



Transit Advisory Board
Thursday, December 12, 2019
Alvarado Transit Center – 2nd Floor
100 1st St. SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Geoffrey Zehnder

Staff Members Present

Danny Holcomb, Director (walked); Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Director (car); Yvette Garcia, Administrative Assistant (car); Ernest Apodaca, Administrative Assistant (car); Amanda Trujillo, Customer Service Supervisor (carpool); Andrew De Garmo, Principal Planner (bus).

Visitors Present

Sarah Kelly, Willy Simon, James Kolberg, Dave Pennella, Kathryn Arndt, Luis Colonga, Nate Begay, Walter Fazio, Bruce Cuba, Caleb Hassan

Call to Order

Israel Chavez, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

Approval of Agenda

Israel Chavez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the December 12, 2019 agenda as presented. William Moore made a motion to accept the agenda. Rachel Hertzman, 2nd the Motion. Motion approved unanimously by the Transit Advisory Board (TAB) Members.

Approval of Minutes

Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to approve the minutes but then realized there was no November meeting and remembers only needing October or September's meetings approved. This will be reviewed in next month's TAB Meeting.

Staff Member Presentation

Andrew De Garmo, Principal Planner started his presentation by asking everyone if they were familiar with how the D-Ride worked before the changes were made. He then went on to explain with a PowerPoint presentation how the Transit Department chose its current bus routes to service the downtown area after the D-Ride route was discontinued. In short, the decision was based on the new routes including #37 going North and West of Downtown as opposed to the old routes which ran East of Downtown because a majority of the riders were not going to be affected by this change. The department did have public input sessions but didn't get a lot of comments regarding these changes.

TAB Member questions:

Israel Chavez-The movement was #36, #37, and the #8 bus routes, this doubled the service on Fifth Street. So why move both routes? *De Garmo's response: the #36/37 runs less frequent than the #8 does, also routes #5, 10, and 11 run frequently on 2nd street. We did do a service equity analysis that gets approved by a council and the decision was based on the feedback we received from the public's input.*

Israel Chavez-Was there a consideration made about the people who walk now two blocks to get to that change? *De Garmo's response: so our world is about tradeoffs, we wanted to do more than one route but as it turns out the buses couldn't make the turn from Lomas Boulevard onto Fifth Street. This is why we decided on choosing Sixth Street. Also, people were getting off before the bus got to the ATC.*

Brendan Miller-Why not just reroute southbound service to Second Street so it would go the same way the D-Ride did so people could still make connections to bus route #790 on 4th Street and Lomas Boulevard. *De Garmo's response: one-way service is always less than optimal, something I never liked about the D-Ride was you could get there but you couldn't get back without going through the ATC. We addressed this weakness by adding a two-way service.*

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

Sarah Kelly-She would like to see the City of Albuquerque spend more money on buses, she feels switching one bus for another bus isn't going to make the system better, and letting people know about detours would be nice. She also made comments about the bus route #8 detour and the new A.R.T route.

Kathryn Arndt-Crossing the street on Central Avenue is now dangerous, there's one area west of the UNM A.R.T bus stop where the crosswalks are only at the stoplights. You have to walk down to Carlisle Boulevard or back up to Richmond Drive to cross the street safely.

During public comment, Christopher Ramirez mentioned Kansas City became the largest U.S. city to eliminate transit bus fares, the local government there recognized it was an equity issue and most of the low-income people were impacted by having to pay bus fare. He would like ABQ Ride to look at the Kansas City Model as something we could replicate here in Albuquerque. Israel Chavez, Brendan Miller, and Kathy Foster agree with this idea.

TAB Chairperson Report – Israel Chavez

Mr. Chavez started his report by talking about the new A.R.T bus route, he noticed some traffic light issues which seems connected to how the buses GPS communicates with the lights and how drivers have to work around this problem. The A.R.T bus windows are dark, there's almost no route information inside them, it's difficult to know where to get off and they tend to bunch up a lot of the time. He noticed the GPS maps of where the A.R.T buses are isn't working correctly and missing from the low-income areas. As for the A.R.T involved car accidents, it's not the fault of the bus driver because people are acting or driving irresponsibly.

Transit Town Hall Report

Bruce Cuba started with a story about the difficulties he has had riding the local city buses, how it relates to him attending his college classes and would like to have the buses run more frequently. Next, sixteen-year-old Caleb Hassan discussed his difficulties using the public transit system, how he used to walk and skateboard to reach his destination. Now he uses the bus to get to where he's going and likes his youth bus pass that helps him accomplish this goal. Lastly, Christopher Ramirez talked about the future of town halls and how people can use the bus system where they live to where they work. These meetings are where people can discuss barriers and motivators using the public bus. An exciting conversation that came up during the town hall meeting was how citizens want Wi-Fi on all the buses and bus stops along with charging stations so that their phones don't die. We want to increase engagement, especially by people who are the most dependent on public transportation. Patricia Salisbury added she enjoyed the town hall meeting and when route changes happen, invite people to come to look at the maps showing the changes that will be made.

