PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

NM 68, MILEPOST 6.863 - 12.706 ROAD AND BRIDGE IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT
RIO ARRIBA COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

CN 5100461 AND 5100462

JUNE 2018

PREPARED FOR
New Mexico Department of Transportation

PREPARED BY
SWCA Environmental Consultants
INTRODUCTION

The following public meeting summary provides a synopsis of the public outreach process and effort to date, including input received, during development of the proposed New Mexico State Road 68 (NM 68), milepost (MP) 6.863-12.706 Road and Bridge Improvements project (CN 5100461 and 5100462). Public involvement and stakeholder coordination for the project began in 2017, and has continued into 2018.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The first public involvement meeting for the project was held on May 31, 2017, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., in Alcalde at the Alcalde Elementary School. To provide notice of the public meeting, an advertisement was published in the Rio Grande Sun on May 18, 2017 and May 25, 2017 (Appendix A). In addition, the same notice was hand distributed to businesses within the corridor and electronically distributed by the District 5 Public Information Officer, an advertisement banner was hung on the NMDOT Alcalde Patrol Yard right-of-way fence, and up to six campaign-style signs were posted at major intersections within the project corridor.

The Project Development Team, including New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) District 5 and environmental staff were in attendance for the May 2017 meeting. Approximately 19 members of the public, county, and state officials, and Project Development Team representatives were present (Appendix B). The meeting began as a 30-minute open house with display boards and a tabletop roll-out showing adjacent property parcels, followed by a formal presentation (Appendix C). The purpose of the meeting was to present the project history, purpose and need for the project, accident data, drainage issues, preliminary project design and recommended improvements within the project corridor. After the presentation, time was given for verbal comments and questions from the attendees. Project comment cards were also available for attendees to provide written comments. In total, four comment cards were received from community members during the public comment period (Appendix E).

After the public comment period, the Project Development Team discussed the verbal and written comments received and used this input to refine the project design. Specifically, the design was refined to 1) improve pedestrian access through a crossing at the NM 68 and CR 42 intersection; 2) alleviate sedimentation and downstream storm water flooding through lining the median ditch with paving, placing riprap and energy dissipaters at the outlet end of structures, and adding temporary sediment traps downstream of the structures during construction; and 3) consolidate access in and out of the Alcalde Patrol Yard by creating a new access point off CR 138.

A second public involvement meeting was held on May 17, 2018, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., in Alcalde at the same location as the 2017 meeting. To provide notice of the meeting, an advertisement was published in the Rio Grande Sun on April 3, 2018 (Appendix A). The same notice was hand distributed to businesses within the corridor and electronically distributed to attendees of the prior meeting, anyone who had previously provided input, and state and local officials. In addition, an advertisement banner was hung on the NMDOT Alcalde Patrol Yard right-of-way fence and up to six campaign-style signs were posted at major intersections within the project corridor. The NMDOT District 5 Public Information Officer also distributed a copy of the meeting announcement.

Approximately 15 members of the public, county, and state officials, and Project Development Team representatives were present at the 2018 public meeting (Appendix B). The meeting began as a 30-minute open house with display boards and a tabletop roll-out showing adjacent property parcels. A handout was also made available (Appendix D). Project Development Team representatives then provided a formal presentation of the project design, purpose and need for the project, accident data, construction phasing and...
traffic control, and right-of-way and environmental impacts. Following the presentation, time was given for comments and questions from the attendees. Verbal comments and questions received during the meeting were summarized in writing and are included in Appendix E. Project comment cards were also available for the public to provide written comments. There were no comment cards received during the meeting. Written comments were accepted following the meeting through May 31, 2018, which marked the end of a 14-day public comment period. As of May 31, 2018, a total of 7 comments have been received (Appendix E).

COMMENTS

Review and analysis of the cumulative comments (2017 through 2018) indicate that the public input received falls into two general themes: 1) supportive of the project with the condition that there are additional project measures adopted, and 2) supportive of the project with the condition that storm water issues are addressed. The following paraphrases comments noted either from questions or verbal comments received during the 2017 and 2018 meetings, as well as comment cards, emails, and letters received during the 2017 and 2018 public comment periods.

Those that are supportive of the project with the condition that there are additional measures gave the following reasoning:

- Caution signs or flashing signage indicating a speed reduction zone would help reduce speeding along the corridor.
- Installation of a streetlight at the intersection of NM 68 and CR 42 intersection would create a safer, more visible turn lane onto La Villita.
- Adding a separate deceleration lane for the heavy trucks accessing the NMDOT Alcalde Patrol Yard and Rio Arriba County Waste Transfer Station would help prevent collisions.
- Dedicated deceleration lanes to enter/exit the Heritage Center would help create safer access to/from the Heritage Center.
- Placement of turnout signage would help encourage drivers to reduce speed before turnouts.
- Providing an evacuation zones to an area where crossing NM 68 is not required would provide safer evacuation access.
- School zone signs would help reduce speeding through school zones.
- Vegetation clearing along the fence lines is needed to maintain fence integrity.
- Adequate resident driveway and BLM access should be maintained during construction and operation of the project.
- A popular recreation area is accessed from the NM 68 and CR 42 intersection and the median crossover should not be closed.
- An underpass or other type of pedestrian/bicycle/equestrian crossing at the CR 42 intersection would provide safer access.
- Adequate access to the La Tienda gas station should be maintained. A dedicated median opening would improve access to this business.
- Acceleration lanes for each median opening would make it safer.
- Lowering the speed limit and increasing police patrols should also be considered.
• Traffic control during construction should take into account the use of the roadway shoulder by the waste management service trucks.

