

# RIO METRO RTD LONG-TERM STRATEGIC VISION PLAN *STAKEHOLDER BRIEFING BOOK*



*With:*

**SITES SOUTHWEST**

**FELSBURG HOLT  
ULLEVIG**

**STRATEGIC ECONOMICS**

**GB PLACE MAKING**

**RENAISSANCE  
PLANNING GROUP**

# WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

- **Welcome!**
- **Introductions**
- **Briefing Book Overview**
  - Project Overview
  - Technical Assessment: What We Learned
  - Board & Stakeholder Outreach: What We Heard
  - Vision Framework
  - Vision Plan
  - Next Steps
  - How to Get Involved



# PROJECT TEAM

## The Mercer Group



**Gary Suiter:** *Principal-in-Charge,  
Project Manager, Lead Facilitator*

## Sites Southwest



**Phyllis Taylor:**  
*Outreach Lead  
Strategic  
Economics*

## Felsburg Holt & Ullevig



**Holly Buck:** *Transit  
Planning Lead*

## GB Place Making



**GB Arrington:**  
*National Best  
Practices Lead*

## Renaissance Planning Group



**Katie Rooney:**  
*Peer Review  
Lead*



**Jeremy Nelson:**  
*Deputy Project  
Manager*



**Gus Cordova:**  
*Outreach  
Support*



**Nadine Fogarty:**  
*Economic Dev. Lead*



# WHAT WE'VE HEARD: WHY IS TRANST IMPORTANT TO THE REGION?

- Relieving traffic bottlenecks on roadways / 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
  - Aging boomers
  - Reversing brain drain of young professionals / millennials

# WHAT WE'VE HEARD: WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

## RMRTD Board

*“Need a vision of where District is heading and consensus on how to move things forward.”*

*“Transparency – have this organization make clear to everybody how it works and how [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. [...] Increase level of ownership in transit as critical to the region’s success.”*



# WHAT WE'VE HEARD: WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

## RMRTD Planning & 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.”*

*“Right now we are the sum of our inherited parts. I would like to become part of [...] the new face of transit.”*

*“We provide funding to ABQ Ride to provide services, [...] RMRTD has regional commuter rail service, and [...] we have these rural boutique operations. We are like a blended family.”*

*“One or two years down the road, what are we hoping to become? We need a strong, overarching vision with objectives and targets.”*



# WHAT WE'VE HEARD: WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

## ABQ RIDE Management & 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.”*



# WHAT WE'VE HEARD: WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

## Transit Riders and 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.”*

*“...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.”*



# PROJECT GOALS

- Develop a *bold vision* for regional transit
- Determine *RTD's role* in achieving that vision
- Build *broad-based support* for the vision
- Identify *new tools* to fund & implement the vision
- Begin *phased implementation* of the vision



# WHAT HAS THE TEAM ACCOMPLISHED?

- **Staff & Stakeholder Visioning**
  - Focus Groups (October 2014)
  - Best Practice Seminars (November 2014)
  - ABQ RIDE Workshop (April 2015)
  - Key Stakeholder Meetings in each County (May 2015)
- **Board Visioning**
  - Listening Session (October 2014)
  - One-on-one Interviews (Fall/Winter 2014)
  - Focusing Session: RMRTD 101 (January 2015)
  - Visioning Workshop (March 2015)
- **Technical Assessment White Papers (Spring 2015)**
  - Economic Development Potential of Transit
  - Peer Review (status quo & aspirational peers)
  - Transit Operations & Organizational Options

# WHAT'S LEFT TO ACCOMPLISH?

- **Develop Strategic Vision Plan**
  - **Draft Plan (August)**
  - **Final Plan (September)**
- **Board considers adoption of Final Plan**
- **Begin implementation of near-term priorities**



# TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



**RENAISSANCE PLANNING GROUP**  
1901 W. Route Street, Suite 1304 • Arlington, VA 22204 • phone: 703.575.9933 • fax: 703.576.4179

**Project:** RMRTD Visioning (Long-Term Strategic Vision and Implementation Services)  
**Contract:** 2014-01  
**To:** Tony Sylvester, Rio Metro Regional Transit District  
**From:** Kathleen Rooney, Renaissance Planning Group  
**Date:** 4/6/15  
**Re:** Regional Transit Agency Peer Review White Paper – DRAFT FINAL

**Purpose of this White Paper**  
Renaissance Planning Group conducted a peer review of transit agencies to inform the initial visioning process and the subsequent development of Rio Metro Regional Transit District's (RMRTD) Strategic Vision Plan. In general, the purpose of a peer review is to research and explore comparable agencies performance to provide insights into opportunities for better management, service, operations, etc. This specific peer review identified up to four (4) peer agencies for RMRTD and its partner agency ABQ RIDE, benchmarked RMRTD operations for, in some cases, RMRTD operations combined with ABQ RIDE (operations) and regional outcomes against those peers, and then articulated key "lessons learned" from the benchmarking assessment. This white paper highlights the key findings and conclusions from this peer review process.

**What Does this White Paper Contain?**  
This peer review followed the following steps:

- Who are we most like?** We selected peer agencies based on comparable regional context (e.g. population, demographics, economy, geography, etc.) and agency context (e.g. size, service, etc.).
- How do we measure up?** We benchmarked the Albuquerque region's transit system and services (including both RMRTD and ABQ RIDE) against the identified peer agencies' data with available baseline data) on key metrics.
- What can we learn from others like us?** We identified opportunities for the visioning (and resulting Strategic Vision Plan) from insights gleaned from the peer agencies.



**MEMORANDUM**

**Project:** RMRTD Visioning (Long-Term Strategic Vision and Implementation Services)  
**Contract:** 2014-01  
**Date:** March 4, 2015  
**To:** Tony Sylvester, Rio Metro Regional Transit District  
**From:** Nadine Fogarty, Strategic Economics  
**Subject:** Opportunities for RMRTD to Foster Regional Economic Development Benefits from Transit in the Albuquerque Region

**Purpose of this White Paper**  
As part of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD) Strategic Vision Planning Implementation effort, Strategic Economics was commissioned to assess the current and potential for RMRTD operations and initiatives – whether existing or new recommendations – influence regional economic development. This white paper provides a general "framework" assessment for understanding the economic benefits associated with transit investments, current and potential future role of transit in generating those benefits in the Albuquerque region, and describes key economic benefits that might be realized or expanded.

**What this White Paper Contains**  
The remainder of this white paper contains the following sections:

- Section 1: Overview of the Potential Economic Development Benefits** section describes the various types of direct and indirect economic benefits that potentially provide. It also includes examples of studies that find that transit delivers a high "return on investment" in terms of economic benefits.
- Section 2: Key Regional Trends and Initiatives to Leverage to Enhance Economic Development Benefits from Transit.** This section summarizes initiatives already underway in the Albuquerque region that should be leveraged to enhance economic development benefits from transit.
- Section 3: Specific Opportunities for Expanded Economic Development Benefits from Transit Investment in the Albuquerque Region.** This section describes economic development benefits from transit that are likely to be realized in the region.



