

Transit Advisory Board

Thursday, February 13, 2020

Alvarado Transit Center – 2nd Floor

100 1st Street SW

Albuquerque, NM 87102

4:00pm to 5:30pm

**Members Present**

Israel Chavez, Chair (car); Rachel Hertzman, (uber); Harris Balkin (car); Christopher Ramirez (walked); Steve Pilon (bus); Kathy Foster (bus), Orville Pratt (car)

**Member(s) Absent**

Patricia Salisbury, Brendan Miller, William Moore

**Staff Members Present**

Danny Holcomb, Director (walked); Chris Payton, Transit Finance Manager (walked); Zachariah Freeman, Marketing Manager (car); Ernest Apodaca, Administrative Assistant (car); Doreen De La Cruz, Temporary Executive Assistant (car)

**Visitors Present**

Kathryn Arndt, John Anderson, Aaron Cowan, Sherri Barth, Terra Rael, Nate Begay

**Call to Order**

Israel Chavez, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:10 pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to approve the February 13, 2020 agenda as presented, William Moore made a motion to accept the agenda and Steve Pilon 2nd the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the Transit Advisory Board (TAB) Members.

**Approval of Minutes**

Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to approve the January 09, 2020 minutes with corrections, Harris Balkin made a motion to accept the minutes and Christopher Ramirez 2nd the motion. It was unanimously approved by the Transit Advisory Board (TAB) Members.

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

Aaron Cowan-The ART bus system is finally up and running. However there seems to be numerous problems involving car accidents, the pedestrian's crossing the streets near ART stations and police enforcement is non-existence. He suggests installing physical barriers like fences at the stations to improve safety and have more crosswalks.

Sherri Barth-Crossing the street near the ART stations is unsafe because you have to walk to the nearest street light and bus shelters have a few benches but not enough for everyone.

Christopher Ramirez-He thanked the Transit Department for Rosa Parks day, he then talked about the Deconstructing Racism New Mexico Organization and agrees crossing streets is dangerous.

During public comment, Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to approve an amended agenda adding Vision Zero, Steve Pilon 2nd the motion and it was unanimously approved by the TAB Members.

**TAB Chairperson Report – Israel Chavez**

Mr. Chavez started his report by thanking the Transit Department for providing a proclamation for Transit Equity Day, he is proud to support this event, and it highlights the beauty of public transportation. He then talked about a letter he wrote to civic leaders that details the issues brought up during the TAB meetings and hopes to do this quarterly. Next, he discussed the farebox revenue data he received from transit, the amount is about 3.5 million annually and he is going to continue to push for free fare on all buses. He feels this a great idea and perhaps a tiered system is the best approach to accomplish this goal.

During the chairperson’s report, Chris Payton explained how federal grants work, he noted fare isn’t required to be charged and revenue doesn’t necessarily mean money but rather passenger boarding’s to some degree. There was then a discussion about how transit is the only department in the city to have a revenue goal of ten percent, an intent that has not been met but was only established in 2019 according to the transit director.

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

Director Holcomb started his report stating in January 2020 726,344 passengers used public transportation, an increase of four percent compared to January 2019, and the request to improve the city/bus maps has been completed on eleven bus routes. Next, he introduced Zachariah Freeman, Marketing Manager to the TAB members and talked about he just doesn’t want to promote ART but the whole transit system in general. Mr. Freeman talked about his work background and what his goals are for the department. After this, there was a discussion on the positive advertisement of the ART system and transportation in general; the media often reports only on the negative things.

During the directors' report, there was a brief discussion on how up to date the farebox information is and what data is incorporated into that collection. TAB members then talked about ART buses merging with normal traffic, the San Pedro ART station needing to be completed, getting more funding and how summer youth passes are a great thing for the community.

TAB Member question(s):

Harris Balkin-I've noticed the ART buses downtown are bottlenecking or bunching up, is there a plan to solve this issue? *Holcomb's response: we're working on an application in Google that sends information to a tablet in each ART bus that will notify the driver how long to wait at each ART station and time length depends on how close each bus is to each other. It could be five minutes or it could ten minutes, it depends.*

**Unfinished Business**

Israel Chavez, Chair started unfinished business by stating he forwarded the response from Andrew De Garmo, Transit's Principal Planner to the TAB members regarding their questions about bus routes #36 and #37. He also emailed Helen Maestas at City Hall regarding Jeffrey Zehnder and she said they will work on getting him removed.

