

MINUTES

21st Century Transportation Task Force

July 22, 2008
3:00 – 5:00 PM
9th Floor Council Committee Room

Type of meeting: Fourteenth Task Force Meeting

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

Resource Persons: Michael Riordan, Mike Smith, Tony Sylvester, Robert Nelson (UNM), Donna Baca, Kara Shair-Rosenfield

Observers: John Perry

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 7-8-08 meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

**Presentation: Regional Land Use and
Transportation Context**

**Chris Blewett,
MRCOG**

“Regional Land Use and Transportation Context”

- Early on in the Task Force, Chris gave a presentation on Rail Runner. He said that this presentation would kind of mirror that one. It focuses on the work they do at the MRCOG: transportation investments and connection to land use, process, product, etc.
- AMPA (Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area) – Bern. Co., Los Lunas, Rio Rancho – statistics being presented today deal with the whole area, not just Albuquerque.

- 2000-2006, growth varies by county. Sandoval county – big winner. Bern. Co. continues to grow, but less of an increase as an overall percentage. Region averaged 14.1% over period.
- Looking out to 2030 – population nears 1,000,000. Job growth increases, too.
- **Land Use Forecasts:** pretty evenly distributed allocation of growth. Over last 20 years, absence of public policy, investments and planning has encouraged growth everywhere, rather than in particular areas.
- **Population and Employment Separation:** more than 80% of new jobs will be located in Bern. Co. but only 50% of new residents. Expect higher per capita VMT because of this.
- **Transportation Issues and Challenges:**
 - Congested roadways
 - River crossings
 - Quality and convenience of transit services – buses having to sit on congested roadways
 - Bicycle facilities and connectivity
 - Pedestrian access
 - Crashes and safety
 - Air quality – ozone non-attainment – need to be aware of consequences of violating ozone attainment level
 - Limited transportation funding
- **Future Transportation Improvements – 2030 MTP funding**
 - Pubic Funds (Federal – 32%, State – 10%, Local – 50%)
 - Total Expenditures = \$6 billion+
- **2008-2030 User Costs**
 - \$120-160 billion
 - Includes car, car maintenance, gas, insurance, crashes
 - \$4.5-5 billion annually
- **2030 MTP Roadway Projects**
 - Majority for roadways – additional lane miles, reconstructing various facilities
 - 31% to serve growth areas
- “Transprawltaion” vs. “Transportainment”
- **Vehicle Hours of Travel** increases by almost 100% by 2030 (doubling of travel time expected) – 247 hours average in 2008 per capita – by 2030, close to 500 hours
- **Congestion and Accidents**
 - Average 33 hours of delay annually (2005) resulting in 21 gallons of wasted fuel per traveler.
 - Traffic accidents cost Albuquerque motorists \$1.2 billion in 2007 – or \$1,512 per person
- **Population by Age**
 - 2008-2030: expected increase of 152%
 - Aging population – how do we serve them?
- **Longer-distance trips affect the roadway system:**
 - Trips 10 miles and longer consume 50% of Daily VMT even though they represent only 20% of all trips.
 - Trips 3 miles or shorter make up 30% of all daily trips yet result in 7% of VMT.
 - Part of the key is to create better places where people don’t have to travel 8-15 miles to satisfy most of their trip purposes.
 - If average trip length could be reduced to 5 miles, we’d be able to dramatically reduce VMT.
 - Longer distance trips are coming from outside the central area of Albuquerque. Spatial relationship between impact on transportation system and where people work, live, and play.

- There's a price to be paid for having a very unbalanced distribution of growth.
- Relationship between density, mix of uses, and transportation systems – more transit and walk trips can occur with the right balance of uses.
- **What does the MTP 2030 hold for the region?**
 - No investment in rail, other than Rail Runner
 - No expansion of BRT
 - No BRT exclusive rights of way
 - No streetcar
 - Not a single thing in the plan that provides for reasonable travel times outside of a car
 - Only includes expansion of fixed-route bus service, which is what we currently have
- **New Breed of City** – Brookings Institute report, Saturday's Journal – creation of megalopolises – calls out Albuquerque
- **Leland Consulting Group Conclusions and Recommendations:**
 - Planning context supports streetcar
 - Redevelopment potential is high
 - Solid transportation investment – decent ridership from Day One
 - Build alignment sections B&C
 - Combine transportation and land-use funding sources
 - Evaluate future phases pending Phase 1 success
- **The Future Without Streetcar:**
 - What transportation mechanism will support the land use plans and goals for the corridor?
 - What should be offered in its place?
 - Continual investments in roadways and fixed route bus service only – neither of which provides potential economic development spin-off?
 - Can we afford not to do this?
 - Is there a good replacement that can even come close to achieving things identified in land use plans?

