Final Report for *All In: Accessibility in the National Park Service 2015-2020* (Five-Year Accessibility Strategy)

Version: January 6, 2021

Introduction

On August 29, 2014, the National Park Service (NPS) released the *All In! Accessibility in the National Park Service 2015-2020* (referred to as the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy). The document recognized an "urgent need for change" and documented goals and strategies aimed at "welcoming all visitors and staff, creating a culture of inclusion, and making critical improvements to both new and existing programs, facilities, and services."

From 2015 to 2020, the NPS worked to address both issues and opportunities recognized in the Five-Year Accessibility Plan. This final report (accurate as of December 2020) does not capture every activity related to accessibility between 2015 and 2020 but does describe major accomplishments related to implementation of the Five-Year Accessibility Plan.

Contents

1.0 Accomplishments Associated with Goal 1 of the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy

Goal 1: Create a welcoming environment by increasing the ability of the National Park Service to serve visitors and staff with disabilities.

Accomplishments:

- Helped visitors with disabilities plan their visit (see Section 1.1)
- Identified and provided resources on competencies for park staff (see Section 1.2)
- Reflected the disability community in the park service experience (see Section 1.3).

1.1 Updated Digital Content to Help Visitors with Disabilities Plan their Visit

Often, a visitor's experience with a park begins online, before arrival. One of the strategies recommended in the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy was to improve information presented to the public about accessible experiences. The National Park Service (NPS) improved its accessibility presence online by:

- Updating and improving the accessibility content available to the public through NPS.gov (see Section 1.1.1)

- Providing an *Accessibility* tab under *Plan Your Visit* on NPS.gov park sites (see Section 1.1.2)

- Ensuring content on NPS.gov sites complies with federal guidelines on electronic and information technology (see Section 1.1.3).

1.1.1 Accessibility Content on NPS.gov

In July 2020, the NPS launched an improved [Accessibility page] on [NPS.gov]. The updated site is a one-stop shop to learn about the bureau's commitment to accessibility, laws and policies that guide the NPS accessibility program; to find specific guidance and practical tips on how parks can make facilities and programs more accessible; and to catch up on the latest news from parks on accessibility improvements. The new, [interactive map feature] links users directly to information about accessible features, programs and services at parks. To ensure compliance, every park is required to have an *Accessibility* tab on the NPS.gov website under *Plan Your Visit (see Figure 1).* [1] Additionally, parks may elect to include subpages (e.g., information specific to visitors with sensory disabilities or mobility disabilities).

It is the responsibility of each park to develop the content for the site.

1.1.2 Accessible Content on NPS.gov

In addition to ensuring that accessibility information is available on park websites, the NPS also worked to make content on all NPS.gov sites compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 508), which requires all electronic and information technology be accessible to people with disabilities. The majority of improvements in this area can be attributed to the Digital

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[1] At the last count in preparation for the NPS Centennial, all but 12 park units did not have an accessibility tab on their park website.

Accessibility Workgroup of the NPS Web Council. Currently, the group's work includes reviews of new and existing websites for 508 compliance (i.e., HTML content) and website scans to remove non-compliant material (i.e., PDFs).

The Digital Accessibility Workgroup works with the Department of the Interior (DOI) to scan websites for non-compliant material in PDF format. The scans are conducted using automated software that identifies non-compliant material and the results are shared with parks and regions via a quarterly report, and twice per year to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) per OMB requirements When the scans started in 2014, the NPS had more than 75,000 PDFs that were not compliant. As of December 2020, the number of non-compliant documents had been reduced to approximately 35,000. The bureau continues to work with parks and programs to meet compliance.

For the more than 200,000 pages on NPS.gov, the Digital Accessibility Workgroup takes necessary steps to ensure 508-compliant website content (i.e., HTML) including emphasizing accessibility during the design phase for new components, providing contract language and standards to use when a park or program use a contractor to create content (this language ensures contractors abide by the standards), and conducts scans of existing content (including NPS.gov and linked partner sites) other than documents.

1.2   Identified and Provided Resources on Competencies for Park Staff

Part of the vision associated with Goal 1 is that "all staff, volunteers, partners and concessioners will be skilled at reaching out to and communicating with, diverse populations and will be proponents of accessibility." In 2016, when the Accessibility Task Force reviewed accessibility training opportunities, they quickly discovered that the NPS had no existing competencies defined for accessibility. Also, accessibility was not addressed by other career fields even though nearly all park staff have a responsibility to make visitors feel welcome.

To take the first step toward addressing the vision of the first goal, the NPS developed accessibility competencies for common job functions within the NPS (see Figure 1). This approach is based on function rather than position because accessibility is not the primary responsibility for most NPS staff. Furthermore, overlap and differences in titles and duties from park to park make it difficult to link accessibility competencies to specific jobs.

