

CONNECTING THE DOTS

July — September, 2021



The Connecting the DOTS Quarterly Newsletter is a product of the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

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DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends of the Region,

The saying goes something like set your goal to hit the moon, and even if you come up short you will still be amongst the stars. And while money is not everything, the current environment is fertile with “once in a generation” opportunities to fund and complete transformative projects.

COG staff had an internal goal setting session to set both return-on-investment (ROI) and impact goals for our organization and the region. Staff set the investment target at \$50M of funding coming into the region through public and private resources for priority projects landed by COG support with our members. In the first quarter, we have already been successful in raising about \$10M. I am proud of the staff for setting the bar very high and all the planning and development work that has been done to set our region and members up for success. I appreciate the hard work it will take to deliver on this commitment.

On July 22, the US Economic Development Administration (EDA) announced \$3B it received under the American Rescue Plan Act and the programs it has launched. One being the **Build Back Better Regional Challenge**, which offers to fund 20-30 regions in the country large investments in transformative growth clusters and supporting projects.

The COG jumped into this with both feet to try to pull our region together around the EnergyàLogisticsàAdvanced Manufacturing (ELM) strategy outlined in our CEDS.

The COG has learned a lot about itself through this Application Challenge:

- ♦ The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is incredibly important to provide focus on the global strategy for the region. It is equally important that the CEDS Committee be more robust, diverse, and involved in guiding the development of the plan.
- ♦ The COG is the economic development district for the region, which is a value to all its member and partners as the COG has more experience than any other organization in attracting EDA investments. The COG provides the right regional table for governments, private sector, and economic development organizations (EDOs) to gather and deliberate around.
- ♦ The COG has the ability and chops to position an application that is extremely competitive against any region in the country.



Evan Williams, Executive Director

COAL AVENUE COMMONS

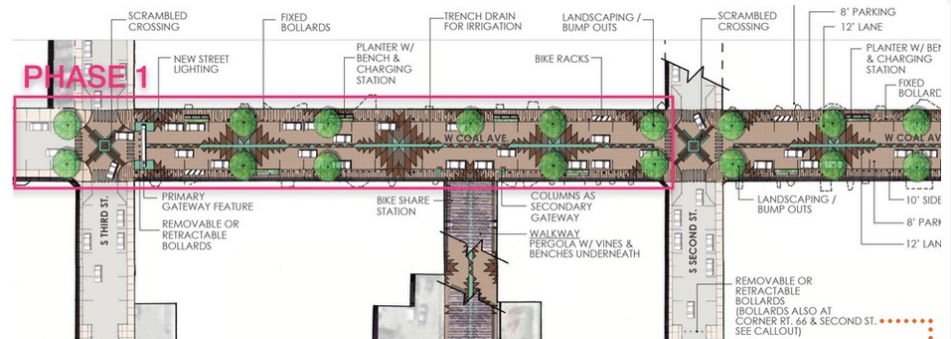
The culmination of 3+ years of community-based planning and design, engineering and construction led to the completion of the first phase of the **Coal Avenue Commons** project. On August 24th, City of Gallup leadership pulled together numerous project partners including the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments to celebrate the completion of the “event street” between 2nd and 3rd Streets. The ceremony marked the beginning of a new era for revitalization of downtown Gallup and solidifies the City’s prioritization of this critical commerce district. At a cost of approximately, \$4.5 million dollars for Phase I, the “event street” was and is a heavy lift and requires close coordination and a unifying partnership with downtown businesses, organizations, local and regional governmental entities and state and federal agencies.

One challenge that has been and will be present is the need to mitigate negative impacts of construction on the businesses within the district and especially along the corridor. To combat this, the City has partnered with Gallup Mainstreet to establish a mitigation partnership and a Downtown Resource Center that provides technical assistance and outreach for businesses. Services rendered include trainings on increased marketing and outreach to expand customer base, merchandising to increase in-store sales, and access to a newly established online Gallup Native Arts Market to access the national and global market. As the city works towards the implementation of phase II, the Downtown Resource Center will continue to provide services to downtown businesses to ensure negative impacts of the project are minimized.

