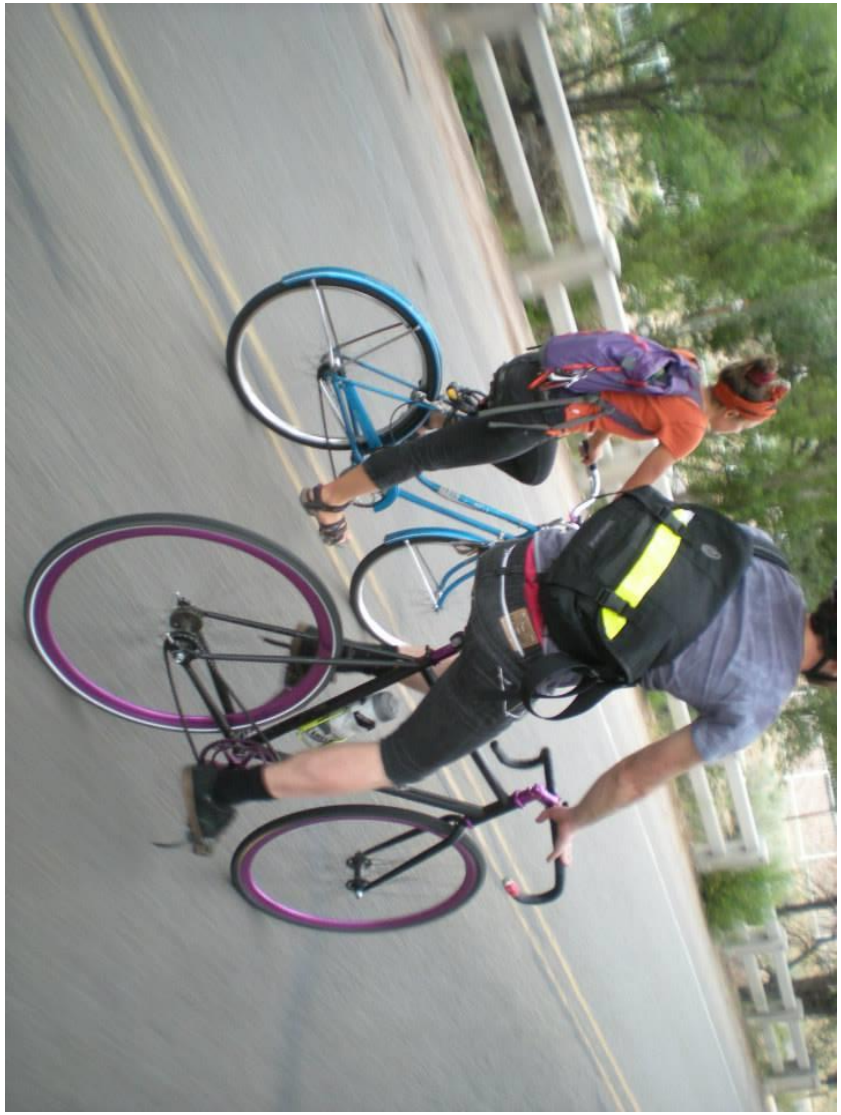


Chapter 4: Getting Around

1. Getting Around

Mobility has a significant impact on quality of life in the Santa Fe Metropolitan Area. The existing transportation system consists of a historically significant and complex network of state and federal highways, local streets and roadways, transit services, a series of bicycle and pedestrian multi-use paths, a railway line and the Santa Fe Airport. It is the utmost importance that the transportation system satisfies mobility needs and also provides convenient, safe and efficient transportation choices.

Roadway System

The following roads are NHS Roadways within the MPO Planning Area:

- **Interstate 25**
- **US – 285**
- **St. Francis Drive (US84/285)**
- **Cerrillos Road (NM 14)**
- **NM 599**

CONSIDER A TABLE THAT IDENTIFIES THE ROUTE, LENGTH, AND DETAILS INCLUDING LANES/CONGESTION/VOLUME/HISTORY ETC.

