ALIGNMENT STUDY REPORT
PHASE 1B - DETAILED EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

NM 68/US 64 IN TAOS
La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita

July, 2016
Project No. 5100750
Control No. 5100750
NM 68/US 64 IN TAOS
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New Mexico Project No. 5100750, CN 5100750

Prepared for:

New Mexico Department of Transportation

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Executive Summary

Project Background

The NM 68/US 64 project is located in the Town of Taos. The proposed project includes segments of NM 68 and US 64. The NM 68/US 64 corridor provides the main north/south arteriel through the Town of Taos. The 1.72 mile long corridor, extends from the NM 68/La Posta Road intersection to the US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane intersection. From the entrance into Taos, NM 68 is a 4-lane roadway with a 2-way turn-lane through the La Posta Road intersection. The road transitions/narrows to a 2-lane roadway with a 2-way left turn-lane north of La Posta Road, continuing to just north of its intersection with the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel Intersection. The segment of NM 68 south of the central business area has paved shoulders, however no pedestrian or designated bicycle facilities. US 64 ties into the central business area just north of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. Through the central business area, the roadway narrows, however there are sections that are wide enough to accommodate side-street parking and bicycle lanes. US 64 northwest of Camino de la Placita was previously improved and provides for a 2-lane roadway with a continuous 2-way left-turn lane, paved shoulders and sidewalks. Camino de la Placita parallels NM 68 and US 64 and is a 2-lane roadway with narrow shoulders, curb & gutter, and sidewalks on either one or both sides. All of the aforementioned street segments provide access to or are located within the central business area, and provide for multiple access points to intersecting streets and businesses.

The Town of Taos and surrounding area has experienced traffic congestion on its existing roads and highways for many years; current traffic volumes within the corridor range from 11,000 to 22,000 AADT. As this area continues to grow, traffic volumes have increased and have resulted in failing levels of service; this is quite evident as one drives through the main streets in Town. The traffic problems exist year round and throughout the day, however are worse during the Noon and PM peak hour periods. The main streets in Taos are provided very limited relief by the remainder of the existing roadway network, since most of the major streets are limited in capacity and have a lack of connectivity. Most of the major streets in Taos have limited right-of-way available. In addition, most of the street intersections operate at a low level of service due to limited capacity and inefficient intersection alignment. There are many older structures adjacent to the existing streets and intersections that are considered of a historic nature, many of which are located in designated Historic Districts, and are protected by State and Federal historic preservation laws. The Town of Taos is also bordered by Taos Pueblo land. The existing roadway facilities also have many physical deficiencies.

Public and Agency Coordination Efforts

Coordination with other agencies and involvement of the public is an ongoing element of the NM 68/US 64 Alignment Study. Accordingly, an Agency Coordination and Public Involvement (PIP) and Context Sensitive Solutions Plan was prepared for the project and will be followed over the course of the alignment study. The PIP presents the process to be followed and activities to be conducted to: (1) make the stakeholders aware of the project; (2) provide stakeholders salient and meaningful information; and (3) involve stakeholders in the evaluation and decision process. Stakeholders for this project include, but are not limited to: federal and state resource agencies having jurisdiction over the natural and cultural resources potentially affected by the roadway improvements; local agencies, including the Town of Taos and Taos County; Taos Pueblo; Taos Downtown merchants; Emergency response personnel; Taos School District; business owners; and property owners.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the proposed improvements is to correct physical and geometric deficiencies, reduce congestion, and improve safety and mobility. The major needs identified as a part of the study include:

- Need to improve traffic operations along NM 68/US 64
- Need to correct major intersection geometric deficiencies
- Need to maintain business access and manage access along the corridor
- Need to manage street drainage flows
- Need to correct pavement deficiencies
- Need to provide for lacking pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Need to provide pedestrian facilities that comply with the latest ADA requirements

In the development and assessment of alternatives, the need for compatibility with the cultural and visual character of the Town of Taos was considered. In addition, the alternatives were developed with the goal of minimizing the acquisition of additional right-of-way and minimizing impacts to historic structures and natural features.

Improvements to NM 68 and US 64 are also needed to maintain an environment conducive to economic growth and development in the Taos area, as Taos is an important tourist destination.

State Infrastructure dollars have been made available for NM 68 and US 64 to address the needed improvements along this corridor.

Build Alternatives Considered

Four base alternatives, in addition to the no-build alternative were considered. Additional recommendations identified through the public involvement process were also assessed in detail; these additional improvements can be included with Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3. The base alternatives and additional improvements considered are as follows:

Base Alternatives

Alternative 1 – Coordinated Signal System

Alternative 1 would provide for signal coordination through the corridor limits on NM 68 and US 64. A well timed, coordinated signal system would improve traffic flows through the corridor, however benefits would be limited by the existing roadway lane capacity. This alternative would include a new traffic signal at the NM 68/Albright intersection, and new traffic signals are recommended on Camino de la Placita at Civic Plaza Drive and Don Fernando Street to improve system wide traffic operations. This alternative would be the least costly, however would not address needed physical improvements associated with pavement and drainage needs and would not address needed pedestrian and bicyclist needs. The use of an adaptive signal system could further improve improved traffic flow over a standard signal coordination system, and will be investigated further in the Design Phase of the project.
Alternative 2 – Coordinated Signal System + 4-lane Improvements on NM 68
Alternative 2 would build on Alternative 1, and in addition would provide for 4-lane improvements between La Posta Road and the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection to add additional roadway capacity. Under this alternative, a segment of NM 68 would include a center median to provide for left-turn movements and an area for median landscaping. However, due to limited right-of-way, the center left-turn lane would not be provided for from south of Los Pандos to the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection. Alternative 2 would include pedestrian and bicycle facilities between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, as well as a storm drain system and pavement reconstruction through these same limits. Alternative 2 would provide improved traffic operations along NM 68 due to the additional roadway capacity. The cost of this alternative would be higher than Alternative 1.

This alternative received the support of the Town of Taos, but there were many public concerns regarding the lack of provisions for a two-way center left-turn lane between south of Los Pандos and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel.

Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68
Alternative 2a would build on Alternative 1, and in addition would provide for roadway reconstruction improvements on NM 68 between La Posta Road and the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection. The segment of NM 68 between La Posta Road and south of Los Pандos would provide for 4-lane improvements with a center median to provide for left-turn movements and an area for median landscaping. Between south of Los Pандos and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, NM 68 would provide for a 2-lane section with a continuous center two-way left-turn lane. The roadway cross-section would be wide enough to provide for a potential future conversion to a 4-lane facility, if warranted. Alternative 2a would include new pedestrian and bicycle facilities between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, as well as a storm drain system and pavement reconstruction through these same limits. Alternative 2a would provide improved traffic operations along NM 68 due to the additional roadway capacity. The cost of this alternative would be very similar to Alternative 2.

This alternative received public support for raised medians from La Posta to south of Los Pандos and for the 2-lane roadway with two-way left-turn lane from south of Los Pандos to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel.

Alternative 3 – Coordinated Signal System + 4-lane Improvements on NM 68 + One-Way Pair
Alternative 3 would build on Alternative 2 and include all the same features as Alternative 2. In addition, this alternative would provide for a “One-Way Pair” facility on NM 68/US 64 and Camino de la Placita. The one-way pair would provide for two lanes of travel in each direction and would provide for designated or shared bicycle lanes and parking lanes where they can be accommodated. In addition, to a new traffic signal at NM 68/Albright, five additional traffic signals are recommended on Camino de la Placita to improve system wide traffic operations. Alternative 3 would provide improved traffic operations over Alternatives 1, 2 and 2a due to the added capacity in both directions. The costs of this alternative would be higher than Alternatives 2 and 2a.

This alternative received mixed public and stakeholder support. While there was some support for this alternative, the majority of the comments received opposed it. The major concerns voiced with this alternative was the need for circuitous travel and associated concerns with travel time, emergency response time, and potential traffic impacts to downtown businesses.

Additional Recommendations
Road Diet Cross-section through Portions of Downtown
The assessment of a “Road Diet” cross-section through the Downtown portion of NM 68 and US 64 was also assessed as a part of the Phase B study process. A road diet is a technique in transportation planning where the number of travel lanes or effective roadway width of the roadway is reduced in order to achieve systematic improvements. By doing so, safety improvements can be incorporated and space can be provided to accommodate other modes of travel. The reduction of lane widths results in space that can be applied to things such as: pedestrian refuges, medians, sidewalks, shoulders, parking, or bike lanes.

On NM 68 and US 64, a road diet could primarily be applied to the segment of NM 68 and US 64 from the intersection of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel to just north of Kit Carson Road at Martyr’s Lane. The existing driving lanes are fairly wide through this area which provides for opportunities to incorporate an area for bicyclists, as well as an opportunity to improve deficient sidewalk facilities. It also provides opportunities to re-direct pedestrian traffic away from areas that are not easily traversable by the handicapped or the elderly, such as steep stairways along NM 68. Other “Road Diet” type improvements such as curb ramp extensions to benefit pedestrian movements, would also be incorporated north of Martyr’s Lane up to the intersection of US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane.

The “Road Diet” can be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

Major Intersections Re-alignments
The majority of the major intersections within the corridor limits were identified as having geometric deficiencies. Non-standard intersection alignments result in conflict points resulting in crashes. The non-standard design also results in poor intersection operations. As a part of the Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives, those intersections identified as being deficient were further assessed to evaluate alternatives that would improve traffic operations and safety. The following improvements can be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3, as follows:

- NM 68/Albright/Tewa – Major intersection geometric improvements were already completed as a part of the Taos County Administrative/Judicial Complex development. This intersection currently warrants a traffic signal.
- NM 68/Siler/Los Pандos – Intersection alternatives assessed at this location included a major re-alignment to line up Siler and Los Pандos, as well as a double Tee intersection, and a traffic roundabout. Lining up Siler and Los Pандos is the recommended option, as it provides for a more standard intersection configuration, which would improve safety and traffic operations.
- NM 68/Camino de la Placita/Quesnel – Issues at this intersection include: problems with larger vehicle turnover movements, ADA issues, parking, side-street proximity and driveway proximity. Recommended improvements at this intersection include: provisions for improved vehicle turning movements, ADA improvements, improved driveway proximity, and improved pedestrian crossing movements. Forcing pedestrian movements to the north leg of the intersection would improve safety.
- NM 68/US 64 – Issues at this intersection include: very narrow existing right-of-way, both private and roadway encroachments, narrow sidewalks, sidewalks incorporated into canopy areas, and ADA issues. Recommended improvements at this intersection include: increased sidewalk width, improved channelization, and incorporation of traffic calming features such as a speed table.
- US 64/Camino del Paseo Pueblo Norte/Montecito Lane - Some of the major issues at this intersection include: side street stop control, ADA, clear zone, sight distance, and intersection delineation. Intersection alternatives included minor and major re-alignments of both US 64 and Camino del Pueblo Norte, as well as signalization. A major re-alignment of this intersection is recommended as it improves sight distance and better controls traffic movements. A gateway treatment for the turnout to Taos Pueblo is also recommended.
Assessment of Traffic Roundabouts
Based on public input/requests, traffic roundabouts were evaluated at two locations, as follows:

- **NM 68/Albright/Tews**: Both 2-lane and 4-lane roundabouts were evaluated at this intersection. A 2-lane roundabout can be accommodated and would function well with a 2-lane roadway cross-section, however as Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 all call for 4-lane improvements through this intersection, a 2-lane roundabout is not recommended. A 4-lane roundabout was evaluated and would function well, however, would create significant right-of-way impacts to an adjacent major business. A traffic roundabout is not recommended at this location.

- **US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali**: Two roundabout options were evaluated at this location. The two alternatives assessed would both function well, however would have significant impact to adjacent businesses. A traffic roundabout is not recommended at this location.

Assessment of Drainage and Water Quality Issues Associated with the Spring Ditch
A drainage system is lacking between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, and drainage is allowed to flow onto private property, most of which eventually flows into local streams, ditches, and arroyos. Several property owners have taken measures to contain the flows that enter onto their property. These measures include small swales and drainage structures. The inclusion of a storm drain system is recommended, and can be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

Drainage flows in the vicinity of the McDonald’s restaurant are currently being directed into the Spring Ditch, resulting in water quality issues. Water quality inlets, in addition to the proposed storm drain improvements are recommended in this area. Provisions for water quality inlets can be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

Assessment of Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding
Based on Stakeholder input, there is a need to locate additional off-street parking lots within the corridor study area, especially through the Downtown business area. In addition, additional signage is needed to direct traffic to designated parking lots and other points of interest. This option would provide benefits to visitors to Taos. Wayfinding can be incorporated into any of the Build alternatives, however, the Town of Taos would be responsible for the development of off-street parking facilities.

Landscaping Improvements
Based on a significant amount of stakeholder input, there is a strong desire amongst the residents of Taos to incorporate landscaping features into any proposed improvements planned on NM 68 and US 64. Landscaping features would make driving through Taos much more aesthetically pleasing. There is a strong public desire to incorporate greenery, including trees and other plantings along the roadway. Due to funding constraints, only limited landscaping can be incorporated in the raised median areas and within the existing right-of-way. Future enhancement projects could be programmed to further enhance the corridor.

Alternatives Comparison Matrix
Table ES-1, Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Matrix, provides a summary of the findings for the alternatives considered. See Table ES-1 on page 4.

Additional Considerations
The Alignment Study for this project assessed potential improvements to Camino de la Placita, which is currently under the jurisdiction of the Town of Taos. The costs of any improvements implemented under Alternatives 1, 2, and 2a would be the responsibility of the Town of Taos. If Alternative 3 was the selected alternative, costs associated with improvements to Camino de la Placita may qualify for State and/or Federal funding, assuming that Camino de la Placita would receive a State Road designation.

Recommendations
The following recommendations are made based on the detailed engineering and environmental evaluations, and taking into account public and stakeholder input:

- The No-Build Alternative will be advanced into Phase C and serve as the baseline when evaluating the Preferred Alternative.
- Alternative 2a is designated as the “Preferred Alternative”, as it addresses the needs identified in the Alignment Study and has public and stakeholder support.
- That the “Road Diet” improvements through the Downtown segment be incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
- That geometric and signalization improvements at the major intersections identified in the Alignment Study be incorporated into the Preferred alternative.
- That drainage and water quality improvements between La Posta and Quesnel be incorporated into the Preferred Alternative.
- That limited landscaping improvements, based on budgetary limitations, be incorporated in the roadway right-of-way and raised medians at locations to be determined during the Preliminary and Final design stage. A maintenance agreement between the NMDOT and the Town of Taos would be required to maintain landscaping features within the highway right-of-way.
- That the Town of Taos consider constructing new off-street parking facilities to address the lack of parking in the Downtown area. That Wayfinding be incorporated into the project design, in cooperation with the Town of Taos.

Table ES-2, Alternatives Features, summarizes the Preferred Alternative by segment. See Table ES-2 on page 5.

Priority Plan
Due to the significant number of needs identified as a part of the Alignment Study, and considering budgetary constraints, recommended improvements will have to be phased. The following phasing plan is recommended:

1. Signal coordination of all the signals within the project limits. An adaptive signal system should be considered to further improve traffic flows. Extending the signal coordination south to NM 518 is also recommended.
2. Roadway reconstruction between La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, to include signalization at Albright, storm sewers, raised medians where they can be accommodated, pavement reconstruction, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. In addition, the re-alignment of the Siler/Los Pudios intersection and improvements at the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection are recommended.
3. Road Diet improvements between Camino de la Placita/Quesnel to Martyr’s Lane, to include sidewalk reconstruction, pavement reconstruction, and shared bicycle lanes. In addition, improvements at the intersection of NM 68/US 64 are recommended.
4. Improvements from Martyr’s Lane to the intersection of US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane, to include pavement rehabilitation, sidewalk improvements, bulb-outs at mid-block crossings, and improvements at the intersection US 64/Camino del Paseo Pueblo Norte/Montecito Lane.

Concurrence with Executive Summary:

J. Don Martinez Date
FHWA Division Administrator
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Elements</th>
<th>No-Build</th>
<th>Alternative 1: Signal Coordination + 4-Lane Improvements</th>
<th>Alternative 2: Signal Coordination + Combination 4-Lane &amp; 2-Lane Improvements</th>
<th>Alternative 2a: Signal Coordination + Combination 4-Lane &amp; 2-Lane Improvements</th>
<th>Alternative 3: Signal Coordination + 4-Lane Improvements + 1-Way Pair</th>
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Table ES.1
Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Decision Matrix

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<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Score</th>
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<td>Segment Map</td>
<td>Design Features</td>
<td>*Alternative 2a</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
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<td><strong>La Posta to Quesnel</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Number of Lanes</td>
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*Note: Includes Additional Improvements.
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION, PROJECT BACKGROUND, AND PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 Introduction

This report documents the findings, investigations, analysis, and recommendations of Phase 1B, the Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives phase for the proposed NM 68 and US 64 improvements project located in the Town of Taos. The proposed improvements are located between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane. The Project and Control Number for the Corridor Study is 5100750. The Study also assessed potential improvements on Camino de la Placita. The project limits on NM 68 are Milepost 44.425 to 45.4917. The project limits on US 64 are Milepost 253.1093 to 253.766. The total project length is 1.7234 miles. Figures 1.1 and 1.2 illustrate the project location and study limits.

The Alignment Study has been prepared by the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Input received to date from local public entities, including the Town of Taos, Taos County, Taos Pueblo, Taos Downtown Merchants, the Northern Pueblos Regional Transportation Organization (NPRTPO), and other major stakeholders to assess the need for and type of improvements, has been considered in the analysis, findings, and recommendations.

This alignment study is being prepared following the latest edition of the NMDOT Location Study Procedures. The Location Study Procedures outline a structured process for the preparation of alignment and corridor studies. Alignment studies are generally conducted in three distinct phases – commonly referred to as Phases A, B, and C. The first two phases serve to develop, evaluate and refine the range of possible alternatives to achieve the need for the proposed action. The third phase involves the preparation of an environmental document and subsequent processing in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).
The Initial Evaluation of Alternatives phase (Phase 1A) was used to identify alternatives that would best achieve the need for physical, operational, and safety improvements along NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita, while avoiding or minimizing environmental (including historic buildings) and community impacts and addressing issues identified by the major stakeholders. Various alternatives were evaluated in the Initial Evaluation of Alternatives phase, including alternatives that would require minor roadway and intersection widening and/or realignment and which may require the acquisition of additional right-of-way to accommodate improvements, a one-way Pair concept, and the addition of traffic signals and/or signal timing improvements. The Initial Evaluation of Alternatives phase was previously completed, the Final Phase A Report is dated June, 2014.

The Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives phase (Phase 1B) was used to further develop and evaluate the alternatives advanced from the Initial Evaluation of Alternatives (Phase 1A) and provide for a more detailed assessment of the engineering and environmental factors associated with those alternatives.

Phase 1C, the Environmental Documentation phase, will involve the preparation of the environmental documentation and the subsequent processing. The successful completion of the Alignment Study process will allow for the selected alternative to be advanced to the Preliminary Design phase.

1.2 Context Sensitive Design/Context Sensitive Solutions

In conjunction with the Alignment Study process, this project has incorporated a context sensitive solutions approach. The Public Involvement and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Management Plan for NM 68 - US 64 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita dated September, 2013 outlines how the NMDOT will incorporate “context sensitivity” into the project development process. The objective of the plan is to assure that:

- The project satisfies the purpose and need while establishing a range of “stakeholder values”
- The safety requirements of NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita are addressed; the project is in harmony with the local communities and preserves the environmental, scenic, aesthetic, historic, and natural resources of the area; that the project meets the expectations of the stakeholders; that project is consistent with local goals and planning documents
- The project is built with minimal disruption to the communities, businesses, and facility users, and
- The project adds lasting value to the local communities.

The current version of the Public Involvement and CSS Plan is on file with the NMDOT and at the offices of Souder, Miller and Associates (SMA). CSS techniques were utilized in this Alignment Study and will continue through the remainder of the project development process. Major Stakeholder issues expressed in Phase 1A were evaluated and documented in the Phase A, Initial Evaluation of Alternatives Report. Major Stakeholder issues addressed in Phase B include:

- Pros and cons of One-Way Pair alternative
- Need for transit accommodations
- Pros and cons of traffic roundabouts at Albright/Tewa intersection
- Consideration of limited right-of-way
- Consideration of Taos Pueblo owned right-of-way and existing easements
- Need to maintain traffic flow at Taos Pueblo turn-off
- Need for increased roadway capacity
- Need to verify that truck traffic can be accommodated on NM 68 and US 64
- Need to improve signal operations and need to assess alternative signal operating systems
- Concerns with potential business impacts with roadway widening alternatives between La Posta and Camino de la Placita/Queensel

- Need to assess major intersection geometric improvements to improve traffic operations and safety, including Siler/Los Pandos and Camino del Paseo Pueblo Norte
- Concerns about emergency response
- Need to address parking needs
- Consider impacts to existing businesses in the downtown area
- Need for continuous pedestrian and bicycle facilities and signing for safety reasons
- Concerns about roadway maintenance
- Need for drainage improvements
- Impacts from storm drainage runoff to existing acequias
- The need for additional off-street parking facilities and wayfinding features.

The formulation of the project development teams as shown in Figure 1.3 has provided the structure for public and agency coordination to occur throughout the corridor study process. This is defined as the Management Structure for the study. This structure allowed for input from all stakeholder interests, a forum to educate all participants of the challenges, and involve them in a collaborative decision-making process to winnow out the unfeasible alternatives and agree to a feasible set of alternatives that can be carried forward. Many of the difficult decisions and project commitments were made during Phase 1B, of the Alignment Study. The approach was developed with an in-depth understanding of the context, the controversies and the environmental considerations to achieve NEPA compliance, which can be summarized as follows:

- Correctly characterize the issues
- Identify creative alternatives
- Resolve competing agency missions and goals
- Select the alternative that best reflects the full range of stakeholder values

Meeting the range of stakeholder needs required coordination, results oriented agendas and a sensitivity for time management. The clearly defined Management Structure facilitated addressing these issues and building appreciation and understanding of these issues among all the stakeholder groups. The Management Structure for this project was made up of three teams, which operated as follows:
1.3 Project Area and Background

NM 68 originates in Espanola and is the main Arterial roadway providing a connection to and through the Town of Taos. US 64 is a major east/west arterial originating at the state line west of Shiprock continuing to the state line east of Clayton. From the entrance into Taos, NM 68 is a 4-lane roadway with a 2-way turn-lane through the La Posta Road intersection. The road transitions/narrows to a 2-lane roadway with a 2-way turn-lane north of La Posta Road, continuing to just north of its intersection with Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. The segment of NM 68 south of the central business area has paved shoulders, however no pedestrian facilities. US 64 ties into the central business area just north of Camino de la Placita. Through the central business area the roadway narrows; however there are sections that are wide enough and which already accommodate side-street parking and bicycle lanes. US 64 northwest of Camino de la Placita was previously improved and provides for a 2-lane roadway with a continuous 2-way left-turn lane, paved shoulders and sidewalks. Camino de la Placita parallels NM 68 and US 64 and is a 2-lane roadway with narrow shoulders, curbs & gutters, and sidewalks on either one or both sides. All of the aforementioned street segments provide access to or are located within the central business area, and provide for multiple access points to intersecting streets and businesses.

The Town of Taos and surrounding areas have experienced traffic congestion on its existing roads and highways (see photo this page) for many years. As this area continues to grow, traffic volumes have also increased and have resulted in failing levels of service; this is quite evident as one drives through the main streets in Town. The traffic problems exist year round and throughout the day, but are worse during the Noon and PM peak hour periods. The main streets in Taos are provided very limited relief by the remainder of the existing roadway network since most of the major streets are limited in capacity and have a lack of connectivity. Most of the major streets in Taos have limited rights-of-way available. In addition, most of the street intersections operate at a low level of service due to limited capacity and inefficient intersection alignment (see photo this page for example). There are many older structures adjacent to the existing streets and intersections that are considered historic in nature, many of which are located in designated Historic Districts, and are protected by State and Federal historic preservation laws. The Town of Taos is also bordered by Taos Pueblo lands, which is an issue that must be taken into account when considering improvements of any kind in the area; early and ongoing coordination between the NMDOT and Taos Pueblo will be required as project development activities are advanced.

There are existing non-standard intersection alignments, which can result in conflict points resulting in crashes. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not continuous, creating potential safety hazards. Insufficient drainage facilities increase the potential of flooding during storm events.

Based on 2013 traffic volumes, the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) on NM 68 and US 64 ranges from 11,000 to 22,000. Traffic volumes are projected to increase to 15,000 to 26,600 within the 20-year time frame, which reflects a continued increase in the traffic volumes. Traffic operations are already operating at a low Level of Service (LOS), resulting in significant traffic delays and congestion. Therefore, any increases in traffic volumes will only worsen the LOS and associated delays.

Project Management Team (PMT) – Regular PMT meetings were held as required during the course of the Alignment Study. The PMT consisted of key staff from NMDOT, FHWA (advisory), and the SMA team. These meetings were used to track the CSS process, scope, establish design criteria, public involvement needs, budget and scheduling issues, but more importantly to monitor project development.

Stakeholder Group (SG) - SG meetings were held to satisfy input evaluation criteria development and alternatives analysis needs. Members of the SG included staff representatives from the NMDOT, FHWA (advisory); Town of Taos, NPRPO, Taos County, Taos Pueblo, Taos Downtown Merchants, Town of Taos Emergency Response, and community representatives. The overall goal of this group was to collectively understand and reflect community and environmental values in the alternatives analysis and provide input and feedback on the purpose and need, and solutions development process.

Project Steering Group (PSG) - The PSG team is comprised of policy-level decision-makers from the NMDOT and FHWA including the NMDOT Chief of Infrastructure Engineer, NMDOT District 5 Engineer, and the regional FHWA director. The PSG is the body that aided in resolving conflicts that could not be resolved at the lower levels of the PMT and SG. They ensured that resources were available and policy decisions were made to keep the project moving forward. They provided assurances that the project will be funded, permits would be streamlined and policy issues would be easily resolved.

Project kick-off meetings were held with members of the PMT, SG, and PSG members to understand the project purpose, components and timeframes, the flow of the decision-making process; and each group’s general roles and responsibilities.
Based on crash data obtained from the NMDOT for Years 2009 through 2011, this roadway segment experienced a total of 241 crashes during those years. The majority of the crashes involved disregard for traffic control devices, following too close, speeding, driver inattention, and improper driving. The highest crash locations include the intersections of La Posta Road, Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, and Kit Carson Road. The crash rate on NM 68/US 64 reflects an injury rate of 10.93, which is higher than the State Crash Rate of 2.17 for those same years.

A number of past studies have been conducted over the last 40+ years in an effort to address the growing congestion issue. These include the following:

- Taos By-pass Study – 1974, NMDOT
- Town of Taos Traffic Master Plan – 1990, Town of Taos
- Taos Traffic Network Improvement Study – 1997, Town of Taos
- Taos Relief Route Corridor Study – 2004, Taos County
- Taos Congestion Relief Route Study – 2008, NMDOT

In addition, other planning studies and associated documentation have established the need for transportation improvements in Taos; these include the following studies:

- Vision 2020 Master Plan
- US EPA Corridor Study
- Arts and Cultural District Cultural Plan
- Acequia Restoration Plan
- Smart Code Charrette Report
- Safe Routes to School Action Plans and Engineering Reports

In addition to traffic congestion issues, there are a number of existing parking and pedestrian issues along NM 68 and US 64. These issues include non-ADA compliant facilities at various locations and include issues such as narrow sidewalks, deficient handrails, stairways that are inaccessible to the handicapped and which have no alternate routes. There are also a number of locations along NM 68 in which parking is occurring on or near the existing right-of-way line; this parking may well be impacted by any roadway widening improvements. Figure 1.4 illustrates some of the typical existing parking and pedestrian issues along NM 68 and US 64. The pictures on page 11 further illustrate these issues.

The need for improvements to NM 68 and US 64 has been identified through the local agency and NMDOT planning process. There is a need to address safety, projected increase in traffic volumes, and roadway deficiencies along the corridor.

An Alignment Study is required to identify existing operational and safety issues along the corridor; evaluate potential alternatives to address the purpose and need of the project; identify a preferred alternative, obtain the required Environmental clearances, and identify a project(s) to include in the NMDOT’s short or long range program for construction.

Improvements to NM 68 and US 64 are currently included in the current NMDOT State transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Funding for this corridor has been made available for this project as a part of the State of New Mexico program that will address key infrastructure projects. This funding will be supplemented by Federal funding. Based on the findings and recommendations of the Alignment Study for this corridor, a project or projects will be programmed, utilizing state infrastructure dollars that will take into account budgetary constraints. Future funding needs will need to be identified to address costs that exceed available funding.
Figure 1.4 - Existing Parking and Pedestrian Issues Map
Damaged and Narrow Sidewalks

Parking Along Existing Right-of-Way

Non-ADA Compliant Sidewalks

Narrow Sidewalks/Non-Standard Railing
Cooperation with other agencies and involvement of the public is an ongoing element of the NM 68/US 64 Alignment Study. Accordingly, an Agency Coordination and Public Involvement Plan (PIP) and Context Sensitive Solutions Plans (CSS) were prepared for the project and will be followed over the course of the alignment study. The PIP presents the process to be followed and activities to be conducted to: (1) make the stakeholders aware of the project; (2) provide stakeholders salient and meaningful information; and (3) involve stakeholders in the evaluation and decision process.

Stakeholders for this project include, but are not limited to federal and state resource agencies having jurisdiction over the natural and cultural resources potentially affected by the roadway improvements, including the Town of Taos, Taos County, Taos Pueblo, Taos Downtown merchants, Emergency response personnel, Taos School District, business owners, and property owners. A more detailed list of project stakeholders is included in the PIP. Because the needs of stakeholders may change over time, the PIP is intended to be a dynamic process that is updated and revised as necessary as the project advances. The PIP is also an important part of the Context Sensitive Solutions Plan (CSS) process described in Section 1.2 of this document. The current version of the PIP and CSS Plan (dated January, 2013) is on file at the NMDOT and at the offices of Souder, Miller and Associates.

The PIP and CSS elements conducted to date as part of Phases A and B have focused on activities to make stakeholders aware of the proposed project and gather information from them with regard to issues of importance, concerns, and possible improvement concepts. To help achieve this objective, a total of 7 public involvement meetings were held in Phase A with the general public, local government representatives, local business stakeholders, and Taos Pueblo stakeholders. These included 2 public meetings, 2 Downtown Merchant Stakeholder meetings, 2 meetings with Taos Pueblo, and 1 meeting with Local Government Stakeholders. Those meetings were summarized in the Phase A, Initial Evaluation of Alternatives Report.

Efforts to keep the stakeholders aware of the proposed project were continued in Phase B of the Study. The input received follows.

2.1 Local Government Stakeholders Group Meeting February 24, 2016

A Local Government Stakeholders Group meeting for the NM 68/US 64 Improvements Project was held on February 24, 2016. The meeting took place in the Town of Taos Council Chambers. Besides the Study Team members, 28 individuals participated in the meeting, including representatives from: Town of Taos and Taos County, as well as Local Business representatives.

The following provides a summary of the Stakeholders comments, concerns, and questions:

- Question on overall project costs presently and in the future, and costs between 2 lanes versus 4-lanes, and better to 4-lane now.
- Question on how 4-lane would transition to 2-lanes at Quesnel.
- Question if parking needs have been studied.
- Question regarding future maintenance after improvements are completed. Concerned, as sees many Town streets not being maintained.
- Concern regarding lane closures during construction.
- Question regarding the proposed Smiths development and if this has been taken into account in the study.
- Concern regarding the need to incorporate landscaping into the project; need to use part of available budget for this.
- Question if parking needs have been studied.
- Concern regarding the need to consider bicycle master plan and bicyclist safety along NM 68 and need to incorporate provisions for full bicycle lanes, and need to have designated bike lanes.
- Question that most of the planning is centered on cars and not so much on alternatives modes of travel.
- Question on right-of-way availability and additional needs.
- Question on whether or not the right-of-way information will be available.
- Question if people would be compensated for losses.
- Question asking for clarification on right-of-way availability and additional needs.
- Question regarding when right-of-way information will be available.
- Question asking if landscaping will be included in the plan.
- Question asking if consideration would be made to hiring local work force for construction phase.
- Question asking if Landscaping will be included in the plan.
- Question asking if consideration would be made to hiring local work force for construction phase.
- Question regarding what transit accommodations will be provided for with the project and comment on how big truck impact traffic operations.
- Question about what is Town of Taos role in approval of preferred alternative.
- Question about who makes the final decisions on preferred alternative and what the decision making process involves.
- Question on the need for more off-street parking facilities.
- Questions on need to bring art to public places into the project.
- Question regarding the need to incorporate landscaping into the project; need to use part of available budget for this.
- Question on the need to incorporate landscaping into the project; need to use part of available budget for this.
- Questions on how 4-lane would transition to 2-lanes at Quesnel.
- Question about the difference in cost between 4-lane and 3-lane improvements.
- Comments regarding the proposed Smiths development and if this has been taken into account in the study.
- Concern regarding the need to incorporate landscaping into the project; need to use part of available budget for this.
- Comments supporting 4-lane improvements.
- Comments opposing one-way streets.
- Comments supporting One-Way pair as there is a need in Taos to reduce traffic delays.
- Question asking if parking needs have been studied.
- Concern regarding the existing intersection at Kit Carson Road and confusing situation for pedestrians and drivers.
- Questions on overall project costs presently and in the future, and costs between 2 lanes versus 4-lanes, and better to 4-lane now.
- Concerns about emergency response with one-way pair option.
- Concern about Emergency response with One-Way pair option.
- Questions questioning the need for additional signals on Camino de la Placita.
- Concern about the existing intersection at Kit Carson Road and confusing situation for pedestrians and drivers.
- Concern regarding lane closures during construction.
- Concern regarding the benefits of the Los Pardos/Siler re-alignment.
- Concern regarding the need to incorporate landscaping into the project; need to use part of available budget for this.
- Concern regarding possible improvements in the vicinity of Sid’s Market and how project will impact them.
- Concern regarding the need to incorporate cross-walks to avoid jay-walking.
- Concern regarding the proposed Smiths development and if this has been taken into account in the study.
- Concern about emergency response with one-way pair option.
- Concern about Emergency response with One-Way pair option.
shown in the presentation. Project would have a positive effect to the Town of Taos
• Comment on need for smaller neighborhood meetings to discuss project specifics such as right-of-way re-
  quirements
• Comment that it has taken a long time to secure funding for improving the corridor and do not want to lose
  the opportunity; need to take advantage of this situation and not risk losing the funding; need to come up
  with a conclusion to make the community better
• Comment supporting bicycle infrastructure
• Several comments on the need for median beautification
• Comment on need for alternative transportation planning
• Comment that a lot of people favor 4-lanes and One-Way pair but the people that oppose them are always
  the loudest
• Comments on need to consider provisions for transit
• Comments on pros and cons of One-Way pairs
• Comment about concerns with increased traffic through neighborhoods along Camino de la Placita with
  One-Way Pair
• Comment regarding the need to coordinate Smiths development with proposed roadway improvements
  • Comment that One-Way pair is preferred; own a business and would improve guest experience; have seen
  positive effects in other cities
• Comment against One-Way pair due to costs, business access-ability, traffic delays not that bad
• Comment on difficulty negotiating on icy bike lanes; prefer separated facilities. Support green space
• Several comments on need for trees, shrubs, landscaping, and beautification into project
• Numerous comments supporting bike lanes
• Comment that signal timing will improve traffic operations and support for One-Way pair
• Comment in support of 4-lane and One-Way pair
• Comment supporting Option 1 at Los Pandos and major re-alignment at Allsups
• Business owner comment on opposition to One-Way Pair; impacts to businesses and neighborhoods
• Comment on need for sidewalks to meet ADA requirements
• Comment in support of 4-lanes and intersection improvements
• Comment in support of 2-lane with median turning lane
Numerous written comments were received after the Stakeholders meeting requesting that trees, shrubs, land-
scaping, and other beautification efforts be incorporated into the project.

2.3 Taos Pueblo Stakeholders Group Meeting March 17, 2016
A meeting with the Taos Pueblo Stakeholders Group for the NM 68/US 64 Improvements Project was held on
March 17, 2016. The meeting took place at the Taos Pueblo Natural Resources Building. Besides the Study Team
members, 68 individual stakeholders attended the meeting. Written comments were also received after the meeting. The public involvement meeting summary is on file at the NMDOT and at the offices of Marron and Associates and Souder, Miller and Associates.

The following provides a summary of the Stakeholders comments, concerns, and questions:
• Comment that entire project limits are a gateway into Taos. Question if Landscaping will be included in the project and recommendation that a Landscape Architect be included in the Design Team.
• Concerns that the re-alignment of Siler/Los Pandos would increase speeds through the intersection and through neighborhoods on Los Pandos
• Several comments with concerns that a 4-lane segment between Siler/Los Pandos and Quesnel would make it difficult in making a left-turns. Preference for a 2-lane section (with left-turn lane) through this area. Would impact businesses access.
• Several comments supporting signal synchronization
• Comment that One-Way Pair alternative would make it safer for pedestrian crossings
• Question on who is funding the project
• Comment that the roadway widening is being driven by/related to the Airport and military. Prefer a By-pass alternative
• Comments that the one-way pair would have a negative impact on downtown businesses
• Comment on the importance of aesthetics
• Comment of the need to incorporate Art into the project
• Comment in support of raised/lanscaped medians
• Comment on opposition to 4-lanes and One-Way pair. Concern that Montoya Street is being used as a by-
  pass
• Question about volume splits at NM 68/Camino de la Placita
• Question if there will be a dedicated bike lane north of Quesnel; need to consider in design as this is a safety
  concern
• Suggestion that Paseo del Cañon be extended to Camino del Medio for trucks to bypass NM 68
• Comments on opposition to One-Way pair; delays not that significant.
• Question regarding the number of public meetings held and if results of Phase 1A presented. Comment that community needs more time to review recommendations before decisions are made
• Comment that diverting storm drainage to the Rio Fernando and Spring Ditch is not a good idea
• Question on where snow is going to be plowed to and impacts to bicyclists and pedestrians
• Comment that there is enough right-of-way to incorporate landscaping
• Comment that the State, Town, and property owners should work on agreements to allow for setting the sidewalks further away from the roadway
• Several comments supporting sidewalks, bike lanes, medians, and landscaping
• Comment that funds could be better utilized on landscaping instead of additional signals on Camino de la Placita
• Comment that there needs to be an effort to find additional parking, as that is lacking in the Down-town area
• Comment that there is a need for Wayfinding signage to direct drivers to available parking areas
• Comment that past Bypass studies came up with good suggestions for traffic relief; bypass is a better alternative
• Comment that the improvements at Los Pandos intersection will result in significant impacts and is this being done to address future development
• Comment to proceed with Los Pandos re-alignment, 3-lane section, fix signals, and fix drainage
• Comment that Speed Limits should be limited to 25 mph.
• Question as to when Power point presentation will be available
• Question about meeting announcement not mentioning One-Way Pair option; has this been dropped from consideration?
• Comment supporting 4-lane improvements with the addition of landscaping. Concern that landscaping would not be maintained. Recommend that parking be provided behind buildings.
• Comment to make provisions for Transit facilities
• Comment supporting One-way pair with landscaping, gateway treatments, signage for parking in Downtown area, limited left turns on NM 68
• Comments supporting One-way pair as Town needs to keep up with growth and it would be beneficial to businesses due to improved traffic flows
• Comments in opposition to additional signals on Camino de la Placitas

Numerous written comments were received with concerns that a 4-lane segment between Siler/Los Pandos and Quesnel would result in difficulty in making a left-turns. Preference for a 2-lane section (with left-turn lane) through this area.

 NOTE: Public Involvement Meeting summaries can be found in Appendix A of this report.

2.5 Town of Taos Input

On May 3, 2016, the Town of Taos wrote a letter to NMDOT Cabinet Secretary Tom Church. In the letter, the Town expressed their support of the project, and included specific features they support, along with additional specific items that they would like to see incorporated into the design. A copy of the Town of Taos letter can be found in Appendix A of this report.
3.0 CHAPTER 3 – CURRENT AND FUTURE CONDITIONS OF THE EXISTING ROADWAY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of information about the condition of the existing transportation facilities. More detailed information can be found in the Phase 1A Initial Evaluation of Alternatives Report. This chapter also describes the existing Social, Cultural, and Environmental conditions of the transportation facilities analyzed in the Alignment Study.

The engineering factors discussed in this chapter include:

- Existing and future traffic volumes
- Major intersection operations
- Crash history and safety
- Existing right-of-way
- Pavement conditions
- Drainage conditions
- Existing Utilities

The following summarizes the existing conditions:

3.2 Existing Roadway and Traffic Operations

Existing Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) data was collected and provided by Mike Henderson Consulting in July, 2013. Data collection included:

- Volume counts, Speed summaries, and Axle classifications on NM 68 and US 64 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, and on Camino de la Placita between NM 68 and US 64.
- Turning movements and Pedestrian counts at the major and minor intersections (Signalized and Un-signalized) on NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita.

3.2.1 Mainline Traffic Volumes

Based on the mainline traffic volume data obtained by Mike Henderson Consulting in 2013, existing traffic volumes range significantly within the project corridor. The mainline traffic data is summarized in Table 3.1.

3.2.2 Mainline Traffic Projections

Traffic projections and ESAL’s reflecting anticipated growth in the area, and based on traffic data collected by Mike Henderson Consulting, were provided by the NMDOT Engineering Data Support Bureau.

Traffic projections are summarized in Table 3.2

3.3 Traffic Operations

In order to assess the current and future traffic operating conditions, the Level of Service (LOS) for NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita mainlines and major intersections was evaluated.

### Table 3.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>AADT</th>
<th>% Northbound</th>
<th>% Southbound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM 68</td>
<td>La Posta to Frontier</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>21,504</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toalane to Albright</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>22,302</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Albright to Siler</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>46.0</td>
<td>54.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Camino de la Placita to US 64</td>
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<td>11,076</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 64</td>
<td>NM 68 to Civic Plaza</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<td>58.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Civic Plaza and Las Milpas</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>15,038</td>
<td>55.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Las Milpas to Brooks</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>15,091</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>47.3</td>
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<td>49.6</td>
<td>50.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Camino de la Placita</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>13,091</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NM 68 to NM 240</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5,332</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>60.7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NM 240 to Don Fernando</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9,332</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>61.5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Don Fernando to Civic Plaza</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>9,702</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Plaza to US 64</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>7,318</td>
<td>50.3</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AADT = Average Annual Daily Traffic

Los is defined as a qualitative measure for describing the operational conditions within a stream of traffic, and the perception by motorists and/or passengers. A LOS definition generally describes these conditions in terms of such factors as speed and travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic operations, comfort and convenience, and safety. Six levels of service are defined for each type of facility for which analysis procedures are available. They are given letter designations, from A through F, with LOS A representing the best operating conditions and LOS F the worst. Level of Service definitions are generally defined as follows:

- LOS A represents free flow. Individual users are virtually unaffected by the presence of others in the traffic stream. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream from LOS A. The level of comfort and convenience provided is excellent.
- LOS B is in the range of stable flow, but the presence of other users in the traffic stream begins to affect the individual behavior. Freedom to select desired speeds is relatively unaffected, but there is a slight decline in the freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream from LOS A. The level of comfort and convenience provided is excellent.
- LOS C is in the range of stable flow, but marks the beginning of range of flow in which the operation of individual users becomes significantly affected by interactions with others in the traffic stream. The selection of speed is now affected by the presence of others, and maneuvering within the traffic stream requires substantial vigilance on the part of the user. The general level of comfort and convenience declines noticeably at this level.
• LOS D represents high-density, but stable flow. Speed and freedom to maneuver are severely restricted, and the driver or pedestrian experiences a generally poor level of comfort and convenience. Small increases in traffic flow will generally cause operational problems at this level.

• LOS E represents operating conditions at or near the capacity level. All speeds are reduced to a low, but relatively uniform value. Freedom to maneuver within the traffic stream is extremely difficult, and it is generally accomplished by forcing a vehicle or pedestrian to “give way” to accommodate such maneuvers. Comfort and convenience levels are extremely poor, and driver or pedestrian frustration is generally high. Operations at this level are usually unstable, because small increases in flow for minor perturbations within the traffic stream will cause breakdowns.

• LOS F is used to define forced or breakdown flow. This condition exists wherever the amount of traffic approaching a point exceeds the amount which can traverse the point. Queues form behind such locations. Operations within the queue are characterized by stop-and-go waves, and they are extremely unstable. Vehicles may progress at reasonable speeds for several hundred feet or more, then be required to stop in a cyclic fashion. LOS F is used to describe the operating conditions within the queue, as well as the point of the breakdown. It should be noted, however, that in many cases operating conditions of vehicles or pedestrians discharged from the queue may be quite good. Nevertheless, it is the point at which arrival flow exceeds discharge flow which causes the queue to form, and LOS F is an appropriate designation for such points.

3.3.1 NM 68/US 64 and Camino de la Placita Mainline Operations

Due to the significant number of existing intersections and associated heavy mainline traffic volumes, the mainline LOS is greatly influenced by the intersection operations. Therefore, in order to most accurately assess mainline traffic operations, a Synchro Traffic Model was developed for the corridor, with emphasis on intersection operations, which included an assessment of traffic delays and queuing.

3.3.2 Major and Minor Intersections

There are twenty-seven (27) intersections of significance within the project limits of this corridor. Of these, seven (7) are signalized.

Intersection turning movement data was also collected and provided by Mike Henderson Consulting in late July, 2013. 12 hour turning movement counts were obtained at each intersection. In addition, pedestrian counts were collected at all the intersections. Based on the turning movement data obtained, a LOS and Delay analysis was performed for years 2013 and 2033 for the intersections with significant turning movements. The Synchro analysis for 2013 and 2033, reflecting LOS and associated Delays are summarized in Tables 3.3 and 3.4 respectively.

### Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway</th>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>AADT (Actual)</th>
<th>DHV</th>
<th>% Heavy Commercial</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>AADT</th>
<th>DHV</th>
<th>% Heavy Commercial</th>
<th>2033</th>
<th>AADT</th>
<th>DHV</th>
<th>% Heavy Commercial</th>
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<td>1,720</td>
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<td>23,256</td>
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<td>NM 68 to Civic Plaza</td>
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<td>1,010</td>
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<td>1,131</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civic Plaza and Las Milpas</td>
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<td>Civic Plaza to US 64</td>
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<td>640</td>
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## Table 3.3
### 2013 Existing Major Intersection Analysis

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Major Road</th>
<th>Minor Road</th>
<th>NB</th>
<th>Approach LOS</th>
<th>Delay (sec.)</th>
<th>SB</th>
<th>Approach LOS</th>
<th>Delay (sec.)</th>
<th>EB</th>
<th>Approach LOS</th>
<th>Delay (sec.)</th>
<th>WB</th>
<th>Approach LOS</th>
<th>Delay (sec.)</th>
<th>INTERSECTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NM 68</td>
<td>La Posta/ Cervantes</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>B 18</td>
<td>D 55</td>
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<td>52</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>20.5</td>
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<td>E 63</td>
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<td>C 35</td>
<td>F 110.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NM 68</strong></td>
<td>Albright/ Tewa</td>
<td>F 438</td>
<td>F 236</td>
<td>A 1</td>
<td>F 268</td>
<td>F 314.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NM 68</strong></td>
<td>Siler Rd./ Los Pados</td>
<td>F 168</td>
<td>F 294</td>
<td>F 224</td>
<td>F 102</td>
<td>F 222.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NM 68</strong></td>
<td>Cam. La Placita/ Quesnal</td>
<td>B 19</td>
<td>F 192</td>
<td>E 65</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>E 79.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NM 68</strong></td>
<td>Kit Carson/ N. Plaza</td>
<td>F 365</td>
<td>F 394</td>
<td>F 119</td>
<td>F 134</td>
<td>F 284.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US 64</strong></td>
<td>Civic Plaza Drive</td>
<td>F 155</td>
<td>F 196</td>
<td>F 92</td>
<td>C 29</td>
<td>F 152.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>US 64</strong></td>
<td>Cam. La Placita/ Rivali</td>
<td>D 54</td>
<td>D 54</td>
<td>F 576</td>
<td>D 38</td>
<td>F 158.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam. La Placita</td>
<td>Valverde/ Lund</td>
<td>C 15.9</td>
<td>B 14.6</td>
<td>B 10.1</td>
<td>A 9.8</td>
<td>B 14.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam. La Placita</td>
<td>Civic Plaza Drive</td>
<td>F 64.7</td>
<td>D 34.5</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>C 17.6</td>
<td>E 44.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam. La Placita</td>
<td>Don Fernando Street</td>
<td>F 71</td>
<td>F 120</td>
<td>C 12.5</td>
<td>B 13.8</td>
<td>F 75.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam. La Placita</td>
<td>NM 240</td>
<td>F 81</td>
<td>F 144</td>
<td>F 179</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>F 101.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 Signal Warrants

Currently, there are seven signalized intersections within the corridor limits, including:

- NM 68/La Posta/Cervantes
- NM 68/Siler/Los Pandos
- NM 68/Camino de la Placita/Quesnal
- NM 68/US 64
- US 64/Civic Plaza
- US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali
- Camino de la Placita/NM 240

In addition, the intersection of NM 68/Albright/Tewa recently met signal warrants and is planned for future signalization. The final improvements to this intersection will be dependent on the recommendations of the Alignment Study.

A Traffic Signal Warrant Analysis was conducted for the intersections of Camino de la Placita/Civic Plaza Drive and Camino de la Placita/Don Fernando Road.

The Civic Plaza Drive intersection meets warrants for existing conditions; Warrants 1, 8-Hour Vehicular (1A, 1B, and 1C), Warrant 3B (Peak Hour Vehicular), and Warrant 7C (80% Volumes for Warrants 1A, 1B, or 4).

The Don Fernando intersection meets Warrant 2A (Four Hour Vehicular Volumes).

3.5 Crash Data and Safety

Crash data for NM 68 and US 64 was obtained from the NMDOT’s Transportation Statistics Bureau for the years 2009 to 2011. In addition, crash history for the Town of Taos, Taos County, and the State of New Mexico was obtained from University of New Mexico Division of Government Research (UNM-DGR).

NM 68/US 64 and Camino de la Placita were analyzed as one corridor for the purpose of this safety analysis. The NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita corridor experienced a total of 241 crashes during that 3 year period. This data was used to determine if specific safety issues are present within the study area.

Based on the crash data, a series of critical analysis factors were identified and evaluated. These analysis factors included:

- Crash Type
- Crash Severity
- Road Conditions
- Lighting
- Highest Contributing Factor
- Alcohol/Drug Involvement

Table 3.5 summarizes the crash data for NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the number of crashes at key locations along the corridor.
Table 3.6 summarizes the number and severity of crashes within the study limits for years 2009 through 2011. NM 68 and US 64 experienced an average of 80 crashes per year between 2009 and 2011. The average crash rate for NM 68 and US 64 was 10.93, which is higher than the Statewide crash rate for this period. During that time, there was an average of 21 injuries per year (27% of the average). There was one single fatality during that three year period, resulting in a fatality rate of 0.19, which is lower than the average statewide rate for this time period. Based on 2010 statewide crash data, 29.4% of crashes involve injury, and 0.7% involves a fatality. Because the corridor averages are so close to the statewide averages, this demonstrates that the severity of crashes is an issue within the corridor.

Another method of comparative analysis is to use crash rates, rather than total number of crashes. A common crash rate methodology is to calculate the number of crashes in a particular corridor length per million vehicle-miles of travel. This calculation helps to “normalize” the data based on the number of vehicles on the roadway. This helps to compare crash data from other roadways that may carry more or less traffic volume and help demonstrate the magnitude of the safety issues in the study area from a comparative analysis. Table 3.7 shows that the study area has an average crash rate that is very similar to the statewide average for all highways, but has a relatively higher crash rate for the data provided for 2011.

The 2009 through 2011 data yielded 63 injury related crashes and one fatal crash out of 241 total reported crashes, resulting in a severity index of 27. Severity index (SI) is a measure of the percentage of all crashes that result in personal injury or death and is the sum of the injury and fatal crashes divided by 100. The severity index for the corridor was compared to the average severity index for all of Taos County along with the statewide average during the same time period. This was done to determine if the severity of crashes is higher, similar, or lower than the average severity of crashes to Taos County and the State of New Mexico. Using the above equation, the corridor severity index shows to be slightly lower than the average severity indices provided in Table 3.8.

The top five highest contributing factors of crashes throughout the corridor are identified in Table 3.9. As shown in the table, following too closely to the vehicle in front accounts for 34% of the crashes within the corridor. Driver inattention and failure to yield follow as the second and third highest contributing factors with 20% and 16% respectively. Both factors of, following too closely and driver inattention likely contributed to the high number of rear end collisions; rear end collisions were involved in 34% of the total crashes. All other contributing factors which include poor driving, alcohol/drug related, and excessive speed accounted for 30% of the crashes.

Crashes involving heavy vehicles, specifically semi-trucks, were also evaluated. Seven crashes were reported involving semi-trucks between 2009 and 2011. Of these crashes, there were no similarities in crash type, contributing factors, or within the roadway conditions, however all seven crashes did involve proper damage only with no injuries or fatalities.

The overall number of crashes and crash rates within the corridor do not indicate significantly unsafe conditions. However, the high crash rates and comparable severity index of the corridor compared to those of the county and state averages do indicate the need for safety condition improvements along the corridor. The high incidences of rear end collisions appear to be due to improper driving (following too close, driver inattention, etc.), further complicated by the large number of access points and various types of traffic control measures. The corridor is very congested with numerous business access points throughout and utilizes a two-way left turn median between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, as a divider between northbound and southbound traffic. The cause of a lot of the crashes along NM 68 and US 64 can be attributed to a number of factors, including: lack of left-turn lanes, undesirable intersection geometry, and traffic congestion. Many of the major intersections are in need of geometric improvements. Corridor improvement alternatives should specifically include countermeasures to mitigate these problems.
### Table 3.6

**NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita - Total Crashes and Severity - 2009 thru 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th><strong>PDO</strong></th>
<th>% PDO</th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>% Injury</th>
<th>Fatal</th>
<th>% Fatal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Average</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*PDO = Property Damage Only

### Table 3.7

**NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita - Crash Rates - 2009 thru 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th><strong>PDO</strong></th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Fatal</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Average</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Statewide Average All Highways</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>1.77</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Rates are crashes per million vehicle-miles of travel*  
**PDO = Property Damage Only**

### Table 3.8

**NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita - Severity Index Comparison - 2009 thru 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th><strong>PDO</strong></th>
<th>Injury</th>
<th>Fatal</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Severity Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Average</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taos County Average</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>746</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statewide Average</strong></td>
<td>31,305</td>
<td>12857</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>44480</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PDO = Property Damage Only**  
**Average includes years 2009 and 2010 only**

### 3.6 Existing Right-of-Way

Preliminary Right-of-way information was obtained from existing NMDOT right-of-way mapping and from the Taos County GIS data base. The existing Right-of-Way widths vary within the corridor limits significantly, as follows:

**NM 68, La Posta Road to Toalane Street**

The Right-of-way width through this segment is approximately 150 feet wide, with the roadway centered within the right-of-way. Ownership is primarily private with some commercial development.

**NM 68, Toalane Street to South of Los Pandos Road**

The Right-of-way width through this segment is approximately 150 feet wide, with the roadway centered within the right-of-way. Ownership is primarily private with some commercial development.

**NM 68, South of Los Pandos Road to South of Camino de la Placita**

The Right-of-way width through this segment is approximately 60 feet wide, with the roadway centered within the right-of-way. Ownership is primarily private with significant commercial development.

**NM 68, South of Camino de la Placita to North of US 64 (Kit Carson Road)**

The Right-of-way width through this segment varies from 40 to 45 feet wide, with the roadway centered within the right-of-way. Ownership is primarily private with significant commercial development.

**US 64, North of US 64 (Kit Carson Road) to Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane**

The Right-of-way width through this segment is approximately 60 feet wide, with the roadway centered within the right-of-way. Ownership is primarily private with significant commercial development.

**Camino de la Placita, NM 68 to US 64**

The Right-of-way width through this segment varies from 50 to 60 feet wide, with the roadway approximately centered within the right-of-way. Ownership is primarily private with some commercial development.
3.7 Existing Pavement Conditions

Limited roadway pavement information is available from As-Built plans.

The existing pavement within the corridor limits is in fair to bad condition, with some areas exhibiting heavy pavement distress, especially between La Posta Road and US 64 (Kit Carson Road).

The NMDOT’s Pavement Design Unit will need to assess the existing pavement conditions after specific design projects are determined and scheduled. For the purpose of cost estimating of any proposed improvements, assumptions will be made, in consultation with the NMDOT’s Pavement Design Unit, with respect to rehabilitation and/or pavement widening recommendations.

3.8 Assessment of Existing Drainage Conditions Including Spring Ditch

3.8.1 Existing Drainage Conditions

The project corridor is located within the Rio Fernando de Taos Watershed. The Rio Fernando de Taos Watershed comprises an area of approximately 52 square miles. The Rio Fernando de Taos runs east to west through the town of Taos, crossing NM 68 just north of Tewa Street/Albright Road intersection, and discharges to the Rio Pueblo de Taos. The project basins within the watershed generally lie on the eastside of the NM 68/US 64 corridor and drain to the east crossing the highway by culverts. Offsite flows will be considered and analyzed in more detail during the preliminary design phases of the project.

The NM 68/US 64 corridor has been analyzed and information has been collected for the existing roadway drainage flows and its drainage facilities. Meetings with the Town of Taos and NMDOT staff were held to discuss the drainage and any known issues. It was observed that the majority of the roadway cross-section within the corridor limits, with the exception of a segment on NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quensel, includes curb and gutter. In the area not containing curb and gutter, drainage is allowed to flow onto private property, most of which eventually flows into local streams, ditches, and arroyos. Several property owners have taken measures to contain the flows that enter onto their property. These measures include small swales and drainage structures.

Existing drainage facilities along the corridor are identified in Table 3.10 and include facilities maintained by the NMDOT, the Town of Taos, and private property owners. The ID numbers in the table correspond to the number shown in Figure 3.2. As shown in the table, many of the existing drainage facilities are in fair to poor condition and may not function to their intended capacity. Along Camino de la Placita is an existing storm drain system maintained by the Town of Taos. A discussion held with the Town of Taos Maintenance Division indicated that several inlets and corrugated metal pipes (CMP’s) constantly fill with dirt and debris. Similar issues occur for several of the State maintained facilities.

It is important to note that there are three water crossings along the corridor, two of which utilize concrete box culverts (CBC’s) to allow water to flow under the NM 68/US 64 roadway. The first crossing is at the Rio Fernando, which consists of 3 – 7’ x 10’ CBC’s. The CBC’s at this location are full of vegetation and debris but appears to be in overall good condition. The second crossing is located just south of the McDonald’s Restaurant and north of the Indian Hills Inn. This CBC provides drainage for a small arroyo which travels west past the Smith’s Grocery Store. This crossing consists of 2 – 4’ x 3’ CBC’s and contains vegetation and sediment buildup as well. The overall condition of this CBC is fair. The third water crossing is a ditch just north of Frontier Rd. which uses what appears to be a 49” x 33” arch CMP to cross under NM 68/US 64. The condition of the structure is unknown as it is buried by sediment.

During discussions with the Town of Taos, the NMDOT, and various property owners, several locations along the corridor experienced the issues noted below:

- The stretch of roadway between Tewa Street and Siler Road does not have curb and gutter. Roadway drainage flows onto the land of private property owners and creates ponding issues. This can become dangerous during the winter months as the cold weather causes the ponding water to freeze.
- The intersection at Siler Road collects drainage along the east side of the roadway and drains into inlets at ID #10 in Figure 3.2. These inlets drain west down Siler Road and eventually to what is called the Spring Ditch. This is a historic ditch that residents would like protected from roadway runoff.
- Drainage south of the Camino de la Placita and NM 68 intersection collects along the west side of the roadway and drains into inlets at ID #’s 12 and 13 in Figure 3.2. However, these area inlets are known to clog easily and flooding occurs within the property directly west of the McDonald’s restaurant. To further complicate things, these inlets also drain to the west and onto the Spring Ditch. It was also noted that a private drainage system has tapped into the storm drainage system to relieve their property of nuisance drainage flows.

The existing drainage structure location map and existing drainage facilities inventory are summarized on Figure 3.2 and Table 3.10.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID #</th>
<th>Intersection/Business</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>La Posta Rd.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>2 - 24” CMP</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 5’ Inlet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NW</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 24” CMP</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Dirt and debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 24” CMP</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Dirt and debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SW</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 - 24” CMP</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Damage to end section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 48” RCP</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 10’ Inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Frontier Rd.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>1 - 49”x33” arch CMP</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Silted in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NW</td>
<td></td>
<td>* 1 - 12” CMP</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Dirt and debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SW</td>
<td></td>
<td>* 1 - 12” CMP</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Dirt and debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Super Save Grocery Store</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 - 18” wide concrete swale</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* 3 - 3.5’x4’ Area Inlet</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* 3 - 24” RCP</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Centinel Bank Plaza</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 - Curb Cuts</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* 2 - Metal drainage grates</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Old Albright Rd.</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>1 - SD Manhole</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 24” RCP</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 - 5’ Inlet</td>
<td>fair</td>
<td>May need to be removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Albright/Tewa</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>4 - 18” Metal sidewalk culverts</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Newly constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 - 18” Metal sidewalk culverts</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>1 sidewalk culvert is missing metal plate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 2’x2’ Area inlet</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Newly constructed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Rio Fernando</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 - 7’x10’ CBC</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Vegetation and debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Randals Lumber</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>* 2” Drainage grate</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Multipel grates of various lengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* 1 - 2’x18’ Area inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Station Café</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 - 2’x10’ Drainage grate</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Siler Rd.</td>
<td>NE</td>
<td>1 - 5’ Inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NW</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 4’x28” Grate inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 2’x18” Area Inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 24” CMP</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 5’ Inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SW</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 24” CMP</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 4’x28” Grate inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Indian Hills Inn</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>* 1 - 3’x4’ Area Inlet</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* 2” Drainage grate</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Multipel grates of various lengths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - Manhole grate</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Arroyo south of McDonalds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 - 4’x3’ CBC</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Vegetation and Debris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 2’x2’ Area inlet</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Travels west behind Smiths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>McDonalds</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 - 3’x4’ Area Inlet</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Cannot see pipe connecting the two inlets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>CDLP/NM68</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td>2 - 5’x4’ Inlets</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SW 2 - 10’ Inlets</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 - 24” RCP n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CDLP = Camino de la Placita
* = Drainage facilities are in private property not maintained by NMDOT
Figure 3.2 - Drainage Structure Locations
3.9 Utilities

There are a number of existing utilities located within the existing roadway corridor; these include: PNM Gas, Kit Carson Electric, Century Link Communications (copper and fiber optic), Comcast CATV lines, and various Water facilities (with different ownership).

**Gas** – There is an existing 4” gas line that runs along the west side of NM 68, continuing north along US 64. There are also existing gas line crossings at the major street crossings and numerous service lines along the entire project corridor.

**Electric** – The majority of the electrical services are provided through overhead power lines that run mostly on the west side of NM 68 and US 64. There are also several crossings along the major streets. There are limited underground facilities associated with existing street lighting; street lighting is outdated.

**Communications** – Communication lines are on common electric poles and there are also underground facilities through the NM 68 and US 64 corridor.

**Water** – There are existing waterlines that run along NM 68 and US 64 through the project limits. Existing water lines on the west and east side of the street run along NM 68 from La Posta to the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection. North of the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection the easterly waterline continues north along NM 68 and US 64. Waterline crossings exist at some of the major cross streets.

**Sanitary Sewer** – There is an existing sanitary sewer line that runs along the east side of NM 68 and US 64 through the entire project limits. Sewer line crossings exist at some of the major cross streets.

Table 3.11 summarizes the utility contacts for this project.

### Table 3.11 Existing Utility Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Utility Company</th>
<th>Utility Type</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>E-Mail Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Mexico Gas</td>
<td>Gas</td>
<td>Margaret Ortiz</td>
<td><a href="mailto:maortiz2@nmgco.com">maortiz2@nmgco.com</a></td>
<td>505-699-8723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kit Carson Electric</td>
<td></td>
<td>David Santistevan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dsantistevan@kitcarson.com">dsantistevan@kitcarson.com</a></td>
<td>575-758-2258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Century Link</td>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Lawrence Lujan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:lorenzo.lujan@centurylink.com">lorenzo.lujan@centurylink.com</a></td>
<td>575-751-4056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Taos</td>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Francisco Espinoza</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fespinoza@taosgov.com">fespinoza@taosgov.com</a></td>
<td>575-751-2047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town of Taos</td>
<td>Sanitary Sewer</td>
<td>Francisco Espinoza</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fespinoza@taosgov.com">fespinoza@taosgov.com</a></td>
<td>575-751-2047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.10 Transit

The Town of Taos operates and maintains a public transit system called the Chili Line. The Chili Line runs under the oversight of teh North Central Regional Transit District (NCRTD). The Chili Line runs from the Ranchos de Taos Post Office on the south, to the Taos Pueblo on the north, therefore NM 68 and US 64 are a part of the transit route. The Chili Line has a number of northbound and southbound stops, primarily along the central business district. The Chili Line operates handicapped buses and a ADA accessible van.

The NCRTD also provides limited service to Santa Fe and to the Taos Ski Valley.

3.11 Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Limited pedestrian and bicycle facilities exist along NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita, however are not continuous and not all existing facilities are compliant with current ADA requirements. In some cases existing sidewalks are also in need of repairs.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be an important aspect of the proposed improvements. Many of the destination areas are within the corridor study limits. There is significant bicyclist activity in the Town of Taos. Due to the existence of residential and commercial development along NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita, there is also a need for pedestrian facilities. Based on initial Public and Agency input, there is strong support for bicycle and pedestrian facilities along NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita.

3.12 School Access

The major school requiring access off the subject corridor is Taos High School. Taos High School is located east of NM 68 off Cervantes Road. Indirect access is also available from other east/west roads including Cruz Alta, Frontier, and Albright. North/south access is also available from Gusdorf Road.

Other schools in the Taos Municipal School District include: Arroyos del Norte Elementary, Enos Garcia Elementary, Ranchos Elementary, Taos Cyber Magnet School, Taos Middle School, and Vista Grande High School.

3.13 Emergency Response

Emergency response in Taos is handled through joint Town of Taos and Taos County efforts.

#### 3.13.1 Police

The Town of Taos Police Department has the primary jurisdiction within the Town of Taos limits, however, they can obtain assistance from the Taos County Sheriff’s Department and the Taos Pueblo Tribal Police, as required. The Police Department is based out of Town Hall, just off Camino de la Placita.

#### 3.13.2 Fire Department

Based on input from the Town of Taos City Fire Department, there are currently eleven Fire Districts that serve Taos County and the Town of Taos. In the vicinity of the NM 68 and US 64 corridor, a Fire Station is located off Camino de la Placita just north of Civic Plaza Drive. Another Fire Station is located to the south, off NM 68 on Camino Santiago.

Traffic congestions presents several challenges to emergency response due to a combination of factors, including traffic congestion, narrow streets, and in some cases poor pavement markings.

3.14 – Existing Social, Cultural And Environmental Conditions

#### 3.14.1 Introduction

This section discusses the environmental, cultural, and social conditions within the limits of the study area. Information discussed herein will be used in subsequent analyses of potential impacts of roadway alternatives. The conditions described in this section are based on a review of existing data sources, field reconnaissance, and limited data collection.
3.14.2 Community Resources

3.14.2.1 - Community Profile

The Taos area has a long history of human occupation. A mixture of Native American, Hispanic, and Anglo influences have affected the development of the community. The existing Pueblo of Taos dates from around 1400 and includes lands in the study area. The Pueblo retains the multi-storied adobe buildings that provides the distinctive pueblo architecture. Early Spanish explorers passed through the area. Coronado’s expedition crossed the Taos area in 1540 followed by Oñate in 1605. In 1710, Cristobal de Serna petitioned for a land grant, and the town was referred to as Don Fernando de Taos. In 1885, the name was shortened to Taos. The town was originally a Spanish fortified plaza surrounded by low adobe buildings. Taos grew beyond its defensive walls and developed into a key trading center on the Santa Fe Trail. Starting in the late 19th Century and continuing into the 20th Century, Taos developed an artist community and also became a popular New Mexico tourist destination. The Taos Downtown Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A mixture of Spanish Colonial, Territorial, Mission Revival, and Pueblo Revival buildings occur within the historic district. Ojitos, Quenes, Martyr’s, La Placita, and Ranchitos streets are the approximate boundaries of the historic district (Julfyan, 1998; Pritzker, 2000; and National Park Service, 2013).

Taos was incorporated in 1934 after a fire on the Taos Plaza. The original incorporated town covered 588 acres. The town has expanded 93 times and covered 3,560 acres in 2012 (Town of Taos, 2012). Taos is an important New Mexico tourist destination and is a key center for New Mexico culture and arts. Taos has a long history as an artist community. Artists have resided in Taos since the early part of the 20th Century.

The Pueblo of Taos is an important community in the Taos area. Traditional religious, cultural, and social practices remain intertwined in the daily lives of the Pueblo people. The Pueblo retains ownership of many land parcels within the project area. Multied-story adobe buildings occupy the central part of the Pueblo. The Pueblo of Taos is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site. Many tourists visit Taos with the main objective being to visit the Pueblo. The roadway into the Pueblo (Camino del Paseo Pueblo Norte) that intersects US 64 at the Allsups store is one of the principal routes for tourists to access the Pueblo.

Several community facilities are located near the study area. A post office is located on the west side of US 64 at Brooks Street. Several facilities are located on the east side of Paseo del Pueblo Norte including Kit Carson Park and Cemetery, Taos Art Museum and Fetchin House, and Taos Community Auditorium. The University of New Mexico (UNM) Taos building, Town of Taos Council Chambers and courts are located along Civic Plaza Drive east of Camino de la Placita. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church is located west of Camino de la Placita along Don Fernando.

3.14.2.2 - Population Characteristics

Taos has a diverse community. Taos County has a Hispanic/Latino majority with a large Native American community. Based on the 2010 Census, Taos County had a population of 32,937 (see Table 3.12). Taos County is experiencing steady growth with a projected growth rate of 1.22 percent for the years 2010-2015.

<p>| Table 3.12 Demographic Characteristics of Areas Near NM 68-US 64 Study Area |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>New Mexico</th>
<th>Taos County</th>
<th>Census Tract 9401</th>
<th>Town of Taos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>2,059,179</td>
<td>32,937</td>
<td>7,709</td>
<td>5,716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Age</td>
<td>36.7 years</td>
<td>45.2 years</td>
<td>43.8 years</td>
<td>44.0 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Under 18</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Over 64</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Population Growth 2010-2015</td>
<td>1.34%</td>
<td>1.22%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Population Growth 2015-2020</td>
<td>1.26%</td>
<td>0.98%</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Race Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- White</td>
<td>68.3%</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>60.2%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Black/African American</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Native American</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Asian</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hawaiian / Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Some other race</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Two or more races</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Hispanic / Latino</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>55.8%</td>
<td>46.5%</td>
<td>51.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Housing Units</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Owner-occupied Units</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Renter-occupied Units</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>47.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2011 Income and Poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Median Family Income</td>
<td>$53,956</td>
<td>$45,392</td>
<td>$44,346</td>
<td>$44,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Family Poverty Rate</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Per Capita Income</td>
<td>$23,537</td>
<td>$22,126</td>
<td>$22,321</td>
<td>$21,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Per Capita Poverty Rate</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: UNM Bureau of Business and Economic Research (2012); U.S. Census Bureau (2013)
Census data for Taos County, the Town of Taos, and Census Tract 9401 provide local socioeconomic data for the study area and show the diverse socioeconomic conditions near the study area. Census Tract 9401 includes the central Taos area and adjoining county areas to the north, including the Pueblo of Taos. The population is slightly older than the state median age with a median age of 43.8 years in Census Tract 9401 and 44.0 years in the Town of Taos. Hispanic/Latino is the largest minority category representing 46.5 percent of the population in Census Tract 9401 and 51.9 percent in the Town of Taos. The presence of the Pueblo of Taos on Census Tract 9401 is demonstrated by the 16.5 percent Native American population.

Census Tract 9401’s poverty rates (13.8 percent family and 15.7 percent per capita) are slightly lower than New Mexico’s poverty rates (14.4 percent family and 19.0 percent per capita). The Town of Taos has relatively high poverty rates (25.6 percent family and 26.6 percent per capita). Based on these statistics and their minority representation, Census Tract 9401 and the Town of Taos should be considered communities of concern for environmental justice evaluation. The Pueblo of Taos, north of the study area, also should be considered a community of concern.

3.14.2.3 - Social Services

Parks and Recreational Facilities
The Town of Taos, Parks Division, operates two parks located near the study area. Kit Carson Park is located on the east side of Paseo del Pueblo Norte. A playground, landscaped areas, and cemetery are located at the park. Taos Plaza is located between Paseo del Pueblo Norte and Camino de la Placita. The plaza contains sidewalk, landscaping, statues, and a cross.

Schools
Taos Municipal Schools operates the schools in Taos. The Taos Cyber Magnet School is located at 310 Camino de la Placita at Bent Street. The school offers traditional and on-line classes. Enos Garcia Elementary School is located at 305 Don Fernando, 0.1 mile west of Camino del la Placita.

Police, Fire, and Hospitals
Public safety services are provided by the Taos Police Department and Taos Fire Department. The Taos Police Department office is located on the west side of Camino de la Placita at 400 Camino de la Placita at the Town Hall Drive intersection. A Taos Fire Station is located across the street at 323 Camino de la Placita.

A few health care providers are located in Taos. The local hospital is Holy Cross Hospital. Other regional hospitals are located in Española and Santa Fe. The Taos Medical Clinic is located along the southern part of the study area at 622 Paseo del Pueblo Sur.

3.14.2.4 - Local Economy
Taos provides employment primarily in government, retail, and tourism-related businesses. Government employment is found with the Town of Taos, Taos County, Taos Municipal Schools, University of New Mexico Taos campus, Pueblo of Taos, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Forest Service. Many stores, restaurants, and motels are located on Paseo del Pueblo Sur south of the study area. This area is an important retail area that serves Taos area residents as well as visitors. Central Taos near the study area supports restaurants, stores, and motels that cater to visitors. Most visitors will travel along US 64 and NM 68 when visiting Taos. Visitors typically park their cars and walk through the Downtown Historic District. Several art galleries are located near the study area. In the winter, many visitors come for the skiing at Taos Ski Valley, which is an important part of the local economy. Snowfall and the number of skiers has an important impact on the local economy during the winter months.

The January 2016 unemployment rate was 8.5 percent. The statewide unemployment rate was 6.5 percent (New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, 2016)
3.14.2.5 - Existing Land Use

Land uses near the study area are a mixture of commercial, office, and residential uses. Most buildings are one-story with a few two-story buildings. Many buildings are on small lots with frontages close to the street. The Town of Taos has worked to protect the traditional urban texture near the study area. In 1999, the Town of Taos prepared the Vision 2020 Master Plan (Town of Taos, 1999) that encouraged mixed use development as stated in goal two of the plan:

- Distinct, neighborhood commercial/mixed use centers are established throughout the planning area to better serve the daily needs of neighborhood residents, reduce traffic congestion and dependence on the automobile, encourage a distinct identity for individual communities and neighborhoods within the planning area, and increase the inventory of affordable houses.

- Downtown Taos originally developed as a compact and complete neighborhood with a definite center and edge. This development pattern has not been maintained with recent development. Lands near the study area are zoned for a variety of uses including, the Central Business District near the plaza and Paseo del Pueblo/Kit Carson Road intersection, commercial along Paseo del Pueblo, and residential along the northern portion of Camino de la Placita. The revised land use element to the Vision 2020 Master Plan proposes to promote four types of land uses in parts of Taos near the study area:
  - Urban Center consisting of high-intensity commercial activity, retail, and office developments mixed with multi-family residential uses; and
  - Urban consisting of a variety of higher density single family and multi-family residential developments with commercial and community services on intersections; and
  - Suburban consisting of medium-density, single family detached residences, which may include a guest house or casita apartment on a lot with a single-family residence; and
  - Civic Space on property owned and developed for public uses such as public buildings, library, fire station, parks, plazas, playgrounds, and cemeteries (Town of Taos, 2012).

3.14.2.6 - Air Quality

Air quality is good near the study area because surrounding lands have low-density development, air emissions sources are dispersed, and the open terrain allows for wind dispersal of pollutants. Traffic volumes are too low to result in exceedences of Clean Air Act standards. Taos is currently in attainment with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQs) under the Clean Air Act. (New Mexico Environment Department [NMED] 2016a; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA], 2016).

3.14.2.7 - Noise

FHWA/NMDOT Noise Policies and Procedures

The relative loudness of a sound or noise is described in units of decibels (dB), a measure of sound pressure on a logarithmic scale. For highway noise studies, traffic noise is averaged over a one-hour peak noise period and is expressed as an equivalent noise level (Leq). An A-weighting filter is used to correlate acoustic energy with the frequency sensitivity of human hearing. Thus, traffic noise conditions are discussed in terms of hourly average A-weighted noise levels in decibels, or Leq dB(A).

FHWA and NMDOT have adopted specific policies and procedures for evaluating traffic noise impacts and the need for noise abatement. According to FHWA and NMDOT procedures, noise abatement must be considered when predicted traffic noise levels approach or exceed specified noise abatement criteria (noise level thresholds) defined for various land use activity categories. NMDOT's noise policy defines “approach” as being within 1 decibel of the appropriate abatement criteria based on the Infrastructure Design Directive, IDD-2011-02.

Traffic is steady and is the main noise source at the study area. Residences, commercial buildings, offices, and hotels are located near the study area. Single family residences are the most common noise-sensitive (Category B) land use near the project area. The noise abatement criteria level is 67 dBA Leq dB(A). Under IDD-2011-02, the project would likely be classified as a Type II noise abatement program based on the alternatives under consideration. Alternatives that propose additional through-lanes would result in a Type I classification, which would require a noise analysis and consideration of noise abatement measures. This will be further reviewed once plans are developed.

3.14.2.8 - Hazardous Materials

There are existing and historic service stations that may have hazardous materials issues. On an initial review of leaking petroleum storage tanks (LPST), the following active LPST sites were identified (NMED, 2016b):
  - Robinson Texaco, 217 Paseo del Pueblo Sur
  - Southside Texaco, 823 Paseo del Pueblo Sur
  - Cañon 66 Service Station, 526 Kit Carson Road

Additional sites of concern will likely be identified with further research. A Preliminary Initial Site Assessment (ISA) was conducted by the NMDOT (report dated 5/31/16). More detailed investigations will be conducted in the Design phase of the project to determine the extent of hazardous materials contamination, if any, in the study area.

3.14.3 - Natural Resources

3.14.3.1 - Geology and Topography

The study area elevation ranges from approximately 6,900 to 7,000 feet above mean sea level. The landscape at the project area is mostly level but slopes downward slightly to the southwest.

Taos is located in north-central New Mexico within the Southern Rocky Mountains physiographic province. The project area is located west of the Taos Mountain portion of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains (Julyan, 2006). Geologic formations at the project area consist of Quaternary alluvium and Quaternary piedmont (New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources. 2003).

3.14.3.2 - Soils

Seven soil mapping units are found in the project area. Fernando clay loam (1-3% slopes) occupies 70% of the study area (see Table 3.13). The soils have moderate risk of water and wind erosion.

Table 3.13 Soils and Erosion Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soil Mapping Unit</th>
<th>Percent of Study Area</th>
<th>Water Erosion Risk</th>
<th>Wind Erosion Risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caruso variant silty clay loam, 0-3% slopes</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando clay loam, 1-3% slopes</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando clay loam, 3-5% slopes</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fernando clay loam, 5-7% slopes</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manzano clay loam, 0-1% slopes</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pogeanae silty clay loam, nearly level</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedillo-Sevilla association, strongly sloping</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.14.3.3 - Vegetation
The study area is located in an urbanized zone with little native vegetation. Most land in the project area is covered with hard surfaces or has landscaped vegetation. Many planted trees occur on properties near the study area. An area of native vegetation, with a canopy of narrow-leaved cottonwood, occurs near Rio Fernando de Taos in the southern part of the study area.

3.14.3.4 - Noxious Weeds
Since vegetation cover is limited in the project area, the presence of noxious weeds is also limited. A biological survey will be conducted to identify and locate noxious weeds within the project area.

3.14.3.5 - Wetlands and Riparian Habitat
The presence of wetlands and riparian habitat is limited within the project area. Wetlands are likely along the Rio Fernando de Taos as well as along an unnamed drainage that flows under La Posta Road at the southern end and follows Ranchitos Road. As part of the biological survey, potential wetland areas will be identified.

3.14.3.6 - Wildlife
Little wildlife is present because of the limited available habitat, presence of disturbed and developed lands, and steady traffic. Wildlife species are primarily those adapted to urbanized areas. Suitable habitat for small mammals and reptiles occurs in vegetation patches along NM 68 and US 64. The Rio Fernando de Taos provides a wildlife migration corridor across the southern part of the study area.

3.14.3.7 - Migratory Birds
Trees and vegetation patches provide potential habitat for migratory birds. Potential nest sites occur in trees along NM 68 and US 64. Common birds include those adapted to urban areas such as the House Sparrow, Rock Dove, Mourning Dove, and House Finch. A wide variety of migratory birds could occur in the trees along the Rio Fernando de Taos.

3.14.3.8 - Rare, Threatened, Endangered, And Other Target Species
Because of the urban character of the study area, few protected species are likely to occur within the study area. Two protected bird species and a protected mammal potentially could occur along the Rio Fernando de Taos.

3.14.3.9 - Floodplains
The project area is located mostly outside of the 100-year floodplain. A 100-year floodplain is located along the Rio Fernando de Taos. The floodplain crosses Paseo del Pueblo Sur in the southern part of the study area (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2010).

3.14.3.10 - Water Quality
Two surface water features occur along in the study area. The Rio Fernando de Taos is a regularly flowing stream in the southern part of the study area, and the Spring Ditch flows under NM 68. Local ditch users have expressed concerns about stormwater runoff flowing into the ditch and affecting water quality. No other surface water features are within or adjacent to the project area. Groundwater occurs at relatively shallow depths. Depth to groundwater ranges from 2 to 125 feet with an average depth of 26 feet (New Mexico Office of the State Engineer, 2014).

3.3.4 Visual Resources
The views near the study area consist of an urban landscape. The pueblo style architecture is common throughout the study area. Both Paseo del Pueblo and Camino de la Placita are narrow, curving roads that create attractive landscapes through this historic part of Taos. Trees are common throughout much of the study area, and there is much local interest in planting additional trees in the study area. The one- to two-story buildings along NM 68 and US 64 fit well within the historic style. The appropriate scale of the buildings and roadways along with attractive streetscape result in a pleasant visual environment for pedestrian (see photos page 27).

3.14.5 Farmland
Farmland Protection Policy Act was passed in order to prevent the unnecessary and irreversible conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses by federal programs. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) classifies farmland that merits protection from conversion as Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance. No land in the project area is currently used as farmland. The NRCS classifies five soil mapping units in the study area as Prime Farmland if Irrigated, two units as Farmland of Statewide Importance, and one unit as Not Prime Farmland (see Table 3.14; NRCS, 2014).
Cultural Resources

A records search was completed for the study area. Cultural resource data was obtained from the New Mexico Cultural Resources Information System (NMCRIS) managed by the Archaeological Resource Management Section (ARMS) of the New Mexico Historic Preservation Division (HPD). This information has been provided to the NMDOT Environmental Development Section.

Table 3.15 is a summary of the sites found within a 0.5 km (0.3 mi) radius of the project area. There are 16 sites located near the project and eight of these sites are within the study area. Also, 26 surveys have been previously conducted in the 0.5 km (0.3 mi) radius (Table 3.16). Finally there are 12 properties that have been listed to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and/or the State Register of Cultural Properties (SRCP) near the project area (Table 3.17). Of the 12 registered properties, 5 could be affected by the proposed project.

As the record search indicates, the study area is located within a culturally dense area. It is located within an older section of Taos, portions of which is within the Taos Downtown Historic District (SR 860, see Table 3.17). Taos has been occupied historically since the mid-1600s. This occupation was in small ranches near the Taos Pueblo. Prehistorically this area was also occupied and utilized by Tiwa-speaking people. Taos Pueblo itself was an important pueblo as it was a trading center between the Pueblo people and the Plains people.
### Table 3.16 — Previous Archaeological Surveys within 0.5 km (0.3 mi) of the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NMCRIS No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>No. of Sites</th>
<th>Author, Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100826</td>
<td>US 64 ROW MP 251.96 to MP 253.38 and 285-m along Hail Creek Road</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Brown, Marie E., Karen Serio and Kenneth L. Brown, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102675</td>
<td>Proposed Additions to the Taos Community Auditorium</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Raymond, Gerry, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>107734</td>
<td>Proposed Improvements to US 64 MP 254.66 to 255.17</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Campbell, K., H Lawrence and G Raymond, 2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>109518</td>
<td>The Simon Bell Property: La Loma Plaza</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boyer, Jeffrey L., 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124893</td>
<td>Two Miles along Veterans Highway near Taos Pueblo</td>
<td>24.37</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Cordua, Teresa and Andrew Zink, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125432</td>
<td>Rights of Way in Colfax, Rio Arriba, and Taos Counties</td>
<td>18.72</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>Doak, David and Chance Copperstone, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126368</td>
<td>Taos Juvenile Treatment Facility</td>
<td>16.98</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Zink, Andrew and Teresa Cordua, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126994</td>
<td>Placitas Road</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Boyer, Jeffrey L., 1992</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.17 — Registered Properties within 0.5 km (0.3 mi) of the Project Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File No.</th>
<th>Name of Property</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>SRCP Listing Date</th>
<th>NRHP Listing Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Blumenschein, Ernest L., House NHL</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15-Oct-1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Carson, Kit, House NHL</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15-Oct-1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Bent, Governor, House</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>21-Mar-69</td>
<td>16-Nov-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>362</td>
<td>Harwood Foundation of the University of New Mexico</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>28-Feb-75</td>
<td>22-Dec-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>540</td>
<td>Luhan, Mabel Dodge, House NHL</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>9-Dec-77</td>
<td>15-Nov-78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>718</td>
<td>Fechin, Nicholai, House</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>22-Jun-79</td>
<td>31-Dec-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>763</td>
<td>Manby House</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>25-Jan-80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>802</td>
<td>Taos Inn</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>3-Apr-81</td>
<td>5-Feb-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>860</td>
<td>Taos Downtown Historic District</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>15-Apr-82</td>
<td>8-Jul-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>861</td>
<td>La Loma Plaza National Register Historic District</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>15-Apr-82</td>
<td>8-Jul-82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>Couse, Eanger Irving, House and Studio and Sharp, Joseph Henry, Studios</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>13-Feb-04</td>
<td>28-Sep-05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Beimer, Bernard J., Residence</td>
<td>Taos</td>
<td>5-Dec-05</td>
<td>22-Mar-06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.14.7 Section 4(f)

As part of the Section 4(f) requirements, FHWA evaluates projects for impacts on public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. FHWA projects are required to avoid such properties unless there is no prudent and feasible alternative to using that property. If a 4(f) property is used, the project must take steps to minimize harm to that property. Several historic properties may qualify as Section 4(f) properties (see Tables 3.15 and 3.17). Kit Carson Park may also qualify as a Section 4(f) property.
4.0 CHAPTER 4 – PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

4.1 Purpose and Need

In general, roadway and intersection improvements, along with other physical, operational and safety improvements are needed on NM 68 and US 64 to help ensure that travel on these segments is safe and efficient and meets current and future needs. Based on input received from the Project Management Team and the Stakeholders, a Purpose and Need Statement was developed for the project as follows:

“The purpose of the proposed improvements is to correct existing physical deficiencies, facilitate traffic flow and operations, improve traffic safety conditions, manage access to adjoining properties, and develop appropriate facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.”

There are seven factors listed in the NMDOT Location Study Procedures guidebook for establishing the purpose and need for a transportation improvement. The applicability of these factors to the NM 68/US 64 project are summarized as follows:

System Connectivity – Roadway connectivity is needed to maintain connectivity between NM 68, US 64, Camino de la Placita and major street crossings in the Town of Taos to maintain access to major destinations. Connectivity is also needed to provide for more timely emergency response services for police and fire, as well as for access to local schools.

Physical Deficiencies – There are a number of physical deficiencies along NM 68 and US 64 including: poor and insufficient drainage facilities; deteriorated pavement conditions; deficient intersection geometrics; lack of continuous facilities to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists; and lack of parking facilities.

Travel Demand and Congestion – Projected traffic volumes for NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita indicate that there is a need for intersection improvements, including auxiliary turning lanes to address projected increases in traffic volumes and to maintain a satisfactory level of traffic operations. In addition, traffic operational improvements will provide for improved response times for emergency vehicles.

Safety – Safety improvements are needed to address complicated intersection alignments, high number of access points, safety hazards created by inadequate drainage facilities, as well as the lack of adequate pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Access and Mobility – Enhanced access and mobility is needed on NM 68 and US 64 in order to provide for more orderly traffic operations along these roadways. Access management is required to better define ingress and egress at business locations.

Economic Development – Improvements to NM 68 and US 64 are needed to maintain an environment conducive to economic growth and development in the Taos area, as Taos is an important tourist destination.

Legislative Mandate – At this time, there are no Legislative Mandates for this project, however State Infrastructure dollars have been made available for NM 68 and US 64 to address needed improvements.
5.0 CHAPTER 5 – DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES ADVANCED FROM PHASE 1A (INITIAL EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES)

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter describes the alternatives that were advanced from the Initial Evaluation of Alternatives (Phase 1A), as documented in the Phase 1A Report.

In Phase 1A of the Alignment Study, an interdisciplinary Project Management Team (PMT), consisting of engineers, planners, and environmental and cultural resource specialists, identified potential improvement alternatives to address the needs associated with the NM 68/US 64 improvements. These alternatives, along with their initial evaluation, are described in the Phase 1A Report.

The following items were identified by the Project Management Team (PMT) as requiring consideration as a part of the NM 68/US 64 Alignment Study:

- Need to improve traffic operations along NM 68 and US 64
- Need to correct major intersection deficiencies
- Need to develop alternatives that are compatible with the cultural and visual character of the Town of Taos, and that will incorporate enhancement features
- Need to develop alternatives that will minimize impacts to existing historic structures and natural features
- Need to develop improvements that will promote livability
- Need to maintain access to businesses and manage access along the corridor
- Need to improve street connectivity
- Need to manage drainage flows
- Need to address pedestrian and bicyclist needs
- Need to minimize the acquisition of additional rights-of-way
- Need to address pavement requirements
- Need to involve the major stakeholders in the identification and evaluation of alternatives

Since the objective of the Initial Evaluation of Alternatives was primarily intended to identify major differences between the alternatives identified in Phase A, detailed evaluations were not performed during Phase 1A; instead a screening process was used that included both qualitative and quantitative criteria and factors.

5.2 Alternatives Advanced from the Initial Evaluation of Alternatives for Further Evaluation

As a part of the Initial Evaluation of Alternatives, the PMT determined that all the alternatives considered in Phase 1A had merit, and were all advanced into Phase 1B for a more detailed evaluation. Four Base Alternatives, as well as the No-Build Alternative were advanced from Phase 1A. In addition, several other recommend improvements made during the Phase 1A study phase were advanced for a more detailed analysis, and are described in this chapter. Detailed assessments of the base alternatives and other recommended improvements advanced from Phase 1A are documented in Chapter 6 of this document.

5.2.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build alternative assumes that improvements to address the transportation needs identified in the Initial Evaluation of Alternatives would not be undertaken. Traffic operations would continue with no major improvements to the corridor. Pedestrian and bicyclist needs would not be addressed. Major drainage and pavement improvements would not be provided. Continued maintenance to address pavement, capacity, safety, access, and other roadside issues would be programmed and carried out as needed.

5.2.2 Alternative 1 – Coordinated Signal System

Alternative 1 would provide for Signal coordination through the corridor limits on NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita in an effort to improve traffic operations through corridor wide signal coordination. This alternative would include the addition of two new traffic signals on Camino de la Placita at the intersections of Civic Plaza Drive and Don Fernando Street to help maintain cross-street traffic flow. This alternative would also include a new traffic signal at the intersection of Albright/Tewa, which has already met signal warrants and was already planned for.

As a part of this alternative, opportunities for minor intersection geometry improvements will be assessed. Improvements included in Alternative 1 would be contained within the existing right-of-way, with the exception of any requirements for minor intersection improvements. Sidewalks and curb ramps were assessed for needed improvements to comply with current ADA guidelines.

The goal of Signal coordination on the NM 68/US 64 corridor is to synchronize multiple intersections to enhance the operation of one or more directional movements in the signal system, thus providing for smooth flow of traffic in order to reduce travel time, stops, and delays. A well-timed, coordinated system would permit continuous movement along the NM 68/US 64 corridor with minimum stops and delays, which also reduces fuel consumption and improves air quality. In the development of a coordinated signal system for the NM 68/US 64 corridor, consideration was given to balancing the traffic operational needs for traffic throughput, and the amount of pedestrian traffic present in the downtown area.

