

Where we are as a community today is a benchmark for our choices in the future.





Chapter 2

FACTORS OF GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Introduction

A comprehensive plan covers a range of complex topics to help us determine how and where we can accommodate a growing population in the way that reflects our vision of the future. This chapter provides an overview of anticipated demographic changes and development trends within the Albuquerque area.

2.2 Development History in the Area

This region has been continuously inhabited for thousands of years: first by Native American Pueblos along the Rio Grande Valley, then by Spanish colonists in the early 1600s. New Mexico was annexed as a United States territory after the Mexican-American War (1846-1847), per the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Development accelerated after the transcontinental railroad arrived in the 1880s, and population grew with new American settlers. Parallel to the major eras of national settlement patterns, our development includes the history of Spanish land grants, followed by an era as a Mexican territory, and trading along El Camino Real.



Image credit: City of Albuquerque Open Space Division

Petroglyphs provide a record of Native American Pueblo history and hold spiritual significance for many modern Native Americans in the region. This irreplaceable cultural resource is protected in perpetuity as the Petroglyph National Monument.

When New Mexico joined the Union as a state in 1912, Bernalillo County's population was just under 25,000 people. Since then, the region's population has steadily climbed. In the early 1900s, tuberculosis patients flocked by train to our dry, sunny climate. In the 1940s, nuclear atomic research activity associated with World War II doubled the population of the metropolitan region. By 1950, there were close to 150,000

residents here, and by 1960, that number almost doubled again. Since the 1970s, development in the valley was largely influenced by Interstate-40 and Interstate-25, which were constructed to cross east of Albuquerque's Downtown and immediately drew drivers and passengers away from historic Route 66.

2.3 Today's Growth & Development Pressures

2.3.1 POPULATION GROWTH

In only 20 years between 1940 and 1960, the county population almost quadrupled, and Albuquerque's population grew by over five times. In recent decades, from 1980 to 2010, city and county population growth averaged around 20 percent per decade. In 2016, the estimated population for Bernalillo County, including incorporated areas, is 677,970. Albuquerque's population is estimated to be 561,379.¹

The University of New Mexico Geospatial & Population Studies unit prepares the projection for the state, and the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) provides a more detailed forecast for its four-county region, which includes Bernalillo County. The area population is predicted to grow at a rate similar to recent decades, increasing by approximately 46 percent by the year 2040. This assumes around 311,000 new residents for the entire county, many of whom are expected to live within the city.

CENSUS YEAR	BERNALILLO COUNTY	ALBUQUERQUE	CITY AREA (SQ. MILES)	CITY DENSITY POP/SQ. MILE
1910	23,606	11,020	3.12	3,532
1920	29,855	15,157	3.12	4,858
1930	45,430	26,570	3.12	8,516
1940	69,631	35,449	11.10	3,193
1950	145,673	96,815	48.27	2,005
1960	262,199	201,189	61.0	3,293
1970	314,774	244,501	80.6	3,033
1980	420,262	332,920	97.6	3,409
1990	480,577	384,736	132.9	2,815
2000	556,768	448,607	186.92	2,475
2010	662,564	545,852	187.73	2,908

Table 2-1: 100 Years of Population Growth and Density (1910-2010)

