



# RIO METRO

REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Friday, November 20, 2015

12:00 p.m.

809 Copper Ave. N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87102

### AGENDA

#### Call to Order

(The presence of a quorum will be noted.)

#### Approval of the November 20, 2015 Agenda

Tab 1 **Approval of the October 16, 2015 Action Summary**

### PUBLIC COMMENT

Tab 2 Anyone who wishes to address the RMRTD Board must register with the Secretary of the Board

### FINAL ACTION ITEMS

Tab 3 **Approving and Adopting the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long**  
R-15-10 RMRTD **Term Strategic Vision**

Tab 4 **Approving the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Policy for Soliciting**  
R-15-11 RMRTD **and Considering Public Comment on Fare Increases and Major Service**  
**Changes**

Tab 5 **RMRTD FY 2014-2015 Budget Adjustment**  
R-15-12 RMRTD

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

Tab 6 **Preview - RMRTD Board of Directors Handbook**

Tab 7 **Staff Reports:**  
-ABQ RIDE  
-NCRTD  
-Rio Metro RTD

### OTHER BUSINESS AND NOTES

**Next Meeting: Friday, December 18, 2015 at 12:00 p.m.**

**Anyone requiring special accommodations is requested to notify Barbara Thomas at (505) 247-1750 at least three days prior to the meeting.**



**RIO METRO**  
REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

**ACTION SUMMARY**

Friday, October 16, 2015  
12:00 p.m.  
809 Copper Ave. N.W.  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

**Rey Garduño, Chair**

**Maggie Hart Stebbins, Vice Chair**

ORGANIZATION		MEMBER		ALTERNATE
Bernalillo County		<b>Debbie O'Malley</b> , Commissioner		Richard Meadows, Clay Campbell Dan McGregor
		<b>Maggie Hart Stebbins</b> , Commissioner, <i>Vice Chair</i>	X	Dan McGregor Richard Meadows
		<b>Lonnie Talbert</b> , Commissioner	X	Nolan Bennett Dan McGregor
Sandoval County		<b>Darryl Madalena</b> , Commissioner	X	James Dominguez Phil Rios
Valencia County		<b>Charles Eaton</b> , Commissioner		Vacant
City of Albuquerque	X	<b>Isaac Benton</b> , Councilor		Diane Dolan
	X	<b>Diane Gibson</b> , Councilor		Chris Sylvan
		<b>Ken Sanchez</b>	X	Tom Menicucci
	X	<b>Rey Garduño</b> , Councilor, <i>Chair</i>		Julian Moya
		<b>Don Harris</b> , Councilor	X	Dawn Marie Emillio
		<b>Richard Berry</b> , Mayor	X	Bruce Rizzieri
		<b>Rob Perry</b>		
City of Belen		<b>Jerah Cordova</b> , Mayor	X	Steven Tomita
City of Rio Rancho	X	<b>Dawnn Robinson</b> , Councilor		Scott Sensanbaugher
	X	<b>Lonnie Clayton</b> , Councilor	X	Peter Wells
Town of Bernalillo	X	<b>Jack Torres</b> , Mayor		Ida Fierro Maria Rinaldi
Village of Bosque Farms		<b>Wayne Ake</b> , Councilor		
Village of Corrales	X	<b>John Alsobrook</b> , Councilor		Pat Clauser, Ennio Garcia Miera
Village of Los Lunas		<b>Charles Griego</b> , Mayor	X	Michael Jaramillo
Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque		<b>Larry Abraham</b> , Mayor		Kelly Ward
<b>ASSOCIATE MEMBERS</b>				
Isleta Pueblo		<b>Kathy Trujillo</b>		Vacant
<b>NON-VOTING ADVISORY MEMBERS</b>				
ORGANIZATION		MEMBER		ALTERNATE
NCRTD	X	<b>Anthony Mortarillo</b>		Jim Nagel
<b>MRCOG STAFF PRESENT</b>				
Terry Doyle, Barbara Thomas, Tony Sylvester, Dewey Cave, Thaddeus Lucero, Riann Martinez, Jay Faught, Larry Horan, Robert Gonzales, Michael Jiron, Conni Vigil, Gil Melgarejo, Josi Vigil				

## AGENDA

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m. by Chair Rey Garduño. The presence of a quorum was noted.

### **Approval of Agenda**

#### **Action Taken:**

Diane Gibson, City of Albuquerque, made a motion to:

**APPROVE THE AGENDA FOR OCTOBER 16, 2015**

The motion was seconded by Dawn Marie Emillio, City of Albuquerque, and passed unanimously.

Tab 1

### **Approval of Action Summary of August 28, 2015**

#### **Action Taken:**

Bruce Rizzieri, City of Albuquerque, made a motion to:

**APPROVE THE ACTION SUMMARY OF AUGUST 28, 2015**

The motion was seconded by Dan McGregor, Bernalillo County, and passed unanimously.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

Tab 2

There were no requests for public comment.

## FINAL ACTION ITEMS

Tab 3

R-15-08 RMRTD

### **Disposition of Rio Metro Regional Transit District Vehicles**

Terry Doyle, RMRTD Director, explained that there are vehicles owned by the RMRTD which are no longer needed, are obsolete or have reached the end of their service life. Mr. Doyle said there are twelve vehicles to dispose of.

The resolution requests concurrence from the Board that the vehicles listed in the attachment to the resolution are obsolete and have a re-sale value under \$5,000 each, and directs the CEO to dispose of the vehicles and delete them from the public inventory. It further directs the CEO to send a copy of the official finding and proposed disposition to the State Auditor and the Local Government Division of the Department of Finance and Administration 30 days before the deletion of the vehicles from the RMRTD public inventory. A copy of the Board's official finding and proposed disposition shall be duly sworn and subscribed under oath by each member of the RMRTD Board appointed to approve the action.

Mr. Doyle stood for questions.

He explained that Zuni Pueblo and non-profits are receiving these vehicles. There were twenty one requests for the twelve vehicles available and Mr. Doyle said the RMRTD member governments and the pueblos are given preference.

Lonnie Clayton, City of Rio Rancho, asked who received the vehicles and suggested a follow-up to see how the recipients are doing with their vehicles.

Steven Tomita, City of Belen, asked how organizations find out about availability. Mr. Doyle responded that it is by word-of-mouth and that people know from previous years.

**Action Taken:**

Mr. Benton made a motion to:

**APPROVE R-15-08 RMRTD DISPOSITION OF RIO METRO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT VEHICLES**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Tomita and passed unanimously.

Tab 4  
R-15-09 RMRTD

**Approving and Authorizing the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Veteran Pass Program**

Mr. Doyle presented R-15-09 RMRTD explaining that Rio Metro began the veterans pass pilot program in November 2014 and has been well received by the veteran community with over 4,500 passes issued and approximately 3,500 trips per month being taken with the pass. The program will expire on December 31, 2015 and it is requested in the resolution that the program be made permanent.

**Action Taken:**

Mr. Clayton made a motion to:

**APPROVE R-15-09 RMRTD APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE RIO METRO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT VETERANS PASS PROGRAM**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Rizzieri and passed unanimously.

**DISCUSSION AND INFORMATION ITEMS**

Tab 5

**Positive Train Control Mandate and the New Mexico Rail Runner**

Mr. Doyle explained that the deadline for the mandate for PTC (Positive Train Control) is December 31, 2015. The possibility for extending the deadline was revoked following the recent accident in Philadelphia. He said that 71% of railroads cannot meet the deadline and the cost for Rio Metro would be between \$30 million and \$50 million.

The Rail Runner typically does not have the situations which the mandate is meant to prevent.

Mr. Doyle and Dewey Cave recently travelled to Washington, DC for a meeting which, Mr. Doyle said, was quite positive.

If the Senate and the House agree, following discussions, the requests for an extension will be approved. Letters to John Thune (Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation) and to Speaker of the House John Boehner and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi were distributed to the Board members present. It is hoped that action will be taken to extend the deadline by the end of November.

Mr. Cave noted that the public needs to know that Rio Metro staff is doing all it can to assure the deadline is extended.

Mr. Benton asked about media releases and Mr. Doyle said that letters would be sent out in early November to providers should it be necessary.

Tab 6

**Rio Metro Visioning**

Mr. Doyle distributed the Long Term Strategic Vision document noting that it provides a great framework for the future.

Ms. Gibson thanked staff for their hard work and said she believes it is a great document. Chair Garduño and Mr. Tomita also had praise for the staff and consultants.

**Reports:**

- ABQ Ride – Mr. Rizzieri reported that a new traffic signal has been installed at the Alvarado Transit Center providing easier entrance and exit to the facility.
- North Central RTD – There was no report from the North Central RTD as Mr. Mortarillo was not present for the meeting.
- Rio Metro RTD – Terry Doyle, RMRTD Director, reported that he had attended the annual APTA (American Public Transportation Association) conference in San Francisco last week and that the Veterans Pass Program won a first place award.

**Adjournment**

The August 28, 2015 meeting of the Rio Metro Regional Transportation Board was adjourned by consensus at 1:00 p.m.

---

Rey Garduño, Chair  
Rio Metro Regional Transportation Board

ATTEST:

---

Dewey V. Cave, Executive Director



## TAB 3

### STAFF ANALYSIS OF R-15-10 RMRTD

#### **Requested Action**

Approving and Adopting the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision

#### **Reason for Request**

- RMRTD issued a RFP to Create a Long Term Strategic Vision for the Rio Metro Regional Transit District and to Assist with Vision Implementation (RMRTD Procurement #2014-01) on January 9, 2014.
- The scope of work in the RFP was developed by the RMRTD Visioning Ad-Hoc committee of the RMRTD Board of Directors and RMRTD Staff
- the RMRTD Board of Directors passed R-14-07 RMRTD Approving the award of RMRTD Procurement #2014-01, To Create a Long Term Strategic Vision for the RMRTD and to Assist with Strategic Vision Implementation to the Mercer Group on March 21, 2014
- The Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision has been developed through extensive stakeholder engagement working with the RMRTD Board of Directors, RMRTD Staff, RMRTD Customers and Community and Business Stakeholders and ABQRide management and staff
- the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision includes a framework of core themes supported by key strategies and implementation tactics that set clear goals and objectives for RMRTD
- the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision provides a transparent foundation for the RMRTD that will guide future decisions and the growth of the RMRTD.

#### **Review / Analysis**

Approving R-15-10 will Approve and Adopt the RMRTD Long Term Strategic Vision, directs staff to begin work on the priority implementation tactics identified in the plan and requires quarterly reporting on progress to the Board of Directors.



24 Directors, RMRTD Staff, RMRTD Customers and Community and Business Stakeholders and  
25 ABQRide management and staff; and

26 **WHEREAS**, the *Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision*  
27 includes a framework of core themes supported by key strategies and implementation tactics  
28 that set clear goals and objectives for RMRTD; and

29 **WHEREAS**, the *Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision*  
30 provides a transparent foundation for the RMRTD that will guide future decisions and the growth  
31 of the RMRTD.

32 **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIO METRO REGIONAL TRANSIT**  
33 **DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:**

- 34 1. The *Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision* attached hereto  
35 and dated November 2015 is approved and adopted Board of Directors.
- 36 2. RMRTD Staff is directed to begin work on priority implementation tactics identified in the  
37 *Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision*.
- 38 3. RMRTD Staff is directed to report progress on priority implementation tactics identified in  
39 the *Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long Term Strategic Vision* to the Board of  
40 Directors Quarterly.

41 **PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015 by the Board  
42 of Directors of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District.

---

Rey Garduño  
Chair  
RMRTD Board of Directors

ATTEST:

---

Dewey V. Cave  
Chief Executive Officer



NOVEMBER 2015



RIO METRO  
REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

# LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION



*Rio Metro would like to thank everyone who was involved in developing this Long-Term Strategic Vision Plan.*

---

## Acknowledgements

Rio Metro RTD would like to thank the following organizations and constituencies for their time and ideas in the development of this Long-Term Strategic Vision Plan:

### Transit Riders

### Community & Business Organizations:

- Adelante Development Center
- Belen MainStreet Partnership
- Greater Belen Chamber of Commerce
- National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)
- Rio Rancho Regional Chamber of Commerce
- Urban Land Institute (ULI)

### Public Agency Staff and Elected/Appointed Officials from:

- Rio Metro Regional Transit District (Rio Metro)
- Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG)
- ABQ RIDE
- City of Albuquerque
- City of Belen
- Town of Bernalillo
- Village of Bosque Farms
- Isleta Pueblo
- Village of Los Lunas
- North Central Regional Transit District
- Los Lunas Public Schools
- Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque
- Rio Communities
- City of Rio Rancho
- City of Socorro Transportation
- Sandoval County
- Bernalillo County
- Valencia County
- University of New Mexico (Main & Valencia Campuses)
- New Mexico Aging/Long Term Services
- New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT)
- New Mexico Public Health
- New Mexico Veterans Services

# CONTENTS

	<b>Executive Summary</b>	<b>iii</b>
	Why a Vision Plan Now?	iv
	How did Rio Metro Develop the Vision?	v
	The Vision	vii
<b>1</b>	<b>Who is Rio Metro?</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Enabling Legislation	2
	1.2 Governance Structure	3
	1.3 Mission Statement	4
	1.4 Existing Operations	5
	1.5 Major Milestones and Accomplishments to Date	6
	1.6 Current Initiatives and Ongoing Constraints	7
	1.7 Future Opportunities and Challenges	9
<b>2</b>	<b>Developing the Vision</b>	<b>15</b>
	2.1 Why this Vision Plan is Needed Now	16
	2.2 Project Goals	17
	2.3 Project Process	18
	2.4 What we Learned: Summary of Key Findings from White Papers	19
	2.5 What we Heard: Highlights from Stakeholder Outreach	23
<b>3</b>	<b>Our Vision</b>	<b>29</b>
	3.1 A Bold but Realistic Vision	30
	3.2 The Vision Framework	31
	3.3 Core Themes and Key Strategies	33
<b>4</b>	<b>4. Implementing Our Vision</b>	<b>39</b>
	4.1 Implementation Tactics	40
	4.2 Priority Implementation Tactics	41
	4.3 Performance Measurement System	44
<b>5</b>	<b>5. Additional Background Materials</b>	<b>51</b>
	Appendix A: Priority Implementation Tactics (Years 1-5)	53
	Appendix B: Future Phase Implementation Tactics	56

Letter from  
Board Chair  
To Be Placed  
Here

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

Why a Vision Plan Now?

How did Rio Metro Develop the Vision?

The Vision

---



*This Long-Term Strategic Vision Plan (hereafter “the Vision Plan” or “the plan”) presents a bold vision for Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD, hereafter “Rio Metro”) for the next decade and beyond. The plan will help Rio Metro prioritize investments, allocate resources, and guide implementation initiatives in a manner consistent with the organization’s goals. This Executive Summary provides an overview of the visioning process and the key recommendations from the Vision Plan.*

## Why a Vision Plan Now?

*“We need a vision of where Rio Metro RTD is heading and consensus on how to move things forward in this region.”*

*– Rio Metro Board Member*

---

### A History of Success

In the 10 years since Rio Metro was formed, the agency has accomplished much to be proud of, including: successfully launching and operating the New Mexico Rail Runner Express commuter rail; increasing bus transit service and funding levels for transit throughout its three-county service area; creating an integrated transit network extending over one hundred miles through New Mexico’s most populated areas; and generally providing more mobility choices to better meet the region’s transportation needs.

As a result of the efforts of Rio Metro and its implementation partners (including local communities and transit service providers such as ABQ RIDE), transit ridership has increased dramatically in Rio Metro service area over the past decade.

---

### Responding to Emerging Opportunities & Challenges

After accomplishing most of its founding goals during its first decade, Rio Metro’s leadership desired to create a strategic vision that could guide and focus its initiatives in the next decade and beyond.

There is a growing recognition among regional leaders that transit investments are critically important for preserving and strengthening the region’s quality of life.

Key opportunities at this time include: planning for a comprehensive regional transit services (including current planning for multiple bus rapid transit corridors), better integration of transit and land use (following the preferred growth scenario in the recently-adopted Futures 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan), and using transit to leverage economic development efforts.

Another key opportunity is more effectively organizing the transit activities of the region’s two primary providers—Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE. It should be noted that while the focus of the visioning process was Rio Metro planning and operations, ABQ RIDE was involved in the development of the Vision Plan, including the Vision Framework and Implementation Approach. As a result, the Vision Plan can inform ABQ RIDE planning and operations; and implementation of the Vision Plan will continue to engage ABQ RIDE on achieving shared goals.

In addition, the region that Rio Metro serves faces many challenges, including: growing traffic congestion at constrained bottlenecks, changing demographics and market preferences, and the need for all organizations to support sustainable economic development in the region. By building on its past successes, while also recognizing constraints in existing resources, Rio Metro's leadership believes that the agency can and should play an expanded role in addressing these regional challenges.

# How did Rio Metro Develop the Vision?



*As part of the visioning process, Rio Metro convened diverse stakeholders – including transit riders – to provide guidance to Rio Metro's leadership and technical staff about stakeholder priorities for investing limited resources.*

---

## Goals for the Visioning Process

In order to address these emerging opportunities and challenges, Rio Metro undertook a strategic visioning process. A key goal for the strategic visioning process was to convene Rio Metro's leadership, customers, and partners to develop an agreed-upon Vision Framework that could provide ongoing guidance to staff on stakeholder priorities for how to invest limited agency resources. Specifically, Rio Metro's leadership established the following five goals for the project:

1. Develop a **bold vision** for regional transit.
2. Determine **Rio Metro's role** in achieving that vision and the role of key implementation partners like ABQ RIDE.
3. Build **broad-based support** for the vision.
4. Identify **new tools** to fund and implement the vision.
5. Begin **phased implementation** of the vision.

These project goals informed the development of this Vision Plan at every step of the project.

---

## Inputs to the Visioning Process

The inputs to the visioning consisted of extensive technical assessments and ongoing stakeholder engagement as summarized below.

### Technical Assessments

Technical assessments were conducted to establish a firm foundation for the visioning process. These included: a) review of Rio Metro's peer transit agencies, b) an analysis of Rio Metro's operations and organization, and c) an overview of the economic development potential of transit in Rio Metro service area.

### Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement

Ongoing stakeholder input was an integral part of the visioning process. Key stakeholders engaged included Rio Metro's Board, staff, customers, implementation partners like ABQ RIDE, and other community and business stakeholders. During the year-long visioning process, Rio Metro gathered input from nearly 250 stakeholders at approximately two dozen stakeholder meetings, staff workshops, widely-promoted community meetings that were open to the public, and publicly-noticed Board meetings. Stakeholder engagement opportunities included:

- **Rio Metro Board:** All Board members were given the opportunity to be interviewed individually at the beginning of the project. Several presentations were given to the Board to understand Board priorities. A Board Visioning Workshop was held to develop a Vision Framework (described below), and the Board was given regular updates and opportunity for input at monthly Board meetings.
- **Rio Metro Staff:** Rio Metro planning, operations, and administrative staff were engaged throughout the visioning process, including kick-off meetings, best practice presentations, and at technical work sessions to vet and refine the implementation approach.
- **Rio Metro Customers and Community and Business Stakeholders:** Nearly a dozen stakeholder outreach meetings as well as widely-promoted community meetings that were open to the public were held across the Rio Metro service area. These were attended by stakeholders representing numerous local communities and diverse perspectives in Rio Metro's service area.
- **ABQ RIDE:** ABQ RIDE management and staff were involved at critical steps of the visioning process. Engagement with ABQ RIDE included: kick-off meetings with management and senior staff, a half-day workshop with management and staff to develop the Vision Framework, and a half-day "plan review" meeting (with a focus on defining early collaboration opportunities between Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE and laying the groundwork for enhanced cooperation and partnerships during implementation of the Vision Plan).

# The Vision

---

## New Mission and Vision Statements

To better reflect the clear direction set out in the Vision Framework, Rio Metro has also revised its existing Mission Statement and developed a new Vision Statement. The revised Mission Statement and Vision Statement are summarized below, and both are meant to be a succinct and memorable distillation of the overall Vision Framework:

***Our Mission:** Rio Metro collaborates to provide safe, accessible, efficient, and innovative transportation services for the benefit of our diverse local communities and the regional economy.*

***Our Vision:** Rio Metro is a leader moving our region forward, connecting our diverse residents and communities, and supporting sustainable prosperity.*

---

## Vision Framework

Taking account of the key findings from the technical assessments and stakeholder engagement meetings, the Board approved a Vision Framework for the agency. The Vision Framework consists of six Core Themes supported by three Key Strategies to define the desired outcomes for that theme, as presented below:



### **Core Theme 1: Exceptional Customer Experience** - *Our customers come first in all we do.*

- **Key Strategy 1.1:** Make transit trips as convenient and time-competitive as possible with auto trips.
- **Key Strategy 1.2:** Focus on safety, security, attractiveness, cleanliness, comfort, and tailored amenities both on vehicles and at stops/stations.
- **Key Strategy 1.3:** Improve schedules, service information, and transit awareness through coordination with other transit providers to make using transit as easy as possible.



### **Core Theme 2: Transformative Regional Services** - *We provide a range of services to meet our region's diverse needs.*

- **Key Strategy 2.1:** Expand “regional priority network” to connect key centers and corridors, including added Rail Runner service.
- **Key Strategy 2.2:** Expand local circulators to connect the regional network with residential areas and smaller/rural communities.
- **Key Strategy 2.3:** Support regional transportation demand management (TDM) programs, bicycle/pedestrian, and first/last mile programs to improve access to fixed-route transit.



### **Core Theme 3: Strong Transit-Centered Communities - *Our services help shape our communities for the better.***

- **Key Strategy 3.1:** Leverage the existing Memorandum of Agreement relationship with MRCOG to better integrate regional transit planning with local land use planning / design.
- **Key Strategy 3.2:** Increase support for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in areas well-served by transit.
- **Key Strategy 3.3:** Promote better pedestrian and bicycle connections to the regional transit system to improve public health outcomes, decrease social / economic isolation, and reduce household transportation costs.



### **Core Theme 4: Sound Financial Stewardship - *We are good stewards of the public resources entrusted to us.***

- **Key Strategy 4.1:** Pursue efficiency gains across all modes (rail, bus, and demand-response service).
- **Key Strategy 4.2:** Seek new and expanded revenue sources (including local & regional, state & federal, and public-private partnerships) to diversify the funding base and provide a stable funding source for Vision Plan implementation.
- **Key Strategy 4.3:** Pursue most the cost-effective agency structure, potentially including independence from MRCOG, acquisition of capital assets from NMDOT, and enhanced coordination/consolidation with ABQ RIDE.



### **Core Theme 5: Innovative Programs & Partnerships - *We think outside the box and seek collaboration always.***

- **Key Strategy 5.1:** Integrate transit investments with the regional economic development strategy.
- **Key Strategy 5.2:** Pursue public-public partnerships (including school districts and UNM/CNM) to offer free/discounted transit passes, joint marketing, and education.
- **Key Strategy 5.3:** Pursue public-private partnerships (including major employers) to fund targeted service to employment centers, transit benefits to employees, and joint marketing.



### **Core Theme 6: Industry-Leading Knowledge & Practice - *Our people take pride in leading the region forward.***

- **Key Strategy 6.1:** Conduct orientation and on-going professional development for staff and Board, including in-person visits with peer agencies.
- **Key Strategy 6.2:** Broaden the stakeholder perspectives provided to Rio Metro leadership and create opportunities for ongoing engagement and leadership development.
- **Key Strategy 6.3:** Become a resource for local jurisdictions to support best practice pilot programs, staff training, and implementation of Vision Plan priorities.

Combined, the Core Themes and Key Strategies in the Vision Framework provide clear direction to Rio Metro Board, staff, customers, and partners on Rio Metro's priority goals and desired outcomes.

---

## Implementation Tactics

Based on the Vision Framework developed and vetted by the Rio Metro Board and key stakeholders, Rio Metro technical staff developed a list of potential Implementation Tactics to achieve the Vision Framework. In total, there are 67 potential Implementation Tactics that might be pursued over the next 20 years (although progress should be measured periodically and the Vision Plan updated every 5 years or so). Twenty-six of those are Priority Implementation Tactics that could be pursued as immediate next steps in the next 5 years. Appendices A and B shows all the Implementation Tactics organized by which of the Core Themes and Key Strategies they support: Appendix A shows Priority Implementation Tactics as described below and Appendix B shows Future Phase Implementation Tactics.

---

## Priority Implementation Tactics

To help provide focus to near-term implementation efforts in the first five years after the Vision Plan is adopted, Rio Metro technical staff identified 26 Priority Implementation Tactics that could be pursued as immediate next steps in the next 5 years. Priority Implementation Tactics are those that: a) can be accomplished in the near-term within existing resources; b) must be accomplished first in order to provide a foundation necessary to achieve other Implementation Tactics in the Vision Plan, and/or; c) must begin now in order to build the momentum needed to address more complex challenges facing the region and achieve the longer-term vision. The following list is illustrative of the Priority Implementation Tactics Rio Metro staff are directed to pursue, in collaboration with public-sector and private-sector partners, in order to achieve the Vision Framework in a timely and cost-effective manner:



- **Tactic Group: Improve perceived safety, security, and cleanliness of the regional transit system.** Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:
  - **Tactic:** Look for cost-share partners to increase funding for security, cleaning, and maintenance of transit vehicles, bus stops, and train stations.
  - **Tactic:** Create a program for passenger reporting of safety and maintenance issues with rapid response by Rio Metro.
  - **Tactic:** Expand security / ambassador presence, including coordination with other law enforcement agencies and potential volunteer public safety / ambassador program.



▪ **Tactic Group: Develop a Regional Transit Network and Service Plan.** Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Identify and pursue incremental improvements to existing rail and bus service that respond to service needs and have potential funding sources.
- **Tactic:** Develop a tiered service concept and map that illustrates the interconnected regional and local network.
- **Tactic:** Define Rio Metro's role in supporting operations of the planned regional Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network.
- **Tactic:** Conduct an assessment of new mobility technologies/services that may disrupt the traditional transit agency business model (e.g. Uber, self-driving cars, etc.).
- **Tactic:** Identify implementation costs and funding sources.



