



LAURA NEUMANN  
CHIEF OF STAFF/  
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Patricia Yeager, PhD  
CEO  
The Independence Center  
729 S. Tejon St.  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

January 10, 2013

Dear Patricia,

Please allow me to respond to the concerns you raised in your recent letter to City Council Members by topic to best address each issue:

*Taxi Vouchers:*

Regarding comments on the use of taxi vouchers, our program will be available only to citizens who are eligible to use our Metro Mobility ADA paratransit system. In accordance with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we provide curb-to-curb, and in many cases door-to-door, transportation to any certified disabled person who cannot take the fixed-route bus and whose trip begins and ends within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of our bus routes. We provide, on average, 550 of these trips each weekday. The net cost to us is \$22/ride.

With the taxi voucher program, Metro Mobility customers traveling up to seven miles will be given the option to ride a taxi from one of the taxi companies operating in this area. The rider will pay the same fare as Metro Mobility (\$3.50), and the net cost to the City for taxi trips will be \$13.50/ride. In the first year of this program we expect 3-5% of our ADA-required trips will be made by taxi. The cost savings is expected to be in excess of \$60,000 per year. We are modeling our taxi voucher program after the successful taxi voucher program in the Denver area that's been operated by RTD for several years.

*More frequent rush hour bus service and full evening service:*

Like you, Patricia, we would like to be in the position to expand bus service to include greater frequency and extended evening service even broader than we did in 2013, however the backlog of safety priorities in streets, bridges, and storm water management (along with the needs of many other city services) limits our ability to do so with General Fund dollars. We are pleased that \$700,000 was added to the City's transit budget in 2013 to provide evening bus service on our highest use routes, including evening ADA paratransit service in those areas. This demonstrates the Mayor's commitment to providing the best transit service we can with the resources available to the community.

*Transit service to the entire Powers corridor so people can take jobs there:*

The City's Transit Services Division (TSD) applied for a federal Job Access/Reverse Commute

grant to fund bus service to the key stretch of Powers Boulevard between Constitution Avenue and Barnes Road starting in 2013. The committee evaluating this request recommends that the project be funded. Unfortunately, this funding is available for just one year. The TSD will reassess our financial condition mid-year 2013 to determine whether funding is available to continue this new bus route for at least two years. If so, we expect that this service will be seriously considered for implementation starting Fall 2013.

*Bus service returned on-base:*

The TSD has been discussing with Fort Carson representatives cost-effective ways to provide transit service to, and on, Fort Carson. Fort Carson recently began providing a circulator bus system on post. Presently, passengers can use our Bus Route #11 to connect to the on-post circulator buses, by a transfer at the bus stop on B Street. We are discussing with Fort Carson representatives the possibility of additional linkages between our bus routes and the Fort Carson circulator system. We will keep you updated in this regard.

*Use of planning incentives within the transit corridors:*

The City is always looking for ways to encourage more in-fill, high density and transit oriented development. This not only makes our transit system more effective and efficient, it reduces the need to extend all City services over a greater geographical area. The City currently has a set of standard incentives available to promote general economic development in the community. While these incentives are not specifically aimed building housing in transit corridors as you suggest, these incentives could be used for that purpose in certain circumstances, especially in geographic areas of the community that have been targeted for redevelopment. In addition, the City has developed a "white paper" on in-fill development which includes many elements consistent with an effective transit system.

*Create a real transit plan that meets the needs of more than the 4,000 individuals who currently ride the bus, according to the Mayor (in October 31 joint Council/Mayor meeting), one that will increase ridership toward levels that help sustain the system:*

The City worked with the Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG) to develop the 2035 Regional Public Transportation Plan – as part of the overall regional transportation plan. This plan identifies future needs and recommended transit corridors. Additionally, the City is continually looking at ways to best, and most cost-effectively, provide transit service in the area. As mentioned previously, we are excited that \$700,000 was added to the City's transit budget in 2013 to provide evening bus service on our highest use routes, including evening ADA paratransit service in those areas. You may rest assured our aggressive approach to finding efficiencies within our current budget in order to provide services relevant to our Citizens is in the forefront of all that we do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laura Neumann', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Laura Neumann