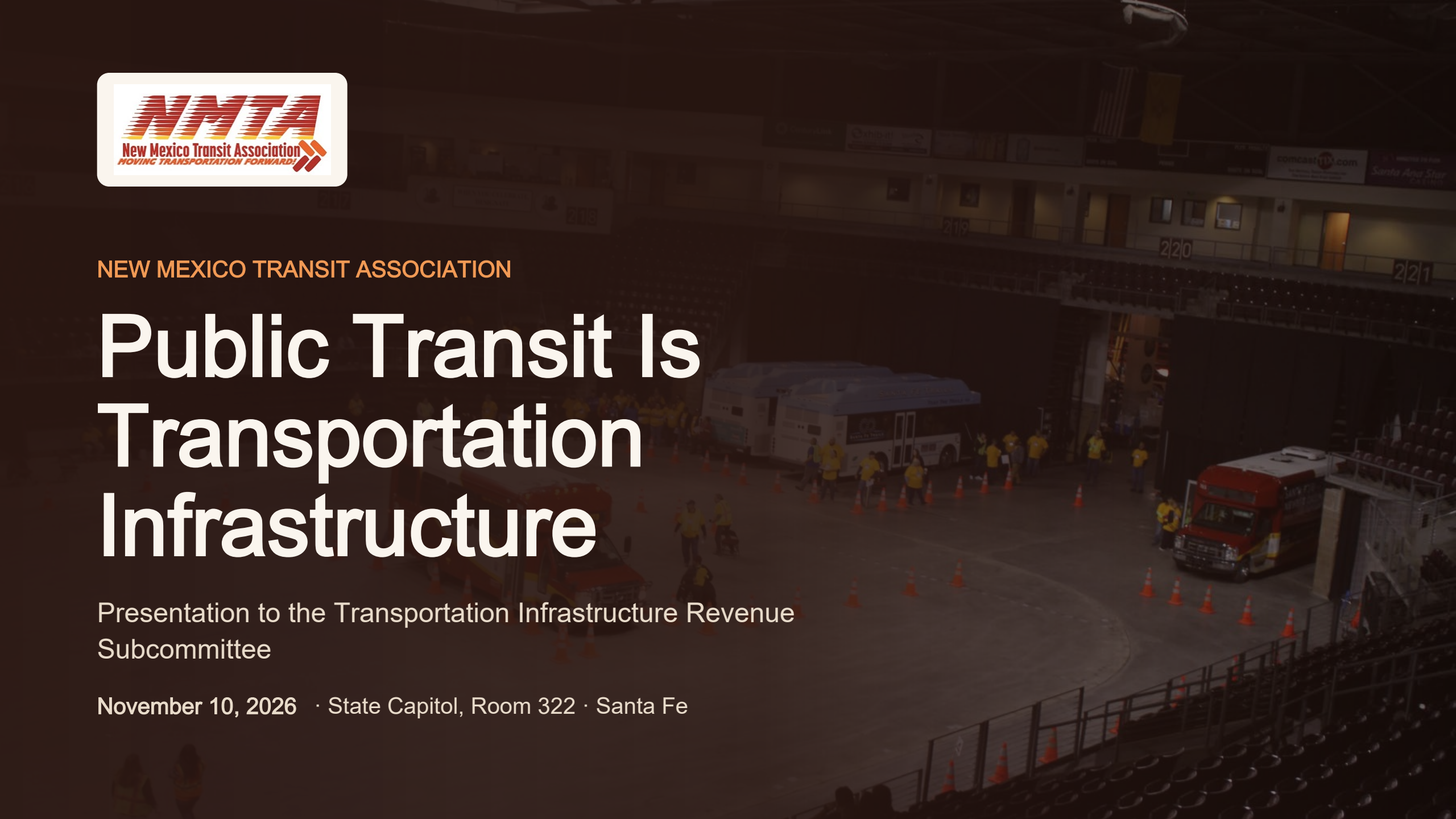
NEW MEXICO TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

