

Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks

Fiscal Year 2010 Application Example

Disclaimer:

This application is an example of a successful Transit in Parks application; however, it is **NOT** necessarily the best response to any given question, since the responses needs to be based on individual site conditions.



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration**

**Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program (Transit in the Parks Program)
Project Proposal for Fiscal Year 2010 Funds – Planning Project**

BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION			
Project Name (Please provide a 1-2 sentence description of the project): Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge "Inside the Fence" Transit Feasibility & Planning Study			
Proposed Funding Recipient: USFWS, Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge			
Public land unit(s) involved: Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge		<u>Location of Project</u> City: Commerce City County: Adams County State: Colorado Congressional District: 7 th	
Federal Land Management Agency managing the above unit(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Land Management <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Reclamation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Service <input type="checkbox"/> Forest Service <input type="checkbox"/> National Park Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g. Federal Trust) Describe:		Type of Planning Project: (Implementation projects, please use the alternate form) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible new alternative transportation system where none currently exists. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible expansion or enhancement of an existing alternative transportation system.			
Transit in Parks Program Funding Requested during FY 2010 \$400,000		Total Cost of Planning Project at Completion (All sources) \$420,000	
Were you awarded Transit in Parks Program funds for this project in the past? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please provide amount awarded: \$			
Do you plan to request additional Transit in Parks Program funds in future years? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Note: If you wish to compete for future Transit in Parks Program fiscal year funds you must reapply).			
If answer "Yes," please specify Transit in Parks Program proposed funding levels for out years below:			
FY 2010 \$	FY 2011 \$	FY 2012 \$	
FY 2010 Funding Amounts from sources other than Transit in Parks Program funds? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please specify funding levels per source below:			
State \$	Local \$20,000	Federal (other than Transit in Parks Program) \$	Private sources \$

CONTACT PERSON

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OTHER PROJECT SPONSORS (in addition to funding recipient)

City of Commerce City
Stapleton Foundation

REQUIREMENTS

If a State, Tribal, or local government entity is proposing the project, the applicant has contacted the manager of the Federal land unit(s) and has the consent of the Federal land management agency or agencies affected.

X The project is consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning process.

X The project is consistent with agency plans.

X The planning project will analyze all reasonable alternatives, including a non-construction option.

BASIC PROJECT DATA

Number of Visitors (Annual): 26,000

Daily Number of Visitors (Peak season): 3,200

Average Number of Vehicles per Day at Peak Visitation: 1130

Current Road Level of Service at Peak Visitation: Light
 (Please consult guidance where available on determining this variable. You may use observational accounts or pictures to provide an assessment of this datum for FY 2010 proposals).

What time of the year does your land unit experience Peak Visitation?

X Spring Summer X Fall Winter

Current Carrying Capacity of Existing Roads: 200 (vehicles/day)

What percent of that capacity is the site operating at during peak periods? N/A %

Current parking shortages during peak visitation: 850

Current Number of Persons who use the alternative transportation system (if one already exists) at peak visitation:

5,000 (average number of visitors/daily at peak)

Estimated Annual Number of Persons who will use the alternative transportation system at project completion: 70,000 (anticipated number of riders or users/annually)

Average number of auto collisions with wildlife in the area? 10 collisions/year

Executive Summary

Please provide an executive summary of your proposal that is no more than one page.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (RMANWR) is located in Commerce City, Colorado, approximately 10 miles northeast of downtown Denver. In 1942, at the height of World War II, the U.S. Army purchased 17,000 acres of land on which to manufacture chemical weapons, such as mustard gas, white phosphorus and napalm to be used as a deterrent during wartime efforts.

To foster economic growth in the area, offset operational costs and maintain the facilities for national security, private industry was encouraged to lease facilities at the Arsenal after the war and produce commercial pesticides. All chemicals, chemical weapons, and waste from the chemical manufacturing processes have been removed or remediated from the site. In November 2010, the remediation efforts will complete the cleanup and continued transition to one of the largest, urban national wildlife refuges.

In 1992, Congress passed the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Act, which stipulated the site become part of the national wildlife refuge system once cleanup was completed. In October 2010, the Army will transfer the last portions of EPA certified remediated lands to the US Fish & Wildlife Service, bringing the refuge lands to 15,500 acres.

