Technical Memorandum No. 5
Transit Needs and Strategies

INTRODUCTION

This critical technical memorandum addresses the service area unmet needs and the strategies to be employed to:

- Address unmet needs now and in the future
- Improve customer service, safety and security
- Ensure sustainability for the future
- Present a variety of service changes

There are a variety of transportation systems that serve the Santa Fe area. The needs and strategies developed in this technical memorandum include recommendations for each of the bus systems, in keeping with their own planning efforts (where applicable). The needs were compiled and determined through a variety of input and observation. These included:

- Demographic data and analysis of land uses
- Review of other plans and reports
- On board observation of each route
- Direct communication with about 100 of customers
- Meetings with advocates, human service agencies and others
- Extensive field observation
- Extensive surveys of riders and non-riders
- Public meetings and focus groups
- Discussions with the various transit systems

REVIEW OF NEEDS

Stakeholder Needs

The extensive review of needs indicated a wide variety of needs related to the service, communications, marketing and a variety of other issues. These are as follows:
Service Hours/Frequency

By far service hours and days brought out the most comments. College students in particular wanted later hours, but so did other riders and in the surveys that was clearly the biggest issue. Service later in the evenings and particularly on the weekend as well as more service on Saturdays was a very popular theme.

Origins and Destinations – Unserved and Underserved

While Santa Fe Trails (SFT) does a good job of service area coverage, there are some areas that remain unserved at this time. Figure 5-1 depicts the locations where service or improved service is needed.

Figure 5-1: Origins and Destinations in Need of Service or Additional Service
Unserved

Unserved areas that were identified as areas in need include the following:

- Santa Fe Ski Basin
- La Cienega

Underserved or Ineffective

Many participants in the process indicated that there were additional areas that were often underserved based on the time of day or days of service. These include:

- Santa Fe Community College – Night service until the end of evening classes and extended Saturday service.
- St. John’s College – Late night service on weekends.
- Agua Fria – Many expressed a need for more service in the Agua Fria area. Shopping was often cited as a need.
- Medical Facilities – Improved access to the hospital.
- Human Services – Improved access to the Health Department, WICs, food pantries, and other locations.
- Airport – Some feel that there is a need for service to the Santa Fe Municipal Airport.
- Southside – Improved access to shopping.

Service Needs

The review of the existing services identified a number of areas where coordination within one system or between systems can be improved.

Communications/Marketing

Many wanted better communication between the transit systems and riders, expressing a desire for apps, real time information and websites. A one stop website and telephone number for all transit systems was suggested. Both the tourist group and the college group thought all transit systems needed to market the hotels, colleges and other tourist destinations. Human service agency representatives also suggested that transit market services to their clients. One commenter suggested partnering with these entities. A number of stakeholders suggested rebranding Santa Fe Trails (SFT).

Safety and Security

While this issue did not register high amongst the survey respondents, it was brought up repeatedly in interviews, focus groups and other meetings. The issues revolved around a perception of a problem
with intoxicated riders or persons loitering by a stop. The other safety issue was bus stop lighting and access. There was a perception among many that the Sheridan Street Transfer facility was unsafe.

**Bus Stops and Transfer Facilities**

The Sheridan Street Transfer facility was criticized repeatedly as an eyesore to downtown and as a safety issue as discussed above. Many bus stops are excellent, however customers pointed out that some stops are not accessible or are difficult to access. Rt. 1 – Agua Fria was singled out as a problem. The Super Walmart stop was cited as dangerous and unusable as it requires a ¼ mile walk through a very active parking lot, gravel and/or roadway with no sidewalk.

There were a number of comments regarding the need for better signage and amenities at NMDOT Park and Ride stops.

**Tourist Oriented Service**

Many felt that there should be a rebranded service that is oriented toward tourists and focuses on the Plaza and Museum Hill. Ski service was discussed.

**Other Needs**

There were a number of other themes that were discussed in the outreach, related to the major themes, yet with different perspectives. These issues are summarized here. Operational issues are addressed in Technical Memorandum No. 3.

- Overall connectivity – Seamless service between systems, websites that show all systems. A number of respondents were unfamiliar with NCRTD service.

- Bicycle and pedestrians – All transit riders are pedestrians or bicycle riders. Transit must work to ensure access and pathways connect each mode.

- Serving the elderly – as the population among the elderly increase and Santa Fe continues to draw elderly visitors; service should be tailored to meet these sometimes unique needs.