▪ **Tactic Group: Use regional transit to promote economic development.**

Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Advocate for the value of regional transit to key implementation partners including local jurisdictions, business community, etc.
- **Tactic:** Communicate, collaborate, and partner with local and regional economic development agencies/organizations so that future economic development investments are focused within 1/2 mile high-capacity transit nodes and corridors.
- **Tactic:** Partner with MPO/RPO to catalyze more TOD in the region, including: education/capacity building, partnerships with local communities and institutions like UNM, grant programs, updating the existing assessment of TOD potential of parcels that are currently (or will soon be) well-served by high-capacity transit.
- **Tactic:** Form partnerships with local jurisdictions and the private sector to get potential redevelopment sites and districts "TOD-ready" with transit-supportive infrastructure (sidewalks, traffic calming, etc.).



▪ **Tactic Group: Become an industry-leading transit agency.** Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Formalize orientation and professional development programs for staff and Board.
- **Tactic:** Establish in-house professional development and training programs with staff participation required per individual professional development plans.
- **Tactic:** Support efforts to form a regional transit advocacy non-profit organization.



- **Tactic Group: Evaluate and implement cost-effectiveness measures.** Rio Metro staff shall pursue as Priority Implementation Tactics such as:
  - **Tactic:** Conduct a top-to-bottom review of Rio Metro’s entire operations to identify opportunities for efficiency gains including administrative costs, services/operations costs, and overhead costs (GRT payments, etc.).
  - **Tactic:** Enhance the identity of Rio Metro as an operating agency which functions in collaboration with MRCOG, while establishing a timeline for Rio Metro to transition to independence from MRCOG.
  - **Tactic:** Conduct a financial and organizational study of pros and cons of acquisition of capital assets from NMDOT.
  - **Tactic:** Conduct a consolidation feasibility study to be jointly funded with ABQ RIDE, while simultaneously identifying and pursuing near-term opportunities for enhanced collaboration (e.g. the development of a single schedule/map, joint marketing efforts, a single fare payment method, and/or a unified brand in the form of one shared name and logo).



- **Tactic Group: Evaluate and pursue new and expanded funding resources.** Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:
  - **Tactic:** Study the feasibility of waiving of existing annual Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) payments on purchased transportation contracts (e.g. Rail Runner).
  - **Tactic:** Conduct a fare study analyzing the costs/benefits of fare structure, with particular emphasis on a) whether the costs of charging passenger fares outweigh the value of farebox revenue received and b) if Rio Metro should transition to a “fare-free” transit model similar to North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD).
  - **Tactic:** Explore private-sector revenue sources such as sponsorship, advertising, and naming rights.
  - **Tactic:** Investigate the feasibility and timing of a GRT increase and other revenue sources dedicated to Rio Metro operations.
  - **Tactic:** Develop financial model with Department of Tax and Revenue to establish baseline return on investment (ROI) for future transit expenditures per state law regarding tax increment districts (TIDs) and tax increment finance (TIF).
  - **Tactic:** Develop a FTA grant program of regional capital projects.



- **Tactic: Continue ongoing stakeholder engagement.** Rio Metro shall also pursue ongoing stakeholder engagement as needed to support all of the Priority Implementation Tactics.

It should be emphasized this is an *illustrative* list of Priority Implementation Tactics that could (and likely will) change somewhat as needed to respond to new opportunities and adapt to new information.

Page intentionally left blank.

# 1. WHO IS RIO METRO?

- 
- 1.1 Enabling Legislation
  - 1.2 Governance Structure
  - 1.3 Mission Statement
  - 1.4 Existing Operations
  - 1.5 Major Milestones and Accomplishments to Date
  - 1.6 Current Initiatives and Ongoing Constraints
  - 1.7 Future Opportunities and Challenges
- 



# 1.1 ENABLING LEGISLATION

*“We’ve accomplished a lot in our short history. But we’ve reached a point where we are operating as the sum of our inherited parts. I would like for us to work better with our partners to become [...] the new face of transit in the region.”*

*– Rio Metro Staffer*

Rio Metro is the primary regional transit service provider for the central New Mexico region. The New Mexico state legislature passed the New Mexico Regional Transit District Act in 2003. This “enabling legislation” authorized the creation of regional transit districts in each region of the state in order to:

- A. *Serve the public by providing for the creation of regional networks of safe and efficient public transit services;*
- B. *Allow multijurisdictional public transit systems to reduce the congestion of single-occupant motor vehicle traffic by providing transportation options for residents;*
- C. *Decrease automobile accidents by reducing traffic congestion on freeways and streets;*
- D. *Reduce noise and air pollution produced by motor vehicles;*
- E. *Prolong and extend the life of New Mexico’s existing roadways by easing the traffic burden;*
- F. *Provide residents with a choice of transportation alternatives so that seniors, youth, low income and mobility-impaired residents and others unable to drive or afford motor vehicles continue to have full access to the goods, services, jobs and activities of the community;*
- G. *Improve the New Mexico economy by increasing workforce and citizen access to education and higher paying jobs; and*
- H. *Prolong and extend petroleum resources.*

In 2005 Rio Metro was created, at that point named Mid-Region Transit District. It should be noted that Rio Metro’s Long-Term Strategic Vision Plan was developed to help the agency continue to fulfill the legislature’s direction as summarized in the above “purpose statements” from the 2003 *Regional Transit District Act*.

## 1.2 GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Rio Metro's governance structure is defined in its founding charter. The 19-member governing Board is composed of at least one Director from each governmental unit that is a member of Rio Metro. The number of directors for each of these governmental units is determined by population, except that a governmental unit cannot have a majority of membership on the Board. Each governmental unit appoints, as determined by each member government, an elected official(s) as a Director and may also appoint a designee(s) for this elected official(s) as an Alternate Director. The Board is reconstituted in the year following each official federal census. The term of service for each Director and Alternate Director, if any, is for a minimum of one year.

## 1.3 MISSION STATEMENT

Rio Metro's existing Mission Statement is shown below:

*The Mission of Rio Metro Regional Transit District is to manage a regional, integrated, multimodal public transportation network that is fiscally responsible, innovative, and efficient. Rio Metro strives to deliver service that is responsive to public need, affordable, convenient, and reliable, while providing a safe and secure atmosphere for passengers and employees. Through our mission, Rio Metro Regional Transit District Board of Directors and employees uphold a commitment to establish, maintain, and continually improve public transportation for the benefit of our passengers, communities, and the environment.*

Doing our part to provide exceptional service means:

- Keeping you informed on the latest news.
- Holding public meetings.
- Publishing budgets, research and reports.
- Providing transportation that is accessible to all of our customers.
- Establishing community partnerships.

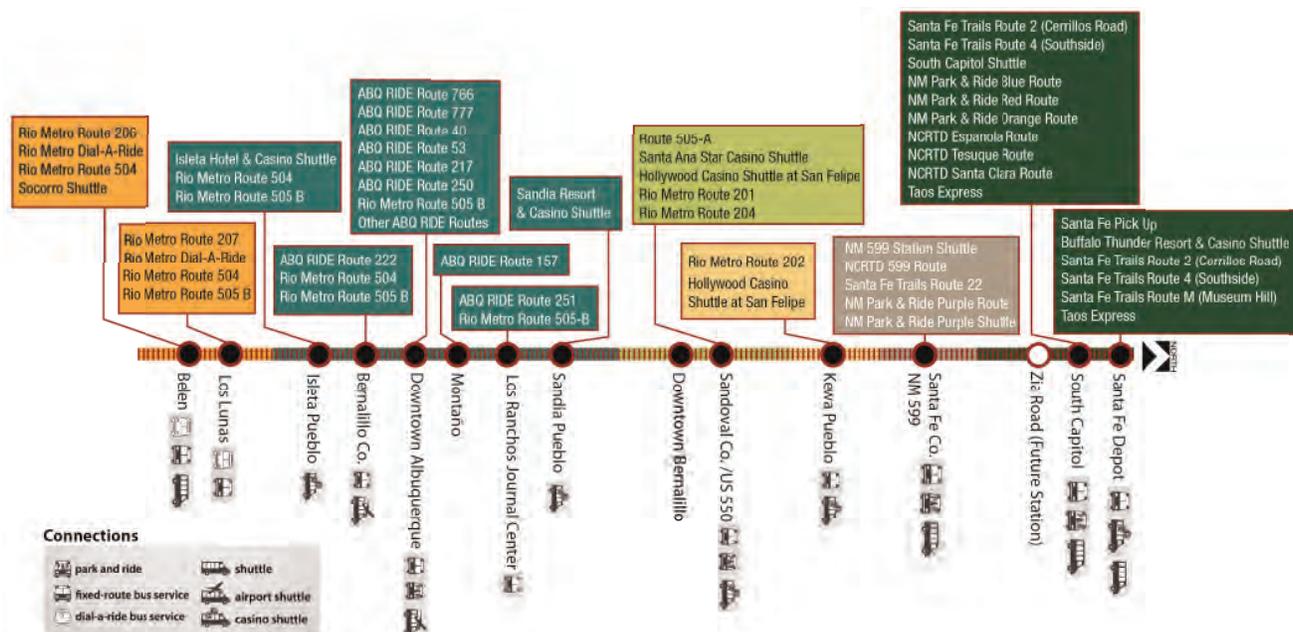
Based on the input received as part of the visioning process, the Mission Statement has been updated and a Vision Statement has been developed; both are described in Section 3.3.

# 1.4 EXISTING OPERATIONS

Rio Metro offers transit service in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Belen, Bernalillo, Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, Bosque Farms, Los Lunas, and Corrales in Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties, providing commuter bus and regional commuter rail service. The rail service (*Rail Runner*) is provided for the longer, regional travel trips between outlying communities and the urban destinations of Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Rio Metro provides bus and Dial-a-Ride services in Sandoval, Valencia, and Bernalillo counties, as well.

Rio Metro also financially contributes to ABQ RIDE for urban transit service but leaves operational decisions largely to the discretion of ABQ RIDE. Rio Metro also provides select service in the region's rural communities.

It should be noted that Rail Runner assets are largely owned by NMDOT, not Rio Metro. These assets include track, rolling stock, stations, and parking facilities. A Memorandum of Agreement between the two agencies defines the rights and obligations of each for the use of these assets by Rio Metro.



Rio Metro and its partners provide a diverse portfolio of transit services, including Rail Runner commuter rail service and connecting bus services that serve both the general public and specific markets.

# 1.5 MAJOR MILESTONES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE



*In its short history, Rio Metro and its partners have accomplished much to be proud of, including the creation of a fully accessible transportation system that connects people of all ages and backgrounds to employment and educational opportunities throughout the region.*

Even as a young agency, Rio Metro has accomplished much the region can be proud of, including:

- Providing 9.5 million passenger trips and 350 million miles of passenger travel, to date.
- Providing accessible transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities residing in the Albuquerque Metro area, Rio Rancho, Los Lunas and Belen. All Rio Metro trains, stations and buses meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements.
- Consolidating several small transit agencies in Valencia and Sandoval counties.
- Providing whole or partial funding to some ABQ RIDE routes of regional significance, enabling ABQ RIDE to extend its services to the Rail Runner and Rio Rancho.
- Providing bus and Dial-a-Ride services in Sandoval, Valencia and Bernalillo counties.
- Creating partnerships with other transit providers resulting in more than 60 connections to other transit services.
- Improvements to the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program, including the use of transit passes, improved overall program access, and the development of key partnerships, increasing service response and participation.
- Effective marketing and transportation demand management (TDM) efforts to promote the Rail Runner and Rio Metro “brands” and services, such as the popular Rail Runner electronic newsletter, the “Dump the Pump” campaign, the award winning Smart Business Partnership Program, and new Rio Metro branding, all creating a recognizable image for the agency and a unified identity for all Rio Metro services.
- Encouraging the use of alternative modes of transportation in order to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality in central New Mexico.
- The Smart Business Partnership Program which provides employers from Belen to Santa Fe with resources, tools and incentives to reduce the use of single-occupant vehicles and create awareness of public transportation among employees.

These accomplishments instill confidence, as the agency has done so much with so little, and is worthy of taking regional transit services to the next level.

# 1.6 CURRENT INITIATIVES AND ONGOING CONSTRAINTS

---

## Current Initiatives

In addition to Rio Metro's ongoing transit operations and supporting functions (marketing, financial, etc.), Rio Metro is also currently involved in a number of regional transit initiatives, including:

- Regional BRT planning;
- Service improvement planning throughout the three-county service area; and
- Partnering with local communities on station area plans.

---

## Ongoing Constraints

### Financial

Like many local governments, Rio Metro is faced with budgetary constraints which cause them to be prudent in how their limited financial resources are spent. Consequently, the budget is especially tight for operation and maintenance of the Rail Runner. In addition, Rio Metro faces other budgetary challenges, including:

- A lack of capital to match federal grants, e.g. the UNM / CNM project – Rio Metro may have a difficult time convincing the federal government they have enough matching funds, which could jeopardize future federal grant funding.
- Unfunded federal mandates that are on the horizon, such as Positive Train Control. While the deadline for implementation has been extended until December 31, 2018, this could require a capital outlay of an estimated \$30 – 50 million, and an additional \$250,000 to \$500,000 annually to operate and maintain the system.

### Asset Ownership

Rio Metro has no substantial capital assets to speak of. NMDOT owns all of the existing right-of-way, as well as the capital equipment (trains). Rio Metro currently owns only about 1½ acres of land. This could limit Rio Metro's ability to pursue debt financing (with no collateral, other than GRT revenue stream, to pledge as security). NMDOT has indicated they want to sell the capital equipment and assets. Rio Metro could improve their financial position if they accept the capital assets as a gift from the state.

## Recent Changes in Customer Satisfaction Levels

Due to financial constraints, Rio Metro faces operational constraints which limit the amount of service that can be provided. The gap between the amount of service that can be provided and increasing customer demand for more service emerges in a number of different venues. For example, every two years, Rio Metro conducts extensive surveys of both their riding and non-riding customers. These surveys cover such topics as demographics, rider information, schedules, ticketing, customer service, perks, and partnerships. Historically, Rio Metro has received high marks in most of these categories. But recent dips in the customer satisfaction numbers (in accordance with the most recent survey, conducted in spring, 2015), may be largely due to budget constraints. The most common complaint was about schedule. Customers generally indicated they would like to see more frequency, reduced dwell times, more evening trains, more weekend trains, and fewer maintenance delays. As noted above, existing budget constraints can create challenges when attempting to accommodate customer demand. The positive “take away” from these surveys is that customers like the transit services provided by Rio Metro and would like to see more of them.

# 1.7 FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

---

## Futures 2040 Plan

Demand for mass transit is growing at the national level, and the Albuquerque region is a part of that trend. Consequently, the staff of MRCOG has embarked upon an extensive planning process and created the *Futures 2040 Plan*. This study stresses the importance of the role transportation plays in the growth of the region. Listed below are some of the key findings of the plan:

- Future population growth will more than double in the urbanized areas of New Mexico.
- Increased travel demands will occur as a result.
- Miles traveled will increase, hours on the roads will increase, and speeds will decrease.
- Congestion at the river crossings will only grow worse.
- Historical development patterns – we must create a better mix of land uses and improved jobs/housing balance.
- Expanded transit in key locations and activity centers will be critical.
- Transit will improve regional mobility and the economy.
- We must re-think our future and shift our priorities – now is the time to act.

---

## ART Corridor - Transit for Our Future

The City of Albuquerque is looking at providing bus rapid transit service along Central Avenue. This project, called Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART), will enhance transit service along this important east-west corridor. The initial ART would be located along Central Avenue, where many of Albuquerque's most important destinations are located. The three bus routes currently on Central Avenue carry 42% of all ridership, while using only 26% of resources. Central Avenue is generally considered to have tremendous transit-oriented (economic) development opportunity for the city.

Other efforts underway that are dedicated to improving transportation in the metro area include the City of Albuquerque and other local partners like Rio Metro, the Mid-Region Council of Governments and local stakeholders, identifying a potential second ART route that could link the Central Avenue area with a University Blvd. (north/south) corridor bus rapid transit system. ART could be an exciting part of Albuquerque's future.

ART combines many features of rail transit with the flexibility of buses. ART is the most cost-effective technology for the City of Albuquerque's current population and future ridership estimates. Some key elements of ART include:

- Dedicated road, lane or mixed traffic route
- Frequent service
- Prioritized signaling at intersections
- Pre-boarding ticketing
- Level boarding
- Stops that are anywhere from 1/4 to 1/2 mile or more apart

ART will provide quick and efficient bus service with increased dependability and timeliness. ART can reduce dwell time (how long the bus is standing still to pick up passengers) which greatly improves service speed. This combined with advanced signal timing and a dedicated lane allows the ART to move more easily through city traffic. ART, while designed to look and operate like trains, is a considerably less costly alternative to light rail.



*Proposed plans for Albuquerque Rapid Transit (ART) call for providing improved transit service that combines many features of rail with the flexibility of buses while simultaneously enhancing safety and amenity for all other modes of travel. (Source: ABQ RIDE ART website)*

## Land Use Challenges and Jobs/Housing Imbalance

While gathering input during the visioning process from a variety of stakeholders representing many interests, it became increasingly clear that land use policies, regulations, and philosophies varied greatly throughout the Albuquerque Metro area. Consistent with the growth patterns in many cities in the Southwest, the story of Albuquerque is primarily one of urban sprawl. These predominant growth patterns make it more and more difficult to provide effective and efficient governmental services to the residents and businesses living in the suburban areas and in the hinterlands of the city. Transportation services are no exception. The cost of providing transportation services becomes increasingly expensive, as vehicles must travel greater distances to serve more sparsely populated areas, away from the city core.

Creating generally consistent and transit-friendly land use regulations among the multiple jurisdictions in Rio Metro service area will present itself as a significant challenge going forward. The current transit initiatives being undertaken by the City of Albuquerque (including ART), along with the Integrated Development Ordinance (IDO) project that is updating and simplifying the City’s land use regulations, are both promising initiatives to create conditions for more transit-oriented development to reduce traffic congestion and low-density sprawl that undermine the cost-effectiveness of transit service. To maximize regional impacts of these initiatives, similar efforts will need to be taken by other jurisdictions in the region to adopt more progressive land-use regulations that encourage more compact development and incentives for transit-oriented development.

Another consistent theme that has emerged is the growing imbalance between housing availability (and affordability) and job centers. Generally, the majority of housing is available on the west side of the Rio Grande Valley while the job centers are located primarily on the east side of the valley. This creates a “commuting culture” that results in congestion, infrastructure degradation, poor air quality, and bottlenecks at the River crossings (see below). The costs of creating the infrastructure to accommodate this growing imbalance between housing and jobs will present itself as a significant financial challenge for local governing officials. Even if this challenge were overcome, the resulting air and noise pollution from the increased traffic will significantly decrease the quality of life in the metropolitan area.

---

## Congested Bridge Crossings

With the growing imbalance between jobs and available housing, more and more traffic will be crossing the Rio Grande, adding to the existing congestion problem at the few crossings that currently exist. Constructing additional lanes and wider bridges will likely be cost-prohibitive, while only addressing the congestion problems for the short-term. Consequently, mass transit presents itself as a more cost effective solution (refer to *Futures 2040 Plan*).



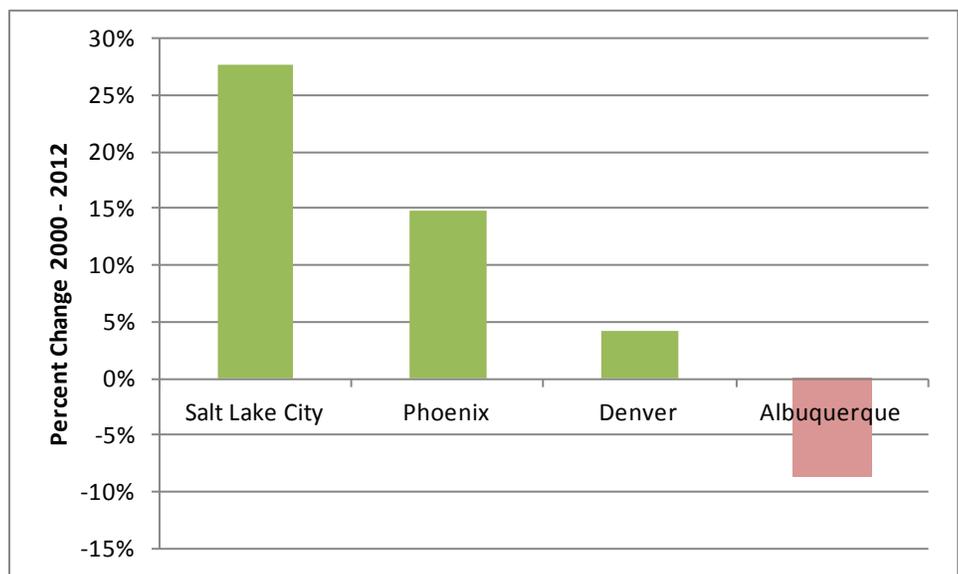
*Rio Metro is uniquely positioned to help its partner communities cost-effectively address traffic congestion that undermines economic growth and quality of life.*

---

## Economic Development

Economic development has been at the forefront of local government agendas since 2008. If Albuquerque and the surrounding areas are going to be successful in their economic development initiatives, they will need to present themselves as forward-thinking, well-educated, clean, safe, and technologically-advanced communities. The area has most of the components to attract desirable jobs, including: excellent higher education institutions, a major airport, commuter rail, outstanding recreational opportunities, great weather, lower taxes, and reasonable housing opportunities. The two components that can be further developed would be improved land use practices and an effective and efficient multimodal transportation system that includes improved regional transit. Combined, these factors would make a formidable statement to businesses and industries interested in locating to New Mexico.

Frequent, convenient, and reliable public transit is increasingly seen as a critical component of a high quality of life, and is one of the factors that many workers – and especially more educated and highly skilled workers – consider in determining where to locate. In recent years concerns have been expressed that the Albuquerque region might be experiencing a “brain drain,” with young educated people leaving the region instead of staying and contributing to the economy. The research clearly shows that overall employment growth generally and in “knowledge-based industries” specifically is not occurring at the same pace in the greater Albuquerque region as other regions in the Intermountain West, including Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, Phoenix and Denver. This likely reflects in part the changing location preferences of educated workers. To put it simply: it may be challenging for the region to create the conditions necessary for sustainable economic growth without investing in the kinds of amenities that educated, skilled workers demand, and transit is typically included on that list of amenities.



*Compared to its aspirational peer regions in the Mountain West and Southwest, the Rio Metro region lags behind in employment growth in knowledge-based industries. (Source: US Census County Business Patterns, 2000 – 2012)*

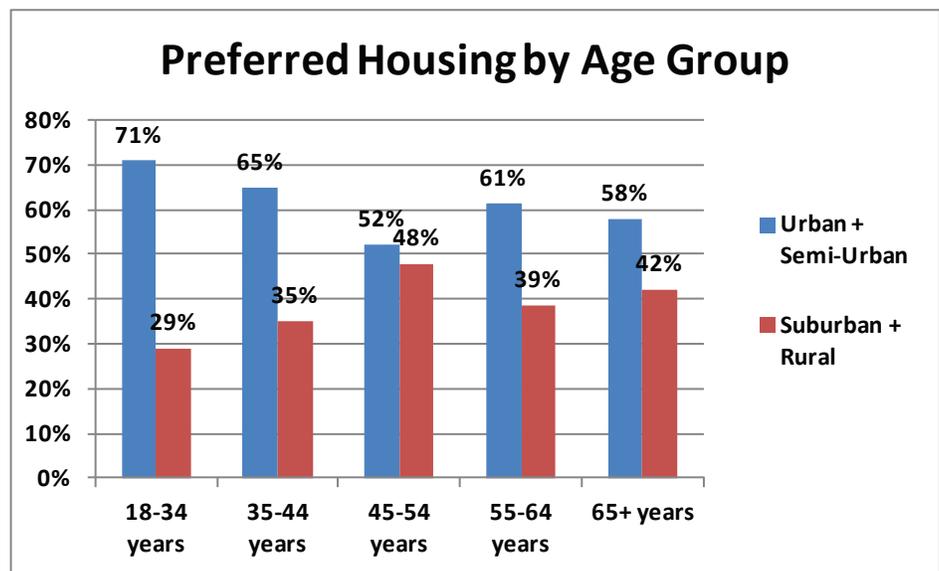
---

## Changing Demographics

Changing demographics – and the associated changes in market preferences – are affecting Rio Metro service area in the same way that they are affecting the rest of the country. Most notably, these include:

- *Aging of the baby boomers.* “Empty nesters” and other baby boomers generally exhibit preferences for smaller homes. As baby boomers are no longer willing or become unable to drive, they are increasingly leaving housing in auto-dependent areas and choosing housing in areas with better mobility choices.
- *Emergence of the millennials.* Millennials generally exhibit a preference for living and working in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, and generally accept smaller homes in exchange for shorter commutes. Millennials also have the lowest rates of obtaining drivers’ licenses and auto ownership compared to recent generations, generally preferring other modes (transit, walking, biking, taxis/shared cars) over driving alone.

Each of these demographic changes impacts Rio Metro’s operations in different ways, but taken together suggest a) increasingly strong demand for Rio Metro’s services in the future and b) the need for communities in Rio Metro’s service area to adapt their land use policies and transportation investments to support Rio Metro’s ability to provide cost-effective transit service (and other mobility options) equitably throughout the region.

