

Transit Advisory Board

Thursday, May 9, 2019

Alvarado Transit Center – 2nd Floor

100 1st St. SW

Albuquerque, NM 87102

**Members Present**

Brendan Miller, Chair; (walked); Nancy JonesFrancis, (walked); Israel Chavez, (car); Rachel Hertzman, (car); Orville Pratt, (bus); David Kesner, (walked); William Moore, (walked); Christopher Ramirez, (bike & walked)

**Excused Members Absent**

Harris Balkin, Patricia Salisbury, Steve Pilon

**Unexcused Members Absent**

Warren Smith and Kimberly Andujo

**Staff Members Present**

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

**Visitors Present**

Matthew Torrez, (car) Transit Security; Luis Calunga, (bus); Chris Baca, (car); Mark Gundlach, (unknown); Daniel Benilee De Luna, (unknown); Jesus Campos, (car); Manuel Mata, (unknown)

**Call to Order**

Brendan Miller, Chair called the meeting to order at 4:04pm.

**Approval of Agenda**

Brendan Miller, Chair, asked for a Motion to approve the May 9, 2019 agenda as presented. Israel Chavez made a motion to accept the agenda as presented. David Kesner, 2nd the Motion. Motion approved unanimously, 8-0 by Transit Advisory Board (TAB) Members.

**Approval of Minutes**

Brendan Miller, Chair asked for a Motion to approve the January 10, 2019, February 14, 2019 and April 11, 2019 minutes as presented. Nancy JonesFrancis, made a motion to accept the January and February minutes as presented. Israel Chavez, 2nd the motion. Motion approved 5-3, Three (3) TAB members abstained. Rachel Hertzman made a motion to accept the April 11th minutes as amended and David Kesner, 2nd the Motion. Motions approved unanimously, 8-0 by TAB.

**Public Comment** – Reminder there is a 2 minute limit on Public Comment

**Matthew Torrez, Transit Enforcement Officer**

Matthew Torrez attended the meeting to once again ask for help for the transit officers and the weapons that they deal with. More than half the officers do not have ballistic vests or protection. This week an officer was attacked by a person carrying a knife, and an officer had a gun pulled on him and luckily it was not a real gun. Officers continue to be attacked on the streets and no one is willing to listen to us. Matthew is hoping that something can be done to help the officers. The officers are in great danger along with the bus drivers and citizens. We are hoping that you can provide us with any help or advise, it would be appreciated. (A hand-out with photos on confiscated weapons from the public by transit security officers).

**Public Comment** – Reminder there is a 2 minute limit on Public Comments

**Chris Baca, Together 4 Brothers**

Chris Baca asked for an update on the letter that was given to the Transit Department and APS in support of “Free” bus passes for students at the last TAB meeting. Family and Community Services planned a meeting regarding the distribution of “free” summer youth passes and there was not a representative from transit at the meeting. (Family and Community Services scheduled the meeting and Transit was not notified, which was oversight) Together 4 Brothers are working with a couple of City Councilors to talk about putting “Free” bus passes into the City budget in the future.

**David Kesner, TAB member**

David asked Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Director what is the Transit policy if an employee feels that they are in an unsafe position? *Employees can report concerns to their immediate supervisors and directors’ depending on what their concerns are. There are also certain bargaining units that can be involved. Stephanie will find out what the official procedure is and report back to the TAB members.*

**Christopher Ramirez, TAB member**

Christopher states that the work that has been done by Together 4 Brothers with the young people of Albuquerque regarding bus stop safety, bus stops seem to be the least safe place in the City.

It is Christopher’s understanding that the Transit Department conducted a survey for the ridership on Earth Day and it would be great if the TAB members could review that information. Christopher made a request to the Transit Department to provide the TAB members with the survey responses from the bus riders who were surveyed on Earth Day. Christopher feels this would be good information to have.

For the next TAB meeting this is the information that the members would like on the agenda.

* Report on Public Safety, Transit Employees and Fixed Route riders
* Earth Day Rider Survey
* What is the Transit Department doing to make the bus stops safe?
* How do Transit Employees report safety concerns?
* CNM and UNM bus pass usage
* Presentation from Esperanza Bike Shop

**Matthew Torrez, Transit Enforcement Officer**

Matthew informed the TAB members that the following procedure should be followed when reporting safety concerns to their chain of command. Matthew states that this has been brought up directly to Superintendent Clarence Decker and Director Toon.

* Sergeant should be notified
* Sergeant notifies Lieutenant
* Lieutenant notifies Superintendent
* Superintendent notifies Deputy Director
* Deputy Director notifies Transit Director

Matthew reported this concern to his chain of command approximately 6 months ago and consistently since then nothing has been done. Matthew Torrez was asked what he would like the supervisors to do. Matthew answered he wants the officers to be safe in the field so that they can provide safety to the citizens, which means supplying ballistic vests like the city should be providing and driving vehicles that have less than 200,000 miles. For instance, an officer was almost ran over because the breaks went out on a security vehicle. He would like more training. The officers have asked for Narcan training since they deal with so many overdose calls. The officers were told “NO” from the Superintendent because the Transit Department does not want the liability. Mr. Torrez stated that currently there are no legal repercussions against anyone for administering Narcan.

