

Letters of Support

Table of Contents

1. Albuquerque Bus Riders Union
2. Albuquerque Public Schools
3. BikeABQ
4. City of Albuquerque Family and Community Services Department
5. City of Albuquerque Mayor
6. City of Albuquerque Transit Department (ABQ RIDE)
7. Greater Albuquerque Area Active Transportation Committee
8. NM Coalition to End Homelessness
9. Transit Advisory Board
10. Uptown Progress Team
11. Urban Land Institute - NM



ALBUQUERQUE
BUS
RIDERS
UNION
a project of Together for Brothers
for transit dependent bus riders

February 23, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the Albuquerque Bus Riders Union (ABRU), a project of Together for Brothers for transit dependent bus riders, are writing to express our **strong support** for the proposed development at the Uptown Transit Center. As it stands, the Uptown Transit Center is located on an underutilized parking lot that has visibility concerns and feels isolated from pedestrian traffic in the dark hours of early morning commutes and evenings. Having a mix of both retail and residential developments woven into the transit center area would be a welcome change to its current usage. Providing food service locations close to the bus stops and seating infrastructure would also provide bus riders waiting out longer headways with a safer environment.

At a time when Albuquerque is experiencing shortages of both affordable and market-rate housing, adding two hundred units of each type in one location central to critical bus infrastructure like the ART Red Line and the 157 bus is a strong move to promote greener transportation options and housing equity within our city. With 12,000 workers commuting to the Uptown area daily, having affordable housing within walking or biking distance to some of our largest shopping areas would be highly beneficial to the Uptown workforce.



ALBUQUERQUE
Bus
RIDERS
UNION
a project of Together for Brothers
for transit dependent bus riders

The existing bus lines provide easy commuting options to the University of New Mexico, Presbyterian Hospital, Downtown Albuquerque, two RailRunner stops, and more. Uptown is a highly desirable area for Albuquerque residents of all income levels to live, work, and play and this project would help 400 households make their homes in the area while also making our existing transit center safer. This project would be a smart development that would provide many benefits to new and existing transit riders and we hope it will be fully funded.

Thank you,

The Albuquerque Bus Riders Union (*including members Althea Atherton, Patricia Browne Hirschi, Baruch Campos-Gallardo, Luis Colunga, Jesus Hernandez, Meta Hirschi, Everlyne Lagat, Ivey McClelland, Christopher Ramirez, Jim Salas and and more*)



Kizito Wijenje
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 12, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
C/O US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Re: City of Albuquerque RAISE Grant, letter of support from Albuquerque Public Schools

Dear Sir,

Albuquerque Public Schools is pleased to provide this letter of support for the City of Albuquerque's RAISE grant application to fund planning, design, and construction for a Transit Oriented joint development project involving the rebuilding of Albuquerque's Uptown Transit Center. Albuquerque Public Schools collaborates on and encourages City of Albuquerque transportation-related projects and initiatives, particularly those that focus on student health and safety, which include encouraging Vision Zero Initiatives and building and maintaining safe walking and bicycling routes to public schools in the Albuquerque metro area.

Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) is a public service provider operating throughout 14 jurisdictions within Bernalillo and Southern Sandoval Counties (including 4 Native American reservations and Pueblos), and covering a geographic area of 1,230 square miles located in Central New Mexico. Currently, APS serves approximately 72,000 students, and transports around 40,000 students per day, via 450 school busses. Municipal transportation projects, which emphasize traffic safety are of the utmost priority to the public schools.

APS wholly supports this City of Albuquerque joint development project, involving Transit Oriented Development (TOD), which will add necessary amenities and services for our students, families and employees. A major APS District employee hub, the Alice and Bruce King Educational Center, is adjacent to the Uptown Transit Transfer Center and will therefore have a direct impact on a concentration of District employees in the area. The infill which will take place in the Joint Development portion of the project will support schools in the Uptown area of Albuquerque, with an addition of 230 dwelling units. In the spirit of planning concurrency, APS closely collaborates with local municipal agencies, including the City of Albuquerque, on numerous programs pertaining to land use planning that serve our communities, constituencies, and the area taxpayers. This project will positively impact our shared constituents who reside, work, and attend school in Uptown Albuquerque.

Please do not hesitate to follow-up with me with any comments or concerns.