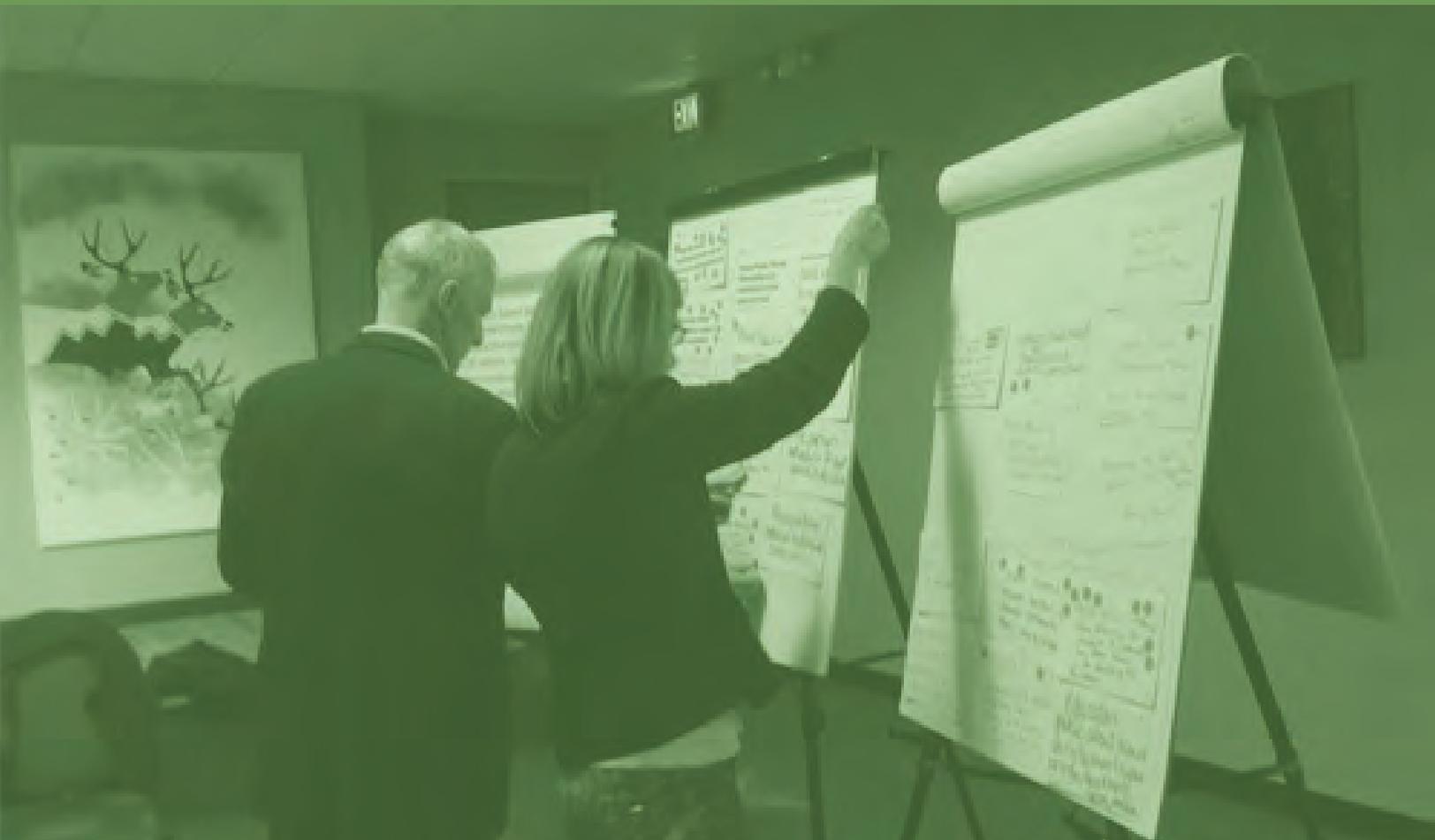


*Younger and older Rio Metro customers generally exhibit a preference for more urban housing located in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods (Source: Rio Metro 2013 Biennial Rider Survey).*

Page intentionally left blank.

# 2. DEVELOPING THE VISION

- 
- 2.1 Why this Vision Plan is Needed Now
  - 2.2 Project Goals
  - 2.3 Project Process
  - 2.4 What we Learned:  
Summary of Key Findings from White Papers
  - 2.5 What we Heard:  
Highlights from Stakeholder Outreach
- 



## 2.1 WHY THIS VISION PLAN IS NEEDED NOW

*“We hear about our differences all the time. But for all our region’s diversity across urban, suburban, rural, and tribal areas, it is still essential that we work together for the benefit of all our communities. Improving regional transit is a great place to start, because transit not only connects us to needed economic opportunities and services. It also directly connects our communities to each other so we’re working as one region.”*

– Rio Metro Rider

As discussed in Section 1.5 and 1.6, there are a number of current and future challenges and opportunities facing the region. Now that Rio Metro has largely achieved its founding mission and goals, the agency is well-positioned to be a regional leader in leveraging regional opportunities and responding to regional challenges. Indeed, stakeholders in the visioning process noted repeatedly that Rio Metro and its key partner ABQ RIDE are critically important to the future success of the region, noting the following key benefits of expanded regional transit:

- Relieving traffic bottlenecks on roadways and bridges;
- Creating more compact land use patterns;
- Reducing public infrastructure costs;
- Reducing household transportation costs;
- Providing access to school / work opportunities;
- Supporting sustainable economic development;
- Enhancing environmental quality;
- Responding to changing demographics / preferences including aging baby boomers and millennials; and
- Reversing the regional “brain drain” trend, in order to create a “brain gain.”

The consequences of not maintaining and expanding the regional transit system would be dire for the future economic health and quality of life in our region. For example, based on data from the Futures 2040 Regional Transportation Plan as well as other regional planning efforts, recent trends in land use patterns in the Albuquerque region are leading to longer commutes and greater traffic congestion, with residents increasingly locating west of the Rio Grande and employment continuing to cluster on the east side of the river. Without changes to land use patterns, more travel options including transit service, regional congestion and commute time are projected to worsen significantly as a result. In fact, the preliminary modeling of preferred and alternative scenarios in the Futures 2040 plan suggests that significant investment in increased transit service will be required to avoid capital costs for roadway and bridge expansions that the region cannot afford.

## 2.2 PROJECT GOALS

Based on the current and future trends affecting regional transit in the region, the Board and staff undertook a strategic visioning process with the following five goals:

1. Develop a **bold vision** for regional transit.
2. Determine **Rio Metro's role** in achieving that vision, and the role of implementation partners like ABQ RIDE.
3. Build **broad-based support** for the vision.
4. Identify **new tools** to fund and implement the vision.
5. Begin **phased implementation** of the vision.

These project goals informed the development of this Vision Plan at every step of the project.

## 2.3 PROJECT PROCESS



*Nearly 250 stakeholders were engaged in the visioning process.*

To achieve the goals above, this Vision Plan was developed over a year-long, intensive process that consisted of both rigorous technical assessment and inclusive engagement with Board, staff, riders, implementation partners, and other key stakeholders. Below are the key elements of the visioning process:

- **Technical assessments to establish a firm foundation for the visioning process.** These included a review of Rio Metro’s peer transit agencies, an analysis of Rio Metro’s operations and organization, and an overview of the economic development potential of transit in Rio Metro service area. See Section 2.4 for a summary of findings from the technical assessment white papers.
- **Extensive input from Rio Metro staff, customers, implementation partners, and other community and business stakeholders.** Approximately two dozen stakeholder outreach meetings, staff workshops, and publicly-noticed Board meetings were held across Rio Metro service area. In addition, widely-promoted public meetings were held in each of the three counties that Rio Metro serves. These in-person stakeholder engagement opportunities were attended by nearly 250 individuals representing diverse perspectives. In addition to these in-person stakeholder engagement opportunities, a project website was created to educate stakeholder and solicit input, and Rio Metro marketing staff promoted the project and input opportunities through its monthly newsletters and social media channels (e.g. Twitter, FaceBook, and LinkedIn). See Section 2.5 for a summary of stakeholder input.
- **Sustained engagement with ABQ RIDE management and staff at every step of the visioning process.** Engagement with ABQ RIDE included: kick-off meetings with management and senior staff, a half-day workshop held with management and staff to develop Vision Framework, and a half-day “plan review” meeting which focused on defining early collaboration opportunities between Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE and laying the groundwork for enhanced cooperation and partnerships during the implementation of the Vision Plan. See Section 2.5 for a summary of stakeholder input.
- **Numerous interactive work sessions with the Board.**
  - All Board members were given the opportunity to be interviewed individually at the beginning of the project.
  - Three “Listening Session” presentations and conversations were conducted at regularly scheduled Board meetings to understand Board priorities and best practices from other regional transit agencies.
  - A half-day, off-site Visioning Workshop was held to develop the Vision Framework consisting of six Core Themes and 18 Key Strategies. See Chapter 3 for full details on the Vision Framework.
- **Rio Metro staff development of a phased Implementation Approach,** including 26 Priority Implementation Initiatives and 41 Future Phase Implementation Initiatives, to achieve the Board’s Vision Framework. See Chapter 4 for full details on the proposed Implementation Approach.

## 2.4 WHAT WE LEARNED:

# Summary of Key Findings from White Papers

Rio Metro also conducted a technical assessment of relevant topics in order to supplement the input provided during the stakeholder engagement process and provide a firm foundation for the development of the Vision Framework and Implementation Approach. This technical assessment took the form of three “white papers” on the topics of:

- Peer Review of Status Quo and Aspirational Peers
- Transit Operations and Organizational Options
- Economic Development Potential of Transit

The issues and opportunities identified in the three white papers informed the initial visioning process and the subsequent development of this Vision Plan. A high-level summary of the key issues identified in the white paper—including those most relevant to Rio Metro’s role in the future of transit in the region—are summarized below. For more details, please see the full versions of all three white papers (75 pages in total) available on the project website at <http://riometro.org/rio-metro-news/502-rio-metro-s-vision-for-the-future>.

---

### Peer Review White Paper

The peer review white paper was written to research and explore comparable agencies’ performance and to provide insights into opportunities for better management, service, and operations of Rio Metro. This specific peer review identified four (4) peer agencies for Rio Metro and its partner agency ABQ RIDE, benchmarked Rio Metro operations (or, in some cases, Rio Metro operations combined with ABQ RIDE operations) and regional outcomes against those peers, and then articulated key “lessons learned” from the benchmarking assessment. The status quo peers were the Stockton and El Paso transit systems and the aspirational peers were Salt Lake City UTA and Denver RTD.

The key issues identified in the peer review white paper are highlighted below:

- **Unique *Regional* Context**
  - Rio Metro service area generally has less population in a larger geographic area compared to peers.
  - ABQ RIDE’s service density approaches the regional service density of some of the Albuquerque region’s aspirational peers (Denver and Salt Lake).
  - A low-density service area requires more resources to provide high-quality service (or only low-quality service can be provided).

- **Unique Service Context**
  - The region's transit services are providing a fairly large number of trips and passenger miles compared to both the status quo and aspirational peers.
  - The region's per capita trips and per capita miles metrics are also similar to or greater than both status quo peers and one aspirational peer (Salt Lake UTA).
  
- **Financial Resources**
  - The region's transit spending is on par with its status quo peers.
  - The region spends significantly less on transit than its aspirational peers.
  - The region has the highest local financial contribution of any peers (as a percent of operations expenditures).
  - The region's labor costs (as a percent of operations expenditures) are less than all status quo peers and most aspirational peers, but ABQ RIDE's costs are 93% of the region's total.
  
- **Operational Outputs**
  - Rio Metro has a lower transit service *density* than most peers (meaning that Rio Metro's routes are more widely dispersed from one another than in the peers' service areas; service density is sometimes referred to as "coverage").
  - Rio Metro region has a transit service frequency lower than its status quo peers, but higher than its aspirational peers. Note that this metric is based entirely on ABQ RIDE's service frequency data (i.e., it does not include Rio Metro service frequency data due to data limitations).
  - Rio Metro's farebox recovery is lower than its peers.
  
- **Regional Outcomes**
  - The region's transit mode share is comparable to status quo peers, but lower than aspirational peers.
  - Overall non-single occupant vehicle (SOV) mode share is lower than for both status quo and aspirational peers.
  - The region performs better than its status quo peers and comparably with aspirational peers in providing access to regional jobs within a 45-minute transit trip.
  
- **Customer Experience**
  - Rio Metro outperforms all peers on measuring customer satisfaction, in two ways:
    - One of only two peer agencies to measure (or at least report) customer service satisfaction; and
    - Over 93% of customers approve of Rio Metro transit service they receive.

---

## Transit Operations and Organizational Options White Paper

The transit operations and organizational options white paper was written to document existing transit operations and agency structures, and identify preliminary opportunities for changes to better achieve the priorities identified in the stakeholder engagement. The paper includes: a technical review of existing transit operations and agency structures for Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE, the history of Rio Metro and its Board organization, a review of peer Board organizational structures, potential governance options for Rio Metro, and identification of opportunities and potential benefits associated with each opportunity.

The key issues identified in the transit white paper are highlighted below.

- **Agency Governance and Management**
  - Some Board members would like more opportunities to engage and provide oversight and leadership of agency initiatives.
  - With the exception of public comment at Rio Metro Board meetings, riders have no formal mechanism to provide ongoing input.
- **Agency Organization Options**
  - Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE both provide transit service in the region and there is some overlap and duplication.
  - Better coordination with ABQ RIDE is desired by stakeholders.
  - There is strong interest on the Board in moving towards consolidation.
- **Services and Service Area**
  - There is a desire to increase service frequency and system connectivity by the Board, staff, and the public.
  - There are limited service types in the agency's current portfolio (commuter rail, fixed-route bus, dial-a-ride).
  - Rio Metro serves a dispersed service area, but there are periodic requests to expand service.
  - There are limited resources to accommodate new service expansion, including expansions geographically, hours of service, or service frequency.
- **Ridership**
  - Rio Metro has a mix of both "transit-dependent" and "choice" riders, and there is a desire and demand to continue to serve both ridership types.

---

## Economic Development Potential of Transit White Paper

The white paper on economic development potential of transit was written to assess the current and future potential for Rio Metro operations and initiatives to influence regional economic development. The paper provided an overview of the potential economic development benefits of transit, identified key regional trends and initiatives to leverage and achieve expanded economic development benefits from transit, and identified specific opportunities for expanded economic development benefits from transit investment in the Albuquerque region.

The key issues identified in the economic development white paper are highlighted below.

- **Transit and Cost-Effective Economic Development**
  - Transit's role in regional economic development isn't widely understood.
  - Transit investments aren't generally coordinated with economic development initiatives.
  - Transit's critical role in connecting people to economic opportunity is underutilized.
- **Transit and Cost Savings for Local Governments**
  - Constrained local government budgets cannot meet future road and bridge infrastructure needs.
  - Effective transit services can lengthen the life of deteriorating roadway/bridge infrastructure.
  - Transit can facilitate reduced infrastructure and service costs for local governments.
- **Transit and Neighborhood Reinvestment**
  - Leapfrog development makes providing transit services more challenging and expensive.
  - Depressed property values can result from poor land use practices.
  - Inconsistent land use and zoning policies throughout the region contribute to the problem.
- **Transit and More Efficient Land Use Patterns**
  - Regional transit has not played a significant role in shaping land use.
  - More congestion will likely result (especially at constrained bottlenecks and bridge crossings).
  - It remains unclear how future growth can be accommodated cost-effectively.
  - More compact development patterns are typically more cost-effective to serve than sprawling development patterns.

For the full versions of all three white papers, please see the project website at <http://riometro.org/rio-metro-news/502-rio-metro-s-vision-for-the-future>.

## 2.5 WHAT WE HEARD: Highlights from Stakeholder Outreach

Nearly 250 stakeholders were engaged in the visioning process at numerous technical staff meetings, stakeholder outreach meetings, widely-promoted community meetings open to the public, and publicly-noticed Board meetings. These included: Rio Metro Board, staff, and customers; key implementation partners like local elected officials and ABQ RIDE; and other community and business stakeholders. See the Acknowledgements at the beginning of this plan for a full list of organizations that were engaged and represented in the development of the Vision Plan.

Key messages voiced during the stakeholder outreach and engagement included the following: a focus on safety first; the need for Rio Metro to help address first/last mile barriers to access the existing transit system; a strong desire for more transit service, especially in off-peak, non-commute times; an encouragement of an increased role for Rio Metro in ensuring that transit investments are integrated with land use planning and economic development goals; a push for enhanced partnerships with both private-sector and public-sector partners; and the hope that Rio Metro can make better use of technology to increase user convenience and build ridership.

A high-level summary of some of the most salient input provided by various stakeholder groups throughout the visioning process is summarized below (organized by which constituency provided the input). For full summaries of the outreach events, including attendees, presentation materials, and documentation of all feedback received, please see the project website at <http://riometro.org/rio-metro-news/502-rio-metro-s-vision-for-the-future>.

## Rio Metro Board

- “We need a vision of where Rio Metro is heading and consensus on how to move things forward in this region.”
- “Transparency – have this organization make clear to everybody how it works and how [to partner with us] to get things done.”
- “Transit does not [always] get you to where you need to go. Need [...] to get you to your destination.”
- “We need to emphasize the benefits of transit, [...], such as congestion reduction, improved economy, creation of jobs, environmental benefits, quality of life...”
- “The [regional] community needs to come together to solve some of the growth issues we’re experiencing. TOD could be a catalytic force that could help to resolve these issues.”
- “Become relevant to a greater number of people. [...] Increased level of ownership in transit is critical to the region’s success.”

## Rio Metro Planning and Operations Staff

- “We need to support this visioning process to attract choice ridership [...] choice riders care about time, cost, and convenience.”
- “We don’t have an umbrella brand, and we need one.”
- “We’ve accomplished a lot in our short history, but we’ve reached a point where we are operating as the sum of our inherited parts. I would like for us to work better with our partners to become [...] the new face of transit in the region.”
- “We provide funding to ABQ RIDE to provide services, [...] Rio Metro has regional commuter rail service, and [...] we have these rural boutique operations. We are like a blended family.”
- “One or two or ten or twenty years down the road, what are we hoping to become? We need a strong, overarching vision with objectives and targets.”

## **ABQ RIDE Management and Staff**

- “Boomers and Millennials are looking for transit alternatives, such as BRT. People are beginning to embrace public transportation, but it’s been slow [in this region].”
- “To gain further support, we need to expand options and provide seamless service...”
- “We need to eliminate duplication between the transit authorities [...] a regional transportation district that covers everything...”
- “We need a consolidated 3-year service plan [...] that addresses what a regional network would look like, including regional standards for urban, rural, and commuter service.”
- “We need a sufficient, dedicated funding source [...] and the ability to plan for transit based on its needs.”

## **Transit Riders and the Business Community**

- “Ninety percent of our current transit problems are attributable to land use policies.”
- “Development used to follow transit; now transit is trying to keep up with development. Transit should be driving development again.”
- “...there is a disconnect between where the jobs are and where people can afford to live. [...] Current transit systems do not accommodate these people, and it is a challenge for them to get to work.”
- “We would love for transit to be part of growth [but] it needs to expand and include the west side. It can’t just continue to focus on the City of Albuquerque’s interior transportation corridors.”
- “[W]e should stop focusing on [building additional] river crossings and look to transit to be the solution to traffic congestion.”

For full summaries of the outreach events, including attendees, presentation materials, and documentation of all feedback received, please see the project website at <http://riometro.org/rio-metro-news/502-rio-metro-s-vision-for-the-future>.

## Focus Issue: The Role of Rio Metro in Promoting Local and Regional Economic Development

Rio Metro plays an important role in the economy of the Albuquerque region, including providing critical connections between workers and jobs, helping to make the region attractive for new businesses and households, and encouraging more focused development patterns near transit. Moving forward, Rio Metro is interested in maximizing the potential of future Rio Metro activities to leverage positive economic development outcomes. As discussed in the Vision Framework in Chapter 3 and the Implementation Approach in Chapter 4, Rio Metro's role in promoting economic development will be in the following areas:

1. **Continue to provide high-quality transit service to major employment centers and incentive programs that promote employee transit ridership.** Rio Metro already works with ABQ RIDE and other transit providers to ensure good transit connections to major employment centers. Rio Metro also operates the Smart Business Partnership (SBP) program that provides tools that allow employers to directly promote and incentivize transit ridership to their employees. Rio Metro should continue and enhance these efforts to not only capture a larger share of the employee commute trips, but also to stimulate economic opportunity by providing affordably priced, congestion reducing travel options.
2. **Leverage new transit investments by coordinating them with economic development initiatives.** In the future, new or enhanced transit service or enhanced amenities for transit passengers should be coordinated with economic development initiatives in order to cost-effectively achieve transit objectives and economic development objectives. Economic development potential should also be an explicit factor when Rio Metro contemplates new transit investments, including connecting to job concentrations (see above) and the potential to stimulate development near stations (see below).
3. **Encourage development near transit.** There are a variety of roles Rio Metro can play in encouraging development near transit. Rio Metro should focus on the following initiatives:
  - Consider economic development goals in property acquisition, use, and disposition. While Rio Metro is not currently a major landowner, existing Rio Metro-owned properties and potential acquisitions should be used to advance regional transit-oriented development (TOD) goals where possible. Sound Transit in Seattle adopted a TOD Policy that encourages consideration of future potential TOD in property acquisition, use, and disposition. The agency also makes sure to consider how the siting, configuration, or design of a transit facility can facilitate future TOD on nearby properties (i.e. getting the area "TOD ready") even if the agency itself doesn't own those properties.<sup>1</sup>
  - Play a proactive role in local and regional planning efforts that encourage transit-supportive land use patterns. Rio Metro and other transit operators have an important role to play in implementing the *Future 2040* plan, which focuses development in centers, corridors, and transit nodes. Pace Transit, in suburban Chicago works closely with local jurisdictions to provide feedback on local planning efforts and development projects, has developed its own TOD guidelines, and has built an organizational culture that embraces land-use planning and urban design as core to the agency's mission of providing high-quality transit.
  - Provide information, technical resources, and act as a "convener" to facilitate discussion, publicize best practices, and encourage TOD in the region. In Denver, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) has long acted as a key regional resource related to TOD, including holding capacity-building meetings and workshops for developers, planners and the general public.

<sup>1</sup> The New Mexico state constitution's anti-donation clause prohibits public agencies from disposing of property at below market value, except in cases where a finding of blight has made as part of designation as a Municipal Redevelopment Area. However, Rio Metro could play a leading role in property assemblage that has high TOD potential, and then sell or lease to private developers at fair market rates.

## Best Practice Case Study: HealthLine BRT, Cleveland Ohio

Cleveland's HealthLine BRT along the Euclid Avenue corridor provides an excellent example of how close collaboration between a transit agency and other stakeholders—including the City, local institutions, non-profits, and developers—can generate significant economic development benefits.

The Euclid Avenue corridor connects downtown Cleveland through Midtown to University Circle, a district that includes Case Western Reserve University and multiple health-related institutions and research centers. The corridor suffered decades of disinvestment. After several years of planning, the Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority (GCRTA) settled on BRT as a cost-effective means to connect the corridor.

GCRTA, the City of Cleveland, MidTown Inc. (a local Community Development Corporation), and the Cleveland Foundation together funded the creation of an economic development strategy for the corridor to leverage the investment in the new BRT line, with the following *non-transportation* goals:

- Promote long-term economic and community development along the Euclid corridor via policies that encourage transit-oriented development and provide reliable public transportation service; and
- Improve the quality of life of those living, working, or visiting the Euclid corridor by improving the pedestrian environment, creating a sense of place, improving access to employment and cultural centers, and improving regional air quality.

Achieving these goals required coordinated efforts among numerous entities:

- **The City of Cleveland** assembled funding for the installation of fiber-optic cables, reconstruction of outdated water and sewer lines, “undergrounding” of power lines, installation of new streetlights, and improvements to bicycle and pedestrian connections. The City also provided incentives for development via its Vacant Property Initiative, offering forgivable construction loans to spur job creation.
- **The State of Ohio** awarded \$9 million to the City of Cleveland through the Clean Ohio Brownfield Revitalization Fund and Ohio Job Ready Sites Programs. These funds allowed for the acquisition, site cleanup, and site development of vacant commercial and industrial properties.
- **Educational and medical institutions** played a critical role in facilitating TOD along the corridor. Due to the proximity to the HealthLine and encouragement of shared parking facilities, new institutional buildings along the corridor were able to reduce surface parking and orient toward the street to support increased transit usage.
- **Local Community Development Corporations (CDCs)** worked to attract businesses and development back to the corridor and promoted the pending BRT investment as part of their economic development initiatives.

As a result of these collaborative partnerships and a commitment creating economic development benefits from new transit investments, the HealthLine BRT has been credited with catalyzing \$5.8 billion in investment along its corridor since its opening in 2008.



*Cleveland RTA's collaboration with public-sector and private-sector partners on the HealthLine Bus Rapid Transit service resulted in the region seeing new \$5.8 billion in investment along the corridor since its opening in 2008.*

Page intentionally left blank.

# 3. OUR VISION

- 
- 3.1 A Bold but Realistic Vision
  - 3.2 The Vision Framework
  - 3.3 Core Themes and Key Strategies
- 



## 3.1 A BOLD BUT REALISTIC VISION

*“Even if you don’t personally ride transit now, you should still support better transit because your employees and customers might take transit. Or your neighbors might take transit. And as you get older and may no longer be able to drive, how will you get to the grocery store or the doctor if we don’t have good transit in place? Maybe more of our kids would stay here after high school if transit were better. The truth is, transit supports everything we’re trying to do to jumpstart this region’s economy and leave it better for the next generation.”*

*– Rio Metro Smart Business Partner*

Responding to the current and future opportunities and challenges summarized in Chapter 1, as well as the stakeholder input and technical findings summarized in Chapter 2, a consensus vision emerged. This chapter describes that vision as well as how the vision was refined to ensure that it was both bold enough to inspire and yet realistic enough to be implementable.

## 3.2 THE VISION FRAMEWORK

After the Vision Framework (described below) was developed based on extensive input from Rio Metro leadership, customers, and implementation partners including ABQ RIDE, Rio Metro revised its mission statement and developed a new vision statement to better reflect the priorities expressed in the Vision Framework. The revised mission statement and vision statement are summarized below and both are meant to be a succinct and memorable distillation of the overall Vision Framework.

