

Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Study for the National Mall and Surrounding Park Areas

National Park Service
U.S. Department
of the Interior



Newsletter No. 1

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You Are Invited . . . Public Meetings!

Thursday, **February 5, 2004**

Old Post Office Pavilion*

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Room 09

Washington, DC 20506

2 to 4 pm and 5 to 8 pm

*Please use entrance from 12th Street

Friday, **February 6, 2004**

**Women in Military Service for
America Memorial**

Arlington National Cemetery

West End of Arlington Memorial Bridge

Arlington, VA 22201

2 to 4 pm and 5 to 8 pm

Do you have a plan or related information for future Visitor Transportation Services? Include an exhibit on your proposals and plans at our public meetings ... See Page 3 for details!

National Park Service Plans for Future Visitor Transportation Services in our Nation's Capital

Dear Friends and Visitors:

I am excited to let you know that the National Park Service (NPS) is beginning the public involvement phase of our transportation planning for future visitor transportation services for the National Mall, Memorials, and surrounding parks and destinations. Please join us at the upcoming public scoping and alternatives development workshops noted below!

Washington, DC is home to a remarkable concentration of monuments, memorials and visitor attractions that symbolize the history and culture of our nation. Since 1969, our transportation goal has been to help visitors access these special locations and understand their significance through the provision of Tourmobile, a concession-run visitor transportation system. As our contract for this service comes to a close in 2007, the National Park Service is exploring whether visitor transportation services are still needed; and if so what type of vehicles, routes, services, fuels, and visitor experiences are desired.

As a prelude to planning, the NPS undertook several studies, summarized in this newsletter.

- Visitor surveys to understand visitation patterns and desired types of transit.
- Local visitor transportation options.
- Strategies for visitor transportation services in five cities (Boston, Philadelphia, Orlando, Savannah and London).

In addition to the NPS, a number of local and federal agencies have also undertaken transportation studies addressing tour bus management, visitor parking needs and low cost, frequent bus services. The NPS will be considering all related plans within this study.

Please join us at our upcoming public meetings and help the National Park Service shape future visitor transportation services for the National Mall and surrounding parks.

Sincerely,

Regional Director, National Capital Region

Purpose of Visitor Transportation Study

PROJECT PURPOSE

The purpose of the project is to protect park resources and enhance visitor experience and education by providing a sustainable, integrated and affordable transportation system for visitors to the national parks and other visitor sites in the Washington, DC area.

PROJECT NEED

The Secretary of the Interior, through the NPS, is responsible for providing an interpretive visitor transportation system for the National Mall and Memorial Parks and among NPS and other visitor sites in the Washington, DC area. Visitors currently use a range of transportation modes and services that are not consistently integrated or linked to visit both NPS and non-NPS destinations. A large number of visitors continue to use private automobiles to access their destinations despite the extremely limited availability of parking spaces near these locations. Visitors typically travel to multiple destinations on each day of their visit and distances between primary visitor destinations are often too great for visitors to walk comfortably and conveniently. Long-term planning goals for Washington, DC include the reduction of vehicle congestion on the roads between and surrounding NPS sites and other federal visitor destinations, improved air quality, and the provision of visitor parking facilities outside the primary visitor destination areas, with increased visitor use and transit instead.

The NPS has provided visitor transportation within the National Mall and Memorial Parks and between NPS and other federal sites since 1969. This service is also the only provider of visitor transportation within the Arlington National Cemetery. The original NPS concession contract to provide visitor transportation expires in December 2005. A two-year extension is in place to continue providing service through 2007. It is the responsibility of the NPS to determine whether such a visitor transportation system is still needed; to identify and analyze a full range of mechanisms for providing the service if needed; and to explore and evaluate a variety of service characteristics, routes, and destinations to create an affordable, sustainable, convenient, safe and educational system for visitor transportation that offers a desirable option [that reduces congestion] to the use of private vehicles.

