

Transit Advisory Board

July 9, 2020

Virtual Meeting (Online) Via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 973 7847 3857

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

**4:00 pm to 5:30 pm**

**Members Present**

Israel Chavez, Chair (ZOOM); Brendan Miller, Vice-Chair (ZOOM); Rachel Hertzman (ZOOM); Harris Balkin (ZOOM); Christopher Ramirez (ZOOM); Steve Pilon (ZOOM); Kathy Foster (ZOOM); William Moore (Phone); Orville Pratt (ZOOM); Patricia Salisbury (Phone); Jacqueline Smith, Chair for PTAB(ZOOM)

**Staff Members Present**

Sandra Saiz, Operations Divisions Manager (ZOOM); Chris Payton, Fiscal Manager (ZOOM) Ernest Apodaca, Administrative Assistant (ZOOM)

**Visitors Present**

Courtney Montano (ZOOM), Mr. Tavasci (ZOOM)

**Call to Order**

Israel Chavez, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:06 pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

Before the approval of the agenda, Mr. Ramirez requested an item be moved to New Business, about neighborhood input regarding bus infrastructures.

Israel Chavez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the July 9, 2020 agenda as presented with the additional agenda items moved, Christopher Ramirez, made a motion to approve the agenda and Patricia Salisbury 2nd the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the Transit Advisory Board (TAB) members.

**Approval of Minutes**

Israel Chavez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the June 11, 2020 minutes, Christopher Ramirez made a motion to approve the minutes and Harris Balkin 2nd the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the TAB members.

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

Courtney Montano is here on behalf of the “Millions for Prisoners New Mexico” organization and wants to know more information regarding the use of public transit for policing and deploying police.

Mr. Tavasci resides at 6101 Central Avenue NE at the Sundowner Apartments and asked if the bus stop shelter at Central Avenue and San Pedro Drive can be moved backed to where it was. During the ART bus station construction, it was temporarily moved.

**TAB Chairperson’s Report – Israel Chavez**

Mr. Chavez, Chair wanted to announce that this will be his last meeting with the TAB members. He will be moving on to new adventures, he would like to thank everyone for the opportunities, the experience transit and the board have given him.

**Director’s Report-Danny Holcomb, Transit Director**

Director Holcomb is out due to a family emergency but did email Israel Chavez, Chair some items from his Directors report. One of the items the TAB members had discussions and questions about was the Coors Boulevard BRT project. They asked if the Transit department was considering starting the project? *Director* *Holcomb’s response: There are currently no plans for a Coors Blvd BRT, but we are starting to discuss a BRT line without raised platforms along University Blvd and running to the airport. Full development is still a couple of years away. The department is planning to have a press conference soon to discuss other items on Coors Blvd and will give an update on that discussion soon.*

Shortly after the Coors Blvd BRT item, Director Holcomb’s email went on to discuss the neighborhood input regarding Transit protocol on infrastructure changes where he and Andrew DeGarmo, ABQ Ride’s Principle Planner have had discussions. Their talks included adding or removing a bus stop and adding a bus shelter. They then discussed the time it would take to meet with the Neighborhood Organizations which may not be practical and will try to keep folks in the loop about changes. Next, some of the TAB members were asking about specific ridership data, according to Mr. Holcomb’s email, the data takes some time to compile, especially with many of our staff still teleworking, and we will get the data out as soon as it is available.

Harris Balkin, TAB member had emailed Mr. Holcomb about bus#1910 letting him know the bus had no air-conditioning, Mr. Holcomb answered the email stating the bus was removed and replaced with a different one. His email followed with a statement about if no one brings up an issue or concern with the Transit Department regarding any issue, he is then unable to act on it or fix it.