- Increased uses of technology – Young riders want apps and websites for information. They want to be able to pay using their phones and gather real time information related to the status of the bus or train.

- Environmental justice/transit dependent – The needs of low income persons, non-English speaking residents and other challenged riders must be met in similar manner as others. Some wanted to make sure that the service to these residents continues to be a focus of the system.
• Transit and Community Development – Where possible transit should be used to guide future development or at the very least be prepared to meet the service needs in outlying areas that are now gaining transit dependent riders.

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

The strategies addressed here are designed for the short term, mid-term and long term (20 years). The strategies are based on the variety of needs identified above and in the various meetings, listening sessions and observations. The variety of strategies addresses planning, operational, infrastructure and other strategies all designed to ensure sustainability and growth over the next 20 years.

Regional Planning – Functioning as One Network

Overarching issues revolve around the need to plan and coordinate on a regional level. The four major systems are absolutely intertwined and must function as one transportation network for the benefit of customers, who do not care which entity is providing the service, as long as they can get from point A to point B in safety and comfort. Potential strategies include:

• Establish a formal planning group to coordinate services and ensure participation at the planner level. This group should meet quarterly and shall be used to ensure joint planning efforts when plans affect other systems.
• Set policy to determine which system operates which future services as will be detailed in the plan.
• Develop a set of region wide standards for bus stops.

Mobility Manager – Serving to Connect

Mobility management can be an excellent way to ensure that the various transit systems coordinate their services. Mobility management activities can include a variety of potential planning, operations and marketing functions. This activity can be placed in SFT, the City or the SFMPO.

Mobility management means different things to different people and should be tailored to meet the local community's needs. For the SFMPO planning area there are a number of potential functions, including but not limited to:

• Coordination of planning efforts among transit systems
• Coordination with human service agencies
• Marketing of services as one network
• Oversight of web site, social media and apps
• Grant writing and revenue generation
• Ongoing outreach meetings and surveys
It should be noted that this position can be funded by FTA at an 80 percent Federal match. The potential cost for a mobility manager would be $100,000 – $150,000 including salary, travel, promotional materials and other needs. At an 80 percent Federal match, local costs will be between $29,000 and $30,000. It is anticipated that this position can partially pay for itself.

**Route Modifications**

The consultants were limited in the level of data available to accurately determine route changes. The best way to address these issues is to conduct a full set of on/off counts to determine the exact patterns of ridership by stop and by time of day. That effort was not part of the work plan due to budgetary considerations and the fact that this is a long range plan. As a substitute for that, the consultants rode each bus, conducted many hours of observation, interviewed hundreds of riders and advocates as well as individual vehicle operators and a group of vehicle operators and supervisors. A number of meetings and focus groups were also conducted and included riders.

**Potential Route Strategies**

**Revise Routes/Eliminate Potential Duplication**

There were a number of locations where service needs to be modified due to a need for greater coordination of services. Based on the bottom-line – route productivity (one way trips per revenue hour) changes are recommended.

Using a benchmark of 10 one way trips per vehicle hour, four routes should be examined: Rt. 6 Rodeo Rd., Rt. 22 Rancho Viejo, Rt. 26 South Cerrillos and Route M Museum Hill. In addition as discussed above there are areas of duplication that should be modified. These are described in the following narrative.

1. **Airport Rd/Jaguar** – There are two routes serving the Airport Rd area in Southwest Santa Fe. Rt. 1 – Agua Fria and Rt. 24 – Airport. The key issues raised about these services are:
   - Rt. 1 - Agua Fria is slow.
   - Rt. 24 - Airport Rd. misses its connection with Rt. 21 to the Santa Fe Community College (SFCC).
   - Service is suggested to Walmart using Herrera Dr. allowing greater access to shopping in this part of the planning area.
   - Service to the airport.

To address these issues, the following strategies have been developed and are depicted in Figure 5-2.
• This strategy has the Rt. 1 - Agua Fria going directly to the Mid-Town transfer point traversing Airport Rd. rather than traveling on the much slower Jaguar Dr.
• The Airport Rd Route (24) will assume the service on Jaguar that was part of Rt. 1.
• Some stakeholders stated that students traveling on Agua Fria Rd want to go to Ortiz Middle School on Jaguar Dr. If this is the case Rt. 1 can change its path once in the morning and twice in the afternoon when school is in session.
• Two possible spurs one to the Airport and one to Walmart via Herrera should be considered either as part of the route or on a limited basis.
• There are no additional costs associated with these strategies.