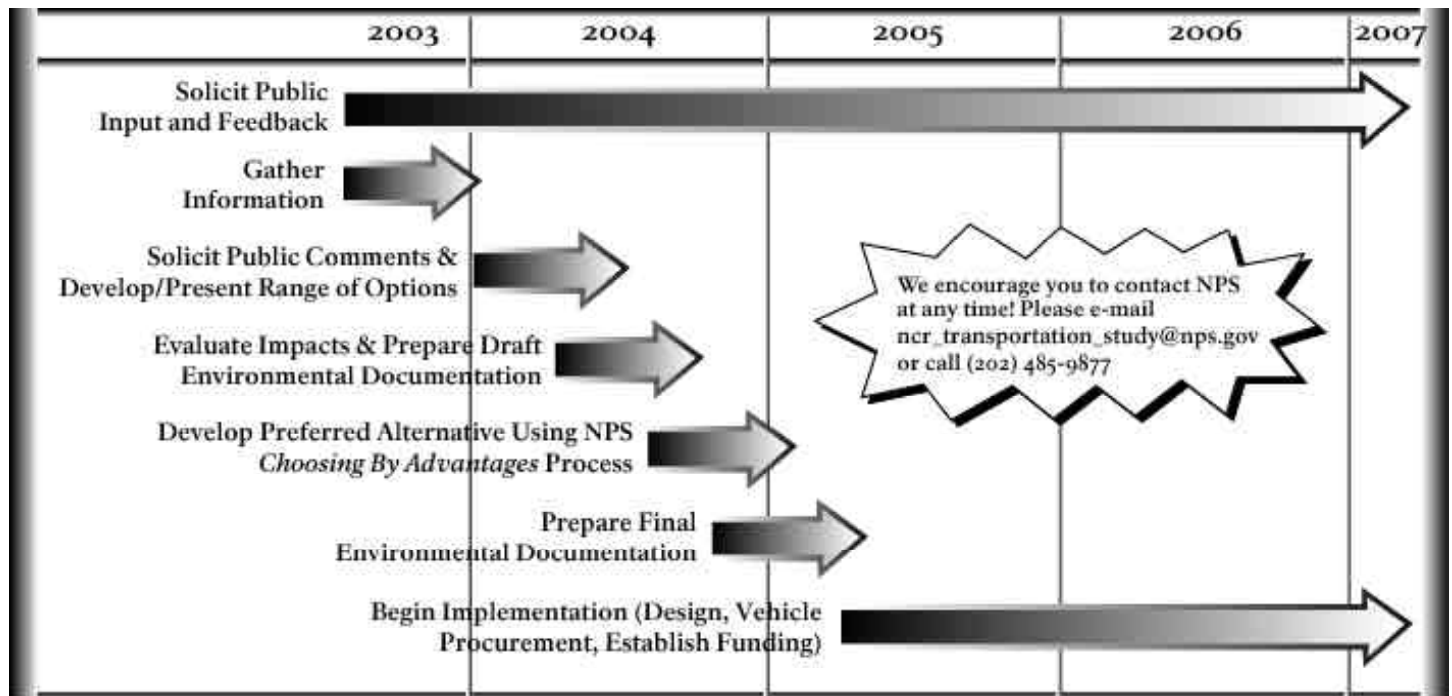


GOALS FOR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- ◆ Develop an identifiable, high quality transportation system appropriate to the NPS and Nation's Capital using context sensitive design.
- ◆ Meet visitor mobility needs and enhance their enjoyment by providing a convenient, sustainable transportation system to and among existing and future NPS sites and other visitor destinations in the Nation's Capital.
- ◆ Provide a transportation system that offers a comprehensive visitor orientation and educational interpretation services to gain an awareness and understanding of the significance of our Nation's Capital and its memorials, landmarks and rich cultural heritage.
- ◆ Provide and encourage the use of a visitor transportation system that supplements and is integrated with the existing urban transportation network and that maximizes direct and convenient connections to mass transit (Metro) and other transportation systems (i.e. roadways and parking facilities, and other commercial, private and public service providers).
- ◆ Pursue a model transportation solution that creatively explores all opportunities to work or partner with government agencies and public and private transit service providers to help fulfill the mission of the NPS.
- ◆ Develop an easy-to-use transportation ticketing and payment system that is affordable, flexible and coordinated with other transportation providers.

Transportation Planning Process

Project Timeline



Help NPS Define the Range of Alternatives

The NPS realizes that the public plays an essential stewardship role in taking care of national parks for the enjoyment of present and future generations. In addition, decision-making is greatly improved when considering diverse contributions from park partners and the public. By engaging the public from the outset of the project, the NPS hopes to gain valuable input to expand the range of options and better assess the issues of greatest concern. We are obligated to make certain our decisions do not compromise park resources and the right of future generations to enjoy them.

Our public meetings will offer an opportunity for the sharing of ideas, comments and concerns regarding visitor transportation for the National Mall and surrounding park areas. This newsletter will provide background information and present innovative transportation ideas. Additionally, this newsletter introduces some fundamental "building blocks" for transportation services. Using these "building blocks," we invite you to help us assemble creative concepts for further consideration.

The first round of meetings will help lay much of the groundwork for the overall planning process and environmental documentation.

The related methods for developing a preferred alternative are outlined on page 10 of this newsletter. Following the formal planning process, many other important steps will be necessary including the establishment of funding, system/facility design and vehicle procurement. With ongoing participation from the public throughout these processes, the likelihood of a successful system implementation is greatly enhanced.



Developing Your Own Plans for Future Services?

On January 6, 2004, the NPS invited parties currently conducting related planning for transportation or visitor services for the Washington, DC area to prepare informational exhibits (for display purposes only) at the Public Meetings scheduled for February 5 and 6, 2004. Each person or organization is limited to one (1) 24"x36" foam-core exhibit board dealing with your proposals only. All exhibits must be registered with the National Capital Parks-Central Transportation Analyst at (202)485-9877 or ncr_transportation_study@nps.gov by January 23, 2004. We encourage you to contact the NPS and participate in planning the future transportation system.