---

### Revised Mission Statement

A mission statement is typically a concise summary of the organization's core purpose and values. As described in Section 1.1, Rio Metro's existing Mission Statement was adopted in 2012. To better reflect the renewed purpose of the organization that has evolved through the visioning process, Rio Metro has revised and consolidated its existing mission statement to be more succinct and memorable, and to provide clarity and focus to the organization's efforts to achieve the objectives of the Vision Plan:

**Our Mission:** *Rio Metro collaborates to provide safe, accessible, efficient, and innovative transportation services for the benefit of our diverse local communities and the regional economy.*

Adoption of this Vision Plan by the Board will also adopt this revised Mission Statement to provide Rio Metro and its implementation partners with renewed clarity on the organization's core purpose in the region in all its day-to-day operations and services.

---

## Vision Statement

A vision statement is meant to evoke the future outcomes that an organization hopes to achieve and what role the organization will play in accomplishing those outcomes. A vision statement must also be succinct in order to be: a) memorable to the organization's leadership, staff, customers, and implementation partners and; b) relevant to both day-to-day operations and longer-term decision-making.

Currently, Rio Metro does not have an organizational vision statement. Rio Metro has developed the following vision statement to provide clarity and focus to the organization's efforts to achieve the objectives of the Vision Plan:

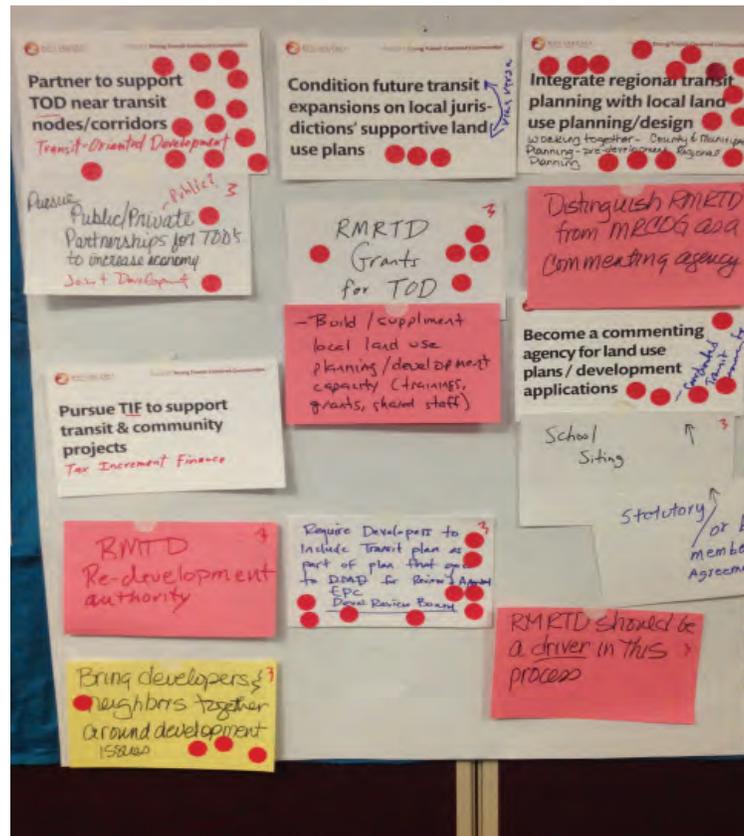
**Our Vision:** *Rio Metro is a leader moving our region forward, connecting our diverse residents and communities, and supporting sustainable prosperity.*

Adoption of this Vision Plan by the Board will also adopt this new Vision Statement to provide Rio Metro and its implementation partners with a renewed focus on its efforts to achieve the long-term objectives of the Vision Plan and lead the region forward.

### 3.3 CORE THEMES AND KEY STRATEGIES

Taking into account multiple conversations with Rio Metro Board members, management, staff, and transit riders, as well as implementation partners like ABQ RIDE, service providers, residents, and the business/development community, Rio Metro developed a Vision Framework for the agency. As shown in Figure 3.1, the Vision Framework consists of a) six Core Themes, with each of the six Core Themes supported by b) three Key Strategies (for a total of 18) which help define the desired outcomes within each Core Theme.

The Core Themes and Key Strategies included in the Vision Framework were vetted with Rio Metro Board and staff, ABQ RIDE management and staff, and other stakeholders during the visioning process, and were ultimately approved by Rio Metro Board at the conclusion of the visioning stage of the project. Combined, the Core Themes and Key Strategies in the Vision Framework provided clear direction to Rio Metro in crafting the implementation approach described in the following Chapter 4.



The Core Themes and Key Strategies included in the Vision Framework were developed through consensus dialogue with Rio Metro Board and staff, ABQ RIDE management and staff, and other stakeholders.

## Figure 3.1 Vision Framework: Core Themes and Key Strategies



### **Core Theme 1: Exceptional Customer Experience** - *Our customers come first in all we do.*

Keeping our existing riders and attracting new riders is central to realizing our vision. Residents and visitors who regularly choose transit over the private vehicle will make this decision based on the quality of their travel experiences. Was their journey on-time? Safe? Convenient? Enjoyable?

- **Key Strategy 1.1:** Make transit trips as convenient and time-competitive as possible with auto trips.
- **Key Strategy 1.2:** Focus on safety, security, attractiveness, cleanliness, comfort, and tailored amenities both on vehicles and at stops/stations.
- **Key Strategy 1.3:** Improve schedules, service information and transit awareness through coordination with other transit providers to make using transit as easy as possible.



### **Core Theme 2: Transformative Regional Services** - *We provide a range of services to meet our region's diverse needs.*

As our region grows, it is increasingly important for our residents to be able to travel between communities for employment, housing, services, tourism and other opportunities that don't respect jurisdictional boundaries. Additionally, Rio Metro's services must be integrated with other providers that serve communities beyond our District, such as Santa Fe and Socorro.

- **Key Strategy 2.1:** Expand the "regional priority network" to connect key centers and corridors, including added Rail Runner service.
- **Key Strategy 2.2:** Expand local circulators to connect the regional network with residential areas and smaller/rural communities.
- **Key Strategy 2.3:** Support regional transportation demand management (TDM) programs, bicycle/pedestrian, and first/last mile programs to improve access to fixed-route transit.



### **Core Theme 3: Strong Transit-Centered Communities** - *Our services help shape our communities for the better.*

Developing the interconnection between land use and transit not only results in increased transit ridership and more cost-effective and efficient services, but can also help our diverse communities—regardless if they are urban or rural—to achieve their unique visions.

- **Key Strategy 3.1:** Leverage existing MOA relationship with MRCOG to better integrate regional transit planning with local land use planning/design.
- **Key Strategy 3.2:** Increase support for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in areas well-served by transit.
- **Key Strategy 3.3:** Promote better pedestrian and bicycle connections to the regional transit system to improve public health outcomes, decrease social / economic isolation, and reduce household transportation costs.



#### **Core Theme 4: Sound Financial Stewardship** - *We are good stewards of the public resources entrusted to us.*

Our region's transit network requires predictable and adequate funding to maintain current service levels and keep vehicles in good repair. Also, our public funding requires us to be accountable to taxpayers and operate as efficiently as possible, all while meeting our diverse transit needs.

- **Key Strategy 4.1:** Pursue efficiency gains across all modes (rail, bus, and demand-response service).
- **Key Strategy 4.2:** Seek new and expanded revenue sources (including local & regional, state & federal, and public-private partnerships) to diversify the funding base and provide a stable funding source for Vision Plan implementation.
- **Key Strategy 4.3:** Pursue the most cost-effective agency structure, potentially including independence from MRCOG, acquisition of capital assets from NMDOT, and enhanced coordination/consolidation with ABQ RIDE.



#### **Core Theme 5: Innovative Programs & Partnerships** - *We think outside the box and seek collaboration always.*

For our region's transit services to offer benefits beyond simply transportation, we will need active participation from a variety of sectors, including our riders, the business community, public schools and universities, other public agencies and civic organizations.

- **Key Strategy 5.1:** Integrate transit investments with the regional economic development strategy.
- **Key Strategy 5.2:** Pursue public-*public* partnerships (including school districts and UNM/CNM) to offer free/discounted transit passes, joint marketing, and education.
- **Key Strategy 5.3:** Pursue public-*private* partnerships (including major employers) to fund targeted service to employment centers, transit benefits to employees, and joint marketing.



#### **Core Theme 6: Industry-Leading Knowledge & Practice** - *Our people take pride in leading the region forward.*

We must ensure that the region's transit providers have the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate this transformation and to empower our Board members to lead in realizing this vision at both the regional and local levels.

- **Key Strategy 6.1:** Conduct orientation and on-going professional development for staff and Board, including in-person visits with peer agencies.
- **Key Strategy 6.2:** Broaden the stakeholder perspectives provided to Rio Metro leadership and create opportunities for ongoing engagement and leadership development.
- **Key Strategy 6.3:** Become a resource for local jurisdictions to support best practice pilot programs, staff training, and implementation of Vision Plan priorities.

## Focus Issue: Coordination and Consolidation of Transit Operations

Transit service integration is a challenge for riders and decision-makers across the West. Like the Albuquerque region, a majority of transit trips are not carried on the regional system in communities as diverse as Seattle, San Francisco, and Phoenix.

Governance solutions that promote enhanced coordination and partnerships across different transit operators can help to improve the rider experience while reducing redundancy of effort. Coordination efforts focus on three things:

- Focusing on customer experience by creating a seamless (or frictionless) experience
- Increasing partnerships between agencies to build relationships and trust at all levels
- Prioritizing incremental collaboration initiatives by tackling the “low-hanging fruit” first

Full consolidation (mergers) of different transit operators is another option that may accomplish the same goals of improving the rider experience while reducing redundancy of effort. However, full consolidation can be more difficult to accomplish than enhanced coordination, and the anticipated benefits of consolidation may not always be realized in the short-term.

### Best Practice Case Study: Phoenix Case Study

The Phoenix region has gone from highly-fragmented transit systems run by cities to an integrated system with three major providers operating under one regional brand: Valley Metro. The systems are the Regional Public Transportation Authority (RPTA), City of Phoenix, and Tempe.

Each system contracts with private providers for service, but riders see a “seamless system” with a single fare system, customer service, marketing programs, and centralized service planning, all under the Valley Metro brand. Getting to an integrated system has been evolutionary over a period of decades starting in 1985, as described in the Figure 3.2 below:

**Figure 3.2: Time Line to Integrated Transit in Phoenix**

1980	Highly fragmented transit systems run by cities
1985	Voters approve ½ cent sales tax for freeways and transit, RPTA formed
1993	Valley Metro begins service under regional brand, local services continue under Valley Metro brand
2002	Valley Metro Inc. formed to design, construct, and operate 57 miles of light rail
2004	Voters approve continued sales tax with more for transit
2008	First 20 miles of light rail opens for service
2012	RPTA and Valley Metro combine with one CEO and a goal to integrate service

## Funding

Under the Valley Metro brand there is one regional fare structure set by RPTA. The RPTA Board of Directors and City of Phoenix City Council set and approve fare changes. The three operating agencies incur the cost of operations, and the other sponsoring agencies reimburse the operating agency monthly. Cities throughout the region purchase on a cost-per-mile basis based on operations expenses, depreciation of facilities, and vehicles. The per-mile cost of service is passed onto those entities funding transportation service for their respective jurisdictions.

## Coordinated Service Planning

RPTA oversees transit services creation and implementation. The general process for coordinated service planning works like this:

1. A jurisdiction goes to RPTA planners with an idea for a new route;
2. RPTA determines the cost and which agency can best operate the service;
3. The jurisdiction sends funds through RPTA to the operating agency; and
4. The RPTA Board periodically revises existing routes for demand and efficiency.

Local jurisdictions retain the authority to implement additional service funded by local resources, including transit ballot initiatives.

It should be noted that despite Phoenix's success in coordinated service planning, the Phoenix region has not achieved full coordination of decision making on regional transit: for example, regional bus service has its own Board, light rail has a separate Board represented by the five cities with light rail service, and paratransit is outside the regional brand and run by the counties (and paratransit riders have to transfer between systems when they cross county lines). For Rio Metro region, the success of a centralized service planning model will be contingent on a thoughtful allocation of Board seats so that each jurisdiction feels that it has the power to advocate for local needs while also being advocates for a truly regional system.



*Phoenix RPTA and partner transit agencies have cooperated to create a seamless experience for their riders across agencies (e.g. an umbrella “Valley Metro” brand, single customer service line, unified fare structure, and universal fare card) and have increased cost-effectiveness by actually consolidating duplicative functions (e.g. marketing and service planning) at the regional level.*

Page intentionally left blank.

# 4. IMPLEMENTING OUR VISION

- 
- 4.1 Implementation Tactics
  - 4.2 Priority Implementation Tactics
  - 4.3 Performance Measurement System
- 



*Rio Metro technical staff, in collaboration with ABQ RIDE, have developed an Implementation Approach that consists of two components: a) Implementation Tactics that will help Rio Metro accomplish the goals and desired outcomes in the Vision Framework and b) a preliminary Performance Measurement system to provide clarity, transparency, and accountability to Rio Metro and its partners as they implement the Vision Framework. Each of these components is discussed below.*

## 4.1 IMPLEMENTATION TACTICS

*“For any of this work we’ve all been doing to make a difference, we need to immediately pivot to focus on implementation, including holding each other accountable for actually accomplishing the vision.”*

*– Rio Metro Board member*

Based on the Vision Framework developed and vetted by the Rio Metro Board and key stakeholders, Rio Metro technical staff developed a list of potential Implementation Tactics necessary to achieve the Vision Framework. In total, there are 60 potential Implementation Tactics that might be pursued over the next 20 years. Appendices A and B shows all the Implementation Tactics organized by which of the Core Themes and Key Strategies they support: Appendix A shows Priority Implementation Tactics as described below and Appendix B shows Future Phase Implementation Tactics.

## 4.2 PRIORITY IMPLEMENTATION TACTICS

To help provide focus to near-term implementation efforts in the first five years after the Vision Plan is adopted, Rio Metro technical staff identified 26 Priority Implementation Tactics that could be pursued as immediate next steps. Priority Implementation Tactics are those that a) can be accomplished in the near-term within existing resources; b) must be accomplished first in order to provide a foundation necessary to achieve other Implementation Tactics in the Vision Plan, and/or c) must begin now in order to build the momentum to address more complex challenges facing the region and achieve the longer-term vision. Following is a list of Priority Implementation Tactics Rio Metro staff are directed to pursue, in collaboration with public-sector and private-sector partners, in order to achieve the Vision Framework in a timely and cost-effective manner:



### Tactic Group: Improve perceived safety, security, and cleanliness of the regional transit system.



*Rio Metro heard emphatically from stakeholders that safety, security, cleanliness were fundamentally important to the “customer-friendliness” of the system.*

Throughout the visioning process, stakeholders mentioned that Rio Metro should keep its laser-like focus on maintaining safe, secure, and clean transit operations, even while expanding its services, programs, and general leadership role in the region. To respond to this direction, Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Look for cost-share partners to increase funding for security, cleaning, and maintenance of transit vehicles, bus stops, and train stations.
- **Tactic:** Create a program for passenger reporting of safety and maintenance issues with rapid response by Rio Metro.
- **Tactic:** Expand security / ambassador presence, including coordination with other law enforcement agencies and a potential volunteer public safety / ambassador program.

**Supports: Core Theme 1 (Exceptional Customer Experience), and specifically Key Strategy 1.2.**



### Tactic Group: Develop a Regional Transit Network and Service Plan.

Stakeholders that participated in the visioning process consistently asked for expanded service, including more routes, more frequent service, especially during off-peak periods, and new service types tailored to different markets (e.g. commuter express buses) and community contexts (e.g. small circulators for rural areas, etc.). Rio Metro heard loud and clear that when it comes to transit service in the region, there is no “one size fits all” solution. For this reason, Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Identify and pursue incremental improvements to existing rail and bus service that respond to service needs and have potential funding sources.
- **Tactic:** Develop a tiered service concept and map that illustrates the interconnected regional and local network.
- **Tactic:** Define Rio Metro’s role in supporting operations of the planned regional BRT network.

- **Tactic:** Conduct an assessment of new mobility technologies/services that may disrupt the traditional transit agency business model (e.g. Uber, self-driving cars, etc.).
- **Tactic:** Identify implementation costs and funding sources.

**Supports:** *Core Theme 2 (Transformative Regional Services), and specifically Key Strategies 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3.*



### **Tactic Group: Use regional transit to promote economic development.**

Throughout this process, Rio Metro leadership, stakeholders, and implementation partners have recognized that promoting economic development and expanding economic opportunity must become a central part of the agency’s mission. As identified in the “Economic Development Potential of Transit” white paper, the Rio Metro service area is missing many opportunities to better harness the potential of regional transit to connect workers with employment, educational opportunities with safe and affordable mobility options, lower household transportation costs by reducing auto dependency, and reduce taxpayer-funded public spending on roadway expansions and other infrastructure by facilitating more transit-oriented development. Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Advocate for the value of regional transit to key implementation partners including local jurisdictions, business community, etc.
- **Tactic:** Communicate, collaborate, and partner with local and regional economic development agencies/organizations so that future economic development investments are focused within 1/2 mile high-capacity transit nodes and corridors.
- **Tactic:** Partner with MPO/RPO to catalyze more TOD in the region, including: education/capacity building, partnerships with local communities and institutions like UNM, grant programs and updating the existing Rio Metro assessment of TOD potential of parcels that are currently (or will soon be) well-served by high-capacity transit.
- **Tactic:** Form partnerships with local jurisdictions and the private sector to get potential redevelopment sites and districts “TOD-ready” with transit-supportive infrastructure (sidewalks, traffic calming, etc.).

**Supports:** *Core Theme 3 (Strong Transit-Centered Communities), and specifically Key Strategies 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3.*

**Supports:** *Core Theme 5 (Innovative Programs and Partnerships), and specifically Key Strategies 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3.*

**Supports:** *Core Theme 6 (Industry-Leading Knowledge and Practice), and specifically Key Strategy 6.3.*



### Tactic Group: Evaluate and implement cost-effectiveness measures.

Rio Metro and its partner agency ABQ RIDE already operate relatively cost-effectively compared to both their status quo and aspirational peers.<sup>1</sup> However, Rio Metro Board, staff, and implementation partners all expressed during the visioning process a strong desire for “continuous improvement” in the cost-effectiveness of its operations. To pursue this goal, Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Conduct a top-to-bottom review of Rio Metro’s entire operations to identify opportunities for efficiency gains including administrative costs, services/operations costs, and overhead costs (GRT payments, etc.).
- **Tactic:** Enhance the identity of Rio Metro as an operating agency which functions in collaboration with MRCOG, while establishing a timeline for Rio Metro to transition to independence from MRCOG.
- **Tactic:** Conduct a financial and organizational study of pros and cons of acquisition of capital assets from NMDOT.
- **Tactic:** Conduct a consolidation feasibility study to be jointly funded with ABQ RIDE, while simultaneously identifying and pursuing near-term opportunities for enhanced collaboration (e.g. the development of a single schedule/map, joint marketing efforts, a single fare payment method, and/or a unified brand in the form of one shared name and logo).

*Supports: Core Theme 4 (Sound Financial Stewardship), and specifically Key Strategies 4.1 and 4.3.*



### Tactic Group: Evaluate and pursue new and expanded funding sources.

One thing was clear from the technical assessments conducted as part of this visioning process: Rio Metro will need new and expanded financial resources to successfully implement this Vision Plan. Therefore, Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Study the feasibility of obtaining a waiver of existing annual Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) payments on purchased transportation contracts (e.g. NMRX).
- **Tactic:** Conduct a fare study analyzing the costs/benefits of the fare structure, with particular emphasis on a) whether the costs of charging passenger fares outweigh the value of farebox revenue received and b) if Rio Metro should transition to a “fare-free” transit model similar to NCRTD.
- **Tactic:** Explore private-sector revenue sources such as sponsorship, advertising, and naming rights.
- **Tactic:** Investigate the feasibility and timing of a GRT increase and other revenue sources dedicated to Rio Metro operations.
- **Tactic:** Develop a financial model with Department of Tax and Revenue to establish a baseline return on investment (ROI) for future transit expenditures per state law regarding tax increment districts (TIDs) and tax increment finance (TIF).
- **Tactic:** Develop a FTA grant program of regional capital projects.

*Supports: Core Theme 4 (Sound Financial Stewardship), and specifically Key Strategy 4.2.*

<sup>1</sup> For more details, see the peer review white paper available on the project website (hard copies available by request).



### Tactic Group: Become an industry-leading transit agency.

As a young agency, Rio Metro has accomplished much to be proud of during its brief existence. However, during the visioning process, Rio Metro Board, staff, and stakeholders acknowledged the need for Rio Metro to build deeper expertise at all levels of the organization and to become more innovative. For this reason, Rio Metro staff shall pursue Priority Implementation Tactics such as:

- **Tactic:** Formalize orientation and development programs for Board members.
- **Tactic:** Establish in-house professional development and training programs with staff participation required per individual professional development plans.
- **Tactic:** Support efforts to form a regional transit advocacy non-profit organization.
- **Tactic:** Advocate for the value of regional transit to key implementation partners including local jurisdictions, business community, etc.

**Supports:** *Core Theme 6 (Industry-Leading Knowledge and Practice), and specifically Key Strategies 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3.*



- **Tactic: Continue ongoing stakeholder engagement.** The visioning process has built tremendous momentum and support for a bold vision for regional transit. For this reason, Rio Metro staff shall also pursue ongoing stakeholder engagement as needed to support all of the Priority Implementation Tactics described above.

**Supports:** *All the Core Themes and Key Strategies.*

It should be emphasized this is an *illustrative* list of Priority Implementation Tactics that could (and likely will) change somewhat as needed to respond to new opportunities and adapt to new information.

For most of the Priority Implementation Tactics, Rio Metro will be the lead implementer. However, the successful implementation of this plan will require collaboration among several partners, most notably ABQ RIDE, local planning departments, and the business community.

The envisioned timeline for the Priority Implementation Tactics described above is in the five years after Board adoption of the Vision Plan.

## 4.3 PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

Participants in the visioning process – including Rio Metro Board members, riders, public agency implementation partners, the business community, and other stakeholders – consistently spoke of the need to ensure momentum and accountability for implementation of the Vision Plan. For this reason, it will be critically important for Rio Metro to measure the region’s progress towards the outcomes prioritized in the Vision Plan for the Vision Plan to be considered successful.

Performance measurement can allow Rio Metro to be more nimble and responsive in its ongoing operations by creating a regular feedback loop on whether existing resources are being used most cost-effectively. In addition, performance measurement can also increase Rio Metro's competitiveness for new funding sources especially under new broad-based criteria being emphasized for federal transit funds. Furthermore, regular reporting of Rio Metro's performance to its Board, staff, riders, business community, and general public helps maintain and expand support for Rio Metro as a trusted and valuable institution that plays a vital role in ensuring the region's high quality of life.

Rio Metro has developed an illustrative performance measurement framework, as shown in Figure 4.1. The illustrative framework consists of 11 priority indicators that support the 18 Key Strategies. The indicators are the thresholds (or benchmarks) that indicate what would be considered success in that area. Note that because some of the Key Strategies are more qualitative and/or do not lend themselves to a simple, one-dimensional measure of success, there are 11 indicators (not 18). The indicators were developed in close consultation with Rio Metro staff to ensure that they could be collected using known data sources and with existing or planned resources.

It should be emphasized that the framework is illustrative and will be further refined during the implementation phase immediately following adoption of the Vision Plan. In particular, ABQ RIDE will be a key partner in Rio Metro's development of final performance measures, as ABQ RIDE is a major transit service provider in the region. The success of regional transit will therefore be a reflection of the mutual success of Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE. In addition, a monitoring and reporting plan for all indicators will also be developed during the implementation phase, describing what performance data are collected (and by whom) and the frequency by which performance data are reported (and how).

Even though the final performance measurement framework may change from what is shown in Figure 4.1, the preliminary framework shown is meant to demonstrate the manner in which Rio Metro will begin to expand its approach to performance measurement in order to successfully implement the Vision Plan. For example, the final performance measurement will contain several "stretch goals" for Rio Metro and its regional implementation partners, while also remaining realistic and achievable within existing or planned capacity, competencies, and resources.

In this way, the final performance measurement framework developed during the implementation phase will become the "report card" by which Rio Metro management and staff commit to be held accountable to by the Board, riders, implementation partners, taxpayers, and other community and business stakeholders. Going forward, this performance measurement framework will also inform Rio Metro's prioritization of how it invests operational and financial resources. For example, Rio Metro will be seeking to align any and all partnership agreements to ensure that those agreements further Rio Metro's progress in successfully implementing the Vision Plan.

*NOTE: All performance measurement systems need to be responsive to unanticipated circumstances (e.g. reduction in funding, unavailability of data, lack of participation from implementation partners, etc.). For this reason, Rio Metro's leadership should periodically assess the final performance measurement system that is developed during the implementation phase and make adjustments to the metrics and indicators as needed, including in response to new information, unanticipated constraints, or other unforeseen issues.*

## Figure 4.1 Preliminary Performance Measurement System

(illustrative, to be refined during implementation)



**Exceptional Customer Experience.** *Our customers come first in all we do.*

- **Customer safety:** Minimum of 95% customer satisfaction on biennial rider survey with perceived (self-assessed) safety at stations/stops and on-vehicles.
- **Customer satisfaction:** Minimum of 90% overall customer satisfaction (e.g. reporting 3, 4, or 5) on biennial rider survey and maximum of 1% customer complaints on a quarterly basis (as measured by total rail + bus complaints/ total rail + bus trips).



