

# Connect New Mexico: Statewide Public Transportation Plan

Final Report

May 2025





## Acknowledgements

The New Mexico Department of Transportation Transit and Rail Division wishes to acknowledge and thank the transit providers in the state for their contributions to this plan. These providers were key in obtaining data about transit in each part of the state, as well as helping to connect NMDOT with the communities served by each provider.

Additionally, NMDOT wants to acknowledge the long-standing partnership between NMDOT and the New Mexico Transit Association which also greatly assisted in collecting information and forming this plan.



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

In response to the growing mobility needs of diverse communities and the completion of the [2045 Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan](#), the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is proud to present Connect New Mexico: Statewide Public Transportation Plan. This visionary document outlines NMDOT's commitment to providing safe, sustainable, and resilient public transportation to improve the quality of life for residents across the state.

As an update to the 2010 New Mexico Statewide Public Transportation Plan, this plan aims to identify current transit service gaps and the changing needs of transit riders to improve urban and rural transit experiences through new policies and programs. As a statewide planning, policy, and funding organization, NMDOT is uniquely situated to help local agencies meet these transit needs.

The plan first looked at the market for transit services, existing public transportation services, and feedback from transit users to identify the gaps and needs for public transportation across the state. This comprehensive review was packaged into the *State of the System Report* and provides a foundation for the policies and strategies developed in this report. Building on the State of the System report, Connect New Mexico provides a vision for NMDOT Transit and Rail Division to support the development of public transportation and decision-making in the state for the next decade.

The chapters of this report are structured to provide a comprehensive overview of the plan and recommendations:

**Chapter 1: Introduction.** Provides an overview of the Statewide Public Transportation Plan process and project timeline.

**Chapter 2: Current NMDOT Programs.** Outlines the current roles and responsibilities of the Transit and Rail Division including federal funding administration and state run public transportation.

**Chapter 3: Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures.** Highlights the overall goals of the plan and how to measure the success of recommended strategies.



**Chapter 4: Strategy Development.** Describes the needs identified from the State of the System report that the recommended strategies can satisfy.

**Chapter 5: Prioritized Strategies.** Introduces the recommended plan strategies for NMDOT and how they are prioritized for implementation.

**Chapters 6: Transit Service Strategies.** Detailed information on the specific transit service strategies.

**Chapters 7: Programs and Policies Strategies.** Detailed information on the specific programs and policies strategies.

**Chapters 8: Reporting and Training Strategies.** Detailed information on the specific reporting and training strategies.

## PROJECT TIMELINE

Connect New Mexico kicked off in fall of 2022, after the completion of the [2045 Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan](#) in 2021. The project has had multiple phases of community and stakeholder outreach as well as transit analysis that were incorporated into the State of the System report. The goals, objectives, and recommendations are the focus of this report.





## Study Limitations

Because this is a Statewide Public Transportation Plan, this is an overview of non-personal transit throughout the entirety of New Mexico, and it builds upon all past efforts to do so. However, this is still a “snapshot” in time with uneven economic progress as the world, country, and state move on from the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, vaccination rollouts to the general public in 2021, and initial recovery in 2022. Although the current demands for travel are closer than the past few years to resembling the volumes of 2019, public transportation is overstrained like many industries. Furthermore, driver and other staff shortages and supply chain constraints also impacted the ability of public transportation operators to provide service at levels comparable to 2019 service. Due to the timing of available data sources, some metrics within this document are unique due to the lower ridership or higher federal dollars from COVID-19 relief funding.

Because of these limitations, a perfect understanding of the level and performance of all non-personal transportation services is impossible. Recommendations coming out of this plan may be considered as to how best fulfill the needs of public transportation in a post COVID- 19 environment.



Source: Golden Spread Rural Frontier Coalition

## 2 CURRENT NMDOT PROGRAMS

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is responsible for a wide range of transit programs and services across the state through its [Transit and Rail Division](#). To better understand the capacity to take on new policies and programs, this section will first recapitulate the existing programs and services currently managed by the Transit and Rail Division, including:

- Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant funding and programs for public and non-profit transit systems, including Indian Tribes. NMDOT Transit and Rail maintains a State Management Plan (SMP) for the Administration of Federal Transit Grants,
- Planning assistance to state metropolitan and rural planning agencies,
- Transit vehicle procurement for state, regional and local transit and nonprofit agencies, except school buses,
- Transit Asset Management plan for rural public transportation organizations,
- Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plans,
- NMDOT Park & Ride intercity bus services,
- Rail Runner service managed in cooperation with the Rio Metro Regional Transit District, and
- NMGo! Vanpooling program.

An additional two programs are administered by the Transit and Rail Division, but are not detailed in this section:

- Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program,
- Permitting Program for requests to allow infrastructure projects to cross or use NMDOT-owned railroad property.

# FTA GRANT FUNDING ADMINISTRATION

The NMDOT Transit and Rail Division oversees various grants provided by the FTA. These grants support a range of general and specialized transit programs in New Mexico, which are established under specific sections of federal transportation legislation. Note that the fund apportionment in the text is what is allocated into New Mexico by the FTA for each federal fiscal year. These may not match state level expenditure plans due to year-to-year carry-overs. The annual availability of funds may be different than the apportionment for a given federal fiscal year as agencies are allowed to accumulate and expend these funds over multiple years.

## FTA's 5303/5304 Metropolitan & Statewide Planning Programs

These programs deliver funding and process guidelines for multimodal transportation planning for states and metropolitan areas. The focus is on collaborative, ongoing, and inclusive planning efforts, leading to both long-term plans and short-term transportation investment priorities. Allowed activities under these programs include creating transportation programs and plans, designing and evaluating public transportation projects, and conducting technical studies related to transit. Matching funds are often required for this funding.

New Mexico received an apportionment of \$636,815 for 5303 Metropolitan Planning in FY2024, representing a 39% increase since FY2019. For 5304 Statewide Planning funding, the state received \$166,285 in FY2024, also a 39% increase over FY2019.

## FTA's 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Funding Program

This program provides funding for transit operations and capital projects in urban areas with populations greater than 50,000. The federal share may not cover more than 50% of operations funding and may not cover more than 90% of the cost of capital projects. These funds are distributed within the state in a variety of ways, some are directly distributed to agencies, some are distributed based on agency performance<sup>1</sup>, and some are distributed and administrated through NMDOT Transit and Rail Division. The State of New Mexico received \$40,576,992 for Section 5307 funding in FY2024, a 62% increase since FY2019.

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<sup>1</sup> FTA Small Transit Intensive Cities (STIC) are awarded funds based on various levels of performance achievement when compared to the national average for similar agencies in the US. In FY2019 only one agency achieved performance awards from the STIC program, while in FY2024 four agencies performed better than other similar agencies.

## **FTA's 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Program**

This program provides funds to ensure that seniors and individuals with disabilities can access transit. The program requires a 20% local match for capital purchases. It is important to note that projects eligible for this program funding must be in a local coordinated human service transportation plan. NMDOT Transit and Rail Division manages a portion of 5310 funds through an annual application and award process, while some funds are managed by MPO's or agencies that are direct recipients. \$3,136,629 was apportioned to the State of New Mexico in FY2024, a 66% increase over FY2019.

## **FTA's 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas Program**

This program offers support for transportation projects in rural areas with less than 50,000 individuals, including administrative, operational and capital assistance. The goal is to improve access to essential services and to maintain and promote the growth of public transit in these regions. Intercity bus services are also supported under the 5311 formula grants for rural areas program, along with the involvement of private transportation operations. NMDOT Transit and Rail Division manages the distribution of 5311 funds that are allocated to the state through an annual application and award process. The program requires a local match of 20% for capital, and administrative, expenditures, and 50% for operating costs. \$16,515,662 was apportioned to the State of New Mexico in FY2024, an increase of 30% compared to FY2019.

## **FTA's 5337 Grants for State of Good Repair**

The 5337 program provides capital assistance for maintenance, replacement, and rehabilitation projects of high-intensity fixed guideway and motorbus systems to help transit agencies maintain assets in a state of good repair in urbanized areas. Additionally, State of Good Repair formula grants are eligible for developing and implementing Transit Asset Management plans. To date, only the urbanized area of Albuquerque has qualified for a formula-based apportionment of 5337 funds. The grants require a local match of a minimum of 20% of the total expenditure. The State of New Mexico received a total apportionment of \$13,708,208 in FY2024 a 42% increase compared to FY2019.

