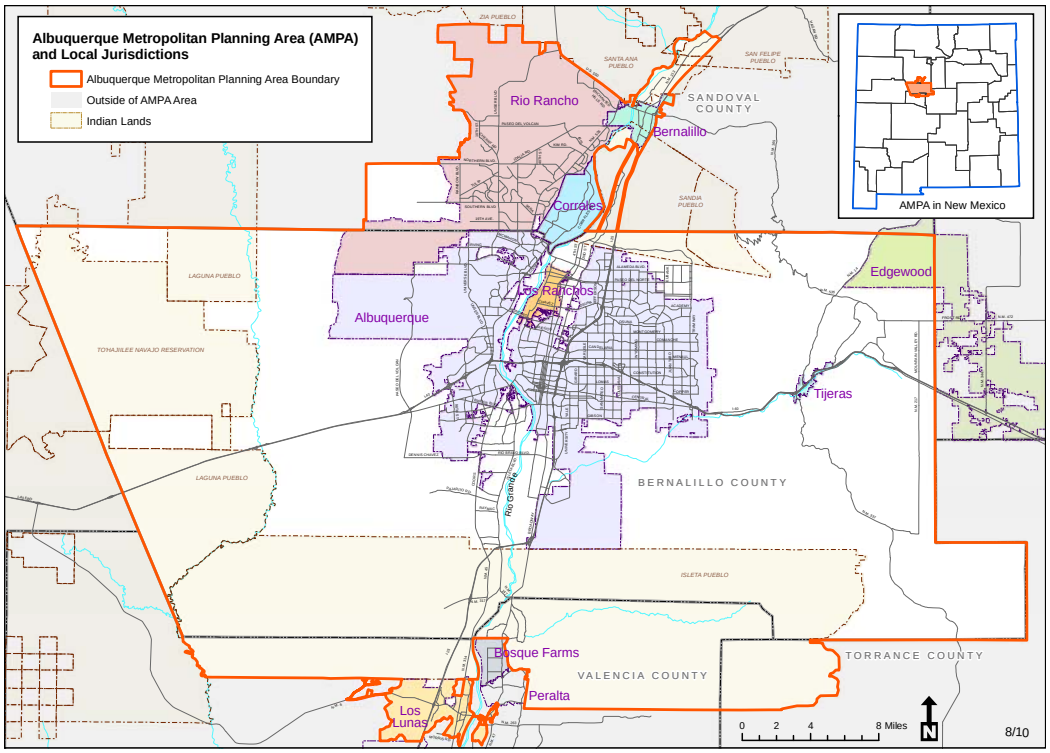
2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

2035 MTP Summary Version



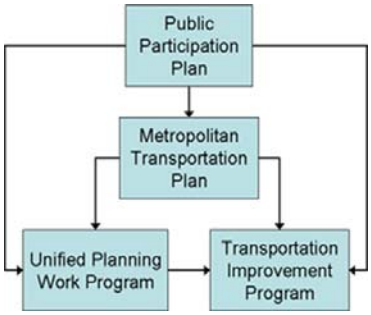
Inside this Report

Metropolitan Planning Organizations & the MTP

All urbanized areas in the United States with a population of more than 50,000 must have a designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) to facilitate the federally-required multimodal transportation planning process. MRMPO (part of the Mid-Region Council Of Governments organization) is the MPO for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area (AMPA). All MPOs must develop a long range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) that is consistent with the latest federal transportation law, which is currently the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), signed by the President in 2005. Regulations are found in Title 23 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450 (23 CFR Part 450). The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) sets the course for the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The UPWP includes a description of the annual planning tasks, responsible agency, time frames and cost estimates. The TIP is a list of near-term regionally significant transportation projects. All metropolitan planning organization products—the MTP, the TIP and the UPWP—adhere to the MPO developed Public Participation Plan.

Federal Requirements and Guidelines

- SAFETEA-LU
- Civil Rights Act
- Clean Air Act
- Existing state and local plans
- Environmental considerations and mitigation strategies (open space, wildlife corridors, cultural resources)



Introduction to the MTP

MTP Development and Public Participation

The major challenge the 2035 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) addresses is how to best plan for the region's transportation needs in response to projected high rates of population growth and consumption of land. The 2035 MTP uses 2008 as a base year for assessing existing conditions and as the foundation for future year projections. Then, the impact of these projections on the transportation network are assessed and a set of recommendations developed that are aimed at achieving the plan's three goals of preserving *quality of life,* improving *mobility and* supporting *economic activity*.

The Metropolitan Transportation Board (MTB), which is comprised of elected officials from each of the organization's member agencies, are the decision makers for MRMPO. This board is advised by several technical committees including the Transportation Planning Technical Group (TPTG), Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC), MTP Steering Committee, Congestion Management Process (CMP) Committee, Pedestrian-Bicycle Transportation Advisory Group (PB-TAG), Public Involvement Committee (PIC), and the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Committee.

Technical committees are comprised of staff from member agencies and provide key contributions in developing the MTP through the analysis of transportation issues and the development of strategies and recommendations for the region. Public and stakeholder input were also instrumental to the plan development (see the Public Participation bar to the right).

One of the essential components of the MTP is the identification of transportation projects and studies planned for the next 25 years. This identification in the MTP is important because it sets the stage for the near-term implementation of transportation projects in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The MTP provides the framework for proper consideration of whether projects are good investments for the AMPA and will be effective for maintaining and improving the regional transportation system.

Key Themes of the 2035

- Expand Transit and Alternative Modes of Transportation
- Integrate Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Maximize the Efficiency of Existing Infrastructure

Efforts have been made to make the 2035 MTP consistent with existing local and state planning documents. In particular, the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) has a variety of state-wide transportation plans that impact regional plans and vice versa. The state-level document that is equivalent to MRMPO's MTP is NMDOT's Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan. The land use plans similar to the MTP are local comprehensive plans. Many of the area and sector development plans, however, can also have a significant impact on the efficiency of the regional transportation system.

Public Participation

MRMPO's Public Participation Procedures were adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Board in January 2010.

The first stage involved assessing current conditions and deficiencies in the transportation system. The 2010 Transportation Survey was the primary means of gathering public input and was made available online. Over 3,600 responses were received, representing a broad cross-section of the public. The top three planning priorities among survey takers were:

1. Develop the transportation system so that people can travel to centers of employment, education and commerce easily by public transit, bicycle and walking
2. Expand and enhance public transit
3. Reduce traffic congestion

The second survey asked meeting participants to assign points to strategies to reduce river crossing congestion. The strategies included expanding bridge capacity; introducing High Occupancy Toll/High Occupancy Vehicle lanes; increasing transit; land use changes; and operational improvements.

- The top two strategies were increasing transit and land use changes.

Development Patterns

One critical transportation issue that results from the current growth patterns is the high-volume east-west commute, as residents increasingly locate west of the Rio Grande while the major job concentrations are still primarily east of the river.

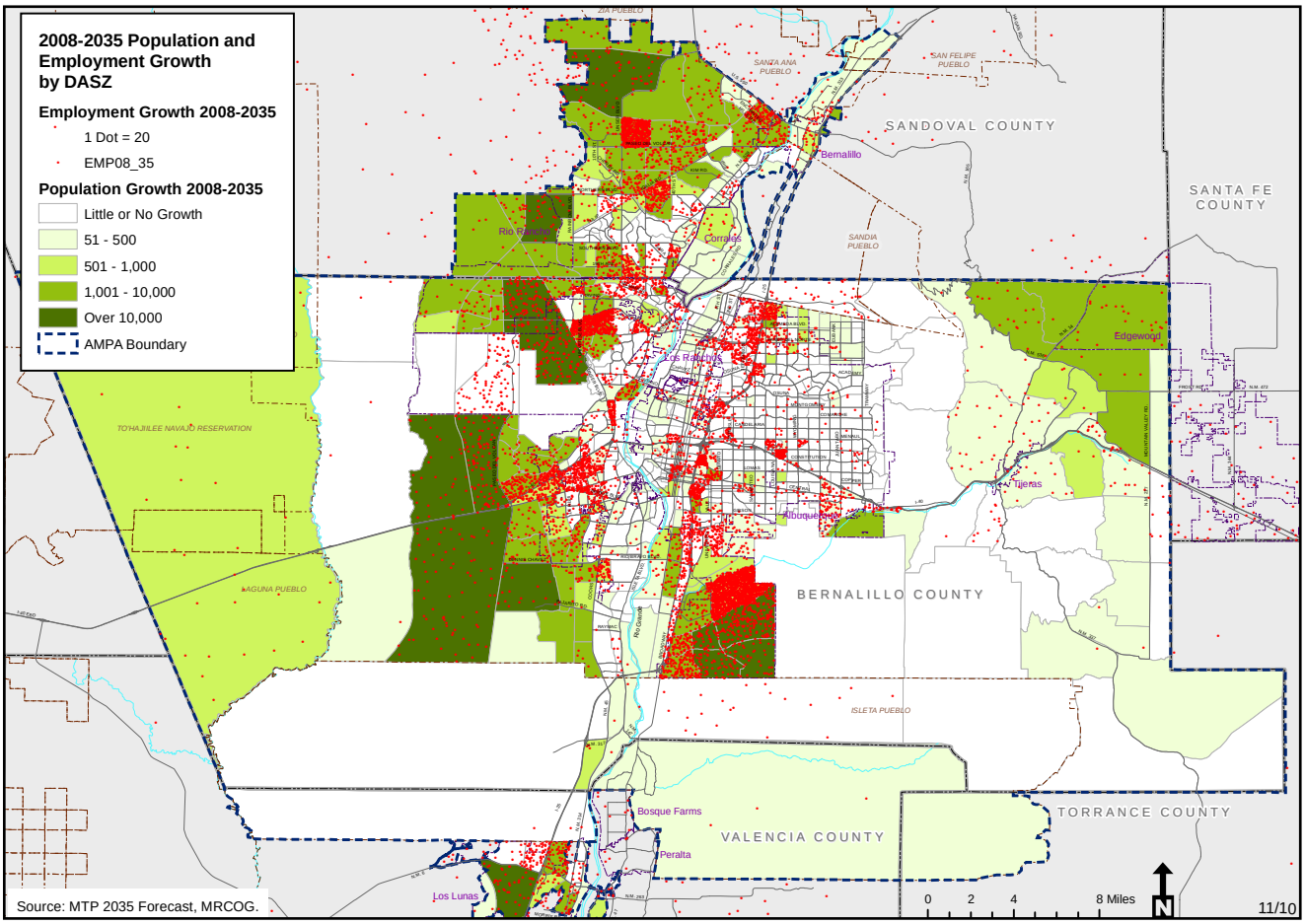
Approximately 44 percent of the AMPA's population currently lives west of the river. MRMPO projects that by 2035 the Westside's share will represent 58 percent of the AMPA's population. While the Westside adds a considerable number of jobs throughout the forecast period (99,000), the largest concentration of jobs remains east of the river.

The dynamics of land availability and consumption patterns have a dramatic effect on transportation patterns both in terms of volume and congestion. As people locate outward from the urban core to live on the periphery of the AMPA, many population-serving jobs follow rooftops. However, job concentrations remain primarily within urban employment centers and corridors. This means people are required to travel further to places of employment.

This relationship between housing and jobs will exacerbate existing congestion, particularly on our river crossings (which are expected to serve an average of one million daily trips by 2035), essentially doubling the number carried today. Comprehensive and targeted regional solutions will be necessary to address land use and development issues which are at the heart of the region's transportation problems.

