

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Mall and Memorial Parks
Washington, D.C.



AN ANALYSIS OF TOUR BUS OPERATIONS WITHIN THE NATIONAL MALL AND MEMORIAL PARKS

Phases VI & VII: Operator & Client Self Reports

August 2014

This page left blank intentionally.

An Analysis of Tour Bus Operations within the National Mall and Memorial Parks

Phases VI & VII: Operator & Client Self Reports

Technical Report Submitted to:

The National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Dr. SW
Washington, DC 20024

National Park Service
Denver Service Center
PO Box 25287
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Submitted by:

Laurlyn Harmon, Ph.D.
Margaret Daniels, Ph.D.
Rodney Vese, M.S.
Minkyung Park, Ph.D.

Contact:

Margaret Daniels, Ph.D.
School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism
George Mason University
10900 University Blvd., MS 4E5
Bull Run Hall, Room 202
Manassas, VA 20110-2203

Voice: (703) 993-4279
Fax: (703) 993-2025
mdaniels@gmu.edu

August 2014

This page left blank intentionally.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

STUDY RATIONALE

The National Park Service (NPS), National Mall and Memorial Parks (National Mall), was awarded a grant through the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program to study and make recommendations for improving tour bus operations within the National Mall. The *National Mall Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (NPS 2010) confirmed tour bus parking and traffic congestion problems and suggested that little has been done to address concerns that were previously identified in 2003. The 2010 plan reported that approximately 21-25 million visits occur in the 684-acre national icon each year. Approximately one-third of the visiting public arrives via tour bus: this can total as many as 1200 buses a day operating in and around the National Mall during the spring-summer peak season.

The purpose of the current project is to quantitatively and qualitatively document existing conditions and set forth a plan of action for short-term and long-term improvements in operational efficiency. A series of studies is being completed that pertain to operational efficiency, congestion, visitor mobility, access, safety, education, recreation, health benefits and protection of sensitive natural, cultural and historical resources. The data collection is occurring in phases, as indicated in Table A. The current report summarizes Phase VI and Phase VII findings, specific to perceptions of tour bus operators and clients. Acronyms that will be used throughout the report include those for the National Park Service (NPS), George Mason University (GMU), District Department of Transportation (DDOT), Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), and American Bus Association (ABA).

Data from six motorcoach company executives (i.e., President, Vice President or General Manager) representing tour bus operators sending approximately 4,385 buses to DC annually, and four clients representing leaders of tour groups were collected by GMU using a standardized instrument designed with input from NPS, Destination DC and DDOT. Board members of the ABA were interviewed prior to questionnaire distribution to ensure item validity. Variables were specific to logs, itineraries, education, recreation, health, vehicle-miles-traveled, methods used to reduce pollution, safety, regulation, and suggestions for improving operational efficiency and energy conservation.

Table A: Project Phases

Project Phase	Study*	Details
I	Off-Bus Data Collection and Photographic Documentation at Loading and Unloading Zones, Part 1	Data collected and analyzed by GMU that is specific to congestion, operational efficiency, mobility, access, safety, and resource protection at loading and unloading zones.
II	Off-bus Data Collection at Gateway Points	Data collected by COG for DDOT specific to tour bus volume and carrying capacity; analyzed by COG and GMU.
III	Off-Bus Data Collection and Photographic Documentation at Loading and Unloading Zones, Part 2	Data collected and analyzed by GMU that is specific to congestion, operational efficiency, mobility, access, safety, and resource protection at loading and unloading zones.
IV	Off-bus Data Collection at Parking Areas	Data collected and analyzed by GMU that is specific to turnover, stacking, user conflict, and carrying capacity at parking areas adjacent to major destinations as well as parking in peripheral locations.
V	On-Bus Data Collection and Photographic Documentation of Daily Bus Operations	Data collected and analyzed by GMU that is specific to congestion, operational efficiency, mobility, access, safety, education, recreation, health benefits and resource protection during the point-to-point experience
VI	Operator Self-Reports	Data collected and analyzed by GMU that is specific to logs, itineraries, education, recreation, health, vehicle-miles-traveled, methods used to reduce pollution, safety, regulation, and suggestions for improving operational efficiency and energy conservation.
VII	Client Self-Reports	Data collected and analyzed by GMU that is specific to itineraries, group needs, intermodal capabilities of diverse tour group markets and ways to maximize the on-bus and pedestrian experience.

*Note: Highlighted studies comprise current report.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Tour Bus Operators

The motorcoach operators interviewed collectively arrange transport for approximately 2,020 tour groups annually to Washington, DC in 4,385 buses, logging over 2.2 million miles. The average group size ranges from 30 to 129 with school groups comprising the largest target market segment.

Operators are cognizant of vehicle emissions and most typically control on-site emissions by encouraging drivers to limit idling time. However, operators simultaneously recognize that their drivers often cruise while in Washington, DC due to a lack of available parking. All operators reported driver safety training programs and were attentive to emergency preparedness.

Operators indicated some willingness to pay for parking but expressed concerns regarding NPS-proposed parking meters. These concerns included cost, length of stay, availability to drivers for short term pick-up/drop-off, the presence of law enforcement to ensure cars do not take up bus spaces and the availability of special spaces for buses needing to deploy wheelchair lifts. Itineraries are designed to account for traffic congestion in Washington, DC and drivers are trained to make schedule adjustments as needed when congestion causes significant delays

In light of perceived overall benefits of tour bus travel to Washington, DC, operators focused on the historical and political significance of the visit and also noted that tour participants are able to experience various cultures, enjoy the beauty of Washington, DC, contribute positively to the local economy and engage in a sustainable practices by using motorcoaches rather than visiting in separate automobiles. Operators indicated that health and recreation benefits for participants included peacefulness, lower stress than driving themselves, exercise, a cleaner environment from fewer cars and spending time with friends and family. Educational benefits noted by operators included learning about history and politics specifically and encouraging inquisitiveness and studying generally. Operator ideas for increasing Washington, DC tour benefits focused on inclusion of more interactive experiences, increased participant free time to visit museums of choice, reducing risk by increasing the safety of areas where buses drop off, reducing fumes, better signage, more on-site interpretation, period-costumed guides and better marketing of benefits.

Operators expressed little interest in using alternative on-site transportation such as Metrorail or the DC Circulator. More parking, more restrooms, better pathways, safer crosswalks and drop-off zones near all locations requiring time entrances were suggestions for improving the pedestrian experience.

Complaints, concerns and suggestions from operators specific to bringing tour groups to Washington, DC were common to parking, drop-off zones, congestion, street closures, routing, enforcement, information provision and timed ticket restrictions.

Tour Bus Clients

Tour bus clients represented a public middle school group, two international groups from South Korea and the Honor Flight Network, which transports World War II veterans to Washington, DC. Clients shared details about their most recent group trips to Washington, DC, which included anywhere from 40 to 190 participants. Their itineraries were either self-defined or designed with assistance from a tour company and varied significantly, with groups visiting anywhere from 4 to 17 sites.

The overall benefits of tour bus travel to Washington, DC noted by tour bus clients included understanding citizenship, being comfortable, tour bus efficiency and, in the case of the client group that serves military veterans, it was noted that participants are afforded the opportunity to observe how the American public feels about their past service and sacrifices. Clients indicated that health and recreation benefits for participants included walking, spending time with friends and teachers, sightseeing and

meeting new people. Educational benefits mentioned by clients included learning about history, information provision that complemented a school-based service learning project, and offering a greater understanding of the U.S. to foreign visitors. Ideas from clients for increasing Washington, DC tour benefits focused on variety of enhancements specific to circulation, lighting, food, bathrooms, water, information, special activities, itinerary suggestions and specialized tour guide usage.

Clients expressed little use of alternative on-site transportation such as Metrorail or the DC Circulator. These modes of transport were perceived to be too difficult for participants to negotiate, were not time effective and did not go to desired locations. Suggestions offered for improving the pedestrian experience included more careful itinerary planning, better food options, more water stations, clearly marked distance signs and improved loading and unloading locations to reduce chaos.

Complaints, concerns and suggestions from client representatives specific to bringing tour groups to Washington, DC pertained to food availability, water fountains, bathrooms and the impact of congestion on site access.

This page left blank intentionally.

CONTENTS

1.	Introduction and Background.....	1
2.	Methods	2
2.1	Respondent Pool	2
2.2	Data Collection Instruments.....	2
2.3	Data Collection: Implementation.....	2
2.4	Sample Size	3
2.5	Data Analysis	3
3.	Industry Association Perspective.....	4
4.	Tour Bus Operator Results	7
4.1	Overview of Tour Bus Companies	7
4.2	Tour Bus Client Information: As Provided by Operators	8
4.3	Washington, DC Itineraries	9
4.4	Local Tour Guide Use and Alternative On-site Transportation.....	10
4.5	Tour Bus Operational Information	10
4.5.1	Vehicle Miles Travelled.....	10
4.5.2	Methods Used to Reduce Vehicle Emissions.....	11
4.5.3	Safety Training.....	11
4.5.4	Emergency Preparedness	11
4.5.5	Timed Tickets	12
4.5.6	Strategies for Managing Traffic Congestion.....	12
4.5.7	Parking Fees and Meters	13
5.	Tour Bus Client Results.....	14
5.1	Client Characteristics.....	14
5.2	Itineraries.....	15
5.3	Participant Feedback	16
5.4	Improving Experiences.....	16
6.	Combined Results: Perceived Benefits and Intermodal Capabilities for Tour Participants.....	17
6.1	Overall Benefits.....	17
6.1.1	Perceived Overall Benefits	17
6.1.2	Enhancing Overall Benefits.....	18
6.2	Health Benefits.....	18
6.2.1	Perceived Health Benefits	18
6.2.2	Enhancing Health Benefits	19
6.3	Recreational Benefits	19
6.3.1	Perceived Recreational Benefits.....	19
6.3.2	Enhancing Recreational Benefits	20
6.4	Educational Benefits	21
6.4.1	Perceived Educational Benefits	21
6.4.2	Enhancing Educational Benefits	21
6.5	On-site Travel Modes Used	22
6.6	Maximizing the On-site Pedestrian Experience.....	22
6.7	Client Use of DC Circulator and Metrorail	23
6.8	Concerns and Complaints when Bringing Tour Groups to Washington, DC	24
6.9	Additional Comments.....	25