Public Transit Is Transportation Infrastructure

Presentation to the Transportation Infrastructure Revenue Subcommittee

November 10, 2026 · State Capitol, Room 322 · Santa Fe



SPEAKING FOR NMTA TODAY

Four transit leaders, one statewide voice

Elizabeth Carter

President, New Mexico Transit Association

David Armijo

Executive Director, South Central Regional Transit District

Nicholas Sofoul

Executive Director, North Central Regional Transit District

Tommy Mims

Director, Gallup Express

WHO WE ARE

A collective voice for New Mexico transit since 1987

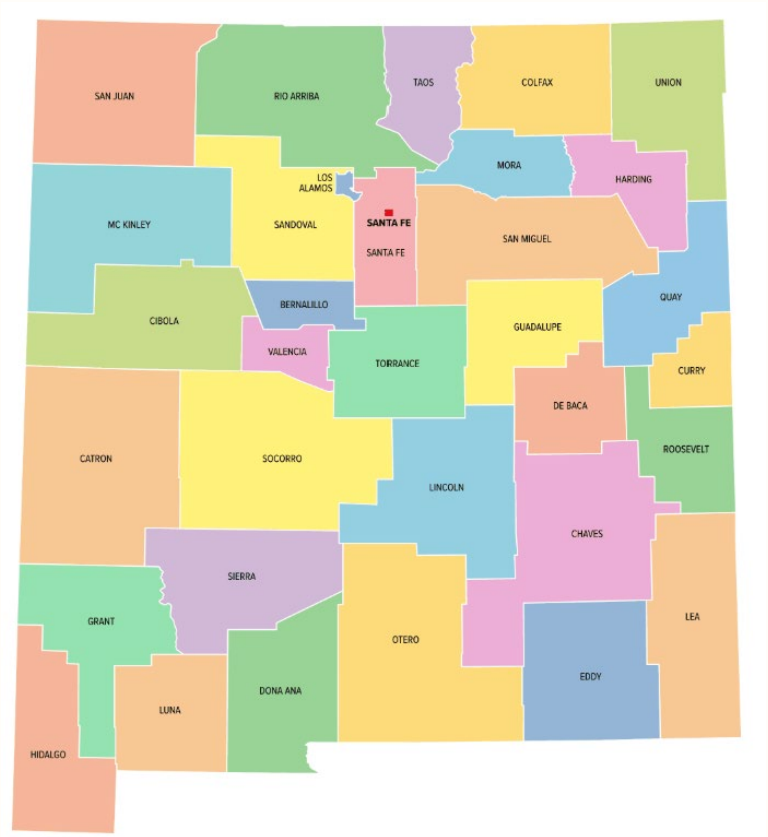
OUR MISSION

To promote, support, and develop quality passenger transportation services in New Mexico.

OUR MEMBERS

- Regional transit districts
- City and county systems
- Tribal transit programs
- Rural transit providers
- Senior and disability services
- Private transportation providers

NM Transit Map Guide



Find transit providers and legislators by county:

nm-ta.com/map

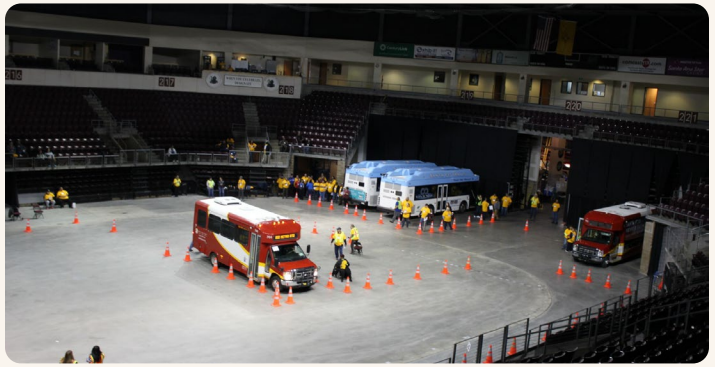
WHAT WE DO

We train, connect, and advocate for every provider



Train

Quarterly training for drivers and managers, in partnership with NMDOT's Transit and Rail Division.



Connect

An annual conference and statewide Bus Roadeo bring rural, tribal, and urban systems together.



Advocate

We track state legislation, share funding information, and speak for members at every level of government.

