

# New Mexico Highway 50 Transportation Study

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## Final Public Involvement and Community Outreach Summary Report January 2006

A Collaborative Project of the:  
**National Park Service/Pecos National Historical Park**  
**Federal Highway Administration**  
**New Mexico Department of Transportation**

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# PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH SUMMARY



*New Mexico Highway 50*

## Introduction

The purpose of the Highway 50 Transportation Study is to identify and evaluate feasible alternatives and provide recommendations that will preserve and provide public access to the Civil War era Glorieta Battlefield and Pigeons Ranch, while also improving the safety of the roadway for local residents, park visitors and the community of Pecos.

Completion of the study will be a collaborative effort between the partnering agencies: National Park Service, New Mexico Department of Transportation, the Federal Highway Administration, and the public. The study will recommend potential solutions to address the growing transportation demands on New Mexico Highway 50, balanced with preservation and interpretation goals at the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park. The process will be comprehensive, context-sensitive, and fully inclusive of public participation.

Anticipated long-term benefits of a successful plan include improved transportation access and safety for the region, enhanced park preservation and interpretation efforts, and local economic development through improved transportation and park experience opportunities for visitors.



*Existing signs in Pecos*

## Synopsis of Report Contents

This outreach summary report provides a description of methods used and information gathered during the public involvement and community outreach efforts for the New Mexico Highway 50 Transportation Study. The report describes the process of developing the public outreach program, explains the exercises and activities used, and summarizes public input gathered. The report also discusses next steps in the outreach process.

Appendices A through G contain comments received during Workshop Series #1 and #2, open house sessions, and through various other outreach methods described in this report.

## The Importance of Public Involvement

Development of the Highway 50 Transportation Study is being shaped by a large-scale public outreach effort. In order to develop feasible transportation alternatives, opinions and suggestions from the public need to be considered. The agency partners responsible for this study have developed a comprehensive public involvement and community outreach program that provides extensive opportunities for engaging the community and gathering public comments and input. The



*Workshop Series #1 participants*

general public, community stakeholders, and various interested groups and individuals will be involved in the study process from the early stages of identifying potential options for resolving transportation problems all the way through later stages of the study related to evaluation of feasible alternatives. After completion of this study, public involvement activities will continue through ongoing environmental analysis and implementation of study recommendations.

## Outreach Methods

Throughout the entire project, several outreach tools are being used to inform the public about the Highway 50 Transportation Study, as well as to notify people about meetings and open houses. Below is a list of on-going outreach methods for the project.

### Project Information Sheet

The Project Information Sheet is a one-page, double-sided, color informational piece developed to provide a project description, schedule, meeting announcements, and contact information and will be updated throughout the course of the study.

### Project Newsletter

A Project Newsletter is a two-page, double-sided informational piece developed to provide a summary of the workshop series and provide additional information about upcoming meetings.

### Press Releases and Calendar Notifications

Project and meeting information is being distributed to local newspapers for publication.

### Interactive Workshops with Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder groups will continue to be invited to attend small, interactive workshop sessions. In Workshop Series #1, stakeholders were grouped into categories of like-interests to open and effective discussions. In Workshop Series #2, stakeholders groups with a variety of interests were grouped together so that participants could gain insights into the perspectives, concerns, and ideas of others.

### General Public Workshops

Evening meetings will continue to be held for the general public and stakeholders not able to attend day meetings. The typical format will involve a brief presentation and activities to prompt participation. Participants will be given ample opportunity to provide comments and ideas.

### Open Houses

Open houses will continue to be held to allow the public to view presentation boards with draft information and provide additional feedback and comments. Team members will be available to talk to participants one-on-one and answer questions as needed.

## Tribal Outreach

Members of the steering committee and project team gave a brief presentation and project overview to representatives from the Jemez Tribe on January 25, 2005. Additional tribal briefings and gathering of comments and input will occur on a periodic basis.

## Meeting Announcement Mailer

A brief project description and meeting announcement flyer was mailed to area residents with addresses in Pecos, Glorieta, Rowe, and Terrero for Workshop Series #1. (The newsletter mailing served this purpose for Workshop Series #2.)

## Project Email and Phone Number

An email address has been set-up specifically for this project. The email address is [hwy50transtudy@otak.com](mailto:hwy50transtudy@otak.com). A project phone number has also been established, it is (800) 370-6148. Comments received via email are provided in Appendix C. The email address and phone number will remain active throughout the duration of the project.

## Comment Cards

Handed out at the public workshops, meetings, and open houses, comment cards provide another means for participants to provide input on the project. Comment cards include contact information, the project email and phone number, and an address for mailing them after meetings. Comments received to date are included in Appendix C.

## Questionnaire

During Workshop Series #2, questionnaires were distributed to get comments and feedback on each of the fifteen transportation concepts presented during the meetings. The questionnaire results are incorporated into the comments received on each option. A copy of the questionnaire is provided in Appendix E and questionnaire results are included in Appendix F.

## Letters of Comment

After Workshop Series #1, several letters were sent to the project team. Comments from letters received to date can be found in Appendix C.

## Follow-up Meetings and Phone Calls

Identified stakeholders unable to attend workshops or public meetings may be contacted to gather their ideas and comments on aspects of the project.

# Workshop Series #1 Overview

## Workshop Series #1 Process

The first stage of outreach involved a week-long interactive workshop series from January 24 through January 29, 2005. The process included focus-group workshop sessions, an evening public meeting, and a



*Workshop Series #1 participants*



*Arrowhead Ruin in the Glorieta Unit*

Saturday open house, all held at the Village of Pecos community room. Over 200 people participated in these meetings, and additional groups and individuals continue to be involved in the process.

The focus-group workshop sessions were held during the day for 90-minute periods. Each workshop session included a brief project presentation, two exercises, and time at the end for questions and answers. The workshops were designed specifically to meet with stakeholder groups of varying interests including local, county, and state governments, historical-interest groups, recreational-focused groups, businesses, and landowners.

