



*New Mexico* DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE



New Mexico Department of Transportation's

# Guide to Public Involvement

A practical resource guide to promote consistency, compliance, and thoughtful planning for public involvement

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# Introduction



Public involvement is a cornerstone of project delivery. Not only is the process of engaging the public early and throughout a transportation project required under environmental law, but the deployment of thoughtful public involvement also leads to outcomes which are more inclusive of community and stakeholder perspectives.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) delivers projects in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) and related federal and state laws and regulations that are in place to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts caused by transportation projects. In accordance with NEPA, public involvement is required as a core component of project delivery and supports NMDOT's core values of accountability and communication.

This Guide to Public Involvement ("guide") provides practical guidance on considerations and procedures for planning, conducting, and recording public involvement. The goal is to provide a framework for thoughtful public involvement planning while promoting consistency for projects advancing through the design phase. All project contexts are different and require varying levels and methods of engagement, however, this guidance should be used as a starting point for all public involvement for projects delivered by the NMDOT. With an understanding that there is no silver bullet for project engagement, this guidance is not intended to deter creativity on behalf of project teams, and teams are encouraged to continually adapt and evolve engagement processes based on the evaluation of previously



## Involvement vs. Engagement:

Throughout this guide, you will see these words intentionally used interchangeably. NEPA identifies Public Involvement as the necessary process to include the community in project planning. In modern practice, however, practitioners have adopted Public Engagement as the new standard language. This is because engagement implies active, meaningful, and ongoing participation as opposed to more passive project involvement or outreach.

## Introduction (cont.)

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The guide is organized into four sections focusing on different elements of public involvement planning and delivery:



**Public Involvement Planning**



**Conducting Public Involvement**



**Follow-up Documentation**



**Roles & Responsibilities**



This is not intended to be a comprehensive guide for project delivery, and project teams should refer to additional resources including NMDOT's Location Study Procedures, Context Sensitive Solutions & Design Directive (IDD-2006-08) and other guidance documents in developing a project delivery strategy.

utilized tactics, recommendations from the communities and stakeholders themselves, and the emergence of new technologies that make engagement more inclusive and comprehensive.

The NMDOT Guide to Public Involvement is intended for use by NMDOT and consultant staff involved in the development and implementation of Public Involvement activities and engagement programs associated with

project planning and development in accordance with the NMDOT Location Study Procedures. The guide will assist NMDOT staff, project managers, the project development team, and Public Information Officers (PIOs) in identifying the means, methods, and opportunities to solicit and gather input and foster meaningful collaboration as part of a project's decision-making process.



# Public Involvement Planning

Thorough planning prior to conducting public involvement can help avoid confusion.

Prior to engaging the public, NMDOT project team members should conduct research early in the project development process to understand procedural and documentation requirements associated with the project and identify the makeup of the community and stakeholders. It is also critical to determine the strategies and tools that would be most effective in securing the active engagement of key stakeholders and provide the widest and most meaningful reach possible to the public.

Thorough planning prior to conducting public involvement can help avoid confusion amongst team members and assist in putting forward a methodical approach to project delivery with the community and stakeholders being brought along at every step. This, in turn, helps to establish a common understanding among the communities being served or impacted by the project and can lead to the identification of potential issues and constraints early on. Early communication helps avoid project delays and gives teams ample time to prepare mitigation and avoidance strategies while also delivering the best outcomes for the communities.



## A: Budgeting and Scoping Public Involvement

This guide will help team members gain an understanding of required activities and effective practices when considering a comprehensive public involvement plan. When scoping as part of project initiation and contract negotiation, the consultant project manager and consultant environmental lead should work closely with the NMDOT district engineer, environmental staff, and PIO to identify required activities, anticipated audiences, and context-specific services that can be implemented to increase engagement. It is important to note that minimum requirements for engagement on projects are not intended to cover all activities for successful engagement but instead act as a basis to build a foundation, which depend on the scope and scale of any given project.

## B: The Purpose of Public Involvement

Public Involvement is a pivotal part of any publicly funded project. NMDOT uses the same taxpayer funded source to move a project through the planning, study, design, and construction phases, so it is important for state staff and hired consultants to do everything possible to be good stewards of public funding and work to deliver projects that serve in the public interest.

Public involvement is a legal requirement under NEPA and other environmental laws, so it is crucial to build robust engagement programs. If a project receives a legal challenge and the agency can't show there was adequate public notice and opportunities for input, there could be serious consequences including the halting of project delivery.

Creating robust engagement plans is also the right thing to do. Good design only comes when consulting the end-users of the product; for transportation projects this means gathering input from the traveling public, the community, and stakeholders. Therefore, it is critical that methods for gathering public input be thoughtfully planned and tailored to the needs of the affected communities through all phases of the project.



### LISTENING AND TRUSTBUILDING

Although public involvement is a legal requirement for transportation projects, there are many benefits that come with actively engaging the communities being served or impacted by a project. Through the active listening process, team members can gather diverse perspectives that influence project design decisions and can help create trust between the agency, project team, community members and stakeholders.

Active listening creates a way for team members to receive input without predetermined outcomes clouding conversations between the community and a project team. One of the common complaints expressed by some members of the community is feeling as though the agency has already decided what the outcomes will be for a project before conducting engagement. Project teams can avoid this perception by facilitating active listening in engagement. This can be done by offering several opportunities for open-ended input, allowing more time at public meetings for question-and-answer sessions (Q&A) than for presentations, continuously and clearly defining the current phase of projects and actively soliciting feedback instead of having a one-way dialogue.

Establishing and maintaining trust is a process that takes time and effort, and project team members should not begin the engagement process assuming that the public will have an inherent trust for the way the project is being developed and delivered. Project teams must help to build and maintain the public's trust through deliberate, meaningful engagement and inclusion.





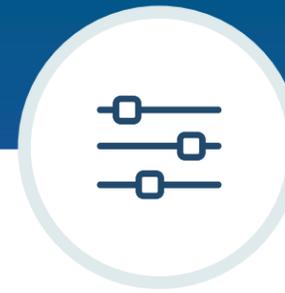
## EQUITABLE ENGAGEMENT

Equity is a concept grounded in history that acknowledges past injustices and unfair treatment of historically underserved communities and communities of color which has led to the development of a system that does not work equally for all people.

NMDOT adopts community-driven planning processes that empower underserved and marginalized populations affected by projects in an attempt to help correct historic injustices and foster a more equitable future. To help engage underserved and marginalized populations it is important to 1) create topic literacy so the community can understand and contribute input on logistics and design, 2) develop partnerships with community-based and non-governmental organizations, and 3) create campaigns to ensure project awareness and accessibility.

New Mexico's melting pot of diverse backgrounds and languages should not be a barrier to civic participation. Project team members should translate materials and presentations based on the unique makeup of different communities, but also understand that language is only one aspect of culture. Creating partnerships with community-based organizations that engage with underserved populations can help to facilitate meetings in areas where underserved populations are in their comfort zones and with authorities they trust.

Project teams should take special care to tailor engagement strategies to the needs of traditionally underserved populations.



## RECORDING ENGAGEMENT METRICS

Recording the quantitative and qualitative results of the public engagement process is a critical element of a comprehensive public involvement program. Recording results of the engagement process is not only required under NEPA, but it also helps project teams understand which strategies do work and don't work when engaging certain communities, and this information can be used to improve future project delivery.

### Quantitative metrics can include:

- Visibility/reach
- Registrations and attendance
- Activity
- User-generated Content (UGC)
- Retention

### Qualitative Metrics can include:

- Public sentiment
- Subjects/Themes of discussion



The statement “this is the way we have always done public engagement” is not a comforting sentiment and is instead a red flag for reassessment.

It is important for project teams to strive for continual improvement in engagement and be responsive to new technologies and metrics that become available as time carries on. Project teams should understand that the way public engagement was conducted two, five, or 10 years ago is likely in need of improvement. The statement “this is the way we have always done public engagement” is not a comforting sentiment and is instead a red flag for reassessment.

# Requirements for Public Involvement



Study & Design  
Discovery



Public  
Comments



Final  
Decision

## WHAT IS NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to seek input from stakeholders and the public throughout the project development process and develop alternatives for consideration where practicable. The following elements are part of the NMDOT's NEPA process.

## NEPA ELEMENTS:

- I. PHASE 1-A/B Study (Corridor or Alignment)
- II. PHASE 1-C Environmental Documentation and Processing
- III. Categorical Exclusions
- IV. Programmatic CE
- V. Environmental Assessment (EA)/ Finding of No Significant Impact
- VI. Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision
- VII. Alternate Project Delivery Methods

## I. PHASE 1-A/B Study (Corridor or Alignment)

While the type of study may vary, the general approach is the same. Both alignment and corridor studies address the same general steps including purpose and need, improvement alternatives, initial environmental effects, and agency coordination and public involvement. The level of environmental effort and processing generally differs between alignment and corridor studies. Because alignment studies typically involve less complex actions and a smaller amount of right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and relocations, the

magnitude of environmental impacts are generally minor.

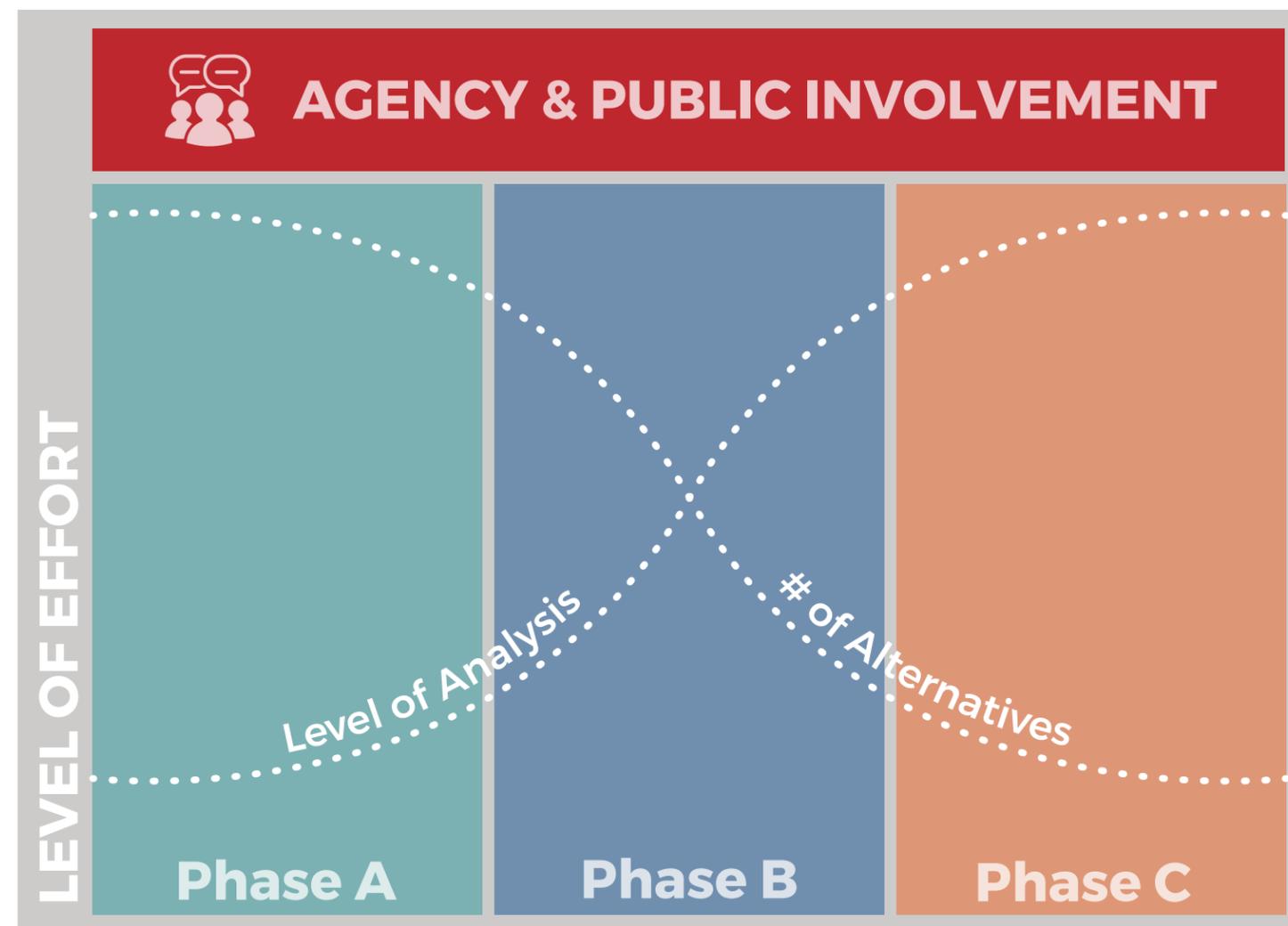
Both alignment and corridor studies are part of Phase I of the NMDOT's project development process, as outlined in the NMDOT Location Study Procedures. The Phase I study phase is separated into two distinct phases—commonly referred to as Phases I-A and I-B (or simply A and B). The study phases serve to develop, evaluate, and refine the range of possible alternatives to achieve the need for an action. The next phase subsequent to the A & B study phases,

Phase I-C, involves the preparation of a NEPA-compliant document in accordance with federal, state, and local laws.

Public and stakeholder involvement are a crucial element of each phase of the alignment/corridor study process and must begin at the start of Phase I-A and continue through Phase I-C. NMDOT often conducts Phases I-A and I-B as a single effort, especially those with a very limited range of improvement alternatives; however, it is important to achieve the objectives of each distinct phase and document this approach. Phase I-B evaluates and refines the alternatives advanced from Phase I-A. Important elements of Phase I-A & B are: (1) development and implementation of Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)-based agency coordination; (2) a public involvement program; and (3) determining the appropriate level of effort for subsequent environmental documentation and processing. Determining the outreach methods, approach, and level of effort depend on the project and community context as well as the number of potential alternatives being considered in both Phase I-A and Phase I-B (**Figure 1.3**). The number and timing of public and stakeholder meetings will vary on a project-by-project basis. Coordination with affected agencies and involvement of the public must be proactive, comprehensive, and continuous through the project development process.

A properly designed and implemented public engagement strategy should follow the NMDOT CSS Public Involvement Plan (PIP) approach to ensure that: (1) the needs and concerns of affected agencies, stakeholders, and the general public are understood and fully considered (2) interested groups and persons are involved in key decisions; and (3) the public is informed of key decisions and progress of the study.

The public engagement team should hold at least one public meeting early in the study process. A second public meeting should be considered toward the end of the study to present the preliminary findings of the detailed analysis, the alternative(s) recommended, and to solicit public comments before a final decision is made on the study phase recommendations. Briefings to local officials, policy boards, community associations, or other groups having an interest in the study should also be provided.



**Figure 1-3. Level of effort: the amount of analysis increases as the number of alternatives is reduced. The effort for public involvement remains high throughout the study process.**

## II. PHASE 1-C ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION AND PROCESSING



Phase I-C is the Environmental Documentation and Processing phase of the NMDOT's project development process, as outlined in the NMDOT Location Study Procedures. During this phase, the preferred alternative identified at the conclusion of the study phase is advanced.

For the vast majority of projects, this phase will include the preparation of a Categorical Exclusion (CE). This type of NEPA document is used for actions that, based on past experience with similar actions, do not involve significant environmental impacts or unusual circumstances. More complex projects may require an Environmental

Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and less complex projects may qualify for a Programmatic CE, which is project specific.

Regardless of the NEPA level of effort, affected and interested agencies, stakeholders, affected property owners, and the general public should be consulted about the process. The level of public involvement during Phase I-C will depend on the information compiled in Phase I-A/B and the potential for the Action Alternative to affect individuals and the general public and the degree to which they are affected.

## III. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

In accordance with guidance from Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), NEPA compliance begins at a CE level of effort. The NMDOT uses two different levels of documentation for the range of actions that qualify as a CE during Phase IC: (1) a CE checklist supported by an evaluation of environmental, social, economic, and cultural factors; or (2) programmatic CEs which require limited investigations based on archival research.

During the preparation of a CE for federal-aid projects, there can be variability in the public engagement approach and the need for a public meeting and 30-day comment period should be reviewed on a project-by-project basis. The need for informing the public and offering opportunities to participate in the decision-making process remains the same; however, the approach is scaled to the complexities of the alternative being advanced, the level of public interest and potential controversy, and the context of the project. Any action with substantial public controversy cannot be authorized using a CE and becomes elevated to an EA for NEPA compliance.

## IV. CE CHECKLIST

Projects involving a CE Checklist often include some level of public engagement or a reasonable opportunity for public participation. This serves to confirm a lack of public controversy and applicability for the project to be authorized with a CE. A 30-day public review or comment period is a standard duration for NEPA compliance; however, the project team could consider a lesser (e.g., 15-day) or greater (e.g., 45-day) duration based on the context and needs of the project. Documentation of the public engagement process and public meeting(s) must be filed in the NEPA Administrative Record. NMDOT may make a CE approval on behalf of FHWA, and the agency's decision does not require an additional 30-day public period.

## V. PROGRAMMATIC CE

Certain projects meet the conditions stipulated in the Programmatic Agreement between the FHWA New Mexico Division and the NMDOT Regarding the Processing of Actions Classified as CEs for Federal-Aid Highway Projects can be approved under a Programmatic CE. These project actions commonly involve limited new disturbance to the human and natural environment (e.g., mill and inlay, geotechnical soil boring, in-kind replacement of a drainage structure). Public engagement or a reasonable opportunity for public participation activities are typically not needed under Programmatic CEs.

## VI. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)/FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

EAs are prepared for proposed actions with environmental impacts that cannot qualify for a CE level of environmental clearance. This situation can arise due to a number of factors. During the preparation of the EA, a public meeting and/or public hearing is required with a 30-day public comment period. Documentation of the public engagement process and public meeting must be filed in the NEPA Administrative Record.

Projects involving an EA are typically concluded with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Any EA with a determination of significant impacts to the human environment cannot be authorized using a FONSI and becomes elevated to an EIS for NEPA compliance. The FHWA requires a 30-day notice of EA availability in a local newspaper(s) and other virtual platforms prior to authorizing a FONSI decision. Following closure, the 30-day comment period on the EA, a FONSI request letter is sent to FHWA requesting issuance of a FONSI. FHWA does not require an additional 30-day comment period on the FONSI decision document; however, FONSI Re-Evaluation may require additional public and stakeholder engagement depending on the context of the project.

## VII. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT/RECORD OF DECISION

Federal actions that significantly impact the human and natural environment must be cleared with an EIS. This is a complex and highly structured environmental clearance process that involves a considerable amount of time to complete. Preparation of an EIS requires an extensive, multi-year public and stakeholder engagement campaign to ensure that substantive comments received are incorporated into the project to the extent feasible and considered as part of the decision-making process. Multiple public meetings and workshops would be required during an EIS.

A notice of availability of the Draft EIS must be published in the Federal Register for a no less than a 45-day public comment period. A public hearing is required during the 30-day circulation period of a Draft EIS. Every reasonable effort shall be made to resolve interagency, stakeholder, or public disagreements on actions before processing the final EIS. If significant issues remain unresolved, the Final EIS shall identify those issues and the consultations and other efforts made to resolve them.

A notice of public availability of the final EIS must be published in the Federal Register and local newspapers prior to authorizing a decision. Projects involving an EIS conclude with a Record of Decision (ROD). FHWA does not require an additional 30-day comment period on the ROD decision document; however, EIS Re-Evaluations may require additional public and stakeholder engagement depending on the context of the project.



## VIII. ALTERNATE PROJECT DELIVERY METHODS

The NMDOT's typical project development process uses Design-Bid-Build (DBB) procurement; however, there are alternative project delivery methods to help reduce the time it takes to deliver highway projects to the public and reduce construction-related risk. Public engagement strategies are implemented in the context of alternative project delivery.

Design-Build (DB) contracting is an example of one method of alternative project delivery in which the design and construction phases of a project are combined into one contract beyond development of an initial conceptual 30% design. In this context, engineering and environmental consultants are either working on behalf of the owner (NMDOT/FHWA) or on behalf of the construction contractor. Beyond the traditional Phase I-AB study phase public engagement, both the owner and construction contractor participate in any additional public outreach efforts

## C: Components of Public Involvement Plans

This section identifies the core components of Public Involvement Plans (PIP) and highlights the types of engagement that can be incorporated into a PIP.

### CONTEXT SENSITIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS

Agency coordination and public involvement is a cornerstone of the NMDOT project development process. These concepts are also fundamental elements of a CSS PIP approach to project development. The CSS process is a collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop transportation projects that fit in their respective physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. The NMDOT has developed a CSS PIP Guidance for Location Study Projects (Appendix A) to help guide the CSS approach to project development and integration of CSS concepts into project-specific public engagement procedures. When developing a PIP and considering the engagement methods to be used to inform and engage with the public, CSS principles should be incorporated into the PIP. It is also important to understand that results of public involvement may call for changes to the planned approach for the project PIP. With that in mind, the project team should treat it as a "living document" which can be updated as the project develops to adjust to what is learned during the process.

### ENGAGEMENT TYPES

There are several ways to engage communities and stakeholders, and strategies are as diverse as the communities served throughout the project development process. During the early stages of the public involvement planning process, project teams should consider the makeup of the population and make informed decisions about strategies that would garner the largest representation and most meaningful engagement of affected community members and stakeholders.

## Questions to ask in early stages of public involvement planning can include:

- ❓ What is the age demographic of the population?
- ❓ Will attending an in-person meeting conflict with work commutes or the dinner hour for community members?
- ❓ Is broadband internet access or mobile data widely available in the community?
- ❓ Is there a high limited-English proficiency (LEP) population in the community? If so, what other languages are highly represented? If so, how are those other languages expressed (e.g., verbal only or written and verbal)?
- ❓ Are there other well-attended community events happening during the project timeline? Getting the public meeting added to the agenda of an existing community meeting/forum (i.e. City Council meetings, Chapter House meetings, Tribal Council meetings, etc.) can result in greater attendance and participation.
- ❓ Who are the local leaders or trusted community resources?
- ❓ Is there a history of mistrust from previous projects?

...And other targeted questions.



### I. IN-PERSON

In-person public involvement strategies are the most traditionally utilized methods because they have been in-use since the passage of NEPA and other associated environmental laws and well prior to the onset of readily available internet capabilities among the general population.

#### In-person engagement strategies can include:

- Public Information Meetings and Open Houses
- Design Workshops
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Pop-up Meetings
- In-person Surveys
- Other methods involving direct interfacing with the public and stakeholders



## II. VIRTUAL

Virtual public involvement strategies involve the use of phone or internet-based technology to gather input and facilitate involvement in the project development process.

These strategies have been steadily adopted by State Departments of Transportation and other transportation agencies over the last several years, especially following the increased use of smart phones by the general population.

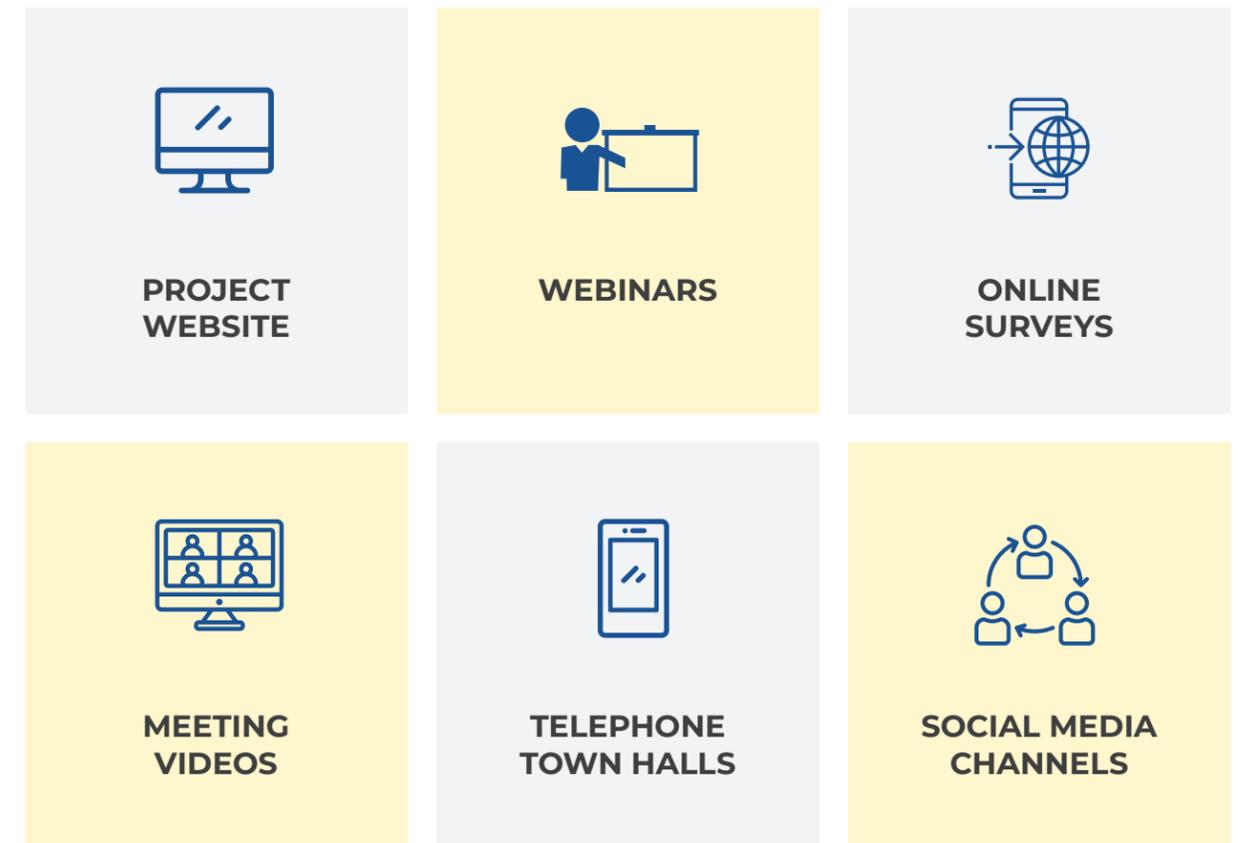
Adoption of virtually based techniques has been further expanded by the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic since local health guidance and laws prevented the gathering of groups in-person for over two years. Additionally, the Federal Highway Administration issued guidance for [Virtual Public Involvement During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), which allows for virtual public involvement to satisfy public involvement requirements as long as the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Emergency Declaration remains in place.

In-line with this guidance, NMDOT has adopted several virtual public involvement strategies to engage the community and stakeholders on critical transportation projects. The results of these efforts often garnered higher attendance, more comments and feedback and a more diverse population of engaged individuals when compared to previous “in-person only” public involvement techniques.

Virtual public involvement strategies and tools are constantly evolving, and NMDOT staff and consultants increasingly have more powerful tools available to target and engage the population in project areas. When it comes to technology-based tools, it can be daunting to consider all options available. The matrix in Appendix B offers a selection of widely used currently available tools and their capabilities for consideration in public involvement plans.

**Active Projects:** When hosting project public involvement, the project team should ensure general project information and scheduled meeting information are posted to the NMDOT Active Projects webpage.

## Virtual Engagement Tools and Strategies:





### III. HYBRID

Hybrid public involvement requires utilizing a mixture of virtual and in-person engagement strategies. This can be any combination of the previously mentioned strategies.

When considering appropriate public involvement techniques, the project team should determine whether the community would be best served by a combination of strategies, and if so, which combination would best encourage robust, meaningful public participation.

Additionally, if an identified hybrid strategy includes offering a public meeting in both an in-person and virtual format, the project team should make efforts to ensure the information presented at both meetings is identical to allow for the same opportunity for the public to be informed and provide input regardless of the option they choose.

As local and state public health guidance changes regarding gatherings in response to the Coronavirus, and considering the recent, sustained success of virtual public involvement strategies on transportation projects, project teams are advised to consider virtual engagement as the starting point for all NMDOT projects with in-person and hybrid tactics to be incorporated on an as-needed basis.

**Simultaneous and non-simultaneous Hybrid Engagement** As hybrid engagement methods become increasingly commonplace for projects, there is an ongoing assessment being made among communications practitioners about the benefits of one approach versus the other.

#### **Simultaneous Hybrid Engagement –**

This method is used when project teams are interested in having community members and/or stakeholders attend a meeting, workshop, or other event at one time, whether they attend in-person at a specified location or online through a simultaneously broadcast stream. This approach can pose various challenges because it combines the typical hurdles project teams would account for at an in-person meeting with those of a virtual meeting including room capacity issues, internet connectivity issues, sound challenges, and other obstacles. This approach also typically involves compromises for one audience versus the other. For example, in-person attendees may have the ability to have one-on-one conversations with project team members before or after the meeting when online attendees do not.

There is value in having simultaneous hybrid engagement including having all parties, whether attending virtually or in-person, hear the same spoken testimony or questions posed by stakeholders and the public at one time. If project teams proceed with hosting a simultaneous hybrid meeting, however, there should be a concerted effort made to address expected barriers for engagement between the audiences.

#### **Non-simultaneous Hybrid**

**Engagement –** This method typically involves combining virtual and in-person engagement tactics at separate times. For example, there could be a virtual public meeting or open house held the same week as an in-person event where the project team shares identical content and operates under a similar format while accommodating for differences in capabilities between virtual and live events.

Non-simultaneous hybrid engagement is often seen as favorable because it avoids combining the challenges of a single simultaneous event while still allowing options for stakeholders or the community to engage in a way that suits them best. When incorporating this method, as with all other public engagement methods, it is important to provide detailed accounts of comments and questions received within the administrative record to make sure that the public has access to the full range of information discussed regardless of format.





## AGENCY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

An agency stakeholder engagement strategy differs from a public engagement strategy in that agencies may have jurisdiction, regulatory authority or other responsibilities that will have a direct impact on key functions of project design and/or construction.

This could range from having direct oversight over the flood control channel connected to the drainage for an existing project (e.g., Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority), regulatory oversight of an environmental resource affected by a project (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), a tie to the funding of a project (e.g., FHWA), or management of the land, road, or ROW that connects directly to or overlaps with the NMDOT's project area (e.g., Bureau of Land Management), and/or state or local governing municipal responsibility (e.g., County/City/Village government, emergency/community services), among other considerations.

As part of a comprehensive engagement strategy, project team members are responsible for identifying the relevant local, state, and federal stakeholders for a project and including them in the project contact list and on all public project communications.



An agency stakeholder engagement strategy differs from a public engagement strategy in that agencies may have jurisdiction, regulatory authority or other responsibilities that will have a direct impact on key functions of project design and/or construction.

Additionally, team members should plan to meet with stakeholders upon the approach of major milestones for a project. This should be performed ahead of a larger public meeting or other public activity but within the same general timeframe to foster trust among the community. Many of the subjects covered in a stakeholder meeting will be similar to what would be presented at a public meeting, however, there may be a smaller group present and more time focused on reviewing specific elements of alternatives or design details and less time focused on procedural elements of project delivery. This can also help encourage common understanding among local agency stakeholders who can then communicate information

to their community members and attend the public meeting having a more comprehensive understanding of proposed designs and delivery.

Occasionally projects will warrant the development of a Technical Advisory Committee comprised of agency and community stakeholders, to regularly meet and consider project details, schedule, and steps in the decision-making process. This is most often necessary for large, complex projects with the potential of having more wide-ranging impacts. It is important to note that the New Mexico Open Meetings Act requires that such meetings be made open to any members of the public upon request.

## TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The State of New Mexico is home to 24 federally recognized Native American Tribes, which operate as sovereign nations with their own governance structure, customs, and culture. Because of the high concentration of Tribal communities throughout the state, it is common for NMDOT projects to traverse or occur in the vicinity of Tribal land. When NMDOT develops a project that travels through or near Tribal land, it is the responsibility of the project team to engage the Tribe as part of the Engagement Strategy.

