

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Mid-Region  
Council of Governments





The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) provides planning services in the areas of transportation, agriculture, workforce development, land-use, water, and economic development for the counties of Bernalillo, Valencia, Torrance, Sandoval, and southern Santa Fe in New Mexico's middle Rio Grande region.

## Message From The Executive Director



I think if I had to choose one word to describe the past year, it would be “change”. All things considered, that is not necessarily a bad thing, but rather a reminder that the real art of staying focused lies in our ability to embrace change. We’ve had a lot of changes here at the Mid-Region Council of Governments the past 18 months, but I like to think that it has expanded our collective regional comfort zones and in doing so expanded our possibilities as well. In my estimation, this is a good time to reflect on the many strides and advancements we have made here at MRCOG.

As you peruse the pages of this year’s Annual Report, you’ll find that there was never a pause in any of our programs. Our New Mexico Workforce Connection program is a tremendous example of that—whether providing much-needed career pathways with on-the-job-experiences...or apprenticeship programs that supply “earn and learn” opportunities for future advancement—our work-based learning programs have assisted many students and job seekers alike.

That said, we saw many crossovers in the areas of workforce and economic development as representatives from both camps rolled up their sleeves and joined forces to apply for important federal funds to bolster our workforce and our economy. We need look no further than Albuquerque’s South Valley for an example of what we can accomplish when we work together: The Partnership for Community Action celebrated the grand opening of its new Social Enterprise Center, a shining example of the amazing things that can be done with the help of partnerships and federal funds.

In the area of transportation, the MPO continued to program substantial funds into the transportation system and deliver a slate of projects amounting to nearly \$271 million dollars in federal, state, and local funds for transportation improvements to move people, goods, and ultimately benefit the economy of our region.

All this, while the New Mexico Rail Runner Express saw an overnight 50 percent boost in ridership as sky-rocketing gas prices drove many to park the car and jump on the train to save some money. In addition, Rio Metro worked with the Governors’ Office and the NM DOT to reduce train fares by 75 percent to give commuters an affordable option for getting around the region.

None of these accomplishments could have happened without the hard work and dedication of our expert MRCOG staff, and those who serve on our MRCOG Boards. And speaking of our board members, I want to wish outgoing MRCOG Chair Debbie O’Malley all the best for her years of service to MRCOG—four of them as Board Chair—and also for her years of service on the Albuquerque City Council, and most recently the Bernalillo County Commission.

Commissioner O’Malley is stepping out of the political scene at the end of the year, but hopefully not for good. Her stalwart guidance will be missed. At the same time, I also want to welcome incoming Chair Barbara Baca to the post and wish her the best as she assumes the reigns, as well as offering a big welcome to Councilor Isaac Benton who is returning as Chair of the Rio Metro Board. It is clear that the MRCOG will remain in good, capable hands going forward.

In closing, let me say that it is a true pleasure to work side-by-side with our elected officials and member governments as we work with the shared vision of fostering those regional partnerships that remove barriers to collaboration and enhance opportunities for all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dewey V. Cave". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dewey V. Cave, MRCOG Executive Director



## From the Outgoing MRCOG Board Chair

“It was my honor and pleasure to serve a second time as the Chair of the MRCOG as a county commissioner.

As I reflect on the last two years, I can only describe them as anything but “normal” because of the pandemic. Though there were few in-person meetings of our membership, that did not stop the important work in the region from moving forward—albeit a little bit slower. And that is due to the determination of our members and the resiliency of the communities they serve.

I want to wish incoming MRCOG Board Chair Barbara Baca all the best as she assumes the position. I am confident that with the continued collaboration among our governing boards, elected officials, and our highly skilled staff, we can build upon our successes and keep the quality of life for the communities we serve as a top priority.

Sincerely,  
Debbie O'Malley”



## About the Incoming MRCOG Board Chair

A native New Mexican who has worked in government and public service for years, Barbara Baca understands the importance of public-private sector collaboration. She is a graduate West Mesa High School and the University of New Mexico, and went on to earn a master’s degree from the University of Colorado at Boulder in 1982.

Barbara started her career with the Albuquerque Open Space Program in 1983, where she helped develop the Rio Grande Valley State Park Management Plan to protect the Bosque. She co-authored the Northwest Mesa Escarpment Plan which led to the creation of Petroglyph National Monument, and also spent three years in Washington, D.C. working with the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program.

Back here in New Mexico, Barbara served as the Social Services Division Manager for the Albuquerque/Bernalillo County Department of Senior Affairs from 2001-2009, before retiring from City Government in 2014, serving her last five years as the Director of the Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department. In 2019, Barbara was elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District—the same year she began serving on the MRCOG Executive Board.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Growth in the Region</b>			
Uncharted Terrain	6		
<b>COVID Impacts on Traffic</b>			
Are Observed Changes Permanent?	9		
Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel	11		
<b>MRMPO Public outreach and Engagement</b>	13		
<b>Regional0 Transportation Planning Organization</b>	15		
<b>Regional Planning Program</b>			
Economic Resiliency Plan	16		
Village of Corrales Zoning Update	18		
<b>Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico</b>	19		
Success Stories	21		
		<b>Economic Development</b>	
		American Rescue Plan Funds Help	
		Central New Mexico Recover	22
		<b>Rio Metro Transit</b>	
		Adjusting to Changes	24
		Rio Metro Marketing:	
		Back out into the Community	26
		Rio Metro Planning	29
		MRCOG Board of Directors	30
		MRCOG Boards and Committees	31
		MRCOG Staff Listing	32

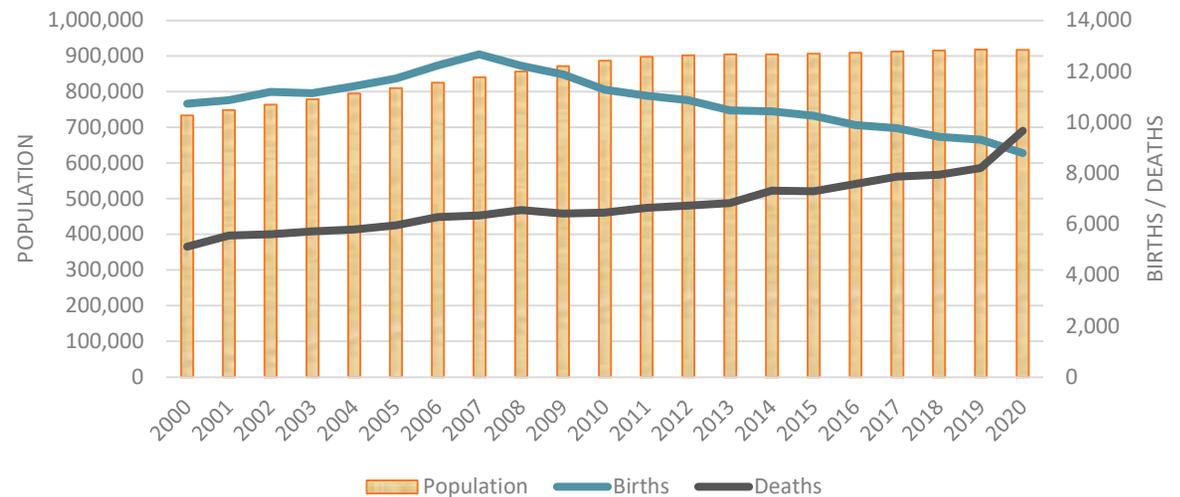
# Growth and the Region: UNCHARTED TERRAIN

The Mid-Region continues to navigate uncharted terrain with respect to mobility, growth, and the economy. More than two years after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; remote work, school and other virtual services have continued to affect traffic patterns, which have yet to fully return to pre-pandemic volumes. Supply-chain issues related to delays in production, labor shortages, and rising costs have driven inflation sky high, straining budgets and limiting spending.

Population growth has remained nearly flat and, for the first time in decades, deaths outnumbered births in 2020. Housing prices are breaking record-highs month after month as the inventory of new homes remains tight. Existing sales are scarce and out of reach for many. Average sales prices topped \$400,000 in 2022. Prices are also soaring among renters.

And, while job numbers have rebounded to pre-pandemic levels, we have seen growth in some industries while others lag. Healthcare and accommodations and food establishments are still shy of pre-COVID employment while transportation and warehousing and construction have rebounded and exceed pre-COVID numbers.