Quick Facts

- Average annual growth rate of 3.4 percent between 2000 and 2008
- The AMPA is projected to reach 1 million people by 2025 and 1.3 million by 2035
- Approximately 100,000 acres of currently undeveloped land will be consumed by 2035
- Potential reduction in the labor markets captured for key employment centers due to increased travel distances and times
- One of every two NM residents to reside in ABQ Metropolitan Statistical Area by 2035
- Job growth is projected to occur at a slower rate than population growth: 48 percent compared with 75 percent



Roadway Conditions

Quick Facts

- A doubling of vehicle miles traveled per day will occur from 16 million to 32 million by 2035
- One million daily trips across the Rio Grande by 2035

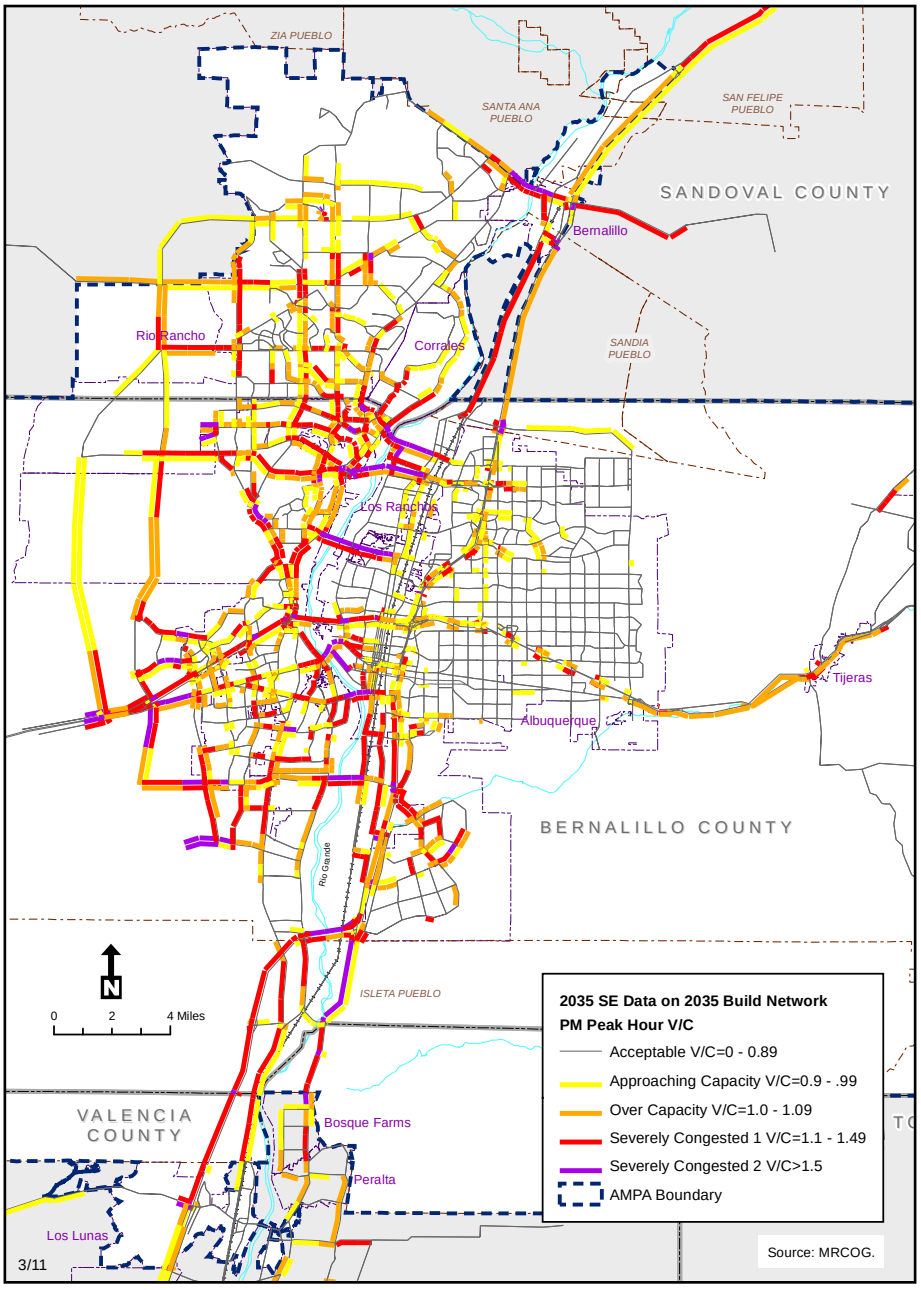
As many drivers know firsthand, the region is already experiencing areas of severe roadway congestion. Future years do not show any sign of reprieve as the area is projected to continue to grow and vehicle miles traveled rates are expected to continue to rise.

MRMPO maintains a regional travel demand model which forecasts growth and travel demand using a planned transportation network and anticipated socioeconomic information. For the 2035 MTP, model scenarios of the roadway network were developed to represent the base year 2008, the interim years 2015 and 2025, and the planning horizon year of 2035. According to transportation demand model analyses performed by MRMPO, without transportation investments made beyond those programmed in the current 2012-2017 TIP (which constitutes a 'no-build scenario'), the severity and number of congested roadways will increase substantially by the horizon year 2035. The region can expect significant increases in congestion not only at the river crossings, but also on the entire transportation system west of the Rio Grande and along north-south corridors east of the Rio Grande. Anticipated growth in Mesa del Sol south of the airport and east of I-25 is underserved by the inadequate roadway infrastructure of the no-build scenario.

As the map shows, in 2035 the roadway network will not fully be able to meet the region's mobility needs. Many roadways will become severely congested. MRMPO will continue to address roadway congestion and mobility in the region through multiple means, including the following:

- operational improvements (Intelligent Transportation Systems and Transportation Systems Management)
- multimodal solutions
- travel demand management strategies
- working with member agencies on regional growth initiatives and land use solutions
- continual refinement of the Project Prioritization Process

2035 PM Peak Hour Build Scenario



Roadway Strategies

Because growth will continue to outpace the amount of roadway expansion that can be funded and built under our financially constrained program, there is no practical way the region can "build" its way out of congestion. When compared to the geographic distribution of socioeconomic growth projections, it is clear that roadway projects programmed in the 2035 MTP are generally planned for areas where growth is expected and network expansion needs are greatest. Notable projects include:

<u>A significant number of north/south capacity enhancement/widening and network connectivity projects</u>

- the completion of Unser Boulevard as a minimum 4-lane facility between Pajarito Road on the Southwest Mesa and US 550 on the Northwest
- the completion of Paseo del Volcan between I-40 and US 550
- the connection of 118th Street from Pajarito Road north to the growth area north of I-40
- the widening of NM 528 in Rio Rancho between Southern Boulevard and US 550

<u>Major east/west facility expansion projects</u>

- a new river crossing and interchange connection to I-25 to serve Los Lunas
- the widening of NM 6 west of I-25
- improvements to Dennis Chavez Boulevard, Paseo del Norte Boulevard, Irving Boulevard, McMahon Boulevard, 19th Avenue/Montezuma Road, Progress Boulevard, and portions of Idalia Road and Northern Boulevard in Rio Rancho

<u>Fourteen new or reconstructed freeway interchanges located throughout the AMPA</u>

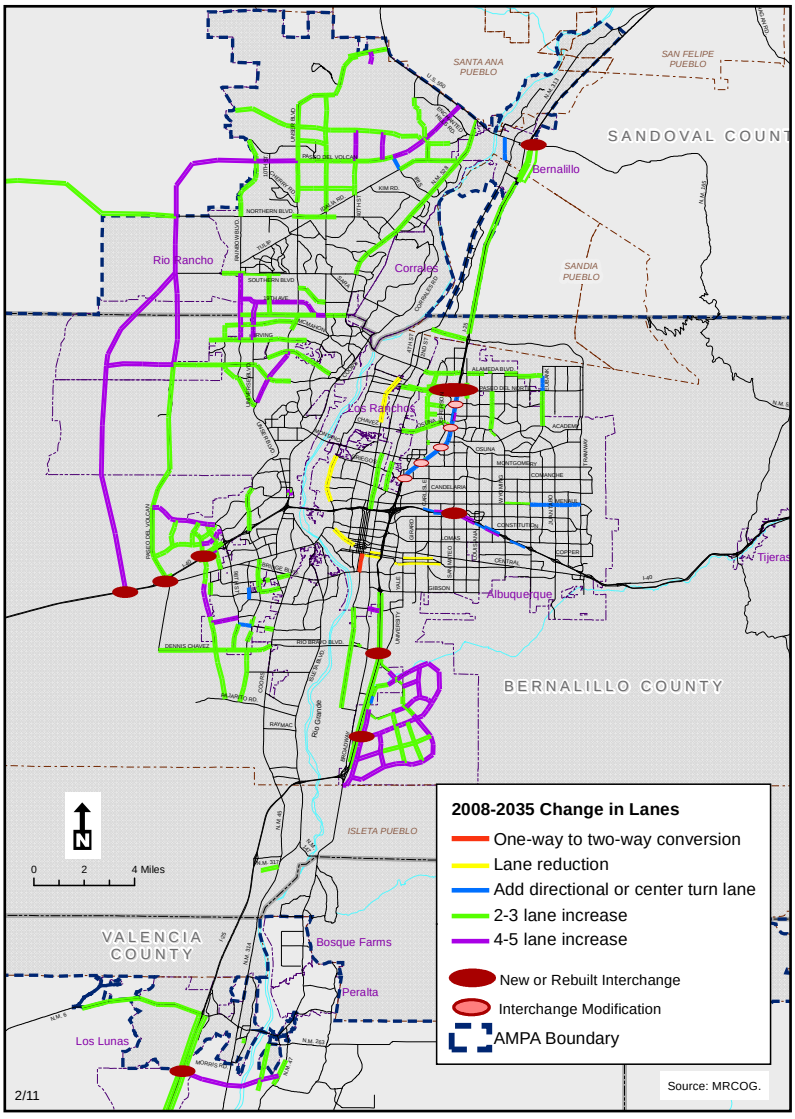
<u>Significant area roadway network expansion</u>

- Mesa del Sol in southeast Albuquerque
- the lands of Westland/Atrisco Land Grant north of I-40, east of Atrisco Vista Boulevard
- the Southwest and Northwest Mesa areas of incorporated and unincorporated Bernalillo County
- the North I-25/Jefferson Corridor
- the majority of the area of Rio Rancho north of Northern Boulevard and serving the new City Center

Mobility Strategies

MRMPO will continue to address roadway congestion and mobility in the region through multiple means, including the following:

- Operational improvements (Intelligent Transportation Systems and Transportation Systems Management)
- Multimodal solutions
- Travel demand management strategies
- Working with member agencies on regional growth initiatives and land use solutions
- Continual refinement of the Project Prioritization Process to ensure projects which most benefit the region are selected



