



Recommendation Submission

Foothills Community Policing Council

Date: October 11, 2021

Approving Councilors: Aundre Huynh, David Zeuch, Graham Bowkett, Idalia Lechuga-Tena, Josephine Martinez, Judy Young, Kathryn Bolkovac, Paul Robert Sedillo, Samuel Nevarez, Vance Kabella, Robert Carleton

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RECOMMENDATION: East Central and Tramway Bus Turn-around. This is primarily an Albuquerque Rapid Transit issue, but it impacts every city agency and all parts of the Four Hills and Singing Arrow Neighborhoods.

Background: The East end of the bus routes that serve Central Avenue terminate at Tramway Boulevard. At present, these busses turn right off Central onto Tramway, and then turn right almost immediately at Wenonah. They then proceed West on Wenonah to Dorado Place where they turn North to Central and then left on Central to return to the city center.

There are many issues relating to this arrangement of bus routes. One of the key issues is that Wenonah is not a major street. It is a congested area, with large apartment complexes on both sides of the street. It is narrow, with cars parked all along, and is poorly lit. It is not a commercial street and use for multiple bus lines is inappropriate.

Another issue is that the busses run at all hours and bring many unhoused and transient people to this area where there are no services intended for their use. Many of these individuals have drug and alcohol problems and are not able to care adequately for themselves. Our CPC has made numerous recommendations for upgrading security and safety for the Four Hills Shopping Center, for Wenonah, and for both Singing Arrow Park and the Singing Arrow neighborhood. We were assured by Alan Armijo of the Mayor's office that security on busses would be extended all the way to the end of the line, but that has not happened.

Though the Parks and Recreation Department and the Solid Waste Department have made strides in upgrading services as we recommended,

they are unable to have a lasting impact. Further, our Foothills Police Command staff is stretched thin and cannot compensate for all of the disruption that results from the excess of bus traffic and the infusion of unhoused individuals in the area.

APD has just completed an intensive program of additional policing and enforcement in the Tramway/Central area, with excellent temporary results. Businesses and their customers alike have noted the positive action and appreciate the actions taken. But these are temporary measures, and the police cannot solve these problems alone, and more than Parks and Recreation can.

The Foothills CPC has received assurances from City Administration that security would be provided on all busses all the way out to the East end of the lines, but we are not aware that any such security has been extended past the Nob Hill area.

The Foothills CPC has met directly with APD and we agree that substantial improvements can be made if there is a comprehensive approach. One aspect that has not been addressed involves bus routes.

Recommendation: We recommend both short-term, medium- and longer-term action by Albuquerque Rapid Transit, as follows:

Short-term: We recommend that the security we were promised for all busses East of Nob Hill be implemented. That has not happened. Security needs to be implemented without further delay.

Further, we recommend that no busses be allowed on Wenonah at all. However, if a study proves the need for some level of service on this residential street, we recommend that all but one bus line providing local stops be removed. Note: If it is deemed necessary to have one line operate on Wenonah, and some riders need access to other routes, they can use transfer passes to switch to the proper lines at bus stops indicated by the bus drivers. This may involve line 1, with a transfer necessary when the line crosses Central Avenue to proceed North. It may be that an enhanced version of Sun Vans in the form of a shuttle service could be implemented for the Singing Arrow neighborhood as a better alternative to regular busses.

Express busses and other local busses need to be re-routed. Instead of the busses turning right onto Tramway from Central, they should proceed East on Central to Four Hills Road. At that controlled intersection they should turn South on Four Hills Road to Wenonah,

turning right onto Wenonah, and then right again onto Tramway northbound. There is a bus stop on Tramway in front of Smiths. After that stop, the busses should proceed North to Central and turn left onto Central to continue their route.

Medium-term: Albuquerque Rapid Transit needs to evaluate the need for all the present lines that travel the full distance along Central Avenue. Passenger data should be available; it should not be difficult to conduct this study. Alternative turn-around points need to be identified and placed in use.

Our city is purchasing a large parcel of land at Central and Juan Tabo for use as a fire station. This land could serve double-duty and accommodate both AFR and a bus turn-around as noted just below.

Long-term: An appropriate bus staging area needs to be located along Central Avenue and used to relieve pressure on the Four Hills neighborhoods. It should be constructed in an attractive manner, like the turn-around at Tramway and Montgomery. That turn-around does not take a huge amount of space and has not been disruptive. It would seem that the property at Central and Juan Tabo would serve this purpose.

Correction of the problems at Central/Tramway will not involve any single recommendation or action by one city agency. This recommendation primarily requires action by ART, but we know that the issues are manifold and require buy-in by every agency, including AFR (Albuquerque Fire, Rescue). The new (ASD) Albuquerque Safety Department, the Bernalillo County Behavioral Health Agency have promised action, though we have not yet seen the results of their efforts. Parks and Recreation has acted and needs to keep up their efforts. There is need for continued action toward achievement of the goals listed above and the improved safety for the entire community.