STATEWIDE REACH

Transit serves every corner of New Mexico

11.3M trips
statewide in FY2025 — up 5% in one year

URBAN · FTA 5307

8.8M+

trips on city systems in Albuquerque, Las Cruces, Santa Fe, and Farmington

605,000+ trips on the Rail Runner

Largest: ABQ RIDE, **7.7M** trips

RURAL · FTA 5311

1.29M

trips from 20 providers serving 29 counties

$32.3M federal and local funds, FY 2026

365 vehicles in service

SENIORS & DISABILITY · FTA 5310

449K

trips for older adults and people with disabilities from 35 providers

$3.6M awarded, FY2026 (20% local match)

534 accessible vehicles since 2012

Source: NMDOT Transit and Rail Division, 2026 Program Fact Sheet (ridership Oct. 2024 – Sept. 2025)

TRANSIT IS INFRASTRUCTURE

A bus is only one piece of the system

Vehicles
Buses and accessible vans

Facilities
Maintenance, operations, transit centers

Safe access
Stops, shelters, ADA boarding

Charging & fuel
For today's and tomorrow's fleets

Trained people
CDL operators, mechanics, dispatchers

Local match
The key that unlocks federal awards

Emergency infrastructure, too. During the recent Hatch Dam evacuation, South Central RTD deployed three buses and trained operators to move residents to safety. Every transit fleet in the state is a resource in an emergency.

2027 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Four priorities that help every transit provider

1

State Transit Fund

Dedicated, recurring state money for federal local match

2

Yield-to-Bus Law

Drivers yield to buses re-entering traffic from a stop

3

Protect Transit Workers

Enhanced penalties for assaulting transit employees

4

Access to the TPF

Let transit districts apply directly to the Transportation Project Fund

Adopted unanimously by the NMTA Board of Directors, September 17, 2026

PRIORITY 1 OF 4

State Transit Fund

1

Dedicated, recurring state funding to help every transit agency meet federal local match.

Presented by David Armijo, South Central RTD · Tommy Mims, Gallup Express

Priority 1 | Priority 2 | Priority 3 | Priority 4

PRIORITY 1 · THE CHALLENGE

Federal transit dollars need a state partner

1 of 4

New Mexico is one of only four states with **no recurring state funding** to help transit agencies meet federal match.

Rising costs

Buses, vans, and parts cost far more than before the pandemic.

Workforce shortages

Agencies compete to recruit and keep CDL drivers and mechanics.

No dedicated match

State transit dollars go mainly to NMDOT's own Park & Ride. When local match runs short, service is cut or suspended.

Sources: AASHTO, *Survey of State Funding for Public Transportation, Final Report 2026* ; D. Armijo, "Public transit deserves a state partner," Santa Fe New Mexican, Aug. 1, 2026

PRIORITY 1 · STATE TRANSIT FUND

Every federal transit dollar requires a local match



No match, no federal dollars

A $1 million bus brings $800,000 in federal funds — only if the agency has $200,000 in hand. Without it, the award goes unclaimed or returns to FTA.

EXAMPLE OF NEED

To build its Taos Multimodal Facility, North Central RTD had to fund roughly **one-third of the project locally** to draw down federal grants. Smaller systems often cannot.

FTA Section 5311 and 5310 match requirements; NMTA 2027 State Legislative Agenda

PRIORITY 1 · THE PROPOSAL

A permanent, nonreverting State Transit Fund

STATE INVESTMENT

$10.6M / yr

$5 per resident floor

POTENTIAL FEDERAL FUNDS

$10.6M–$42.5M

From 1:1 (operating) to 4:1 (capital)

60% Formula

State Transit Block Grant

Open to every agency statewide (except NMDOT Park & Ride). Based on population, ridership, and revenue miles.

40% Competitive

Mobility Access for All

Reserved for rural, tribal, and Section 5310 providers.

Eligible: operating and capital match

Multi-year: 5–7 year drawdown for major capital

Accountable: NMDOT performance reporting

Initial concepts. Population: Census, July 2025. Leverage: 50/50 operating, 80/20 capital match.

PRIORITY 1 · WHY IT MATTERS

What a State Transit Fund delivers statewide

Unlocks federal dollars

Agencies can claim the 5311 and 5310 awards they already qualify for.

Keeps money in NM

Lowers the risk of unspent federal funds reverting to FTA.

Levels the field

Rural and tribal systems with small tax bases get their own track.

Makes planning possible

Multi-year money to hire drivers, maintain fleets, and grow service.

Wins competitive grants

Committed match strengthens BUILD and Bus and Bus Facilities bids.

Treats transit like roads

Sustained state investment, not one-time or emergency appropriations.

