

N.M. 599 and County Road 62 Interchange Project

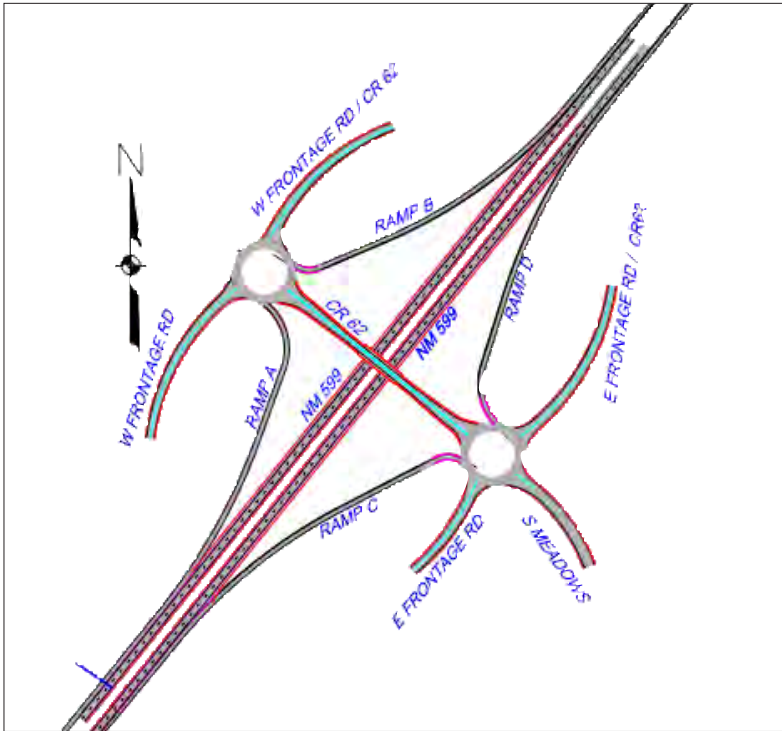
Story by Carlos O. Ruiz and William Hutchinson

In just a few months’ time District Five is expected to begin work on the N.M. 599 and County Road 62 Interchange project on the west side of Santa Fe. The highly-sensitive project took time and innovative solutions to get to a design that was both visually and structurally appealing.

The design was challenged with two main conditions: restricted existing right-of-way and the commitment to minimizing visual impacts created by the construction of an overpass bridge over N.M. 599. The Department of Transportation and Northern Design Division addressed their restrictions by 1) reducing the interchange footprint to fit within existing right-of-way limits, 2) lowering N.M. 599 to minimize the visual impacts that a regular overpass bridge would have created, and 3) designing roundabouts on both sides of N.M. 599. Other significant achievements utilizing this design include reducing the overpass bridge width by one-third by not requiring a turning lane, and creating a continuous intersection at the roundabouts, thereby eliminating a stop condition that potentially would have increased the possibility of accidents.

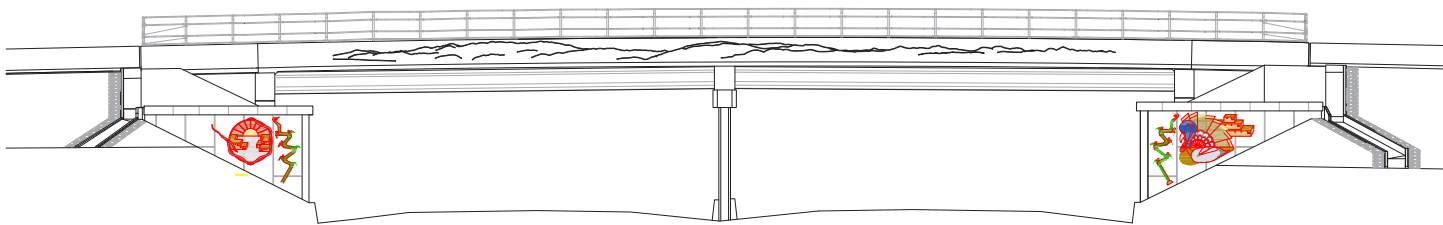
An integral part of the interchange design was the inclusion of a Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) element, which would allow for the original site-specific art to be included on a new bridge structure that will be constructed this year at the interchange on the west side of Santa Fe. A series of overpass bridges were part of the original concept on the overall relief route and District Five is constructing them as demand and funding allow.

