

**Final NPS Alternative Transportation Program  
Strategic Action Plan, 2012 – 2016**

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## Executive summary

This plan is an action-oriented, performance-based update to the *2002-2006 Alternative Transportation Program (ATP) Strategic Plan* which focuses the ATP on efforts to coordinate and manage ATS investments and identifies key actions and deliverables for the ATP to accomplish within the next five years.

This *ATP Strategic Action Plan* consists of three actions supported by fifteen individual tasks. The NPS Transportation Program will coordinate all ATP stakeholders in completing the tasks and deliverables that support these actions, summarized below.

Action	Task	Target Completion Date
<b>Action 1: Systematize prioritization and justification of alternative transportation investments.</b>		
	Task 1.1: Define ATP goals, objectives, and performance measures.	August 2012
	Task 1.2: Formulate a national ATP investment strategy.	January 2012
	Task 1.3: Define an ideal Category III regional allocation formula.	November 2013
	Task 1.4: Develop a data regime to support ATS performance measures.	December 2012
	Task 1.5: Collect data elements to support ATS performance measurement.	December 2013
	Task 1.6: Summarize ATS and ATP performance measures in the <i>ATP Annual Performance Report</i> .	March 2014
<b>Action 2: Modernize asset management practices for alternative transportation.</b>		
	Task 2.1: Define ATS assets to be included in FMSS, PAMPs, and other management systems.	January 2013
	Task 2.2: Integrate ATS asset management data into FMSS/PAMPs.	January 2014
<b>Action 3: Communicate ATP strategies, policies, status, and accomplishments.</b>		
	Task 3.1: Create a single resource to store ATP program management documents.	October 2011
	Task 3.2: Update this <i>ATP Strategic Action Plan</i> biennially.	September 2013
	Task 3.3: Update <i>Service-wide Comprehensive Call Guidelines</i> annually.	August 2012
	Task 3.4: Update the <i>ATP Business Practices</i> as needed.	As-needed
	Task 3.5: Update ATP fact sheets, policy papers, and white papers for external distribution as needed.	As-needed

## Introduction

### *Purpose*

This document is an action-oriented, performance-based update to the *2002-2006 Alternative Transportation Program (ATP) Strategic Plan*. This plan focuses the ATP on efforts to coordinate and manage investments in alternative transportation systems (ATS) and identifies key actions and deliverables for the ATP to accomplish within the next five years. The ATP will update this plan every two years.

### *Transportation and Alternative Transportation Systems*

Transportation systems are critical components of the National Park Service (NPS). Transportation systems not only provide critical access to (and sometimes protection of) natural and cultural resources, but they also influence the feelings and reactions people have before, during, and after their visits.

Privately-owned vehicles (POVs) are the predominant mode of access, generating 2.4 billion vehicle miles traveled within national parks annually.<sup>\*</sup> While the POV is an acceptable mode of access in many cases, it can also have negative impacts on the very resources being protected. In addition to requiring appropriately sized road and parking infrastructure, POVs can create traffic and parking congestion; generate air, noise, and water pollution; or simply be out of context with the natural and cultural resources NPS is charged to protect.

Throughout the history of the NPS, visitors have also traveled to and within parks using railroads, buses, ferries, planes, small watercraft, bicycles, dogsleds, snow-machines, and even on foot. While these alternative modes have historically provided critical access to sites that physically could not be reached by POVs, in the last few decades a various array of alternative modes and intelligent transportation systems<sup>†</sup> have been increasingly used as policy tools used to mitigate some of the negative consequences of POVs. Together, all applicable alternative transportation modes and intelligent transportation systems are known as *alternative transportation systems (ATS)*.

### *The Alternative Transportation Program*

The *Alternative Transportation Program (ATP)* was launched in 1998 and comprises the collection of offices, individuals, activities, policies, and procedures that coordinate and manage ATS investments. Responsibilities of the ATP include helping park units to plan, fund, deploy, operate, maintain, and in some cases, retire, ATS.<sup>‡</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> Transportation System Characteristics Fact Sheet, page 1.

<sup>†</sup> Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) are technology-driven solutions that improve the efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure.

<sup>‡</sup> Alternative Transportation Program, 2002, page 7.

