

Transit Advisory Board

Thursday, February 14, 2019

Alvarado Transit Center – 2nd Floor

100 1st St. SW

Albuquerque, NM 87102

**Members Present**

Brendan Miller, Chair, (walked); Nancy JonesFrancis, (walked); Harris Balkin, (car); Patricia Salisbury, (bus); Steve Pilon, (bike/bus); Israel Chavez, (walked); Rachel Hertzman, (unknown); Orville Pratt, (bus); David Kesner (car)

**Members Absent**

Kimberly Andujo, Warren Smith and Geoff Zehnder

**Staff Members Present**

Bernie Toon, Transit Director, (car); Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Director, (car) Rita Chavez, Executive Assistant, (car)

**Visitors Present**

Christopher Ramirez, (train/walked); Michael Barndollar (train/walked) and Luis Colunga (walked).

**Call to Order**

Brendan Miller, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:07pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

Brendan Miller, Chair asked for a Motion to approve the February 14, 2019 agenda as presented. Harris Balkin 2nd the Motion. Motion approved unanimously, 9-0 by Transit Advisory Board (TAB) Members.

**Approval of Minutes**

Brendan Miller, Chair asked for a Motion to approve the January 10, 2019 minutes as presented. Nancy JonesFrancis made a motion that the minutes be reviewed and re-written for better comprehension and the minutes will be approved at the March meeting. Patricia Salisbury 2nd the Motion. Motion approved unanimously, 9-0 by TAB.

**Public Comment** - None

**Approval of TAB Letter to Civic Leaders**

Brendan Miller, gave a hand-out of a TAB memo they would like to go Mayor, Tim Keller and several other administrative staff, City Councilors and Bernalillo County Commissioners. (Before sending this letter out Brendan would like to get the information for the new members regarding their districts) Israel Chavez made a motion to accept the letter with changes to remove TAB members who were replaced and include the new TAB members and their City Councilors and County Commissioners. Harris Balkin 2nd the motion to approve letter with changes. Motion approved unanimously, 9-0 by TAB.

**Visitor Presentation’s** - None

**Director’s Report**

Bernie Toon, Transit Director welcomed the TAB members back to the Santa Fe/Training Room for this meeting and all future meetings. APD now has offices set up downstairs at the Alvarado Transit Center (ATC) for the Downtown Safety District.

**Introductions**

Bernie Toon introduced Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Director. Stephanie started employment in January with the Transit Department and she comes to us from the Village of Los Ranchos where she was the Village Clerk. The department will now have two Deputy Directors, Annette Paez will oversee the operations of the department. Stephanie will focus on areas outside of the operations area, i.e. HR, Marketing and three to four other areas including disaster preparedness. The Transit Department would also like to welcome Rita Chavez who also started in January and comes out of retirement to work with Transit. Rita was previously employed with The University of New Mexico. Rita will be the Executive Assistant for the Transit Director and will be providing support to the marketing department and others. She will be the support person for the TAB and P-TAB Boards.

**Ridership Report**

Ridership report was given by Bernie Toon and a hand-out of the report was provided.

Ridership for January was 716,000 which is an 8% decline compared to January 2018. The fiscal year for 2018 is down 2.77% on the fixed routes. The SunVan ridership is currently flat and has about a 1.2% growth over the last fiscal year.

SunVan has filled several of the scheduler positions that were open and we are almost at full capacity. There are 84 SunVan buses in operation and we currently do have a small driver shortage, which is about five (5) SunVan drivers. The department is able to cover the shortage by having supervisors drive and asking for volunteer overtime and also drafting fixed route drivers. Bernie encouraged TAB members to help spread the word that drivers are needed for both SunVan and fixed routes. If you know of someone please ask them to contact the H.R. Department in Transit. The department is down about 70 fixed route drivers. The department will be hiring 20 new drivers next week. In an effort to help Transit in recruiting, we will now begin to offer signing bonuses. The bonus will be split into three pay-outs. The driver will receive a bonus when they pass the drug test and is hired. The next bonus will be given at the end of their six (6) month probation, then they will be given their final bonus when they become a full-time driver after a year. We feel this is a good recruiting tool. We have not confirmed the dollar amounts on the bonuses but they should be large enough to encourage people to apply. The bus drives just received a pay raise of $3.00 per hour. This also helps with the gap in solid waste drivers pay in connection with bus drivers there is no longer a $4.00 gap in pay it is now around $1.50.

**Director’s Report/Discussion**

*Do people have to qualify in order to receive SunVan services?* Yes, the riders must go through a personal interview here at the ATC office, they will need to provide medical information from their doctors, and ATC goes through a checklist with them regarding their mobility, mental state and other requirements. This is a subjective process and our team is trained on these face-to-face assessments. *Does transit take all ADA disability categories, i.e. visual impaired and those with cognitive issues etc.* Yes, all are taken.The riders use the SunVan for a variety of rides, such as, dr. appointments, shopping, restaurants and trips of convenience.

