

WHAT IS THE PAUL S. SARBANES “TRANSIT IN PARKS” PROGRAM?

The Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks (Transit in Parks) Program is a federal financial assistance program that annually awards grants to carry out projects that provide alternative transportation (bus, rail, or other conveyance including facilities for pedestrians, bicycles, and watercraft) in national parks and public lands.

WHAT IS THE PAUL S. SARBANES “TRANSIT IN PARKS” TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER (TRIPTAC)?

The Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Technical Assistance Center (TRIPTAC) provides information, training, and technical support on alternative transportation systems (ATS) for federal land managers. Specific services include person-to-person technical liaisons, a Help Desk (helpdesk@triptac.org or 877-704-5292) and website (www.triptac.org), training workshops, a peer mentoring program, and an online system to help public land managers find documents, technical manuals and other resources.

WHAT IS A CASE STUDY?

To expand knowledge about outstanding ATS projects in parks and public lands, the TRIPTAC is assembling a set of case studies. Each case study highlights successes experienced and examines lessons learned by land management units. Studies describe the transportation challenge, ATS solution and the steps taken to reach a successful outcome. They pay special attention to the characteristics of successful partnerships, such as those between a public land unit, local friends groups, and non-profit organizations.

THIS DOCUMENT WAS AUTHORED BY

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THE FULL CASE STUDY CAN BE FOUND AT

www.triptac.org/TRIPTACResources/TRIPTACPublications/Default.html



www.triptac.org
helpdesk@triptac.org (877) 704-5292

Partnership Case Study

Cape Cod National Seashore Alternative Transportation Partnership

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1961, Cape Cod National Seashore (CACO) is a unit of the National Park Service that spans six towns along the outer portion of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Nearly five million people visit CACO every year, with much of this visitation occurring during the summer season. Many visits occur over relatively short periods of time (e.g., over a weekend), and are characterized by dependency upon a personal vehicle. Such patterns of visitation have raised concerns about damage to natural habitats, traffic congestion, noise pollution, energy consumption, and air quality.

To address these issues of mobility and congestion for residents and visitors on Cape Cod, CACO formed partnerships with state, county and local governments, regional planning organizations, and private businesses. According to CACO's 2003 Long-range Planning Study, one of the goals of the CACO partnerships is to "provide visitors and residents with a safe, economical, convenient and reliable alternative to the private automobile." In particular, these efforts focused on reducing traffic congestion, providing public transit for year round residents (especially youth and the elderly), and reducing environmental impacts to sensitive CACO resources. Solutions were identified to both improve mobility in and around CACO, and ultimately, to provide visitors with the opportunity to have a "car-free" vacation on outer Cape Cod.

Shuttle service began in 2000 through a partnership between CACO and the Cape Cod Regional Transit Authority (CCRTA). The Provincetown/ North Truro Shuttle (The Shuttle) connects visitors and residents with boat tours and ferry, bus, and air service in the greater Provincetown area. Following the success of the Shuttle, Flex service began on outer Cape Cod in 2006. Flex, operated by CCRTA, offers a hybrid of fixed route and on-demand service, connecting points of interest and transit hubs along the length of outer Cape Cod. Buses for Flex were purchased with funds from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks program. In addition to the two new transit services, the CACO partnerships have led to the publication of a "car-free" vacation guide for outer Cape Cod travelers (the outer Cape Cod Smart Guide), the construction of context sensitive bus shelters, and continuing efforts to address Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) planning, bicycle planning, planning for parking challenges, and bus maintenance needs.

Development of the Shuttle involved an initial partnership between CACO, the CCRTA, and the towns of Truro and Provincetown. In 2000, representatives from CACO, CCRTA, Cape Cod Commission (a regional planning organization), and a number of other state agencies and transportation associations were appointed to the Cape Cod Transit Task Force (CCTTF). The CCTTF created the original proposal for Flex, guided by the following goals: 1) reduce auto dependency, 2) mitigate seasonal traffic, 3) meet the needs of the year-round population, 4) develop coordination, communication, and cooperation, and 5) incorporate smart growth and land use planning. Currently, the relationship between CACO, the Cape Cod Commission, and the John A. Volpe National Transportation Systems

Center (Volpe Center) continues through ongoing study of transportation issues on and around the National Seashore. The CACO partnerships have also led to establishment of other "spinoff" transportation partnerships on the Cape.

The CACO experience offers numerous potential lessons for other federal land units. Partnership members attribute the success of their efforts to a number of factors, including:

- a history of collaboration between CACO and surrounding communities,
- leadership on the part of CACO to engage in comprehensive planning and to provide seed money funding to start the planning process, which extends far beyond borders of the park,
- a deployment approach in which implementation projects are based on design projects and planning studies,
- thorough planning studies that illustrate and demonstrate a need, and benefit the outside community (e.g., reduce congestion on community roads),
- community interest in addressing transportation problems,
- thinking big but working small in manageable components to achieve the larger objective (e.g., initially introducing Shuttle service just on outer Cape Cod as part of the larger objective to improve public transit in and around CACO),
- capital funding from outside sources, with operating costs shared between towns,
- building each project on the success of the previous one,
- effective public outreach and marketing, and
- a pro-active and effective transportation task force appointed by the Massachusetts Secretary of Transportation.

Challenges addressed during partnership activities included:

- addressing concerns about impacts to existing services,
- weathering budget shortfalls and sustaining funding for operations,
- providing adequate accommodation for bicycles, and
- expanding partnership activities to a wider region.

Stakeholders expect that the Cape Cod Transit Task Force will re-convene in conjunction with the development of updated 5-Year and Long-Range public transportation plans. Further, CACO, CCRTA, the Cape Cod Commission, the Volpe Center, and their various partners plan to continue to work together on studies and planning efforts that will further improve the quality of transportation on outer Cape Cod.