

# North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD) Update of the 2006 Service Plan 2008-2013



October 2008



**Gannett Fleming West, Inc.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I.</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS AND CURRENT CONDITIONS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>III.</b>	<b>SERVICE PLAN UPDATE .....</b>	<b>12</b>
A.	RIO ARRIBA COUNTY INCLUDING CITY OF ESPAÑOLA .....	12
B.	LOS ALAMOS COUNTY .....	16
C.	TAOS COUNTY INCLUDING THE TOWN OF TAOS .....	19
D.	SANTA FE COUNTY / CITY OF SANTA FE – SANTA FE TRAILS .....	22
E.	PUEBLO TRANSIT SERVICE .....	25
F.	NCRTD REGIONAL SERVICE.....	27
<b>IV.</b>	<b>SUMMARY OF TRANSIT SERVICE PROPOSALS.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>FINANCIAL SCENARIOS .....</b>	<b>31</b>

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In May of 2006, the NCRTD was presented with a comprehensive Service Plan.

It included four key elements that gave the NCRTD clear direction for many years.

1) Role of the NCRTD

- Coordination of existing services in the three county areas leading to consolidation where appropriate. (Taos County joined the NCRTD in March 2008).

2) Service Improvements

- Expansion of existing local service and introduction of regional connections based on the model of a regional network of services.

3) Cost for service

- To fully implement the 2006 Plan the annual cost would range from \$5 million to eventually graduating to an \$8 million full service program annually.

4) Options to pay for service

- Introduce a Gross Receipt Tax as soon as possible.
- Aggressively pursue all appropriate and eligible state and federal grants.
- Establish a regional fare structure that encourages ridership.
- Seek local municipal contributions as an additional means to provide matching funds.

This update is a continuation of the adopted 2006 Service Plan. Since the lack of stable local funds to support the NCRTD has yet to be realized, the plan is still relevant and continues to provide a clear and realistic path for success. This Service Plan is subject to review and adjustment as needed to accommodate the area and ridership demands.

When the NCRTD was formed in 2004 there was significant interest to make sure the citizens represented in the boundaries of the NCRTD would see new opportunities for mobility and access to critical services. In the short time the system has been operating the demand for more and better mobility options has dominated the issues confronting the Agency. Because of the lack of state and federal funds the NCRTD has provided only a minimal level of service to many parts of the Region. Residents have had hopes that the RTD would meet their specific mobility needs but the lack of stable funding has left residents isolated with minimal choice. As recently as November 2007, the State Department of Transportation presented a "Transportation Focus on the Future" report that concluded that to meet just 20% of the identified statewide rural public transportation needs, over \$30 million per year is needed. This would provide just the basic service to many areas of the state and indeed falls far short in addressing the true lifeline mobility needs of the residents.

Two additional studies and regional efforts have been presented in August 2008. The Northern New Mexico Regional Economic Development Institute presented the Progress through Partnership Project. It is important to note that the NCRTD is a partner in this project. All four counties that comprise this study group are members of the RTD. Also in August 2008, the results and recommendations from the New Mexico First Organization's town hall meeting were presented. The meeting's theme was Sustainable Transportation: Paying Our Way From Here to There. The findings were not exclusively about roads and highways - public transportation was discussed and was included in the mix of issues and options that must be considered.

The NCRTD agrees with these studies and finds it unacceptable to allow the lifeline services to fall significantly short of the expressed demand and is committed to address the problem.

Although faced with many challenges over the last two years, the NCRTD has made an impressive start. There is much more to do and this update looks at what milestones have been met and provides a series of recommendations as to what is next in meeting the key elements of the 2006 Service Plan.

Significant milestones to date:

- Adoption of Mission Statement.
- Adoption of Goal and Objectives which now guide the District.
- Consolidation in July 2007 of the Española-Rio Arriba transit service.
- Implemented eleven fixed routes.
- Management of the shuttle service which started in April 2007 between Eldorado and Santa Fe.
- Opening Celebration - October 5, 2007.
- NCRTD started operating service on October 2007.
- Addition of Taos County to the NCRTD in March 2008.
- Implementation of new mid-day service to Los Alamos.
- Coordinated grant applications with Rio Arriba County, City of Española, NCRTD and the Tribal Governments.
- Adoption of a regional fare policy.
- The development of a downtown transit exchange in Espanola. Provides easy connections and transfers to all busses traveling to and from downtown Espanola.
- Action leading to a stable, reliable funding source.
- Coordinated service expansion plans with existing providers.
- Growth in ridership. From October 2007 to August 2008 a 122% increase was realized.
- Establishment of a fleet management plan.
- Award of Federal funding for major capital projects.
- Service to Santa Clara, Tesuque Pueblos, and Ohkay Owingeh.
- NCRTD Website.
- NCRTD TV Commercial.

## **II. MISSION STATEMENT, GOALS AND CURRENT CONDITIONS**

The Mission of the NCRDT is to provide safe, secure and effective public transportation within North Central New Mexico, in order to enhance the quality of life of our citizens, by providing mobility options and to spur economic development throughout the region.

The six Goals as presented in Section II of this update have clearly served as guiding principles for the NCRTD. These goals provide the basis and rationale for having the Regional Transit District.

Goal 1 and 3 are the most critical in the early development of the RTD and the Agency must move forward aggressively to see that these goals are realized. The citizens deserve access to the most critical lifeline services. These services are defined as an indispensable trip, such as for medical, education and employment and are the most basic and real in terms of need.

- Goal 1:** Establish a reliable and adequate source of financing for NCRTD transit services.
- Goal 2:** Increase personal mobility so that more people can contribute to, and participate in, the economic and social life of the larger community.
- Goal 3:** Ensure that citizens of the NCRTD have access to critical lifeline services.
- Goal 4:** Ensure that the NCRTD Service Plan is consistent and complementary to the Regional Transportation Policy Plan.
- Goal 5:** Refine a set of performance targets that permits the Board to make decisions to maximize the use of all funds made available to the NCRTD.
- Goal 6:** Reduce dependence on the private auto to contribute to improved air quality, reduce urban sprawl and lower levels of traffic congestion.

The NCRTD is now at a critical juncture as it debates “what it is and what it should be”. The Board has reviewed the established Goals and Objectives adopted in 2006 to determine how best to move forward. The results of that survey and the conclusions reached at the March 14, 2008 Board Retreat have been incorporated into this Update.

The next step in the evolution of the NCRTD is to implement Goal #1. “Establish a reliable and adequate source of financing for NCRTD transit service”.

Why?

The uncertainty of any state or federal funding to provide the needed financial resources is real. The opportunity for a state public transit fund continues to be debated but no foreseeable solution is at hand. The Legislature will include the issue of sustainable public transportation funding as part of the 2009 Legislative session. It is important to note that the Legislature has authorized the establishment of RTD’s, including the funding mechanism.

Federal grant funding continues to be illusive as well. The NCRTD has applied for many grants and has been funded on a partial basis. Although the NCRTD has received a grant for buses, vans, shelters, and bus stop signs, the fate of their newest grant application for a maintenance/operation and administration facility is pending. In addition the NCRTD will continue to apply for Federal Tribal Funds.

The substantial local contributions by NCRTD members for grant matching purposes is to be commended but these contributions also have long-term uncertainty. In order for the citizens of the NCRTD to fully support the public transportation opportunities of now and in the future, they must be certain that the service is and will be available in a stable, ongoing and reliable form. In addition, the public will constantly evaluate the level and quality of service provided.

The value of the service currently being provided by the NCRTD is critical to a limited clientele, but the broad appeal to the general population is limited without significant service improvements and funding throughout the region.

Goal # 2 and 3. Increase personal mobility and access to critical lifeline services.

The consultant team looked at what transit services are currently being provided to the citizens of the NCRTD area and what **increased** service would look like in each of the four Counties as well as the Pueblos.

Increased service remains one of the top priorities for those passengers dependent upon public transit. Increased service would improve the flexibility for passengers offering more choice and travel options. Offering more service provides a greater incentive for new users to access public transit. Increased service opens the door for residents in more remote areas to access employment as well as shopping, recreation and medical services that might never have had the opportunity to do before.

Goal # 4. The consultant team has reviewed the "Transportation Focus on the Future" report dated November 2007. This report was prepared by Cambridge Systematic at the direction of New Mexico's Office of Lieutenant Governor. The conclusions of the "Sustainable Transportation Town Hall" report of August 2008 developed by the NMDOT and the NM Association of Regional Councils and the "North Central Regional Economic Strategic Plan" are currently being developed in partnership with the Counties of Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Los Alamos and Taos.

The report provided significant insight into the quandary New Mexico has, to support the overall transportation of the State. Throughout the document there was reference to the need for public transportation both in an urban and rural setting. The most dramatic information came from the results of a study conducted by AARP. The Senior Transportation Study concluded that the needs of the seniors will become even more significant in the coming years with the aging of the population. The report's conclusion was that much more must be done to address the shortfall between needs and actual service.

The "Focus on the Future" report also stated that to meet 20% of identified statewide rural public transit needs over \$30 million per year is needed.

The consultant study team finds that the action being taken by the NCRTD to seek local funding shows real leadership in tackling a major transportation problem for a significant portion of the population. The NCRTD Board is to be commended for their approach and vision for the future. The recommended improvements in this update will go a long way to address the issues raised in the Focus on the Future and the AARP report.

Goal # 5 NCRTD is developing this regional transit program in concert with the Counties and local communities with its boundaries.

These performance measures provided by the DOT would include such statistics as those shown in the following table. Note – these measures will be updated in 2010.