A few days after the celebration of the opening of phase I of the Coal Avenue Commons project, the Council of Governments, through their Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO), notified the City that they had been awarded **\$3,325,000** from the New Mexico Department of Transportation’s Transportation Project Fund. Coupled with a **\$175,000** cash commitment, the city can fully fund Phase II of

the project which includes reconstruction of the roadway and subsurface drainage improvements between 1st and 2nd Streets including the 2nd Street intersection.

The Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments has been a critical partner since the inception of the project and looks forward to the completion of Phase II and the utilization of the “event street” for community events.



Coal Avenue Commons—Phase I



Coal Avenue Commons—Phase I Ribbon Cutting Ceremony—August 24, 2021

CDBG NEWS

2022 City of Grants CDBG Application: During the first quarter of FY2022, the COG assisted the City of Grants with the resubmission of its application to CDBG for Phase II – Washington/Jefferson Avenue Drainage Improvements. During the 2020-2021 application cycle, the City of Grants was not awarded CDBG infrastructure funds due to increased competitiveness and shortfalls in readiness. However, as the year progressed, the city had notified the COG of its desire to resubmit and had indicated areas of improvement including readiness and general application requirements.

The Washington/Jefferson Avenues Drainage Improvement project includes full-depth reconstruction of the intersection of Washington & Jefferson Avenues including approximately 450-Linear Feet (350-LF for Phased Project) of the Washington Avenue corridor. The project will include the construction and installation of critical subsurface drainage infrastructure that will alleviate flooding and convey upstream storm water from the Grants Arroyo south into the proposed bio-park area. This will ensure the school, family center, and area residential neighborhoods are protected from frequent (e.g., 10-year) flood events.



Building Better Neighborhoods

The COG and Wilson & Co. proceeded to update the application including project narrative and justification, required forms, cost estimates, scopes of work, planning and water conservation documentation, design, and the application form. All partners involved contributed to an improved CDBG infrastructure application and look

forward to presenting to the Community Development Council on October 27th and securing \$750,000 for this much needed project.



Flooding along Washington Avenue next to Mesa View Elementary School

2019 CDBG Construction Grant (McKinley County): The White Cliffs Water Improvement Project was awarded to construct a new 50,000-gallon water storage tank and waterline to connect to the White Cliffs service area. This project was in the grant agreement process when the 2020 COVID pandemic hit and the subsequent economic shortfall, delaying all pre-construction processes. This process was started up again this past spring 2021, but due to decreased global production, construction costs for materials, transportation and equipment increased altogether. This impacted the White Cliffs project, resulting in a \$250,000 funding gap. \$60,000 was secured from the 2021 capital outlay, concluding with a \$190,000 funding gap.

The NM Department of Finance & Administration reached out to local governments on emergency funding that may be made available under the ARPA Local Government Recovery Funds. Last month, the Community Development Council (CDC) held a special meeting. McKinley County presented the funding need for the White Cliffs project and the remaining amount was granted. The grant agreement

CDBG NEWS continued..

process is currently underway. The project goes out for bidding next then final construction. Construction is anticipated to be completed by the next CDBG construction grant application cycle that should be scheduled by April 2022.

2022 CDBG Planning Grant (McKinley County): The COG provided technical assistance in completing and submitting a 2021 planning grant application that has a ceiling of \$50,000. This grant, if secured, will be used to develop a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the Allison community that currently does not have access to a reliable source of water supply.

McKinley County and its standing partners, the COG and DePauli Engineering and Surveying (DES), continue to provide technical assistance and support to all small water system projects and to identify all available funding programs in efforts to prepare these special districts for the much-anticipated Navajo-Gallup Water Supply transmission line.

Currently, the Allison community does not have access to a reliable source of water and is not connected to the City of Gallup's regional distribution system. This PER will help identify strategies and solutions that can help increase accessibility to reliable water supply and infrastructure, including the NGWSP.

