

Executive Summary

The Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area (AMPA) will face a number of challenges in the coming decades. The considerable population growth seen in recent years is expected to continue and will result in increased congestion and immense burdens placed on existing infrastructure. Congestion associated with such growth will also result in diminished air quality, losses in economic activity, increased travel times and overall decreases in quality of life. Confronting these challenges requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to ensure that individuals' traveling and commuting needs are met and that goods and services are readily available throughout the metropolitan region.

The region experienced extensive growth between 2000 and 2008, and the metropolitan area is expected to add over 550,000 residents between 2008 and 2035, an increase of 74 percent. This growth, however, is not likely to be dispersed evenly throughout the region as the vast majority is likely to occur in the region's periphery and west of the Rio Grande. Today, approximately 44 percent of the AMPA's population lives west of the river while employment is concentrated primarily east of the river. This growth pattern creates a high-volume east-west commute which is expected to continue; by 2035 the Westside will contain 58 percent of the AMPA's population yet the Eastside will still contain more than three quarters of the region's jobs. As a result of this disparity, river crossings will surpass one million daily trips by 2035, essentially doubling the number carried today.

In the AMPA, transportation planners, decision makers, and the general public alike realize that the "building our way out of congestion" approach to transportation in the region will no longer suffice, especially when faced with limited funding sources,

Key Themes of the 2035 MTP:

- Expand Transit and Alternative Modes of Transportation
- Integrate Land Use and Transportation Planning
- Maximize the Efficiency of Existing Infrastructure

significant growth projections, and the mounting challenges of rising oil prices, climate change and air quality concerns. To keep a population of 1.3 million moving in the region in 2035, new targeted goals and comprehensive strategies must be developed. Adding capacity alone will not be enough as growth will outpace the amount of roadway expansion that can be funded and built.

Through this plan a variety of important strategies are discussed. Some key steps that need to be taken are the expansion of convenient and reliable transit and alternative modes such as bicycling and walking, the coordination of land use and transportation planning, and ensuring that the existing infrastructure is fully utilized and operates as efficiently as possible.

Key Statistics:

- One million daily trips are projected to occur across the Rio Grande by 2035
- The AMPA will reach 1 million people by 2025 and 1.3 million by 2035
- Approximately 100,000 acres of currently undeveloped land will be consumed by 2035
- Job growth is projected to occur at a slower rate than population growth: 48 percent compared with 75 percent
- There are 32 proposed crossings in the Long Range Bicycle System; four are funded and in the implementation stages (before construction), and an additional four are part of this MTP.
- From 2004 to 2008, 4.3 percent of all crashes involved alcohol. Of these crashes, 54 percent resulted in fatal crashes, and of all fatal crashes 24 percent involved a pedestrian.
- The AMPA boundary had Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic (AADTT) of 7,548 in 2002. By 2035 the AADTT is projected to increase to 20,063.
- The EPA is considering a Primary Ozone Standard in the range of .060 to .070 parts per million, which the AMPA will likely exceed
- The transportation sector in New Mexico contributes approximately 17 percent of the State's total greenhouse gas emissions

The recent introduction of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express, the expansion of ABQ Ride services, and the development of the Rio Metro Regional Transit District have created new options for commuters in the region. Annual transit ridership recently surpassed 10 million, providing substantial relief to the region's infrastructure, lowering vehicle emissions and alleviating congestion.

Transit also provides perhaps the best option for addressing the excessive river crossing demand as no other strategy provides the opportunity to transport large numbers of commuters and travelers across the region in as cost-effective and efficient a manner. The region must build upon its recent successes and create efficient transit with stations that are serviced by bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. These efforts will in turn reduce dependence on single occupancy vehicles for all trips while also reducing congestion, providing clear public health benefits and creating more transportation options for a wide spectrum of users.