Figure 5-2: Revised Santa Fe Trails Airport Road Service

2. South Cerrillos Road – The key issue here is that there are two SFT routes serving South Cerrillos that in essence are competing with each other. During peak hours the NMDOT Shuttle also duplicates the other services on Cerrillos. This is one of two reasons why Route 26 has poor ridership. Rt. 22 travels on South Cerrillos and then south to the 599 Station, Rancho Viejo, Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) and SFCC. Rt. 26 – South Cerrillos
also travels down the same route as far as I-25. These routes should be modified so that they are not duplicating each other.

To address these issues, the following strategies have been developed and are illustrated in Figure 5-3.

- Rt. 22 should serve as an express route traversing Cerrillos making 1 - 2 stops between the Mid-Town transfer and I-25. Beyond I-25 it should retain its current status. This would serve to speed up Rt. 22 making it more attractive to potential riders travelling.
- Rt. 26 should provide all stops service to the Human Service Department.
- Route 26 requires that the stop at the Walmart be placed next to the store close to Cerrillos. The Walmart stop would be better off on Cerrillos than its present location if Walmart will not cooperate.
- Note that for those desiring to travel from the Human Service Department to 599 can use the peak hour NMDOT Shuttle which is timed for Rail Runner meets.
- There are no additional costs associated with these strategies.

Figure 5-3: Revised Santa Fe Trails South Cerrillos Road Service
599 Station Area – As shown in Figure 5-4, there are a variety of routes that serve this area. During peak hours there are three routes: NCRTD 599 Route, NMDOT 599 Station Shuttle and SFT Rt. 22. Each of these routes travels the same roads during peak hours, but they are each coming from different directions. NCRTD’s route primarily serves the government offices and prisons south of the station. The NMDOT route travels north to and from the Mid-Town Transfer Center, while Rt. 22 comes from the community college to the east. Each route carries 10 – 12 passengers during peak hours for service to the 599 Rail Runner service.

These routes while serving many of the same areas are coordinated for the most part. With one exception, it is the consultant’s recommendation that these routes should remain as is, since they generate good ridership, go in different directions and serve different needs.

The one recommendation will be to allow for a mid-day meet with the Rail Runner for students who want to travel to campus in mid-day (currently this would connect with the 10:51 a.m. northbound Rail Runner and the southbound mid-day 1:26 p.m.). There are no additional costs associated with these strategies.

Figure 5-4: Transit Routes Serving the NM 599 Rail Runner Station
4. Rt. M Museum Hill/Santa Fe Pick-Up – Route M with very low ridership provides essential service to both Museum Hill and St. John’s College. Currently the route meanders around Alameda to the east and south of the Plaza. The Santa Fe Pick Up also serves the Museum Hill area on a sporadic basis. This competition reduces the effectiveness of the service. As noted in the Review of Existing Services, very little ridership is experienced in between the Plaza and the two primary destinations.

- Rebranding – The Santa Fe Pick-up service should be rebranded (as will be discussed in a subsequent section) and the Museum Hill route is proposed to be part of that rebranding.

- Museum Hill – It is recommended that this route provide direct service to Museum Hill and St. John’s College via Old Santa Fe Trail (Figure 5-5). This route should be separate from the revised downtown/plaza circulator.

There are no additional costs associated with these strategies.

**Figure 5-5: Revised Museum Hill Route**
5. Santa Fe Pick-Up Circulator – Redefine and rebrand this service – The circulator should have bigger buses with 2 doors for easy and rapid access and must now be accessible for persons with disabilities. This service should operate with low floor vehicles. Currently a committee is designing a route. It is recommended that they use the following rules to guide the service.

Designing fixed route services is far more complex than simply connecting the dots. Poor service design will result in lower ridership. Care must be taken in designing routes. The first decision that has to be made is: What exactly do we want this route to do? Once this is determined, the design of routes and placement of stops is next.