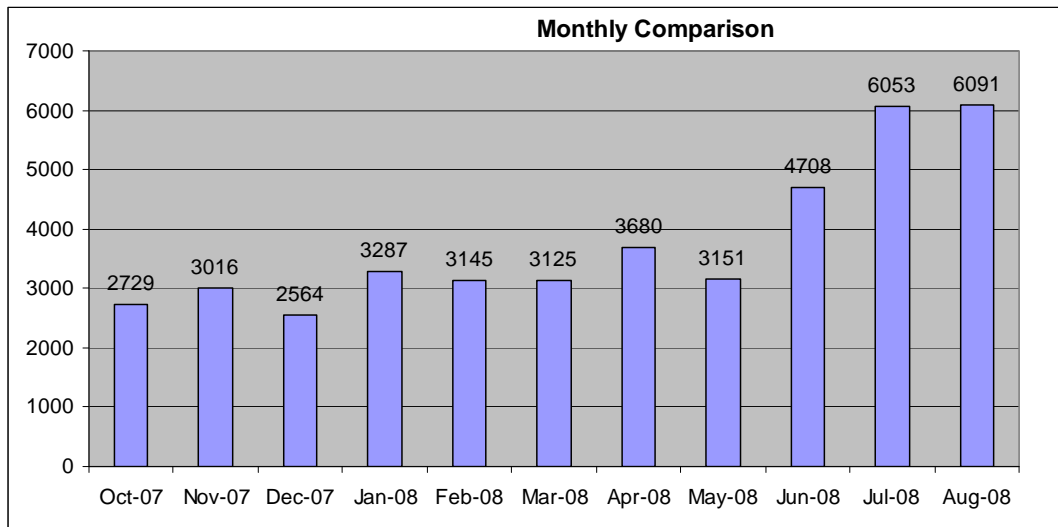
**Table 1- Performance Measures**

Total Trips		Operating Cost per Veh. Hour
Vehicle Hours		Operating Cost per Veh. Mile
Vehicle Miles		Passengers per Veh. Mile
Cost per Passenger Trip		Fare Recovery Ratio
Cost per Vehicle Mile		
Cost per Vehicle Hour		

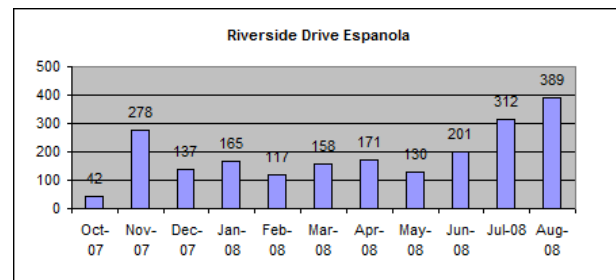
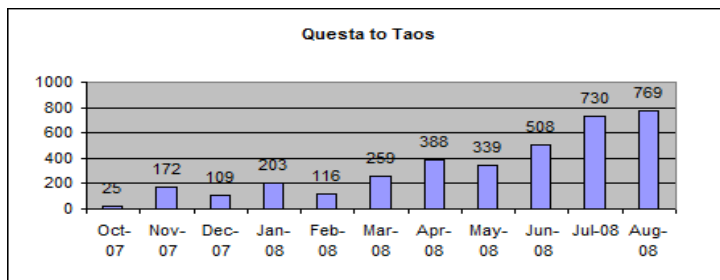
Goal #6 Reduce dependence on the auto, improve air quality.

The NCRTD has aggressively pursued a partnership with the State DOT and SECA to reduce the dependence on the private auto by supporting peak time commuter option services. More regional connection is needed and is proposed in this study. Now with the Rail Runner soon to begin service to Santa Fe, the NCRTD is preparing to implement feeder service to and from the train.

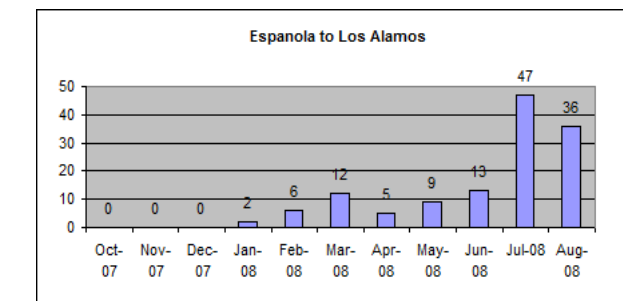
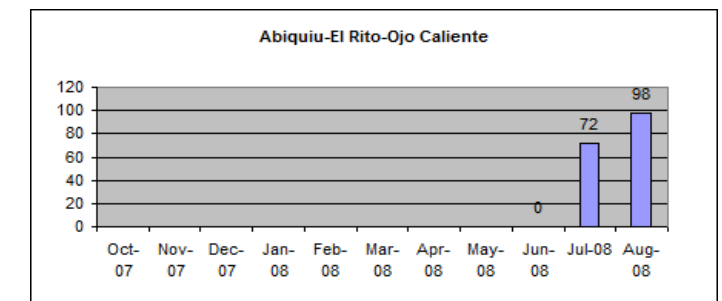
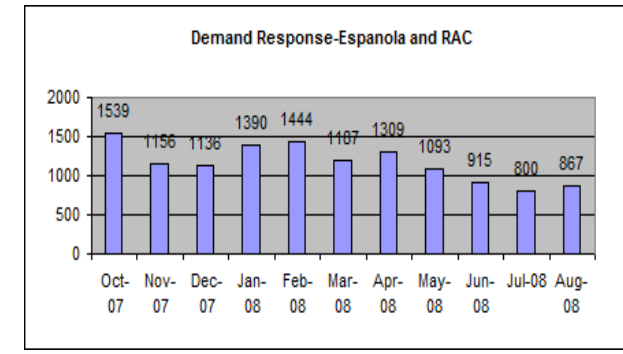
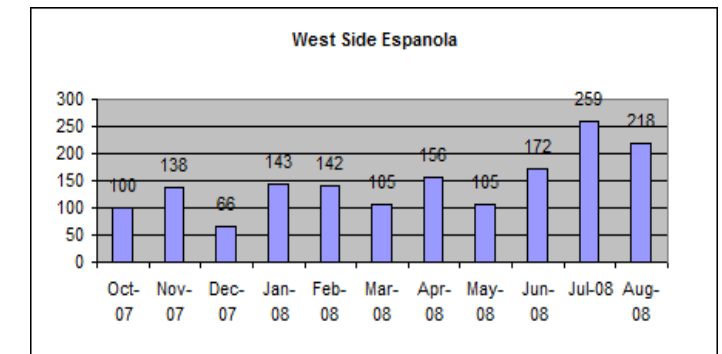
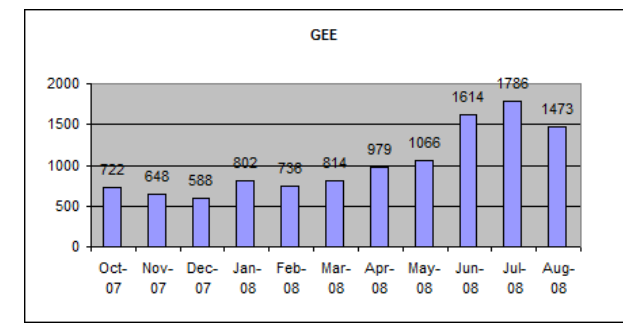
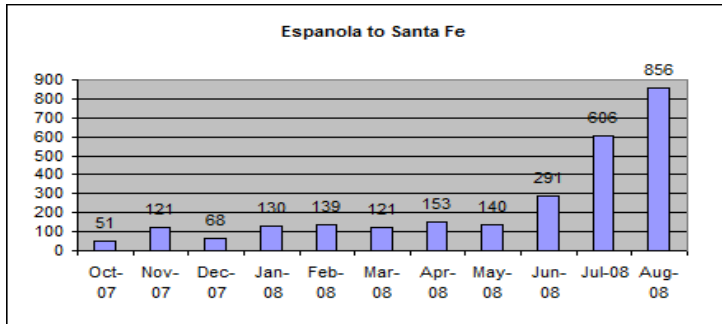
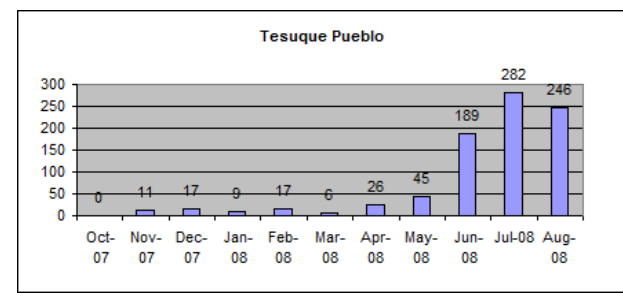
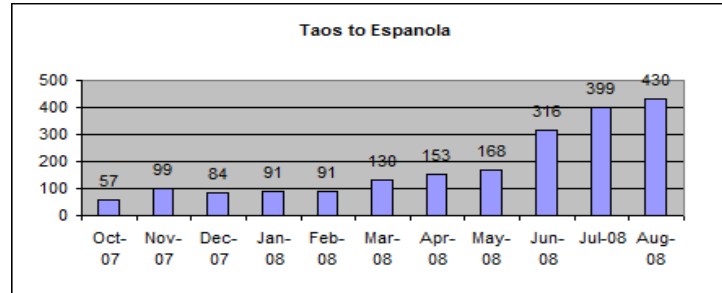
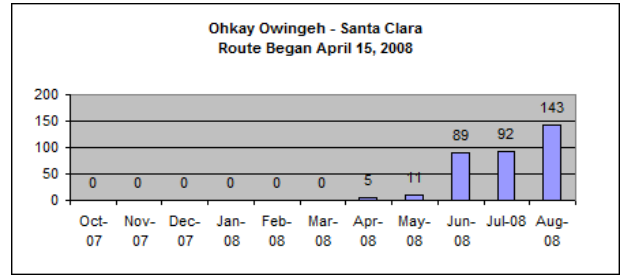
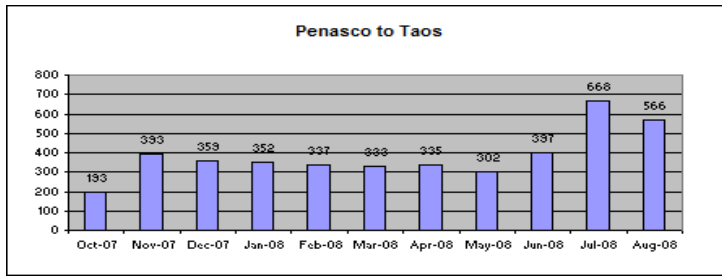
## Current NCRTD Ridership - August 2008



