

**LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS
FOR 2010**

**HEARINGS
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION**

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MICHAEL STEPHENS and SHALANDA YOUNG, *Staff Assistants*

PART 3

**FISCAL YEAR 2010 LEGISLATIVE BRANCH
U.S. CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER**



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(II)

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH APPROPRIATIONS FOR 2010

THURSDAY, JULY 23, 2009.

STATUS OF OPERATIONS OF THE U.S. CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER

WITNESSES

STEPHEN T. AYERS, ACTING ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL
**BERNARD UNGAR, CVC PROJECT EXECUTIVE, ARCHITECT OF THE
CAPITOL**
**TERRIE S. ROUSE, CEO FOR VISITOR SERVICES FOR THE CVC, ARCHI-
TECT OF THE CAPITOL**
PHILLIP D. MORSE, SR., CHIEF OF POLICE, U.S. CAPITOL POLICE
**TERRELL DORN, DIRECTOR OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES,
GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE**

CHAIR OPENING REMARKS

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Good morning. I would like to call to order this 14th CVC oversight hearing of the House Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee of the Committee on Appropriations.

We are at the point where we would like to occasionally have a hearing to just check the box and see how things are going and address any concerns that have cropped up since the last hearing.

We have had about 1.6 million visitors to the CVC since it opened in December, which is about double the number that visited in the same time period last year. About 80 percent of the reservations are being made, according to the CVC staff, through Member offices, with about 20 percent of those going through staff-led tours, which is a little bit bigger than it had been when it first started. So staff-led tours appear to have increased.

We are going to address a number of topics this morning, but staff-led tours and the continuing evolution of how those are handled will be my focus. We want to make sure that we keep the CVC staff ever mindful that they are not to interfere with the conduct of staff-led tours.

And then we have some other issues that have arisen related to large groups and the nagging issue of how do we transport people who are either frail or elderly or both from the west front around to the entrance to the CVC.

The witnesses at today's hearing will be Stephen Ayers, the Acting Architect of the Capitol; Terrie Rouse, the CEO for visitor services for the CVC; Phillip Morse, the chief of the Capitol Police; Terry Dorn, the director of physical infrastructure issues at GAO,

who hopefully won't have a whole lot to say today because we are past the homestretch, we have crossed the finish line, and now we are doing our victory lap; and Barry Ungar, the CVC project executive.

We will hear from Stephen Ayers, Chief Morse, and Terrie Rouse, and then we will open it up to questions.

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

But before we do that, I do want to take a point of personal privilege and thank Dave Marroni for his service to the House of Representatives. This will be his last hearing, and this is his last week serving the Legislative Branch Appropriation Subcommittee.

He originally came to us as a loaner from GAO, and we were able to successfully recruit him away from GAO. But the smart public servant that he is, he didn't give up his right to return.

So he preserved his ability to go back to GAO, and since his wonderful wife, Moira, is now working on her MBA at Emory University in Atlanta, and he has spent quite enough time away from her in their brief marriage and wants to join her in Atlanta, he will be going back to work for GAO.

He will be back to be lent to us from them to help us finish the conference process, and I just have a feeling that he will come back to us one day. And he certainly will, if I have anything to do with it.

But, Dave, thank you so much for your incredible service.

I really have to tell you that I have never met a person with a better steel-trap mind for information and data and who got not only up to speed but knew more than some staff—in an amazingly quick period of time and has worked here like a 30-year veteran for the time that I have been the Chair.

And I appreciate your service.

Mr. Aderholt.

OPENING REMARKS—CONGRESSMAN ADERHOLT

Mr. ADERHOLT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is good to be here with our visitors here today. Thank you for taking time to be a part of the panel.

And I want to thank the Madam Chair for her willingness to have this status of operations hearing, especially concerning the Capitol Visitor Center.

Since it has been open in the last 8 months, there has been, I know, well over a million people, I believe, that have gone through the Capitol Visitor Center. It is the new face of the Capitol, in the sense that that is the introductory part of when people come into the United States Capitol Building, that is what they see first.

And I know that any time you have a new process or a new facility, you have to work the bugs out. And that is, I think, what has occurred over the last 8 months, and we are working on that.

And I want to thank everyone with the Capitol Visitor Center for addressing—especially on the staff-led tours. That is certainly going in the right direction, and we thank you for your paying attention to that and how we can better serve our constituents.

So, again, thank you for having the hearing, and I look forward to the testimony. Thank you.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You are welcome.

Okay. Mr. Ayers, the floor is yours. Your statement will be entered into the record, and you can proceed with a 5-minute summary.

OPENING STATEMENT—STEPHEN AYERS

Mr. AYERS. Thank you, Madam Chair and Congressman Aderholt and members of the subcommittee. I am pleased to be here today to provide a status report on the few remaining construction activities on the Capitol Visitor Center.

But, before I do that, Madam Chair, let me also echo your comments about Dave Marroni. It has truly been a pleasure to work with you, and I do hope that our paths cross again in the near future. Thank you, Dave.

Since the doors to the Capitol Visitor Center were open to the public for the first time on December 2nd, we have seen a remarkable and overwhelming response to the facility. We have recently marked a major milestone, with 1.6 million visitors attracted to the CVC.

Not only are we accommodating this record number of visitors, but our facility operations and management team is doing an outstanding job maintaining the Capitol Visitor Center; keeping it clean, well-stocked, and functioning at top efficiency.

Ms. Rouse will discuss the CVC operations in further detail in her testimony, but I would like to take a moment to thank this subcommittee, the Chair and the ranking member in particular, for your continued leadership and guidance in support of the Capitol Visitor Center and the Architect's Office in general.

CONSTRUCTION PROGRESS

I am pleased to report that all basic construction work is essentially complete. We are finishing with a few specific items and anticipate that most of our work will be done by the end of September. This includes the ongoing paver repair work, landscaping, reinstalling the historic trolley stop on the Senate side of the Capitol Building, and completing the final phase of the fire alarm and security system acceptance testing.

To better accommodate and assist Members and guests in navigating around the Capitol Visitor Center, we are preparing to install interior and exterior way-finding signage, as well.

PUNCH LIST ITEMS AND CHANGE ORDERS

Madam Chair, you recall that our punch list started at nearly 16,000 items a few months ago, and today we have less than 245 items remaining on that punch list. We continue to work closely with the Office of Compliance, the United States Capitol Police, and our Fire Marshal on those specialty items that remain open.

At this time, there are 92 open change orders that we are working on, and we expect to have very few new potential change orders being submitted as our activities are clearly wrapping up in the next few months.

Most importantly, we are confident we have sufficient funds on hand to meet all of our remaining obligations on this project.

Madam Chair, I would like to conclude my testimony by noting that the CVC has continued to be recognized with several awards for the professional workmanship involved in its construction. This spring, our team responsible for relocating the model of the Statue of Freedom from the Russell Building to Emancipation Hall was recognized by the Washington Building Congress in its specialty painting category, an award we are particularly proud of.

As always, we appreciate the continued support of this subcommittee and will continue to provide exceptional service to the Congress and the visiting public.

And this concludes my statement, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

[The information follows:]

**STATEMENT OF STEPHEN T. AYERS, AIA, LEED AP
ACTING ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL**

Regarding the Capitol Visitor Center

**Before the
Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

July 23, 2009

Madam Chair, Congressman Aderholt, and Members of the Subcommittee, I am pleased to be here today to provide a status report on the few remaining construction activities on the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC). I am joined by Mr. Bernie Ungar, CVC Project Executive, and Ms. Terrie Rouse, our Chief Executive Officer for Visitor Services.

Since the doors to the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) were opened to the public for the first time on December 2, 2008, we have seen a remarkable, overwhelmingly positive response to the facility. Just two weeks ago, we marked a major milestone in that we have welcomed more than 1.6 million visitors into the CVC. In late April, we set a record of more than 19,000 guests in one day. Compared to prior years when guests had to wait in line for two to four hours during the peak of Cherry Blossom season, this year we were able to accommodate this great influx of guests into the Capitol Visitor Center with only a six minute wait, on average.

Not only are we accommodating this record-number of visitors, our Facilities Operations and Management team is doing an outstanding job of maintaining the CVC by keeping it clean, well stocked, and functioning at top efficiency.

Ms. Rouse will discuss CVC operations in further detail in her testimony, but I want to take this opportunity to thank the Subcommittee — and the Chair and Ranking Member in particular — for your continued leadership, guidance, and support of the CVC and of our Agency's efforts in general.

I am pleased to report that all basic Sequence 2 construction work is essentially complete. We are finishing work on a few specific items, and anticipate that most of this work will be closed out by the end of September. This includes the ongoing paver repairs, landscaping, re-installing the historic trolley stop, and completing the final phase of the fire alarm and security system acceptance testing. To better accommodate and assist Members and guests in navigating around the Visitor Center, we are preparing to install interior and exterior wayfinding signage.

Some minor issues that we've encountered over the past few months concerning the decorative fountains and water leaks in the Library of Congress tunnel are being addressed and corrected. Following an incident in early June when heavy rains contributed to a ceiling leak near one of the Senate meeting rooms, we have inspected and cleaned all the storm drains to prevent a repeat occurrence.

As of July 21, there are fewer than 290 open items on the main punchlist. We continue to work closely with the Office of Compliance, U.S. Capitol Police, and the Fire Marshal on specialty items that require special focus. At this time, there are only 117 open change orders, and we expect very few new potential change orders to be submitted as construction activities wrap up over the next few months. We are confident that we have sufficient funds on hand to close out all of our remaining obligations.

Madam Chair, I'd like to conclude my testimony by noting that the CVC has continued to be recognized with several awards for the professional workmanship involved in its construction. This spring, our team responsible for relocating the model for the Statue of Freedom from the Russell Building to Emancipation Hall was recognized by the Washington Building Congress in its "Specialty Painting" category.

We are honored to have been singled out for this unique and complex project. The fine team that worked on moving the model — which is the centerpiece of Emancipation Hall — can take great pride in their role in helping to complete the largest single expansion of the Capitol Building.

As always, we appreciate the continued support of this Subcommittee as we continue to provide exceptional service to Congress and the visiting public, and to protect and preserve the U.S. Capitol for generations to come. This concludes my statement, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. Ayers.

Ms. Rouse.

Without objection, all of the statements will be entered into the record.

OPENING STATEMENT—TERRIE ROUSE

Ms. ROUSE. Good morning.