Sandra Saiz, Operations Division Manager spoke on behalf of Director Holcomb regarding ridership numbers, June’s ridership was 348,774 passengers and is a decrease of about 52.16%. Ms. Saiz stated the Sun Van ridership is not quickly calculated but can give a ballpark number estimate and revealed Sun Van ridership for June is down about 8%. Next, Ms. Saiz mentioned we do not have an update on the state of emergency (COVID-19) currently happening and we are waiting for direction from the city hall administration. We will keep you updated.

TAB Member question:

Christopher Ramirez-Are the commuter’s routes back in service or are we still on a Saturday schedule? *Operations Divisions Manager Saiz’ s response: On June 13th there was a bid we called “a hybrid bid” which means some commuters but nothing that connects with the rail runner would run. We had our planners assess where we needed to add ridership and areas where we could cut down.*

**The Chris Payton Report (Fare box Revenues)**

Chris Payton, ABQ Ride’s Fiscal Manager started his presentation with information about fare box revenue. Mr. Payton stated the department has numbers for the entirety of last year, the actual numbers we've received in fare box are 2.6 million dollars with a budget of 3.5 million dollars and that’s about 26% less than 3.5 million. The Transit Department budgeted more because we were anticipating an increase in revenues related to the ART bus route. We analyzed the dates from July 2019 to March 11, 2020, the first amount of revenue was about 2.1 million dollars for 8 ½ months and then about 500,000 dollars for the remainder of the year. Once the state of emergency which we now know as COVID-19 was declared we saw a drop of about 48% in revenues.

During Chris Payton’s report, Mr. Chavez, Chair wanted to note that the rest of the budget is made up of tax dollars which is only 6%, this means those monies are made from fare box and federal revenues which are 3.5million dollars. Mr. Chavez believes that it is very inappropriate that the Transit Department is trying to collect funds from people who need the bus and has sent a resolution to the City Council as well as to the Mayor of Albuquerque. Mr. Chavez, Chair is confused about how the department could not find in their budget to not collect fares during this time of a global pandemic. He and the TAB board would like a detailed breakdown of the budget because they are hearing conflicting information.

TAB member question(s):

Harris Balkin-There are a lot of ART station kiosks, were you purchase tickets, that are not working.

*Chris Payton’s response: we can get current status on ticket machines that are working and the ones that aren’t.*

Kathy Foster-What is the fare box recovery rate for the year 2020? *Payton’s response: I don’t have that information at my fingertips at this moment, but I will follow up with you on that.*

Chris Ramirez-Asked and wanted to know about the department receiving federal funds, emergency funds due to Covid-19 and how this makes up for the lost funds of projected revenue? *Payton’s response: Transit did receive 27.3 million dollars and that was appropriated by the City Council on June 30th, 2020. This money was used for COVID-19 related expenses and salary payments.*

Chris Ramirez-Was the additional 27 million dollars federal COVID-19 Funds? Also, the money transit received from federal funding, can it be replaced with the lost revenue due to people not being able to purchase a ticket and can bus fare be made free from those funds? *Payton’s response: We reimburse expenses but we don’t necessarily reimburse revenue even though revenue helps pay for those expenses, administration plus everyone wants to see how long we are going to be affected by this pandemic and how bad it hurts the revenues before making any kind decision moving forward.*

**Resolution concerning the use of transits resource’s for policing purposes**

Mr. Chavez wants to introduce a resolution, he sent the letter out via email to all transit staff and Board members to read. The resolution condemns the use of transit resources for policing purposes and it was Mayor Keller who ordered city buses or vans to be used for policing purposes in several of the recent protests. Israel Chavez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve or adopt the resolution. Orville Pratt made a motion to approve the resolution and Brendan Miller 2nd the motion. The resolution was approved by the TAB members with eight voting yes and one voting present.

During the discussion about the resolution, Mr. Pilon wanted to propose an amendment about city buses and Sun Vans being used to transport police and how this might be in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Mr. Pilon made a motion to discuss this amendment, Mr. Chavez, Chair asked to second the motion, there was not second motion and therefore the motion did not proceed.

