

The New Mexico 2040 Plan

Northeast Regional Transportation Plan





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Introduction

What is a Regional Transportation Plan?

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 (NMDOT) federally-required long range transportation plan.

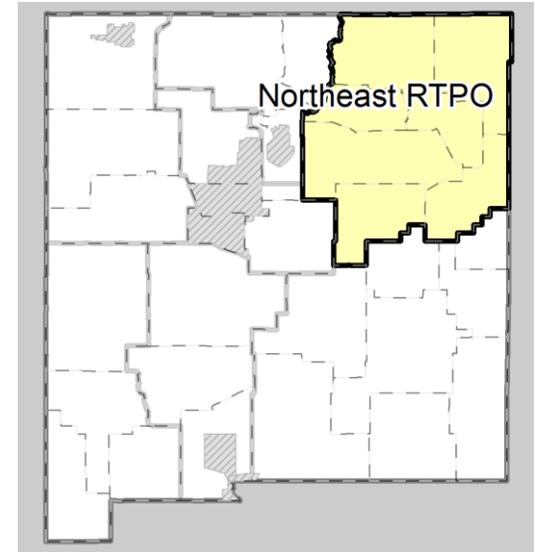
The purpose of the RTP is to apply the statewide plan's Vision, Goals, Objectives and Strategies to the regional level, as defined by local government entities, community organizations and associations, regional transportation partners, as well as the general public. Under federal law, long range transportation 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. This RTP provides a framework for thinking about the region's transportation system over the same period, from 2016 to 2040.

About the Northeast RTPO

The Northeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (NERTPO) is one of the seven regional transportation planning organizations that collaborate with local entities and NMDOT. NERTPO includes Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, Quay, San Miguel and Union counties and the communities within these counties. The Northeast RTP is reflective of multimodal needs as defined by these participating entities.

NERTPO functions as an advisory body and planning forum for the NMDOT. The New Mexico Councils of Government (COGs) were contracted in 2005 to staff the seven RTPOs to assist regions outside of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundaries. Two COGs support NERTPO, with North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD) supporting Colfax, Mora and San Miguel counties, and Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG) supporting Union, Harding Quay and Guadalupe counties, in addition to De Baca, Curry and Roosevelt counties in the Southeast region of the state.

The NERTPO is comprised of a Joint Technical and Policy Committee made up of members that represent their local county or municipality. Members are elected officials or those individuals appointed by their local government, usually municipal or county administrators or public works employees who are authorized to make decisions on behalf of the entity they represent. Agencies other than municipalities, county governments, land grant or tribal governments are also included in the planning process at varying





levels. NERTPO partners with District 4, one of the six NMDOT Districts that manages all transportation activities including maintenance and construction of the highways in their specific regions of New Mexico. The District 4 boundary mirrors the NERTPO's seven county area, covering Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, Quay, San Miguel and Union counties.

The terrain and weather vary considerably in the northeast region. The elevation ranges from just above 4,000 feet in the plains to mountain passes at approximately 9,000 feet and mountain peaks at about 11,000 feet. The area is framed by the front range of the Rocky Mountains to the west, Mesa and Hill Country in between and the Great Plains to the east and southeast. In the summer it is typical to have strong thunderstorms in the afternoon with localized flooding. In an average winter, travelers can experience snowy conditions on our roadways anywhere from late September to early May.

Title VI Information

The North Central New Mexico Economic Development District and Eastern Plains Council of Governments both fully comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. Additional Title VI information and forms for the NCNEMEDD-NERTPO region (Colfax, Mora and San Miguel counties and all contained communities) can be obtained by contacting NCNEMEDD's Title Coordinator, Tim Armer at phone number 1 (866) 699-4927, fax number 1 (877) 293-3710, by mail at 3900 Paseo de Sol Santa Fe, New Mexico 87507, or visit www.ncnmedd.com for additional information. Additional Title VI information and forms for the EPCOG region (Union, Harding Quay and Guadalupe counties and all contained communities) can be obtained by contacting EPCOG's Title Coordinator, Sandy Chancey at (575)-762-7714, by fax at (575) 762-7715, by email at schancey@epcog.org, mail at 418 Main, Clovis, NM 8801, or visit www.epcog.org/Transportation.html for more information.



Existing and Future Conditions



Demographics

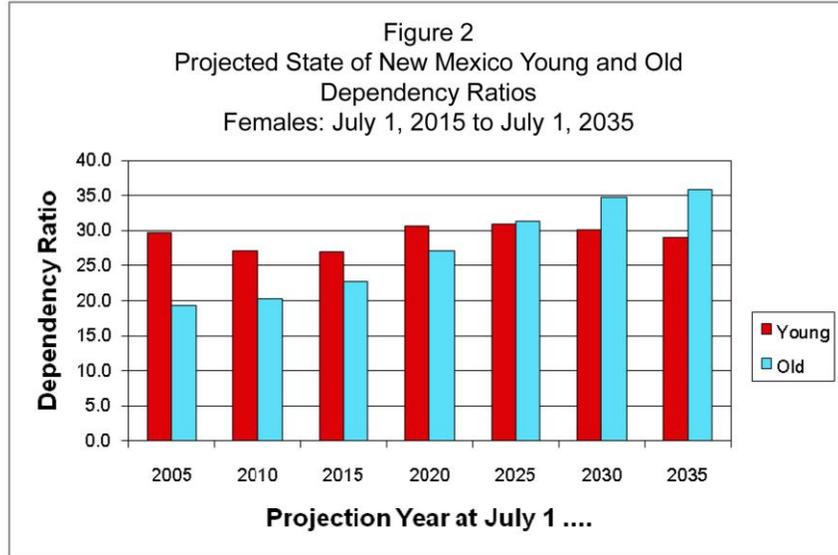
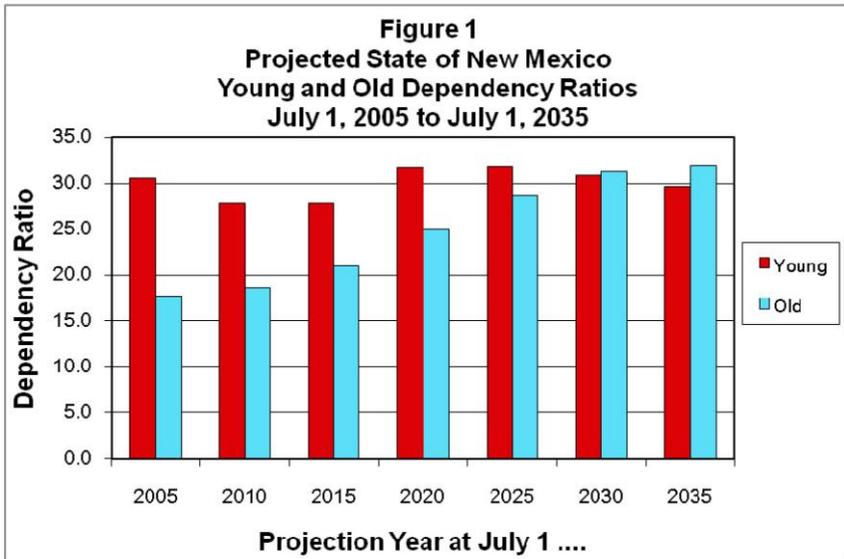
Since the previous Northeast Regional Transportation Plan was completed in 2007, the region's population has declined, and this trend is likely to continue as more people move from rural areas into metropolitan centers. Additionally, as a portion of the population is aging in place, this too will change the demands of the transportation system in the northeast. This region of the state is largely rural and sparsely populated, and the economy is based largely on agriculture, forestry, tourism such as skiing, hunting and fishing, as well as construction, retail trade and educational, health and social services.

The Northeast RTPO consists of seven counties that cover 22,258 square miles. The total population in the region as of the 2010 Census was 66,996 and is projected to decline to 63,808 by the year 2040, a 4.8 percent rate of decline. The Northeast population is approximately 3.3 percent of the state population and only 2.3 percent of the state population by the year 2040. The percent of the population over 60 in 2010 is 32.2 percent in comparison to statewide at 19.1 percent, with a national average of 18.5 percent. The Northeast percent of obese in 2010 was 24 percent in comparison to statewide 24 percent, with a national average of 27 percent.

Age Distribution (focus on over 65)

The baby-boomer generation, those born between the years 1946 and 1964, is significantly changing the age distribution across the nation as well as the state. As this generation grows older and more people in that age group reach retirement age, the types and amounts of services needed to serve this growing population will change accordingly, as will their transportation needs and driving patterns. In 2010, the first generation of these baby-boomers turned 65 years old, which started a population shift in the state that will continue for the next two decades. As illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, the old dependency ratio (the number of persons 65 years old and over per 100 of the population aged 16 to 64 years old) continues to increase over the next 30 years.

In New Mexico, the female life expectancy at birth in 2005 (82.1 years) was estimated to be higher than male life expectancy (76.0 years) by almost six years, on average. This differential in average life expectancy between males and females is expected to persist over the next 30 years. By 2035, the average male life expectancy will increase to 79.0 years. The average female life expectancy will increase to 85.1 years (BBER). As such, the female old dependency ratio will exceed the young dependency ratio (the number of people younger than 16 years old per 100 of the population 16 to 64 years old) by the year 2025 (Figure 2), while the overall old dependency ratio will overtake the young dependency ratio by the year 2030 (Figure 1).



The “graying” of the state population also generates new areas of conflict, especially because different racial and ethnic groups are aging at different rates. The Anglo population will predominate among the elderly whereas the minority population will predominate among the young and in the labor force. Moreover, the needs of an aging population are quite different from the needs of a young population, which could represent another set of opposing goals when planning for future transportation needs and desires.