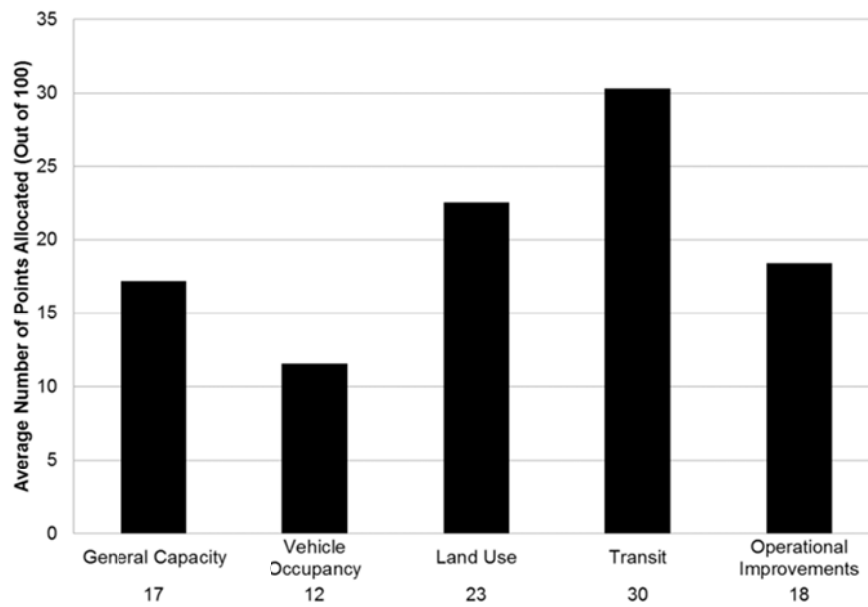
Cohesive land use and transportation planning is also crucial for the vitality of the region's infrastructure. Where activity centers and new housing are located influences transportation patterns and household expenses as much as any change or improvement to the transportation network. It is therefore essential to consider ways to develop land use patterns and well-connected streets that are designed for the comfort and convenience of all users and that provide concentrated development (where appropriate) in order to efficiently service communities with expanded transit service. For example, the proposed Bus Rapid Transit service that would connect the Journal Center (a major activity

center), northwest Albuquerque, and southern Rio Rancho would support opportunities for transit-oriented development, while linking important residential and commercial districts.