Madam Chair, Congressman Aderholt, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

I also want to thank you for your support and guidance during this exciting period in the history of the Capitol Visitor Center. Much of the success of the Visitor Center is a result of the guidance we have received from you and your staff, and we personally thank Dave Marroni for his guidance.

CVC VISITOR MILESTONE

Since opening the Visitor Center, we have welcomed 1.6 million visitors to the U.S. Capitol. We have already surpassed the number of visitors who came to the Capitol during 2008, and we will likely double that number.

Despite this dramatic increase in visitation, we have had an equally dramatic decrease in the average time visitors wait to enter the Capitol. Today, through our expanded screening zone and the tireless efforts of the Capitol Police, visitors may enter the Capitol Visitor Center through the front doors for an average wait of just 6 minutes. As you know, prior to the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center, visitors to the Capitol were often told as early as 10:00 a.m. that all tour passes had been distributed. Perhaps the greatest success story we can tell today is that, since its opening, no constituent, no visitor, no family has been turned away by the Capitol Visitor Center.

CVC OPERATIONS

While there has been a few bumps in the road, the efficiency of operation is a testament to the guidance of this committee and our authorizers and to the dedication and responsiveness of my team. Responsiveness is critical, as we demonstrated last spring when tours were booked solid weeks in advance. As the season approached, we began receiving close to 400 calls a day from Members' offices seeking to reserve staff-led or guide-led tours for constituents, many of whom were arriving at Members' offices at the last minute.

We knew that we needed to immediately review, in consultation with this committee and other authorizing committees, some of the procedures that had been established prior to the opening of the Capitol Visitor Center. And here are some of the adjustments we made.

First, we established a separate line at our information desk in Emancipation Hall for handling congressional staff requests. We assigned staff to serve as congressional ambassadors on the floor of the Emancipation Hall to facilitate staff tours and other Member tour requests. Additionally, we added two tour slots weekday morn-

ings and two slots in the afternoon specifically to accommodate tour requests from Members' offices. We tripled our phone staff.

With these and other measures in place, every staff-led tour request was accommodated. During a 2-week period at the height of the spring season, congressional staff led approximately 11,000 people on tours.

CVC SHUTTLES

To facilitate access to the Capitol, we are replacing older shuttle vehicles with more modern units customized to accommodate persons with disabilities. While fewer than one-half of 1 percent of our visitors use our shuttles, the new expanded fleet will enhance our ability to transport visitors from the bus drop-off location in the southwest corner of Capitol Square to the Visitor Center.

As we continue to refine our operations, we have made adjustments on the administrative front. In response to requests from the Members of Congress, we have increased the number of Congressional Historical Interpretive Training program sessions, otherwise known as CHIP. We are developing an online version of the training component. So far, close to 4,000 congressional staff have completed the training.

In order to continue to be responsive to Members' office concerns, we have instituted monthly listening sessions for congressional staff, where they may raise questions and concerns about any aspect of our operation.

Our two gift shops and restaurants are enjoying robust sales, comparable to other venues in the District. The Congressional Auditorium and other congressional event spaces are being well used by Members of Congress. As of July, 900 events had been booked by Members in these spaces.

Finally, we are piloting a variety of educational programs, including a series of events and lectures for Constitution Week in September.

MEMBER RECOGNITION

I am proud to be able to testify to the success of the Capitol Visitor Center. I am especially proud of the many thank-you notes we have received from Members' offices. Here is what one staffer working for a Member from Arkansas wrote: "Just wanted to thank you for an excellent job. Lately, we have been calling for the last-minute constituents that want to visit the Capitol in July, and we were able to accommodate them." And from the Senator in Maryland: "Thank you for providing an excellent experience for my constituents."

Madam Chair, this concludes my statement, and I will be happy to answer any questions.

[The information follows:]

**STATEMENT OF TERRIE S. ROUSE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER FOR VISITOR SERVICES
U.S. CAPITOL VISITOR CENTER**

**Regarding the Current Status of Operations
of the U.S. Capitol Visitor Center**

**Subcommittee on Legislative Branch, Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

July 23, 2009

Madam Chair, Congressman Aderholt, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the status of operations at the Capitol Visitor Center. I also want to thank you for your tremendous support and guidance during this exciting and challenging period in the young history of the Capitol Visitor Center. As I will discuss later, much of the success of the Visitor Center is a direct result of the guidance we have received from you and your staff, particularly during the peak of the spring tourism season earlier this year.

Less than eight months ago, the doors to the Capitol Visitor Center were opened to the public for the first time. I am pleased to report that as of July 22, we have welcomed more than 1.6 million visitors to the United States Capitol during this period. I would like to note that we have already surpassed the number of visitors who came to the Capitol during the entire year in 2008, and we are on pace to double that number. Equally impressive is that despite this dramatic increase in visitation, there has been an equally dramatic decrease in the average time visitors wait outside before entering the Capitol. In the past, visitors often waited up to three or four hours outside in the elements before entering the Capitol. Today, through our expanded screening zones and the tireless efforts of the Capitol Police, visitors are able to enter the Visitor Center after an average wait of just six minutes.

I would also like to note that in the past, visitors to the Capitol were often told by as early as 10 a.m., that all tour passes had been distributed and the visitors were turned away for the day. Perhaps the greatest success story we can tell is that since its opening, no constituent, no visitor, and no family has been turned away by the Capitol Visitor Center.

Madam Chair, often I walk through Emancipation Hall and observe the hundreds of smiling faces of visitors who are here with their classes or their families or those who may have just wandered into the facility with a sense of curiosity. It is truly impressive to witness people taking advantage of the wide range of experiences the Capitol Visitor Center offers: visitors in line waiting to see the orientation film that begins their tour of the Capitol; gathered around the plaster model for the Statue of Freedom marveling at its beauty and grandeur; peering through the skylights, awed by the breathtaking views of the Capitol dome; entering the Exhibition Hall to explore the history of the Congress and the Capitol; posing for photos near one of the statues from the National Statuary Collection located throughout the hall; entering the Visitor Center Restaurant to enjoy a bite to eat, or walking into one of our shops to purchase a memento of their visit. Observing how well and orderly visitors move through the facility, it's easy to forget that we've been at this less than eight months. While there have been bumps in the road, the efficiency of our operations is a testament to the valuable guidance of this Subcommittee and our authorizers, and to the dedication, professionalism, and responsiveness of my entire team.

In fact, I would have to say that responsiveness is perhaps our most critical skill as was demonstrated during the peak of the spring tourism season earlier this year. Through the Advance Reservation System, tours were booked solid weeks in advance, so as the season approached we began receiving close to 400 calls a day from Members' offices seeking to reserve staff-led or guide-led tours for constituents, many of whom often arrive at Members' offices at the last minute. In light of the concerns about staff-led tours that you and many other Members of Congress expressed at that time, it became immediately apparent and imperative to review and reassess, in consultation with this Subcommittee and our authorizing committees, the policies and procedures that had been established prior to the opening of the Visitor Center.

Today, with our first spring season a few months behind us and with the refinements to our operational procedures now well-tested, I am pleased to report on the following adjustments implemented by our operations team to accommodate staff-led tours and facilitate staff training.

First, we established a line at our Information Desks in Emancipation Hall dedicated to receiving and handling staff requests and last-minute constituent tours. We also assigned staff to serve as Congressional "ambassadors" on the floor of Emancipation Hall where they dedicate each day to facilitating staff-led tours and other Member tour requests. We added two tour slots each weekday morning to accommodate tour requests just from Member Offices, and we also added two tour slots each weekday afternoon to accommodate only staff-led tour requests. With these measures in place, every staff-led tour request has been accommodated. Most notably, during a two-week period during the Cherry Blossom Festival this spring, Congressional staff were able to lead more than 11,000 constituents through the Capitol.

Behind the scenes, we tripled our phone staff from two to six personnel during peak periods. The additional staff enable us to respond more promptly to the 300-400 tour requests we continue to receive each day, most of which come from Congressional offices. We also assigned staff to respond to phone calls on Saturdays during peak periods.

To further facilitate access to the Capitol, we are in the process of replacing our older shuttle vehicles with more modern units that have been customized specifically to accommodate persons with disabilities. While current use of the shuttles is tracking at less than one-half of one percent of our daily visitor counts, this new and expanded fleet of shuttles will increase our ability to transport visitors from the bus drop-off location at the southwest corner of Capitol Square to the Visitor Center in a timely manner.

As we continue to refine our operational procedures, we have made and will continue to make adjustments on the administrative front as well, particularly in the administration of our Congressional Historical Interpretive Training program (CHIP). First, and in response to requests from Members of Congress, we have increased the number of CHIP training sessions so that staff have more options to participate in the training at a time that is most convenient for them and their

offices. Second, we are developing an electronic version of several of the CHIP training components so that staff can train online. While we will continue to evaluate all aspects of the CHIP program, I am pleased to report that close to 4,000 staff have completed the training.

As these procedural and administrative refinements demonstrate, Madam Chair, we have heard your concerns and those of other Members of Congress and we have responded aggressively to meet your expectations. In order to continue to be responsive, we have instituted monthly listening sessions for Congressional staff where we invite them to come to us with their questions and concerns about any and all aspects of our operation.

Before concluding my statement, I want to give some recognition to our other operational components not directly related to touring the Capitol. First, our two Gift Shops and our Restaurant are enjoying robust sales, and we are on a pace that is comparable to other venues in the District. We continue to increase the inventory of the Gift Shops with a variety of lower cost items, and the Restaurant has received much praise for both the quality of the food and its customer service.

Regarding the use of the Congressional Auditorium and our other Congressional event spaces, I can report that these areas are being well-used by Members of Congress. As of July, we have had 900 events booked in the event spaces. We expect those areas to become even more popular as more Members of Congress become familiar with the amenities and state-of-the-art technical capabilities that are available in those spaces.