## **FTA's 5339 Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula and Discretionary Programs**

The 5339 program facilitates the availability of federal funding to states direct recipients for the replacement, rehabilitation, and acquisition of buses and associated equipment, as well as for the construction/renovations of facilities related to buses. This includes funding to transition to low- or zero-emission vehicles or facilities. Funding is distributed through formula and competitive grants. NMDOT Transit and Rail Division manages the distribution of 5339 (a) formula funds to agencies that are not direct recipients through an annual application and award process. The program requires a local match of 20% for capital. A separate discretionary program offers grants competitively, specifically for projects involving bus and bus facilities (b) and bus and bus facilities advance low emission vehicles (c). The State of New Mexico received a total apportionment of \$5,690,481 in FY2024 a 6% increase compared to FY2019.

## **ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRANSIT INVESTMENTS**

The following material is largely drawn from a report that was commissioned by the American Public Transit Association and was conducted by Economic Development Research Group, published in 2020. The conclusions of the study are generally applicable to public transit investments across the US. The precise return on investment in New Mexico may vary from this more national view, but it is a safe extension of this research to establish the claim that public transit investments return more to the economy of a state, region, county, or city than their direct costs. This particular study only focuses on jobs and measurable impacts on the gross domestic product and economic productivity. There are other influences that transit brings including positive influences on social and environmental benefits. Those influences were not assessed by this study, but in other studies have also shown that investments in public transit yield positive benefits to the community being considered.

The Executive Summary of this report can be found here: [APTA-Economic-Impact-Public-Transit-2020.pdf](#). Again, the paragraphs below represent a high-level summary of this study and are intended to demonstrate the positive economic influences of investments in Public Transit. There is a methodology available that allows localization of the analysis but there was insufficient economic data available to complete such an assessment just for the state of New Mexico.

"Public transportation is critical to the Americans who use it and even those who do not. It is a lifeline for many as it provides mobility options, generates jobs, spurs economic growth and supports public policies regarding energy use, air quality and carbon emissions. All of

these are important elements when it comes to considering the benefits, costs and optimal investment levels of public transportation. This report focuses solely on one aspect—how investment in public transportation affects the economy in terms of employment, wages and business income. It specifically addresses how various aspects of the economy are affected by decisions made regarding investment in public transportation. This report updates an earlier report, *Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment*, prepared by Economic Development Research Group for the American Public Transportation Association in 2014.”

## **Overall Findings:**

“Increased investment in public transportation can lead to significant economic growth as a result of both the short-term stimulus impact of public transportation outlays and a longer-term, cumulative impact on economic productivity. The latter is enabled by increasing investment to improve our nation’s urban transportation systems and sustaining the investment over time.

The analysis shows that public transportation investment can have significant impacts on the economy, and thus represent an important public policy consideration. These impacts include:

1. supporting American jobs and industry with spending on public transportation; and
2. providing savings for households and businesses due to improvement of transportation system performance.

While the total impact will depend on the level and distribution of investment, the magnitude of potential impact can be illustrated by considering a scenario of enhanced investment sustained over 20 years. Under such a scenario of sustained higher investment (which would lead to improved quality and availability of public transportation), there would be a significant increase in ridership, supporting additional growth of the national economy. The impact by the end of the 20-year period would represent a ratio of approximately \$5 billion of additional GDP per \$1 billion invested annually. This includes \$3 billion due to the productivity effect of cost savings in the economy and \$1.8 billion supported by the pattern of public transportation investment spending. At current wage rates, this is equivalent to a ratio of approximately 49,700 jobs per \$1 billion invested in public transportation.”





Source: Rio Metro Regional Transit District

## NEW MEXICO RAIL RUNNER EXPRESS

Together with the Rio Metro Regional Transit District, the NMDOT manages the [New Mexico Rail Runner Express](#), a commuter rail network that provides transportation in the Rio Grande Corridor (which includes Belen in the southern end, Albuquerque, and Santa Fe at the northern edge). Rail Runner stations increase mobility by providing more than 60 bus connections, which allow commuters to travel to other communities in northern New Mexico - from south to Socorro and north to Questa or Costilla.





# NMDOT PARK AND RIDE INTERCITY BUS SERVICE

NMDOT Transit and Rail Division provides shuttle and intercity public transportation services during peak times in the morning and evenings. [NMDOT Park & Ride](#) started in 2003 with only three routes and has expanded since then to include seven routes and five shuttles. In 2023, it was the 6th highest ridership transit service in the state.

The currently available routes are described below:



- **Orange Route:** Connects Santa Fe - Las Vegas via three different roundtrips and one one-way trip. The cost for the route is \$3 one-way and \$90 for a monthly pass.
- **Red Route:** Connects Española, Pojoaque, and Santa Fe via two roundtrips and six one-way trips. The cost for the route is \$2 one-way and \$60 for a monthly pass.
- **Green Route:** Service between Española and Los Alamos via eleven roundtrips and one one-way trip. The cost for the route is \$2 one-way and \$60 for a monthly pass.
- **Blue Route:** Connecting Santa Fe, Pojoaque, and Los Alamos with nine roundtrips and four one-way trips. The cost for the route is \$3 one-way and \$90 for a monthly pass.
- **Purple Route:** Service between Albuquerque, NM-599 Station, and Los Alamos via one roundtrip and six one-way trips. The cost for the route is \$6 one-way and \$150 for a system-wide monthly pass.
- **Gold Route:** Connecting Las Cruces in New Mexico with Anthony and El Paso in Texas via six roundtrips and eight one-way trips. The cost for the route is \$3 one-way and \$90 for a monthly pass.
- **Silver Route:** Service between Las Cruces and White Sands Missile Range via four one-way trips. The cost for the route is \$3 one-way and \$90 for a monthly pass.
- In addition to the seven routes described above, there are five shuttles in the Santa Fe area providing connections with NM Rail Runner Express service during peak hours:
  - **Santa Fe Place Shuttle** connecting Santa Fe Place Mall with the NM-599 Station.
  - **Rodeo Park Shuttle** connecting Rodeo Park Dr. to the South Capitol Station.
  - **Purple Shuttle** provides service to the NM-599 Station, the South Capitol Station, and the Santa Fe Depot.

- **National Guard/Corrections Shuttle** connecting the Santa Fe County Justice Center, the Parole Board, the Department of Corrections Administration, and the National Guard with the NM-599 Station.
- **Anaya Complex Shuttle** connecting the Anaya Complex to the South Capitol Station.

## NMGO!

NMDOT launched [NMGo!](#) in 2019. Since 2023 the program has been providing vanpooling throughout the state. Funds for the program are provided by the Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program. In order to encourage vanpooling, NMGo! covers up to 33% of monthly costs through a partnership with Commute with Enterprise.



### 3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goals and objectives will help guide NMDOT Transit and Rail Division decisions about how to invest in public transportation for future policies and programs. To closely integrate this study into the overall long-term plans for NMDOT, Connect New Mexico utilizes the same overall goals established in the New Mexico 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (). While the goals in the Long-Range Transportation Plan are broad in scope to cover all the different initiatives under NMDOT, the objectives and performance measures for each goal have been refined to focus just on the aspects that are applicable to the Statewide Public Transportation Plan. Each objective and performance measure are either directly from the Long-Range Transportation Plan or are variations of each that have been refined to focus on transit services.

Figure 1 NMDOT Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan Goals

#### NEW MEXICO 2045 PLAN GOALS



##### **Asset Management**

Optimize spending to cost effectively preserve our transportation assets in the best possible condition over the long term



##### **Safety**

Improve safety for all transportation system users



##### **Mobility & Accessibility**

Efficiently and equitably invest in infrastructure and technology to provide reliable multimodal access and connectivity, improve mobility, foster economic growth, and minimize transportation's contribution to climate change



##### **Program Delivery**

Deliver transportation programs through approaches and processes that improve resiliency, respect New Mexico's unique cultures, and promote fiscal and environmental stewardship

Objectives are specific aims under each goal that help define how strategies might meet the requirements of each goal. Performance measures are sets of measurable statistics that NMDOT and other agencies can use to determine the effectiveness of strategies meeting the goals and objectives. Combined, the goals, objectives, and performance measures provide a framework to determine the overall success of strategies and programs listed in the recommendations. Information on each goal is provided over the following pages.