Two public evening meetings were scheduled originally, but due to snowy weather conditions, one evening meeting was rescheduled for February 23, 2005. This two-hour public meeting, held at the Glorieta Firehouse, included the same presentation, exercises, and question and answer period as the focus-group workshop sessions.

A public open house was held on Saturday, January 29, 2005. Meeting attendees from the focus-group sessions and public meeting were invited to come back and view the comments and ideas that had been shared during the week-long workshop series. All flip-chart notes, maps, and other comments gathered were available at the open house for public review.

## **Summary of Workshop Series #1 Results**

### ***Visioning Exercise***

The Visioning Exercise was designed to lead participants through a brainstorming session, where they could imagine a preferred future for Highway 50 through the Glorieta Unit in Pecos National Historical Park. This exercise was done at each of the daytime focus-group workshops, the evening public meetings, and the Saturday open house. Participants were assured there were no wrong answers and then presented with the following scenario:

*“You get the offer of a lifetime – to move to a beautiful tropical island. 20 years from now, you return and travel through this area. The New Mexico Transportation Study has been a success, and you like what you see. Tell us what you are seeing.”*

Participants were asked to take a few minutes to consider the question before the brainstorming session began. Each idea that was shared was written down on flip chart boards. Comments and ideas shared during the Visioning Exercise are summarized on the following pages. A full listing of comments recorded during the Visioning Exercise is provided in Appendix A.

### ***Summary of Common Perspectives and Ideas Shared at Workshop Series #1***

A diversity of opinions and a wide range of ideas and suggestions were offered by participants during the workshop sessions. A summary of the most commonly mentioned perspectives and ideas is provided below.

Related to Traffic and Safety

- There was broad agreement that traffic congestion and safety problems exist on NM Highway 50.
- Traffic needs to slow down on Highway 50.
- Highway 50 should not be widened because that might impact historic features and increase speeds even more.
- If Highway 50 stays in the same location, shoulders should be widened for safety and bicycle travel.
- Consider lowering speed limit through the Park.
- There are safety issues on La Joya – a nearby street.
- Many people felt there was a need for an alternative route of access between Pecos and Interstate 25.

Related to Development of the Park Unit and Sensitivity to the Surrounding Community

- Visitor improvements and interpretation in the Glorieta Unit will enhance the visitor experience and increase awareness of the unique history of the battlefield.
- Environmental, cultural, and historical goals of the Park should be accomplished without disrupting the community and people who live in the area.
- Interpretive trails and trailhead/roadside pull-off and parking areas should be provided and carefully designed, with minimal impact to neighbors.
- Hiking trails should be developed throughout the Park; improve public access (via a trail link) to the Glorieta Lifeway Center and surrounding public lands. Consider linking the two park units with a multi-use trail.
- All transportation alternatives studied should avoid negative impacts to the La Joya neighborhood.
- Interpretation at the site should include transportation themes related to the Santa Fe National Historic Trail and historic route US 66.
- The Glorieta Unit should continue to be accessible to be a “no fee” area.
- Continue to provide access to and from and preserve property rights of parcels within and near the Glorieta Unit.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of life enjoyed by the community of Pecos and residents of the area and retain the rural character of the area – quiet and peaceful.
- Look for opportunities to provide an economic boost the community and region through increased tourism at the Park.

Other Ideas and Suggestions

- Consider highway realignment and Interstate 25 access opportunities inside of the Park and not just through surrounding private properties.
- Strengthen partnerships between the Pecos community, counties,

**Workshop Series #1 participants**

and the agencies involved in this study.

- Consider visual impacts, as well as impacts to vegetation. Save trees and native vegetation.
- An alternative route of access to and from access Pecos should be explored.
- Pedestrian and bicycling safety through corridor is important. Highway 50 is a designated bicycling route.
- Highway 50 needs to be maintained, even if a new route is developed.
- Highway 50 could be down-scaled to a “local road,” designed to better fit the historic setting, if an alternative route of access to Interstate 25 can be developed.

### What Happens if Nothing is Done

Some workshop participants were resistant to change and favored the idea of doing nothing to improve Highway 50 or transportation conditions in the area. A few people said, “leave the highway alone.” The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will require that a “no action” alternative be analyzed in the future environmental document. Analysis of the “no action” alternative would bring to light the consequences that might occur if no improvements were made or no new access was developed.

Most workshop participants recognized that there likely would be negative environmental consequences and impacts if nothing was done, such as:

- Increasing traffic and safety issues (accidents) on NM Highway 50;
- Continued degradation of the historic landscape and structures in the Park unit; and
- Ongoing impacts to the area’s quality of life and community due to increased traffic congestion.

### **Evaluation Criteria Exercise**

In the Evaluation Criteria Exercise individuals began identifying and prioritizing criteria that should be considered during the development of preliminary concepts and alternatives for the Highway 50 Transportation Study. Participants were given three presentation boards listing 18 evaluation criteria topics and a blank board where new criteria topics could be written. These presentation boards are provided in Appendix B to this report.

Each person was given 10 red dot stickers and then asked to place dots next to criteria topics they felt were most important, including any new criteria topics attendees had added.

Following are the criteria topics participants felt were most important to consider during evaluation of preliminary concepts and alternatives.

