

Freight Rail Line Feasibility Study San Juan County, New Mexico

"Opening the doors of economic opportunity for the Four Corners Region"

Wednesday, August 21
Farmington Civic Center
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Wednesday, August 21
Newcomb High School
5 - 7 p.m.

Thursday, August 22
Navajo Technical University
5 - 7 p.m.



4 Corners Freight Rail
Feasibility Study

Welcome and Introductions

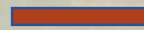
San Juan County



Cultural Consultant Team



HDR



Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study



YOU'RE INVITED!

Public Information Meetings on the Four Corners Feasibility Study – September 13-14, 2022

San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, and the Federal Railroad Administration are studying the economic feasibility of freight rail service to the Four Corners region. The addition of this service would not only add freight rail to the region but could also potentially reduce commercial traffic, decrease the potential for traffic accidents, and open up the doors of economic opportunity to the region.

The Four Corners Freight Rail Study Team is holding Public Information meetings to inform the study to the community and share information on what the project benefits are, the funding, and the study timeline.



Four Corners Freight Rail

Learn more and share your thoughts!

Public Invited to Informational Meetings on the Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

YOU'RE INVITED!

June 21 - 22, 2023

San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, and the Federal Railroad Administration are studying the economic feasibility of freight rail service to the Four Corners region. The addition of this service could potentially reduce commercial traffic, decrease the potential for traffic crashes, and open the doors of economic opportunity to the region.

The Four Corners Freight Rail Study Team invites you to participate in the second round of public meetings on Wednesday, June 21, and Thursday, June 22, 2023. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss potential route alignments and the study team's process. Your feedback is important and will help guide the development of this study!

STUDY AREA MAP



Persons with disabilities should contact Mike Stark at (505) 334-4273 to arrange for assistance. Individuals who require auxiliary aids or a translator for non-English speaking residents for this meeting should contact San Juan County at least two days before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Learn more at:

Public Information Meetings

Wednesday, June 21, 4 - 7 p.m.

Newcomb High School, US Highway 491
Newcomb, NM 87455

Thursday, June 22, 4 - 7 p.m.

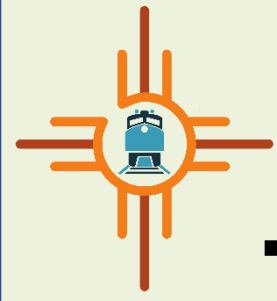
Navajo Technical University, Lowerpoint Rd,
State Hwy 371 Crownpoint, NM 87313

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Learn more at: www.4cornersfreightrail.com

Initial Public Information Meetings

- Two public information meetings held in September of 2022.
 - Sept 13th in Shiprock
 - Sept 14th in Farmington
- Two public information meetings held in June of 2023.
 - June 21 in Newcomb
 - June 22 in Crownpoint
- Meetings were to inform the public about the project.
- Received initial feedback from the public in attendance.



