

FEASIBILITY STUDY

CONNECTOR TRANSIT SERVICE

BETWEEN THE CITIES OF

KIMBERLEY AND CRANBROOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------|--|----|
| 1.0 | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2.0 | TRANSIT OBJECTIVES..... | 1 |
| 3.0 | POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS | 2 |
| 4.0 | COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT | 3 |
| 5.0 | REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE IN THE MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS | 4 |
| 6.0 | EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICE | 5 |
| | Transit Service to Kimberley Alpine Resort | 5 |
| 7.0 | SERVICE PLAN | 6 |
| | Moderate Proposal..... | 7 |
| | Moderately Enhanced Proposal..... | 8 |
| | Significantly Enhanced Proposal..... | 8 |
| 8.0 | FARE STRUCTURE | 11 |
| | Transit Vehicle Requirements | 11 |
| 9.0 | OPERATIONS | 11 |
| 10.0 | SUMMARY AND COST IMPLICATIONS OF SERVICE EXPANSION OPTIONS | 12 |
| MAP: | | |
| | PROPOSED REGIONAL CONNECTOR SERVICE: KIMBERLEY/CRANBROOK | 10 |

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study examines the feasibility of public transit service between the communities of Cranbrook and Kimberley. There is growing demand for such a regional service with each community benefiting from the opportunity of a transit linkage. This study is prepared by BC Transit through a request by the City of Kimberley. Kimberley finds a regional connector transit service an important transportation link for local residents. Cranbrook has not requested such a study, although senior staff have been made aware of the study and the benefits of such a service for the residents of Cranbrook.

This report includes proposed service options and their cost implications. The service options are derived from a combination of:

- meeting the local objectives of the study
- meeting a standard base of financial and passenger performance
- meeting the needs and desires of area residents
- matching the characteristics of the area to its optimal transit service

The objectives of the City of Kimberley suggests that a moderate level of transit service should be considered and that the primary focus of service would be a transit link for social, medical and shopping purposes. In addition consideration for a commuter link should be examined if there appears to be evidence of demand.

2.0 TRANSIT OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study is to identify demand for public transit service between the City of Kimberley and the City of Cranbrook. Particular emphasis will be on services that would assist those local residents from both communities who are dependent on public transit for their transportation requirements. In addition, a commuter service should be considered and wherever possible service should be targeted at serving people from all demographic groups. The specific objectives of the study, from a local perspective, are:

- Depending on demand service levels should be occasional (e.g. twice per week) or more regular (e.g. Monday through Saturday).

- Depending on demand, scheduled commuter service with stops in downtown Cranbrook, the hospital and college.
- During the peak winter ski season (January thru March) Saturday service between Cranbrook and Kimberley Alpine Resort.

There are also overall objectives that can be achieved by a study of a regional transit link between Kimberley and Cranbrook. A connector will allow the opportunity to provide access to employment opportunities, shopping areas, health facilities, educational facilities, recreational areas and cultural facilities in the service area to residents of Kimberley that otherwise might not be available. A regional link also provides improved availability of transportation services to senior citizens, people with a disability and those who may be limited in travel opportunities by virtue of their financial status. For Cranbrook residents, transit service to Kimberley offers an enjoyable trip to one of the Kootenay's most popular destinations. Kimberley's downtown platzl, with its many unique shops and restaurants in the Bavarian theme, has over 25,000 visitors a year. Finally, the regional service will provide transportation alternatives to the youth of both Kimberley and Cranbrook, who by circumstances of age or automobile availability are limited in their personal mobility.

Community transportation systems support and promote numerous aspects of economic and social development, including:

- Creating jobs by attracting employers to areas that are accessible to more people;
- Empowering workers by enabling transportation disadvantaged people to reach jobs and become productive members of society;
- Strengthening local businesses by giving them access to workers and to a wider market;
- Enabling seniors to remain independent by providing access to health care, shopping, day care programs, and other basic life needs.

