

**Section 5309
Bus and Bus Facilities
Livability Initiative Program
Grant Application for the
Montaño Intermodal Center
Albuquerque, NM**

**Federal Transit
Administration**



**ABQ RIDE
City of Albuquerque
Transit Department
February 10, 2010**

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• United States Senator Jeff Bingaman	
• Albuquerque City Councilor Debbie O’Malley	
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• North Valley Coalition	

1. APPLICATION INFORMATION

Project: Montañño Intermodal Center

Serving bus, commuter rail, bicycle, & pedestrian modes with park & ride access

Location: Montañño Road between 2nd Street and Edith Boulevard
Albuquerque, NM

Applicant Information:

City of Albuquerque Transit Department (ABQ Ride)

FTA Recipient ID#: 1523

Contact Information:

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Fleet (vehicles operated in maximum service):

Motor bus – 122
Paratransit – 54

Employees

Total – 520
Drivers – 340

Technical Capacity: ABQ Ride is able to implement the Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program of Projects in accordance with the grant application, Master Agreement, and all applicable laws and regulations, using sound management practices. ABQ Ride promptly addressed a finding in this area in its draft FY09 Triennial Review and has received no adverse comments.

Legal Capacity: The applicant is eligible and authorized under state and local law to request, receive, and dispense FTA funds and to execute and administer FTA funded projects. The authority to take all necessary action and responsibility on behalf of the grantee is properly delegated and executed.

Financial Capacity: ABQ Ride has the ability to match and manage FTA grant funds, cover cost increases, cover operating deficits through long-term stable and reliable sources of revenue, maintain and operate federally funded facilities and equipment, and conduct an annual independent organization-wide audit in accordance with the provisions of OMB Circular A-133. ABQ Ride promptly addressed a finding in this area in its draft FY09 Triennial Review and has received no adverse comments.



2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Albuquerque Transit Department (ABQ Ride) is submitting this application for the 5309 Bus and Bus Livability grant program for the Montañito Intermodal Center (Center) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The City of Albuquerque (City) is requesting \$6,722,800 for land acquisition, environmental and engineering services, construction, and related costs. The local match of \$1,927,120 is in place and a project timeline of 12 – 16 months after funding is anticipated. This project represents an integral piece to the regional transportation network and is a catalyst project for the land use and redevelopment envisioned for the area. The City is partnering with the Rio Metro Regional Transit District (RMRTD) for the development of the Center.

The Center will provide a new ABQ Ride and New Mexico Rail Runner Express commuter rail intermodal connection with new bus priority capital improvements to enhance bus service to the center. The intermodal center will be located in the geographic center of Albuquerque on Montañito Road – a principal arterial with a strategic crossing of the Rio Grande and one of only a few arterials crossing the entire city from east to west.



Figure 1: Example of a current rail / bus transfer facility in Albuquerque.

The Center will encompass approximately 4 acres. A bus island and priority bus drop off area adjacent to the Rail Runner platform will accommodate ABQ Ride buses and other shuttle connections as shown in Attachment 5.1. The Center will accommodate approximately eight busses at a time, including articulated busses. The design includes sidewalk improvements, landscaping buffers, and pedestrian and bicycle access points to reflect the goals and standards defined in the North 4th Street Corridor Plan, the relevant land use plan.

Rider amenities at the Center will include real time rider information, seating areas, signage, shelters, waste receptacles, information kiosks, and night sky protecting lighting. The Center will also be served by the free wi-fi system available to Rail Runner passengers. Video surveillance, an emergency phone linked to the City police department are also included to address and real or perceived safety concerns.



Figure 2: Public art elements at Los Ranchos ABQ Ride / Rail Runner station

The commuter rail platform is located at the eastern edge of the Center. The 500 ft long platform will also include the mentioned rider amenities, and will be designed to reflect the pueblo-revival design. The platform will include a mini-high for ADA accessibility into the passenger cars and required safety features such as tactile warning strips. The Center will include a public art element, which will extend ABQ Ride's and RMRTD's efforts to integrate public art into the region's public transportation system.

Recognizing the popularity of park and ride facilities, the initial concept accommodates approximately 300 parking spaces. Anticipating the increased role of non-auto access, the design anticipates the evolution of the site to higher uses and accommodates the footprint of a future building without significant retrofitting. This design accommodates the building form recommended for the future land used in the area in the North Fourth Street Rank III Sector Plan (Figure 3). The building is still in the conceptual stage but is envisioned to provide enhanced rider service such as indoor and heated customer facilities, restrooms, a staffed customer service area, rider oriented retail space, and office space for related transit employees.

The design concept and engineering cost estimate include a number of elements to promote sustainability, including the use of LED lighting where appropriate, a photovoltaic system to offset the center's energy use, and rainwater capture design elements. Bicycle lockers will also facilitate cycling to the system – already a popular choice for ABQ Ride and Rail Runner passengers.

This project includes signaled access to Montañero Road intersection to facilitate bus and vehicle access to the station. Improvements designed to prioritize bus movements in the corridor, such as queue jumping and signal pre-emption are also part of the proposed project.

To ensure the public perceives seamless transit service at the Center, the RMRTD and ABQ Ride will continue to cooperate on branding, public outreach, advertizing, and pubic information efforts.

2.1 Project Team

ABQ Ride is the lead applicant for the grant proposal. The application reflects the input of the office of Mayor Richard J. Berry, Councilor Debbie O'Malley (the home council district of the Center), the Planning Department, and a number of other public and private entities.

ABQ Ride provides fixed-route bus and demand-response paratransit service to the City and neighboring portions of Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties. Fixed-route service consists of 39 routes, including three "Rapid Ride" enhanced bus routes. The agency operates 122 buses in maximum service, along with 54 paratransit vans, and employs about 520 people including 340 drivers. The City has extensive experience developing transit projects. Since 2000, ABQ Ride has constructed a number of significant FTA-funded facilities, including a major Downtown intermodal center, new maintenance and transportation facility, and four park and ride facilities including one currently nearing completion.

The RMRTD is a supporting agency for this grant proposal. The RMRTD is responsible for the operations and ongoing planning of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express (Rail Runner) and

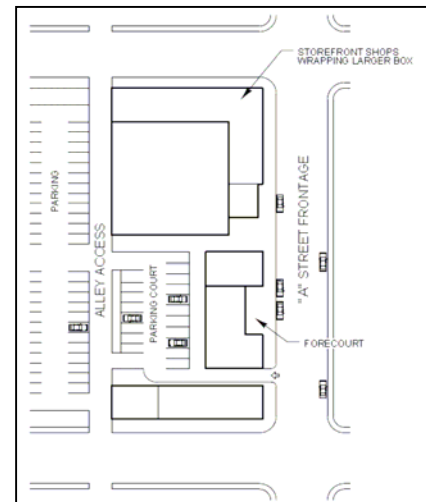


Figure 3: "Liner Building" form identified in the North 4th Street Plan for the area

regional bus service in Sandoval, Valencia, and Bernalillo counties. The Rio Metro Board of Directors, which is comprised of elected officials from the member jurisdictions, is responsible for establishing financial, management, service operation, fare and other policies that support the operations of the regional transit district and that conform to state and federal laws and regulations. RMRTD operates the Rail Runner with 24 daily weekday trips and 25 RMRTD bus routes.

RMRTD staff - partly while with the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) - were responsible for Rail Runner station design, project letting, and construction management. The RMRTD is willing to assume these roles for the Center as well. The RMRTD was developed in coordination with the MRCOG and both organizations currently share staff.



Figure 4: Passengers on a RMRTD bus

The MRCOG is a supporting and partnering agency in this proposal. MRCOG is a multi-county governmental planning agency representing the four Albuquerque metro counties. MRCOG also houses the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) responsible for carrying out the metropolitan planning process, including the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the region. The City is a member of the Metropolitan Transportation Board and the RMRTD.

2.2 Project Need

The Center plays an important role in addressing the region's projected "growing pains" and builds upon the significant recent successes of the region's public transportation system. In a region of rapid population growth, the 2030 MTP forecasts an increase of over 100% in auto travel times and a 50% increase in vehicle miles traveled. The Center will help to steer that trajectory in a more efficient and sustainable direction by enhancing access to the cross-town bus service and the Rail Runner for approximately 275,000 residents.

Additionally, ABQ Ride's bus rapid transit system and the Rail Runner now provide an opportunity for a new future land use and transportation scenarios. Land use planning efforts by the City and outlying communities have emphasized the relationships between land use and transportation. The development community is beginning to respond, and Rail Runner station areas in both Santa Fe and Albuquerque have seen mixed use and higher density development occur in the station areas. The Center will not only provide a safe, convenient and economical alternative to the region's auto-oriented growth pattern, but combined with on-going land use planning activities it will encourage the development of land use along the principles of transit oriented development in the City's already urbanized area.

2.3 Project Background

2.3.1 The Albuquerque – Santa Fe Corridor

The Albuquerque–Santa Fe corridor contains nearly half of the state’s entire population and, with over 443,000 jobs, nearly 60% of New Mexico’s employment. By 2025, population in the corridor will grow by nearly 50% to more than 1,300,000.

Albuquerque serves as the commercial, financial and educational center of the state. While Santa Fe, the state capital, is also a major regional employment center with over 79,000 jobs (about 21,000 of which are government related), the median price for a home in Santa Fe in 2007 was \$371,000. The lack of affordable housing forces much of the workforce to live outside the city, creating significant commuter population traveling the corridor on a daily basis.

