



Briefing Materials on the Ports-to-Plains Corridor



For New Mexico Legislative Finance Committee

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Thank You

Before this briefing is reviewed, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance and the communities in northern New Mexico would like to thank New Mexico for its ongoing commitment to improve the U.S. 87/64 Corridor to a four-lane divided highway and for its support of the legislation for Future Interstate Designation and Planning Funding for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor.

The Ports-to-Plains Alliance

Ports-to-Plains is a grassroots alliance of over 200 communities and businesses, including Alliance partners Heartland Expressway and Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, whose mission is to advocate for a robust international transportation infrastructure to promote economic security and prosperity throughout North America's energy and agricultural heartland including Mexico to Canada. Additional information on the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is available at <http://www.portstoplains.com/>.

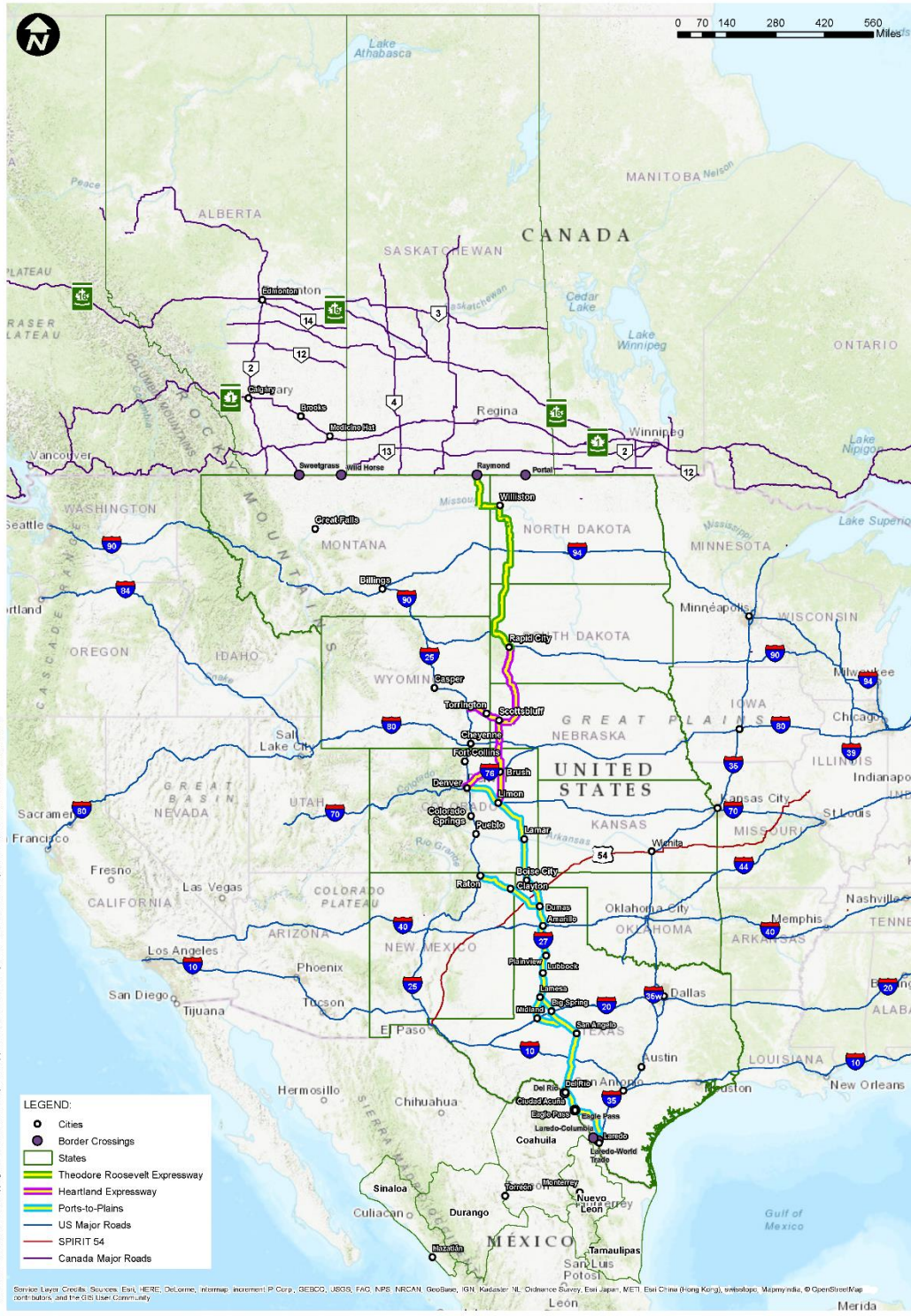
Congressional Designation as a High Priority Corridor on the NHS

In 1998, the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor was granted its federal designation in the TEA-21 reauthorization bill as a high priority corridor from Laredo, Texas to Denver, Colorado via U.S. Interstate 27. In the 2001 appropriations bill, the route was approved through Texas, and then in 2002 the remainder of the route through New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Colorado was approved and signed by President George W. Bush in an independent bill.



