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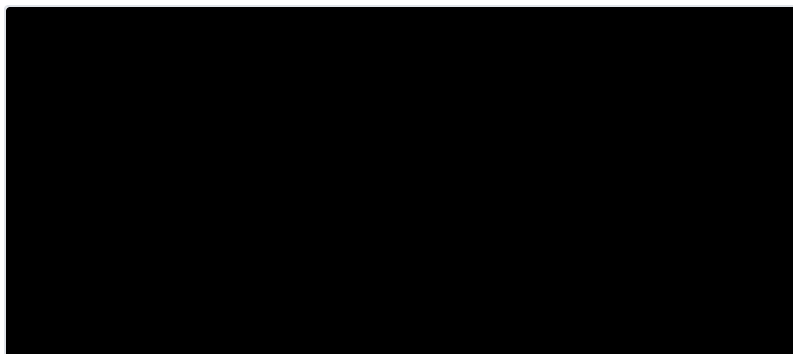
Date: Tue, Aug 5, 2025 at 10:32 PM

Subject: Focus on mobility equity : "What free transit looks like in Albuquerque, nearly two years after the city eliminated fares"

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What free transit looks like in Albuquerque, nearly two years after the city eliminated fares



**What free transit looks like in Albuquerque,
nearly two years after the ...**

Next City reports Albuquerque's zero-fare transit, made permanent in 2023, has boosted ridership by 20% and aids...

EXCERPT

Albuquerque made zero-fare transit permanent in November 2023, becoming one of the largest U.S. cities to implement zero-fare transit. About a year and a half later, transit officials and advocates say the zero-fare program is working as intended, by serving the city's lowest-income residents. As some other mid-sized cities walk back their plans to make transit free, in Albuquerque the program is sticking around.

"This is a public service, and the people that we serve really rely on it," says Leslie Keener, director of the City of Albuquerque's transit department. "I think it's a way to really just open up access and create mobility so that people have the opportunity to have some upward movement."

Mobility for survival Nearly 90% of Albuquerque's bus riders have household incomes of less than \$35,000 per year, and a similar percentage don't have access to a vehicle, Next City reports. Making it easier for the city's lowest-income residents to get around is part of what Christopher Ramirez calls "the first purpose of public transit."

"Transit equity is giving the people that are most in need the resources, and then build out" other aspects of public transit, such as routes and frequency, says Ramirez, the co-founder and executive director of Together for Brothers. In 2017, the community organization conducted a community health impact assessment that led to a focus on transit equity advocacy. Starting in 2019, the community organization has led a coalition to push for free transit in Albuquerque.