



Partnering for Success

Techniques for Working with Partners to Plan for Alternative Transportation in National Park Service Units



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

Prepared by the USDOT Volpe National Transportation Systems Center, 2003

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Cover images from left to right, top to bottom: Acadia National Park, Cape Cod National Seashore, the Presidio of Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Lowell National Historic Park, Mount Rainier National Park, Yosemite National Park, and Zion National Park.

NPS ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

The NPS Alternative Transportation Program (ATP) promotes innovative transportation solutions within parks and seeks to share lessons learned and expertise across the NPS in planning and implementing alternative transportation systems through reports such as this. The program also supports efforts to demonstrate environmental leadership in transportation, to use transportation as a tool to educate visitors about park resources and services, and to educate NPS staff so that they can effectively implement alternative transportation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

America's national parks are among the most popular tourist destinations in the country, with more than 424 million visits in 2001 alone. But this very popularity, along with the fact that most visitors arrive by private passenger car, has led to a variety of transportation-related challenges: congestion, overflow parking, air and noise pollution, hazardous conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, and damage to natural and cultural resources. In an effort to reduce the impact of vehicles and better manage the flow of visitors to and throughout a park, many park units are trying alternative transportation solutions, such as transit systems. To plan and implement effective alternative transportation systems (ATS), parks have found it helpful to work in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including park staff and visitors, gateway community residents, area businesses, municipal governments, regional and state planning agencies, and more. This report summarizes the techniques of and lessons learned by some of the National Parks that have been particularly successful in forming partnerships to support planning and implementation of ATS.

This report is based on interview and other material gathered from nine National Park units: Acadia National Park, Cape Cod National Seashore, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Grand Canyon National Park, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Mt. Rainier National Park, Lowell National Historical Park, Yosemite National Park, and Zion National Park. A companion document, *Partnering for Transportation Success at Acadia National Park*, is an in-depth case study of the Island Explorer Shuttle Bus System, which serves Acadia National Park and the surrounding communities on Mount Desert Island.

This report is designed to function as a guide that can save other parks both time and resources. Other park units can apply the lessons learned to their own circumstances, and tailor the following partnering techniques to their particular context and needs:

- ✓ Coordinate the planning of transportation issues with other community needs in order to leverage existing resources and gain community acceptance.
- ✓ Become involved with local community organizations and institutions in order to promote awareness of transportation issues and generate support for new transportation planning.
- ✓ Conduct public workshops and other gatherings in order to lay the groundwork for transportation planning efforts, seek public input into transportation planning, and generate support and understanding for park-oriented transportation efforts.
- ✓ Involve a wide spectrum of partners in transportation planning in order to gain diverse perspective and support.
- ✓ Seek out the expertise and resources necessary to develop a knowledge base and support for transportation planning.
- ✓ Use formal partnership devices in order to cement collaborative relationships.
- ✓ Provide financial or other resource incentives in order to encourage public and community participation in the planning and implementation of alternative transportation.
- ✓ Use the tools of advocacy to build a network of support for alternative transportation.

WHY PARTNER?

Possible Partners

- Park visitors
- Park “friends” organizations
- Local citizens and landowners
- Local, county, and state elected officials and governments
- Area businesses and developers
- Chambers of commerce and tourism organizations
- Environmental, recreation, and historical preservation organizations
- Planning commissions
- MPOs and transit agencies
- Social services agencies, such as councils on aging
- State and Federal transportation, environmental, and other agencies
- Colleges and universities

The influence of a national park extends well beyond its geographical boundaries. In particular, a park’s transportation system can affect cultural and natural resources within and outside the park, the experiences of visitors, the life of gateway communities, and the plans of regional and local governments. In turn, parks themselves are affected by the actions and decisions of visitors, gateway communities, local governments, and governmental agencies. This interdependence provides an opportunity to pursue transportation solutions jointly through partnering.

THE BENEFITS OF PARTNERING

Few national parks can independently conceive, plan, implement, and operate an alternative transportation system. Many parks lack the requisite staff time and technical skills. In addition, park financial resources are often not enough to support the capitalization or operation of a new transportation system. Partnering

can help provide a park with the staff, technical expertise, and diverse and stable financial support structure it needs to address transportation challenges.

