



## Mid-Region Council of Governments of New Mexico

# Monitoring the Impacts of the COVID-19 on Travel & Socioeconomics for Planning & Operations



Urban Land Institute, New Mexico  
October 22, 2020

# Today's Agenda

- ◆ Impacts of COVID-19 on the Economy
- ◆ Impacts of COVID-19 on Traffic Counts & Patterns
- ◆ Impacts of COVID-19 on Bike & Pedestrian Activity
- ◆ Questions?



# Economic Impacts of COVID-19 on the Albuquerque Metro Area

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# Presentation Outline

- ◆ What does the current (as of August 2020) employment data look like?
- ◆ What does the Covid-19-updated REMI forecast look like?
  - ◆ Employment forecast
  - ◆ Gross Regional Product forecast
  - ◆ Population forecast
- ◆ How is migration changing?

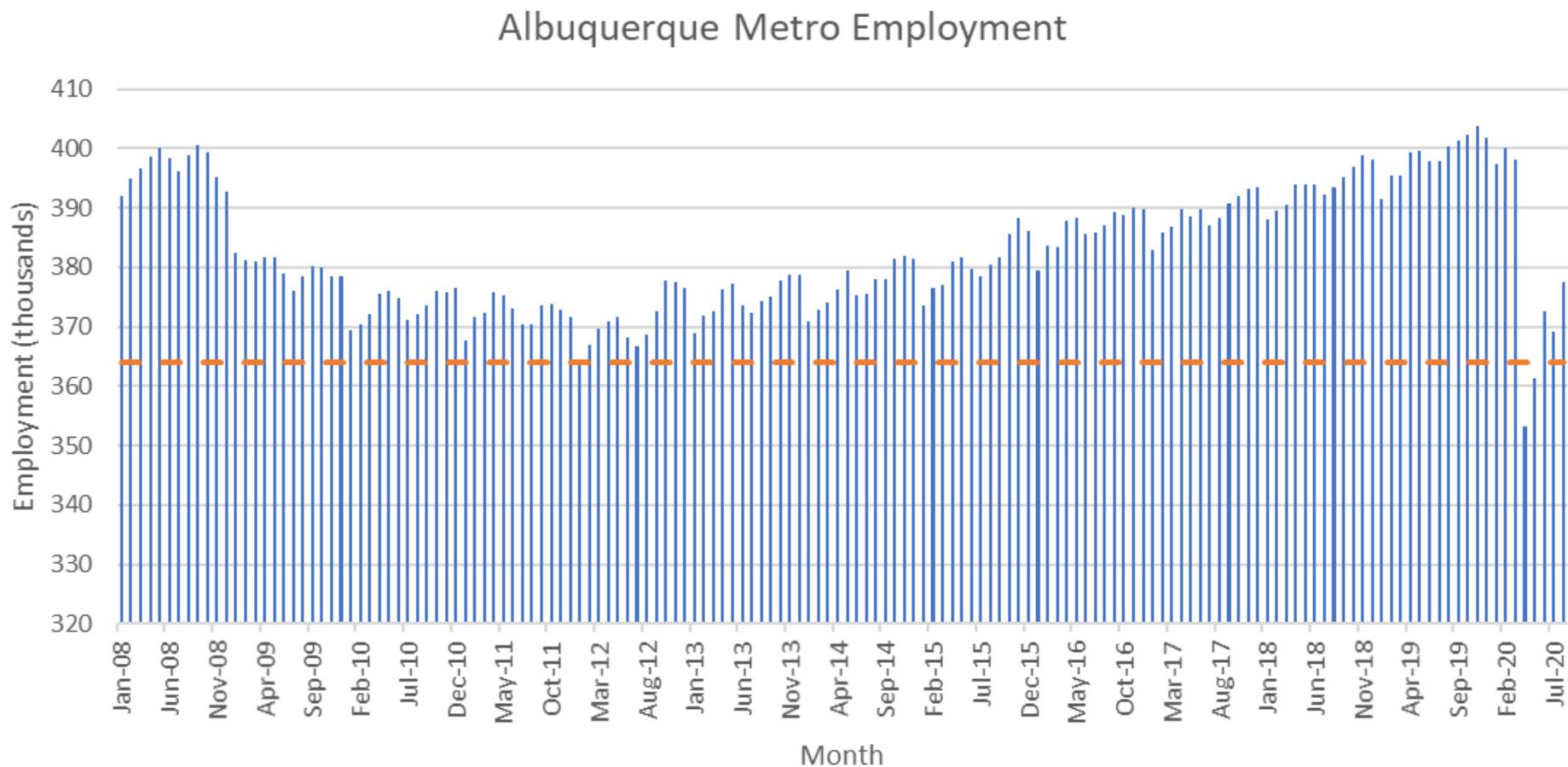


**10 years of employment  
growth has been erased in  
4 months.**



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# Historical Employment



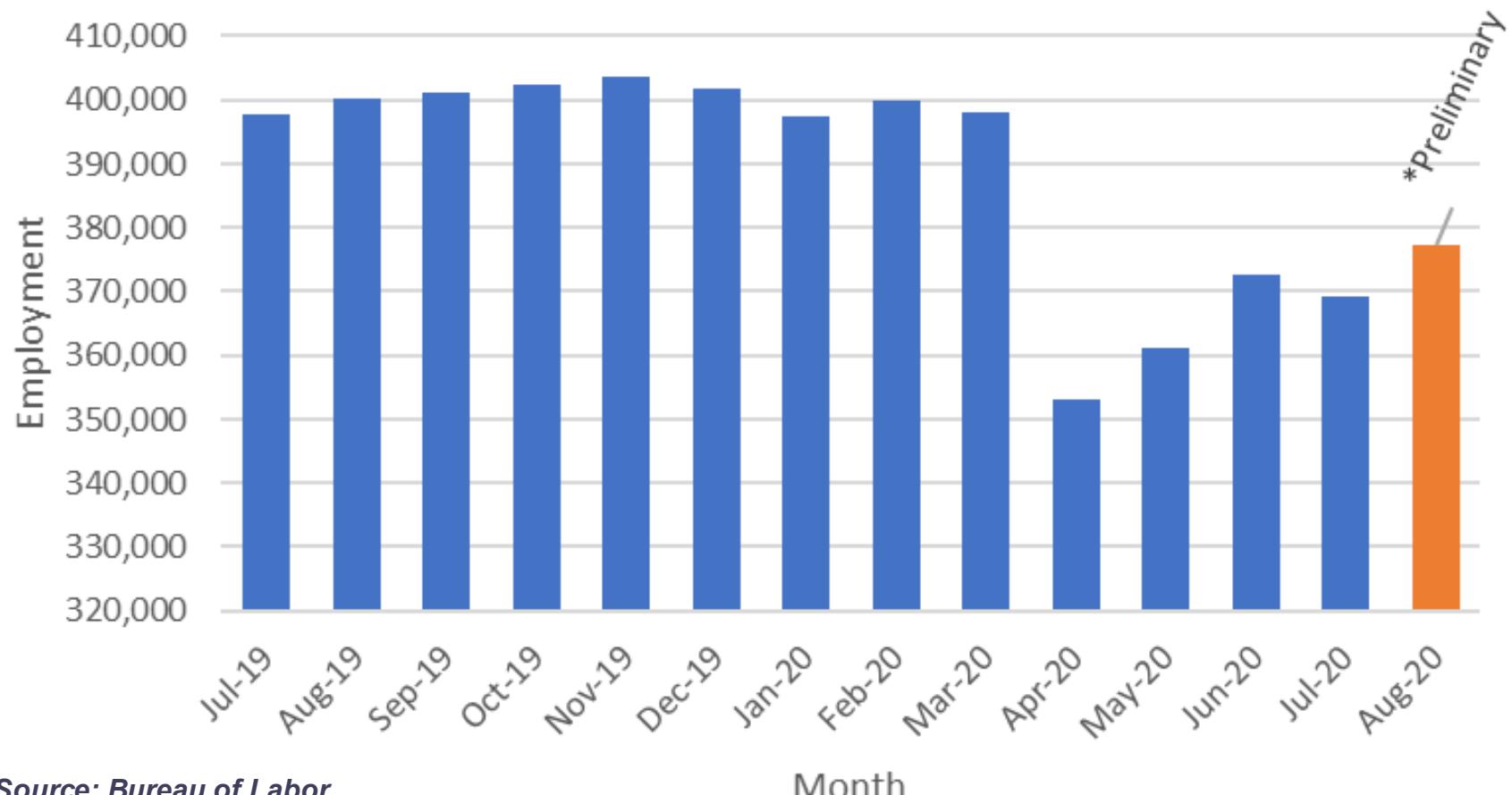
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, CES

Employment      Previous Low (Jan. 2012)

# Recent Employment

## Albuquerque MSA Employment

*Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Employment Statistics, Total non-farm, not seasonally adjusted*



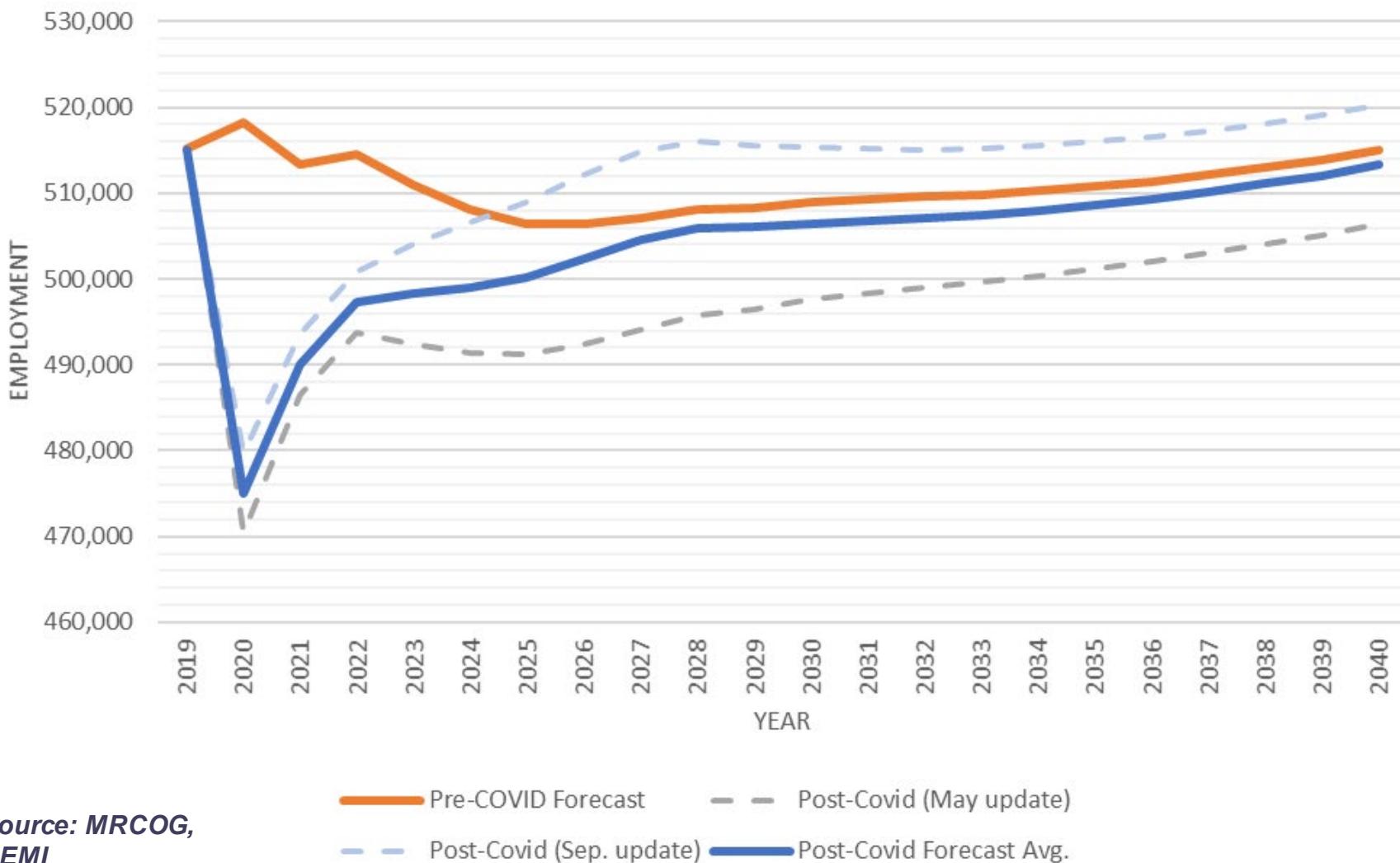
**The Albuquerque Metro  
Area  
may not return to 2019  
employment levels until well  
after 2040.**



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# Employment Forecast

## Employment Forecast (REMI)



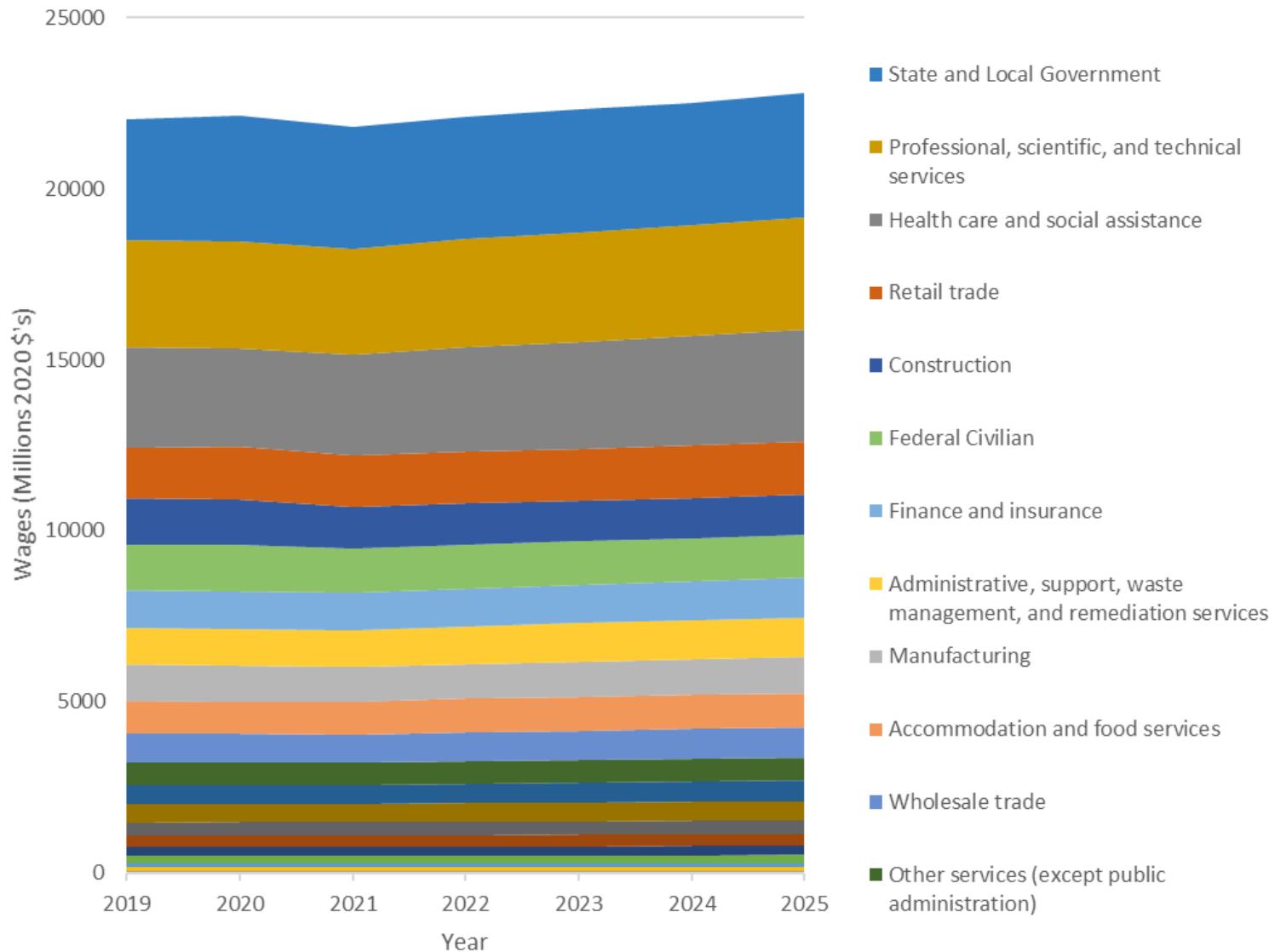
**The Albuquerque Metro  
Areas's largest industries are  
not heavily affected by the  
pandemic which keeps wages  
and economic output stable.**