Those that are supportive of the project with the condition that storm water issues are addressed gave the following reasoning:

• Silt and/or sediment from the NMDOT Alcalde Patrol Yard potentially impacts surface water features in the area and measures should be taken to prevent possibly contaminated water from leaving the yard site.

• Paving the median may lead to an increase in water velocity and exposure to oil and gas pollutants.

• Moving storm water runoff to different drainage channels may alleviate some of the flooding issues and prevent silt and gas pollutants from getting into the local acequia system.

Copies of all comments received through May 31 2018, via the comment cards, fax, or from email can be found in Appendix E.
APPENDIX A

Public Meeting Notices
PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT FOR

NM 68 Road and Bridge Improvements
from Milepost 6.863 (Alcalde) to 12.706 (south of Velarde), CN 5100461/5100462

Presentation of the project design and construction phasing and traffic management

The New Mexico Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is holding a public meeting to present the project design and receive input from the public. Proposed improvements include pavement reconstruction, bridge structure replacement and repair, median access control, and drainage improvements.

The meeting will begin with an open-house to discuss the project design with the Project Study Team at 6:00 PM and a presentation at 6:30 PM. Your attendance and input is important to helping the team finalize the project design. All interested parties are invited to attend.

Written comments will be accepted at the meeting or can be sent (by May 31) to:

SWCA Environmental Consultants
5647 Jefferson Street NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
or fax: 505.254.1116
or jhyre@swca.com

To request Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations for this meeting, please contact Jennifer Hyre, SWCA, at least two days before the meeting: (505) 245-1115.

Thursday, May 17, 2018
Alcalde Elementary School
Student Library
NM 68, County Road 138A, Alcalde, NM
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Presentation 6:30 PM
The New Mexico Department of Transportation, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is holding a public meeting to present the preliminary project design and receive input from the public. Proposed improvements include pavement reconstruction, bridge structure replacement and repair, median access control, and drainage improvements.

The meeting will begin with an open-house to discuss the project design with the Project Study Team at 6:00 PM and a presentation at 6:30 PM. Your attendance and input is important to helping the team move forward with the project design. All interested parties are invited to attend.

Written comments will be accepted at the meeting or can be sent (by June 14) to:

SWCA Environmental Consultants
5647 Jefferson Street NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
or fax: 505.254.1116
or jhyre@swca.com

To request Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations for this meeting, please contact Jennifer Hyre, SWCA, at least two days before the meeting: (505) 245-1115.

Wednesday, May 31, 2017
Alcalde Elementary School
Student Library
NM 68, County Road 138A, Alcalde, NM
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Presentation 6:30 PM
APPENDIX B

Sign-in Sheets
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
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Public Meeting – Sign-In Sheet
NM 68, Milepost 7 – 12.7 Road and Bridge Improvements (CN 5100461)
May 31, 2017
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM | Presentation at 6:30 PM
APPENDIX C

PowerPoint Presentation 2018
NM 68 Road and Bridge Reconstruction
CN 5100461/5100462

May 17, 2018

MP 6.9 to 12.7
NM 68 Project Team

NMDOT:
Paul Brasher, District Engineer
Thomas Griego, Acting Maint. Engr.
Lawrence Lopez N. Region Mgr.
Dana Garcia, Project Development Engineer
Jennifer Mullins, Environmental

WHPacific:
Hal Byrd, Transport. Director
Steven Harris, Project Manager
Mike Zwolinski, Bridge Engr.

Sheila Johnson, Drainage Engr.

Cobb Fendley (Utilities):
Sean Wolfe and Mac Brown

Lee Engineering (Traffic):
Paul Barricklow and Patrick Byrd

T.Y. Lin (Bridge):
Eric Froberg and Shane Kuhlman

SWCA (Environmental):
Jennifer Hyre
Begin Phase 1 Project near the northern boundary of the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo, 6.9 MP

Bridge 8550 (Southbound) Mile Post 12.3
Bridge 6760 (Northbound) Mile Post 12.3

Bridge 8549 (Southbound) Mile Post 11.6
Bridge 6759 (Northbound) Mile Post 11.6

End Phase 2 Project just north of Velarde Elementary School, 12.7 MP

End Phase 1 Project / Beginning Phase 2 Project near Sangre de Cristo Self Storage, 10.1 MP

Bridge 8543 (Southbound) Mile Post 8.2
Bridge 6492 (Northbound) Mile Post 8.2

Bridge 8548 (Southbound) Mile Post 9.5
Bridge 6758 (Northbound) Mile Post 9.5
Purpose of the Meeting

- Inform stakeholders on the project status
- Review project purpose and need
- Review right-of-way and utility impacts
- Review traffic control during construction
- Update the environmental review (NEPA Process)
- Gather Input from stakeholders
Questions/Comments from 1st Public Meeting (May 2017)

- Storm water flow from medians/impacts on local acequia
- Consolidation of access at NMDOT patrol yard and Alcalde county transfer station
- A safe pedestrian/bicyclist/horse crossing is desired near the access point to BLM land and County Rd. 42.
- Consider crossover for La Tiendita gas station at the 8.6 MP
- Consider crossover between STA 268+00 (MP 8.9) and 310+00 (MP 9.6).
- Construction impacts to local water utility
- Traffic calming strategies
- Right turn lanes vs. continuous 10’ shoulders
- Construction schedule
Project Needs

