



# Draft Alternatives



The National Park Service (NPS) is preparing a Transportation Plan/Environmental Assessment (plan/EA) to improve transportation conditions in Bandelier National Monument (the monument). The plan will analyze the environmental effects of a range of alternatives designed to reduce transportation-related impacts to natural and cultural resources, improve visitor experience, and restore Frijoles Canyon to a more tranquil setting.

## Background

More than three decades of studies and workshops have documented transportation and congestion management challenges in the monument, including traffic congestion at the entrance and a lack of adequate parking in Frijoles Canyon. Recent fires and flooding events have added to a reduction in available parking in Frijoles Canyon, further challenging the monument's transportation system.

To offset reduced parking in Frijoles Canyon, the monument is currently partnering with Los Alamos County and Atomic City Transit to provide emergency shuttle service from the White Rock Visitor Center to Frijoles Canyon. The shuttle service is temporary and long-term strategies to address the monument's transportation issues have not yet been developed and implemented.

## Transportation Alternatives

Based on comments received during the public scoping phase of the project, analysis of transportation and visitor use data collected during 2012, and information gathered from previous planning documents and studies completed in the monument, four preliminary action alternatives have been drafted to address transportation needs in the monument.

The preliminary alternatives include a "non-transit" alternative, which provides for visitor access to Frijoles Canyon by private vehicle during all months of the year. The non-transit alternative relies on providing visitors with pre-arrival information that might persuade them to visit the monument during off-peak times, and on-the-ground traffic management to minimize traffic congestion and parking shortages.

The preliminary action alternatives also include three "transit alternatives," each of which involves the operation of a mandatory shuttle service for visitor access to Frijoles Canyon during peak visitation periods. Two of the transit alternatives include parking in the monument, and one includes parking in the monument and at the White Rock Visitor Center.

In addition to the action alternatives, a "No Action" alternative will be included in the plan/EA available for public review in Winter 2014. This newsletter focuses on the action alternatives.

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## Purpose and Need

The purpose of this Transportation Plan/EA is to develop resource-sensitive, environmentally sustainable, and cost effective solutions to the existing transportation conditions at the monument.

Traffic management has been an ongoing issue in Bandelier National Monument. During peak periods, parking in Frijoles Canyon fills up quickly, requiring additional vehicles to wait at the entrance until space becomes available. This situation adversely affects air quality, soundscapes, water quality, monument operations, and visitor safety as well as the overall visitor experience.

## Objectives

- Create a convenient and desirable experience that promotes safe, efficient, and accessible visitation at the monument.
- Maintain the character and integrity of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) National Historic Landmark District.
- Reduce environmental impacts associated with the current transportation systems, such as air pollution.
- Reduce the impact of vehicle operations in Frijoles Canyon to enhance tranquility.
- Make monument attractions outside Frijoles Canyon more accessible to disperse visitor use.
- Enhance the availability of information related to visitor use opportunities to more broadly distribute visitors across the monument.



For More information, please go to our website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/band>

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What are the components of the preliminary alternatives?

Key components of the preliminary action alternatives are summarized in the figure to the right, and include parking capacity and management, site improvements for parking, transit, and pedestrian facilities, and transit routes for the transit alternatives. In addition, all of the alternatives include “travel demand management” strategies designed to shift some visitor use to less busy times and places in the monument. Finally, the preliminary alternatives include information about operations and maintenance requirements.