The ATP visioning workshop proposed the mission of the ATP is to<sup>§</sup>

*Provide safe, sustainable and appropriate access to and within National Park units consistent with the National Park Service mission.*

The Park Facilities Management Division (PFMD) Transportation Program directly oversees the ATP and coordinates ATP-related activities of primary NPS stakeholders and Federal Lands Highways, all of whom have joint responsibility for the program's success:

- Regional transportation and alternative transportation program managers
- Transportation Working Group
- PFMD Facility Planning Branch
- Denver Service Center Transportation Division
- Federal Lands Highway Planning Branch
- Federal Transit Administration

### *Performance-based planning*

In 2002, the ATP published the *2002-2006 ATP Strategic Plan* which made important steps in the coordinating ATS investments.\*\* This *2012-2016 ATP Strategic Action Plan* updates the *2002-2006 ATP Strategic Plan*, expanding upon its strategies and establishing concrete actions within a performance-based approach.

Performance-based planning is a systematic, ongoing process that is integrated into an organization's ongoing planning, management, and decision-making processes.†† The advantages of performance-based planning for the NPS include improving allocation of limited dollars among an abundance of spending needs, and fulfilling the "continuous" component of the 3C process by tracking progress toward meeting goals and objectives. The need for NPS to implement performance-based planning has been documented throughout the last decade, as shown in Appendix A.

The remainder of the document describes the performance-based strategic actions and tasks to be taken by the ATP over the next five years.

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<sup>§</sup> Golden, CO, February 2011

\*\* National Park Service Accomplishments in Alternative Transportation.

†† Pickrell, S. and Neumann, L. (2000). *Conference Proceedings: Use of performance measures in transportation decision making*, Irvine, California, October 29–November 1, 2000. pages 17-33.

## ATP strategic actions and tasks

This *ATP Strategic Action Plan* consists of three actions supported by a variety of individual tasks. The actions are as follows:

- Systematize prioritization and justification of ATS investments;
- Modernize asset management practices for ATS;
- Communicate ATP strategies, policies, status, and accomplishments.

The PFMD Transportation Program will coordinate all ATP stakeholders in completing the tasks and deliverables that support these actions, summarized in Table 1.

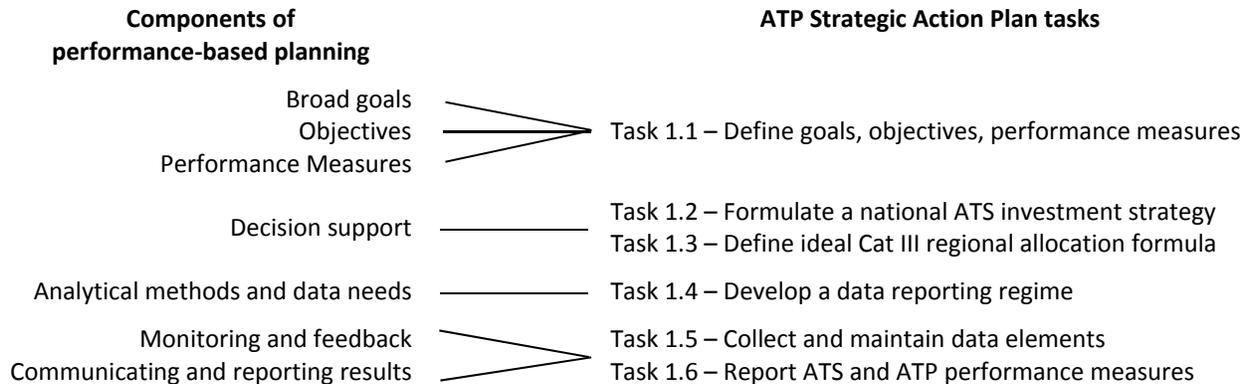
**Table 1 - Summary of strategic actions and tasks described in this plan**

Action	Task	Target Completion Date
<b>Action 1: Systematize prioritization and justification of alternative transportation investments.</b>		
	Task 1.1: Define ATP goals, objectives, and performance measures.	August 2012
	Task 1.2: Formulate a national ATP investment strategy.	January 2012
	Task 1.3: Define an ideal Category III regional allocation formula.	November 2013
	Task 1.4: Develop a data regime to support ATS performance measures.	December 2012
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<b>Action 2: Modernize asset management practices for alternative transportation.</b>		
	Task 2.1: Define ATS assets to be included in FMSS, PAMPs, and other management systems.	January 2013
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<b>Action 3: Communicate ATP strategies, policies, status, and accomplishments.</b>		
	Task 3.1: Create a single resource to store ATP program management documents.	October 2011
	Task 3.2: Update this <i>ATP Strategic Action Plan</i> biennially.	September 2013
	Task 3.3: Update <i>Service-wide Comprehensive Call Guidelines</i> annually.	August 2012
	Task 3.4: Update the <i>ATP Business Practices</i> as needed.	As-needed
	Task 3.5: Update ATP fact sheets, policy papers, and white papers for external distribution as needed.	As-needed

### *Action 1: Systematize prioritization and justification of ATS investments.*

The ATP will create a performance-based planning process for ATS investments in order to improve transparency, accountability, and cost effectiveness.

