

# MINUTES

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Task Force

February 20, 2008  
11:30 AM – 1:30 PM  
Council Committee Room, 9th Floor

**Type of meeting:** Fourth Task Force Meeting

**Attendees:** Councilor Isaac Benton, Mike Skaggs, Claude Luisada, Claude Morelli, Moises Gonzalez, Jeffrey Peterson, Antonio Sandoval, Charles Ivy, Terry Keene (absent), Gary Bodman, Nevin Harwick, Alex Romero (absent), Bert Thomas, Bob Murphy, Brent Wilson, Chris Blewett, Clovis Acosta, Cynthia Reinhart (absent), Dale Lockett (absent), Jeannie Chavez, Joanne McEntire (absent), Joel Wooldridge, JW Madison, Martin Sandoval, Ralph Cipriani (absent), Frank Burcham

**Resource Persons:** Pat Montoya, Andrew de Garmo, Keith Perry, Tom Menicucci, Donna Baca, Kara Shair-Rosenfield, Tony Sylvester

**Observers:** Ted Shogry (CABQ Budget Office), Steven Baca (Indicators Progress Commission)

## AGENDA TOPICS

**Welcome**

**Councilor Benton**

**Discussion:** Councilor Benton called the meeting to order.

**Approval of Agenda and Minutes**

**Councilor Benton**

**Discussion:** Councilor Benton moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Councilor Benton moved to approve the minutes from the 2-5-08 meeting. Charles Ivy asked that a small correction be made to the minutes to reflect that he was not absent on 2-5-08. The motion to approve the minutes, as corrected, was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Discussion:** Leland Consulting Group, who is conducting the modern streetcar cost-benefit analysis for the City of Albuquerque, gave a presentation to the Task Force on the work that they’ve completed thus far. They reviewed the Scope of Work they were given for the Modern Streetcar Cost-Benefit Analysis. Tasks include: review ridership estimates and market strategy, identify development potential (land-use opportunities), assess how to pay for streetcar as proposed by City in 2006. MRCOG will look at regional context. [Leland’s PowerPoint presentation and “Cost and Ridership Analysis” attached.]

Following Leland’s presentation, Task Force members asked the following questions:

1. Clovis Acosta: When Portland built their streetcar, how developed were they compared to how developed Albuquerque is today?
  - a. Chris Z: Portland is bigger than Albuquerque, for starters. And Portland’s downtown has been healthy and strong for a long time. Downtown Portland’s revitalization started back in the 1970s. Downtown Albuquerque is weaker, by comparison, but parts of the Central corridor are very healthy. Albuquerque has strong anchors and better ridership potential than Portland did. The Rail Runner station in the middle of the proposed line is an important factor to consider.
2. JW Madison: Have you looked at different proposals for phasing construction of a streetcar? Have you considered that a streetcar line on Central Ave. could potentially be 30-40 miles long? Would we be better served by lightrail?
  - a. Carlos: Our analysis does not look beyond what HDR did (roughly the river to Carlisle). The main difference between lightrail and streetcar is how far apart the stations would be spaced. Lightrail serves commuters more than local population. We have not analyzed the efficiency of lightrail verses streetcar for a longer, extended line.
  - b. Chris Z: Keep in mind that modern streetcar is one tool in a toolbox. For more regional transportation, perhaps expansion of the Rapid Ride would make more sense.
3. Claude Morelli: Are you going to segment your analysis?
  - a. Chris Z.: We are focusing on the Central Avenue line, not the Sunport line.
4. Charles Ivy: Will the opportunity costs be specified in your analysis? This could help us understand potential tradeoffs we might need to consider.
  - a. Chris Z.: Yes. Our charge is to identify different issues and provide you with information. You, as the deliberating body, will need to make decisions based on the information we provide you.
5. Charles Ivy: So if streetcar is more about economic development than transportation, we have to be careful about taking funding from transportation to pay for this.
  - a. Carlos: I wouldn’t necessarily say that streetcar is not about transportation. Just because there is an economic development component to streetcar, you shouldn’t underestimate the transportation opportunity that streetcar presents.
6. Joel Wooldridge: Can you say whether or not streetcar would contribute to vehicle trip reduction at all?
  - a. Carlos: We haven’t been asked to calculate that as part of this study. Portland, for example, has quantified the increase in mode share that has resulted from their streetcar. Walk trips are one way to measure vehicle trip reduction. You can also use vehicle miles traveled and air quality scores to calculate this.
7. JW Madison: Is this the right time to start worrying about gentrification that could result from the

construction of a streetcar?

