

## Introduction

The Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD)/Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) held its second set of open houses for the Paseo del Norte High Capacity Transit Study (PDN HCTS) on Wednesday, March 27, 2013. The meetings were held at two locations to more easily accommodate and attract stakeholders who commute, work, and/or live near the study area.

- ◆ The first open house was held in the Journal Center area at the Dekker/Perich/Sabatini offices from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM.
- ◆ The second open house was held on the west side at the Albuquerque Police Department (APD) Northwest Substation from 4:30 PM to 7:00 PM.
- ◆ In addition, RMRTD/MRCOG project representatives met with the Piedras Marcadas Neighborhood Association immediately following the evening west side open house.

This document summarizes the organization of the open houses and provides a summary of comments received.

## Open House Advertisement

Notification of the open houses occurred through the following methods:

- ◆ Newspaper advertisements were published in the Albuquerque Journal West Side Edition on Thursday, March 21, 2013 and in the Albuquerque Journal on Sunday, March 24, 2013.
- ◆ Press Release was submitted to all regional news organizations.
- ◆ Open house announcement flyers were hand delivered to businesses with frontage on Jefferson Street in the Journal Center area.
- ◆ Open house announcement flyers were mailed to all businesses in the Journal Center area with over 25 employees.
- ◆ Emails with open house announcements were sent to:
  - neighborhood association presidents within the study area;
  - residents in Councilor Lewis' district (via Sara Mancini on the study's Technical Advisory Committee);
  - individuals who have expressed an interest in the study through prior involvement; and,
  - RMRTD Board of Directors, MRCOG Board of Directors, and MRCOG Public Involvement Committee.
- ◆ Open house announcements were published in the MRCOG newsletter, the Office of Neighborhood Coordination newsletter, the New Mexico Rail Runner e-newsletter, and a special e-blast.
- ◆ Open house announcement flyers were posted on the ABQ Ride buses that service the study area.
- ◆ Open house announcement posters were displayed on A-frame stands and campaign-style signs at the northwest transit center, along Jefferson, and at key intersections throughout the study area.
- ◆ Open house announcements were broadcasted on local television and radio news programs.



- ◆ MRCOG website address, which posted links to all open house materials, was listed on the flyers for those who could not attend.

Attendees were asked “how did you hear about this event” on the sign-in sheets, and their responses are shown in the following table:

Advertising Method	Journal Center Open House	West Side Open House
Emails	20	14
Signs	5	6
Television and Radio News	4	1
Rio Rancho Journal Newspaper	4	10
On Technical Advisory Committee	2	1
Dekker/Perich/Sabatini employee	5	0
Friend	2	1
Flyers delivered to businesses	4	0
MRCOG website	1	0

## Open House Attendance

Forty-five people signed in at the registration table at the Journal Center open house at the Dekker/Perich/Sabatini offices from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM.

Thirty-three people signed in at the west side open house at the APD Northwest Substation from 4:30 to 7:00 PM.

Representatives from RMRTD/ MRCOG and the consultant team were also present at the above open houses.

Seventeen people attended the Piedras Marcadas Neighborhood Association open house in addition to the RMRTD/ MRCOG project team representatives.

Completed Sign-In Sheets for the open houses are included in [Appendix A](#).

## Open House Overview

The open houses had the same purpose, provided similar information, and were organized in the same fashion. The purpose of the open houses was to:

- ◆ Share the latest information about the project with the public.
- ◆ Describe types of transit strategies, explain solutions being considered, and describe potential route alignments.
- ◆ Solicit comments from stakeholders and the public relating to the short-listed route alignments as well as other aspects of the proposed BRT improvements.

The open houses included the display of project boards provided at ‘stations’ as described below. Project representatives were available at each station, guiding attendees, explaining the materials, and answering any questions that arose. Collectively, the stations explained why the project is important and the alternatives being considered.