In fact, partnering can save a park both time and resources. Including a diverse array of stakeholders in the ATS planning process can help parks to develop transportation solutions that meet both park and stakeholder needs. In addition, early and continuing involvement through partnering can help parks later avoid potentially alienating stakeholders when key decisions have to be made (which could delay and even stop a project) and helps to ensure early stakeholder support and buy-in. As a result, projects are kept on track. On a larger scale, partnering with

Few national parks can independently conceive, plan, implement, and operate an effective alternative transportation system without consulting with a variety of partners.

organizations or coalitions that support a project can influence local and statewide transportation and land use decision-making and funding. The unintended consequences of poor transportation and land use decisions can be as harmful to the local and regional economy and quality of life as they can be to a park’s resources and the experiences of park visitors. What’s more, partnering can identify opportunities to coordinate work on current or future projects. This coordination can allow partners to pool funding and resources in order to develop projects with even greater benefits than would be realized had the projects been developed independently.

THE CONTEXT OF PARTNERING: HOW PARTNERING FITS INTO TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) requires interagency cooperation in transportation system planning and improvement projects. However, successful partnering relies on working relationships more than the force of law. Partnering between a park and a variety of

stakeholders in the ATS planning process involves developing a working relationship between the parties and a commitment to work toward common goals from the planning stages through project implementation. In fact, partnering is crucial to informing and moving forward the sequential steps of the transportation planning process: identification of issues and needs; development of goals and objectives; data collection and analysis; evaluation of possible solutions based on their ability to meet the goals and objectives; and selection of a preferred solution.

Cooperation in transportation planning in alternative transportation for the National Parks stems from the top, as reflected by the 1997 memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the U.S. Department of Interior and the U.S. Department of Transportation to cooperatively plan and develop alternative transportation solutions within national parks. Under the MOU, the NPS and DOT agencies have used innovative transportation planning, interagency agreements, personnel exchange, and related policy, guidance, and coordination procedures in the implementation of safe and efficient transportation systems that are compatible with the protection and preservation of park resources.

Partners can provide parks with the data, information, evaluation and analysis expertise, funding, political support, and other resources they need to make informed transportation decisions that meet stakeholder needs while protecting and enhancing park resources and the visitor experience. The following are just a few examples of the issues on which partners can work with parks during the transportation planning process:

- Benefits and drawbacks of certain modes of alternative transportation.
- Impacts of new transportation systems on area businesses, including in-park concessions.
- Locations of shuttle bus stops.
- Impacts of transportation alternatives on historic sites, wetlands, and other cultural and natural resources.
- Parking options for motor vehicles not allowed in the park or on sections of park roads.
- Solutions for addressing increasing demands on park staff time.
- Funding opportunities for ATS development, operations, and maintenance.
- Strategies for meeting and reconciling the transit needs of park employees, visitors, and local residents.

PARKS STUDIED

To develop a comprehensive understanding of the role of partnerships in the planning of alternative transportation systems within the National Park Service, staff members at nine park facilities were interviewed about their experiences with transportation planning and partnerships. These nine parks represent a diverse cross-section of the facilities of the National Park Service, including not only the large and well-known parks but also several of the smaller parks. Each shares with the others a common experience of excessive traffic and congestion, and each has begun to look beyond its own boundaries for partners to assist in the process of planning and implementing a system of alternative transportation. One-page profiles of each park unit, including selected information about their transportation challenges, alternative transportation solutions, and partnering efforts are appended to this report.

PARTNERING TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESS

The park staff interviewed for this report identified the following techniques as important elements of their efforts to partner for the planning and implementation of alternative transportation. The techniques listed here, which can be tailored to meet unique needs, are offered as suggested recommendations for other NPS units considering the development of alternative systems of transportation. Examples of how these techniques are used in specific parks are also provided for additional guidance.

1. Coordinate the planning of a park-oriented alternative transportation system with other community needs in order to leverage existing resources and gain community acceptance.

- Learn the historical, economic, and political contexts of the local communities affected by or interested in the planning of an alternative transportation system in order to identify existing transportation needs and potential transportation opportunities.
- Read recent local, regional, and state transportation plans to find potential system overlaps and opportunities for system linkages and shared planning.
- Work with Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and state and federal transportation agencies to recognize the important role recreational travel planning has in local, regional, and state transportation plans.
- Survey local residents and other stakeholders affected by park transportation planning on their attitudes and aspirations for an alternative transportation system. Parks and neighboring communities often experience the same transportation issues. By discussing these common issues, NPS can demonstrate its commitment to helping with local issues.