The MPO is primarily concerned with roadways of "Regional Significance", which are defined as those roadways eligible to receive federal funding, but it is also interested in the connectivity and functionality of the network as a whole and how that may impact the "Regionally Significant" roadway network. Federal statutes (CFRs) require that public roadways be classified based on the characteristics of the service (mobility and access) they provide. Functional Classification is an analytic tool used by the MPO in the planning of roads and highways and determining the needs and priorities for transportation funds. Functional Classification affects some design and access features, the rules regulating a roadway's use and in some cases the land use adjacent to it. The higher the level of motor vehicle mobility required of a facility the higher its Functional Classification.

> Regionally Significant project (23 CFR Sec. 450.104) means a transportation project that is on a facility which serves regional transportation needs (such as access to and from the area outside the region; major activity centers in the region; and major planned developments) and would normally be included in the modeling of the metropolitan area's transportation network. At a minimum, this includes all principle arterial highways and all fixed guideway transit facilities that offer a significant alternative to regional highway travel.

The Functional Classifications are defined as follows:

- Interstate: Highest Mobility for vehicular traffic.
- Arterials (Principal and Minor) High mobility.
- Collectors (Urban, Rural Major, Rural Minor) Lower mobility/higher access for vehicular traffic.
- Local: Lowest Mobility/Highest Access for vehicular traffic

Functional Classifications are put in place recognizing the need to accommodate vehicular traffic in a manner that reduces congestion and increases access to regional and urban destinations. They also assist in defining

With the exception of Local and Rural Minor Collectors all other Functionally Classified roadways are eligible to receive federal funds and are deemed as "Regionally Significant."

eligibility for federal funding sources. Please note that there exists and inverse relationship between increased access as defined by the highest mobility for vehicular traffic and mobility for pedestrian, bicycle and in many cases transit usage. The MPO recognizes this relationship and is committed to planning for and implementing a balanced transportation network that accommodates access for vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders.

Transportation Corridors: The National Highway System (NHS) was developed by the US Department of Transportation in cooperation with the states, local official and Metropolitan Planning Organizations with the purpose of identifying the core road network that was considered critical to the nation's economy, defense and mobility. The US Congress approved the NHS in 1995 with the intent that the United States would prioritize federal-aid funds appropriately to ensure that the NHS was adequately maintained.

The Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan identifies a number of "Strategic Multimodal Transportation Corridors" with significant regional, statewide, national and transnational importance. These corridors are where multimodal opportunities and needs are the greatest and will be the NMDOT's highest priorities for state transportation funding investment. Projects falling outside of these strategic corridors will be lower in priority. These corridors include the Interstate and National Highway Systems, the Strategic Highway Network (STAHNET) system (a partnership between the Federal Highway Administration and the Department of Defense identifying the system of public highways that provide access, continuity and emergency transportation of personnel and equipment in times of peace and war), and principal freight and intercity transportation corridors. In the Santa Fe region, these include I-25, US-84/285, NM 14, and NM-599.

Current Traffic Volumes and Congestion: The MPO maintains a traffic count program which consists of primarily conducting counts at locations to assist the NMDOT meet their requirements for the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS). To date this program has been limited to collecting data primarily on roadways within the Santa Fe City limits, with locations typically counted at least every three years, however the program has been temporarily suspended in 2011 due to the need to clearly identify the most appropriate locations for NMDOT to meet their requirements. It is anticipated that by the end of 2015 the program will be continued in a manner that will maximize the MPO and NMDOT's understanding of traffic flow, volumes and delays for future planning efforts.

The most current data were collected using temporary traffic count recorders which collected traffic volumes over a 48 hour period during the weekdays. These counts provided a snapshot of traffic volumes and characteristics on the roadways within Santa Fe. Figure YYYY shows average weekday traffic volumes on the area roadways vary from almost 54,000 vehicles per day recorded on St Francis Dr. to less than 100 vehicles per day on many of the local residential streets. Interstate 25, St Francis Dr, Cerrillos Road, Airport Road and St. Michaels Dr. are the most traveled roadways in the Planning Area carrying between 30,000 and 55,000 vehicles per day.