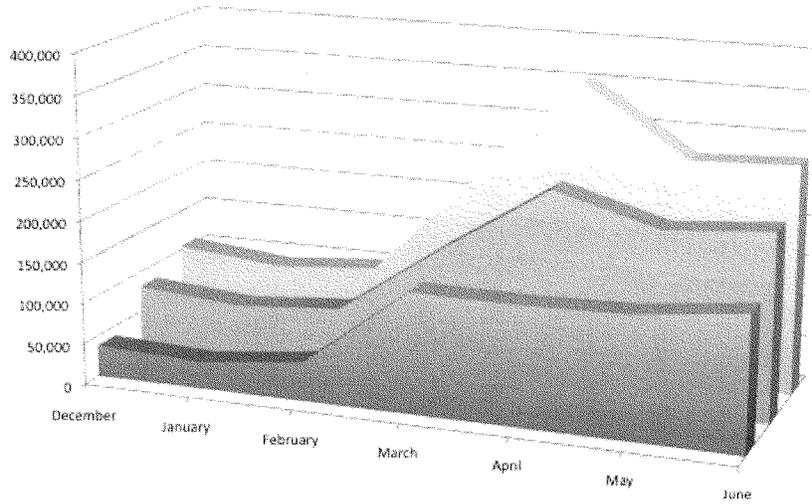
Lastly, I'd like to report on the efforts of my Public Programs and Education team, who are now developing a variety of educational programs to increase public awareness of the workings of Congress. Of particular note, they have planned a series of events and lectures for Constitution Week, which was established by Congress to encourage citizens to reflect on the impact that the Constitution, Congress and the laws passed by the Congress over the past 200 years have had in shaping the fabric of our daily lives. The team is also developing an online version of the Exhibition Hall that will expand on the dynamic nature of the legislative process and on the art and architectural history of the Capitol.

As you can see, Madam Chair, we are managing a number of diverse operational components at the same time. Yet all aspects of our operation are aimed at one goal: to create a pleasurable, memorable, and inspirational experience for each and every visitor to the United States Capitol. Through the support and leadership of this Subcommittee, and our authorizing committees during this inaugural year of the Capitol Visitor Center, I am proud to be able to testify to the success of the facility. However, we will not rest on our laurels. Instead, we will continue with diligence to monitor all of our procedures and look for ways to further enhance our efficiency and hospitality. Most important, we will maintain an open dialogue with Member offices and be responsive to the feedback we receive as we strive to create a pleasurable Capitol experience for your constituents and all visitors to the United States Capitol.

Madam Chair, this concludes my statement. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



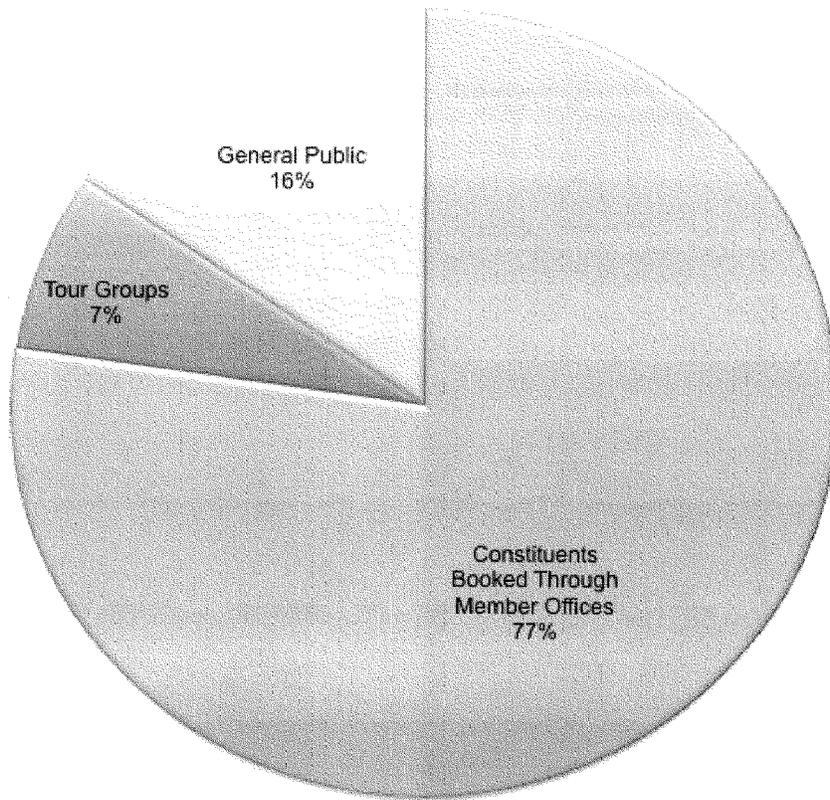
**Comparison of Tour Passes and Attendance by Month
Pre- and Post-Capitol Visitor Center Opening (Dec. 2, 2008)**



■ Passes Issued Previous Year ■ Passes Issued Since Opening ■ Door Count Since Opening



**Tour Passes Reserved by All Sources -
December 2008 – June 2009 (on average)**



■ Constituents Booked Through Member Offices ■ Tour Groups ■ General Public

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.
Chief Morse.

OPENING STATEMENT—CHIEF MORSE

Chief MORSE. Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the committee, Mr. Aderholt. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to discuss Capitol Police's role in securing the CVC.

I would like to start by thanking the committee for its leadership in this process. I would also like to thank the Architect of the Capitol and his staff for their partnership in developing and implementing an overall program for operation of the Capitol Visitor Center that I believe balances security of the complex with the desire for visitor accessibility.

Together, we have processed more than 1.6 million visitors into the U.S. Capitol and the Capitol Visitor Center since it opened in a very safe and controlled and monitored environment. We have made every effort to move visitors into the facility in an expeditious manner while maintaining the highest level of security. Overall, we believe the security operations at the Capitol Visitor Center and the Capitol are working well.

CAPITOL DIVISION REALIGNMENT

In order to better focus our sworn resources, we recently realigned the Capitol division to provide greater flexibility for moving assets to meet the influxes of traffic into the various entrances for the Capitol and the Capitol Visitor Center.

Likewise, we are continuing to work with our stakeholders to find ways to efficiently screen Members, staff, visitors, and staffed tours through the tunnels into the Capitol and the CVC.

AOC PARTNERSHIP

In addition, we are continuing to work with the Architect's Office to monitor the established transportation plan in order to balance the access of mobility-challenged visitors with the security needs of the complex.

Before I close, I would like to thank all of the men and women of the United States Capitol Police for their work every day to maintain the security of the Capitol complex in order to protect our legislative process. I am extremely proud of each one of them.

Again, I would like to thank the members of the committee for inviting me here to testify before you today. And I would be happy to answer any questions that you have.

[The information follows:]

**Statement of Phillip D. Morse, Sr.,
Chief of Police, United States Capitol Police**

**Before the Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch,
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives**

**Regarding the Current Status of Operations of the
U.S. Capitol Visitor Center**

July 23, 2009

Madam Chair, Congressman Aderholt and Members of the Subcommittee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to provide a brief update on the United States Capitol Police role in securing the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC).

Today, I would like to focus my comments on three specific areas: the Department's security operations since the opening of the CVC, the CVC transportation plan, and the utilization of the Cannon Tunnel for staff-led tours.

The Department continues to work closely with the Architect of the Capitol (AoC) and the Congress on the daily security operations at the Capitol Visitor Center. Since the opening of the CVC almost eight months ago, we have processed more than 1.6 million visitors into the United States Capitol through the Capitol Visitor Center in a safe, controlled and monitored environment in an expeditious manner, while maintaining the highest level of security and protection.

As a part of the planning process for the security operations of the Capitol Visitor Center, we created operational staffing plans for the security mission of the facility according to the assumptions known at the time. In doing so, we determined that a number of posts within the Capitol would be eliminated and that these sworn personnel resources could be reallocated to address CVC operations. The pre-opening staffing plan for the facility was based on a need for 31 additional sworn personnel to meet these planning assumptions, which the Congress provided for us over two fiscal years. However, when the facility opened some of the planning assumptions changed, expected realignment of posts were not realized and new mission requirements were added.

When the CVC opened, we expected to realign 89 posts, but were unable to do so in several cases. Some of these included the North Screening/North Door, which requires 6 officers to operate the post, and the five officers required to prevent early morning and late night access into the Capitol from the CVC.

Additionally, we had to adjust our staffing assumptions when the CVC opened 30 minutes earlier each day than was previously expected. This change in operating hours resulted in nearly 350 additional manpower hours per pay-period. In addition, nine mandatory life safety posts that were not previously known prior to the opening of the CVC were required to be staffed during CVC operating hours, as well as the need for additional overtime for these posts during late night receptions and events at the facility. Several other posts were also added, which we have previously provided to this committee through questions for the record.

As are our AoC partners, we are continuing to learn the visitor and operational patterns of the Capitol Visitor Center. As a part of this process, we are also learning the evolving patterns of the continued use of the Cannon Tunnel as an alternate entry point for staff led tours. Please be assured that we are paying close attention to the visitor patterns, so we can assign the correct number of officers and officials at the various entry points to accommodate timely screening, balanced against our primary security mission. We realize that lines at entry points are inevitable, because people arrive at irregular times and in irregular numbers. Our goal is to facilitate the flow of visitor traffic to ensure that their experience is an enjoyable one. To do so, we are flexing our staffing patterns, so we can adjust the staffing levels at the CVC main entrance to offset visitor traffic at the Cannon Tunnel and vice versa.

However, in order to ensure the safe operations of the legislative process, we must balance the available staff to meet these specific requirements against all post requirements across the Capitol Complex. We know that our current mission load exceeds our authorized sworn staffing levels and that many of these requirements must be achieved through the use of overtime. We have taken steps to control our use of overtime where practicable, but we will not take any action to reduce overtime that will result in the reduction of security or our ability to respond to emergencies.

To better address the sworn staffing requirements of the Capitol and CVC, the Capitol Division recently completed a realignment to adjust for the early opening hours of the Visitor Center and the subsequent need to have assets available prior to the opening of the facility to

ensure that tour operations remain on time. This realignment of personnel within the Capitol Division has provided greater unity of command and better utilization of staffing resources. We are also conducting a staffing analysis to determine staffing shortages within the Capitol Division for this purpose and further staffing adjustments which may be necessary.

Another area of consideration for the efficient security operations on the Capitol Complex is the transportation plans for buses and other visitor transport. After examining nearly eight months worth of data, we believe that the transportation plans that were put into place prior to the opening of the CVC have been successful. Even with over 1.6 million visitors thus far, the controls on bus traffic do not appear to be causing adverse impacts to our visitors. In fact, many visitors continue to visit their Members in the various congressional office buildings prior to entering the Visitor Center, so the impact of the transportation plans is reduced. Based on our successes to date in this area, we would recommend that no changes be made to the current transportation procedures at this time. We will continue to work with the Capitol Police Board, the AoC and our stakeholders to monitor transportation issues affecting the Complex and recommend adjustments as necessary.