Appendix A: Manager/Tour Operator Data Collection Instrument	27
Appendix B: Client Data Collection Instrument	33
Appendix C: Tour Operator Participation Request.....	38
Appendix D: Client Participation Request.....	39

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Overview of Tour Bus Companies	7
Table 4.2: Annual Bus Usage	8
Table 4.3: Client Groups Transported to DC: Annual Data	8
Table 4.4: City, State and/or Country of Origin for Groups Coming to Washington, DC	9
Table 4.5: Local Tour Guide Use.....	10
Table 4.6: Vehicle Miles Travelled	10
Table 4.7: Methods Used to Reduce Vehicle Emissions	11
Table 4.8 Driver Safety Training.....	11
Table 4.9: Emergency Preparedness.....	11
Table 4.10: Impacts of Timed Tickets on Itineraries and Transportation.	12
Table 4.11: Strategies for Managing Traffic Congestion	12
Table 4.12: Parking Fees and Meters	13
Table 5.1: Tour Bus Clients: Group Characteristics	14
Table 5.2: Tour Bus Usage	14
Table 5.3: Client Demographics of Most Recent Trip to Washington, DC.....	14
Table 5.4: Sites Visited During Most Recent Trip to Washington, DC.....	15
Table 5.5: Itinerary Development and Impacts	15
Table 6.1: Perceived Overall Benefits of Participating in a Washington, DC Tour	17
Table 6.2: Ideas to Enhance Overall Benefits of Participating in Washington, DC Tour	18
Table 6.3: Perceived Health Benefits of Participating in a Washington, DC Tour	18
Table 6.4: Feasibility of Increasing Health Benefits	19
Table 6.5: Ideas to Enhance Health Benefits of Participating in a Washington, DC Tour	19
Table 6.6: Perceived Recreational Benefits of Participating in a Washington, DC Tour	20
Table 6.7: Feasibility of Increasing Recreational Benefits	20
Table 6.8: Ideas to Enhance Recreational Benefits of Participating in Washington, DC Tour	20
Table 6.9: Perceived Educational Benefits of Participating in Washington, DC Tour	21
Table 6.10: Feasibility of Increasing Educational Benefits.....	21
Table 6.11: Ideas to Enhance Educational Benefits of Participating in Washington, DC Tour	22
Table 6.12: On-site Travel Modes Used	22
Table 6.13: Maximizing the On-site Pedestrian Experience.....	23
Table 6.14: Use of DC Circulator and Metrorail.....	23
Table 6.15: Concerns and Complaints when Bringing Tour Groups to Washington, DC	24
Table 6.16: Additional Comments.....	25

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The National Park Service/National Mall and Memorial Parks (NPS/National Mall) management team completed a plan entitled the *National Mall Plan / Environmental Impact Statement* (NPS, 2010) to provide a long-term management framework for the future of the National Mall. As part of the larger plan, conditions pertaining to access and circulation were highlighted. The *National Mall Plan* proposed numerous recommendations in light of tour bus operations, including but not limited to: loading and unloading locations; parking; the management of large groups arriving by tour bus; creating multilingual educational opportunities for culturally diverse groups that arrive by tour bus; ready access to refreshments for tour bus arrivals and departures at select locations; information provision; and, sustainable practices.

The background for the 2010 recommendations included findings from a 2003 study entitled the *District of Columbia Tour Bus Management Initiative* that was conducted by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center for the District of Columbia Department of Transportation and other key stakeholders. The 2003 study highlighted numerous problems associated with tour bus operations in the District of Columbia, including traffic congestion, residential neighborhood disruption, air pollution, excessive noise, obstruction of view corridors and major landmarks and negative impacts on local infrastructure. The 2003 study recommended specific changes as well as on-site data collection and counts for monitoring purposes. However, the concerns raised and recommendations set forth in the *National Mall Plan*, completed in 2010, suggested that little progress had been made in the interim period.

In 2011, NPS contracted with researchers at GMU to conduct a scoping study to determine the perceptions of the current state of tour bus operations in Washington DC from key stakeholders. The study was conducted to better understand tour bus operations, in general, and specifically to determine the constraints to making improvements to current tour bus operations on the National Mall.

The GMU research team worked collaboratively with NPS to identify agencies for participation in the scoping interviews. Feedback was also received through meetings, e-mail communication and webinar participation. The following stakeholders were represented in the 2011 study: Academy Bus / New World Tours, Destination DC, DDOT, Guild of Professional Tour Guides, National Tour Association, United Motorcoach Association, U.S. Capitol Police, U.S. Park Police and the U.S. Travel Association. The primary goal of the scoping questions was to determine perceptions of the progress that has been made in terms of addressing the problems identified and the recommendations made in the 2003 study. Results from operators indicated perceptions of little progress, with an overall sense of increased enforcement being accompanied by a decrease in available parking, resulting in increased congestion and cruising. A disconnect between operator and enforcement personnel was evidenced, with operators indicating that parking and loading spaces near key visitor sites on the National Mall are inadequate for current demand while enforcement agencies indicated concerns regarding a lack of knowledge of and/or unwillingness to use available sites.

The current study builds upon the background knowledge provided in the 2003, 2010 and 2011 reports by beginning the process of systematically documenting existing conditions related to tour bus operations. This report represents the final two phases (i.e., VI and VII) of the seven-phase study that will ultimately be integrated into a comprehensive plan of action for short-term and long-term improvements in tour bus operational efficiency within the National Mall. For Phase VI, data from tour operators were collected and analyzed specific to logs, client demographics, itineraries, education, recreation, health, vehicle-miles-traveled, methods used to reduce pollution, safety, regulation, and suggestions for improving operational efficiency and energy conservation. For Phase VII, data from tour bus clients regarding group demographics, itineraries, education, recreation, health, vehicle-miles-traveled, and suggestions for improving tour group experiences were collected and analyzed. Results from both phases are presented in this report to allow for a comparison of industry and client perspectives regarding similar issues.

2. METHODS

2.1 RESPONDENT POOL

Twelve tour bus companies (i.e., operators) and five client groups were identified by the GMU, NPS, Destination DC and ABA as possible contributors to the study. Representatives from each company/client group were identified, contacted by GMU researchers and invited to participate in the study.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

The two data collection instruments were constructed with significant input from NPS, DDOT and Destination DC. In addition, prior to reaching out to the respondent pool, an in-depth interview was conducted by GMU researchers with members of the ABA executive team who provided a foundational industry perspective (see Section 3 of this report for a summary of this interview). This information was also used to confirm the validity of items included in both questionnaires.

For the tour bus operators, data were collected in six sections (see Appendix 1). Section A included company demographics specific to annual operations as well as the sizes, types and specialized needs of groups the company serves. Section B requested information regarding group itineraries. Section C included bus operational information, such as origination cities, bus miles travelled annually to DC, miles travelled while in D.C, air quality control strategies, emergency preparedness, driver time management techniques and parking. Sections D and E asked for information regarding perceived and potential tour benefits overall followed by sub-categories of health benefits, recreational benefits and educational benefits. Information regarding intermodal capabilities was solicited in Section F, including group circulation methods in DC, drop-offs/pick-ups, driver concerns/complaints and client concerns/complaints regarding transportation to DC.

For tour bus clients, the questionnaire had five sections (see Appendix 2). Section A asked for information regarding the group represented, the tour bus company of choice for the group, the number of buses on a typical Washington, DC trip and facilities available on the bus. Section B allowed respondents to indicate a variety of demographics about the group's most recent DC visit, including group size, age, group type (e.g., school age, adult, military, etc.), use of assistive devices and primary language spoken. Section C had itinerary-specific questions from the most recent DC visit. Sections D and E asked for information regarding perceived and potential tour benefits overall followed by sub-categories of health benefits, recreational benefits and educational benefits

2.3 DATA COLLECTION: IMPLEMENTATION

Using contact information for company and client representatives provided by GMU, ABA and Destination DC, introductory emails were sent to the twelve tour bus operators and five client group representatives on April 7, 2014 (See Appendix 3 and Appendix 4). Respondents were asked to either submit written responses via email, surface mail or fax or, alternatively, complete a phone or in-person interview with one of two GMU researchers by May 5, 2014. Follow up communication occurred as individuals responded. All non-respondents were contacted via email and given an extension to June 11, 2014, at which point data collection ceased.

2.4 SAMPLE SIZE

Using the methods outlined above, data from six motorcoach company executives (i.e., President, Vice President or General Manager) representing tour bus operators and four clients representing tour groups were collected.

2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative and qualitative findings are represented in tables with accompanying narrative to allow for ready comparison of operator data. The same approach was taken for the client data. In areas where operator and client questionnaire items are similar (i.e., perceived benefits) the two data sets were merged to allow for a comparison of industry and client perspectives.

3. INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION PERSPECTIVE

Board members from the ABA were interviewed on March 27, 2014 in order to ensure that the questions to be posed to operators and clients covered the range of concerns noted anecdotally to National Mall personnel over the years. During this in-person interview with two GMU researchers, the following questions were raised and accompanying, summarized responses provided.

Question 1: With respect to tour bus visitation in Washington, DC what is your ideal scenario?

Response: Looking at the changing market over past 15 years or so, group travel and the size of the motorcoach market are continuing to grow. For instance, 700 million passengers are moved through motorcoaches annually. This suggests DC would be a top destination among destination markets.

Increases in motorcoach volume plus reduced parking spaces as the result of policies implemented after 9/11 are contributing to an ill feeling towards DC among motorcoach operators. What was happening in New York City is now happening in DC.

DC is unique because of the structure of the city, where people are moved from monument to monument as opposed to dropping visitors off for all-day trips. The dynamic structure of the DC tourism industry makes it a unique scenario in motorcoach parking because timed admissions are changing the itinerary and people's attitudes post 9/11 have changed to a heavier reliance on buses. People want to be mobile and be able to move around or get out in a hurry.

Question 2: Why do people want to be bused from location to location all day?

Response: Moving with a bus and the safety associated with having the bus in close proximity are incentives to bus travel.

Question 3: How do you feel about the idea of shaping itineraries to decrease the reliance on buses and increase pedestrian experience?

Response: Generally speaking a third party is planning the trip, with a constrained budget, and adding other variables to increase cost to the trip may not be welcome.

Question 4: How do we improve the situation?