In addition to the temporary counts conducted by the MPO, the NMDOT operates 17 Permanent Count Stations within the MPO Planning Area and collect traffic volume data 24 hours per day, 36 days per year. The collected data provides the basis to develop growth trends. Table YYYY shows the traffic volumes collected at these permanent count stations over the past decade.

The table shows that during the first half of the decade (2000-2004), traffic volumes on average grew by almost 2% per year, while in the second half of the decade (2005-2009) traffic volumes on average decreased by 1%. Overall, by the end of the decade traffic volumes had on average declined back to or below levels recorded in 2000. A contributing factor to the declines in traffic volumes during the second half of the decade was likely the result of higher gas prices beginning in 2006 through the fall of 2014 and the worldwide economic recession which hit starting in 2008 and continues today. Many of these corridors saw increases prior to 2006 and will likely be the corridors which experience traffic increases between now and 2040.

During the first half of the 2000's NM599 saw the highest traffic growth with an average of over 10% per year. The second half of the decade saw volume decline back to 2004 levels. The only location to show significant growth during the second half of the decade was on St Francis Drive between Zia Road and Siringo which saw an average growth rate of over 3% per year. This was likely a result of the capacity improvements made when this section of St Francis was expanded from 4 lanes to 6 lanes.

The congestion experienced on Santa Fe's roadways is minimal compared to that experienced in larger metropolitan areas, such as Los Angeles, CA, El Paso, TX or even Albuquerque, NM where congested peak periods last for at least a couple of hours.

Level of service (LOS) is a scale that measures vehicular congestion based on time delay either at individual intersections or along corridors. It ranges from LOS A, which reflects free flowing conditions with minimal delay, to LOS D, which is generally the ability to travel along a corridor with moderate delay, typically making it through signalized intersections without having to wait for the next cycle, to LOS F which reflects complete gridlock. LOS E/F are generally considered substandard from the perspective of LOS, however a new school of thought is beginning to surround the application of LOS because roadway right-of-ways are shared by multiple modes of travel.

The introduction to the 2008/2009 *Multimodal Level of Service Analysis for Urban Streets: Users Guide a* National Cooperation Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Document 128 states: "To adequately evaluate the quality of service provided by the facility, on must consider the implications of facility design and operation on the auto driver, the bus passenger, the bicyclist and the pedestrian." As the Santa Fe MPO advances its planning efforts for all modes of transportation it is recommended that a more comprehensive analysis of roadway service become institutionalized.

The peak periods where congestion is most noticeable in Santa Fe are relatively short, approximately 30 minute ranges starting around 7:30AM and 5:00PM. The St Francis Drive Corridor Study found that during peak periods much of the corridor is operating with at or over-capacity (LOS E/F) conditions: Sawmill road to West Zia Road, and the central and north half of the corridor from Alta Vista St. to Paseo de Peralta.

Similar conditions were found in the NM599 Interchange Priority Study along NM599 at the signalized intersections. The I-25 Corridor Study found that traffic flow along the interstate was congestion free, but much of the exits

experienced congestion, primarily due to the outdated configurations of the interchanges.

Future Roadway Demand:

Regional Transit and Rail System

The Santa Fe Metro Area has seen unprecedented growth in regional transit services over the past ten years. The area is now serviced by five public agencies each providing service in a manner that strives to meet the needs of all commuters, visitors and residents of the metro area.

Santa Fe Trails, launched in January of 1993 is the City of Santa Fe's small urban transit system and provides the greatest level of fixed service to the area. Santa Fe Trails was the nation's first transit system to operate its entire fleet with cleaner burning compressed natural gas (CNG).

Twenty three years later Santa Fe Trail's mission is to *"provide transit service in the city of Santa Fe (and parts of Santa Fe County) to get area residents and visitors wherever life takes them"* and boasts an annual ridership level of over one million, an over 50% increase in the past 10 years. Santa Fe Trails is serviced by a fleet of 35 state of the art buses and hosts eleven distinct routes including the downtown's Santa Fe Pick-Up and the Santa Fe Ride, and an ADA Paratransit service.