Mid-Region Council of Governments Presentation

Dave Pennella, Administrator Planner started his presentation by talking about what is it they do as an organization, what the metropolitan transportation plan is about, how they forecast growth and incorporate all the data they receive into their long-range planning goals. Our metropolitan planning area is everything, all of Valencia County, Bernalillo County, and sections of Sandoval County including Cochiti Pueblo. According to and under the US census law, when there's 50,000 people or more you must have a metropolitan planning area or organization. We plan out 20 years and include strategies for projects to help those regions. We look at what kind of growth to anticipate and where to expect or predict the needs for transportation services. Our job is to estimate how much federal, local or state revenue will be available for transportation between now and the upcoming years. A majority of our money we receive comes from the federal level of the government and we cannot exceed the total of all the projected revenues from those projects.

James Kolberg, Socioeconomic Planner discussed in more detail how their organization receives their population and employment projections. He also added when looking at their projections, we look at the whole region and not the income of the people living in those regions. He also talked about the slowing birth rate in America and how they use that data to help calculate their information.

Willie Simon, Transportation Planner talked about building infrastructure and how it relates to their transportation plans. The data we collected showed a lot of people will cross rivers to reach their destination so our goal is to get at least twenty percent of the population to utilize public transportation at these river crossings and set aside part of the federal money we receive to reach this goal. He then explained what their transportation network is and what transportation accessibility is which involves walking buffers or bus transfers.

Christopher Ramirez added to the MRCOG presentation discussing the idea of transit equity for the people that need it the most instead of catering to the wealthiest people in Albuquerque when we know some people need the service more in lower-income areas. Brendan Miller also added he heard Coors Boulevard wasn't a premium transit corridor because of a few select people making that decision and will advocate making this change in the future.

Director's Report- Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Director

Ms. Dominguez started the Director's report by talking about the launch of the A.R.T bus route and apologized she didn't have any numbers or statistics for the first few days of operation. She then discussed we are working on updating bus stop locations, maps, and schedules to reflect the current changes that have happened. We are also looking at A.R.T platforms without infrastructure located within historic districts to see what designs or resources are needed to complete those structures which include the San Pedro Drive stop. She then discussed the RFP (Request for Proposal) which involves an entire redraw of services and how we're still in the preliminary phases of gathering data on how to compile it. The process is not completed at this point and she will do her best to make sure the TAB members are informed before the announcement of the RFP completion. Next, she discussed bus route #8, in short, the TAB members want the route to keep its weekend service on Twelfth Street and she explained the department has received the update on the number eight recommendation and that we are certainly considering it but haven't made any final determinations yet.

TAB Member Questions:

Israel Chavez-Geoffrey Zehnder came one time, yelled at us about A.R.T and then never came back. I would like his position to be removed. *Dominguez's response: there are certain requirements if you missed a certain amount of consecutive meetings and you can't be removed from the board until you reach that number. That's the issue here but we can certainly discuss this with Helen from City Hall to resolve this problem.*

William Moore-When somebody has a ticket, well there'll be somebody coming around on the bus to see whether they've paid for bus fare or not and is there any way to have the A.R.T buses announce the name of the next bus stop opposed to the street name? *Dominguez's response: so when you board the A.R.T bus, you're no longer required to show your ticket to the driver and our security staff will periodically get on the bus to verify you have a paid pass. As far as the A.R.T announcements, we can certainly look into establishing and creating announcements that everybody can understand.*

TAB Member comments: *Reminder there is a time limit on TAB Member Comment(s).*

Patricia Salisbury-I was at an A.R.T stop at Central Avenue and Girard Boulevard trying to make a connection, we sat at that stop going westbound for seven minutes on the bus. The traffic priority signal light seems to be not working correctly and the driver explained to the passengers were waiting for the next few A.R.T buses to pass through before we can move again.

Harris Balkin-When it comes to bus transfers, the only way for the driver to communicate the request is to go through central dispatch and this can cause you to miss the other bus. My concern is that you want to get the people that are not necessarily riding the bus to start riding the bus so you've got to give them better ways to communicate their requests to the other buses.

Christopher Ramirez- There are three particular incidences in West gate where the maps are so out of date, there's one stop that has 10 year old maps and bus information. It seems like one of the fundamental responsibilities of the department is to update the maps and make sure that the information is accurate and always up-to-date.

New Business

Wasn't mentioned

Unfinished Business

Wasn't mentioned

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Adjournment

Israel Chavez, Chair, asked for a motion to adjourn, Orville Pratt 2nd the Motion and it was approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 5:54 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday, January 09, 2020; 4:00 PM at the ATC-2nd Floor