2.3.2 ABQ Ride

ABQ Ride has grown dramatically over recent years, expanding service with an impressive ridership response. From FY04 through FY09, ABQ Ride added 20% more revenue hours of fixed route service, and ridership increased over 35%. Annual passenger miles traveled increased by over 65%. The ridership gains have come as a result of a number of factors including ABQ Ride’s introduction of its “Rapid Ride” bus service in FY05, coordination with the new Rail Runner commuter rail, and a population increasingly interested in using mass transit.

2.3.3 New Mexico Rail Runner Express

The 100-mile Rail Runner corridor extends between Belen - Santa Fe Corridor (Figure 5), with the Center located approximately in the middle. The corridor has many unique features including the Albuquerque International Airport, the State Capitol in Santa Fe, five Native American Pueblos, and key City employment and activity centers.

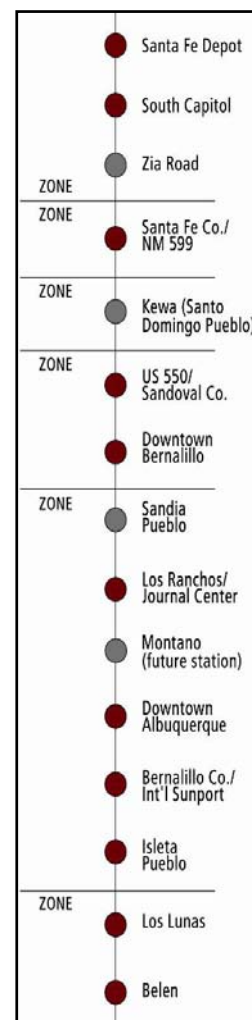


Figure 5: New Mexico Rail Runner Express Route Map

Since 2009, Rail Runner operations and development have been the responsibility of the RMRTD. The schedule is designed around peak hour commute with weekend and early evening



Figure 6: New Mexico Rail Runner Express at the Santa Fe Depot

service. Ridership averages approximately 5,000 boardings per day and average trip length is approximately 39.3 miles. Fares include free transfers to ABQ Ride buses and result in about 1,000 rides per day on ABQ Ride buses. New Mexico Park & Ride pass holders can transfer to the Rail Runner for free. The Rail Runner has been very successful in attracting and accommodating bicyclists, with up to 200 bike boardings a day.

The total of capital costs for the Rail Runner system was \$403.8 million. These costs were covered entirely by state funds. These funds include \$318 million of GRIP (Governor Richardson's Investment Partnership) funds, \$60 million in interest on bonds, a \$17 million in capital outlay approved during the 2007 New Mexico Legislative Session, and \$10 million provided by Sandoval County.

2.3.4 Public Transportation in Central New Mexico

Recent investments in the public transportation in central New Mexico have produced dramatic results with ridership in Albuquerque metropolitan area almost doubling between 1999 and 2009 (Figure 7). This is due to several factors. ABQ Ride implemented a "light" version of bus rapid transit known locally as Rapid Ride. Starting at the end of 2004 with the Red Line, Rapid Ride service has increased to three lines Red, Blue and Green. At the same time, ridership on regular bus routes has also increased. In 2006 the implementation of the Rail Runner added commuter rail ridership, which again increased in 2008 with extension of the service to Santa Fe. The NMDOT implemented NM Park & Ride bus service and RMRTD service in outlying communities are increasingly contributing to ridership numbers.

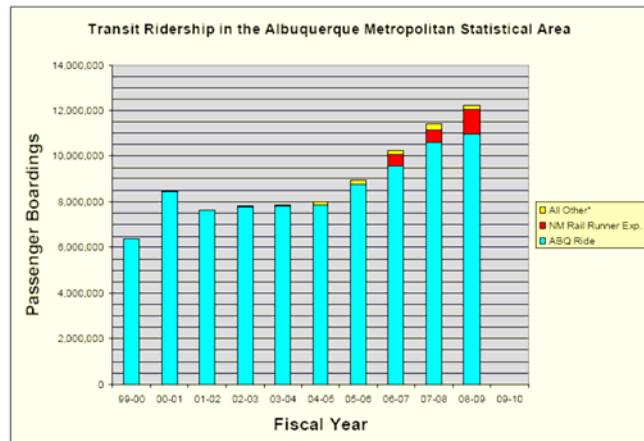


Figure 7: MSA Transit Ridership Bar Graph. Source: MRCOG, 2010

3. PROJECT PURPOSE

3.1 Provide More Transportation Choices

The Center will enhance access to the region's public transportation system and provide a safe, reliable and economical transportation option. For a significant portion of City's population the Center and new bus routes will reduce obstacles that transportation can pose in seeking employment, education, and health care.

By facilitating access to the Rail Runner, the Center leverages the transportation benefits of the commuter rail system. Largely due to the workforce characteristics of Santa Fe, the Center will result in a daily reduction of 80 VMT per rider accessing the center to board the Rail Runner with additional reductions due to increased ABQ Ride ridership. Because the Rail Runner is currently operating, this investment will result in increased ridership on day one.

3.2 Promotes Equitable, Affordable Housing

The Center will promote equitable, affordable housing both by increasing affordable mobility options for current residents in the area and by anchoring future redevelopment.

The Center will significantly enhance job opportunities and affordable transportation costs for area residents, partly due to Albuquerque's role in housing Santa Fe's workforce. The median home price in Santa Fe was \$270,475 in 2003, nearly \$100,000 higher than the national median.

By 2007 the median price for a home in Santa Fe increased to \$371,000, almost twice the median price in Albuquerque (\$198,500) or the nation (\$217,500) (National Association of Realtors). At the same time, the median household income in Santa Fe is less than the national average. This has created a significant commuter population traveling the corridor on a daily basis.

The Center also will serve as a transfer center for several area bus routes, providing increased mobility within the Albuquerque area. The Center will trigger two new routes, one serving a primarily residential market, the other providing service to the Jefferson employment corridor. The Center is less than ½ mile from a current, frequent, all-day ABQ Ride route on 4th Street. ABQ Ride will deviate this route to the Center at least for trips connecting with the Rail Runner, providing access for about 3,000 people living in poverty in that corridor. ABQ Ride also has an existing route passing the site on Montañito that will continue to provide service to the area. The combination of these four routes will provide substantial mobility benefits to the current population.

Finally, the Center is likely to anchor redevelopment in the area over time that will expand housing choices at densities appropriate for transit. The City is nearing completion of a North Fourth Street Rank III Corridor Plan that designates the Center area as a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) zone. The plan will also create a Mixed Use zone along 4th Street and an Infill Zone for residential pockets with potential for further infill housing.

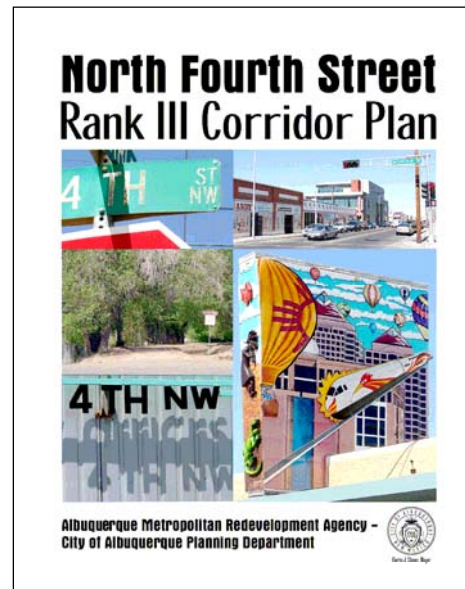


Figure 8: Cover of City's draft corridor plan

3.3 Enhance Economic Competitiveness

The Center will enhance economic competitiveness by providing enhanced access to the Rail Runner for a large portion of the Albuquerque population as well as access to 46,000 jobs in the Jefferson corridor within a 15-minute bus ride. The Rail Runner is increasingly seen as an important economic link between the cities and towns it connects. It provides access to jobs throughout the Santa Fe to Belen corridor, as well as educational opportunities with a number of colleges and universities within easy reach, including the University of New Mexico and the Community College of Central New Mexico.

The proposed bus service will provide portions of the western side of the City, which has very low employment to housing ratios, direct access to the Rail Runner as well as additional links to ABQ Ride's network of bus routes. The largely residential area to the east of the center will also be provided access to the commuter rail system.

Employment in the Albuquerque MSA is concentrating in a limited number of activity centers, a number of which are served by the Rail Runner. The activity centers along the Rail Runner corridor include Downtown Albuquerque, the University of New Mexico, Kirtland Air Force Base, and the Jefferson corridor/Journal Center. These employment centers account for a large percentage of employment in the MSA.

3.4 Support Existing Communities

The Center is consistent with, and will advance, a number of current land use and transportation planning efforts in the station area - an infill location in the geographic center of the Albuquerque metro area. The concept of the Center dates back to 1993, with the adoption of the North Valley Area Plan, a Rank II city land use plan. This plan's vision for the center includes access to a regional rail system extending to Santa Fe, an intermodal center with bus and vehicle facilities, and pedestrian and bike connections linking the center to nearby neighborhoods. The currently proposed design for the Center draws directly from the one brought forth in the plan, which also noted land redevelopment opportunities.

The City is currently finalizing a neighborhood planning effort underway for the North 4th Street corridor including the area around the Center. The plan includes a vision and implementation actions for revitalizing the area near the center. It also includes TOD and Mixed-Use Development overlay zoning categories around the Center and along 4th Street and Montañito. Design features to encourage walkable, pedestrian friendly redevelopment are also included in the draft plan. Transportation redesign visions include improving safety, functionality and aesthetic for pedestrians, and that redesign and improvement efforts shall optimize public transit. A variety of other design parameters, street cross sections and planning and construction guidelines are also included to ensure redevelopment activities advance the area's vision for the future.