Ports-to-Plains Alliance Corridor

The Ports-to-Plains Alliance Corridor consists of the High Priority Corridors of Ports-to-Plains, Heartland Expressway and Theodore Roosevelt Expressway that connect nine-states and extends from Mexico to Canada.



**PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE
CORRIDOR MAP**

Issuing Office: Lubbock
Project No: 2884.18
Date: 04/09/2018
Sheet: 1 of 1



DEAL STRUCK ON PORTS-TO-PLAINS ROUTE!!

Lubbock Avalanche Journal
Published: Tuesday, July 31, 2001
ROBERT GEHRKE
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON {AP}— Lawmakers from Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas reached agreement Monday on a route designed to handle truck traffic between Laredo, Texas, and Denver.

The deal includes the alignment along U.S. 287 preferred by Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas but adds a spur route, arguing it would cost \$175 million less to upgrade U.S. 87 for the increased truck traffic than the U.S. 287 route.

Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., had been sponsoring legislation to have the New Mexico path declared the official route, arguing it would cost \$175 million less to upgrade U.S. 87 for the increased truck traffic than the U.S. 287 route.

Sen. Pete Domenici, R-N.M., said the measure "bodes well not only for the future of northeast New Mexico but also for the economical and efficient movement of goods and people." He said Raton and Clayton had successfully lobbied for the measure.

Bingaman said he was "very pleased that New Mexico was able to make such a strong case for the (Raton) route. When it comes to travel efficiency and feasibility, all evidence points to the fact that the New Mexico route certainly fits the bill."

Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., who opposed Bingaman's legislation, praised the compromise. "This important agreement will now allow us to proceed in a united front to develop this important trade route," he said.

The designation of an official Ports-to-Plains corridor is expected to make it easier to secure government funding to improve the highways, said Bingaman spokeswoman Jude McCartin.

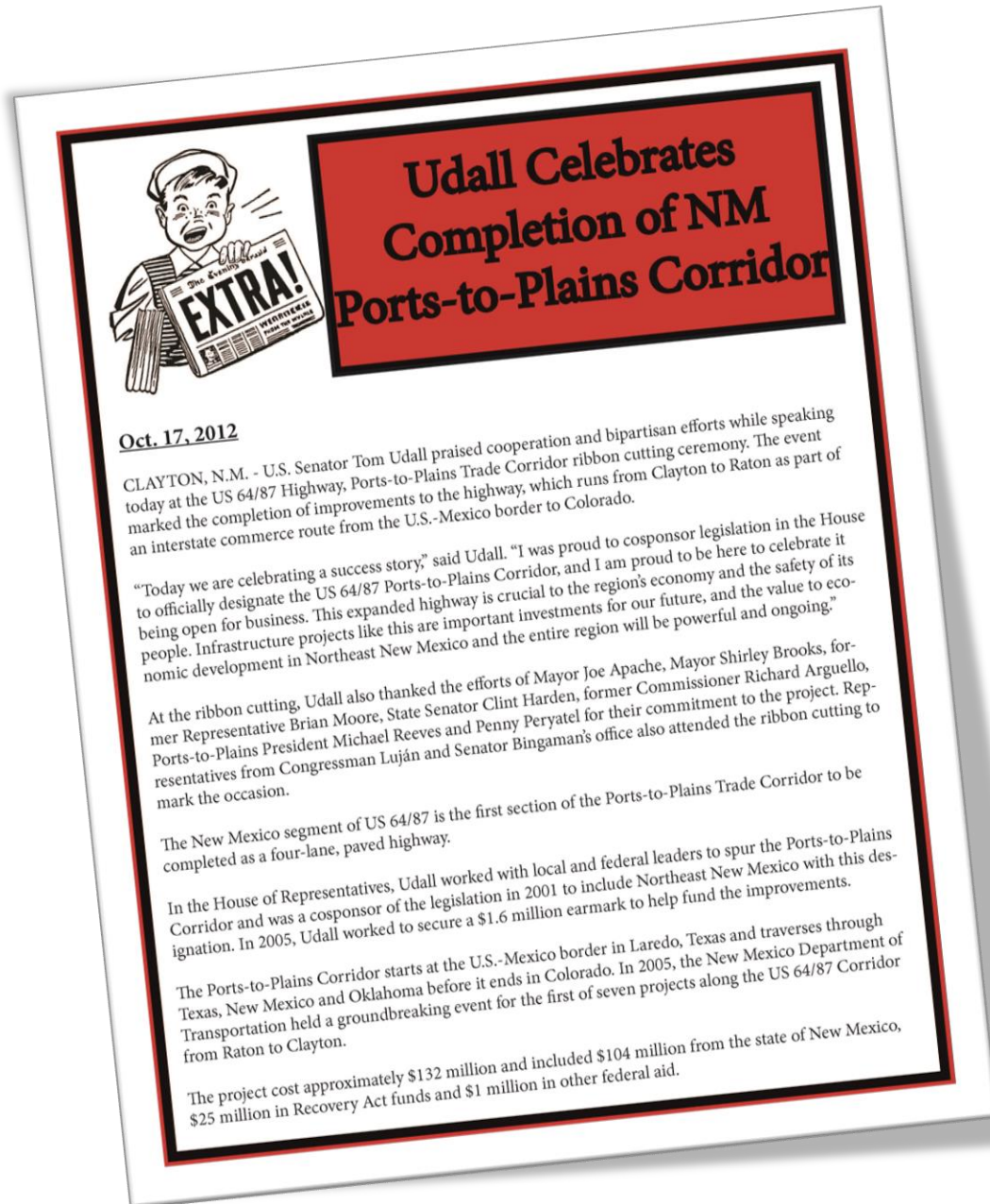
Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M., said he expects the inclusion of the New Mexico spur to boost that region's economy. "Citizens in the northeast corner of New Mexico have fought hard for this route," Udall said. "Today's announcement by the Federal Highway Administration is a great compromise that will benefit all four states."