In order to provide guidance for the committee recommending a route, KFH is presenting a set of guidelines. These guidelines come from the KFH Group service design course and are modified specifically for the Santa Fe Pick-Up.

a) All Bus Riders are Pedestrians – This must be remembered during all elements of the design. Can one get to the bus stops without maneuvering through barriers?
b) Keep it Simple – Do not try to do too much with one route – that can be a fatal flaw. The Pick-Up service should serve as a Rail Runner feeder and a tourist oriented service in the downtown/Plaza area, Museum Hill and nothing else.
c) Service Days and Hours – At a minimum, 6:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday with late night Friday and Saturday service.
d) Avoid Long Loop Routes – Long one way loop style routes are generally ineffective due to long travel times (five minutes to the destination, but 25 minutes or longer to get back to the origin point, for example). 15 or even 20 minute loops are acceptable.
e) Keep the Meandering to a Minimum. In most cases let the riders walk to the bus rather than having the bus go to the riders. Major stops are an exception.
f) Proper Streets and Turns – Bus must be able to easily traverse a narrow street. Routing should avoid unprotected left turns on busy streets as well as any other difficult maneuvers. Where possible stay on main thoroughfares.
g) Headways – The time between buses going in the same direction on the same route. Going from 30 minute headways to 15 minute headways almost doubles the cost, but makes the service more attractive.
h) Do Not Compete with Yourself – Do not operate a competing paratransit or other service.
i) Looking Good - Marketing – While services need to be professionally marketed and promoted, the best advertising is good looking buses and professional vehicle operators. Consider rebranding this service.
j) Accessible Bus Stops and Pathways – Care must be taken in selecting bus stops for safety and accessibility. Issues such as near side or far side stops need to be considered. The bottom line for customers: safety, accessibility and proximity to major trip generators. Pay attention to pathways. Never leave the placement of the stop, shelter or other amenities up to the installation crew.
k) Bus Stops and Timing Points – for this type service stops should be between 1/8 mile and ¼ mile apart. If vehicle headways are 15 minutes apart or less, customers do not need timing points (but vehicle operators do).

l) There can be Exceptions – There are times when some of the rules must be broken. Just do it smart and be careful.

6. Eliminate Inappropriate Maneuvers – NMDOT’s contractor uses 45 foot over the road coaches for the shuttle service that typically is only 25 percent full and winds down side streets. In particular the shuttle executes a number of unprotected back-up moves to leave bus stops. This should be corrected.

Route Timing and Interlining

In this section of the report, route timings and interlining issues are discussed. While the study team was not able to conduct on-off counts and a detailed analysis of transfers, due to the nature of this plan, there are a number of recommendations in this area and these are discussed as follows:

1. New Mid-Town Transfer Center: Re-Timing All Routes – Virtually all routes will require a retiming due to the new Mid-Town Transfer location. This new site will be far more accessible to many routes allowing for rapid ingress and egress. The Cerrillos route should be able to reduce travel time to and from the Mid-Town hub by 3-4 minutes at least. Some of the routes that travel east to west through the transfer hub will probably require the same amount of time as current, for while the new transfer hub is farther (from the east), the circuitous approach of the current hub calls for the same amount of time. The Cerrillos Route in particular will need significant retiming.

2. Revise Timing of Routes with On-Time Issues – Based on the observations, discussions with vehicle operators and customers there are indications that a number of routes regularly run late or early. These will require additional modification based on current issues. All retiming should be conducted at one time.

3. Layover Timing - Observations showed that there were a number of long layovers for routes, reducing their effectiveness. These routes should be tightened to about 5 minutes per hour of service for layover/recovery time.

The routes that appear to need additional retiming include:

- Rt. 2 – This route usually operates on 15 minute headways and does not really need a schedule for the public. The schedule and timing points often do not reflect the actual performance as this route often runs very late (according to the schedule). Customers in actuality would see little difference. The vehicle operators however need accurate timing points to serve as a guide. At present this is an issue.

- Rt. 4 – This route typically operates early, requiring vehicle operators to sit at some timing points. There is also significant layover time.
• Rt. 5 – This route appears to run late during the peak and early off peak.
• Rt. 21 and 26 - These routes are interlined and often run late according to observations and vehicle operator comments. This is an issue for those riders connecting at the Mid-Town hub.

4. Interlining Routes – Interlining is a standard practice in systems the size of Santa Fe. While not appropriate for all routes, it has, for the most part many benefits and no negatives if implemented appropriately. These benefits include:

• Improved customer service – Transfers are seen as a negative. Reducing transfers is convenient for customers.
• Reduces travel time.
• Interlining has no additional costs and no negative effects on service.

A full transfer analysis would indicate which route pairs would maximize transfers. Typically this would include matching an origin based route such as Rt. 24 with a destination based route such as Rt. 21.