**Director’s Report/Discussion (Cont.)**

There are questions that the TAB members were unable to find on-line and would like to know some statics regarding SunVan, for instance, *do we know how many people qualify for this service? How many people are*

*certified to use the services? How many trips per day per SunVan(s)? How many times does a qualified person use the services in a month?*

*How many fixed route bus driver positions are currently filled?* There are about 250 drivers currently and to be fully staffed we would need to be at about 230 to 325 drivers. *Currently how many buses are in operation on a given day? How many fixed routes are there for public transit?*Bernie Toon will provide the information at the next meeting.

*Will the new minimum wage law that just was just approved will it affect the transit department?* At this time we are unsure if it will affect transit. The Transit Department deals with so many collective bargaining units that we don’t know yet. Not all drivers are members of their Unions, about 20% of drivers are in a Union and 80% choose not to belong, but they are still represented by collective bargaining.

The TAB members have talked about the suggested re-routing of the 8th/Menaul and the 12th street bus on weekends. Andrew De Garmo, Principal Planner made a recommendation to adjust the frequency on route 11 to 40 minutes and to do interlining on Saturday and Sunday between the 11 and 8 buses here at the ATC. *Is that a sure plan on the schedule? Is that part of plan to change in May with the next bid and when the 790 switches to summer schedule?* Yes, the next bid is coming up in about 3 weeks and those will be intergraded. Then the Transit Department will go on a hiatus with regard to making changes because we are working on initiating a system wide study of all the routes. We will be putting together an RFP for a consultant. This process will take about a year. We will be looking at how many routes could potentially use 40 foot electric buses in lieu of the 60 ft. buses. *How much money is budgeted for the study?* An FTA planning grant will be used, which will give us about $100,000 to $200,000 for the study.

*Was a contingency on the ART buses regarding FTA funding?* The contingencies for the ART buses were as follows, in order to accept the buses they had to pass the Federal government durability testing and the buses still not have passed those tests that are being performed at the Altoona facility. There are 40-foot buses that have passed the tests and now we have several choices. We can use electric, clean diesel, hybrid diesel and CNG buses. We will have the consultant look into all of this in the planning process.

*Is there a possibility that street cars will be used?* No, street cars are out of the equation.

Chris Ramirez, Director Together for Brothers would like to be a part of the community input for this process. *Can TAB members contact their City Council members to ask for support for any initiatives transit is working on?* Yes, you can always talk to your City Council members if you see a need for assistance.

*The TAB members would like to receive a list of the Transit initiatives that are in the works*. Bernie will provide to the TAB members as soon as it is completed. Bernie welcomes the TAB members to provide suggestions on the study. The scope of work is currently being created.

A few Transit employees will be taking a trip to Houston to look at the new buses sometime in late March and TAB members can go on the trip but they would be responsible for all travel costs. We can provide information on this trip at the March meeting or once we confirm.

An update on the Park and Ride on Coors. We are currently looking at a lot that is affordable and in a good location. We have identified about 3 locations that are available. We hope to be making a decision soon. The Central and User Transit Center is (CUTC) construction is going great and the construction is ahead of schedule so we are planning to open sometime in the spring. This is going to be a GREAT facility.

**Director’s Report/Discussion (Cont.)**

The TAB members requested that a representative from the Marketing Department attend the meeting on Thursday, March 14th at 4:00pm. Rita will ask Keith Breitbach, Marketing Coordinator to attend the meeting. The TAB members would like hear information about the following topics: what are marketing initiatives, will transit brochures be updated into one brochure, how is transit marketing to visitors both local and out of town with the various Chambers, will apps be updated, is transit being marketed to hotels, will the transit department look into various languages with regard to brochures and print, do we market transit with the airport, do we market transit with large events in the city, what is the plan to market increased ridership, how do we market to lower income individuals who do not have access to a computer or cell phone. As an FYI Marketing’s main focus for the past 9-months or so has been working on ART and has also been trying to fix some things and we should and will do a better job in the future.

**Unfinished Business**

*Is there an update on suggestions of re-numbing of commuter express routes to 500 designations for consistency?* Bernie informed the TAB members that this will be looked into as part of the study.

A suggestion was made, can the study look at modeling after Phoenix and Houston as they have increased ridership as they changed their routes to be longer and put fewer bus on the road. Yes, Bernie can put this suggestion into the study request.

**New Business**

None

**Announcements and Correspondence**

*Can Public comments be moved to the front and back of the agenda?* Yes, we can make the correction.

 A suggestion was made to see if transit can look into APS students getting bus passes for free. Santa Fe public schools and Los Alamos public schools are now doing this for the students. This might help to increase ridership. It did make a rather large increase for both cities.

Since we do this for UNM and CNM how difficult would it be to offer the same passes for APS? Can we get APS to help defer the cost? UMM and CNM do pay transit a specific amount to help with the costs, but it does not cover the full cost of ridership.

Can we look into having the City buses and the University buses working together as one bus system? The riders can use the same pass and pay the same amount on all trips for both the City and University buses. This is currently being done in Colorado. This is also being done in Arizona were the riders can use the same pass for all cities i.e. Phoenix, Glendale, Scottsdale etc.

**Adjournment**

The TAB meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm by Brendan Miller, Chair.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 14, 2019; 4:00 PM at the ATC-2nd Floor**