

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

# NM 500 RIO BRAVO BRIDGES REPLACEMENT PROJECT, BERNALILLO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMENT SUMMARY REPORT

CONTROL NO.: A301000





# NM 500 RIO BRAVO BRIDGES REPLACEMENT PROJECT, BERNALILLO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO

## PUBLIC OUTREACH AND COMMENT REPORT SUMMARY

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

CONTROL NO.: CN A301000  
DATE: JULY 2021

WSP USA, INC.  
2440 LOUISIANA BOULEVARD, SUITE 400  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2	PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS .....	1
3	PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS .....	4
4	DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION.....	10
	APPENDIX A: PUBLIC MEETING NOTICES .....	A
	APPENDIX B: VIRTUAL MEETING ATTENDANCE LIST .....	B
	APPENDIX C: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION.....	C
	APPENDIX D: PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED .....	D

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT TONIGHT'S MEETING? .....	2
FIGURE 2: HOW DO YOU USE THE NM 500 RIO BRAVO CORRIDOR? .....	2
FIGURE 3: NM 500 METROQUEST SURVEY.....	3
FIGURE 4: PRIORITY RANKING VOTING RESULTS FROM SURVEY PARTICIPANTS .....	4
FIGURE 5: PRIORITY RANK SELECTION WITH THE NUMBER OF VOTES.....	9
FIGURE 6: DEMOGRAPHICS – AGE OF PARTICIPANTS (YEARS).....	11
FIGURE 7: DEMOGRAPHICS – GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS.....	11
FIGURE 8: DEMOGRAPHICS – ETHNICITY OF PARTICIPANTS.....	12

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF INPUTS PER ZIP CODE .....	10
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The following public meeting summary provides a synopsis of the public outreach process and effort to date, including input received, for the NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project in Albuquerque, Bernalillo County, New Mexico (CN: A301000). Public involvement and stakeholder coordination for the project began in 2020 and has continued into spring 2021.

## 2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Phase IA/B Study Area serves a broad and diverse set of stakeholders including federal, tribal, and state resources agencies; county and local agencies; community residents; commuters; area businesses; elected officials; and other users of the bridge within the Albuquerque Metro area. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person community and stakeholder engagement was not feasible for the Phase IA/B Study efforts, which necessitated development of a virtual engagement strategy to reach a wide audience and seek effective tools for public participation. Accordingly, the project team held a live, virtual public involvement meeting during the study phase on Wednesday, December 9, 2020. The project team selected the Zoom virtual meeting platform for the meeting because of its versatility in allowing participants to join over the internet or via telephone. The following summarizes our context-sensitive approach to public and stakeholder engagement to date.

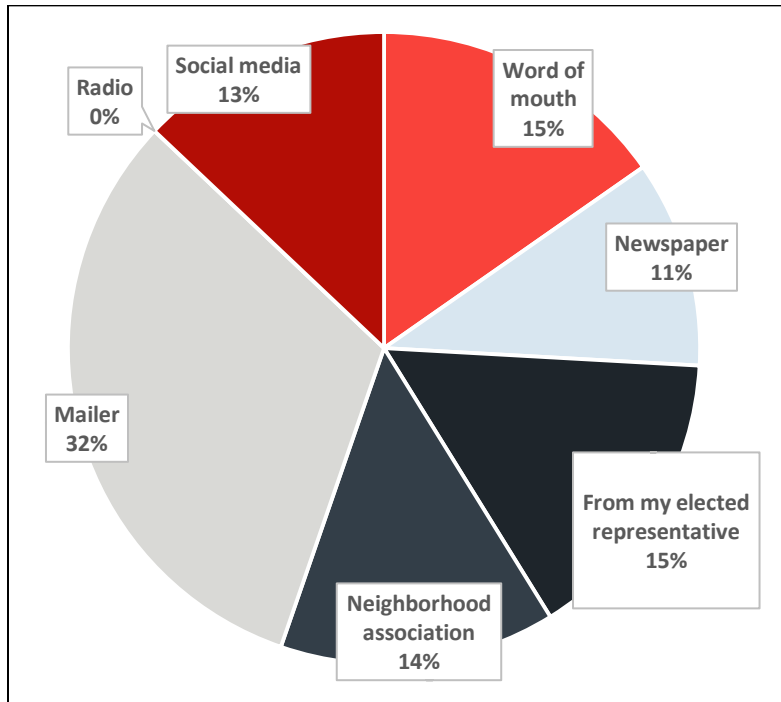
To provide notice of the public input request, United States Postal Service Every Door Direct Mailers (EDDM) were sent to 5,541 residents in the immediate vicinity of the project area, and an advertisement was published in the Albuquerque Journal newspaper on November 25, 2020 (**Appendix A**). In addition, a mailing list of over 1,000 contacts was generated using grassroots outreach, which included numerous area neighborhood associations; local trail and biking groups; adjacent businesses and residents; Senator Padilla's constituent mailing list; federal and state regulatory agencies; city, county, tribal, and state officials; and anyone from the public who requested to be added to the mailing list. The public meeting announcement was sent to those on the mailing list through email with follow-up flyers sent to those immediately within the project area using the available County Assessor property owner information. Lastly, notification of the public meeting announcement was posted on the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Projects Website and social media outlets, and distributed through the NMDOT Public Information Officer.

The virtual public meeting included a PowerPoint presentation and a live question-and-answer interaction between the Project Team and participating public. The meeting was recorded, and a video of the meeting was posted to the NMDOT's YouTube website to allow those who were not able to attend to watch the presentation and provide feedback. The presentation began with introductions, and then the Project Team discussed project location, project development process, activities completed, key objectives of the project, bridge and project design, and schedule. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation slide deck is located in **Appendix C**.

Once the live event was underway, the Project Team polled attendees about how they heard of the event. Most listeners heard about the public meeting through the mailer that was sent two weeks prior. Results are summarized below in Figure 1.

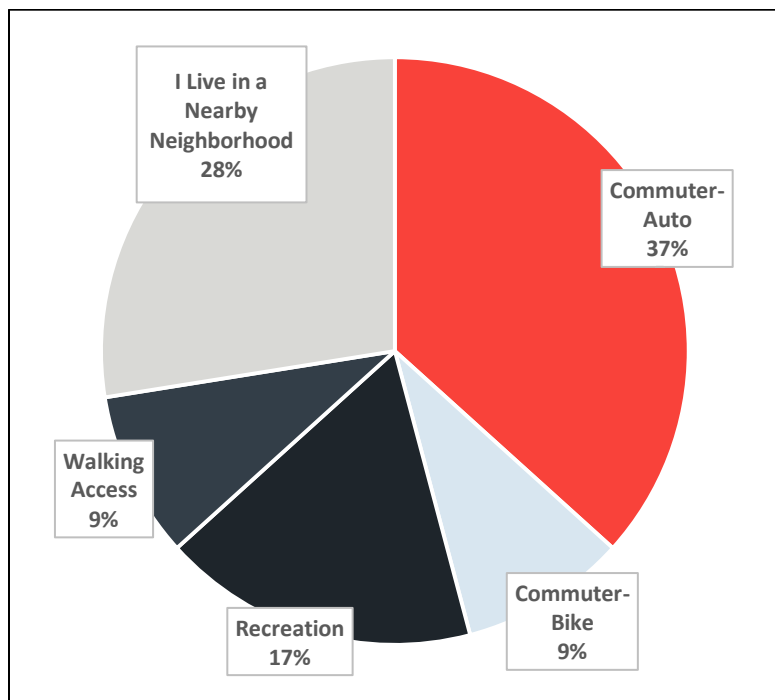


**Figure 1: How did you hear about tonight's meeting?**



Shortly thereafter, a second poll question was asked to the listeners about how they use the NM 500 Rio Bravo corridor. Most listeners use the corridor for commuting in their vehicle or because they live in a nearby neighborhood. Results are summarized below in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: How do you use the NM 500 Rio Bravo Corridor?**

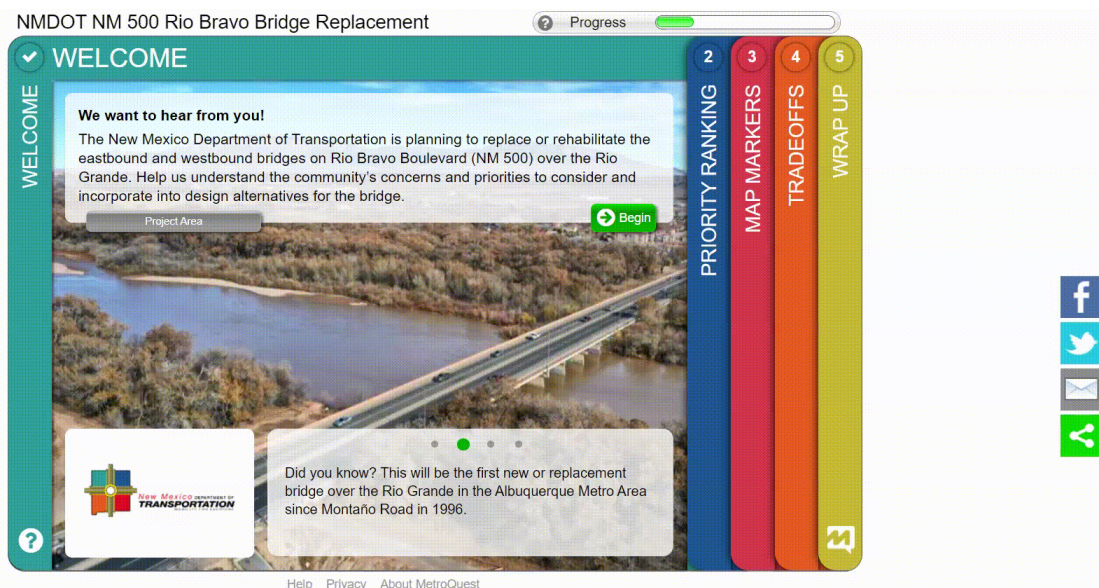


Considering the urban context of the project corridor, the Project Team chose strategies to encourage public participation from a diverse spectrum of the public. The public advertisement included a custom weblink URL (<http://linktr.ee/nm500riobravo>) that led the public directly to a centralized webpage that offered single-source access to the public meeting registration webpage, NMDOT District 3 Projects webpage, and MetroQuest survey. Participants were encouraged to provide comments via email or through the online MetroQuest survey option during the public comment period.

To aid in the public involvement process, an interactive and informative web-based survey tool was created on the MetroQuest platform (Figure 3), compatible with any internet-connected device (laptops, tablets, and smart phones). MetroQuest allowed the public to receive project background information while providing their input on ranking priorities, providing specific comments with geo-referenced locations, voting on tradeoffs, and volunteering demographic information. The survey was provided in both English and Spanish. Participation in the MetroQuest survey was promoted alongside the virtual public meeting via the project email list, EDDM mailers, and advertisement published in the newspaper and social media outlets. The survey was published two weeks prior to the live meeting event when meeting notices were mailed to the public. The survey remained live until the end of the public comment period on January 31, 2021.

The public comment period, initially set for 30 days, was extended for an additional 20 days, ending on January 31, 2021. The Project Team decided to extend the comment period to allow participants additional time to respond due to variables such as the holiday season and a peak in the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Figure 3: NM 500 MetroQuest Survey**



Overall, 162 people registered for the live public meeting event ahead of time. On the day of the meeting, a total of 168 people attended the event on Zoom. The video of the meeting posted to the NMDOT YouTube channel following the meeting has garnered an additional 120 views. During the public meeting event on December 9, 2020, the Project Team received 43 questions and comments. Attendees engaged in active discussion and Q&A

for longer than the scheduled meeting time of an hour and a half, which lasted 158 minutes total. A total of 253 people participated in the English-version MetroQuest survey, consisting of 427 comments and 2,644 data points. The Spanish-version MetroQuest survey saw a total of 14 participants who provided 87 data points and 13 comments. Additionally, the Project Team received comments in 34 emails and 7 phone calls.

