

Chapter 8 - Comments and Responses

Introduction

This section contains the responses to the comments received by OPRHP on the Draft Master Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Midway State Park. The Draft Master Plan/DEIS was issued on July 22, 2009. A Public Hearing was held on August 12, 2009 at the Chautauqua Lake Central School, Mayville, NY. The comment period ended on September 18, 2009.

Out of about 24 attendees at the Public Hearing, three people spoke and their comments were recorded. During the comment period for the Draft Master Plan/DEIS, the Agency received six written comment letters and eleven comments by email. A list of persons providing comments is included at the end of this chapter.

The types of comments received included document editing suggestions, requests for clarification of information presented in the document, and comments related to specific aspects of the plan. All comments were reviewed and organized by categories. Responses to these comments are found in this section and were considered in the revisions found in this Final Master Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

OPRHP appreciates the time and effort that persons interested in the future of Midway State Park have invested in their review and comments on the Draft Master Plan/DEIS and their participation in the public hearing.

Response to Comments

Plan and Process

Comment:

Concern expressed about loss of the Arcade.

Response:

Although the Arcade Building will be taken down, the Arcade games and function will be moved to improved facilities on the first floor of the Hippodrome.

Comment:

Agreement with the decision to classify Midway State Park as an Historic Park.

Response:

Thank you for your support of this decision.

Comment:

Expression of support for the Plan recommendations of natural resource protection and sustainability

Response:

Thank you for your support.

Comment:

Expression of support for the goal of establishing balance between recreational uses and the protection and interpretation of the historic, natural and scenic resources of the park.

Response:

Thank you for your support.

Tourism

Comment:

Disappointment was expressed by local cottage resort that Midway did not stay open on Monday and Tuesday. Also that there were no fireworks for 4th of July. Suggestion that park employ people familiar with tourism and amusement parks.

Response:

Midway State park is open on Monday and Tuesdays, although the amusement rides are closed. This continued the practice that was established several years prior to the acquisition. Budgetary constraints contributed to the lack of fireworks for the 4th of July. Park staff were able to secure sponsorships for a laser light show. Also, firework displays were available at a nearby park in Mayville on the 4th of July. Midway State Park is a member of a national amusement ride organization, several permanent staff have been trained in public relations and attended national amusements park training workshops and conferences.

Comment:

Concern expressed that development of the park should not happen, that it should be left alone to prevent it becoming overcrowded.

Response:

The proposed improvements for Midway State Park may increase attendance. This would be in the positive context of enhancing appreciation and use of this historic park. It is not anticipated that the carrying capacity will be exceeded, or that overcrowding conditions will occur.

Building Conditions

Comment:

Concern about the Hippodrome related to roof condition, leaks, skating surface treatment and requesting removal of the internal banisters to allow room for “American Roller Dancing.”

Response:

Several buildings at Midway are in need of roof repairs and replacements, including the Hippodrome. The region and agency will be including these projects in their capital planning budget. Removing the banisters in the roller rink would significantly change the character and design of the existing historic roller rink, and is not recommended.

Operations

Comment:

Concern expressed that price of going to the park and rides is getting expensive.

Response:

Currently there is no fee charged for entrance to the park. Also, the price of the amusement ride tickets has been consistent with the prices charged prior to the acquisition.

Comment:

Question was raised as to attendance figures for past 5-7 years, financial analysis and income statements to justify expansion of the park. Also if park has been breaking even on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Response:

Attendance figures are based on estimates since entrance fees are not charged. Attendance figures appear to be consistent over the past several years, but are variable generally based on the weather. Income has also been consistent over the past several years, but is also affected by seasonal conditions such as the weather. The plan does not focus on expansion, but rather on improvements and restoration to the existing infrastructure and some of the buildings. Several significant changes recommended in the plan include changing the “traffic” flow of the park for safety and aesthetic reasons, as well as improving parking and lake access. The amusement ride area is not open on Monday and Tuesdays because of lower demand on these days.

Comment:

Concern was expressed that level of park maintenance is not as good as under previous owner.

Response:

Thank you for your concern. The entire park system is operating at a reduced capacity due to the current statewide budget crisis.

Environmental Impacts

Comment:

Concern expressed that the plan should develop a single Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for all intended modifications, with phased implementation as actions occur.

Response:

State Park Master Plans are conceptual in nature and meant to be implemented over a long period of time. Some of the proposed developments may not occur for several or many years depending on available funding. As new measures and techniques for storm water control and prevention are constantly being developed, it is better to wait until a specific project is being designed and incorporate the latest best management practices for stormwater control in design of each project.

Comment:

Concern was expressed that although there is a three tiered parking system, the 300 spaces of conventional pavement will have significant runoff. How will stormwater runoff from this lot be managed and will green space be included?

Response:

There has been no detailed design of the parking lot as the drawings in this plan are conceptual. However, as depicted in Figures 12 and 13, the design envisioned for this parking area includes the placement of 3 vegetated swales adjacent to the paved parking lot, plantings at the end of each row

of parking, and buffer plantings near the road. As discussed in the Environmental Impacts section it is also anticipated that the design of this lot would include some drainage structures to prevent runoff into Maple Springs Creek during large storm events. Additional planting along the stream and the use of pervious pavement for the other two levels of parking will also help to reduce stormwater runoff. Additional stormwater management measures may be considered when the lot undergoes detailed design.