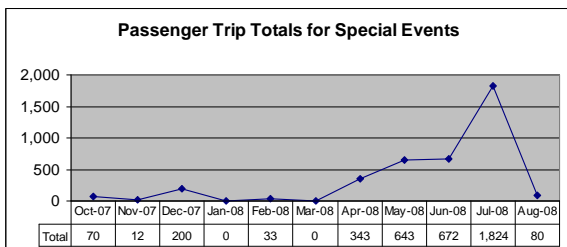
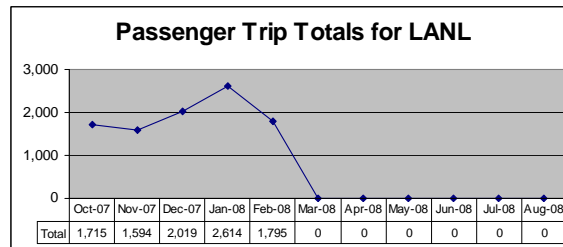
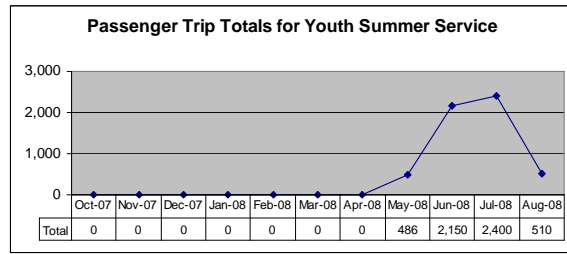
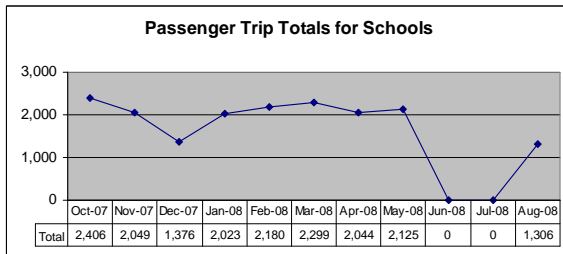
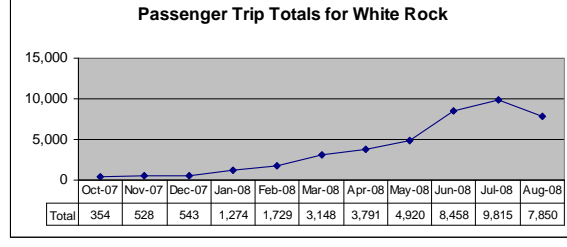
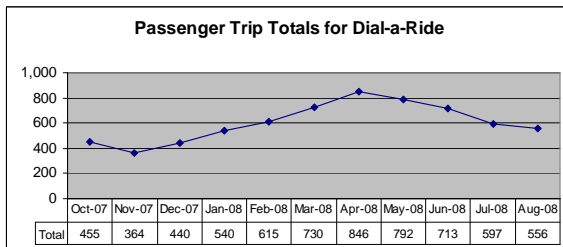
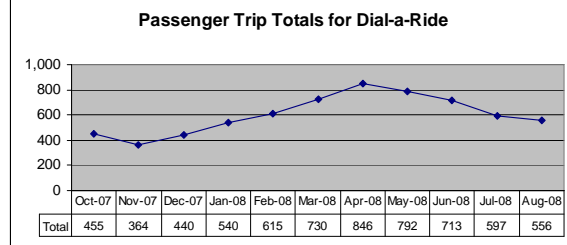
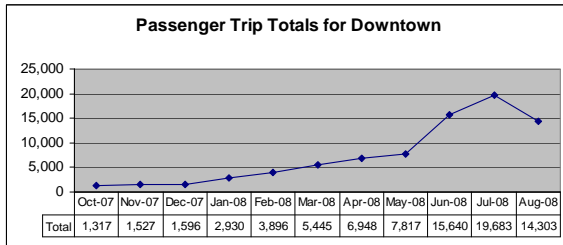
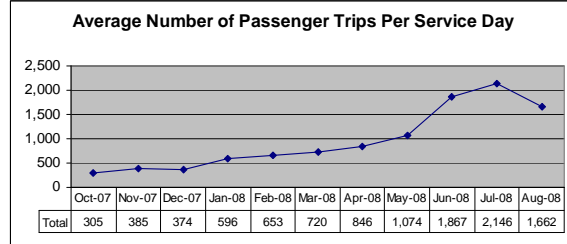
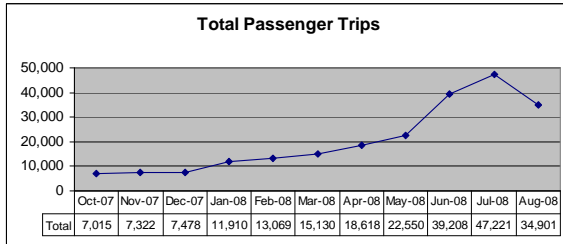
Oct-07	First month of operation
Nov-08	Free fare month
Dec-07	Schools closed for snow and Holidays
Jan-08	Promotion of RTD
Feb-08	Short month and holiday
Mar-08	Demand response decline/cold weather
Apr-08	18% increase
May-08	17% decrease - holiday and spring school break reduces riders
Jun-08	49.5% increase in ridership-free month-gas prices
Jul-08	28.5% increase in ridership-free month-gas prices
Aug-08	Increase of 38 trips



## North Central Regional Transit District Service Plan Update



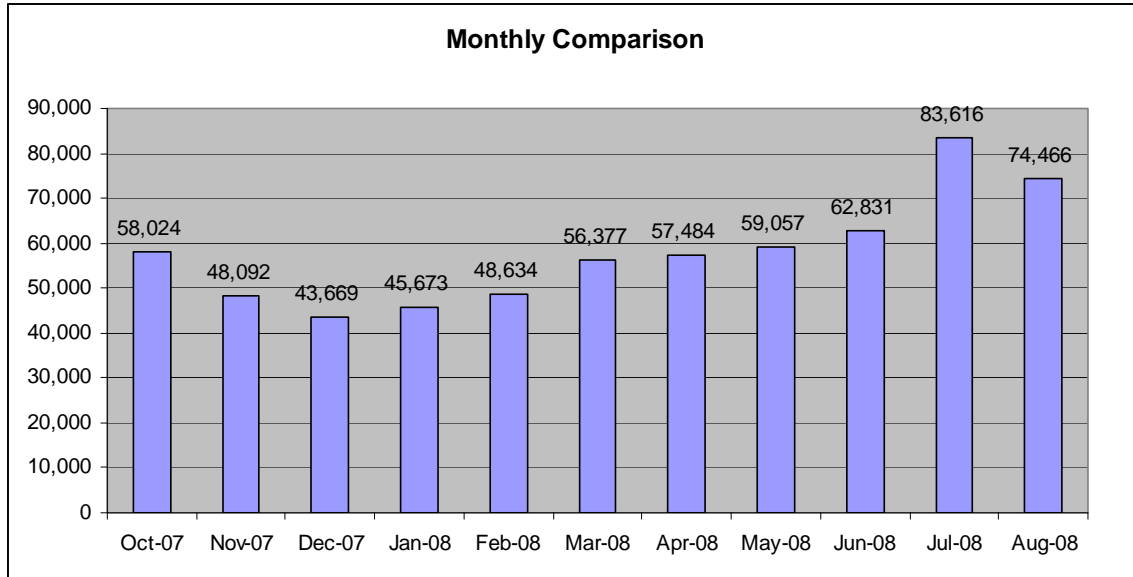
## Atomic City Transit - August 2008 Ridership Report



