



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
Governor

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### **Governor Bill Richardson's Statement on Capital Outlay for Paseo del Norte**

SANTA FE - Governor Bill Richardson issued the following statement today regarding capital outlay funding for the Paseo del Norte extension in Albuquerque, NM:

“As Governor, I am concerned about the traffic problems that West Side Albuquerque residents face every day. I also believe that local governments - cities, counties, school districts - are not adequately planning for the basic services people need. The transportation system on the West Side needs a lot of work - roads, transit, even land use. Looking ahead, I am concerned that Albuquerque is growing in a way that it will be tied in traffic knots for decades to come. I would like to see the City reinvest in, and revitalize, older areas like the Central Avenue corridor where I just located my Albuquerque office.

I seriously considered vetoing all of the Legislature's funding for the Paseo del Norte extension, and I am not insensitive to the concerns of voters who rejected funding for this project in a recent bond election. I did not veto the funding because I see the challenge being faced daily by tens of thousands of West Side residents. However, there are some very significant policy issues that must be resolved.

I am not endorsing this project. The state's funding will not be released until the following conditions are met to the satisfaction of the state Department of Finance and Administration and the state Department of Transportation:

- 1) Creation of a true multimodal transportation plan - including fair and thorough analysis of the alternatives to the construction of the Paseo extension - that will provide transportation choices for West Side residents. This plan needs the cooperation of Albuquerque and Rio Rancho in particular and should be ratified by the mayors and governing bodies of these jurisdictions. It is time for true regional cooperation on transportation and land use in this rapidly growing area.
- 2) Adoption of a written resolution of support for the project by the governing body of the City of Albuquerque - the City Council.
- 3) Development of a plan to enhance the protection of the Petroglyph National Monument. The plan should prevent further expansion of the road system in the Monument, address encroachments and buffers around the Monument, consider the possibility of a road that would “fly over” the Monument, and commit to interpretation and education related to the Monument’s cultural resources. I am asking my State Historic Preservation Officer and the regional Pueblos to participate in this process because of its state-wide importance.
- 4) Assurance that the project is legally defensible - and that the state is not irresponsibly exposing itself to lawsuits by spending state money on a project that wasn’t adequately planned in conformance with state and federal law.

These stringent conditions reflect the complex issues in the Paseo del Norte project. Yet the state and my administration are concerned about the severe West Side traffic and quality of life issues. Thus I have made huge investments in other West Side projects - from parks to roads - that will create immediate return. These include the Coors/I-40 interchange, the Unser project, intersection improvements on Coors, and the Bosque parkland acquisition.

We can help meet the infrastructure needs of the West Side - but we must do it in a way that creates a new direction for planning and transportation in the metro area. And if we do not achieve that new direction, these funds will not be allocated to the Paseo project.”