



New Mexico Transportation Plan

Southwest Regional Transportation Plan



Acknowledgements

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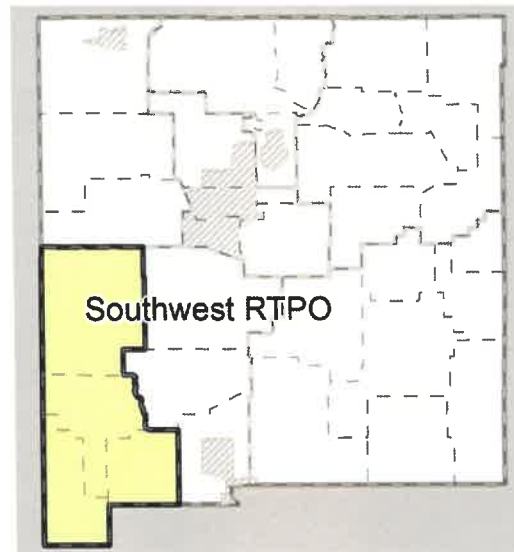
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What is a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)?

The development of a long-range transportation plan provides an opportunity for elected officials, organizations, and individual citizens to determine how the transportation system should be structured to serve future needs most effectively. This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is an integral part of the “New Mexico Transportation Plan” (NMTP), which is the New Mexico Department of Transportation’s federally required long-range transportation plan. The purpose of the RTP is to apply the statewide plan’s Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies to the regional level. Under Federal law, long-range transportation plans must look ahead at least 20 years; however, New Mexico has chosen to go beyond the minimum to examine a 25-year timeframe instead.

About the Southwest RTPO



The Southwest RTPO (SWRTPO) encompasses approximately 17,308 square miles in rural Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, and Catron Counties. SWRTPO is a voluntary association of local governments and the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) that provides a forum for members to meet, plan, and work together on issues related to transportation in the Southwest region. It is comprised of municipalities and counties in the rural portion of the region and acts as the state-required Regional Transportation Planning Organization for the area. Its membership consists of elected officials and their designated alternates. Federal and state agencies with a responsibility for

transportation planning and programs in the region are also represented in an advisory, non-voting capacity on the SWRTPO Committee.



Title VI Information

The Southwest Council of Governments fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 49 CFR, part 2, and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. SWNMCOG assures that no person or persons shall on the grounds of race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity under the SWRTPO. For more information or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please contact the SWRTPO, Cerisse Grijalva at 575-388-1509 or email grijalvac1@swnmcog.org or visit our web site at www.swnmcog.org for additional information.



Existing and Future Conditions



Region Overview

The Southwest New Mexico Council of Governments (SWNMCOG) consists of four counties: Grant, Hidalgo, Luna, and Catron, and nine municipalities: Bayard, Hurley, Santa Clara, Columbus, Deming, Lordsburg, Virden, Reserve, and Silver City.

The Southwest region is unique in that there are several municipalities linked together.

In the Southwest regional long-range plan of 2007, the Southwest mining industry hit a downturn and many jobs were lost. Since then, the mining industry has re-emerged and is one of the Southwest's most significant economic contributors.

The Town of Silver City has adopted the Silver City Greenways and Big Ditch Master Plan which establishes an interconnected greenway corridor and pathway system that promotes health, social, and economic opportunities for citizens and visitors of Silver City and Grant County. The Town of Silver City has also been recognized by the Continental Divide Coalition as a Continental Divide Trail Gateway Community.

The Grant County Airport has general aviation services provided by Advanced Air. These services include passenger flights between Silver City and Albuquerque and between Silver City and Phoenix.

The Columbus/Palomás Port of Entry is located south of the Village of Columbus. The Port of Entry completed an expansion in 2019 that has increased safety and expedited crossing time. It is the only 24-hour port of entry in New Mexico.

The City of Deming's downtown area located in Luna County has been designated as Deming Mainstreet. Deming, Luna County parallels Interstate-10 and serves as the mid-point between Los Angeles, California and Houston, Texas. Aiding to the logistic competitive advantage of Deming is the 24/7 International Commercial Port of Entry in the Region just 30 miles South and a dual served rail system with a 1,400 ft. municipally owned rail spur. Deming is home to BIG industry that frequents the commercial airport with an 8,000 ft runway. Deming is able to support the largest winery in the State of NM, Lescombes Family Vineyard, which also operates their bottling operation out of Deming, and the largest green chile and jalapeno processor in the world, Olam Food Ingredients. In addition to the robust ag-processing business cluster, Deming also boasts a unique manufacturing scene as well with Compass Made, Solitaire Manufactured Homes, and Little Toad Creek Brewery & Distillery. Deming has an affordable housing market and exclusive amenities such as Trees Lake & Inflatable Water Park, four State parks within the County, and multi-faceted approach to healthcare.



The City of Lordsburg has a new border patrol station that houses 245 agents and includes a helicopter pad and mounted patrol. The Love’s Gas Station has been remodeled and now has a mechanics bay. A new high school in Lordsburg is going to take place in the upcoming years. Antelope Wells is becoming a more modernized crossing which will increase tourism in the Southwest region.

The Village of Virden, City of Bayard, Town of Hurley, Village of Columbus, and Glenwood have become frontier communities through NM Mainstreet.

Southwest New Mexico is becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination. The Gila National Forest, the southwestern culture, and historical landmarks along with the arts and main street developments bring added appeal to the area.

Demographics

The total population in the region as of the 2020 Census was **59,127** and is projected to grow to **73,255** by the year 2040.

Age distribution in the region as of 2023 was:

County	Total Pop.	Median Age	Under 18 yrs	18-24 yrs	25-34 yrs	35-64 yrs	65+ yrs
Catron	3,635	59.5	11.6%	7.9%	3.8%	33.5%	43.2%
Grant	27,472	49.1	13.7%	8.8%	11.2%	32.9%	33.4%
Hidalgo	4,160	42.1	19.9%	8.1%	12.5%	35.6%	21.8%
Luna	25,424	37.1	28.7%	8.4%	10.1%	35.4%	17.3%



Industries and Economy

The Southwest region's economy has traditionally been tied to the land. Throughout the Southwest there is agriculture, ranching, greenhouse production, and value added products.

Mining has also been a substantial component to the economy. With residents commuting from Deming, Lordsburg, Cliff/Gila, Glenwood, Mimbres as well as from Morenci, AZ to work with the Freeport McMoRan Inc. Tyrone and Chino Mine Operations. Freeport McMoRan Inc. is a "good corporate citizen" in that they promote regional economic sustainability through their own grant program giving back \$525,000 a year to local nonprofits and government entities. Freeport McMoran Inc. provides over 2,500 direct jobs. With Freeport McMoran Inc. being in the Grant County area, roads are utilized excessively with the commuting as well as with the heavy trucks transporting fuel, copper, and equipment.

Government jobs are part of the Southwest economy. These include schools, health facilities, rural health clinics, and Federal and state service jobs.

There is a university located in Silver City entitled Western New Mexico University. This brings about 4,000 students a year to the Silver City area.

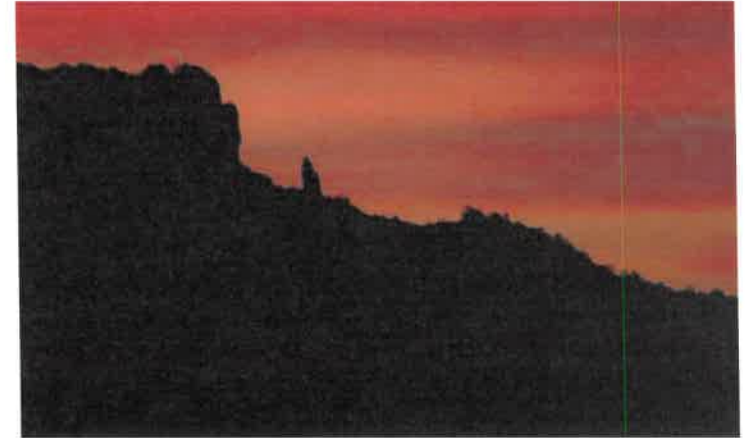
Tourism is a big part of the Southwest. There are many outdoor, recreational activities as well as major events and attractions.



Land Use and Communities

Grant County

Grant County has a predominantly rural residential land use pattern outside the municipalities of Silver City, Bayard, Hurley, and Santa Clara. Retail establishments and service oriented businesses are located within the Town of Silver City, except for the neighborhood-serving businesses in the municipalities of the Mining District and the outlying farming and ranching communities. Commercial use tends to be smaller and locally-owned business operation in downtown Silver City, with larger commercial establishments and most of the chain and franchise stores located along the corridors. The U.S. 180 East corridor has established itself as the most important strip commercial corridor in the region. The NM 90 highway corridor (Hudson St.) serves as a secondary commercial area, with Highway 180 West also playing a minor role.



The location of major retail and commercial businesses in Silver City along Highway 180 East is reinforced by the fact that this roadway connects Silver City with the mining district towns and the Mimbres Valley communities where the majority of the remaining population of the county is located. Additionally new residential development in the ETJ (Extra Territorial Jurisdiction) area has provided a nearby customer base for commercial uses along this corridor, most of which are within Silver City town limits. Recognizing the importance of U.S. 180 East as a growing retail/commercial corridor, the Town of Silver City has in the past annexed land along the corridor, which helps assure that Silver City receives their share of any new gross receipts revenues.