Industries and Economy

The economy of the northeast region can be compared to a three-legged stool, with the three legs being government, tourism, and agriculture. Government in the region includes state hospitals and educational institutions, local governments, and various agencies supported by government. The jobs created are diverse, with moderate to median incomes, good benefits, and fairly good stability. Tourism and agriculture jobs, by contrast, are often entry level positions, with lower incomes, few benefits, and are often seasonal in nature. Data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis indicates that over 50 percent of all jobs in the Northeast region are directly related to these three sectors.

Government jobs in the region totaled 8,222 in 2010 based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (26 percent of all jobs). In addition, the region has a larger-than-expected number of local government units, and therefore a larger proportion of elected officials and employees. For example, the region has 3 percent of the state's population, but seven of its thirty-three counties (21 percent) and 21 of its 102 municipalities (20 percent). The pattern is similar for specialized governments such as public school districts and public housing authorities. The last decade has seen the rise of indirect government employment with the construction of private correctional facilities in Guadalupe and Union counties.

The recent economic recession has significantly hindered the growth of the region's tourism economy. Tourism industry jobs are not as easy to identify, but it is estimated that 5,000-6,000 of the jobs in the lodging, entertainment, and retail trade sector are also directly related to tourism. Agriculture in the region is historically focused on the raising of beef cattle and feed for cattle. Farm jobs make up over 10 percent of all jobs, employing over 3,000 persons.

Global climate change impacts on precipitation provides an uncertain future as regional temperatures could increase, which could in turn lead to more severe fires and flooding. Facilities like ski resorts and golf courses, as well as open range ranching and growing of feed could be directly impacted by reduced water availability, while fires and floods of increased intensity have the potential for widespread disruption of access and services in the region.

Summary of Economic Challenges

In a rural region like the northeast, where government jobs represent a significant portion of the employment, and both tourism and agriculture are dependent on favorable weather, expanding the scope of the economy would ensure a more sustainable economic future for the region. Additionally, increasing the quality of the jobs in the region with good-paying, permanent positions with benefits instead of seasonal jobs to support peak activities, would bolster the region and help retain young people and draw new residents to the area. Demand for such a workforce would be supported by a robust education system, to provide young people the skills and qualifications necessary to fulfill their potential in such an economy.



This region is home to many beautiful landscapes, full of history and opportunities to explore. There are the basic ingredients to keep and support the current population and draw more people, but there is still more to be done to make the communities in this region more attractive.

Economic Development Goals

The economic development challenges described above generated the following five economic development goals for the region for the next twenty years:

1. Diversify the economy
2. Develop a high-quality workforce
3. Increase the number of higher-paying jobs
4. Retain and attract youth and families
5. Make rural communities vibrant

Economic Development Building Blocks

Strategic investments in four key areas in which the public sector has significant control or influence are needed before economic development efforts can be truly effective:

1. Infrastructure - Infrastructure is a key factor, particularly in water and broadband facilities.
2. Human Capital - The region's low skill levels, relatively low unemployment rate and poor educational performance make improving the current and future workforce an imperative.
3. Public Policy - Smarter public policies are an essential ingredient to accomplish the identified goals.
4. Economic Development Services - There is a lot of interest by local governments for a regional approach due to restricted revenues in a largely-rural region are driving the need for more consolidated economic development services (NEEDO-NM).

Target Industry Clusters

The planning process identified three economic clusters as targets for future emphasis that are consistent with the goals and are that are emerging rather than existing businesses. The target industry clusters identified are:

1. Tourism/Recreation
2. Renewable Energy/Green Industry
3. Value-Added Agriculture

Land Ownership and Regional Assessment

Land ownership in the NERTPO Region is characterized by large landowners. East of the mountains, most land is privately held in very large ranch holdings. In the mountains, much of the land is in Federal government ownership, under management of the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and other agencies. The table below shows for each county how much of the land area is owned privately and by the federal and state governments.

County	Total Area In Square Miles	Land Area Ownership (Percent)		
		Private	State	Federal
Colfax	3,757	88%	11%	1%
Guadalupe	3,030	84%	8%	8%
Harding	2,125	70%	25%	5%
Mora	1,931	85%	7%	9%
Quay	2,874	86%	13%	1%
San Miguel	4,717	81%	6%	13%
Union	3,824	80%	18%	2%
NERTPO Region Total	22,258	82%	12%	6%

Strengths

The NERTPO region has 22,258 square miles of land - a land area larger than nine of the States - and is about 19 percent of the land area of New Mexico. The topography has major variations from the western end of the Great Plains on the eastern edge of the region, through the southern end of the Rocky Mountains forming the west side of the region. The land has been a significant asset to the development of the region including:

- The mining of minerals in the mountains,
- Vast grazing resources for cattle and sheep on the prairie and in the valleys,
- Lumbering the timber resources in the mountains, and
- Unique historic sites and scenic vistas to draw tourists.



In addition, the location of the land has served transportation corridors from the historic Santa Fe Trail, through the mainline of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, to Interstates 40 and 25.

Weaknesses

The large land area creates several weaknesses for the NERTPO region. The travel distances within the region are significant: it is nearly a four-hour drive from the Eagle Nest in the northwest corner to Tucumcari near the southeast corner and over three hours from Clayton in the northeast corner to Pecos in the southwest corner. Several communities are located 1.5 to two hours from their county seat, where most rural business is conducted. While the region has served as part of two historic travel corridors (a couple alignments of the Santa Fe trail and Route 66 run through the region), it is not a destination for goods and services, but does service tourism. The lack of proximity to large urban concentrations with growing power needs has also limited its viability for the development of its abundant renewable energy resources. However, there is a commonality of interest in the region which is unusual considering the large land area.

Opportunities

New opportunities are evolving on the vast, sparsely-developed land areas in the region. The region has supported and continues to support a number of extractive industries. Coal deposits in the Raton Coal Field were actively mined up into the 1990s, but have since ceased active mining. There is currently carbon dioxide extraction in Union and Harding Counties, and elsewhere energy is still a major opportunity with oil and natural gas being produced or located in the northwest and northeast areas of the region. Renewable energy is an increasing activity that ranges from existing photovoltaic and planned wind energy facilities on the plains area, to the proposed use of the timber resources for biomass energy development.

Land ownership patterns provide a significant opportunity. Large private land holdings have proven valuable, as large land holdings have provided land for planned growth and large ranches near Raton have been converted to employment centers, such as at the Philmont Scout Ranch and the National Rifle Association's Wittington Center.

Open landscapes and the sunny, arid climate have combined to enhance the appeal to tourists. With skiing, cycling, hiking, and other outdoor activities on the increase nationally, the region has land to fulfill most outdoor recreation needs.

Threats

Extraction of the region's oil and natural gas resources may require the use of the hydraulic fracturing or "fracking", which is a controversial extraction process. In New Mexico there are concerns that fracking could cause geologic instability and contamination of the region's limited water resources. Mora County was the first county in the U.S. to ban fracking due to water safety concerns in 2013, but that ban was overturned in 2015. Elsewhere in the region, CO² extraction requires heavy trucks that travel on a number of smaller local roads, which pose potential conflicts with local traffic.



Focusing specifically on the available modes of transportation, the future of Amtrak’s Southwest Chief is uncertain. If this line were to go away, this would negatively impact a number of the rural counties and communities that rely on the tourism and property taxes brought to the region by Amtrak. Philmont Scout Ranch alone relies heavily on the rail line to bring hundreds of scouts in every summer. Philmont is pursuing alternatives to Amtrak, but that could require bussing scouts in from as far away as Texas.



Tourism-Focused Transportation Programs

There are some transportation programs that have been initiated both at the state and federal levels that support tourism in New Mexico, specifically in the Northeast region of the state. The New Mexico MainStreet Program was funded by the New Mexico State Legislature in 1985 to assist local communities with commercial district revitalization. On the national level, the National Scenic Byways program was originally intended to foster economic development through furnishing the upfront capital costs associated with developing transportation related tourist amenities. The program was created by congress through the funding and authorization bill ISTEA (1991), and subsequent funding allocations were made through SAFETEA-LU (2005). However, MAP-21 (2012) effectively ended the program, but the designations remain in place today, and serve to draw tourists to scenic destinations and byways.

New Mexico MainStreets in the Northeast

- Clayton MainStreet
- MainStreet De Las Vegas
- Raton MainStreet
- Tucumcari MainStreet
- Harding County MainStreet

Scenic Byways in the Northeast

- Mesalands Scenic Byway - the flat tops and steep rock walls of mesas are a unique feature of central New Mexico.
- Route 66 National Scenic Byway - In New Mexico, Route 66 slices across the entire state — from border to border — and before a 1937 realignment, it made a loop to Santa Fe, then rejoined the main highway at Albuquerque.
- La Frontera Del Llano - spend the day traveling through the grasslands and plains of New Mexico and experience the natural "Wild West."
- Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway - this winding route takes you through some of the most beautiful areas of North Central New Mexico.



