



# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

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## Public Involvement Plan Overview

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) outlines the steps for engaging with public during the Prewitt-Milan Transportation Master Plan (PMTMP). The PIP combines a Stakeholder Outreach Plan and a Promotional Plan into a single document.

The PIP helps determine the appropriate level of engagement for the particular project and stakeholders in question, and to define the specific steps that will be taken and tools that will be used to conduct the engagement. Defining these elements early on in a process helps the Project Team to prepare quality engagement materials and to establish a clear and predictable process for gathering public and other stakeholder feedback.

### Role of Public Involvement

Public involvement is an essential part of the planning process for projects that will significantly impact residents, business owners, and other groups within a community. Input from the public puts other forms of analysis conducted during the planning process into context and helps ensure that the final outcomes of the process are reflective of a community's needs and aspirations.

Starting public involvement at an early stage such as PMTMP (which analyzes transportation needs at a high level) helps establish community buy-in for subsequent stages of implementation of identified transportation projects. This can be important when seeking funding for projects. Federal environmental law requires every project that seeks or that might seek Federal funding to include public engagement as part of its planning and design, and state governments are required to define procedures and guidelines for effective public engagement. Involving the public at this early planning stage can demonstrate community buy-in and improve the competitiveness of recommended projects for such funding at later stages.

## Project Overview

The Prewitt-Milan Transportation Master Plan (PMTMP) will coordinate the planning and delivery of road and rail infrastructure projects to improve access to the Prewitt and Milan industrial parks and to other economic development projects in nearby communities. The PMTMP will analyze the multimodal transportation system 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.



Figure 1: Primary Study Area

## Project Goal and Objectives

Project Goal: Establish a common understanding of the current state of transportation needs and investments in the Prewitt-Milan corridor and to develop a blueprint for implementing projects.

Project objectives:

- Evaluate transportation planning issues
  - Identify transportation improvements to enhance access freight and commuter access to the Prewitt and Milan industrial parks
  - Pinpoint transportation needs for other forthcoming or potential economic development projects in the I-40 corridor between Prewitt and Milan, including in communities such as Thoreau and Bluewater.
  - Analyze transportation needs of residents and workers in the corridor to improve their access to employment opportunities and to better their quality of life
- Gather existing data on land use, economics, environmental
- Consider future transportation conditions/Evaluate impacts of growth
  - Build understanding of future changes to the region's transportation network and to the transportation and logistics industries more broadly, in order to enhance long-term economic development outcomes study area
- Develop prioritized recommendations for transportation needs
- Build consensus and support for PMTMP projects

## Components of the Public

The identified components of the public include:

- Agency representatives
- Local and regional decision makers
- Business owners, developers in the project corridor
- Transportation sector representatives (private sector)
- Residents of the project corridor
- Non-resident commuters and other users of the project corridor

## Stakeholder Outreach Plan

The Stakeholder Outreach Plan (SOP) summarizes all project outreach activities and provides guidelines for the preparation, facilitation, and documentation of these activities. The plan will include expectations for the Project Team as well as the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) and Technical Working Group (TWG) members. The SOP includes a summary of the following outreach initiatives, which are discussed in more detail below:

- TWG/PAC meetings
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Public Meetings
- Website

## Policy Advisory Committee (PAC)

There will be four PAC meetings consisting of executive level managers from each of the participating stakeholder governments and agencies and will be responsible for providing direction, approving the project parameters, and establishing criteria for future project evaluations. The PAC will likely expand to include new members as new agencies and partners are identified.

## PAC Members

PAC Member	Affiliation
Marvin Magee	Members, Electric Generating Facility Economic Development District
Rhonda Mitchell	
Anthony Dimas Jr.	
Bill Lee	
Tony Tanner	
Robert Castillo	
Clemente Sanchez	
Michael Brown	
Harry Garcia	
George Muñoz	Representative
Charles Lundstrom	Senator
Felix Gonzales	State Transportation Commissioner, NMDOT
Daniel Torres	Mayor, Village of Milan
Billy Moore	Chair, Cibola County
Paulson Chaco	Chair, McKinley County
	Navajo Nation Office of President/Vice-President

## Technical Working Group (TWG)

There will be five TWG meetings composed of senior technical staff from the governments and agencies participating in the PAC and will serve to provide support to the PAC and the Study Team.

The TWG is divided into several subgroups based on a particular topic focus area of the plan. These groups are: 1) Community, 2) Economic Development and Industry, and 3) Transportation and Infrastructure. As needed, the project team will engage with these groups individually to work through particular topics or discussions relating to the subgroup's focus area. TWG members are assigned based on their organization's focus or the individual's area expertise. Within each subgroup, there is representation for both Cibola and McKinley counties. A list of agencies participating in the TWG are listed below by subgroup.