Stations consisted of the following:

- ◆ Station 1: open house format
- ◆ Station 2: what the Paseo del Norte High Capacity Transit Study will accomplish
- ◆ Station 3: description of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and its features
- ◆ Station 4: short-listed route alternatives
- ◆ Station 5: detailed look at the northwest BRT route alternatives
- ◆ Station 6: detailed look at the Paseo del Norte route alternatives
- ◆ Station 7: detailed look at the Journal Center BRT route alternatives
- ◆ Supplement to Stations 5-7: typical sections of the roadway with implementation of BRT
- ◆ Station 8: results of the evaluation of each route alternative
- ◆ Station 9: invitation and opportunity for the public and stakeholders to provide comments
- ◆ Station X: description of land use potential in the corridor

Attendees at both open houses were provided a handout containing small versions of the display boards and a return-addressed Comment Form or Questionnaire.

## Comments Received

Comments about the study were compiled using several methods:

- ◆ Written comments were recorded via the comment forms or questionnaires which were distributed to all attendees at the open houses. The forms could have been submitted in a comment box at the registration table or mailed to the project manager.
- ◆ Written comments were emailed to the project manager.
- ◆ Spoken comments were recorded by written notes taken by a project team member.
- ◆ Questions and comments were recorded on a flip-chart which was located in the open house room for project representatives as well as open house attendees to use.

All written comments were requested to be returned by Saturday, April 13, 2013 for inclusion in this Open House Summary.

Completed comment forms and emails received are included in [Appendix B](#).

The key issues identified by open house participants and the answers provided on the comment form or questionnaire are summarized below.

## Written Comments

### Comment Form Questions

Attendees returned sixteen comment forms or questionnaires during the open house sessions, and emailed two comments. The key issues identified by open house participants on the comment forms are summarized below. The number shown in parenthesis indicates the number of similar comments.

*What is the closest major intersection to where you live?*

**Eastside:**

Jefferson and Paseo, Jefferson and I-25, Tramway and Spain, Tramway and Montgomery, 12<sup>th</sup> and Mountain

**Westside:**

Unser and Paseo del Norte (2), Golf Course and Paseo del Norte (2), Universe and Paseo del Norte, Coors and Montaño, Unser and Montaño, Unser and Paradise, Coors Bypass and Ellison, NM 528 and Southern, NM 528 and Riverside, NM 528 and Leon Grande.

*Which of the Northwest-area transit alignments do you prefer?*

- (11) a. **Yellow** – Unser Boulevard and Paseo del Norte
- (3) b. **Purple** – Southern Boulevard, Sara Road, NM 528, and Coors Boulevard
- (1) c. **Pink** – Unser Boulevard, McMahan Boulevard, and Coors Boulevard

*Which proposed Park and Ride location in the Northwest area would work best for you?*

- (6) Volcano Heights
- (2) Northwest Transit Center
- (2) *New* – Large Lot on Southern Blvd. at the old City Hall
  - Along Paseo del Norte
  - First Baptist Church / Intel
  - Coors and Paseo del Norte
  - Golf Course and Paseo

*Are there destinations other than the Journal Center and the UNM/CNM area that you would like to see better-served by transit?*

UNM and UNMH (4), Paseo del Norte corridor in the Far Northeast Heights (2), Montgomery - east (2), Railrunner station at the Journal Center, Airport, Uptown, Northwest Transit Center weekend service, Downtown (2), Coors and Montaño, NM 528 between Southern and NM 550, Northwest area around Ventana Ranch, Trails, and Montecito Estates

*Which Journal Center Route do you prefer?*

- (3) a. **Green** – Channel Road (along the AMAFCA North Diversion Channel)
- (9) b. **Blue** – Jefferson Street
- (2) c. **Light Blue** – various local streets

*Please provide any other comments or identify other issues you think are important for the Paseo del Norte High Capacity Transit Study (PDN HCTS) in the space below.*

- (3) Would like to see implementation as quickly as possible before other projects are developed.
- (2) Would like more pedestrian friendly design such as safe street crossings after exiting the bus.
- (2) Consider a park-and-ride at the old City Hall on NM 528 and Southern and extending the purple route to this intersection; it is very important not to eliminate the existing bus stop at Southern.
- (2) Would like to connect the west side with the east side destinations such as the airport, UNM, and UNMH.
- (2) Would like to continue Route 790 service.

