

**City and County of Santa Fe Collaborate to Enhance Connections to Rail Runner**

Rail Runner service in Santa Fe has been met with great enthusiasm, excitement, and a call from the Mayor, City Councilors, and County Commissioners to begin work to expand local transit service connections. Although initial transit connections are in place at both the South Capital Station and the Santa Fe Depot, a collaborative planning process will begin in the coming weeks not only to ensure that these local connections can be sustained in the future, but also to extend them to neighborhoods and facilities not presently served by public transportation. Mayor David Coss notes that with such expanded services: *“Residents and visitors alike will have more options to move about the Santa Fe area, and between Santa Fe and Albuquerque, than ever before. Providing such shuttles and transit connections will create new access to local businesses which is particularly important in these times.”*

Lawrence Rael, Executive Director of the Mid-Region Council of Governments who oversees the Rail Runner project on behalf of the State of New Mexico, is grateful for the local transit connections already being provided by the City Santa Fe and is excited that plans are in the works to extend these vital services beyond city limits into Santa Fe County neighborhoods. *“The more places Rail Runner passengers can go after arriving in Santa Fe the more riders we expect to make use of the service. The same is true for Santa Fean’s who want to take the train to Albuquerque in that the more convenient it is for passengers the more of them we will have. This local partnership is extremely important to the success to the Rail Runner, and we are thankful Santa Fe city and county officials have taken the lead to assure they not only exist today, but will grow in the future.”*

In late 2008, the North Central Transit District (NCRD) passed a resolution allocating 86% of funds generated from the recently approved Regional Transit Tax exactly for such purposes. Santa Fe County Commissioner Harry Montoya states: *“I am very much looking forward to participating with other city and county Regional Planning Authority (RPA) members to identify where transit services can be expanded in Santa Fe County to provide new access to the Rail Runner. The Santa Fe County Commission very much appreciates the NCRD Board’s pledge that a portion of the funds from the transit referendum will be provided to the county to expand service to areas and entities not presently served. In my role as a board member of both the NCRD and RPA, I will work to bring new transit routes to the people of Santa Fe County as soon as possible.”*

Santa Fe City Councilor Rosemary Romero, who also serves on the board of both the NCRD and the RPA, also anticipates a good working relationship with all entities involved as transit service plans are developed. *“The opportunity before us to respond to the voters, and connect more people and areas to the Rail Runner, is exciting one that will involve community outreach and participation in the coming months. I hope that through this process we can provide connections that allow as many people as possible to use the Rail Runner for all types of trips.”*

Regional Planning Authority staff, with support from both the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County, will be hosting public meetings in February and March to discuss potential areas where local transit service could be expanded. Following this public outreach process, the information gathered from the meetings will be presented to the City Councilors and County Commissioners, who as members of the Regional Planning Authority will make the final decision on future service expansions.

The public involvement meetings will be an “open house” format for the first hour, followed by a presentation from staff, with time allotted for public comment to follow. Meetings are scheduled as follows:

*For further information, please contact:*

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Jon Bulthuis, City of Santa Fe Transit Director, at 955-2006  
Andrew Jandacek, Santa Fe County Planner at, 986-6214

February 16, 2009	Santa Fe County Commission Chambers @ 102 Grant Avenue	6:00-8:00pm
February 17, 2009	Genoveva Chavez Community Center @ 3221 Rodeo Road	6:00-8:00pm
March 10, 2009	Eldorado Community Assoc. Railroad Bdg. @ 1 Hacienda Loop	6:15-8:15pm
March 12, 2009	Santa Fe Community College @ 6401 South Richards Ave.	6:00-8:00pm
March 17, 2009	Santa Fe County Satellite Office Cuyamungue @ 17839A US84/285 (west side US84/285 @ Buffalo Thunder exit)	6:00-8:00pm