The goal of Ports-to-Plains is to create a four-lane highway corridor for truck traffic between Laredo and Denver. Congress identified the program as a high priority after the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement.



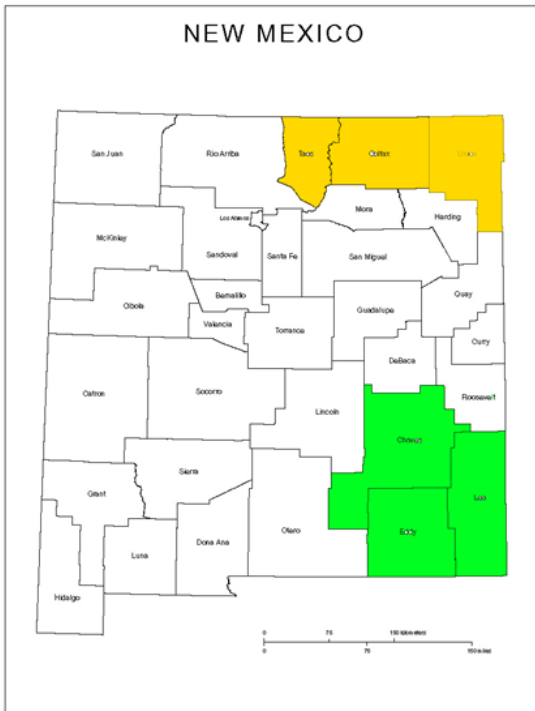
Status of the New Mexico Corridor

New Mexico was the first state in the nine state Ports-to-Plains Region to complete the corridor as a four-lane divided highway. Over \$138 million was invested, including a significant amount from Governor Richardson's Investment Partnership (GRIP) bonds issued by the New Mexico Finance Authority.



Ports-to-Plains Corridor Economic Impact Study

Ports-to-Plains Corridor Economic Impact Study prepared for the Eastern Plains Council of Governments and New Mexico Department of Transportation by Consensus Planning, Inc. was published in June, 2021.



Agriculture, tourism and the oil and gas industry are the major industries in New Mexico. The map to the left highlights in yellow the counties impacted by the P2P corridor. Included in New Mexico is the area benefited from the P2P Corridor highlighted in green. This shows the area of the Permian Basin, which connects to the P2P Corridor in Texas at Midland, TX.

The Ports-to-Plains Economic Impact Study¹ examines a segment of the international Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor (US Highway 87/64) in northeast New Mexico and the potential effects on the local communities (**Union County, Town of Clayton, Colfax County, City of Raton**) of designating the route as an Interstate Highway (IH).