2020 CDBG Construction Grant (City of Gallup): The City of Gallup has a current CDBG (construction) project: the West Logan Avenue Street and Drainage Project was awarded \$1 million for Phase I, complete replacement of both water and wastewater lines and reconstruction of the street, including the drainage system, for the Chihuahuita neighborhood, between 7th Street and 9th Streets. Phase

II is to complete the 6th Street block; requiring more funding. The City and DePauli Engineering & Surveying (DES) are currently conducting the bidding process and will be ready for construction in the near future.



Water line break along West Logan Avenue in Gallup



Aftermath of water line break along West Logan Avenue in Gallup

REVOLVING LOAN FUND

The Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (NWNMCOG) has worked extensively to ready for relaunch the Enterprise Loan Fund (ELF), a revolving loan fund program intended to provide small business in northwest New Mexico with access to low-cost, low-interest business loans.

The Board meeting of the NWNMCOG, held in August 2021, saw the approval of program policies and procedures. In addition, the NWNMCOG took action to appoint Jim Cox, CPA, who is the COG Board member for San Juan County, as the Loan Committee Chair for the ELF. Since his appointment, Mr. Jim Cox has been participating in weekly calls between the NWNMCOG and the National Development Council (NDC) regarding program development in anticipation of program launch.

Through a professional services contract, the National Development Council (NDC) has been retained to provide the NWNMCOG with program and technical assistance. Weekly calls between NWNMCOG and NDC on program development have centered on finalizing the following components:

- Loan Intake / Analysis
- Loan Approval / Closing
- Program Compliance
- Program Reporting
- Marketing
- Loan Committee

As part of NDC's technical assistance, NWNMCOG is currently participating in ED 201 – Business Credit Analysis, a course which is part of NDC's Economic Development Professional (EDFP) certification program.

NWNMCOG is moving toward completion of all program documents in the next month, with a legal review to follow. Upon satisfactory legal review and a final notice to proceed, the Enterprise Loan Fund anticipates taking applications for loan no later than the first quarter of FY2022.



(ICIP) INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

It's that time of year again to update local capital project priorities and to identify local resources and match funding.

ICIPs for FY2023-2027 has officially closed. All ICIP submissions were completed for our member and local governments, including special districts and senior center facilities. Currently waiting for final publication of the ICIP.

- ◆ Special Districts – Friday, September 3, 2021
- ◆ Tribal Governments – Friday, September 17, 2021
- ◆ Counties and Municipalities – Friday, September 17, 2021
- ◆ Senior Citizen Facilities – Friday, October 1, 2021

The NM Department of Finance & Administration (DFA) held a series of virtual workshops that began in August 2021 with the *ICIP 101* workshop. Other workshops include:

- ◆ CDBG Opportunities
- ◆ Cost Estimating
- ◆ Planning, Vetting, Application & Funding
- ◆ NMFA Public Lending
- ◆ FUNDIT
- ◆ Outdoor Recreation Planning
- ◆ Aging & Long-Term Services
- ◆ Senior Center ICIPs
- ◆ Capital Outlay Process

Presentation materials can be accessed at:

<https://www.nmdfa.state.nm.us/local-government/icip/>



New Mexico Department of
Finance & Administration

Next priority is to start preparing for the 2022 legislative session. Capital Outlay forms are due on Thursday, January 13, 2022, by 3:00PM.

MANUELITO CANYON BRIDGE

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony

On Friday, September 3, 2021 McKinley County held a ribbon cutting ceremony for a massive watershed bridge project on Manuelito Road, several miles south of I-40 west of Gallup. This project entailed two bridges crossing over a 26x26 foot wide by 120 foot long culvert and a 12x12 foot wide by 120 foot long culvert structure where two watershed arroyos entered an even larger canyon watershed which runs along the east side of the south Manuelito Canyon road. The issue for these improvements was the combined watershed arroyos and main canyon were coming closer and closer to the road, with limited right of way. This was a first and major step for saving and prolonging the life of this road, providing access to a large population of Chapter area residents on the south side of I-40. Going forward, more watershed mitigation will be needed to extend the life of this road corridor, but this first and most urgent watershed mitigation was successfully completed and celebrated on September 3, at the location of these two new bridges.