Some routes however are not suited to interlining. These would include:

• Long routes (or other routes) that may be prone to running late such as Rt. 1 Agua Fria which has peak hour issues that cannot be helped due to the nature of the route.
• Rt. 2 Cerrillos should also remain an independent route due to the frequent headways and the need for consistency. This service must operate on time or it will face “bunching” issues.

Service Hours and Days

The need for evening and weekend service was cited consistently by a variety of interests. Earlier morning service was not cited as a need:

• Hours – Later in the evening for work and recreation.
• Weekend entertainment service - Potential late night dial a ride (see below).
• Saturday service to SFCC and work related trips.
• Extending Saturday service beyond 8 PM on selected routes (six) to 10 PM or Midnight would cost approximately $66,000 - $130,000 annually, assuming a per hour cost of $110.
• Rt. 21 to SFCC does not operate on Saturdays even though there are classes all day from 9 AM to 6 PM. Providing this Saturday service coupled with another route would cost about $25,000 annually.
• In the future additional weekend expansions should be considered and evaluated periodically.
**Future Services**

The slow, one percent or less annual growth allows for a measured approach for future growth. Major needs will unfold slowly. They include:

- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): Cerrillos Road** – While Santa Fe cannot justify the capital investment for BRT at this time, there will be potential over the next 20 years for such service. Without question, the most likely corridor for BRT service is the Cerrillos Road corridor which now transports virtually one-half of the SFT Ridership; a potential BRT route is shown in Figure 5-6. BRT service typically requires: select stops spaced over ½ mile apart, large buses with wide doors for rapid ingress and egress, headways of 15 minutes or less during peak hours and the ability to electronically maintain a green light. Often these buses have dedicated lanes or right of way however that is not a requirement and would not be practical in Santa Fe. Feeder service can be built into BRT as well.

**Figure 5-6: Potential Future Bus Rapid Transit Along Cerrillos Road**

![Map of Cerrillos Road corridor](image)

The Cerrillos Rd. corridor traverses the entire length of the planning area from the 599 station area to the Plaza area. It connects most of the major destinations in the planning area:
Most of the retail districts in the city,
Both state office complexes,
Each Rail Runner,
The Railyard area and the Plaza

What the Cerrillos Road corridor is lacking is major origins. While many origins are within walking distance of the corridor, a BRT service will need the support of feeder buses during peak hours. Over the next 20 years as justification for a BRT type service emerges, feeder service can develop either route based and/or through a dial a ride service. These routes would link outlying areas to the BRT for a faster travel time throughout the service area. In addition, the overall route structure of the future may be revised to direct more service to the high capacity corridor.

The SFMPO and the City should initiate discussions and attempt to get a Federal grant to conduct a detailed study of the corridor and the costs involved in implementing such a service. Capital needs will have to be addressed: vehicles will be needed, bus stops many of which on Cerrillos Rd. are ready to go with minimal upgrade, technology upgrades at stops and on board vehicles and maintenance infrastructure (if needed). Attempts to generate capital funds from Federal, state and local governments and the private sector should begin immediately.

• Senior Service – The City of Santa Fe has a major commitment to serving the elderly. In addition to fixed route services that will continue to be responsive to senior communities, the City offers a paratransit service for all seniors. As these elderly demographics expand, this need will increase in significance. Future senior apartment and retirement communities will be targeted for shopping and Plaza service. Working with the planning department, these communities can be appropriately planned with service tailored for each area as appropriate. It is recommended that seniors be encouraged to ride fixed route.

• Longer Distance Internal Commutes – Population growth patterns over the next 20 years continue to show growth in the southwest and in the south. As affordable housing needs continue to grow in these outlying areas, more commuter and local service will be needed. Service needs will expand beyond Rt. 599 in the west and Interstate 25 to the south. This can include a number of different service designs. Potential services can include:
  - Express routes to outlying areas – Commuter service could be express, filling the bus in one or two communities and then traveling in express service (with a stop at the Mid-Town hub) to destinations along Cerrillos, state complexes and the Plaza area.
  - Vanpools – in areas that have a manifested need, but not able to justify a full bus, vanpools can be deployed effectively and at a low cost.
  - Feeder service to BRT on Cerrillos Rd. – See the discussion related to BRT.