Direct impacts from **agriculture**² were described as 1) the IH designation creates an opportunity to enhance agricultural marketing efforts for northeast New

Mexico, both regionally and to broader markets; 2) the ability to move products locally may be affected depending on decisions about highway access and local infrastructure changes; and 3) a reduction of travel times due to higher IH speed limits and other benefits make driving the route quicker and easier to move agricultural products. **Most of the agricultural industry activity in the area occurs based on long standing relationships with US Highway 87/64 users who are already heavily reliant on the route.**

Cattle production is a major industry in the region and along the entire Port-to-Plains Corridor. Twelve of the nation's largest feedlots are served by the P2P corridor. Improvement to IH standards would in turn improve the market access to feedlots and processing facilities in adjacent states, but also could encourage expansion of local feedlots and attract new meat packing plants to the region like the **High Plains Processing** project on Interstate 25 in Las Vegas, New Mexico. With the support from a New Mexico Economic Development Department Local Economic Development Act grant, the Colorado

¹ **Ports-to-Plains Economic Impact Study: Northeast New Mexico**, Eastern Plains Council of Governments and New Mexico Department of Transportation, June 2021, https://www.epcog.org/files/ugd/269de5_2cc9ec0587d0469bae6aa57a1e56504c.pdf

² Ibid

Cattle Company announced a \$1.6 million investment in April 2020 to refurbish a vacant facility for meat processing and will employ 20 employees. **Proximity to the IH was specifically cited for the location decision.**

The **tourism industry** would benefit from improved access and increased tourism traffic. Based on the traffic projections with an IH designation, the number of visitors is expected to increase to destinations such as Capulin Volcano National Monument, Clayton Lake State Park and Dinosaur Trackways, and Sugarite Canyon State Park. **In 2019, there were 5.7 million visitors to northeast New Mexico; the number is projected to grow to 6.9 million by 2040, a 22% increase.** The future IH would also benefit the movement of tourists to Taos and other northern areas of New Mexico.

In terms of **energy**³, another area of New Mexico that will benefit from developing the future interstate in New Mexico and Texas is within the Permian Basin. Hobbs, NM in Lea County is 95 miles from Midland, TX. Midland is on the route for future interstate designation in Texas. **The counties of Chaves, Eddy, Lea, and Roosevelt produced 447.3 million bbls of oil and 1,722.5 million mcf of natural gas in 2021. This represents over 98 percent of oil production and over 76 percent of natural gas production in New Mexico.**

The Ports-to-Plains Economic Impact Study showed the improvement or expansion of the corridor will create temporary and cumulative/permanent employment opportunities in the region. The study looked at five-year increments between 2025 and 2040. Temporary employment includes construction for highway improvements, lodging, truck stops, restaurants, wind farms and wind generation manufacturing, solar energy production, and agricultural growing, processing, and distribution facilities. **There would be 10,770 direct construction-related jobs and 20,034 indirect jobs created by 2040.** Permanent employment covers the same categories, with the exception of highway construction, adding up to 3,448 jobs by 2040.

Improvement or expansion of the Corridor would promote safety and mobility in the region. **The study projected a reduction in vehicle crashes of between 17% and 63% by improving the Corridor to IH standard.** The greatest reduction in crash rates would occur with the construction of a relief route in Clayton.