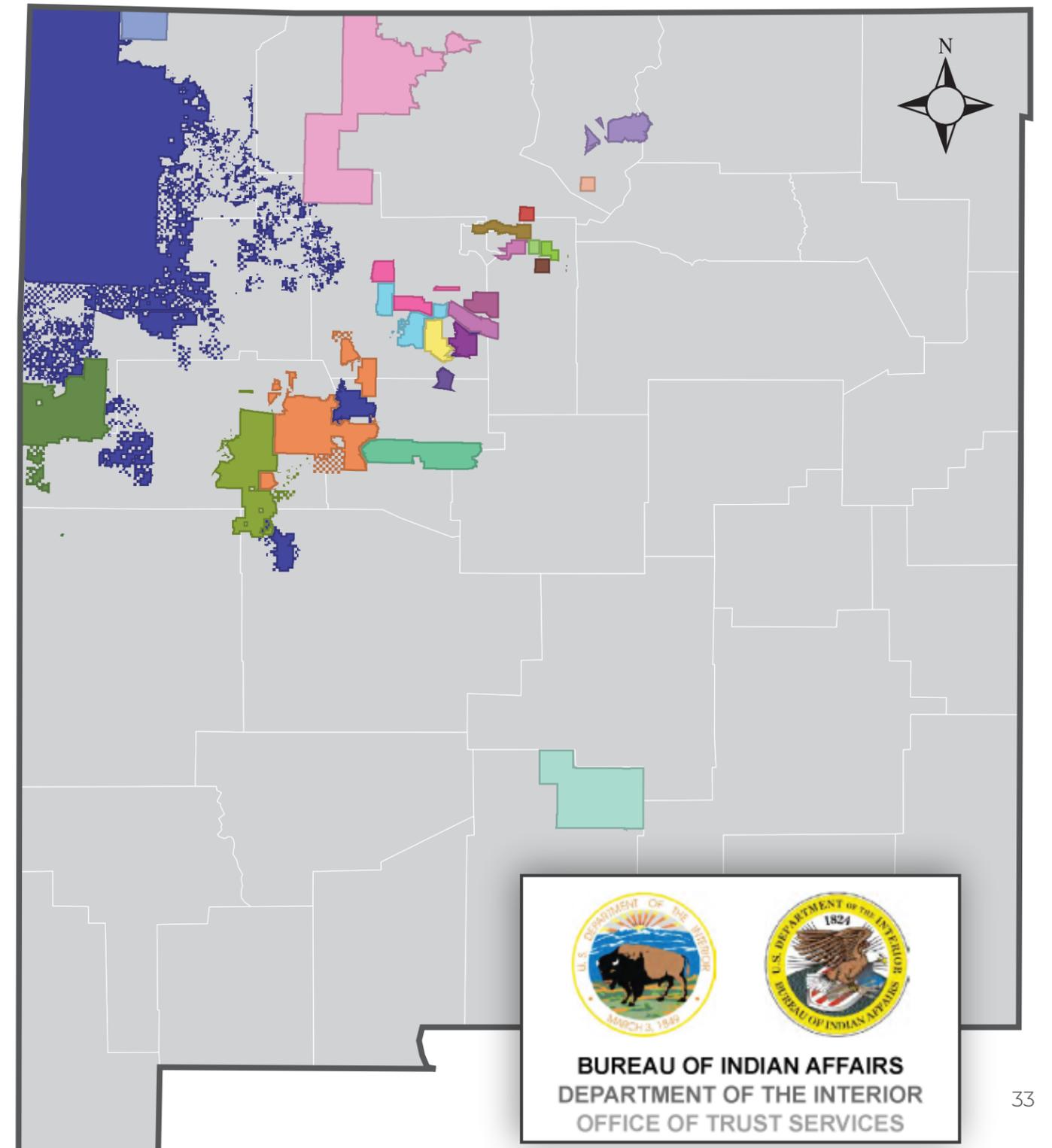
Project team members should research the existing Tribal Council and/or other governing body (e.g., Navajo Nation Chapter Houses) on the sovereign nation for inclusion in project communications. If a project has limits which traverse Tribal communities, the project team should work closely with Tribal governments and applicable resource departments to communicate the proposed engagement strategy to ensure common understanding and to confirm the strategies can be effective for their Tribal members.

The New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs Historic Preservation Division maintains a list of all tribes who have requested to be consulted for projects occurring in specific counties throughout the state. The NMDOT Tribal Liaison also maintains and annually updates a list of tribal officials in the state. These lists should be referenced and utilized when creating a stakeholder database for a project.

**Tribal government officials, councils, elders, and other Tribal representatives operate as part of a sovereign nation and should be communicated to with the same courtesy, respect, and deference to official titles that project team members would use to communicate with other elected officials, partner agencies, and stakeholders.**

Many Tribes manage their local roads, in cooperation with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which connect to state-managed highways and, as such, a concerted effort should be made to engage with the appropriate division of the Tribal government to solicit collaboration and common understanding.

Further information on NMDOT's policy for Tribal engagement can be found in the State-Tribal Consultation, Collaboration and Communication Policy (Dec. 2009).



## ELECTED OFFICIAL ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

As part of any PIP, project team members should research elected and appointed representatives of the communities being affected by the proposed project and contact their offices to notify them of upcoming milestones and opportunities for engagement. This should include adding them to the project contact list and including officials on all meeting notices and related project communications.

Ahead of scheduled public meetings, project team members should contact elected offices via telephone to secure confirmation or decline of attendance for the meeting. Many elected officials also have comprehensive email distribution lists for their constituents. The team member assigned to the phone follow-up should ask if the official will share the notice via their respective distribution lists. At the beginning of a public meeting, it is a best practice to acknowledge the presence of officials in attendance.



### Offices to be contacted should include:

- ✓ NMDOT Transportation Commissioners
- ✓ State Legislators
- ✓ County Commissioners
- ✓ City Councilors (if applicable)
- ✓ Tribal Government Officials (if applicable)

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

A public involvement strategy should be the most comprehensive part of a project's PIP. This is because through the development of this strategy, the project team must consider the most diverse and unique characteristics of a community and determine, based on these considerations, what strategies would be most effective for engaging the public.

### I. DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

As part of the necessary NEPA documentation, the environmental team will conduct a demographic analysis to look at the characteristics of the community in terms of factors such as age, race and ethnicity, English proficiency and other considerations. This analysis helps to determine the profile of the community and can lead to the incorporation of engagement strategies tailored to their needs.

### II. COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

There are several sub-groups within a respective broader community context that should be researched and included when developing a PIP. Some of the sub-communities can include:

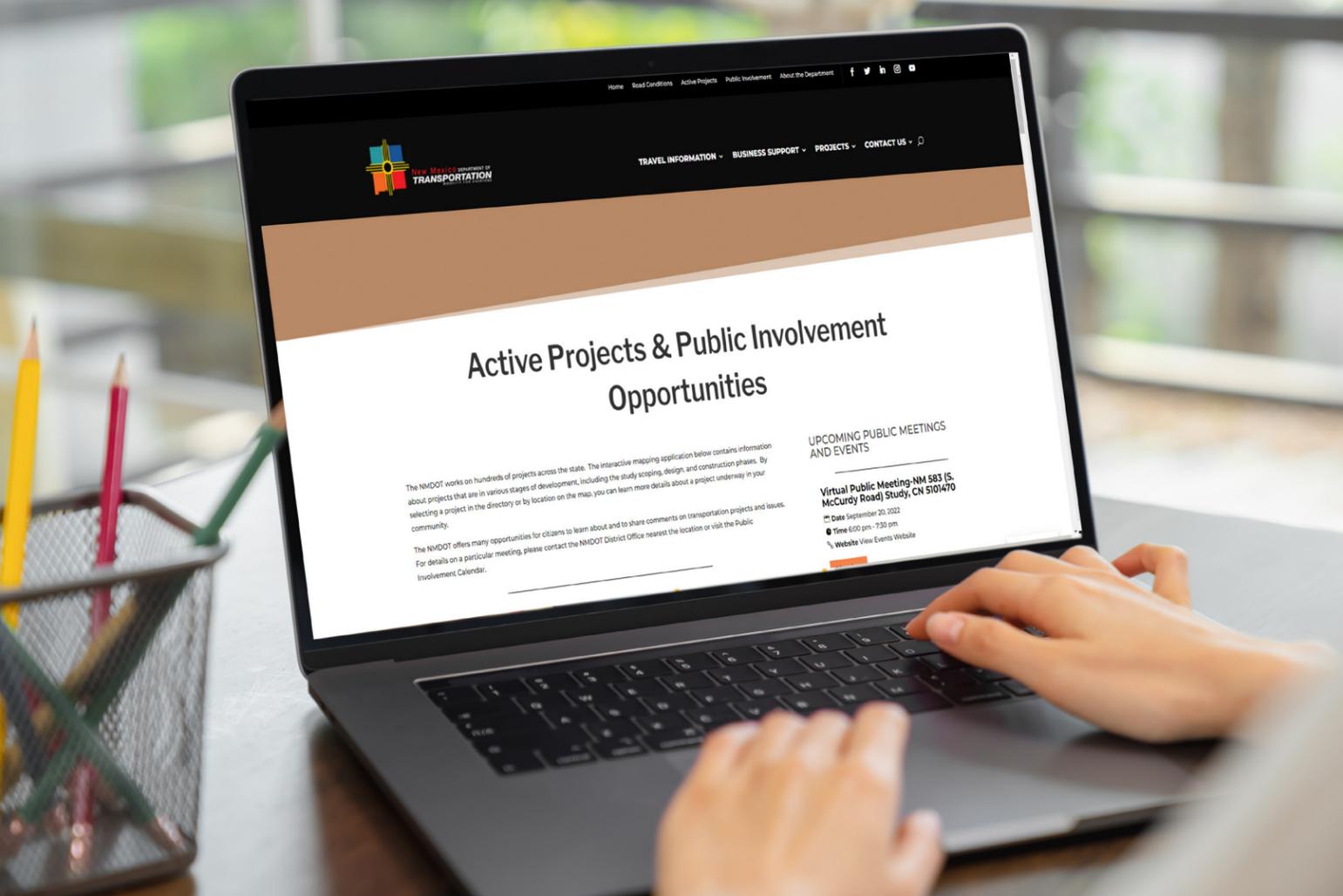
- Community members
- Businesses
- Neighborhood associations
- Community-based organizations
- Schools
- Health and safety
  - » Police and fire
  - » Emergency medical services
  - » Local healthcare services

### III. AFFECTED PROPERTY OWNERS

When private property impacts are expected as a result of the project such as acquisitions, construction-maintenance easements, temporary constructions permits, and temporary work permits, the NMDOT Project Development Engineer (PDE) is responsible for conducting property owner interviews with affected property owners. Property owner interviews occur in the field on the potentially impacted property. The scope of work and intended need for property is explained to the owners and exhibits or visuals are used, if available, to describe the impacts to property. The PDE must also request the owner sign a License to Enter Real Property. The results of the meeting are recorded and referred to as the project design advances.

Although property owner interviews are only required prior to the project team reaching 30% design, depending on the project and potential impacts, there could be value in conducting interviews in the study phase. In order to promote trust and rapport, it is recommended that property owner interviews occur before a public meeting to avoid the potential for surprise and an adverse response if affected property owners discover potential impacts to their property in a public forum.

More information about property owner interviews can be found in the NMDOT Infrastructure Design Directive IDD-2020-01.



## NMDOT Branding and Style

Branding consistency is needed for projects and project team members should use the appropriate NMDOT logo and color scheme when developing materials. Federal aid projects should use of the appropriate federal funding agency logo (e.g., FHWA). There is room for deviation for specific resources and exhibits, and for projects with lengthy schedules and high public visibility, there can be occasions where individual branding elements may be warranted to promote familiarity amongst the community. In these cases, the NMDOT logo will still need to be included as well as partner agencies as appropriate. This should be handled on a case-by-case basis.

## New Mexico Department of Transportation BRAND GUIDE



### COLOR PALLETTE

	<b>HEX</b> #1A1A1A	<b>RGB</b> 9, 9, 9
	<b>HEX</b> #333333	<b>RGB</b> 51, 51, 51
	<b>HEX</b> #666666	<b>RGB</b> 102, 102, 102
	<b>HEX</b> #2F639E	<b>RGB</b> 47, 99, 158
	<b>HEX</b> #27969C	<b>RGB</b> 39, 150, 156
	<b>HEX</b> #AF53AB	<b>RGB</b> 175, 83, 171
	<b>HEX</b> #F4834E	<b>RGB</b> 244, 131, 78
	<b>HEX</b> #A6433E	<b>RGB</b> 166, 67, 62
	<b>HEX</b> #5753AF	<b>RGB</b> 87, 83, 175
	<b>HEX</b> #FEDE29	<b>RGB</b> 254, 222, 41

### LOGO SPECS

#### Width

100 pixels / 1.04 inch (at 96 ppi)

#### Height

120 pixels / 1.25 inches

#### Minimum Spacing

50 pixels / 0.52 inches

### FONTS

#### Heading

Montserrat / Weight 700

#### Paragraph

Montserrat / Weight 500 or 700

## ONLINE PRESENCE

Online resources are some of the most readily accessible assets to the general public. Within this section, we look at common online tools and how they are used.

### I. WEBSITE REQUIREMENTS

Currently, NMDOT maintains an “Active Projects” webpage on their agency website (<https://www.dot.nm.gov>) of all active study and design phase and construction phase projects across the state. This webpage is used to advertise upcoming public involvement opportunities and meeting events. Project-specific websites should be considered for use on a project-by-project basis depending on the scale, scope, and anticipated level of public interest. These websites are hosted by NMDOT and serve as a hub for all public project information throughout the life of the project. Not every single project warrants a stand-alone website and project teams should determine needs during project initiation to scope for content development support if a website is needed.

## Americans with Disabilities Act

Web accessibility is covered Under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Public guidance has been published to provide a best practices toolkit for state and local government websites. Some of the provisions of this guidance include:

- **Adding a Text Equivalent to Every Image:** Adding a line of simple HTML code to provide text for each image and graphic will enable a user with a vision disability to understand what it is. Add a type of HTML tag, such as an “alt” tag for brief amounts of text or a “longdesc” tag for large amounts, to each image and graphic on your agency’s website.
- **Posting Documents in a Text-Based Format:** Always provide documents in an alternative text-based format, such as HTML or RTF (Rich Text Format), in addition to PDF. Text-based formats are the most compatible with assistive technologies.
- **Avoiding Dictating Colors and Font Settings:** Websites should be designed so they can be viewed with the color and font sizes set in users’ web browsers and operating systems. Users with low vision must be able to specify the text and background colors as well as the font sizes needed to see webpage content.
- **Including Audio Descriptions and Captions:** Videos need to incorporate features that make them accessible to everyone. Provide audio descriptions of images (including changes in setting, gestures, and other details) to make videos accessible to people who are blind or have low vision. Provide text captions synchronized with the video images to make videos and audio tracks accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing.



## Section 508

Section 508 refers to the amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and specifically addresses access to electronic and information technology. The law applies to all Federal agencies when they develop, procure, maintain, or use electronic and information technology. Federal agencies must ensure that this technology is accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities to the extent it does not pose an “undue burden”. It applies to, but is not solely focused on, Federal pages on the Internet.

Although the law does not explicitly apply to state agencies or entities outside the federal government, it is good practice to strive for 508 compliance, especially for projects utilizing federal funding sources. Accessibility is also a major priority for the state and every effort should be made to remove barriers from participation for people with disabilities.

There are several resources available to learn about Section 508 compliance and test existing resources for compliance at [www.section508.gov](http://www.section508.gov)



## II. SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS

NMDOT utilizes social media to engage with the public. NMDOT-managed profiles include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Chapter 2 includes more details on how project team members can create content for sharing on NMDOT’s social media channels.

## III. ONLINE ENGAGEMENT TOOLS

There are a variety of online engagement tools available for use during project development. When utilizing these tools, the project team should ensure the language and style utilized is consistent with NMDOT style and the style of other project resources. Further detail on engagement tools can be found in Chapter 2 and a comprehensive matrix of readily available tools can be found in Appendix B.



# Conducting Public Involvement

Identify activities and strategies that increase participation and lead to a robust program.



This chapter outlines the necessary functions for conducting a public involvement program and items for consideration to increase participation. The intent of this chapter is to define requirements while identifying activities and strategies that could increase participation and lead to a robust public involvement program.



Different projects require different levels of public involvement depending on things like duration of anticipated impacts, the number of impacted resources, the population of impacted residents or travelers, or the need for private property acquisitions, among other considerations. The level of public involvement also depends on the need to involve the public to ensure that decisions are made in consideration of and to benefit the public needs and preferences.

Below are examples of four different types of projects and potential engagement tactics to be used based on project context:



## Project 1

A federally funded bridge alignment study for a major perennial river crossing within a metropolitan area with mixed residential, light industrial, commercial, and open spaces.

**Public Involvement Goal** – Facilitate early and continuous engagement with the public and stakeholders, identify community concerns and involve them in the decision-making process.

**Potential Engagement Tactics** –

- Identify the audience and any unique or special communication needs
- Launch a study website and calendar event page with a fillable comment form
- Post to NMDOT's Active Projects webpage
- Host Live Virtual Meetings with stakeholders at key study milestones
- Conduct outreach to advertise public Involvement meeting(s)
- Newspaper advertisements, phone calls, email blasts, press releases, social media posts, banners, EDD mailers, fliers, and announcements at local events
- Host live virtual public involvement meetings during Phase A and Phase B with Spanish interpretation
- Provide a Project Hotline to reach team members to ask a question or provide input
- Conduct online-interactive surveys in English and Spanish
- Establish a comprehensive contact list
- Share a summary of public input and study findings via project fact sheets, study website, social media, and radio announcements
- Send regular updates on study milestones to the contact list
- Share a summary of public input and study findings on the study website



## Project 2

A federally funded project for pedestrian path improvements along a U.S. Highway in a small rural historic village that is very active and vocal. The road traverses a National Historic Landmark.

**Public Involvement Goal** – Maintain open communication with the village residents, National Park representatives, State Historic Preservation Division, and community leaders to develop CSS design plans that consider the historic context, the high number of seasonal tourists, and the safety concerns.

**Potential Engagement Tactics** –

- Identify the audience and any unique or special communication needs
- Launch a project-specific webpage and calendar event page with a fillable comment form
- Post to NMDOT's Active Project webpage
- Conduct outreach to advertise public involvement events
  - » Newspaper advertisements, email blasts, press releases, social media posts, and EDD mailers
  - » Post fliers at churches, shops, and gathering sites
  - » Prepare visualizations for outreach materials, presentations, and webpage
  - » Email via NHL manager's community contact list
- Host live virtual stakeholder meeting(s)
- Host a virtual open house and in-person public involvement meeting(s) on the weekend due to poor internet availability and the number of out-of-town property owners
- Coordinate a Citizens' Advisory Committee and host several working group sessions
- Post-recorded events, visuals, and meeting summaries on the project webpage
- Establish a comprehensive contact list
- Share regular updates on project development milestones via mailed fact sheets, email blasts, project-specific webpage, and social media



## Project 3

A federally funded bridge replacement project on Navajo Nation land.

**Public Involvement Goal** – Maintain open communication with the tribal representatives and community.

**Potential Engagement Tactics** –

- Identify the audience and any unique or special communication needs
- Launch a project-specific webpage and calendar event page with a fillable comment form
- Post to NMDOT's Active Projects webpage
- Host virtual stakeholder meetings or in-person meetings, if desired, with Chapter House and Navajo Nation at key milestones
- Conduct outreach to advertise a Telephone Town Hall meeting
  - » EDD mailers
  - » Radio announcements broadcast in the Navajo language, Diné Bizaad
  - » Emails and follow-up phone calls to tribal representatives in the area, schools, and emergency response teams
  - » Social media blasts on NMDOT profiles and local county, tribal, and school district channels
  - » Banners positioned in key locations for roadway users to see
  - » Press Releases
  - » Newspaper advertisements
  - » Chapter House newsletter announcements
- Host Telephone Town Hall Meeting



## Project 4

A state-funded road preservation project in an urban area. No need for ROW and no roadway closures are required.

**Public Involvement Goal** – Maintain open communication with the local municipality and inform the public about the upcoming project.

**Potential Engagement Tactics** –

- Launch a calendar event page with an online fillable comment form
- Post to NMDOT's Active Projects webpage
- Host virtual stakeholder meetings with the local municipality at key milestones
- Conduct outreach to advertise public notification and opportunity to comment or ask questions
  - » Phone calls and emails to schools and emergency response teams
  - » Social media blasts on NMDOT profiles and local municipality, and school district channels
  - » Press Releases

## A: Public Notifications

Public notifications are necessary for announcing any engagement opportunity whether, in-person, virtual or hybrid. Examples of required notice types and others that could assist in getting the word out include the following:

### ADVERTISEMENTS

There are several types of advertisements used as part of standard and enhanced NMDOT public engagement processes.

#### I. NEWSPAPER

Publication of newspaper advertisements to notice public meetings is a standard procedure for all NMDOT projects and an FHWA requirement. Project teams should identify the local newspaper publication in closest proximity to the project area and publish the meeting notice two weeks before the date of the meeting. If there are multiple meetings to be held in a series within the same project area, the notice should be published two weeks before the first meeting of the series. In some areas of the state the nearest local newspaper may be a considerable distance from the project area. If there is no widely circulated newspaper publication in the area, project team members should work with the Environmental Bureau District Liaison,

Public Involvement Coordinator, and District PIO to identify an alternative strategy to announce the meeting. This correspondence should be documented via email and mentioned in the summary report.

#### II. CORRIDOR SIGNAGE

There may be instances where corridor signage is useful for providing notice of the public meeting, especially for projects near heavily trafficked areas with lower travel speeds. Corridor signage can come in different forms ranging from campaign-style signs to large banners. Project team members should include minimal text and direct the audience to the project website or NMDOT website for more information.

All print and email advertisements should be graphically appealing, attempt to minimize text where possible, use common language as opposed to overly technical jargon, and include the following elements:

- » Meeting date, time, and location
- » NMDOT logo
- » FHWA logo (if receiving federal funding)
- » Project control number
- » Project area map
- » Meeting purpose
- » Project team contact information
- » ADA accessibility and translation needs statement
- » Instructions for how to share a comment
- » Notice of closing date of the comment period

### III. RADIO ADVERTISEMENTS

Radio advertisements can be an effective way to notice the community about an upcoming public engagement opportunity. These types of ads are especially useful when engaging rural audiences or tribal audiences on tribal lands where mobile phone service can be sparse. If issuing a radio advertisement on a tribally affiliated radio station, the project team should consider issuing the advertisement in the native language of the target audience in order to reach a broader stakeholder base.

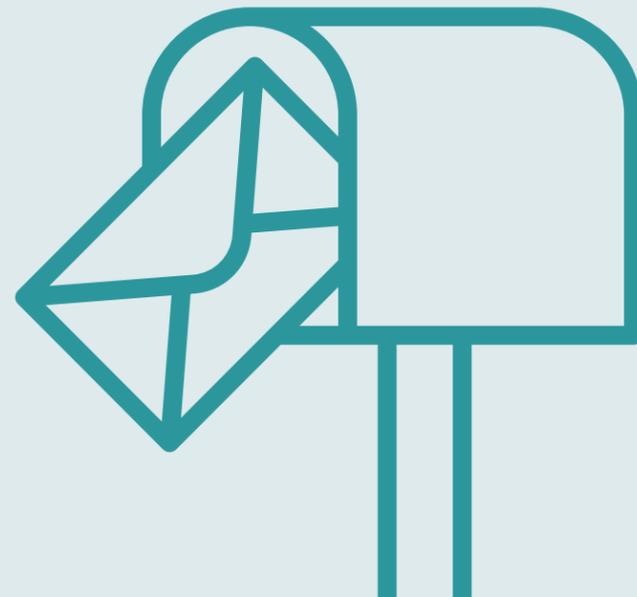
### MAILERS, FLYERS, AND EMAIL NOTICES

Mailers, flyers, and email distribution are common ways to notify the public of meetings, and each have benefits and drawbacks.

Distribution of physical mailers can be an efficient and cost-effective way to reach a large population of community members within or near a project corridor.



EDDM Mailings can reach a large audience of community members at a reasonable cost.



#### MANUAL MAILING

Project team members can review County Assessor data to find property owner contact information and develop a mailing list based on proximity to the proposed project. One of the issues with this method is the property owners may sometimes be different than the residents or occupants of the physical property and affected community members can miss the distribution.

#### EVERY DOOR DIRECT MAILING

The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) offers Every Door Direct Mailing (EDDM) as a service in which they will provide a postcard-sized mailer to every mailbox along a specified mail route so that residents and occupants near the proposed project receive notifications. This is the most efficient way to secure a large, guaranteed distribution of mailers in a relatively short period of time. Additionally, many local print shop vendors offer development of EDDM-sized mailers and will provide the cards directly to the postal service for distribution. The drawback to this strategy is that individual addresses cannot be selected for distribution, so there is less control over the footprint of notice distribution. Another drawback of this method is that occupants may be missed if mail is not received at their physical properties.

#### FLYERS

Flyer distribution can be a useful method for distributing meeting notices, primarily due to the personalized nature of walking through the corridor to hand the notice to property owners, renters, institutions, and businesses. This serves as an opportunity to engage directly with community members where project team members can inform them of the upcoming project. An additional consideration could be to post flyers at community gathering areas that allow postings like grocery stores, places of worship, supermarkets, community and senior centers and other frequented community hubs. The drawbacks to this type of distribution include safety concerns for staff when accessing private property and the inefficient distribution of notices when compared to other methods like EDDM.

#### EMAIL DISTRIBUTION

Email distribution can be the most cost-effective and efficient way to notice the community and stakeholders about upcoming engagement opportunities. In order to distribute project emails, team members should first develop a comprehensive email list, develop a digital graphic in the same style as other advertisements, and then either distribute the notice via a designated project team member email or through a subscription-based email distribution service (some readily available options identified in Appendix B). A drawback to this type of distribution includes excluding those members of the public who do not have an email address or lack reliable connectivity to the internet.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media should be utilized when providing notice of upcoming public meetings. This can be done through the development of formatted social media posts and their accompanying copy for NMDOT's existing social media channels. Team members should consider researching stakeholders' use of social media channels and request that they post information about upcoming meetings.

Twitter and Facebook are the most widely followed and utilized social media channels for NMDOT and will generate the largest audience for meeting notifications. Unlike email and print notices, social media posts work best with minimal text.

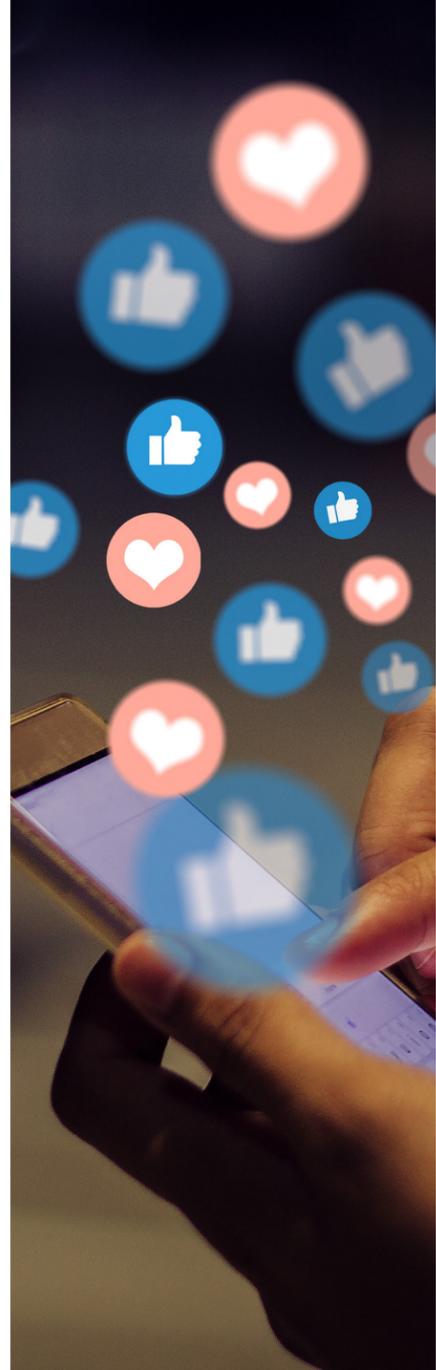
### A social media post should include the following elements:

- ✔ Project Title
- ✔ Meeting Date
- ✔ Project Website
- ✔ Project Control Number

Project team members should work with the relevant agency staff to develop content and share social media posts leading up to the meeting (Refer to Chapter 4).

### Minimum Requirements for Public Meeting/ Workshop Noticing: (Two weeks before event)

- ✔ Newspaper Advertisement
- ✔ Meeting notice distribution (Mailing, EDDM or Flyers)
- ✔ Email to Project Contact List
- ✔ Calendar Event on NMDOT Website



## OTHER NOTICES

### PRESS RELEASES

Press releases can be used to make broader announcements of a public meeting or opportunity for public comment. These often are warranted for projects with high public visibility and/or those with high potential for impacts to the community and travelers. Project team members should work with the District PIO to prepare press releases for all public events.

### CALENDAR EVENTS

Upon scheduling and noticing of a public meeting, consultant team members should work with the relevant NMDOT staff to create a calendar event with all meeting information on the NMDOT website or project-specific website.

### STAKEHOLDER PHONE CALLS

A more personal form of notification includes direct phone calls to community stakeholders. These can include community center managers, local medical facilities, leadership at local schools, prominent community-based organizations, and other community leaders. This can be time consuming, especially for large projects. However, the level of effort is significantly less than distributing flyers door-to-door but it still maintains personal contact. Phone calls can also help establish goodwill and lead to notice distribution through existing networks, forums, meetings, and email lists. Many schools use an auto-dialer notification system to send pre-recorded messages to parents, which may be available to provide notice of a public meeting.

### EXISTING COMMUNITY MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT/UPDATE

It is important for project team members to consider the existing commitments and responsibilities of community members and governing officials and understand that adding another meeting to their calendar may not move the respective project higher up the priority list of community members or governing officials. Project staff should consider attending an existing well-attended community or council meeting to either announce the upcoming public meeting or seek a spot on the agenda (if possible) to provide a project update.

### PLACE OF WORSHIP BULLETINS

Some project areas have prominent places of worship in their vicinity. An effective strategy for engaging community members can include contacting a congregation to inquire into publishing a meeting notice or announcement within their bulletins, which are often published weekly.

### TRIBAL AND PUEBLO NEWSLETTERS

Many tribes and pueblos circulate regular newsletters to tribal members. For projects occurring near or on tribal lands, the project team should pursue publishing the notice in the newsletter.



## FACT SHEETS

Fact sheets can be printed or digital and include design information, process information, graphics and any other information that helps to convey the complexities of the project. Fact sheets are especially useful for complex, lengthy projects that will require extended time between the study phase, environmental processes, final design, and potential construction.

When developing a fact sheet, project staff should review the community demographics and identify if the development of an accompanying fact sheet in a language other than English is warranted.

All developed fact sheets should be posted to the NMDOT project website for easy accessibility.

## VISUAL AIDS

Visual aids can include poster boards, engineering design roll plots, schematics and other visual information that helps to convey critical project information under consideration. Many times, large visual aids are best used when conducting an open-house style meeting where project team members are assigned to specified stations and are able to have detailed conversations with the community and stakeholders in a more intimate fashion than exclusively relying on large group-based presentations. Visual aids can also be helpful to include as a project resources on a dedicated project website.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments are a critical part of the environmental process, and the solicitation of public comments is required under NEPA. The methods for submission include phone call, email, traditional mail, online or in-person at a meeting. Public comment periods typically last 30 days but can be extended in certain circumstances including for projects with significant public interest and volume of comments, or if the comment period coincides with holidays, among other extenuating circumstances.

Public comment sheets, forms, or cards are common resources for in-person meetings. These allow for community members to voice their concerns, support, or opposition about a project in a written format. Comments sheets are placed into a box by community members for consideration by the project team and are later recorded into the administrative record per NEPA requirements. The public should be allowed anonymity when submitting comments.

One point of contact should be designated on the project team for all public comments and commenters should be notified of receipt of their comment.

## SIGN-IN SHEETS

Sign-in sheets are utilized for all in-person meetings and allow for attendees to identify themselves and place their contact information into the project contact database. When collecting personal information, there should be an acknowledgment that collected personal contact information will not be made public to protect privacy.

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## B: Materials

There are a variety of materials used for engagement. This section identifies commonly used resources and the justifications for their use.

### POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (PPT)

PowerPoint presentations (PPTs) are a critical part of public meeting materials. For projects utilizing consultants for project delivery, it is standard practice for the consultant team to lead the development of these presentations in close coordination with NMDOT engineering and environmental staff.

PPTs should be succinct and rely on visuals to help tell the story of the project development process, including

introduction of the presentation topics, current project status, and next steps, as opposed to being exclusively text-based. Presentations should also have graphic treatment that is consistent with project materials. Like other public resources, PPTs should use common language, avoid dense written paragraphs and technical jargon, and utilize bulletized information with graphic support wherever possible.

An example PowerPoint presentation is included in Appendix C.