**MEMORANDUM**

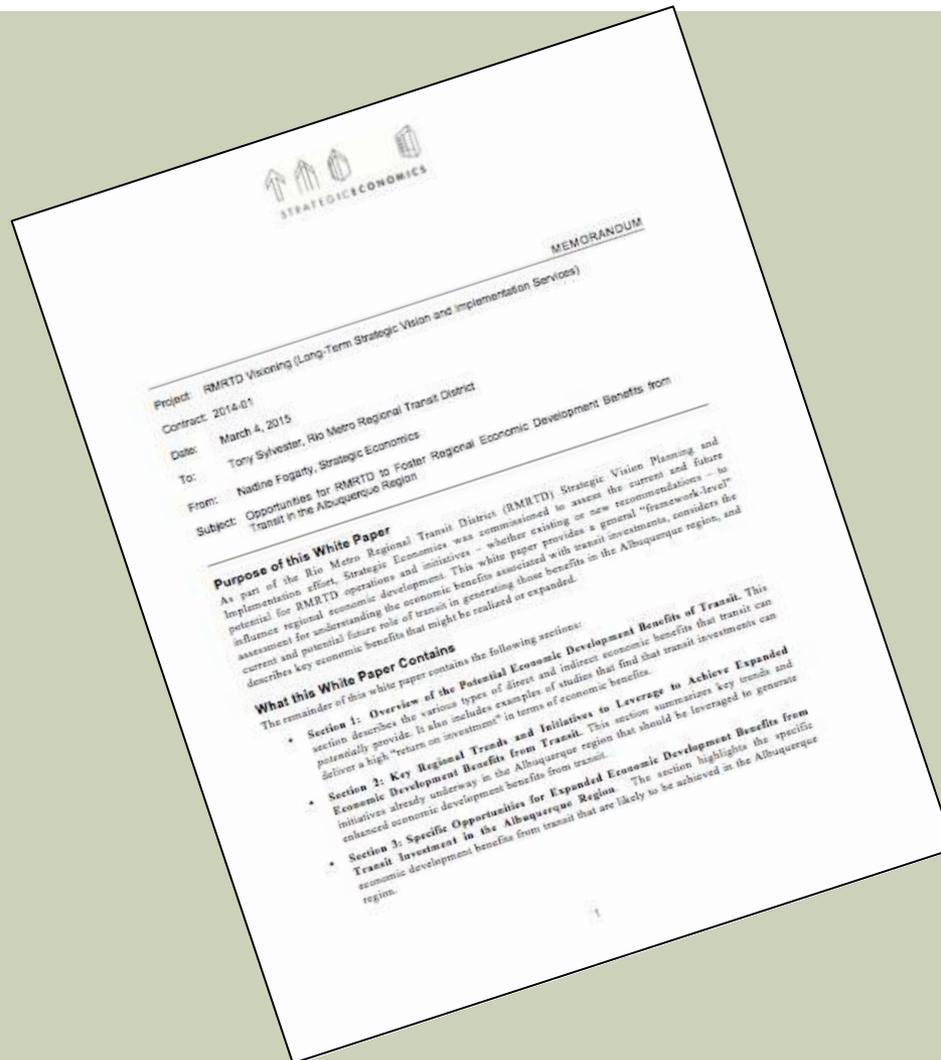
**Project:** RMRTD Visioning (Long-Term Strategic Vision and Implementation Services)  
**Contract:** 2014-01  
**Date:** March 27th, 2015  
**To:** Tony Sylvester, Rio Metro Regional Transit District  
**From:** Holly Buck and Kelly Leachbetel, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig  
**Subject:** RMRTD Existing Conditions, Transit Governance Structure, and Coordination Opportunities White Paper

**Purpose of this White Paper**  
Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU) conducted a technical assessment of Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD) and ABQ RIDE to document existing transit operations and agency structures, governance structures, and the business community informed the development of this technical assessment by providing input to the consultant team throughout the fall of 2014, and into 2015. In addition to existing conditions, this white paper provides an overview of transit district governance structures, and potential coordination/collaboration opportunities for RMRTD. The findings from this white paper will inform the visioning process currently underway, and the subsequent development of RMRTD's Long-Term Strategic Vision Plan.

**What This White Paper Contains**  
This white paper is comprised of three parts:

- Part 1: RMRTD Existing Conditions and Summary of RMRTD Partner Agencies/Service Providers.** Part 1 includes a technical review of existing transit operations and agency structures for RMRTD and ABQ RIDE, including an assessment of agency leadership/management, transit services, public information, operating and capital budgets, and funding sources. This part also includes a summary of relevant information about RMRTD partner agencies/service providers, including the Metropolitan Transit Board (MTB) of the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), Santa Fe Trails, and the North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD).

# WHITE PAPER: POTENTIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF TRANSIT



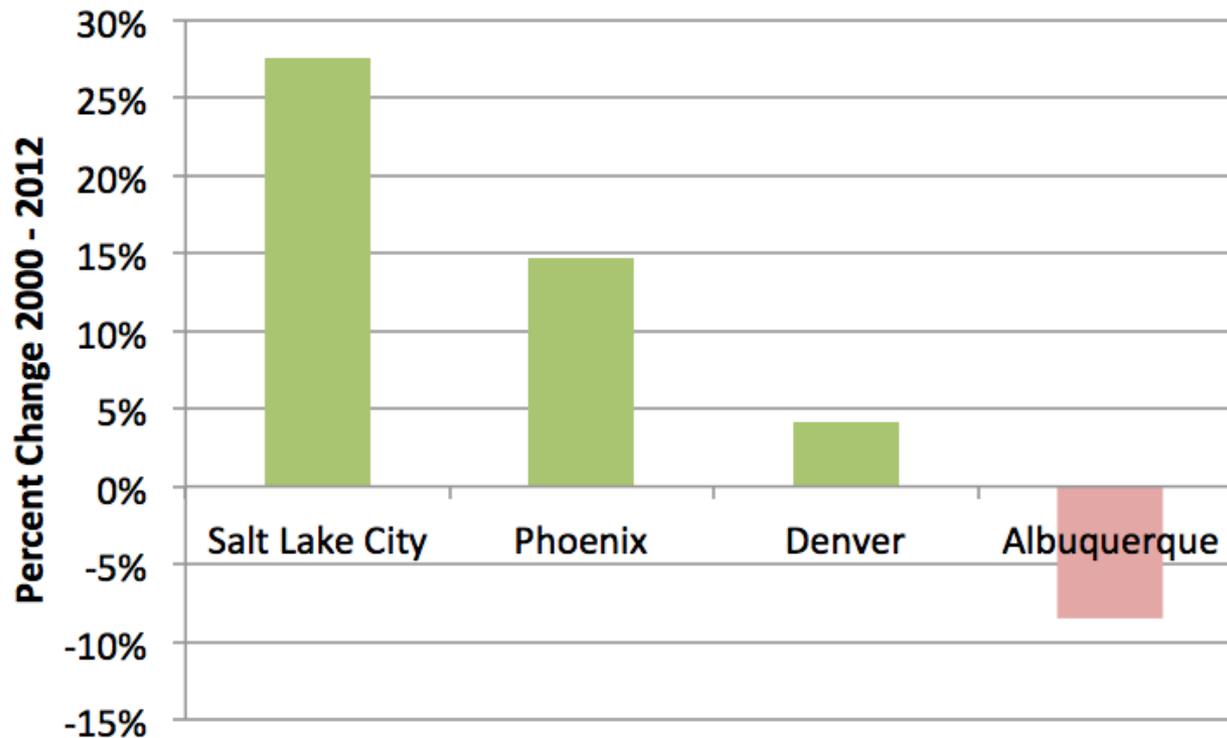
# POTENTIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF TRANSIT

## What the White Paper Contains

- **Assesses the potential economic benefits associated with transit investments**
- **Describes key trends and the future role of transit in generating those benefits in the Albuquerque region**
- **Describes specific economic development opportunities / benefits that could be realized in this region**

# WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

*Regional Change in Employment in Knowledge-Based Industries, 2000 - 2012*



Source: US Census County Business Patterns.

