

MINUTES

21st Century Transportation Task Force

June 24, 2008

3:00 – 5:00 PM

9th Floor Council Committee Room

Type of meeting:

Twelfth Task Force Meeting

Attendees:

Councilor Isaac Benton, Claude Luisada, Claude Morelli, Moises Gonzalez, Jeffrey Peterson, Antonio Sandoval (absent), Terry Keene (absent), Gary Bodman (absent), Nevin Harwick (absent), Alex Romero (absent), Bert Thomas, Bob Murphy, Brent Wilson (absent), Chris Blewett, Clovis Acosta, Dale Lockett (absent), Joanne McEntire (absent), Joel Wooldridge, JW Madison, Martin Sandoval (absent), Ralph Cipriani, Frank Burcham, Gus Grace (absent)

Resource Persons:

Michael Riordan, Mike Smith, Keith Perry, Tony Sylvester, Robert Nelson (UNM), Carlos Henandez (Leland), Donna Baca, Kara Shair-Rosenfield

Observers:

John Perry, Silvio Dell'Angela, Jeff Maher

AGENDA TOPICS

Welcome

Councilor Benton

Discussion: Councilor Benton called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes

Councilor Benton

Discussion: Councilor Benton moved to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. Councilor Benton moved to approve the minutes from the 6-11-08 meeting with a correction to note that Moises Gonzalez was not absent from the 6-11-08 meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Group Discussion: Draft Outline

Discussion: Councilor Benton began the discussion by reviewing updates that had been made to the outline. The major update was the incorporation of the Transit Group's materials into the outline format. Councilor Benton also worked on adding to the outline: filling in some of the introductory language, turning observations and policy recommendations into complete sentences, adding "Observation Statements" where none existed, and fleshing out the Modern Streetcar section of the outline. He asked for the group to review his proposed changes and comment on whether or not they agreed with them.

Councilor Benton pointed out that one of the other things he added was a new section called “Land Use/Planning/Compact Development” which he suggested might come after the Transit Section and before the Modern Streetcar Section. He said that, while it didn’t seem to naturally fit into any particular section, he thought it would be important to include some specific remarks about connections between land use and transportation since it was a topic that came up a number of times during discussions. Many Task Force members agreed that it would be a good idea to include some general statements about how land-use policies and transportation planning interface, and there was some discussion about exactly how and where in the report to include such statements. Joel Wooldridge suggested that, rather than have entire section of the report dedicated to this topic, perhaps it could be included in Part 3, the Conclusion. The group agreed with this recommendation, and [the newest Draft Outline reflects this change](#).

On the subject of the relationship between land-use and transportation planning, members made the following comments:

Claude Luisada: The issue of land use is a fundamental part of the whole equation. Sometimes you have to take a bit of a chance and put transportation out there before you’ll have a huge number of users. It can take a couple of years.

Ralph Cipriani: Land-use planning is done for a whole array of reasons. What we have been dealing with in terms of roadways and transit represents the supply side. Land use represents the demand side. This Task Force is charged with addressing the supply side, not the demand side. However, you need to closely examine and execute land-use policies to determine if you’re supporting and taking advantage of the supply side. I think we should flag this issue for the Mayor and Council.

JW Madison: We need to be focused on improving corridors that are already in place and using them more efficiently in terms of both transportation and land use.

Ralph Cipriani: There’s another big policy issue that I think we should include in our final report. Communities tend to let the free market determine the sequencing of growth, and then the public has to step in to provide the necessary infrastructure and transportation, irrespective of mode. The model that Albuquerque has followed is, ask the public to fund growth after it’s already occurred. Portland, however, focused on using the public’s money to channel and target future growth, not vice versa. It’s a fundamental difference in how public investments are made. I think our recommendation should be that private sector development must follow public investment, rather than public investments having to chase after private sector development.

Discussion: Mike Smith, the Task Force’s facilitator, led the group in a discussion about the Modern Streetcar section of the outline (the group used Councilor Benton’s 6.24.08 draft, which included additional language that the group commented on and edited during the discussion). He started by asking the group to identify areas in Section A – Conditions for Success – that they all agreed with.