Response: Don't remove any more parking spaces. An example of the parking problem is that Union Station has lost many spaces in the hopes and promises of expanding parking. But, they have not expanded the outdoor parking lot which is located at New York Avenue.

Question 5: How does DC compare in terms of paid parking?

Response: Owners would much rather pay for parking than not have a place to park. So the drivers are OK with the paid parking. An overall frustration for DC is that DC is not dealing with the tour bus industry as a whole. Other cities seem to have better signs, better maps, more spaces, and better collaboration between city and the industry. Consider that New York has added meters for buses, why can't DC add meters? The goal should be to work on how to add more motorcoaches for bringing in tourism instead of working to limit them.

Question 6: How do you feel about DDOT and Destination DC?

Response: There is no action coming out of DDOT. For example, consider the Ivy City Parking Lot which is located next to Love Nightclub. Coordination among partners has never led to

action. A possible solution would that private lots could be converted to bus lots. Buzzard Point is an example of one Destination DC and DDOT have done, but nothing else has happened. Also, realize that not one single lot has overnight parking. There is also frustration with service types. Many studies look at different things but they are all servicing the same industry. There is no coordination among organizations regarding results. Over 10,000 commuters are moving into the city every day with a motorcoach. There is a connection between these different types of buses.

Question 7: How do you feel about enforcement?

Response: The number of agencies enforcing is causing confusion. Collaboration of enforcement agencies through DDOT has not led to any solutions. The [District Department of Environment's] Air Quality Division enforcing idling is challenging. Signage is not clear for pick-up and drop-off locations. There is an overall negative feeling toward enforcement. Another issue is the conflicting definition between what a commercial vehicle means. In other cities the definition includes buses but not in DC.

Question 8: Is parking underneath DC feasible?

Response: The concept is feasible but the funding is highly unlikely. Consider a European model that has worked in other cities.

Question 9: What motorcoach companies deal with international tourists?

Response: Companies with over 50 buses or the larger bus companies usually deal with international tourism. The majority of buses are on day trips, not overnight trips.

Question 10: Are itineraries specific to a tour or is there a standard or several standard tours?

Response: Both, they are standard but can be modified.

Question 11: Are planners willing to share itineraries?

Response: Yes many are, and several publish their itineraries on the web.

Question 12: Do drivers have a specific emergency preparedness plan for DC?

Response: Larger companies will have a specific plan but small companies may have no plan at all for day to day activities. One company had a sample emergency plan that some companies have adopted.

Question 13: Are planners looking at health benefits of tourism when making plans?

Response: No, they wouldn't think so. There is a frustration that the trip is the same every year but the client or teacher wants to stay the same.

Question 14: What is the permitting status of tour buses?

Response: Everyone needs to have a 6 day permit, except if they have the apportioned plates. Permits can be obtained online or over the phone. Commuter buses would have apportioned plates. Permit kiosks could be helpful but currently none exist, which limits when you could obtain a permit.

Question 15: What is the busiest day of the week?

Response: Thursdays are the busiest for school groups, weekends are the busiest for leisure travelers.

Question 16. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Response: Arlington Cemetery or Pentagon City could be considered for alternative tour bus parking. Overnight and driver comfort should be considered in plans. A feasible parking location must have a bathroom and a place to get a cup of coffee and other amenities. Restrooms are not required on buses.

4. TOUR BUS OPERATOR RESULTS

4.1 OVERVIEW OF TOUR BUS COMPANIES

Executives from each of the six tour bus companies provided information on their basic operations and the tour groups with whom they work on an annual basis. To maintain confidentiality, each tour bus operator was designated a letter of the alphabet, thus, all following data will refer to Operator A, B, C, D, E or F.

All six companies were based in either the northeastern or mid-Atlantic coastal region of the United States (Table 4.1). Each offered a variety of tour styles, accommodated both large and small groups and most allowed clients to either use a pre-designed itinerary or would work with them to design an itinerary meeting a group's particular interests. All motorcoaches provided by these companies offered basic amenities such as reclining seats, public address systems, stereo/CD players, air conditioning and DVD players. Larger motorcoaches also offered an on-board restroom and were typically wheelchair accessible.

TABLE 4.1: OVERVIEW OF TOUR BUS COMPANIES

Company	Characteristics	Services Offered
A	Northeast U.S. tour operator providing service within U.S. and allowing clients to purchase pre-designed itineraries or build-your-own itineraries. Approximately 435 buses sent to DC annually.	<i>Tours:</i> Vacation, corporate, schools, multi-day, 1-day, express, cruises, fly tours, sport tours <i>Equipment:</i> 56-passenger motorcoaches, 40-passenger motorcoaches, 29-passenger mini-coaches, executive limo vans, vans & school buses <i>Amenities:</i> DVDs, AM/FM radios, PA systems, reclining seats, A/C, individual reading lights & panoramic windows. 56-passenger coaches are wheelchair accessible
B	Northeast U.S. tour operator providing service to 48 states & Canada and allowing clients to purchase pre-designed or build-your-own itineraries. Approximately 600 buses sent to DC annually.	<i>Tours:</i> Vacation, schools, 1-day, multi-day <i>Equipment:</i> Motorcoaches for 20+ <i>Amenities:</i> restrooms, reclining seats, video systems, tinted windows and a public address system
C	Northeast U.S. tour operator providing service primarily along the east coast and in the northeast. Approximately 500 buses sent to DC annually.	<i>Tours:</i> Vacation, corporate, schools, football shuttling, cruises, primarily 1-day with some multi-day tours <i>Equipment:</i> 30-passenger limousine motorcoaches, stretch limousines and vintage trolley <i>Amenities:</i> TV, DVD/CD/Stereo, A/C, restroom, dry bar
D	Northeast U.S. tour operator providing local, regional and national service and allowing clients to purchase pre-designed or build-your-own itineraries. Approximately 200 buses sent to DC annually.	<i>Tours:</i> Weddings, vacation, groups, schools, dinners only, ski trips and will offer transport only, 1-day, multi-day <i>Equipment:</i> 54-person motorcoaches <i>Amenities:</i> WiFi, CD/Stereo, restroom, PA system, A/C
E	East coast U.S. tour operator providing local, regional, national & international service allowing pre-designed itineraries and chartered coaches. Approximately 2,500 buses sent to DC annually.	<i>Tours:</i> Vacation, schools, sports, 1-day, multi-day <i>Equipment:</i> 54-person motorcoaches, 36-person motorcoaches, 29- & 31-passenger minicoaches <i>Amenities:</i> A/C, DVD/video, cell phones, reading lamps, restroom
F	East coast U.S. tour operator providing local, U.S. & Canada service with a focus on mid-Atlantic coast and allowing pre-designed or build-your-own itineraries. Approximately 150 buses sent to DC annually.	<i>Tours:</i> Vacations, schools, special interest groups, soft adventure, 1-day, multi-day, shuttles <i>Equipment:</i> 56-person motorcoaches, 47-passenger motorcoaches, 29-passenger mini coaches, 9-passenger Sprinter vans, <i>Amenities:</i> A/C, Video, WiFi, DirecTV

The number of tour groups each company serves annually ranged from 665 to 7,000 (Table 4.2). Among those, 75 to 700 of the groups are being transported to Washington, DC. Many of the groups require more than one bus to serve their larger group size (average group size ranged from 30 individuals/group to 150 individuals/group), thus, tour bus companies reported sending from 200 to 2,500 buses to Washington, DC annually.

TABLE 4.2: ANNUAL BUS USAGE

Company	Approx. No. of Tour Groups Transported per Year	Approx. No. of Buses Sent Out per Year	Approx. No. of Groups Transported to DC per Year	Approx. No. of Buses Sent to DC per Year	Average No. of Individuals in Each DC Tour Group
A	665	4,753	145	435	56
B	1,500	2,080	500	600	129
C	7,000	7,000	500	500	30
D	800	2,500	100	200	39
E	3,000	*	700	2,500	125
F	4,300	10,750	75	150	100
Total	17,265	27,083*	2,020	4,385	

*Information not provided.

Not all tour operators engaged in consistent travel to Washington, DC throughout the year. Operator E specified that Spring (February through June) and Fall (September through November) were the heaviest use times for the tour bus company. Other tour bus companies did not specify this information; however, visitation patterns in Washington, DC suggest that many companies experience similar peaks in travel times following this approximate schedule.

4.2 TOUR BUS CLIENT INFORMATION: AS PROVIDED BY OPERATORS

Tour bus companies bring a variety of client groups to the Washington, DC area annually. School groups are the primary client group served for each tour bus company at almost 1500 annually between the six tour companies (Table 4.3). Adult groups make up the second most frequent group served for all tour bus companies except Company C for whom senior groups are their second most frequently served client.

Client average ages ranged from 13–40, however, it should be noted that all respondents served either senior groups or military groups with older individuals. Therefore, the average age of clients served does not reflect the full range of client ages. For example, with Companies A, E, and F, though the average ages of their clients ranged from 13-16, they also serve the adults who accompany the school groups.

TABLE 4.3: CLIENT GROUPS TRANSPORTED TO DC: ANNUAL DATA

Company	Average Client Age	School	Adult	Seniors	Culture / Language Other Than English	Military	Groups Needing Assistive Devices	Groups with Special Medical Needs
A	15–16	130	0	15	0	0	10	0
B	27	300	75	25	190	20	20	50
C	30	300	60	70	20	50	**	3
D	40	100	55	37	5	3	8	0
E	13–14	600	100	10	5	15	25	2*
F	13–14	60	10	0	0	5	5	10
Total		1,490	300	157	220	93	68	65

*For this tour bus company, the specialized medical needs arise usually with a wounded warrior program.

**Information not provided.

In addition to the clients in Table 4.3, Operator B also indicated that the company provides service to approximately 60 political groups annually. Further, Operator E specified that any groups that desired language interpretation would bring their own interpreters with them; therefore, they do not track information on language needs of groups.

For the final group characteristic, tour bus operators shared the origination locales of their primary groups who they typically bring to Washington, DC (Table 4.4). Origination cities ranged from the nearby states of Pennsylvania and North Carolina to global origins.