Moreover, even in a community as small as Kimberley there can be environmental benefits. Transit is a very efficient mode of transportation compared with the automobile in terms of energy consumed, space required, and the amount of pollution produced. From a fiscal perspective, one of the key overall benefits of increased transit use is the reduction in other public and private costs that results from reduced automobile traffic.

3.0 Population and Demographics

The most basic indicators of potential transit ridership levels are characteristics of the population to be served -- total population, demographic breakdown and population distribution.

Based on information from *Statistics Canada*, Table 3.1 displays *1996 and 2001 Census* population figures specifically for Kimberley.

| | 1996 | 2001 | % change |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Kimberley | 6,738 | 6,485 | -3.8% |
| Male | 3,310 | 3,140 | -5.1% |
| Female | 3,430 | 3,345 | -2.5% |
| Age 0-17 | 1,435 | 1,280 | -10.8% |
| Age 18-24 | 535 | 475 | -11.2% |
| Age 25-44 | 1,900 | 1,595 | -16.1% |
| Age 45-64 | 1,615 | 1,825 | 13.0% |
| Age 65 + | 1,265 | 1,315 | 4.0% |

Of immediate interest is the drop in population over the 5-year census period – the absolute population change is not particularly significant to produce any substantive differences in transit service provision. In general, the population threshold within the Municipal Systems Program of BC Transit is 5,000 persons within a concentrated urban area for consideration of conventional service.

Potential for transit ridership is based somewhat on the age breakdown of the population. Ridership for a limited level of service is generally comprised of captive riders – those persons that have no viable means of transportation. Higher levels of transit such as commuter-based service will attract choice riders – those with a viable means of transportation. In Kimberley we see captive riders identified generally as those under 20 and seniors who comprise 40% of the population.

Based solely on the nature of the population distribution within Kimberley, and in the absence of a very specific commuter market, a high level of regional connector service provision is marginal at best. An evaluation of a moderate level of service is suggested as the best course of action.

4.0 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The development pattern of a community and local travel patterns provide information on the most effective design of a transit service. With most local trips being home-based, the main travel flows are generally between residential areas and activity centres. The scale and nature of each of these locations determines overall demand for travel. Although internal movement in Kimberley is important, Cranbrook remains the medical, commercial, business and entertainment centre for Kimberley.

The development of the East Kootenay Regional Growth Strategy last year indicated that the centralization of health facilities in Cranbrook has resulted in a demand for transit from outlying communities. This appears to be of greatest interest for seniors. The opening of the Cranbrook Recreation Complex with a wave pool, swimming and hockey rink with the added attraction of the WHL Kootenay Ice is a strong draw for all ages. Combined with the College of the Rockies, Tamarack Mall, Wal-Mart and all of the additional entertainment choices has made Cranbrook the major centre of the East Kootenay region.

A count of daily vehicles on highway 95A between Cranbrook and Kimberley was taken October 14th to 18th just south of Marysville. Average daily traffic was 4,724 vehicles, with approximately 50% in each direction. MoH indicated that being a fall end of week count, this number is at the very low end of the annual range.

There are 189 full and part time students residing in Kimberley enrolled at the College of the Rockies. While we do not have specific information on the mode of travel, it is safe to assume that some students would use a bus service if it was convenient.

Taking into account both the population and community development information, the viability of a connector type service is strengthened by the size and draws of Cranbrook in general as the primary transit ridership generator for Kimberley.

5.0 REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE IN THE MUNICIPAL SYSTEMS

There are a number of regional transit connector services within the Province.

- In Central Kootenay there is rural transit providing service from Nakusp to Nelson two days per week.
- A more traditional community-to-community service is in place between Harrison Hot Springs, Agassiz and Chilliwack in the Fraser Valley. The service operates with five trips per day Monday to Friday and four on Saturdays and four on Sundays during the summer.
- On Vancouver Island there is service linking Qualicum Beach, Parksville and the major urban centre of Nanaimo.

