# Community-Based Planning: Providing Access to Public Transportation To Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge

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#### What is the Public Lands Transportation Fellows (PLTF) Program?

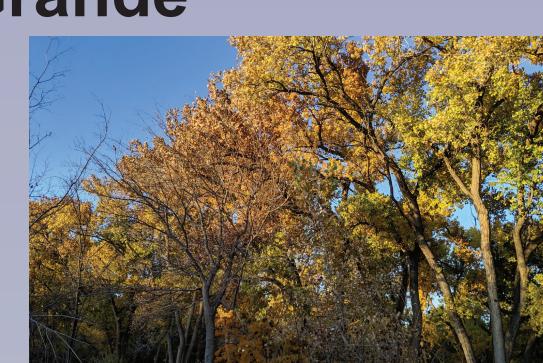
The Public Lands Transportation Fellows program provides public lands with transportation professionals for six to 12 months who assist in transportation planning and implementation to help public lands reduce traffic, congestion and pollution while improving visitor experiences. These programs are designed to place individuals with substantial knowledge and expertise in transportation planning and related areas. See footer for a list of sponsors.

#### Valle de Oro: First Urban Wildlife Refuge in the Southwest

- Established in 2012
- 570 acres in the South Valley of Albuquerque, New Mexico
- 7 miles south of downtown Albuquerque
- Previously the Price Dairy, Valley Gold Farms
- Established through a collaboration between neighbors, partner organizations, and governing
- Valle de Oro (VdO) visitor center and wetland habitats are currently under construction

#### Rio Grande

The Rio Grande provides essential natural space, recreation, and biodiversity to the city and



Cottonwood forests of the Bosque, Source: Begay, N.

Valle de Oro NWR

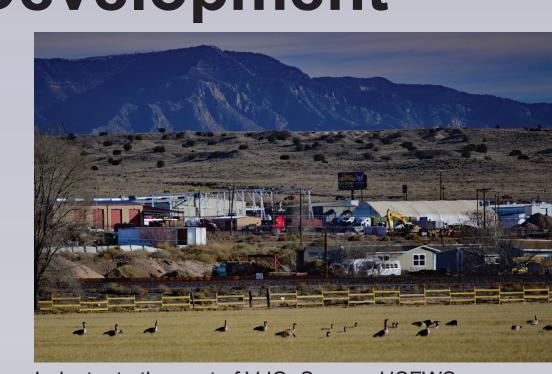
Surrounded by agricultural, residential, industrial, and open space, the Refuge navigates a complex land use context.



VdO is bordered by industrial development, but the Refuge provides new opportunities for urban residents to experience wildlife.

#### **Opportunities**

- 45% of New Mexica residents can access VdO in a 30 min. drive
- Strong grassroots involvement with surrounding communities ensures
- Provides opportunities for Albuquerque area and neighbors to experience wildlife



# heavy industrial use

inclusion and equitable Neighborhood



# Limited public

unincorporated Bernalillo County area, including the Mountain View

 Need for better last mile connections between VdO and existing transportation infrastructure



# Refuge is surrounded by transportation access in

No Vehicle Ownership People of Color ownership, there is a need for alternative transportation options people of color in in the South Valley and Mountain View.

The South Valley has the highest concentration of Bernalillo County.

C-1 Neighborhood Commercial Zone

M-1 Light Industrial Zone

M-2 Heavy Industrial Zone

## Existing Conditions: Missing Last Mile Connections

# **Bus Connectivity**

Challenge: Bus stops are over 1.5 miles away

with no place for buses to turn around on 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Route 51 is the closest line to the Refuge and

one of the longest ABQ Ride lines.

 Currently, both bus stops are over 1.5 miles away from the Refuge (in front of the Mountain View Community Center and near Joy Junction, a family homeless shelter).

#### Rail Runner Connection

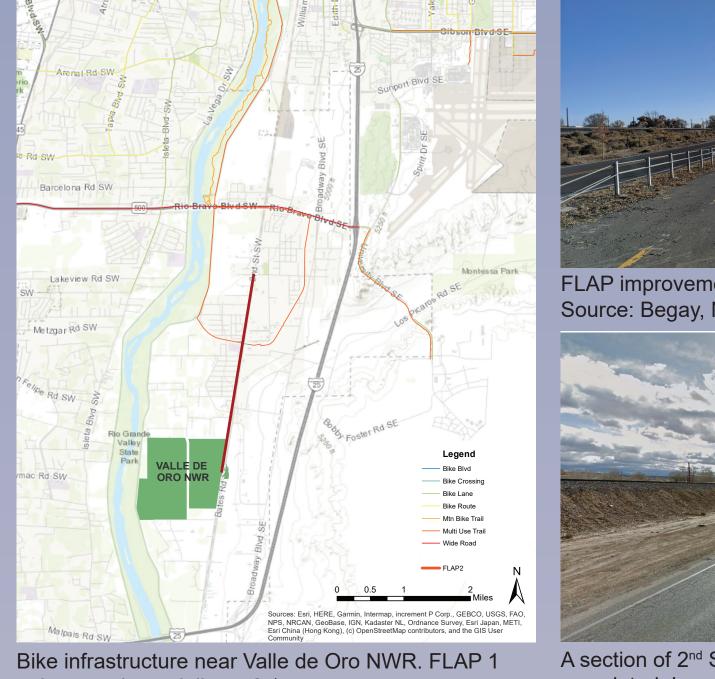


• Challenges: Connecting to the Four Acre site and using site to connect to the Rail Runner. The Rail Runner Express serves the Middle Rio

Grande corridor from Belen to Santa Fe. Currently, there's a stop at Rio Bravo and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, serving the South Valley. This stop is miles away from the Refuge.