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# Wage & Salary Forecast

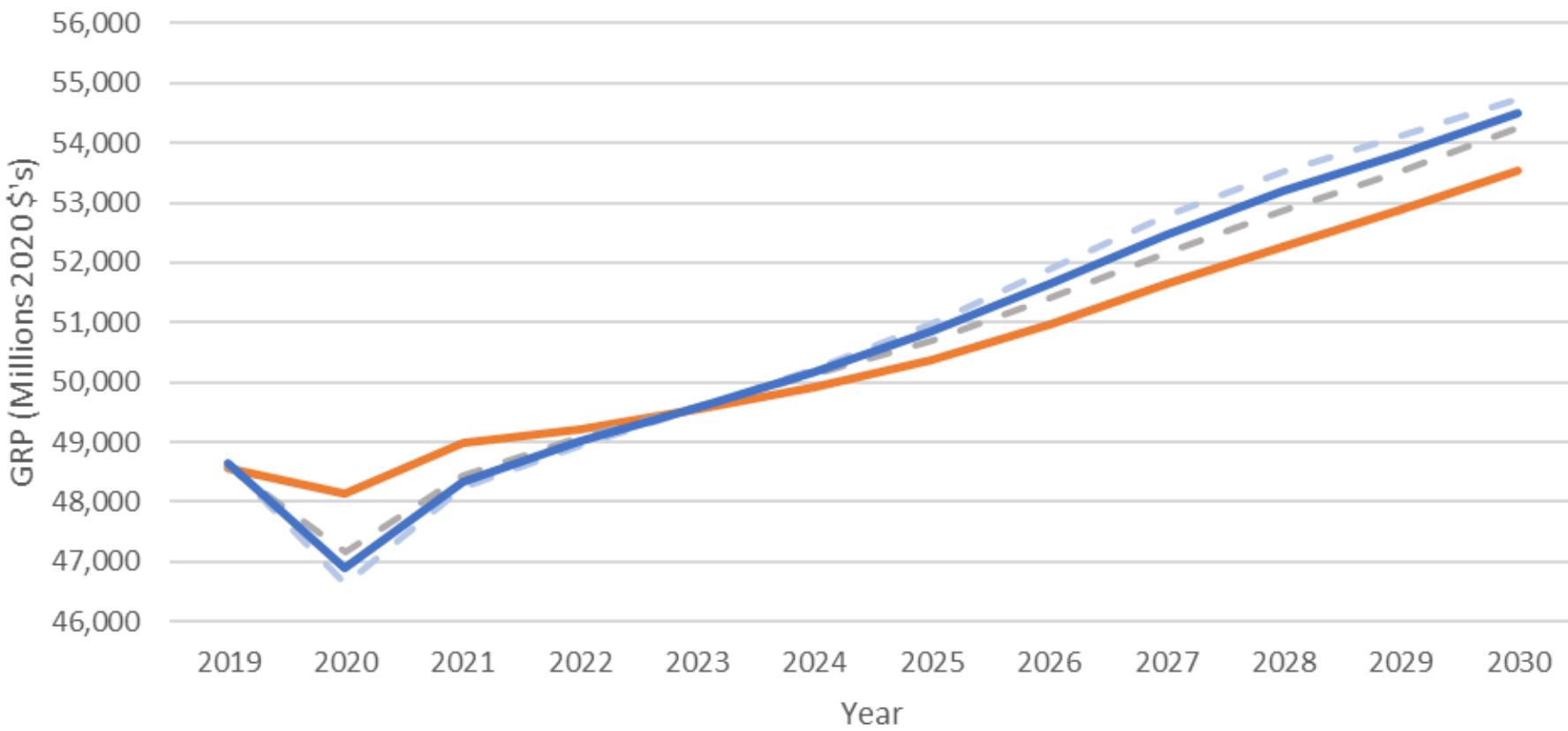
MRCOG Wages and Salaries Forecast by Industry



Source: MRCOG, REMI

# Gross Regional Product Forecast

Gross Regional Product Forecast (REMI)



Source: MRCOG,  
REMI

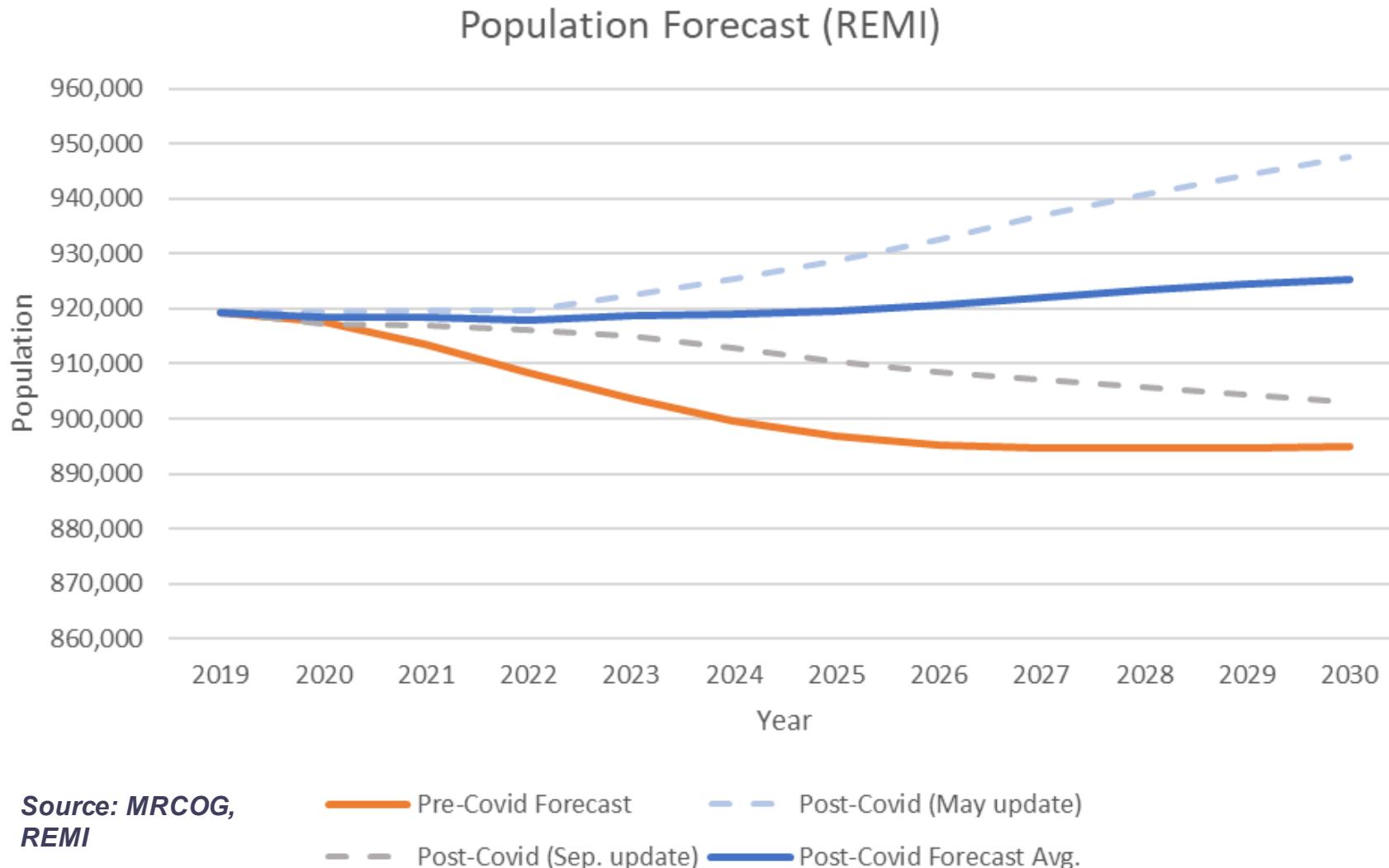
Pre-Covid Forecast      Post-Covid (May update)  
Post-Covid (Sep. update)      Post-Covid Forecast Avg.

*Silver Lining:*  
Albuquerque's Metro Area is  
forecasted to have higher  
GRP and population growth  
as a *result* of the pandemic.



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# Population Forecast



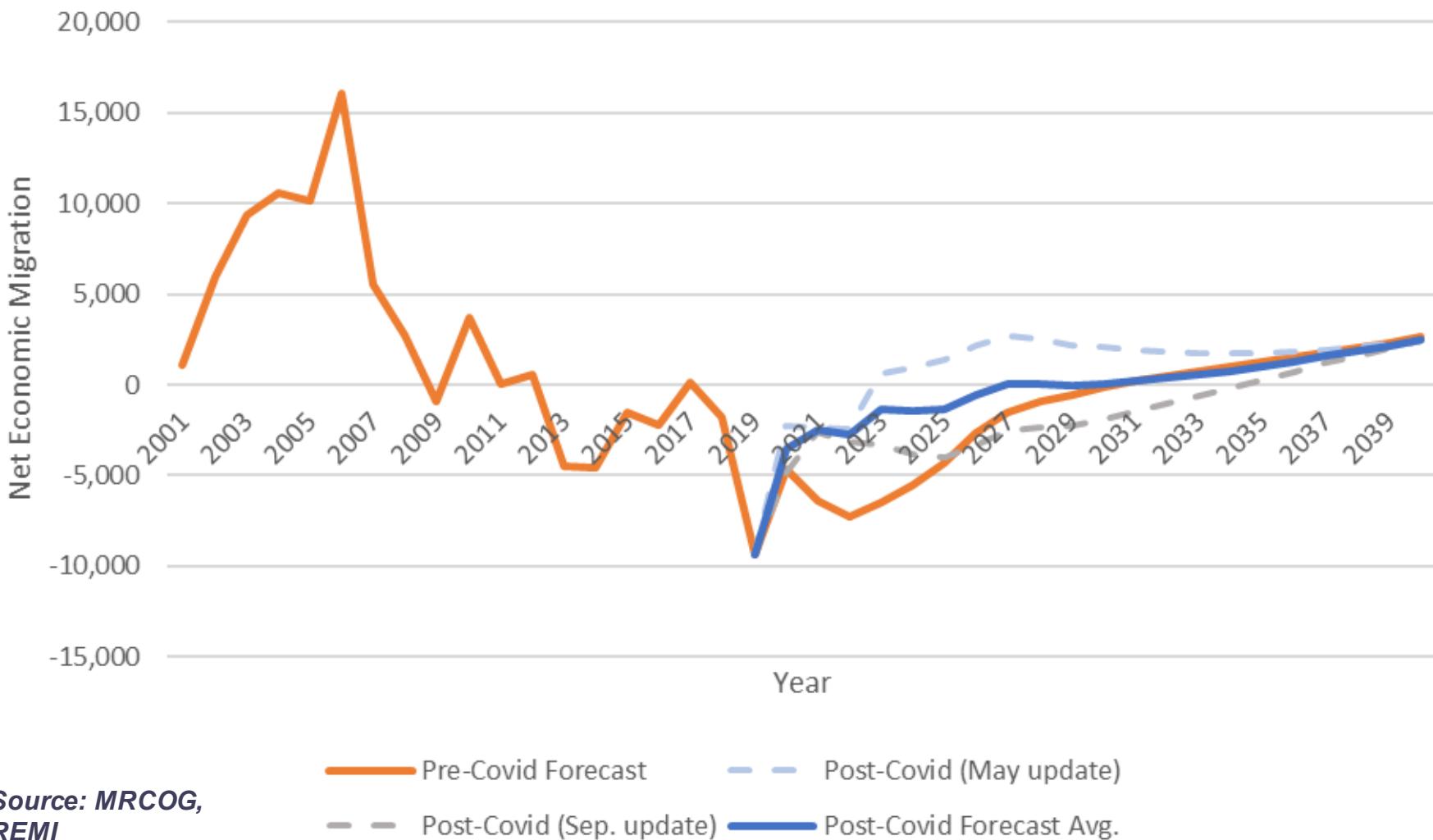
The population growth  
may be fueled by less  
people leaving, not  
necessarily new people  
coming here.



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# Migration Forecast

## Economic Migration Forecast (REMI)



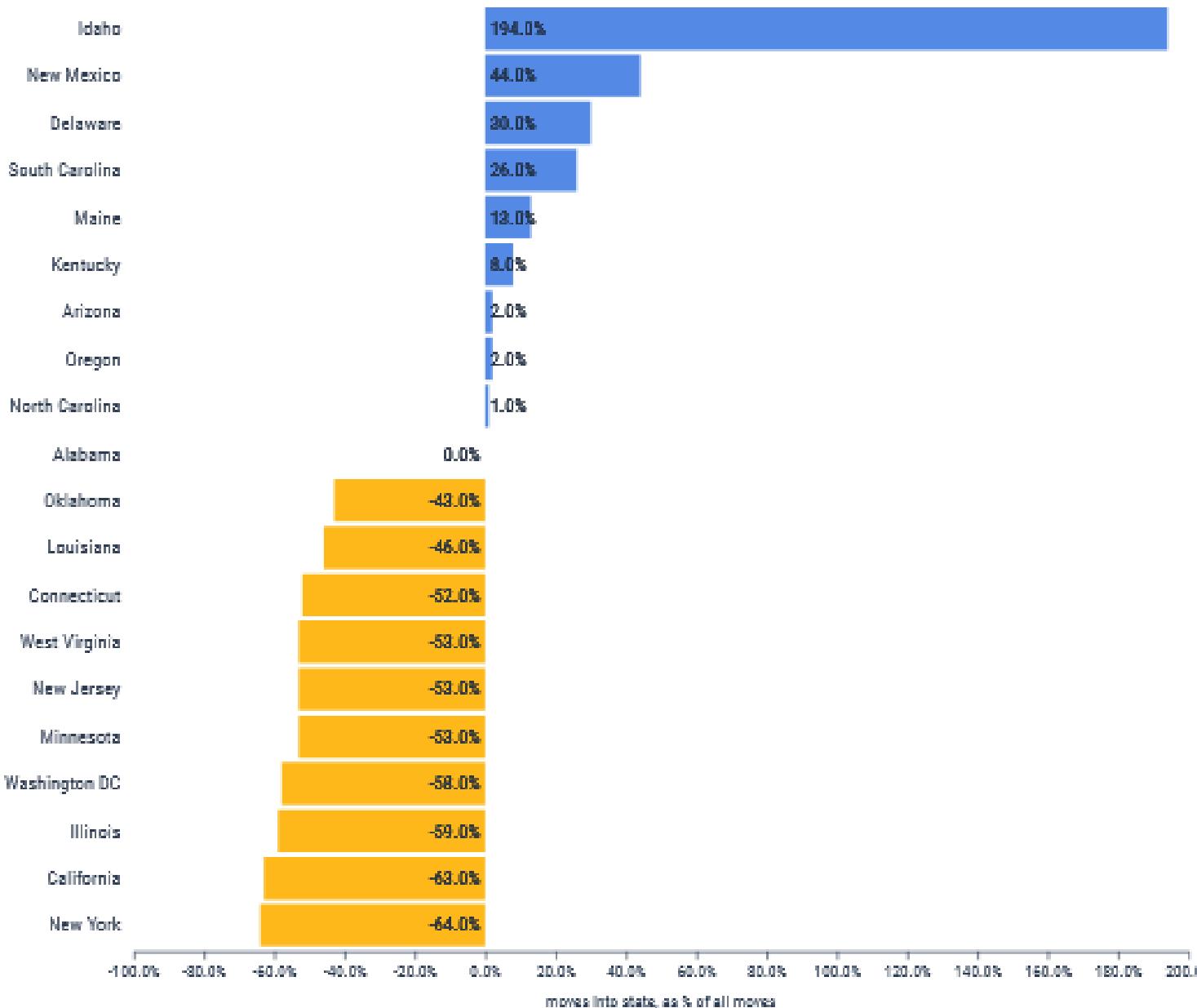
**Other data sources also  
point to net-positive  
migration.**



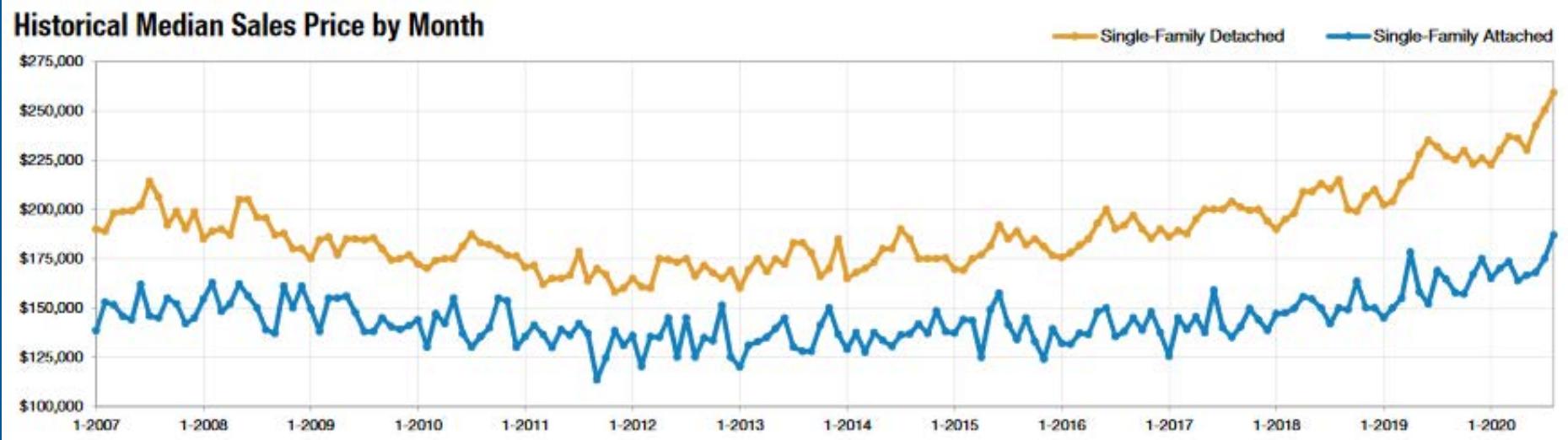
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## Net moves by state