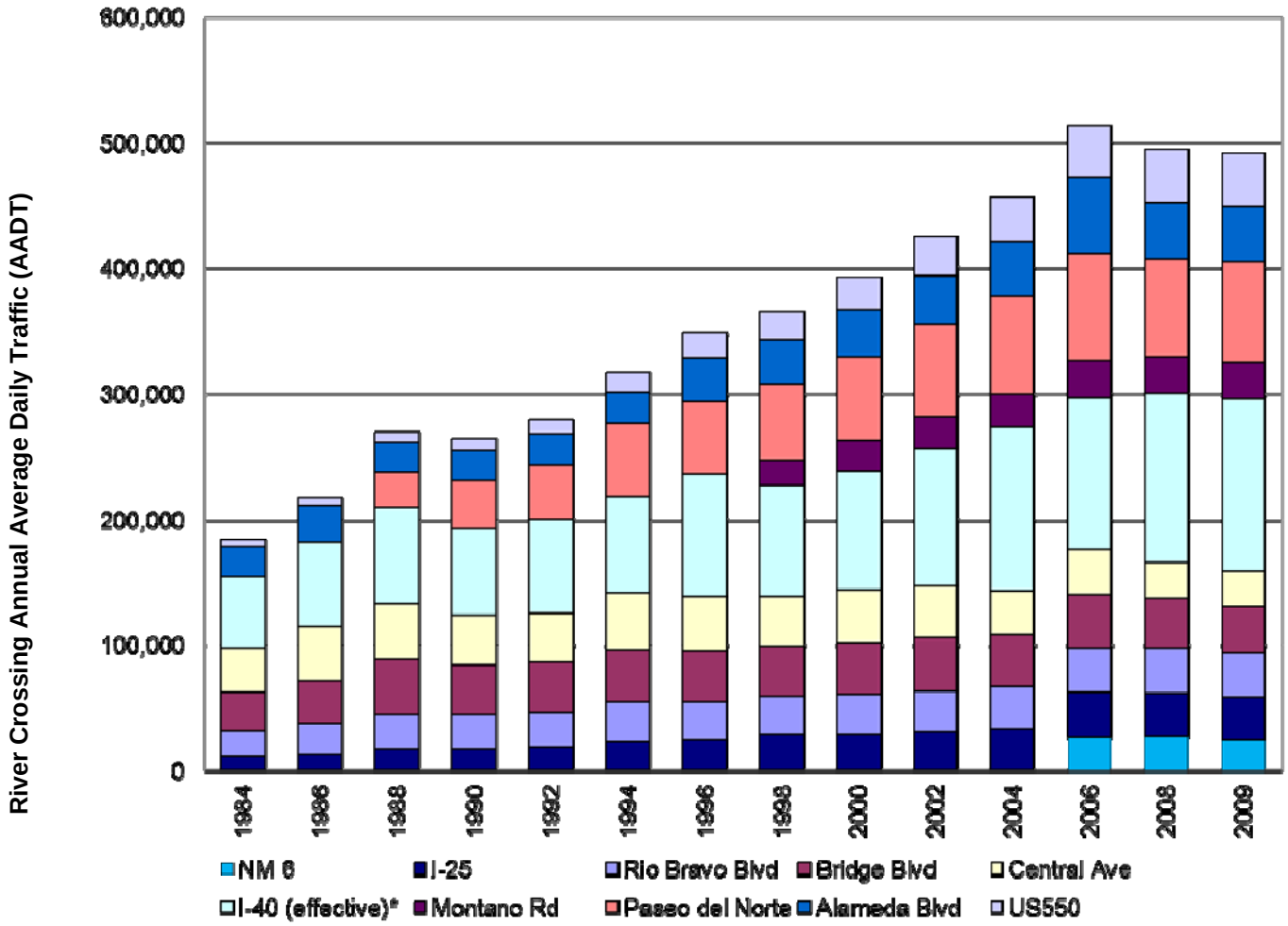
Crossing the River

Can We Build Our Way Out?

The metropolitan area's recent development patterns—in particular the prolific growth west of the river and in the City of Rio Rancho—place a heavy burden on the region's transportation infrastructure. Especially affected is the commute period which is largely dominated by home-based work trips between residential origins and non-residential destinations on either side of the river.

Existing river crossings are expected to serve an average of one million daily trips by 2035, essentially doubling the number carried today. Historically, numerous studies have been undertaken to evaluate alternative river crossing alignments, yet these prospects have been unsuccessful with prohibitive factors ranging from the negative community impacts of inevitable residential relocations, right-of-way expense, environmental impacts to sensitive wetlands or permanent open space and outright political opposition. Aside from a new river crossing proposed at a location south of Los Lunas (potentially outside of current AMPA boundaries) no additional river crossings are planned.

New strategies must focus on managing the transportation system through a balanced and diversified approach. This approach must include solutions that use travel demand management to reduce the overall volume of vehicles on the road, change travel time usage patterns and encourage the use of a variety of transportation modes. The region must also enhance the use of technology, maximize the efficiency of existing infrastructure and strategically add auto and transit capacity in key corridors. Now is the time to begin planning for alternatives such as comprehensive car-pooling programs and exclusive right-of-way for bus rapid transit that would provide much greater efficiencies over auto travel in terms of person carrying capacity, travel time reliability, reduced fuel consumption and improved air quality.



Transportation Systems Management

The significant travel demand placed on the transportation infrastructure presents an opportunity for the region to employ creative systems management and operational strategies that increase the efficiency of the transportation system and enhance options for travelers in the region. The following management strategies will be key to finding solutions in the AMPA.

- Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS)
- Incident Management
- System Preservation
- Access Management

ITS refers to data collection and communications using advanced electronics or centralized monitoring to manage the operations of the transportation system and improve efficiency.

National statistics have shown that as much as 60 percent of all traffic delays are related to traffic accidents and that for every minute an accident remains in a traffic lane, traffic is delayed up to an additional five minutes. TSM programs such as the Freeway Courtesy Patrol program can minimize these types of delays.

Another important consideration is System Preservation. Maintenance is important because roads in poor condition result in increased occurrences of congestion, delay and vehicle damage as well as increased fuel consumption and travel time.

Roadways access management is another system management and operations strategy. MRMPO member agencies have designated certain facilities as "limited access roadways" with prescribed access limitations to increase roadway throughput and control the number and frequency of driveways.

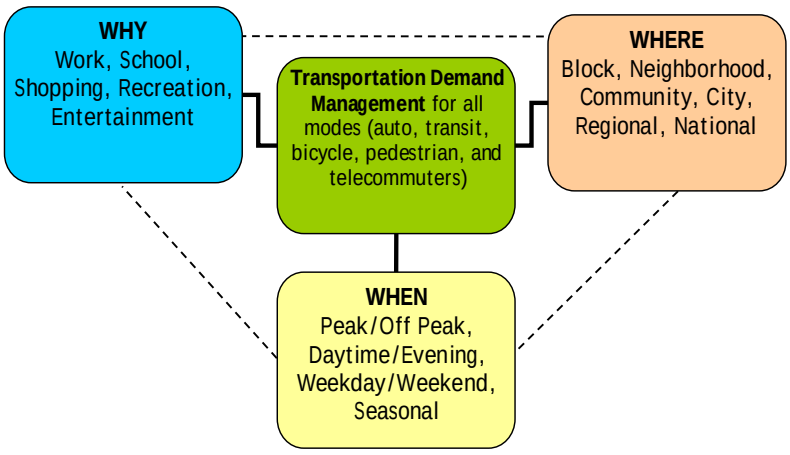
Potential Projects

- Signal timing optimization
- Vehicle detectors repair/ replacement
- Turning lanes
- Grade separations
- Pavement striping
- Lane assignment changes
- Traffic management centers - individual agency and joint/ shared use
- Coordinated signal deployments for transit and general purpose lanes
- Incident detection and response
- Traveler information dissemination
- Special event traffic management
- Managed lanes/HOV

Transportation Demand Management

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) is a comprehensive approach to handle travel demand issues for all modes and address regional congestion issues by looking at the Why, When and Where people are traveling. TDM uses strategies to reduce the number of miles people travel through a variety of strategies including:

- ridesharing
- public transportation
- programs that promote bicycling/walking
- value pricing (i.e., High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, toll lanes, and congestion pricing)



TDM can also be undertaken at the private sector level through strategies such as providing employees flexible schedules to reduce the number of peak-hour commuters. TDM strategies for increasing bicycle and pedestrian trips, ridesharing, and telecommuting work to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by providing more transportation options; however, the greatest reductions in VMT are derived from increased transit usage. Trips changed from single-occupancy vehicles to transit not only reduce VMT, but CO_2 emissions per passenger mile for transit produce on average less than half of private auto CO_2 emissions, even when nearly empty buses are factored into the equation.

Congestion Management Process

A Congestion Management Process (CMP) is intended to assess the performance of the regional transportation system, identify the sources and extent of congestion, recommend appropriate strategies to manage congestion and improve mobility, and consider the benefits of proposed transportation projects and travel demand management (TDM) programs. The ongoing challenge for the CMP is to integrate those strategies into the regional planning process and encourage local governments to implement congestion management techniques in appropriate locations.

CMP Data

The backbone of the CMP is a series of transportation data that MRMPO collects which are designed to measure recurring and non-recurring congestion. The three principal data elements for the CMP include: 1**) volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio**, which compares the observed traffic volume on a roadway segment to the intended roadway capacity; **2) speed differential**, which compares the difference between observed speeds and posted speed limits; and **3) crash rates at individual intersections** compared to the regional average. The data is collected for the 30 corridors and two Interstate facilities that comprise the CMP congested network.

An initial list of congested corridors was developed by the CMP Committee based on qualitative and quantitative criteria. Data is collected on these corridors on a recurring basis and results are listed in a rankings table that indicates the facilities that experience the highest overall levels of congestion. The detailed analysis conducted on the congested network sheds light on the nature of congestion for the segments of each corridor. For instance, if congestion is the result of volume then appropriate strategies may include reduced roadway demand through transit, alternate modes, or other travel demand management techniques. By contrast, if congestion is the result of slow speeds, then roadway inefficiencies may be addressed through operations improvements such as signal timing and coordination, or access management which can reduce the number of vehicles or turning movements on a roadway. In addition to detailing the type of congestion experienced in the region and management strategies, the CMP served as the basis for the Project Prioritization Process.

Project Prioritization Process

Recently MRMPO, with the help of various technical committees, developed a new Project Prioritization Process (PPP) to be used for selecting projects to include in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The PPP is a unique tool for making informed decisions and allocating resources based on technical data. The Prioritization Process uses the goals of the MTP and further defines specific evaluation criteria for each goal in order to measure the extent to which a proposed project provides quality of life, mobility or economic benefits. Each project submitted to the TIP is evaluated against a series of performance measures and receives a prioritization score. Projects are also evaluated with criteria specific to different mode types, meaning roadway, transit, and pedestrian/bicycle projects are judged based on criteria which more accurately reflect the needs of those modes.

Sample Criteria

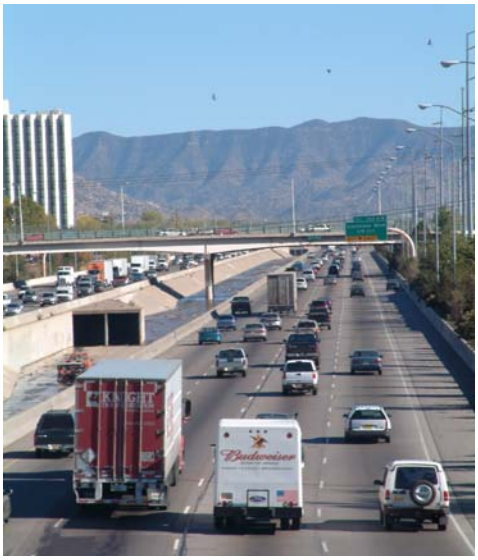
- Air Quality
- Safety
- Environmental Justice
- Preserve Existing Infrastructure
- Geographic Need
- Performance Strategies
- Intelligent Transportation Systems
- People Movement
- Intermodal Connectivity
- Alternate Modes
- Investment/Activity Areas

PPP and the 2012-2017 TIP

The first opportunity to implement the prioritization process was for the 2012-2017 TIP, which was developed in winter 2010-2011. It is important to establish that the PPP is a tool rather than the ultimate determinant in the distribution of federal transportation dollars. It is not intended to replace the debate and dialogue associated with the TIP process. Rather, it is meant to serve as a guide to shape the discussion around common evaluative criteria and to bring attention to projects which most effectively address the needs of the region.