• Service in La Cienega – The NCRTD plan calls for Santa Fe service from La Cienega and its major trip attractor Las Golandrinas. This area is still light in population density, but that should change over the next 20 years. A low level of service can be justified now, but in 10 – 15 years there will be greater demand and density.
• Ski Santa Fe Service – Calls for at least seasonal service with the possibility of year around service to Ski Santa Fe reflect similar requests during the NCRTD planning process in 2013. Ski Santa Fe is just outside the planning area.

• Late Night Service – Dial a ride service could fill a need for late night service on weekends. It is estimated that 2 – 4 vehicles could meet this need. The service could be activated with a smartphone app or by telephone. The service can be operated internally or through a taxi contractor(s) that can meet the federal, state and local requirements for this service.

• Major Events Shuttles – SFT can address the parking issues related to major Plaza events. Setting up remote parking and shuttling people to the Plaza can contribute to the event’s success and get people to ride the bus.

Facilities – Long Term

Facilities include the two transfer hubs, bus stops and the SFT administrative and operations facility. They are each discussed in the following narrative.

Transfer Facilities

At the initiation of this planning process, it was evident to all that the two transfer hubs had significant structural issues and both need change. All stakeholders are aware of this issue and SFT management has made this a priority and is moving forward. During the planning process the Mid-Town facility is changing to a far better location to be designed for SFT. SFT has also initiated a design study for a new transfer hub near the Plaza.

A new downtown facility makes sense on every level as the current facility is less than desirable from a transit standpoint and certainly an “eyesore” one block from the Plaza. Every effort should be made to reach agreement on a design and a site. All parties must work together to secure funding. This effort should be initiated as soon as the design study is completed.

A broad coalition should be built to make the case for a proper facility downtown: with the appropriate design esthetics, convenience for customers and allowing for rapid non-intrusive access and egress from the facility. In addition, consideration of future BRT service requiring the accommodation of 40 foot coaches or articulated buses should be factored into the design.

Bus Stops

SFT has done a good job in developing many of its bus stops. The varieties of shelters are all accessible and are esthetically pleasing. Many other stops however lack any infrastructure and in many cases lack a sidewalk or accessible sidewalk.
Future efforts in improving all bus stops start with a Vision:

1. All bus riders are pedestrians or bicyclists.
2. The bus stop is transit’s front door.

SFT, each of the transit providers, the City and the MPO should work together to:

- Conduct a full assessment of each stop and pathways, inventorying each stop, its needs and capital requirements.
- Adopt similar standards for all stops.
- Coordinate planning with the MPO Bicycle plan and the separate Pedestrian Plan.
- Secure capital funding for improvements at the Federal, state, local government and private sector levels.

This activity should begin immediately.

A second recommendation is to require new private or public developments to work with transit and the SFMPO to implement specified transit infrastructure improvements that would enhance transit as part of the development process. This could include bus pull outs, pedestrian crossings, shelters and other transit amenities to enhance service.

**Safety and Security**

The perception of a safety and security issue inhibits ridership. This is most prevalent on SFT and NCRTD. Many commented on that issue and potential solutions include the following:

- Developing a region wide policy for handling inebriated persons – A coalition of advocacy groups, stakeholders, regular riders, legal staff, and transit management should forge a mutually agreeable region wide policy to ensure all customers’ safety and feeling of security.
- Sheridan Street - These issues were discussed in the Facilities section above.
- Bus Stops – Also discussed in detail in the Facilities section. The issues include:
  - Safety and security – lighting at stops would be assessed as part of an inventory.
  - Accessible pathways and stops.

**ADA and Elderly Paratransit**

Paratransit usage has accelerated in recent years, increasing five percent per year for the past three years. SFT operates paratransit well beyond the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The service includes elderly persons without disability and the service covers an area larger than three-quarters of a mile beyond fixed route.
While this is a laudable policy goal, there are a variety of activities designed to make it easy to ride fixed route and to assist passengers in doing so. These soft approaches toward fixed route ridership ultimately allow for passenger self-selection of the most appropriate mode. In many cases paratransit riders opt for fixed route due to the convenience.

**Incentives**

Incentives are considered by many to be the best way to minimize ADA paratransit ridership and maximize use of fixed-route by persons with disabilities. It should be remembered that the cost of a paratransit trip in Santa Fe is about $40 - $50, while the cost of a fixed-route trip is under $8, yielding a savings of $32 - $42 for every trip diverted to fixed-route. In addition, placing persons with disabilities on fixed-route serves to “mainstream” riders – one of the goals of ADA. Following are some incentives that have had success over the past 20 years.