States with the biggest gains and losses in moves since the pandemic started



# Historical Home Sales



Source: Greater Albuquerque Area Realtors

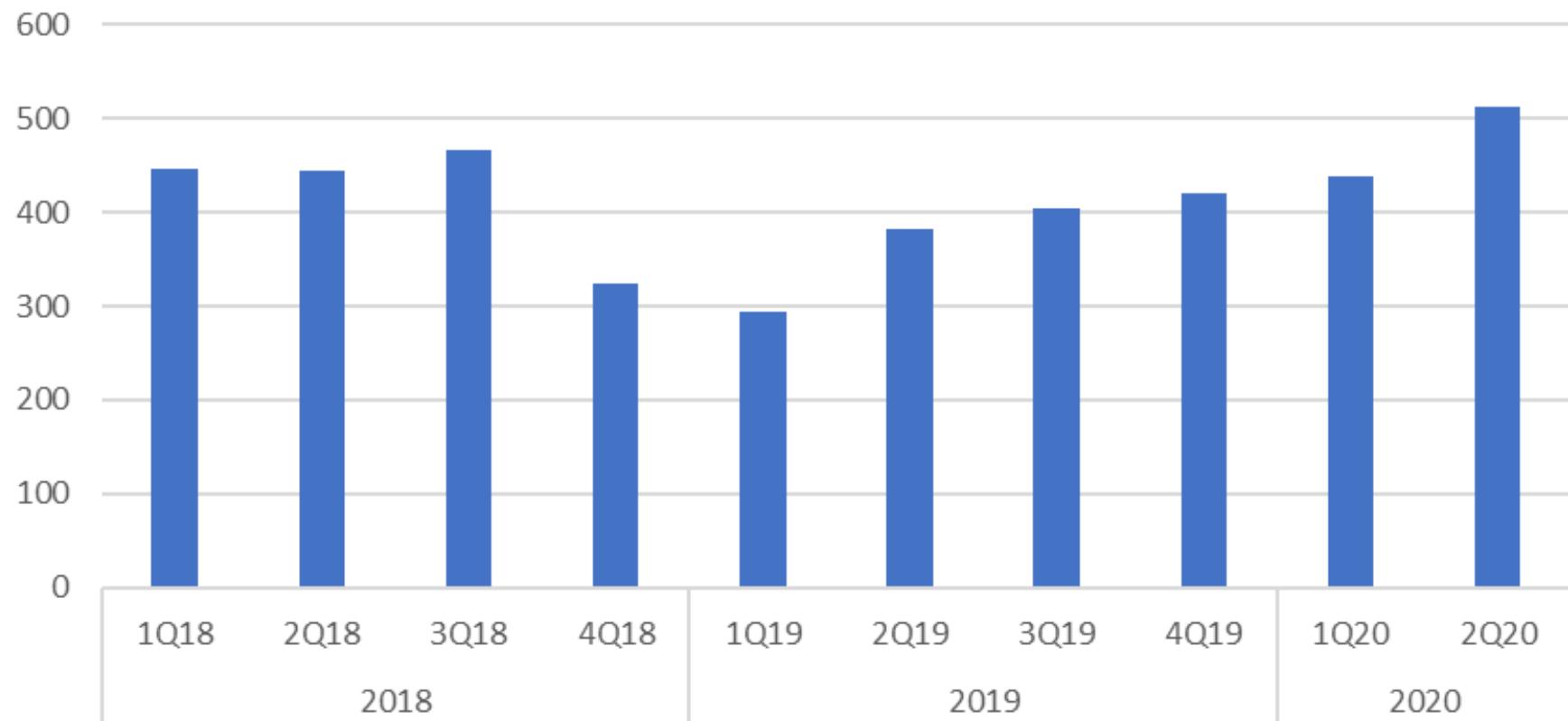


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# Recent Housing Construction

Sum of QtrStarts

Quarterly Housing Construction Starts



year Quarter

Source: Metrostudy

# Key Takeaways

- ◆ 10 years of employment growth in Albuquerque has been erased in 4 months.
- ◆ Albuquerque may not return to 2019 employment levels until well after 2040.
- ◆ Albuquerque's largest industries are not heavily effected by the pandemic which keeps wages and economic output stable.
- ◆ Silver Lining: Albuquerque is forecasted to have higher population growth as a result of the pandemic.



# COVID-19 Traffic Monitoring

*Returning to a New Normal*

Nathan P. Masek, AICP

Senior Transportation Planner

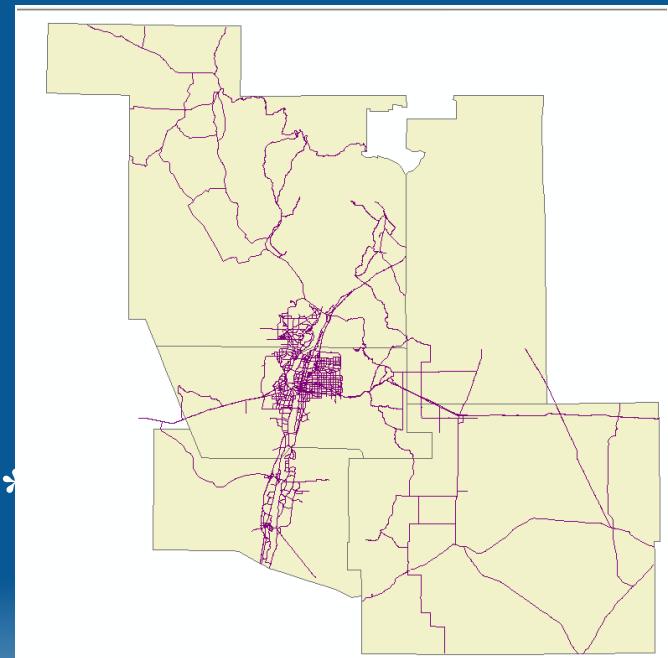
[NPMasek@mrcog-nm.gov](mailto:NPMasek@mrcog-nm.gov)



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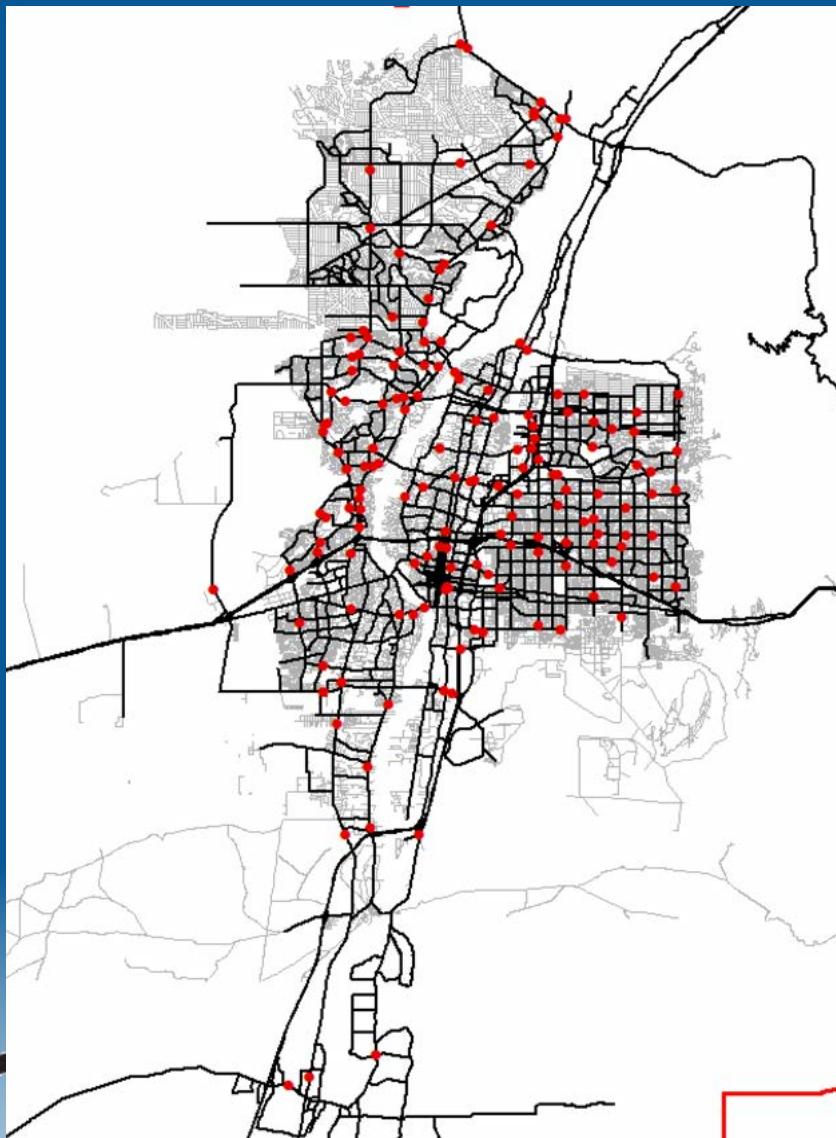
# Quick Background

- ◆ Data collection started in 1989
  - ◆ Tube Counts – Ongoing, 1000 +/- locations/year
  - ◆ Weekday, Veh. Class, Speeds
  - ◆ Integration NMDOT Perm/RTMS
- ◆ Funded by NMDOT
- ◆ Covers 4+ counties
- ◆ MPO's UPWP, Regional Planning
- ◆ **TIP/MTP Agency Project Support\***
- ◆ **NMDOT Counts and FHWA's HPMS\***
- ◆ **Annual Traffic Flow Maps\***



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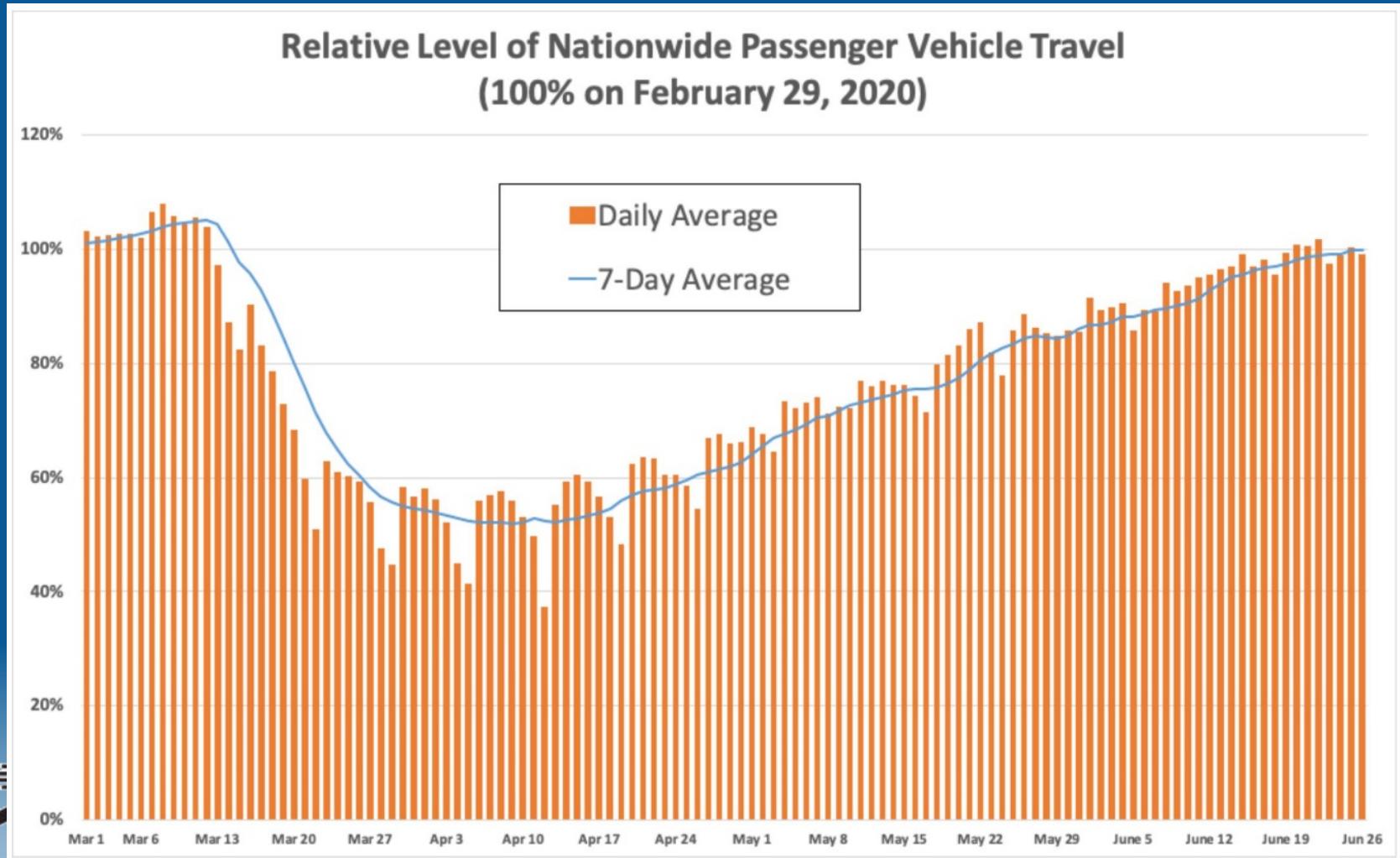
# COVID-19 Presents a New Traffic Monitoring Opportunity



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# Nationwide – What is Happening?

“Recovery”.....*What About Albuquerque?*



# COVID-19 Timeline in New Mexico

*Statewide/Governor's Policy "Stay in Home", Openings by Sector, Schooling from home, Forecast Uncertainty.....It's Changing!*

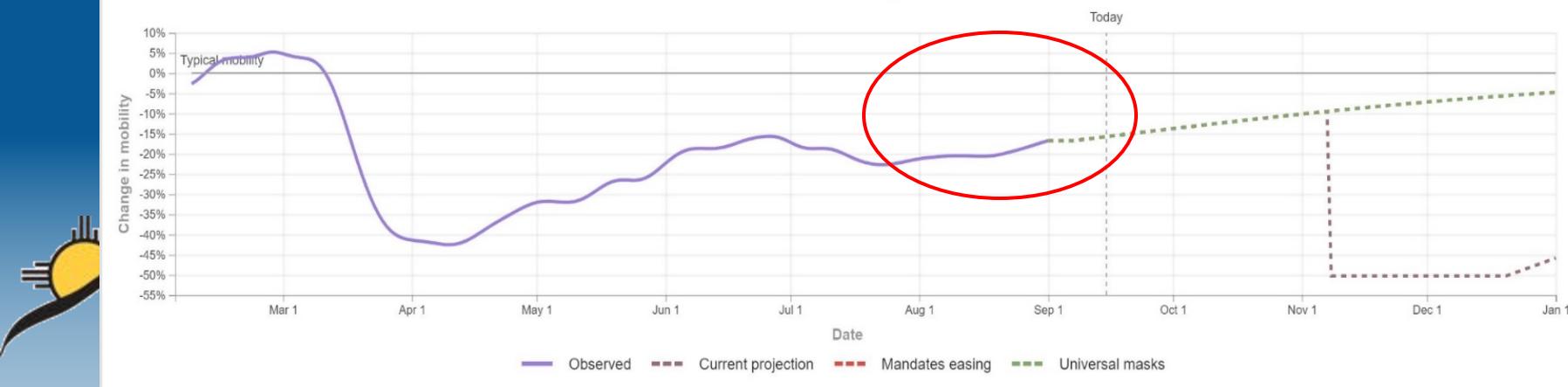
[Healthdata.org - New Mexico Social Distancing and "Mobility"](https://www.healthdata.org/new-mexico-social-distancing-and-mobility)