• *Safety concerns and design deficiencies throughout the corridor.*

• *Roadway and bridges are in poor condition.*

• *Drainage and erosion issues throughout the corridor.*
Purpose and Need

1. **Safety Improvements**
   - Provide design consistent with travel speeds on project
   - Improve sight distance at turnouts and intersections
   - Correct deficiencies in horizontal and vertical alignment
   - Upgrade guardrail protection for slopes and fixed objects
   - Provide up-to-date signing and striping
   - Implement speed calming measures in Alcalde

2. **Access Control**
   - Reduce frequency of crossovers.
   - Correct deficient deceleration lanes at crossovers.
   - Install access control fence in median.
The primary cause of crashes within the project limits were due to:

- Driver Inattention (19%),
- Failed to yield the right of way (14%),
- Involved alcohol or drug impairment (14%),
- Excessive speed (11%).
Crashes Preventable with Access Changes

To bring NM 68 into better compliance with safety standards and to improve safety along the study corridor, 34 of the existing 48 median openings will be closed.
• Deceleration and Acceleration Lane Requirements
• Median Crossover Spacing Requirements:
  • Full Access
  • Partial Access
Existing Median Access

- Spacing between the existing median crossovers is too close and does not allow for adequate deceleration and acceleration lanes.
**Proposed Median Access**

- 14 median crossovers will be provided.
- Existing right-in/right-out driveway access will be maintained. Driveways will be flattened and paved to the ROW.
Median Crossover Consolidation
Information and Benefits

Advantages:
• Reduce severity of crashes
• Fewer conflict points
• Safer left turn lanes and median operation
• Improved performance of through lanes

Disadvantages:
• Additional travel time between turn arounds (Up to 60 Seconds)
3. Other Safety Improvements

- Consolidate NMDOT Patrol Yard full access with Solid Waste Transfer Station to reduce congestion and weaving conflicts with large truck in the area.

- Establish pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle median refuge at County Rd 42 for non-motorized access to the BLM trails and open space east of NM68 and near County Rd 42.
Purpose and Need

3. Other Safety Improvements

- Consolidate NMDOT Patrol Yard access with Solid Waste Transfer Station to reduce congestion and weaving conflicts with large truck in the area.

- Establish pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle median refuge at County Rd 42 for non-motorized access to the BLM trails and open space east of NM68 and near County Rd 42.
Purpose and Need

4. Reconstruct and Rehabilitate Bridge Structures & Channel Protection

- Remove, reconstruct, and widen bridge 6760 (Phase 2 Project) 12.3 MP
- Remove, reconstruct, and widen deck on bridge 6759 (Phase 2 Project) 11.6 MP
- Repair and restore 6 bridges (4 on the Phase 1 Project, and 2 on Phase 2) 8.2 MP and 10.5 MP
Purpose and Need

5. Repair and Reconstruct Drainage Structures & Channel Conditions

- Remove and reconstruct various box and pipe culverts along the corridor
- Repair and correct channel erosion and silting conditions at drainage structures
Fix Channel Scour at 7.1 MP and 10.3 MP

Channel Erosion at Concrete Box Culvert Outlet, 10.3 Milepost

Storm Water Energy Dissipater (Example)
Right-of-Way and Easements

Right-of-Way acquisition will be limited to 3 locations

- Energy dissipater, 7.1 MP (Lt.)
- Energy dissipater, 10.3 MP (Lt.)
- New Patrol access road, 7.3 MP (Rt.) Road to County Solid Waste Transfer Station

Concrete Box Culvert at 7.1 Milepost w/ new Energy Dissipater
Right-of-Way and Easements

Right-of-Way Acquisition is been limited to 3 Locations

- Energy dissipater, 7.1 MP (Lt.)
- Energy dissipater, 10.3 MP (Lt.)
- New Patrol access road, 7.3 MP (Rt.) Road to County Solid Waste Transfer Station
Right-of-Way Fence Correction

The existing ROW fence in Alcalde is misaligned between the 7.0 MP at CR41A and the 7.3 MP at CR37, and will need to be moved to correct the alignment.
Right-of Way Fence Correction

The existing ROW fence in Alcalde is misaligned between the 7.0 MP at CR41A and the 7.3 MP at CR37, and will need to be moved to correct the alignment.
Right-of-Way and Easements

Construction Maintenance Easements

- Will be established to construct and maintain drainage and channel improvements primarily along the western ROW line
Right-of-Way and Easements

Temporary Construction Easements

- Will be established to construct and improve safety for driveways and the TCP will expire once the construction is completed.

- Water utility valve box adjustments will be done concurrently with construction. It is anticipated that any loss of service will be brief, and this work will be coordinated with impacted property owner during construction.
Traffic Control during Construction
Traffic Control during Construction

TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN TYPICAL DETOUR FOR SOUTHBOUND INSIDE LANES CONSTRUCTION

Note: No Left Turns during Construction in Construction Zone
Traffic Control during Construction

TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN TYPICAL DETOUR FOR SOUTHBOUND OUTSIDE LANES CONSTRUCTION

Note: No Left Turns during Construction in Construction Zone
Traffic Control during Construction

TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN FOR NORTHBOUND LANES CONSTRUCTION

Note: No Left Turns during Construction in Construction Zone
Environmental Review and Impacts

- Cultural Resources
- Water Resources
- Socioeconomics
- Recreation
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Hazardous Materials
- Threatened and Endangered Species
Schedule

• Environmental approvals & acquisition of right-of-way and easements to begin June 2018

• Utility relocations to be concurrent w/ construction

• Phase 1 Construction - 6.9 Milepost to 10.1 Milepost Anticipated Start (2020)