Sincerely,

Scott Elder, Superintendent Albuquerque Public Schools



February 13, 2023

TO: Honorable Secretary Pete Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Dear Secretary Pete Buttigieg:

We express our support of the ABQ RIDE's Uptown Joint Development Project. This infill development project will provide essential affordable and mixed-income housing options in an employment center, where currently affordable housing is lacking and most of the workforce commute from other parts of the city. The project merges affordable housing, mixed-use, and transit in a true TOD development manner. It will take existing surface parking, move the parking underground and replace it with housing, transit, retail uses, and a public plaza associated with the transit stop. In addition, sidewalks will be widened, and continental crosswalks will be added to all driveways. The improved pedestrian facilities will enhance the overall connectivity in an area that is still dominated by surface parking lots.

As BikeABQ we support densification, the provision of affordable housing, and improved transit facilities as well as improved pedestrian facilities.

This project will result in:

- Increasing affordable housing in an area with no legally restricted affordable housing within ½ mile of the site
- Reduce surface parking and replace it with higher and better uses.
- Increasing pedestrian amenities and connectivity in and around Uptown.
- Creating an enhanced public transit plaza to enhance the transit user experience.

Our organization wholeheartedly supports the City's grant application.

Respectfully,

BikeABQ Board

BikeABQ
PO Box 4119
Albuquerque, NM
87196-4119

CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

Department of Family and Community Services

Carol M. Pierce, Director



Timothy M. Keller, Mayor

February 23, 2023

Rebecca Velarde, Director of Development
Palindrome Communities, LLC
412 NW 5th Avenue, Suite 200
Portland, OR 97209

RE: Support for Affordable Housing Development at Albuquerque's Uptown Transit Center

Dear Ms. Velarde:

On behalf of the City of Albuquerque's Department of Family and Community Services, I would like to express my support for the Palindrome Communities' **Uptown Connect Project**. It is my understanding that this Project will be applying to the U.S. Department of Transportation for its 2023 RAISE Grant program to make the mixed-use development feasible. Although Albuquerque will definitely benefit from the commercial and transportation aspects of the project, it is the 215 units of affordable, multi-family rental housing that are so critical in helping address the housing crisis currently facing our community.

PO Box 1293

Albuquerque

NM 87103

According to a recent report by the Urban Institute, there are approximately 22,300 renter households in Albuquerque who earn 0-30% of AMI that were severely cost burdened, meaning they are paying more than half of their income for housing costs. These extremely low- and low-income households are at greatest risk of housing instability. The Urban Institute report identified a gap of 15,500 units for households at or below 30% AMI in Albuquerque. Additionally, the City estimates that overall lack of housing supply in Albuquerque is approximately 30,000 units.

www.cabq.gov

While these statistics are extremely challenging to overcome using conventional methods of developing affordable housing, opportunities like this 2023 RAISE Grant could play a big part in addressing the housing need in Albuquerque. If awarded, this innovative Uptown Connect Project will not only drive commerce and provide essential transportation, but it will also create much-needed housing resources to the residents of our community.

Please feel free to Rick Giron, Community Services Project Manager at (505) 768-2968 or rickgiron@cabq.gov, if you have any questions regarding the City's affordable housing efforts.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Carol M. Pierce
79c4e134908418



City of Albuquerque Office of the Mayor

Timothy M. Keller | Mayor
Lawrence Rael | Chief Administrative Officer
Kevin Sourisseau | Chief Operations Officer
Sanjay Bhakta | Chief Financial Officer
Katarina Sandoval | Chief of Staff

February 21, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
C/O US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

RE: Uptown Transit Center Joint Development Project – “Uptown Connect”

Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing in support of the RAISE grant application for “Uptown Connect” on behalf of ABQ RIDE, which operates the public transit system for the City of Albuquerque. We are committed to being the lead applicant for the 2023 RAISE grant with this submission.

The City of Albuquerque committed to pursuing a Transit-Oriented Development project on the property built as the Uptown Transit Center in the original grant award in 1998. While it has taken a long time for this project to coalesce, there is no better time like the present. This project will further one of my administration’s priority goals – to add 5,000 new dwellings in the next 3 years. The 215 affordable housing units to be developed with this project, along with the additional 194 dwelling units created by this development will make a substantial dent in our housing need. Bringing more people to live near our Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) service promises even better gains for residents who have high housing and transportation costs.

