



MEMORANDUM

Project: RMRTD Visioning (Long-Term Strategic Vision and Implementation Services)

Contract: 2014-01

Date: July 3rd, 2015

To: Tony Sylvester, Rio Metro Regional Transit District

From: Holly Buck and Kelly Leadbetter, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig

Subject: RMRTD Transit Operations and Organizational Options White Paper - FINAL

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 and identify preliminary opportunities for changes to better achieve the goals of the Long-Term Strategic Visioning project currently underway.

RMRTD's and ABQ RIDE's boards, management/staff, transit riders, and other stakeholders (e.g. partner agencies and the business community) informed the development of this technical assessment by providing ongoing input to the consultant team throughout in the fall of 2014 and into 2015. In addition, a PowerPoint summary of the key findings and conclusions of an earlier draft of this white paper was delivered to the RMRTD Board at their 3/11/15 Visioning Workshop and to ABQ RIDE management and staff at their 4/14/15 workshop focused on ABQ RIDE. This version has subsequently been revised based on feedback at those meetings and from RMRTD staff.

Ultimately, the findings from this white paper will inform the development of recommendations in the RMRTD's Long-Term Strategic Vision Plan.

What This White Paper Contains

This white paper consists of three parts:

- **Part 1: RMRTD Existing Conditions and Review of 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. Part 1 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).

- **Part 2: Transit Governance Structure.** Part 2 includes a summary of the New Mexico Regional Transit District Act, the history of RMRTD and its board organization, a review of peer board organizational structures, and potential governance options for RMRTD.
- **Part 3: Preliminary Opportunities and Potential Benefits.** Based on the identification of key issues in the preceding sections, Part 3 identifies preliminary opportunities related to agency operations and the associated benefits of each opportunity. This section also identifies the organizational structure needed to achieve the project goals.

Next Steps

The insights highlighted in this white paper will be used to develop recommendations in the RMRTD Strategic Vision Plan, including: a) action items to address the identified key issues and opportunities, and b) resources needed to implement those action items to achieve the long-term vision.

Part 1: RMRTD Existing Conditions and Review of Partner Agencies/Service Providers

Overview of Rio Metro Regional Transit District

RMRTD is one of the primary regional transit service providers for central New Mexico. RMRTD 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. RMRTD's mission is to "manage a regional, integrated, multimodal public transportation network that is fiscally responsible, innovative, and efficient." To achieve this mission, RMRTD 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."¹

RMRTD Board of Directors

The RMRTD Board of Directors guides the agency and consists of 19 appointed local officials from member agencies throughout the transit district. Member agencies include Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, City of Albuquerque, City of Belen, Town of Bernalillo, Bernalillo County, Village of Bosque Farms, Village of Corrales, Village of Los Lunas, City of Rio Rancho, Sandoval County, Valencia County, Isleta Pueblo (associate member), and North Central Regional Transit District (ex-officio, non-voting member). Member agencies appoint a representative and an alternate representative to serve on the board for a minimum term of one year.

¹ RMRTD "Mission and Services" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://riometro.org/about/mission-and-services>.

The Board of Directors is responsible for carrying out the functions assigned by the provisions of the state's Regional Transit District Act. These functions include establishing financial, management, service operation, fare, and other policies that support transit system operations.² The Board of Directors' primary tasks include establishing a regional transit system that is compatible with established state, regional, and local transportation plans; developing policies and procedures to support the establishment of the system; and developing a sound financial plan that provides for the capital, operating, and maintenance requirements of the system.³

RMRTD developed a Service Sector Council to allow maximum local community input. This council helped develop service plans, monitor operational performances, and provide input on local and regional public transportation needs. However, RMRTD had a difficult time engaging the council members in this capacity and this council no longer exists. Community input is valuable and necessary; therefore, it is important for RMRTD to identify ways to keep the council active and engaged.

RMRTD Service

RMRTD provides both bus and regional commuter rail service. RMRTD provides rail service for the longer, regional travel between outlying communities and the urban destinations of Albuquerque and Santa Fe. RMRTD also financially contributes to ABQ RIDE for urban transit service but leaves operational decisions largely to the discretion of ABQ RIDE. RMRTD also provides select service in the region's rural communities.

To evaluate the full range of service provided by the RMRTD, it is necessary to examine all RMRTD funded service. A significant amount of the RMRTD budget is contributed to ABQ RIDE, but ABQ RIDE ridership is not included in RMRTD National Transit Database (NTD reports). The RMRTD *Short Range Plan* presents a service overview based on data assembled to reflect all funded service. For this reason, the data presented in this white paper may differ from those reported elsewhere.⁴

According to the *Short Range Plan*, RMRTD carried a record 1.97 million riders during FY2012 (July 2011 to June 2012), an increase of 4.6 percent over FY2011. The Rail Runner accounts for approximately 60 percent of the ridership, with buses (including ABQ RIDE bus service funded by RMRTD) carrying the other 40 percent. Approximately 55 percent of RMRTD trips in FY2012 occurred in Bernalillo County, with about 13 percent each in Sandoval and Valencia counties. The Rail Runner also provides service to Santa Fe County (which is not part of RMRTD), and these trips account for 18 percent of RMRTD's total ridership.⁵ **Table 1** illustrates the breakdown of the total ridership by county for FY2012.

² ibid.

³ RMRTD "About the Rio Metro Board" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://riometro.org/about/rio-metro-board/board-of-directors-about>.

⁴ For example, note that the *Peer Review* white paper uses ridership (and other data) directly from the National Transit Database (NTD). This is because the scope of that white paper required making quantitative comparisons to other peer agencies and therefore it was necessary to rely on NTD data because NTD reporting requirements helps facilitates consistent reporting of data across agencies.

⁵ RMRTD *Short-Range Transit Plan FY 2013-2017*. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://riometro.org/images/pdf/rmrtd-2013-2017-short-range-plan-final.pdf>.

Table 1. Total RMRTD Ridership by County, FY2012

County	Rail Runner	Percent	Bus	Percent	Total	Percent
Bernalillo	474,801	24.1%	606,642	30.8%	1,081,443	54.9%
Sandoval	177,827	9.0%	76,499	3.9%	254,326	12.9%
Valencia	178,087	9.0%	74,376	3.8%	252,463	12.8%
Santa Fe	360,939	18.3%	N/A	N/A	360,939	18.3%
Unassigned	N/A	N/A	21,933	1.1%	21,933	1.1%
TOTAL	1,191,654	60.5%	779,450	39.5%	1,971,104	100.0%

Note: 602,864 ridership were on bus service funded by RMRTD and operated by ABQ RIDE. Source: Rio Metro Regional Transit District Short Range Plan FY2013 – FY2017, December 2012

Rail Runner Express

The Rail Runner Express is New Mexico's first commuter rail service. Phase I of the system, which operates on an existing right-of-way purchased from BNSF Railway by NMDOT from Belen to Bernalillo, opened in July 2006. Phase II, the extension of the line to Santa Fe, opened in December 2008. The train corridor is approximately 100 miles long with 14 existing stations and a 15th station set to open in the near future.

The existing Rail Runner Express stations illustrated in **Figure 1** include Belen, Los Lunas, Isleta Pueblo, Bernalillo County, Downtown Albuquerque, Montaño, Los Ranchos/Journal Center, Sandia Pueblo, Downtown Bernalillo, Sandoval County/US 550, Kewa, Santa Fe County/NM 599, South Capital, and Santa Fe Depot. The Zia Road Station is the next station to be added to the corridor. It is located between the Santa Fe County/NM 599 Station and the South Capital Station. Construction of this station is complete; however, it will open after the City of Santa Fe addresses some nearby land use issues.⁶

Most of the Rail Runner Express stations operate as park-and-rides and have various levels of free and paid parking. **Table 2** includes an overview of the parking, bicycle facilities, and other amenities available at the Rail Runner stations. All Rail Runner Express stations have Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible platforms and ramps to accommodate persons with disabilities.

Rail Runner assets are largely owned by NMDOT, not RMRTD. 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 RMRTD. The consultant team's preliminary observations of the potential pros and cons of RMRTD not owning the assets it relies upon for its operations include:

- Pros:
 - Reduced RMRTD debt service burden;
 - Potential economies of scale / negotiating leverage on purchasing;

⁶ RMRTD "Zia Road Station Information" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://riometro.org/rio-metro-schedules/train-schedule/45-ct-categories-en/ct-stations-connections-en/station-information/132-zia-road-station-information>.