Initial routes should be selected to serve existing dense areas, and then future routes should be expanded to less dense areas.

Would like more security at park-and-ride stations.

Would like to see more explanation of evaluation results, especially weighting factors of technical team, and assessment of political feasibility.

Should consider other projects in this study, such as: the redesign of I-25 on/off ramps, the proposed future Wal-Mart at Paseo and I-25 northwest corner, the new 22 acre city park at Vista del Norte and Osuna (Northeast/ Journal Center).

Would like to see a bus stop at Golf Course Road and Paseo del Norte.

Would like a bike trail to continue east on Paseo del Norte and pass over I-25.

Would like ABQ Ride to improve the river crossing on Alameda, making Route 98 Wyoming and Alameda an all-day route, and replacing Route 31.

Would like a similar BRT project on Montañño especially when new Rail Runner station opens.

Would like regular service on El Pueblo.

The parking lot gets full quickly at the El Pueblo Railrunner station.

The yellow route allows for the best infrastructure expandability as this route is less developed. The yellow route has more potential to improve travel times if dedicated transit lanes are incorporated as they are built as opposed to trying to dedicate lanes where the full ROW is already constructed.

Using a location in Volcano Heights as a transfer area, Unser could provide access to I-40, which in turn could serve Downtown and Uptown.

The yellow route should be a full circle since the functional classification of Unser and PDN are both limited access principals.

The purple route might be a half circle due to Sara Road which is a minor arterial.

## Spoken Comments and Questions

### Spoken Comments

- (several) General support for the project.
- (several) Interest in increased transit service further east.
- (several) Concern that the new bus service might interfere with current traffic flows.
- (several) Would like WiFi on BRT to attract students and office workers to the new service.
- (several) Prefer BRT over riding the 790 and 157 ABQ Ride Routes. Would appreciate a new bus route that would alleviate crowding on the 790.
- (several) Free transit passes to UNM students are a large benefit to Westside residents.
- (several) Activity levels at the Northwest Transit Center are high which demonstrates the need for transit service in northwest Albuquerque.
- (2) Prefer BRT over riding the bus to UNM area.
- (2) Would like a service to the New School in the Journal Center.
- (2) Concern that the purple route/Sara alternative will eliminate the ABQ Ride Routes 251/551. Riders who live a mile or so north of Sara Road would find it too far to walk to the purple route.



- (2) Concern that the new route will replace the ABQ Ride Route 790.  
Suggestion that the full list of variables be shown so people know what was examined and included in the evaluation.  
The alignment should encourage and be selected based on transit supportive land uses that are or could be in place.  
Lots of people travel between Rio Rancho and KAFB every day and need better transit.

### Spoken Questions

- (several) When will this be implemented?
- (2) Why wasn't light-rail or other modes considered? Why is BRT the preferred mode? Are buses cheaper in the long run than light rail?
- (2) What types of vehicles will be used? Will they use alternative fuels?  
Can it be implemented in time to mitigate PDN-I-25 interchange construction? Is this project tied to the PDN/I-25 interchange reconstruction?  
What is the difference between the park-and-ride lots and the stations as shown on the map?  
How would the park-and-ride lots operate?  
How would a curb-side and/or median stop operate? Where would a BRT bus stop at a station? In a pull out lane?  
What are the right-of-way (ROW) widths for typical street sections? Do we already have enough ROW to build dedicated lanes?  
Will there be any potential ROW needs or additional land needed to accommodate a station?  
How are the routes evaluated? What are the categories? How are the criteria weighted?  
Why was Paseo del Norte chosen over Alameda for the river crossing?  
Is Rio Rancho contributing enough financially to regional transit services?  
Will there be enough growth to support BRT? Will the project self-support?  
Did the project consider zoning?  
Will buses delay traffic?  
Did the project consider other cities?  
Will residents get a final say on the project such as putting it on a ballot?