Joanne McEntire: The data you showed – has it been updated since the last MTP?

Chris Blewett: Most is straight out of MTP.

Joanne McEntire: So the VMT data, for example, is 3-4 years old already.

Moises Gonzalez: Are there transportation implications to keeping ozone levels down?

Chris Blewett: There are transportation implications if we don't keep levels down. Bernalillo County is at highest risk of non-attainment while the other areas within the AMPA get a free ride. You have to demonstrate how you're going to achieve attainment over time. Non-attainment puts us at risk of losing federal funding. And there are certain things you can't use federal funding on if you're in non-attainment – expansion of general purpose lanes, e.g.

Councilor Benton: Chris raised some important questions, such as what we're going to do in this corridor if we don't do streetcar. Are we satisfied with what we've got? Does what we have enforce our land use goals adequately, or at all? Some discussion of better use of managed lanes and queue jumpers/dedicated lanes for buses would also be worthwhile.

	General Discussion: Preliminary Streetcar Recommendation	
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Discussion:

- **Councilor Benton:** I want to talk briefly about our schedule. We're trying to complete the report within the next two meetings, by Sept.1. The last two meetings have been focused on the streetcar. I want to put out for discussion the following question: are we going to get where we need to be in two meetings? When we first set deadlines, it was, in part, because we were looking at having the ¼ tax on the ballot this fall. But we're probably not going to get there that quickly. Whether this goes on the ballot at a future date or Council makes a recommendation has yet to be determined. I'm not interested in dragging this out forever. My sense is that we could do some polling today on the question of the streetcar recommendation. Then, over the next two weeks, Kara and I will start drafting the first part of the report, based on the latest outline. Other things to be worked out – recommendation on streetcar, and allocation of ¼ cent. Any thoughts on the schedule?
- **JW Madison:** A couple of things keep sticking in my mind – as far as reaching the city in general. I haven't seen any great deal about selling rail other than about for development/real estate potential. We haven't gotten into all the reasons about why better bus service isn't enough. And we haven't talked about other possible corridors to put rail on other than Central for downtown/Nob Hill.
- **Councilor Benton:** What this group was charged with doing was looking at the streetcar as proposed. And that's what Leland's report has done. I think there are merits to having a discussion about expanding beyond Central, but our charge is to discuss Central as a pilot area. We can't talk about expansion until something is already in place.
- **Nevin Harwick:** Has anyone discussed this with the development community at all?
- **Joanne McEntire:** Nationally, there is enormous interest by the development community in corridors that are well supported by transportation options. Chris alluded to the aging of our population and demographics of the corridor. More demand will be occurring in next 20-30 years for attached housing and small lot detached housing. National study (Nelson) – the development community needs to be looking at unmet demand over the next 20 years for the rest of market. Albuquerque has a lot of catching up to do. The development community is very interested in investing in communities where infrastructure is in place and policy exists (e.g., lower impact fees) to support this type of development. Our consultant's report says putting the streetcar in place will create \$1 billion in development!
- **Claude Luisada:** I have a list of recommendations with regard to the streetcar:
 1. Any transit project of this size and cost should probably be handled under the jurisdiction of the RTD.
 2. The streetcar project, as currently proposed, has a route length which is too short to add much value to the overall transit system or to justify its project cost.
 3. Funding this project thru the ¼ cent tax would have long-range negative effects on both the transit system and the maintenance and extension of the street network, both of which this tax is supposed to be partially funding.
 4. Streetcar systems appear to be receiving minimal Federal funding.
 5. This project needs to undergo a rigorous analysis.
 6. However, a Light Rail Transit Line that extends from 98th Street on the west to Tramway on the east would function as the backbone of a greatly improved transit system.
 7. A rail line such as this need not necessarily require the use of heavier rail and vehicles. Placing stations further apart should automatically qualify it for Federal funding as a Light Rail Line.
 8. This Light Rail Line could use the median of I-40 as a right-of-way for substantial portions of the entire stretch.
 9. Branches of this line could serve the base, the airport, Mesa del Sol, and other high traffic

areas.

Conclusion: The project as presently outlined is not viable. But an expanded rail project might be the catalyst that would spur development while reducing auto traffic and improving the overall environment. Such a project should justify the higher overall cost.

