Valley Plan

The National Park Service should address how the Yosemite Valley Plan affects planning for the Tunnel View Overlook rehabilitation.

"What is the role of the Valley Plan in this project?"

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-4)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Public Involvement

The National Park Service should ensure that interested members of the public have continued opportunities for involvement in the planning process at Tunnel View Overlook.

"If a person or organization has gone to the trouble of sending you formal comments such as these, I would think it would go without saying that they should receive a copy of the document which their comments were directed toward."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-23)

Screening Level 1-2 - Already decided by law, regulation, national policy, or an approved park plan. Per Director's Order 12, the park notifies the public when an EA is available for review. Members of the public may access the EA on the park's website, or request that a copy be sent to them. The park also solicits requests from the public for documents in the Monthly Planning Update.

Scenic Resources/Visual Quality

Scenic Vistas

The National Park Service should develop a plan to maintain the vista at Tunnel View Overlook.

"Write into plan a must to maintain the view into the future."

(Individual, Torrance, CA, Comment #1-2)

Screening Level 1.3 - This is the wrong planning level for a decision on this concern (i.e., out-of-scope). Development of a Vista Management Plan is anticipated for Fiscal Year 08-09.

The National Park Service should remove trees to restore the vista at Tunnel View Overlook.

"Over the past 30-40 years the trees immediately below the wall have grown so tall they now obstruct the view. Please remove these."

(Individual, San Diego, CA, Comment #2-2)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Cultural Resources

Historic Sites/Resources

The National Park Service should remove trees to restore the historic vista at Tunnel View Overlook.

"Selective tree removal to restore the historic nature of the view is a wonderful idea. It is clear that all the trees in the viewscape are growing in the fill place during construction."

(Individual, Clovis, CA, Comment #7-9)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Visitor Experience

Carrying Capacity

The National Park Service should address carrying capacity at Tunnel View Overlook.

"No matter how the Tunnel View site may be re-configured, it will inevitably be overwhelmed at times unless the issue of user capacity is addressed."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-2)

"No matter how many parking spaces you allot to tour buses, there will be times when more buses than that will want to pull in. So the issue of management needs to be addressed, not just bricks and mortar."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-3)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Visitor Services

Development/Developed Areas

The National Park Service should include terraces in the design of Tunnel View Overlook to increase viewing area and photo opportunities.

"Grade this area with successive terraces or one with seating, walls and thereby doubling view sites and photo opportunities."

(Individual, Torrance, CA, Comment #1-1)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Health and Safety

The National Park Service should improve safety for pedestrians at Tunnel View Overlook.

"I favor action that makes the area safer."

(Individual, Yosemite, CA, Comment #6-1)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

The National Park Service should provide viewing opportunities that keep pedestrians out of the road.

"I have seen too many near accidents caused by camera giddy tourists stepping back into traffic at the eastern end of the Wawona Tunnel View parking lot."

(Individual, Comment #8-2)

"People would not be forced to stand in the middle of the west-bound ingress road if they could get the view by standing elsewhere. The growth of trees is forcing people into this particular spot, which clearly creates a dangerous situation."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-14)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

The National Park Service should consolidate the three crosswalks to the center and provide clear direction to pedestrians for accessing the viewing area at Tunnel View Overlook.

"Move crosswalk to center."

(Individual, Oakhurst, CA, Comment #3-8)

"Pedestrian crossing from the upper to the lower lot can be improved by re paint the crosswalk and providing signage tell visitor to only cross in the crosswalk (might improve the situation by 40%)."

(Individual, Clovis, CA, Comment #7-7)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Wayside Exhibits

The National Park Service should use culturally accurate language on interpretive signs at Tunnel View Overlook.

"It would be proper to only mention Ahwahneechees, Monos and Paiutes as the Indians of Yosemite Valley, before and when the Mariposa Battalion entered the Valley. There was no mention of the word "Miwok, Mewuk, or Miwuk" in the discovery of Yosemite. So it would be incorrect to add this title to any interpretive signs."