The primary industrial use in the county has historically been associated with mining, and is primarily located in or near the municipalities of the mining district.

Institutional uses in the municipalities of the mining district are typically located in the core downtown areas. These include schools, churches, government offices, fire stations, community centers, and other civic uses.

In outlying farming and ranching communities, institutional land uses most often cluster at the centers of the rural communities, typically along corridors and/or at intersections of major roadways. The schools, churches, and community centers stand at the “heart” of these rural communities and are important in the daily life of residents.



The county's rural communities are primarily residential. However, a mix of land uses has developed over time in rural communities such as Gila/Cliff and Mimbres. Retail and other commercial uses, as well as schools, governmental, civic, and religious uses tend to cluster at nodes along the main highways or along county roads and exist adjacent to residential uses.

The county has developed an Extra Territorial Jurisdiction Plan but has not yet been implemented.

The Town of Silver City's downtown area located in Grant County has been designated as Silver City MainStreet. Silver City's Mainstreet has been nationally recognized and has had success in their efforts to create a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and ongoing annual events.

Santa Clara, Bayard, and Hurley have been designated as Frontier Communities under New Mexico Mainstreet.

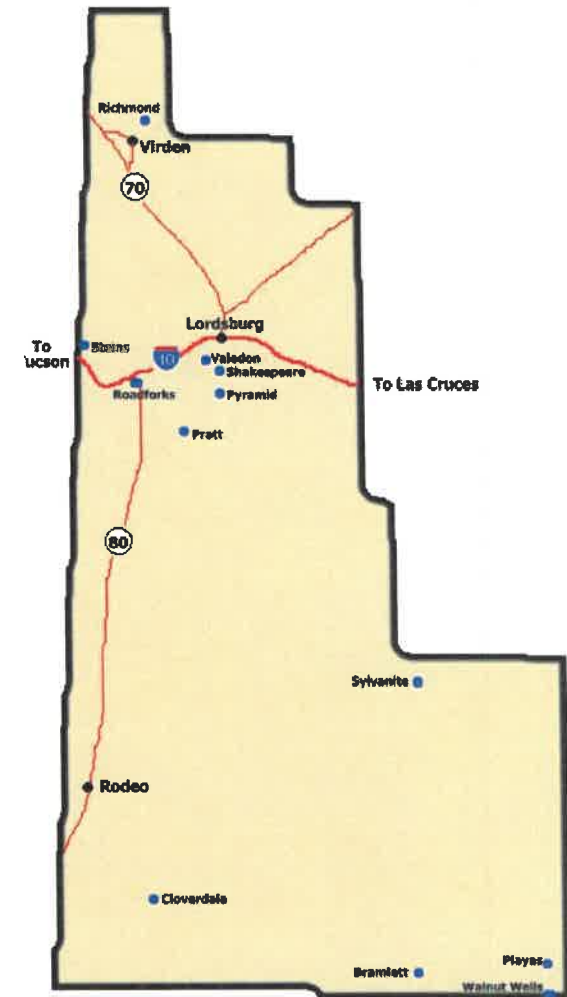


Hidalgo County

In Hidalgo County, there are a number of land use categories that can be identified, including agricultural, ranching, residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, parks, and recreation. Hidalgo County's land use patterns can be defined as:

- Agricultural land use primarily along the Gila River Valley and in the Animas Valley
- Ranching primarily in the southern part of the county, but also occurring through the county.

The City of Lordsburg has been designated as a Frontier Community under New Mexico Mainstreet.





Catron County

Catron County is located in west-central New Mexico adjacent to the Arizona border. The county is the largest in New Mexico, but also one of the least populated, having a population density of only 0.5 persons per square mile. The county contains 6,900 square miles, a majority of which is owned by the Federal government. The county includes the oldest declared wilderness area in the United States. The Apache and Gila National Forests border one another in this area; the two forests combined cover much of Catron County.

The nearest communities that provide higher level services to Catron County residents are: Socorro to the East, Gallup and Grants to the North, Silver City to the South, and Springerville, Arizona to the West. The county is approximately the same distance to the major cities of Albuquerque, Las Cruces, and Tucson, Arizona.

The county does not have any interstate highways, railroads, or significant commercial air passenger activity. U.S. Highway 60 traverses the county east to west from Socorro to the Arizona border, passing through the communities of Datil, Quemado, Pie Town, and Red Hill. From the northern county border, the main north to south route starts as State Route 36 and travels into Quemado. From Quemado State Route 32 continues to Apache Creek, where State Route 12 becomes the main route. State Route 12 then continues southwest, past Reserve, to a juncture with U.S. Highway 180 that continues south to the southern county border and eventually Silver City and Interstate 10.

The Continental Divide Trail winds through the county and includes several peaks over 10,000 feet in elevation. The terrain varies throughout the county, but primarily consists of mountain ranges and high plateaus. The vegetation in the county also varies greatly from open grasslands to densely wooded conifer forest offering a wide range of wildlife habitat, and recreational and commercial opportunities.





Luna County

Luna County has a total land area of 2,965 square miles. However, 70 percent of the land is controlled by state and Federal governments combined. It is critical that Luna County carefully monitors actions taken by state or Federal agencies which may affect the lands within the county and to carefully plan the use of lands over which the county exercises authority. The primary land use in the county is residential properties that farm or ranch the land.

Luna County has a proud and successful heritage in farming and ranching producing chilies, pecans, cotton, melons, sweet onions, and grapes and is home to value-added agricultural product processing plants. The value added agricultural processing industry includes Border Foods; St. Clair, New Mexico's largest winery; and Luna Rossa another award-winning wine maker.

Luna County encompasses the Village of Columbus where the Columbus/Palomas border is located. This Port of Entry completed an expansion in 2019.





Public Health

Public Health-Percent Obese (2010): 21% (statewide = 24%, national average = 27%)

Counties	Catron, Grant, Hidalgo, Luna		
Land Area	17,308 square miles		
Population Statistics	Total Population	2010: 59,127	2040: 73,255
	Percent of State Population	2019: 31.7%	2040: 29.6%
	Percent over 45 (2020):	31.4% (statewide = 31.4%, national average = 40.3%)	
	Percent Obese (2019):	33% (statewide = 33%, national average = 27%)	



Key Challenges and Opportunities

The Southwest Regional Working Group recognized some key challenges and opportunities in the Southwest region throughout this process. They are listed below.

Key Challenges

- Funding- There is a lack of funding in both Federal and state transportation funds. It also is difficult for the smaller, rural communities to apply for funding due to the local match, Federal and state requirements, and competition with the urban areas.
- Aging and deteriorating infrastructure
- Increased demand for multimodal transportation including sidewalks, trails, and bicycle lanes
- Balancing rural and urban needs
- Improve regional public transit
- Increase connectivity from rural areas to urban areas
- ATV/UTV use

Opportunities

- Palomas/Columbus port of entry expansion
- Alternative fuel use; southwest NM is a prime area for renewable energy
- Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Plan
- Memorandum of understanding between all local governments to work collaboratively on economic development
- Rail lines along I-10
- Increased tourism opportunities



Identified Regional Needs

Improve Connectivity

In the rural, southwest region, it is difficult to access other areas of the region and the state if one does not own a motor vehicle. With an aging population, it is difficult to access health care providers therefore, there is a need for affordable, reliable transportation to get from home to those services.

Active Transportation

Members of the regional working group recognized the need for other modes of transportation facilities which include bicycle routes, trails, sidewalks, etc. Active transportation has recently had an increase in interest in the southwest region.

Improve Regional Public Transit

There is a lack of active public transportation in the southwest region. Members of the regional working group have recognized the set routes provided by Corre Caminos are difficult to utilize by the elderly and the young. Corre Caminos also does not extend to Catron County. The local transit in the southwest region is very limited and the public would like to have access to more areas of the region.

Improve Safety while updating aging infrastructure

Improving safety is always a concern. Aging infrastructure is a key issue in this region. There is a recognized need to increase safety by maintaining pavement. The RWG identified areas where bicycle lanes and alternative routes for pedestrians do not exist and this has been an arising concern that is expressed often by the public.

ATV/UTV Use and Safety

With an increase in recreational vehicle use, the southwest region has been looking at ways to address the issues that arise. These issues range from allowed/designated routes, rules and regulations, and tourism opportunities.



