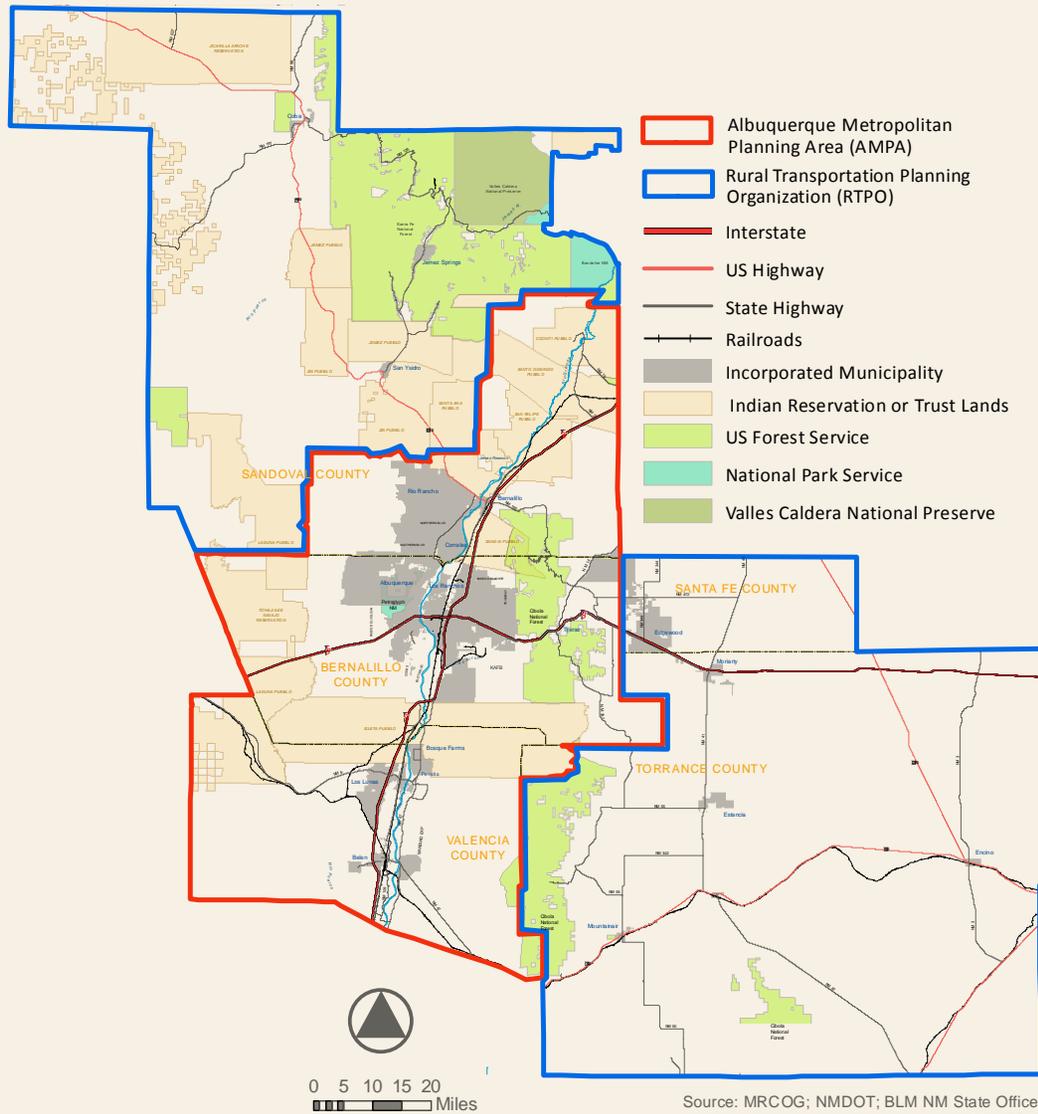


**2017
ANNUAL REPORT**



Mid-Region Council of Governments



MRCOG

The Mid-Region Council of Governments provides planning services for the counties of Bernalillo, Valencia, Torrance, and Sandoval in the areas of transportation, agriculture, workforce development, land-use, water, and economic development. MRCOG serves as the metropolitan planning organization for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area and is responsible for identifying transportation planning priorities and programming federal transportation funds throughout the region. MRCOG is the administrative entity for the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico, providing quality resources for people seeking career opportunities, and for employers in search of skilled workers. MRCOG also serves as the administrative entity for the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD). Rio Metro is the primary regional transit provider for Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia counties, offering transit service between municipalities and across county lines. The RTD manages the New Mexico Rail Runner Express commuter rail and operates select bus routes in the three-county area.

CONTENTS

People and Place.....	6
NM Workforce Connection.....	12
Transportation Planning.....	16
NM Rail Runner Express	24
Local Planning Assistance and Rural Transportation Planning	32
Boards and Committees	34
MRCOG Staff Listing	37



Words of Welcome



*Dewey V. Cave, MRCOG
Executive Director*

There is a lot to be said on the topic of “regional importance.” Just look around our four-county region and you’ll get a good picture of what it means for individual communities to collaboratively address issues of regional importance. This past year was no exception, as our member governments faced various shared challenges together—the collaborative process was alive and well at the Mid-Region Council of Governments!

A few key accomplishments were made in the area of transportation. Together with staff, members have worked diligently to focus on transportation strategies, project development, and the programming of scarce transportation dollars. A new network for federal transit funding has been established, the congestion management plan was updated, and we saw the completion of a pilot bikeshare project for the region.

We can’t broach the subject of regional transportation without talking about the New Mexico Rail Runner Express. It seems that every year, there is another important milestone to highlight. This year, we saw the opening of the long-awaited Zia Road Rail Runner station in Santa Fe, bringing the total number of stations to 15.

Speaking of milestones, a major accomplishment on the economic development front was the results of a year-long study that looked at the viability of positioning our region as the next major global transportation hub. The findings were encouraging, and looked at translating our regional assets into a coordinated economic development strategy.

I would be remiss if I didn’t boast about one of the brightest spots of the past year, and it is one that brings major potential in the area of job growth for our region. The Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico was awarded a four-year, four-million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for an innovative job training program designed to provide IT job seekers in central New Mexico with the skills to quickly advance into well-paying, high-growth jobs. The program is called TechHire New Mexico, and our NM Workforce Connection received one of only 39 grant awards out of 215 nationwide applications.

It is evident in this year’s Annual Report that every challenge has brought with it an opportunity to start a constructive dialogue, create a positive change, or make something better. As you read through the pages, I ask that you keep in mind that these successes and accomplishments were able to happen because of the strong partnerships that have been formed throughout the region.

It is with this kind of collective participation and vision that we are able to go forward and achieve much for the good of the whole. I invite you to join me in looking back and celebrating the many landmarks and highlights of the region that we have reached together—because success for just one of our communities means success for all.

Sincerely,

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

Message from the Board Chair



*MRCOG Board Chair
Jack Torres*

A review of 1969 headlines includes concerns about Albuquerque Public Schools, City-County police issues, and a recommendation for a Special Session on Medicare, among other issues. Reminds me of the adage, “The more things change, the more things stay the same.” 1969 also marked the establishment of MRCOG. We can only imagine the many challenges communities faced. We can also imagine the hope and expectations that a new, regional planning organization might bring to our diverse communities.

As I look forward to my second year as Board Chair, I do so with high expectations for our continued success. Today, as in 1969, the need for collaboration, partnerships and inclusion are paramount for the region. MRCOG is a powerful resource. As with any resource, it is up to each of us to take advantage of the potential before us. I applaud and thank all who actively avail themselves of this resource and encourage every member to step up participation and involvement. Let’s capitalize on the wisdom of those leaders in 1969 who created MRCOG, which remains significant some 48 years later.



PEOPLE & PLACE

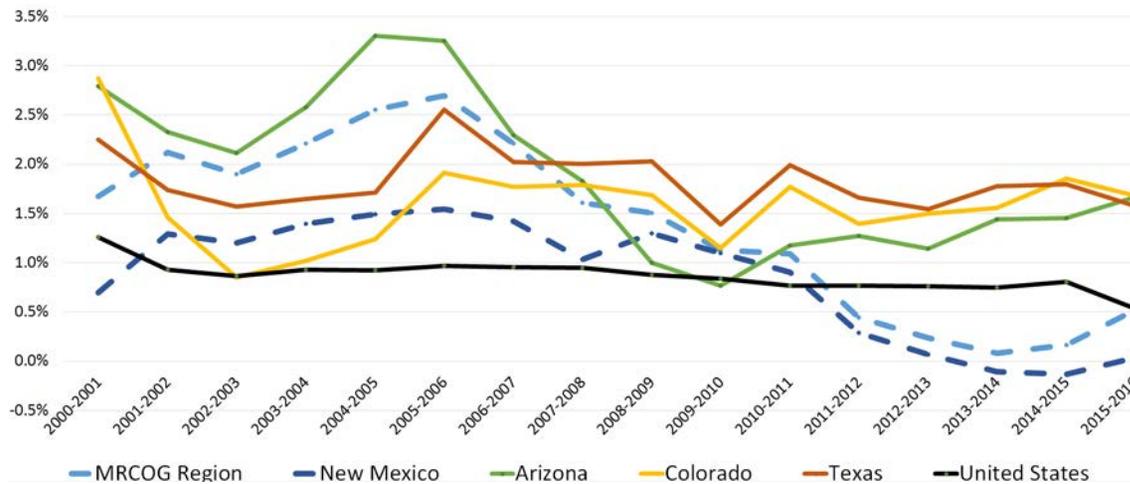
For the first part of this decade some leading indicators of prosperity, population and employment growth, have fallen to historic lows. In January of this year, a quote from a local newspaper article read: “If New Mexico’s population growth was a heart patient, it would be flat-lining.” A full five years after officially emerging from the Great Recession, New Mexico and the MRCOG region is just now beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel.

POPULATION DATA

Following 50 years of growth in excess of 20 percent per decade, population growth in the MRCOG region has stalled, falling below one-percent every year since 2011.