- **Councilor Benton:** Claude, you've raised points similar to JW's about running rail in a different way in different parts of town. That point may warrant a statement in the report. At this point, I would like to take a poll based on the report we have in front of us.

Report had two options for streetcar: 1) funding for recommended alignment using approx. 28% of ¼ cent tax. 2) Same thing but using TIDDS and more private investment and only 12% of tax. Those things are clearly before us. I'd like to poll how everyone is feeling.

This will hopefully help us make progress on final part of report. We're talking about the B&C sections only.

1. 28% funding
2. 12% funding
3. 0% funding

- **Bob Murphy:** Good luck with getting the TIDD. The idea that the development community will come rushing to the corridor is not realistic. Development will not be overwhelming and will not happen without subsidies. Albuquerque does not have the income levels and jobs base to support the assumptions. Taxpayers will still have to provide additional subsidies, even if you can get TIDD to pay for the trolley itself.
- **JW Madison:** The ¼ cent tax already exists. Do the PIDs and TIDDs already exist or would they have to be created?
- **Councilor Benton:** They would have to be created and voted on.
- **Clovis Acosta:** What's the contribution of private entities? What happens if you don't make the estimate?
- **Joanne McEntire:** Going back to TIDDs. This could be the first TIDD in the city that meets the real intent of TIDDs. I don't think we can safely say that we're going to vote for the TIDD-1/4 cent scenario because we don't know what property owners will do. We'd need an "if/then" kind of clause for voters. I don't know if this has even happened in other 10-year taxes. Maybe the tax could say, "In the first 3 years of the tax, it will be spent on roads and transit. And during first 3 years, there would have to have to be votes on PID and TIDD. If the PID and TIDD were put in place, the City would then use a percentage of the ¼ cent tax to fund the remainder." I'm leaning in the direction of a combination recommendation.
- **Councilor Benton:** How to deal with the renewal of tax will be up to Council. Council could vote to extend, put the question before voters, or just let it sunset. The Task Force has unanimously said we don't want the tax to die – it's needed for various purposes. Another possibility is that we could make recommendations about the allocation for roadways and transit, and IF the streetcar were to be eventually funded through TIDDs, that could be considered part of the transit percentage. With all discussions we've had, there are questions about whether the streetcar is strictly transit, or is it more – planning, policy, etc.
- **Nevin Harwick:** Do those percentages include operating or just capital? It's not clear in the report.
- **Tony Sylvester:** Leland is going to clarify the issue about the percentage of the ¼ cent tax they've assumed for operating costs.
- **Frank Burcham:** Whatever the exact percentage for operating is, the concept is still the same, though: you either have a TIDD or you don't. The exact percentage is not important.

Mike Smith: Back to the vote (percentage of ¼ cent funding for construction and operation of streetcar) – you can vote for 2 out of the 3 options:

1. 28-32% funding
 - b. In favor: 3
2. **12-18% funding w/TIDDs and private funding**
 - a. **In favor: 10**
3. 0% funding
 - a. In favor: 3

Mike Smith: To sum up what I've heard you say – We like the idea of a streetcar, but only if a TIDD could be put in place. We're less committed to using tax for the streetcar; however, we would support using a smaller percentage of the ¼ cent tax for the construction of the streetcar under the condition that private funding and TIDD were major parts of funding. Still have to discuss the following: if a TIDD is not created, then the tax should be divvied up as follows...

- **Joanne McEntire:** I'd like to get to roadways and state a key concern I have. Speaking on behalf of small modes – walking and cycling to transit stops. The condition of pedestrian facilities citywide is probably not even a 5 on scale of 1-10. So many people cannot take the bus because they can't navigate sidewalks to get to bus stops. Sidewalks are narrow, have no buffers from traffic, are cracked, and lack ramps in a lot of places. I want to continue to argue for extending roadway funding to the entire ROW, curb-to-curb. Costs of roadway maintenance and rehab keep going up, and adding requirements for pedestrian facilities will result in the costs going up even more. We need better pedestrian standards across the board. The streetcar presents a phenomenal opportunity for economic development. Chris's argument regarding bringing 5,000-6,000 new people to corridor – that really has the potential to help take a nice little chunk out of VMT, which is one of the guiding principles we discussed in the first couple of months of the task force.
- **Nevin Harwick:** I thought the consultants said that the difference in commercial development was only about \$100 million. We've missed a step – we haven't discussed the recommendations in the Leland report themselves. My vote for 0% is based on the fact that I don't agree with Leland's recommendations.
- **Joanne McEntire:** Point of clarification: The part of Leland's presentation that dealt with benefits said \$1 billion in commercial development with the streetcar vs. \$200 million without. That's an \$800 million difference, not \$100 million.
- **Councilor Benton:** We weren't really asked to say whether we agree or disagree with report. Just whether we support the streetcar based on the report.
- **Nevin Harwick:** I'm actually in favor of more transit in the city. But not necessarily streetcar because I don't think it meets the needs of the city.
- **Councilor Benton:** There might be a majority report and 2 minority reports. I think it's a question of how long do we want to continue to meet to pick apart the report. We could make some statements within each report about whether we agree or disagree with the Leland report.
- **Clovis Acosta:** As the use of other transportation modes increase, wouldn't street maintenance costs decrease?
- **Nevin Harwick:** We will still have street maintenance costs. They won't reduce by much, if at all.
- **Councilor Benton:** In the long run, the more we use transit and managed lanes, we could reduce wear on roadways.
- **Claude Luisada:** My objection to the streetcar is something totally different. The catchment area is so small that it is not going to create a lot of new riders. And the streetcar would be disrupting existing bus service – Rapid Ride in particular. Making people transfer more is not a good thing.