Population Growth and Natural Increase, 2000-2020



Source: US Census Bureau, NM Dept. of Health

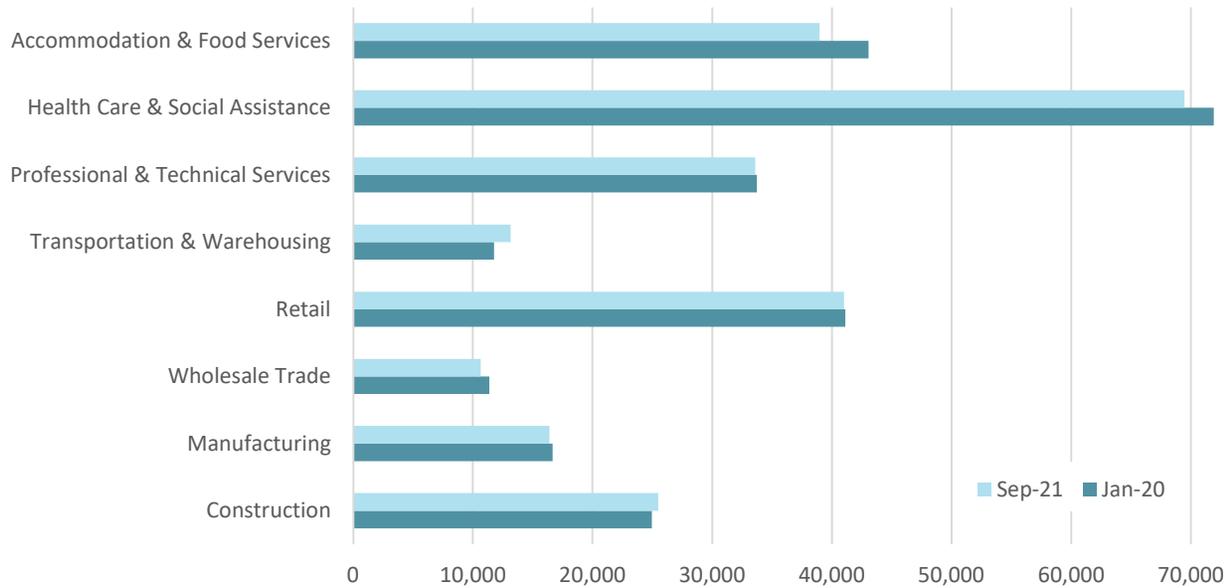
Single Family Home Average Sales Price



Source: GAAR

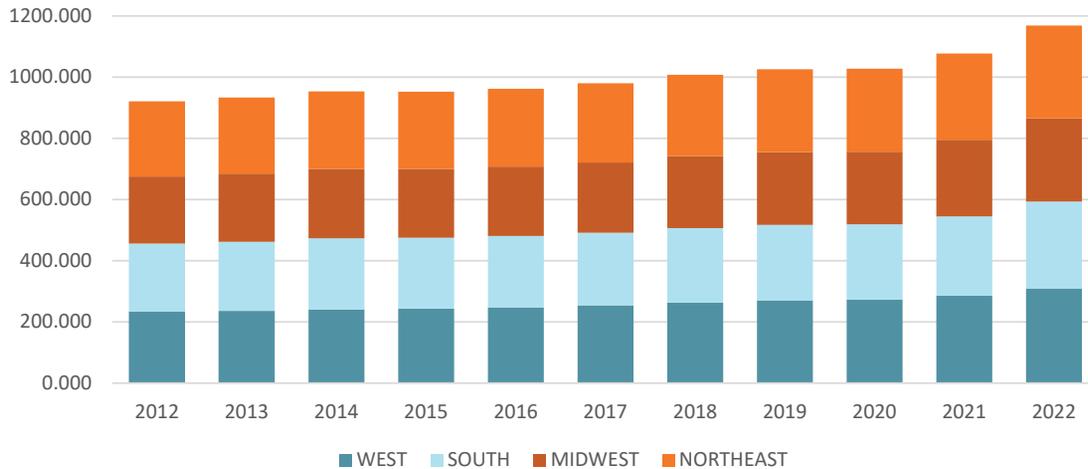
Average sales prices have been climbing for years and in 2022 topped \$400,000. Prices are also soaring among renters.

### Employment by Major Industry: Pre-COVID and September 2021



Source: Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages

### Consumer Price Index by Region



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, not seasonally adjusted

Average prices paid by urban consumers for goods and services have been on the rise. Across the United States, this cost went up by 9.3 percent in May 2020 from the year before. New Mexico leads the western region with the highest overall prices.

Rising inflation, slowed growth, shifting industries - these forces are not unique to New Mexico, they are happening all over the nation. Unfortunately, they tend to have an outsized impact on our state given that our population and economy are relatively small in comparison to our neighbors. However, being relatively small also has its advantages. For one thing, a single success story has the potential to catalyze positive change throughout the region. Here are just a few examples of how communities in the Mid-Region continue to flourish and develop their economies.

### Los Ranchos de Albuquerque

The 4th Street Revitalization Project reduced traffic to two travel lanes allowing for pedestrian sidewalks and crossings, a Low Impact Development (LID) drainage system, and lighting and landscaping in the major commercial district of the Village. In addition to calming traffic and providing a beautiful and safe multi-modal environment, this public improvement project has attracted ten new businesses, two infill housing developments, two B&Bs and 5,900sqft of new retail space currently under construction.



### Bernalillo County

Bernalillo County has completed several significant projects including the Amazon Fulfillment Center located in the Upper Petroglyph plan area, generating thousands of jobs for the region, and a new Pilot Travel Center near the Sunport Commerce Center area in the South Valley. In addition, the County relocated over 800 staff into the Alvarado Square building in the heart of downtown Albuquerque, allowing for operational efficiencies while supporting the City's downtown redevelopment efforts.

### Village of Los Lunas

The Village of Los Lunas has focused on providing its residents an excellent quality of life by fostering an outstanding education system and a skilled workforce. This has cultivated a thriving economic hub, promoting industry and professional development, as shown by the recent arrival of the UNM Workforce Training Center, Amazon, and Project Alloy.

### Town of Bernalillo

With the US Highway 550 reconstruction complete, the Town of Bernalillo has seen a resurgence in business development while keeping a small town feel. Soon to open is a new Starbucks, a Del Taco, an independent coffee roaster and a locally owned landscape company. There has also been growth in the cannabis industry and an expansion of one of the largest producers in the State.



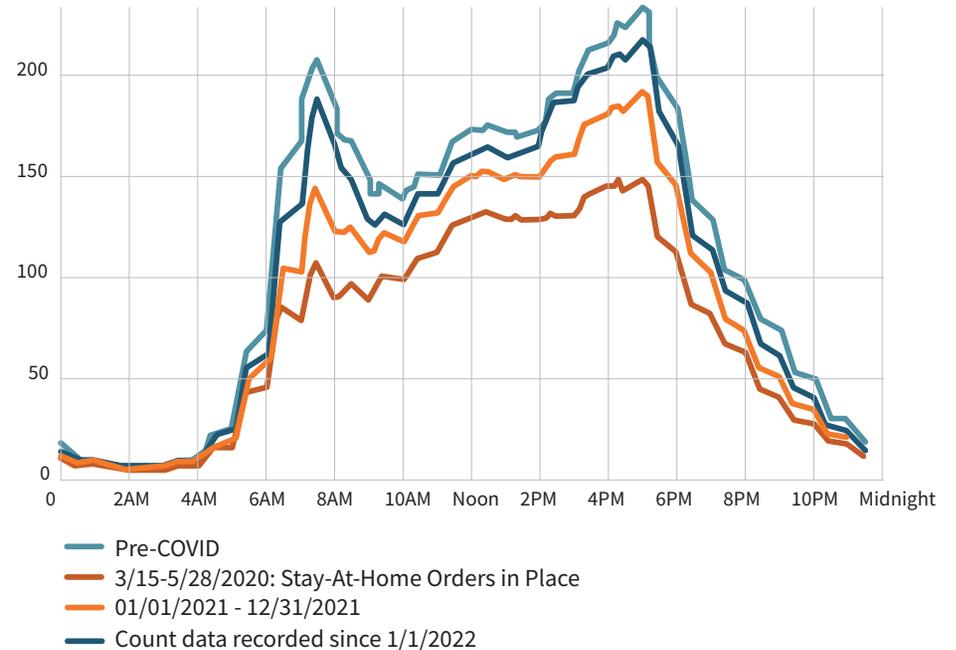
# COVID Impacts on Traffic

## ARE OBSERVED CHANGES PERMANENT?

We're over two years into the COVID pandemic. The stay-at-home restrictions on work and public activities have been relaxed, and infection rates are far below their historic peak in late 2022. But MRCOG's traffic monitoring program reveals COVID may have had more lasting effects on travel in the region. It's safe to say that, for the most part, everyone is ready to "get back to normal." But in the transportation planning world, we are asking ourselves what that really means. Have we returned to pre-COVID patterns and levels of travel or are there more subtle, permanent changes at play? A deeper dive into the data gives us a clue.

As noted in our data reporting since the pandemic began, daily traffic volumes were significantly reduced, especially during peak travel periods. When considered with the COVID Stay-in-Home policy to control the spread of COVID, the region experienced the highest concentration of job losses since data tracking began. (Albuquerque Journal, March 2021). Since then, employment has been on an upswing, and overall traffic has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels, however, GDP per capita for 2020 shows a reduction of 2.8 percent over 2019, leading to some pause over the potential lasting effects of COVID and associated reductions.

Average Weekday Traffic by Time of Day

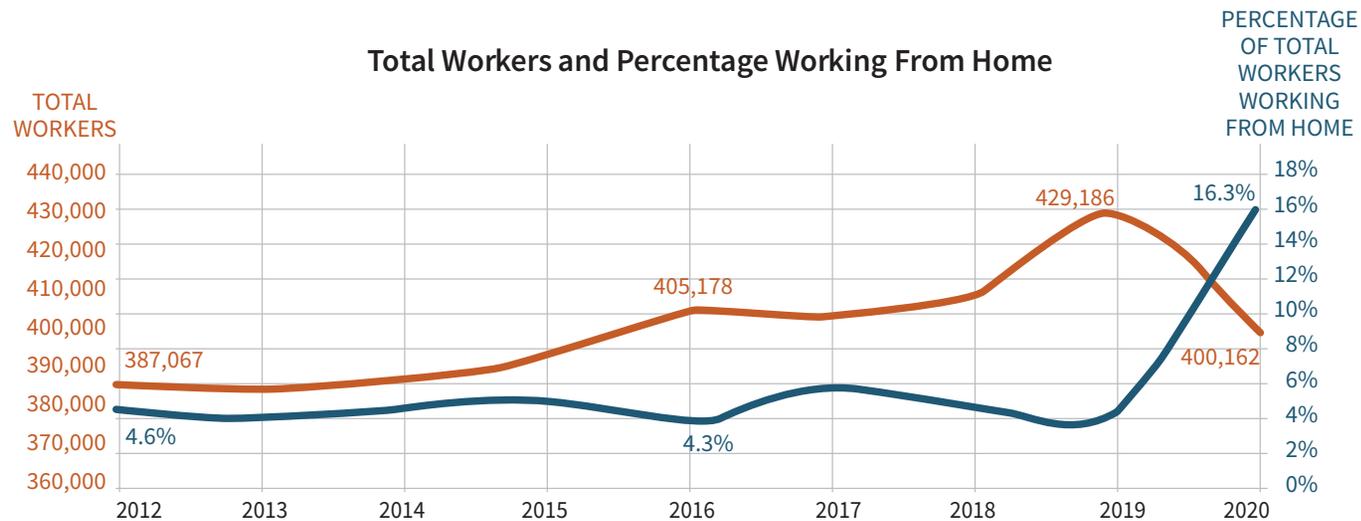


In the first three months of COVID, daily traffic was reduced by nearly 34 percent. By the end of the first year of COVID, traffic had begun to return to pre-pandemic levels, but was still 18 percent below pre-COVID times. By the end of 2021 volumes were still down by 11 percent. Data in the first part of 2022 shows that overall, we are still below pre-pandemic volumes, though by a lesser amount at 5 percent.