North Central Regional Transit District, (NCRTD) the regions iconic "Blue Bus" provides free transit service to a four county area including Santa Fe County. After much collaboration including the New Mexico Legislature passing New Mexico's Regional Transit District Act in 2003 and the passage of a 1/8 cent gross receipts tax by the representative counties, a consolidated NCRTD began servicing the region in 2007 with twenty two fixed and demand-response routes, six of which service the metro area.

The Blue Bus provides service for students, commuters traveling from the north or greater Espanola and Los Alamos area to the Town of Edgewood at the County's southernmost boarder, and for residents needing regional access to social and medical services.

As of January 1, 2015, the NCRTD assumed operation of the **Taos Express**, previously operated by the Taos Chili Line. The Taos Express provides residents and visitors with weekend bus transit between Taos and Santa Fe and is a connecting service with the New Mexico Rail Runner.

Starting with nine buses and three routes the **New Mexico Park and Ride** began service in 2003. The NMDOT operates the Park and Ride Shuttles with three routes servicing the metro area as a primary means of access to the New Mexico Rail Runner Stations and services for commuters from Los Alamos, Espanola, Albuquerque, and Las Vegas, NM. In State Fiscal Year 2013, Statewide the Park and Ride:

- Removed 10.4 million vehicle miles during the busiest commute hours;
- Reduced carbon emissions by 5,026 tons; and
- Served an Average Daily Ridership of 1,249.3 passengers *(New Mexico Department of Transportation Park and Ride History and Facts through FY 2013)*

The **Rail Runner Express** is New Mexico's first commuter rail service. Inaugurated in 2006, it now provides service seven days a week to 14 stations along 96.5 mile corridor that runs through Valencia, Bernalillo, Sandoval and Santa Fe Counties. Opened to Santa Fe in 2008, The New Mexico Rail Runner Express provides commuters access via three stations, Railyard Depot, South Capital and 599 with a fourth, Zia Station to be considered for opening in 2015. In 2012 the Rail Runner carried more than 1.1

million riders, averaging approximately 3,800 passengers per week. The Rail Runner is administered by the NMDOT and the Rio Metro Regional Transit District.

Amtrak's Southwest Chief makes a stop at Lamy, NM outside the southeastern most edge of the Santa Fe MPO Planning Area. Amtrak contracts with Lamy Shuttle and Tours, a private entity to provide access to downtown Santa Fe and transit connections. Currently, a section of Amtrak's route through Colorado and New Mexico is potentially slated for being decommissioned in 2016. The NMDOT's Transit and Rail Division was tasked with studying the impacts of the closure and the New Mexico State Legislature will be debating the pros and cons of financially supporting the route in 2015.

Further details about commuter rail service impacting the Santa Fe Metro Area can be found in the NMDOT's State Rail Plan adopted in March of 2014.

Each of the transit service providers has seen moderate ridership growth since the inception of their service and anticipates that growth to continue. The advent of the Rail Runner and its stations provided key commuter links for the metro region and regional collaboration was necessary to synchronize route stops and key destinations. Between fixed routes, and paratransit services a significant portion of metro area residents and visitors have access to a source of transportation.

The NCRTD Blue Bus has steadily expanded service to the metro area and will be expanding service to the La Cienega community south and west of Santa Fe. The NCRTD has invested in advanced technology that will provide real time data and they will be testing both compressed natural gas (cng) and propane buses along Santa Fe Routes in 2015 as possible replacement fuels for their fleet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Room for improvement was clearly identified in the Santa Fe MPO's Public Transit Master Plan. These are included as the following challenges:

- Lack of coordinated investments amongst all transit providers in technology, including websites, real-time GPS tracking, trip planners, google transit.
- Disparate agency marketing. This includes individual website access, marketing materials and strategies, route maps, signage and more.
- Poor service for weekends and evenings across most fixed routes.
- Undesirable feelings of safety and security, hindering ridership especially along Santa Fe Trails' Cerrillos Road, Route 2 where public drunkenness and disorderly conduct were sited multiple times.
- Confusion with existing marketing and branding of the Santa Fe Pick-Up servicing downtown Santa Fe Rail Runner Express commuters and tourists.
- Poor mobility and access options for "the last mile "or how and where transit riders get to their final destinations and transit stops.
- The Rail Runner Express has logistical and infrastructure challenges that limit the frequency and speed of the route and many riders would like a stop near to the "Sunport", Albuquerque's Airport.