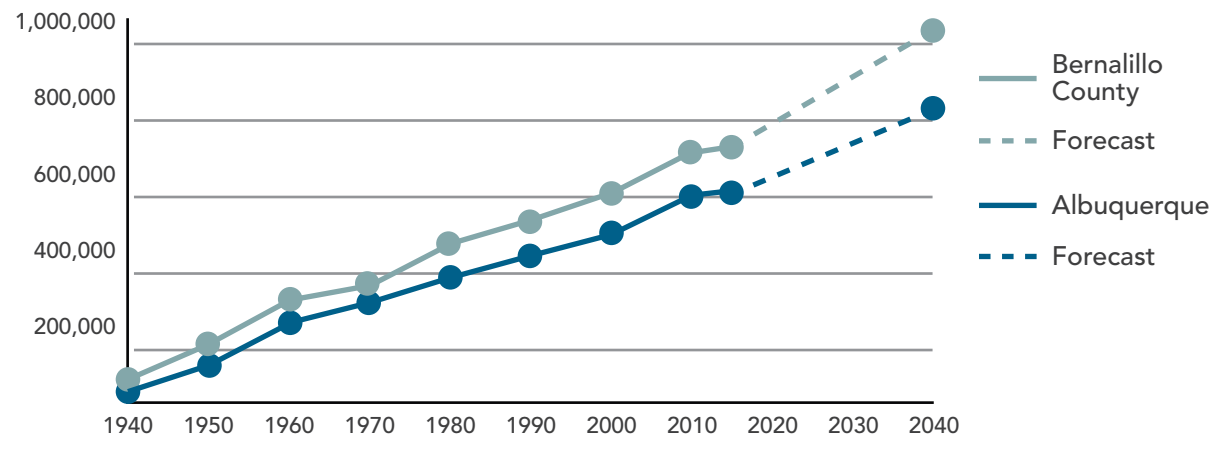


Figure 2-1: Albuquerque and Bernalillo County Population Growth (1940-2040)

Source (top and bottom): Albuquerque and Bernalillo County figures from U.S. Census 1940-2010; MRCOG 2040 Forecast

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Based on these forecasts, some growth is expected and must be planned for, particularly to grow in sustainable ways and protect our quality of life and the character of our vibrant communities. This growth forecast is on par with other similar-sized metropolitan areas. If less growth occurs than expected, the severity of our challenges will be reduced, and we will have more time to adjust our planning for the future.

2.3.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

Age & Generational Changes

Since the early 1990s, the median age in Albuquerque has risen at a slower rate than that of the county, state, or nation (see **Figure 2-2**). This is likely due to the fact that young people often move to Albuquerque from other parts of the county and state in search of education and employment opportunities, while the surrounding population shows more aging.

Looking at different generations helps us better understand the impact of these demographic changes on the needs of the population. Millennials (those born in roughly the 1980s and 1990s) make up a large portion of the population in the County. This group will continue to play an important role in land use and transportation decisions due to its size and the age of the individuals, who are currently choosing careers, housing preferences, and family size.

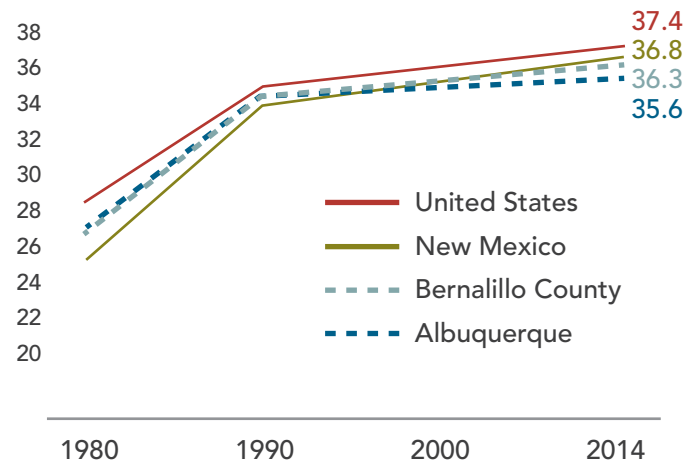


Figure 2-2: Median Age Comparisons

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2014

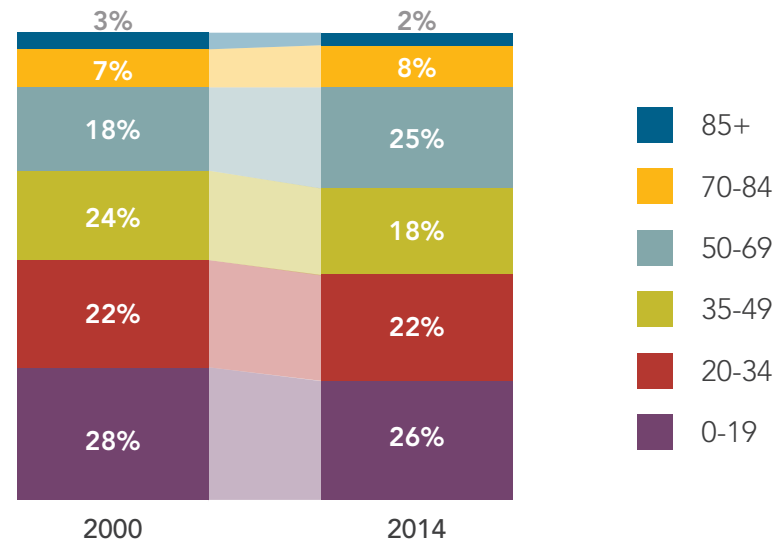


Figure 2-3: Change in Age Groups in the County (2000-2014)

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2014

As Generation X (those born in the late 1960s through the 1970s) and Baby Boomers age in place or move to the area, the number of people 65 and over in Albuquerque is expected to more than double between 2012 and 2040. Their needs and preferences will also play an important role in local decision-making.