- a. Brian: It's up to policymakers to put in place requirements to prevent gentrification. In Portland, an affordable housing requirement of 25-35% was built into local policy.
  - b. Chris Z.: I would look to policies, plans, and redevelopment plans that are currently on the books and figure out how streetcar can help achieve already identified goals.
  - c. Councilor Benton: I think this is something we can comment on, but there would need to be parallel policy to address specific things, such as affordable housing requirements. It makes sense that when things get more attractive, they get more expensive. Gentrification is definitely a concern, but we should be clear about what we mean by "gentrification" and address particular issues.
8. Councilor Benton: I've heard a lot about debates in Los Angeles over rail vs. other transit modes – specifically that rail takes away from buses. Is that a perceived or real concern?
- a. Chris Z.: Ridership analyses show that rail attracts more riders than buses.
9. Councilor Benton: There is a fear of density in Albuquerque. Would you say that a key issue in determining whether or not a streetcar would be successful and achieve necessary ridership numbers would be getting enough residents and residences along the line?
- a. Chris Z.: Our analysis will look into what needs to be achieved in terms of numbers to support streetcar.
  - b. Carlos: What we've seen is that there is a propensity to use alternative modes of transportation in this corridor. There isn't a uniform way that people circulate along Central.
10. Claude Morelli: The proposed streetcar in Albuquerque would require transfers – either end point transfers, or UN park-and-ride. People are skeptical about the ability to maintain streetcar as attractive and appealing.
- a. Carlos: The transfer penalty is huge. We share the same concerns.
11. Nevin Harwick: If Rapid Ride and the #66 route have a combined ridership of 10,000, and the streetcar would only have 7,500, where is the benefit in having streetcar if the number of riders is reduced by 25%?
- a. Carlos: No, we're projecting a net increase in riders – from 10,000 now to 17,500 with streetcar.
12. Nevin Harwick: Has anyone studied the interactions between the major destinations that the streetcar line would hit?
- a. Carlos: It's difficult to assess that. A lot would depend on the frequency of service, for example.
  - b. Chris Z.: You'd need to look at who your users are. If you know your audience, you can target the service to meet their needs. One thing to do would be to track where people get on and off on ABQ Ride.
13. Claude Luisada: Does your assignment include looking at lightrail? From Tramway to Paseo del Volcan is a long distance. How do we serve people all over the city?
- a. Ike: They're strictly looking at streetcar. Lightrail is not part of their analysis.
  - b. Chris Z.: But MRCOG will be looking at the regional context.
14. Claude Morelli: The operating costs for the 8-mile loop seem very high to only achieve 15-minute headways. If the system were 1/3 of the length and headways were only 5 minutes, perhaps greater ridership could be generated.
- a. Chris Z.: Portland's headways are about 10 minutes. 15 minutes is a pretty good headway to start with.

- 15. Jeffrey Peterson: I represent the council district is the far NE Heights (District 4), which is far away from anything we're talking about. How do we sell something like this to people who live far away from the proposed streetcar line and are unlikely to use it?
  - a. Chris Blewett: That's part of the larger piece of what MRCOG is looking at. It would be very hard to sell the streetcar if that's the only thing we're working on and that's being proposed. Have to keep in mind that not every mode of transportation serves everyone. We have to provide options.
  - b. Councilor Benton: It's also important to keep in mind that having a healthy, thriving center city benefits the whole city, not just residents of the center city.
  - c. Brian: Streetcar is also a way to promote a "park once" environment. So even if someone doesn't use the streetcar every day, when they want to, it's convenient and useful to them.
- 16. Mike Skaggs: Funding mechanisms – I'd really like to see an analysis of the beneficiaries in your funding models. If you could break down the 8 miles into smaller components and determine where the highest success area is most likely to be, or what area will pay for itself, that would be helpful.
- 17. Joel Wooldridge: Do perceptions and attitudes change after streetcar goes in?
  - a. Chris Z.: You tend to see many requests for extensions come in after a line is constructed.

	<b>Presentation 2: City of Albuquerque Goals &amp; Objectives/Indicators Progress Commission</b>	<b>Ted Shogry, CABQ Budget Office</b>
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**Discussion:** Ted explained that the City adopts 5 Year Goals and Annual Objectives. The Indicators Progress Commission (IPC) is given a major role in this process. Steven Baca is the Chair of the IPC. The IPC establishes future vision and conditions. The development of strategies to achieve the vision and conditions is left up to the Council. The City takes the "desired conditions" and aligns program strategies to those conditions. Every four years, the IPC develops a Progress Report; they are currently in the process of producing the 2008 Progress Report.

Steven Baca: The Progress Report is an interesting opportunity to review data, see how Albuquerque compares to other cities, and become familiar with the community's expectations. We see opportunities to share insights with this Task Force and learn what your thoughts are on how to proceed with transportation-related matters in the Progress Report.

Ted Shogry: The IPC conducted citizen surveys. We may have a lot of survey data that could be of use to the Task Force. We can make that available to you. (Kara to work with Ted on this.)

	<b>Scheduling of Next Meeting; Adjourn</b>	
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**Discussion:** Councilor Benton said that the next meeting will focus on continuing the discussion that started at the last meeting and asked everyone to continue to think about basic principles and goals that the Task Force can adopt. He summarized the key principles that were previously articulated: 1) Latent group that doesn't use transit now but might. 2) Vehicle miles traveled reduction. 3) Increased mobility for all.

The next meeting of the Task Force will be on Tuesday, March 4, 2008, 3-5 PM, in the City Council Committee Room on the 9<sup>th</sup> Floor of City Hall. The meeting adjourned at 1:30 PM.