**Transformative Regional Services.** *We provide a range of services to meet our region's diverse needs.*

- **Transit service availability:** XX% of households are within a 1/4 mile of existing transit service (as appropriate to the surrounding land use context and likely ridership demand) that connects them to the tiered regional transit network.
- **Transit system accessibility:** XX% of households have convenient and comfortable non-automobile (walk / bike) access to the tiered regional transit network in 20 minutes or less.
- **On-time performance:** Minimum of XX% (exact percentage to be determined during implementation phase) of all transit trips will have an on-time arrival and departure (schedule adherence of +/- 5 minutes), with potential emphasis on trips to/from high-capacity nodes. Demand-response service will adhere to federally-defined on-time performance standards that are legally required for that service type.



**Strong Transit-Centered Communities.** *Our services help shape our communities for the better.*

- **Market share for transit and supportive modes:** Minimum of XX% commute mode share for transit and supportive modes such as carpool, taxi, bicycling, walking, and telecommuting (as measured by total single-occupant vehicle commute trips/total commute trips and tailored appropriately for urban, suburban, rural service contexts).
- **Transit leveraging and catalyzing new development growth.** XX% of new development growth (as measured by residential units and commercial square footage) will be transit-oriented development (as measured by households with vehicle ownership below the regional average) or transit-adjacent development (as measured by location within 1/2 mile distance from stops/stations of the priority regional transit network).



**Sound Financial Stewardship.** *We are good stewards of the public resources entrusted to us.*

- **Service efficiency & productivity:** Compared to Rio Metro’s status quo and aspirational peers, and while recognizing the different operating characteristics of Rio Metro’s different modes and unique service area contexts:
  - Maintain current high-efficiency on a cost-per-passenger mile basis; and
  - Look for opportunities to increase efficiency on a cost-per-passenger trip basis.



**Innovative Programs & Partnerships.** *We think outside the box and seek collaboration always.*

- **Transit leveraging/catalyzing economic development:** Collaborating with ABQ RIDE, increase participation in Smart Business Partnership (SBP) so that:
  - XX% of employees and students within 1/2 mile of Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE transit are associated with SBP organizations and eligible for SBP benefits; and
  - XX% of employees and students at SBP organizations receive a subsidized, discounted, or free transit pass through federal pre-tax commuter benefits or bulk purchase contracts with employers and educational institutions.



**Industry-Leading Knowledge & Practice.** *Our people take pride in leading the region forward.*

- **Board and staff as regional and industry leaders:**
  - 100% of new Board members, Leadership Committee members, and staff will participate in “Rio Metro 101” orientation within their first three months at the organization; and
  - 50% of Board members, Leadership Committee members, and staff will participate in professional development opportunity of some kind at least once every year.
- **Staff as change agents in achieving the vision:**
  - Minimum of 95% of employees report that their work plays a meaningful role in helping Rio Metro achieve the Key Strategies in the Vision Plan that they themselves are most passionate about; and
  - Minimum of 95% of employees report that Rio Metro is headed in the right direction necessary to achieve the Key Strategies in the Vision Plan.

## Focus Issue: Implementing the Vision will require New Funding Sources

All of Rio Metro's previous audits and the peer review done as part of this visioning process have found that the agency is a good steward of existing financial resources. Even so, as part of this vision Rio Metro is committing itself to a top-to-bottom review of potential strategies to increase operational cost-effectiveness in all areas. Per the peer review, Rio Metro region invests less in transit than its aspirational peers in the Denver and Salt Lake regions that many stakeholders in the visioning process pointed to as models to emulate. For these reasons, it must be stated clearly and directly: Rio Metro will need additional financial resources to successfully implement this Vision Plan. While Rio Metro will continue to make good use of its existing funding sources, potential new funding sources are described below.

### Federal Funding Sources

Over 80 federal programs may be used for some type of transit and transportation assistance. The most common federal transportation funding sources are:

- Federal Transit Administration Assistance
- Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)
- Veterans Transportation Services
- Older Americans Act (OAA)
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

### State Funding Sources

In 2012, New Mexico reported providing \$6.6 million to transit in the state, the lowest level in the last five years, which ranked it 27th in the nation in terms of state support for public transit (or 26th in terms of per capita funding of \$3.30 per resident). A summary of state funding sources (ordered chronologically by the number of states that employ this funding source is shown) is below:

- Gas tax (13 states)
- Bonds (10 states)
- General funds (11 states)
- Registration/title fees (8 states)
- General sales tax (6 states)
- Motor vehicle/rental car sales tax (6 states)
- Interest income (7 states)
- State transportation fund (4 states)
- Trust fund (4 states)

Other state transit funding sources include lottery funds, casino funds, toll authority funding, and payroll mobility tax. Rio Metro should evaluate the viability of increasing existing funding sources or pursuing additional funding sources to meet future needs of the region.

### Regional GRT Increase

One additional funding source available to Rio Metro is an increase in the regional Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) dedicated to Rio Metro transit. Such a measure would be submitted to voters in Rio Metro's three-county service area and approved by a simple majority. In 2014, voters in 18 states considered 61 transit ballot with 42 of these succeeding at the ballot box for a 69% success rate. Historically, transit measures have had a 71% success rate, but low voter turnout combined with other factors may have ultimately hurt the overall 2014 success rate.

Some keys to a successful transit ballot measure:

- Develop a clear transit improvement plan (“this is what it means for me”);
- Organize a broad base of supporters;
- Use “champions” to make your case;
- Articulate a clear, simple message and use it consistently; and
- Target high voter turnout elections (presidential election years).

Two relevant cases studies of successful transit ballot measures are summarized below.

### **Best Practice Case Study: Denver FasTracks**

“FasTracks” plan: 122 miles of LRT, 18 miles BRT, new park-n-rides, expanded bus service, and redevelopment of Union Station. The yes campaign spent \$3.6 million and had the support from all 41 mayors plus the Chamber, industry, and environmental groups.

Seven years earlier voters rejected a conceptual transit ballot measure opposed by RTD’s Board with a 58% no vote. The yes campaign spent \$650,000 (versus \$50,000 for the no campaign). The failed “Guide the Ride” vote in 1997 prompted backers of a metro-wide transit system to redouble their efforts.

In 2001-2003 a comprehensive, region-wide FasTracks plan was developed in a highly inclusive process. The resulting map with all the improvements was a centerpiece in the campaign. The campaign stressed two key messages “You can’t stop growth – need to plan for it” and “The time is now.” A sign of the strength of the well-organized and well-timed yes campaign was that the measure passed despite the fact that one of two daily papers, the then-Governor and the then-Executive Director of CDOT opposed the campaign.



*When Denver metro voters approved additional resources for Denver RTD, the agency was able to dramatically expand transit service to all its partner communities, and develop new bus-train intermodal stations and new TOD opportunities at major transit nodes.*

### **Best Practice Case Study: Ann Arbor, MI**

In May 2014 Ann Arbor area voters gave a resounding 71% yes vote to expand property taxes annually by \$35 on a \$100,000 home to fund a five-year Transit Improvement Plan that would expand service by 44%, purchase new buses, build park-n-rides, bus stops, and shelters. The increased millage is expected to raise \$5.4 million annually. Service improvements started in August 2014. The yes campaign spent \$54,427 and the opposition spent \$15,037.

Before the 2014 election, the last time voters in Ann Arbor went to the polls to approve a tax for public transit was more than 40 years ago when they approved the original millage. Early polling showed support from 63 percent of voters. Government, business and environmental leaders, and the presidents of the University of Michigan, Eastern Michigan University, and Washtenaw Community College supported the campaign.

MoreBuses.org utilized a campaign slogan of “More buses! More places! More often!” The Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority provided 31 separate online maps detailing a major restructuring of routes, locations of more frequent bus service, and extended hours of service across its entire system.

Page intentionally left blank.

# 5. ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND MATERIALS

---

Appendix A: Priority Implementation Tactics (Years 1-5)

Appendix B: Future Phase Implementation Tactics

---



During the Vision Plan process, the project team developed several interim deliverables summarizing the key messages from stakeholder engagement and key findings from technical assessments. These interim deliverables provided the foundational material for the development of the Vision Framework. The Vision Framework was in turn vetted with Rio Metro Board, ABQ RIDE leadership and staff, as well as community and business stakeholders in order to develop this final Vision Plan. Each of the interim deliverables that informed the development of the Vision Plan are listed below and are available on the project website at <http://riometro.org/rio-metro-news/502-rio-metro-s-vision-for-the-future>. Hard copies of these interim deliverables (or any other work product created during the Vision Plan process) are available from Rio Metro.

### **What We Heard**

- Stakeholder Interview Summaries (October 2014)
- Board Visioning Workshop Summary (March 2015)
- ABQ RIDE Visioning Workshop Summary (April 2015)
- Business and Community Outreach Summary (May 2015)
- Public Workshops Outreach Summary (September 2015)

### **What We Learned**

- White Paper: Economic Development Potential of Transit (March 2015)
- White Paper: Peer Agency Review of Both Current and Aspirational Peers (May 2015)
- White Paper: Transit Operations and Organizational Options (July 2015)

### **Strategic Vision Framework Briefing Book**

- Briefing Book PowerPoint presentation (November 2015)





Appendix A: Priority Implementation Tactics (continued)

Core Themes	Key Strategies	Priority Implementation Tactics (Years 1-5)																			
		Tactic Group																			
		Improve perceived safety, security, and cleanliness of the regional transit system	Develop a Regional Transit Network and Service Plan	Use regional transit to promote economic development	Evaluate and implement cost-effectiveness measures	Evaluate and pursue new and expanded funding sources	Become an industry-leading transit agency	Ongoing engagement													
Theme 5: Innovative Programs & Partnerships	Strategy 5.1: Integrate transit investments with the regional economic development strategy.					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Strategy 5.2: Pursue public-public partnerships (including school districts and UNM/GNM) to offer free/discounted transit passes, joint marketing, and education.	✓	✓	✓																	
	Strategy 5.3: Pursue public-private partnerships (including major employers) to fund targeted service to employment centers, transit benefits to employees, and joint marketing.	✓	✓	✓																	
Theme 6: Industry-Leading Knowledge & Practice	Strategy 6.1: Conduct orientation and on-going professional development for staff and board, including in-person visits with peer agencies.																				
	Strategy 6.2: Broaden the stakeholder perspectives provided to Rio Metro leadership and create opportunities for ongoing engagement and leadership development.																				
	Strategy 6.3: Become a resource for local jurisdictions to support best practice pilot programs, staff training, and implementation of Vision Plan priorities.																				

# Appendix B: Future Phase Implementation Tactics

✓ = Directly supports Key Strategy

✓ = Indirectly supports Key Strategy

Core Themes	Key Strategies	Future Phase Implementation Tactics																			
		Tactic 1: Allow all-door boarding on buses and specify low-floor buses with curb-level boarding to reduce dwell time.	Tactic 2: Install signal pre-empt on buses and specify low-floor buses with curb-level boarding to reduce dwell time.	Tactic 3: Work with local communities to get more dedicated bus lanes to remove buses from congested mixed-flow lanes to reduce level time.	Tactic 4: Work with other transit providers to develop better coordinated schedules to improve transfer efficiency.	Tactic 5: Invest in signal improvements to maintain rolling stock in a state of Good Repair as possible with auto trips.	Tactic 6: Increase signage to allow for more regular inspection and timely cleaning and maintenance of passenger environment.	Tactic 7: Prioritize public art and placemaking investments at stations and stops.	Tactic 8: Develop a single-schedule map regional fare payment method, and other other modes and service providers.	Tactic 9: Implement wayfinding and signage to improve legibility and usability of the system and create consistent branding across all modes and providers.	Tactic 10: Increase frequency of Rail Runner service.	Tactic 11: Implement regional BRT network to urban areas.	Tactic 12: Implement other regional premium services such as commuter express buses to extend end-of-line services to smaller communities and rural areas.	Tactic 13: Create high-frequency local networks in urban areas with transit-supportive policies (land use, parking management, etc.)	Tactic 14: Develop service expansion plans for smaller communities and rural areas based on cost recovery thresholds (RBD).	Tactic 15: Partner with MPO and ABQ/RIDE to develop a regional TMO/TMA with dedicated staff to serve as a regional Clearhouse for TDM services, technical assistance, marketing and pooled funding.	Tactic 16: Develop service expansion plans for smaller communities and rural areas based on cost recovery thresholds (RBD).	Tactic 17: Partner with MPO and ABQ/RIDE to develop a regional TMO/TMA with dedicated staff to serve as a regional Clearhouse for TDM services, technical assistance, marketing and pooled funding.	Tactic 18: Develop service expansion plans for smaller communities and rural areas based on cost recovery thresholds (RBD).	Tactic 19: Partner with MPO and ABQ/RIDE to develop a regional TMO/TMA with dedicated staff to serve as a regional Clearhouse for TDM services, technical assistance, marketing and pooled funding.	Tactic 20: Develop service expansion plans for smaller communities and rural areas based on cost recovery thresholds (RBD).
 <p>Theme 1: Exceptional Customer Experience</p>	Strategy 1.1: Make transit trips as convenient and time-competitive as possible with auto trips.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Strategy 1.2: Focus on safety, attractiveness, cleanliness, comfort, and tailored amenities both on vehicles and at stops/stations.	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓		✓	✓								✓
	Strategy 1.3: Improve schedules, service information, and transit awareness through coordination with other transit providers to make using transit as easy as possible.		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓							
 <p>Theme 2: Transformative Regional Services</p>	Strategy 2.1: Expand "regional priority network" to connect key centers and corridors, including added Rail Runner service.						✓							✓	✓	✓					
	Strategy 2.2: Expand local circulators to connect the regional network with residential areas and smaller/rural communities.						✓										✓	✓	✓		
	Strategy 2.3: Support regional transportation demand management (TDM) programs, bicycle/pedestrian, and first/last mile programs to improve access to fixed-route transit.								✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Appendix B: Future Phase Implementation Tactics (continued)

✓ = Directly supports Key Strategy

✓ = Indirectly supports Key Strategy

Core Themes	Key Strategies	Future Phase Implementation Tactics																				
		Tactic: Allow all-door boarding on buses and specify low-floor buses with curb-level boarding to reduce dwell time.	Tactic: Install signal pre-empt on buses and specify low-floor buses with curb-level boarding to reduce dwell time.	Tactic: Work with local communities to get more dedicated bus lanes to remove buses from congested mixed flow lanes to reduce travel time.	Tactic: Work with other transit providers to develop better coordinated schedules to improve transfer efficiency.	Tactic: Invest in capital improvements to maintain rolling stock/rail in a State of Good Repair to reduce breakdown/down time and increase service reliability and schedule adherence.	Tactic: Implement additional service to reduce headways and thereby reduce total travel time.	Tactic: Invest in capital improvements to maintain rolling stock/rail in a State of Good Repair as possible (double tracking, centralized traffic control, etc.)	Tactic: Negotiate MOUs, MOAs and contracts with other agencies to improve Rail Runner efficiency and reduce maintenance with auto trips.	Tactic: Increase funding to allow for more regular inspection and timely cleaning and maintenance of passenger environment.	Tactic: Prioritize public art and placemaking investments at stations and stops.	Tactic: Develop a single-schedule map regional fare payment method, and other departments field offices.	Tactic: Develop a single customer service number and quickly direct callers to local other modes and service providers.	Tactic: Implement wayfinding and signage to improve legibility and usability of the system and create consistent branding across all modes and providers.	Tactic: Increase frequency of Rail Runner service.	Tactic: Implement regional BRT network to urban areas.	Tactic: Implement other regional propulsion services such as commuter express buses to extend end-of-line services to suburban communities.	Tactic: Create high-frequency local networks in urban areas with transit-supportive policies (land use, parking management, etc.)	Tactic: Develop service expansion plans for smaller communities and rural areas based on cost-recovery thresholds (TRD).	Tactic: Partner with MPO and ABQ RIDE to develop regional TMO/TMA with dedicated and pooled funding.		
 <b>Theme 3:</b> Strong Transit-Centered Communities	<b>Strategy 3.1:</b> Leverage existing MOA relationship with MRCOG to better integrate regional transit planning with local land use planning / design.	✓	✓						✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	<b>Strategy 3.2:</b> Increase support for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in areas well served by transit.																✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	<b>Strategy 3.3:</b> Promote better pedestrian and bicycle connections to the regional transit system to improve public health outcomes, decrease social / economic isolation, and reduce household transportation costs.																✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
 <b>Theme 4:</b> Sound Financial Stewardship	<b>Strategy 4.1:</b> Pursue efficiency gains across all modes (rail, bus, and demand-response service).	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓							✓	✓	
	<b>Strategy 4.2:</b> Seek new and expanded revenue sources (including local & regional, state & federal, and public-private partnerships) to diversify the funding base and provide a stable funding source for Vision Plan implementation.								✓	✓											✓	✓
	<b>Strategy 4.3:</b> Pursue most cost-effective agency structure, potentially including independence from MRCOG, acquisition of capital assets from NMDOT, and enhanced coordination/consolidation with ABQ RIDE.																					





## Appendix B: Future Phase Implementation Tactics (continued)

✓ = Directly supports Key Strategy

✓ = Indirectly supports Key Strategy

Core Themes	Key Strategies	Future Phase Implementation Tactics																			
		Tactic: Develop a comprehensive bicycle program to improve transit bike integration (e.g. bikes on buses, bike parking, bike sharing, bike connections to transit nodes, etc.)	Tactic: Partner with MPO/PO to provide dedicated staff to focus on land use transit integration, including providing technical assistance to local communities, planning initiatives, and development review processes	Tactic: Partner with MPO/PO to provide dedicated staff to focus on land use transit integration, including providing technical assistance to local communities, planning initiatives, and development review processes	Tactic: Partner with MPO and local jurisdictions to conduct a comprehensive inventory of pedestrian/bicycle needs and issues	Tactic: Partner with local jurisdictions and school districts to address priority throughout life region	Tactic: Partner with local jurisdictions and school districts to address priority throughout life region	Tactic: Develop level of service targets appropriate for different modes and corridors or a significant loss of funding	Tactic: Create "Worst Case Scenario" Service Plan to prioritize service in the event of a significant loss of funding	Tactic: Expand high-visibility transit programs in partnership with ABO, RIDE, and HES (Institutes of Higher Education)	Tactic: Partner with UNM/CNM for cost-sharing on expanded services targeted to their community organizations to build capacity and create incentives around P3	Tactic: Work with public agencies to develop and implement transit-supportive policies	Tactic: Work with public agencies to develop and implement transit-supportive policies	Tactic: Expand the Smart Business Partnership Program to include dedicated staff changes to agency charter to create board and seat dedicated to specific skill sets, circumstances (e.g. private sector, transit riders, educational institutions, etc.)	Tactic: Develop charter for Executive Leadership Committee and begin recruiting members funding and/or staff resources to local communities to further transit-supportive policy and implementation	Tactic: Partner with MPO/PO to develop a technical assistance program to provide grant funding and/or staff resources to local communities to further transit-supportive policy and implementation	Tactic: Continue engaging stakeholder engagement				
 <p>Theme 5: Innovative Programs &amp; Partnerships</p>	Strategy 5.1: Integrate transit investments with the regional economic development strategy.	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Strategy 5.2: Pursue public-public partnerships (including school districts and UNM/CNM) to offer free/discounted transit passes, joint marketing, and education.	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Strategy 5.3: Pursue public-private partnerships (including major employers) to fund targeted service to employment centers, transit benefits to employees, and joint marketing.	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
 <p>Theme 6: Industry-Leading Knowledge &amp; Practice</p>	Strategy 6.1: Conduct orientation and on-going professional development for staff and board, including in-person visits with peer agencies.																✓			✓	
	Strategy 6.2: Broaden the stakeholder perspectives provided to Rio Metro leadership and create opportunities for ongoing engagement and leadership development.											✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Strategy 6.3: Become a resource for local jurisdictions to support best practice pilot programs, staff training, and implementation of Vision Plan priorities.	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	



## TAB 4

### STAFF ANALYSIS OF R-15-11 RMRTD

#### **Requested Action**

Approval of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Policy for Soliciting and Considering Public Comment on Fare Increases and Major Service Changes

#### **Reason for Request**

- In accordance with the Regional Transit District Act, 73-25-5 NMSA 1978, the RMRTD Board is vested with the duty of the establishment of policies regarding fees, toll, rates and charges and the approval of significant route or schedule changes affecting more than twenty-five percent of a regional transit system
- As a recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds, the RMRTD is required to comply with the public comment requirements of 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(c)(1)(I), which mandates a locally developed process to consider public comment before raising fares or carrying out major reductions in transportation service
- During the 2015 RMRTD Triennial Review by the Federal Transit Administration, RMRTD was found to not have a locally developed policy for soliciting and considering public comment on fare increases and major service changes and a deficiency was noted on the final report with a corrective action due date of January 27, 2016

#### **Review / Analysis**

Approving R-15-11 will bring RMRTD into compliance with 49 U.S.C Section 5307(c)(1)(I) and will close the deficiency noted on the FTA 2015 triennial review of RMRTD



**Resolution: R-15-11 RMRTD**

1       **APPROVING THE RIO METRO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT POLICY FOR**  
2       **SOLICITING AND CONSIDERING PUBLIC COMMENT ON FARE INCREASES AND**  
3       **MAJOR SERVICE REDUCTIONS**  
4

5       **WHEREAS**, the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD) was formed in  
6 accordance with the Regional Transit District Act, 73-25-1 to 73-25-18 NMSA 1978, and  
7 is a political subdivision of the State of New Mexico; and

8       **WHEREAS**, in accordance with the Regional Transit District Act, 73-25-5 NMSA  
9 1978, the RMRTD Board is vested with the duty of the establishment of policies  
10 regarding fees, toll, rates and charges and the approval of significant route or schedule  
11 changes affecting more than twenty-five percent of a regional transit system; and

12       **WHEREAS**, as a recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds, the  
13 RMRTD is required to comply with the public comment requirements of 49 U.S.C.  
14 Section 5307(c)(1)(I), which mandates a locally developed process to consider public  
15 comment before raising fares or carrying out major reductions in transportation service;

16       **NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIO METRO REGIONAL**  
17 **TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:**

18 The Rio Metro Regional Transit District Board of Directors hereby approves the policy  
19 for Soliciting and Considering Public Comment on Fare Reductions and Major Service  
20 Changes (attached hereto as Exhibit A) and any modifications to the policy required by  
21 the Federal Transit Administration to comply with 49 U.S.C. Section 5307(c)(1)(I).

22  
23

24           **PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015 by the  
25 Board of Directors of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District.

---

Rey Garduño  
Chair  
RMRTD Board of Directors

ATTEST:

---

Dewey V. Cave  
Chief Executive Officer

## **RIO METRO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT POLICY FOR SOLICITING AND CONSIDERING PUBLIC COMMENT ON FARE INCREASES AND MAJOR SERVICE REDUCTIONS**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD) is committed to providing opportunities for the public to comment on proposed fare increases and major service reductions. RMRTD will consider these comments before implementing changes.

RMRTD considers a major service reduction as follows:

1. Commuter Rail – a 25% reduction in service miles
2. Commuter Bus – a 25% reduction in service miles or elimination of a route
3. Demand Response – a 25% reduction in available service hours as measure by typical daily usage.

*Exemptions:*

- Discontinuance of Temporary Services, Demonstration Services and Pilot Projects that will be or have been in effect for less than a year
- Initiation/Discontinuance of Promotional Fares
- Natural of Catastrophic Disasters that may force the suspension of transit services for public safety or technical issues
- Temporary Route Detours

The Policy for Soliciting and Considering Public Comment on Fare Increases and Major Service Reductions is presented to complement the RMRTD Title VI Policy and the notice; opportunity for comment requirements of the New Mexico Regional Transit District Act, 73-25-14 NMSA 1978. This plan is not intended to supersede RMRTD's Title VI policy nor the notice; opportunity for comment requirements of the New Mexico Regional Transit District Act, 73-25-14 NMSA 1978.

Outside of this policy, RMRTD provides public outreach and other engagement activities to solicit public comment regarding, long range planning, the annual program of projects development, project development, project implementation, fare structure and service changes that do not meet the definition of major service reductions, etc.

### **1.2 Solicitation and Consideration of Public Comment**

The RMRTD shall solicit and consider public comments prior to implementing a transit fare increase and/or any major service reduction in transit services in the manner provided herein.

### **1.3 Public Meeting**

At least one public meeting with RMRTD shall be conducted prior to the implementation of a transit fare increase, and/or any major service reduction. Notice of the meeting time and place shall be given by publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the RMRTD service area at least 14 days in advance of the public meeting. The notice shall generally describe the nature of the proposed action, shall state that public comments will be accepted prior to and at the meeting, shall provide an address for the submission of comments prior to the meeting, and shall describe the means of obtaining and/or the location of additional information about the proposed action. The meeting shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable laws, regulations and RMRTD procedures. Mailed notices shall also be given to any persons who have filed written requests with the RMRTD for such notices. The RMRTD may provide additional public notice by posting the public notice on buses, trains, transit stops and other locations expected to be viewed by users of transit services. RMRTD may also at its discretion conduct one or more public workshops prior to the public meeting to inform transit users and the general public of proposed fare increases or major service reductions and to accept and consider public comment on the proposed changes

### **1.4 Consideration of Public Comments**

For all fare changes and major service reductions, the public comments received will be written and reported to the RMRTD Board of Directors during a regularly scheduled board meeting. Staff analysis summarizing the comments will be prepared to accompany the report. Additional public comments will be accepted during the Board meeting. The Board of Directors will consider and, if necessary, act on the comments and staff reports prior to implementing a fare change or major service reduction.



## TAB 5

### STAFF ANALYSIS OF R-15-12 RMRTD

#### **Requested Action**

Approval of the FY 2015 RMRTD Budget Adjustment

#### **Reason for Request**

- An adjustment is necessary to accurately reflect changes in actual revenues and expenditures.

#### **Review / Analysis**

The proposed change will adjust the FY -2015 Budget and bring revenues and expenditures in line with actual FY 2015 figures.