1. **Transportation** is just one part – the streetcar should enhance other aspects of the local economy but must function very well as a transportation means in and of itself.
 - **Claude Morelli** and JW Madison both liked and agreed with A.1.
 - **Chris Blewett** said that he had a problem with the second part of the statement – “must function very well...”. If people expect the streetcar to do something it’s not designed to do, that’s a problem. We need to be clear about what a modern streetcar can be expected to do and what it should not be expected to do. We wouldn’t ask the local street system to carry interstate level traffic, and we can’t ask the streetcar to do something it’s not designed to do.
 - **Councilor Benton** suggested that maybe it just needed to be clarified that it must function well as a “local service” transportation means.
 - **Chris Blewett** said that he’d like to see the second half of the statement removed completely.
 - **Claude Morelli** agreed with Chris about needing to be clear about what a modern streetcar is intended to do, maybe by adding a definition of “modern streetcar.”
 - **Ralph Cipriani** did not agree with deleting the second half of the statement. He said there had to be some sort of performance metrics associated with it since it is a transportation investment. He suggested embellishing the narrative to be clear and address the issue Chris raised.
 - **Claude Morelli** suggested the second half be revised to say “must function well as one specialized means of local public transportation, in-and-of itself.” The group agreed with this, and [the newest Draft Outline reflects this change](#).
2. **Public policy and regulation**
 - a) A minimum population density of 15(?) DUA along the route to support ridership minimums is required.
 - b) This will require changes in zoning to increase density and mixed-use development along the route.
 - c) The political will must be available to use existing budgets and or new taxes and issue bonds to fund the system.
 - d) Tax Increment Development Districts (TIDDs) could be established by local government to help fund system infrastructure.
 - e) city-wide benefits beyond the route could include:
 - (i) relationship and strengthening of other modes such as improving ridership in the bus system
 - (ii) economic development and tourism
 - (iii) reduction of traffic impacts at major destinations – combine park and ride, high capacity of streetcar
 - **Ralph Cipriani** said he really liked (a), (b), and (c) of this statement, but not (d).
 - **Bob Murphy** said (a) should say “housing density” rather than “population density” and that he thought 15 DUA was incredibly high. He suggested that 10-12 DUA might be more realistic and acceptable.
 - **Ralph Cipriani** suggested that, instead of putting in a concrete number, there could be a more general statement, such as “acceptable industry-wide standards for residential

densities but tailored to Albuquerque's conditions."

- **Clovis Acosta** asked, if the minimum density is not met, is that a show stopper?
 - **Carlos Hernandez** from Leland Consulting Group informed the group that the industry-wide standard that they used in the cost-benefit analysis is actually 30 DUA, which is the density level that will make the ridership numbers work. The number is for a ¼ mile catchment area around each station. He said that the minimum DUA should be no lower than 15.
 - **Ralph Cipriani** reiterated that the Task Force needed to make a general policy recommendation and that it will be up to the Council to make specific changes to existing policy or create new policy.
 - **Claude Morelli** stated that he felt the discussion was going in the wrong direction. He said that there are examples of streetcar systems across the country that do not have 30 DUA around stations but are still successful because they go past tourist destinations. He thought that to look at this issue and say it would be a fatal flaw if you didn't achieve 30 DUA around stations would be the wrong approach.
 - **Facilitator Mike Smith** asked the group to table discussion of A.2. so that they could get through the other sections.
3. **Economy and markets** – potential spin-off development, perception of City as forward-thinking, neighborhood-serving local business, enhancement of tourism and convention economies, resulting in some potential for self-funding (TIDD).
- No member of the Task Force said that they strongly agreed with this section. Therefore, it was discussed later in the meeting.
4. **Demographics and zoning**
- a) land use changes must occur
 - b) planning for future infill and line extensions
 - c) population density projections to insure ridership
 - No member of the Task Force said that they strongly agreed with this section. Therefore, it was discussed later in the meeting.
5. **Leadership** – Mayor and Council must be willing to tax and bond. Business and social leaders' support is essential to this.
- **Ralph Cipriani** said he loved this section.
 - **JW Madison** agreed that being "willing to tax and bond" is critical to success.
 - **Bob Murphy** recommended adding the word "consistently" to the statement. "Mayor and Council must be willing to *consistently* tax and bond over a long period of time." The group agreed with this, and [the newest Draft Outline reflects this change](#).
6. **Events and Destinations** – Consider the effectiveness of the route in serving major events, employers and destinations. These include Atrisco, Biopark, Old Town, Downtown, Lovelace/Presbyterian, UNM, TVI, sports facilities, Nob Hill.
- **JW Madison** said that he liked this section.
 - **Claude Morelli** thought that statement needed to be strengthened by taking out the word "Consider" because the destinations identified are what make the route work, and without them, the route would be infeasible. He suggested rewriting the statement as: "The route must serve major events, employers and destinations."
 - **Claude Luisada** said the second sentence should begin "Examples include" rather than "These include".
 - **Clovis Acosta** added that it should say "Examples include, but are not limited to..."
 - **Bob Murphy** pointed out that "TVI" need to be changed to "CNM".
 - **Claude Morelli** also asked to add "hotels" to the list of examples.
 - The group agreed with all of the changes, and [the newest Draft Outline reflects them](#).
7. **Developer experience**