- Enables RMRTD to focus on operations, policy, and planning; and
- Vested interest and participation of NMDOT into the system.
- Cons:
 - Potentially increased burden on O & M budget;
 - Decreased capacity for issuing debt against assets;
 - Limited control over capital / facilities planning and replacement;
 - RMRTD capital and maintenance investment into NMDOT assets;
 - Potential for divergent priorities and directives resulting from interrelated roles and responsibilities of the RMRTD and NMDOT.

The full implications of RMRTD of this arrangement should be evaluated in an organization, administration, and financial study.



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Figure 1. Map of Existing Service Connections

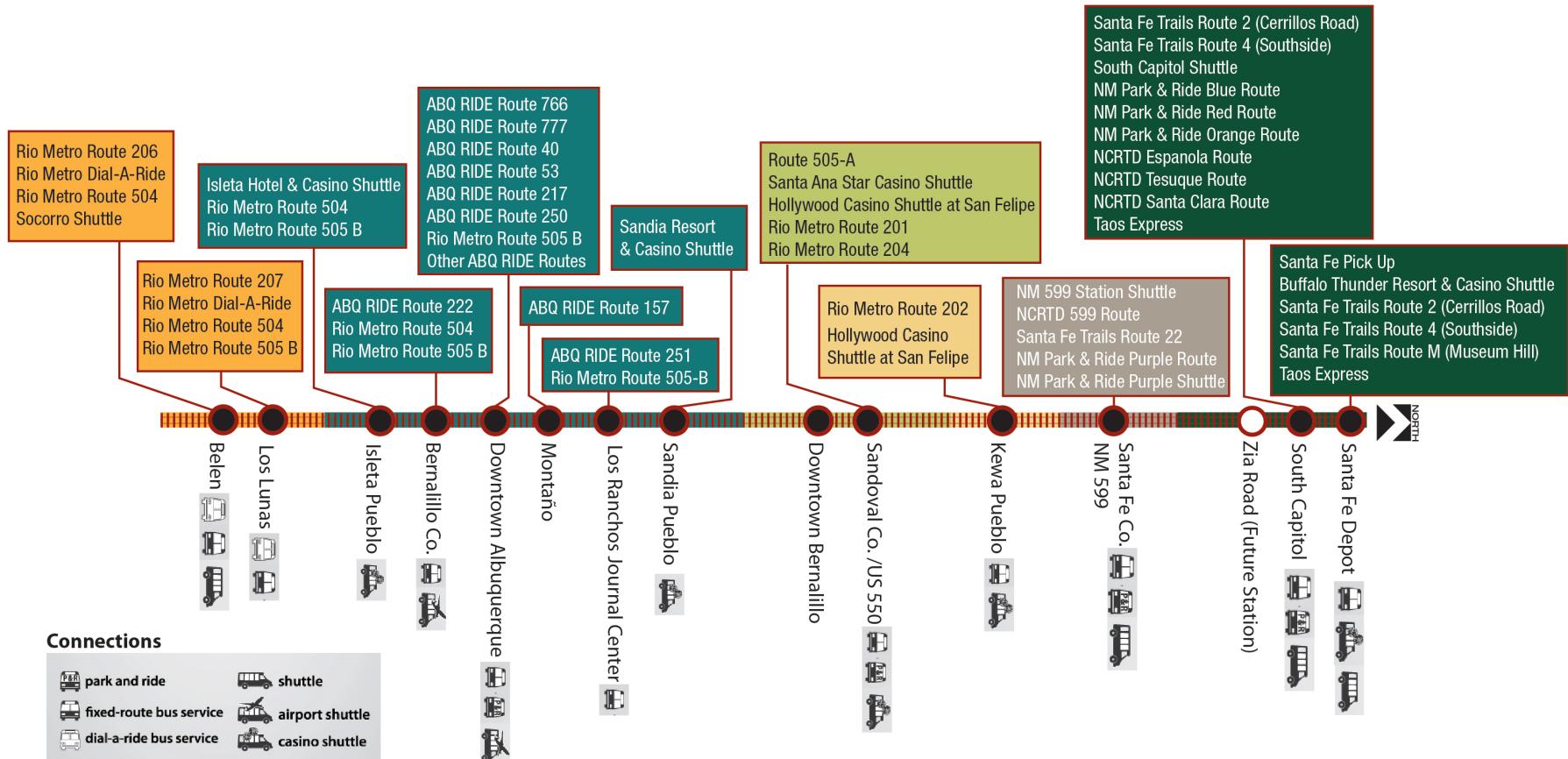


Table 2. Rail Runner Express Station Facilities and Amenities (not necessarily owned and operated by the RMRTD)

Station	Parking		Bike Facilities	Other Amenities
Santa Fe Depot	Paid/Private	Manhattan Avenue Parking Structure	No bicycle lockers	
South Capitol	Free/Public	200 spaces	10 bicycle lockers	Rail-Trail connection
Santa Fe County/NM 599	Free/Public	200+ spaces	14 bicycle lockers	
Kewa	Free/Public	40 spaces	2 bicycle lockers	
Sandoval County/US 550	Free/Public	Lower lot – 191 spaces Upper lot – 260 spaces	10 bicycle lockers	Dedicated parking for vehicles
Downtown Bernalillo	Free/Public	23 spaces	4 bicycle lockers	
Sandia Pueblo	Free/Public	75 spaces	4 bicycle lockers	
Los Ranchos/Journal Center	Free/Public	262 spaces	8 bicycle lockers	Paseo del Bicycle Trail connection
Montaño	Free/Public	290 spaces	16 bicycle lockers	
Downtown Albuquerque	Paid/Private	Parking Structure at 1 st Street and Gold Avenue	20 bicycle lockers	Restrooms, Cafe
Bernalillo County	Free/Public	172 spaces	8 bicycle lockers	
Isleta Pueblo	Free/Public	75 spaces	4 bicycle lockers	
Los Lunas	Free/Public	190 spaces	14 bicycle lockers	Restrooms, Café ⁷
Belen	Free/Public	200 spaces	10 bicycle lockers	Dedicated parking for vehicles

Rail Runner Express trains operate seven days a week and run from approximately 4:30 am to 10:30 pm on weekdays, with increased service during the morning and evening commute periods. Trains operate less frequently on weekends with shorter hours of operation. Trains operate from approximately 8:00 am to 10:30 pm on Saturdays and from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm on Sundays.

⁷ The café is owned by the Village of Los Lunas.

Rail Runner Express fares were initially free to attract ridership. In November 2006, free service ended on the line's Sandoval section, and ridership fell to 1,000 passengers per day. When the Los Lunas and Belen stations opened with free service, ridership rose to approximately 1,800 passengers per day. Free service on the Belen section of the line ended in April 2007, and a new zone-based fare structure went into effect as described below.

