

## Duke City needs a BRT system now

By Kevin Yearout  
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As community and business leaders, NAIOP and the GACC are writing to strongly disagree with the statements of Randal O'Toole of the Washington, D.C.-based Cato Institute in his Oct. 20 op-ed published in the Albuquerque Journal claiming that Albuquerque does not need a bus rapid transit system.

O'Toole claims that "highway subsidies average two or three pennies per passenger mile, while subsidies to ABQ riders average nearly 90 cents per passenger mile." As close observers of development in Albuquerque, we have seen firsthand that the subsidies directed to roadways are not just "pennies per passenger mile."

Every year the city spends millions in capital improvement, and developers spend millions more solving traffic issues peculiar to their projects. Yes, the costs are high, but these investments achieve solutions to our city's transportation problems and are the right choice for our community and our economy.

NAIOP and the GACC believe the advancement of a bus rapid transit system in Albuquerque is a proper transportation solution to address the needs of our public. One-third of the jobs in the city are within a mile of Central, and one quarter of the population.

In addition to this, the most essential destinations in the city are located off of Central — Old Town, Downtown, Presbyterian Hospital, University of New Mexico, Central New Mexico Community College, and a myriad of others are on or within walking distance of Central. It is our future as the place where the aging Boomers (which includes the signatories) and the Millennials want to live, play and work. These two groups represent more than half of the Albuquerque population.

According to the article, "The Young and Restless and the Nation's Cities," published in the City Observatory this month, "Within the largest metropolitan areas, well-educated young adults are increasingly moving to close-in urban neighborhoods. Talented young adults, in the aggregate are much more likely to choose to locate in close-in urban neighborhoods than are other Americans." The article goes on to say "Businesses are increasingly locating in or near urban centers to better tap into the growing pool of well-educated young workers, and because these central city locations enable firms to better compete for talent locally and recruit talent from elsewhere."

In addition, there is an opportunity to build the BRT system with a 3:1 or 4:1 Federal Capital Investment Grant Program match which would provide Albuquerque with substantial leverage of

our local investment. We would also like to note that cities like Tucson and Fort Collins, Colo., have taken advantage of this funding to make substantial improvements in their cities.

Our organizations believe Albuquerque needs a bus rapid transit and the time is now. Our professional community is very familiar with the hidden costs of being too late into the marketplace. The Innovation Corridor, which will be anchored by the [STC.UNM](#) and government and business community collaborative “Innovate ABQ.” is the heart of a new economy that is being built as you read this.

Although many may be unaware of its emergence, the signs are everywhere. It is being built around the brain power of our Millennials and the capital stored up by the Boomers. This is a bootstrap effort to make the best of what we have.

The BRT allows the innovation of the arts and science of this corridor to be knitted together like no other system can. If we are going to change our future we have to have a city with systems that reflect the needs of our future. NAIOP and the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce believe the BRT system will be the key element in setting the stage to make this happen.