Transportation System Overview



Transportation System Overview

Key Routes

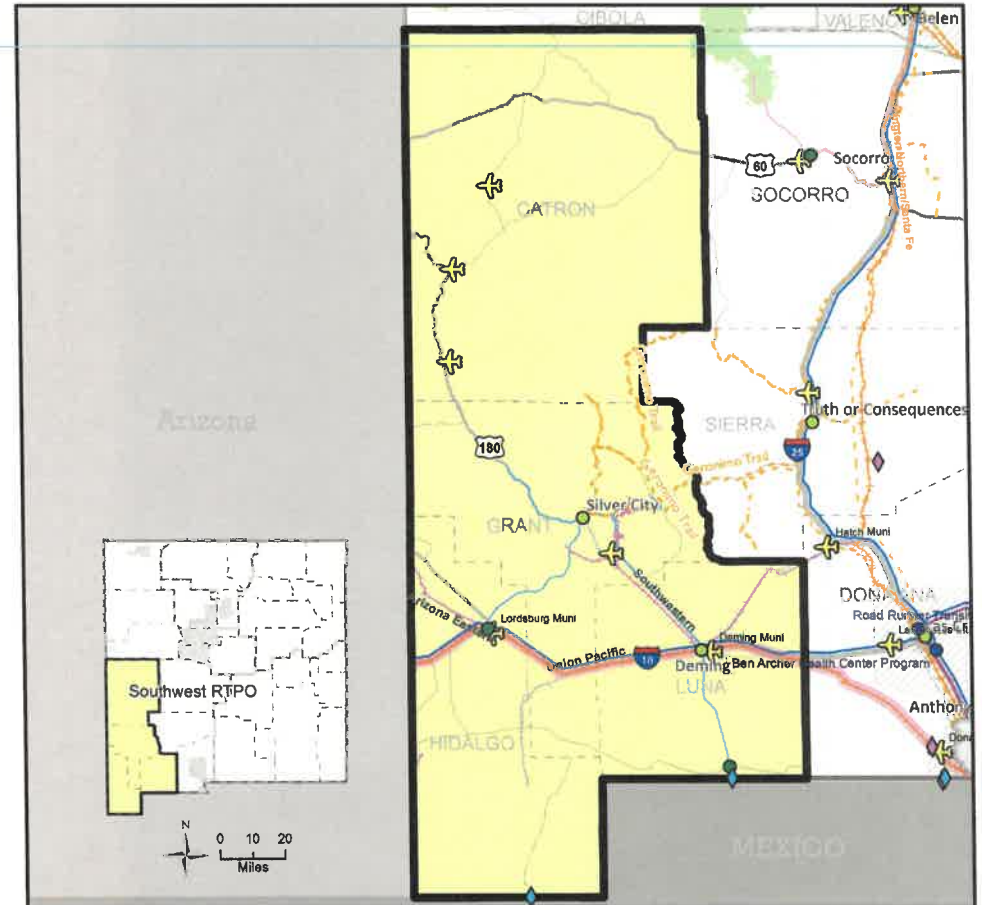
- Interstate 10
- U.S. 180
- U.S. 70
- U.S. 60

Scenic Byways

- Geronimo Trail
- Trail of the Mountain Spirits
- Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

Airports/Airstrips

- Grant County Airport (1,363)
- Lordsburg Airstrip
- Deming Airstrip
- Lordsburg Border Patrol helipad



NM MainStreet Communities

- Frontier Community Projects
- NM MainStreet Community
- State Authorized Arts and Cultural District

Intercity Transit Services

- Transit Services
- ◆ Industry Locations
- ◆ Border Crossings
- Greyhound
- NMDOT Park and Ride Services
- Corre Caminos
- Ztrans

Rail

- Class 1 Railroad
- Class 3/Short Line Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Amtrak Sunset Limited

Roads and Boundaries

- New Mexico Scenic Byways & National Historic Trails
- Interstate
- US Road
- Tribal Lands
- Other RTPO
- Southwest RTPO
- Counties
- MPO







Airport Categories





- ✈ Primary (Hub)
- ✈ Primary (Non Hub)
- ✈ Commercial Services
- ✈ Reliever
- ✈ General Aviation
- ✈ Non-NPIAS



Roadway System by Tier

Working in coordination with its partners, NMDOT will use a tiered, multimodal prioritization system to establish performance targets and make resource allocation decisions. The table below defines three to four tiers for each mode that reflect the different levels of importance of different types of transportation facilities and services for moving people and goods. Standards for maintenance and operations reflect the tier structure, with higher tiers having higher condition standards than lower tiers. Tiers shaded in 'gold' will have the highest condition targets. Tiers in 'silver' will have lower performance targets, but still require substantial levels of investment. Tiers in 'bronze' will have the lowest performance targets. Tiers in white are for facilities that are not appropriate for investment. Given the higher performance targets, NMDOT will also make the higher tier facilities and services the primary focus of its capital investment. In the case of transit, NMDOT will prioritize investments on the basis of the *New Mexico State Management Plan for the Administration of Federal Transit Grants*.

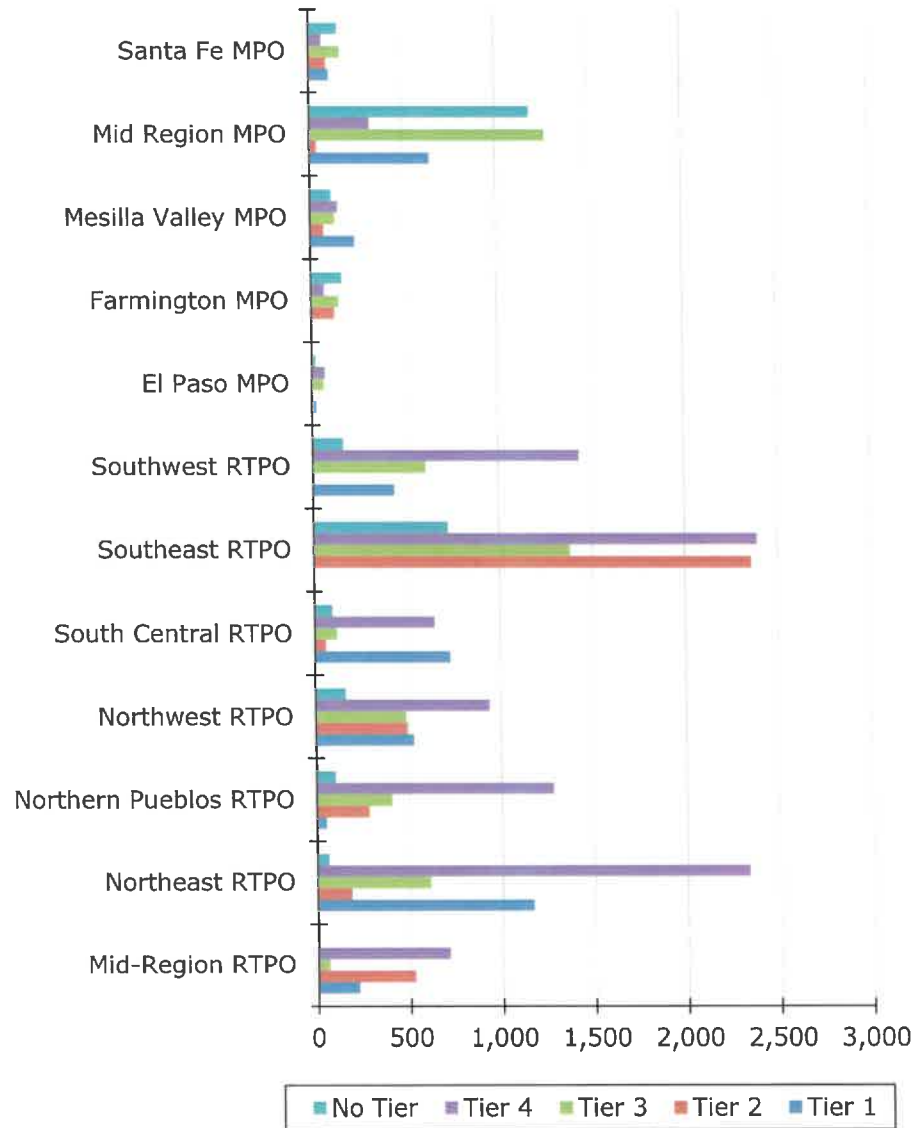
Tier	 Roads	 Freight	 Bus/Rail	 Pedestrian	 Bicycle	 Aviation
1	Interstates	Interstates Transcontinental Railroads	Demand for >35 scheduled trips per week in each direction	Urban highway routes ... with population concentrations	High demand on- system routes	Primary commercial airports (e.g., Sunport)
2	Cities 20k+ Demand > 10k High tourist demand destinations	Remainder of priority truck network High demand shortline railroads	Demand for 20-34 scheduled trips per week in each direction	... with pedestrian generating land use	Medium demand on- system routes	Non primary commercial airports
3	Cities 10k+ Demand > 5k Rest of NHS Tourist destinations	Remainder of active short line railroads, regionally significant freight network	Demand for 5-19 scheduled trips per week in each direction	... all other segments	Low demand on- system routes	Reliever airports
4	All others	Abandoned railroads	Demand for 1-4 trips per week in each direction	Non-urban highways, no ped accommodation	Routes that appropriately prohibit bicycles	General aviation airports