The performance measures are intended to identify projects which provide a number of contributions to the transportation network. The criteria are varied and wide-ranging. Multifaceted projects which address a number of regional needs and target key locations generally receive the highest prioritization score. The performance measures for the MTP are similar to the PPP but focus on the transportation system as a whole. The Project Prioritization Process Guidebook is available on the MRCOG website in the TIP section.

Air Quality Challenges



Air quality is monitored within the AMPA, and areas are designated as attainment or nonattainment areas according to whether they meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for each pollutant. In Bernalillo County, ground-level ozone, carbon monoxide (CO) and coarse and fine particulate matter (PM) are monitored to ensure compliance with NAAQS.

A pollutant that is likely to become an issue in the region is ozone. In January 2010, the EPA proposed a more stringent revision to the current ozone NAAQS to ensure that the standard protects public health. The EPA is reconsidering setting revised primary and secondary Ozone Standards in the range of .060 to .070 parts per million, which will more than likely place the AMPA at 100 percent or more of the standard and potentially in nonattainment status. The control of ozone formation is based on regulating emissions of volatile organic compounds and oxides of nitrogen. On-road vehicle emissions are sources of both ozone precursors. Since ozone does not form immediately, and because heat and sunlight are actors in its creation, ozone can form miles away from the original source of its precursors and forms more readily during the hot summer months.

Conformity Determination

Significant growth in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) poses potential challenges for the region's air quality because this growth contributes to on-road vehicle emissions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for whether an area is in nonattainment for carbon monoxide, lead, ozone (1-hour), particulate matter (PM-10), and sulfur dioxide, called National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Ground level ozone, carbon monoxide (CO) and particulate matter (PM) levels in Bernalillo County are monitored for adherence to air quality standards. For example, Bernalillo County requires that dirt tracked onto paved surfaces be promptly removed and that measures be taken to control dust from operations, such as construction, landscaping, and roadwork at all times through its Fugitive Dust Control Requirements and Surface Disturbance permitting process.

Regional transportation plans, programs and projects must demonstrate conformity. This is accomplished in part by The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program (CMAQ) Program which provides funds to states for transportation projects designed to improve air quality and reduce traffic congestion, particularly in areas that do not meet NAAQS or in maintenance areas that have had previous air quality problems. Improving air quality is not only important for steering the region back into compliance with NAAQS, but also for the simple sake of protecting the region's valued clear skies, vistas and clean air.

Ozone Standards

In January 2010, the EPA proposed a more stringent revision to the current ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standards to ensure that the standard protects public health.

The EPA is considering setting a Primary Ozone Standard in the range of .060 to .070 parts per million, which will more than likely place the AMPA at 100 percent of the standard and in nonattainment status.

Public Transportation Challenges

The recent significant rise in ridership won Albuquerque recognition as one of the fastest growing public transit markets in the nation. The more recent increase is in part due to the introduction of the Rapid Ride and Rail Runner Express services. For example, there has been a 40 percent increase in ridership since the initiation of the Rail Runner Express service.

In 2008, voters in Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties passed a one-eighth of one percent gross receipt sales tax dedicated to transit. Half of the tax revenue is used to operate the Rail Runner and the remaining half is used by Rio Metro for other bus transit purposes.

While expanding existing service is the most cost-effective approach because the infrastructure already exists, providing new transportation options is also essential to tackling regional transportation issues and increasing the transit mode share.

The dynamics of land availability and consumption patterns have a dramatic effect on transportation patterns both in terms of volume and congestion. In 2008 only 26 percent of people within the AMPA were living within a quarter mile of transit stops. Unfortunately, peripheral housing development and a "drive until you qualify" ethos has created vast subdivisions of single family detached housing without nearby services. Providing transit service to these communities is also difficult due to lack of street connectivity.

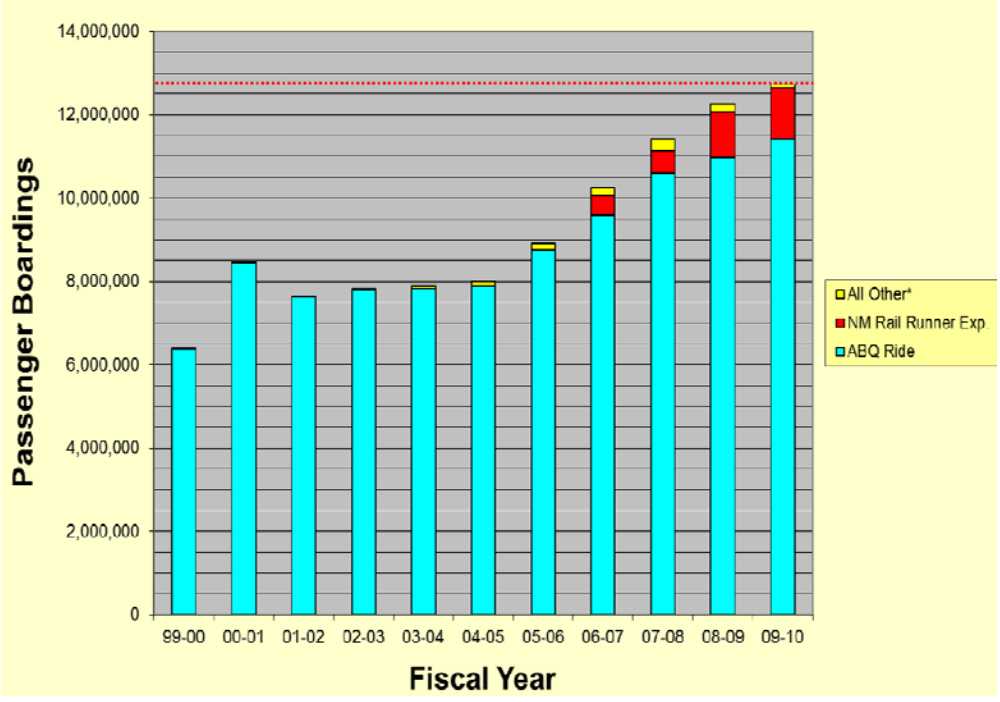
Quick Facts

ABQ Ride ridership increased by 45 percent since 2005 and over 4 percent since 2009

Twenty-six percent of the 2008 AMPA population lives within 1/4 mile of transit service

While transit service is a strategy that addresses congestion, it is at the same time subject to the effects of roadway congestion. River crossings and arterials that feed major employment and activity centers (which are also major transit destinations) will likely be the most heavily congested roadways. To complicate matters, few roadways in the AMPA contain transit-specific infrastructure such as dedicated transit lanes or signal prioritization.

Planning for separate and adequate right-of-ways and investing in transit-related infrastructure must be made a priority to ensure the development of an overall transit system that can reduce travel times and help alleviate congestion. Changing personal travel habits is also necessary to increase transit ridership.



Public Transportation

Strategies

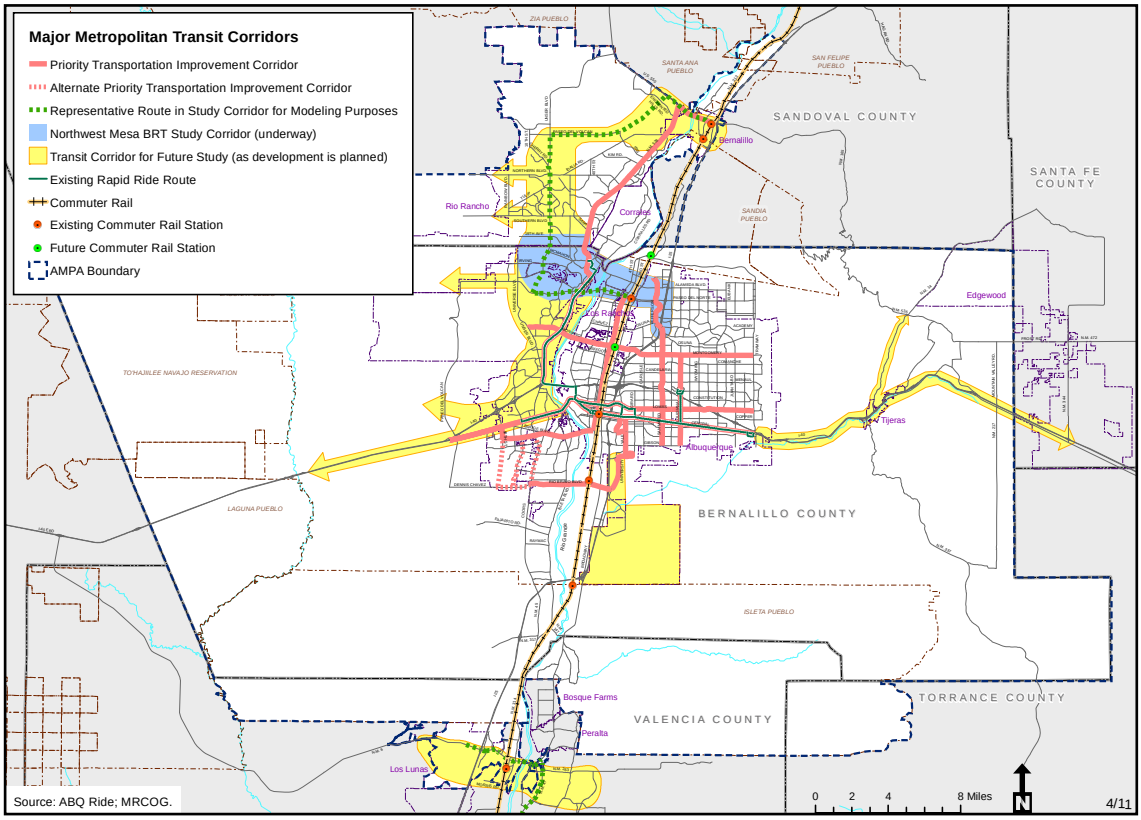
In order to achieve the regional goal of increasing the mode share for transit along river crossings, new opportunities and services need to be developed. The City of Albuquerque, Rio Metro and MRMPO are in the preliminary stages of planning for a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system for the metropolitan area. BRT is a high speed, generally high frequency form of transit that is designed to move large numbers of travelers and commuters efficiently along major travel corridors. On river crossings a separate BRT network could significantly improve travel time, particularly during peak-hour travel, for a greater number of people than could any type of single-occupancy vehicle lane expansion. The next step is a more in-depth analysis of travel time savings, potential ridership increases and congestion mitigation. For the long term, Priority Transit Improvement Evaluation Corridors (PTIC) and Transit Corridors for Future Study are identified in the map. PTICs were identified as examples of corridors best suited for high frequency and high volume transit service over the coming decades (although other corridors could be as equally suited or better suited than these example corridors). Transit Corridors for Future Study refers to geographic areas where development is anticipated to occur and therefore these corridors require further study regarding new or additional transit service.

Key Strategies

- Increase transit mode share for river crossings to 10% by 2025 and 20% by 2035
- Better coordinated land use and transportation planning
- Employ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies
- Consideration and development of complete streets policy at the regional and local levels
- Review of employment clusters to determine appropriate level of transit service to and from those areas
- Continued park and ride expansion
- Improved bus transit service to commuter rail services
- Expansion of Bus Rapid Transit and Rapid Ride
- Expanded and new Rail Runner stations
- Study feasibility of other premium transit services such as light rail

Land use planning and transit-oriented development (TOD) must be an integral part of the planning and the implementation process in order to support a cost-effective public transportation system. Local municipalities are encouraged to work with MRMPO to identify areas for transit-oriented development and other concentrated development opportunities that support transit to and from current and planned Activity Centers. Currently, TOD efforts in the region include the following:

- Town of Bernalillo Downtown and US 550
- International Sunport/ Bernalillo County
- Village of Los Lunas Station Area Plan
- Bridge Blvd corridor plan
- Fourth St Corridor/ Montano Station Plan
- Downtown ABQ Station mixed used developments



Pedestrian and Bicycle Challenges

The challenges for pedestrian and bicycle planning are serious but not insurmountable. Walking and bicycling are worthwhile modes for a wide range of reasons. The most direct impacts are on personal health and expenses. Other benefits include improving the environment, improving traffic congestion, and reducing dependence on foreign oil. Improving our transportation network to better include non-motorized modes of travel will benefit the region as a whole.

