

Manitoba Bus Passenger Safety Consultation

**Summary of the Stakeholder Discussion
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

March 14, 2000

Manitoba Bus Passenger Safety Consultation

Summary of the Stakeholder Discussion Winnipeg, Manitoba

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1.0 Introduction

In June 1999, Transport Canada, assisted by the Institute On Governance, held a pilot session in Victoria, B.C. to discuss the issue of bus safety and identify actions which might further improve Canada's strong safety record. PricewaterhouseCoopers was contracted by Transport Canada to assist, in conjunction with the Institute on Governance, in the Bus Safety Consultation across Canada.

The Manitoba workshop followed the Maritime and Prairie workshops respectively held on February 29th, 2000 and March 7th, 2000. The session in Manitoba took place on March 14th, 2000 at Place Louis Riel All-Suite Hotel, 190 Smith Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The facilitators were Ms. Nathalie Roy and Ms. Suzanne Forget of PricewaterhouseCoopers. Session participants included a number of representatives from different stakeholder groups: bus operators, bus manufacturers, safety and medical organizations, school boards and trustees, high school students, senior representatives, representatives from the Department of Transport (federal and provincial) and provincial representatives from the Department of Education.

Mr. Derek Sweet from Transport Canada made a presentation on the context in which the consultation is taking place. References to the information packages, the exemplary record on bus safety, the desire to touch base with the public and the special effort devoted to obtaining a fair representation of the industry and the stakeholders were made. Mr. Sweet elaborated on the need to discuss the seat belt issue given that Transport Canada receives a great deal of correspondence requesting either the installation of seat belts on school buses or an explanation of their absence. The questions raised by the general public made this item mandatory for discussion.

Mr. Sweet noted that following each consultation session, participants will receive, electronically or by mail, a copy of the report produced by PricewaterhouseCoopers. It was also mentioned that a consolidated report would be produced in the late summer or early fall. Participants and other interested parties were invited to review the consultation outcomes on the web site at http://www.policity.com/worksites_transport.htm. Mr. Phillip Haid from the Institute on Governance elaborated on the web site and provided participants with a document explaining the site.

Prior to entering into the discussion, facilitators proceeded with an ice-breaker exercise where participants were "matched" two by two. Participants had five minutes to get to know one another and find one interesting thing about that person to share with the group as a whole.

The overall discussion was designed to obtain input and feedback from the participants to better understand:

- their concerns regarding bus and motor coach safety;
- their views on putting seatbelts in school buses and motor coaches;

- their suggestions on how to prioritize these concerns; and
- their opinions regarding possible strategies to address these concerns.

To exchange ideas on the various issues, participants first met in a plenary session where they identified key issues related to school bus safety. They were then separated into two groups to discuss these issues. Groups were composed of a variety of stakeholders. They subsequently reconvened as a larger group to share highlights of their discussions. The main issues were as follows:

- Seat belts;
- Public education;
- Driver training/standards/evaluation;
- Recruitment;
- Seating capacity;
- Student tracking;
- Age of school buses; and
- Children behaviour.

Safety issues related to motor coaches were discussed by the overall group in a plenary session. The topics covered were seat belts, high speeds and driver training.

It should be noted that the intent of this Report is to capture the views and ideas expressed by the participants at the workshop. We have endeavored to capture the discussion as accurately as possible, without offering any overall analysis or conclusions. The Final Report will cull all the ideas and suggestions provided in the sessions and on the web site, and offer some overall analysis and conclusions on bus safety.

2.0 Main Themes

This section presents the main themes that were highlighted throughout the day's discussion.