This project is in a Historically Disadvantaged Census Tract, as defined by Justice40. My administration is taking steps to commit to Justice40 goals at the local level and have long prioritized advancing equity and supporting disadvantaged communities. This project aligns with our local Justice40 goals, as communicated in my Executive Order for Equitable and Just Implementation of Justice40, which will prioritize investment in historically under-resourced communities.

Further, the project will rebuild and modernize the Uptown Transit Center. This transfer platform is located in the middle of our dense, Uptown center, but there are no amenities or supporting land uses to serve our transit riders. Right now, it is quite isolated and is surrounded by vast parking lots. We firmly believe that redeveloping the block with apartments, retail, restaurants and other entertainment uses will improve the safety and security of the Transit Center. There will be hundreds of people coming and going throughout the day and evening. We hope that this project will attract many more passengers to our transit system because of the comfort and convenience of walking out their front door and having a one trip ride to our Downtown,

University of New Mexico, two hospitals, and many other destinations along the way. This project will capitalize on the prior investment in our ART Bus Rapid Transit system due to its location at the ART Route 766 terminus.

Our transit department is actively seeking a RAISE Grant in the amount of Twenty-Five Million Dollars (\$25,000,000). This federal money will leverage on the order of Sixty-Five Million (\$65,000,000) in Low-Income Tax Credits and private equity capital to build the residential portion of the project (described as Phase II in the grant application). The affordable housing project will act as a lever for a final phase of 194 units of private market-rate housing and additional commercial space, which will be entirely privately financed on the order of Fifty-Two Million Dollars (\$52,000,000).

Mr. Secretary we urge you to recommend and award Uptown Connect for the 2023 RAISE grant. By doing so, we will be able to transform the Uptown Transit Center into a thriving community that will be tied to affordable housing, job opportunities, recreation and rapid bus transportation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy M. Keller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Timothy M. Keller
Mayor



Leslie Keener, Transit Director



Timothy M. Keller, Mayor

February 17, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
C/O US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC 20590

RE: Uptown Connect – The Uptown Transit Center Joint Development Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

ABQ Ride operates the public transit system for the City of Albuquerque. The City of Albuquerque is committed to pursuing a Transit-Oriented Development Project to reconstruct our Uptown Transit Center.

The center, right now, is a bus platform and a parking lot. The site sits on two acres in the middle of Uptown, surrounded by three shopping malls, and three major office buildings. A block is half owned by the City, half by Nusenda Credit Union. Today, the Uptown District has no legally-restricted affordable housing.

Our proposal is to reconstruct our Uptown Transit Center to an active urban place and bring affordable housing to the site. There are three projects which will include a north and south tower on either side of a Transit Plaza. The first tower – part of the Joint Development Project – will have 215 income-restricted affordable housing units. Completion of the Joint Development Project will act as leverage for another 194 units of market-rate housing in a true Transit-Oriented Development on an abutting site to the south. The Transit Plaza will be an open air facility with bus services to the site remaining as they are today.

The over-400 units of housing being contemplated will double the amount of multi-family housing within one-half mile of the transit center. The new center increases safety by taking a few cars off the road, reductions in automobile emissions, encourages walking and bicycling because of the proximity of land uses. Fewer cars means fewer crashes. Building an active transit plaza will reduce nuisances, such as vandalism and illicit drug use that occur today. Being next to transit brings the folks living on the site within a half-hour bus ride to our local hospitals and downtown area where you can catch the Rail Runner commuter train and use multiple other buses coming out of the Alvarado Transportation Center.

Mr. Secretary, we urge and thank you for your support of the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Leslie Keener".

Leslie Keener, City of Albuquerque Transit Director



Tim Keller, Mayor

Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee (GAATC)



TO: Honorable Secretary Pete Buttigieg
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

February 13, 2023

Dear Secretary Pete Buttigieg:

We are writing to express our sincere support of ABQ RIDE's Uptown Joint Development Project. As the City of Albuquerque revitalizes and reimagines Uptown, an important urban center in our city, it is vital to invest in and provide affordable and mixed-income housing, active transportation options, vibrant and appealing outdoor spaces, retail, and connectivity to key community destinations such as living, shopping, jobs, and entertainment.