Transportation legislation acknowledges the importance of intermodal transportation and provides funding for pedestrian and bicycle projects. Unfortunately, funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects has historically been lower than for other modes of transportation. According to the Alliance for Biking and Walking, at the federal level about 1.2 percent of transportation dollars are spent on bicycling and walking.

Key Strategies

- Development with appropriate distances between activities, density and design
- More convenient and accessible networks
- Making space in the public right-of-way
- Improving safety
- Increasing funding

Both Pedestrian and Bicycle Challenges	Predominantly Pedestrian Challenges	Predominantly Bicycle Challenges	Challenges due to Geography
Improving connectivity in order to overcome long distances due to segregated land use and providing facilities that effectively connect to major destinations	Developing areas that invite walking	Providing end of trip facilities	Crossing the Rio Grande River, interstates and any other significant physical barriers
Making walking and bicycling travel times as competitive as possible with the automobile	Developing mixed use areas that have shorter distances between uses	Providing safe routes to accommodate bicyclists of all abilities	Negotiating the elevation gain between the valley, west side escarpment, and the foothills
Retrofitting roadways that previously did not provide space for pedestrian and bicycle facilities			
Changing public perception about walking and bicycling and providing education on how to safely and effectively use these two modes for transportation			

There is growing evidence that greater investment in these modes increases levels of bicycling and walking.

Vista del Norte

Downtown Albuquerque

The private automobile is best suited for providing transportation where destinations (such as home and work) are spread out and parking is plentiful. When land uses are more compact and distances between destinations are shorter, pedestrian and bicycle travel work best. Local roads provide the most comfortable facilities for pedestrian and bicycle travel due to lower speeds and volume of motor vehicle traffic. Unfortunately, many newer developments include local roads that do not connect with other roads and terminate in dead-end facilities in an effort to minimize traffic and maximize privacy for homes. In addition, wide arterials and intersections have high crash rates not only for pedestrians and bicyclists, but also for motor vehicles.

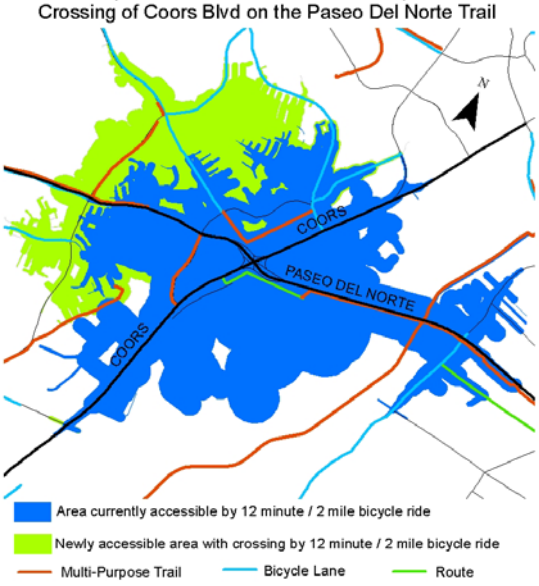
A significant challenge to increasing the use of alternative modes such as walking and bicycling is changing people's perceptions. Many drivers feel that they have more right to be on the road and resent having to share it with bicyclists or give pedestrians the right-of-way. Moreover, many people choose not to bicycle or walk because they feel these modes of travel are suitable only for the young and fit, or as a result of safety concerns. Public education campaigns can help overcome some of these perceptions.

Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

In a survey conducted as part of this MTP, 36 percent of participants indicated a desire for better bicycling access and 25 percent wanted better walking access. Increasing interest in walking and biking to nearby destinations is complemented by a growing awareness of how walking improves public health and reduces congestion.

Facilities also need to connect to desirable destinations and overcome gaps in the transportation network. MRMPO examines opportunities such as proposed grade-separated bicycle and pedestrian crossings which close gaps over large physical barriers. MRMPO measures how well a planned crossing will serve the surrounding community by looking at how many people would be served and how many jobs would be accessible if the connection existed today, and then compares that to the community currently served without the crossing (see map below). The two interstates, I-40 and I-25, are major barriers for bicycle and pedestrian travel. I-40 is generally well connected with 32 roadway crossings over this interstate. For bicyclists, there are 20 crossings that are either grade separated, have bicycle facilities, or are local roads. I-25 by comparison is much harder to cross. There are 26 roadway crossings and only eight crossings that are suitable for bicyclists. The most effective planned crossing not yet built is the crossing of I-25 along the Bear Canyon Arroyo. This project is in its final stages before construction. The Rio Grande is another major barrier to bicycle and pedestrian travel. Currently, there are two bicycle-pedestrian bridges over the Rio Grande, one of which was completed in 2010. NM 6 in Los Lunas and US 550 in the Town of Bernalillo are particularly problematic for bicyclists and pedestrians as neither provide safe crossing conditions and are the only river crossings in their communities.

Newly Accessible Area with Grade-Separate Crossing of Coors Blvd on the Paseo Del Norte Trail



The mileage of official bicycle facilities in the region grew by 42 percent between 2004 and 2010, and this plan includes projects that would more than double the current mileage of bicycle facilities. Nevertheless, people reaching destinations by bicycle often have to be resourceful and creative in navigating their way around. In response, transportation professionals are coming up with creative ways to make space for bicyclists. For example, in 2009 the region's first bicycle boulevard was put into place connecting downtown Albuquerque to the University area. The "sharrow" (a street stencil) is another cost-effective infrastructure improvement used in constrained right-of-ways to indicate a shared lane for motorists and bicyclists. For pedestrian travel, the presence of sidewalks alone is not sufficient for accomplishing this goal, and the type and scale of pedestrian-related improvements needed vary by location. As a result the 2035 MTP includes a Pedestrian Composite Index (PCI), a tool that looks at what attracts and detracts pedestrians from places to help locate and prioritize pedestrian improvements. The higher the Pedestrian Composite Index score, the greater the need for pedestrian improvements.

Finally, the importance of educating people about bicycle and pedestrian travel is often overlooked. The AMPA region has fairly good bicycle and pedestrian networks, but people often need some encouragement or more information to start using these modes for transportation. Through MRMPO processes funding is provided to local entities to work on education and encouragement for biking and walking safely in the AMPA.

Long Range Plans

Long-range bicycle projects are included in this MTP in the Long-Range Bicycle System map. This map includes all projects that the various jurisdictions would like to complete when the system is fully built out—both linear facilities and grade-separated crossings. The Long-Range Bicycle System map also acts as an important tool to remind agencies and developers to take into consideration planned facilities as areas develop. MRMPO has also developed a long-distance facility network (shown within the Long-Range Bicycle System map). The long-distance facility network consists of proposed and existing *regionally significant* bikeways that will provide a means for bicyclists to travel across and between jurisdictions in the network. This network will also include way-finding signage.

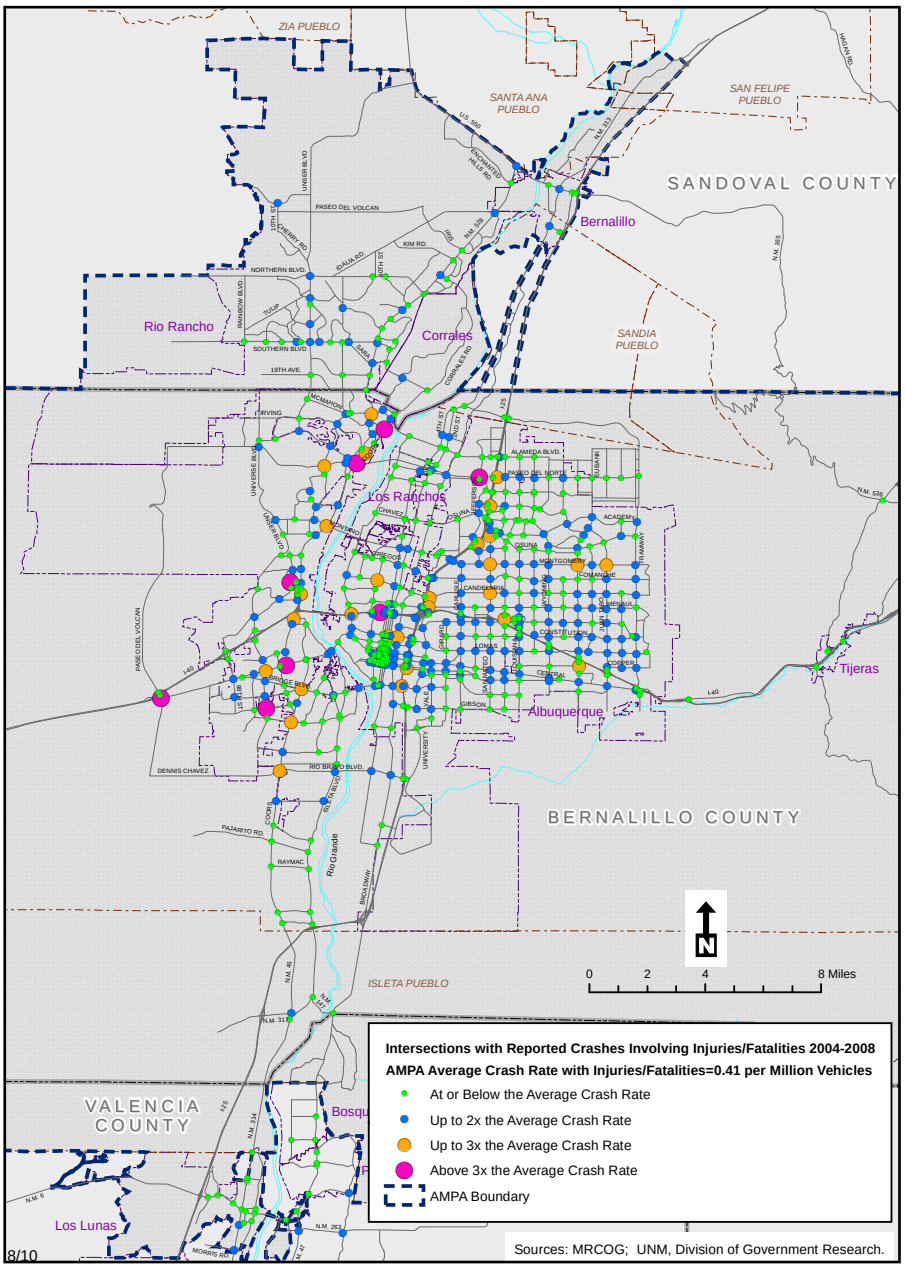
Safety Challenges

In the United States, motor vehicle crashes are the number one cause of unintentional death for people between the ages of one and 34. New Mexico's fatality rate of 1.38 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2008 is still above the national average fatality rate of 1.25 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. From 2004 to 2008 the number of crashes in the region declined by around 19 percent. However, the number of fatal crashes in the region rose by 23 percent in 2008 compared to 2007.

The intersections with the highest crash rates are mainly concentrated along Coors Boulevard, Paseo Del Norte Boulevard, and Central Avenue. Areas with the highest crash rates for bicyclists and pedestrians are around the UNM campus, downtown Albuquerque, and the area in the Northeast Heights bounded by Lomas Boulevard, Indian School Road, Juan Tabo Boulevard, and Tramway Boulevard.