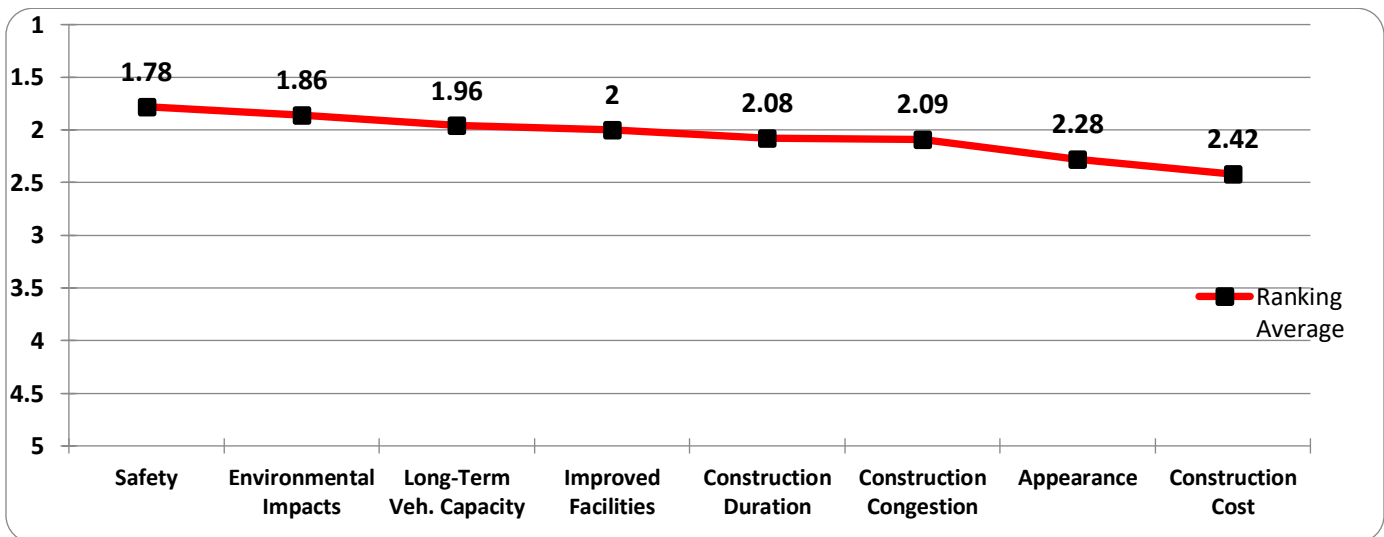
### 3 PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

Comments received from all platforms were combined and organized into general themes. Review and analysis of comments indicate that the public input received falls into the following themes: (1) project priorities, (2) access concerns, (3) safety concerns, (4) multi-modal (pedestrian and bicycle) concerns, and (5) environmental concerns. Comments received that fell outside of the project scope or location were shared with the pertinent land managing agency (e.g., Bernalillo County). The following summary of paraphrased cumulative comments is based on questions or comments received to date from the public. Copies of all comments received through January 31, 2021, and a complete summary categorized into general themes can be found in the *NM 500 Bridges Replacement Project Public Comment Summary Report*, on file at the NMDOT Environmental Bureau.

#### PRIORITY RANKING

Within the MetroQuest survey, participants were asked to rank priorities based on what they believed to be the most important. Participants ranked safety as the most important priority and construction cost as the least important (Figure 4). *Note that the highest rank is 1.*

Figure 4: Priority Ranking Voting Results from Survey Participants



#### ACCESS CONCERNS

- Will the bridge be shut down at any point during construction?
- Traffic is extremely heavy on Rio Bravo Blvd. Specifically on 2<sup>nd</sup> St. to the new portion of Rio Bravo Blvd., the turn lanes, Isleta Blvd., and Poco Loco Dr.,

- Commenters noted access concerns and made comments concerning several locations within the project area, including:
  - The ability to safely access the Bosque, acequia, Rio Bravo Picnic Area, open space trailheads, parking lots, and bike path. Off-road vehicles are often in the ditch and open space paths and sometimes create their own trails.
  - Crossing the river.
  - Accessing I-25 from the residential area on the west side of Isleta.
  - Access concern with 2<sup>nd</sup> St. northbound traffic turning west then crossing lanes to access current service station.
  - Commenters added access concern markers at the following locations: El Porvenir Circle SW, Del Sur Drive SW, the First Financial Credit Union, along the Rio Bravo Bridge, along Isleta Blvd., the recreation areas, Belvedere Ave SW, 2<sup>nd</sup> St. intersection, King Rd. SE, Prince St., and at Valley Rd. SW at Esequiel Rd. SW.
- Commenters expressed concerns regarding access during and after construction, specifically:
  - Getting across the river during construction.
  - Being able to access school bus stops during construction.
  - Traffic congestion during construction.
  - Congestion along detour routes during construction, specifically at NM314, the Tribal Road Network from NM314 to NM45, and south on Isleta and NM317 to I-25. One commenter noted that repaving the detour routes should be included in the project because a higher number of vehicles will be traveling along those routes.
- Questions about access included:
  - What will be done to help with traffic flow onto Rio Bravo?
  - Will the new bridges be constructed in a similar fashion to the existing one?
  - With the new I-25 Rio Bravo interchange construction west to Broadway, will there be a possibility of new construction between 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Broadway?
  - Why do other bridges get recreation parking lots and citizens on this side of the river get none? There is a lot, but there is no access here.
  - Will the city and neighborhood use this bridge for public mass transit purposes such as extra city bus services or a possible light rail?

## **SAFETY CONCERNS**

- Commenters expressed concerns about safety at Poco Loco Dr., and specifically noted that it is difficult to access Rio Bravo Blvd. from Poco Loco Dr. and vice versa, a traffic light should be installed at this intersection, and drivers who enter westbound traffic from Poco Loco Dr. often make unsafe entries into traffic and cause disruptions to traffic flow.
- Commenters made several comments about the safety of Rio Bravo Blvd. along the entire project area, and specifically noted that speeding is a huge concern, there are potholes, turning conflicts must be minimized, pedestrian access is dangerous, and accidents occur on the bridge. One commenter asked if an adequate barrier will be installed between east and westbound traffic. One commenter suggested using narrow lanes to prevent speeding.
- Commenters expressed concern with the intersection at 2<sup>nd</sup> St. and specifically noted that the intersection should be safer for pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists, drivers often run the light to avoid

getting held up by the train, and there are a lot of accidents at this location. One commenter suggested adding right-hand turn lanes to improve safety.

- Several people made comments about the safety of the pedestrian areas within the project boundaries, and noted that:
  - The box culvert under Rio Bravo is useful for pedestrian and bike travel when on the single-track dirt trail, however, lighting should be installed under the bridge. One commenter was concerned that drivers will not see pedestrians at the underpass, which could cause collisions.
  - The path along the drain has a dangerous blind intersection.
- Commenters were concerned about safety during construction and noted that they are concerned about the safety of the workers, and speed bumps may be needed along Quetzal Dr. during construction to prevent speeding in the neighborhood, since drivers use the neighborhood as a detour, take the turn too fast at Poco Loco Dr., and come close to hitting pedestrians and residents.
- Several commenters expressed concerns with the safety at the Isleta Blvd. intersection, and stated that there is too much speeding and too much congestion. Comments suggested that an additional traffic light, longer merge lane, and a double-turn lane would improve safety at the intersection. One commenter also noted concern about pedestrian access and being able to safely cross. One commenter suggested adding a ramp meter for traffic joining eastbound Rio Bravo from northbound Isleta because merging is dangerous and difficult during rush hour.

## PEDESTRIAN CONCERNS

- Commenters noted several concerns related to pedestrian facilities and access in the project area:
  - Although the bridge has a pedestrian passage, it does not connect to pedestrian facilities on either side of the bridge. On the east side, the pedestrian part of the bridge is inaccessible to pedestrians and cyclists and does not facilitate travel along Rio Bravo Blvd. People walk on the bridge even at night when visibility is poor. There should be a pedestrian sidewalk on the north side of the bridge and multi-use trail on the south side of the bridge. The pedestrian pathways need to connect to the Chris Chavez Trail to the Riverside Trail.
  - The bike and pedestrian lanes need to be wider, separated from the speeding traffic, and better protected. The existing pedestrian access is very narrow and run-down. It should be upgraded, safer, and have shade. Separate access would benefit those looking to access the bike trails or Rail Runner station and the nearby homeowners.
  - All pedestrians should be banned to make room for safer, wider lanes for vehicles.
  - The slip lanes are incredibly dangerous for pedestrians and cyclists.
  - The intersection at Isleta Blvd. has pedestrian traffic and is unsafe. There needs to be adequate time for pedestrians to cross the intersection at the pedestrian crossing.
  - The intersection at 2<sup>nd</sup> St. and Rio Bravo Blvd. is unsafe for pedestrians to cross.
  - Commenters requested a sidewalk and bike connection to Dean Dr., a connection that continues from 2<sup>nd</sup> St. to the school and minimart, access across the river and bridge, a sidewalk on the west side of the bridge, and pedestrian access to the east. Commenters also requested that the pedestrian facilities be well lit and include drainage.
- Commenters noted pedestrian concerns at the following locations: Isleta Blvd. intersection, along the Rio Bravo Bridge, Shaw Dr. SW, the recreation areas, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> St. intersection.

## CYCLING CONCERNS

- Several people made comments about cycling concerns on the existing bridge and stated that there are no dedicated bike paths over the bridge, the shoulder is very narrow and never cleared of debris, access to the existing cycling routes is difficult, and speeding cars make cycling unsafe. Additionally, commenters noted that there is no left-hand turn lane to turn to go southbound on Isleta Blvd., and there is a lack of cycling facilities west of the river. Commenters also noted that the bike lane ends before the intersection, which makes it difficult to merge with traffic and unsafe to turn left onto Isleta Blvd.
- Suggestions and comments on the bicycling opportunities and associated project design included:
  - There should be a dedicated pedestrian bridge.
  - The bike routes need to connect the Chris Chavez Bike Trail to the Riverside Trail. There also should be a bike route on Isleta and on 2<sup>nd</sup> St. that connects to the open space area.
  - Rio Bravo Blvd. should have adequate and enhanced commuter and recreational bike lanes that are separate from traffic and are protected, such as with a barrier (jersey barrier/flex posts). If only located on one side of the bridge, the multi-use path should be bi-directional and 12-14 feet wide. If the path is located on both sides of the bridge, it should be 6-7 feet wide, which would be beneficial to those looking to access the bike trails or the Rail Runner Station from the west side of the river, and local homeowners.
  - Cyclists often use the sidewalk to cross the bridge because the existing shoulder/bike lane has a lot of debris in it, and the sidewalk offers additional distance from traffic. However, this makes the sidewalk unsafe for pedestrians to walk and leads to dangerous moments when people try to pass each other. When designing the bike lanes, a physical barrier should protect a bike lane alongside a dedicated pedestrian lane.
  - Cyclists will not currently travel under the bridge to orient themselves with traffic and will go “against the flow” of traffic due to convenience. The new bike lanes should be wide enough to allow for cyclists to pass one another without dismounting, even if the bike lane is not explicitly labeled as a two-way lane;
  - The current bridges have wide shoulders that are suitable for bicycling but are almost always covered in debris, including glass. Additionally, the space under the bridge is also covered in trash, which encourages cyclists to cross the bridge into traffic. These should be swept regularly. Any design that could minimize the accumulation of trash would be an improvement. One commenter noted that a lot of the trash accumulation is from trash thrown from vehicles.
  - Commenters noted the need for improved bicycle safety at the 2<sup>nd</sup> St. intersection and suggested that there needs to be priority signalization at the intersection for bicycles, and the cycle lanes should be painted through the intersection. Commenters noted that it is unsafe for cyclists to access the bridge from 2<sup>nd</sup> St. because the bike lane does not connect.
  - Bicycles need the ability to maneuver safely around the Isleta/Rio Bravo intersection in all directions. Rio Bravo is the major bicycle artery to access the Bosque Trail system.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

- Commenters expressed concern about the impacts to the Bosque and Rio Grande and noted that impacts to the ecosystem (both habitat and wildlife), should be as limited as possible during and after construction and the ecosystem should be protected. Specific comments include:
  - There are a lot of invasive, non-native species and dangerous jetty jack cables stretching through the trees, which may also be dangerous.



- Increased usage would be harmful to the ecosystem.
- The water is already not drinkable here. Kicking up more mud will destroy what little life is here. Additionally, runoff from the road is washing off to the river and nearby yards. AUI installed a pipe culvert to fix the flooding.
- Increased industry and parking are causing a loss of traditional character and environmental health.
- Concerns about damage to the water from downstream and overall wildlife habitat.
- The descansos in the forest must be respected.
- Concerns about air quality.
- Several commenters noted that the noise is already very high for residents in the area, specifically along La Mora Ln. and Kelsey Rd. They also noted that an increase in traffic with a new bridge would increase the noise levels further and add to the disturbances the neighborhood already experiences. Several commenters requested construction of a noise barrier, potentially 6-8 feet tall. One commenter expressed concern about the noise during construction and attached a list of notes from high noise events that occurred in April 2020.