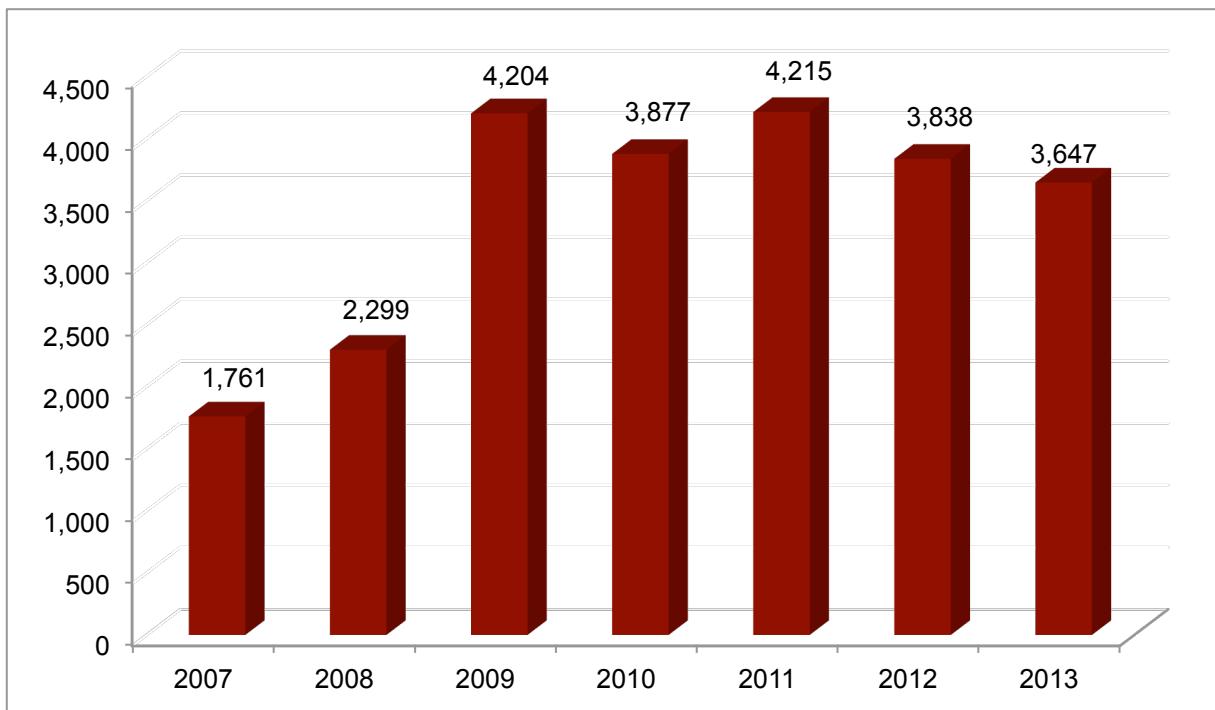
Currently, there are six fare zones along the corridor between Belen and Santa Fe. The ticket price is determined by the distance traveled, calculated by the number of fare zones that the rider travels through. Riders can purchase tickets online before boarding or from a ticket agent while onboard the train. Riders have the option to purchase one-way trip tickets, day passes, monthly passes, and annual passes. Reduced fares are available to senior citizens (age 62 and older), students, youth age 10 to 17, Medicare recipients, and persons with disabilities. Children age 9 and under ride for free.

In November 2014, a new pass program was launched for veterans. The pilot program provides a free annual pass to veterans with a VHIC (VA card) and the passes are available at the Rail Runner Customer Service Office and at targeted outreach events. The program is a partnership of the New Mexico Department of Veterans Services, the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, and the City of Albuquerque.

Rail Runner Express ridership increased dramatically after service was extended to Santa Fe in December 2008. Approximately 60 percent of weekday trips and 85 percent of weekend trips have one trip end in Santa Fe County and the other in Valencia, Bernalillo, or Sandoval counties. Rail Runner Express carried nearly 1.1 million riders in 2013, with approximately 3,600 total passengers per weekday.⁸ **Figure 2** illustrates average weekday ridership from 2007 to 2013. **Figure 3** illustrates annual ridership from 2007 to 2013.

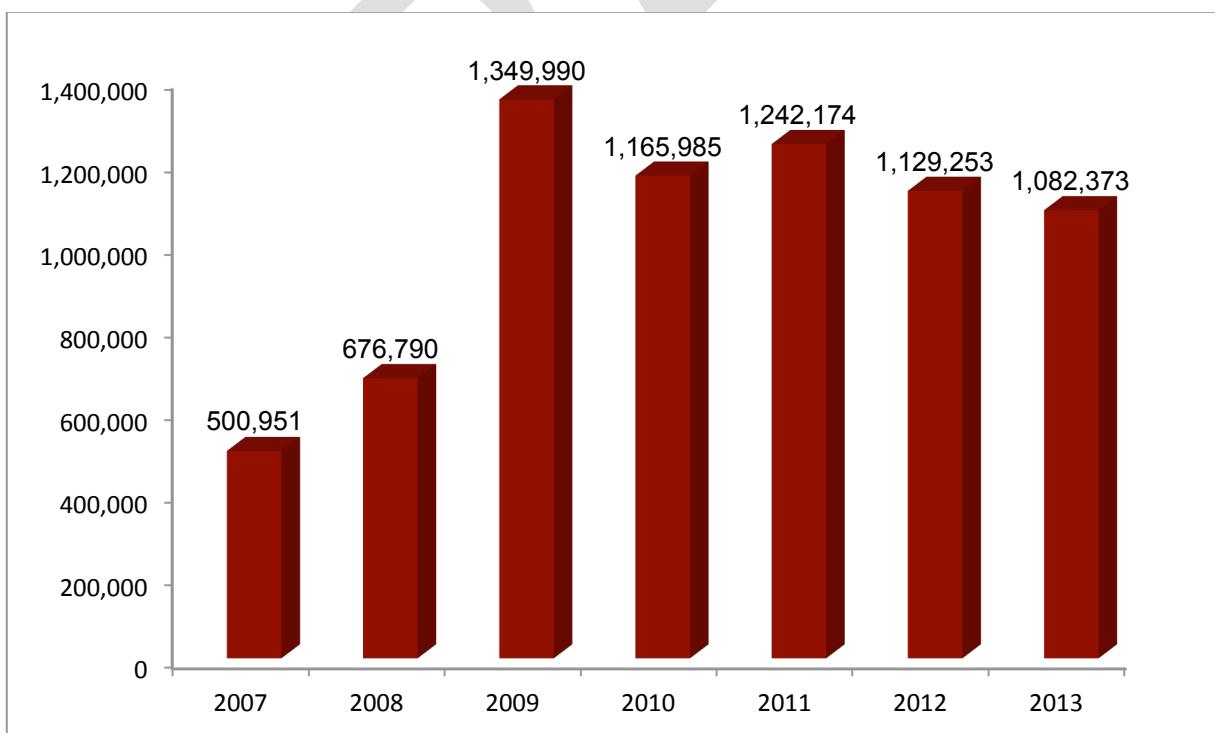
⁸ NMDOT State Rail Plan (March 2014). Accessed in June 2015 at http://dot.state.nm.us/content/dam/nmdot/Transit_Rail/NewMexicoStateRailPlan2014.pdf.

Figure 2. Rail Runner Express Average Weekday Ridership, 2007 to 2013



Source: NMDOT State Rail Plan (March 2014)

Figure 3. Rail Runner Express Annual Ridership, 2007 to 2013



Source: NMDOT State Rail Plan (March 2014)

The Rail Runner Express connects many other transit services in the region, including Amtrak, Greyhound Lines, ABQ RIDE (including Rapid Ride lines), Santa Fe Trails, NCRTD's Blue Bus routes, and other smaller shuttle services. Based on a transit usage report in the MRCOG region, in 2012 approximately 35 percent of all transit trips in the Albuquerque Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) involved a transfer.⁹ To make using the system as easy as possible, passengers receive free transfers to Santa Fe Trails' service, and ABQ RIDE offers free service to passengers who show their Rail Runner Express ticket. **Table 3** provides an overview of the service connections available between the Rail Runner Express and other local/regional transit services.

Table 3. Rail Runner Express Service Connections

Rail Runner Express Transit Service Connections	Service	Location
	Amtrak and Greyhound Lines	Downtown Albuquerque
	ABQ RIDE	Bus routes in downtown Albuquerque and at the Los Ranchos/Journal Center and Bernalillo County/International Sunport Stations
	Casino Shuttles	Shuttle service to nearest Rail Runner Station (Santa Ana Pueblo, Isleta Pueblo, Pojoaque Pueblo)
	NCRTD	South Capital and NM 599 Stations
	RMRTD	Los Lunas Station
		Bernalillo Stations – Cuba, Jemez Springs, Cochiti Pueblo and Enchanted Hills
	Santa Fe Trails	South Capitol and Santa Fe Depot Stations
	Socorro Shuttle	Belen Station connecting to Socorro
	Taos Express	Shuttle service from Santa Fe Depot and South Capitol Stations
	University of New Mexico	Shuttle service connecting main UNM campus to the Downtown Albuquerque Rail Runner Station/ABQ RIDE Alvarado Station

⁹ *Transit Usage in the MRCOG Region*. Presentation given to CMP Committee (3/14/12). Provided by RMRTD.

Buses and Dial-a-Ride

RMRTD provides bus and Dial-a-Ride services in Sandoval, Valencia, and Bernalillo counties. All bus routes operate Monday through Friday, with some routes operating on the weekends.

Rio Metro bus ridership was approximately 780,000 during FY2012, an increase of 111,000 (16.6 percent) over FY2011. Ridership increased in all three counties, with the largest growth on ABQ RIDE routes, Sandoval County commuter buses, and Valencia County demand response. Over 77 percent of ridership is concentrated on ABQ RIDE, with Valencia County demand response and Sandoval County commuter buses making up most of the remainder.

