

CITY MANAGER: _____

DATE: _____

October 18, 2016

Dear Mayor Leeser and City Council Members:

Since our inception as the Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee, October 2015, we have been discussing a Veterans Ride/Rate which would alleviate transportation difficulties for our community veterans. The VAAC discussion about El Paso providing veterans a discounted or free bus pass has been going on for about a year. We as a committee feel that this is taking way too long to implement. Not having any kind of transportation is a stress our veterans face everyday. We have been proactive as a committee researching and speaking with other cities that have similar programs in place. We have found that providing this service to veterans enables them to become more independent and feel support by the city they live in.

On March 2016, we came before City Council and asked for consideration in providing a Veterans Ride/Rate service to our local veterans. We presented how essential this service is for veterans and cited the use of the FTA funding for this program. We gave examples of how other cities such as Houston, Texas and Albuquerque, NM have similar programs in effect. This service not only assists veterans get to their destination, but it sends a clear message that El Paso supports and helps our veterans in any way that they can.

As of our July VAAC meeting, Sun Metro staff let us know that at the very least there would be a fare in place by October 2016 –this is one year after our initial discussion. We as a committee, are asking for a deadline, no later than November 1, 2016 to implement the Pilot Program which will be provided by Sun Metro and veteran agencies in our community. We have seen that other cities in Texas and the Nation have completed this same task in six months or less. We, as a committee feel this service is essential in helping our veterans get to their jobs, trainings, homes, grocery shopping, etc. These veterans have given much of themselves to serve our nation, and as a City we can give something back to them by alleviating the stress of not having some kind of transportation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

David Nevarez, VAAC Chairman and the VAAC