Background

History of NPS Visitor Transportation

Since 1969 the National Park Service has provided transportation for visitors to the Washington, DC area. The NPS selected a concessioner to provide interpretive transportation to visitors on the National Mall and surrounding park areas. While stops have varied over the years, Tourmobile has provided multiple routes including:

- ◆ National Mall and Memorial Parks
- ◆ Arlington National Cemetery
- ◆ Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens (via George Washington Memorial Pkwy.)
- ◆ Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

FRAMEWORK FOR THE ORIGINAL SERVICE

The Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the NPS, is responsible for maintaining our national parks and for providing facilities and services for their public enjoyment through concessioners, partnerships or otherwise. In 1967 the NPS issued a Prospectus for interpretive transportation services. At this time the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Corporation (WMATC) filed suit contesting the Department of the Interior's (DOI) authority to provide such services within the Washington, DC area, the same service area for which Congress had established WMATC. The U.S. Supreme Court found in Universal Interpretive Shuttle Corp. v. Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Commission, 393 U.S. 186 (1968), the Secretary has substantial power over the National Mall. "When Congress established the WMATC, it did not intend to create dual regulatory jurisdiction by divesting the Secretary of the Interior of his longstanding exclusive charge and control over the mall." Congress has also directed the Secretary to provide interpretive transportation services between or in Federal areas within the District of Columbia and its environs, including, but not limited to, the National Mall and other visitor facilities established within the National Visitor Center Facilities Act of 1968, such as Union Station.

These considerations continue to have relevance to the planning efforts of the National Park Service because it remains the role and responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior, acting through NPS, to plan for future visitor interpretive transportation services on DOI lands. The National Park Service strives to do this in conjunction with all area visitor and transportation agencies and interests to best serve all visitors to our Nation's Capital.

EVOLUTION OF THE CURRENT VISITOR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

- 1969 Services begin in March with three trams.
- 1970 Service added to Arlington National Cemetery through and agreement with the U.S. Department of Army following the decision to limit public vehicular access while continuing visitor access to the cemetery.



National Park Service selected concessioner, Tourmobile.

- 1974 Legislation provided for additional routes to serve the U.S. Capitol, the Kennedy Center and Union Station.
- 1976 Service briefly added to R.F.K. Stadium parking lots for Bicentennial celebrations.
- 1978 Routes to Frederick Douglass N.H.S. and Mt. Vernon were added.
- 1995 A north route to include the Pennsylvania Avenue N.H.S., Ford's Theatre, and FBI was added.
- 2003 Frederick Douglass and Mt. Vernon routes suspended due to reduced tourism.

THE SYSTEM AND ITS USE

The system is designed to provide sightseeing and education - interpreter guides seated near the driver of each vehicle describe sights, provide educational background, and answer visitor questions. The transportation service is provided year round, and served over 1.37 million users in 2000. Tourmobile is estimated to serve approximately 15% of the visitor transportation market. In 2001, Tourmobile was expecting its most successful year ever, projecting to serve approximately 2 million visitors; however, the impact of the September 11th attacks on overall travel also affected Tourmobile. In response to these market conditions, service to some attractions was temporarily suspended.

The system is currently comprised of about 40 buses and trams, which can carry more than 3,000 passengers in total, including vehicles equipped to serve disabled visitors. Some vehicles have been modified to run on Compressed Natural Gas (CNG), a less polluting alternative to diesel fuel. Tourmobile houses its vehicles and maintenance center on Hains Point within East Potomac Park on NPS lands. Tourmobile routes serve more than 20 stops, including Arlington National Cemetery.

Background

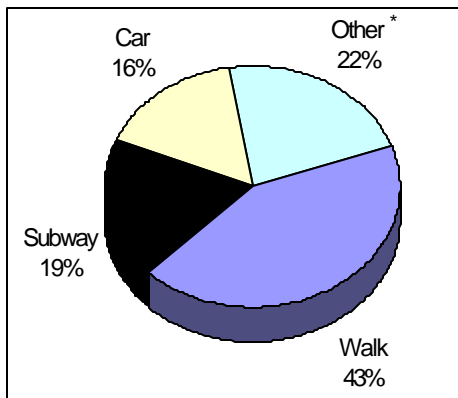
NPS Visitor Transportation Survey

A Visitor Transportation Survey was conducted in the Spring and Summer of 2003 for the NPS by PriceWaterhouse Coopers and ETC Institute. The Survey was conducted to help the NPS understand the profiles, preferences and needs of visitors regarding transportation in the Washington, DC area. This data will also help determine the appropriate range of services to provide to NPS sites. Key findings from the survey are highlighted on the remainder of this page.

- ◆ Approximately 87% of visitors travel with a group made up of family members, friends or business associates.