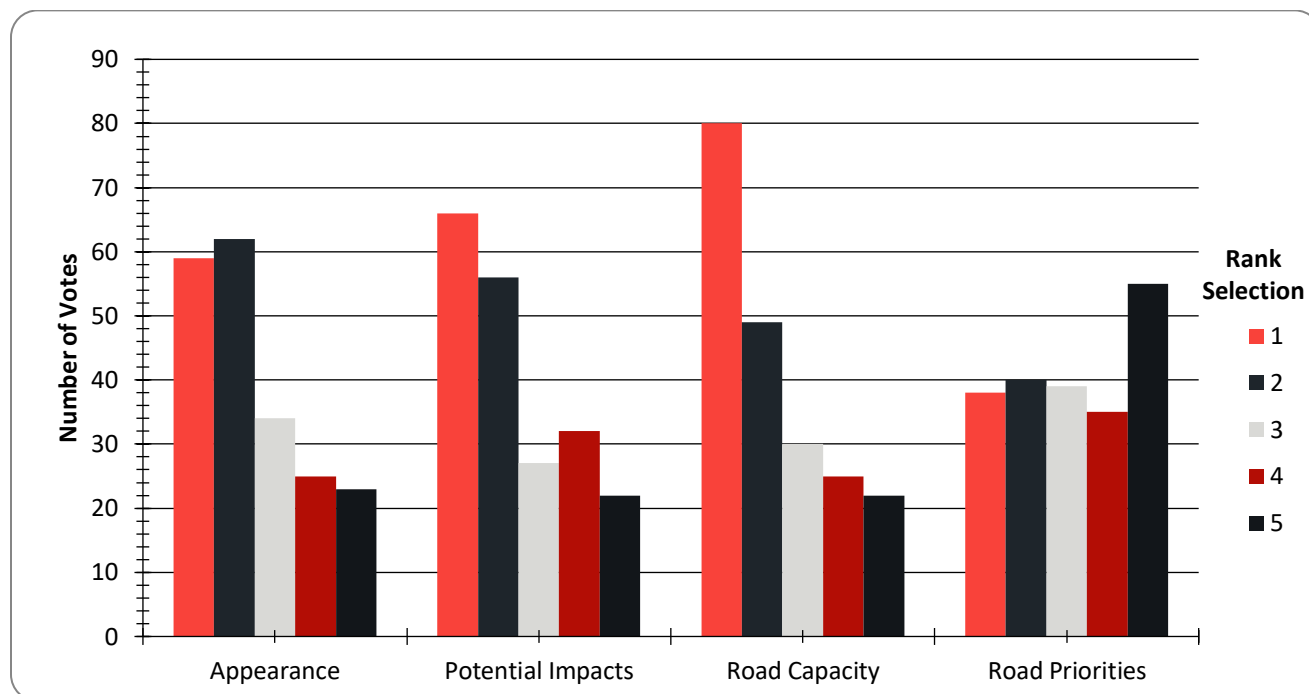
### OTHER COMMENTS RELATED TO THE PROJECT

- Several commenters provided positive feedback about the format of the MetroQuest survey. They noted that it was comprehensive and appreciated the ability to learn about the project and comment on it without having to attend an in-person public meeting.
- Commenters expressed concern about their homes and properties adjacent to the bridge, including their livestock, and health. One commenter noted concern about being able to access the ditch with their horses for training purposes. A number of commenters asked if their properties would be acquired as a part of this project, and if so, how much notice they would get.
- Commenters asked what the total cost of construction is and whether NMDOT has sufficient funding for the project. Additionally, commenters made suggestions for funding, including:
  - Request NM State Senator Michael Padilla for additional Capital Outlay funding from the state to start the project a year sooner.
  - Add funds for landscaping and equestrian improvements.
  - Request Bernalillo County to pay for public art work to be added (1% for the arts).
- Commenters made comments about the aesthetics of the bridge, and suggested that:
  - The median be kept and used for maintained landscaping. One commenter noted that, in order for Rio Bravo to meet the definition of a boulevard, nicer trees need to be planted along the roadside.
  - A culturally relevant community space should be included, with a stage or gathering area that respects nature and the history of agriculture in the area.
  - The bridge should include a push-out observation area with informational signage, but only if the pedestrian paths are well-separated multi-use paths, such as the one on I-40.
  - The bridge should look like the bridge on Montano.

### TRADEOFFS AND PRIORITIES

The MetroQuest survey allowed participants to choose between project priorities including construction costs, vehicle capacity, and safety. Figure 5 shows those rankings. *Note that the highest rank is 1.*

**Figure 5: Priority Rank Selection with the Number of Votes**



- Road Priorities:
  - 29% of people voted that more space for bikes and pedestrians is more important than more space for vehicles (18%). Commenters noted that more people using the bridge will be in vehicles but encouraging active transportation will reduce greenhouse gases.
    - There should be adequate space for bikes/pedestrians and enough space for transit and vehicle capacity over the next 50 years without it needing to be a tradeoff.
- Potential Impacts:
  - 31% of people expressed that they would rather have fewer environmental impacts than a shorter construction time (11%). One commenter noted that construction should take longer to avoid cutting down trees because they grow so slowly in the Bosque.
- Appearance:
  - 29% of people said that it was more important to add aesthetic treatments to improve the appearance of the bridge, while 12% said it was more important to prioritize a lower construction cost. Commenters noted that safety is more important than aesthetics, but that the bridge should reflect the beauty of the South Valley and create a sense of pride in the community.
- Road Capacity:
  - 37% of people said it was more important to reduce congestion by providing more lanes of traffic during construction than to reduce costs and impacts of construction (11%). Commenters noted that preserving and increasing mobility of people and goods is more important than saving money on the construction project and that pedestrian access and capacity should also be a priority.



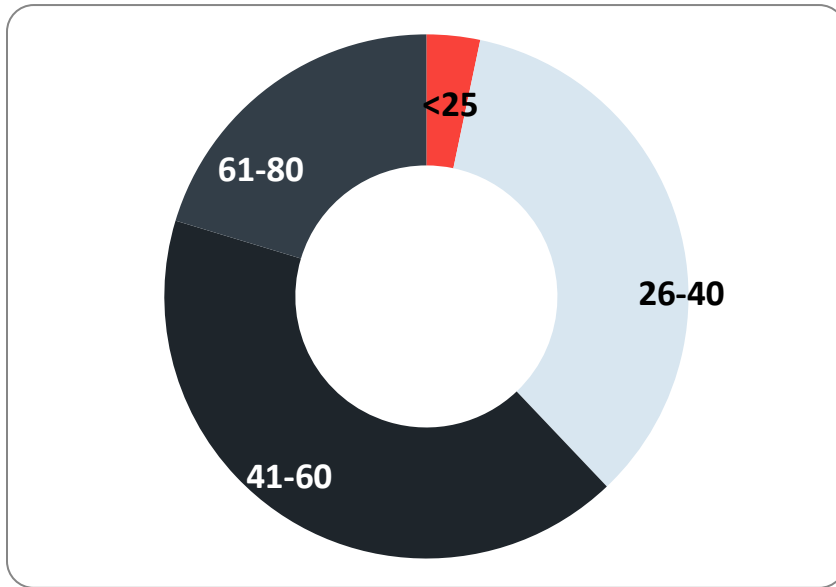
## 4 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

During the public meeting, web participants were asked to volunteer demographic information. In addition, the final page of the MetroQuest survey asked for participants to provide demographic details, such as age, zip code, and ethnicity. Combined results are included below in Table 1 and Figures 6-8.

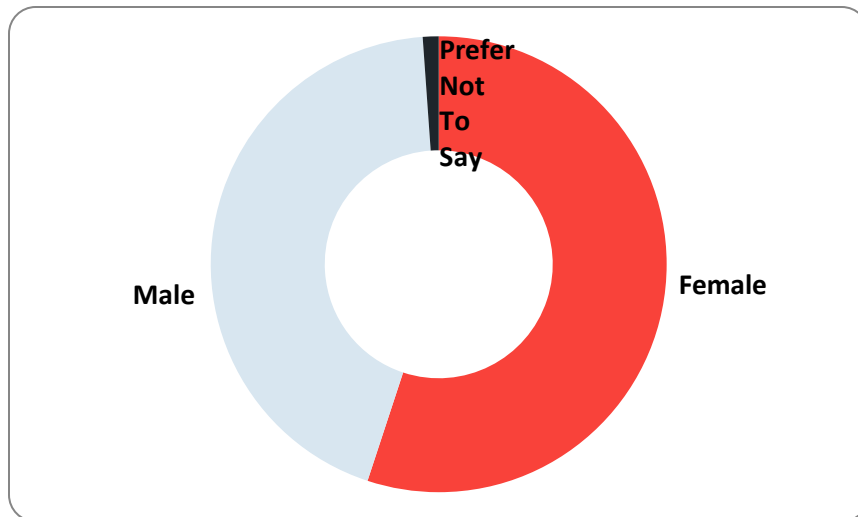
**Table 1: Number of Inputs per Zip Code**

Zip Code	Number of Inputs
8710X	1
30144	1
87004	1
87031	1
87068	1
87102	9
87104	3
87105	90
87106	7
87107	4
87108	2
87110	5
87112	1
87113	2
87114	2
87120	2
87121	47
87122	2
87123	1
87501	3
87505	1

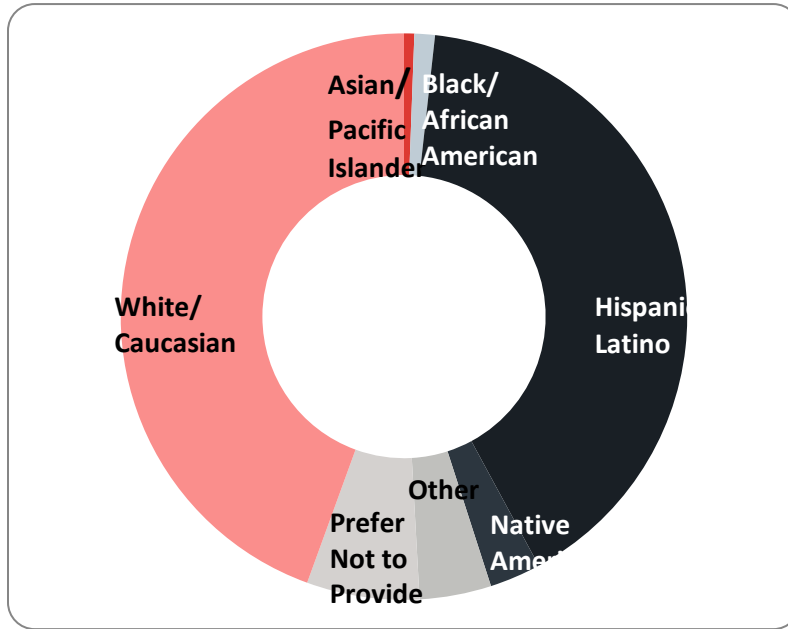
**Figure 6: Demographics - Age of Participants (years)**



**Figure 7: Demographics - Gender of Participants**



**Figure 8: Demographics - Ethnicity of Participants**



## APPENDIX A: PUBLIC MEETING NOTICES

# United States Postal Service Every Door Direct Mailers Postcard



**NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement Project**

**VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING**  
Wednesday, December 9  
6 -7:30 P.M.

Servicios de interpretación en español estarán disponibles en la reunión.

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Rio Bravo Blvd. Between Isleta Blvd. & 2nd St. (CN A301000)

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is planning to replace or rehabilitate the east- and west-bound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande.

The structures are nearing the end of their design-life and are in need of upgrades or replacement. Existing conditions show there is also a need to increase travel capacity along Rio Bravo between Isleta Boulevard and 2nd Street. Additionally, this serves as an opportunity to provide enhanced safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

NMDOT invites you to attend the virtual public meeting where we will introduce the project, present existing conditions, present preliminary proposed alternatives and welcome public input.



P.O. Box 91750  
Albuquerque, NM 87109-1750

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## JOIN US!

**NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement Project**  
**VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING**  
Wednesday, December 9, 2020  
6-7:30 PM

Register at: <https://linktr.ee/NM500RioBravo>  
OR


Call-in at the scheduled meeting time: +1 346 248 7799  
Webinar ID: 849 1147 9420

To request ADA accommodations or a translator,  
contact Jennifer Hyre before December 7, 2020.

NMDOT will use Zoom, a web-based service with call-in capabilities to host the virtual public meeting. Members of the community are encouraged to register for the event and join the discussion, provide comments and ask questions of the project team. Comments can be provided at the meeting or sent by January 9, 2021 to:

**WSP USA | Jennifer Hyre | Attn: NM 500**  
2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
[Jennifer.Hyre@wsp.com](mailto:Jennifer.Hyre@wsp.com) | (505)-878-6577

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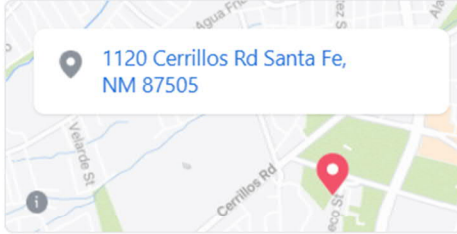
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NMDOT added an event.

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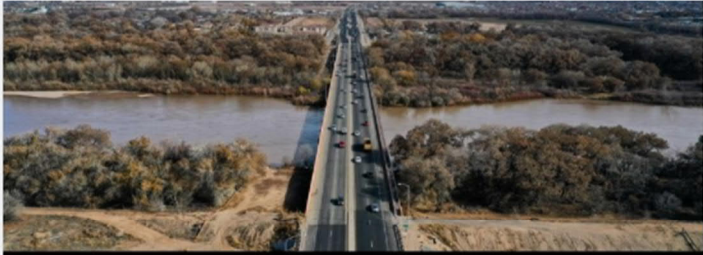
**WED, DEC 2 - DEC 16**

NMDOT wants to inform the public that the fifth Amendment to the 2020-2025 STIP is...