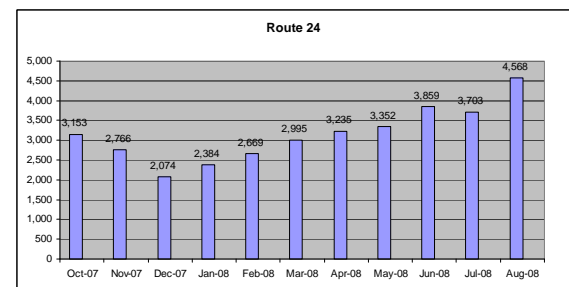
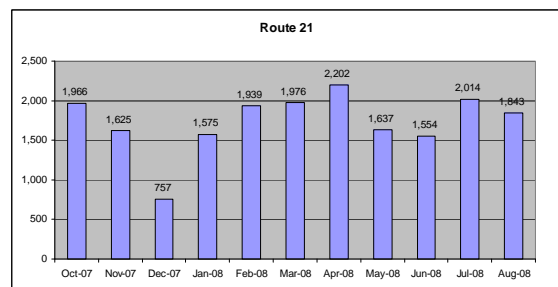
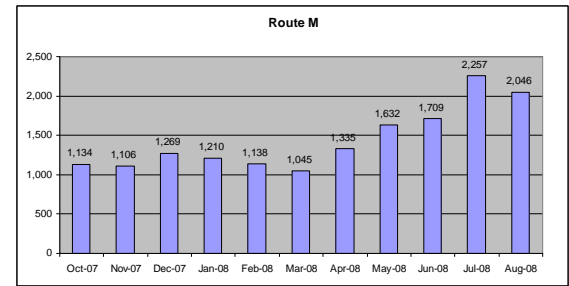
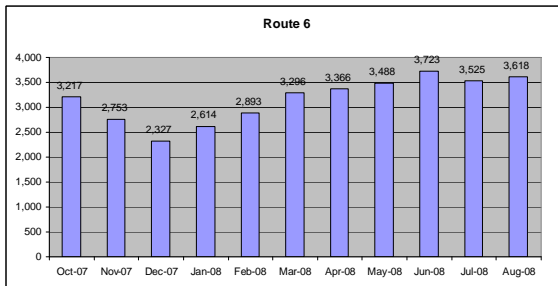
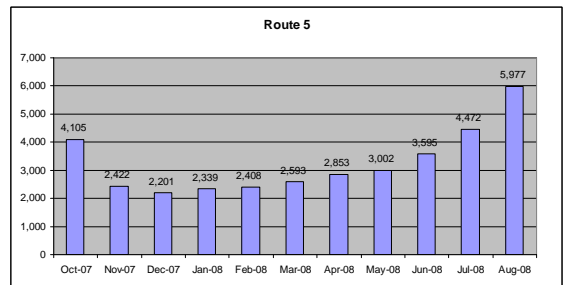
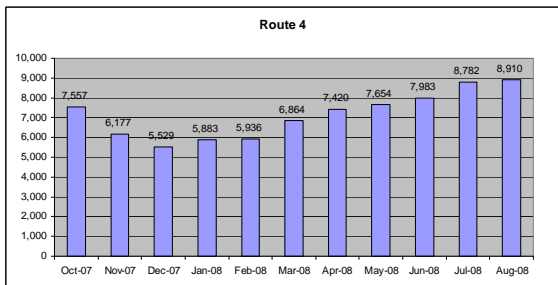
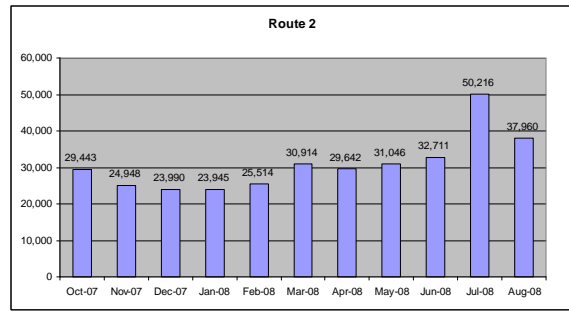
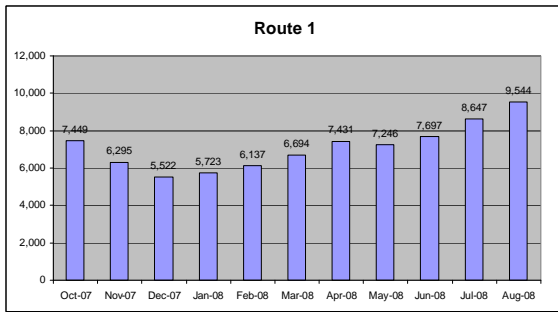
Please note the following items regarding overall ridership data:

- Service Days per Month
  - October – 23 days
  - November – 19 days
  - December – 20 days
  - January – 20 days
  - February – 20 days
  - March – 21 days
  - April – 22 days
  - May – 21 days
  - June – 21 days
  - July – 22 days
  - Aug – 21 days
- School began on August 18th, 2008 for the 2008/2009 school year.
- Special service between Sullivan Field and White Rock was provided on July 4th for fireworks display.
- School ended May 23rd, 2008 for the 2007/2008 school year. Youth Summer Service began May 27th.
- Rider contest, in coordination with Earth Day, took place the week of April 21 through April 2.
- LANL services were discontinued at 7:04 p.m. on Friday, February 22nd. Therefore, LANL services were provided for only 15 days in February and zero days in March, April, May, and June.
- Breaks occurring in December and January services which impacted ridership:
  - LANL services did not run from Dec. 24, 2007 thru Jan. 1, 2008 due to their winter break.
  - After school services did not run from Dec. 24, 2007 thru Jan. 4, 2008 due to the schools winter break.

## Santa Fe Trails Ridership – August 2008



# North Central Regional Transit District Service Plan Update



### **III. SERVICE PLAN UPDATE**

The plan focuses on the four member Counties – Santa Fe, Rio Arriba, Los Alamos and Taos and the five Pueblos – and the need for improved local and regional transit services.

The update shows the current picture of the service being provided and a recommended base level of new service that is consistent with the policies and objectives of the 2006 Plan.

#### **A. RIO ARRIBA COUNTY INCLUDING CITY OF ESPAÑOLA**

##### **1. NCRTD Transit Service within the City of Española**

The Española transit system is considered extremely well run, offering local residents a dependable and efficient service. The quality and level of service provided within the community has contributed to a much-used system and that popularity has been the main reason the service is now fixed-route regularly scheduled service. Also by way of information, most of the demand response service that was provided within the City of Espanola in 2006 has now been converted to a fixed route service.

When developing the service levels for Española the 2006 Service Plan considered three guiding principles:

- To increase the accessibility of transit to a larger number of residents within the community.
- To encourage more residents to consider the use of public transit by making improvements to the total service quality of the system.
- To coordinate local service, rural service within Rio Arriba County, regional connector service between Española, Los Alamos, Taos and Santa Fe and connections with Ohkay Owingeh and Santa Clara Pueblo

The current local service within Española has implemented two fixed routes:

Riverside Drive Route serving the main commercial core of Española in both north and south directions.

West Side Route serving Paseo de Onate, North Railroad Avenue and Coronado in both north and south directions.

Service on both routes is every 60 minutes from 6:00 am - 6:00 pm Monday through Friday.

The 2006 Service Plan proposed fixed route service east of Riverside along McCurdy, El Llano and Fairview Lane. Because of the narrowness of the road infrastructure and safety concerns through this section of Española, the area is being served by on demand service.

Also, currently there are three round-trips daily from Española to Santa Fe and two trips daily from Santa Fe to Española.

Service to Ohkay Owingeh began in April 2008, Service runs from El Duende, Chamita through the Pueblo to the casino south parking lot. This provides connections to Santa Fe, Taos and Riverside Drive in Española.

There are three trips daily between Espanola – Los Alamos-Pojoaque and the route connects with a bus in Pojoaque that travels to Santa Fe. This is mid day service and operates four hours per day.

## **2. Recommended Expansion of the Service in Española**

**The following enhancements are recommended:**

- In order to attract more riders as well as giving existing riders more travel time choice it is proposed to increase frequency of service from every 60 minutes to every 30 minutes weekdays and weekends on the fixed route service.
- It is recommended to increase the hours of service from 6:00 am - 11:30 pm weekdays. The additional two hours in the evening will assist those residents who work late, attend the Northern New Mexico College or require connecting evening local service from Santa Fe or Los Alamos.
- Introduce service on Saturdays from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm to accommodate local residents who have requested Saturday service for work, shopping, recreation and social trips within the community.
- It is recommended to increase frequency between Española and Santa Fe to hourly during the weekday between 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am-8:00 pm weekends
- Continue to work with the City of Española Public Works Department to locate safe places for buses to stop along the routes.
- Los Alamos continues to be a destination for Española residents and it is recommended that regional connector service between Española and Los Alamos be provided during weekdays and weekends. The Los Alamos Medical Center is a major destination as are general trips for shopping, recreation and social reasons. Los Alamos is planning for major expansion of its retail development in the downtown area, making it an even more attractive destination for neighboring communities.
- Development of an off-street downtown Española transit exchange to accommodate local, rural and regional transit service providers is needed. A major downtown exchange would allow all buses to travel through the heart of downtown. The main downtown transit exchange is a critical component of the transit system. It is important that the location be highly visible as it is the first point of contact potential passengers has with their transit system. A highly visible centralized location makes the overall experience of using transit safer, more convenient and ultimately increases ridership.
- Rural service within Rio Arriba County, connecting service to Los Alamos, Taos and Santa Fe should all connect at the downtown exchange.

### **3. Future Considerations**

The consultants are recommending some service additions and improvements to be considered in the future. These would take place if the community was receptive, ridership warranted and revenue was available. The cost of these improvements are not factored into this update.

- City of Española: Change 60-minute frequency to 30 minute for weekday and weekend trips between Española and Santa Fe. Hours of operation to stay the same.

### **4. Current NCRTD Transit Service in Rio Arriba County**

The North Central Regional Transit District provides fixed route and ADA transit service in many areas of Rio Arriba County and is a lifeline for those residents within the more rural areas of the County.

The provision of rural transit service is a major challenge. The travel distance, time, poor road conditions and inclement weather make it difficult to adhere to a regular public transit schedule. Rural transit ridership is generally comprised of captive riders – those persons who have little or no other viable means of transportation, such as an automobile. In terms of demographics, this group is comprised primarily of seniors, the young and low-income persons.

### **5. Recommended Expansion of Service in Rio Arriba County**

**The following enhancements are recommended:**

- Provide service six days a week – Monday through Saturday – in line with the proposed City of Española transit service.
- Expand the hours of operation from 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays matching the proposed service hours for the City of Española service.
- Introduce Saturday service from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm matching the proposed service within Española.
- Fixed rural service between Española and Tierra Amarilla on State Routes 84 and 64 should be implemented two days a week – Tuesday, Thursday. Tierra Amarilla is the location of the district court and a popular senior center. It is recommended that service be every three hours with departures from Española starting at 6:30 am and ending at 6:30 pm. It is understood that this service will not operate during the winter months when the road is hazardous or closed.
- Service between Espanola-Abiquiu-El Rito-Ojo Caliente has just started up with six trips per day between the towns.
- Consider fixed route service between Espanola and Alcalde CR 41. Currently this service is demand response. There are limitations due to safety concerns and staff will continue to evaluate.