Roads will continue to be the backbone of the region's transportation network. However, adding capacity alone will not be enough to meet the growing transportation demand. New strategies must focus on managing the transportation system through a balanced and diversified approach. This approach must include solutions that use travel demand management to reduce the overall volume of vehicles on the road, change travel time usage patterns and encourage the use of a variety of transportation modes. The region must also enhance the use of new technologies including intelligent transportation systems, maximize the efficiency of existing infrastructure and strategically add roadway and transit capacity in key corridors.

Findings from recent public meetings indicated that the public supports focusing efforts on changing land use patterns and expanding other modes, particularly transit, in order to keep people moving across the river (see Figure Ex-1). The responses revealed that the general public is prepared to consider the variety of approaches required to confront the region's challenges.

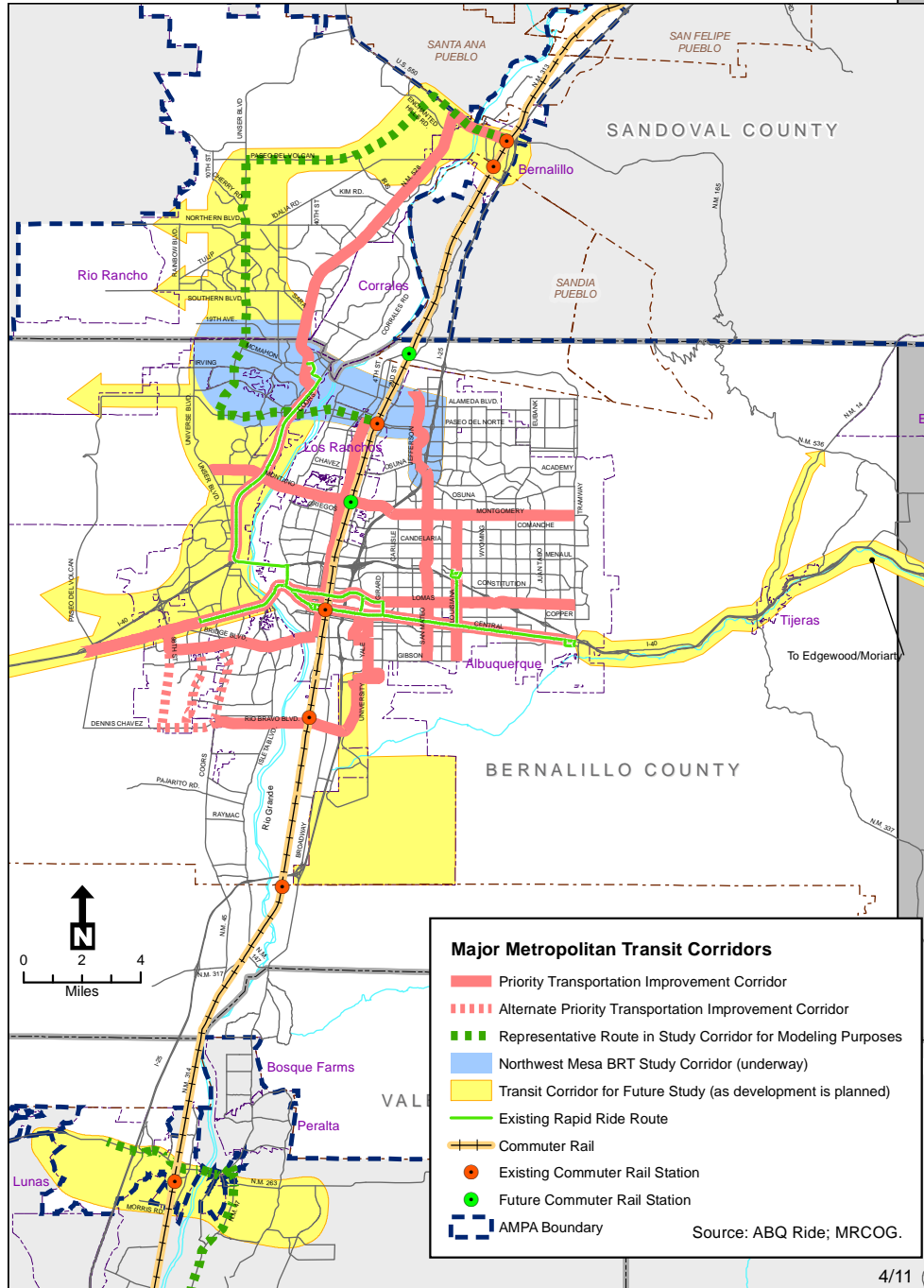
Figure Ex-1: Strategies to Address River Crossings