As part of the celebration, there were many Navajo Nation, County, State and Federal leaders who participated in addressing the participating public with at my estimation around 40 – 60 in attendance. As part of the ceremony, the public was addressed by Doug Decker – McKinley County Attorney-Invocation; Anthony Dimas – McKinley County Manager – Welcome & Introductions; Billy Moore – McKinley County Commission Chairman; Milton Davis – Manuelito Chapter President; Patty Lundstrom – NM State Representative; Jonathan Nez – Navajo Nation President; and US Senator Ben Ray Lujan.

After the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, refreshments were provided at the Manuelito Chapter House.



State Representative Patty Lundstrom conducts speech at the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony



Federal, State, and local partners

EDA FUNDING PROGRAMS

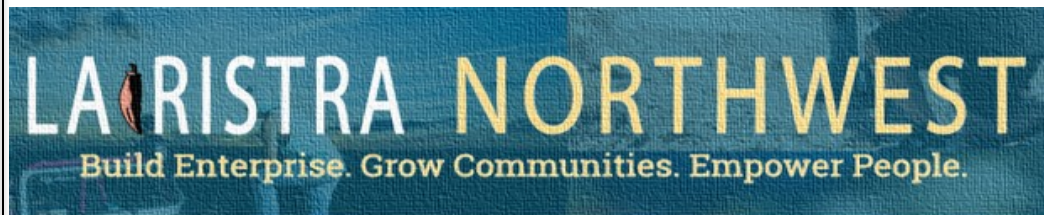
Once in a Generation Funding EDA ARPA Programs

On July 22, 2021, the US Economic Development Administration announced its programs to spend \$3B of American Rescue Plan Act funding to revitalize America's economy. For the last six months, the COG has been soliciting projects through its online portal, discussing projects with tribal and local economic development organizations, and tracking other priorities from our Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

The COG has become one of the foremost experts in the region on these programs and the requirements surrounding them. The COG has helped throughout the region matching projects with programs to target the top priorities with the highest likelihood of success. The COG continues to be ready to help communities

navigate this competitive application.

Finally, the COG has taken the lead on developing a Build Back Better application for the region around the ELM strategy of utilizing energy assets in order to propel logistics development that combined would provide the region a competitive advantage in advancing manufacturing.



BUILD. BACK. BETTER. **CONCEPT APPLICATION SUMMARY**

Region: Northwest New Mexico
Four Corners, USA

Impact Area:

New Mexico: San Juan County, McKinley County, Cibola County
Arizona: Apache County and Navajo County
Utah: San Juan County
Colorado: La Plata and Montezuma

Lead Agency: Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments

“Our region is a place where business is still done with handshakes and hard work. The beauty of our landscape is only surpassed by the imagination and creativity of our people. Some are drawn by enchantment, while others are tied to its land. We all survive by its water and make our way by the sweat of our brow. Our region is guided by footprints, made fertile by the cultures that continue, and driven to leave things better for the next. Contribute your chapter to our storied history, today!”

Billy Moore, Commissioner
McKinley County Commission
Thoreau, New Mexico
Chairman
COG Board of Directors



TRANSPORTATION PROJECT FUND

Monumental Transportation Money Awarded

Virtual, via Zoom – – On August 26th, the New Mexico Transportation Commission approved close to \$160 million worth of local and tribal transportation projects throughout the State of New Mexico. A special call for projects was announced in April, and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs), and New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) reviewed applications from various entities throughout the State. Ultimately, NMDOT Cabinet Secretary Michael Sandoval provide a final list of recommendations to the Commission for approval. The NMDOT received over \$273M in applications statewide and selected 110 projects for award totaling \$159.5 million. Remaining funds will be used for hardship waivers. Special thanks to our District 5 Commissioner Tom Taylor and District 6 Commissioner Charles Lundstrom for their support and advocacy for these funds. Projects funded in Northwest New Mexico and the counties of Cibola, McKinley, and

San Juan

included:

District	Entity	Project Title	State	Entity	Total
5	City of Aztec	McWilliams Road Paving	\$663,100	\$34,900	\$698,000
5	City of Bloomfield	East Blanco Bridge Phase II	\$363,850	\$19,150	\$383,000
5	City of Farmington	Foothills Drive Enhancement Phase III	\$1,672,950	\$88,050	\$1,761,000
5	Navajo Nation - Shiprock Chapter	Shiprock Farm Road Improvement	\$1,140,000	\$60,000	\$1,200,000
5	San Juan County	County Road 6100 Bridge Resurfacing	\$603,250	\$31,750	\$635,000
5	Town of Kirtland	Road 6405 Reconstruction	\$114,950	\$6,050	\$121,000
5	Town of Kirtland	Road 6411 Reconstruction	\$114,950	\$6,050	\$121,000
6	Cibola County	County Road 1 Bridge and Road Repair	\$1,187,500	\$62,500	\$1,250,000
6	City of Gallup	Coal Avenue Commons Phase II	\$3,325,000	\$175,000	\$3,500,000
6	City of Grants	Washington Avenue & Drainage Recon	\$2,070,346.40	\$108,965	\$2,179,312
6	City of Grants	Sakelares Blvd Design	\$546,250	\$28,750	\$575,000
6	McKinley County	Superman Canyon Bridges	\$1,900,000	\$100,000	\$2,000,000
6	Village of Milan	Airport Road Reconstruction	\$3,145,591	\$165,557	\$3,311,149
6	Navajo Nation – Ramah Chapter	BIA Route 145 Reconstruction Design	\$546,250	\$28,750	\$575,000
6	Navajo Nation - Ramah Chapter	BIA 195 Reconstruction	\$850,360	\$44,755	\$895,116
6	Navajo Nation – Tohajiilee Chapter	Tohajiilee Road Paving	\$3,695,403	\$194,494	\$3,889,898
6	Navajo Nation – Tsayatoh Chapter	West Tsayatoh Road Phase I	\$2,327,500	\$122,500	\$2,450,000
6	Pueblo of Acoma	State Road 124 Frontage Road	\$1,472,500	\$77,500	\$1,550,000
TOTAL			\$21,294,404	\$1,120,756	\$22,415,163

2021 RURAL WATER SUMMIT

McKinley County and its working partner, the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments, hosted the County's first rural water summit on Tuesday, August 31, 2021. This summit was both a virtual and in-person event that was highly attended by local leadership, special districts, standing partners and state agencies.

The summit was organized to provide crucial information for our regional small water systems that have struggled for decades to get the support and funding needed to get local infrastructure projects off the shelves. The summit also provided an opportunity for small water systems to directly connect with state agencies and programs that can provide the necessary data or resources to get projects funded.

Main presenters include:

John Mumm (Water Planner, NM Office of the State Engineer/Interstate Stream Commission) talked about the upcoming update of the state's 50-Year Water Plan. Plan development is still in progress and currently in the public input phase.

John Leeper (Physical Engineer, Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions) presented on the history of the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project and the state's regional planning districts.

Jeff Kiely (Consultant, Kiely Consultants) presented on the history of local and regional planning and the NGWSP.

Dominique Cartron (Esq., Daniel B. Stephens & Associates) presented on the McKinley County water regionalization initiative and next steps.

A special thanks to the New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and the Rural Communities Assistance Corporation (RCAC) for supporting the County's initiative to regionalize its small water systems and to developing a regional water program that benefits all special districts and local governments.