**Chairperson’s Report, Brendan Miller**

The chairperson, Brendan Miller has the letter that was presented to the TAB members at the meeting on April 11, 2019 which was signed by several community supporters of the “Free” bus passes. Brendan is currently working on a letter of support to give to all City Councilors. Brendan will send a draft letter to the TAB members for input once letter is complete. The letter of approval can be discussed and amended at the next TAB meeting. After a response letter has been drafted the TAB members will present at a City Council meeting.

**Christopher Ramirez, TAB Member**

As a point of information Together 4 Brothers is currently working with the City Councilors on getting “Free” bus passes added to the budget next year. It was suggested that the letter should be completed soon and possibly be presented at the City Council meeting on Monday May 20th as the City budget will be discussed. The Transit Department has provided to the City Councilors the approximate cost for providing “Free” bus passes to all APS students, cost will be over $500,000. The agreements that were made between CNM and UNM to have their students receive “Free” bus passes is different from the one that is being proposed to the City by Transit. The amount of $500,000 came from the 85,000 APS students. Realistically the number of students who would ride the City bus would be about 10,000. We are hoping the City would follow the model of CNM and UNM and not use a specific fee based on the number of students but rather the amount of actual student riders. APS is dragging their feet on this issue is because APS receives revenue for students riding their school buses and one of their hesitations is APS would receive less money from the State because less students would be riding the school buses.

A discussion ensued regarding the creating of letters by the chairperson. Some board members feel that the draft letters should be drafted while all members are present at a TAB meeting. Other TAB members were okay with the Chairperson, Brendan creating a “DRAFT” letter then bringing the correspondence to the TAB members at a meeting or emailing to them for input and amendments with all members present to produce a final document. **Motion: Nancy JonesFrancis made a motion, the TAB members would like to recommend an amendment to the TAB Resolution to consider geographic diversity of the Transit Advisory Board members by City Council District and the motion 2nd by David Kesner. Motion passed unanimously 8-0.**

Brendan has visited the Unser/Central Transit Center and it is very nice. It is well lit at night and is a good addition to the City.

**Director’s Report**

Bernie Toon, Transit Director is out of the office to attend to a personal emergency. We do not know when Mr. Toon will return to work and an Acting Director has not been appointed yet.

Stephanie Dominguez, Deputy Transit Director will give the Director’s report in Mr. Toon’s absence. There were 779,357 riders in April and that is 5% down from the same time last year.

The Transit Department offered “Free” bus rides on Earth Day on April 22nd and currently there is no data to share. The Earth Day riders were surveyed and information from the survey will be provided at the next TAB meeting. Transit did not offer “Free” rides last year for Earth Day so there is no data to compare. There is data on the number of riders for Earth Day on Monday April 22nd, which was 31,825. In comparison to other Monday’s in the month the ridership was up.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) language is still being worked on for the Route Study. The Transit Department is hoping that the RFP will be ready to go out within the next 2 to 3 months. The Transit Department definitely wants to do this right and make it inclusive. We are looking at other Route Studies that have been completed in other cities such as Albuquerque. Israel Chavez would like to make a recommendation that the Route Study be community based as much as possible. We do not want any communities, such as communities of color, immigrant communities and low income communities left out of the Study. We would like to make sure the Study is all-inclusive.

**Director’s Report (Cont.)**

Cristopher Ramirez, asked what is the status of the of the “3Asks” letter that was provided to the Mr. Toon and TAB members? When Mr. Toon returns he will receive the letter for review. The TAB members voted at the April 11th meeting to support the “3 Asks” letter from Together 4 Brothers.

**Christopher Ramirez, TAB Member**

As an FYI to Stephanie and the group. People in the Bay area do not use a consultant to do their transit studies they use a community based planning committee to conduct the study. These studies are funded out of Grants. Christopher will send Stephanie some links to the various studies he has conducted regarding this issue.

**Israel Chavez, TAB Member**

Israel asked how transit and APS are calculating the number of “Free” bus passes that are being provided to City Council. Stephanie will look into this and see what number was given to City Council and how it was calculated. CNM and UNM do pay a fee for their passes.

**David Kesner, TAB Members**

Is there any data on how many CNM and UNM use the “Free” bus passes? ***Stephanie will look into this for the TAB members.***

**Unfinished Business**

None

**New Business**

Service on Fixed Ridership was a topic that Steve Pilon wanted to discuss and since he is not here we can table discussion until next meeting. **David Kesner, made a Motion to table discussion on Fixed Ridership service until June 13th meeting. Nancy JonesFrancis, 2nd the motion. Motion passed unanimously 8-0 by TAB members.**

May 17th is Bike to Work day. Transit will not be offering “Free” bus passes on this day.

