

National Park Service

U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park of American Samoa

**Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition
Plan**

November 2024

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Park of American Samoa staff are dedicated to serving all park visitors to help them find meaning in the resources of the park and its stories. Recently, park staff embarked on a journey to ensure that key experiences are available to all visitors, regardless of race, nationality, socioeconomic status, or ability. Park staff conducted an accessibility self-evaluation of park facilities, services, activities, and programs and drafted a transition plan that identifies opportunities for improvement and outlines critical steps towards implementing responsive solutions parkwide.

This accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan (SETP) resulted from the work of a National Park Service (NPS) interdisciplinary team, including planning, design, and construction professionals and interpretive, resource, visitor safety, maintenance, and accessibility specialists. The team developed conceptual site plans identifying the location of accessibility barriers and opportunities for each assessed park area and crafted an implementation strategy to assist park staff in scheduling and performing required actions and documenting completed work. The team also assessed park policies, practices, communication, and training needs to improve access to elements of the park that lie outside of direct physical and programmatic access. The goals of the SETP are to (1) document existing park barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities; (2) provide an effective approach for upgrading facilities, services, activities, and programs; and (3) instill a culture around creating universal access.

PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY

National Park of American Samoa staff have made many strides to improve physical accessibility throughout the park. The renovations at the visitor center to provide accessible parking and a ramp to the entrance allows more visitors to access the facility. The Pola Island Trail provides an immersive forest hiking experience, with limited barriers to accessibility.

Park staff identified recurring findings related to the physical accessibility of parking areas, accessible paths and trails, and visitor information areas, such as exhibits and trailhead signage. Often, these facilities and features did not meet accessibility scoping requirements or had surfaces that were unstable; slopes that exceeded allowable standards; or items that were out of reach range, heavy, or difficult to operate. Restroom amenities at the visitor center failed to meet the standards.

Improving access at the Lower Sauma Ridge Trailhead, such as providing a ramp to the Fale, adding benches along the trail, and improving the route surface to be firm and stable, would make it easier for visitors to experience the forest environment and views of Pola Island. Creative solutions for accessible trail improvements and new viewing areas at different park locations would help increase access and provide for more meaningful visitor experiences of the parks unique resources.

PROGRAMMATIC ACCESSIBILITY

National Park of American Samoa staff have made improvements to programmatic accessibility in recent years. Tactile elements are provided throughout the visitor center exhibits, including a 3D map of the island of American Samoa, and silent videos are labeled as having “no sound.” Audio description of the video would improve access to this program for people with limited vision.

Park staff identified recurring findings related to program accessibility for park publications, waysides, exhibits, and programs. Many of the exhibits in the park visitor center had font and contrast issues and were difficult to read, and alternative formats, such as audio description, large print versions, and braille versions, were limited.

Significant ways in which programs could be improved include providing tactile models at the park’s wayside exhibits. Additionally, improving trailhead signage parkwide would provide specific information about trail features and conditions, enabling visitors to decide for themselves if a trail is appropriate.

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INTRODUCTION

Since 1916, the National Park Service has preserved, unimpaired, the natural and cultural resources and values of the national park system, while providing for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of current and future generations.

Many national parks were founded because of their stunning views, extreme and unique geography, challenging and sensitive natural environments, and historic and fragile structures. National Park of American Samoa and other parks exist because of their history and resources. The NPS mission balances protection of resources (natural and cultural) with visitor enjoyment. Facilities, services, and programs were designed and built in parks to accommodate visitors and help them better understand each park purpose and significance.

However, many facilities were constructed before the passage of laws and policies requiring the National Park Service to provide access to the widest cross section of the public and to ensure compliance with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. The accessibility of commercial services in national parks is also governed by applicable federal laws. After more than 100 years of operation, the National Park Service continues to work towards a more inclusive environment.

Visitors today have unique needs and expectations, and the agency must adapt to meet changing demands. Modern scientific research and visitor trend analysis provide new insights into accessibility opportunities and challenges in the national park system. According to 2020 Center for Disease Control data, there are approximately 61 million people with disabilities in the United States, and this number is expected to rise in the coming years as more people reach retirement age (65 and older). This information helps the National Park Service understand changing visitation patterns, the nexus between resource stewardship and accessibility, and the impacts of managing visitors, resources, and infrastructure with the reality of unpredictable funding. Planning can help identify solutions to challenges and provide a trajectory full of opportunity for current and future visitors. The National Park Service is committed to making park facilities, services, programs, and employment opportunities accessible to all people, including those with disabilities.

National Park of American Samoa's existing general management planning documents continue to provide relevant guidance, which may be supplemented through development of additional planning documents such as this one. The accessibility SETP is a component of the park's planning portfolio. This plan documents park barriers to accessibility for people with disabilities and provides an effective approach for upgrading park facilities, services, and programs. In addition, the plan helps inform management decisions regarding project prioritization, funding, and compliance.

ACCESSIBILITY SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN

The creation of a transition plan is mandated by regulations under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as they apply to the US Department of the Interior, which states that “No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance.” The act requires parks to document architectural barriers and identify solutions, time frames, and responsible parties to improve and increase accessibility.

This plan was prepared to provide National Park of American Samoa staff with a tool for addressing overall needs associated with making the park accessible when viewed in its entirety. The plan is based on an understanding of key park experiences and establishes a methodical process that identifies, prioritizes, and outlines improvements to park accessibility. The plan proposes strategies for implementation over time and in a manner consistent with park requirements and protocols.