Operators:

A: Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes

B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)

C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles

D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles

E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)

F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

TABLE 4.4: STATE, CITY, REGION AND/OR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN FOR GROUPS COMING TO WASHINGTON, DC

Company	State, City and/or Country of Origin
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ohio: Cleveland, Akron, Youngstown • Pennsylvania: Erie, Pittsburgh
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeastern United States • France • Germany
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worldwide
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pennsylvania: Delaware Valley area of Philadelphia
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Carolina: Cities and schools throughout the state • Throughout United States
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Carolina: Western & Central regions • Tennessee: Eastern region • South Carolina: Northern region

4.3 WASHINGTON, DC ITINERARIES

Tour bus operators were invited to share information regarding their itineraries when transporting clients to Washington, DC. Standard itineraries provided by Operators A and D included visits to the Lincoln Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, World War II Memorial, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, the Pentagon, and at least one Smithsonian museum. Operators B and C noted that 75% and 10% of their itineraries, respectively, are standard but did not note specific sites. Operators E and F reported that all of their itineraries are customized.

Customized itineraries included visits to places such as Ford's Theatre National Historic Site, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Newseum, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Pentagon, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Smithsonian National Zoological Park. Additionally, one or more of the Smithsonian Museums were included in most custom itineraries. One operator specified that groups would usually choose Smithsonian museums that aligned with their specialty interest areas. For example, a school group visiting with their science teachers would choose to visit the National Museum of Natural History as part of their itinerary.

Operator E explained that his motorcoach company partners with a separate organization whose employees coordinate the itineraries for his company, including reserving timed tickets for visits to places needing them, such as the White House. While they always include at least one of the Smithsonian museums in their tours, each group chooses the museum which best meets their needs or focus. The most common choices among the Smithsonian museums are the National Museum of Natural History, the National Archives, the National Air and Space Museum and the National Museum of American History. In addition, approximately 5% of the Operator E's groups include a trip to the Smithsonian National Zoological Park. In general, Operator E prefers to include itinerary items that do not require timed tickets.

Meal stops are included in most tour itineraries. Among the six respondents, two offered information regarding how they manage their groups' meal needs. Specifically, Operator D noted that tours typically dine at the Union Station food court while Operator E generally plans for meals at the Old Post Office Tower, Ronald Reagan Building, one of the Smithsonian museums or the Pentagon City Mall food court.

Operators:

A: Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes

B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)

C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles

D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles

E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)

F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

4.4 LOCAL TOUR GUIDE USE AND ALTERNATIVE ON-SITE TRANSPORTATION

Operators were asked to indicate their use of local tour guides and alternative transportation while in DC. In terms of local tour guides, responses varied significantly, ranging from 1% (Operator D) to 99% (Operator E) of itineraries (Table 4.5).

Public transportation, specifically use of Metrorail or the DC Circulator, was not identified as a significant component for tour operators when bringing groups to Washington, DC. Those who report use of public transportation noted that they did so rarely and one operator stated their groups ride Metrorail from end of line to Smithsonian Metro Station or L'Enfant Plaza Metro Station for the experience only.

TABLE 4.5: LOCAL TOUR GUIDE USE

Company	Approximate % of DC Itineraries that Include a Local Tour Guide
A	15%
B	90%
C	10%
D	1%
E	99%
F	90%

4.5 TOUR BUS OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

Operators provided information regarding vehicle miles traveled, strategies for reducing emissions, emergency preparedness, timed tickets, congestion and parking.

4.5.1 Vehicle Miles Travelled

When combining all trips to DC, the six companies log over 2 million miles, with (Table 4.6).

Operator E, for example, traveled approximately 1,000,000 miles in the previous year between departure points and the National Mall. Additionally, while transporting clients between sites in DC, buses accrue mileage. Both operators and bus drivers indicate that much of this onsite mileage involves cruising while empty during periods when clients are sightseeing if parking is not readily available (see also Phase V of this study). For instance, Operator E stated that the onsite mileage averages 50 miles per day but that this number increases if no parking is available at the Buzzard Point parking lot and the driver needs to drive around to find an alternative parking space.

TABLE 4.6: VEHICLE MILES TRAVELLED

Company	Annual Miles Traveled for DC Tours	Average per Bus Vehicle Miles Travelled for DC Tours	Average per Bus Vehicle Miles Travelled While in DC
A	435,000	335	15 / day
B	600,000	884	200 / trip
C	13,000	500	50 / day
D	72,000	360	7 / day
E	1,000,000	750	50 / day
F	93,750	1,300	175 / trip
Total	2,213,750		

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

4.5.2 Methods Used to Reduce Vehicle Emissions

Tour bus companies use a variety of methods before travelling to Washington, DC as well as during their visit to attempt to reduce bus emissions (Table 4.7). Pre-trip methods among respondents varied and included sustainable education, upgrading equipment, inspections, and routine maintenance. Once in Washington, DC, respondents' primary strategy was to reduce idling time.

TABLE 4.7: METHODS USED TO REDUCE VEHICLE EMISSIONS

Company	Prior to Travel	During DC Tour
A	Enrolled in university "Motorcoach Sustainability" program	Reduced idle time
B	State and local pollution inspection	Restrict idle time to minimum
C	Purchased newer equipment	Shut off buses
D	No idling at pick up points or rest stops to/from DC	No idling at pick up and drop off points unless needed to operate wheelchair lift
E	Not aware of anything we can do	Park, turn off engines and always attempt to find parking as soon as possible
F	Maintain vehicle emissions systems properly	No idling and have groups walk when feasible

4.5.3 Safety Training

Safety training is an essential element of tour bus driver education. Operators provided feedback regarding the extensive training their drivers receive regarding passenger safety and emergency preparedness. Passenger safety was primarily addressed through pre-employment and/or continuing education (Table 4.8). Operator E also employs a full-time Safety Director.

TABLE 4.8 DRIVER SAFETY TRAINING

Company	Driver Safety Training
A	Pre-employment: 100 hours classroom & on the road training Annual driver recertification
B	Courses in passenger safety
C	Pre-employment: 56 hours classroom & on the road training Quarterly safety meetings
D	FMCSA training Commercial driver's license requirement Company safety/service meetings
E	Driving training program (i.e., DOT regulations, bus operations, safety) Full-time Safety Director
F	Pre-employment: 40 online class hours, 40 in-class hours, 40 or more training on each vehicle to be used

4.5.4 Emergency Preparedness

Tour bus operators are attentive to emergency preparedness. While operators were asked to indicate the preparedness plan for Washington, DC specifically, several responses suggested that the plans did not vary from destination to destination. Specific measures are indicated in Table 4.9.

TABLE 4.9: EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

Company	Emergency Preparedness
A	Driver training — Operation Secure Transport Motorcoaches equipped with GPS 24-hour emergency dispatch
B	Group leader cell phone contact with motorcoach and tour bus company main office Passengers provided with contact information in some cases

Operators:

A: Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes

B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)

C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles

D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles

E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)

F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Company	Emergency Preparedness
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver and office personnel training: C.A.T. Eyes (Community Anti-Terrorism Training Institute) • Driver training: security practices, operational procedures, suspicious activity recognition and reporting
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as other cities • Be aware of surroundings
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24-hour phone access • IMG (International Motorcoach Group) member
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as other cities • 2-way radios & cell phones for drivers • Multiple route planning/awareness • Motorcoaches outfitted with Saucon Fleet Management system for onboard messaging and monitoring

4.5.5 Timed Tickets

All of the tour bus operators except Operator D indicated they include a visit to at least one Washington, DC site that requires a timed ticket (Table 4.10). Most noted that they adjust their schedules to accommodate for the inclusion of visiting a pre-scheduled location at a particular time. One company specifically noted that timed tickets are challenging while another company suggested that the difficulty level can vary depending on traffic and how quickly the group seems to be moving through their schedule that day.

TABLE 4.10: IMPACTS OF TIMED TICKETS ON ITINERARIES AND TRANSPORTATION.

Company	Impacts of Timed Tickets
A	Day is scheduled around those locations (usually U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Washington Monument)
B	Depends on traffic and group promptness
C	Difficult working around itinerary
D	*
E	Other visits become secondary, but this is not a problem
F	**

*This company does not include visits to locations needing timed tickets

**No response given.

4.5.6 Strategies for Managing Traffic Congestion

When faced with traffic congestion, all of the tour bus operators except Operator D noted that drivers add time into their schedules to allow for traffic congestion while in Washington, DC. If, however, they do get behind schedule, each company has a slightly different approach to making up for lost time (Table 4.11). For example, Operators A, B, C and F make some kind of adjustment to the schedule while Operator E collaborates with the host hotel to develop best driving strategies for the day. In addition, Operator E does not allow new drivers to work in DC without assistance from a senior driver. Drivers working with Operator D do not attempt to make up for lost time.

TABLE 4.11: STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Company	Strategies for Managing Traffic Congestion
A	Eliminate items from itinerary or shift items to a different day of the tour
B	Skip stops or shorten time at stops
C	Change schedule or cancel item
D	Drivers do not attempt to make up lost time and do not account for traffic congestion
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High awareness of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane openings/closures • Include senior driver with new drivers • Work with hotels to discuss driving strategies
F	Make schedule adjustments and relay them to the group

Operators:

A: Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes

B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)

C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles

D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles

E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)

F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

4.5.7 Parking Fees and Meters

With respect to parking, most operators were willing to pay at some level, with perceptions of reasonable fees ranging from \$1/hour to \$20/hour (Table 4.12). One operator suggested that it would be helpful to:

... think about charging a bus company during the high months (e.g. Spring/Fall) and use the Hains Point area during that time. They (the HP spaces) appear vacant to the drivers most of the time so it appears to be an extreme loss of parking and drivers can't see rationale. The perception is that it must be much more offensive to bikers to have to ride behind buses who are trying to see if one of the 6 spaces are available than it would be if the buses were just parked there. Then, close off to buses for months where bus traffic isn't the highest.

Regarding NPS-proposed parking meters, operators were asked to indicate any concerns they had. Operators noted concerns such as cost, length of stay, availability to drivers for short term pick-up/drop-off, the presence of law enforcement to ensure cars did not take up bus spaces and the availability of special spaces for buses needing to deploy wheelchair lifts (Table 4.12).

