



# County of Los Alamos

## Minutes

### Transportation Board

*David Hampton, Chair; Michael Altherr, Vice Chair; Karen Edwards; and Georgia Strickfaden, Members*

Thursday, April 4, 2024

5:30 PM

1000 Central Avenue, Council Chambers

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

April 4, 2024, Transportation Board Meeting was called to order at 5:30 P.M.

Present:

David Hampton, Chair

Michael Altherr, Vice Chair

Georgia Strickfaden

Karen Edwards

Council Liaison:

Melanee Hand

Staff in attendance:

Juan Rael, Public Works Director

Louise Romero, Sr. Management Analyst

AV Support - Perry Rutherford

Members of the public in attendance:

Dr. Robert Bourque

Mr. Randal Pair

Lisa Hampton on Zoom

#### 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The April 4, 2024, meeting agenda was approved as presented; motion passed unanimously.

#### 3. PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Robert Bourque commented on the issues at the North Mesa roundabout.

Mr. Randal Pair commented on the traffic issues near the airport.

#### 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

[18583-24](#) Approval of Minutes from the Los Alamos Transportation Board Meeting on March 7, 2024

**Attachments:** [A - Draft March 7, 2024 Transportation Board Meeting Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Member Edward seconded by Vice Chair Altherr that the March 7, 2024 meeting minutes be approved as presented; motion passed unanimously.

#### 5. PRESENTATIONS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS (Action maybe taken on these items)

[18582-24](#) A Bus For Us - Inclusion of Blind and Low-Vision Customers in Public Transportation.

**Presenter: Karen Edwards, Member of the Transportation Board**

Member Karen Edwards is a member of the National Federation of the Blind in New Mexico and Canes and Canines of Los Alamos.

Member Edwards grew up in Los Alamos and worked at LANL. She is now completely blind. Mobility is at the heart of the fears that we all harbor about blindness.

Tools in the Toolbox:

- Smartphones
- Large print and magnification
- Braille and speech screen output
- White cane
- Dog guide
- Sighted guide

Navigation without eyesight challenges us to utilize our senses of hearing, touch, and smell to gather information around us, including even the bottoms of our feet. The blind utilize information those with eyesight may not note including sun position; the sound of traffic flow, aromas, rate/time walked, landmarks such as planters and poles, pavement changes and even GPS data. Whether a blind person uses a dog guide or white cane, he is the navigator. Dogs and canes are mobility aids.

Member Edwards also talked about the steps it takes to plan a trip and then taking a trip.

She thanked the staff of Atomic City Transit for making it possible for blind and low vision customers to join the mainstream and to contribute to the world.

The handout will be included with the meeting minutes.

## **6. REPORTS & UPDATES**

### **A. County Council Liaison Reports**

Councilor Hand mentioned the following:

1. At the March 22nd NCRTD meeting, discussion of potential impacts to Los Alamos County regarding the possibility of GRT.
2. Presentation to Council on the LA Health Plan.
3. Legislative session, clean transportation and fuel standards.
4. Traffic impacts by Ted Wika with LANL.

Tickler:

1. Budget hearings will be held in late April.
2. Bike Month Proclamation
3. Public Works Week.

### **B. Chair's Report**

An interview was conducted for a new T-Board member, the item is on the April 9th Council meeting agenda for approval.

### **C. Board Member Reports**

Member Strickfaden- The Tourism Implementation Task Force has been reorganized; the task force will meet quarterly with the Lodgers Tax Board.

Vice Chair Altherr- Review future agenda items list.

Member Edwards- Is there funding for the additional work on the parcel at 19th Street?

**D. Staff Report**

[18584-24](#) Public Works Staff Report - March 2024

**Attachments:** [A – Public Works Staff Report – March 2024](#)

Juan Rael, Public Works Director provided the following update:

1. Bike to Work on May 16th.
2. Airport Manager recruitment, interview have been conducted.
3. DP Road Phase II has been approved by Council.
4. Construction projects in progress- Loma Linda, Rose Street, Urban Trail, Fuel Farm and the Golf Course improvements.

**7. NEXT MEETING/FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS****FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

- Presentation and Adoption of Mid-Block Crossing Policy (May)
- Denver Steels Phase II Roadway & Utilities Improvements Project (May)
- Transit Center Preliminary Planning Efforts (May)
- Bicycle Safety Group Update (TBD)
- Open Meetings Act Presentation (TBD)
- Public Works Design & Construction Standards (TBD)
- Revisit Bike and Pedestrian Plans (TBD)
- Presentation by LA Public Schools Superintendent (TBD)
- Presentation by Eric Peterson (TBD)

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

The Transportation Board meeting adjourned at 7:05 P.M.

Approved



5/3/2024

David Hampton, Chair

Date

# A Bus for Us

## Inclusion of Blind and Low-Vision Customers in Public Transit



**Wednesday, January 10, 2024**

**Presented at 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.**

**101 Camino Entrada, Building 1, Room 200**

**Presented by Karen Edwards – Los Alamos County Transportation Board,  
National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico, Canes and Canines of Los  
Alamos**

Workshop participants will learn about tools and techniques employed by low-vision and blind transit users, and gain skill in best practices to interface with blind customers.