Race & Ethnicity

Characterized by the diversity of its residents, Bernalillo County has been a majority minority area since before 2010. This means that the Hispanic population, traditionally in the minority, has steadily increased to represent the largest percentage of the total population. Meanwhile, the relative percentage of white, non-Hispanics has decreased, and the percentages of Native American, Asian, and African American people have remained relatively stable.

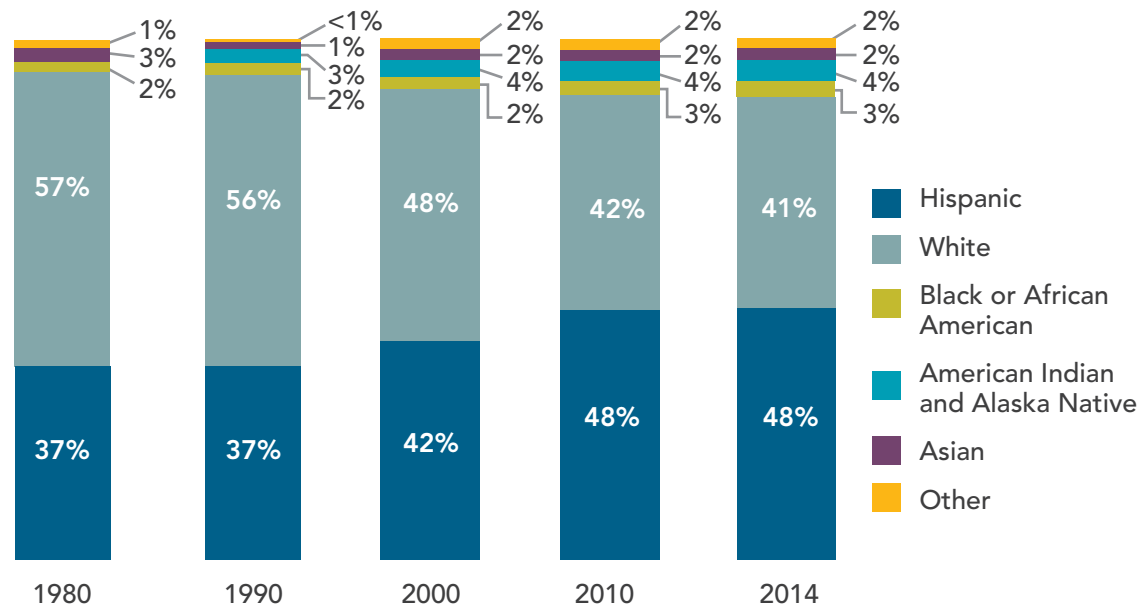


Figure 2-4: Changes in Ethnic Mix of Bernalillo County Residents (1980-2014)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census 1980-2010 and ACS 2009-2014.

Note: Totals may be less than 100 percent due to rounding.

2.3.3 EMPLOYMENT

Our economy is reliant on federal jobs associated with Kirtland Air Force Base and Sandia National Labs, which suffered cutbacks in the past decade. Like many metropolitan areas, our economy is also dominated by service industries. In Bernalillo County, agricultural, oil and gas refining and transporting, and freight industries associated with trucking and rail play an important role in the economy. Recent economic development efforts have emphasized entrepreneurship and technology transfer to diversify and strengthen our local economy.

Job forecasts predict that the area will continue to have steady job growth into the future. The county is expected to see over 130,000 new jobs by 2040. Continuous efforts will be needed to grow businesses and industries to actualize the amount of jobs forecasted. Careful planning and strong policy decisions will be needed to guide some of that job growth to locate west of the Rio Grande to help provide employment opportunities to West Side residents and alleviate congestion pressure on our region's limited river crossings.

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2.3.4 JOBS-TO-HOUSING BALANCE

The imbalance of jobs to households in our region poses a significant challenge for our future due to limited river crossings and our limited ability to increase the capacity of existing crossings.

On the whole, we drive less if there are job opportunities and services near our homes and desirable housing and amenities near our workplaces. In areas with more houses than jobs, commute times tend to be longer, and congestion tends to be worse.

