

Press Release

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The Coalition to Make ART Smart Filed Suit Challenging the FTA's Failure to Adequately Consider Environmental Impacts of Albuquerque Rapid Transit Project

Today in the United States District Court for the District of New Mexico, the Coalition to Make ART Smart has filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Secretary of Transportation and the City of Albuquerque.

Doug Peterson, spokesperson for Make ART Smart states:

“The current design of the Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) project on Historic Route 66 is so destructive and violative of federal and state law that the Coalition was left with no choice but to file suit, particularly in light of an April 4 deadline to challenge the project in court. Despite widespread public opposition, the City plans to force a design that will carve a 10-mile scar down the most treasured and storied thoroughfare in Albuquerque. Neither the City of Albuquerque nor the Federal Transit Authority have adequately studied the effect of the ART project in order to determine:

- Impact on the environment
- Potential degradation of the historical integrity of the 80 historic landmarks along Albuquerque's Route 66
- Changes to traffic volume, patterns and flow in adjacent neighborhood streets due to the reduction of lanes along Central Ave.
- Impact of lane reduction, removal of left turns and other factors on local area businesses
- Impact of the double center lane bus system running concurrently and alongside Route 66 buses on Central Ave.

For several months, The Coalition has collectively spent hundreds of hours studying the current design and bringing concerns to the City, but the City has failed to cooperate appropriately and in a timely manner with citizen and neighborhood groups to consider alternative proposals to ART.

The Coalition's lawsuit asks the Court to declare that the FTA inappropriately granted the City an exemption from federal environmental review that would have revealed the current design's harmful environmental impacts and provided a process to resolve them.

While the Coalition seeks relief from the U.S. District Court, we are hopeful that the City will voluntarily reconsider the project and make the changes necessary to protect Route 66 and the citizens of Albuquerque and preserve its ability to obtain the FTA funding for a modern transit system that serves rather than harms our City. ”