**Christopher Ramirez, TAB Member**

A project that Together 4 Brothers is reviewing is how to increase transit equity for young people besides “Free” bus passes and allowing young people be able to access bikes in Albuquerque. Esperanza Bike Center offers free bikes to the public and they too are challenged with funding. Would there be a way for TAB members to work with Esperanza on transit issues? There is also a bike program called PACE Bikes that provides bikes around the city with the main focus being downtown. It would be nice if PACE could get more bike stations around the city in various neighborhoods. This would allow more people to ride a bike to get to a fixed route stop. Would a sponsorship opportunity be a way to fund bike stations around the city? The TAB members would like to have someone from Esperanza Bike Center and or/PACE Bikes give a presentation on their services at the next meeting.

There was a discussion about holding TAB meetings at different sites such as Community Centers or libraries around the City to allow various community members to attend the meetings. The TAB meetings would continue to be held at the ATC at its regularly scheduled meeting dates and times but there could be special meetings held off site.

**Public Comment** – Reminder there is a 2 minute limit on Public Comments

**Matthew Torrez, Transit Enforcement Officer**

The photos that were provided is just a small amount of weapons that were taken from individuals at bus stops or on the bus to be used against Transit Enforcement officers and bus drivers. Some graffiti that was recently noticed at the San Mateo and Central bus stop said “save your bullets for cops and bus drivers”. Matthew stated he can’t stress enough how under staffed they are with only 4 officers to patrol the entire City, which includes Rio Rancho and the south valley. The officers are stretched very thin and unable to respond to incidents in a timely matter. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

This safety issue will be in the letter that will be addressed to City Council. The TAB members feel that this is an extremely important topic that needs to be addressed right away and should not be “unfinished business”. This issue should be dealt with immediately and solved as this affects not only the officers but the drivers and the riders. If a letter is written maybe it should give examples of the amount of money the City could lose if an officer, driver or rider is injured or killed while on duty or riding the bus. Maybe the salary of adding additional officers would be less expensive than a worker’s comp or civilian claim.

**David Kesner, TAB Member**

David Kesner stated he is going to contact the mayor’s office to discuss this issue.

Chairperson, Brendan Miller asked officer Torrez how the TAB members can help. Matthew Torrez replied, ***we really appreciate your support right now, we need support. Maybe someone with a little louder voice than us officers might be helpful, as we seem to be going unheard. Brendan Miller asked, are there four officers including yourself? Matthew Torrez response, There are 3 officers in the downtown area, which are responsible for some of the businesses on 2nd street, there are two mobile patrol units for the entire City of Albuquerque and each mobile unit is maned by two officers. So, four officers cover the entire fixed route for Albuquerque. This is on a good day, when we have enough officers to man all patrols.***

**Chis Baca, Together 4 Brothers**

Thanked the TAB members for voting in support of the “Free” bus passes for students.

**Announcements**

Mark Gundlach, is an advocate for bike riders and owner of Outdoor Recreation. He was in the Albuquerque business community for several years and most recently was the General Manger of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Mark currently has a contract with the City of Albuquerque through Outdoor Recreation to teach APS students bike education. Outdoor Recreation gives out over 3000 bike helmets per year to students and works closely with Esperazna Bike Center. Mark is the founder of Day of the Tread which is a cycling event to benefit Pegasus Legal Services for Children. Day of the Tread event will be held on Sunday, October 27, 2019. There were 1500 riders last year and this year there will be over 2000. The age range is from 6 to 100 years old. There will be a costume contest, recharge zones, SAG support, music, entertainment, food and a drink garden. For more information you can log onto: **DayoftheTread.com**

Some facts on cycling, kids are no longer riding bikes, 5% of APS students combine walk and ride to school, which means if you have a school of 600 students only 30 of those students ride a bike or walk to school. Albuquerque is rated by League of American Cyclist 44th out of 50 states in biking for advocacy, facilities and just about everything that supports bicycling. The Mayor is supporting the Vision Zero initiative, which means working towards no pedestrian or cycling deaths in the City. The most recent statistics show for the past 5 years between 2011 and 2015, 365 people were killed in traffic crashes in our area and 39,500 people were injured and of those 2900 were serious or incapacitated. The commutes in Albuquerque are made of the following: walking 1.9%, bikes 1%, motorcycles 4% and autos 8% as you can see there is no bus service mentioned. Biking is the safest mode of transportation. If you are an adult who cycles you can add 7 years to your life.

**Adjournment**

The TAB meeting was adjourned at 5:27pm by Brendan Miller, Chair.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, June13, 2019; 4:00 PM at the ATC-2nd Floor**