- Currently service between Espanola and Velarde is demand response. Consideration is being given to change this service to fixed route. Service would be from 6:00 am - 7:00 pm M-F and 8:00 am - 7:00 pm on Saturday.
- Connections would be at Ohkay Owingeh for continuation to Santa Fe and Riverside Drive fixed route.
- Direct service between Rio Lucio-Dixon-Espanola should be considered. Currently there is no direct service between these three communities. Service would be from 6:00 am - 7:00 pm M-F and 8:00 am - 7:00 pm on Saturday.
- Expand hours of service to 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays.
- Introduce Saturday service from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm.
- New or improved service to the following communities and towns: Abiquiu, El Rito, Ojo Caliente, Alcalde CR 41, Velarde, Rio Lucio, Dixon, Tia Amarilla (Chama), Chamita.

## **RIO ARRIBA – PROPOSAL**



## **B. LOS ALAMOS COUNTY**

### **1. Los Alamos County Transit Service - Atomic City Transit**

The Atomic City Transit service for the County of Los Alamos and the townships of Los Alamos and White Rock area is a well-planned and successfully operating transit service, with recently improved reliability, service frequency, coverage and hours of service. All indications are that this new service is beginning to meet the needs of the community and it is appreciated. There are currently five fixed routes that provide service to the Los Alamos/White Rock area. Para-transit service is available throughout the area and the hours of service are consistent with the fixed route service. Additional morning and afternoon peak service is planned for the fall 2008 subject to final budget approval. The regional peak period commuter service operated by New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Park and Ride, continues to be highly successful. There are currently two mid-day regional trips to either Santa Fe or Española provided by the NCRTD.

### **2. Recommended Expansion of NCRTD Los Alamos County Transit Service**

**The following enhancements are recommended:**

It is recommended that mid-day regional service between Española-Los Alamos and Santa Fe-Los Alamos be every 60 minutes weekdays between the hours of 11:00 am and 2:00 pm. Furthermore, evening service between the hours of 7:00 pm and 11:30 pm should be considered. These service additions should be in the form of direct or express buses. The expanded service would greatly benefit local residents of Española, Santa Fe and Los Alamos for shopping, medical, employment, social, and recreation trips between these communities.

Atomic City Transit is proposing in 2009 to make major improvements to its route frequency.

Currently the Los Alamos neighborhood routes are served every 60 minutes all day. The White Rock route is every 80 minutes.

In 2009 the transit system is proposing the Los Alamos neighborhood routes would have 30 minute service at peak times and 60 minute during off peak. The White Rock route is proposed to change from 80 minutes to 40 minutes at peak and remain at 80 minutes during off peak.

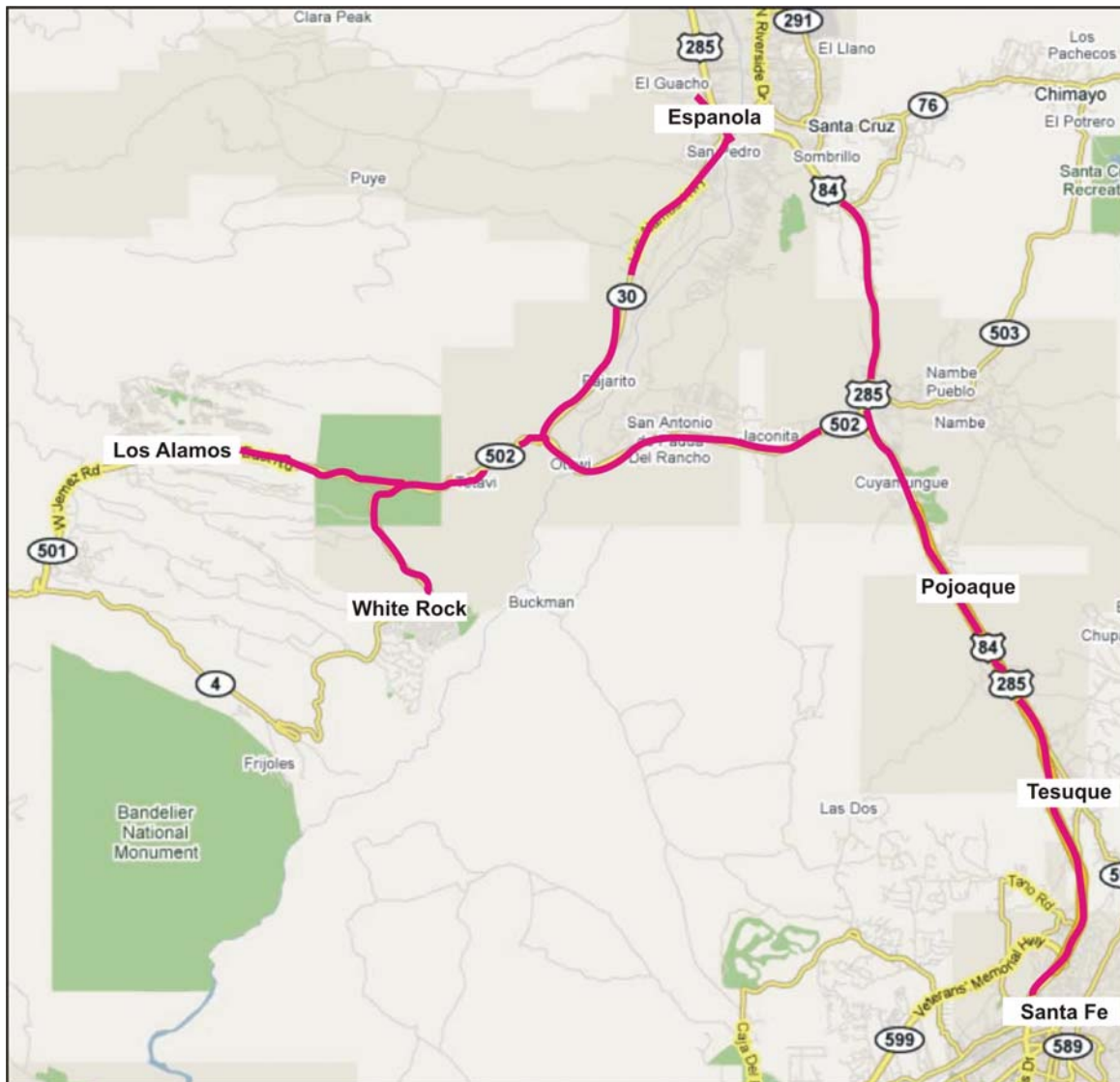
The downtown circulator, the LANL shuttle and the mid-day run will remain at 20 minute frequency.

### **3. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS**

The consultants are recommending some service additions and improvements to be considered in the future. These would take place if the community was receptive, ridership warranted and revenue was available. The cost of these improvements are not factored into this update.

- Los Alamos County - Change 60 minute frequency to 30 minute for weekday and weekend trips between Los Alamos/White Rock and Española and change 60 minute frequency to 30 minutes for weekday and weekend trips between Los Alamos/White Rock and Santa Fe.
- In addition, Atomic City Transit has developed a plan for optional services to be considered over the next several years:
  1. White Rock / Pajarito Road (peak and non peak)
  2. Bandelier Route
  3. Ski Hill Route
  4. Saturday Santa Fe Shopper
  5. Connection to Rail Runner Regional Commuter service
  6. Connection to Amtrak Service for long distance travel
  7. Sunday Service
  8. Downtown Bi-directional service every 10 minutes
  9. Neighborhood service every 30 minutes all day
  10. Reverse LANL All-Day Circulator
- Expand regional service from Los Alamos and White Rock to Española and Santa Fe to every 60 minutes during the mid-day base. Provide weekdays between the hours of 11:00 am - 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm.
- Neighborhood routes – 30 minute frequency at peak, 60 minutes at off peak times
- White Rock – 40 minute frequency at peak.

## LOS ALAMOS COUNTY - PROPOSAL



## **C. TAOS COUNTY INCLUDING THE TOWN OF TAOS**

### **1. NCRTD Transit Service in Taos County**

The NCRTD provides fixed route service in Taos County. This service is primarily outside the boundaries of the Town of Taos. There are three departures in each direction daily between Cerro and Questa and the Town of Taos. There are also two trips in each direction weekdays between Chamisal, Penasco and Vadito and the Town of Taos. Service is provided between the hours of 6:30 am - 6:30 pm weekdays.

Regional connector service between the Town of Taos and Española is provided three times daily weekdays, (5:15 am, 8:15 am - 4:30 pm) along SR 68 and 84. The Safe Economical Commuting Alternative (SECA) provides vanpool service between Taos and Santa Fe. Other routes are being planned to include Los Alamos.