	"Gold Standard" Highest performance targets		"Silver Standard" Mid-level performance targets		"Bronze Standard" Lowest performance targets		Not appropriate for investment
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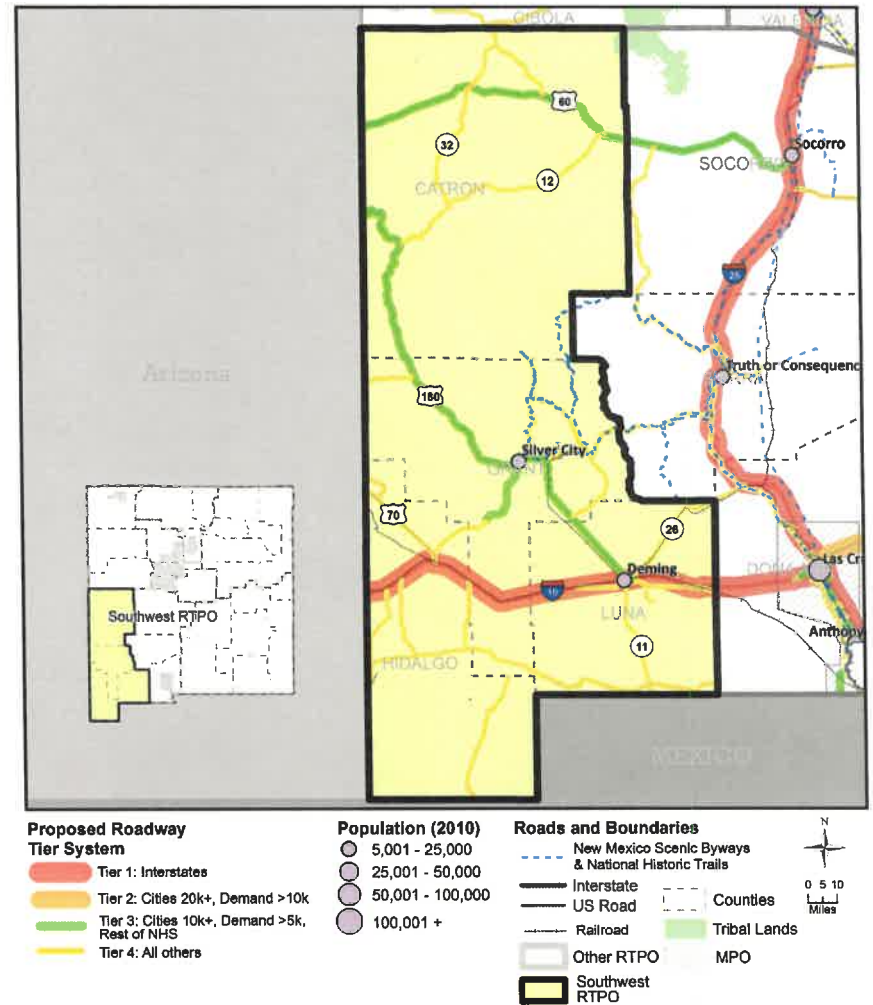
*Note: Bus/Rail, Pedestrian, and Bicycle tiers are preliminary and will be updated.



Total Lane Miles by Tier



Roadway System by Tier

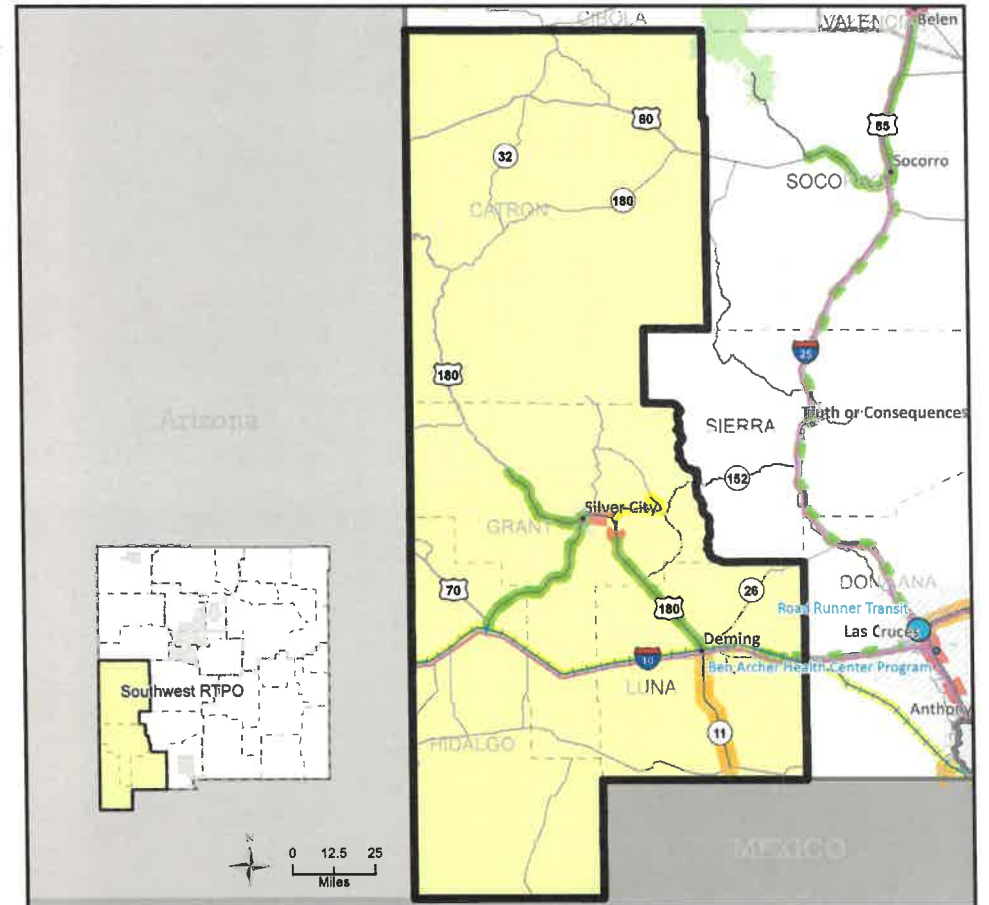




Transit Service

Transit Service Providers (FY 2023 Ridership)

- Southwestern Regional Transit District (0.12 million)
- Corre Caminos (FY2023 ridership - 66,000)



Existing/Future Transit Service Levels

2015	2050 (Anticipated)	Service Level
[Red line]	[Red line]	Level 1: > 35 scheduled trips per week in each direction
[Orange line]	[Orange line]	Level 2: 20-34 scheduled trips per week in each direction
[Green line]	[Green line]	Level 3: 5-19 scheduled trips per week in each direction
[Yellow line]	[Yellow line]	Level 4: 1-4 trips per week in each direction

NM Transit Providers and Annual Ridership (2013)

[Small blue dot]	<75K
[Medium blue dot]	75K to 250K
[Large blue dot]	250K to 800K
[Very large blue dot]	800K to 1M
[Large blue dot]	1 M to 13.5M

Intercity Transit Services

[Red line]	Intercity Bus Services
[Purple line]	Greyhound
[Blue line]	Amtrak

Roads and Boundaries

[Thick black line]	Interstate
[Thin black line]	US Road
[Green shaded area]	Tribal Lands
[Grey shaded area]	Other RTPO
[Yellow shaded area]	Southwest RTPO
[Dashed line]	Counties
[Dotted line]	MPO
[Black dot]	Cities

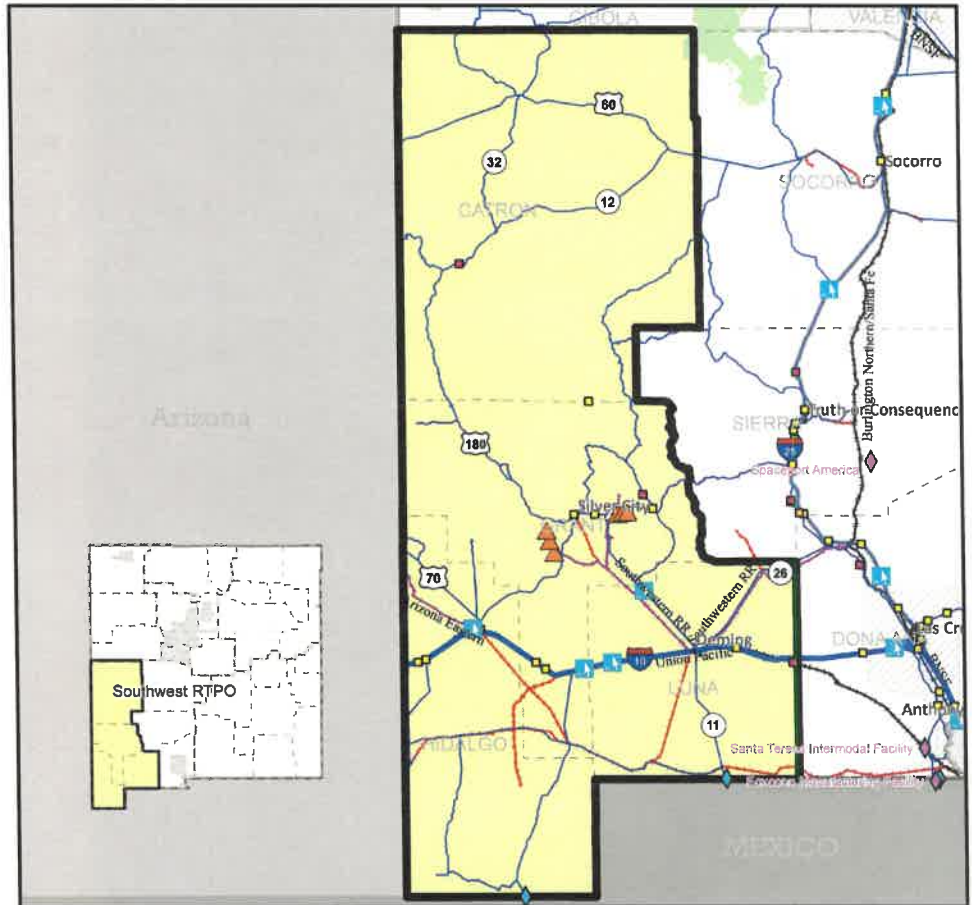
Population (2010)
1 dot = 20 persons



Freight

Rail Lines

- Southwestern Rail
- Arizona Eastern Rail
- Union Pacific



Freight Corridors* 2035

- Truck AADT
- 1 - 15,000
 - 15,001 - 20,000
 - 20,001 - 40,000

*Freight corridors as identified in 2008 NMDOT Multimodal Freight Study

Railroads

- Class 1 Railroad
- Class 3/Short Line Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad

Mines

- Copper Mine

Restricted and Obsolete Bridges on Tiered Network

- Posted Restriction
- Functionally Obsolete
- Functionally Obsolete and Posted Restriction

Other Industry Locations

- Rest Area
- Industry Locations
- Border Crossings

Boundaries

- Tribal Lands
- Other RTPO
- Southwest RTPO
- Counties
- MPO
- Cities



Scenic Byways

Trail of the Mountain Spirits

The 93-mile National Scenic Byway winds around the southwest corner of New Mexico, back and forth across the forested Continental Divide, through the country's first national wilderness area, the Gila, and past ancient cliff dwellings. Long known locally as The Inner Loop, especially among bicycle race fans, the byway serves as the route for the grueling annual Tour of the Gila race. It is just as fun for travel by car or motorcycle, or biking on your own, and offers a wealth of year-round birding options. The byway crosses six climatic zones and a broad swath of the Old West territory made famous by the daring exploits of Native Americans, Buffalo Soldiers, frontier families and scurrilous outlaws. You cannot help but be touched by the spirits of those that have passed before you. Start and end in San Lorenzo, in the heart of the Mimbres Valley, at the junction of state roads 152 and 35.