About The Project

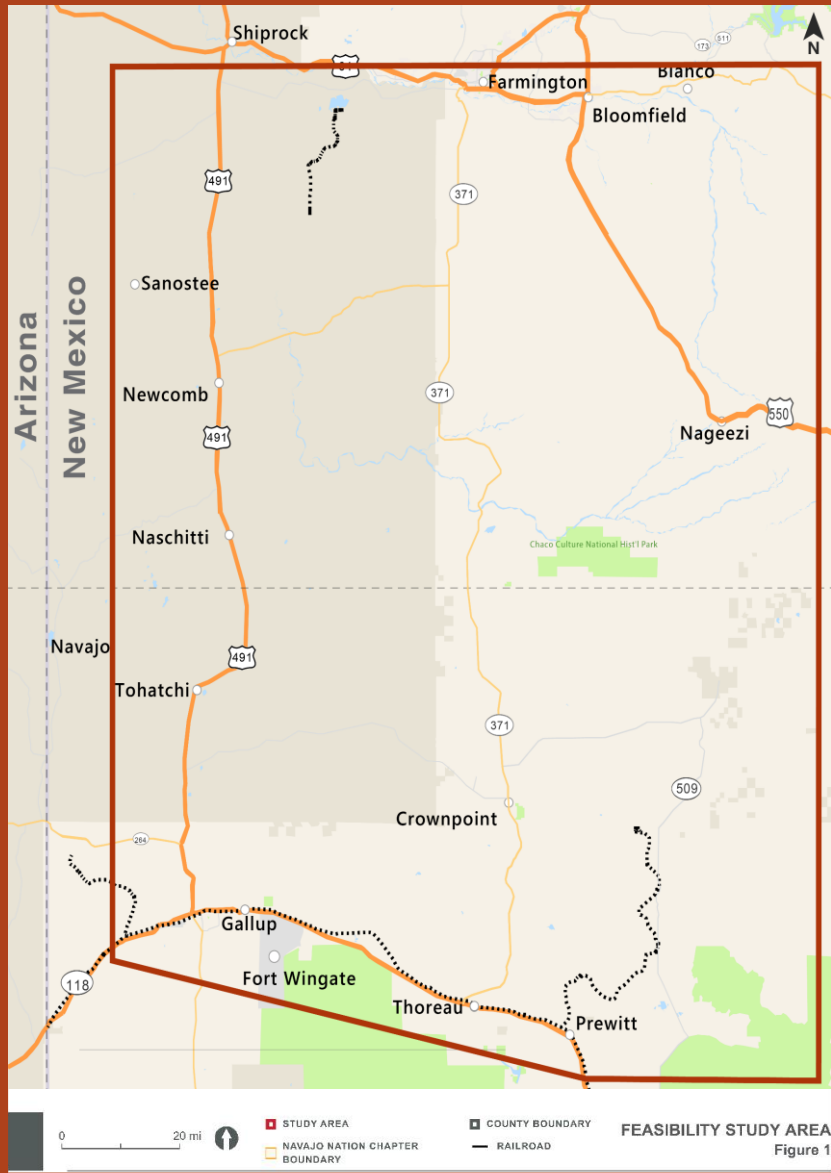
During the feasibility study, the project team identifies and evaluates potential route alignments, transloading facilities, commodities, and environmental impacts. In addition, public involvement and coordination with local agencies play a crucial role in the project development.

Research by the New Mexico Economic Development Department and the City of Farmington found nearly \$20 billion worth of products in projected demand for transport by the railroad industry.

A Four Corners rail line could capture a high percentage of the demand when connected to the present BNSF railroad that runs east and west in the southern portion of the Navajo Nation.