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NMDOT added an event.

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**JOIN US FOR A LIVE VIRTUAL MEETING**

NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement Project CN A301000

Wednesday, December 9 | 6 -7:30 p.m.

**WED, DEC 9 AT 5 PM PST**

NMDOT NM 500 (Rio Bravo Bridge) Replacement Virtual Public Meeting



## New Mexico Department of Transportation NM 500 Bridge Replacement Social Media Plan | CN A301000

Meeting Date: December 9, 2020 at 6 p.m.

[Click here to download images.](#)

### FACEBOOK COPY

#### **Image: Facebook1**

*Post on Wednesday, December 2 at 2 pm MT*

Join us for a live, virtual public meeting on Wednesday, December 9 from 6-7:30 PM MT to learn more about plans to replace or rehabilitate the eastbound and westbound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande in the Albuquerque Metro Area. The event will be held on Zoom. Register to join and ask your questions to the project team: <https://linktr.ee/NM500RioBravo>.

You may also call in at the scheduled meeting time to 1-346-248-7799 using Webinar ID: 849 1147 9420

#### **Image: Facebook2**

*Post on Monday, December 7 at 2 pm MT*

“NMDOT is planning to replace or rehabilitate the eastbound and westbound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande in the Albuquerque Metro Area and would like to hear from you! Register now to take part in our virtual, interactive public meeting on Wednesday, December 9, 2020 from 6-7:30 PM MT.

The event will be held on Zoom. Register to join and ask your questions to the project team:

<https://linktr.ee/NM500RioBravo>.

You may also call in at the scheduled meeting time to 1-346-248-7799 using Webinar ID: 849 1147 9420

Don't miss this opportunity to hear directly from the project team and ask them your questions!”

#### **Image: Facebook3**

*Post on Wednesday, December 9 at 6 pm MT*

“Our virtual public meeting is starting now! Join us live to learn about plans to replace or rehabilitate the eastbound and westbound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande in the Albuquerque Metro Area. Call in to 1-346-248-7799 using Webinar ID: 849 1147 9420 to hear from the project team and ask questions!”



## TWITTER COPY

### **Image: Twitter1**

*Post on Wednesday, December 2 at 2 pm MT*

“Join us for a live, virtual public meeting on Wed, 12/9 at 6 PM MT to learn about plans to replace or rehabilitate the eastbound and westbound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande in Albuquerque. More info and registration: <https://linktr.ee/NM500RioBravo>”

### **Image: Twitter2**

*Post on Monday, December 7 at 2 pm MT*

“NMDOT is planning to replace or rehabilitate the east- and westbound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande in Albuquerque and would like to hear from you! Register to take part in our virtual public meeting on Wed. 12/9 at 6 PM MT. <https://linktr.ee/NM500RioBravo>”

### **Image: Twitter3**

*Post on Wednesday, December 9 at 6 pm MT*

“Our virtual public meeting is starting! Join us live to learn about plans to replace or rehab the east- and westbound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande in Albuquerque. Call 1-346-248-7799 Webinar ID: 849 1147 9420 to hear from the team and ask questions!”



**AFFIDAVIT OF PUBLICATION**  
**STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

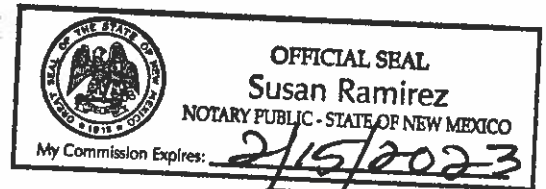
WSP USA

**County of Bernalillo**      **SS**

Elise Rodriguez , the undersigned, on oath states that she is an authorized Representative of The Albuquerque Journal, and that this newspaper is duly qualified to publish legal notices or advertisements within the meaning of Section 3, Chapter 167, Session Laws of 1937, and that payment therefore has been made of assessed as court cost; that the notice, copy of which hereto attached, was published in said paper in the regular daily edition, for 1 time(s) on the following date(s):

11/25/2020

*[Handwritten Signature]*



*[Handwritten Signature]*

Sworn and subscribed before me, a Notary Public, in and for the County of Bernalillo and State of New Mexico this 25 day of November of 2020

PRICE \$3,147.36

Statement to come at the end of month.

ACCOUNT NUMBER 1099443



# NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement Project

VIRTUAL PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, December 9  
6 -7:30 P.M.

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, is planning to replace or rehabilitate the east- and west-bound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande.

The structures are nearing the end of their design-life and are in need of upgrades or replacement. Existing conditions show there is also a need to increase travel capacity along Rio Bravo between Isleta Boulevard and 2nd Street. Additionally, this serves as an opportunity to provide enhanced safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.



PROJECT LOCATION: Rio Bravo Blvd. Between Isleta Blvd. & 2nd St.  
(CN A301000)

NMDOT invites you to attend the virtual public meeting where we will introduce the project, present existing conditions, present preliminary proposed alternatives and welcome public input. Servicios de interpretación en español estarán disponibles en la reunión. NMDOT will use Zoom, a web-based service with call-in capabilities to host the virtual public meeting. Members of the community are encouraged to register for the event and join the discussion, provide comments and ask questions of the project team. Comments can be provided at the meeting or sent by January 9, 2021 to:


WSP USA | Jennifer Hyre | Attn: NM 500  
2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
Albuquerque, NM 87110  
Jennifer.Hyre@wsp.com | (505)-878-6577

Register at: <https://linktr.ee/NM500RioBravo>  
OR

Call-in at the scheduled meeting time: +1 346 248 7799  
Webinar ID: 849 1147 9420


To request ADA accommodations or a translator, contact Jennifer Hyre  
before December 7, 2020.


# Announcement Update to Mailing List



## NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project


CN A301000





# 124

people attended the virtual public meeting on December 9, 2020.



# 524

comments received


## Thank you!

The New Mexico Department of Transportation thanks all who have provided input on the NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridges Replacement Project.

The Project Team will use the feedback to refine design options and select a preferred alternative.

The NMDOT will ask for public input again during the next phase so please watch for more information.

### Priorities Identified:



1. Safety
2. Environmental Impacts
3. Long-Term Vehicle Capacity
4. Improved Facilities
5. Construction Duration

### Anticipated Project Schedule

Scoping Study*: 2020-2021
<b>Initial Engineering Design Development*: 2021</b>
Environmental Analysis & Documentation: 2021/2022
Final Engineering Design: 2022/2023
Anticipated Construction Start: 2024

\*Public Meeting

## APPENDIX B: VIRTUAL MEETING ATTENDANCE LIST

Section omitted due to personal  
identifying information

## APPENDIX C: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION





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# **VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING**

December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**NM 500 Rio Bravo Blvd.  
Bridge Replacements Study  
(MP 8.8 to MP 10.5)**

**NMDOT CN A301000**



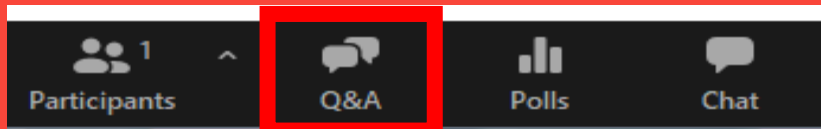
# Meeting Platform: Zoom

- ▲ Zoom Webinar – only presenters will be on video
- ▲ This meeting is being recorded
- ▲ For Spanish translation, select the Interpretation icon on your Zoom toolbar; select “Spanish”
- ▲ *Para escuchar la presentación en español, seleccione el ícono de Interpretación en la barra de herramientas de Zoom; seleccione “Spanish”*

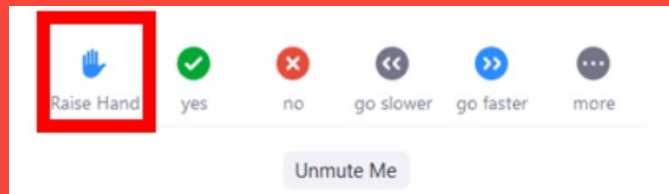


# Meeting Platform: Zoom(Cont.)

- ▲ Polling – respond directly in the “pop-up” box
- ▲ Questions & Answers – Please add project-related questions in the Q&A dialogue box



- ▲ *During Q&A, if you would like to speak, raise your hand (\*9 if you have dialed-in)*





# PRESENTERS

## New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) Team Presenters

- *Priscilla Benavides, NMDOT Central Region Design Manager*
- *Jill Mosher, NMDOT Assistant District Engineer*
- *Justin Gibson, NMDOT District Engineer*
- *Meghan Myers, WSP Project Manager*
- *Jennifer Hyre, WSP Environmental Planner*
- *Nathaniel Miller, WSP Project Engineer*
- *Kevin Alvarado, WSP Communications*



# AGENDA

## ▲ Presentation Topics

1. *Project Limits and Purpose & Need*
2. *Existing Conditions*
3. *Project Development Process and Schedule*
4. *Proposed Improvements*
5. *Alignment Alternatives & Evaluation*
6. *Next Steps*

## ▲ Q&A Session (after the presentation)







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# PROJECT LIMITS AND PURPOSE & NEED

**NMDOT CN A301000**

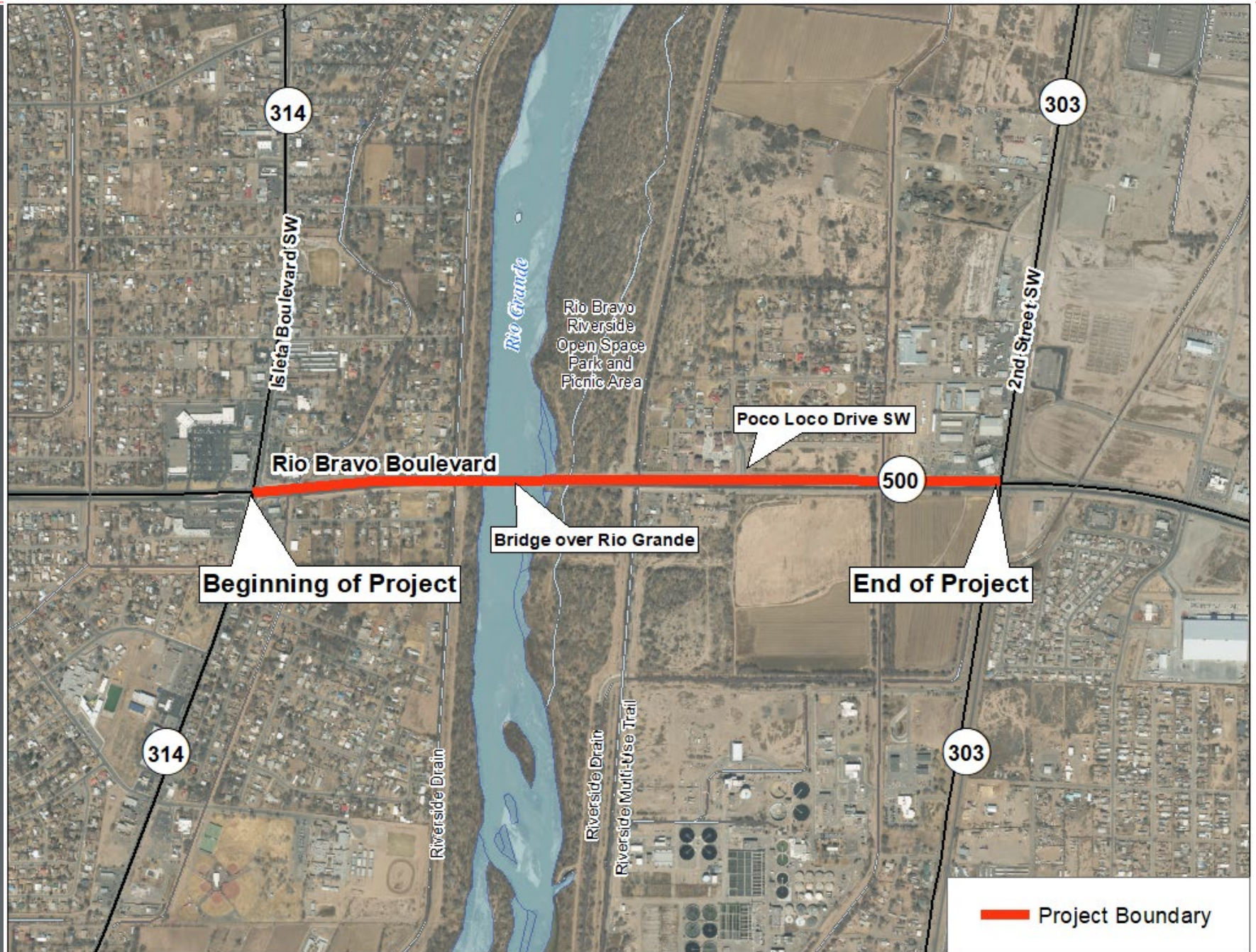
**<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>**