As I mentioned previously, we are keenly aware of the importance of staff led tours as a part of our visitors' overall experience. Please be assured that we are taking into consideration any impacts that lines and screening procedures within the Cannon Tunnel have on our visitors. We realize that security screening at the Cannon Subway is, by design, slower than security screening at the entrance doors of the legislative office buildings. This is a result of officers being required to hand search bags for additional prohibited items that may be allowed in the

office buildings, but are not allowed into the Capitol and CVC. We will continue to monitor the timeliness and efficiency of these screening processes and will adjust our staffing as practicable to meet the surges of visitors utilizing the Cannon Tunnel as an access point. However, in some cases a staffing surge to meet an influx of visitors within the Cannon Tunnel may not be possible, as our available staffing may be aligned to meet security requirements for posts within the Complex.

In closing, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today. The Department remains committed to continuing the highest-level of security and service provided to the Congress and the visitors to the Capitol Complex. With the continued support of the Congress, the Department will be able to provide for the sworn workforce and operational support mechanisms needed to meet the security requirements for the CVC.

I will be glad to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much. Terry.

OPENING STATEMENT—TERRELL DORN

Mr. DORN. Thank you, Madam Chair, Mr. Aderholt, and members of the subcommittee.

As predicted at the last subcommittee hearing, the CVC did open on December 2nd. Since then, AOC has continued to work on remaining punch list items and has reduced their number from about 3,000 at the time of the last hearing to about 300 today. They have also reduced the number of open change orders to about 100.

I expect most of these items to be corrected by the end of September, with only a few items, such as way-finding signage and some work in the Senate Curator space, to be complete by the end of September.

While the remaining work is important to having a complete and usable facility, operations have not been materially affected. The current estimate remains at 621, and we are also confident, as the AOC is, that the project should complete it under that price.

And, also, I would just like to say that we are thrilled that you are loaning Dave Marroni back to us, and we hope we can keep him for a little while.

Thank you very much.

[The information follows:]

United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Testimony
Before the Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch, Committee on
Appropriations, House of Representatives

For Release on Delivery
Expected at 10:00 a.m. EDT
Thursday, July 23, 2009

**CAPITOL VISITOR
CENTER**

**Construction Expected to
Be Completed within
Current Budget Estimate**

Statement of Terrell G. Dorn, Director,
Physical Infrastructure Issues



Madam Chair and Members of the Subcommittee:

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to assist the Subcommittee in monitoring progress on the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) project. My remarks will focus on (1) the Architect of the Capitol's (AOC) construction progress since the last CVC hearing on September 24, 2008,¹ and (2) the project's expected cost at completion and funding status.

Today's remarks are based on our review of schedules and financial reports for the CVC project and related records maintained by AOC and its construction management contractor, Gilbane Building Company; our observations on the progress of work at the CVC; and our discussions with AOC.

Construction Is Essentially Complete

On December 2, 2008, the CVC opened, as discussed at the Subcommittee's September 2008 CVC hearing. Since the opening, AOC and its contractors have worked to complete punch list items² and have reduced their number from about 3,000 at the time of the last CVC hearing to fewer than 300 as of July 20, 2009. In addition, AOC and its contractors have continued to work to reduce the number of open (outstanding) proposed change orders (PCO),³ and the number of open orders has declined since our last statement (see fig. 1). AOC expects that most punch list items and work being conducted under change orders will be completed by September 30, 2009. However, AOC expects a few activities will extend beyond this time, including work to

- install way-finding signs for House and Senate expansion spaces,
- design and install new environmental control equipment in the Senate curator storage room, and

¹GAO, *Capitol Visitor Center: Update on Status of Project's Schedule and Cost as of September 24, 2008*, GAO-08-1172T (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 24, 2008).

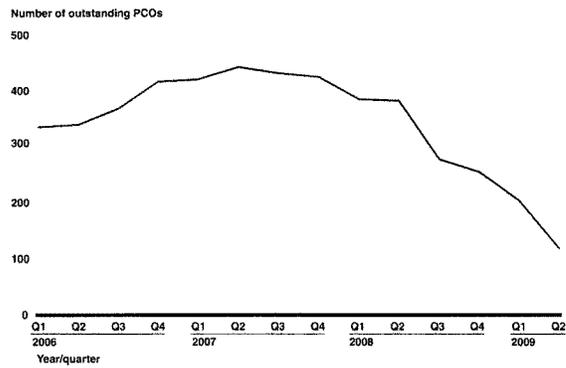
²A punch list identifies tasks, usually minor, to be completed at the end of a project.

³Change orders are directives or written agreements between contracted parties that represent an addition, deletion, or revision to the contract and indicate associated adjustments to the contract's cost and schedule. Change orders may be used for new work to correct design problems or scope gaps.

- remove trailers from the project management compound and restore the site.

While the remaining work is important to ensuring a complete and usable facility, CVC operations have not been materially affected by incomplete work. AOC expects all work to be completed by early 2010.

Figure 1: Outstanding Proposed Change Orders by Quarter, 2006 through June 2009



AOC's Cost Estimate Remains the Same

AOC's current estimate of the cost to complete the CVC project's construction, first reported in September 2007,⁴ remains about \$621 million. We believe this estimate is realistic and contains a sufficient allowance for contingencies, provided that remaining change orders and potential delay claims are settled at the amounts anticipated by AOC. Sustained attention to outstanding change orders and potential claims is, however, needed to reduce uncertainty about the project's final costs.

⁴GAO, *Capitol Visitor Center: Update on Status of Project's Schedule and Cost as of September 25, 2007*, GAO-07-1249T (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 25, 2007).

To date, about \$607 million has been approved for CVC construction. In addition, AOC has \$11 million more in fiscal year 2009 CVC appropriations that it may use for construction after it obtains congressional approval to obligate these funds. AOC did not request any CVC construction funds in its fiscal year 2010 budget request. If AOC needs the additional \$3 million contemplated in its \$621 million cost-to-complete estimate, AOC plans to obtain those funds from reprogramming.

Madam Chair, this completes my prepared statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or Members of the Subcommittee may have.

**Contacts and
Acknowledgments**

For further information about this testimony, please contact Terrell Dorn on (202) 512-6923 or dornrt@gao.gov. Other key contributors to this testimony include Shirley Abel, Michael Armes, Lindsay Bach, Maria Edelstein, Elizabeth Eisenstadt, Jeanette Franzel, Heather Frevert, Jackie Hamilton, and Joshua Ormond.

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STAFF-LED TOURS

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you all very much.

I want to start off with the staff-led tours. Since the meeting that we had a couple of months ago in my office with Mr. Aderholt and Mr. Brady and Mr. Lungren, there have been a number of improvements made to staff-led tours and the complaints have dropped. I don't get as many Members stopping me in the Chamber and griping about how they have been restricted.

But that having been said, we did make sure that we put language in the fiscal year 2010 appropriations bill to ensure that you are prohibited from restricting the staff-led tours except for security reasons.

Can you describe for us whether and in what way, you are currently restricting staff-led tours? And have you made it clear to your staff, particularly the guides, that it is only the Capitol Police, not the CVC guides, that are responsible for making sure that staff-led tours follow security restrictions?

Ms. ROUSE. I can safely say that we are not restricting staff-led tours. We make it very clear to our guides and our Visitor Assistants, anybody who is hosting members of the public, that we are not restricting them.

We do have our listening sessions, so we can give feedback—

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. How often do you have those?

Ms. ROUSE. We have had them about every month or so since the spring. And we take constant telephone calls from folks, and I think it has greatly improved.

MEMORANDUM DIRECTIVES

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I have seen memos from you to Member offices on tour operations that are pretty directive. And, I mean, the way you word those memos don't appear to be recommended guidelines; they appear to be mandates.

For example, the current restriction that tours are to go in a clockwise motion around the Capitol, but, that is not applicable to staff-led tours. If they want to go counterclockwise, diagonal, or up to one floor and down to another, that is perfectly acceptable.

But your memos appear to be far more directive, and that is the feedback I am getting from Members and staff, that they have been told to turn around and go the other way. So perhaps you could make your memos less directive or more specific, as it relates to staff-led tours.

And then with the old Supreme Court, I know it is open every day, but it is not officially on the non-staff-led tour. But are you still making sure that the staff that give tours understand during the training that they can bring our constituents into the old Supreme Court?

Ms. ROUSE. Staff-led tours can take their tours anywhere they want to go. And the two chambers, the old Senate chamber and the Old Supreme Court are places that people often go. There is usually someone there. The routing through the the old Senate Chamber for the regular tours is something that we look at every day, depending upon the number of reservations we have, because it is sort of a gently used building.

STAFF-LED TOUR FLEXIBILITY

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yeah, you have to be careful in there. But in the CHIP training, it is made clear to staff that on a staff-led tour they do have the flexibility to go where they want and in the direction that they want?

Ms. ROUSE. It should be the case, and I will make sure that is the case going forward.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. That would be great. I did listen to you describe some of the things that you have been doing to improve staff-led tours.

I want to move to shuttle buses, and then my time will expire.

We have received communication from the tour bus companies, as well as from the Guild of Professional Tour Guides, that are very concerned about the difficulty that frail and elderly visitors are having getting up the hill from the west front.

And I know we have the six shuttles that are available. And I also know that they can be made available in advance, with advance notice, if they have a particularly large group. And basically all six can take 30 people at a time, but 30 people at a time, if you have 90 people, then you have 60 people who are waiting 20 or 30 minutes for you all to do the loop and come back to get them. So that is a concern.

One of the main things I wanted to ask you is, has it been explored or would it make any sense to buy one of those minibuses like they use at the Kennedy Center so that we could—

Ms. ROUSE. Oh, go back and forth?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes. I mean, we wouldn't use it every day, but we would use it for a large group.

And, Chief Morse, I mean, if we did that, is that something that could be screened? I mean, it is our bus, so—

Chief MORSE. Absolutely.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ [continuing]. We probably wouldn't need to screen it.

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED CONSTITUENTS

Representing a constituency in south Florida that has a disproportionate number of frail elderly, that is a hill that for a healthy person is, a pretty good bit of exercise. For someone frail, it is extremely difficult.

And I know that you have urged the tour companies to communicate with you in advance, and I absolutely think they need to do that. But if you have a big busload of seniors, a good chunk of them are going to be frail. And I just don't know that those shuttles are an ongoing viable option.

So can you share both of your thoughts about that?

Ms. ROUSE. Well, on the minibus?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Uh-huh.

Ms. ROUSE. You know, I think we can, of course, look into any scenario. It would be the privilege of the chief of police on what would be appropriate.

We have so far been able to accommodate people who are coming in on that end when they give us enough notice. And even when they don't have notice, we can always call for additional support.