Areas of high activity or employment such as Downtown, Journal Center, and others have been slower to recover. Also, many of the principal and minor arterials that serve commercial or employment areas also show slower recovery in peak period traffic, while traffic in residential areas on smaller collector and local streets has returned, and in some cases exceeded pre-COVID levels.

Count data collected since the beginning of 2022 show that both the AM and the PM Peaks remain four percent below pre-pandemic levels, but it is hard to say if this is a permanent state.

When we consider employment data from the Census Bureau's latest American Community Survey for clues that might explain these patterns, we see a significant drop (6.8 percent) in employment of in 2020. However, we also see that the percentage of total workers who are "Working from Home" jumped from a very steady 5 percent to over 16 percent. This is a notable phenomenon and can help explain some of the observed shifts we are seeing in traffic patterns. If this shift continues, it could be a remarkable step in achieving one of MRMPO's regional transportation goals to promote alternatives to single occupant vehicle travel with flexible hours and work from home options.



## BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN TRAVEL

MRCOG manages seven permanent trail counters in the region, and is looking to expand its non-motorized counts program to enhance its bicycle and pedestrian data collection to better support transportation planning for these modes in the region.

Now that MRCOG has a full year of data from 2021, comparisons between 2019, 2020, and 2021 data can be made to discern any trends in bicycle and pedestrian trail usage over time.

While bicycling and pedestrian traffic in 2021 did indeed show a return to pre-pandemic levels (before the big jump in volumes observed in 2020), unfortunately, those levels were even lower than those in 2019, at least on the multi-use trails in the region.

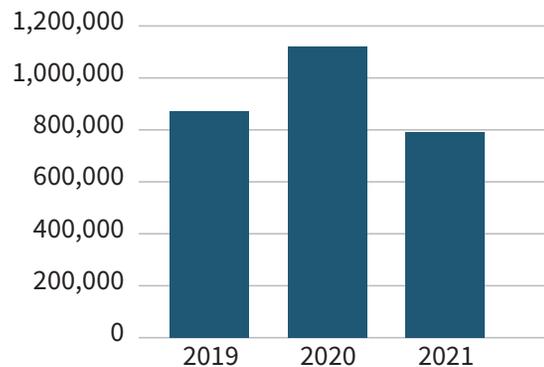
Other travel patterns can be observed in bicycle and pedestrian data collected from permanent counters. The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, which has been held in the first weeks of October for decades, was put on pause in 2020.

The effect of this pause was quite evident on the multi-use counter along the North Diversion Channel Trail near the Journal Center, a popular route for people on bicycles traveling to Balloon Fiesta.

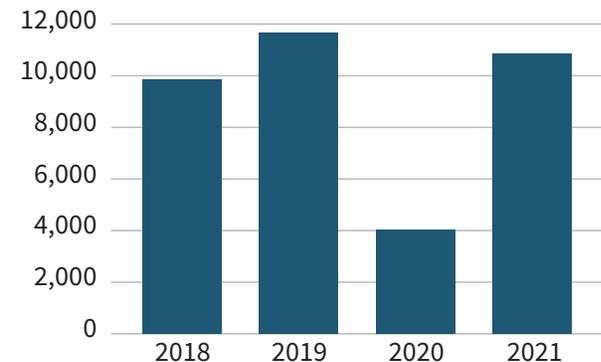


Members from MRMPO's Active Transportation Committee on a tour of multi-use trails and the permanent counter on the Paseo del Norte trail near the Rail Runner station.

**Total Trail Use (Bicycle and Pedestrian Trips)**



**Trail Use on North Diversion Channel at Journal Center During Balloon Fiesta**



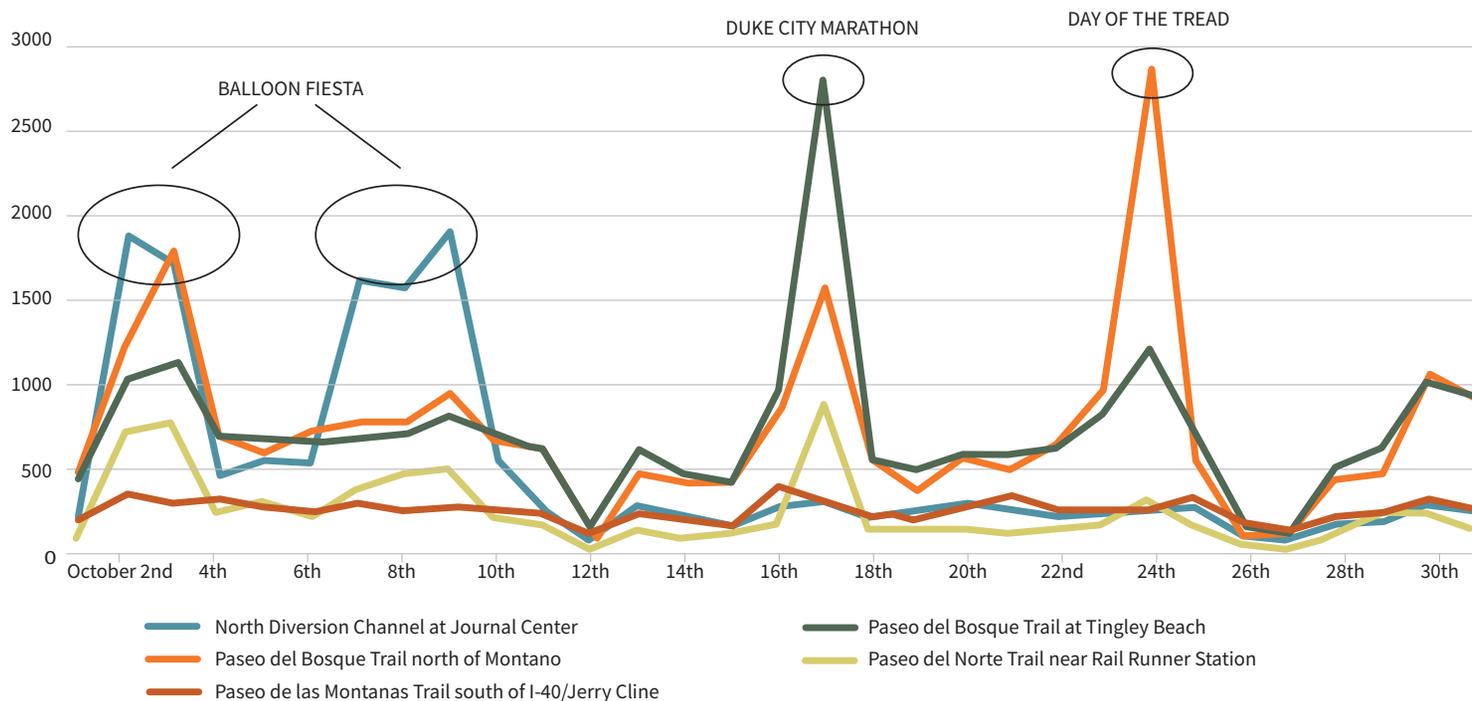
Comparing data from the same time period in 2019, 2020, and 2021—the first week of October and the weekends right before and after that week—we see a precipitous decline in bicycle and pedestrian trips on that trail in 2020 and then a robust return to bicycling along the trail in 2021. Indeed, the event provides a big incentive for people to get out and use that trail.

In 2020, when there was no Balloon Fiesta, counts on the North Diversion Channel Trail near the Journal Center decreased by 65 percent compared to 2019.

The effect of events on other multi-use trails is also evident by looking at the trail data. For example, the Duke City Marathon and Day of the Tread bicycling event participation are both evident and show noticeable increases in trail use. Sometimes what might at first look like an odd increase in a graph is explained by knowledge of such popular events.

These examples show just some of the insights that can be gleaned from data collection. More robust data will better support those modes by showing where bicycling and walking is occurring—and, tellingly, where it is not occurring—and help make the region more bicycle and pedestrian friendly over time.

### October 2021 Trail Use Data



## MRMPO PUBLIC OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

MRCOG has been embracing some shifts in its approaches to Public Outreach and Engagement. As the field of public outreach develops and improves, it is important to identify what can be used and incorporated to remain cutting-edge, especially as a transportation planning agency. Earlier this year, MRCOG hired two new team members, a Public Outreach and Engagement Planner and a Title VI Coordinator, to assist in the task of developing and maintaining innovative outreach practices.

Many of the shifts in outreach and engagement adopted by MRCOG and MRMPO have been informed by research into best practices from notable institutions and other peer planning organizations. A key innovation is the use of virtual engagement tools and hybrid meeting formats. Virtual and hybrid formats were initially used as a response to the COVID pandemic but have now been recognized as best practices due to the ability of these formats to reduce barriers to participation. In addition to meetings,

many other virtual tools, such as social media, open houses, surveys, polls, working sessions, and online forums have been incorporated into MRCOG's outreach and engagement toolkit.

