

Transit Advisory Board Agenda

August 13, 2020

Virtual Meeting (Online) Via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 955 3163 1586

Phone#: 1 669 900 6833 or 1 253 215 8782

**4:00 pm to 5:30 pm**

**Members Present**

Christopher Ramirez, Chair (ZOOM); Rachel Hertzman, Vice-Chair (ZOOM); Brendan Miller (ZOOM); Harris Balkin (ZOOM); Kathy Foster (ZOOM); William Moore (Phone); Orville Pratt (ZOOM); Patricia Salisbury (Phone)

**Staff Members Present**

Danny Holcomb, Director (ZOOM); Margaret Lucero, Executive Assistant (ZOOM); Ernest Apodaca, Administrative Assistant (ZOOM)

**Visitors Present**

Francisco Soto (ZOOM), Iman Andrade (Phone), Joyce Thornhill (ZOOM), Rex Colorado (Phone), Peter Rice (ZOOM), Theresa Sieler (Phone)

**Call to Order**

Christopher Ramirez, Chair, began the meeting at 4:11 pm.

**Approval of Agenda or Additions**

Before approval of the agenda Harris Balkin requested an addition to agenda to discuss the reversible lane in West downtown.

Christopher Ramirez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the August 13, 2020 agenda additions. Rachel Hertzman moved to approve the agenda with additions and Harris Balkin 2nd the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the Transit Advisory Board (TAB) members.

**Approval of Minutes**

Christopher Ramirez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the July 9, 2020 minutes. Harris Balkin made a motion to approve the minutes and Patricia Salisbury 2nd the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the TAB members.

**Public Comment** –*Reminder there is a 2 minute limit on Public Comment(s).*

Iman Andrade uses the bus to search for work opportunities, feels the bus is unsafe because mask mandates are not be enforced and people are not respecting the law and not wearing the masks. Security guards are really not enforcing it as well as bus drivers. It should not be the driver’s job to enforce the mask mandate, there should be more security guards on the buses to enforce and to minimize contact with the bus driver.

Francisco Soto agrees with more security for enforcing the mask mandate. Mr. Soto would also like to see more cleaning of the platform areas, especially in the higher traffic areas. The vending machines are not economical because most of the vending machines do not work and are not being repaired. Availability of ticket purchasing should be more accessible. People rely on the buses for work and shopping, so there should be more people that can ride and more buses running

Patricia Salisbury is asking for more places, other than Albertsons that sell the bus tickets.

**TAB Chairperson’s Report – Christopher Ramirez**

Mr. Ramirez is excited to be working with his peers on the Transit Advisory Board. He is pleased the board is able to have a public space for people to voice their questions and concerns to Transit Department. He also appreciates the Transit Staff for doing a good job in moving forward. Transit is doing their best to make sure buses are clean and passengers and drivers are able to safely ride the buses. He contacted the Mayor’s office and City Council President about two recent resolutions submitted calling for the elimination of bus fares and the use of public transportation vehicles for transporting police to protests. Mr. Ramirez is waiting for a comment back. He would like to encourage his fellow board members to help reach out to the Mayor’s Office and City Council.

**Director’s Report-Danny Holcomb, Transit Director**

Director Holcomb began his report with ridership numbers. July’s ridership was 354,814 passengers for fixed route, compared to July of last year this is a decrease of about 53 percent. The decrease is due to COVID. The nationwide average is seeing a decrease of 40-60 percent. COVID update: still on a modified schedule. When we go back to full service that is usually a 2 to 3 week process due to drivers bid. To date we’ve handed out 25,000 masks. We’ve purchased another 20,000 masks and will continue to hand out masks to the drivers and passengers.

We’ve been having technical issues with TVM (Ticket Vending Machine). If we are able and depending on the issue, we can access remotely to fix the problem. Passengers can still pay on front of bus and on our APP. We will need to do more advertising, so we can get the message out.

The buses are cleaned every night with fogging machines. Danny invited TAB to come see process of cleaning.

The drivers received a bag with hand sanitizer, masks, hand wipes, gloves, and if driver has concerns about bus or area being dirty, road supervisors have the same materials. Maintenance staff is doing a good job cleaning buses.

Harris Balkin: Art drivers are really enforcing masks mandate.

Patricia Salisbury: Bus stops and buses are really being kept clean. I feel safe and comfortable riding the bus.

Danny Holcomb: There are 1,200 stops around town and we have about 10 employees that clean those stops and do the best they can to keep the stops clean.

Iman Andrade: Drivers should not be enforcing the mask mandate. Drivers are risking their life at work. There should be more funding for security guards on the buses to enforce mask mandate.

 Rachel Hertzman: Has the legal aspect of public transit for bussing police during protests been followed up on or what is the status?

Danny Holcomb: No type of legal research has been done at this time.

Chris Ramirez: Will work with Jacqueline to put a request to the City Attorney to ask about doing research on that before the next TAB meeting.

**Unfinished Business**

Chris Ramirez asked Danny Holcomb about RFP (Request for Purchase) route study.