- Participants expressed mixed feelings regarding the issue of seat belts. Some were in favor, whereas others were against the installation of seat belts on school buses. Others required more information prior to sharing their opinions on the use of seat belts on school buses.
- Many participants felt that it was premature to talk about educating the public when insufficient data is available. Comments on the small amount of dollars invested in research were also made. For some participants, identifying the remaining research questions is a priority. More precisely, they want to know where are the gaps in research.
- Despite the fact that some participants wished further studies were conducted on school bus safety, many were satisfied with the existing data indicating that school buses are safer without seat belts. From this perspective, the next step would be to develop a public education campaign. Letters sent to students' homes either by mail or through the schools, television commercials, internet, videos accompanied by a brochures, bed time stories, coloring books, as well as parent/teacher meetings were mentioned as methods for reaching the target population.
- It was mentioned that parents, teachers, the general public, school boards, students and decision makers (such as trustees and politicians) should be targeted by the promotion campaign. Participants believed that the following elements should be included in the message: various statistics in favor or against the installation of seat belts; empirical data and research results; explanation that most accidents occur between the domicile and the loading zone; current bus design and how children are protected; negative impact of seat belts; and parents' role in educating children.
- Many participants agreed that some standards should be established with regard to the following: minimum hours of training and servicing; minimum hours of driving; and physical standard including medical and fitness test.
- Attendees agreed that many people drive school buses because they like the work and enjoy the children. However, given the already regulated industry and the tough market, there is a risk of making recruitment even more difficult if the standards become too demanding.
- The following were identified as ways to facilitate school bus driver recruitment: improving the profession's image (with better standards and a formal evaluation process); selling of this new image; better compensation; modern equipment; well behaved children; professionalism of the employees; pleasant and valued work environment; employer's flexibility (i.e. job sharing, vacation time).

- The policies around seating capacity were discussed. The major question was: who sets the maximum for seating capacity? Other stakeholders talked about the major costs associated to seating capacity.
- Participants could not reach a consensus on how to track students. Most agreed that student tracking requires monitoring and that schools, not drivers, should be accountable for the monitoring. It was concluded that student tracking is primarily a money issue. It was also felt that before developing an action plan, authorities must understand what the public wants and what are the available resources.
- Discussions on motor coaches started with an acknowledgement of the fact that motor coaches are generally safe. However, some people felt that insufficient information was available to allow them to make a decision on whether seat belts should be installed on motor coaches. It was also acknowledged that motor coaches are durable.
- Seat belts are not the “fix all” solution for improving the safety level on motor coaches. High speeds were raised as a major risk of accidents that can’t necessarily be prevented with the use of seat belts.
- The notions of hours of service as well as the lack of standards for driver training were raised as key concerns. Attendees reported that the motor coach industry is faced with a demanding clientele and, therefore, there is a need to keep looking into improving client service - including ways to improve their safety.

3.0 Specific Comments Regarding School Buses

This section presents a summary of the specific comments provided by participants during the plenary and break-out sessions on safety issues related to school buses.

As presented below, participants identified a total of 25 issues related to school buses.

1. Availability of statistics
2. Age of school buses
3. Bus driver training
4. Period testing
5. Management of children
6. Management of discipline
7. Student behavior
8. Parent education
9. Public education
10. Bus design
11. Seat belts
12. Bus visibility
13. Lighting
14. Education of teachers
15. Code of conduct for everybody
16. Passenger tracking
17. Review of policies
18. Maintenance of structure
19. Conditions of the rural environment
20. Bus safety capacity
21. Transportation of young children
22. Bus ownership
23. School bus definition / mini-van
24. Funding for school bus transportation
25. Transit buses as school buses

The following section presents highlights of the discussions in relation to the issues identified as most important by the participants: seat belts, public education, driver training, recruitment, seating capacity and student tracking. The seat belt issue was identified by Transport Canada as a mandatory topic for discussion.

3.1 Seat Belts

- Participants expressed mixed feelings regarding the issue of seat belts. Some were in favor of whereas others were against the installation of seat belts on school buses. Other required more information prior to share their opinion on the use of seat belts on school buses.
- Participants listened to a letter from Dr. Milton Tenenbein on the need for installing seat belts in school buses. Although many participants were not convinced that seat belts would increase the safety of the children, they agreed that more restraint research testing is required to determine the true safety benefits of seat belts as current test data is confusing (it supports and rejects the use of seat belts). In addition, they also agreed that the “three point belt” might be a safer type of safety restrain device.

Furthermore, they all agreed that some initiatives could be made to increase the safety of children travelling on school buses.