While MRMPO is committed to prioritizing equity in all outreach and engagement efforts, continued research into best practices has yielded a necessary look into furthering innovative methods that prioritize systemic equity. One such method is the Community Engagement Spectrum shown on the next page: a tool that can be used to guide the involvement of MRMPO and the public in every outreach and engagement scenario, ensuring that the role of MRMPO, the public, and equity are fully realized throughout the process. This engagement spectrum was modeled after the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) but was modified to meet the needs of MRMPO.



Lead/Coal Road Safety Audit Kickoff Meeting for the public and stakeholders held June 8, 2022.

This was a hybrid meeting: participants were able to attend either in person or via Zoom.

## MRMPO Community Engagement Spectrum



	<b>INFORM</b> 	<b>CONSULT</b> 	<b>COLLABORATE</b> 
<b>GOAL</b>	Let public know about transportation planning efforts	Get feedback on transportation planning	Provide a seat at the table when developing plans
<b>COMMUNITY INCORPORATED</b>	At the end of the process when decisions have been made	At the beginning of the process once a draft is complete	At the beginning, and throughout with follow-up regarding how their input is used
<b>ENGAGEMENT TOOLS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertising</li> <li>• Newsletter</li> <li>• Brochures/Fliers</li> <li>• Social Media</li> <li>• Web-pages</li> <li>• E-communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys &amp; Polls (in-person or online)</li> <li>• Public Meetings &amp; Comments</li> <li>• Open Houses</li> <li>• Virtual Open Houses &amp; Online Forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Groups &amp; Working Groups (in person or online)</li> <li>• Iterative &amp; participatory planning tools that incorporate feedback</li> <li>• Advisory roles for public stakeholders</li> <li>• Social media live</li> <li>• Video conferences</li> <li>• Working sessions</li> </ul>
<b>ROLE OF COMMUNITY</b>	Audience	Advisor	Stakeholder
<b>ROLE OF AGENCY</b>	Decision-makers	Planners	Leaders
<b>ROLE OF EQUITY</b>	Minimal	Targeted	Integrated
<b>ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE</b>	Fast	Specific	Continuous

### Encuentro Build Day

With the help of an AARP Community Challenge Grant, MRMPO joined a hands-on group of community organizations dedicated to improving residents' health in Albuquerque's underserved areas. They gathered to re-purpose and revitalize the parking lots on Encuentro's new site on south 4th Street. Flexible "pop-up" landscaping elements that were "do-able" (a wellness path, a community garden, and a patio) were designed and deployed, as well as a walking program that connects people to the Barelas neighborhood for safe, convenient and comfortable walking.



## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

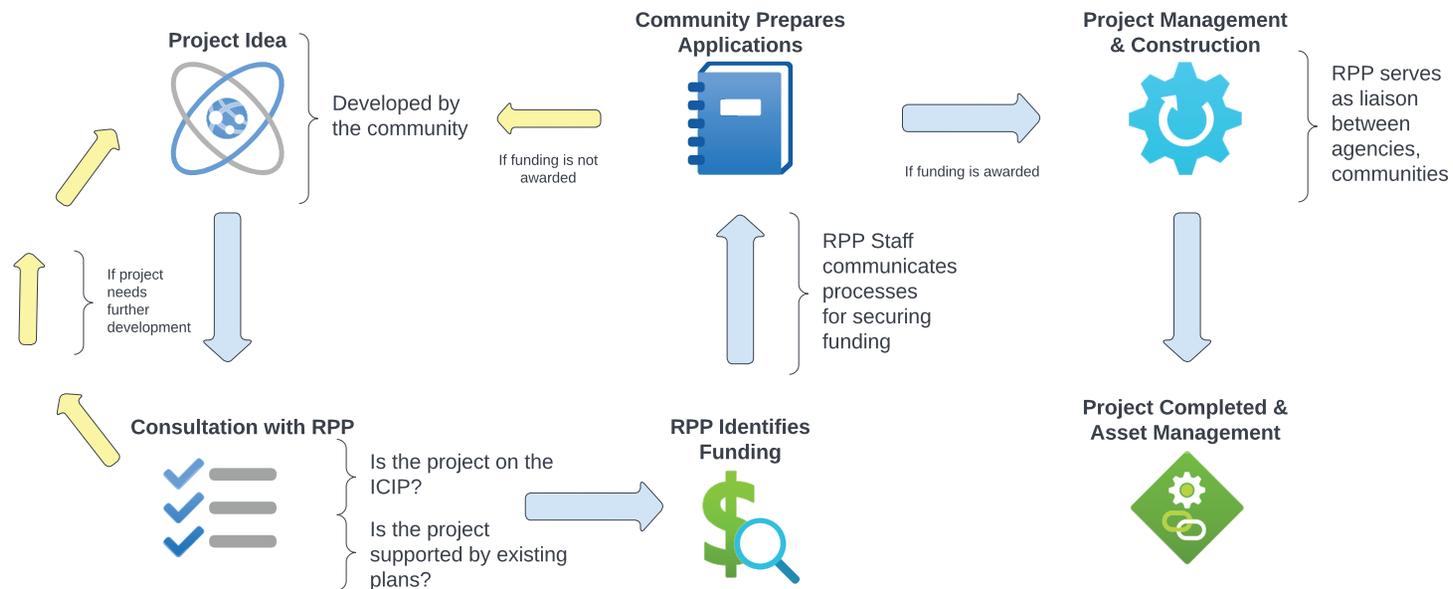
The Mid-Region RTPO exists to help its member communities plan, develop, and implement their transportation infrastructure projects. With significant funding made available, thanks in part to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill, the RTPO planning team has been working hard with member communities to ensure they are well positioned to capture these much-needed investments.

To that end, and in coordination with the Regional Planning Program (RPP), the team is implementing a new streamlined project identification, development, and management process (or as our friends at the Northwest NM COG like to call it, ‘projecteering’—see illustration below.) This allows the RTPO and RPP to identify projects early in the process, find

appropriate funding sources while providing support to the applying community.

As part of this process, MRRTPO members successfully applied for four new projects under the Transportation Project Fund, a state funding program for local roads and bridges. NMDOT has approved and recommended each project for funding for a total of \$2.7 million.

In addition to the project development work, MRRTPO staff have completed much of the Regional Transportation Plan update, with added data and maps, new input from community members, and updates to the goals and strategies that reflect the transportation priorities for the region.



# Regional Planning Program

## ECONOMIC RESILIENCY PLAN

In July of 2020 MRCOG received an grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) entitled the *CARES Act Economic Development District Supplemental Disaster Recovery and Resiliency Award*. This award allowed the Mid-Region Regional Planning Program (MRRPP) to expand our services and provide assistance with the economic development efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of this award, the MRRPP was tasked with developing an Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan to explore events that cause disruption in the economy (including the COVID pandemic), create strategies for economic recovery, and develop policies, programs, and project priorities to reduce future disasters' impacts.

The Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan is a companion document to MRCOG's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), which was most recently updated in early 2020.

The MRRPP worked with a team of engineers, economists, a local data science company, and planners to develop this plan. The engineering partners assessed natural and man-made hazards in the region, the economists conducted an industry survey and economic assessment, the

## ECONOMIC RECOVERY & RESILIENCY PLAN



### ECONOMIC RECOVERY & RESILIENCY PLAN

for Sandoval, Bernalillo, Valencia, Torrance, & Southern Santa Fe Counties

Take our survey:



What are the threats and challenges facing your community's economy?  
What does economic resilience look like?

### Visit us at the following events:

5/7	8AM-12PM	Albuquerque Growers' Market at Robinson Park
5/11	3PM-6PM	Cedar Crest Farmers' Market next to Triangle Grocery
5/12	5PM-7PM	Mountainair, Dr. Saul Community Center
5/17	6PM-8PM	San Ysidro, San Ysidro Village Complex
5/21	7AM-2PM	Rio Rancho's Biggest Yard Sale at Cabezon Park

data science company facilitated a strategy workshop with community and industry leaders, and the planners conducted community outreach and assembled the plan.

The project team hosted seven community stakeholder meetings, one region-wide workshop, and attended seven community events throughout the Mid-Region. Through this outreach, the team received input from over 400 people, which helped to create a list of prioritized threats to the region and informed the development of the strategies to address these threats. The goals shown below were developed based on this feedback.

The development of the Economic Recovery and Resiliency Plan is an important step in assisting the communities in the MRCOG region. It will serve as a guide and roadmap for local officials, community leaders, and municipal staff to work towards economic resilience.

### ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY PLAN GOALS

1. Collaborate and coordinate with communities in the region to address common threats and challenges.
2. Diversify the economy to reduce single-industry dependence and to create economic drivers that are more resilient to downturns.
3. Address limitations associated with water resources, and foster sustainable economic development patterns by linking water resources and growth.
4. Address the lack of reliable broadband internet, and identify resources to assist local businesses in creating a successful online presence.
5. Enable rural communities to build operational capacities to apply for more funding, and create external resources that support communities applying for funding.
6. Address aging and insufficient infrastructure.
7. Address crime and safety.
8. Address the affordable housing crisis.
9. Prepare for future wildfires and cascading hazards, like flooding, to mitigate and prevent severe impacts.
10. Address invasive species and range productivity issues, and develop farming practices that can adapt to drought conditions.



# VILLAGE OF CORRALES ZONING UPDATE

MRCOG's Regional Planning Program (MRRPP) provides professional planning assistance and technical services to MRCOG's member governments. Over the course of a year, MRRPP assisted the Village of Corrales with an update to their zoning ordinance and sign code.