Project Overview

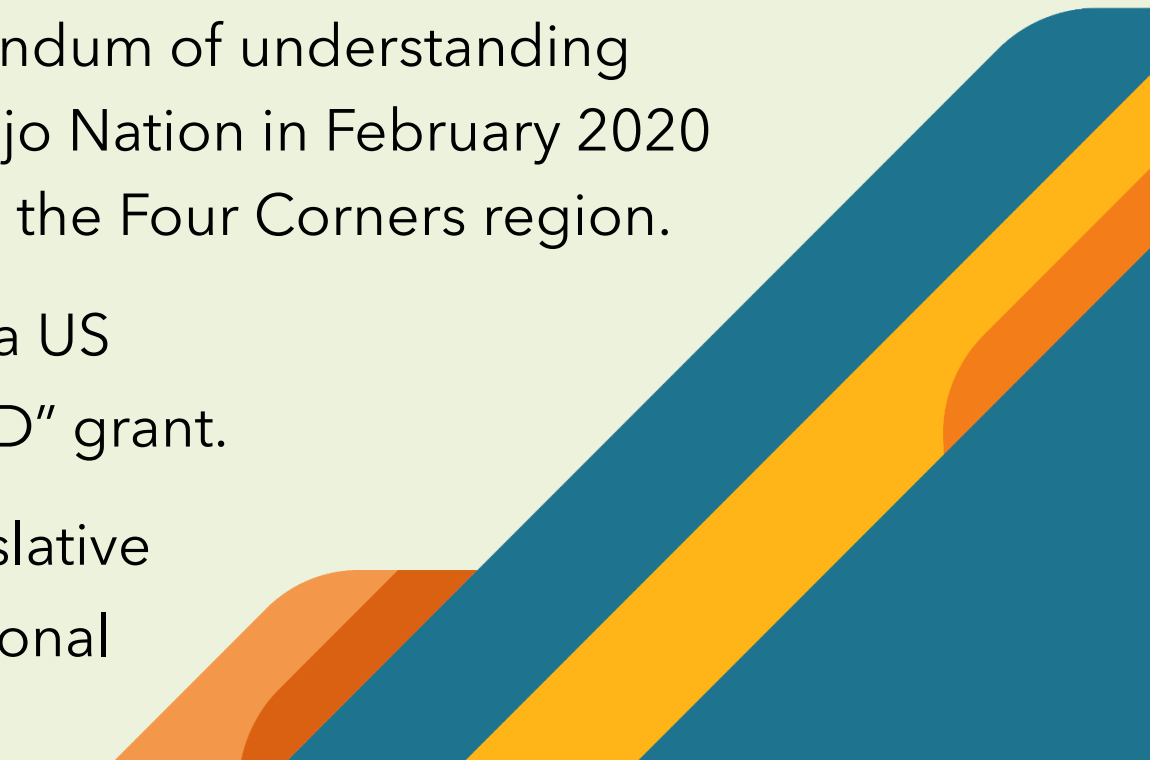


- The U.S. freight rail network does not currently serve San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, or the greater Four Corners region.
- This proposed project studies the feasibility of a 100-mile Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) rail spur and related facilities along U.S. 491/U.S. 371 through the Navajo Nation from the Four Corners region to the I-40 corridor.
- This study will develop alternatives for a proposed new rail line between the Four Corners area, with a connection to the BNSF Southern Transcontinental Railway along the I-40 corridor, which runs between Chicago and Los Angeles.

Lack of Transportation Infrastructure in the Four Corners Area



How Did We Get Here?

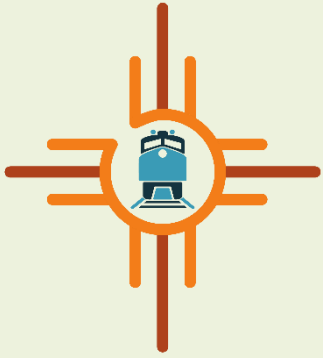
- After 50 years of multiple studies with little progress, new key partnerships and funding are now in place to move the project forward.
 - In February 2020, a historic memorandum of understanding between San Juan County and Navajo Nation in February 2020 created a partnership to bring rail to the Four Corners region.
 - Project awarded \$2 million through a US Department of Transportation “BUILD” grant.
 - Support from San Juan County Legislative Delegation, Four Corners Congressional Delegation, and the NMDOT.
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Funding Source: USDOT's BUILD Transportation Grant

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)
Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage
Development (BUILD) Transportation Grant

The FY 2019 BUILD program gave special consideration to projects aiming to improve infrastructure conditions, address public health and safety, promote regional connectivity, or facilitate economic growth or competitiveness. San Juan County was awarded a BUILD Grant to support a pre-NEPA project development and alternatives analysis study for a proposed new rail line between the Four Corners area and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) national freight network along the Interstate 40 corridor.





WHY FREIGHT RAIL?

About 40% of U.S. freight is shipped by railway, more than any other mode of transportation¹

Fewer greenhouse gasses (GHGs)

- Rail accounts for only **2.1%** of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions². In contrast, idling trucks contribute approximately 20% of annual U.S. carbon emissions.
- Moving freight by rail rather than trucks lowers greenhouse gas emissions by up to **75%**
- If 50% of truck traffic moving at least 750 miles went by rail instead, GHGs would fall by ~26.2 million tons

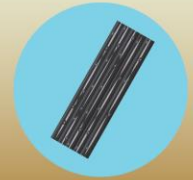
Railroads are the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land

- Moving an average of one ton of freight more than 480 miles per gallon
- On average, railroads are three to four times more fuel-efficient than trucks. A single freight train can carry the freight of several hundred trucks³

Potential Goods Shipped By Rail



Farm Products Recyclables Food Products Energy Manufactured Goods



Minerals Forest Products Fertilizers Fuel Metals

Navajo Nation Involvement

- In February 2020, San Juan County and the Navajo Nation signed a Memorandum of Understanding.
- The MOU established a framework for cooperation for future railway, community, and business development in the Four Corners region.

