

# ARCHES 21

THE NATIONAL PARK VISITOR EXPERIENCE  
FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

A PROPOSAL FOR AN INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
GRAND COUNTY  
MOAB CITY  
UTAH DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Prepared by  
Grand County  
Moab Transit  
Authority  
Study  
Committee

April 1, 2019

# OBJECTIVE

- **CREATE A NATIONAL PARK EXPERIENCE THAT PRIORITIZES BIKING AND WALKING OVER PRIVATE CARS**
- “It’s not about the Shuttle, it’s about creating many opportunities for people to get out and walk.” NPS Zion Shuttle Manager.
- We won’t just manage traffic better, we will create a better visitor experience ... we want people to leave happy and excited about their visit to Arches. (Arches represents 72% of Moab tourism and is considered the draw that introduces most people to Moab, so a good Arches visitor experience is key to repeat visitation)
- The Arches National Park road network was designed in the 1950s when America was in love with cars. It’s time to design the National Park of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century around biking and walking.

# PARTNERSHIP PLAN

- The best way to implement an innovative Visitor Experience at Arches National Park is through a partnership between the National Park Service, Grand County, Moab City, and the Utah Department of Transportation.
- Our starting point is the successful Shuttle partnership between the Town of Springdale and Zion National Park. We envision a two shuttle network: one along US191, the other within Arches.
- We take the Arches 21 plan to the next level: Moab is recognized worldwide as the premier biking destination ... so we make Arches the most bike friendly National Park in the Nation.
- We encourage visitors to get out and walk, with a new network of short one way trails to more of the 2,100 arches, with convenient shuttle drop-off and pick-up locations.

# SPRINGDALE / ZION MODEL

- **SPRINGDALE / ZION MODEL**
- **Currently in it's 19<sup>th</sup> year**
- **Visionary Plan conceived by Zion Superintendent Don Falvey, joined by Springdale Mayor Bimstein, jump-started with \$50,000 study grant from Zion Natural History Association.**
- **Two Free Shuttle Networks, one along Highway 9 in Springdale, the other within Zion.**
- **New Zion Visitor Center complex includes convenient walk-in fee collection booths at terminus of Springdale Shuttle.**
- **Springdale has continually upgraded Bus Stops, dispersed parking lots, and parking management plan.**
- **Kanab is currently studying a Shuttle from the East.**



# 1. SHUTTLE NETWORK

- **MOAB SHUTTLE** large capacity FREE bus along US191 from Spanish Trail to the Arches National Park Visitors Center.
- **DELICATE ARCH EXPRESS** large capacity FREE bus from Arches Visitors Center directly to Delicate Arch, with two stops at Balance Rock and Devils Gardens Intersection (recognize that a large percentage of Arches Visitors have limited time and just want to see the iconic Utah landmark, or just visit the Windows District without even getting out of their car)
- **WINDOWS and DEVILS GARDEN LOOP** large capacity FREE bus from Express Stops to side roads.
- **JEEP EXPLORER** ten passenger vehicle serving the new one-way trail heads and special view points, requiring supplemental fee. (Solves “instant congestion” issues at Zion by dispersing visitors in smaller groups to many more trails and view points)

## 2. BIKING PLAN

- **BIKE DEPOT** at Balanced Rock gravel storage site (casual bikers can't do the initial hill so we start them at an easier place)
- **RENTAL BIKE FLEET** road bikes, mountain bikes, e-bikes provided through concessionaire (National legislation in process to allow e-bikes in National Parks)
- **NO CARS ALLOWED** in Arches during the March to October Shuttle Season. This creates a wonderful car-free experience like we haven't had in many years. (Car lovers will be motivated to come in the Winter months for a driving experience) (Zion Shuttle operator said no car traffic in Park allows shuttle to maintain 4 minute frequency schedule.
- **Bike racks on buses.**

## 3. WALKING PLAN

- **ONE-WAY HIKES.** Research new one-way hikes in Front Range of Arches from the paved road. Short hikes to encourage casual walkers to get out and explore for 15 minutes, half hour, or one hour. (Front Range Hikes, not Wilderness Area hikes) Currently we only have Park Avenue.
- **DELICATE ARCH LOOP HIKE.** Make our most famous hike a one-way loop hike so visitors don't experience oncoming traffic, and the new route down is a brand new adventure on slick rock, past an echo chamber, without looking at the parking lot below.
- **NO NEW PAVEMENT REQUIRED.** Jeeps can use narrow dirt tracks if necessary to deliver visitor to new trail heads.
- **NEW HIKES.** There have been no new hikes in Arches in 40 years. There are many opportunities to build capacity by increasing the total miles of trails, and thus dispersing the visitors.

# 4. PARKING & INFRASTRUCTURE

- **US191 PARKING PLAN.** Create new parking lots and encourage visitors to leave their cars at hotel.
- **INITIAL OBJECTIVE:** replace full count of 800 Arches parking spaces. Increase objective to 1,000 parking spaces along US191 with proper count for RVs, Trailers, SUVs and compact cars.
- **LONG TERM centralized capacity at new MOAB/ARCHES WELCOME CENTER** at the UMTRA site.
- **SHUTTLE EXPRESS ENTRANCE** to Arches over old stone bridge.
- **SHUTTLE STOPS** and shade structures on US191 and within Arches. Traffic control and crosswalks along US191.
- **EMPLOYEE HOUSING.** Most Springdale/Zion drivers are semi-retirees. Plan must include housing strategy.



# FINANCIAL PLAN

- **REDEPLOY UDOT ARCHES RECREATIONAL HOTSPOT PARKING FUNDING** to specifically address this new opportunity to create an Arches/Moab Shuttle. Redeploy \$9.7 million.
- UDOT has already expressed a willingness to fund the initial study, and will consider redeploying funds once we have consent and consensus from the County and City. (This is separate from the Federally Funded study for Local Transit. Long term, US191 route will include year-round and seasonal schedule)
- **PARKING LOTS** can either be on City/County land, purchased land, or 5/10/15 year leased land. Long term availability of UMTRA site facilitates this approach.
- **ENTREPRENEURIAL APPROACH.** Buy used buses economically and get the system started within two years.

# STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION

- 1. MOAB TRANSIT AUTHORITY STUDY COMMITTEE discuss, revise, and approve ARCHES 21 plan today. Achieved.
- 2. GRAND COUNTY COUNCIL review ARCHES 21 plan and vote to approve asking UDOT to fund and initiate ARCHES 21 study.
- 3. MOAB CITY review COUNTY approval and concur with UDOT study, and express willingness to redeploy \$9.7 million UDOT Recreational Hot Spot Funding to ARCHES 21 plan.
- 4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE review COUNTY and CITY approval and concur to participate in UDOT study.