- a) Phasing (Leland to report in May)
- b) Construction timeline
 - No member of the Task Force said that they strongly agreed with this section. Therefore, it was discussed later in the meeting.

8. Public realm and design

- a) ease of use/accessibility
- b) appeal to public
- c) attractiveness of system
- d) safety
 - **Claude Morelli** said that he thought this section was a critical one to keep. He also said that some prefatory language would be very useful and suggested adding “cleanliness” after “attractiveness of system”.
 - **JW Madison** asked if “safety” could be further refined.
 - **Claude Luisada** suggested changing (d) to say “safety for both riders and the general public.”
 - The group agreed with these changes, and [the newest Draft Outline reflects them](#).

After completing their review and discussion of the parts of Section A that they agreed with, the group talked about the three sections that people had questions about and didn’t necessarily agree with:

3. Economy and markets – potential spin-off development, perception of City as forward-thinking, neighborhood-serving local business, enhancement of tourism and convention economies, resulting in some potential for self-funding (TIDD).

- **Ralph Cipriani** thought that this section was confusing because it seemed to mix apples and oranges. He suggested moving section 3 to an opening preface for the Modern Streetcar section.
- **Claude Morelli** did not agree with moving/removing section 3 completely. He argued that this was one of Leland’s Conditions for Success and that the streetcar project has to demonstrate net positive benefits.
- **Councilor Benton** suggested removing the language he added and leaving the original language in section 3. The additional language could be moved to the preface. Section 3 would now simply say: “3. Economy and Markets – potential spin-off funding (TIDD)”
- The group agreed, and [the newest Draft Outline reflects this change](#).

4. Demographics and zoning

- a) land use changes must occur
- b) planning for future infill and line extensions
- c) population density projections to insure ridership
 - **Ralph Cipriani** said that, from a policy perspective, section 4 seemed to be closely related to section 2(a) and 2(b). He felt that anything related to rezoning and land use should be dealt with in section 2(a) and (b).
 - **Claude Morelli** suggested that section 4 simply be labeled “Demographics” and that everything else should be removed from the section.
 - The group agreed, and [the newest Draft Outline reflects this change](#).

7. Developer experience

- a) Phasing (Leland to report in May)
- b) Construction timeline
 - **Carlos Hernandez** suggested that the group might want to hold off on discussing this section because Leland will be addressing this issue in their final report, which should be ready in time for the next Task Force meeting.
 - **Ralph Cipriani** said that the issue of phasing was an important one. He suggested adding

a new section 9 “Phasing of the System” and having a requirement that each segment that’s constructed must be self-sufficient, including with regard to financing. He warned that if the first segment is too tiny, people won’t use it and that the length of the first segment has to be big enough to create a critical mass of users and have enough origination and destination points.