*When we hear the word 'blind,' we might imagine:*

- pity from the public
- Indigent
- Left out
- Confined and restricted
- Boredom
- Loneliness and isolation
- Hopelessness
- Depression

*Imagine you have a superpower that could transform blindness to:*

- Self sufficient
- Independent
- Explorer
- Socially engaged with friends, family and community



**YOU MAKE**  
*a Difference*

***Atomic City Transit drivers bestow this superpower each day!***

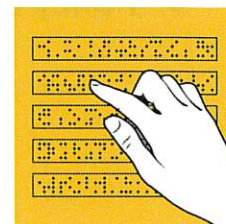
**Because of the service you provide us each day, we can add a powerful tool to our kit.**

Blindness is defined as: *Visual acuity less than 20/200*

Functional eyesight: individual may be able to use eyesight to perform tasks such as recognize colorful, high contrast images as in reading a sign by standing closer.

Tools Used by blind travelers:

- Smartphones
- Large print and magnification
- Braille and speech screen output
- White cane
- Dog guide
- Sighted guide



**Navigation** is ascertaining one's position to plan and execute a route.

- Navigating without eyesight challenges us to utilize our senses of hearing, touch, and smell to gather information around us, including even the bottoms of our feet.
- The blind utilize information those with eyesight may not note including sun position; the sound of traffic flow; aromas; rate/time walked; landmarks such as planters and poles; pavement changes; and even GPS data.
- Whether a blind person uses a dog guide or white cane, he is the navigator. Dogs and canes are mobility aids.



## NM White Cane Law

Full information can be found at: [www.cfb.state.nm.us/legal-information/white-cane-law/](http://www.cfb.state.nm.us/legal-information/white-cane-law/)

This act [28-7-1 to 28-7-7 NMSA 1978] may be cited as the “White Cane Law”.

It is the policy of this state to encourage and enable persons who are blind, visually impaired or who have another physical disability to participate fully in the social and economic life of the state and to engage in remunerative employment.

- **Equal right to use public facilities**
- **Driver to take precautions approaching blind**
- **Interference with rights of blind; penalty**
- **Annual proclamation of white cane safety day by governor**
- **Policy of state on employment of persons with a disability**



***Imagine you are a blind traveler going from home to a meeting at the Los Alamos County Municipal Building. What will you need to arrive safely at your destination?***

#### Planning a trip

- Accessible websites which can be read by speech and braille screen users
- Colorful high contrast larger font brochures
- Tactile maps posted in community
- Outlining bus routes
- Staff who are knowledgeable and can clearly communicate route details

#### Taking the trip

- Bus stops should be extra visible
- Bus stops identifiable by sound or touch
- Arriving bus can be identified by time or verbally via driver or app
- Identifying upcoming stops using verbal announcements
- **Number one: a driver willing to remember the stop I ask for when I board**

#### No Thank You's

- Grab my white cane or dog guide or the arm handling the dog or cane
- Shouting instructions from a distance using words like over there, those trees, that seat.
- The silent treatment e.g., nodding and pointing; mumbling and grunting.
- Issuing commands to the person's dog guide Providing unnecessary data e.g., "you're walking up the stairs."
- Communicating to a sighted companion rather than directly to the blind person.

#### Yes Please's

- Clear concise descriptions: "a seat is available about six rows back on your right" or "as you exit the bus, turn left and travel about 10 yards to the intersection of 42 and Sandia"
- Introducing yourself and offer assistance you can offer. "Hi, I'm Mike from Atomic City. May I be of help with directions or by offering an arm to the next intersection?"
- If not using sighted guide help, walk a few feet ahead or behind the blind person while maintaining verbal contact

**Thank you, the staff of Atomic City Transit for employing your superpowers to make it possible for blind and low vision customers, and all customers to transcend obstacles and to join the mainstream and to contribute to our world. Because of the work you do, we as blind people don't see eyesight lost so much as access gained.**

Considerations for Future Transit Accessibility Enhancements  
(listed in order of realistic to fantastic)

Formally survey disabled transit riders and staff to identify areas for continuous quality improvement;

Research best practices for accessible transit nationwide and apply locally if feasible;

Seek specialized grants and awards that fund and promote accessibility projects;

Identify sources and costs for producing transit maps in "extra-visible" and raised line formats;

Work with coaches and rehabilitation specialists serving the disabled to become familiar with Atomic City Transit services;

Reward County transit staff who promote inclusivity and accessibility;

News articles featuring the disabled utilizing transit;

Promote cross-County partnerships and collaborations that encourage differently-abled residents and visitors to join the mainstream of travel; .

All new fleet vehicles be equipped with speech output for route and stop identification;

More visually friendly and braille signage;

Establish a universally understood and highly visible signal blind travelers can use to signal the bus driver to stop;

Bus drivers who are people people, are precision navigators, and skilled at painting pictures with fewer than a thousand words;

Tactile pop-out buttons on the edge of seat backs that would deploy while occupied, thus signaling which seats are empty;

Motion activated bus stop poles that make a sound as a pedestrian approachesBe nationally recognized on a list of "most accessible Places to live."