TAB member questions/comments:

Bill Moore-Would like to know more from the Mayor’s Office why they used transit vehicles to transport police to these protests? *Mr. Chavez, Chair’s response: I have reached out to Helen Maestas to get reasoning as to why Mayor Keller used buses and Sun Vans as transportation for APD, and she said would get back to me with this information but has not given an update.*

Chris Ramirez - Wants to support and push Mayor Keller to not use transit vehicles for protests and the public not to have any bad feelings about using public transportation in such a way.

Jacqueline Smith, Paratransit Advisory Board (PTAB) Chair-anted to add she supports the resolution.

Harris Balkin-He is appalled that the Sun Vans were used for policing and how funds or revenues are being used to transport police to these protests.

Steven Pilon-Wonders if it were white supremacists marching down Central Avenue damaging all those businesses, would everyone feel the same way if they used transit vehicles to transport those officers?

Bill Moore-He stated will not support the resolution due to lack of information.

Cortney Montoya-Her thoughts and feeling about transit using resources to dispatch police to these protests is a form of trauma to our community and to the people who are watching online or television. She feels very grateful to hear that folks are wanting to invest in human rights issues.

**Officer Elections**

Israel Chavez, Chair started the TAB board elections with the Chairman position. The board has nominated Chris Ramirez for Chairman. Mr. Chavez made a motion to appoint Christopher Ramirez as Chairman of the Transit Advisory Board. The motion was moved by Patricia Salisbury and 2nd by Kathy Foster. The motion was unanimously approved by the TAB Members.

Israel Chavez proceeded to take nominations for the Vice-Chair position of the Transit Advisory Board. Mr. Ramirez nominated Kathy Foster as Vice-Chair and Mr. Chavez, Chair made a motion to appoint Kathy Foster to become the TAB Vice-Chair. The motion was moved by Brendan Miller and Patricia Salisbury 2nd the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the TAB members with congratulations to Mr. Ramirez and Mrs. Foster on their new positions.

**Unfinished Business**

Mr. Chavez would like to have the Transit Department provide legal analysis for the use of transit resources for policing that violates any federal law.

**New Business**

Neighborhood input regarding bus infrastructures.

**Steve Pilon Houston Transit Presentation**

Steve Pilon started his presentation by talking about how the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County is a major public transportation agency based in Houston, Texas. This system operates bus, light rail, bus rapid transit, HOV, HOT lanes, and paratransit services. He discussed Jarrett Walker, who is an international consultant in the public transit network design and policy agency. He has been a full-time consultant since 1991 and has led numerous major planning projects in North America, Australia, and New Zealand. He wants to encourage transit and the board to read up about Jarrett Walker and how his work with improving transit systems run smoother and more efficiently.

**Adjournment**

Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to adjourn, Bill Moore motioned to adjourn, Harris Balkin 2nd the Motion, and it was approved unanimously by the TAB members. Meeting adjourned at 5:38 pm.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, August 13, 2020; 4:00 PM via online (ZOOM)**

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

16:13:57From Christopher Ramirez: Thanks Edward for this input.

16:14:16 From Christopher Ramirez: This is an important issue to have local communities input into infrastructure changes. I will help follow up with this.

16:14:44 From Brendan Miller, Vice-Chair: Yes, thank you for bringing this to our attention.

16:18:00 From Rachel Hertzman: and the issue is there is no shade?

16:18:30 From Rachel Hertzman : it is the 66

16:19:42 From Christopher Ramirez : Israel, can we please be sure to get his contact information?

16:22:02 From Steve Pilon : thank you Israel

16:23:14 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : Thank you for your leadership Israel,

16:23:41 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : !

16:25:34 From Harris : Way to keep us on schedule Israel

16:27:41 From Harris : Brendan, you are a true asset to the TAB and we will continue to rely on your knowledge and passion.

16:28:18 From Christopher Ramirez : I have a question about ridership

16:35:51 From Steve Pilon : what is the total budget?