Each of these cited examples are extremely successful. Their success though is predicated on the fact that the level of service matches the demand for service. This accountability makes the services financially viable and yet still provides invaluable service for those residents dependent on public transit.

6.0 EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICE

The Kimberley Community Bus provides regularly scheduled service to Cranbrook on the first and third Monday of every month. Service leaves Kimberley at 9:00 AM making stops at Tamarack Mall, Save on Foods, Cranbrook Mall and Wal-Mart. Service returns at 1:30 PM., arriving back in Kimberley by 2:30 PM. Ridership is steady averaging 9.5 customers per trip. Cost is \$10.00 for the round trip.

Greyhound provides two trips in each direction. The service is focused on the Cranbrook – Calgary service with the link to Kimberley designed more to handle the freight portion of the business. Buses leave Cranbrook at 6:30 AM and 6:00 PM. Trips from Kimberley leave at midnight and at 10:25 AM. The scheduled running time between the communities is 25 minutes. Adult one-way fare is \$8.15 plus GST.

The Family Centre provides a volunteer car/van service for seniors based on demand. As would be expected ridership is very modest with only 26 rides in the past six months.

TRANSIT SERVICE TO KIMBERLEY ALPINE RESORT

With the close proximity of the Kimberley Alpine Resort to Downtown Kimberley there is a potential market for providing ski bus service for residents of Cranbrook. Service to ski hills is becoming more popular in communities within the Province. Of interest to Cranbrook/Kimberley is the ski bus service now provided to Silver Star Mountain in Vernon and to Red Mountain in the Kootenay Boundary communities of Trail and Rossland.

The ski service to Silver Star was implemented December 2002 and has proven to be very successful. A bus operates between Salmon Arm, Vernon and Silver Star with two additional trips up and down the mountain for park and ride customers. Service operates weekends, professional development days and school holidays from season start to finish. Silver Star is unique in that the cost of the ski service is borne by Silver Star Mountain Resort. As a community partner the resort understands the advantages of public transit and their financial commitment includes 100% funding of all marginal costs of the ski bus service. The first year saw fully loaded buses with the need for additional buses to meet the demand.

The Red Mountain service is slightly different with service provided every day from season start to finish. Cost has been included within the Annual Operating Agreement although a move to consider a similar partnership with the ski hill is on going. Ridership remains modest with higher demand during weekends and holiday periods.

A ski bus service to Kimberley Alpine Resort provides a major destination for residents of Cranbrook and to a lesser extent local user within Kimberley. It provides demand for service in both directions and opens up an additional market segment to public transit. It clearly

shows a serious attempt at providing a transit alternative and a commitment to the local economy.

7.0 SERVICE PLAN

This section lists proposals resulting from the community profile analysis, comparable service in other communities and the local transit objectives. The service proposed is responsive while being realistic and fiscally responsible.

By the community information gathered, especially the large draw for travel into Cranbrook for all types of transit-related trips and by all market segments, a regional connector service between the two communities is warranted. Although the population size is marginal for such a service, the provision of transit will provide greater opportunities over time and thus enhance ridership over the long term. The level of service should also attract some riders who may not have otherwise thought of using a service with less convenience.

The type of service proposed is a fixed route/fixed scheduled service with the possibility of deviations off this route within a specified corridor to provide service for handyDART eligible clients. This type of service can truly be called a paratransit system in the sense that both conventional and handyDART eligible passengers can use the system and that there is some flexibility provided within the system. However the service can also be termed an accessible conventional system.

This plan outlines the service levels and the number of recommended annual hours. Although detailed plans are provided for consideration, they can be modified or discussed further. *Please note the comment after the enhanced plan calling for further input from the community at large.* The plan is presented in levels of system alternatives – moderate changes, moderately enhanced and significantly enhanced.