Of note, RMRTD is currently developing a service improvement plan for Valencia County that will convert existing Dial-a-Ride services to fixed-routes. The new routes will connect with existing fixed-route services, Rail Runner Express stations, and major employment/residential areas. The goals of this pilot project include providing more transit within Valencia County and to Albuquerque; providing more regularly scheduled routes that do not require advance reservations; increasing the visibility of RMRTD; increasing operational efficiency; and providing the maximum amount of service possible within budgetary constraints.

Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6 list the routes, where the routes provide access, and which agency is the operator. Any bus route that begins with the number “2” connects directly to the New Mexico Rail Runner Express

Table 4. Albuquerque Metro/Bernalillo County Routes

Route	Access To	Operated By
Route 96	Rio Rancho to KAFB	ABQ RIDE
Route 155	Coors Blvd – Rio Rancho	ABQ RIDE
Route 222	Airport Business Park	ABQ RIDE
Route 250	Airport Express	ABQ RIDE
Route 251	Rio Rancho – Rail Runner – Journal Center	ABQ RIDE
Route 366	Albuquerque to Route 66 Casino Hotel	Rio Metro
Route 500 Purple	Albuquerque to Santa Fe – Los Alamos	NMDOT
Route 505A	Bernalillo to Albuquerque	Rio Metro
Route 505B	Albuquerque to Belen	Rio Metro
Route 551	Rio Rancho – Journal Center	ABQ RIDE
Route 790	West Side to UNM	ABQ RIDE

Table 5. Sandoval County Routes

Route	Access To	Operated By
Route 8	Bernalillo, Cuba	Rio Metro
Route 201	Bernalillo, Enchanted Hills	Rio Metro
Route 202	Santo Domingo Pueblo, Cochiti Pueblo, Cochiti Lake	Rio Metro
Route 204	Bernalillo, Jemez Springs	Rio Metro
Rio Rancho Dial-a-Ride	Rio Rancho (for seniors & disabled)	Rio Metro

Table 6. Valencia County Routes

Route	Access To	Operated By
Route 206	Bus route in Belen	Rio Metro
Route 207	Bus route in Los Lunas	Rio Metro
Dial-a-Ride	Los Lunas	Rio Metro
Dial-a-Ride	Belen	Rio Metro

RMRTD Service Productivity and Performance¹⁰

Across the entire system, RMRTD carried approximately 26 passengers per revenue hour of service in 2012. As a point of comparison, data from FY2012 National Transit Database (NTD) reports that ABQ RIDE also carried about 26 passengers per vehicle revenue hour of service over its entire system (including SunVan paratransit), Santa Fe Trails carried about 10 passengers per vehicle revenue hour, while Las Cruces Roadrunner Transit served 13 passengers per vehicle revenue hour.

Urban fixed-route services are by far the most productive, as expected due to higher densities and more transit-supportive land uses and urban design. In FY2012, the Rail Runner Express carried about 32 passengers per train revenue hour, and the fixed-route buses operated by ABQ RIDE generated 28 passengers per vehicle revenue hour, compared to 30 passengers per vehicle revenue hour across the entire ABQ RIDE fixed-route system. The demand response, paratransit, and rural fixed-route operations are less productive as they are low-capacity service modes and operate in lower density areas.

¹⁰ All data reported in this section are from the 2012 National Transit Database.

RMRTD's cost per passenger trip in 2012 was \$12.04 across the entire system. ABQ RIDE fixed routes are the most economical, with a cost per passenger of \$3. Other services range from \$16 to \$30 per passenger trip.

The Rail Runner, which is designed to carry large passenger volumes over long distances, costs about \$20 per passenger, but passenger trips average over 40 miles, equating to a cost of about 46 cents per passenger mile. This is significantly lower than the comparable cost per passenger mile on ABQ RIDE or other bus services.¹¹ It is also lower than the per-mile cost of operating a private vehicle, which the USDOT estimated was approximately 61 cents per mile in 2012 assuming 15,000 vehicle miles per year.¹²

Transportation Demand Management

Rio Metro received their first TDM grant in 2010, and ABQ RIDE has operated a TDM program since the mid-1990s. To make the most of the TDM efforts being implemented in the region, the two agencies will work together under one grant beginning in FY2015. Rio Metro will lead the efforts in FY2015 and 2016 and the lead agency will be ABQ RIDE in FY2017 and 2018. Rio Metro's TDM program is housed within the agency's marketing department.

The program aims to change travel behavior and reduce single-occupant vehicle trips by promoting transit, ridesharing, and non-motorized (bicycle and pedestrian) trips. TDM programs may serve different purposes for different communities and agencies, including congestion management, air pollution mitigation, support of transit programs, and promotion of alternative modes.

Rio Metro's current TDM program consists primarily of the Smart Business Partnership. As of 2015, more than 66 area companies representing 73,000 employees and 30,000 students participate in the TDM program. Participating companies promote alternative forms of transportation to their employees, and, in return, companies are offered rewards for participating (Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels).

Current Rio Metro TDM objectives and strategies include:

Goal: Develop partnerships with the largest employers in the region to provide alternative transportation incentives and education to their employees.

- **Education and Outreach** to large employers (employee presentations, trip planning assistance, and educational events at employee worksites)
- Promote **flexible work schedules and alternative work arrangements**
- Conduct **annual employee survey**

¹¹ RMRTD Short-Range Transit Plan FY 2013-2017. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://riometro.org/images/pdf/rmrtd-2013-2017-short-range-plan-final.pdf>.

¹² USDOT Bureau of Transportation Statistics, "Table 3-17: Average Cost of Owning and Operating an Automobile (Assuming 15,000 Vehicle-Miles per Year)." Accessed in June 2015 at http://www.rita.dot.gov/bts/sites/rita.dot.gov.bts/files/publications/national_transportation_statistics/html/table_03_17.html.

- Encourage employers to **subsidize employee bus and rail** passes
- Add **designated carpool spaces** to encourage carpooling
- Add **bike racks and bike lockers** to encourage cycling to work
- Promote the **Guaranteed Ride Home** program
- Create and distribute **regional brochures** promoting alternative modes
- Create **TDM video** to be shown at business meetings, presentations, website, etc.
- Create and promote **corporate discount program** for bus and rail passes

RMRTD Marketing and Public Information

RMRTD has an extensive outreach, marketing, and advertising program to help create brand identity, promote usage of alternative modes, and reduce the use of single-occupant vehicle trips. The following provides an overview of the key goals and activities of the marketing department:

- Rebrand and market Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE as one regional transit system to create **one regional brand**
- Implement **bi-annual transit survey** to identify and understand target audience
- Develop and implement **strategic marketing plan** with a cohesive, integrated communications plan
- Integrate Rio Metro and ABQ RIDE **web platforms** and information (new site launched in 2013)
- Use **social networking** to educate and inform passengers
- Use **email marketing** campaigns to reach target audiences
- Print and distribute quarterly rail magazine – **XPress Magazine**
- Implement **advertising campaigns** highlighting the financial savings of using public transportation
- Use **education and outreach** to encourage alternative transportation use among targeted groups, including youth, older adults, visitors, hotel guests, and businesses
- Use **ambassador program** to enhance use of public transportation
- **Train staff and bus drivers** on key messages
- Promote and facilitate increased use of **bicycles to access transit**
- Continue to improve **mobile technology** to provide real-time information to passengers (Rio Metro is in Google Transit's database and can be used for trip planning)

RMRTD Funding Sources

RMRTD funding comes from various federal, state, and local sources. These funds are either applied to rail or bus service, or both. RMRTD uses the state fiscal year of July 1 through June 30 as the reporting basis for operating expenses. Current projections indicate that existing transit services are expected to maintain State FY2014 funding levels through State FY2020. Special/new service is expected to maintain its State FY2014 level of expenditure through State FY2020.

In terms of bus service, revenue sources will not change significantly until State FY2016 when federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) and Surface Transportation

Program-Urban (STPU) funds are received for the implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) on Central Avenue in Albuquerque. These revenues range from \$5.6 to \$6.3 million annually between State FY2016 and State FY2020. Expenditures for the implementation of BRT for this time frame reflect these revenues plus local matching funds. BRT expenditures reflect capital improvements, not operating expenses.

Federal 5307 (Fixed Guideway) provides over 40 percent of the total rail revenues (approximately \$15.7 million); with other non-urbanized and CMAQ funds making up the additional federal and state sources. Federal 5307 and gross receipts tax (GRT) revenues are forecast to consistently increase through 2020. Federal 5337 (State of Good Repair) funds will increase to full allocation levels in 2015 (\$5.5 million) and continue through 2020. Rio Metro GRT and revenues from fares make up the local funding sources of the State FY2015 budget.