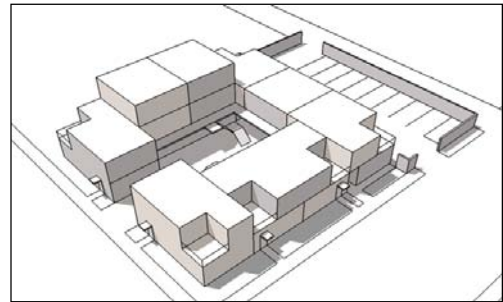


Figure 9: Courtyard Apartment's are one of the future uses identified by the North Fourth Street Rank III Corridor plan for the Intermodal Center area.

As the agency responsible for the initial implementation of the Rail Runner, MRCOG is leading a TOD planning effort designed to capture the positive economic, land use, and community benefits of the Rail Runner. The COG and the City are currently engaged in a planning and visioning project to ensure the Center advances the City's revitalization goals. This effort, which is focusing on the area within ½ mile from the center, emphasizes creating a walkable, pedestrian-friendly environment around transit connections that encourage residents and workers to ride transit more and drive their autos less.

3.5 Coordinate Policies and Leverage Investments

At the project level, ABQ Ride and Rio Metro are collaborating in the effort to establish the Center, expanding on past effort to establish new bus service to the Rail Runner stations in the ABQ Ride service area. In addition, local match has been secured from the State of New Mexico and the City.

At the broader level, the Center has been incorporated in multiple planning efforts by multiple agencies. As mentioned above, the City's Planning Department is planning for the center in designating the area as a TOD zone with the vision of future higher density, mixed-use redevelopment. Rio Metro has included bus service to the center in their service planning, and the facility is in the region's 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

3.6 Value Communities and Neighborhoods

The Center supports the local community's desire for better access to the Rail Runner and supports the North Fourth Street Rank III Corridor Plan that the Albuquerque City Council is currently considering after extensive public input. Local neighborhood groups have been working for several years in an effort to improve the walkability of the 4th and Montano area just to the west. As demonstrated by letters of support from the North Valley Coalition, Near North Valley Neighborhood Association, and area City Councilor, the local community is enthusiastic about the prospect of additional transit infrastructure and service in their area (Attachment 5.4).

3.7 Project Budget

The proposed project budget is below. As noted, about 55% of the property (2.45 of 4.3 total acres) has already been acquired, and the environmental assessment and preliminary engineering are underway. The budget includes construction cost for facilities typical of Rail Runner stations along with added bus transfer shelters and queue jump/signal priority facilities where feasible to provide timely and comfortable transfer in this congested corridor.

Activity	Amount	Notes
Property Acquisition	\$2,650,000	<i>55% of acquisition already completed.</i>
Environmental Assessment	\$60,000	<i>Underway with state funding</i>
Preliminary Engineering	\$190,000	<i>Underway with state funding</i>
Final Design & Engineering	\$350,000	
Construction of Rail & Parking Facilities	\$5,000,000	
Construction of Additional Bus Facilities	\$400,000	
Total	\$8,650,000	

Proposed Funding Sources

FTA (77.7%)	\$6,722,880
Local (22.3%)	\$1,927,120

3.8 Federal Amount Requested

ABQ Ride is requesting \$6,722,880 for this project. The project request is for funding for property acquisition, environmental review, preliminary engineering, final design, and construction of the Center.

3.9 Matching Funds

ABQ Ride will provide \$1,927,120 as local match, resulting in a 22.3% local match ratio. The local match will include property already acquired for the project. Parcel B - 1, the eastern 2.45 acres of land adjacent to the railroad track, was purchased on April 15, 2008, for \$1,447,120 with state funds appropriated by the New Mexico state legislature. In addition, RMRTD is currently using \$250,000 in state funding for an environmental assessment and preliminary engineering. Finally, the City of Albuquerque is committing \$230,000 to complete funding for the project.

3.10 Project Timeline

ABQ Ride anticipates project completion in 16 – 24 months after funding. The center is in current relevant transportation planning documents (the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan) and is a driving element in land use planning in the station area. The project match is in place. State required environmental reviews are in the final public comment phase, and preliminary design and costs estimates have been completed. A project

Gant chart is provided below. The timeline assumes that the requested funds will be immediately available and will be adjusted based on award and funding.

ID	Task Name	Start	Finish	Duration	2009				2010												2011						
					Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar				
1	Environmental Review	9/1/2009	4/1/2010	153d																							
2	Design	10/1/2009	4/30/2010	152d																							
3	Engineering and Bid Documents	3/1/2010	6/1/2010	67d																							
4	Land Procurement	3/1/2010	7/2/2010	90d																							
5	Bid and Construction	6/21/2010	2/25/2011	180d																							
6	Bus Improvements	4/21/2010	12/28/2010	180d																							

Task 1: Environmental Review

The environmental review process for the Center began in September 2009. This review will meet the requirements of the NMDOT. A public information meeting was conducted in December of 2009, and the Draft Environmental Document was submitted to the NMDOT for formal review on February 5, 2010. The RMRTD anticipates receiving a categorical exclusion from the NMDOT by the end of April 2010.

Task 2: Center Design

Design activities began in October of 2009. Initial concepts were presented to an agency advisory group in November 2009 and to the public in December 2009. Final concept design is anticipated by the end of May 2010.

Task 3: Bid and Engineering Documents

Based on fund availability, engineering and bid documents will be developed between April 2010 and the end of June. RMRTD and ABQ Ride will approve final plans and documents.

Task 4: Land Procurement

ABQ Ride will begin and complete the land acquisition process for the remaining required land (Parcel 1-A)

Task 5: Bid and Construction

ABQ Ride will issue the bid documents. ABQ Ride and RMRTD will oversee and manage project construction.

Task 6: Bus Improvements

ABQ Ride and RMRTD will ensure that bus and train schedules coordinate for intermodal transfers and will implement queue-jump and/or signal priority facilities where feasible.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

4.1 Demonstrated Need for Resources

The grant request is a non-recurring project that will provide significantly expand the service area of ABQ Ride and Rail Runner service. However, development costs represent most of Albuquerque's annual formula funds, creating a difficulty in funding the center while maintaining funding for other needs as transit expands rapidly in the metropolitan area.

The NMDOT has invested over \$400 million in the construction and start-up of the Rail Runner, and counties along the entire Rail Runner corridor have approved gross receipts taxes to fund its

operations and expand local bus service. However, the current economy has made it difficult to fund this center, the last to be under consideration along the corridor. Two other stations are also in the process of development – one is locally funded and one is funded through ARRA. The RMRTD does not intend to add other stations.

a. The project will have a significant impact on service delivery.

Figure 10 depicts the market area that Center will serve. Calculated using the MRCOG's TRAM (Transportation Accessibility Model) the center will significantly increase access to the Rail Runner system and bus service operating out of the center. The market area contains 275,000 people, based on a 20-minute private vehicle access time. Twenty-minute access time was deemed appropriate based on ridership at existing stations for the approximately 55-mile one-way trip to Santa Fe. This market will make the center the major station in northern Albuquerque, allowing a new population of Albuquerque residents to use the Rail Runner to reach employment, education, health care, recreation and other opportunities in Albuquerque, Santa Fe and other activity centers in the corridor.

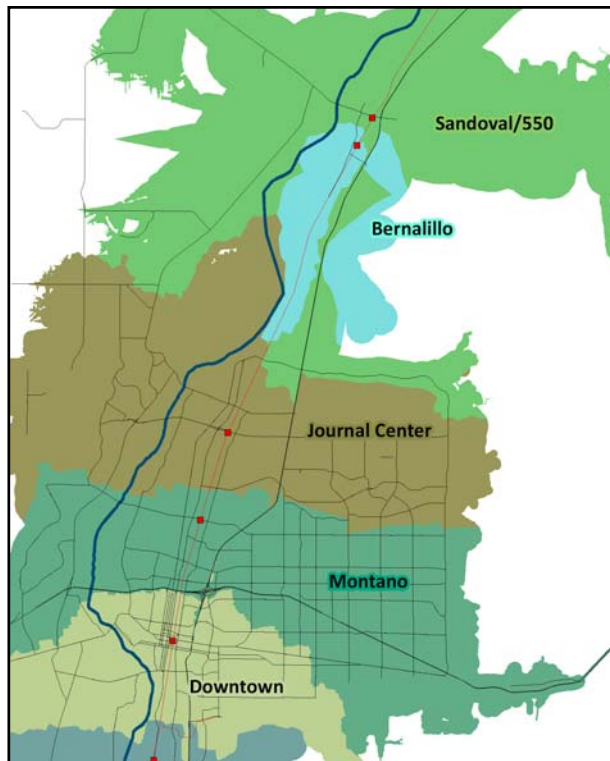


Figure 10: Station Market Area. Source: MRCOG, Planning Technologies, 2009.

Since the entire 100-mile Rail Runner corridor and 11 stations are currently in operation, the station will result in a significant impact on ABQ Ride, Rail Runner, and RMRTD service on day one. Additionally, the center will play an important role as a destination with bus connections to the Journal Center employment center.

ABQ Ride and RMRTD plan to add two new bus routes in conjunction with the center, one along Montañito & Montgomery to provide access to the Rail Runner and connecting bus routes for residents in the corridor, and one between the Center and the employment areas along the I-25/Jefferson corridor. Both routes will provide needed connections in ABQ Ride's current route network, in addition to providing service to the Center and surrounding residents.

