

Transit Advisory Board

June 11, 2020

Virtual Meeting (Online) Via ZOOM

Meeting ID: 991 6249 0331

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)

**Staff Members Present**

Danny Holcomb, Transit Director (ZOOM); Yvette Garcia, Administrative Assistant (ZOOM)

**Visitors Present**

Peter Rice (Phone), Joyce Thornhill (ZOOM)

**Call to Order**

Israel Chavez, Chair, called the meeting to order at 4:15 pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

Before the approval of the agenda, Mr. Ramirez requested additional items be added to today’s meeting about the free fare resolution from the last meeting and an item about neighborhood input regarding bus infrastructures.

Israel Chavez, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the June 11, 2020 agenda as presented with the additional agenda items added, Harris Balkin made a motion to approve the agenda and Rachel Hertzman and Orville Pratt 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 May 14, 2020 minutes, Rachel Hertzman made a motion to approve the minutes and Orville Pratt 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).*

Ms. Thornhill asked how the Sun Van drivers are doing during the COVID-19. *Director* *Holcomb's response: Drivers are staying healthy and safe, but will talk more in-depth under the Director's Report.*

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

Mr. Chavez, Chair wanted to acknowledge and recognize police brutality. How it affects us citywide, which includes the Transit Department and hopes the TAB members can be supportive during these times.

During the Chairperson’s report, there was a brief discussion about the bus rapid transit (BRT) system along the Coors Boulevard corridor.

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

Director Holcomb started his report by talking about ridership numbers, May’s ridership was 306,544 passengers and is a decrease of about 59 percent from May of last year. We did switch to a Saturday schedule which is what caused the numbers to drop, the decline in ridership is mainly because people are staying home, staying safe due toCOVID-19. He went on to report the Transit department hasn’t had a single staff person report positive for the Coronavirus, we have had several people test but no one has come back positive. He then discussed that the ART bus route is back up and running on a Saturday schedule, but will limit passengers to a 50 percent capacity. Starting Monday, June 15, 2020, we will be handing out face masks to any passengers that do not have one. We have about 7,500 masks to give out to the public and our Marketing Division, Customer Service Division, and Bus Drivers will help to accomplish this goal. Lastly, Director Holcomb spoke about putting up temporary shelters at Rio Grande Boulevard, Central Avenue, and the West downtown area located near Mr. Balkin at the Edo station. We are still pursuing permanent canopies at those three ART stations.

During the Director’s report, Mr. Chavez, Chair discussed his opposition to buses being used by APD for policing purposes and it is his opinion that it is outside the scope of what the buses should be doing, which paints the buses in a negative spotlight. Ms. Hertzman agrees with what Mr. Chavez’s criticism and feels buses shouldn’t be used in such a manner. She also would love to see a collaboration with Albuquerque Public School (APS) and the City of Albuquerque (COA) to deal with the upcoming school year if stricter COVID-19 policies are implemented, causing a possible staff shortage. Ms. Salisbury also talked about the use of public transportation during the protests. Lastly, Mr. Balkin mentioned he would like the Mayor's office to better communicate with the TAB members regarding the use of the Transit department's resources and would love to have the Mayor himself attend one of their meetings someday.

TAB Member question(s):

Isreal Chavez- How is the department counting ridership on ART and were any city buses used to transport APD at any point during the protests? *Director* *Holcomb’s response: The ART buses have an automatic passenger counters, they count people as they board the bus. APD requested to use Sun Vans to transport their police officers.*

Steve Pilon- Why was there such a big drop in Sun Van verse Fixed Route, he also heard that Sun Van might start to transport passengers to a Fixed Route bus stops instead of taking them to their original destination? *Director* *Holcomb’s response: I believe a lot of the agencies that we transport our clients to like Goodwill, Adelante, and VSA’s have closed temporarily due to the virus. Transporting passengers using fixed bus-route lines was mentioned a few times in the past, but we haven’t gone any further than a brief conversation and this is on the back burner for now.*

Rachel Hertzman–I wanted to know what the estimated daily ridership numbers are currently. *Director* *Holcomb’s response: I will get that information to you as soon as I find out and we have 7500 masks only to give out.*

Christopher Ramirez-I would like to know if the Transit department could provide annual and monthly ridership information based on the route? *Director* *Holcomb’s response: I will work on getting that information.*

William Moore-Where does the fare box revenue go and does it come back to the Transit department? *Director* *Holcomb's response: The money does come back to the department and I know for the year 2018 we received 3.5 million dollars from fare box revenues.*

**Unfinished Business**

Mr. Chavez, Chair started unfinished business talking about the request for proposal (RFP), specifically the one about reanalyzing the entire Transit department's operation process and remembers Deputy Director Stephanie Dominguez saying it's definitely on hold for now. Director Holcomb stated there is no money allocated at this time, the cost is 200 to 300 thousand dollars for such a review and was trying to figure out how we're going to pay for such an evaluation. Mr. Pilon loved how Houston reimagined their transportation system and this is certainly the model that I have in mind for what I'd like to see done here in Albuquerque. There was then a discussion between the TAB members of how long and when did they start discussing this RFP. Next, Mr. Chavez, Chair discussed how he would like to fill the two vacant positions for the TAB board and has been in contact with Helen Maestas to fill those missing placements. Mr. Ramirez then opened dialogue regarding a census of where people are currently living and what city council districts do TAB members reside in. Mr. Chavez, Chair, stated he will collect the information from the TAB members before this meeting is adjourned and also mentioned he talked to newly appointed City Council member Thanh-Lan Sena about a rapid transit system becoming a reality on the Westside of Albuquerque. Mr. Pilon talked with Ms. Sena as well regarding transportation issues and she was very supportive of his discussion.