RMRTD Budget and Cost Effectiveness

The RMRTD *Short Range Plan* provides insight into the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of rail and bus services provided by Rio Metro. The plan is updated every five years, and the most recent version was adopted in December 2012. The *Short Range Plan* provides insight into the budgeting process for RMRTD for the State FY2013-2017 budget.¹³ The budget information provided below is from the State FY2014 Budget and *Short Range Plan Addendum* (May 2013).

Rail Transit

The RMRTD budget for State FY2014 was \$40.2 for the New Mexico Rail Runner Express. The budget reflects significantly larger revenues and expenditures than were included in the State FY2013 budget due to additional Federal 5307 revenues of \$7.9 million in State FY2014. Additionally, RMRTD received \$2.0 million of Federal 5337 (State of Good Repair) funds in State FY2014 (a new revenue source). The FY2015 rail budget is approximately \$45 million.

Non-Rail Transit

The RMRTD transit services budget for FY2014 was \$15.6 million. The budget included a range of transit services in the RMRTD service area, such as demand response, commuter bus, elderly and disabled service, fixed-route service, and service contracted through ABQ RIDE. The excess expenditures are funded by cash carryover from previous years, including funding for service expansions that were not implemented. Additionally, a new budget category for vanpool service was included in the State FY2014 budget.

Overview of ABQ RIDE

ABQ RIDE is the local transit agency serving Albuquerque operating as a department within the City of Albuquerque. ABQ RIDE is the third largest City department and is authorized for 550 employees, which includes drivers, security, maintenance, administration, and clerical staff. ABQ RIDE operates various city bus routes, including the Rapid Ride semi-BRT service. ABQ RIDE currently operates 21 regular fixed routes, 15 commuter routes, three Rapid Ride routes,

¹³ RMRTD *Short-Range Transit Plan* FY 2013-2017. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://riometro.org/images/pdf/rmrtd-2013-2017-short-range-plan-final.pdf>.

and one downtown circulator.¹⁴ ABQ RIDE is the largest public transportation system in New Mexico, with ridership of nearly 13 million in 2013.

ABQ RIDE Management

ABQ RIDE has two decision-making entities; the City of Albuquerque's City Council makes policy decisions, and the Director of the Transit Department makes operating and administrative function decisions. Policy decisions by the City Council include annual budget approval, major capital/facility purchases, changes to fare structure, and any major changes or additions to transit service/operations. Administrative decisions made by the Director include all regular service changes/modifications (including headways, route structure, etc.), hiring in conjunction with the City's Human Resources Department, planning, and operations. ABQ RIDE has six unions representing the staff of ABQ RIDE. Additionally, the Transit Advisory Board serves an advisory role to the Director and ABQ RIDE. The committee, currently nine members, addresses various matters relevant to public transit in Albuquerque.¹⁵

ABQ RIDE Service

ABQ RIDE currently has 39 routes in operation. Routes are classified as Rapid Ride routes, local routes, and commuter routes. Daily ridership was approximately 35,360 in 2013. **Table 7** shows FY2013 ridership. ABQ RIDE also operates complementary paratransit service called SunVan (called Mini Ride from 2003–2006) that provides curb-to-curb service for persons with disabilities.

Table 7. FY2013 ABQ RIDE Ridership

Route Type	Ridership
Rapid Ride Routes	3,027,280
Local Routes	9,583,981
Commuter Routes	294,978
TOTAL	12,906,239

ABQ RIDE has five main transit centers: Alvarado Transit Center, Central & Unser Transit Center, Montaño Transit Center, Northwest Transit Center, and Uptown Transit Center.¹⁶

In October 2014, the City of Albuquerque unveiled conceptual designs for construction of Albuquerque Rapid Transit, a true BRT system that includes dedicated lanes, traffic signal priority, level boarding, and off-bus fare payment. Ongoing public input will further develop the

¹⁴ ABQ RIDE "Bus Routes and Schedules" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/bus-routes-and-schedules-pdf-format>.

¹⁵ ABQ RIDE "Transit Advisory Board" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/our-department/transit-advisory-board>.

¹⁶ ABQ RIDE "Transit Centers" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://www.cabq.gov/transit/transit-centers>.

BRT system and determine which road(s) it will travel on. It is anticipated that Albuquerque Rapid Transit will be operational in fall 2017.

ABQ RIDE Public Information

Riders on ABQ RIDE have multiple ways to plan their trip and access service information. Google has ABQ RIDE's routes in its transit database. Passengers can type their destination location and arrival or departure times into the web-based program and their computers or smart phones will map out a step-by-step transit route. This program is linked on the City of Albuquerque's Trip Planning website. This is ABQ RIDE's primary trip planning tool.

Users can also use the TXT2RIDE service. This service allows a user with a phone capable of text messaging to text a bus stop number and a Rapid Ride route number to TXT2RIDE (27433) and receive an immediate response with accurate, up-to-date schedule information. ABQ RIDE does not charge a fee to use the TXT2RIDE service. This service is provided by AT&T.

Riders can also use the ABQ RIDE mobile app. ABQ RIDE is the official City of Albuquerque mobile app for the transit system. Users can plan their trip, calculate fares, track buses in real time, and find connections to the Rail Runner commuter train. ABQ RIDE was developed by APPCityLife, Inc. and is free to download in iTunes and Google Play.

Transit riders can also access real-time ABQ RIDE bus information using the Where's My Bus? (WMB?) Module. The WMB? Module tracks ABQ RIDE buses as they move along their route. Users of the module can select which route they would like information, and see a map that provides real-time vehicle location along the route. This service is powered by the University of New Mexico Information Technologies.

ABQ RIDE Financials

Funding for ABQ RIDE comes from the City's Transit Operating Fund, which is managed by the Transit Department. Major revenue sources include passenger fares, intergovernmental revenue, General Fund operating subsidy, and 36 percent from the Quarter Cent Transportation Infrastructure Tax. Residents approved this tax in fall 2009 to enhance transit services.

According to NTD, ABQ RIDE's 2012 annual operating budget was approximately \$42.5 million. Since 2013, \$4.7 million of this budget was from RMRTD to fund specific ABQ RIDE routes; these routes primarily connected to the Rail Runner or served a regional transportation need. Starting in 2013 RMRTD provided this funding but did not require that it be used explicitly for bus services connecting to Rail Runner. This allowed more flexibility and reduced the administrative burden for ABQ RIDE.

Approximately \$26 million of ABQ RIDE's annual 2012 budget was expended on salaries, wages, and benefits. Another \$10.5 million was spent on materials and supplies, and the remaining \$5.5 million was spent on other operated expenses.¹⁷ It is worth noting that because ABQ RIDE is a department within the City of Albuquerque, some expenses that are incurred by

¹⁷ 2012 National Transit Database.

a standalone transit agency such as RMRTD are not incurred by ABQ RIDE. These include expenses such administrative functions such as payroll and information technology, professional functions such as human resources and legal counsel, as well as overhead costs such as insurance.

ABQ RIDE's FY2015 approved budget is nearly \$50.5 million.¹⁸

Overview of Other Transit and Planning Agencies

This section includes an overview of the transit and planning agencies that RMRTD regularly coordinates with, including MRCOG, Santa Fe Trails, and NCRTD.

Mid-Region Council of Governments

MRCOG is another important entity to consider in the development of a strategic vision for RMRTD. MRCOG provides metropolitan and rural transportation planning for the entire four-county area (Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia, and Torrance counties), including the development of the long-range transportation plan (MTP) and the short-term Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Albuquerque metropolitan area. MRCOG administers Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding for the Job Access and Reverse Commute and New Freedom programs for agencies and organizations within the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area and also provides assistance with curb-to-curb transportation for qualified low-income residents through the job access program.

MRCOG has a Metropolitan Transportation Board (MTB) that sets policy for transportation issues in the urban area and consists of elected officials from each member jurisdiction. The MTB coordinates local government transportation planning and project development, identifies federal funding for transportation projects (including roadway widening and extensions), sets policy for roadway access, identifies corridors and alignments for new roadways, identifies new bicycle facilities and associated federal funding opportunities, and makes decisions about long-range transportation issues.

