

Evaluation Criteria Overview

Purpose

The development of the BBFMP includes a set of three conceptual site plans or **Alternatives** for the re-establishment of facilities after the CZU fire in 2020. The purpose of the **Evaluation Criteria** is to provide guidance and rationale for the selection of a **Preferred Alternative** that will be presented in the final BBFMP alongside a series of management and implementation considerations.

Three Alternatives with a Common Approach

Each of **Alternatives** has been designed to achieve a set of **Planning Objectives**, which emerge from the **Guiding Principles** found in the Reimagining Big Basin Visioning Process.

In the context of this Facilities Management Plan, achieving these objectives means:

- Siting facilities to avoid potential environmental hazards, including those that will be amplified with climate change, and mitigate negative effects of development and visitor use to the local ecosystem;
- Limiting development near sensitive resources, namely old growth forests and creeks;
- Enabling the continuation or reestablishment of natural hydrological processes;
- Supporting pre-fire visitation levels;
- Replacing staff housing lost to fire;
- Incorporating best practices in building and infrastructure systems design and materials to improve resilience and sustainability
- Allowing for forest regeneration and active forest management;
- Including opportunities for partnerships with California Native Tribes;
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from park activities;
- Minimizing costs associated with park maintenance and operations;
- Ensuring that facilities foster a sense of welcome for all park visitors, regardless of background or ability;
- And giving special consideration for the provision of facilities that support visitation from diverse groups that may have not historically visited the park.

Since these planning objectives are critical to rebuilding Big Basin, all three Alternatives are intended to meet objectives through varying design approaches.

Alternatives Not Considered

Some alternatives were not considered because they would substantially fail to meet planning objectives, or because they are otherwise infeasible. Alternatives not considered include:

- **REBUILD IN PLACE.** A reconstruction of all pre-fire facilities in the same or similar locations with some incorporation of updated best practices in building and infrastructural systems and a new shuttle system.
- **NO SHUTTLE OPTION.** A redistribution of park facilities among previously developed sites or sites otherwise suitable for development, but without an internal park shuttle nor bus stop on a route from Santa Cruz Metro, thereby requiring extensive surface parking and limiting access to the park to those with a private vehicle.
- **REDUCED PARK CAPACITY.** Reducing the overall quantity of visitor-serving facilities in the park to prioritize resource protection, limiting park visitor capacity and recreational opportunities.

Each of these **Alternatives Not Considered** are evaluated in the table below (**Green = Aligns with Guiding Principles**, **Yellow= Somewhat aligns with Guiding Principles**, **Orange = Does not align with Guiding Principles**) compared to common approach for Alternatives under consideration.

	NOT CONSIDERED			CONSIDERED
	REBUILD IN PLACE W/ SHUTTLE	NO SHUTTLE OPTION	REDUCED CAPACITY W/ SHUTTLE	THREE CONSIDERED ALTERNATIVES
Prioritize Forest Health	Pre-Fire Facilities located in Old Growth	Extensive Surface Parking Required in Old Growth	Facilities moved out of Old Growth	Facilities moved out of Old Growth
Provide Equitable, Diverse, and Evocative Visitor Experiences	Experiences at Big Basin are Familiar, but missed opportunity to expand diversity	Experiences at Big Basin are Familiar, but only to those with private vehicle	Limited recreation opportunities, Decreased visitor capacity	Pre-fire visitor capacity with more diverse access and experiences
Diversify Transportation and Access Opportunities	Park Shuttle and Bus System	Only those with private vehicle can access park	Park Shuttle and Bus System, but with lower overall park capacity	Park Shuttle and Bus System
Practice Land Stewardship	No new specialized facilities for adaptive management and stewardship partnerships; limits capacity for prescribed burns	Additional facilities to support stewardship partnerships	Additional facilities to support stewardship partnerships	Additional facilities to support stewardship partnerships
Include Indigenous Perspective	No new facilities developed in consultation with tribal reps	New facilities and overall park design developed in consultation with tribal reps	New facilities and overall park design developed in consultation with tribal reps	New facilities and overall park design developed in consultation with tribal reps

Foster Landscape Connectivity	Some fragmentation of critical habitat	Some fragmentation of critical habitat	Very Limited fragmentation of critical habitat	Limited fragmentation of critical habitat
Design with Reverence and Resilience	Park Facilities are nostalgic, but are not sited to optimize resilience	Extensive Surface Parking diminishes reverence; Logistically infeasible to provide sufficient parking	Park Facilities are minimal; Reduction in visitor capacity limits opportunity to interpret the legacy of the redwoods	Park Facilities are reverent and resilient
Engage the Park Community and Build Partnerships	No new specialized facilities for partnerships	New specialized facilities for partnerships	No new specialized facilities for partnerships	New specialized facilities for partnerships