• Phase 2 Construction - 10.1 Milepost to 12.7 Milepost Anticipated Start (2023)
How to Comment

• Leave comment sheet with project team tonight
• Email jhyre@swca.com
• Fax 505.254.1116
• Mail to
  SWCA Environmental
  5647 Jefferson Street NE
  Albuquerque, NM 87109

Submit your comments by May 31, 2018
Questions?
APPENDIX D

PowerPoint Presentation 2017
NM 68 Road and Bridge Improvements
CN 5100461

Public Involvement Meeting
May 31, 2017
Project Limits and Location

The project is located in Rio Arriba County and begins at mile post 7.0, approximately 2.5 miles north of the junction of NM 74, and ends at mile post 12.7.
Purpose of the Meeting

• Update Stakeholders on the Project Status
• Review the Project Purpose and Need
• Review the Preliminary Design
• Environmental Review (NEPA Process)
• Gather Input from Stakeholders
NM 68 Project Team

NMDOT:
Paul Brasher, District Engineer
Javier Martinez, Maint. Engr.
Lawrence Lopez N. Region Mgr.
Travis Johnson, PDE

WHPacific:
Hal Byrd, Transport. Director
Steven Harris, Project Manager
Mike Zwolinski, Bridge Engr.
Sheila Johnson, Drainage Engr.

Cobb Fendley (Utilities):
Sean Wolfe and Mac Brown

Lee Engineering (Traffic):
Paul Barricklow and Patrick Byrd

T.Y. Lin (Bridge):
Eric Froberg and Shane Kuhlman

SWCA (Environmental):
Jennifer Hyre
Prior to 1966 NM 68 was a 2 lane highway with narrow shoulders that meandered along and near the current alignment of highway that exists today.

The highway was reconstructed with 2-12’ driving lanes and 10’ shoulders along a new alignment in 1966 - What is now the current southbound lanes south of County Road 1370 at Alcalde Elementary, and the northbound lanes north of County Road 1370 at Alcalde Elementary.

In 1984 the roadway was expanded to a four lane divided highway with two 12-foot driving lanes in each direction, 10’ outside shoulders, and a 4’ inside shoulders on the new construction. The NMDOT also constructed many of the median crossover that you see today during this time period.
During these construction phases that expanded the highway many of the old drainage structures were extended and not replaced. As a result many of those old structure are composites of two and even three different generations of road construction. A structure might be a concrete box culvert in the center, a concrete pipe at the inlet end and a corrugated metal pipe at the structure outlet.

Today the highway is in poor condition.
- The road bed has settlement unevenly due to poor soil condition under the roadway.
- Many of the drainage structures do not perform to current design standards, and are in varying degrees of deterioration.
- The pavement is near the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced.
- Median access (left hand turning bays) does not meet current safety standards for spacing and deceleration lane lengths, and poses a significant safety hazard in its current configuration.
Purpose and Need

Reconstruct and Rehabilitate Deteriorating Features:
• Pavement
• Bridges
• Drainage Structures

Correct Safety Deficiencies:
• Roadside Slopes and Structures
• Median Crossovers And Turn Lanes
Purpose and Need

Reconstruct and Rehabilitate Deteriorating Features:
- Pavement
- Bridges
- Drainage Structures

Correct Safety Deficiencies:
- Roadside Slopes and Structures
- Median Crossovers And Turn Lanes
Safety (Purpose and Need)

**Improving Safety Throughout Corridor**
- Provide Design Consistent with Travel Speeds on the Roadway
- Improve Sight Distance at Turnouts and Intersections
- Correct deficiencies in Horizontal and Vertical Alignment
- Upgrade Guardrail Protection for Slopes and Fixed Objects
- Install Rumble Strips on Median Shoulders
- Provide Up-to-Date Signing and Striping

**Provide Access Control Throughout Corridor**
- Correct Safety Deficiencies Associated with Deceleration Lane Length and Median Crossovers Spacing
- Install Access Control Fence in Median
Crash Causes

The Primary cause of crashes within the project limits were due to:

- Driver Inattention (19%),
- Failed to Yield THE Right-of-Way (14%),
- Involved Alcohol or Drug Impairment (14%),
- Excessive Speed (11%).
Crashes Preventable with Access Changes

To bring NM 68 into better compliance with Safety Standards and to improve safety along the study corridor, it is recommended that 34 of the existing 48 median openings be closed.
NMDOT State Access Management Manual

- Deceleration and Acceleration Lane Requirements
- Median Crossover Spacing Requirements:
  - Full Access
  - Partial Access
Existing Median Access

- Inadequate length for left turn deceleration lanes
- Inadequate spacing between crossovers to accommodate length left turn lanes
  - 635’ Needed for 50MPH
  - 793’ Needed for 60 MPH
Proposed Median Access

- Adequate length for left turn deceleration lanes
- Adequate spacing between crossovers to accommodate length left turn lanes
  - 635’ Needed for 50MPH
  - 793’ Needed for 60 MPH
Median Crossover Consolidation
Information and Benefits

Advantages:
• Reduce Severity of Crashes
• Fewer Conflict Points
• Safer Left Turn Lanes Operation
• Improved Performance of Through Lanes
• Median Access will Meet Highway Safety Standards

Disadvantages:
• Additional Travel Time Between Turn Arousnd (Up to 60 Seconds)
• More Vehicles using Remaining Median Crossovers
Bridges (Purpose and Need)

Reconstruct and Rehabilitate Bridge Structures & Channel Protection

- Remove and Reconstruct Bridge 6760
- Remove and Reconstruct Deck on Bridge 6759
- Repair and Restore 6 Bridges (2 NB and 4 SB)
Culverts (Purpose and Need)

