



Legislation Details (With Text)

File #: 23-0177 **Version:** 1

Type: Consent Item **Status:** Agenda Ready

File created: 5/1/2023 **In control:** Visalia City Council

On agenda: 5/15/2023 **Final action:**

Title: Authorize for the City Manager to enter into a five (5) year Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service (NPS) to continue in-park Sequoia Shuttle service, in conjunction with the City of Visalia's Gateway Sequoia Shuttle service, for an annual contract amount received of \$1,784,123, to be adjusted annually by Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI), and any requested service adjustments and related costs.

Sponsors:

Indexes:

Code sections:

Attachments: 1. P23AC00523 City of Visalia SEKI Shuttle

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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Agenda Item Wording:

Authorize for the City Manager to enter into a five (5) year Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service (NPS) to continue in-park Sequoia Shuttle service, in conjunction with the City of Visalia's Gateway Sequoia Shuttle service, for an annual contract amount received of \$1,784,123, to be adjusted annually by Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI), and any requested service adjustments and related costs.

Deadline for Action: 5/25/2023 - To account for preparation costs for 2023 season

Submitting Department: Administration - Transit

Contact Name and Phone Number:

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Department Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the City Council authorize the City Manager to enter into a five (5) year Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service (NPS) to continue annual operational services of the Sequoia Shuttle within the park for an annual amount of \$1,784,123 paid to the City. This fee will be adjusted annually by Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI), and any requested service adjustments and related costs.

Summary:

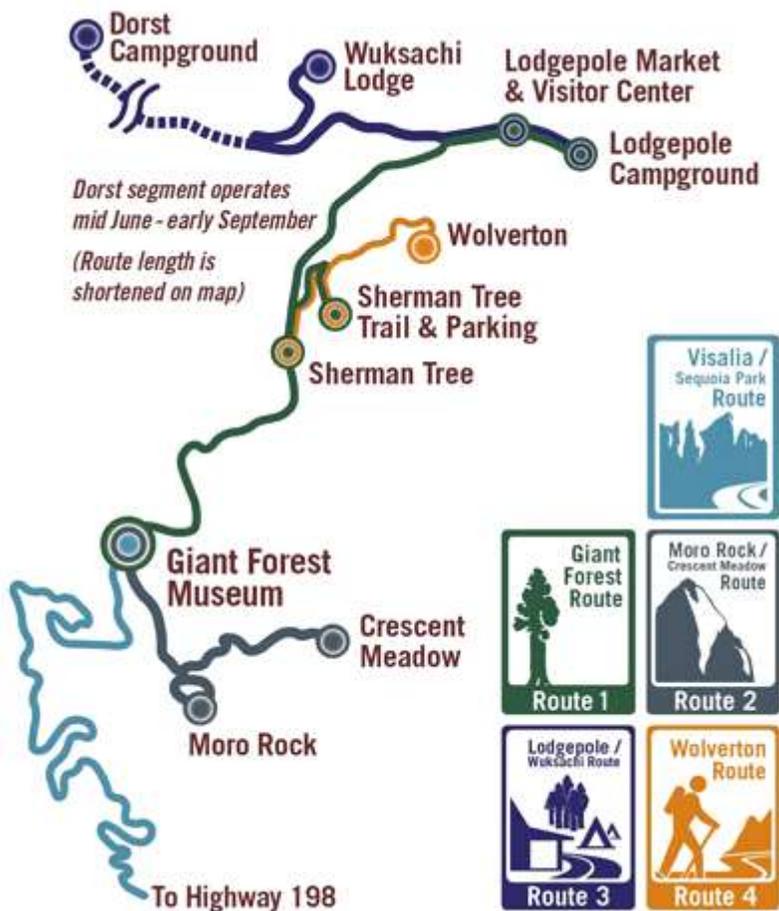
The attached agreement covers the operation of the Sequoia Shuttle within the Sequoia National Park by the City of Visalia on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS). The Transit Division provides this service and works with Transdev, who has acquired First Transit in March 2023, the

City's transit operations contractor, operating under a Cooperative Agreement with the NPS. Under the authority of this agreement, the City and NPS will work together annually to develop each season's service plan and make small adjustments to services as needed and agreed upon by both parties. There will only be minor adjustments to the routes, schedules and inflation increase, based on Consumer Price Index (CPI), Producer Price Index (PPI) and operations contract rate increases, to the corresponding rates annually. The agreement will otherwise remain unchanged for the duration of the five years.

Background Discussion:

The Sequoia Internal Shuttle began service in 2007 and has operated for 16 seasons. Each multi-year agreement details the services for the first year of the agreement. During the agreement term, the schedules and budget for each successive year are agreed upon through a collaborative process between the City and the NPS and memorialized as amendments to the agreement. Under the contract, the City provides all bus services including the lease of all buses used and the provision of trailers for temporary driver housing during the season.