Partnering Practices

- ✓ Coordinate park-oriented alternative transportation system planning with other community needs.
- ✓ Involve NPS staff with community organizations
- ✓ Use public workshops and other gatherings to seek public input and generate support
- ✓ Include a wide spectrum of partners
- ✓ Seek out expertise and resources necessary to build knowledge and support.
- ✓ Use formal partnership devices to cement collaborative relationships.
- ✓ Provide financial or other incentives to encourage public participation.
- ✓ Use advocacy tools to build a support network.

The staff of Golden Gate NRA has worked with the California DOT and the San Francisco area MPO to encourage the prioritization of recreational transportation needs in regional planning efforts.

2. Become involved with local community organizations and institutions in order to promote awareness of transportation issues and generate support for new transportation planning.

- Use telephone calls, meetings, and other outreach efforts to make contact with and seek input from local residents, area officials, business owners, and other stakeholders before and during the transportation planning process.
- Make use of NPS staff members who may have developed solid contacts and networks in surrounding communities through prior outreach efforts on other issues.
- Participate in community meetings and activities. These public forums offer the opportunity to influence decision-making on projects that affect parks and to inform the community about park resources, programs, and projects.
- Be involved in local, MPO, and state transportation planning activities in order to demonstrate community commitment and to represent park interests in local, regional, and state transportation planning.

Staff members from Zion NP attend monthly meetings of the Springdale Visitors Bureau, as well as local transportation expositions and exhibits. A Zion park ranger is present to answer questions about Zion's shuttle bus system.



Lowell NHP works closely with the local MPO, which includes the park in all of its mailings about regional transportation issues.

3. Conduct public workshops and other gatherings in order to lay the groundwork for transportation planning efforts, seek public input on transportation planning, and generate support and understanding for park-oriented transportation efforts.

- Sponsor educational/promotional events for the general public in order to gather public input on and reaction to ATS plans. Invite local officials to participate.
- Organize design charrettes and other activities with the public on transportation issues. These events offer opportunities for the public to become involved with transportation planning and for design professionals to explore the links between transportation and other community issues, including housing, tourism, and economic development.
- Host public activities that offer opportunities for visitors not only to engage with park transportation issues but also to explore park recreational facilities.
- Use public notices to publicize events and comment periods.

Cape Cod NS partners with local businesses to support an annual Alternative Transportation Day. The event is fun, educational and also promotes alternative transportation.



Golden Gate NRA and the Presidio Trust often conduct walking and biking tours with visitors and residents to discuss pedestrian and bicycle issues and future transportation plans.

4. Involve a wide spectrum of partners in transportation planning in order to gain diverse perspective and support.

- Include institutional stakeholders in transportation planning efforts in order to expand community buy-in for new systems. Examples of such stakeholders include chambers of commerce, local tourism and economic development agencies, recreational organizations and clubs, environmental organizations, and councils on aging. Non-profit organizations in particular can provide a forum for community involvement, play an advocacy role, and take on activities such as community education and outreach.

Staff from Great Smoky Mountains NP meet with town chambers of commerce, local civic clubs, and other organizations to get input efforts to develop in-park and regional ATS.



Cape Cod NS has worked with organizations representing the residents of low-income housing and with other human services organizations to identify transportation needs of those groups.



Lowell NHP hosted numerous, one-on-one meetings with local and state legislators to discuss the possibility of expanding historic trolley service.

- Work closely with elected officials and other local leaders to include them in all aspects of park transportation planning. Conduct regular briefings for legislative representatives at all levels of government and provide them with information through mailings, in-person briefings, and invitations to public events.
- Partner with local businesses to seek assistance for planning, funding, and promoting alternative transportation systems.

5. Seek out expertise and resources necessary to develop a knowledge base and support for transportation planning.

- Before launching a transportation planning effort, identify the staff, time, and resources – both within NPS and without – that will be available to support the project.
- Select professionals from a wide range of disciplines – including planning, architecture, landscape architecture, economics, tourism, and marketing – who can actively contribute to planning and public involvement efforts.
- Involve a transportation planner with knowledge and experience in the local community to help with public involvement activities.

Mount Rainier NP used the contact list of the regional U.S. Forest Service office to identify stakeholders to include in design charrettes.



Staff from Grand Canyon NP has attended conferences of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to gain information and share resources on planning for alternative transportation. The park has also used APTA mailing lists to identify and reach service providers.