Annual Population Growth: US, NM, Select States, and MRCOG Region

Source: US Census Bureau, MRCOG

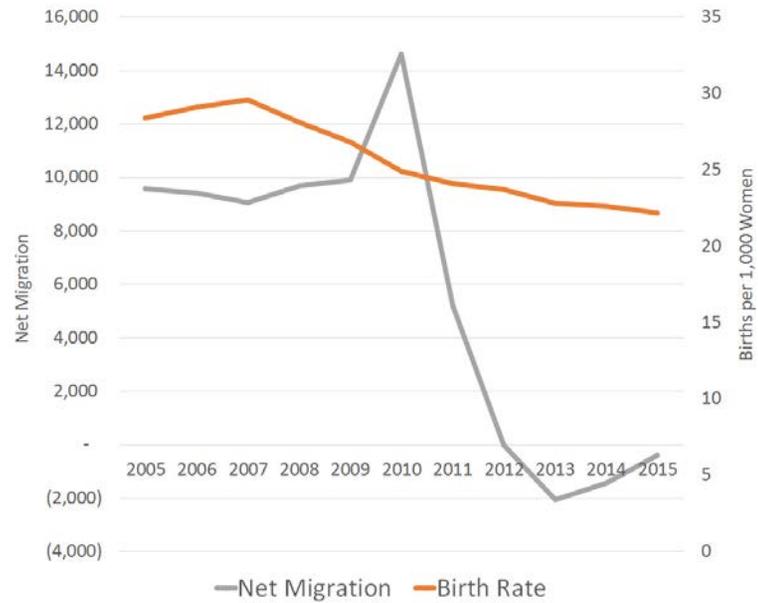


During the height of the housing boom, the MRCOG region’s fast pace of growth was exceeded only by Arizona. With the onset of the recession in 2007, the pace of population growth decreased in all areas. However, following 2010, the other areas have bounced back while our region and state continued their free-fall.

Two key factors, natural increase (births and deaths) and net migration (movers in and out) ultimately determine whether an area grows or declines. Natural increase, which is typically fairly stable over time, has actually declined in the MRCOG region over the past six years as the number of births per woman has decreased, illustrating the fact that women are having fewer children or opting out of childbirth altogether. This is not unique to the region as this trend is echoed at the

Key Components of Population Change: MRCOG Region

Source: New Mexico Department of Health, US Census Bureau, MRCOG



national level as well. A decrease in the overall birth rate is likely attributable to both personal choice and economic factors. A far greater factor in New Mexico is migration. That is, for the first time since the 1960s we are witnessing more people leaving the state than moving in. This is true of the MRCOG region as well.

Texas, Colorado, and Arizona are the primary recipients of New Mexicans who leave the state. Many of these movers are leaving for work and taking their families. The same states also contribute a large number of immigrants to New Mexico, albeit in lower numbers than those who leave.



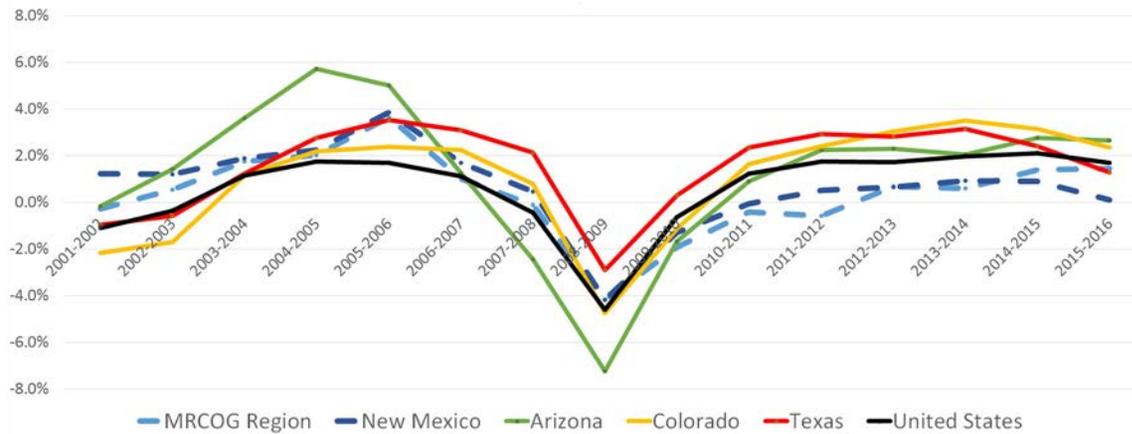
ECONOMIC DATA

There is a logical connection between population growth and economic growth. That is, in times of economic prosperity regions often attract migration, and conversely, economic decline can serve to push people out of an area.

While the MRCOG region and New Mexico entered the recession with our neighbors, we have emerged much slower than bordering states and the United States as a whole. The chart on the next page illustrates this well: our region was in the middle of the pack in terms of employment growth rates going into

Pace of Employment Growth: US, NM, Select States, and MRCOG Region

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics



the recession, but following the wreckage of the Great Recession we have come out behind. It is notable that the MRCOG region has seen year-over-year employment increases of over one-percent for the past two years, closing in on national levels.

Future expectations for growth have been adjusted downward due to the consistent decline in our pace of growth and in particular the decline in birth rates and migration. Based on the updated projections from the University of New Mexico’s Geospatial Population Studies group (UNM-GPS), our growth expectations have nearly been cut in half, from 388,000 new people between 2015 and 2040 to 198,000. If this

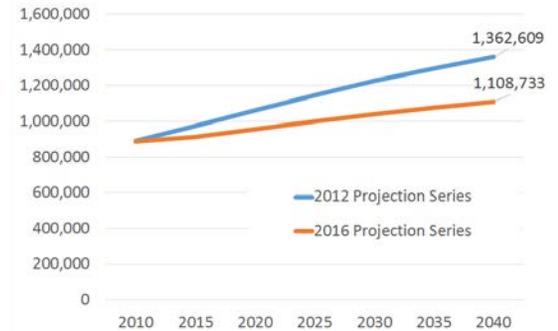
scenario plays out, the result of less growth will translate into diminished demand for new housing, goods, services, and infrastructure.

There is an indeed a glimmer of a silver lining in our story as the MRCOG region has possibly rounded the corner in the areas of population growth, migration, and employment, which have all begun to trend upward over the past year or so. It is possible, even likely, that we have seen the bottom. As we dust ourselves off and begin to piece ourselves back together, our challenge as a region will be to create what comes next with intention and ingenuity.



Comparison of Population Projections: MRCOG Region

Source: UNM-GPS





HUB STUDY CREATES BUZZ, EARLY WINS

Last March, MRCOG and its member governments began a year-long study of the transportation and logistics assets of the region, to see how those assets could translate into a coordinated economic development strategy.

The study identified several actions that could be taken immediately in order to improve economic opportunities in the region.

Redefining the Foreign Trade Zone

Foreign Trade Zones are areas where foreign goods may be received, stored, assembled into new products or otherwise manipulated without being subject to import tariffs. It is an initiative that encourages assembling and manufacturing on US soil, and creates employment opportunities.

A 62 acre site adjacent to the Albuquerque Sunport had originally been defined as this region's FTZ. Last year, the region expanded the boundary of the FTZ to include all of Bernalillo and Valencia counties, as well as the cities of Rio Rancho and Moriarty.

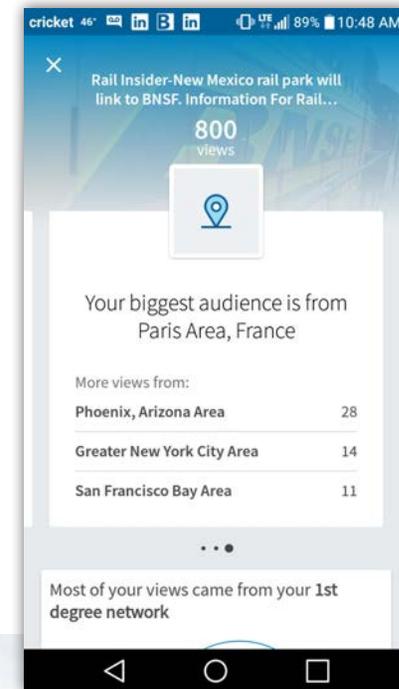
Establishing a Regional Rail Facility

When the study pointed out the importance of increasing the region's rail freight capacity, Bernalillo County stepped up and invested

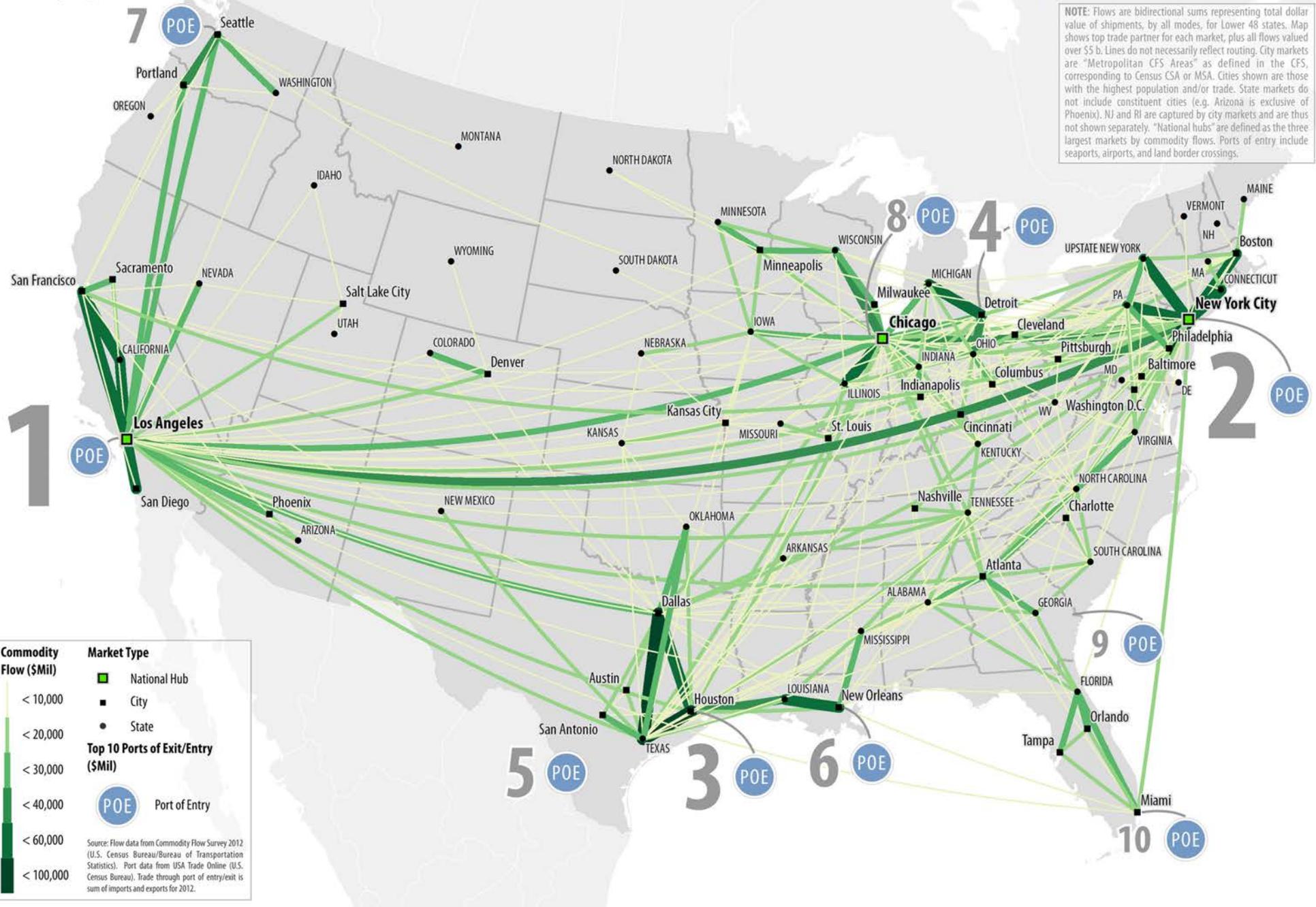
\$400,000 for rail infrastructure that will foster development of a Rail Park along NM 6, just west of the Facebook site in Los Lunas.