 The Refuge has an unused four acre property to the east which may be used to access the Rail Runner.

## Biking Infrastructure



Challenge: No bike path connection from VdO

to Rio Bravo Blvd. South diversion channel blocks connection to Paseo Del Bosque Trail.

 Funding was secured to re-engineer roadway and install native landscaping along the 2<sup>nd</sup> Street corridor.

#### • 2<sup>nd</sup> street path ends at the connection to the Chris Chavez Trail and South Diversion Trail.

#### **Trail Network**



 Challenge: Establishing a trail network that equally provides access for all user groups. Currently, Refuge trails are farm roads which act as the primary interior access network in

The public has driving access to these roads but may be restricted once visitor center is

 The El Camino Trail is the only non-vehicle access trail currently on the Refuge.

#### Bus, Bike, Rail, and Trail: Providing Access For All Ride the Bus to VdO



To bring bus service to VdO, there are two options to

2. Establish another bus line to service the Refuge

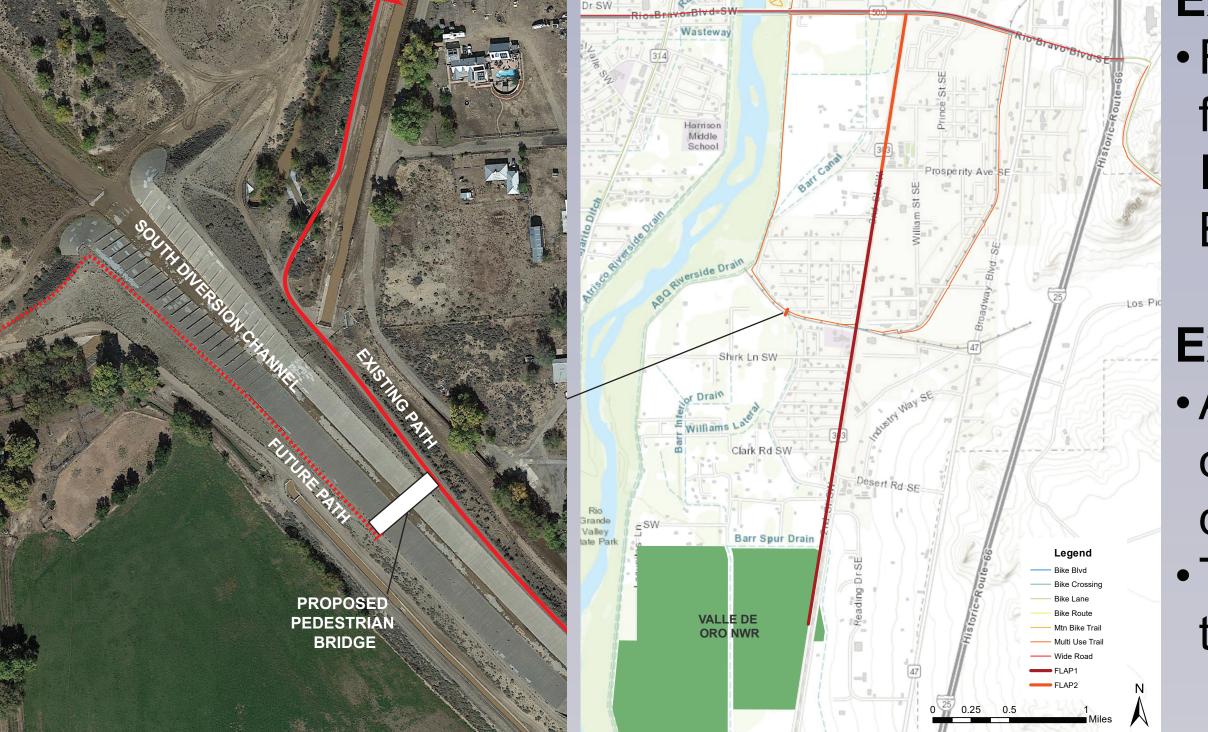
Both options would require another bus to serve the

 Funding for the bus will be pursued through Capital Outlay funding through the New Mexico Legislature.

 A natural gas bus is preferred to reduce air pollution in the neighborhood.