PRIORITY 1 · LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Enact a permanent State Transit Fund

A reliable annual base

Proposed floor: $5 per resident each year — about $10.6 million at the July 2025 population.

Fair statewide access

60% by formula; 40% through a competitive track for rural, tribal, and Section 5310 providers.

Funding that works

Capital and operating match, a 5–7 year drawdown for major purchases, and NMDOT performance reporting.

THE REQUEST

Create a permanent, nonreverting fund with transparent allocation rules.

The $5 per-capita floor and 60/40 split are starting concepts for discussion with legislative sponsors and NMDOT.

PRIORITY 1 · A RURAL EXAMPLE

Rural Agency Challenge

Gallup Express: what local match means for a small rural provider.

Presented by Tommy Mims, Director, Gallup Express



RURAL TRANSIT IN PRACTICE · GALLUP EXPRESS

A small system with a big responsibility

289 sq. mi.

Gallup, Yatahey, Churchrock, Gamerco, Mentmore, and Williams Acres

900 stops

a day on four deviated fixed routes, weekdays 6:14 a.m. – 6:43 p.m.

3 systems

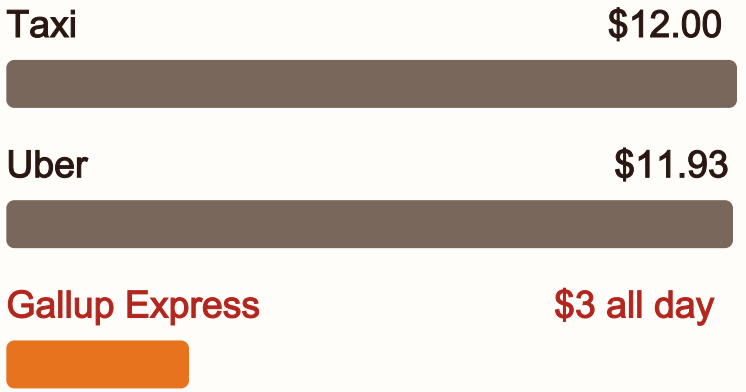
Tickets transfer with A:shiwi Transit and Navajo Transit