MODERATE PROPOSAL

The moderate plan proposes to increase regional connector service slightly from the existing service:

Service between Kimberley and Cranbrook will operate three days a week – Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. One round trip operating from Kimberley mid-morning, (9:30 AM) and a return morning trip for Cranbrook residents. In the afternoon the bus would leave Kimberley at about 1:30 PM to Cranbrook and return at 2:00 PM. The service would terminate at the Downtown Transit Exchange in Cranbrook, offering transit passengers timed transfer connection with the Cranbrook Transit System. A sample schedule would be:

| Leave Kimberley | Arrive Cranbrook | Leave Cranbrook | Arrive Kimberley |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 9:30 AM | 10:30 AM | 10:30 AM | 11:20 AM |
| 1:30 PM | 2:30 PM | 2:30 PM | 3:30 PM |

Times can change in the detailed planning stage once service is approved.

Transit service to Kimberley Alpine Resort: As a first phase is scheduled every Saturday through the major ski months of January, February and March. If this proves to be successful an increase in days of service and length of service can be considered. Saturday service will provide ski bus service starting in Cranbrook at 8:20 AM arriving at Kimberley Alpine Resort at 9:20 AM and back downtown in time for the regularly scheduled mid-morning trip to Cranbrook. Return service Saturday afternoon will be scheduled upon the arrival of the mid-day service from Cranbrook at 3:30 PM.

MODERATELY ENHANCED PROPOSAL

The moderate enhanced plan is the same as the moderate plan except it proposes to increase service from three days a week to six days – Monday through Saturday. The ski bus option will remain Saturday only.

SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCED PROPOSAL

This plan continues with mid-day service Monday through Saturday. It also proposes a commuter run during weekdays. The service will be focused on workers and college students. A sampling of the major work and start times of some of the communities more significant

employers, (City Hall, College and hospital administrative staff, downtown business offices) concluded that given the restrictive nature of one bus in service the most attractive service possible for workers is for that group working 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM. This holds true for most communities in the Province with the highest work commute demand at this period. The regional connector service will arrive downtown Cranbrook at 8:15 for the 8:30 AM work start with on-demand service to the hospital and college. In the afternoon, service will be scheduled to depart Cranbrook at 4:45 PM for 4:30 PM workers. A sample schedule would be:

| Leave Kimberley | Arrive Cranbrook | Leave Cranbrook | Arrive Kimberley |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 7:15 AM | 8:15 AM | 8:30 AM | 9:20 AM |
| 9:30 AM | 10:30 AM | 10:30 AM | 11:20 AM |
| 1:30 PM | 2:30 PM | 2:30 PM | 3:20 PM |
| 3:30 PM | 4:30 PM | 4:45 PM | 5:35 PM |

Times can change in the detail planning stage once service is approved.

If local Councils are considering this option for service it is strongly recommended that local input from the community at large is solicited. The City should have a high degree of confidence that a commuter service is viable and through community input, the service can be refined to meet the majority of potential users. BC Transit can assist in setting up marketing information and the most successful way to seek community input.

The proposed routing is:

- ➔ from Kimberley via Ross, Kimberley, Boundary, 4th Avenue, Tadanac, 7th Avenue, Trail, 4th Avenue Boundary, Wallinger, Warren to Marysville
- ➔ from Marysville via Highway 95A to Cranbrook via Wal-Mart, Tamarack Mall, Downtown Cranbrook and on-demand to the East Kootenay Hospital and College of the Rockies
- ➔ the outbound route from Cranbrook, to Kimberley is reverse of the inbound
- ➔ In the winter months of January and February the service will on Saturdays extend outbound and inbound up to the Kimberley Alpine Resort

In Downtown Cranbrook service will terminate at the Downtown Transit Exchange with transfers available on the existing Cranbrook Transit System, upon approval by the City of Cranbrook.

