



Expedited Approval for NPS-Sponsored Public Surveys

1. **Project Title | Submission Date:** Transportation Study: Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites July 9, 2008

2. **Abstract:** The purpose of this research is to help the project team design and implement a sustainable alternative transit system (ATS) at Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites (ROVA) in Hyde Park, NY. The park sites are located two-to-six miles from one another and five miles from existing rail service. ROVA is instituting a pilot shuttle system, the "Roosevelt Ride," to connect the park sites with the Poughkeepsie train station. This survey will help park managers better understand ridership patterns, visitor origin and planned destinations, and evaluate the pilot service so that modifications can be made to better serve visitors in subsequent years of the pilot program and in the long-term ATS.
(not to exceed 150 words)

3. Principal Investigator Contact Information

First Name: Tom **Last Name:** Crikelair

Title: Principal

Affiliation: Tom Crikelair Associates

Street Address: 1 Davis Place

City: Bar Harbor **State:** ME **Zip code:** 04609

Phone: 207-288-0381 **Fax:** 207-664-0690

Email: tom@crikelair.com

4. Park or Program Liaison Contact Information

First Name: Marjorie **Last Name:** Smith

Title: Landscape Architect

Park:

Park Office/Division: Northeast Region, Boston Office

Street Address: 15 State Street

City: Boston **State:** MA **Zip code:** 02109

Phone: 617.223.5133 **Fax:** 617.223.5164

Email: Marjorie_Smith@nps.gov

Project Information

5. **Park(s) For Which Research is to be Conducted:** Home of Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site; Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site; Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site

6. **Survey Dates:** 8/1/09 (mm/dd/yyyy) To 8/31/09 (mm/dd/yyyy)

7. **Type of Information Collection Instrument (Check ALL that Apply)**

- Mail-Back Questionnaire
- On-Site Questionnaire
- Face-to-Face Interview
- Telephone Survey
- Focus Groups
- Other (explain)

8. **Survey Justification: (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)**

The National Park Service Act of 1916, 38 Stat 535, 16 USC 1, et seq., requires that the National Park Service (NPS) preserve the national parks for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The 2006 *NPS Management Policies* (Section 8.11, "Social Science Studies") state that the NPS will facilitate social science studies that support the NPS mission by providing an understanding of park visitors and a scientific basis for park planning, development, operations, and management.

This study gathers information from Roosevelt Ride passengers regarding their travel patterns, planned destinations, and attitudes about the shuttle system. This information will inform the project team as it plans for improvements for the pilot and long-term ATS. The survey will be conducted in August, which is typically a peak month for visitation.

This study is needed because there is no information available about users of the Roosevelt Ride service. Onboard passenger surveys are standard practice in the transit industry. The survey instrument incorporates questions used in similar alternative transportation surveys. In particular, it follows an approach that has been used for the past 10 years by Downeast Transportation and Acadia National Park for a shuttle service known as the Island Explorer. (Island Explorer short Range Transit Plan, May 21, 2007, prepared for NPS and MDOT by Tom Crikelair Associates, Chapter 3: Onboard Surveys of Island Explorer Passengers, pp. 3-1 to 3-15.)

9. **Survey Methodology: (Use as much space as needed; if necessary include additional explanation on a separate page.)**

(a) Respondent universe:
Roosevelt Ride passengers aged 18 and older will be surveyed on days in August 2009 when the Roosevelt Ride is operational. August was chosen as the survey period because of reliably high park visitation. Because the target population is Roosevelt Ride passengers, results are not intended to be generalizable to other park visitors.

(b) Sampling plan/procedures:
A survey will be distributed on board the Roosevelt Ride on a) the return trip to the Poughkeepsie train station at the end of the day and b) the return trip to the Wallace Center at the end of the Top Cottage tour. Each group will be asked to complete one questionnaire. If a member of the group agrees, the on-board NPS interpreter (in uniform) will hand the visitor a survey. The eligible member with next birthday will be asked to complete the survey. All groups will be asked to participate, because the Roosevelt Ride is a small project that serves a limited number of visitors each day. The respondents will return the completed surveys to the on-board interpreter when they leave the bus. Passengers will be asked to complete only one survey for their group during their visit.

(c) Instrument administration:
A uniformed on-board NPS interpreter will approach all passengers over the age

of 18 when they board the Roosevelt Ride for their return trip and ask if they wish to fill out a survey for their group. The on-board interpreter will make the following announcement: "Hello Roosevelt Rider Passengers! The National Park Service is conducting a survey to engage your thoughts about the Roosevelt Ride service. Responding to the survey is very easy and will take about 5 minutes. If you have already filled out this survey, please do not take it a second time. When you are done, please hand me the completed survey when you leave the bus." Then, the on-board NPS interpreter will distribute the surveys (printed on card stock).

(d) Expected response rate/confidence levels:

This survey is based on a similar research project for a shuttle system serving Acadia National Park. In 2007, 323 surveys were distributed to Island Explorer passengers; 315 surveys were returned, for a response rate of 98%. On-board transit surveys generally receive high response rates, because respondents can complete the survey while they are on board (taking no time away from their tour of the parks) and because they can return the survey to an interpreter upon exiting the bus. The expected response rate is 90%. The margin of error is +/- 6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

(e) Strategies for dealing with potential non-response bias:

Non-response will be tested by comparing characteristics of the sample population with selected observable characteristics of non-respondents. The date, time, and group composition of passengers refusing the survey will be recorded and reported on a survey log. The results of the check for non-response bias will be reported, and the implications of non-response bias (if any) for park planning will be discussed.

(f) Description of any pre-testing and peer review of the methods and/or instrument (recommended):

Tom Crikelair Associates has developed the survey instrument and approach. Many of these questions have been used in previous visitor surveys to get general information about NPS visitors. In addition, questions specific to transportation are similar to those used in other transportation planning instruments (e.g. for the Island Explorer at Acadia National Park and for the Point Reyes Access Study)

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| 10. | Total Number of Initial Contacts Expected Respondents: | 300 | 270 | 11 | Estimated Time to Complete Initial Contact Instrument (mins.): | 1 | 5 | 12 | Total Burden Hours: | 28 |
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| 13. | Reporting Plan: | The data from the completed surveys will be compiled in Microsoft Excel and analyzed using a statistical software program known as FloStat. Frequency distributions will be analyzed for groups that traveled to Hyde Park by train, and for groups that arrived by other travel modes. A report summarizing the findings will be provided to the project team. The report will describe travel patterns of Roosevelt Ride passengers, as well as their views about potential shuttle expansion. The project team will use the findings when planning for modifications and/or expansion of the pilot service, and ultimately, the long-term ATS. The project team will transmit a copy of the final report to the NPS Social Science Program. |
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