16:37:18 From Kathy Foster : What is the Farebox Recovery Rate for FY20

16:37:27 From Christopher Ramirez : I have a question about the emergency federal funds received and how this makes up for the lost funds.

16:39:01 From Kathy Foster : Thank you, Mr. Payton.

16:43:30 From Kathy Foster : Do the fareboxes create revenue to match operating costs? With a fare-free system, what would be the discrepancy between operating fare boxes v. fare-free system?

16:43:50 From Rachel Hertzman : 6%

16:44:21 From Christopher Ramirez : And we should include marketing for “fares” too.

16:46:11 From Christopher Ramirez : Can we please follow up on federal funds for fare collection? We have not been told about any other revenue to support fare collection.

16:48:52 From Harris : Free Fares are a result of tax revenue approved by municipalities. Is there a line item for this in the budget?

16:50:20 From Christopher Ramirez : Just a reminder to the TAB that Las Cruces (and El Paso) and Santa Fe are not collecting fares during the pandemic.

16:51:35 From Christopher Ramirez : When is the deadline of the three years for the master plan RFP?

16:54:34 From Christopher Ramirez : I would like an amendment to add “Building Black Power New Mexico, Fight for Our Lives and Millions for Prisoners” as other groups supporting the resolution.

16:54:40 From Kathy Foster : Please add Mr. Ramirez' comment on Chat to the minutes.

16:57:16 From Christopher Ramirez : I would also like to add language, “and Furthermore the Transit Advisory Board (TAB) requests the city’s legal department to explore if transporting police to protests violates American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) guidelines.”

16:58:46 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : Agreed, and if Transit has money available, we should increase service to underserved routes and communities.

17:01:14 From Jackie Smith : As the PTAB Chair, I think that language is important. Maybe not to add to the resolution, but the legal implications should be explored.

17:08:40 From Kathy Foster : Thank you, Ms. Smith.

17:09:41 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : And Transit use should be encouraged by those at all income levels to help the environment.

17:10:08 From Christopher Ramirez : Can I yield time to Courtney?

17:11:44 From Christopher Ramirez : Thanks Chairwoman Smith for your comments.

17:12:14 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : I support the resolution and would also like to sign.

17:12:54 From Kathy Foster : I support the resolution.

17:14:03 From Jackie Smith : Yes, I would feel the same way.

17:14:03 From Kathy Foster : I don't see the connection.

17:14:35 From Kathy Foster : I do not want to use valuable time for hypothetical, but focus on the task at hand.

17:14:57 From Jackie Smith : Thank you Ms. Foster, I agree with you.

17:15:08 From Harris : This was about the misuse of funds not the reason for the use.

17:15:26 From Jackie Smith : Agreed, Mr. Harris.

17:15:44 From Brendan Miller, Vice Chair : Agreed.

17:17:39 From Jackie Smith : Very good point, Mr. Ramirez!

17:27:19 From Jackie Smith : Congratulations, Ms. Foster and Mr. Ramirez.

17:27:38 From Kathy Foster : Thank you, everyone.

17:27:40 From Christopher Ramirez : Thanks and congratulations to TAB and thanks Mr. Chavez and Mr. Miller for your service.

17:27:45 From Rachel Hertzman : Congratulations both of you and thank you so much for all of your hard work and commitment!

17:28:39 From Kathy Foster : Thank you, Mr. Chair and Mr. Vice Chair for your dedication this past year.

17:29:31 From Brendan Miller : Thank you and Congratulations to Chair Ramirez and Vice-Chair Foster!

17:31:03 From Rachel Hertzman : Mr. Pilon, this is a request that you send the powerpoint to the board via email. Thank you.

17:31:50 From Brendan Miller : Yes, please do. Thanks in advance.

17:38:35 From Kathy Foster : I am interested in this presentation as well. Thank you.

17:38:47 From Christopher Ramirez : I agree that we should have Mr. Pilon complete the presentation at next month’s meeting.

17:39:42 From Courtney : Thanks everyone! Take Care!