MONTANO AND JEFFERSON ROUTES: POPULATION, HOUSING, AND EMPLOYMENT DATA, 2008				
Route	Population	Dwelling Units	Employment	Establishments
Montano	42,234	20,082	24,398	2,334
Jefferson	9,482	4,510	46,433	2,368

Source: MRCOG estimated, 2010.

As shown in Figure 11, the new express bus service along Montañito and Montgomery will provide mobility for over 40,000 residents within a 15-minute bus trip of the station, including a wide range of

Figure 11: Demographic data for planned bus routes.

demographics. (Fifteen minutes was used for bus access to account for additional walk-access time not included in the 20-minute drive access time.) Residents along this corridor do not currently have convenient access to the Rail Runner and the regional mobility it provides. These residents include almost 1,000 households with no vehicle and 4,800 people living in poverty (based on 2000 Census data). Farther east along Montgomery are relatively high proportions of elderly residents. Residents to the west live across one of Albuquerque's congested river crossings.

The Jefferson corridor route will provide access to 46,000 jobs within a 15-minute bus ride, about as many jobs as are currently accessible within 15 minutes of the downtown Albuquerque station, currently one of the busiest Rail Runner commuter destinations on the corridor. The route will also alleviate some difficulty of accessing the Rail Runner from the Jefferson corridor at the current Paseo Del Norte station, where traffic congestion has necessitated circuitous bus routing to ensure timely connections with the train.

4.2 Planning and Prioritization at Local / Regional Level

The Center is consistent with and advances the visions and goals established in the primary planning documents addressing the regional transportation system:

- a. The project is consistent with the transit priorities identified in the long range plan and/or contingency/ illustrative projects.

The concept of the Center dates back to 1993, with the adoption of the North Valley Area Plan, a Rank II city land use plan. This plan's vision for the center includes access to a regional rail system extending to Santa Fe, an intermodal center with bus and vehicle facilities, and pedestrian and bike connections linking the center to nearby neighborhoods. The currently proposed design for the Center draws directly from the one brought forth in the plan, which also noted land re development opportunities.

The RMRTD Service and Financial Plan (adopted by the RMRTD Board of Directors on July 16, 2008) presents a cohesive regional transit system that provides economical transportation alternatives. The Plan identifies future transit services and infrastructure needs for the three county service area. A programmatic approach, which included gathering input from recently completed and relevant planning studies, community comments and technical analyses, was applied to define the service and infrastructure investments identified in the plan.

The primary bus routes planned in conjunction with this application are specified in the RMRTD Service and Financial Plan. The plan includes two routes, one extending from the Center to the east while an additional route would extend west. This bus service is designed to transport passengers to large employment centers or other regionally significant destinations. This type of service is characterized by a limited number of passenger stops in order to maintain high average operating speeds, and also utilizes park-and-ride facilities.

The planned Jefferson route is supported by ABQ Ride's draft Westside Transit Improvement Study. The study envisions a future expansion of the route to extend from the west end of

Montaño to the Jefferson corridor, potentially interlining with a similar route serving Jefferson from the Alameda corridor to the north.

The 2020 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (adopted by the Metropolitan Transportation Board on April 26, 2007) includes the intermodal project as Project Number 424. As stated in the MTP, the facility “will provide a stop serving the North Valley, Northeast Albuquerque and the Montgomery Boulevard corridor, and additional service for commuters west of the Rio Grande utilizing the Montaño Bridge.”

The project supports all the regional transportation goals established in the MTP. Goals of particular relevance include (1) maintain and preserve the existing transportation infrastructure, (3) provide choices in access and mobility for people and goods, (4) manage existing systems to maximize our return on investments, and (5) provide transportation that supports local land use planning, community goals, and the economy.

b. The MPO endorses the project, if in a UZA, and the State, if for a rural area.

The intermodal project is Project Number 424 in the 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan where it is listed as a proposed strategy to help with congestion on the Montaño river crossing (p. 3-20). A letter from the MPO endorsing the project is included in the Attachments.

c. Local support is demonstrated by availability of local match for this and/ or related projects and letters of support.

The availability of the local match is demonstrated by the City resolution presented as Attachment 5.4. This also demonstrates the City’s support for the project. With state funding, the RMRTD and ABQ Ride have already acquired 55% of the needed property and undertaken the environmental review and preliminary engineering.

The attached letters demonstrate the support the Center is receiving from the City and State elected officials. Additionally, as the letters communicate, the Center is receiving support from local neighborhood associations.

d. Capital projects are consistent with service needs of the area.

The Center provides a critical link in the region's transit network. As shown previously in Figure 12, the Center would serve a large portion (275,000 residents) of the Albuquerque population within a 20-minute vehicle trip, as well as a significant number of residents (42,000) and jobs (46,000) within a 15-minute bus trip. Current parking shortages at the El Pueblo Rail Runner station to the north (closest station with park & ride spaces) illustrate the demand for access to the Rail Runner in this area of Albuquerque (Figure 12).

The Rail Runner currently carries about 5,000 trips per day, and the two existing bus routes serving the station area (routes #157 and #10) carry about 2,000 daily. The Center will significantly increase ridership



Figure 12: Los Ranchos / Journal Center Station and overflow parking

on both rail and bus modes.

- e. The proposal multimodal center demonstrates coordination with and support of other transportation modes and partners.

The proposed Center is a joint project between ABQ Ride and the RMRTD, and the agencies have coordinated transit service at the three existing Rail Runner stations in the ABQ Ride service area. The facility is served by current bicycle lanes on Montañito extending all the way to the west side of the city and is within ¼ mile of a planned bicycle trail along 2nd Street. The Rail Runner currently carries up to 200 bicycles daily. ABQ Ride transports 750 bikes per day on its buses. The facility will also include bicycle lockers.



Figure 13: Los Rancho / Journal Center Rail Runner station and ABQ Ride Route 151 bus

4.3 Livability

- a. The project will significantly enhance user mobility through the creation of more convenient transportation options for travelers

As demonstrated above, the project will provide more convenient access to the Rail Runner for 275,000 residents within a 20-minute vehicle trip and 40,000 residents within a 15-minute bus trip. The Rail Runner provides access to the state's key employment and residential areas along its 100-mile corridor, including five Native American Pueblos. The Center will provide a comfortable transfer location for users transferring between modes or between connecting bus routes.

The residents served by the new bus routes include almost 1,000 households with no vehicle and 4,800 people living in poverty based on 2000 Census data. Farther east along Montgomery are relatively high proportions of elderly residents. Residents to the west live across one of Albuquerque's congested river crossings. Residents along this Montañito/Montgomery corridor do not currently have convenient access to the Rail Runner and the regional mobility it provides.

The Jefferson corridor route will provide access to 46,000 jobs within a 15-minute bus ride, about as many jobs as are currently accessible within 15 minutes of the downtown Albuquerque station, currently the busiest Rail Runner commuter destination in Albuquerque. Bus route connections will also enhance convenient access from this North Valley area and the Westside to destinations throughout the City.

- b. The Center will contribute significantly to broader traveler mobility through intermodal connections, or improved connections between residential and commercial areas.

The fundamental purpose of the Center is to provide intermodal connections between a wide range of modes, including pedestrian, bicycle, bus, auto, and rail modes. The project will also facilitate the implementation of the City's North 4th Street Corridor Plan, which envisions a more pedestrian and transit-oriented form of development in the Center area.

c. The Center improves existing transportation choices.

The Center's critical role in expanding access to transit modes is part of a larger effort to address congestion and mobility concerns in the Albuquerque metro area. The limited river crossings in Albuquerque and the single direct roadway connection (Interstate 25) between Albuquerque and Santa Fe are both areas of congestion concern in the 2030 MTP. The 2030 MTP specifically lists the Center as one of the ways to address congestion on the Montañito bridge, and future congestion on I-25 was a driving force behind the implementation of the Rail Runner. By providing connections between bus routes and rail service, the Center will substantially improve transportation choices for a large number of residents.

d. The Center improves accessibility and transport services for economically disadvantaged populations, non-drivers, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

The Center will provide important new mobility options for populations less likely or able to drive. Connecting bus service will provide regional mobility to 1,000 households with no vehicle and 4,800 people living in poverty based on 2000 Census data within a 15-minute bus ride, along with nearly 4,500 seniors 65 or older. Approximately 17,000 residents with disabilities live within that same transit radius.

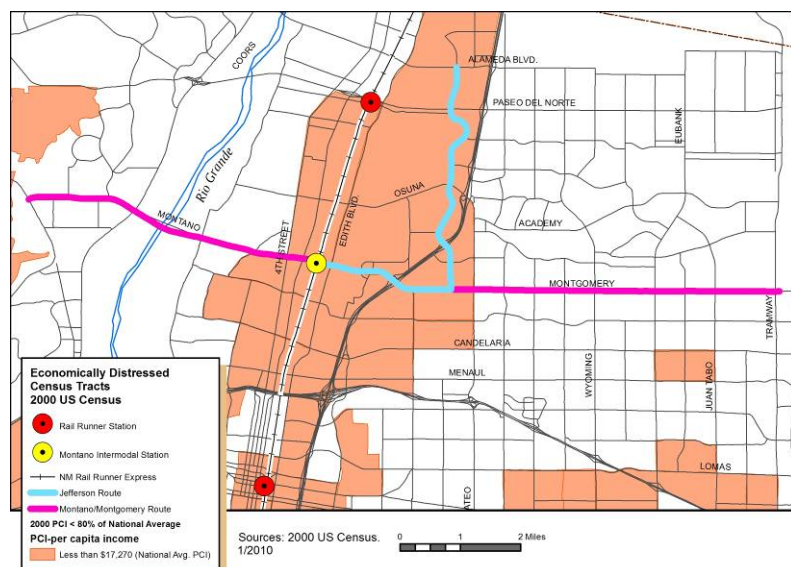


Figure 14: Intermodal center and economically distressed areas.
Source MRCOG.