The groundbreaking of this regional rail park created a buzz of new interest from companies now looking at Central New Mexico. The region appears to be "on the map" for plastics companies wanting to be close to oil fields and petroleum production but also close to warehousing, manufacturing facilities, and west coast markets (see screenshot).

Groundbreaking ceremony at the site of the Central New Mexico Rail Park.



NOTE: Flows are bidirectional sums representing total dollar value of shipments, by all modes, for Lower 48 states. Map shows top trade partner for each market, plus all flows valued over \$5 b. Lines do not necessarily reflect routing. City markets are "Metropolitan CFS Areas" as defined in the CFS, corresponding to Census CSA or MSA. Cities shown are those with the highest population and/or trade. State markets do not include constituent cities (e.g. Arizona is exclusive of Phoenix). NJ and RI are captured by city markets and are thus not shown separately. "National hubs" are defined as the three largest markets by commodity flows. Ports of entry include seaports, airports, and land border crossings.



Commodity Flow (\$Mil)	Market Type
< 10,000	■ National Hub
< 20,000	■ City
< 30,000	● State
< 40,000	POE Port of Entry
< 60,000	
< 100,000	

Top 10 Ports of Exit/Entry (\$Mil)

Source: Flow data from Commodity Flow Survey 2012 (U.S. Census Bureau/Bureau of Transportation Statistics). Port data from USA Trade Online (U.S. Census Bureau). Trade through port of entry/exit is sum of imports and exports for 2012.

NEW MEXICO WORKFORCE CONNECTION

The New Mexico Workforce Connection and its many partners, through the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and other US Department of Labor funded programs, has continued to help job seekers and businesses in New Mexico's central region to maximize their successes. This past year has been particularly exciting due to the start-up of the TechHire NM program, the Graduate ABQ kickoff, and the many job opportunities and business services that were provided.

TechHire New Mexico

Within the last year, the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico (WCCNM) was awarded a U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA), H-1B TechHire

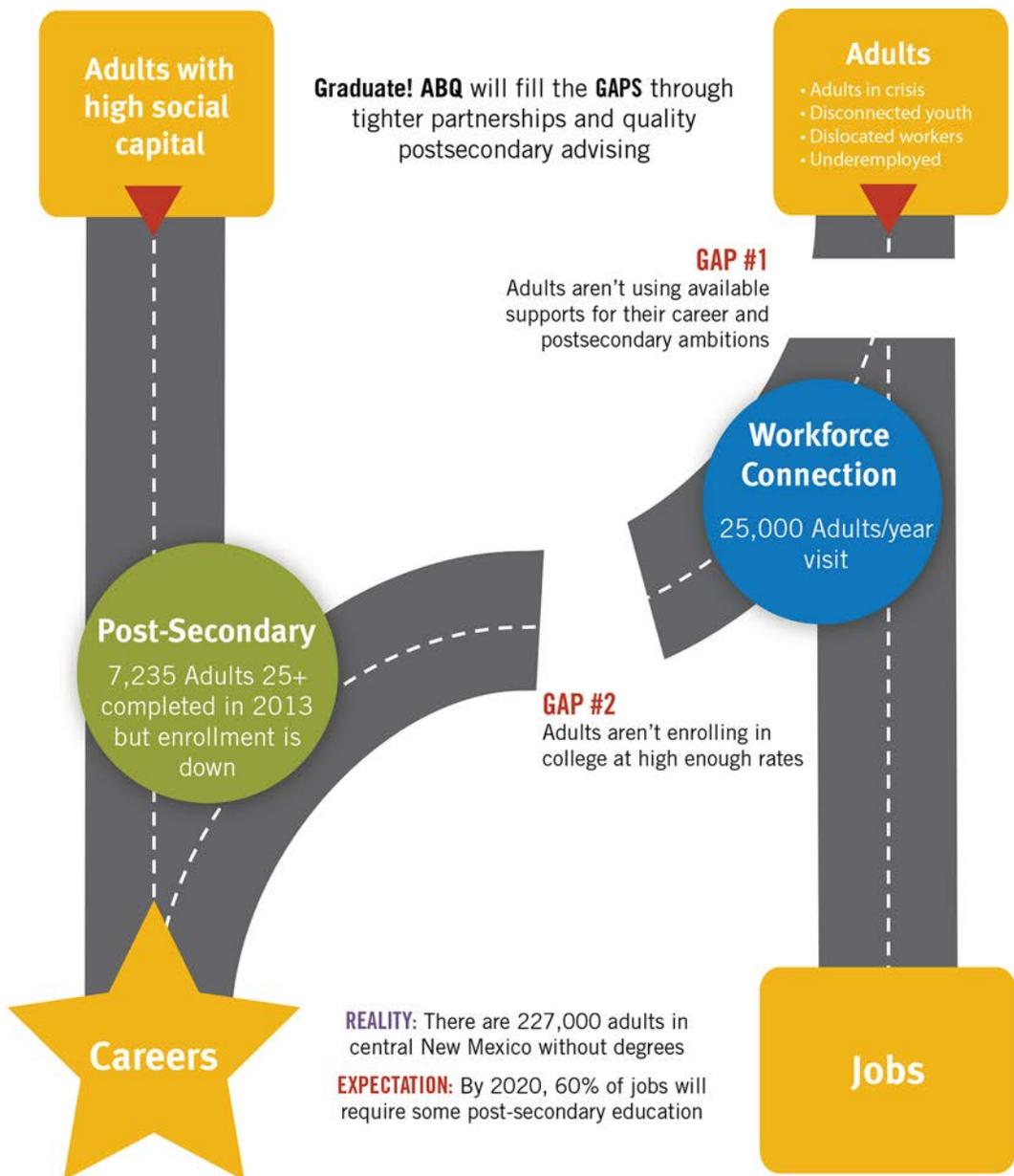


Partnership Grant. The \$4 million grant program, titled TechHire New Mexico, was one of only 39 grant awards out of 215 nationwide applications.

TechHire New Mexico is designed to provide Information Technology (IT) job training and placement for individuals in Bernalillo, Sandoval, Torrance, and Valencia counties ages 17-29 who experience barriers to training and employment. The program offers paid IT occupational training opportunities and works to identify any IT-related staffing challenges employers have and help overcome these by growing a more effective pipeline of IT talent.

TechHire New Mexico is actively recruiting employers and job seekers to participate in the program. The program will provide paid IT training and employment assistance for 450 eligible participants. It will also benefit employers by providing job placement support, customized accelerated technical training (e.g. boot-camps), apprenticeships, and work experience opportunities for qualified individuals in IT occupations.





GRADUATE! ABQ

Graduate!ABQ

Starting this year, visitors to the New Mexico Workforce Connection Central Region can get assistance from a Graduate! ABQ Coach who will help prospective students take the first steps toward a college degree or certificate.

It is not easy for adults to go back to college, and this program will help students connect with support systems on campus, apply to colleges, as well as figure out how to pay for their continued education.

Graduate! ABQ is a partnership between Mission: Graduate, NM Workforce Connection Central Region, Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), the University of New Mexico (UNM), Youth Development Incorporated (YDI), and the City of Albuquerque.

Graduate! ABQ is part of the Graduate! Network, a national organization working with a select number of 17 communities across the nation, with a mission to increase the number of adults completing college.

JOB TRAINING AND PLACEMENT SUCCESS STORIES

Through the WIOA program and service providers, Youth Development Incorporated (YDI) and SER-Jobs for Progress, the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico has been able to provide education, on-the-job training, and job placement services with very successful outcomes.



New Mexico Workforce Connection

A Proud Partner of the American Job Center Network



Britnee was 17-years old when she enrolled in the WIOA Program. After graduating high school last year, Britnee decided to enroll in the Quality Health Dental Assistant Program. The turning point for Britnee was the consistent guidance and mentorship provided by her Youth Development Practitioner that helped her to decide on continuing her education. Since completing the classroom instruction and receiving her Dental Assistance certification, Britnee has been hired by Comfort Dental. With a huge smile Britnee says, "I love my career."

Quintana Dental has partnered with the WIOA program to provide on-the-job training opportunities for students who complete the Dental Assisting Program through Quality Health Management, which trains students in the areas of chair-side dental assisting, sterilization and safety, radiography, dental science, and front office training. Quintana Dental has been able to create a bridge from education to work by offering permanent employment to WIOA participants who have successfully completed the QHM Dental Assisting program through their enrollment into a WIOA on-the-job training contract.



After 17 year old high school student Esperanza enrolled in the WIOA program, she was placed at the Independent News in Edgewood for work experience in graphic design and social media. This placement provided Esperanza with the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge on how a local newspaper business operates. The WIOA Youth Program aligns its work experience worksites with the students career interest so they can learn first-hand what it is like before they invest more time and money in this field after high school. "Obtaining this job has opened my eyes as to what direction my life will go and that is an experience I couldn't have gained from a classroom environment or anywhere else," says Esperanza.



Shy Rebecca had a hard time interacting with staff and peers, and fell behind in classes due to a hereditary condition that interferes with her ability to work and stay in school. After enrolling in the YDI Youth Build Program, she attained her High School Equivalency, worked with a Youth Development Practitioner to develop goals and a service plan, and today she is employed at First Choice Healthcare as a Patient Service Representative. When asked what her advice is to other students who may be struggling, she offered, "Stop and just do it and ask for help. It's not worth it to be working minimum wage jobs to try and pay bills. It's better to have a career. The WIOA program is awesome; it helped me get to where I am today."