**Resolution: R-15-12 RMRTD**

1 **ADJUSTING THE RIO METRO REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT (RMRTD) FISCAL**  
2 **YEAR 2015 BUDGET (FIRST BUDGET ADJUSTMENT)**  
3

4 **WHEREAS**, the RMRTD Board of Directors approved the RMRTD State Fiscal  
5 Year 2015 Budget at their May 16, 2014 meeting by passing RMRTD resolution R-14-  
6 11; and

7 **WHEREAS**, Changes to the RMRTD FY 2015 budget are necessary to  
8 accurately reflect actual revenues and expenditures; and

9 **WHEREAS**, RMRTD Budget adjustments must be approved by the Board of  
10 Directors

11 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE RIO METRO REGIONAL**  
12 **TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS THAT:**

13 The RMRTD Fiscal Year 2015 Budget is adjusted as indicated in Exhibit A and  
14 Exhibit B attached hereto.

15 **PASSED, ADOPTED, AND APPROVED** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of November 2015 by the  
16 Board of Directors of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District.

---

Rey Garduño  
Chair  
RMRTD Board of Directors

ATTEST:

---

Dewey V. Cave  
Chief Executive Officer

RMRTD Rail Budget to Actual	Budget FY15	Actual FY15	Balance Budget to Actual	Adjusted FY15 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>				
Federal Revenue	24,394,000	11,634,980		
State Revenue	2,110,000	864,704		
GRT Rail Revenue	13,603,000	14,618,648		
BNSF/Amtrak Revenue	1,800,000	2,060,842		
Farebox Revenue	3,149,000	2,587,198		
Bike Locker Revenue		2,275		
Special Projects Revenue		108,342		
Advertising Revenue	75,000	80,846		
Permitting Revenue		272,608		
Misc Revenue	<u>21,000</u>	<u>21,120</u>		
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>45,152,000</b>	<b>32,251,562</b>	<b>(12,900,438)</b>	<b>32,251,562</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
MRCOG Salaries & Benefits	1,356,000	1,219,996		
Services - Professional/Printing/Advertising	446,000	514,188		
Comm - IT Communications	477,000	544,122		
Utilities -	266,000	269,241		
Travel - Employee	11,000	11,054		
Other - indirect/supplies/misc expenses	380,000	388,284		
Other - Insurance	3,287,000	3,090,394		
Other - Fuel & Lubricants	3,600,000	2,579,352		
Herzog - Management Fee	16,899,000	16,800,858		
Recon Items - Rental Expenses	200,000	181,941		
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>26,922,000</b>	<b>25,599,431</b>	<b>1,322,569</b>	<b>25,599,431</b>
<b>Capital Projects</b>				
NMRX Capital Plan	4,816,000	3,344,560		
Crossings (including section 130)	2,110,000	2,113,169		
TAM	399,000	0		
Security	121,000			
Rehab/Renovate Rail Station	179,000	16,500		
Associated Transit Improvements	113,000	0		
Capital - Fare Rev Collections Equip	0	96,072		
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>7,738,000</b>	<b>5,570,301</b>		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>34,660,000</b>	<b>31,169,732</b>	<b>3,490,268</b>	<b>31,169,732</b>
<b>Revenues over Expenditures</b>		<b>1,081,830</b>		<b>1,081,830</b>
<b>Ending Fund Balance</b>		<b>1,081,830</b>		

RMRTD Transit Budget to Actual	FY15 Budget	Actuals	Balance Budget to Actual	Adjusted FY 15 Budget
<b>Revenues</b>				
Federal Revenue	6,781,614	2,551,240		
GRT Fund Balance above Reserve	6,522,000	-		
GRT Transit Revenue	9,300,000	11,222,538		
Farebox Revenue	96,000	96,894		
Special Projects Revenue		16,700		
Advertising Revenue		6,230		
UNM/CNM Partnership Contribution		150,000		
Interest Income - Bank		345		
Lease Income		53,930		
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>22,699,614</b>	<b>14,097,877</b>	<b>(8,601,737)</b>	<b>14,097,877</b>
<b>Expenses</b>				
Salaries and Benefits	3,570,000	3,427,522		
Services - Professional/Printing/Advertising	850,000	753,675		
Services - All Aboard America	1,688,000	1,442,530		
Services - ABQ Ride	4,755,000	4,755,000		
Services - MPO Transportation	160,000	159,621		
Services - Purple Route Park & Ride	108,000	105,493		
Comm - IT Communications	295,000	280,528		
Travel - Employee	30,000	29,444		
Other - Indirect/supplies/misc expenses	1,292,773	1,275,033		
Other - Fuel & Lubricants	200,000	177,667		
Other - Tires & Tubes	16,000	15,615		
Other - Repair & Maintenance	120,000	109,520		
Capital - Purchases \$5000 and Over	40,000	23,665		
Capital - Revenue Vehicles	1,121,485	-		
Capital - Equipment/Street Furniture/Stops	292,000	-		
Recon Items - Building Lease	40,000	37,291		
Recon Items - Purchase Agreement Lease	154,000	153,420		
Recon Items - Property Lease		-		
Recon Items - Rental Expenses	20,000	16,608		
I25 Pdn Corridors, Journal Center, UNM/CNM	1,053,371	-		
UNM/CNM/Sunport BRT	1,053,371	-		
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>16,859,000</b>	<b>12,762,631</b>	<b>4,096,369</b>	<b>12,762,631</b>
<b>Revenues over Expenditures</b>		<b>1,335,246</b>		<b>1,335,246</b>
<b>RMRTD Capital and Operating Fund Balance</b>		<b>10,396,881</b>		



## TAB 6

### STAFF ANALYSIS OF RIO METRO BOARD OF DIRECTORS HANDBOOK

#### **Requested Action:**

Staff is asking board members to review the draft *Board of Directors Handbook* and submit any comments via email to Grant Brodehl (gbrodehl@mrcog-nm.gov) prior to Friday, December 18, 2015.

#### **Reason for Request:**

- *Long-Term Strategic Vision* Key Strategy 6.1 states that Rio Metro should, “Conduct orientation and on-going professional development for staff and Board...” The *Board of Directors Handbook* is the first step toward implementing this strategy.

#### **Review/Analysis:**

Early in the development of the *Long-Term Strategic Vision*, several board members and stakeholders noted the lack of a formal orientation program for the Board of Directors. In response to this need, the *Board of Directors Handbook* was drafted to give new and existing board members an overview of Rio Metro’s regional role, history, unique mix of transit services, board structure and function, employees and transit partners, financial outlook, and upcoming major projects.

While many transit agencies provide orientation training to their boards—typically through a combination of presentations and written materials that concentrate on procedural and fiduciary responsibilities—Rio Metro’s *Board of Directors Handbook* intentionally strikes a more conversational tone. Rather than merely focusing on dotting the i’s and crossing the t’s, the handbook seeks to clearly and more meaningfully convey Rio Metro’s purpose and value to the region.

Any comments that staff receive from board members will be reviewed and incorporated into the handbook so that it may be finalized in time for the January 15, 2016 board meeting. Concurrently, the handbook and other important reference documents will be posted online.

Staff anticipates updating the handbook annually as key transit statistics and budgetary numbers are updated, new members join the board, and new projects and vision tactics are implemented.



*Board of Directors Handbook*  
*January 2016*



**RIO METRO**  
REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

### *Mission*

*Rio Metro collaborates to provide safe, accessible, efficient, and innovative transportation services for the benefit of our diverse local communities and the regional economy.*

### *Vision*

*Rio Metro is a leader moving our region forward, connecting our diverse communities, and supporting sustainable prosperity.*



# *Greetings from the Director (SAMPLE)*

Dear Board Member,

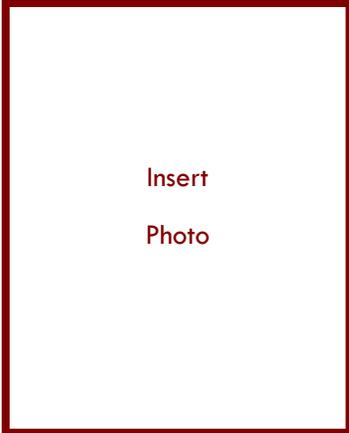
It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Rio Metro Regional Transit District. You are entering the Board of Directors at a unique time. Within the last decade, our region has witnessed a decline in the vehicle miles traveled per person, all while transit ridership and passenger miles traveled have risen dramatically. At the same time, both “millennials” who are now entering the workforce and seniors who are growing in number are expressing a greater desire for the types of transit services that Rio Metro and its partners provide. Furthermore, Rio Metro’s newly adopted *Long-Term Strategic Vision*—developed last year with considerable board member and stakeholder input—presents a bold vision for the next decade and beyond, while embracing goals, strategies and tactics that will enable us to achieve this vision.

As a board member, you have the privilege to lead Rio Metro through this time of opportunity, as we strive to play a greater role in how people travel within, to and through central New Mexico. To prepare you for this effort, this handbook provides an overview of Rio Metro’s history, services, partners, customers, finances, vision and initiatives. It also describes your role and how you can best advocate for the transit needs of your constituents and the region.

I recognize that your board appointment comes in addition to your responsibilities as an elected official, and for that reason I appreciate your participation all the more. My staff and I welcome your active engagement as we work together to create a first-class transit network.

Sincerely,

Terry Doyle, Director



Insert  
Photo

# *Welcome to the Board of Directors (SAMPLE)*

Dear Fellow Board Member,

In 2015, this board drafted and adopted a strategic vision that aims to transform transit's role in our region. While improved mobility for all constituents, young and old, is at the heart of this vision, we believe creating a robust transit network is about more than just having the freedom to travel. For example, many traditionally car-centered metropolitan areas are learning that quality transit can be part of a larger strategy to attract new business, retain tomorrow's workforce and promote economic prosperity.

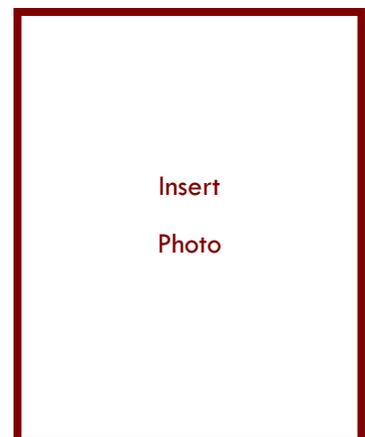
As we begin to implement this vision in 2016, I encourage you to consider how Rio Metro can help our region realize similar benefits. Whether you represent a rural area, small town or major city, your local perspective and understanding of your constituents' needs will contribute to our shared and lasting success. However, this can only happen through your regular participation.

Although the demands of this board may seem relatively small when compared to your elected office, I encourage you not to overlook this opportunity. Together, we can chart a course for public transportation that will make central New Mexico an even better place to call home.

I look forward to serving alongside you.

Sincerely,

Chair



# Contents

Why Transit? .....	1
Our History .....	2
Our Services.....	3
Overview.....	3
New Mexico Rail Runner Express.....	5
Bus Routes.....	6
Dial-a-Ride .....	7
Community Transportation.....	7
ABQ RIDE .....	8
Our Board of Directors.....	9
Structure .....	9
Responsibilities & Opportunities.....	10
Relationship to the Chief Executive Officer.....	11
Board Meeting Expectations .....	11
Our Employees .....	12
Our Partners.....	14
Mid-Region Council of Governments.....	14
North Central Regional Transit District.....	15
New Mexico Department of Transportation.....	15
Herzog Transit Services.....	16
All Aboard America .....	17
Our Customers .....	18
Our Finances .....	20
Our New Strategic Vision.....	22
Our 2016 Initiatives .....	23
Positive Train Control.....	23
Albuquerque Rapid Transit--UNM/CNM Bus Rapid Transit .....	23
Mobile Ticketing App & Transit Vehicle Tracking .....	24
Appendix A: Staff Contacts.....	25
Appendix B: Recommended Resources.....	27
Appendix C: Board Member Directory .....	29



## *Why Transit?*

According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), Americans took 10.8 billion trips by transit in 2014, marking a 39% increase since 1995. Perhaps surprisingly, central New Mexico outpaced the nation during that same period. Transit ridership grew by 123% from 6.5 million to 14.5 million, while passenger miles traveled grew an astounding 338% from 21.5 million to 94.3 million.

What is driving this growth? Locally, the last decade brought two major transit innovations, the New Mexico Rail Runner Express and Rapid Ride bus lines. These services opened new connections between neighboring communities, and improved access to major employment centers and educational institutions. Both were also instrumental in providing viable alternatives to auto commuting—especially as gas prices soared above \$3.00 per gallon and the economy faltered during the Great Recession.

Greater use of transit is also being influenced by two pronounced demographic shifts. As confirmed by local travel surveys conducted for the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and national surveys, the Millennial generation, which recently entered the workforce, has a stronger preference than previous generations for urban lifestyles that offer robust transit services and other travel choices. At the other end of the spectrum, Baby Boomers and seniors who traditionally lived more auto-dependent lifestyles are using transit at greater rates than they once did.

In addition to these trends, APTA notes a variety of benefits that individuals, families and communities are realizing by embracing transit, including:

- \$30 million in increased business sales for every \$10 million in transit capital investment;
- 42% higher values, on average, for homes located near highly frequent transit service;
- An annual 4,800-pound carbon emission reduction for every 20-mile commute that shifts from auto to transit;
- \$10,000 annual savings for a two-person household that downsizes to one car;
- Transportation for those who cannot afford or choose not to own a vehicle, or for those who are no longer able to drive; and
- Lower fuel consumption and congestion costs.

### *Rider Spotlight—Baby Haiden*

After Bianca Gachupin and Julian Shiye's baby, Haiden Braylee, was born 13 weeks premature, they relied on Rio Metro's services to visit their daughter in Presbyterian Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit almost daily. Not owning a car, Bianca and Julian took bus route 204 from Zia Pueblo, boarded the Rail Runner at the Sandoval County/US 550 Station in Bernalillo, exited the train at the Downtown Albuquerque Station, and took an ABQ RIDE bus to the hospital. According to Bianca, "The Rail Runner was there for us when we needed it most...with the train, we were able to watch her grow and get healthy." Today, Haiden is able to take the train with her parents, "But now," Bianca says, "we ride with smiles on our faces".



## Our History

In 2003, the New Mexico legislature passed the Regional Transit District Act, authorizing the creation of multi-jurisdictional transit agencies. The following year, the legislature gave regional transit districts the authority to levy up to a one-half cent gross receipts tax. These two actions paved the way for the formation of the Mid-Region Transit District (encompassing Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia counties), which was certified by the New Mexico Transportation Commission in March 2005.

These early milestones were directly related to the development of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express. During that same period, the Mid-Region Council of Governments was proceeding with the planning, design, construction and initial operation of the Rail Runner on behalf of the New Mexico Department of Transportation. In July 2006, Rail Runner service began between Albuquerque and Bernalillo, expanding south to Belen in February 2007 and north to Santa Fe in December 2008. In that same year, the Mid-Region Transit District was renamed the Rio Metro Regional Transit District and voters approved a 1/8<sup>th</sup>-cent gross receipts tax. Half of these new revenues were committed to the Rail Runner, and the remaining half were authorized to fund Rio Metro's system at large.

With a revenue stream secured, Rio Metro assumed operation of the Rail Runner in 2009. Shortly thereafter, Rio Metro acquired member agency bus services, including the City of Belen's, Village of Los Lunas' and the City of Rio Rancho's dial-a-ride services, and the Sandoval Easy Express commuter bus service. Funds were also used to establish ABQ RIDE and Rio Metro bus routes that connect to Rail Runner stations and also serve outlying rural communities and pueblos.

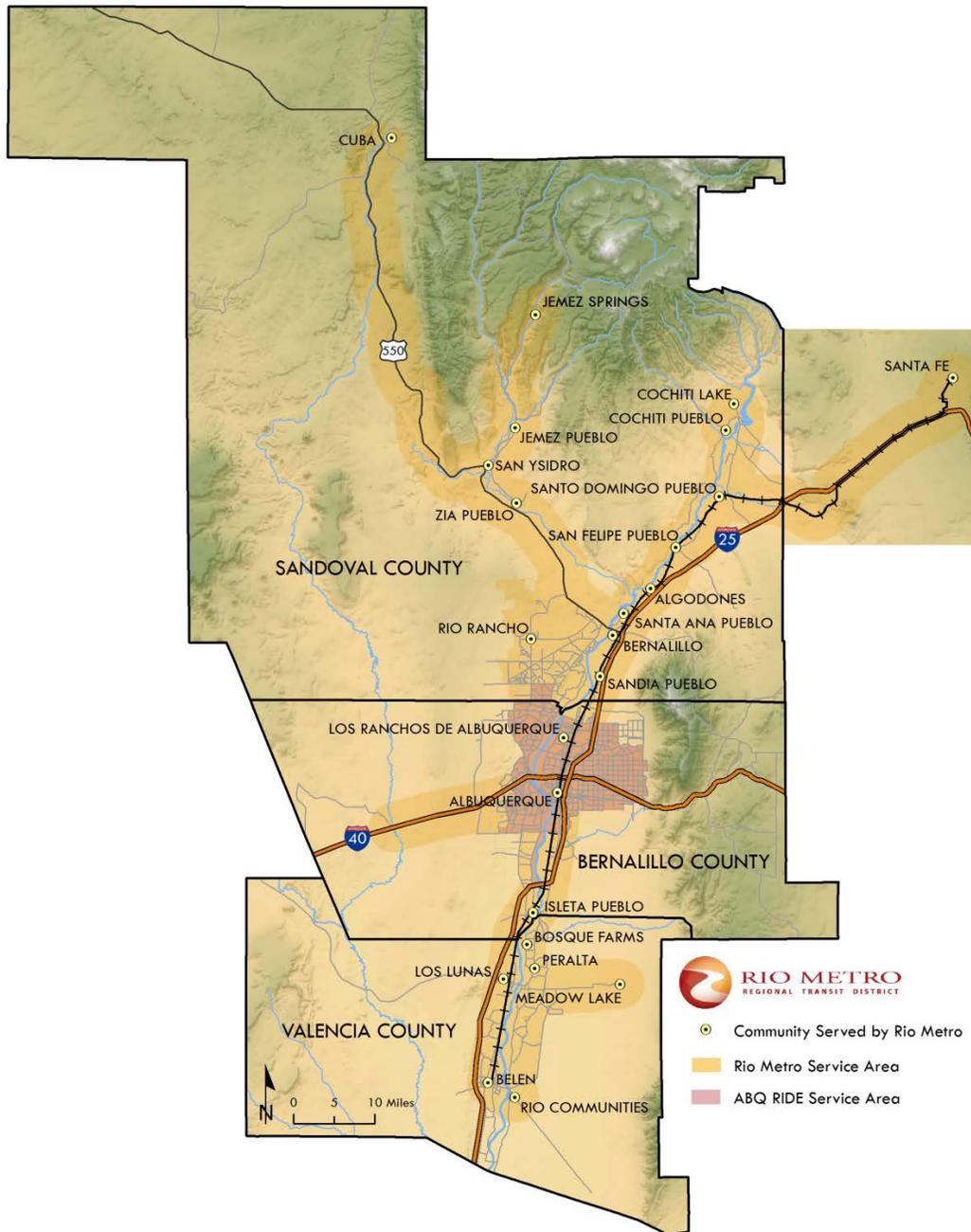
In more recent years, Rio Metro has had to enact scheduling changes and fare increases brought on by reductions in federal and state funding for Rail Runner operations. These actions by the board have brought stability to Rio Metro's financial outlook, allowing Rio Metro to now focus on implementing a long-term vision for transit in the region.



# Our Services

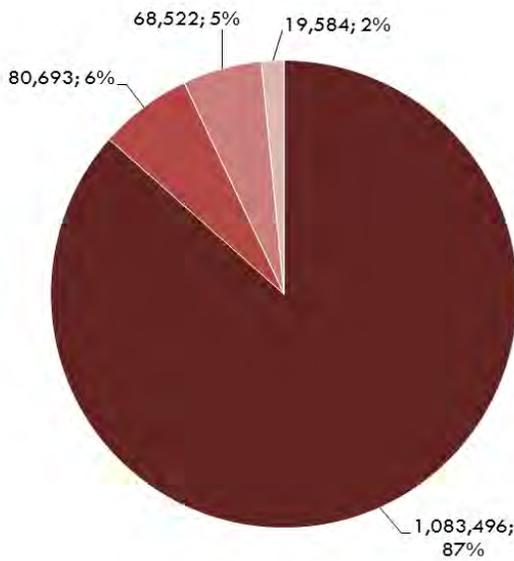
## Overview

While Rio Metro's official boundary includes Bernalillo, Sandoval and Valencia counties, its reach extends well beyond these borders. The most obvious example is Rail Runner service in Santa Fe County. However, other transit agencies, such as the North Central Transit District, NMDOT Park-and-Ride and Socorro Transit, also provide vital connections from the Rail Runner to communities like Taos, Los Alamos and Socorro, respectively. Rio Metro is truly part of a larger, interconnected transit network.

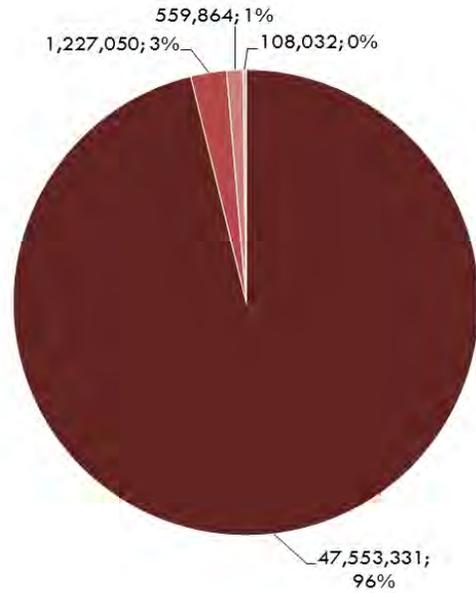


As suggested by its history, Rio Metro also provides an uncommon combination of intercity, urban, suburban, and rural transit services, including the New Mexico Rail Runner Express; eleven commuter bus routes primarily serving Sandoval and Valencia Counties; two dial-a-ride services in Valencia County and the City of Rio Rancho; and the community transportation taxi service in Bernalillo County (previously known as Job Access and Reverse Commute). Combined, these services provided 1,252,304 passenger trips and 49,448,277 passenger miles traveled in fiscal year 2014 (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014) as broken down by the charts below.

Rio Metro Passenger Trips, FY2014



Rio Metro Passenger Miles Traveled, FY2014



- Rail Runner
- Bus
- Demand Response
- Community Transportation

## *New Mexico Rail Runner Express*

The Rail Runner is—by far—Rio Metro’s most popular and well-known service. Eighty-seven percent of all Rio Metro’s passenger trips (1,083,496) and 96 percent of its passenger miles traveled (47,553,331) in FY2014 occurred on the Rail Runner. In FY2016, lifetime Rail Runner passenger trips and passenger miles are expected to exceed 9,000,000 and 400,000,000, respectively. The relatively high ratio of passenger miles to trips tellingly reveals the Rail Runner’s most defining statistic—the average passenger trip length is nearly 44 miles, which is much farther than most similarly sized commuter rail agencies.

When service began on July 14, 2006, the Rail Runner connected only three stations: Downtown Albuquerque, Los Ranchos/Journal Center and Sandoval County/US 550. Service was extended to Los Lunas and Belen in late 2006/early 2007, and Santa Fe was reached in December 2008. Today, 22 weekday, 11 Saturday, and 7 Sunday trains connect 14 stations along an approximately 100-mile corridor from Belen to Santa Fe.

As a commuter rail service, the Rail Runner is distinguished from light rail, streetcar, heavy rail (e.g., subway) and other rail technologies, because it travels upon and shares a standard gauge railway with other freight and passenger rail operators (e.g., Amtrak and BNSF); relies on diesel rather than solely electric propulsion; provides regional connections between suburban and rural communities and urban centers; generally travels longer distances with more widely spaced stations; and can travel at high speeds (up to 79 mph). Also, ticketing, fare structures and other commuter rail operational practices are commonly different than other types of rail services.

Furthermore, as the name “commuter rail” suggests, the majority of the Rail Runner’s ridership comes from workers commuting to Albuquerque and Santa Fe. However, the Rail Runner also serves New Mexicans and visitors throughout central and northern New Mexico, through its extended network of partner transit providers. In effect, the Rail Runner helps link nine counties and over 60 connecting bus routes.



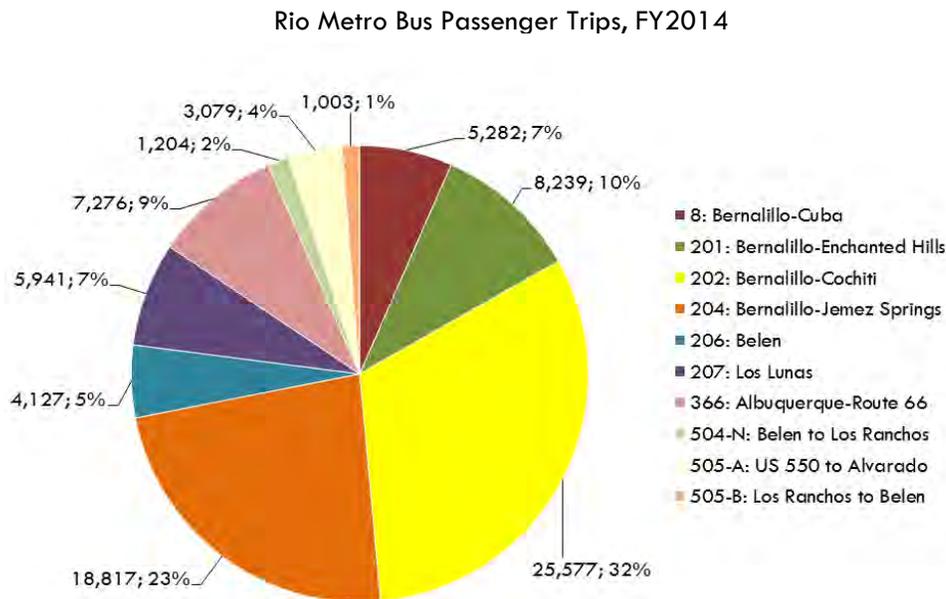
## Bus Routes

Eleven Rio Metro bus routes fan out from Rail Runner stations and other transit centers to serve outlying neighborhoods and rural communities. Four connect the Sandoval County communities and pueblos of Cuba, Jemez, Jemez Springs, San Ysidro, Zia, Santa Ana, Kewa, Cochiti, and Cochiti Lake with northern Rio Rancho, Bernalillo, and the Sandoval County/US 550 and Kewa Rail Runner stations. All or portions of these routes were originally branded as the Sandoval Easy Express, and were operated by the Mid-Region Transit District under contract with Sandoval County.