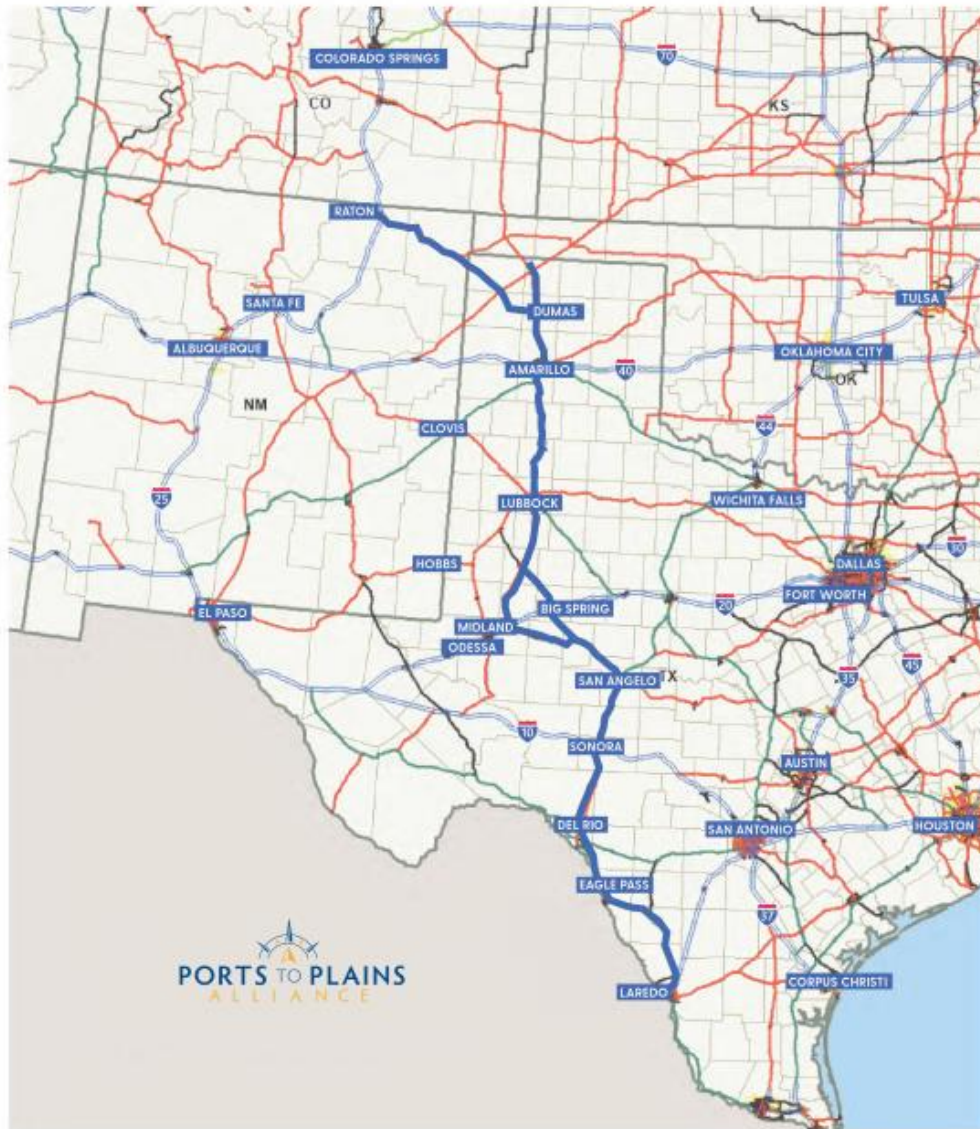
The New Mexico Freight Plan cites the Ports-to-Plains Corridor concept in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) as a model to facilitate the movement of goods and services through the state.

³ **County Production Summary**, New Mexico Minerals and Natural Resources Department, <https://wwwapps.emnrd.nm.gov/ocd/ocdpermitting/reporting/production/countyproductioninjectionsummary.aspx>

Designation as a Future Interstate

On Tuesday, March 15, 2022, President Biden signed the FY 2022 Omnibus Appropriations legislation. This legislation included the designation of the entire Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas and New Mexico as a Future Interstate Highway.

Future Interstate Designation



This legislation was supported by the New Mexico Department of Transportation in a letter to U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and infrastructure leadership.



June 24, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
United States House of Representatives
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
United States House of Representatives
1135 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Ports-to-Plains High Priority Corridor Interstate Designation on the National High System in New Mexico

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) is supportive of Congressional action to enhance the highway system in New Mexico and designate the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, which is a Congressionally-designated High Priority Corridor, as a potential future Interstate Highway.

The Governor Lujan Grisham administration has been committed to working with communities in our state on potential economic development opportunities. We are in the process of conducting a study to understand the true benefits and impacts of the future interstate highway designation.

While we recognize the potential value a project of this scope may bring to communities in the rural areas of our state, we will ultimately support what is best for these communities impacted based on the outcome of the study and local input.

If you have any questions or if I may be of further assistance, please contact me at Michael.Sandoval1@state.nm.us or your staff may contact Jerry P. Valdez, Executive Director, at 505-795-3033 or JerryP.Valdez2@state.nm.us

Sincerely,


Michael Sandoval (Jun 25, 2020 08:12 MDT)

Michael R. Sandoval
Cabinet Secretary
New Mexico Department of Transportation

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor

Michael R. Sandoval
Cabinet Secretary

Commissioners

Jennifer Sandoval
Commissioner, Vice-Chairman
District 1

Bruce Ellis
Commissioner
District 2

Hilma Espinoza Chynoweth
Commissioner
District 3

Walter G. Adams
Commissioner, Chairman
District 4

Thomas C. Taylor
Commissioner
District 5

Charles Lundstrom
Commissioner, Secretary
District 6

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

Next Steps in New Mexico

Route Numbering

In the original FY22 Omnibus Appropriations legislation, while the route was designated, the route numbering was not identified. The Ports-to-Plains Alliance is working on additional legislation to identify the route numbering for the future Interstate Highway in New Mexico and Texas.

Route numbering legislation bills have been introduced in both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives. U.S. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) introduced S.992 co-sponsored by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX), Martin Heinrich (D_NM) and Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) to formally name the Ports-to-Plains Corridor “Interstate 27.” Representative Jodey Arrington (R-TX) and also introduced H.R. 1821 in the House. Both bills were the same language.