East of the Rio Grande, there are almost 1.5 jobs for every household. West of the river, there is less than one job for every two households. Particularly at peak hours, traffic congestion at river crossings is expected to worsen dramatically over time, leading to bridge crossing times of an hour or more by 2040 without significant job growth on the West Side, as workers will have to continue commuting to jobs east of the river.

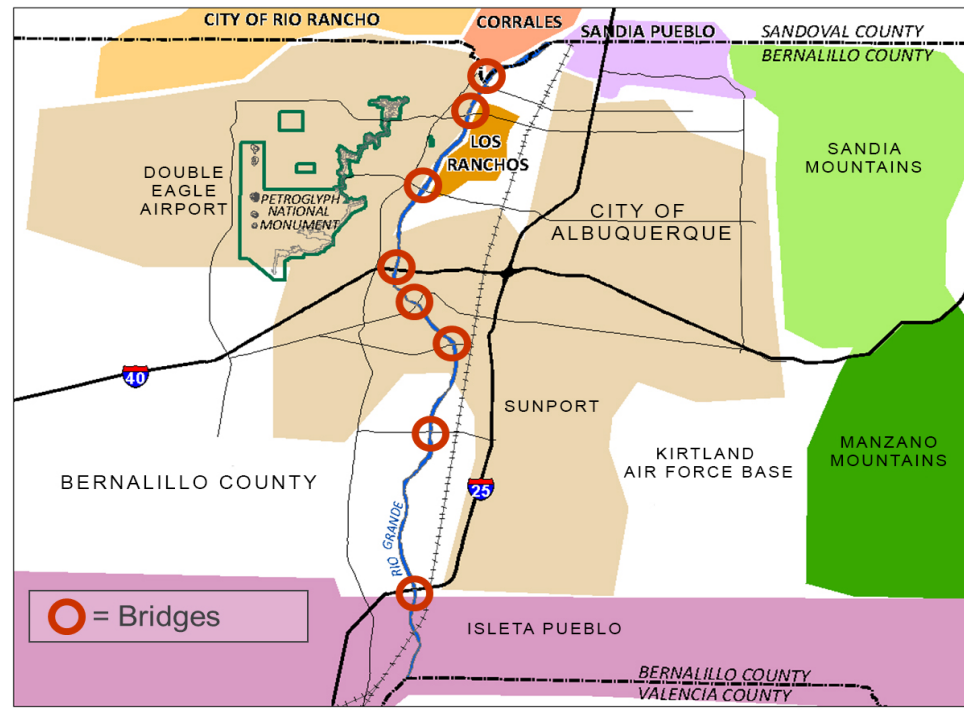


Figure 2-5: Bridge Crossings and Jurisdictions



Figure 2-6: Natural Features

2.3.5 CHANGING PREFERENCES

Changing demographics pose both a challenge and opportunity for our region as preferences shift about the kinds of places we live and the transportation options we choose. In general, preferences are shifting toward places that give people options to walk, bike, or take public transportation.

In 2014, the American Planning Association found that one out of four people wanted the option to ride/bike to work or errands, and one in two people wanted to live in a walkable community.³ Nationally and locally, larger shares of Millennial and Baby Boomer generations are shifting away from suburban lifestyles and choosing smaller homes in more urban areas, close to a multitude of services and accessible by walking, biking, and transit. While the percentage who want these options may remain small, the sheer numbers of people in these generations results in more demand for this type of housing than we may be ready for, particularly when other small percentages of other generations may want the same kinds of options.

These changing preferences don't necessarily translate into everyone wanting to live in more urban areas. A 2013 MRCOG travel preference survey found that while



Image credit: City of Albuquerque

Urban living options in East Downtown.