### **2. Recommended Expansion of Service in Taos County**

**The following enhancements are recommended:**

- Increase frequency of the existing rural transit service within the County of Taos from 6:00 am – 8:00 pm weekdays and from 8:00 am – 8:00 pm on Saturdays to meet demand as needed.
- Introduce weekday and Saturday hourly service between 9:00 am – 3:00 pm serving the Taos area and Espanola, with timed transfer connections southbound to Santa Fe.
- Increase ADA service throughout Taos County by adding more vehicles and offering service between the hours of 6:00 am – 8:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am – 8:00 pm Saturdays to meet the demand as needed.
- Create a college express route between Taos and UNM Klauer Campus. Proposed service would be from 7:00 am – 9:00 pm weekdays.
- Create a route between Taos and Arroyo Seco with trip frequency as needed to accommodate demand at peak times throughout the week. Route days to be established to accommodate demand. This route between Taos and Arroyo Seco would connect with the Chili Line on the north end of town.
- Create a year round route at peak times between Questa and Red River. Service would be from 6:00 am – 8:00 pm Monday – Saturday.
- Establish a new route between Questa-Costilla-Amalia and provide trips between 6:00 am and 7:00 pm with route days to accommodate demand. This service would connect at Questa for continued service to Taos and Red River and be adjusted as demand increases and decreases.
- Establish service to the Questa-Red River area daily between 6:00 am and 8:00 pm seven days a week if demand allows, including establishing service to Eagle Nest. Service to Eagle Nest contingent upon negotiations with Colfax County and NCRTD Board approval. The potential Eagle Nest service would be primarily for winter ski activities, but could be expanded year round if the demand allows.

- Establish service to Chevron Mining, Inc. from Taos-Questa and Amalia-Costilla, with the provision of a cooperative agreement with Chevron Mining, Inc.
- Establish new service to Los Cordovas and Blueberry Hill area via Highway 240.

### **3. Town of Taos (Chile Line)**

The Chile Line transit system is owned and operated by the Town of Taos and is under the administration of the Public Works department. The north and south routes operate Monday through Saturday starting at 7:00 am and ending at 5:38 pm. Service is provided in an abbreviated form on Sundays.

The consultants are recommending that the Town of Taos join the NCRTD as an active member as was done by Taos County. This would ensure that the residents of the Town and County are receiving the maximum benefits of a coordinated transit system. Improvements to schedules, routes and areas covered would provide greater choice and options to the residents and tourists as well.

The following enhancements to the Chili Line services should be considered.

Chili Line-Red Route:

- Change the hours of service to be from 6:00 am - 7:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am - 8:00 pm Saturday and Sunday, or to accommodate demand as needed.
- Establish service through Ranchitos via Highway 240 to Ranchos de Taos. This service route addition is contingent on NCRTD Board approval.

Chili Line Expansion:

- Provide service to residential areas on Canon East and Canon West businesses.
- Service would be from 6:00 am - 7:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am - 8:00 pm Saturday and Sunday, or to accommodate demand as needed.

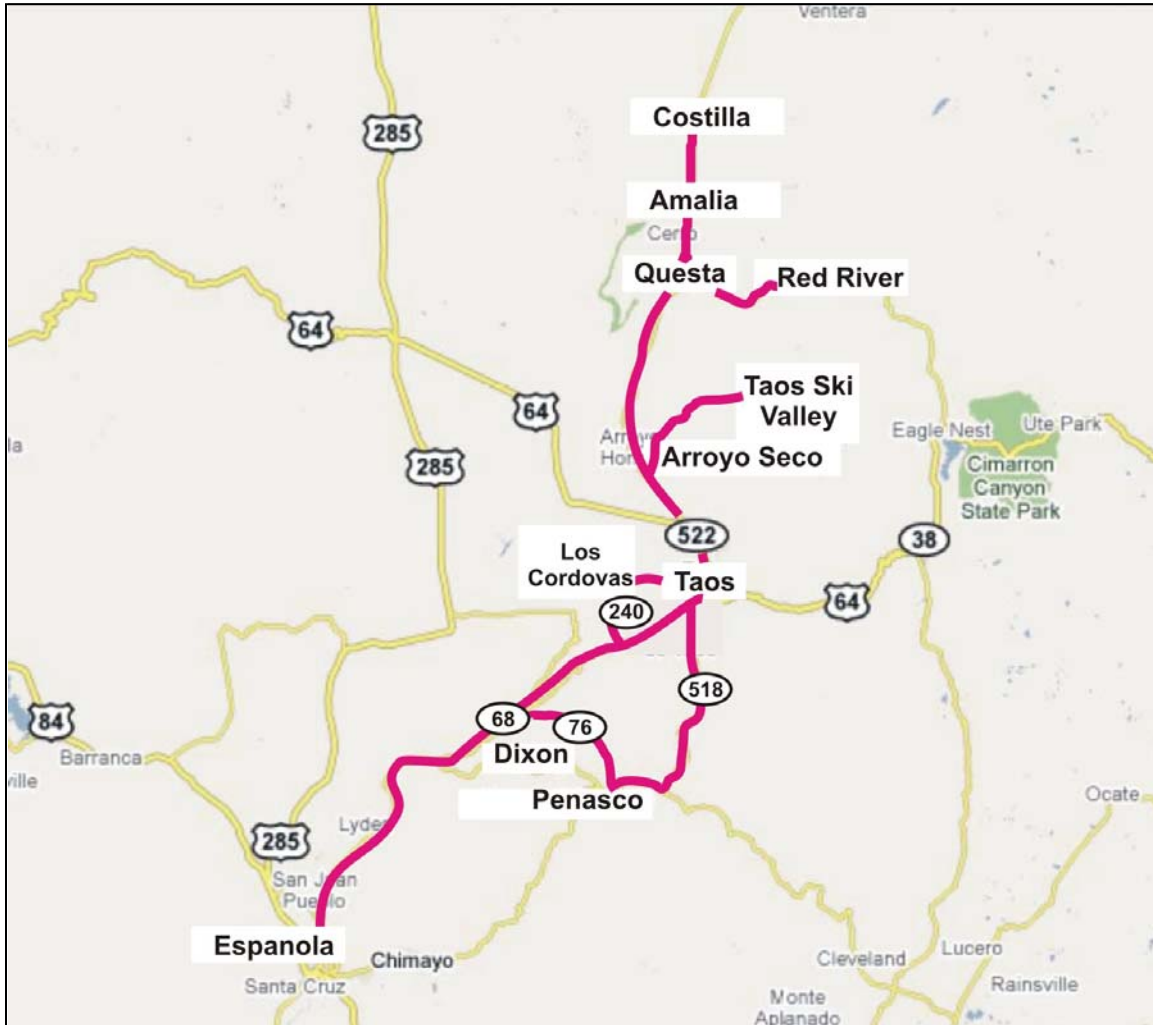
ADA Service:

- Increase the number of vehicles
- Increase the hours of service from 6:00 am - 7:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am - 8:00 pm on Saturday, or to accommodate demand as needed.

General Service Improvements:

- Connections to the Rail Runner Regional Commuter service.
- New or improved service to the following communities and towns: Questa, Arroyo Seca, UNM Klauer Campus, Red River, Costilla, Amalia, Chevron Mining, Inc., Taos Ski Valley, Los Cordovas, Blueberry Hill, Rancho de Taos.

## TAOS COUNTY - PROPOSAL



## **D. SANTA FE COUNTY / CITY OF SANTA FE – SANTA FE TRAILS**

**The recommendations presented in this update represent suggestions made by staff of Santa Fe County and Santa Fe Trails. The final decision on service improvements will be made jointly by the Regional Planning Authority, the NCRTD, Santa Fe County and the City of Santa Fe.**

### **1. NCRTD Transit Service in Santa Fe County**

Demand for increased rural service in the County of Santa Fe continues to grow. New service that started in January 2008 from Edgewood, Moriarty, Stanley through to Eldorado and Santa Fe provides much needed service to the south end of Santa Fe County, service is presently is contracted to All Aboard America. Service is from 6:00 am – 7:04 pm. Additional service to offer more frequency and travel time choices for residents is already been requested. Service between Eldorado and Santa Fe, starting in late 2007, is now well established and there is interest within the community for increased service. The bedroom communities along Highway 14 such as Cerrillos, Madrid and Golden are dependent on Santa Fe for work, medical, social, shopping and recreation activities.

### **2. Recommended Service in Santa Fe County**

**The following enhancements are recommended:**

With the agreement of the County and City of Santa Fe, the planning for new services will be carried out by staff from those agencies. NCRTD will provide a fixed financial contribution to the County for these services. In 2009-2010 \$2.4 million is budgeted to fund the local service portion of the Regional Rail Service. The Rail Runner is being managed by a partnership between the Mid Region Council of Governments and the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Santa Fe County is responsible for providing a share of the operating costs. Resolution 2008-11 established a distribution process between the NCRTD and Santa Fe County that provides funds for the suggested improvements listed in this update. Construction on phase II Bernalillo to Santa Fe is scheduled to be completed by December 2008 and service to Santa Fe will start shortly thereafter. Phase I, with service in the Albuquerque area started in July of 2006 and expanded between Belen and Bernalillo a year later.

#### **Greater El Dorado Expansion**

- Propose Expand hours from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm Monday – Friday, and 8:00 am - 8:00 pm on Saturday to Eldorado/Santa Fe.

#### **Santa Fe County NM 14 Route**

- Cerrillos-Madrid-Golden this would be a new route.
- Route times would be 6:00 am - 8:00 pm Monday through Friday
- Would provide approx 3 round trips per day.

#### Community College District Route

- Increase the service currently being provided by Santa Fe Trails.
- Create a route providing 7 round trips per day.
- Hours would be 6:00 am - 8:00 pm Monday through Friday and 8:00 am - 8:00 pm Saturday. Hourly service.

#### Pojoaque Corridor

- Presently there are three round trips per day through this corridor provided by Rio Arriba County from Espanola to Santa Fe.
- Propose Rio Arriba support Espanola to Pojoaque, and Santa Fe County support Pojoaque to Santa Fe.
- Service from 6:00 am - 8:00 pm Monday through Friday. Provide 5 round trips per day.

#### Espanola-Chimayo-Pojoaque

- Presently there is no bus service in this area.
- Create approx 6 round trips per day from 6:00 am - 8:00 pm. Trips would be at peak times only.