## Asset Management

Optimize spending to cost effectively preserve our transportation assets in the best possible condition over the long term.

Objectives	Performance Measures	Metric Benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain transit vehicles in a state of good repair</li> <li>▪ Maintain transit operations and passenger facilities in a state of good repair</li> <li>▪ Assess and address system risks to improve resiliency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percent of revenue vehicles exceeding useful life benchmark (ULB)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>▪ Percent of non-revenue service vehicles exceeding ULB</li> <li>▪ Percent of facilities rated under 3.0 on the Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) condition rating scale<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Data will be collected by NMDOT through future efforts to calculate this metric.</li> <li>▪ Data will be collected by NMDOT through future efforts to calculate this metric.</li> <li>▪ In 2021, 20% of agencies with TAM plans and 25% of ABQ ride facilities had a TERM rating less than 3.0.</li> </ul>



## Mobility and Accessibility

Efficiently and equitably invest in infrastructure and technology to provide reliable multimodal access and connectivity, improve mobility, foster economic growth, and minimize transportation's contribution to climate change.

Objectives	Performance Measures	Metric Benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve mobility and accessibility in strategic corridors</li> <li>▪ Facilitate fleet transitions to electric and alternative fuels</li> <li>▪ Assess and address system risks to improve resiliency</li> <li>▪ Monitor and support actions to address bus driver shortages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Percent of counties with public transportation service</li> <li>▪ Percent of population within 25 miles of public or private intercity transit</li> <li>▪ Percent of statewide transit fleet comprised of zero- and low-emission vehicles</li> <li>▪ Reported reductions in service attributed to driver shortages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In 2023 19 of 33 counties, 58%, had public transportation.</li> <li>▪ In 2020, 76%, or 1,586,712, New Mexicans live within 25 miles of an intercity bus or rail station.</li> <li>▪ Data will be collected by NMDOT through future efforts to calculate this metric.</li> <li>▪ Data will be collected by NMDOT through future efforts to calculate this metric.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> Useful Life Benchmark is the expected lifecycle of a capital asset or the acceptable period of use in service for a particular transit provider's operating environment.

<sup>3</sup> The TERM rating scale is from 1 to 5. Ratings below 3.0 include Marginal and Poor.



## Safety

Improve safety for all transportation system users.

Objectives	Performance Measures	Metric Benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Reduce the number of roadway fatalities and serious injuries</li><li>▪ Invest in infrastructure and programs that improve pedestrian safety</li><li>▪ Increase safety on transit vehicles and in passenger facilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Number of FTA-reportable incidents involving transit vehicles</li><li>▪ Percent of fixed route and deviated fixed route transit agencies with bus stop design guidelines and stop databases</li><li>▪ Number of assaults occurring on transit vehicles and at passenger facilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ In 2024, there were 66 reportable incidents involving transit vehicles.</li><li>▪ Data will be collected by NMDOT through future efforts to calculate this metric.</li><li>▪ Data will be collected by NMDOT through future efforts to calculate this metric.</li></ul>



## Program Delivery

Deliver transportation programs through approaches and processes that improve resiliency, respect New Mexico's unique cultures, and promote fiscal and environmental stewardship.

Objectives	Performance Measures	Metric Benchmark
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Deliver transit projects that connect New Mexico communities to resources necessary to maintain quality of life</li><li>▪ Deliver projects on-time and within budget</li><li>▪ Provide guidance to local agencies on available funding programs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Percent of transit projects completed according to schedule</li><li>▪ Percent of population with access to transit programs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Data will be collected by NMDOT through future efforts to calculate this metric.</li><li>▪ In 2020 75% or 1,565,160 New Mexicans live within 1 mile of a fixed route or demand responsive service</li></ul>

# 4 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

Developing strategies from gaps and needs identified in the State of the System report involves a systematic approach aimed at addressing specific opportunities for improvement. The process starts by reviewing key findings from the transit market analysis, transit service analysis, and community outreach sections of the State of the System report. These gaps and needs serve as the foundation for strategic planning, guiding the formulation of targeted goals and objectives. Strategies are then crafted to directly challenge identified needs to implement effective solutions. The following sections go through the identified needs and gaps that are the basis of the recommended strategies in the next chapter.

## TRANSIT SERVICE GAPS

### Rural Transit Needs

While expansion of rural transit services has been successful in parts of the state over the past decade, a considerable gap still exists between where transit services are available and the remaining rural population of the state. This mismatch affects many rural areas including both regional community centers and low-density areas with high percentages of low-income individuals, people with disabilities, and zero-vehicle households.

The top ten largest municipalities in the state without transit services are listed below. All of the municipalities listed below have a population between 1,300 and 13,000, as all larger municipalities in the state of New Mexico have transit services.

- |             |                      |
|-------------|----------------------|
| ▪ Artesia   | ▪ Lovington          |
| ▪ Capitan   | ▪ Pecos <sup>4</sup> |
| ▪ Eunice    | ▪ Raton              |
| ▪ Jal       | ▪ Santa Rosa         |
| ▪ Lordsburg | ▪ Tucumcari          |

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<sup>4</sup> NMDOT Park & Ride provides commuter service in Pecos connecting to Santa Fe and Las Vegas.



There are also other communities in the state that have expressed an interest in having more access to public transportation service, including Torrance County which includes cities like Moriarty, Estancia, and McIntosh.

There are five counties (listed below) in the state that currently have no local or intercity transit services. While these counties have lower total populations ranging from 600 to 4,300, most have a high percentage of mobility need populations.

- Catron County
- De Baca County
- Hidalgo County<sup>5</sup>
- Guadalupe County
- Harding County

Efforts to bridge this gap through the formation or expansion of Regional Transit Districts (RTD) have seen success in the past. However, most of the lesser populated areas of the state do not currently fall within an established RTD and would need either strong local support and/or the formation of an RTD to expand rural transit services further. Additionally, local government agencies often have persistent budget challenges and competing priorities that limit comprehensive improvements across the state.



Source: City of Socorro

<sup>5</sup> Hidalgo County is a member of the Southwest RTD but has opted out of service at this time.