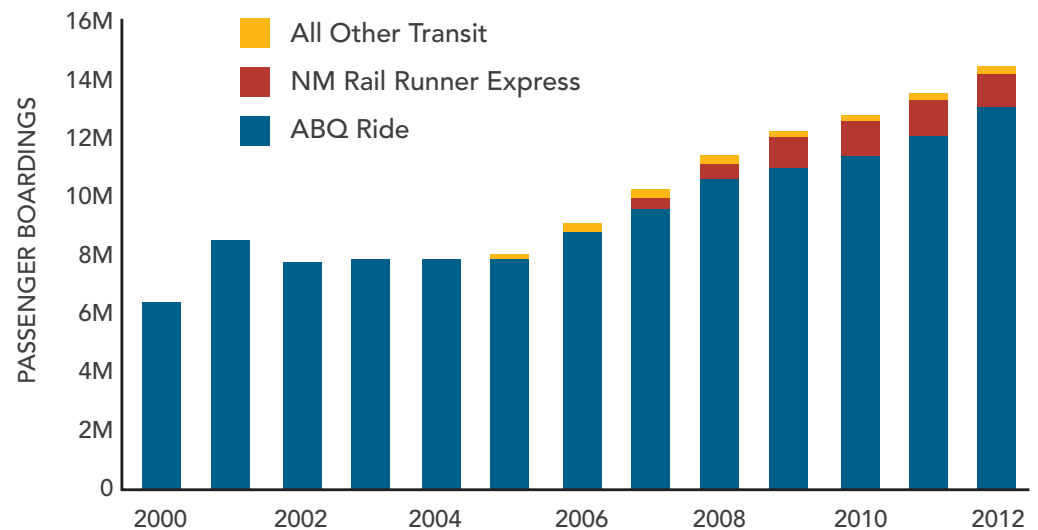


Figure 2-7: Transit Ridership in the Albuquerque Metro Area (2000-2012)

Source: MRCOG

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an urban or semi-urban lifestyle was the most attractive option for a large majority of people (60 percent), almost a quarter of residents (22 percent) want to live in rural areas in the future. An ongoing challenge in our region will be how to protect rural lifestyles despite an influx of people.

In 2016, public participants in the Comp Plan update echoed this shift in preferences. People expressed a desire for vibrant, active centers with options to live, work, play, and learn, connected by corridors that provide more choices and better mobility for pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users.

2.4 Accommodating Future Growth

2.4.1 CONSTRAINTS TO FUTURE GROWTH

Where growth will occur in the county and the city will be determined by a number of factors. Tribal lands and publicly owned land form growth boundaries on all sides of the county. Even so, there are approximately 160 square miles of vacant developable land in the unincorporated county, compared to the 120 square miles that have already been developed. Significant changes will

be needed to direct growth within the developed metropolitan footprint, preserve undeveloped areas and rural character, and ensure sustainable growth over time. See **Section 5.1.2.1 of the Land Use chapter** for a more detailed discussion of available land in the city and county.

The City had extraterritorial planning and zoning powers within five miles of its boundary until the state legislature removed them in 1998. Several bills since then have sought to reinstate the City's extraterritorial jurisdiction. By 2003, the City had annexed much of the urban built environment within the Albuquerque area. That year, the state legislature adopted legislation limiting the City's ability to annex land without the approval of the County. Until the state legislature acts to change existing laws, the City's municipal boundaries are constrained for the foreseeable future. By 2040, a large portion of available land in the city may be built out, and the city might become land-locked by other jurisdictions.

The Comp Plan presents a shared vision for the pattern and intensity of growth in both city and county areas so that both jurisdictions can accommodate reasonable growth and development to 2040.