Transportation System Overview

Transportation System Overview

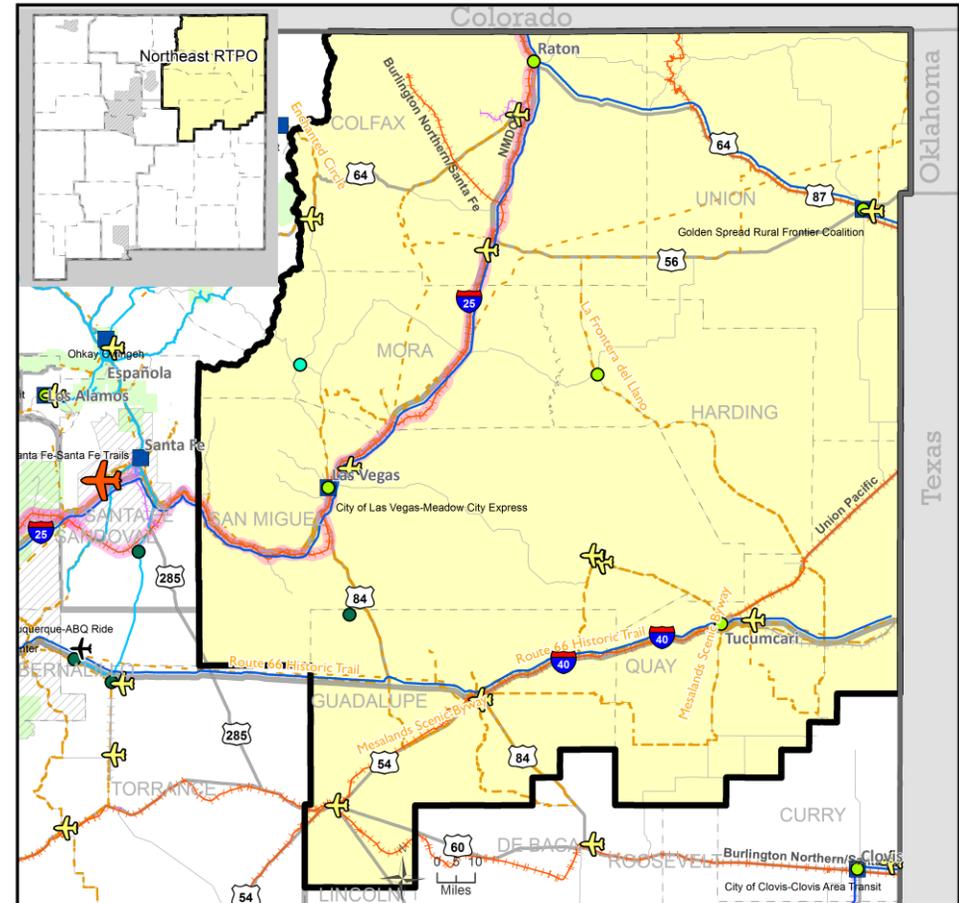
The Northeast region has approximately 700 miles of interstate and US highways. Commercial vehicle traffic travels through the region on I-25 and I-40, as well as US Routes 54, 56, 64/87 and 84. The east-west traffic volumes are significant along I-40 and US 54 which serve as corridors for shipments going to and from California and Texas. The region is a gateway to travelers coming from Colorado, Oklahoma, and Texas. The Northeast region is crossed by two interstate highways:

- I-25 runs from the Colorado border north of Raton south to Las Vegas and then east out of the region. I-25 closely parallels the old Santa Fe Trail from Wagon Mound on to Santa Fe;
- I-40 runs east/west, in many places overlying the alignment of Route 66, which was decommissioned in 1985. Route 66 passed through San Jon, Santa Rosa and Tucumcari, but when the interstate bypassed these towns, they lost valuable traffic.

The region's federal aid primary system consists of nine designations.

- US 54, which enters the southwestern part of Guadalupe, continues northwesterly to Santa Rosa, follows I-40 to Tucumcari, and then travels through Logan and Nara Visa before crossing into Texas;
- US 60 and US 285 cross US 54 at Vaughn, briefly traveling through the southwest corner of Guadalupe County before leaving District 4 for other parts of the state;
- US 84 enters Guadalupe County from Fort Sumner in District 2, then follows I-40 west of Santa Rosa for 16 miles, when it heads north to Romeroville. At Romeroville, it follows I-25 west into Santa Fe County and out of District 4;
- The northern part of the district is crossed by US 64 in Colfax County, US 64/87 from Raton to Clayton, and US 56/412 from Springer to Clayton. At Clayton, both alignments continue into adjoining states, with new designations of US 87 (southeast to Texline, Texas) and US 56/64/412 (northeast to Boise City, Oklahoma).

Northeast Transportation System Overview



NM MainStreet Communities

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

Intercity Transit Services

- Transit Services
- North Central Regional Transit District
- NMDOT Park and Ride Services
- Greyhound

Rail

- Class 1 Railroad
- Class 3/Short Line Railroad
- Abandoned Railroad
- Rail Runner, Amtrak Southwest Chief

Roads and Boundaries

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

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*.

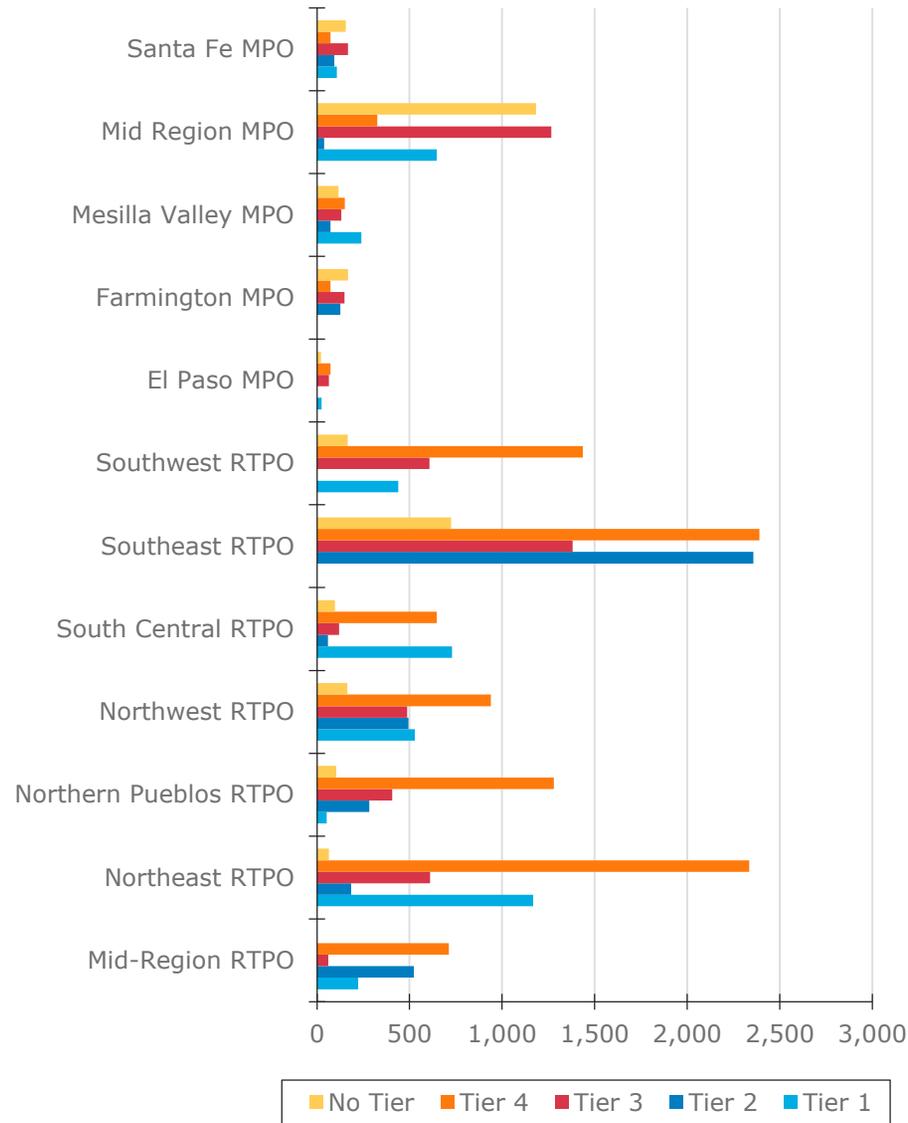
Tier	 Roads	 Freight	 Bus/Rail	 Pedestrian	 Bicycle	 Aviation
1	Interstates	Interstates Transcontinental Railroads	Demand for >35 scheduled trips per week in each direction	Urban highway routes ... with population concentrations	High demand on- system routes	Primary commercial airports (e.g., Sunport)
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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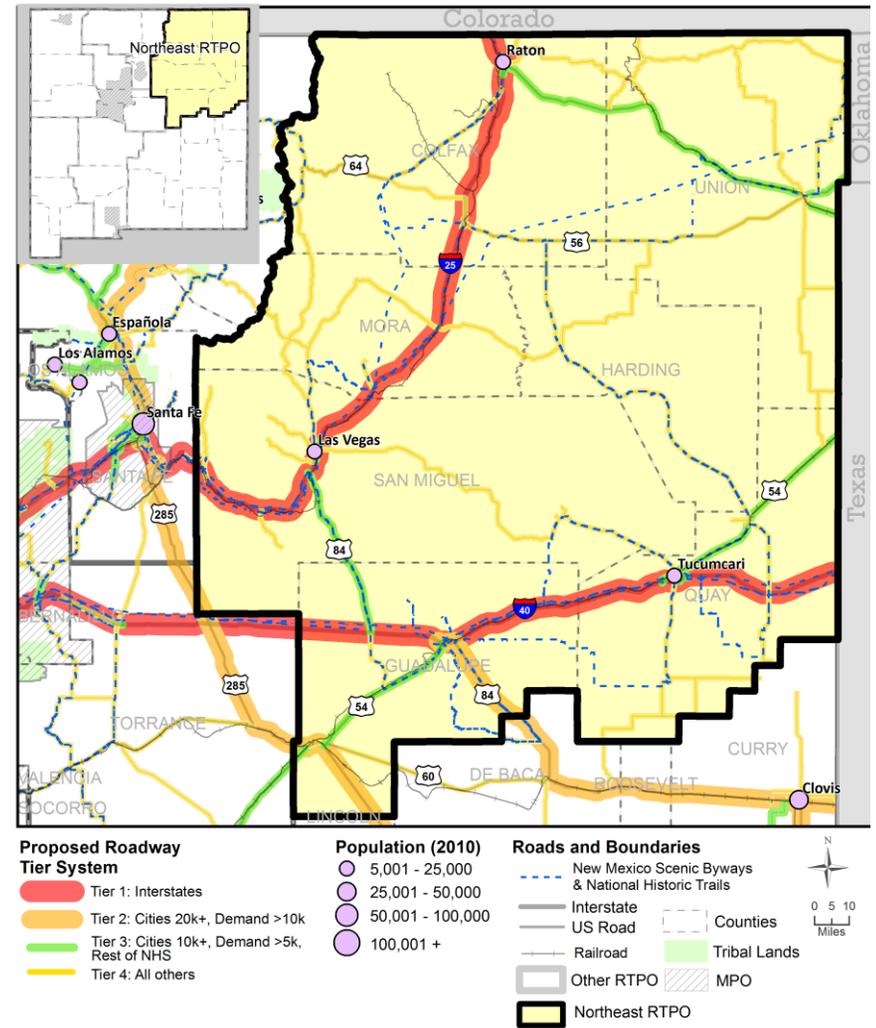
*Note: Bus/Rail, Pedestrian, and Bicycle tiers are preliminary and will be updated.



