



UNM / CNM / Sunport Transit Study

Public Involvement & Public Comments, April/May 2013

Meeting Purpose:

The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) held the fourth series of public meetings for the UNM / CNM / Sunport Transit Study. The public meetings were aimed at providing the public, especially specific stakeholder groups, with an update on the project, and soliciting input on the development of the short-list of route alternatives as well as land use considerations.

Meeting Format:

Three separate meetings were held on the following dates:

- An evening meeting on April 30th at the ***Loma Linda Community Center***.
- A mid-day meeting on May 1st at the ***UNM Student Union Building***.
- A mid-day meeting on May 2nd at the ***CNM Student Resource Center***.

The meetings included an hour-long presentation by Tony Sylvester, Project Manager, followed by a Q&A and public comment session. The presentation included the following topics: overview of project and its goals and objectives, features and characteristics of enhanced transit, the “short list” of potential route alternatives and the development of these alternatives, a discussion of measures that are to be used to evaluate these alternatives in the next phase of the study, and potential transit-supportive land uses.

Meeting Notification:

Newspaper advertisements were published in the following newspapers:

- ABQ Journal published on Sunday, April 28th in the New Mexico section of the paper.
- UNM Daily Lobo published on Tuesday, April 23rd and Wednesday, April 24th issues. (*NOTE: A publishing error indicated incorrect meeting dates*).
- ALIBI published on Wednesday, April 24th weekly issue.
- CNM Chronicle published on Tuesday, April 23rd weekly issue.
- April/May Neighborhood News (published each month by the City of Albuquerque Office of Neighborhood Coordination) available in print and on their website.

Mail:

748 meeting notification postcards were mailed on April 19th, 2013 to business owners that are in the study area identified through the InfoUSA database.



Email:

Meeting notification was emailed to the following groups:

- Project listserv containing approximately 250 people who had either attended a past meeting or were part of an interested local group.
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
- MRCOG Metropolitan Transportation Board, Transportation Coordinating Committee, and Public Involvement Committee.
- Rio Metro Regional Transit District Board.
- UNM and CNM for distribution through their internal email systems to faculty and staff.

Internet:

Meeting notification was posted on the following websites:

- CNM online calendar.
- MRCOG project website/calendar.
- April/May Neighborhood News (published each month by the City of Albuquerque Office of Neighborhood Coordination) available in print and on their website.
- Project Facebook page updates.
- Rio Metro website/calendar.

Other:

- Flyers provided to UNM, CNM, and other stakeholders for distribution.
- Rail Runner TV monitor ads.

Press Release:

A press release was issued on April 24th, 2013 to local news outlets.

Meeting Materials:

Meeting visuals included a Power Point presentation, six display boards which displayed information about the study area, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) characteristics, route alternatives (long list and short list), potential street sections, and initial screening summaries. In addition, meeting attendees received a comment form.

Attendance:

Loma Linda meeting: Approximately 24 people attended, not including project staff.

UNM meeting: Approximately 18 people attended, not including project staff.

CNM meeting: Approximately 10 people attended, not including project staff.



Clicker Response:

Interactive clickers were used during the meeting to gather information. A summary of responses is provided below.

- 1) *What is your affiliation to the UNM / CNM / Sunport area?*
 - About 70% of the respondents were residents, and again there were difficulties reaching UNMH and business owners. The number of UNM attendees dropped significantly, perhaps because of the proximity to finals and the end of the semester. It is uncertain if UNM circulated an internal email this time around – although all of the attendees from the last meeting were added to our listserv and received the MRCOG emails this time.
- 2) *How did you hear about this meeting?*
 - Email was again the most effective communication method, followed by word of mouth, the Journal, and Facebook.
- 3) *Have you used transit within the last month?*
 - 29% used transit most days, 20% did so occasionally, and 51% had not used transit.
- 4) *What three things would encourage you to use transit more often?*
 - 70% said more frequent service would make them more likely to use transit, followed by longer service hours (this was captured in “other” at the Loma Linda meeting), more direct routes, and more connections to other routes. Price, technology, and safety were ranked lowest.
- 5) *Which of the 3 remaining routes best serves your travel needs?*
 - Most people said Yale or University would best serve their travel needs – only 13% chose Buena Vista.

Comments:

Verbal comments were recorded by a project team member on a flip chart during the meeting, and a comment form was provided to attendees to allow for written comments to be submitted at their discretion. The comment form was also available on-line along with project information and an email address was provided to the public for submission of comments. Post-it Notes were also provided so participants could comment directly on the display boards. A total of 6 written comment forms were collected at the meetings; 3 forms were received electronically; and 3 email comments were submitted.