ACCESSIBILITY SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN PROCESS

The process for creating a SETP involves seven steps:

STEPS OF THE SETP PROCESS



1. **Identify Key Park Experiences and Park Areas:** The interdisciplinary team began by identifying the key experiences available to visitors at the park. Key park experiences, which help determine the park areas to assess in step 2, are iconic and important experiences for visitors to understand the purpose and significance of the park. Park legislation is the foundation for key park experiences, which are identified through park purpose, significance, interpretive themes, and programs (available in the park's foundation document at <https://npshistory.com/publications/foundation-documents/npsa-fd-2017.pdf>). Key park experiences ensure that planned improvements are prioritized to best increase overall access to park experiences.

The key park experiences identified for National Park of American Samoa include the following:

- a. **Paleotropical Rainforest Ecosystem:** The National Park of American Samoa protects and preserves the only paleotropical rainforest ecosystem in the United States, which provides habitat for the island's healthy populations of pe'a (fruit bats). This rainforest, intact from seashore to mountaintop, is of profound cultural, scientific, and medicinal importance to Samoans and the world.
- b. **Marine Ecosystems:** The National Park of American Samoa has the only Indo-Pacific coral reef ecosystem in the national park system and is ecologically diverse, with more than 900 species of fish and more than 230 species of coral.

- c. **Coral Reef Resistance to Climate Change:** The Ofu Lagoon in the National Park of American Samoa is a globally important living laboratory for scientists to study the park's corals, which appear to be resistant to high ocean temperatures and fluctuations in pH. Studying these reefs may be a critical step to understanding future climate change impacts on coral reefs.
- d. **3,000 Years of Human History:** The National Park of American Samoa preserves archeological and cultural resources and sites, representing over 3,000 years of habitation. The sacred Saua Village on Ta'ū Island is one of the earliest settlements in Polynesia and is considered a birthplace of Samoan and other Polynesian cultures.
- e. **Fa'asamoa:** The National Park of American Samoa perpetuates Fa'asamoa (Samoan way of life) by sharing the intact and vibrant traditions, values, and legends that connect the Samoan people to the land and sea. Traditional subsistence use of park resources supports Fa'asamoa in local communities. Opportunities include immersing oneself in Samoan cultural programs and experiences.
- f. **Scenery:** The National Park of American Samoa works in partnership with local villages to manage the remote and beautiful tropical island landscape. Samoan villages, lush rainforests, dramatic sea cliffs, coral-filled lagoons, expansive night skies, and world-renowned white sand beaches contribute to the park's iconic scenery.
- g. **Recreational Opportunities:** The National Park of American Samoa provides visitors and local Samoans with a variety of memorable recreational opportunities that are compatible with Fa'asamoa and promote health and wellness. Opportunities include hiking rainforest trails to mountaintops and Samoan cultural sites and swimming, snorkeling, diving, and boating in the park's tropical waters.

To prepare for step 2, the team then listed all developed areas of the park in which visitors have access.

2. **Determine Park Areas to Assess:** In some instances, not all park areas can be assessed during this process due to time and funding constraints. Therefore, the interdisciplinary team determined which park areas to assess based on the number of key park experiences, visitation level, diversity of activities and programs, distribution, and unique characteristics. The areas selected for assessment provide the best opportunities for the public to access all key park experiences. Areas not assessed will be assessed and improved as part of future facility alterations or as components of a future planned construction project (see appendix C for areas not assessed).
3. **Identify Facilities, Services, and Programs in Each Park Area:** The team identified all facilities, services, and programs in each park area to ensure that all physical and programmatic visitor amenities in each park area were reviewed for accessibility. The comprehensive lists of facilities, services, and programs were the basis for conducting assessments and documenting barriers.

4. **Conduct Accessibility Assessment:** On-site, the interdisciplinary assessment team assessed each park area and identified physical and programmatic barriers to accessibility. The team then reviewed possible solutions and explored options to provide universal access. In some cases, programmatic alternatives needed to be examined because eliminating physical barriers is not always possible due to historic designations, environmental concerns, topography, or sensitive cultural and natural resources. Therefore, a range of programmatic alternatives was considered to provide access to key park experiences for as many visitors as possible.
5. **Draft Transition Plan:** Following the assessment, the team added field results to an implementation strategy table and drafted conceptual site plans to display the locations of barriers and opportunities. An implementation strategy can be complex because of a large range of coordination efforts associated with scheduling accessibility improvements. All improvement efforts need to consider park activities and operational requirements. Improvement efforts need to consider park activities and operational requirements to determine how and when to implement a solution. While some changes can be done quickly at little or no cost, others may be integrated into existing projects or planned as separate projects, and more complex solutions may require advanced planning and requests for funding. Based on these considerations, the team identified an implementation time frame and a responsible park staff member for each barrier and solution. Implementation time frames are based on NPS staff's ability to complete the improvements within normal scheduling of park operations and planned projects and are as follows:
 - a. Immediate (0–1 year)
 - b. Short term (1–3 years)
 - c. Mid-term (3–7 years)
 - d. Long term (longer than 7 years)
6. **Conduct Public Involvement:** Public involvement occurs at the draft stage of the transition plan; however, it is recommended that at the beginning of the SETP process, park staff initiate public outreach efforts with organizations representing people with disabilities. The draft plan will be released for a 30-day period to solicit input from the public, including people with disabilities and organizations that represent people with disabilities, to provide comments and thoughts on whether the document represents a reasonable review of the park's barriers and a feasible and appropriate strategy for overcoming the barriers.
7. **Finalize Transition Plan:** After the comment period has closed, park staff will analyze all comments to determine if any revisions to the plan are necessary. Those revisions will be made before the implementation strategy is finalized. Once finalized, a notification will be sent to the public to announce the plan's availability.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

The park superintendent is responsible for implementing and integrating the accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan, and the accessibility coordinator assists the

superintendent by documenting improvements, keeping the plan updated, and communicating to park employees. It's recommended that park staff employ trained consultants and involve the disability community to assist with addressing accessibility improvements to ensure that design and implementation meet the needs of visitors with disabilities. Creating parkwide accessibility requires staff awareness, understanding, and appropriate action. Because of fiscal constraints and limited park resources, staff will need to determine which improvements will benefit the greatest number of visitors with disabilities. Suggested implementation time frames and relative costs need to be factored into all accessibility investment decisions.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA

PARK AREAS ASSESSED

The interdisciplinary team assessed the following park areas for accessibility during the planning effort. Park areas not assessed are in appendix C.