Total Lane Miles by Tier



Roadway System by Tier



Transit Service

Transit is an important option for decreasing the number of single occupant vehicles, and it enriches communities with affordable and reliable movement of people to and from work, business, vital services, and recreation.

There are two general types of transportation programs funded by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants which are administered by the NMDOT Transit and Rail Bureau:

- 5311 Rural Public Transit
- 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors, Individuals with Disability

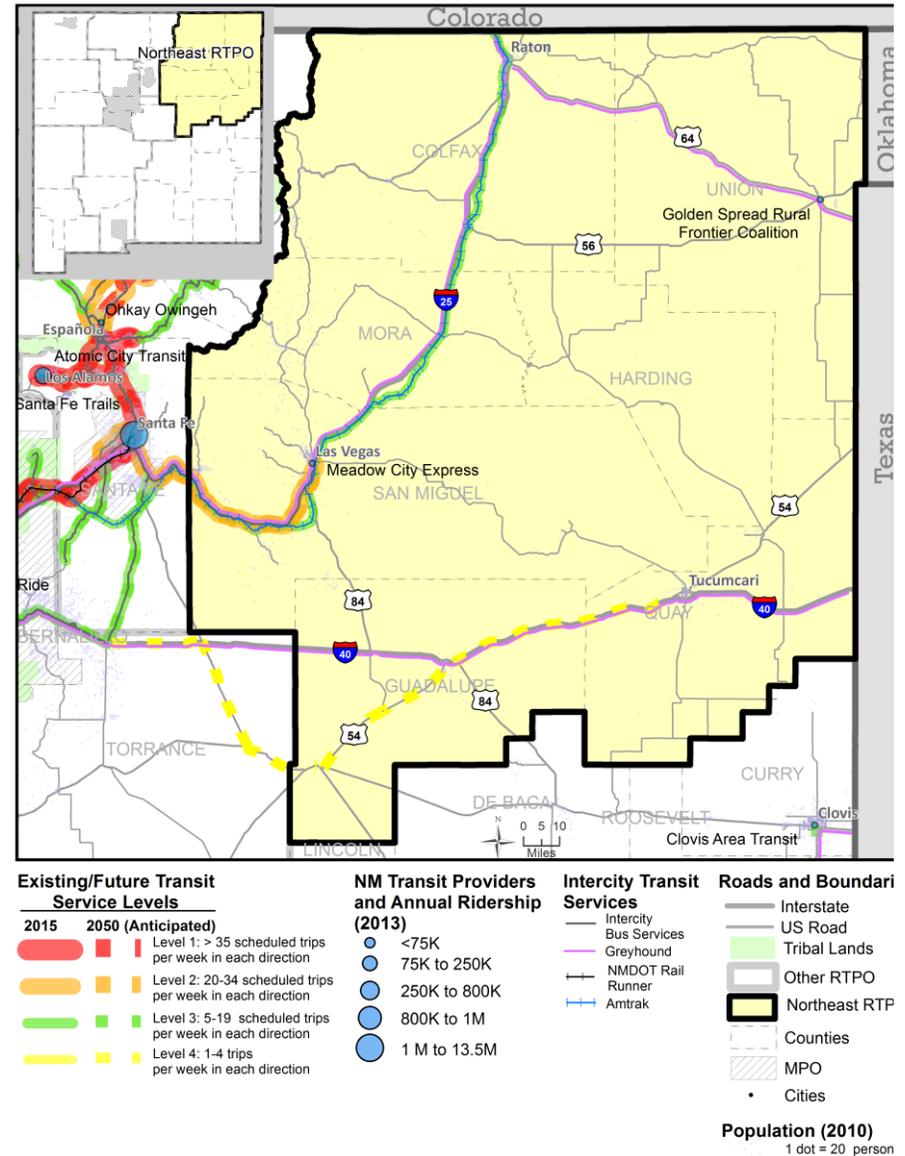
The grants are for both rural and urban communities. They are specifically for capital and are generally given to private non-profit organizations, although government entities may also apply.

At present, there are only two transit programs in the Northeast, both through Rural Public Transit: the City of Las Vegas/Meadow City Express and Union County/Golden Spread Rural Frontier Coalition. Additionally, there is a NMDOT Park and Ride Route from the City of Las Vegas to the City of Santa Fe. An additional route, Tucumcari to Albuquerque by way of Vaughn, would fill a significant service gap in the region, as indicated in the dotted yellow line on the Transit by Tier map.

The members of the NERTPO participated in the Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plans process.

Other transit options are similarly limited. Amtrak stops both in Raton and Las Vegas, and while Greyhound has three routes through the region, but only stops in Raton.

Transit by Tier



Freight

Freight activity in the Northeast region of the state is most active for through traffic, with most traffic running east-west along I-40, and I-25 serving as the second most active corridor, though freight moves throughout the region.

Rail freight left the region when BNSF stopped operating freight on the Raton Line, which it reserves as a backup route in case service on the Transcon east of Belen is interrupted. The only regular rail service on the Raton Line in New Mexico is Amtrak's *Southwest Chief*, which makes one trip per direction daily.

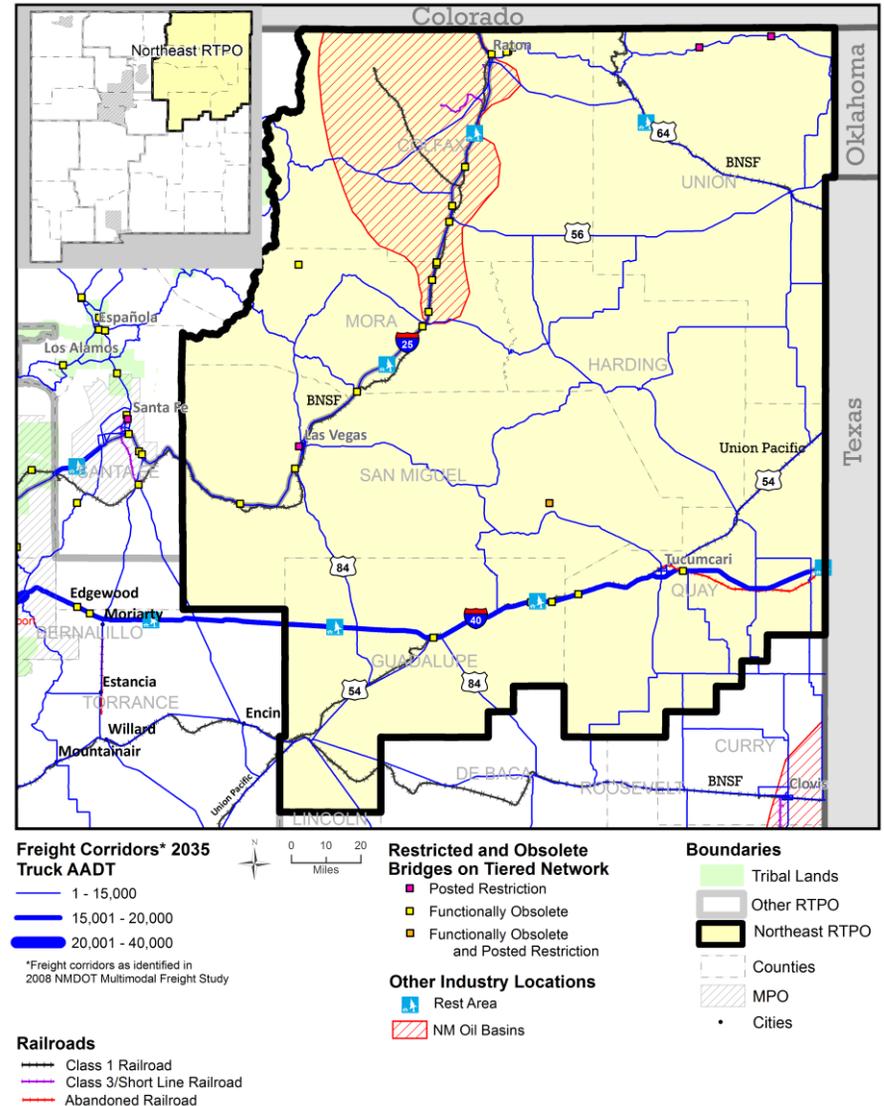
In terms of safety for truckers and the traveling public, there are ten public rest areas in the Northeast, but they are focused along the most active routes: three along I-40, two on I-25, and one on US-64. These facilities have between 10 and 20 designated truck parking spaces, except the Glenrio center near the Texas border, which has more than 50 truck spaces.