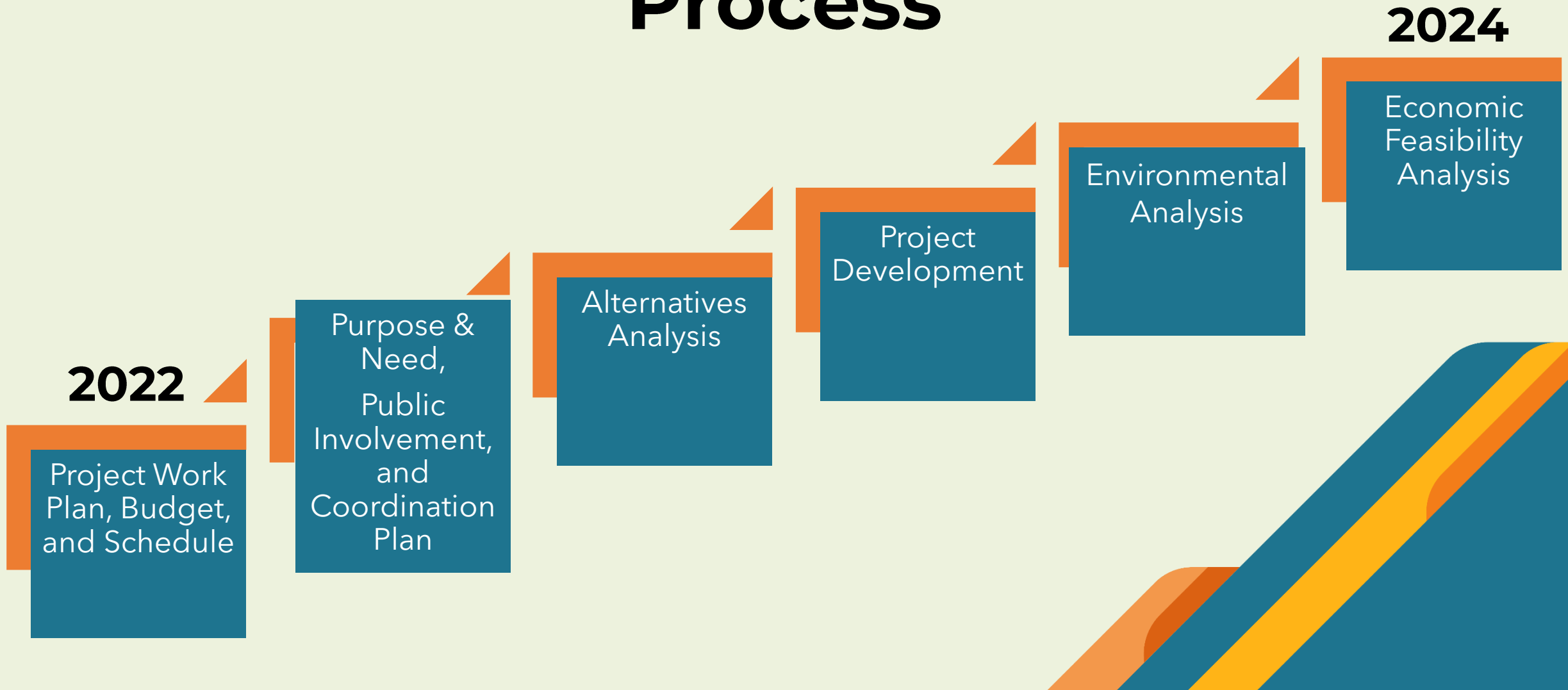




Public Involvement/ Agency Coordination

- Subcontract with Al Henderson, AHEC and Tom Chee, Consultant
- Identify 32 chapters that will likely be impacted by the project and obtain resolutions
- Contact each chapter for a consultation
- Present to Navajo Nation elected leaders, NNC committees, departments, agencies and other interested parties
- Coordination with BNSF

Federal Railroad Administration's Process



Project Benefits

A new connection to the BNSF freight rail network will improve the efficiency of the freight transportation system in the Four Corners region and expand economic opportunities.



- Reduced freight traffic on U.S. 491, U.S. 550, and other roads decreases the potential for crashes and provides less congestion and safer transportation.
- Reduced truck traffic leads to less wear and tear on roads and decreases maintenance costs.
- Reduced costs of shipping goods to and from the Four Corners region through efficient movement of connections to the BNSF network
- Attracts potential businesses looking to expand in the Four Corners region.