During Unfished Business, Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to approve Rachel Hertzman as a record keeper to better assist the board with their discussions, Ms. Hertzman made a motion, it was 2nd by Steve Pilon and unanimously approved by the TAB Members.

**Public Land’s Transportation Presentation-Nate Begay**

Mr. Begay started his presentation by talking about when they started, their refuge started in 2012 and was the first group of the wildlife refuge to be created in the southwest side of Albuquerque. The refuge is 570 acres, a lot of different organizations and non-profit groups worked together to get them started. We are converting the farmland into wetlands and the refuge will be open to the public late summer 2020. The main issue the refuge is going to have is that there is no accessible public transportation to the refuge, the closest bus stop is 2.5 miles away near the Joy Junction homeless shelter and many of these communities are underserved areas in the city. So, what our organization would like to propose is bus route #51 which is the closest route to the refuge be extended to reach our location and to better serve the people at the homeless shelter. The extension would require an additional bus and our cost projection is around 665,000 dollars to make this happen. Service intervals would be around 45 minutes with two buses on that route or 55 minutes with one bus making the trip each time. Regardless of how many buses there are the cost would be the same and were looking into securing federal money to help this become a reality. If we are unable to make this happen, we are looking into alternative transportation services like transit’s Sun Van’s or other smaller vehicles to get public transportation down to the refuge.

During the public land’s transportation presentation, there was a discussion on how to better serve this part of the city with public transportation, it’s a low-income location and belongs to the county district. The TAB members then discussed how they support their ideas and would be happy to help them write or contact any government official that can make this happen. The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) would be a great place to start to achieve this goal.

TAB Member question(s):

Harris Balkin-Has there been any approach to Rio Metro to help you guys out in getting more transportation? *Begay’s response: we did actually, they provided us with a decommissioned bus to use but a driver CDL is required to operate the vehicle and we don’t have anyone that can do that yet.*

**Vision Zero Presentation-Terra Reed**

Ms. Reed started her presentation by introducing herself, she works for the city’s planning department and is the chairperson for the city’s vision zero task force. Next, she explained what vision zero is, basically it's an international movement to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries. The City of Albuquerque committed to becoming a vision zero city and started towards that goal last summer. The task force works with several organizations and government agencies which include APS, ABQ Ride, MRCOC. One of the first tasks we worked on was a 20 mile per hour safe zone in the downtown area and it’s interesting that people don't understand how dangerous it is to drive 10 miles above the speed limit. One of the computer programs we use is called “Complete Streets,” it is part of the USDOT and is a tool we are using to make vision zero a reality. We have some funding from the federal highways administration to do a road safety assessment, and we can pick wherever we want to start in the city and we decided the best place to start is in the international district of Albuquerque. We agree that lower-income areas do need more attention and this is a dangerous location for a lot of people.

During the vision zero presentation, Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to assign Harris Balkin, TAB member as the temporary Chairperson, it was 2nd by Christopher Ramirez and unanimously approved by the TAB Members. Mr. Chavez, TAB member then made a motion to adopt a resolution that states that the TAB members support making transit a fair free city, he encourages the transit department to work and find a way in conjunction with the city, state, and federal leaders to accomplish this goal. The motion was accepted and approved unanimously by the TAB members.

TAB Member question(s):

Christopher Ramirez-How do we start or safe engineer better crosswalks, especially for those pedestrians crossing Central Avenue? *Reed’s response: we are working with the department of municipal development to improve safety and the best way to get your voice heard is to contact the city's 311 department. We also want to create an interactive application map so folks can report traffic safety concerns.*

Christopher Ramirez- I would love to see the ridership by the route if that's possible and what the cost of each one is. *Holcomb’s response: This would be a conversation with our analysts and I can get back to you on this.*

**New Business**

Wasn’t mentioned.

**Announcements**

There were no announcements.

**Adjournment**

Harris Balkin, temporary Chair asked for a motion to adjourn, Israel Chavez 2nd the Motion and it was approved unanimously by the TAB members. Meeting adjourned at 5:26 pm.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 12, 2020; 4:00 PM at the ATC-2nd Floor**