There are also a number of bridges with posted restrictions or that are functionally obsolete, though many are on frontage roads, not on the main interstate and highway routes as it might appear from the map.

The Raton Oil Basin, as identified in the red has marks in Colfax and Mora counties, has been inactive in terms of coal mining since the 1990s, but there has been interest in mining the coalbed methane to produce natural gas from this region.

The region also includes a section of the Ports to Plains network, which connects from the Gulf Coast in Texas up to Canada. The section in New Mexico is a portion of US-87 from Texline, Texas, that currently stops in Raton, despite Denver being included in the Ports to Plains corridor.

Freight





Key Challenges and Opportunities



Key Challenges and Opportunities

The NMTP/RTP planning processes has been a valuable opportunity to discuss regional transportation in northeastern New Mexico, through Regional Working Groups and other meetings. The key challenges and opportunities identified in those meetings were Freight, Public Transit, Recreation, Water, Roads and Safety. The top challenge agreed by all who participated was the lack of adequate funding through the traditional funding streams to support all the needs and desires from this region, let alone across the whole state.

Transportation

Strengths

Roads and Freight: The I-25 and I-40 corridors provide reliable, high speed connectivity to other areas for private motor vehicles, as well as serving as initial access routes to significant tourism opportunities throughout the Northeast region.

Weaknesses

Public Transit: Low-density development and communities separated by large open spaces are hurdles to operating public transit, and small communities generally lack funding to match federal funds to run transit services, even when run as demand-based services .

Opportunities

Public Transit: The major opportunity seems to be to make on-call public transportation services more efficient and accessible across the region. This might be able to be implemented by use of a transportation management system (TMS) similar to those implemented in a few other regions across the country.

Threats

Funding: The major threat to transportation is the long-term reduction in government spending that leads to continued deferred maintenance of existing highways, no new highway construction projects, and cutbacks in existing public transportation services.



Topic Area Discussions

Roads and Rail. Roads were a main topic for discussion, with a focus on maintaining what exists in a state of good repair, improving road quality to match the rest of the state. After that, look to increasing connectivity to improve regional access for tourism, and for pedestrians and bicyclists. Rail was also a topic of concern, both for retaining Amtrak’s *Southwest Chief* line down through Raton and Las Vegas to retain this valued service to support communities through tourism and property taxes, and bringing back freight rail service to bring opportunities for new businesses in the region.

Safety. Vehicle-wildlife collisions were a concern, as was near-misses where vehicles dodged wildlife and could collide with other vehicles. There was also the desire to see certain routes improved to increase safe travel, specifically citing Ocate Pass, which is the most direct route from Texas to the Northeast ski areas. This route is in poor shape and has very limited services, and people are directed to use this route by their GPS navigation devices.

Public Transit. RWG Stakeholders recognized that public transit is a valuable part of the transportation network in the region, but noted that small communities often cannot afford to pay matching funds for federally reimbursable programs to start programs, and sometimes have difficulty with continued funding after starting local programs. Funding options should be considered. A new regional transit district (RTD) was discussed as a possible solution, as stakeholders realized that the aging population will need more transportation assistance in the coming years.

Recreation. RWG Stakeholders indicated that they wanted to expand trails and tourism to improve the quality of life in our region; develop awareness, support and expand Scenic Byway attractions; and expand bicycle facilities for health and recreation.

Freight. While a section of the NMTP is devoted to freight, RWG Stakeholders indicated the importance of freight from the beginning. Stakeholders want to revitalize commercial rail to support new business development along the existing rail line and rail spurs. RWG Stakeholders also noted that package pickup and deliveries are not as frequent as elsewhere in the state, stating that some regions do not have the option of next-day deliveries. Stakeholders suggested development of regional freight hubs to address this issue, and designation of freight corridors to further support road freight in the region.

Identified Needs

- **Transportation Infrastructure**– significant deterioration of highways, bridges and rail lines. There is a population decline in the NERTPO, but miles of roadway and infrastructure must still be maintained. The need for new transportation funding sources is critical for the future of the NERTPO and New Mexico.
- **Public Transportation**– the need to improve and expand the public transportation is critical; an interconnected network of transit routes. Improve the existing Park-and-Ride services and Rail Runner expansion. Investment in more local public transit providers.



- **Population decline and increase of Economic Development-** the population and economy of northeast New Mexico are declining. Maintaining and improving the transportation system are essential to stemming the outward flow of people to activities and building on Tourism.
- **Roadways-** maintain, improve and build roadways to support movement of people and goods throughout the whole region to provide connectivity to towns, and support the local tourism and agriculture economies.
- **Public Transit-** transit is very much needed in the rural community, along with the need for expansion of transit system boundaries. Currently transit, which is not widely available in the region, is a demand response and has limited access and connectivity to public transit after 5 p.m.
- **Safety-** focus continuously on making appropriate safety improvements for all roadways and transportation systems, reducing injuries and fatalities, and prevent vehicle-wildlife collisions.
- **Recreation-** improve the region’s recreational opportunities by adding, improving and expanding trail systems, pedestrian, bicyclist and equestrian facilities.
- **Financing-** establishing funding for transportation systems, and local match for roadways, would help local entities secure more projects in their communities.



Regional 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 (RTPOs) and five Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) 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 A: Public Involvement Process 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 Northeast RTPO RWG included 42 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 (Appendix A). These members also participated in various Statewide Working Groups (SWGs) 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 the NMTP, but it also each of the seven RTPs. Since each region has its own unique set of challenges, each RWG enabled a closer look respectively at their region and how it should develop from now until the year 2040.

The Northeast RTPO's RWG identified the key regional issues, how to address and achieve goals and guide the investments for the future of the region.

Rail is important, even crucial, to northeast New Mexico. RWG members highlighted the need to retain Amtrak *Southwest Chief* and restore rail freight service, increase track speeds, and identify new funding sources for both freight and passenger revenue in New Mexico. There were discussions of exploring new types of rail freight shipments such as water, aggregates, and solid waste, and the suggestion to investigate the feasibility of regional rail operator taking over the freight service. The US-Mexico trade possibilities were also highlighted as a potential boon for the region. It was suggested that running the 2926 steam locomotive to Las Vegas would serve as a significant as a tourist attraction for the region.

Maintenance of existing infrastructure is important to RWG members. There is a need to address the deterioration of existing transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, rest areas, and rail lines. To do so, it is likely that new sources of revenue need to be investigated, and there needs to be more consistent funding for the local roadways, bridges, and ADA Compliance.

The RWG discussed the potential to develop the transportation system to support tourism, as tourism is especially important to the economy of the northeastern part of New Mexico. There was the desire to see the regional transportation system designed, built, maintained, and operated to support this industry. For example, existing assets such as Amtrak and the Scenic Byway network should be maintained and improved, and possibilities for new improvements and services include bicycle/pedestrian trails (e.g., Las



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Vegas to Hot Springs), a steam tourist train (using the 2926), and better roadway connections to Texas and Oklahoma. We need a larger investment for Scenic Byways and better signage in New Mexico.

RWG members stressed the desire to expand and improve public transportation, including the development an interconnected network of transit routes and improvement of the existing Park-and-Ride services between Santa Fe and Las Vegas. The region could also benefit from more coordination with public transportation, expanding services to include more senior providers, and more communities participating in public transit programs to address an aging population. The region also has many students, disabled and homeless veterans needing public transportation. There was the wish to explore the possibility of replacing the Park-and-Ride service with expanded Rail Runner Service. This would benefit the smaller rural communities.

Key Issues Raised in Northeast RTPO RWG

- Maintaining freight and passenger rail service is crucial for economic development.
- Preservation of existing infrastructure; roads, bridges and rail lines are deteriorating.
- Transportation of natural resources is key to economic development in the region (water, liquefied natural gas, propane).
- Declining population these counties.
- Water availability.
- Agency support needed to implement projects.

Summary of Goals, Priorities, and Strategies

Goal Area	Regional Working Group Priorities	Strategies
Operate with Transparency and Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to encourage public participation through transparent and accountable operations of the RTPO in public meetings and on the NERTPO webpage. Improve RTPO members' readiness to participate in projects through improved information delivery and access. Ensure records are kept in a transparent and accurate fashion. Improve data collection and utilization for better project development and applications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to encourage public input in NERTPO meetings Continue to post up-to-date information on the NERTPO web site, including information and updates for statewide and RTPO-specific topics. Work with the NMDOT to incorporate policies and procedures for transparency and historical information consistency and retention. Coordinate with the NMDOT to make sure that we provide important information and are accountable for implementation. Budget O & M issues are addressed for locals. Improve training for the RTPO Planners regarding data collection and use Collaborate with RTPO Planners and local agencies to provide advance notification and timely updates to the locals and public. Coordinate with the NMDOT for financial and reporting information for local projects.
Improve safety and public health for all system users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions. Better utilize Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and other funding sources to address safety concerns in the region. Be consistent with state-wide safety plans and goals. Improve data collection and utilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage participation with all the funding sources available. Utilize the information and strategies from the Safety Summit/Safety Plan to be consistent and address all safety issues in all modes of transportation. Encourage and facilitate participation with a RSA for local projects. Bring funding presentations to the NERTPO Meetings for educational and information purposes to address safety and health issues. Bring trainings for data collection and asset management. Conduct RSA's for better data collection. Adoption of safety policies related to Complete Streets, pedestrian design and access management.
Preserve and maintain the transportation system over the long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and replace aging infrastructure, based on improved asset management and data collection. Provide more detailed bridge and road inspections to local governments with funding sources. Maintain existing paved roadways, including local roads. Establish sustainable funding flows in scale with the growing needs of the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with maintenance of infrastructure to avoid further deterioration. Pursue and support a dedicated funding source for transportation at the state and local level for infrastructure. Identify new funding sources for state/local gov. transportation Infrastructure. Increase trainings to locals on data collection and asset management. Encourage routine maintenance for infrastructure to control the deterioration. Identify and implement best practices for routine maintenance, preventative maintenance, and rehabilitation of substandard infrastructure to ensure safety and efficient use of the local transportation system. Identify opportunities to better support local community needs by shifting responsibility for roadway maintenance and management to local agencies.