The Mimbres people lived here almost a thousand years ago and remain an enigma. Archeologists can only speculate about their beginnings (perhaps evolved from Mogollon culture), and especially about their ultimate fate. Graceful Mimbres pottery is the most famous artifact of the culture. Pottery often depicted geometric designs, daily routines, or animals—cranes, turkeys, fish, hummingbirds, even mosquitoes. On feast days the usually quiet valley community of San Lorenzo overflows with pilgrims walking to the small miracle room tucked into the local church. Watch for the cutoff to Bear Canyon Lake, a little gem offering fishing and other recreation, and a picturesque, intermittent waterfall.

The byway crosses twice over the mountainous hydrological divide that separates watersheds that drain into the Pacific Ocean from those that drain into the Atlantic. A portion of the Continental Divide Trail, stretching from Canada to Mexico, travels through this area.

The byway overlaps with this Audubon-designated trail for birders through the Gila too. Some 337 species of birds have been found at the 8 stops along the byway.

Further north, in the Sapillo Valley, find “the Emerald of the Gila Forest.” A high-country 73-acre jewel, Lake Roberts was created by damming a creek in the 1960s. Camp, hike, or fish for trout, bass, and plump catfish or stop by the nearby general store.





Turn north to head toward this extraordinary site. Examine the homes and lives of the Mogollon people who lived here from the 1280s through the early 1300s. Mogollon culture may have evolved from the Anasazi and/or the Hohokam. Though the cliff dwelling site is small compared to Mesa Verde National Park and Bandolier National Monument, the dwellings hold their own in impressiveness. The cliff dwellings are north on state road 15, off of state road 35.

Nestled in ponderosa pines, historic Pinos Altos sits at the south end of the byway along Route 15, north of Silver City. You can still see ruins of old mines and appreciate a quaint museum dedicated to the original miners of the 1800s. While you meander around the vintage Western downtown, take the time to check out The Buckhorn Saloon and the Opera House, known for its entertaining melodramas, across the road. There are plenty of camping areas located nearby.

Geronimo Trail

From the creosote and cholla-swept sands of the Chiricahua Desert to the pinon and ponderosa cliffs of the Gila Wilderness, the wild freedom expressed by Chiricahua Apache warrior Geronimo more than a century ago embodies the scenic byway named in his honor. Born in a quirky desert town built over bubbling underground hot springs, the Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway taps the largest reservoir in New Mexico before kinking its way to the nation's first declared wilderness. En route are rugged carved canyons, thickly wooded mountain passes, quaint villages and ghost towns that still number a few live souls in their ledgers.

In the town of Truth or Consequences – T or C – the Geronimo Trail Visitors Center and Geronimo Springs Museum offers information and exhibits on Geronimo and local history, from mastodons to the memorabilia of Ralph Edwards, the TV host whose 1950s-era game show gave the town its name. The road loops past bright pastel-painted shops to the dun-colored beaches of 43-mile-long Elephant Butte Lake. With 200 miles of shoreline, three marinas, a visitor center, boating, water skiing, fishing and camping, Elephant Butte Lake State Park is a watery Mecca for drought-parched desert denizens. On Memorial Day weekend, its population sometimes spikes to 100,000 revelers. The reservoir's dam was completed in 1916 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to impound Rio Grande waters for irrigation, some of which soak nearby Hatch's famous hot chili fields.

The byway's northern route leaves the "Butte" on state road 181 and turns toward the foothills on state road 52 past the ranches and pecan orchards of Cuchillo, a onetime stage stop and trading center. A side trip north up state road 142 coasts 10 miles through pungent creosote scrub and sculpted arroyos before dropping into a verdant valley. Winding through the vine-covered adobe walls of





Monticello, a village that recalls Tuscany with its lavender fields, hand-hewn church and flower-strewn plaza, the road abruptly ends on a dirt trail at desert's door.

From Cuchillo, state road 52 heads to the twin “ghost towns” of Winston and Chloride, silver mining communities dating from 1881. The Pioneer Museum’s restoration is part of its ongoing history and a tour of the one-time general store is peppered with anecdotes about the eccentric characters that once strolled its wooden floors. A 200-year-old oak “hanging tree” graces the center of Main Street but, as the folks from the Pioneer Museum will tell you, no one actually was hanged in it – although a few drunk cowboys and miners were dunked in the horse trough and tied there to sober up. Nine miles north, the byway turns west on state road 59 and climbs 31 miles through the vanilla-scented ponderosa stands of the Gila National Forest to the Beaverhead Ranger Station. For those traveling in four-wheel-drive vehicles, Forest Road 150 heads south along the west side of the Aldo Leopold Wilderness past Wall Lake, now closed to the public. Check with the Gila Forest for current road conditions before braving the ruts and gullies of this backcountry dirt road, which ends at the byway’s southern section on state road 35. For those who opt for pavement, retrace the byway route back to Interstate 25 and head for the southern route at the Hillsboro exit on state road 152.

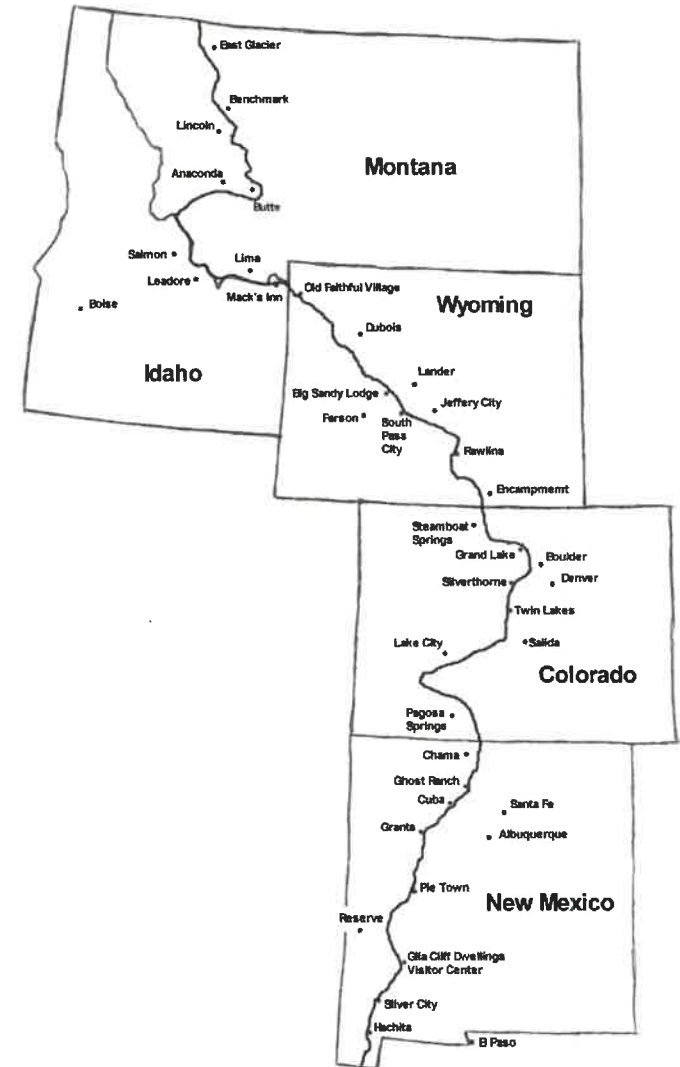
The byway hairpins west up to Emory Pass in the Black Range, offering panoramas of deep forest green set against rolling desert sands beyond. Dropping downhill, the road enters San Lorenzo, a Spanish village founded in 1714, now a ranching community spread along the banks of the Mimbres River. The byway continues north on state road 35 along the river to meet FR 150 in the Gila National Forest. Travelers may connect here to the Trail of the Mountain Spirits Scenic Byway or retrace their steps to I-25, where a short jaunt south leads to Caballo Lake State Park.



Continental Divide National Scenic Trail

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail (CDNST) is one of the most significant trail systems in the world. Established by Congress in 1978, it spans 3,100 miles between Mexico and Canada, traverses five states and connects countless communities along its spine. Over the past 30 years it has gradually assumed a marked physical shape; and preserves and celebrates an opportunity for adventure and history with one of the most significant features on our planet.