So, thus far, we have been able to accommodate, but I think it could be worthwhile at least exploring the idea of something else that could be used.

COMMUNICATION

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I am just a little concerned because the communication that I have gotten from the companies is that there is not a regular enough communication with them about you needing to know in advance. I mean, is it on the Web site when you book a tour?

Ms. ROUSE. It is on our Web site.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Is it in a prominent place?

Ms. ROUSE. Yes, it is where it is, but it is in a prominent place. When they call us in the call center, we do tell them. We also, in a couple of cases with the tour companies who we work with quite a bit, have had things in their newsletter.

So we made a pretty strong appeal with the guides, tour companies, who also stopped by to see me a day or 2 ago. We have made an effort with them. However, we can make an additional effort.

What we did do last year with some of the tour companies, we had them come in and walked them through the whole process. And that made them feel better. So we could——

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If you did that on a regular basis, that would be——

Ms. ROUSE. Yes, we can do that. Not a problem.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I also think it is absolutely incumbent upon them—and the tour guides and the associations are here today, and the bus companies might be here, as well. It is a two-way street, and it is incumbent upon them to know this process and know the guidelines, and they need to make sure that they let you know in advance and prepare you.

We are never going to have a perfect system, because dropping off at the west front for someone frail is going to be inconvenient and a little more difficult than the ideal situation in front of the east front would be.

Okay, my time has expired. Thank you.

[CLERK'S NOTE: Correspondence referred to follows:]



**The Guild of Professional Tour Guides
of Washington, DC**

**3306 Potterton Drive
Falls Church, VA 22044**

July 17, 2009

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
United States House of Representatives
Chairman, Legislative Branch Subcommittee, Appropriations
H-47 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Rep. Wasserman Schultz:

I am writing this letter about a particular concern of the Guild of Professional Tour Guides, Washington, D.C. in regard to the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC). Over the last seven months our members have been among the most frequent visitors, each time bringing with us people from across the United States and beyond. The CVC is impressive, and we have found the personnel to share our goal of providing the best possible experience for visitors. The glaring problem has been the logistics of getting people up Capitol Hill.

The shuttle cart service is helpful for someone with a bad knee, a person on crutches, or someone confined to a wheelchair. It is totally inadequate for ferrying groups of 40 - 55 senior citizens to the CVC entrance. Even the planned expansion of the shuttle fleet is insufficient, particularly because several busloads may arrive at the same time. You will continue to see groups of senior citizens struggling up the hill on foot.

What was once called "Jenkins Hill" and is now known as "Capitol Hill" may one day be called "Heart Attack Hill."

We understand the security concerns of having tour buses with luggage bays on Capitol Hill. And although we would like to have buses with empty luggage bays be allowed on Capitol Hill after inspection by Capitol Police (as was done prior to June 2007), we don't expect this to happen any time soon. For the same reason it has been very difficult to secure special permission to bring any motor coach up Capitol Hill. Some of our groups have been able to ferret out the required procedures, but the transmission of the authorization to the responsible security personnel appears to be dysfunctional.

We have many anecdotal stories of the problems encountered by our senior groups. The Guild has 450 members, 365 of whom are professional guides, and the rest are businesses in the tourism industry. We are finding that some tour companies specializing in senior travel are putting on their itineraries nothing more than a drive-by of the West Front of the U.S. Capitol. The tourists aren't told about the Capitol Visitor Center when it's impractical to get the group up the hill.

There are several ways to deal with the problem of making the Capital Visitor Center more accessible. The Guild has a Government & Tourism Committee that is looking for partners who share our view that more needs to be done. Two contacts are listed below.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Shirley Timashev
President

cc: Russ Preble (301) 839-2775
Carl Saperstein (703) 525-1793

Mr. Aderholt.
Mr. ADERHOLT. Thank you.

SENIOR TOUR GROUPS

Well, again, let me just take over as far as, also, about the concerns for senior groups. And thank you for your paying attention to this issue, because we are hearing things from the senior groups. And, you know, certainly that is an obstacle, to get up the hill. And, therefore, trying to find a way to better facilitate visitors in any way, we know that that is what you want to do and what we want to do and help to facilitate that. So we thank you for paying attention to that and just encourage you to continue to do what you can to make sure that that message gets out to the tour groups, especially that cater to senior groups.

One thing that I wanted to address to Mr. Ayers is the issue about the signage in the CVC. And one of the concerns after the CVC was opened was the lack of interior and exterior signage.

SIGNAGE IMPLEMENTATION

And I just wanted to check what the status of the implementation of the signage is and what needs to be done to improve that and what feedback you are getting from other people that are in the CVC on a daily basis.

Mr. AYERS. We have certainly gotten feedback that it is difficult to navigate, difficult to find where you are. We have gotten that feedback from Members, staff, our own employees and guides, as well as the Capitol Police officers that staff that on a daily basis.

We have implemented a temporary signage program, and we have gone in and put room numbers and "you are here" signs and directional signs throughout the facility as an interim measure until the permanent signs are fabricated and installed. We think that will be several months from now before they are actually installed, so that is why we went ahead with a temporary measure on the inside.

On the outside, we are also looking at temporary signage, as well. Just last week, I saw the design for that. I would suspect within the next two to four weeks that exterior signage will be in place to help people navigate around Capitol Square to get to the appropriate entrance of the building.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Okay, very good.

CVC UTILITY COSTS

Concerning the utility costs for running the CVC, are they running higher than you expected, lower, pretty much what was expected for the overall utility cost of running the CVC? Can you give us a little status report on that?

Mr. AYERS. I can give you that for the record. I don't have that information with me. But I would be happy to give you an update on electrical, steam and chilled water and domestic water.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Okay. All right. That would be very good.

That is all I have, Madam Chair.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Okay, great.

[The information follows:]

UTILITY COSTS ESTIMATES FOR RECORD

Question. What have the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) utility costs been since opening, and how do they compare with utility projections?

Response. In late Fiscal Year 2008 and early Fiscal Year 2009, the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) installed meters to measure specific utility usage for various buildings, including the CVC as part of the U.S. Capitol Building. In order to accurately measure utility usage, these meters had to be calibrated and brought on line; thus, the AOC has partial data for the CVC starting in March 2009. Since this time, the average cost for electricity has been \$100,000 per month. The average cost for chilled water has been \$90,000 per month. The average cost for water has been \$14,000 per month, including sewer and impervious surface charges. The AOC estimates utility costs based on rates and historical data regarding the number of cooling and heating days; however, on an annual basis, dependant upon the weather, the actual data is acquired throughout full-time CVC operations, the AOC will continue to monitor this ensure accurate budget estimates.

Mr. Rodriguez.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Let me just thank you for being here and thank you for the work you are doing.

And they had the same kind of questions I had, in terms the signage, because I hear a lot of the tourists come by and ask the policemen where to go. So I think hopefully—the tourists, I guess, a year from now, I guess, will be still asking the same questions, so as many signs and guidance as you can provide would be helpful.

Mr. AYERS. We do believe it is really important that we put in a system that enables police officers to do police and security work versus way-finding on a continual basis. And we have heard that loud and clear from the officers that work outside the Capitol Building. And we are working to address that with new exterior signage.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Thank you.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Cole is not here.

Mr. Honda. Oh, I am sorry.

Mr. LaTourette.

CHAIR TRENDSETTER

Mr. LATOURETTE. That is okay, Madam Chairman. I was going to compliment you on continuing to be a trendsetter. Your footwear is some of the finest I have seen on the Hill in a very long time.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you very much. Yeah, I like to blend into the background.

Mr. LATOURETTE. In Ohio, we call those “nice kicks.”

I want to just echo the signage thing. And it is not just the visitors. We had two Republican conferences in some room over there, and we were all wondering around for a very long time, and we couldn't figure out where we were going. So anything you can do—

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. I have the same problem with Rayburn, too.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Well, anything you can do to help not only the visitors but the Members, sort of, find their way would be greatly appreciated.

And I was sort of marvelling at the frail people that apparently live in Florida and Alabama. And one place you don't want to be in Ohio is when a group of blue-haired ladies get off a bus going into a casino. They just come charging through. So I guess we are hardier stock up in my part of the world.

COORDINATION CONFIRMATION

I do want to ask about coordination. And I don't like asking questions by anecdote, but I got one, and I think it illustrates the point. And that is the coordination between your forces, Chief, and Ms. Rouse.

And it was on art competition day. And art competition day is a big day. And there were two lines, apparently, to get into the tunnel, one for the tours and then one for the artists and their families.

In our specific case, we apparently broke a rule, and we had an artist and family and then we had a couple of people that just wanted to see the Capitol. And we asked the red coats which line to get in, and the red coats said, "It doesn't matter, either one." And I thought that was a good answer. But when they got up to security, the security at the magnetometer said, "Oh, no, the artist and his family can go down and look at the picture and leave, but the other people have to go back into another line." And that is okay, but because of the length of the line it was like half an hour. I mean, so you got half an hour here, half an hour there. We cheated; we took the artist and the family into the tunnel and into the Capitol Visitor Center anyway, and nobody caught us.

But it raises some concern, just in terms of—can you just, sort of, discuss for the subcommittee how you all are talking to each other to make sure that the red coat answer is the same as the checkpoint answer?

Chief MORSE. Well—I can say—I don't know the total number, but Ms. Rouse gave it to me the other day when we were down in the CVC. There had been some 800 types of events that had taken place related to the CVC. She had conveyed that, you know, to our division that handles the CVC, and they were handled very well. So the communication between her office and the division office I think goes very well.

Instances like that, yes, poor communication. But, certainly, we can, you know, prioritize or facilitate any special needs of the Members related to any special events and, at the same time, still expeditiously move people into the CVC from the main entrance to the Cannon tunnel.

So we will improve upon that and that communication, especially since the Cannon tunnel is handled by our House division and the Capitol division is primarily responsible for the CVC and all. We will improve upon that communication with Ms. Rouse.

But we do work very well together in that respect.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Ms. Rouse.

PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

Ms. ROUSE. Yes, actually, we do work very well. We have a weekly partners meeting with everyone who has anything to do with the CVC down to the Attending Physician's office. It is a great debriefing hour where everything can be said and we work through the issues. Of course, every time something new happens, then we debrief on that.

So that communication, I think, has led a lot to what often is a very smooth operation. And when there are hiccups, we acknowl-

edge them. We don't brush them under the table; we go right after them.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Thank you very much.

And I just want to commend all of you, because my notes indicate that the average wait time is down from 2 to 4 hours to 6 minutes, which is really—I mean, that is really outstanding, with all of the demands and security and people you have to see.