Through WIOA, WCCNM has been a partner of the Roadrunner Food Bank of New Mexico, who has been serving New Mexico's hungry since 1980. Through their work they are helping to feed 70,000 New Mexicans weekly. In 2016 Roadrunner Foodbank was able to provide 11 employees with assistance from the WIOA on-the-job training skill upgrade program. Each participant successfully completed all their training hours and continue to do a remarkable job for the company in their new positions. WIOA's support and connection with Roadrunner has been a huge success in employment, training, and employee retention.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Transportation planning at MRCOG is an ongoing activity. From collecting and analyzing transportation data and keeping up with the latest technological developments to preparing the region for the future, MRCOG's transportation planners under the umbrella of the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO) rarely see a dull moment.

Transportation Improvement Program

This past year, the MRMPO finalized the FFY 2018-2023 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Albuquerque Metro Planning Area (AMPA). The TIP programs federal funding for transportation projects for a six year period. Each fiscal year is required to be fiscally constrained: the amount of funds programmed in a given year must not exceed the amount of funds estimated to be available in that same year. The 2018-2023 TIP contains an estimated \$723,617,549 of funds.



The NM Department of Transportation, all local and tribal governments within the AMPA, public transit operators and federal government agencies are eligible to propose projects for inclusion in the TIP. These include transit enhancements and expansion, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, travel demand management strategies, roadway improvements, park and ride facilities, intelligent transportation system enhancements, and studies/data collection.

Projects proposed for inclusion in the TIP must be consistent with the area's current, long-range transportation plan, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and proposed projects are evaluated to see whether they meet the MTP's regional goals of improving mobility, economic vitality, environmental resiliency, and active places. Each project proposal receives a prioritization score depending on how well it supports the regional goals and objectives of the MTP.

Information about the TIP process as well as the complete project listing can be found on the MRCOG website.



COMPLETE STREETS

Complete streets is a term to describe streets that are designed to meet the needs of all users--pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists--and users of all abilities including young people, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

The mission of the New Mexico Complete Streets Leadership Team is to improve the health and safety of New Mexicans by increasing active transportation options via "Complete Streets" policies and practices

by state, local, and tribal governments. The organization's primary purpose is to educate about Complete Streets and provide resources to the people of New Mexico who are concerned about the health of our communities and the safety of our streets.

In 2016, the New Mexico Complete Streets Leadership Team drafted and passed a Complete Streets Memorial as a step toward eventual State Legislation, organized a panel and presentation for the 2016



NM American Planning Association state conference, and organized and participated in several community events.

The team's work has been useful in helping promote Complete Streets, which are called out in the 2040 MTP as an effective way of improving safety and mobility, and also for enhancing active transportation. In the coming year, the team will re-assess its current focus areas and continue to work on building support for Complete Streets.

Above: Complete Streets team members getting ready for a public education event.

Left: An example of what a complete street looks like. Notice how it safely accommodates everyone.



BICI BIKESHARE

downtown bikes

BICI Bikeshare was launched back in 2015 in partnership between Downtown ABQ MainStreet Initiative and MRCOG, with 75 bicycles and 15 stations throughout downtown and beyond for quick trips, running errands, or enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

In many major cities around the world, Bikeshare programs are becoming a standard form of public transit. They are designed to expand personal mobility, connect to and from other modes of transit, and promote active and healthy living.

This past year, the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD) adopted the downtown pilot bikeshare program under its management. RMRTD has continued the existing pilot program, received federal funding to

expand BICI beyond downtown, and is currently planning the program's expansion.

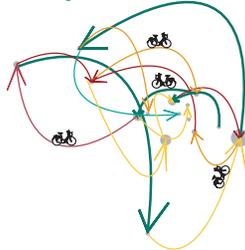
The "heat map" to the right shows where BICI bikes are used most in the metropolitan area.



2,067 BICI MEMBERS



8,375 TRIPS



63.4%
BICI riders from NM

 A white silhouette of a bicycle on a teal background.

AVERAGE RIDE TIME

33
minutes

 An icon of a stopwatch with a bicycle wheel inside the dial, indicating the average ride time.

TOP 5 STATIONS*

1. EDO/GROVE
2. PNM
3. SILVER MOON LODGE
4. CITY HALL WEST
5. ABQ MUSEUM/SLATE STREET CAFE

* Statistics shown are from May 15, 2015 - May 15, 2017



TRAFFIC & CONGESTION

Taking a look at the metropolitan area's most congested corridors gives us an indication of where growth is taking place and how well our roadway system is keeping up with that growth.

The following data went into determining the most recent ranking of congested corridors for 2014, as shown in the table:

- 1. Traffic volume data** was used to determine the roadway's volume to capacity (V/C) ratio. V/C ratios compare a roadway's peak hour volume to the roadway's "intended capacity," which is the number of cars it was designed to accommodate.
- 2. Average peak hour travel speeds** were used to determine the roadway's "speed differential," which is the difference between the observed peak hour speed and the posted speed. The higher this difference, the more points were allocated.
- 3. Crash rates** were determined for every intersection where crash data was available. The higher the crash rate, the more points were allocated.

The point scores in the table represent the sum of congestion points amassed along each corridor. Each corridor's point scores were divided by the length of the corridor, so longer corridors wouldn't have higher congestion scores merely because there were more opportunities to get points.

Top Ten Congested Corridors in 2014

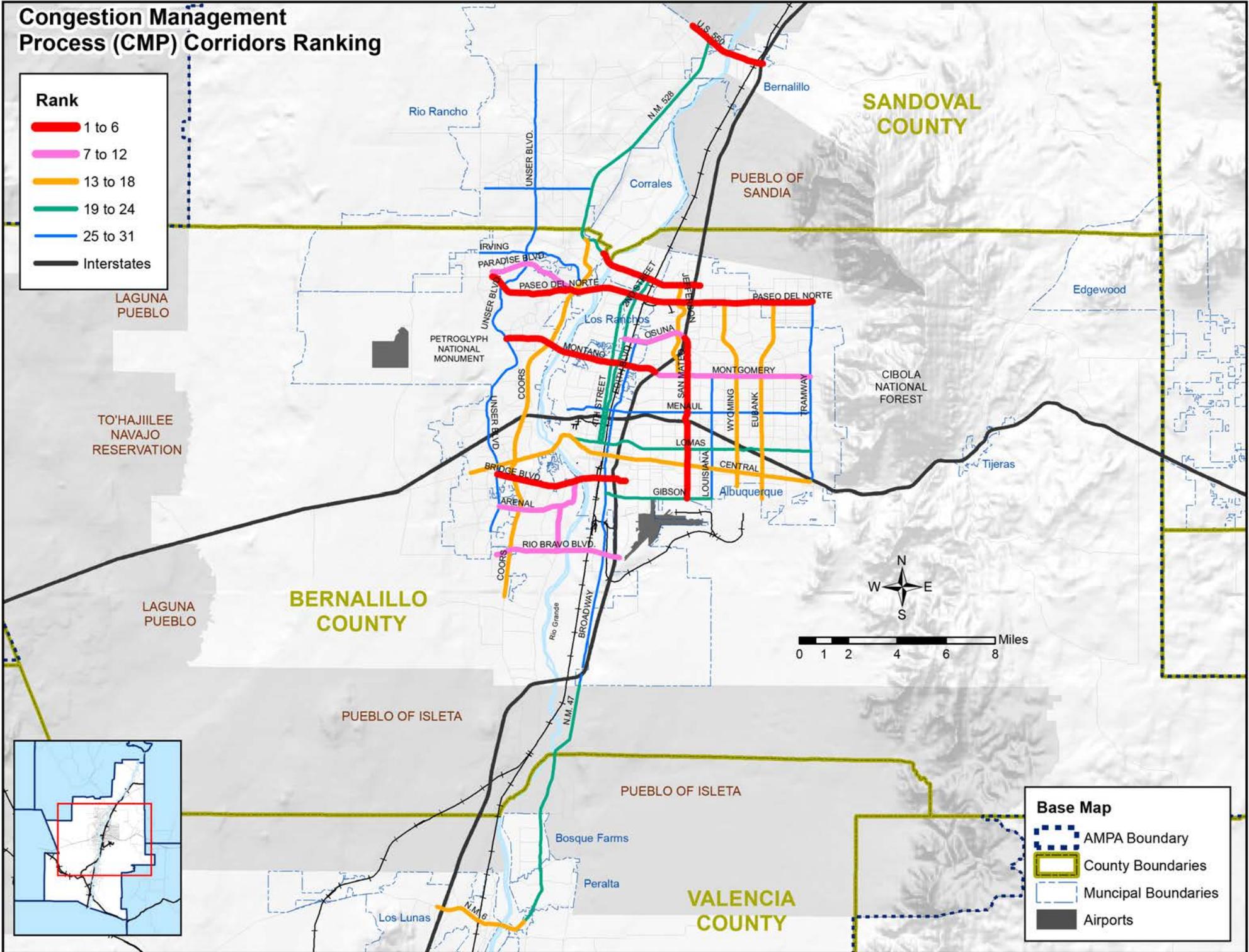
Rank	Route	V/C Points	Speed Points	Crash Points	Final Score
1	Alameda Blvd.	68.19	23.97	3.64	95.80
2	Montano Rd.	41.25	25.88	11.82	78.95
3	Bridge/Cesar Chavez Blvd.	48.61	15.08	11.33	75.02
4	U.S. 550	52.87	17.14	3.33	73.35
5	Paseo Del Norte	33.68	16.89	16.32	66.89
6	San Mateo Blvd.	9.19	38.78	18.13	66.10
7	Paradise Blvd.	30.65	18.86	16.00	65.51
8	Isleta Blvd.	40.16	19.21	4.62	63.98
9	Osuna Rd.	15.92	38.17	9.33	63.42
10	Arenal Rd.	27.82	21.54	10.00	59.35

Highlights

- **The five most congested corridors are all river crossings. All experience high traffic volumes as well as significant speed delay.**
- **San Mateo Blvd. found itself in the top 10 despite low traffic volumes in relation to the corridor's capacity. This is due to the slow speeds and high crash rates experienced along this corridor.**
- **Three Westside corridors that feed river crossings—Isleta Blvd., Arenal Rd., and Paradise Blvd.—rounded off the top ten.**



Congestion Management Process (CMP) Corridors Ranking



CONNECTED AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES

What once may have sounded like science fiction is now a fast-approaching reality: connected and autonomous vehicles are only years away from wide-scale deployment. MRCOG, through the ITS Subcommittee, is considering what this will mean for the traveling public, consumers, and our region. Are we prepared?

What are connected and autonomous vehicles?

Connected and autonomous vehicles are vehicles that use technologies that enable them to “talk” to one another and share data. Connected vehicle technology doesn’t depend on “line of sight” communications to be effective. So, if a car ahead of you is braking hard on the other side of a hill due to an obstruction, you would receive notification even though you can’t see and aren’t aware of the dangerous situation developing.