\*Knowledge-based industries include information; finance and insurance; real estate; professional, technical and scientific services; and management of companies and enterprises.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS: TWO CATEGORIES

## Direct Investment Benefits

- Capital Expenditures: job and income growth
- Operation Expenditures: ongoing job, income, and GRT growth

## Indirect Economic Benefits

- Increased household savings
- Better access to economic opportunity
- More educated and employed workforce
- Improved economic competitiveness and business attractiveness

# GENERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF TRANSIT

- **Attracting and Retaining Educated & Skilled Workers**
  - Employment growth not keeping pace in southwest region
  - Creates opportunity for increasing employment growth in knowledge-based industries
- **Increased Economic Competitiveness, Productivity, and Innovation**
  - Attracts workers and firms
  - Reduces turnover and absenteeism
  - Example: Innovate ABQ – transit's role key to economic success

# RECENT REGIONAL TRENDS

- Transit ridership has grown dramatically in recent years
- Increasing service (frequency, extending hours, improved service)
- Premium transit services such as Bus Rapid Transit is envisioned
- Demographics and consumer preferences are changing, thereby creating more demand for transit services
- MRMPO and *Futures 2040* note excessive roadway costs and increases in traffic congestion
  - Increased transit service and transit-supportive land uses are the foundation of the “preferred alternative”

# SPECIFIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BENEFITS OF TRANSIT IN THIS REGION

- More cost-effective economic development: a coordinated, transit-focused strategy
- Cost savings for local governments: reduced costs of infrastructure/services
- Neighborhood reinvestment: increased property values
- More efficient land use/compact development: reduced regional traffic congestion (esp. at constrained bottlenecks)

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: COST EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ■ Issues

- 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

## ■ Opportunities

- Promote transit's role in supporting the regional economy
- Coordinate with regional economic development strategy to use transit to retain/recruit businesses
- Expanded partnerships with major employers/institutions (schools) to expand subsidized transit pass program and supporting initiatives



# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: COST SAVINGS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- **Issues**
  - Constrained budgets cannot meet future infrastructure needs
  - Deteriorating roadway/bridge infrastructure
  
- **Opportunities**
  - Expand transit strategically to:
    - Get the most out of existing roadway capacity
    - Reduce need for expanded roadway infrastructure
  - Frees up constrained capital & O & M budgets
  - Limits tax increases

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: NEIGHBORHOOD REINVESTMENT

## ■ Issues

- Leapfrog development
- Depressed property values
- Inconsistent land use and zoning policies throughout the region

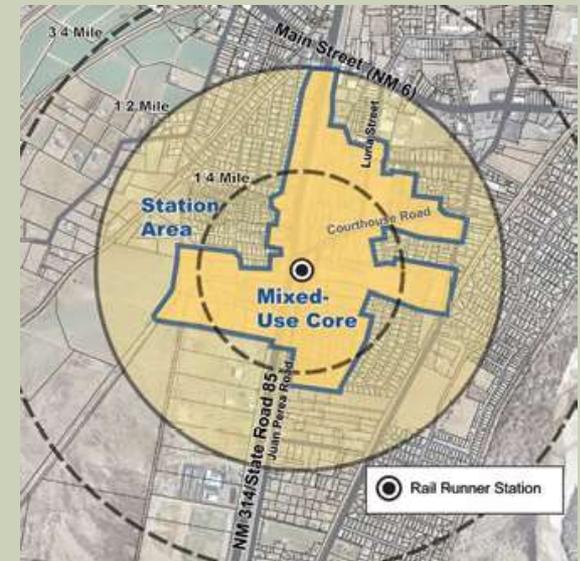
## ■ Opportunities

- Expand transit in conjunction with reforms to land use policies/development standards to:
  - Increase in investment along transit corridors
  - Increase in property values and tax base
- Example: Albuquerque's Comprehensive Plan Update and Unified Development Update

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: MORE EFFICIENT LAND USE PATTERNS

## ■ Issues

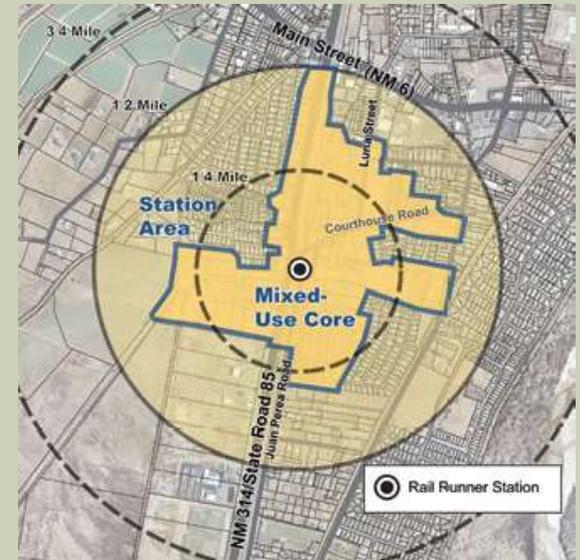
- Regional transit hasn't played a significant role in shaping land use
- More congestion (especially at constrained bottlenecks)
- Unclear how future growth can be accommodated cost effectively



# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITES: MORE EFFICIENT LAND USE PATTERNS

## ■ Opportunities

- Provide highest level of transit service in areas planned for efficient development
  - Existing Rail Runner stations as a focus for TOD
  - New ART corridors as an emerging infill development opportunities
- RMRTD plays a role in local and regional land use planning
  - Coordination with updates to local land use plans/development standards
  - Condition new/expanded transit service on supportive local land use plans



# WHITE PAPER: TRANSIT OPERATIONAL & AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIONS



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### What This White Paper Contains

- This white paper is comprised of three parts:
- **Part 1: RMRTD Existing Conditions and Summary of RMRTD Partner Agencies/Service Providers.** Part 1 includes a technical review of existing transit operations and agency structures for RMRTD and ABQ RIDE, including an assessment of agency leadership/management, transit services, public information, operating and capital budgets, and funding sources. This part also includes a summary of relevant information about RMRTD partner agencies/service providers, including the Metropolitan Transit Board (MTB) of the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), Santa Fe Trails, and the North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD).