With the imminent completion of cleanup, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding areas are expected to experience dramatic increases in the number of visitors, employees and residents in the coming years. As the northeast quadrant of the Denver metro area develops, there are significant transportation planning and implementation efforts under way including the Interstate 70 East Corridor EIS, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) FasTracks Transit Plan, the City and County of Denver Strategic Transportation Plan, and the Commerce City Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

Recognizing that over two million people currently live within a one hour drive of the 15,500 acres of the Refuge, access to and around the site will require a multi-modal approach. A planning study on the feasibility of a circulator shuttle "outside of the fence" has been conducted in cooperation with several local partners. This study outlined possibilities for a circulator shuttle, initially as a pilot and after successful pilot, as part of the RTD transit network.

The RMANWR Comprehensive Management Plan (1996) envisions access around the refuge "inside the fence" by walking, bicycling, and especially by bus. Privately operated automobiles are not planned as a mode of access around the refuge. Currently, the refuge has a single bus, operated by staff and volunteers, touring 5,000 people per year. As the refuge visitation ramps up to the forecasted 70,000 people in 2017 wanting to tour the interior of the refuge and its outstanding wildlife resources, particularly the plains bison herd, the current model will no longer work.

While conceptually approved, a more detailed feasibility analysis and implementation plan needs to be developed on how the refuge moves people around the refuge. Financial assistance is needed to conduct this analysis and planning to support the transition from Army operated remediation site with very low visitation to a fully operational and intensively visited National Wildlife Refuge in a highly urbanized area.

Project Description

What activities would be funded by the requested Transit in Parks Program financial assistance? Please provide a project description that is no more than one page in length. You may attach up to two pages of maps or other illustrations that do not count towards the page limit.

For RMANWR as an urban refuge, under the conceptual plan laid out in the RMANWR Comprehensive Management Plan (1996), visitors will arrive at the refuge by multimodal transportation and they will move around the site by walking, bicycling or bus. The shuttle system will operate on an inner and outer all weather capable tour loop system, with multiple connector routes between the two loops. A series of pedestrian trails will be accessed by buses operating on the tour loops. An important concept is that only very limited access by privately operated automobiles will be allowed on the interior of the refuge.

The "Shuttle Feasibility Study for Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Commerce City, and Stapleton Area" (Feb 2009), the "outside the fence" shuttle study, determined that, according to the 2000 Census, the study area included approximately 120,000 residents in nearly 40,000 households. Since 2000, thousands of new residents have moved to the Stapleton area. Currently over 3,000 homes are occupied on the site of the former Stapleton International Airport. There are over two million people in the Denver Metro area that reside within a one hour drive of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge.

During the Army led remediation effort at Rocky Mountain Arsenal, site access was strictly controlled and all visitors were escorted around site on rented or GSA leased buses. Tours were by reservation and produced tour ridership numbers around 5,000 people per year. Once the refuge is fully operational and the surface remediation activities cease, a demand estimate of 70,000 people touring RMANWR on shuttle is forecasted.

For the RMANWR "inside the fence" transit feasibility and planning study, the information reflected in the 1996 Comprehensive Management Plan would be revalidated and new information would be collected to determine that on-site transit is, in fact, the appropriate mode of moving people around the refuge. Estimates for numbers of visitors to the refuge will be refined and particularly, the numbers of visitors requesting a site tour. If revalidated that a shuttle is the best method to move people around, then method of operation and physical infrastructure would be evaluated.

The methods of operation evaluated would include the current model of agency operated & funded site tour (no action alternative) as well as other alternatives, including Friends group operation, concessionaire operations of a shuttle system, shuttle system operation in combination with neighboring partners such as Commerce City and Stapleton, or combining inside and outside the fence shuttle operations with an RTD operation. Physical infrastructure such as types of vehicles, pick up and drop off points around the new Visitor Center, currently in construction, as well as pick up and drop off points around the refuge would be evaluated. The analysis would include a comprehensive financial assessment, including an economic analysis and an operational budget.

Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands Planning Evaluation Criteria

(There are separate evaluation factors for implementation projects. Use the implementation project proposal template for implementation projects.)