# Project Limits

## Isleta Boulevard to 2<sup>nd</sup> Street

Intersection  
Improvements are not a  
part of this project





# Purpose & Need



## ▲ Project Purpose

- » *To address structural deficiencies and to improve transportation system continuity within the project limits*

## ▲ Project Need

- » *End of Design-Life Infrastructure*
  - The eastbound river bridge is in poor condition and requires replacement
- » *Roadway Capacity*
  - Additional river crossing capacity is needed in the metro area
  - Review traffic control needs at the Poco Loco intersection
- » *Multi-modal Improvements*
  - Pedestrian and bicycle facilities are discontinuous

Bridge Infrastructure Deficiencies,  
Traffic Capacity, and Multi-modal Connectivity

# Emergency Rehabilitation for Eastbound River Bridge December 2019 thru February 2020

**The Damage (Before)**



**Emergency Repair (After)**



# Emergency Rehabilitation for Eastbound River Bridge December 2019 thru February 2020

## What Happened?

- December 2019 – NMDOT inspector noticed significant bump
- Emergency Bridge Inspection and Traffic Closure
- Emergency Repairs and Traffic Closures



## Why this project is different?

- This project was already planned with funding programmed in the Statewide Transportation Plan (STIP) prior to the emergency
- Not an emergency
- Will assess all transportation needs within project limits
- Maintaining traffic flow will be a key project consideration





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# EXISTING CONDITIONS

**NMDOT CN A301000**

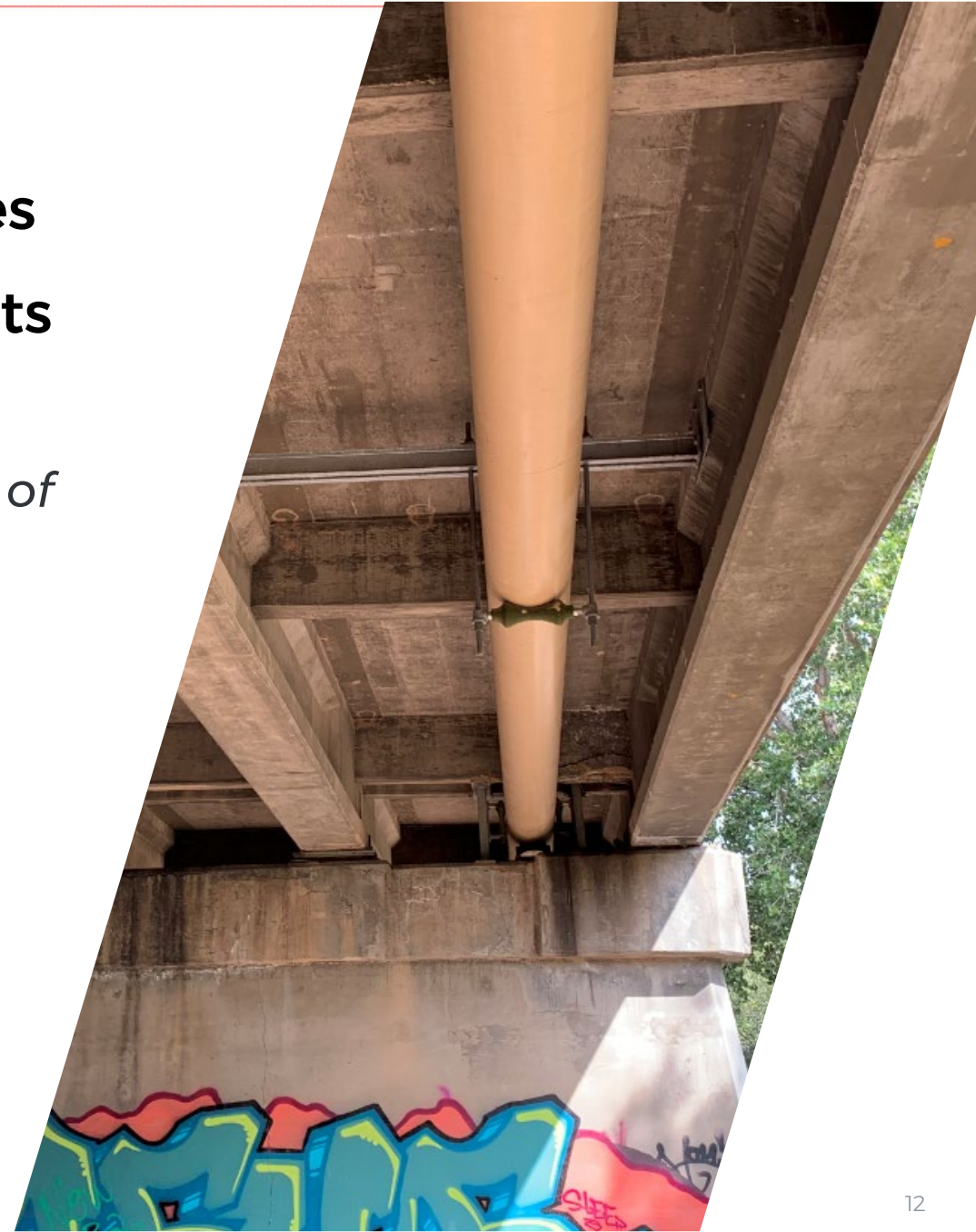
**<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>**



# Existing Structural Conditions



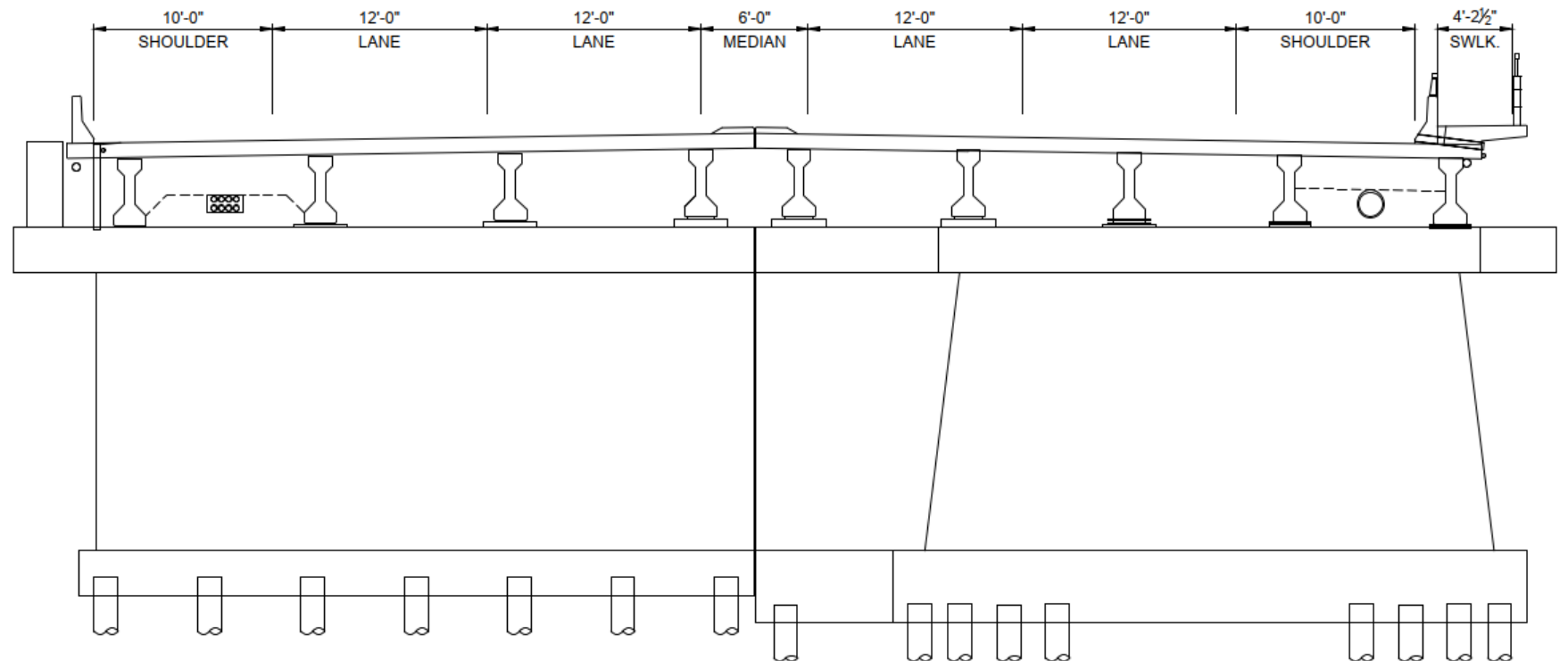
- ▲ **Rio Grande Bridges**
- ▲ **Riverside Drain Bridges**
- ▲ **Riverside Drain Culverts**
- ▲ **Eastbound Bridges**
  - » *Built in 1961, at the end of 50-year design life*
  - » *Emergency Repair in February 2020*
- ▲ **Westbound Bridges**
  - » *Built in 1985, will be 40 years old at the start of new construction*



# Existing Roadway Conditions

## ▲ Existing Typical Section (Rio Grande River Bridges)

- » *Four Lanes with outside shoulders*
- » *Raised Median*
- » *1" Joint between bridges*
- » *Sidewalk on south side only; narrow and discontinuous*





# Other Infrastructure Existing Conditions

## ▲ Utilities

- » Gas
- » Fiber-optic Communications
- » Electric
- » Water

## ▲ MRGCD Riverside Drains and Access

- » Both sides, outside levees
- » Box culvert for access on west side

## ▲ Recreation Facilities

- » Rio Bravo Riverside Picnic Area, Fishing Pier, and Trail
- » Paseo del Bosque Trail
- » Riverside Drain Trail

## ▲ Lighting

- » Both sides of Rio Bravo Blvd

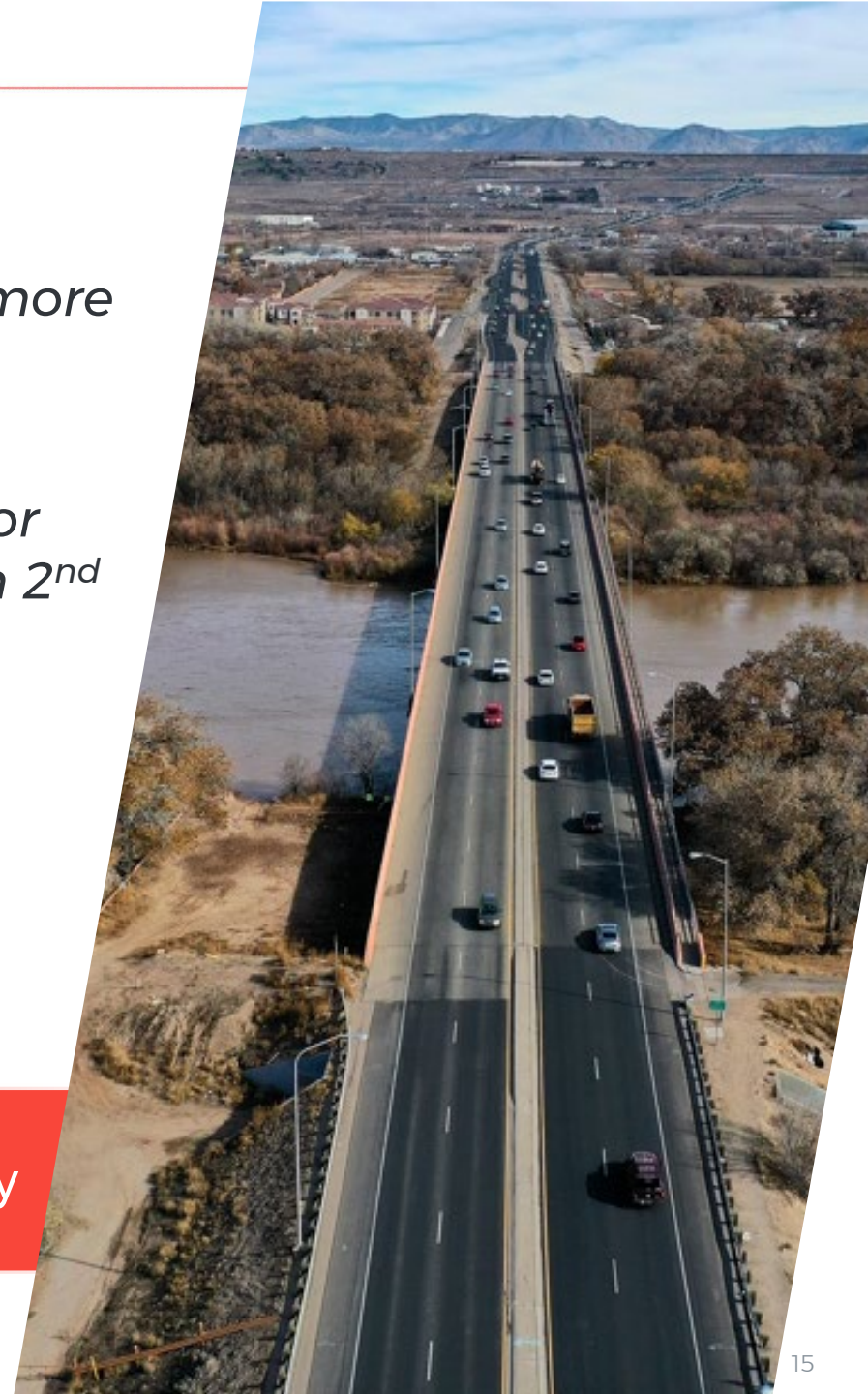


# Existing Traffic Conditions

## ▲ Traffic Considerations

- » *Rio Bravo river crossing serves more than 30,000 vehicles per day*
  - High volume of 35,600 in 2008
- » *Rio Bravo Boulevard has been or will be widened to 6 lanes from 2<sup>nd</sup> Street to I-25*
  - River crossing currently 4 lanes
- » *Traffic during construction:*
  - Apply lessons learned from emergency repair project