For more information on the Rural Water Summit or to get access to some of the presentation materials, go to: <http://www.nwnmcog.com/rural-water-summit.html>



2021 RURAL
WATER SUMMIT



PREWITT/MILAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Key Updates

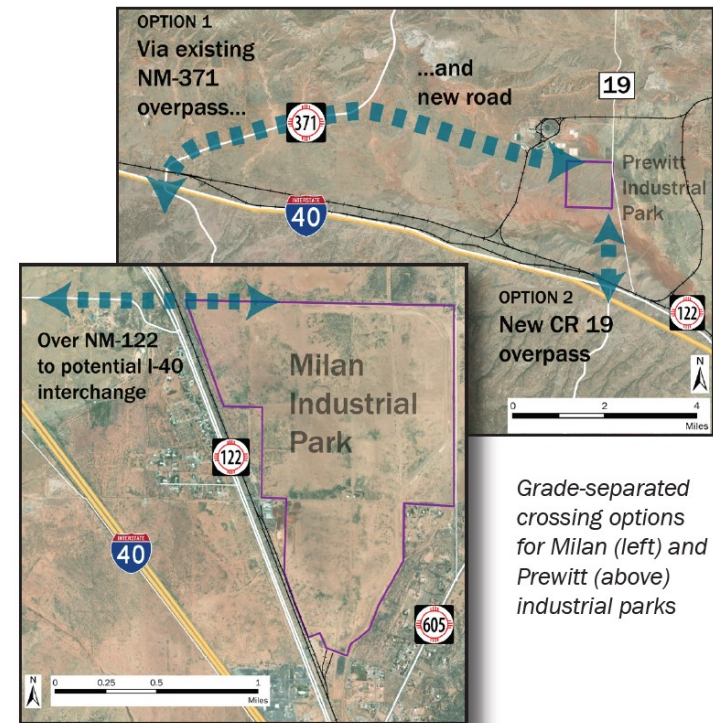
The Prewitt-Milan Transportation Master Plan progressed in two key areas over the summer of 2021. First, the Project Leads met with two focus groups, each directly involved in the planning and implementation of the Prewitt and Milan industrial parks, which are the major drivers of this effort to understand transportation needs in the corridor. Second, the consultant team has progressed on its preliminary analysis of the study area. The team has examined the traffic that may be generated by the industrial parks and the resulting infrastructure needs to meet this future traffic. The team has also studied the current state of Interstate 40 infrastructure to understand any needs on that important route.

Main Takeaways So Far

1. Traffic At full buildout, the industrial parks will generate significant road traffic volumes. In the short term, this is likely to require minor road improvements; in the longer-term, more intensive improvements may be needed.
2. Grade Separation One of main long-term needs for industrial park access will be grade-separated railroad crossings. Today, the road routes to the Prewitt and Milan industrial park sites cross the busy BNSF mainline tracks. As the parks develop and traffic generated by them grows, constructing grade-separated crossings of the tracks will be important to safely accommodate this traffic. The main options for a grade-separated crossings at each industrial park site are as follow (also see maps at right):
 - ♦ Milan site: a crossing at Sawmill Road, that could connect to a potential new I-40 interchange to the west;
 - ♦ Prewitt site: 1) a new overpass near County Road 19 in Prewitt; or 2) a route via the existing NM 371 overpass at Thoreau, then via a

new road from NM 371 east to the industrial park site

3. I-40 Interchanges No deficiencies have been identified at the Interstate 40 interchanges in the study area, though analysis continues.
4. Milan rail loading/unloading Identifying a short-term option for loading rail cars at the Milan industrial park would be valuable, before the park's planned rail layout is fully built out.



Project Next Steps

The PMTMP process will last until early 2022. In the meantime, here are some of the key upcoming next steps for the project.