Data Collection

Connected vehicles capitalize on advances in communication to collect valuable travel data. When vehicles become detectors, the amount of information available on roadway conditions increases astronomically. Data shared among vehicles/modes, drivers,



roadside devices, and transportation managers from different agencies allows for the collection and dissemination of real time traveler information.

Safety

The sharing of travel data allows drivers to be notified of upcoming hazardous travel situations as they arise. This advanced notification allows drivers more time to react and can dramatically reduce the number of accidents on our roads and highways.

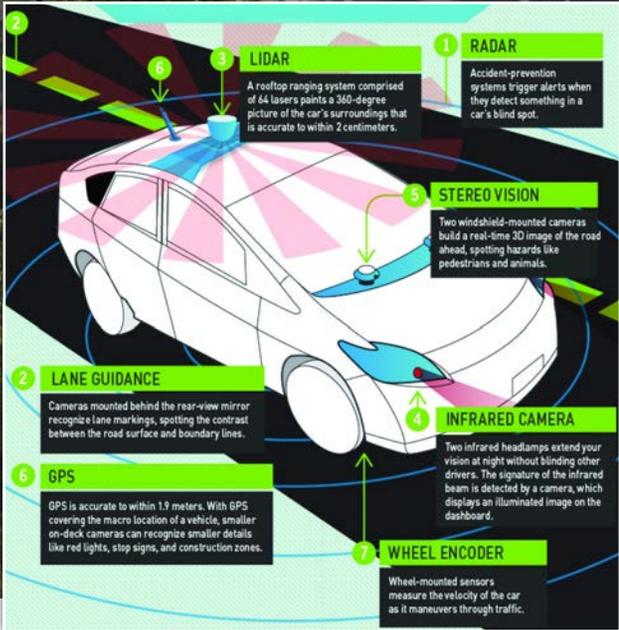
System Efficiency

As roadway data becomes available in “real-time,” traffic flows can be controlled more efficiently to prevent or lessen congestion. This will have a significant impact on the amount of congestion experienced by drivers, as well as on the environment by cutting fuel consumption and emissions.

Implementation

Connected vehicle technology is becoming standard equipment and offers a less expensive alternative to the physical installation of roadside radar and camera equipment by agencies that manage the transportation system. It will take time for local agencies to adopt these technologies as resources are spread thin. However, the benefits can ultimately outweigh the costs in terms of increased safety, reduced delay, and improved operations of the transportation system.

In order to provide a fully integrated transportation system that serves all users, it will be crucial for all agencies and modes to participate in adopting these technologies. In many ways, the ‘connected vehicles’ future is preparing us for the ultimate integration of driverless (or autonomous) vehicles.



NEW MEXICO RAIL RUNNER EXPRESS

It was another eventful year for the New Mexico Rail Runner Express. A new station opening, improvements to track and pedestrian paths, keeping riders informed through e-blasts, smart phone messages, and an in-transit magazine, and continuing popular programs such as those for veterans and seniors.



Zia Road Station Opening

The New Mexico Rail Runner Express added a 15th station to its service area this year. The Zia Road Station in Santa Fe, which is located at the intersection of Zia Road and St. Francis Drive, opened on April 24th.

The Zia Road station was built as part of Phase II of the Rail Runner project which extended commuter rail service north to Santa Fe in 2008. Earlier this year, the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the City of Santa Fe reached an agreement on station access, and directed the Rio Metro Regional Transit District to begin service to the station.

“It’s great to be able to add Zia Road to the

Rail Runner schedule,” said Dewey Cave, Chief Executive Officer, Rio Metro Regional Transit District. “It took more time than expected, but I think the community, nearby businesses and passengers will find Zia Road to be a very viable stop along the corridor – especially for those shorter trips in and around Santa Fe.”

The Zia Road station, from opening day through July 2017 has been the origin or destination for more than 6,000 passenger trips.

Passenger Communications

With more than 900,000 passenger trips per year on the New Mexico Rail Runner Express and Rio Metro buses, the Rio Metro Regional

Transit District Marketing and Customer Service Departments have worked hard to establish a solid format for passenger communications.

Delays, Emergencies, Schedule Changes

In the event of delays and emergencies, passengers can access real-time information through the Rio Metro website, Twitter, text messages, Rail Runner station message boards, and, of course, by calling the Rio Metro Customer Service Office directly.

Special Events

Throughout the year, Rio Metro’s train and bus schedules are adjusted for holidays and special events. In addition to the website,



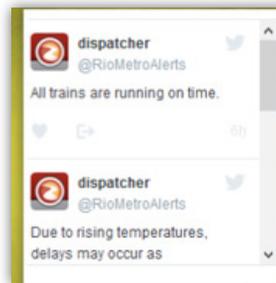
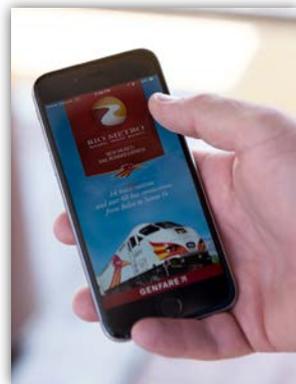
passengers also have options to receive this information through a monthly newsletter, e-Blasts, Facebook, and Twitter.

Express Magazine

Express Magazine is the Rail Runner’s in-transit publication designed to provide Rail riders with information about activities and attractions from businesses along the 100-mile train corridor.

The magazine increased publication from two issues per year when it started back in 2014, to three issues per year currently. There is no cost to Rio Metro for the production of Express Magazine.

20,000 copies of the magazine are mailed out, 2,200 copies distributed to Rail Runner hotel partners, 3,000 copies are distributed on the train, and another 1,800 copies are handed out at community events.



Safety

The New Mexico Rail Runner Express has demonstrated a commitment to safety since day one. As part of this commitment, and to fulfill a federal regulation, we host a Full Scale Exercise once every two calendar years. The purpose is to give emergency responders throughout the Santa Fe to Belen corridor a chance to become acquainted with not only the train and equipment, but also with the railroad terrain and its unique environment.

The week prior to the exercise, NMRX joins forces with Amtrak and BNSF to offer several training dates. This year, attendees were given four hours of classroom instruction followed by two hours of hands-on equipment familiarization training presented by safety experts. For 2017, 59 responders attended the training. Attendees for the training included emergency responders from:

- Los Chavez Fire Department
- Albuquerque Police Department
- Isleta Fire Department
- Isleta Volunteer Fire Department
- Belen Fire Department
- New Mexico State Police
- New Mexico Rail Runner Express Customer Service
- Rio Metro Regional Transit District
- Santa F County Office of Emergency Management
- Pueblo of Sandia



- Mid-Region Council of Governments
- Oklahoma City Police Department
- Santa Ana Police Department
- Moriarty/Edgewood School District
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- Santa Fe County Fire Department
- Galisteo Volunteer Fire Department

The Full Scale Exercise was held in Lamy, New Mexico on August 8, 2017. Over 300 responders and 112 volunteers from 21 different agencies were on-site for a full day of practicing real-world, simulated emergency preparedness situations.

The scenario and responding agencies change each time to practice, in a safe learning environment, dealing with a variety of scenarios. Past years have tested terrorist situations, hostage negotiations,

collisions between Amtrak, BNSF, and NMRX equipment, biological agents released onboard, derailments, and a hijacking.

For the exercise this year, the scenario was chosen to coincide with several statewide emergency preparedness conferences, table top exercises, and countless discussions on the mitigation of an earthquake along the Rio Grande Rift. Our scenario was that an earthquake occurs along the Rio Grande Rift, near MP 858.0, CP Gonzales (Santa Fe/Sandoval County line). When it strikes, there is a BNSF train waiting at the siding, with an NMRX train and an Amtrak train nearby. A collision occurs between the three separate trains. There is a hazardous-material release, with dozens of passengers on-board both the Amtrak and NMRX trains.



Popular Programs

Veteran's Annual Pass

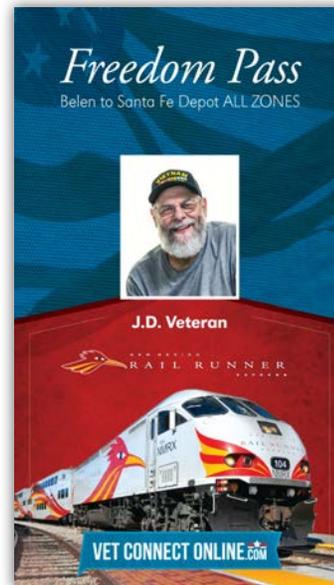
This past November, the Veterans Annual Pass became the Freedom Pass. It is now a lifetime pass that does not need to be renewed annually. The pass was already available at the main Rio Metro office and VA Medical Center in Albuquerque, and two new locations were added this past year to help assist in issuing passes—one at the Los Lunas Transportation Center, and the other in Santa Fe at Eco Motive.

The partnership with private business Eco Motive is especially helpful in serving the northern communities. Eco Motive, located right next to the Santa Fe Depot Rail Runner Station, issues passes during business hours and by appointment.

With four locations now issuing the Freedom Pass, there has been a noticeable increase in veteran ridership using the Pass. In fact, average ridership grew from 3300 rides per month* to over 3600 rides per month.** An increase was also recorded in the number of passes issued during that same time period—an average of 350 passes issued each month climbed to an average of 477.