### **PRESENTATION STYLE:**

Whether a meeting is held virtually or in-person, presenters should be cognizant of presentation style and use layman terminology, positive body language, warm tone, and a cadence that allows listeners to easily follow the presentation. It is also important for presenters to not overly rely on visuals in consideration of audience members who may have called into the meeting or who have sight limitations.

### **LOCATION SELECTION**

A location should be selected that is in or near the project area with easy access and ample parking for attendees. Local community centers, libraries and other public venues often work well. If hosting a pop-up meeting, project team members should utilize an area that is heavily trafficked like a local grocery store, community park or at an existing event within the community. The location or setting selected should be neutral meeting space lacking in religious and political context.

When selecting a meeting location, the project team should discuss seating needs with the meeting space owner. Submitting a facility use application may be required to inform the owner of the number for chairs and tables needed and inform the user of any terms and conditions associated with use of the space.

### **AUDIO VIDEO (AV) SERVICES**

Project team members should consider AV availability including projector and screen access, audio amplification (e.g., microphones and speakers) and other technology needs anticipated for use. On occasion, the most central meeting location will not have technology available, and the project team members assigned to coordinating the meeting will need to secure the necessary technology for use at the event or select a different meeting location within proximity to the project having better AV accessibility.

### **REFRESHMENTS**

It is important for the project team to understand that lengthy in-person public meetings generally occur at or near the dinner hour for attendees. Refreshments including small snacks, such as baked goods or crackers, and drinks, such as water, coffee, or juice, should be provided at in-person meetings. The project staff providing refreshments should take care to have original packaging and a list of ingredients readily visible to avoid dietary issues for attendees.

When selecting a meeting location, the project team should confirm that outside food and drink are permissible to bring into the meeting space.

### **ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS**

When determining a meeting location, the project team should consider the mobility impaired ADA -related accommodations at the chosen facility. These can include access ramps, automatic doors, handicap parking and other accommodations. Some older buildings constructed prior to the passage of the ADA may be missing these facilities and should be removed from consideration.

As part of the public meeting notices, project teams are required to solicit requests for ADA accommodations. When these requests are received, it is the responsibility of the staff in charge of facility and access planning to develop accommodation strategies.

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## **C: In-Person Meetings**

In-person meetings have commonly been utilized to solicit public input throughout history for project delivery. There are a few considerations that should be made when planning for in-person engagement opportunities.

## D: Virtual Engagement

### TOOL SELECTION

There is a myriad of interactive tools for consideration when hosting a virtual engagement opportunity. These range from virtual meeting hosting software to online surveys, on-screen drawing tools, online mapping tools and everything in between. Increasingly NMDOT is utilizing accessible online engagement tools to empower the public to contribute to the project development process in an enhanced manner when compared to soliciting comments alone. Appendix B includes a matrix of readily available tools that can be referenced by NMDOT and consultant staff when developing a public engagement scope and plan.



### PUBLIC MEETING RECORDING

A major benefit of hosting a virtual public meeting or workshop is the ability to record the session for posting onto the NMDOT YouTube channel and/or project webpage. In addition to serving as part of the public record, videos allow for community members and stakeholders who were unable to attend the meeting to receive the same information as those in attendance. This benefit is evident by recent meeting recordings receiving a higher volume of viewership than the volume of attendees at the event on many recent virtual public meetings. The project team is required to record every virtual public meeting for posting following the event. Recordings should be provided to the NMDOT in MP4 digital multimedia file format.



A major benefit of hosting a virtual public meeting or workshop is the ability to record the session.

### PREPARATION AND TROUBLESHOOTING

As part of the preparation for an upcoming virtual public meeting, the project team members assigned to coordinating the meeting are required to assign staff with keen familiarity using the online meeting platforms for virtual public events. The team is also required to incorporate staff redundancy and provide a “backup host” should the designated host experience any technology or connection issues during the virtual event.

As part of typical virtual meeting preparation, the project team members assigned to coordinating the meeting should host at least two rehearsals prior to the meeting to run through the presentation material and test intended functionality of the online meeting platform. This is critical to the preparation process and all speakers and team members with a role at the meeting are asked to attend the rehearsal. If utilizing a language interpreter or other third-party service provider as part of the meeting, the team should ensure their presence in at least one rehearsal and scope the vendor agreement accordingly.



## E: Interpretation and Translation

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Interpretation and translation should be provided if the demographic analysis identifies a high threshold of LEP community members and/or if interpretation services are requested by a community member. Interpretation refers to the active communication, word by word, at a meeting. By contrast, translation refers to the conversion of materials to another language or the action of operating as an intermediary between two parties attempting to communicate in different languages.

Interpretation services can be provided in both in-person and virtual formats and trained interpreters should be utilized to provide this service. For in-person meetings, interpreters will often bring radio technology that community members can utilize to listen in their own language. For American Sign Language interpretation, the interpreter will often stand at the front of the room to communicate what is being spoken.

For virtual meetings, many platforms offer functionality that allows for an interpretation channel to be added to the meeting. In this case, community members in need of accommodation will select the corresponding language track and the interpreter will actively communicate what is being spoken in the English language channel. Many platforms also offer the ability to turn on closed captioning interpretation to accommodate hearing impaired members of the public.

If interpretation services are requested, it is not suitable to have an untrained technical staff member attempt to provide this service, even if they are fluent in the language. For material translation, however, project team members with experience delivering these services can be considered upon NMDOT approval.

## F: Documenting and Tracking

When conducting public engagement, it is a requirement to consistently document and track efforts and their outcomes. Not only is this process required by NEPA and other environmental laws, but it can also assist in evaluation of tactics following the completion of an engagement cycle.

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### RSVP AND ATTENDANCE

RSVP information allows project team members to understand anticipated attendance for a meeting and help them to staff accordingly. RSVP information is easier to secure for virtual public meetings which often have a simple registration mechanism.

The gathering of attendance allows the project team to track who arrived, their organization or affiliation (if any), and to add them to the contact list. Sign-in sheets should be used for in-person meetings. Virtual meeting platforms often automatically track this information.

### COMMENTS

The solicitation of comments is a required process for all NMDOT projects and recording comments for the public record is required under NEPA and other applicable environmental law. Public and stakeholder comments can be secured in a variety of ways including a completed comment sheet, an email, a phone call, or through an online form or survey. Typically, comments posted on social media are not collected for the public record.

### GLOBAL MAILING LIST

The global mailing list is one of the most important resources for on-going project engagement throughout the entire project development process. When the project team is starting from the initial project phases, the consultant team is required to conduct research to populate the list based on the community characteristics and information available online or through existing organizations. When a consultant is tasked with advancing a project in a later phase, it is the responsibility of the consultant to work with NMDOT staff to secure any previously existing contact lists used by the team to build upon. Chapter 1 identifies a good starting point for the community stakeholders, officials, and organizations to include when developing the list. The global mailing list is an iterative resource and all community members and stakeholders who attend meetings, provide comments, or otherwise participate in the project development process should be added to it regularly.

When a project team completes its work on a project, the final list should be provided to NMDOT Environmental Bureau staff for record keeping and distribution to any team overseeing engagement for later phases of the project.



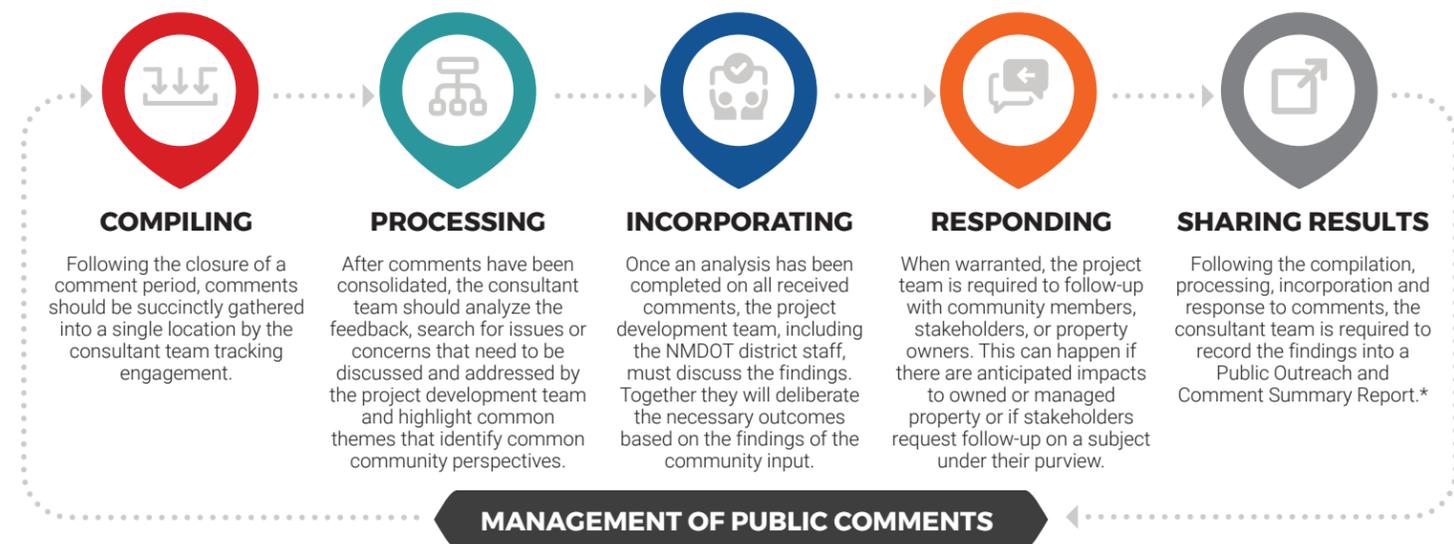
# Follow-up and Documentation



## A: Management of Public Comments

As identified in Chapter 2, public comments come in many forms. Although community members can submit comments whenever they choose, there are streamlined processes associated with compiling and analyzing comments received during an open comment period, usually following a public meeting. All submitted public and stakeholder comments should be recorded and interpreted for consideration as part of the project development process.

After conducting public engagement there are a set of practices required to accurately record the results of the activities and provide them to the project development team for consideration. The following section identifies the standard process for documenting engagement and following up with community members and stakeholders who engage.



\*Because the final Public Outreach and Comment Summary Report is likely to contain sensitive information like personal contact information, the consultant team is required to develop an accompanying redacted version which is published on the project website or active projects website. (Refer to Section B).

## B: Documentation of Public Involvement

There are typically two key deliverables used for documenting public involvement as standard practice by NMDOT during the environmental documentation phase (Phase I-C)—the **Public Outreach and Comment Summary Report** and **NEPA Compliance Documentation**:

### **PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT**

Record keeping and documentation are imperative to a transparent public engagement program and to ensure a defensible NEPA Administrative Record is maintained. Following closure of an open comment period associated with a public meeting and after comments are compiled, a Public Outreach and Comment Summary Report should be prepared that summarizes the steps taken in the public engagement process, including the methods used for notifying the public, and organizes the comments received. The report would include copies of notification and presentation materials, meeting attendance lists, and raw comment data. A version of the report with redactions made to remove personal identifying information should also be published to the established project website upon completion. Refer to Appendix C for an example of a Public Outreach and Comment Summary Report.



Record keeping and documentation are imperative to a transparent public engagement program and to ensure a defensible NEPA Administrative Record is maintained.

## **NEPA COMPLIANCE DOCUMENTATION**

### **ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD**

The NEPA Administrative Record contains the supporting documents of the path that an agency has followed in making its decision. An administrative record should contain those documents that are critical to the approach the federal agency has taken. Records detailing the public and stakeholder engagement process are important, as well as documents that reflect how criticism or opposition was addressed. All members of the project development team are responsible for developing and maintaining organized files that support the administrative record in addition to the NEPA document.



## C: Follow-up

Community members and stakeholders who engage in the project development process are often donating time to participate in the project. Simple follow-up messages provided to the contact list can help keep the community engaged and informed and foster goodwill among the population.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF ATTENDANCE/INPUT

Following an engagement meeting or activity, it is important for the project team to communicate with the community and stakeholders and thank them for their involvement or input. This can often be done most efficiently via email and the message should include links to any resources available online, including a meeting recording, publication, or summary of received input.

**NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project**  
CN A201000

**124** people attended the virtual public meeting on December 9, 2020.

**524** comments received

**Thank you!**  
The New Mexico Department of Transportation thanks all who have provided input on the NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project. The Project Team will use the feedback to refine design options and select a preferred alternative. The NMDOT will ask for public input again during the next phase so please watch for more information.

**Priorities Identified:**

1. Safety
2. Environmental Impacts
3. Long-Term Vehicle Capacity
4. Improved Facilities
5. Construction Duration

**Anticipated Project Schedule**

- Scoping Study: 2020-2021
- Initial Engineering Design Development: 2021
- Environmental Analysis & Documentation: 2021/2022
- Final Engineering Design: 2022/2023
- Anticipated Construction Start: 2024

\*Public Meeting

An example follow-up message

### FORECASTING PROJECT/STUDY NEXT STEPS

As a project advances to further phases including construction or as a published environmental document, the project team should utilize the email contact list to communicate progress.



## D: Strategy Review and Performance Evaluation

As specified in the public involvement planning section of this guide, it is the responsibility of the project development team to identify performance measures at the onset of the engagement process for evaluation at the conclusion of the engagement cycle or project.

Project team members should consolidate qualitative and quantitative metrics as engagement processes wrap up for a discussion with the NMDOT about successes, challenges, and areas for improvement. This is a critical step in continually striving for improved and more inclusive engagement and allows the NMDOT to carry successes for specific communities to future projects.

### “CUSTOMER SATISFACTION” FOLLOW-UP

A strategy that should be considered for evaluation is a follow-up survey provided to the contact list at the conclusion of a project phase. This can help secure valuable feedback that can be used by project team members to evaluate utilized strategies for future engagement.



# Roles and Responsibilities

The project team may consist of a diverse group of staff from the NMDOT and Consultant firms.



For any given public engagement context, the project team may consist of a diverse group of staff from the NMDOT and Consultant firms. This may also include partnering quasi-decision-making local government agencies. The following section discusses the general roles and responsibilities of various team members who typically participate in public engagement activities for NMDOT/FHWA-led projects, as well as the public.

## A. NMDOT Staff

This section identifies the NMDOT staff typically involved in the engagement process and specifies their roles.

### **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT ENGINEER**

For design development projects, a Project Development Engineer (PDE) is assigned to the project as the overall lead and primary agency point-of-contact. Often this role is filled by staff from one of the NMDOT's Regional Design Centers (North, Central, or South), but may be assigned to a technical engineer within the respective District office.

The PDE's role in the public engagement process includes acting as the lead NMDOT representative. This includes review and comment on technical content of materials, attendance and participation at public and stakeholder events, determining appropriate responses to public comments, and coordinating with the respective District to determine how public input will be incorporated into the project design or construction.



## ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SPECIALIST

The NMDOT Roadside Environment Design Section of the Environmental Bureau has a staff position dedicated to public involvement. This ensures that communication with the public is inclusive, clear, and continuous so that stakeholders can come to a consensus on solutions to a community's transportation needs. The Public Involvement Specialist's role is to act as a supporting resource to the project development teams for projects statewide. This includes participation in the public engagement approach discussion on a project-by-project basis, review and comment on materials content, attendance at public and stakeholder events, and providing facilitation support as needed to support the Department.



## ENVIRONMENTAL BUREAU DISTRICT LIAISON

Each NMDOT District has an assigned Environmental Bureau liaison who is responsible for overseeing the NEPA and environmental clearance process during development and design of federal and state funded projects. The Environmental Bureau liaison's role is to act as the agency environmental lead and participate in the project development process. This includes participation in the public engagement approach discussion for projects within their area of assignment, review and comment on materials content, attendance at public and stakeholder events, and maintaining internal agency projects records.

For any projects requiring public engagement and without an engineering and environmental consultant, the Environmental Bureau liaison would be responsible for facilitating all aspects of the public engagement strategy, preparation of materials, meeting facilitation, and subsequent documentation.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Each of the NMDOT's six District offices has a local PIO. The role of the PIO is to act as a local spokesperson and implement district-level organizational communication and public awareness strategies. The PIO typically responds to local media and public inquiries and disseminates public information through press releases and other forms of communication.

NMDOT's General Office (GO) public affairs communications team in Santa Fe handles all official content posting and public messaging on the Department's social media platforms.

The consultant and/or environmental liaison should provide the appropriate District PIO with an electronic copy of public meeting notices, including any social media advertisements. The consultant and/or environmental liaison should provide social media materials to the GO communications team.

## DISTRICT STAFF

Numerous District staff are involved in the project development process and have roles and responsibilities in the public engagement process. This typically includes key leadership, the District Engineer, Assistant District Engineer, and Assistant District Construction Engineer since each District is responsible for fiscally delivering infrastructure improvement projects to benefit the traveling public. Participation from the district leadership is instrumental in consensus building with the public, affected stakeholders, and the project development team.

The role of district leadership in the public engagement process is to participate as a project team member and act in an agency decision-making role. This includes attendance and participation at public events and strategic stakeholder events, support with developing messaging pertaining to specific and/or sensitive issues, review and comment on technical content of materials, and working with the project development team to determine how public input will be incorporated into the project design or construction.

## WEBSITE AND COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

Currently, NMDOT maintains a projects webpage on their agency website of all active study and design phase and construction phase projects across the state. This webpage is used to advertise upcoming public involvement opportunities and meeting events. Depending on the scale, scope, and anticipated level of public interest, a project-specific website may be developed to serve as a single source platform of information, including public engagement resources.

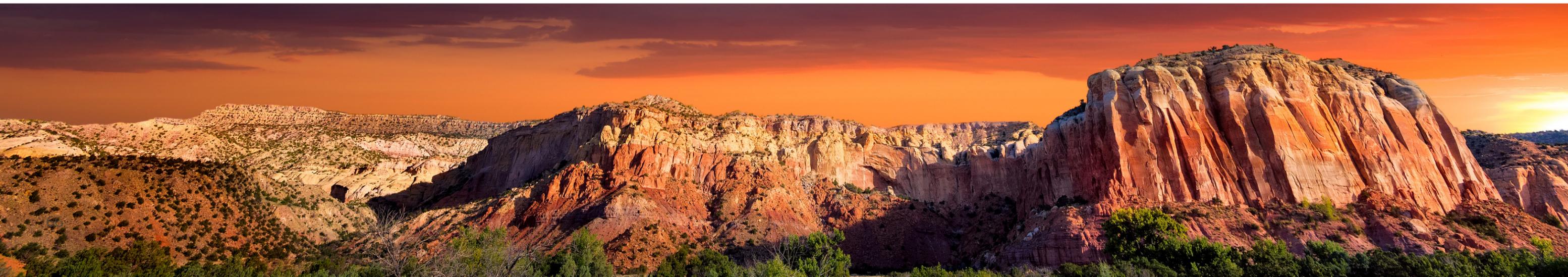
NMDOT website developers are responsible for adding site content and supporting the front-end and back-end functioning of the website(s). The consultant, NMDOT PIO, and/or environmental liaison are responsible for providing the website staff with electronic project-specific technical content, such as written narratives, presentation materials, visual graphics, post-meeting video recordings, etc.

## B. Engineering, Environmental, and Public Involvement Consultants

Depending on the Department's needs for a specific project or task, engineering, environmental and public involvement consultants are contracted to serve as an extension of agency staff. In many instances a consultant team is selected to assist NMDOT with facilitating the entire project development process beginning with the study phase through final design. This is typical of larger and/or complex projects that require implementation of a public engagement strategy. Smaller projects and/or NMDOT design led projects may have a consultant contracted to perform specific public and stakeholder engagement tasks within the larger project context project.

The consultant team is typically responsible for developing the public engagement strategy and PIP based on the context of the project and

local community, facilitating the workflow, handling the production of technical materials (e.g., PowerPoint presentation, newspaper notices, roll plots), and implementing all aspects of hosting a public meeting event and 30-day public comment period. The consultant team must confirm the public engagement approach with the NMDOT PDE, public involvement coordinator, and Environmental Bureau District liaison prior to implementation. When the consultant team serves as the public engagement lead on a project, all consultant-produced materials need to be provided to the NMDOT team for review, comment, and approval prior to public distribution. The consultant team is also responsible for maintaining documentation of the public engagement process to support the NEPA administrative record, when applicable.





## D. Partner Agencies

Depending on the scale of the project, local government agencies may partner with the NMDOT and participate in the project development process. The role of partner agencies is to oversee all jurisdictional responsibilities related to project design and work with NMDOT to help build consensus from the public. Partner agencies can also play a key role in notifying community members and stakeholders of upcoming engagement opportunities.

## C. The General Public

Public input is key to developing sound transportation infrastructure solutions. Similar to the project team, the public has their own roles and responsibilities for participating and engaging in the NMDOT's decision-making process. While public input is accepted at any time, it is imperative for the public to offer input, ask questions, and provide comments during public and stakeholder engagement events and 30-day comment periods. This allows the project team to continue to advance the project schedule and meaningfully consider and incorporate public and stakeholder feedback.



Public input is key to developing sound transportation infrastructure solutions.

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Sample Checklist/Timeline .....	166

# Sample Context Sensitive Solutions Public Involvement Plans (CSS PIP)

CSS PIP Guidance for Location Study Projects  
NM 14 Cerrillos Road Improvements  
I-40 Corridor Study, Arizona to Albuquerque

## CONTEXT-SENSITIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN FOR LOCATION STUDY PROJECTS

1. Goals of Collaboration with the Community
  - a. Provide safety for users and community
  - b. Address community and social issues
  - c. Maintain environmental harmony
  - d. Promote livability
  - e. Create lasting value for community
  - f. Use agency and community resources effectively
2. Analyses of the Project Background Context
  - a. Environmental
  - b. Historic
  - c. Land Use
  - d. Transportation
  - e. Community
  - f. Visual
  - g. Economic
  - h. Public Health
  - i. Environmental Justice
3. Modal Considerations and Connectivity
  - a. Motorized vehicles
  - b. Transit
  - c. Pedestrian
  - d. Bicycle
4. Opportunities to Express Local Values
  - a. Functional classification
  - b. Design speed
  - c. Traffic calming
  - d. Gateway & Place-making treatments
  - e. Structural aesthetics
  - f. Road diet
5. Scale the Solution to the Problem
  - a. Affordability
  - b. Supported by community
  - c. Can be implemented in a reasonable time
6. The Design Approach
  - a. Use flexibility found in design guidelines
  - b. Project-specific communication strategy
  - c. Graphic of the decision-making process
  - d. Multi-disciplinary study team
  - e. Identification of stakeholders and public
  - f. Summary of location context
  - g. Identification of issues
  - h. Consensus on purpose and need definition

- i. Consensus on evaluation criteria
- j. Alternatives development
- k. Investigation of environmental and cultural impacts of the alternatives
- l. Alternatives screening against evaluation criteria
- m. Preferred Alternative
- n. Mitigation measures for impacts
- o. Document decisions
- p. Track and meet all commitments



Figure 1. CONTEXT-SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

CONTEXT-SENSITIVE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN FOR LOCATION STUDY PROJECTS

## NM 14 Cerrillos Road Improvements MP 52.04 to MP 53.73 (St. Michaels to St. Francis) Context Sensitive Solutions Public Involvement Plan

Control Number: S100680

October 5, 2020

Prepared for:



and



Prepared by:



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Introduction

This document serves as the Context Sensitive Solutions Public Involvement Plan (CSSPIP) for the NM 14 Cerrillos Road Improvements from MP 52.04 to MP 53.73 (St. Michaels to St. Francis) in Santa Fe, New Mexico (Control Number S100680). Cerrillos Road is designated as State Highway 14 (NM 14) and is a major thoroughfare in the Santa Fe metropolitan area transportation system. Cerrillos Road is one of Santa Fe’s key transportation and land use corridors and one of its most heavily traveled roadways. The corridor is multimodal with diverse land uses including small retail shops, schools, and large employers. Commuter mobility and local circulation are important functions for this segment of Cerrillos Road.

The purpose of the proposed improvements to Cerrillos Road from St. Michaels Drive to St. Francis Drive is to enhance mobility for vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian travel, to address physical deficiencies of the existing transportation facilities, and to better manage traffic flow.

The CSSPIP is a dynamic document that will evolve as the study progresses. It is expected that new issues may be identified as stakeholders are informed and involved in the process. Methods to involve stakeholders may also change to maximize outreach and provide the best opportunities for input.

In the end, the CSSPIP strives to incorporate public involvement and active stakeholder participation into the study development process to produce transportation projects that fit within the context of the community, natural resource mitigations, and visual enhancements, and respond to the needs of the community.

Goals of the Collaboration with the Community

Public involvement and consideration of the project setting and context are a fundamental component of the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Location Study Procedures. This scoping study seeks to provide transparency, seek feedback and lead collaboration with the community and stakeholders affected in the study area.

With this CSSPIP, the NMDOT, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the City of Santa Fe (CoSF) intend to meet the following goals through collaboration with the community:

- To establish the project context and identify major issues;
- To identify project stakeholders; and
- To develop a decision-making process that is sensitive to the project context, involves stakeholders in a meaningful way, and leads to development of a preferred alternative that is consistent with transportation, environmental, cultural, community, land use and economic contexts in the project area.

Enhancing mobility for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and multi-modal users, addressing physical deficiencies of the existing transportation facilities, and better managing traffic flow are the main objectives of the NM 14 Cerrillos Road Improvements project. Data regarding traffic counts, crashes/accidents, traffic flow, and conflict areas will be gathered and vetted with the public to establish the purpose and need for the project.

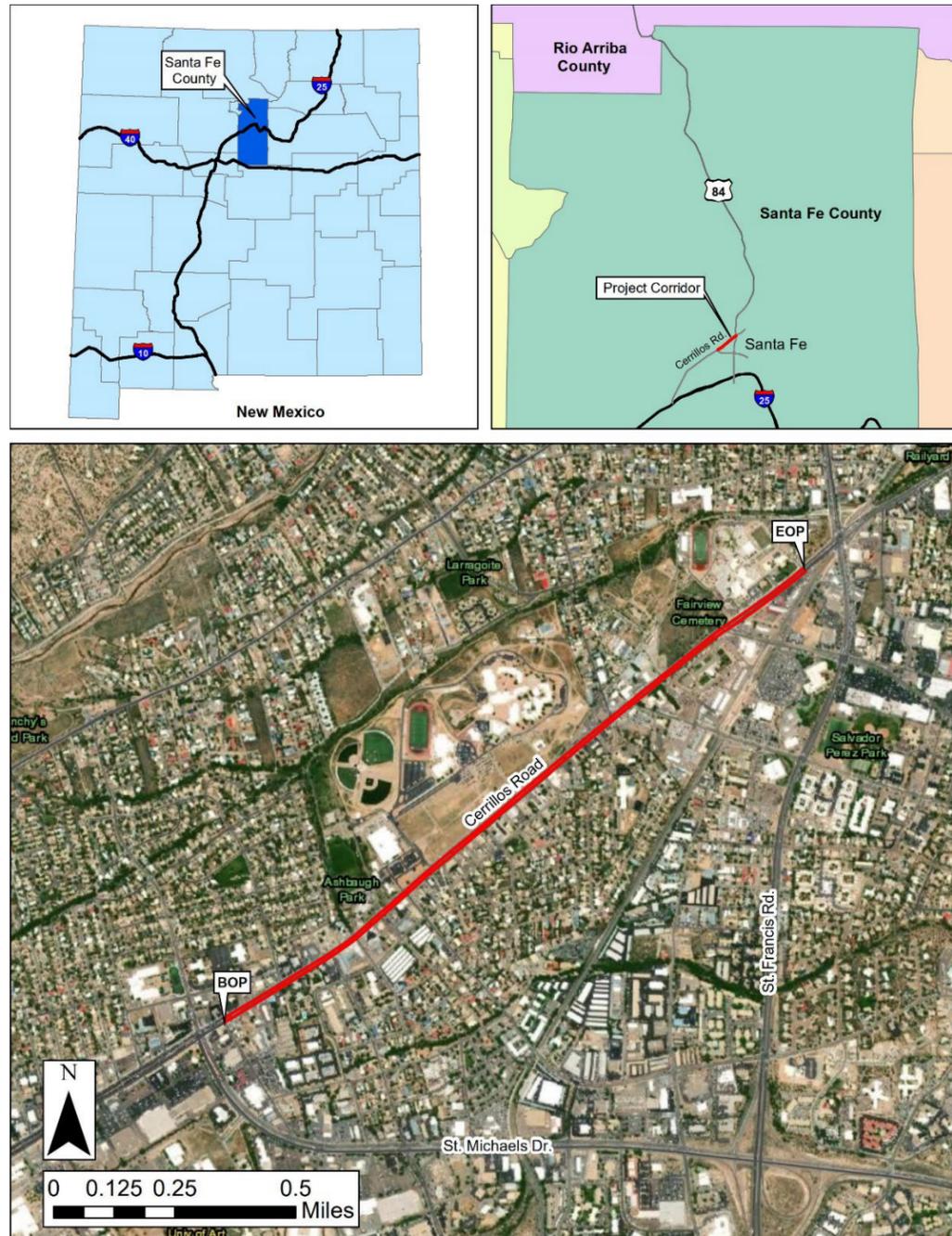


Figure 1: Project Map

### Analyses of the Background Context

The following sections provide additional background and context as it relates to the environmental setting, historical context, local economics and land use, transportation facilities, community composition, visual resources and public health considerations within the study limits.

#### Environmental Setting

The NM 14 corridor is situated within the U.S Environmental Protection Agency Level IV North Central New Mexico Valleys and Mesas ecoregion, which is part of the larger Arizona/New Mexico

Plateau region. This ecoregion is generally characterized by mesas, valleys, piedmont slopes, deep canyons, and a few scattered hills (Griffith et al., 2006).

The Santa Fe Mountains, to the east of the city, round out the Sangre de Cristo range. Its tallest mountain, Truchas Peak, is 13,107 feet. Several arroyos and streams flow from these mountain canyons, namely the Santa Fe River, now an ephemeral-intermittent stream that runs through the city and to the Rio Grande.

The area is on flat to gently sloping plateau gradually increasing in elevation toward the mountains north of Santa Fe. The Santa Fe area is characterized by its range in elevations, 6,700 ft in the city to over 13,000 in the Santa Fe National Forest. These elevations create several biomes which include a grassland/woodlands transition zone, coniferous forest (6,000 ft – 9,500 ft), and subalpine and alpine zones (over 9,500 ft). Sagebrush and grasses dominate the lower elevations, Piñon pine and junipers dominate the transition zone, Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine, and aspen woodlands at mid-elevations, and spruce fir forests at high elevation. These biomes support a diversity of wildlife including elk, black bear, mule deer, deer, rabbits, rattlesnakes, as well as a wide variety of bird and aquatic species.

#### Historic

Prior to European settlement, the Santa Fe area was occupied by the Pueblo people, who had established several villages in the area. Spanish colonists began to arrive in the late 1500's to settle the land as part of New Spain. Throughout the historic period, Santa Fe had been settled and resettled many times by Puebloan and Spanish peoples.

Santa Fe was located near the northern terminus of the Camino Real, a long-established trade route between Mexico City and Santa Fe and in 1821, the Santa Fe Trail was completed which linked the area to the eastern United States. After the end of the Mexican-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, New Mexico became a territory of the US and the Anglo-Hispanic population in the area began to grow, particularly after the arrival of the railroad in 1880.

By the mid-17th century, the land north and south of the Santa Fe River was irrigated by acequia systems which encouraged agricultural activity and economic growth in the area. By the 20th century, mineral exploration and extraction became an important industry and the area transitioned from sheep farming to mining. New Mexico attained statehood in 1912. During this time, the city began to grow outward from the plaza, the city center, and became the state's capital.

As the City of Santa Fe continued to experience growth in the early 20th century, Cerrillos Road began to develop as a commercial corridor in the 1930's. Cerrillos Road continues to serve as a critical regional transportation corridor and a commercial and retail center for residents as well as tourists.

#### Land Use

Lands within and surrounding the project consist of dense urban development with local and chain businesses, community facilities, and private property owners. Types of businesses vary, and include restaurants, retail, automotive repair, and animal care. Community facilities include the Santa Fe School of the Deaf, Santa Fe Indian School, Fairview Cemetery, Ashbaugh Park, Santa Fe Fire Department Station 3 and the Santa Fe Indian Hospital.

**Transportation**

Cerrillos Road is designated as State Highway 14 (NM 14) and is a major thoroughfare in the Santa Fe metropolitan area transportation system. Cerrillos Road is one of Santa Fe’s key transportation and land use corridors and one of its most heavily traveled roadways. Commuter mobility and local circulation are important functions for this segment of Cerrillos Road. No improvements to the St. Michaels Drive or St. Francis Drive intersections are planned.