- ◆ The majority (60%) of respondents spent 2 to 4 days visiting sites in the focus area of the study.
- ◆ Survey respondents visited an average of five attractions per day.
- ◆ Twenty-four percent of respondents indicated that there were individuals in their travel party who could only walk limited distances due to age (young or old) or physical condition.
- ◆ About one third of the respondents indicated that this was their first trip to the Washington, DC area.
- ◆ The survey indicates that the majority (63%) of visitors make transportation planning decisions after they arrive, rather than in advance of their trip.

Modes of Travel Between Visitor Attractions

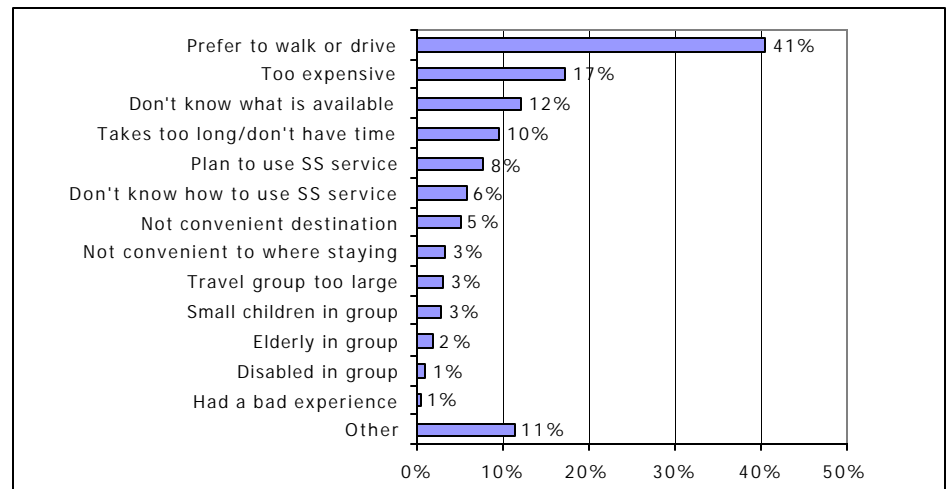


Source: NPS, Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Survey, 11/03

Walking and the Metro Rail subway are the primary modes of travel used between all visitor attractions. Sixty-one percent of all visitors used the subway at some point during their visit to Washington, DC, and most felt it was "easy" or "very easy" to use.

*Taxi, sightseeing service, public bus, etc.

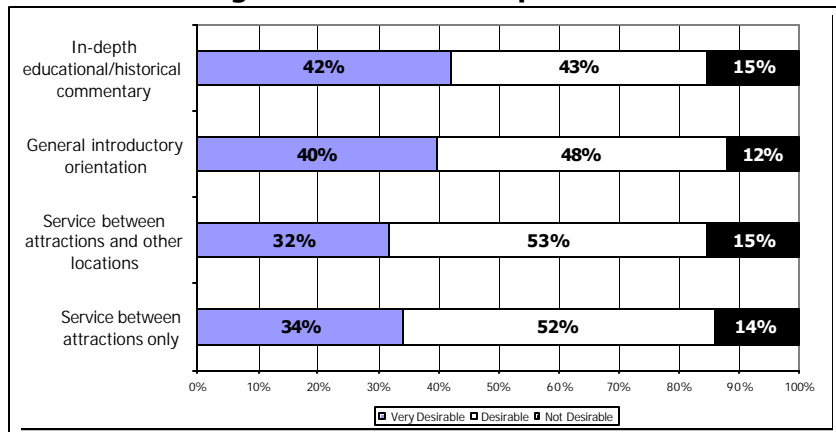
Reasons People May Choose to Not Use Sightseeing Services



Source: NPS, Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Survey, 11/03

Approximately 18% of visitors indicated that they had used a sightseeing service (Tourmobile, Old Town Trolley, etc.) in the Washington, DC area, with the majority (82%) not choosing to do so. However, satisfaction levels were extremely high for all aspects of existing sightseeing services. There were multiple reasons indicated that either prevented or might prevent visitors from using sightseeing services.

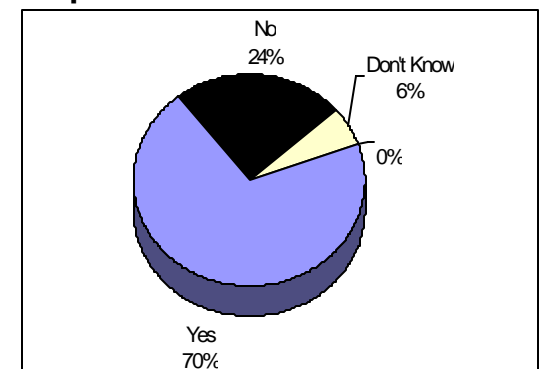
Desire for a Range of Different Transportation Services



Source: NPS, Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Survey, 11/03

Four different transportation system categories were presented in the NPS Visitor Transportation Survey. Eighty-five percent or more of respondents felt it would be "desirable" or "very desirable" to have any of the four different types of transportation services described in the survey.