Enhance multimodal mobility, connectivity, and accessibility

- Support broader implementation of regionally appropriate Complete Streets policies.
- Support regional airports.
- Increase opportunities for access central transit system.
- Develop Regional Transit District.
- Encourage more active transportation.
- Preserve passenger rail corridor.
- Redevelop freight rail in the region.
- Acknowledge and plan in accordance with local “tiers” to compliment statewide tiers.
- Work with all stakeholders to incorporate multimodal design policies such as Complete Streets, consistent with the NMTP.
- Consider land use, economic development and tourism when planning for and designing new projects.
- Coordinate with NMDOT to include appropriate ITS solutions for integration into NMRoads and similar traveler information services.
- Develop an interconnected network of transit routes.
- Pursue development of Enchanted Circle RTD to serve communities in the region in a connected fashion.
- Improve the existing Park-and-Ride services between Santa Fe and Las Vegas.
- Explore the possibility of replacing the Park-and-Ride service with expanded Rail Runner Service.
- Increase coordination with public transportation providers.
- Increase the number of transit providers, targeting senior, student, disabled and homeless veteran populations.
- Enhance and invest in infrastructure for pedestrians, bicycles, transit stop facilities, and other related infrastructure.
- Continue to enhance and improve local small airports in the future.
- Preserve Amtrak and freight rail service in the northeast for Economic Development; partner with all stakeholders to seek funding sources.
- Establish criteria and thresholds for establishing tiers for modes not already established in the NMTP bicycle, pedestrian, etc.

Respect New Mexico’s culture, history, environment and quality of life

- Ensure historical site in the region are accurately identified and appropriately signed.
- Increase support for Scenic Byways and National Historic Trails.
- Encourage the enhancement and investment in Historical, Environmental, Scenic Byways, State and National Historical Trails to improve the quality of life and economy in the northeast.
- Utilize local and state plans in order to preserve the culture, environment history and the quality of life for all.
- Develop criteria and checklists for NMDOT project types to ensure successful implementation of CSS Principles.
- Develop and adopt design standards for local communities that respond to context; provide high-quality, but cost-efficient options; and comply with all relevant design guidelines.



Next Steps: Action Items and Accountability



Plan Implementation

The NERTPO 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 following action items.

Summary of Action Items

Action Item	Owner i.e. who's responsible
Goal 1: Operate with Transparency and Accountability	
Meet with the NMDOT and planners statewide to improve the consistency of information and historical records.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers from around the state
Schedule regular meetings to discuss changes or updates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers and NMDOT liaisons
Review contents and suggestions for improvements to site and files (Review of Budget)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT liaisons
Coordinate with the NMLTAP for data collection and use trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT LTAP staff
Collaborate by e mail, reporting and coordination of important information and allowing the RTPO Planner to distribute the material.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program manager
Better reporting and coordination with RTPO Planners for financial and project status.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers
Utilize the PFF process for better project development and the ICIP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program manager with local agency representatives
Goal 2: Improve Safety and Public Health for All System Users	
Assist and provide technical assistance with applications to improve the safety and health issues in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with local agency representatives
Work with local governments on data collection and asset management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with local agency representatives
Train RTPO Planners to assist with RSA's for better data collection and applications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDOT liaisons with RTPO program managers
Coordinate with the NMDOT for safety policies, Complete Streets, pedestrian design and access management in the RTPOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT liaisons and District staff
Goal 3: Preserve and Maintain Our Transportation System for the Long Term	
NMLTAP Trainings for the local gov.'s on data collection and asset management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •



Action Item	Owner i.e. who's responsible
Assist and provide technical assistant with data collection and asset management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with local agency representatives
Coordinate with the NMDOT and all stakeholders to seek new funding sources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with multiple parties
Coordinate with the NMDOT to implement best practices for routine maintenance, preventative maintenance, and rehabilitation of substandard infrastructure to ensure safety and efficient use of the local transportation system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT liaisons and District staff, and local agency representatives
Coordination with the NMDOT to identify opportunities and trainings to better support local community needs by shifting responsibility for roadway maintenance and management to local agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT liaisons, LTAP and District staff
Goal 4: Provide Multimodal Access and Connectivity for Community Prosperity and Health	
Work with the NMDOT and other stakeholders to implement policy for complete streets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT liaisons and District staff, along with local agency representatives
Work and provide technical assistance to local governments for better planning and during the PFF Process and ICIP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT LTAP staff and local agency representatives
Coordinate with the NMDOT, NMED, Local Governments and Tourism department to address Land Use, ED and Tourism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with multiple other parties
Plan and implement for the aging population and the changing needs for Public Transit and Transportation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT liaisons and District staff and local agency representatives
Coordination with RTPO Planners to identify information needs and types of quality information provided to NM Roads and other NMDOT information sources for the public and locals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with NMDOT ITS staff
Provide trainings to NMDOT and RTPO Staff on TDM and TSM & O to help ensure successful implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMDOT LTAP, with RTPO program managers, NMDOT liaisons and District staff, and local agency representatives
Coordinate with locals to establish rural criteria and thresholds for establishing tiers for modes not already established in the NMTP bicycle, pedestrian, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with District staff and local agency representatives
Goal 5: Respect New Mexico's Cultures, Environment, History, and Quality of Life	
Continue to provide updates and presentations to the NERTPO Members on CSS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers
Utilize local plans and NMTP for better planning of projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with local agency representatives
Provide Environmental and CSS presentations for valuable resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTPO program managers with various NMDOT staff



Action Item	Owner i.e. who's responsible
Coordinate with the locals to develop criteria and checklists for NMDOT project types to ensure successful implementation of CSS Principles at the local level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RTPO program managers with local agency representatives
Develop, train and adopt design standards for RTPOs and local communities that respond to context; provide high-quality, but cost-efficient options; and comply with all relevant design guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• RTPO program managers with various NMDOT staff, as well as local agency representatives



RTPO Involvement in STIP Development

The NERTPO coordinates with the NMDOT District Four Staff and approves quarterly amendments to the STIP. The NERTPO and the NMDOT District Four Staff have a great rapport; the constant coordination makes the RTPO very successful. The NERTPO's are no longer rating and ranking the projects, since the process takes place on a statewide basis by the NMDOT General Office Planning Division. The NERTPO does not have any other funding sources available to provide an RTIPR at this time.

NERTPO and Regional TIP Development. The processes involved for local governments and agencies to begin their involvement with the Regional TIP begin through the application processes for NMDOT transportation funding. Application forms and instructions present sections needed for packaging a proposal for funding. These applications tools include language encouraging, if not requiring, consistency with the RTP and related planning documents.

The application process usually includes a point system as part of the scoring process that rewards those project applications already included in planning documents, demonstrating previous planning and approvals from their local boards and councils. The application processes include feasibility reviews which bring the Applicant, NMDOT District Staff & Liaisons and RTPO Program Managers together for a discussion on how proposed transportation project applications can be improved for a more competitive application and successful funding. The processes encourage applicants to develop transportation projects through the preliminary stages of obtaining environmental clearances and design.

Roadway, TAP, RTP and NMHSIP. Local Governments (and other agencies, as appropriate) will make application for local-lead, federally-funded Roadway projects, as per the criteria established by the Northeast RTPO. For Roadway, an application package is approved prior to NERTPO issuing a Call-For-Projects. Its application package includes the application forms, criteria and scoring sheet. NERTPO has the ability to meet, revise and approve changes to its application format, instructions and criteria. Local-lead applications for TAP, RTP and NMHSIP programs follow the NMDOT Guides established for those programs.

Transportation Stakeholders. Transportation stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input on transportation projects through their invitation to NERTPO meetings. This process has been followed for years, with the transportation stakeholder list changing and expanding. Meeting content is known through the circulation of meeting agendas, to include online postings on EPCOG, NCMEDD and RTPONM.org website. RWG Member participation included established Transportation Stakeholders and was expanded into new areas (e.g., agricultural interests, rail, etc.), following the intent of MAP-21 legislation. New RWG members have already been added into the existing Transportation Stakeholder contacts.

Updating the Regional Transportation Plan. The Northeast RTPO is familiar with updating its Regional Long Range Plan. The need for updates will surface as there are changes in the region and as it becomes apparent that applications for transportation funding can be stronger with such amendments to the Plan. The process followed for previous Long Range Transportation Plan updates included bringing the amendments before NERTPO Members in a regular public meeting, allowing for discussion/comment/recommendations and requiring their approval for the update to the Regional Plan.



The NERTPO members follow the NMDOT process for all the funding sources and starting with the Project Feasibility Form (PFF) process. This process ensures that the local government understands the project and has sufficient planning prior to the project submittal. We make sure that all projects are consistent with the NMTP.



Appendix A: Public Involvement Process

Overview of Public Outreach Process

Regional Working Groups (RWGs) 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 Northeast 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 Northeast RTP was developed in coordination with the NMTP project team, RTPO planners, and NMDOT liaisons. The NERTPO Committee internally reviewed the Northeast 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 Northeast RTPO participated in a total of five events. There were three public meetings, which engaged about 30 people (City of Las Vegas, Village of Angel Fire and City of Santa Rosa). The NMRTPO's participated in the NMML Conference with a booth and taking public comment forms and surveys for the inclusion in the plan. There was also a presentation in the Town of Springer



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 NERTPO participated in a total of five events. The overall organization of the stakeholder involvement process is diagramed below.

