

Transit Advisory Board

May 14, 2020

Virtual Meeting (Online) Via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 992 8790 7988

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

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

**Members Present**

Israel Chavez, Chair (ZOOM); Brendan Miller, Vice-Chair (ZOOM); Rachel Hertzman (ZOOM); Harris Balkin (ZOOM); Christopher Ramirez (ZOOM); Steve Pilon (ZOOM); Kathy Foster (ZOOM); William Moore (ZOOM); Orville Pratt (ZOOM)

**Member(s) Absent**

Patricia Salisbury

**Staff Members Present**

Danny Holcomb, Transit Director (ZOOM); Ernest Apodaca, Administrative Assistant (ZOOM); Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Director (ZOOM); Mark Eshelman, Senior Project Coordinator (ZOOM)

**Visitors Present**

Peter Rice (ZOOM), Joyce Thornhill (ZOOM), Daniel Benitez De Luna (ZOOM)

**Call to Order**

Israel Chavez, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to approve the May 14, 2020 agenda as presented, Harris Balkin made a motion to accept the agenda and Orville Pratt 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 February 13, 2020 minutes, Harris Balkin made a motion to accept the minutes and Christopher Ramirez 2nd the motion. It was approved by the TAB Members with Mr. Miller and Mr. Moore abstaining since there were not present at the February meeting.

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

Daniel Benitez De Luna works for “Together for Brothers,” he is the youth coordinator and would like to talk about transit equity and bus fares. He used an example of a young skateboarding kid who couldn't afford the cost of bus fare because he had to choose between food or transportation and believes that if bus fares were permanently free it wouldn't have been an issue. Mr. Benitez De Luna would love to see free bus fares become a reality once Covid-19 is behind us.

**TAB Chairperson’s Report – Israel Chavez**

Mr. Chavez, Chair read out loud a letter he wrote to city counselors discussing free bus fares, the difficulties of Covid-19, people staying safe, and thanked everyone for their service. He then briefly discussed the ART station at Central Avenue and San Pedro Drive.

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

Director Holcomb started his report by talking about ridership numbers, in March we were down 17 percent, and in April we were down 59 percent but we did switch to a Saturday schedule which is what caused the numbers to drop. The decline in ridership is mainly because people are staying home, staying safe, and Covid-19. He then discussed that the Transit Department hasn't had too many discussions regarding the ART station at San Pedro Drive because of the current pandemic, we did add in pin curbs to the ART road lanes and brought back bus route #37. Next, he talked about the upcoming schedule changes set for June 13th where weekday service will return but will operate on a modified timetable, ART will return as well but on a Saturday schedule.

TAB Member question(s):

Harris Balkin-The Governor of New Mexico mandated everyone to wear masks in public now, how will this affect transportation? *Holcomb’s response: I support facemasks but I don’t know to what level were able to enforce that mandate, I want the drivers to wear them and we may have to give masks to bus riders but do we have that many face coverings to give out is the question? I will get more direction from City Hall at their upcoming meeting.*

William Moore-What’s the city’s position on free fares? *Holcomb’s response: I will support whatever direction I’m given from City Hall, these are tough financial times, the free fare for 18 and under will probably continue.*

**Mark Eshelman, ABQ Ride Senior Project Coordinator Presentation**

Mr. Eshelman started his presentation by discussing his current horizontal and vertical projects. A good example of a vertical project is the Central Avenue and Unser Construction that was recently completed; think canopies or anything tall. He then talked about the new pin curbs that were installed onto the ART road lanes and the main issue were hoping to resolve is stopping drivers from making left-hand turns into those lanes which have been causing a lot of the car accidents with the ART buses. Next, he discussed how he’s working on adding a yellow line with the words “stay behind the yellow line” installed at all the ART stations in the city, he hopes to encourage bus riders to stay away from the bus as it pulls into the station and hopes to have this project completed soon. He then talked about establishing shelter shades for bus stops to better protect citizens waiting for the bus. We will also be adding more signage cues to ART stations and slightly adjust the stoplight signal lights for the ART buses. Director Holcomb added to Mr. Eshelman’s presentation by stating we’ve added 1.5 miles of pin curbs which cost about half a million dollars. After the presentation, there was a discussion about bus stops and shelters regarding shade infrastructure. Then there were conversations about eliminating near side and far side bus stops along with redundant bus stops. Finally, there was a discussion of how bus stops or shelters get replaced or repaired over time and Mr. Eshelman gave location examples that were recently fixed. Mr. Miller, Vice-chair did add to the conversation stating we have talked about these topics in the past.