It is also important to note that the same language was submitted as an amendment to the FY24 Appropriations legislation by Representative Henry Cuellar (D-TX). In the legislation, route numbers were assigned as I-27 from Laredo, TX through Dumas, TX to Raton, NM. The two locations in Texas where the future interstate diverges are named I-227 for the current Routes 158 and 349 from Sterling City to Midland to Lamesa, and as I-327 for the current Route 87 from Dumas to the Oklahoma border. These numbers were based on input from FHWA. The language and a map are shown below.





118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 992

To amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 to designate the Texas and New Mexico portions of the future Interstate-designated segments of the Port-to-Plains Corridor as Interstate Route 27, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 28, 2023

Mr. CRUZ (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, and Mr. LUJÁN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

A BILL

To amend the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 to designate the Texas and New Mexico portions of the future Interstate-designated segments of the Port-to-Plains Corridor as Interstate Route 27, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “I-27 Numbering Act
5 of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. NUMBERING OF DESIGNATED FUTURE INTERSTATE.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1105(e)(5)(C)(i) of the
 3 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
 4 (Public Law 102–240; 109 Stat. 598; 133 Stat. 3018) is
 5 amended by inserting after the tenth sentence the fol-
 6 lowing: “The routes referred to in clause (i) (other than
 7 subclause (V)(bb) and subclause (IX)(aa) of that clause)
 8 and clause (iv) of subsection (c)(38)(A) are designated as
 9 Interstate Route I–27. The route referred to in subsection
 10 (c)(38)(A)(i)(V)(bb) is designated as Interstate Route I–
 11 227. The route referred to in subsection
 12 (c)(38)(A)(i)(IX)(aa) is designated as Interstate Route I–
 13 327.”.

14 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section
 15 1105(c)(38)(A)(i) of the Intermodal Surface Transpor-
 16 tation Efficiency Act of 1991 (Public Law 102–240; 105
 17 Stat. 2032; 114 Stat. 2763A–201; 116 Stat. 1741) is
 18 amended—

19 (1) in subclause (V)—

20 (A) by striking “Lamesa, the Corridor”
 21 and inserting the following: “Lamesa—

22 “(aa) the Corridor”; and

23 (B) in item (aa) (as so redesignated), by
 24 striking “87 and, the Corridor” and inserting
 25 the following: “87; and