Alcohol-involved crashes and a very high pedestrian fatality rate are two serious issues in the AMPA. Just over four percent of all crashes involved alcohol and of these crashes 54 percent resulted in fatalities. The highest percentage of alcohol-related crashes involved 20 to 24-year old drivers. The proportion of male drivers in fatal crashes was nearly 2.5 times as high as the proportion of female drivers. Of all fatal crashes, 24 percent involved a pedestrian. Most of these crashes can be attributed to driver inattention and speed related contributing factors.

Distracted driving is also a serious issue as more drivers are talking and texting on their phones. Other issues include an increased number of older drivers on the roads as the 65-years and older population is projected to double by 2050 (older and younger drivers are more likely to die or be injured in crashes than the general population). Prioritizing the improvement of roadway safety for pedestrians and bicyclists and increasing education and enforcement concerning safe driving habits for young drivers and those driving while impaired or intoxicated will be key issues for the future. Strategies to address these issues will need to be aimed at, but not limited to, behavior changes, design, and enforcement.



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2004-2008
Fatal	60	45.00	49	43	53	250
Injury	6,152	5,895	5,366	4,542	4,141	26,096
Property Damage	11,646	12,204	12,526	11,903	10,283	58,562
Total	17,858	18,144	17,941	16,488	14,477	

Safety Strategies

Safety strategies in the AMPA include, but are not limited to, addressing major intersections and corridors that have high crash rates, alcohol-involved crashes and crashes where young drivers are involved and tackling the high occurrence of pedestrian involved crashes.

In order to address these issues, driver behavior and roadway design need to be further investigated. Assessing safety for the most vulnerable users, such as pedestrians and bicyclists, will provide a safer transportation system for all modes of transportation and increase mobility options for all users.

The 2006 NMDOT safety plan set a goal to achieve a 20 percent reduction in the state fatality rate by 2010, or a total rate of 1.67 fatalities per 100 million vehicle miles traveled. New Mexico exceeded this goal with a fatality rate of 1.38 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 208. In 2009 a new safety goal was set for the updated *Comprehensive Transportation Safety Plan (CTSP)*. The new goal is to achieve a 25 percent reduction in traffic fatalities from 413 in 2007 to no more than 310 fatalities by 2010. For the years following 2010, it will be the goal of the CTSP to continue to reduce fatalities by 2.3 percent per year.

Safety improvements will also help mitigate the direct and indirect costs of crashes such as property damage, emergency services, medical bills and loss of time at work. In 2000, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimated that traffic crashes in the United States accounted for approximately $230 billion a year in economic losses.

Congestion reduction is another benefit; according to a study done by AAA in 2008, 40 to 50 percent of all nonrecurring congestion may be associated with traffic incidents.

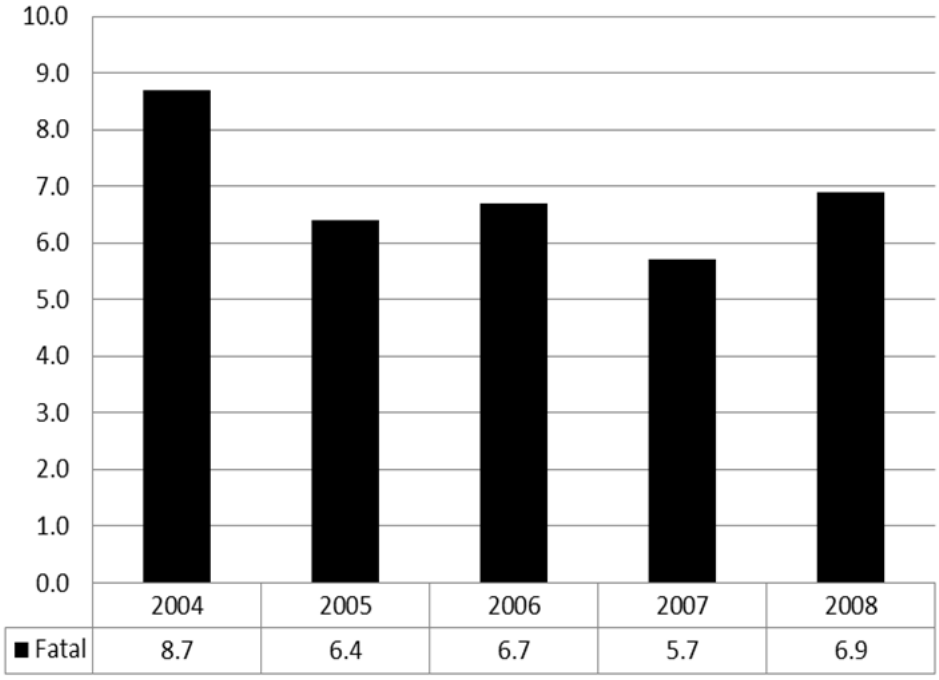
Finally, creation of a safety management plan or task force for the AMPA will support the development of a prioritization process for spending safety-related funding sources. Other safety strategy initiatives include the following:

- Support for Safe Routes to School
- Encourage adoption of Complete Streets and Context Sensitive Design Solutions
- Increased use of technology

Potential Safety Projects

- Signal installations
- Street lighting and signage
- Crosswalk and pavement markings
- Intersection improvements
- Modification of signal timing to improve traffic flow and safety
- ITS installation for real-time traffic surveillance
- Roundabouts at intersections for crash mitigation
- Median barriers to provide bike trail protection
- Pedestrian facilities improvements
- Installation of flashers, gates and other safety devices to provide railroad crossing improvements
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements at railroad crossings

Fatal Crashes per 100,000 People in the AMPA by Year



Freight Movement

Goods mobility is vital to local and national economies. At the national level, transportation is a $1.2 trillion industry, generating eight percent of the nation's jobs.

In the AMPA, a reliable transportation network gives businesses a competitive advantage by providing them the ability to deliver products at lower cost and reach local, national and global markets. For consumers, access to these goods raises their standard of living.

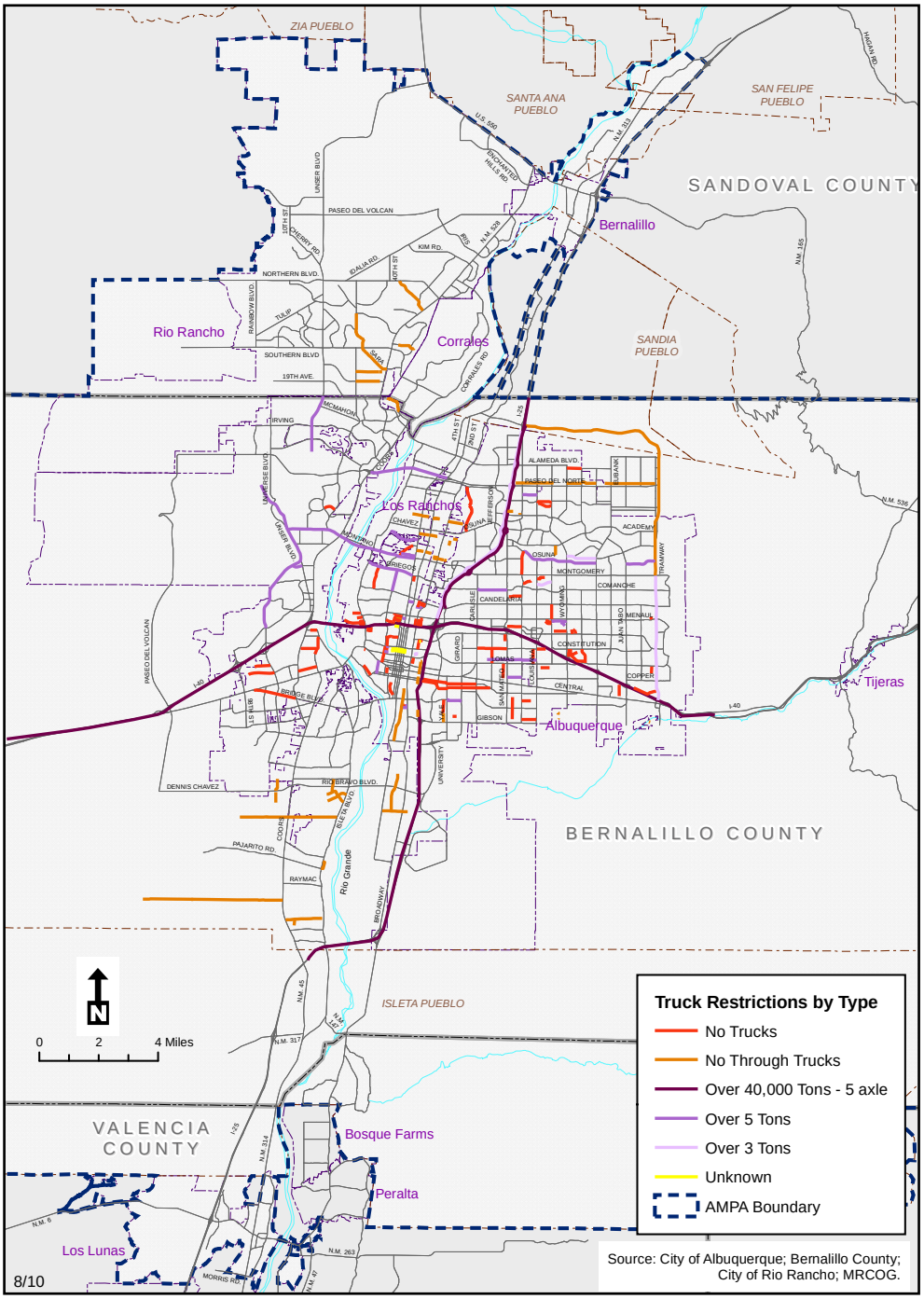
Albuquerque is located at the intersection of I-40 and I-25. I-40 is a major cross-country route connecting the California to eastern markets. For this reason, preserving and maintaining I-40 is a significant national and regional interest. I-25 carries a much smaller number of trucks.

Local freight haulers have raised concerns about truck restrictions (see map) on local facilities which make trips longer and more costly and time of day/day of week restrictions which hamper goods movement and compound congestion at critical times. Such restrictions effectively force trucks to drive at times when congestion is at its worst.

While freight movement is projected to increase greatly by 2035, the greatest challenge facing local haulers is a systemic one. The perennial issue of "crossing the river" is critical for shippers because the options to improve commuter traffic are not available to freight movers.

The lack of freight access to the arterial system on Albuquerque's Westside is considered by some shippers to be a "high service cost area" for pick-ups and deliveries.

Several facilities have been identified as "Primary Freight Corridors" . These include Coors Boulevard from I-40 to its junction with NM 528; Alameda Boulevard from I-25 to NM 528; and several other relatively low-volume facilities that maintain connections between intermodal facilities and the interstate system.



Financial Analysis

Long-range transportation plans for metropolitan areas are required to be fiscally constrained, meaning that the total project cost must not exceed the amount projected to be available.

There are two major challenges in projecting how much funding is available for transportation projects. First, federal revenues are based on the SAFETEA-LU authorization which has expired (Congress has passed continuing resolutions extending the reauthorization). Second, in 2008, the national and world economy entered a recession. Congress enacted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, however this funding is unlikely to be reallocated.