## Social distancing

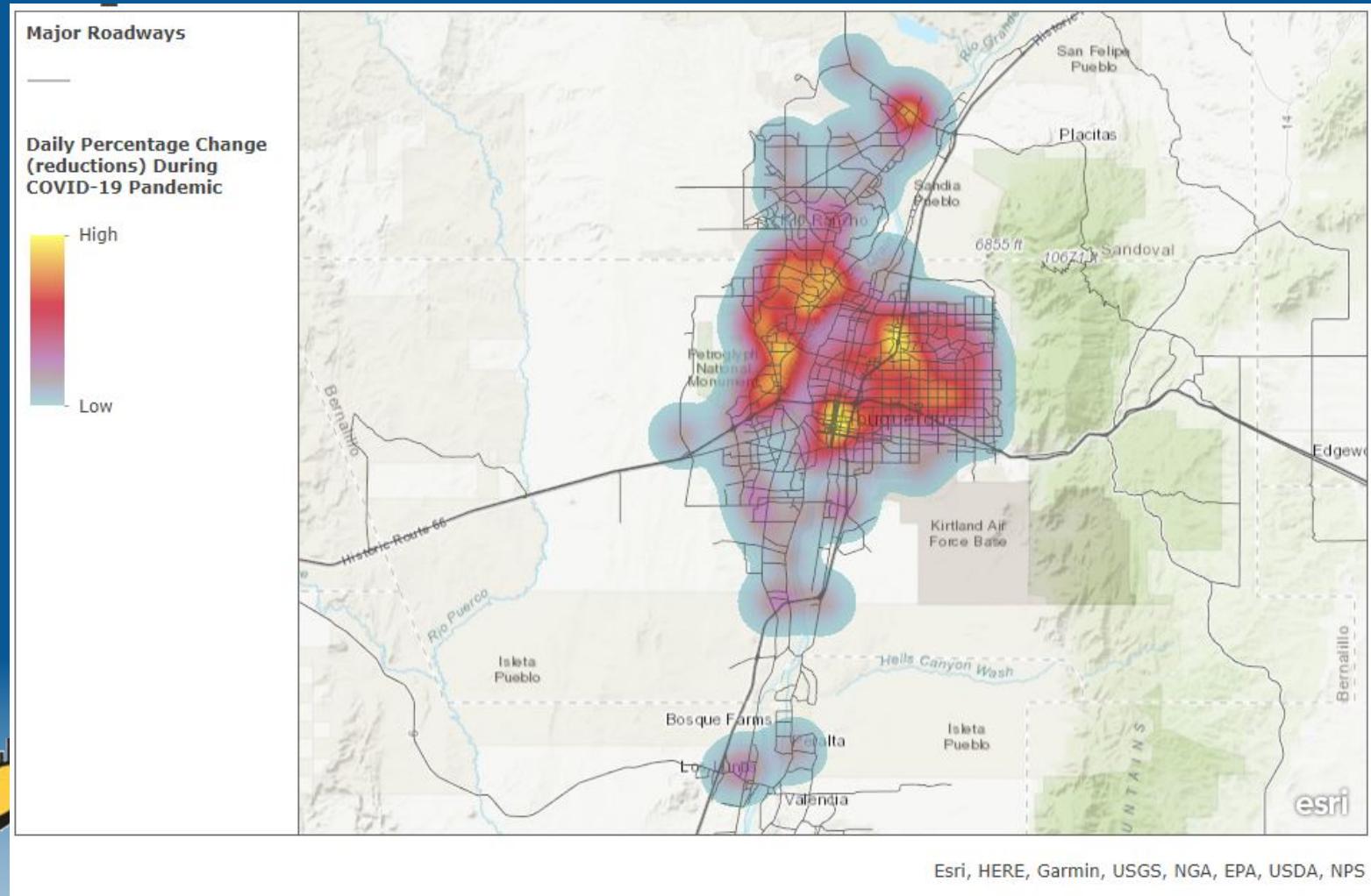
Reducing human contact (as measured by cell phone **mobility** data) can drive down infections so that mask use, testing, isolation, and contact tracing ca... ▾

Scenario ⓘ Projection X Easing X Masks X ▾



# The First 6 Months – What is Happening?

- **Cycle 1 – March 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup>, 32.5% Reduction**
- **Cycle 2 – June 8<sup>th</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup> , 16.6% Reduction**
- **Cycle 3 – August..... Ongoing**



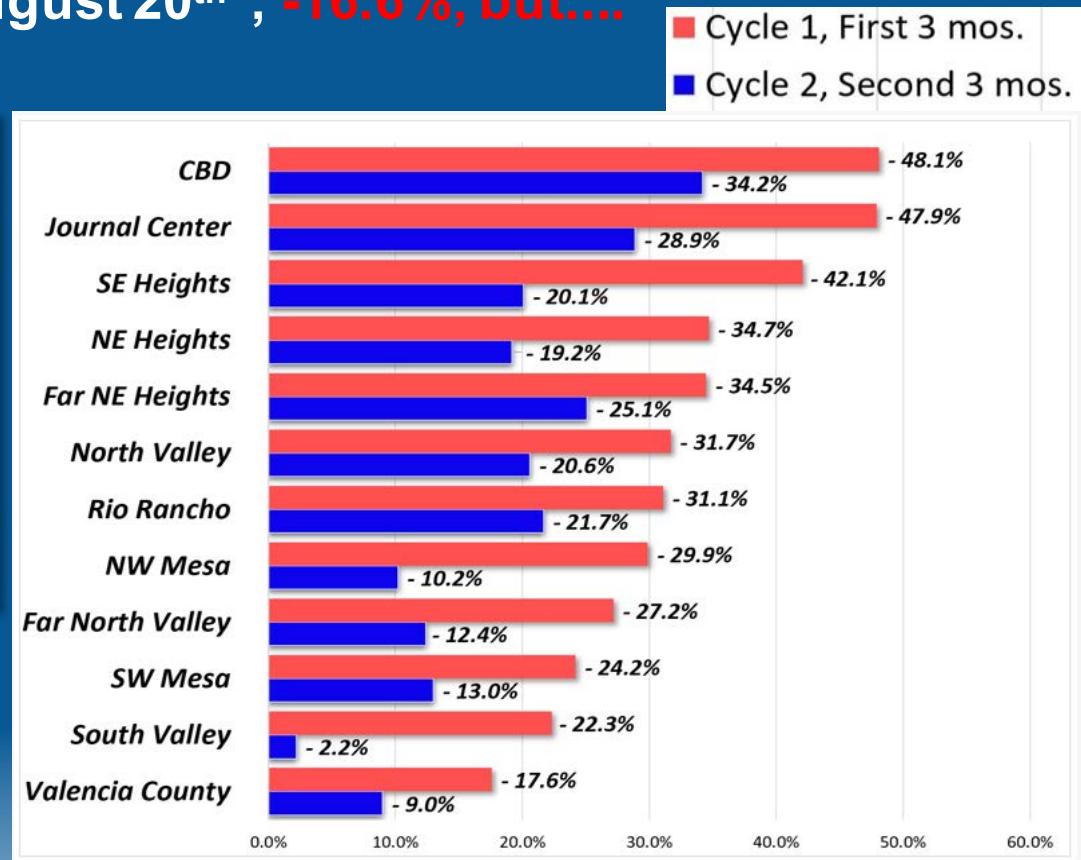
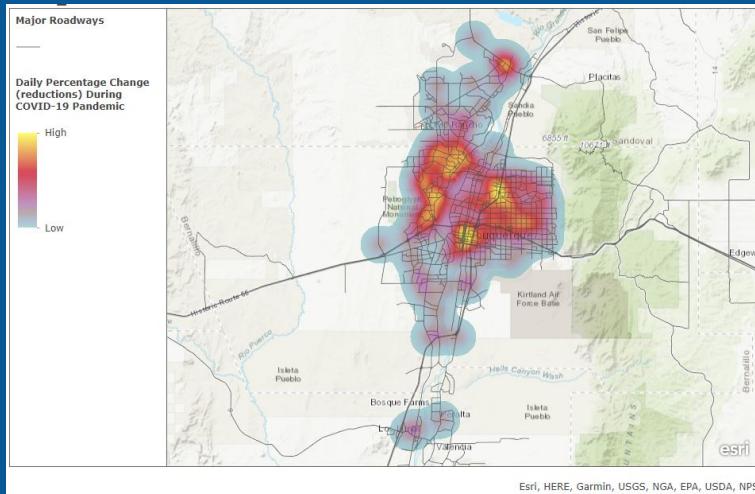
# In Albuquerque's Metro Area, Traffic Impacts Vary by Subarea



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# Cycle 1 and 2 Results... *Mixed Recovery by Subarea*

- **Cycle 1** – March 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup>, **-32.5%**, but....
- **Cycle 2** – June 8<sup>th</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup> , **-16.6%**, but....



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# Traffic Impacts Vary by Time of Day

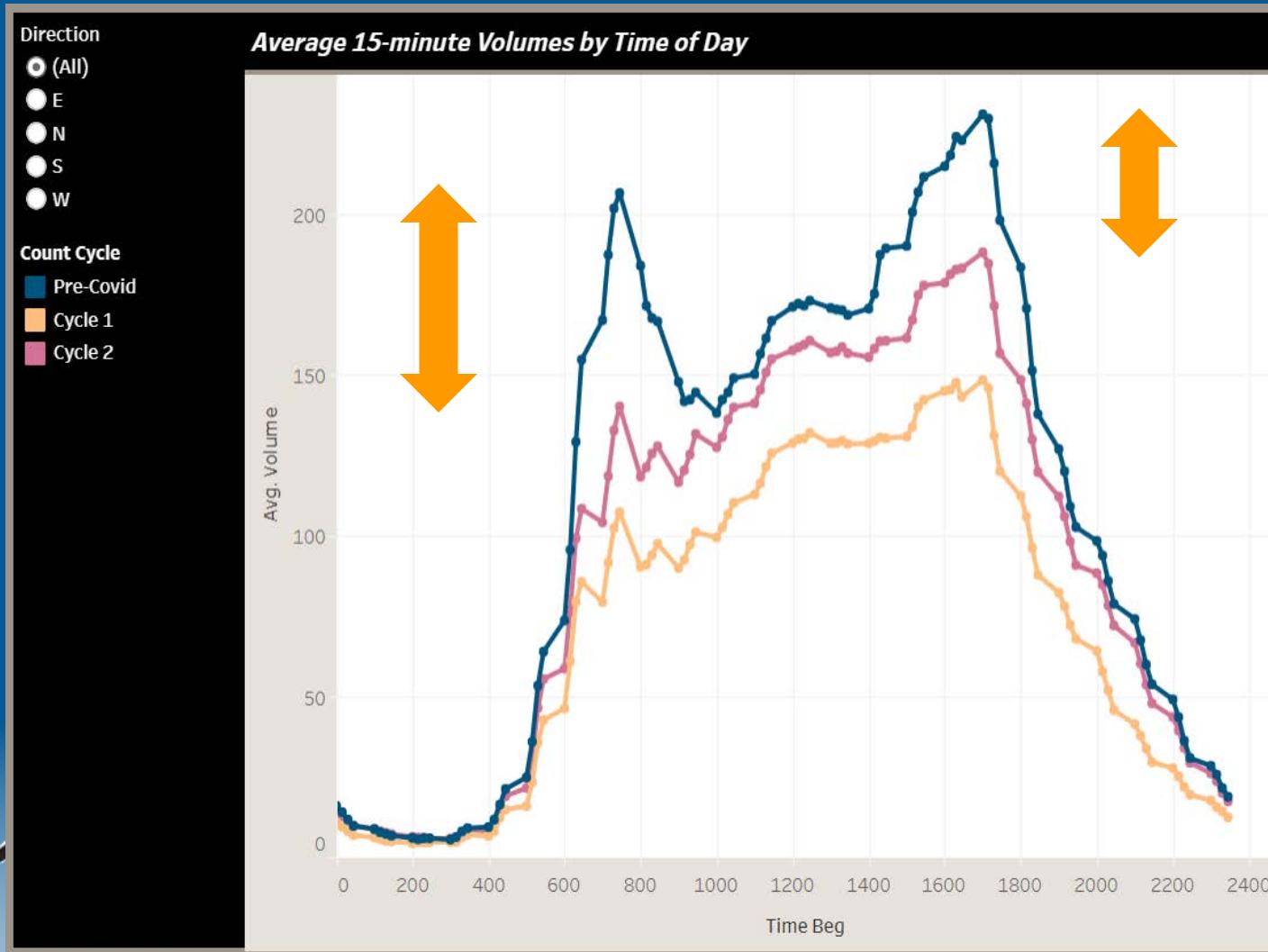


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# Travel by Time of Day, Why the Uneven Pattern?

## Normal/Pre-Covid Daily Trips vs COVID....

### AM impacted more than PM



# Travel by Time of Day, Work / Non-Work

## Normal/Pre-Covid Travel Survey

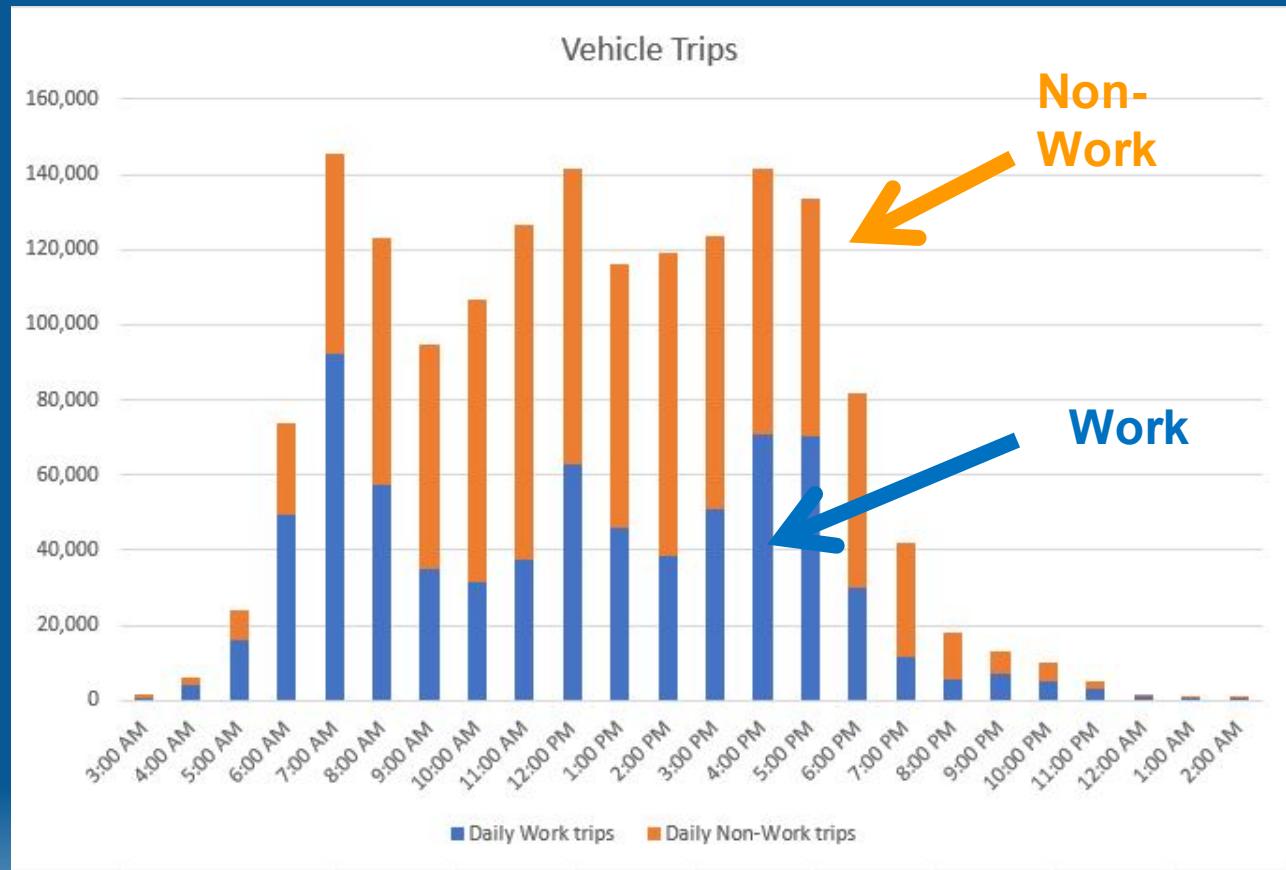
### Travel Survey

#### *Work Trips by Period:*

AM 63%

Midday 45%

PM 53%

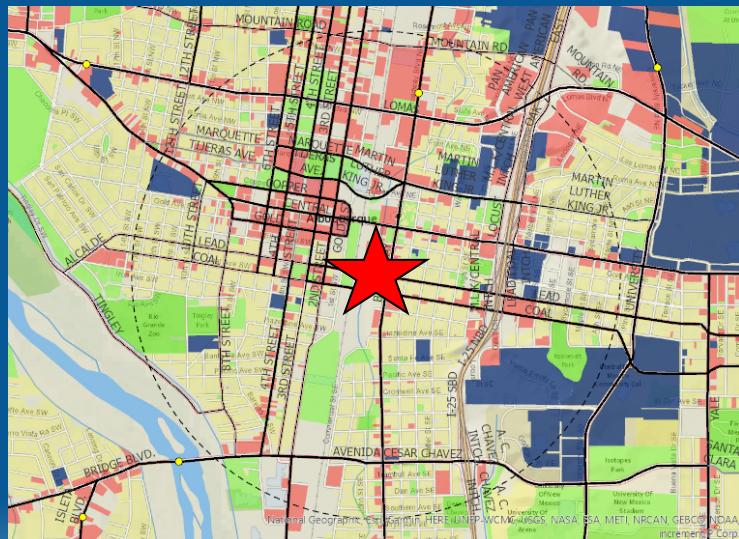


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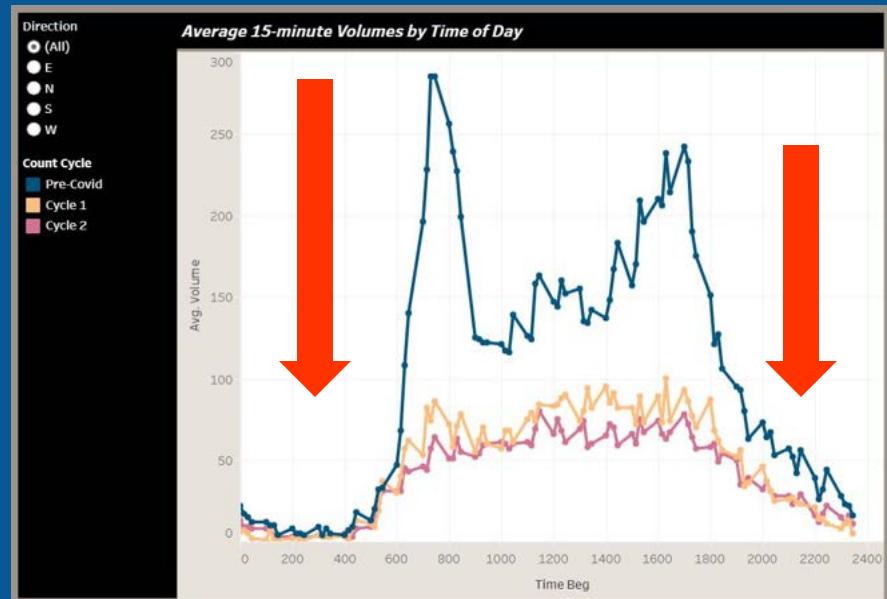
# Time of Day Impacts.....*Mixed Recovery* Varies by Facility, Adjacent Land Use

Volumes Increasing, but far from a return to the previous pattern.... Why?