The purpose of land use zoning regulation is complex, but can be summarized into four key points:

1. Divides jurisdictions into land use regions or zones
2. Specifies what types of structures can be built in each zone
3. Proscribes limits on size and dimension of structure type by region or zone
4. Defines the process by which local governments grant permission for new development

By keeping their zoning ordinance up to date, jurisdictions can reduce the impact of development on traditional ways of life and help their communities grow responsibly and equitably.

MRRPP staff worked with a steering committee comprised of Village staff, Planning and Zoning Commissioners, and Village Council appointees to revise the Village's zoning ordinance for clarity, usability, and conformance to current case law.

Prior to the update, the Village was experiencing problems with inconsistent interpretations of language in the ordinance, which led to challenges, including legal cases and appeals to council. The goal of this update was to make the ordinance clearer and easier to understand for members of the public, Village Staff, Planning and Zoning Commissioners, and Village Councilors. No policy changes were made by the MRRPP, but several policy changes were made by the Village Council during the process which were incorporated into the final document.

The MRRPP was able to deliver a revised ordinance that is more coherent and accessible. The Village of Corrales zoning ordinance updates were approved by the Village Council on March 8, 2022.

The MRRPP also worked with the steering committee and Village staff to update the sign code in accordance with the current best practices and design it in such a way that it could be easily enforced by the Village staff.

## MID-REGION REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM

These changes will help the Village avoid legal issues in the future because it is content-neutral with clear guidelines for its enforcement. The changes to the sign ordinance were approved April 12, 2022.

Overall, these changes will help the Village to be consistent in their enforcement of the zoning policies and make it clearer to the residents of the Village what is required when developing their property or business.



# Workforce Connection

## OF CENTRAL NEW MEXICO

### The NEG-DWG Project

During COVID-19, the WCCNM was awarded the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NEG-DWG) under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) which provides resources to states and other eligible applicants to respond to large, unexpected layoff events causing significant job losses.

Under the NEG-DWG, the Central Region Adult & Dislocated Worker (DW) program has two projects. The first is the transitional jobs project that strives to enable individuals with a limited work history to experience the opportunity to gain meaningful work skills that lead to gainful employment. The target population for this program is individuals with non-violent criminal backgrounds who are currently eligible for dislocated worker or long-term unemployed. Transitional jobs participants are placed at worksites with employers across a range of occupations and industries in the four-county region. As of June 30, 2022, 31 participants were placed in transitional work opportunities.

Second, under the NEG-DWG, the Central Region continues a partnership with CNM Ingenuity to focus on short-term training certificates and other training/education opportunities for unemployed individuals hardest hit

The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) board oversees the workforce partner network and federally-funded employment and training programs and services in the four-county region including Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia counties. The WCCNM directs the planning, oversight, policy guidance, and design of services in four New Mexico Workforce Connection centers located across the region. The programs and services help job seekers gain sustainable employment and connect businesses with a qualified and accessible workforce.

by COVID-19 and looking for careers in the IT/tech industry. The IT/tech training opportunities align with the overall sector strategy in the Central Region that is currently underway. As of June 30, 2022, 102 participants were enrolled with “Individual Training Accounts” (ITA) in IT/tech trainings.

### Work-Based Learning Programs

Work-based learning experiences strengthen the linkages to career pathways by providing students and job seekers with on-the-job experience and employable skills while also providing employers with the opportunity to develop their future workforce. Supporting work-based learning is one of ten goals established by the *WCCNM WIOA 2020-2023 Four Year Plan*, and in PY21, the WCCNM increased the number of work-based learning opportunities available through the public workforce system in the Central Region.

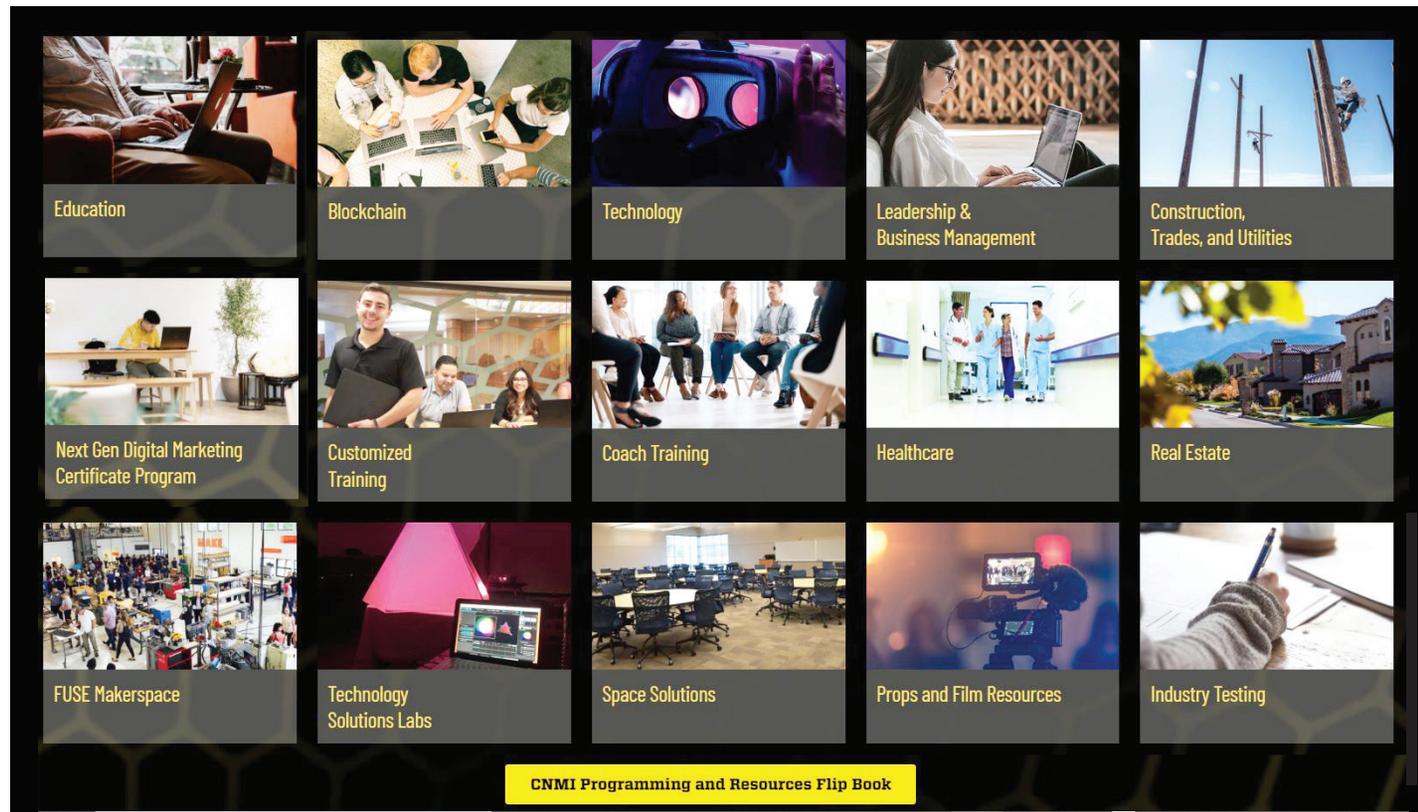
The WCCNM passed multiple policies to increase internships, transitional jobs, and work experiences in the region. Projects such as the Facebook Career Connections program, have resulted in successful internships,

and, in many cases, full-time permanent employment with some on-the-job training opportunities. Opportunities afforded via the WCCNM “Transitional Jobs” policy are significant for disadvantaged individuals, such as formerly incarcerated individuals and long-term unemployed, with a goal to reduce recidivism and poverty within the Central Region. The Youth Program provides valuable paid work experiences for in-school youth and out-of-school youth ages 16-24.

There has been increased support for apprenticeship in the Central Region as the WCCNM promotes that the “earn and learn” approach helps

workers start new careers and helps businesses recruit and retain a highly-skilled workforce. The Adult & Dislocated Worker Program and the Youth Program continue to work with trade associations and apprenticeship programs to use WIOA funds in a variety of ways to help individuals prepare for, enter, and complete apprenticeship programs.

Additionally, in partnership with the NMDWS State Apprenticeship Office, the NMWC Central Region Apprenticeship Coordinators work closely with employer/sponsors to review and prepare their program standards for submission and approval of formal registered apprenticeship programs.



## WORKFORCE CONNECTION SUCCESS STORIES



**Lynn**

Lynn enrolled as a participant in the Dislocated Worker Grant (DWG) program and was challenged finding employment due to his justice-involved background and health restrictions.

The WIOA program business consultants worked with Myriad Hospitality. When a front desk associate opportunity presented itself, Lynn was an excellent match for the work experience. He learned valuable communication skills and how to use the hotel computer system for guest reservations.

As a result of his punctuality and perfect attendance, Lynn was offered full-time employment as a maintenance technician. As a result, he was able to purchase a vehicle and move into an apartment. Lynn is grateful for the many opportunities the WIOA program has given him to change his life.



**Katherine**

When Katherine entered the WIOA Adult & Dislocated Worker program, her main goal was to get back into the workforce after raising a family. She wanted to return to school and pursue a teaching program.

Katherine holds Bachelor degrees in Zoology and Law as well as an M.A. degree in Criminal Justice, but felt her true passion was in teaching. She enrolled in the Alternative Teachers – Special Education program at CNM Main Campus.

Despite some challenges, Katherine maintained impressive grades and started co-teaching at Cleveland High school for her field experience course.

In her last semester, Katherine was offered a full-time job at Manzano High School, where she currently works as a Special Education Biology teacher and truly loves being an educator.



**Matthew**

Matthew came to the WIOA Youth Program as a high school graduate. His goal was to become a firefighter and obtain his EMT Basic certificate.

With the assistance of the Youth Program, Matthew attended the EMT program at CNM. At the Los Lunas Fire Department, he gained a lot of practical job experience. Matthew attended school while completing 29 hours of work experience weekly.