You're not creating a lot more ridership.

- **Councilor Benton:** Claude, it would be great if you would help write a minority report – I need help from those of you who feel strongly about your point of view on the streetcar part of discussion.
- **Bob Murphy:** I was involved in putting in place the original ¼ cent tax. Voters voted on maintenance to streets. From the tax side, the reality is that the taxpayers are not going to support extension of the tax unless the majority of it goes into street maintenance, adding lanes, etc. I agree with Joanne about including sidewalks and think the public will as well. If we start talking about using 25% of the tax for streetcar, however, we would be jeopardizing the tax itself. Taxpayers will not support that. They may support public-private partnership with TIDDs, and it may be justified to attempt getting public support in that case. If a larger portion would go towards Rapid Ride, there would probably be support for that, too. We really can't get too far out there. 12-15% range, balanced with private partnership, it could pass. But beyond that, we can't jeopardize the other 80% or more. The City budget depends on the ¼ cent almost entirely for street maintenance. It is not worth it to jeopardize the overall tax.
- **Joanne McEntire:** Michael Riordan has made it abundantly clear that the tax is very successful. Roads have been brought up to much better condition. The tax for road maintenance is still needed, but maintenance may not have to be as great a percentage of the tax. I would like to see a graph of the tax, projected out 10 years: here is the portion that DMD needs plus additional 10% for ROW; here is the 12-18% in streetcar. The remainder would hopefully be at least 30% for transit.
- **Councilor Benton:** Those who voted in the majority, please put together your reasons why you support 12-18% of the tax for the B&C alignment. For those who voted for 0%, please put together bullet points for a minority report. For those who voted for 28-32%, please put together bullet points for another minority report.
- **Nevin Harwick:** I think it's important to write a minority report for 0%. I will put my thoughts together.
- **Clovis Acosta:** After hearing today's discussion, I would like to withdraw my support for 28-32%. It seems that a proposal of 28-32% could jeopardize both the streetcar and the rest of tax.
- **Antonio Sandoval:** I would like to discuss the report itself in more depth. I voted for the 12-18% scenario, but as a west side resident, I would really like to see the streetcar extend across river. It would be nice to discuss the recommendations in greater depth.
- **Joanne McEntire:** We should keep in mind that a western extension could use a different funding source, i.e., the Lodger's Tax.
- **Councilor Benton:** That's something I've been wondering about. The consultants looked at funding sources and segments equally, but the "A" segment could potentially use other sources.
- **Dale Lockett:** Joanne mentioned the Lodger's Tax. The way the state law is written today, that tax could probably not be used to fund a portion of the streetcar. Other places have a self-imposed "entertainment district" tax; we may want to consider something like that. The only challenge is that you have to set up a separate governing body. The linkage to the west side is very important and cannot be underestimated at this time.

- **Joanne McEntire:** We should also know in five years if we're going to build an arena in downtown.
- **Nevin Harwick:** Just to clear up the question about what percentage is needed for operating costs, based on the numbers in Leland's report, it looks like 7.8% for operations will be needed.
- **Councilor Benton:** At next meeting, we'll need to keep working on the streetcar section, but we should be pretty close to having final language on other sections.

	Scheduling of Next Meeting; Adjourn	
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Discussion: The next meeting of the Transportation Task Force will be on Tuesday, August 5, 3 PM in the Council Committee Room on the 9th floor of City Hall. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 PM.