Regional 1-Way Pair;  
Significant reduction in AM/PM peaks  
due to work & university trips



## Coal West of Broadway

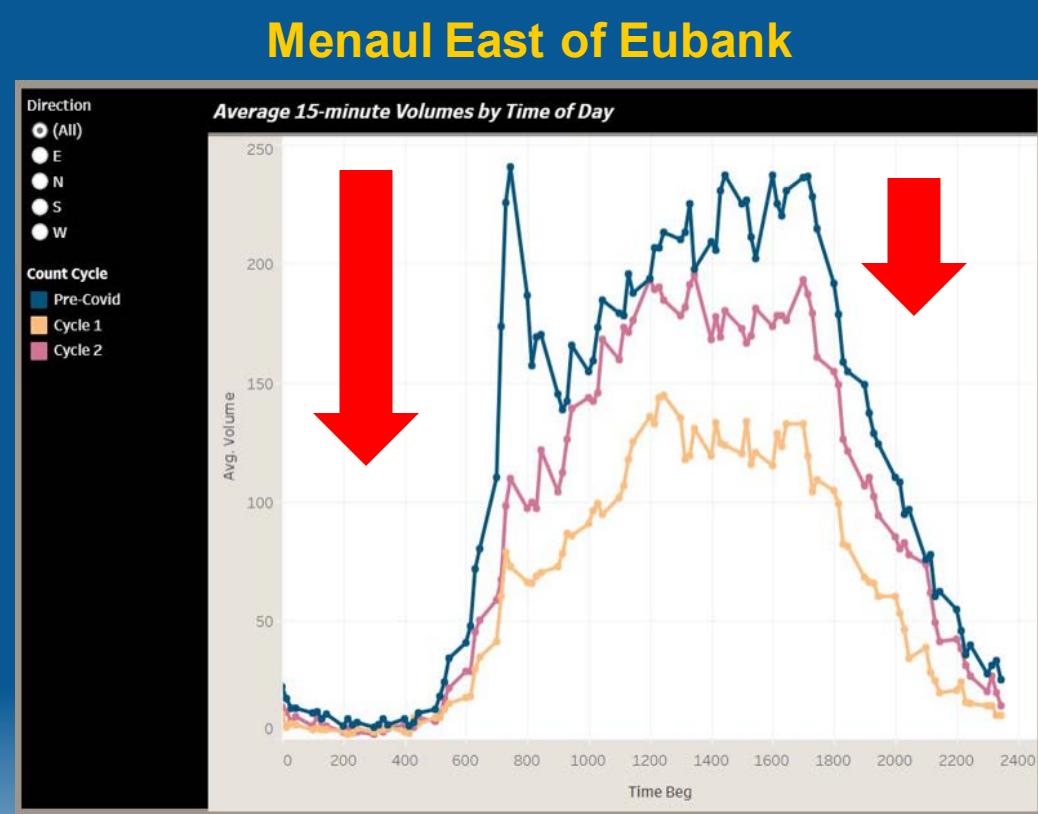
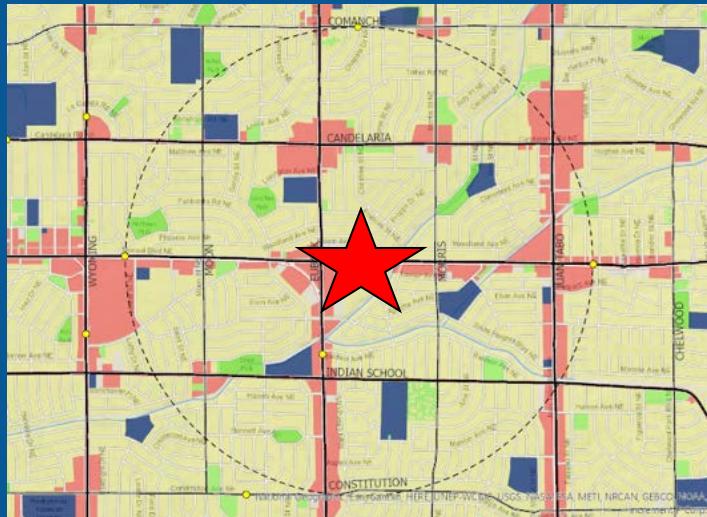


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# Time of Day Impacts.....*Mixed Recovery* Varies by Facility, Adjacent Land Use

Volumes Increasing, mixed return to previous pattern.... Why?

Arterial w/Adjacent Residential,  
AM, PM, and mid-day impacts....

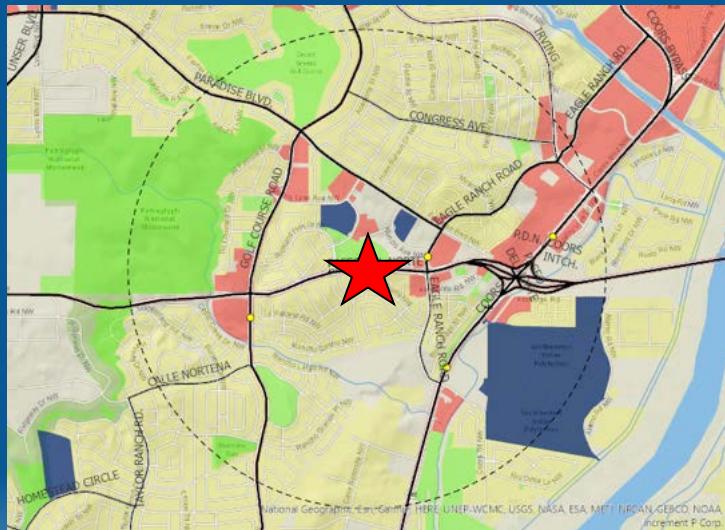


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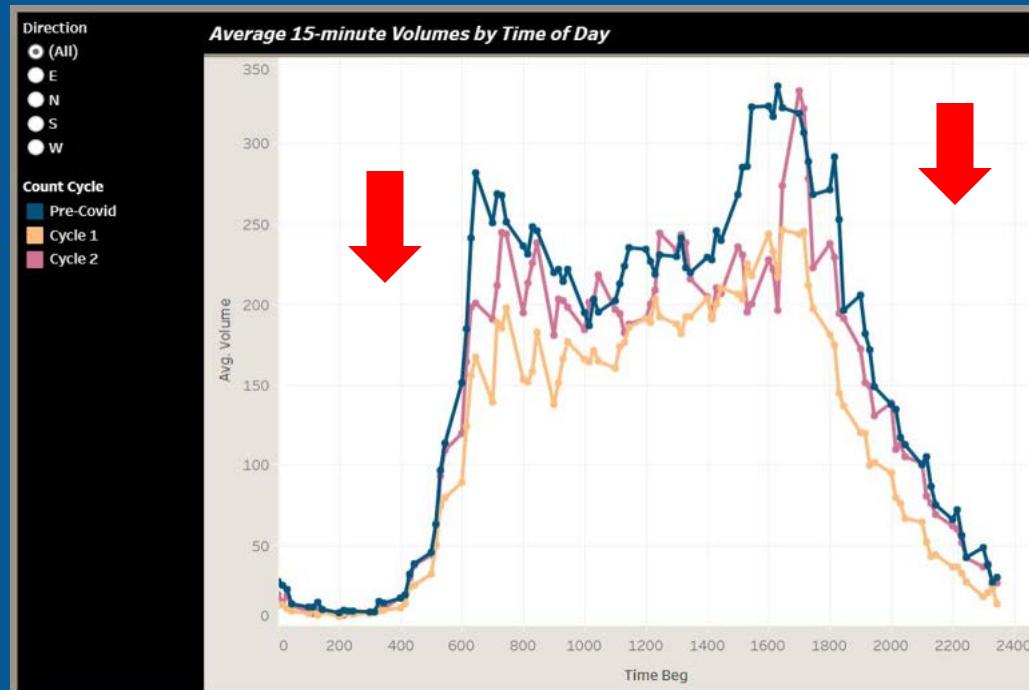
# Time of Day Impacts.....*Mixed Recovery* Varies by Facility, Adjacent Land Use

Volumes Increasing, and approaching previous pattern... Why?

Regional Arterial  
AM, PM, and  
mid-day similar  
reductions....



## Paseo del Norte, West of Eagle Ranch

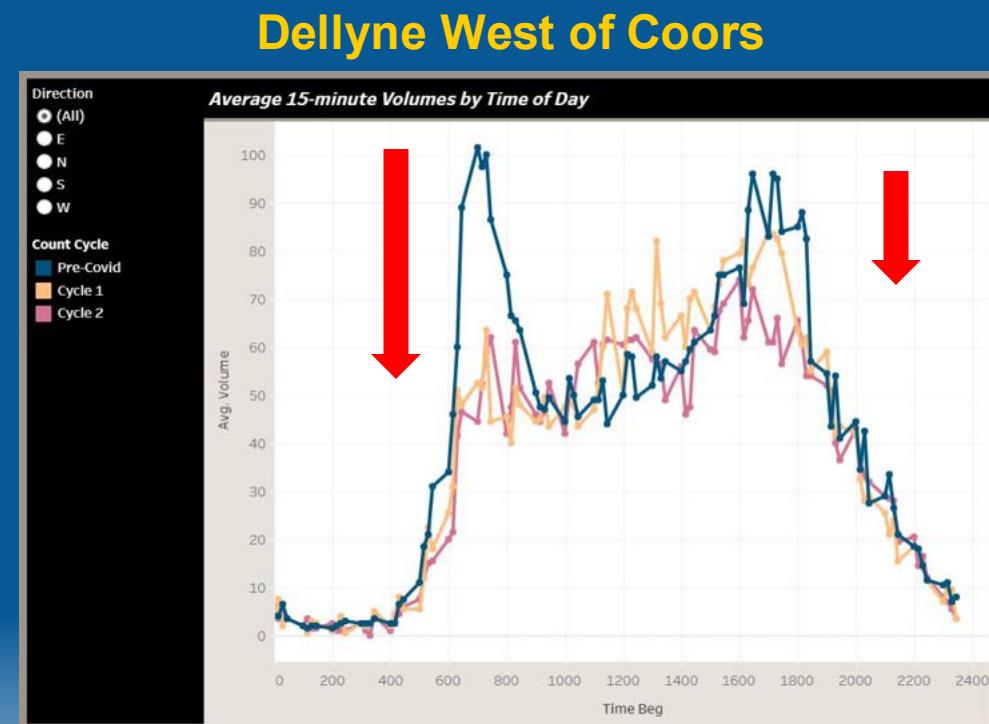
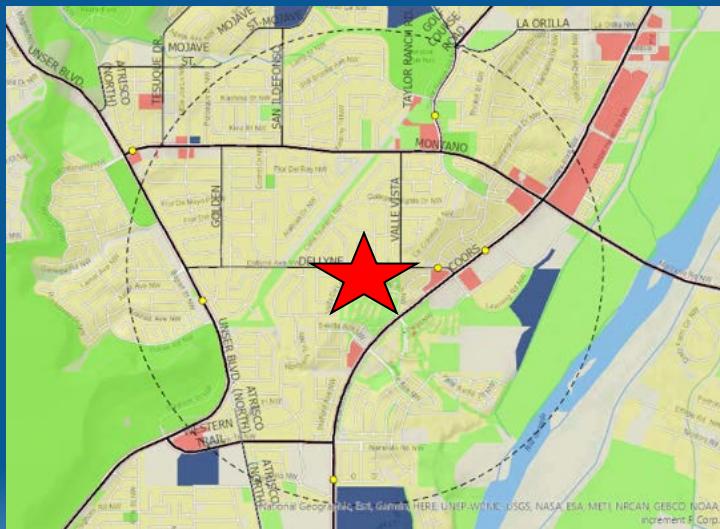


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# Time of Day Impacts.....*Mixed Recovery* Varies by Facility, Adjacent Land Use

Volumes Increasing, another mixed return to previous pattern.... Why?

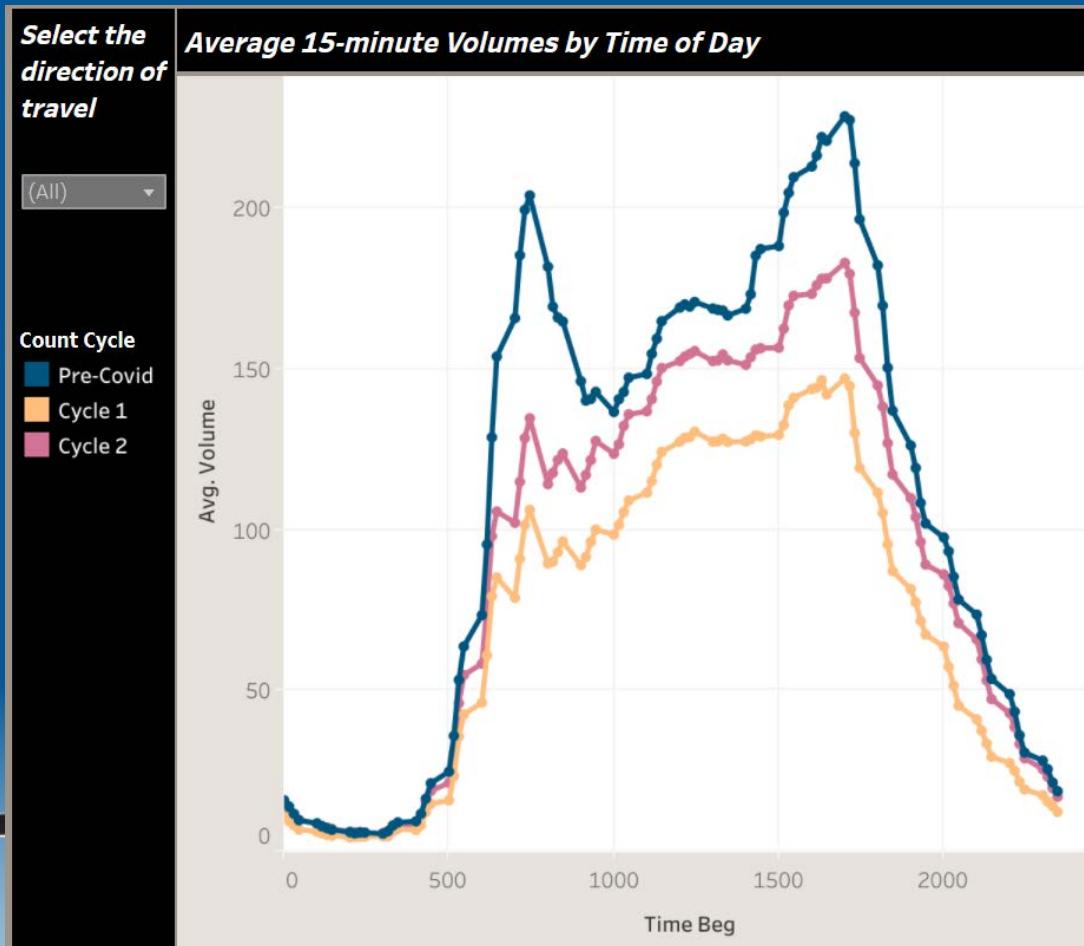
Residential Collector,  
AM, PM, and mid-day  
impacts....