In Valencia County, two routes connect Los Lunas and Belen neighborhoods to their respective Rail Runner stations. In April 2015, a pilot route was also extended to the UNM Valencia Campus from the Los Lunas Transportation Center to take advantage of Valencia County Dial-a-Ride's most popular destination.

In Bernalillo County, one route links the Central and Unser Transit Center in Albuquerque to the Route 66 Casino Hotel. Three other routes serve Bernalillo County to and from Sandoval and Valencia counties to replace early morning Rail Runner trains that were discontinued in FY2012.

In FY2014, these routes accounted for 80,693 passenger trips (six percent of Rio Metro's ridership) broken down by the chart below.



## *Dial-a-Ride*

Generally categorized as “demand response” service, dial-a-ride is a shared-ride service that does not operate on a fixed route, but instead delivers passengers directly from their desired origin to their desired destination; however, passengers are required to schedule their trip by reservation. Rio Metro operates two dial-a-ride services that were acquired from member agencies and generally still reflect the operating characteristics established by those agencies. Valencia County Dial-a-Ride was previously operated by the City of Belen and Village of Los Lunas. It provides curb-to-curb service to riders of all ages and abilities across most of Valencia County, and is especially vital to persons living in rural communities such as Meadow Lake and El Cerro Mission who lack access to a vehicle. Rio Rancho Dial-a-Ride, formerly Rio Transit, provides door-to-door service within Rio Rancho, to the Cottonwood area, and to medical appointments in Albuquerque. This service is limited to seniors ages 55+ and individuals with disabilities ages 18+ who are Rio Rancho residents. In FY2014, both services combined to provide 68,522 passenger trips (five percent of Rio Metro’s ridership).



## *Community Transportation*

The Community Transportation program is a continuation of the Mid-Region Council of Governments’ Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program. JARC was previously a distinct federal program to provide work transportation for low-income individuals. While the federal program has been discontinued, Rio Metro continues to provide this service for Bernalillo County residents receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, those living within 150% of the Federal poverty level, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. In order for an individual to use Community Transportation’s taxi service, bus service must not be available at the time of their trip, travel time by bus would take 1.5 hours or more, or the nearest bus stop to their home or work is greater than one-quarter mile. A person can only be enrolled in the program for up to one year and may also be issued an ABQ RIDE bus pass when appropriate. In FY2014, Community Transportation provided 19,584 passenger trips (two percent of Rio Metro’s ridership).



## ABQ RIDE

Since FY2011, Rio Metro has annually contracted with its largest transit partner, ABQ RIDE, through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to provide services within Bernalillo County and southern Sandoval County, including:

- Bus routes 222, 250 and 251, which connect the Bernalillo County Station and the Sunport, the Downtown Albuquerque Station and the Sunport, and northwest Albuquerque/Rio Rancho and the Los Ranchos/Journal Center Station, respectively;
- Extending bus routes 96 and 155 from the Northwest Transit Center to the intersection of Southern and Unser boulevards in Rio Rancho during peak hours; and
- Funding support for other routes such as the 790 Blue Line Rapid Ride.

This partnership also allows all passengers in possession of a valid Rail Runner ticket to ride ABQ RIDE buses for free, and makes arrangements for “bus bridge” service in emergency situations that would require transport of Rail Runner passengers by bus.

In FY2014, Rio Metro contributed \$4,708,000 to ABQ RIDE, which accounts for a 13% share of ABQ RIDE’s \$35.6 million operating budget, 12,906,239 passenger trips, and 45,300,899 passenger miles traveled. Also, the MOU in more recent years has not restricted the use of Rio Metro’s contribution to specific routes—giving ABQ RIDE greater flexibility to leverage these local dollars against other funding sources.



It would not be fitting to conclude this section without also noting that while Rio Metro carries one-tenth the passengers of ABQ RIDE, both agencies serve similar numbers of passenger miles traveled because of trip length. In FY2014, the average ABQ RIDE passenger trip length was 3.5 miles; the average Rio Metro passenger trip length was 39.9 miles. This key difference reflects how and where each agency operates. ABQ RIDE serves the urban and suburban context of Albuquerque where origins and destinations are relatively close to one another. Rio Metro, however, tends to provide longer, regional and rural connections that link distant communities and transit systems.



# Our Board of Directors

## Structure

The Regional Transit District Act requires that the board include at least one member from each member government, and prohibits one government from holding a majority of seats if the district includes more than three governments. Expanding upon the Act, Rio Metro’s contract and bylaws allocate seats based on population, which results in 19 board members distributed across the following governments:

Board of Directors Roster (November 2015)

Member Government	Name	Title
City of Albuquerque	Richard Berry	Mayor
	Isaac Benton	Councilor, District 2
	Ray Garduño, Chair	Councilor, District 6
	Diane Gibson	Councilor, District 7
	Don Harris	Councilor, District 9
	Vacant	Vacant
City of Belen	Jerah Cordova	Mayor
Bernalillo County	Maggie Hart Stebbins, Vice Chair	Commissioner, District 3
	Debbie O'Malley	Commissioner, District 1
	Lonnie Talbert	Commissioner, District 4
Town of Bernalillo	Jack Torres	Mayor
Village of Bosque Farms	Wayne Ake	Councilor
Village of Corrales	John Alsobrook	Councilor
Village of Los Lunas	Charles Griego	Mayor
Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque	Larry Abraham	Mayor
City of Rio Rancho	Lonnie Clayton	Councilor, District 6
	Dawnn Robinson	Councilor, District 2
Sandoval County	Darryl Madalena	Commissioner, District 5
Valencia County	Charles Eaton	Commissioner, District 4

Associate Members (Non-Voting)

Member Government	Name	Title
Isleta Pueblo	Kathy Trujillo	Transportation Division Manager
North Central Regional Transit District	Anthony Mortillaro	Executive Director

The bylaws also allow the board to confer non-voting, associate membership to another government that provides financial contributions or connecting/complimentary transit services, or that is significantly impacted by Rio Metro’s services. Only two governments, Isleta Pueblo and the North Central Regional District, have been granted associate membership.

Full member governments must appoint as many elected officials to the board as they have seats. Board members, in turn, may appoint unelected officials as alternates to serve in their absence. Nevertheless, the Regional Transit District Act requires that only elected officials may vote to acquire land or issue bonds.





Board members also serve by identifying ways that Rio Metro and its member governments can align plans and capital projects to benefit both agencies. For example, a member government may be drafting a land use plan along a corridor served by a Rio Metro bus route. In this case, questions about appropriate transit-supportive land use densities, multi-modal design standards and pedestrian/bicyclist “last mile” connections can be addressed so that the existing bus route and the land uses it serves function more harmoniously.

In addition to being a good reference for board members, the American Public Transportation Association’s *Transit Board Member Handbook* highlights one other key role for board members—system innovation. An engaged board can greatly impact the future of their organization, and, in Rio Metro’s case, that opportunity is now. Rio Metro is in the midst of implementing a long-term strategic vision, which is explained in more detail in the section titled “Our New Strategic Vision”.

### *Relationship to the Chief Executive Officer*

Per Rio Metro’s founding contract, the Chief Executive Officer oversees the district’s day-to-day affairs and may be hired or removed by the board. The CEO is required by the contract to “...see that all policies, directions and orders of the board are carried out”; however, the contract also stipulates that such direction must come from the board: “Unless the board has authorized such exercise of authority, decisions or instruction of individual board members or committees shall not be binding on the Chief Executive Officer.”

These clauses highlight the unique relationship between the CEO and the Board of Directors. The CEO’s role is to take action on policies adopted by the board. In doing so, the CEO has day-to-day control over many of the topics covered in this handbook, such as hiring employees, contracting and operating services, communicating with customers, developing a budget, auditing financial records and administering board meetings. This frees the board to focus on more broad-based policies that will contribute to Rio Metro’s long-term success.

### *Board Meeting Expectations*

The Board of Directors currently meets monthly on the third Friday at noon in the MRCOG boardroom. Board meetings are led by the Chair or Vice Chair, who are voted to their respective offices each June. The Chief Executive Officer, Director and most managers are present, and the Office Manager/Board Liaison records the minutes. All meetings allow for public comment.

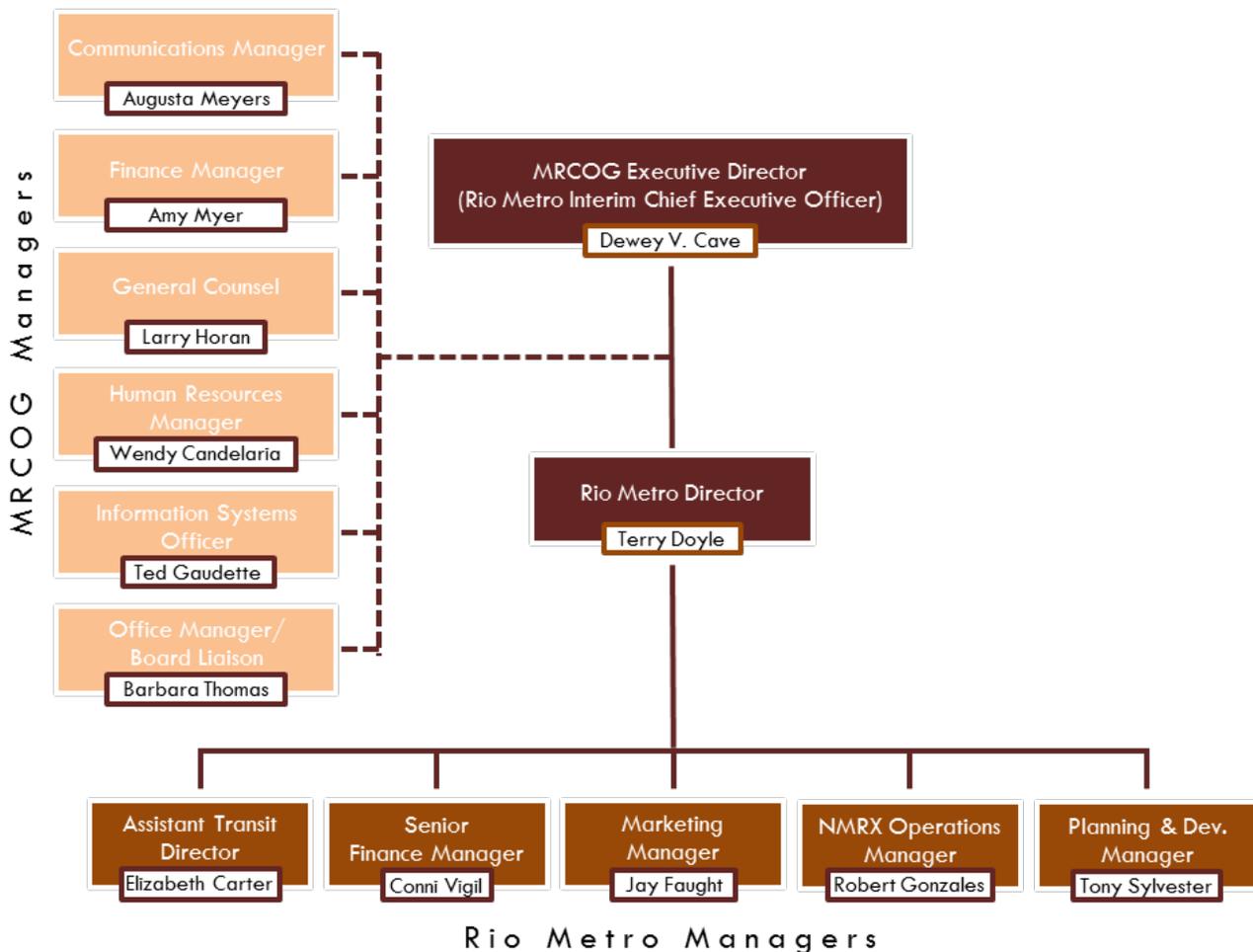
A majority of board members (10 of 19) constitutes a quorum, and is required for the board to take action on items subject to their authority. To help ensure a quorum, each board member, upon appointment to the board, must select an alternate(s) to attend board meetings in the event of their absence. When an absence arises, it is the board member’s responsibility to notify and arrange for their alternate’s attendance.

To ensure compliance with the State of New Mexico Open Meetings Act, the board adopts an Open Meetings Resolution each June that includes the meeting schedule for the upcoming fiscal year. Each meeting’s agenda packet is typically finalized and emailed to the board three days prior to the meeting, and, in the event of a cancellation, notice is also distributed by email.

# Our Employees

Although Rio Metro is an independent agency, its main office is located at the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG). This is owed, in part, to MRCOG's development and initial management of the Rail Runner prior to Rio Metro's existence. Because of this legacy, MRCOG's Executive Director continues to serve as Rio Metro's Interim Chief Executive Officer. Rio Metro and MRCOG also still pool resources by sharing communications, finance, legal, human resources, information technology and administrative personnel. However, the Director and five managers are employed full time by Rio Metro to oversee the following:

- NMRX Operations Manager: Rail Runner operations, facility maintenance, capital improvements, safety and dispatching;
- Marketing Manager: Marketing and advertising, customer service, travel demand management and graphic design;
- Planning and Development Manager: Short and long-range planning and capital project management;
- Assistant Transit Director: Contracted and directly-operated bus operations, including Valencia County Dial-a-Ride, Rio Rancho Dial-a-Ride and Community Transportation; and
- Senior Finance Manager: Budget, grants, purchasing, accounting, payroll and NTD reporting.



Employees positioned under these managers work in several locations across Rio Metro's service area. Marketing, planning, grants, finance, administrative, community transportation and Rail Runner dispatch employees work on various floors at the MRCOG building in Albuquerque. Valencia County Dial-a-Ride employees are located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of Los Lunas Transportation Center. Rio Rancho Dial-a-Ride employees are located at the Sandoval County transit building at the La Plazuela de Sandoval complex. Rail Runner operations employees are housed out of the rail yard on Iron Ave. west of Broadway Blvd. and a small building near the Los Ranchos Station, but are commonly in the field to perform their duties.

### *Employee Spotlight—Valencia County Dispatch Team*

Denise Kurtz, Martha Garley and Lupe Maltos are the friendly voices behind Rio Metro's Valencia County Dial-a-Ride service. As dispatchers, they respond to calls in English and Spanish, schedule rides, dispatch drivers, monitor radios, handle farebox deposits and much more. Prior to teaming up, Denise was a bus driver for Los Lunas Schools and Rio Metro, Martha worked as a dispatcher for Los Lunas Transportation and Lupe served in Rail Runner customer service. Today, they ensure that our clients in Valencia County receive the highest care.



## Our Partners

### Mid-Region Council of Governments

The Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) was established in 1969 to provide a regional planning forum for central New Mexico governments. In addition to Rio Metro, MRCOG is home to several important organizations including Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico, the Economic Development District and the Rural Transportation Planning Organization.

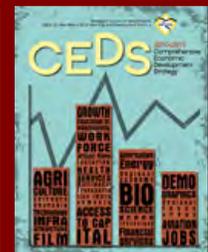
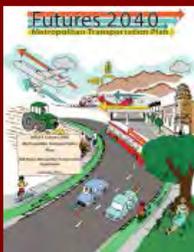
Of all MRCOG-affiliated organizations, Rio Metro coordinates most closely with the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO). MRMPO receives funds from Rio Metro to carry out transit-related planning tasks such as on-board surveys and transportation modeling for studies and grant applications. However, MRMPO is primarily responsible for completing federally-mandated transportation plans and programs that involve and affect Rio Metro, including:



- Developing and adopting the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area's long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), most recently *Futures 2040*;
- Selecting transportation projects to receive federal funding through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process; and
- Establishing roadway access and other regional transportation policies.

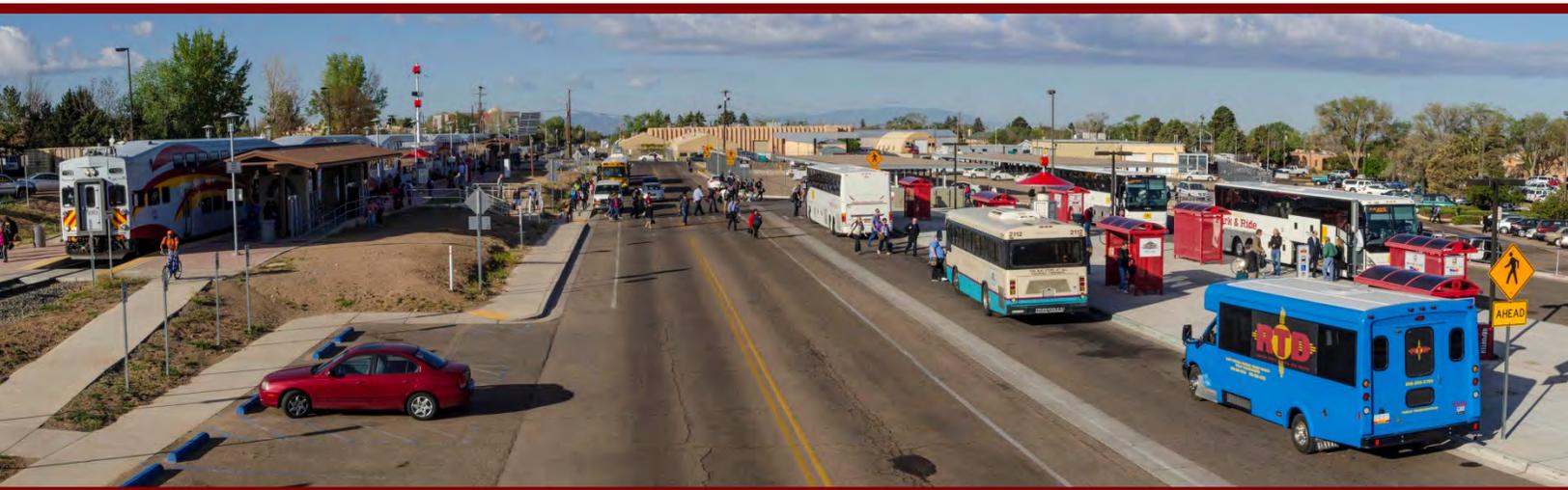
MRMPO plans and programs are approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Board (MTB), of which Rio Metro is a member. And, while many of Rio Metro's board members serve on the MTB and other MRCOG boards on behalf of their member governments, *Rio Metro is a distinct agency over which neither the MTB or MRCOG have authority.* Understandably, with several meetings at MRCOG each month, board members should not hesitate to contact Rio Metro staff if they have questions about the relationship of the MTB and Rio Metro's Board of Directors should any confusion arise.

Rio Metro also participates on three staff-level technical committees that serve the MTB. The Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) reviews and provides recommendations on items scheduled to come before the MTB. In turn, the Transportation Program Task Group is a standing technical committee that is primarily responsible for drafting and amending the TIP prior to TCC review and MTB approval. Lastly, the Congestion Management Process Committee satisfies a federal mandate to identify congested corridors and develop strategies to improve the transportation network's efficiency.



## *North Central Regional Transit District*

The North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) is a key contributor to Rio Metro's success. The NCRTD's iconic blue buses provide connections from the Rail Runner to Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe and Taos counties. Equally as important, the NCRTD dedicates nearly half of its gross receipts tax revenue to fund the Rail Runner, as Santa Fe County is not within Rio Metro's district boundary. Past contributions from NCRTD have hovered around \$2 million annually. Because of Rio Metro and the NCRTD's close relationship, Rio Metro's Transit Director is an ex officio member of the NCRTD Board of Directors. Likewise, NCRTD's Executive Director serves as an associate member of Rio Metro's board.



## *New Mexico Department of Transportation*

As the owner of all Rail Runner right-of-way, equipment and infrastructure, the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) necessarily has a close relationship with Rio Metro. Formalized most recently in a 2013 memorandum of agreement (MOA), Rio Metro is generally responsible for all Rail Runner operations, maintenance, construction, marketing, scheduling, fare policy and collection, procurement, planning, budgeting, accounting and other day-to-day activities. Rio Metro is also required to report on these activities to the New Mexico State Transportation Commission every July. In return, NMDOT allows use of its right-of-way and equipment, directs certain funds to the Rail Runner, provides project support as needed, and serves as lead negotiator with railroads and other parties. The MOA has no termination date. Instead, it requires 12 months written notice of termination by either party, except in cases of emergency. To keep up-to-date on MOA activities, NMDOT Rail and Transit Bureau and Rio Metro staff usually meet bi-weekly.



In addition to the Rail Runner, NMDOT and Rio Metro also partner to provide bus service. Rio Metro is one of many sub-recipients who receive section 5310 (seniors and individuals with disabilities) and 5311 (rural) federal formula grants that are administered by NMDOT. Rio Metro also provides funding for a portion of NMDOT Park-and-Ride's Purple Route, which, in concert with the Rail Runner, connects Albuquerque to Santa Fe and Los Alamos.

### *Herzog Transit Services*

While Rio Metro is responsible for operating the Rail Runner on behalf of NMDOT, Rio Metro does not directly operate the Rail Runner. Rather, Rio Metro contracts with Herzog Transit Services to carry out three primary responsibilities: train operations, maintenance of equipment and facilities, and maintenance of way. Herzog Transit Services also manages other commuter rail services, including the Altamont Commuter Express (Stockton, CA), the Coaster (San Diego, CA), and the Trinity Railway Express (Dallas, TX).



Although they are not Rio Metro employees, Herzog's engineers, conductors, train attendants and security officers arguably have Rio Metro's most visible roles. Besides ensuring that our customers have a great experience on the Rail Runner, they are responsible for train startup and inspections, operating the train safely and efficiently in accordance with the schedule and regulations, collecting fares, performing passenger counts, and many other tasks.



Behind the scenes, but no less important, Herzog's maintenance crews ensure that the Rail Runner remains in a state of good repair. At the most basic level, the Rail Runner's "rolling stock"—9 locomotives, 9 cab cars and 13 coach cars—need to be fueled, cleaned, and inspected on a daily basis. As the need for repairs arises, many can occur outside of the shop with minimal impact to operations. However, preventative maintenance and more significant repairs may require a vehicle to be rotated out of service or placed in the shop mid-day or overnight. Major repairs and overhauls can even necessitate transporting the vehicle back to the manufacturer. For these reasons, the Rail Runner has enough vehicles to maintain an appropriate spare ratio in the event that a vehicle must be removed from service.



Maintaining the “way”—the track, signals and other infrastructure—is equally important to the Rail Runner’s success. Herzog crews perform routine maintenance such as replacing ties, installing ballast, repairing bridges and culverts, fencing and conducting inspections. They also ensure that all signals and switches are operating correctly to maintain the safety of train passengers and road travelers. Herzog’s contract expires September 2018, but may be renewed through September 2021.

### *All Aboard America*

While Rio Metro directly operates all Valencia County bus services and the Rio Rancho Dial-a-Ride, Rio Metro contracts some bus routes to All Aboard America. All Aboard America currently operates all Sandoval County bus routes, route 366 within Bernalillo County, and routes between Bernalillo and Sandoval County. They also operate NMDOT’s Park-and-Ride routes. All Aboard America’s contract expires in 2020 with an opportunity for renewal through 2023.

**ALL ABOARD AMERICA!**



### *Partner Spotlight—NCRTD’s Mountain Trail Route*

September 26, 2015 marked the inaugural run of the North Central Regional Transit District’s Mountain Trail Route, connecting the South Capitol Rail Runner Station to Ski Santa Fe. The very first passenger trip on the Mountain Trail Route demonstrated the freedom created by Rio Metro and its partners working together. To access the Winsor Trailhead for a three-day hike, Freddy Vargas took ABQ RIDE Routes 5 and 157 to get to the Montano Transit Center, boarded the Rail Runner, and transferred to the Mountain Trail Route upon arrival at the South Capitol Station. Mr. Vargas’ review of the Mountain Trail Route: “I just think this is almost as good as green chile...”



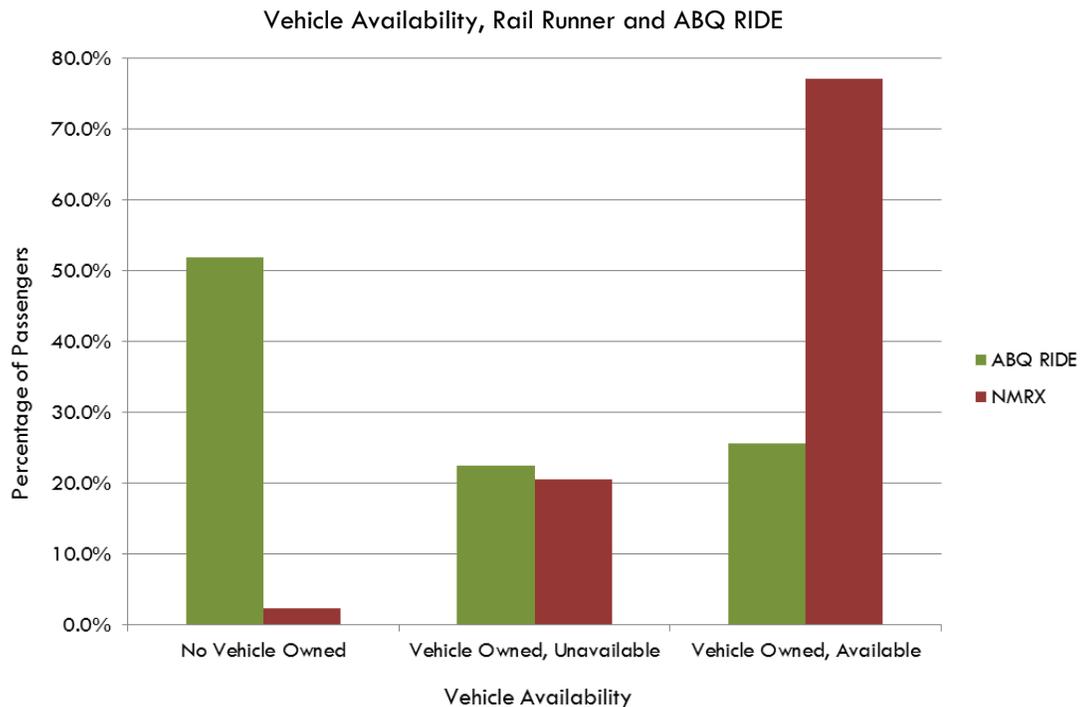
## Our Customers

Because Rio Metro exists for the benefit of its passengers, it is vitally important to know who rides Rio Metro's services, where and how they are traveling, and what they think of their experience. This is done in a variety of ways.