#1 in poverty

McKinley County has New Mexico's highest poverty rate, about 36–38%

COST OF ONE 2 -MILE TRIP

Downtown Gallup to Walmart, one way

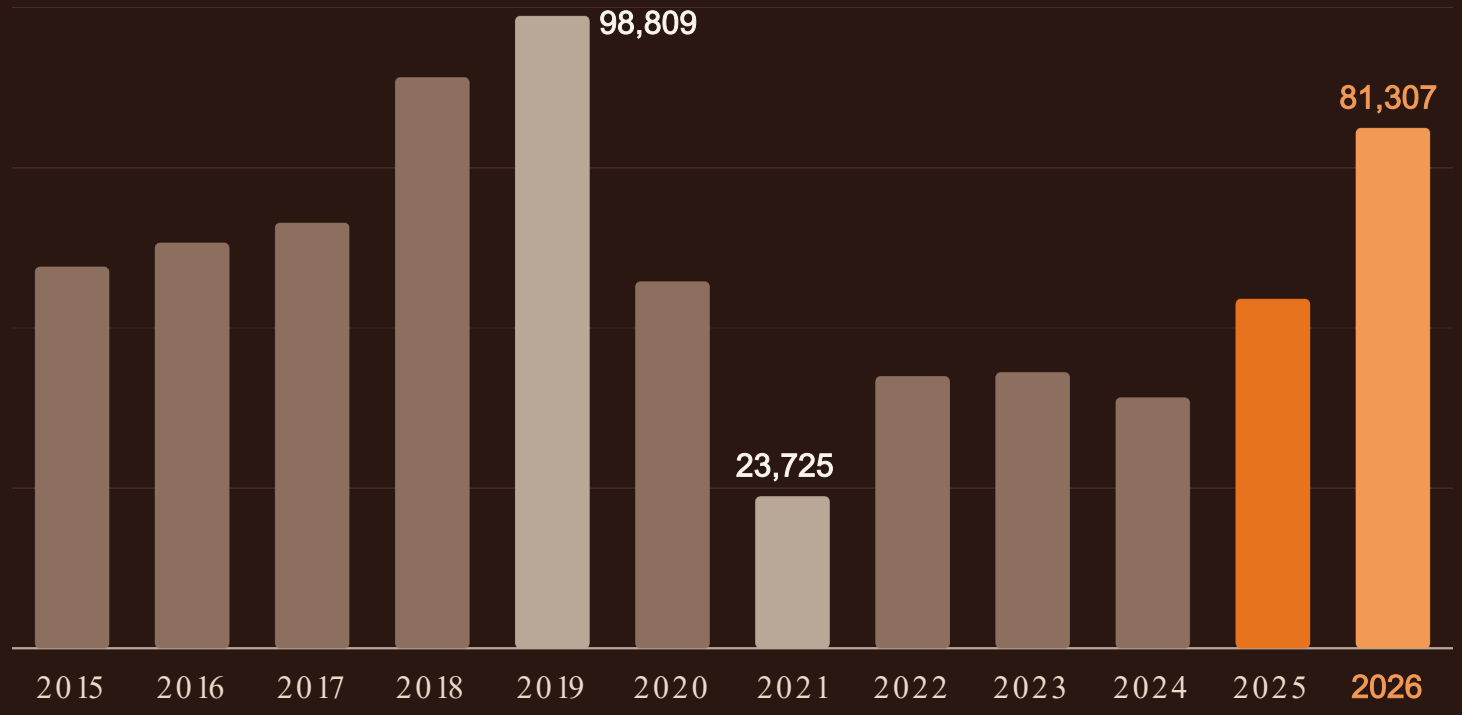


Veterans ride free.

Source: Gallup Rural Transit (Gallup Express); fares as quoted by local taxi and Uber

RURAL TRANSIT IN PRACTICE · GALLUP EXPRESS

Riders are coming back— demand is real



98,809
riders at the 2019 peak

23,725
at the 2021 pandemic low

2× since 2024
81,307 riders in 2026 — 82% of the 2019 peak

Source: Gallup Rural Transit (Gallup Express) annual ridership, 2015 –2026

RURAL TRANSIT IN PRACTICE · WHY PRIORITY 1 MATTERS

To run a $1 million system, Gallup must find $426,000 locally — every year

FY 2027 Section 5311	Total	Federal	Local
Administration (80/20)	$178,506	$142,804	$35,701
Operating (50/50)	$836,463	$390,731	$390,731
Capital (80/20)	$0	$0	$0
Total	$1,014,968	$533,536	$426,433

⚠ **No capital request for FY 2027.** Replacing a bus would require another 20% local share on top of operating match.

42¢

of every budget dollar must come from local sources

TODAY'S STATE SHARE

$0

Gallup is not alone. Many small urban, rural, and tribal agencies face the same challenge.

Source: Gallup Rural Transit FY 2027 Section 5311 award. Operating match is on net cost after fares.

PRIORITY 2 OF 4

Yield-to-Bus Law

2

Drivers yield to buses re -entering traffic from a stop.

