

**Transit Advisory Board**

January 14, 2021

4:00 pm to 5:30 pm

Virtual Meeting (Online) Via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 949 3920 8194

Phone#: 1 669 900 6833 or 1 253 215 8782

**Members Present**

Christopher Ramirez, Chair (ZOOM); Kathy Foster, Vice Chair (ABSENT); Harris Balkin (ZOOM @ 5:01pm); Rachel Hertzman (ZOOM); Brendan Miller (ZOOM)); Steve Pilon (ZOOM); Orville Pratt (ZOOM), Patricia Salisbury (ZOOM); Jacqueline Smith, PTAB (ZOOM)

**Staff Members Present**

Danny Holcomb, Director (ZOOM); Margaret Lucero, Executive Assistant (ZOOM)

**Visitors Present**

Nate Begay, Valle de Oro, National Wildlife Refuge (ZOOM); Luis Colunga, Together for Brothers (ZOOM); Chris Davis, Motorcoach Operator, Transit (ZOOM); Adam Leuschel, Assistant City Attorney (ZOOM); Terra Reed, Department of Municipal Development Division, Vision Zero Coordinator (ZOOM); Peter Rice, Downtown Albuquerque News (ZOOM)

**Land Acknowledgement**

Chair Ramirez would like to start off the meeting with a land acknowledge. The City of Albuquerque is on indigenous land and referred to as Tiwa land. That is currently represented by Sandia and Isleta pueblos. We ask for permission and blessing for us to be here and serve the community.

**Call to Order**

Christopher Ramirez, Chair, began the meeting at 4:10 pm.

**Approval of Agenda or Additions**

Chair Ramirez asked for a motion to approve the January 14, 2021 agenda. Brendan Miller moved to approve the agenda and Orville Pratt 2nd the motion.

Steve Pilon: would like to move to amend the agenda to discuss reconsidering our previous resolution from the board expressing the TAB’s disapproval of using the public buses to move police to demonstrations to maintain public order.

Chris Ramirez: Mr. Pilon I can accept that as a friendly amendment to today’s agenda. Margaret please add under New Business to review the Resolutions Mr. Pilon suggested.

Chair Ramirez asked for a motion to approve the amended agenda. Brendan Miller moved to approve the amended agenda and Orville Pratt 2nd the motion.

The motion was voice approved by Rachel Hertzman, Brendan Miller, Steve Pilon, Orville Pratt, and Patricia Salisbury.

**Approval of Minutes**

Chair Ramirez asked for a motion to approve the December 10, 2020 minutes. Brendan Miller and Patricia Salisbury made a motion to approve the minutes and Steve Pilon 2nd the motion. The motion was voice approved by Rachel Hertzman, Brendan Miller, Steve Pilon, Orville Pratt and Patricia Salisbury.

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

No public comment

**TAB Chairperson’s Report – Christopher Ramirez, Chair**

Chris Ramirez: We wanted to recognize the entire Transit staff and we were able to do that in December with providing burritos for the Transit Department. Thank you to Stephanie Dominguez, Margaret Lucero, Mario Portillo, Sandra Saiz, Zach Freeman, Doreen De La Cruz, Jackie Smith, and Baruch Campos to help distribute the burritos. Serena Hajovsky help pay for the burritos. Thank you Patricia Salisbury for your donation. Thank you Danny and ABQ Ride to contribute funds for that to happen. Thanks to Zach for the social media about it.

Danny Holcomb: Everyone really enjoyed and appreciated the burritos. It’s nice to give back to our staff. Thank you Mr. Ramirez for all you did to get that out for our staff.

Chris Ramirez: We will move on to Budget and City Councilors. I know some of you are interesting, outside your roll of TAB, in being an advocate for public transportation. We will be talking about opportunities and skill building in and outside of the meetings. Danny is there already a budget process starting for the next fiscal year?

Danny Holcomb: Yes, we will be presenting our budget to the city administration in the next couple weeks.

Chris Ramirez: There will be opportunities to be advocates for the next fiscal year and make sure we advocate for any decrease to budget that was covered by CARES Act that we make sure we make up those budget gaps and look at increases when and where possible for public transportation. Thank you to Ms. Salisbury for joining us last week at Together for Brothers for Transit Equity Day planning and I will be including some suggesting included in the Resolutions I will be presenting today.

