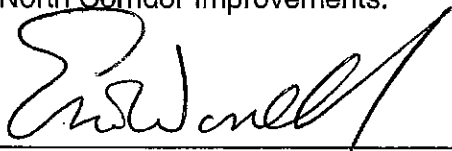


**Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
US 491 North Corridor Improvements
Project FLH-666-1(49)17, CN 2357**

The FHWA has determined that the selected build alternative for the US 491 North Corridor Improvements, in San Juan County, New Mexico, will have no significant impact on the human or natural environment. The project will improve safety conditions, meet existing and future travel demands, enhance mobility and access, and establish a link that supports the regional transportation system and long range planning goals. The improvements will serve the traditional, economic, and resource interests of the local communities as well as support economic development and anticipated growth in the area. The project has been developed in close consultation with the Navajo Nation. Extensive public involvement has been performed at the adjacent chapter houses. Public comments and concerns have been sought and addressed to the extent practical during planning and preliminary design. The scope of the selected alternative is to develop US 491 as a 4-lane facility in place of the present 2-lane facility from MP 46.0 to MP 84.7. The construction will include the following major elements:

- Two new driving lanes will be constructed adjacent to the existing 2-lane facility
- The typical section of the new lanes will include, at a minimum: two 11.5-foot driving lanes; a 4-foot inside shoulder; and a 6-foot outside shoulder
- Twelve-foot shoulders will be constructed at approaches to turn-outs that are used as school bus stops
- A variable width median will be constructed for the entire length of the project; the median will vary from 12 to 60 feet wide, with most of the corridor having a 46-foot width median; median openings will be placed at major turnouts and other appropriate locations
- Intersection improvements will be constructed at four major intersections at MP 47.3, MP 56.0, MP 60.5, and MP 67.0, including deceleration and storage lanes and lighting
- Drainage structures will be extended, modified, or replaced, as necessary
- The improvements will be constructed within the existing right-of-way except for various temporary construction permits and approximately 0.5 acres of new right-of-way easement at MP 72.8 – 73.0.
- The 4-lane facility will have a 70 mph design speed and a 65 mph posted speed limit

This FONSI is based on the Environmental Assessment (EA), Project Input Synopsis and FONSI Request prepared by the NMDOT, which have been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the EA. The EA, Input Synopsis, and FONSI Request provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required. Issuance of this FONSI provides final environmental authorization for final design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of the selected build alternative for the US 491 North Corridor Improvements.



FOR _____
FHWA New Mexico Division Administrator

6/26/06
Date