Figure 1: Job Functions

• Frontline Customer Service

• Facilities Operation, Maintenance and Construction

• Interpretation, Education and Public Affairs

• Visitor Protection, Public Health and Risk Management

• Purchasing and Contract Management

• Partnerships and Commercial Services

• Technology and Information Services

• Accessibility Management

The NPS used the competencies as a framework to develop and improve trainings, including the Park Accessibility Coordinator (PAC) Training (see Section 1.2.1), the Accessibility Webinar Series (see Section 1.2.2), an accessibility focus for the National Training Development Program (NTDP) (see Section 1.2.3) and the Disability Dialogue Series (see Section 1.2.4). All trainings were initiated and designed during the five-year accessibility strategy period. Some trainings will not be delivered until 2021 and beyond.

1.2.1   Park Accessibility Coordinator (PAC) Training

The Park Accessibility Coordinator (PAC) Training was a pilot project that included the development and delivery of two classroom-based 3½ day training workshops[2] for NPS PACs. PACs serve – typically as a collateral duty – to advocate for, promote and increase accessibility in their respective parks. The course was designed to provide students with the foundational knowledge and skills to develop these competencies.

The National Center on Accessibility (NCA), which developed and implemented the PAC Training curriculum, used the servicewide accessibility competencies in two ways:

- During the design phase, the training topics were selected based on and directly aligned to the competencies. The competencies thus act like learning objectives.

- During the workshop, participants took a pre-test and a post-test to self-assess their understanding of the training concepts, based on the competencies. The assessment provided a means for the participants to determine if their knowledge improved and if they should pursue additional learning opportunities.

After the two pilots, the PAC training materials were revised based on participant feedback. The NPS intends to use the final products as an "off-the-shelf" tool with some tweaking to account for the audience. Due to travel restrictions to mitigate exposure to COVID-19, the NPS did not hold PAC Training workshops during calendar year 2020 but plans to deliver the training online in 2021.

Accessibility Webinar Series

The accessibility webinar series presented by the NCA is designed to advance the knowledge of NPS employees by facilitating an increased awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities to actively participate in and benefit from parks, recreation, cultural and natural areas. Each webinar event lasted 60 to 90 minutes and was designed as a stand-alone learning opportunity (i.e., not part of a larger curriculum).

Webinar topics are aligned to the learning needs of NPS employees, as identified in the servicewide accessibility competencies. When identifying topics for the series, the NPS and NCA focused on competencies not emphasized in other trainings.

Webinar topics fall into two categories:

- Commonly experienced topics that apply to everyone regardless of role and type of park. These topics are considered "core." The NPS intends to repeat core topics annually.

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[2] Workshops were held in November and December 2019.

- Special topics that pertain to a small group of people or are time sensitive. These sessions are not repeated annually.

1.2.2   National Training Development Program (NTDP)

The National Training Development Program (NTDP) was created to prepare collateral duty trainers to lead training of all types for the NPS. The NTDP is sponsored and administered by the Park Facility Management Division (PFMD) Training Team. The premise behind the program is to recognize subject matter experts (SMEs) in their fields and to give them the tools to be effective trainers so that they may share their knowledge with others. In the past, the NTDP accepted SMEs in several program topics including the Facility Management Software System (FMSS), cost estimating and asset management. The NTDP consists of five months of distance learning, culminating in a week-long capstone classroom activity. Since 2009, the NTDP has graduated eight cohorts.

The Eppley Institute is working with the PFMD Training Team to add accessibility as a NTDP program topic in recognition that some NPS employees have extensive knowledge of accessibility as it relates to facilities. With the servicewide accessibility competencies as a guide, the team developed a list of knowledge areas that apply to facility management generalists with expertise in accessibility. Based on that list, the team drafted assessment questions for a content endorsement exam, a prerequisite for NTDP participants to assess the applicant's level of expertise.

1.2.3   Disability Dialogue Series

The Disability Dialogue Series is an initiative aimed at providing information and training to the NPS workforce that addresses the issues and safety requirements that a post-pandemic workplace may create for people with disabilities. The series was initiated in response to COVID-19. The content remains applicable, as the pandemic changed the way NPS works with a greater emphasis on flexible and remote work environments.

The Disability Dialogue Series was planned by employees with disabilities and featured members of the disability community to ensure that the voice of the disability community is heard directly by NPS staff and their partners. The NPS designed the sessions to be conversational and to give participants the opportunity to hear moderators ask questions not addressed in more formal training environments. This series was part of fulfilling the Goal 1 strategy that recommended the NPS: "Reach out to members of the disability community to create a dialogue about accessibility needs, priorities, and accomplishments."