New bus line will serve VdO and communities in the

#### Connect to Albuquerque Bike Network Extend 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Improvements North



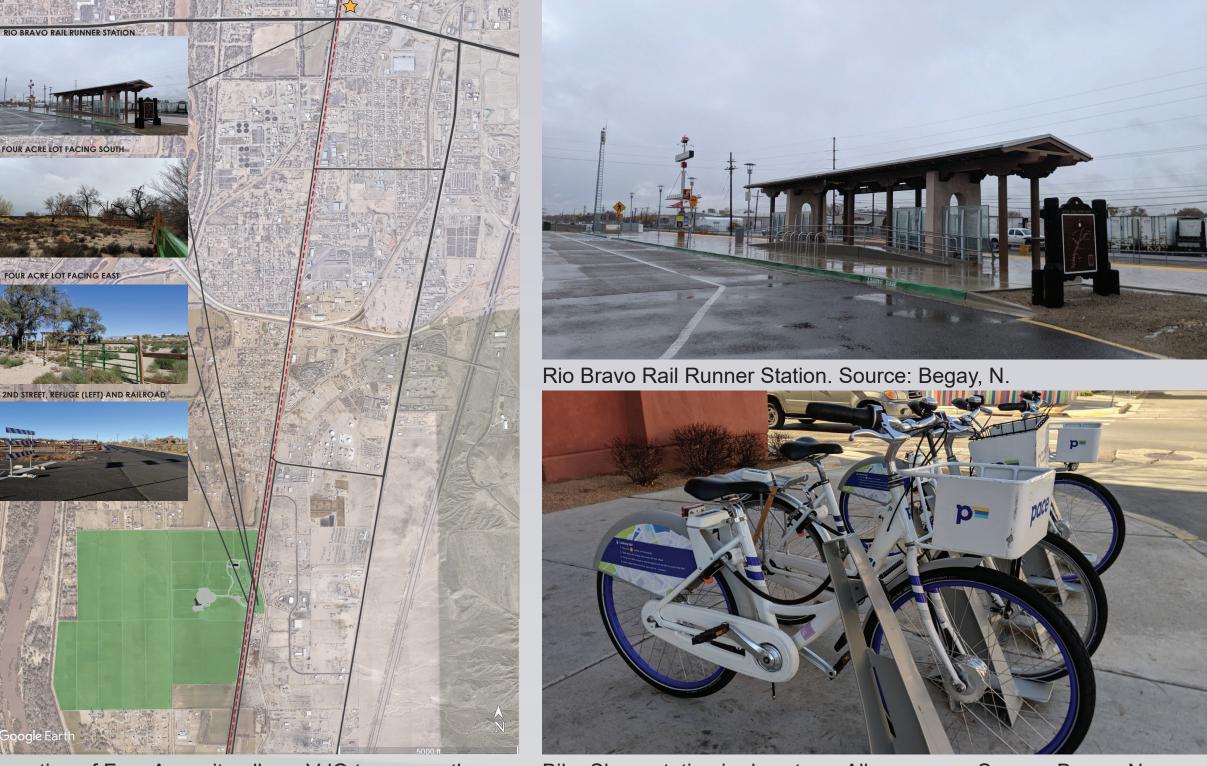
• Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) funding was secured to extend FLAP I bike path from Prosperity Ave to Rio Bravo Blvd (FLAP II).

#### **Extend the Paseo del Bosque Trail**

 A pedestrian bridge is also in the scope of work for FLAP II to extend the Paseo del Bosque trail south to the Refuge.

 Trail improvements will connect VdO to the larger Albuquerque biking network.

### UNM Rail Runner Station Feasibility Study and Bike Share



Collaboration with UNM

- University of New Mexico School of Architecture and Planning will conduct a studio to determine best use for Four Acre site and Rail Runner connection.
- Will seek community input and propose short-term and long-term use. Provide connection proposals between

Four Acre site and Refuge.

Bike Share to Rio Bravo Rail Runner

 Seek bike share stations at Rail Runner station and Refuge Visitor Center.

#### Bus, Bike, Rail, and Trail: Providing Access For All Trail Network Planning Strategies



#### Trail Management

- Determine user groups for trails
- Determine long-term maintenance needs for each trail
- Consider driving access for the public on the perimeter trail
- Determine access points to trails for neighbors

#### Trail Design

- Accommodate user groups through trail design
- Plan placement of amenities throughout network including signage, benches, shade structures, blinds, and more
- Determine surfacing materials based on user groups
- Provide cost estimates for trail construction
- Collaborate with biologist to create buffer zones to protect wildlife and habitat

#### Other Transportation Improvement Projects Refuge Signage **Electric Vehicle Chargers**

Replace missing signage:

roadway adoption signs,

speed limit signs, wildlife

crossing signs, wayfinding

Research highway signage

procedure with NMDOT

to assist wayfinding on

#### **Quiet Crossing**

- Trains sound their horns at all
- hours, disturbing neighbors Improvements made to local rail crossings allow for quiet crossing designation
- Work with NMDOT and Bernalillo County to designate quiet crossings





Interstate 25





Collaborate with Bernalillo

Chargers in the South Valley

at the VdO visitor center and

County to establish first

Electric Vehicle (EV)

# Partners and Stakeholders













WILDERNESS