TABLE 4.12: PARKING FEES AND METERS

Company	How Much per Hour is Reasonable to Pay for Parking Close to DC Sites?	Concerns Regarding Proposed Bus Parking Meters
A	\$5 / hour	Cost Limited availability Length of stay
B	\$10–20 / hour	Cars will park there — like Cherry Blossom Festival Too short of time allowed to accommodate group
C	We should not have to pay for parking due to revenue brought to city from clients.	Method of payment for drivers One bus arriving and staying all day
D	\$10 / hour	Will we be able to briefly pick-up/drop-off fee free? Will there be police present to keep cars out of bus slots? Will there be special locations for buses needing to deploy wheelchair lifts?
E	Depends on proximity, e.g. \$1 / hour is reasonable for bus to park within 1–2 miles of site.	For cars and buses? Will length of space accommodate bus?
F	No price indicated. Noted: Increasingly expensive to travel to DC — adding parking to various venues adds to the price burden. Some tour groups choosing closer to home trips due to increased expense of DC travel.	It will add another expense that trips cannot bear

Operators:

A: Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes

B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)

C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles

D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles

E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)

F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

5. TOUR BUS CLIENT RESULTS

Phase VII of this study was designed to assess feedback from tour bus clients, defined as the individuals who represented a National Mall tour group and were present during the tours. Representatives from each of four client groups provided information on their basic characteristics and details regarding the groups' most recent trips to Washington, DC. To maintain confidentiality, each client was designated a letter of the alphabet; thus, the following analysis will refer to Clients A, B, C and D.

5.1 CLIENT CHARACTERISTICS

Section A of the questionnaire invited tour bus clients to share four characteristics: 1) the group represented; 2) tour bus companies preferred by the group; 3) number of tour buses used on a typical Washington, DC visit; and, 4) restroom availability on buses used by the groups.

Groups represented included a public middle school, two groups of international travelers from South Korea and Honor Flight Network veterans (Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1: TOUR BUS CLIENTS: GROUP CHARACTERISTICS

Client	Group Characteristics
A	Public middle school group originating from the northeastern U.S. Tour included primarily youth ages 12-15 and accompanying school personnel.
B	Adult group originating from South Korea. Tour included primarily adults ages 50-60 years old.
C	Adult group originating from South Korea. Tour included primarily adults ages 50-60 years old.
D	Honor Flight Network tour. Tour included World War II veterans and their companions, ages 70-90+ years old.

Table 5.2. summarizes the preferred tour bus companies, number of tour buses used during a typical visit to DC and restroom availability. Three clients had a particular bus company preference while Client C chartered from a variety of bus companies. The number of buses used on a typical Washington, DC visit ranged from 1 to 5. All clients selected tour buses with restrooms.

TABLE 5.2: TOUR BUS USAGE

Client	Tour Bus Companies Preferred	Number of Buses on Typical DC Visit	Buses Equipped with Restrooms?
A	Capital Tours, Inc.	4	Yes
B	Capital Executive Transportation	1	Yes
C	Charter from various bus companies	4	Yes
D	Dillon's Bus Service	2	Yes

Respondents next shared details of their most recent trip to Washington, DC. All client groups had completed trips within three months or less of the data collection period. All groups had adult travelers, two included school-aged children and three included seniors (Table 5.3). English was the primary language spoken among the groups identified by Clients A and D, while Korean was the primary language spoken for the groups represented by Clients B and C. The Korean groups included Korean-speaking tour guides. Two groups required assistive devices for at least one member of their tour group.

TABLE 5.3: CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS OF MOST RECENT TRIP TO WASHINGTON, DC

Client	Group Size	Average Age	School-aged in Group?	Adults in Group?	Seniors in Group?	International Travelers in Group?	Military Personnel in Group	Any Member Used Assistive Device?	Language Interpreter Used?
A	190	14	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
B	53	55	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
C	40	55	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
D	85	75	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No

5.2 ITINERARIES

Each client group visited a wide range of sites within the greater Washington, DC area (Table 5.4). Destinations included monuments, memorials and Smithsonian museums. All four client groups visited the Lincoln Memorial, but otherwise, itineraries varied significantly.

TABLE 5.4: SITES VISITED DURING MOST RECENT TRIP TO WASHINGTON, DC

DC Destination	Client A	Client B	Client C	Client D
Air Force Memorial				X
Arlington National Cemetery	X			X
Ford's Theatre National Historic Site	X			
Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial	X			
Korean War Veterans Memorial	X		X	X
Lincoln Memorial	X	X	X	X
Marine Corps War Memorial (i.e., Iwo Jima Memorial)				X
Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial	X			
Mount Vernon	X			
National Air and Space Museum	X			
National Museum of American History	X		X	
National Museum of the American Indian	X			
National Museum of Natural History	X			
Newseum	X			
Pentagon Memorial				X
Smithsonian museums*		X		
Thomas Jefferson Memorial		X	X	
U.S. Capitol			X	
U.S. Capitol Visitor Center	X			
U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum	X			
U.S. Navy Memorial				X
U.S. Supreme Court	X			
Vietnam Veterans Memorial	X			X
White House **	X	X	X	
World War II Memorial	X			X

*Museum names not specified.

**Groups A and C viewed the White House from the street for pictures.

Itineraries for each client were designed by either the tour company hired or the client group (Table 5.5). Two of the four groups were able to visit all destinations desired. However, Clients A and C were not able to visit the interior of the White House, primarily because of the advance notice required to do so. In addition, Client A was not able to visit the interior of the U.S. Capitol, the U.S. Supreme Court or the National Archives. Their group represented middle school students. As such, the tour leader stated that long lines in exposed areas and the size of the group were prohibiting factors.

Adhering to a specific timeline is often a challenge for many tour group operations within the National Mall. While these respondents did not encounter problems with adhering to their most recent itineraries, Client A did note that in the past, weather had created timeline challenges. Only Client A used timed tickets during the most recent visit.

TABLE 5.5: ITINERARY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACTS

Client	Who Created Itinerary?	Desired Destinations That Group Was Unable to Visit	Reasons for Inability to Visit Desired Destinations
A	Tour company with input from school teachers	National Archives White House tour Interior of U.S. Capitol U.S. Supreme Court	Long lines in sun and too long of a wait Group is large – hard to balance wait time with students
B	Tour company	None	n/a
C	Client C planners	Interior of White House	Needed recommendation in advance to visit inside
D	Client D planners	None	n/a

Clients:

A: Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US

B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea

C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea

D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

5.3 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Among the four client groups, Clients A and B reported that they gathered feedback from participants after their most recent visit to Washington, DC while Clients C and D did not. Client A gathered a breadth of information regarding destination rating, time management, meal satisfaction, a special outing (i.e., boat trip), flight satisfaction, preparation improvement suggestions, additional comments and bus utilization. Client B collected data regarding the bus, the guides and the food.

5.4 IMPROVING EXPERIENCES

Clients were asked to detail suggestions they have learned that would assist others in having a successful visit to Washington, DC. Client A was the only respondent to offer advice. Suggestions pertained to bringing student groups and included the following: room as close to city as possible; have security guards so teachers can sleep at night; consume big breakfasts, lunches and dinners; schedule in time for students to choose museums to visit; bring reusable water bottles, although there are not enough filling stations; have students dress in layers; ban electronic devices for students, as they are a distraction; be flexible and willing to change itineraries; always reexamine what tour operator suggests by doing “common sense” tests; count off system for large groups and review every stop; have students use a buddy system; wear comfortable shoes; bring extra flip flops on bus for students, as someone always breaks theirs; select museums and destinations for students carefully – do what they want to do; try to end on a high note, i.e., a tour of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum right before you head home is depressing for students.

Clients:

A: Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US

B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea

C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea

D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

6. COMBINED RESULTS: PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND INTERMODAL CAPABILITIES FOR TOUR PARTICIPANTS

Both tour bus operators and tour bus clients responded to items regarding perceived benefits of visits to Washington, DC. For comparison purposes, the results from both perspectives were merged. Perceived benefit areas included overall followed by health, recreation and educational. Respondents were then asked to rate the feasibility of enhancing these same four benefit areas and then urged to offer specific suggestions for enhancing benefits.

6.1 OVERALL BENEFITS

6.1.1 Perceived Overall Benefits

Both tour bus operators and clients perceived a wealth of overall benefits for those who participated in their tours (Table 6.1). A common benefit noted was the opportunity for tour groups to learn about how a democracy works as well as the political and historical significance of the U.S. government. Both groups also noted the value of tour bus travel in that it allows participants to visit Washington, DC economically and efficiently.

Among operators, it was further noted that tour participants are able to experience various cultures, the beauty of Washington, DC, contribute positively to the local economy and engage in a sustainable practices by using motorcoaches rather than visiting in separate automobiles. Tour bus clients noted benefits of understanding citizenship, being comfortable, and, in the case of the client group that serves military veterans, it was noted that participants are afforded the opportunity to observe how the American public feels about their past service and sacrifices.

TABLE 6.1: PERCEIVED OVERALL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN A WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Operator Perspectives	Client Perspectives
Experience culture and diversity; observe diverse people (race, creed, religion) working together	Culminating 8 th grade activity — theme of citizenship; connects to U.S. history studied
Understand greatness of U.S.	Comfortable transportation
Understand history	Professional tour guide
Understand how democracy and government work	Can visit most important tourist sites in limited time
Enjoy the beauty of city	Learning about political, historical and social aspects of U.S. capital city
Convenience for passengers	Veterans can see how American public feels about their service and sacrifice during war
Affordability	
Contributing to local economy	
Contributing to clean environment through use of motorcoach	

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
- B:** Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
- C:** Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
- D:** Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
- E:** Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
- F:** Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
- B:** Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
- C:** Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
- D:** Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

6.1.2 Enhancing Overall Benefits

Ideas for enhancing overall benefits were limited among tour bus operators and related to the inclusion of more interactive experiences and participant free time to visit museums of choice (Table 6.2). Tour bus clients, however, suggested a variety of enhancements specific to circulation, lighting, food, bathrooms, water and information.

TABLE 6.2: IDEAS TO ENHANCE OVERALL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Operator Perspectives	Client Perspectives
More hands-on and detailed experiences Include free time to visit museums and other guided activities	Simpler ways of moving around, i.e. drop-off and pick-up locations Better night lighting near monuments because kids have gotten lost and it's easy to get turned around at World War II Memorial, for example Better food on the National Mall More accessible bathrooms More accessible water stations Slideshow showing more period information, e.g. Ford's Theatre, would help kids visualize what is happening Kiosks showing mini videos at key sites along mall Would like to use NPS National Mall app, but downsides of cellphones for kids far outweigh upsides More parking lots More sites to visit at night Improvements in traffic Improvements in bus parking

6.2 HEALTH BENEFITS

6.2.1 Perceived Health Benefits

Among the operators and clients, physical exercise was identified as a primary health benefit. Direct impacts of being able to engage in peaceful and less stressful visits to Washington, DC since tour participants were not required to drive were also noted as was the health benefit of contributing to less air pollution. Client D made a special note of the emotional health benefit to veterans on an Honor Flight tour of being able to experience gratefulness from the public.