Lower Sauma Ridge Trailhead

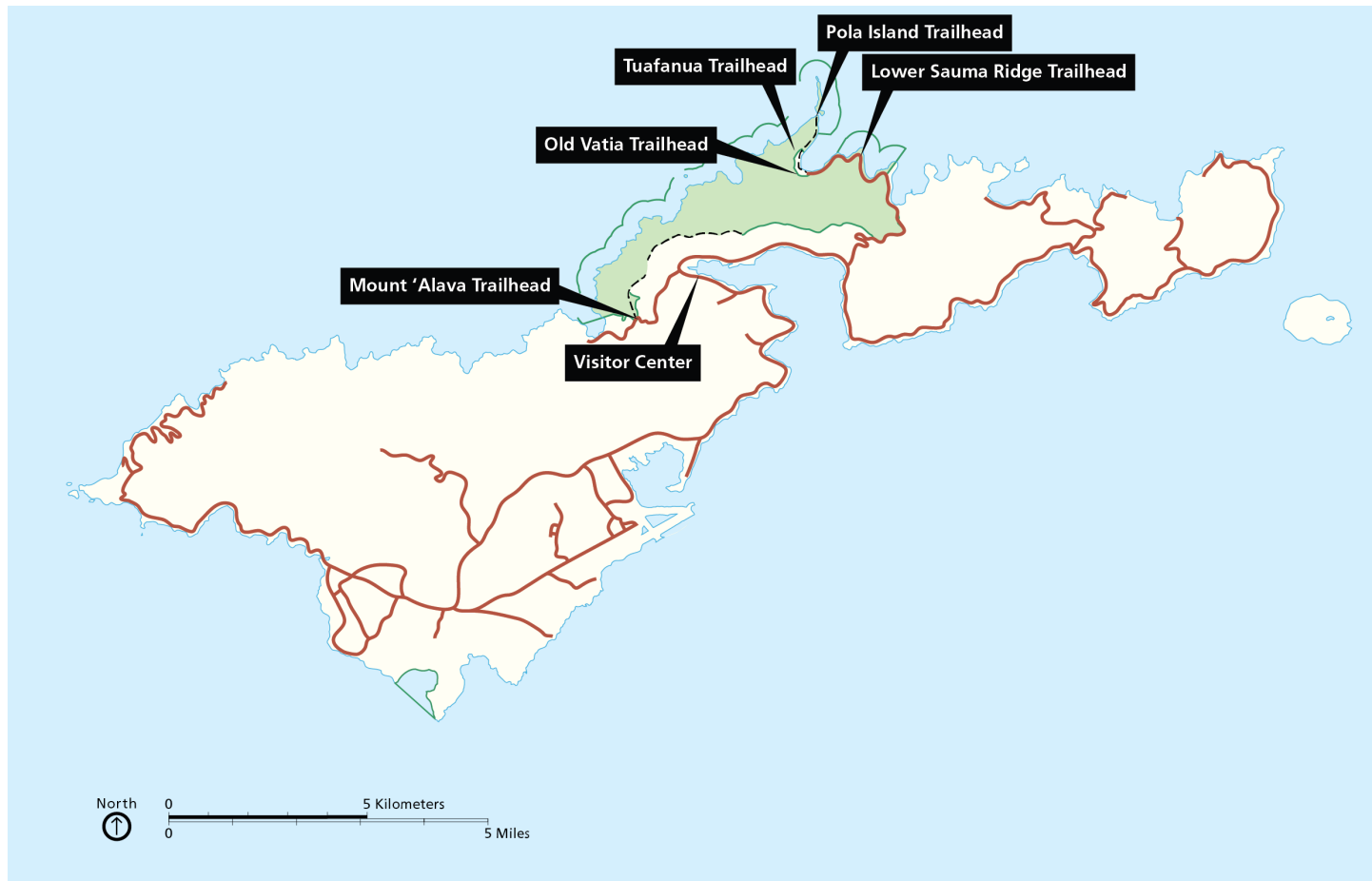
Mount 'Alava Trailhead

Old Vatia Trailhead

Pola Island Trailhead

Tuafanua Trailhead

Visitor Center



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR PARK AREAS ASSESSED

The Architectural Barrier Act requires that any building or facility designed, constructed, altered, or leased with federal funds be accessible and usable by any individuals with disabilities. The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards and the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS) were adopted for federal facilities in 1984 and 2006, respectively. Subsequently, in 2011, standards for recreational facilities were incorporated into ABAAS as chapter 10. In 2023, NPS Policy Memorandum 23-01 implemented the most current International Code Council (ICC) and American National Standards Institute (ANSI) building codes to supersede ABAAS for building standards. The Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards will continue to provide scoping and technical requirements for outdoor developed areas.