Repair and Reconstruct Drainage Structures & Stabilize Channels

- Remove and Reconstruct Various Box and Pipe Culverts Along the Corridor
- Repair and Correct Channel Erosion and Silting Conditions at Drainage Structures
Scour and Erosion Protection
Environmental Review and Impacts

- Threatened and Endangered Species
- Cultural Resources
- Water Resources
- Air Quality
- Noise
- Hazardous Materials
- Multi-modal Transportation
- Socioeconomics
Schedule

1. **Phase C and D: Project Started (June 2016)**
   - Identification of Project Footprint and Right-of-Way Impacts
   - Environmental & Preliminary Engineering through 30% Design.
   - Public Meeting and Comment Period (May 31, 2017)

2. **Phase II: Final Design through 90% Design: Start (March 2017)**
   - ROW Survey and Mapping
   - Acquisition of Construction Maintenance Easements
   - Preliminary Design/Environmental Approvals

3. **Final Design(s): Start March 2018**

How to Comment

• Leave comment sheet with project team tonight
• Email jhyre@swca.com
• Fax 505.254.1116
• Mail to
  SWCA Environmental
  5647 Jefferson Street NE
  Albuquerque, NM 87109

Submit your comments by July 01, 2017
Questions?

New Mexico Department of Transportation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

WHPacific

May 31, 2017
APPENDIX E

Handout
The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is proposing improvements that will address safety issues and design deficiencies to the road, bridges, and drainage structures along New Mexico Highway 68 (NM 68) from milepost (MP) 6.863 to 12.706. In May of 2017, the NMDOT held a public meeting. During the meeting, topics discussed included the project history, purpose and need for the project, crash data, the preliminary design, and anticipated schedule. Following the public meeting, elements of the project design were refined based on the input received.

Based on funding constraints, the project will be phased for construction. Phase 1 (CN 5100461) will consist of approximately 3.3 miles from MP 6.863 to MP 10.116. Phase 2 (5100462) will consist of approximately 2.6 miles of MP 10.116 to MP 12.706.

The proposed project would involve roadway and bridge construction, drainage improvements, vertical grade and super-elevation improvements, access control, signing and striping including raising the grade of existing driveway tie-ins; closure of median crossovers; cleaning of drainage structures; installing rip rap and energy dissipaters at select drainage structures; replacing Bridge 6760 (north bound [NB]); deck replacement and widening of Bridge 6759 (NB), preventative maintenance to six other bridges (Bridge 6492 (NB), 8543 (south bound [SB]), 6758 (NB), 8548 (SB), 8549 (SB), and 8550 (SB); guardrail installations; and spot right-of-way fence replacements.

**PROJECT SCHEDULE**

- May 2017—Public Meeting #1
- May 2018—Public Meeting #2
- June 2018—Environmental Approval
- June 2018—Right-of-Way Process Begins
- Fall 2018—Final Design for Phase 1
- Spring 2019—Final Design for Phase 2
- 2020—Phase 1 Construction
- 2023—Phase 2 Construction

Please submit questions or requests for additional information to:
Jennifer Hyre, SWCA Environmental, 5647 Jefferson St. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109
Phone: 505-254-1115, Fax: 505-254-1116
Email: jhyre@swca.com
Submit your comments by May 31, 2018
APPENDIX F

Public Comments Received
Before the presentation, representatives from the Onate Monument Visitor’s Center expressed interest in a NB right-turn deceleration lane into the turnout and an acceleration lane out of the turnout. They spoke to stories of close calls between drivers who are in the through lane and those trying to brake and make the turn off the highway.

The Onate Monument Visitor’s Center has also been renamed, and it was requested to place a sign with the updated name on the highway.

Acceleration lanes are desired for each median opening.

The property owner with land across from the NMDOT Patrol Yard is concerned about the quantity and quality of the water that flows into a pond on the property. There is concern about silt and/or sediment from the patrol yard flowing downstream, and it was questioned whether this water in the pond has been tested for contaminants.

- Because this was outside the ROW and any CME, this was not in the scope of the environmental report and not tested.
- According to the District 5 Engineer, the patrol yard has been dammed up so that runoff does not flow into the roadside ditches.
- Also according to the District 5 Engineer, the private pond showed up on the USGS geological maps sometime around the 1980s and may have been created by a landowner to capture water from the channel. The water is from the same historical basins upstream, but the pond changed the stream pattern downstream.

According to the stakeholders, the retention pond at Alcalde Elementary School does not function or hold water during storms and instead the flow continues to the private pond on the West side of NM 68.

The public is concerned about sedimentation in the local acequia system (along St. Rd. 389 parallel to NM 68) and stated that it has been a problem since the highway was built in the 1960s. It was requested for the water expelling from culverts near the BOP to be diverted to one of the channels that leads directly to the river.

- The design team explained that it is against regulations to divert water from one basin to another that isn’t the same basin in which water has historically flowed.
- This project is minimizing its impact in regards to sedimentation by lining the median ditch with paving, placing riprap and energy dissipaters at the outlet end of structures, and building temporary sediment traps downstream of the structures during construction.

The pond and acequia will be further discussed among the design team, drainage engineers, and environmental consultant, but as of now appear to be outside the scope of this project and responsibility of the NMDOT.
• In the previous public meeting it was expressed that the gas station should have a median opening for its entrance. The design team will evaluate the grades at this location and add a median opening here if it can be feasibly done.