Numerous factors can be used to determine whether signal coordination would be beneficial. The NM 68/US 64 corridor appears to be a good candidate for signal coordination, as major intersections are in close proximity to each other, there are significant traffic volumes between adjacent intersections, and based on observed platooning that occurs from traffic flow arriving from upstream intersections.

For the purposes of this study, a Standard Coordinated Signal System was used for the basis of the assessment. A Standard Coordinated Signal System provides the following:

- Programmed phased cycles based on time of day
- Varies cycle length based on traffic demand
- Single controlling (master) signal with basic demand algorithm

It should be noted that the NMDOT is currently assessing other types of coordinated signal systems, including an Adaptive type system. A number of Adaptive systems are currently available and have been implemented in various municipalities throughout the United States. The NMDOT is currently assessing these systems and is developing specifications that would provide for a competitive environment and assure that the systems are in fact effective, reliable, and can be easily maintained. An Adaptive type system provides for the following advantages:

- Individually (local) controlled signals
- Communicative (global) network with other signals
- Complex algorithms that modify based on demand

The use of an Adaptive system could potentially further enhance traffic operations on NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita as communications within the signal network would be improved and would adjust based on fluctuating traffic demands. The NMDOT will continue to assess these systems for utilization on the NM 68/US 64 corridor through the Study and Design phases.

Figure 5.1 illustrates Alternative 1, along with the location of existing and proposed traffic signals.
Figure 5.1 - Alternative 1 Existing and Proposed Signals
5.2.3 Alternative 2 – Coordinated Signal System + 4-lane Improvements on NM 68

Alternative 2 is similar to Alternative 1, however it would also include roadway widening to provide for 4-lane improvements to NM 68 from La Posta Road to the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection. Similar to Alternative 1, this alternative would involve corridor wide signal coordination plus 2 new traffic signals on Camino de la Placita at Civic Plaza Drive and Don Fernando Road. Similar to Alternative 1, this alternative would also include a new traffic signal at the intersection of Albright/Tewa.

For the most part, Alternative 2 would be contained within the existing right-of-way, with the exception of a short segment of roadway just south of the intersection of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, as well as any requirements for minor/major intersection improvements. Sidewalks and curb ramps will be assessed for needed improvements to comply with current ADA guidelines.

On NM 68, between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, the roadway would be widened to provide for a 4-lane facility with paved shoulders, curb and gutter, and sidewalks. The paved shoulders and sidewalks would provide for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Left-turn lanes at key locations would be provided along this segment.

Figures 5.2 and, 5.3 illustrate a plan view of Alternative 2 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the location of existing and proposed traffic signals.

5.2.4 Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Quesnel

Based on public input, it was recommended that in lieu of Alternatives 2 and 3, that a combination 4-lane and 2-lane facility with provisions for a center left-turn lane, bicycle lanes, curb and gutter, and sidewalks be assessed for the NM 68 segment between La Posta and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. There was significant public opposition regarding the loss of a center turn lane on NM 68. Under this alternative, 4-lanes with a center turn median would be constructed between La Posta Road to south of Los Pандos Road. From south of Los Pандos Road to Quesnel, the cross-section would consist of a 2-lane road with a two-way left-turn lane. Both segments would include bicycle lanes, curb and gutter, and sidewalks. This alternative would provide for a center turn lane for the entire length between La Posta and Quesnel.

The cross-section between La Posta Road and just south of Los Pандos, would provide for a similar cross-section as Alternative 2, as described above and as reflected in Figures 5.5, 5.5a, 5.5b, and 5.5c.

Between just south of Los Pандos to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, the roadway cross-section would include two 12-foot driving lanes in each direction, 5-foot bike lanes in each direction, a 2-foot buffer area between the driving lanes and bike lanes, curb and gutters on each side of the roadway, and 5-foot sidewalks on each side. In addition, this segment would provide for a 14-foot continuous center left-turn lane to provide for a refuge area for left-turn movements. In order to minimize right-of-way impacts, the 3-foot buffer areas behind the curbs would not be included. Figure 5.7 illustrates the proposed roadway cross section on NM 68 between Las Posta Road and Camino de Placita/Quesnel. Figure 5.8 provides a perspective of the 2-lane with two-way left-turn lane cross-section through this area.

Right-of-way requirements for Alternative 2a would be similar to Alternative 2.

Other than signal coordination, this base alternative does not include physical improvements north of Quesnel, however other physical improvements would be addressed under the Additional Recommendations described later in this chapter.

5.2.5 Alternative 3 – Coordinated Signal System + 4-lane Improvements on NM 68 + One-Way Pair

Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 2, however it would also include converting a short segment of NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita to a “One-Way Pair” facility. In addition, this alternative would require the installation of 5 new traffic signals on Camino de la Placita to facilitate traffic operations. New signal locations would include: Valverde/Lund Streets, Town Hall Drive, Civic Plaza Drive, Bent Street, and Don Fernando Road. The additional traffic signals are required to address cross flow traffic from the side streets. Similar to Alternatives 1, 2, and 2a this alternative would also include a new traffic signal at the intersection of Albright/Tewa.

The right-of-way in the segment of NM 68 and US 64 between the intersection of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection and just north of the Kit Carson Road intersection is very limited (40 to 45 feet). In addition, this segment is within the Historic District which severely limits any major roadway widening. Through this segment, the pavement width is approximately 17-feet wide in each direction, therefore the roadway cross-section would provide for 2 14-foot lanes in the same direction with provisions for shared bicycle usage. Appropriate shared bicycle markings would be provided. The existing curb and gutters and sidewalks would remain. Curb ramp improvements would be made to the extent possible to comply with current ADA design requirements.

The right-of-way in the segment between just north of Kit Carson Road to Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane on the north end of the project widens out to approximately 60 feet. A major portion of this segment is still within the Historic District. Through this segment the cross-section would provide for two 12-foot lanes in the same direction, 4-foot bicycle lanes on each side, 6-foot parking lanes on both sides, and the existing curbs and gutters...
Proponents of road diets believe that key benefits include lower speeds, reduced crash rates, improved pedestrian accessibility, parking, and bike lanes. Lane width reductions result in space that can be applied to things such as pedestrian refuges, medians, sidewalks, and curbs.

A road diet is a technique used in transportation planning where the number of travel lanes or effective roadway width of the roadway is reduced in order to achieve systematic improvements. By doing so, safety improvements can be incorporated and space can be provided to accommodate other modes of travel. The reduction of lane widths results in space that can be applied to things such as pedestrian refuges, medians, sidewalks, shoulders, parking, and bike lanes.

On NM 68, between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, the roadway would be widened to provide for a 4-lane facility with paved shoulders, curbs and gutters, and sidewalks. The paved shoulders and sidewalks would provide for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Left-turn lanes at key locations would be provided along this segment.

The One-Way Pair would provide for two lanes of travel in each direction and would provide for designated bicycle lanes and parking lanes where they can be accommodated.

Right-of-way requirements for Alternative 3 would be similar to those of Alternatives 2 and 2a, however possible additional right-of-way may be required for signalization improvements on Camino de la Placita. Sidewalks and curb ramps will be assessed for needed improvements to comply with current ADA guidelines.

Figures 5.9 and 5.10 illustrate Alternative 3 north of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. Figures 5.2 and 5.3 illustrate Alternative 3 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, along with the location of existing and proposed traffic signals. Figure 5.9a provides a perspective of the on-way pair in the vicinity of Bent Street.

Other than signal coordination, lane re-striping and signing modifications for conversion to reflect modified traffic flows, this base alternative does not include physical improvements north of Quesnel, however other physical improvements would be addressed under the Additional Recommendations described later in this chapter.

5.2.6 Additional Recommendations

As discussed in Section 5.2, a number of additional recommendations were made as a result of Stakeholder/ Public input. These additional recommendations were recommended for detailed assessment in Phase 1B along with the base alternatives and can be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 described above. The following summarizes the additional recommendations:

5.2.6.1 - Assessment of a “Road Diet” cross-section through portions of the Downtown segment

Based on the need to improve pedestrian facilities and to provide for continuity of bicycle facilities, it was recommended that a “Road Diet” type treatment be assessed for the segment of NM 68/US 64 between Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, through the Downtown area, and continuing to the intersection of US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane, in order to improve safety and provide space for other modes of travel. This would involve road modifications to improve pedestrian and bicyclist accessibility by making modifications to the existing roadway cross-section within the existing right-of-way.

A road diet is a technique used in transportation planning where the number of travel lanes or effective roadway width of the roadway is reduced in order to achieve systematic improvements. By doing so, safety improvements can be incorporated and space can be provided to accommodate other modes of travel. The reduction of lane widths results in space that can be applied to things such as pedestrian refuges, medians, sidewalks, shoulders, parking, and bike lanes.

Proponents of road diets believe that key benefits include lower speeds, reduced crash rates, improved pedestrian safety, promotion of greater driver attentiveness, and promotion of cycling if additional space is provided to accommodate bicyclists. Research has found that road diets can be expected to reduce the overall crash frequency, with the higher crash reductions occurring in small urban areas.

Critics of road diets believe that they can negatively affect the speed and reliability of transit service operating on the roadway, particularly if bus stops are located in pullouts and traffic queues delay buses which are attempting to re-enter traffic. Other concerns are related to public safety in that police, fire and ambulance response may be slowed.

On NM 68 and US 64, a road diet could primarily be applied to the segment of NM 68 and US 64 from the intersection of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel to Martys’ Lane. The existing driving lanes are fairly wide through this area which provides for opportunities to incorporate an area for bicyclists, as well as an opportunity to improve deficient sidewalk facilities. It also provides opportunities to re-direct pedestrian traffic away from areas that are not easily traversable by the handicapped or the elderly, such as steep stairways along NM 68. The very limited right-of-way and close proximity of the buildings and portals present challenges in being able to achieve ADA compliance at all locations within this segment. Figure 5.11 illustrates potential modifications that can be accomplished through this area. Figure 5.11a illustrates the proposed cross-section between Camino de la Placita and Martys’ Lane. Figure 5.11b provides a photo simulation of this concept in the vicinity of Bent Street.

Figure 5.11 illustrates how sidewalks can be widened starting north of the Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection by utilizing a part of the existing roadway section, and still be able to provide for approximately 14-foot travel lanes in each direction. A shared bicycle lane can be incorporated. Figures 5.11a and 5.11b also illustrates how the curbs can be moved in to be able to provide for a widened sidewalk through this area.

The existing right-of-way and roadway cross-section north of the segment described above (Martys’ Lane – north) already provides for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as side street parking for the adjacent businesses. Therefore, a road diet through this area would likely be limited to a minor reduction of lane widths (approximately 11-foot lanes) to be able to widen and improve the existing sidewalk facilities and provide for desirable bicycle lane widths. Through this area, curb ramp extensions could also be incorporated to benefit pedestrian movements as a safety measure. Figure 5.12 illustrates a potential cross-section through this area, as well as potential locations for the incorporation of curb ramp extensions.

The “Road Diet” would also include required pavement improvements.

5.2.6.2 - Assessment of Major Intersection Re-alignments to improve traffic operations and Safety

Based on the need to improve traffic operations and pedestrian safety at the major intersections within the study corridor, it was recommended that horizontal geometric improvements be provided for. These intersections are described in more detail in Chapter 6 of this report.

5.2.6.3 - Assessment of Traffic Roundabouts at 2 Major intersections

Based on public input, there is a desire to assess the feasibility of traffic roundabouts at two major intersections, including the NM 68/Tewa/Albright and US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane intersections.
Figure 5.2 - Alternatives 2 and 3 Plan
Figure 5.3 - Alternatives 2 and 3 Plan
Figure 5.4 - Alternatives 2 and 3 Cross-sections
Figure 5.5 - Four-Lane Perspective Utilizing Raised Median with Landscaping Option - Wider Right-of-Way

Figure 5.5a - Four-Lane Perspective Utilizing Raised Median Without Landscaping Option

Figure 5.5b - Four-Lane Perspective Utilizing Two-way Left Turn Lane Option
Figure 5.5c - Locations Where A Raised Median Could Be Incorporated.
Figure 5.6 - Alternative 2 - 4 Lane Perspective - Narrow Right-of-Way
Figure 5.7 - Alternative 2a Cross-sections
Figure 5.8 - Alternative 2a - Two-Lane Perspective with Left Turn lane - Narrow Right-of-Way

Figure 5.9a - One-Way Pair Simulation
Figure 5.9 - Alternative 3 Plan
Figure 5.10 - Alternative 3 Plan
Figure 5.11 - Downtown Corridor Exhibit
Figure 5.11a - Road Diet Cross Section

Figure 5.11b - Photo Simulation Road Diet
Figure 5.12 - Curb Ramp Extensions
5.2.6.4 - Assessment of Drainage issues including Spring Ditch Water Quality Impacts

Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would require the construction of curbs and gutters, and would therefore require a storm drain system to direct the drainage flows.

In addition, the Mayordomo of the Spring Ditch has voiced concerns about how the existing NM 68 infrastructure impacts the quality of water on the Spring Ditch. There is a need to assess what these impacts are and look at alternatives to address water quality issues as required.

5.2.6.5 - Further assessment of Off-street Parking and Wayfinding

Based on stakeholder input, there is a need to locate additional off-street parking lots, especially through the downtown business area. In addition, additional signage is needed to direct traffic to designated parking lots and other points of interest. While the locating of new off-street parking lots is more of a local function, the NMDOT is willing to work with the Town of Taos on this endeavor.

5.2.6.6 - Incorporate Landscaping Improvements

Based on stakeholder input, there is strong support for the incorporation of landscaping improvements to make travel through the Town of Taos more aesthetically pleasing. The Town of Taos will need to work with the NMDOT to come to agreement on maintenance of landscaping areas with the NMDOT right-of-way.
6.0 CHAPTER 6 – DETAILED EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

6.1 Introduction

This chapter includes a more detailed evaluation of the major engineering and environmental factors associated with those alternatives recommended for advancement into Phase 1B. The additional recommendations made regarding the Road Diet through Downtown, Major intersection improvements, Traffic Roundabouts, Water Quality Improvements, Off-street parking and Wayfinding, and Landscaping improvements are also evaluated in more detail in this chapter. This chapter provides a description of the roadway design features, major intersections, drainage, right-of-way requirements, utility issues, construction issues, updated costs, and environmental considerations and potential impacts.

6.2 Design Criteria

The design criteria used to develop the improvement alternatives are based on information in the following reference documents and sources:


Based on AASHTO criteria, and in order to provide for acceptable degrees of congestion, Urban Major Arterials should be designed for a LOS of C or D.

6.2.1 Design and Posted Speeds

A 40 mph Design Speed was used for NM 68. For US 64, a 25 mph Design Speed was used. For Camino de la Placita, a 25 mph Design Speed was used. NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita are currently posted at 35 mph, 25 mph, and 25 mph respectively through the project corridor.

As a part of the development and evaluation of alternatives, consideration was also given to the amount of existing right-of-way available, as well as other existing constraints within the project limits.

6.3 Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives

6.3.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative assumes that improvements to address the transportation needs identified in the Alignment Study would not be undertaken. Traffic operations on NM 68, US 64, and Camino de la Placita would continue to operate under the existing conditions.

6.3.2 Build Alternatives

The following summarizes the Detailed Evaluation of major factors associated with each of the build alternatives evaluated in Phase 1B of the Alignment Study.

6.3.2.1 Purpose and Need

“The purpose of the proposed improvements is to correct existing physical deficiencies, facilitate traffic flow and operations, improve traffic safety conditions, manage access to adjoining properties, and develop appropriate facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.”

6.3.2.1.1 Alternative 1 - Coordinated Signal System

Signal Coordination in itself does not address the existing physical deficiencies within the corridor. Sidewalk and curb ramp improvements would not be included as a part of this alternative, with the exception of the immediate signalized intersection locations. No major intersection geometric improvements would be included as a part of this base alternative.

This alternative would not address pedestrian and bicyclist needs between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita. Sidewalk deficiencies with the Downtown (beyond Camino de la Placita) area would remain. There would be no provisions to address bicyclist needs through portions of the Downtown area.

Traffic flows would be improved compared to the No-Build alternative, however, there would still be significant delays throughout the corridor.

6.3.2.1.2 Alternative 2 – Coordinated Signal System + 4-lane Improvements on NM 68

Signal Coordination plus 4-lane improvements to NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel addresses physical improvements needed on NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel.

This alternative addresses needed pedestrian and bicyclist needs between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. Sidewalk deficiencies and provisions for bicyclists needs within the Downtown area (beyond Camino de la Placita/Quesnel) would be addressed under other additional improvements discussed later in this chapter.

Signal coordination would be included under this alternative and traffic flows would be improved compared to Alternative 1 due to increased roadway capacity.

6.3.2.1.3 Alternative 2a - Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel

Alternative 2a benefits would be similar to Alternative 2 with respect to addressing needed physical improvements on NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. Similar to Alternative 2, physical improvements north of Quesnel would be addressed under other additional improvements discussed later in this chapter.

Similar to Alternatives 1 and 2, signal coordination would be included under this alternative. Traffic flows would be improved compared to Alternative 1. Traffic flows would be similar to Alternative 2, with the exception of the intersection of Siler/Los Pandos where delays would be greater due the reduced lane capacity.

Between south of Los Pandos to Quesnel, this alternative provides a pavement width wide enough to accommodate future restriping of NM 68 to 4 lanes if it is determined to be required in the future.
6.3.2.1.4 Alternative 3 - Alternative 3 - Coordinated Signal System + 4-Lane Improvements on NM 68 + One Way Pair

Signal Coordination plus 4-lane improvements to NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita + One Way Pair north of Camino de la Placita addresses physical improvements needed on NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. Similar to Alternatives 2 and 2a, physical improvements north of Quesnel would be addressed under other additional improvements discussed later in this chapter.

Signing and striping improvements north of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel would be required for the conversion to a one-way pair. Signing and striping improvements would also be required on Camino de la Placita for the conversion to the one-way pair.

This alternative addresses needed pedestrian and bicyclist needs between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. Sidewalk deficiencies and provisions for bicyclists needs within the Downtown area (beyond Camino de la Placita/Quesnel) would be addressed under other additional improvements discussed later in this chapter.

Traffic flows would be improved compared to Alternatives 1, 2 and 2a, with the exception of the intersection of NM 68/Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, which would experience significantly higher delays.

6.3.2.1.5 Road Diet Downtown Segment

A Road Diet through the Downtown segment is consistent with the Purpose and Need for the project as it would address needed physical improvements to address pedestrian and bicyclist needs through the Downtown area. A Road Diet through the Downtown area could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.1.6 Major Intersection Re-Alignments

Major intersection re-alignments is also consistent with the Purpose and Need for the project, as it would improve the mainline and cross-street operations and would improve safety for motorists and pedestrians. Major intersection Re-Alignments could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.1.7 Traffic Roundabouts

The use of traffic roundabouts can have a positive impact on Purpose and Need for the project if they improve intersection operations. At the NM 68/Albright/Tewa intersection traffic operations would be improved over the existing condition. At the US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane intersection traffic operations would also be improved over the existing condition.

The use of traffic roundabouts could be incorporated into all Alternatives, however when used with Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would result in significant right-of-way impacts.

6.3.2.1.8 Drainage Improvements and Water Quality Issues at Spring Ditch

Drainage improvements along the Study corridor address physical deficiencies and are thus consistent with the purpose and need. Spot drainage improvements could be addressed with Alternative 1. Major drainage improvements could be addressed with Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

The Spring Ditch and associated water quality issues was not a part of the original Purpose and Need for this project, however is an issue that needs to be considered during the Alignment Study for this project. Improvements to address this issue could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.1.9 Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding

Provisions for off-street parking and wayfinding is consistent with the Purpose and Need of the project as it helps to manage access to adjoining properties, addresses parking needs, and provides guidance to the traveling public.

However, the development of off-street parking lots is more of a local agency responsibility to obtain and develop off-street parking facilities. It should be noted that this study did not include a detailed parking needs analysis, therefore the local agencies would need to conduct a formalized study to determine actual parking needs. The NMDOT would work with the local agencies to incorporate wayfinding measures and provide supplemental signing for any new parking facilities. Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding would benefit Alternatives 1, 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.1.10 Landscaping Improvements

The incorporation of landscaping improvements is consistent with the Purpose and Need for the project as it provides for a much more aesthetically pleasing environment for the highway users and leaves a better impression of the Town for visitors.

As a result of public input meetings, a significant number of comments received requested that streetscape and landscaping be integrated into the proposed project improvements, in order to improve the appearance of the approach into the Downtown area for both the residents and visitors to the Town of Taos.

While the major intent of subject project is to provide improvements to address traffic congestion, improve traffic operations, and to address physical deficiencies, planning for future streetscape and landscaping can be incorporated into the planning efforts. Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would incorporate raised median islands that could receive landscaping treatment, however the placement of raised median islands would have to be limited to the limits between La Posta Road and south of Siler Road, as the limited right-of-way does not allow for the inclusion of a raised median for the entire corridor. In addition, there are other potential locations to add landscaping features outside the roadway prism, where there is sufficient right-of-way to accommodate such improvements (applicable to Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3). Again, there are more opportunities for this towards the southern end of the project, where the existing right-of-way is much wider.

Since there are currently budget limitations on this project, at a minimum, infrastructure (such as pipe sleeves for future irrigation) and native vegetation in the raised median areas and areas within the right-of-way could be incorporated at a fairly low cost. Additional landscaping improvements could then be incorporated under future enhancement projects. Agreements between the NMDOT and the Town of Taos would be required to address maintenance of the new features.

6.3.2.2 Traffic Operations

In order to assess Existing and Future traffic operations for the alternatives advanced, LOS and Delay analysis was performed for each alternative, including the No-Build. Table 6.1 summarizes the analysis.

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 illustrate a comparison of the LOS for the alternatives for years 2013, 2023, and 2033, as well as the No-Build Alternative.

In addition, a Queuing Analysis was completed for the alternatives advanced reflecting 2013, 2023, and 2023 to assess the queuing values at the major intersections. The No-Build alternative was also assessed. Figures 6.3 through 6.12 provide a summary of the queuing values.
Table 6.1
Level of Service and Delays - P.M.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<td>D</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>D</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>B</td>
</tr>
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<td>US 64 &amp; Cam. de la Placita/ Rival Ln</td>
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<td>F</td>
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<td>F*</td>
<td>C*</td>
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<td>F*</td>
<td>D*</td>
<td>D*</td>
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<td>76.3</td>
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<td>88.0</td>
<td>88.3</td>
<td>112.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Indicates that the intersection is an all-way stop thus the LOS is valued differently than a signalized intersection.

Note: Level of service and delays for Alternative 2a would be similar to Alternative 2, with the exception of the intersection of Siler/Los Pandos, where longer delays would occur due to the reduced lane capacity.
Figure 6.1- Peak Hour LOS Map
Figure 6.2- Peak Hour LOS Map
#1 - NM 68 & La Posta Rd./Cervantes Dr.

**Legend Max Queue** (ft)
- **No Build/Coordinated/Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair**
- Average of 6 tutes
- **Note:** Red text denotes a queue that exceeds link distance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>La Posta Rd. (489)</th>
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<th>2033</th>
<th>Thru/ Right</th>
<th>Thru</th>
<th>Left</th>
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<td>259/149</td>
<td>223/307/</td>
<td>220/157</td>
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<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>110/195/</td>
<td>136/185/</td>
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<td>Left</td>
<td>Thru</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>77/112/</td>
<td>110/74/</td>
<td>94/34/</td>
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<td>Right</td>
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<td>7/86</td>
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Figure 6.3 - Intersection Queuing Summaries

#5 - NM 68 & Tewa St./Albright St.

**Legend Max Queue** (ft)
- **No Build/Coordinated/Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair**
- Average of 6 tutes
- **Note:** Red text denotes a queue that exceeds link distance.

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<td>34/22/</td>
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<td>42/48/</td>
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<th>2033</th>
<th>Thru/ Right</th>
<th>Thru</th>
<th>Left</th>
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<td>212/278/</td>
<td>179/111/</td>
<td>180/212/</td>
<td>185/123</td>
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Figure 6.4 - Intersection Queuing Summaries
#6 - NM 68 & Siler Rd./Los Pandos Rd.

**Legend Max Queue** (ft)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ex. 2023</th>
<th>Ex. 2033</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NM 68 - Paseo del Pueblo Sur (1883)</strong></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>120/124/483/208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legend Max Queue</strong> (ft)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair</strong></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>120/124/483/208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Built/Coordinated</strong></td>
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#7 - NM 68 & Cam.de La Placita/Quesnel

**Legend Max Queue** (ft)

<table>
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<th></th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Built/Coordinated</strong></td>
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<td>10/10/10/10</td>
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Figure 6.5 - Intersection Queuing Summaries

Figure 6.6 - Intersection Queuing Summaries
**Figure 6.7 - Intersection Queuing Summaries**

**Figure 6.8 - Intersection Queuing Summaries**
#19 - US 64 & Cam. de La Placita

**Legend Max Queue* (ft)**

- No Build/Coordinated/
- Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ex.</th>
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<th>Right/ Thru</th>
<th>Left</th>
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<td>300/300</td>
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**US 64 (Link dist. 288 ft)**

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**Figure 6.9 - Intersection Queuing Summaries**

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#27 - NM 240/Ranchitos Rd. & Cam. de La Placitas

**Legend Max Queue* (ft)**

- No Build/Coordinated/
- Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Ex.</th>
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**No Build/Coordinated**

**Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair**

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**Figure 6.10 - Intersection Queuing Summaries**
### #19 - US 64 & Cam. de La Placita

**Legend Max Queue* (ft)**

- No Build/Coordinated/
- Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair

#### US 64 (Link dist. 288 ft)

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<td>295/303/45</td>
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#### US 64 (Link dist. 288 ft)

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**Legend Max Queue* (ft)**

- No Build/Coordinated/
- Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair

### #27 - NM 240/Ranchitos Rd. & Cam. de La Placitas

**Legend Max Queue* (ft)**

- No Build/Coordinated/
- Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair

#### NM 240/Ranchitos Rd. (481)

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**Legend Max Queue* (ft)**

- No Build/Coordinated/
- Coord. + 4 Lanes/One-way Pair

### Figure 6.11 - Intersection Queuing Summaries

### Figure 6.12 - Intersection Queuing Summaries
6.3.2.2.1 Alternative 1 – Coordinated Signal System
Compared to the No-Build alternative, signal coordination would result in a slight improvement in the LOS at all major intersecting streets, thus reducing delays. The queuing analysis shows that this alternative would not improve the queuing along NM 68 and US 64, and in fact would make the queues longer in many cases.

The use of an adaptive system could potentially further enhance traffic operations on NM 68 and US 64, as communications within the signal network would be improved and would adjust based on fluctuating traffic demands. Studies in other states have shown that Adaptive Coordinated Signal systems have resulted in a reduction in the number of intersection stops, and has improved travel times by as much as 3 to 5 mph. The NMDOT will continue to assess these systems for utilization on the NM 68/US 64 corridor through the Study and Design phases if Alternative 1 is advanced.

6.3.2.2.2 Alternative 2 – Coordinated Signal System + 4-Lane Improvements on NM 68
Compared to the No-Build alternative, signal coordination plus 4-lane improvements to NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita would result in an improvement in LOS at all major intersecting streets, thus reducing delays. Compared to Alternative 1, the LOS for all intersections is improved. The intersections of NM 68/Albright/Tewa and NM 68/Siler/Los Pandos, shows a dramatic improvement compared to Alternative 1.

The queuing analysis shows that an overall improvement in queuing over Alternative 1 in the segment south of Camino de la Placita, however, no significant difference north of Camino de la Placita.

Median options were assessed for the segment between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita. The resulting improvements in LOS at all major intersecting streets, thus reducing delays. Compared to Alternative 1, the LOS for all intersections is improved. The intersections of NM 68/Albright/Tewa and NM 68/Siler/Los Pandos, shows a dramatic improvement compared to Alternative 1.

For the segment between South of Los Pandos and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, the limited right-of-way does not provide enough room to incorporate a median, under this alternative

For the segment between South of Los Pandos and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, the limited right-of-way does not provide enough room to incorporate a median, under this alternative.

Consideration of a Continuous TWLTLs can offer traffic operations advantages in some cases. One of the key benefits of a TWLTL’s includes the removal left turning vehicles from the through traffic lanes, which can reduce delay to through vehicles and can lead to a reduction of rear-end and sideswipe collisions. In addition, TWLTL’s provide separation between opposing lanes, which can lead to a reduction in head-on collisions.

Though TWLTL’s offer several advantages when used under the right circumstances, they do have limitations. TWLTL’s do not function well once certain traffic volumes or recommended driveway spacing limits have been exceeded. In areas of high traffic volumes, raised medians have been shown to be safer than TWLTL’s. Design criteria for the use of TWLTL’s includes the removal left turning vehicles from the through traffic lanes, which can reduce delay to through vehicles and can lead to a reduction of rear-end and sideswipe collisions. In addition, TWLTL’s provide separation between opposing lanes, which can lead to a reduction in head-on collisions.

6.3.2.2.3 Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel
Traffic operations under Alternative 2a would be similar to those under Alternative 2, with the exception of the intersection of Siler/Los Pandos, which would experience longer delays due to the limited intersection capacity. In addition, additional delays could be experienced as traffic volumes between south of Los Pandos and Quesnel continue to grow due to the limited lane capacity and the limitations of a TWLTL as discussed above in Section 6.4.2.2.5. This alternative, however, does provide sufficient pavement width to provide for re-striping to 4-lanes if required in the future.

6.3.2.2.4 Alternative 3 – Coordinated Signal System + 4-Lane Improvements on NM 68 + One Way Pair
Compared to the No-Build alternative, signal coordination plus 4-lane improvements to NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, plus converting NM 68/US 64/Camino de la Placita to a One-Way Pair, would result in a significant improvement in LOS at all major intersecting streets with the exception of the intersection of NM 68/Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, thus reducing overall delays. Compared to Alternatives 1, 2 and 2a, the LOS for intersections south of Camino de la Placita would improve. North of Camino de la Placita and on Camino de la Placita itself, the LOS would not be significantly different. The LOS at the intersection of NM 68/Camino de la Placita/Quesnel would be significantly lower than Alternatives 1, 2 and 2a.

The queuing analysis shows an overall improvement over the No-Build and Alternatives 1, 2 and 2a.

6.3.2.2.5 Road Diet Downtown Segment
Road Diet improvements through the Downtown area would not result in any improvements to traffic operations. It would, however, provide a better defined traveled way for bicyclists.

The Road Diet improvements can be incorporated into Alternatives 1, 2, and 2a.

6.4.2.2.6 Major Intersection Re-Alignments
There are a number of major intersections within the study limits that were identified as having geometric deficiencies that affect safety and traffic operations. Non-standard intersection alignments result in conflict points causing crashes. The non-standard design also results in poor intersection operations. As a part of the Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives, those intersections identified as being deficient were further assessed to evaluate alternatives that would improve traffic operations and safety, as follows:

6.4.2.2.6.1 Intersection of NM 68/Albright Street/Tewa Street
The intersection of Albright/Tewa was recently re-aligned to bring the two intersecting streets together; this was done as a part of the Taos County Administrative/Judicial Complex development. The NMDOT previously assessed this intersection for Signal Warrants; it was determined that the intersection met Signal Warrants. Since the warrant study was completed, initial project development activities for a signalization project were started and then delayed to see how the subject Alignment Study might impact the design of the intersection. The final
geometric improvements recommended for this intersection will depend on the preferred alternative identified as a part of this study. At a minimum, signalization improvements would be included as a part of the proposed improvements. An alternative to signalization would be a traffic roundabout, as described later in this report.

6.3.2.6.2 Intersection of NM 68/Siler Road/Los Pandos Road

The intersection of Siler/Los Pandos is an offset intersection, which is signalized. The offset angle, along with other horizontal geometric deficiencies create traffic operational problems. There are significant delays on the northbound, southbound, and side street through movements.

Three alternative intersection improvement options were assessed at this location, as follows:

1. Re-alignment of Los Pandos Road

Under this option, Los Pandos Road would be re-aligned to line up with Siler Road. This would greatly improve the intersection horizontal geometry and would improve traffic operations and safety. This improvement would also allow standardized pedestrian crossings and improved curb ramp improvements for pedestrians.

This option, however, would require the acquisition and potential relocation of an existing building improvement in order to re-align Los Pandos Road. It does not appear that the building is currently occupied. Figure 6.13 illustrates this option.

2. Development of 2 separate signalized Tee Intersections with Maximum Spacing

Under this option, two separate “Tee” signalized intersections would be constructed. The Siler intersection would essentially remain at its current location, however, the Los Pandos intersection would be re-aligned to the south to maximize the spacing between the two intersections.

This option would require the acquisition of property on the southeast quadrant of the intersection to accommodate the re-alignment of Los Pandos Road. Figure 6.14 illustrates this option.

3. Traffic Roundabout (Smith’s Super Center Development)

A new Smith’s Super Center development is planned for the east side of NM 68 on the northeast side of Los Pandos. While not a part of the original Alignment Study, the NMDOT was asked to do a preliminary assessment of a Traffic Roundabout at this intersection. A full assessment of a traffic roundabout will be completed after the developer for Smith’s corporation provides the required Traffic Impacts Study for the proposed development. Figure 6.15 illustrates a possible traffic roundabout configuration.

6.3.2.6.3 Intersection of NM 68/Camino de la Placita/Quesnel

The Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection is slightly offset with a free-right movement for eastbound to southbound movements. The intersection is signalized, and the intersection is located at the entrance of the central business district. This intersection currently operates at a low level of service during the AM and PM Peak Hour periods. Pedestrian movements are moderately high at this location, especially during the Noon and PM Peak Hour periods.

Some of the major issues associated with this intersection include: problems with larger vehicle turning movements, ADA issues, parking, side-street and driveway proximity.

Potential improvements at this intersection include: provisions for improved vehicle turning movements, ADA improvements, improved driveway proximity, and improved pedestrian crossing movements. Forcing pedestrian movements to the north leg of the intersection would improve safety. Proposed improvements would likely require additional right-of-way. Figure 6.16 illustrates potential improvements at this intersection.

6.3.2.6.4 Intersection of NM 68/US 64

The NM 68/US 64 (Kit Carson Road) intersection is slightly offset and is signalized. This intersection is surrounded by commercial establishments. The west leg, also known as North Plaza Road provides access to the Taos Plaza. This intersection operates at a very low level of service during the AM, Noon, and PM Peak Hour periods; with all through and left-turn movements experiencing significant delays. Pedestrian movements at this intersection are high, with the highest volumes during the Noon and PM Peak Hour periods.

Some of the major issues at this intersection include: very narrow existing right-of-way, both private and roadway encroachments, narrow sidewalks, sidewalks incorporated into canopy areas, and ADA issues.

Potential improvements at this intersection include: increased sidewalk width, improved channelization, and incorporation of traffic calming features such as a speed table. Proposed improvements would likely require additional right-of-way. Figure 6.17 illustrates potential improvements at this intersection.

6.3.2.6.5 Intersection of US 64/Camino del Paseo Pueblo Norte/Montecito Lane

Montecito Lane intersects US 64 on the east side as it curves to the west. Camino del Pueblo Norte also intersects US 64 as it curves to the west, just north of Montecito Lane. The intersection is channelized to separate eastbound to westbound traffic. Camino del Pueblo Pueblo Norte provides access to Taos Pueblo. The major turning movements are northbound to eastbound, westbound to southbound, and westbound to northbound. Pedestrian movements at this intersection are low.

Some of the major issues at this intersection include: side street stop control, ADA compliance issues, clear zone, limited sight distance, and intersection delineation.

Two alternative intersection improvement options were assessed at this location, as follows:

1. Intersection Minor Re-alignment Delineation

Under this option, a minor re-alignment of Camino del Paseo Pueblo Norte would be included to provide for improved sight distance. The intersection would be signalized to better control traffic movements. Intersection delineation would be provided. ADA issues would be addressed. Additional right-of-way would be required. Figure 6.18 illustrates this option.

2. Intersection Major Re-alignment and Delineation

Under this option, a more significant re-alignment of both Camino del Paseo Pueblo Norte and US 64 would be provided to further improve sight distance. The intersection would be signalized to better control traffic movements. Intersection delineation would be provided. ADA issues would be addressed. Additional right-of-way would be required. Taos Pueblo has requested a “Gateway Treatment” at the turnoff to the Pueblo. Figure 6.19 illustrates this option.

Assessment of Traffic Roundabouts at 2 Major intersections

Based on public input during Phase 1A, as well as Phase 1B of the Alignment Study, it was requested that traffic roundabouts be evaluated at two (2) locations, including the intersections of NM 68/Albright/Tewa and US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane, as an alternative to a standard intersection design.

1. NM 68/Albright/Tewa

Of all the major intersections on this corridor, this intersection is one of the most likely candidates for a traffic roundabout, as NM 68 has a significantly wide right-of-way, the side street alignments are fairly normal, and no historic structures are located in the vicinity of the intersection. The study evaluated both a single lane and a double lane roundabout.
6.3.2.2.8 Drainage Improvements and Spring Ditch

Drainage improvements associated with the Spring Ditch would not have an impact on traffic operations.

6.3.2.2.9 Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding

The incorporation of Off-street parking at key locations and Wayfinding measures would likely have a positive impact on traffic operations in that there could be a slight reduction in through traffic, there would be more alternatives to side-street parking, and unfamiliar drivers would be provided more guidance as they drive through the corridor.

6.3.2.3.1 Alternative 1

Signal Coordination in itself does not address a lot of the existing safety issues on this corridor. However, minor intersection improvements associated with the signal coordination work would result in improved accessibility at those spot locations.

Studies in other states have shown that Adaptive Coordinated Signal coordination systems have resulted in a reduction of intersection crashes.

This alternative would not address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, or through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.3.2 Alternative 2

Signal Coordination plus 4-lane improvements to NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, in itself does not address all of the existing safety issues, however, this alternative would address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita. In addition, signal improvements at intersections on the remainder of the corridor would result in improved accessibility at those spot locations.

This alternative, combined with the Road Diet improvements would address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs north of Camino de la Placita, through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.3.2.3 Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel

The safety improvements associated with this option would be very similar to those stated above for Alternative 2. This alternative, combined with the Road Diet improvements would address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs north of Camino de la Placita, through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.3.2.4 Alternative 3

Similar to Alternatives 2 and 2a, Signal Coordination plus 4-lane improvements to NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita + One Way Pair north of Camino de la Placita addresses pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita. In addition, signal improvements at intersections on the remainder of the corridor would result in improved accessibility at those spot locations.

This alternative on its own would not address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs north of Camino de la Placita, through the Downtown area. However, this alternative, combined with the Road Diet improvements would address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs north of Camino de la Placita, through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.2.7 Traffic Roundabouts

A more detailed assessment of incorporating traffic roundabouts was made at the intersections of NM 68/Albright/Tewa and US 64/Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane. (See detailed discussion above.)

While the traffic roundabouts would improve traffic operations, significant widening would be required to accommodate the minimum size roundabout required for the design traffic volumes.
6.3.2.4.1 Alternative 1
Signal Coordination in itself does not address the needed pedestrian and bicyclist needs for the corridor, however the addition of sidewalk and curb ramp modifications associated with signalized intersection improvements would benefit pedestrian accessibility at those spot locations. This alternative would not address pedestrian and bicyclist needs between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, as well as through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.4.2 Alternative 2
Signal Coordination plus 4-lane improvements to NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita addresses pedestrian and bicyclist improvements needed on NM 68 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placitas by providing for a paved shoulder and new sidewalks. This alternative, combined with the Road Diet improvements would address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs north of Camino de la Placita, through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.4.3 Alternative 2a - Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel
Pedestrian and Bicyclist improvements would be very similar to those described under Alternative 2. This alternative, combined with the Road Diet improvements would address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs north of Camino de la Placita, through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.4.4 Alternative 3 - Coordinated Signal System + 4-Lane Improvements on NM 68 + One Way Pair
Pedestrian and Bicyclist improvements would be very similar to those described under Alternatives 2 and 2a. This alternative, combined with the Road Diet improvements would address pedestrian and bicyclist safety needs north of Camino de la Placita, through the Downtown area.

6.3.2.4.5 Road Diet Downtown Segment
Road Diet type improvements would improve accessibility for pedestrians in the Downtown area. Bicycle symbols, markings, and signage would provide benefits to bicyclists. This option could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3. Unfortunately, there are locations in the Downtown area where existing narrow stepped passages exist. Attempting to correct these type of situations could result in significant impact to adjacent historic building structures and will likely not be feasible and/or acceptable. The need for Design Exceptions at these locations will likely be required.

6.3.2.4.6 Major Intersection Re-Alignments
Major intersection re-alignments would result in benefits to both pedestrians and bicyclists. Improved sidewalks, curb ramps, crossing markings, and more standard intersection geometry would result in benefits to pedestrians and bicyclists. This option could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.4.7 Traffic Roundabouts
Traffic roundabouts would result in improved benefits to pedestrians and bicyclists by providing designated travel areas away from traffic and would provide for safe designated crossings at the intersections. This option could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.4.8 Drainage Improvements and Spring Ditch
Drainage and water quality improvements would not impact pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

6.3.2.4.9 Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding
Off-street parking and wayfinding would benefit pedestrian traffic traveling to and from destinations in the Downtown area. This option can be incorporated into Alternatives 1, 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.4.10 Landscaping Improvements
Landscaping features would make for a more pleasant experience for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along the corridor. This option could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.

6.3.2.5 Drainage
Alternative 1 in itself does not address drainage improvements. Drainage issues, particularly between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita would not be addressed. Spot drainage issues through the Downtown area would still need to be addressed.

6.3.2.5.1 Alternative 2
Alternative 2 would address drainage system requirements between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita. Drainage improvements north of Camino de la Placita could be incorporated at spot locations as required.
Proposed Improvements:
Conceptual design was prepared to provide the basis for the drainage design and demonstrate that the proposed improvements safely convey the peak storm events affecting NM 68/US 64 from La Posta Road to the Camino De La Placitas/Queensel intersection. Locations requiring improvements include the locations along the corridor that experience issues as noted in the Existing Conditions as described in Section 3 of this report. This stretch of roadway was separated into Segment 1 and Segment 2. This was done because Segment 1 and Segment 2 are separated by a high point at Siler Road. Segment 1 drains to a CBC and eventually to the Rio Fernando, and Segment 2 drains west eventually to the Spring Ditch. Segment 2 was divided by improvements at the intersection of Siler Road and NM 68 and by improvements near the McDonald’s. Two alternatives for improvements near McDonald’s are provided.

The conceptual design performed for the various improvements demonstrate that the proposed system will adequately convey the fully developed storm event for each structure alternative. Proposed structures were designed to convey the 50-year event from onsite basins contributing to flows impacting the corridor.

Segment 1: La Posta Road to Siler Road
The first improvement area is located along NM 68 between La Posta Road/Cervantes Dive and Siler Road/Los Pando’s Road. This stretch of roadway is extremely flat which causes ponding and insufficient drainage to the existing drainage structures along this area. Also, the segment of roadway between Tewa Street/Albright Road and Siler Road/Los Pando’s Road does not have curb and gutter which increases the ponding issues. It is recommended that curbs and gutters are added in this location to reduce ponding of the adjacent properties. No new drainage infrastructure is anticipated between La Posta Road and Toalane Road. Drainage south of Frontier Road will be captured by inlets at ID #1 on Figure 3.2. It is recommended that a minimum 30” Storm Drain Culvert Pipe (SDCP) storm drain collector be placed between North of Taolane Road and about 600-feet south of the Siler Road/Los Pando’s Road intersection.

Based on preliminary drainage calculations, a minimum 30” SDCP will be required to convey the flows for the 50 year storm event. This proposed storm drain will drain into the three existing 7-feet by 10-feet CBC’s. Coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) will be required to verify that this will be allowed. Curb Drop Inlets (CDI) are recommended at four locations along this stretch on both sides of the roadway (8 total) to improve drainage into the proposed storm drain. This should capture any drainage from a high point in elevation located about 150-feet south of Frontier Road and any drainage south of Siler Road. It is recommended that a manhole be placed between each pair of CDI’s (4 total). It will be required that these inlets are water quality inlets in order to remove pollutants before discharge to the Rio Fernando de Taos. In order to improve drainage and to facilitate placing the proposed CDI’s at low points, the vertical alignment of the road will be adjusted to provide a moderate rolling grade. Maximum grades will be 5 percent. See Figure 6.24 for the location of the proposed CDI’s, proposed storm drain, and existing CBC. Refer to Table 6.2 for the preliminary cost estimate for the improvements in Segment 1.

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Segment 2: Siler Road to Camino de la Placitas:
The second area requiring improvements is located along NM 68 between the Siler Road/Los Pando’s Road intersection and the Camino de la Placitas/Queensel intersection, about 325-feet north of the McDonald’s restaurant. This stretch of roadway includes ID #’s 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 on Figure 3.2. The inlets and box culvert at these locations all drain flow to the west, draining eventually into the Spring Ditch. A base improvement alternative at Siler Road and two improvement alternatives in the area of the McDonalds were considered based on meetings held with the Town of Taos, NMDOT staff, and local residents that discussed drainage issues in this area. Each alternative would include the same improvements at Siler Road (ID #10).

Siler Road Improvements
The area at the intersection of Siler Road and NM 68 has various inlets shown as ID #10 on Figure 3.2. These all drain west, eventually into the Spring Ditch. It is proposed that the existing inlets be removed and that water quality inlets be installed on either side of NM 68. Typical pollutants that wash off the road during rain events include sediment, rubber tire pieces, oils, and various automotive fluids. The only way to clean these pollutants out of the storm water is by routing the water through a structural or natural Best Management Practice (BMP). A structural BMP is used for this alternative. These BMPs will remove most of the pollutants from the storm water stream prior to discharge into the existing Spring Ditch.

It is recommended that a water quality inlet be placed on both sides of NM 68 just north of Siler Rd. The inlet on the east side will tie in to the existing storm drain just east of it. A minimum 24” SDCP storm drain will tie the two proposed inlets and run east to west across NM 68. A manhole will be placed between in the center of Siler Road directly south of the proposed west inlet and a minimum of 24” SDCP storm drain be installed to tie in the proposed inlet and manhole. An additional manhole is recommended on Siler Road between the existing inlets just west of Siler Road which will tie in the proposed manhole just east of it. Preliminary cost estimates were produced for each alternative in order to provide decision factors to analyze each alternative effectively. See Figure 6.25 for the location of the proposed water quality drop inlets and storm drain and Table 6.3 for the preliminary cost estimate for the improvements at Siler Road.