- Use the expertise and contacts of other agencies in the region, including the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, state departments of transportation, and regional MPOs. Develop and foster on-going, positive relationships with these agencies in order to improve access to other sources of federal transportation funds and to foster trouble-shooting when problems arise.

- Gather expertise and assistance from national transportation organizations.
- Develop committees and other advisory groups, to include local citizens, to work with NPS staff on transportation planning.

6. Use formal partnership devices in order to cement collaborative relationships.

- Enter into memoranda of understanding with the state department of transportation, the regional MPO, and the local transportation agency to solidify working relationships and clarify roles and responsibilities for park-oriented transportation planning.
- Develop documents of agreement to codify consensus around planning issues, including agreements on sharing of responsibilities – financial, administrative, in-kind – between stakeholders.
- Establish official arrangements for the promotion and advertising of park transportation systems.
- Use official mechanisms to confirm the contribution or commitment of funds.

Yosemite NP offers commissions to local and regional hotels that will sell tickets for alternative transportation systems in the area.



Lowell NHP uses cooperative agreements when funds are transferred between organizations and agencies.

7. Provide financial or other resource incentives in order to encourage public and community participation in the planning and implementation of an alternative transportation system.

- Provide gateway communities with opportunities not only to participate in park-oriented planning but also to establish their own transportation planning processes. NPS staff members can offer much-needed expertise on planning and funding for transportation projects, thereby helping to develop a regional network of transportation planning.
- Allow the employees of area businesses to use park transportation systems for free, so they become supportive of the system and prepared to explain its use to visitors.
- Promote alternative transportation systems with offers to allow local children to ride for free, thereby encouraging the support of area families and community organizations.
- Provide a small NPS sign or sticker for display to area businesses that indicate support of park transportation systems.

As part of a process of community-based design charrettes, Mount Rainier NP has supplied participating municipalities with information about available funding for transportation planning and has offered to help local communities with grant applications.



Zion NP's "Ambassadors' Training" allows trained businesses to put a shield in their windows stating that they can answer questions about the park and provide park information.

8. Use the tools of advocacy to build a network of support for alternative transportation.

- Educate local- and state-level political officials on park-oriented transportation issues and advocate for their backing for the development of new alternative transportation systems.
- Reach out to influential local decision-makers for assistance with advocacy campaigns.
- Distribute promotional materials about park transportation to municipal offices in gateway communities.
- Maintain mailing lists of stakeholders and other interested parties to keep them up-to-date on issues and progress.
- Work directly with the local news media to encourage coverage of regional and park-related transportation issues. Provide fact sheets, websites, contact names, and other useful information and invite representatives of the media to public events, such as alternative transportation or alternative fuel exhibits.
- Conduct and participate in transportation-related conferences and symposia as a way to spread the word about park-oriented transportation efforts and gather interest and support.

Members of the planning staff at Great Smoky Mountains NP keep careful track of lists of interested stakeholders in order to provide them with information on the status of transportation planning at GSMNP.

LESSONS LEARNED: STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Planning, designing, implementing, and maintaining a new transportation system is a learning experience for any national park, regardless of its location, size, funding, or political support. All parks can learn from others currently in the process of developing partnerships to support the planning of new transportation systems. This section describes partnering “do’s” and “don’ts” learned over the years by the nine parks included in this study. Interested parks can use these lessons to tailor the previously listed partnering techniques in order to save time and resources and to prevent frustration. Regardless of which partnering technique a park uses or with what partner a park works, these lessons learned apply and can help the partnering and ATS planning processes run smoothly.

Cast a wide partnership net.

No park is an island. Involve as many partners as appropriate in ATS planning efforts. Reach out to “non-traditional” partners, such as area businesses and tourism groups, social services organizations, political leaders, the media, and others. Expanding the circle of partnership can prevent project delays, increase political and public support, and identify unanticipated and innovative ideas and funding sources. It can also improve or build upon a park’s “good neighbor” image within the community.

Work closely with state DOTs, MPOs, and federal agencies.

Form relationships with funding agencies and departments that look beyond individual projects. Once a trusting relationship is developed, these groups can provide more than just funding. When issues arise with other partners, with funding procedures, or with other issues, these groups may be able to step in and maintain project momentum.

Find a local ATS champion.

