



Summary of Public Meetings

As part of the process of gathering information and data to inform the Chincoteague Alternative Transportation Study, two public meetings were held in October 2008. These meetings provided an opportunity for the project team to describe the study, and offered participants a time to talk about their transportation concerns and ideas. The meeting featured presentations and remarks from the project team, small discussion or “break out” groups, and open dialogue among all participants.

The purpose of the study is to **gather information, identify transportation issues, and develop and analyze possible alternatives** that may be considered for implementation by the Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and its partners, Assateague Island National Seashore, the National Park Service, the Town of Chincoteague, and Accomack County. The project partners are working together to address transportation issues in the study area, which includes the Refuge, local roads like Maddox Blvd., Rt. 175 and Rt. 13.

Who Attended?

The meetings drew community members, refuge and park staff, and others who participated in a dialogue about transportation issues in the study area. The meetings were held at 9AM and 6PM on a Thursday in order to accommodate residents, business owners, and other stakeholders with commitments at different times of day. The meetings were scheduled to last two hours, but each ran slightly longer in order to allow discussions to continue.

Approximately 75 people participated in the two meetings, including partners and members of the project team. Chincoteague Mayor Jack Tarr and Accomack County Supervisor Wanda Thornton remarked on the value of the study and contributed thoughts and ideas in break out sessions. Sylvia Parks of Rep. Thelma Drake’s district office also attended and was a resource for attendees in her break out session.

Break out groups consisted of approximately 10-15 participants, and included full-time/year-round residents, seasonal residents, business owners, local community leaders, elected officials, refuge and park staff, and others with general interest in transportation issues. There were about fifteen participants who are also National Park Service or Fish and Wildlife Service staff members.

At the start of the meeting, participants were asked to use one word to describe transportation on Chincoteague. Many attendees contributed their thoughts. After brief presentations by the Volpe Center, refuge staff, and elected officials, participants then broke into three groups, and discussed high-priority issues or problems, as well as potential solutions. This document summarizes the outcome of the discussions.

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“One Word”

Attendees were asked to share one word that describes transportation on Chincoteague. These words provide a brief snapshot of how residents and others think about transportation, which characteristics are important, and what some issues may be. Participants referred back to these words during later discussions of problems and solutions. Participants in both the AM and PM sessions contributed to this list.

Sparse	Parking	Changing	Slow	Needed/Necessity*
Enjoyable	Pedestrians	Compatible	Chaotic	Mopeds
A privilege	Easy-going	“Unstressful”	Dangerous*	Seasonal*
Simple	Funding	Lost Tourists	Congested	Bicycles
The Bridge				

* These words were suggested twice, by participants in both the AM and PM meetings.

Concerns and Ideas

After brief presentations by Volpe and FWS staff, attendees met in small groups to brainstorm about their primary concerns or issues with transportation on Chincoteague and at the refuge, and their ideas for possible solutions. Attendees were asked to consider two questions: (1) What do you see as the major transportation concerns at the refuge, at the beach, and in Chincoteague? and (2) What are your ideas for possible solutions?

A summary of the common concerns and ideas raised by multiple groups is included below, but a full list of all the feedback received can be found in Appendix 1.

Concerns and Issues	Solutions and Ideas
<p>Safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists sharing the road • Inadequate separation, road shoulders, sidewalks, width of bike paths, and bike path surfaces • Young/inexperienced cyclists • Storm evacuation and shelter on beach • Emergency vehicle access 	<p>Education and Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to share the road between cyclists/cars • How to bike/use a moped with children • Effective signage • Bike maps • Information about when people should go to beach • Information about when beach parking full
<p>Is congestion/traffic a concern?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summertime holiday weekends and Pony Penning week only • Bottleneck at refuge entrance booths • Not bad relative to other places • Do tourists care? More concerned about size of beach and crowding. 	<p>Refuge entrance booths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EZpass or other automated/electronic pass system • Stickers on car windshields • Express lane • Have staff walk line of traffic to redirect people with passes • Purchase passes off-site • Move location?

Concerns and Issues	Solutions and Ideas
Maintain vehicle access to the beach, and parking at the beach	Beach and parking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move (or add additional) beach and parking to the north; transition from south and keep south open to certain users (fishermen, hikers, birders) • Create new bay beach • Need plan in place for when vehicles cannot access beach (temporarily or permanently): transit, move parking/beach north, park in Wilderness Loop • Erosion tactics: sand replenishment/relocation, snow/sand fencing, jetties/reefs
Handicapped access to parking spaces, beach, water line, and fishing	Provide ADA matting for handicapped parking spaces, handicapped parking for fishing by ORV entrance (with fee component), removable ramp for closer access to water and beach
Litter and other impacts of increasing the number of visitors to beach	Provide a variety of options for the different users and their different needs (one size does not fit all).
	Increase access to southern tip of Toms Cove and other areas by ORV and boats
	Think regionally and positively about solutions
	Make gateway community a positive label
	Expand transit
	Offer beach-equipment concessions on beach (umbrellas, chairs, coolers, etc.)

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Conclusions and Next Steps

This document summarizes the discussion that took place at the two public meetings. It is an important part of a larger group of documents about the Alternative Transportation Study. These other important documents are all available on the project Web site: <http://chinco.fws.gov>. The documents include:

- “What is the Chincoteague Alternative Transportation Study?” background document
- Summary of the January transportation workshop
- Agenda for the October public meetings
- Maps of the study area

Moving forward, those interested can continue to share ideas and concerns with the project team by sending an email to: ChincoteaguePlanning@DOT.gov.