The only thing I have left is I have been racking my brain since you asked questions to determine whether I lead my tours clockwise or counterclockwise, and I can't figure it out. But thank you very much.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. LaTourette.
Mr. Honda.

VISITOR LINES AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

Mr. HONDA. Thank you very much.

And let me add my thanks to Mr. Marroni. I knew that name sounded familiar, and I remember it was a song. Do you remember that, "I got a girl named Boney Maroney"? That shows you how old I am, I guess.

And to our staff, also, thank you very much.

And it just happens my question has to do with lines, also. And when I enter the Capitol Visitor Center, sometimes it is a very hot and humid day; others—I am anticipating the cold winters.

How are we going to be shortening that line so that we can, one, make sure that if it is a long line that the seniors and the older folks, those who need to be sheltered from the humidity and the cold, are accommodated as quickly as possible?

The lines are out there—and I know that you had some fans out there that help, but it doesn't reach all the time down to the end of the line. And I am not sure how long the wait time is, but it seems to me that there might be other mechanisms like those little spray hoses where it reduces the temperature and cools people off. But, still, a lot of folks are older, and standing around really saps their strength. I am getting to that age, too, so, you know, I would like to know if there are any thoughts being put into that, in terms of prior to entering the building.

Chief MORSE. Well,—I will begin by answering that.

VISITOR SCREENING

One thing that I do is I go work the lines on occasion. I go over to the CVC, and I have spent several weeks over there actually helping screening, seeing how screening is done, going outside.

What I have noticed—and it isn't a policy or a procedure or anything of that sort, it is just human nature, especially with our officers who know that these types of things are occurring, we work very closely with the Visitor Services, who stand out there with us. And, frankly, anytime we see anyone who needs special care or can't stand or sit, we simply expedite them into the facility. And we hope and explain to everybody who is still waiting that, you know, this is something good for people and this is what we are going to do. And I have never seen an issue or problem with it.

As far as anything that we could do with regard to making the environment in that area better when it is hot or cold, we could

certainly get together and look at that, whether it be fans or heaters or mist or water or whatever.

But our officers know that, when there are people in need and that things aren't working out very well for them in the environment that they are standing, they expedite them into the building.

VISITOR SERVICES DIVISION

Ms. ROUSE. To follow up on what the Chief was saying, the Visitor Assistants are out there. What we have done, thanks to our Visitor Services division, is we have more people out there at the lines who can identify and help direct way-find. Then they are able to identify someone who is in need.

We have umbrellas that we are now going to have out there that allow us to address the need for not only rain, but if someone can't deal with the heat. Like you, I don't like the heat, at this point in my life.

So we are trying to accommodate, and we are trying to learn from our colleagues around the country, what are they doing with the crowds that they have, in the environments that they have? And then we will take those best practices, run them through our partners, and see what would make sense, so, as we approach the season next year, we have better solutions.

VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS

Mr. HONDA. To the Chair, I know that when 9/11 first happened and we closed down our airports and then the onslaught of long lines started to come up, they have contracted with Disneyland, because some of the folks there are used to looking at how to configure lines and control lines and bring people through expeditiously.

But it seems to me that there would be issues around communication. If you are having busloads, you know who is going to be there; that could be accommodated. But those who just arrive through different tours, it seems to me there should be some sort of a protocol that is followed rather than just leaving it up to individual officers and persons to check the lines and see if something is going on. It should be a matter of course that we check that line and see if we can help people get through.

And I think that will go a long ways, in terms of their affection for what is happening while they are visiting here at the center. So if we could just pay a little bit more attention to that and see what we could do. I think our goal is to be the Nordstrom of the world, be centered around our clients.

Ms. ROUSE. Congressman, we can certainly come up with a protocol to address that need.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Mr. Ruppertsberger.

RESTROOM FACILITIES

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. The first thing, I think you ought to be congratulated. You all have come a long way since we first started with this issue. There are always things to work out, and that is what we are doing right now.

I have two issues I want to raise. But following up on Mike's question, when people come here, sometimes they come from train stations or whatever, and they are in long lines. Do we have bathroom facilities outside that they can use right away?

I mean, it is something we might want to consider, if people are going to be in a line, they are coming from a train station or whatever, they have young kids. I don't know how we deal with it, whether you want to consider Spot-a-Pots or whatever. But it is just an issue I thought of. So I will get off of that. Just think of that issue.

Mr. HONDA. I was told that, when you pass 50, you don't pass a bathroom.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. You know, that song that you talked about, I think that song was in the 1930s. So that shows your age.

TOUR GUIDES

The two issues I would like to talk about—this is one that I think has to be dealt with. I am telling you experiences, feedback from me. And some of the feedback—these are people that have come to the Visitor Center. I have a sister who has two children, 10 and 7, and I have a chief of staff who has 10-year-old twins. And both had not a very good experience with the tour guides.

And I want to try to address the issue of tour guides. Because we spent all this money, we want to make this an extremely positive experience for families all over the country, people from other countries, whatever. And we can do all of the things that we talked about, but if we don't have a positive tour guide situation, it can really make it not very positive, I guess.

And this is what my suggestion is. I am not sure what the hiring standards are. I am not sure what the training is. And it has to really—you need management, I think, to look at the people doing the training to see where we are. But I have an idea, because I have had two complaints now—three, really, but two people that I am rather close to about how the guides are totally condescending, especially to young children.

A lot of people want to ask a lot of questions. And I don't know if we are giving our guides a time period to run them through or whatever it is. And then my sister happened to go to the White House and had a totally different experience.

CVC EVALUATION SURVEY

I think one of the issues to deal with that might be that we might want to put together, to give everyone who goes on the tour, an evaluation sheet, "What did you think of the Capitol Visitor Center?" and then give an evaluation on the tour guide so that all of the tour guides know that they are going to be held accountable.

And I think this is really an issue that, of all the good that we do—it is the same thing as elected officials. If we have a staffer who is giving—

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Will the gentleman yield?

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I will yield, especially with a pink cast. I like that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We would be happy to put language in the report directing the CVC to make that change.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Okay. Well, I think that is positive. And it has to be managed on a regular basis. And you could—even to the point that you might want to—maybe some people might be better with senior, some people might be better with children. I don't know if you just stand in line and pick up the next person that comes. I am not sure what the system is.

But I think this is an issue that we need to discuss with this committee and that you need to report back to us on a regular basis to make sure that—but it is a management issue in the end. I don't know who we are hiring, what the standards are, whatever.

MEMBER VOTING NOTIFICATION

The other issue I want to talk about and maybe comment on before my time runs out is the issue of cell phones and, really, even the ability for Members to be able to—when there is a vote called, if your cell phone doesn't work and the bells aren't going off—it is the same issue I have talked to Dan Beard about in the Capitol's lunchroom or whatever, where you can't get a phone call and yet you don't know that there is a vote there.

So I am not sure from an infrastructure point of view, but it is something, I think, when Members are over there or they are with some visitors that they are taking from their district or whatever. I don't know what that system is now.

Okay, could you respond to the first—this tour guide thing is a major issue.

Ms. ROUSE. The tour guide issue is the major issue for me. If someone is having a bad experience, that is not good. So I do think we will look into that and address that. It is an ongoing concern of ours, and we do a lot of training. This gives us another point to train on. Condescension is not very good.

As for evaluation, we are in the process of developing a mechanism to do full-scale evaluation of our visitors and our users. And hopefully we will have that launch, probably not until the fall. So I am pleased that we will be able to have solid information for this committee in probably about 9 months.

COMPLAINTS/HIRING STANDARDS

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Who is doing the hiring? Do you have certain standards?

Ms. ROUSE. Yes, we actually have—

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Personality standards? It seems to me, people skills are very relevant here.

Ms. ROUSE. Yes, we do have standards, and we do evaluate people on the comments that we get from people whose services they are using. So we will go back and address that.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. And, again, one or two bad individuals can hurt everybody, too. So I am not saying—but when I hear two people and then I get another complaint, you have to raise it.

Ms. ROUSE. Okay. Thank you.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Now, what about the issue of the cell phones?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes, Mr. Ungar.

Mr. UNGAR. Yes, sir, on cell phone coverage in the CVC, as part of our project we have covered fully the CVC public areas in the

Senate side. As of a few months ago, there was a problem on the House side. It was a funding issue with the CAO's office.

BELL SYSTEM AND CELL PHONE COVERAGE

As of at least a few months ago, it had not installed a system in the House portion of the CVC for cell phone coverage. The coverage that was being received at that point in time was spillover from the rest of the CVC. But I don't know the current status of that within the House.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. And how about the bell system for votes when they go off?

Mr. UNGAR. I know in certain—

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. On the clocks, on the clocks.

Mr. UNGAR. Yes. That I am not aware of.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. That is something you should look at.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yeah, just to correct Mr. Ungar, it is actually not a funding issue. The CAO is in the process of working on it. For some reason, in the previous speaker's administration, they weren't expecting to use the House expansion space as soon as we ended up using it. And there is a significant demand and a lot of Members use it now, and it wasn't designed with cell phone coverage.

But we are in the process of doing that right now. The concern and what is taking a little bit longer is that our expansion space happens to be next to the SCIF. And so they are dealing with—

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I am on the Intelligence Committee, and we have an issue there too. But we have to have the NSA and CIA look at that to make sure that it doesn't penetrate the SCIF.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Exactly. And that is what is being reviewed and evaluated right now. But it is a problem that is being addressed.

Thank you, Mr. Ruppertsberger. And, particularly, thank you, being a parent of 10-year-old twins.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. No, I am not a parent. I have a sister—

COMMUNICATING WITH CHILDREN

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. No, I know. But as a parent of 10-year-old twins, it is actually very important to make sure that the guides are sensitive to children.

Just by way of example, not standing at full height and talking down to a child who is much lower to the ground, you know, just training them on little things that really help in interaction with children, getting down to their level, listening to their questions, answering their questions in a simple way but not a patronizing way.

Some people are good at dealing with kids, and other people are not. And if your children don't have a good experience on the tour, it can really impact your trip for the rest of the day.

PAVERS

So, anyway, just some fellow parent advice there.

I want to shift to the pavers, which is not you, Ms. Rouse. Obviously, we can all see the replacement of the pavers going on out

on the plaza. There are some that are heavily damaged, some that are not damaged as badly.

Where are we in terms of the paver replacement process? And how are we dealing with the difference between the normal wear and tear and the design flaw that clearly existed, because we always had an expectation that these would be driven upon?