Depending on the date of a building's construction or alteration, different design standards apply. The interdisciplinary team used checklists that include ABAAS, ICC, and ANSI Standards to conduct the transition plan facility assessments. Although a barrier may be identified by the current assessment for improvement, facilities are only required to follow the standard in place at the time of construction and/or alteration. Therefore, barriers may not be in violation of accessibility standards. However, any renovation or upgrade of that building is required to meet the most current standard at the time of work. In addition, Harpers Ferry Center Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media were followed for facility and program assessments.

This document does not include strategies for transitioning employee workspaces to be accessible. In the event that an employee with a disability is hired by National Park of American Samoa, the supervisor and employee will discuss the employee's needs. The supervisor will then determine what accommodations are reasonable in the given work environment and determine a plan of action to meet those needs.

For each park area, this document provides an overview of findings and recommended solutions in a brief narrative and bulleted list and provides corresponding conceptual site plan(s) that illustrate the locations of proposed improvements. For details on each barrier, solution, and time frame, see the companion implementation strategy table at https://parkplanning.nps.gov/NPSA_SETP. It is important to understand that the site plans and recommendations are conceptual and will require further design development and historic and environmental compliance before construction. SETPs are not to be used as a section 106 compliance review submittal. Consult with cultural and natural resource staff before proceeding with recommended actions. During the implementation phase, the interdisciplinary team must reassess the project site conditions; refer to ICC, ANSI, and ABAAS, as relevant; and consult with the local disability community to ensure that specific design and programmatic solutions are correctly addressed.

UNIQUE CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION AT NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA

The National Park of American Samoa recognizes that complying with accessibility provisions is not always practicable because the natural terrain, existing vegetation, or other constraints impose limitations in most park locations.

In the National Park of American Samoa, the Samoan lands the park manages are leased, and many projects involve informing the park village as part of NPS co-stewardship and maintaining a positive relationship. With that, most “car parking” and “trailheads” are outside park boundaries and on family land. Through the lease, families are asked to provide access to trailheads and possibly parking space, if space is available. With that in mind, it is difficult to request to a family that these proposed improvements occur on their land and not in the park.

For the “routes” in the park, complying with all technical requirements is not practicable due to terrain of most “routes.” Also, doing so would likely fundamentally alter the purpose of the setting. The National Park of American Samoa has numerous cultural features that include archeological sites, burial grounds and cemeteries, traditional cultural sites, and other properties considered sacred, as well as areas that are protected habitat for threatened or endangered species.



LOWER SAUMA RIDGE TRAILHEAD

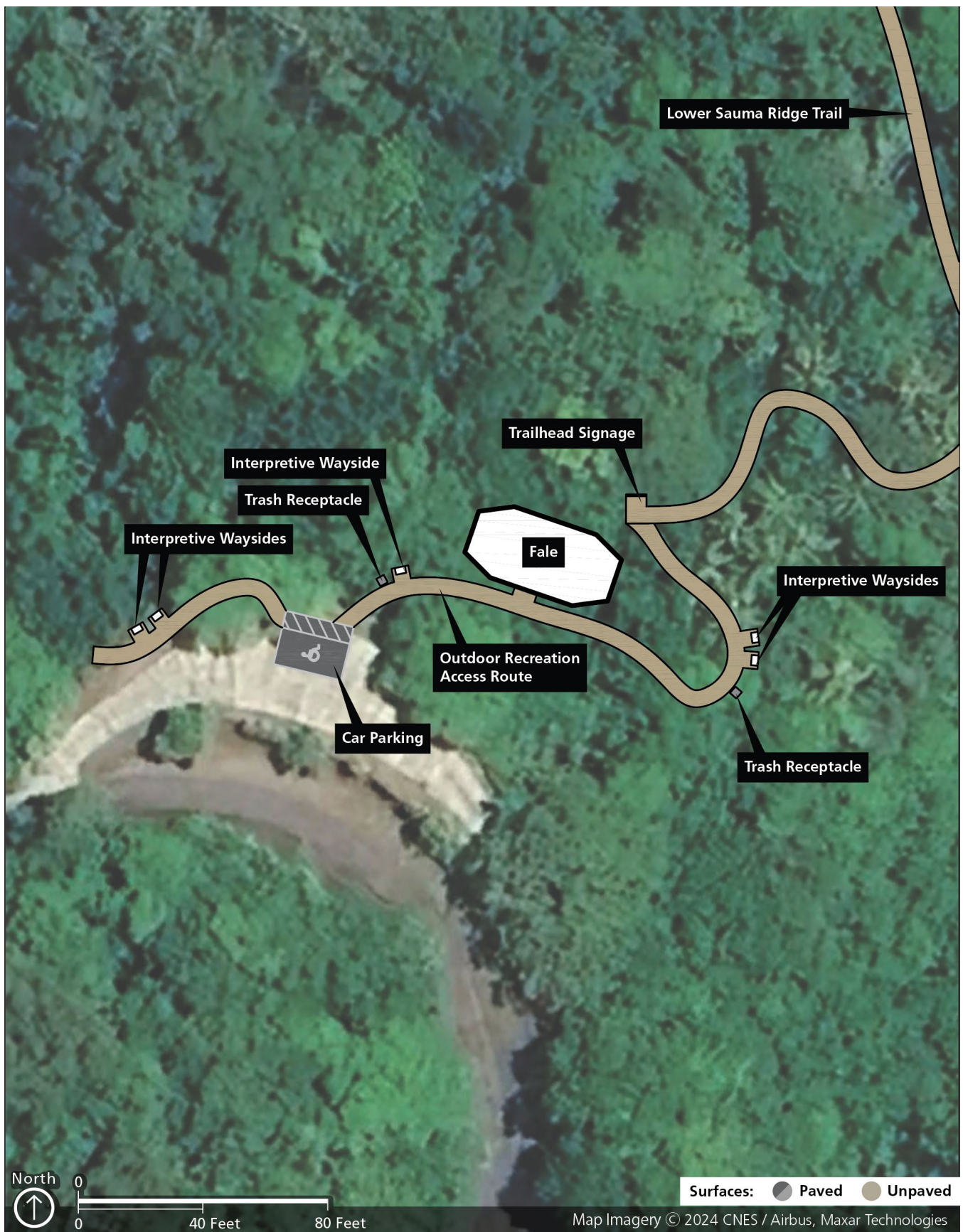
Lower Sauma Ridge Trailhead is located on the northern side of the island and is one of the more formal trailheads in the park. Thick vegetation surrounds the pulloff but opens up to views of the majestic Pola Island below. There is a paved parking area for vehicles that leads to an unpaved grass surface interpretive area with several wayside exhibits and a covered Fale. Improving the ground surface, trimming vegetation for clear vertical clearance, and providing a route up to the Fale with benches would greatly increase the accessibility of this area.