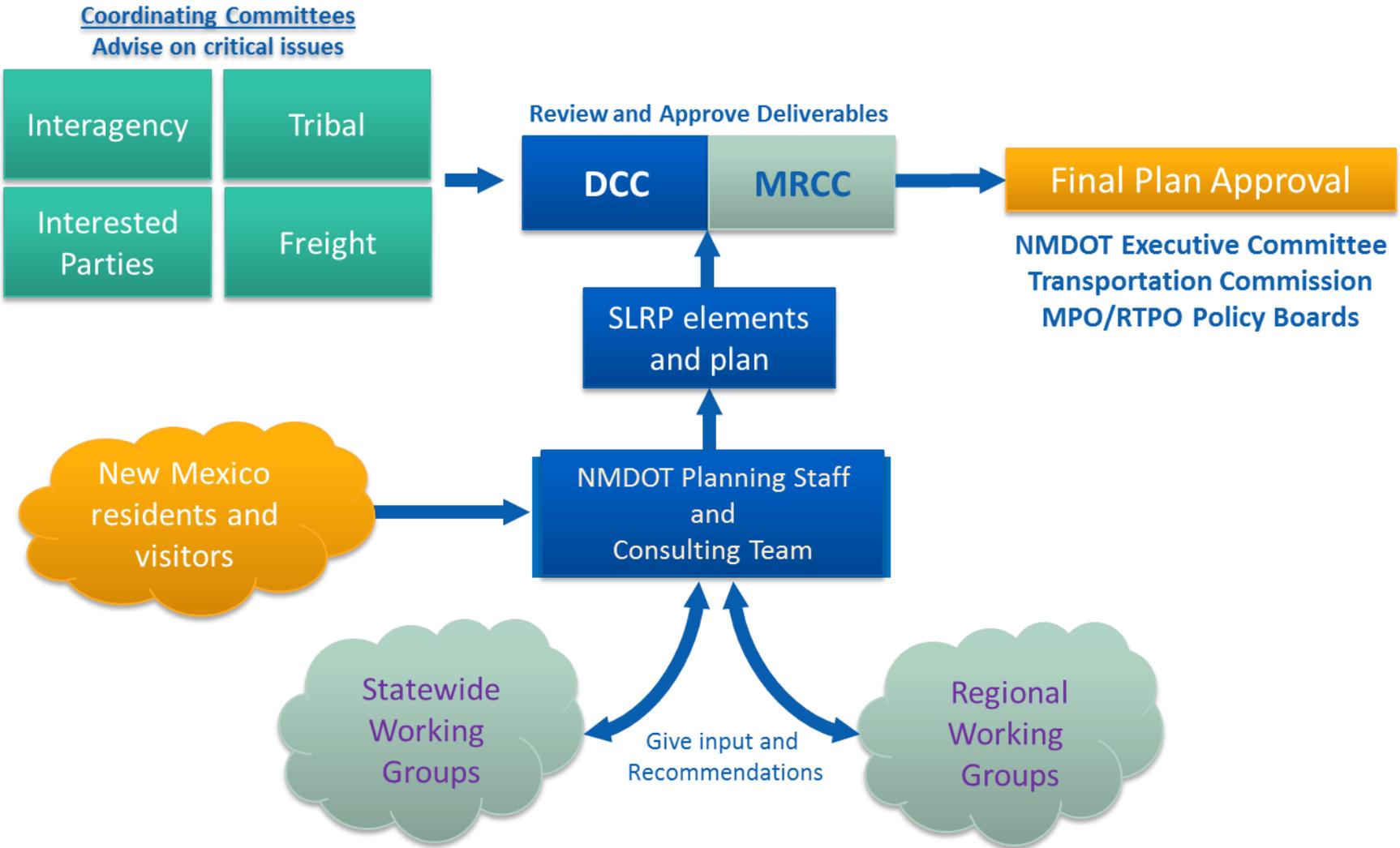
Throughout the plan phases, RTPO planners worked to engage the public through a variety of methods including information stations at public events such as health fairs, conference presentations, and public surveys. The Northeast RTPO participated with information stations at two statewide conferences, the New Mexico Annual Municipal League Conference (Albuquerque) and the New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference (Santa Fe). Surveys relating to the NMTP/RTP were

conducted at the information stations. Depending on geographical location, survey results were then distributed between the seven RTPO regions for their review and consideration in their individual RTP. On a regional level, EPCOG/NERTPO also participated with a presentation to the Eastern Plains Council of Governments Board of Directors meeting. RTPO Program Managers also participated in a statewide information station held on Transportation Day at the Legislature. During this event, RTPO's encouraged the public to be aware, look for and comment, as necessary, on the content in their draft RTPs due in a few months.





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 Northeast RWG first met on March 13, 2014, at the NMDOT District 4 office at South Highway 85, in Las Vegas. A total of 9 members participated including representatives from NMDOT, Northeast RTPO, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, North Central New Mexico Economic Development District, NMEDD, San Miguel County and the Village of Angel Fire. 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

- Deterioration of roads, bridges, and rail lines must be addressed. Maintenance of existing infrastructure is important.
- Rail is important, even crucial, to northeast New Mexico.
- Economic development is dependent on infrastructure maintenance.





- Transportation of natural resources (such as water, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and propane) is key to economic development and population retention in the region.

Synthesis of Key Challenges Discussion

- Significant deterioration of highways, bridges, and rail lines.
- Significant budget concerns (funding based on miles, past projects have exceeded budget, doing more with less).
- Loss of rail service.

Synthesis of Data Needs Discussion

- Traffic studies and infrastructure data.
- Local feasibility studies.
- Construction estimates.

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 Northeast RWG met on June 25, 2014, at the Angel Fire Community Center in Angel Fire. A total of 21 members participated including representatives from NMDOT, Northeast RTPO, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, North Central New Mexico Economic Development District, San Miguel, Colfax, Harding and Union Counties, and the communities of Angel Fire, Eagle Nest, Las Vegas, Springer, and Tucumcari. 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

- ‘Complete Streets’ - should be implemented all at one time, so that projects are not piecemealed. The way funding is currently structured; it is difficult for a community to complete an entire project during one period. Funding is scarce compared to needs.
- Enchanted Circle Regional Transit District (RTD) - needs to be further investigated to provide benefit to the aging population. Small communities cannot afford their part and cannot afford the continuation of the service. Funding options should be considered.
- Development of bicycle paths in the region - Need more bicycle/pedestrian services and trail connections.
- Use right-of-way as utility corridors.





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 Northeast RWG met on November 19, 2014, at the Santa Rosa Convention Center, at 1085 Blue Hole, in Santa Rosa. A total of 19 members participated including representatives from NMDOT, Northeast RTPO, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, North Central New Mexico Economic Development District, the New Mexico Economic Development Department, the Counties of San Miguel, Guadalupe, and Harding, and the communities of Angel Fire, Las Vegas, Santa Rosa, and Tucumcari. 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.

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/RTPO 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 don't 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.

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?

Northeast Regional Working Group Review

The Northeast RWG met on March 13, 2014 in the City of Las Vegas, June 25, 2014 in the Village of Angel Fire and November 19, 2014 in the City of Santa Rosa. A total of 30-40 members participated including representatives from NMDOT, Northeast RTPO Members, Eastern Plains Council of Governments, North Central New Mexico Economic Development District, New Mexico Economic Development Department, New Mexico Department of Health, the Counties of Colfax, Mora, San Miguel, Guadalupe, Quay, Harding and Union Counties. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Present the draft RTP
- Solicit feedback

Discussion

- Rail is important, even crucial, to northeast New Mexico: Retain Amtrak Southwest Chief and restore rail freight service. Increase track speeds. Identify new funding sources for both freight and passenger revenue in New Mexico. Explore new types of rail freight shipments such as water, aggregates, and solid waste. Investigate the feasibility of regional rail operator taking over the freight service. Capitalize on the freight potential of US-Mexico trade and the opportunity to run the 2926 steam locomotive to Las Vegas as a tourist attraction.
- Maintain existing transportation assets in a state of good repair: Maintenance of existing infrastructure is important. Address the deterioration of existing transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, rest areas, and rail lines. New sources of revenue need to be investigated. There needs to be more consistent funding for the local roadways and bridges and ADA Compliance.
- Develop the Transportation System to support tourism: Tourism is especially important to the economy of the northeastern part of New Mexico. The transportation system of the area should be designed, built, maintained, and operated to support this industry. Existing assets such as Amtrak and the Scenic Byway network should be maintained and improved. Possibilities for new improvements and services include bicycle/pedestrian trails (e.g., Las Vegas to Hot Springs), a steam tourist train (using the 2926), and better roadway connections to Texas and Oklahoma. We need a larger investment for Scenic Byways and better signage in New Mexico.
- Expand and improve public Transportation: Develop an interconnected network of transit routes. Improve the existing Park-and-Ride services between Santa Fe and Las Vegas. Explore the possibility of replacing the Park-and-Ride service with expanded Rail Runner Service. This would benefit the smaller rural communities. More Coordination with public transportation, more senior



providers, and more communities participating in public transit programs to address an aging population. We also have many students, disabled and homeless veterans needing public transportation.

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 NERTPO outreach efforts included:

- Town of Springer Public Meeting/Information Station
- Mosquero Health Fair
- New Mexico Municipal League Conference booth and surveys
- New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference booth and surveys

Summarize: The NERTPO participated in a total of four public events that engaged hundreds of people from throughout New Mexico and within the NERTPO planning area.