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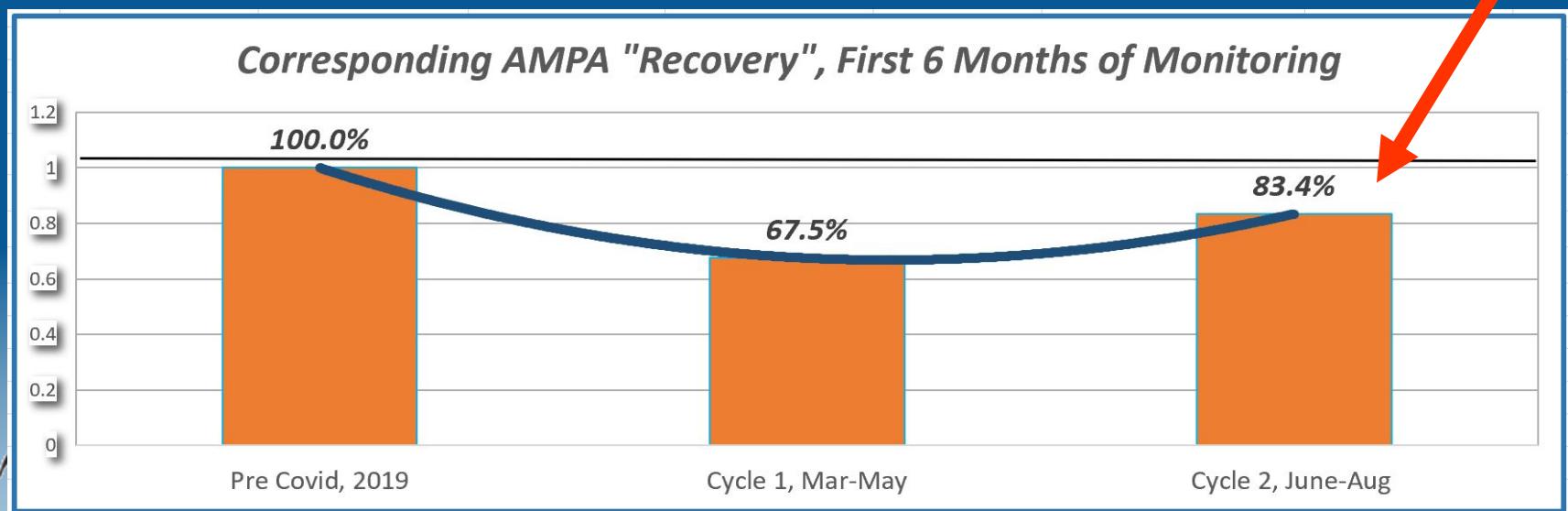
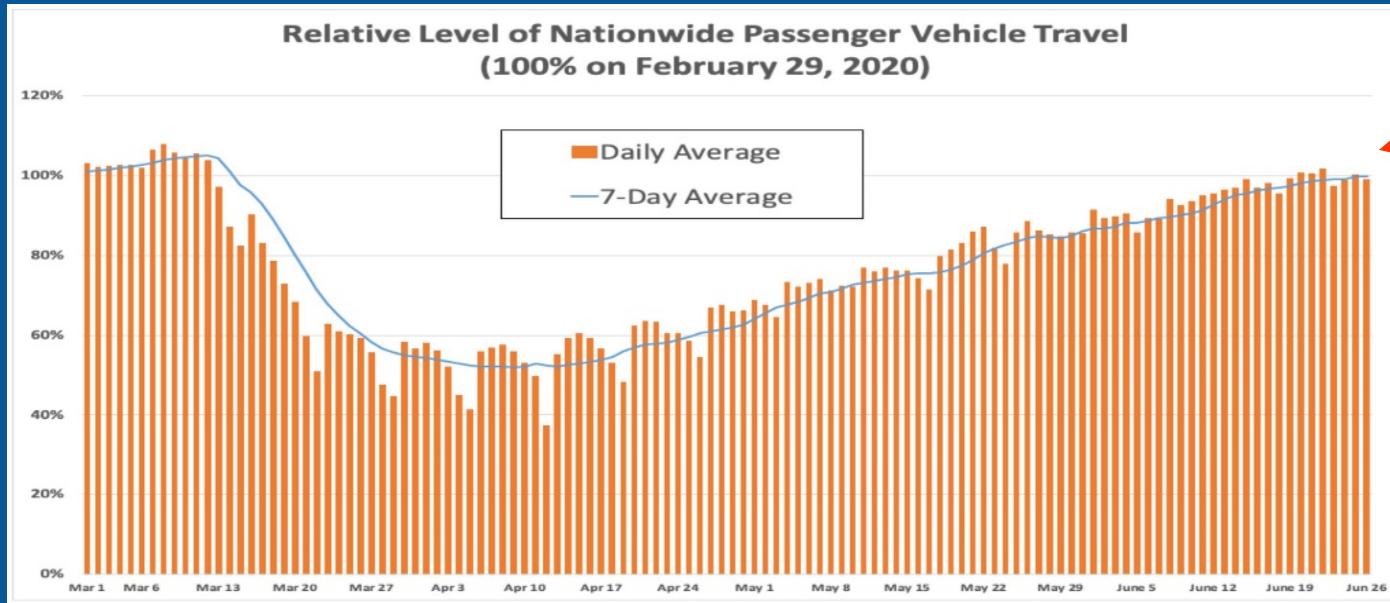
# Conclusion- COVID Impacts- *Slow Recovery*

- Cycle 1 – March 23<sup>rd</sup> to May 28<sup>th</sup>, 32.5% Reduction
- Cycle 2 – June 8<sup>th</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup> , 16.6% Reduction
- Cycle 3 – August ..... Ongoing



# Nationwide v. Local Recovery

## How do We Compare?



# Planning Challenges

- ◆ Monitoring Continues...
- ◆ What/When is our New Normal?
- ◆ Disparate Impacts, by Road Type, Subarea, Time of Day...
  - ◆ *The Land-Use / Transportation Connection*
- ◆ How Will This Affect Planning and Operations, Programming, Local Development Review?
- ◆ Congestion Reduced, Safety Improved (but at the cost of jobs)



# Planning Silver Linings

- ◆ Traffic Reductions, Congestion, and Travel Demand Management – e.g. *Work at Home*
  - ◆ a Taste of What is Possible!
- ◆ Alternative Modes, Incentivizing Shifts
- ◆ Relationship of Jobs and Housing Mix on Trips
- ◆ Correlation with Policy/Infrastructure Programming
- ◆ How do we, as planners, employ effective policy to achieve successful Travel Demand Management?



# Impacts of COVID-19 on Active Transportation in the Albuquerque Metro Area

Tara Cok

Transportation Planner

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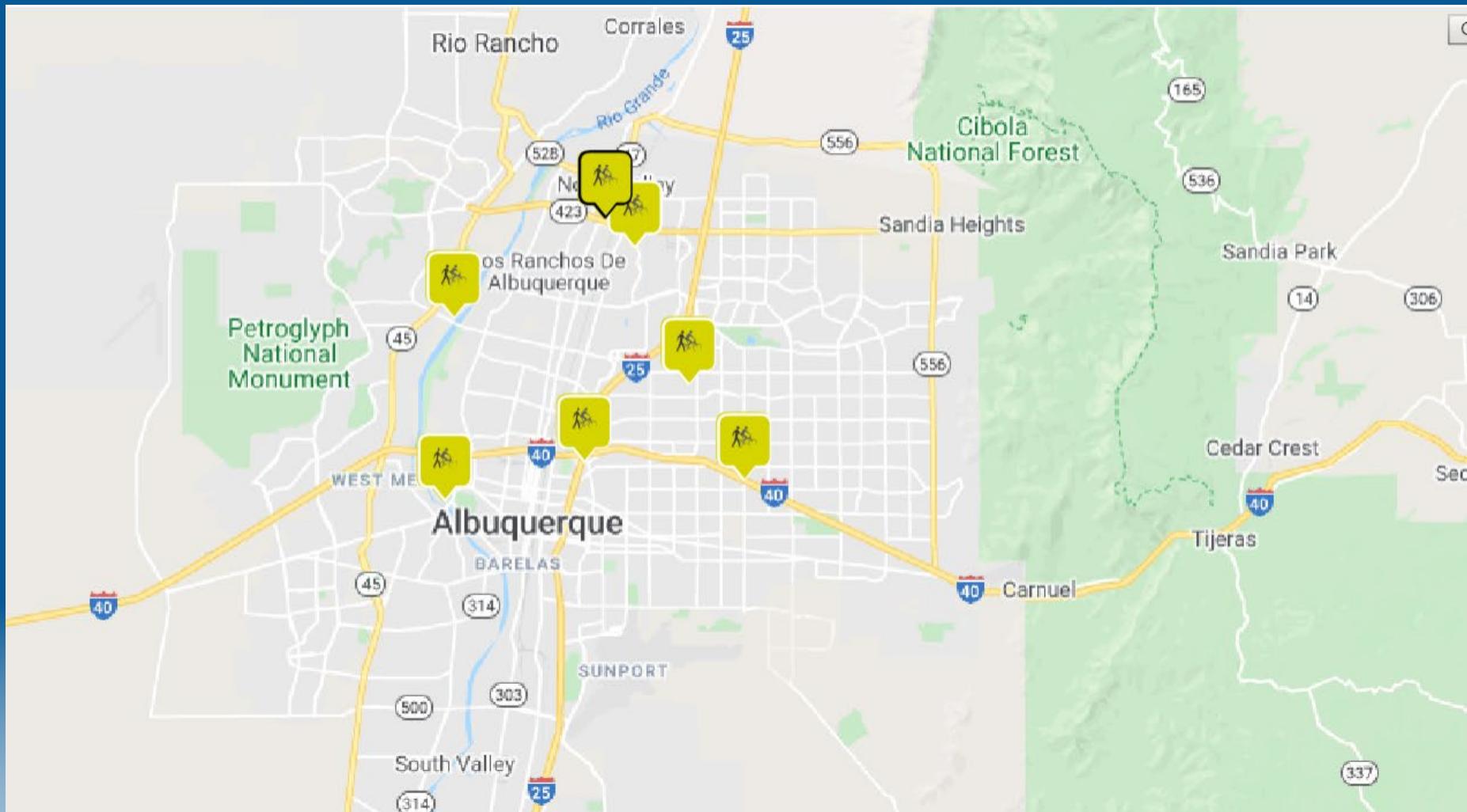
# Biking and Walking Trends during COVID-19

Anecdotally and from our own observations, we've likely seen more people walking and biking where we live. Is this supported in the data?

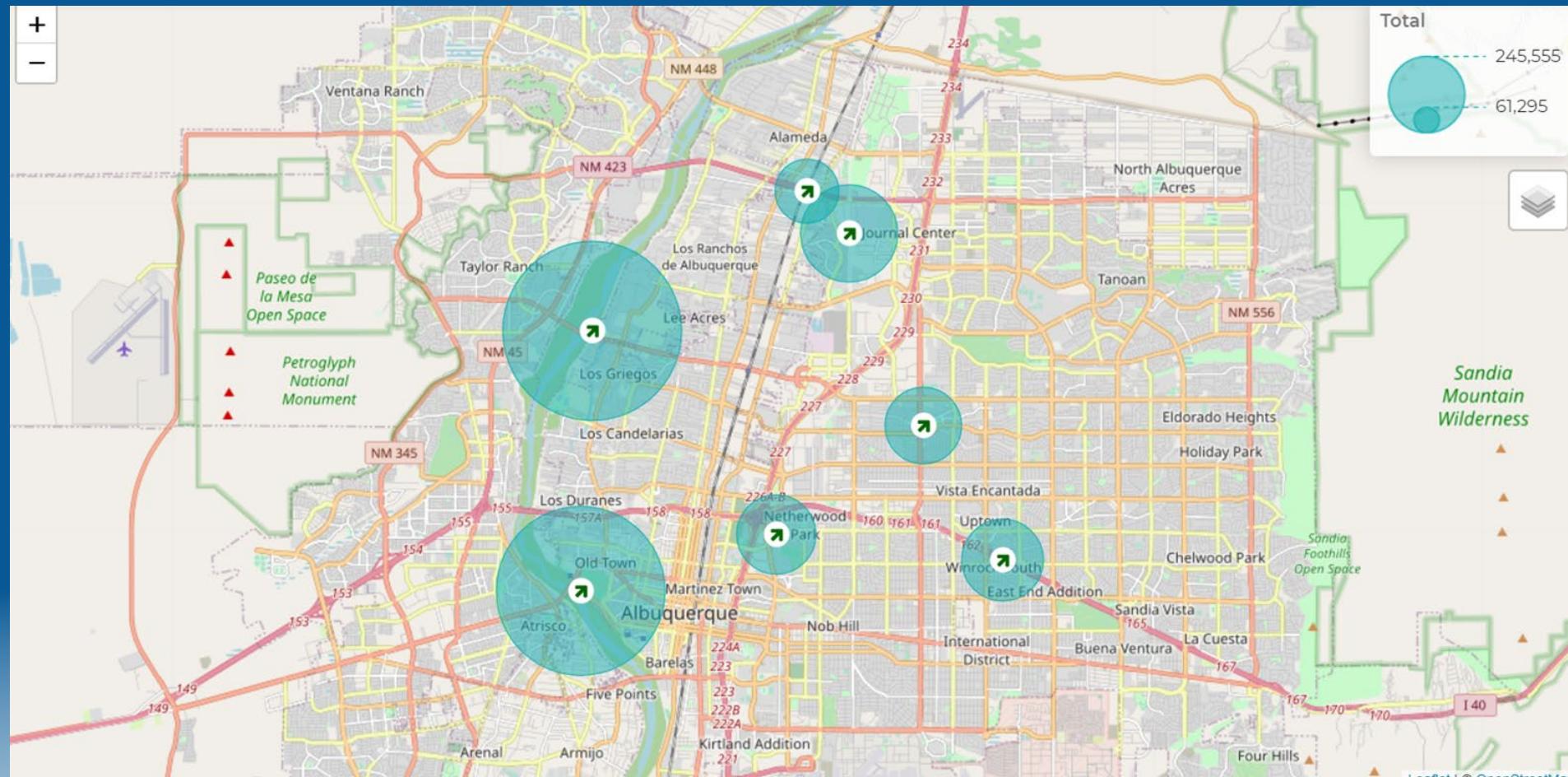
- ◆ Internationally: China, Ireland, Germany, the U.K. have seen increases on their bicycling networks.
- ◆ Nationally: Increases reported in many U.S. cities (New Orleans, Philadelphia, Houston, Los Angeles, etc.).
- ◆ Locally in the Albuquerque metro area, our data is showing increases as well.