Work with a political leader or non-profit organization that can champion the park and help lead the ATS planning process. These champions may have access to the financial, political, and public support needed to get a project off the ground and to maintain progress.

Communicate with stakeholders early and often.

Describe future goals and plans, gather input, and then describe the goals and plans again. Develop contact lists and continually provide partners with information and updates. By keeping partners involved and “in the loop” throughout the planning process, progress can be sustained as project delays are prevented.

Empower partners.

By building stakeholder capacity in transportation, new and innovative transportation solutions may develop. Educate partners on transportation issues and the importance of planning for ATS. Include partners in transportation planning events and formal agreements that delineate the roles and responsibilities of different partners on a transportation planning effort. Offer incentives – such as funding information and NPS recognition for important assistance – to participate in the development of ATS.

Encourage collaboration to promote a sense of ownership.

Involve local residents, leaders, businesses, and other groups in ATS planning efforts from the start. For example, have them participate in decisions such as shuttle bus stops and bus signage. By incorporating their ideas and needs into the planning

process, a park helps communities to feel a sense of ownership in the ATS created. As a result, they are less apt to view a new transportation system as having been forced upon them by the federal government.

Know your limits.

Bring in technical experts and transportation professionals to provide valuable expertise not always available within NPS. It can also be helpful to work with a technical expert who is knowledgeable about the community context within which the park is working. These individuals offer not only professional expertise but also insight into the needs and priorities of the partner communities.

Be flexible.

Tailor partnering approaches and techniques to the characteristics and needs of the park, its transportation challenges, its surrounding environment and communities, and the larger political environment. Try new approaches and reach out to new groups. Innovation can lead to a transportation solution that meets everyone's needs.

ACADIA NATIONAL PARK

- 47,498 acres of granite-domed mountains, woodlands, lakes, ponds, and ocean shoreline in Maine
- Boating, camping, climbing, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, biking, and skiing
- Approximately 2.8 million visits in 2002



Friends of Acadia

The Transportation Challenge

- Congestion during peak visitation caused air and noise pollution, haze, and acid rain.
- Parking scarce.
- Damage to natural resources from illegal parking.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- In 1999, establishment of Island Explorer Shuttle Bus System, which now has 17 propane-fueled buses.
- In 2002, 281,000 visitors rode the buses, keeping as many as 88,000 motor vehicles off park roads during the peak summer months.
- From 1999 to 2002, ridership increased 107%.

Partners

- Six towns surrounding Acadia National Park
- Mount Desert Island League of Towns
- Friends of Acadia
- Downeast Transportation, Inc.
- L.L. Bean and other local businesses
- Maine Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration

Funding

- Federal CMAQ funds
- Friends of Acadia
- Park fees
- Corporate gift from LL Bean
- ATP funding
- Federal Lands Highway Program

Partnering Techniques

- Participates in meetings and activities of the Mount Desert Island League of Towns.
- Regularly gathers and shares system performance data with partners and the public.
- Conducts a public forum at the end of each season to report on system performance and solicit comments.

Lessons Learned

- Ensure that local interests—town leaders, businesses, and other organizations—play a prominent role in the ATS planning process.
- Find a local ATS champion who may have access to the financial, political, and public support needed to get a project off the ground.
- Bring in technical experts knowledgeable about the community context.
- Design ATS operations to respond to the needs of gateway communities and others who may be directly affected by the system.
- Provide fare-free service, if possible.

More Information

■ Len Bobinchock, Acadia National Park, (207) 288-3338, Len_Bobinchock@nps.gov

CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE

- 43,605 acres of shoreline, historic sites, museums, lighthouses and two visitor centers in Massachusetts
- Swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, biking, picnicking, and canoeing
- Approximately 4.5 million visits in 2002



The Transportation Challenge

- Only two bridges and two primary highways connect the Cape Cod peninsula to the mainland.
- Limited public transit.
- Roadways can become crowded during peak season.
- Limited site parking leads to illegal parking and resource damage.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- Open-air tram from remote parking areas to Coast Guard Beach.
- Seasonal, propane-powered shuttle bus service between Provincetown and Truro. Riders can board at over 10 designated stops or flag driver to stop anywhere along bus route.
- Looking to expand system year-round and run between Provincetown and Orleans, including Truro, Wellfleet, Eastham, and Brewster.