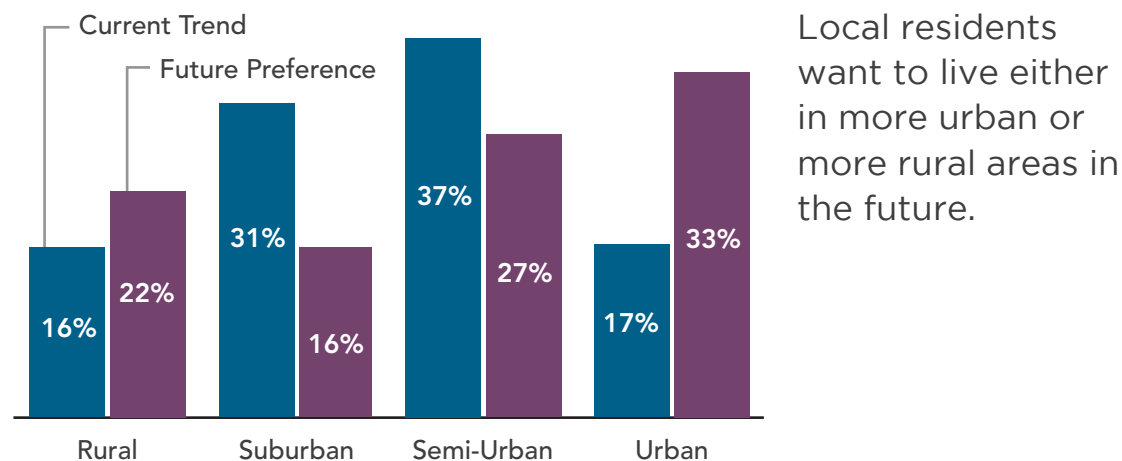


Figure 2-8: Current and Preferred Lifestyle Trends in Bernalillo County

Source: MRCOG Travel Preference Survey, 2013-2014, Bernalillo County

	DEVELOPED SQ. MI. (APPROX)	VACANT SQ. MI. (APPROX)	TOTAL DEVELOPABLE LAND SQ. MI. (APPROX)	TOTAL UNDEVELOPABLE LAND SQ. MI. (APPROX)
Albuquerque	89	24	113	76
Unincorporated Bernalillo County*	120	160	280	259

Table 2-2: Developed and Vacant Land, Albuquerque & Unincorporated Bernalillo County

*Unincorporated Bernalillo County includes Federal Lands, such as Cibola National Forest, the Petroglyph National Monument, and the Reserve Area. It does not include Kirtland Air Force Base, tribal lands, or other municipalities.

2.4.2 GROWING INWARD

While national trends indicate that regions that support and invest in infill growth are recovering best from the 2008 recession, Albuquerque's developed footprint has grown rapidly, and we continue to grow primarily through suburban residential development on the city's edges.

Outward expansion is problematic because it puts additional strain on limited infrastructure funding and finite natural resources and doesn't achieve the kinds of placemaking that make cities attractive. Low-density, suburban development at the edge of our urban footprint competes with many residents' desire to preserve rural lands and lifestyle options.

We need policies that encourage infill development in appropriate places and sustainable growth patterns over time.

Where growth occurs at the urban fringe, it should take the form of concentrations of mixed uses within Centers and Corridors, in addition to single-family residential. This policy direction will help us move toward a vibrant, sustainable region.

2.4.3 EXPANDING HOUSING OPTIONS

Attracting young people is a key strategy for economic development and needs to be reflected in our housing policy. Millennials represent the largest segment of the local population and a growing part of the workforce. While most young families will likely choose to live in traditional detached homes, growing numbers will desire to live in cottage homes, urban townhomes, and intentional living communities. Our local

housing stock needs to evolve to include more of these desired housing types.

Beyond planning for Millennials, we must also be planning for Boomers — the second-largest generation in our region — whose housing preferences and needs are also expected to shift in the next two decades. In fact, of the growth in population expected by 2040, 80 percent will be households without children. This signals a significant change from past housing preferences, and existing and anticipated housing stock in the Albuquerque area will not be sufficient if more of these households prefer housing options other than single-family homes, particularly if they want affordable rental options.

While local home ownership affordability is generally high, there is a lack of affordable

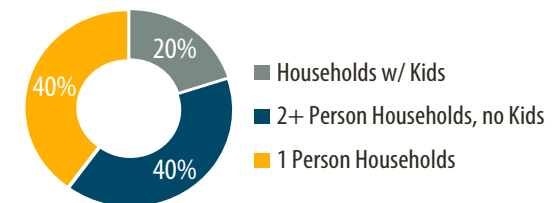


Figure 2-9: Share of Population Growth to 2040

Source: Arthur C. Nelson, Presentation to the Greater Albuquerque Realtors Association, April 2015

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rental housing. For comparison, only one out of every four owned homes is considered unaffordable or severely unaffordable – costing more than 30 percent of the area median household monthly income. For rental units, this number is two times as high, with one out of every two units unaffordable or severely unaffordable. Future housing policies should encourage and protect affordable rental options.

2.4.4 BALANCING

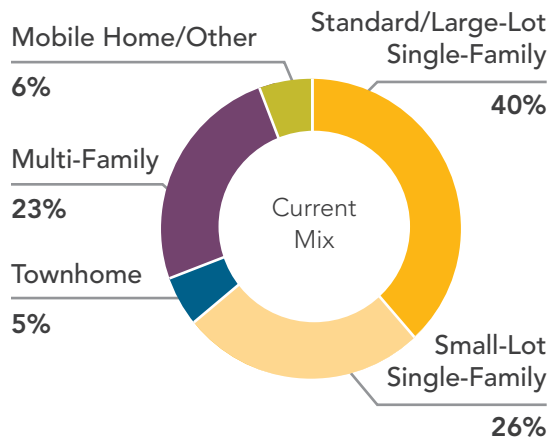


Figure 2-10: Housing Mix in Bernalillo County

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2009-2014 ACS

JOBS & HOUSING

To address the imbalance of jobs and housing on the West Side, the City and County should pursue housing policies that create vibrant neighborhoods near jobs and amenities throughout the area, minimizing residents' cross-river commutes. Locating new employment near transit or developing transit to serve existing employment centers will also be helpful in reducing vehicular traffic.