Criteria	Points	Weight
1. Demonstration of Need		50%
a. Visitor mobility & experience	(1-5)	
b. Environmental condition as result of existing transportation system	(1-5)	
2. Methodology for Assessing: Visitor Mobility & Experience Benefits of Project		15%
a. Reduced traffic congestion	(1-5)	
b. Enhanced visitor mobility, accessibility, and safety	(1-5)	
c. Improved visitor education, recreation, and health benefits	(1-5)	
3. Methodology for Assessing: Environmental Benefits of Project		15%
a. Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources	(1-5)	
b. Reduced pollution	(1-5)	
4. Methodology for Assessing: Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability of Alternatives		20%
a. Effectiveness in meeting management goals	(1-5)	
b. Financial plan and cost effectiveness	(1-5)	
c. Cost effectiveness	(1-5)	
d. Partnerships and funding from other sources	(1-5)	

Planning Justification

Your responses to these questions must total no more than eight pages.

1. Demonstration of Need

- a. Visitor mobility and experience:** Describe the site's current and/or anticipated transportation problem or opportunity for improvement. You should include information on issues such as traffic congestion, traffic delays, parking shortages, difficulty in accessing destinations, safety issues, lack of access for persons with disabilities, lack of access for individuals with lower incomes or without cars, and visitor frustration. Please cite reports, plans, studies, and other documentation to support your description.

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (RMANWR) and the surrounding areas are in a very rapidly growing part of the metro Denver region. Commerce City's Prairie Gateway project is located immediately to the southwest of the future RMANWR entrance and Visitors Center. The future RMANWR Visitor Center and new entry at Gateway Road is currently under construction with anticipated completion in April 2011. The area is expected to experience dramatic increases in the number of visitors, employees and residents in the coming years. In the Prairie Gateway, the recently completed Dick's Sporting Goods Park / Colorado Rapids Soccer Stadium and Commerce City Civic Center are waiting to be joined by a million plus square feet of office and retail development. The Stapleton redevelopment project, the nation's largest urban infill project, which includes a unique mix of homes, shops, offices, parks, and schools in a walkable community that is conducive to use of alternative modes of transportation, is just south of RMANWR. The goal is to bring both new residents as well as existing underserved and economically disadvantaged communities to the refuge - - a destination that by 2012 will be the largest (15,500 acres) public open space in the Denver Metro Region by a factor of 2.5 times the next largest public open space.

There are also over 50,000 people employed in this area. The 2000 Census indicated that nearly ten percent of households within the study area did not own a vehicle. An additional 35 percent of households only had one vehicle available. A significant number of area residents are therefore transit dependent, with a higher than average bus ridership in this area than other parts of the Denver Metro Region. In communities adjacent to RMANWR, to the south and west, this lack of privately owned vehicles to access the refuge effectively restricts entry for those segments of the population.

To date, visitors have had very limited access and current potential visitor frustration is from inability to access the refuge and its resources. The proposed study will answer the question of how to open up access to the potential 2,000,000 visitors within 1 hour drive while protecting the amazing natural resources on site.

b. Environmental condition as a result of the existing transportation system: Describe the site's current or anticipated problem or opportunity for improvement of the environment in this area. You should include information on current or anticipated problems such as air pollution, noise pollution, run-off, water quality, harm to vegetation and wildlife, and other impacts or stressors on natural, scenic, cultural and/or historic resources caused by the existing transportation system. Please cite documentation in agency plans, studies, reports and other documentation that will help to support your description.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, a gem with outstanding wildlife resources, has been protected since World War II by its "poison necklace" that prevents the development that would have otherwise come, as it has across the rest of the Denver metropolitan area. During remediation efforts, the air quality was documented to be the best in the Denver metro area, as a result of limited access. With very restricted access during production years and only slightly more accessible during remediation, transportation impacts to environmental conditions have been very limited. Imagine having the opportunity to start over again at Yellowstone NPS without its loop road and outside connector routes – how would plans be redone on moving visitors through the site?

At RMANWR, the intent is be proactive in avoiding conflicts between private vehicles and wildlife, as seen in Custer Park or Yellowstone. A transit study will validate the refuge's current environmental conditions, forecast what the environmental impact might be should the refuge be opened to unlimited private automobile entry to view our bison herd and other wildlife resources, and how a shuttle and other modes of transportation may mitigate the impact of the anticipated visitation increase and its resulting environmental impacts.