Presented by Elizabeth Carter, New Mexico Transit Association

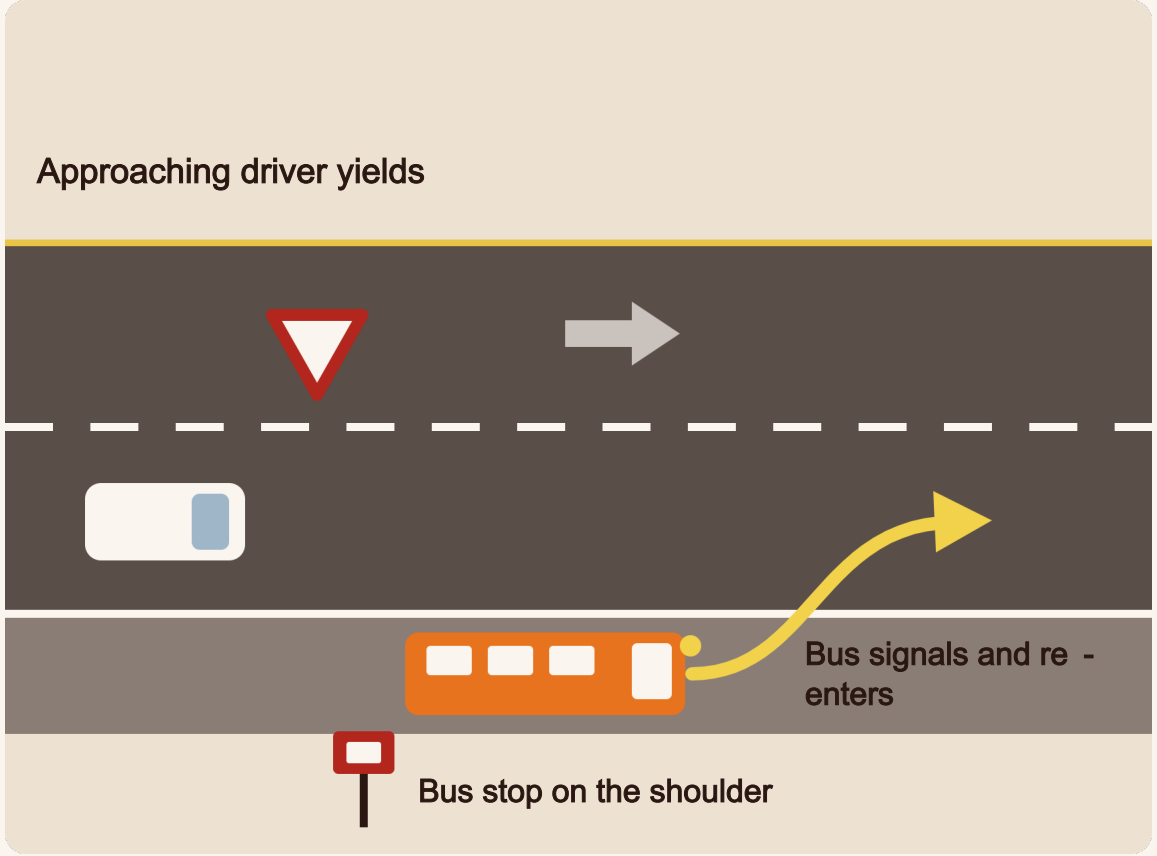
Priority 1 | **Priority 2** | Priority 3 | Priority 4

PRIORITY 2 · YIELD - TO - BUS LAW

A loaded bus must merge into high-speed traffic from a standstill

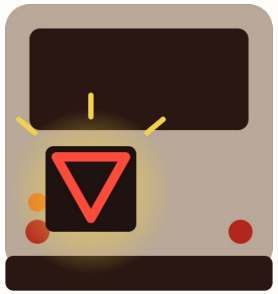
On highways and busy roads, buses often stop on the shoulder to board riders. But drivers have no legal duty to let the bus back in — so operators wait for gaps that may never come, or merge into traffic that won't make room.

⚠ State law covers emergency vehicles, school buses, and pedestrians — but is **silent on transit buses** .



PRIORITY 2 · THE PROPOSAL

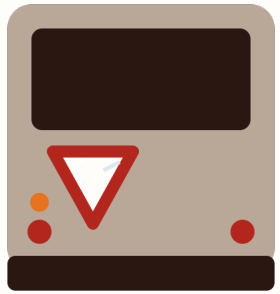
Build on laws already working in other states



Illuminated yield sign

Flashes with the turn signal. Florida research found it improved yielding and bus re-entry time.

Cost prohibitive for many small urban and rural providers



Reflective yield decal

Low cost, no wiring, visible day and night. Gives every fleet — large or small — a practical way to comply.

Affordable for every provider in New Mexico

Proven in Florida, Oregon, Colorado, and California. For New Mexico:

Drivers **yield** to a signaling bus

Sign or decal — agencies choose

Operators keep their **duty of care**

Public education and a modest penalty

Research: Florida DOT / USF Center for Urban Transportation Research, yield -to-bus studies (2007, 2010). Illustrations not to scale.

PRIORITY 3 OF 4

Protect Transit Workers

3

Add transit workers to New Mexico’s existing enhanced assault and battery penalties.

Presented by Nicholas Sofoul, North Central RTD

Priority 1 | Priority 2 | **Priority 3** | Priority 4

PRIORITY 3 · PROTECT TRANSIT WORKERS

Transit workers are missing from New Mexico's protected-worker law

400%+

rise in the rate of reported attacks on transit operators over the 2010s. More than half the states now impose enhanced penalties.

