



County of Los Alamos

Los Alamos, NM 87544
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Council Meeting Staff Report

December 9, 2014

Agenda No.:	B.
Indexes (Council Goals):	2014 Council Goal – Quality Governance - Maintain Quality Essential Services and Supporting Infrastructure
Presenters:	Philo Shelton
Legislative File:	6617-14

*** THIS ITEM WAS TABLED AT THE NOVEMBER 14, 2014 COUNCIL MEETING.**

Title

Discussion and Possible Authorization for Atomic City Transit to Provide Shuttle Services to Pajarito Mountain Ski Hill from December 2014 through March 2015.

Recommended Action

I move that Council authorize Atomic City Transit to provide shuttle services to Pajarito Mountain Ski Hill from December 2014 through March 2015 as described in the recommended Alternative ____.

I further move that the County Administrator direct staff to include the associated Budget Revision in the mid-year Budget Revisions to be presented to Council.

Body

At the request of Councilor Sheehey, staff is bringing forward options for providing bus service to Pajarito Mountain Ski Hill for Council's consideration. Using our past experience in providing similar service in 2013, staff has reviewed various options with respect to shuttle service being implemented on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, including the week between Christmas and New Year's Day (December 26 through January 4). Assuming there is enough snow for the ski hill to open, the County could begin the service on December 6 and continue through the last weekend in March 2015.

Alternative A service includes half-hour service from Sullivan Field parking lot starting at 8:00am and finishing at 4:45pm. White Rock and the downtown would be serviced through on demand Dial-a-Ride. The cost for this alternative is estimated to be \$113,600. Dial-a-Ride bus would be staged at the White Rock Visitor Center.

Alternative B service includes hourly service from Sullivan Field parking lot starting at 8:00am and finishing at 4:30pm. White Rock and the downtown would be serviced through on demand Dial-a-Ride. The cost for this alternative is estimated to be \$85,000. Dial-a-Ride bus would be staged at the White Rock Visitor Center.

Alternative C service includes half-hour service from Sullivan Field parking lot starting at 8:00am and finishing at 4:45pm. White Rock would have hourly service and the downtown would be serviced through on demand Dial-a-Ride. The cost for this alternative is estimated to be \$142,200.

Alternative D service would be provided through on demand Dial-a-Ride starting at 8:00am and finishing at 4:30pm. The cost for this alternative is estimated to be \$56,400.

The costs for each alternative given above includes costs for winter driving training, staffing, _____

operation and maintenance of vehicles, fuel charges, signage, and special events at the Ski Hill. The minimum level of service Atomic City Transit can provide is Dial-a-Ride service in order to be in compliance with our federal grant assurances with Federal Transit Administration. Dial-a-Ride service requires a minimum staffing level of two employees, where one takes a reservation and one to drive the service. Since most transit employees do not live in Los Alamos, it is not feasible to just offer one trip in the morning, noon, and evening time frames. There are pre and post trip inspections that are required, and travel time to and from Pajarito Cliffs Site, where it would not be cost effective even if there were two employees who could work an intermittent work schedule.

Staffing would be provided by extending the terms of three current limited-term FTEs who were hired for the Bandelier Shuttle. Under the recommended alternative, employees would work two 10-hour shifts to operate the ski hill route and Dial-a-Ride Saturday and Sunday and work two additional 10-hour shifts during the week filling in for drivers taking annual or sick leave and performing much needed bus and shelter cleaning and detailing. If Council does not authorize the ski hill shuttle, these limited term employees' last day will be December 6, 2014. Another advantage of keeping the current limited term staff is Transit will not need to hire and train seven new employees and instead will only need to hire and train three new employees in order to provide the proposed continuation of Bandelier service. If Council does not approve the Bandelier shuttle service, the limited term employees will be released at the end of March 2015.

Due to federal grant requirements, Dial-a-Ride service must be provided and is included in the cost estimate. Atomic City Transit currently provides over 550 Dial-a-Ride trips per month Monday through Friday. Current Dial-a-Ride users have indicated a high desire for weekend Dial-a-Ride service and staff expects the weekend Dial-a-Ride service to be well utilized.

During January through March of 2013, Atomic City Transit did provide ski hill shuttle services on Friday through Sunday and holidays, with Friday having poor ridership counts mostly due to a poor snow year. The total passenger trips during this service was 3,082. The average daily use for Friday was 58; the average daily use for Saturday was 178 (including Skiasta); and the average daily use for Sunday was 99.

Alternatives

Council could choose any of alternatives A through D or choose to deny authorization to provide shuttle services to Pajarito Mountain Ski Hill this upcoming winter season.

Fiscal and Staff Impact/Planned Item

If Council approves the ski hill shuttle services, staff will prepare a Budget Revision to be presented to Council as part of the mid-year Budget Revisions.