Top 10 Potential Considerations/Evaluation Criteria

- Police, fire, and emergency services
- Important archaeological and cultural resources and historic sites
- Aquatic resources such as streams, rivers and associated riparian habitat, and wetlands; floodplains and drainage considerations
- Important visual resources/views/impacts to scenic qualities
- Noise abatement in sensitive areas
- Context sensitive and sustainable solutions
- Neighborhood cohesion, safety, and community services
- Community values
- Interpretive opportunities associated with National Park Service resources
- Biological resources, including threatened and endangered species and important habitats

Other Potential Considerations/Evaluation Criteria Added by Participants

- Expand access and use of national forest lands
- Consider landowner rights and concerns
- A new and safer exit onto I-25 is needed (level with merge lane onto highway)
- Leave as is
- Provide interpretation and visitor use of Highway 50 as Santa Fe National Historic Trail
- Do not add night sky pollution
- Bike path from national park (monument) to battlefield is needed
- Do not remove buildings from their historic context
- Reroute Highway 50
- Reduce traffic congestion
- Improve traffic safety; widen the road

**Summary of Comments on Maps**

Maps were made available for workshop series participants to share additional thoughts and sketch ideas on. The map on page 7 of this report summarizes map comments and ideas received.

**Identifying Stakeholders**

Stakeholders were first identified by the project steering committee. Beginning in November 2004, committee members began identifying key stakeholders to participate in the focus-group sessions. In all, over 25 stakeholder groups were identified.

After all the stakeholder groups were identified, they were combined into like-interests and invited to participate in daytime focus-group workshops.



***New Mexico Highway 50***



*Adobe structure adjacent to Highway 50 at Pigeons Ranch*

Stakeholder groups included:

- Local Businesses
- Churches
- Local and County Governments
- Recreational Interests
- Historical Interests
- Federal Government
- Elected Officials
- Landowners
- School Districts
- Utility and Emergency Services

Stakeholder representatives were contacted by phone and email during late December and early January. The meeting schedule was finalized in mid-January. A representative from each stakeholder group was contacted and given a brief introduction to the project, invited to attend a workshop with other organizations of “like-interest,” and welcomed to invite up to five people from his/her organization. Each stakeholder was also mailed a Project Information Sheet. Agencies/organizations that were unable to attend focus-group sessions were invited to attend one of the evening meetings. A schedule of all the agencies/groups/organizations that participated in the daytime focus-group sessions during Workshop Series #1 is provided in Appendix G.

### **Notifying the Public**

The general public was given advance notification for the evening public meetings and Saturday open house. Several newspaper articles were written about the project. A notice and schedule for all public evening meetings, including contact information, were listed in newspapers, including the Santa Fe New Mexican, Pecos Wrap edition and the Albuquerque Journal. Project Information Sheets were posted throughout Pecos and Glorieta. A meeting announcement mailer was also sent to residents throughout the area. Approximately 2,200 mailers were sent to residents and approximately 350 sent to property owners living outside the area.

Additional tools used to inform the public about the Highway 50 Transportation Study project, as well as to notify them about the evening public meetings, included website postings on the Pecos National Historical Park website and New Mexico Department of Transportation website, and electronic variable message signs. Many meeting participants commented on the effectiveness of the variable message signs in getting the word out about the public meetings. Each of these sources, in combination with the Project Information Sheet, provided information so that questions could be answered. These tools were successful in informing the public about the project and meetings.

## Workshop Series #2 Overview

### Workshop Series #2 Process

The second stage of outreach involved a three-day interactive workshop and public meeting series held June 16 through June 18, 2005. The process included four focus-group workshops, an evening public meeting, and three daytime public meetings on Saturday. The evening public meeting was held on June 16<sup>th</sup> at the Pecos Middle School and all other meetings were held at the Village of Pecos Administrative Center.

The purpose of Workshop Series #2 was to review comments and ideas from Workshop Series #1, to explore and refine concepts developed to date based on those comments, and to get input on draft evaluation criteria and remaining steps in study process. Each meeting included a presentation on the overall goals and objectives of the entire study, a history of the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park, a summary of “what we heard” during Workshop Series #1, presentation of a transportation “toolbox,” and an introduction to the fifteen transportation concepts. After the presentation, the project team gave a brief description of each of the fifteen concepts, answered questions, and wrote down comments for each. A summary of comments is provided below.

### Summary of Workshop Series #2 Results

The fifteen concepts for addressing the area’s transportation needs and problems were categorized into and presented in three sets during Workshop Series #2:

- Set One: Low Build, No Build, and No Action Concepts
- Set Two: Realignment/Bypass Concepts
- Set Three: New Routes Between NM 50 and I-25

Each set of concepts is described in more detail below, followed by summaries of public comments received at the workshop series related to each set of concepts. It was explained that the team was seeking general comments and perspectives related to the concepts shown, and that the concepts were categorized in order to make group discussion and evaluation less cumbersome. Workshop participants were informed that any of the concepts could be “mixed and matched” with any of the other concepts to create hybrids.

Also, it was explained that under any of the concepts presented, NM 50 through the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park will remain open for access to the park and private properties along that stretch of the highway. For example, if an alternative alignment for NM 50 in the vicinity of the park or a new linkage between NM 50 and Interstate 25 were developed, the function of NM 50 through the park would change, and thus, the route could be “downgraded” to a local access road serving park visitors and residents who live inside the park boundary.



*Workshop Series #2 participants*

### ***Set One: Low Build, No Build, and No Action Concepts***

These concepts include “minimalist” approaches to resolving transportation issues, such as increased enforcement, education, and low build improvements such as traffic calming and speed reduction programs. It should be noted that “low build” approaches do not always equate to “low cost.” Although upfront capital costs may be lower, additional staffing, maintenance, and operational costs might be needed, resulting in increased long-term costs.

The “no action” concept was also included in this set. Evaluation of a “no action” alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and allows the opportunity to evaluate the potential results and impacts that might occur if no actions are taken. Set One is shown at the end of this report in Figure I.

#### *Summary of Public Comments*

Summaries of the most prevalent comments stated by Workshop Series #2 participants for each set of concepts, as well as each of the individual concepts are provided below. For the full listing of comments recorded at the workshop series sessions, please refer to Appendix D.