Major River Crossing for South Valley





# Existing Traffic Conditions



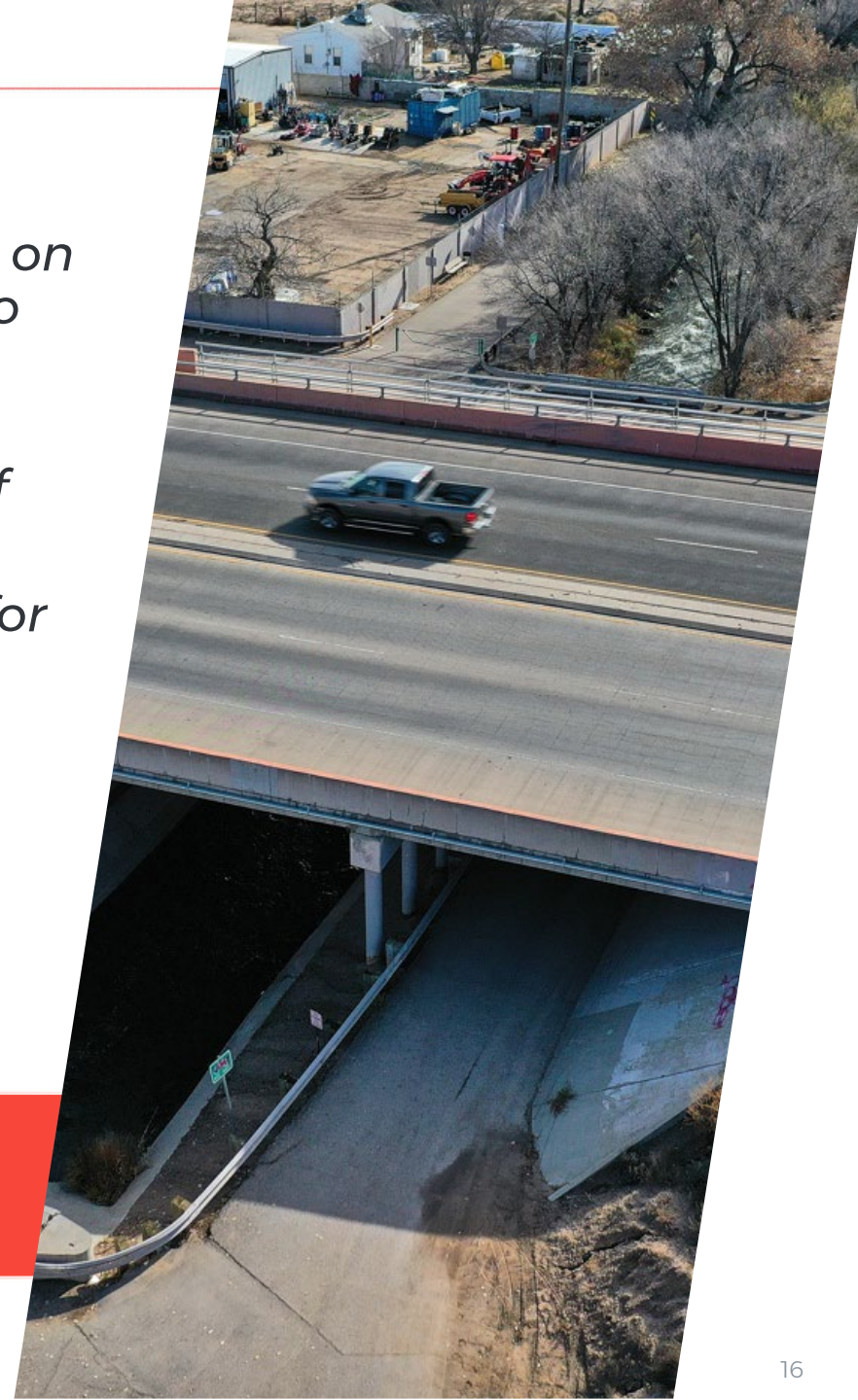
## ▲ Multi-Modal Uses

- » *Multi-Use Paseo del Bosque Trail on east side; crosses under Rio Bravo Blvd*
- » *No sidewalk connections on Rio Bravo Boulevard on either side of the bridges*
- » *Existing shoulders may be used for bicycle travel*

## ▲ Poco Loco/Dean Drive Intersection

- » *Traffic Signal Warrant Study to determine IF there is a need for signal control*

Proposed Improvements will Benefit all Travel Modes

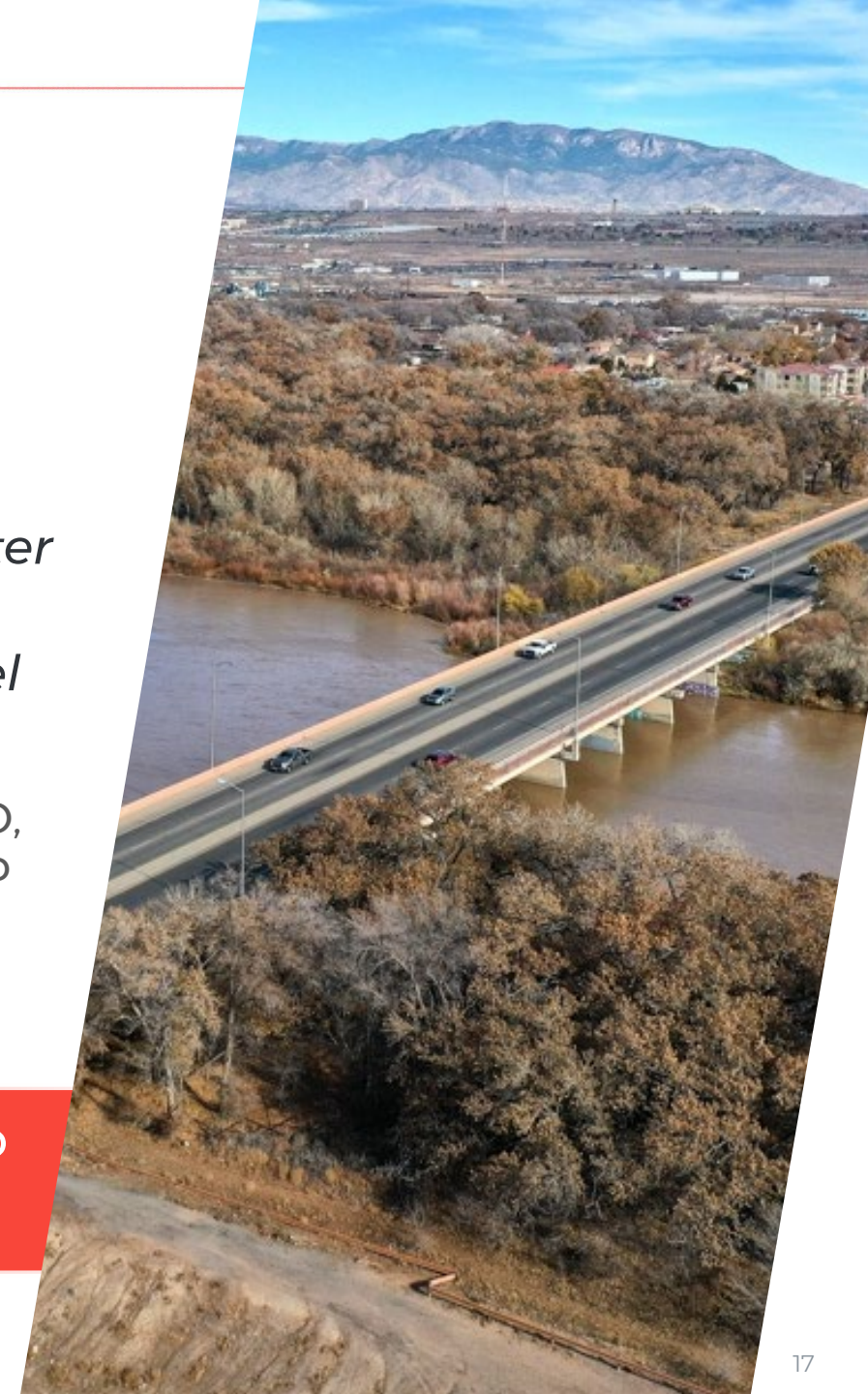


# Existing Flood Plain Conditions

## ▲ Floodplain

- » *FEMA Requirements*
  - No-Rise Allowed
  - Temporary Rise Possible
- » *Levee System*
- » *Height of bridge girders over water level*
- » *Bridge supports in active channel*
- » *Coordination*
  - Army Corps of Engineers, MRGCD, Bureau of Reclamation, Bernalillo County, Interstate Stream Commission, US Fish & Wildlife Service

Bridge Alternatives will be chosen to minimize impacts to floodplain





# Existing Environmental Conditions

## ▲ ENVIRONMENTAL

- » *Agency Coordination*
- » *Threatened and Endangered Species and Habitats*
- » *Bat Roosting and Nesting Birds*
- » *Water Resources*
- » *Cultural Resources*
- » *Noise*
- » *Visual Resources*
- » *Riverside Recreational Area*







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# Project Development Process and Schedule

**NMDOT CN A301000**

**<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>**

# Project Development Process

## ▲ Phase I

» **Currently in this phase**

## » Phase II

» *Final Design*

## » Phase III

» *Construction*

## Phase IA/B: Alignment Study

- » *Establish Why Improvements are Needed*
- » *Evaluate Alternatives and Select the Preferred Alternative*

## Phase IC: Environmental Processing

- » *Environmental Investigations*
- » *Obtain Authorization to Construct Improvements*

## Phase ID: Preliminary Design

- » *Preliminary Engineering*
- » *Define Right-of-Way Needs*
- » *Prepare Engineering Cost Estimate*

**Stakeholder and Public Involvement**  
– Ongoing throughout Phase I



# Collect Comprehensive Data

- ✓ Design and R/W Survey
- ✓ Environmental Surveys
- ✓ Geotechnical
- ✓ Bridge Conditions
- ✓ Floodplain
- ✓ Traffic and Access
- ✓ Agency Coordination
- ✓ Stakeholder Input



# Project Schedule

- ▲ Start of Study (Phase IAB) – **Spring 2020**
- ▲ Public Meeting – **Fall 2020**
- ▲ Completion of Study – **Spring 2021**
- ▲ Initial Engineering Design Development – **2021**
- ▲ Environmental Analysis & Documentation – **2021 / 2022**
- ▲ Final Engineering Design – **2022 / 2023**
- ▲ Anticipated Construction Start – **2024**

We are Here

Study Phase to Construction



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# Proposed Improvements

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# Proposed Improvements

- ▲ **Highway Improvements**
  - » *Additional traffic capacity*
  - » *ADA accessible sidewalks and access*
  - » *Bridge replacements or rehabilitations*
  - » *Bosque trail access improvements*
  - » *Bicycle accommodations*
  - » *Adjacent road project connectivity*

Final conditions will provide an improved, connected corridor

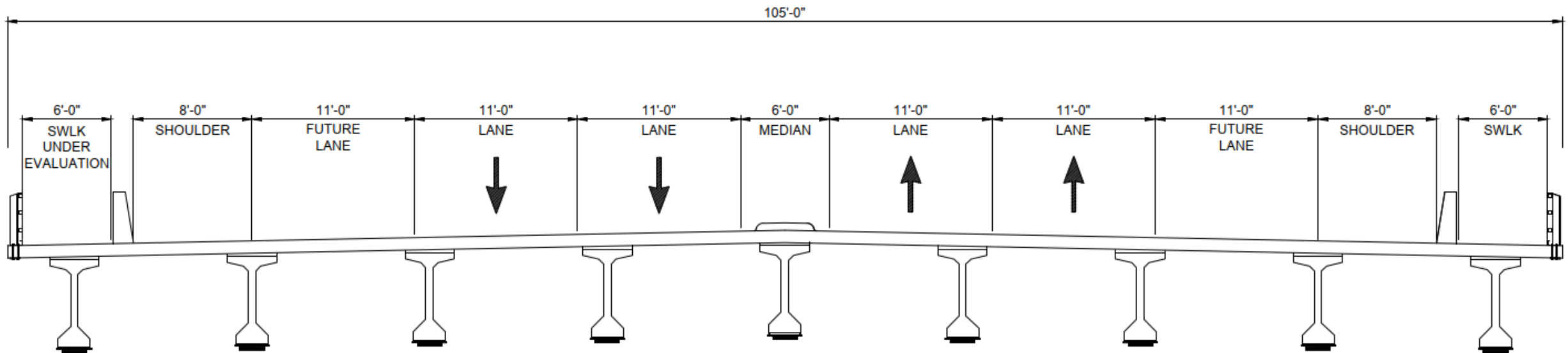


# Proposed Improvements

When first opened the bridge may only be striped for 2-lanes in each direction

## ▲ Proposed Typical Section

- » *Provide additional traffic capacity*
- » *Provide sidewalk on both sides of the bridge*
- » *Maintain outside shoulders*







