



**Susana Martinez**  
Governor

**Tom Church**  
Cabinet Secretary

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For Immediate Release

**NMDOT Seeks Continued Public Input on  
Future of Transportation in New Mexico**

**Roswell:** The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) seeks continued public input on the future of transportation in New Mexico. The purpose is to help the department update its Statewide Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan (SLRP). The plan will provide a framework to guide the expenditure of approximately \$21 billion over a 25-year time period extending from 2016 to 2040.

The project got underway at the start of this year. “NMDOT has reached out to hundreds of New Mexico residents and stakeholders to better understand our state’s transportation challenges and opportunities,” said NMDOT’s Claude Morelli, who is managing the project. Work conducted over the last several months has focused on assessing existing conditions on the state’s transportation system and identifying key transportation issues. “We’ve taken a multi-layered approach to gathering public and stakeholder input,” Morelli said. “We’ve sought to engage a wide and diverse array of groups and individuals.” NMDOT’s approach to public and stakeholder outreach has included a broad range of activities (See Attachment #1).

Several common themes have emerged from our outreach and discussions to date (Attachment #2). Overall priorities for NMDOT to consider include:

1. Find sustainable sources of revenue and spend funds more strategically;
2. Continue to address traveler safety needs;
3. Recognize NMDOT’s important role in addressing public health concerns;
4. Improve public transportation;
5. Support economic development;
6. Provide access and mobility for everyone, everywhere;
7. Support movement of freight by all modes: truck, rail, pipeline, air;
8. Protect and preserve what makes New Mexico unique;
9. Coordinate across jurisdictional/regulatory boundaries and make decisions transparent; and,
10. Improve the quality of data and information to help managers make better decisions.

Moving forward on the project, the NMDOT will be taking the input gathered since the start of the year to establish a vision, goals and objectives to guide transportation investment in the state. The department will also be gathering additional ideas about projects, policies and programs to address state and regional transportation challenges.

Over the next several weeks, the NMDOT will be cooperating with the state’s Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to seek public input

on transportation strategies to consider incorporating into the Statewide Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan, as well as the plans that the RTPOs and MPOs are developing concurrently.

In the southeast part of the state, staff of the Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SERTPO) will provide updates on the planning process at regularly scheduled SERTPO meetings and will also be setting up a booth at the Eastern New Mexico State Fair (ENMSF):

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**September 29 to October 4, 2014 (hours vary)**

**October 15, 2014 (Wednesday) starting at 10 a.m.**

*Southeast RTPO staff will be available from September 29 to October 4 at the Eastern New Mexico State Fair. NMDOT encourages everyone to stop by their booth to obtain information, fill out comment cards, etc.*

*Presentation on NMDOT Statewide Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan & Southeast Regional Transportation Plan at Southeast Regional Transportation Planning Organization policy committee meeting*

Eastern New Mexico State Fair  
2500 SE Main St  
Roswell, New Mexico 88203

Bondurant Room  
Roswell Public Library  
301 N. Pennsylvania  
Roswell, New Mexico 88201

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**For general information on NMDOT Statewide Plan:** Contact Claude Morelli, SLRP Project Manager, New Mexico Department of Transportation, (505) 660-3146, [claude.morelli@state.nm.us](mailto:claude.morelli@state.nm.us).

**For information on SERTPO meetings and the ENMSF information booth:** Contact Mary Ann Burr, Southeast RTPO ([mbsnmedd@plateautel.net](mailto:mbsnmedd@plateautel.net) or 575-624-6131)

**Project website:** [www.newmexicotransportationplan.com](http://www.newmexicotransportationplan.com)

**Email address for public comments on the plan:** [info@newmexicotransportationplan.com](mailto:info@newmexicotransportationplan.com)



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## **Attachment #1** **NMDOT public outreach activities for statewide plan**

- Setting up an interactive website ([www.newmexicotransportationplan.com](http://www.newmexicotransportationplan.com)) and social media presence (@NMtransplan)
- Conducting a bilingual statewide survey and targeted tribal and freight surveys
- Holding stand-alone public meetings or making presentations on the plan at other publicly noticed meetings
- Holding special meetings with targeted groups such as transit operators, Main Street community leaders, bicycle riders, representatives of disabled communities and others
- Making presentations to community groups and setting up information stations at places where people gather (e.g., county fairs, conferences, etc.)
- Meeting with statewide working groups comprised of experts from both the public and private sectors in particular areas like safety, public health, freight movement, visitors/tourism, economic development and others
- Meeting with regional working groups comprised of members from local and regional communities
- Meeting with plan coordinating committees made up of staff from every part of the NMDOT; planners from Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations; staff of other state, federal and tribal agencies; and planners from all of the state's tribal governments