Due to the visual impacts of the new structure on the view shed and requests from the public, it was decided by District Five’s Engineer Miguel Gabaldon and Environmental Bureau Biologist Christina Kelso that art could serve as the mitigation measure for the impacts

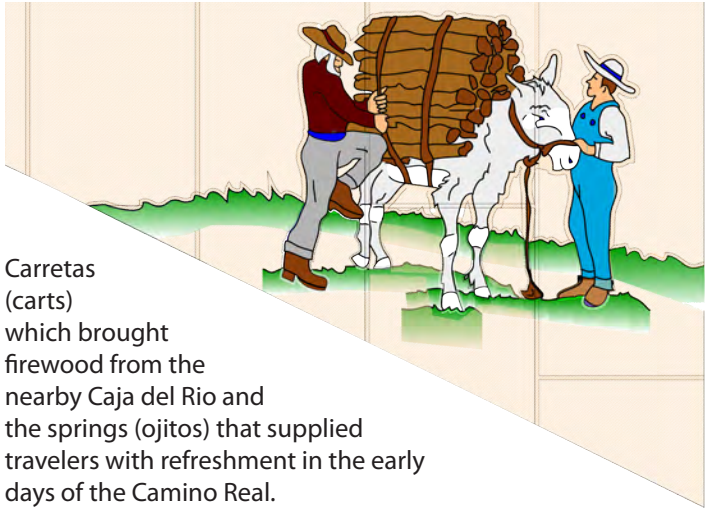


Above: N.M. 599 interchange with roundabouts.

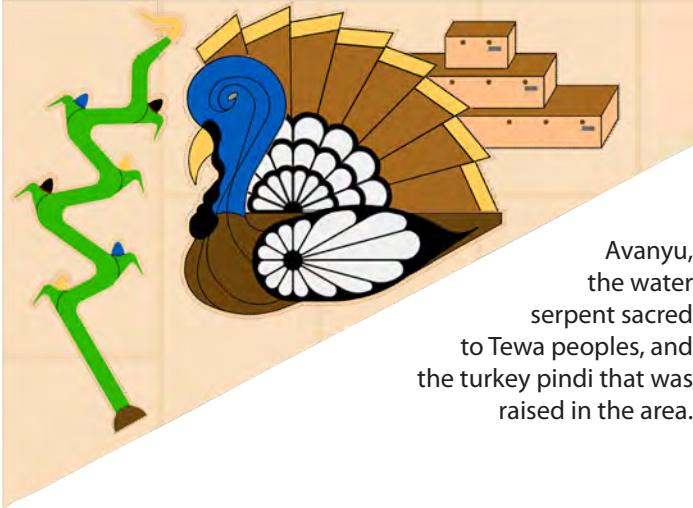
that would then qualify the treatment for federal participation. Project Development Engineer Carlos O. Ruiz worked with Landscape Architect William Hutchinson and Bridge Engineer Robert Crossno to define what areas would be available for treatment using concrete form liners. Through our public involvement process it was decided to invite both the adjacent Agua Fria community and the ancestral Tesuque Pueblo community to each nominate an artist to work with the Department. Leanna Aragon, a 17-year-old member of the Tesuque Pueblo was nominated as was Leo Romero, a 5th generation Agua Fria Village native. Each artist was assigned one side of the bridge and was asked to come up with themes that expressed their community’s expe-



CR62 OVER NM599
SOUTH ELEVATION



Carretas (carts) which brought firewood from the nearby Caja del Rio and the springs (ojitos) that supplied travelers with refreshment in the early days of the Camino Real.



Avanyu, the water serpent sacred to Tewa peoples, and the turkey pindi that was raised in the area.

rience of living in this place. Drawings were presented for favorable public comment and were then finalized in CAD form with specific depth and color specifications. Leanna’s work includes avanyu, the water serpent sacred to Tewa peoples, and the turkey pindi that was raised in the area. Leo’s work references the carretas (carts) which brought firewood from the nearby Caja del Rio and the springs (ojitos) that supplied travelers with refreshment in the early days of the Camino Real. Connecting the images on each side on the outside of the concrete wall barrier are mountain reliefs showing what the traveling public will see when heading that direction. The bridge will also accommodate the increasing pedes-

trian and bicycle traffic found in the surrounding areas. Additionally, the roundabout native landscape treatment will be supported by harvested rain water. The construction will commence in the spring of 2012 and will be substantially completed by December 21, 2012. The Project Development Engineer for this project is Carlos O. Ruiz, P.E. The facilitation of the process was done by the NMDOT Context Sensitive Solutions unit in association with the Environmental Bureau and District Five. ■