Scope of Work and Methodology

The planning project's scope of work and methodology should include tasks that will assess the areas below in a thorough and professional manner. The planning project should have a scope of work and methodology at this proposal phase, although it may be refined later.

2. Methodology for Assessing - Visitor Mobility & Experience Benefits of Project

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the visitor mobility & experience benefits of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. **Reduced traffic congestion:** This criterion includes: reduced average number of daily motorized vehicle trips during peak visitation, time lost to traffic delays, visitor frustration, and the area's current capacity of the existing transportation system.

The current system of site access causes very little congestion with the limited site visitation and very limited areas where privately owned automobiles can be operated. However, it is anticipated that the charismatic mega fauna of the site – plains bison, mule deer, whitetail deer, and coyotes – highly visible in their open plains setting - will bring an immediate increase in visitation, once the site is fully opened to public access beginning in April 2011, the projected opening of the new Visitor Center. If opened to traditional private automobile access to drive through the site, it is conjectured that the 200,000 visitors forecast for 2017 would almost all drive their vehicles through the site, causing intense traffic congestion on the existing light duty road network.

The requested study will evaluate various alternatives that will keep traffic congestion and pollution at or near its current low level.

- b. **Enhanced visitor mobility, accessibility, and safety:** This criterion includes enhanced intermodal interconnectivity, improved public access to resources, improved access for those with disabilities and low incomes, traffic safety, pedestrian/cycling safety, and safety in the case of catastrophic events (i.e., forest fires or security threats).

There are significant mobility problems that impede public access getting to, from, and circulating around the refuge. The key north-south arterial in the area, Quebec Street is projected to carry 63,800 vehicles per day, exceeding the current maximum capacity of 48,000 vehicles each day. A proposed pilot circulator shuttle between the new RMANWR Visitor Center and adjacent communities will provide solution to part of these mobility problems. The proposed pilot circulator shuttle takes into special consideration the mobility needs of low income, minority and people with disabilities. Shuttle characteristics such as vehicle type, vehicle route, and the need for fully equipped ADA vehicles were considered as well.

The FasTracks regional transit system will build a new rapid transit corridor, scheduled for 2014, through the study area that connects Downtown Denver to Denver International Airport, including a new stop and Intermodal center at Stapleton. Connecting the proposed shuttle from the Stapleton Intermodal Center to the Refuge would allow visitors to access the Refuge from the regional transit system by connecting the final leg of the journey. Given the potential traffic bottlenecks, the high number of potential visitors, the large number of residents without access to a vehicle and the increasing number of additional destinations in the area, an alternative to the private automobile is critical to maximize access to the Refuge.

The Refuge plans to conduct numerous urban outreach opportunities contingent upon the creation of successful and effective transportation mobility measures. The proposed study will measure the extent of the above mobility problems and ability for the potential alternatives to mitigate or solve the problems. The study methodology will also assess how the visitor experience can be maximized with the creation of a new shuttle system.

- c. Improved visitor education, recreation, and health benefits:** Describe how the project's scope and methodology will assess improved visitor education, recreation and health benefits?

One of the most important purposes for Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge mandated in the Federal law (P.L. 102-402) that created the refuge is to provide opportunities for public environmental education and interpretation as a window on the entire refuge system. However people arrive at the refuge entry, the refuge would provide them with a variety of educational and interpretive options, including pedestrian trails, interior loop tours, or learning experiences based out of the refuge visitor center.

During completion of remediation activities, all visitors to the refuge have been escorted by staff or refuge volunteers. Even with this limitation, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge had contacts with over 26,000 people per year in past years with slightly over 5,000 people taking the existing bus tour. While there will still be some access limitations to parts of the refuge once remediation activities are completed, refuge boundary fence lines have been moved inward by 100-300 feet to make space available for a boundary trail open daily during daylight hours that would encompass the entire refuge perimeter, over 19 miles. This has been completed for 14 miles (3/5) of the refuge boundary. As a result, the refuge visitor center and roughly 200 acres of refuge lands outside the boundary fence will be available for use during daylight hours year-round. To increase opportunities for environmental education and interpretation, the transportation study proposed in this document will determine the most effective ways and means for visitors to move through the site.