(Non-Governmental Organization, Sacramento, CA, Comment #9-1)

Screening Level 1.3 - This is the wrong planning level for a decision on this concern (i.e., out-of-scope).

Other NPS/Non DNC Services and Facilities

The National Park Service should consider constructing restrooms at the Tunnel View Overlook.

"I have mixed feelings about adding restrooms."

(Individual, Yosemite, CA, Comment #6-3)

"Should still consider bathrooms."

(Individual, Clovis, CA, Comment #7-1)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

The National Park Service should install signs informing visitors of the proximity of the Bridalveil and Chinquapin Comfort Stations.

"Put up a sign telling people how far it is to the restrooms at Bridalveil and Chinquapin."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-9)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Transportation

Parking

The National Park Service should improve traffic flow at Tunnel View Overlook.

"One way traffic both parking areas."

(Individual, Oakhurst, CA, Comment #3-5)

"Consideration should be given to one-way traffic into both lots."

(Individual, Clovis, CA, Comment #7-8)

"Buses need a through traffic flow---easy in, easy out."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-16)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

The National Park Service should improve/reconfigure parking at Tunnel View Overlook.

"Move bus parking next to sidewalk"

(Individual, Oakhurst, CA, Comment #3-6)

"Move auto parking to center"

(Individual, Oakhurst, CA, Comment #3-7)

"Park of busses should be done along the north west edge of the lower parking area."

(Individual, Clovis, CA, Comment #7-5)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

The National Park Service should improve drainage at Tunnel View Overlook.

"I am confident that drainage can be dealt with in obvious ways."

(Individual, Bend, OR, Comment #4-4)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

Traffic and Vehicle Management System

The National Park Service should consider alternative parking locations and implement a shuttle service to and from Tunnel View Overlook.

"If traffic/crowding is too much, and parking cannot be enlarged, it will be necessary to provide nearby parking and/or shuttle service to and from this very special place."

(Individual, Bend, OR, Comment #4-3)

Screening Level 4-0 - Scoping concern that expands the scope of the project as initially defined to the public and will be reviewed by park management.

The National Park Service should slow vehicle traffic at Tunnel View.

"Many of the problems would not exist if traffic was slowed down."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-10)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document

The National Park Service should use the Rostrum parking area located west of Wawona Tunnel on the Wawona Road as a transit staging area to alleviate congestion at the Tunnel View Overlook.

"Consider the inter-relationship between Tunnel View and the Turtleback Dome parking/viewing strip. If eastbound buses could be parked in a "holding pattern" at Turtleback, and then move on down to Tunnel View only when space has opened up, it could minimize a lot of the problem. This would require communication between Tunnel View and Turtleback, which seems like it could be pretty routine and easily accomplished. But the main problem would be to re-configure the driving lanes and parking strip at Turtleback so that eastbound vehicles could park without crossing over against oncoming traffic. In other words, the present eastbound driving lane would become the parking strip, and the present parking strip would become the westbound driving lane. Even without any consideration of Tunnel View, such a configuration at Turtleback might make a lot of sense. After many miles of winding through the forests, incoming traffic on Wawona Road suddenly rounds a bend and sees a dramatic view of Yosemite Valley in front of them. But they can't stop, because the parking strip is on the wrong side of the road. If they could stop, this might relieve a lot of the pressure on Tunnel View."

(Conservation Organization, Fresno, CA, Comment #10-19)

Screening Level 4-0 - Scoping concern that expands the scope of the project as initially defined to the public and will be reviewed by park management.

Park Operations

Garbage and Waste Collection/Disposal

The National Park Service should improve garbage collection and disposal services at Tunnel View Overlook.

"Add additional trash vessel. The area below the over look is full of trash."

(Individual, Clovis, CA, Comment #7-2)

Screening Level 2-0 - Scoping concern or concern defining issue to be addressed by the planning document.