The center itself is located in an economically distressed area, as shown in Figure 14, which displays in orange the census tracts where the per capita income reported on the 2000 Census was less than 80 percent of the national average.

Bus service from the Center to the Jefferson employment corridor will connect Rail Runner riders to 46,000 jobs, providing enhanced access to employment opportunities for people living throughout the Rail Runner's 100-mile corridor.

The Center will decrease household transportation costs in three primary ways. First, by presenting a lower cost transportation mode the center will reduce daily transportation and commuting cost (approximately \$172 monthly saving based on commute to Santa Fe and the purchase of a monthly Rail Runner pass which includes an ABQ Ride bus connection). Second, those who live close to the intermodal center and connecting bus route may be able to reduce the number of vehicles owned and operated by the household, reducing household expenditures by approximately \$6,000 (American Automobile Association, 2008). Finally, the North 4th Street Corridor Plan proposes a TOD overlay zone for the area that will lead to a more efficient and accessible land use pattern requiring fewer auto trips to reach activities and destinations.

A unique characteristic of the Rail Runner corridor is the presence of a number of Native American Pueblos - Sandia, Isleta, Santa Ana, San Felipe and Santa Domingo. The Rail Runner currently has stations in two of those Pueblos (with convenient access to a third), with stations under construction for the other two Pueblos, providing enhanced mobility for Pueblo residents.

- e. The Center is the result of a planning process which coordinated transportation and land-use planning decisions and encouraged community participation in the process.

The concept for the Center has developed as a result of a broad, long-term, coordinated transportation and land-use planning process. The concept of the Center dates back to 1993, with the adoption of the North Valley Area Plan, a Rank II city land use plan. This plan's vision for the center includes access to a regional rail system extending to Santa Fe, an intermodal center with bus and vehicle facilities, and pedestrian and bike connections linking the center to nearby neighborhoods. The currently proposed design for the Center draws directly from the one brought forth in the plan, which also noted land redevelopment opportunities. The North Valley Coalition, which represents the local neighborhoods, enthusiastically supports the project. (See the attached letter of support).

The City is in the process of adopting a new plan for the North 4th Street corridor. The concept of the Center has been a key element in that 5-year long planning process, which included extensive public involvement. The plan includes the Center area in a new North Fourth Transit Oriented Development (NFTOD) land-use regulatory zone. "The intent of [the] NFTOD District is to support and take advantage of transit investments by serving relatively large areas, providing community-serving retail and services and high density housing" (p. 12 of the plan).

The RMRTD's Service and Financial Plan, which incorporated numerous public meetings, also envisions the Center and the Montgomery/Montaña connecting bus service.

The 2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program include the project and were the result of a regional public involvement effort.

4.4 Sustainability

The Center also presents an alternative to an increasingly congested and compromised corridor. Interstate 25, a four-lane interstate highway which generally parallels the Rail Runner tracks, is the only continuous roadway connecting Albuquerque and Santa Fe that directly serves both population centers. Interstate 25 also traverses the Pueblos of Sandia, Santa Ana, San Felipe and Santa Domingo, so expanding the capacity of the facility, or pursuing the construction of another roadway in the corridor would involve some significant challenges. Congestion on the corridor is projected to increase dramatically. By the year 2030, the number of vehicles using I-25 to Santa Fe is projected to increase to about 80,000 daily, and travel time will increase from 75 to 112 minutes. By accommodating travel along this corridor, the Rail Runner provides a valuable alternative to widening I-25 or constructing a parallel roadway.

- a. Center will improve energy efficiency or reduce energy consumption/green house gas emissions

The Center leverages the transportation benefits of the Rail Runner. Those using the Center to access the Rail Runner are expected to reduce daily VMT by 80 miles per passenger due to the workforce travel to Santa Fe. Because the Rail Runner is currently operating and because of the

large market area and increase in bus access to the Rail Runner, this project will result in increased ridership and a reduction in VMT on day one. Current Rail Runner ridership averages about 5,000 boardings per day with an approximate daily VMT reduction of 200,000 miles, resulting in substantial reductions in energy consumption and green house gas emissions.

b. Project will maintain, protect or enhance the environment

In addition to the Center's transportation role, the Center includes a number of design features that will maintain protect and enhance the environment. These features include photovoltaic systems offsetting Center energy use (Figure 15), the use of LED lighting, rainwater catchment areas, and a bike locker program. The Center's location – an infill site in the urbanized area – and the “amenity value” offered by the bus and rail service will mitigate the pressure for outward, auto-oriented, urban growth and will produce numerous environmental and energy benefits.



Figure 15: Photovoltaic modules at a Rail Runner station

4.5 Leveraging of Public and Private Investments.

a. Jurisdictional and Stakeholder

Through state funding, property acquisition, environmental review, and preliminary engineering have begun. In addition, the \$403 million capital costs of the Rail Runner system were covered by state funds, demonstrating the commitment of the state to the development of the Rail Runner.

Local governments and residents also demonstrated this commitment. Recognizing the regional nature of the land use and transportation issues facing the Albuquerque – Santa Fe corridor of New Mexico and the regional transportation backbone the Rail Runner provided, the RMRTD was officially constituted at the March 2005 meeting of the New Mexico Transportation Commission. In a separate action the North Central Regional Transit District was also formed in the fall of 2004. Demonstrating popular support for the regional transportation program and local government collaboration, a local-options gross receipts tax was passed by all counties in both Transit Districts in 2008. In the Rio Metro area the tax passed district wide by a 54%-46% margin despite the failing economy and extremely low gas prices. Similarly, voters in the City of Albuquerque passed a 10-year renewal of an additional transportation gross receipts tax in the fall of 2009, despite the continuing difficult economy. Thirty-six percent of the renewed tax will go to transit, up from 20% in the previous 10-year tax.

b. Disciplinary Integration:

A variety of public agencies have been involved in the development of the concept for the Center, including the MRCOG, City of Albuquerque Planning Department, and Bernalillo County.

4.6 The Project is Ready to Implement.**a. The Center's environmental work is nearing completion.**

The state required environmental review for the proposed site was initiated in September of 2009. A public meeting was held in December. The draft document is currently being reviewed, and a public hearing is anticipated for late February. RMRTD anticipates receipt of a Categorical Exclusion by the end of March 2010.

b. Center implementation plans and initial design is nearing completion.

The design of the Center is funded, with an anticipated completion by the end of April. The development of engineering and bid documents is partially funded and will commence with the finalization of the design. With funding in place, we anticipate complete engineering and bid documents by the end of May 2010.

c. TIP/STIP can be amended.

The 2008-2013 Transportation Improvement Program includes the project. Due to the current lack of future funding, the project is not in the 2010-2015 Transportation Improvement Program but will be added if funding becomes available.

d. Center's local share is in place.

The State of New Mexico has provided \$1,447,119.55 for property acquired in April 2008 as well as \$250,000 for the environmental assessment and preliminary engineering currently nearing completion. The City of Albuquerque is committing an additional \$230,000 by the City, bringing the local match to \$1,927,120, or 22.3% of project costs.

e. Project can be obligated and implemented quickly if selected.

The RMRTD and ABQ Ride are ready and able to obligate the funding and implement the project immediately if selected.

f. The applicant demonstrates the ability to carry out the proposed project successfully.

The RMRTD has already constructed 11 Rail Runner stations to date, many with park & ride and connecting bus facilities. From funding to start up in two and half years, the Rail Runner was one of the fastest commuter rail start-ups in recent history. ABQ Ride is currently nearing completion of its second park & ride facility in the last two years and has a history of successfully completing projects of similar magnitude over the last ten years.

4.7 Applicant's Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity**a. ABQ Ride and RMRTD have the technical capacity to administer the project.**

ABQ Ride is able to implement the Urbanized Area Formula Grant Program of Projects in accordance with the grant application, Master Agreement, and all applicable laws and regulations, using sound management practices. ABQ Ride promptly addressed a finding in this area in its draft FY09 Triennial Review and has received no adverse comments.

b. Fleet replacement and/or expansion and c. For fleet expansion operating funds

The proposed project is not a fleet expansion project.

- d. There are no outstanding legal, technical or financial issues with the grantee that would bring the feasibility of successful project completion into question.

There are no outstanding legal, technical or financial issues with the grantee that would bring the feasibility of successful project completion into question.

- e. Source of Center's local match is identified and is available for prompt project implementation if selected (no deferred local share will be allowed).

The local match has been identified and is available for prompt project implementation.

- f. The grantee is in fundable status for grant making purpose.

ABQ Ride is in fundable status for grant making purpose.