Partners

- Local towns, Chambers of Commerce and businesses
- Cape Cod Transit Task Force
- Cape Code Regional Transit Authority
- Massachusetts Highway Department
- County of Barnstable/Cape Cod Commission
- Congressman Delahunt's Office
- Massachusetts Office of Transportation and Construction
- Local human service organizations
- Local Steamship Authority

Funding

- NPS
- Cape Cod license plate fee
- ATP funding
- County of Barnstable/Cape Cod Commission
- Local Chambers of Commerce
- Local Steamship Authority

Partnering Techniques

- Participates in Cape Cod Transit Task Force, a group of local and regional stakeholders working together on long-range transportation planning and management on Cape Cod.
- Partners with local businesses, local transportation providers, and Barnstable County to support an annual Alternative Transportation Day.
- Works with low-income housing and other human services organizations to help meet the transportation needs of individuals in need.

Lessons Learned

- Use local and regional transportation plans to find potential overlaps and opportunities for system linkages and shared planning.
- Need for coordination and communication early and often in transportation planning process.
- Be involved in local, MPO, and state transportation planning activities in order to capitalize on funding opportunities, demonstrate community commitment, and represent park interests in local, regional, and state transportation planning.

More Information

- Ben Pearson, Cape Cod National Seashore, (508) 349-3785, ben_pearson@nps.gov
- Clay Schofield, Cape Cod Commission, (508) 362-3828, cschofield@capecodcommision.org

GOLDEN GATE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

- 74,816 acres, including 28 miles of coastline
- Includes Alcatraz Prison, the Presidio (1,160 acres), and Muir Woods National Monument
- Walking, picnicking, backpacking, and camping
- Nearly 14 million visits in 2002
- Presidio Park: National Historic Landmark District managed by the Presidio Trust, a Federally-chartered corporation.



GGNRA Park Association, U.S. Department of Energy

The Transportation Challenge

- Local traffic congestion.
- No public transit to rural facilities.
- Parking scarce.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- San Francisco public transit and in-park compressed natural gas shuttle buses serve Presidio visitors, residents, and commercial tenants.
- Presidio residents can also rent 4 Ford Think City electric cars as part of the City CarShare program.
- Plans to expand ferry service, reactivate historic trolley line, and develop a system of buses and aerial trams that originate in downtown San Francisco.

Partners

- Local Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Community groups
- Regional transit providers
- Local and county government agencies
- Residents and commercial tenants of the Presidio
- California Department of Transportation
- Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration

Funding

- NPS
- Presidio Trust
- County governments
- Public Lands Highway discretionary grant
- ATP funding

Partnering Techniques

- GGNRA staff participates in local and regional planning processes.
- Conducts walking and biking tours with Presidio visitors and residents to discuss pedestrian and bicycle issues and future transportation plans.
- Surveyed Presidio residents on their transportation needs and behavior in order to inform transportation planning.

Lessons Learned

- Work with local and state transportation agencies and providers to encourage the prioritization of recreational transportation needs in regional planning efforts.
- Host public activities that offer opportunities for visitors not only to engage with park transportation issues but also to explore park recreational facilities.

More Information

■ <http://www.presidiotrust.gov>

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

- Spanning 1.2 million acres of the Colorado River and adjacent uplands in northern Arizona
- Primary visitation at North and South Rims
- Sightseeing, hiking, rafting, and mule riding
- 4.3 million visits in 2002
- 4.5 million ATS boardings in 2002



The Transportation Challenge

- Most visitors arrive by private vehicle.
- Parking scarce and often full at major trailheads, facilities, and viewing points during the peak visitation season.
- Air and noise pollution

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- 26 electric, diesel, CNG, and LNG shuttle buses connect viewpoints, trailheads and visitor facilities in South Rim Village.
- Evaluating alternatives for an expanded transit network within park.
- Pursuing biodiesel for diesel fleet.

Partners

- Local communities
- Local businesses and community organizations
- State DOT
- Regional county governments
- Federal Transit Administration

Funding

- ATP funding
- Transit fees from park entrance fees

Partnering Techniques

- Attends conferences of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to gain information and share resources on planning for alternative transportation.
- Distributes promotional materials to gateway communities and businesses.

Lessons Learned

- Partner with local businesses to seek assistance for planning, funding, and promoting alternative transportation systems.
- Develop contact lists and continually provide partners with information and updates.
- Recognize the importance of contractor staff, especially mechanics, in maintaining a diverse and aging fleet.