Summary and Comparison of the Four Action Alternatives		General Concept	Site Improvements	Parking Areas	Transit Routing	Shuttle Stops
<div>Alternative 1: Frijoles Canyon Parking Improvements and Travel Demand Management</div>		Visitor access to Frijoles Canyon would be via private vehicle and tour bus throughout the year. Maximizes the existing parking capacity in Frijoles Canyon and shifts peak season employee parking to the Mesa Top, with vanpool service to Frijoles Canyon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Frijoles Canyon Lots: Up to 7 new parking spaces in the Backcountry Lot if public vehicular access is provided across Frijoles Creek.</li><li>Frey Trailhead Lot: 25 new parking spaces added to existing lot, with shoulder widening on Juniper Road for vehicle staging.</li><li>No change to existing visitor facilities.</li><li>Added pedestrian connection between Corral/Stables area and the monument Visitor Center, if needed for employee parking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visitor Parking: Up to 161 spaces in Frijoles Canyon, including 87 in Main Lot, 48 in Backcountry Lot, 26 in Picnic Area Lot. Twenty-four spaces in the Corral/Stables area.</li><li>Employee Parking: Up to 50 spaces at the Frey Trailhead Lot, with vanpool service to Frijoles Canyon. Limited administrative/emergency vehicle parking in Frijoles Canyon Main Lot.</li><li>Tour Bus Staging: 4 spaces at Frey Trailhead Lot</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not applicable</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not applicable</li></ul>
	<div>Alternative 2: Peak Season Internal Shuttle</div>		Mandatory shuttle service to Frijoles Canyon from a new parking lot adjacent to Route 4 (“Internal Shuttle”) during transit operating hours. Visitor parking available in Frijoles Canyon outside of transit operating hours and for visitors with special needs or backcountry permits. Level peak visitor demand using travel demand management strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A new parking lot added adjacent to Route 4 with spaces for 100-210 vehicles, facilities to accommodate shuttle bus loading/unloading for the Internal Shuttle, and connector road for shuttle bus access to monument entrance station</li><li>Shuttle bus loading/unloading area at a new parking lot adjacent to Route 4 would include: Comfort station, information kiosk, and bus drop-off/pick-up shelter with benches.</li><li>Pedestrian connection would be added in Frijoles Canyon between Corral/Stables area and the monument Visitor Center, if needed for employee parking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visitor Parking: 100-210 spaces provided in a new lot adjacent to Route 4, with shuttle service to Frijoles Canyon. Visitor parking in Frijoles Canyon outside of transit operating hours and for visitors with special needs or backcountry permits.</li><li>Employee Parking: Allowed to park in Frijoles Canyon, but encouraged to park in a new lot adjacent to Route 4 and ride shuttle to Frijoles Canyon.</li><li>Tour Bus Staging: 4 spaces at Frey Trailhead Lot.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Internal Shuttle runs between a new parking lot adjacent to Route 4 and Frijoles Canyon.</li><li>Internal Shuttle stops: A new parking lot adjacent to Route 4, Juniper Road Junction, Frijoles Canyon Overlook, and the monument Visitor Center.</li></ul>
	<div>Alternative 3: Peak Season Internal Shuttle + Weekend Community Shuttle</div>		Mandatory shuttle service to Frijoles Canyon from a new parking lot adjacent to the monument entrance area (“Internal Shuttle”) during transit operating hours. Visitor parking available in Frijoles Canyon outside of transit operating hours and for visitors with special needs or backcountry permits. Level peak visitor demand using travel demand management strategies. Optional shuttle service connecting the monument with other recreation and tourist destinations in the Los Alamos/ monument area (“Community Shuttle”).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A new parking lot added adjacent to the monument entrance station with spaces for 100-210 vehicles and facilities to accommodate shuttle bus loading/unloading for the Internal Shuttle.</li><li>A new parking lot added in the Ponderosa Area with spaces for 25 vehicles and facilities to accommodate shuttle bus loading/unloading for the Community Shuttle.</li><li>Shuttle bus loading/unloading area at new parking lots adjacent to monument entrance station and in the Ponderosa Area would include: Comfort station, information kiosk, and bus drop-off/pick-up shelter with benches.</li><li>Pedestrian connection would be added in Frijoles Canyon between Corral/Stables area and the monument Visitor Center, if needed for employee parking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visitor Parking: 100-210 spaces provided in a new lot adjacent to the monument entrance station, with shuttle service to Frijoles Canyon. Visitor parking in Frijoles Canyon outside of transit operating hours and for visitors with special needs or backcountry permits.</li><li>Employee Parking: Allowed to park in Frijoles Canyon, but encouraged to park in a new lot adjacent to the monument entrance area and ride shuttle to Frijoles Canyon.</li><li>Tour Bus Staging: 4 spaces at Frey Trailhead Lot.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Internal Shuttle runs between a new parking lot adjacent to the monument entrance station and Frijoles Canyon.</li><li>West Community Shuttle runs between Los Alamos and a new parking lot adjacent to the monument entrance station via the Ponderosa Area.</li><li>East Community Shuttle runs between Los Alamos and a new parking lot adjacent to the monument entrance station via Tsankawi and White Rock Visitor Center.</li></ul>
	<div>Alternative 4: Peak Season White Rock + Ponderosa Shuttles</div>		Mandatory shuttle service to Frijoles Canyon from White Rock Visitor Center or a new parking lot in the Ponderosa Area of the monument during transit operating hours. Visitor parking available in Frijoles Canyon outside of transit operating hours and for visitors with special needs or backcountry permits. Level peak visitor demand using travel demand management strategies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A new parking lot added in the Ponderosa Area of the monument with spaces for 25 vehicles and facilities to accommodate shuttle bus loading/unloading for the Community Shuttle.</li><li>Shuttle bus loading/unloading areas at a new parking lot in the Ponderosa Area would include: Comfort station, information kiosk, and bus drop-off/pick-up shelter with benches.</li><li>Pedestrian connection would be added in Frijoles Canyon between Corral/Stables Area and the monument Visitor Center, if needed for employee parking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Visitor Parking (White Rock Visitor Center): Up to 98 vehicle spaces and 16 large vehicle/RV spaces, with transit service to Frijoles Canyon. Up to 131 spaces available in an overflow lot across Route 4 from White Rock Visitor Center.</li><li>Visitor Parking (Ponderosa): 25-55 spaces in a new lot in the Ponderosa Area, with transit service to Frijoles Canyon.</li><li>Employee Parking: Allowed to park in Frijoles Canyon, but encouraged to park at White Rock Visitor Center or a new lot in the Ponderosa Area of the monument and ride shuttle to Frijoles Canyon.</li><li>Tour Bus Staging: 4 spaces at Frey Trailhead Lot.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>White Rock Shuttle service runs between White Rock Visitor Center and Frijoles Canyon.</li><li>Ponderosa Shuttle service runs between the Ponderosa Area and Frijoles Canyon.</li></ul>