While vehicle travel will remain the dominant form of transportation in the region, and while it is essential to maximize the efficiency and performance of the region's roadways, it is also imperative that other options be developed and new responses to growth be considered. Offering a variety of transportation options is part of developing vibrant communities and sustainable transportation systems and will help the region achieve the MTP's three goals of enhancing *quality of life*, ensuring the *mobility of people and goods*, and supporting *economic activity and growth*. Finally, the region must be committed to making sound long-term decisions, an outcome that can be achieved through regional cooperation and data-driven efforts such as the Project Prioritization Process.

Planned Transit Improvements

Preliminary Corridors and Areas for Further Study



Key Statistics:

- 26% of 2008 AMPA population within ¼ mile of transit service
- 72% of 2008 AMPA population within ½ mile of transit service
- FY 2010 – 11.4 million trips on ABQ Ride and 1.2million Rail Runner trips
- ABQ Ride ridership increased by 45% since 2005 and over 4% since 2009

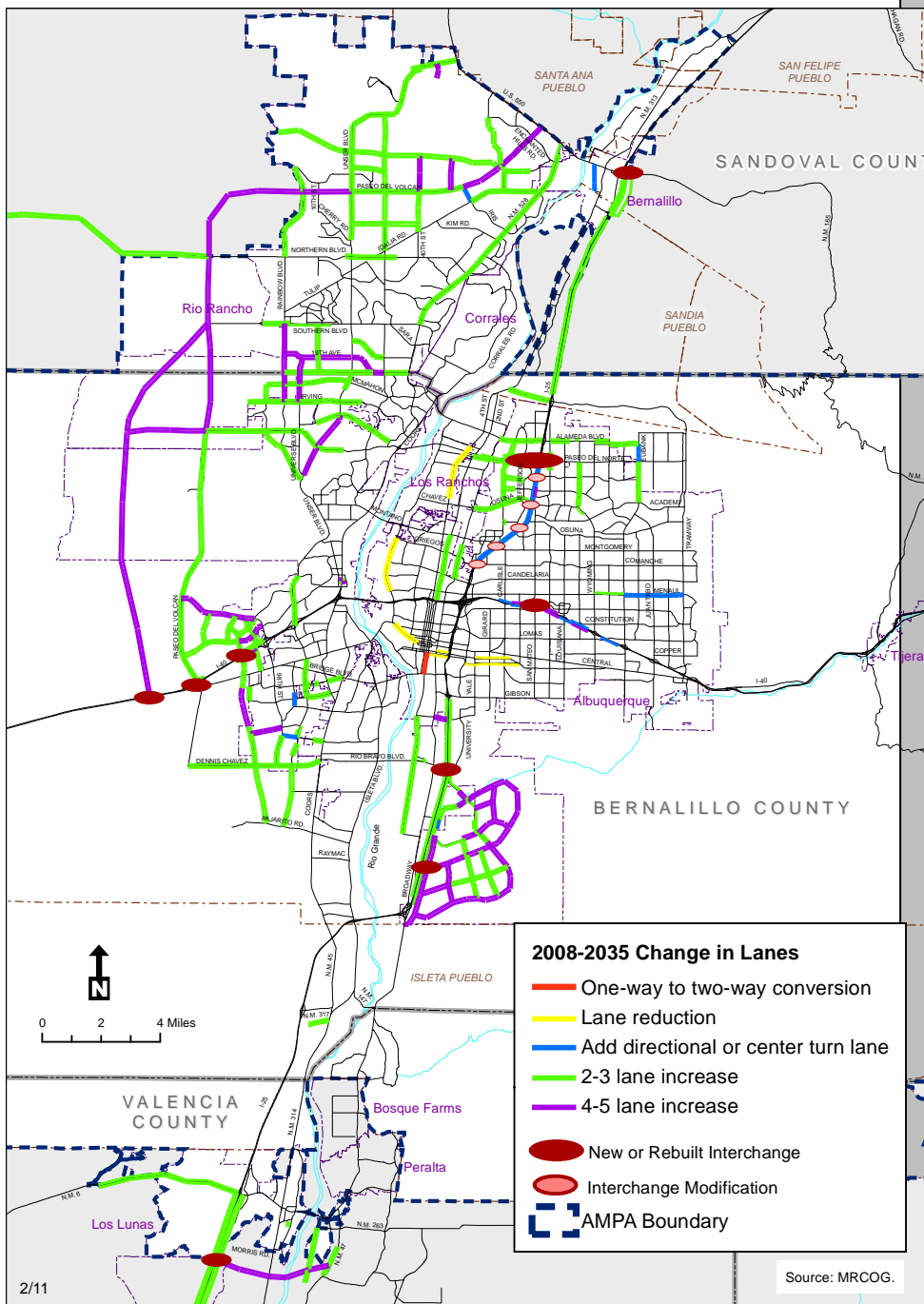
Key Projects:

- Increase frequency of Rail Runner service
- Introduce Bus Rapid Transit service along critical corridors and river crossings
- Additional park and ride facilities
- Fixed route expansion across AMPA

Key Strategies:

- Mode share goal: 10% of all river crossing trips to be taken by transit by 2025 and 20% of all trips by 2035
- 25% of federal CMAQ, STP-Enhancements, and STP-Urban funds are to be allocated toward transit projects that alleviate river crossing congestion
- Encourage transit-oriented development
- Develop network of high frequency, premium transit service across the AMPA
- Create dedicated infrastructure to improve

Planned Roadway Improvements



Key Statistics:

- Vehicle miles traveled per day will double from the current 16 million to 32 million in 2035
- Vehicle hours of delay will be 1.5 million (currently 400,000)
- One million daily trips across the Rio Grande (doubled from today)