#### *Set One Overall*

These concepts as potential solutions on their own did not receive very much interest or support by Workshop Series #2 participants. Most participants felt that these concepts would not fully address transportation needs or resolve problems, unless they were implemented as accompaniments to other options. For example, many of the workshop participants who supported concepts that would involve realignment of NM 50 and/or development of a new interchange also felt that slowing of traffic on NM 50 through the park was a good idea.

#### *Concept A – Low Build: Gateways, Traffic Calming, and Pull-offs on Existing Alignment*

- Slowing traffic through the battlefield is necessary to provide a better experience for park visitors.
- This concept won't be practical if the road continues to carry the bulk of commuter traffic.
- NM 50 should be retained as a route of access for park visitors and residents inside and near the park regardless of whatever options are pursued.
- Traffic calming would improve safety, and gateway monuments or signs would help create more identity for the park.
- This concept would not meet the basic goals to enhance access to the park, expand interpretive opportunities, and improve safety or all travelers of the highway.



***Workshop Series #2 participants***

Concept B – Slight Shift of Highway to the South in the Vicinity of Pigeons Ranch Building

- The existing wells, trees, and other historic and archeological features would be impacted with this alignment.
- Glorieta Creek and associated wetlands could be impacted.
- This concept would not improve safety or commuting efficiency overall and would not fully achieve the goals for enhancing access to the park.

Concept C – No Build: Manage by Education, Enforcement, and Encouraged Use of NM 63 as the Commuter Route to I-25

- Many questioned the potential effectiveness of this concept.
- This approach would only provide minimal benefit, but would make better sense if combined with one of the other concepts presented later.
- This concept does nothing to enhance preservation, access, and interpretation to the park and battlefield.

Concept D – No Action: No Improvements and No Management Activities

- Most workshop participants agreed that doing nothing is not an option. Many said that something needs to be done to address the area’s transportation needs and improve safety. Many participants also supported the need for actions to enhance preservation, access, and interpretation at the national park unit.
- Although most workshop participants recognized the need to move forward with actions and improvements, a few other attendees did favor the concept of “doing nothing” because they were concerned about changing the character of the area. Some stated concerns related to the implications of additional population growth and development in the area that might occur if new transportation improvements and facilities (such as an interchange) were developed.

**Set Two: Realignment/Bypass Concepts**

These concepts include various approaches to realigning NM 50 in the vicinity of the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park. As such, some of these concepts could be categorized as “bypasses” involving the realignment of NM 50 around the core of the park. Set Two is shown at the end of this report in Figure 2.

Set Two Overall

Although workshop participants were generally intrigued by some of the possible realignment concepts shown, many raised concerns about potential impacts to private property, as well as natural and cultural resources. Workshop participants felt that some of these concepts showed more promise than others. Several workshop participants stated that it would be important to upgrade the Glorieta Interchange to improve its function and efficiency in conjunction with any of these



**Workshop Series #2 open house**



**Workshop Series #2 participants**

realignment concepts. Many workshop participants also stated that some of the concepts shown would not be viable without development of a new linkage to NM 50. The linkage was seen as essential in addressing the commuter traffic needs of the area and without this linkage, motorists would continue to use the old route through the park (see more information below under discussions related to individual comments).

*Concept E – Realignment in the Vicinity of the North Boundary of Glorieta Unit*

- Of all the realignment concepts, this one was viewed as the one least likely to impact private property since the new alignment could straddle the national park and forest service public lands and be routed to avoid private properties. Private property owners who participated in the public workshop series requested slight adjustments of the conceptual alignment to avoid their parcels.
- There was a lot of concern that design and construction of this concept would not be cost effective or practical given the steep terrain in the area shown.
- Many stated concerns about the amount of earthwork and impacts to natural resources, vegetation, archeological resources, and aesthetics that might result from development of this concept.



**Workshop Series #2 open house**

*Concept F – Shift of Highway Alignment to the South at the Base of the Hill*

- Many saw potential in this concept because it would affect fewer private properties than some of the other realignment concepts; however, property owners in the vicinity of this concept were adamantly opposed.
- Several participants questioned whether this realignment would actually meet the goals for preserving the battlefield and historic resources in the park since it would involve adding another route through the core of the park unit.
- Glorieta Creek and associated wetlands could be impacted.



**Pigeons Ranch and Highway 50**

*Concepts G-1 and G-2 - Extend Old Denver Highway and Connect to West End of NM 50*

The concepts include two approaches for connecting back into NM 50 west of the park unit.

- Many participants stated concerns that the use of the Old Denver Highway in this vicinity would disrupt neighborhood character and quality of life in the La Joya area.
- Current residents who front along and have access from the Old Denver Highway were concerned about how this alignment might affect their property and homes.
- Participants stated that there would be a need for a link between the Old Denver Highway and NM 50, west of Pecos for this approach to work effectively.

- Some saw the use of existing right-of-way as resourceful.
- Some emphasized the need for upgrades to the entire length of the old highway in order for it to function effectively as the area's primary commuter route.

Concept H – Flyover of I-25 and Connection to South of Glorieta Interchange

- Participants commented that this approach would need a link to NM 50 west of Pecos for it to function effectively in conveying commuter traffic.
- Many stated concerns about the potential impact to community character and the environment resulting from construction of an elevated structure in this vicinity.
- Some Glorieta area residents expressed interest in this concept because they felt it might improve their access to I-25.
- This concept would require significant private property acquisition as well as coordination with the railroad.

Concepts I-1 and I-2 – Realign NM 50 to Ascend Ridge and Join New Frontage Road (Concept G)

- There were extensive concerns about the potential impacts to the La Joya area that might result from development of either of these realignments, including:
  - significant impacts and disruptions to private properties in the area,
  - impacts to the neighborhood and quality of life for the La Joya community,
  - impacts to historic and archeological resources (such as Arrowhead Ruins), and
  - degraded aesthetics resulting from building a route to the top of the ridge.
- This concept would involve crossing Glorieta Creek and could create impacts to aquatic habitats.
- This concept would need to be developed in conjunction with Concept G, requiring improvement of the frontage road along I-25 and upgrading of the Glorieta interchange.