### TWG Member Agencies

Community
Village of Milan
Cibola County
Grants-Cibola County School District
Bluewater Village
NMSU - Grants
Baca/Prewitt Chapter
Thoreau Chapter
Casmero Lake Chapter
Gallup McKinley County School District
Navajo Council Delegates
Navajo Technical University
Economic Development and Industry
Regional Representative, NM Economic Development Department
Cibola County Economic Development Foundation
State Land Office
McKinley Paper/Biopappel
El Segundo Mine/Peabody Energy

Greater Gallup Economic Development Corporation
Solid Waste Authority
Eastern Navajo Regional Business Development Office
Escalante Electric Generating Facility
<b>Transportation and Infrastructure</b>
BNSF Railway Company
NMDOT – Transit & Rail
NMDOT – Freight
NMDOT District 6
NMDOT – NWRTPPO Liaison
NMDOT Tribal Liaison
Cibola County RTPO Representative
Cibola County Road Superintendent
Village of Milan Manager and Public Works Director
Continental Divide Electric Cooperative (incl. Broadband)
Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA)
McKinley County Road Superintendent
Navajo Division of Transportation

## Role of PAC/TWG

The first and last PAC/TWG meeting will be combined for both groups to allow for a more comprehensive approach at those points in project development. The other meetings will be held separately to allow for a more interactive workshop for the TWG and more of a decision-making environment for the PAC.

Overall, The PAC/ TWG groups will fulfil the following roles:

- Share info on plans/projects in the region
- Support data collection
- Help build alternatives
- Evaluate alternatives
- Refine recommendations
- Create PROJECT CHAMPIONS

## PAC/TWG Meeting Logistics

For all meetings there will be invitations sent via email. For the foreseeable future, meetings will be held virtually to comply with public health guidelines regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. After each meeting there will be a Meeting Summary and meeting materials provided to all PAC/TWG members.

## Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews to be conducted with key stakeholders, including but not limited to specific PAC/TWG members. Interview questions to include:

- How would you like to stay informed of projects and opportunities in the area?
- How do you let others know what your agency/community is doing/approving?
- What are your concerns regarding:
  - Infrastructure Funding
  - Land Use
  - Transportation Systems
  - Freight Movement
  - Economic Development



- Jobs
- Housing
- What information would help you be more effective in attracting investment in the region?
- How can this region work together to be more effective in attracting investment in the region?

A preliminary list of interviewees is listed below.

**Preliminary List of Interviewees**

Interviewee(s)	Target Date
Bluewater Village representative	June/July 2021
Milan Village Manager Sarah Austin & Public Works Dir. <b>Joe Ray Mirabal</b>	June/July 2021
Solid Waste Authority representative	June/July 2021
Escalante Generating Facility	June/July 2021
McKinley Paper/Biopappel	June/July 2021
Peiter Hjerstedt, BNSF	August 1, 2021
Larry Maynard, NMDOT	August 1, 2021

## Public Meetings

Two public meetings are planned for during the project timeline. At this time, the project team anticipates that public meetings will be held virtually via the GoToWebinar platform to comply with meeting restrictions related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Should these restrictions be lifted, in-person public meetings may be planned. Regardless of the platform/venue, public meetings will be held in the evening to maximize participation from the public. The format and content will include recommendations from the TWG/PAC, and will be sure to maintain cultural sensitivity to the Navajo Nation participants.

Public meetings will be advertised on the NWNMCOG website, other participant’s websites, the local newspaper, and via email blasts to stakeholders and project team members.

The format for each meeting will be finalized by the project team but each of the public meetings will include sign-in sheets, comments sheets, contact information, and an opportunity to ask questions.

**Anticipated Public Meetings/Focus Groups**

Group/Audience	Target Date
Prewitt and Milan Industrial Parks	June 1, 2021
Navajo Nation representatives	June 1, 2021
General Public #1	Sept 1, 2021
General Public #2 (Draft Report)	Mid-January 2022

## Website

A page for project-related information has been created on the NWNMCOG website: <http://www.nwnmcog.com/prewitt-milan-transportation-plan.html>. This page will be used to disseminate project updates to project stakeholders (e.g., the PAC and TWG) and the general public. The page will be updated at least monthly or as needed.

## Interactive Mapping Tool

A collector map has been created to allow stakeholders to share their input on transportation needs within the project area. The tool allows users to create points on a map within the study area and to add a description with the point. The tool will be used by the project team to understand the community's input on transportation needs in a geographically specific and uniform way. The tool is accessible via a link on the project webpage on the NWNMCOG website.

## Communication Out

Project updates and key work products will be shared with the stakeholders and the public via the following channels:

- Email: PAC and TWG members will be engaged directly by email.
- Public meeting notices: Notices of public meetings will be provided on the NWNMCOG website, other participant's websites, the local newspaper, and via email blasts to stakeholders and project team members
- Website: The project web page on the NWNMCOG website will be the key medium for sharing project updates, both during and after the completion of the PMTMP process. The page will be updated at least monthly with the latest summaries of stakeholder input and project work products. The final documents associated with the PMTMP will be posted to the page and will remain after the completion of the study
- Brochure: This brochure will be completed towards the end of the study process. The brochure will include summaries of the following: project goals and objectives; results of stakeholder input; recommended investments; and project priorities.

## Project Team and Contact Information

Name	Position	Phone	Email
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