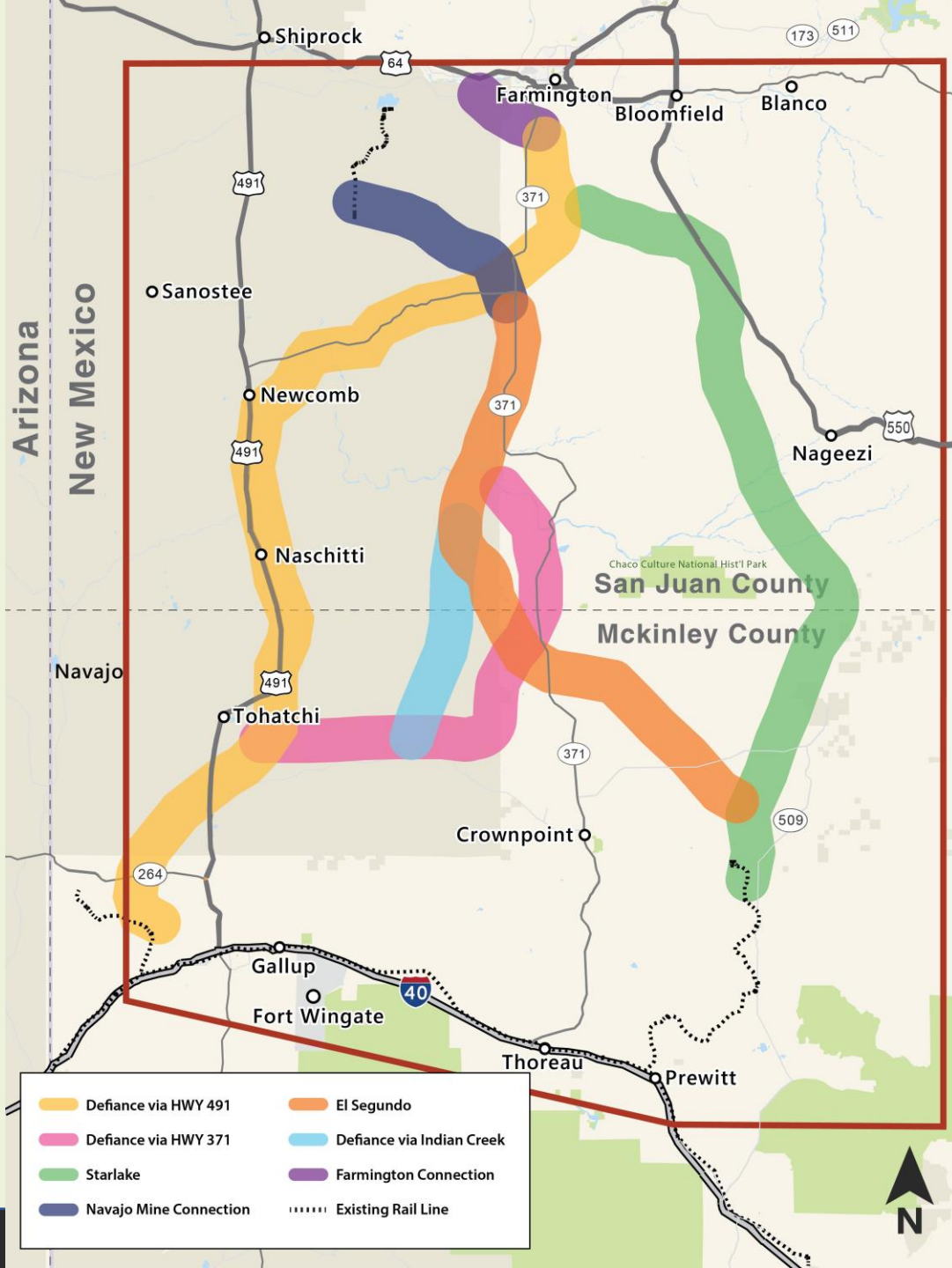
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Recommended Alignment Routes



- Defiance via HWY 491
- Defiance via HWY 371
- Starlake
- Navajo Mine Connection
- El Segundo
- Defiance via Indian Creek
- Farmington Connection
- Existing Rail Line

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Next Steps

- Complete Tasks Per the FRA Grant Agreement and DWP
- Final Report to FRA



4 Corners Freight Rail
Feasibility Study

FY 2023-2024 CRISI Grant Application

In May 2024, San Juan County submitted a grant application requesting \$4.0 million in federal funding from the USDOT FRA FY 2023-2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) funding to advance the next phase of the Four Corners Freight Rail Project - which includes Preliminary Engineering (PE) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review. The State of New Mexico will provide \$1.0 million in non-federal matching funds.



Four Corners Freight Rail Project

San Juan County, New Mexico

FY 2023-2024 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program Grant Application

May 28, 2024

Letters of Support of the CRISI Grant Application

- New Mexico Congressional Delegation
- Navajo Nation
- New Mexico Department of Transportation

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
DELEGATION OFFICE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 14, 2024


The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Department of Transportation, Federal Railroad Administration, Co Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program, (FR-CRS-24-4 Freight Rail

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

Members of the New Mexico Delegation write in support of the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) and the Navajo Nation's application to the Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration's CRISI Program. The Freight Rail Project will significantly enhance freight transportation infrastructure improving efficiency and safety while promoting economic development.