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<td>663781</td>
<td>Tie To Existing 24” Waterline</td>
<td>Each</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$2,000.00</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Contingency</th>
<th>Estimated Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>$62,550.00</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>$81,315.00</td>
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Figure 6.13 - Los Pandos Intersection Option 1
**Figure 6.15** - Los Pandos Intersection Roundabout Option

**Figure 6.16** - Quesnel Intersection Improvements
Figure 6.17 - Kit Carson Intersection Improvements
Figure 6.18 - Allsups Intersection Option 1

Figure 6.19 - Allsups Intersection Option 2
Figure 6.20 - Albright 2 Lane Roundabout Option

Figure 6.21 - Albright 4 Lane Roundabout Option
Figure 6.22 - Rivali 4 Major Legs Option

Figure 6.23 - Rivali 3 Major Legs With Driveway Option
Figure 6.24 - Proposed Storm Drain and CDI Locations
Figure 6.25: Proposed Siler Road Water Quality Manhole and Storm Drain Locations

Figure 6.26: Proposed Water Quality Manhole and Storm Drain Locations for Option 1
Figure 6.27: Plan View Example Bio-retention Pond System

Figure 6.28: Profile View Example Bio-retention Pond System

Figure 6.29: Location of Proposed Bio-retention Pond System and Storm Drain for Option 2
McDonald’s Area Improvements:

Option 1: Water Quality Inlets
This option involves removing the existing inlets and installing new water quality inlets at ID #’s 11, 12, 13 and 14 as shown on Figure 3.2. It is recommended that a water quality inlet be placed just off the McDonald’s parking lot and tie in to the McDonald’s storm drain. A minimum 30” SDCP will tie in to a proposed water quality inlet just off the McDonald’s restaurant which will tie in to another water quality inlet directly across NM 68 with a minimum 30” SDCP. This inlet will need to tie in to the existing inlet just west of it on private property with a minimum 24” SDCP. These inlets will replace the existing inlets at ID #13. Two additional water quality inlets will replace the existing inlets at ID #14. See Figure 6.26 for location of the proposed water quality drop inlets and storm drain for this area and Table 6.4 for the preliminary cost estimate for the improvements for Option 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.4: Cost Estimate For Water Quality Inlet System</th>
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<tr>
<td>570437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601300</td>
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<td>662100</td>
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Estimated Cost: $90,745.00
Contingency: 30.00%
Estimated Total: $117,968.50

Option 2: Bio-retention Pond
This option involves removing the existing inlets, installing new CDI’s, acquiring easements/right-of-way, and rerouting the storm water system. The existing 24” SDCP at ID #’s 13 and 14 area will need to be replaced with new 24” SDCP and re-routed to drain to a central location north of ID #12. The McDonald’s parking lot storm drain will also need to tie in to the new storm drain near ID #12.

At the central location just north of ID #12, it is proposed that a 24” SDCP crosses the NM 68 roadway in a southeasterly direction and along the south side of the vacant lot south of McDonald’s. The proposed 24” SDCP will continue to the easternmost corner of the lot. It is proposed that a 50-foot by 50-foot by 10-feet (L x W x D) trapezoidal detention pond with 3:1 side slopes be installed that will naturally remove pollutants from the storm water. Based on preliminary drainage calculations using the 50 year storm event, the required pond volume is approximately 0.17 acre feet. The storm water will be routed through the pond where the pollutants will be allowed to settle and be filtered through bio-filtration before release. The water will then be released through a 30” SDCP via an inverted pipe on a riser structure on the south side of the pond which will convey flows south to a nearby ditch which eventually drains to the Spring Ditch. An example bio-retention pond plan and profile can be seen on Figure 6.27 and Figure 6.28. See Figure 6.29 for the location of the proposed bio-retention pond and storm drain, and Table 6.5 for the preliminary cost estimate for the improvements for Option 2. Additional studies may be required in this area because of existing groundwater monitoring wells in the area. No costs included are in Table 6.5 for any remediation.

Table 6.5: Cost Estimate For Detention Pond System

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<th>Number</th>
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Estimated Cost: $731,305.83
Contingency: 30.00%
Estimated Total: $950,697.58

6.3.5.2.3. Alternative 2a- Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel
Drainage improvements under Alternative 2a would be very similar to those described under Alternative 2 above.

6.3.5.2.4 Alternative 3
Recommendations for Alternative 3 would be similar to those for Alternatives 2 and 2a, as described above.

6.3.5.2.5. - Road Diet Downtown Segment
Drainage improvements would be limited to spot locations to address any ponding areas to maintain positive drainage flows.

6.3.5.2.6 - Major Intersection Re-Alignments
Drainage improvements would be limited to address any ponding areas to maintain positive drainage flows.

6.3.5.2.7 - Traffic Roundabouts
Drainage improvements would be limited to maintaining positive drainage flows.

6.3.5.2.8 Drainage Improvements and Spring Ditch
Positive impact; see write-up this section.

6.3.5.2.9 - Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding
Off-street parking and way finding measures should not have an impact on roadway drainage flows.

6.3.5.2.10 Landscaping Improvements
There is a potential for recovering drainage flows for utilization for landscaping improvements. This option could be incorporated into Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3.
6.3.2.6 Geo-technical and Pavement

Pavement conditions were assessed by the NMDOT to determine the preliminary needs for pavement rehabilitation or reconstruction.

6.3.2.6.1 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would not address any paving requirements associated with the project corridor.

6.3.2.6.2 Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would address paving requirements between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. Paving improvements north of Quesnel would be addressed under the Road Diet improvements.

Based on input provided by the NMDOT’s Pavement Design Unit, preliminary pavement recommendations were provided for this alternative. Based on the condition of the existing pavement, at a minimum major pavement rehabilitation is required between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. However, since storm drain improvements would be required under this alternative along with minor vertical grade adjustments, full pavement reconstruction is recommended. Preliminary pavement recommendations are as follows:

- Full Depth Pavement Removal
- Subgrade Stabilization (i.e. Lime or Cement Treatment)
- Construct 6” Base Course
- Construct 7” Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA)

If this alternative is advanced to the Design phase, pavement investigations and testing will be carried out and a formal pavement design will be prepared.

6.3.2.6.3 Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel

Pavement improvements under Alternative 2a would be similar to Alternative 2.

6.3.2.6.4 Alternative 3

Similar to Alternatives 2 and 2a, Alternative 3 would address paving requirements between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita. Paving improvements north of Quesnel would be addressed under the Road Diet improvements. This alternative does not address pavement improvement needs on Camino de la Placita as this is currently not a State road, however would need to be considered if this is the selected alternative.

6.3.2.6.5 Road Diet Downtown Segment

Preliminary pavement recommendations between the intersection of Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersection and US 64 are similar to those as Alternative 2, since the pavement is in bad condition. North of the intersection the intersection of US 64, the pavement is not in as bad a condition, and ADT’s as well as truck volumes decrease; the Preliminary recommendations for this segment are as follows:

- Construct 5” Cold Milling
- Construct 5” HMA Inlay

6.3.2.6.6 Major Intersection Re-Alignments

Pavement improvements would be limited to areas associated with intersection geo-metric modifications. Preliminary pavement recommendations for Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would be similar.

6.3.2.6.7 Traffic Roundabouts

Pavement improvements would be limited to areas associated with intersection geo-metric modifications. Preliminary pavement recommendations for Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would be similar.

6.3.2.6.8 Drainage Improvements and Spring Ditch

Pavement reconstruction or rehabilitation will not impact drainage flows.

6.3.2.6.9 Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding

Roadway reconstruction or rehabilitation will not impact any potential new off-street parking lots or wayfinding measures.

6.3.2.6.10 Landscaping Improvements

Roadway reconstruction or rehabilitation will not impact proposed landscaping improvements.

6.3.2.7 Right-of-Way

6.3.2.7.1 Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would require very minor additional rights-of-way. Additional rights-of-way would be limited to needs associated with minor geometric improvements for the installation of new traffic signals and the need for geometric and curb ramp improvements.

6.3.2.7.2 Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would require additional rights-of-way acquisition on a short segment of NM 68 between Siler Road and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel to accommodate roadway widening. It is anticipated that Temporary Construction Permits (TCP’s) and/or Construction Maintenance Easements (CME’s) may also be required between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita to construct the roadway widening. Additional rights-of-way will be required between the intersection of Siler Road/Los Pandos and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel to accommodate roadway widening; a 5-foot strip of additional right-of-way will be required on each side of NM 68, for a total of approximately 9,000 square feet. In addition, minor rights-of-way acquisition would be required for signal coordination as described under Alternative 1 above.

6.3.2.7.3 Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel

Right-of-way requirements for Alternative 2a would be similar to Alternative 2.

6.3.2.7.4 Alternative 3

Rights-of-Way needs for Alternative 3 would be similar to those described above for Alternatives 2 and 2a.

6.3.2.7.5 Road Diet Downtown Segment

Based on the preliminary analysis, it appears that this option can likely be constructed within the existing rights-of-way. However, Temporary Construction Permits (TCP’s) may be required to construct the improvements.

6.3.2.7.6 Major Intersection Re-Alignments

Additional rights-of-way would be required for all major horizontal geometric improvements. Intersection realignments at key intersections, such as Siler/Los Pandos, NM 68/Camino de la Placita, NM 68/US 64, and US 64/Camino del Paseo del Pueblo Norte would require the need for additional rights-of-way to provide for improved intersection geometry. Intersection re-alignment at the Siler/Los Pandos intersection could be made on either the west or east side on NM 68. In either case the acquisition/relocation of an existing building structure...
6.3.2.7 Traffic Roundabouts
A preliminary assessment of incorporating traffic roundabouts was made at two intersections, including the intersection of NM 68/Albright/Tewa and US 64/Rivali Lane.

While traffic roundabouts would improve traffic operations, significant widening would be required to accommodate the minimum size roundabout required for the design traffic volumes. Significant impacts to properties on all four surrounding quadrants would occur, including properties with existing improvements. Potential right-of-way impacts are reflected on Figures 6.20 through 6.23.

6.3.2.8 Drainage Improvements and Spring Ditch
The needed drainage improvements within the corridor can likely be accommodated within the existing right-of-way. However, improvements needed to address water quality issues, such as the Spring Ditch would require additional right-of-way if the Bio Retention Pond Alternative is selected. In addition, TCP’s and CME’s may be required for construction and maintenance activities.

6.3.2.9 Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding
The incorporation of off-street parking would require the acquisition of right-of-way for the construction of any new parking facility. The responsibility for this work would be with the local agency. Wayfinding measures can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way.

6.3.2.10 Landscaping Improvements
Median landscaping improvements can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way. Roadside landscaping improvements are limited to available areas within the existing right-of-way. Very limited right-of-way starting south of the Siler/Los Pandos intersection limits the landscaping improvements that can be incorporated in this segment.

6.3.2.8 Utilities
6.3.2.8.1 Alternative 1
Alternative 1 would not require any major utility relocations. An assessment would need to be made to see if updating the signal system would impact or require any minor utility modifications. The construction of additional traffic signals could have an impact on existing utilities. The construction of a coordinated signal system would require conduit runs along NM 68, US 64 and Camino de la Placita. Conduit runs could result in potential utility conflicts. Sub-surface utility investigations will be required during the Preliminary Design phase to determine if any existing utilities will be impacted.

6.3.2.8.2 Alternative 2
Alternative 2 would likely have impacts to existing utilities within the La Posta to Camino de la Placitas segment associated with roadway widening and drainage improvements. North of Camino de la Placita, an assessment would need to be made to see if updating the signal system would impact or require any minor utility modifications. The construction of additional traffic signals could have an impact on existing utilities, as described above for Alternative 1.

6.3.2.8.3 Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel
Utility impacts associated with this alternative are similar to those under Alternative 2, as described above.

6.3.2.8.4 Alternative 3
Utility impacts associated with this alternative are similar to those under Alternatives 2 and 2a, as described above.

6.3.2.8.5 Road Diet Downtown Segment
Utility impacts associated with this option would be very minor.

6.3.2.8.6 Major Intersection Re-Alignments
Intersection realignments at key intersections, such as Siler/Los Pandos, NM 68/Camino de la Placita, NM 68/US 64, and US 64/Camino del Paseo del Pueblo Norte would likely result in some degree of impact to existing utilities, especially if there are any improvements that would require excavation, such as signal relocation or storm drain improvements.

6.3.2.8.7 Traffic Roundabouts
Impacts associated with traffic roundabout improvements would be similar to those of the Major Intersection re-alignments described above.

6.3.2.8.8 Drainage Improvements and Spring Ditch
Utility impacts can be expected with any storm drain improvements and improvements associated with storm drain water quality improvements, as trenching activities would be required.

6.3.2.8.9 Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding
There is a potential for minor utility impacts associated with the construction of off-street parking lot facilities.

6.3.2.8.10 Landscaping Improvements
The incorporation of median and roadside landscaping will require tie-ins to existing waterlines and would require metering.

6.3.2.9 Ease of Construction
6.3.2.9.1 Alternative 1
Alternative 1 would not result in any major impacts to traffic for coordinating traffic signals. Simple temporary lane closures at existing and new signal locations would be required. Construction of the interconnect conduit system would require intermittent single lane closures through the project limits.

6.3.2.9.2 Alternative 2
Similar to Alternative 1, there would be limited traffic impacts for the signal coordination efforts. There would be significant traffic impacts between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placitas for roadway widening operations, including any storm sewer and utility relocation work, and paving improvements. Temporary lane closures and short-term detouring is anticipated.

6.3.2.9.3 Alternative 2a – Coordinated Signal System + Combination of 4-lane and 2-lane Improvements on NM 68 from La Posta to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel
Te impacts of Alternative 2a would be very similar to Alternative 2.

6.3.2.9.4 Alternative 3
The impacts of Alternative 3 would be very similar to Alternatives 2 and 2a.
Figure 6.30 - Siler ROW Requirements

Figure 6.31 - Placita / Quesnel ROW Requirements
Figure 6.32 - Kit Carson ROW Requirements

Figure 6.33 - Allsups ROW Requirements
6.3.2.9.5 Road Diet Downtown Segment
Road Diet type improvements would not result in any major impacts to traffic. Sidewalk construction through the Central Business District would require temporary lane closures, as well as temporary sidewalk closures. There would be a need for extra coordination efforts with the business community.

6.3.2.9.6 Major Intersection Re-Alignments
Intersection realignments at key intersections, such as Siler/Los Pandos, NM 68/Camino de la Placita, NM 68/US 64, and US 64/Camino del Paseo del Pueblo Norte would likely require significant traffic control efforts to complete improvements. Temporary and extended lane closures are anticipated.

6.3.2.9.7 Traffic Roundabouts
Ease of construction for traffic roundabouts would be similar to major intersection re-alignments as described above.

6.3.2.9.8 Drainage Improvements and Spring Ditch
Storm drain improvements would have a significant impact on the ease of construction, as it would require major excavations and extended lane closures.

6.3.2.9.9 Off-Street Parking and Wayfinding
The construction of off-street parking lots would not have a significant impact on traffic operations, and could therefore be easily constructed.

6.3.2.9.10 Landscaping Improvements
The incorporation of landscaping improvements would have a minimal impact on traffic control; improvements can be made as a part of the roadway construction and with one-lane closures for roadside areas.

6.3.2.10 Costs
The range of Construction costs for the major alternatives considered for this corridor would range from high to low as follows:
- Alternative 3
- Alternative 2 & 2a (Similar costs)
- Alternative 1

Roadway costs for Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would be higher than Alternative 1 due to roadway widening and reconstruction required between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita-Quesnel, as well as storm drain improvements, repaving, and the need for additional traffic signals.

Costs for alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would increase with the addition of any of the following items:
- Major Intersection Realignments or Roundabout construction
- Downtown Road Diet improvements
- Water quality remediation
- Landscaping improvements
- Off-street parking improvements

Table 6.6 summarizes preliminary cost estimates for each of the above alternatives. Table 6.6 also includes additive costs for additional optional improvements.

6.4.3 Initial Assessment Of Environmental Impacts

6.4.3.1 - Community And Land Use Impacts
Community and land use impacts would be low with Alternative 1, low with Alternative 2, net benefit with Alternative 2a, and moderate with Alternative 3 (see Table 6.7). There was strong community preference for Alternative 2a. With the “one-way pair”, there is local concern that the traffic pattern change would affect the community fabric. The “one-way pair” would require some changes in driving patterns for vehicles entering and exiting businesses and community facilities. Options such as 2-lane cross section, road diet, off-street parking and wayfinding would benefit adjoining land uses by improving conditions for pedestrians and complementing adjoining land uses. The major intersection re-alignments and roundabouts would have negative impacts on adjoining properties.

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<th>Alternative</th>
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Options

- Road Diet Downtown Section
- Major Intersection Re-alignments
- Traffic Roundabouts
- Drainage and Water Quality Improvements
- Wayfinding
- Landscaping

6.4.3.2 - Social Services
Social service impacts would be low with Alternatives 2 and Alternative 2a, and moderate with Alternative 3 (see Table 6.8). There would be a net benefit with Alternative 1. Signal and intersection improvements would likely reduce emergency vehicle response times slightly. The “one-way pair” may require some rerouting of some emergency vehicle traffic, but emergency response times may decrease because of reduced traffic congestion. The “one-way pair” would also require some adjustments to school bus routes and parents traveling to Enos Garcia Elementary and the Taos Cyber Magnet schools. The 2-lane cross-section and road diet with pedestrian and bicycle facilities would provide safer conditions for students to walk or ride a bike to school and for tourists to walk through Downtown Taos. The off-street parking option would provide more parking opportunities for clients visiting social service facilities. The remaining options would have a low impact on social services.
## Table 6.6
NM/US 64, La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita
Conceptual Cost Estimate

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<th>Alternative 1</th>
<th>Alternative 2</th>
<th>Alternative 2a</th>
<th>Alternative 3</th>
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<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$325,000</td>
<td>$75,000</td>
<td>$325,000</td>
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<td>$325,000</td>
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<td><strong>Sub-total Construction Engineering</strong></td>
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<td>$1,582,604</td>
<td>$360,220</td>
<td>$1,582,604</td>
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<td>Gross Receipts Taxes (8.1875%)</td>
<td>$323,866</td>
<td>$138,519</td>
<td>$596,107</td>
<td>$143,185</td>
<td>$596,107</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total GRT Costs</strong></td>
<td>$323,866</td>
<td>$138,519</td>
<td>$596,107</td>
<td>$143,185</td>
<td>$596,107</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Totals</strong></td>
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<td>$1,830,339</td>
<td>$7,876,730</td>
<td>$1,892,005</td>
<td>$7,876,730</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Totals</strong></td>
<td>$6,109,785</td>
<td>$5,798,735</td>
<td>$11,743,000</td>
<td>$3,781,370</td>
<td>$11,743,000</td>
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</table>

**Additional Costs (Includes 20% Contingencies)**
- Downtown Improvements - Curb/SW Repairs, Re-stripping, Signing
- Intersection Re-Alignment @ Siler/Los Fandos
- Intersection Improvements @ Camino de la Placita/Quensal
- Intersection Improvements NM 68/US 64
- Intersection Improvements @ Camino del Pueblo Norte
- Right-of-Way Acquisition - Roadway Widening & Intersection Geometrics
- Water Quality Improvements and Spring Ditch
- Pavement Reconstruction - Camino de la Placita/Quensal to US 64
- Pavement Rehabilitation - US 64 to Camino de la Placita/Rivali Lane
- Streetscape/Native Landscaping Improvements - La Posta to Siler

**Sub-total** $3,662,993

**Gross Receipt Taxes (8.1875%)** $390,908

**Total Other Project Costs** $3,953,900

**Use** $3,953,900
### 6.4.3.3 - Local Economy

NM 68 and US 64 play an important role in the local economy by providing access to local businesses and community facilities. Economic impacts would be low with Alternative 3 and have a net benefit with Alternatives 1, 2, and 2a (see Table 6.9). The one-way pair option would provide the greatest traffic improvement and improve traffic flow through Downtown Taos. Some business owners are concerned that the one-way pair will negatively affect the character of Downtown Taos by reducing pedestrian traffic. In contrast, comments from other business owners have indicated concerns that traffic congestion leaves a negative impact on visitors to Taos. They believe that traffic congestion is too be expected and Taos visitors should be encouraged to park their cars and walk through the downtown Taos area. Many visitors are surprised that a small community like Taos experiences such traffic congestion. Most options would benefit the local economy by improving pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicle transportation. There would be improved access to local businesses. Drainage and water quality improvements would have no impact on the economy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Net Benefit</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Low Impact</th>
<th>Moderate Impact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alternative 1 – Coordinated Signal System</td>
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### 6.4.3.4 - Air Quality Impacts

Although air quality in Taos is good, maintaining traffic flow and reducing the number of idling vehicles can help improve air quality. Reducing traffic congestion and idling vehicles at intersections, such as NM 68/US 64, would result in minor improvements to air quality. Dust control measures would be needed during construction. By reducing traffic congestion and idling vehicles the four alternatives as well as roundabouts and major intersection re-alignments would result in slight, net benefits to air quality (see Table 6.10). The road diet and two-lane cross-section options would have low air quality impacts because increases in idling vehicles are possible.

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<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Net Benefit</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
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### 6.4.3.5 Noise Impacts

Keeping vehicle speeds at 25 to 35 mph in the corridor will ensure that noise levels do not increase substantially. Keeping traffic speeds to 35 mph or less is the best option for limiting noise impacts. The Alternatives and most options would have low noise impacts. Alternatives 2 and 3 would add travel lanes. These alternatives would likely result in a Type I classification under Infrastructure Design Directive, IID-2011-02, which would require a noise analysis and consideration of noise abatement measures. Traffic on Camino de la Placita is not expected to increase because NM 68 and US 64 are developed urban corridors with numerous driveways, streets and business frontages, noise walls are not a feasible option since any wall would have numerous openings. See Table 6.11.
### Table 6.11 Noise Use Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Net Benefit</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Low Impact</th>
<th>Moderate Impact</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Options
- Road Diet Downtown Section
- Major Intersection Re-alignments
- Traffic Roundabouts
- Drainage and Water Quality Improvements
- Wayfinding
- Landscaping

### 6.4.3.6 - Hazardous Materials Impacts
Further investigations will be needed to determine if there are any hazardous materials sites along NM 68 and US 64. Existing and historic services stations may have caused some impacts. An Initial Site Assessment (ISA) will be conducted to determine the extent, if any, of soil and groundwater contamination in the study area.

### 6.4.3.7 - Soil Impacts
Roadway reconstruction would disturb the terrain and soils along the corridor. Measures would need to be implemented to minimize soil erosion and sediment transport during construction. At the completion of construction, soil erosion would be reduced because a greater proportion of the corridor would be covered with hard surfaces.

### 6.4.3.8 - Impacts To Vegetation
Since there are no large areas of native vegetation in the project area, vegetation impacts would be minor. Alternative 1 and most of the options would have moderate vegetation impacts. The roundabout and drainage/water quality improvements would also have moderate vegetation impacts. Disturbed areas would be reseeded with native vegetation at the completion of construction. See Table 6.12

### Table 6.12 Vegetation Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Net Benefit</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
<th>Low Impact</th>
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</table>

### Options
- Road Diet Downtown Section
- Major Intersection Re-alignments
- Traffic Roundabouts
- Drainage and Water Quality Improvements
- Wayfinding
- Landscaping

### 6.4.3.9 - Noxious Weeds
No large-scale noxious weed infestations occur in the study area. If located, isolated areas of noxious weeds would be easily controlled.

### 6.4.3.10 - Wetlands And Riparian Habitat
The project could potentially impact wetlands along the Rio Fernando de Taos as well as along an unnamed drainage that flows under La Posta Road at the southern end of the study area. Wetlands impacts would depend on any roadway widening or drainage improvements constructed near this waterway. If the biological survey determines that wetlands are present at these locations and would be impacted by construction activities, wetland delineations would be conducted, and a wetland mitigation plan would be prepared. A Section 404 permit under the Clean Water Act would be obtained from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

### 6.4.3.11 - Wildlife
Wildlife impacts would be few because of the absence of wildlife habitat. Alternative 1 and the options would have low wildlife impacts. Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would have moderate wildlife impacts. The roundabout and drainage/water quality improvements would also have moderate wildlife impacts. The alternatives and options would have low wildlife impacts. The main habitat area is the riparian vegetation along the Rio Fernando de Taos. Migratory birds are the primary wildlife issue in the study area. Potential migratory bird nest sites occur in trees along the Rio Fernando de Taos and ornamental trees growing in various areas near the corridor. Tree cutting and clearing should occur outside the migratory bird nesting season (March-September) or preconstruction surveys for migratory birds would be needed. See Table 6.13.

### Table 6.13 Wildlife Impacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
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<th>No Impact</th>
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</table>

### Options
- Road Diet Downtown Section
- Major Intersection Re-alignments
- Traffic Roundabouts
- Drainage and Water Quality Improvements
- Wayfinding
- Landscaping
6.4.3.12 - Rare, Threatened, Endangered, And Other Target Species
A biological survey will be conducted to determine if the project has the potential to impact three species in riparian areas along the Rio Fernando de Taos. No protected species are expected to occur in other portions of the study area.

The Yellow-Billed Cuckoo could utilize the Rio Fernando de Taos, but due to the level of development in the area, this is unlikely. However, surveys should be conducted for this species prior to construction.

Southwestern Willow Flycatcher could utilize the Rio Fernando de Taos further downstream from the study area, but this area is not ideal habitat for the flycatcher. Surveys may be warranted to determine the quality of existing habitat.

The New Mexico Meadow Jumping Mouse potentially could occur in meadows adjacent to the Rio Fernando de Taos. Field surveys may be warranted to determine if these meadows are in fact wet-meadows appropriate for this rodent. If so, a species specific survey, including trapping, may be required to determine the presence or absence of the jumping mouse.

6.4.3.13 - Floodplains
One 100-year floodplain area may be affected by proposed roadway improvement in the vicinity of the Rio Fernando de Taos. The project would not modify this floodplain or increase the flooding risk to any adjoining properties. Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 would have some work within the floodplains with low impacts, but the overall limits of the floodplain would not change.

6.4.3.14 - Water Quality
Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 and the roundabout option would increase the amount of impervious surface with moderate impact to water quality (see Table 6.14). Drainage and water quality improvements would benefit water quality. Water quality in the Spring Ditch would be noticeably improved. Alternative 1 and other options would have low impact to water quality.

Construction activity would be the main source of water quality impacts with the potential for soil erosion and sediment transport. The construction contractor would obtain coverage under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit (CGP). The construction contractor would prepare a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the project area. The SWPPP would describe Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be installed and maintained both during construction and after construction to prevent, to the extent practicable, pollutants in storm water from entering waters of the U.S. Permanent stabilization measures and permanent storm water management measures would be implemented to minimize pollutants from entering waters of the U.S.

A Section 404 permit through the USACE and Section 401 water quality certification through the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) would be needed if project activities affected any wetlands or jurisdictional waters associated with the Rio Fernando de Taos or the drainage under La Posta Road. A Section 404 Nationwide Permit 14 (which includes the water quality certification) could be used if impacts were less than ½ acre.

6.4.3.15 - Visual Resources.
Roadway, sidewalk, and intersection improvements would result in modifications to the visual environment. Alternative 1 would have no impact to visual resources (see Table 6.15). Alternatives 2, 3, and intersection realignments, and roundabouts would modify the streetscape appearance with high impact. These modifications would be a readily observable change. Alternative 2a is the preferred alternative by the public because the visual modifications better fit the context of Taos. Artwork and landscaping could be incorporated into the roundabouts, which would result in a different, but possibly improved, visual appearance at those intersections. The other options would have low level visual impacts. Final plans would need to incorporate color and design features to ensure that the improvements fit within the Taos context. Trees and landscaping would offer opportunities for visual enhancement.
6.4.3.16 - Farmland

The study area contains soils classified as Prime Farmland if Irrigated and Farmland of Statewide Importance. None of these soils are currently used as farmland, and there are no plans to convert any of these soils back to farmland. Proposed improvements would not take any currently cultivated farmland out of production.

6.4.3.17 - Cultural Resources

A cultural resource survey will be conducted to identify historic buildings and archaeological sites along NM 68 and US 64. The presence of the Downtown Taos Historic District and several historic buildings merits special attention. The cultural resource survey would evaluate potential impacts to the district and historic buildings. Proposed improvements will require State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) review. The addition of sidewalks in front of portals is expected to be a major issue. Use of low vibratory construction methods will be required near historic buildings.

Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 with the four-lane roadways and the intersection re-alignment and roundabout options have the potential for moderate cultural resource impacts (see Table 6.16). These options and alternatives may impact historic structures along the roadway. In addition, these alternatives and options would affect the visual appearance of the roadway compared with the historic appearance of the roadway. The water quality improvement option may impact Spring Ditch, which is a historic acequia. Construction of off-street parking has the potential to affect archaeological sites and historic buildings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative</th>
<th>Net Benefit</th>
<th>No Impact</th>
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<tr>
<td>Options</td>
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<td>Road Diet Downtown Section</td>
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<td>Major Intersection Re-alignments</td>
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<td>Traffic Roundabouts</td>
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6.4.3.18 - Section 4(f)

Historic buildings near the study area are potential Section 4(f) properties. Several historic buildings are located along NM 68 and US 64. In addition, the Taos Downtown Historic District occupies portions of the project area near the NM 68/US 64 intersection. The area of highest density of historic properties is located between Quesnel and Martyr’s Lane. The roadway is especially narrow between Quesnel and Kit Carson Road. To provide ADA improvements, sidewalk improvements would be constructed in front of historic buildings. Such actions may constitute a “use”. The cultural resource survey will provide more information on these buildings. Once proposed improvements are further developed, project impacts to the park and historic buildings will need to be reviewed to determine if they are Section 4(f) impacts.

Due to the potential for Alternative 2, 2a, and 3 to affect 4(f) National Register of Historic Properties eligible historic properties, an evaluation will be conducted to determine if the proposed improvements constitute a “use” of the properties. If the properties are determined to be a “use”, appropriate Section 4 (f) approval and mitigation options will be determined.
7.0 CHAPTER 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The objective of Phase 1B, Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives, was to further evaluate and refine the alternatives advanced from Phase 1A, Initial Evaluation of Alternatives. These alternatives are consistent with the needs identified in Phase 1A.

Table 7.1 provides a summary of the Alternatives considered. Alternatives 2, 2a, and 3 reflect the inclusion of other recommended improvements, including:

- Road diets through downtown
- Major intersection improvements
- Drainage improvements
- Pavement reconstruction/rehabilitation
- Landscaping

Table 7.2, Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Matrix, provides a summary of the findings for the alternatives considered. Table 7.2 also addresses additional options considered.

A Project Management Team (PMT) meeting was held on April 5, 2016 to review the findings of the Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives. A follow-up PMT meeting was held on June 10, 2016 to review the Draft Phase 1B Report and to discuss additional public input received at and in response to the public meetings. Based on the needs identified, the detailed evaluation of Engineering and Environmental factors, and taking into account Stakeholder input, the PMT made specific recommendations on which alternative(s) to advance into Phase 1C.

The following specific recommendations were made as follows:

1. The No-Build Alternative is viable, but does not appear to be a prudent option. The No-Build Alternative does not address the needs identified in the Alignment Study, and is not consistent with the objectives of this project.
2. Alternative 1 would improve traffic operations, but does not address all the major factors identified in the Purpose and Need for this project, including the need for pedestrian and bicycle facilities, drainage improvements, corridor enhancements, and pavement needs. This alternative is therefore not recommended for advancement into Phase 1C.
3. Alternative 2 would improve traffic operations and addresses needed physical improvements, including increased traffic capacity, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, drainage improvements, corridor enhancements, and pavement needs. This alternative received favorable stakeholder support and the support of the Town of Taos Council, however there was significant public response regarding concerns with the loss of a two-way left-turn lane between south of Los Pandos to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel.
4. Alternative 2a would improve traffic operations and addresses needed physical improvements, including increased traffic capacity, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, drainage improvements, corridor enhancements, and pavement needs. This alternative received much more public support as it provides for a left-turn lane facility through the entire limits of La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel. In addition, this alternative provides sufficient roadway width between south of Los Pandos to Quesnel to provide for future restriping to 4-lanes if additional capacity is required. This alternative is therefore recommended for advancement into Phase 1C as the “Preferred Alternative.”
5. Alternative 3 provides a lot of the same benefits as Alternatives 2 and 2a, including slightly better improvements in traffic operations. However, this alternative received mixed public support, as there are continued concerns about potential impacts to the business community, as well as the need for circutous travel. This Alternative is also the most costly and would require additional signalization on Camino de la Placita. While this Alternative has merit, it is not recommended for advancement into Phase 1C.
6. The Road Diet through the Downtown area would result in significant benefits to pedestrians and bicyclists. This option is recommended for advancement into Phase 1C as a part of Alternative 2a.
7. The geometric re-alignment of the Major intersections on this corridor would result in a number of benefits including improved traffic operations and safety. At Albright Street, a new traffic signal is recommended. At the Silier/Los Pandos intersection, the realignment of Los Pandos Road is recommended. At the Paseo del Pueblo Norte intersection, major re-alignment and signalization is recommended. These improvements are recommended for advancement into Phase 1C as a part of Alternative 2a.
8. Traffic roundabout improvements could provide for improved traffic operations at the two intersections assessed, however these would result in significant right-of-way impacts. Therefore traffic roundabouts are not recommended for advancement into Phase 1C.
9. Drainage and water quality improvements would provide significant benefits for drainage management and improved water quality at the Spring Ditch. This option is recommended for advancement into Phase 1C, as a part of Alternative 2a.
10. Roadway enhancements, including Landscaping along NM 68 and US 64 would greatly enhance the visuals of the corridor. This option had significant public support and is recommended for advancement into Phase 1C. However, due to funding limitations, improvements may have to be phased. Limited improvements (based on budget limitations) are recommended as a part of Alternative 2a.
11. Off-street parking and Wayfinding would provide benefits to traffic operations and the local economy. The PMT is in support of this option, however the acquisition of right-of-way and construction of off-street facilities is a local responsibility. It is recommended that the Town of Taos and the NMDOT continue to work together on these efforts, and that these efforts be closely coordinated with the business community. Wayfinding (signing) will be incorporated into the final project design; coordination efforts with Town of Taos staff will take place to determine the most beneficial locations for placement.

Table 7.3 summarizes the Preferred Alternative by segment.

7.2 Project Phasing Plan

Due to the significant number of needs identified as a part of the Alignment Study, and considering budgetary constraints, recommended improvements will have to be phased. The following phasing plan is recommended:

1. Signal coordination of the entire project limits. Consideration of an adaptive signal system should be considered. Extending signal coordination south to NM 518 is also recommended.
2. Roadway reconstruction between La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita/Quesnel, to include signalization at Albright, storm sewers, raised medians where they can be accommodated, pavement reconstruction, bike lanes, and sidewalks. In addition, realignment of the Silier/Los Pandas, and Camino de la Placita/Quesnel intersections are recommended.
3. Road diet between Camino de la Placita/Quesnel to Martyr’s Lane, to include sidewalk reconstruction, pavement reconstruction, and shared bicycle lanes. In addition, improvements at the intersection of NM 68/US 64 are recommended.
4. Improvements from Martyr’s Lane to Rivali Lane to include pavement rehabilitation, sidewalk improvements, and bulb-outs at mid-block crossings. In addition, improvements at the intersection of NM 68/ Camino del Paseo Pueblo/Montecito Lane are recommended.
### Table 7.1
**NM 68/US 64 IN TAOS - ALTERNATIVES FEATURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment Map</th>
<th>Design Features</th>
<th>Alternative 1</th>
<th>*Alternative 2</th>
<th>*Alternative 2a</th>
<th>*Alternative 3</th>
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<td><strong>La Posta to Quesnel</strong></td>
<td><strong>Signal Coordination</strong></td>
<td>Yes + Addl. @ Albright</td>
<td>Yes + Addl. @ Albright</td>
<td>Yes + Addl. @ Albright</td>
<td>Yes + Addl. @ Albright</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bike Lanes</strong></td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Number of Lanes</strong></td>
<td>Remains 2 + Lt. Turn</td>
<td>4-Lanes + Lt. Turn</td>
<td>Comb. 4-Lanes &amp; 2-Lanes + Lt. Turn</td>
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*Note: Includes Additional Improvements.*
### Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Decision Matrix

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<th>Alternative 2a: Signal Coordination + Combination 4-Lane &amp; 2-Lane Improvements</th>
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### Table 7.3
**NM 68/US 64 IN TAOS - ALTERNATIVES FEATURES**

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<td><strong>Sidewalks</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bike Lanes</strong></td>
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REFERENCES

Corridor Alignment Study Report, NM68/US64 in Taos, La Plata Road to Camino de la Placitas, Phase 1A Initial Evaluation of Alternatives, June, 2014

Public Involvement and Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) Plan for NM 68 – US 64 between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita, September, 2013


USEPA. 2016. Green Book, Nonattainment Status for Each County by Year for New Mexico. Washington, DC

USEPA. Website viewed on March 28, 2016: https://www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbk/.
APPENDIX A

Public Involvement Meeting Summaries
On April 28 NM DoT and SMA made a public presentation in Taos on the alternatives being recommended for Phase B. While the vast majority of the recommendations are consistent with the preferences of the Town, the public and the stakeholders, there are a few areas we would like to ask NM DoT to re-examine, some options presented that we would like to reinforce, and some that we would like to partner on with NM DoT.

The areas of concern are as follows:

Improvements proposed by NM DoT in Alternative #2 of the NM DoT NM 68/US 64 Corridor Study and supported by the Town:

(a.) The upgrading and/or installation of synchronized lighting at all intersections along the Paseo del Pueblo corridor.
(b.) Widening of Paseo del Pueblo Sur to 4 lanes between Rt. 518 and Camino de la Placita/Queens, with a turn lane north from La Posta onto Paseo del Pueblo Sur.
(c.) Installation of a signalized intersection with all indicated turn lanes at Albright Street.
(d.) A typical roadway section that would include sidewalks and bike lanes on both the northbound and southbound side of Paseo del Pueblo throughout the length of the project area.

Improvements examined by NM DoT in the NM 68/US 64 Corridor Study and requested by the Town to be included in the project design and implementation.

(a.) Realignment of the Siler/Los Pando and Paseo del Pueblo intersection and the installation of a traffic circle at this location for the purpose of creating a gateway and calming traffic before entering the State recognized downtown Historic District.
(b.) The installation of medians for as much of the study area as feasible from La Posta Road north to the intersection of Camino de la Placitas, Queens Rd. and Rt. 68 to better control turn movements, improve public safety, enhance traffic flow, improve the aesthetics of a 4-lane highway through a historic community, and to help create traffic calming.
(c.) The design and installation of historic lighting from Siler/Los Pando to Camino de la Placita on Paseo del Pueblo Sur at minimum, and ideally throughout the Historic District.
(d.) Pedestrian "bump outs" at all high impact pedestrian crossings on Paseo del Pueblo.
(e.) Allow for the future installation of landscaping in the medians and on both sides of Paseo del Pueblo for the length of the project area within the NM DoT right-of-way. The Town realizes that the future maintenance of such landscaping would be the responsibility and at the cost of the Town.
(f.) Where the right-of-way permits, that NM DoT examine the potential for moving the bike lane(s) off the roadway and/or moving the sidewalks as far back from the roadway as possible to increase the year-round safety and use of these features.
(g.) The Town asks that NM DoT allow for the potential of a matching traffic circle at the northern gateway to the Taos Historic District and the northern terminus of this project, at the intersection of Paseo del Pueblo Norte, Rivalli Lane and Camino de la Placita.
(h.) To increase vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian safety, reducing the incidents and severity of conflicts by defining and limiting (consolidating and reducing) approved highway access points along the project route on Paseo del Pueblo.
(i.) In our meeting with the Taos Pueblo this week, the Pueblo government expressed a willingness (and perhaps a desire) to discuss with the Town and NM DoT consolidating several small parcels of land it oversees bordering or in close proximity to the Paseo del Pueblo Sur, Camino de la
Placitas, Quesnel intersection, which might allow for that intersection to be made safer and more functional, especially if Option 3 of the corridor study (paired one-ways) is not implemented and that intersection becomes the point where 2 sidewalks, 2 bike lanes and 4 lanes of traffic must be merged into two vehicle lanes.

While we are requesting a very ambitious list of added or modified adjustments to the project design, the Town of Taos recognizes that NM DoT is already short $2.6 million to complete the minimal improvements envisioned by NM DoT to Paseo del Pueblo within the project area.

The Town also realizes that the cost of additional improvements for Alternative #3, the inclusion of paired one-ways on Paseo del Pueblo and Camino de la Placita, in the northermmost section of the project, would cost an additional $1.9 million that NM DoT has not yet identified for the project.

The Town, therefore, requests and seeks the support of NM DoT during this process that should any additional funding become available or earmarked for this project, that those funds first be allocated to completing the improvements to Paseo del Pueblo, as identified by NM DoT in Alternative #2, and requested by the Town, above.

However, despite the fiscal uncertainty going forward and the minimal design that would be required for Option #3, we request that Alternative #3 remain within the project scope for purposes of design and possible future funding considerations, and support of Council.

We do not want to lose the opportunity for the Town and NM DoT to examine the potential for this option in the future.

We would also; consistent with the above, request that no design or capital construction be made during the Paseo del Pueblo phase that would eliminate future consideration of this option.

Additionally, the Town of Taos realizes that the benefit of improvements made by NM DoT can best be maximized by the Town agreeing to aggressively increase downtown off-street parking opportunities in the Albright to Siler, Siler to Camino de la Placita and Camino de la Placita to Tovani Lane sections of the project area.

Further, that improvements and expansion of pedestrian and cycling opportunities through sidewalk repair and expansion, as well as linking bike lanes on Town side streets are similarly critical to the effectiveness of the State’s investment and the Town of Taos is committed to both an immediate and long-term capital improvements and maintenance program to achieve these objectives in partnership with the State.

The Town would like to engage with yourself, your staff and Souder Miller and Associates, as the project design team, as soon as possible to examine how and to what extent the Town and NM DoT can partner to address all of the above priorities that we have listed.

Again, I would like to express our appreciation to yourself, NM DoT and the Governor for your continued and substantial support of our community and our transportation needs throughout this process.

We look forward to continuing with this dialogue so that we may further discuss options for the Town of Taos becoming a partner in this project.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or our Town Manager at any time on this or any other matter. I can be reached at dbarrone@taosgov.com or (575) 751-2002 and Mr. Bellis may be reached at (575) 751-2002 or rbellis@taosgov.com.

Enclosed for your convenience is the NM 68/US 64 Corridor Study Project Meeting handout presented at the Public Information Meeting on April 28, 2016 that we are referring to in this letter.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Daniel R. Barrone
Mayor

CC: Governor Susanna Martinez
Taos Town Council
Taos County Commission
Taos Pueblo
Public Information Meeting
Thursday, April 28, 2016
Taos Council Chambers
Taos, New Mexico

Agenda
Open House: 6:00 pm
Presentation: 6:15 pm
Comments and Questions: * 7:00 pm
* Please show numbered card and state number when asking questions or giving comments.

Meeting Handout

Project Summary: The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is conducting a corridor study for NM 68 and US 64 in Taos, New Mexico. The corridor study includes Paseo del Pueblo from La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita.

Public Meeting Purpose: To present findings of the Phase 1B Corridor Study.

Recommended Preferred Alternative: Proposed Alternative 2, Signal Coordination and Roadway Widening of Paseo del Pueblo from La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita/Querenz, has been selected and includes the following:
- Road reconstruction and widening of Pueblo de Sur from 3-lanes to 4-lanes between La Posta Road and Camino de la Placita/Querenz
- Road realignment and pavement reconstruction of 2-lane road from Camino de la Placita/Querenz to Martyr’s Lane
- Pavement rehabilitation of 2-lane road from Martyr’s Lane to Camino de la Placita/Ravel Lane
- Realignment of major intersections in this corridor
- Traffic signal coordination
- Construction of new sidewalks and repair of existing sidewalks
- Access management
- Mid-block pedestrian crossings north of Martyr’s Lane
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) enhancements
- Addition of bike lane and/or bike-share lanes
- Drainage improvements
- Potential enhancements, such as landscaping

NM 68/US 64 in Taos - ALTERNATIVES FEATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment Map</th>
<th>Design Features</th>
<th>Alternative 1</th>
<th>*Alternative 2 (Preferred)</th>
<th>*Alternative 2a</th>
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<td>Yes, south of Los Pillos</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Limited</td>
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</table>

Querenz to Martyr’s Lane

| **Signal Coordination** | Yes = Add; on Placita | Yes = Add; on Placita | Yes = Add; on Placita | Yes = Add; on Placita | Yes = Add; on Placita |
| Sidewalks | No | Widen Sidewalks | Widen Sidewalks | Widen Sidewalks | Widen Sidewalks |
| Bike lanes | No | Shared Lane | Shared Lane | Shared Lane | Shared Lane |
| Number of Lanes | 3-lane | 2-lane | 2-lane | 2-lane | 2-lane |
| Advanced Medians | No | Spot | Spot | Spot | Spot |
| Drainage Improvements | No | Spot Improvements | Spot Improvements | Spot Improvements | Spot Improvements |
| Intersection Improvements | No | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ADA Improvements | Limited | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Pavement Rehab | No | Reconstruction & Rehabilitation | Reconstruction & Rehabilitation | Reconstruction & Rehabilitation | Reconstruction & Rehabilitation |
| Landscaping Infrastructure | No | No | No | No | No |

Martyr’s Lane to Ritual

| **Signal Coordination** | Yes = Signals on Placita | Yes = Signals on Placita | Yes = Signals on Placita | Yes = Signals on Placita | Yes = Signals on Placita |
| Sidewalks | Limited | Limited, repair as required | Limited, repair as required | Limited, repair as required | Limited, repair as required |
| Bike lanes | Yes to Remain | Yes to Remain | Yes to Remain | Yes to Remain | Yes to Remain |
| Number of Lanes | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Advanced Medians | No | Spot Improvements | Spot Improvements | Spot Improvements | Spot Improvements |
| Drainage Improvements | No | Limited | Limited | Limited | Limited |
| Intersection Improvements | Limited | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| ADA Improvements | Limited | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Pavement Rehab | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Landscaping Infrastructure | No | Mid-Rise Crossing Ramps & Gateway Treatment Taos Pueblo | Mid-Rise Crossing Ramps & Gateway Treatment Taos Pueblo | Mid-Rise Crossing Ramps & Gateway Treatment Taos Pueblo | Mid-Rise Crossing Ramps & Gateway Treatment Taos Pueblo |

*Includes design options
**Meeting Summary**

Local Government Stakeholders Meeting  
NM 68/US 64 Corridor Study – Phase 1-B  
February 24, 2016, 1:00 pm  
Town of Taos Council Chambers

Meeting Announced in: The Taos News  
Dates announced: 02/18/2016 as a Legal Ad  
Mail outs sent: 02/12/2016 to 109 addresses

Twenty-eight stakeholders attended the meeting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer Mullins</td>
<td>NMDOT</td>
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<tr>
<td>George Herrera</td>
<td>Souder Miller</td>
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<td>Antonio Jaramillo</td>
<td>NMDOT</td>
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<td>Jennifer Mullins</td>
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<td>Richard Peña</td>
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<td>George Herrera</td>
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<td>Matthew Nighbert</td>
<td>Souder Miller</td>
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<td>Eric Hawton</td>
<td>Souder Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eric Johnson</td>
<td>Marron and Associates</td>
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<td>Phillip Alexander</td>
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<td>Karen Sanderson</td>
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<td>Jake Caldwell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Bryan Jones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fritz Hahn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Robinson</td>
<td>PO Box 3111, Taos, NM 8757 <a href="mailto:flyng.orter@live.com">flyng.orter@live.com</a></td>
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<td>Dominic Martinez</td>
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<td>Tom Myers</td>
<td>PO Box 3319, Taos NM 8751 <a href="mailto:tom@aglaza.org">tom@aglaza.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Bells</td>
<td>400 Camino de la Placitas, Taos, NM 8751</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Mapes</td>
<td>PO Box 1840, Taos, NM 8751 <a href="mailto:david@deftaos.com">david@deftaos.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Colonius</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ccolonius@gmail.com">ccolonius@gmail.com</a></td>
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The following project team member were present:
- Antonio Jaramillo, NMDOT
- Jennifer Mullins, NMDOT
- Richard Peña, NMDOT
- George Herrera, Souder Miller
- Matthew Nighbert, Souder Miller
- Eric Hawton, Souder Miller
- Eric Johnson, Marron and Associates

**Presentation**

George Herrera and Matthew Nighbert discussed the project. Topics covered included project history, project development process, alternatives, other recommendations, traffic operations, parking and pedestrian issues, signal coordination, intersection improvements, drainage and Spring Ditch, right-of-way, utilities, current schedule, and project funding.