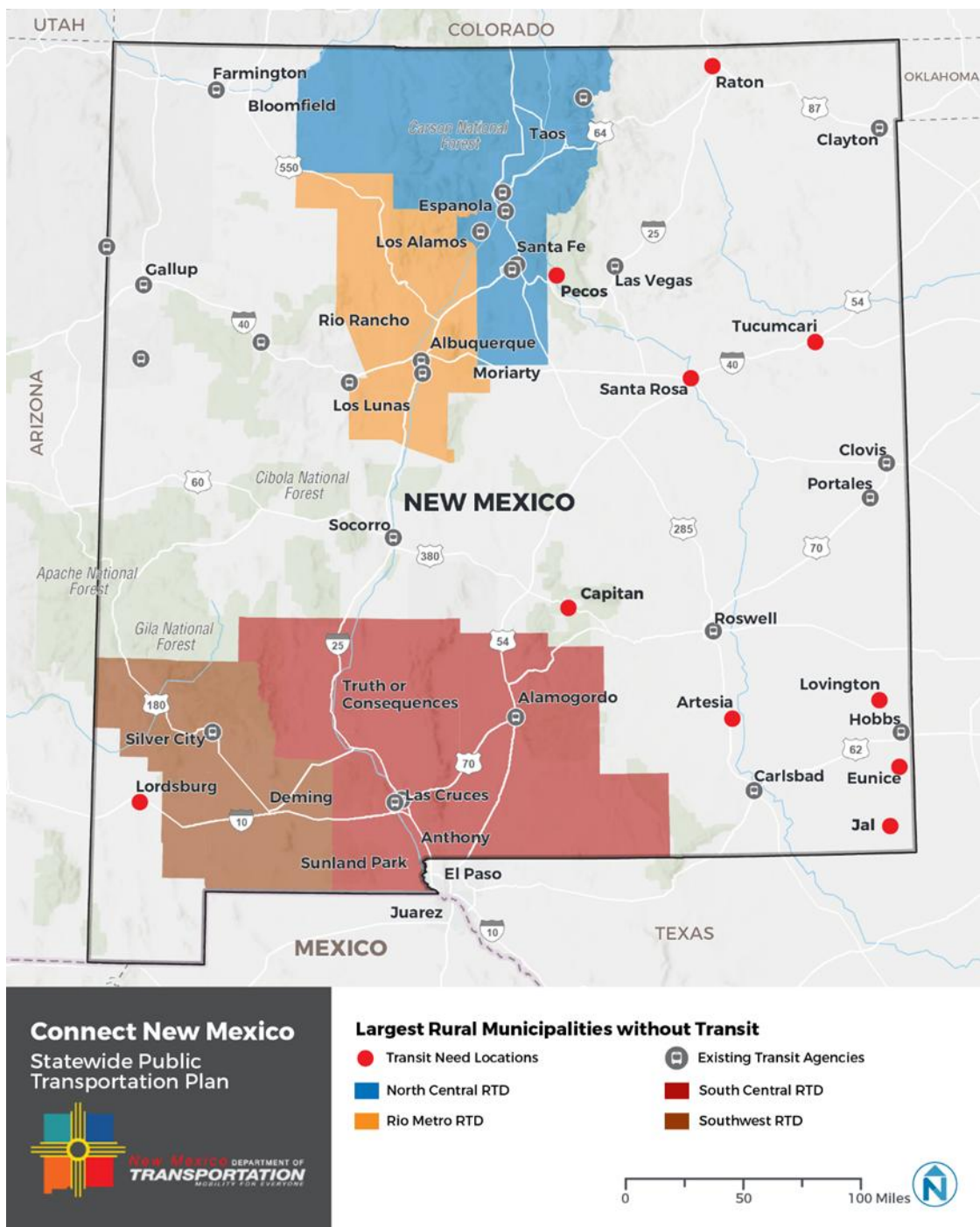


Figure 2 Rural Transit Needs – Municipalities

## Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plans

In 2023, NMDOT Transit and Rail updated its Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plans (Coordinated Plans) for the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs) in the state, dividing the state into seven regions.

The purpose of these Coordinated Plans is to identify the transportation needs of youths, older adults, individuals with disabilities, households without vehicles, persons living under the poverty line, and households with no vehicle available and compare those communities with the service areas of existing transportation providers to identify the most transit dependent communities. The Coordinated Plans are available here: [New Mexico Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plans](#).

- In the Northeast RTPO, the most transit dependent areas are in and around the cities of Las Vegas, Santa Rosa, Raton, Tucumcari, Logan, Clayton, and Mora. In addition, local stakeholders identified a need for public transportation in the communities of Eagles Nest, Angel Fire, Mosquero, and Roy and in the counties of Mora and San Miguel.
- In the Northern Pueblos RTPO/Santa Fe MPO, the most transit dependent areas are in and around the cities of Española, Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Taos.
- The Coordinated Plan for the Northwest RTPO/Farmington MPO identified areas in and around Grants, Pueblo of Laguna, Gallup, Zuni Pueblo, Black Rock, Pueblo Pintado, Thoreau, Kirtland, and the southwest portion of San Juan County as the areas with the highest transit dependence.
- In the Mid-Region RTPO/MPO, the most transit dependent areas in Albuquerque are along the Central Avenue and I-40 corridors, including the International District, Downtown, and Southwest Albuquerque. For the rest of the region, the most transit dependent areas include the South Valley, Laguna Pueblo, Meadow Lake, El Cerro Mission, Belen, western Tarrant County, and the Pueblos located in Sandoval County (Jicarilla Apache, Jemez, Zia, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Kewa, and Cochiti).
- The Coordinated Plan for the South Central RTPO/Mesilla Valley MPO/El Paso MPO found that the most transit dependent areas were in and around the town of Alamo and in Central Las Cruces.
- In the Southeast RTPO, the most transit dependent areas include neighborhoods in Alamogordo, Carlsbad, Clovis, Hobbs, and Roswell. Otero and Lincoln counties also contain areas with high transit dependence.
- In the Southwest RTPO, the most transit dependent areas include northern Catron County, northern Luna County, and communities in and around Silver City, Bayard, Deming, Quemado, and Lordsburg.

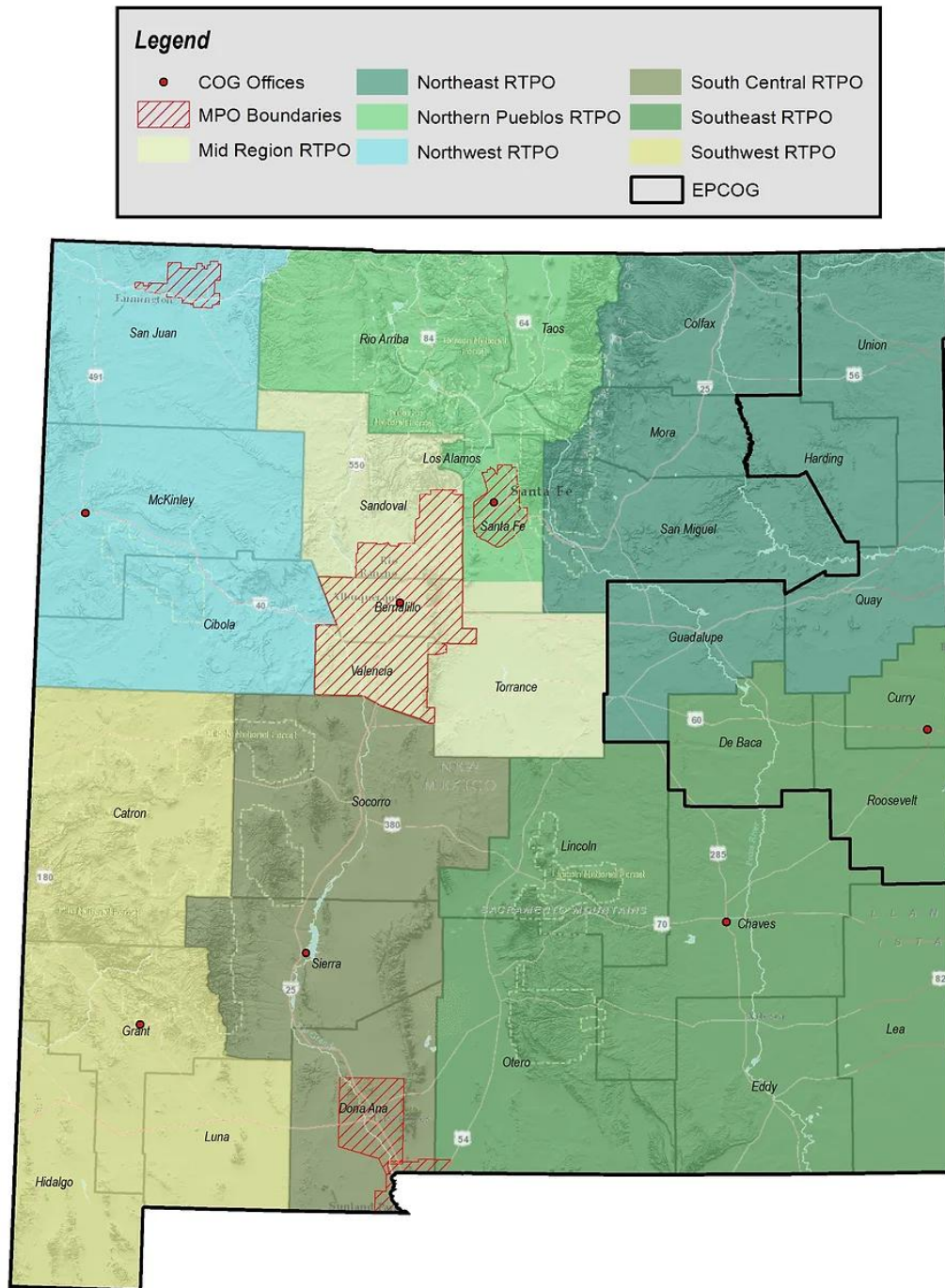


Figure 3 Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Planning Areas, 2023



## Intercity Regional Gaps

From the intercity access analysis of private intercity operators in the State of the System report, it is demonstrated that many of the high population areas of the state are served by intercity bus, rail services and/or a Regional Transit District. However, around 38% of rural New Mexicans who live outside Regional Transit Districts do not have access to intercity bus or rail services, highlighting a critical need to expand transit options to fill these gaps.