• It was mentioned that a lot of the waste management service trucks drive along the shoulder continuously when picking up.
  o The design team reinforced that NM 68 will have continuous 10’ outside shoulders.
  o It was requested that the construction traffic control will take this into consideration when maintaining access.

• The BLM representative stated concern about sedimentation issues and increased water velocity from the BLM lands east of NM 68. He requested a copy of the drainage report, and although it is not finalized, WHPacific will send the report in its current state.

• A question was posed on what type of fence will be in the median. The design team explained it was an access control fence and not a cable barrier.

• There was concern about the impacts of the project for the local utilities (specifically the local water utility’s main crossing in Alcalde).
  o The design team explained that there will not be impacts to the water line main, however there will be adjusting of the valve covers to new driveway grades.
  o There are currently no anticipated impacts to the gas and power lines.
  o There are data (either cable or fiber) lines that are not buried very deep and in some cases exposed and strung across channels; however, these are outside of the ROW and not impacted by the project.

• It was questioned whether the drainage report took into consideration the surface drainage from the roadway pavement. Since the proposed design includes paving the median, the public expressed that this would increase the volume of water coming out of the culverts and contribute to more surface oils/fuel draining into the channels as well (an increase from what currently percolates into the median soil).
  o The design team explained that the drainage report analyzed the basins up and downstream of NM 68 as well as the surface run-off from the highway.
  o Although paving the median slightly increases the volume of run-off water from the highway, the project has made efforts to slow down the velocity of the outlets of structures as much as possible (through riprap, energy dissipators, and temporary sediment traps), which equalizes the flow similar to what it is today. These measures will also reduce the amount of solids in the water.

• A question was posed on what size the culverts under the driveways will be. The design team answered 24” typically and that they will be connected in series that flow to the historical drainage channel.

• It was asked whether the frontage roads discussed in the previous public meeting was still an option. The design team explained that frontage roads would
not have been feasible in this project due to the ROW and property implications of toe-of-slope limits further than where they are today.

**Comments Written on Roll-plot**

- **STA 166+00, MP 6.9**: The water from the culvert at this location drains to the acequias and through the village of Plaza de Alcalde and deposits silt. Can this water be diverted north or south to another channel that flows directly to the river.
- **STA 185+00, MP 7.2**: There is a flood control dam upstream of the double barrel C.B.C. called the ‘Sebastian Martin Black Mesa Dam Site 18 – Upper Rio Grande Watershed District’.
- **STA 186+00, MP 7.3**: The water main that crosses NM 68 in Alcalde is a 16” line plus the thickness of the casing.
- **STA 187+00, MP 7.3**: There are local water authority wells on the east side of NM 68 that will need to be excluded from the TCP in this area to not be disturbed by the contractor.
- **STA 195+00, MP 7.4**: There is a private pond on the LT. side of NM 68 that is collecting water that appears to come from the elementary school and NMDOT Patrol Yard.
- **STA 206+00, MP 7.6**: The retention pond at Alcalde Elementary School does not function correctly.
- **STA 247+00, MP 8.4**: It is requested to place a NB right turn deceleration lane and acceleration lane for the Onate Monument turnouts.
- **STA 248+00, MP 8.4**: The Onate Monument has changed its name to Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area (NRGNHA) and requests a roadway sign change.
Dear Ms. Hyre,

I am enclosing comments in reference to the plans and presentations made at the May 17, 2018 Public Meeting at the Alcalde Elementary School, regarding the proposed projects on State Road 68 between Alcalde and Velarde. We were not notified of the first Public Meeting held last year, so this is our first formal presentation of our concerns and recommendations.

Thank you for your consideration.

THOMAS A. ROMERO
Executive Director
Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area
(505) 660-5882

director@riograndenha.org

www.riograndenha.org

https://www.facebook.com/NationalHeritageCenter/

https://www.instagram.com/nrg_nha/
Jennifer Hyre
SWCA Environmental Consultants
5647 Jefferson Street NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109

Ref: Public Comments, NM 68, MP 6.863-12.706, Road & Bridge Improv.

Dear Ms. Hyre,

I am writing to submit our comments in reference to the plans and presentations made at the Public Meeting held on May 17, 2018, at the Alcalde Elementary School. Two members of my staff were present at the meeting, and some of these comments may have been made to you verbally. We are submitting these written comments because we were not made aware of the first meeting held in 2017, so this is our first opportunity to express concerns and recommendations.

The Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area occupies the building and property known as the Oñate Monument, under an agreement with Rio Arriba County, permitting us to establish our headquarters in the facility and to develop and operate the facility on behalf of the County as a multi-cultural visitor center. The property was vacant for a number of years; however, it is now beginning to see increased traffic with visitors and event activities that only promise to increase as we complete planned renovations and interpretive activities on the site.

Our comments (attached) concern safety issues and increased volumes of traffic and vehicle interactions along the corridor. I trust you will consider these are serious concerns, and that there will be consideration given to the issues that we are raising. We will be pleased to speak with your team directly, if that would help in your assessment of the needs presented.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Thomas A. Romero, Executive Director
Northern Río Grande National Heritage Area

Attachment:
Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area
Road and Drainage Improvements
List of Concerns and Suggestions

Access to the Heritage Center:

There are presently two entrances to the Heritage Center that are available for public and private access. Access issues differ for the northbound vs. southbound traffic, and these are complicated by the high rate of traffic speed through this corridor. Speed limit is set at 60 mph.