# TRANSIT OPERATIONAL & AGENCY ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIONS

## What the White Paper Contains

- Provides a technical review of existing transit operations and agency structures for both RMRTD and ABQRide
- Summarizes the New Mexico Regional Transit District Act; the history of RMRTD and its board organization; a review of peer agency organizational structures; and potential governance options for RMRTD
- Identifies preliminary opportunities related to agency operations and the associated benefits of each opportunity; identifies the organizational structure needed to achieve the project goals

# WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

- Stakeholders have expressed a strong interest in more effective and efficient delivery of regional transportation services
- Insights from this white paper will be used to develop recommendations for the RMRTD Strategic Vision Plan
- Action items are identified to address the key issues and opportunities for RMRTD
- Resources will be needed in order to implement the action items and achieve the long-term vision

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: GOVERNANCE / MANAGEMENT

## ■ Issues

- Some Board members would like more opportunities to engage
- Riders have no formal role to provide ongoing input

## ■ Opportunities

- Better orientation for new board members
- Ongoing training / development for existing staff board members
- Expand board to include advisory seats including riders



# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: AGENCY ORGANIZATION OPTIONS

## ■ Issues

- 2 transit agencies with some overlap & duplication
- Better coordination with ABQ Ride is desired by stakeholders
- Strong interest on the Board in moving towards consolidation



# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: AGENCY ORGANIZATION OPTIONS

## ■ Opportunities

- Expanded coordination of:
  - Early phase: Maps, fares, branding
  - Later phase: Capital planning, performance measures
  - *Would* improve customer experience and net cost-effectiveness
- Full consolidation of:
  - Early phase: Administration
  - Later phase: Operations
  - *Could* improve service quality and net cost-effectiveness
  - **Requires a full feasibility study**



# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: SERVICES & SERVICE AREA

## ■ Issues

- Desire to increase service frequency and system connectivity
- Limited service types in agency's current portfolio (commuter rail, fixed-route bus, dial-a-ride)
- Dispersed service area, but periodic requests to expand service
- Limited resources to accommodate new transit demand



# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: SERVICES & SERVICE AREA

- **Opportunities:**
  - Tiered transit network
    - Regional priority network with most frequent service
    - Local circulators to connect to regional network
    - Tailored service in smaller/rural communities to connect to above
  - Reduce transfer friction:
    - Single fare / fare media
    - Expand timed transfers



# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: SERVICES & SERVICE AREA

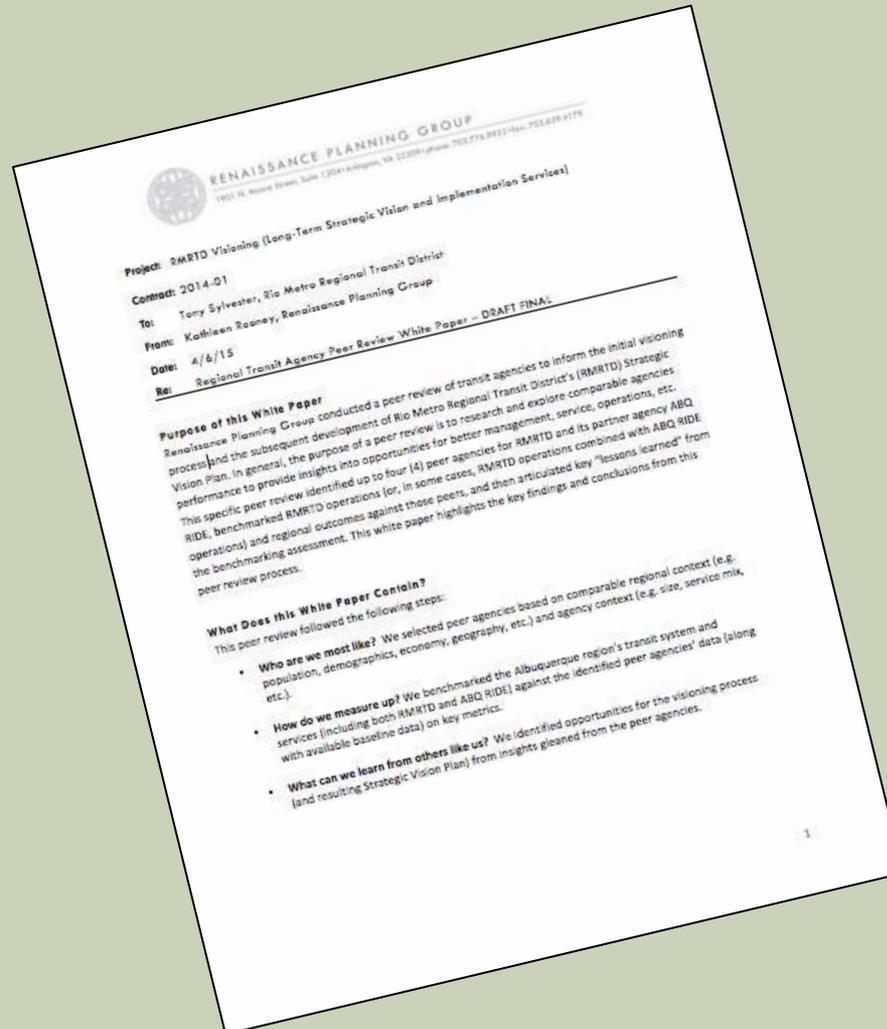
- Opportunities:
- Prioritize expanded service on:
  - Transit-supportive land use
  - Local cost-sharing where land use isn't transit-supportive
- Evaluate viability and pursue potential funding opportunities:
  - Gas tax (13 states)
  - Bonds (10 states)
  - Registration/title fees (8 states)
  - General sales tax - GRT(6 states)
  - Motor vehicle/rental car sales tax (6 states)
  - State transportation fund (4 states)

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: RIDERSHIP

- RMRTD has a mix of “transit-dependent” & “choice” riders
  - Deliver a service mix that will provide essential services to transit-dependent riders, while also attracting new choice riders



# WHITE PAPER: PEER REVIEW



# PEER REVIEW

## What the White Paper Contains

### ■ Who are we most like?

- We selected peer agencies based on comparable regional context (e.g. population, demographics, economy, geography, etc.) and agency context (e.g. size, service mix, etc.).

### ■ How do we measure up?

- We benchmarked the Albuquerque region's transit system and services (including both RMRTD and ABQ RIDE) against the identified peer agencies' data (along with available baseline data) on key metrics.

### ■ What can we learn from others like us?

- We identified opportunities for the visioning process (and resulting Strategic Vision Plan) from insights gleaned from the peer agencies.