* In the period of July 2015 to June 2016

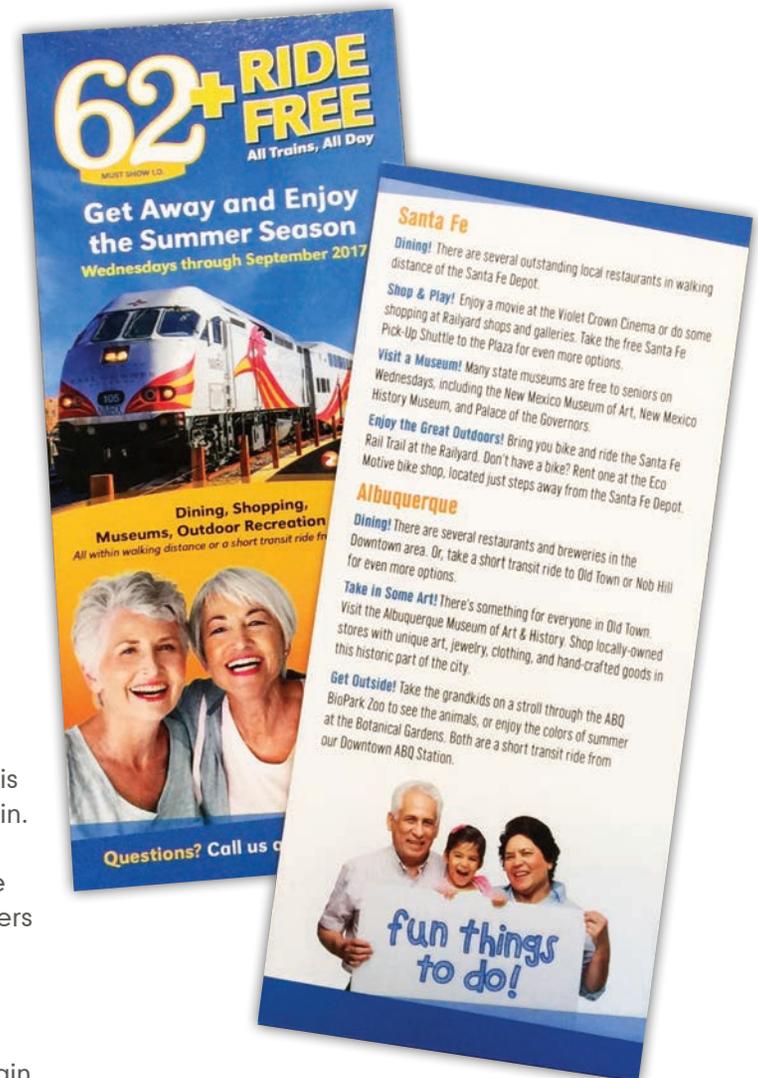
** In the period of July 2016 to June 2017



Seniors 62+ Ride Free

Last year, the Rail Runner kicked off a campaign to encourage Seniors 62+ to ride the train by making rides free on Wednesdays for those 62 and over. This was such a success, that in February of this year, the program was implemented again. Since the program started, nearly 20,000 Seniors 62+ have taken advantage of the opportunity. Many who were first time riders have now become regular Wednesday riders.

There are no limitations on this program which means participants can ride any train along the corridor. The program is seasonal, and will end at the end of September 2017, to start back up again in February 2018.



For the Kids

Trax!

Since his unveiling in May 2014, Trax, the New Mexico Rail Runner Express mascot, has become one of the most recognizable costume characters in the state. Standing over 6 ½ feet tall, with big yellow feet and a perky tail, this giant red roadrunner makes quite an impression.

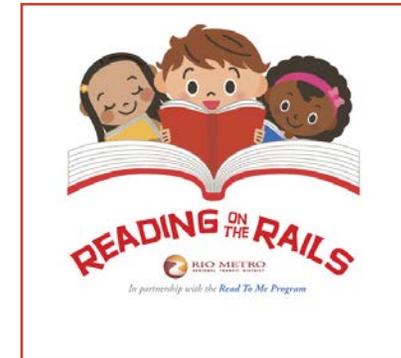
In the past year, Trax participated in more than 40 community events, assisted with many Operation Life Saver presentations at schools and community centers, and kicked off his own series of dedicated rail safety programs for kids at public libraries.

Reading on the Rails

This Spring, Rio Metro kicked off the Reading on the Rails program, which provides a wide selection of books located in brightly labeled pockets near the entrance on train cars.

The program provides children and families a meaningful experience while riding the train, and is geared towards children Pre-K through 8th Grade who are encouraged to read on their journey – and even take the book home if they like!

Trax helped kick-off the annual Read to Me Children's Book Drive.



Improvements

Over the past year, Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD) has made critical advancements on a number of Rail Runner capital projects. As part of the Rio Metro Short Range Plan, all of these projects aim to improve safety, customer satisfaction, performance and reduce maintenance costs.

Pedestrian Improvements

The engineering for the first phase of the Town of Bernalillo Pedestrian Improvements project is complete and is expected to go out to bid before the end of 2017. These improvement will provide pedestrian paths and a signalized pedestrian crossing by the Downtown Bernalillo Station – where upwards of 75 crossings a day occur.

Design is currently underway to develop another mile of path along the tracks. Through the collaboration of Rio Metro, the Town of Bernalillo and the New Mexico

Department of Transportation, \$2.9 million of federal funding has been secured for these improvements.

Continuous Welded Rail Project

The currently underway Continuous Welded Rail project is an effort to weld 12-miles of track segments together. These improvements are being completed on the critical section of track near Sandia Pueblo, and will result in a higher quality train ride, reduce track and equipment maintenance costs, and improve on-time performance.

Los Ranchos/Journal Central Station

Improvements at the Los Ranchos / Journal Center Station are completely engineered and will provide additional parking on the lot on the west side the railroad tracks, enhance bicycle and pedestrian connectivity, and provide additional safety features, such as surveillance cameras and lighting. The

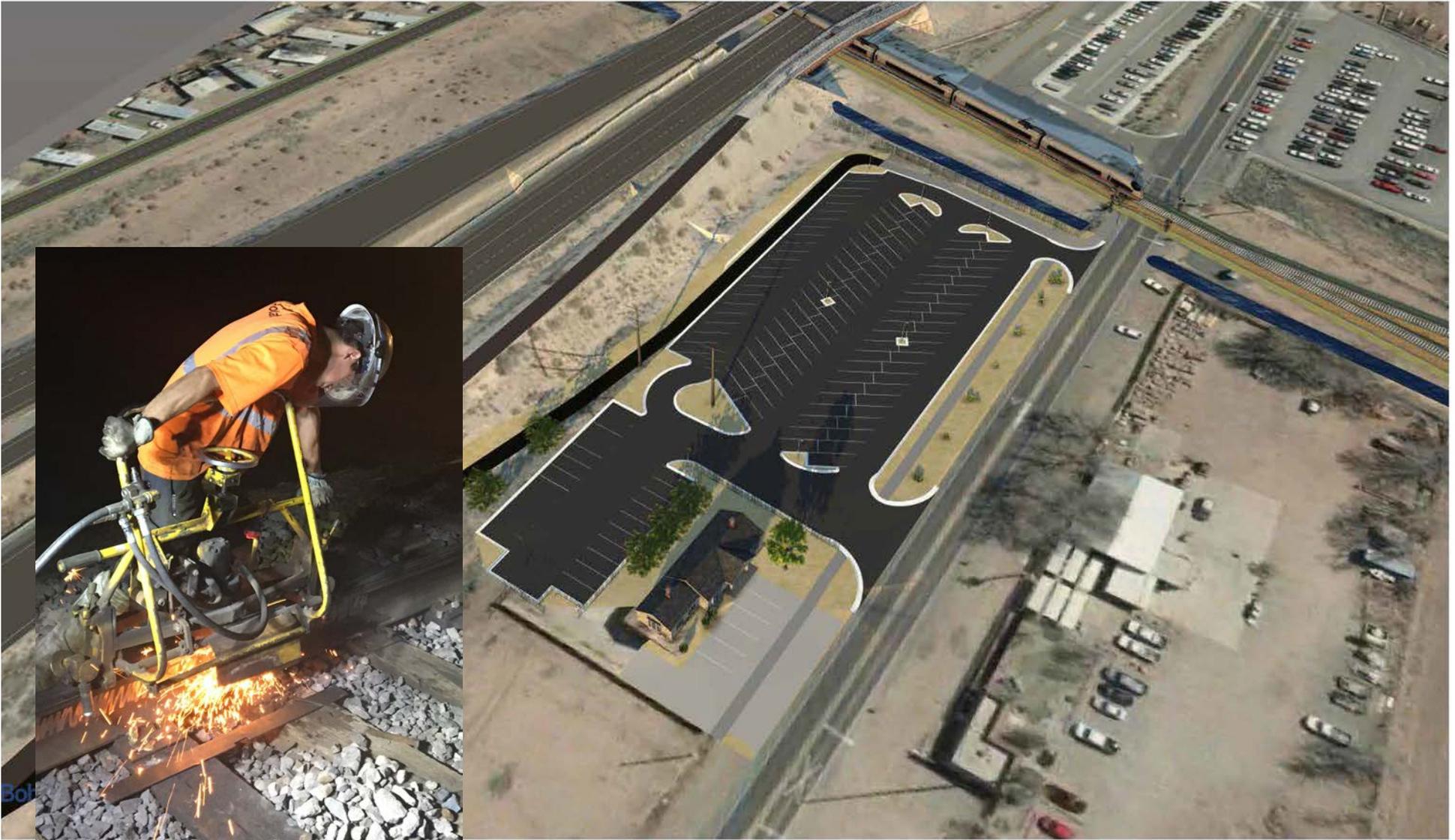
construction work is scheduled to go out to bid this year, and be completed sometime next year.

Transit Service Refinements

Following the Rio Metro Vision Plan's theme of "sound financial stewardship," staff planners evaluated the productivity of Rio Metro transit service. This analysis identified ways to improve the efficiency (and reducing operations costs) of the Bus Route 201 (northwest Rio Rancho/Town of Bernalillo) and to make the service more convenient to current and new passengers. These changes have been implemented and while it is too soon to tell their impact on ridership, the early signs are promising.

Similar service refinements are planned for other routes in the upcoming year.





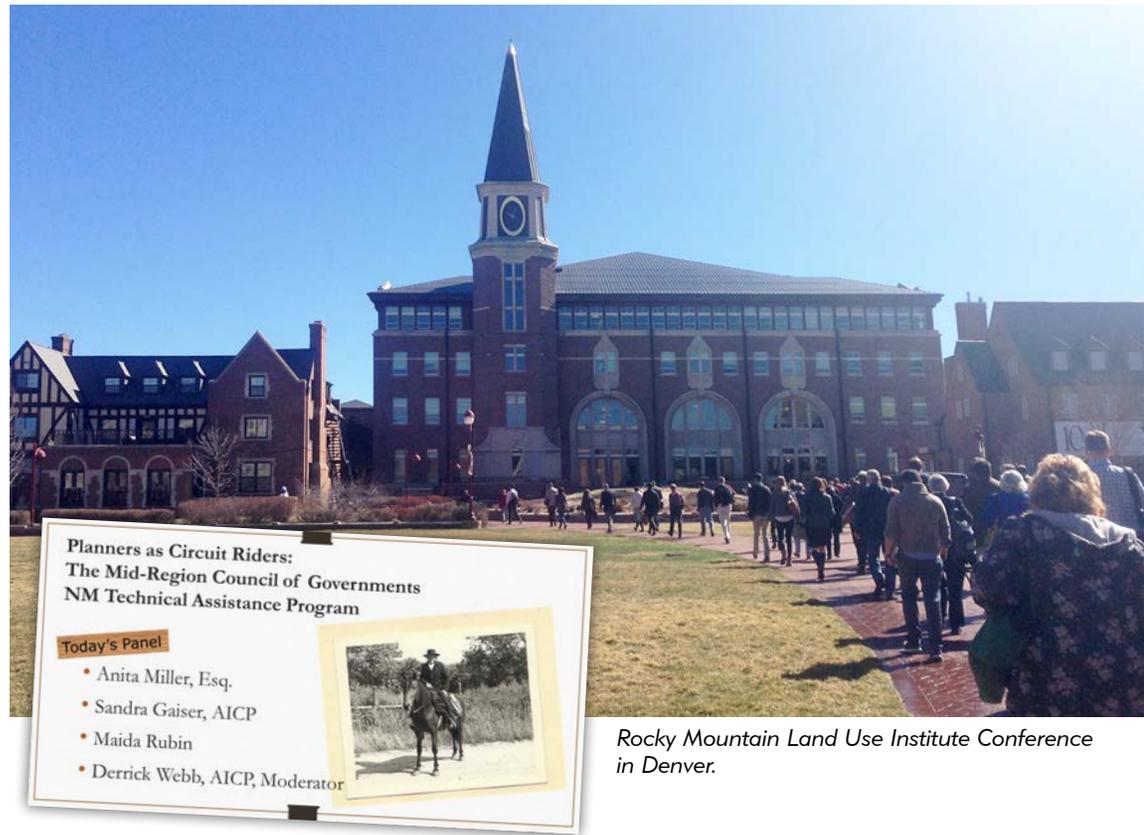
**Rendering of Improvements at Los Ranchos/Journal Center above.
Continuous Weld Project in Process at left.**