This project represents the fourth and final phase of the combined NMDOT and CoSF effort to upgrade Cerrillos Road from Airport Road to St. Francis Drive. The NMDOT and CoSF are in the process of executing a road exchange agreement transferring the ownership and maintenance of Cerrillos Road along this entire length to the CoSF once this final phase is completed.

Per the Traffic Volume Development Report, the roadway saw an average daily traffic of 33,479 in 2019. The highway also sees some truck traffic. Per the 2017 AADTT Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic on State Owned and Maintained Roads, the average daily truck traffic is 2,297, which includes 1,262 Single Trucks and 1,035 Combo Trucks (NMDOT).

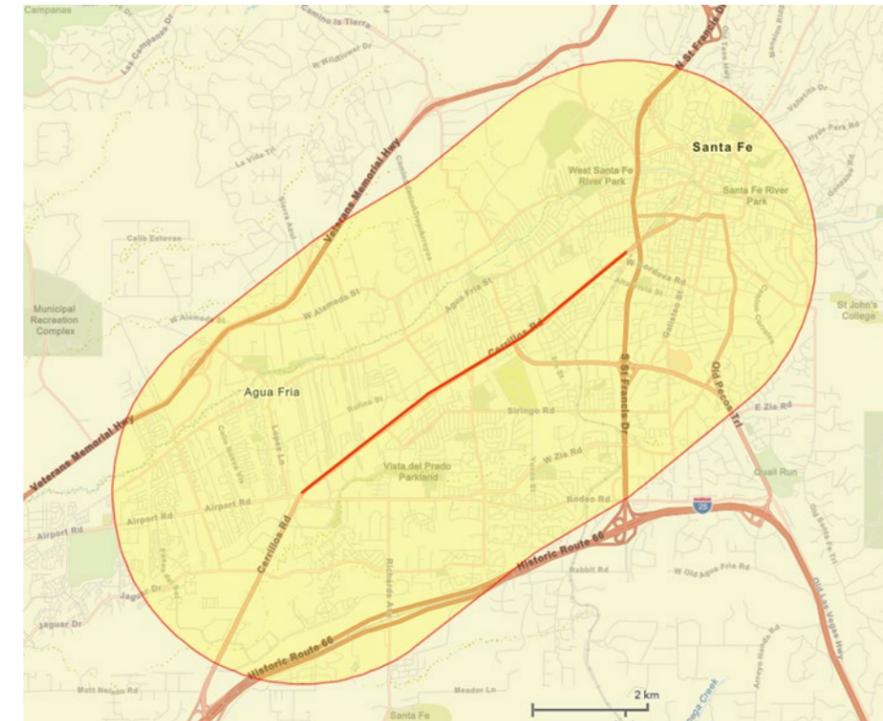
**Community**

Numerous community services are present in and around the project area, this includes the Santa Fe Indian Hospital, Santa Fe School for the Deaf, Santa Fe Fire Department Station 3, the Fairview Cemetery, the James A Little Theater, and the New Mexico Department of Transportation office. Several businesses exist along this project corridor, including small retail, large chain retail stores, a hostel, hotels, automotive repair and sales. Residential neighborhoods are also located near the project area and may be impacted.

Federal guidelines for Environmental Justice afford all communities and individuals, regardless of race, national origin, or income protection from disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental impacts. Specifically, environmental justice aims to identify and address these high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations and provide them access to public information and the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau was obtained via the Economic Profile System (EPS) and the EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN), both of which use federal data to map, assess, and compare demographic characteristics based on specific geographies. EJSCREEN combines environmental and demographic indicators, using customized analysis areas via an interactive mapping interface, to identify minority and/or low-income populations, as well as potential environmental quality issues of concern to those groups.

Approximately, 85% of the population in the study area is Caucasian which is higher than the state average, which is 38% (Figure 2). Approximately 12% of the population surrounding the study area is low-income compare to the state average of 16% low income.



**Figure 2: Demographic Study Area Location Map**

Additionally, the American Community Survey shares additional demographic information for the communities within the study area, as described in Table 1 (American Fact Finder - American Community Survey), which provides an overview of demographic characteristics for Santa Fe City in comparison with Santa Fe County and the State of New Mexico.

**Table 1: Demographic Overview for the Study Area, Santa Fe City, Santa Fe County, and New Mexico**

Characteristics	Study Area (2-mile radius)	Santa Fe City	Santa Fe County	New Mexico
<b>Population</b>				
- Total Population	68,562	70,913	147,514	2,084,828
- Median Age	-	42.8	45.3	36.7
- Percent under 18	20%	18%	19%	24%
- Percent over 65	19%	22%	21%	16%
<b>Percentage of Population Growth</b>				
- 2010 to 2018 % Change	-	+24.1%	+3.8%	+1.4%
<b>Race and Ethnicity (Percent)*</b>				
- Caucasian (White)	85%	86%	83%	38%
- Native American	3%	2%	4%	9%
- African American (Black)	1%	1%	1%	2%
- Asian	1%	1%	1%	1%
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%
- Other Race	8%	6%	9%	0%
- Two or more races	2%	3%	1%	2%

- Hispanic Ethnicity	58%	50%	51%	48%
<b>Income</b>				
- Percent Low-Income	12%	11%	11%	16%
- Per Capita Income	\$32,508	\$39,468	\$35,801	\$25,257
<b>Language Spoken at Home (percent)</b>				
- English	62%	67%	66%	65%
- Spanish	34%	30%	30%	28%
- Other Indo-European Languages	0%	1%	1%	0%
- Asian and Pacific Islander Languages	0%	1%	0%	1%
- Other Languages	1%	1%	1%	5%

Source: 2013-2017 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, American Community Survey (US Census Bureau)

\* Data may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Note: Hispanic population can be of any race.

**Visual Resources**

Visual resources (the landscape) consist of landform (topography and soils), vegetation, bodies of water (lakes, streams, and rivers), and human-made structures (roads, buildings, and modifications of the land, vegetation, and water). These elements of the landscape can be described in terms of their form, line, color, and texture.

The Sangre de Cristo Mountains are visible to the east of the road and the Jemez Mountains are visible to the west. The project area is an urban environment with commercial buildings of various architectural styles, time periods, and materials.



**Figure 4: Viewshed of Cerrillos Road facing Northeast**

**Economic**

Cerrillos Road serves as a major roadway influencing economic opportunities within the City. As discussed, there are several businesses located within the study area. Cerrillos Road is a Principal arterial that provides connectivity to neighborhoods, schools, and local businesses within the City of Santa Fe. The corridor also connects to the Old Town Plaza, which is a key tourist destination within the city.

**Public Health**

A holistic approach to public health includes elements such as air quality, safety, active transportation, and access to medical care. Santa Fe County is in attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards as established by the Environmental Protection Agency under the authority of the Clean Air Act, and therefore, the air quality of Santa Fe County is generally considered to be good.

The Santa Fe Fire Department Station 3 is located within the project corridor near Ashbaugh Park and at the northeastern edge of the project area. The fire department serves the center of the City in the protection and prevention of loss of life and property as well as the delivery of emergency services.

The Santa Fe Indian Hospital is located within the project area and serves nine pueblos. There are additional Santa Fe area hospitals outside of the project area, primarily on St. Michaels Drive, that provide emergency room and outpatient services that use Cerrillos Road as a route for ambulance service. As such, emergency response issues should be considered in addressing transportation needs for the corridor.

**Modal Considerations and Connectivity**

Motorized vehicles are the primary mode of transportation through the study area. There is some commercial traffic in addition to the standard passenger-sized vehicles.

There are continuous, variable-width pedestrian sidewalks along Cerrillos Road, as well as roadway shoulders used as bike lanes in both directions. In some areas the pavement is degraded and in poor condition. This project will consider improvements to multi-modal connections in the project area.

There is an access point to a connector trail to the Acequia Trail to the east of the Santa Fe Fire Station 3. Additionally, there is also a trail access point near the Railfan Road/Odd Fellows Hall and several proposed trail connections around the S. Capital Station and Railyard Park.

There are several bus transit routes within the project corridor and Santa Fe Trails has numerous bus stop locations in the corridor, including ones with shelters.

**Opportunities to Express Local Values**

Opportunities to express local values will be addressed in the areas of roadway design, traffic safety, traffic calming, and landscaping. Per the City of Santa Fe General Plan, the project area is targeted for mixed-use development, including commercial, residential and institutional uses.

It is expected that stakeholders will guide the development of aesthetic enhancements. Such enhancements may blend with the landscape in terms of color, texture, shape, and form. This segment of Cerrillos does not serve as a gateway/entranceway to the City, but rather is adjacent to prior phases of improvements along this corridor.

**Roadway and Traffic Features**

Cerrillos Road/NM 14 is classified as a Principal Arterial. This classification is not expected to change as a result of this project. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour.

## Aesthetic Treatments

The Context Sensitive Solutions approach considers the total context within which a transportation improvement project will exist, including aesthetic resources, while maintaining safety and mobility. Cerrillos Road is an aesthetically pleasing urban road. The study will consider the optimal use of existing right-of-way although an alternative in consideration would require additional right-of-way. Any aesthetic treatments considered or developed as part of the study would need to blend with the visual context of the area in color, texture, and shape and be in harmony with the previous Cerrillos Road corridor improvements.

## Scale the Solution to the Problem

### Affordability and Timeliness

The feasibility of implementing roadway improvements identified will be based on funding availability and priority within NMDOT District 5 when compared to implementing other projects. Roadway improvements identified during the scoping study will also be prioritized by cost and the ability to design and implement the improvements in a timely manner.

### Supported by the Community

An essential part of the study development process is community and agency stakeholder support. Residents of the Santa Fe community will be invited to participate in virtual public involvement events. The NMDOT anticipates traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety, improvements to roadway rideability, the potential interruptions to Cerrillos Road traffic during construction, and changes to driveways and access points to be of most interest to the public. Once the concerns and issues of the study area have been identified, stakeholders (area residents, traveling public, tourists, business owners, agencies, etc.) will be asked to provide input on solutions to these issues. Their input will be considered and used to refine the study recommendations.

## Design Approach

The Location Study Procedures, Context Sensitive Solutions, and public involvement will be incorporated into the scoping study process and will be integrated into the alternatives development and design, which will focus on meeting the needs of the traveling public and local community.

### Identification of Stakeholders and the Public

Stakeholders for the project can be divided into the following categories: 1) those directly impacted by the study and have a vested interest in study decisions; 2) those indirectly impacted by the study because they use Cerrillos Road as part of their travel route related to tourism or business travel; and Government entities or service providers within and surrounding the study area.

#### Directly Impacted Stakeholders

- Residents and Community Members
- Business owners
- Commuters
- Schools (Santa Fe Indian School, New Mexico School of the Deaf, Santa Fe Public Schools)
- School bus drivers
- Local utilities (power lines, telephone – fiber optic, electrical, sanitary sewer, water, gas, cable TV, signal systems)

- Bicyclists and pedestrians
- Santa Fe Bike Trail Advisory Committee
- Santa Fe Transit Department
- Santa Fe Trails
- Emergency Service Providers (Santa Fe Fire Department Station 3, Ambulance, Police)
- United States Postal Service
- Santa Fe Railyard Corporation
- Freight and other trucking companies
- Private landowners

#### Indirectly Impacted Stakeholders

- Tourists
- Local economic development groups (including chamber of commerce)
- General public
- Community groups/neighborhood associations
- Santa Fe bike community and other interest groups

Additionally, there are many agencies with jurisdictional authority over the infrastructure, environmental resources, and/or land use within the project area, such as:

- Elected officials
- City of Santa Fe
- City of Santa Fe Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Santa Fe County
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- New Mexico Environmental Department
- New Mexico Office of Cultural Affairs, Historic Preservation Division
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Federal Highway Administration

### Consensus on Purpose and Need definition

In coordination with the NMDOT, the study team will seek to obtain a consensus on the project purpose, need, issues, and goals. Issues will be identified through discussions with stakeholders and the public.

Anticipated issues include the following:

- Improving rideability of Cerrillos Road through the study area;
- Improving ADA and multi-modal connectivity;
- Maintaining access for traffic in both directions during the project improvements and construction; and
- Improving drainage throughout the corridor.

### Project-Specific Communication Strategy

Coordinated agency and stakeholder engagement is critical for the success of this project. The project team anticipates stakeholders will have concerns regarding access to their residences and businesses during construction and traffic impacts during construction. While federal and state government-mandated COVID-19 emergency precautions remain in effect, such as social distancing and ‘stay-at-home’, Public Involvement Plans will focus on alternatives to traditional stakeholder and agency gatherings, public meetings, and open houses until further notice. The safety, health, and well-being of our team and the communities we serve is paramount.

The project team will make every effort to keep agency and stakeholder representatives informed of project progress and invite feedback using the following strategies. The approach will be adjusted as needed based on input from the NMDOT and FHWA. Within a half mile of the project location, 10-11% of the population has limited English speaking ability, which likely consist of Spanish- and Native American-speaking individuals. Appropriate methods for language inclusion will be incorporated into the public involvement communication strategy in accordance with FHWA Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*.

#### Public Meetings

- **Agency scoping:** Standard scoping letters will be drafted on behalf of NMDOT and sent to pertinent land managing and regulatory agencies, area business and neighborhood associations, and pertinent community organizations, such as Santa Fe Trails and bicycle advocacy groups.
- **Business owner interviews and agency coordination meetings:** Coordination of regular audio or audio-video meetings with agency stakeholders will occur through the normal consultation process. Business owner interviews and potentially focal-group meetings will also occur. In-person meetings are not feasible at this time. NMDOT will conduct on-going coordination with key stakeholders, including the CoSF, the Santa Fe Indian School, and the Santa Fe Indian Hospital. Periodic briefings and/or presentations may be provided to other stakeholders to coincide with major milestones and/or on an as-requested or as-needed basis determined in collaboration with the NMDOT.
- **Public involvement meeting(s):** While emergency precautions are being implemented, methods for informing the public in-person are not feasible. FHWA approves using alternative measures for achieving public input due diligence. Public meetings will be held during appropriate stages in the project development process, as determined in cooperation with the NMDOT team. Specific to this project, there will be two public meetings during Phase 1A/B. The meeting dates, times, locations, and purpose will be announced at least 2 weeks in advance, using the following outlets, as feasible:
  - Meeting notices sent via mail or email to landowners, businesses, and schools adjacent to the study area, and to agency stakeholders;
    - Every Door Direct U.S. Postal Service cardstock mailers or electronic notification to a master mailing list may be used
  - Public announcements in local newspaper (*Santa Fe New Mexican*) and local radio stations, including KSFR, KANW, KRAR, and KRRE;

- Meeting notice posted on the NMDOT Projects website;
- Meeting notice posted through NMDOT’s and CoSF’s social media outlets, Facebook and Twitter;
- Meeting notice distributed through the NMDOT and CoSF Public Information Officers; or
- Other notification methods chosen by the project team.

The public meeting format will be a virtual meeting platform scaled to the context of the local community and the project purpose and need. All public meeting-related materials would be posted on the NMDOT Projects website for public viewing, <https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>. The structure and content of the public meeting (to be reviewed and approved by the NMDOT) could include the following:

- A virtual town hall public meeting that combines the use of active phone (landline and mobile) participation in tandem with live audio-video internet streaming;
  - The meeting style mimics a radio show and is facilitated similar to in-person meetings with a moderator, combined verbal/Power Point presentation, and Question and Answer interaction between the development team and participating public.
- A pre-recorded, static audio/video informational event with a Power Point presentation for subsequent posting on the NMDOT Projects website; or
- Other methods chosen by the project team.

The public would have 30 days to provide comments through all of the traditional methods, except in-person. Following closure of the public comment period, a Public Involvement Summary Report will be prepared to document public input and concerns and aid in refining the alternatives. Additional correspondence, email updates, and/or focus-group meetings may be held as determined necessary during the study progress.

### Alternatives Development

The study team will conduct necessary evaluations to complete a draft engineering scoping report which will describe the preliminary alternatives and evaluate how each addresses the project purpose and need. These initial alternatives will be presented to the public for input and feedback. public input will assist with identifying a recommend alternative for further analysis.

### Preferred Alternative

The results of the scoping analysis and public feedback on the initial alternatives will be used to inform the study team’s development, analysis, and recommendation of a preferred alternative. Through the project development process, NMDOT will develop a preferred alternative that will be evaluated during Phase IC. A National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliant document and cultural and biological resources investigations will be completed during Phase IC to analyze the preferred alternative. The NEPA document will include mitigation and minimization measures, as needed. This preferred alternative will be advanced for further detailed engineering.

### Decision Process

All of the above elements will be used in the decision-making process. All decisions and commitments made during the Cerrillos Road Improvements Project will be documented and included as part of the administrative record to comply with NEPA. Public and stakeholder participation, engineering, constructability, environmental resources, and any other pertinent criteria will be considered during the project development process to help inform the decision-making process.

All decisions will be transparent to all stakeholders and will include explanations on how decisions were reached. These decisions, including any mitigations and commitments, will be documented in meeting summaries that will be made available to stakeholders. While comprehensive public and stakeholder input will be sought, the NMDOT and FHWA will have responsibility for making final decisions. Figure 5 below illustrates the decision-making process.

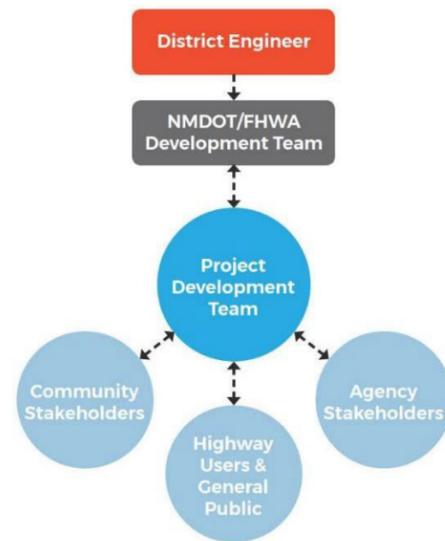


Figure 5: Graphic of the decision-making process

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## I-40 Corridor Study, Arizona to Albuquerque, Milepost 0 to 150 Public Involvement Plan

Prepared for  
CN 6101580



August 2022

Prepared by  
**Parametrix**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American Community Survey
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
CN	Construction Number
EJ	Environmental Justice
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
MP	milepost
mph	miles per hour
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NMSLO	New Mexico State Land Office
PDE	Project Development Engineering
PIP	public involvement plan
TPOs	Transportation Planning Organizations
US	United States

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides the context sensitive public involvement plan (PIP) for the I-40 Corridor Study, Construction Number (CN) 6101580. The I-40 Corridor Study covers 150 miles of I-40 from the Arizona State Line at milepost (MP) 0 to the Atrisco Vista Interchange in Albuquerque at MP 150 as shown in Exhibit 1. I-40 is the primary east-west route connecting communities through central New Mexico to Arizona and Texas. I-40 is a primary freight route in the United States that travels to and through New Mexico. The purpose of the I-40 Corridor Study is to identify corridor needs, develop and evaluate alternatives, and develop a Highway Operational Improvement Plan to address existing and future operation and safety needs for this section of I-40 and adjacent frontage roads.

### Exhibit 1. Study Area Map



The purpose of this PIP is to establish goals for public involvement and stakeholder coordination and identify the methods that will be used to inform and involve consulting agencies and tribes, stakeholders, and the public throughout the I-40 Corridor Study. The PIP is intended to be a dynamic document; as activities are undertaken, the PIP methods may be revised and updated to reflect new information and the best methods for engaging the public and agencies involved with the project.

A general outline for NMDOT PIPs is established by the NMDOT in the document “Context Sensitive Public Involvement Plan for Location Study Projects.” These guidelines establish a suggested outline for PIPs, which include 1) PIP goals; 2) project background and context; 3) consideration of travel modes and connections; 4) identification of opportunities to express local values; 5) scaling the solution/recommendations to identified issues; and 6) the public involvement approach consistent with the above.

## 2. GOALS OF THIS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

The goals of the PIP for the I-40 Corridor Study are to inform, engage, and involve the public, elected officials, tribes, agencies, and key stakeholders throughout the study as it pertains to the project analysis, development of alternatives and recommendations, and decisions. Involving the public, communities, and community leaders in the development of the I-40 Corridor Study will help the project team develop recommendations and a Highway Operational Improvement Plan that reflects community values; integrates the needs and safety of highway users and the communities served by the highway;

and results long-term improvements to I-40 that are in accord with the environment, are sustainable, and provide lasting value.

## 3. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

### 3.1 Landscape

The study area is located in western New Mexico and crosses the Arizona/New Mexico Plateau and the Arizona/New Mexico Mountains (Griffith, G.E., et al 2006). The Arizona/New Mexico Plateau is considered a transitional zone between its surrounding ecoregions that include the Colorado Plateaus, the Mojave Basin, and forested mountains. The area includes topographic features such as mesas, plateaus, valleys, and volcanic features such as malpais and volcanic rocks. Vegetation in this area often includes grasses such as grama and dropseeds as well as shrubs such as saltbushes, sages, and sacatons. Junipers are common in this region and in certain locations ponderosa pines and Douglas firs can be found. The Lava Malpais region is home to some species not found across the rest of New Mexico, and species with specialized adaptations (Griffith et al. 2006).

The Arizona/New Mexico Mountains is a mountainous area, but typically has lower elevations and warmer, drier climates. Often these mountains are surrounded by deserts or grasslands. Within the study area, I-40 and adjacent frontage roads cross the Conifer Woodlands and Savanna ecoregion, which are typically higher in elevation than the Arizona/New Mexico Plateau. Vegetation in this area is mostly pinyon-juniper woodlands with grasslands and shrublands occurring in pockets (Griffith et al. 2006).

### 3.2 Historic Context

As mentioned above, the study area crosses through several different zones, and parallels much of the Rio San Jose River. This environmental variability provides access to a variety of natural resources that have been used throughout prehistory. As a result of this access to natural resources, the study area and surrounding vicinity have been inhabited for millennia. Paleoindian hunter/gatherers traveled through the area as early as 10,000 B.C. with permanent habitation dating back to 6500 B.C. and the remains of prehistoric pueblo residences that date to 100 A.D. Native American presence along the corridor is still prominent with modern Native American communities in the general vicinity including Acoma, Laguna, and Zuni pueblos, as well as the Navajo communities of Church Rock, Tohajilee, and Ya-ta-hey.

The study area also forms a natural east/west travel corridor ranging from prehistoric trails to stagecoach routes, railroads, and modern highways. Modern transportation first came to the area in the 1880s when the railroad was established to facilitate movement of livestock and access to mining resources throughout this part of New Mexico. Later, in 1926, the first alignment of Route 66 was developed along a route that mostly paralleled the railroad. Then, beginning in 1957, I-40 slowly began replacing Route 66 through this part of the state. These modern travel modes encouraged development of cities along the route such as Gallup and Grants. Gallup was initially a small stage stop and Grants was a homestead until the arrival of the railroad, and later Route 66, spurred their growth into the larger population centers seen today. Development of Route 66 began in the mid 1920's. by the end of 1937, Route 66 was paved throughout New Mexico, making Route 66 New Mexico's first fully paved highway. (New Mexico Museum of Art 2022). I-40 was built in the 1960s, replacing some sections of the former Route 66 and in other areas, I-40 took a modified route and old sections of Route 66 became frontage roads or became parts of other state highways, county, or tribal roads. Route 66 is a tourist destination

for many and is identified as a State and National Scenic Byway and has buildings, districts, and road segments listed on the National Register of Historic Places (US Department of the Interior 2022).

### 3.3 Land Ownership, Land Use, and Economics

I-40 and adjacent frontage roads cross land owned by multiple agencies including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the New Mexico State Land Office (NMSLO), the Department of Defense, the United States (US) Forest Service, the National Park Service, and several different tribes (BLM 2022). A large portion of the study area is located on tribal lands owned by the Laguna Pueblo, Acoma Pueblo, and the Navajo Nation Reservation. The Zuni Reservation is located several miles south of the study area and has traditionally used lands in the study area. A large portion of the study area is surrounded by private lands. There are several communities located along I-40, the largest of them include the towns of Gallup, the Grants/Milan area, and the western portion of Albuquerque.

Land uses in the area include residences, outdoor recreation areas and industries and uses such as mining, oil and gas extraction, education, medical facilities, hospitality/casinos, energy, and retail. Recreational areas include Mt. Taylor, Bluewater Lake, El Malpais and El Morro National Monuments, and other state parks and landmarks of interest. Several trails intersect or are located near the corridor, the most prominent being the Continental Divide Trail near Grants. Smaller trails include Mentmore hiking trail, the North Hogbacks trail, and other trails that are part of the 22 miles of trail located in Gallup's High Desert Trail System. Other trails are located near the I-40 corridor, including several located in Cibola National Forest just south of Fort Wingate, near El Malpais National Monument, and around Mt. Taylor. These trails may be accessed, at least in part, by the I-40 corridor. Urban areas in the project such as Gallup and the Grants/Milan area are traditional mining towns, and the surrounding lands are still used for mining operations and natural gas extraction. The eastern limits enter the Albuquerque metropolitan area.

### 3.4 Transportation

New Mexico has three major interstate highways. I-25, which runs north-south from Colorado to I-10 (Las Cruces) and I-40, which runs east-west from Texas to Arizona; and I-10, which runs east-west in southern New Mexico, from Texas to Arizona through Las Cruces, NM. This section of I-40 is the primary east-west route to and through central New Mexico and is a primary freight route to and through New Mexico.

Motorized vehicles travelling on I-40 include passenger vehicles, freight, and buses. Transit services using I-40 include bus service provided by Greyhound and some local school buses and local transit services. Local and tribal transit services, including Laguna Transit, use adjacent frontage roads. I-40 is identified as an interstate facility in NMDOT's New Mexico Prioritized Statewide Bicycle Network Plan (NMDOT 2018). Bicyclists are permitted to ride on the shoulders of I-40 in the study area. The 34-mile section of I-40 from NM 124/Laguna Pueblo to Atrisco Vista in Albuquerque is on the proposed US Bicycle Route system. There are several frontage roads in the study area that have lower vehicle and truck volumes and are designated by NMDOT as Tier 1 bicycle routes, meaning they are prioritized for bicycle travel and have the greatest regional benefit as bikeways. These areas include the frontage roads along I-40 between Grants and the Arizona state line, including NM 118, NM 112, and NM 124 (NMDOT 2018). Pedestrian facilities in the study are limited to frontage roads near more urban areas, such as Grants and Gallup.

As shown previously on Exhibit 1, there are several frontage roads that parallel I-40 through much of the study area. Many of these are portions of the historic Route 66 or have become parts of other state highways. These roadways serve local traffic, including transit and bikes, and are sometimes used by vehicles as detour routes if there is an incident or closure on I-40.

I-40 parallels a major railroad owned and operated by the BNSF that provides critical transcontinental rail service through the southern United States. Amtrak passenger service is provided along I-40 via the Southwest Chief route connecting Chicago to Los Angeles, with train stations in Gallup and Albuquerque.

The elevation in the I-40 corridor varies, with several uphill and downhill grades, which can affect travel speeds and add to operational challenges between large trucks and passenger vehicles. At the Arizona state line, the area elevation is at about 6,600 feet above sea level. It rises to about 7,250 feet at the Continental Divide near MP 48 near Thoreau and then descends to about 5,500 feet near Albuquerque.

Within the study area, I-40 is a 4-lane divided highway with varying physical characteristics. Most of the corridor has lane widths of 12-feet with inside shoulder widths varying from 4-feet to 10-feet and outside shoulder widths varying 10-feet to 16-feet. Through most of the study area, I-40 functions as a rural interstate highway with a posted speed of 75 miles per hour (mph). There are some areas (such as the town of Gallup) where posted speeds drop to 65 mph. At the Arizona state line, I-40 has an average daily traffic volume of about 20,000 vehicles per day. East of the state line near downtown Gallup, traffic volumes increase incrementally to over 28,000 vehicles per day. East of Gallup, traffic volumes vary from 13,000 vehicles per day to 26,000 vehicles per day. Approaching Atrisco Vista Boulevard near Albuquerque, traffic volumes reach approximately 39,000 vehicles per day. The proportion of traffic represented by heavy trucks typically varies between 30 percent to 40 percent and can be higher in areas (NMDOT 2021). The majority of truck traffic (estimated at 85 percent) passes through the state to/from other origins and destinations (NMDOT 2015).

Frontage roads adjacent to I-40 are provided in some locations. In general, these frontage roads are 2-lane roadways that are located mostly near existing interchanges. The frontage roads provide access to residences near and around the interchanges at posted speed limits varying from 30 mph to 55 mph. Existing average daily traffic along frontage roads varies from approximately 400 vehicles per day to approximately 5,000 vehicles per day.

### 3.5 Communities

A total of 29 US census-identified communities are documented as existing within one mile of the project corridor. Many of these communities are considered part of unincorporated counties and/or tribal reservations. The largest of these communities are Gallup, Grants, and western outskirts of Albuquerque. Exhibit 2 lists census-identified communities within 1 mile of the project area.

#### Exhibit 2. Communities in the Study Area

Albuquerque	Gonzales	Prewitt
Allison	Grants	Rehoboth
Bluewater	Laguna	San Fidel
Budville	Manuelito	Seama
Casa Blanca	McCartys	South Chavez
Church Rock	Mesita	Thoreau
Coolidge	Milan	Twin Buttes
Defiance	New Laguna	Villa de Cubero
El Rito	North Chavez	Wingate
Gallup	Perea	

US census-identified communities located within one mile of the project area.

### 3.6 Community Demographics and Environmental Justice

Information on socioeconomic and demographics conditions for this project was derived from the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Environmental Justice (EJ) screening tool (EPA 2022). The EJ screening tool uses American Community Survey (ACS) and US Census data to provide environmental and demographic characteristics of a designated area. For this project, the most recent ACS data for the EJ screening tool was from 2015-2019.

The project has a population of approximately 17,367 living approximately ½-mile from I-40 in the study area. Of this population, about 14,316 (82 percent) identify as a person of color, including a Native American population of approximately 8,312 (48 percent) and a Hispanic population of approximately 5,759 (33 percent) (US Census Bureau 2022). These populations are a higher percentage than the state average of 63 percent but are similar to percentages seen in McKinley and Cibola counties (US Census Bureau 2022). The percentage of Native Americans are higher (48 percent) in the study area than New Mexico's state average of 11.2 percent (US Census Bureau 2022). Cibola and McKinley County have notably high Native American populations, about 44 percent and 80 percent respectively (US Census Bureau 2022). Linguistically isolated populations in the study area are about 5 percent, which is similar to what is seen across the state and McKinley and Cibola counties.

Economically, the project area has an unemployment rate of approximately 13 percent and a low-income population of 57 percent. Both values are above state averages of an unemployment rate of 7 percent and a low-income population of 41 percent. However, these percentages are similar to the unemployment rates and low-income populations of McKinley and Cibola counties. Additionally, the project area has a slightly higher population with less than a high school education at 20 percent compared to 14 percent for the state.