Willingness to Park 15-30 Minutes from National Mall and Memorial Parks if Frequent Shuttle was Available



Source: NPS, Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Survey, 11/03

Seventy percent of overall survey respondents were willing to use remote parking and shuttles to access the National Mall and Memorial Parks. Of those willing to use remote parking, approximately two-thirds were also willing to pay for parking.

Background

Policy Guidance for National Park Service



NPS Management Policies 2001 provide the following guidance related to transportation planning for national parks. “NPS will, where appropriate, emphasize and encourage alternative transportation systems, which may include a mix of buses, trains, ferries, trams, and—preferably—non-motorized modes of access to, and moving within, parks. In general, the preferred modes of transportation will be those that contribute to

maximum visitor enjoyment of, and minimum adverse impacts to, park resources and values.”

“NPS will explore transportation systems if a project:

- ◆ Is appropriate and necessary to meet park management needs or to provide for visitor use and enjoyment;
- ◆ Is designed with extreme care and sensitivity to the landscape through which it passes;
- ◆ Will not cause unacceptable adverse impacts to natural and cultural resources, and will minimize or mitigate those that cannot be avoided;
- ◆ Will not cause use in the areas it serves to exceed the areas visitor carrying capacity;
- ◆ Will incorporate the principles of energy conservation and sustainability;
- ◆ Will incorporate universal design principles to provide for accessibility for all people, including those with disabilities;

- ◆ Will take maximum advantage of interpretive opportunities and scenic values;
- ◆ Will not violate federal, state, or local air pollution control plans or regulations; and
- ◆ Is based on a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach that is fully consistent with the park’s general management plan.”

“The Service will work cooperatively with other federal agencies; tribal, state and local governments; regional planning bodies; concessioners; citizen groups, and others to design and promote alternative transportation systems for park access and circulation. In-park transportation systems should be linked to public transportation whenever feasible, through cooperation with public transportation agencies and gateway communities. A decision to provide visitor transportation systems will be based on a finding that the system:

- ◆ Is a cost-effective alternative to the construction, operation, and maintenance of additional roads, parking areas, and support facilities;
- ◆ Will reduce traffic congestion, noise, air pollution, and adverse effects on park resources and values;
- ◆ Will enhance the visitor experience by offering new or improved interpretive or recreational opportunities; by simplifying travel within the park; or by making it easier or safer to see park features; and
- ◆ Will conserve energy and utilize alternative fueled vehicles whenever practicable.”

Visitor Tour Market and Transportation Strategies

LOCAL TOUR MARKET

The NPS has conducted research to assess the local tour market and best practices in visitor transportation planning. The findings will be used as a valuable reference for this planning process.

Washington, DC continually ranks among the top tourist destinations in the nation, and travel and tourism is estimated to be a nearly \$10 billion industry for the region. A wide range of tours are available to visitors including, water excursions, historical walking tours, themed van tours and sightseeing trolley or tram tours. The most dominate type of tour to the region remains motorcoach or packaged charter tours. Most guided single day tours in the Washington, DC area cost between \$20 - \$40, with the exception of a numerous of free, guided walking tours.

Most tour operators offer more than one tour, offering a range of services in routes, themes, and in some cases shuttle services from area hotels. Some examples of themes and variations include, espionage and scandal themed tours, routes and tours focused on African American sites, self-guided tours with site interpretation available via personal cell phone, and kayaking tours that combine environmental stewardship with waterfront sightseeing.

NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL TOUR MARKET

The John A. Volpe Transportation Systems Center assisted the NPS by conducting research to assess national and international practices in providing visitor transportation services. Four United States cities and one foreign city were researched to identify strategies that could possibly be utilized in this project setting. The cities included Boston, Philadelphia, Savannah, Orlando and London.

There will be more information from the full report at the public meetings, but a few creative ideas from Savannah, Georgia are noted below.

- ◆ The Historic Area Shuttle (also called the Downtown Loop) offers visitors a free ride through Savannah’s historic district. The route offers links to other Catham Area Transit (CAT) bus routes and the Savannah Belles Ferry service.
- ◆ Tour operators are regulated and may only use designated routes and areas for passenger loading/unloading.
- ◆ Through creative marketing material and visitor guides, Savannah strongly encourages visitors to stop at an initial Visitor Information Center and make use of remote parking and alternative transportation services rather than driving into the historic district.