### **3. Recommended Service in the City of Santa Fe**

(Per service recommendations of Santa Fe Trails)

#### Route 6 Service Frequency Improvements

- Expansion to Southside and Eastside residents, the hospital, and the anticipated Rail Runner station at Zia Road.
- The expansion would provide improved weekday service frequency of 30 minutes to the present 60 minute frequency.
- Operation would be for 30 hours daily.

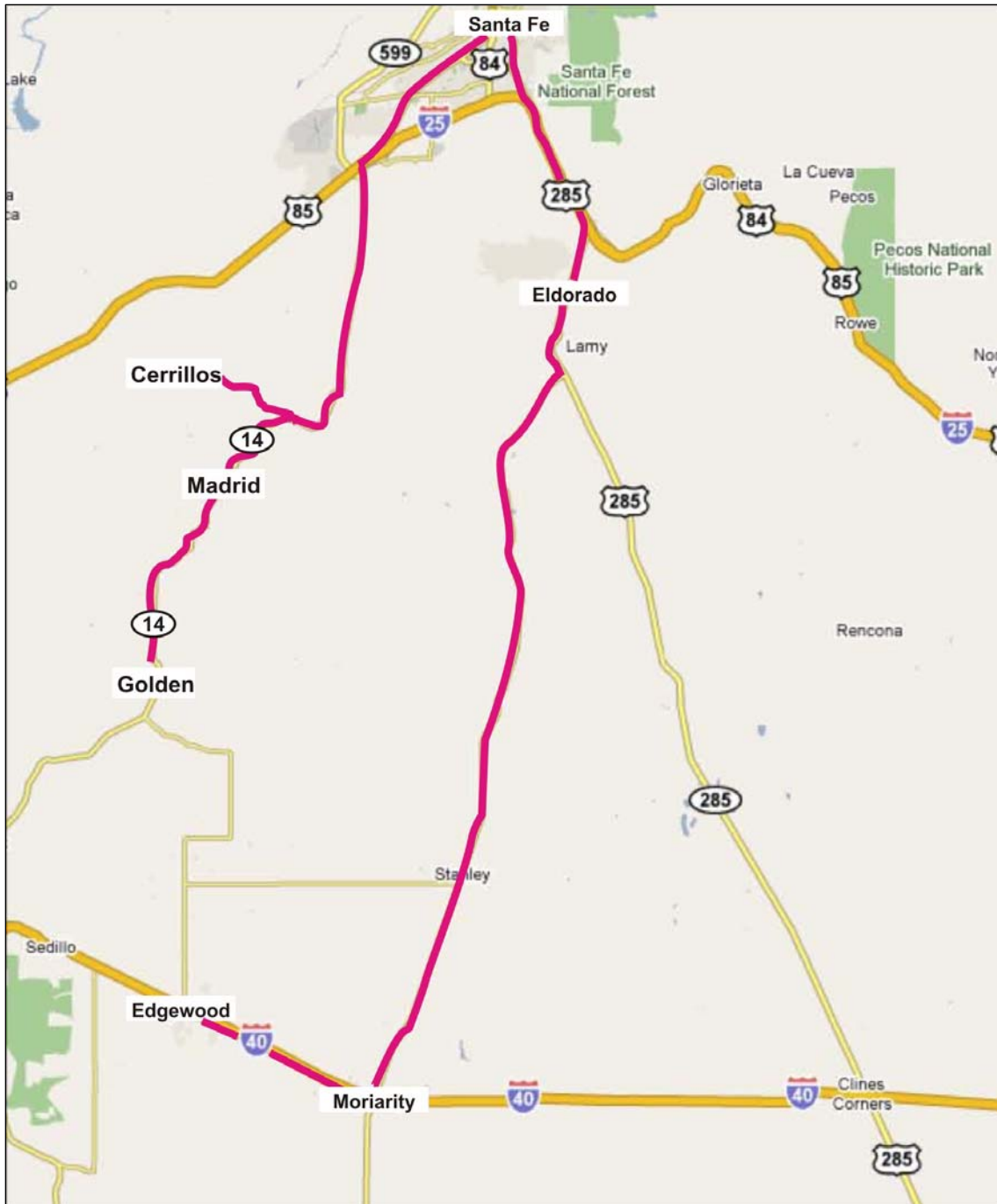
#### Route 4 Service Frequency Improvement

- Expansion to Southside and Mid-city residents, state offices, and the anticipated Rail Runner station at the NMDOT General Office.
- Would provide improved weekday service frequency of 15 minutes from present 30 minute service.
- Operation would be for 30 hours of daily service.

#### Route 2 Service Extension

- Expansion to provide new service along Cerrillos Road south of Rodeo Road to serve the state offices, growing retail establishments, and the anticipated Rail Runner station at NM 599.
- Expansion would provide new weekday service to meet anticipated Rail Runner arrivals and a new connection to the Santa Fe Place Transit Center.
- Operation would be for 24 hours of daily service.

## CITY OF SANTA FE / SANTA FE COUNTY – PROPOSAL



## **E. PUEBLO TRANSIT SERVICE**

### **1. Pueblo Transit Service**

NCRTD is the major service provider for transit service to the Pueblos of Tesuque, Pojoaque, Ohkay Owingeh, San Ildefonso and Santa Clara.

There are two types of service that must be available to meet the mobility needs of the residents of each of the Pueblos: internal circulation and regional trips.

Internal circulation routing within each Pueblo remains minimal with most pueblos still requiring greater internal circulation to meet the needs of local residents than is currently provided.

Regional trips providing the ability to access services outside the Pueblos is key to many residents. The trip purpose is the same as for those not living in the Pueblo, i.e. work, medical, social and recreation.

### **2. Recommended Expansion of Pueblo Transit Service**

**The following enhancements are recommended:**

For both internal circulation and regional trips:

- Increase the hours and days of service to be consistent with the other areas of the NCRTD, hourly service starting at 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays and 8:00 am - 8:00 pm Saturdays.
- Respecting the sanctity and sovereignty of tribal lands, internal circulation service will be determined by the Pueblos.

It is important to coordinate and consolidate as much service between the Pueblos and other areas within the NCRTD. For example, The Ohkay Owingeh transit service is linked to the Española system. Ohkay Owingeh is the north end terminus of the Riverside Drive transit route that has service every 60 minutes weekdays. Ohkay Owingeh is also served by the regional connector service between the Town of Taos and the City of Española.

## PUEBLO TRANSIT SERVICE – PROPOSAL



## F. NCRTD REGIONAL SERVICE

Regional transit service is an integral part of the transportation network within the NCRTD. Presently, NMDOT is the primary provider of regional transit commuter service through the State Park & Ride program. The service is focused primarily on the morning and afternoon commuter market with a limited number of off-peak trips between certain communities.

There is growing demand for off peak or mid-day regional service. Regional mid-day service is constantly facing challenges including increased ridership and demand for more service. Although discussed earlier in each separate county section, the study team would like to highlight the importance of this service by illustrating all the proposed improvements in this one section. In order for this regional service to maintain success it will require a concerted effort by the local transit providers, municipalities and the NCRTD to increase the exposure of the regional transit service through a coordinated information and marketing campaign to 'educate the service' to local residents.

### Recommended Regional Connections Summary

Origin	Destination	Schedule Frequency (weekday only)
Los Alamos/ White Rock	Santa Fe	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm. Evening – from 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm.
Los Alamos/ White Rock	Española	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm. Evening – from 6:00 pm - 11:30 pm.
Española	Santa Fe	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 6:00 am - 8:00 pm.
Española	Los Alamos/ White Rock	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm. Evening – from 6:00 pm - 11:30 pm.
Santa Fe	Española	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm.
Santa Fe	Los Alamos/ White Rock	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 11:00 am - 2:00 pm. Evening – from 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm.
Taos	Española	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 5:15 am - 8:00 pm.
Española	Taos	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 9:00 am - 3:00 pm.
Pojoaque	Santa Fe	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 6:00 am - 8:00 pm.
Tesuque	Santa Fe	Every 60 minutes mid-day – from 6:00 am - 8:00 pm.

The mid-day trips will coordinate at the main downtown transit stop in Taos, Española and Los Alamos. White Rock passengers will have a timed connection with the regional service provider. In Española, passengers from San Ildelfonso, Santa Clara, San Juan as well as the NCRTD, local City of Española and rural transit will meet for a timed connection. Pojoaque and Tesuque residents will be picked up on route because of their location adjacent to Highway 84/285.