# Location of permanent bike/ped counters in Albuquerque



# Total counts at all locations have increased in 2020 compared with 2019



# Timeline of closures and openings in New Mexico

NEW MEXICO 

Select another state

New Mexico

How to read this graphic

New Confirmed Cases

New Deaths

## RECENT OPENING AND CLOSING POLICY DECISIONS

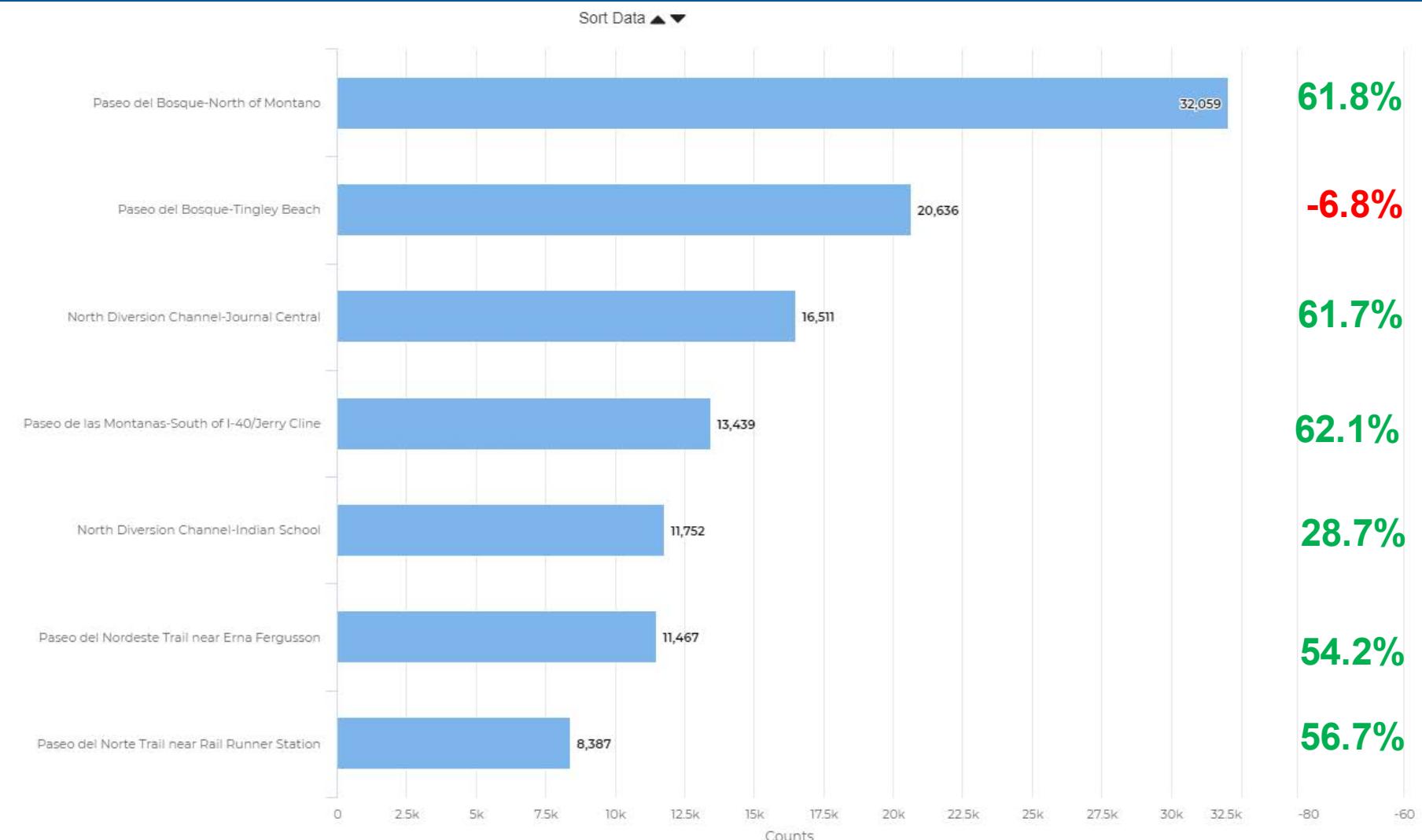
● Restriction/closing   ● Opening   ● Deferring decisions to county   ● Other

← Previous   Q   Next →

New Confirmed Cases



# April 2020 Trail Counts Compared to April 2019



Overall, a 38.7% increase  
in total trail use was seen  
for April 2020 compared  
to April 2019.

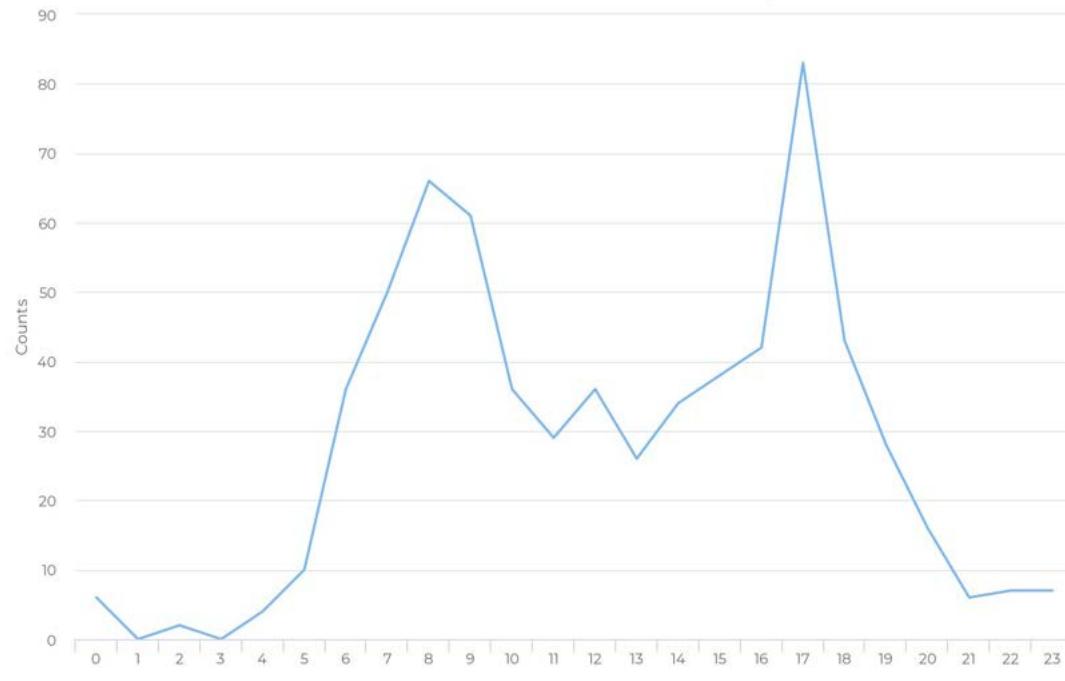


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# We also saw a shift in time of use of the trails

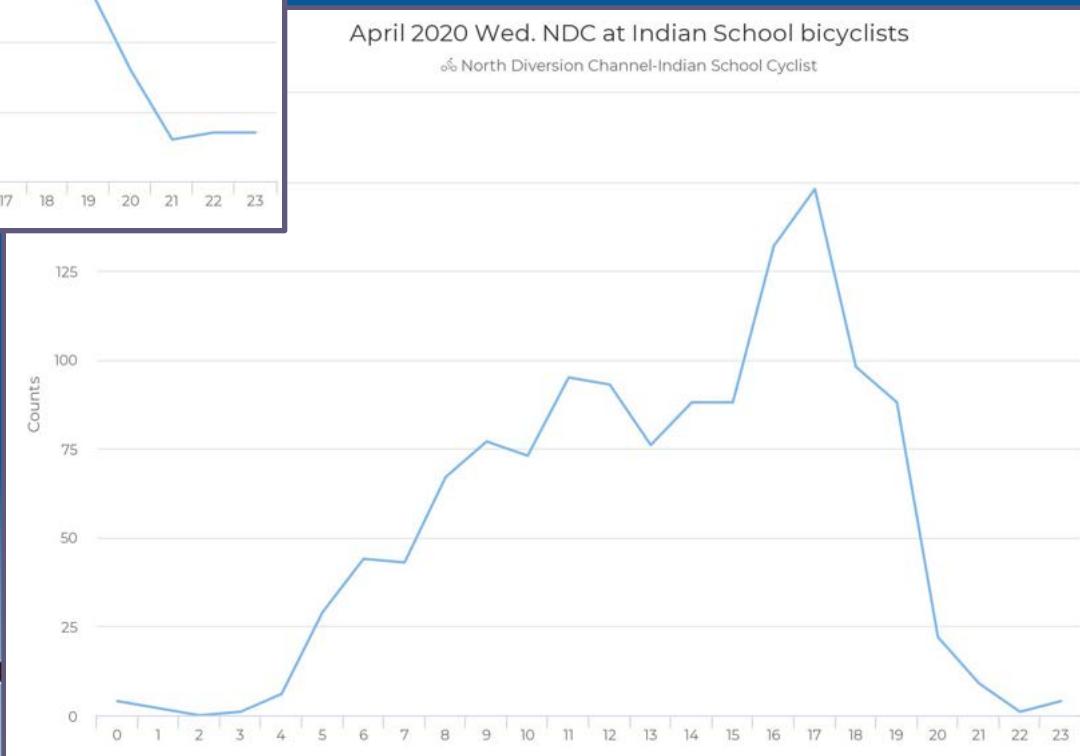
April 2019 Wed. NDC at Indian School bicyclists

○ North Diversion Channel-Indian School Cyclist

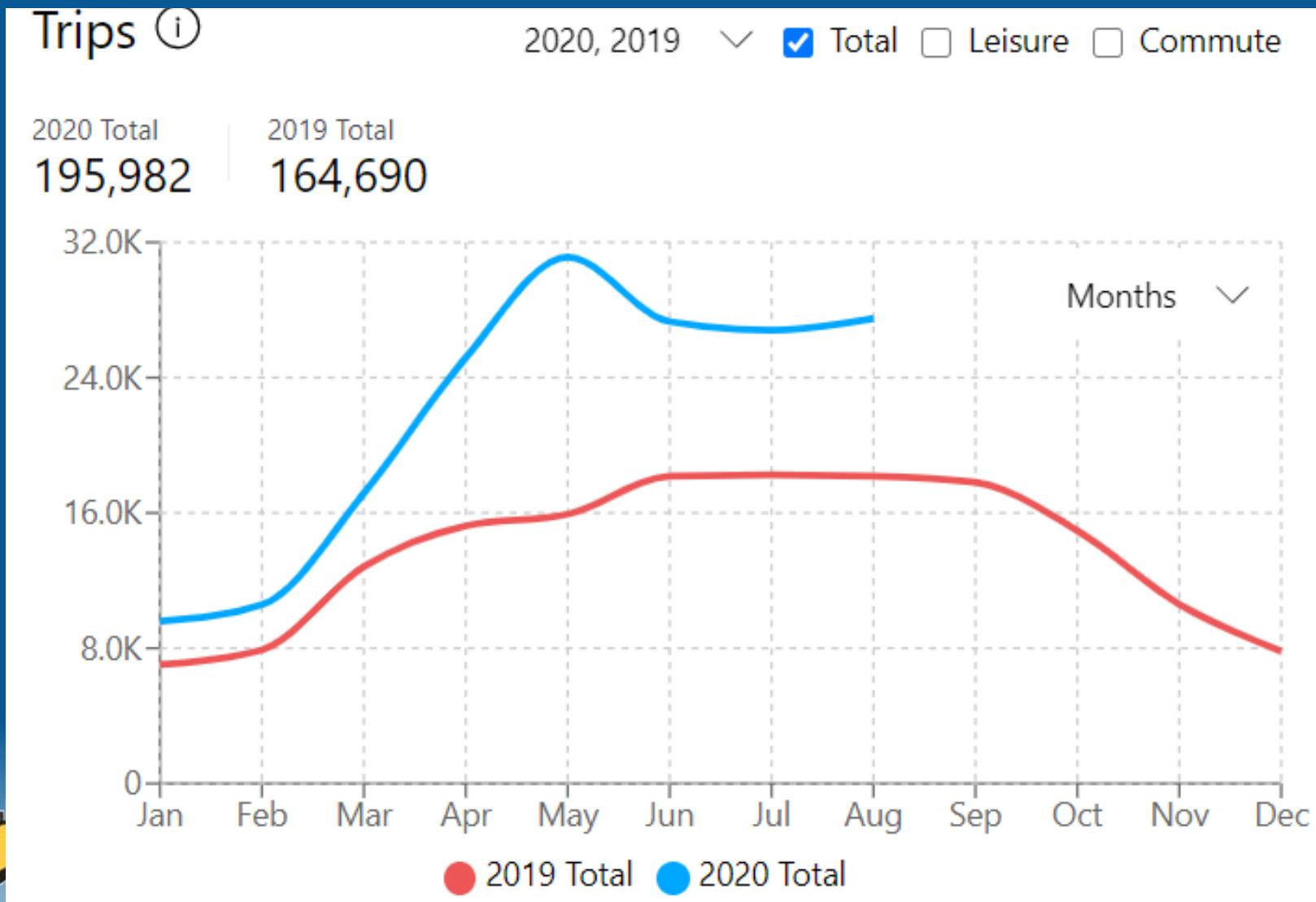


April 2020 Wed. NDC at Indian School bicyclists

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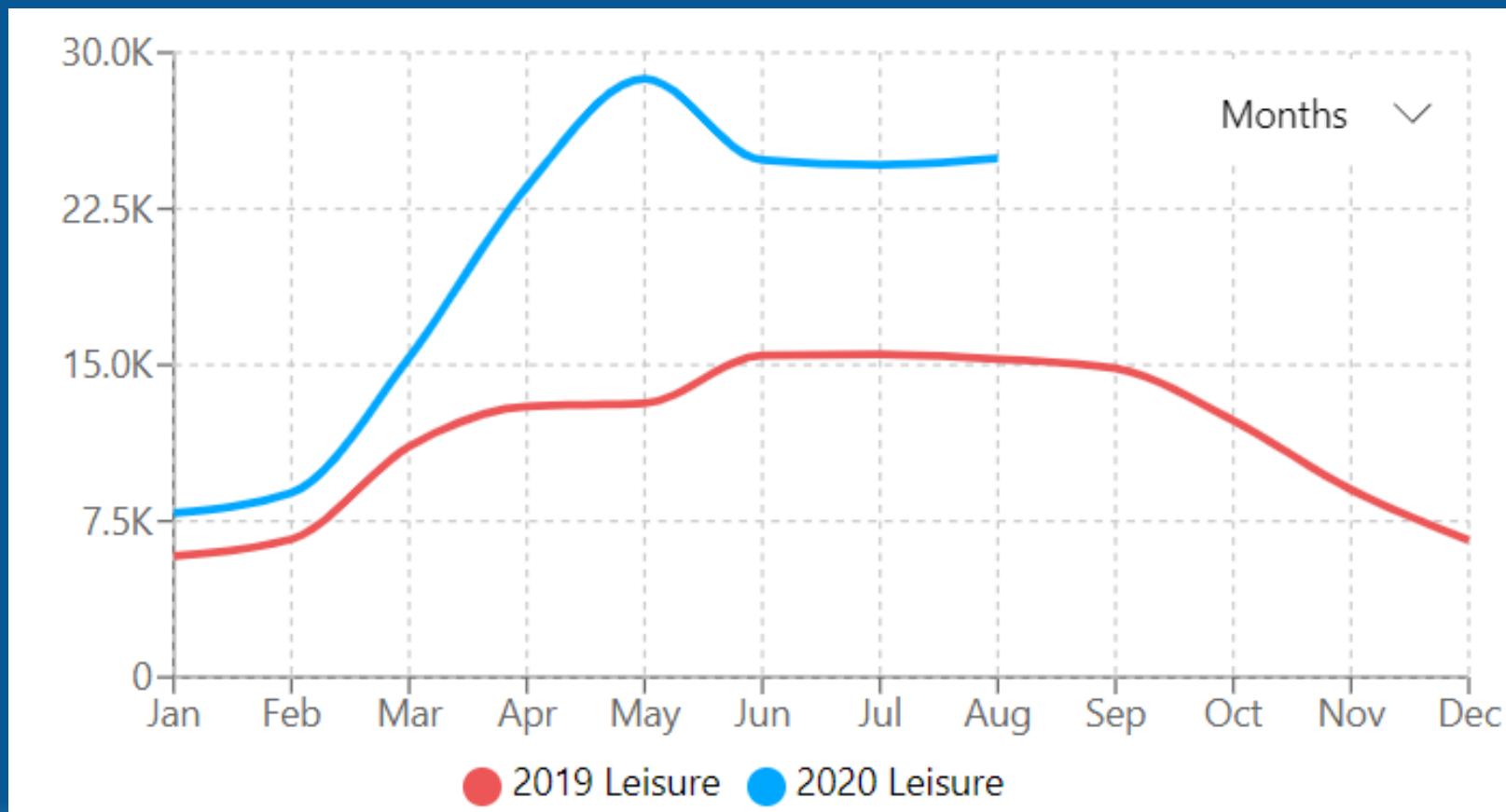


