



Public Meetings Summary

Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility
Study

San Juan County, New Mexico

August 2023

Prepared by:

HDR Engineering, Inc.
2155 Louisiana Blvd NE Ste 3000
Albuquerque, NM 87110

In cooperation with:

San Juan County
Navajo Nation
Federal Railroad Administration

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Introduction

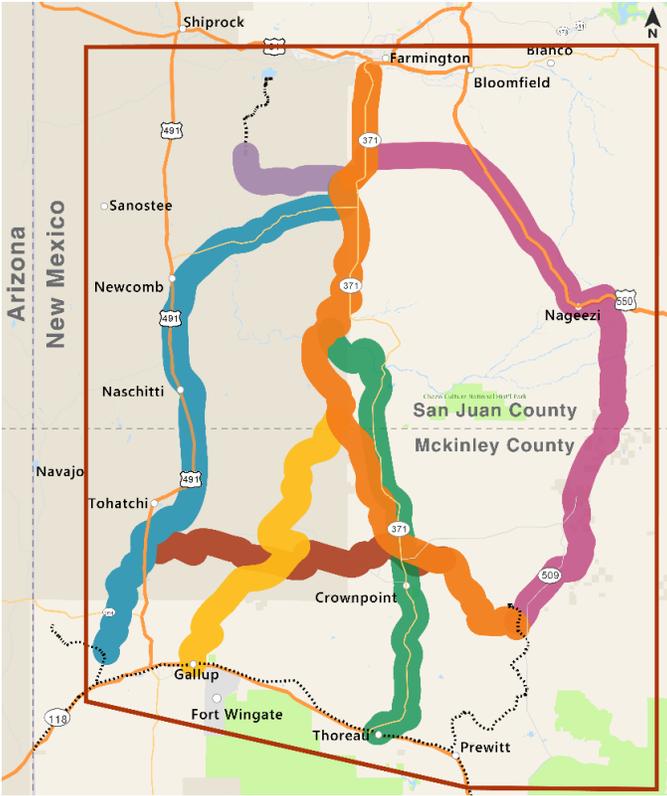
San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, and the Federal Railroad Administration are studying the economic feasibility of freight rail service to the Four Corners region and potential railroad alignments from Gallup and Thoreau, New Mexico to Shiprock, NM.

This Feasibility Study will develop activities and alternatives for a proposed new rail line between San Juan County near Shiprock with a connection to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway near Gallup and Thoreau.

Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

Despite 140,000 route miles, the U.S. freight rail network does not currently serve San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, or the greater Four Corners region. The addition of this service would not only add freight rail to the region but could potentially reduce commercial traffic, decrease the potential for traffic crashes, and open the doors of economic opportunity to the region.

Figure 1: Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Potential Route Alignments



Public Information Meetings

The public information meetings were intended to encourage input from stakeholder groups that the study team can use to make informed decisions, learn about the study area from different perspectives, and engage the community in the decision-making process. This public outreach phase encouraged involvement with community members, organizations, and other stakeholder groups in overlapping areas to formulate solutions and incorporate advice and recommendations into the decisions that will be carried forward, to the maximum extent possible.

San Juan County with the support of the Navajo Nation, held a second public meeting to share draft Feasibility Study conclusions on June 21 and 22, 2023. The June 21 meeting took place from 4 to 7 p.m. at Newcomb High School in Newcomb, NM, and 33 people attended. The June 22 meeting took place from 4 to 7 p.m. at Navajo Technical University in Crownpoint, NM and 15 people attended.

The meeting reintroduced the study to the community and shared information on the project benefits, potential route alignments (see Figure 1), potential goods to be shipped by rail, and the study timeline. The project team collected comments and questions on the study's conclusions following the presentation.

Notifications

Copies of all the public meeting notifications are in Appendix A.

Radio Advertisement

The project team created a script for an on-air radio advertisement that ran on three local radio stations: KGAK, KNDN, and KWYK. The radio advertisement, recorded in English and Navajo, aired six times a day for four weeks beginning May 25, 2023. Both the English and Navajo recordings contained pertinent information, including the time, date, and locations for both public meetings in Newcomb and Crownpoint.

Newspaper Advertisements

The team developed and distributed three newspaper advertisements for this meeting. The newspaper advertisements provided an overview of the study, invited the public to attend the in-person public meetings, and provided the

study website for more information. The advertisements – which also included the date, time, and locations for the meetings – ran in the following publications:

- Farmington Daily Times (June 7, 2023)
- Gallup Independent (June 7, 2023)
- Navajo Times (June 8, 2023)

Meeting Notification Poster

San Juan County distributed public meeting posters to key stakeholders, such as other agencies and tribal chapter houses, which included details on how to attend and participate in the public meetings.