Evaluating Key Differentiators Among Considered Alternatives

The three considered Alternatives are similar in the scale of their development, programs they accommodate, and all out-perform the Alternatives Not Considered in achieving planning objectives. However, there are some key differentiators among the Alternatives in terms of distribution of program throughout the park, which has an impact on park operations, visitor experiences, staff residential options, capital and operating costs. These factors will be evaluated qualitatively, and score based on how effectively they meet the criteria described below.

PARK OPERATIONS

CRITERIA	SCORE (1=low, 5=high)					HOW TO MEASURE
	1	2	3	4	5	
O&M Facilities are sited to minimize staffing needed to operate the park	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team
O&M Facilities are sited to enable adaptive management of natural resources and stewardship activities	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team
O&M Facilities are sited to decrease number and distance of internal trips to operate the park	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team
						Evaluation of Anticipated Vehicle Trips from F&P
O&M Facilities are sited to support visitor safety and emergency response capacity	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team

STAFF RESIDENCES

CRITERIA	SCORE (1=low, 5=high)					HOW TO MEASURE
	1	2	3	4	5	
Park residences and community facilities are sited and designed to meet seasonal housing needs .	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (Potential input from Staff Working Group)

Park residences and community facilities are attractive for long-term staff families and support recruitment	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (Potential input from Staff Working Group)
In-park staff residence locations support emergency response time	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team
Park residences and community facilities are well suited to the character and integrated with the neighboring community	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (Potential input from Stakeholder Groups, Saddle Mountain Neighbors)

VISITOR EXPERIENCE

CRITERIA	SCORE (1=low, 5=high)					HOW TO MEASURE
	1	2	3	4	5	
Facilities support experiences that evoke nostalgia or reverence to park's resources and history	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (With consideration of public input)
Facilities support interpretation and educational experiences	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (With consideration of public input)
Day-Use Facilities accommodate inclusive experiences for diverse park users	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (With consideration of public input)
Overnight Facilities accommodate inclusive experiences for the diverse park users	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team
						Evaluation of total capacity for overnight use
Arrival and internal navigation of the park is intuitive, safe, and convenient	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (with consideration of public input)

SITE DESIGN IMPLICATIONS

CRITERIA	SCORE (1=low, 5=high)					HOW TO MEASURE
	1	2	3	4	5	
Facilities siting minimizes impact on sensitive resources	1	2	3	4	5	Evaluation of development impact (With inputs from NRD, Biological Assessment, Partners)
Facilities siting avoids environmental hazards and minimizes risk to users and facilities	1	2	3	4	5	Evaluation of hazard avoidance (With inputs from NRD)
Facilities siting enables hydrological restoration projects	1	2	3	4	5	Evaluation of development impact (With inputs from Balance, Biological Assessment)

Facilities siting has the greatest capacity for renewable energy generation .	1	2	3	4	5	Evaluation of parkwide cumulative renewable energy potential
Capital Costs for facilities and supportive infrastructure are lower, relative to other alternatives	1	2	3	4	5	Evaluation of planning-level capital costs (With inputs from Sherwood)
Operations Costs for facilities and supportive infrastructure are lower, relative to other alternatives	1	2	3	4	5	Scored by CSP Project Team (With inputs from Sherwood)

Agency Review

Important safety considerations including driveway locations and life safety planning and evacuation protocol presented in the Alternatives will be reviewed by **Caltrans and Santa Cruz County Fire Marshal**. Components of any of the three alternatives that do not satisfactorily meet safety standards will need to be revised, or the alternative will be removed from consideration as the preferred alternative.

Timeline for Incorporating Evaluation in the Preferred Alternative

The three alternatives will be finalized and presented for public review in June 2024. An online survey and pop-up materials will be developed to collect inputs regarding visitor experience that will help the CSP project team score the items above in consideration of public input. During the engagement period, park staff and the project team will also refine and score the evaluation criteria related to O&M, staff residences, and other site design implications. The scores will be tabulated and summarized in August 2024.

Arriving at a Qualitative Narrative

While the evaluation criteria are tabulated in a way to develop a “score” for each alternative, a more qualitative approach will be needed to synthesize the findings into a compelling narrative that provides guidance and rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative.