



Transit Advisory Board Agenda
September 10, 2020
Virtual Meeting (Online) Via ZOOM
Meeting ID: 974 3077 4138
Phone#: 1 669 900 6833 or 1 253 215 8782
4:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Members Present

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

Staff Members Present

Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Director (ZOOM); Stan Low, Application Development Manager (ZOOM); Margaret Lucero, Executive Assistant (ZOOM)

Visitors Present

Nate B., (PHONE); Micaela Baca, (PHONE); Caitlyn Moppert, NMCAN (ZOOM); Rachel, Wilderness Society (ZOOM); Peter Rice, (ZOOM);

Land Acknowledgement

Chris Ramirez would like to start off the meeting with something new; a land acknowledge. Albuquerque is on indigenous land, it's on pueblo land and referred to as Tiwa people. We are all on Tiwa land and ask for permission and blessing for us to be here and serve the community.

Call to Order

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

Approval of Agenda or Additions

Christopher Ramirez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the September 10, 2020 agenda. William Harris moved to approve the agenda 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 August 13, 2020 minutes. William Moore made a motion to approve the minutes and Harris Balkin 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).*

No public comment

TAB Chairperson's Report – Christopher Ramirez

Christopher Ramirez: Helen Maestas from the Mayor's office and City Council, Pat Davis' office has responded and they are reviewing the two resolutions we submitted. I would like ask the TAB members to also reach out to the Mayor's office and City Councilor Pat Davis encouraging them to take on our resolutions as either policy or to introduce legislation at the city council level. *(Shared document on screen)* I would like to share a list that I've identified Transit Advisory Boards in New Mexico, City of Las Cruces, Santa Fe and Los Alamos County. Three other boards in close proximity are City of Colorado Springs, El Paso and Salt Lake. I would like to establish a relationship with other communities, so we can learn what they are doing in terms of transit equity and planning. I'll share the link to the document. I received information during a webinar on COVID and Transit equity. I will share link for the organization and the report on how to make transit safe and equitable during COVID. I want to thank NMCAN for their speaker to talk about why transit is important and why eliminating fares would impact their lives positively.

Micaela Baca: I'm a young mother of two, transportation is hard for me because I do not have a vehicle right now, so I'll rely on the bus system for doctor's appointments and anything else. It's difficult because sometimes I don't have a dollar or two for a bus pass. When we have to take the bus there are some safety concerns with people not wearing masks, but I have not had any problems at the stops. ART buses are being used for Rapid Rides now and that has been a lot easier.

Christopher Ramirez: If transit was free, how would that impact you and your kid's life right now?

Micaela Baca: It would be extremely helpful, because I am currently trying to get custody of my daughter and her dad will use the fact that I don't have my own vehicle to get her for visitations or appointments. I know I am not the only youth that struggles with having the funds.

Chris Ramirez: I will make a commitment to work with Caitlyn and NMCAN to get some more bus passes.

Caitlyn Moppert: Micaela is definitely not the only youth that relies on transportation to get to their day to day things and requirements like visitations and doctor appointments.

Chris Ramirez: State agencies, like CYFD and other community organizations, who are struggling with financial issues during COVID, bus passes are usually the first to get cut from the budget. Fare free transit can positively impact NMCAN and other organizations to be able to redistribute resources that they spend on buying bus passes to other amazing work. Caitlyn can you share what NMCAN does.

Caitlyn Moppert: We work with the youth that are in or transitioning out of foster care or juvenile justice system. We work on setting goals related to education, employment and building out their resources and network.

Steve Pilon: Asked Micaela how many times a day or week she uses the bus system, how far of a walk from your home to closest bus line? Do you feel like the current pattern of bus service fits your needs?

Micaela Baca: I use the bus every day and my bus stop it literally right next to my home. I try to keep all my appointments close to where I live.

Kathy Foster: I want to thank NMCAN and Micaela for coming to our meeting and sharing your story.

Rachel Hertzman: Thank Caitlyn and Micaela for their feedback and sharing their stories. Are they collecting fares sometimes on ART or all bus lines?

Micaela Baca: Only on ART buses, but regular buses are still the same need to scan your pass or fare.

Rachel Hertzman: Is there any way we can collaborate with the State, for people that are receiving amenities or benefits, if they could somehow be linked to receive free bus passes if our resolution does not pass. I think it is so critical for all different ages get free fare.

Brendan Miller: It is my understanding that ABQ Ride does not receive State funding. The State does not provide funding for municipal transit agencies. We would have to reach out to State Government for that. Is there a way to get a City bus line by the west side of Pan American between Candelaria and Comanche?

Patricia Salisbury: Thank NMCAN and Micaela for joining our meeting.

Deputy Director Dominguez: Thank Caitlyn and Micaela for coming we always appreciate feedback from our riders and community members.

Director's Report-Stephanie Dominguez, Transit Deputy Director

Deputy Director Dominguez began her report with ridership numbers. August ridership was 333,279 passengers for fixed route, compared to last fiscal year, this is a decrease of about 58 percent. Para transit SunVan service, July ridership 6,786 passengers, compared to last fiscal year, this is a decrease of about 67 percent.

COVID update: We continue to clean and sanitize the buses on a daily basis. Masks are required, unless you have a medical condition. We continue to make sure we have masks for passengers and drivers. We will begin installing driver barriers on all our buses.

Our legal department is currently reviewing the TAB's resolution regarding the use of transit vehicles for transporting police officers. We hope to have an update at the next TAB meeting.

Fares will be free for Election Day, November 3, 2020.

Steve Pilon: Had a question about RFP progress

Christopher Ramirez: RFP is on the agenda.

For time management purposes we moved on to New Business

New Business

Chris Ramirez asked Stan Low to do a general overview of the Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs)

Stan Low: All ART stations need to have power and connect with fiber optic cable. Fiber optic is used to connect to the variety of electronics on the ART station and used to move that fiber from one station to the next, so if any requirements are missing there will be problems with all of the electronics on the ART stations including the ticket vending machine. TVM's were purchased by a company BEATT. They have been very responsive for any kind of requests or special functionality and make machines accessible to all, including a touch screen, audio signals and tutorial built into it. They are limited at the moment because the technicians can't get into the country, they are stopped at the border and found some success to write a letter to provide at border crossing. They have shipped parts to El Paso, but technicians have not been allowed access. It is our intent to visit, on a weekly basis, each TVM and provide service. The screens are a very popular item to break. We have ten broken screens. The plan is to alter the touch screens with plexi glass in order to protect the screen from vandalism.

The UNM TVM is non-operational at the moment and the TVM at Louisiana is fully functional, but not connected to fiber, as a result there is no credit card functionality. The networking department has looked at the switches and determined fiber cable has been broken in two places. Both have to be repaired.

Storms from night before last triggered circuit breakers. We have GFI so if there is an electric surge those breakers will trip. We found several machines that were turned off are now turned on. Yucca station still does not have electricity and will not be available for credit card purchases.

Harris Balkin: Has been requesting information about why the ticket machines are not taking credit cards for single or day passes?

Stan Low: If anyone has any questions regarding technology involved in Transit, including TVMs, my phone number is 505-724-3114. There are fees associated with credit card transactions and if the cost of your purchase is less than cost of credit card transaction fee then the credit card vendor does not allow for the lowest costing transaction.

Harris Balkin: These credit card charges were never explained to the public. ART was based on being able to get on and off without the use. I'm disappointed that this information has not be passed down to the public. That information is not anywhere in the Marketing or the ART concept.

Stan Low: I can't speak for the Marketing Department, but I can only suggest that as one goes through purchasing process when the screen comes up for one of those bus passes, it does state credit card not available for this transaction.

Chris Ramirez: Reminded Harris to get recognized by the Chair before additional questions are asked. Also to make sure other folks have a chance to ask a question and keep things respectful as possible. I'd like to recognize Patricia Salisbury, she has talked about the screen at the Rio Grande station.

Patricia Salisbury: You can't seeing the screen because of the glare of the sun and the issue with credit card purchases, I understand it now. Is there any signage at these stops where the machines aren't working?

Stan Low: Rio Grande station has a broken hard drive. We're in the process of getting a replacement. I've made a note about the glare of the sun on the screen. Regarding signage for a TVM being non-operational, it has been my policy to unplug the screen for fear that any signage I would put out would be vandalized. Before the ART system came into place, there were other methods of getting a bus pass without using cash you can go to any consignment sellers and purchase passes there. None of those methods have gone away you can still ride the bus with cash or a bus pass. What has been unsuccessful is providing a credit card means for the lowest price fare at these TVM and that may have not been effectively communicated through Marketing and on the screens. I will go back to the vendor and see if we can make that more apparent.

Rachel Hertzman: Regarding vendor fees, does it have anything to do with the City's system or budget and is there a way we can do a collaborative initiative to see how other systems do it?

Stan Low: Our fares are so much lower than other jurisdictions, I don't know of any other jurisdictions that you can buy a bus pass for 35 cents with the standard credit card fee at 50 cents. I don't have a definitive answer, but I can ask other jurisdictions if they do it and how they can afford it.

Chris Ramirez: Moving on to RFP update in Unfinished Business

Unfinished Business

Deputy Director Dominguez: We are still continuing to review other municipalities and agencies that have done RFP route studies with our planning staff.

Chris Ramirez: Encourage us to look at other communities as we move forward with the RFP study and Director Holcomb mentioned at the last meeting that he wants to wait till system is fully online. Is there any update about resolutions on free fare or usage of Transit for police protests?

Deputy Director Dominguez: No additional information, other than what was stated earlier, our legal department is reviewing the resolution.

Chris Ramirez: I followed up with the folks that were interested in joining me in a committee around engagement of Transit Advisory Board. Either doing staff appreciation or maintenance along the transit corridor. Transit and I followed up with the City to clarify and we can meet as long as there is not a quorum that is not a violation of the Open Meetings Act.

Deputy Director Dominguez: Yes, we followed up with Transit's attorney. You are able to meet as long as it is less than a quorum and no decisions are made. Also, as a best practice, anytime you are meeting, we need to do a notice of potential quorum to notify the public about what the meeting is about.

Chris Ramirez: Recognized Steve Pilon's comment to Deputy Director Dominguez about RFP

Steve Pilon: What is the timeline when RFP will go out? Isreal had mentioned the money was lost in the shuffle and they had found it, so I understand the money is no longer an issue.

Deputy Director Dominguez: One point of clarification, the money was not lost. There was some miscommunication. This money was allocated before Director Holcomb came on board, so when he responded to Isreal's question I don't think he was aware money was allocated in a previous fiscal year specifically for this RFP. A tentative goal is to release this RFP next year. COVID has really impacted a lot of our projects, so we are reassessing those timelines.

Chris Ramirez: Asked Deputy Director Dominguez about the San Pedro ART Station.

Deputy Director Dominguez: We have worked on an estimate with our planning department. We anticipate that the project will cost about \$1.5 million dollars. I checked with fiscal manager there has not been a funding source identified with this project.

Chris Ramirez: The San Pedro station was a funded part of the ART process and for clarification, I'm following up with councilor Davis. The community was told at one time the San Pedro was a part of a second phase of the ART project. I will follow up with the person that made the comment about the San Pedro stop.

Rachel Hertzman: Was there ever any funding source?

Deputy Director Dominguez: When I briefly spoke with our fiscal manager he was under the impression there was not. I will look into additional documentation on the original SSGA Grant to verify.

Rachel Hertzman: Could this be part of a TIP for the metropolitan regional council of governments of planning projects, so if it is not funded now it gets applied for and then goes on their prioritization?

Chris Ramirez: Kathy Foster is making sure to document questions or concerns to help follow up.

Deputy Director Dominguez: I will have to look into what projects would qualify for a TIP before I give a formal response.

Moved back into New Business

New Business

Chris Ramirez: Asked Deputy Director Dominguez about the electric bus purchase

Deputy Director Dominguez: The city was awarded a Low-No Grant in the amount of \$2.78 million dollars, so that will allow us to purchase 5 electric buses. We hope to have them by next year. We put out a bid, which has been closed. We are currently reviewing the responses to that bid and we should have a formal announcement at the next TAB meeting on who was awarded the bid on the electric bus lease. For this grant we are working with is an agency Center for Transportation and the Environment (CTE). They are assisting with the routes and purchase of the 5 electric buses.

Brendan Miller: Are you thinking of using electric buses more on routes that stay in the valley and not go up and down hill. Do you have information with specifics about routes?

Deputy Director Dominguez: That is part of CTE's function to help identify those routes. I will look into if we can distribute the routes that we are looking at. ART is not one of them, because we will not have the ability for on route charging and that does limit the routes that we are able to use the electric buses on.

Harris Balkin: It is my understanding that the new buses are 40 feet, not 60 feet. Is that correct?

Deputy Director Dominguez: We have not made a final determination for the 5 purchased.

Harris Balkin: The new buses were supposed to be standard size, therefore the fact that they are going up and down may not have as much bearing based on their new size. I just wanted to clarify that this are not the same or identical to the ART buses in terms of the 60 foot articulated design.

Deputy Director Dominguez: They are not 60 foot buses.

Steve Pilon: Have you looked at the implications of the maintenance expenses?

Deputy Director Dominguez: We are looking into that. We meet with CTE on a regular basis and our Division Manager for maintenance is part of that group. He is looking into the costs and requirements that would be needed for electric buses.

Chris Ramirez: Before we move to our second round of public comments Harris Balkin had a question or comment to Stan Low.

Harris Balkin: I apologize if I reacted rather quickly previously. How much potential revenue are we losing as a result of something that was not publicized and any way you can rectify this would be appreciated.

Stan Low: I will reach out to other Transit agencies how they accommodate something similar.

Harris Balkin: Supermarkets and other entities do not have credit card minimums, but you have people that only want to take one ride and only carry cash. It has me concerned about how much potential revenue we've been losing.

Patricia Salisbury: If there are no public comments, I have a question for Stan Low. Why only ATC and Albertsons sell bus passes?

Stan Low: We can't require companies to see our bus passes. But I can certainly reach out to those in our organization who deal with the consignment sellers and ask if there is an approach they are taking in finding other consignment sellers. There is also a smart phone application where you can buy bus passes.

Brendan Miller: I would be happy to approach La Montanita Co-op to see if they would be interested in selling bus passes for the City.

Second Round of Public

No public comment

Adjournment

Chris Ramirez, chair asked for a motion to adjourn, Patricia Salisbury motioned to adjourn meeting. Harris Balkin 2nd the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:25 pm

Next Meeting: Thursday, October 8, 2020; 4:00 PM via online (ZOOM)

Below are the chat messages exchanged during the ZOOM Meeting

16:00:53 From Christopher Ramirez to Margaret Lucero (Privately) : Good afternoon
16:00:58 From Christopher Ramirez to Margaret Lucero (Privately) : Buenas tardes
16:01:21 From Christopher Ramirez to Margaret Lucero (Privately) : Just a big thank you for everything and also a reminder to please "save" the chat and include with the minutes. Thank you!
16:19:42 From Christopher Ramirez :
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1daA5M0rJhzXcL1R3TyNnSUVCTMedWVjOBuieeosDIKk/edit?usp=sharing>
16:20:20 From Christopher Ramirez : <https://www.thedreamcorps.org/our-programs/green-for-all/campaigns/safetransit/>
16:23:08 From Stephanie Dominguez : Hello All, Stan and I will need to leave the meeting at 5:00pm.
16:25:27 From Christopher Ramirez : Thanks Stephanie.
16:27:03 From Rachel Hertzman : I have a comment.
16:27:57 From Christopher Ramirez : We will move up Stan's presentation.
16:30:44 From Micaela Baca : totally agree with her!!!
16:34:40 From Caitlyn Moppert, NMCAN : I need to hop off but I appreciate the space you all created for us today!
16:35:59 From Christopher Ramirez : Can you please share the PDFs with the board for ridership?
16:48:15 From Christopher Ramirez : Sorry everyone I am going off camera because my internet is not stable.
16:49:26 From Steve Pilon : ground Fault Circuit Interrupter
16:51:57 From Christopher Ramirez : Stan Low:505-724-3114
16:55:12 From Rachel Hertzman : Patricia you're cutting out
17:03:15 From Steve Pilon : i have question re RFP review
17:20:05 From Steve Pilon : some stores have credit card minimums
17:23:12 From Stephanie Dominguez : I have to leave the meeting. Thank you everyone!