Proposed accessibility improvements at Lower Sauma Ridge Trailhead include the following:

- **Car Parking:** Add accessible parking, an access aisle, and signage.
- **Routes:** Improve the ground surface on the route to the trailhead and other site features. Provide a route up to the Fale.
- **Interpretive Waysides:** Improve the contrast on wayside exhibits and improve the ground space to be level. Provide an audio version and audio description of the interpretive wayside.
- **Trailhead Signage:** Add trailhead signage that outlines trail characteristics and conditions.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

Lower Sauma Ridge Trailhead Conceptual Site Plan





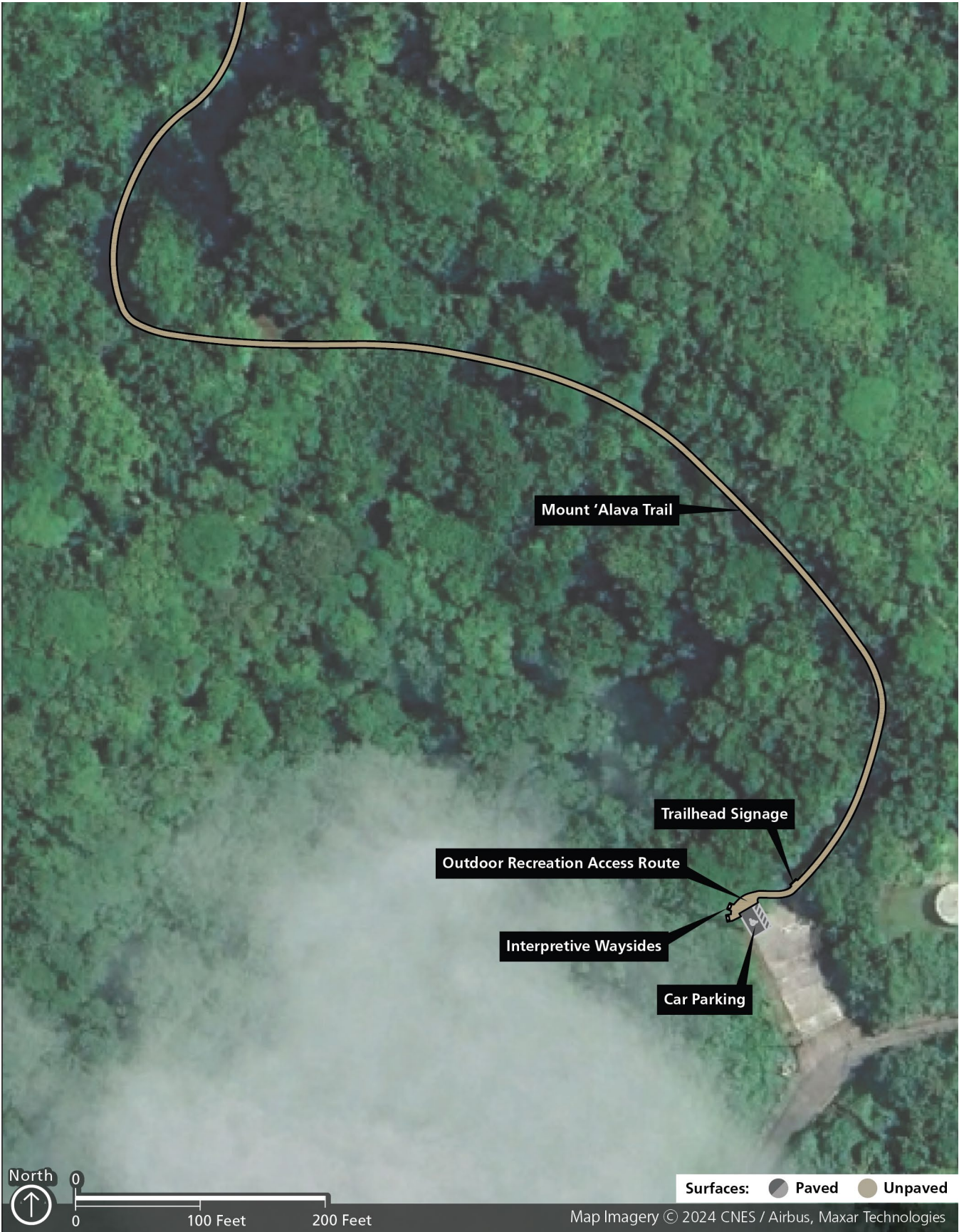
MOUNT 'ALAVA TRAILHEAD

Located near the southern portion of the park, Mount 'Alava Trailhead is outside of the NPS leased lands and provides access to the Mount 'Alava Trail and the Fati Fati Trail. Visitors park on a paved surface surrounded by forest and can learn more about the park through on-site interpretive waysides. The Mount 'Alava Trail starts from the parking area and provides an immersive forest experience, however, with steep slopes and uneven surfaces. To provide a higher degree of access to the area, park staff are considering adding a viewing area for the first 0.25 mile down the trail and reducing slopes, removing obstructions, and hardening surfaces. Proposed accessibility improvements at Mount 'Alava Trailhead include the following:

- **Car Parking:** Add accessible parking, an access aisle, and signage.
- **Routes:** Improve the ground surface on the route to the trailhead and to all other site features.
- **Interpretive Waysides:** Improve the contrast on wayside exhibits and improve the ground space to be level. Provide an audio version and audio description of the interpretive wayside.
- **Trailhead Signage:** Add trailhead signage that outlines trail characteristics and conditions.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

Mount 'Alava Trailhead Conceptual Site Plan





OLD VATIA TRAILHEAD

The Old Vatia Trailhead is somewhat hidden, and current access requires park visitors to park their vehicle on private property. The trailhead area has an interpretive wayside that could be improved by providing a level ground space in front of it and including trail characteristics on trailhead signage.

Proposed accessibility improvements at Old Vatia Trailhead include the following:

- **Car Parking:** As feasible, add accessible parking, an access aisle, and signage.
- **Routes:** Improve the ground surface on the route to the trailhead and to all other site features.
- **Interpretive Waysides:** Improve the contrast on wayside exhibits and improve the ground space to be level. Provide an audio version and audio description of the interpretive wayside.
- **Trailhead Signage:** Add trailhead signage that outlines trail characteristics and conditions.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

Old Vatia Trailhead Conceptual Site Plan





POLA ISLAND TRAILHEAD

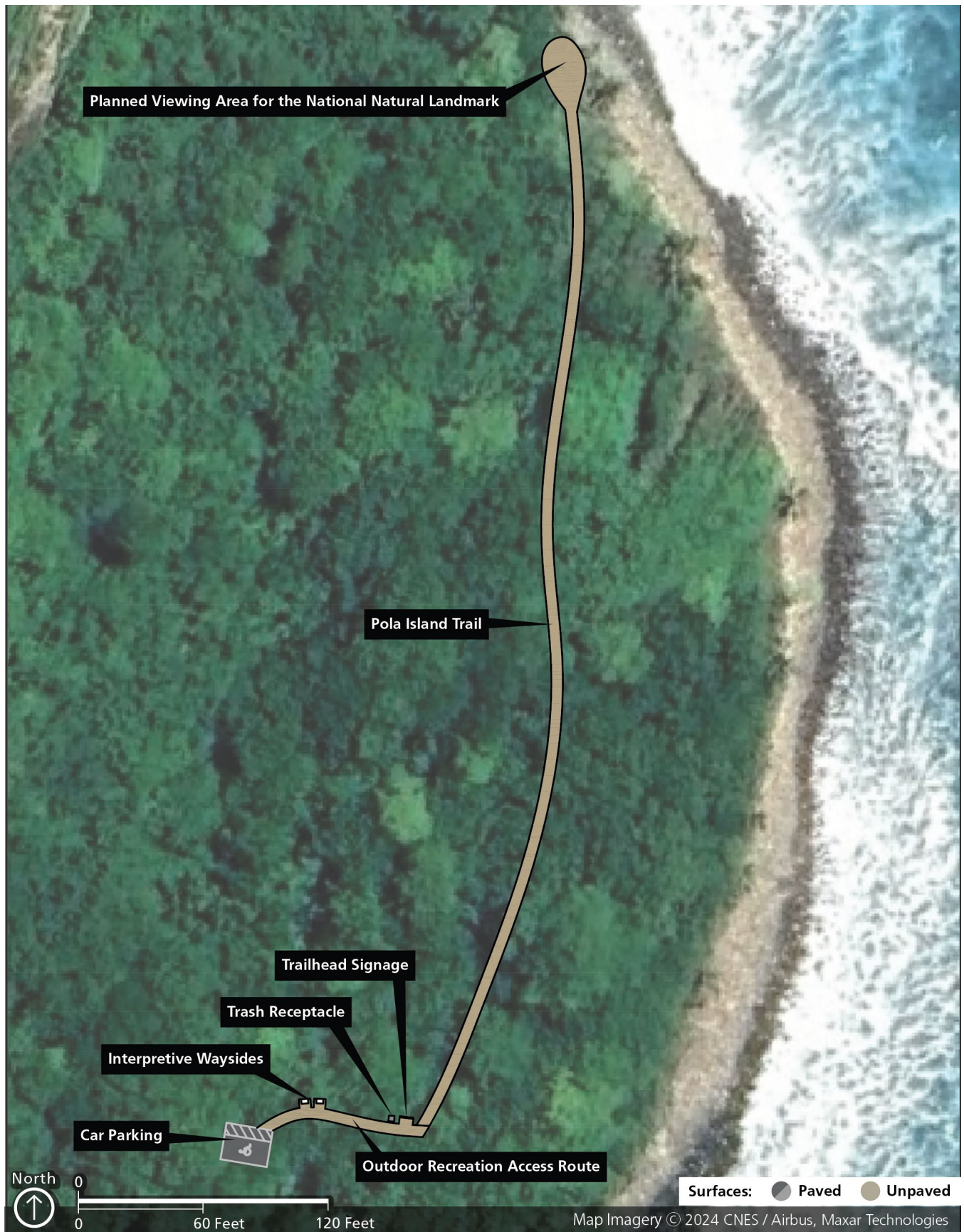
Pola Island Trailhead and Trail is one of the more accessible locations in the park. Visitors park beneath a forest of trees and hike 0.1 miles roundtrip on a fairly flat, but at times uneven, trail to a rough and rocky beach with views of the coastline and Pola Island, a National Natural Landmark. Slight improvements to the trail's surface to make it firmer and more stable and cutting back vegetation to provide the required vertical clearance would make this trail accessible to more visitors. The park is planning to formalize a viewing area, with accessibility features, to take in the magnificent views of Pola Island and the coastline.