**Director’s Report-Danny Holcomb**

Danny Holcomb began his report with ridership numbers. December’s ridership was 276,428 passengers for fixed route, compared to December of last year this is a decrease of 62.59 percent. COVID is still affecting our ridership. These numbers are standard across the industry and every Transit agency we’ve surveyed is looking at a 50 to 60 percent decrease in ridership. (*Margaret Lucero emailed TAB members the ridership numbers prior to the meeting).* We have a new electric bus. We have a tentative press conference, for our roll out plan, scheduled for January 29. I will let TAB know exactly when and where. The attempt of this first bus, we want to see where they will be most effective. We’re hoping to get five new electric buses later this year.

Chris Ramirez: Drivers and other staff members might be in this next iteration of vaccine.

Danny Holcomb: Yes, we are supposed to be in Group 1B with the vaccination process and have identified staff who have direct contact with the public. We have a good plan on moving forward once we get the ok to start getting our staff vaccinated.

Steve Pilon: I’m working on the City response for COVID for the Homeless and we have an upcoming meeting about when and who will be getting the immunization. I will make sure to mention the bus drivers.

Danny Holcomb: Thank you, we appreciate anything you can do.

Chris Ramirez: Do you have any updated fixed route changes?

Danny Holcomb: I don’t see any projected changes to the fixed routes. We are doing a huge hiring push on drivers so once we are given the green light we can go full service.

Chris Davis: We are going through a paradigm change and it’s really exciting because the drivers are learning a different way of how to approach our customers. Thank you for the burritos it’s nice to feel appreciated. Going back to full schedule is exactly the logistics were are getting ready for. We have a good team right now and once that team is fully up and running you are going to see how great it is.

Chris Ramirez: We hope there is a Transit employee, at every TAB meeting, to share their stories. We think that the employees are an important stakeholder.

Orville Pratt: I think they’re doing a good job keeping the bus stops clean around town.

Chris Ramirez: I feel very appreciative that we still have safe and healthy options for public transportation. Mr. Balkin was asking about the credit card machine at the ART station at the east Downtown location.

Danny Holcomb: I can follow up with Mr. Balkin. One of the issues about the TVM (Ticket Vending machines) they are from south of the border and getting parts and technicians to work on them is a little difficult. We are trying to get someone trained locally to work on the machines.

**Unfinished Business**

Chris Ramirez: Any updates on the RFP?

Danny Holcomb: We have an official unofficial draft that we have been working on the last few weeks. Ideally I’d like to get it out by the end of month, but we’re still ironing out some kinks.

Chris Ramirez: If you are not familiar with the RFP, there was funds put together for a request for proposal for a route planning. We would really like to make sure to give input on the RFP process.

Chris Ramirez: We went through a process, at the beginning of the year, suggesting ways the Board can be more involved in the Transit Department and the community. Recognition of Transit employees, which we did this past year. Also public input into Transit. We would like to include Senior Affairs and their input in public transportation. There was a recent world health organization Age-Friendly Cities from AARP. When the weather is warmer we can support the staff that are keeping the bus stops safe and clean.

Chris Ramirez: Mr. Holcomb, do you have an update on the San Pedro ART station?

Danny Holcomb: We are working with the State Historical Preservation Office (SHIPO) to get approval to put canopies on the three remaining ART stations that don’t have them. As part of that project, we are looking at what we need to do to get the San Pedro station running. It may not have all the amenities that a current ART station has, but we want to get it operational.

Chris Ramirez: Can you also speak about the funding issues?

Danny Holcomb: We are trying to find local funding to get that going with Councilor Davis. We think we found some money to pay for that and not have to go through some of the Federal requirements the FTA requires, so it expedites the process.

Chris Ramirez: Do you know the potential plan for the San Pedro station stage of having every amenity.

Danny Holcomb: First plan is to get it up and operational and put a canopy. It’s not going to have a TVM or monitors. We may have to put a hawk signal for folks to cross Central.

Patricia Salisbury: Where on San Pedro will the stop be located?

Danny Holcomb: On Central half a block west of San Pedro.

Chris Ramirez: Transit Equity Day is fare free. Thank you Ms. Reed and Ms. Salisbury for joining the planning meeting and exciting ideas were generated. February 4 is Rosa Parks Birthday and has been recognized as a national action for the past four years in public transportation and Transit Equity. There’s been a request to make sure there’s very clear civil rights information included on the buses. Michelle Melendez with the office of Equity of Inclusion is working with Transit and other agencies to put together civil rights language in the buses in at least five different languages.

Patricia Salisbury: I was pleased to meet with people representing different (*audio distorted*) a lot of great ideas were exchanged.

Terra Reed: It was a great group of people and conversation.