- **Travel training** – teaching people to ride fixed-route (for individual routes or the entire service area). There are many programs available to train persons to ride fixed-route. The cost is low and the benefits very high. The cost of the training is recouped after 3 – 4 paratransit trips have been diverted to fixed-route. For example, the cost of travel training an individual is about $100. If the person trained takes fixed-route three times, that cost will be offset by the reduction of expensive paratransit trips.

- **Fare incentives** – free fare on fixed-route is a powerful motivator when the alternative is $4 per round trip on paratransit. Again the benefits far outweigh the costs.

- **Infrastructure improvements** – Many of the system’s bus stops are inaccessible and/or have no accessible pathways. This limits customer’s ability to get to a bus stop and results in more paratransit trips and higher operating costs. Management should assess each stop and determine what infrastructure improvements are most cost effective.

- **Enhanced fixed-route service with less transfers through interlining and more direct service.** This by itself should entice some to ride fixed-route.

- **Some systems require all applicants to come in for an interview and if necessary an evaluation. Studies have shown that simply requiring people to come in for an interview (SFT will supply the transportation) reduces applications by up to 25%. This is recommended for SFT. Management is referred to The National Easter Seals Project Action web site for more information on eligibility certification procedures for ADA paratransit.**

- **Some systems have applicants perform a variety of physical and cognitive tests. This is not recommended for SFT.**
Improve Performance/Reduce Costs

The following changes can improve performance of the paratransit system and can reduce costs in the system.

- Enhance productivity through more efficient scheduling and routing – grouping trips where possible. THE BEST WAY TO REDUCE COSTS IS THROUGH IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY.
- Maximize subscription service to improve performance.

TECHNOLOGY

The need here is to develop a fully coordinated network to include all systems in the SFMPO study area:

- One stop web site with trip planner and real time updates
  - Telephone apps for ease of use
  - Social media
  - Real time bus arrival on apps and at key stops
  - Other new technologies as they evolve
  - Entire SFMPO planning area and all connecting systems

- Eventual merger of technologies – While most systems have gone their own way regarding technology, over the course of the next 20 years, there will be new opportunities to coordinate the use of technology.
  - Conduct group procurements to reduce costs and increase coordination of technologies

MARKETING SERVICE

Marketing of services should be the combined effort of all transit systems that serve the area.

- Different services and audiences need different marketing approaches. Market service to a variety of potential customers:
  - Commuters,
  - Students,
  - Tourists
  - Feeder service

- Partnering and Sponsorships
  - SFT takes advantage of advertising revenue
  - Possibilities of sponsorship programs where businesses can purchase a variety of sponsorship packages available for all size businesses.
  - Opportunity for businesses to sponsor free fare days which will result in increased ridership.
Opportunities for partnerships to promote transit – Museum Hill, Las Golandrinas, Ski Santa Fe, Major Plaza events and the Convention Center to name just a few.

- Consider system rebrand
  - New paint scheme(s)
  - New marketing plan for rebranded service
  - Best implemented when significant change is happening
  - Separately rebrand Route M and Pick-Up service – this service, geared for tourists should receive a rebrand when the new service is inaugurated. The bus needs to be visible and leave no doubt as to its function.

One Network of Services for the Future

The current system map book delineates each of the SFT routes. NCRTD, NMDOT and Rail Runner each have their own separate schedules. Connecting services are indicated by a logo, but there is no information about actual routes or connections. As discussed previously, while there are four systems operating extensively within Santa Fe, there is really only one network of services that combines each system’s Santa Fe services.

- Network Map
  - One set of schedules and maps for all services operating wholly or in part within SF.
  - The map should not have schedule information on it.
  - Schedules for all services should have separate inexpensive three fold brochures with basic rules, fares, a map of the route (and connections) and a schedule for that route.
- One Website and one set of apps for all transit services in Santa Fe
- One customer service telephone number for all regional transit information would provide the same level of customer information as an app or a website

NEXT STEPS

The purpose of this memorandum is to help guide the study committee in making decisions related to these strategies. The consultants previewed the strategies to the study committee in October. In early December the consultant will come on site to meet with the committee to select the most appropriate transit strategies for Santa Fe's future. These strategies will then become part of the Long Range Transit Plan for Santa Fe.