Expanding regional transit services is crucial for connecting residents to essential services such as healthcare facilities, educational institutions, social services, and employment centers located in neighboring towns or cities. Without reliable transit options, individuals in these underserved areas may face barriers to accessing these services, which can exacerbate social isolation, health, and economic disparities.

As seen in Figure 4, represents the relative magnitude of intercity travel in New Mexico. This figure is an indicator of opportunities for intercity connections. Many of these corridors have existing transit service, but others, including Farmington-Albuquerque and Roswell-Artesia-Carlsbad do not.



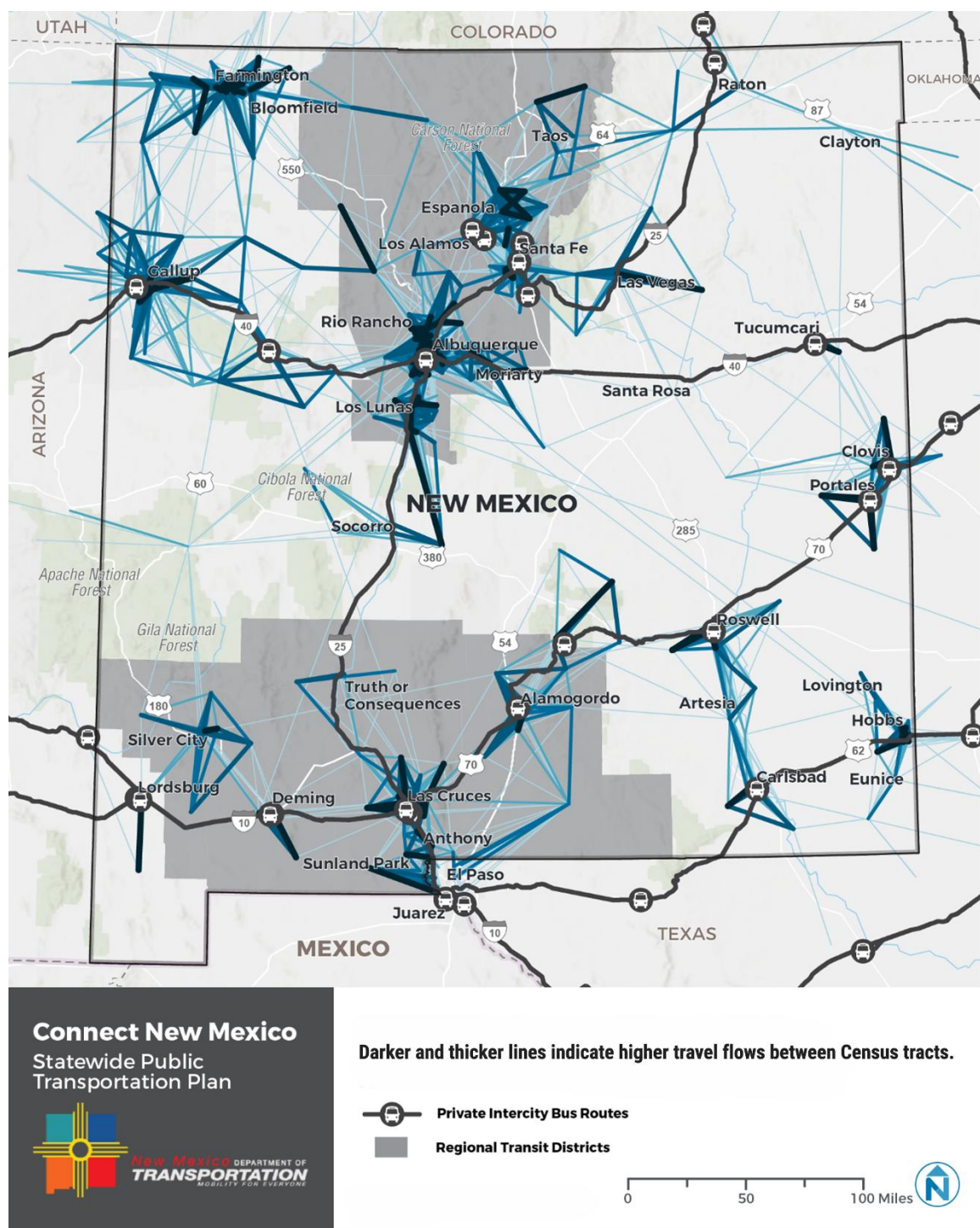


Figure 4 Regional Travel Flows and Intercity Services

# TRANSIT AGENCY NEEDS

## Driver Hiring and Retention

As noted by most transit providers during project interviews and documented in the State of the System report, the shortage of bus drivers has become a pressing issue, impacting the reliability and availability of public transportation services statewide. This shortage has been exacerbated by several factors, including an aging workforce, access to driver training, competitive job markets for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) drivers, state and federal laws governing recreational and medical cannabis use, and the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, many transit agencies are struggling to maintain adequate staffing levels. NMDOT can partner with other state agencies to help ease the strain from driver shortages through the development of programs for transit agencies to recruit, train, and retain bus drivers and ensure that agencies can continue to provide reliable and accessible public transportation services.

## Vehicle and Technology Procurement

Transit agencies in New Mexico are facing significant challenges when it comes to procuring vehicles in a timely manner, which is crucial for maintaining and expanding their services effectively. Many vehicles are approaching the end of their operational lifespans and procuring new vehicles or other equipment can take a significant amount of time and resources. Additionally, newer technologies and software to assist with the operation of rural transit services are often hindered by funding limitations and administrative hurdles. Additionally, the costs and effort associated with implementing new technologies, training staff, and completing additional planning work can increase financial or administrative strain,



particularly for rural and smaller urban transit systems.

NMDOT presently offers procurement assistance for vehicles and new technology. Continuing to explore opportunities for NMDOT to provide procurement assistance for both vehicles and new technology could help alleviate financial and administrative burdens from local transit agencies.

## **Reporting & Planning**

One of the key challenges faced by many transit agencies is ensuring that they have the resources and expertise to develop and evaluate service plans, and accurately interpret and adhere to necessary regulations and reporting. The intricacy of federal transit regulations can overwhelm smaller agencies with limited administrative and/or technical capabilities.

NMDOT Transit and Rail Division should continue to provide technical assistance for required reporting, including Disadvantaged Business Enterprises, Drug and Alcohol Testing, and National Transit Database (including General Transit Feed Specifications (GTFS) updates). In the case of GTFS reporting, which is a new requirement, NMDOT has already enlisted technical assistance to help agencies comply. Perhaps, a larger issue is awareness of the requirement and availability of technical assistance.

## **NMDOT Data Capabilities**

As part of the development of the State of the System report, NMDOT had to collect data and information from all transit agencies across the state to determine the overall need for improvements. While some information is reported from agencies to NMDOT through annual funding applications and regular compliance visits, the additional data for this plan required a substantial effort to collect and analyze. NMDOT already deploys a popular data reporting and information system called "BlackCat." Retrieving data from the system for summary level reporting is presently challenging. NMDOT could explore the feasibility of including a KPI dashboard within BlackCat that could view data as statewide, regional, type of agency, or individual agency key metrics. The idea is to establish an enhanced centralized database for monitoring transit agency performance and also to add a tool to simplify tracking progress towards achieving the goals and objectives of this plan.



## 5 PRIORITIZED STRATEGIES

From the needs identified in the State of the System report and the goals and objectives listed above, a list of strategies was developed to address the connectivity gaps and operational challenges across the state. Since many of the strategies address multiple goals of the plan, strategies are grouped into categories based on project type or implementation method, instead of being grouped by goal. The strategies were grouped into the following categories:

- **Transit Services**
- **Programs and Policies**
- **Staffing, Reporting, and Training**

Strategy descriptions, implementation requirements, and examples from other states are listed in the following chapters for each strategy.

### Transit Services

These strategies seek to fill the gaps between where transit services are provided across the state and where there continues to be a need for service.