**New Business**

Chris Davis: The paradigm that we are changing here for drivers is moral control of language. We want them to start being aware of their locations, not just their routes, because a lot of questions come up, like where is the closest Walmart or park, etc. We do want the public to feel comfortable reporting inappropriate behavior from the driver or other public members, because if we see a trend we can keep track of it. We get a lot of people using the bus essentially, but not utilizing it for parks or other non-essential places.

Chris Ramirez: What are some experience and challenges you are seeing during the pandemic?

Chris Davis: We ask the driver to wipe down their area and do a self-wipe down of their bus. We are provided with a goody bag that has gloves, wipes, etc. It’s important they take ownership of their bus. We are trying to avoid people coming in three to five feet distance of you. I always tell the customers I prefer you sit down because your safety is important to me. The customers are actually wearing masks and gloves and if a customer needs a mask I can give them one and that minimizes the tension.

Chris Davis: I’d like to thank Ms. Salisbury, she’s one of the main people that really helped out with the 37. What a vison!!

Chris Ramirez: We want all drivers to have fair and equitable pay. We can look at a future Resolution around pay. We’d also love to see the City give hazard pay and the drivers are a great example. They are still doing the really important work. Please convey from the board a deep appreciate to drivers and know we want to advocate and be good partners for the drivers and Transit staff.

Chris Davis: In my twelve years I’ve been here we have such a good team. Mr. Holcomb has really put people in key places to create a great team. I think in the next three years you’re going to see some really outstanding stuff. We have awesome buses. I will share everything you said and thank you so much.

Chris Ramirez: I feel the energy from Mr. Davis and I appreciate your leadership Mr. Holcomb. I’d like to ask the board to think of other stakeholders and I look forward to hearing from them.

Chris Ramirez: The TAB passed a Resolution in support of Transit Equity Day. I put a link in the chat for the Transit Equity Day Resolution and will ask for comments or changes. *Shared screen and read the “Albuquerque Transit Equity Day” verbatim. Mr. Ramirez asked Luis Colunga to share why the TAB should support the Resolution.*

Luis Colunga: I’m here to share why I think it is important for free fare for youth twenty four and under, outreach for COVID safe activities that young people can have access to in multiple languages. I am a twenty three year old man of color. I would be riding the bus a lot more and I don’t always have money on me. It’s been challenging to me to get transportation to go to the grocery store. If the bus were free to me I would be utilizing the bus more for recreational activities. Those activities are really crucial for young people. We just don’t have the means to get there. This Resolution will help young people and everyone in Albuquerque.

Chris Ramirez: Are there any edits or questions about the Resolution?

Rachel Hertzman: Can you please send this out a day or two in advance so we can review it? In the fourth paragraph *“unequal access to public transit based on race, income and disability”* I would add and age. On the second page, second paragraph “that the TAB called on the city to make the current free fares for youth….” Can we add something like and implement corollary needed traffic safety amenities. On the first page, first paragraph “unequal access” add and treatment.

Chris Ramirez: Ms. Hertzman, Ms. Reed is suggesting “implement related and needed”

Rachel Hertzman: Yes, I agree.

Brendan Miller: Maybe “related and necessary”

Terra Reed: It’s hard to define what is necessary. Maybe “related traffic improvement to serve those users”

Chris Ramirez asked for motion to accept the Resolution. Rachel Hertzman made a motion to accept the Resolution, Steve Pilon 2nd the motion.

The motion was voice approved by Harris Balkin, Rachel Hertzman, Brendan Miller, Steve Pilon, Orville Pratt, and Patricia Salisbury.

Chris Ramirez: That is a unanimous vote, yes, to the Resolution.

Chris Ramirez: Thank you Mr. Pilon for bring up the agenda item around updating our Resolution.

*Chris Ramirez shared his screen with the Resolution against using Transit for policing*

Steve Pilon: In light of the threat to have violent demonstrations in cities and capitols, I’m wondering if we should change our tune when it comes to the possibility of using Transit buses as necessary to maintain public order. The FBI is warning of threat throughout the country.

Rachel Hertzman: The Resolutions states “Transit Advisory Board condemns the practice of using Transit resources for policing purposes which are not related to any emergency services” I think it’s important that we don’t take the previous Resolution out of context and we realize there are some similarities and differences between Albuquerque and Washington D.C.. The point of that Resolution was in the context of recent protests that had been associated with Black Lives Matter and I was not aware of any issue of a threat. It’s more of an issue of how to improve our City’s efficacy and policing strategies. We can make another Resolution that we can submit to City Council, if a violence incident breaks out then we would support City resources being allocated to transportation of police force.