1.3   Reflected the Disability Community in the NPS Experience

People with disabilities are the largest minority[3] in the United States, but their stories and histories often remain untold. "Disability stories" refer to the array of experiences by, from and about people with disabilities represented across our nation.

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[3] Per the CDC, 61 million adults in the United States (26% of the total adult population) live with a disability.

In 2017, the NPS launched its online Disability History Series. The Disability History Series is organized by the following topics. All topics have some connection to the NPS, such as a national park unit or national register designation.

- Places: Learn about parks and other NPS places associated with disability history. The series provides information on 60 locations that shifted attitudes towards treatment of the disability community.

- People: Meet the people associated with disability history in the United States. The series profiles 11 people including Dorothea Dix, Helen Keller and Samuel Gridley Howe, known for their personal experience with a disability and/or their role as a changemaker for the community.

- Education Resources: Discover education resources associated with disability history. The site links to the NPS education and training website as well as free online lessons plans through the Teaching with Historic Places series.

- Theme Study: Examine the complexity of disability history in the United States. Beginning with an introduction, this series is organized around themes stretching across the past three centuries. These themes include:

  o Early and Shifting Attitudes of Treatment
  o Educational Reform
  o Military and Disability
  o Presidents and Disability
  o Disability Rights Movement
  o National Park Service and Accessibility.

For more information, visit the Telling All Americans' Stories website and the Disability History Series website.

In addition to reflecting the disability community from a historical perspective, the NPS also reflects and includes the disability community in their workforce. The Employees for the Advancement of People with Disabilities (EAPWD) is an Employee Resource Group (ERG) sponsored by the Office of Relevancy, Diversity and Inclusion. The EAPWD has a three-pronged mission per the group's charter (updated September 17, 2018):

- Serve as a catalyst for cultural change within the NPS for present and potential employees with disabilities, their families, their supervisors and co-workers, allies and NPS managers.

- Strive for equity in the opportunities for employees with disabilities to be recruited and hired, to improve and advance and to fully participate in every facet of NPS life.

- Advise NPS senior leadership on policies and practices that support employees, emphasize the issues we have in common and advocate for awareness and an inclusive, respectful and positive environment.

The EAPWD is open to all employees of the Department of the Interior (DOI) and allies from every level of the Department, regardless of disability, including concessioners, interns, alumni, volunteers and employees from partner organizations, as allowable by law or policy.

2.0 Accomplishments Associated with Goal 2 of the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy

Goal 2: *Ensure that new facilities and programs are inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities.*

Accomplishments:

- Incorporated accessibility compliance into project planning and review (see Section 2.1)

- Used technology (see Section 2.2)

- Improved access to resources for parks and programs (see Section 2.3).

2.1 Incorporated Accessibility into Project Planning and Review for Newly Constructed Assets

Accessibility, as an essential component of park improvements, is critical to ensuring parks are open and usable for all visitors. In the past five years, the NPS has worked to improve how accessibility is incorporated into planning and design by understanding our success rate (see Section 2.1.1) and identifying processes to improve that success rate (see Section 2.1.2).

2.1.1 Understanding Our Success Rate

In December 2018, a collaboration between the Washington Support Office (WASO) Accessibility Program Support and the Denver Service Center's (DSC) Planning Division was initiated to review a sample of project statements to determine whether accessibility compliance (1) should be addressed by the project and (2) was or was not addressed in the project proposal. Of the 1,550 projects reviewed, the team determined that 739 of the projects (48 percent) should address accessibility but only 523 (34 percent) of the proposals mentioned accessibility in the project description or as an emphasis area. While it is possible that a project may address accessibility even if it is not stated in the proposal, the effort assumed that projects that do not include accessibility in the project statement have a strong potential to be built or implemented without addressing federal accessibility requirements. This assessment confirmed the need to build checks for accessibility into the workflow for project development and review.

2.1.2 Improving Processes Associated with Project Planning and Review

In 2019, the Park Planning, Facilities and Lands (PPFL) Directorate's revAMP initiative conducted a current-state assessment of the processes that parks use to incorporate compliance-related requirements during the execution of projects that deal with the maintenance, repair, renovation, creation and/or destruction of facilities. The assessment was followed by a multi-day meeting bringing together leaders and practitioners to develop recommendations to address the pain points identified with the current state. Once implemented, the recommendations will provide additional tools and resources for park staff to:

- Understand accessibility compliance under the Architectural Barriers Act (ABA) of 1968 and Rehabilitation Act (Rehab Act) of 1973.

- Identify roles and responsibilities associated with compliance. Ensure the positions with compliance responsibilities are involved throughout the lifecycle of a project, but especially in the initial stages.