TABLE 6.3: PERCEIVED HEALTH BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN A WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Operator Perspectives	Client Perspectives
Peacefulness Less stress since they are not driving Exercise from walking Clean environment from reduced air pollution	Lots of walking / physical exercise Experiencing gratefulness from public; in most cases it's the first time veterans have experienced this

Operators:

A: Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes

B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)

C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles

D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles

E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)

F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

A: Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US

B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea

C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea

D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

6.2.2 Enhancing Health Benefits

Tour operators and clients shared how feasible they believe it would be to increase the potential health benefits for their participants (Table 6.4). Most of the operators and clients were neutral in their responses, suggesting that they do not have strong opinions on this topic. Three of the six operators did not respond to this item.

When asked to provide ideas for how health benefits might be enhanced on a Washington, DC tour, ideas from tour operators focused on risk, fume reduction and circulation (Table 6.5). Tour bus clients, on the other hand, focused on individual needs of participants by suggesting better food, more water filling stations or alternative water options, shaded areas and more accessible paths.

TABLE 6.4: FEASIBILITY OF INCREASING HEALTH BENEFITS

Respondent	Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible
Operator A*					
Operator B			X		
Operator C*					
Operator D			X		
Operator E*					
Operator F			X		
Client A		X			
Client B			X		
Client C				X	
Client D			X		

*No response given.

TABLE 6.5: IDEAS TO ENHANCE HEALTH BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN A WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Operator Perspectives	Client Perspectives
Reduced risk regarding accessing bus in unsafe areas Reducing fumes from bus motors in operation To keep charter buses out of DC, look at old Boeing Air Force Base or other locations in Maryland and Virginia – would it be feasible to have a central location that charter buses come to and the Circulator picks them up and takes them to city? Most companies would likely be willing to pay for something like this and the Circulator bus operators know the city better than charter bus drivers and would know about daily changes in traffic.	Better food More water filling stations Offer mineral water Shaded areas with benches to cool down in hot weather and for thunderstorm cover Gravel paths hard for strollers, people in wheelchairs or people with mobility challenges

6.3 RECREATIONAL BENEFITS

6.3.1 Perceived Recreational Benefits

Operators and clients noted a variety of recreation benefits including exercise, spending time with friends and family, and meeting or engaging with new people and sightseeing (Table 6.6).

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

TABLE 6.6: PERCEIVED RECREATIONAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN A WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Operator Perspectives	Client Perspectives
Exercise from walking Being with family and friends	Chance to see U.S. Capitol Be with friends and teachers See museums and monuments Tour guide was fun and kind Fun day to meet new people

6.3.2 Enhancing Recreational Benefits

Tour operators and clients shared how feasible they believe it would be to increase the potential recreational benefits for their participants (Table 6.7). Most of the operators and clients were neutral in their responses, suggesting that they do not have strong opinions on this topic. The exceptions were Operator E who believed it was very unfeasible to increase recreation benefits for participants and Client A who believed it was very feasible to increase recreation benefits. Two of the six operators did not respond to this item.

When asked to provide ideas for how recreation benefits might be enhanced on a Washington, DC tour, no ideas were provided by tour bus operators (Table 6.8). Tour bus clients suggested creating itineraries for those with specialized interests such as animal lover tours, developing youth-oriented scavenger hunts, providing distance markers to allow recreational walkers/joggers to quantify distances and suggesting mini-exercise activities for participants.

TABLE 6.7: FEASIBILITY OF INCREASING RECREATIONAL BENEFITS

Respondent	Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible
Operator A*					
Operator B			X		
Operator C*					
Operator D			X		
Operator E					X
Operator F			X		
Client A	X				
Client B			X		
Client C				X	
Client D			X		

*No response given.

TABLE 6.8: IDEAS TO ENHANCE RECREATIONAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Operator Perspectives	Client Perspectives
Everything is already there that you need to do.	Distances marked so people could walk and jog and know how far they went. Suggested itineraries for people interested in certain subjects, such as museum exhibits, veterans tours, animal lover tours, history tours, that could be pre-printed and used by tour groups Museum scavenger hunts for kids to get them to engage in locations more. Mini-exercise suggestions (stretching, jumping jacks, etc.)

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

6.4 EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

6.4.1 Perceived Educational Benefits

The most commonly mentioned educational benefit was specific to historical knowledge and learning (Table 6.9). Operators noted benefits pertaining to learning about society, current politics, future planning and igniting/encouraging additional education. Clients centered more on their group type; for instance, Client A shared the educational value of students engaging in a complementary service learning project as a critical outcome while C specifically noted potential educational benefits to foreign visitors in terms of understanding history of the U.S.

TABLE 6.9: PERCEIVED EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Operator Perspectives	Client Perspectives
Learn about history Learn about current politics Understand how to plan for future Ignites inquisitiveness Encourages more studying Encourages continuing education	Learn about history Learn about society Complements service learning project – each kid has been active in a Citizen Action Group of choice throughout year planning & completing service projects Learn about Washington, DC Museums and monuments offer new understanding about U.S. history to foreign visitors

6.4.2 Enhancing Educational Benefits

Tour operators and clients shared how feasible they believe it would be to increase the potential educational benefits for their participants (Table 6.10). The most common response given by operators and clients was “neutral,” suggesting that they do not have strong opinions on this topic. Notable exceptions are Operator D, who indicated that is very unfeasible to increase educational benefits and Client A, who indicated it is very feasible to increase educational benefits.

Operator ideas for enhancing educational benefits of participating in Washington, DC tours included better signage, the use of on-site speakers, general guides and period costumed guides. Clients also suggested greater use of guides as well as contests and creating opportunities for participants to see demonstrations (Table 6.11).

TABLE 6.10: FEASIBILITY OF INCREASING EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

Respondent	Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible
Operator A*					
Operator B			X		
Operator C*					
Operator D			X		
Operator E					X
Operator F		X			
Client A	X				
Client B			X		
Client C				X	
Client D			X		

*No response given.

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

TABLE 6.11: IDEAS TO ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN WASHINGTON, DC TOUR

Tour Bus Operator Perspectives	Tour Bus Client Perspectives
Better signage On-site speakers Guides to allow for questions Period costumed guides Current education benefits are phenomenal, but may be underestimated and under-marketed	Touring guides aimed at school groups Fun contests – Park Service Rangers are awesome and have been, engaging, invaluable and great at answering student questions More consistently good tour guides; have been mixed in terms of engaging the audience well Love seeing demonstrators at the White House – people need to see First Amendment in action!

6.5 ON-SITE TRAVEL MODES USED

Respondents were invited to indicate the modes of transportation used once on-site at the National Mall. With the exception of Honor Flight veterans, all respondents who answered this question indicated that walking is common, while only one indicated alternative public or private transport in the form of loop services and Metrorail.

TABLE 6.12: ON-SITE TRAVEL MODES USED

Respondent	On-site Travel Modes Used
Operator A	Additional motorcoach pick-ups & transfers Walking where motorcoaches are restricted
Operator B	Walking
Operator C	Walking
Operator D	Walking first Private tour buses running loop services Metro subway system last
Operator E	Walking
Operator F	Groups walk between museums (e.g., drop-off: Air & Space; pick-up: American History Museum)
Client A	Walking: we do a ton of walking Bus
Client B*	
Client C	Buses between stops Walking to individual sites from bus pick-up/drop-off
Client D	Use buses to get to all of our stops

*No response given.

6.6 MAXIMIZING THE ON-SITE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Respondents were asked to share ideas for what might be done to maximize a tour group's pedestrian experience to decrease the number of bus pick-ups and drop-offs (Table 6.13). Responses from operators were specific to the provision of better services and an improved transportation infrastructure while clients additionally noted that careful itinerary planning can lead to improvements (Table 6.13).

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

TABLE 6.13: MAXIMIZING THE ON-SITE PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE

Respondent	Suggestions for Improving the Pedestrian Experience
Operator A	If walking is mandated, provide seasonal items for tour participant comfort free of charge, e.g. umbrellas
Operator B	More restrooms Better pathways Small tourmobiles for people with disabilities
Operator C	More parking
Operator D	More Metro loop buses with one-fee all-day pass Offer RFK or Union Station as a base location for coaches (no tour/charter coaches on the National Mall and use Metro loop buses accordingly)
Operator E	Infrastructure, but not pedestrian overpasses (those are gaudy) – underwalkways Stoplights and crosswalks across major roads are quite dangerous – but not sure what best strategy is for pedestrians to have to make these crossings. We want to take the tour bus to the place that is closest to those areas where tour groups do not have to cross streets.
Operator F	Drop-off and pick-up zones neared all of the locations which require timed entrances
Client A	Sometimes it is better planning on our part (watching the clock more carefully, not having to wait for kids). Traffic always awful and the monuments at night are challenging. Better food option and water stations. Kids love the sculpture garden by Natural History and putting hot feet in the fountains. Ice cream vendors are always a hit. Clearly marked signs with large letters saying “Air and Space ¼ mile across National Mall” etc. would really help. Large readable signs with maps that are labelled with names and “You are here” symbols. Better pick-up and drop-off locations. It is chaos with all the buses!
Client B*	
Client C*	
Client D	We do not wish to reduce the number of stops

*No response given.

6.7 CLIENT USE OF DC CIRCULATOR AND METRORAIL

Tour bus clients were asked to indicate their willingness to put tour group members on the DC Circulator or Metrorail as part of their itinerary (Table 6.14). Only Client A was willing to consider using these modes of transportation if they could be implemented efficiently and cost effectively. Clients B, C and D replied that they would not use these modes of transport because they were perceived to be too difficult for participants to negotiate, were not time effective and did not go to desired locations.