Social Media

The team developed social media posts for San Juan County's Facebook account, including details on how to participate in the public meetings and how to comment on the study.

Media Coverage

The Tri-City Record, covering northwest New Mexico, published an article on July 5, 2023, summarizing the study's key focal points and the public meetings. The article also included an interview with Mike Stark, who is San Juan County Manager, and the project's lead representative.

Public Meeting Materials

Copies of all the public meeting materials are in Appendix B.

Presentation

A PDF of the presentation is available to the public through the study webpage in June 2023.

Meeting Boards

The public meetings utilized five, 24x36 display boards that described the study timeline, project benefits, potential route alignments, potential goods shipped by rail and how to provide comments or ask questions.

Public Comments

Copies of all the public meeting comments are in Appendix C.

The project received public comments in the following ways:

- At the in-person public meetings on June 21-22
- Study webpage: www.4cornersfreightrail.com
- Email: info@4cornersfreightrail.com
- Mail: Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study C/O HDR Engineering
2155 Louisiana Blvd NE Ste 3000, Albuquerque, NM 87110

In total, the project received 27 comments and questions, which focused on the route alignment options, economic development for the region, potential partnerships, and support and opposition for a railroad in the region. Of those, the public provided 16 comments in-person at the June public meetings through a written comment form while the public submitted 11 comments via email or the online comment form.

Appendix A – Public Meeting Notifications

Radio Advertisement

Newspaper Advertisements

Meeting Notification Poster

Social Media

Media Coverage

Appendix B – Public Meeting Materials

Presentation

Meeting Boards

Appendix C – Public Comments

Public Comments



Four Corners Radio Script – June 2023 Public Meetings

THE NAVAJO NATION AND SAN JUAN COUNTY HAVE FORMED AN IMPORTANT PARTNERSHIP TO INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES IN OUR REGION THROUGH RAIL.

THEY ARE TEAMING WITH THE FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION TO EVALUATE AND IDENTIFY POTENTIAL RAILROAD ROUTES AND FACILITIES ALONG US 491 AND NM 371, ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS, AND FORECAST THE POTENTIAL ECONOMIC POSSIBILITIES FOR THE REGION.

THIS CONNECTION WOULD IMPROVE TRAFFIC SAFETY ... AND MAKE THE AREA MORE ATTRACTIVE AS A RESOURCE FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DECREASE SHIPPING COSTS FOR BUSINESSES.

THE FOUR CORNERS FREIGHT RAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY WILL CONSIDER POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THROUGH RAIL SERVICE ... WHICH COULD CREATE MORE BUSINESSES WITHIN THE REGION AND BRING ADDITIONAL TAX REVENUES THAT WILL DIRECTLY BENEFIT THE LOCAL SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES.

MORE BUSINESS COULD MEAN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES AND CAREER PATHWAYS FOR LOCAL CHILDREN, ALLOWING THEM TO STAY IN THE REGION AND RAISE THEIR FAMILIES CLOSE TO HOME.

JOIN THE FREIGHT RAIL STUDY TEAM FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS FROM 4 TO 7 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21ST AT NEWCOMB HIGH SCHOOL IN NEWCOMB AND THURSDAY, JUNE 22ND AT NAVAJO TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY IN CROWNPOINT.

CAN'T MAKE IT? WE STILL WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU. SUBMIT YOUR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE POTENTIAL PROJECT ON THE STUDY WEBSITE AT W-W-W DOT FOUR CORNERS FREIGHT RAIL DOT COM.



Four Corners Freight Rail

Learn more and share your thoughts!