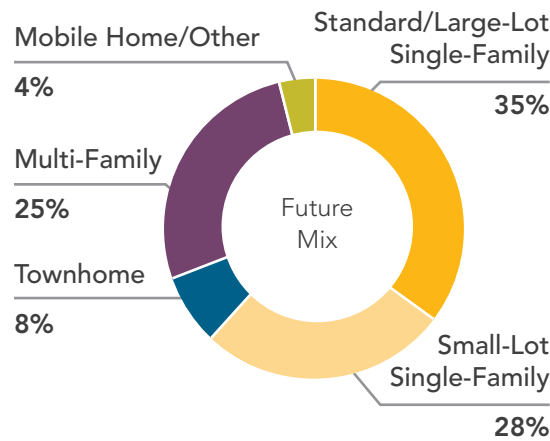


Figure 2-11: Future Balanced Housing Mix by Type for Bernalillo County

Source: Envision Tomorrow Balanced Housing Model using three data sources: U.S. Census ACS 2009-2014, 2014 Projections of the Population and Components of Change for the U.S., and MRCOG 2040 population forecast inputs.

2.4.5 COORDINATING REGIONAL GROWTH

In 2015, the Metropolitan Transportation Board adopted a preferred scenario for how to grow as a region for the first time. Going beyond the typical analysis that evaluates the consequences of future growth based on current trends, MRCOG's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the four-county region that includes Albuquerque and Rio Rancho analyzed the potential benefits of more compact growth in the metropolitan area.

If local jurisdictions work together and change land use policy and make coordinated transportation investments to encourage compact growth, the region is expected to see benefits to air quality and multi-modal mobility. While vehicle miles

We must expand options for housing that people want and can afford to meet residents' needs now and in the future.

traveled and commute times still increase over time in the preferred scenario, the increase is less than in the trend scenario, showing improved conditions compared to past trends.

This Comp Plan is closely coordinated with the MTP to implement the changes necessary for land use and transportation policy in order to realize the benefits presented in the preferred scenario.

Water planning and water/wastewater infrastructure is coordinated through the

Albuquerque-Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (ABCWUA). The ABCWUA board includes elected officials from both the City and County. Staff from both local governments coordinate with ABCWUA on updates to the Water Conservation Plan and the 100-year Water Resources Management Strategy.

To estimate future water demand, ABCWUA uses a comparison of past utility growth along with the same growth forecast as the regional MTP and the Comp Plan. ABCWUA is also a commenting agency for

development proposals subject to review and approval by the City or the County. For more details on water infrastructure and planning, see the **Infrastructure, Community Facilities & Services and Resilience & Sustainability chapters.**

2.4.6 FOCUSING GROWTH IN CENTERS & CORRIDORS

Existing and designated Centers and Corridors are intended to accommodate much of the anticipated future growth in the city and county. Instead of low-density, single-use growth at our edges, new development and redevelopment will be encouraged in existing Centers connected by a strong transportation network that accommodates cars and trucks, transit, cyclists, and pedestrians. Any potential for growth at the edges of the existing metro area should be master-planned as mixed-use, walkable Centers and Employment Centers, connected by Corridors that provide transportation options, mobility, and access for pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and drivers.

The Centers and Corridors framework encourages a range of vibrant places with varying activity intensity and development densities with development appropriately

	2012 DATA	2040 TREND ANALYSIS (% GROWTH)	2040 PREFERRED SCENARIO (% GROWTH)
ACCESS			
Households near centers	64,842	+51	+99
Households near transit	25,530	+59	+108
Jobs near activity centers	142,531	+33	+40
Jobs near transit	47,496	+15	+31
TRANSPORTATION			
Vehicle hours traveled	50,778	+47	+40
Transit ridership	41,033	+40	+142
River crossing trips	592,609	+36	+31
Average commute time	17 min	+36	+12

Table 2-3: 2040 Preferred Scenario Results for Access, Sustainability, and Transportation

Source: MRCOG Preferred Scenario Analysis.