Santa Fe Trails (City of Santa Fe)

Santa Fe Trails is the local transit agency in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Santa Fe Trails currently operates 10 bus routes that provide good coverage across the city. Santa Fe Trails provides bus connections to the Rio Metro Express at the Santa Fe Depot and South Capitol Stations via Routes 2 and 4. Train riders can ride Santa Fe Trail buses for free with a train pass.¹⁹

In addition to fixed-route bus service, Santa Fe Trails operates ADA complementary paratransit service. This demand response transportation service is for persons with disabilities who cannot use the regular fixed-route bus service. It is primarily curb-to-curb service, but door-to-door service is provided upon request. This service operates the same hours as the fixed-route service.

¹⁸ City of Albuquerque "Annual Budget" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://www.cabq.gov/dfa/budget/annual-budget>.

¹⁹ City of Santa Fe "Transit" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://www.santafenm.gov/transit>.

Santa Fe Trails passengers can access transit information on the Santa Fe Trails website, which currently links to Rio Metro's site, or by using the Santa Fe Trails app. Santa Fe Trails is the official City of Santa Fe mobile app for the transit system. Users can plan their trip, calculate fares, track buses in real time, and find connections using the app. The app was developed by APPCityLife, Inc. and is free to download in iTunes and Google Play.

North Central Regional Transit District

NCRTD operates transit service throughout the counties of north central New Mexico, including Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos. The service, which began operating in 2007, is primarily funded by a 1/8 of one percent GRT levied in the district, but also receives federal funding facilitated through the NMDOT and a contribution from Los Alamos County. The GRT has a 15-year life span and will require another ballot initiative in 2023 to ask voters for continued funding of the GRT. NCRTD's annual operating budget was \$9.8 million in FY2013, which included the distribution of funds to Rail Runner Express (\$1.8 million), Santa Fe Trails (\$982,000), and Atomic City Transit (\$1.4 million).

NCRTD operates 22 routes Monday through Friday, all of which operate fare free. NCRTD fixed-route Blue Buses connect with transit services provided by New Mexico, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, Red River, Taos, and RMRTD. Additionally, NCRTD operates complementary ADA paratransit service for passengers who are not able to use the fixed-route service. Demand responsive service is available on a limited basis to residents in Rio Arriba and the City of Española.

NCRTD has seen steady increases in ridership since its inception and carried 209,750 passengers in 2014, an 8.7 percent increase over 2013. To continue to meet the needs of passengers, NCRTD is developing an Intelligent Transportation System to provide real-time bus location and arrival times. The technology will use Quick Response (QR) codes at bus stops and text requests to access information. The ITS technology will also allow passengers to plan trips and obtain connecting information for other transit systems such as Santa Fe Trails, Atomic City Transit, New Mexico Park and Ride, and the Rail Runner Express.

Part 2: Transit Governance Structure

In 2003, the New Mexico Regional Transit District Act (Chapter 73, Article 25, NMSA 1978) was passed, enabling the formation of multi-jurisdictional transit agencies.²⁰ Following the establishment of the Regional Transit District Act, legislation was adopted allowing transit districts to levy up to a half-cent local GRT to fund transit operations.

Upon the finalization of this legislation, the New Mexico Transportation Commission approved the formation of the Mid-Region Transit District (renamed Rio Metro Regional Transit District in

²⁰ State of New Mexico Compilation Commission. Accessed in June 2015 at <http://public.nmcompcomm.us/nmpublic/gateway.dll/?f=templates&fn=default.htm>.

2008) in spring 2005, which encompasses Bernalillo, Sandoval, and Valencia counties, as well as most of the cities, towns, and villages within those counties.

In 2008, the RMRTD voters approved a 1/8-cent GRT to fund transit services, with half of the revenues dedicated to rail and half to the bus transit system. In 2009, the GRT took effect and at that time RMRTD assumed management of the Rail Runner, which was previously managed by MRCOG. In 2010, RMRTD began providing bus service after consolidating several small transit agencies and also began providing funding for some ABQ RIDE routes that were of regional significance.

New Mexico Regional Transit District Act

The Regional Transit District Act provides specific guidelines in terms of the various powers, privileges, and duties of transit districts formed within the state of New Mexico.

The Regional Transit District Act includes the following sections:

1. Short title
2. Purpose
3. Definitions
4. Creation of districts
5. Board
6. Powers of the district
7. Toll collection
8. Bonds
9. Agreement of the state not to limit or alter rights of obliges
10. Investments
11. Exemption from taxation
12. Cooperative powers
13. Powers of governmental units
14. Notice; opportunity for comment
15. Notice; opportunity for information
16. Taxation
17. Addition or withdrawal of territory by a district
18. Matching funds
19. Authorization to employ commuter rail service law enforcement officers; powers and duties of officers

To provide context relative to the governing structure and board organization of RMRTD, a few key elements of the Act are included here, including "Purpose" and "Board."

Purpose of the Regional Transit District Act [73-25-1 NMSA 1978] is 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.

The Regional Transit District Act states the following in reference to Boards [73-25-5 NMSA 1978]:

- A. All powers, privileges and duties vested in or imposed upon the district shall be exercised and performed by the board. The board may delegate its powers by resolution to an officer or agent of the board, with the exception of the following:
 - 1. Adoption of board policies and procedures;
 - 2. Ratification of acquisition of land by negotiated sale;
 - 3. Initiation or continuation of legal action, not involving traffic or toll violations;
 - 4. Establishment of policies regarding fees, tolls, rates or charges;
 - 5. Approval of significant route or schedule changes affecting more than twenty-five percent of a regional transit system; and
 - 6. Issuance of bonds.
- B. Only an elected official shall be able to vote on resolutions regarding Paragraphs (2) and (6) of Subsection A of this section.
- C. The board shall promulgate and adhere to policies and procedures that govern its conduct and provide meaningful opportunities for public input. These policies shall include standards and procedures for calling emergency meetings.
- D. The board shall be composed of at least one director from each governmental unit that is a member of the district. A director shall be an elected official or his designee. A governmental unit shall not have a majority of membership on the board, unless there are three or fewer participating governmental units in the district.
- E. A director of the board shall not vote on an issue when the director has a conflict of interest. A director of the board, officer of the board or employee of the board shall not:
 - 1. Acquire a financial interest in a new or existing business venture or business property of any kind when he believes or has reason to believe that the new financial interest will be directly affected by his official act;
 - 2. Use confidential information acquired by virtue of his office or employment for his or another's private gain; or
 - 3. Contract with the district without public notice and competitive bidding and full disclosure of his financial or other interest in the business that is party to the contract.

- F. The attorney general shall investigate and prosecute, when appropriate, a complaint brought to his attention involving a violation of Subsection D of this section. Violation of the provisions of Subsection D of this section by a director of the board, officer of the board or employee of the board is grounds for removal or suspension of the director or officer and dismissal, demotion or suspension of the employee.
- G. In addition to all other powers conferred by the Regional Transit District Act [73-25-1 NMSA 1978], the board may:
1. Adopt bylaws;
 2. Fix the time and place of meetings and the method of providing notice of the meetings;
 3. Make and pass orders and resolutions necessary for the government and management of the affairs of the district and the execution of the powers vested in the district;
 4. Adopt and use a seal;
 5. Maintain offices at a place as the board may designate;
 6. Appoint, hire and retain employees, agents, engineers, attorneys, accountants, financial advisors, investment bankers and other consultants;
 7. Prescribe, in accordance with the Procurement Code [13-1-28 NMSA 1978], methods for auditing and allowing or rejecting claims and demands for:
 - a. The awarding of contracts for the construction of improvements, works or structures;
 - b. The acquisition of equipment; or
 - c. The performance or furnishing of labor, materials or supplies as may be required for carrying out the purposes of the Regional Transit District Act [73-25-1 to 73-25-18 NMSA 1978]; and
 8. Appoint advisory committees and define the duties of the committees.

Rio Metro Regional Transit District Board Organization

Governance is an important component of the effective operation of any transit agency. Typically, a Board of Directors governs a transit agency, but there is not a one size fits all model for all transit agencies. This section provides information on the RMRTD structure, keys to board effectiveness, and opportunities for RMRTD enhancement.

Overall, the Board of Directors is responsible for carrying out the functions assigned by the provisions of the Regional Transit District Act including establishing financial, management, service operation, fare, and other policies that support the operations of the transit system. The day-to-day operations of RMRTD are the responsibility of the agency director and program staff. RMRTD is currently governed by a Board of Directors made up of elected officials (mayors, councilors, and commissioners) from all member agencies based on the requirements of the enabling legislation and agency bylaws. The following summarizes how the RMRTD board members are determined or appointed, and terms of office based on the agency's 2012 amended bylaws.