**Development of Rural Transit Services to Areas Not Currently Served**



**Identify Areas to Increase or Provide Intercity Service**



**Promote the Coordination and/or Consolidation of Transit Services**

## Programs and Policies

These strategies are primarily focused on processes, policies, and technical assistance by NMDOT.



**Continue to enhance Procurement Processes and Policies for Local Agencies**



**Assist Agencies with Zero Emission Transitions**



**Continue Direct Technical Assistance and Federal Planning Funds to Transit Agencies and Transportation Planning Organizations**

## Staffing, Reporting and Training

These strategies look at potential staff training programs and reporting requirements for transit agencies.



**Encourage Programs to Increase Driver Retention and Recruitment**



**Improve Access to CDL Training Programs for Transit**



**Continue to Provide Technical Support to Rural Transit Agencies with GTFS Reporting**



**Maintain a Database to Track Performance Measures**

# STRATEGY EVALUATION

While each strategy is based on a defined need from the State of the System, each has a different level of effort and investment needed for implementation. To determine the prioritization of each strategy in the overall plan, several strategy prioritization criteria were used including overall time to implement the strategy, the investment needed, and the number of agencies involved for the strategy to succeed. Each of these prioritization metrics are described below and results for each strategy are shown in the summary table in **Error! Reference source not found..**

## Time Frame

Many factors can contribute to when a strategy may be fully implemented. Policies or programs that modify or recommend changes to existing programs are likely to be implemented the quickest. Strategies that make use of existing funding sources or contracting methods are more likely to be implemented sooner. Strategies may be long term if new legislation or intergovernmental agreements are needed to be fully implemented.

As funding and agency staff become available, strategy implementation timeframes may be amended. The initial time frames given for each strategy are:

- **Ongoing** – Currently under way and continuing for the foreseeable future
- **Short Term** – 1 to 3 years to implement
- **Medium Term** – 3 to 6 years to implement
- **Long Term** – 7 or more years needed to implement

## Investment Needed

Investment needed can include both the financial resources needed for each program or policy as well as the staffing resources. The total costs and staffing efforts are summarized as:

- **Low** – No new financial resources needed but may need staff resources. Could be done within current staff capacities.
- **Medium** – Funding needed to implement strategy or significant staff resources. Funding sources may be from existing federal, state, or local funding or contracting sources. May require hiring of additional staff to oversee or implement.
- **High** – Significant funding and/or staff hiring needed to implement. New funding sources may be required to generate additional revenue for programs and policies.



## Implementation Agencies

While all of the strategies have a lead role by NMDOT Transit and Rail Division, other agencies across the state may have a role to play in implementing individual strategies and are listed in the table below. The New Mexico Transit Association (NMTA) is listed as one organization that can stand-in for local transit agencies across the state. The more agencies involved with the strategy, the more complex the strategy may be to implement.

## Strategy Priority

Due to limited funding and availability of staff across the state, it is not possible to implement all of the strategies at the same time. By giving strategies a priority level, NMDOT and partner agencies can focus on strategies that are likely to better address the performance measures for relevant goals or strategies that can make it easier to implement future strategies. Based on the prioritization criteria and the identified needs from interviewed transit agencies, the public survey, and statutory deadlines, each strategy is given a ranking of either **Low, Medium, or High**.

Overall priority includes additional factors beyond time frame, investment, and implementing agencies. Additional considerations for higher priority are the most critical needs identified by state transit agencies or stakeholders and federal regulatory deadlines.

## STRATEGIES SUMMARY




The following table is a summary of all the proposed strategies with the prioritization metrics, implementation agencies, and related plan goals.



**Figure 5 Prioritized List of Strategies**

New Mexico Long Range Transportation Goal									
Number	Strategy	Time Frame	Investment Needed	Priority	Implementation Agencies	Asset Management	Mobility & Accessibility	Safety	Program Delivery
Transit Services									
T.1	Development of Rural Transit Services to Areas Not Currently Served	Medium Term	High	High	NMDOT; RTPOs		●	●	●
T.2	Identify Areas to Increase or Provide Intercity Service	Medium Term	High	High	NMDOT		●	●	●
T.3	Promote the Coordination and/or Consolidation of Transit Services	Medium Term	Low	Medium	NMDOT; RTDs	●	●	●	●
Programs and Policies									
P.1	Continue to Enhance Procurement Processes and Policies for Local Agencies	Ongoing	Medium	Medium	NMDOT; NMTA	●	●		●
P.2	Assist Agencies with Zero Emission Transitions	Ongoing	Medium	Medium	NMDOT; NMTA	●	●	●	●
P.3	Continue Direct Technical Assistance and Federal Planning Funds to Transit Agencies and Transportation Planning Organizations	Ongoing	Low	Low	NMDOT		●	●	●
Reporting and Training									
R.1	Encourage Programs to Increase Driver Retention and Recruitment	Ongoing	High	High	NMDOT; NMTA		●	●	●
R.2	Improve access to CDL Training Programs for Transit	Medium Term	High	Medium	NMDOT; NMTA		●	●	●
R.3	Continue to Provide Technical Support to Rural Transit Agencies with GTFS Reporting	Short Term	Low	High	NMDOT; NMTA		●		●
R.4	Maintain a Database to Track Performance Measures	Ongoing	Low	High	NMDOT	●	●	●	●


RTPOs = Regional Transportation Planning Organizations; RTDs = Regional Transportation Districts

## 6 TRANSIT SERVICE STRATEGIES




Strategy	Time Frame	Investment Needed	Priority	Implementation Agencies	Asset Management	Mobility & Accessibility	Safety	Program Delivery
Transit Services								
 <b>T.1 Development of Rural Transit Services to Areas Not Currently Served</b>	Medium Term	High	High	NMDOT; RTPOs		●	●	●
 <b>T.2 Identify Areas to Increase or Provide Intercity Service</b>	Medium Term	High	High	NMDOT		●	●	●
 <b>T.3 Promote the Coordination and/or Consolidation of Transit Services</b>	Medium Term	Low	Medium	NMDOT; RTDs	●	●	●	●



Transit Service Strategy	Description	Implementation Items	Relevant State Examples
 <p><b>T.1 Development of Rural Transit Services to Areas Not Currently Served</b></p>	<p>From the transit needs section of this plan, rural transit services are needed in both small regional centers and in large areas of the state with a high percentage of populations with mobility challenges. Focusing on areas without any transit access will greatly assist in providing additional mobility options for residents and meeting the goals of this plan.</p> <p>NMDOT Transit and Rail Division already assists communities looking to develop transit services in the state and would continue that work. Additional technical assistance could be provided to local communities to determine the cost and feasibility of certain transit options within their communities.</p> <p>Additionally, since most of the new rural transit services over the past decade were provided through the creation or expansion of RTDs, NMDOT Transit and Rail Division can provide technical assistance to local communities on setting up or incorporating into an RTD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with RTPOs to fund and/or develop Transit Feasibility Studies in areas of the state currently unserved by transit.</li> <li>▪ Identify and reach out to areas outside of RTDs with high regional mobility connections to determine desire for creation or expansion of RTDs to expand transit services.</li> <li>▪ Continue to pursue opportunities to implement Microtransit service in rural areas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-state examples of new transit services through the formation of RTDs like South Central Regional Transit District</li> <li>▪ Best Practices in Rural Microtransit</li> </ul>
 <p><b>T.2 Identify Areas to Increase or Provide Intercity Service</b></p>	<p>From the transit market analysis and statewide travel flow analysis, there is a high demand to travel along the I-25 corridor between Albuquerque and Las Cruces. The statewide transit survey also revealed unmet demand for more regional services, particularly between the two largest municipalities in the state.</p> <p>The travel flow analysis also revealed a high number of trips between population centers within regions throughout the state as people need to access jobs, grocery stores, shopping, health care, and social services. Outside of the RTDs and a few local transit agencies across the state, there is a lack of public transportation services, and a lack of service provided by private bus companies.</p> <p>New intercity services could be operated by local transit agencies, although they would need additional local or regional funding sources, through NMDOT's Park &amp; Ride service, or partnering with private bus companies.</p> <p>By partnering with private bus companies, the state could subsidize increased frequency on routes or new intercity routes across the state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NMDOT Transit and Rail Division will continue to fund and/or provide technical assistance to local agencies for intercity corridor transit plans.</li> <li>▪ Work with intercity private bus companies to explore options for greater intrastate connectivity and integrate private bus routes and stops into the New Mexico Transit Map.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Washington</a>: Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Connecticut</a>: Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Colorado</a>: Bustang program</li> </ul>




