

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS ASSOCIATION

105 Stanford, SE
Albuquerque, NM 87106

December 18, 2014

Bruce Rizzieri
Director, ABQ Ride
PO Box 1293
Albuquerque, NM 87103



Dear Mr. Rizzieri:

We appreciate your holding the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) workshop and answering questions from people in the University Heights Association (UHA) area on November 10.

We encourage you to have similar meetings in the future. Our experience with the Yale street development project in the 1990s and the Lead and Coal project shows that having strong public involvement, including an advisory task force of people from throughout the corridor, is essential to a successful project.

UHA supports transit improvements in this area and throughout the City. However, we cannot support any of the alternatives that you have proposed for Segment 4B through the University Area. All of the designs are not exhaustive of the most reasonable options, nor are any of them the preferred designs.

The most reasonable ART alternatives are ones that also:

1. Allow for safe passage for the thousands of people going north-south across Central each day. Elements necessary include maintaining a median and limiting the number of traffic lanes, providing for frequent, wide north-south crosswalks, including at Yale, Cornell, Stanford, Princeton, and Girard, and providing wider sidewalks along Central. The current proposals do not enhance the pedestrian/bicycle safety, which they must do for the area and so that the ART could be successful.
2. Limit vehicle impacts on the eight north-south streets south of Central from Yale to Girard, and the adjoining east-west streets of Silver, Lead and Coal. The proposed designs would reduce the traffic lanes on Central, which would result in more vehicle traffic using the north-south streets and Silver, Lead and Coal. Silver is a designated bicycle boulevard and it is inappropriate to increase vehicle traffic on that street. The Lead-Coal Corridor improvement project was specifically not designed to accommodate more traffic from Central. The north-south streets also are not designed to increased vehicle traffic, which would be detrimental to the neighborhood.

3. Support businesses and vehicle traffic flow. A specific purpose of ART is to support "corridor businesses." Designs that eliminate westbound left turn lanes on Central do not support existing businesses. On the contrary, such a design both increases negative impacts on neighborhood streets and decreases the number of motorists that can/would access the businesses. Thus, the two existing traffic lanes in each direction on Central must be maintained. Eliminating a traffic lane would result in more congestion. A single traffic lane and on-street parking would greatly increase congestion, as cars trying to parallel park would result in more accidents and more congestion by blocking traffic in the one lane as cars park or exit. Traffic lanes are much more important to traffic flow and for businesses than is the on-street parking. Any study of Central on-street parking will show that many of the spaces are unused during the vast majority of the time.

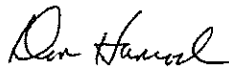
4. Strong consideration must be given to one dedicated lane for the BRT, which can be used for buses in both directions, or a single dedicated lane and a second lane that can be used by both BRT and other traffic.

UHA is very interested in working with you to develop reasonable ART alternatives so that improved transit is a benefit to the City as a whole, as well as to the neighborhoods.

Sincerely,



Joe Gallegos, President



Don Hancock, Secretary/Treasurer

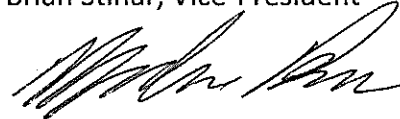


Julie Kidder

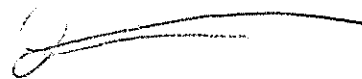
Sherry Smith



Brian Stinar, Vice-President



Marlene Brown



Jennifer Simpson



Eugene Trosterud

cc: Mayor Berry, City Councilors, County Commissioners, UNM President Robert Frank, Rep. Gail Chasey, Sen. Cisco McSorley