- **Bert Thomas** asked for clarification in terms of the desired outcome of the discussion about the Conditions for Success. He wanted to know if the Task Force had to recommend a straight “yes” or “no” on the streetcar, and if that recommendation should be based on whether or not the Conditions for Success had been met.
- **Ralph Cipriani** questioned if the discussion was taking place in the right order. He asked if, perhaps, the group should first come up with its recommendation – “yes” or “no” on the streetcar – and depending on the recommendation, develop conditions if necessary.
- **Councilor Benton** disagreed with the approach Ralph suggested and said he thought they were using the right approach by first evaluating and determining what conditions must exist and then drawing a conclusion based on whether or not the conditions exist.
- **Bert Thomas** agreed with the approach the group was using. He thought it would make sense to say in the report “The Task Force considered the following criteria (i.e., the Conditions for Success), and based on our analysis of the criteria, we recommend yes/no.”
- **Councilor Benton** added that the recommendation didn’t just have to be “yes” or “no” but could have specific conditions attached either way.
- **Ralph Cipriani** pointed out that there was a heavy emphasis in the charge to the Task Force on the ¼ cent tax and that the discussion about the streetcar needed to, at some point, tie directly back to the ¼ cent tax. Especially if the Task Force decides to recommend moving forward with the streetcar, some questions to ask might be: Should the City tap into the tax to help pay for a streetcar? If so, at what level/percentage? If not, does the Task Force still support the streetcar and recommend financing in other ways?
- **Facilitator Mike Smith** asked the group to go back to the question of whether or not to add a new section 9 on Phasing and make a decision on that issue.
- **Ralph Cipriani** said that, as a matter of policy, there needs to be a clear statement about the first segment having to be of an adequate size and operated efficiently and effectively.
- The group didn’t have a problem adding a section 9 but agreed that Leland’s next presentation might shed more light on the issue.

Going back to a discussion of section 2, which had been tabled earlier in the meeting, the group continued to discuss how to revise the section. Bert Thomas made a general comment that all of Section A should be kept as clean as possible and be considered the “litmus test” for the streetcar recommendation. Councilor Benton suggested that section 2(e) be removed and placed in the preface to the Modern Streetcar section. Other than making that change, he thought section 2 should be left as-is and be considered as part of the “test” that Bert mentioned. The group agreed with moving section 2(e) to the introduction of the Modern Streetcar section, and [this change is reflected in the newest Draft Outline](#).

Some general discussion about the streetcar took place in the last few minutes of the meeting:

Moises Gonzalez asked where things were at with the State contribution to the streetcar project, the extension to the Sunport.

Councilor Benton said that the State’s contribution is contingent upon the City moving forward with the Central Avenue portion.

Claude Morelli asked if the route that has been proposed is necessarily the right route. He pointed out that previous projections were that it would take an hour to get from the Sunport to the Alvarado Transportation Center on the streetcar and that someone who rented a car would be almost all the way to Santa Fe in that same amount of time. With respect to the Central line, Claude said he was

frustrated that it doesn't serve the Convention Center, Old Town (because of how dangerous it is for pedestrians to cross Central Avenue near Old Town), Explora. He said it seemed to him like there could be opportunities to greatly improve the route and that part of the Task Force's process should be to consider the route.

Michael Riordan pointed out that the proposed streetcar line did, indeed, serve Old Town and that major median modifications were proposed and would have helped improve the crossing, making access to Old Town much better for pedestrians.

Ralph Cipriani commented that ABQ Ride is intended to be the backbone of the city's transportation system and that the streetcar is really only intended to serve a niche market.

Claude Morelli agreed that the streetcar can't be considered the "backbone" of the transportation system, especially when it has to run in mixed traffic and doesn't have dedicated right-of way.

Time ran out, and it was decided that general discussion at the next meeting would focus on the remainder of the Modern Streetcar section:

- B. Sustainability of the System: Is it sustainable? How would it be sustained?**
 - 1. Is it financially sustainable? First cost, and long term.
 - 2. Is potential ridership there? At start, and after land use changes.
- C. Alternatives to Streetcar**
 - 1. BRT (Buses in Dedicated ROW)
 - 2. Light rail (most likely on a different corridor, not Central Ave.)
 - 3. Expanded Rapid Ride (quasi-BRT)
 - 4. Enhanced Route 66 bus and other fixed bus routes
- D. Relationship to other modes**
 - 1. ABQ Ride
 - 2. Rail Runner
 - 3. Park-and-Ride
 - 4. Bike/trail system
 - 5. Neighborhood circulators
- E. Recommendation: Yes? No? Maybe? Conditions?**

Members of the Task Force were asked to continue editing the outline and reviewing/commenting on all of the proposed changes that have been made.

	Scheduling of Next Meeting; Adjourn	
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Discussion: The next meeting of the Transportation Task Force will be on Tuesday, July 8, 3 PM in the Council Committee Room on the 9th floor of City Hall. The meeting adjourned at 5:02 PM.
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