## IV. SUMMARY OF TRANSIT SERVICE PROPOSALS

Service Community Area	Description of Service
City of Española	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed-Route Transit</li> <li>• Increase frequency of service to every 30 minutes.</li> <li>• Increase hours of service to 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays.</li> <li>• Introduce Saturday service from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm.</li> </ul>
Rio Arriba County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand hours of service to 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays.</li> <li>• Introduce Saturday service from 8:00 am - 8:00pm.</li> <li>• New or improved service to the following communities and towns: Abiquiu, El Rito, Ojo Caliente, Alcalde CR 41, Velarde, Rio Lucio, Dixon, Tia Amarilla (Chama), El Duende, Chamita.</li> </ul>
Los Alamos County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand regional service from Los Alamos and White Rock to Española and Santa Fe to every 60 minutes during the mid-day base. Provide weekdays between the hours of 11:00 am and 2:00 pm and 7:00 pm and 10:00 pm.</li> <li>• Neighborhood routes – 30 minute frequency at peak, 60 minutes at off peak times.</li> <li>• White Rock – 40 minute frequency at peak.</li> </ul>
Taos County, Town of Taos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand hours of service to 6:00 am - 7:00 pm weekdays.</li> <li>• Increase frequency between Taos and Espanola</li> <li>• Introduce Saturday service from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm, or to accommodate demand as needed.</li> <li>• Sunday service on the Chili Line.</li> <li>• Expansion to cover Canon East and West.</li> <li>• Increase ADA service hours weekdays and weekends.</li> <li>• Increase frequency and coverage of rural transit service.</li> <li>• New or improved service to the following communities and towns: Questa, Arroyo Seco , UNM Klauer Campus, Red River, Costilla, Amalia, Questa-Red River, Chevron Mining, Inc , Taos Ski Valley, Los Cordovas, Blueberry Hill, Rancho de Taos.</li> </ul>
Pojoaque Pueblo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local circulatory service within Pojoaque, local service into Española, direct regional service into Santa Fe.</li> <li>• 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays.</li> <li>• 8:00 am - 8:00 pm weekends.</li> </ul>
Tesuque Pueblo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local circulatory service within Tesuque, local service into Española, direct regional service into Santa Fe.</li> <li>• 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays.</li> <li>• 8:00 am - 8:00 pm weekends.</li> </ul>
San IldelfonsoPueblo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local circulatory service within San Ildelfonso, local service into Española, direct regional service into Santa Fe.</li> </ul>
Santa Clara Pueblo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local circulatory service within Santa Clara, local service into Española, direct regional service into Santa Fe.</li> <li>• 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays.</li> <li>• 8:00 am - 8:00 pm weekends.</li> </ul>
Ohkay Owingeh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local circulatory service within Ohkay Owingeh, 30-minute service into Española, direct regional service into Santa Fe.</li> <li>• 6:00 am - 8:00 pm weekdays.</li> <li>• 8:00 am - 8:00 pm weekends.</li> </ul>

Santa Fe County	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rail Runner Commuter Rail Service.</li><li>• Expansion of Greater Eldorado/Edgewood Service.</li><li>• Community College District.</li><li>• NM 14 Route Cerillos-Madrid-Golden.</li></ul>
City of Santa Fe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Route 2 Service Extension.</li><li>• Route 4 Service Frequency Improvements.</li><li>• Route 6 Service Frequency Improvements.</li><li>• Hwy 599/I-25 Rail Runner Depot to Santa Fe Plaza Service.</li></ul>

## **Ridership**

The NCRTD has experienced significant ridership gains during the first 10 months of starting service. Due to improvements to existing routes, implementation of new routes, coordination of services, marketing and promotion; ridership have grown 122% in this short period. External factors such as high gas prices also have contributed to the gains. Increased growth in ridership can be expected in the short-term if the recommended expansions in the 2008 update are realized. As the fixed-route service begins to appeal to residents and the benefits of regularly scheduled service, increased hours and days of service and timed connections with regional services becomes increasingly popular; we anticipate a ridership improvement of 5% to 10% per year (in the intermediate term of three to five years). A big part of the success of the service will be in the delivery of key performance indicators such as on-time performance, guaranteed timed connections as well as a strong marketing campaign to increase local awareness of public transit.

## **V. NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSIONS**

It is recommended that the North Central Regional Transportation District Board – and its respective local governments:

- 1) Approve the service plan update as a guide for transit planning and service delivery at the October 3, 2008 Board Meeting, and direct staff to enter into Transit Service Agreements with the member Counties.
- 2) Move forward with the funding proposal and seek voter approval for a County Regional Transit Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) in November 2008.
- 3) Meet with NCRTD member jurisdictions to negotiate Transit Service Agreements and to finalize operations plans for new services and annual performance measures.
- 4) Direct NCRTD staff to proceed with more detailed planning work. (routing, stops, signs, shelters, schedules).
- 5) Direct NCRTD staff to prepare detailed operations, capital and administration budgets together with financial plans for revenue allocations.

When the tax is approved:

- 1) Create and implement a marketing and promotion plan.
- 2) Determine a start date(s) for new services.
- 3) Order buses and other capital needs (shelters, signs etc.).
- 4) Hire and train operating and maintenance personnel.
- 5) Start Service.

### **Conclusions and Moving Forward**

In order for any of these recommendations to be realized, the affected communities must endorse and support the funding proposal being considered. Also the expansion in transit services, outlined in the service plan, involves a major commitment to improving local transit services on the part of the NCRTD.

In return, the NCRTD must require certain commitments from the communities that will benefit from the new or improved services, particularly in the case of major expansions, which involve moving to a new, or much more comprehensive and expensive level of local and regional transit services. In these cases, the community needs to commit to policies that will be supportive of the new regional transit service. It is the NCRTD's responsibility to drive this process. The member jurisdictions must reaffirm their commitment to the original concepts of regional service as defined in the 2006 Service Plan:

- All decisions are made on the basis of what's best for the region.
- Service improvements made at the local level must be consistent and complementary with the overall service philosophy of the region.

## VI. FINANCIAL SCENARIOS

**Chart 1 – Draft Annual Budget 2009-2010  
Revenue and Distribution Proposal**

1/8 GRT Collected in four Counties	\$7,955,274
Less 3% State Collection Fee	(\$240,000)
	\$7,715,274
Revenue from Federal Grants	\$1,410,227
	\$9,125,501
Revenue from local matching funds	\$542,257
	\$9,667,758
Revenue from Los Alamos County GRT	\$800,000
	\$10,467,758
RailRunner Distribution**	(\$2,291,542)
	\$8,176,216
Santa Fe City/County Service Plan Distribution 86%**	(\$1,970,726)
	\$6,205,490
NCRTD Distribution 14%**	(\$320,816)
	\$5,884,674
Taos, Rio Arriba, Los Alamos Counties Service Plan Distribution	(\$4,088,120)
	\$1,796,554
NCRTD Administration	(\$1,000,000)
	\$796,554
Capital Purchases (vehicles and shelters)	(\$296,554)
	\$500,000
NCRTD ending fund balance requirement	(\$500,000)
	<u>\$0</u>

\*\* Refer to Chart 2 on page 32.

**Chart 2 – Santa Fe City/County Revenue Distribution\*\***

<b>1/8 GRT Collection in Santa Fe County</b>	<b>\$4,583,084</b>
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**Distribution**

RailRunner receives 50%	\$2,291,542
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Santa Fe City/County receives 50%	\$2,291,542
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Per resolution 2008-11, Santa Fe City/County receives  
86% of the 50% to be distributed as follows:

Santa Fe Trails	\$1,022,899
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Santa Fe County	<u>\$947,826</u>
	\$1,970,726

The 14% remainder goes to the NCRTD  
for administration and operations. (RailRunner connections).

\$320,816
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Charts 3 and 4 reflect the capital needs for the NCRTD for a three-year period showing the different percentage of Federal funding. These charts are used as an example to illustrate the significant difference in NCRTD contributions based on the Federal participation, which is uncertain.

**Chart 3 - NCRTD Capital Plan 2010-2012**

<u>Facility*</u>		Federal Match 80%	NCRTD Local Match 20%
	\$5,500,000	\$4,400,000	\$1,100,000
Transfer Centers Shelters Signs P&R lot spaces	\$3,500,000	\$2,800,000	\$700,000
<u>Rolling Stock</u>	\$7,460,800	\$5,968,640	\$1,492,160
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,460,800</b>	<b>\$13,168,640</b>	<b>\$3,292,160</b>

\* Maint, Ops, Admin Facility in Espanola

**Chart 4 - NCRTD Capital Plan 2010-2012**

<u>Facility*</u>		Federal Match 40%	NCRTD Local Match 60%
	\$5,500,000	\$2,200,000	\$3,300,000
Transfer Centers Shelters Signs P&R lot spaces	\$3,500,000	\$1,400,000	\$2,100,000
<u>Rolling Stock</u>	\$7,460,800	\$2,984,320	\$4,476,480
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$16,460,800</b>	<b>\$6,584,320</b>	<b>\$9,876,480</b>

\* Maint, Ops, Admin Facility in Espanola

There will be a need to purchase a considerable number of transit vehicles once the tax is established.

These charts are an example of two scenarios showing the capital needed and what the costs will be to the NCRTD based on different percentages of federal funding.

As the detailed planning moves forward toward implementation, the NCRTD staff must decide what mix of vehicle sizes are needed.

The cost per vehicle is calculated at a 2008 price.

**Chart 5 - Fleet Requirements – 80/20 Match**

		Cost / Per Vehicle	Total	Federal Match 80%	NCRTD Local Match 20%
Year 1					
8 Replacements 25-40 Passenger	8	\$120,000	\$960,000	\$768,000	\$192,000
19 New Vehicles 25-40 Passenger	19	\$120,000	\$2,280,000	\$1,824,000	\$456,000
2 New 57 Passenger	2	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$800,000	\$200,000
Year 2					
9 Replacements (10% inflation)	9	\$132,000	\$1,188,000	\$950,400	\$237,600
Year 3					
4 Replacements	4	\$145,200	\$580,800	\$464,640	\$116,160
10 New (10% inflation)	10	\$145,200	\$1,452,000	\$1,161,600	\$290,400
Totals	52		\$7,460,800	\$5,968,640	\$1,492,160

**Chart 6 - Fleet Requirements – 40/60 Match**

		Cost	Total	Federal Match 40%	NCRTD Local Match 60%
Year 1					
8 Replacements 25-40 Passenger	8	\$120,000	\$960,000	\$384,000	\$576,000
19 New Vehicles 25-40 Passengers	19	\$120,000	\$2,280,000	\$912,000	\$1,368,000
2 New 57 Passenger	2	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$400,000	\$600,000
Year 2					
9 Replacements (10% inflation)	9	\$132,000	\$1,188,000	\$475,200	\$712,800
Year 3					
4 Replacements	4	\$145,200	\$580,800	\$232,320	\$348,480
10 New (10% inflation)	10	\$145,200	\$1,452,000	\$580,800	\$871,200
Totals	52		\$7,460,800	\$2,984,320	\$4,476,480



**North Central Regional Transit District**

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