# PEER REVIEW: WHO ARE WE MOST LIKE?

## ■ Peer Selection Characteristics

- Regional size
- Transit system/service size
- Nature of transit services
- Socio-economic similarities
- Innovation/aspirational character

## ■ A Note About Peer Reviews

- There is no perfect peer!
- No two agencies/regions can be an exact match
- Peer reviews offer a “mirror”
- Identify opportunities for improvement

# PEER REVIEW: WHO ARE WE MOST LIKE?

## ■ Status Quo Peers

- San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission / San Joaquin RTD (Stockton, CA)
- El Paso Mass Transit District “Sun Metro” (El Paso, TX)

## ■ Aspirational Peers

- Near-Term (10-20 years):
  - Utah Transit Authority (Salt Lake City, UT)
- Long-Term (20+ years):
  - Denver Regional Transit District - RTD (Denver, CO)

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: UNIQUE REGIONAL CONTEXT

## ■ Issues

- Unique regional context compared to both status quo and aspirational peers
  - Generally smaller service area population
  - Dispersed over a generally larger service area geography
  - ABQ RIDE's service density approaches the regional service density of some of the Albuquerque region's aspirational peers
- A low-density service area requires more resources to provide high-quality service (or only low-quality service can be provided)

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: UNIQUE REGIONAL CONTEXT

## ■ Opportunities

- In order to maintain and expand high-quality service, the Albuquerque region's transit will need to:
  - Become more efficient with existing resources if possible;
  - Work with local jurisdictions to increase population in the areas/corridors where high-quality service is currently provided or desired in the future (in order to justify the expense of the higher-quality service); and/or
  - Seek additional financial resources.

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: UNIQUE SERVICE CONTEXT

## ■ Issues

- The region's transit services are providing a fairly large number of trips and passenger miles compared to status quo and aspirational peers
- The region's per capita trips and per capita miles metrics are also similar to or greater than status quo peers and aspirational peer UTA.
- Disaggregating the numbers for RMRTD and ABQ RIDE:
  - ABQ RIDE's higher service **area** density and higher trips per capita is largely responsible for the favorable results for the Albuquerque region on the per capita trips and per capita miles metrics.
  - RMRTD's performance on per trip and per person metrics were generally weak compared to peers, although RMRTD performed well on a per mile basis, lower than all other peers.
  - RMRTD provides a fewer number of rides to a larger service area population and ABQ RIDE provides many more rides to a smaller service area population

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: UNIQUE SERVICE CONTEXT

## ■ Opportunities

- Develop strategies to increase the “yield” (on a per capita trips and per capita miles basis)
- Long-term:
  - Take a leadership role in the integration of transportation/land use
  - Focus most of the future regional growth in areas/corridors that are currently well-served by transit (or could be in the future)
- Short-term:
  - Developing a coordinated TDM strategy with major employers/employment centers to develop TDM programs such as parking cash-out;
  - Developing transit-supportive mobility programs to address first/last mile access barriers; and
  - Coordinating and conditioning transit service expansions on local jurisdictions’ adopting (and adhering to) transit-supportive land use plans.

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

## ■ Issues

- The region's transit spending is on par with its status quo peers
- The region spends significantly less on transit than aspirational peers
- The region has highest local financial contribution than any peers (as a % of operations expenditures)
- The region's labor costs (as a % of operations expenditures) are less than all status quo peers and most aspirational peers, but ABQ RIDE costs are:
  - 93% of region's total
  - Much higher than than or equal to all peers

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

## ■ Opportunities

- Dramatic improvements to transit service will require more financial resources:
  - Local cost sharing
  - Regional revenues, such as increased to GRT dedicated to RMRTD
  - Expanded state / federal funds
- Any discussion of coordination/consolidation must account for labor cost issue:
  - Short-term: Increased inter-agency coordination to reduce duplicative functions
  - Long-term: Different labor cost structure of two agencies must be resolved before potential consolidation

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: FINANCIAL RESOURCES

- **Bottom line**
  - RMRTD uses its resources cost-effectively (per passenger basis)
  - The region invests *less* in transit than its *aspirational* peers
  
- **New resources will be needed to**
  - Increase services
  - Expand service area
  - Premium services to attract choice riders
  - Realize non-mobility benefits (e.g. economic development)
  - **Accomplish the Board's priorities**



*Early estimates for three BRT corridors is \$230M capital and \$15.3M annual operations*

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: OPERATIONAL OUTPUTS

## ■ Issues

- Lower transit service density than most peers
- Lower service frequency than status quo peers (but higher than aspirational peers)
- Farebox recovery lower than peers

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: OPERATIONAL OUTPUTS

## ■ Opportunities

- Improve transit service frequency in a cost-effective manner
  - This will require improving service area density and yield via:
    - Land use planning strategies
    - TOD
    - First/last mile access programs
- Improve farebox recovery
  - Increased farebox recovery should be part of a comprehensive strategy to:
    - Improve efficiencies wherever possible
    - Access additional funding sources

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: MEASURING OUTCOMES

## ■ Issues

- Transit mode share is comparable to status quo peers, lower than aspirational peers
- Overall non-SOV mode share is lower than both status quo and aspirational peers
- 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
- Albuquerque region has the lowest share among all peers of households within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile of fixed-guideway transit
  - Note this is most likely a reflection of low amount of fixed-route service in the Albuquerque region

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: MEASURING OUTCOMES

## ■ Opportunities

- Increase the region's transit / non-SOV mode share to the level of its aspirational peers:
  - Provide more service
  - Address the land use, TDM, and first/last mile challenges
  - Go beyond thinking of themselves solely as transit agencies
  - RMRTD as “multimodal mobility service provider
- Address the low number of homes in the region accessible by transit, and be able to provide cost-effective expansions of transit service:
  - Play a bigger role in coordinating with local jurisdictions on land use planning and development decisions
  - Become an active champion and resource to enable more compact, dense, transit-oriented development.

# KEY ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES: MEASURING OUTCOMES

## ■ Issues

- RMRTD outperforms all peers on measuring customer satisfaction, in two ways:
  - 1 of only 2 peer agencies to measure (or at least report) customer service satisfaction
  - Over 93% of customers approve of the RMRTD transit service they receive

## ■ Opportunities

- Develop a more comprehensive performance monitoring and reporting program
  - Include metrics linked to Vision Plan workplan (core themes, key strategies, priority implementation tactics)
  - Increase reporting / visibility of RMRTD's areas of success and areas for improvement

# STAKEHOLDER VISIONING



# WHO WE'VE ALREADY MET WITH

- **Transit Riders**
- **Elected Officials**
- **Business & Community Orgs**
  - *Adelante Development Center*
  - *Belen MainStreet Partnership*
  - *Greater Belen Chamber*
  - *NAIOP*
  - *Rio Rancho Regional Chamber*
  - *ULI*
- **Public Agencies:**
  - *RMRTD*
  - *MRCOG*
  - *ABQ Ride*
  - *City of Albuquerque*
  - *City of Belen*
  - *Town of Bernalillo*
- *Village of Los Lunas*
- *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*
- *UNM (Main & Valencia Campuses)*
- *NM Aging/Long Term Services*
- *NM Public Health*
- *NM Veterans Services*

- **Public Agencies (continued)**

# WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Regional transit system
  - Merger of RMRTD and ABQ Ride
- Regional Land Use Pattern that Supports Transit
  - Geographically dispersed
  - Disconnect between where people work and where they can afford to live
  - Pockets of higher density – Rail Runner station areas, transit corridors
  - Network of conveniently located park & ride facilities
  - Need advocates, political support for higher densities, infill
  - Importance of transit oriented development to rural communities served by the Rail Runner

# WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- **Demonstration projects that show what transit can do**
  - BRT on Central
  - Better use of technology – example of Uber and Lyft Apps
- **Creative funding / financing**
  - Public/private partnerships
  - RMRTD as developer
  - Existing 1/8% is fully allocated
  - Additional 3/8% funding?
  - Fare increase?
- **Plug service gaps for captive riders**

# WHAT WE'VE HEARD

- Better options for riders by choice
  - Improved service for tourists, reverse commute, weekends
  - Schedules and routes to better serve major employers, students
  - Better options for first and last mile service
  - Safety – on transit, access to transit
  - Focus on seniors, youth, commuters as prime targets
- Nurture transit advocates
  - Transit advisory group
  - Public outreach and engagement
- Centralized, accessible source of information / trip planning
  - “Transit concierge”
  - Online

# BOARD VISIONING



# OCTOBER: LISTENING SESSION

- Why is transit important in this region?
- How can we best engage your communities / constituencies?
- Who else should we talk to?
- What does the Board expect from the consultant team?



# LISTENING SESSION: WHY IS TRANST IMPORTANT TO THE REGION?

- Transit is part of the answer to address many of the regional issues:
  - Relieving traffic bottlenecks on key roadways/bridges
  - Creating more compact land use patterns
  - Reducing infrastructure costs
  - Providing equitable access to school/work opportunities
  - Supporting sustainable economic development
  - Responding to changing demographics (aging baby boomers)
  - Reversing the brain drain of young millennials

# NOVEMBER: BEST PRACTICES SEMINAR

- Topic: *“What have other transit agencies done to address key regional challenges?”*
- Lessons learned:
  - Transit as a tool to catalyze economic development and shape land use patterns
  - Leading agencies started 20-30 years ago



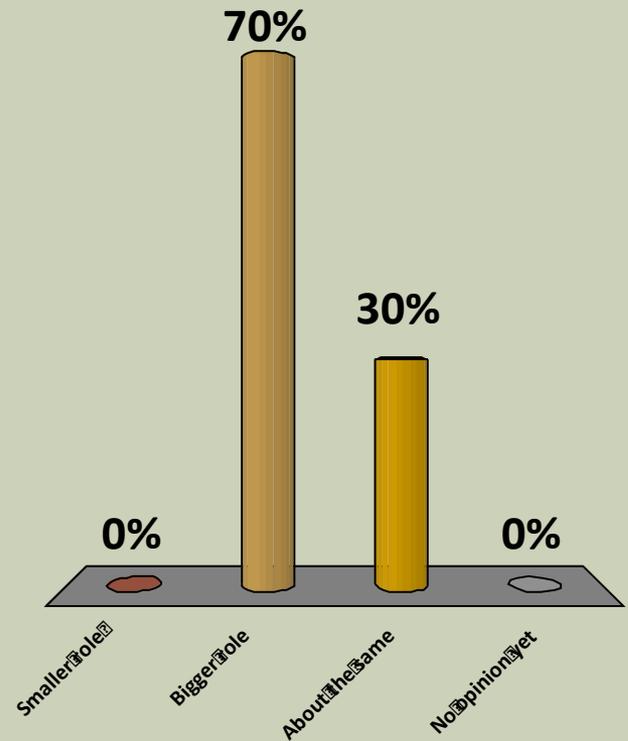
# JANUARY: FOCUSING SESSION

- Six big policy questions for this Board:
  1. Board's role
  2. Services/service area
  3. Ridership
  4. Land use/economic development
  5. Coordination/consolidation
  6. Financial resources



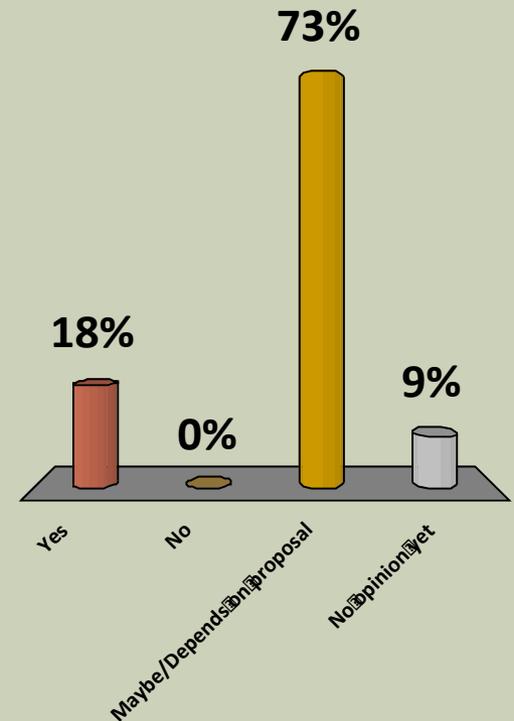
# FOCUSING SESSION: WHAT ROLE DOES THIS BOARD WANT TO PLAY IN LEADING RMRTD'S FUTURE?

- A. Smaller role
- B. Bigger role
- C. About the same
- D. No opinion yet



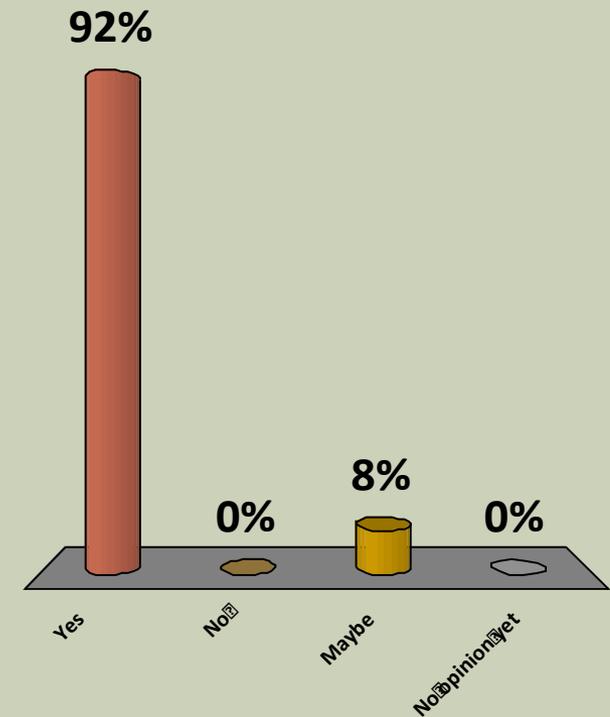
# SHOULD RMRTD FOCUS ON EXPANDING ITS SERVICES AND/OR SERVICE AREA?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe/Depends on proposal
- D. No opinion yet