According to the Prairie Gateway Traffic Impact Study (Matrix Design Group, 2005), the refuge visitor center is estimated to receive several hundred daily visitors, with estimates of 1,130 vehicles on peak weekends. Special events days could draw up to 6,325 vehicles. Five years after remediation completion in November 2010, the annual projected visitation to the Refuge is expected to be over 200,000 visitors. The expected auto-occupancy of the visitor center is 3.0 passengers per vehicle. The refuge will be open all year long, though spring and fall months will likely see higher numbers of daily visitors than winter months.

3. Methodology for Assessing - Environmental Benefits of Project

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the environmental benefits of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources:** This criterion includes energy conservation, energy efficiency, ecosystem sustainability, preservation of archeological and/or historical resources, viewshed and watershed preservation, reduction in auto-wildlife collision rates, improved habitat connectivity, ensuring that visitation does not exceed an area's ability to handle increased levels of visitation or the "carrying capacity" of the land unit, and other protection benefits where applicable.

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge is nearing completion of its transition from a SuperFund site, listed on the National Priorities List for hazardous materials cleanup, to a national wildlife refuge. As a former chemical manufacturing area owned by the U.S. Army and used by Shell Chemical for commercial chemical production, no access was allowed to the public. While impacts to both resident and migratory wildlife were caused by production and waste

disposal activities, in a unique twist, the production and resulting contamination protected the site from the surrounding urban development. As the cleanup activities are completed and certified, the land is now being transferred incrementally from the Department of the Army to the Department of the Interior for use as a national wildlife refuge.

The 15,500 acres of the completed refuge will make it one of the nation's largest urban refuges and a home to numerous wildlife and plant species, notably including one of the largest wintering bald eagle roosting sites along Colorado's Front Range, large prairie dog colonies, and impressive herds of mule and white tailed deer. The reintroduced plains bison herd is part of the national "pure" bison meta herd management project. Surface cleanup activities are expected to be completed by November 2010, allowing refuge activities to proceed with no limitations. The transportation challenge facing the refuge is to correctly identify multi-modal access solutions for the dramatic increase in future visitor demand, before that demand overwhelms existing access capability. Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent communities have the challenge of bringing people to and from a site for which the public has only had limited or no access in the past!

The Refuge Comprehensive Management Plan, released in March 1996, discusses in detail the various plant and animal communities at the refuge. The major plant community is the shortgrass prairie, but limited amounts of other biological communities occur along First Creek or around the manmade lakes, used for irrigation and storm water control.

Hundreds of cultural and historic resources have been recorded at the refuge, including prehistoric and Native American artifacts as well as those of prairie settlers including ranchers, farmers and homesteaders, dating from the 1880's to the pre-WWII era. In June 1942, the Rocky Mountain Arsenal was established by the U.S. Army. Cultural and historic resources on the refuge have been protected from injury or damage because the establishment of Rocky Mountain Arsenal precluded most public access and all commercial/residential development and related transportation systems on the site. The historical (1880-1970) transportation system in areas surrounding the refuge was developed around the typical section road grid system to serve mostly agricultural lands with scattered farms and ranches and small agricultural communities. This transportation system caused only minor impacts to natural and cultural resources but the related conversion of native prairie to agricultural land had significant impacts on native plant and animal communities. More recent (1970-1995) development of the communities and transportation systems surrounding the refuge added a modest increase in human development and minor changes (paving of some section roads) to a still agricultural landscape, with minor additional impacts to cultural, natural, and scenic resources. However, the dramatic increase in growth and development surrounding the refuge since 1995 stimulated by the opening of Denver International Airport (DIA), completion of Pena Blvd. from Interstate 70 to DIA, and the more recent completion of Interstate E-470 from Interstate 70 northward to Interstate 25, has rapidly transformed the area from an agricultural landscape to a leading edge of suburban expansion. This suburban expansion and related pressures for increased transportation access are poised to generate significant impacts on natural, cultural, and scenic resources in the area. Stunning vistas across previously open expanses of the prairie toward the Colorado Front Range mountains with breathtaking views are gradually being degraded by suburban development from Fort Collins to Pueblo, Colorado, including areas surrounding the refuge.