REGIONAL PLANNING PROGRAM

The Regional Planning Program at MRCOG houses the Local Planning Assistance (LPA) program and the Rural Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO). Through the LPA program, staff assist communities in the Mid-Region by providing workshops and training for municipal staff and elected officials, as well as developing comprehensive plans and updating land use ordinances. The RTPO handles funding for transportation projects in rural communities such as Transportation Alternatives Program and Rec Trails Program funding. RTPO staff works with communities to determine project feasibility and long term project planning.

Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute Conference in Denver

From recreating missing zoning maps to fielding questions about chicken coops as dwelling units, staff provide a broad range of services to local governments through MRCOG's LPA program. New Mexico works differently from other western states; there is no State Planning Office and many rural communities do not have planning staff. The LPA program allows MRCOG staff to function as an extension of municipal staff, providing technical assistance and working to expand their local capacity.



Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute Conference in Denver.

While councils of government in New Mexico can legally provide these services, some other states such as Colorado are hindered by a clause in the state constitution prohibiting government entities from competing with private firms. Because of the unique nature of the LPA program, particularly to other states, staff put together a session about the services MRCOG provides and made a presentation at the 2017 Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute (RMLUI) conference in Denver.

The presentation included information on the various types of technical assistance

provided to communities, and the impact that this assistance has had to better equip them to make informed, rational land use decisions. Because the conference focuses on land use law in the Rocky Mountain west, presenters also discussed the New Mexico legal cases that local planning commissioners, elected officials and municipal staff should know when making land use decisions. MRCOG incorporates this information into individual trainings as well as the annual Planning Commissioners Workshop, hosted at MRCOG.

Transportation Alternatives Project Awards

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a federal-aid, cost reimbursement program that provides federal funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives. Potential TAP projects include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving mobility for non-drivers, turnouts for scenic overlooks, and safe routes to school projects. The program is implemented in New Mexico by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT). MRCOG is pleased to announce that the NMDOT has selected two Mid-Region communities, the Town of Edgewood and the Village of Cuba, to receive TAP funding for Federal Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019.

The Town of Edgewood has been awarded funds for the “Town Commons Truss Bridge” project. This bridge will serve to safely connect each side of Bachelor Draw with the Town Commons Recreational and Municipal facilities. This project re-purposes a historic NMDOT Trestle bridge built in 1930. The trail bridge will connect Town Common trails to the overall trails network, promoting physical activity, fitness, health, well-being and quality of life for Town residents.



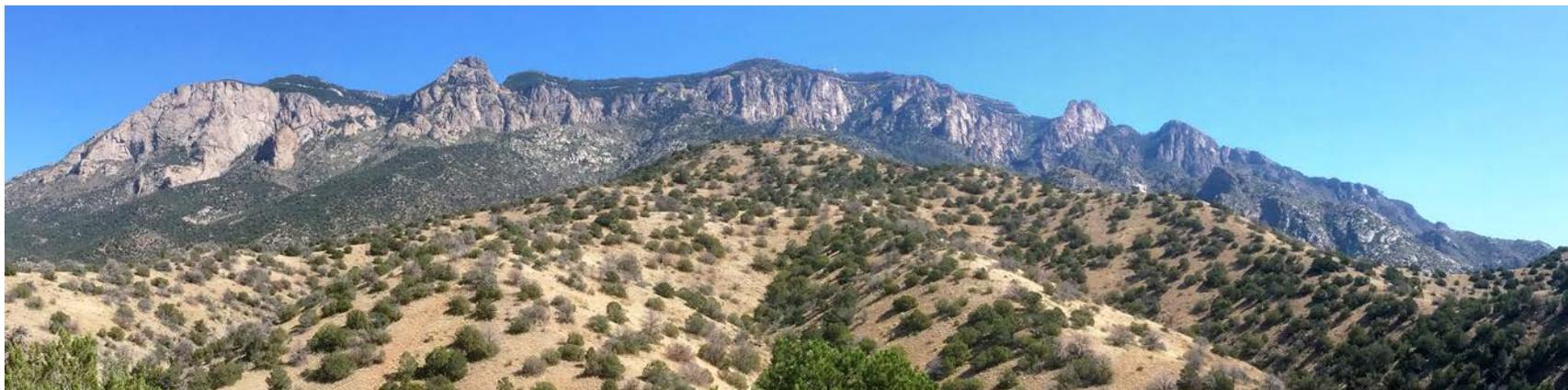
Top: Town Commons Truss Bridge Project in Edgewood.

Left: NM 216 Sidewalk Project in Cuba

The Village of Cuba has been awarded funds for the “NM 126 Sidewalk” project. This project is a new sidewalk to provide a safe pedestrian connection from the Village of Cuba’s Jemez Mountain Scenic Byway information kiosk at the intersection of US 550 and NM 126 to the Village’s St. Francis of Assisi Park located on the north side of NM 126. The alignment of the proposed sidewalk and trails along NM 126 and County Road 13 will allow future extension of sidewalk to the Cuba Schools campus, 0.75 miles from the US 550-NM 126 junction.



BOARDS AND COMMITTEES



MRCOG Board of Directors	35
Rio Metro Board of Directors	36
Metropolitan Transportation Board.....	36
RTPO Committee	36
Water Resources Board.....	36
WCCNM Board	36
2017 Staff Listing	37

MRCOG Board of Directors

Bernalillo County

Commissioner Debbie O'Malley
Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins
Commissioner Steven Quezada

Sandoval County

Commissioner James Dominguez
Commissioner David Heil

Torrance County

County Manager Belinda Garland
Commissioner Julia DuCharme

Valencia County

Commissioner Jhonathan Aragon
Commissioner Helen Cole

City of Albuquerque

Robert Perry, Chief Administrative Officer
Councilor Isaac Benton
Councilor Diane Gibson
Councilor Don Harris
Councilor Patrick Davis
Councilor Dan Lewis
Councilor Klarissa Peña

City of Belen

Mayor Jerah Cordova

City of Moriarty

Mayor Ted Hart
Councilor M. Steven Anaya

City of Rio Rancho

Mayor Gregory D. Hull
Councilor Dawn Robinson

City of Rio Communities

Mayor Mark Gwinn

Town of Bernalillo

Mayor Jack Torres

Town of Edgewood

Mayor John Bassett

Town of Estancia

Trustee Cory Dryden
Trustee Manuel Romero

Town of Peralta

Councilor Leon Otero

Village of Bosque Farms

Mayor Wayne Ake

Village of Corrales

Councilor Philip Gasteyer
Councilor/Mayor Pro Tem Pat Clauser

Village of Cuba

Mayor Mark Hatzenbuehler
Vandora Casados, Clerk/Trustee

Village of Los Lunas

Mayor Charles Griego
Christina Ainsworth, Director of Community
Development

Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque

Mayor Larry Abraham
Trustee Donald Lopez

Village of Tijeras

Mayor Gloria Chavez

Village of Willard

Mayor Robert Chavez
Emily Sanchez, Clerk

Albuquerque Public Schools

Lorenzo Garcia

Los Lunas Public Schools

Ron Williams

Rio Rancho Public Schools

Richard Bruce

University of New Mexico

Connie Beimer, Director of Government
Relations

CNM

Dr. Katharine W. Winograd, President

Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority

Bruce Thomson

Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District

Adrian Oglesby

Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority

James Fahey

Rio Metro Board of Directors

Mayor Larry Abraham
 Councilor Patrick Davis
 Councilor Ken Sanchez
 Councilor Diane Gibson
 Councilor Don Harris
 Councilor Isaac Benton
 Mayor Richard Berry
 Mayor Jerah Cordova
 Mayor Jack S. Torres
 Commissioner Debbie O'Malley
 Commissioner Maggie Hart Stebbins
 Commissioner Michael Quezada
 Mayor Wayne Ake
 Councilor David Dornberg
 Mayor Charles Griego
 Mayor Mark Gwinn
 Councilor Dawn Robinson
 Councilor Jim Owen
 Commissioner Charles Eaton

Metropolitan Transportation Board

Mayor Larry Abraham
 Councilor Patrick Davis
 Councilor Diane Gibson
 Councilor Dan Lewis
 Councilor Don Harris
 Councilor Klarissa Peña
 Councilor Isaac Benton
 Mayor Richard Berry
 Rob Perry
 Bob Skerry
 Deborah Stover
 Lorenzo Garcia
 Mayor Jack Torres
 Comm. Debbie O'Malley
 Comm. Maggie Hart Stebbins
 Comm. Michael Quezada
 Lina Benavidez
 Wayne Ake
 Ennio Garcia-Miera
 Michael Jaramillo
 Kenneth Murphy
 Priscilla Benavidez
 Jerah Cordova
 Councilor Dawn Robinson
 Mayor Gregory Hull
 Michael Baker
 Terry Doyle
 Commissioner David Heil
 Andres Sanchez
 Merrill J. Yazzie
 Kathy Trujillo
 Brandon Herrera

WCCNM Board

Nyika Allen
 Odes Armijo-Caster
 Paige Briggs
 Doug Calderwood
 Reyes Gonzales
 Marni Goodrich
 Sionna Grassbaugh
 Victoria Hernandez
 Michael Herrick
 Mayor Gregg Hull
 Paul Kress
 John Lahoff
 Patricia Lincoln
 Rita Gallegos Logan
 Doug Majweski
 Ralph Mims
 Teri Norris
 Debbie Ortiz
 Waldy Salazar
 Leslie Sanchez
 Randy Sanchez
 Mike Swisher
 Mayor Jack Torres
 Juanita Trad
 Carolyn VanderGiesen
 Bob Walton
 Vicki Wilkins
 Isaac Zamora