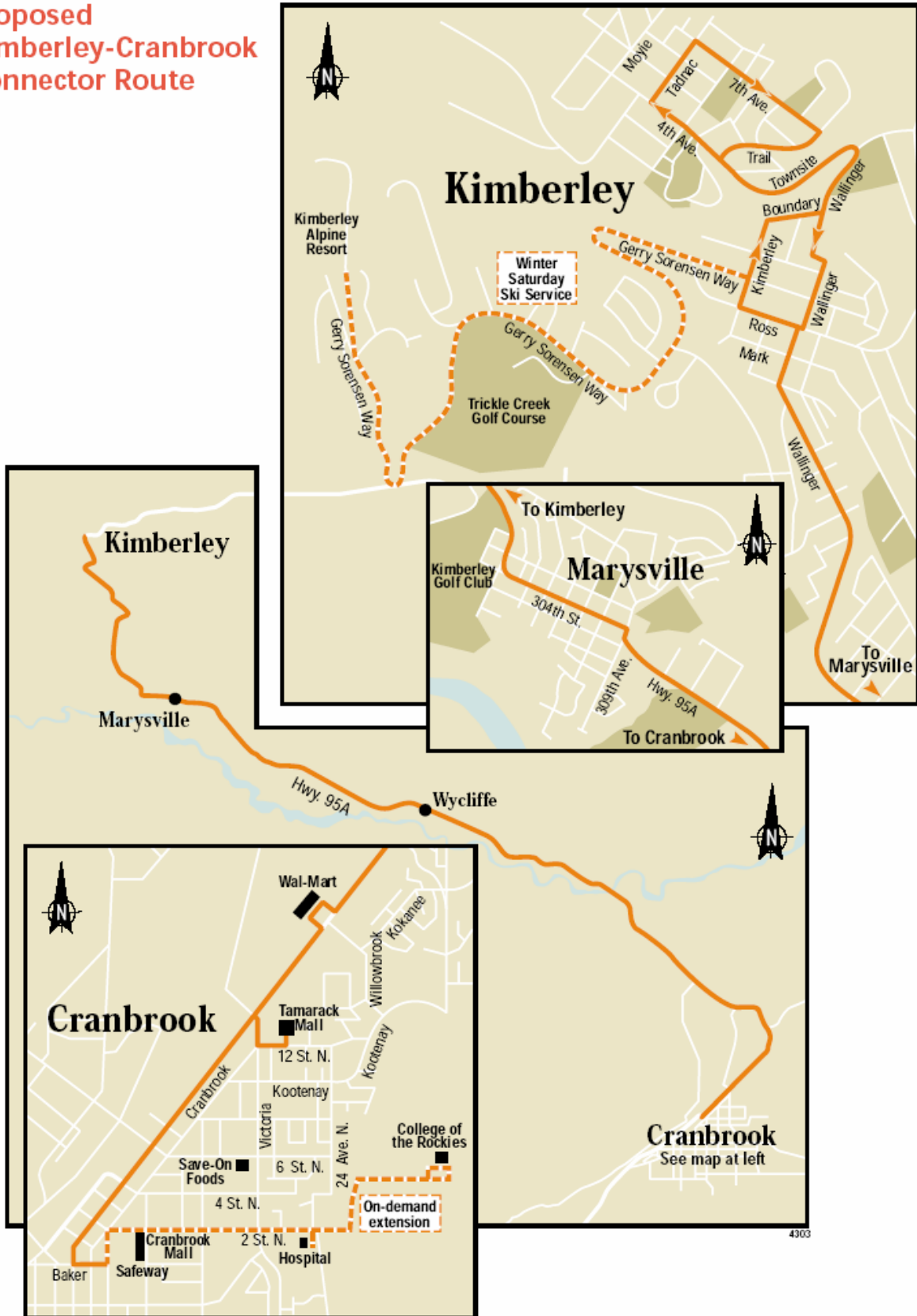
A one-way trip is approximately 32 km and would take just under an hour (approximately 50 minutes) to complete the trip. A five minute extension of this trip time would provide the schedule flexibility required for the small number of route deviations expected.

Along the route, bus stops should be located only within the built-up areas of Kimberley. Actual bus stop locations can be decided upon at a later date in consultation between BC Transit and municipal staff. In other areas along the route, “flag” or “hail” stops would be more efficient, with the actual stop location at the discretion of the driver based on safety.