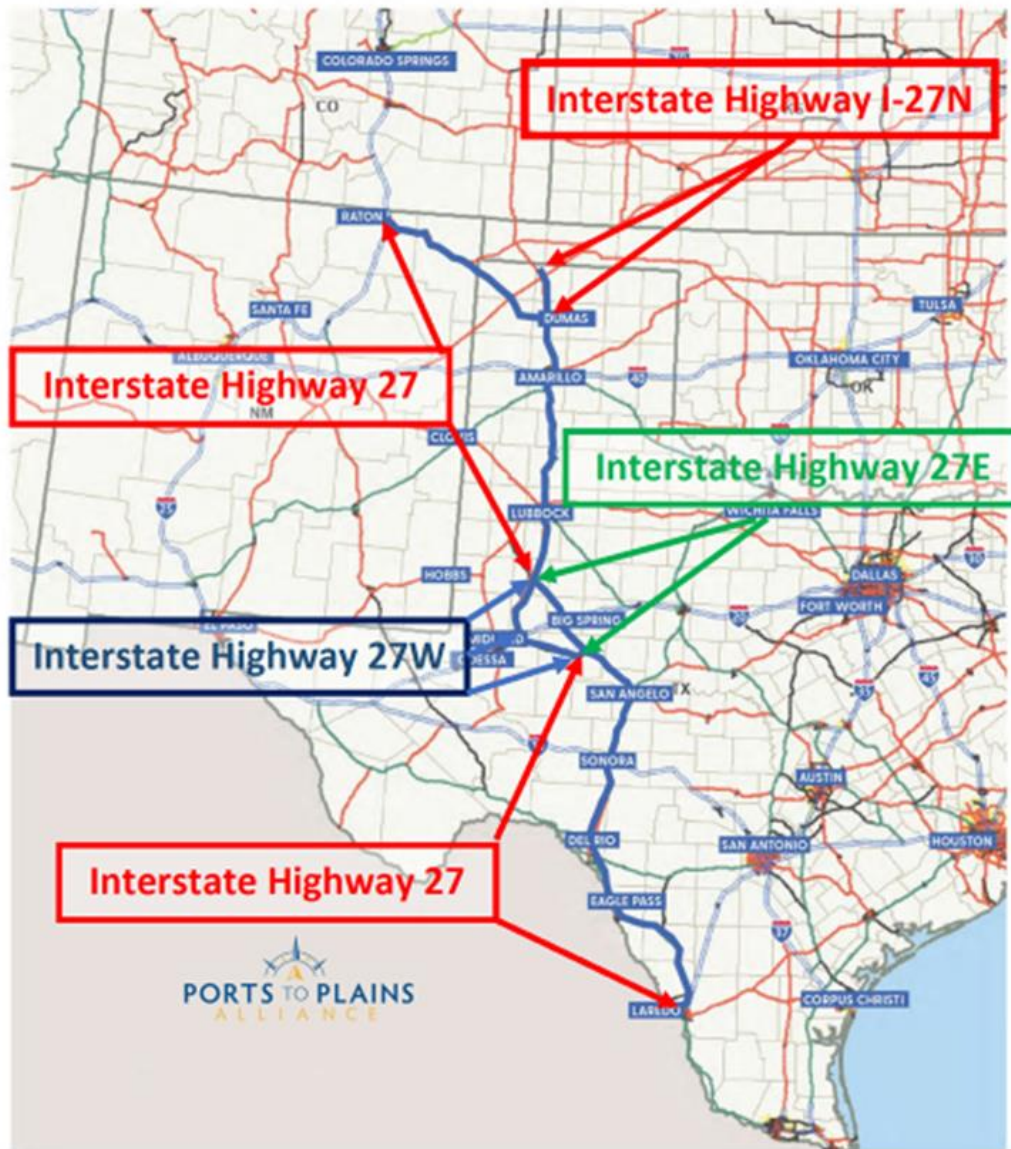
26 “(bb) the Corridor”; and

•S 992 IS

1 (2) in subclause (IX)—
2 (A) by striking “(IX) United States Route
3 287” and inserting the following:
4 “(IX)(aa) United States Route
5 287”; and
6 (B) in item (aa) (as so redesignated), by
7 striking “Oklahoma, and also United States
8 Route 87” and inserting the following: “Okla-
9 homa; and
10 “(bb) United States Route 87”.