- Some attendees reported that despite research results proving that school buses are safer without seat belts, some American cities have installed seat belts for political reasons. Again, some people reiterated that 3 point belts are safer if children wear them.
- One participant commented that there are many outside factors that can't be controlled such as other drivers on the road. The impact on seating capacity was also brought up during the discussions.
- Transport Canada representative as well as one manufacturer made a reference to two reports providing results on safety issues: Review of Bus Safety Issue (TP 13330E) and School Bus Collision Summary Canada 1989-1997 (TP 13412E). The following reports could also provide further information to participants: School Bus Safety Study Vol. I and Vol.II 1985 (TP 6222E); Background Paper on School Bus Occupant Protection (TP 8013E); School Bus Seat Development Study 1987 (TP 8445E). These reports are available in the two official languages.

3.2 Public Education

- Many participants felt that it was premature to talk about educating the public, as insufficient data is available. Comments on the small amount of dollars invested in research were also made. For some participants, identifying the remaining research questions is a priority. More precisely, they want to know where there are gaps in research. The overall message shared by the group was that the seat belt issue is not black and white: there are solid arguments both for and against the installation of seat belts on school buses.
- Despite the fact that some participants wished further studies were conducted on school bus safety, many were satisfied with the existing data supporting that school buses are safer without seat belts. From this perspective, the next step would be to develop a public education campaign. Letters sent to students' homes either by mail or through the schools, television commercials, internet, videos accompanied by a brochure, bed time stories, coloring books as well as parent/teacher meetings were mentioned as methods for reaching the target population.
- It was mentioned that parents, teachers, the general public, school boards, students and decision-makers (such as trustees and politicians) should be targeted by the promotion campaign. Participants believed that the following elements should be included in the message: various statistics in favor or against the installation of seat belts; empirical data and research results; explanation that most accidents occur between the domicile and the loading zone; current bus design and how children are

protected; negative impact of seat belts; and parents' role in educating children. One participant proposed that a different message be sent to casual and everyday users.

3.3 Driver Training/Standard/Evaluation

- The notions of driver training, the standards relating to training, as well as evaluation of drivers were raised by the participants and are presented in this section.
- According to some participants, training for school bus drivers represents the best way to reduce the mistakes associated with human error. It was reported that most school bus accidents are related to human mistakes.
- Seniors raised language as an important factor: it was suggested that to be able to effectively communicate and establish a relationship with the children, drivers must speak the language children understand. This is particularly true for regions serving diverse cultural communities.
- Many participants agreed that some standards should be established with regards to the following: minimum hours of training and service; minimum hours of driving; and physical standard including medical and fitness test. It was felt that more importance should be given to the fitness test results. The example of the physical requirements in an evacuation situation was given. There is no maximum age for drivers and participants concluded that there should not be discrimination based on age but rather rely on the physical standard to continue the drivers' employment.
- Some attendees mentioned that drivers should not only master their driving skills but should also acquire behavior management skills to obtain their license. To help with the discipline challenge, some participants proposed to provide school bus drivers with uniforms. Some attendees reported that uniformed workers tend to have less discipline problems. Finally, a First Aid course was also reported as an essential component of a school bus driver curriculum.
- Many people supported one participant who requested that evaluation be made mandatory. Because problems are often related to the drivers' old habits, an evaluation should be undertaken either by the Division or a contractor. There is still a need to establish what drivers should be measured against. In addition, some attendees mentioned that not everyone can afford to conduct regular evaluations.
- Some attendees reported that parents' expectations are greater than the policies in place. In fact, some participants reiterated power carried by parent associations and the capacity to change the policies.

- Drug and alcohol programs were mentioned; this subject was identified as a very sensitive one. Some participants reported having a list of procedures to follow in case of a positive test result. Some wished they had a list of dos and don'ts.
- It was perceived that driver training, standards and evaluations are linked to the question of funding. It was reported that if the issue is important enough, it should be supported by Transport Canada and the provinces. Participants cited the lack of funding as the main reason for only minor improvements in drivers training. However, they also agreed that such initiatives as the conduct of annual evaluations and the establishment of national standards would contribute to improve drivers skills. To ensure consistency on driver standard and evaluation, it has to be regulated.
- Given the Department of Education's responsibility of providing training resources, participants also agreed that the province should be responsible to set training and evaluation standards. Participants also felt it would be of benefit to create a partnership with various "bodies" to raise the bar for driver training. This initiative should be lead at the federal level.
- One participant asserted that formal evaluation, as well as drug testing, would improve the image of the profession and consequently have a positive impact on recruitment.