- On the northbound lane there is no turnout lane to permit deceleration outside of the main flow of traffic. Individuals turning into the property must drive onto the shoulder to cut speed before making the right turn, then, must negotiate a sharp right turn into the entry gate.
- On the southbound lane there are two median turnouts (one for each entrance), but they are not connected, so if the traveler mistakenly enters the first turnout, but needs to be in the second, he must reenter the traffic lane then re-exit at the second turnout. This is often difficult with high traffic volumes at full speed.
- Exits from the property are also complicated: Exits turning north do not have an acceleration lane to permit merging with traffic. Exits turning south must first cross the northbound lane, stop in the median, then merge on the southbound lane, with no merge lane facility.

We are recommending consideration of the following:

- Dedicated in and out turning lanes to the Heritage Center – North and South
  We spoke with one of the designers at the meeting and discussed the possibility of adding a turnout lane on the northbound highway shoulder following the bridge. (He said the required standardized length for a turnout lane would not fit the space available after the bridge, but it would be possible to shorten the length of a turnout.) A similar turnout capacity is required off the southbound lane.
- Turnouts for the two entrances on both northbound and southbound lanes should be joined to permit continuous travel from one entrance to the other. This will require grading of the shoulder and median in the areas between the two entrances.
- Signage to alert to the turnouts is required on both the north and southbound lanes of travel, especially with approaches at full speed.
- Speed zones - Lessening the speed limit within the access area to the Heritage Center and other nearby attractions (Los Luceros or La Tiendita) should be considered. (See discussion below).
- Flashing Lights (Near the School/Near the Heritage Center) – The Heritage Center anticipates a great number of visitors and in-house usage, especially during special events. Having an indicator on the road beforehand, such as flashing lights, would help signal merging and turning traffic.

Cultural Corridor:

The corridor containing the Heritage Center also contains exits and entrances to numerous residences, businesses, and Los Luceros, a State-owned historic property. During the presentation, much was said about cultural resources, heritage sites, and need for consideration of environmental factors, including endangered species, socioeconomic factors, and other impacts that the project would bring on the area. The corridor includes reference to two national historic trails (Camino Real and Old Spanish Trail), access to the Heritage Center, and Los Luceros, and access to the Mesa Prieta Petroglyphs and other areas and points of interest that need to be highlighted for tourists and the general public.

We are recommending consideration of the following:

- Designation of the corridor as a Cultural Corridor, and placement of prominent signage to highlight the cultural resources will bring attention to the resources and permit attention to traffic patterns.
Lowering the speed limit - The speed limit drops to 45mph in the zone surrounding the County maintenance facility and the Alcalde Elementary School, south of the Heritage Center, but increases to 60mph in the corridor through to Velarde. The higher speed limit means traffic may course through the corridor at speeds up to 70mph. Maximum speed through this corridor should be similar to the speed zones currently established within the Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo boundaries.

School Zone – The corridor includes a school zone containing the Alcalde Elementary School, and there is designation of two emergency evacuation sites to serve the School. The Alcalde Senior Center is the 1st evacuation site, but since it is located on County Road 389, it is important to consider an access point not requiring crossing of the highway. The Heritage Center is the 2nd evacuation site, and there is need to provide safe access for children along the roadway. Both are inconsistent with the increased speed limit levels currently in place.

**Signage:**
There is critical need to expand and update the signage along the corridor. Signage should be planned within the context of the entire corridor rather than just for each facility. Key recommendations are:

- **Update name change of the Heritage Center** – Signage on the highway should reflect the name of the Heritage Center rather than the Oñate Monument Visitor Center that is now shown.
- **Signage for Los Luceros** – Signage for Los Luceros is difficult to read and not seen until one is nearly at the turn. Signage should be of the same style as used for the Heritage Center.
- **Signage for other cultural resources** also needs to be updated. This includes reference to existing tourism signage and provision for expanded interpretive signage consistent with the Cultural Corridor designation.
- **Designated school zone signs** – The presence of a school zone should be visibly highlighted.
- **Flashing lights** – Though not a sign, consideration should be given to flashing lights where these may be appropriate to traffic safety.
Hello, Lara,

I live along CR41 in the La Villita area on the north side of Alcalde. I will be out of town on the date of this meeting and am hoping that I may submit a request to you in lieu of being present. I would ask that we install a streetlight at the intersection of Hwy 68 and CR 0042, which is the turn from 68 westward down to La Villita. It is marked currently with a (small) sign and does have a turn lane - but at night it is difficult to see. It is a very dark section in the Hwy, so easy to miss the sign, and then the entry into CR 42 is virtually invisible until you've turned toward it and have your headlights pointing directly toward it. I work in Los Alamos and am leaving home and returning in the dark almost half of the year - a few lights would be truly helpful and much appreciated. I should add, though, that we savor our night sky in northern NM and so, if possible, it would be really great if new lighting could be down-directed and night-sky friendly.

I hope that the public meeting goes very well!

Thanks a lot,
Debora
101 CR 41, Alcalde, NM 87511

Vecinos,

**NMDOT is scheduling another meeting, please scroll further in this email for more information.**

Report suspicious activity by calling 753-3320 option 7, and identify yourself as a member of the Alcalde Neighborhood Watch or remain anonymous.

Louella B. Medina
Co-Chair
Alcalde Neighborhood Watch

----- Forwarded Message -----
Lara,
Thank you for this information. I have sent out the notice to my Alcalde Neighborhood Watch distribution list.

It's funny how things turn out. I was curious about this project and was going to look for a contact name and email address.

I hope there is a good turn out.

Have a great evening.