Transit Service Strategy	Description	Implementation Items	Relevant State Examples
 <p><b>T.3 Promote the Coordination and/or Consolidation of Transit Services</b></p>	<p>Since the Regional Transit District (RTD) Act of 2003, the State of New Mexico has allowed for the formation and operation of transit services at the regional level instead of the local or county level. The establishment of NCRTD, Rio Metro RTD, SCRTD, SWRTD, and consolidation of local services have facilitated expanded transit services both at the local level and across counties.</p> <p>NMDOT Transit and Rail Division will continue to support discussions of consolidating existing transit services to reduce redundancy and promote the expansion of more regional services across the state. NMDOT Transit and Rail Division will provide technical and financial support for RTD feasibility studies and technology assessments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete or fund studies looking at benefits and costs for local transit agencies operating within existing regional transit districts to consider closer coordination or consolidation.</li> <li>▪ Partner and/or fund regional studies with RTDs to consider the expansion or development of additional RTDs across the state.</li> <li>▪ Prepare a statewide technology assessment to identify opportunities for improved efficiency.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In-state examples of consolidation by NCRTD and Rio Metro</li> </ul>





# 7 PROGRAMS AND POLICIES STRATEGIES



Strategy	Time Frame	Investment Needed	Priority	Implementation Agencies	Asset Management	Mobility & Accessibility	Safety	Program Delivery
Programs and Policies								
 <b>P.1 Continue to Enhance Procurement Processes and Policies for Local Agencies</b>	Ongoing	Medium	Medium	NMDOT; NMTA	●	●		●
 <b>P.2 Assist Agencies with Zero Emission Transitions</b>	Ongoing	Medium	Medium	NMDOT; NMTA	●	●	●	●
 <b>P.3 Continue Direct Technical Assistance and Federal Planning Funds to Transit Agencies and Transportation Planning Organizations</b>	Ongoing	Low	Low	NMDOT		●	●	●

Programs and Policies Strategy	Description	Implementation Items	Relevant State Examples
 <p><b>P.1 Continue to Enhance Procurement Processes and Policies for Local Agencies</b></p>	<p>Interviews with rural transit operators across the state and the analysis of fleet statistics revealed universal concerns with aging transit vehicles, limited staff availability, and long delivery times for new transit vehicles. It is important for rural transit agencies to have access to the NMDOT Transit and Rail Division Standard Operating Procedure for purchasing transit vehicles.</p> <p>NMDOT Transit and Rail Division also provides case by case procurement guidance for equipment, software, construction, and land acquisition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ This standard operating procedure should be reviewed and revised as needed. NMDOT Transit and Rail Division should continue to pursue opportunities to utilize other states' price agreements for transit vehicles.</li> <li>▪ Continue to provide technical support for other types of procurements.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Texas</a>: Invitation for bid (IFB), Request for proposal (RFP), State cooperative purchase contract, and joint procurement</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Oregon</a>: Provides public how-to guides for purchasing of transit vehicles</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Wisconsin</a>: Developing Guides for Transit Vehicles</li> </ul>
 <p><b>P.2 Assist Agencies with Zero Emission Transitions</b></p>	<p>To apply for the Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program or the Low or No Emission Grant Program, agencies must provide a Zero-Emission Transition Plan. To date NMDOT Transit and Rail Division has assisted three public transit agencies with their Zero Emission Transition Plans. NMDOT Transit and Rail Division will continue to assist with preparing and updating transit agency zero-emission transition plans by providing funding and technical support.</p> <p>NMDOT has developed a National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure deployment plan that outlines how New Mexico will use NEVI funds to deploy publicly accessible DC fast chargers along Interstate corridors over the next two years. It also provides a broader blueprint for how the state will continue to facilitate the deployment of publicly accessible chargers to serve community, recreation, and other needs by leveraging additional funding sources and building on existing state and private sector initiatives once the Interstate corridor network is built out in later years.</p> <p>NMDOT currently responds to the annual CALSTART survey of Zero and Low No bus purchases across the U.S. and Canada. Data includes grants awarded, buses on order and delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to implement the NMDOT National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) deployment plan.</li> <li>▪ Collect and analyze data on ZEB performance and usage.</li> <li>▪ Continue to apply for Low or No Emission discretionary grants on behalf of rural transit providers.</li> <li>▪ Explore additional funding opportunities that are available at the state and federal level.</li> <li>▪ NMDOT Transit and Rail Division will develop performance measures for Zero and Low No vehicles in order to inform future planning and policy, giving agencies guidance as they make decisions about their ZEB fleets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">New York</a>: EV Make-Ready Fleet Assessment Services</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">New York</a>: Truck-Voucher Incentive Program</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Washington</a>: Washington Transportation Electrification Strategy</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">California</a>: Hybrid and Zero-Emission Truck and Bus Voucher Incentive Project</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Colorado</a>: 2023 Colorado EV Plan</li> </ul>


Programs and Policies Strategy	Description	Implementation Items	Relevant State Examples
 <p><b>P.3 Continue Direct Technical Assistance and Federal Planning Funds to Transit Agencies and Transportation Planning Organizations</b></p>	<p>Rural transit operators across the state have expressed a need for increased technical assistance from NMDOT. NMDOT Transit and Rail Division currently works with NMTA to prioritize training based on requests from Transit Operators and areas identified during compliance and technical assistance site visits. Trainings are provided year-round. Transit Operators are also encouraged to take advantage of training resources available through Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP).</p> <p>Along with training sessions, NMDOT Transit and Rail Division provides a resource hub that consolidates all relevant information, tools, and templates that transit agencies need. This hub can include best practices, compliance guidelines, and technical manuals.</p> <p>NMDOT Transit and Rail Division should continue to provide additional financial and technical assistance for planning efforts, such as an updated Agency Safety Plan for urban transit agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to provide regular training sessions, workshops, and webinars on various aspects of transit management such as grant writing, financial management, service planning, and marketing. These webinars will ensure that training opportunities are accessible to all rural transit agencies.</li> <li>▪ Continue to provide one on one on-site technical support through the technical assistance site visits.</li> <li>▪ Maintain the online resource hub that consolidates all relevant rural transit information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">National RTAP:</a> Resource Library</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">California:</a> The California Association for Coordinated Transportation's goal is to provide training, technical assistance, and research activities that will improve rural transit services.</li> </ul>


## 8 REPORTING AND TRAINING STRATEGIES

Strategy	Time Frame	Investment Needed	Priority	Implementation Agencies	Asset Management	Mobility & Accessibility	Safety	Program Delivery
Reporting and Training								
 R.1 Encourage Programs to Increase Driver Retention and Recruitment	Ongoing	High	High	NMDOT; NMTA		●	●	●
 R.2 Improve Access to CDL Training Programs for Transit	Medium Term	High	Medium	NMDOT; NMTA		●	●	●
 R.3 Continue to Provide Technical Support to Rural Transit Agencies with GTFS Reporting	Short Term	Low	High	NMDOT; NMTA		●		●
 R.4 Maintain a Database to Track Performance Measures	Ongoing	Low	High	NMDOT	●	●	●	●