- Regional Working Group3 meetings
- Eastern Plains Council of Governments Boardmeeting
- New Mexico Municipal League Conference
- New Mexico Infrastructure Finance Conference

NERTPO/June Meeting (Angel Fire). During a regular, public meeting of the NERTPO, the NMDOT Project Team Leader made presentation to members on the NMTP/RTP. Members commented on multiple issues. Highway shoulder lengths and related safety improvements, Members and guests also expressed that there is an imbalance of revenue raised versus funding distributions within the State. Also discussed was the importance of Amtrak, and the need to keep the Southwest Chief in the Northern area, working with GPS inaccuracies, increasing the gas tax, balancing need for bike trails versus public transit for the smaller local government budget and balancing tourism revenues.

RTPO Roundtable (Roswell). NMDOT and RTPO Program Managers met in their regularly scheduled quarterly meeting. An invited guest, the Mayor of Roswell, provided welcoming remarks and offered input. The Mayor spoke of the need for four-laning State highways that are impacted by oil and gas traffic, citing US 82, Artesia to Lovington; US 82 and NM 206, Tatum to Lovington; and US 380, from Roswell to the Texas line. He also spoke of the need for bus transportation services regionally.

New Mexico Annual Municipal League Conference (Albuquerque). RTPO Program Managers, statewide, participated in an information station for the primary purpose of conducting public outreach and obtaining public input with regards to the NMTP/RTP.

For NERTPO/EPCOG's region, there were seventeen commenters. Comments were provided from the communities of Tucumcari, Maxwell, Logan, Clayton and San Jon. Roadways and public transit were of primary concern. Commenters explained that roads (and city streets) are deteriorating, and there is a need for both paved roads and improved connectivity between towns. Support was given for public transit, specifically with requests changing from demand response to fixed routes and more connectivity with the smaller communities (i.e. Meadow City Express and Golden Spread Rural Frontier Coalition). Other areas included financing, traffic safety, and lack of rest areas, bike paths, water, and rail line.

New Mexico Infrastructure Conference (Santa Fe). Public input was received at a statewide RTPO information station that focused on NMTP/RTP. For NERTPO/EPCOG's region, there were eight commenters that addressed the subject areas listed below.

- Connectivity
- Funding
- NM 39
- Public Transportation
- Roads

Eastern Plains Council of Governments Board Meeting (Clovis). EPCOG's Program Manager spoke to attendees at this function, giving an update of NMTP/RTP activity and the public outreach segment. Communities represented were from the Northeast region, Guadalupe County, San Jon, Tucumcari and Harding.

The transportation-related information collected was as a result of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). Colfax, Guadalupe, Harding, Mora, Quay, San Miguel and Union.

- Roadways. Focus on roads, to include comments that routes need to be established for the whole county, providing connectivity to towns. Roads are badly deteriorating.
- Public Transit. Attendees commented on public transit within the region. Transit is very much needed in the rural communities (and County areas), it has been recommended to transition from demand response to fixed routes. There is limited access and connectivity to public transit after 5:00 p.m.
- City Streets.





- Financing. The most important issue is finding financing for their transportation systems, and local match for roadways.
- Traffic Safety. Emphasized traffic safety.
- Lack of rest areas.
- Bike Paths.

Specific Projects, Policies or Programs Recommended

- Rail Line. Amtrak the Northern Area
- Federal guidelines/policies. Federal guidelines and policies address rural areas.
- Bike Lanes/safe roads to schools.



Appendix B



History of NCNMEDD and EPCOG

North Central New Mexico Economic Development District (NCNMEDD) was created on June 27, 1967, by statutory authority of the Joint Powers Agreement Act, Section 4-22-1 to 4-22-7, New Mexico Statutes Annotated. for the purpose of assisting units of local government in the development of a regional economic development program and aiding in its implementation. Formation of NCNMEDD came about as a result of passage of the Public Works and Economic Development Act (Public Law 89-136) by the U.S. Congress in 1965. This legislation permitted designated counties to form non-profit entities for the purpose of promoting the socioeconomic environment of its members. It also created the Economic Development Administration (EDA) under the U. S. Department of Commerce. The purpose of EDA is to provide a vehicle for the delivery of financial and technical assistance to economically depressed areas throughout the nation.

As originally designated and funded by EDA in 1967, NCNMEDD was composed of eight contiguous north central New Mexico counties: Colfax, Los Alamos, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Miguel, Sandoval, Santa Fe, and Taos. In order to conform to state planning district designations, Sandoval County was officially transferred from NCNMEDD by EDA in March, 1973, to membership in the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments. For some purposes, however, Sandoval County has elected to participate in the District program.

The Eastern Plains Council of Governments (EPCOG) was established in 1972, under the Regional Planning Act. The Eastern Plains Council of Governments serves District IV, which encompasses seven counties, Curry, De Baca, Harding, Guadalupe, Roosevelt, Quay, and Union. Together, these seven counties contain twenty-two municipalities. In 1978, EDA of the U.S. Department of Commerce authorized the designation of the region as an Economic Development District. Since that time, the EPCOG has served District IV in a multiplicity of roles, one of the most significant of which for this planning organization has been the collaboration of public, private, and governmental sectors in a combined effort to formulate a comprehensive regional plan.



Appendix C



History of The New Mexico MainStreet Program

The New Mexico MainStreet (NMMS) Program was funded by the New Mexico State Legislature in 1985 to assist local communities with commercial district revitalization. According to state statute, the New Mexico MainStreet Program was formed to *"provide for the revitalization of central business districts in New Mexico communities based on the preservation and rehabilitation of existing structures of unique historical and architectural character and the development of progressive marketing and management techniques as an economic development strategy for local governments,"* 3-60 B-1 to 3-60 B-4 NMSA 1978.

Clayton MainStreet

LeRoy Wood, Executive Director
P.O. Box 105
Clayton, NM 88415

MainStreet de Las Vegas

Cindy Collins, Executive Director
500 Railroad Ave.
Las Vegas, NM 87701

The mission of MainStreet Las Vegas is to unify the historic commercial corridor and engender pride in the community while promoting economic development and preserving historical, cultural, architectural and natural resources through partnerships and community collaboration. Main Street de Las Vegas is proud to be a part of the charming and historic town of Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Raton MainStreet

Brenda Ferri, Executive Director
145 S. 1st Street
Raton, NM 87740

Our Mission

We are committed members of the community dedicated to improving the quality of life in Raton by revitalizing our downtown area. We want to foster business prosperity and offer new economic opportunities. We seek to have a community where all generations can have a sense of pride in Raton and all cultures feel respect for their heritage.

Our Goals

Promote economic sustainability for new and existing businesses through development of catalyst projects in the downtown Master Plan that support Raton's growth and downtown revitalization.



Enhance Raton's natural culture and historic riches by developing a vibrant downtown community that engages multi-generational citizens by creating a unique sense of place

Ensure that Raton MainStreet, Inc. is a visible, well-run, well-resourced organization that has credibility in the community.

Our Vision of Raton

Raton is "small town America" at its finest. It is a comfortable place to live where residents and visitors can escape the "hustle and bustle" of more hectic lifestyles, to be greeted by heartfelt smiles and friendly hellos while strolling downtown, a place where neighbors truly care for each other and offer hospitality to visitors without hesitation. Raton has a deep sense of shared values and community pride, a keen appreciation of its historical and cultural heritage, and also provides the best of modern conveniences. Life in Raton makes you want to be part of this thriving community where businesses prosper and economic opportunities abound.

Tucumcari MainStreet

Gail Houser, Executive Director
P.O. Box 736
Tucumcari, NM 88401
100 Railroad Ave.
Tucumcari, NM 88401

Harding County MainStreet

Mary Libby Campbell, Interim Director
PO Box 172
Roy, NM 87743

Scenic Byways

Originally created by congress through the funding and authorization bill ISTEA (1991), the National Scenic Byways program was intended to foster economic development through furnishing the upfront capital costs associated with developing transportation related tourist amenities throughout the United States. Subsequent funding allocations were made through SAFETEA-LU (2005), however MAP-21 (2012) effectively ended the program. Throughout the life of the Byways program numerous scenic drives throughout the Land of Enchantment have been embellished. These projects showcase the intrinsic scenic, historical and cultural qualities of our state while adding to its economic well-being.

Today, the Transportation Planning and Safety division manages remaining contracts from funding allocations made under SAFETEA-LU. While no new grants are being awarded under the Scenic Byways program, a few of the programs eligibilities have been rolled into the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Among these are activities such as the construction of turnouts, overlooks and



viewing areas as well as some facilities to promote non-motorized travel. Some other changes under MAP-21 include that nonprofits can no longer be lead of expenditures on Scenic Byways projects, but must partner with a local government. (NMDOT)

Included in the northeast are three Scenic Byways and one National Scenic Byway:

Mesalands Scenic Byway

The flat tops and steep rock walls of mesas are a unique feature of central New Mexico.

Route 66 National Scenic Byway

In New Mexico, Route 66 slices across the entire state — from border to border — and before a 1937 realignment, it made a loop to Santa Fe, then rejoined the main highway at Albuquerque.

La Frontera Del Llano

Spend the day traveling through the grasslands and plains of New Mexico and experience the natural "Wild West."

Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway

This winding route takes you through some of the most beautiful areas of North Central New Mexico.

Mesalands Scenic Byway and Route 66 National Scenic Byway Maps (NM Tourism)

Texas to Santa Fe



Enchanted Circle Scenic Byway and La Frontera del Llano Scenic Byway Maps (NMTourism)