○

Future Interstate Designation

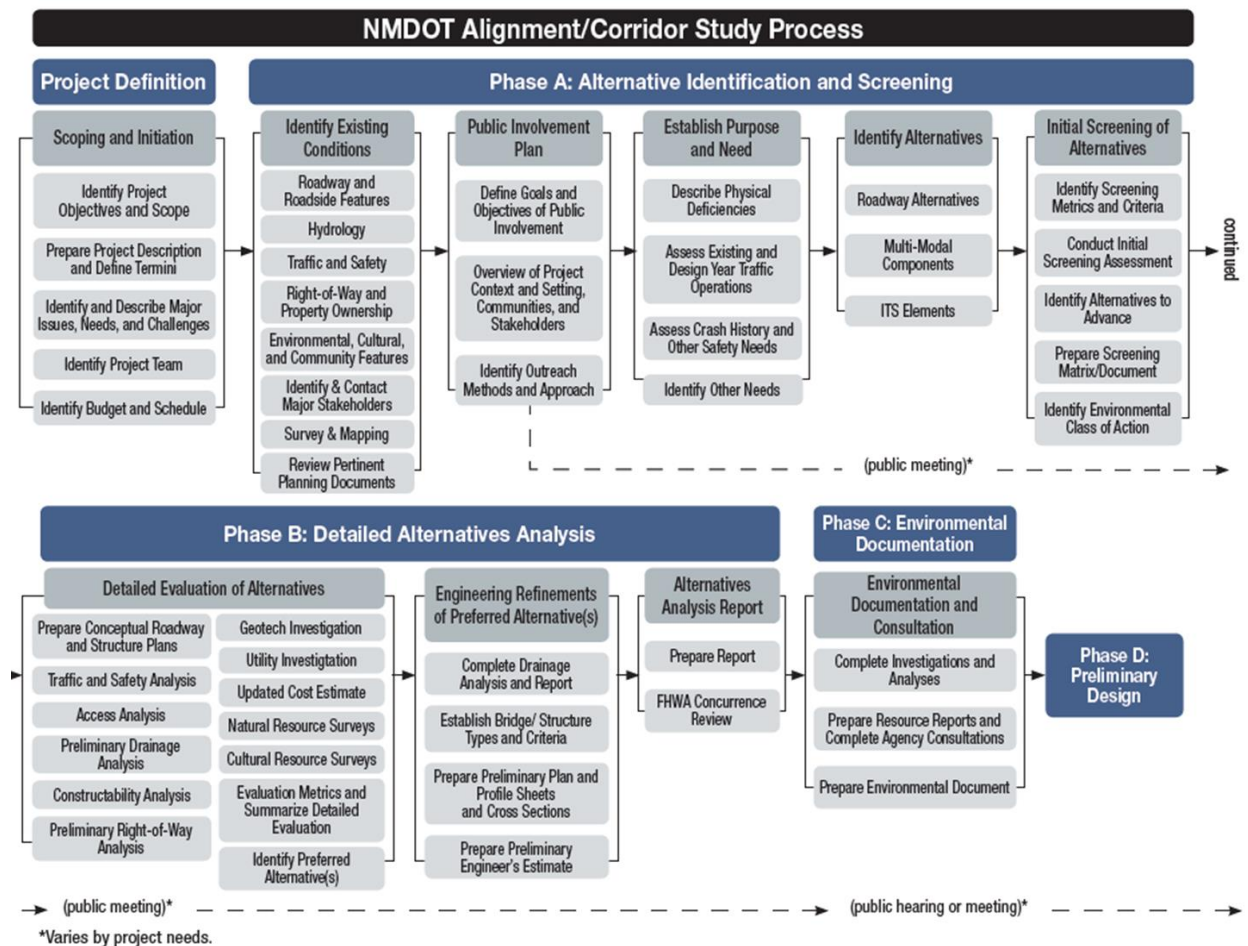


Planning Funds for the Interstate Highway

Before the actual construction update to interstate highway, there is a planning process outlined by the New Mexico Department of Transportation Location Study procedures: A guidebook for Alignment Studies and Corridor Studies.



As shown below, that process includes Project Definition, Phase A: Alternative Identification and Screening, Phase B: Detailed Alternatives Analysis, Phase C: Environmental Documentation, and Phase D: Preliminary Design. This process is required for each future construction segment and must be completed before Final Design, Right-of-Way Acquisition, and Construction can move forward.



With the support of NMDOT, the Ports-to-Plains Alliance has assisted the Town of Clayton, on behalf of the entire corridor in New Mexico, submit both FY24 Congressionally Designated Spending in the U.S.

Senate and FY24 Community Projects Funding in the U.S. House of Representatives requesting \$1.6 million for a \$2 million planning project.



March 10, 2023

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
U.S. Senator for New Mexico
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Ray Luján
U.S. Senator for New Mexico
498 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernández
U.S. House of Representatives
1510 Longworth House Office
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Community Project Funding Request - Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Planning

Dear Senator Henrich, Senator Lujan, and Representative Leger Fernandez:

The New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) would like to express support for the Community Project Funding Request for the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Planning project being submitted by the Town of Clayton.

With the approval of the proposed future Interstate on the New Mexico Ports-to-Plains Corridor (U.S. 87/U.S. 64) in the FY 2022 Appropriations Bill, the Town of Clayton is now looking forward to moving toward the key findings of the Corridor Economic Impact Study prepared for Eastern Plains Council of Governments and NMDOT. "The designation of the Ports-to-Plains Trade Corridor (US Highway 87/64) between the New Mexico-Texas state border and Raton would provide positive economic development impacts for northeast New Mexico."

If awarded, this funding would focus on the planning and preliminary engineering phases, including project feasibility, preliminary design, environmental and final design on proposed Interstate U.S. 87/ U.S. 64, as outlined in the Impact Study. This project has been checked for federal funding eligibility and if awarded, can be added to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) in the following formal amendment. NMDOT will provide the required 20% match for this project. I urge you to support the Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Planning through a Community Project Funding Request.

Sincerely,

Ricky Serma
NMDOT Cabinet Secretary

**Michelle Lujan
Grisham**
Governor

Ricky Serma
Cabinet Secretary

Commissioners

Jennifer Sandoval
Commissioner, Vice-Chairman
District 1

Vacant
Commissioner
District 2

Hilma E. Chynoweth
Commissioner
District 3

Walter G. Adams
Commissioner, Chairman
District 4

Thomas C. Taylor
Commissioner
District 5

Charles Lundstrom
Commissioner, Secretary
District 6

General Office

P. O. Box 1149

Santa Fe, NM 87504

The Ports-to-Plains Corridor Interstate Planning projects was submitted to Senators Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Luján, as well as, Congresswoman Theresa Leger Fernández. In the submission of the project by the Town of Clayton, the Project Purpose stated: Following the designation of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in New Mexico as a Future Interstate in the FY2022 Appropriations legislation, the project would initiate interstate highway planning on U.S. 87 / U.S. 64. These planning funds would be used for Project Definition, Phase A: Alternative Identification and Screening, Phase B: Detailed Alternative Analysis, Phase C: Environmental Documentation, and Preliminary Design.