After Matthew graduated from the EMT Basic program and passed his state exams, he made a career change and decided to enlist in the US Army.

He credits his career choice to the opportunities presented to him during his time as a youth participant. He will utilize his EMT training and knowledge of emergency response in his future duties as a soldier. Matthew started basic training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

# Economic Development

## AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN FUNDS HELP CENTRAL NM RECOVER

As the shift in the Mid-Region continued in 2021 from economic development to economic recovery, more than \$2.5 million flowed into central New Mexico communities from the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) through the American Rescue Plan (ARPA). The funding was aimed at accelerating the economic recovery from the pandemic and building local economies that would be resilient to future economic shocks. The following are EDA ARPA grants awarded in the Mid-Region in 2022.

### **\$1,200,000 EDA ARPA ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE GRANT AWARDED TO THE KESHET DANCE COMPANY IN ALBUQUERQUE**

To support Keshet Dance Company with renovating its Ideas and Innovation Center. The project will improve the economic conditions of underserved populations and further advance a diverse local creative economy by providing free/low-cost business development resources/training.

### **\$800,000 EDA ARPA ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE GRANT AWARDED TO UNM RAINFOREST INNOVATIONS IN ALBUQUERQUE**

To support the Tribal Entrepreneurship Project which provides training, mentoring, and strategy development for entrepreneurship growth to mitigate barriers that have prevented tribal entrepreneurs from starting and growing strong resilient businesses. Once completed, the project will lead to direct jobs for the tribal community.

### **\$400,000 EDA ARPA TRAVEL, TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAM GRANT TO THE STREET FOOD INSTITUTE IN ALBUQUERQUE**

To support food businesses as they recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic by helping restaurant entrepreneurs create new strategies to become more resilient in the event of future disruptions.

### **\$200,000 EDA ARPA TRAVEL, TOURISM AND OUTDOOR RECREATION PROGRAM GRANT AWARDED TO THE TOWN OF BERNALILLO**

To creating a strategy to attract new visitors and build a tourism industry in the Town of Bernalillo. Ultimately, the project will help increase employment opportunities, save jobs, spur private investment, and advance economic resiliency throughout the region.



---

## South Valley Social Enterprise Center

In June of 2018, Partnership for Community Action was awarded \$1 million from the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) to help create a new workplace and shared community space where families, neighborhoods and institutions could come together to create enduring relationships, develop collective leadership, design innovative solutions and advocate for a stronger New Mexico. As the designated Economic Development District for the region, the MRCOG provided grant oversight and administration for the project.

In June of this year, the much-anticipated vision became a reality and PCA held a grand opening for staff, elected officials, and community members alike at their brand new Social Enterprise Center.

The South Valley Social Enterprise Center is a public-private partnership that brought hundreds of construction jobs and more than 60 permanent jobs to the heart of Albuquerque's South Valley. Built in a designated Opportunity Zone, the \$4.5 million project houses Southwest Creations Collaborative—a textile/manufacturing company, office space, a community engagement hub, as well as an on-site early learning center, and more. This investment will allow the revitalization of a major property on Isleta Boulevard bringing much needed business development and family-centered programs to the South Valley.

Together with PCA's matching funds of \$428,571, the nearly \$1.5 million dollar total went toward construction of the center building at the new facility.



# Rio Metro Transit

## ADJUSTING TO CHANGES

### Service Changes to the NM Rail Runner Express

An onboard/online survey was undertaken in March 2022 to help determine the changes in ridership characteristics post-pandemic. Out of the 1,298 responses, 63 percent had ridden the train in the last month. However, 23 percent indicated that they no longer ride the train.

To dig deeper, we wanted to know about working habits. We found out that 34 percent of work commuters were on hybrid/remote schedules, and 31 percent of all riders for all trip purposes were on hybrid/remote schedules. Noteworthy is that 33 percent of current riders were new: they did not ride the train prior to the pandemic. Hybrid/remote workers ride the train less frequently than those who are back at their work sites full-time.

When asked what discouraged individuals from riding the train, the prevailing response was the inconvenient schedule. More mid-day trains are one of the most frequently cited requests from riders—on weekdays for commuters, and on weekends for leisure riders.

The passenger survey was instrumental in determining what changes to make to the schedule. For the weekday, late morning and early afternoon



services were added to both northbound and southbound schedules. On Saturdays, the northbound schedule added a mid-morning and early afternoon train, and the southbound schedule saw the addition of a morning, early afternoon, and early evening train.

### Ridership Incentives

Across the country, transit agencies have experienced a decline in ridership over the past two years due to COVID-19. The return to public transit has been slow, and, to help combat this, the Rio Metro Marketing Department created several incentives for riders.

#### Seniors 60+ Ride Free on Wednesdays

For the past six years, this has been a successful senior program for the New Mexico Rail Runner Express, and by lowering the age to 60+ it aligned us with other transit systems in the area who had lowered their senior age to 60+. The lower age gives more seniors an opportunity to ride the train free on Wednesdays.

#### Fare Reductions

In early Spring, gas prices began to rise and continued to remain high, so in an effort to increase affordability for commuters and travelers, Rio Metro launched a fare reduction program. From April 18th through July

31st, all one-way, day pass, and monthly pass Rail Runner fares were reduced by 75 percent (it did not apply to annual train passes). Daily ridership was about 60 percent of pre-pandemic levels, and this fare reduction would encourage many to get back on the train, as well as attract others who have never commuted by rail to give it a try. This program was extended through December 31st, 2022.

### Senior Age Change

Effective August 1, 2022, the Reduced Senior Fare age was dropped from 62+ to 60+ which allows more seniors to benefit from the lower fares.

### Electrical Charging Stations

Bernalillo County made it easier for drivers of electric vehicles to charge up by installing stations at the four of the Rail Runner Train Stations: Bernalillo County, Downtown Albuquerque, Los Ranchos/Journal Center, and Montañito.



### Dial-a-Ride Service in Corrales

The growing demand for Rio Metro's transit services in Sandoval County, and to offer customers more flexibility, resulted in Rio Metro's 12-month Dial-a-Ride pilot project to the residents of the Village of Corrales.

On June 6, 2022, Corrales Dial-a-Ride service was incorporated into the current Rio Rancho Dial-a-Ride service, providing transportation from 6:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Residents of Rio Rancho can schedule trips to the Village of Corrales, and residents of the Village of Corrales can schedule trips to Rio Rancho, Albuquerque (for medical appointments only) and the Cottonwood Mall area.

This door-to-door service is available to Rio Rancho and Village of Corrales residents 62 years of age and older, and to disabled individuals 18 years of age and older. Riders must be registered to use the service. Children up to age 17 can ride with any eligible rider. Riders and children will be picked up and dropped off at the same location.

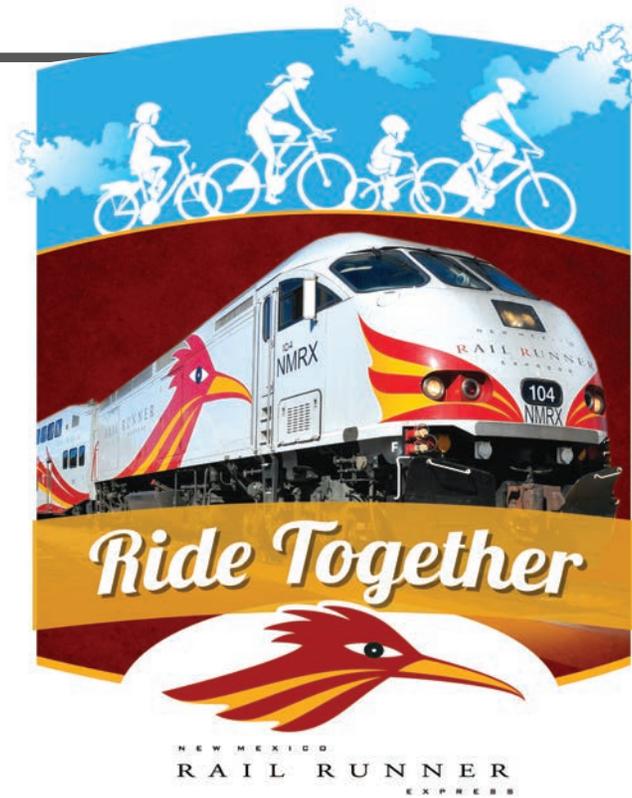


## RIO METRO MARKETING: BACK OUT INTO THE COMMUNITY

Over the last few years, Rio Metro's Marketing Department has pivoted its campaigns and critical messaging to reflect the many changes in the workforce and recreational activities. Last year, as COVID-19 restrictions eased and more people started going back to work in person and attending more events, the department stepped up efforts to engage with the public, share informative and educational messaging related to train and bus services, and went back to participating in public events and outreach.

Most of the campaigns that were held centered around safety: Operation Safe Driver Week in July 2021, Rail Safety Week in September 2021, Pedestrian Safety Month in October 2021. All were geared towards increasing safety around rail road tracks and at and around the stations.

Three videos were produced: "Catch the Bird" features the beautiful landscape of the Rail Runner corridor, A fun commercial promoted the Seniors 60+ Ride Free Wednesdays program, and Operation Safe Driver Week detailed the steps that bus operators must follow when approaching and crossing train tracks. "Catch the Bird" won many awards. The department won 15 awards overall this past year, which was a outstanding achievement.