TABLE 6.14: USE OF DC CIRCULATOR AND METRORAIL

Respondent	Would you be willing to put tour group members on the DC Circulator or Metro as part of your itinerary?	Rationale for Response
Client A	Yes	As long as it was manageable and did not add significantly to our costs. We hire tour guides that are with us the entire time and we use all bus time with them fully! Not sure what the Circulator is. I also happen to love guided bus tours if the guides are good.
Client B	No	Too many people, hard to find, control
Client C	No	Time limit concerns, can have similar experience in any other big city in the world
Client D	No	The Metro does not go where we want to go

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

6.8 CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS WHEN BRINGING TOUR GROUPS TO WASHINGTON, DC

Tour bus operators were invited to share their primary concerns and complaints when sending tour groups to Washington, DC, as well as the issues raised by their drivers and customers. Tour bus clients asked to share what their personal concerns and complaints when bringing tour groups to Washington, DC (Table 6.15).

TABLE 6.15: CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS WHEN BRINGING TOUR GROUPS TO WASHINGTON, DC

Respondent	Primary Concerns and Complaints
Operator A	Lack of parking Lack of convenient drop-offs Law enforcement Auto traffic congestion Permit fees Inaccessibility of motorcoach
Operator B	Lack of information Lack of control of intersections by DC Police Lack of understanding by US Park Police about bus loading policy Little available help if bus has mechanical issue The theory that if the police prevent buses from parking, they will just go away when, in fact, they ride around creating more pollution The apparent glee that US Capitol Police demonstrate by forcing buses to move just as the group returns to be picked up Need for more formal food stops, e.g. food courts
Operator C	No place to park Street closings Not enough time to see everything
Operator D	Lack of parking space for our coaches with protection from the elements. We cannot idle for clean air reasons so to have a building to shelter drivers all day from extreme heat or cold. Sitting inside a tour bus during the summer temperatures reach 140 degrees. Sitting outside the coach on the hot macadam is little relief for the summer weather as the black asphalt retains heat. During the winter a driver will freeze in the coach. Are you aware some drivers bring portable heaters to heat the bus inside during a long layover to keep warm because they cannot idle the bus and there is no building close by to go into to escape the cold weather? Police eager to chase us away when trying pick up our passengers on the National Mall. The RFK stadium should be open all year long for coaches to park there with more loop buses and Metro trains to get the passengers into and around the Mall area all day to all the monuments, memorials and museums. Clients expect us to provide door to door type service all day in Washington and we are unable because it is a long day for us and the drivers need off-duty time to remain in compliance with FMCSA regulations.
Operator E	Drop-off and pick-up locations Parking Groups don't understand that when we roll up to the Capitol we have 45 seconds to drop off. And, don't understand that everyone must be there when a bus rolls up to pick them back up again. They do understand it's challenging, but we hear the comments that it would be nice if there was a more relaxing drop off location. Same with Smithsonian Air & Space.
Operator F	Parking Unfriendly and overzealous cops How hard it is to get to see certain things because of ticket restrictions such as the Capitol, Holocaust, National Archives, Fords Theatre, the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, etc. – many larger tour companies book all the time slots on all the popular days and do not release them once they have scheduled their groups.

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

Respondent	Primary Concerns and Complaints
Client A	We are exhausted by the end with all the walking we do and because we come for 3 days with tons of kids and try to see a LOT of the city. We prefer vendors on streets for souvenirs to shops. Food is tougher due to group size and locations. Screenings like at Reagan building where we eat lunch do take time. Can't always get in places like the Capitol Visitor Center. Bathrooms and water fountains are a perennial problem and we try to have the kid bring reusable water bottles.
Client B	The tour guide couldn't get into sites with the group, because he had to stay in the vehicle (because of the parking) Using 15-person van — very hard to drop-off and pick-up people at Lincoln circle because van not permitted to enter)
Client C	DOT checks and road blocks
Client D	Traffic congestion

6.9 ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The final item on both the operator and client questionnaires invited respondents to share any additional comments. Operators A, B and E responded with a variety of comments including perspectives regarding the use of Circulator vehicles, responses to route changes and associated bus drop-off and pick-up issues, and an offer to participate directly in additional bus traffic discussion meetings.

TABLE 6.16: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Respondent	Comments
Operator A	Use of Circulator vehicles is going to lead to congestion and it will not allow for flexibility, appropriate vehicle size, or special access. It will cause increased cost, issues with scheduling & transferring groups. Additionally, the group will be forced to leave their safe, secure motorcoach for the use of a public Circulator.
Operator B	I liked the changes in Potomac Park that made the drive one way from Jefferson to Lincoln. However, it would have been nice to have at least one or two signs advising of that fact on the routes inbound to DC. Many buses were not able to make scheduled pick-ups because the normal route was closed. Also, if you are going to create a mile of bus drop-off and pick-up on the drive, it might be better used for bus parking as my observation was that the park police threw the buses out immediately after they unloaded and refused to let them back in unless the groups were standing next to the road. In the 4 days I was there, the bus loading areas were empty and few buses used them because the police did not have a good understanding that the bus needed to be parked there 15-20 minutes to accommodate passengers returning at different rates of speed due to age, physical abilities and condition.
Operator C*	
Operator D*	
Operator E	Would welcome being invited to any conversations with DOT, NPS, GMU folks...very willing to openly discuss with folks and learn about what kinds strategies are being used to address and impacts. (Operator) recognizes he may not be aware of negative impacts to all sides regarding various decisions and is very open to learning. Would be happy to participate to make it better for everyone. Very willing to travel to DC for such a meeting.
Operator F*	
Client A	Thank you for asking our opinions!
Client B*	
Client C*	
Client D*	

*No response given.

Operators:

- A:** Tours to NE region of US; ~435 DC buses annually; origin OH & PA; range of bus sizes
B: Tours to US & Canada; ~600 DC buses annually; origin NE US, France & Germany; mid to large buses (20+ person vehicles)
C: Tours to US East coast & Northeast; ~500 DC buses annually; origin worldwide; 30-person vehicles
D: Tours to US; ~200 DC buses annually; origin PA; 54-person vehicles
E: Tours to US & international; ~2500 DC buses annually; origin NC & US; mid to large buses (29+ person vehicles)
F: Tours to US & Canada; ~150 DC buses annually; origin NC, TN & SC; range of bus sizes

Clients:

- A:** Public middle school (12–15 yrs old); NE US
B: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
C: Adults (50–60 yrs old); South Korea
D: Seniors (70+ yrs old); Honor Flight

This page left blank intentionally.

APPENDIX A: MANAGER/TOUR OPERATOR DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

National Mall and Memorial Parks Tour Bus Study Self-Report from Tour Bus Executives

Thank you for responding to the following questions regarding tour bus operations in Washington DC (DC) and the National Mall and Memorial Parks (National Mall). Please respond to all items that relate to your organization. You can skip any item that you are not able to answer. The questionnaire can be returned by email, fax or surface mail. All contact information can be found on the last page.

SECTION A: Demographics. This first section of our questionnaire asks you to share demographics of your basic operations and tour groups with whom you work.

1. What tour bus company do you represent?

2. Approximately how many tour GROUPS does your organization transport in a year, including all destinations?

3. Approximately how many tour BUSES does your organization send out in a year, including all destinations?

4. Approximately how many tour GROUPS does your organization transport to DC in a year?

5. Approximately how many tour BUSES does your organization send out to DC in a year?

6. Are the buses that your organization sends to DC equipped with restrooms? Yes ____ No ____

7. What is the average number of individuals in each DC tour group?

8. What is the average age of your DC clients?

9. Please indicate the approximate number of groups your organization transports to DC in a typical year that represent each characteristic in the table below:

GROUP TYPE	School Groups	Adult Groups	Senior Groups	Cultural Groups	Military Groups	Other - please describe:
# OF GROUPS (per year)						

10. Please indicate the approximate number of groups your organization transports to DC that have the following needs each year:

GROUP TYPE	Assistive Devices	Specialized Medical Needs	Language Accommodations - please state language:	Language Accommodations - please state language:	Language Accommodations - please state language:
# OF GROUPS (per year)					

SECTION B: Itineraries. The second section of our questionnaire asks you about the group itineraries you provide and your participants’ feedback.

11. What aspects of your itineraries to DC are standardized, meaning they do not change from group to group?

12. What aspects of your itineraries to DC are customized for each client?

13. What is the approximate percentage of your DC itineraries that include local tour guides? _____%

14. Are you willing to share a sample itinerary to DC that is offered by your organization?
 Yes ____ No ____ If yes, please send it with the completed questionnaire.

15. Do your clients ever use the Metro or DC Circulator as part of the itinerary?
 Yes ____ No ____

SECTION C: Bus operational items. This next section of our questionnaire asks you to share information regarding bus operations.

16. For your DC itineraries, please list common cities/states of origin of the primary groups that you serve (i.e., Where are your clients coming from?)

17. Approximately how many total miles do your buses travel per year to DC, when combining all trips to DC?

18. What is the average per bus vehicle miles traveled associated with trips to DC, when considering the average individual round trip? (Please provide a sample log, if feasible)

19. What is the average vehicle miles traveled per bus while in DC? (Please provide a sample log, if feasible)
20. What methods, if any, does your company use to reduce tour bus pollution:
- a. Prior to trips to DC:

 - b. During trips to DC:
21. What kind of training do your drivers take to ensure the safety of their passengers?
22. Please explain your emergency preparedness plan for tours going to DC.
23. Do your itineraries include visit sites in DC that require timed tickets? Yes ____ No ____
If yes, how do these sites impact your itinerary and transportation around DC?
24. Do your drivers add in time for congestion when in DC? Yes ____ No ____
25. How do your drivers make up for lost time when they get behind their schedule in DC?
26. How much is reasonable to pay per hour for parking close to specific sites in DC? \$_____/Hour
27. The National Park Service will soon install parking meters at several bus parking sites close to the National Mall. What are your primary concerns regarding the plan to install parking meters for tour buses?

SECTION D: Perceived benefits for tour participants. The fourth section of our questionnaire asks you about the benefits you believe individuals may gain from participating in your group itineraries.

- 28. What do you believe are the primary **OVERALL** benefits of your tours to DC for participants?

- 29. What do you believe are the primary **HEALTH** benefits of your tours to DC for participants?

- 30. What do you believe are the primary **RECREATIONAL** benefits of your tours to DC for participants?

- 31. What do you believe are the primary **EDUCATIONAL** benefits of your tours to DC for participants?

SECTION E: Feasibility of increasing benefits for tour participants, and specific ideas: This next section of our questionnaire asks you to think about and share possible strategies for enhancing benefits to participants.

- 32. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing the **OVERALL** benefits of your tours to DC for participants?