Active Transportation

Active transportation or bicycle and pedestrian elements are now integral standalone components of this 2015-2040 MTP. As a result of specific needs identified in the 2010 MTP, the MPO has adopted Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans. Active transportation offers numerous options to improve our existing transportation system efficiently and cost effectively through a variety of systematic enhancements while simultaneously providing benefits, including safety to all roadway users.

Bikeways System

The Santa Fe MPO adopted the Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan in 2012 following a recommendation in the 2010 MTP to develop the Plan. The Plan's purpose is to coordinate transportation planning and other bicycle-related planning among MPO partner agencies in order to maximize the benefits of the use of bicycles for transportation. Benefits include economic development, reduced traffic congestion and demand for motor vehicle parking, reduced greenhouse gas emissions, healthier residents and neighborhoods, improved urban and suburban environments, quality of life, accessibility, and an affordable transportation option.

The vision of the plan is that residents and visitors enjoy safe and convenient bicycle and pedestrian access along a comprehensive network of multi-use trails and complete streets, connecting residential neighborhoods with all areas of the community.

Under the goal of "More Bicycle Facilities and Better Bicycle Facilities, within an Integrated and Effective Bikeway System," the Plan presents twelve general recommendations for improving bicycle infrastructure followed by eight additional recommendations in the area of bicycle education, encouragement, and enforcement. The Plan concludes with a road map for implementation detailing strategies to disseminate recommendations, agency responsibilities, prospective funding sources, and specific proposed projects listed in three phases of development.

The citizens of the metropolitan area gave implementation of the Plan a boost with support of $6 million in City bond funding for implementation of the Phase A recommendations. The Plan called for the metropolitan area to achieve "Silver" status by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) as a Bicycle-Friendly Community within five years. Santa Fe achieved "Silver" status in 2014 and incidentally achieved "Silver" status by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) in 2014.

Since the inception of the 2012 Metropolitan Bicycle Master Plan the development of on and off road bicycle facilities has been tremendously successful with an understanding that the areas needs and opportunities are expansive. With that said it is recommended that the Bicycle Master Plan be updated in 2016 and completed by 2017 to include an inventory of the projects completed to date with a slate of new project and policy recommendations.

A definitive success of the Plan includes the development of the Bikeways Mapping Project and as a deliverable the Santa Fe Bikeways & Trails Map. The map was created through public input to show the perceive suitability of on-street facilities for bicycling. The MPO produced 20,000 copies in 2012 and is need of updating and reprinting the map in the first quarter of 2015. The maps are well distributed and snapped up by both locals and visitors and are prized giveaways during any of the multiple national and international events hosted annually in the region.

In 2013 the Santa Fe MPO invested in six passive infrared ped/bike counters. The MPO maintains a system of semi-permanent (may be moved as needed) automatic counters to monitor bicycle and pedestrian volumes 24 hours a day at selected locations. Collecting better data on usage and demand is essential to building long-term support for walking and cycling, and improving conditions for those who choose to walk and ride bikes.

Pedestrian System

The 2010 MTP update included a recommendation for the development of a standalone Pedestrian Master Plan. That plan began in late 2013 and is now a major component of this 2015 MTP update.

The 2010 MTP characterized the nature of the regions pedestrian system and facilities as follows:

> "The network of pedestrian facilities in Santa Fe include a mix of sidewalks, crosswalks, formal and informal pathways, and streets without sidewalks. Having been developed over the years by a combination of site specific improvements by individual landowners and developers and somewhat more comprehensive improvements through public roadway projects, the only consistent aspect of the pedestrian circulation system throughout the area is its inconsistency."

It is fair to state that member agencies through the development of roadway projects and requisite pedestrian facilities for new developments have resulted in better pedestrian facilities overall in the past five years, but as the Pedestrian Master Plan reveals the gaps and needs in the metro area are enormous.