Danny Holcomb: We met a couple times with Principal Planner, Finance Manager and Deputy Director trying to see if we can find another contract with another entity, state or city that has done something similar. Now is not best time to do an audit. I would want that when transit is fully functional.

Harris Balkin: Suggested looking into City of Richmond, they are similar in size and have the same system as Albuquerque.

Brendan Miller: Suggested looking into Houston and Phoenix, Valley Metro Phoenix are also great examples.

Danny Holcomb: We can look into that.

**New Business**

Chris Ramirez: Essential workers need transit and TAB voted on a resolution back in May that fares should be eliminated to make it fair, easier, safe and healthy for drivers and passengers. Chris asked Iman to comment on essential workers and public transit.

Iman Andrade: Just make it safe as possible by wearing masks and drivers should be eliminating the fares and drivers should not be getting sick because they have to collect fares. Drivers should not be disciplined for not enforcing mask mandate. Fees should be eliminated altogether it would benefit people looking for jobs.

Chris Ramirez asked Danny Holcomb about rebranding ArtX and press conference.

Danny Holcomb: Rebranding of ArtX 790 upgrade and press conference with the Mayor will be held on August 21 at 11:30am at the NW Transit Center. The rebranding of route 790 will run from NW Transit center along Coors, down the freeway to Rio Grande and down to Central. It connects people going to CNM, UNM and Downtown. We are getting rid of rapid ride logo. The ArtX has the same ART buses and will tie into the Art program. The new ArtX buses look nice, fresh, clean and crisp and we’re excited about that.

Chris Ramirez: If any TAB members are interested in going to the press conference please connect with Danny.

Brendan Miller: He’s happy about upgrade to 790.

Harris Balkin: Where is the conference taking place?

 Patricia Salisbury: Asked if the press conference information can be emailed to members. It would be helpful if there was a stop on Rio Grande and I-40 in both directions on the 790.

Danny Holcomb: Just had a conversation with Principal Planner about that yesterday and an issue with that is going north, during rush hour, on Rio Grande from curbside lane to far left lane to get on I-40 west is a tough merge.

Patricia Salisbury: I understand there was a study being done on that intersection, but what about going southbound on Rio Grande. It will provide more transit opportunities in the North Valley.

Brendan Miller: There is a current route 37 stop in front of Old Town Albuquerque, before Bellamah, would that provide enough space to merge?

Danny Holcomb: We can look into it.

**NACTO membership:**

Chris Ramirez asked Danny Holcomb to talk about the NACTO membership.

Danny Holcomb: NACTO is National Association of City Transportation Officials. We are officially members of NACTO. There are really helpful tools in the organization for Transit, Planning, Municipal Development and Street Maintenance.

Chris Ramirez asked Danny Holcomb about participation in NACTO committees.

Danny Holcomb: We have different departments that are part of the committee looking at different concepts and ideas for improvements to Albuquerque, like streets, infrastructures and transportation. We’ve assigned employees and city staff to those committees that we think will be helpful for everyone.

**TAB & ABQ Ride projects:**

Chris Ramirez: He would like to get ideas from board members of activities they can plan or do as a group. We can think about what some COVID safe ways are and after we brainstorm if someone, in addition to myself, would be interested in connecting before the next meeting to brainstorm a plan of implementation and bring it back to our meeting in September.

Harris Balkin: I would like to honor the drivers of ABQ Ride and then the passengers.

Kathy Foster: I like the idea of a community clean up, stopping at each quadrant of the city. We can also ask some kids, maybe an art project to make signs for us to hold out and wave around.

Rachel Hertzman: I really support the idea of a community cleanup. We can have a collaboration with the board and community members and City of Albuquerque janitorial staff, who do the work and clean up on the buses. We can shadow them and do some of the work, voluntary.

Brendan Miller: I think the cleanup is a great idea. Also posting laminated bus schedules to bus stops or adding bus schedules to bus stops that have none.

Orville Pratt: I like Harris’ idea and talking to maintenance first to get a feel of what they’re doing and what they see, then to the public to see what they’re talking about. I’d like a background on maintenance before we start shadowing.

Patricia Salisbury: I like the idea of recognizing the bus drivers. Quite often you see on TV essential workers being recognized with their stories. I’m also ok with the cleanup, maybe a neighborhood community can help with the cleanup activities. I would be interested in helping out with the committee putting these activities together.

Chris Ramirez: Thank you Danny for suggesting this idea.

Danny Holcomb: These are all great ideas. I think recognizing drivers and mechanics is always important. I will support the board, in any way I can, with whatever the board comes up with.

Chris Ramirez: Is there anyone that would be interested in connecting between now and our next meeting to come up with a plan and ideas and bring it back to the meeting.

\*Patricia Salisbury, Brendan Miller, Kathy Foster and Harris Balkin are interested in helping.

Rachel Hertzman: I would like to help, but concerned about violating rules.

Chris Ramirez: I will verify and make sure we are following all Open Meetings Act.

