

Capital Plan
Mountain Express
2019

Background

Bus fleet is presently 14 large buses and six small buses. Large buses (39 passengers) are generally used on the town routes and small buses (24 passengers) on the condo routes.

The large buses average six years and 116,000 miles. The small buses average five years and 62,000 miles. Of the 20 buses, six have engines with over 10,000 hours. Even with the upgrading of the fleet, repairs are a major cost (about \$90,000 per year).

During peak ski season days, six town buses, three condo buses and one Crested Butte South bus are used. Additionally, four buses are rotated every other day on the four high mileage routes, resulting in continuing use for 14 buses. The other six buses are used for back-up whenever buses are out of service for repairs or maintenance.

The remaining vehicles are a senior van purchased in 2016 with 41,900 miles, and four pickup trucks purchased in 2011, 2017 and 2018 with 42,000, 10,000, 3,800 and 8,200 miles.

The bus barn was completed in 2009 and a bus lift was added in 2012.

Land Purchase

MX purchased one lot at the new Whetstone Industrial Park with the Gunnison Valley RTA and one lot on its own. The lots will initially be used for bus storage. With grant funding from CDOT, MX plans to build a new facility on site and move operations down valley. MX was awarded a Planning Study grant from CDOT which will take approximately six months to complete. Once completed MX will apply for a Capital grant through CDOT for funds to build the new facility.

Considerations

- Determining a replacement policy for buses is difficult because of the way the buses are used, with much idling, and our excellent repair capabilities. With two

full-time mechanics and a complete shop, we can keep buses running indefinitely, although they begin to look shabby and become costly to keep repairing.

- There is very little salvage value in used buses.
- We won't need six back-up buses. However, since there is little salvage value, old buses are retained and used lightly until a major repair is needed or for parts.
- The newest small buses are used on the Town routes during off-season.
- With all of the back-up buses, ridership increases will have a minimal impact on capital needs.
- It takes up to six months to receive a new bus The ideal time to receive new buses is in the fall to allow time to get them broken in before the ski season.
- Total bus miles in the 12 months ended December 31, 2018 was 203,900 and 18,900 service hours.
- Big buses cost \$195,000 and small buses \$160,000.
- Buses have been purchased using FTA grants and a 20% local match. The deficits being debated in Washington could result in future reductions to FTA funding and therefore reductions in future grants available.
- Cameras and digital destination signs were installed in bus purchases starting in 2014 and will be included in future bus purchases.

Plan

MX is applying for a Capital grant with CDOT to purchase two big buses in 2021.

On a continuing basis we should be purchasing at least one bus each year. Exactly what to purchase and when will depend on grants received and cash available.

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