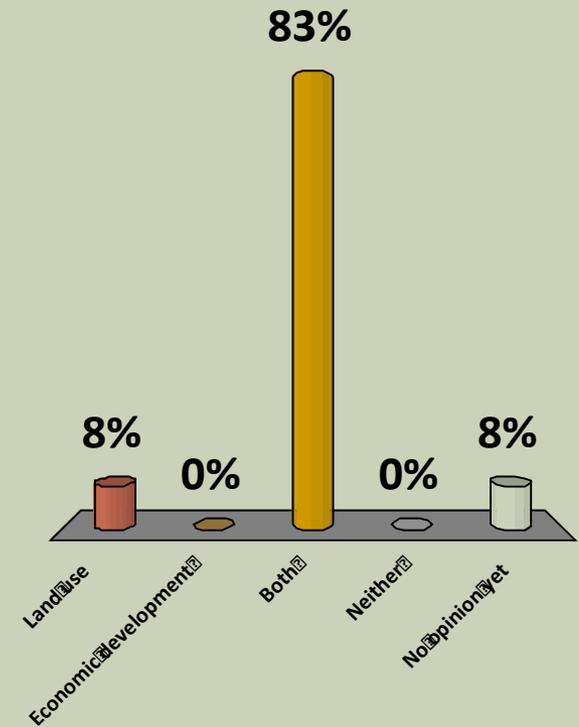
# SHOULD RMRTD BE FOCUSED ON ATTRACTING MORE “NON-DEPENDENT RIDERS”?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe
- D. No opinion yet



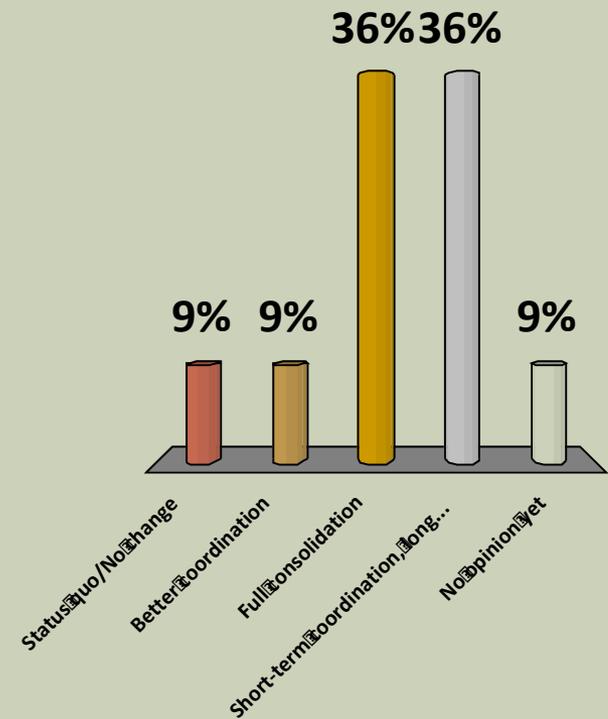
# SHOULD RMRTD PLAY A GREATER ROLE IN LAND USE/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION?

- A. Land use
- B. Economic development
- C. Both
- D. Neither
- E. No opinion yet



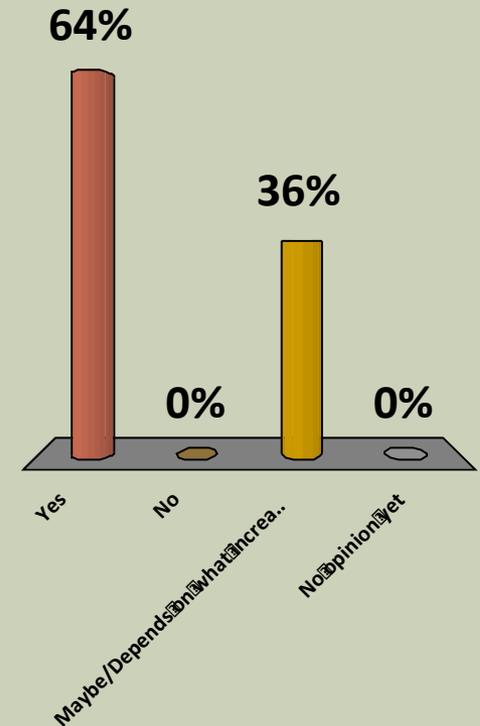
# SHOULD RMRTD PRIORITIZE BETTER COORDINATION WITH ABQ RIDE, OR FULL CONSOLIDATION INTO A SINGLE AGENCY?

- A. Status quo/No change
- B. Better coordination
- C. Full consolidation
- D. Short-term coordination, long-term consolidation
- E. No opinion yet



# SHOULD RMRTD BE PURSUING NEW REVENUE SOURCES, INCLUDING POTENTIAL INCREASES TO LOCAL/REGIONAL TAXES?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Maybe/Depends on what increase revenues would be used for
- D. No opinion yet



# MARCH: VISIONING WORKSHOP



# VISIONING WORKSHOP: BIG IDEAS, CORE THEMES, KEY STRATEGIES

CREATE A REGION WITH  
MULTIPLE TRANSPORTATION  
OPTIONS INCLUDING A TRAVEL  
SYSTEM THAT INTEGRATES  
COMMUNITIES AND PLAYS A ROLE  
IN COMMUNITY BUILDING AND ECONOMIC

ADD "FUTURE"  
THEME 04  
**Sound Financial Stewardship**  
Our region's transit system requires predictable, reliable and adequate funding to maintain its current service levels and equipment. Our public funding requires us to be accountable to our taxpayers and operate as efficiently as possible while meeting our diverse transit needs. A central theme of our regional transit vision is **establishing a reputation as a strong steward of our existing funds and assets - and clearly defining a responsible fiscal path toward satisfying the region's future transit needs.**

Partner to support TOD near transit nodes/corridors  
Public/Private Partnerships for TOD to increase mobility  
Pursue TIF to support transit & community projects  
The "Barometer" funds

Condition future transit expansions on local jurisdictions' supportive land use plans  
RMRTD Grants for TOD  
- Build development local land use planning / development capacity (training, grants, shared staff)

Integrate regional transit planning with local land use planning/design  
Last year's RMRTD from MERSAS  
- Communicating agency  
Become a commenting agency for land use plans / development applications  
School Sites  
statutory / or by member agreement

RMRTD Re-development authority  
Empire Developer to include TOD plan as part of plan that goes to DMSP to show how to bring transit, housing, etc.

Bring developers / neighbors together around development process  
RMRTD should be a driver in this process

# VISION FRAMEWORK: CORE THEMES & KEY STRATEGIES



# VISION FRAMEWORK: CORE THEMES & KEY STRATEGIES

## Theme 1:

### Exceptional Customer Experience

- **Strategy 1.1:** Make transit trips as convenient and time-competitive as auto trips.
- **Strategy 1.2:** Focus on safety, attractiveness, cleanliness, comfort, and tailored amenities both on vehicles and at stops/stations.
- **Strategy 1.3:** Expand service availability through improved schedule coordination with other providers.

## Theme 2:

### Transformative Regional Services

- **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 residential areas and regional network.
  - Service in smaller/rural communities to connect to local circulators and regional network.
- **Strategy 2.3:** Support regional TDM, bicycle/pedestrian, and first/last mile programs to improve access to fixed-route transit.