The Sequoia Internal Shuttle summer service operates five routes serving all the major road-accessible destinations in the Giant Forest, including Crescent Meadow, Dorst Creek Campground, the General Sherman Tree, the Giant Forest Museum, Lodgepole Campground including the Market and Visitor Center, Moro Rock, Wolverton, and Wuksachi Lodge. Summer routes typically operate the Thursday before Memorial Day weekend through the Sunday after Labor Day. Also included is a winter service during Thanksgiving, usually operated between Thanksgiving Day through that Sunday, and Christmas Holidays, usually operated between Christmas Eve through New Year's Day. Staff has in the past, will continue to coordinate with NPS to accommodate the service when the Sequoia National Park is open to the public. The City of Visalia can terminate this contract upon sending NPS written notification of the reasons for such termination and proper notice of the effective date.



There is limited parking within the park at major attractions and trail heads. Through the use of the internal shuttle, visitors are able to park all day and visit the park attractions reducing stress of parking at each attraction, traffic, and reducing the emissions emitted within the park creating a more enjoyable visitor experience.

The cost of the internal shuttle service is paid in full by NPS and offered to the public free of charge. During the 2022 season, the internal shuttle provided an average of 6,584 rides per day with a season total of 717,676 rides, 23.66% below 2019’s ridership but 106% above 2021’s ridership. A summary of the 2022 Internal Shuttle Ridership by Month and Route is shown below, Table 1.

Table 1
2022 Internal Shuttle Ridership Summary

	Rt. 1 Giant Forest	Rt. 2 Moro Rock	Rt. 3 Wuksachi	Rt. 4 Wolverton	TOTAL	Daily Average by Month
May	27,424	27,885	4,355	8,381	68,045	11,341
June	78,152	71,738	5,628	26,223	181,741	6,058
July	100,101	102,936	12,326	28,460	243,823	7,865
August	70,386	64,811	6,162	21,178	162,537	5,243
September	26,208	22,283	4,039	9,000	61,530	5,594

Total	302,271	289,653	32,510	93,242	717,676	6,584
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On Thursday May 10th, 2023, NPS provided Transit that the Sequoia National Park would not be open until at least early June, pushing the start of our service start to mid-June t the earliest. This is not uncommon for NPS to authorize service and then it be canceled or reduced due to weather, fires, or other unforeseen circumstances. These concerns are brought up before the start of each service. Transit staff seeks approval from NPS for any and all costs incurred after the contract service bids closes will be reimbursable under this agreement, not to exceed the annual budget. Approval by NPS for these charges are documented and filed along with the annual budget approval.

NPS reimburses the City for the entire cost to operate the internal shuttle service monthly, which provides a great connection to the external shuttle the City operates from Visalia. Transit staff requests reimbursement based on financial reports for Transit’s Sequoia Internal Shuttle service, 4553, that show the actual expenditures incurred in the reimbursement period as outlined below in Table 2. At the end of each season, staff pulls a year-to-date report to ensure all expenditures incurred have been reimbursed. If it is found that some costs have not been included in previous reimbursements, staff include those charges in the last reimbursement. Due to the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) ending in September, NPS asks that the City estimate and request reimbursement for the Winter Service, Thanksgiving and Christmas, prior to October 1. Transit staff estimates the cost of the Winter service, plus 15% contingency, and request reimbursement prior to the service being performed. If not all the funds are exhausted during the Winter services, the park is credited back those funds in the following season.

Table 2
Reimbursement Schedule

Reimb. Period	Jan. - May	June	July	Aug. - Sept.	Oct.-Dec.
Reimb. Reqd.	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Sept.

It is estimated that approximately \$1,784,123 will be needed to operate the 2023 internal Sequoia Shuttle. This amount is \$120,000 higher than last year as a result of the requested increase of internal route frequency, possible service to Dorst Campground, Visalia’s Operations & Maintenance Contract cost increase, and an inflationary increase of 2.5% for leases and overhead allowed under the previous contract. Moving forward, the Transit Division will base all increase off the CPI-U for service and correlating PPI for product as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Fiscal Impact:

The Sequoia Internal Shuttle service is covered 100% by the contract payments from the National Park Service (NPS) which is placed in the Shuttle Internal Revenue line, account code 4553-44503. Transit requests reimbursement electronically monthly though the Federal Government website ASAP.gov and payment is made electronically within 24-hours. Transit only requests reimbursement for all costs incurred by the operation of the Sequoia Internal Service.

Prior Council Action:

March 12, 2018: Approval of the last 5-year contract for Sequoia Internal Shuttle services.

Other:
None.

Alternatives:

None.

Recommended Motion (and Alternative Motions if expected):

.recommendation

I move to authorize the City Manager to enter into a five (5) year Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service (NPS) for an annual amount received of \$1,784,123 to be adjusted annually as described within the report.

Environmental Assessment Status:

None.

CEQA Review:

None required.

Attachments:

- 1) P23AC00523 City of Visalia SEKI Shuttle
 - a. DRAFT Contract between the City of Visalia and the United States Department of the Interior.
 - b. The Sequoia Internal Shuttle 2023 Budget and Schedule as approved by the NPS leadership team.