5. ATTACHMENTS

5.1 Center Design Concept

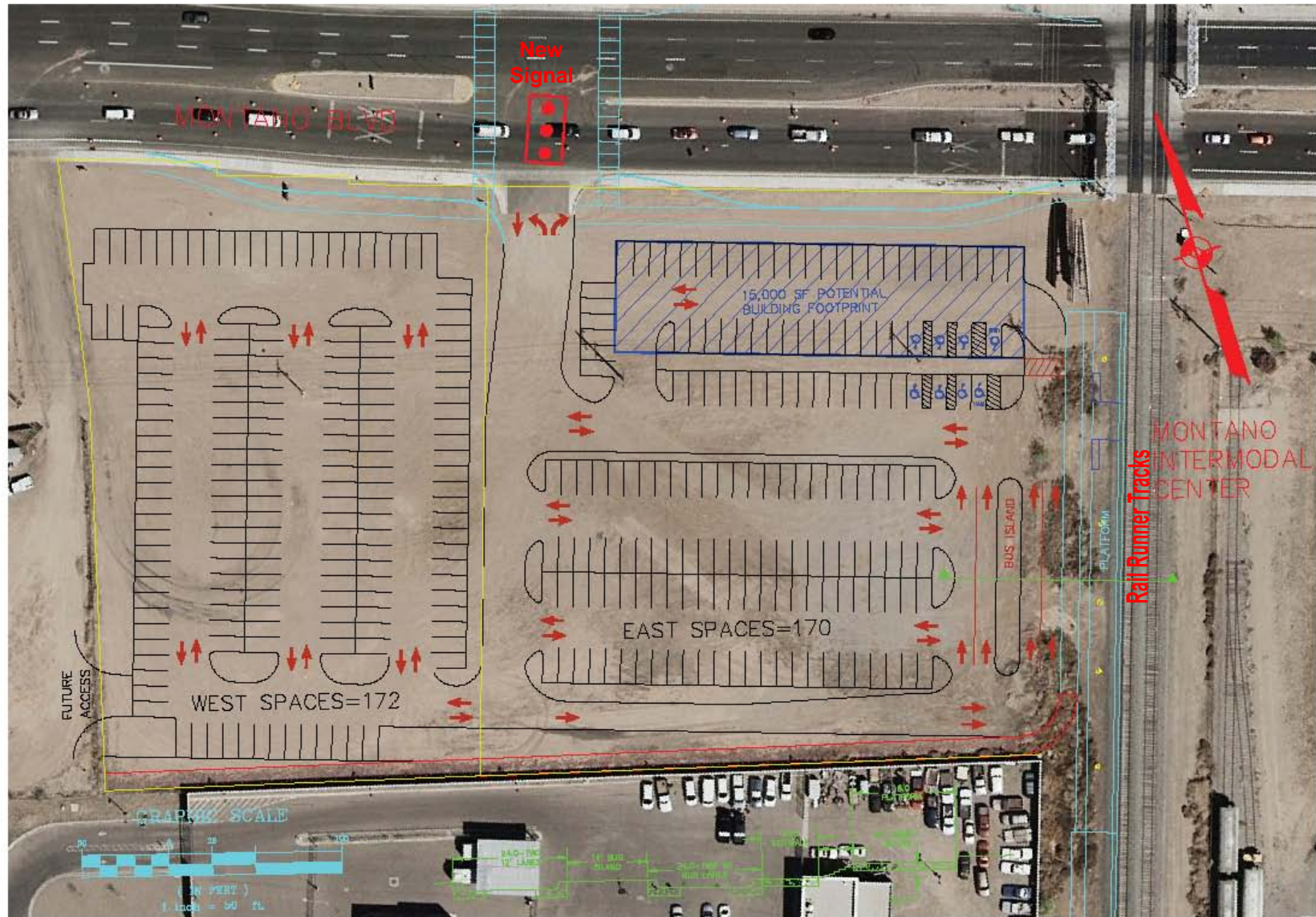
5.2 Parcel Plats for Property Acquisition

5.3 Cost Estimate for Montano Intermodal Center

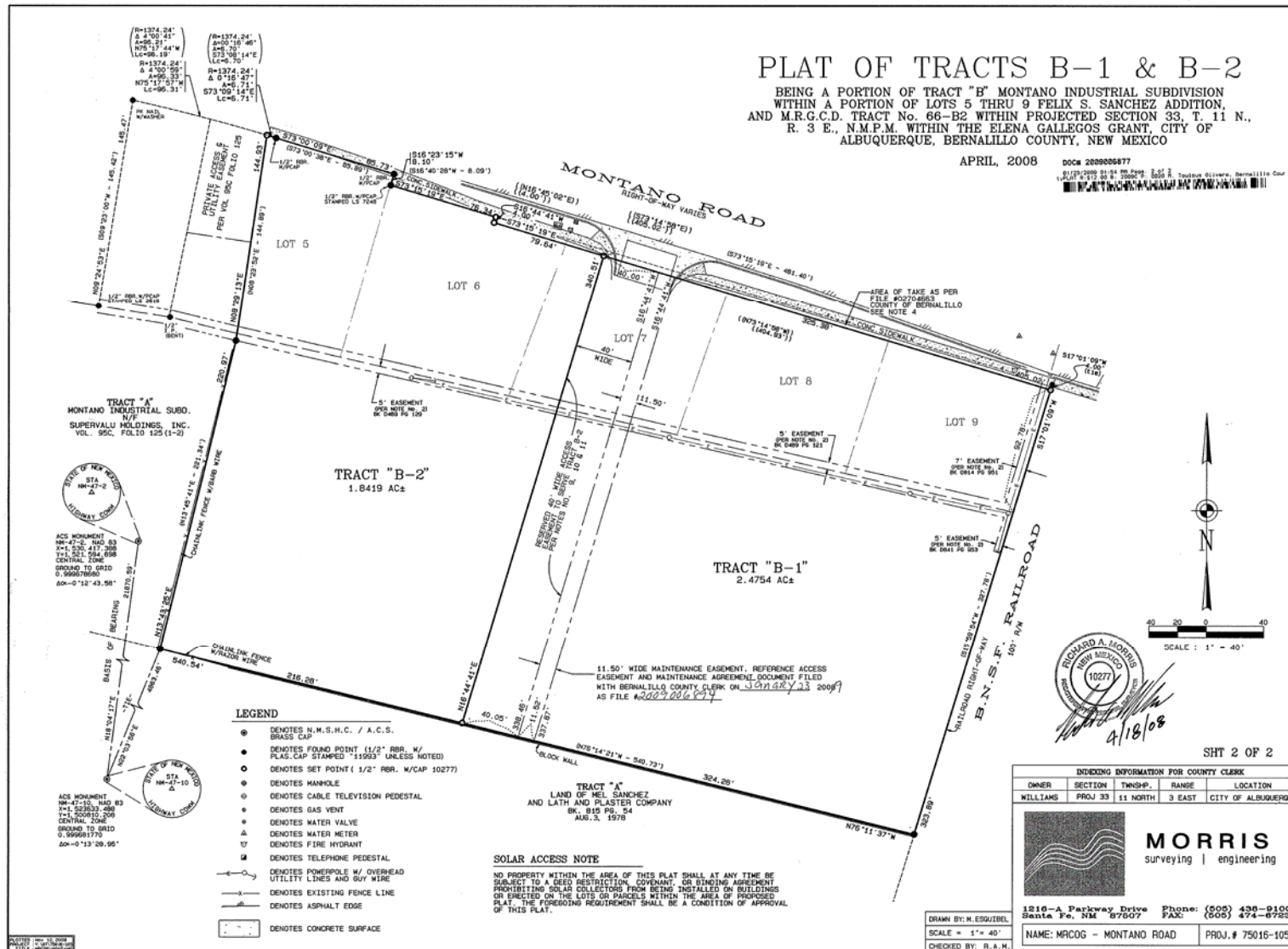
5.4 Letters of Support

- Rio Metro Regional Transit District
- Mid-Region Council of Governments (Metropolitan Planning Organization)
- United States Senator Jeff Bingaman
- Albuquerque City Councilor Debbie O'Malley
- Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
- Governor J. Robert Benavides, Pueblo of Isleta
- Near North Valley Neighborhood Association
- North Valley Coalition

ATTACMENT 5.1: CENTER DESIGN CONCEPT



ATTACHMENT 5.2: PARCEL PLATS



ATTACMENT 5.3: COST ESTIMATE FOR MONTANO INTERMODAL CENTER

Montano Intermodal Center Conceptual Cost Estimate LOTS B-1 and B-2 (EAST AND WEST PARKING LOTS)