3.4 Recruitment

- Attendees agreed that many people drive school buses because they like the work and enjoy the children. However, given the already regulated industry and the tough market, there is a risk of making recruitment even more difficult if the standards become too demanding. Many reported having to advertise a great deal to recruit candidates.
- The image of the profession could be improved to change the perception of the school bus drivers' job. Many participants shared that most people do not understand the responsibilities undertaken by bus drivers.
- The following were identified as ways to attract suitable candidates: improving the profession's image (with better standards and a formal evaluation process); selling of this new image; better compensation; modern equipment; well behaved children; professionalism of the employees; pleasant and valued work environment; employer's flexibility (i.e. job sharing, vacation time). The problem associated with the later option is that there are no replacement drivers. It is therefore difficult for the Employer to be flexible.

3.5 Seating Capacity

- It was not clear to all attendees whether seating capacity was a safety issue or a question of comfort. Two students reported having sat on school buses so crowded that one of their legs was in the aisle. According to regulations, the aisle should be clear at all times and, therefore, it becomes a safety issue.
- Some participants talked about their School Board's policies on seating capacity. It is usually linked to passengers' age and weight. However, these policies may vary from one Board to another. Some attendees mentioned that the existence of policies simplifies the lives of drivers allowing them to refuse passengers when buses have reached their full capacity. In this case, a second bus is called to accommodate the extra passengers. It was perceived as linking to driver education to report over loaded buses. The major question was: who sets the maximum for seating capacity?
- Other stakeholders talked about the costs associated with seating under-utilization; major costs were associated to seating capacity. Some Divisions have seating plans and one student felt that it would have a positive impact on her school travelling.

3.6 Student Tracking

- Participants could not reach a consensus on how to track students. Most agreed that student tracking requires monitoring and that schools, not drivers, should be accountable for the monitoring. In fact, it was reported that parents expect the school to know where their children are, and attendees added that parents cannot expect drivers to know this.
- The example of a credit card with bar codes (with radio frequency) was mentioned as a method for tracking students. This was perceived as a good idea for younger children. However, the problem of parents not informing the school when a change to the schedule occurs remains. Another complication was raised in connection with multiple addresses for a same child. High school students were not very receptive to the idea of being associated to a bar code but recognized the importance and the safety aspect of student tracking.
- One student reported not being allowed to take a different bus without her parent's authorization. It was perceived as a good initiative by one of the working groups. The students reported that the

presence of a teacher, a teacher's aid or a monitor in the school yard, as well as on the school bus would improve the safety and would keep students alert to ensure they don't miss their bus.

- It was concluded that student tracking is primarily a monetary issue. It was also felt that before developing an action plan, authorities must understand what the public wants and what the available resources are. A fit gap analysis would provide good indication of the extent of the problem.
- A major question was raised: "Are we ready to absorb the costs"? Despite the fact that student tracking was perceived as a customer preoccupation, taxpayers will still pay the bill.

3.7 Age of School Buses

- Although participants agreed that older school buses are safe, they also agreed that it would be beneficial to conduct research on the life span and safety fitness level of older school buses. This information should than be provided to the public to help change the public's perception that older buses are unsafe. However, participants acknowledged that today's school buses are designed and equip for maximum safety. They cited the lack of funding from the province as the main reason for the number of older school buses still being used to transport children. They also expressed concern that school bus operators do not have to retrofit their older buses because of a "grandfather" clause.
- Participants suggested that a working group be formed to prepare a business plan to make the case for funding of new school buses to the Ministry of Education. It was suggested that the working group be composed of representatives from each key stakeholder group. Participants agreed that the working group should at least be composed of members of both the Association of School Business and the Association of School Trustees. In addition, they agreed that the business plan should include the following components: an explanation of why additional funding is required; the safety benefits that would be achieved; a costs analysis of buying versus maintaining aged school buses; other options for funding (including advertising on buses, alternative use of school buses, changing the definition of a school buses so that other vehicles could be used to transport children to school - however, participants also expressed concerns over the liability issue for the last two options. They agreed the liability implications would need to be clearly researched and articulated in the business plan).