In addition to the EJ screening tool, the project team used the Justice40 Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool to identify areas that have been classified as disadvantaged as it pertains to issues of infrastructure, health conditions, socioeconomics, and other factors. The Justice40 Tool was developed by the Biden-Harris Administration for the purpose of tracking and delivering 40 percent of the benefits of federal investments in climate and clean energy, including sustainable transportation, to disadvantaged communities. This information is typically used as part of federal funding grant applications and the decision-making process to award federal funds to projects in areas identified as disadvantaged. To be classified as a disadvantaged community, a census tract must be above the

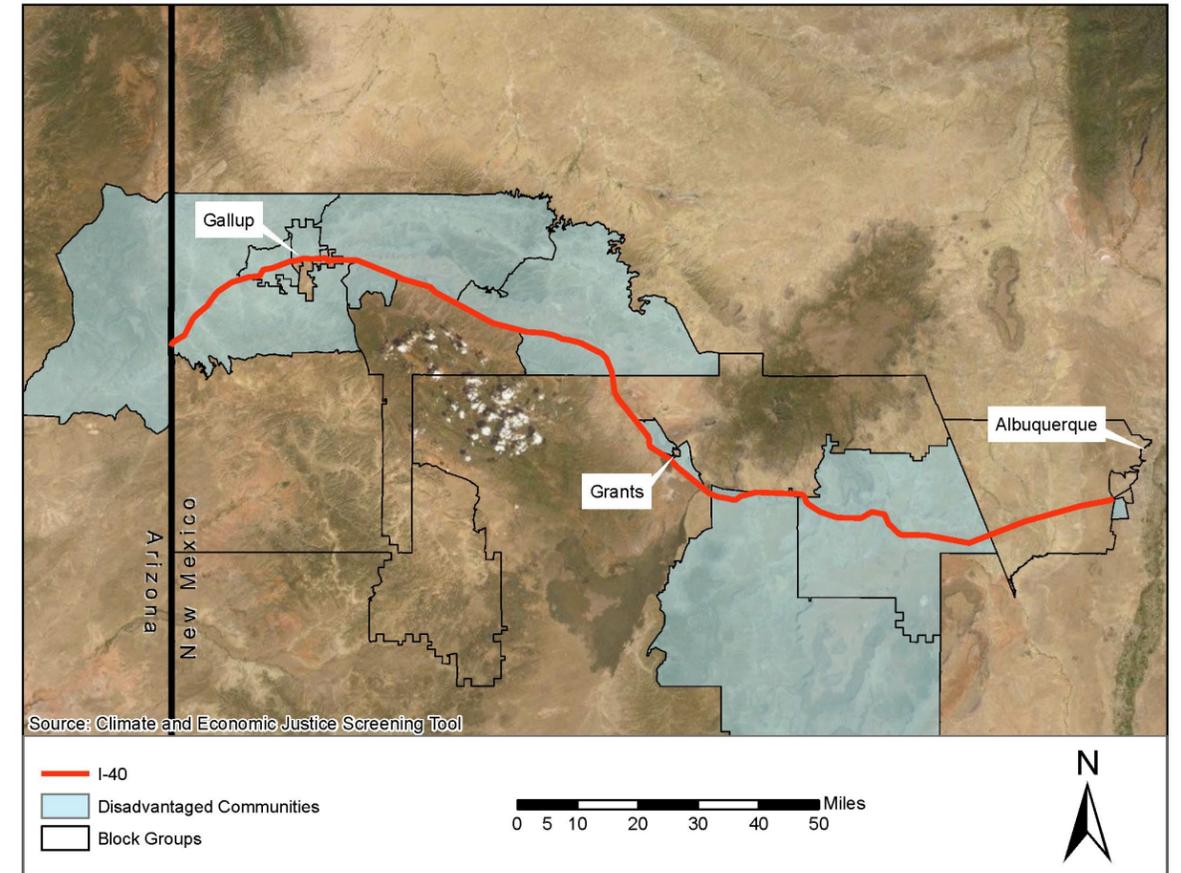
threshold for one or more environmental or climate indicators and it must be above the threshold for socioeconomic indicators. Within the state of New Mexico, the Justice40 Tool identifies just under 500 census tracts in the state of New Mexico and about 45 percent of these tracts are identified as being disadvantaged in one or more of the categories assessed.

Exhibit 3 lists disadvantaged census tracts in the study area and Exhibit 4 shows the locations of these tracts. The study area intersects with 20 census tracts and 13 of these tracts are classified as being disadvantaged in at least one climate or economic category. Many of these tracts are located on tribal lands. Based on this community information, engagement of the tribes and broader community will be critical to understanding the challenges faced in the area and the benefits and negative impacts of the proposed alternatives and recommendations (Justice40 2002).

**Exhibit 3. Census Tracts Identified as Disadvantaged**

Census Tract	Disadvantaged category
35001004736	Workforce development
35006946100	Health burdens, workforce development
35006941500	Clean energy and energy efficiency, Health burdens
35006974201	Legacy pollution, Health burdens, Workforce development
35006974400	Climate change, Legacy pollution, Workforce development
35031946000	Clean energy and energy efficiency, Health burdens, Workforce development
35031943600	Clean energy and energy efficiency, Health burdens, Workforce development
35031943901	Clean energy and energy efficiency, Health burdens, Workforce development
35031945300	Health burdens, workforce development
35031945200	Climate change
35031943902	Clean energy and energy efficiency, Health burdens, Workforce development
35031943901	Clean energy and energy efficiency, Health burdens, Workforce development
04001945002	Climate change, Health burdens, Workforce development

**Exhibit 4. Locations of Census Tracts Identified as Disadvantaged**



### 3.7 Visual

Wide open vistas are common throughout the I-40 study area and preserving the viewshed in these areas should be a consideration throughout the project development process. Additionally, I-40 travels through several communities, which could provide opportunities for gateway treatments or additional aesthetic enhancements. Prominent rock formations are common in the area and include Mount Taylor, red-rock formations, and malpais/volcanic rock formations near Grants. I-40 reaches its highest point at nearly 7,300 feet at the Continental Divide located between Gallup and Grants.



Example of rock formations found surrounding the project area. Mt. Taylor peak can be seen in the background



Example of unique malpais/volcanic rock landscape in the study area

### 3.8 Public Health and Safety

Public health issues related to I-40 and frontage roads are focused mostly on highway and roadway safety and air quality. One of the purposes of this study is to assess roadway safety and identify areas where improvements are needed. In addition, I-40 and the associated frontage road network provides critical access to healthcare and emergency services. When the interstate is blocked due to accidents or construction, this access can be compromised if there are not alternate routes. Identifying and constructing improvements to traffic operations and safety in this corridor could benefit public health by providing improved access to healthcare and community resources

New Mexico generally has good air quality and as such only has three counties that have had nonattainment levels of pollutants under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in the last 30 years. These counties are Dona Ana, Bernalillo, and Grant counties. The project area does enter Bernalillo County at its eastern end and this county has previously had NAAQS for Carbon monoxide (EPA Green Book 2022). However, Bernalillo County has been in attainment since 1995. Air quality is not anticipated to be an issue in the study area.

Public health considerations for the project will include implementing public involvement approaches that can engage the public in the broad 150-mile area and provide options that are accommodating to

ongoing concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these challenges, public meetings will most likely occur in a virtual format using Zoom. Most stakeholder meetings will also occur virtually, unless in-person meetings are requested by the stakeholder group.

## 4. TRAVEL MODES AND CONNECTIONS

Key considerations travel modes and connections for the I-40 Corridor Study are discussed below:

### Motor Vehicles and Trucks on I-40 and Frontage Roads

Due to the rural nature of the study area, key modal considerations on I-40 and frontage roads are focused on passenger vehicles and truck traffic. Transit in the study area is limited, but provides intra and inter-regional service that uses I-40 and adjacent frontage roads, that will be considered..

### Bicycles

For I-40, NMDOT does not designate interstates as part the priority bicycle network in New Mexico because the current design of these facilities includes wide shoulders and rumble strips that provide reasonable separation between motorists and bicyclists (NMDOT 2018). Similarly, frontage roads are generally excluded from NMDOT's priority bicycle network, though in some cases, frontage roads are also state highways and are generally designated as Tier 2 routes. An exception in the study area are the frontage roads along I-40 between Grants and the Arizona state line, including NM 118, NM 112, and NM 124, which are designated as Tier 1 routes.

High vehicle speeds and the high volume of truck traffic on I-40 may detract from the number of people who would feel safe using I-40 as a bikeway. However, in much of the study area, there are very few alternative routes for bicycle travel. Key considerations for the I-40 Corridor Study should include:

- Maintaining existing shoulder widths to support bicycle travel on I-40.
- Adding signage, where appropriate to either increase motorist awareness or identify connections from I-40 to local and regional bicycle routes (such as those located on frontage roads.
- On frontage roads, particularly those located between Grants and the Arizona state line, NM 118, NM 112, and NM 124 maintaining or expanding shoulder widths to have at least four feet of clear space should be a consideration, since these are identified as Tier 1 bicycle routes.

### Pedestrians

Pedestrian travel is not a key consideration on I-40 since it is an interstate route. Pedestrian facilities along frontage roads should be a consideration in urban areas, where there are nearby destinations for pedestrians.

## 5. OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPRESS LOCAL VALUES

One of the goals of the PIP is to provide opportunities for the public and key stakeholders to express local values. Opportunities to express local values for highway projects include considerations such as design speed, traffic calming, gateway treatments, and structural aesthetics (such as bridge design). For I-40, considerations will include gateway treatments, structural aesthetics, and preserving views. In

addition, for frontage roads, design speed, traffic calming, and potential improvements for nonmotorized travel will be key considerations.

## 6. SCALING THE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM

I-40 is a critical route for interstate, intrastate, and freight travel. It is the backbone of the transportation system in New Mexico and must meet the long-term travel needs of the state. The I-40 Corridor Study is needed to identify the short and long-term needs in the corridor. A key component of the I-40 Corridor Study is developing a Highway Operational Improvement Plan that will prioritize needed improvements for future implementation. The Highway Operational Improvement Plan will provide NMDOT with a plan that can be used to secure future project funding and move recommended improvements into design and construction. One of the reasons for completing the I-40 Corridor Study is to understand what improvements are needed and how to best phase/implement those improvements to create the greatest benefit to the public and highway users.

## 7. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT APPROACH

The public involvement approach for the I-40 Corridor Study will emphasize opportunities for stakeholders and public to provide input on all aspects of the study. This includes items such as the project purpose and need, corridor issues of concern, alternatives development, how alternatives will be evaluated, recommendations, and the preferred alternative. In addition, the public involvement approach will include opportunities for stakeholders and the public to express local values on design-specific aspects such as considerations for bicycles and aesthetic treatments of structures, as needed. The public involvement approach includes the following sub-sections:

- Section 7.1 Project-Specific Communications Strategy
- Section 7.2 Identification of Stakeholders and the Public
- Section 7.3 Decision-Making Process
- Section 7.4 Tracking Commitments

### 7.1 Project-Specific Communications Strategy

Several communications methods are planned to inform and involve the public as described below. As noted in Section 3.8 Public Health and Safety, public health considerations for the project will include implementing public involvement approaches that can engage the public in the broad 150-mile area and provide options that are accommodating to ongoing concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To address these challenges, public meetings will most likely occur in a virtual format using Zoom or other similar platform. Most stakeholder meetings will also occur virtually, unless in-person meetings are requested by the stakeholder group.

#### 7.1.1 Project Website

##### 7.1.1.1 External/Public Project Website

The project team will develop and maintain a project website where project information will be available to the public throughout the I-40 Corridor Study. To maintain consistency with other NMDOT

public websites, the website will be developed to look like NMDOT's existing web template/project webpages using similarly layouts, fonts, colors, and logos. The website will include short, easy-to-read project information on topics such as the proposed project purpose and need, existing conditions, proposed alternatives. The website will also include public meeting announcements and meeting links; public meeting presentations; maps, including GIS-based story maps; comment forms, public surveys; public meeting notes, and information on how people can be added to the project contact list. The website will be developed with input from NMDOT staff and will be launched prior to the first public meeting, expected in the fall of 2022. The website will serve as the primary source of information for the public, and printouts of information will be available upon request.

### 7.1.1.2 Internal Team Website

The project team will develop and maintain an internal team project website to share information between the consultant team and NMDOT staff. This website will be GIS-based and will serve as a tool to keep team members in the loop on project information that can be shared. The internal website will evolve over time and will ultimately contain the available data for the I-40 Corridor Study. The consultant team maintains the web portal, but it is hosted by NMDOT and project information will be hosted on various web-maps that will provide NMDOT with the electronic information for the project throughout the life of the study and beyond. The internal website includes project team documents, such as the project scope and team contact information; web maps, data, and resources; and meeting presentations and notes. The internal website was developed at the beginning of the project in May 2022 and is located at <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/ebd887067300470fb13448ed63f5808e>. Please contact Stephanie Miller at [smiller@parametrix.com](mailto:smiller@parametrix.com) or 720.412.6646 if you need the username and password to access the site.

## 7.1.2 Public Meetings

The project team plans to host three virtual public meetings throughout the I-40 Corridor Study to present key findings and invite public comments and feedback. The three public meetings will focus on:

1. Meeting 1 will focus on introducing the project, explaining how people can be involved, and sharing information about existing conditions, project needs, and discussing a range of alternatives. In this meeting, the project team will be asking the public for input on key issues to consider and getting their feedback on corridor need, the range of alternatives, and evaluation criteria. This meeting is expected to occur in the fourth quarter of 2022.
2. Meeting 2 will describe the initial alternatives evaluation and recommendations for alternatives that should be evaluated in detail. The public will be asked to comment on the alternatives evaluation and recommendations. This meeting is expected to occur in the first quarter of 2023.
3. Meeting 3 will focus on the preferred alternative/s and will present and ask for public input on the Highway Operational Improvement Plan. This meeting is expected to occur in third quarter of 2023.

People will be notified of public meetings through several different methods, including:

- A public meeting announcement that invites people to the public meeting and provides information on where/how to access the project website or contact the project team directly for project information. This announcement will be sent to organizations and individuals that are included in the project contact list that is discussed in Section 7.2. The announcement will be sent via email, unless the individual does not have an email address or has requested

information to be sent via postal mail. The project contact list is expected to grow and evolve over time as described in Section 7.2.

- Social media contacts will receive a social media package with information that can be shared in community newsletters, electronic message boards, listservs, radio, and social media such as Facebook.
- A press release will be provided to newspaper and radio contacts, in addition, the project team will publish a public meeting advertisement in up to two local newspapers per direction from the NMDOT.

Public meeting notifications will be published at least two weeks (15 calendar days) before the meeting takes place. Public meetings will occur virtually, though Zoom or similar platform, which allows people to attend the meetings both via the web and phone, for people who do not have web access. Public meeting notifications will be widely distributed to people and organizations included on the project contact list that will be created for the project as described under Section 7.2 Identification of Stakeholders and the Public. In most cases meeting notifications will be sent through e-mail, though hard copies will be mailed to interested parties if they do not have an email address.

Public meetings are expected to include a formal presentation that will be given by the project team and time for public questions and answers. Web content will be provided summarizing the information shared in the presentation. Public comments will be accepted for up to 30 days after the public meeting. Once the public meeting has occurred, the project team will make the public meeting recording available on the website and public comments will be requested and accepted for up to 30 days after the public meeting. Once public comments have been received, the project team will develop a public meeting summary that includes a summary of the public meeting, number of attendees, questions and answers given, and public comments received.

## 7.1.3 Other Stakeholder Engagement

In addition to the external project website and public meetings, other stakeholder engagement is planned as summarized below.

### 7.1.3.1 NMDOT and FHWA Leadership and Elected Officials

The project team will provide project updates for NMDOT and FHWA leadership and elected officials throughout the I-40 Corridor Study. These project updates will occur on a periodic basis, likely quarterly, and will be provided electronically in a newsletter or GIS Story-Map format. The distribution list for these project updates will be determined in consultation with NMDOT leadership as directed by the NMDOT Project Development Engineering (PDE) and District Engineers in Districts 3 and 6. The purpose of the updates will be to keep NMDOT and FHWA leadership and elected officials informed of project progress and key project issues.

### 7.1.3.2 Coordination with Tribes

A large portion of the study area is located on tribal lands and the Native American population in the study area is much higher than other areas of New Mexico. As such, project coordination and consultation with area tribes is a key component of this PIP. Area tribes include the Laguna, Acoma, Navajo, and Zuni, in addition to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). As part of the I-40 Corridor study, the project team plans to meet with each of these tribes for up to three meetings. The first meeting will occur in the Summer of 2022 to meet with representatives to gauge interest in the project, identify key

stakeholders and contacts, and request suggestions for how best to engage the tribe including its staff, councils, and members. Additional meetings will take place as the project progresses to share project information, solicit input, identify concerns (including cultural and natural resource concerns, and answer questions. Meetings are planned to occur virtually, unless in-person meetings are requested.

### 7.1.3.3 Coordination with Transportation Planning Organizations

Additional coordination meetings are planned with affected area Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs), which include the Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Northwest Rural TPO. As part of the I-40 Corridor study, the project team plans to meet with the two local TPOs for up to three meetings. The first meeting will occur in the Summer of 2022 to meet with transportation staff to gauge interest in the project, identify key stakeholders and contacts, and request suggestions for how best to engage the TPO and interested members. Additional meetings will take place as the project progresses to share project information, solicit input, identify concerns (including cultural and natural resource concerns, and answer questions. Meetings are planned to occur virtually, unless in-person meetings are requested.

### 7.1.3.4 Other Stakeholder Coordination

Other stakeholder meetings and coordination is planned throughout the I-40 Corridor Study. This additional coordination will be more specifically defined as the project progresses but will likely include the following.

- Landowner and Regulatory Agency Coordination – As part of the alternatives evaluation, the project team will engage key landowners and regulatory agencies that could have resources affected by the alternatives assessed. Specific outreach may include the NMSLO, BLM, State Police, Corps of Engineers, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Freight Community – As part of the project, we will be conducting outreach with the freight community to identify key issues related to freight. The consultant team will work with the NMDOT PDE and NMDOT freight staff to identify specific contacts and a preferred approach for obtaining input from this highway user group.
- Other groups as directed by NMDOT – As part of the project, additional meetings or specific presentations will be conducted to groups as directed by the NMDOT PDE and District 3 and 6 Engineers. This may include the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), NMDOT management, local agencies, and/or other organizations or individuals, as requested by the NMDOT PDE and District 3 and 6 Engineers.

## 7.2 Identification of Stakeholders and the Public

Key stakeholders and interested members of the public will be identified in consultation with NMDOT staff. This will include developing and maintaining a project stakeholder and social media contact list that will be used to send out project information and public meeting invitations. The initial list will be developed in consultation with the NMDOT PDE, District Public Information Officers, the Statewide Public Involvement Specialist, and NMDOT's environmental lead. In addition, the project team will reach out to the TPOs and tribes to identify key stakeholders and suggestions for how to best engage stakeholders.

A preliminary list of key stakeholders and contacts that have been identified in the study area is provided below. These stakeholders were identified in coordination with NMDOT based on their

proximity to the study area; potential for impacts by right-of-way or construction; their connection, role, or potential interest in the I-40 corridor; and regulatory status. This list will be developed with specific contacts that will be maintained and updated throughout the life of the project. This contact list is expected to grow throughout the duration of the project and the project website will include information on how people can be added to the contact list.

### Tribes (Tribal Staff, Councils, Chapters, tribal members)

- Bureau of Indian Affairs – Navajo, Laguna, and Southwest Region Offices
- Navajo Nation
- Acoma Pueblo
- Laguna Pueblo
- Zuni Pueblo
- New Mexico Indian Affairs Department

### Regional Transportation Organizations

- Mid-Region Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Northwest Rural TPO

### Elected Officials

- Federal/State House of Representatives
- Federal/State Senators
- County Commissioners (McKinley, Cibola, and Bernalillo Counties)
- City/Town Councilmembers (Albuquerque, Gallup, Grants, Milan)

### City/Town Staff

- County Staff (McKinley, Cibola, and Bernalillo Counties)
- City/Town Staff (Albuquerque, Gallup, Grants, Milan)

### Law Enforcement/Fire Departments/School Districts

- New Mexico State Patrol
- County Police
- Tribal/Local/County Fire
- School Districts

### Landownership Agencies

- New Mexico State Lands Office
- Bureau of Land Management
- Department of Defense
- U.S Forest Service
- U.S Department of Interior/National Park Service

### Regulatory Agencies

- State Historic Preservation Office
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- New Mexico Environment Department
- New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- Navajo Nation EPA

- Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife
- State Historic Preservation Officer and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers from the Navajo Nation and the Acoma, Laguna, and Zuni Pueblos

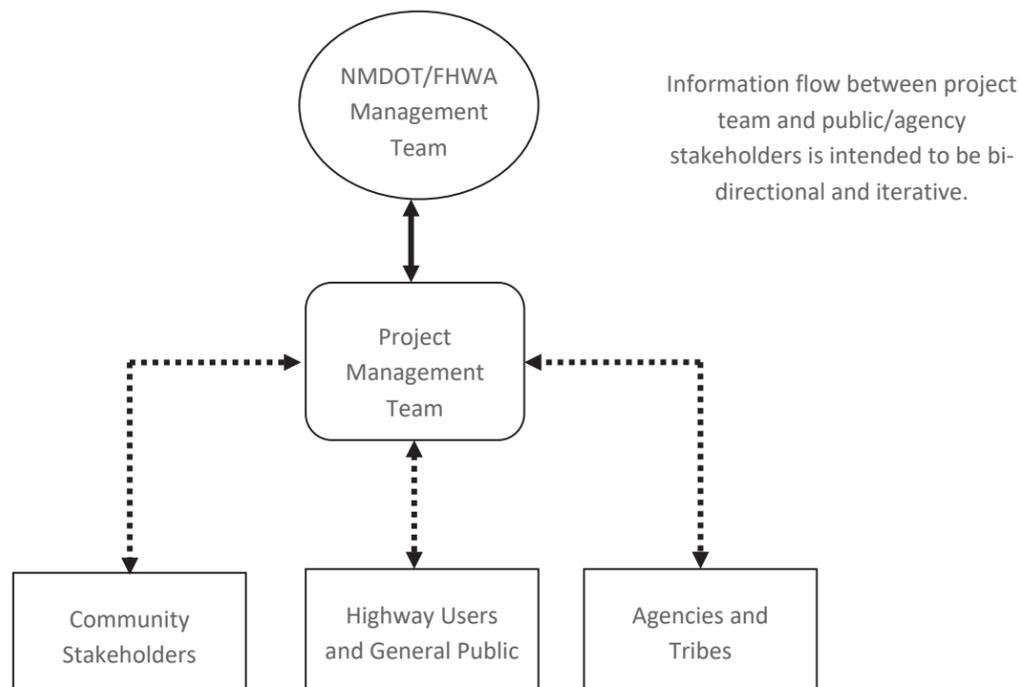
**Other Key Stakeholders/Contacts**

- Freight Community, including the New Mexico Trucking Association
- Business community, including local Chamber of Commerce, Economic development groups
- Area news, radio, and social media outlets

### 7.3 Decision-Making Process

Throughout the I-40 Corridor Study, input will be encouraged and sought from agencies, the public, and key stakeholders. In collaboration with FHWA, NMDOT will have the responsibility to make final decisions and recommendations. As shown in Exhibit 5, information will be distributed both directions between the general public, agencies and key stakeholders, the Project Management Team and NMDOT/FHWA Management Team.

**Exhibit 5. Decision-Making Process**



The project team will implement an inclusive and transparent decision-making process that engages community stakeholders (including elected officials and community groups), agencies, tribes, highway users, and the public to provide them with information about what is learned through the study, opportunities for input on alternatives and recommendations, and clear recommendations for next steps in the I-40 corridor.

### 7.4 Tracking Commitments

Recommendations and decisions, including any commitments, will be documented in meeting summaries and the Final Phase A/B Report and Highway Operational Improvement Plan that will be made available to public and stakeholders. Once the I-40 Corridor Study is completed, NMDOT will have clear record of decisions and commitments that they will carry forward into any future projects that move into design, environmental review, and construction.

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# Public Involvement Tools Matrix

The following matrix presents a selection of tools to support engagement. The tools are divided into four different subgroups: meetings tools, input collection tools, information sharing tools and promotional/outreach tools. It should be noted that multiple virtual tools will often need to be used together to provide a robust and inclusive approach to virtual engagement.

The matrix presents each tool by providing a short description of the tool, its main purpose in engagement, the key elements of engagement the tool

provides, the level of resources that the tool would require from the agency (e.g., staff time, cost and training or skills needed), considerations of how accessibility should be addressed when using the tool, and examples of existing products and providers that offer the tool.

Tool Type	Description	Key Engagement Elements	Resources Considerations	Accessibility Considerations	Examples
<b>Meetings</b>					
<b>Live Virtual Meeting</b>	Event held in real-time on a virtual platform that allows participants to join using video calling or phone call-in to learn about project information and engage with the project team. Can be used for public meetings and stakeholder sessions. <b>Purpose:</b> Increases participation by allowing participants to join a meeting without having to travel.	Share presentations, maps, and videos to provide project information. Participants can ask questions or respond to engagement questions verbally, via a chat message, or through a polling application. Meetings can be recorded and shared with participants who could not attend live. Some platforms offer “break-out rooms” for small group discussions.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> High Requires multiple staff members to run meetings - at least 2-3 staff running logistics in addition to presenters. May take up to 3-4 weeks to deploy, considering time needed to advertise the meeting and conducting “dry-runs” to ensure that the event runs smoothly.	Participants with limited internet access or technology skills could have difficulties joining these meetings. Most platforms provide options for closed captioning but may be an additional cost. ASL interpreters could be needed on camera to translate. Some platforms provide options for “language rooms” that provide non-English speakers an option to participate in their language of choice, but additional translation staff would be required.	Zoom GoToWebinar/ GoToMeeting WebEx Microsoft Teams
<b>Telephone Town Hall</b>	Event is held in real-time through telephone that allows participants to listen to project information and verbally ask questions or provide comments. <b>Purpose:</b> Increases participation by reaching participants directly via phone to join a meeting without having to travel.	Share verbal content to provide project information. Participants can ask questions verbally. Offers phone/online Q&A and polling. Some service providers offer multi-language capabilities and live captioning	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> High Requires multiple staff members to run meetings - at least 2-3 staff running logistics in addition to presenters. May take up to 3-4 weeks to deploy, considering time needed to advertise the meeting and conducting “dry-runs” to ensure that the event runs smoothly. Relies heavily on the work of the service provider to set up and host town hall.	Works best for audio-only content, which can be a barrier to participants with audio impairment. Utilizes publicly available data, such as voter registration lists, for phone numbers to set up outbound pre-calls. Should consider having a toll-free number and a dial-out number, which may include additional fees.	TTHM Access Live Tele-Town Hall Public Input
<b>Virtual Open House</b>	An on-demand platform on which participants can access project information and engage with the project team through different input tools. <b>Purpose:</b> Provides project information through a familiar “environment” over a longer period that is available at the convenience of the participant.	Share recorded presentations, videos, display boards, handouts, and more to provide project information to participants. Collect questions, comments, and demographic information from participants.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium - High Upfront effort and cost to develop the virtual open house platform template. Development of presentation materials to fit within the template. Subsequent events can utilize the template, which can be updated to include project-specific content.	Participants with limited internet access or technology skills could have difficulties joining these resources. In this case, paper versions of materials could be shared with participants upon request. Template should consider ADA requirements, and text and graphics must be Section 508 compliant. Copies of the presentation and project resources can be developed to provide content in additional languages.	GIS Storymaps ERM Virtual Meeting Rooms Custom
<b>Live Streamed Meeting</b>	Event held in a physical location and then streamed to a platform for participants to watch live or on-demand. <b>Purpose:</b> Increases participation by allowing participants to virtually join an in-person meeting without having to travel; does not require advance registration.	Share presentations, maps, and videos to provide project information. Participants can ask questions or respond to engagement questions verbally, via chat, or through a polling application. Meetings can be recorded and can be shared post-meeting for participants who could not attend live.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> High Requires in-person location to have capabilities to live stream the meeting via a camera and computer. At least one staff member should be monitoring the live stream to ensure that the connection is live and to field questions on the streaming platform. An additional 2-3 staff would need to facilitate other elements of the meeting in-person	Most streaming platforms provide options for closed captioning, but this may be an additional cost. More difficult to provide live language translation; however, the meeting could be recorded and a voice-over or translated subtitles can be added for additional languages. Staff should ensure that the audio and visual quality is high for participants on the live stream, not just at the physical location.	YouTube Live Facebook Live PublicInput.com

Tool Type	Description	Key Engagement Elements	Resources Considerations	Accessibility Considerations	Examples
<b>Drive-In Meeting</b>	Location that has free Wi-Fi where participants may meet to join a virtual meeting or access project information that is available online. <b>Purpose:</b> Provides access to project information to participants in areas with limited access to the internet.	Share presentations, maps, and videos to provide project information on a large screen in a central outdoor location, similar to a drive-in movie.  Participants can ask questions or respond to engagement questions verbally, via chat, or through a polling application if the meeting is live.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low Requires a public location with free access to public Wi-Fi.  Special notification, such as mailers or phone calls, should be made to areas with limited access to the internet to provide details about where to access the drive-in meeting.	Participants may not have smartphones or laptops, so having additional devices at the location, such as public computers at a library, could further increase participation.  Easy-to-understand direction should be provided to assist participants with limited technology skills.	Custom
<b>Meeting-In-A-Box</b>	Toolkit with recorded presentations, visual aids, and engagement activities are packaged together and shared with small groups to conduct public meetings externally. <b>Purpose:</b> Reaches smaller groups of participants who may be unable to join meetings virtually or attend large in-person events.	Share recorded presentations and handouts to provide project information to participants.  Provide survey opportunities for participants to share input.  Collect questions, comments, and demographic information from participants.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low Staff will need to develop meeting materials to be combined into a digital toolkit to provide to participants via email or by mail.  Coordination would be needed to provide and collect meeting kits from participants, and to compile input provided.	Both digital and print versions should be developed to reach participants who do not have personal devices and technology to run the meeting.  Materials translated into additional languages could be provided on request, which would include voice-overs or closed captioning on videos as needed.  Materials should be checked for Section 508 compliance for participants with visual impairments.	Custom
<b>Input Collection</b>					
<b>Online Survey</b>	Website-hosted survey to collect input. Various tools support different question types, such as multiple choice, open-ended, priority ranking, image selection, or map location, and more. <b>Purpose:</b> Collect feedback from participants through an easy-to-access platform that is available at the participants' convenience.	Collects various data to inform project development, including demographic or Title VI data from participants.  Can target hard-to-reach populations, such as younger age groups and commuters, in a mobile-friendly platform.  Collects all response data into a single platform to streamline data analysis. Some tools provide analysis in ready-made charts and figures.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> High Adding content into survey platform could take up to 2-3 weeks, including user testing (assumes that the survey content is already developed).  Additional staff time may be required to input results from paper surveys into the mobile platform.	Paper versions of surveys could be provided to participants with limited internet access upon request.  Surveys can be translated into additional languages, but tools may charge additional cost.  Survey content should be checked for Section 508 compliance to ensure the platform is accessible.	SurveyMonkey MetroQuest SurveyHero ArcGIS Survey123 Google Forms
<b>Live Interactive Polling</b>	Polling conducted in real-time to allow participants to engage with questions both in-person or virtually. <b>Purpose:</b> Collects input from participants during meetings while also reporting results back immediately.	Can be used during in-person meetings or virtual and live-streamed meetings; participants can respond to questions via their mobile device or laptop from any location.  Collects various data to inform project development, including demographic or Title VI data from participants.  Reports results back during meetings, allowing for an informed discussion around the results.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low Requires at least one staff member during the meeting to run the polling activity - note that this person will need to be able to share their screen during the meeting to display the questions and results.  Upfront time needed to program survey questions into the platform and to conduct testing prior to the meeting.	Participants at in-person meeting may not have a personal device; therefore, devices should be made available.  Tool may not have screen-reading capabilities for those with visual impairments, so the question, answer choices and results should be read out loud for those participants.	PollEverywhere MentiMeter
<b>Whiteboarding</b>	Activity in which participants can draw or type information onto a shared screen to provide input during virtual meetings. <b>Purpose:</b> Allows participants to directly engage in providing input during virtual meetings.	Can be used during in-person meetings or virtual meetings; participants can respond to questions via their mobile device or laptop from any location.  Displays results back during meeting, allowing for an inform discussion around the results.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low Requires at least one staff member during the meeting to run the polling activity - note that this person will need to be able to share their screen during the meeting to display the questions and results.	Participants at in-person meeting may not have a personal device; therefore, devices should be made available.  Tool may not have screen-reading capabilities for those with visual-impairments, so results should be read out loud for those participants and participants should be allowed to verbally present their input.	Miro Moqups Lucidspark