The Town of Silver City has become a Gateway Community to the Continental Divide Trail designated by the Continental Divide Coalition.





Goals and Strategies



Our Vision for the Future

The New Mexico Transportation Plan and this Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) are organized by five goals that lead to a vision for the future of transportation in the state. All goals are supported by a process that prioritizes transparency and accountability in all decision making. This section explains the specific strategies developed for each goal and how they will be applied. The goals and strategies for the plan were developed collaboratively, based on input from a broad range of public and private stakeholders from across New Mexico. Over 165 partner agencies, 1150 public and stakeholder participants, and 660 survey respondents supported the development of the plan and strategies.

NMDOT’s 2040 New Mexico Transportation Plan (NMTP) provides the foundation for seven Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) in New Mexico. The RTPs share NMDOT’s goals and strategies, however, since each region has its own unique identity and set of challenges the statewide framework has been adapted to each region and will be carried out on a regional basis.



NMDOT cooperated closely with the state’s seven Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO) and five Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to develop the NMTP. It also established a robust public and stakeholder engagement process to help ensure that the plan’s vision, goals, strategies and actions would reflect a broad cross-section of statewide and regional perspectives.

To facilitate input at the (rural) regional level, the RTPOs provided opportunities for the public and agencies to learn about and comment on the plan through the regular RTPO Policy Committee meeting process and through a variety of other venues. (See Appendix for details). Each RTPO also formed an interdisciplinary Regional Working Group (RWG)

to facilitate stakeholder involvement in a more-structured and systematic fashion. RWG members included NMDOT planning liaisons, RTPO staff, NMDOT District staff, staff from other public agencies, employees of private organizations, and private citizens.



The Southwest RTPO RWG included 34 members who participated in the process, meeting at each milestone of the plan Phases I, II and III. For additional information about each phase, please refer to the Appendix. These members also participated in various Statewide Working Groups (SWG) and Coordinating Committees, which also met throughout the planning phases. The picture at the right provides a sense of the level of engagement that generated the core vision, goals, and objectives of the plan.

The feedback and information collected from this high level of coordination among varying stakeholders helped to shape not only the NMTP, but also each of the seven RTPs. Since each region has its own unique set of challenges, each RWG enabled a closer look at its region and how it should develop from now until the year 2040.

The Southwest RTPO's RWG identified the key regional issues, how to address and achieve goals and guide the planning process. Key issues that were raised in the RWG meetings are listed in the box below.



Plenary Coordinating Committee,
December 2, 2014

Key Issues Raised in Southwest RTPO RWG

- Focus on regional public transportation
- Rural connectivity to the rest of the state, as well as connectivity among all modes of transportation for all age groups
- Support economic development in the region (tourism, renewable energy, U.S./Mexico border)
- Address regional transportation funding, restructure financing of projects (based on functional class) and emphasize local needs



Goal 1: Operate with Transparency and Accountability

The Southwest RWG did not have any major concerns with transparency and accountability. They encouraged the need for continuance of public involvement and public awareness. It is important for the public to be involved in the planning processes.

Strategies.

- Develop and Collect Data
- Update Web sites
- Inform/Update the public and local governments

Key Priorities Raised in Working Group

- Need more public involvement/awareness

RTPO Action Items

- Develop needed transportation data through graphs, excel, charts, etc.
- Collect needed transportation data through national and state databases that are relevant to regional planning
- Continue to update RTPO and COG web sites as needed
- Encourage participation in RTPO and COG Board meetings to ensure efforts are not being duplicated



Goal 2: Improve Safety and Public Health for All System Users

The need for safe, multimodal transportation was a big concern within the RWG. There are health concern issues that could be addressed through opportunities with different modes of transportation. Updating road infrastructure can increase safety in the region. Other key priorities are listed below.

Strategies

- Improve data gathering with agencies such as dispatch, police, DMV, public works department, etc. to enhance regional data
- Develop partnerships with EPA, NMED, NMDOH, DOJ, State Police, etc. to improve safety and public health
- Provide driver education to keep public up to date on road/highway laws
- Implement/Comply with ADA standards
- Seek and Obtain funding opportunities

Key Priorities Raised in Working Group

- More multiuse pathways
- Interstate 10 dust control
- Address funding for growing health needs such as senior transportation, child obesity, child/senior hunger, etc.
- Dedicated funding for Safe Routes to School
- Improve way-finding (signage, GPS)
- Increase broadband infrastructure
- Bring rotation of health specialists to rural communities
- Safety metrics for non-motorized modes
- Expand Highway 180 to four lanes between Deming and Hurley



- RTPO Action Items
- Create a database pertinent to the region and timeline in which data needs to be updated
- Implement working sessions during RTPO meetings in relation to the created timeline
- Contact all agencies concerning public health and safety to participate in RTPO processes
- Coordinate driver education through DMV
- During planning processes, ensure ADA compliance
- Provide recreational opportunities with safe, alternative routes
- Find and obtain permanent funding for Corre Caminos to ensure public transportation
- Seek Highway Safety Improvement Program funds to decrease safety hazards throughout the region



Goal 3: Preserve and Maintain our Transportation Assets for the Long Term

Improving and preserving what our region already has is an important factor to our communities. Many roadways in the southwest region are aged and need attention. With farming, mining, and government agencies here, heavy truck traffic is a concern for future roadway deterioration.

Strategies

- Establish means of obtaining local funds to offset short falls in state and Federal funding
- Ensure geographic distribution of funds geographically and statewide
- Continue transportation safety plans by region
- Asset management training for transportation purposes

Key Priorities Raised in Working Group

- Funding
- Local roadway improvement
- Address local congestion (Silver City, Deming)

RTPO Action Items

- Seek and obtain other funding mechanisms
- Ensure communities in the Southwest apply for funding
- As an advocate, coordinate with NMDOT to include all RTPO and MPO planners to participate in all state decision committees
- Continue transportation safety plans by region
- Provide training on asset management for transportation purposes by partnering with NMDOT and the Local Government Division



Goal 4: Enhance Multimodal Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility

There has been an increasing demand for alternative modes of transportation. The southwest region is a popular tourist destination with little access to transportation to these destinations. The aging population is also concerned with the rural areas having no access to the urban areas for healthcare facilities. More priorities are listed below.

Strategies

- Include transportation providers in the RTPPO processes
- Continue to participate in negotiations with essential services
- Enhance partnerships between transit and air services
- Develop a transit to trails
- Enhance partnerships with local and urban transit to create connectivity routes

Key Priorities Raised in Working Group

- Complete Streets policy and context sensitive approach
- Increase connectivity between urban and rural areas
- Improve inter-modal systems for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Increase RTD ridership
- Merge RTDs
- Public transit between rural and urban areas (connect rail, to bus, pedestrian or bike)
- Truck-freight toll tax implementation
- Support/Incorporate Silver City Greenways Plan and Continental Divide Trail Projects



RTPO Action Items

- Include transportation providers to help RTPO in the planning processes
- Through negotiation with essential air services, come up with new air routes
- Create services for transit to transport public to Grant County Airport from the region
- Create a set route from each participating county to the Grant County airport
- Prioritize the most utilized trails throughout the region and create services from prioritized list
- Contact urban transit providers to create connectivity routes with local transit providers



Goal 5: Respect New Mexico's Cultures, Environment, History, and Quality of Place

The Southwest region is a popular tourist destination. It is important that the history here is recognized and preserved.

Strategies

- Participate in the development of plans to identify regional needs
- Support energy efficiency potential

Key Priorities Raised in Working Group

- Thriving and self-sustaining rural communities
- Alternative fuel use (renewable)
- Rural communities are important
- Support Mainstreets
- Consider the Colonias Infrastructure Fund to leverage funds for more projects
- Provide transportation needs of aging populations in rural communities
- Designate atv/utv routes that will preserve the southwest region's quality of place

RTPO Action Items

- Identify regional needs based on quality of place.
- Encourage for all unincorporated and incorporated areas to take advantage of Frontier and Mainstreet initiatives to create a better sense of quality of place
- Encourage residential, commercial, and transportation means to use alternative fuel use



Next Steps: Action Items and Accountability



The Southwest RTPO plays an important role in working with the NMDOT to implement the overall NMTP and this RTP. Specific roles are described here of who will implement the action items.