Mr. UNGAR. Right. Madam Chair, we are making very good progress. We are about 2 to 3 weeks away from finishing the paver replacement effort on the House side. We have started to work on the Senate side, and we are a bit ahead of schedule, at this point. And we hope to finish around mid-September with the complete project.

In terms of maintenance, once we finish the new pavers, they will not require a great deal of maintenance, but they will have to be inspected periodically for oil stains and cleaned, and then the joints will have to be inspected.

But we don't anticipate anywhere near the type of chipping that we have experienced with the old system, at least in those portions of the plaza that we are replacing.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. So the chipping and—there are some chipped and discolored ones. Are those part of the replacement process?

Mr. UNGAR. Yes. The bulk of those are in the area that are going to be replaced. There are a few that are chipped and have some stains in the areas that we are not replacing, but we are going to replace those that are chipped or stained individually.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Just another suggestion: If, as we go forward, we can make sure that the gaps that may develop in between pavers are monitored. Women who walk across them in heels may have trouble. I can tell you, on many an occasion on, not these pavers, but other pavers where I have had a heel get yanked off of it, and it is dangerous. You can really hurt yourself.

Mr. UNGAR. Right.

Mr. Dorn, I am not sure how much you can answer this at a public hearing. But do we have an issue with the company that originally designed the plaza pavers and, laid down all those damaged ones? And is there a lawsuit, or how are we resolving the issue of paying for the replacement?

Mr. DORN. Right. There is no ongoing litigation at the moment. We are still not really in a good place to talk about it. But I do know that AOC has been having some correspondence with the designer.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Okay.

Mr. DORN. It is at that stage, and maybe Stephen—

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Okay. Like I said, in an appropriate setting, maybe you could give us the information about where we are on that.

Mr. DORN. I would be happy to.

CANNON TUNNEL & LONG LINES

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. If this is not the appropriate setting, then the appropriate setting would be fine.

Chief Morse, I had an opportunity to speak in my office to Assistant Chief Nichols last month about the length of the lines in the

Cannon tunnel during the part of the peak staff-led tour season. It was really getting back to being an hour and a half, 2 hours. And we would walk by them every day on our way to vote, and you had a 6-minute wait time outside the entrance to the CVC and a 2-hour wait time for staff-led tours. And, you know, we were getting a lot of Member complaints about the length of time.

Chief Nichols was extremely helpful, and we were able to, I think, achieve a balance between how many magnetometers and staff at the entrance of the CVC versus making sure we can open two magnetometers at the Cannon tunnel. So I appreciate the adjustment being made to that. Six minutes is a great time, but it doesn't have to be 6 minutes, it can be 10 minutes or 15 minutes, and we can reduce the time for the staff-led tours considerably.

So, do you have a plan going forward to make sure that, during peak times, we can keep the two magnetometers open?

Chief MORSE. Immediately following that meeting, we instituted that plan. And we continue to monitor the lines and make sure that we have supervisors on scene, the appropriate number of magnetometers open, and the most expeditious, you know, professional screening that we can do at that location.

LONG LINE RESOLUTION

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. And just as an extension of that, because we have also had really long lines outside the House office buildings, what steps are being taken to address those lines?

Chief MORSE. What we have done is assembled response teams that will go—because these lines come and go, and we can't guess when that is going to happen. So what we do is we simply monitor the input at the doors, and whenever we have long lines at locations, we send additional officers to that location to help alleviate the lines. And we just do that on a rotating fashion.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. It seems like, as the tourist season has wound down, the lines seem to have been getting a little bit shorter recently.

Chief MORSE. They have. And we have also noticed, as you said, that the staff-led tours have increased, and people are still coming from different modes of transportation and visiting their Members before they go to the CVC or the Capitol. And, we are screening significant numbers of people this year into our buildings.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you.

Mr. Aderholt. My time has expired.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Yeah, just let me follow up on the—Chief Morse, let me just mention this to you, and Mr. Ruppertsberger reminded me of this.

U.S. CAPITOL AND ITS SYMBOLISM

We want, of course, all of our constituents to have a very positive experience when they come to the Capitol. And, of course, I tell people this is one of the—probably if they are only going to see one building in Washington, D.C., maybe I am partial, but I tell them that they ought to see the Capitol of the United States, just because of what it stands for and the symbolism. And, you know, when you see that Capitol dome, you can recognize it around the world, and people do recognize it around the world.

But one of the things that is important, whether it be a tour guide or whether it be a staffer or whether it be someone that is working with the Capitol Police, I think it is important that, you know, they show the respect for the visitors that are in the Capitol. And sometimes I will walk by some of the Capitol Police in parts of the Capitol, not just the Visitor Center, and sometimes it seems like it is not really their top priority to—and I understand safety is their top priority, but sometimes the way that they communicate to some of the visitors and some of the staff is sometimes pretty condescending.

SECURITY CONCERNS

And I just—again, I know that safety is the first and foremost for their job, but at the same time I do think it is important that, whether you have a 5-year-old or a 10-year-old, they have a positive experience at the Nation's Capitol.

And I don't know if that is something that you all address on a consistent basis or whether that really ever comes up. But I do think there is—I would appreciate if you would look into that and just let your officers know that these people are here maybe for the only time they will be visiting the Capitol in their entire life, and it needs to be as positive an experience as possible.

And, you know, I understand that they have never been in some of these buildings before, so they are not sure exactly how they are supposed to put their purse on the conveyor belt exactly the way that they need to be or to have their purse open when they go through a certain magnetometer or something like that.

So I just bring that up. It is not anything that I had actually planned to say. It is just, you know, Mr. Ruppertsberger was talking about that issue, and I do think it is vitally important that the public sees a very positive face for all of us that work here, whether it be a Member of Congress, whether it be the Capitol Police, staff, someone in touring as far as the red coats, or whatever the case may be.

So I just mention that to you. I don't really necessarily want to—you don't have to respond to it necessarily. I just want to put it on your radar screen and, you know, would appreciate your just being constantly aware of that issue.

Chief MORSE. Actually, if you don't mind, I would like to respond.
Mr. ADERHOLT. I would welcome that.

U.S. CAPITOL POLICE OFFICERS

Chief MORSE. I can concur. I have worked for the U.S. Capitol Police for 25 years, and one of the things that I love the most is the interaction with the people that work here and come here. That is one of the reasons that I go out, most recently the Memorial Day concert, the 4th of July concert, and some of these other lines that we have been seeing at the CVC and the buildings, to really emulate one of our core values of our police department, which is courteous and, you know, to lead by example.

And we, as Capitol Police officers, appreciate the fact that people come here from around the world to visit. And it is my intention that they all, when they interact with Capitol Police officers, they see a professional police officer who is unflinching, courteous, sin-

cere, and principled. And those are our core values that stand for “USCP.”

Chief MORSE. So we will go back and make sure that we reiterate that and hopefully correct any issues with any individuals that don’t follow those core values in our agency.

U.S. CAPITOL POLICE APPRECIATION

Mr. ADERHOLT. Let me just follow up on that and let me just say that I think—you know, the Capitol Police, let me just say, you all do a great job and you have some of the finest officers I think anywhere in the country serving as the Capitol Police and they do a great job. I mean as with any profession or any job, you even have some Members of Congress that actually would give a bad impression that make us look bad as well. So certainly no occupation or profession is immune from that. But like I say, it is something that I think it is important that people who come here to the Capitol and sometimes the officer maybe is just having a bad day, but I think it is important that they do everything they can to show the courtesy, at the same time making sure that safety is the number one concern.

Thank you.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Thank you, Mr. Aderholt.

Mr. Honda.

Mr. HONDA. I am fine. Thank you.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Ruppertsberger.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I am fine.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. I just have a couple more questions.

GALLERY VISITATION PROCESS

Chief Morse, it was brought to my attention recently that a constituent who had people who wanted to go through the gallery, you know go and sit in the gallery for a little while, they had a whole bunch of stuff with them, you know just some bags and things like that. So they came upstairs. They were going to go do the gallery first and then go back through the CVC later. But we were in the middle of a series of, I think, six votes, and seeing that process versus just watching the debate is something that they wanted to see and they were urged to go see it. The officer that they dealt with told them, no, you can’t—even though there are cubbies right there that they can put their stuff up, they were told that they had to go back to the CVC and register, and the term “register” was used, and leave their belongings there. And then only then could they come back up and sit in the gallery.

Well, they went down and did that process. And they had one of my staff with them. So there was a little bit back and forth, cordial back and forth, but they were still told they had to go back to the CVC. When they did get back up to the gallery, the gallery was not nearly completely full and there was only a handful of people in line, yet still they were restricted to being in the gallery for 15 minutes and then shuttled out and told to leave.

VISITOR ACCOMMODATIONS

What is the process for gallery visitation? Is it made clear both to staff on staff-led tours and also to the redcoats that—I mean isn't there any flexibility? When the gallery is empty or not that full and the line is not long, do we have to rigidly adhere to the 15-minute rule?

Chief MORSE. Well, I think you just hit it, that there was no flexibility there as you described it. There is a process for the gallery, there are gallery tickets, there is a line from the CVC and from the Capitol building itself that you can get there. But once a staff person had brought someone to the gallery, I don't understand why it couldn't have been facilitated.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. They just wanted to put their stuff in the cubbies and go in the gallery for a little while, then come back out.

Chief MORSE. Yes. I am sure that it happens often where the process is not followed for whatever reason. And perhaps that had some impact on the decision the officer made. But in my view, you know, you were there, you were staff, you had a group, we should have been able to be flexible enough to facilitate that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Can we just make sure that it is communicated to the officers that staff that area that—you know, obviously we have rules, and when there is long lines you want to get people through there, and I realize that the Sergeant At Arms runs that gallery visitation process, not the CVC, but the officers are there that staff it.

Chief MORSE. I think we should be able to facilitate those things. If it is problematic or something—

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Do they have to bring their stuff back to the CVC? Do they have to keep their stuff in the CVC?

Chief MORSE. No. The things are taken there by the doorkeepers that are not allowed into the galleries. And there is space there; carts, cubby holes, cabinets, et cetera, that as people come up the staircases that is the first thing they do. But you know we can facilitate that. If there is some problem, then you know we will communicate to the staff.

Chief MORSE [continuing]. And kind of go back through. But I think in that particular instance we could have probably been a little more flexible and facilitated it.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. My last question is actually unrelated to the CVC. And as you might imagine having a broken leg, Mr. Ayers, I am a little more sensitive now than I normally would be to accessibility issues in the Capitol.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Would you yield? Just don't slide into second base.