RMRTD Board Composition – The Board shall be composed of at least one Director from each governmental unit that is a member of the District. The number of directors for each of these governmental units shall be determined based on population, except that a governmental unit shall not have a majority of membership on the Board, unless there are three or fewer governmental units in the District.

1. Population under 50,000 – One Director
2. Population 50,001 – 100,000 – Two Directors
3. Population 100,001 – 150,000 – Three Directors
4. Population 150,001 – 300,000 – Four Directors
5. Population 300,001 – 450,000 – Five Directors
6. Population 600,001 – 750,000 – Seven Directors

The Board shall be reconstituted in the year following each official federal census.

Appointment – Each governmental unit shall appoint, in a manner to be determined by each governmental unit, an elected official(s) of the governmental unit as a Director and may also appoint a designee(s) for this elected official(s) as an Alternate Director.

Term of Service and Qualifications – The term of service for each Director and Alternate Director, if any, shall commence with the first meeting of the Board following his or her appointment; shall be for a minimum of one year; and shall continue until the date on which a successor is duly appointed, or the date on which he or she ceases to be an elected official of the appointing governmental unit, or the date on which he or she is removed from the Board by the governmental entity.

Resignations – Any Director or Alternate Director may resign at any time, effective upon receipt by the Board Chair of a written notice of resignation.

Alternate Director – In the event a Director is absent from a Board meeting, the Alternate Director appointed by the governmental unit that appointed the Director shall act for the Director for all purposes, except in the following instances, when only an elected official may cast a vote: ratification of acquisition of land by negotiated sale; and issuance of bonds.

Peer Organizational Structures

There is not a one size fits all organizational structure of transit boards based on the varying laws, requirements, needs, values, and goals of transit agencies. To understand the nuances of board organization and structure, a review of peer board structures was conducted. The peers reviewed include those documented in the formal peer review process, including:

- Denver Regional Transportation District
- El Paso Mass Transit District
- San Joaquin Regional Transit District (SJRTD)
- Utah Transit Authority

To provide a local comparison, New Mexico's NCRTD is also included in this peer review as shown in **Table 8**.

Keys to Transit Board Effectiveness

One of the most critical components of the success of a transit agency is the effectiveness of the governing board. Effectiveness of the board is often based on member selection, orientation, and support provided by agency staff. This section summarizes key facets of successful board governance found in the *Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 85: Public Transit Board Governance Guidebook*.²¹

Board Member Selection and Appointments

The success of a governing board is critically linked to several influencing factors. When identifying new and potential board members, the following are key characteristics and values to consider:

- Ability of potential member to provide a unique contribution to the board
- Potential members' interest in public transit and support of the agency's mission, vision, and values
- Commitment, dedication, and availability of potential members
- Political astuteness of potential members
- Ability of potential members to secure funding and obtain support of key constituents

It is also important to ensure balance among board members in terms of age, gender, race, disability status, and employment background. This allows varied insights and a wide range of experience among board members.

New Board Member Orientation

New transit agency board members often do not have extensive, if any, experience with transportation governance. In the case of RMRTD, elected officials are appointed to sit on the board, and while they may be interested in transit, understanding the nuance and intricacies of system management is not common. It is important to help board members become acquainted with system operations, management, performance measurement, and marketing early on.

Common Transit Agency Committees

- Executive Committee
- Finance/Budget Committee
- Human Resources Committee
- Planning Committee
- Legislative/Government Relations Committee
- Marketing Committee
- Ad Hoc Committees (as needed)

Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 85 provides the following list of recommended topics for board member orientation:

- Board's roles, responsibilities, and member requirements
- Brief history of transit system

²¹ Federal Transit Administration *Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 85: Public Transit Board Governance Guidebook* (2002). Accessed in June 2015 at http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_85.pdf.

- Committee structure and responsibilities
- Current and future strategic plans
- Introduction to key staff member and departmental responsibilities
- Mission and goals
- Tour of transit system
- Transit system's finances
- Transit systems programs and services

It is important to remember that board member orientation is only the first step in the education process of board members and that ongoing training and education are required to ensure that board members are as effective as possible.

Ongoing Board Member Training

Following are some preliminary suggestions for potentially increasing board capacity to support the District's Long-Term Vision Plan adoption and implementation.

Existing board members: Ongoing capacity building

- Purpose: To develop basic competency among all existing Board members on relevant topics and projects.
- Composition: All board members
- Programming: A periodic, interactive 30-minute agenda item at regular board meetings with topics to include:
 - RMRTD 101: What is the agency's history, core mission, structure, etc.?
 - Your Role as a Board Member: What is your role as stewards of the agency?
 - Strategic Planning 101: What is the purpose of RMRTD short- and long-term planning and visioning?
 - Other topics TBD (as may be suggested by Board members)
 - These sessions can be recorded and provided as an orientation video for new Board members to reduce "on-the-job training" learning curve
 - Site tours/field trips (local best practices and potential tours of nearby aspirational peers such as Denver or El Paso)

Core board members & staff: Formation of Vision Plan Leadership Working Group

- Purpose: To develop a core team of board & management leaders to guide and advocate for Plan development, adoption, and project implementation
- Composition: Subset of Board members and Staff at RMRTD and partner agencies
- Programming:
 - Monthly 60- to 90-minute meeting to precede Board meetings to keep core leadership informed, get input on potential challenges, opportunities, etc., and provide them with assignments (such as engaging their communities/constituencies to build support for the project, meeting one-on-one with a colleague on the Board on a particular issue, etc.).
 - Site tours/field trips (local best practices and potential tours of nearby peers

Future board leaders: Formation of Regional Futures Forum

- Purpose: To identify and cultivate potential leaders who may join the Board to support future Plan implementation activities
- Composition: New faces, entrepreneurs, Millennials. No application process, but must be nominated by someone else (even if that is by informal surveying of existing networks for who would be good).
- Programming: A small group (no more than 12 to 15) who meet monthly for professional development / capacity building / networking around regional smart growth issues, including the importance of a good regional transit system.

Governing Board Committees

It is very common for transit boards to use a committee structure to manage the system, plan for the future, and deal with short-term needs and issues. TCRP Report 85 identifies several factors that impact committee success, including:

- Development of written committee guidelines that identify responsibilities, goals, and structure
- Appointment of board members to committees that align with their experience and competencies
- Appropriate level of staffing to support the committee and serve as a resource

Table 8. Peer Agency Governance/Organizational Structure

Agency	Governance Model	Board Composition	Standing Committees
Rio Metro Regional Transit District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional Transit District authorized under New Mexico State Legislature ▪ Enabling legislation determines the number and manner in which board members are appointed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elected officials appointed by member governments ▪ Number of appointments based on population ▪ Minimum of one and up to seven board members per member government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ None at this time
Denver Regional Transportation District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional Transportation District authorized under Colorado State Legislature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publicly elected Board of Directors ▪ Each director represents a specific district and must live in the respective district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Civil Rights ▪ Executive ▪ FasTracks Monitoring ▪ Financial Administration and Audit ▪ General Manager Oversight and Performance Management ▪ Government Relations ▪ Operations and Customer Service ▪ Planning and Development
El Paso Transit District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Department of the City of El Paso 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ El Paso City Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizens Advisory Committee (9 regular members and 3 alternates serving 2-year terms)
North Central Regional Transit District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional Transit District authorized under New Mexico State Legislature ▪ Enabling legislation determines the number and manner in which board members are appointed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One elected official appointed by each member of the district ▪ Voting strength of each member based on the "Voting Strength Analysis" – assigns to each vote based on member governments population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Finance
San Joaquin Regional Transit District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regional Transit District authorized under California Legislature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizen appointed board by member agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ City/County/Transit Liaison ▪ Facilities ▪ Finance and Audit ▪ Personnel (Human Resources) ▪ Retirement Board for Employees
Utah Transit Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local district political subdivision of the State of Utah ▪ Enabling legislation determines number and manner in which board members are appointed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Citizens appointed by elected officials of the constituent members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Executive ▪ Finance and Operations ▪ Planning and Development ▪ Stakeholder

Table 8. Peer Agency Governance/Organizational Structure (continued)

Agency	Number of Board Members	Board Member Term	Alternates	Attendance Requirements	Regular Board Meeting Schedule
Rio Metro Regional Transit District	19	Minimum of 1 year	One per member government	Good faith effort to attend all meetings; six unexcused absences warrant removal from the board	Monthly
Denver Regional Transportation District	15	4 years	None	Any board member may be removed with the affirmative vote of 10 directors	Monthly
El Paso Transit District	8	City Council Terms	N/A	N/A	Monthly
North Central Regional Transit District	14	No longer than 4 years unless reappointed by member governing body or until removed by appointing member and/or no longer holds elected office	N/A	Any board member with 3 consecutive absences considered for withdrawal from the District	Monthly (bylaws indicate Board must meet at least quarterly)
San Joaquin Regional Transit District	5	4 years	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>	Monthly
Utah Transit Authority	16	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>	<i>Data not available</i>	Monthly

Part 3: Preliminary Opportunities and Potential Benefits

This section provides a preliminary discussion on opportunities to improve the efficacy of RMRTD through Board engagement activities, Board structure, and agency coordination opportunities.