Concept J – Improve and Widen Existing Underpass

- Participants stated that this concept could negatively impact environmental resources in the vicinity, and there are significant drainage issues at the current underpass.
- Some stated that this concept might provide better access to residents south of I-25.
- Participants commented that this approach would need a link to NM 50 west of Pecos for it to function effectively in conveying commuter traffic.
- It was also acknowledged that this concept would need to tie in with



**Workshop Series #2 general public meeting**



**Workshop Series #2 Open House**

the Concept H component of a frontage road on the south side of the interstate and a connection to an upgraded Glorieta interchange (requiring private property acquisition and coordination with the railroad).

### ***Set Three: New Route Possibilities – Between NM 50/Pecos and Interstate 25***

These concepts include various possibilities for creating a new route between the Pecos vicinity and Interstate 25. Such a route would provide a new conduit for commuter traffic. Although the current route of NM 50 through the Glorieta Unit would continue to provide access to park visitors and local residents, it could be downgraded to a local access road. Each of these concepts would involve construction of a new interchange with the interstate. Set Three is shown at the end of this report in Figure 3.

#### ***Set Three Overall***

Many workshop participants were supportive of the potential to create a new link between the Pecos vicinity and Interstate 25. The majority felt that an approach like this would serve long-term regional transportation needs and solve many problems related to access and traffic.

Although many expressed interest in concepts that would involve creating a new access route and interchange with I-25, several workshop participants were concerned about the implications of additional population growth and development in the area that might occur if new transportation improvements and facilities (such as an interchange) were developed. Concerns related to the potential cost of a new interchange were also stated. Several workshop participants strongly stated that if a new route is pursued in any of the areas shown, avoiding impacts to private residences will be extremely important.

#### ***Concept K – Centrally Located Linkage Between NM 50 and Interstate 25 and New Interchange***

- Of the three “new route” concepts presented, Concept K was preferred by most workshop participants. Many felt that its central location would best serve the area’s transportation needs by providing more direct access to the interstate and improving emergency response times. (A new fire station is being proposed in the area.)
- Many stated concerns about the potential impacts to private properties in this vicinity. It appears that this route could be developed with less impact to private properties than some of the other concepts, but further research and analysis is needed to confirm.
- Many thought this was the best concept in combination with Concepts A and C.

### Concept L – Pecos Western Outskirts Linkage between NM 50 and I-25 and New Interchange

- Of the three “new route” concepts presented, Concept L was the second-most preferred by workshop participants. There were concerns that this alignment is not as centrally located as Concept K and thus, too far out of the way for La Joya and La Cueva residents.
- Many stated concerns about potential impacts to private property; but some said this could be mitigated by keeping the alignment inside the boundary of the national park.
- There were concerns about potential impacts to natural resources and archaeological sites that might exist in the area – crossings of river tributaries and the existence of significant archaeological sites inside the park were commonly mentioned concerns.
- Several were concerned about costs associated with this concept since it would involve the most construction (of a new highway route for the longest distance and a new interchange).

### Concept M – Create New Access Point to NM 63 and New Half Interchange Southeast of Pecos

- The least favored of the “new route” concepts, Concept M was generally thought to be too far to the east to effectively serve the region’s transportation needs. The area’s population center and most intensive growth is to the west of this vicinity, so it was felt that commuters and travelers would not “back track” to use this new access route.
- One group of participants suggested a new concept, “N” which shifted the potential connection between NM 63 and I-25 further to the northwest, closer to Pecos, because it was felt that more people from Pecos would use this route if it were a more direct connection to the interstate.
- Some made the point that the recent improvements on Highway 63 were well-suited for the use of this route to carry more commuter traffic; however others were concerned about carrying higher traffic volumes and speeds through the main unit of Pecos National Historical Park – shifting the problem from the Glorieta Unit to this area.
- Several commented that the new interchange location would be too close to the existing Rowe interchange, and a new centrally located interchange (between Rowe and Glorieta) would better serve the region.

### **Notifying Stakeholders**

The same stakeholders identified in Workshop Series #1, were contacted to participate in this workshop series. Stakeholder representatives were contacted by phone, email, and mailed letters during May 2005. The meeting schedule was finalized in early June. A representative from each stakeholder group was contacted and given a project newsletter, invited to attend a workshop with other organizations of like-interest, and

welcomed to invite up to five people from his/her organization. Agencies/ organizations that were unable to attend focus-group sessions were invited to attend one of the public meetings. A schedule of all the agencies/groups/organizations that participated in the daytime focus-group sessions during Workshop Series #2 is provided in Appendix G

### **Notifying the Public**

The general public was given advance notification for the public meetings. A newspaper article was written about the project. A project newsletter was mailed to approximately 2,200 residents and property owners in Pecos, Glorieta, Rowe, and Torrero.

Additional tools used to inform the public about the Highway 50 Transportation Study project and Workshop Series #2 included website postings on the Pecos National Historical Park website and New Mexico Department of Transportation website, and electronic variable message signs. These tools were successful in informing the public about the project and meetings.

## Workshop Series #3 Overview

### Workshop Series #3 Process

The third stage of outreach involved a three-day interactive public workshop series held October 20 – 22, 2005. The process included four focus-group workshops, an evening public meeting, and two daytime public meetings on Saturday. The Thursday evening and Saturday public meetings were held at the Pecos Middle School. The daytime meetings were held at the Village of Pecos Administrative Center.

The purpose of Workshop Series #3 was to review comments and ideas from Workshop Series #2, present the refined alternatives, and obtain public comments on the five alternatives that moved forward. Each meeting included a presentation on the overall goals and objectives of the entire study, a summary of “what we heard” during Workshop Series #2, an introduction of the five alternatives, and an explanation of the evaluation matrix. After the presentation, the project team gave a brief description of each of the five alternatives, answered questions, and wrote down comments for each alternative. Meeting participants completed an evaluation matrix for each alternative. A summary of comments is provided below.