**Question and Answer Session**

*(Project team responses are in italics)*

Tom Myers: I note that you use small compact cars in your renderings. A lot of the traffic on these roads are big trucks, anchors, cement trucks, delivery trucks to Randall’s. How are those vehicles going to be considered when you make a decision between four lanes, three lanes, the width? Particularly if you’ve got heavy vehicles coming out of Randall’s that need to go south. How is that going to be addressed there?

Tom Myers: Several years ago the issue of the one way on Paséo del Pueblo Norte and Placitas was addressed. And the businesses along Paséo del Pueblo Norte had a resounding no to a one way going north on Paséo del Pueblo Norte, as well as south on Placitas. So you are going to address those issues with the businesses? To make sure that they’re not going to lose business? Because they are not going to get the same volume of traffic if it’s one way instead of two ways.

Tom Myers: And I also note that you are taking into consideration the spring ditch, and I thank you for that. I am a commissioner on the Taos Valley Acequia Association, and the water issue is huge. Which also includes, which I didn’t see in here, any considerations for the possibility of (not audible) moving across the street. With the acequia de Madre el Pueblo running through the pastures that are being considered for development. I was wondering if you could address making sure the acequias are not damaged. As far as trucks go, these are renderings, and the lane width will be wide enough to accommodate trucks, and at the intersections we will make sure that trucks can make those turns.

As far as the water quality issues that you mentioned, we have met with owner of the spring ditch already, and we are looking some potential to address some water quality issues. We are working closely with them, and we will continue to do so. And we will be identifying alternatives.
Nothing has been decided here. We have identified three alternatives, going through the Phase A process. Pretty much everyone was in favor of Alternative 2. We didn’t see a lot of opposition to that, but when it came to the one way pair, it was kind of a mixed reaction. Essentially we want to come up with something that addresses all the issues, but at the same time, we want to make sure it is something that fits in with the community. Nothing has been decided. I know we have gotten some comments, some emails. And that’s why we are here today, to take comments. It’s a process, and going through the process we will consider all the comments.

Paul Jones: I have a few questions. Is the report from Phase A available on the website?

Yes, it is on the NMDOT website.

Paul Jones: Second, this is just for my information. What’s the Right of Way? What’s the formula? When you say right-of-way, is it 25 feet from centerline? What does that mean? Right-of-way?

Right-of-way means, well it varies. It is pretty much center, closer to Costa is narrows down to about 60 feet, and closer to Quecnel down to about 40 feet, and then past the Rio Grande, opens up again to about 60 feet. So basically, that’s what we have to work with.

Paul Jones: Last question, I don’t see anything about landscaping in this whole plan? I missed the first meeting and you said you were going to address it in Phase B?

As I mentioned earlier, the project started as traffic congestion, and I think as the project evolves and actual further recommendations get made, this is where we are going to recommend this is when those kind of things can be looked at. It would have to be of course worked directly with the town, to get cooperative agreements to make sure that it gets maintained. So it is something that could be incorporated. Right now, it is not part of the project, part of the estimates.

Paul Jones: Is there budget money for landscaping?

Not at this time.

That’s something that we certainly can look into, but what we currently looking at with the amount of money that George showed on his project. We are really pushing that to meet the length of the project. So we want to focus our funds on the length of the roadway and the ADA improvements. Landscaping is, I don’t want to say it’s not necessary, it’s something that we would like to add and could potentially if we find additional money we could add it to this project, but as of right now there’s no money available for that.

Paul Jones: The last question I have. In Colorado they do a lot of rainwater harvesting when they are building roads. Are you taking that into consideration when you are talking about curbs and gutters?

We haven’t gotten to that point yet. I know on some of the alternative we are looking at with the Spring Ditch. We are looking at some potential ponds for separation that could potentially be used. But I am trying to get actual design when those options are a lot closer.

Tom Myers: It was stated a couple of weeks ago at a meeting about the cows pasture that 52 percent of the Taos County lives in poverty. I am wondering if it were mandated in any way about hiring a certain percentage of locals to do a lot of the work? We have a lot of skilled workers in this town and would be good to see if a large percentage of that work could come from our locals rather than shipping people from out of state or out of town?

That would be dependent upon the contractor. So whoever is the contractor selected, we can definitely, there are some goals that could be set aside for the contractor. And the contract, that we would have with them to allow for that. But sometimes with the contractor, they have specific people that they work with. But there are certain technical that we can incorporate into the contract to allow them to use local forces.

Stacey McGuire: I am just wondering if you could, two parts: First, if you could speak a little bit to the public transit accommodations that have been included in this? Bus pull outs? Bus stops? Stuff like that along the corridor. And I just want to reiterate the concern about trucks, large buses, and RVs and turning radii at intersections and while pulling out of businesses.

So far the issues have identified the transit stops that I think there are. Someone tell me if they are wrong and I’ll update it. Right now we don’t have provisions for bus stops. That is something they would work out in design. And we can make sure we put something in there to say, these are the stops. So work with the transit to figure out what’s necessary under the new requirements, you have to have eight feet from the face of curb to the back of the stop and all those types of bells and whistles. So when those new stops come in, that’s where we have to look at the location of those. And as far as the truck turning radius, and buses and other large vehicles, I went through some extensive stuff, just even on the existing. I took the existing intersection of NM 68 and US 64. You know, most trucks aren’t going to be able to make that left hand turn from south to east. They just drag all over the island. And I believe, I haven’t seen anything, but I think the truck route actually takes them down NM 68 and then to NM 518? And that’s actually the truck route, so it’s straight through because they can’t make that left hand turn. I can really only accommodate where there is already and existing accommodation. If there is a building or something already existing in the way, I can’t really improve the turning radius, without saying we need to take out this building. In a lot of these, I have the larger turning radius where the room is available. But if there are limitations for me in the right-of-way or existing structures, then it kind of that’s what’s there. I didn’t make it any worse, but in some areas, I couldn’t make it any better either.

To answer your question about when vehicles pull-out. The coordinated system, and the signal system could potentially allow for gaps. And so it would allow for those large vehicles to make the left turn if it’s necessary. So there is that possibility there as well.

Michael Sayre: What approvals are required from the town?

Well, there’s not necessarily a form of approval. Basically, always when we do projects in a town or city, we definitely want the support of the community.
Michael Sayre: I’m going to be real specific. Before you shift roads to one way routes, is there anything the town has to agree on? Or do you get to do it all by yourselves?

No, because we’re talking about Camino de Placitas is not a state road, so we don’t have control over that.

Jake Caldwell: When it comes to actually picking among the three alternatives, I know that there will be more opportunity for public comment, and more public meetings, but what is the actual decision making process entail? Who makes that decision? And on what basis?

We have what’s called a project study team. A consult team from the Department of Transportation has number of people from different disciplines involved in the team. Federal Highway Administration is part of the team. There is some town representation, and basically they look at the results of what they study is showing. What’s going to work and what’s not going to work. And try and take all those things into consideration. Plus all the input that came from the public and the stakeholders. And basically try and balance those things out to make the decision.

Jake Caldwell: You keep saying they. Who are they? The director of the Department of Transportation? The Governor? Who’s they?

Ultimately the decision will be up to the Department of Transportation, and through the Federal Highway Administration for approval.

Jake Caldwell: But presumably the decision to go ahead will be the DOT? Who is it that makes it? Is it a cabinet member, the Director?

It’s not just one individual. It’s a group of people that is comprised, like George said, in a study team. We have people that work with traffic safety, looking at our bridge, our drainage. Everybody as a collective whole makes that decision.

Jake Caldwell: But that’s not very transparent. Do they vote on it? Is it six people? Twelve people? Who makes the decision?

I am not sure how many people are in the study group. But not one individual is making that decision. Let’s put it that way. It’s a collective group of people that make that decision, and we go forward and we evaluate all the alternatives and the input we have from the public. We take that into consideration, and based off of that, is an alternative that we…

Jake Caldwell: It’s the word we that I keep trying to get out. Who’s we, whose stamp of approval on it? Who is the final guy that does it?

It’s the NMDOT that does it.

Jake Caldwell: And who’s in charge of that? What is the entity? Who are the people? Who is the guy in charge? Who is the guy who decides the bottom line?

Anonymous: It’s ultimately up to the district engineer that we are going to recommend it to, and his name is Paul Brasher. And he is the one that we are going to propose this to, and he is the one that is going to approve it.

Jake Caldwell: OK, that’s what needed to be said first.

Even up to when the recommendation is made in Phase C, those recommendations will be made again, and there will be another opportunity for additional public involvement.

Anonymous: Is our District Representative Roberto Gonzales? Is he included in this? Because we don’t have a transportation infrastructure subcommittee.

Not necessarily, but I have a feeling he does get updates on the projects.

Anonymous: Could you put the roundabouts up on the screen the one at Albright? My question is bottlenecks? If you create, let’s say the five lane alternative, and then the roundabout is, let’s say, just one lane, so issues of bottleneck at the roundabout. That one in particular.

We’ll have to model the roundabout to see how it operates traffic wise, make sure it’s not going to bottleneck. That’s part of the analysis and evaluation process.

I’m sorry, I want to understand your question. If we went with this alternative, the single lane roundabout, it would just go with the two lane. So there is an alternative that just keeps this as a two lane, so we wouldn’t have this with the four lane.

Then what would you have with a four lane?

If we went with that, we would have to have the two lane (roundabout).

Anonymous: It would seem for future growth, we would want, I’m going to call five lanes, two, two and a turn, but then you have to get some right-of-way from something else. So I am kind of hearing that we’re going to go with three lanes? I’m trying to get to, it would seem with four lanes would be good right-of-way. But if you’re constricted...

Well, we could also just signalize this intersection.

That’s a fallback. The signal is a fallback.

Anonymous: So if you would go four lanes, and signal lights?

It synchs.

Anonymous: And then at Allsups? Would there be bottlenecks like where the project ends? You are building out up until the other side of Allsups.

This would carry, essentially north through the signal at Camino de la Placitas.
Anonymous: And that's where the project would end, so at that point would you see another bottleneck? If theoretically you went to the four lanes.

Well see here, we only have two. So north of the south end at Quesnel, north of that, we only carry two lanes all the way through. Because that's as much lane as fits.

Anonymous: Where would you perceive bottlenecks could be? Issues where traffic would back up? And how would you address that?

The big bottlenecks will still be at the major intersections: Quesnel, Kit Carson, Those are going to have a lot of traffic. There's still going to be some delays there, but we are working on improving the situation.

Anonymous: Let's just say you favor the four lane which seems feasible with the right-of-way. How much right-of-way in addition to that plan would you take as opposed to just the three lane?

It's not a lot because we do have a fair amount of Right of Way to the south. When we start approaching Quesnel, that's when we have less right of way on both sides.

Stacey McGuire: In regards to the round a bout. Have you guys looked into any pedestrian crossing concerns at that location? If the round a bouts are utilized vs signals? It's a live road. There’s a lot of folks.

Are you weighing the options of pedestrians crossing in a roundabout, or pedestrians crossing at a signal?

Stacey McGuire: At a signal. Yes.

There's that argument that round a bouts and pedestrians don't necessarily mix. But speeds are lowered at a roundabout. So pedestrians at a roundabout only have to cross the lanes associated with the direction of travel. So not the entire way because there are two lanes, in two directions, plus the turns. Does that make sense? If you're in the roundabout, and you're going around getting into the roundabout, pedestrians are in that direction of travel. So they are in front of the driver. Versus at an intersection which is the most common pedestrian strikes, is at an intersection, are right turns and crossing left. So those are out of the driver perception until they are right there in front. So that's where the big perception difference is between intersections and round a bouts. I know there are some pedestrians that don't like roundabouts. They are particularly hard for blind people to hear direction of travel, but they are recommended for Federal Highways so they are just a tool in our toolbox. Does that answer your question?

Stacey McGuire: It answers my question, but I think that there's a lot of pedestrian traffic. And we've had in the past couple of years, a couple fatalities related to folks trying to cross NM 68 in various locations on the south end of town. And I know that I would have concerns personally for a roundabout in that sense, versus a signalized intersection.

Stacey McGuire: So I understand the roundabouts are a tool in your toolbox. I heard what he said. They are supposed to be great. However, do you do studies of where you are putting the roundabouts? Because they don't work here. People don't yield, and nobody gets a ticket. If you have a street like we do on NM 518 when they put in the roundabouts, the side streets, people don't yield. It's probably one time out of ten. So I want to know, is that part of what you consider?

It usually is. I mean if there's a little bit of history, we can add a little study in, but most of what we study is the traffic flows, the actual amount; the volumes of traffic, to make sure that roundabout functions as it should.

Again, we are not necessarily putting in the roundabouts. They came up during the Phase A process, and we were asked to look at roundabouts.

Stacey McGuire: When you were talking about either the realignment of Los Pandos or the double T, could you just go over it? You didn't use pros and cons, but essentially that's how I heard it. Could you just go over those? Like how do you weight that out?

This is the four legged, I mean this is what everyone is used to. So here it's one signal, so its all in one signal piece. If we go to the double T, then you basically put that thing off, these signals are timed they are set up to coordinate with each other so that this traffic from this doesn't continue to back up beyond the intersection. And vice versa. So those two would talk to each other so they would let the green go through so that you don't get over stacking at either of those two intersections.

Stacey McGuire: So that I understand. And then that building goes away?

Yes, this here would need to go away.

David Weaver: I am Chief of Police here. For roundabouts, I have to respectfully state roundabouts make a whole lot of sense. Drivers don't like them because they're not used to them. It causes confusion. However, when there is a collision inside the roundabouts, they are almost always at very low speed. Before we had the roundabouts on Cañon, the three of them, we had multiple high speed collisions, several fatalities. When they put the roundabouts in, I wasn't a big fan. They put them in, and I'll be danged. They worked out great.

Stacey McGuire: But you don't ticket people.

David Weaver: I'm sorry?

Stacey McGuire: Never mind, I won't go there. But you don't ticket people when they don't yield. Isn't that really your job?

David Weaver: Well I'm working, OK? We can go into enforcement strategy, which will be a different conversation, which means I have two officers working the street right now. So, we want to have a strong traffic enforcement, we need to grow the department by about nine slots. I'd be happy to do that. With where we are at right now, if we have roundabouts, and it slows
Anonymous: Will there be any closures in relation to this project, or the rest of the commission, but in my mind the four way is the way you want to go.

Anonymous: I appreciate that. I am a county commissioner. I cannot speak for the people here, but in my mind the four way is the way you want to go.

Beth Robinson: Can I look at the visual you created for Quesnel intersection? Where the little one way street it?

Beth Robinson: And would you consider putting a roundabout there instead of a traffic light?

Anonymous: Where’s the potential. There’s also the potential to make it safer. If there’s safety issues, but at the same time we need to make sure that businesses do have their access.

Anonymous: That’s still an open question?

Anonymous: I am assuming you have survey right of way?

Not yet, we are basically working on the GIS, looking at what’s available with GIS. But when this project goes through the design, they will actually be able to get the survey done and make sure we know exactly where the right-of-way is.

Anonymous: And that will be available?

At some point that will be available.

Beth Robinson: Are you considering this Los Poblanos, Skyler improvement with Smiths located currently where it is and traffic that goes in and out of Smiths? Part one. And Part two, has anyone talked to you about creating ingress, egress for a Smiths to be built on the other side of the street?

To answer your first question, no, we are doing this independently of that, trying to improve the operation and safety at that intersection. We have heard, staff at Smiths would be taken through our access manual, basically saying they want to get it off the arterial street.

Beth Robinson: So you would basically do a cut or whatever, whenever, if ever there is development on the road?

Any development would have to go through the proper channels, to get approval.

So you look at kind of where the location’s at, and relationships of where other drivers are across the street or around it, and say well this is or isn’t a good location.

Beth Robinson: And would you consider putting a roundabout there instead of a traffic light?

Not yet. We did take a look at a roundabout at La Valley and Placitas.

Beth Robinson: I’ve laid something out, but because of this building and this building, there’s not much improvement that we could make lane wise to that. It’s essentially going to be updating the sidewalks and the signals at that location. Overall length configuration with the intersection’s not going to change.

Anonymous: Chief beat me to it, also speaking in defense of the roundabouts. I have a workshop that’s right in the corner of Gustorf and Paseo del Cañon, and there were some horrible accidents and really, people just going right through Gustorf. And I think one, three people were killed, in one accident. And they started building the roundabouts and that was, I knew that was going to be new for the town. I’ve watched, people are getting the hang of it, and it’s flowing better and better. And the biggest problem for me when I am going through it sometimes people aren’t signaling when they are making a left turn, and that kind of messes it up for everyone else in the intersection. I have seen some State Police, because there is a State Police what would you call it, headquarters, substation, and when they’re there at the right time, they will ticket. I’ve seen it in proven function. It’s just a constant flow, plus there’s at times, because there are schools in the area when there’s pedestrian traffic, and I’ve watched that work well too. So I think it’s something that is new to us, and getting used to. I remember the first time I went through one I was in Houston, and I didn’t know what I was in. I about had a heart attack, though I was going to crash a company vehicle, but now I know what to watch for, and no when people aren’t going to use their signals know they might be making a turn. But anyway, I think they’re great.

Anonymous: We have our road director here. We have our county manager. We have our emergency medical services. I can’t speak for them, but it would seen it would make sense that we have to go with the four way, and not five lanes, because then there’s no turning lane, as I see it now. But it would just make sense to expand into four lane for future growth. I think if we kept the one lanes, I think we’re not solving the problems we’re seeing with bottlenecks, and then I hear what you said if you were to go with the four lane, the roundabout by Sentinels is off the table, you’d just put a stop light. We need a stop light there, it’s very dangerous. I guess my question is, is cost going to be a consideration in four lanes vs. three lanes? And would you scrap the four lane idea because it would be too expensive?

Cost is always a consideration. But I think we’re looking at what’s going to work. It is a little bit wider, but I think if it significantly better then.

Safety is paramount to the NMDOT so that’s the main consideration, cost isn’t necessarily an issue if it has a lot of benefit, in the sense that it flows better, less traffic congestion and it’s safe. That’s what we look for.

Anonymous: I appreciate that. I am a county commissioner. I cannot speak for the people here, or the rest of the commission, but in my mind the four way is the way you want to go.

Anonymous: Will there be any closures in relation to this project?
Beth Robinson: And you foresee it staying a one-way street?

Yes, with this study we don’t have any opportunities to change that.

Beth Robinson: That would be a challenge then.

Anonymous: The Albright roundabout you are considering, if you get two lanes? How do you approach Central Bank? Without altering their building?

There’s a whole process with purchasing the property, and we have an organization within the DOT that’s all they do, relocations, and acquiring properties.

Anonymous: So they most likely have to be compensated for their losses? And what it would cost to maybe modify the building?

Yes.

Anonymous: I drive in from Cañon every day and hit the Plaza light. I can either go right, straight, go left. There seems to be always confusion amongst pedestrians and drivers as to who has the right of way, who has the light. Particularly when they are coming from the North side, and they are going to cross the right turn lane. They don’t know when to walk across that little section to get to that tiny little island. And then there are drivers that are basically lost. Nobody, nobody pays attention to the red light. I always count to three to make sure nobody is zipping through the red lights. Would there be a way to make that intersection pedestrian change only? In other cities they’ve done that where no traffic can go through it for a certain amount of time, but it’s all pedestrian, which means I can walk diagonally, I can make a safe journey across that intersection. I am not sure it’s safe right now. So would there be consideration to add a pedestrian only crossing into the signal structure?

Which intersection was that?

Anonymous: Plaza light.

So here?

Anonymous: If I’m turning right, the pedestrians don’t know when it’s safe to cross to that little island in the middle. And then they are waiting for a light, they don’t know which direction they can cross, depending on the state of the light. Because it’s not just north and south, it’s got two or three different phases. Unfortunately there’s not too much more we can do to improve this, because of the footprint. Maybe we could take a little bit more of a sliver here, but here we are back-up, this is all parking here. I’ve looked at laying it out, and I can maybe improve it about 10 percent.

Sounds like he is talking about the lights, a four way stop, and people basically move in synch.
Anonymous: What would we have to do to make that happen?

This is a state road, and we have to.

John Miller: I guess the question is, as we move forward with the project talking with the community about these designs and be aware of the conversations that are taking place, just so that we have a chance to say hey our bike master plan says this, and this isn’t happening, or this is what we want our town to look like. So then, maybe the bigger question, correct me if I’m wrong, but how do we know about these meetings? How do we make ourselves involved in the difficult process for the normal person?

Anonymous: Also I want to very quickly address this issue of one way streets. There have more than one study done that the town has hired engineering firms to do to study the downtown traffic flow and the studies have shown that one way streets really worsen the traffic. With longer trips for a lot of people extending the lengths for everyone’s trips, and lots of left hand turns. And quite frankly we don’t want our tourist zipping north or zipping south. We want them to have access, preferably pedestrian access and good parking to the historic district. So if my vote counts, I vote against one way streets.

We do have comment forms up here, so I encourage people to send up comment forms. I also have my email address on there, and that’s really how we track comments. So obviously one way pairs has been a really big issue for quite a while. So if we get a lot of comments saying we’d rather go a different direction, that’s definitely going to have a lot of influence. So if we see a lot of you want bikes, you don’t want one way pairs, I mean that has a huge influence on the process so, this is the time to be giving us written comments. Getting a comment form or sending us an email, or sending us a letter.

John Miller: And so would you say most of the planning centered around these types of projects is centered around car? Car focused transportation? It seems like with four lanes and your kind of saying this other stuff, it can happen, but it’s not really in the plan. Its car centered. Looking at the space that we’re talking about here, it’s very much an area that can be fashioned to be used by the community in terms of pedestrians, walkability. So I guess my question, in a roundabout way, is how much of the process is focused on alternative methods of travel? The biking, pedestrians, transit? Versus just the side of you know, we are driving from place to place? Which seems very car centric.

I can say that over the years I think this changed and I think there has been more emphasis on pedestrians and bicycles.

If we didn’t really consider bikes or any alternative modes of transportation we wouldn’t have included them in this project. We are a multi-modal department so we want to include bikes, and we want to make sure bikes are included. We want to make sure pedestrians are included. We also have Rosa up here who is our bike and pedestrian person for the department, so she makes us accountable, making sure that we incorporate these alternative modes of transportation. I think we are trying to incorporate as much as we can with what we have.

And there’s also additional funding that we can apply for to accommodate for this, and we are definitely trying to go after that additional funding so that we can include those as well.

John Miller: I didn’t want to imply that you’re not. Because obviously it’s here, you are showing it. But I just wanted to know the background, you know how your department, and the DOT in general makes allowances for those multi modal bikes.

So the DOT does have a maintenance plan. They do have maintenance crews here locally that evaluate the roadway. Because this has been before reconstruction, we expect a design life of the asphalt. And sometimes that design life is deteriorated because of snow, or certain things. Weather obviously has a big impact on that. And you guys do get a lot of weather here, so that design life could potentially go down. So there is an evaluation process that we have and we have what’s called an acid management. It evaluates the roads on a yearly basis. And that evaluation, it evaluates if one year we don’t see any cracking, the second year there is cracking then that raises a flag, saying we need to do something at this location. So we are monitoring that on a yearly basis.

Phillip Alexander: Who monitors that? Is it a supervisor here at this district?

We do get information from the local supervisors. But like I said we have an acid management plan, and basically, its a vehicle that we drive and it basically takes a picture of the condition of the road.

Phillip Alexander: How often does that happen?

On a yearly basis.

Phillip Alexander: On a yearly basis. Well, this being Taos, and the way you said the weathers is, it would probably be better to have it done on a bi-annually basis. In the spring, right after winter, and then maybe right before fall. Because, you know here, there are a lot of trucks that go through here to avoid the interstate. You understand what I mean, to avoid the scales at the interstate. I know this because I watch it every day. Just wanting to know that, because we don’t want to go through the whole potholes scenario again, because people were up in arms these past two years about the potholes being on Paséo. They were complaining to the town and the county, and I am a radio show, and I straight out said on my radio show, do not call the town or the county, call this guy, Dennis Martinez at NMDOT, he’s the district manager. And I think we actually got some done with that. Because the thing is this too, in a couple of years, we’re going to have some more monies coming into our town and our county from the airport and ski valley, and that influence of GRT and stuff how are we going to keep the money here in Taos County and Northern New Mexico to keep the maintenance on these roads, because our
district line goes all the way to South Santa Fe. And those lines need to be redrawn so we keep our monies here to maintain our state roads here. Is that possible?

That I couldn’t answer. I don’t know how that is really determined. I could ask.

Phillip Alexander: Who’s the guy that draws the lines? Do you have any idea?

No, I’m sorry, I would tell you but I don’t know.
The following project team members were present:

- Antonio Jaramillo, NMDOT
- Paul Brasher, NMDOT
- Richard Peña, NMDOT
- Jennifer Mullins, NMDOT
- George Herrera, Souder Miller
- Matthew Nighbert, Souder Miller
- Eric Hawton, Souder Miller
- Eric Johnson, Marron and Associates

Presentation

George Herrera and Matthew Nighbert discussed the project. Topics covered included project history, project development process, alternatives, other recommendations, traffic operations, parking and pedestrian issues, signal coordination, intersection improvements, drainage and Spring Ditch, right-of-way, utilities, current schedule, and project funding.

Question and Answer Session

(项目 team responses are in italics)

Anonymous: What is the overall projected cost?

We’re working on those numbers now.

Anonymous: Let’s say they wait ten years, what would the increase be?

It’s hard to say. I guess the great news is for this part of the corridor there is funding available. So I think we will get going.

Anonymous: Do you know the cost between the two lanes and four lanes?

There’s 67 feet in difference in width, so it’s not a real significant cost increase.

Anonymous: So what would be the cost if you came in and did one lane, and then ten years down the road you decided you need to do two?

The big difference is going to be with the drainage, you are probably going to have to re-do that whole drainage if it is right on the edge of the road. That would be a lot more cost involved, dealing with traffic control.

Anonymous: So in that scenario, do you think it would be better to do the four lanes?

It would be more cost effective if we were positive that it does perform better.

Beth Robinson: I am wondering how the feed work going up the hill at Quesnel, if there are four lanes going into the town, historic area, where you only have two lanes going through town? How will the feed to a two-lane situation work?

Obviously there would have to be a transition section.

Beth Robinson: How is parking being studied? Is that something the town is working on?

The existing parking through the Plaza will remain. I know that there were a lot of comments for additional off street parking. The department would be willing to work with the town, to provide signing and so forth.

Keith Randall: What objective criteria are you using to evaluate weather or not the one-way pair is advisable?

One of the reasons that alternative is an advantage, is at least traffic operation wise, it seems to work the best out of the alternatives.
Keith Randall: I have been given some data that I am not in a position to understand, that a one-way pair would create longer distances to get around town. Is that data that was provided to you as part of your study that you could evaluate weather or not it has voracity?

When I looked at the one-way pair, we looked at the traffic volumes for all of the intersections, so we took all those turning movement volumes and I took everyone that was turning, left, and I turned them right. Essentially I made a bubble, and they had to leave the bubble in order to be discounted, and I did a ‘where is their end trip’ outside of the bubble. So I took them, maybe all the way around the bubble, I had this spreadsheet that takes everyone all the way around the bubble, and all departure points of the bubble are all the same. Yes, to answer your question, we do have longer trips for sure, you can’t get around that with a one way pair. The difference is, if someone wants to make a left hand turn on the one-way street, there is the other lane, the other option, and not everyone has to stop.

Keith Randall: My question right now is there is data around town that is not in favor of the one-way pair. And I want to know if it’s correct data? Is that something you could evaluate? Is that something you would want?

We haven’t seen that, yes we would like to take a look at it.

Anonymous: There is a company called Molzen Corbin, who did a study for the one-way pairs and showed that it would slow traffic 11%. And one of the problems here in Taos, is that there are not enough cross streets, it could work if you have cross streets, but not here. Do you know about that study?

It’s a pretty outdated study. I haven’t looked at it lately, but I know which one you are talking about.

Anonymous: We have more cars now, so it would be even slower.

These are just alternative now, we are here to get your input on the pros and cons.

Anonymous: When you say Phase B, does that already assume you’ve approved Phase A? Are we still deciding on the theme of the whole project?

We’ve approved the first phase, and now we are just doing an analysis of the alternatives, Phase B. It is still part of the same process. I have a difficult time of seeing how having a part of a avenue for cars being one way in the Taos Historic District, going one way, how it’s going to assist? Because, not have made a thorough enough search of what the real traffic is, if you took the traffic in sections, first you’ve got the traffic in the centralized retail area, in the historic district. It’s going to be the merchants, manning the retail stores, the public service path of business. And other public services, merchandise, furniture that is going to be sold in that area. Then local people who will want to go into town, and do their shopping. A lot of times they want to walk and not drive. Many have visitors, tourism town, in town for several days, the things they are interested in, what they want are the specialty shops. In the downtown Historic District. Also the entertainment center.
Anonymous: One of the things I have not seen, is you’ve got such a long stretch of road, between Superstage (?) and Quesnel and we see a lot of jay-walking, there are no crosswalks to provide safety. Now presumably the light at Albright will aid at that area, but then you’ve still got that huge intersection, there’s nothing for pedestrians to be able to cross the road. Does this encompass any of the pedestrian traffic safety measures?

There will be sidewalks for the pedestrians, and you are correct, there will be a light at Albright, so that will be an intersection with pedestrian crossing at that point. Currently there are no plans for intermediate, mid-block crossings. It’s a safety issue.

Elana Lombard: I didn’t see any talking about more parking. Is that part of this plan? More parking is something that we really need. Secondly, when they did the new paving that happened recently in the downtown area, already we are getting massive potholes, already worse potholes than before they paved it. So while they are putting in these new roads, are they going to hire somebody who is actually does a job that will be a permanent improvement? Or will they have to Repave every six months or every year? It seems like a huge waste of our dollars that we are not doing a decent job when we do it. Thirdly, I want to say that I am very opposed to the one-way street. All the businesses on my street that I have talked to are very against it. They are not here to share their voice, but I am representing.

Are you talking about off street parking?

Elana Lombard: Yes

This is something that the department would be willing to work with the town, on developing the locations and lining and signing.

Elana Lombard: So this is not part of this budget?

No, it is not. Regarding the paving, probably what you have seen is the local streets is maintenance activities; trying to keep up with the potholes and the weather. If we go with the two or the four-lane alternative they would be built to a specification that would require a longer design time. Typically any reconstruction has to adhere to guidelines, for a 20-year life. It would be designed to last.

Anonymous: We’re talking about bicycles, sidewalks and pedestrians. Is there any discussion about bringing art to public places to the infrastructure? Because this is an Art Community, and Anonymous: We’re talking about bicycles, sidewalks and pedestrians. Is there any discussion about bringing art to public places to the infrastructure? Because this is an Art Community, and this could be a way to bring in funding for some public art pieces.

There is no funding right now for landscaping.

Anonymous: What would it take to get that in your discussion, in your analysis?

Basically what would need to happen is the town would have to work with NMDOT to entertain such a thing. Right now it is not within our budget, but it’s not something we are not open to consider. It has to meet certain requirements; it has to be a location that doesn’t pose a hazard to the driving public. Doesn’t block sight lines, stuff like that. But we could work with the district and identify locations that...

Anonymous: When would that have to be done by?

Probably sooner than later. Before we get into 30% design, so before preliminary design, so that’s the end of 2016, early 2017.

Bruce Ellis: I have some concerns about pedestrian traffic as well. More in the central part of the Historic District. I already know from experience, just driving through myself, that even though we’ve got sidewalks, there’s people crossing in a lot of places, and I have a suspicion, that quite a bit of traffic slow down that you see in your models, is due to cars having to stop for pedestrians. I would be worried if we go to a one-way pairing, that we’d have faster moving traffic and we would have much more of the need for pedestrian control sidewalks crossings, perhaps the kind where we have flashing lights, or something, and there’s an actual time delay on how often people can actually cross. I would be concerned also about public safety. It’s a very constrained corridor, there’s not a lot of room for people to get around in it. And a higher speed of traffic could be a risk to pedestrians. I also think there needs to be a collaborative effort with the town when it comes to signage. Because what you’re going to be talking about if you do that pairing is traffic heading a much longer distance before it gets to the general parking areas, and they are going to need to know where the parking is. So they know to not slow down and loiter all around, they are actually heading somewhere. Something that helps them know, you’re going to go all the way through, all the way around and then you’re going to take a right turn into the parking lots.

Lawrence Baker: First of all, if you come from someplace, like Baltimore, which I did, and I go to Denver a lot. Our traffic, we don’t have any traffic. So this whole problem for me is really pretty wild. We’re a tourist town, and we don’t really want people to go zoom through town. We want them to go and see what we’re about, so they can stop and visit, and go into the shops and spend money so, that’s definitely against the one way. The other thing, there was another study done, I can’t tell you the name of it, but it did show that if there were convenient parking lots at the corner of Placitas and Quesnel and Pueblo del Sur that would divert 30% of traffic away, right away. The people come from the south, and they’ll visit, if they could come into town, and turn immediately into a garage, and walk that would alleviate a whole lot of the traffic. So that of course I think is a Taos issue. We also want to keep the charm of Taos, so if you start encroaching on the sidewalks and buildings, I assume you aren’t going to tear down any buildings? You did show a three-lane option, going into Quesnel, and also the last meeting that I went to here, I was strongly hoping that you would put in a round about at Albright? And even up at Placitas, could you put one there? They are actually more attractive, and cheaper in the long run.

We actually looked at a round about at Placita and Ribaldi Lane.

Lawrence Baker: And then stop lights on Placitas? According to this friend, who I am also using her notes, she says that it costs $250,000 to put in one traffic light. And you have five of them on Placitas. That’s more than a million dollars. I drive on Placitas every day. Several times a
day, and there is no traffic problem on Placitas at this point. So I hope you are not putting traffic lights on Placitas.

This is from my friend who couldn’t be here but she has been working on this for a really long time. She said you’ve got $11,000,000 why don’t you start in the south of town, and put in a really attractive roadway, with median strips, or xeriscaping it, and go as far as you can with this batch of money, instead of slapping down $11,000,000 worth of asphalt, give us something that is really pretty for a short distance, and when people see how pretty it is, then they’ll want it for the rest of the time.

The $11,000,000 that you are referring to is earmarked for roadway. We are entertaining in the first phase, some opportunities for landscaping; possibly putting in some trees, but again, it has to meet certain requirements, because safety is paramount on roadways such as this. So we don’t want to introduce something that could potentially be a hazard. So we want to make sure if we do any landscaping that it meets the minimum requirements.

Lawrence Baker: Are you considering a median that’s landscaped?

Currently there are only two medians in the first phase, and that’s not going to be landscaped. We are currently talking to the town, to see if they want to do that. It’s basically a town issue; they would have to maintain it.

This is the layout. Because this is a US highway, we have large vehicles that have trailers, and off tracking that cause this raise to get pretty large. We have two alternatives with this. One of these has Ribaldi as an actual leg of the round a bout. The next one is just a driveway, and part of the reason for doing that was, basically this leg impacts this building. This leg impacts this building, this leg impacts all this property. It’s like the only piece that is not heavily impacted is this one, and there’s sidewalk. Even their side yard is taken over by the round a bout. We could chop this leg off and turn this into a driveway essentially. This is coming off of Placitas, and this is US 64.

I’d like to respond to some of the things she said here. First of all, the one about the crosswalks, where you have lights. You can go up to Colorado in Winterpark to a major highway that has hundred times more cars and trucks than here, they have crosswalks on a two lane highway, and they have flashing lights, and they work very well. It seems to me that if you put flashing lights here on a one-way, you’re going to stop all the traffic at one time, and they’re going to see it easier, but on a two-lane, your trying to stop two lanes, so if you want to find out how well they work, call up there to Winterpark.

The other thing that I see is that, if you take Black Hawk, Colorado and Central City, that at the point they originally put Casinos up there it was all jammed up, and people would drive away cause they couldn’t get in and out. But then they went in and created a one-way situation with proper access and so forth. And more people stopped for the Casino’s and everything else now, and they get the traffic, that has to get through the town, that isn’t going to stop at the Casino, through it faster because they’ve created a traffic pattern that I think you are trying to work at, that will get all the people, that really don’t want to stop through there, and people that want to be there and be part of downtown, and be part of the area, don’t get bogged up in all the crud of all the trucks and things that are going through town.

And as far as I understand, this is not a view of patient kind of situation, which you alluded to, but more of a traffic control situation. And the beautification would have to come, as you said, if the city said, gee, let’s take some of the turn lane and let’s make it look nicer. But you’re trying to make a better traffic pattern through the town, to allow more access for the visitors, and allow access for the people who want to be out of town, out of town.

Yes, and it’s a balance.

Cid Baker: Considering that they main route is used for trucks, not just cars, how can a round a bout, we’re talking about big trucks, that use this. How does a round a bout work with big trucks according to your studies?

They traverse it just fine. Their rear tracking goes across the truck aprons which is designed for their vehicles, so if they are on the inside lane, that trailer tracking is going to go across that truck apron, if they are on the outside lane, the operator is going to steer wide, and navigate wider, so the round a bout is designed for that size vehicle. They’ve laid out the design requirements for large trucks.

Cid Baker: Where’s an example of that in New Mexico?

Cid Baker: I own Sid’s food market, and we’re planning on a construction project in the spring here, and we’re going to get people so they can make a left out of our store more safely at a traffic light. Ribaldi Lane we’re going to be using. Is anything going to change on Ribaldi Lane?

Currently there are no major improvement plans for that intersection unless alternative B were to happen.

Cid Baker: With the town looking at this zoning issue, does that effect your study at all? Because that could have some major impact on what we are talking about.

It obviously would. We don’t know that much about it, but if there is a major development that comes in, obviously it’s going to generate a lot of traffic and it’s going to have an impact, so we would have to think about that. And of course the developer would have to go through the Department of Transportation to get approval for any type of right of way. They’ll have to have justification for what they’re doing and on top of that, they’ll have to incorporate improvements to make their plan work.

Mark Aznus: If you keep Pueblo Norte and Placitas, both two ways, don’t do the one way pair thing, and you widen Pueblo Sur to four lanes all the way up to Placitas and Quesnel, what does that transition look like that you mentioned before?

There are a couple different options from going two lanes to one lane, so right at that intersection we have a couple options. Before the intersection we can transition the lane in. So at the intersection we just have one lane through the intersection. The other alternative is to do...
a lane track. A left turn track, so anybody on left turn, essentially have to turn left on Camino de la Placitas. So it is essentially ending that inside lane by forcing everybody in it to turn left. And everyone in the right lane has to go through.

Mark Asmus: Are these good solutions?

Well, it’s a solution. It doesn’t address that on the other side of the intersection. There’s not enough width of roadway to carry any more than that. There’s a lot of left turning volume. Is it half? Probably not. But that’s the thing, you’re going to get the right lane stack and the forced left. That is still what you end up with at the intersection, whether you trap it and divert it right afterwards.

It is still an improvement over what you have today.

Anonymous: You guys are already at stage B. When are you going to be contacting the property owners that are affected by this?

Again, this is a study, so once the study concludes, and we have a firm recommendation for what’s going to move forward. Essentially that’s when they start the survey, and tell the landowners how they are going to be affected. There’s a group with the NMDOT that deals specifically with Right of way, so there’s lots of opportunities to work through that process.

Anonymous: So when is that going to be happening? You guys have a bunch of scenarios but.. I just have another comment. Earlier she mentioned people driving through town, well those people are the ones driving through town anyway. And my observation, having spent a lot of time in Colorado and Taos and driving back and forth, was most people are coming from the south and they are not driving through town as much as they are coming out although there’s plenty of people coming from the north. The other thing I would point out is this is a state highway, so that everyone understands, if you get the money to deal with the issues you have to abide by what it takes to deal with state highways, which is different than a small road going through town. And the final thing I would like to point out, I don’t think you need all those stop lights on Placitas. It just makes no sense. You need a couple of them where there are cross streets, but five stoplights seem to be overkill maybe pedestrian flashing lights is a better idea.

Terry Boettcher: I’ve been driving on this section before you had two cross streets on the one way direction that had improvements, that are going between the two one way. And that’s where a lot of those signal lights are going on those cross streets right?

Yes

Beth Robinson: If Placitas were made one way, our Fire Department would have to re-locate. Unless you are just going to let them go the wrong way? If they need to go a faster way that isn’t the one way. And there’s a safety issue here. You don’t want to have the fire trucks to go longer to get where they need to go, and if they needed to go right, they couldn’t because it was one way. Has anyone talked to the Fire Department to see what they think about this?

They have been advised. Again, it is the pros and cons. This all goes in the decision making process.

Bonnie Korman: That was a good issue that I didn’t see. I was thinking mainly about the Post Office which is a main destination for locals. Is there going to be a stop sign right there? And I also agree with her when she said Placitas is a relief route for us, people doing business in town, it is very pleasant, non-traffic, stop signs some are pretty new, and they work really well. My main question is, what are you going to base the input on? Will it be our comments? Email? Written? Is it going to be the meeting? The public meeting? What factors are you taking into consideration about what we want and what we don’t want? Affecting some of the issues that were brought up here? How do you make those decisions, based on what?

It’s based on engineering factors, public input, stakeholder input, right of way impacts, environment impacts. It’s a whole group of things.

A one way street is a big decision. Its either or. Would you just put that through because in your mind it’s better?

No, nothing has been selected. We are presenting the alternatives. That is part of the process, and we use the input to make the decision. There has been a lot of good questions here today, both sides, and all of that will go into discussions.

Alicia Hanes: There’s been a lot of good points here today, and one of the things that I wanted to comment on is when we look at change, it’s always a little intimidating, and a little scary. And when we look at that we want to preserve our town of Taos, which obviously everyone in this room must love, or we wouldn’t have taken the time to be here. We have to look at the idea that change can also be good. And when we saw some of those pictures of the existing road, and the state of disrepair that they are currently in. And then we saw the renderings of what it could be. Yes it will be change, and yes, there might be some unpleasantness in respect to that. But just think of the positive effect of perhaps the four way road going through, and how of a positive impact that would have to the visitors and the tourists that do come to this town. To see that type of presentation versus what we have now. Even though change is difficult, I would urge everyone to consider that some of these changes they oppose could really have a positive effect on this town.

These alternative can really build on each other. Two can build on one, and three can go on two. We can do certain things, and preclude something else being done.

I work with the NMDOT in the Environmental Section, and I want to address one of the questions. You can submit your comments on email, or written form. It’s being recorded now, and definitely submit those to us. And they mentioned that they were going to end Phase B in May I believe, and the preferred alternative will move forward. But another public meeting will be provided to present that preferred alternative. And again, there’s another opportunity to contribute and voice your concerns or your support.

Anonymous: Being from Colorado for forty years, and being here for twenty five years, one experience was building the roundabouts. Everybody was opposed to the roundabouts, and
Anonymous: Question about the light signals. (could not hear over back ground noise)

There is a likely hood that we will do an alternative with the signals, but when we fix the signals its not just changing up the diagonal. We are going to have to take a look at the curve rounds. We may have to take some right of way.

Anonymous: Is it possible to have a small meeting for like just the block so you can talk to the whole neighborhood, especially if there will be right of way taken, to get the feedback of the people in the neighborhoods weather there’s going to be additional right of way purchased?

We’ll really tie that down when we get through the preliminary design. And at that time we will be able to give those specifics.

Anonymous: But by then you’ve already made up your mind?

I guess the main thing is to try to get those individuals to these meetings.

Anonymous: I just want to say, I’ve been working on this for ten years, and we’ve finally got the Department of Transportation’s attention. The Governor has finally agreed that she’s going to spend money on the community. I just don’t want this money to go away. There are other communities that are begging for the money, waiting in line for the money. The Governor said we are going to spend it in Taos, I want to get it spent here so they don’t take it away, and I love the feedback that we’ve been getting, but we need to move forward. We don’t want to send a message back to the Governor that we can’t make up our mind. So we want to keep that money here. The next round of funding that will probably come to Taos could be twenty to twenty five years down the road. And so we really want to be cognizant about those, you know with the gas prices dropping, and less and less money that is being generated within the State of New Mexico, there’s going to be less and less funding. This is our one chance to get it done in the next twenty years. So we want to get it done right, and we want to hear everybody’s input, but the end of the day, we want to have some conclusion so they know what direction they are going to go to, and what we’re going to work on to make our community better and make it more beautiful.

Carl Colonius: I appreciate the alternative transportation infrastructure on all three plans. Really important. You’ve got a significant number of people in the region that are talking about bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and it can’t be on the side burner. It has to be front and center priority. Which I appreciate it being in all the plans. I would like to also chime in on the round a bouts. I was personally pleasantly surprised when roundabout opened near the middle school. I was sitting at that light for years, dropping kids off and picking kids up. And the roundabout has cleaned that up very nicely. I was not a fan of them before that went in.