Tool Type	Description	Key Engagement Elements	Resources Considerations	Accessibility Considerations	Examples
<b>Fillable Comment Form</b>	Form that can be used to collect input as a virtual form hosted on a website or a PDF form that can be digitally filled out and submitted. <b>Purpose:</b> Collects input from participants digitally without having to host an online survey on a separate webpage.	Collects various data to inform project development, including demographic or Title VI data from participants.  Can be hosted on existing project-specific website or NMDOT event page to make it easy for participants to submit their input.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium If comment form is integrated with website, the site will need a tool that can be embedded to collect responses in the background – this may require IT support	Paper comment forms should be considered to provide to participants with limited internet access upon request.  Surveys can be translated into additional languages as needed.	Adobe PDF PublicInput.com Microsoft Word Gravity Forms Ninja Forms
<b>Crowdsourcing</b>	Platform used to collect ideas, comments, and suggestions from participants; can support participants voting on comments from other participants. <b>Purpose:</b> Gathers collective input digitally; can substitute the need for an online survey or virtual meeting.	Can collect input from participants in the form of text comments, photos, videos, maps, or other visual media.  Allows participants to comment on each other's input or to vote on suggestions to come to a group consensus.  Helps project staff see trends or priorities.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium Staff will need to monitor comments or respond to questions posted.  The project team should share necessary project information prior to starting a crowdsourcing activity to ensure that participants are providing informed comments.	Participants with limited internet access or technology skills could have difficulties adding comments to the platform. These participants can be encouraged to provide comments via email or phone and can be added to the platform by staff.	Custom
<b>Collaborative Mapping</b>	Mapping-based platform used to collect ideas, comments, and suggestions from participants about a specific area. <b>Purpose:</b> Collects input digitally with interactive capabilities to search and click on specific areas that may not be easily accessible in other survey formats.	Collects input from participants on specific geographic locations. Some platforms allow participants to provide open comments, and images, or to respond to survey questions.  Allows participants to comment on each other's input.  Helps project staff see comment clusters within the project area.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium Staff will need basic knowledge in GIS or GoogleEarth, depending on the platform used to develop interactive maps.	Some tools may support additional languages, but this may come at an additional cost.  Participants with limited internet access or technology skills could have difficulties adding comments to the platform. These participants can be encouraged to provide comments via email or phone and can be added to the platform by staff.	Esri Storymaps
<b>All-In-One Platform</b>	Platform that manages, tracks, and documents different engagement efforts for all projects that require engagement. <b>Purpose:</b> Creates a single location to manage all project communications and engagement activities to easily track and report on efforts.	Platforms can have different suites of tools ranging from webpage hosting, surveys and comment forms, project hotlines and emails, comment tracking, virtual meeting tools, and more.  When used for all projects, this method creates consistency for participants when finding information and providing input.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium Training and development will be required up front, but subsequent projects can be updated within the platform more quickly.  It is recommended to have one internal staff member who is responsible for setting up all projects within the platform.	Some tools may support additional languages, but this may come at an additional cost.  Participants with limited internet access or technology skills could have difficulties participating with online platform, so in-person or mail-in options should be provided as requested.  Important to check with the platform that different accessibility needs can be met.	PIMA PublicInput.com Social Pinpoint Bang the Table Granicus
<b>Information Sharing</b>					
<b>Project Website/ Webpage</b>	Online resource to share project information and host different virtual engagement efforts. <b>Purpose:</b> Provides a single location for all project information.	Shares all project information and documents. Websites can range from a single webpage that hosts all information in a scrolling format to a webpage with multiple tabs with different information.  Can announce specific engagement activities or link to engagement tools.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium Depending on the website's complexity, development of the platform could take up to one month to design.  Staff time will be needed to develop content for the website, with updates as needed throughout project development.  Support may be needed to support graphics/branding.	Print content of materials available on the website should be developed to provide information to participants with limited access to internet.  Website content could be translated into additional languages as needed. Some platforms may utilize GoogleTranslate.  Content should be checked for Section 508 compliance for participants with visual impairments.	Wix Squarespace WordPress GoDaddy

Tool Type	Description	Key Engagement Elements	Resources Considerations	Accessibility Considerations	Examples
<b>Mobile Application (App)</b>	Platform that is installed onto mobile devices and allows participants to view information and respond to engagement opportunities.  <b>Purpose:</b> Keeps participants more engaged through a constant tool that is available on their smartphone. Primarily recommended for long-term projects due to the increased upfront effort to launch.	Shares information for review.  Allows participants to share input via text, images, or other multimedia messages.  Can send push-out notifications to keep participants updated on engagement opportunities.  Can utilize geolocation services to share location-based input.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> High  Support to program the application and configure updates will require an upfront effort.  Staff will need expertise on application design, and what type of content would best be used within the app.  Could take several months to program and launch the app.	Option to receive information and provide input must be developed to reach those without smartphones.  Application should be designed to be capable with older models of smartphones.  Applications may be able to be programmed to use additional languages for a cost.  Content should be checked for Section 508 compliance for participants with visual impairments.	Custom
<b>Online Forum</b>	Platform that allows participants to post messages and sometimes visual content to start conversations about projects with one another.  <b>Purpose:</b> Provides an environment where participants can discuss comments and ideas openly with minimal structure.	Participants start conversations around project-related topics.  Project teams can start specific topics and allow the community to add comments or suggestions.  Project team can answer questions, or host "ask me anything" sessions to respond to participants.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium  Staff time to review messages and monitor for relevant comments or questions.  Staff time to analyze open-ended questions and report on findings could be significant.	Participants can post comments in their preferred language - would require staff knowledge of language to translate for analysis.  Participants with limited internet access or technology skills could have difficulties participating with forums, so in-person or mail-in options should be provided as requested.	Reddit
<b>Project Hotline</b>	Service allowing participants to call-in to a recording system or reach a team member live to ask questions or provide input.  <b>Purpose:</b> Provides a way for participants with limited access to internet to provide comments and ask questions.	Allows participants to leave voice messages or to speak with a team member to provide comments or ask questions.  Builds trust by providing a reliable network of communication between the community and the project team.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low  Staff time to answer calls or listen to messages.  Can be integrated into all-in-one platform tool.	Directions/pre-recordings on system should prompt participants if they would like to leave a message in another language.	Custom
<b>Informational Video</b>	Content that shares project information in a short video using graphics, text, and audio to explain project details with participants.  <b>Purpose:</b> Provides project content in a more engaging and succinct format that can be easily shared to different platforms.	Provides participants with necessary information to provide informed feedback through the engagement process.  Shares information in an easy-to-understand format that is more attention grabbing than text alone.  Can be shared on project websites, through social media or other digital communications, or could be aired on public access television.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium  Staff time should include developing a script and storyboard.  Simple videos can be created with programs such as PowerPoint.  For more advanced videos, staff should be familiar with more sophisticated equipment to record footage and desktop video-editing software.  Additional equipment that can enhance videos includes tablets, smartphones, digital cameras, microphones, and drones.	Videos with voice-overs should consider adding closed captioning for participants with audio impairments.  Video content and closed captioning can be translated into additional languages for limited English proficiency participants.	Custom
<b>Visualization</b>	Graphics that visually show what a project would look like when it is built. These graphics can include photo simulations, 3D images, videos, or aerial footage.  <b>Purpose:</b> Helps communicate difficult concepts in a visual format that is more understandable to participants than text.	Provides participants with necessary information to provide informed feedback through the engagement process.  Can be used in other materials, such as videos, virtual reality, presentations, and other project content.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> High  Requires staff to have 3D modeling and rendering skills, which also requires specialized equipment and programs.  Depending on the complexity of the design, more time might be needed to create the visualizations.  Should be done toward the end of design to have a visualization that is as close to the proposed design as possible.	Visualizations typically have minimal text, but it is important that text appears clearly and complies with Section 508 requirements.  Special care should be taken when choosing colors to avoid using colors that might appear too similarly for color-blind participants.  Color should not be the only way to convey information. Symbols should also be used to increase readability for participants with visual impairments.	Custom

Tool Type	Description	Key Engagement Elements	Resources Considerations	Accessibility Considerations	Examples
<b>Virtual Reality</b>	Device that uses a computer-generated simulation of a 3D image or environment that allows participants to interact with the image in a realistic way.  <b>Purpose:</b> Provides visuals to allow participants to better understand the project design through a realistic environment.	Provides participants with necessary information to provide informed feedback through the engagement process.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> High  Requires staff to have 3D modeling and rendering skills, which also requires specialized equipment and programs.  Should be done toward the end of design to have a visualization that is as close to the proposed design as possible.  Special equipment is often needed to allow participants to view the environment and understand what the project would look like when complete.	Visualizations typically have minimal text, but it is important that text appears clearly and complies with Section 508 requirements.  Special care should be taken when choosing colors to avoid using colors that might appear too similarly for color-blind participants.	Custom
<b>Public Access TV</b>	Ability to broadcast meeting recordings, videos and presentations to local public access television channels to reach participants who may use these channels as their main source of information.  <b>Purpose:</b> Reaches additional participants by sharing materials that have already been developed for the project.	Provides participants with necessary information to provide informed feedback through the engagement process.  Shares information in an easy-to-understand format that is more attention grabbing than text alone.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low  Staff must coordinate with local public access TV staff to broadcast materials as needed.	Videos with voice-overs should consider adding closed captioning for participants with audio impairments.  Video content and closed captioning can be translated into additional languages for limited English proficiency participants.	Dependent on local availability
<b>Podcast</b>	Audio content that shares project information without visual content to explain project information. Useful when explaining a project or concept that will not be in the built environment, such as a planning effort or policy that can be explained in a conversational manner.  <b>Purpose:</b> Provides project information to participants in an engaging and popular format that can be listened to on-demand through various platforms.	Provides participants with necessary information to provide informed feedback through the engagement process.  Podcast episodes can be hosted on a project website, or can easily be shared on social media, on radio or through podcasting platforms for smartphones.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium  Laptops or mobile phones can be used to record audio. Most computers have software available to edit audio recordings, or online software can be used as needed.  Staff should consider developing a script or general talking points prior to starting recording.  Podcasts can range from 15 to 60 minutes and can be hosted as frequently as every week to quarterly.	Transcripts of the podcasts can be made available for those with audio impairments.  Podcasts can be translated into additional languages as needed.	Custom
<b>Promotional/Outreach</b>					
<b>Social Media</b>	Advertisement posts on social media platforms to notify participants of projects and engagement opportunities.  <b>Purpose:</b> Reaches participants in an environment where they are socially active and encourages them to share the information with their own networks.	Notifies participants about engagement opportunities.  Provides a method to share project information with participants in a brief format (such as a short text post or video).  Can allow participants to comment on posts, which can be used for the public record if desired.	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Medium  Content for posts can be developed in advanced and can be scheduled ahead of time on some platforms.  If comments and questions on posts will be part of the public record, staff will require time to monitor and respond to questions; this would include developing standard responses or developing answers.  Graphic, eye-catching posts can be developed to engage with more participants, which would require graphic design capabilities.	Participants can usually use their social media platforms to automatically translate content into their language of choice, but important posts should also be translated into additional languages as needed.  Posts that include videos should also use closed captions for participants with audio impairments as well as participants who may not use sound while using social media.  Graphics that are developed for social media posts should comply with Section 508 requirements.	Facebook Twitter Instagram LinkedIn NextDoor Reddit TikTok
<b>Email-Blast/Digital Newsletter</b>	Notification or content shared via email to an existing group of email addresses to provide information about projects and engagement opportunities.  <b>Purpose:</b> Reaches participants who have opted-in to receiving emails from the agency or about the project directly.	Notifies participants about engagement opportunities.  Provides a method to share project information with participants in a brief format (such as a short text post or video).	<b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low  Content for posts should be developed and scheduled in advance so participants have ample time to respond to requests to provide input.  Platforms can be used to send out these messages, which may include the ability to store email addresses and create a dedicated project email box for responses.	Content can be translated into additional languages as needed.  Graphics that are developed for emails should comply with Section 508 requirements.	Outlook Gmail MailChimp Constant Contact

Tool Type	Description	Key Engagement Elements	Resources Considerations	Accessibility Considerations	Examples
<b>Digital Toolkit</b>	<p>Combines resources such as presentations, handouts, images, and promotional content into a single package that is shared digitally to participants to spread information about a project or engagement opportunity to their own networks.</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Increases the reach of project information and promotional materials by participants sending materials directly to other potential participants.</p>	<p>Notifies participants about engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Provides method to share project information with participants in a brief format (such as a short text post or video).</p>	<p><b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low</p> <p>Staff will need to develop project and promotional materials to be combined into a digital toolkit to provide to participants via email.</p> <p>Toolkits could also be shared as a digital download if hosted on a website.</p>	<p>Both digital and print versions should be developed to reach participants who have limited access to the internet or have limited technological skills.</p> <p>Materials translated into additional languages could be provided on request.</p> <p>Graphics that are used for signage should comply with section 508 compliance for participants with visual impairments.</p>	Custom
<b>Corridor Signage and/or Banners</b>	<p>Physical signs that are placed around community buildings or within right-of-way to announce project updates or engagement opportunities.</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Reaches participants who may be commuters through a project area or participants who are not present in virtual environments.</p>	<p>Notifies participants about engagement opportunities.</p>	<p><b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low</p> <p>Staff time will be needed to develop the design for the signage, as well as to distribute signs in various locations and retrieve the signs at the end of the engagement period.</p> <p>Yard signs can be printed at most commercial print shops and will include the metal stakes used to position the signs in the ground.</p>	<p>Content can be translated into additional languages as needed and used on opposite sides of the sign.</p> <p>Graphics that are used should comply with Section 508 requirements and use large text to attract the attention of participants as they drive by.</p>	Custom
<b>Radio Announcement</b>	<p>Advertisements made on local radio to notify participants of projects and engagement opportunities.</p> <p><b>Purpose:</b> Reaches participants who are not present in virtual environments but receive their news primarily via radio.</p>	<p>Notifies participants about engagement opportunities.</p> <p>Provides method to share project information with participants in a brief format.</p> <p>Can allow participants to call in to provide comments or ask questions if done in real-time.</p>	<p><b>Level of Resources Needed:</b> Low</p> <p>Laptops or mobile phones can be used to record audio. Most computers have software available to edit audio recordings, or online software can be used as needed.</p> <p>Staff should consider developing a script or general talking points prior to starting recording or live announcements.</p>	<p>Announcements can be made in additional languages by a translator.</p> <p>Written announcements should be made in addition to radio announcements for participants who do not use radio due to audio impairments.</p>	Custom

# NMDOT Engagement Examples

Following are a selection of examples of materials used for public engagement on NMDOT projects. Although these are considered good examples, they should be used for reference only and are not intended to limit creativity or context sensitive solutions considerations. Per the established guidance, project teams are expected to tailor their strategies to the needs of the community and project.

## New Mexico Department of Transportation NM 14 Cerrillos Road Live Virtual Public Meeting | July 21, 2021 at 6 p.m.

[Click here to download images.](#)

### Facebook Copy

Image: Facebook1

Do you drive, cycle, or walk on NM 14 (Cerrillos Road) between St. Michaels and St. Francis Dr. in Santa Fe? We want to hear from you! Join us for a live virtual public meeting on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 starting at 6:00 PM MT to learn more about the Cerrillos Road Study. The public meeting will be held on Zoom.

TO JOIN ONLINE, VISIT US AT: <https://nm14cerrillos.nmdotprojects.org/event/live-virtual-public-meeting/>

TO JOIN BY PHONE, CALL US AT: (346) 248-7799, Webinar ID: 878 5956 8392 at the scheduled meeting time.

Image: Facebook2

NMDOT is studying Cerrillos Road from St. Michaels to St. Francis Drive in Santa Fe. The potential improvements would be aimed at enhancing mobility for vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians, and better managing traffic flow. We would like to hear from you! Register now to take part in our virtual, interactive public meeting on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 starting at 6:00 PM MT on Zoom. Register to join and ask your questions to the project team: <http://nm14cerrillos.nmdotprojects.org> You may also call in at the scheduled meeting time to (346) 248-7799 using Webinar ID: 878 5956 8392

Don't miss this opportunity to hear directly from the project team and ask them your questions!

*Post on Wednesday, July 21 at 6 pm MT*

Image: Facebook3

Our virtual public meeting is starting now! Join us live to learn about plans to improve Cerrillos Road from St. Michaels to St. Francis Drive and enhance mobility for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. Call in to (346) 248-7799 using Webinar ID: 878 5956 8392 to hear from the study team and ask questions!

### Twitter Copy

Image: Twitter1

Join us for a virtual public meeting on Wed, 7/21 at 6 PM MT to learn about plans to improve Cerrillos Road from St. Michaels to St. Francis Drive and enhance mobility for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. For more info and registration, visit: <http://nm14cerrillos.nmdotprojects.org>

Image: Twitter2

NMDOT is studying Cerrillos Road from St. Michaels to St. Francis Dr. The purpose of the potential improvements would be to enhance mobility and safety for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. We want to hear from you! Register now for the virtual public meeting on Wed. 7/21 at 6 PM MT. by visiting: <http://nm14cerrillos.nmdotprojects.org>

Post on Wednesday, July 21 at 5:55 pm MT

Image: Twitter3

HAPPENING NOW: Our virtual public meeting is starting on Zoom! Join us live at 6pm to learn about preliminary improvement alternatives for Cerrillos Road from St. Michaels to St. Francis Dr. to enhance mobility for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Register at <http://nm14cerrillos.nmdotprojects.org> or call (346) 248-7799 Webinar ID: 878 5956 8392 to join.

**Email Copy**

Subject: NM 14 (Cerrillos Road) Study Virtual Public Meeting on July 21, 2021

Join us for a live, virtual public meeting on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 starting at 6:00 PM MT! During the meeting, we will provide an overview of existing conditions and introduce preliminary alternatives under consideration. Plus, the project team will answer YOUR questions live!

NMDOT will be using the Zoom platform for this meeting. Pre-registration is encouraged.

Here are the different ways you can participate in the meeting:

- TO JOIN ONLINE, VISIT US AT: <https://nm14cerrillos.nmdotprojects.org/event/live-virtual-public-meeting/>
- TO JOIN BY PHONE, CALL US AT: (346) 248-7799 (Webinar ID: 878 5956 8392) at the scheduled meeting time

To request ADA accommodations or a translator, contact Jennifer Hyre at (505) 878-6577, before July 16, 2021.

We're looking forward to speaking with you LIVE on Wednesday, July 21, 2021!

**LIVE VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING**  
 NM 14 Cerrillos Road Improvement Study

**REGISTER TODAY!**

Community members are encouraged to attend the Zoom event July 21 at 6 p.m. to provide comments and ask questions.

**LIVE VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING**

**REGISTER TODAY!**

Community members are encouraged to attend the Zoom event July 21 at 6 p.m. to provide comments and ask questions.



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 **New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
 MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

Community members are encouraged to attend the Zoom event July 21 at 6 p.m. to provide comments and ask questions.

NMDOT US 64/NM 17 Public Participation Banner in Chama, NM



# Welcome

## to the second series of public meetings for the US 82 Roadway Project – Artesia to Lovington

The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update on the study and share key findings and recommendations to the general public and other stakeholders. The segment of US 82 being studied by the NMDOT begins at milepost 107.7 in the City of Artesia (approximately 1/2 miles east of US 285) and ends at milepost 170.3 (17th Street) in the City of Lovington.



**Meeting Format:**

We will have a presentation and a question, comment, and answer period. The meeting will begin promptly at 6:00 pm. Our Project Team representatives will be available after the meeting to answer more questions, if desired.

**Comments:**

We will take notes on the comments we receive tonight. If you would like to send us comments after the meeting, you can send an email to [US82RoadwayProject@pbworld.com](mailto:US82RoadwayProject@pbworld.com) or mail us at:

Parsons Brinckerhoff  
Attention: US 82 Roadway Project  
6100 Uptown Boulevard NE, Suite 700  
Albuquerque, NM 87110

To help us move forward, we ask that you send us comments no later than September 10, 2015.



Thank you for taking time to attend this meeting and for providing input.

## Why are Improvements to US 82 a NMDOT Priority?

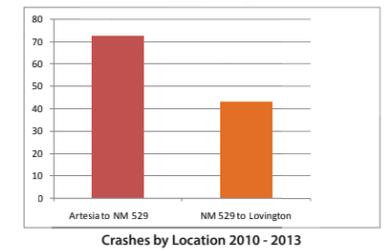
Three factors are behind the need to improve US 82 between Artesia and Lovington:

1. Safety
2. The volume, type, and operating characteristics of traffic
3. The condition of the existing highway



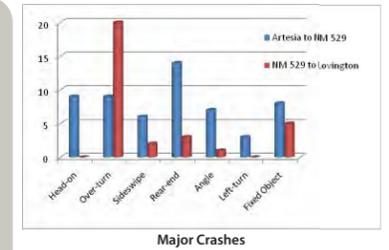
**Driver Safety**

- A review of crash data for 2010 through 2013 shows a total of 163 crashes have occurred within the project limits. (Complete data for 2014 is not yet available.)
- Of this number, the majority of crashes (63%) occurred in the segment between Artesia and NM 529 (not including the intersections in Lovington).
- The types of crashes varies by major segment:
  - From Artesia to NM 529, many crashes involve turning vehicles and failed attempts to pass.
  - East of NM 529 to Lovington, many crashes involve roll-overs. This is attributed to the lack of shoulders.



**Traffic Flows and Vehicle Types**

- The number of vehicles using US 82 is not excessive for a 2-lane highway. However, the vast majority of traffic consists of large trucks and other industrial traffic. The highest volume of traffic occurs within the segment from Artesia to Riverside
- Because many vehicles are turning from and onto the highway, the capacity of the 2-lane section is diminished.
- Even though passing lanes are not available, passing maneuvers are common on US 82 due to differences in travel speed.



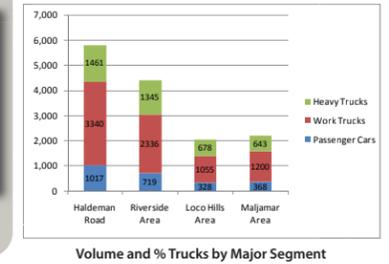
Very few intersections have auxiliary lanes.



Turning traffic is common along the corridor.



Work trucks and heavy trucks make up >75% of total traffic.



**Other Considerations**

- From Maljamar to Lovington, the roadway has very narrow shoulders and the pavement is in poor condition.
- The number of highway turnouts is very high. Few of these turnouts have turn lanes.



Roadway conditions east of Maljamar.



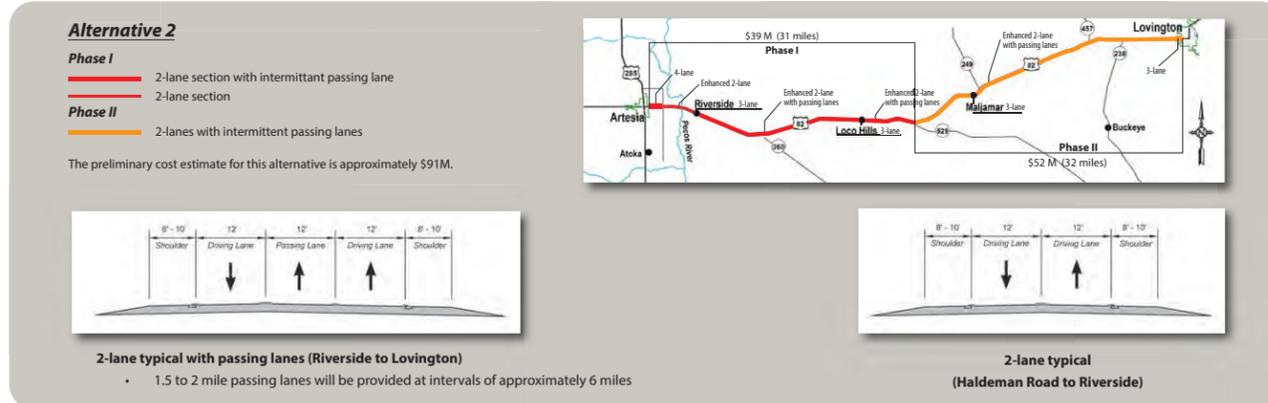
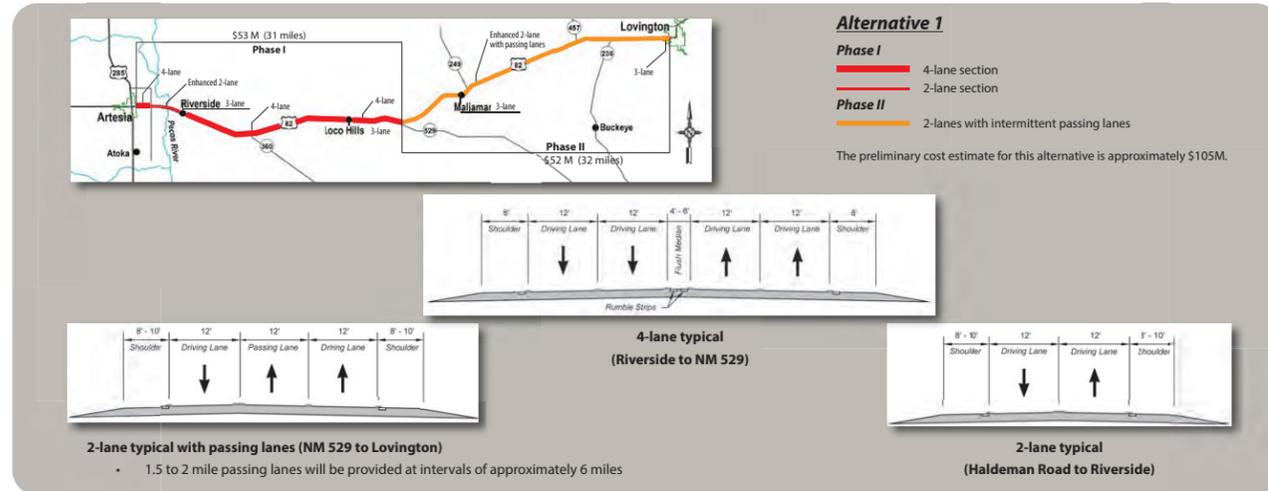
There are a high number of turnouts to oil and gas fields, particularly within the segment from Riverside to NM 529.

### What Improvements Have Been Considered?

Various alternatives (options) for improving US 82 were identified by the NMDOT Project Team. Alternatives were developed considering safety needs, traffic volumes and operations, community and industry needs and feedback, land ownership, potential impacts, and available funding. Because the costs for the entire corridor can reach well over \$100M, the availability of funding was a particularly important consideration. Through an iterative process, two alternatives emerged and were evaluated in detail.

#### Mainline Areas

Two alternatives for the mainline sections of US 82 were evaluated in detail: Alternative 1 and Alternative 2. The primary difference between the alternatives is that Alternative 1 includes a 4-lane segment between Riverside and NM 529; whereas Alternative 2 has a 2-lane typical with passing lanes within the same segment. Both alternatives include turning lanes at major intersections.

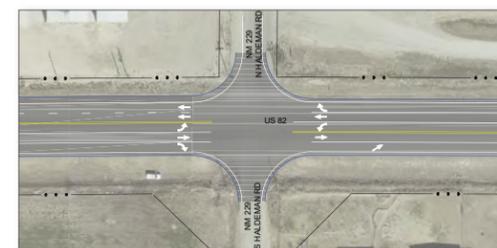
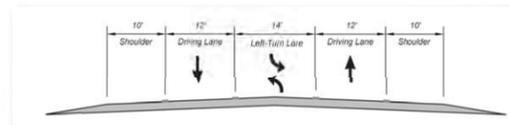


#### Community Areas

- Within the areas of Riverside, Loco Hills, and Maljamar, a 3-lane section is proposed. This will include 2-driving lanes, a center left-turn lane, and 10-foot shoulders to facilitate right turns.
- A 3-lane section is also proposed on the approach into Lovington from CR 100A (Lea County Airport) to 17th Street.
- A 4-lane section and 5-lane section were considered. However, due to impacts to the adjacent properties and the difficulty for large trucks to turn into and out of driveways, these two alternatives were dropped.

#### Major Intersections

Auxiliary lanes – right-turn lanes, left-turn lanes, and acceleration lanes – will also be added at major intersections. The auxiliary lanes will help prevent conflicts between through and turning traffic and will enable vehicles to safely merge with traffic.



Example of proposed intersection improvements

### NMDOT Recommendations

The two leading alternatives for US 82 were evaluated in detail. The evaluation considered the performance merits, engineering feasibility, cost, and impacts of each alternative.

#### Primary Evaluation Metrics Used to Evaluate Alternatives

1. **Performance** – how each alternative improves the conditions within the project area that affect safety (i.e., passing, turns, etc.)
2. **Constructability** – the ability to reconstruct the highway without excessive disruption to highway users
3. **Affordability** – the cost of each alternative and the funding available to implement the alternative
4. **Right-of-Way Needs** – the amount, type, ownership, and presence of improvements on the land needed to implement each alternative
5. **Access** – how well each alternative provides safe access to the properties along US 82
6. **Impacts** – the impacts of each alternative on businesses, homes, utilities, and environmental resources



#### The Recommended Alternative

Based on the evaluation, Alternative 1 is recommended by the NMDOT Project Team. This alternative provides an affordable solution to the problems affecting this highway. However, at a cost over \$100M, implementation of this project will require more than one phase.



#### Key Design Features of Alternative 1

- **Artesia to Haldeman Road** – four-lane section with auxiliary lanes at Haldeman
- **Haldeman Road to east of Pecos Bridge** – two lane section with ten-foot shoulders
- **East of Pecos Bridge through Riverside** – three lane section (two travel lanes and center turn lane with ten-foot shoulders)
- **Riverside to NM 529** – four-lane with flush median with eight-foot shoulders
- **NM 529 to Lovington** – two-lane section with eight-foot shoulders; passing lanes at approximate six mile intervals
- **Loco Hills and Maljamar** – three-lane section (two travel lanes and center turn lane with 10-foot shoulders)
- **Approach into Lovington** – three-lane section with 8-foot shoulders

#### Additional Features

- Posted Speed – 65 mph in mainline areas / 45 mph in developed areas and communities
- Radar speed signs, improved signage, and medians at community approaches
- Median and shoulder rumble strips



Radar speed signs and oversized signs provide greater visibility for drivers.

#### Phasing Approach

Because of funding limitations, the reconstruction of US 82 will be done in two phases:

1. **Phase 1** – Artesia to NM 529 (31 miles). This phase was given first priority because of its higher traffic volume and greater number and severity of crashes.
2. **Phase 2** – NM 529 to Lovington (32 miles). This phase will be constructed when the needed funding can be secured.



Reconstruction of US 82 will be completed in two phases.

#### Next Steps

Several steps are still necessary before construction can begin:

1. **Early September 2015:** Selection of Preferred Alternative – If comments from the general public and affected businesses and landowners support the recommended alternative, the NMDOT will make any refinements needed and proceed to the design phase.
2. **September to December 2015:** Preliminary Design and Environmental Approvals – Preparation of preliminary design plans, access changes, right-of-way needs, and environmental documents will be completed.
3. **December 2015 to September 2016:** Final Construction Plans, Right-of-Way Acquisition, and Bid Letting – Final construction plans for bid will be prepared and right-of-acquisition will occur.
4. **Late 2016 and 2017:** Construction Underway

Project Phase	2015				2016				2017								
	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Selection of Preferred Alternative																	
Preliminary Design and Environmental Approvals																	
Final Designs, R/W Acquisition, and Bid Letting																	
Construction Begins - Late 2016/early 2017																	

# RIO GRANDE GORGE BRIDGE

## STRUCTURAL FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR SUICIDE DETERRENT SYSTEMS

### FACT SHEET



**44** SUICIDES have occurred at the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge **BETWEEN 1991 & 2017**

**80%** of suicides at the bridge involved **RESIDENTS OF NEW MEXICO\***

**7<sup>th</sup> HIGHEST BRIDGE IN THE UNITED STATES**

Listed in the *State Register of Cultural Properties* and included in the *National Register of Historic Places* in **1997**

**2.6%** OF ALL DEATHS IN NEW MEXICO\* COMPARED TO **1.6%** OF ALL DEATHS NATIONALLY\*

**IN THE LAST DECADE**  
 4,235 STATE  
 113 COUNTY  
 22 BRIDGE

SUICIDE accounts for

\*According to the New Mexico Office of the Medical Investigator (as of 1/15/18)

### PURPOSE AND NEED

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is conducting a study to evaluate alternatives for a potential physical suicide deterrent system for the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge in Taos County, New Mexico, the goal being to improve bridge safety while preserving its history and structural integrity. The purpose of the study is to understand the structural feasibility of adding a suicide deterrent system to the bridge.

### CONSIDERATIONS

There are several factors NMDOT is considering to determine the next steps regarding the addition of a potential suicide deterrent system.

- Maintenance
- Inspection Access
- Structural Feasibility
- Constructability
- Cost
- Historic Resources
- Community Values
- Visual Impacts
- Cultural Resources

### ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED

**NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE** – The no-build alternative would leave the structure in its existing condition.

**VERTICAL RAILING ALTERNATIVE** – The vertical railing alternative, 8 feet and 3 inches tall, would replace the existing pedestrian rail.

**HORIZONTAL NET ALTERNATIVE** – The horizontal net alternative would be installed approximately 15 feet below the existing railing and would extend out 15 feet from the edge of the bridge.