### Summary of Workshop Series #3 Results

These five alternatives for addressing the area’s transportation needs and problems were presented at the public meetings:

1. Manage by Education, Enforcement, & Encouraged Use of NM 63 - No Improvements and No Management Actions
2. Gateways, Traffic Calming, and Pull offs on Existing Alignment - Slight Shift of Highway to South
3. Extend Old Denver Highway; Connect to West End of NM 50; and Realign to Ascend Ridge and Join New Frontage Road
4. Extend Old Denver Highway and Connect to West End of NM 50 to Create a Centrally Located Linkage Between NM 50 and I-25
5. Centrally Located Linkage Between NM 50 and I-25 - New Interchange

Each alternative is described in more detail below, followed by summaries of public comments received at the workshop series related to each alternative. It was explained that the team was seeking specific comments on each of the alternatives related to eight evaluation criteria. The evaluation criteria was developed based on input received in earlier public meetings. Below are general comments on each of the alternatives as well as a summary of comments on the evaluation matrix. Maps showing the five alternatives are located in Appendix I, and a blank evaluation matrix/ comment form is provided as Appendix J.



*Workshop Series #3 participants*

The eight evaluation criteria are:

- *Does it meet the project purpose and need?* – The purpose of the project is to preserve and provide public access to the Civil War era Glorieta Battlefield and Pigeons Ranch, while also improving the safety of the roadway for local residents, park visitors, and the community of Pecos.
- Police, fire, and emergency access – How does the alternative impact these services?
- Preservation of archaeological, cultural, and historical resources – How does the alternative impact these resources?
- Protection of aquatic and biological resources – Does the alternative protect these resources?
- Neighborhood cohesion and community values – Does the alternative retain neighborhood cohesion?
- Right-of-way considerations – How does the alternative impact right-of-way? Will new right-of-way be required?
- Interpretive opportunities for the Glorieta Unit – Does the alternative provide for interpretive opportunities at the Glorieta Unit?
- Relative cost considerations – Is the potential cost of the alternative a factor – how does it impact your evaluation?

For each criterion in the evaluation matrix, meeting participants responded with:

- Positive – alternative is much better than current conditions
- Somewhat Positive – alternative creates some improvement to current conditions
- Neutral – alternative neither improves nor worsens current conditions
- Somewhat Negative – alternative is worse than current conditions
- Negative – alternative is much worse than current conditions

Also, it was explained that under any of the alternatives presented, NM 50 through the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park would remain open for access to the park and private properties along that stretch of the highway. For example, if an alternative alignment for NM 50 in the vicinity of the park or a new linkage between NM 50 and Interstate 25 were developed, the function of NM 50 through the park would change, and thus, the route could be “downgraded” from a highway to a local access road serving park visitors and residents who live inside the park boundary.

### **Alternative I: Manage by Education, Enforcement, & Encouraged Use of NM 63 - No Improvements and No Management Actions**

This alternative includes “no build” approach to resolving transportation issues, such as increased enforcement and education. This alternative

includes no physical improvements to NM 50. This “no build” alternative is required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and allows the opportunity to evaluate the potential results and impacts that might occur if no actions are taken.

### **Comments**

- Not much interest in Alt. I
- Combine Alt. I and 2 without a realignment
- Accomplishes nothing
- Not realistic
- Alt. I should not be discarded – slowing down traffic and enforcement of speed limits would accomplish a lot
- Alt. I does not seem like a viable long term solution

### **Evaluation Matrix**

*Does it meet the project purpose and need?* - The majority of meeting participants did not think Alternative I met the purpose and need of the project.

*Police, fire, and emergency access* - The majority of meeting participants thought Alternative I would have negative impacts on emergency access.

*Preservation of archaeological, cultural, and historical resources* - The majority of meeting participants felt that preservation would be worse under Alternative I than under current conditions.

*Protection of aquatic and biological resources* – Most meeting participants were neutral and thought conditions would not change.

*Neighborhood cohesion and community values* – Meeting participants were divided on whether or not this alternative would impact neighborhood cohesion. Some thought it was positive while others thought it was negative or somewhat negative.

*Right-of-way considerations* – The majority of meeting participants did not think this alternative would impact right-of-way (no new right-of-way required).

*Interpretive opportunities for the Glorieta Unit* - The majority of meeting participants thought Alternative I would have a negative impact on interpretive opportunities.

*Relative cost considerations* - The majority of meeting participants thought Alternative I was positive in relation to cost.

### **Overall Comments**

There was not much interest in Alternative I as a stand alone alternative. Several people would like to see Alternative I combined with one of the other alternatives. Meeting attendees felt that Alternative I would do nothing for the park or to improve safety or address future traffic problems.



***Workshop Series #3 participants***

### **Alternative 2: Gateways, Traffic Calming, and Pull offs on Existing Alignment - Slight Shift of Highway to South**

This alternative includes “minimalist” approaches to resolving transportation issues, such as a National Park gateway sign and “low build” improvements such as traffic calming and speed reduction programs. This alternative would also include a slight shift of the existing alignment near the Pigeons Ranch adobe structure. It should be noted that “low build” approaches do not always equate to “low cost.” Although upfront capital costs may be lower, additional staffing, maintenance, and operational costs might be needed, resulting in increased long-term costs.

#### **Comments**

- It would impact well, juniper trees, pond, “historic” apple trees, etc.
- Combine Alt. 1 and 2 without a realignment
- Would want to do away with this one as a measure to protect the building, safety issue; needed to preserve the old building
- Does not make any sense – this is a “patch,” slower speeds will not address issues
- Destroys wetlands to preserve Pigeons Ranch House – otherwise worthless!
- Alt. 2 seems like the best low-impact solution

#### **Evaluation Matrix**

*Does it meet the project purpose and need?* - The majority of meeting participants did not think Alternative 2 met the purpose and need of the project.