Date: 2-8-2010

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	UNIT	ESTIMATE	COST	
				Unit Cost	Cost
	SITE				
	Earthwork				
*****	SITE CLEAR AND GRUB	ACRE	4.35	\$1,300.00	\$5,655.00
203100	BORROW	C.Y.	12275	\$5.50	\$67,512.50
	Paving				
207000	SUBGRADE PREPARATION	S.Y.	17605	\$2.00	\$35,210.00
304140	BASE COURSE, 4" (REGULAR PAVING)	S.Y.	13895	\$8.00	\$111,160.00
304180	BASE COURSE, 8" (HEAVY DUTY PAVING)	S.Y.	3,710	\$10.00	\$37,100.00
423250	HMA SPIII, 3" (REGULAR PAVING)	S.Y.	13,895	\$13.00	\$180,635.00
423250	HMA SPIII, 6" (HEAVY DUTY PAVING)	S.Y.	3,710	\$26.00	\$96,460.00
450***	CONCRETE PAVEMENT, 8" (BUS PARKING)	S.Y.	754	\$85.93	\$64,791.22
608004	CONCRETE SIDEWALK, 4" (4' PED CONNECTIONS)	S.Y.	418	\$50.00	\$20,900.00
608004	CONCRETE SIDEWALK, 4" (ADJACENT TO 300' PLATFORM)	S.Y.	733	\$50.00	\$36,650.00
609200	HEADER CURB	L.F.	4,807	\$13.69	\$63,069.83
704754	RETRO PT'ND PYMT STRIPE, 4"	L.F.	5,700	\$0.46	\$2,622.00
*****	WHEELCHAIR RAMP	EACH	8	\$1,225.00	\$9,800.00
*****	ASPHALT TRAIL (2" ASPHALT ON 6" SUBGRADE)	S.Y.	1,289	\$12.80	\$16,499.20
	Landscaping and Irrigation				
*****	LANDSCAPING AND IRRIGATION	S.F.	23,800	\$4.00	\$95,200.00
	Site Lighting				
*****	SITE LIGHTING	EACH	22	\$3,500.00	\$77,000.00
	Utilities				
*****	24" RCP, II	L.F.	475	\$48.19	\$22,890.25
*****	TRENCH, 8", 18-36", SD, 8-12" D	L.F.	475	\$27.25	\$12,943.75
*****	DOUBLE D, DROP INLET	EACH	2	\$4,338.76	\$8,677.52
*****	CONNECTION TO EX. MH	EACH	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
652000	MH TYPE C, 4' DIAMETER, 0-8' DEPTH	EACH	1	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
*****	ARTERIAL PAVEMENT, REMOVE AND REPLACE, W/M	S.Y.	145	\$61.43	\$8,907.35
*****	1" IRRIGATION METER BOX	EACH	2	\$668.84	\$1,337.68
*****	1" UTILITY EXPANSION CHARGE (UEC)	EACH	2	\$4,340.00	\$8,680.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$989,201.30
	MONTANO BLVD				
207000	SUBGRADE PREPARATION	S.Y.	1,876	\$2.00	\$3,752.00
304180	BASE COURSE, 6"	S.Y.	1,345	\$8.95	\$12,037.75
423***	ASPHALT CONCRETE, SUPERPAVE, 8"	S.Y.	1,085	\$35.50	\$38,442.50
608004	CONCRETE SIDEWALK, 4"	S.Y.	620	\$50.00	\$31,000.00
608106	DRIVE PAD 6"	S.Y.	45	\$70.00	\$3,150.00
609500	STANDARD CURB AND GUTTER	L.F.	798	\$21.00	\$16,758.00
609636	CONCRETE VALLEY GUTTER 6" X 36"	L.F.	200	\$35.00	\$7,000.00
701***	STREET SIGNAGE	L.S.	1	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00
704700	HOT THERMOPLASTIC PAVEMENT MARKINGS	L.F.	670	\$0.50	\$335.00
704717	HOT THERMOPLASTIC PAVEMENT MARKING RIGHT ARROW	EACH	1	\$135.45	\$135.45
704720	HOT THERMOPLASTIC PAVEMENT MARKING WORD (ONLY)	EACH	2	\$175.00	\$350.00
700***	NEW TRAFFIC SIGNAL	L.S.	1	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$367,760.70
	RAILRUNNER PLATFORM				
*****	PLATFORM (See Note 4 Below)	L.F.	500	\$3,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
511000	CONCRETE RETAINING WALL	S.F.	3,750	\$25.00	\$93,750.00
*****	RAMPS AND STAIRS W/HANDRAILS	L.S.	1	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$1,608,750.00

ATTACHMENT 5.3: COST ESTIMATE (continued)

<u>EROSION CONTROL</u>					
603200	SILT FENCE	L.F.	3,805	\$5.00	\$19,025.00
603250	DROP INLET PROJECTION TYPE I	EACH	2	\$150.00	\$300.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$19,325.00
<u>MISCELLANEOUS</u>					
618***	CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC CONTROL	LS	1	50,000	\$50,000.00
618000	TRAFFIC CONTROL MANAGEMENT	LS	1	20,000	\$20,000.00
621000	MOBILIZATION (8%)	LS	1	85,000	\$85,000.00
801000	CONSTRUCTION STAKING BY THE CONTRACTOR	LS	1	70,000	\$70,000.00
*****	PNM UTILITY RELOCATION	LS	1	125,000	\$125,000.00
*****	SOLAR PANELS, LED LIGHTING AND RELATED EQUIPMENT	LS	1	225,000	\$225,000.00
*****	PUBLIC ART	LS	1	55,000	\$55,000.00
*****	SITE FURNISHINGS	LS	1	15,000	\$15,000.00
	SUBTOTAL				\$645,000.00

Notes: 1) Assumed parking lot paving section of 3" asphalt, over 4" base course, over 12" subgrade.
 2) Assumed heavy duty paving section of 6" asphalt over 8" base course over 12" subgrade.
 3) Assumed Montano paving section of 8" asphalt over 6" base course over 12" subgrade.
 4) Estimated platform cost based on past construction figures of similar structures.

Subtotal	\$3,630,087.00
20% Contingency	\$726,007.40
E&C (8%)	\$290,402.96
Subtotal	\$4,646,447.36
NMGR (6.87%)	\$319,210.93
Total	\$4,965,658.29

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Commissioner Glenn Walters
Commissioner Michael Wiener

ADMINISTRATION

Dewey Cave
Interim Executive Director

Chris Blewett
Director of Transportation and
Planning Services

809 Copper NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 247.1750
Fax: (505) 247.1753

Bruce Rizzieri
ABQRide Director
100 1st Street
Albuquerque, NM 87102

January 27, 2010

RE: Section 5309 and the Montano Intermodal Station

Mr. Rizzieri:

We are pleased to partner with the City of Albuquerque and ABQRide for the Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities Grant and the implementation of the Montano Intermodal Station and connecting bus routes.

As you know, the Rio Metro Regional Transit District is the agency responsible for the development and operations of the New Mexico Rail Runner Express. Our analysis shows that the Montano Intermodal Station and proposed bus service will significantly enhance the accessibility of the Rail Runner to Albuquerque residents and will serve as a key access point for residents close to the station and along the heavy residential area on Montano. Additionally, the station will serve as a destination for commuters accessing the Journal Center employment area.

As you are aware, the station design efforts are advancing and we are finalizing the environmental documentation. The RMRTD is eager to participate in any capacity necessary in station implementation efforts. Our experience in the development of the other Rail Runner stations can help ensure that the station is designed to meet ridership needs, that it integrates with and compliments the community, and that the project is completed on time and in budget. As we have done in the past, we look forward to coordinating the rail and bus services at this station to provide seamless connections.

We look forward to partnering with you on this exciting project and our continued cooperation in bringing public transportation to central New Mexico.

Sincerely,



Chris Blewett
Director
Rio Metro Regional Transit District



Mid-Region Council of Governments

January 29, 2010

Grant Administrator
Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities
Livability Initiative Program Grants

Dewey V. Cave
Interim Executive Director

Submitted via e-mail: Urbancirculator@dot.gov

Larry Abraham
Chair, Board of Directors
Mayor, Village of Los Ranchos
de Albuquerque

MEMBER GOVERNMENTS

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Albuquerque Public Schools
Albuquerque Metropolitan
Arroyo Flood Control
Authority
City of Belen
Bernalillo County
Town of Bernalillo
Village of Bosque Farms
Village of Corrales
Village of Cuba
Town of Edgewood
Village of Encino
Town of Estancia
Village of Jemez Springs
Village of Los Lunas
Los Lunas Schools
Village of Los Ranchos
de Albuquerque
Middle Rio Grande
Conservancy District
City of Moriarty
Town of Mountainair
Town of Peralta
City of Rio Rancho
Rio Rancho Public Schools
Sandoval County
Southern Sandoval
County Arroyo Flood
Control Authority
Village of Tijeras
Torrance County
Valencia County
Village of Willard

RE: Montañó Rail Runner Station Project, Albuquerque, NM

The project to develop the Montañó Rail Runner Station has the full support and endorsement of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as demonstrated by several approval actions of the Metropolitan Transportation Board (MTB) which serves as the governing body of the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The project is consistent with, and is listed in, the current *2030 Metropolitan Transportation Plan* (MTP) for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area which was approved by the Metropolitan Transportation Board on April 26, 2007. The project was also consistent with the previous *2025 Metropolitan Transportation Plan*.

In addition, the project to develop the Montañó Rail Runner Station was programmed in the Albuquerque Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) in FY 2006, FY 2007 and FY 2009 (see attachment). Any additional funds granted will be added to the TIP.

If you require any further information, please contact me.

Sincerely,

David R. Pennella
Transportation Program Manager

cc: Tony Ogboli
FTA, Region VI
819 Taylor Street, Room 8A36
Fort Worth, TX 76102

United States Senate

February 4, 2010

The Honorable Peter M. Rogoff
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
East Building
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE
5th Floor, Suite E-57
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Rogoff:

I am writing in strong support of the City of Albuquerque's ABQ Ride Transit's application to the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5309 Livability Initiative. The request is for \$6.72 million for the construction of the Montañito Rail Runner Intermodal Station.

The new intermodal station will be located in the geographic center of Albuquerque on Montañito Road – a principal arterial with a strategic crossing of the Rio Grande. In addition to the rail platform, the station will provide park and ride spaces, pedestrian and bicycle connections, and bus facilities for ABQ Ride and Rio Metro buses. The project is being coordinated with the Rio Metro Regional Transit District

I do believe the project fully meets the goals of the Livability Initiative. The new station will enhance access to the Rail Runner for 275,000 area residents and provide a convenient connection to 46,000 jobs in the Jefferson corridor. It will also help further local land-use planning efforts, address regional air quality and congestion concerns, and enhance the region's economic competitiveness by growing the regional transit network.