In addition, the current development of sites adjacent to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge including the Prairie Gateway, the Dick's Sporting Goods Park / Colorado Rapids MLS Soccer Stadium / Sports Complex and the Stapleton-Forest City, Inc redevelopment of the former Stapleton Airport site cause additional transportation demands that further impact the natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources at and near the refuge.

A Cultural Resources Management Plan has been developed jointly with the Army and has been in place for eight years. Sitewide cultural resources inventories already completed will assist in avoidance or mitigation of transportation impacts to sensitive sites.

- b. Reduced pollution:** This criterion includes air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, and visual pollution.

While pollution generating activities have been held to a minimum during the restricted access required by the recent remediation activities, the alternatives developed will be analyzed to see how they minimize the increase in air pollution through avoidance of emission increase. The large landscape of the site contributes to reducing the noise pollution of the entire area. Transit options that reduce the noise footprint that would be caused by increased privately operated vehicles will all be assessed for how much they contribute to the overall area noise reduction. All evaluated alternatives will be assessed to ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations for water or visual pollution contribution, and more importantly, how they will contribute to mitigating the impacts on people and nature of the surrounding area's impacts.

4. Methodology for Assessing - Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the operational efficiency and the financial sustainability of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. Operational efficiency:** This criterion includes considerations of how a potential alternative system may/may not meet identified management goals and objectives for this site, including consideration of multiple alternatives.

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge Study will first assess a non construction alternative. This will primarily analyze current and future projections of traffic volumes and visitor projects based on development and growth that will occur with committed levels of funding. Based on expected visitation to the refuge, a non construction alternative will identify future transportation conditions without the system to determine the base level of transportation system operations. Then the study will consider a new alternative transportation system. The characteristics of this alternative would be identified based on the current and future transportation conditions. An important element of this analysis will be to provide cost and benefit estimates with particular attention given to the impacts and potential mitigation of natural, cultural, historical and scenic resources. This analysis will also consider the congestion level of the current and future roadway network with a new shuttle system to quantify the transportation and air quality benefits. This analysis will further identify the most cost effective alternative to meet the transportation need without negatively impacting natural, cultural, historical and scenic resources of the area.

- b. Financial feasibility:** This criterion includes the development of a financial plan that will incorporate a potential alternative transportation system, including the evaluation of multiple alternatives.

A key component of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge study will be a comprehensive financial assessment. This assessment will begin with an economic analysis and an operational budget. The operational and maintenance costs would be estimated on an annual basis, with consideration given to preferred methods of financing capital costs such as amortization, pay as you go, etc. The study will also conduct a funding opportunities analysis to identify potential revenue sources. These could include fare box revenues, sponsorships, grants, and local, regional, and federal funding sources. The potential for innovative and joint funding sources is evident given the high level of collaboration and interest in the feasibility study from multiple public and private entities in the area.

- c. **Cost effectiveness:** This criterion includes the development of an analysis of cost effectiveness considerations that includes multiple alternatives.

In addition to the financial analysis, a comparison of each alternative developed will include analysis of the cost required per visitor served.

- d. **Partnerships and funding from other sources:** This criterion includes planning projects that would be carried out or funded in partnership with other entities in addition to the sponsor and will receive points depending on the level of partnership. Documentation (e.g., partnership agreements, letters of partnership support, letters of confirmation of financial contribution, letters of in-kind contributions, etc.) that supports and verifies involvement of partners and level of partnership *must* accompany this proposal.

This planning effort, as a companion process to the proceeding planning effort – the “Shuttle Feasibility Study for Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge, Commerce City, and Stapleton Area” (Feb 2009), the “outside the fence” shuttle study brought together a unique collaboration of multiple public and private sector partners to support that planning effort. These partners include the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service), City of Commerce City, Colorado; Forest City - Stapleton, Inc; Kroenke Sports Enterprises; and the Stapleton Foundation.

These partners continue to work together and two partners, Commerce City and Stapleton Foundation, have proposed to contribute in-kind donations to this planning effort. A successfully and smoothly operated refuge drawing large visitation numbers provides economic benefits by providing a larger customer base for their economic generators such as retail commercial centers, educational institutions, and recreational facilities.