Enhanced assault penalties in NMSA Chapter 30, Article 3:

School employees	Protected
Sports officials	Protected
Health care workers	Protected
⚠ Public transit employees	Not covered

FTA data as cited in industry reporting; FTA General Directive 24-1; NMSA 1978 §§ 30-3-9, 30-3-9.1, 30-3-9.2

PRIORITY 3 · DRIVER ASSAULT IN NEW MEXICO

It is happening on New Mexico buses

“Drivers endure verbal abuse, threats, and frequent physical assaults. I’m one of them.”

Denise Muniz Archibeque, Albuquerque bus driver · KRQE News 13

“Literally threatened the bus driver with a knife.”

Passenger who shared video of the attack on a Las Cruces–El Paso bus · KOB 4





Sources: KRQE News 13; KOB 4 (Oct. 21, 2026). Images: onboard camera video of the Sept. 24 Las Cruces–El Paso attack, via KOB 4.

PRIORITY 3 · THE PROPOSAL

Add transit workers to the protections already in New Mexico law

Offense	Without enhancement	Enhanced (current law)
Assault	Petty misdemeanor	Misdemeanor
Aggravated assault	Fourth-degree felony	Third-degree felony
Assault with intent to commit a violent felony	Third-degree felony	Second-degree felony
Battery	Petty misdemeanor	Fourth-degree felony*
Aggravated battery (injury, no great bodily harm)	Misdemeanor	Fourth-degree felony

*Fourth-degree felony for school employees and health care workers; misdemeanor for sports officials.

THE ASK

Add **public transit employees**, including contractors, to the existing statute.

No new crimes. No new penalty levels.

WHY IT HELPS

- Helps recruit and keep drivers
- Backs federally required de-escalation training
- Supported by the Amalgamated Transit Union

NMSA 1978 §§ 30-3-1 to 30-3-5 (general); §§ 30-3-9, 30-3-9.1, 30-3-9.2 (school employees, sports officials, health care workers)

PRIORITY 4 OF 4

Access to the Transportation Project Fund

4

Let regional transit districts apply directly for TPF grants.

Presented by Nicholas Sofoul, North Central RTD

Priority 1 | Priority 2 | Priority 3 | **Priority 4**

PRIORITY 4 · TRANSPORTATION PROJECT FUND

Let transit districts apply for TPF grants directly

A PROVEN NMDOT PROGRAM

$100.4M

to 71 local and tribal projects in FY 2026 — more than double the year before

95% / 5%

state share / local match

ELIGIBLE USES

- ✓ Planning and design
- ✓ Right-of-way acquisition
- ✓ Construction
- ✓ Environmental and other studies
- ✓ Transit facilities: bus stops, park-and-rides, transit centers

WHO CAN APPLY TODAY

- City transit systems: **Yes**
- County transit systems: **Yes**
- Tribal transit systems: **Yes**
- ⚠ Regional transit districts: **No** — not listed in statute

THE ASK

Add RTDs to the eligible-entity list in § 67-3-78. Same 95/5 match, scoring, and RTPO/MPO review — **no new appropriation.**

Sources: NMDOT (Sept. 2025 TPF awards); NMDOT overview to TIRS (June 2026); § 67-3-78 NMSA 1978 and 18.27.6 NMAC

AT A GLANCE

Four asks— only one requires an appropriation

APPROPRIATION REQUEST

1 State Transit Fund

A permanent, non-reverting fund in NMDOT Transit and Rail: 60% by formula to every agency, 40% for rural, tribal, and 5310 providers.

$10.6M

per year, recurring · $5 per resident × 2.13 million New Mexicans

POLICY CHANGES — NO APPROPRIATION

Priority	Legislative action	Who benefits
2 Yield-to-Bus	New section of the Motor Vehicle Code	Riders, operators, motorists
3 Protect workers	Add workers to NMSA Ch. 30, Art. 3	Transit workers, contractors
4 TPF access	Add RTDs as eligible, § 67-3-78	Regional transit districts