Summary of Action Items

Action Item	Owner (i.e., who's responsible)
Goal 1: Operate with Transparency and Accountability	
1. Develop needed transportation data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Local Government entities
2. Collect needed transportation data.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO
3. Continue to update RTPO and COG web sites as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • SWNMCOG
4. Encourage participation in the RTPO and COG Board Meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • SWNMCOG
Goal 2: Improve Safety and Public Health for All System Users	
1. Create a database pertinent to the region and timeline in which data needs to be updated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO
2. Implement working sessions during RTPO meetings in relation to the created timeline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO
3. Contact all agencies concerning public health and safety to participate in the RTPO processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO
4. Coordinate driver education through the Department of Motor Vehicles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Local Government entities
5. During planning processes, ensure ADA compliance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Local Government entities
6. Provide recreational opportunities with safe, alternative routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • NMDOT • Local Government Entities



Action Item	Owner (i.e., who's responsible)
7. Find and obtain permanent funding for Corre Caminos to ensure public transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • NMDOT • SWRTD • Corre Caminos
8. Seek Highway Safety Improvement Program funds to decrease safety hazards throughout the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Local Government entities
Goal 3: Preserve and Maintain our Transportation System for the Long Term	
1. Seek and obtain other funding mechanisms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Local Government entities
2. Ensure communities in the Southwest apply for funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO
3. As an advocate, coordinate with NMDOT to include all RTPO and MPO planners to participate in all state decision committees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Mexico RTPOs and MPOs • NMDOT
4. Continue transportation safety plans by region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO
5. Provide training on asset management for transportation purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDOT • Local Government Division
Goal 4: Enhance Multimodal, Mobility, Connectivity, and Accessibility	
1. Include transportation providers to help RTPO in the planning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Local Government entities
2. Through negotiation with essential air services, come up with new air routes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Local Government entities • Essential Air Services
3. Create services for transit to transport public to Grant County Airport from the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • Transit Providers • Essential Air Services



Action Item	Owner (i.e., who's responsible)
4. Prioritize the most utilized trails throughout the region and create services from prioritized list.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • U.S. Forest Service • Trail Groups
5. Contact urban transit providers to create connectivity routes with local transit providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • MPOs • Transit Providers • NMDOT
Goal 5: Respect New Mexico's Culture, History, Environment, and Quality of Place	
1. Identify regional needs based on quality of place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • SWNMCOG • Local Government entities • NMDOT
2. Encourage for all unincorporated and incorporated areas to take advantage of Frontier and MainStreet initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • SWNMCOG • Local Government entities
3. Encourage residential, commercial, and transportation means to use alternative fuel use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SWRTPO • SWNMCOG • MainStreet • Local Government entities



RTPO Involvement in STIP Development

Role of the RTPO on developing a regional TIP working with districts and others (process). The Southwest RTPO plays an active role in assisting local governments with their community needs. The RTPO assists with meeting transportation needs by seeking funding or programs that will assist the local governments in meeting their goals. This year and the years thereafter, the RTPO ensures that all transportation projects are listed in the Regional Transportation Improvement Program Recommendations (RTIPR).

The Southwest RTPO has established a continuous, annual prioritization process for review, rating and ranking of proposed transportation projects for the RTIPR. Although anyone can suggest a new project throughout the year, the SWRTPO is required to publicize an Open Call for projects every year. As part of its commitment to public participation, the SWRTPO invites citizens, stakeholders, and local governments to make project recommendations to be considered for inclusion.

The next step is filling out the Project Feasibility Form (PFF). Once this form is complete, it is submitted to the RTPO and after an initial check by RTPO staff they will arrange a meeting with the NMDOT District Staff to determine if the project is feasible. If determined feasible, a submission of a Project Identification Form (PIF) is next. This is submitted to the RTPO staff and to the RTPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for project prioritization to be included in the RTIPR.

Proposing projects and the prioritization process. The local governments engage in the process through the RTPO TAC Committee meetings that take place as needed. There is participation in updating the RTIPR and prioritizing projects as well as proposing new projects.

Regional Working Group. Keeping the regional working group (RWG) intact is a valuable idea because they provide a good source of feedback. Engaging them gives them an opportunity to provide input on various planning documents and projects. Including these stakeholders brings different ideas to the table.

Process for Plan Amendments. The process to amend the plan is the change first goes through the RTPO TAC Committee for approval then the COG Board for final approval. In order for a plan to be amended, it must be reviewed by the two committees.



Appendix: Public Involvement Process



Overview of Public Outreach Process

Regional Working Groups (RWG) were organized individually by each RTPO with NMDOT assistance. Each RWG was comprised of NMDOT Divisions, NMDOT Districts and other public agencies, private organizations, and the RTPO itself. These working groups met at each Phase of the NMTP development and provided key input into the plan.

In Phase I, the Southwest RWG provided input on the vision and goals for 2040, and identified the key challenges and opportunities to achieve that vision as well as identifying the data and information needed to address these questions.

In Phase II, the RWG provided input on the strategies, actions, investments, policies and performance standards to address regional transportation needs.

During Phase III, the group was asked to evaluate three distinct plan alternatives on their ability to meet the NMTP goals and objectives. The RWG provided input on the plan framework, investment priorities, management practices, performance standards, and other policies included in these alternatives which helped to define the NMTP strategies for achieving the goals as defined for the 2040 plan horizon.

The Southwest RTP was developed in coordination with the NMTP project team, RTPO planners, and NMDOT liaisons. The Southwest RTPO Committee internally reviewed the Southwest RTP.

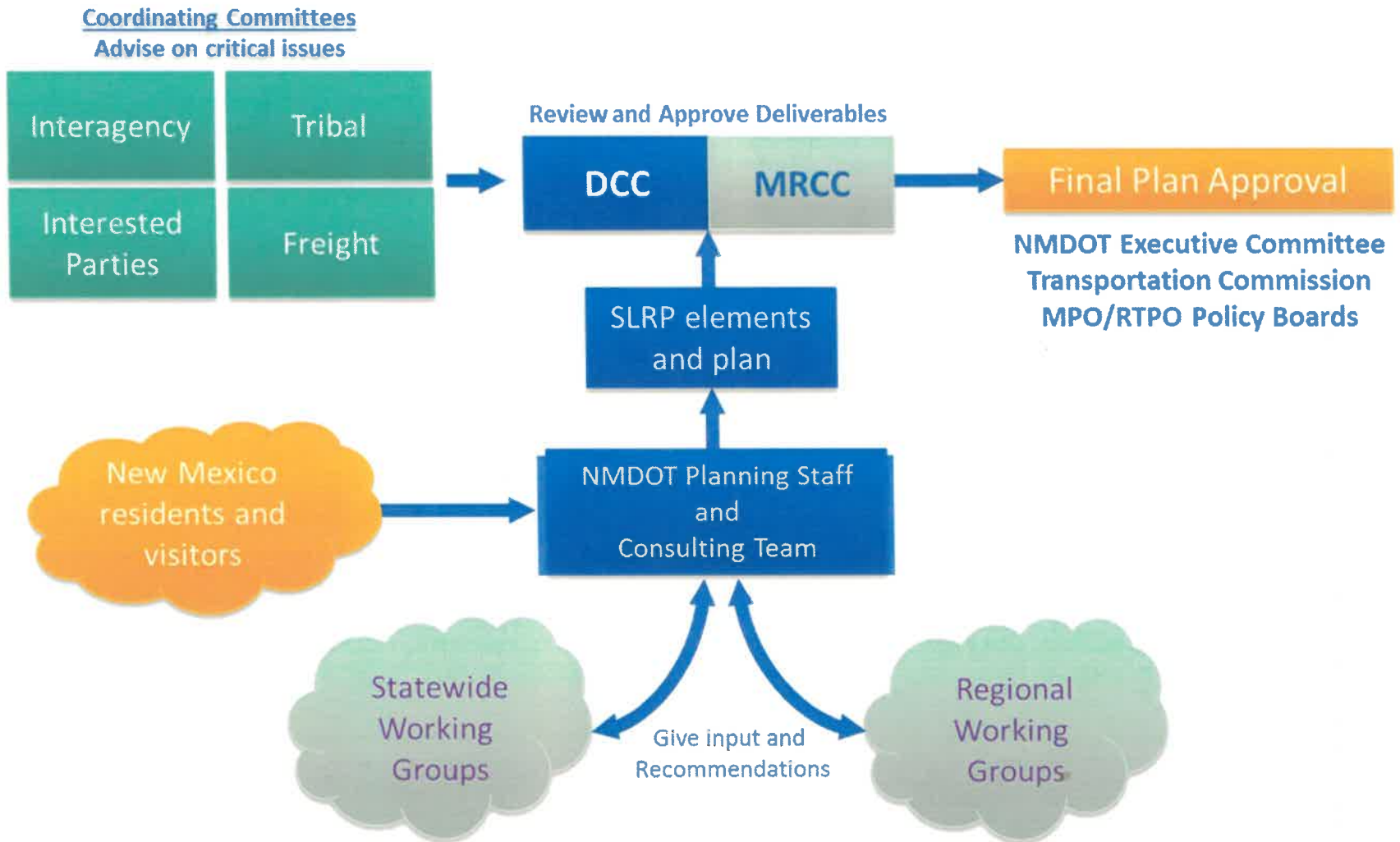
RTPOs were actively involved in the plan approval and implementation phase, Phase IV, of the process by facilitating draft presentations of the RTP, gathering internal stakeholder input, and finalizing the draft plan for approval by the New Mexico State Transportation Commission.

Throughout the plan phases, RTPO planners worked to engage the public through a variety of methods including information stations at public events such as health fairs, conference presentations, and public surveys. The Southwest RTPO participated in a total of four events including two public meetings, which engaged about 40 people and two conferences, which engaged hundreds of conference participants.

The overall organization of the stakeholder involvement process is diagramed below.



NMTP Stakeholder Process





Phase I: Existing Conditions

Phase I of the NMTP process asked the question, “Where are we now?” The objective of the meeting was to gather information on regional conditions, trends, issues and opportunities and solicit input on the statewide plan goals and objectives.