- Encourage interdisciplinary teams to collaborate on compliance.

Additionally, the PPFL released a draft Facility Investment Strategy in August 2020. The FIS reinforces the need for a planning process, known as the Strategic Facility Investment Plan (SFIP), that will help any park develop its facilities strategy and establish a more defensible 5-year plan.

Beginning in late 2018, Project revAMP sponsored an effort to develop standard tools, processes, and best practices for use in SFIPs. SFIPs are not a single process or product, but rather a suite of tools and processes to develop a park's program of projects, identify strategic investment priorities, and help inform and shape a more pragmatic and strategic approach to project funding.

Furthermore, the Facilities Planning Branch of the Park Planning and Special Studies Division established an associated working group, the Facilities Planning Working Group, consisting of approximately 100 staff from across the NPS facility management community. Among its objectives, the working group aimed to incorporate compliance, including accessibility, into SFIP processes. Full incorporation into early planning processes may have the following positive results: automate accessibility review and understanding, engage accessibility subject matter experts where needed, ensure the consideration and completion of accessibility compliance and produce a more comprehensive design and high-quality estimate.

2.2   Used Technology

A component of Goal 2, Strategy C is to "explore cutting-edge technologies that would increase 'virtual' accessibility when more traditional solutions are not possible." Technology is used to both provide an experience when traditional solutions are not possible[4] and to enhance the experience for everyone. For example, in many park units, visitors now have the option to receive a UniDescription Brochure (see Section 2.2.1) or to use the Park Mobile app (see Section 2.2.2) to orient and educate themselves with the park and its resources. For those unable to physically visit, some parks now offer 360° virtual tours (see Section 2.2.3).

2.2.1   UniD

Reading and collecting park brochures (called 'unigrids' because of the standard layout) is a common activity that most park visitors take for granted. Users who are blind, have low vision, have a print-related disability, or are auditory learners have historically faced challenges enjoying unigrids. The UniD system now makes this experience possible for broader communities by allowing additional formats, such as HTML5, MP3 audio files and text files, to be used on common equipment. The system also makes audio-described content accessible.

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[4] The NPS needs to do everything feasible to enable people with disabilities to receive as close to the same benefits as those received by other visitors. If ABA requirements cannot be met, parks may apply for an exemption via the Section 504 process of the Rehabilitation Act. In doing so, parks must develop an alternative means for those with disabilities to experience the resources that cannot satisfy the requirements of the ABA.

Started in 2014 and led by Harpers Ferry Center, the UniD project is a partnership with the University of Hawaii. All information is reviewed by members of the American Council of the Blind before publication. As of June 2020, over 100 NPS sites were using UniD. For more information on UniD, visit the UniD Website. For an example an audio-described unigrid, visit the Denali National Park & Preserve website.

2.2.2   Park Mobile

Park Mobile is a wayfinding application (app) that helps visitors find and experience sites near them geographically. Although Park Mobile is broadly used across all audience groups, accessibility is a foundational component of the app. It focuses on delivering an accessible experience, including built-in audio descriptions for each point of interest and exhibit space. Park Mobile is the only app that provides the deep accessible experience for blind and low vision users. The app includes the following features: accessible interior exhibit tours, audio description and information on physical accessibility for each of the app's points of interest.

Additionally, Park Mobile works for all visitors because:

- Third party apps often have outdated or incorrect information. Park Mobile uses information from park staff to provide the best experience for visitors.

- The offline mode of the app makes it realistic for a visitor to a geographically remote park, like Yellowstone National Park, to do some trip planning, save points of interest and itineraries in a favorites list and learn about nearby sites, all without internet connectivity. Several parks, including some of the most visited, have little or no connectivity in significant portions of the park. Park Mobile provides a way to deliver interpretation and safety information to users even while offline.

- A servicewide app eliminates the need for people with disabilities to use several different tools. Instead, visitors can use one tool consistently across all parks. The app also uses a platform, the smart phone, that is readily available to most people.

For more information, visit the National Park Service Apps website on NPS.gov.

2.2.3   360° Virtual Tours

360° virtual tours make it possible for those physically unable to visit a specific park or site to enjoy a park experience. The technology uses tour footage and audio descriptions to create a virtual experience. The 360° virtual tours, unlike videos, create an immersive environment by offering self-exploration and giving control to the user.

The NPS has published the following 360° virtual tours:

- Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park: Jeff Smiths Parlor, Moore Cabin, Moore House, Visitor Center and Museum

- Minuteman Missile National Historic Site: Delta-01 Control Center, Delta-01 Support Rooms, Delta-01 Topside, Delta-09 Missile Silo, Visitor Center and Exhibits

- Shenandoah National Park: Brown House, Byrd Visitor Center, Dickey Ridge, Massanutten Lodge, Prime Minister's Cabin

- [Sitka National Historical Park](#): Russian Bishop's House, Sheetʼka Kwaan Naa Kahidi, Sheldon Jackson Museum, St. Michael's Cathedral, Totem Trail

- [New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park](#): Nathan and Polly Jackson House.