Reporting and Training Strategy	Description	Implementation Items	Relevant State Examples
 <p><b>R.1 Encourage Programs to Increase Driver Retention and Recruitment</b></p>	<p>Driver availability remains a consistent hurdle for transit agencies across the state. To address this issue NMDOT Transit and Rail Division supported a 2022 Wage and Compensation Study that evaluated salaries and benefits for transit positions as compared to similar positions in other industries at the state, regional and national levels. This study will be updated in 2025.</p> <p>In addition, NMDOT Transit and Rail Division will continue to partner with New Mexico Transit Association to be the lead for this initiative. Also contributing to the effort, the FTA Transit Workforce Center provides resources to transit operators for recruitment strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update the 2022 Wage and Compensation Study.</li> <li>▪ Encourage local transit agencies to collaborate by sharing best practices, resources, and recruitment strategies. Facilitate regular meetings, workshops, and conferences to foster communication and cooperation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The FTA Transit Workforce Center provides resources to transit operators for recruitment strategies</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Transit Workforce Center</a></li> <li>▪ Transit Agency Wage and Compensation Study</li> </ul>
 <p><b>R.2 Begin or Subsidize a Statewide CDL Training Program for Transit</b></p>	<p>Statewide interviews with transit agencies revealed a pressing need to hire more operators with Commercial Driver Licenses (CDLs).</p> <p>NMTA can perform a statewide needs assessment to identify areas with the highest demand for CDL drivers and evaluate existing training programs. Understanding the demand and existing resources will help tailor the program to address specific gaps and maximize impact.</p> <p>Transit agencies can develop partnerships with community colleges, vocational schools, private training providers, and the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions to collaborate on a curriculum. Partnerships can provide expertise, facilities, and job opportunities, making the program more comprehensive and effective. This curriculum can emphasize flexible instruction methods and schedules, including evening and weekend classes, to accommodate working adults.</p> <p>Transit agencies can begin by launching programs such as the Missouri SkillUp model (which helps SNAP recipients improve workforce skills) for phased implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NMTA will perform a statewide needs assessment</li> <li>▪ Partnership with New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions</li> <li>▪ Launching pilot programs</li> <li>▪ Continuous monitoring and evaluation to maintain program quality and effectiveness</li> <li>▪ Effective program marketing and promotion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Missouri</a>: SkillUp program</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Kentucky</a>: Farmworkers Grant</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Nevada</a>: SANDI Program</li> </ul>



Reporting and Training Strategy	Description	Implementation Items	Relevant State Examples
 <p><b>R.3 Assist Rural Transit Agencies with General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) Reporting</b></p>	<p>Starting in reporting year 2023, fixed route services must be reported to NTD through submission of each agency's General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS). GTFS defines a common data format for public transportation schedules and associated geographic information, essentially the route pathways and stop locations. From our interviews with rural transit agencies, GTFS reporting can be challenging for agencies lacking resources, expertise, and available staff. To assist rural transit agencies with GTFS reporting, the NMDOT can implement a variety of strategies and support mechanisms.</p> <p>NMDOT Transit and Rail Division can continue to offer workshops, webinars, and one-on-one training sessions to help rural transit agencies understand GTFS requirements and how to create and maintain their GTFS feeds.</p> <p>In addition, NMDOT can help deploy user-friendly tools and templates that rural transit agencies can use to generate and update their GTFS feeds. NMDOT can also set technology expectations at the state level with a statewide technology plan for rural transit agencies, similar to Michigan DOT's 2022 plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to offer workshops, webinars, and one-on-one training sessions</li> <li>▪ Provide software resources to agencies to manage their GTFS feeds</li> <li>▪ Continue to offer contracted expertise in GTFS creation and maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Oregon</a>: Public Transportation Provider Training</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">National RTAP</a>: GTFS Builder</li> <li>▪ <a href="#">Michigan</a>: Statewide Technology Plan for Rural Public Transit Agencies</li> </ul>

Reporting and Training Strategy	Description	Implementation Items	Relevant State Examples
 <p><b>R.4 Maintaining a Centralized Fleet and Facility Inventory for Urban (5307) and Rural (5311) Recipients</b></p>	<p>As part of the reporting for the Group Tier II Transit Asset Management Plan, rural agencies (those receiving 5311 funding) provide information on vehicles and facilities to the state. Urban (5307) funding recipients do not report fleet or facilities information to the state but directly to the National Transit Database.</p> <p>Through this reporting process, few agencies have detailed information about their administrative, maintenance, and passenger facilities beyond their overall condition. The state, due to the reporting pathways, also lacks a clear picture of the full state of transit assets throughout the state's transit agencies, other than for agencies receiving 5311 funds. This lack of knowledge hinders the state's ability to coordinate asset management between agencies in need and/or emergency and hurts the ability to understand transit asset needs at the state level.</p> <p>By having all the state's transit vehicles and other physical transit assets in a single database and having agencies provide additional information about the capabilities and condition of their facilities, NMDOT can have a better understanding of the needs for transit capital investments across the state.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NMDOT would need to determine what additional information beyond the Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM, Title 49 CFR Subtitle B, Chapter VI, Part 625) ranking would be required for agencies. The amount or type of fleet and facility information could be scaled by agency type to not overburden smaller agencies.</li> <li>▪ By having more detailed information obtained from agencies through the next reporting requirement, fewer staff resources would be required.</li> <li>▪ With any self-reporting information, some in-person checks may be required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <a href="#">Georgia</a> – requires 5307 Small Urban recipients to apply for funding through the state. As part of that funding application for 5307 &amp; 5339, rolling stock and facilities must be provided into a statewide inventory to record acquisitions, disposals, and scrapped assets as they occur.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A.

### Public Comments Received

#### Statewide Public Transportation Plan Comments Received

**2/5/25** - Hi there. I am a disabled woman who regularly utilizes public transport. I live in poverty. I rely solely on free public transportation due to limited and fixed income. I know your program doesn't get a lot of positive feedback if any from the general public.

Please know your efforts haven't gone unnoticed. People are busy or forget to do surveys. Please know I speak for everyone when I say: Free public transportation has made all of our lives exponentially better. Especially when this was done during the pandemic.

The electronic buses are a cut above the rest. Having someone come in and clean the buses after every ride is also amazing. The buses are clean and safe. Thank you so much for everything you all have done for the community. I hope you all are encouraged to continue providing the amazing services that you do. Keep up the amazing work.

**2/6/25** - I am please to see Artesia is being placed on the list of a location in need of Public Transportation. The failure of the State of New Mexico to establish PT in Artesia for so long has been a neglect on the part of such. The draft clearly points out the States long history of understanding that public transportation for a certain category of people are Federally protected- and has Always had Federal funding for such.

So I will be happy to inform my clients in Artesia that they'll be able to make it to the doctors, and other affairs.

**2/12/25** - *Regarding Figure 4, are those flows measured per year? It seems rather low to believe that only 3,000 trips were made between Albuquerque and Santa Fe in one year.* – Pages 20-21 have been updated for clarity.

*Additionally, the criteria used to create the prioritized list of strategies is mentioned but not well explained.* -

I really liked Figure 5 because it is comprehensive and highlights key points such as time, investment, and priority.

However, I have a couple of questions: *1. Are the implementation agencies already committed to supporting NMDOT in achieving these goals? Yes, we have partnerships in place and these goals are reflected in continuing discussions. and 2. Of the high-priority projects, which one would NMDOT aim to tackle first? I noticed there are many ongoing projects, but not all are high priority, which further confuses me regarding*

*how the priority rankings were determined.* - All priority projects are of high importance and implementation will be based on resources available.

I was recently contacted by the Transit Workforce Center (mentioned in R.1.) to share conclusions from the report we produced for NMDOT. They are conducting a study on the impact of implementing microtransit on drivers.

2/18/25 - I have a few notes after reading:

1. Page 21 *Regional Travel Flow map*: *I don't know how to read this, could an explanation under the map be added to help summarize the main pathways/pathways that need more support?* – Pages 20-21 have been updated for clarity.
2. Page 23 - love the Blackcat dashboard idea and would absolutely use it
3. page 24/31 - consolidated and connected services - is there movement on the discussion for one app to rule them all in terms of transportation across NM instead of every agency having its own app/website? – There have been no discussions about one app for all transit agencies.
4. page 28: is there any discussion around pooled bus operators? AKA if one agency is hiring and retaining well, can bus operators be shared between divisions in a sensible way? - NMDOT defers those conversations to local agencies to reach consensus on personnel policy issues.
5. You are my favorite.

2/26/25 - Does nothing to connect northern and southern New Mexico - The plan does identify intercity connections and service needs to be improved. We are committed to increasing those connections as resources are available.

Does nothing to extend rail service – We are currently updating the State Rail Plan to identify the rail service needs of the State.

Does nothing to connect historic communities across New Mexico – See response to question 1.

Does nothing to prioritize communities of color. – There are several socioeconomic factors that define transit dependent communities. NMDOT has prepared Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plans for each RTPO and MPO in the State. These plan can be found on the NMDOT Transit Bureau webpage linked here ([Transit Bureau | NMDOT](#)) . These plans prioritize transportation investments in the most transit dependent communities.