The Southwest RWG first met on February 25, 2014, at the Southwest NM Council of Governments, in Silver City. A total of 18 members participated including representatives from NMDOT, Southwest RTP, Southwest NM Council of Governments, New Mexico Department of Health, New Mexico State Police, MainStreets, Grant and Luna Counties, Mesilla Valley MPO, Bicycling Advocate CC, Gila National Forest, Freeport McMoran, and Corre Caminos. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Introduce the consulting team and the Regional Working Group-1 (RWG-1) members
- Review objectives of the plan, schedule, and NMTP development process
- Review working group charter and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) action planning outline
- Discuss 2040 vision, key issues, challenges, and needs to be addressed throughout the planning process
- Identify the data and existing plans available to support RTP/NMTP development

During the working session, participants were asked to discuss and identify the following:

- What are the vision and goals for 2040?
- What are the challenges and opportunities to achieve that vision?
- What data and information do we need to answer these questions?

Below are the key discussion points made in the breakout working groups and plenary discussions.





Synthesis of 2040 Vision Discussion

- Connectivity- connecting “us” to the rest of the state as well as connectivity among all modes of transportation and for all age groups.
- Increase number of lanes on major highways to accommodate increase in economic development (e.g., ports of entry).
- Rural roads are not designed for bike or pedestrian use- this is an issue when considering connectivity improvements.
- Focus on regional transit- this can substitute increasing transportation costs.

Synthesis of Key Challenges Discussion

- Sustainable funding.
- Funding sources have not caught up to projects (planning process too expensive, then there is not funding for construction).
- Economic status of the community has a big impact on getting funding (without influx of funding, communities are destined to remain lower socioeconomic status- a viscous cycle unless something changes to help smaller communities in need).
- One-size-fits-all approach to transportation projects does not work for rural communities.
- Concentrate on rural infrastructure to impact community economic status.
- Rural Communities are important.
- Reconnect rural communities with the north-south state corridor.
- Consider the Colonias Infrastructure Fund- the flexibility of this funding increases the work you can do and leverages more funds.

Phase II: Strategic Direction

Phase II of the NMTP process asked the question, “Where do we want to go?” The objective of the meeting was to discuss the scenario analysis framework and to solicit input on the strategies, actions, investments, policies and performance standards to address regional transportation needs.

The Southwest RWG met on June 17, 2014, at the Grant County Business and Conference Center, in Silver City. A total of 15 members participated including representatives from NMDOT, Southwest RTPO, Southwest NM Council of Governments, MainStreets, Grant County, Mesilla Valley MPO, Bicycling Advocate CC, Gila National Forest, Elephant Butte Chamber of Commerce, Deming-Luna County Chamber of Commerce, Sierra County Tourism Board, Town of Silver City, Hidalgo Medical Services, Freeport McMoran, and Corre Caminos. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide overview of plan activities completed since the Phase I meeting
- Present and solicit reactions to the scenario analysis framework
- Brainstorm strategies, actions, investments, policies, and performance standards to address regional transportation needs for consideration in the NMTP alternatives analysis

In a large plenary discussion session, participants were asked to discuss the following:

- What key themes needing emphasis and/or themes were missing from the Phase I RWG summary?
- What key issues, factors, or trends will need to be addressed by NMDOT in the next 10 to 25 years?

Participants were then asked to break into small groups to brainstorm policies, programs, and projects to address regional transportation needs at three geographic scales: inter-regional, inter-community, and within community.





Synthesis of Common Themes

- System for prioritizing projects should involve the community and include funding mechanisms. Re-structure financing of transportation projects, emphasize local projects.
- Expand Information Technology Systems (ITS) throughout the state to provide roadway conditions, services, location of services, conditions/detours up ahead, a web address for further information, especially at border crossings.
- Many statewide strategies work at the regional level and could be implemented differently at the local level to allow for flexibility and community involvement.
- Utilize and maximize the Ports of Entry in the region (i.e., Columbus and Antelope Wells).
- Improve signage / wayfinding as well as transit options in the region, especially for Spaceport.
- Improve connections with industrial parks and highway/rail freight transportation.
- Link transportation plans to local land use plans and codes.
- Stakeholder-based processes and good public involvement allow for better adoption and implementation of local plans and projects.





Phase III: Resource Allocation

Phase III of the NMTP process asked the question, “How are we going to get there?” The objective of the Phase III meeting was to introduce the draft plan alternatives and solicit input on the plan framework, investment priorities, management practices, performance standards, and other policies included in these alternatives. The Southwest TWG met on July 7, 2015, at the Town of Silver City Annex Hall at 1203 N. Hudson St. in Silver City. A total of fourteen members participated including representatives from NMDOT, SW RTPO planners, Silver City Mainstreet, some municipalities, and some residents of Silver City. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide a summary of work to date
- Provide an overview of the Plan Alternatives
- Perform the Alternatives Rating Exercise
- Plenary discussion to obtain feedback on the pros and cons of each Plan Alternative



A series of three Plan Alternatives were presented to the members. Alternatives A and B assumed that there would be no change from NMDOT’s current budget trajectory (i.e., steadily diminishing revenue in inflation-adjusted terms), while Alternative C assumed that one or more new sources of revenue might become available at some point in the future.



Table 10: Alternative Scenarios Comparison

Alternative A Trend Based on Current Practices	Alternative B Management + Focused Investment	Alternative C Aspirational Vision + New Revenues
Least responsive to goals – reactive, not proactive	More proactive and responsive to goals than Alt A, but less than Alt C	Most responsive to goals – a proactive approach
Status quo – assumes current investment and management practices are the best for future challenges.	Invests NMDOT’s funds more strategically and emphasizes strong policies (e.g., life-cycle costing) to support sustainable management of assets.	Additional funds and expanded priorities create opportunities to address long-term needs in a strategic fashion.
Recognizes: (a) good things that NMDOT is already doing (e.g., improving safety) and (b) change can be disruptive.	Prioritization framework may favor urban areas and high volume corridors	Implementation depends on new revenue. Focus on revenue may draw attention away from the need to be more cost-effective.



Phase IV: Plan Approval and Implementation

RTPOs were actively involved in the plan approval and implementation phase by presenting the draft RTP to the RWG, the MRMPO TCC and MRMPO TRB, as well as the MRCC, then gathering internal stakeholder input to revise and finalize the plan for approval by the New Mexico State Transportation Commission. RTPO and RWG members also vetted the NMTP at the MPO/RPO Coordinating Committee Meeting.

The MPO/RPO Coordinating Committee meeting was held on April 14, 2015, at the Mid-Region Council of Governments Boardroom at 809 Copper Avenue NW, in Albuquerque. A total of 28 members participated including representatives from NMDOT. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Provide an overview of the “Coordinating Committee Review Draft” of the New Mexico Transportation Plan (NMTP)
- Identify areas of strong alignment between state and regional/metropolitan plans
- Discuss region-specific actions and implementation activities

Synthesis of Discussion

The following is an overview of the plenary discussion.

Table 1: Mid-Region MPO, Santa Fe MPO

- Coordination with NMDOT liaison, RTPO and MPO to make sure this plan happens.
- NMDOT must approach solutions from “transportation” perspective, not the Highway Department focus.
- Aspects of Complete Streets should be included throughout, not just under one goal/strategy.

Table 2: Northern Pueblos RTPO, Mid-Region RTPO, Northwest RTPO, Farmington MPO

- When you do not implement scenario planning into modeling, it burdens the planning process. Travel-demand, smaller capacity, and financial modeling should be built into MPO plan.
- Continue interagency coordination, expanding beyond transportation (e.g., groups focused on economic vitality).

Table 3: Southeast RTPO, Northeast RTPO

- Association and support for RTPOs is missing in the plan; acknowledge them and use them as partners (“we are NMDOT’s arm”). RTPO role could be more explicit.
- Work with local entities to do asset management, valuation of assets and more funding for preservation and maintenance.

Southwest Regional Transportation Plan



Table 4: South Central RTPO, Southwest RTPO

- Partnerships, training and education, communication, asset management
- Not mentioned in the plan is collaboration with Environmental Protection Agency, recreation and tourism collaboration with Economic Development Department, and no mention of the Councils of Government (they are designated by the Federal Government as economic development districts).

Takeaways for your own MTP or RTP

- Do local asset management
- Mid-Region has begun implementation of asset management
- NMTP focus on travel demand and O & M instead of capacity is a benefit to the MPOs. It substantiates the preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure. Coming from the NMDOT gives it more weight.
- Can the actions be accomplished with the existing budget? Is additional budget needed or allocated?
- Do performance measures need to be evaluated every year? From the MPO perspective, it would not be recommended. Not much changes within the annual time frame.
- Think more about funding coordination and transparency. Who is at the table for this?



Southwest Regional Working Group Review

The Southwest RWG met on May 19, 2015 at the Silver City Town Annex in Silver City. A total of 17 members participated including representatives from NMDOT, Southwest RTPO, and municipalities in the Southwest region. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Present the draft RTP
- Solicit feedback
- Release the plan for formal public comment period

The Southwest RTPO Committee along with the RWG met on July 7, 2015 to solicit feedback and re-release the plan for the 30 day public comment period. The plan will then be brought before the SWNMCOG board on August 20, 2015 for approval.

RTPO Public Outreach

The NMTP public participation framework included opportunities for various public outreach methods across the state including surveys, interviews, public events and meetings as well as information stations. Throughout the plan phases, RTPO planners worked to engage the public through a variety of methods. The Southwest RTPO outreach efforts included:

- New Mexico Municipal League Conference
- New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference
- Two Public Meetings held in Silver City

Summarize: The Southwest RTPO participated in a total of two events that engaged hundreds of people from throughout New Mexico and within the Southwest RTPO planning area.