TAB Member question(s):

Steve Pilon-Are there any additional plans for future pin curbs in the reversible ART road lanes? *Mr. Eshelman’s response: I know there are six to seven additional lanes that are being studied or researched right now which may include reversible lanes and priority will go to the lanes with the highest car accidents or any type of incident. The Edo ART station is a concern for us within the department.*

Christopher Ramirez-Why was the bus stop at San Mateo Boulevard and Kathyrn Avenue removed*? Ms. Dominguez’s response: We will follow up with Andrew to find out what happened and I’ll get back to you.*

**Transit Advisory Board (TAB) Resolution in Favor for Free Transit during COVID-19**

Christopher Ramirez, TAB member motioned for a resolution regarding a letter advocating for free bus fare during the current Covid-19 pandemic. Mr. Chavez, chair read the letter out loud and members then voted on the resolution. The motion was 2nd by Orville Pratt, TAB member, and approved 7-1 by the other TAB members with William Moore voting against the resolution.

**Adjournment**

Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to adjourn, Christopher Ramirez motioned to adjourn, Harris Balkin 2nd the Motion, and it was approved unanimously by the TAB members. Meeting adjourned at 5:12 pm.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, June 11, 2020; 4:00 PM via online (ZOOM)**

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

16:06:54 From Joyce Thornhill : hello Everyone

16:08:00 From Andrew de Garmo : hello

16:08:19 From Joyce Thornhill : yes this COVID 19 is very crazy right

16:12:47 From T4B Account : I am as well here for public comment

16:13:15 From T4B Account : Daniel benitez de luna

16:13:24 From Rachel Hertzman : Ms. Thornhill we cannot hear you

16:14:04 From Rachel Hertzman : If you cannot speak to the Mike do you have a comment to type in the chat?

16:16:07 From Joyce Thornhill : no I can’t. whenever all the Day programs reopens again it is going to be very scary for everyone to start riding

16:16:26 From Joyce Thornhill : in Albuquerque

16:16:30 From Steph - Transit to Andrew de Garmo(Privately) : Did you receive any public comments via email? If not, I would just make that statement

16:16:55 From Joyce Thornhill : thank you

16:17:13 From Andrew de Garmo to Steph - Transit (Privately) : I didnt

16:18:43 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : We have another Public Comment period at the end of the meeting for anyone who wants to speak or type in the Chat.

16:25:11 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : Mark, we can not hear you.

16:25:53 From Joyce Thornhill : when will u be having Sun Van Bus meeting

16:26:56 From Steve Pilon : vertical and horizontal projects? What do those terms mean?

16:27:50 From Joyce Thornhill : no thank you

16:40:13 From Kathy Foster : Hello! This is Kathy. I apologize for having to leave early. As always, I’d like to continue to show my support for fare-free transit during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. Thank you.

16:49:09 From Christopher Ramirez : Wanted to share the language for the resolution: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o0pcv8q9hHeWs02RvAylzPNcQmCugL99J\_G6TTtIYxs/edit?usp=sharing

17:06:36 From Christopher Ramirez : Thanks for keeping us on our toes Mr. Rice.

17:07:20 From Israel Chávez, Chair : Transit Advisory Board (TAB) Resolution in Favor for Free Transit During COVID-19 Whereas ABQ Ride and City of Albuquerque Transit Department provides services for essential workers and others who rely on the public bus services. Whereas, farebox collection on all routes (except ART, which is currently closed) happens at the front of the bus, directly next to the driver, and puts drivers and passengers at greater possible risk for transmission of COVID-19. Whereas, removing fare collection will meet some of the needs of transit equity and having people most impacted to have greater access to transit. Whereas, personal protective equipment is not sufficiently provided to all transit staff and passengers. Therefore be it resolved, the TAB endorses the Transit Department’s suggestion to eliminate transit fares during COVID-19 to make it healthier and safer for drivers and passengers as well as less of a burden for essential workers and others who rely on transit.

17:07:23 From Peter Rice : Anytime...

17:07:45 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : Email would be great. I was unable to access the Google Doc at the link.