The advent of the Pedestrian Master Plan recognized that pedestrian facilities were a result of a disaggregated and incremental decision making. A primary focus of the plan is to develop an inventory and condition status of existing facilities. The Plan establishes a 25 year framework to improve the pedestrian environment and increase opportunities for walking as an active mode of transportation and recreation that is convenient, comfortable, safe and inclusive, and accessible by all.

The Plan presents a set of goals and strategies as well as a framework for improving the pedestrian environment and serves to accomplish the following:

- Detail existing sidewalk system conditions, review policies for sidewalk maintenance and reconstruction, assess current design guidelines and policies that serve to enhance and promote Santa Fe's walkability.
- Provide clear project and policy recommendations that advance the ability of all citizens and visitors to walk throughout the community in a safe, convenient, fun and healthy manner.

It is the desire of the MPO that the development of the Pedestrian Master Plan will facilitate further data collection and data collection protocols that will assist with a comprehensive inventory and procure useful information about the pedestrian system. Furthermore, the benefits of investing in and improving all areas of the pedestrian system become quantifiable in a transparent manner that supports all users of the system and shifts the point of decision making on improvements to a more balanced level.

Freight

Regional: Freight is vital to the Santa Fe MPO's economy, as well as the New Mexico economy. The majority of raw and furnished goods and major parcel deliveries are moved via interstate motor freight carriers and a variety of freight class vehicles. There are 18 classes that a shipped package may fall under with class 50

being the least expensive, to class 500 as the most expensive. Efficient freight mobility is crucial to the economic resilience of the area.

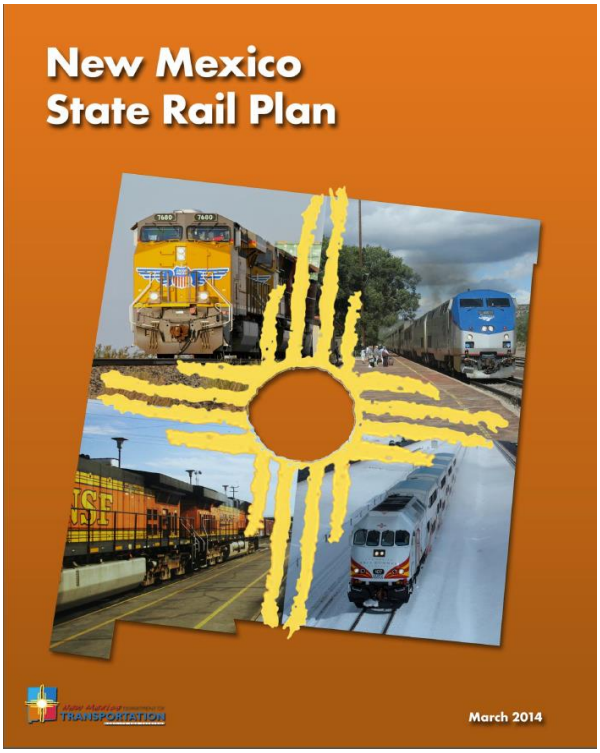
The movement of freight and goods within the Santa Fe Metro Area is almost exclusively provided via truck. Trucks tend to compromise 8 to 10 percent of the total number of vehicles on major highways. I-25, which traverses the Santa Fe Metro Area, is the major north/south freight route through the State carrying between 3,000 and 6,000 trucks per day.

Much of the truck traffic generated in the MPO Planning Area is related to the delivery of construction materials, farm supplies and retail or wholesale supplies. Although it is desirable to divert much of the through truck traffic to NM599, St. Francis Drive still remains the shortest route through the area. NM 599 was constructed as a relief route around Santa Fe specifically for the transportation of low level nuclear waste from Los Alamos to the Waste Isolation Pilot Project (WIPP) near Carlsbad.

Statewide: According to the NMDOT Research Bureau report: Innovation in Transportation, Establishing Freight Corridors, approximately 75 percent of the freight transported within New Mexico is "through" freight, which is freight that is transported entirely through the state. Approximately 25 percent is transported by rail. Air cargo is responsible for less than once percent of the state's freight movement.