There are several major components of performance-based planning, as shown in Figure 1. These components relate to six tasks through which the ATS will implement its performance-based planning process.



**Figure 1 - Relationship of performance-based planning components to ATP Strategic Action Plan tasks**

The groundwork for several of the tasks within Action 1 has already been laid. In these cases, the focus will be on reviewing and synthesizing past efforts, validating the results, and formalizing for use on an on-going basis.

**Task 1.1: Define ATP goals, objectives, and performance measures.**

*Target completion date: July 2012*

The ATP will refine and formalize the goals and objectives that were discussed at the ATP Visioning Workshop in Golden, CO, in February 2011.

The ATP will also adopt performance measures that support the goals and objectives. The chosen performance measures will inform what ATS data will be collected, as described in Task 1.4. For at least the first several years of data collection, described in Task 1.5, both the number of performance measures and associated data requirements should be small to minimize the burden of data collection on units and regions.

**Task 1.2: Formulate a national ATP investment strategy.**

*Target completion date: January 2012*

The ATP will develop and maintain a strategy to guide ATP investments that support the mission of the NPS, sustain critical systems, and reflect sound asset management practices. The investment strategy will address the following components:

- How to prioritize and/or balance system and service preservation with the need or opportunity to create new and expanded alternative transportation;
- What are the desired measurable outcomes of ATP investments;
- What is the role of asset management and system preservation in investment decisions;
- What is the role of the proposed Capital Investment Strategy (CIS) in investment decisions;
- What types of fund sources are best used for different types of investments; and

- What courses of action will be taken when it has been determined that an ATS is unable to achieve a sustainable level of performance.

Eventually, ATS performance measures will help the ATP make decisions that are aligned with the investment strategy.

**Task 1.3: Define an ideal Category III regional allocation formula.**

*Target completion date: November 2013*

Prior to 2011, the PRPP Category III funding was allocated by WASO as a service-wide, competitive, discretionary program. This service-wide method of distributing Category III was distinctly different than the distribution of Category I (roads and bridges) projects, for which funding was sub-allocated at a regional level and project selection was done at the regional level as well.

In FY 2011, in an effort to align the Category I and Category III management practices, the Transportation Working Group led an effort to create a formula-based method to allocate Category III funding to the regions.

Though an allocation formula attempts to approximate aggregate need without identifying and evaluating specific needs, it should be based on quantitative factors that are representative of specific needs. The Transportation Working Group found there was no set of factors for which data is currently available that are representative of regional ATS needs and representative of multiple modes. Acknowledging this, the Transportation Working Group and regional transportation program managers decided to implement a “demonstration” allocation formula for 2011 and update the formula as better data is made available.

To plan for future updates to the formula, the ATP will define an “ideal” Category III regional allocation formula which will support the goals and objectives identified in Task 1.1. Formula factors must be transportation-based, multimodal, measurable, able to be validated, and applicable service-wide. The ideal formula will recognize the importance of factors that both demonstrate ATS needs and recognize ATS accomplishments. Data elements that comprise the factors of the ideal formula will be incorporated into the data regime defined in Task 1.4. The ideal Category III formula will not be implemented until supporting data is collected.

The ATP will define how often the formula will be rerun. Updates to the current formula and the ideal formula will be documented, reviewed, and updated as needed in the *Category III Regional Allocation Formula Documentation* according to Task 3.1.

**Task 1.4: Develop a data regime to support ATS performance measures.**

*Target completion date: December 2012*

The ATP will plan and implement a data regime to simultaneously support ATS performance measures and other programs and initiatives within the NPS that require ATS data. As part of this task, the ATP will lead an effort to:

- Identify what individual or office will be responsible for the data regime.
- Identify what data is needed and how it will be used.
- Identify what data elements currently exist and what data elements are yet to be collected.
- Develop a data collection process/tool and identify a place to store service-wide ATS data.
- Communicate service-wide what data needs to be collected and support data collection.
- Develop structured reports and establish a method for ad-hoc reporting.

After the ATP has formally addressed the above considerations, the ATP will review the new process to ensure that it is practical and produces quality and cost-effective results.

**Task 1.5: Collect data elements to support ATS performance measurement.**

*Target completion date: December 2013, December 2014, December 2015, December 2016*

The ATP will put into practice the data regime defined in Task 1.4.