More Information

- Jim Tuck, Grand Canyon National Park, (928) 774-1697, jim_tuck@nps.gov

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

- 521,490 acres in North Carolina and Tennessee, 95% densely forested
- Includes Cades Cove, an area of historic buildings associated with early Appalachian culture
- Sightseeing, hiking, camping, horseback riding, and bird watching
- Approximately 25.5 million visits in 2002



The Transportation Challenge

- Most visitors arrive and tour by private vehicle. Traffic congestion during peak visitation season.
- No regional train or bus service.
- Several major roadways traverse the park, including a primary route between TN and NC.
- Campers must drive out of park for food, gasoline, and other services.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- Fee Trolley service from Gatlinburg, TN to park entrance and limited stops within the park.
- Multiple long-term studies of transportation options in the park and region currently on-going, including the possibility of an alternative transportation system in the Cades Cove area.

Partners

- Local communities, including the City of Gatlinburg
- Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
- Southern Appalachian Mountains Initiative (SAMI)
- National Park Foundation
- Tennessee and North Carolina DOTs
- FHWA

Funding

- ATP fundings
- Local communities
- SAMI
- Tennessee DOT

Partnering Techniques

- Meets regularly with local government officials, local civic clubs, and other organizations to communicate efforts to develop in-park and regional ATS.
- Keeps lists of interested stakeholders in order to provide them with information on the status of transportation planning.

Lessons Learned

- Tailor techniques to the characteristics and needs of the park, its transportation challenges, its surrounding environment and communities, and the larger political environment.
- Involve local residents, leaders, businesses, and other groups in ATS planning to help communities feel a sense of ownership and view ATS as having been developed in partnership.

More Information

- Dianne Flaugh Great Smoky Mountains National Park, (865) 436-1239, dianne_flough@nps.gov

LOWELL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

- 141 acres of the downtown area of the city of Lowell, MA
- Buildings from the Industrial Revolution and a network of canals used for tours and interpretation
- Historical/cultural park in an urban environment
- Approximately 754,000 visits in 2002



The Transportation Challenge

- Traffic congestion in and around park.
- Need to improve link to commuter rail station and regional bus service.
- Streets within the park offer limited parking.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- Free historic trolley service to major park attractions.
- System of canal boats with tours for a fee connected to trolleys by canal-side walkways.
- Plans for the expansion of the trolley system.

Partners

- Lowell residents and businesses
- City of Lowell and local government agencies
- Lowell Historic Preservation Commission (now defunct)
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction
- Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust
- Greater Lowell Community Foundation
- Lowell Regional Transportation Authority (LRTA)
- Local MPO, the Northern Middlesex COG
- Seashore Trolley Museum
- UMASS-Lowell
- Federal agencies

Funding

- ATP funding
- Public Lands Highway program
- TEA-21 Enhancement Funds

Partnering Techniques

- Works closely with the local MPO and City of Lowell.
- Hosts numerous, one-on-one meetings with local officials and state legislators.
- Uses cooperative agreements to transfer funds.
- MOU with City of Lowell, Lowell Regional Transportation Authority, Northern Middlesex County of Governments, and Seashore Trolley Museum to expand ATS.
- 2002 urban design charrette to discuss expansion plans with stakeholders and the public.

Lessons Learned

- Work with government agencies or non-profit organizations that can champion the park and the ATS planning process. These champions may have access to the financial, political, and public support needed to begin a project and maintain progress.
- Include partners in formal agreements that delineate the roles and responsibilities of the different partners on a transportation planning effort.

More Information

- Christina Briggs, Lowell National Historical Park, (978) 275-1725, christina_briggs@nps.gov
- Beverly Woods, Northern Middlesex County of Governments, (978) 454-8021, bwoods@nmcog.org

MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK

- 235,000 acres of forests and meadows, including 14,000-foot Mount Rainier, in Washington
- Hiking, mountaineering, and sightseeing
- Approximately 1.9 million visits in 2002



The Transportation Challenge

- Directly accessible only by private vehicle.
- Mostly inaccessible during the winter, pushing most visitation to the spring, summer, and fall.
- Traffic congestion during peak visitation seasons, especially at popular mountaineering areas.
- Parking scarce and often on road shoulders, impacting wildlife and visitor safety.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- Stipulation in concessionaire contracts to provide employee shuttle buses.
- Park shuttle van running from nearby towns that park staff can ride for a fee.
- Planning effort for regional transportation improvements, including shuttles.