Loma Linda evening community meeting:

Verbal Comments Recorded by Flip-Chart:

- Buena Vista has lots of residential uses.
- The corridors under consideration mirror some ABQ Ride routes. How will they interact with ABQ Ride?
- Would like bus service on south part of Girard.
- How would median bus stops work?
- Yale BAT lane option – people might pass in the other lane
- South Yale complete street plan is proposing on-street parking, which conflicts with these plans. (though a couple residents said they liked the transit idea better and didn't like the South Yale proposals)



- Will there be bus shelters? Need 8-10 feet for that.
- Need to coordinate with South Yale complete streets project. Don't do the same project twice.
- How much of this project is driven by/paid for by UNM and CNM? Will UNM be able to reduce their bus services?
- Traffic islands interfere with left turns, like at Ross & Yale.
- Lots of bus drivers park on Buena Vista, behind ABQ Ride garage.
- Cross-campus Yale connection – how will you control traffic and prevent cars from entering the facility?
- Concern about the land use questions in our PowerPoint – they will be “used against” the neighborhoods. Proposed new uses can threaten existing residential uses.

Written Comments to Comment Form Questions:

The potential route alternatives recommended for further evaluation were presented at the meeting and are included in the presentation on our website. Which of these best serves your travel needs within the study area?

- Thank you for keeping Santa Clara closed!!
- I prefer the bike lane options! Do NOT make a bus route through the UNM mall!

Have we missed any other critical information that should be considered as we begin the evaluation of alternatives process?

- Limits traffic on residential streets.
- Minimizes car trips in the area.
- Simplicity.

Our approach to developing a land use strategy was presented at the meeting and is included in the presentation on our website. Do you have suggestions or comments you want us to consider as we develop the land use strategy?

- There are no Girard alternate options.
- Mixed-use buildings are great but the living spaces still need to be affordable. \$2200/month only serves to gentrify the area and drive long-term residents or even students and families out.

Please use this pace to provide any additional comments pertaining to this study that you may have.

- There is a bus stop sign at 2800 Vail Ave with a bus route service 1997. I think the bus company should remove it or add a bus route to it.

UNM mid-day meeting:

Verbal Comments Recorded by Flip-Chart:

- Median-running BRT: last person being thought about is the pedestrian. Pedestrians use medians to help cross the street. Need pedestrian improvements.
- Concerns about where Buena Vista traffic will go.
- Cross-campus Yale connection is crazy. There are too many bikes/pedestrians. It's not too far to go around the campus.



Written Comments to Comment Form Questions:

The potential route alternatives recommended for further evaluation were presented at the meeting and are included in the presentation on our website. Which of these best serves your travel needs within the study area?

- I think that the Yale Blvd option I would agree with. *It would be ok as long as it does not intrude on one of the best parts of the UNM campus, which I consider as the “heart”. The duck pond area is such a respite from the hectic nature of this area. I dread the idea of cutting directly through the campus, especially between Zimmerman and the Duck Pond. Scholes Hall, as well, has such historical impact as well as the Alumni Chapel. Please do not destroy this area with a connecting route.
- Combination of Yale and University.

Have we missed any other critical information that should be considered as we begin the evaluation of alternatives process?

- I live in the East Mountains 1 mile south of I-40 near Sedillo Hill. I know there is a park-and-ride across from the 66 gas station at the I-40 Sedillo Hill exit. I have never used it, but would love to if I could commute to UNM and be dropped off near the Frontier! How can I find out more info about routes and hours/days?
- You really need to look at connecting to park-and-ride areas (think the Popejoy Shuttle)- most people don't live within the corridor and as we get older, most of us can't walk long distances- and most of us aren't willing to walk long distances if we can avoid that by driving and parking.

Our approach to developing a land use strategy was presented at the meeting and is included in the presentation on our website. Do you have suggestions or comments you want us to consider as we develop the land use strategy?

- I like the Brick Light District. Often I find parking behind a restaurant. Having lived off and on in the area for 50 years, I am happy to see how this part of Harvard has changed and I am now frequenting the eating establishments here as a first choice. It feels safer to me.
- Retail and restaurants have a hard time in this economy.

Please use this pace to provide any additional comments pertaining to this study that you may have.

- I am concerned for the long-time residents of Buena Vista between Cesar Chavez and Central. How will these changes impact their quality of life!
- I live at Carlisle and Indian School and come to UNM 2 – 3 times a week. Sports facilities 2 – 3 times a month and to the airport 2 -3 times a year. UNM North campus occasionally. I'm a transit rider but only when it's more convenient when driving. As usual- there was no opportunity to talk to the planners- they were all involved and no one acknowledged me.



CNM mid-day meeting:

Verbal Comments Recorded by Flip-Chart:

- Need to consider how to accommodate sporting and other special events that draw large crowds.
- Concerns about where bike traffic on University would go if bike lanes are removed.
- Cross-campus Yale connection will need to deal with bike, pedestrian, and skateboard cross-traffic.
- UNM ultimately wants to remove cars from Redondo, but buses would be allowed.

Written Comments to Comment Form Questions:

The potential route alternatives recommended for further evaluation were presented at the meeting and are included in the presentation on our website. Which of these best serves your travel needs within the study area?

- Yale corridor.

Other:

Written Sticky Note Comments on Display Boards:

Route Alternatives, Long List and Short List

- Re: Yale route. Comment - Going on Yale through UNM presents safety, noise, and existing art issues.