- Monocacy National Battlefield: Worthington House

- Statue of Liberty National Monument: Statue of Liberty and Liberty Island.
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The NPS has developed the following 360° virtual tours and plans to publish them soon:

- Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park: The Texas Whitehouse

- Eisenhower National Historic Site: Eisenhower Main House, Eisenhower Show Barn

- Gettysburg National Military Park: Abraham Brian House, David Wills House, Lydia Leister House.

3.0 Accomplishments Associated with Goal 3 of the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy

Goal 3: *Upgrade existing facilities, programs and services to be accessible to people with disabilities.*

Goal 3 addresses the features that visitors encounter most often because upgrading facilities, programs and services removes existing barriers.

Over the last five years, the NPS made significant progress towards Goal 3. Most of these improvements were undertaken building-by-building and program-by-program as parks renovated facilities and rejuvenated programs. Those successes are too numerous to enumerate in this report, but some accomplishments include the following:

- Improved use of data to identify accessible facilities (see Section 3.1)

- Conducted assessments to identify existing barriers (see Section 3.2)

- Improved processes to ensure the inclusion of accessibility in project planning and design (see Section 3.3)

- Developed exemplars of good accessibility projects (see Section 3.4).

3.1 Improved Use of Data to Identify Accessible Facilities

To update facilities efficiently, it is necessary to first identify existing accessibility features and structures. Data on NPS facilities is recorded in the Facility Management Software System (FMSS). [5]

A review showed that although the FMSS provides the ability to record accessibility data for the NPS inventory, data managers lacked guidance to consistently capture the data. To address this, the WASO Accessibility Support Program partnered with the Comprehensive Asset Strategic Tools Development Group (CASTL)6 from 2016-2018. This group developed the following draft business requirements based on experience with the current state of accessibility data servicewide:

- Identify the existing facilities in the real property inventory of the FMSS that comply with accessibility standards or are not required to comply with accessibility standards.

- Identify existing facilities in the real property inventory of the FMSS that currently do not comply with accessibility standards, but are required to comply, and track progress toward bringing those facilities into compliance.

The Accessibility-CASTL partnership then validated the business requirements by analyzing the current state of accessibility data and conducting focus group interviews and surveys. The partnership noted three key survey findings:

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[6] The Park Facility Management Division established the CASTL in 2011 to develop asset management tools that identify and manage critical life-cycle asset data for all facility types within the NPS asset portfolio. The group completed their work in 2017.

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- Parks need accurate data that represents whether inventory is accessible. However, at the time of the survey, users were unfamiliar or unaware of the purpose and use of the FMSS data fields intended to capture accessibility compliance information.

- Accessibility assessments, further detailed in Section 3.2, are the primary means of determining accessibility compliance. However, at the time of the survey, there was no reliable method to record the assessment results and track the mitigation of deficiencies. The NPS needed defined business practices to ensure important information from the assessments was captured and acted upon in an effective and consistent way.

- The FMSS is the preferred means to capture accessibility data.

Conducted Accessibility Assessments to Identify Existing Barriers

Accessibility assessments show parks where areas of non-compliance with accessibility requirements exist so parks can prioritize improvements.

Accessibility assessments were primarily conducted by two centers with the expertise: the National Center on Accessibility (NCA) and the Denver Service Center (DSC).[7] Members of the NCA and DSC assessment teams report that park staff members are eager to participate in the process, as they want to improve accessibility but do not have the training and knowledge to identify the barriers.

NPS accessibility assessments:

- **Consider Entry-to-Exit**. Assessors ask:

  - How does the visitor arrive at the site?
  - What is the next experience?
  - What is the next interaction?
  - How does the visitor exit the site?

- **Take a Holistic Approach**. Compliance standards often focus on physical access, but assessments consider all opportunities and likely visitor interactions, including programs and services. Assessors should ask questions, including the following:

  - Who can participate in the interpretation programs? Who cannot?
  - How does the visitor receive information about accessible places and programs?
  - What role does facilities management play? What is law enforcement's role?
  - How do all these interactions come together to impact the visitor experience?

- **Involve the Disability Community**. Once the park reviews the results of the assessment, staff should work with the disability community to determine the best process to incorporate the action items identified during the assessment. Involving the disability community has the additional benefit of establishing relationships with members of that community.

