



## **Fiesta Express Park and Ride & Transportation Update**

### **Changes to Approach Focused on Improving Guest Experience**

For Immediate Release

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ALBUQUERQUE, NM – Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta (AIBF) officials announced important updates and information related to accessing the event, including Fiesta Express Park and Ride.

“As we plan for the Balloon Fiesta each year, it’s important that we analyze successes and areas that need improvement,” said Balloon Fiesta’s Executive Director Paul Smith. “In 2018, we had over 880,000 guest visits to Balloon Fiesta Park. While it brings great excitement to know that many people are attending this magical event, opening day of the 2018 event identified areas needing improvement for our 48<sup>th</sup> event.”

Immediately following the 2018 event, Balloon Fiesta officials began working with the Civil Engineering Department at the University of New Mexico to conduct a traffic study. AIBF officials also worked with the travel app Tom Tom to identify traffic flow challenges for passengers and park and ride traffic. The work resulted in an improved traffic management plan & Park and Ride service plan for the 2019 Balloon Fiesta.

The Balloon Fiesta traffic team identified ways to increase efficiencies at existing Park and Ride locations; this includes a more intuitive layout, enhanced volunteer training, increased signage and staffing. Based on the insights from the UNM Traffic Study, the traffic team made adjustments to the Park and Ride bus access points and identified some solutions to ease backups for guests driving to Balloon Fiesta Park.

The biggest changes to Park and Ride include the addition of wave loading times, limited seating and only online ticket sales (no walkup sales).

Newly acquired/developed parking areas will be available for guests driving to the Balloon Fiesta.

#### **Driving to Balloon Fiesta Park**

Parking is \$15.00 CASH ONLY. In order to expedite entry into the park, Balloon Fiesta will not process credit or debit cards to pay the parking fee. Officials ask that guests have the exact cash ready, before reaching the parking fee collection areas to speed up the collection process.

- Guests traveling from Santa Fe and areas of Albuquerque east of Interstate 25 will access the park by way of Tramway and Alameda. Drivers approaching from the east side will be parked north and east of Balloon Fiesta Park.
- Guests traveling from areas west of I-25 and the valley will access the park by way of Alameda Boulevard. Drivers will be directed to parking areas south of Balloon Fiesta Park on either side of Alameda.

## **Fiesta Express Park & Ride**

There are four convenient locations available for Balloon Fiesta guests to park their car and get a bus ride to Balloon Fiesta Park. Park and Ride will be located on the Eastside at Coronado Mall and Hoffmantown Church as well as on the Westside at Cottonwood Mall and Intel. Park & Ride tickets are available for purchase online and are limited per event and park and ride location.

### **Location Information**

- Cottonwood Mall and Intel Park and Ride will unload and load outside of Balloon Fiesta gates, northeast of the Balloon Museum. Guests will go through security checkpoints before entering Balloon Fiesta Park.
- Coronado Mall and Hoffmantown Church will unload inside Balloon Fiesta Park. Guests will go through security checkpoints before getting on the bus to Balloon Fiesta Park.
- Park and Ride for guests with special needs will load and unload inside of Balloon Fiesta Park and will go through security checkpoints before getting on the bus.

### **Park and Ride Loading Times and Pricing**

- Morning Sessions – Each park and ride location will have two waves of shuttles to Balloon Fiesta Park loading approximately at 4:00am and 5:30am for morning sessions. Buses will start return service to the Park and Ride locations at 8:00am.
- Afternoon/Evening Sessions – Each Park and Ride location will have two waves of shuttles to Balloon Fiesta Park loading approximately at 3:00pm and 4:30pm for afternoon sessions. Buses will start return service to the Park and Ride locations at 7:00pm and will run until 10pm.
- Park and Ride tickets include transportation and admission for a specific session. The pricing is: Adults \$15 (13-61), Seniors (62 & Older) \$12, Children (6-12) \$7, children 5 and younger are free. Pricing, locations, schedules and discounted tickets are available online at <https://balloonfiesta.com/Park-Ride> . There is no Fiesta Express Park & Ride service on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday but traffic is usually lighter those days and there will be plenty of parking.

## **Ride Share**

Guests will easily be able to once again utilize ride share programs like Lyft and Uber, when accessing Balloon Fiesta Park. The drop-off and pick-up location will remain near Alameda Boulevard and Horizon, south of the Launch Field.

## **Bike Valet**

Riding a bike to Balloon Fiesta Park is one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to visit. The Bike Valet is free and allows guests a safe place to park their bikes while visiting the Balloon Fiesta; this year there will be additional space, making room for more bikes to be parked. Pace Bike Share will again be offering its rental bike program, making more bikes available for guests to rent. Cyclists can take the bike trail that runs along the AMAFCA North Diversion Channel that crosses underneath Paseo del Norte and Alameda, ending just north of the Balloon Museum, in the Bike Valet parking station. The Bike Valet can accommodate more than 1,000 bicycles each session.

## **About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta**

The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta presented by Canon is an annual festival of hot air and gas balloons that takes place every October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It is the largest gathering of balloons and balloonists in the world. For details on events, schedule, entertainment and photographs visit our website [www.balloonfiesta.com](http://www.balloonfiesta.com) and follow us on Twitter @BalloonFiesta and Facebook.

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