*Police, fire, and emergency access* - The majority of meeting participants were neutral on this alternative’s impact on emergency access.

*Preservation of archaeological, cultural, and historical resources* - The majority of meeting participants thought preservation would be worse under Alternative 2 than under current conditions.

*Protection of aquatic and biological resources* – Most meeting participants thought protection of these resources would be worse under this alternative.

*Neighborhood cohesion and community values* – Most meetings participants thought this alternative would have a positive impact on neighborhood cohesion.

*Right-of-way considerations* – The majority of meeting participants did not think this alternative would impact right-of-way (no new right-of-way required).

*Interpretive opportunities for the Glorieta Unit* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have negative impacts on interpretive opportunities.



***Pigeons Ranch and Highway 50***

*Relative cost considerations* - The majority of meeting participants thought Alternative 2 was positive in relation to cost.

### **Overall Comments**

There was not much support for Alternative 2 as a means to address existing and future issues related to NM 50. Public meeting participants thought it could be combined with one of the other alternatives without shifting the roadway alignment to the south. The gateway and traffic calming seemed favorable but not as stand alone solutions.

### **Alternative 3: Extend Old Denver Highway; Connect to West End of NM 50; and Realign to Ascend Ridge and Join New Frontage Road**

This alternative involves realigning NM 50, connecting to and then following the Old Denver Highway, south of the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park. The route would ascend the ridge in the eastern portion of the park unit and connect back up to NM 50 near La Joya Road.

### **Comments**

- Better than others, would like to take out the junk yard
- Ridge has significant archaeological importance, need to consider eliminating any impact to ridge
- Tunnel idea is ridiculous
- Geared towards park, disregards people living in the community – unacceptable to disrupt people instead of park
- Only an expensive “patch” simply funneling the mass of traffic to another neighborhood!
- Dangerous curves and grades – bad sight lines
- High impact to too many residents
- Poorer traffic flow than existing alignment
- May not limit traffic and people may still use “old” hwy 50
- This leaves the community status quo
- Windmill Hill is a major part of battle field, this alternative would cause a disruption
- Please remember as you make decisions that, ultimately, you’re messing with people’s lives. There are reasons (of a wide variety) for people to live in the potentially impacted areas. If people want interchanges, they should go live somewhere else, where they already exist. All things considered, Alternative 3 seems to be the least of the evils.

### **Evaluation**

*Does it meet the project purpose and need?* - Meeting participants were split on whether Alternative 3 would meet the purpose and need. Some thought it would, while others thought it would not.



*Workshop Series #2 public meeting*

*Police, fire, and emergency access* - The majority of meeting participants thought Alternative 3 would have a somewhat positive or positive impact on emergency access.

*Preservation of archaeological, cultural, and historical resources* - The majority of meeting participants thought preservation would be worse under this alternative than under current conditions.

*Protection of aquatic and biological resources* – Most meeting participants thought protection of these resources would be worse under this alternative.

*Neighborhood cohesion and community values* – Most meetings participants thought this alternative would have a negative impact on neighborhood cohesion.

*Right-of-way considerations* – The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have negative impacts related to right-of-way (more right-of-way needed).

*Interpretive opportunities for the Glorieta Unit* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have somewhat positive impacts on interpretive opportunities.

*Relative cost considerations* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would be negative in relation to cost.

### **Overall Comments**

Public meeting participants were marginally supportive of this alternative. Some people thought this alternative would have the least disruption to private properties but the most disruption to cultural and archaeological resources. Participants thought this would be an expensive alternative and only a minimal solution to the problems.

### **Alternative 4: Extend Old Denver Highway and Connect to West End of NM 50 to Create a Centrally Located Linkage Between NM 50 and I-25**

This alternative also includes realigning NM 50. NM 50 would connect to and follow the Old Denver Highway south of the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park. It would follow Old Denver Highway eastward and make a new connection to NM 50 approximately one mile east of the park unit.

### **Comments**

- Almost works, but simply reroutes the same high volume of traffic off hwy 50 on to Old Denver Rd, thereby ruining two neighborhoods
- Impacts too many homes
- May not limit traffic and people may still use “old” hwy 50
- This leaves the community status quo
- A bypass will not solve traffic problems
- A bypass is not good for the local community, a lot of people live

along Old Denver Hwy

- Is ok but would put far too much traffic on west end of Old Denver Hwy
- Geared towards park, disregards people living in the community – unacceptable to disrupt people instead of park
- Alt. 4 won't work because the old interchange is too inadequate for traffic

### **Evaluation**

*Does it meet the project purpose and need?* - Meeting participants thought this alternative would meet the project purpose and need.

*Police, fire, and emergency access* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have somewhat negative or negative impacts on emergency access.

*Preservation of archaeological, cultural, and historical resources* – Meeting participants were split on whether or not this alternative would have negative or positive impacts on these resources.

*Protection of aquatic and biological resources* – Most meeting participants thought protection of these resources would be worse under this alternative.

*Neighborhood cohesion and community values* – Most meetings participants thought this alternative would have negative impacts on neighborhood cohesion.

*Right-of-way considerations* – The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have negative impacts related to right-of-way (more right-of-way needed).

*Interpretive opportunities for the Glorieta Unit* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have somewhat positive impacts on interpretive opportunities.

*Relative cost considerations* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would be negative in relation to cost.

### **Overall Comments**

Most meeting participants felt Alternative 4 would not adequately address the general traffic and safety problems facing the region. People also thought this alternative would impact the local community and property owners.