*Day of the Tread Family Ride – In October 2021, Rio Metro once again partnered with Day of the Tread – a popular Día de los Muertos themed cycling event – for the Rail Runner Family Ride. Participants rode north from Albuquerque's Sawmill District to the Los Ranchos / Journal Center Rail Runner Station. Riders then boarded the train with their bikes and were transported back to Downtown Albuquerque.*

*Trax, the Rail Runner mascot, has returned to making appearances at community events and helping with rail safety presentations. Throughout the year, he has visited with kids at schools and public libraries, greeted sports fans at Albuquerque Isotopes baseball games, attended community events like National Night Out, and even participated in a fundraiser for the Ronald McDonald House.*



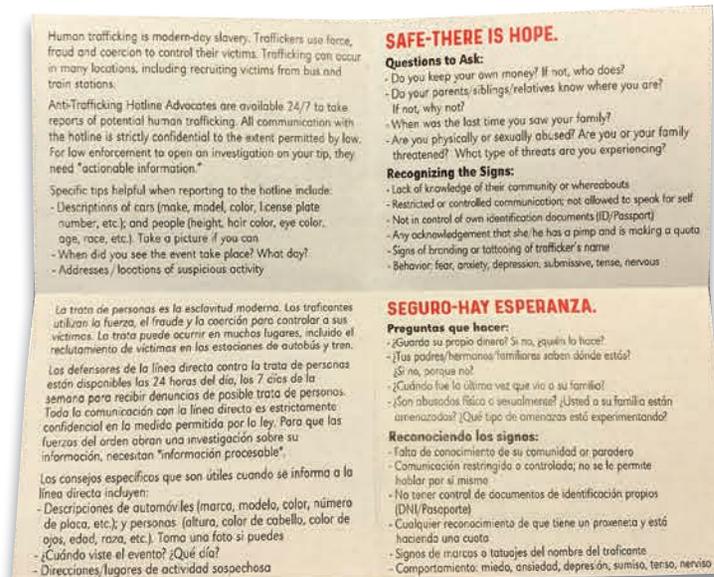
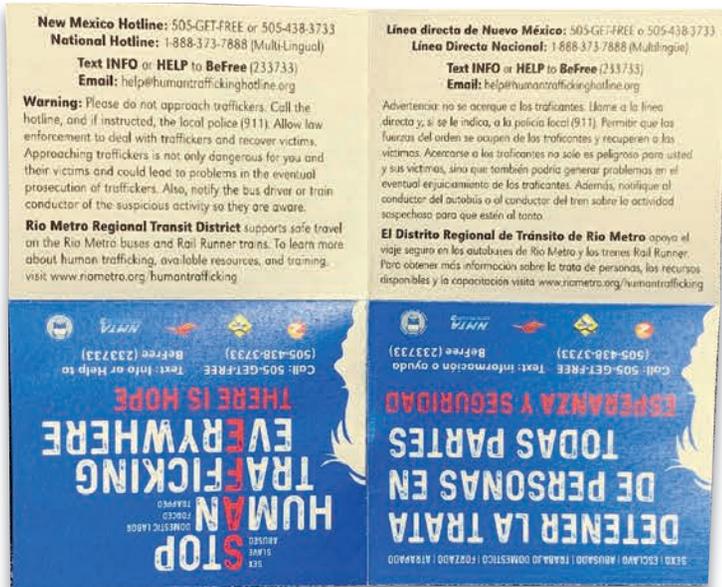
Screenshots from the award-winning "Catch the Bird" video.

## Rio Metro's Human Trafficking Campaign

Human trafficking is modern-day slavery and it is more pervasive on public transit than publicly known. It is a local, national, and international problem, and, in an effort to help spread awareness about this issue, we partnered with the New Mexico Transit Association (NMTA), and with ABQ RIDE who installed posters on the city buses. The target audience was the communities we serve at large along the Rail Runner corridor and the rural areas of Valencia and Sandoval counties. The creation of an original logo was key to the campaign. Just as important, the messaging was for the people being trafficked to provide them with resources and give them hope.

One of the most important pieces created was the pocket brochure. So often people don't recognize the signs or know the questions to ask of those being trafficked. The brochure addresses these topics (in both English and Spanish) and was designed to easily fit into someone's pocket. They were distributed to Rail Runner train crews, and Rio Metro and All Aboard America bus drivers. The New Mexico Transit Association also distributed the brochure to its members across the state.

This is an on-going campaign and we will continue to send out reminder messages through various channels.



---

## RIO METRO PLANNING

### New Mexico Rail Runner Express Centralized Traffic Control (CTC)/Main 2 Extension

The New Mexico Rail Runner Express Centralized Traffic Control (CTC)/Main 2 Extension project first appeared in Rio Metro's 2012 Short Range Plan and remains today one of its highest capital priorities. Unfortunately, the project was delayed while Rio Metro amassed the \$65 million budget for and implemented a federally-mandated Positive Train Control (PTC) system. With PTC now fully operational, Rio Metro has again set its sights on constructing the CTC/Main 2 project in fiscal year 2023.

The project will install CTC—a system that regulates train movements through dispatch-controlled signals and switches—from a location approximately three-quarter miles south of Avenida Cesar Chavez north to Griegos Rd. This is last section of the Rail Runner corridor slated to receive CTC, and will, among other benefits, increase track speed from as low as 20 mph up to 60 mph; reduce travel time through this section by nearly 9 minutes; and improve dispatch oversight of train movements in Downtown Albuquerque. Moreover, CTC provides a signal system for PTC to overlay, affording an additional level of safety.

The project will also extend Main 2 from Griegos Rd. north to a point between Montaña Rd. and Osuna Rd. Rio Metro will accomplish this by reconstructing 1.2 miles of a dilapidated track known as the Hahn Lead and by extending it an additional 0.3 miles. The resulting double track, accompanied by CTC and PTC improvements, will improve track capacity and passing opportunities in the vicinity of the Montaña Station.

The CTC/Main 2 Extension project has a \$17 million budget, of which \$14.6 million is federally funded through the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). This TIP funding was made possible through the Metropolitan Transportation Board's policy to set aside 25 percent of its federal discretionary funds for regionally significant transit projects.

### Valencia County Transit Facility Bidding and Construction

Rio Metro is excited to announce that the design of the first phase of the Valencia County Transit Facility (VCTF) wrapped up this June. Rio Metro is currently bidding the project, will begin construction this winter, and looks forward to welcoming Valencia County staff and bus fleet to their new home near the intersection of NM 6 and NM 47 in Los Lunas in Fall 2023.

This first phase will include an 8,000-square foot administration building; staff, visitor and bus parking areas; utilities; drainage; landscaping; fencing and gates; security and access controls; and improvements to NM 47. This project is made possible by a \$6 million grant from FTA's Bus and Bus Facilities program. Pending future funding, the second phase will feature a maintenance building, expanded bus parking, bus wash, and fuel island/charging stations.



## MRCOG Board of Directors

### **Bernalillo County**

Commissioner Debbie O'Malley  
County Manager Julie Morgas Baca  
Commissioner Steven Michael Quezada

### **Sandoval County**

Commissioner Katherine Bruch  
Commissioner David Heil

### **Torrance County**

Commissioner Leroy Candelaria  
County Manager Janice Barela

### **Valencia County**

Commissioner Jhonathan Aragon  
Commissioner Gerard Saiz

### **City of Albuquerque**

COO Lawrence Rael  
Councilor Isaac Benton  
Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn  
Councilor Klarissa Peña  
Councilor Pat Davis  
Councilor Dan Lewis  
Councilor Brook Bassan

### **City of Belen**

Mayor Robert Noblin

### **City of Moriarty**

Mayor Ted Hart  
Councilor M. Steven Anaya

### **City of Rio Rancho**

Mayor Gregory D. Hull  
Councilor Robert Tyler

### **City of Rio Communities**

Peggy Gutjhar

### **Town of Bernalillo**

Mayor Jack Torres

### **Town of Edgewood**

Commissioner Jerry Powers

### **Town of Mountainair**

Jesse Davidson

### **Town of Peralta**

Leon Otero

### **Village of Bosque Farms**

Mayor Russell Walkup

### **Village of Corrales**

Mayor Jim Fahey  
Councilor Zachary Burkett

### **Village of Cuba**

Mayor Richard R. Velarde  
Clerk/Trustee Vandora Casados

### **Village of Los Lunas**

Mayor Charles Griego  
Erin Callahan

### **Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque**

Mayor Donald Lopez

### **Village of Tijeras**

Nicolas Kennedy  
Michael Limón

### **Village of Willard**

Mayor Robert Chavez  
Clerk Emily Sanchez

### **Albuquerque Public Schools**

Barbara Petersen

### **Los Lunas Public Schools**

Ron Williams

### **Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority**

Bruce Thomson

### **Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District**

Barbara Baca

### **Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority**

Cassandra D'Antonio

## MRCOG Boards and Committees

### Metropolitan Transportation Board

Mayor Jack Torres  
COO Lawrence Rael  
Councilor Dan Lewis  
Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn  
Councilor Pat Davis  
Councilor Klarissa Peña  
Councilor Isaac Benton  
Councilor Brook Bassan  
Barbara Peterson  
Commissioner Debbie O'Malley  
Comm. Steven Michael  
Quezada  
Commissioner Walt Benson  
Commissioner David Heil  
Lina Benavidez  
Councilor Peggy Gutjahr  
Mayor Gregory Hull  
Councilor Robert Tyler  
Councilor Paul Wymer  
Mayor Jack Torres  
Mayor Russell Walkup  
Councilor Stuart Murray  
Michael Jaramillo  
Mayor Donald Lopez  
Mayor Jake Bruton  
Ron Brown  
Barbara Baca  
Cassandra D'Antonio  
Tony Sylvester  
David Quintana  
Justin Gibson  
Merrill Yazzie  
Jon Paul Romero