If awarded, the Four Corners Freight Rail Project will implement the development project, including preliminary engineering, detailed project cost estimates documentation to support a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and will prepare the project for final design and construction in subsequent funding. Constructing and upgrading critical rail infrastructure, this project will address bottlenecks and provide more reliable and efficient transportation options

Sincerely,

Dr. Buu Nygren, President
THE NAVAJO NATION

Post Office Box 7440 • Window Rock, Arizona 86515 • Phone: (907) 873-3111

March 25, 2024

The Navajo Nation **DR. BUU NYGREN** PRESIDENT
Yideeskáadi Nitsáhákees **RICHELLE MONTOYA** VICE PRESIDENT

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590


Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I am writing to express my strong support for a Consolidated (CRISI) grant application to the Federal Railroad Administration Project. San Juan County, NM and the FRA entered into Development (BUILD) Agreement (Agreement #9A365214) fund pre-NEPA project development activities and an alternate line between San Juan County in the vicinity of Shiprock, N Railway (BNSF) Gallup Subdivision near Gallup, New Mexico

Prior to execution of the Grant Agreement providing funding the Navajo Nation signed a memorandum of understanding established a framework of cooperation with respect to development opportunities in the Four Corners region, located

The proposed freight rail line will have a significant impact on off the Navajo Nation, as well as providing a new source of economically depressed region. The Four Corners region transportation for large scale transport of feedstock and economic development in a coal transition region. This new rail accidents and possible injuries and fatalities due to the use of traffic will also improve the state of good repair on roadway thereby, providing a more environmentally friendly alternative result, the creation of this new connection to the BNSF freight the overall freight transportation system in the Four Corners region.

I appreciate your time and thoughtful consideration of this grant term economic benefits for the Navajo Nation, San Juan County

Sincerely,

Amit Bose
Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Bose,

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is pleased to support San Juan County's application for a CRISI grant for a proposed freight railroad connection between the Four Corners region and BNSF Railway's Southern Transcon route. San Juan County will use CRISI grant funds to conduct preliminary engineering and environmental review activities for the proposed freight railroad line. NMDOT commits to ensuring the County will obtain all local match requirements for this grant.

The Four Corners region has not been connected to the national freight railroad system since a narrow-gauge railroad connection to Antonito, Colorado was abandoned more than fifty years ago. Long-distance freight shipments to or from the Four Corners region travel by truck between the Four Corners area and the nearest railroad transloading facilities. The nearest railroad facilities are along the BNSF Transcon, which is more than 100 miles south of Farmington, New Mexico, the largest city in the Four Corners region. Other truck shipments travel nearly 200 miles to rail facilities in the Albuquerque area.

A freight rail connection to the Four Corners region would reduce the cost of shipping goods to and from the Four Corners region. This would benefit existing businesses in the Four Corners region, and help to attract new businesses to the region. Business and government representatives from San Juan County have been evaluating options for constructing a railroad line since 2010. Constructing a freight railroad to the Four Corners region is identified as a priority in the 2014 New Mexico State Rail Plan, developed by NMDOT. In 2024, San Juan County is completing a planning study of this project that includes selecting the preferred alignment for the proposed rail line.

In addition to the economic benefit for the Four Corners region of having a connection to the national rail network, NMDOT will benefit from reducing the number of miles existing freight must travel on New Mexico highways before it is transferred to rail. This freight includes heavy truck shipments of coal from southwestern Colorado trucked to Gallup, New Mexico, and of hydraulic fracturing sand trucked from Gallup to oilfields in San Juan County. The wear and tear from heavy trucks carrying these commodities shortens the lifecycle of the New Mexico highways that carry them.

General Office | P.O. Box 1149 | Santa Fe, NM 87504

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Governor

Ricky Stern
Cabinet Secretary

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District 6

Tell us what you think & stay connected

- Take a moment to share your thoughts
- Sign up to receive study updates



Fill out a comment card, or just leave us your email address. We'll add you to our contact list and ensure you get the latest updates and information about the Four Corners Freight Rail Line Feasibility Study.

Visit the website: **4CornersFreightRail.com**



info@4cornersfreightrail.com

Questions?



4 Corners Freight Rail
Feasibility Study