Comment:

Opinion to encourage solar electric cogeneration on Hippodrome and other facilities

Response:

This suggestion is compatible with the intention of the plan. Figure 13 – Park Operations discusses Parkwide Sustainability Measures including “renewable resource capture – geothermal, solar, wind, etc.” This will be considered during the detailed design process for these facilities.

Comment:

Concern that a vegetative swale will not handle all the stormwater.

Response:

Several vegetated swales are proposed throughout the park as depicted in Figure 12 to help with the capture, control, and filtering of runoff. In addition the master plan calls for substantial restoration, regeneration and plantings of native species of trees and plants throughout the park. The additional vegetation will act to reduce stormwater runoff into the Lake and stream.

Comment:

Opinion expressed that plan should look into alternative, water saving restroom technology.

Response:

Thank you for your comment, the plan does specify this type of technology in chapter 6 page 68.

Comment:

Concern that a “dark sky” lighting plan should be implemented.

Response:

Thank you for your concern. Although the plan does intend a dark sky protocol as described in Figure 13, this was not expressed in the narrative. A dark sky statement has been added to the lighting paragraph, chapter 6 page 93.

Recreational Activities

Comment:

Support expressed for trail creation in the plan, recommendation that further thought be given to linking with existing trails outside the park and connecting with Long Point State Park.

Response:

The support for trail creation is appreciated. Consideration was given during the planning process to linking the park to Long Point State Park. This proved difficult, however, due to intervening private land. The plan as proposed will improve linkages via water and linkages in the snowmobile trail

system. The agency will continue to explore the possibility of land linkages in the future as parcels become available for acquisition.

Comment:

Desire expressed for a large roller coaster, Ferris wheel, and adult rides to the park.

Response:

Any additional rides purchased for Midway will be in character with the existing vintage rides, which are focused on children. Although rides that would be enjoyable to children are sometimes also enjoyable to adults, such as Ferris wheels, there are no plans to purchase rides that are specifically focused on adults.

Comment:

Concern that newer rides make the park feel too new. Need for older rides such as wooden roller coaster, more for older patrons

Response:

As funds become available, “vintage” rides will be considered for possible expansion of the amusement ride area. There are no plans to purchase newer rides that are not in keeping with the existing historic context of the park. Also please see response to previous comment.

Comment:

Support for tour boat docks

Response:

Thank you for your support.

Comment:

Desire that birding should be given attention in the plan

Response:

Thank you for your comments. The interpretive panels on several of the trails and waterfront will include information on birds of the area.

Comment:

Comment that swimming should be considered at the park because it was historically allowed. Conversion of part of the Hippodrome to changing rooms and lockers is also suggested.

Response:

Swimming and wading were considered as part of the recreation alternatives at the park and were determined to be inappropriate. (see Chapter 5 page 57)

Historic Resources

Comment:

Concern that removal of some buildings would impact the Historic Register status of the park.

Response:

The removal of selected buildings will not impact the eligibility of Midway park for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The park will remain on the National Register of Historic Places. As discussed within the Environmental Impacts Chapter, the buildings to be removed were documented to be structurally unsound, not meet current codes, or pose a health and safety threat to patrons. The Historic Preservation Field Services Bureau within OPRHP has reviewed the proposed projects and determined that the adverse impacts to these structures can be mitigated through documentation of the buildings prior to their demolition, following the specifications outlined in Appendix B and providing historic interpretation of the buildings in the park museum and via signage at their historic locations.

Relation to other plans/organizations

Comment:

Expression of support and willingness to participate in Friends Group by local community association.

Response:

The staff at Midway will be reaching out to community groups and individuals to assist in forming a Midway Friends Group.

Comment:

Suggestion to partner with a school or organization that teaches historic restoration.

Response:

Thank you for your suggestion. OPRHP is open to proposals from such groups.

Open Space Protection

Comment:

Agreement with decision to make lake access a priority and to improve that access through boat launches, building removal, and docks.

Response:

Thank you for your support of this decision.

Designations

Comment:

Expression of agreement that special designations are not appropriate for Midway State Park.

Response:

Thank you for your support.

Comment:

Recommendation that park be reconsidered for Bird Conservation Area

Response:

The Bird Conservation Area (BCA) Program was established to recognize state-owned sites that host outstanding bird communities. In order to be designated as a BCA, a site must meet at least one of nine criteria, which can be found at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/28841.html>. Midway State Park does not currently meet any of these nine criteria, and thus is ineligible for BCA designation. While Chautauqua Lake has been designated as an Important Bird Area because of the waterfowl concentrations which occur on the lake, Midway State Park property extends only to the water line and does not provide significant habitat for migrating or wintering waterfowl.

Persons / Organizations Who Provided Comments

Name	Title	Organization
Parks & Trails New York		
Bartram, Peter	Resident	
Burt, Randall	Resident	
Cafilisch, James E.	Chautauqua County Legislator	
Conroe, Douglas E.	Chairman	Chautauqua County Environmental Management Council
Cutting-Shreve, Nora	Resident	
Doleski, Steven J.	Regional Permit Administrator	NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Region 9
Goodwill, Thomas J.	Resident	
Hall, David	Resident	
Hetrick, Anndreus R.	Resident	
Nixon, Andrew		Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau
Shaul, Mary Honnigford	Resident	
Smead, Sharon Marie	Resident	
Wiemer, Peter	Owner	We Wan Chu Cottages