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# Alignment Alternatives & Evaluation

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**<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>**



# Roadway Alignment Alternatives

## ▲ No Build Alternative

- *Do Nothing Alternative*
- *Does not satisfy the Purpose and Need for this Project*
- *1965 Bridge requires replacement*

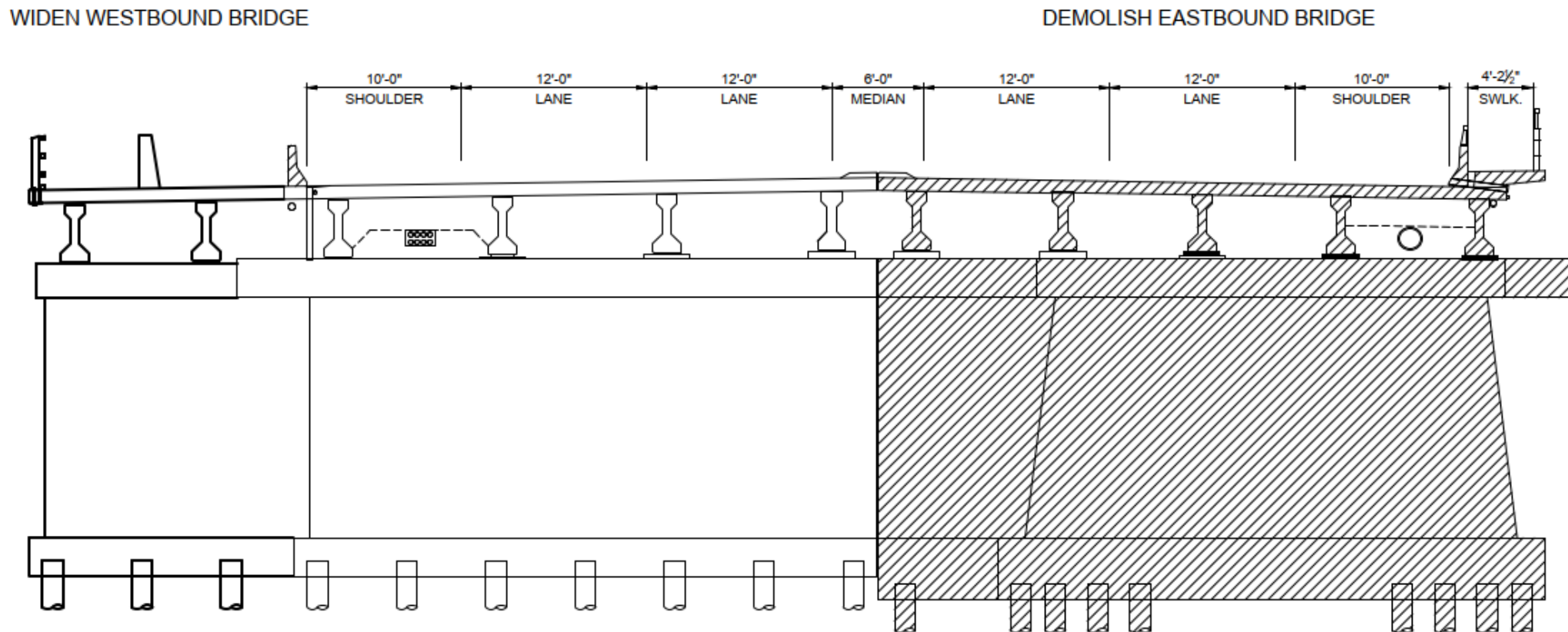
## ▲ How Should the Bridges be Improved?

- » *Maintain existing alignment*
- » *Build in new offset location on either side of the existing bridges*
- » *Combination of existing and offset alignments*



# Alternative 1 – Maintain Existing Alignment Replace the Eastbound Bridge Only

- ▲ Phase 1 – Widen the Westbound Bridge
- ▲ Phase 2 – Demolish the Eastbound Bridge



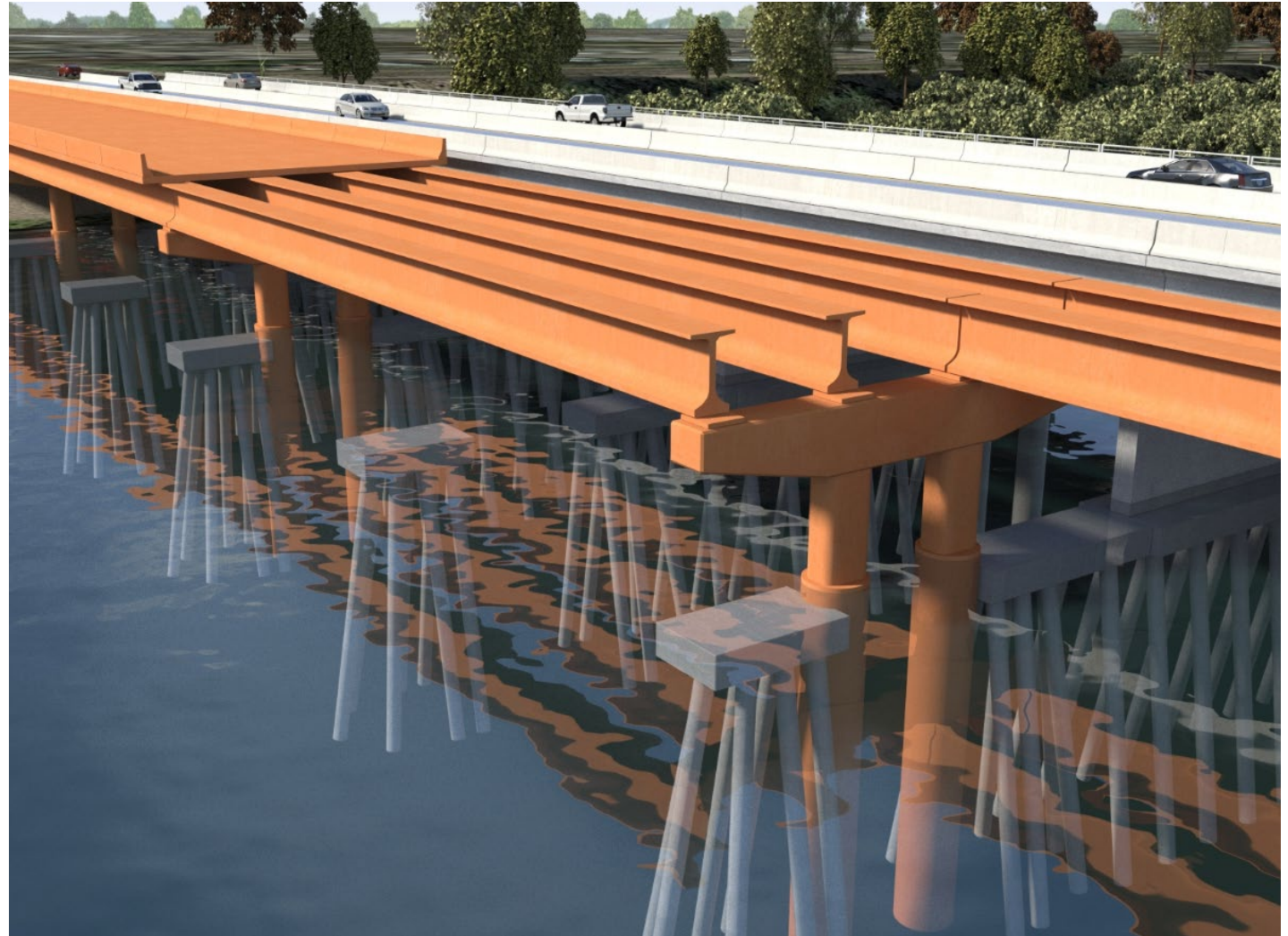


# Alternative 1 – Maintain Existing Alignment Replace the Eastbound Bridge Only

## ▲ Phase 3 – Replace the Eastbound Bridge

### ▲ BUT

- » *Strict Floodplain requirements will require the replaced Eastbound bridge to line up with the existing piers*
- » *The existing Foundation Elements will present a great challenge accomplishing this*