For the next three questions, please indicate how feasible you believe it would be to enhance each type of benefit for your tour participants. Then, share the specific ideas you have for enhancing that benefit.

- 33. How feasible do you think it would be to enhance the **HEALTH** benefits of your tours to DC for participants? (please check one)

Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible

- a. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing **HEALTH** benefits:

- 34. How feasible do you think it would be to enhance the **RECREATIONAL** benefits of your tours to DC for participants? (please check one)

Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible

- a. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing **RECREATIONAL** benefits:

35. How feasible do you think it would be to enhance the **EDUCATIONAL** benefits of your tours to DC for participants? (please check one)

Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible

a. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing **EDUCATIONAL** benefits:

SECTION F: Intermodal capabilities: The final section of our questionnaire wraps up with asking you to share information regarding intermodal capabilities.

36. Once your drivers drop off a group, what are the primary ways tour bus groups use to get around the National Mall?

37. What can be done to maximize a tour bus group’s pedestrian experience and, accordingly, reduce the number of drop-offs and pick-ups around the National Mall?

38. What are your primary concerns and complaints that you and your drivers have regarding transporting tour groups to DC?

39. What are your primary concerns and complaints that your clients express about their visits to DC?

40. Additional comments:

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!
 You can return this questionnaire via email, fax or surface mail.
 See next page for contact information.

Contact Information

Email: Please return to Maggie Daniels (mdaniels@gmu.edu) or Laurie Harmon (lharmon@uwlax.edu)

Fax: Please fax to Maggie Daniels at 703-993-2025

Surface mail: Please mail to Maggie Daniels

Maggie Daniels, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, National Mall Tour Bus Study
School of Recreation, Health and Tourism
George Mason University
10900 University Blvd., MS 4E5
Bull Run Hall, Room 201B
Manassas, VA 20110-2203

Questions or comments, please call:

Maggie Daniels: 703-993-4279

Laurie Harmon: 540-878-8737

APPENDIX B: CLIENT DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

National Mall and Memorial Parks Tour Bus Study Client Self-Report

Thank you for responding to the following questions regarding tour bus travel to Washington DC (DC) and the National Mall and Memorial Parks (National Mall). You are being asked to complete this questionnaire because your tour group either recently or regularly visits DC and the National Mall with a tour bus company. Please respond to all items that relate to the group you represent. You may skip any item that you are not able to answer. The questionnaire can be returned by email, fax or surface mail. All contact information can be found on the last page.

SECTION A: Demographics. This first section of our questionnaire asks you to share basic demographics of your tour group members.

1. What group do you represent?
2. Which tour bus company do you prefer to use when bringing a group to DC?
3. Approximately how many tour BUSES does your group use on a typical DC visit?
4. Are the buses that your group uses when travelling to DC equipped with restrooms? ___Yes ___No

SECTION B: Recent Trip. For this next section, please refer to your **most recent** trip to DC.

5. When was your most recent trip to DC (month/day/year)?
6. Approximately how many people were in your group?
7. What was the average age of the clients in your most recent tour group?
8. Please indicate (using an “x”) any of the following categories your group represented:

School Groups	Adult Groups	Senior Groups	Cultural Groups	Military Groups	Other - please describe:

9. Did anyone in your group use an assistive device (e.g. wheelchair, cane, etc.) ___Yes ___No
10. What was the primary language spoken by your group members?
11. Did anyone in your group need a language interpreter? ___Yes ___No

SECTION C: Itineraries and participant feedback. The third section of our questionnaire asks you about the itinerary and participant feedback for your group’s most recent trip to DC.

12. What was the group’s itinerary while in DC? Please share a copy, if possible.
13. Who created the itinerary? This may be the tour company, you, another individual or some combination.

14. Was there anything your group wanted to do that you were unable to do? Yes No

a. IF YES, please tell us WHAT you were unable to do and WHY:

15. Were you able to follow the approximate itinerary timeline? Yes No

a. IF NO, please tell us why not:

16. Did your itinerary include sites in DC that require timed tickets? Yes No

17. Did you gather feedback from your participants after their tour completion? Yes No

a. IF YES, please tell us share with us what questions you asked and the results, if possible.

18. Was this your group's first visit to DC? Yes No

a. IF NO, please share what you have learned over the years to improve your experiences to DC:

b. IF NO, please tell us what suggestions or hints you have for a successful trip in DC that you are willing to share with others:

SECTION D: Perceived benefits for tour group members. The fourth section of our questionnaire asks you about the benefits you believe individuals may gain from participating in your group itineraries.

19. What do you believe are the primary **OVERALL** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants?

20. What do you believe are the primary **HEALTH** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants?

21. What do you believe are the primary **RECREATIONAL** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants?

22. What do you believe are the primary **EDUCATIONAL** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants?

SECTION E: Feasibility of enhancing benefits for tour participants, and specific ideas: This next section of our questionnaire asks you to think about and share possible strategies for enhancing benefits to participants.

23. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing the **OVERALL** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants?

For the next three questions, please indicate how feasible you believe it would be to enhance each type of benefit for your tour group participants. Then, share the specific ideas you have for enhancing that benefit.

24. How feasible do you think it would be to enhance the **HEALTH** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants? (please check one)

Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible

a. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing **HEALTH** benefits:

25. How feasible do you think it would be to enhance the **RECREATIONAL** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants? (please check one)

Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible

a. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing **RECREATIONAL** benefits:

26. How feasible do you think it would be to enhance the **EDUCATIONAL** benefits of your visits to DC for tour group participants? (please check one)

Very Feasible	Somewhat Feasible	Neutral	Somewhat Unfeasible	Very Unfeasible

a. What are some specific ideas you have for enhancing **EDUCATIONAL** benefits:

SECTION F: Intermodal capabilities: The final section of our questionnaire wraps up with asking you to share information regarding intermodal capabilities.

27. Once the tour bus dropped off you and your most recent group at the National Mall, what are the primary ways your group used to get around the National Mall?

28. What could have been done to maximize your most recent tour group's pedestrian experience at the National Mall and, accordingly, reduce the number of drop-offs and pick-ups?

29. Would you be willing to put tour group members on the DC Circulator or Metro as part of your itinerary?

_____Yes _____No

a. Why or why not?

30. What are your primary concerns and complaints regarding bringing tour groups to DC?

31. Additional comments:

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!
You can return this questionnaire via email, fax or surface mail.
See next page for contact information.

Contact Information

Email: Please return to Maggie Daniels (mdaniels@gmu.edu) or Laurie Harmon (lharmon@uwlax.edu)

Fax: Please fax to Maggie Daniels at 703-993-2025

Surface mail: Please mail to Maggie Daniels

Maggie Daniels, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, National Mall Tour Bus Study
School of Recreation, Health and Tourism
George Mason University
10900 University Blvd., MS 4E5
Bull Run Hall, Room 201B
Manassas, VA 20110-2203

Questions or comments, please call:

Maggie Daniels: 703-993-4279

Laurie Harmon: 540-878-8737

APPENDIX C: TOUR OPERATOR PARTICIPATION REQUEST

Dear (Tour Operator),

Researchers from George Mason University are working with the National Park Service regarding a study designed to improve tour bus operations on the National Mall and in Washington, DC.

(Point of Contact) of (Agency) suggested that I reach out to you regarding this study.

We would like to hear from you regarding your experiences when sending buses to the National Mall and Washington, DC. Questions are specific to organizational characteristics, itineraries, bus operations, perceived benefits and intermodal capabilities.

The questions are attached. If you agree to participate, you can respond in writing or we can schedule a phone interview that will be conducted by me or my research colleague, Laurie Harmon. If you feel there is someone else in your organization who should receive the questionnaire in addition to you or instead of you, please let me know.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you are willing to respond to these questions. If you agree to participate, your feedback will be summarized for use in analysis of the conditions of tour bus operations in the National Mall & Memorial Parks area.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research. The data in this study will be confidential. All responses will be analyzed without connecting the data to any identifying information.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

I would appreciate your written response by **Monday, May 5, 2014**. If you prefer to complete the interview over the phone, just let me know and we can schedule a phone interview that will take place within the next month.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to email or call me.

Many thanks for your role in improving tour bus operations on the National Mall.

Sincerely,
Maggie Daniels, Ph.D.
Principal Investigator, National Mall Tour Bus Study
School of Recreation, Health and Tourism
George Mason University
10900 University Blvd., MS 4E5
Bull Run Hall, Room 201B
Manassas, VA 20110-2203
Phone: 703-993-4279
Fax: 703-993-2025
mdaniels@gmu.edu

APPENDIX D: CLIENT PARTICIPATION REQUEST

Dear (Tour Bus Client),

Researchers from George Mason University are working with the National Park Service regarding a study designed to improve tour bus operations on the National Mall and in Washington, DC.

(Point of Contact) of (Agency) suggested that I reach out to you regarding this study.

We would like to hear from you regarding your experiences when sending buses to the National Mall and Washington, DC. Questions are specific to organizational characteristics, itineraries, bus operations, perceived benefits and intermodal capabilities.

The questions are attached. If you agree to participate, you can respond in writing or we can schedule a phone interview that will be conducted by me or my research colleague, Laurie Harmon. If you feel there is someone else in your organization who should receive the questionnaire in addition to you or instead of you, please let me know.

Please let me know at your earliest convenience if you are willing to respond to these questions. If you agree to participate, your feedback will be summarized for use in analysis of the conditions of tour bus operations in the National Mall & Memorial Parks area.

There are no foreseeable risks for participating in this research. The data in this study will be confidential. All responses will be analyzed without connecting the data to any identifying information.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. If you decide not to participate or if you withdraw from the study, there is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs to you or any other party.

This research has been reviewed according to George Mason University procedures governing your participation in this research.

I would appreciate your written response by **Monday, May 5, 2014**. If you prefer to complete the interview over the phone, just let me know and we can schedule a phone interview that will take place within the next month.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to email or call me.

Many thanks for your role in improving tour bus operations on the National Mall.

Sincerely,

Maggie Daniels, Ph.D.

Principal Investigator, National Mall Tour Bus Study

School of Recreation, Health and Tourism

George Mason University

10900 University Blvd., MS 4E5

Bull Run Hall, Room 201B

Manassas, VA 20110-2203

Phone: 703-993-4279

Fax: 703-993-2025

mdaniels@gmu.edu