A slight variation on this option reduces the number of trips from 4 to 3 per day. The morning and evening commuter trips would remain and a noon trip replaces the two midday trips. While the service would continue to accommodate commuters and students, it would not be as convenient for seniors and others for medical appointments and other trip purposes.

A map of the proposed service is shown on the following page.

**Proposed
Kimberley-Cranbrook
Connector Route**



8.0 FARE STRUCTURE

Transit fares in BC are not structured to meet traditional business objectives of revenue or profit. Instead, the objective is to provide a combination of adequate government subsidies and farebox revenue to meet social, economic and municipal objectives.

| OPTION 1 | KIMBERLEY/CRANBROOK |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Adults | \$3.00 |
| Concession (Seniors and Students) | \$2.00 |
| OPTION 2 | KIMBERLEY/CRANBROOK |
| Adults | \$2.50 |
| Concession (Seniors and Students) | \$1.50 |

Although not listed, the fare proposal would also include pre-paid fare options such as tickets and monthly passes, the tickets priced at slightly discounted rates off the face value and the monthly pass at about 20 round trips per month.

As discussed previously, transfer privileges between the service and the Cranbrook Transit System will be subject to successful negotiations between and approvals from those parties involved.

Transit Vehicle Requirements

A vehicle with the capacity of 20 to 25 passenger seats with 2 wheelchair spaces would be the most appropriate as it matches the estimated demand based on the population size, and gives the greatest amount of flexibility for the service design. The latter comment refers to the possible mix possible of conventional and door-to-door passengers as well as the imposition of a large vehicle in smaller urban areas.

9.0 OPERATIONS

There are two options for consideration for the operation of the proposed service. Kimberley Transportation Committee can operate the service under the current Annual Operating Agreement between Kimberley and BC Transit. If Cranbrook is in agreement with the importance of the regional link between the communities they would then become a “sub-partner” within the agreement.

A second alternative for the operation of the service would be to have this service as an extension of the existing Cranbrook Transit Service Area. In doing this, the operations would fall under the existing Cranbrook operations. As the Annual Operating Agreement is with the City of Cranbrook, this extension of service would most easily be supported by the City of Kimberley being a “sub-partner” of the City. This would allow the service to be operated by the existing transit management company – GrayLine of Victoria – with their background in providing both conventional and custom transit services. In addition, the existing fleet allows the ability to draw on a spare vehicle if there are mechanical problems.

10.0 SUMMARY AND COST IMPLICATIONS OF SERVICE EXPANSION OPTIONS

The table below summarizes the service proposed for the Kimberley - Cranbrook regional connector service. The exact cost-sharing, phasing and implementation of these services will be determined after local approval through the annual budget approval process with BC Transit. Costs include the lease fee costs for a new fully accessible mini-bus with seating capacity for up to 24 passengers and 2 wheelchair positions.

Summary and Cost Implications of Service Expansion Options

| Description of Service | Vehicles | Hours | Total Cost | Revenue |
|---|----------|-------|------------|----------|
| Moderate Proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three days a week – Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday • Saturday service January thru March to Kimberley Alpine Resort | 1 Bus | 630 | \$40,000 | \$9,000 |
| Moderately Enhanced Proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six days a week – Monday through Saturday • Saturday service January thru March to Kimberley Alpine Resort | 1 Bus | 1,230 | \$67,500 | \$18,000 |
| Significantly Enhanced Proposal A: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-day service six days a week – Monday through Saturday • Commuter service – Monday through Friday (3 trips/day) • Saturday service January thru March to Kimberley Alpine Resort | 1 Bus | 1,730 | \$90,000 | \$26,000 |
| Significantly Enhanced Proposal B: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-day service six days a week – Monday through Saturday • Commuter service – Monday through Friday (4 trips/day) • Saturday service January thru March to Kimberley Alpine Resort | 1 Bus | 2,230 | \$112,000 | \$34,000 |