Building Blocks

for Potential Transportation Services

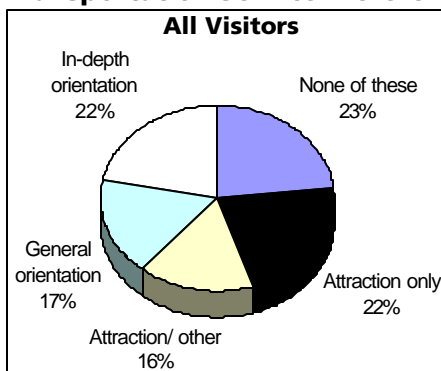
The Range of Alternatives

The NPS will explore a full range of feasible alternatives for any transportation system it may decide to provide. It is not the intention of the NPS to duplicate transportation provided by others. The NPS will evaluate all public feedback to help identify and determine which future transportation services are appropriate for NPS sites. Four general categories of services were described in the [2003 NPS Visitor Transportation Survey](#) and respondents showed no strong preference for one type of service. This may indicate a demand for multiple or layered transportation services to accommodate differing types of visitor needs and desires.

Within any alternative there are many different ways to meet visitor needs, and different approaches can be layered to provide a range of services. NPS policy indicates that transportation can offer new or improved interpretive or recreational opportunities as well as simplify travel making it easier and safer to see the destinations. Think about and share ideas on how these four general categories of transportation services from the 2003 NPS Visitor Transportation Survey could be combined or modified to provide transportation for visitors:

- ◆ Frequent transportation service between visitor attractions would be used mainly by tourists; no commentary about local attractions would be provided.
- ◆ Frequent transportation service between visitor attractions and other destinations (e.g. office buildings, shops, hotels and restaurants) would be used by tourists and residents; no commentary about local attractions would be provided.
- ◆ Transportation service with general introductory orientation to the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area and visitor attractions; the information provided could include the hours that attractions are open, how much it costs to visit sites, etc.
- ◆ Transportation service with in-depth educational or historical commentary about things you may see on the route; the information provided could include details about the reason memorials were built or facts about historic events or government leaders.

Transportation Service Preference



Respondents were fairly equally interested in each of the four types of transportation services when asked to select their most preferable choice. This may indicate a market for more than one type of transportation system, or a transportation service that accommodates various needs and interests.

Source: NPS, Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Survey, 11/03

How Would the System Operate?

Upon selection of a Preferred Alternative, implementation strategies will be examined to determine the best means for funding, delivering, and managing the service. Considerations will include ownership options, contracting methods, funding sources, financing options and visitor fees/fares. At a minimum, the basic approaches listed below will be evaluated to determine the most efficient strategy for providing high quality services.

- ◆ **Concession Operated** - NPS can develop a contract with a concessioner to provide visitor transportation, similar to the current Tourmobile operation. Commercial services contracts must be determined to be necessary and appropriate services providing for public use and enjoyment that cannot be met outside the park boundaries.
- ◆ **Public/Private Operation** - A partnership between public and private entities that seek mutual benefits from a visitor transportation system.
- ◆ **NPS-Owned** - A transportation system which is exclusively owned and operated by the NPS. This would eliminate the need for special contractual arrangements but require the provision of services that are not typically undertaken by the NPS.

Education, Interpretation and Orientation

There are numerous ways to orient visitors and provide them with education and interpretation. Multiple approaches can be combined together. Help us consider what methods should be available.

- ◆ **Individual Audio Guides** - Museums often offer personal audio equipment so that visitors can experience the same exhibit differently – some visitors chose not to use the audio at all, some listen as long as they want and select only those topics or exhibits which are of personal interest. These flexible audio systems may also offer themed or multilingual options as well. This approach can be applied to visitor transportation as well. For example, visitors to Paris may use low cost headsets which plug into any visitor bus they ride. Trolleys in Boston use audio wands to provide education in foreign languages.
- ◆ **Live Guides** - Tour guides or driver guides can interpret or provide an orientation to the area. Drivers or guides may also be costumed to interpret historic periods.
- ◆ **Broadcast Audio** - Audio and music can be broadcast through vehicle sound systems – some messages are keyed to play as a vehicle passes a geographic location.
- ◆ **Electronic Messages** - A message display can announce stops or provide brief information about what is located near the stop.
- ◆ **Written Guides** - Vehicles can carry pamphlets or maps about destinations or listings of current events.
- ◆ **Interactive Visual Guides** - Vehicles can be equipped with video monitors connected to cameras that can zoom in to provide close up views; play video of what can be seen at various destinations; or potentially broadcast ongoing events or congressional hearings.

Building Blocks

for Potential Transportation Services

continued

Vehicle Technology and Types

Multiple vehicle types will be considered for use as part of a future visitor transportation system. Vehicle types offer an assortment of tradeoffs including passenger capacity (different seating configurations), maneuverability, visual characteristics, ADA accessibility, engine performance and alternative fuels. An initial set of vehicle technologies and types are presented on these pages for review. Most of these vehicles can be customized with additional options such as low floor configurations, unique exterior designs, expanded standing room, removable windows, etc. We would like your ideas and preferences for vehicle type and appearance.