Your careful evaluation of Albuquerque's application is very much appreciated. Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,



Jeff Bingaman
United States Senator

JB/dja



CITY OF ALBUQUERQUE

City Council

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Albuquerque, NM 87103
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District 6

Michael D. Cook
District 7

Don Harris
District 9

Laura Mason
Council Director

February 9, 2010

Mr. Peter Rogoff
Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
East Building, 4th Floor
ATTN: Office of Peter Rogoff
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Rogoff,

The City of Albuquerque supports the joint grant application by the Albuquerque Transit Department and the Rio Metro Transit Agency Rail Runner Express, for a Bus and Bus Facilities Livability Grant. The grant will fund a joint Bus Park and Ride and Commuter Rail Station on Montano Road in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The station will have a service area of several hundred thousand potential transit riders and will be a key part of the infrastructure needed to implement a transit system that attracts ridership volumes so as to reduce traffic over a congested river crossing. The project will also help revitalize a historic corridor and provide economic development opportunities to adjoining lower income neighborhoods.

A Council Resolution, attached to this letter has been introduced to the City Council for an appropriation of \$230,000. This match is in addition to pre-acquisition of a portion of the land needed for the station and funding to complete the projects environmental assessment and preliminary design. The Resolution will be heard on Monday, February 17th, 2010.

The State of New Mexico and the Rio Metro Transit Agency have acquired half the needed property. Rio Metro has initiated the environmental impact assessment process and the preliminary station design. The rail service and a number of bus routes that would serve the station are already in operation. The connecting stations for these two modes are three miles from the North Valley's Central Core, adding time for the passengers and expense for the Albuquerque transit system. By developing this station the bus commute time to and from the Rail Runner Express will be reduced, attracting new riders who in turn reduce congestion on the river crossing and better connect area merchants to markets throughout the region.

February 9, 2010

Page 2

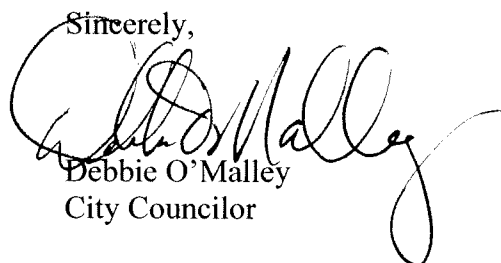
Traffic on the nearby river crossing often comes to stop during rush hour, imposing long delays that create noise and air pollution. Access to the neighborhoods near the crossing is impeded. If even a minority of the commuters crossing the river become transit riders, these impacts would be significantly mitigated and it could remove the need to expand the river crossing, saving tens of millions of dollars and avoiding a project that would be a dividing rod among the City residents who reside west of the river crossing (the commuters) and those who live next to it in the North Valley.

The station complements efforts to revitalize North Fourth Street, a six mile long corridor. It will create a connection from this corridor, one of two major transit corridors in the City to neighborhoods through out Albuquerque, the metropolitan area and the Santa Fe/Los Alamos Urban Area. Revitalizing Fourth Street is important to preserving the City's North Valley a living artifact of United States and Spanish Colonial History. Over 400 years ago trails that crisscross the North Valley served as the Royal Spanish Road from Mexico City to Santa Fe. During the 1920's and 30's Fourth Street was the original US Route 66. From the 1940's through the early 1960's it served as US 85, the first automobile highway to connect the American West with Mexico. During the past several decades lands and structures abutting Fourth Street, now a local arterial street have become blighted. An effort, in its 9th year is underway to restore this corridor as a walk able, transit street orientated street that will again become the commercial spine of Albuquerque's North Valley.

In addition, plans are for the station to include retail services and affordable multi-family housing. This is important. Between the corridor and the station is a long narrow neighborhood that is a lower income middle class working area. Many houses in the neighborhood are the first homes purchased by citizens who immigrated to the United States. A number of young people from the neighborhood have opened small retail businesses on Fourth Street the station will open markets well beyond Fourth Street that will help grow these businesses. Finally it will also offer convenient economical access for area residents to jobs throughout Central New Mexico.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie O'Malley", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Debbie O'Malley
City Councilor

DO/tgm



February 5, 2010

Mr. Bruce Rizzieri
ABQ Ride Director
City of Albuquerque Transit Department
100 1st Street NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Mr. Rizzieri,

The Board of Directors of the Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce is pleased to support the City of Albuquerque's application to the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA's) Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities grant funds for funding to build the Montañño Rail Runner Intermodal Center.

The intermodal center will provide a vital hub for rail, bus, pedestrian and bicycle connections in the center of Albuquerque, as well as providing a park & ride facility for people using those other modes. The center will enhance access to the Rail Runner and bus service for 275,000 area residents and provide a convenient connection to 46,000 jobs in the Jefferson corridor. In doing so, it will help to further local land-use planning efforts, address regional air quality and congestion concerns, and enhance the region's economic competitiveness by growing our regional transit network.

As an organization that supports making our community a place where businesses can grow and prosper and where people want to raise their families, we're excited about this project and look forward to its implementation.

Sincerely,

Del Archuleta
Chairman of the Board
Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce

Terri Cole
President & CEO
Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce



PUEBLO OF ISLETA

P.O. BOX 1270 ISLETA, NM 87022

February 4, 2010

Bruce Rizzieri
ABQ Ride Director
100 – 1st Street NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Mr. Rizzieri:

This is to support your application for the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5309 Bus and Bus Facilities grant funds for the purpose of constructing the Montano Rail Runner Intermodal Station. We believe that the proposed Montano Rail Runner Intermodal Station is located strategically to serve many residents and businesses in our region, including Pueblo of Isleta residents who board the train at the Isleta Rail Runner Station.

Providing better and easier access to the Rail Runner and connected buses will be critical to building an effective regional transportation network. The proposed Montano Rail Runner Intermodal Station will greatly contribute to such a goal.

We are pleased to support your efforts to build a Rail Runner Intermodal Station at Montano, a highly strategic location that would serve not only the City of Albuquerque but also potentially the entire region.

Sincerely,

PUEBLO OF ISLETA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Robert Benavides', is written over a horizontal line.

J. Robert Benavides
Governor



NEAR NORTH VALLEY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

VOLUNTEERS WORKING INCLUSIVELY TO PROTECT,
PRESERVE, AND ENHANCE THE COMMUNITY

NNVNA
PO Box 6953
ALBUQUERQUE, NM
87197

RICHARD A. SANDOVAL,
PRESIDENT, 345-4371

MAIL@NNVNA.ORG
WWW>NNVNA.ORG

February 3, 2010

Mr. Bruce Rizzieri
ABQ Ride Director
100 First Street SW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

RE: City of Albuquerque Section 5309 Grant Application for the Montañño
Rail Runner / ABQ Ride Intermodal Facility

Dear Mr. Rizzieri:

I am pleased to inform you that the members of the Near North Valley Neighborhood Association who attended a regular meeting held on February 2, 2010 *voted unanimously* to endorse your application to the Federal Transit Administration to obtain a \$6.5 million "Livability" Grant to fund construction of the Rail Runner / ABQ Ride Intermodal Station at Montañño Road. In addition, I am pleased to report that our Board of Directors also voted unanimously last December 15 to support this much-needed project. Our neighborhood is located approximately a mile-and-a-half south of this planned facility.

This project has been on our radar screen since at least 1993, when a concept for a commuter rail station at this location was described and illustrated in the Albuquerque / Bernalillo County *North Valley Area Plan*. (See <http://www.cabq.gov/planning/publications/northvly.pdf>, pp. 109-111.) In addition, the project is an integral part of the proposed Corridor Plan for North Fourth Street. This form-based plan has been under development for several years and is currently pending City Council adoption. The plan envisions and would enable significant transit-supportive redevelopment to occur both adjacent to and nearby the planned intermodal facility. (See <http://www.cabq.gov/council/current-projects-studies/north-4th-street-rank-iii-corridor-plan>.)

Many of the residents in our area (including several of our board members) are regular transit users; we are thus very excited by the prospect that this project will eliminate the need to travel long distances out-of-direction to access the Rail Runner or to access bus services to the North I-25 Corridor, Northeast Heights, the West Side, and other destinations. We anticipate that this facility will *greatly improve* the quality, safety and convenience of both commuter train and bus service to residents and businesses in our area.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Sandoval
NNVNA President

Christopher S. Catechis
President, North Valley Coalition
5733 Guadalupe Trail, NW
Albuquerque, NM. 87107

Bruce Rizzieri
ABQ Director
100 1st Street, NW
Albuquerque, NM. 87102

RE: City of Albuquerque Section 5309 Grant Application for the Montano Rail Runner
Intermodal Station

Dear Mr. Rizzieri,

I am writing to you today to express the support of the Albuquerque North Valley Coalition for the City of Albuquerque's Section 5309 Grant Application for the Montano Rail Runner Intermodal Station. The North Valley Coalition represents fifteen neighborhood associations within Albuquerque's North Valley and as an organization we firmly believe that the completion of the Montano Rail Runner station will greatly enhance the quality of life for residents of the North Valley. Montano Road, which passes through the heart of the North Valley, provides for one of the few river crossings in Albuquerque. As such, the area surrounding Montano has become ever increasingly congested. Traffic congestion can be greatly reduced by creating a park and ride lot west of the Rio Grande River on Montano that could then tie into a Rapid Ride system that delivers commuters to the Montano Rail Runner station. However, the first step is to complete the Montano Rail Runner station. Having interacted with many neighborhood association Leaders and resident members within our organization, I can attest that the residents of the North Valley eagerly await the completion and operation of the Montano Rail Runner station. We wholeheartedly support the pursuit of the Section 5309 Grant Application.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Catechis", written in a cursive style.

Christopher S. Catechis
President, North Valley Coalition