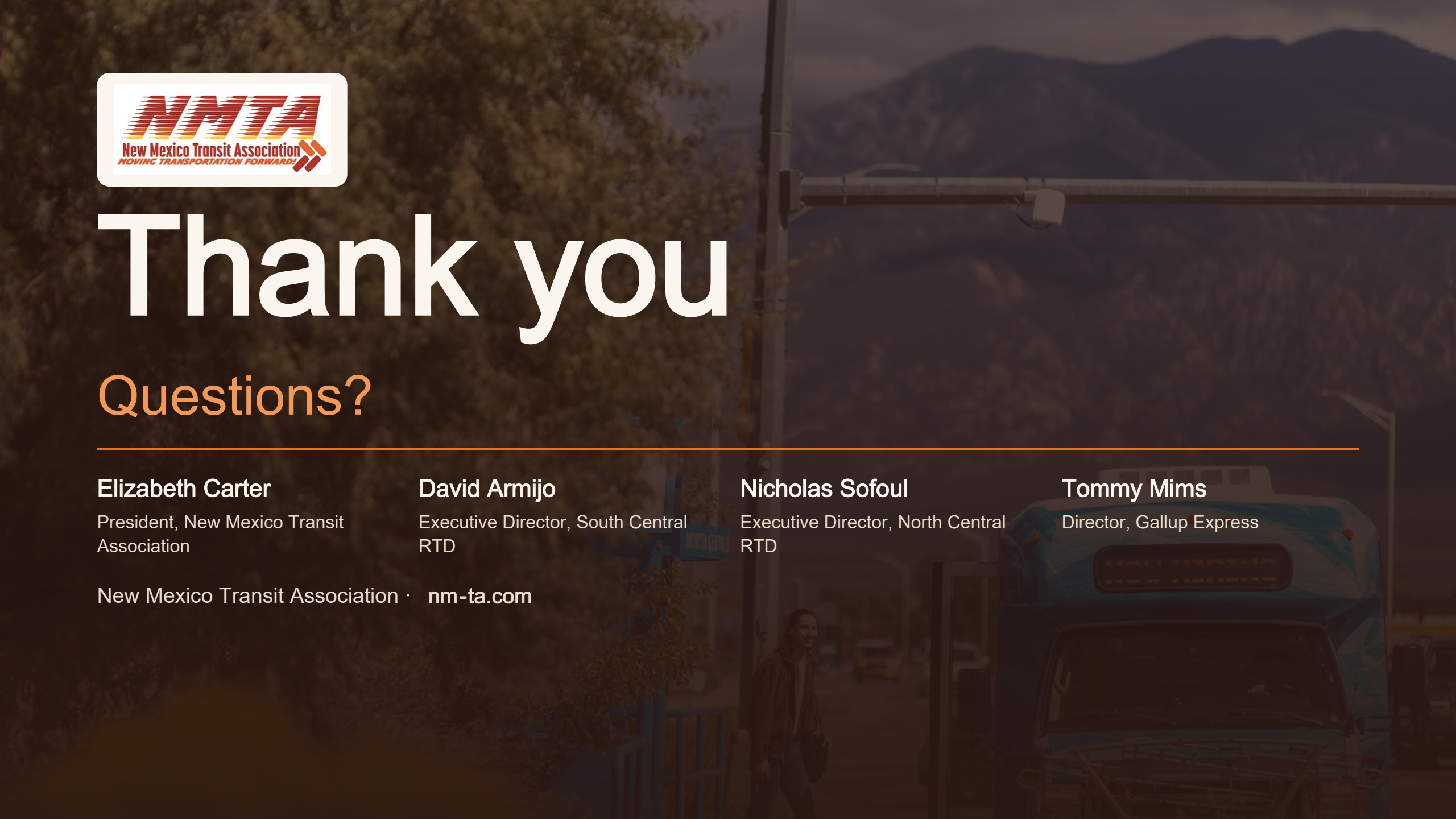
NMTA 2027 State Legislative Agenda. Cost estimate: $5 × 2,125,498 residents (U.S. Census, July 2025) = $10.63 million.

OUR REQUEST

Make transit part of New Mexico’s transportation investment strategy

1. Include public transit in the state’s transportation revenue and capital planning.
2. Support a State Transit Fund for predictable federal match.
3. Back Yield-to-Bus, transit-worker protection, and TPF eligibility in 2027.





Thank you

Questions?

Elizabeth Carter
President, New Mexico Transit Association

David Armijo
Executive Director, South Central RTD

Nicholas Sofoul
Executive Director, North Central RTD

Tommy Mims
Director, Gallup Express

New Mexico Transit Association · nm-ta.com