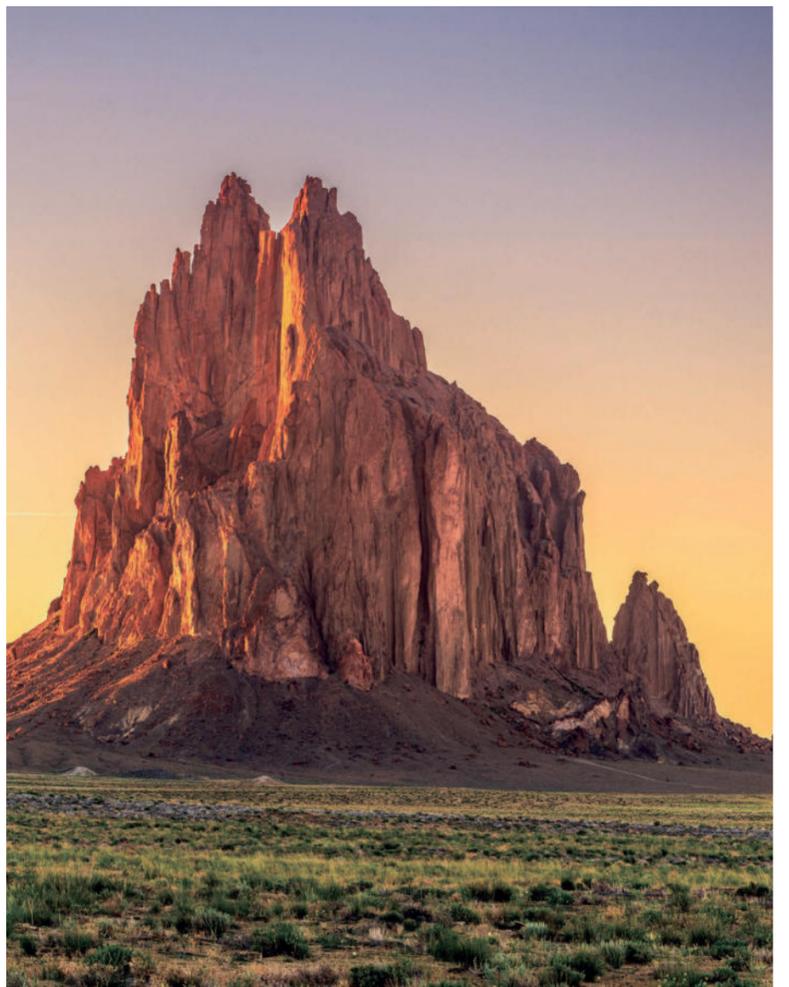
**Public Invited
to Informational
Meetings on the Four
Corners Freight Rail
Feasibility Study**

YOU'RE INVITED!