Louella B. Medina
927-3767

--- On Sat, 5/5/18, Louella Medina <alcaldeneighborhoodwatch@mail.com> wrote:

> From: Louella Medina <alcaldeneighborhoodwatch@mail.com>
> Subject: Fw: NMDOT Road and Bridge Improvement Project-Public Meeting Notice for the NM State Hwy 68
> To:
> Date: Saturday, May 5, 2018, 9:43 AM
> Vecinos,
> >
> >
> > NMDOT is scheduling another meeting, please scroll further in this email for more information.
> >
> > Report suspicious activity by calling 753-3320 option 7, and identify yourself as a member of the Alcalde Neighborhood Watch or remain anonymous.
> Louella B. Medina
> Co-Chair
> Alcalde Neighborhood Watch
>
> ----- Forwarded Message -----
>
> From: Lara Thompson
> <Lara.Thompson@swca.com>
>
> Sent: Friday, May 4, 2018, 4:51:46 PM MDT
>
> Subject: NMDOT Road and Bridge Improvement Project-Public Meeting Notice
>
> Good evening,
>
> On behalf of NMDOT, please see below for an upcoming public information meeting. We look forward to your participation.
>
> Lara
> Thompson
>
> Natural Resources Project Assistant
>
> SWCA Environmental Consultants
>
> 5647 Jefferson St NE
Public Meeting – Comment Sheet
NM 68, MP 7 – 12.7 Road and Bridge Improvements (CN 5100461)
May 31, 2017

Thank you for participating in tonight’s public meeting. Please take a few moments to provide us with your comments. You may leave your completed sheet in the comment box, hand it to one of the project team members, or it may be returned by mail to the addressee on the back page, by fax (505.254.1116), or by email (jhyre@swca.com). Although public input will be accepted at any time, we ask you to submit your comments specific to this meeting by June 14 2017.

Right - Turns on Stat - 100 + 24
Right - Turns on Stat - 187 + 00 to Trans. for Station
Right - Turns on Stat - 204 + 00 to Academy Elem. School.
Right - Turns on Stat - 224 + 00 to BMI Equestrian.

Right turn on Stat 255 to 260 wide turning
in the meadow.
Right turn on Stat 372 + 00
Right turn on Stat 411 + 00
Right turn on Stat 452 + 00

Fix the intersection & Valentine Elementary
School with:

Providing your name and contact information is optional.
Name: Love Valdez Jr
Address: 1002 403
Valleymex NM 87582
Email: lavdez3016@arrivo.com
Public Meeting – Comment Sheet
NM 68, MP 7 – 12.7 Road and Bridge Improvements (CN 5100461)
May 31, 2017

Thank you for participating in tonight’s public meeting. Please take a few moments to provide us with your comments. You may leave your completed sheet in the comment box, hand it to one of the project team members, or it may be returned by mail to the addressee on the back page, by fax (505.254.1116), or by email (jhyre@swca.com). Although public input will be accepted at any time, we ask you to submit your comments specific to this meeting by June 14 2017.

- Consider flashing lights @ reduced speed zone.
- Advanced warning @ reduced speed zones.
- Flashing caution light @ County Road 72.

Providing your name and contact information is optional.

Name: __________________________
Address: __________________________
Email: __________________________
Thank you for participating in tonight's public meeting. Please take a few moments to provide us with your comments. You may leave your completed sheet in the comment box, hand it to one of the project team members, or it may be returned by mail to the addressee on the back page, by fax (505.254.1116), or by email (jhyre@swca.com). Although public input will be accepted at any time, we ask you to submit your comments specific to this meeting by June 14 2017.

1) The property at 1091 St Rd 68 has two under-highway culverts. What is planned for these two areas?

2) Is there a cross over at the entrance to our driveway?

3) I would like a copy of the drainage plan for this project. If a field inspection of public records request is necessary, please notify me.

4) Are any comments needed from us (FLUTE)?

5) Salt Sage overgrowth between our fence and the highway is excessive. Is there a plan to remove this vegetation?

6) Maintaining the integrity of our fence along NM 68 is essential for us for security. What is the design proposed for the two entering our property?

OVER 5

Providing your name and contact information is optional.

Name: Mark Sanchez

Address: 1091 St Rd 68 - FLUTE

Velarde, NM 87582

Email: mark@FLUTE.com

505 - 852 - 0128
7) Are there de acceleration lanes North and South of our driveway?
Public Meeting – Comment Sheet
NM 68, MP 7 – 12.7 Road and Bridge Improvements (CN 5100461)
May 31, 2017

Thank you for participating in tonight’s public meeting. Please take a few moments to provide us with your comments. You may leave your completed sheet in the comment box, hand it to one of the project team members, or it may be returned by mail to the addressee on the back page, by fax (505.254.1116), or by email (jhyre@swca.com). Although public input will be accepted at any time, we ask you to submit your comments specific to this meeting by June 14, 2017.

Her father owns property on the west side of NM 68 near MP 10.5. The property has been subdivided into multiple lots with a shared easement for a road to connect to NM 68. Currently, the property has an unpermitted driveway connecting to NM 68 to property boundary. She already spoke with Traci’s.

Her father’s property would be impacted by the closure of the median crossings. They are planning future development and feel the lack of a direct ability for a left-hand turn would hinder ability for development of their parcels. They request for their access to remain open.

They spoke with Mr. Armijo, DS Traffic Engineer and will apply for driveway permit.

Providing your name and contact information is optional.

Name: MS. Benevides on behalf of her father, Albert Villareal
Address: 505-243-5798
Email: cynthia.v.herrera@gmail.com (sister)

Request notice of next public mtg and follow up about cross over