Funds Available	Amount
Federal and State Revenue for Transportation (Capital and District 3 Maint. & Oper.) FY 2008-2035	$2,852,997,370
Local Revenue for Transportation FY 2008 -2035	$3,983,912,567
Total Public Revenue FY 2008-2035	$6,836,909,937
Expenditures	**Amount**
Cost of All Public Capital Projects FY 2008 -2035	$5,093,845,634
Cost of Maintenance & Operations FY 2008 -2035	$1,743,064,303
Total Public Expenditures FY 2008-2035	$6,836,909,937

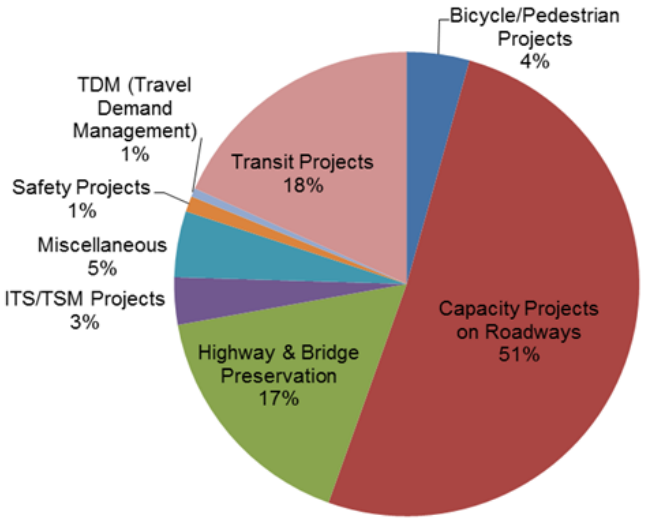
To produce the revenue estimate for this MTP, all local agencies and the New Mexico Department of Transportation have provided their best educated guess as to the levels of available funding for the period 2008 through 2035. Federal amounts for 2008 through 2011 are those actually programmed and available. Projections from 2012 to 2017 are amounts provided by NMDOT. Projections for 2018 outward were maintained at 2017 levels through 2035. In addition, federal highway funding levels which were reduced through 2027 for debt service are restored in 2028 after they are fully paid back.

Public capital expenditures include all regionally significant projects funded with federal transportation dollars, state funds and local general funds, bond funds and impact fees. Private funds used for construction of transportation infrastructure have been projected to equal the cost estimates of each privately-funded project. Maintenance and operations (M&O) expenditures have been projected for expenditures on federal-aid eligible highways and transit systems.

Transportation Revenue (Public Sources)	Total FY 2008-2035
Federal Highway Program	$1,765,916,897
Federal Land Highway Program	$7,024,000
Federal Priority Funds	$72,482,026
Federal Special Programs	$37,297,195
Federal ARRA	$58,915,574
Federal Transit Administration	$444,932,047
Total Federal (includes required matching funds)	**$2,386,567,738**
State Capital Funds (includes GRIP 1 & GRIP 2)	$213,998,089
State Funds for District 3 Maint. and Oper.	$252,431,542
Local Funds	$3,983,912,567
Total Public Revenues	**$6,836,909,937**

A review of all proposed capital projects reveals over half of all capital funds will be used to expand highway capacity with significant funds being spent on preserving the current highway and bridge infrastructure and improving safety. Highway-related expenditures comprise nearly 70 percent of the total planned expenditures. Additionally, the majority of ITS/TSM (Intelligent Transportation System/Transportation Systems Management) funds are utilized to increase performance of the highway system. Nearly one-fifth will be spent on transit to maintain current transit infrastructure and expand transit service to achieve the river crossing mode shift goal to transit of 10 percent by 2025 and 20 percent by 2035.

Percent Expenditure by Type of Project



Future Directions

How can we best integrate land use and transportation planning?

MRMPO is interested in facilitating the development of a regional plan for the greater Albuquerque area that incorporates objectives relating to the integration of land use and transportation, livability, growth and other issues. This plan would provide the opportunity to develop a new regional vision that would serve as the foundation for long-range planning activities in the area.

Regional decision makers and transportation planning partners have expressed renewed interest in working together to solve issues facing the metropolitan area such as uncontrolled growth and the implications this type of growth has on the transportation network. A greater understanding of how transportation problems are often caused by land use decisions and development patterns is leading to a stronger belief in the need for integrated transportation and land use planning (and vice versa; sometimes poor transportation decisions lead to poor land use outcomes).

Transportation decisions have limited effect when they are reactive to land use development rather than considered concurrently. This type of disconnected planning hinders MRMPO's ability to provide comprehensive and feasible transportation solutions. MRMPO can be an important facilitator for this process, as the Metropolitan Transportation Board—consisting of elected officials from many of the local jurisdictions—already provides a regional forum for considering new ideas and solutions.

A new plan would provide the opportunity to create a region-wide growth and development vision; develop new regional sustainability goals such as those relating to land use and transportation integration, climate change, energy technology and livability; analyze future growth scenarios and assess their impacts on the region; and identify and support the implementation of key projects linking transportation and land use in the region.

The federal transportation reauthorization bill that will replace SAFETEA-LU is likely to include provisions for greenhouse gas emission reduction requirements, and there have also been efforts to bring an energy and climate change bill before Congress. It is therefore reasonable to expect that greenhouse gas emissions reductions strategies will become a requirement for Metropolitan Planning Organizations either through the passage of energy and climate change-related legislation or federal surface transportation legislation—or both.

MRMPO is looking into several other important areas to include as part of its transportation planning activities. These areas include livability, public health, complete streets, user fees and transportation planning for an aging population.

EJ Strategies

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance. Environmental justice (EJ), which stems from Title VI, addresses how low-income and minority populations are affected by transportation decisions including those made as part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. MRMPO EJ strategies include:

- Ensuring Limited English Proficient (LEP) persons have access to programs, services and information provided by MRMPO.
- Identifying residential, employment, and transportation patterns of low-income and minority populations so that those populations' needs can be identified and the benefits and burdens of transportation investments can be fairly distributed.
- Evaluating and improving MRMPO's public involvement processes to eliminate participation barriers and to engage minority and low-income populations in transportation decision making.
- Using MRMPO's Transportation Accessibility Model (TRAM) to assess whether environmental justice communities have greater or lesser access to public transportation, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and employment centers than the AMPA as a whole. MRMPO calculated that 57 percent of the EJ population is within 1/4 mile of all transit stops (compared to 26 percent of the AMPA population).
- Using the MRMPO-produced environmental justice index to identify environmental justice areas and their location relative to transportation projects.

Future Directions

Livable Communities

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) launched a Livable Communities Initiative in 2009, and on its heels a sustainable communities partnership between the DOT, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency was formed to implement the following six livability principles:

1. Provide more transportation choices
2. Promote equitable, affordable housing
3. Enhance economic competiveness
4. Support existing communities
5. Coordinate policies and leverage investment
6. Value communities and neighborhoods

Public Health

At the core of planning is protecting public health and safety. In fact, National Ambient Air Quality Standards are established with the main purpose of protecting public health. Emissions from motorized transportation have been shown to impact respiratory health, particularly for residential areas near major interchanges and large arterials. In addition, a poorly connected transportation system combined with widely dispersed land uses can result in decreased physical activity which contributes to heart disease, diabetes, and increasing health care costs.

Complete Streets

Complete streets are streets and sidewalks that are designed to provide safe and convenient travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit users of all ages and abilities. The City of Rio Rancho is looking into complete streets implementation, and the City of Albuquerque hopes to adopt by spring 2011 a plan with similar intent, the Great Streets Facility Plan. The true effectiveness of complete streets will be in the implementation measures and therefore often requires re-visiting design standards.

Economic Impact Model

MRCOG expanded the ability of its economic impact model to interact with the travel demand model and analyze the impact of changes to the transportation network. MRMPO expects that this tool will allow more comprehensive integration of land use, transportation, and economic analysis so that planners may anticipate how an investment in one of these elements will impact the others and provide for more informed decision-making when selecting near and long term projects for funding.

Future Strategies

- Development of a complete streets policy
- Development of design standards guidelines based on complete streets and context sensitive solutions
- Working with member agencies on Health Impact Assessments (HIA)
- Support and pursue livability principles and funding
- Use the economic model to quantify benefits of transportation projects
- Bring more public awareness to the implications of housing location on true housing cost and the importance of the location of services such as transit
- Investigate user-based-fees issues such as equity, legislative requirements, technological issues and the viability of high occupancy toll lanes

Housing and Transportation Affordability

Transportation expenses understood as a part of household expenses has gained attention through the Center for Neighborhood Technology's (CNT) work on calculating how much households across the country are spending on transportation in an effort to measure true housing affordability. The organization has shown what many have ignored for decades: "cheaper" housing found on the fringes is often actually less affordable when associated transportation costs are factored in because of longer travel distances from jobs and services such as transit. An online map showing housing and transportation affordability for the MRMPO region would allow decision-makers to better plan transportation and land use and locate affordable housing needs. Residents could use the tool for making housing decisions based on expected housing and transportation costs.

User Fees

Like many metropolitan areas, there are more transportation infrastructure needs in our region than revenue and funding sources to meet them. One way to solve this perpetual dilemma is to begin moving toward a more user fees-oriented approach in order to finance needed transportation infrastructure. Examples of user fees are regular tolls, high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, congestion pricing and vehicle miles traveled charges.

Compact Land Use Scenario

The population of the AMPA is projected to grow by more than 600,000 by 2035. This level of growth, most of which is expected to occur on the region's peripheries, puts a great strain on the region's infrastructure and would make roadways even more congested. However, sprawling development and severe congestion are not inevitable. Scenario analysis allows planners to test alternative development patterns and simulate their impact on quality of life issues such as congestion, travel times, personal transportation costs and air quality.

As an initial exercise and a starting point for discussion, MRMPO developed a compact development scenario that represents a first effort to understand how changes in land use patterns might impact travel behavior and the transportation network. The results of this exercise show that the impacts of compact development on regional travel are significant.

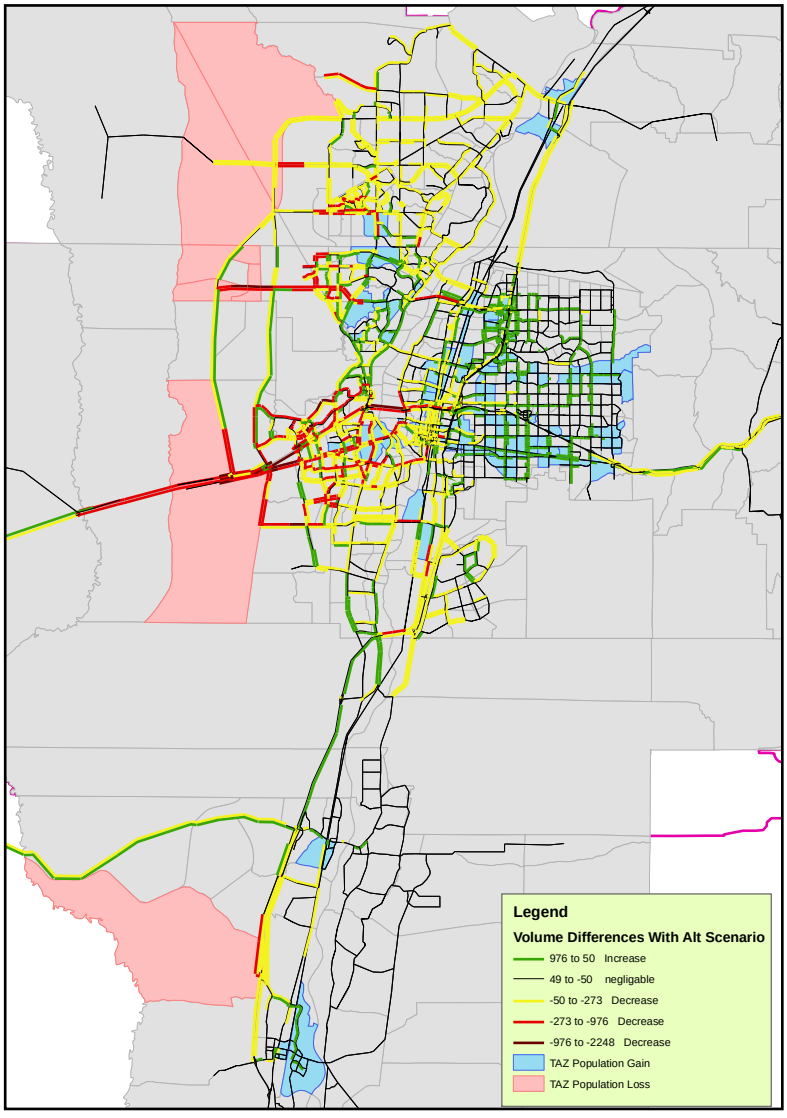
Summary statistics below compare the compact development scenario with the 2035 MTP forecast and illustrate that more compact growth results in fewer hours of delay and shorter distances of travel. The map to the right shows the PM peak hour volume changes on the road network. These differences make sense given that a greater number of people live closer to employment sites and services found on the Eastside. Most remarkably, perhaps, is that the average travel speed for the region increases. The reason for this is that by encouraging density and allowing for shorter trips, overall congestion actually decreases and longer trips can be accomplished at faster speeds. In addition, portions of the AMPA that gain population under the compact development scenario are those best equipped to handle higher traffic volumes due to the presence of transit and a grid roadway system.