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The one-way proposal re-appears every so often when there are other more efficacious plans for rerouting flows through historic district...

Hope to meet with you February 24.

Also, is there an online review: Per entire plan proposal?

Thank you for your comments. We do not have the proposed improvements on-line, but we will have displays and a presentation on the proposed alternative at the February 24 meeting.

Comment 6: Dave and Renee Hardy

Not seeing much online regarding your consulting firm? Are you hired by Town, County or State? In what capacity?

Marron and Associates is a sub consultant to Souder Miller and Associates, who is on contract with the New Mexico Department of Transportation. Marron and Associates, of Albuquerque, is an environmental consulting company. Souder Miller and Associates, of Santa Fe, is an engineering consulting company.

Comment 7: Jay Connerley

I live in the historic, on Lund and Leatherman. My concerns are that this will drive more traffic into our neighborhood. The locals know how to avoid traffic and if forced on to a one way route would cause more cut through on Lund St. Civic Plaza, Theadora. We do NOT want speed bumps on the street. A relief rout would be one that gets the heavy traffic out of the business district. Such as Blueberry Hill, or routing out near the airport.

Comment 8: Jim Fambro, Taos County Commissioner, District I

Thank you for the invite and information for the upcoming meeting. I will actually be attending the NACO Legislative Conference that week in Washington and will not be able to attend. I will pass this on to others and hopefully we will have representation at this meeting.

Comment 9: Michael Sayre

I hope to be able to attend the meeting. I live at 606 Camino de la Placita. Until and unless you can assure me access to my home by means of a right-hand turn into my driveway, which would be required in the event of making Camino de la Placita a westbound one-way, there is no sense in even discussing such a proposal. I invite you to try to turn right into my driveway, in anything larger that a compact car, sometime before the meeting; I’ll offer you a coffee down below. You will see the ridiculous and dangerous situation left me by the Town of Taos when Camino de la Placita was redone some 10-15 years ago.

Comment 10: Fred E. Winter

I believe serious consideration must be given to adopting a workable two-way pair system.

I believe that the proposed Smiths project must be coordinated with this project to include sidewalks and street-scaping.

I believe art in the public places must be included as an integral part of this plan.

Comment 11: Christopher M. Smith, GM, The Historic Taos Inn

My apologies for being unable to participate in your presentation this past week in Taos.

I just wanted to express my support for the two way pairs option, though possibly with less traffic lights southbound on Placitas, as they seem less needed to the extent you have indicated.

We are a historic hotel on the main road, and our guest experience would improve greatly with this change. Many of our customers are negatively impacted with our “traffic problem”, as they call it at check-in, and it leaves a horrible first impression of our town. We also have issues with the sidewalk easement in front of our building, which is incredibly small in width, and feel that a two-way pair option would make it more safe for pedestrians, and hopefully create room for a bike lane.

I have seen the positive effects of one-way pairs in other cities, and can report that they do not have a negative or diversionary impact on retail. People simply “follow the large round-about” to get to their location. If anything, I think it would make our downtown more accessible and inviting due to the increased ease with which one could get in and out.

Comment 12: Polly Raye

1. The cost of implementing one way is high.
2. One-way would SLOW traffic flow through town by 11%.
3. Traffic delays only happen 25% of the time.
4. We want the historic district to be accessible to tourists so they visit and enjoy it, not just rush past it.
5. Re-design of the Plaza would be even fewer cross streets.
6. Our traffic delays are insignificant compared to almost anyplace else in the country.
7. Start at the southernmost point under consideration.
8. Improve Paséo del Sur from that point north.
9. We have $11 million available. Improve the roadway as far as possible with this amount of money, starting at the south end and working north. It might only go halfway to the historic district, but half-way done right is a much better investment than all-the-way looking ugly.
Comment 13: Kevin Clayton

As a resident of the south side of Taos, New Mexico I frequently travel the three miles to the plaza area. Many times I try to ride my bike into town but all too often I find that the bike lanes and side walks are covered in either ice piled up by snow plows or gravel brushed off from the road lanes. I believe the situation would be much improved, and bike lanes would actually get used, if they were separated from vehicular traffic by a green space that would include trees, shrubs, and native grasses. This green space would intercept storm runoff, road debris, noise, dust, car exhaust etc. and non-motorized traffic much more pleasant, not to mention improve the quality and aesthetics of down town Taos.

Thank you for the work that you are doing to improve our town. I look forward to seeing the results.

Comment 14: Andres S. Vargas

For too many years we, the residents of Taos, have suffered with the shortsightedness and provincialism of our Councilmen, Mayors and planners decisions transforming Taos streets to look like any place in America and the loss of a unique southwestern look. Please look at our unique history and try to retain and implement the character and flavor of adobe style by including landscaping that enhances the beauty of Taos. Essential to the creation of such beauty is to include trees, shrubs, and trails for the citizens to walk on, parks, etc., and such things that would enhance the beauty of Taos streets for the enjoyment of all. Thank you for your efforts to include in your recommendations, truly beautiful environment. Thank you.

Comment 15: Elana Lombard

I am a Taos business owner and attended the recent meeting concerning how to best mitigate traffic issues through town. I am against the one-way pair proposal (#3). It will only make people have to travel longer if they are forced to go around the block to reach their destination. It may also lead to frustration and unwillingness to patronize downtown businesses if they have to go out of their way to get there. It’s already challenging enough to succeed in business in our economically depressed state, without further obstacles.

Also, currently there is little traffic on Placitas, other than when school dismisses. The proposal to put several lights (a total of 5 I believe) on Placitas is disturbing. Several lights will slow traffic through this usually speedy bypass of the main road through the center of town. Plus their installation will cost a tremendous amount of money. I am opposed to putting in so many lights along this corridor and don’t really see the need for it.

Comment 16: Greg Pease

Thanks for the opportunity! Bike Lanes, YES! All the way around northern NM.

Comment 17: Jim Ludden

Urban landscape in northern New Mexico is basically dirt brown, with all the stucco buildings and windblown dust. Along with the mechanical improvements to US 68 through Taos, I urge you to design some natural green – trees and plants – that will moderate the harshness of a street side.

Thank you.

Comment 18: Ross Ulibarri

Lights on Placitas Road. Too many new stoplights. The traffic will be slowed down compared to the existing stop signs.

Please include bike lanes everywhere! This will aid in reducing congestion and pollution.

Comment 19: Gary Gerguson

FWIW, my recommendations are
1. Do the downtown changes first. This will be the most difficult probably but this qualifies as the most important and will have the greatest impact on traffic flow. The proposed initial changes will be important later on.
2. At least double the traffic rate flow or cut the transit time from N>S or S>N in half or forget it.
3. One ways will be the quickest way to help...at one level, just a bunch of signs, stripes and signal mods.
4. Times signals could help today!

Comment 20: John W. Whitney, MAI

Thanks for the opportunity to voice my opinions! I think the one-way pairing and four –lane option would be the best.

I am whole-heartedly in favor of Phase A Alternative No. 3. Four lanes from La Posta to Quesnel would be excellent.

I think a round a bout at Albright/Tewa is the right answer.

I question whether additional traffic signals are necessary on the Camino de la Placita one-way pairing for Lund, Don Fernando and Civic Plaza Drive. Is there room for round a bout?

The major realignment looks better for the Allsups corner.

Option 1 looks better for the Los Pandos Road Realignment.
February 24, 2016, 3:00 pm

Comment 21: Emily Sadow

I am writing to you regarding the Hwy 64/68 La Posta-Paséo alternatives. I am undecided whether the one way inclusion is a good idea or not as I have not heard the arguments for/against. I feel it would be a little difficult for residents trying to get somewhere close to having to drive all the way around. But it could lessen the congestion.

I feel that the least amount of new traffic lights the better. I don’t think it’s necessary to have lights on Placitas.

The main concern for me is that whatever plan is adapted that bicycles and pedestrians are a major priority. This town could/should be walking and biking friendly but it is actually pretty scary. If we call ourselves a tourist friendly, recreation abundant town, we need to back it up with alternative modes of transportation. We are way behind the curve on bike friendly roads. Please make sure this is addressed in any alternative you choose.

Thanks for your time.

Comment 22: Gerald Warman

I am a business owner and resident of the Town of Taos. I am against the changing of Camino de la Placita and Paséo del Pueblo Norte into one-way streets. In the case of Camino de la Placita what is now a quite side road that proceeds past residential, retirement, government and business uses will become a thoroughfare for transiting heavy trucking traffic, which, as is the current case on Paséo del Pueblo Norte, is outrageously loud. Furthermore, the only purpose of one way traffic is for easing traffic congestion and increasing flow of traffic through an area. Usually the results are achieved at the expense of pedestrian traffic and safety and an intrinsic alienation of vehicular traffic from normal pedestrian utilization of the affected area.

In addition, creation of a new de facto Highway through town via Camino de la Placita in essence makes that road subject to the same conditions as does the existing NM 68-US 64 corridors without the easements and obligations associated with a named highway. Who will be responsible for maintenance, surveying and easement changes, which would reflect designating that route as a State/Federal Highway? Or would the Town of Taos be left with that responsibility on what would be a newly created high-density traffic corridor?

Of more importance to me, and a subject, which I have addressed previously to the Town of Taos, is the maintenance of existing sidewalks such that they meet minimum standards set forth in the US Federal Americans with Disability Act. The existing sidewalks have been non-compliant for decades and no governmental body has yet taken responsibility for their current state of deterioration. Furthermore, when this matter was taken up with both Town of Taos and your offices over a year ago when this same presentation was made before the public I asked why the two issues were not addressed separately as there is only a desire to deal with the traffic situation as part of a larger planning option for the Town of Taos whereas in the case of the sidewalks there is an ongoing obligation and a definite indication of negligence by both the State of New Mexico and Town of Taos in violation of Federal ADA regulations.

I hope that the logistics and benefits of separating traffic to one way routes through town will be recognized. This project is long overdue. I hope this time around it will be undertaken and done correctly. This is a golden opportunity.

Finally, the issue of safe bicycle lanes needs to be addressed by this commission so that those who do use this ecologically responsible method of transportation (I am not one of them due to age) are more than just minimally accommodated.

The high-speed flow of traffic through the Town of Taos is of no concern to me. I would rather see a sensible, safe and environmentally responsible approach to making the Historic District a place where those who work and live can expect to prosper and grow. If traffic continues to be “congested”, so what. I both walk and drive. The occasional inconvenience of high traffic density while driving is certainly not a matter for the total reconfiguration of the downtown Historic District at the expense of everyone else.

Pave the roads.
Fix the sidewalks.
Put in bike lanes.
No more traffic lights.

Give people a reason to get out of their cars and enjoy what could be a lovely experience.

I know your job is to build roads and solve perceived problems involving traffic flow and utilization. You are a vested interest and I am a taxpayer. We are bound at times to be at odds.

Thank you for taking the time to review this letter.

Comment 23: Dan Jones

I have recently learned of the lack of landscape plans for this project, so I have added additional comments on my attached form.

As part of the highway project being studied through central Taos, a dedicated bicycle lane is critical. Currently bicycling through Taos is dangerous and unpleasant.

I hope that the logistics and benefits of separating traffic to one way routes through town will be recognized. This project is long overdue. I hope this time around it will be undertaken and done correctly. This is a golden opportunity.

Additional input 3/6: I just learned that the studies have not taken landscaping or tree planting into account. This is a serious oversight. The lack of trees along the redesigned street would be a serious mistake. Further, as a horticulturist, I can tell you that planning for the infrastructure of planting, cutouts, soils, irrigation, needs to happen at this stage and not once the project is underway. Taos is blighted with Siberian Elms and this is a great opportunity to utilize the many other viable tree varieties that do well in Taos. As noted above I firmly believe there is a need to
increase viable bike paths (and pedestrian sidewalks) in central Taos. These, as well, need the trees. We live in a dusty, hot summer environment that can be ameliorated by trees.

Comment 24: Amy Bell

I received the below email from the Taos Tree Board and would like to express my support for their concern regarding the lack of vegetation/landscaping in the current plan for HWY 68.

I am part of the New Mexico Chapter of ASLA’s Executive Committee, and have been very active in our efforts to promote Complete Streets conscious planning throughout the state. Attached is a flyer we distributed on Complete Streets day (Feb 11th) at the Roundhouse in Santa Fe and I’m sure you’re aware of these efforts statewide, as it’s clear that the HWY 68 plans have safety and economic development at their core. This is an important project that will clearly improve safety, visibility, walkability, and all the related economic and social implications for the area.

I’m sure you are also aware that street trees in particular are a significant contributor toward traffic calming, storm water management/mitigation, improved air quality, and increased spending at local businesses. As a landscape architect and certified arborist, I’m (painfully) aware of how landscaping, while a critical component of creating Complete Streets, often gets left out of the equation due to lack of funding and concerns about maintenance. While these concerns are clearly legitimate, project budgets are ‘what they are’ – the question of including provisions for landscaping in the plans is quite important. Even if funds don’t allow for landscaping right now, it would be a shame to make future installation impossible through lack of foresight on the matter. Provision of landscape parkways and irrigation sleeving are low-cost measures that would make future planting a possibility.

I have worked with several members of the Taos Tree Board through my membership on the New Mexico Urban Forest Council. They demonstrate exceptional ability to build partnerships, and raise community enthusiasm and funding for important local urban forestry efforts. I have no doubt that if the plans for HWY 68 include provisions for future landscaping, the Tree Board will not only engage the community to develop plans for implementation, they will also be able to cooperatively plan (with the Town of Taos) for appropriate maintenance considerations. It’s also clear that in the Tree Board, you have a number of highly qualified local professionals who are available to provide valuable advisement on how best to include street trees and landscaping in the HWY 68 plans.

Thank you for your time and consideration on the matter. Please let me know if there is anything NMASLS, the NM Urban Forest Council, or I can do to help with the effort.

Comment 25: Ben Wright

Dear Taos Tree People,

I have included you on this list because at some point or another you have expressed interest in trees and landscaping for Taos. As you probably know, there are plans in the works to remodel the streetscape of HST 68 as it travels through downtown Taos. The project is focused on improving traffic flow, bike lanes, and pedestrian walkways. However, there is currently little to
February 24, 2016, 3:00 pm

NM 68/US 64 Corridor Study – Phase 1-B
Business Stakeholders Meeting

Comment 29: Jessica Roybal

My name is Jessica Roybal and I am a native of Taos, New Mexico. I am writing to express my concern that there is limited landscaping and tree planting included in the plan to remodel the streetscape of Highway 68.

Growing up in Taos, I have vivid memories of walking down Burch Street or Randall Lane lined with beautiful tree coverings. I was told, by my grandmother that the families that settled in town planted the trees with visions of tree lined streets. The streets expressed and illustrated stories of the seasons. We are still privileged to enjoy their vision for decades. Taos Highway 68 has lost a lot of the tree-lined streets, including those once framed the mountains and Overland.

I think it would be best to think about our impact on the future and a vision that we would like to share with them. The Highway 68 plan should consider including at minimum the infrastructure to support the planting of trees and landscaping in the near future. I have also attached a couple of my street shots of Burch and Randall Land from this fall for your visual reference.

Comment 30: Barley Donahue

Please include xeriscaping when you design the road through Taos. I bet you will make it beautiful.

Homeowner and voter in Taos.

Comment 31: Tara Waters Lumpkin

I am extremely concerned that the plans in process for the streetscape of HWY 68 do not include vegetation, trees and landscaping.

The entrance to Taos from the south is incredibly ugly and dusty. All the friends that I've had visit me in Taos have remarked that they thought Taos would be pretty, but that the entrance to town is ugly, and they have asked why there aren't trees along HWY 68.

What can I say? I usually reply that there is a “lack of vision” in Taos among the local governments, its planners, the retailers, and our residents. As you know, it’s easier to provide the necessary planting spaces, drainage, and irrigation systems before the concrete and asphalt are laid. So, for once, maybe we could get this right rather than add to our tons ugliness.

In addition, if we are to market Taos as a “green” town in the future, we need to include the planting of vegetation as part of our effort not only to beautify our town but also to offset our carbon footprint. Taos is dreadfully behind most of the USA when it comes to emphasizing that we value the environment.

Let’s plant trees and help ourselves, our town, and our environment.

Comment 32: G. Robert Parker

I am writing to recommend that a streetscape plan be integrated into the proposed improvements for Hwy 68 in Taos. My understanding is that plans are currently underway to make planned improvements for the highway. As you are aware, Highway 68 is the major entry and gateway into Taos from the South and as such needs to provide a welcoming and carefully designed streetscape for both residents and visitors alike.

Many years ago, I worked with the Town of Taos to initiate a “boulevard” approach for the redesign of Hwy 68 but at that time there were no plans by the State to make any improvements. The design approach that a number of concerned citizens and myself took was to create a landscaped center median strip down the center of the highway from the south end on up to the intersection with the highway and Quesnel Road. The landscaped median was not dissimilar to that along a number of boulevards in Albuquerque, including Tramway Boulevard. Whereby turning lanes were rationalized and provided at appropriate locations with the balance of the median landscaped with drought resistant plant materials. There was very little hard landscaping in the median strip and it was planned with both trees, low shrubs and flowering plant materials, and was provided with underground irrigation to ensure sufficient plant growth throughout the growing season. The design was cognizant of sight lines and the efficient movement of traffic.

In addition, the sides of the highway were planned for both pedestrian and bike lanes and planting strips, such that the entire roadway was considered as a landscaped gateway to the Town of Taos.

With the amount of traffic and roadside development that has occurred over the last 15 years, a design approach that incorporates a landscaped boulevard is more essential now than previously. Our roadway into the town needs to be an asset that is aesthetically pleasing as well as satisfying the engineering demands of improved traffic management. I would hope that you, your firm, and the State will take the need for a carefully landscaped median along with the sides of the roadway into serious consideration.

I should be happy to discuss this with you further at your convenience if you should so wish.

Comment 33: Puncky and Mary Heppner

I am happy to hear about the renovation to Highway 68. It is much needed, and I greatly appreciate the leadership of the City of Taos in both their foresight as well as moving this issue forward.

Barley Donahue

Jessica Roybal

Tara Waters Lumpkin

G. Robert Parker

Hilary Hart

Puncky and Mary Heppner
However, I am very concerned about the omission of green spaces in the plan. One absolutely wonderful characteristic of Taos are the many and old trees, especially in the downtown area. I strongly urge the planning committee to include at the very beginning green spaces, and particularly trees that will continue to beautify Taos and welcome visitors and locals alike, for many years to come.

Comment 34: Beth Enson

I strongly urge you to include basic landscape design elements in your redesign of Highway 68 in Taos. It will be much more difficult to retrofit and add these elements later on. Simple stub-outs for irrigation and drainage and spaces for trees and shrubs can suffice, even if the landscaping is not planted immediately. The costs, both financial and aesthetic, for leaving these elements out of the design are too great in the long run. I am a founding member of the recently created Taos Tree Board and care deeply about ensuring a sustainable and green future for Taos. We are dependent on tourism for our economy and the landscape is a critical part of keeping Taos attractive to visitors and to those of us who live here.

Thanks for the work you are doing for our town.

Comment 35: J Paul Burner

I urge the powers to be to consider trees, plants and other aesthetic vegetation in the proposed HKW 68 renovation.

Comment 36: Lawrence Baker

I implore you to not just slap down $11M worth of ugly asphalt and think you’ve done us a favor. We need landscaping, sidewalks and bike lanes would be terrific, even landscaped medians would be good, although I didn’t see that on any of your proposals. We DO NOT want one-ways through our tiny town. We want people to have to see what we have to offer by going slowly. We’re a tourist town. You’re supposed to see what we have. I have lived here for 35 years and would like to continue to enjoy driving through the downtown area with the beauty of nature all around. After all, that is why I live here. Thank you.

We really have to laugh at people complaining about traffic here when I come from Baltimore and spend a lot of time in Denver. Now those places have serious traffic. At the very worst, our main drag may take you 3-5 minutes (if that) to get through the main part of town. We don’t want people flying through at 40-50 mph (which they will do, I promise you, because they already do it) with one-ways, killing pedestrians as they go. And putting stoplights on Placitas is ludicrous. I drive that stretch several times a day sometimes and I am never held up more than normal except at the light at Ranchitos where I may have 5 cars in front of me. It a local gets caught in traffic, they deserve to be inconvenienced because there are so many ways to get around traffic here.

We only have two times of day when the traffic can even approach being heavy, morning and evening and even then it’s mostly during the height of the tourist season.

I know people don’t like traffic circles but they are the most efficient and the most attractive. If you ever go to Aspen, they put one in at a 5-way (one road heads to the Maroon Bells) and it works beautifully and isn’t all that large. I don’t buy this idea that you have to have 1-lane or 2 – lane round a bouts. You can have a 1 ½ so that the semis can get around them. You could even make them slightly elliptical on the main drag part because the semis don’t go on the side roads. And I just heard our police chief Weaver say that traffic fatalities are nil at the round a bouts.

You had one proposal on the approach to the Historic District that wasn’t so bad, a nice way of putting 6 lanes into two. Would you please send me those 3 options and I will write back and tell you which one looks best. I think it was the middle one, but I’m not sure.

I hope you’re listening to us. We don’t want to look like Santa Fe’s Cerrillos or ABQ’s blocks of nothing but concrete. Our administration may think that bigger is better but I have several thousand signature who disagree and who want Taos to stay in scale.

Would you please send me the pictures of the three options for telescoping 4 lanes into 2 just before the Historic District begins? Thank you.

Those options are still being developed, and the details are not available at this time.

Comment 37: Laura Stewart

I am disappointed to hear that at this time there is little to no planning for trees or landscaping for the remodel of Hwy 68. What a difference it would make if, coming into Taos, there was some beautiful vegetation. As it stands now, coming into Taos is just plain ugly. Newcomers to Taos often remark to me how disappointed they are as they drive into Taos. Let’s offset the commercial, concrete blandness with some beauty, and restore Taos’ image as an environmentally forward-thinking town.

Comment 38: Terry McClymond

Please plan to add in some vegetation, trees, bushes, etc. when you do your planning in Taos. I have lived here for 35 years and would like to continue to enjoy driving through the downtown area with the beauty of nature all around. After all, that is why I live here. Thank you.

Comment 39: Sarah Mantis

I would like to encourage the town, hopefully with support from the state, to include a landscaping plan for the roadway on Highway 68 in Taos. First impressions are extremely important for the welcoming attraction for a town. It also adds to the feeling of pride and ownership for the local population. Taos could certainly gain from civic pride.

Comment 40: Cat Hayden

I am grateful for our beautiful northern New Mexico landscape and know that many tourists and part timers enjoy the beauty and aesthetics of our town, as well. For many travelers, from the North of South, it is their first visit and first impression of Taos. A beautiful landscape of flowers, bushes and shady trees encourages and invites exploration. Be it shops, restaurants, the Visitor Comment
Center or our many incredible Art venues. What a pleasure it is to enjoy the shade and beautiful hanging baskets around the Plaza...and how much a lovely landscape border would add to our main entrance into town. If they stop, they will buy! All this equates to increased economic success for our community.

I sincerely hope the Town and County of Taos will consider the importance of landscape design before the concrete and asphalt is poured...if done in thoughtful and pre-planned phases, it will enhance the beauty, enjoyment and pleasure we all receive from our beautiful Taos.

I wish you well on this project and would hope that SOME of my tax dollars are going for beautification.

Comment 41:  Emelie Olson

My husband, Glenn Yocum, and I are pleased to learn that the remodeling of Hwy 68 through downtown Taos is intended to improve traffic flow, to provide bike lanes and pedestrian walkways. As residents who walk rather than driving whenever we can through Taos, this is very welcome.

However, I am very disappointed that there is reportedly no plan for vegetation, trees, or landscaping as part of the project. These are extremely important to us, for human health, beauty, and the protection of the natural environment. They are also financially important, since they attract visitors and keep both them and current residents here.

We urge you to include that planning at this stage of the process, since it should be integral to your vision.

It is also important to plan now for controlling rain and snow run-off and direct it into planting areas, so that trees, shrubs, and smaller plants are watered naturally. This also reduces the flooding of streets, sidewalks and parking lots. It also saves the city money in watering costs and allows scarce water to be used in other ways. I have seen beautiful examples of such rainwater control and distribution in other areas, and look forward to seeing them here. The basic principles of Permaculture, which I am not expert in, but know enough to know how effective they are, include such water control.

Thank you for your attention and time. We look forward to seeing public proposals that will address our concerns.

Comment 42:  Saskia Iliohan

When I look at pictures of Taos past and especially now in light of the proposed re-zoning, I would urge you to plan with great detail and community support... Please consider allowing the time and experience of a committee to create visions, planning and logistics (not to mention environmental sustainability) of the green, public areas in the plan.

Comment 43:  Saskia Iliohan

Thank you for forwarding and acknowledging receipt of my comments. Just wondering if a reply to my concerns is forthcoming... I hope so.

We plan to prepare a single response to the tree and landscaping comments that we have received from many stakeholders.

Thank you.

Comment 44:  David Lambert

Please include trees in your renovation plan for the Taos Plan. They will add so much to the area.

Comment 45:  Ron McFarland

Great to learn you are planning to improve the entrance to Taos via the south. It would be awesome if your plan includes updates for new trees, plants, shrubs, flowerbeds and irrigation.

In addition, it is even better if your plan shows respect for existing plant material by protecting plants during construction and if possible bringing pruning and other neglected care up to date.

Comment 46:  Bruce W. McClymond

As a property owner adjacent to the proposed project I am totally in favor of the one way pairing of the two streets. However, now would be the perfect time to include provisions for landscaping along the routes, whether those are done at this time or in the future. Plantings and green areas would certainly soften the impact of a highway through the Historic District.

Comment 47:  Suzanne Schwartz

I have lived and worked in Taos County for over 30 years. I have witnessed many changes since before Walmart.
Thank you for incorporating bike lanes and pedestrian walkways into the plan. This will improve life for visitors and residents alike. In addition, it is crucial in this day and age of climate change fueled by corporate greed that we do everything in our power to combat it for the sake of future generations and the planet itself. Landscaping and especially the planting of trees MUST BE included in the plan. Anything less would be completely irresponsible.

Comment 48: Jeff Stadler

Below are my comments and suggestions on the reference Corridor Study based on the following attended the last two NMDOT meeting held in Taos, a 1969 A.S. degree in Civil Engineering Technology from ENMU in Portales, 10 years with the USFS surveying, designing and construction inspection of Forest Service Roads, a registered Land Surveyor in NM since 1982 and Colorado since 1988, a resident in and around Taos for over 40 years, and I pushed hard to re-align Albright to its current location.

I am not in favor of the proposed one-way pairings because any street connecting the one-way pairs between Civic Plaza Drive and the Northern terminus of Placitas would go through residential areas. If either of the one-way streets were to be closed due to an emergency, the next closest alternative route to US 64 would be Upper Ranchitos Road. The delay in response time for the fire department because they can’t go north on Placitas. Additional lights on Placitas would be in excess of current NMDOT minimum spacing requirements, which I was told was 1000 feet. So if the one-way pairing is determined to not be feasible, why would run 2 lanes of traffic north into a bottleneck at Quesnel and Placitas? I would like to submit the following suggestions in the following priority to comply with budgetary constraints.

1. Please implement the Adaptive Signal System for the traffic lights before adding traffic lanes.
2. From La Posta and Cervantes to a new light at Albright and Tewa, 2 lanes north and south with sidewalks, center turning lane. Transition right north bound lane to right only at Albright.
3. From Albright and Tewa to a new light at a re-aligned Los Pandos and Siler, repave current road configuration after installing any drainage structures to the full widths of the existing ROW to facilitate future lane additions.
4. From Los Pandos and Siler to Quesnel and Placitas, 1 lane north and south with sidewalk and planting buffers, center turning lane, install any drainage structures to the full width of the existing ROW to facilitate future lane additions.
5. From Albright and Tewa to the new light at the re-aligned Los Pandos and Siler, add sidewalks with planting buffers.

Thank you for any consideration to my concerns and suggestions.

Comment 49: Rita O’Connell

It has been brought to my attention by the fine folks at the Taos Tree Board that the current Highway 68 renovation plan for Taos includes little in the way of vegetation and landscaping. Many of us are concerned about this, and hope that the project leaders will see the importance of adjusting the design plan to include these elements up front. We ask you to place higher value and priority on incorporating green elements, which are extremely important, as I’m sure you understand, both aesthetically and environmentally.

I will be sharing these thoughts with our leaders at the Town as well.

Comment 50: Katie Gillis

I am strongly requesting that an aesthetic and functional landscaping plan be included in the overall purported road improvements along Hwy 68. Beautiful and protective trees and other appropriate plantings are a vital part of a community and speaks highly of the foresight and environmental considerations addressed by its leaders. Thank you for your diligence and concern in this matter.

Comment 51: Priscilla Winslow

I am a Taos County resident for 42 of my 55 years. I grew up going to Taos Public Schools and returned to run my own business for the past 29 years. I currently live on the beautiful Dragoon Lane and I love Taos!

It has come to my attention that in planning of in town traffic flow Landscaping has not been considered fully. The planting of trees needs to be the first and foremost in the minds of Town Planners. To not do this is to ignore a positive healthy future for Taos, our Earth and future generations. Thinking short term is not sustainable.

In the late ‘80’s I had a brief part time job selling the Taos Photo Map. What was so striking was the amount of trees that aerial map photographed all through the downtown area. That still exists in some areas and is lacking in many others. Living in two different locations in town the past two years has been a new experience for me. I have so appreciated the areas easily walked and become more aware of those those not walker/bicycle friendly. It has been heartening to see more bike paths and pedestrian walkways being built and I thank you for moving in that direction! Including nature and vegetation in the plans is of critical importance for current and future residents. Leave we forget? We also call Taos a tourist destination.

Comment 52: Ben Wright

I am writing on behalf of the Taos Tree Board. We earnestly support the inclusion of trees and landscaping in the early stages of the Hwy 68 project. Judging from the type of work explored on your company website, I would suspect your sentiments are right there with us.

Thank you for your work on this project and your efforts in trying to improve the downtown infrastructure for Taos. We have attended three recent public meetings to try and understand the nature of this project and the extent of the planning. We have met with town manager, Rick Bellis, and town counselor, Fritz Hahn, to try and see what the town could do to include green infrastructure planning in the design. We have discussed it with other town officials and among ourselves, and urged citizens to submit comments of their own, both to your office and to the Town of Taos. We understand that in order for this to happen, the town of Taos needs to contribute planning coordination, general support, and funds to help implement the planting and future maintenance of landscaped plants and trees. The response so far has been an almost
Both sides claim “lack of funding” but I think they are not thinking this through clearly. Both you and I know that the financial gains of landscaping and GI Implementation far outweigh the costs through business gains, tourism dollars, energy savings, storm water mitigation, etc. But that is just the beginning. The choices that we make today on this planning decision affect the character of the town for a long time in the future. They also claim that it is too late in the planning process to make provisions for landscaping. I can’t imagine this is true because the decisions as to traffic circles versus times lights versus split-pair one-ways and 2 lane roads versus 4 lane roads, and where these various inconveniences are places still seem largely up in the air. (That is another issue). Certainly there is still time to engineer in some key spots for something green in there. At the very least, provide irrigation stub outs, and planting spaces for the future. The grey needs to be balanced with the green right?

As you probably know, the Town of Taos and its citizens are embroiled in contentious zoning disputes, blurred long-term vision, and challenging leadership in determining solutions to these matters. We are seeking your help in opening a dialogue to discuss the importance of trees, landscaping and GI planning to this project. The scale and influence of the Hwy 68 project to the overall aesthetic and function of the town demands it. This is the backbone for future planning in the downtown area. Let’s get this right!

Thank you for your time in reading all our letters and let us know how we can work on setting some of these ideas into motion. I’m open to further communication.

Comment 53: Felix Banuelos

I am a concerned citizen of Taos. We have an open window of opportunity this year 2016 to incorporate street trees, shrubs, and groundcover plantings within the proposed adjacent pedestrian paving areas. Integrating green scape areas within the planning phases is vital to enhancing the Hwy 68 improvements setting a firm foundation for all to see that Taos is moving forward in a positive direction. We urge you to consider the importance of balancing the improvements of Hwy 68 with another color beside grey.

Comment 54: Myrth Killingsworth

Hwy 68 is the portal to Taos. I walk it often, the strip between the Sagebrush Inn and Taos Java, with my 9-month-old son and our dog. This winter the snow along the side of the road was black with exhaust hours after falling. The traffic noise is muted by nothing living. The roadside is littered with beer cans and on-shot liquor bottles. And yet, this is how we present our town to others who come here seeking enchantment, and perhaps more importantly, to our children and ourselves.

The solution is simple – Trees. Please consider including plans for trees, landscaping and vegetation in the upcoming remodel of our town’s doorway. My husband and I have chosen to raise our son in Taos, and the work that you are doing now is an opportunity to improve the esteem, economy, safety, air-quality, and beauty of this remarkable community. Please let my son grow up in a place that welcomes people with garlands of plants. Let him breathe clean air and take pleasure in walking and biking. Let him say, “I am from Taos” with pride. Thank you for doing this vital work in service to the betterment of our community.

Comment 55: Paula Randall Ervin

As a property/business owner within the proposed project area, I am very interested in the proposals. I am pleased that the state and town are looking at improving the stretch of highway from La Posta Rd to Camino de la Placitas. This area has been in need of improvement for a very long time. I would like to praise the State Highway Department and the town for genuinely listening to the public concerns.

Of the several proposals that are being discussed from our vantage point, #2 looks most workable with one lane going north and south with a center turn lane (just as it is now). We have a very busy lumber & building material business at 315 Paseo del Pueblo Sur. We average 3 semi-truck deliveries daily and 95% of these big trucks go back south after unloading in our yard. With this in mind, I think having to cross two lanes of north bound traffic in order to get into the turn lane would be much more difficult than it is now.

I also like the idea of a round a bout at the intersection of Albright and Tewa, but again my concern would be that it would safely accommodate large semi-truck traffic.

Thank you again for the opportunity to give input on this study.

Comment 56: Jean Stevens


Comment 57: Mark Schuetz

As you work on the street design in Taos, I encourage you to include vegetation and water infiltration zones that support that vegetation at every opportunity. So far as I know, the leading pioneer of creating water infiltration zones that benefit vegetation adjacent to paved surfaces, is Brad Lancaster www.harvestingrainwater.com/aboutbrad/. Several projects in Tucson feature his successful efforts to eliminate flooding adjacent to roadways and sidewalks, through the infiltration of seasonal runoff into porous planted areas. Those sites have bountiful shade trees and prosperous understory vegetation because of the periodic floods they receive from the amplified water volume that is delivered to them from the adjacent hard surfaces.

We want to see these types of project in Taos because the presence of vegetation adjacent to thoroughfares increases livability, enhances community aesthetic, buffers the inevitable dust and hydrocarbon emissions resulting from roadways, and have been statistically show to reduce crime.

Thank you for considering my suggestions on behalf of the health and well-being of our community.
Comment 58: Paul Bryan Jones

I am writing with some deep concerns about the lack of green infrastructure in your NM 68-US 64 Corridor Study, La Posta Road to Camino de la Placitas Project. I was present at the last public meeting and no mention of landscaping or trees in the project.

The project does not address climate change or greening initiatives. With the present state of the planet, especially Taos, a high desert plateau, the importance of trees and their many benefits to the community, land, and people should be incorporated into any highway development project.

Sustainability and resiliency are key in all building projects, and greenscapes address these issues. Our town supports trees, Tree City USA since 2010. We pride ourselves about planting trees for healthier communities and environments.

I look forward to seeing a revision of Phase 2 or Phase B so community issues will be addressed and implemented.

Comment 59: Dan Veirs

Taos is a historic town that depends on its appearance. Building a bland highway with no consideration for landscaping would be detrimental to visitors, the town, and the people. It needs more than just concrete.

Comment 60: Rebecca Egg

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen. I would like to see planning for the eventual installation and trees and other landscape elements included in the renovation plans that I understand your firm is creating. Tourism is critically important to the local economy, and attracting retirees also does much to support local small businesses. Enhancing the aesthetic appeal of roads leading into and through the downtown area support these two critical parts of Taos’s economy and improves the quality of life for all who live in and around Taos.

Taos’s agricultural contributions to the region date back for many centuries and, unlike Santa Fe, this tradition is still alive here. Furthermore, the town has a long history of resident artists and visitors who should be able to see the beauty that has inspired them, on both large and small scales. In the last decade, the town has lost far too many of the large trees that used to shade our roadways because of neglect and abuse and occasionally because they simply reached the end of their lifespans. This trend must be addressed. The Taos Tree Board is working on this issue but they need the support of everyone currently working on the Hwy 68 plans.

In my opinion, it would be a terrible thing if Paseo del Pueblo Norte and Placitas began to look more like St. Francis Drive in Santa Fe or like Hwy 68 through Española. Taos is beautiful and quirky, independent and lovely. I believe that efficiency can be improved while maintaining and sustaining the town’s character. I understand that current budgets may not allow large expenditures for landscape installation at this time. Still, I would like to see plans made that provide space for plants and conduits for the irrigation that will eventually be needed. I appreciate your consideration.

Comment 61: Janice S. Martenson

I have viewed the power point presentation regarding the Taos traffic flow change proposal(s).

I am in full agreement that the traffic patterns into/out of the historic district need to be changed. Adding bike paths and sidewalks for the safety of bikers and pedestrians is much needed in this community.

However, one thing completely missing from the proposal, at least in this Feb. 24, 2016 presentation that I viewed, is consideration of landscaping, trees, and the overall aesthetics of the traffic flow project. It is vital that the local arborists and landscapers be involved from the beginning to aid in the consideration of maintaining existing tree health, and to advise on planting spaces, draining, and irrigation systems. It is much more sensible to plan for these elements before hard surfaces are laid than after.

Thank you for your consideration.

Comment 62: Jason Boyd

Please consider using the opportunity of the re-design of this gateway to Taos to introduce some landscaped areas to this busy traffic corridor. As you well know these can be used to alleviate storm water runoff, bolster the appearance of the streetscape and improve the experiences of both pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Comment 63: Thomas Myers

I attended the informational meeting at the Taos Council Chambers two weeks ago and have been reading the plans (90+ page pdf) and am appalled at the one way plan for Paseo del Pueblo Norte and Placitas. These two arteries are vital to traffic going north and south and to make Paseo del Norte one way north from Quesnel to Placitas and Placitas one way south with proposed 7 (SEVEN) traffic lights is not feasible.

Medina Sand and Gravel come from the north to travel east on Kit Carson to their local distribution business. Every day. LARGE trucks. This will create traffic jams all along Placitas. Other businesses seriously affected: Fire Department having to go south to go north. Schools and morning and afternoon traffic congestion with parents dropping off and picking up children.

Traffic from the post office going south will now ALL have to go down narrow residential streets (Hinde and Lund) to get to Placitas and probably go to Valverde to continue south to the dangerous Valverde and Lower Ranchitos intersection (blind looking east).

Businesses on Paseo del Pueblo Norte will suffer as people speed north.
A round a bout by Centinel Bank won’t happen as Centinel will never allow part of their building to be razed. Never going to happen.

And what about landscaping? This needs to be addressed soon. Bike paths also need to be addressed and added to the plans in a way that makes these paths functional and not dangerous.

A lot of work has gone into this Study, but needs more to be done to make it work for Taos.

Please come and talk with us.

Comment 64: Paul Phillips

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the NM 68/US 64 Corridor Study.

My wife and I are longtime residents at 22 Jose Pacheco in the Cañon neighborhood.

We would like to make four primary comments on the study.

First, we commend you and the others involved in this important project and the opportunity you are providing for citizens to make comments.

Second, we strongly favor any and all improvements needed to promote and provide bike lanes (alternative transportation infrastructure) as a key part of the project. This will make Taos more beautiful and user friendly to residents and visitors, conserve energy, improve the visual aesthetics of the southern entry to Taos, and improve the quality of life for all of us. This would both promote tourism and serve the benefit of longtime residents.

Third, we do not think a four lane project would be needed or advisable. We are concerned a four lane project could increase traffic speeds and pose danger to both pedestrians and bikers. Traffic circles, road narrowing, vegetative plantings and other traffic slowing techniques should instead be used to make this southern entry to Taos safer and more like a parkway. This would greatly improve the current situation, which feels like a “dead zone” and strip development that has marred so many cities across the country. Let’s make this southern entry to one of America’s most unique small cities beautiful again!

Fourth, we strongly favor the incorporation of plantings, trees, and vegetation into the project. This will greatly improve the “parkway” feeling we think is ideal, make the project more beautiful, and express Taos’ valuing of the environment and natural world. The southern entry to Taos should incorporate the natural beauty that makes Taos special.

Many thanks for the opportunity to make these comments.
**Local Government Stakeholders Meeting**

The Federal Highway Administration and New Mexico Department of Transportation announce a stakeholders meeting

**NM 68-US 64 Corridor Study**

**La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita**

**CN 5100750**

**Date:** Wednesday

**February 24, 2016**

**Location:** Taos Convention Center

- Coronado Hall
- City Council Chambers
- 120 Civic Plaza Drive
- Taos, New Mexico

**Time:** 1:00 – 2:30 pm

**Project Summary:** The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is conducting a corridor study for NM 68 and US 64 in Taos, New Mexico. The corridor study includes Paseo del Pueblo from La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita and Camino de la Placita west of Paseo del Pueblo. NM 68 and US 64 are often congested by local and visitor vehicle traffic. Pedestrians commonly walk along streets in this area to access restaurants, shops, hotels, and the plaza area.

**Stakeholders Meeting Purpose:** To present revised project concepts, discuss local government issues, and receive comments from local governments. NMDOT project team representatives will be present to discuss the corridor study. Local government officials are encouraged to attend and provide their perspectives on the proposed improvements under consideration for NM 68 and US 64 in Downtown Taos.

**ADA:** To request Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-related accommodations for the meeting, contact Eric Johnson at (505) 898-8848 at least two days before the meeting.

**Comments:** Written comments will be accepted at the meeting or they may be sent by March 9, 2016 to:

- Eric Johnson
- Marron and Associates
- 7511 Fourth Street NW
- Albuquerque, NM 87107

- phone: (505) 898-8848
- email: eric@marroninc.com
- fax: (505) 897-7847

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**Business Stakeholders Meeting**

The Federal Highway Administration and New Mexico Department of Transportation announce a stakeholders meeting

**NM 68-US 64 Corridor Study**

**La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita**

**CN 5100750**

**Date:** Wednesday

**February 24, 2016**

**Location:** Taos Convention Center

- Coronado Hall
- City Council Chambers
- 120 Civic Plaza Drive
- Taos, New Mexico

**Time:** 3:00 – 4:30 pm

**Project Summary:** The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is conducting a corridor study for NM 68 and US 64 in Taos, New Mexico. The corridor study includes Paseo del Pueblo from La Posta Road to Camino de la Placita and Camino de la Placita west of Paseo del Pueblo. NM 68 and US 64 are often congested by local and visitor vehicle traffic. Pedestrians commonly walk along streets in this area to access restaurants, shops, hotels, and the plaza area.

**Stakeholders Meeting Purpose:** To present revised project concepts, discuss concerns of Taos businesses, and receive comments from business owners and managers. NMDOT project team representatives will be present to discuss the corridor study. Business owners and managers are encouraged to attend and provide their perspectives on the proposed improvements under consideration for NM 68 and US 64 in Downtown Taos.

**ADA:** To request Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-related accommodations for the meeting, contact Eric Johnson at (505) 898-8848 at least two days before the meeting.

**Comments:** Written comments will be accepted at the meeting or they may be sent by March 9, 2016 to:

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STATE OF NEW MEXICO  
COUNTY OF TAOS

I, Meriah Montoya, being first duly sworn, declare and say that I am Legal Advertising Representative of THE TAOS NEWS, a weekly newspaper published in the English language, and having a general circulation in the City and County of Taos, State of New Mexico, and being a newspaper duly qualified to publish legal notices and advertisements under the provisions of Chapter 167 on Session Laws of 1977, that the Legal No. 14,949 a copy of which is hereto attached was published in said newspaper 1 day(s) between 02/18/2016 and 02/18/2016 and that the notice was published in the newspaper proper and not in any supplement; the first date of publication being on the 18th day of February, 2016 and that the undersigned has personal knowledge of the matter and things set forth in this affidavit.

/S/ Meriah Montoya
LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT REPRESENTATIVE

Subscribed and sworn to before me on this 18th day of February, 2016

Notary
Commission Expires: 02/11/17

The Taos News  
PO Box 3737 Taos, NM 87571 975-758-2241
Meeting Summary
Pueblo of Taos Stakeholders Meeting
NM 68/US 64 Corridor Study – Phase 1-B
March 17, 2016, 1:30 pm
Taos Pueblo Natural Resources Building

Meeting Announced by Shawn Duran, Tribal Administrator

Meeting Attendees

Fourteen stakeholders attended the meeting:

1. Robert Espinosa
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2. Cherylin Atcitty
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3. Ezra Bayles
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4. Jeff Ogburn
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5. Scott Fields
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6. Bernadette Lujan
   505 Gusdorf Road, Suite 5, Taos, NM 87571, blujan@taospueblo.com
7. Jimmie Romero
   P.O. Box 1846, Taos, NM 87571
8. Tammie Mirabal
   Taos Pueblo Housing, P.O. Box 2570, Taos, NM 87571, tmirabal@taospueblo.com
9. Harold Cordova
   P.O. Box 1846, Taos, NM 87571, lt.gn@taospueblo.com
10. Fred Romero
    P.O. Box 2596, Taos, NM 87571, fwc@taospueblo.com
11. George Track
    P.O. Box 2596, Taos, NM 87571, warchiefsecretary@taospueblo.com
12. Riva Soazo
    Tribal Realty, P.O. Box 1846, Taos, NM 87571, rsoazo@taospueblo.com
13. Shawn Duran
    Tribal Administrator, P.O. Box 1846, Taos, NM 87571, sduran@taospueblo.com
14. Vernon Lujan
    CMS Municipal Services Division, vlujan@taospueblo.com

The following project team member were present:

- Antonio Jaramillo, NMDOT
- Jennifer Mullins, NMDOT
- Bill Hutchinson, NMDOT
- Genevieve Head, NMDOT
- Richard Peña, NMDOT
- George Herrera, Souder Miller
- Matthew Nighbert, Souder Miller
- Joan-Marie Sanchez, Souder Miller
- Eric Johnson, Marron and Associates

Presentation

Attendees introduced themselves. Shawn Duran mentioned that the meeting was requested by the pueblo. George Herrera presented project team, meeting purpose, project location, project history, roadway issues, pedestrian issues, bicycle issues, traffic issues, and project development process. George discussed Phase 1-A alternatives. Matthew Nighbert discussed details of the proposed roadway and traffic improvements. George followed with a discussion of drainage, right-of-way needs, utilities, and schedule.