### **Alternative 5: Centrally Located Linkage Between NM 50 and I-25 - New Interchange**

This alternative includes creating a new route west of the Pecos vicinity, between the current NM 50 and Interstate 25. Such a route would provide a new conduit for commuter traffic. Although the current route of NM 50 through the Glorieta Unit would continue to provide access to park visitors and local residents, it could be downgraded to a local access

road. This alternative involves construction of a new centrally located interchange for access to I-25.

### **Comments**

- Best for commuters/community, most direct, best preservation, long-term solution.
- The only one that makes sense.
- Accommodates growth including south along with parks needs, but costs more money.
- Cultural resources in the area for this alternative need to be considered
- Will preserve park unit – “A diamond in the rough”
- Keep alignment to NW corner
- Makes most sense, but what about the cost?
- New interchange much better than other ideas
- Displacing 12 -15 families possibly more depending on alignment
- Most expensive to build interchange
- Makes sense to correct problem – better access from population area to highway
- Best of choices, only one that works for just about everyone, would like to see something clearer on the map than a couple of hundred shaded acres.
- If this is preferred – want to keep “old” hwy 50 as is, no gravel
- Would give Pecos an economic opportunity
- Need to consider topography
- Roadway will still be congested – not solving traffic problem
- Geared towards park, disregards people living in the community – unacceptable to disrupt people instead of park
- Preferred as long-term solution
- Does this take away potential farm land?
- Preferred because it is the only interchange option – existing interchange was not designed for existing traffic
- Interchange is too expensive for achieving goals of the park – too close to existing interchange
- Prefer – need of many outweigh the need of 4 houses
- Not preferred 4 houses would be impacted
- Disturbs the least amount and preserves park, but concerned about displaced people
- Interchange will allow area to accommodate future growth
- If the correct route is chosen for Alternative 5 – It could be accomplished with minimal impact on personal property – (unless we continue to wait until 10 more houses are put in) and would solve a multitude of problems
- Alternative 5 is the best over all alternatives. It will help to isolate the

Glorieta Unit of the Park and help with the traffic problems and help to open the road systems to the property to the area south of the BNSF Railroad.

- I would hope that, depending on logistical considerations, a new road would be located as far west (closest to the battlefield park) as possible. I think this alternative 5 would provide great benefits to the area. Safety and accessibility for emergency help is important.
- Alternative 5 seems to make the most sense in terms of long range usage. You might as well plan on a certain amount of growth now and in the future. It will be cheaper to plan and build for it now. Growth is going to happen – let's be ready!
- If costs permit, alternative 5 is the best. Should be combined with traffic calming (lower speeds) and improved signage through the battlefield.

### **Evaluation**

*Does it meet the project purpose and need?* - Meeting participants thought this alternative would meet the project purpose and need.

*Police, fire, and emergency access* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have positive impacts on emergency access.

*Preservation of archeological, cultural, and historical resources* – The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have positive impacts on these resources.

*Protection of aquatic and biological resources* – The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have positive impacts on these resources.

*Neighborhood cohesion and community values* – Most meetings participants thought this alternative would have positive impacts on neighborhood cohesion.

*Right-of-way considerations* – The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have positive impacts related right-of-way (right-of-way would be easier to acquire).

*Interpretive opportunities for the Glorieta Unit* - The majority of meeting participants thought this alternative would have positive impacts on interpretive opportunities.

*Relative cost considerations* – Meeting participants were split on whether or not cost would be a negative or positive consideration.

### **Overall Comments**

The majority of public meeting participants felt Alternative 5 was the best fit for the purpose and need of the project, minimizing disruption to the surrounding community. People felt that this alternative would best accommodate future growth in the Pecos region and would address the inadequacy of the existing Glorieta interchange.

### General Comments

- Would like to use current Hwy 50 route through the park as a bike trail
- Hwy 50 is Santa Fe Trail, needs to be considered in this process
- Ranching is a major industry that needs to be considered, is tourism and bedroom communities?
- How will increased development affect the availability of water?
- Noise is an issue that has not been discussed
- Need to look at speed reduction – impact to Pigeons Ranch
- Truck access should be limited on NM 50
- Speed up the process – why are you taking so long to do a study?
- Interchange would provide a more direct route to Pecos NHP, possibly
- Why not put new roadway on the Park's property?
- Need an alternative that would move project along even if archeological site was found
- Growth and congestion will continue – need to improve road
- Park is an important resource to the community
- Prefer previous option M – don't like any of the alternatives
- Leave the road where it is but bypass well and improve/widen and put shoulders on it
- Tunnel makes least amount of sense – highest cost?
- NMDOT needs to formally declare NM 50 in the battlefield as unsafe
- Keep old Hwy 50 open!
- Treat old Hwy 50 as scenic drive

### Notifying Stakeholders

The same stakeholders identified to participate in Workshop Series #1 and #2, were contacted to participate in this workshop series. Stakeholder representatives were contacted by phone, email, and mailed letters during early October 2005. The meeting schedule was finalized in mid-October. A representative from each stakeholder group was contacted and given a project newsletter, invited to attend a workshop with other organizations of like-interest, and welcomed to invite up to five people from his/her organization. Agencies/organizations that were unable to attend focus-group sessions were invited to attend one of the public meetings.

### Notifying the Public

The general public was given advance notification for the public meetings. A newspaper article was written about the project. A project newsletter was mailed to approximately 2,200 residents and property owners in Pecos, Glorieta, Rowe, and Torrero.

Additional tools used to inform the public about the Highway 50

Transportation Study project and Workshop Series #3 included website postings on the Pecos National Historical Park website and New Mexico Department of Transportation website, and electronic variable message signs. These tools were successful in informing the public about the project and meetings.

## Other Planned Outreach Activities/Next Steps

A final report will be produced and will outline the entire study process including existing conditions analysis, visioning process, initial concepts, refined alternatives, and public involvement activities. The five alternatives will now move forward into further environmental analysis. Public involvement meetings will continue to be held throughout the project.