### RESULTS OF EVALUATION

- ▶ Evaluation of the alternatives showed that the **HORIZONTAL NET ALTERNATIVE** would require more significant and costly modifications to the bridge; therefore, it **was eliminated from consideration**.
- ▶ The no-build alternative would not make changes to the existing suicide deterrent system, such as the suicide hotline, and the existing occurrence of incident response and recovery would not change.
- ▶ The no-build alternative would require improvements to bridge members that either require repair or replacement and painting to extend the life of the existing structure.
- ▶ **The NO-BUILD ALTERNATIVE and the VERTICAL NET ALTERNATIVE will continue to be viable options under consideration.**

### PHOTO SIMULATION ILLUSTRATING THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES LOOKING TOWARDS THE BRIDGE AND FROM THE BRIDGE.



### WHAT'S NEXT

Once complete, the study will be available to inform further discussions within the regional planning process, and for potential inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan for funding next steps.

STAY CONNECTED

**WEB ADDRESS:** RioGrandeGorgeBridgeStudy.com  
**EMAIL:** RioGrandeGorgeBridge@hdrinc.com  
**MAIL:** NMDOT | c/o Rio Grande Gorge Bridge Study  
 2155 Louisiana Blvd. NE, Suite 9500 | Albuquerque, NM 87110129

Project Control Number: CN 5101020





# PUBLIC MEETING OPPORTUNITIES for I-25 Improved | Comanche to Montgomery CN A301901

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), invites you to join an online Public Meeting for the I-25 Improved project. The project team will discuss proposed improvements to the I-25 corridor in Albuquerque between Comanche Road (MP 227.6) and Montgomery Boulevard (MP 228.5). An in-person Public Meeting will be held by reservation only. The same information will be provided at both meetings.



To be mindful of COVID-19 precautions, an **online Public Meeting** will be hosted on **Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2021 at 6 p.m.** Visit [i25improved.com](http://i25improved.com) and follow the step-by-step instructions on how to join the event.



An **in-person Public Meeting** (by reservation only) will be held **Thursday, Aug. 12, 2021 at 6 p.m.** Reserve your spot by calling 505-785-ROAD (7623) or emailing [info@improved.com](mailto:info@improved.com). Additional details will be available once you sign up.

Public comments will be accepted through **Friday, Aug. 27, 2021**. Comments can be sent to:



**Mail:**  
I-25 Improved  
6001 Indian School Rd., NE, Suite 250  
Albuquerque, NM 87110



**Email:**  
[info@i25improved.com](mailto:info@i25improved.com)



**Website:**  
[i25improved.com](http://i25improved.com)

If you are not able to attend the meetings but would like to provide input, please contact us at 505-785-ROAD (7623) to request an information packet. To request ADA accommodations or a translator, contact the project team before Aug. 5, 2021.

# PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT for the NM Highway 475 Phase A Feasibility Study

NMDOT Control Number 5101630

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is hosting a Virtual Public Meeting to discuss the NM Highway 475 (NM 475) Phase A Feasibility Study in the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County. The study is primarily focused on bicycle improvements on NM 475 from Bishops Lodge Road to Ski Santa Fe and will also examine conditions along the entire corridor starting at US Highway 84/285 (St. Francis Drive). The **purpose of the Virtual Meeting** is to introduce the study, present information on existing conditions, and receive your input. The meeting will involve a short presentation followed by a question and answer session.

**WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU!**  
Join the Virtual Public Meeting  
**Thursday, March 3, 2022**  
Starting at 6:00 PM (MST) via Zoom

REGISTER at: <https://bit.ly/nm475-zoom-meeting>

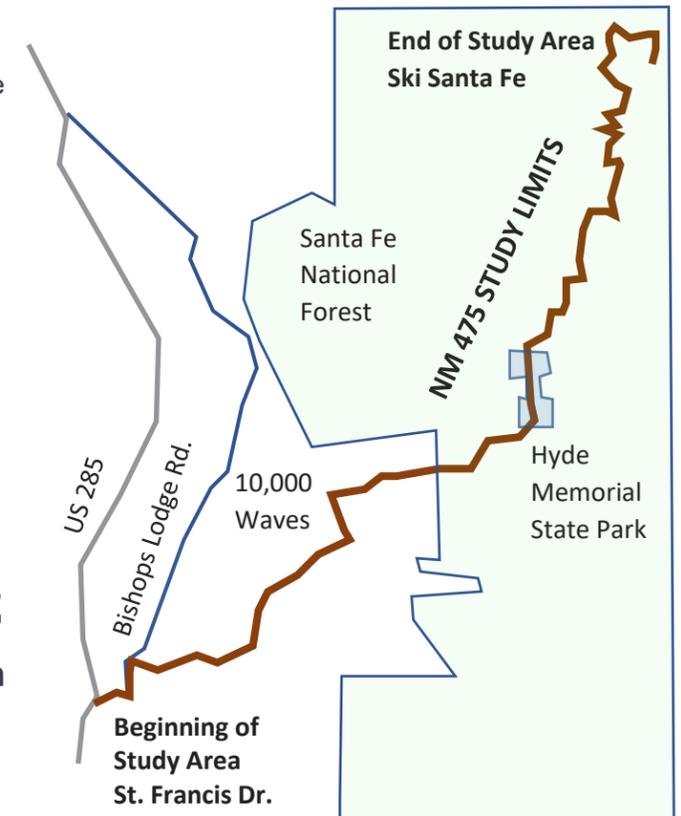
Register in advance using the link above. A confirmation email will then be provided containing information on how to join either using Zoom or by telephone.

**To Request Meeting Assistance:** Contact John Taschek at (505) 980-0993 or para obtener información en español, comunicarse con Gabby C.-Apodaca, P.E. al (575) 520-9171 o [Gabby.Contreras-Apodaca@stantec.com](mailto:Gabby.Contreras-Apodaca@stantec.com).

To learn more and to join the mailing list, visit:  
<https://nm475study.com/>



Please post this notice or share it with others who may have an interest in the study.



## HOW TO SHARE COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

**Mail:** Attn: NM 475 Phase A Feasibility Study  
Ecosphere Environmental Services, Inc.  
320 Osuna Road NE, Suite C-1  
Albuquerque, NM 87107

**Email:** [jtaschek@ecosphere-services.com](mailto:jtaschek@ecosphere-services.com)

**Website:** <https://nm475study.com/>

The comment period ends April 2, 2022.

## NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement Project

### VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, December 9  
6 - 7:30 P.M.

Servicios de interpretación en español estarán disponibles en la reunión.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Rio Bravo Blvd. Between Isleta Blvd. & 2nd St. (CN A301000)

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is planning to replace or rehabilitate the east- and west-bound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande.

The structures are nearing the end of their design-life and are in need of upgrades or replacement. Existing conditions show there is also a need to increase travel capacity along Rio Bravo between Isleta Boulevard and 2nd Street. Additionally, this serves as an opportunity to provide enhanced safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

NMDOT invites you to attend the virtual public meeting where we will introduce the project, present existing conditions, present preliminary proposed alternatives and welcome public input.

P.O. Box 91750  
Albuquerque, NM 87109-1750

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## JOIN US!

### NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement Project

#### VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, December 9, 2020  
6-7:30 PM

Register at: <https://linktr.ee/NM500RioBravo>  
**OR**  
Call-in at the scheduled meeting time: +1 346 248 7799  
Webinar ID: 849 1147 9420

To request ADA accommodations or a translator, contact Jennifer Hyre before December 7, 2020.

NMDOT will use Zoom, a web-based service with call-in capabilities to host the virtual public meeting. Members of the community are encouraged to register for the event and join the discussion, provide comments and ask questions of the project team. Comments can be provided at the meeting or sent by January 9, 2021 to:

**WSP USA | Jennifer Hyre | Attn: NM 500**  
 2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
 Albuquerque, NM 87110  
 Jennifer.Hyre@wsp.com | (505)-878-6577

## NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project

CN A301000

# 124

people attended the virtual public meeting on December 9, 2020.

# Thank you!

The New Mexico Department of Transportation thanks all who have provided input on the NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project.

The Project Team will use the feedback to refine design options and select a preferred alternative.

The NMDOT will ask for public input again during the next phase so please watch for more information.

# 524

comments received

### Priorities Identified:

1. Safety
2. Environmental Impacts
3. Long-Term Vehicle Capacity
4. Improved Facilities
5. Construction Duration

### Anticipated Project Schedule

Scoping Study\*: 2020-2021

Initial Engineering Design Development\*: 2021

Environmental Analysis & Documentation: 2021/2022

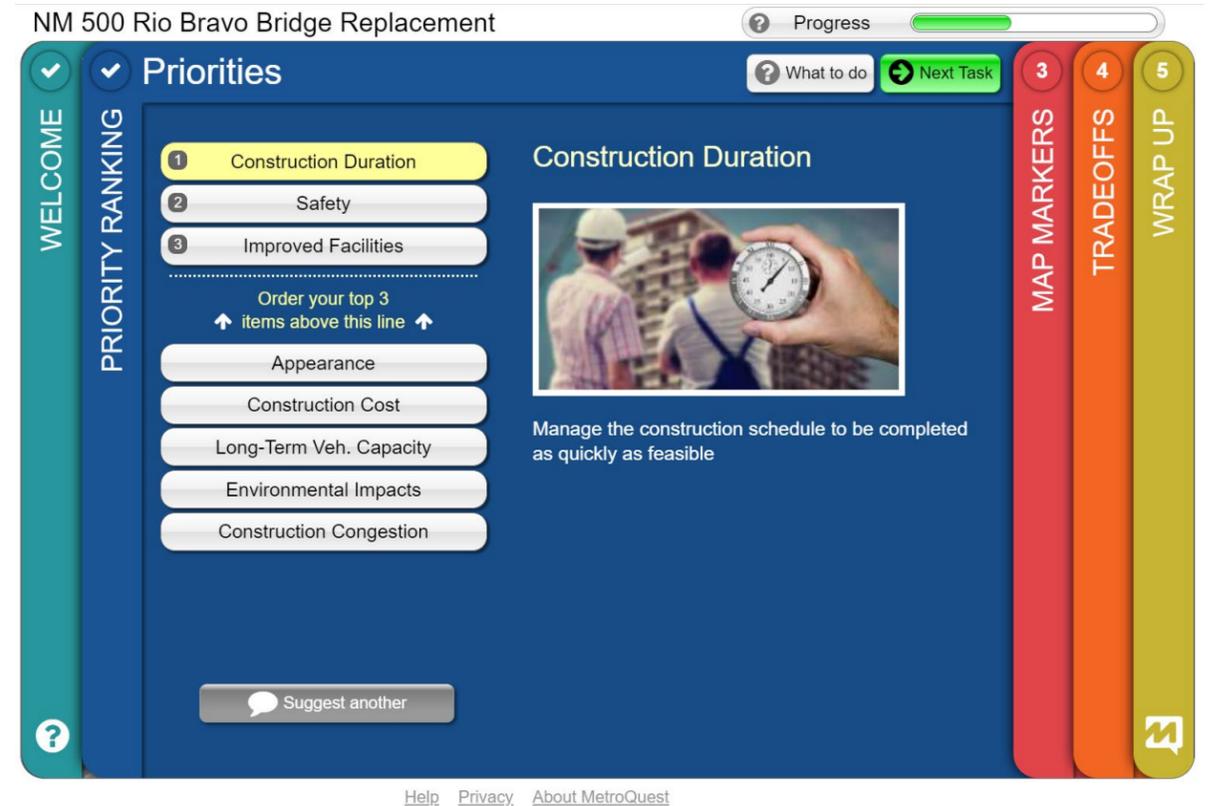
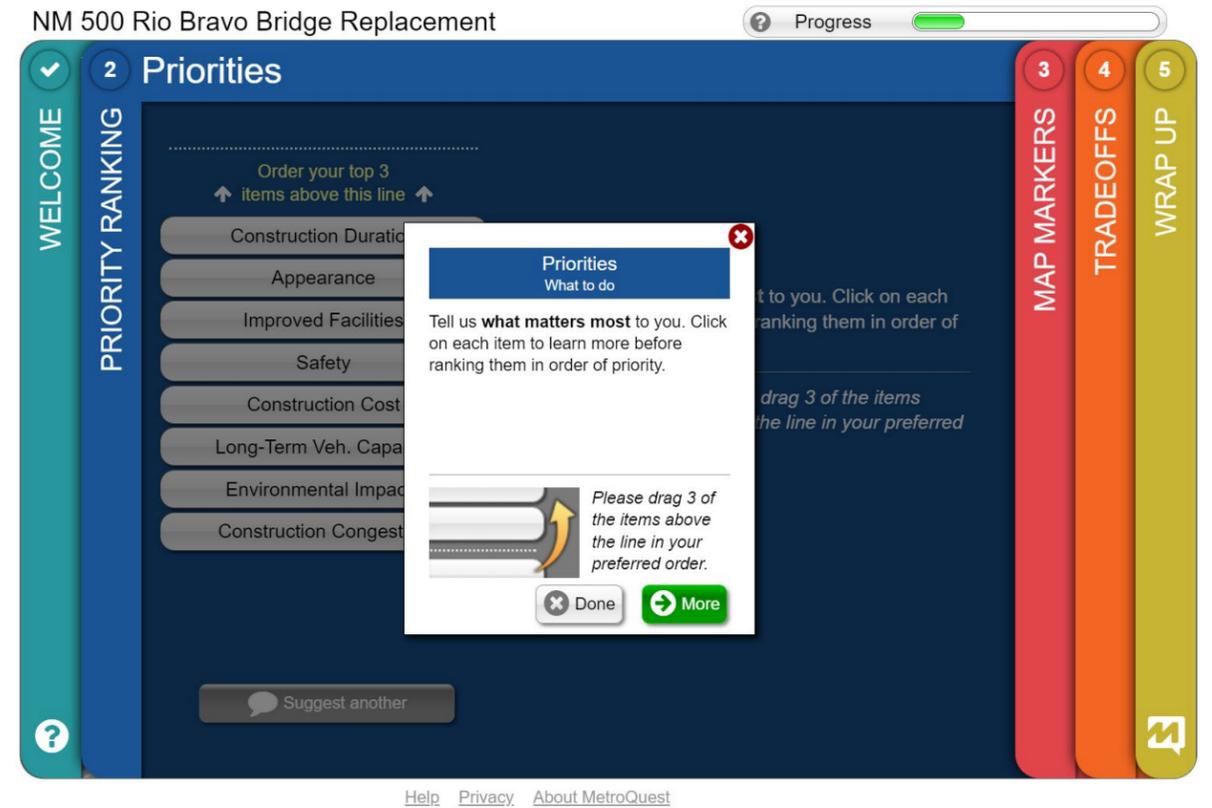
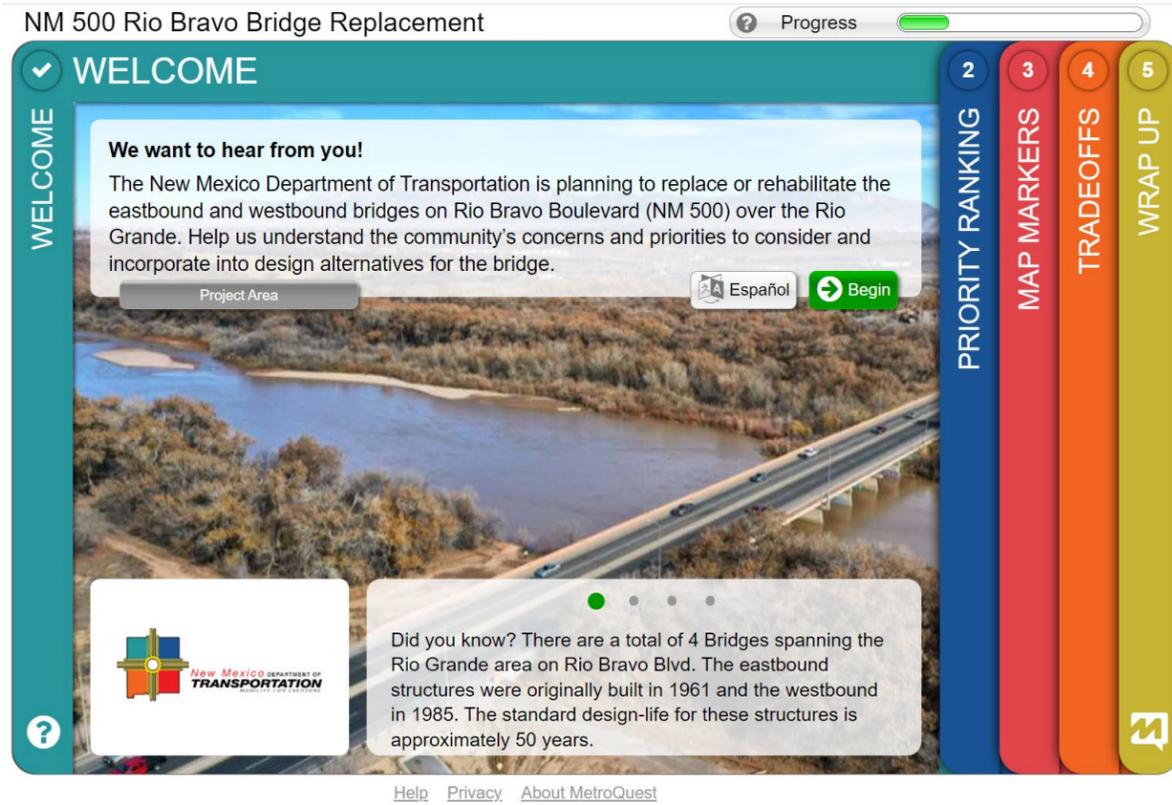
Final Engineering Design: 2022/2023

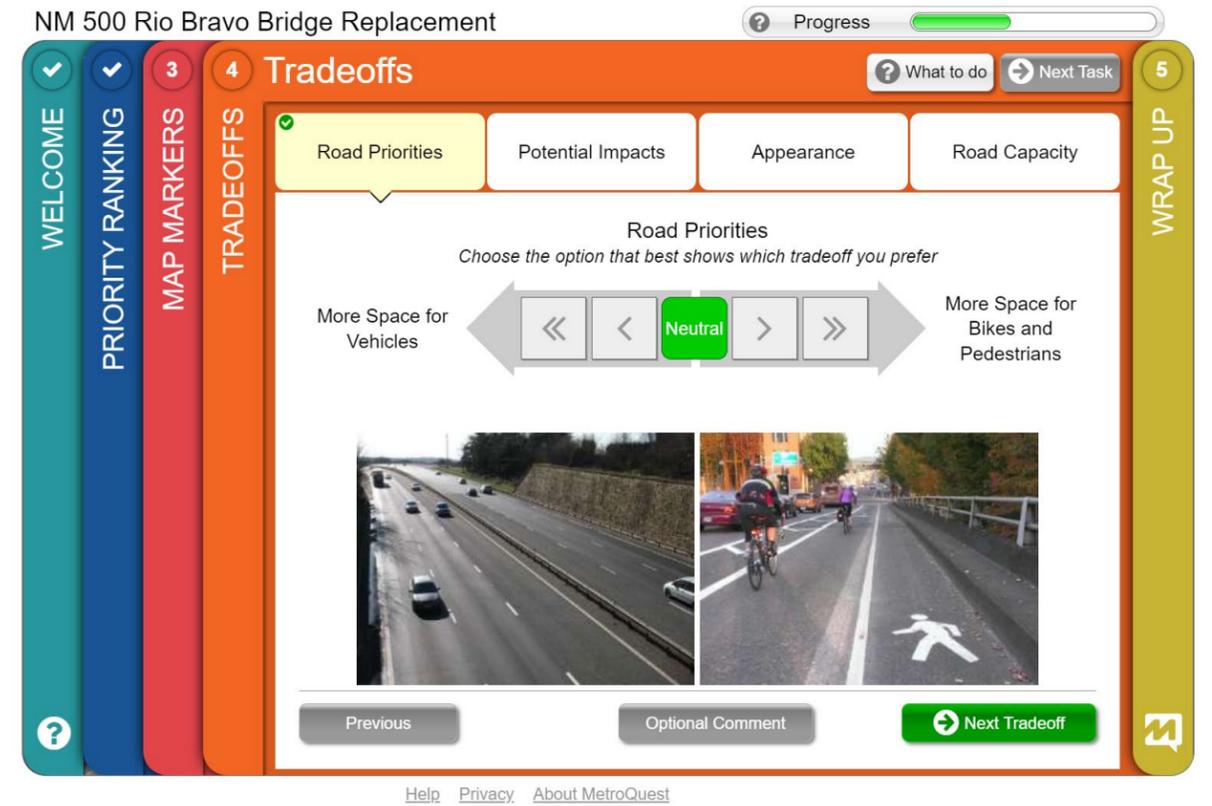
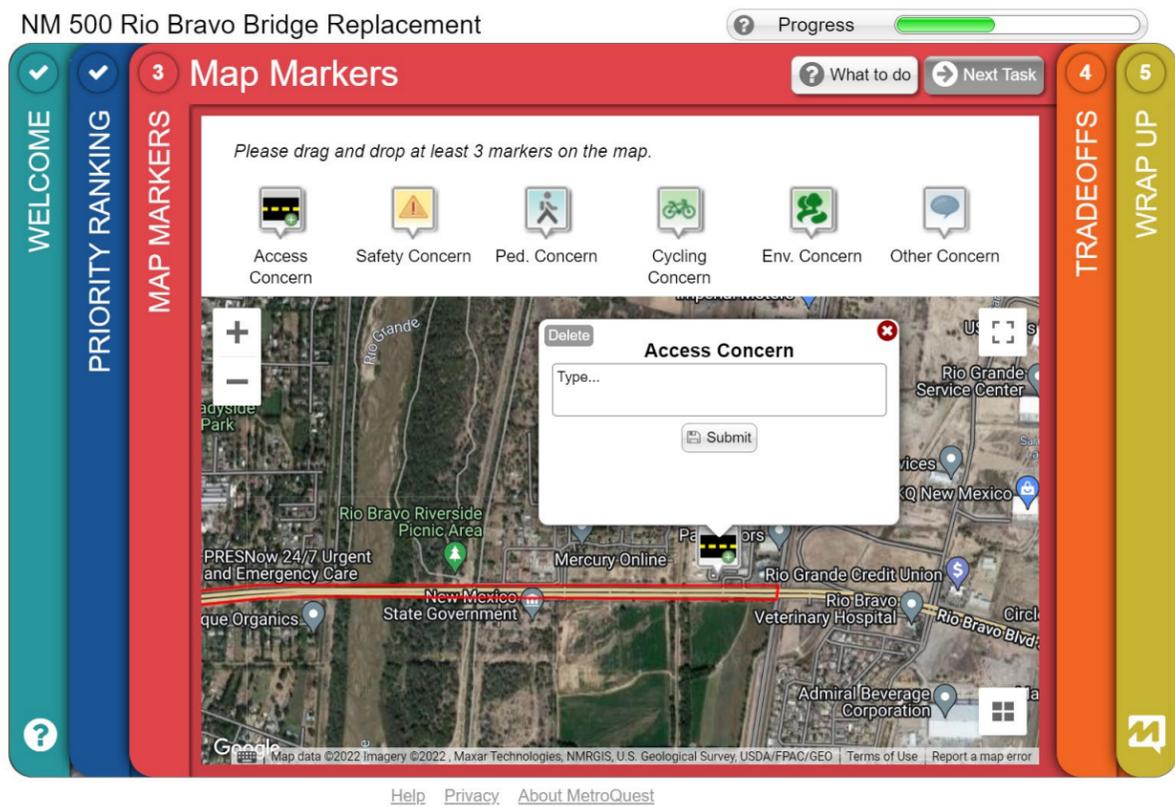
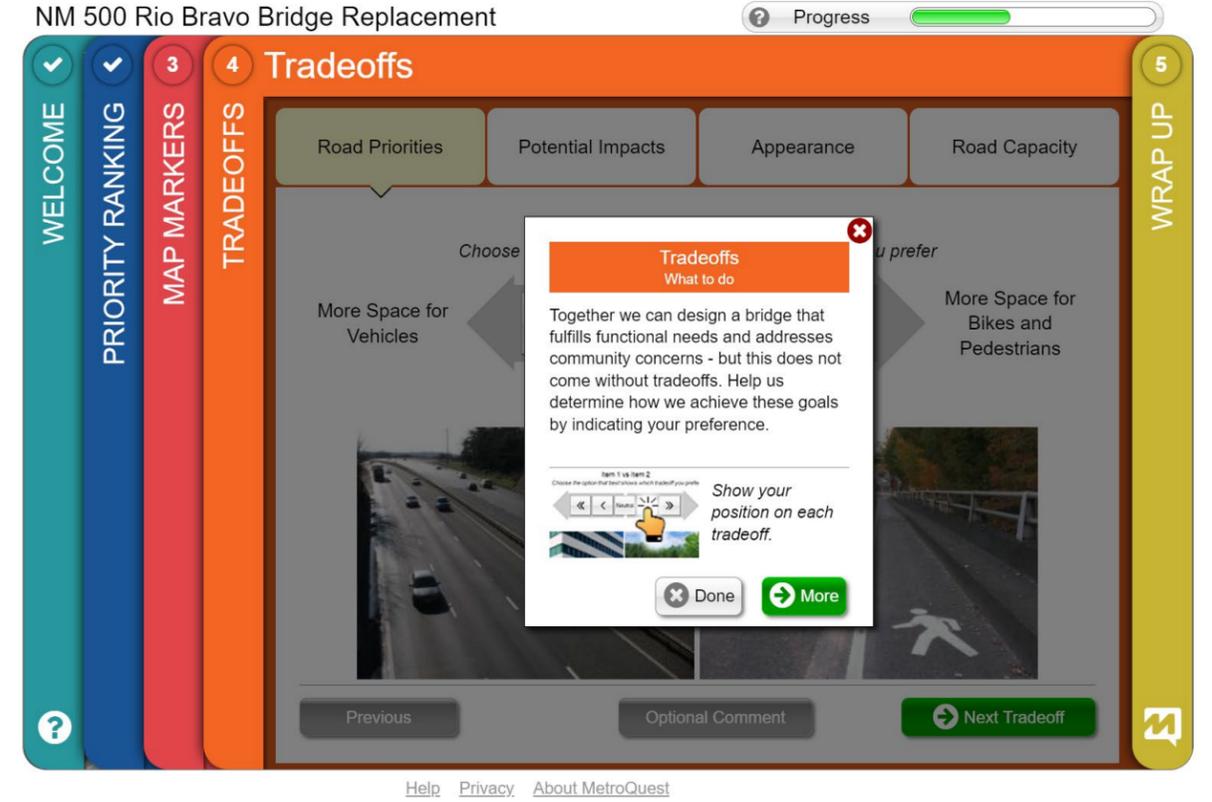
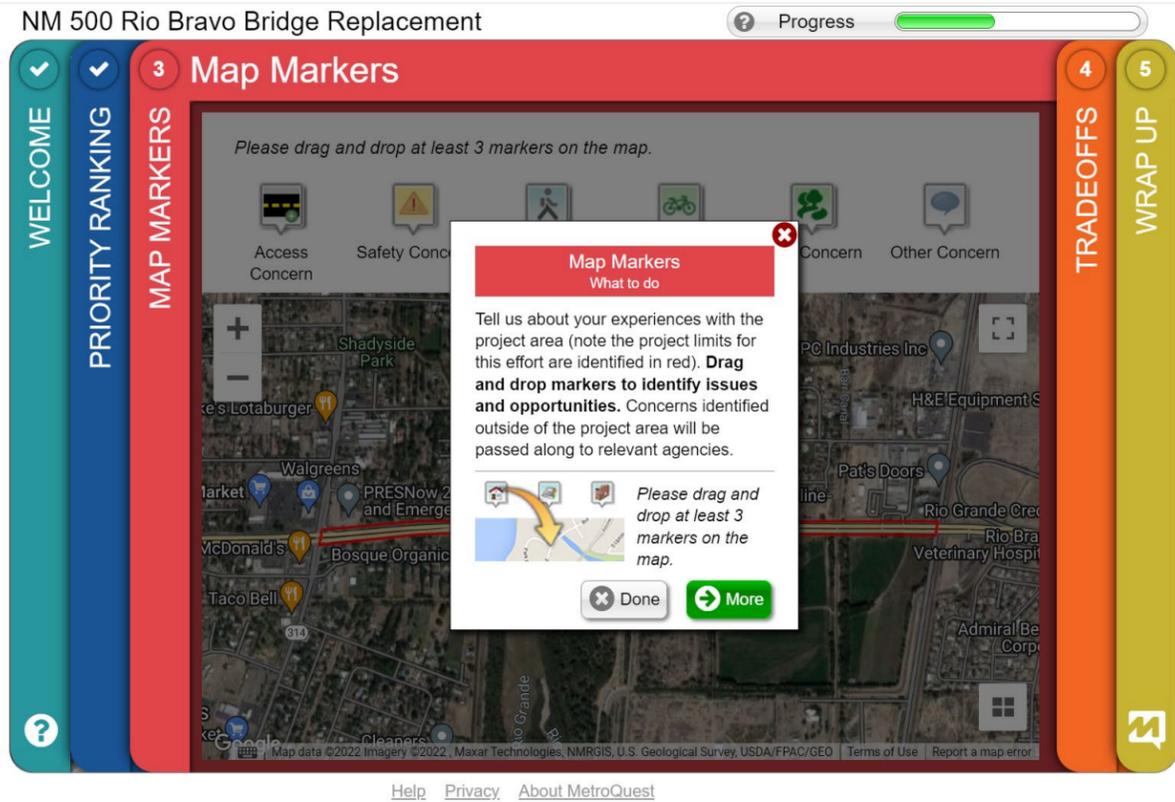
Anticipated Construction Start: 2024

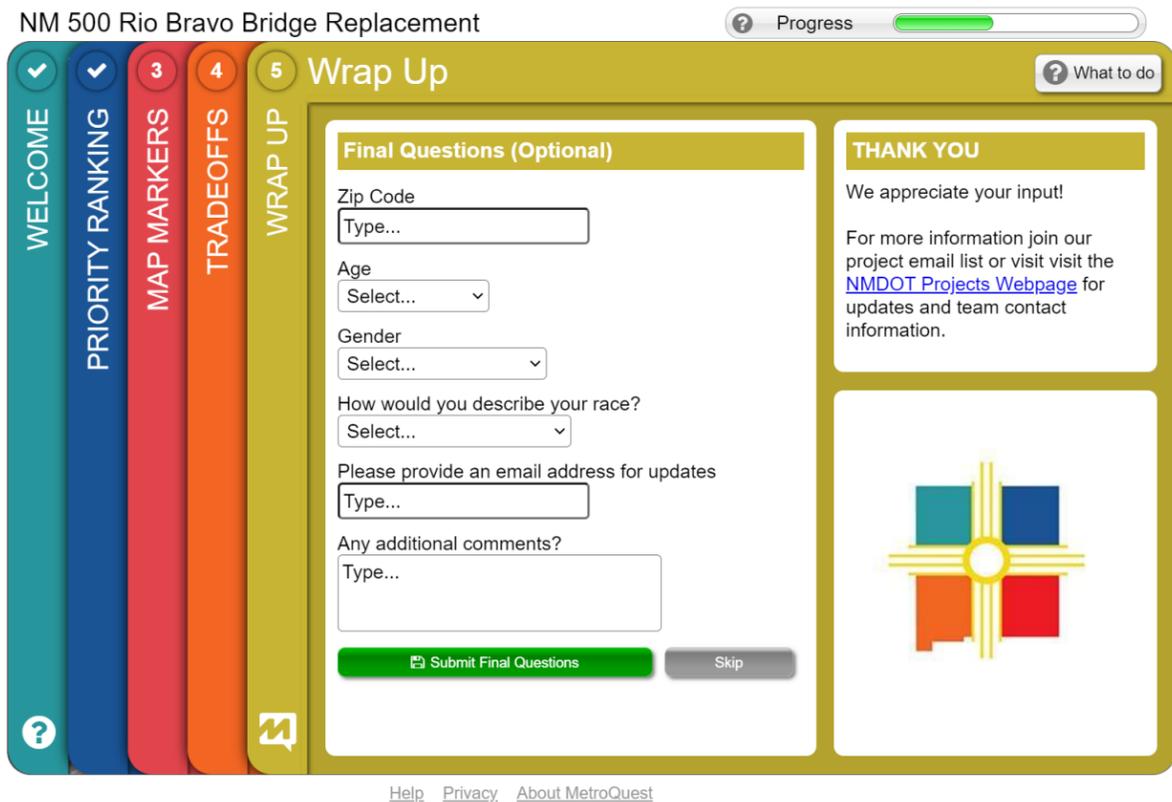
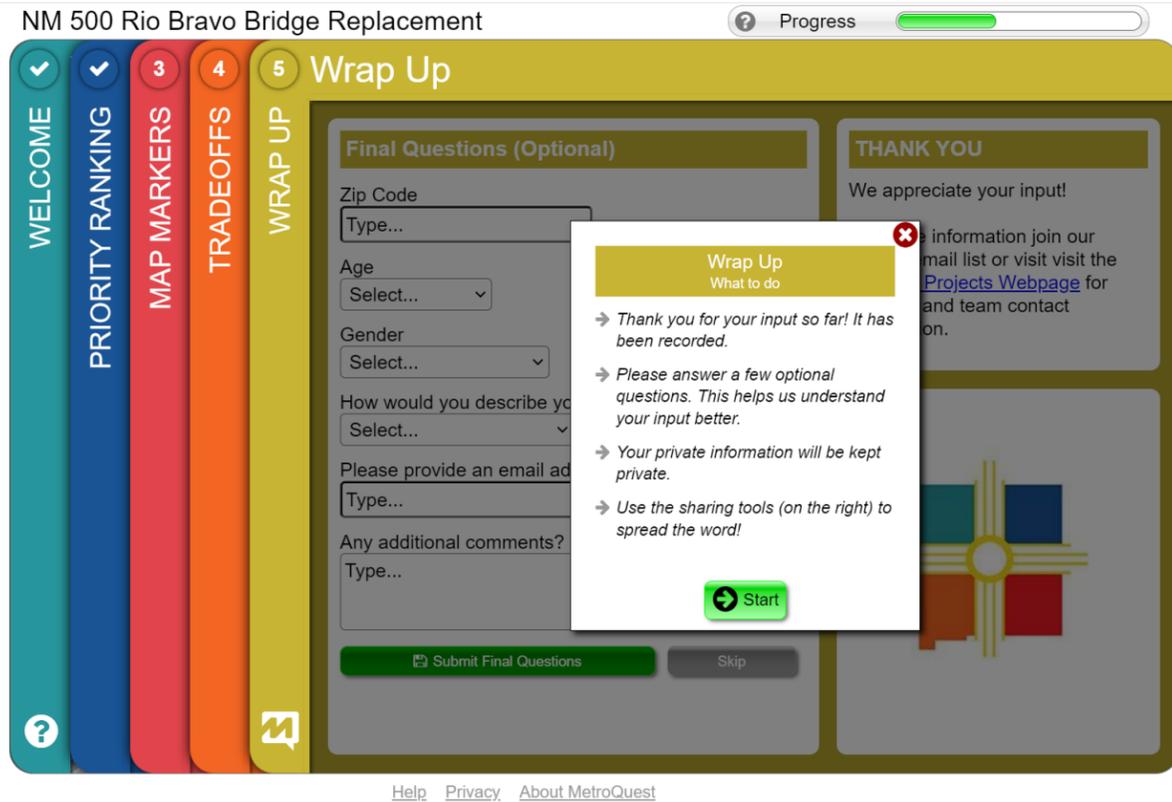
\*Public Meeting

**NM500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement – MetroQuest Survey**

Following is an example of a MetroQuest survey used to solicit community input during Phase-IA of the NM500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement project. The order and images represent the flow of exercises community members were led through and the instructions they were provided for how to engage with the survey and provide input.