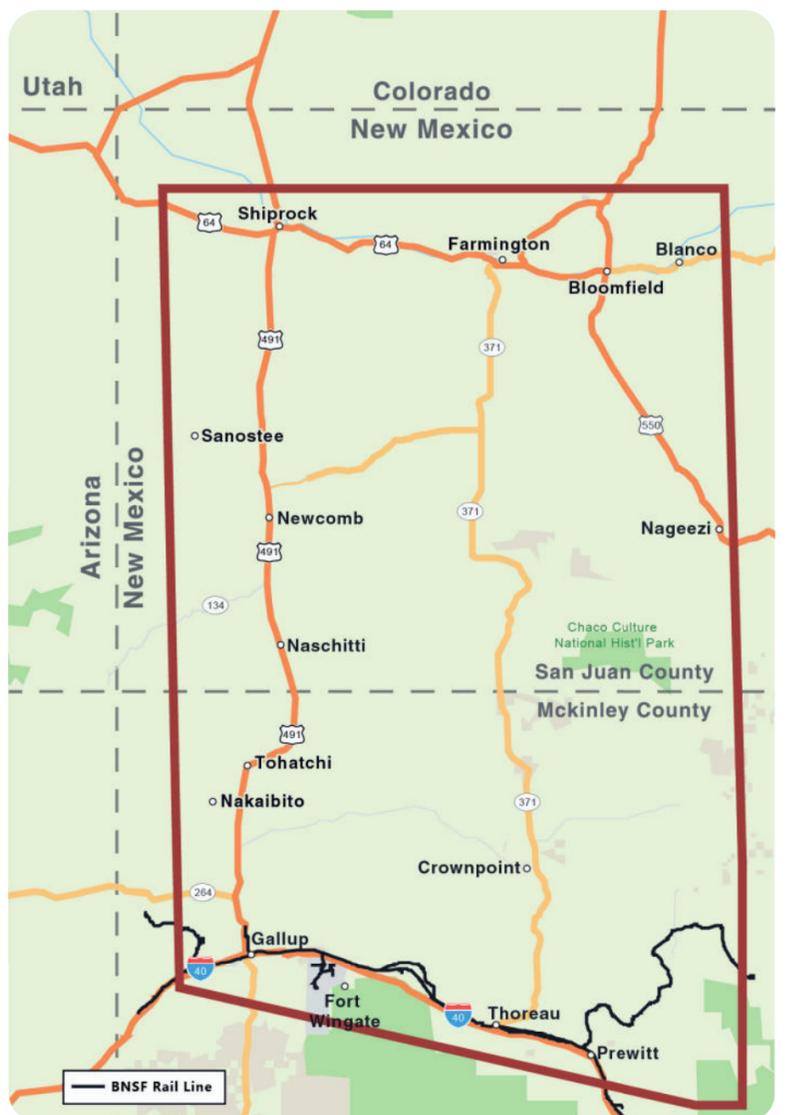
June 21 - 22, 2023

San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, and the Federal Railroad Administration are studying the economic feasibility of freight rail service to the Four Corners region. The addition of this service could potentially reduce commercial traffic, decrease the potential for traffic crashes, and open the doors of economic opportunity to the region.

The Four Corners Freight Rail Study Team invites you to participate in the second round of public meetings on Wednesday, June 21, and Thursday, June 22, 2023. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss potential route alignments and the study team's process. Your feedback is important and will help guide the development of this study!



STUDY AREA MAP



Public Information Meetings

**Wednesday, June 21,
4 - 7 p.m.**

**Newcomb High School
US Highway 491
Newcomb, NM 87455**

**Thursday, June 22,
4 - 7 p.m.**

**Navajo Technical University
Lowerpoint Rd, State Hwy 371
Crownpoint, NM 87313**

Persons with disabilities should contact **Mike Stark at (505) 334-4273** to arrange for assistance. Individuals who require auxiliary aids or a translator for non-English speaking residents for this meeting should contact **San Juan County at least two days before** the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Learn more at: www.4cornersfreightrail.com



Four Corners Freight Rail

Learn more and share your thoughts!

Public Invited to Informational Meetings on the Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

YOU'RE INVITED!

June 21 - 22, 2023

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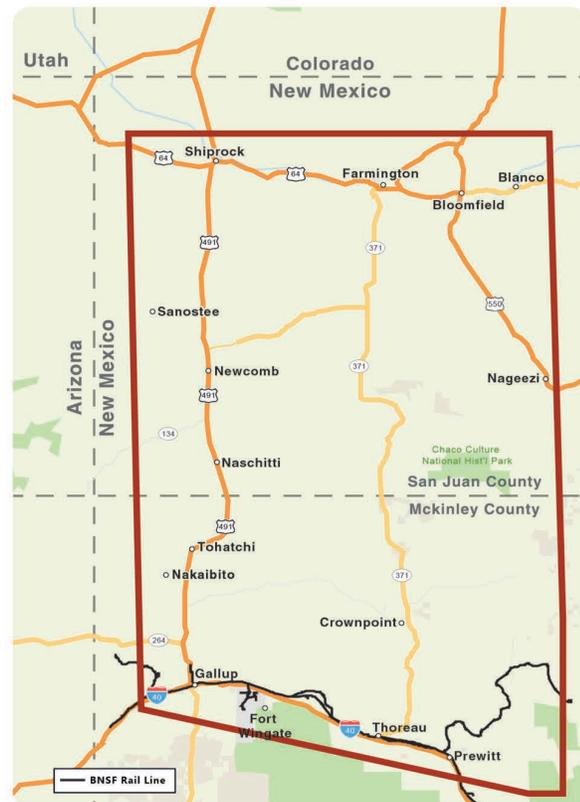
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STUDY AREA MAP





Four Corners Freight Rail

Learn more and share your thoughts!

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Newcomb, NM 87455

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Navajo Technical University, Lowerpoint Rd,
State Hwy 371 Crownpoint, NM 87313

STUDY AREA MAP



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Learn more at: www.4cornersfreightrail.com

Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study – June Public Meetings – Social Media Plan