STANDARD TRANSIT BUSES

Standard transit buses are typically 40-45 feet in length and require 11 to 12 foot lanes for safe operation. The design of these buses provides accommodations for moderate to high passenger volumes, and efficient loading and unloading in areas with frequent stops and complex visitor travel patterns. Passenger capacity ranges from 35 to 48 seated.



SMALL TRANSIT BUSES

These buses are typically used in urban settings where ridership levels do not justify large transit buses or better maneuverability is necessary. Seated capacity typically ranges from 20 to 35 passengers. While initial costs may be lower, these durable buses are generally more expensive than larger buses on a per-passenger basis.



ARTICULATED TRANSIT BUSES and BUSES WITH TRAILERS

Articulated buses maximize passenger capacity by using a trailer (nondetachable) joined to the main vehicle by a special joint or articulation to provide a 55-60 foot overall vehicle length. Seated capacity is approximately 50 to 70 passengers. Most models have multiple doors for easy boarding and alighting. Buses with trailers utilize a powered lead vehicle with one or more un-powered trailer units. Generally, both units provide passenger accommodations so the vehicles can operate with or without the trailers. This configuration is less maneuverable than smaller trams but more maneuverable than articulated buses. They also offer flexibility to respond to variations in demand patterns by using different combinations of trailer units. Seated capacity per unit is typically 25 to 40 passengers.



HISTORIC TROLLEY REPLICAS

This vehicle design is typically based on durable small transit buses, but can be designed from standard transit buses. The style offers an easily identifiable and distinctive transit vehicle, which can also be important in areas where multiple transit systems are operating. While generally accommodating lower passenger levels, the per-passenger costs may be more expensive than other options. Seated passenger capacity ranges from 20 to 35.



Building Blocks

for Potential Transportation Services

continued

Vehicle Technology and Types *continued*

DOUBLE DECKER BUSES

This vehicle type is generally designed to accommodate large passenger volumes (60 to 82 seated passengers) and is best suited for medium to long-distance trips. Open top buses are available. Double decker buses offer maximum viewing potential from the upper level but typically require more time for boarding and alighting. These vehicles are not suitable in areas with restricted clearances.



TOURIST TRAMS

Various designs are available for this vehicle type, including vehicles modeled after trains and other unique themes. These specialized units use a lead vehicle which is powered, and one or more passenger trailer units (20-40 seated passengers). Vehicles can be customized to maximize viewing and perform especially well where frequent loading and unloading of larger groups is required.



NPS PROTOTYPE BUS



This vehicle was developed to evoke NPS touring cars of an earlier era in large western parks, similar to those still in use at Glacier National Park. While the bus was developed so that it could convert to a tracked vehicle in the winter, it could be adapted for an urban area. The bus can be modified to serve from 18 to 30 passengers. This design includes low floors, easy access for disabled visitors, large side windows for good visibility, an open air top, and the ability to run on various fuels, including less polluting alternative fuels such as liquid natural gas (LNG) and propane (LPG).

Routes



Transit route planning requires an understanding of passenger demand patterns as well as the transportation network that links the system together. To maximize passenger convenience, a route should provide stops in close proximity to key activity centers.

In addition to convenience, route planning has a direct correlation to operating requirements and related costs. Some key considerations for route planning are noted below.

ROUTE PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- ◆ Minimizing travel time is important to rider convenience since a bus trip includes walking to a stop and waiting for the vehicle in addition to the actual travel time. Too many stops and transfers can decrease convenience.
- ◆ Different route patterns and/or other transportation services should intersect at strategic locations to offer visible and convenient connection points.

- ◆ Longer routes require more vehicles, therefore increasing capital costs and operating costs.
- ◆ Route travel times and resulting operating costs can be significantly influenced by congestion on roadways. Dedicated travel lanes for transit vehicles or priority treatments at intersections can offer advantages over operations in mixed traffic flow.
- ◆ Route planning should be carefully coordinated with local security measures and related facility planning. Special treatments at station locations such as lighting and open platform areas can also help improve passenger safety.

The study team will seek input from the public in helping define the most efficient routes and stop locations for future visitor transportation services. Information from the visitor survey will be used to illustrate and evaluate the magnitude of travel patterns between key destinations. We need your ideas on how to seamlessly connect both current and planned visitor attractions with future transportation services. The tradeoffs of various route concepts will be evaluated to optimize convenience and technical feasibility.

Building Blocks

for Potential Transportation Services

continued

Stops and Facilities

Stop locations are an important factor in determining how convenient a transportation system is to visitors. Convenience was the most important consideration for respondents to the 2003 NPS Visitor Transportation Survey. Easy connections to the subway topped the list. Stops can serve both connections to other services, such as Metrorail, or can serve a particular destination, such as the soon to open, WWII Memorial, or may be a combination of both. Cities such as New York, London and Paris have stops for public buses, private sightseeing services and subway at the same location. Private sightseeing services in Boston and New York are often located at major public bus / transportation stations, as well as multi-modal centers such as docks where visitors transfer to water transportation. In these examples, each type of service has a unique identity and function, but connects seamlessly. Stop locations may also need to provide facilities. Think about the types of services and facilities that should be provided at different types of visitor transportation stops. What is needed?