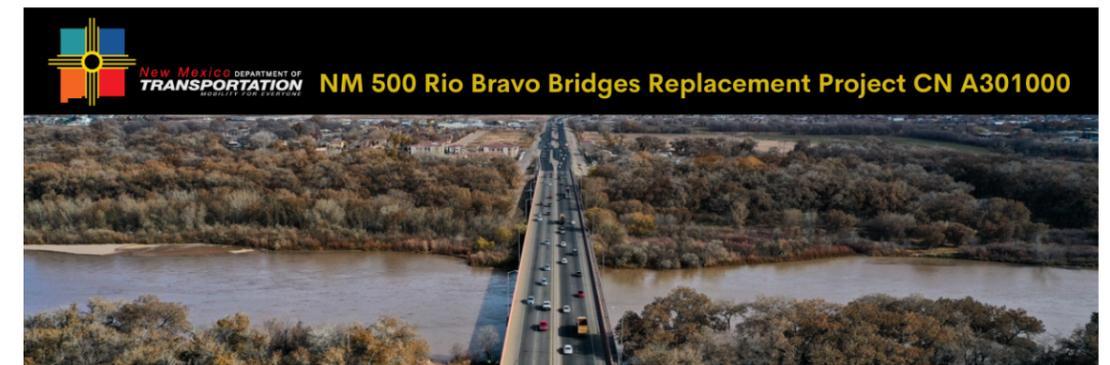




## NM500 Project Email

**From:** Rebecca Reints <rebecca.reints@wsp.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, January 11, 2021 11:06 AM  
**To:** Alvarado, Kevin S. <Kevin.Alvarado@wsp.com>  
**Subject:** January Update - NM500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project

[View this email in your browser](#)

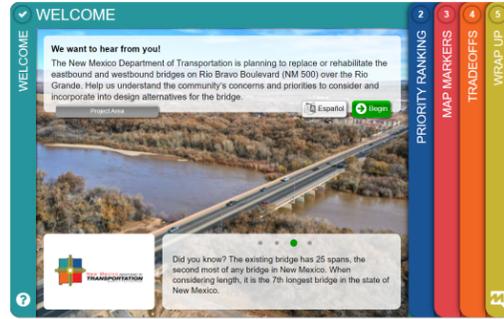


On behalf of all of us at the New Mexico Department of Transportation we want to wish you a happy new year and thank you for your continued interest in the NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project. We held a virtual public meeting on December 9, 2020 to introduce the project, present preliminary design options, and answer community questions. You can find a link to the recorded meeting below and find all meeting materials including a PDF of the presentation on the [project web page](#).



In addition to the meeting, we launched an interactive community survey in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#) to better understand community priorities and preferences. If you haven't already, please complete the survey and forward the link to your

neighbors and friends so we can hear from as many members of the community as possible!



### We want to hear from you!

We know how important this project is to the community and we acknowledge that things can get busy over the holiday period.

With that in mind, we have extended the public comment period to **Sunday, January 31, 2021.**

Thank you once again for your interest and active involvement in the project and we look forward to keeping you informed on the latest as we move forward.

### How to get involved

1. Watch the [video of the public meeting](#) on December 9, 2020.
2. Participate in the [online survey](#) (available in English and Spanish).
3. Visit the [project web page](#) for the latest project resources and information.
4. Share your comments via email to [jennifer.hyre@wsp.com](mailto:jennifer.hyre@wsp.com) or by mail to

Attn: NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges  
 2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
 Albuquerque, NM 87110



*Copyright © 2021 Attn: NM 500 Rio Bravo Blvd Bridge, All rights reserved.*  
 Thank you for your interest in the New Mexico Department of Transportation's NM500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project.

#### Our mailing address is:

Attn: NM 500 Rio Bravo Blvd Bridge  
 2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
 Albuquerque, NM 87110

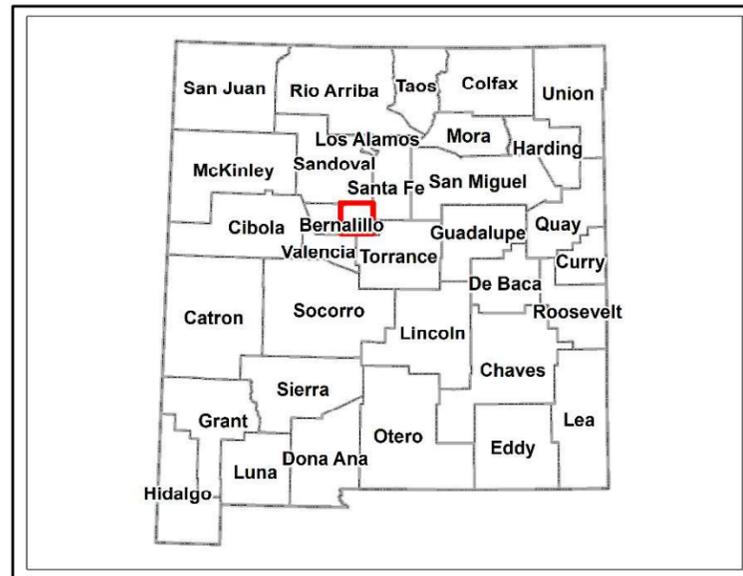
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NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NM 556 TRAMWAY BLVD TRAIL OVERPASS IMPROVEMENTS, BERNALILLO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CONTROL NO.: A300923



# NM 556 TRAMWAY BLVD TRAIL OVERPASS IMPROVEMENTS, BERNALILLO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

## PUBLIC COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CONTROL NO.: CN A300923  
DATE: JUNE 2021

WSP USA, INC.  
2440 LOUISIANA BOULEVARD, SUITE 400  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87110

WSP.COM





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- 3 PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS ..... 2**
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- APPENDIX C: PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED ..... 21

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The following public engagement summary provides a synopsis of the public outreach process and effort to date, including input received, for the preservation and/or rehabilitation of four wooden timber thru-arch bridges that carry a multi-use trail over Tramway Blvd (NM 556) between Comanche Road and Copper Avenue in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico (CN A300923). Public involvement and stakeholder coordination for the project began in early 2021 and has continued into mid-2021.

# 2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, in-person public engagement was not feasible to discuss the existing conditions, proposed improvements, and project development and schedule. At this time, the FHWA approves using alternative measures for achieving public input due diligence. Accordingly, the Project Team uploaded a recorded, audio-visual PowerPoint presentation to the NMDOT’s YouTube channel, and made it publicly available on the NMDOT Projects webpage for a 30-day comment period. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation slide deck is located in **Appendix A**. To participate, the public was encouraged to watch the narrated presentation, review the information on the NMDOT Projects webpage, and submit comments or questions by telephone, email, or mail between April 1, 2021 and April 30, 2021.

To provide notice of the public input request, United States Postal Service (USPS) Every Door Direct Mailers (EDDM) were sent to 8,268 residents in the immediate vicinity to the project area, and an advertisement was published in the *Albuquerque Journal* newspaper on April 1, 2021 (**Appendix B**). In addition, a mailing list was generated to include local city, county, and state officials, local trail and biking groups, and anyone from the public who has requested to be added to the mailing list. A public input announcement was sent to those on the mailing list through email. Lastly, notification of the public input announcement was posted on the NMDOT Projects Website and social media outlets, and distributed through the NMDOT Public Information Officer.

Considering the urban context of the project corridor, the Project Team chose strategies to encourage public participation from a diverse spectrum of the public. The public advertisement included a QR barcode (see figure) and custom weblink URL (<http://rebrand.ly/TramwayTrailOverpass>) that led the public directly to the NMDOT District 3 Projects webpage containing project information and the recorded presentation.

During the 30-day public comment period, the custom URL was visited 131 times and the QR code was scanned 40 times. The recorded PowerPoint video hosted on the NMDOT’s YouTube channel was viewed a total of 229 times. A copy of each of the notifications is located in **Appendix B**. Additionally, the project team received 45 public comments and questions (2 phone calls and 43 emails), which are summarized in the next chapter.

Figure 1. QR Code



### 3 PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

Review and analysis of comments indicate that the public input received falls into four general themes: 1) full support of the project, 2) comments and concerns about prairie dogs in the project area, 3) comments and questions about schedule and cost, and 4) comments and questions about construction and design. The following paraphrased cumulative comments were noted from questions or comments received during the 30-day public comment period. Copies of comments are included in **Appendix C**.

- Overall, the public is overwhelmingly supportive of the project. Those expressing full support of the project noted:
  - This project is much needed.
  - This will improve the recreation experience.
  - Thank you for providing the informative video and opportunity to provide feedback.
- Comments and concerns about prairie dogs include:
  - Protect the prairie dogs.
  - Do not stage equipment or materials on the burrows or run over the prairie dog burrows with equipment.
  - If excavation occurs, the prairie dogs should be removed beforehand.
  - If prairie dogs need to be relocated, they should be removed this summer before they go into torpor.
  - Efforts should be made to avoid disturbing prairie dog habitat between May and Mid-June when the pups are born and are weaning.
- Comments and questions about schedule and cost include:
  - How long will the construction take?
  - Will the repairs be completed consecutively (one right after the other)?
    - The bridges should not all be worked on at one time because they are heavily used.
  - Please don't start projects during Balloon Fiesta.
  - What is the cost of the project?
- Comments and questions about construction and design include:
  - Have detours been considered? Tramway is very busy and reducing it down to one lane each direction could cause a lot of traffic and frustration.
  - Will bicyclists be rerouted to the pedestrian trail when the bridges are being worked on? Signage should be installed telling bicyclists to slow down during construction to avoid conflict with walkers. What measures will be in place for pedestrians to cross Tramway? The traffic light is short.
  - Include robust signage for drivers on Tramway and cross streets to encourage them to watch out for people walking and biking during construction.

- The functionality of the bridges depends on the bridges themselves and the approaches to the bridges. The current bridges are not ADA friendly and are difficult to cross in wheelchairs and bikes. Reach out to the disabled community to see what improvements mobility-challenged people would like to see.
  - Mention in the proposal that these bridges were constructed before ADA became federal law.
- Is the decking really in need of replacement?
- The polymer surface is a big improvement from the wood planks.
- Can a fire retardant be added to the wooden structural elements? The glulam beams on the Candelaria bridge do not appear to be protected even though the decking is. The fire retardant should not detract from the appearance. A steel bridge would be safer and more fire resistant than wood.
- Are there any plans to add flora between the lanes of Tramway?
- Do the overpasses have proper lighting?
  - I would like to see LED lights for improved safety. The color changing ones like what downtown has that can be seen from the road would brighten up the area.
  - Solar lighting should be installed.
- The railings should be improved.
- The artificial surface is less safe than wood because it has less give, making it harder on joints when walking. Ice and snow do not melt as quickly on the artificial surface, making it very slippery and difficult to navigate safely during the winter.
  - The wood surface is more aesthetically pleasing than the artificial surface, even if it is less safe.
- Jill Mosher directed a project to install slip resistant deck materials on the Candelaria Bridge, which was successful. Recommend using that on these bridges as well.
- There are often homeless encampments at the bridge at Tramway and Copper. Can the area under the bridge be walled off so that this will no longer be an issue?
  - There is a lack of maintenance, upkeep, and enforcement of city and state laws along the trails which has led to crime, vandalism, and littering.
  - There is a woman who lives 75 yards south of Bridge 8457 with her dog.
- Retain the character and aesthetic of the existing bridges. The locals nearby are fond of them and like the safety and utility they provide.
- Can the walkways be graffiti-resistant?
- Please add signage on the bridges to indicate the recreational trails they connect to on the west side of Tramway.
- The timbers should be donated to Habitat for Humanity Re-Store instead of discarded.

# APPENDIX A: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION






**VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

April 2021

**NM 556 Tramway Blvd Trail Overpass Improvements**  
NMDOT CN A300923

## PRESENTERS






**New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Team Presenters**

- **Greg Clarke**, NMDOT District 3 Project Development Engineer
- **Jennifer Hyre**, WSP Environmental Planner
- **Ray Trujillo**, WSP Senior Bridge/Structures Manager

## AGENDA






**Presentation Topics**

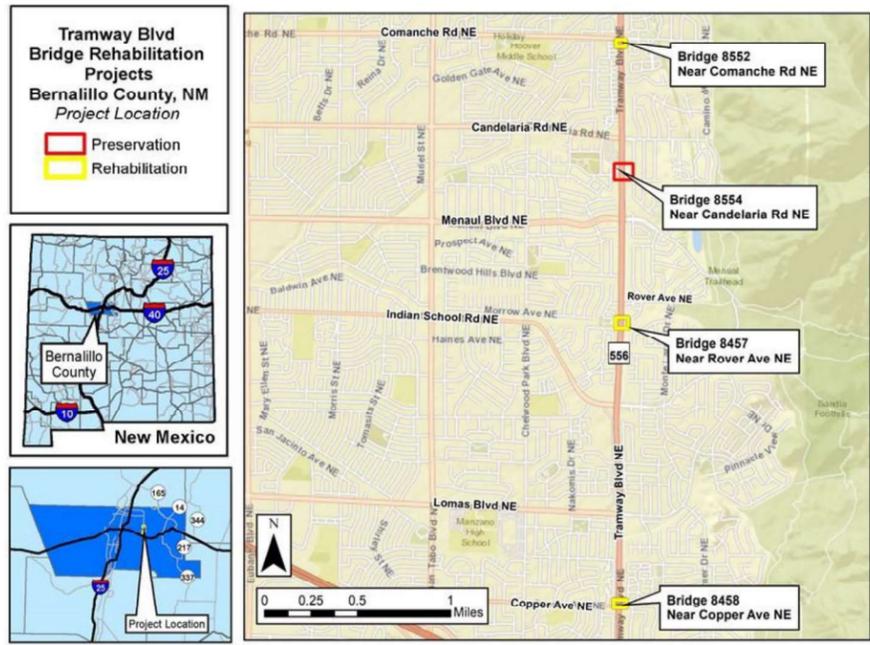
1. Project Limits
2. Existing Conditions
3. Proposed Improvements
4. Project Schedule
5. Next Steps
6. How to Comment

## PROJECT LIMITS AND EXISTING CONDITIONS






# Project Limits



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing concrete bridge elements



Existing steel bridge elements



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing timber bridge decking



Existing pedestrian fence



# EXISTING CONDITIONS

Existing timber glulam beams

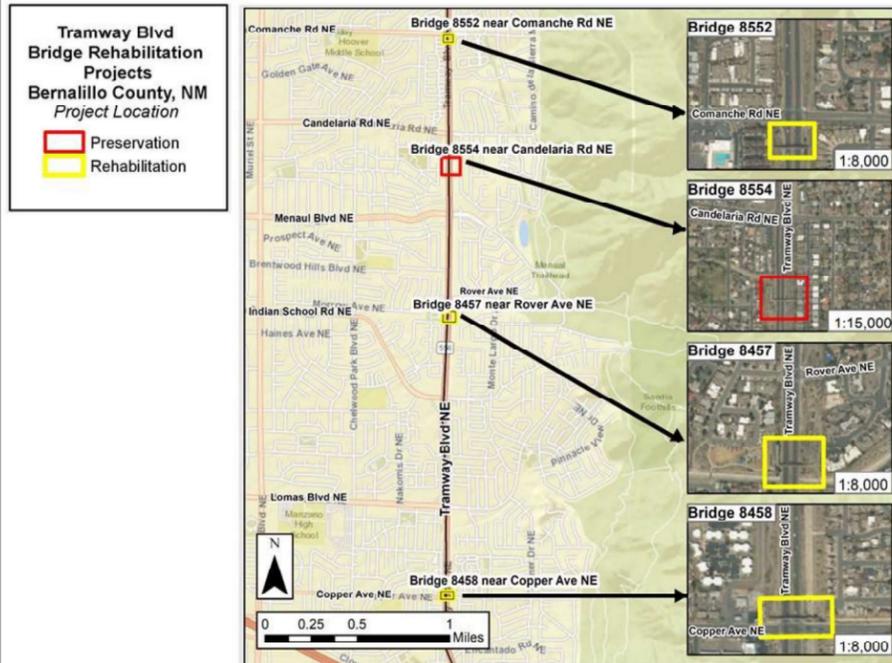




## Proposed Improvements

### Proposed Improvements: Preservation or Rehabilitation of the Four Bridges

Bridge	Location
8552	Comanche Road
8554	Candelaria Road
8457	Rover Avenue
8458	Copper Avenue



### Proposed Improvements: Preservation or Rehabilitation of the Four Bridges

Bridge	Location
8552	Comanche Road
8554	Candelaria Road
8457	Rover Avenue
8458	Copper Avenue

### Proposed Improvements: Preservation

Bridge	Location
8554	Candelaria Road

#### What is Bridge Preservation?

- Work done to prevent or reduce deterioration of a bridge.
- Restores the function of the bridge and improves its condition
- Extends the bridge's service life
- Examples of bridge preservation include concrete repair and repainting steel bridge elements

#### What is Bridge Rehabilitation?

- Work required to restore the structural integrity of a bridge
- Correct major defects and deterioration a bridge may have
- Examples of bridge rehabilitation include replacement of bridge decks

#### Why is Bridge Preservation work only being done to the Bridge near Candelaria Road?

- Fire damage in July 2013



## Proposed Improvements: Preservation

Bridge	Location
8554	Candelaria Road

### Rehabilitation work done in 2014 to Bridge near Candelaria Road

- West approach ramps rebuilt
- New fiber reinforced polymer deck
- New hand rail attached to existing pedestrian rail
- Repainted pedestrian rail and other steel elements



13

## Proposed Improvements: Preservation

Bridge	Location
8554	Candelaria Road

### What will Bridge Preservation consist of?

- Repair concrete at abutments and piers
- Repair and retighten the pedestrian fencing



14

## Proposed Improvements: Preservation

Bridge	Location
8554	Candelaria Road

### What will Bridge Preservation consist of?

- Repaint steel elements



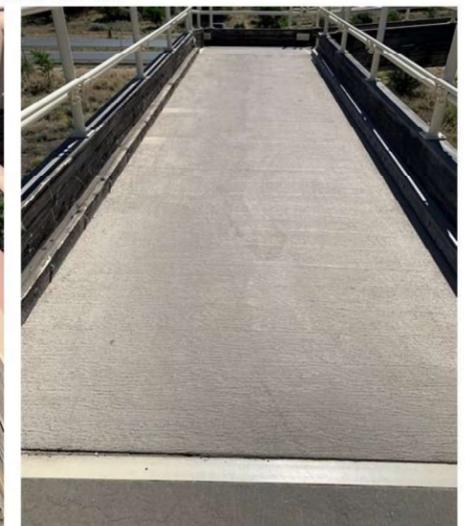
15

## Proposed Improvements: Rehabilitation

Bridge	Location
8552	Comanche Road
8457	Rover Avenue
8458	Copper Avenue

### What will Bridge Rehabilitation work consist of for the remaining 3 bridges?

- Replace the existing timber bridge decking with a fiber reinforced polymer deck



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### Proposed Improvements: Rehabilitation

Bridge	Location
8552	Comanche Road
8457	Rover Avenue
8458	Copper Avenue

#### What will the rehabilitation work consist of?

- Add pedestrian hand rails to existing rails
- Repaint steel elements



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## Construction Maintenance of Traffic

- Cyclists using the shared use path will be re-directed on to a protected lane on Tramway Blvd
- Pedestrians will be provided a safe route during construction
- Signs will be placed clearly marking the detour instructions
- Traffic will be reduced to one lane in each direction
- Work will only occur above the areas where traffic is not flowing



### Proposed Improvements: Rehabilitation

Bridge	Location
8552	Comanche Road
8457	Rover Avenue
8458	Copper Avenue

#### What will the rehabilitation work consist of?

- Repair concrete at abutments and piers
- Repair and retighten the pedestrian fencing



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## Project Schedule and Next Steps

## Project Schedule

- ▲ Preliminary Engineering Design - Winter 2020/2021
- ▲ Virtual Public Meeting - Spring 2021 ← We are Here
- ▲ Initial Engineering Design Development - Spring 2021
- ▲ Final Engineering Design - Summer 2021
- ▲ Anticipated Construction Start - Winter 2021/2022

Study Phase to Construction

## Next Steps

- ▲ Gather Public Input
- ▲ Develop Final Design Plans
- ▲ Construction



## We Want to Hear from You...

Please provide us with comments by April 30, 2021

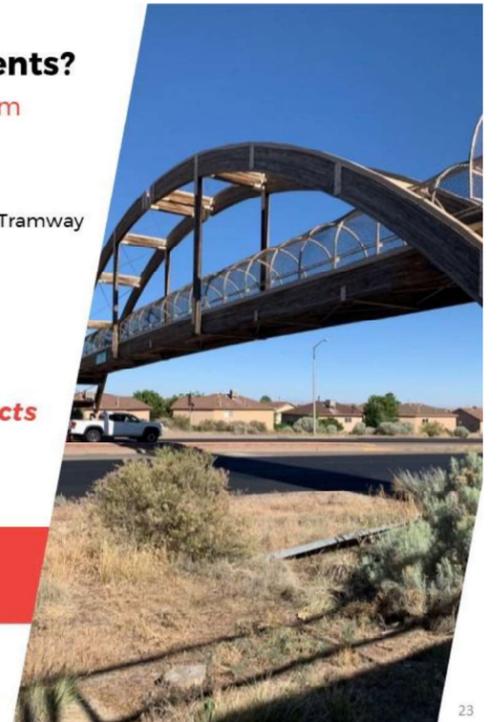
Electronic submittals preferred

### ▲ How to Provide Comments?

- Email: [jennifer.hyre@wsp.com](mailto:jennifer.hyre@wsp.com)
- Call: (505) 878-6577
- Mail:
  - WSP | Jennifer Hyre | Attn: NM 556 Tramway
  - 2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400
  - Albuquerque, NM 87110
- More information on the NMDOT Projects Page

[dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects](https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects)

All Comments are welcome!!



# Thank you!

NMDOT CN A300923  
<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>

# APPENDIX B: PUBLIC MEETING NOTICES

## Albuquerque Journal Advertisement

U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

**NM 556/  
Tramway Blvd.  
Trail Overpass  
Improvements**

Public Input Request  
April 1 - 30, 2021

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is planning to preserve and/or rehabilitate four bridges that carry the multi-use trail over Tramway Blvd. (NM 556) between Copper Ave. and Comanche Rd. The project includes four wooden timber thru-arch bridges that carry the trail over NM 556 for grade-separated crossings.

We would like to hear from you if you have any concerns or comments about the overpasses.

Visit the NMDOT Projects webpage to watch a recorded presentation on the project and then provide your comments and questions:  
[rebrand.ly/TramwayTrailOverpass](https://rebrand.ly/TramwayTrailOverpass)

**Comments and questions should be sent by April 30, 2021 to:**  
WSP USA c/o Jennifer Hyre Attn: Tramway  
2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Jennifer.Hyre@wsp.com | (505)-878-6577

To request a translator, contact Jennifer Hyre.

## Social Media Advertisement: Twitter

New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

**PUBLIC INPUT REQUEST**

NM 556/Tramway Blvd. Trail Overpass Improvements CN A300923  
April 1-30, 2021

**PROVIDE INPUT NOW!**

Watch a recorded presentation on the NMDOT Projects webpage and then provide your comments and questions.

**PUBLIC INPUT REQUEST**

NM 556/Tramway Blvd. Trail Overpass Improvements CN A300923  
April 1-30, 2021

**PROVIDE INPUT NOW!**

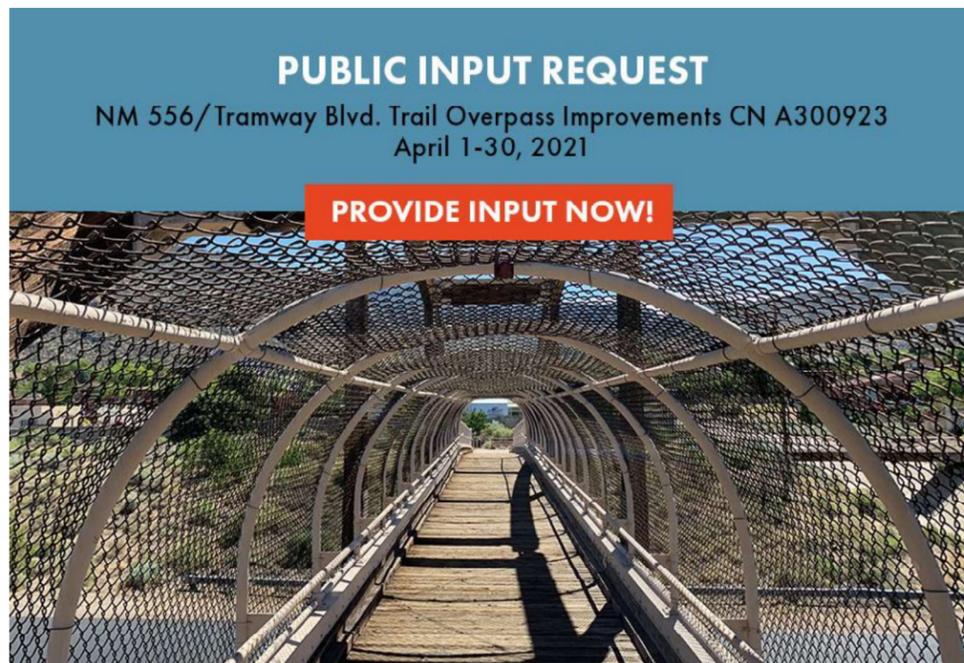
New Mexico DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE

Watch a recorded presentation on the NMDOT Projects webpage and then provide your comments and questions.

### Social Media Advertisement: Facebook



Watch a recorded presentation on the NMDOT Projects webpage and then provide your comments and questions.



Watch a recorded presentation on the NMDOT Projects webpage and then provide your comments and questions.

### United States Postal Service Every Door Direct Mailer Postcard



**WE WANT YOUR INPUT!**

NM 556/Tramway Blvd. Trail Overpass Improvements  
**VIRTUAL OPEN HOUSE**

Visit the NMDOT Projects webpage to watch a recorded presentation on the project and then provide your comments and questions:  
[rebrand.ly/TramwayTrailOverpass](http://rebrand.ly/TramwayTrailOverpass)



To request a translator, contact Jennifer Hyre.

Comments and questions should be sent by April 30, 2021 to:

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2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Jennifer.Hyre@wsp.com | (505)-878-6577

### BikeABQ Shared Facebook Post

10:35

◀ Messenger

**BikeABQ** Yesterday at 2:29 PM ·

NOT AN APRIL FOOL'S JOKE (but like, really not):  
[NMDOT](#) will be repairing the Tramway Bridges (overdue for some love!!) and is looking for input all this month!  
Visit [rebrand.ly/TramwayTrailOverpass](https://rebrand.ly/TramwayTrailOverpass) to learn more and provide feedback!  
Cycling Peeps [Albuquerque Mountain Bike Association](#) [New Mexico Bike Summit](#)



Watch a recorded presentation on the NMDOT Projects webpage and then provide your comments and questions.

Like   Comment   Share

## APPENDIX C: PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

Appendix omitted to protect personal information

# Materials Review

## Sample Checklist/Timeline

Public involvement materials and strategies don't materialize overnight. When developing materials for public involvement, the project team should clearly identify the associated deliverables and the associated lead times for review, feedback, and publishing in order to keep the entire team apprised of schedule and to be cognizant of lead-times for review, production and preparation.

The following is an example of a public involvement checklist and timeline as used for a sample project. In this example, a consultant identifies lead times for deployment and review by NMDOT in anticipation of a public meeting.

### DOCUMENTS

- Context Sensitive Solutions – Public Involvement Plan
  - » Draft to NMDOT 4 weeks after kickoff
- Public Outreach and Comment Summary Report
  - » Draft to NMDOT 3 weeks after end of public comment period

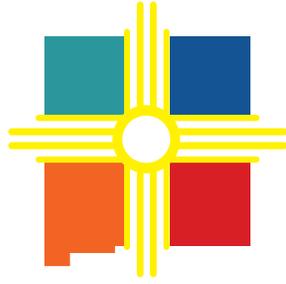
### MATERIALS

- Public Meeting Notices
  - » Newspaper Advertisements
  - » Radio Advertisement Script
  - » Social Media Advertisement
  - » Every Door Direct Mailer
  - » Press Release
    - ♦ Drafts to NMDOT 4 weeks ahead of meeting
    - ♦ Final versions to publishers, print shop, radio station, social media team, 3 weeks ahead of meeting
    - ♦ All notices distributed 2 weeks ahead of meeting
- Posting of information to NMDOT Active Projects Webpage
  - » Draft content to NMDOT 3 weeks ahead of meeting
  - » Information posted 2 weeks ahead of meeting
- Posting of event on NMDOT events calendar
  - » Draft content to NMDOT 3 weeks ahead of meeting
  - » Information posted 2 weeks ahead of meeting

- Presentation Development
  - » Draft to NMDOT 6 weeks ahead of meeting
  - » Final Draft ready 3 weeks ahead of meeting
- Project Fact Sheet
  - » Draft to NMDOT 4 weeks ahead of public meeting
  - » Fact sheet distributed and published online day of public meeting

### PROCESSES

- Reserve Venue for in-person open house
  - » 8 weeks ahead of meeting
- Schedule Zoom Webinar for Virtual Open House
  - » 8 weeks ahead of meeting
- Host team rehearsals
  - » Rehearsal #1 - 2 weeks ahead of meeting
  - » Rehearsal #2 – 1 week ahead of meeting
  - » Rehearsal #3 (as needed) – 3 days before meeting



*New Mexico* DEPARTMENT OF  
**TRANSPORTATION**  
MOBILITY FOR EVERYONE