In 2012, with funding support from Rio Metro, the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MRMPO) performed a randomly sampled on-board survey of Rail Runner passengers to update its travel demand model. Key findings include:

- Of morning trips, 58 percent were to work and 19 percent were to college/university;
- 56 percent accessed the train by driving, carpooling or being dropped off, while 37 percent accessed the train by walking or biking;
- 52 percent of trips required a transfer to/from another transit service;
- Less than 3 percent live in households without access to a vehicle;
- 77 percent had a vehicle available to them on the day of their trip, but chose instead to take the train; and
- 67 percent are employed and 25 percent are students.

While these results are what one might expect of a commuter rail service, they stand in remarkable contrast to ABQ RIDE, whose finer-grained bus network better serves those who rely on transit as their primary means of transportation. This claim is emphasized by the following chart, which shows that Rail Runner passengers have greater rates of vehicle availability, but instead choose to forego driving (primarily because of cost as identified in other surveys). Consequentially, Rail Runner ridership is likely more susceptible to the variable costs associated with driving (e.g., lower gas prices correlate to lower ridership).



While MRMPO's survey more rigorously focuses on passenger demographics and travel patterns for the Rail Runner, Rio Metro's marketing section conducts a biennial customer survey across Rio Metro's bus and rail services that more broadly captures passengers' experiences. This survey is particularly useful for tracking Rio Metro's performance and identifying changes that can improve passenger satisfaction. The results of the customer survey are reported to the board as they become available.

Day-to-day, Rio Metro's customer service agents communicate with passengers in a variety of ways, most notably by telephone and email, but also face-to-face in the office and at community events. They are the first point of contact for many passengers. For example, when trains and buses are delayed or schedules are changed, it is their responsibility to alert passengers in the following ways:

- Message boards at all stations;
- A recorded message on the Rail Runner toll-free line;
- Text messages for specific train numbers and bus routes;
- Twitter posts @RioMetroAlerts;
- Posts on the front page of Rio Metro's website;
- Facebook, though only for major service disruptions or schedule changes; and
- Email to 10,000+ opt-in subscribers, again for major service disruptions and schedule changes.

Customer service agents also manage the bike locker program, monitor security cameras, reconnect passengers with lost items, and much more.



## *Our Finances*

As a regional transit district, Rio Metro has the authority to levy a one-half cent gross receipts tax within its district boundary. To fund existing services, voters have approved a one-eighth cent gross receipts tax, half of which must be committed to the Rail Runner. Also, as noted previously, Rio Metro receives gross receipts tax contributions from the North Central Regional Transit District to support Rail Runner operations within Santa Fe County.

Gross receipts taxes provide a relatively stable source of local income. However, they are generally tied to the health of the regional economy and can fall during economic downturns, placing added pressure on Rio Metro's services when they may be needed most.

Fares are a second source of local funding. Although fare revenue makes up a significantly smaller share of Rio Metro's local revenue than gross receipts tax, it is the funding source over which the Board of Directors has the most immediate control. For example, during the Great Recession, many transit agencies were forced to increase fares and/or cut services to offset declines in other tax-based revenues. Rio Metro similarly increased fares in 2011 to offset the loss of certain federal funds for operations. In contrast, some agencies, such as the North Central Regional Transit District, charge no fares to stimulate ridership and eliminate the expense and boarding delay associated with fare collection.

While Rio Metro has the authority to issue bonds as another source of local revenue, it does not because it has relatively few assets to serve as collateral. This is primarily because all Rail Runner vehicles and right-of-way are owned by the State of New Mexico and not Rio Metro. However, NMDOT collects fees from Amtrak and BNSF for their use of NMDOT-owned tracks. Per the MOA with NMDOT, these fees are passed along to Rio Metro on a reimbursable basis.

The largest source of revenue comes from federal grants, several of which are determined by formulas based on operating and regional characteristics (e.g., vehicle revenue miles, directional route miles, passenger miles traveled, population). Federal funds that Rio Metro commonly receives directly from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or as a sub-recipient from NMDOT include:

- 5307 Urbanized Area (capital and operations);
- 5307 Small Urbanized Area (populations less than 200,000 for capital and operations);
- 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Senior and Individuals with Disabilities;
- 5311 Other-than-Urbanized (rural) Areas (capital, operations and administration);
- 5337 State of Good Repair (capital maintenance of railroad rolling stock and way);
- 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities (capital);
- Section 130 Railroad-Highway Crossings; and
- Flex funds (e.g., CMAQ, STP-U) received through the TIP process.

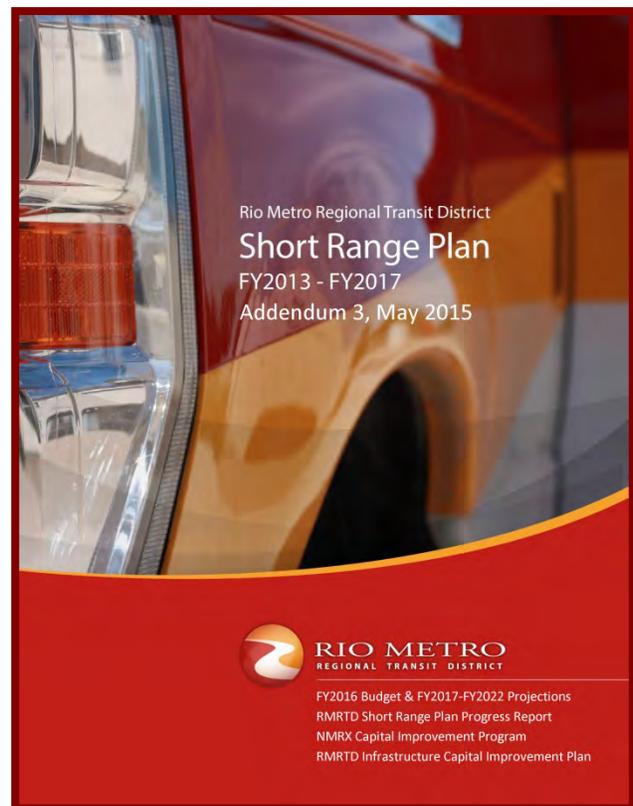
While Rio Metro could not operate its services without federal funding, accepting these funds comes with substantial obligations above and beyond state and local requirements. Civil rights, environmental, labor, procurement, property acquisition, records retention and safety, are just some of the categories of additional FTA regulation. Rio Metro is also subject to project and National Transit Database reporting, and a comprehensive federal review and inspection every three years (i.e., the triennial review).

Each fiscal year, Rio Metro separately budgets these revenues for both rail and bus services. For FY2016, the Rail Runner will receive approximately \$45.4 million in revenues (\$14 million gross receipts tax and other local funds; \$3 million fares; \$2.1 million Amtrak/BNSF fees; \$26.3 million federal funds). Rail expenditures will total \$26.7 million for operations and maintenance and \$7.7 million for capital improvements, leaving approximately \$11 million in carryover.

Bus services will receive \$22.1 million in revenue (\$15 million gross receipts tax and other local funds; \$96,000 fares; \$7 million federal funds). Bus expenditures will total \$16.1 million for operations and maintenance and \$898,000 for capital improvements, leaving approximately \$5 million as a cash reserve.

The budget appears before the board for approval each May, packaged as part Rio Metro's *Short Range Plan*. First adopted in 2012, the *Short Range Plan* is updated annually and has been revised over the years to now include four components:

1. **Rail and bus service budgets.** In addition to detailing the upcoming fiscal year's budget, this section also estimates revenues and expenditures for the following six years. This not only helps anticipate future needs, but also better aligns Rio Metro's budget with the six-year horizon of MRMPO's Transportation Improvement Program.
2. **Short Range Plan Progress Report.** When the *Short Range Plan* was originally adopted, it highlighted several projects with varying timeframes and priorities, many of which were unfunded. The progress report updates the status of these projects and their funding levels, and incorporates new projects as needed.
3. **New Mexico Rail Runner Express Capital Improvement Program.** The NMRX CIP details how Section 5337 funds will be used to maintain the Rail Runner system in a state of good repair over the next seven years. Projects are classified by type, including equipment maintenance, right-of-way maintenance, grade crossing maintenance, bridge maintenance and capital construction; and are typically completed by Herzog as part of their maintenance of equipment and way efforts.
4. **Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan:** The ICIP is submitted to the State of New Mexico each June as part of a larger planning process to inform legislators of potential capital outlay projects. For Rio Metro, the ICIP is essentially a prioritized list of capital projects already documented in the *Short Range Plan* and NMRX CIP.



## *Our New Strategic Vision*

Over the last 10 years, Rio Metro and its partners have accomplished much to be proud of, including: successfully launching and operating the New Mexico Rail Runner Express; expanding bus service throughout the three-county service area; facilitating an integrated transit network that spans multiple transit providers; and providing new transit options to better meet the region's transportation needs. Recognizing these successes—and the opportunity for transit to play an even greater role in the region's prosperity—the board took the ambitious first step toward Rio Metro's future by adopting the *Long-Term Strategic Vision*. This vision focuses on six core themes:

1. **Exceptional Customer Experience.** *Our customers come first in all we do.*
2. **Transformative Regional Services.** *We provide a range of services to meet our region's diverse needs.*
3. **Strong Transit-Centered Communities.** *Our services help shape our communities for the better.*
4. **Sound Financial Stewardship.** *We are good stewards of the public resources entrusted to us.*
5. **Innovative Programs & Partnerships.** *We think outside the box and seek collaboration always.*
6. **Industry-Leading Knowledge & Practice.** *Our people take pride in leading the region forward.*

These themes did not originate in a vacuum. Rather, they were developed over the last year through a collaborative process that included:

- Extensive board member involvement through interviews, workshops, and regular presentations and updates at board meetings;
- Stakeholder interviews and workshops with elected officials, riders, business leaders, and social service and education providers;
- Workshops between Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE staff geared toward improving integration;
- Three published white papers that assessed Rio Metro's organizational structure and operations, existing and aspirational peers, and role in supporting economic development; and
- Public meetings in all three counties.

This input not only helped define the six core themes, but also establish the strategies and “tactics” that the board and staff will pursue in the coming months and years. Likely the most significant tactic, from which several others stem, is the creation of the region's first transit network and service plan that spans all transit providers. This plan would respond to continued calls throughout the visioning process for new routes, increased frequency on existing routes, more off-peak and weekend service, better integration between providers, and services appropriately scaled to each community's needs. It would also integrate previous efforts to identify future transit corridors, such as the Valencia County Service Improvement Plan and a 2011 Sandoval County study.

Realizing a more robust regional transit network and seeing Rio Metro's strategic vision to fruition, however, will require the board's consideration of challenging questions and tradeoffs. For example, how will Rio Metro and its partners fund new and expanded services when all existing funds are committed? How much funding will be directed to more productive, high-ridership services versus services that expand geographic coverage into more suburban and rural locations? What will Rio Metro's future relationship be to its partners like MRCOG and ABQ RIDE? What organizational restructuring must take place within Rio Metro? These and other decisions await.

## *Our 2016 Initiatives*

In addition to managing its on-going transit operations, Rio Metro will be actively engaged in a several major projects in 2016. The following initiatives are highlighted because they are likely to be the focus of considerable discussion and action at future Board of Directors' meetings.

### *Positive Train Control*

In 2008, a Metrolink (Los Angeles) commuter train and Union Pacific freight train collided head-on, killing 25. The National Transportation Safety Board subsequently determined that the Metrolink Engineer failed to stop at a red signal, likely the result of texting. On the heels of that incident, Congress passed the Rail Safety Improvement Act, which required Class I freight railroads and commuter railroads to implement Positive train control (PTC)—a developing technology designed to prevent train collisions, overspeed derailments, work zone incursions and train movements through improperly positioned switches—by December 31, 2015. Unfortunately, when the legislation passed, Congress made no corresponding appropriation to help commuter railroads fund the PTC mandate, nor was PTC technology ready for implementation.

For these reasons, most commuter railroads, including the Rail Runner, were unable to meet the 2015 deadline. Congress has since extended the deadline to 2018, with the opportunity for two additional years on a case-by-case basis. However, even with this extension, neither Rio Metro nor the New Mexico Department of Transportation are able to amass the estimated \$50 to \$75 million necessary to design and construct PTC on the Rail Runner corridor (amounting to about twice the Rail Runner's annual budget). It also deserves noting that PTC would not have prevented any of the fatalities that have occurred on the Rail Runner corridor to date. Nevertheless, both will continue to work with the Federal Railroad Administration to evaluate all possible options for compliance with the Rail Safety Improvement Act.

### *Albuquerque Rapid Transit—UNM/CNM Bus Rapid Transit*

In 2016, ABQ RIDE hopes to begin construction on the state's first bus rapid transit (BRT) system along Central Ave. Nicknamed ART (short for Albuquerque Rapid Transit), it will incorporate technologies that mimic light rail, including dedicated lanes, signal priority, level boarding, and off-vehicle fare payment. After completing FTA's project development process in 2015, which includes environmental review, planning and design activities, ABQ RIDE applied for a Small Starts grant that would cover approximately 80% of ART's projected \$100 million construction cost. An official response from FTA is expected in early 2016.

On the heels of ART, Rio Metro will apply with the FTA to enter project development for the UNM/CNM BRT, which is proposed along the University Blvd. corridor between



Menaul Blvd. and the Sunport. The UNM/CNM BRT is designed to link the University of New Mexico's Main, North and South campuses, UNM Hospital/Health Sciences complex, Central New Mexico Community College, Sunport, and many other businesses, residences, entertainment and recreation facilities. These activities combined draw a daytime population of 101,500 to the University Blvd. corridor—requiring over 25,000 parking spaces at UNM and CNM alone (in addition to shuttle buses to/from many of these lots). The UNM/CNM BRT will help alleviate some of this parking demand and its associated congestion by providing a vital north-south service that will link to the ART on Central Ave. and other ABQ RIDE bus routes.

### *Mobile Ticketing App & Transit Vehicle Tracking*

Rio Metro is anticipating the release of a new mobile ticketing application for the Rail Runner in 2016. The app will allow passengers to purchase tickets, view schedules, receive alerts, manage their accounts, and contact customer service. Currently, tickets may be purchased online through a web browser and delivered by email. However, these tickets are only valid for a date specified at the time of purchase. Soon, passengers will be able to purchase tickets within the new app that are not tied to a specific date. Passengers can then validate the ticket just prior to boarding the train on a date of their choosing. This innovation in fare payment will make the Rail Runner both easier to use and more attractive to an ever-growing number of smartphone users. It also has the potential to reduce on-board sales, which are more costly for Rio Metro to collect.

In addition to the app, Rio Metro's marketing section is working with UNM, ABQ RIDE and MRCOG to develop a real-time tracking tool that will allow passengers to know the exact location of the Rail Runner train or Rio Metro bus that they are waiting for. This same team developed the "Where's My Bus?" tool that allows passengers to track UNM shuttles and ABQ RIDE buses both online and within ABQ RIDE's app. This technology has two major appeals. First, it reduces the number of phone calls that customer service receives regarding a transit vehicle's location. Second, it makes the wait time—typically the worst part of any transit trip—more predictable.



# Appendix A: Staff Contacts

## General Inquiries

If you have additional questions about what you've read, suggestions for ways we can improve our services in your community, or any other concerns, we encourage you to contact Rio Metro's Director or MRCOG's Executive Director. Either can then direct you to the most appropriate employee.

Terry Doyle, Rio Metro Director  
(505) 843-1701  
[tdoyle@mrcog-nm.gov](mailto:tdoyle@mrcog-nm.gov)

Dewey Cave, MRCOG Executive Director  
(505) 247-1750  
[dcave@mrcog-nm.gov](mailto:dcave@mrcog-nm.gov)

## Board Meetings

For questions regarding board meetings (schedules, agendas, attachments, minutes, etc.), or to confirm your attendance at an upcoming meeting, please contact:

Barbara Thomas, Office Manager/Board Liaison  
(505) 247-3616  
[bthomas@mrcog-nm.gov](mailto:bthomas@mrcog-nm.gov)

## Public Relations

Rio Metro's Communications Manager is here to help you respond to media requests, and also to spread the word in your community about our services.

Augusta Meyers, Communications Manager  
(505) 724-3626  
[ameyers@mrcog-nm.gov](mailto:ameyers@mrcog-nm.gov)

When talking with the press, you are welcome to use this handbook as a quick reference. The "Our Services" and "Why Transit?" sections provide a good overview.

At minimum, it is important to remember that Rio Metro's services are truly region wide—spanning the boundaries of our member communities to connect residents with jobs, classrooms, social services and other transit providers. The following page also lists some basic, but comprehensive, talking points that help explain the range of services offered by Rio Metro.

### *Rio Metro in Our Region*

- Rio Metro's bus and rail services provide 1.2 million passenger trips annually;
- More than 49 million passenger miles are traveled on Rio Metro's system each year;
- Rio Metro operates the New Mexico Rail Runner Express, which serves 14 stations from Belen to Santa Fe;
- Partnerships with other local transit systems provide over 60 free bus connections to and from the Rail Runner;
- Rio Metro operates 11 bus routes and 2 dial-a-ride services;
- Rio Metro's Rio Rancho dial-a-ride service is provided for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Valencia County dial-a-ride is open to anyone.
- Rio Metro's fleet includes 9 locomotives, 22 rail cars and 36 buses.
- Rio Metro contracts with All Aboard America for 6 additional buses that primarily serve Sandoval County.



## *Appendix B: Recommended Resources*

If you wish to dive more deeply into the topics covered in this handbook, please consider the following resources:

### *American Public Transportation Association Transit Board Member Handbook (July 2014)*

Prepared by the nation's leading transit association, this handbook addresses issues common to transit boards, including the roles and responsibilities of board members, the job of the chair, evaluating board performance, selecting a CEO, and much more.

<https://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/2014-Transit-Board-Member-Handbook.pdf>

### *Albuquerque Rapid Transit Website*

This website serves as the clearinghouse for information relating to the Albuquerque Rapid Transit project. Visitors can view project plans, reports and maps, read news stories, watch videos and get answers to frequently asked questions.

<http://www.brtabq.com/>

### *Bylaws of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (April 2012) / Mid-Region Transit District Governmental Unit Contract (March 2005) / Mid-Region Transit District Certification (March 2005)*

Rio Metro's bylaws establish rules for budgeting and finance; the official seal; and Board of Directors' committees, meetings, conduct and business, and membership. The bylaws' authority flows from the contract and certification that created the Mid-Region Transit District.

[Link Needed](#)

### *National Transit Database*

As a recipient of federal funds, Rio Metro is required by the Federal Transit Administration to report operating and financial information to the National Transit Database (NTD). In turn, the FTA publishes data sets and summary profiles for each urban transit agency, which allow agencies to evaluate their performance and compare themselves to their peers.

<http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/data.htm>

### *New Mexico Rail Runner Express Project Development History (October 2009)*

What did it take to make the Rail Runner a reality? This report provides a comprehensive overview of the Rail Runner's origins, and is particularly helpful for understanding what went into some of the earliest decisions. Topics include rolling stock acquisition, negotiations with BNSF, selection of the preferred route into Santa Fe, station development, branding and naming, and capital and operating costs.

<http://riometro.org/images/pdf/rail-runner-history-oct-2009-web.pdf>

### *Paseo del Norte High Capacity Transit Study: Alternatives Analysis Report (October 2014)*

The Paseo del Norte High Capacity Transit Study evaluates various alternatives to connect northwest Albuquerque and Rio Rancho to the Journal Center/I-25 corridor via Paseo del Norte. This analysis recommends bus rapid transit as the appropriate technology, identifies a locally preferred alternative, and estimates capital and operating costs. Entry into the Small Start's project development process is not anticipated at this time, as the board has given greater priority to the ART and UNM/CNM BRT projects.

<http://www.mrcog-nm.gov/special-studies/pdn-transit-study>

### ***Regional Transit District Act (2003)***

Chapter 73, Article 25 of the New Mexico Statutes authorizes the creation of regional transit districts and establishes the laws that govern them.

<http://public.nmcompcomm.us/nmpublic/gateway.dll/?f=templates&fn=default.htm>

### ***Rio Metro Regional Transit District Long-Term Strategic Vision (November 2015)***

Rio Metro's *Long-Term Strategic Vision* presents a bold vision for the next decade and beyond. The plan helps prioritize investments, allocate resources, and guide implementation tactics in a manner consistent with Rio Metro's goals.

<http://riometro.org/about/rio-metro-strategic-vision>

### ***Rio Metro Regional Transit District Marketing Plan (July 2015)***

The *Marketing Plan* is updated at the beginning of each fiscal year to align Rio Metro's marketing efforts with the changing conditions in our region. Customer service survey results, demographic and economic data, and a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis are examples of the inputs that drive Rio Metro's outreach, education, event, and promotion strategies.

**Link Needed**

### ***Rio Metro Regional Transit District Short Range Plan, Addendum 3 (May 2015)***

Originally adopted in 2012 and updated annually, the *Short Range Plan* includes four key components: the annual budget and six-year budget projections, project progress report, New Mexico Rail Runner Express Capital Improvement Program (required for receiving 5337 State of Good Repair funds), and the Rio Metro Regional Transit District Infrastructure Capital Improvement Plan.

<http://riometro.org/images/pdf/rmrtd-short-range-plan-addendum-3.pdf>

### ***Rio Metro Regional Transit District Website***

Rio Metro's website is easy to navigate, providing quick access to Rail Runner and bus schedules, fares, maps, station information, and more. The marketing section also updates the home page with the latest news, events, promotions and any temporary schedule changes or alerts.

<http://riometro.org/>

### ***Title VI (Civil Rights)***

Rio Metro is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or discriminated against when using our services on the basis of race, color, national origin or any other characteristics protected by law. Notice of Rio Metro's Title VI policy is posted in all vehicles, and the process and form for filing a Title VI complaint is available on our website.

<http://riometro.org/component/content/article/19-ct-categories-en/ct-about-en/222-title-vi>

### ***UNM/CNM/Sunport Study: Alternative Alignments Identification and Assessment (March 2014)***

This assessment is the culmination of a four-year process to determine the appropriate transit technology (bus rapid transit) and select a locally preferred alternative for a high-capacity transit system connecting UNM, CNM and the Sunport. This report will serve as the basis for a forthcoming request to enter the FTA's Small Starts project development process.

<http://www.mrcoq-nm.gov/special-studies/unm-cnm-study>

# Appendix C: Board Member Directory



*Larry Abraham*

Mayor, Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque



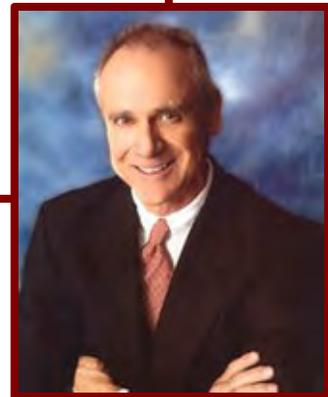
*Wayne Ake*

Councilor, Village of Bosque Farms



*John Alsobrook*

Councilor, District 4, Village of Corrales



*Isaac Benton*

Councilor, District 2, City of Albuquerque





*Richard Berry*

Mayor, City of Albuquerque



*Lonnie Clayton*

Councilor, District 6, City of Rio Rancho



*Jerah Cordova*

Mayor, City of Belen



*Charles Eaton*

Commissioner, District 4, Valencia County





*Ray Garduño, Chair*

Councilor, District 6, City of Albuquerque



*Diane Gibson*

Councilor, District 7, City of Albuquerque



*Charles Griego*

Mayor, Village of Los Lunas



*Don Harris*

Councilor, District 9, City of Albuquerque





*Maggie Hart Stebbins, Vice Chair*

Commissioner, District 3, Bernalillo County



*Darryl Madalena*

Commissioner, District 5, Sandoval County



*Anthony Mortillaro*

Executive Director  
North Central Regional Transit District  
(Associate Member)



*Debbie O'Malley*

Commissioner, District 1, Bernalillo County





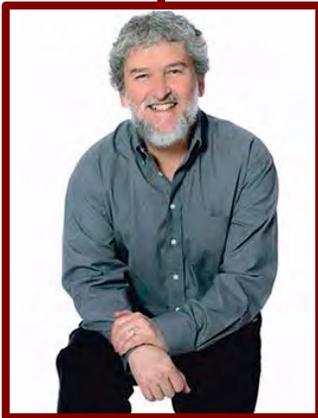
*Dawn Robinson*

Councilor, District 2, City of Rio Rancho



*Lonnie Talbert*

Commissioner, District 4, Bernalillo County



*Jack Torres*

Mayor, Town of Bernalillo



*Kathy Trujillo*

Transportation Division Manager  
Isleta Pueblo  
(Associate Member)



*This page intentionally left blank.*