CAPITOL COMPLEX ACCESSIBILITY

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Right. I guess if I didn't slide into second base I wouldn't be as aware, but it has actually been quite helpful given that we fund the expanded accessibility efforts that you have been pursuing out of this subcommittee.

There are quite a lot of gaps in our accessibility in the whole Capitol complex, but one of those that is pretty glaring is in the

Cannon House Office Building. The interior doors that are enclosed with the elevator on each, you know on all the corners of all the floors—do you know what I am talking about? There is the elevator bank and then the doors that you have to click open to get out into the hallway.

Mr. AYERS. Yes, I do.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. None of those are wheelchair or disability accessible. There is no buttons to open them. I have either been going around on crutches or on the scooter for the last 10 days and a disabled individual absolutely could not be by themselves and get through those doors coming off the elevator. Do you have a timetable for when those doors in Cannon, all throughout Cannon, are—I mean I am going to be done with this in 12 weeks, but you know it is a real issue that I was not aware of. It never even occurred to me until I was dealing with it myself.

Mr. AYERS. No, Madam Chair, we don't have a timetable. I wasn't aware of that issue, but we will look at that right away and get that corrected.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. A button needs to be put on all of those so that someone in a wheelchair can get it open themselves if they are alone, which often people aren't. There are nice people that are willing to open the doors, but I have also found that there are people who are not so nice who just walk right by you and let the door go in your face. So anyway, if we could look into that, that would be great.

Mr. AYERS. We could do that.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The other place is that on the door on the south, on the south front of the Capitol where the ramp is.

Mr. AYERS. Yes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. You come in and the main doors have a button, but then there is a door to the left that is the door that you are supposed to go through if you are a Member or if—that door is—no button on that door either and no button coming out, and that is the way you are supposed to come out. So it is—and that door is heavy—so it is really an issue.

And with that if no other members—

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I have one other thing.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Please, yes.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. We talked about the cell phone coverage. The tunnel that goes where the subway is, a lot of times Members are rushing to vote and we still lose some calls there.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. The CAO, Mr. Ruppertsberger.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. That is all the way through?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yeah.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. And the lunchroom the same thing?

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Any of those issues related to cell phone access is the CAO.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Dan Beard.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Yes, Dan Beard, exactly.

So I appreciate it. We are all very cognizant of how there are lots of places, too many places in the Capitol complex that are inaccessible to the disabled. But you know I am more clearly aware of it now, and to the degree that we can step up our efforts and to the degree you need help from the subcommittee, please let me know.

Mr. AYERS. Thank you.

CHAIR CLOSING REMARKS/HOMEWORK

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. We wouldn't be the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee without some homework. So now that the CVC has been opened for 8 months it is really a good time for us to take stock and assess how well systems developed before we opened are working now that the center is operating in the real world. And as we have talked about at this hearing, whenever you open up a facility of this magnitude some things are going to go well, other things not so well and will need adjustment. The key is being able to identify where problems exist and adapt accordingly.

So based on the discussions today, I think one of the main areas worth taking a second look at is the current transportation plan. We had said we were going to revisit it at this point in a year after we saw how it was going with the six shuttles. It is clearly a problem that I think needs evaluation. It sounds like the overall existing system is working well, but there are definitely some adjustments that need to be looked at in order for us to get particularly the senior citizens and the frail elderly up to the CVC. And so in line with that I would like the CVC staff, in coordination with the Capitol Police, to review the existing plan for getting visitors from their tour buses to the CVC and assess how well it is working and whether additional adjustments might be worth considering to better facilitate the movement of visitors, particularly senior citizens, from their tour buses to the CVC main entrance. And please explain the pros and cons of each potential adjustment, identify whether it is viable, and provide a general estimate of its cost to implement both initially and then on an annual basis as well. And the report will be due back a month from now on August 24th.

With that, thank you all for your participation. The subcommittee stands adjourned.

[CLERK'S NOTE: The Executive Summary of the CVC Transformation Review follows:]



U.S. CAPITOL
Visitor Center

**U.S. Capitol Visitor Center Transportation Plan Update
Executive Summary
September 2, 2009**

Background

Visitors to the U.S. Capitol who arrive at the West Front bus drop-off area and who find the walk to the Capitol Visitor Center (CVC) difficult have the opportunity to make arrangements for assistance. Before or during arrival visitors may make arrangements to utilize the current shuttle system, which takes visitors from the motor coach bus drop-off location on the West Front at First Street, SW and the intersection of Maryland Avenue, SW (Garfield Circle) to the Capitol Visitor Center's East Front entrance.

The Capitol Visitor Center's website has a link on its home page, "Visitors with Disabilities," which provides information about the shuttle system as well as the phone number for the Office of Congressional Accessibility Services (OCAS). This same information is also located on the page, "Getting to the Capitol," which lists the numerous ways to reach the Capitol Visitor Center. Visitors, including large groups, are able to call ahead to make arrangements for shuttle and wheelchair service as well as sign language interpretation services. Additionally, after disembarking from a bus, visitors can directly request shuttle service from any Visitor Assistant posted at the Garfield Circle area and the southwest kiosk. Shuttle service is available all day during visiting hours.

Another opportunity to request shuttle service in advance is through the CVC's Advance Reservation System (ARS). When visitors and Congressional staff book a tour through the ARS, a "Contact Us" link at the bottom of each screen brings them to a page that lists the phone number of the OCAS in order for visitors or Congressional staff to make these arrangements. The OCAS staff assesses the specific needs and informs the Office of Visitor Services of both the service required and the time frame requested.

Current Shuttle Service Status

The Office of Visitor Services (Visitor Services) currently operates two shuttles during regular visiting hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Saturday. According to data provided by Visitor Services, the shuttles have served 14,111 visitors, or approximately 1% of all Capitol visitors from March 2009 through July 2009.

Visitors may request shuttle service on the spot by asking the Visitor Assistant who acts as the “curbside greeter” when they are dropped off by their tour’s motor coach near Garfield Circle. Visitor Assistants staff these posts throughout the day during operating hours. There is also a visible sign in the window of the kiosk that directs visitors to call the Visitor Services number to request shuttle service. Visitors leaving the Capitol may also request shuttle service back to the bus pick-up location from any of the Visitor Assistants posted inside the Visitor Center or outside near the facility’s entrances.

During operating hours, two shuttles will operate continually and can accommodate up to 60 passengers and 12 wheelchairs per hour. The new shuttles provide improved reliability and allow Visitor Services to use all six shuttles at one time, as needed.

Data reflects that the use of the shuttle service is relatively low. Records from March 2009 through July 2009 indicate the highest use occurred on July 31, 2009, with 250 riders for the day, or roughly 30 people per hour.

Accommodating Large Groups

Motor coach buses could potentially drop off a large group (50-60 passengers) of visitors who may all need to use the shuttle service due to mobility issues. In these cases, we strongly encourage the groups to plan ahead and call the OCAS to arrange shuttle service. With advance notice, Visitor Services can ensure that all six shuttles are operational at the prearranged time. In addition, advance notice from tour coordinators will allow us to stagger the arrival of buses to minimize the likelihood that two large groups will compete for shuttle access.

For a busload of 55 passengers, the average wait time for the entire group to be dropped off at the entrance could be approximately 20-25 minutes during normal circumstances. A group of 30 visitors or fewer could be transported to the CVC entrance in approximately 10 minutes.

Currently, Visitor Services does not track the number of large groups that arrange for shuttle service in advance.

Partnership with Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, DC

On September 1, 2009, Capitol Visitor Center staff met with representatives from the Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, DC, to provide an update on Visitor Center operations. The discussion focused on the current shuttle service, suggested alternatives, and the mutual goal of establishing a strong partnership between the CVC and the Guild.

The groups will meet again in late fall to discuss the new shuttle accommodations after a three-month observation period. They also agreed to maintain open lines of communication that will foster a strong working relationship with the Guild. This includes providing the Guild information regarding upcoming events, exhibits, educational opportunities, and the latest tour guidance. Likewise, the Guild will alert CVC staff to upcoming tours involving large groups of visitors and, in particular, those who may be requesting shuttle services.

Interim Shuttle Service Status

On August 28, 2009, the Visitor Center received six new electric ADA-compliant shuttles that will replace the current shuttles. The new vehicles have six seats and one wheelchair accessible station. All shuttles include a top, a windshield, an all-weather enclosure, and a wheelchair ramp.

The six new shuttles will have the maximum system capacity to move 180 passengers and 36 wheelchair passengers per hour. This includes the time it takes to load and unload passengers and round trip travel time. The most recent usage indicates that these six new shuttles will be sufficient to accommodate current demand. This increased capacity will accommodate well above the peak of 250 shuttle requests we received on a day earlier this spring.

Minibus Alternative

Another possible alternative or augmentation to the ADA shuttles is the use of a minibus. Numerous vendors in the Washington, DC area provide this service for a fee. A minibus is defined as a 22-passenger bus with a wheelchair lift and two wheelchair positions (for a total of 24 passengers). Buses with 31-passenger capacity are also available and come equipped with lifts; however, they do not have the ability to secure heavy motorized wheelchairs. The handicapped individual is removed from the chair, placed in a seat, and returned to the wheelchair upon arrival.

Some of the major advantages and disadvantages of the minibus concept are listed below.

Advantages include:

- Climate controlled enclosed environment
- No direct maintenance or operating costs/requirements associated with ownership
- Equipment clean, operating correctly and guaranteed to be in service

Disadvantages include:

- Delays caused by traffic-related events and emergencies, as minibuses would need to travel on city streets and not on paved pathways as do the shuttles
- Emissions and idle time
- Additional security screening required
- Cannot accommodate an entire busload of visitors at one time and would require multiple trips from Garfield Circle to the CVC entrance.
- Unlike the shuttles, a minibus cannot bring visitors to the CVC entrance elevators, but only to the drop off point on First Street, NE/SE, approximately 400 feet away.

Recommendation

The Capitol Visitor Center staff, Architect of the Capitol, and U.S. Capitol Police recommend that a one-year observation period begin immediately now that the new shuttles are operational to allow the Visitor Services staff to monitor shuttle usage through the peak spring and summer tourism seasons in 2010. It is further recommended that the National Tour Association and the Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, DC, as well as other related tour groups, be contacted for their comments during the observation period. After this one-year pilot program ends, we will provide a report that includes an assessment of the effectiveness of the pilot program, an evaluation of the comments from the tour groups, and recommendations for any further actions.