## Transportation Demand Management & System Improvements

All of the preliminary action alternatives propose operational and system improvements using dynamic information to help visitors make informed trip planning and travel decisions to help improve their visit to the monument. These strategies would be used in conjunction with parking management and/or transit solutions to help manage peak visitation and minimize traffic congestion and parking shortages.

### Entrance Station Operations

In all of the preliminary action alternatives, a queue bypass lane would be provided for administrative and emergency vehicle access. In addition, entrance station staff would greet and direct tour and school buses.

### Visitor Information

All of the preliminary action alternatives include a variety of techniques to provide visitors with information about parking, transit, visitor use, and weather conditions in the monument. For example, Variable Message Signs (VMS) would be placed at strategic locations to direct visitors to less-congested destinations in and around the monument during peak periods. In two of the preliminary action alternatives (the non-transit alternative and the transit alternative with the White Rock Shuttle), NPS staff would be stationed at the White Rock Visitor Center.

### Wayfinding

Wayfinding at key junctions helps support transportation demand management strategies. Additional roadway signage would help direct visitors to parking and/or transit staging areas, as well as provide information on how to access transit where applicable. Map kiosks and pedestrian guides would help visitors navigate through the monument.

## Planning Timeline



= Opportunities for public input

**GET INVOLVED! This is your chance to be a part of the Bandelier legacy.**



**Online at PEPC**

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/band>



**By Mail**

Superintendent  
Bandelier National Monument  
15 Entrance Road  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87544

OR

### What's next?

After receiving public comments, NPS will revise the alternatives to incorporate your ideas and suggestions. The revised alternatives will be evaluated by NPS staff using a Choosing-By-Advantages (CBA)/Value Analysis (VA) workshop to systematically identify a preferred alternative.

**Please send any comments by Friday, July 12, 2013**