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scaled to protect existing single-family neighborhoods and rural areas.

2.4.7 LEVERAGING PUBLIC INVESTMENTS

The Centers and Corridors framework is part of a strategy of responsible public investment. Directing growth to areas where public dollars have already been invested in

Centers and along Corridors increases the rate of return on that investment. This strategy increases the tax base and provides high-quality places to live and work, all while investing in growing and supporting the places where people want to live. Nationally, we see a trend of young workers and large employers choosing cities that provide vibrant live-work-play-learn environments. Investing in more of these districts in

Albuquerque further supports our economy through attracting and retaining a strong workforce for the future.

Chapter 2 Endnotes

1. U.S. Census Bureau, Claritas Estimates, 2015
2. University of New Mexico Geospatial & Population Studies
3. American Planning Association, "Investing in Place," May 2014. Arthur T. Nelson, "ABQ Trends & Opportunities to 2040," Presentation 4/16/2015.

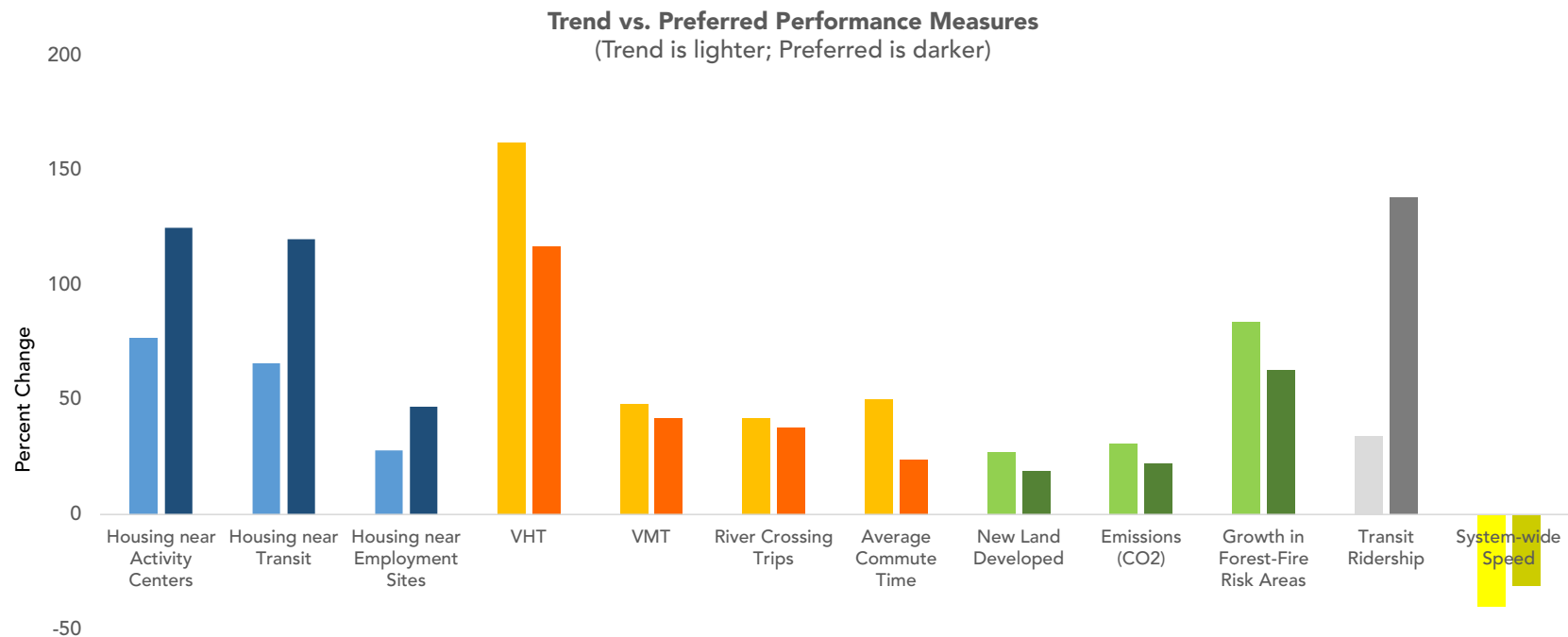


Figure 2-12: Potential Benefits of the MTP Preferred Scenario

Source: MRCOG Travel Preference Survey, 2013-2014, Bernalillo County.

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