Potential Street Sections

- Re: University Boulevard South of Cesar Chavez (busway added to roadway median). Comment - This is the CORRECT urban avenue hierarchy: HIGH speeds in middle, LOW speeds on edges; see BRT Chicago.
- Re: Yale Boulevard South of Central (curbside busways, right turn only for cars). Comment - A lot of bike riders on Yale, this format would seem to make things not bike friendly.

Initial Screening Summary 1

- Re: General Feasibility of Lomas/Yale – 1) Traffic diversion on Lomas due to land takers and 2) Potential for conflicts with pedestrians on campus. Comment – How are these not fatal flaws?

Electronically Submitted Comment Forms:

The potential route alternatives recommended for further evaluation were presented at the meeting and are included in the presentation on our website. Which of these best serves your travel needs within the study area?

- The best route that connects the north, main and south campus lands is University Blvd. If there are hubs along Central that can be used to distribute commuters quickly through campus



east/west, this would provide the optimum system. This could be accomplished with smaller Disney type open vehicles that circulate continuously on Redondo, with intermittent forays into the main heart of the main campus. It assumes that there are also strong BRT type transit east/west on Central that could connect with this system. The corner of Central and University becomes critical as a major transit hub. As such, land use on the northwest corner (or in the median) becomes integral to mitigating congestion and facilitating transfer to the local Quick-Rides.

- Additional east/west BRT routes are needed, perhaps on Lead/Coal and/or Gibson to draw traffic off this congested area...or consider neighborhood connectors.
- When developing the final solution, it will be critical to address UNM internal transit strategies so that proper connectivity can be enhanced. Funding for buses would be helpful, as well as operating expenses. It should be faster, less costly and more convenient to ride the bus or bike than to drive.
- I think that Yale would be the most direct route through this area while allowing students from CNM to use the bus system and allowing many people choose to shop and attend sports games in the area without needing to use their cars for the entire trip.
- I don't know if I would use this route. However, I have used the bus service at Lomas and University to go to the game and it was very convenient. I would use it again.

Have we missed any other critical information that should be considered as we begin the evaluation of alternatives process?

- The area that is not addressed that students would most benefit from is a park/ride system located perhaps at the old truck stop at Menaul/University. Grabbing the bus to quickly get to class would be essential. Many students live in the NE Heights and west side.
- I think that it is important to consider that it may not be a good idea to have buses on the UNM main campus. I think that even having buses driving on Redondo may make for too many conflicts between the buses and other vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists. I think that it may be a good idea to consider making any route use Central and University since many people already will work to Central to utilize the three Rapid Ride buses and the 66.
- The buses on Mountain Road need to be changed to small buses. The weight of the buses causes damage to our adobe homes. The bus drivers need to slow down on Mountain Road. The speed limit is 25 mph. In the 1970s, buses were taken off Edith Boulevard because the weight was damaging the homes. The buses running down Mountain Road late at night and on the weekends seem to be empty. I would like to see a study done on the schedules before I comment on days and times buses run. I realize that people who utilize the buses have this as their only transportation so I do not want to take the buses away from them. My issue is the weight of the buses.

Our approach to developing a land use strategy was presented at the meeting and is included in the presentation on our website. Do you have suggestions or comments you want us to consider as we develop the land use strategy?



- The land strategies need more development to better understand alternatives and present options. While I believe that the ppt was excellent at trying to explain land use, it seemed that the alternatives presented were confusing to some of the audience. Perhaps some overlay sketches to demonstrate what development would look like in the actual location to be discussed.
- It would also seem that when considering land use that context would be an important factor. While I like and appreciate the Brickyard's mixed use approach, it looks more like the mid-west or Edo.
- I strongly support the notion of 2-3 story mixed use along Central and especially at the corner of Central and University. Four story is too overwhelming on that corner.
- I just think that it would be a good idea to involve everyone in the process, which includes large entities and also the residents of the area.
- The alternative transportation should not diminish the residential area of Martineztown/Santa Barbara. High Density apartments do not belong in historical residential neighborhoods. There should not be high density on Lomas between the RR and I-25. This is a historical residential neighborhood. Good Planning would discourage this type of development.

Please use this space to provide any additional comments pertaining to this study that you may have.

- As the study progresses, I would like to see more discussion regarding multi-modal transit centers and bicycle connections. Also, will metrics be developed so that success can be evaluated at periodic intervals to test the solutions?
- Great progress! Thanks for sharing.
- I like everything about this process except the absence of Light Rail, or preferably Modern Streetcar or Rapid Streetcar, service in this plan. University Blvd. would be perfect for this.
- I believe the Clicker questions should include soliciting public opinion about the Rail alternatives, especially for University Blvd. A strong public response to this might move the Powers in this direction. The idea is to promote the notion of long-term gain over just up-front cost, admittedly a tall order in our Here And Now society.
- If BRT turns out to be a good stepping-stone, it needs to be designed so as to be easily convertible to Rail as soon as the busses wear out and this region ever learns what just about everybody else already knows about multi-modal transportation. This letter is not anti-bus. It's anti-bus-only.
- Alternative transportation is definitely needed. It should be timely and convenient. Most importantly, it should not diminish the residential historical neighborhoods.