3.8 Children Behaviour

- Participants agreed that childrens' behaviour is a major concern. This problem will not be easy to solve as it involves changing not only childrens' behaviours but also the attitude of parents, teachers, politicians, etc. Attendees felt that support to the drivers could be provided by: showing respect for the transportation program and support to the drivers; taking action to resolve discipline problems; supporting the establishment of policies that provide an accountability framework and enforcement guidelines for drivers to use as required.
- Participants agreed that a "Code of conduct" or some national standards for student behaviours as it relates to safety would be beneficial.
- Some initiatives such as monitors / videos on school buses are helping to some degree with better behaviours. However, participants also suggested increasing fines as another way to bring about changes.
- Participants also agreed that discipline needs to start at home. Hence, parents should be encouraged to teach their children about school bus safety and its importance.

4.0 Specific Comments Regarding Motor Coaches

This section presents highlights of the plenary discussions in relation to the issues identified as most important by the participants regarding motor coach safety: seat belts, high speeds and driver training. The seat belt issue was identified by Transport Canada as a mandatory topic for discussion.

4.1 Seat Belts

- Discussions started with a recognition that motor coaches are generally safe. However, some people felt that insufficient information was available to allow them to make a decision on whether seat belts should be installed on motor coaches. It was also acknowledged that motor coaches are durable.
- Overall, participants had mixed feelings on safety benefits of putting seat belts on motor coaches because seat belts could, in some instances, increase the number of injuries. It was also mentioned that seat belts are primarily designed for frontal impact, therefore not beneficial in all cases.

- It should be noted that only two participants had an in-depth knowledge of the motor coach industry. According to these two participants, motor coaches would not be safer with seat belts. However, one representative mentioned that the seats that do not benefit from “compartmentalization” should be equipped with seat belts. These seats are the ones located in the first few rows behind the driver’s seat as well as the middle seat at the end of the bus facing the aisle.
- From a customer’s point of view, their demands focus on luxury rather than safety elements. For example, they would request more and better television sets rather than seat belts.
- Participants felt that the media plays an important role in informing public perceptions of motor coach safety. In effect, they tend to make “a big deal out of it”. However, given that actions are often driven by a political agenda, regulators should be careful and rely on solid research to make decisions.

4.2 Other Safety Concerns

- Seat belts are not the “fix all” solution. High speeds were identified as a major cause of accidents that cannot necessarily be prevented with the use of seat belts.
- It was asserted that the high volume of traffic combined with high speed results in high risk. Motor coach drivers must be made aware of those risks. One representative mentioned that a maximum speed has been set in his fleet of buses. Despite drivers complaining about other motor coaches’ greater capacity for speeding, the company did not modify the engine for safety reasons. Participants reacted well to that initiative.
- The hours of service was mentioned as another issue. Despite the requirement for mandatory breaks before driving, bus owners are incapable of monitoring the drivers’ activities prior to their shift. The example of an employee working at home all day then starting a long trip was brought up. The introduction of a resting shift (or rotation) was proposed by one participant.
- The notion of driver training for motor coaches was also mentioned. However, it was reported that there are no national standards except the ownership of the proper class of license. It was reported that the establishment of minimum standards would be very difficult to sell. Some comparisons with the states were also made.
- There are some guidelines relating to “drinking and driving” and the use of drug and alcohol. Some organization test their drivers but the test results are confidential and cannot be shared with other organizations. It was proposed that a structure be developed to increase the value of the shared

information. Participants felt that it would need to be regulated to obtain the unions' support regarding the dissemination of drivers' personal information.