  - In some cases, the public, including disability organizations and stakeholders, are invited to review and comment on the draft findings of the assessment. The park

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[7] Accessibility assessments are conducted by the DSC as part of the Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan (SETP).

then engages reviewers in accessibility projects as they move forward to make improvements.

3.2 Improved Processes to Ensure the Inclusion of Accessibility in Project Planning and Design for Existing Assets

As noted in the previous sections, the NPS sends out teams to assess facilities, documents the needed improvements in FMSS work orders and develops projects to make improvements and meet accessibility requirements. However, more often, accessibility improvements are a secondary benefit of a project, not the primary driver. According to the Architectural Barriers Act, all buildings and facilities built or renovated in whole or in part with federal funds must be accessible to, and usable by, people with disabilities. Therefore, even projects that are not driven by accessibility deficiencies often include accessibility upgrades. In order to effectively incorporate accessibility into these projects, parks need clear guidance and resources to understand and comply with federal accessibility requirements.

Based on interviews with stakeholders, the PPFL revAMP initiative identified a gap in guidance, resources, personnel and standardized processes to address compliance[8] for design and construction. To address this gap, revAMP coordinated a rapid improvement event (RIE) August 19-22, 2019. The RIE brought together a multi-directorate team and resulted in a series of recommendations. The recommendations, once implemented, will provide resources to address compliance during the pre-planning phase, ensure compliance coordinators have the applicable knowledge and resources to fulfill their responsibilities and develop a tiered system by which parks can receive compliance support. The RIE recommendations promote efficiency by addressing compliance early (during the pre-planning phase) and by using interdisciplinary teams.

3.4 Provided Exemplars of Accessibility Improvement Projects

In direct response to Strategy E of Goal 3 of the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy, the NPS initiated the Targeted Accessibility Improvement Program (TAIP).

The TAIP addressed the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy's recommendation that the NPS focus flexible park funds, in addition to recreation fees and concession franchise fees, to target high-potential, high-impact, pure (to the degree possible) accessibility projects at high visitation areas for key park visitor experiences. The program leveraged available fund sources to correct priority accessibility deficiencies when a comprehensive rehabilitation or upgrade of that park facility or program was not scheduled in the near future.

TAIP translated this recommendation into projects that resulted in exemplars of best practices in accessibility from entry to exit for prevalent[9] experiences that can be found throughout the NPS. For a project to be an exemplar of best practices, it must use the principles of Universal Design to:

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[8] The RIE defined compliance as the National Environmental Policy Act process, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act process, Structural Fire code requirements and Accessibility code requirements.

[9] The TAIP defined prevalent as campgrounds, trails, overlooks, water access, historic structures, monuments, battlefields and visitor centers/museums

- Provide direct access: Provide visitors with disabilities direct access to the facility/area rather than providing an alternative or virtual experience.

- Benefit a range of disabilities: Provide access for visitors with mobility disabilities, sensory disabilities (e. g., hearing and vision loss) and intellectual disabilities.

- Encompass the totality of the area: Make the entire array of visitor experiences at a facility/area accessible.

- Include outreach to the disability community: Gather feedback and input from the people that will most benefit from the improvements - the local disability community.

In FY 2015, nine projects were selected based on applications from the field. The TAIP made it possible for parks to complete the projects using a multidisciplinary team with the following members: Washington Office Accessibility Program Support (accessibility subject matter expert [SME], oversight), NCA (accessibility SME), DSC (project management), HFC (interpretive media) and the region where appropriate. After the completion of the projects, the TAIP aimed to document the lessons learned and generate guides to Universal Design.

In FY 2017, the flexible park fund source used by the TAIP was eliminated from the NPS budget. The multidisciplinary teams associated with each project had to determine a logical stopping point. In some cases, the logical stopping point was completion. For other projects, the logical stopping point was design. All nine projects ended in different places.

The following subsections provide an overview of each of the nine TAIP projects.

3.2.1 Devils Tower National Monument (DETO)

Project	Provide access to the Tower Trail and accessible interpretive waysides along the trail, interpretive plaza, walkways to the trail and visitor center, exhibits inside the visitor center and parking spaces and vehicular drop off area.
Scope	Provide access to the Tower Trail, accessible interpretive waysides along the trail, accessible interpretive plaza, and accessible walkways to the trail, visitor center, and climber registration office. The project also develops and installs accessible exhibits inside the visitor center as well as accessible parking spaces and the vehicular drop off area.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	Planning and design
Significance	The project will completely makeover the experience while maintaining focus on the tower. The new range of exhibits at the interpretive plaza include a variety of tactile models that enable a comprehensive experience. The contractor was dedicated to finding the best solution to improving the path to the tower while still embracing the natural setting.
Community Involvement	The project was not able to involve the local disability community, so the NCA facilitated prototype review at their facility in Bloomington, Indiana. There have been multiple rounds of prototyping and significant improvements made to the projects per the feedback.
Status	Fabrication and construction in 2021.