Board Engagement and Structure

The following engagement and structure opportunities are based on discussions with peer agencies and an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of RMRTD's current Board structure.

Creation and Implementation of a Citizen Advisory Committee

To add additional insight and opinion from the public, RMRTD may consider creating and implementing a Citizen Advisory Committee as a standing committee to provide input to the board on transit planning and transit operations matters. Citizen Advisory Committees are commonly used to involve the public in making decisions about transit planning and operations. Advisory committees generally consist of members representing community interests, such as neighborhood associations, transit riders, environmental groups, business groups, and advocacy groups. Advisory committee members are generally selected either by special invitation or through a competitive application process. It is important to consider the balance of representation needed on the committee when selecting members to accurately reflect the diverse interests and perspectives of the community. *TCRP Synthesis 85: Effective Use of Citizen Advisory Committees for Transit Planning and Operations* provides an extensive literature review about advisory committees, advisory committee survey findings, and information about successful practices and case studies.²²

The creation of a Citizen Advisory Board would allow more direct participation from RMRTD community members that cannot be appointed to the RMRTD Board under current Regional Transit District Act enabling legislation. Several of the peer agencies reviewed have active and successful Citizen Advisory Committees in place, including the El Paso Transit District and the Denver Regional Transit District. Denver's Regional Transportation District currently has a Citizen Advisory Committee in place that meets monthly, advises the board, and informs the build-out of Denver's mass transit network (FasTracks). The mission of Denver Regional Transportation District's Citizen Advisory Committee includes:²³

- Providing region-oriented advice to the Board of Directors on issues related to the implementation of the FasTracks Plan.
- Receiving staff reports on the progress of the project in relationship to established schedules, budget allocations, DBE goals, and quality management guidelines.
- Reviewing and providing comment on the Denver Regional Council of Governments Annual FasTracks Review Report.
- Promoting public awareness and understanding of the voter approved FasTracks Plan and its implementation.

²² Federal Transit Administration *TCRP Synthesis 85 Effective Use of Citizen Advisory Committees for Transit Planning and Operations*. (2010). Accessed in June 2015 at http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_id=14388.

²³ Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) "Citizen Advisory Committee" webpage. Accessed in June 2015 at http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main_11.

Board Member Composition and Voting Authority

RMRTD's current board has 19 voting members, with a minimum of one representative from each member agency. The agencies that have higher populations receive additional seats on the board based on set criteria. While this provides appropriate levels of voting authority based on the transit district's population distribution, it does create some issues: (1) board members that are "one of many" (e.g., Albuquerque has 6 seats on the board) may not see the importance of their individual participation and role on the board, and (2) regular attendance may be an issue with such a large board which leads to challenges associated with quorum requirements.

RMRTD may want to consider how they look at board composition. NCRTD has one board member per member agency of the transit district and then applies a weighted measure to assign voting power to each individual board member. NCRTD's "Voting Strength Analysis" is updated annually based on member agency population to ensure the voting strength accurately reflects changing demographics. Weighted voting power with a smaller board may lead to increased buy-in of board members, enhanced trust among member agencies/board members, improved attendance, and the ability of the board to reach consensus.

Rio Metro Regional Transit District Professional Development

Professional development and ongoing training of transit staff and management are critical to the success of any transit agency. There are a variety of training programs and tools available to improve the management and operation of a transit agency. RMRTD should participate in and have staff attend trainings provided by the New Mexico Public Transportation Association when possible. In general, there are a variety of training programs available to consider ensuring that RMRTD staff is current on transit trends and programs, including:

- Driver Training
 - Defensive Driving
 - Enhancing the Passenger Experience/Customer Service
 - Understanding ADA/Accommodating Passengers with Disabilities
- Administration
 - Asset Management
 - Customer Service
 - FTA Procurement Process
 - Grant Application Process
 - Incident Management
 - Public and Media Relations / Marketing
- Maintenance
 - Vehicle maintenance, management and inspection

Funding Opportunities

A 2011 Government Accountability Office report found that 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)

AASHTO's *Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation* (2014) summarizes information on state transit funding mechanisms across the US. Of 50 states 46 identified providing some form of state funding. Some states limit use to capital or operating assistance while others provide flexible funding that can be applied to operating or capital. In 2012, New Mexico reported providing \$6.6 million to transit in the state, the lowest level in the last five years. New Mexico ranks 27th in the nation in terms of state support for public transit. This level of funding equates to \$3.30 per capita and ranks 26th in terms of per capita funding. Other states range from no state funding for transit to over \$200 per capita for transit.

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. RMRTD should evaluate the viability of increasing existing funding sources or pursuing additional funding sources to meet future needs of the region.

Summary of Preliminary Opportunities and Benefits

Through development of this white paper, a number of opportunities to enhance efficiency of transit operations and deliver transit services effectively at a local and regional level were identified. **Table 9** summarizes these preliminary ideas. As discussed in the introduction to this white paper, the next steps will be to develop a consensus long-term vision informed by the preliminary opportunities identified in this white paper. In order to achieve a consensus long-term vision, *the recommended changes to RMRTD's and ABQ RIDE's existing operations and organizational structures should be fully-vetted and final agreement reached on the list of opportunities and potential benefits of implementation.*

Table 9. Summary of Preliminary Opportunities and Potential Benefits

Agency Structure

Opportunity	Potential Benefit	Difficulty of Implementation
Develop a collective mission statement for the region	Regional guidance for transit among various modes and providers	Low
Coordinate and consolidate decision making between RMRTD Board of Directors and ABQ RIDE Transit Advisory Board	Coordinate capital investment and leverage limited available funds	High
Coordinate and consolidate administration and operations of RMRTD and ABQ RIDE management and staff	Increase efficiency and leverage limited available funds to improve quality of service	High

Service

Opportunity	Potential Benefit	Difficulty of Implementation
Implement a single, seamless fare structure between systems	Seamless service to users among various modes and providers	Medium
Develop equitable and coordinated service standards for the entire region	Seamless service to users among various modes and providers	Medium
Procure service contracts cooperatively	Increase efficiency and leverage limited available funds	Low
Consolidate fleets and maintenance activity	Increase efficiency and leverage limited available funds	Medium
Evaluate potential benefits of targeting funding of RMRTD bus service and interagency transfer to ABQ RIDE to fund their bus service to ensure they achieve priority implementation strategies from the Vision Plan	Focus limited resources on activities that best achieve Vision Plan	Medium

Table 9. Summary of Preliminary Opportunities and Potential Benefits (continued)***Public Information***

Opportunity	Potential Benefit	Difficulty of Implementation
Develop a single brand that unifies the various transit agencies and is identifiable by users	Seamless service to users among various modes and providers; improve user experience	Low
Create a single source for customer service (one-call/one-click)		Low
Develop a single smart phone app that allows users to access information for all connecting transit agencies		Low
Provide a single website for all connecting transit agencies		Low

Board Structure and Engagement

Opportunity	Potential Benefit	Difficulty of Implementation
Create Citizen Advisory Group	Provide public perspective and input to the board on transit planning and transit operations	Low
Modify Board Composition	Increase trust among member agencies/board members, improved attendance, and the ability of the board to reach consensus	High
Board and Staff Training	Increase efficiency of administration and oversight	Low

Funding

Opportunity	Potential Benefit	Difficulty of Implementation
Evaluate viability and pursue potential funding opportunities	Improved financial stability and ability to expand services	High
Develop a single capital investment plan to prioritize and guide regional investments	Coordinate capital investment and leverage limited available funds	Medium