- The question of recruitment did not appear as critical for the motor coach industry than for the school bus industry. Nevertheless, the representatives from the motor coach industry observed a reduction in the pool of suitable candidates.
- Attendees reported that the motor coach industry is facing a demanding clientele and, therefore, needs to keep looking into improving their client service, including ways to improve their safety. It was clear that modifications should be based on improved sources of information and empirical data. It links to the validity of the data and sources of Transport Canada.
- It was felt that safety record for motor coaches can always be improved. The enforcement by operators of maintenance standards was mentioned.
- The migration towards smaller vehicle was also discussed. The example of the airport shuttle buses was mentioned, as well as the absence of regulations pertaining to these vehicles, and more precisely to the absence of seat belts.
- Participants concluded that, in many instances, the issues go back to the definition of a bus.
- The driver record display was not particularly well received.

Appendix A
Agenda

Manitoba Bus Passenger Safety Consultation Workshop Agenda

*Winnipeg
March 14, 2000*

The purpose of the consultation session is to capture the views of the participants on the issue of bus passenger safety, including seatbelts in school buses and motor coaches.

More precisely, we seek to understand what are:

- your concerns regarding bus and motor coach safety;
- your views on putting seatbelts in school buses and motor coaches;
- your suggestions on how you would prioritize these concerns;
- your opinions regarding possible strategies to address these concerns.

Part I

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 9:00 - 9:30 | Continental Breakfast |
| 9:30 - 9:50 | Introduction <i>opening remarks by Mr. Derek Sweet from Transport Canada, workshop objectives, participants' expectations</i> |
| 9:50 - 10:00 | Presentation of Context by Transport Canada |
| 10:00 - 10:15 | General Views on Bus Passenger Protection <i>discussion of participants's views on bus passenger protection</i> |
| 10:15 - 11:00 | School Buses: Safety Factors and Related Concerns <i>identification of areas of concern exploration of the issue of seatbelts</i> |
| 11:00 - 11:15 | Refreshment Break |
| 11:15 - 12:15 | School Buses: Safety Factors and Related Concerns (con'd) <i>further discussion on identification of areas of concern and seatbelts prioritization of issues</i> |
| 12:15 - 1:15 | Lunch <i>salads, sandwiches and beverages will be provided in the meeting room round table discussion over lunch</i> |
| 1:15 - 1:45 | School Buses: Action Scenario(s) <i>potential initiatives to address safety issues</i> |

next steps

Manitoba Bus Passenger Safety Consultation Workshop Agenda

*Winnipeg
March 14, 2000*

Part II

- 1:45 - 3:00 Motor Coaches: Safety Factors and Related Concerns
*identification of areas of concern
exploration of the issue of seatbelts
prioritization of issues*
- 3:00 - 3:15 Refreshment Break
- 3:15 - 4:00 Motor Coaches: Action Scenario(s)
*potential initiatives to address safety issues
next steps*
- 4:00 - 4:30 Synthesis
*review of overall discussions on school buses and motor coaches
wrap up and evaluation*
- 4:30 End of Session

Appendix B
List of Participants

Winnipeg Participants List Bus Manufacturers

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Appendix C
Consultation Improvement Report

Manitoba Bus Passenger Safety Consultation

**Consultation Improvement Report
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

March 14, 2000

1.0 Introduction

This report presents a brief summary of the participants' reaction to the workshop held in Winnipeg on March 14, 2000 and recommends some ways to improve the remaining stakeholders consultation interactions. This document is based on participants' evaluation comments, PwC experience and The Institute on Governance debrief information.

2.0 Participants' Reaction

The facilitators requested that the participants list, on a "recipe card", 3 things they liked about the workshop (or worked well) and 3 things they did not like (or would recommend be improved). This section presents a summary of the comments received.