### WCCNM Board

Marvis Aragon  
Odes Armijo-Caster  
Beth Barela  
Joseph Bizzell  
Deborah L. Breitfeld  
Celina Bussey  
Doug Calderwood  
Theresa Carson  
Danielle Casey  
Eleanor Chavez  
Troy Clark  
Herb Crosby  
Johnna Chapman  
Johanna Chapman  
Kristen Gamboa  
Marni Goodrich  
Bob Grassberger  
Tracy Hartzler  
Victoria Hernandez  
Antoinette Holmes  
Greggory Hull  
Krista Kelley  
Samuel Kolapo  
Joe LiRosi  
Vaadra Martinez  
John Mierzwa  
Laura Musselwhite  
Debbie Ortiz  
Stacy Sacco  
James Salas  
Waldy Salazar  
Leslie Sanchez  
Diane Saya  
Jerry Schalow  
Raymond Trujillo  
Gina Urias-Sandoval  
David Valdes  
Carolyn VanderGiesen

### Rio Metro RTD Board

Councilor Renee Grout  
Councilor Tammy Fiebelkorn  
Councilor Pat Davis  
Councilor Klarissa Peña  
Councilor Isaac Benton  
Mayor Tim Keller  
Steven Tomita  
Mayor Jack S. Torres  
Commissioner Adriann Baroba  
Commissioner Walt Benson  
Commissioner Steven Michael  
Quezada  
Mayor Russell Walkup  
Councilor Mel Knight  
Mayor Charles Griego  
Mayor Donald Lopez  
City Manager Martin Moore  
Councilor Robert Tyler  
Councilor Jim Owen  
Commissioner Michael Meek  
Commissioner Joseph Bizzell

### Rural Transportation Planning Organization Committee

Robert Hudson  
Gilbert Dominguez  
Ken Brennan  
Michelle Jones  
Sheri Bozic  
Elroy Keetso  
Glenn Tortalita  
Dennis Fulfer  
Mark Hatzenbuehler  
Gary Brett Clavio, Sr.  
Daniel White  
Leonard Lujan

### Water Resources Board

Diane Agnew  
Bruce M. Thomson  
Ken Ziegler  
Dale Tafoya  
Mayor Jack Torres  
Comm. Charlene Pyskoty  
Sherry Abraham  
Ronnie Reynolds  
Debbie Ortiz  
Donald Lopez  
Joaquin Baca  
Art Swenka  
Marian Wrage  
F. Kenneth Eichwald  
Wayne Johnson  
Gabriel Luna  
Steve Glass  
Lynn Montgomery  
Brenda Smythe  
Sal Reyes  
Bobby Ortiz

## MRCOG Staff Listing

### **Peach Anderson-Tauzer**

Outreach/Engagement Planner

### **Yoshiro Akutagawa**

Facility Maintenance Manager, NMRX

### **Clim Aragon**

Lead Program Manager, WIOA

### **Joe Aragon**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Kristy Aragon**

Career Development Specialist, WIOA

### **Paul Aragon**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Severo Aragon**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Stephanie Aragon**

Procurement Officer, Los Lunas

### **Saul Araque**

Business Consultant, WIOA

### **Maximina Baca**

Administrative Assistant, WIOA

### **Michael Baca**

WIOA Network Administrator

### **Teanna Baca**

Customer Service, NMRX

### **Kelly Benavidez**

Customer Service, NMRX

### **Peter Blewett**

RMRTD Network/System Tech

### **Tanya Blewett**

Train Dispatcher

### **Bianca Borg**

Regional Planning Manager

### **Eduardo Borunda**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **James Breiterman**

Train Dispatcher

### **Grant Brodehl**

Special Projects Planner II

### **Donald Brown**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Sheila ter Bruggen**

Communications Coordinator

### **Gregory Cabrera**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Elizabeth Carter**

Operations Review & Policy Compliance Manager

### **Dewey Cave**

Executive Director

### **Albert Chavez**

Transit Dispatcher, Rio Rancho

### **Mark Chavez**

Train Dispatcher

### **Martin Chavez**

Facilities Maintenance, NMRX

### **Tabatha Chavez**

Career Development Specialist, WIOA

### **Allyne Clarke**

Marketing Manager

### **Tara Cok**

Transportation Planner

### **Ross Cummings**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Anthony Duran**

Information Systems Specialist

### **Danny Duran**

Facilities Maintenance Manager

### **John Felix**

Transportation Planner

### **Ernie Fernandez**

Train Dispatcher

### **Keegan Fisher**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Stephanie Flynn**

Career Development Specialist, WIOA

### **Richard Frye**

Facilities Maintenance, NMRX

### **Vangie Gabaldon**

Special Projects Coordinator

### **Hannah Gadri**

Career Development Specialist, WIOA

### **Angela Galindo**

Transit Dispatcher, Los Lunas

### **John Gallegos**

Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

### **Kenneth Garcia**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Michelle Garcia**

Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

### **Samuel Garcia**

Traffic Counter

### **Cristina Garduno**

Business Consultant, WIOA

### **Ted Gaudette**

Information Systems Officer

### **Patricia Georges**

Program Manager, WIOA

### **Nicole Giddings**

Program Support Coordinator, WIOA

### **Bianca Gonzales**

Career Development Specialist, WIOA

### **Clyde Gonzales**

Facilities Maintenance

### **Robert Gonzales**

Operations Manager, NMRX

### **Carmen Gutierrez**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Eric Gutierrez**

Human Resources Manager

### **Melissa Gutierrez**

Business Consultant, WIOA

### **Michelle Harrison**

Program Support Coordinator, Los Lunas

### **Sherri Hastings**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Kristin Hodgson**

Transit Operator, Los Lunas

### **Channing Hofman**

Regional Planner

### **Larry Horan**

Attorney

### **Michael Jiron**

Graphic Designer/Project Manager

### **James Kolberg**

Transportation Planner

### **Denise Kurtz**

Supervisor, Los Lunas

### **Barbara LaCour**

Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

### **Elizabeth Lewis**

Train Dispatcher

### **Julian Lucero**

Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

### **Ariana Lueras**

Career Development Specialist, WIOA

### **Maggie Lujan**

Program Analyst, WIOA

### **David Maes**

RMRTD Training Coordinator

### **Lupe Maltos**

Customer Service, NMRX

**Gerald Mares**  
Transit Operator, Los Lunas

**Samantha Marquez**  
Career Development Specialist, WIOA

**Paul Marrujo**  
Transit Operator, Los Lunas

**Arthur Martinez**  
WIOA Administrator

**Jocelyn Martinez**  
Program Support Coordinator

**Riann Martinez**  
Marketing Specialist

**Nathan Masek**  
Senior Transportation Planner

**Carol Mathews**  
Transit Manager, Rio Rancho

**Nathaniel McKenzie**  
Business Consultant, WIOA

**Martha Mendoza**  
Administrative Assistant

**Claudia Patricia Merlo**  
Transportation Planner

**Augusta Meyers**  
Communications Manager/  
Economic Development Program  
Manager

**Elizabeth Middleton**  
Interim Operations Manager, WIOA

**Adrienne Molinar**  
Accountant, WIOA

**Bailee Monk**  
Business Consultant, WIOA

**Kendra Montanari**  
Transportation Planning and Technical  
Services Manager

**Marla Montiel**  
Special Projects Coordinator

**Steven Montiel**  
Transportation Program Manager

**Marie Morra**  
Marketing Specialist

**Kendra Morrison**  
Career Development Specialist, WIOA

**Steve Moya**  
Traffic Counter

**Karen Mullins**  
Supervisor, Rio Rancho

**Eric Murphy**  
Customer Service, NMRX

**Mary Murphy**  
Transit Operator, Los Lunas

**Rex Musselman**  
Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

**Amy Myer**  
Senior Finance Manager, MRCOG

**Hernan Navarrete**  
Transit Operator, Los Lunas

**Lance Northrop**  
Train Dispatcher

**Elizabeth Olson**  
Train Dispatcher

**Renee Padilla**  
Accountant

**Rafen Page**  
Transportation Planner

**Stephanie Paiz**  
Community Outreach/Safety  
Coordinator, NMRX

**Bill Panas**  
Facilities Maintenance

**Nicole Perches**  
Accountant

**Karla Mondragon-Perea**  
Customer Service, NMRX

**Yvonne Perez**  
RTD Dispatcher, Los Lunas

**Lisa Portillo**  
Accountant

**Forest Replogle**  
Transportation Planner

**Jeanine Richards**  
Administrative Assistant, WIOA

**Jose Rodriguez**  
Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

**Tawnya Rowland**  
Project Director Pathway 3, WIOA

**Irma Ruiz**  
Customer Service Manager

**Steve Saavedra**  
Transit Operator, Los Lunas

**JoAnn Saenz**  
Transit Operator, Los Lunas

**Alexander Sanchez**  
Facilities Maintenance, NMRX

**Robert Sanchez**  
Facilities Maintenance, NMRX

**Twila Sanchez**  
Quality Assurance Specialist, WIOA

**Lisa Sedillo**  
Customer Service, NMRX

**Sagert Sheets**  
GIS Analyst Coordinator

**Payton Showalter**  
Regional Planner

**William Simon**  
Transportation Planner II

**Joel Steinhauser**  
Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

**Matthew Stone**  
Operations/Dispatcher

**Tony Sylvester**  
Planning Manager/Board Liaison

**Vera Taylor**  
Transit Services Surveyor

**Barbara Thomas**  
Office Manager

**Winifred Tinney**  
Acting Transit Supervisor, Los Lunas  
RMRTD

**Jesse Turley**  
WIOA Accounting Manager

**Conni Vigil**  
Director of Finance and Administration,  
RMRTD

**Josephine Vigil**  
Senior Finance Manager, RMRTD

**Sandra Wallace**  
Transit Operator, Rio Rancho

**Alan Wooten**  
Transit Operator, Los Lunas

**Matthew Wylie**  
Quality Assurances Coordinator



**Mid-Region Council of Governments**

809 Copper Avenue NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102  
(505) 247-1750  
[www.mrcog-nm.gov](http://www.mrcog-nm.gov)