Proposed accessibility improvements at Pola Island Trailhead include the following:

- **Car Parking:** Add accessible parking, an access aisle, and signage.
- **Routes:** Improve the ground surface on the route to the trailhead and all other visitor facilities.
- **Interpretive Waysides:** Improve the contrast on wayside exhibits, and improve the ground space to be level. Provide an audio version and audio description of the interpretive wayside.
- **Trailhead Signage:** Add trailhead signage that outlines trail characteristics and conditions.
- **Trail:** Harden surfaces with fewer obstacles, and cut vegetation.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

Pola Island Trailhead Conceptual Site Plan





TUAFANUA TRAILHEAD

Tuafanua Trailhead is located on private property and in the northern section of the park. The Tuafanua Trail leads visitors up switchbacks from Vatia Village through a lush tropical rainforest to a hidden coastline. The trailhead is undeveloped, with parking currently on grass. Designating an accessible car parking space and providing trailhead information on a flat surface would provide visitor access to information needed to make decisions about continuing their journey on the Tuafanua Trail.

Proposed accessibility improvements at Tuafanua Trailhead include the following:

- **Car Parking:** As feasible, add accessible parking, an access aisle, and signage.
- **Routes:** Improve the ground surface on the route to the trailhead.
- **Trailhead Signage:** Add trailhead signage that outlines trail characteristics and conditions.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

Tuafanua Trailhead Conceptual Site Plan





VISITOR CENTER

National Park of American Samoa's visitor center is in Pago Pago and is a popular stop for visitors to learn more about the park and what experiences they can have. An accessible car parking space is provided, with a series of ramps to reach the entrance door. Once inside, the exhibits showcase the significance of the island's unique tropical rainforests, coral reefs, fruit bats, and the Samoan culture. There are interactive and tactile exhibits that integrate models of islands, sea life, forest birds, and cultural handicrafts and tools for all visitors to be able to experience. A park film in the theater has open subtitles, with park staff currently working on open captioning. Improvements to the accessible car parking space, ramps, restroom features, accessible routes throughout the exhibit space, and text size and contrast of exhibits would improve the accessibility of the Visitor Center.

Proposed accessibility improvements at Visitor Center include the following:

- **Parking:** Improve the slopes and widths of accessible parking spaces. Provide directional signage to point visitors to the accessible entrance.
- **Routes:** Improve the slopes of the ramp and maneuvering clearance by the entrance door. Provide handrails on both side of stairs that extend at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- **Exhibits and Bookstore:** Improve knee clearance at the tactile map and other exhibits, the operability of exhibits, the text size and contrast, and the clear width and height of circulation space. Provide audio versions and descriptions of exhibits. Relocate goods for sale to be within an accessible reach range.
- **Theater:** Add designated wheelchair and companion seating spaces. Provide opened captioning for the park film.

- **Restrooms:** Improve restrooms with accessible features and more maneuvering clearance.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

Visitor Center Conceptual Site Plan





NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA PROGRAMS

National Park of American Samoa showed strengths in its tactile elements for exhibits. The park does not currently have an accessible guide or alternative formats for printed and digital materials. Unique opportunities exist to offer audio versions and descriptions of park videos to engage staff and further support visitors with disabilities. National Park of American Samoa staff are aware of these areas for improvement and are committed to addressing them.

Proposed accessibility improvements to parkwide programs include the following:

- **Publications:** Add parkwide and site-specific alternative format publications.
- **Audiovisuals:** Add audio descriptions for all on-site videos, and add videos and photographs of inaccessible trails/views.
- **Website and Social Media:** Add detailed accessibility information, broken down by user types, and promote accessible experiences and opportunities in social media.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.



NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA POLICIES, PRACTICES, COMMUNICATION, AND TRAINING

National Park of American Samoa showed strengths in its responsiveness to complaints about accessibility issues and commitment to removing barriers. The park does not currently have accessibility training for staff or conduct outreach to local groups with disabilities. Unique opportunities exist to offer staff training and inclusive outreach to engage staff and further support visitors with disabilities. National Park of American Samoa staff are aware of these areas for improvement and are committed to addressing them.

Proposed accessibility improvements to policies, practices, communication, and training include the following:

- **Staff Training and Park Protocols:** Add staff and discipline-related accessibility training, and add standard operating procedures for park policies, such as assisting people with disabilities in emergencies.
- **Communications and Partnerships:** Conduct outreach to local groups with disabilities, add accessibility information on the park website, develop an accessibility guide, and provide guidance to partners and outside groups regarding accessible programs.

Details of the identified accessibility barriers and their recommended solutions and target time frames are available in the implementation strategy table.