## **Attachment #2**

### **Key themes that have emerged from outreach / discussions to date**

1. Find sustainable sources of revenue and spend funds more strategically. Stakeholders have told NMDOT that it needs to spend its funds more strategically and to find solutions to address the inherent unsustainability of its traditional revenue sources such as the gas tax. In a trend being felt throughout the country, revenues from transportation sources have been declining in both inflation-adjusted and absolute terms. Federal and state taxes on gasoline and other fuels have not changed since the early 1990s and have not kept pace with inflation. In addition, people have been driving less and cars and trucks are becoming much more fuel efficient. So, revenue has not kept up with costs.
2. Continue to address traveler safety needs. While New Mexico has seen a number of traffic safety improvements over the last 10 years, NMDOT has identified several areas of concern related to the safety of the traveling public. The fatality rate in New Mexico continues to remain higher than the national average, with fatalities on rural roads accounting for a disproportionate share of the total. Alcohol and distracted driving (e.g., texting) still contribute to far too many fatal and incapacitating crashes. Pedestrians and bicyclists remain far too likely to be hit by cars. The rate of teen drivers (15-19) involved in crashes is almost three times higher than the statewide average of all drivers, and the motor vehicle-related death rate among teen drivers remains higher than the national average. Animal-involved crashes remain a very serious problem in several of the state's counties. And, in the last three years, there have been increases in reported crashes involving hazardous materials.
3. Recognize NMDOT's important role in addressing public health concerns. Stakeholders have emphasized the important role that NMDOT can play to address serious public health concerns in the state. One of these concerns is obesity. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 27.1 percent of adults, 13 percent of high school students, and 12 percent of low income children (ages 2-5) in New Mexico deal with obesity issues. High rates of obesity contribute to a variety of negative health outcomes such as diabetes, hypertension, and congestive heart failure. While many factors contribute to obesity, stakeholders have said that NMDOT can help reduce obesity rates by building more and better facilities to enable and encourage "active" travel modes such as walking and bicycling. Building infrastructure to support active transportation is an investment in the state's future, they say, because it can help lower our large, unfunded "liability" of future health care expenditures related to the high rates of obesity seen in today's population.
4. Improve public transportation. In nearly every meeting held throughout the state since the start of the year, NMDOT has heard calls to improve public transportation (frequency, connectivity, hours of operation, etc.). Transit ridership in New Mexico has risen dramatically in recent years. Between 2008 and 2013, ridership statewide increased by 27 percent, from 14.6 million to 18.6 million. This trend is expected to continue as population grows; transit services begin to attract more "choice" riders (i.e., people who choose to use transit, rather than have to use transit); and there are increases in the number of transit-dependent citizens -- including elderly persons, young people without driver's licenses, people with special transportation needs, and low income households.



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5. Support economic development. NMDOT has heard that it has an important role to play in helping to develop and sustain the state's economy. But, to ensure maximum impact, its investments need to be strategic and targeted (to support border development, provide better routing information for trucks, address needs in our "Main Street" communities, enhance the quality of the visitor travel experience, etc.). Investing in new infrastructure may be required in some instances, but what is especially critical is to ensure that the state's highways, bridges, transit systems, rest areas, etc. are designed well and maintained in a state of good repair.
6. Provide access and mobility for everyone, everywhere. Stakeholders have said that NMDOT needs to address the needs of all system users (not just some) in all communities (urban, rural, and tribal). It also needs to address the needs of tourists, visitors and recreational travelers.
7. Support movement of freight by all modes: truck, rail, air. NMDOT should make it easier for freight of all types to move by and between all transportation modes, including truck, rail, and air.
8. Protect and preserve what makes New Mexico unique. Culture, history, landscapes, flora, and fauna are what make New Mexico special and unique. Stakeholders have pointed to the important role that NMDOT can play to help protect, restore, preserve, or highlight these as it undertakes projects or implements programs.
9. Coordinate across jurisdictional/regulatory boundaries and make decisions transparent. The stakeholders have said that NMDOT can make best use of its limited resources through partnership and coordination with other agencies and organizations, including those in both the public and private sectors. They have also said that ensuring decision-making transparency is absolutely critical to ensuring that NMDOT makes good decisions, spends its funds wisely, and maintains public trust.
10. Improve the quality of data and information to help managers make better decisions. Good data and information are essential for making good decisions. Stakeholders have said that NMDOT needs to become a leader in data collection and analysis, with quality assurance and control becoming a top priority for the Department.