Through traffic – trains passing through New Mexico, represents 88 percent of all rail traffic by weight and 95 percent of all rail traffic by value on New Mexico's rail network. (New Mexico State Rail Plan) The preponderance of rail freight impacting New Mexico is from the mining and utility sectors. Freight delivered by Rail does not directly impact the Santa Fe Metro Area.

In March of 2014 the NMDOT adopted the New Mexico State Rail Plan where more details can be found regarding rail freight.



Aviation

The Santa Fe Municipal Airport (SAF) is a small non-hub commercial service and general aviation airport that has seen substantive annual increases in commercial activity since the last MTP update in 2010.

In 2015 SAF is serviced by two commercial airlines, American Eagle, with destinations to Dallas/Fort Worth and Los Angeles and United Express, with service to Denver. According to a study conducted by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's International Center for Air Transportation, in 2013, the airport had 2,724 departures, up from 1,484 in 2012 for an 83.6 percent change. Available seats went up 60.8 percent from 66,372 in 2012 to 106,722 in 2013. Passenger enplanements and deplanements on commercial flights jumped from 19,653 in 2009 to 137,927 in 2013.

Additionally, SAF is home to nearly 200 general aviation aircraft and eleven military fixed and roto-wing aircraft (NM Air National Guard). The

majority of the based aircraft is single engine, and includes jet and multi-engine planes.

The Terminal Building, built in 1941, offers a variety of services for the traveling public. Amenities include a full-service restaurant, airline ticket counters, airline self-serve kiosks, parking pre-pay envelopes and drop box, baggage claim, rental car counters, restrooms, vending machines, information displays and flyers, and the airport management offices. As part of a master planning effort in 2014 and 2015 the Terminal Building is slated for expansion to accommodate the recent and projected growth.

Ground transportation includes rental car services, private shuttle services, taxis and limos. The airport is currently not served by a public transportation system; however the Santa Fe MPO Public Transit Master Plan recommends that Santa Fe Trails explore a route modification for service to the airport.

Maintenance

Santa Fe County: Santa Fe County has maintenance responsibilities for approximately 574 miles of road of which XXX miles are within the Santa Fe MPO Planning Area.

The Santa Fe County Road Maintenance Division is comprised of 39 staff members rotating 8 hr shifts with snow removal operations lasting as long as necessary. The snow removal begins with the priority one roads, the high volume traffic roads, then filters down to priority two and local roads.

Santa Fe County established a Road Advisory Committee (RAC) for the purpose of reviewing and recommending road improvements to the Board of County Commission, review and monitor road improvement projects and research funding sources in order to establish long-range planning for road improvements.

NMDOT: The Santa Fe MPO Planning Area is serviced by NMDOT'S District 5. The District 5 Engineer is responsible for roadway construction, roadway maintenance, engineering support, technical support, traffic operations, bridge maintenance, safety operations, equipment management, administration operations, quality management and public relations.

The maintenance section is responsible for maintaining all roadways within the District. This includes roadway rehabilitation, safety upgrades, fencing, vegetation/herbicide operations, signage and snow removal.

NMDOT District 5 maintains an active maintenance agreement with the City of Santa Fe to provide routine maintenance along segments within the City of Santa Fe. The NMDOT maintains the following roadways:

- Cerrillos Rd – St. Francis west to city limits
- St. Michael's Dr. – Cerrillos Rd to Old Pecos Trail
- St. Francis Dr – I-25 to US 285
- Paseo De Peralta – St Francis Dr to Bishops Lodge
- Old Pecos Trail – St. Michaels Dr to Rodeo Rd
- Hyde Park Road – Bishops Lodge to city limits
- Bishops Lodge (Washington Ave) – Paseo De Peralta to Hyde Park Rd
- North Guadalupe – Paseo De Peralta to US 285

The City of Santa Fe provides roadway maintenance via the City Streets and Drainage Maintenance Division. The City has approximately 1100 designated roadways with approximately 755 lane miles and 41 miles of unpaved roads.

The Streets and Drainage Maintenance Division is responsible for maintenance of the streets and drainage infrastructure. The tasks include snow removal, concrete construction, grading, sweeping, pavement maintenance, engineering/inspection, drainage maintenance, and administration.