**Task 1.6: Summarize ATS and ATP performance measures in the ATP Annual Performance Report.**

*Target completion date: March 2014, March 2015, March 2016*

The *ATP Annual Performance Report* will be updated annually according to Task 3.1 and will address progress on the definition, refinement, and success of performance measures related to ATS and ATP.

First, ATS descriptive statistics based on the performance measures collected in Task 1.5 will be presented at the summary level (aggregated service-wide and by regions) and at the individual ATS level. These statistics will be used by the ATP, regions, and units to:

- Describe the current state of the NPS alternative transportation systems;
- Track the effectiveness of previous ATS investments at meeting the goals and objectives defined in the *ATS Service-wide Performance Plan*;
- Help identify needs and make informed decisions about future ATS investments; and
- Report the direct costs and benefits of ATS to support planning and outreach activities.

Second, ATP performance measures will track the performance of the ATP (as opposed the performance of individual or aggregate ATS) in completing the actions and tasks of this plan. Example measures for the program include the following:

- Percentage of system compliance with data collection defined in Task 1.5;
- Percentage of products defined in Task 3.1 that have been updated within the stated period;
- Percentage of outreach materials defined in Task 3.5 that are less than five years old;
- Percentage of ATS assets entered into FMSS; or
- CAT III obligation rates.

The ATP will use the results of the *ATP Annual Performance Report* to improve planning, funding, deployment, operations, maintenance, and retirement of alternative transportation systems in the subsequent years.

### *Action 2: Modernize asset management practices for ATS.*

Many of the assets associated with ATS are not entirely or in part incorporated into either the Facility Management Software System (FMSS) or the Park Asset Management Plan (PAMP) process. These systems, along with the proposed CIS, are the cornerstones of NPS efforts to implement a service-wide investment strategy and allocate limited resources across asset types to needs based on asset management principles.

#### **Task 2.1: Define ATS assets to be included in FMSS, PAMPs, and other management systems.**

*Target completion date: January 2013*

The ATP will plan and implement a comprehensive approach designed to fully integrate ATS-related assets in FMSS and PAMP systems. The ATP will establish a project work group to help ensure that the project scope and design is appropriate and complete. The ATP will define the ATS-related asset types and associated data needs and determine the most cost-effective and efficient approach to providing the data required by FMSS to achieve NPS asset management goals. The ATP will develop a model for ATS-related asset management business practices and identify any of the elements of this model that may require special analysis and/or studies (e.g., depreciation costs, deferred maintenance estimates, maintenance schedules, etc.) and take appropriate action.

#### **Task 2.2: Integrate ATS asset management data into FMSS/PAMPs.**

*Target completion date: January 2014*

The ATP will work closely with Asset Management Branch, Facilities Planning Branch, Transportation Branch, regional offices, and individual units to integrate ATS asset management information into FMSS. FMSS data requirements will be identified and collected via the data regime described in Task 1.4. Units will be responsible for the input of ATS asset management data into FMSS, and ultimately units will consider ATS assets in their PAMPs. The ATP will conduct a pilot study of this new process to ensure that it meets established performance measures related to quality, cost, and practicality.

### *Action 3: Communicate ATP strategies, policies, status, and accomplishments.*

The ATP seeks to establish documents that formalize ATP plans, strategies, policies, performance management activities, roles and responsibilities, and business practices. These documents will be regularly reviewed and updated according to a regular schedule and they will be readily available to all ATP partners and stakeholders.

#### **Task 3.1: Create a single resource to store ATP program management documents.**

*Target completion date: October 2011*

The ATP will create a page on the NPS and FHWA/FLH Transportation Sharepoint website to house program management documents. Filenames for the documents will be clearly labeled and follow a similar naming convention. Documents will be formatted similarly. Only the most recent documents will be given prominence, while earlier versions will be available in an archive section of the page. Documents to be included on the site are listed in the table below.