Partners

- Park staff and concessionaires
- Local residents and business owners
- Local governments and Tribal councils
- Local non-profit organizations
- Washington Department of Transportation
- Washington State Tourism Department
- U.S. Forest Service
- FHWA

Funding

- Federal Lands Highway program
- Local businesses
- Washington State Tourism Department
- ATP funding

Partnering Techniques

- Uses the contact list of the regional U.S. Forest Service office to identify partners.
- Works with professional planners and architects on a series of design charrettes with stakeholders to consider new options for transportation and community development in the region.
- Supplies participating municipalities with information about available funding for transportation planning. Helps local communities with grant applications.

Lessons Learned

- Continually describe goals and plans to partners and gather input.
- Educate partners on transportation issues and the importance of planning for ATS in order to help generate new and innovative transportation solutions.
- Offer incentives, such as funding information, to participate in the development of ATS.
- Bring in technical experts, such as transportation and landscape planning professionals. Bring in an expert knowledgeable about local communities to provide insight into their needs and priorities.

More Information

- Patricia Sacks, NPS Denver Service Center, (303) 969-2431, pat_sacks@nps.gov

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

- 761,266 acres mountains, valleys, waterfalls, and meadows, including the Mariposa Grove of giant sequoias
- Yosemite Valley is the most visited area of park
- Sightseeing, hiking, climbing
- Approximately 3.5 million visits in 2002



Merced CAG

The Transportation Challenge

- Most visitors arrive and tour by private vehicle.
- Traffic congestion during peak visitation season.
- Parking is limited.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS) vehicles serve park and region.
- Free shuttle bus service in park.
- Fee-based concessionaire shuttle to popular park hiking trails.
- Research on possibility of expanding in-park shuttle system.

Partners

- YARTS
- Counties of Mariposa, Merced, and Mono
- Town of Mammoth Lakes
- California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)
- FHWA and FTA
- Yosemite Concession Services

Funding

- Local counties
- CalTrans
- ATP funding
- FTA

Partnering Techniques

- Offers commissions to local and regional hotels that will sell tickets for alternative transportation systems in the area.

Lessons Learned

- Try new approaches and reach out to new groups. Innovation can lead to a transportation solution that meets everyone's needs.
- Reach out to partners such as area businesses and tourism groups to help improve or build upon a park's "good neighbor" image within the community.

More Information

- Marty Nielson, Yosemite National Park, (209) 379-0270, Marty_Nielson@nps.gov
- Marjie Kim, Merced County Association of Governments, (209)-723-3153, MKIRN@mcag.cog.ca.gov

ZION NATIONAL PARK

- 146,592 acres of natural canyons, sandstone cliffs, deep valleys, and towering cliffs in Utah
- Zion Canyon Scenic Drive is most popular viewing site
- Hiking, climbing, and horseback riding
- Approximately 2.6 million visits in 2002



The Transportation Challenge

- Park only directly accessible by private vehicle or tour bus. Traffic congestion during peak visitation season caused air and noise pollution and impacted wildlife.
- Parking scarce.

Alternative Transportation Solutions

- In 2002, vehicle use was restricted on Zion Canyon Scenic Drive from April through October.
- 30 propane-powered buses shuttle visitors among Springdale and Zion Canyon attractions. Buses also tow trailers.

Partners

- Local businesses
- Community of Springdale, Utah
- Utah Department of Transportation
- Zion Natural History Association
- FHWA
- Springdale Visitors Bureau
- Park concessionaires

Funding

- Park entrance fees
- ATP funding
- TEA-21 grants
- Local communities
- Local businesses

Partnering Techniques

- Attends monthly meetings of the Springdale Visitors Bureau to represent park interests.
- Sends a park ranger to local transportation expositions and exhibits to answer questions about Zion's shuttle bus system.
- Supports a program called "Ambassadors' Training," which allows trained businesses to put a shield in their windows stating that they can answer questions about the park and provide park information.

Lessons Learned

- Reach out to partners such as area businesses and tourism groups to increase political and public support and to build upon a park's "good neighbor" image within the community.
- Offer incentives, such as NPS recognition for important assistance, to participate in the development of ATS.
- Involve local residents, leaders, and businesses in ATS planning efforts from the start. By incorporating their ideas and needs into the planning process, a park helps communities to feel a sense of ownership in the transportation system.

More Information

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