# Strava data also indicates more people are biking



A 72% increase in 2020 compared to 2019

# We see shifts in the type of bike trips being taken

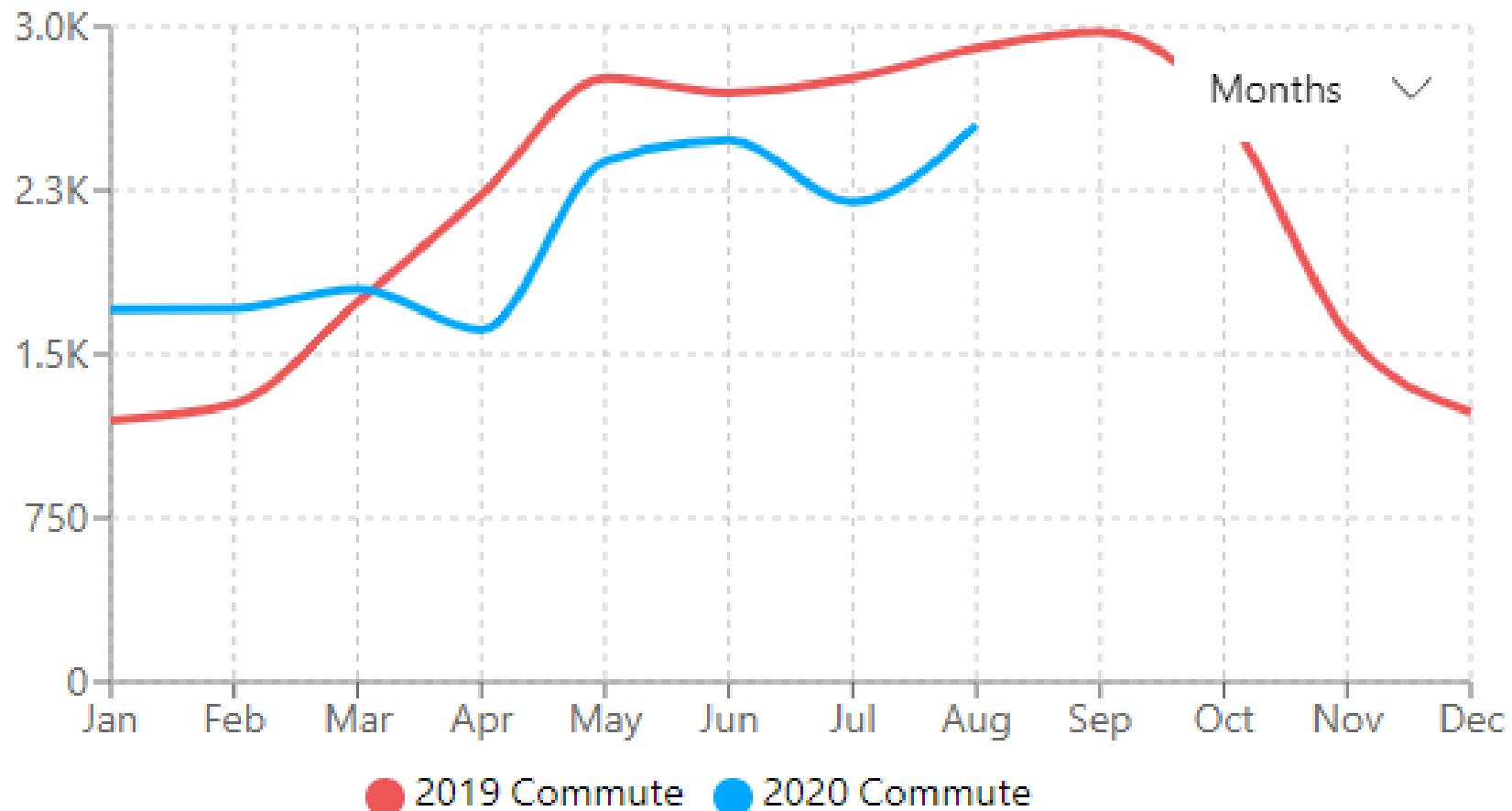


Source: metro.strava.com



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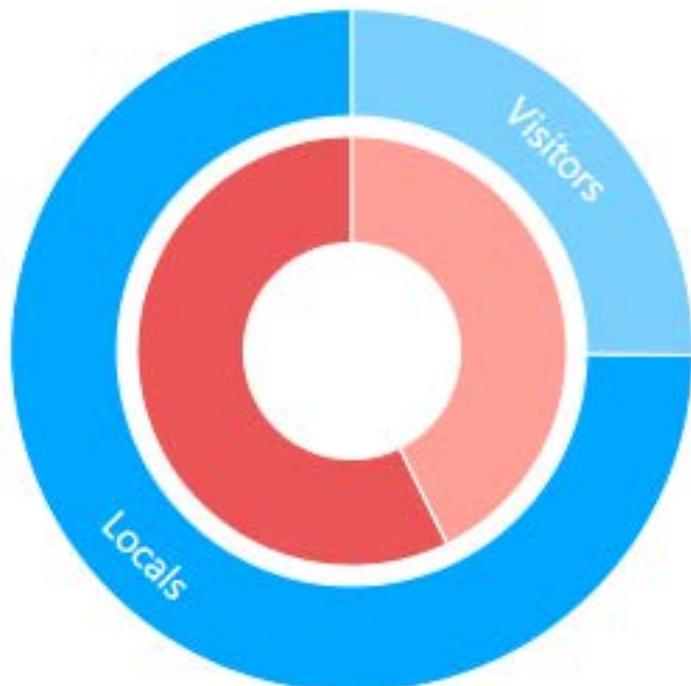
# Bike commute trips in 2019 and 2020



# Fewer visitors to our area in 2020 making the increases all the more impressive

Tourism ⓘ

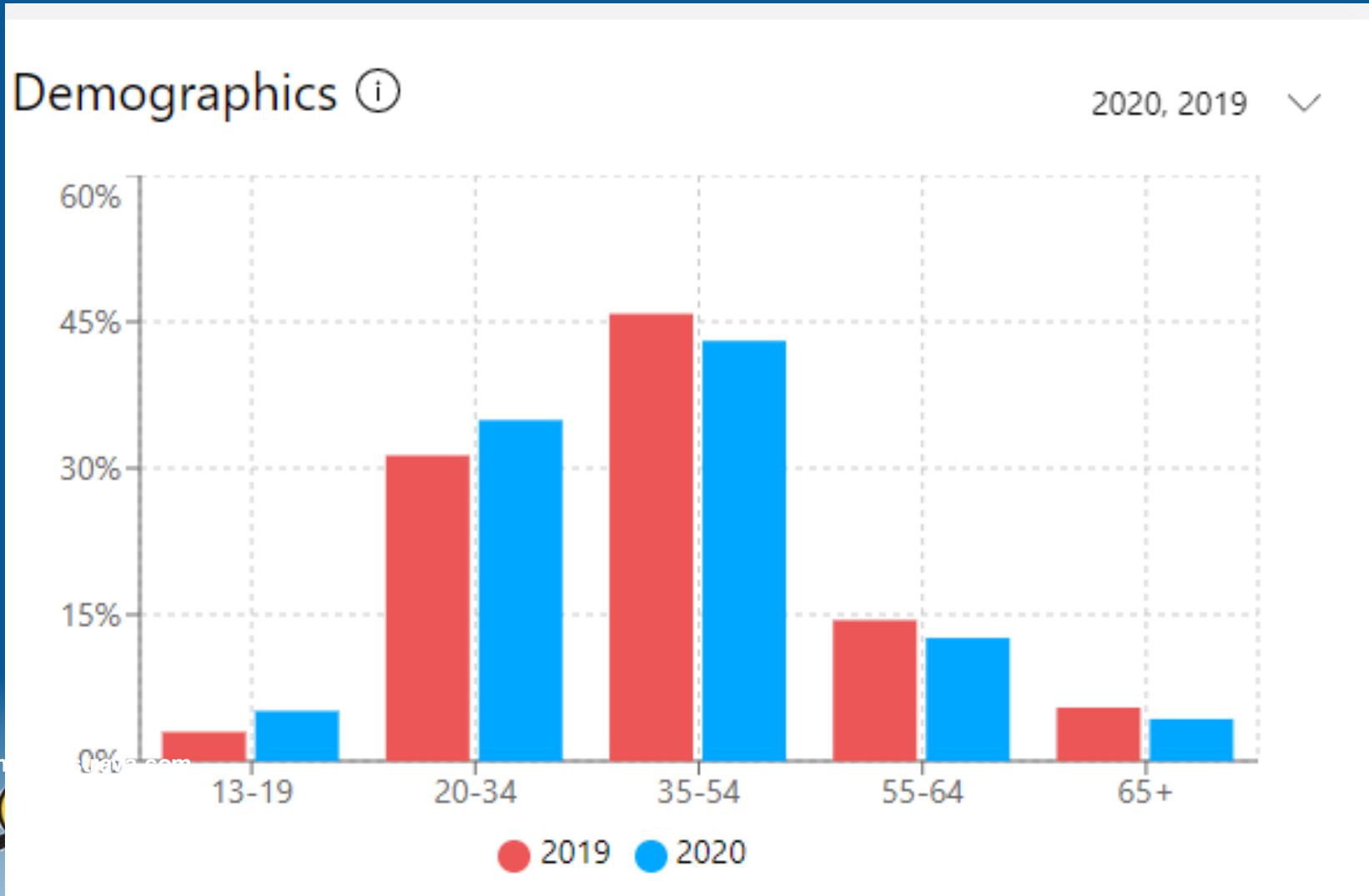
2020, 2019 ▾



Source: metro.strava

● 2019 ● 2020

# The uptick in bicycling is highest among younger age groups



# Strava data for pedestrians also shows an increase

Trips ⓘ

2020, 2019



Total



Leisure



Commute

2020 Total

277,292

2019 Total

196,140

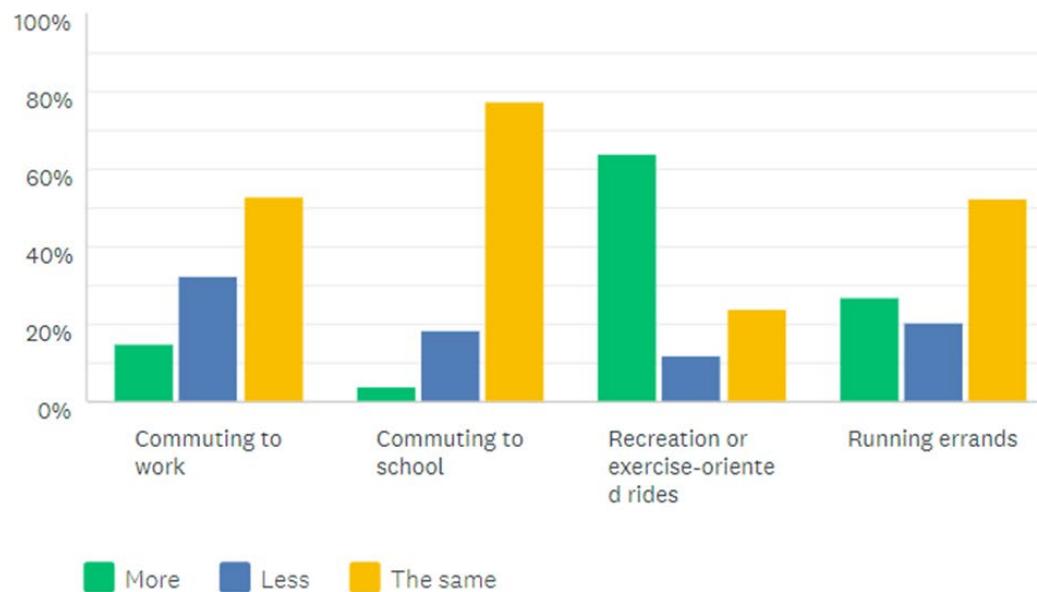


A 115% in pedestrian trips in 2020 compared to 2019.

# Increase in local bike trips for recreation is reflected in a recent survey

Have you been doing more, less, or the same amount of the following types of trips by bike during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answered: 843   Skipped: 49



People reported less commuting to work and school bike trips and more recreation/exercise-oriented and errand based bike trips.



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# How do we build off this momentum?

- ◆ Residents got a taste of how great biking and walking can feel, a silver lining of the pandemic. Building on this new and renewed interest can benefit our communities.
- ◆ It is important to find out why exactly people are walking/biking more and build on that.

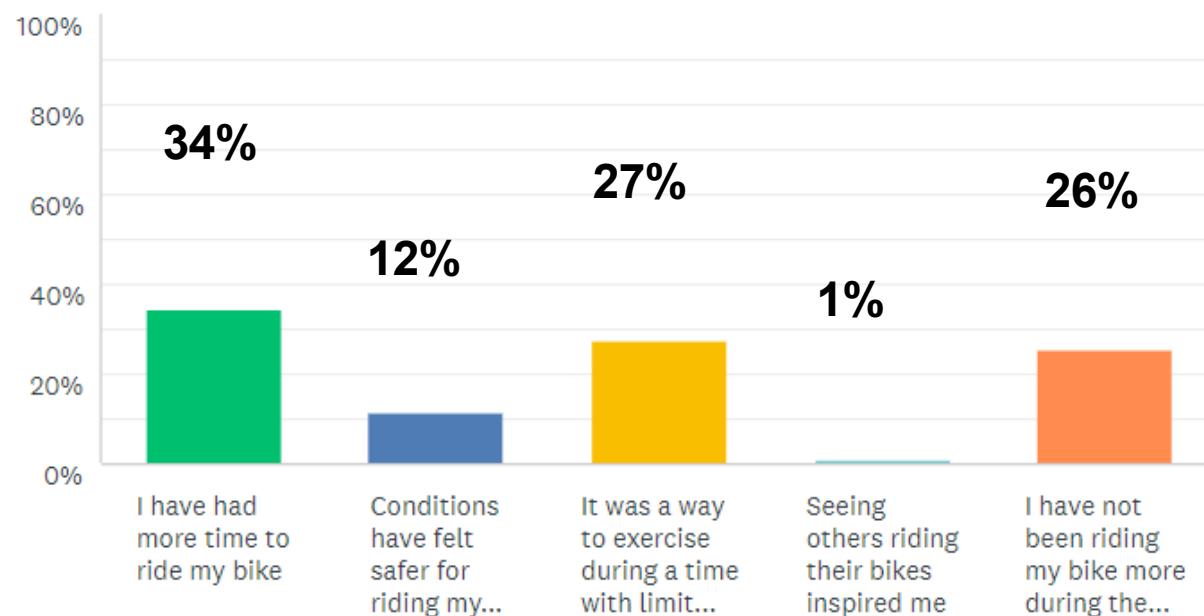


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# Our recent bike to work day survey gives us some ideas on why people have been riding and walking

If you have been riding your bike more during the COVID-19 pandemic, what would you say is the main reason for this?

Answered: 822   Skipped: 71



# Bike/ped use on the trails compared to vehicle traffic counts

Period 1

March 23 to May 28, 2020



-32.5%  
Vehicle  
Counts

+50%  
Bike/Walk  
on Trails



Period 2

June 8 to August 20, 2020



-16.6%  
Vehicle  
Counts

+32%  
Bike/Walk  
on Trails



# Transportation Planning Responses to COVID-19

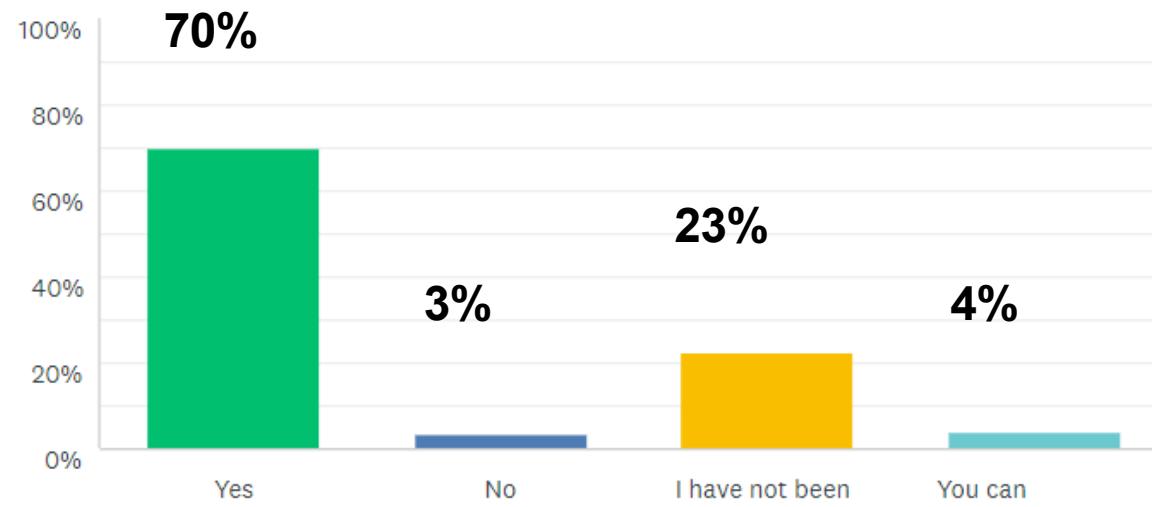
- ◆ Internationally and nationally: closed streets and “slow streets” types of programs, installation of new bike facilities, etc.
- ◆ Locally in the Albuquerque Metro Area: the City of Albuquerque has adopted an Active Streets Ordinance; the City’s bike to work day and annual open streets events have shifted to virtual formats for 2020.



# Silver Lining: Survey respondents overwhelmingly report they anticipate riding their bikes more after the pandemic

If you have been riding your bike more since the COVID-19 pandemic, do you anticipate that you will continue to ride your bike more after the pandemic is over/things return to more normal conditions?

Answered: 828   Skipped: 65



Source: surveymonkey.com results for BikeThruBurque event

# Strategies for Planners

- ◆ See this experience as an **opportunity** to boldly **reconsider how our streets serve and should serve all users and the community**;
- ◆ **Re-allocate roadway space to non-motorized uses** (expanding sidewalks, installing temporary bike lanes, closing streets temporarily or permanently, sharing streets, etc.);
- ◆ Encourage and **support continued bicycling and walking** (through virtual bike and ped events, etc.);
- ◆ **Monitor use, gather data and publicize any increases** to encourage more people to bike and walk and help get the attention of elected officials and policy makers (helps make a case for increased funding).



# Thank you! Questions?



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