As the Committee that advises the City on the needs of people who walk, bike, use mobility devices, use other people-powered transportation options, and use public transit in our community, we are happy to support this project. This project will enable the City of Albuquerque in partnership with developers to redesign and rebuild our Uptown Transit Center and park and ride lot into a robust transit-oriented development. This project will result in:

- Increasing affordable housing in an area with no legally-restricted affordable housing within ½ mile of the site
- Increasing safe pedestrian and cyclist connectivity in and around Uptown, which will expand access to jobs, reduce parking demands, decrease greenhouse gas emissions by promoting transportation alternatives, and improve community health
- Creating an enhanced transit plaza with safe and comfortable places to wait for transit, watch entertainment, and access retail

Our organization wholeheartedly supports the City's grant application.

Respectfully,

Ryan C. Mast

Ryan Mast
Vice Chair, Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee (GAATC)

Greater Albuquerque Active Transportation Committee
City of Albuquerque Department of Municipal Development | PO Box 1293 | Albuquerque NM 87103
cabq.gov/gaatc



New Mexico Coalition to
End Homelessness

February 20, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC
20590

Secretary Buttigieg:


The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness' mission is to create solutions to homelessness from prevention through permanent housing by using action, advocacy and awareness. We believe in and support the Uptown Connect project because it will directly connect those experiencing homelessness to affordable housing in a critical area of Albuquerque.

Uptown Connect proposes to build 215 new affordable housing units in an existing urban area that has very little housing. There are two aging apartment complexes and one upper end complex with the highest rents in the city. In these options, there is no legally binding affordable housing. After this Joint Development is complete, it will spur a second development with close to 200 market-rate dwelling units.

The New Mexico Mortgage Finance Authority's *Housing New Mexico: A Call to Action* identifies "Create More Housing" as the first call to action. Creating new affordable dwelling units provides a path to permanent housing for people transitioning out of homelessness, emergency shelters, or transitional housing. The City of Albuquerque's Housing Forward Plan identifies the need for 30,000 new dwelling units, and sets a goal to add 5,000 more dwelling units than would already come on line in response to market demand. The City is also making headway on the Gateway Health Hub which will provide emergency shelter beds, an engagement center, and medical respite. There are a range of service providers and partners that provide a low-barrier approach to service provision to address homelessness.

This project will make a substantial impact on the housing market in Albuquerque. We hope that it will also help us make progress in addressing our homelessness issue as it relates to the overall shortage of housing in Albuquerque.

We thank you for your support of this forward-looking project.

Sincerely,


Monet Silva
Executive Director
New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness



TRANSIT DEPARTMENT
PO Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103
Telephone: (505) 724-3100
Fax: (505) 724-3111

cabq.gov

February 09, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Transit Advisory Board of the City of Albuquerque, I hereby lend the Committee's unqualified support to ABQ RIDE's proposal to reimagine our Uptown Transit Center into an active urban destination with 420 affordable housing. The members of the Transit Advisory board meet monthly to review transit and related issues in the City of Albuquerque; we serve an advisory role to the ABQ RIDE Director and staff to support informed decision-making and foster a safe and robust transit system.

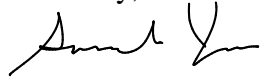
Right now, the Transit Center is essentially a parking lot with a bus platform. Redesigning the space to spread out the bus access lanes and install a wide transit platform with retail, with residential apartments and additional businesses flanking either side, holds promise to foster community and economic activity while increasing safety. By adding affordable housing and retail to the development, we will be putting "eyes on the street" throughout the day and night, helping to reduce vandalism and other illicit activities that can happen in a vacant lot.

This project will expand transit ridership to those who need it. The estimated 420 people who will live at the Uptown site will be within easy bus, bike, and walking distance to jobs, services, banking, and food. The Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) project, which runs nearby, brought many new apartment buildings to Central Avenue. Residents of these new units have many fewer cars than typical apartments, supported by strong ART service. The buses along Central Avenue consistently have among the highest ridership of all bus routes in the city, and those routes have had strong increases after COVID. The Transit Center's residents will have easy access to the ART system, which can connect them to amenities across Albuquerque's core—this includes the University of New Mexico, Presbyterian Hospital, and Downtown. Each of these landmarks are within a 25 minute one-seat ride.

The project is expected to increase economic values of properties in the Uptown District, spurring a virtuous cycle of investment that will improve the lives of people living in the area. A proportionally small amount of Federal money is expected to trigger additional large private

investments. In a time when New Mexico is short an estimated 32,000 housing units, demand for additional investment in the Transit Center's two-acre property will be strong. Finally, the project aligns with a City commitment to create 5,000 new housing units above the typical rate of growth, by 2025. This project alone will satisfy 8% of the goal. We thank you for your support of this forward-looking project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Samuel Jensen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "J".