- In general, the group reacted positively to the overall workshop. They reported that it was well organized, structured and controlled. Some participants also commented on the pertinence of the topics chosen for discussion but one reported the lack of information available from the presenters on statistics regarding accidents.
- Overall, attendees felt they had excellent group discussions, valuable sharing of information and that good ideas were put forward. It was also an opportunity to meet other stakeholders on bus safety and to collect information to share with colleagues. Discussions on bus age as well as on strategies to improve funding were especially appreciated.
- Participants liked the good stakeholder representation. However, many felt that the discussion on motor coach safety was weak due to the shortage of representatives and lack of input. One participant proposed to hold different sessions for school buses and motor coaches. Nevertheless, it was perceived as a good opportunity to make contacts and a chance to learn from various users.
- One reference was made on the good technical representation from Transport Canada. Two attendees wished they had heard more about Transport Canada on crash testing and research on school buses. One participant questioned Transport Canada's reason for trying to improve an already excellent record.
- Workshop participants made positive comments on the facilitation team. They reported the workshop was well organized and that facilitators ensured the session moved at a good pace while keeping participants on track.

- Many attendees shared that it was an excellent forum to express views on safety from various stakeholders. The fact that everyone's opinion was considered was also reported as positive. However, some participants felt that there was insufficient time to exhaust all ideas relating to each discussion and that too limited time was allowed for debating the issues. One participant expressed that too many issues were covered in a 1-day session and another wished hard copies of the reports cited had been made available to participants. The need for additional background information was brought as an element to improve in future sessions; one participant said that discussions "jumped" to quickly to solutions without sufficient and accurate background information.
- One participant appreciated the leadership role taken by Transport Canada in reviewing school bus safety across Canada in order to understand the needs of the operation. There are some expectations that Transport Canada will react to the issues raised during the consultations.
- The discussions surrounding the seat belt issue raised various comments. One participant suggested that it would have been useful if time would have allowed for more debate on the seat belt issue, allowing for the discussion of more points, especially those pertaining to the weaknesses of some arguments in favour and/or against the installation of seat belts. One attendee reported negatively on the amount of time devoted to seat belts given that it was not considered as an issue. Another participant felt that the agenda was pre-prioritized, and that conclusions were predetermined; the seat belt issue was cited as an example.
- Some comments were made on the room in which the workshop was taking place. Some participants liked the setting and felt the room size was adequate, whereas others felt that larger facilities would have been more appropriate. However, one participant mentioned that break-out rooms may have worked better to prevent distractions and interruptions from the other group. Positive and negative comments were made on the food and the service provided by the hotel.

3.0 Recommendations

This section presents some recommendations to improve the next consultation sessions. Most recommendations were discussed with Phillip Haid from the Institute on Governance.

- For the session scheduled to take place in Toronto, hold two separate sessions for school bus and motor coach safety. It is proposed to hold a 1-day session on school bus safety. Further

discussion with Transport Canada will be required to determine if half a day or a full day will be necessary to discuss motor coach related issues.

- Participation from seniors and youth were appreciated; attempt should be made to ensure the public representation in future sessions.
- Repeat the split of participants into two groups while ensuring fair stakeholder representation in each group.
- The main room should be set up in a U shape. However, for next session arrange for one break out room to reduce the distractions during group discussions. Both PricewaterhouseCoopers and the Institute on Governance agreed that the facilities in Winnipeg were not perfect: insufficient number of cups, room size too small, absence of regular clean ups.
- The representative from the Institute on Governance proposed that the next session be held in a room with natural light.
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- Keep the ice-breaker exercise where, two by two, participants introduce each other. It takes longer but it provides everyone a chance to speak.
- Maintain the same balance of plenary and group discussions. Breaks were well scheduled; keep two breaks in the afternoon.
- Let participants rest for the half-hour lunch break; maintain the non-working lunch.
- The presentation by Transport Canada at the beginning of the session was welcomed by the participants. Based on the participants' reactions, more information, such as statistics and research on crashes, should be provided in the introduction presentation by Transport Canada.
- While facilitators must raise the issue of seat belts, some explanation on the rationale behind this topic helped explaining the context in which discussions on seat belts are taking place. The presentation of statistics will allow facilitators to re-direct the seat belt issue towards the public education issue more easily rather than "imposing" the discussion on the participants. Again, facilitators will focus on the development of an education campaign, where possible (include the target population, the media and the message).

- Facilitators should continue to reiterate the status of the discussion and link the various discussions together; they should also clearly state where the discussions fit in the consultation session.
- Edit the Toronto agenda to reflect these recommendations. It was proposed to start the Toronto session at 9:00 rather than 9:30.