- “ **Stops located at subways and train stations.** Rest rooms, orientation maps, ticket information and purchase booths or machines, seating, sign identifying the stop, electronic information about wait time, public telephones?
- “ **Stops located near primary parking facilities.** Ticket information and purchase, shelter, seating, rest rooms, route information, sign identifying the stop, electronic information about wait time, orientation maps, public telephones, pick up and delivery from personal vehicles?
- “ **Transfer stops located where routes intersect.** Ticket information and purchase, shelter, seating, route information, sign identifying the stop, electronic information about wait time, orientation maps?
- “ **System stops.** Shelter, seating, sign identifying the stop, electronic information about wait time, orientation maps?



Within this study, we will explore transportation-related facilities to ensure context sensitive design and siting.

Ticketing

Visitors were also asked to consider a range of ticket options in the 2003 NPS Visitor Transportation Survey. The survey results indicated that the most important ticketing approach was a full day pass with the ability to hop on and off vehicles. There are many approaches to ticketing and some creative ways of using public and private partnerships. Boston and London encourage visitors to use public transit by offering visitor-oriented multi-day public transit passes. Here in Washington, DC, WMATA, the Metrorail operator also offers multi-day passes. Private sightseeing services in New York and Paris use multi-day passes that have significant discounts, or combine with night passes. Some cities, such as Savannah, GA and Orlando, FL offer some free services that are funded either by comprehensive transportation strategies, business districts or individual attractions such as Disneyworld. Some private sightseeing services offer free passes to local hosts of visitors.

Developing a Preferred Alternative

The National Park Service uses a process called “Choosing by Advantages” (CBA) to make cost-effective and value-based decisions both for planning and construction projects. This process can also be used to improve alternatives and to reduce costs. CBA will be used to develop a preferred alternative from within the range of alternatives that the public will help NPS define. The National Park Service is required to explore a full range of feasible alternatives for all projects. In any range of alternatives there are differences, and those differences are decision factors. CBA helps the NPS rate and rank differences, decide which differences offer more advantages and can help the Park Service craft a preferred alternative that brings together the advantages of several different alternatives.

The CBA process will take place after a range of alternatives has been presented in the next newsletter for public comment. Public comment on Newsletter 2 will also be sought about the criteria and factors that will be used in the CBA process.

Ways to Participate!

For more information, contact the NPS Transportation Planning Team at ncr_transportation_study@nps.gov or Transportation Analyst at 900 Ohio Drive S.W. Washington, DC 20242

202-485-9877

WINTER 2004

- ◆ Read and comment on Newsletter No. 1
- ◆ Participate in February 2004 Public Meetings
- ◆ Share your ideas, comments, concerns at any time via mail, e-mail or telephone

SPRING / SUMMER 2004

- ◆ Stay tuned for future public meetings and join us to review the range of alternatives
- ◆ Read and comment on Newsletter No. 2
- ◆ Share your ideas, comments, concerns at any time via mail, e-mail or telephone

WINTER 2004 / 2005

- ◆ Review and comment on environmental documentation
- ◆ Participate in future project development public meetings

WINTER 2007 AND BEYOND

- ◆ Visit the National Mall and surrounding area to see and experience the improvements

Public Meetings

Public meetings will be held to help the planning team gather information for the transportation study. These meetings will be the primary opportunity for all groups and agencies to provide feedback to the NPS on project scoping and development of alternatives for future services. The Public meetings will feature a variety of information related to this Visitor Transportation Study. Information on other plans and studies occurring in the region will also be available at meetings.

Thursday, **February 5, 2004**

Old Post Office Pavilion*

1100 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 09

Washington, DC 20506

2 to 4 pm and 5 to 8 pm

*Please use entrance from 12th Street

Friday, **February 6, 2004**

**Women in Military Service for America Memorial
Arlington National Cemetery**

West End of Arlington Memorial Bridge

Arlington, VA 22201

2 to 4 pm and 5 to 8 pm

The NPS also invites any interested party currently conducting related planning for transportation or visitor services for the Washington, DC area to prepare an informational exhibit for display purposes only at the Public Meetings. Each person or organization is limited to one (1) 24"x36" foam-core exhibit board dealing with your proposals only. All exhibits must be registered with the National Capital Parks-Central Transportation Analyst at (202)485-9877 or ncr_transportation_study@nps.gov by January 23, 2004.

Information on NPS and NPS Planning and Management Policy can be found at www.nps.gov.

Washington, DC Visitor Transportation Study for the National Mall and Surrounding Park Areas

National Park Service
U.S. Department
of the Interior



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Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Attention: Transportation Analyst
900 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

First Class Mail
Postage and Fees
PAID
National Park Service
Permit Number G-83