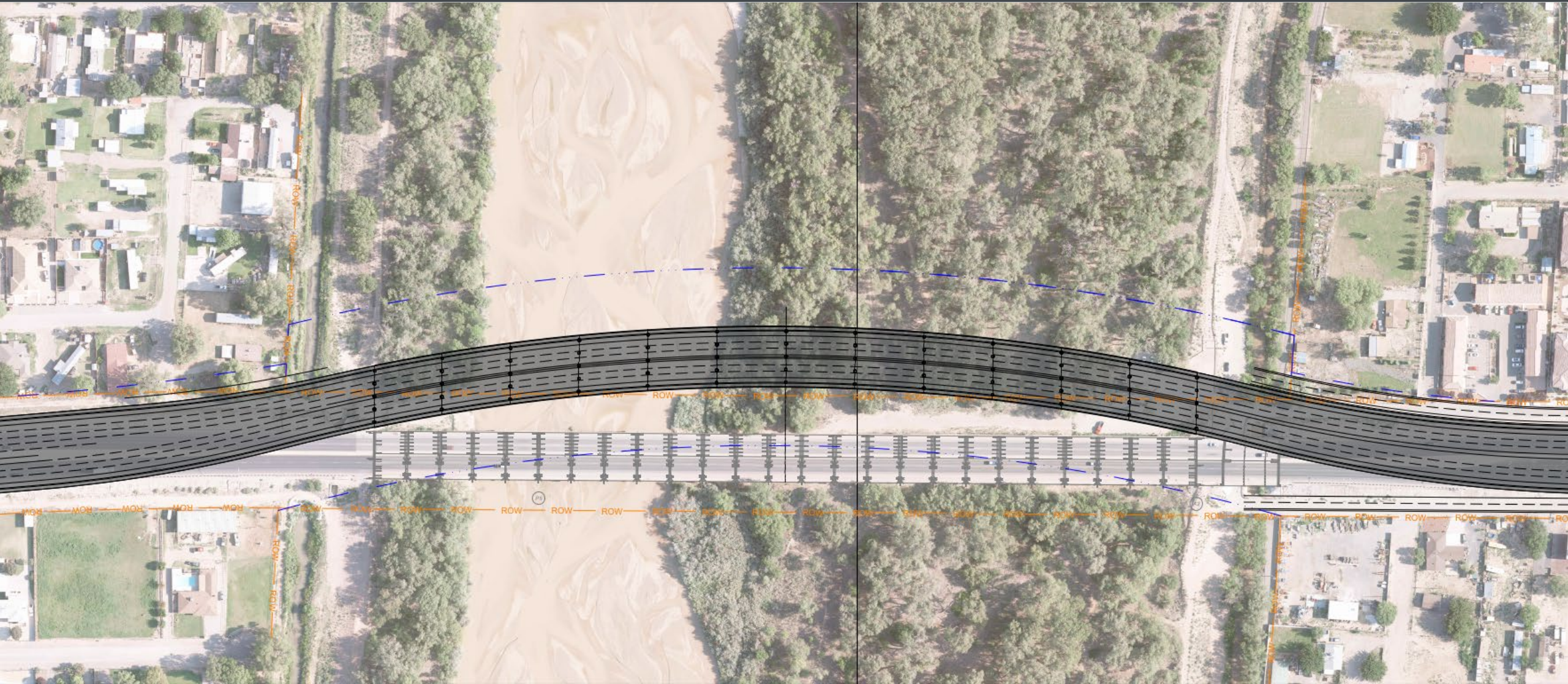


# Alternative 2 – Maintain Existing Alignment Replace all Bridges





# Alternative 3 – New Alignment North Curve





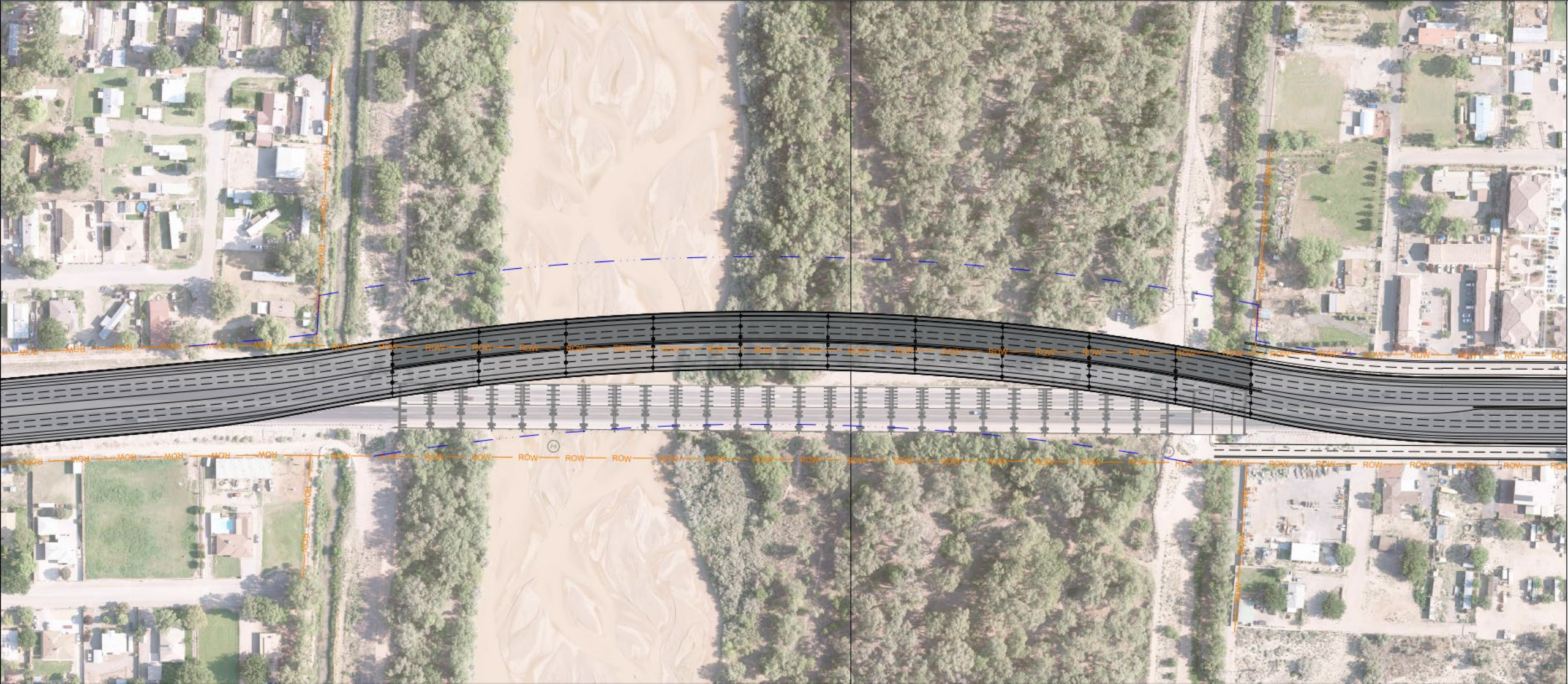
# Alternative 4 – New Alignment Split Bridge





# Alternative 5 – Offset Alignment

## Offset half the new bridge to the North





# Alternative 6 – Offset Alignment

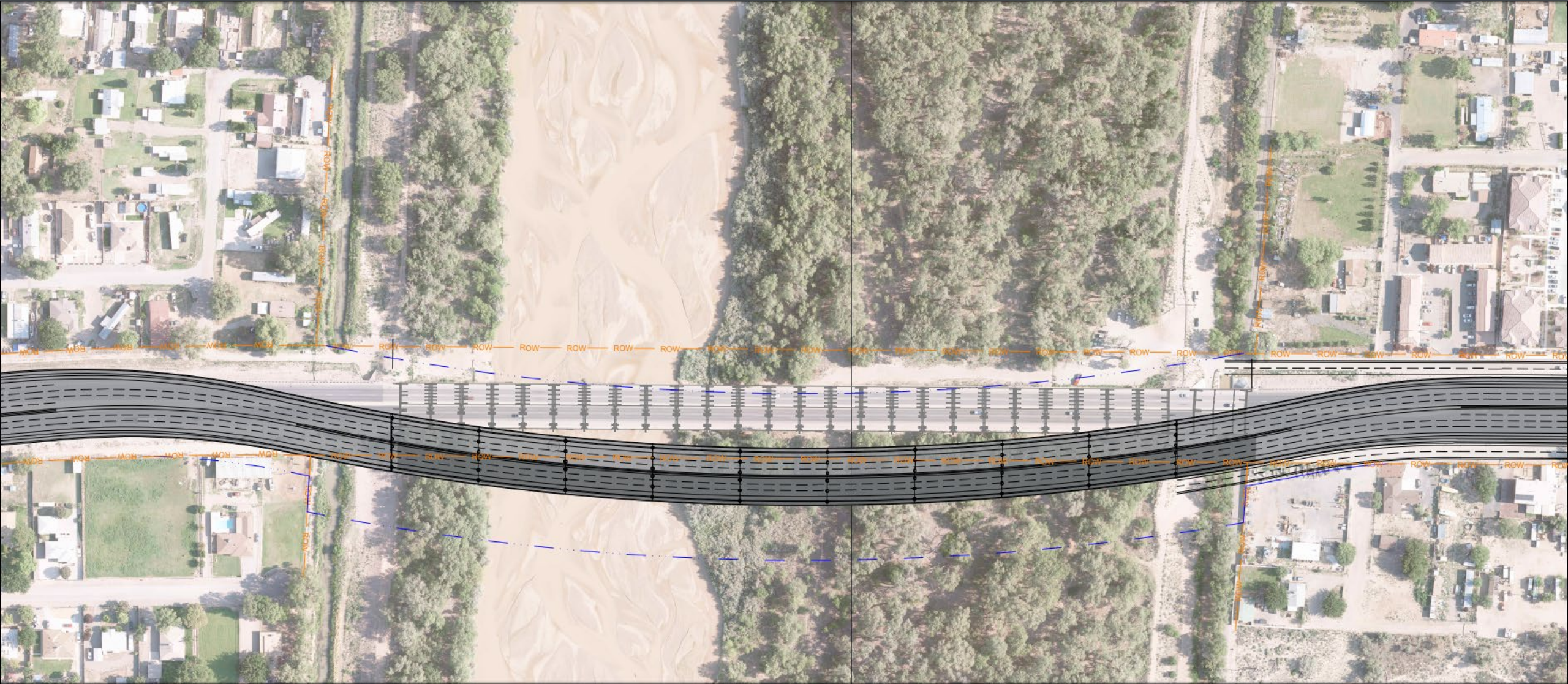
## Offset half the new bridge to the North, Straight





# Alternative 7 – Offset Alignment

## Offset half the new bridge to the South





# Evaluation Criteria

## ▲ Evaluation Criteria for Alternatives

- » *Construction Cost*
- » *Constructability (e.g., site access)*
- » *Environmental Impacts*
- » *Property & Right-of-way Impacts*
- » *Maintaining Traffic during Construction*
- » *Utility Phasing*
- » *Pedestrian & Bicycle Mobility*
- » *Rio Grande Requirements*
- » *Future Maintenance*
- » **Public & Stakeholder Support**





# Comparative Evaluation of Alternatives

## Rating Scale

Significant Advantage	Advantage	Neutral	Disadvantage	Fatal Flaw
-----------------------	-----------	---------	--------------	------------

Evaluation Criteria	Alignment Alternatives								
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	No Build	Widen WB in place, replace EB In-Line	In-Line Replacement	North Full Offset	Split	North Half Offset	North Half Offset - Straight	South Half Offset	Rehabilitate all Bridges
Project Purpose & Need									
Initial Construction Cost	N/A								N/A
Future Maintenance	N/A								N/A
Design Life	N/A								N/A
Constructability	N/A								N/A
Maintenance of Traffic during Construction	N/A								N/A
Property Takes & ROW Impact	N/A								N/A
Environmental Impacts	N/A								N/A
4(f) Property Impacts	N/A								N/A
Utility Phasing	N/A								N/A
Pedestrian & Bicycle Mobility	N/A								N/A
Drainage Requirements	N/A								N/A
Roadway Geometry	N/A								N/A
Public and Stakeholder Support	N/A								N/A



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# Next Steps

**NMDOT CN A301000**

**<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>**



# Next Steps

- ▲ Gather Public Input
- ▲ Detailed Evaluation of Improvements
- ▲ Prepare Phase IA/B Study
  - » *Select Alternative to Advance*
- ▲ Complete Environmental Studies & Documentation
- ▲ Develop Preliminary Design Plans
- ▲ Develop Final Design Plans
- ▲ Right-of-way Acquisition
- ▲ Construction

PHASE IC & PHASE ID





# We Want to Hear from You...

**Please provide us with comments by January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**

**Electronic submittals preferred**

## ▲ How to Provide Comments?

- » Email: [jennifer.hyre@wsp.com](mailto:jennifer.hyre@wsp.com)
- » Call: (505) 878-6577
- » Mail:  
WSP | Jennifer Hyre | Attn: NM 500  
2440 Louisiana Blvd NE, Suite 400  
Albuquerque, NM 87110
- » Complete a MetroQuest Survey:  
<https://linktr.ee/nm500riobravo>
- » More information on the NMDOT Projects Page:  
<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>

All Comments are Welcome!!



# MetroQuest Survey

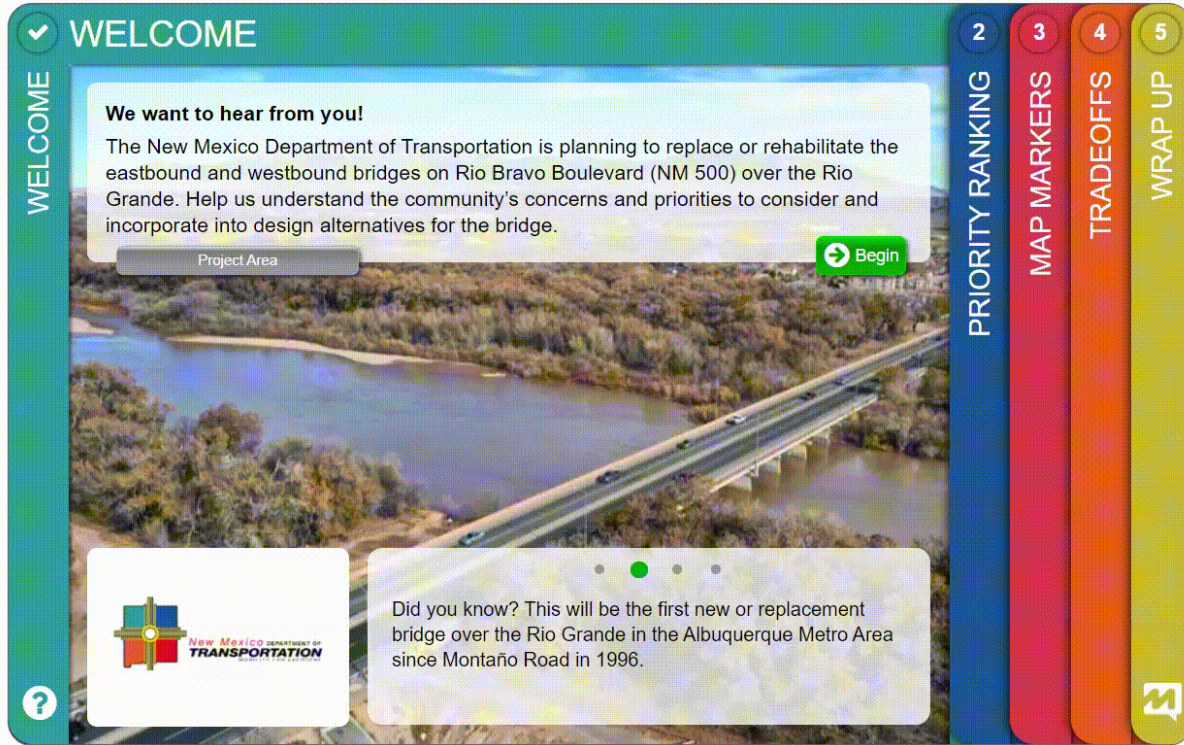
Access at:  
[linktr.ee/nm500riobravo](https://linktr.ee/nm500riobravo)

Help us learn about your concerns and priorities

Available in English and Spanish

NMDOT NM 500 Rio Bravo Bridge Replacement

Progress 



**WELCOME**

**We want to hear from you!**

The New Mexico Department of Transportation is planning to replace or rehabilitate the eastbound and westbound bridges on Rio Bravo Boulevard (NM 500) over the Rio Grande. Help us understand the community's concerns and priorities to consider and incorporate into design alternatives for the bridge.

[Project Area](#) [Begin](#)

**Did you know?** This will be the first new or replacement bridge over the Rio Grande in the Albuquerque Metro Area since Montañó Road in 1996.

**Navigation:** WELCOME, PRIORITY RANKING, MAP MARKERS, TRADEOFFS, WRAP UP

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# Questions

**NMDOT CN A301000**

**<https://dot.state.nm.us/nmdotprojects>**

## APPENDIX D: PUBLIC COMMENTS RECEIVED

Section omitted due to personal  
identifying information