**Table 2 - Sample of ATP program management documents**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Update Cycle</b>	<b>Task</b>
<b><i>Category III Regional Allocation Formula</i></b>	Documentation for the demonstration Category III regional allocation formula.	As needed	Task 1.3
<b><i>ATP Annual Performance Report</i></b>	Annual report of both ATP and ATS performance measures.	Annually in September	Task 1.6
<b><i>ATP Strategic Action Plan</i></b>	Strategic 5-year plan for the ATP.	Biennially in September	Task 3.2
<b><i>Service-wide Comprehensive Call Guidelines</i></b>	Eligibility criteria for PRPP and TRIP funding.	Annually in August	Task 3.3
<b><i>ATP Business Practices</i></b>	ATP business practices and roles and responsibilities for the Transportation Program and ATP stakeholders.	As needed	Task 3.4

**Task 3.2: Update this *ATP Strategic Action Plan* biennially.**

*Target completion date: September 2013, September 2015*

The ATP will update this *ATP Strategic Action Plan* every two years. Updates to the plan will be made based on the results of the *ATP Annual Performance Report* (described in Task 1.6), the changing regulatory and policy environments, and the evolving transportation needs of NPS. The planning horizon for each plan update will be five years. The ATP will publish the most recent version of the *ATP Annual Performance Report* as described in Task 3.1.

**Task 3.3: Update *Service-wide Comprehensive Call Guidelines* annually.**

*Target completion date: August 2012, August 2013, August 2014, August 2015, August 2016*

The ATP will continue to publish Category III eligibility criteria in the *Service-wide Comprehensive Call Guidelines* on an annual basis, as described in Task 3.1. In addition, a link to the TRIP notification will be posted.

**Task 3.4: Update the *ATP Business Practices* as needed.**

*Target completion date: As needed*

The ATP will annually review the existing business practices in light of the past year's experience, changes to program structure, changes in project eligibility and funding levels, and anything else, and revise the *ATP Business Practices* if needed. The ATP will post the most recent version of the *ATP Business Practices* as described in Task 3.1.

**Task 3.5: Update ATP fact sheets, policy papers, and white papers for external distribution as needed.**

*Target completion date: As needed*

The ATP will continue to produce outreach materials including fact sheets, policy papers, and white papers for distribution to external stakeholders. The ATP will regularly update these materials in an effort to inform and educate elected officials, government staff, and the public about the importance of ATS to NPS, the performance of individual and aggregate ATS, and the investment needs and priorities associated with NPS ATS. These materials are of particular interest to the following organizations:

- Other federal land management agencies, including U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation and Army Corps of Engineers;
- U.S. DOT agencies, including FTA, FHWA, and FLH;
- Non-profit partners including the National Parks Conservation Association, National Park foundation Eno Transportation Foundation, Volpe National Transportation Systems Center and FLH Eastern Central and Western Federal Lands Highways Divisions; Rails to Trails, Smithsonian Institute, Department of Energy and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials;
- National Academies of Sciences, Transportation Research Board, Congressional Research Service
- Congress, including House and Senate subcommittees and offices of individual congressional representatives; and,
- The public at large.

The ATP will continue to make these products available throughout its parent website, <http://www.nps.gov/transportation>.

### **Future updates to this plan**

Future updates to the plan should consider the following activities, and when they may be appropriate for inclusion in the *ATP Strategic Action Plan*:

- Defining performance targets for performance measures;
- Adjusting performance targets to encourage continued improvement; and
- Adjusting the weights of the ideal Category III allocation formula over time to decrease reliance on factors that demonstrate ATS needs (which encourages negative incentives and potentially rewards undesirable results) and increase reliance on factors that recognize ATS accomplishments (which rewards desirable results).

## Appendix A – References to the need for the ATP to adopt performance-based planning

Year	Document	References to performance-based planning
2006	<i>Pilot Data Collection Summary and Future Recommendations</i>	Recommends creation of a single web-based resource for all NPS ATS data to facilitate transportation and transit service planning and analysis.
2004	<i>Federal Lands Highway Alternative Transportation Program Performance Measures</i>	The purpose is to assess outcomes as a product of the management of its resources – both internal (program administration) and external (funding allocated through the Federal Lands Highway Program to the NPS).
2004	<i>NPS Long-Range Transportation Plan</i>	States transit data measures are crucial for “using funds effectively and efficiently” and declares a data measurement process underway at the time would result in an ATP performance measures database and help park planners “build on successes and avoid missteps.”
2002	<i>Opportunities to Improve the Administration of the ATP</i>	GAO report emphasizes that NPS needs a data-driven process to ensure cost-effective planning, implementation, and operations of ATS service-wide.
2002	<i>NPS ATP Program Plan</i>	Identifies “data collection and decision making” as a key strategy for the ATP and directs the program i) to determine all data collection needs and ii) to use this data to optimize investments and conduct integrated transportation planning.
2001	<i>NPS Strategic Plan</i>	Documents the importance of centralized data collection in all park areas to facilitate planning activities.
1999	<i>NPS Transportation Planning Guidebook</i>	Provides an outline of a performance-based transportation planning process.