For more information	See the news release posted on the park's website.

3.2.2   Independence National Historical Park (INDE)

Project	Upgrade accessibility to Independence Hall, Congress Hall and Old City Hall, three historically significant buildings on Independence Square.
Scope	Three major components: • Structural: Construct a ramp from the street to Independence Square. Bring into compliance existing ramps and handrails. Install automatic doors at Congress Hall, Old City Hall and West Wing. Improve access at the back of Independence Hall. • Tactile Features: Add tactile map of Independence Square identifying the buildings. Add tactile models of the historical buildings. • Technology: Add audio-description to the videos and make available assistive listening devices. Use digital interactives to help tell the stories and explain the significance of the remarkable buildings.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	The technology components were completed under TAIP.
Significance	Cumulatively, the improvements and services will allow visitors with a disability to experience the sites on the Square on an equal and similar nature as other visitors. The services will also allow visitors to experience the second floors of the historic structures, which many visitors are unable to visit due to physical requirements of stair-climbing. Due to their historic significance, providing a lift or elevator is not an option to make the second floors accessible for all.
Community Involvement	The park contracted with an organization that supports system technology for the state of Pennsylvania. They reviewed and tested the technology to ensure it was effective for those with a disability.
Status	The technology components were installed at the end of February 2020. The staff was trained on how to use the system. Funding has not yet been identified to complete the Structural and Tactile improvements.

3.2.3   Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park (KLGO)

Project	Provide accessibility by removing physical barriers in park buildings.
Scope	The park removed barriers in five 1900-era historic buildings, including redesigning two restrooms and three entry ramps, integrating three high-low drinking fountains into historic lobbies, redesigning the theater seating layout and replacing the carpet.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	All components completed under TAIP.

Significance	Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park receives over 800,000 visitors annually. The park's key buildings that visitors encounter on their way into the historic district of Skagway did not meet federal accessibility standards. The project improved all visitors' access to services and created a more welcoming environment for those with disabilities.
Community Involvement	None. All of the changes were structural improvements.
Status	Completed

3.2.4 Mammoth Cave National Park (MACA)

Project	Provide accessible trail experience for Echo River Spring.
Scope	The project would: • Rehabilitate 2,600 feet of existing dirt trail to an 8 foot wide and hard surface (concrete) trail that will allow easy access • Design, fabricate and install three to four interpretive signs • Install up to two new benches along the trail • Provide a concrete pad and screening for a restroom (accessible port-a-john), garbage collection and recycling receptacles • Construct an accessible overlook to the Green River from the parking lot • Construct two new accessible overlooks above the Echo River Spring that are accessible from the Echo River Trail • Modify the parking lot to conform with accessibility requirements.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	All components completed under TAIP.
Significance	The project created an entry-to-exit experience (e.g., parking area, trail head, trail). There are waysides at the trail point that explain the significance of the water and how some divers used it as a means into the cave. There are also waysides at an overlook to the river and ferry. The trail is popular and accounted for over 25 percent of all visitations among ranger-led surface walks before the improvements.
Community Involvement	The park involved the disability community early in the project and then asked them to return when the features were installed. From this project, the park was able to establish a relationship with the disability community. The participants from the local community are the biggest advocates and promoters of the new trail.
Status	Completed. The project was so successful, the park sought (and received) funding under a different fund source to turn the trail into a loop.

3.2.5 National Mall and Memorial Parks (NAMA)

Project	Provide physical and programmatic accessible solutions to all of the levels (lower, portico and chamber) of the Jefferson Memorial.

Scope	Two components: • Physical: Construct a ramp to enable all visitors to enter the rotunda. Redesign the exhibit area. • Interpretive: Include a wide range of tactile exhibits. The exhibits will explain the physical structure of the memorial and share information (including a 3D model) on other proposals before the current memorial was constructed. The exhibits will have tactile reproductions of features of the memorial, including quotes (in exact size) from the Declaration of Independence, a model of the Jefferson statue and a reproduction (in actual size) of the head of the statue. The project also included outside exhibits that can be enjoyed when the museum is closed.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	Planning and design
Significance	The park was inspired by the project. The park intends to incorporate similar improvements to the Lincoln Memorial. They will use a similar method (e.g., develop prototypes, get feedback from the disability community).
Community Involvement	Based on input from the disability community, several successful improvements were made to the design.
Status	The park was able to secure another fund source. All components of the project are scheduled to be completed in 2021.