Samuel Jensen
Board Chair
City of Albuquerque Transit Advisory Board



UPTOWN PROGRESSTEAM

February 2, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
C/O US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Mr. Secretary:

I write to express the Team's strong support for the City of Albuquerque's proposed redevelopment of their transit center here in Albuquerque's Uptown District.

It is our understanding that the transit department wants to replace its current parking lot and bus platform with an activated transit plaza, commercial space on the ground floor, and over 200 affordable apartment units above the commercial level. It's an ambitious proposal that will do much to energize a site at the heart of Uptown. The renderings we have seen of the project are impressive, and we see three major benefits that would arise from such a project...

First, it will activate a dead space in our landscape - a place that has long been a target for vandalism and other nefarious activity. The perpetrators of these activities are constantly hanging around the site, disturbing pedestrians, peering into office windows, and generally making people in the surrounding buildings uncomfortable during their working day. By putting so many "eyes on the street" 24 hours a day we expect such activity to greatly decline.

Second, it will create affordable housing for some of the thousands of employees who come in and out of Uptown every day. While Uptown is home to many major professional firms, it is also home to three shopping malls, multiple large office buildings, and many small retail and service firms. It is our sense that about one-third (4000) of the employees in Uptown come for jobs related to food service, maintenance, and the retail trades. They are coming from outside Uptown, which means while they may benefit from lower housing costs elsewhere in the City, they are subject to the costs of owning a car. Affordable housing will help them keep housing costs down, while having affordable housing within walking distance of their jobs will mean immense savings in transportation costs.

And third is a simple market benefit. The current understated transit center sits on an acre and a half of valuable Uptown land. To be able to realize the investment represented by such a project will be a boon to the entire Uptown area. We understand, too, that the City's project will help launch another private Transit-Oriented Development with an additional 200 units of market-rate housing.

February 2, 2023
Secretary Pete Buttigieg
Page 2

Mr. Secretary: We urge you to act positively on the City's grant request. A small amount of Federal money will do much to leverage this very advantageous project in our business district.

Respectfully,



Damen Kompanowski
Manager, Sheraton Uptown Hotel

Cc: Leslie Keener, ABQRIDE

Uptown Progress Team
c/o Associa Canyon Gate
8500 Jefferson St NE Suite B
Albuquerque, NM 87113

ALBUQUERQUE NM 870

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Secretary Pete Buttigieg
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington DC, 20590

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20590-



February 14, 2023

Secretary Pete Buttigieg
C/O US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590



New Mexico

Mr. Secretary:

On behalf of ULI New Mexico, we are writing to express strong support for the City of Albuquerque's proposed redevelopment of the Uptown Transit Center site.

First, more about ULI: we are the oldest and largest network of cross-disciplinary real estate and land use experts in the world. Through our members' dedication to the mission and their shared expertise, the Institute has been able to set standards of excellence in development practice. Headquartered in Washington, DC, our New Mexico chapter has existed for 15 years.

We have worked closely with the City of Albuquerque's transit department for many years on a variety of different projects. We championed the recent bus rapid transit project, ART. We also worked closely with the City on their recent zoning code update to facilitate a less complex development process and encourage mixed-use projects along major transit corridors.

This proposed development would be hugely beneficial for Uptown, the City of Albuquerque & our entire region.

Similar to other places, we are experiencing a housing crisis. Additionally, growth in our region is creating more traffic congestion. This project would help with both of those challenges. The 200 units of affordable housing included as a part of this project would support the many lower-income workers in this significant employment center.

High-density development around transit, such as this project, has many benefits including increased safety by taking cars off the road; reducing emissions; connecting more people to opportunity; and more. From this transit center, residents would have a convenient connection to the hundreds of jobs available in Uptown. They would be able to access thousands more jobs using the transit service available from this facility, including the ART bus rapid transit line which terminates here.

Our mission is to shape the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. We urge you to swiftly approve the City's grant request for this transformative mixed-use, transit-oriented development proposal.

With appreciation,

Will Gleason, Chair, ULI New Mexico

A black ink signature of Will Gleason, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes.

Rathi Casey, Incoming Chair, ULI New Mexico

A black ink signature of Rathi Casey, written in a cursive, handwritten style.