# VISION FRAMEWORK: CORE THEMES & KEY STRATEGIES

## Theme 3: Strong Transit-Centered Communities

- **Strategy 3.1:** Integrate regional transit planning with regional/local land use planning and design.
- **Strategy 3.2:** Increase support for Transit-Oriented Development in areas well served by transit through grants, education, capacity building, and partnerships.
- **Strategy 3.3:** Become a commenting agency for land use plans/development applications and develop transit impacts/mitigations standards.

## Theme 4: Sound Financial Stewardship

- **Strategy 4.1:** Pursue efficiency gains across all modes.
- **Strategy 4.2:** Seek new and expanded revenues sources (including local & regional, state & federal, and public-private partnerships) to diversify funding base provide stable funding source for Vision Plan implementation.
- **Strategy 4.3:** Evaluate most cost-effective agency structure, including potential independence from MRCOG and potential coordination/consolidation with ABQ RIDE.

# VISION FRAMEWORK: CORE THEMES & KEY STRATEGIES

## 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/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.

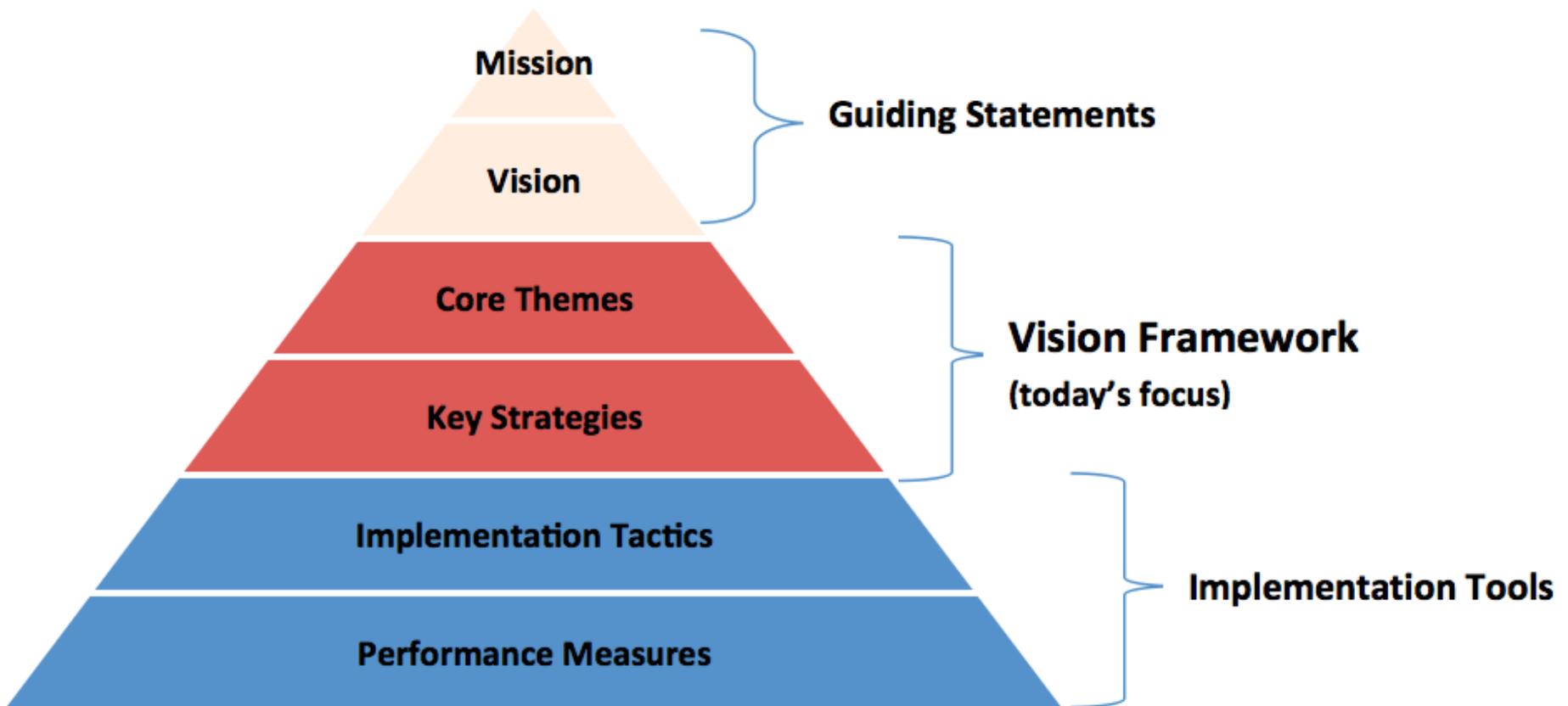
## Theme 6: Industry-Leading Knowledge & Practice

- **Strategy 6.1:** Conduct orientation and on-going professional development for staff and board, including in-person visits with peer agencies.
- **Strategy 6.2:** Form Executive Leadership Committee with focused responsibilities, potentially including advisory members from private sector, educational institutions, and riders.
- **Strategy 6.3:** Become a resource to local jurisdictions to support best practice pilot programs, staff training, and implementation of Vision Plan priorities.

# VISION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION-FOCUSED DOCUMENT



# VISION PLAN BUILDING BLOCKS



# VISION PLAN - CONTENT

## **Current Conditions**

Existing Context  
Mission Statement  
Ongoing Constraints  
Future Challenges

## **Future Vision**

Vision Statement  
Organizational Model  
Core Themes & Key  
Strategies  
Performance Measures

## **Implementation**

Implementation Tactics  
Phased Timeline  
Supporting Partners  
Planning Costs &  
Funding

## **Appendices**

Outreach Themes  
Board Briefing Book  
White Papers  
Resources (e.g. sample  
MOUs, etc.)

# VISION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION-FOCUSED DOCUMENT

## Core Theme

- **EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE**

## Key Strategy

- **Make the transit trip more competitive with the auto trip**

## Implementation Tactics

- **More direct transit routes linking key destinations**
- **Improve transfer efficiency**
- **Transit Priority Solutions (Signal Priority, Queue Jumps, Dedicated Lanes)**

## Performance Measures

- **Reduce transfers by XX% (TBD)**
- **Decrease transfer wait time by XX% (TBD)**
- **Decrease Route times by XX% (TBD)**

# VISION PLAN: IMPLEMENTATION-FOCUSED DOCUMENT

## Implementation Tactic: Improve Transfer Efficiency



- The “Four Cs” Continuum:
  - Many possible tools to achieve any given strategy
- Implementation tactics based on:
  - How agencies can best work together
  - A phased approach

# NEXT STEPS

- **August:**
  - Board Reviews Draft Vision Plan
- **September:**
  - Board Considers Adoption of Final Vision Plan
- **Fall 2015:**
  - Begin implementation of near-term priorities



# OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

- Promote the project website
  - <http://riometro.org/rio-metro-news/502-rio-metro-s-vision-for-the-future>
- For more info or to request a presentation
  - Tony Sylvester, [tsylvester@mrcog-nm.gov](mailto:tsylvester@mrcog-nm.gov)  
(505) 247-1750
- Thank you!