CONCLUSION

National Park of American Samoa staff are committed to providing all visitors with the opportunity to connect with and learn about the park's unique natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Accessibility improvements identified in the National Park of American Samoa SETP will make it easier for individuals with cognitive, hearing, vision, and mobility disabilities to discover, understand, and enjoy the range of experiences available at the park. Park staff will continue to work towards accommodating all visitors while sustaining the park's legacy to preserve and protect paleotropical rainforests, coral reef ecosystems, and the Fa'asamoa (Samoan way of life), including living cultural traditions and resources that date back 3,000 years.

The primary goal of the plan is to consider universal design strategies and document modifications needed to provide access to park facilities, services, activities, and programs for all visitors. As park staff work towards implementing the plan, physical access to and within assessed park areas will be improved, and park information and programs will be enhanced or created for all visitors across the breadth of key experiences at National Park of American Samoa. Experiences such as rain forest immersive hiking trails, signage in alternative formats, and accessible car parking to provide access to more park areas will be improved to enhance the visitor experience.

The National Park of American Samoa SETP is a living document intended to be used as a guiding reference for the park as park staff implement accessibility upgrades and documents accessibility accomplishments. As barriers to accessibility are removed and/or improved, changes will be updated in the implementation strategy table. Park staff will conduct periodic reviews to evaluate and update conditions to reflect accomplishments and document new programs or other changes that occur over time. Revisions to the plan may include conducting additional assessments for areas not originally conducted as a part of this plan.

Over time, the results of this collective effort will make National Park of American Samoa a truly welcoming and accommodating place for all visitors and will provide equal opportunity to access the places, resources, stories, and experiences at the park.

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APPENDIX A: ACCESSIBILITY LAWS, STANDARDS, GUIDELINES, AND NPS POLICIES APPLICABLE TO NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA

As a national park, National Park of American Samoa is required to comply with specific federal laws that mandate that discriminatory barriers be removed to provide equal opportunities to persons with disabilities. The following laws, design guidelines, and director's orders pertain to National Park of American Samoa.

LAWS

- Architectural Barriers Act of 1968: <https://www.access-board.gov/aba/guides>
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.550>
- Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: <http://www.section508.gov>
- Effective Communication: <http://www.ada.gov/effective-comm.htm>
- Reasonable Accommodations: <http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/disability-employment/reasonable-accommodations>
- Other Power-Driven Mobility Devices: <https://www.ada.gov/opdmd.htm>
- Service Animals: https://www.ada.gov/service_animals_2010.htm
- 43 CFR, Section 17.549 Program Accessibility: Discrimination Prohibited: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.549>
- 43 CFR, Section 17.550 Program Accessibility: Existing Facilities: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.550>
- 43 CFR, Section 17.551 Program Accessibility: New Construction and Alterations: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/43/17.551>

NPS DIRECTOR'S ORDERS AND MANAGEMENT POLICIES

- Director's Order 16A: *Reasonable Accommodation for Applicants And Employees with Disabilities*: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/DO_16A_5-4-1999.pdf
- Director's Order 42: *Accessibility for Visitors with Disabilities*: https://www.nps.gov/subjects/policy/upload/DO_42_11-3-2000.pdf
- National Park Service *Management Policies 2006*, Section 1.9.3 Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1548/upload/ManagementPolicies2006.pdf>

GUIDELINES

- Draft Accessibility Standards for Public Rights-Of-Way: <https://www.access-board.gov/prowag>
- Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for National Park Service Interpretive Media: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/accessibility.htm>

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES

Many of the resources listed below for trainings, accessibility assessments, project development, and implementation are currently located on the Pacific West Region Accessibility Self-Evaluation and Transition Planning SharePoint site (<https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/nps-PWR-AccessibilitySETP?CT=1649343052705&OR=OWA-NT&CID=204c2563-b913-0894-1cae-52bc8f021fcf>). In the near future, this information will be available to all NPS staff and will be uploaded to the Park Facility Management Division's "Accessibility for Visitors and Employees with Disabilities" web page (<https://doimspp.sharepoint.com/sites/nps-pfmd/SitePages/Access-for-Visitors-and-Employees-with-Disabilities.aspx>). This information includes specific accessibility resources for concessions, facilities and maintenance, interpretation and education, and law enforcement staff. Resources include the following:

- A glossary of accessibility terms
- Reference information and links to laws and policies
- Accessibility assessment checklists and videos
- Accessibility training links and materials
- Templates that help track and document accessibility actions and an accessibility guide
- Guidance for making historic sites accessible
- Guidance for service animals in parks, accessible publications and programs, signage, and audio description
- Disability dialogue information and trainings
- Guidance for preparing PMIS packages for accessibility improvements
- Trail assessment protocols and summary sheets

APPENDIX C: PARK AREAS NOT ASSESSED

The following park areas were not assessed for this plan. The selection process determined that key park experiences provided in these park areas were available in an equivalent way in the areas that were assessed. If any park area not assessed is improved by new construction or alterations in the future, the area will be assessed and improved to comply with current accessibility standards. These areas will be improved as a part of future facility alterations or as a component of a future planned construction project.

- Park areas on Ofu Island
- Park areas on Ta'ū Island

APPENDIX D: CONTRIBUTORS

NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA

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NATIONAL PARK OF AMERICAN SAMOA ACCESSIBILITY SELF-EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN NOVEMBER 2024

This accessibility self-evaluation and transition plan has been prepared as a collaborative effort between National Park of American Samoa staff, Regional Office staff serving Interior Regions 8, 9, 10, and 12, and Denver Service Center staff and is recommended for approval by the superintendent.

Approved

Date

Scott Burch, Superintendent, National Park of American Samoa



As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historic places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

National Park of American Samoa [eTIC number ###/#####]

November 2024

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