Question and Answer Session
(Project team responses are in italics)

Who requested the project? Town? County?
The pueblo has land near the intersection of Camino de la Placita and NM 68. According to the pueblo’s street agreement with town, Camino de la Placita would be shifted north, and the pueblo would get land to the south.

Does this project affect the pueblo’s agreement with the town?
The pueblo has given permission to the town to maintain roads.

Tribal government does not like the one-way pair? Will you need extra right-of-way?
Five feet on each side of the roadway would be needed. We would do a property survey.

One-way pair leaves one-way into the pueblo.

Will the four-lane alternative need right-of-way?
The four-lane north of Los Pandos to Quesnel is hard to fit, and right-of-way may be needed.

What about trucks?
We are going with 11-foot lanes that is accepted by AASHTO. St. Francis Drive in Santa Fe has 10-foot 6-inch lanes.

Will you eliminate parking north of Civic Plaza?
The parking will stay.

Will there be a bottleneck where the road goes from four-lane to two-lane?
At Albertsons, the left lane is fast, but the right lane is slowed with merging traffic.

The project developed as part of a process.

When the town abandons a road, the land comes back to the pueblo.
Most people cut through the Allsup's parking lot.

There will need to be a turning lane for southbound traffic at the Allsup's.

What about a roundabout (near the Allsup's)?

It would take a lot of land. The south leg (US 64) of the roundabout would enter at a difficult point.

Turn lanes are needed for large trucks.

NM 585 had the first roundabouts in New Mexico, and they have worked well.

We are trying to minimize right-of-way takes and balance functionality.

Have you talked to the town about the case with the Spring Ditch?

The town is working on it.

Pueblo right-of-way is at Camino de la Placita and Quesnel.

We request that the pueblo has the opportunity to review environmental documents.

What is impact on Ojitos Road near Quesnel?

It will be tied down in the design phase.

When will there be an alternative decision?

In May when the report is released.

What was public comment on the one-way pair? I know there was some opposition.

It has been a mixture of responses on the one-way pair. We are taking account of this in the decision-making process.

Who makes the decision?

NMDOT has an interdisciplinary team. FHWA has final review.

My concern is it will be a one-way pair. Will there be a signal at Allsup's?

A decision has yet to be made.

The pueblo will provide comment before the end of April.

We have the I.H.S. center, and ambulances are a concern. Our health center is here.

Just improve the roads, and leave it the way it is.

At the last meeting, we felt you were pushing the one-way pair. It is out of the way for ambulances on Camino de la Placita. Also, it is not good for tourists.

Ninety percent of people come in from the south (through the intersection at Allsup's).

We will have a free-flow right turn.

The road is supposed to be straight. It is not historically correct as proposed (near the Allsup's intersection).

Is there a yield going right?

Yes, but there is not a big traffic improvement.

We need a large area for visitors. We need a large straight-away for our visitors. We want a nice entrance to our home.

What are crash rates?

Low.

Does this part have funding?

Yes, NM 518 to La Posta will start this year then this project in 2017.

How far does the four-lane go?

To Camino de la Placita and Quesnel.

How far do the sidewalks go?

Sidewalks go the full length of the project.

Have a straight road north into the pueblo.

When are traffic counts taken?

We tend to look at peak traffic.

Do you take historic designations into account, such as the UNESCO World Heritage Site?

The adjustment in geometry is for safety. What you are talking about (straight road) would be less safe.
We need to have input as the design develops.

*We will get your input on the 30 percent, 60 percent, and 90 percent plans.*

Our Tourism Department keep track of people visiting the pueblo.

Was there a count on that road specifically?

Yes.

North and southbound addressed?

Yes.

Look at a third lane as a slow down or speed up lane.

The roundabouts present an opportunity for a gateway. The center could have art or a feature.

Would the budget have money for a feature?

We would have to go after additional funds. There are requirements.

There is a high potential for a big accident. Tankers come into Allsups. With a roundabout, need to put in space for trucks.

Is this part of Governor Martinez’s initiative for tourism.

Yes, it is in Governor Martinez’s investment program. The majority of the $8.5 million is state funds.

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**Meeting Attendees**

Sixty-eight attended the meeting

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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Bob Silver: My name is Bob Silver, and I think I have a suggestion that would save you trouble. It relates to the proposed realignment. Or the alignment of Siler and Los Pandos, it seems to be taken as a given that that ought to occur. That the intersection ought to realign, but I'd like you to really think about that. And why you would want to realign it. Apparently you want to realign so that we could move traffic through that intersection faster. I don’t think that’s a good thing to do. If you’re familiar with the streets between the traffic light at Paséo, where Siler and Los Pandos Rd. are not currently aligned, that’s the one stopping point aside from the stop sign at Montoya, between Cruz Alta and Paséo. As they stand now, people come careening through my neighborhood around the blind curves on Los Pandos Rd. and it no sidewalks and no control over the speed of the traffic that comes through there. Bob Parker: I am an architect, and a real good designer and a planner, and I recognize the complexity of this project, with regards to the very differential arrangements of the streets through Taos, but I think there is something very fundamental that’s lacking. The entire stretch of Paséo is our gateway to Taos, a very heavy tourism oriented community, and it’s the first thing visitor’s see. What I see on these drawings and what I saw on what you presented was basically the CFS toll. And I recognize that the Copper Lane way bits and so forth(??), but I see no landscaping, and you mentioned there was very little funds in the way of landscaping. I would hope you don’t end up looking like the platted median strips through Española, or Cerrillos Road in Santa Fe because that landscape is really turns out to be primarily just gravel and a few native scrubs. Do you have landscape architect and designer on your team? Yes. There’s development situations on here. And of course those are based on funding availability. There is right-of-way that can be enhanced.

Bob Parker: So basically what you’re saying is it’s very unlikely that it will pass because most of the funds are going to the purely engineering aspects of this roadway design. As I said, this is a gateway to our Town. And aesthetics in many respects should be number one. Because of how business, and how we as residents come to love this town. And it don’t include aesthetics at the very beginning and make it an integral part of the overall design process, then we’re going to end up with some more asphalt. And I would highly recommend that you reconsider building that in, even it means phasing it on a funding process so at least we’d have a vision to look forward to.

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James Prato: I’m taking up the section between Siler to Quesnel? If you’re talking about a four-lane highway or a four-lane road there, what happens to the turning ability for people to turn off to Smiths? The Taos Diner? To the 99 storage? How about for McDonalds? If you’re going four-lanes, what happens to that?

Judy Mangina: Basically inside lane is going to become your left turn lane. The advantage of having the four-lanes is it’s going to move traffic a little bit faster. There should be some gaps for people to make those turns there, as you signal to turn, traffic will have to go around you.

Steve Kenin: My name is Steve Kenin, It appears we have four-lanes to Quesnel, down to two-lanes, and the paired one-way streets that were taken off the table. With paired one-way streets, we could have two lanes in each direction all the way through town, which is what every small town does when it gets busy, but not in Taos. Now we’ve been looking at this for twenty-five years, and for twenty-five years it’s been taken off the table, and I don’t quite understand why. The second thing, is the question of pedestrian safety. Trying to get across the road is really difficult. For example in front of the Taos Inn, if there were paired one-way streets, it would be easier, more comfortable for pedestrians, more comfortable for drivers. I know there’s been some opposition, but I don’t understand why, and I don’t understand why it’s been taken off the table. Since we’d be able to race down four-lanes from Quesnel and Placitas, and then we’ll have the same traffic situation that we have right now.

Is that agreement on your part? When you shake your head? We did consider those things, and we’ve dealt with all of them. The one-way pair actually moves traffic a little bit better; there are some pros and cons. Based on the input that we’ve had over the course of the number of years that we’ve had we did get a significant amount of opposition against the one-way pair. Not only from the business community, but also from the Pueblo. The good thing I can say is, by doing what we’re doing right now it does basically provide the infrastructure for a one-way pair.

Judy Mangina: The federal government is contributing a lot of money to the total of billions that you say are already available, correct?

No. The federal government is contributing some, but the majority of it is State funded.

Judy Mangina: Ok thank you. But the federal government is involved. I am personally feeling intuitively, and as the person that I am as a developed spiritual medium, that all of this widening concern for traffic in Taos is related to the airport. And to eventual military. I’ve lived here for about 40 years, and watched traffic, and all the stuff going on. I’m very concerned about the water quality in the Rio Fernando, as it feeds the riparian area Baca Park, and the soon to be added 20 acres of land that has been put aside as an extension of Baca Park. And the fact that the Rio Fernando is also one of the sources of acequia waters. The water quality of the Rio Fernando is pretty low right now. It’s got the most E. coli of any river in Taos. There are a number of organizations trying to clean that up. Having affluence going into the Rio Fernando and those acequias will be detrimental. Point number one.

Point number two. I think the one-way paring is less than intelligent. All the businesses would have all their traffic turn north. As you’re coming south, you’re going to miss all the businesses between the Taos Inn and the Pueblo. If you’re leaving the post office, you’re going to have to go down to Nine and Lund to get to Placitas to go south. So those streets become major traffic roadways, much to the chagrin of the people who live on those streets. So that is I would say less than intelligent maneuver. And the other thing is that I’ve heard all of this is help move traffic through town faster. For businesses that’s a bad idea. They want us, the potential consumer to see their signs, see their businesses, stop and shop. Moving people through faster is not going to attain that goal.

Rebecca Egg: My name is Rebecca Egg and I just want to strengthen Bob Parker’s comments about the importance of aesthetics to our town. I support everything he said, I’m wondering if it’s possible for you to give detailed plans on the lane space areas on Alternative 2, I believe, to the Taos Tree Board, so that we can look it over? And see what we think and make comments, because I’m not sure that my eyes are good enough to tell on this.

Again, these are just concepts right now. When this project actually goes through design is when we will ask people to get involved. There will definitely be some coordination with the Town of Taos.

We also have on board, we have the State Architect, Bill Hutchinson, and he is bringing up a lot of issues that you have just brought up as well. Know that we have that person on board and he is one of the advocates for you. I just want to reiterate the whole landscape issue, I am not saying that we can’t do it, we are trying to accommodate that as well, but we are going to have to work really closely with the town to be able to do that, but from last meeting to this meeting, we’re really taken that into consideration and we will continue to do so. And you will have more opportunity to voice your opinion when we get into the Phase C and into preliminary design.

Tom Myers: In addition to the concerns about the sea of asphalt that Bob Parker had mentioned and the need for significant, high quality landscaping, it seems the Town cares very much about art, and it must have thought before planning is complete. There needs to be provisions for that; and hopefully, you’ll give it some consideration.

Those kinds of things can occur. There definitely needs to be town involvement in the process.

We’ll definitely take that into consideration. That is another aspect that Bill has taken on. He knows the importance of that. With that we also have to take into consideration safety, so we can have art in the right-of-way, but we have to get permission, obviously, from FHWA because that is their roadway. And we have to make sure that we follow safety guidelines to make sure it doesn’t cause, or could potentially, cause any type of injury if it is potentially struck. Just like a sign has a breakdown way post, so we just have to take that into consideration. We will definitely look at that as we progress.

Cynthia Morgan: One thing I haven’t seen is the possibility of three lanes of traffic with the center lane being the turn lane. It seems to me that we would do away with some of the mass of the asphalt, and it would improve safety in that stretch. Because I think if you four lanes coming right down to Quesnel, you’re going to have a huge traffic jam that’s going to be impossible.
We did look at that as an alternative. That was alternative 2A, but basically what the analysis showed us was that cross section, it would not help with the traffic.

Anonymous: Kind of on the same issue. I think the center lanes that we have now are like suicide lanes. And I like the idea of having the medians where we can put some shrubs or small trees that will eliminate the left hand turn from every access point along from La Costa up to Quesnel. So I am hoping that the medians are enough so that there will be places people can make U-Turns safely if they have to, but not cross two lanes and make left hand turns. That’s very dangerous.

That’s the intent. I know there have been crash analysis before and after putting in medians. It did show that the crashes went down after the medians were installed.

That issue was brought up the last time. And so we ended up incorporating a visual of putting in medians in that corridor. We can vet that out as we progress. We’ll have to work with access management. Of course it would be limiting access to some of the adjacent properties there along 68. We’ll have to take that into consideration.

Beth Robinson: My name is Beth Robinson, I live on Montoya Street, and anything that happens in that area I’m really interested in. My road right now is being used as a bypass. The issue of the four lanes going to town has so many negative aspects I don’t really know where to begin. One thing I would ask you is what were your criteria for establishing the necessity for four lanes? If it was speed, I think you are using the wrong criteria, because you are going way into a small area entering into the historic district. We don’t need speed around here. What we need is aesthetics and safety. And there’s no reason why that can’t be a three-lane with medians that have turnouts to turn left. You can’t safely turn across a four-lane street. You can’t turn left. The traffic backs up behind you or crashes into you. You’ve got to wait for two lanes of traffic coming towards you in order to get across, which is absolutely insane. And if you are going into that section from the south, leaving a three-lane area with medians, why not continue it? It makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. And I am totally against one-way streets going through our town. We need people to slow down coming through our town. We don’t need people to speed up. We need people who are coming to visit, to be able to not have the pressure of a lot of traffic behind them, to drive fast through a town that is supposed to be a destination for people that are coming to look at the art, enjoy the history, enjoy the culture, etc. etc. etc. It’s what we’re all about. I mean, what are we turning ourselves into here?

Again, it’s not about speed, it’s about trying to reduce the traffic.

Beth Robinson: Well if it’s about safety, then four lanes is not the ticket.

Kathy Fortner: A couple of things. One, I would like to echo the fact that I think landscaping should be part of the plan, and if it means going to 2A to gain more money to do that, that’s a great idea. But my question is this, what is your thinking about that you’re going to take two lanes up to the bottleneck. What’s going to happen? You’re just going to continue to be bottlenecked! So why have two lanes going into that area? That’s where the congestion is. It’s between where the county building is and up to Quesnel. All you’re doing is dumping out more people into that intersection, coming both ways. What difference does it make? I don’t see how that logic works. And I think that’s something we need to discuss. I do get the whole synchronization of the lights. That makes a lot of sense. But after that.

So this is where you are referring? OK, so the big concern here is that we’re taking all this traffic of four lanes, and then it gets to here and really we are just talking about these two lanes, going into one lane. In reality what we have is these two lanes going to this lane, and this lane. And when I look at the actual volume splits, I think there was 500 plus here, and then 250 making this left hand turn. So ideally, that’s what we want. If all we saw was three people turning left, and 500 going straight through then the balance of this system wouldn’t work. Because we would have all of these people wanting to go through, but it’s balanced right now with this configuration, because a little less than half is going to turn left onto Placitas. So this two-lane thing, we still have to have a left hand turn there, whether we have a median back here that would have some finite distance, but it’s just this way, you can actually roll along a little better. It’s a real deep pocket because it’s basically infinite. So that means that the queue can be as long as it needs to be to turn left.

Kathy Fortner: How about from the south?

I don’t know the volumes on that one. I didn’t look up the numbers. I can find them, but off the top of my head I don’t know them. They are actually pretty well balanced either way. This way, onto Quesnel there’s literally like five or nine cars, pretty low. But you don’t have a conflict there because you’re not crossing any traffic and if you are, it’s pretty hard rights.

Kathy Fortner: So really all your gaining is the fact that you’re allowing for more cars to get in that left turn lane than you do now. So they have a left turn lane?

Correct, and what would happen if we had a median and a finite left turn lane, is we would have the queuing where we would have cars sitting in a through lane, they stack up, and then you have people behind them that wouldn’t be allowed to turn left, where right here, you get pretty close to the intersection and if we put enough signs there, you have to turn left if you are in this lane so be prepared. Of course, with every system where humans are involved, there’s going to be some mistakes that happen right there. People will be like, oh i’ve got to get over, but this actually gives us a little more room, and what those volume splits, I was confident with the four lane configuration ending the way it does here at Quesnel.

Anonymous: What were the volumes splits?

They were pretty close to a little over 550 and a little over 250 turning left. So a 0.4 ratio there.

Stacey McGuire: Related to that, where does the suicide lane turn into a left turn lane going northbound?

The median configuration in this would taper a little bit south of Siler, and we would go to four lanes.

Stacey McGuire: And then from that intersection north, am I understanding correctly that there is not going to be a dedicated bike lane?

No, well, you are sort of correct. The shared lane would go from here to Marge Lane, and then north of that, we would have bike lanes and parking lanes.

Stacey McGuire: I think that specific section is very critical to have a dedicated bike lane because of the high levels of traffic. And the high level of tourists. If you’re not fully familiar with, and for locals, I live here, and I wouldn’t be caught dead biking on that road right now. Given the layout that you guys are proposing, I think it’s an improvement, but I think to not incorporate a fully modal perspective is really being a disservice to the town in the long term.

Here is the problem if we really try to include dedicated bike lanes we run into buildings. We either have to eliminate sidewalks or we have to move the buildings, which we can’t do. The lanes are as shrunken as they can get. We’ve already heard there are large trucks that come through here. I wouldn’t want to be
in a bike lane, I mean I know this base is still the same, but a 10-foot lane, with a 4-foot lane, even that pushes the sidewalks out to far.

Stacey McGuire: I don’t want to share a bike lane with an 18-wheeler up my butt either.

This is what fits; we can delve more into this in a bit.

Anonymous: I’m enjoying this bit about congestion. It reiterates what I said about taking Pilion west, and it goes to Medio, and Medio on out north to make that a by-pass. It would be really easy without a lot of interference. That’s what your 18-wheelers and your drive through Taos people, who don’t want to get involved because they’re a business or whatever. It would be a safe way to do that; it would be a humongous reduction to the traffic congestion for this area. So I would hope that you would reconsider the plan that you’ve already got going. And give some consideration to extending Calton to Medio on out to highway 68.

As many of you are aware there’s been bypass requests circulating for 30-40 years. They’ve never been able to get them through so.

Linda Hodapp: I would like to support Alternative 2A. I think you need to have the two lanes, with the center, with the medians. If you want to make a Taosino cringe, just say that we’re starting to look like Santa Fe. We’re starting to look like Cerrillos Road. And this one, while it may be crappy, I’d rather sit and slow down, than have this four-lane thing coming in.

Polly Raye: I agree completely Alternative 2a is much better than the four-lane. Four-lanes would not work, and because that section is surrounded by businesses on both sides of the road. People want to go to those businesses. So imagine they’re coming south and you want to go to McDonald’s, you’d get in a left lane, and you stop, and everybody behind you backs up. And then you have to wait until two lanes of traffic traveling north, both stop and let you cross. It just doesn’t work. Businesses need to be available to people to get to, and if there were no turning lane, it would be a disaster. We need that turning lane in that section of road. Two-lanes and a turning lane.

S.F. Horn: One-way pairs is wrong. It should be dismissed on the face of it. Right now, even during the most congested periods of time, and I’ve sat for more than a dozen times, from the courthouse to Rival Lane on the other side of town it never takes more than 5-7 minutes. I’ve never sat for more than that length of time. That’s my comment about one-way pairs.

You said you didn’t want to take about Phase 1A, but I have some questions. You said Phase 1A was completed in June 2014. But it’s never been presented to this community. Can you tell me when it was presented to this community? When the community was first introduced to some of these options?

We’ve had a total of seven public meetings sir.

S.F. Horn: Seven of them? You had a meeting in October for the public. You had a meeting in December for the stakeholders and elected officials, that’s a total of three. You had a public meeting in February 2014, and an April public meeting in 2014. That shows five meetings.

We had two with the Pueblo.

S.F. Horn: Ok with the pueblo, I don’t know about the pueblo. But when after Phase 1A was completed, when was it presented to the community? It was completed in June. All of those meeting were prior to June. Did you ever present Phase 1A to this community?

Not for 1A, no, the results were posted for public review

S.F. Horn: That’s all I want to know. You didn’t do it.

No. But we did give the results of Phase 1A when we started Phase B planning.

S.F. Horn: You didn’t present Phase 1A to the community, that’s all I care about. Phase B, this is Phase B now. You said you had three stakeholder meetings and one public meeting, this is the one public meeting I assume, there was a meeting in February for the stakeholders and elected officials, when were the other two meetings?

We had two meetings back in February. One for the elected officials, and one for the stakeholders.

S.F. Horn: That’s what I said.

That’s two, and we had one with the pueblo, that’s three, and this one is the forth.

S.F. Horn: OK, but this is the first time it has been presented to this community. As a whole, other than…

These are the recommendations as a result of all

S.F. Horn: So the stakeholders and elected officials got to add their input before coming to the public, but you didn’t ask the public. And now the stakeholders got to see it in February, they’ve had months to think about it. You have given the community two weeks to think about this before you finalize your plans. That’s not fair, that’s wrong. And without seeing this, without having access to this plan and it not on your site, it’s not on the DOT site, without having access, nobody can digest what you’ve just been through, and sit down and think about it cogently, is this going to be put on your site? Phase 1B? Or Phase B?

Yes.

S.F. Horn: OK, and it will be up there tomorrow?

No, not tomorrow.

S.F. Horn: When?

It’s still being developed part of the process is

S.F. Horn: Is it going to be on the site before you finalize your plans?

Not the final report.

S.F. Horn: So we as a community aren’t going to have access to the plan, to think about it, to reflect? That’s it, you can’t answer that question?

Just to answer that question. The two stakeholder meetings, the stakeholder and the elected official stakeholder meeting, we didn’t just limit it to those people. There were other people from the general community that attended that, so we didn’t just limit it to them. Secondly, the Phase B study, you’re going to still have the opportunity to voice your opinion on any of these things that I’ve mentioned. We still have to go through the Phase C process and we also have to go through preliminary and final design, so this is not the only opportunity that this community will have to voice their opinion.
S.F. Horn: I understand that, but you’ve given us two weeks to talk about this, we have two weeks. May 12th, that’s what it says on the handout, May 12th.

Right, but like I said, we’ve presented this a number of times to this community, not just today.

S.F. Horn: The stakeholders and elected officials announcement was a legal; it didn’t appear anywhere else in the paper except in the legal. And other than the email list that you’ve sent out, it was not broadcast publically as far as I’m concerned. That’s my opinion.

The slides that you have up there, the talk about the northbound traffic, anybody who has sat at La Posta...and on 68th where it narrows down very quickly knows that people don’t think ahead. I for one, move somewhere towards Alburquerque to the interior lane, knowing it’s going to be restricted. I don’t see how that same problem is not what would occur here. You’re going to have people on the interior lane, who are not going to want to turn left, and suddenly, you understand. All this does is compound the problem. And there are others that spoke to that effect.

S.F. Horn: You mean to turn left?

S.F. Horn: Again there was talk. How does someone who wants to go to Johnny’s Barber Shop? They’ve got to, first of all you said they can’t do it. Double yellow line, he’s got to go all the way through town, find some way to turn around and come back. Is that not correct?

You mean to turn left?

S.F. Horn: Yes

You can turn left across double yellow. You can’t change lanes across a double yellow, but you can make a left turn, at a legal left across a double yellow.

S.F. Horn: I think that should show a broken yellow line, when I see a double yellow line I think I can’t cross there. But in any event that still presents a problem crossing two lanes of traffic. My feeling is, the reason this is being done from four lanes to three lanes, it should be the two lanes of traffic with a median as it is right now, and simply improve it. The reason this is being done, because as George said earlier, when somebody asked about one way pairs, and somebody said, why isn’t this being done, and George said well there’s pros and cons. It moves traffic slightly, slightly better. And there’s opposition from businesses and from the pueblo. Shortly after that he said when somebody asked about it, well we’re providing infrastructure for the future. That’s what the look is here. The look is to bring as many, to bring...
Excuse me. I understand what you want, but I am just saying that a section like this if you get enough buildup on that center lane it's going to start skipping into the driving lane and then you're really going to back everybody up.

S.F. Horn: Is the middle lane not simply a turning lane? Correct?

Right, there is enough demand on that center lane it's going to back into the highway.

S.F. Horn: We don't need ... I've never witnessed that problem. There are times when I've sat in that middle lane, waiting for traffic so that I can turn, but I've never had traffic back up behind me. I think that is not true. Your statement is not true. Another, who's going to, who, Councilor Cantu has talked several times about plowing through the center of town, and the ice and snow that gets splashed on to the buildings and the sidewalks. And the snow that is laden with the salt, the sidewalks deteriorate. So what's going, you just said you are going to use the bicycle lanes and the sidewalks to put the snow on so who's going, are you going to take care of the sidewalks after they're built, or is the town going responsible?

The town of Taos.

S.F. Horn: The town of Taos, all right. So you're doing us this wonderful favor. And we're going to have to maintain it, and I believe the public works manager is over here. I don't know if he wants to chime in, but I've heard him say, now, it's a lot of work taking care of the sidewalks. It's an incredible maintenance project, and we're strapped enough as it is.

Julia Vasquez: My name is Julia Vasquez. This is so, I am really appreciating this, and I am really struck by the complexity of it, so excuse me if I don't have all of my thoughts in order. I'm also going to advocate for the landscaping, and consider what the man was just talking about, and that first diagram where he was showing the best case scenario. You had enough distance to actually have a landscaped area including the sidewalk and the roadway. I'm very interested in that, and I'm wondering what variations on that theme might be possible and I'm thinking also about a variation that happens. They have a lot of stones there. I also want to put a word in for air quality. When you're walking the sidewalks, it's really bad air quality. Especially when you've got people packing up the night at Kit Carson. It's not a friendly place to walk. So I think if you're really talking about pedestrian improvements, the air quality and shade, become conditions. In order to have shade, You've got to have something that's left onto the road, and that again, brings up a need for planning for trees, and something early enough on your process, so there is enough space for those roots to develop. You know that story.

Another topic, you know the speed limit if you're coming to it at 35 up near Ace Hardware and Mulberry? People don't slow down there that much, and sometimes, merely just trying to turn, is a royal attack of speed. Because people close up the gaps.

And the last thing I wanted to bring up is, I know that the interface between private property and state owned property and town property probably requires more stakeholder work than any other area, but I would wonder, if say a section like this, if Station Cafè owner, and the person after that, and the person after that, if there was some agreement that could be made with the stakeholders, so that this idea of having the potential of the sidewalks separated from the road is even a possibility. And then I'm wondering if the bike lane could be paired with the sidewalk away from the car lanes? On the other side, of some sort of landscaped buffer? And then the other thing I was wondering about is access in and out of businesses? There's a couple of places that are completely tricky. Where the Taos diner is, where the sewing machine shop. That whole area, really doesn't have a designated in and out. It's like the whole block is in and out. And that goes back to this pavement aesthetic that somehow this town is just thrown into. I'd love to see that stop. And another access point with the post office, the main post office, when you try and turn into there from the north, you have to cross the access out of the post office, which is farther north, and I'm just wondering if this kind of planning ever addresses those things? Where, so the post office is here, this is north and you cannot turn into the driveway here because it says do not enter, but you have to turn in at the next part, which means you cut off people trying to get out of the post office. And the whole scenario that is made up is not, it doesn't flow.

Thank you for your comments.

Mr. Hall: They've talked for a while, but raised some very interesting questions about the whole process, and this town is very much about process, and the full house here when the meeting started really proved we are vitally concerned about the plans that you are making. It seems to me that we're all stakeholders in this process, and my question is, are we going to be meaningful participants in the process? Or are you just going to listen to what we say, record it, and then do as you please, without us having any meaningful say in what actually results?

The public meeting is part of the process. As we've gone through the process, there have been changes and additional alternatives are being looked at, and that's all because of public input.

Ben Wright: My name is Ben Wright. We're trying to speak up for landscaping in projects like these. I'm just looking at the situation, it seems like the major, well there are two issues, one is money, obviously, and the second one is takes. And we're talking about an old town where buildings were laid against the road, because that's all the space that was necessary, and we're trying to modernize it and make it allow for more traffic, more people, more this, more that. And then simply is not enough space in many of the sections we're talking about. I see what you all are trying to do with the lanes. What's most important here? And from what I've seen with these discussions the importance is really placed on traffic, number one. My understanding of the citizens of Taos, I mean, that's important, but that is less important to us, than having safe places to walk, safe places to bicycle, being able to feel safe on the streets. And then, my major concern is I mean, I would like to see a lot more trees and landscaping along these roads. I think the four-lanes going through town is a hair-brained idea personally. It brought up all the problems. It seems like you're accommodating large volumes of traffic to move through town efficiently. You know, I understand that there are a lot of considerations, but I think that there are other concerns. To me, that's less important. And I'm not the only one. I think in this planning process, first of all, we want to be part of the process. And you should hear what we're asking for, what we're asking for is we don't need traffic cruising through the downtown area. We would like safe sidewalks. We would like safe bike lanes, and we would like landscaping that is maintainable.

Thank you for your comments. We will look for a balance and this project, it is going to have a lot of improvements in respect to traffic operations, and a lot of other things that are needed. Sidewalks and all that. It's not going to just happen the way a lot of people think it is. There's going to be delays. There's still a need for a by-pass, there's still a need for other improvements on other streets. So don't think that there aren't going to be delays.

Mark Asmus: Just for the record, I'm opposed to the four-lane option that you've identified as your preferred solution. What worries me is that I've mentioned it already. Question about the intersection of Quesnel and, those numbers that you cited earlier, 500 and 250, are those vehicle counts?

Those are current movement counts, yes.

Mark Asmus: 500 went straight north, and 250 turned left?

Yes.
Mark Asmus: I'm flabbergasted at that. I go through that intersection with some regularity. I never would have guessed that it's only a 2:1 ratio. I would have guessed it was 10:1. Who's coming to this town to go north? They don’t know to turn left at Placitas. I’m really shocked at that, and that measurement took place over what time?

It was in June, over a week time.

It was three days, 7/16 to 7/18/2013.

The 250 and 500 are within the PM Peak, a one-hour traffic time. And it’s usually in the PM Peak, and typically in the PM Peak, it’s not driver’s that aren’t familiar with it. Its usually the commuters, the people that utilize that, so you wouldn’t see a lot of tourists during that time.

Mark Asmus: Are you saying it’s not representative of traffic flow during other portions of the day?

We took it through the entire day, so we identified what that PM Peak hour was based off of the volume of traffic that was counted. So it is representative of the whole day. So we identified a certain time frame that was the highest volume and we established that as the peak hour.

I’m sorry, but that’s typically your highest point of congestion, so you may have other times of day when the tourists are going straight, everybody else is going left. I know that those ratios might be different at different times of day, it’s just during the most congested time of day, the PM Peak, that’s the ratio that we saw.

Mark Asmus: Well, I’ve already said, I don’t like the four-lane option for a whole host of reasons. If you go ahead and implement that intersection there at Quesnel and Placita and Paséo turns into a nightmare, which I think it’s going to. How do you admit that? How do you, short of the one way pair, which I get the feeling here that the one way pair is not the... We understand that. It’s basically what we have now. Right now it’s a single lane going through correct? So you are basically going to be at the same point, which you are now.

Mark Asmus: With a lot narrower lanes.

Not narrower lanes, no. You are still having the same width, but you are still going to have the short distance to make the left, and you’re still going to have the line and the traffic going straight.

Anonymous: It seems like a lot of people here prefer the two-lane option, and I am just wondering if we’ve done a cost analysis on the two-lane option? Because there’s probably less paving, I would imagine it would be less money, which would leave it’s not significant because there is not really a significant difference in the width. We still have to have the storm drains, to have the lights, still have to have the sidewalks, so there is not a huge difference in the two-lane and the four-lane

Polly Raye: A good place to save some money for landscaping would be to not put the extra traffic lights on Placitas. I can’t imagine that we’ll need them; it’s never backed up the stop signs work very well. Every time you add a traffic light we end up with traffic jams.

Those costs aren’t included because any work on Placitas doesn’t qualify for the funding that’s available. That would have to be done with local funding.
individual. It could have caused a crash. It wouldn't have been a bad one, because everyone was going slow, but it wasn't what you would want to see, and that was caused by that offset by Los Pandos being slightly south of Siler. And there's a parallel situation in just what happened at Allbright. I mean that intersection was aligned the very same way. If you look they're twins of each other.

Walter Cox: Well I guess my second question is, I understand what you're saying, and you're exactly right, that's messed up, both directions. I've been the guy out in the middle, fearing for my life, I understand entirely what you are saying. Could you not facilitate, or some way make a left turn lane in both directions. It seems to me a simple matter of marking off the street or putting a better traffic signal there with lanes, where you could turn in each direction. And my ulterior motive behind that in asking you this, is the fact that if that becomes, as someone has already mentioned the safety issues on Los Pandos Road. I guarantee you that will make that a thoroughfare through there, and people will turn right, and people will come from the south of town parallel and head to that intersection to go north hoping to avoid the Paséo south of that intersection. You're jumping into another can of worms by making it, right now, it's self-limiting because of the very things you have said. People don't want to come that way because they know they are taking their life in their hands with that turn. So could you not ease things and facilitate left turn lanes with a different signal and with different lane markings rather than have to buy property and raze buildings? You've got to have an acre paving there you probably don't need unless someone's telling you you're going to have 7,000 potential cars an hour to be able to go through that intersection, and I don't think that need exists. I think you're fixing something that's not broken without doing it much cheaper, with other ways of doing it.

I don't know what's going to happen if we realign. You guys know better than I do. But I have all of my guidebooks that say the way it is right now is unsafe. And I can't really add a lane in the middle that would accommodate. It's kind of like you said a two way left turn lane sandwiched in between two signal heads. People are like, I want to go there, and I want to go there, they just, you know, opposing directions and they want to occupy the same space and by pushing everybody together like that we can actually make it safer at least for the people turning left and as well as the pedestrians. Because right now the pedestrian configuration on the existing intersection is, well, I'm sure you've all seen it so. I hope that answered your question.

Anonymous: If you do realign that, it will make the traffic flow on the main highway better, because right now we have to stop the traffic for Siler. We have to stop for Los Pandos, stopping traffic twice as long than if we stopped if that is realigned.

Right, that is correct.

Anonymous: Right so it takes twice as long. You're stopping on the main highway twice as long. So if you want to move traffic through there, align it.

For the record, I am not in favor of the four-lane. Three lanes, as it is, fix the alignment, fix the signals, and fix the drainage. And I have a question. Are you guys going to build up the roadway again? Or are you going to cut some out of that road? Because that roads been built up and all the old buildings in there are below the grade of the road. And they weren't that way, it's been years and years that the highway departments been building it up.

No, they'll give that consideration when they are actually doing it. Good access.

Anonymous: Well the drainage is, that creates drainage problems for all the owners along there.

S.F. Horn: That intersection, in October, when he presented this project it appeared to me that the light there is intended to work like a directional light to move traffic, to allow north bound to turn, south bound to turn. And I asked if it was working properly, I repeated that question in December 2013. February 2014 I was told by Juan Rael that it was quote unquote, in the queue, in the queue, he needed to get a team up to look at it. Can you tell me whether or not that light is functioning? It's supposed to function. That's just a quick question; I've been waiting for over 2.5 years.

Speed limits. Speed limits from say La Posta through the other side of town should be 25, all these changes and speed limits, as traffic engineers I am sure you understand how that leads to this one breaking his taillight consistently through town. Twenty-five that way people slow down, it's safer for everybody. You say you want to introduce safety, there you go.

The Phase 1A, which was never presented to this community, as you said was dated 25, June 2014. 24 June 2014 was the final plan of the state public involvement plan, and it says NMDOT is committed to conducting planning activities, openly and transparently in providing citizens with the opportunity to learn about and participate in the transportation plan and process.

Lastly, your presentation tonight. Will you put that up on, not will you put it up. I want to see it on your DOT District 5 site so that people can look at it. Will that be done tomorrow? By tomorrow?

Are you talking about the Phase A?

S.F. Horn: No, this presentation tonight.

We'll try to get it up. I can't guarantee it's going to be tomorrow. But we will try. I am not going to commit a time frame, but we'll try. We'll get it up as soon as possible.

S.F. Horn: Before May 12?

I would assume so, yeah.

S.F. Horn: Assume so?

I can't make that commitment because I am not the one who does that. There are 17 people that will load that up. We'll try to get that on as soon as possible.
Written Comments

Comment 1: Lawrence Baker

Thanks for the heads up for the meeting. What happened to the proposal for 3 lanes necking in at Quesnel and starting around Randall’s, I think?

Eric Johnson: It would probably be best to come to the meeting and discuss with the engineers. That section is complicated.

Comment 2: Michael Sayre

I notice that the advance summary of the meeting omits any mention of converting Paséo del Pueblo Norte and Camino de la Placita to paired one-way streets. Does this mean that such proposal has been dropped? Or just that it won’t be discussed at the meeting? Thanks.

Eric Johnson: The One-way Pair was not selected as the Recommended Preferred Alternative in the Phase B report. We do not intend to consider it further.

Michael Sayre: Thanks for the info. I will no longer plan on being an active participant in nor an opponent in any way of the Paséo del Pueblo discussions. Good luck.

Comment 3: John Mantis

So my last comment of limiting access to crossing across traffic lanes via a median ala Cerrillos Rd. in Santa Fe ain’t happening. We have so many store entry driveways between La Posta and Quesnel...how ARE you planning to limit cars from crossing 2 lanes? No left turns? Perhaps that will be addressed in the access mgt section, but it will be a shooting gallery if crossing is permitted.

Best regards.

PS: We could use some landscape stuff.

Eric Johnson: I would recommend talking to the project engineers at the public meeting on April 28. It will likely take us awhile to work out the access management along the project corridor.

Comment 4: Donna Dufresne, Anonymous, Terry Thompson (submitted the same)

A four-lane road with NO TURNING LANE? No.

Eliminating the turn lane between Los Pandos and Quesnel = A Bad Idea.

Imagine entering a business on the opposite side of the road with four lanes of continuous traffic: Two lanes traveling north, two lanes traveling south.

Your maneuver:
Get in the left lane and stop.
Wait for both lanes of traffic going the other way to stop.
Turn left across two lanes of traffic.

Transform Paséo del Sur into a beautiful entryway into town.

Use the millions from the State to beautify and improve Paséo del Pueblo. Don’t just repave the ugly wide swath of unbroken pavement.

Build Sidewalks and bike lanes along both sides of the road. Where possible, locate bike paths off the road.

Create a narrow buffer strip with trees and plants between the sidewalk and the road. So walking is a pleasant experience, safe, shady and beautiful.

Create a landscaped median with designated turn lanes. So businesses on both sides of the road can be easily and safely reached.

To beautify Paséo: Start at the south edge of town and improve the road as far north as possible with the available millions. Once people see the improvements it will be easier to raise the money to complete Paséo to the northern boundary.

A Vision for Taos Historic District – It is the Taos Historic Walking District.

- A beautiful destination with pedestrian-friendly roads and sidewalks from Los Pandos north.
- Easy-to-find perimeter parking lots where locals and visitors can park their cars all day while they enjoy the historic district.
- Safe crosswalks and sidewalks make it pleasant to visit museums and galleries, restaurants, Taos Plaza and historic buildings, and unique locally-owned shops.

Streets and roads are the "Bones" of the Historic District. Pedestrian-friendly streets and roads:

- Gently moving traffic (15-20 mph).
- Plenty of well-marked ADA-compliant crosswalks.
- Addresses and parking lots are easy to find and access.
- Signage is informative.
- There are trees for shade and benches for resting.
- Walking feels safe and pleasant.
- Pedestrian-friendly and pedestrian-only streets welcome people on foot.

Improve traffic flow in the Historic District. Engineers who has studied Taos traffic found:

- Traffic would not move through town faster on one-way streets (in fact one-way streets would slow traffic by 11%).
- 30% of the traffic in towns like ours is people looking for a parking space.

The three ideas the engineers offered for improving our historic district traffic flow are:

- Replace the old stoplights with synchronized lights (and, where possible, remove them. Traffic lights slow traffic and create back-ups).
- Provide more, and more visible, perimeter parking lots so everyone can get off the road and on foot as soon as possible.
- Ban, or limit the hours of, large trucks traveling through the historic district.

One-way streets are not the answer. Visitors are unlikely to circle around the long Paséo-Placitas loop to search for a business that isn’t on their “one-way leg”. All historic district locations would suffer.

A one-way circle around the historic district would inconvenience locals 100% of the time. Traffic delays only occur when there are lots of tourists in town, probably less than 25% of the time.
I very much appreciated the opportunity to hear the current plans for 68/64 through Taos last evening. I didn’t speak up, as I’m more someone that needs to digest first. I’m sorry everyone had to smile through some overly vocal people!

Your plans sound good. I agree with the realignments of intersections. Everything you’re doing will help and I trust that your engineering evaluations are pointing you towards the best approaches. I disagree with many of the speakers that your goal is to cause speed through town. With the heavy volume of traffic, all the improvements in the world are still going to mean a creeping pace through town much of the time. Since splitting traffic to one way seems off the table, I won’t weigh in that that would seem to be the only real fix to move the volume (other than a bypass).

I agree with one speaker that the need for signals along Placitas is probably unnecessary.

Comment 5: Dan Jones

A stronger focus on landscaping is my biggest input at this point. The rendering, where you have the width on the southern end showing a separation of sidewalk and street is great. Understandably you can’t do that through the entire corridor, but wherever you can, it helps. The landscape beds in these places would make a great place for “Welcome to Taos” signage and perhaps a piece of public art, as mentioned. Perhaps that becomes the purview of Taos, not you. But the infrastructure can and should be constructed as part of the reconstruction work. There is a great deal of passion in Taos (you got a taste of that last night!) for many things. As a landscaper, I know that there are probably many sources for the donation of plant material and the people to plant it. And hopefully, maybe an irrigation system as well. Strictly using natives, or native-adapted plants and trees, would mean a pretty minimal amount of water. One of my biggest gripes is the vast overuse of irrigation... using appropriate plants means systems do not need to run often. My other gripe is the amount of unrealistic planting that happens along streets only to die from neglect and then we’re left looking at litter-strewn, weed-choked concrete planting beds.

Trial run: Expensive mistake

Some people may suggest the one-way idea be implemented on a “trial basis” and reversed if it doesn’t work as planned. Why is that a really bad idea?

1. The cost of creating one-way streets is several million dollars. Reversing the construction will cost millions more.
2. The state’s one-way plan includes 3-5 new stoplights on Placitas, each of which costs over $250,000.00. Maybe quite a bit over since the law now requires handicapped walkways at each intersection. Removing them will be expensive.
3. There has been no engineering study that shows that one-way streets would improve traffic flow through town. On the contrary, the engineering firm hired by the town, (Molzen-Corbin) said one-way streets through the historic district would SLOW traffic by 11%.
4. Molzen-Corbin’s engineers made suggestions for improving traffic flow that are relatively inexpensive and have not been tried. It makes sense to try those first: Time-synchronized lights; visible perimeter parking; re-routing, or limiting the hours for large trucks.
5. The Town is in the midst of a $100,000.00 contract with an out-of-town firm for redesign of the Plaza. It will be several months before we receive their recommendations. It they include closing one or two of the Plaza streets to traffic there will be even fewer cross streets available for those caught in a one-way circle. This will create even more back up at the Placitas/Quesnel and the Kit Carson/Plaza stoplights.
6. A Trial is a waste of funds that could be used to beautify Paséo del Sur and Norte; a project we know will enhance the town for both locals and tourists.

Comment 6: Bill Thomas

I recently attended your public meeting in Taos concerning Corridor Study of 68 Project. You attached several suggestions of the project with diagrams, but they were so small, the size of a postage stamp, that you were unable to read or see them at all. Could you please send me some 9.5 x 11 copies of these?

I certainly feel the idea of a One-way is a very bad idea and should not be considered.

Comment 7: Dianna Frost

I would like the NMOT to know that I oppose the “IMPROVEMENTS” presented at the April 28th meeting.

Three lanes with safe median turn lanes TO INCLUDE LANDSCAPING would be preferable and safer for our town.

Aligning Los Pandos and Siler Roads would be an expensive “improvement” and would allow traffic to speed down these side streets. The traffic on Los Pandos is already dangerously fast.

There is a better way and much less expensive way to solve the confusion at that intersection by repositioning the traffic lights to eliminate the current “no-man’s” land”, and by calibrating them with left turn Arrows, and re-stripping the streets. This should be tried.
I hope that Paséo del Sur will become a BEAUTIFUL ENTRYWAY INTO TOWN from Ranchos, with sidewalks, bike paths and landscaping on both sides, and a proper median for safe turns, with landscaping, rather than 4 lanes.

Comment 8: Polly Raye

Thanks for coming up to Taos again to share NMDOT’s thinking about our road improvements.

In order to have a community conversation it would be helpful to have the email addresses of the folks who signed in to the meeting last Thursday. Would you please email the sign in sheets to me?

Eric Johnson: Thank you for your email. In order to protect people’s privacy, we do not give out email or mailing addresses of meeting attendees.

Comment 9: Ann Cole

Please count me as being opposed to both of NMDOT’s recommendations regarding changing roadways through Taos. They are bad idea and wouldn’t add value to this little town. Instead they would create a real mess.

I do support three lanes with safe median turn areas.

Comment 10: Veronica Harrold

I vote NO to NMDOT’s proposed “improvements” to the town. A 3-lane road with safe median turn areas with landscaping would be highly preferable to their plans.

Comment 11: Ariel Schoen

I would vote for keeping the Paso del Pueblo lanes as they are. I suggest using the funds allotted for the project to upgrade road surfaces throughout the county.

Aligning Los Pandos and Siler roads also seems like a waste of time and resources. I like the proposed alternative solution. But, again, use any “excess” funds to improve road surfaces.

Thank you for your service.

Comment 12: William A. Christmas, MD

Please note my objections of two of the proposals:

1. DO NOT make Paséo del Sur 4 LANCES all the way to Queuel. We have problems there already (I live on Queuel). I only see this as creating a MESS for vehicular traffic and pedestrians. Instead, please begin the merge somewhere north of Albright to 3 lanes (one-way traffic lanes and a turn lane, preferably with a median and controlled turning breaks). This will make everything (sidewalks, bike lanes, crossings by pedestrians, and traffic making left turns safer and easier).

2. Give more thought to the Los Pandos/Siler realignment. The proposal your company made is overly expensive. The problems at that intersection could be solved with rational placement of traffic lights and appropriate painting of the road surface to indicate to motorists where they should be if the light turns red. In San Rafael, California the traffic planners paint intersections they want to keep free with diagonal strips and big letters KEEP CLEAR. This would be a cheaper and viable solution to the problem, and it would free up funds to have beautiful medians.

Comment 13: Dave and Renee Hardy

I have some former professional experience in travel-demand forecasting, land-use planning, and traffic engineering. The following questions and comments are based on my limited knowledge about the long running effort to solve the Paséo del Pueblo Sur northbound traffic bottleneck. I last attended a public meeting several years ago. I realize some of the open questions I present here may have been answered at the more recent meetings.