**New Business**

Mr. Ramirez started new business discussing giving the neighborhood’s input regarding infrastructures, he liked the great presentation about bus infrastructure and some of the planning that was going on within the Transit department. However, a bus stop was removed without consultation at San Mateo Boulevard and Kathryn Avenue, he would like to see a really good engagement for ABQ ride to work with neighborhoods and the Neighborhood Associations Group to prevent this type of change from happening again. He feels the TAB board needs to explore how to work with the ABQ ride to make sure neighborhoods are being consulted about these types of changes. Mr. Chavez, Chair, agrees the city needs to solicit advice from its constituents and community members before making changes to infrastructures. Director Holcomb feels this is a great idea and something we can do once we have the staffing available, we can certainly go out and talk to as many neighborhood organizations as we need to regarding any changes. Mr. Pilon feels there should better rules in place before these types of changes are made and approved. Mr. Miller, Mr. Pilon briefly discussed the bus rapid transit (BRT) system along the Coors Boulevard corridor and Ms. Salisbury is glad to have bus route #37 back. Lastly, Mr. Pilon shared his concerns about the gross receipts tax shortfall that’s predicted and how it’s going to affect bike trails across the City of Albuquerque.

**Below is the information collected by Chairperson Israel Chavez:**

*City Council Districts*

Israel Chavez, Chair–*District 2*

Brendan Miller, Vice-Chair–*District 5*

Harris Balkin–*District 2*

Rachel Hertzman–*District 7*

William Moore–*District 2*

Steve Pilon–*District 2*

Christopher Ramirez–*District 2*

Orville Pratt–*District 7*

Kathy Foster–*District 9*

Patricia Salisbury–*District 2*

**Adjournment**

Israel Chavez, Chair asked for a motion to adjourn, Harris Balkin motioned to adjourn, Patricia Salisbury 2nd the Motion, and it was approved unanimously by the TAB members. Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, July 9, 2020; 4:00 PM via online (ZOOM)**

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

16:18:57 From Joyce Thornhill: good

16:20:28 From Joyce Thornhill: how is all the Sun Van Bus driver's been doing during this crazy coronavirus right

16:25:54 From Rachel Hertzman : question: I didn't notice this is in the spreadsheets. You are handing out 7500 masks per day. What is avg? daily ridership?

16:26:33 From Joyce Thornhill: yes that's is going to be lots of masks to keep everyone safe

16:27:27 From Steve Pilon: demonstrations not "riots"

16:30:30 From Joyce Thornhill: yes I went to VSA @ 4904 4th Street for 17 years since 2003

16:31:22 From Rachel Hertzman: 7500 total masks, not masks per day

16:31:36 From Joyce Thornhill: no VSA is not going to be opening up any more

16:40:27 From Rachel Hertzman: Has anyone invited him, re Harris Balkin?

16:40:30 From Christopher Ramírez: Just a clarification. Lawrence Rael has attended TAB on behalf of the mayor.

16:41:45 From Steve Pilon: What would be the reason for having the mayor attend?

16:42:15 From Kathy Foster: No questions from Kathy Foster - thank you for the discussion and input re SunVan

16:42:46 From Joyce Thornhill: are u going to be having another Zoom meeting next month in July

16:52:16 From Christopher Ramírez: There's money that was allocated that we were told needed to be allocated by July. Can we follow-up?

16:56:11 From Christopher Ramírez: Is it possible to let us know the current make up of where the board currently lives?

17:02:40 From Christopher Ramírez: Want to also advocate as talk about corridors like Coors to also collaborate with the county and MRCOG about leveraging resources and transit for outside the city and with the county and region.

17:04:59 From Steve Pilon: Human Transit is the blog of Jarrod Walker the consultant behind both Houston and Indianapolis. He has discussions of both these systems

17:05:48 From Steve Pilon: Jarrett not Jarrod

17:12:37 From Rachel Hertzman: you just cut out

17:18:24 From Christopher Ramírez: It was the City Planning Department that hosted the meeting that changed the status of Coors.

17:21:04 From Joyce Thornhill: are u going to be having a sun van bus meeting next month in July on Zoom

17:22:28 From Rachel Hertzman: If I may.

17:24:44 From Joyce Thornhill: goodbye to all of u & be safe. Yes I am on Copper & Tramway

17:26:29 From Joyce Thornhill: no thank u

17:26:37 From Steve Pilon: thanks to everyone

17:26:39 From Rachel Hertzman: Thanks, Israel!