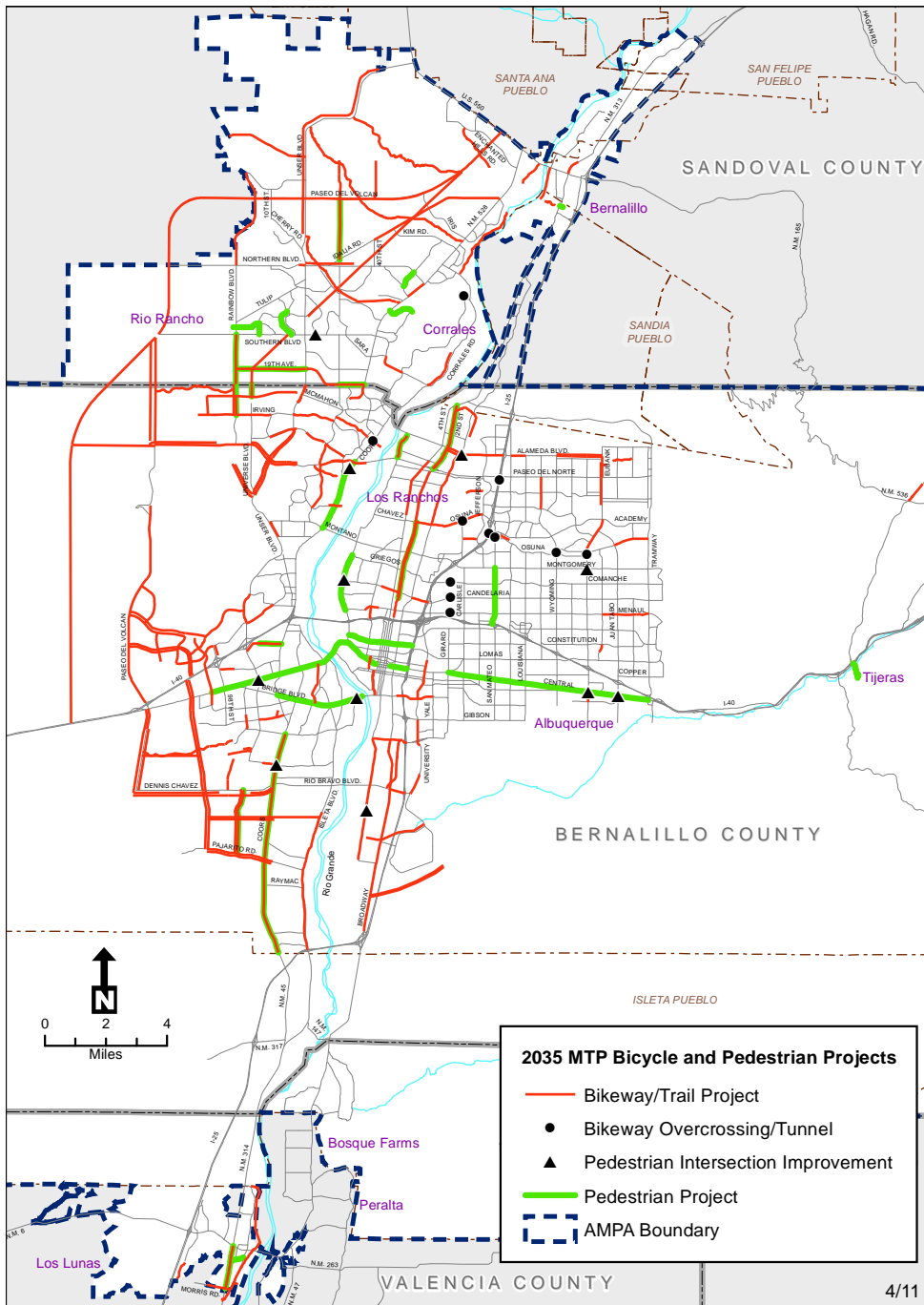
Key Projects:

- Completion of Unser Blvd and Paseo del Volcan
- Widening of NM 528 in Rio Rancho between Southern Blvd and US 550
- Fourteen new or reconstructed freeway interchanges
- Significant area roadway network expansion for Mesa del Sol, the North I-25/Jefferson Corridor and Rio Rancho area north of Northern Blvd and serving the new City Center

Key Strategies:

- Roadway projects programmed in the MTP are generally planned for areas where growth is expected and network expansion needs are the greatest
- Operational improvements, multimodal solutions and travel demand management will be undertaken to help alleviate regional congestion
- Working with member agencies on regional growth initiatives and land use solutions

Planned Bike/Ped Improvements



Key Statistics:

- 55 miles of pedestrian improvements and 11 intersection improvements for pedestrians
- 181 miles of new bicycle lanes, 131 miles of new multi-purpose trails, 6.6 miles of unpaved trails, and 11 overcrossings/tunnels
- 10,000 youth and 1,500 adults taking bicycle education classes per year

Key Projects:

- Pedestrian improvements along Central Ave, Bridge Blvd and Corrales Rd
- Overcrossing/tunnel projects at Paseo del Norte & Coors, the Big-I & the Bear Canyon Arroyo Trail
- Major trail projects in Rio Rancho and the Westside will provide 36 miles of premium trails completely separate from motor vehicle traffic
- Bicycle education programs for youth and adults
- North Valley's 2nd St pedestrian and bicycle improvements, South Valley's Isleta Drain Trail, and Los Lunas' Hunning Lateral Trail

Key Strategies:

- Complete streets regional policy
- Programs that encourage and educate people about walking, bicycling and taking public transit
- Safe Routes to School and other programs that encourage walking and bicycling to school
- Health impact assessments of transportation infrastructure on surrounding communities

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