I begin with the one-way pair. My first impression is southbound North Paso north of Camino de la Placita will increasingly break down. Followed by, increased turning movements of those wishing to change directions throughout the historic district will slow traffic to a crawl, in my opinion. I can’t begin to guess how residential streets will handle the increased congestions. In my opinion, there is not a tight enough street spacing. Too few options for circulation.

Have your alternatives investigated emerging trends in land use and trip generation? For example; online retail now grows at a ~10% annual rate. This trend points to trip reductions for brick and mortar retail. Does the model consider a cumulative reduction in home-based non-work trips over time?

Are trips loaded to the network based on land-use, socio-economic characteristic, and associated trip generation rates? Along the lines of my previous comment, does the model take into consideration the growth of e-commerce sales as a percentage of total retail sales, and the impact of this trend on future non-work trips? Also, what is the forecast for telecommuting and it’s impact on home-based work trips and peak hour flows? Less driving seems to be the overall trend nationally.

What is the outlook for other uses, and how can this be affected by land-use policies? For example a greater shift to a mixed-use, transit-oriented development plan? What would that look like in five or ten years?

We are looking to preserve the intrinsic qualities of Historic Taos, what we still have, and where possible, wait for shifts in travel demand based on favorable trends such as new delivery system, and a gradual decline in trips generated by “strip commercial”. I recommend an incremental, go-slow approach.

Has the current traffic model been configured to consider the potential benefit to level-of-service with the consolidation of all access and egress along the South Paséo? How would coordinated signalized intersections at tighter intervals affect peak levels of service? A highly regimented thoroughfare can free up capacity without the need for road widening. This is slowly evolving along the South Paséo, but is not nearly enough complete to effectively control the flow of traffic ahead of the bottleneck. That street section requires far less access/egress. If possible, all driveways from Camino de la Placita to Los Pandos should first be consolidated into one intersection. How would that help? Could this be a phase 1 in advance of some of the more disruptive money-driven improvements proposed?

Most people I talk to say the peak drive times in Taos are relatively short compared to cities. That is my experience. Have you quantified the cost of delay? If so, do those costs justify engineering standards that are perhaps better suited to highway-oriented urban development, rather than the gateway to a UNESCO World Heritage Site?

Finally, planners tend to get how added capacity nearly always contributes to added demand, and once again, congestion. This is the typical transportation policy that has fueled the post-war growth (and suffering) of American cities. To indiscriminately add growth-inducing capacity to the Taos street network might degrade the quality of life that makes this a unique world-class tourist destination. I could go on...
With the exception of a master thoroughfare development plan for Paseo del Pueblo Sur, and until that is finished, I am in favor of do-nothing.

US Dept. of Commerce tracks quarterly retail e-commerce estimates. This data should imply a decline in certain retail-oriented auto trips. In ten years, 25% may be a conservative estimate. Accordingly, a single delivery vehicle making 75 daily stops eliminates about that many car trips, yes?


Comment 14: Terry Thompson

Here are a couple of things the DOT should NOT do in Taos:

BAD IDEA #1

Change the roadway from La Posta to Quesnel from what it is now: 3 lanes (two travel lanes and one turn lane) to: FOUR TRAVEL LANES, TWO IN EACH DIRECTION, WITH NO TURN LANE. Imagine if you have to stop and block a whole lane of traffic while you wait for two lanes going to other way to create an opening for you to turn left!

BAD IDEA #2

Align Los Pandos and Siler Roads. This would be an expensive “improvement” and it is opposed by most of the residents of the area. The traffic on Los Pandos is already dangerously fast.

There is a better way and much less expensive way to solve the confusion at that intersection by repositioning the traffic lights to eliminate the current “no-man’s land”, and by calibrating them with left turn arrows, and re-striping the streets. This should be tried.

WHAT THE DOT SHOULD DO is Keep the three lanes, install SAFE MEDIAN TURN AREAS, AND INCLUDE LANDSCAPING.

Consider the attached philosophy when improving our roads in Taos.

Comment 15: Kathleen Fowler

No one ways for Paseo and Placitas! Gone to meeting for the last 25 years on the issue. Downtown business owners don’t want. Kills the souls of downtown, slows traffic by 11%, confuses tourists. Not good for cruising. Do all the other stuff first with the highway. But plan for downtown Paseo to remain open to two-way traffic. Sam’s Shop/Bent St. for forty years.

As for landscaping. Will it be maintained? Examples in town that it won’t be.

Yes, any landscaping would be maintained.

Comment 16: Lynn Rosati

Four lanes is absurd. It is ludicrous. Roundabout at Los Pandos absurd. Other round a bout not good. Pave roads good, need paving on roads. Center turn lane continuous is good. Four-lane will cause accidents. Car accidents, bike accidents insurance claims again is a problem. Plant: Plants and trees. Roundabout is crazy.

Comment 17: Shelley Loveless

It would be very dangerous to widen this road without a center change lane. It would also become a dangerous bottleneck as it enters into the two-lane Historic Zone. Making Siler/Los Pandos straight would only make the traffic faster and more dangerous, as we home owners on that street know. All of the homeowners I have talked to oppose these proposals and suggest a safer, more economical solution lies in proper stoplight placement with left turn arrows.

Comment 18: R.A.L. West

As a Taos resident of many years, I wish you to be aware of my absolute opposition to widening/changes the Paseo area from Los Pandos north to Quesnel.

If there were a properly-functioning center turn lane through that area, and the businesses on the east side of the road repaired the SEVERE potholes at their entrances, (which slow traffic considerably as one has to slow way down to enter, half out in the road, to avoid vehicle damage), I believe the current congestion through the area would be sufficiently relieved.

Comment 19: Miranda Quintana

Requested via email public meeting handouts, sent to her on May 05, 2016.

Comment 20: Lauren Hershiser

We want Taos tow to be beautiful and pedestrian friendly not one ways. We really need more parking, bike lanes and better sidewalks! Please no one-ways in Taos.

Comment 21: Leo Weaver

We are a store in the John Dunn shops. We are STRONGLY AGAINST this initiative to eliminate the turn lane on Paseo.

We want Taos town to be beautiful and pedestrian friendly.

Keep Paseo the way it is.

Comment 22: Jan Smith

As a citizen of Taos and a business owner in the Taos Historic District, I am opposed to the road improvement plan that would make four lanes and no turning lane. I feel that this would cause worse problems with traffic than we have now. Two lanes with a turning lane would keep the traffic flowing. I am also opposed to one way streets which would make it more confusing to tourists as far as where to park and how to get to the Historic District, shops, galleries and restaurants. We need to make getting around Taos as easy and trouble free as possible.

Comment 22: Katie Iko

I am writing to express my opinion that there should be no four-lane road on Paseo and the realignment of Los Pandos/Siler. And yes, to two travel lanes, and a safe turning median as well as no one-way streets from the Historic District.
Comment 23: Cathy Book
I am a small business owner in Taos. I do not want our roads to become four-lanes. We should preserve our small town of historic value. I do not understand why we are all being ignored and people want to move forward on this.

Comment 24: Paul Figueroa
I am opposed to proposed Alternative 2 from La Posta Rd. to Camino de la Placita and prefer Alternative 2A for this segment.

The Town Taos vision 2020 encourages redesign of major streets and roads that serve as entryways (gateway) and enhance the sense of community and character of Taos. A four-lane entrance to the Towns Historic Overlay Zone doesn’t, and sacrifices pride of community. Alternative route signs to Salazar Rd and the implementation of coordinated traffic signals and a new one at Albright will reduce volume.

Revision 2020 states, “widening roads only temporarily reduces congestion” and urges steps to address “lack of connectivity of primary arterials”. First impressions are critical to a tourism-based economy in Taos. A landscaped, gateway of trees, vegetation fosters civic pride, draws tourists to the “Corazon of Taos”. Volume, safety and aesthetics are addressed in the .8 miles of Alternative 2A.

Comment 25: Stacey McGuire
Bike lanes, pedestrian access and bus pullouts are critical to quality of life, in particular near the plaza itself. This lack of safe infrastructure directly impacts my choices and my experience in town and a deterrent for many visitors. This impacts the economy as it limits the tourism side. If you have mobility issues, or like to ride your bike or take public transit to tour town, the lack of infrastructure (multimodal) can be a deal breaker. Please consider running sidewalk on Paséo del Pueblo all the way north (past Altusps) to connect with sidewalks on Camino de la Placita. It is high traffic (dirt path next to road) but can be only used by the gutsy!

Comment 26: Kathryn F. Fortner
For the segment La Posta to Quesnel, I think Alternative 2A is preferable to #2. With #2 you are just pushing the congestion to the intersection of Pueblo Norte and Placitas/Quesnel. By your own traffic study, only 1/3 turn left onto Placitas. That is not what happens Friday through Monday when far less traffic turns left.

I do like that #2 and #2A will have controlled left turn lanes. The open middle lane we have now is very dangerous. The synchronized signals will go along way to less congestion (best part of the whole plan)!

Landscaping and areas for future landscaping must be included in plans and budget. Rather have congestion than look like the four-lane road through Español.

Comment 27: John Mayer
La Posta to Quesnel:
• Prefer Alternative 3.
• As much landscaping as possible.
• Limit left turns north and south of Los Pandos.
• No left turns out of Smith’s on to Paséo, use Siler Rd. for left turns.
• Gateway treatment to Historic Area on Peso del Pueblo Sur and Norte.
• Signage for parking and shopping by Kit Carson Rd. on Paséo and on Placita.
locals alike will have to follow a one-way pattern where people will see businesses they never saw before and will discover new local and tourist hot spots.

Changing the flow on the main road would stop heavy flow and people speeding through residential neighborhoods in the downtown area, such as Siler Rd., Montoya Street, Ranchitos Rd., Salazar Rd., La Posta, Los Pandos and more. People would not be speeding down your neighborhood to avoid traffic anymore, as traffic would flow BETTER THROUGH ALTERNATIVE 3.

When towns grow, they adopt one-way streets to help with flows, towns as small as Truth or Consequences and cities as large as Albuquerque. Let this town grow and let people drive in the 21st century.

PLEASE, PLEASE re-consider alternative 3 as it would be the best option for our town.

Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 (Alternatives 2+3).

My comments follow:

1. Change the NM 68 roadway from La Posta Rd. to Quesnel Lane from what it is now: 3-lanes (two travel lanes and one turn lane) to: 4 TRAVEL LANES, TWO IN EACH DIRECTION, WITH NOW TURN LANE.

2. Align Los Pandos Rd. and Siler Road 4-way intersection.

3. All plans for this stretch of NM 68 include bike paths on both sides and sidewalks. DOT indicates this will happen whether the roadway is 3-lanes or 4, but there would be a lot less room for sidewalks and bike paths with the 4-lane plan.

My comments follow:

As a resident of Taos County for over 35 years, and a business person that had an office space just north of Quesnel Lane on NM 68, I strongly disagree with revising NM68 to 4-lanes, 2 traveling lanes in each direction with no turning lane in the middle for the segment north of Tewa St. and Albright St. as per Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 (Alternatives 2+3).

DISAGREE WITH 4-LANE ALTERNATIVE NORTH OF ALBRIGHT INTERSECTION:

a. A high percentage of traffic on this section of road is turning onto and off of NM 68 to access businesses on both east and west side of NM 68. With no turning lane and hoping for 2-lanes of no cars to cross this segment of the road will be more accident-prone. The road cross section shows a full raised median of 14’ width but in plan view, I do not see this is the intent, nor is there the space in this segment. This median, even if a narrow curb and gutter will just aggravate drivers and people will jump it to make their left turns into the business they seek.

b. This also makes pedestrian use almost impossible and extremely dangerous.

c. 4-lanes tends to increase the speed, a major safety issue.

d. Due to the center of Taos’ historic nature with buildings close to the existing two-lane road, the aggravation of congestion as the roadway transitions to two-lanes will just be brought closer to the historic plaza where we have the most pedestrian traffic.

AGREE WITH:

a. New light at Albright/Tewa intersection.

b. New turning lanes at Albright/Tewa intersection.

c. 4-lanes south of Albright/Tewa intersection with turning lanes as shown.

SUGGESTION FOR SILER AND LOS PANDOS INTERSECTION:

- Since Siler and Los Pandos intersection is not aligned, developing a defined left turn lane on the northbound side of NM 68 in combination with a working left turn signal will improve traffic flow and reduce risk of accident. Just south of this intersection keep the center turning lane with one lane traffic flows will keep traffic moving and make for safe left turns. People are courteous and give you an opportunity to turn left when they see the Los Pandos light is red.

- On north side of this same intersection provide a defined left turn lane in the current center lane zone with a signal that is not simultaneous with the northbound left turning vehicles. If there is room for a southbound right hand turn lane onto Siler by obtaining easement adjustment from Smiths Gas Station that would be helpful. This feels like it would be a low cost option verses the State purchasing private property and demolishing a building to align this intersection.

- Siler Road is a great bypass to go around the west side of downtown Taos with several street options behind Taos Plaza. The drawback is Siler Rd. is very narrow, so working with the Town of Taos to give the driving lanes a couple more feet would be a great improvement.

SUGGESTION FOR IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLING USAGE:

- Keeping the center turn lane and one lane of moving traffic in each direction is helpful. The center turn lane could become a landscaped/sculptural island in locations that match open spaces or islands of landscaping already developed by businesses. The edge of these landscaped islands could also correlate with a well-defined crosswalk when it makes sense.

- Narrow down the driving lane at crosswalk locations slows traffic and gives a pedestrian a better chance of crossing in a timely manner.

- Both of the above suggestions improve the setting; help develop a sense of place (entering an interesting community), and alert drivers to pay attention to non-motorized users.

- A pedestrian overpass, fulfilled via an artistic/architectural competition, may also be appropriate especially with the elevation change between Quesnel and NM 64 intersection near Taos Plaza.

- Agreed that sidewalks need tremendous improvement near Quesnel and Taos Plaza area.

SUGGESTION FOR SIGNAGE:

- There are alternative routes through Taos, granted these are on Town streets. Perhaps signage suggesting some of these routes to people passing through and not needing to make a stop near the Taos Plaza can be designed. Salazar Road is a route with many service/businesses and connects El Prado to south of Taos Proper.

Thank you for the extensive work for many years, as per the PDF I found at NMDOT website, on addressing the traffic flow and safety issues in the Town of Taos.

Comment 31: Adam Reyes

This letter includes thoughts and opinions regarding the Phase 1B NM 68/Paseo del Pueblo Sur and US 64/Paseo del Pueblo Norte corridor.
Many drivers take more risks such as pulling out into traffic without adequate timing and driving down to drive from La Posta through downtown, however this is not the case and the experience is frustrating. Whenever possible, I avoid this stretch of road as do countless locals. It should take a handful of minutes to drive from La Posta through downtown, however this is not the case and the experience is frustrating. Many drivers take more risks such as pulling out into traffic without adequate timing and driving down the turn lane. Yes, we know they are not supposed to do this, but it seems the heavy and unreasonable traffic makes people feel that this is the only way to avoid the slow crawl that burdens our main road. Lack of proper bike lanes and sidewalks, along with reckless drivers, creates a constant battle when doing something as simple as going to the grocery store or visiting a restaurant or any local business on this road. It adds risk to pedestrians and the biking population, which is increasing every year.

Alternative 3 is my choice for fixing many problems we face in our everyday commute. Four-lanes from La Posta would eliminate the bottleneck and close calls when yielding. This would also help with people turning onto US 68 north or southbound and allow more adequate timing creating a less hostile environment, i.e. less slamming on brakes to accommodate desperate drivers, less people driving long distances down the turn lane to avoid the slow crawl. Smith's grocery store might actually be easier to access and all around less stressful.

Having two lanes northbound from Quesnel to Rivali would make a tremendous difference allowing for efficient commute and business access. The one way southbound on Placitas would do the same. This idea has been brought up many times before and honestly, should have been done years ago. This would change the way this town works in a positive way. Medians would add more safety when turning north or south. This would help eliminate people driving down middle turning lanes and accidents that occur in this lane in front of business accesses. Landscaping is always nice, but should not be the primary concern. Safety first. Drainage has always been an issue and this plan would address keeping more water off the roadway and may help with growing potholes.

Seeing these plans bring more confidence to the future of this town. If we can make this a reality, it would allow the town to continue to grow and allow a more desirable commute and driving experience all around. Business would do better and be allowed to grow with ease. If we continue to do nothing, it will only become worse and more dangerous. This must happen. Please strongly consider Alternative 3 as this is the most reasonable solution for our town.

Comment 32: Jim Dostal

I live in downtown Taos and I am STRONGLY opposed to four-lanes of traffic. Would much prefer 3 lanes with middle turn lane. Thank you.

Comment 33: Carter Griffin

I sent a request earlier for a two-lane with a center lane for turning, bike lanes and sidewalks. What does it take to let you know four-lanes denote a mess for turning left and is just ugly. Is it the current Taos officials who want this for their one-way streets through the town? I have lived here for 42 years, I do not believe you are interested in public opinion, even from over 100 responses, but you have to fulfill legal requirements. What you are proposing is a sham.

Comment 34: Marcia Burden

Four travel lanes, two in each direction, with no turn lane? It's crazy—and dangerous! NMDOT can do a lot better than that!

Why would the NMDOT planners even contemplate designing and building a roadway with four lanes between Albright and Quesnel? A plan that destroys all hope for reasonable left turns for vehicles through that stretch from either direction? It's crazy!

Comment 35: Minna White

Four lanes from Albright to Quesnel will be highly dangerous. There is no by-pass and cars turn left coming from both directions.

Please: Two-lanes and a center turning lane. Align Siler Road intersection if possible, but do NOT lose the left-turning lane. Paséo is already dangerous.

Comment 36: Polly Raye

Four lanes are unworkable. Imagine stopping a whole lane of traffic behind you to make a left turn. Then Hoping the two lanes going the other way will let you through. The stretch of road from Albright to Quesnel has many businesses on both sides of the road.

Business access, generous sidewalks and bike paths, and landscaping are more important to Taoseños than speed as people approach and pass through our historic district.

Four lanes would create lots of back-ups, confusion and fender-benders. It's a bad idea for this stretch of road. Please listen to the people of Taos.

Comment 37: Annie

Voting against four lanes. Voting for two lanes.

Comment 38: Danielle Freeman

This is my thought on the proposal to make four lanes from Quesnel to Los Pados: Before any action that commits to the State Highway people, there should be full discussion in open community meetings about this idea. It is important that every one gets their say as that helps everyone better understand the whys and wherefores of whatever action is ultimately taken.

Comment 39: Patricia Morrison

I am writing to express my opinion relative to the Paséo del Pueblo highway through Taos. I am opposed to a four-lane highway. I understand the traffic in the downtown area is usually congested but to put four lanes, get rid of turning lanes, that ultimately becomes two lanes through the center of town, seems like it is not a good solution to this age-old issue. I agree with beautifying what is already in place, encourage people to walk and bike. Encourage drivers to use Paséo de Peralta to get through town quickly. Please don't move ahead with an eyesore of four lanes, which ultimately makes it even harder for people to cross the road. Thank you.
Over the last three years, I have attended three NMDOT meetings in Taos and have knowledge of the one I could not attend. During all four well-attended meetings, you heard overwhelming that they do NOT want four lanes between Siler Road and Quesnel. To ignore their wishes is a travesty and I hope that you will listen to what the people want. Our Town Council, who voted 4-1 for four lanes is out of step with what the people want and we will have to deal with that in due time.

To be perfectly clear, we want three lanes from Albright to Quesnel with the middle lane a turning lane. If we mush have four lanes, they must stop at Siler and go no further. A round a bout at Siler will funnel the traffic appropriately. Thank you.

W. Dean Koop

W. Dean Koop, am enclosing the following for your consideration in the planning of the possible proposed one-way pair and turnabout intersections portions of the main avenue improvement plans in the Taos Historic District area of the Town of Taos.
The corridor of highway's #68 and #64; how wonderful, that is has contributed so much the Taos Historic District, adamantly and sincerely oppose any developments of one-way traffic. With all the considerations and attributes cited above the following drive-to areas, plus all the natural terrain sporting destinations in the areas surrounding Taos. Casino economy, the Rio Grande River Gorge Bridge, the four famous Ski Resorts in the nearby the special ambiance and environmental love for Taos’s living area and tourist attractions; town at the other side.

Downtown Historic tourism and convenience center extending from the south end to the north end of Camino de la Placita.

All of the above five classes of drivers in the Taos Historic District are drive-in, not drive through types of traffic users. These “drive to and return to" places do not want faster speeds nor round-about, and one way traffic routes which are "longer" ways which take more time and use more vehicle expense to penalize the quality of their living environment in and near the Taos Historic District.

The Sixth- group is those persons driving into the Taos Historic District by use of Highway #68 and #64 and ten or fifty minutes later, (after hopefully gassing up and/or eating), are leaving town at the other side.

The "corridor of highway’s #68 and #64; how wonderful, that is has contributed so much toward the special ambiance and environmental love for Taos’s living area and tourist attractions; especially, the Taos Historic District, the Taos Pueblo, residents, activities and economy and Casino economy, the Rio Grande River Gorge Bridge, the four famous Ski Resorts in the nearby drive-to areas, plus all the natural terrain sporting destinations in the areas surrounding Taos.

With all the considerations and attributes cited above the following "Stakeholders" in and near the Taos Historic District, adamantly and sincerely oppose any developments of one-way traffic and turn-about intersections on the main #64 and #68 traffic roads which mainly serve the present Heritage and Legendary Taos Historic District and the nearby trafficking areas.

The above is hereby attested and claimed by our dated signatures and printed affiliation below:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature</th>
<th>Affiliation/Printed</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 18th, 2016</td>
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<td>KACHINA LODGE RESORT HOTEL &amp; MEETINGS CENTER</td>
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<td>413 Paséo del Pueblo Norte, Taos, New Mexico, 87571</td>
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<td>(575) 758-2275/cell (505) 328-6189</td>
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Mr. Tom Church, Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Department of Transportation
1120 Cerrillos, Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502

Dear Mr. Church,

The Public and affected Stakeholders have not been fully heard relative to the proposed plan to change the traffic to “One Way" on Paséo del Pueblo Norte and Camino de la Placita in the Taos Downtown Historic tourism and convenience center extending from the south end to the north end of Camino de la Placita.

When the Public is fully heard there might be overwhelming rejection to the “One Way” proposed plan. Currently, on February 24th, 2016, the public meeting for information and comment on the plan was flawed by very few stakeholders being directly notified about the meeting and purpose. Most affected stakeholders were not notified.

My extensive personal visit with the Major Stakeholders reveal that the manner of notice and the meeting procedures of the February 24th, 2016, were flawed in many respects. With a proper public notice and meeting procedures, the public comment to the New Mexico Department of Transportation and the Taos Town Council would result in overwhelming opposition to the "One Way" plan.

Due to the above, the “One Way” part of the road traffic change of the traffic improvement plan should be rejected, and a more thorough research study, and complete agreement by the majority of the major Taos Historic District Stakeholders and general public; as to the propriety of the proposed “One Way” plan should be obtained.

This proposed change to the Taos traffic improvements plan is favored by the Town of Taos administration which favors the “One Way” byway traffic change which was reported to be for two reasons; one, a “One Way” road would eliminate pot holes developing on the high traffic roads so often; and two, the funds that could be available needed enough room to be able to use all of the funds approved; or else all of the funds available would not be available.

We must keep Taos, Toas.

The Taos Historic District is a place of rest, a place of peace, a vacation place to see and slow down from the high speed, tension of the day by day activities that make millions of people “wish for” and plan another vacation.

If it’s not broken don’t make changes to fix it by making things in a place of rest and peace go faster.

Should the improvements in the Taos Historic District develop speed bumps or fix pot holes or repair and paint and build decorative railings or art statures, etc. to make a place more attractive to visit to a town of joy, peace and rests for its many visitors?

The sweet frosting on such resulting improvements, is a more boisterous economy in the area all supported by pro-rate gross receipts tax and town lodgers taxes and property taxes; an environment to replace the (over use) of alcohol, drugs, driving fast and developed incidents of ugly mishaps while people are trying to forget their worries. All of this is a poor example of a peaceful, productive and joyful living environment for the many children and young people who live in and vacation in the Taos Historic District area.
Let’s keep Taos, Taos.

Wider and faster vehicle traffic lanes which create a more hazardous environment and air pollution and noise does not fit the character of the Historic District part of the Town of Taos. The planned “One Way” traffic changes, has failed to consider the full impact to the economy, the immediate side road activities and neighbors and many traveling visitors to festivals and attractions in the area.

The “One Way” traffic proposal will have a major affect to the valuations of all stakeholders, properties and income, etc. economy in the area as to continued utility and purpose, and usage affecting Taos County property tax receipts for general public services usages, etc.

Therefore all of the above explains why the present “One Way” traffic proposal in the highly developed commercial, etc., with main avenue roads have not adequately involved the stakeholders and public and the possibly missed several legal steps by rushing toward planned completion.

The group of stakeholders may not have received due process of their rights to relocation of major traffic rezoning change to a “One Way” traffic change in this long time established and fully developed Town Plaza and Historic District. The private property rights as to values, income loss and personal associating affections of established easement contiguous to developed businesses may be severely damaging the owner’s eminent domain rights connected to the property. We all know that public tax records, etc. will measure the many property decreased values and income losses in the near future, if they occur.

Thus, I don’t think the “One Way” traffic change part of the plan should be made or inclusive to the over-all plan and is not fair or good judgment in a closed environment such as the April 28th, 2016 proposed informative meeting.

Respectfully yours,

KoBa Limited Partnership and W. Dean and Sally M. Koop
Owners and doing business as Kachina Lodge Resort Hotel & Meetings Center at 118 unit full service Hotel on 7.25 acres at 413 Paseo del Pueblo Norte, Taos, New Mexico.

Comment 44: John Hutson

As a Taos county resident I believe that doing away with the turn lane to have more travel lanes is a bad idea that will result in more traffic delay as traffic will have to stop behind cars trying to turn left across oncoming traffic. It may also cause more accidents as well. Please consider my thoughts and the thoughts of other citizens prior to making a poor decision that will affect many.

Comment 45: Robert Loveless

My wife, Shelley Loveless wrote to you about what a dangerous bad idea it is to widen the road at this point, without a center turn lane only to create a frustrating bottleneck into the two lane historic district. I want you to know that I am also against this idea, as well as the proposed changes to straighten Siler/Los Pandos.

Comment 46: Jean Admire

Please reconsider the proposal to “improve” the current situation with a four-lane road. Such a proposal does not serve the traffic needs of all residents of the area. The approach to downtown needs to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians as well as vehicles. A two-lane road with landscaped medians and turning lanes to facilitate business entry is far preferable.

Please add my voice to the anti-four-lane-road crowd. Please design a more inclusive alternative that addresses travel needs of folks on foot or bikes.

Comment 47: Nan Fischer

I just read this article in the Taos News about road construction. I think four lanes on Paseo Sur south of the Plaza is a bad idea. If you have ever driven here, you would know what horrible drivers we have, never mind when tourist season is upon us. I CANNOT imagine trying to make a left turn off Paseo form a four-lane road. You’d be blocking one lane completely, while trying to get across two lanes of traffic. I see this as 1) dangerous, and 2) a way to cause more congestion. The suicide lane is not perfect, but it gets cars out of the way to turn, and we only have to cross one lane. Four lanes is a disaster waiting to happen. That’s my 2 cents after driving around here for 30 years.

I am all for sidewalks, and bike lanes that are not part of the road.

An afterthought: The roundabout at Los Pandos and Paséo is also a bad idea. The traffic on Paséo would never end. Even with the light, you can wait to pull out of a parking lot onto the road for 5 minutes. I think that time would get longer with a roundabout. The intersection should be aligned, and the light kept in place.

Comment 48: Margery Reading

I am writing to urge that the road way not be increased in number of lanes, and that the current two lanes with a turning lane be maintained. Thank you.

Comment 49: Marilyn Hoff

I write to oppose the proposal to make Camino de Pueblo Sur in Taos into a four-lane road with no left turn lanes! Please keep Pueblo Sur as a three-lane street with the center lane for turning left. This foolish four-lane/no left turn lane idea was evidently dreamed up by somebody who has never lived or driven in Taos. The lack of left hand turn lanes would mean that every time somebody wanted to turn left on Pueblo Sur that driver would need to cross two lanes of oncoming traffic at great risk and frustration, backing up traffic behind while waiting for a rare double opening. As a resident of Taos County who shops in Taos several times a week, I do not wish to put my life at risk simply by needing supplies. Following traffic, too, would be impossibly frustrating getting stuck and needing to change lanes behind any vehicle ahead that stops to execute the dangerous maneuver of turning left. Please keep the middle lane exclusively devoted to turning left and give us instead more trees and landscaping, more bike lanes and more pedestrian walkways and perhaps some medians to help regulate and protect the left-turners.

I also oppose aligning Los Pandos and Siler—what that intersection needs is simply another traffic light. Thank you for your attention.
Please note my family’s opinion on the Taos highway improvements under consideration:

Between La Posta and Quesnel, we strongly favor two lanes plus a turn lane, a raised median (including significant landscaping and public art) pedestrian sidewalks, and bike lanes protected from auto traffic.

We strongly oppose the simple alignment of Siler Road and Los Pardos Road. This would lead to a dangerous and deadly increase in the speed of traffic from the west (currently 20 mph) to east (currently 15 mph) through this intersection. A simpler, less expensive, safer alternative is available employing turn arrow signals for northbound and southbound traffic turning onto these streets.

Comment 51: Nancy Herrick

I am strongly opposed to the creation of four lanes between Albright and Quesnel. Two lanes with a turning median seems to be more than adequate for a town of this size. Looks are everything in Taos!

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Comment 52: Ahmad Alarcon

As a merchant and Dad, I’m for three lanes for the Albright to Quesnel route. Please no four lanes. Without a turn lane, there is potential for delays and accidents.

I add my support for two traffic lanes and a turning lane and not four lanes.

Comment 54: Jean Reading

Know that I have been on the Dem. Central Comm. for quite a few years and go to Taos from Arroyo Seco almost every day through the part of town you are proposing to have four lanes, which sounds great, but just will not work. The middle lane, as now, could have small turning islands and there could be bike lanes and sidewalks on either side. And yes, Albright could have a traffic light, and move the Los Pardos – Siler light a bit south making it a bit easier to turn north from Los Pardos, but please, don’t spend the money to align them! And traffic circles at either place would be too expensive, as would another 4th lane.

Further, the public has not properly been informed of these huge new ideas ie: new downtown zoning on the Couse property as well as the Couse Museum/archive for all Taos Artists on Quesnel. (this passed but has not yet been built thankfully). And now this- 4 lanes all the way from Albright to Quesnel. Turning impossible, and its not wonderful now but would be not only dreadful but ugly.

Thanks for listening.

Comment 55: Wendy Kaggerud

I write to voice my opinion that taking the turn lane out of the stretch of road from Albright to Quesnel would be a move that would have dangerous implications to the drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians that now use that road. I am against that construction.
Comment 62: Chien Motto

The concept or plan of adding another lane to Paseo Sur between Los Pandos and Quesnel seems problematic and needs further discussion.

Comment 63: Elizabeth Cunningham

I understand that the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is proposing to change the roadway from Albright to Quesnel. I don’t use that intersection all the time, and the turn lane is essential to keeping traffic flowing. I also understand that keeping the three-lane road allows for bike paths, sidewalks and landscaping – all a boon to the economic and cultural welfare of the plaza and surrounding streets-places of long, rich and significant history to the Taos and to New Mexico. Further, having the three-lane road – two traffic lanes with a median turn lane allows for greater access to the businesses in the historic district as well as safer pedestrian and bike usage, and having the area landscaped adds to the kind of pleasing aesthetics this community is working to achieve.

For the above-mentioned economic and cultural reasons, I am against the four-lane proposal. Under no circumstances do I want any more one-way roads in Taos. I urge you to drop the four-lane proposal in favor of the three-lane road. I know our history and I know what’s valuable and of intrinsic worth. Let’s keep New Mexico True and preserve the historical flavor of the Taos Historic District.

Comment 64: Judy Weinrobe

Please! We need a turn lane on the Paseo in Taos!

Comment 65: Alan Macrae

I am responding to a letter requesting that I contact you concerning the widening of the highway leading to the heart of Taos to four lanes. I am having trouble understanding how four lanes would work. Without a turn lane the traffic would grind to a stop almost immediately in heavy traffic. What has been needed and is the least expensive alternative to having traffic bottleneck at the intersection of Quesnel and Paseo del Pueblo Sure is a system on signs leading traffic to side streets that would take them around the plaza area if they didn’t want to suffer the long lines of traffic. I fail to understand why this hasn’t been done. A system of helpful directed instructions would relieve the congestion especially at rush hour of Friday. I am happy to point out similar signs in other cities to you if you like.

Comment 66: Tom Kennedy

I am expressing my concern over the fact that NMDOT might be trying to push through a proposed four-lane road at the entry to the Historic District in downtown Taos. Please listen to the people of Taos and the legitimate concerns over this proposal. What we need is to improve upon the existing two-lanes with a center turn lane and incorporate landscaping, bike paths and sidewalks. I am a business owner in the historic district and a 40-year resident of Taos. Thank you for listening and please make the smart decision for Taos.

Comment 67: Patty Hannigan

Taos does not need the proposed four-lane road.

Comment 68: Trudy Abrams

PLEASE do not make this stretch of heavily traveled road on our busiest highway four moving lanes of traffic! The current configuration, two moving lanes and a center lane for left turns, works well going in either direction. I see this road often... most Taoseños do.

I have lived in large metropolitan areas in several US cities and on other continents. Getting in and out of a busy thoroughfare with four moving lanes is difficult, time-consuming and dangerous. Just today I needed to make several left turns into or out of that road. The center turn lane was crucial; it made the trip easy.

Comment 69: Nancy Schultz

By the way what is the use in pumping four-lanes into two???

Comment 70: Jan Martenson

I am completely in favor of the three-lane road proposal for the stretch of Albright to Quesnel in Taos. I feel that the four-lane proposal would create a nightmare for left-hand turning into the many businesses on both sides of this road.

I believe that the plan of two through-lanes with a center turn lane, bike paths, sidewalks, and appropriate landscaping is far more suitable and safe for both the residents of Taos and visitors.

Thank you for your consideration.

Comment 71: Kayce Leopold

Regarding the proposed change to road in Taos from Albright St. (county courthouse) to Quesnel Lane:

Please uphold 2 TRAFFIC LANES WITH A SAFE MIDDLE TURNING LANE [known as alternative “2a” proposal]... NOT four lanes!

Comment 72: Ben Wright

I am firmly against the town’s suggestion to enact four lanes of traffic going from La Posta to Quesnel. I and many other people spoke up against it at the public meeting on Thursday, April 28th. I don’t understand why the town administration is going against the public’s wishes and requesting this option.

I would like to see two lanes with a dedicated turning lane created by medians. This would be safer, have much better business access, allow room for safe bike lanes, sidewalks, and most important to me, Trees!

The four-lane option would be yet another accommodation for automobile culture that serves as a digression in terms of sustainable town planning. This is absolutely backwards and goes against nationwide planning efforts to revitalize urban areas with livable solutions focused on the needs of people.
Comment 73: Sara Jean and Gene Gray

...sounds like a traffic disaster.

Comment 74: Deborah Neilson

I would like to voice my support for an improved three-lane route from Albright Street to Quesnel in Taos, NM. I believe that a four-lane road with no turn lane would encourage speeding, increase accidents, and make it more difficult to access local businesses. I am in support of bike lanes as well. It is difficult and dangerous to ride bikes in this town due to the conditions of the roads and the lack of bike lanes. I frequently travel to Colorado for vacations because many towns have developed well maintained bike lanes that are safe and conveniently located. I would like to see our town consider other options rather than just getting people from point A to point B as fast as possible.

Comment 75: Alford Johnson

The proposal to create a four-lane highway on Paséo del Pueblo Sur from Albright St. to Quesnel would exacerbate the traffic flow problem rather than improving it by dumping all that higher speed traffic into the Historic District. It seems much more practical to have one lane of traffic each direction with a central turn lane or even better, a median with turning zones. This better accommodates those vehicles who want access to businesses without stopping the flow of traffic. In addition, the median could be landscaped thereby improving the aesthetics of that stretch of road.

We don’t need a four-lane highway dumping traffic into the Historic District.

Comment 76: Jamie Miceli

Please take into consideration my strong opposition to the newly proposed four-lane road form Albright to Quesnel, versus the safer, more picturesque, and pedestrian/bicyclist friendly three-lane road.

I’ve lived in Taos for 33 years and sometimes bicycle around town. I’ve always felt that Taos would benefit in every way from more bike and pedestrian paths. Plus doing away with the turning lane sounds very dangerous to me. Let’s keep Taos safe, unique, and picturesque.

Comment 77: Skip Miller

I am writing in protest of the New Mexico Department of Transportation’s (NMDOT) proposal to change the roadway from Albright to Quesnel to four travel lanes-two in each direction, with no turn lane. I am concerned that this proposed plan will further congest traffic on the highway that runs parallel to the Taos Historic District. Further, since Taos depends on the income generated through tourism, the current two-lane with one turn lane allows for better access to businesses in and around that Plaza and surrounding area. Additionally, I understand that keeping the tree-lane road allows for both landscaping and for the development of bike paths and sidewalks-addressing my other concerns, namely for beautifying the area around the Taos Historic District-with its National Landmark status-and for greater safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Urging you to keep the current two-lane plus turn lane on the Albright to Quesnel corridor for economic, safety and aesthetic reasons and to preserve the historical flavor of the Taos Historic District.

Comment 78: Frankie Chamberlain

I am in favor of TWO TRAFFIC LANES WITH A SAFE MEDIAN TURNING LANE (known as alternative “2A” proposal), not a four-lane road.

Comment 79: Nita and Henk van der Werff

We oppose changing the traffic pattern on Paséo del Pueblo Sur.

We need to maintain TWO TRAFFIC LANES WITH A SAFE MEDIAN TURNING LANE, and not have a four-lane road.

Comment 80: Morris and Frances Reynolds

We add our voice to other who have commented on the redesign of Paséo del Pueblo Sur in downtown Taos: We want two traffic lanes with a safe median turning lane, not a four-lane road. A four-lane road without a turning lane would make it difficult to turn into local businesses along the route, and it is not consonant with the character of the area.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Comment 81: Linda Hodapp

I would like to voice my support for Alternative 2a for the NM 68/US 64-corridor study. I believe we will have better flow, safety and aesthetics with two lanes plus a left turn lane as it is now, from La Posta to Quesnel.

Thank you for having the community meeting in Taos on April 28th. I appreciated your presentation and having the opportunity for the public to speak.

Comment 82: Susan Moller

In Taos, we need safe turning lanes to keep from holding up traffic while waiting, sometimes for some minutes, to turn across traffic. Let us spend that money for safe bike lanes and tree lined medians.

Comment 83: Elizabeth Jenkins

Please consider 2a a better traffic plan for this area. Thank you for your attention.

Comment 84: Mary Jo Carey

I just heard about the proposal for a four-lane roadway between Albright and Quesnel and I must say that is NOT a good idea! I am often on that road and the current turning lane is just right. Two-lanes each way would be crazy! So many people are turning into businesses all long that route and if one traffic lane was used for left turns either way it would be chaos...people trying to change lanes behind someone turning. Please only consider the three-lane (2a) alternative. This makes it easier on everyone as far as turning AND we sure do need a bike lane. Every town should be building a bike lane into their highway plans. Do NOT do the four lanes!

FYI, I have lived here for 46 years and watched all the changes to this road. I am on this road daily.
I have a question about the new four-lane highway proposed for south of downtown Taos. How would left hand turns into business along the highway be handled? (1) left hand turns allowed, making easy access to businesses on the left, but blocking the left hand lane, or (2) no left hand turns permitted, except at designed lights or traffic circles, or (3) something else?

Thank you for your comments. If the four-lane alternative is selected, left turns would likely be according to your option 1, but plans would need to be further developed.

I vote for the tree-lane road with median etc., not the four-lane. The three-lane is much more people friendly and in synch with the feeling of Taos that keeps people here and continuing to come here and love it.

I'm a 45 year resident in Taos, have gone to all the road meetings, and would like to give you my feedback.

I am very much in favor of two traffic lanes with a safe median turn lane as opposed to the recommended four-lane option.

Making turns without having a turn lane will not only slow traffic down in the left lanes but will be a safety hazard as people, especially tourists will be switching lanes as they get caught behind the left lane.

I also believe the harder access will hurt the businesses on the road. I also would like to make a comment on the town’s recommendation of the two traffic circles they are asking for. Traffic circles work fine, however when big semi trucks use them, they not only take up both lanes, it becomes a safety and traffic flow issue as well. As there currently is no bypass around Taos for the big trucks, I feel it would be a HUGE mistake to have traffic circles on the main road which big semis use all the time. Currently, all sidewalks stop at the turnoff to the Pueblo. It would be great if those could be continued on both sides to the Camino de la Placita and Rivali intersection to encourage safer and more pedestrian traffic. Also, Placitas Road is an excellent relief route that works well for locals and the idea of traffic lights is unnecessary. Lastly, landscaping is a huge plus to beautify a tourist town and is very much needed in any plans, even if some other improvements need to be put on hold. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Just a note to state that I consider a four-lane road with no turning lanes through the middle of Taos to be a very bad design idea and that two traffic lanes with a landscaped turning lane would serve the Town of Taos and the people of Taos much more safely.

Thank you for your attention.

La Posta to Quesnel- I prefer Alternative ‘2a’ because it complies with the town’s Master Plan (Vision 2020) and it does not create a bottleneck at Quesnel for northbound traffic. An added bonus would be smaller round-a-bouts should they be considered instead of traffic lights at Albright and Siler.

Quesnel to Martyr’s Lane- I prefer Alternative ‘2’ or ‘2a’ since they are the same. But no new lights on Placitas in either case.

Martyr’s Lane to Placitas- I prefer Alternative ‘2’ or ‘2a’ since they are the same. But no new lights on Placitas in either case.

Please do not pass this design proposal. We MUST have a turn lane in the center. It’s a necessity. Thank you.

What would be the purpose when after Quesnel, the road returns to two lanes on Paséo for the next several blocks? What a bottleneck as vehicles going north have to go from two to one lane right in the middle of town!!! Not a good idea. Better keeping the turn lane because there is LOTS of turning in this corridor.

Alternative 2a should be proposed route- will allow bike lanes.

I oppose four-lanes.

Would like round a bouts at both locations.

I support Alternative ‘2a’ since they are the same.

Placitas Road is an excellent relief route that works well for locals and the idea of traffic lights is unnecessary. Lastly, landscaping is a huge plus to beautify a tourist town and is very much needed in any plans, even if some other improvements need to be put on hold. Thank you very much for your consideration.

I want to voice my opinion concerning the latest proposed four-lane road and eliminating the turning lane between Los Pandos and Quesnel.

I have recently the Bent Street Café and Deli located in the John House Shops. I am excited about my new venture and look forward to developing a relationship with my neighbors and fellow merchants in the Historical District. As a local business owner whose survival depends on easy access for locals and tourists alike, I am in favor of anything that will slow people down and get them out of their cars to shop and dine downtown.

One of the biggest reasons tourists visit the Taos area is the quaintness of the Plaza and surrounding downtown historical areas. A generic, four-lane thoroughfare through the center of town will not accomplish the goal of improving traffic, but it will put anyone on a bicycle or on foot at greater risk. As a
tax-paying business owner, I don’t think the goal of the city should be to create and easier route for the hotels and motels south of town to rush their guests past our businesses and up to the Ski Valley.

To create a pedestrian-friendly atmosphere downtown, I support the previous plan that had been proposed with safe bike lanes, sidewalks, turning lanes and medians. This approach has worked in other small towns across the country and it will work here as well. If you really want to encourage tourism, support local merchants and significantly ease traffic, build additional easy-access parking options in and around downtown.

I hope the powers that be will listen to their constituents and do what is right for the town of Taos.

Comment 96: Mary Alvarado
I vote for three-lanes, sidewalks and bike lanes, please preserve the beauty and relaxed pace of Taos. People come here for peace, not to buzz through in a hurry. I live off of Kit Carson Road.

Thanks for hearing our town.

Comment 97: Jo Edna Boldin
I am letting NMDOT know I oppose having FOUR TRAVEL LANES, TWO IN EACH DIRECTION, WITH NO TURN LANE on a stretch of road going through Taos from Albright to Quesnel.

We absolutely need a left turn lane to easily access all of our businesses. It would be impossible to stop to turn left and block a whole lane of traffic while waiting for two lanes of traffic to open up for me to turn!!! NO NO NO!!

Comment 98: Donna Reina
I am letting NMDOT know I oppose having FOUR TRAVEL LANES, TWO IN EACH DIRECTION, WITH NO TURN LANE on a stretch of road going through Taos from Albright to Quesnel.

We absolutely need a left turn lane to easily access all of our businesses. It would be impossible to stop to turn left and block a whole lane of traffic while waiting for two lanes of traffic to open up for me to turn!!! NO NO NO!!

Comment 99: Robert Gontram
I understand there is a consideration for changing this road to four lanes without a center turn lane. I am for local businesses and for maintaining the flow of GRS Tax collection to the Town of Taos. Please keep these important issues on the table when final plans are made.

Comment 100: Michele Marien
Please do not make these stupid four lanes, no turn lane changes. Do we really need speed through the center of town? Bike lanes and turn lanes are more important to us!!

Comment 101: George Long
Alternative 3. One-way roads. Please fix this and let Taos grow.

Comment 102: Dennis Luftig
Sorry I’m a bit late on commenting on the proposed road construction in Taos. I would hate to see a bottleneck created by large roads going into small roads. Actually the traffic is not bad in Taos anytime of the day. It looks like, but I’m not sure, that you would be removing the center lane left turn. Is that correct? Please send me a PDF of the changes, or the proposed changes.

Comment 103: Dennis Robbins
I am not in favor of the four lane road proposal between Albright to Quesnel; a bike lane? Yes.

Comment 104: Carter Griffin
This in in response to the NMDOT meeting with the Town of Taos; I have a residence on Destino Ln. Regarding options, I am in strong favor of two lanes plus a middle lane landscaped for turnouts including a bike lane and sidewalks between La Posta and Quesnel. Four lanes is ugly and is not appropriate. Please do not align Siler and Los Pandos, it would be a speedway and seriously affect the quality of the Los Pandos neighborhood.

Comment 105: Ms. Torres
Roundabouts are hazardous in inclement weather. She does not like roundabouts.

Asked about repaving. Would like it all repaved.

Would like three lanes. A turning lane is needed. There are many businesses in section from Los Pandos to Quesnel.