3.2.6   San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park (NHP)

Project	Removing barriers and improving accessibility to the ship *Balclutha* and associated facilities throughout the Aquatic Park Area.
Scope	Improve the method to transition from the pier to the ship. Recognizing that not all areas of the ship can be made accessible, provide opportunities for experiences such as tactile exhibits and videos that accommodate those with hearing loss.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	Planning and design
Significance	The *Balclutha* is an 1886 historic sailing ship that is the flagship for San Francisco Maritime and currently has limited accessibility to the ship's decks and the onboard interpretive exhibits. This project provides both physical and programmatic accessible solutions.
Community Involvement	The park held focus groups and public meetings to review designs. The project provided multiple prototypes.
Status	Funds have been requested for 2021.

3.2.7   Saratoga National Historical Park (SARA)

Project	Make the waysides on a 10-mile self-guided tour road physically and programmatically accessible.

Scope	Incorporate accessibility into existing designs to renovate and repair 10 interpretive battlefield stops. The project would replace two-dimensional maps and wayside exhibits with tactile elements.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	Planning and design
Significance	When the park initiated the project, there were few examples of accessibility projects for battleground parks. The Saratoga design could be used as a model for other parks.
Community Involvement	Based on input from the disability community, several successful improvements were made to the design.
Status	Anticipated to be funded under the Great American Outdoors Act.

3.2.8   Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore (SLBE)

Project	Create access to a river experience as well as improve a campground that supports these experiences.
Scope	The project improves the Loon Lake, Platte River Campground, El Dorado, Picnic Area and Platte Point areas. The upgrades to existing facilities to meet accessibility requirements included 9 restrooms, 12 trash receptacles, 28 water spigots/hydrants and 9 parking areas. In addition, 20 waysides, 30 wayfinding, 10 tactile relief maps would be installed. The primary Philip A. Hart Visitor Center will also receive work to upgrade the accessibility of the information desks and exterior informational sign and provide a 3-D floor orientation map.
Components Accomplished with TAIP	Planning and design, including prototyping.
Significance	The park aims to create a full experience for visitors (entry-to-exit) by providing access to the water, campground and the visitor center.
Community Involvement	Based on input from the disability community, several successful improvements were made to the design. The contractor reportedly had such a positive experience working with the disability community, they conducted additional testing independent of the project and aim to incorporate Universal Design into all of their projects moving forward.
Status	Completed planning and design and installed some components. The park is seeking another fund source to complete the project.

3.2.9   Steamtown National Historic Site (STEA)

Project	Improve physical and programmatic accessibility for trains on display in the historic roundhouse.
Scope	The project made tactile improvements that included an orientation map, a 3-D multisensory exhibit of the roundhouse, and an exhibit on the steam locomotion process including an interactive piston.

Components Accomplished with TAIP	The project was completed using TAIP funds. The original scope was revised to accommodate the budget cuts. The original scope would grant all visitors access to the four historic rail cars. The revised scope provided an alternative experience.
Significance	The park provided considerable improvements in accessibility for the enjoyment and understanding of all visitors. The park is now better poised to serve visitors of all abilities.
Community Involvement	Involvement of the local disability community contributed to the success of the project. The project used prototypes (maps, steam engine model) to solicit feedback.
Status	Completed
For more information	See the news release posted on the park's website.

3.3 Contributors to Content in Section 3.0

Table 5 lists the contributors to the information in this section.

Table 1. Contributors to Content Associated with Goal 3

Contributor	Office	Topic
Ray Bloomer	Accessibility Specialist, National Park Service	TAIP
Michelle Cook	National Center on Accessibility	NCA Assessments
Tamara Delplane	Denver Service Center	DSC Assessments
Cynthia Nelson	Denver Service Center	DSC Assessments
Cindy Somers	National Center on Accessibility	TAIP

4.0 Conclusion

Along with the accomplishments described above, each section of the Final Report recognizes those that contributed to the content. However, the implementation of the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy involved many more than those listed in this report. Just as nearly every NPS employee plays a role in ensuring parks welcome all visitors and staff, hundreds of NPS employees contributed to the accomplishments and successes associated with the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy. The NPS thanks every superintendent that invited accessibility coordinators to early discussions for construction projects; every writer that ensured their document met 508 compliance; every instructor that updated training materials to teach others about accessibility; every interpretive ranger that audio-described content; and countless others. These many contributions indicate the Five-Year Accessibility Strategy was aptly named. The NPS is *all in,* as it took – and it will continue to take – every employee to transform parks and programs into models of inclusion for people with disabilities.

Additionally, the NPS Accessibility team would like to give a special thanks to *All In* contributors and reviewers including Tim Cash and Todd Edgar (NPS Office of Communications); Michelle Cook and Cindy Somers (National Center on Accessibility); Bernard Gordon (National Center on Accessibility);