PREWITT/MILAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

About the Master Plan

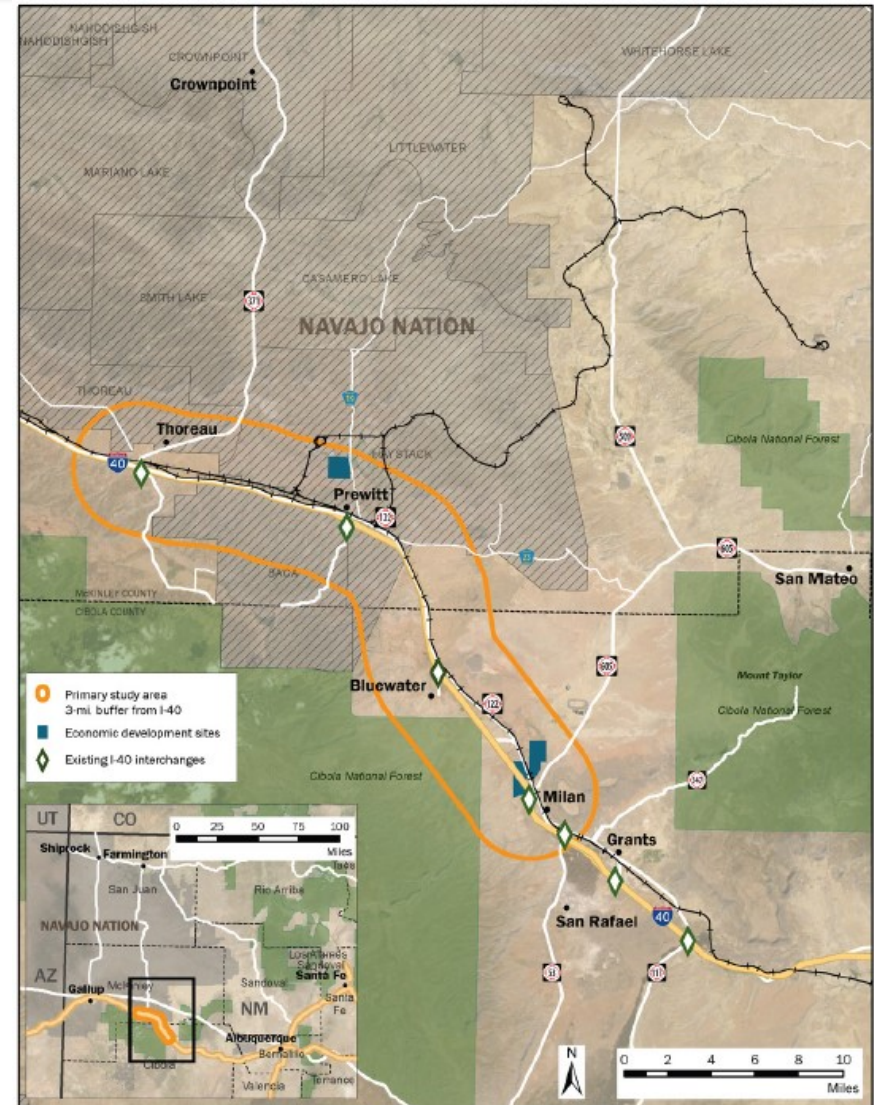
The Prewitt-Milan Transportation Master Plan (PMTMP) will coordinate the planning and delivery of projects to improve access to the Prewitt and Milan industrial parks and to other projects in nearby communities. The PMTMP will analyze the multimodal transportation system to support improved safety and to support industrial and economic development needs between Prewitt and Milan and in communities such as Bluewater and Thoreau. The purpose of the PMTMP is to plan and identify next-step design needs and opportunities, and outline funding in order to construct the infrastructure needed to serve an emerging economic boom in Northwest New Mexico.

Goals of the Plan

- ◆ Evaluate transportation planning issues
- ◆ Gather existing data on land use, economics, environmental
- ◆ Consider future transportation conditions/Evaluate impacts of growth
- ◆ Develop prioritized recommendations for transportation needs
- ◆ Build consensus and support for PMTMP projects

Study Area

The study will identify transportation projects in the Interstate 40 corridor generally between the Prewitt and Milan industrial park sites. Where applicable, this may include transportation projects beyond the Primary Study Area.



Learn more & add your vision to the interactive map at

www.nwnmcog.com/prewitt-milan-transportation-plan

BUILDING IMPROVEMENTS

The NWNM Council of Governments recently has invested in some needed building improvements. This includes addressing some roof leak problems for both our main building office, and the storage facility behind the building. While the roof repairs were a little expensive, they will help preserve our historic building for many years to come. The roofers did not just address the areas that were leaking; they actually repaired the entire roofs of both buildings to help preserve our historic downtown Gallup building for the long term. COG staff also did some major landscaping upgrades to the entrance to our building on Aztec Avenue as well.