PM Peak Hour	MTP 2035	Compact Scenario	Percent Difference
Vehicle Hours of Delay	160,154	123,654	-23%
Vehicle Hours Traveled	228,812	189,354	-17%
Vehicle Miles Traveled	3,077,065	2,946,946	-4%
Average Speed	13.4	15.6	16%

Daily impacts on travel as a result of the compact development scenario are shown in the following table and include reductions in total and per capita miles traveled, along with 50,000 fewer trips across the river. The latter statistic is particularly significant given the severity of current and projected congestion and travel delay on the river crossings.

Daily Statistics	MTP 2035	Compact Scenario	Percent Difference
Vehicle Miles Traveled	31,588,579	30,333,044	-4%
Vehicle Miles Per Capita	23.8	22.8	-4%
River Crossings	1,032,041	982,482	-5%

While the results of this scenario development demonstrates that changes in land use patterns can substantially improve congestion, a true scenario analysis would involve a much larger effort that includes the development of several potential growth scenarios and significant participation from MRMPO's committees and the public.

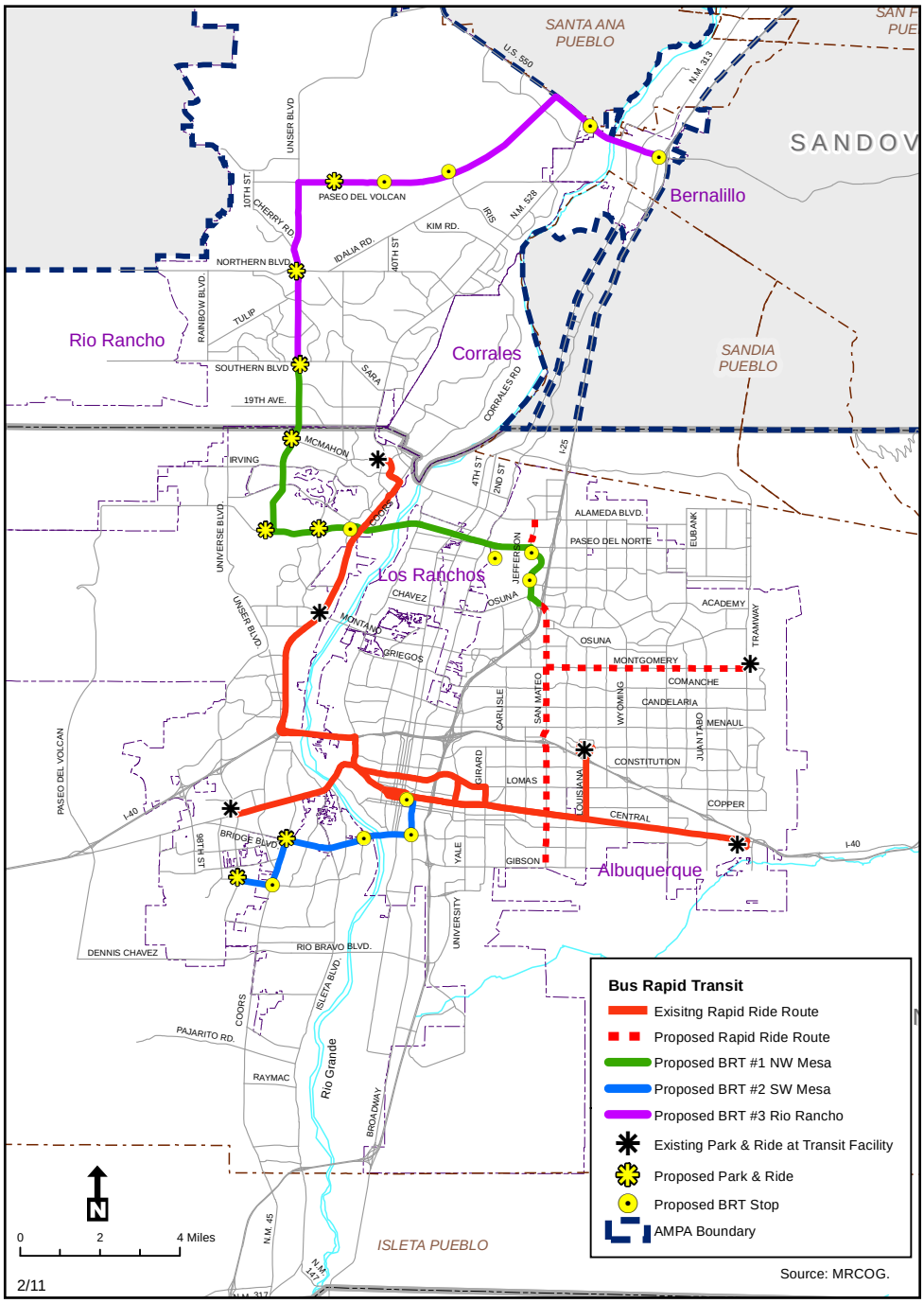


Bus Rapid Transit Conceptual Scenario

Both the 2035 MTP survey and feedback from MRMPO's public meetings indicated an appetite on the part of the public for expanded transit service. This public support is greatly assisted by the Metropolitan Transportation Board's dedication of at least 25 percent of discretionary funds from the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) towards transit services that mitigate river crossing congestion.

Recently the City of Albuquerque, Rio Metro Regional Transit District and MRMPO began exploring the feasibility of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network to provide alternative means of crossing the Rio Grande while providing connections to the New Mexico Rail Runner Express (NMRX) and connecting major residential and employment centers. The BRT conceptual scenario is an example of a set of investments in new transit routes including vehicle purchase and capital costs over the twenty-year period. By considering federal discretionary funds as the only source of capital and infrastructure investments for the BRT network, a conservative estimate is provided.

BRT is a high speed, high frequency form of transit designed to move large numbers of travelers and commuters efficiently along major travel corridors. BRT is considered a premium bus service with guaranteed travel times, but is considerably less expensive than other forms of mass transit such as light rail and streetcars. To work effectively, BRT service must be well coordinated with walking and bicycling facilities, intercity bus, rail transit, and other transportation services. The conceptual scenario presented in the MTP connects crucial high growth areas as to major employment centers and provides access to the NMRX. One conceptual route provides access from southern Rio Rancho and northwest Albuquerque to the journal center while another connects the southwest mesa to downtown Albuquerque. A third route would connect downtown Rio Rancho to the US 550 Rail Runner station.



The routes indicated here are *potential* routes; the actual routes may vary but the scenario does identify the markets that the City of Albuquerque, MRMPO and Rio Metro are trying to serve and shows what could be implemented using a single source of funds (federal).

Monitoring the Progress of the MTP

Planning documents are continually being updated, but one way to ensure a plan remains relevant and effective is to monitor its performance. The 2035 MTP sets out specific performance targets to better measure the progress of the 2035 MTP and determine whether or not the plan is meeting its three primary goals—preserve and improve quality of life, mobility of people and goods and support economic activity and growth. Goals may be achieved in quantitative ways such as increasing mode share or decreasing transportation costs to the end user (MTP performance targets), and goals may be addressed in an qualitative manner such as by undertaking a transportation study or expanding coordination on a particular issue (MTP action items). An annual report will be presented to MRMPO committees for their input and review. As this process unfolds, MRMPO will continue to evaluate its usefulness and change targets or methods as needed.

Quality of Life Objective Statement: Enhance the livability, safety, and environmental conditions of the region through proactive, responsible, equitable and sustainable transportation decisions.

Quality of Life Performance Targets

1) Air Quality: Maintain Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita at or below 2008 levels
2) Environmental Justice: Increase accessibility to transit for environmental justice (EJ) areas
3) Safety: Reduce fatal and injury crashes by 2.3 percent per year
4) Existing Infrastructure: Improve bridge and pavement conditions compared to 2008 levels

Mobility of People and Goods Objective Statement: Enable the efficient movement of people and goods within and through the region and provide residents with a range of viable transportation options.

Mobility of People and Goods Performance Targets

1) Geographic Needs: Increase transit mode share along river crossings to 10 percent by 2025 and 20 percent by 2035
2) Multimodal Connections: Increase non-single occupancy vehicle trips to 25 percent by 2025 and 30 percent by 2035
3) Performance Strategies: Implement High Priority Congestion Management Process strategies from the Congestion Mitigation Process Toolkit

Economic Activity and Growth Objective Statement: Develop a transportation system that promotes economic activity in the region achieved through decisions that provide an affordable, efficient, and accessible multimodal transportation network.

Economic Activity and Growth Performance Targets

1) Investment Areas: Target transportation investments that improve connectivity and mobility for all modes within high Activity Density Areas
2) Local Priorities and Land Use: Increase transit services and appropriate thoroughfare connections to locally-designated Activity Centers and rail station areas
3) Housing and Transportation Affordability: Reduce the average household combined cost of housing and transportation compared to costs in 2010

Quality of Life Action Items:

- Support plans for implementation of alternative fuels and infrastructure
- Develop strategies/plans for prioritizing safety improvements
- Develop livable/sustainable community measures
- Pursue the use of built environment health impact assessments
- Identify locations for improved pedestrian facilities using the Pedestrian Composite Index
- Support incorporation of complete streets principles into MPO and local plans and policies and develop a regional roadway design document based on complete street and context sensitive design elements
- Support the convenience and safety of non-motorized modes of travel as commuting alternatives
- Investigate regional strategies for mitigating/adapting to climate change

Mobility of People and Goods Action Items:

- Encourage increased transit services on Primary Transit Improvement Corridors (key corridors for transit)
- Complete Bus Rapid Transit study for the Northwest Metro Area
- Analyze levels of people movement (pedestrians, transit passengers, vehicle drivers and passengers) rather than vehicle traffic alone to better understand how people are travelling along a corridor
- Increase involvement in Safe Routes to School programs
- Assess and improve connectivity of thoroughfare system and local streets to improve walkability and better distribute vehicle traffic
- Close gaps in the regional bicycle network
- Support the expansion of park and ride facilities
- Identify specific locations for dedicated transit facilities, right-of-way acquisition and signal improvements

Economic Activity and Growth Action Items:

- Work with member agencies on coordinating regional growth strategies with the transportation network
- Assess economic impacts of transportation projects and transit-oriented development
- Support development of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) activities
- Assess economic impacts of various land use scenarios
- Work on measuring and evaluating the combined housing and transportation costs for the region
- Identify transportation projects to be constructed through financial and project implementation arrangements with private sector parties
- Support incorporation of transit-oriented development principles into local development plans and policies
- Assist local governments in reviewing truck restrictions and policies to allow for the more efficient movement of goods