Chris Ramirez: We want our drivers to be safe, Danny is there any language that you would suggest to keep our drivers and riders to have a safe and positive view of our Transit system.

Danny Holcomb: I’d rather not get involved in your proclamation regarding this issue.

Chris Ramirez: Mr. Pilon, is there a motion you would like to make? I would welcome if you have a specific motion or language you would to include.

Jacqueline Smith: I would like to speak on this…I was a part of this with the former Chair, Mr. Chavez. We signed that Resolution. I want to remind everybody, Mr. Chavez and I, did say we were concerned about the buses being weaponized to police, because it does make the riders uncomfortable and it could put our drivers in jeopardy.

Steve Pilon: I haven’t prepared any specific language on this, but I think we need to recognize that and would like it to be on the record that if the City needs to use the buses to maintain public order, proper provisions can be made for the safety of the drivers, it’s appropriate use of them. It’s a legitimate use of City resources.

Chris Ramirez: Mr. Pilon we can go on record in the minutes and I would like to keep the Resolution as it is right now. If other Board member want to go on record on about what they support they’re welcome to do that as well. Are there other board members that would like to go on record that agree with Mr. Pilon?

*(see chat)*

Chris Ramirez: I skipped Kathy’s portion. We will revisit TAB Mission and Stakeholders at our next meeting.

Chris Ramirez: I want to remind TAB members, who are expired, to re-apply. I will follow up with Helen Maestas to make sure we all know the next steps.

Jacqueline Smith: If you know anyone that would be interesting in joining PTAB, please encourage them to join. The information is on the website.

Rachel Hertzman: I wasn’t aware that you have to go through a formal procedure in re-applying. How do I re-apply?

Harris Balkin: Was the question I emailed you earlier addressed?

Chris Ramirez: Mr. Holcomb will follow up with you.

Brendan Miller: I’m sure you can apply on the website and do it the same way as the first time.

**Second Round of Public Comment** (*Reminder there is a 2 minute limit on Public Comment(s).*

Terra Reed: I want to mention Greater Albuquerque Bicycle Advisory Committee (GABAC) and want to have a representative on the Board who represent Transit riders. I will have more of an update on your next meeting, but if you have any questions about that feel free to reach out.

**Adjournment**

Chair Ramirez, chair asked for a motion to adjourn, Harris Balkin motioned to adjourn meeting. Rachel Hertzman 2nd the motion. Meeting adjourned at 5:46 pm

**Next Meeting: Thursday, February 11, 2021; 4:00 PM via online (ZOOM)**

**Below are the chat messages exchanged during the ZOOM Meeting**

16:02:21 From Margaret Lucero to Christopher Ramirez(Privately) : I made you co host

16:02:57 From Margaret Lucero to Christopher Ramirez(Privately) : I don't see Mr. Pratt on the agenda. I'm sorry I did not catch that

16:10:38 From Margaret Lucero to Christopher Ramirez(Privately) : Mr. Pratt is asking if you can send him that email with the information about the help with the burritos

16:24:41 From Rachel Hertzman : <https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/the-polices-tepid-response-to-the->capitol-breach-wasnt-an-aberration/

17:04:03 From Christopher Ramirez : https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hKi0zA6HAusZo5iNEln4m\_VYTZ4tePFG-RkrekBBNnk/edit?usp=sharing

17:16:16 From Rachel Hertzman : corollary; corollarily

17:16:39 From Steve Pilon : complementary?

17:16:43 From Terra Reed : related?

17:26:44 From Jackie Smith: I’d like to speak to this.

17:27:23 From Margaret Lucero to Christopher Ramirez(Privately) : Should I extend the meeting?

17:34:22 From Patricia salisbury : I oppose the use of city busses by police for any reason!

17:36:07 From Terra Reed : We can chat more, but we only forward resolutions/official requests to Helen

17:37:04 From Christopher Ramirez : Greater Albuquerque Bicycle Advisory Committee (GABAC)

17:38:45 From Terra Reed : treed@cabq.gov

17:39:13 From Steve Pilon : Good Evening all

17:40:23 From Rachel Hertzman : I need to request clarification. Thanks!

17:40:38 From Patricia salisbury : My audio is really distorted for some reason so I am leaving the meeting now.

17:41:36 From Margaret Lucero : I will forward the TAB members the email Helen sent me.

17:44:55 From Terra Reed : You just apply through the same process as others in the public at the boards and commissions page: https://www.cabq.gov/clerk/boards-commissions

17:45:13 From Christopher Ramirez : Thank you Terra