Water Resources Board

Mark Sanchez
 Cynthia Borrego
 Bart Faris
 Dale Tafoya
 Mayor Jack Torres
 Commissioner Debbie O'Malley
 Councilor Patricia Clauser
 Rita-Loy Simmons
 Ronnie Reynolds
 Debbie Ortiz
 Mayor Larry Abraham
 Adrian Oglesby
 Art Swenka
 Marian Wrage
 Commissioner F. Kenneth Eichwald
 Steve Glass
 Lynn Montgomery
 Brenda Smythe
 Sal Reyes
 Bobby Ortiz

Rural Transportation Planning Organization Committee

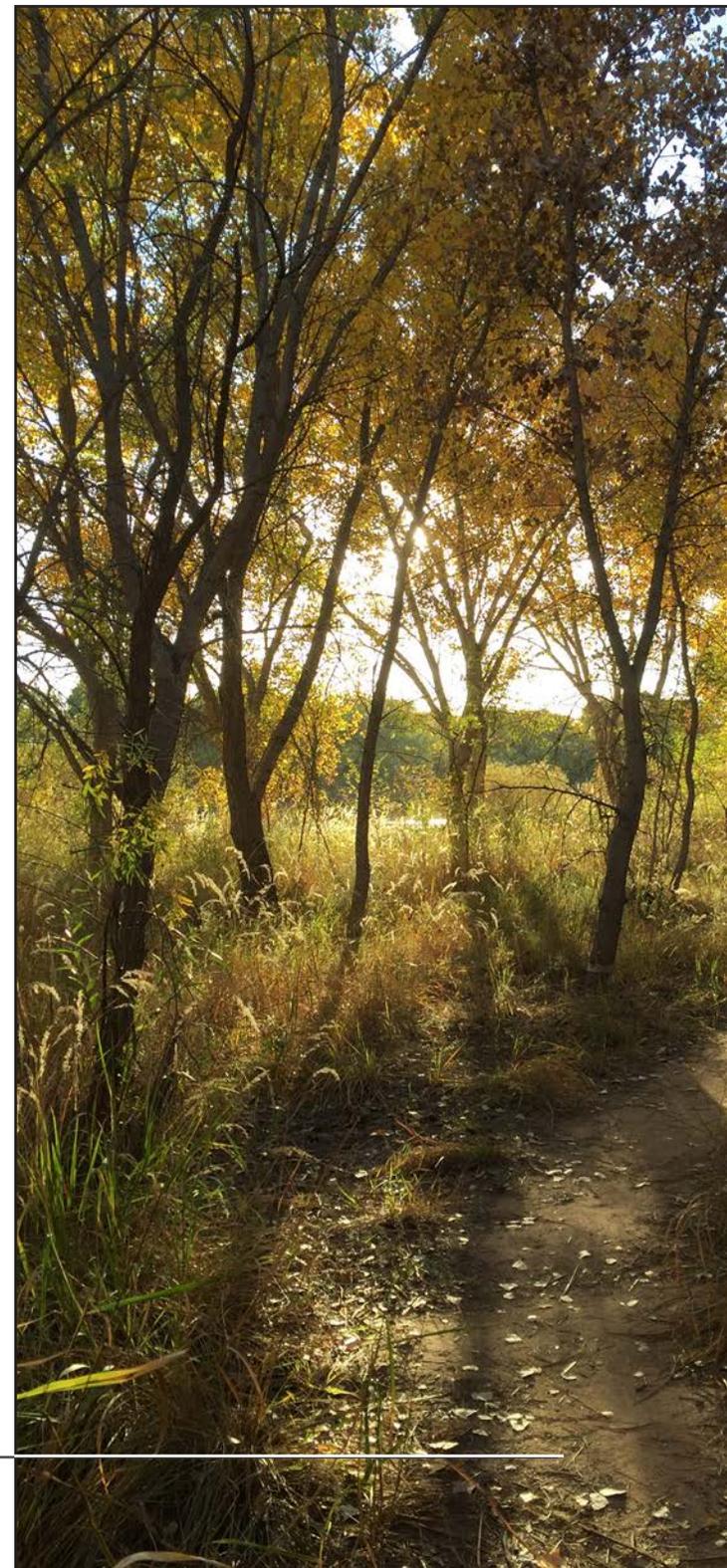
Mayor Ted Hart
 Mayor Mark Hatzenbuehler
 Juan Torres
 Morrow Hall
 Governor Joshua Mandalena
 Mayor Robert Wilson
 George Visio
 Sheri Bozic
 Peter Nieto
 Pete Nieto
 Ray Matthew
 Steve Lucero
 County Manager Belinda Garland

MRCOG 2016 Staff Listing

Yoshiro Akutagawa, Facility Maintenance
Joe Aragon, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Lloyd Aragon, WIOA Planner
Jim Armijo, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Celina Baca, Administrative Assistant
Michael Baca, WIOA Computer Specialist
Wendy Ball, RTD Driver, Rio Rancho
Wilfred "JR" Barela, Facilities Maintenance
Kelly Benavidez, Customer Service, NM Rail
Runner Express
Eduardo Borunda, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Gerald Bowe, Transit Services Surveyor
James Breiterman, Train Dispatcher
Grant Brodehl, Special Projects Planner
Donald Brown, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Sheila ter Bruggen, Communications
Coordinator
Veronica Campbell, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Henry Campos, Facilities Maintenance
Wendy Candelaria, Human Resource Manager
Elizabeth Carter, Transit Operations Manager
Dewey Cave, Executive Director
Mark Chavez, Train Dispatcher
Martin Chavez, Facilities Maintenance
Allyne Clarke, Marketing Manager
Tara Cok, Transportation Planner
Gary Cowles, RTD Driver, Rio Rancho
Ross Cummings, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Shohreh Day, GIS/Systems Analyst
Terrance Doyle, Rio Metro RTD Director
Danny Duran, Facilities Maintenance Manager
Kirk Estrada, Train Dispatcher
Ernie Fernandez, Train Dispatcher

Richard Frye, Facilities Maintenance
Vangie Gabaldon, Special Projects Planner
Sandra Gaiser, Regional Planning Manager
Kenneth Garcia, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Samuel Garcia, Traffic Counter
David Gardnier, RTD Driver, Rio Rancho
Martha Garley, RTD Dispatcher, Los Lunas
Ted Gaudette, Information Systems Officer
Andrew Gingrich, GIS/Data Analyst
Christopher Gonzales, WIOA, Career
Development Specialist
Deanna Gonzales, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Robert Gonzales, Operations Manager NM Rail
Runner Express
Esteban Gonzalez, RTD Driver, Rio Rancho
Carmen Gutierrez, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Eric Gutierrez, Senior Accountant
Scott Gwatkin, IT Specialist
Valerie Hermanson, Transportation Planner
Kristin Hodgson, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Larry Horan, Attorney
Sarah Ijadi, Transportation Planner
Daniel Jimenez, Transportation Planner
Michael Jiron, Graphic Designer
Candice Johnson, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Eddy Kirksey, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
James Kolberg, Transportation Planner
Denise Kurtz, RTD Dispatcher, Los Lunas
Elizabeth Lewis, Train Dispatcher
Louie Leyba, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
Brandon MacEachen, Marketing Specialist
David Maes, Transit Manager, Los Lunas
Sylvia Maestas, Accountant
Lupe Maltos, Dispatcher, Los Lunas

Continued on next page...



John Mares, Accountant
 Virginia Marquez, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Arthur Martinez, Operations Manager, WCCNM
 Jocelyn Martinez, Program Support Coordinator
 Riann Martinez, Marketing Specialist
 Nathan Masek, Transportation Planner
 Carol Mathews, RTD Dispatcher, Rio Rancho
 Elias McEntire, Transportation Intern
 Martha Mendoza, Administrative Assistant
 Augusta Meyers, Communications Manager
 Adrienne Molinar, Accountant
 Kim Monjaras, Procurement Officer
 Kendra Montanari, Senior Socio-Economic
 Program Manager
 Marla Montiel, Special Projects Coordinator
 Steven Montiel, Transportation Planner
 Dominic Montoya, Special Projects Planner
 Ernest Montoya, One Stop, Maintenance
 Raymond Montoya, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Rex Moore, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Larry Moritomo, Sales Manager
 Marie Morra, Marketing Specialist
 Steve Moya, Traffic Counter
 Eric Murphy, Customer Service, NM Rail Runner
 Amy Myer, Senior Finance Manager
 Elizabeth Olson, Train Dispatcher
 Nicole Ortiz, Program Support Coordinator,
 WIOA
 Stephanie Paiz, Safety Officer
 Dave Pennella, Transportation Program Mgr.
 Renee Padilla, Accountant
 Jenna Paulson, Customer Service Mgr, NMRX
 Nicole Perches, Customer Service NMRX
 Yvonne Perez, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Benjamin Ramirez, Transit Service Worker

Forest Replogle, Transportation Planner
 Ashley Romero, WIOA, Career Development
 Specialist
 Lionel Romero, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Tawnya Rowland, WIOA, TechHire Director
 Maida Rubin, Transportation Planner
 Irma Ruiz, Special Projects Planner
 Margaret Sachs, WIOA Business Consultant
 Alexander Sanchez, Facility Maintenance
 Jerilynn Sans, Administrator, WCCNM
 Bayard Scadden, RTD Driver, Rio Rancho
 Christine Schreck, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Lisa Sedillo, Customer Service, NM Rail Runner
 Carl Seif, RTD Driver, Rio Rancho
 Ann Simon, Economic Development Program
 Manager
 William Simon, Transportation Planner
 Joel Steinhauer, RTD Driver, Rio Rancho
 Matthew Stone, Operations Supervisor/
 Dispatcher
 Anthony Sylvester, Special Projects Manager
 Paul Talley, Transportation Intern
 Vera Taylor, Transit Services Surveyor
 Socorro Telles, Transit Operations Supervisor,
 Los Lunas
 Barbara Thomas, Office Manager
 Caerllion Thomas, Transportation Planner
 Winifred Tinney, RTD Dispatcher, Rio Rancho
 Ramona Torres, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Jesse Turley, Accounting Manager, WCCNM
 Timothy Valdez, RTD Driver, Los Lunas
 Conni Vigil, Senior Finance Manager RTD
 Josephine Vigil, Accounting Manager RTD
 Matthew Wylie, Quality Assurances Coordinator



Mid-Region Council of Governments

809 Copper Avenue NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
(505) 247-1750
www.mrcog-nm.gov