**Reversal Lane in west Downtown: (added to Agenda)**

Harris Balkin: I understand the use of the bus lane is alternated depending on traffic in the morning, but the length of the lane in west downtown is about the same length of east downtown and there are ART signals in that stretch between Laguna and Lomas. I’d like to see it being used as an alternate with the west downtown station being a stop, if necessary. Because buses coming west come out of 10th street and turn west there. It’s just a thought about using that for what it was supposed to be used for, unless the initial plan was to be used for what it’s used for now.

Danny Holcomb: We had meeting two days ago about options with the west downtown area, it’s a project we are still working on.

Chris Ramirez: Kathy is going to help document any questions or issues that the board or public bring up to help remind Transit to follow up and they can be addressed at the next meeting. He also forgot to mention in his Chair report, there is an interest from other board members about Transit Equity and he has able to participate in a couple National Coalitions and recent Town Halls. If anyone is interested in the material, let him know. He’s been able to speak with Senator Udall and Congresswomen Haaland’s office about current proposed legislation that would include the additional transit funding.

**Second Round of Public**

Theresa Sieler: I work on Kirtland Air Force base and would like to take the Route 2. Will that be changing soon?

Danny Holcomb: We have several routes that serve the base. There is some construction going on at the Eubank gate and it is detouring one of our routes. Once we start running commuter routes, we’ll have more service to the base. This is just a thought we’re kicking around, because ridership is so low, we’re thinking about using Sunvan for some routes where we don’t have a lot of people.

Harris Balkin: Would like to commend Danny regarding the 157, the driver was not wearing a mask and he let Danny know and he quickly addressed it, also discuss electric 40 ft. buses coming. If we can talk about that at the next meeting.

Brendan Miller: Regarding Sunvans, would replacing the 40 ft. buses with Sunvan on low ridership commuters be more economical and free up resources to increase routes and frequency when COVID is no longer an issue, such as the 53 and 54.

Danny Holcomb: Yes, potentially. He also responded to Harris Balkin’s question regarding electric buses. We are working on bringing in an electric bus this year and working on bringing in 5 electric buses in FY21. So at the end of next year we will have 6 electric buses. We’re trying to figure out routes, longevity of batteries and ridership.

Harris Balkin: Thank you it does not need to go to the next meeting.

**Adjournment**

Chris Ramirez, chair asked for a motion to adjourn, Harris Balkin motioned to adjourn meeting. Brendan Miller 2nd the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:21 pm

**Next Meeting: Thursday, September 10, 2020; 4:00 PM via online (ZOOM)**

**Below are the chat messages exchanged during the ZOOM Meeting**

16:18:07 From Joyce Thornhill : no

16:19:31 From Joyce Thornhill : I am just very scared riding Sun Van right now during this Covid

16:20:47 From T4B Account : Thanks for that comment Joyce.

16:27:19 From Francisco Soto : I also work for the transit department IT Division

16:30:49 From Francisco Soto : Literally a $20 plexiglass saves the screen

16:31:19 From Francisco Soto : We are using most of are man hours upgrading to 4G

16:31:24 From Rachel Hertzman : technical clarification: please define the acronym

16:32:03 From T4B Account : Thanks Francisco

16:32:38 From Francisco Soto : 4G Is the new wireless technology

16:33:59 From Rachel Hertzman : Not 4G, what sounded like TVM/TBM (plexiglass screen)?

16:34:56 From Rachel Hertzman : Ticket Vending Machine, thank you, Brendan and Danny.

16:35:03 From Francisco Soto : The vending machines do not have protection built in to protect the screen.

16:45:33 From Francisco Soto : I agree with contacting phoenix arizona

16:50:05 From Francisco Soto : I would suggest a route to the new amazon warehouse and temper pedic warehouse that is growing.

16:51:47 From Francisco Soto : I have to go everyone have a good night

16:52:42 From T4B Account : Thanks Francisco

16:53:10 From Brendan Miller : Yes, please add a stop at Rio Grande and Bellamah. This should provide enough merge space.

16:53:36 From Brendan Miller : Bellamah near side in front of Hotel Albuquerque.

16:56:06 From T4B Account : National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)

17:00:38 From Rachel Hertzman : Mr. Ramirez, I appreciate your being willing, your acknowledgement, and recognition, to follow-up on the issue of allocation fo City transit funds to transport law enforcement to peaceful protest. This must be uncoupled from fearmongering use the issue possible white supremacists marching on Central Ave, which was the main point from the July meeting. Thank you again!

17:16:05 From Rachel Hertzman : Christopher, please send me the transit equity information, as well. Thanks! Also, at some point, can we clarify what I am keeping notes of... and will be most useful to all of us?

17:16:15 From T4B Account : Of course Rachel

17:16:47 From Rachel Hertzman : Thanks!

17:17:00 From Theresa Sieler : Eubank will open on August 17th

17:17:07 From Theresa Sieler : Eubank gate that is

17:18:02 From Theresa Sieler : I'm not close to 31

17:18:28 From Rachel Hertzman : what about the 157?

17:21:50 From Theresa Sieler : To take 157 I would go Rt 2 to Rt 5 or 8 to 157

17:22:11 From Theresa Sieler : Thank you