Date	Outlet	Content	Graphics	Links
<p>June 6</p>	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>San Juan County in collaboration with the Navajo Nation and the Federal Railroad Administration is holding two public information meetings to discuss the Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study and share information on what the project benefits are, the potential route alignments, and the study process. Learn more at: www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p> <p>Public Information Meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday, June 21 4 – 7 p.m. Newcomb High School US Highway 491 Newcomb, NM 87455 • Thursday, June 22 4 – 7 p.m. Navajo Technical University Lowerpoint Rd State Hwy 371 Crownpoint, NM 87313 	<p>Graphic with both meeting Dates</p>  <p>The graphic features a stylized sun logo at the top left. Below it, the text reads 'Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study'. Underneath, there are two orange boxes with white text. The first box lists 'Public Information Meetings' for Wednesday, June 21, 4 - 7 p.m. at Newcomb High School, US Highway 491, Newcomb, NM 87455. The second box lists Thursday, June 22, 4 - 7 p.m. at Navajo Technical University, Lowerpoint Rd, State Hwy 371, Crownpoint, NM 87313. The background has blue and yellow diagonal stripes.</p>	<p>www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>
<p>June 8</p>	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>You're Invited! The Four Corners Freight Rail Study Team will be holding two public information meetings later this month to reintroduce the study to the community and share information on what the project benefits are, the potential route alignments, and the study process. Learn more at: www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>	<p>You're Invited</p> <p>Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study Public Information Meetings</p>  <p>The graphic features a stylized sun logo at the top left. Below it, the text reads 'Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study' and 'Public Information Meetings'. At the bottom, there is a blue banner with the text 'YOU'RE INVITED!' in white. The background has blue and yellow diagonal stripes.</p>	<p>www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>

Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study – June Public Meetings – Social Media Plan

Date	Outlet	Content	Graphics	Links
<p>June 12</p>	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, and the Federal Railroad Administration are studying the economic feasibility of freight rail service to the Four Corners region. The addition of this service would not only add freight rail to the region but could also potentially reduce commercial traffic, decrease the potential for traffic accidents, and open up the doors of economic opportunity to the region.</p> <p>Visit the study website at www.4cornersfreightrail.com for more information and join us at the upcoming public information meetings June 21-22, 2023.</p>	<p>Image with map</p> 	<p>www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>
<p>June 14</p>	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>Want to learn more about the Freight Rail Feasibility Study? Join us in person at our public information meetings on Wednesday, June 21, and Thursday, June 22, where you can ask the project team questions and gain more information about the project benefits, the potential route alignments, and the study team’s process.</p> <p>Visit the study website to learn more: www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>	<p>Join us!</p> <p>Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study Public Information Meetings</p> <p>JOIN US!</p> 	<p>www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>

Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study – June Public Meetings – Social Media Plan

Date	Outlet	Content	Graphics	Links
<p>June 16</p>	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>REMINDER: Join us for an in-person public information meeting for the Four Corners Feasibility Study on Wednesday, June 21, from 4 -7 p.m. at Newcomb High School, US Highway 491, Newcomb, NM 87455</p> <p>Visit the study website to learn more: www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>	<p>Image with meeting info</p> 	<p>www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>
<p>June 19</p>	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>REMINDER: Join us for an in-person public information meeting for the Four Corners Feasibility Study on Thursday, June 22, from 4 -7 p.m. at Navajo Technical University, Lowerpoint Rd State Hwy 371, Crownpoint, NM 87313</p> <p>Visit the study website to learn more: www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>	<p>Image with meeting info</p> 	<p>www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>
<p>June 20</p>	<p>Facebook</p>	<p>Don't forget the in-person public meetings tomorrow and Thursday for the Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday, June 21 4 – 7 p.m. Newcomb High School US Highway 491 Newcomb, NM 87455 • Thursday, June 22 4 – 7 p.m. Navajo Technical University Lowerpoint Rd State Hwy 371 Crownpoint, NM 87313 	<p>Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study Public Information Meetings</p> 	<p>www.4cornersfreightrail.com</p>

Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study – June Public Meetings – Social Media Plan

Date	Outlet	Content	Graphics	Links
		Visit the study website to learn more: www.4cornersfreightrail.com		
June 21	Facebook	Attend the in-person public information meeting for the Four Corners Feasibility Study TODAY, Wednesday, June 21, from 4 - 7 p.m. at Newcomb High School, US Highway 491, Newcomb, NM 87455 Visit the study website to learn more: www.4cornersfreightrail.com Your feedback matters!		www.4cornersfreightrail.com
June 22	Facebook	Don't miss today's in-person public information meeting for the Four Corners Feasibility Study from 4 -7 p.m. at Navajo Technical University, Lowerpoint Rd State Hwy 371, Crownpoint, NM 87313 Visit the study website to learn more: www.4cornersfreightrail.com		www.4cornersfreightrail.com

Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study Public Information Meetings

JOIN US!



Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study Public Information Meetings



YOU'RE INVITED!



Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

Public Information Meetings

Wednesday, June 21, 4 - 7 p.m.

Newcomb High School

US Highway 491

Newcomb, NM 87455

Thursday, June 22, 4 - 7 p.m.

Navajo Technical University

Lowerpoint Rd, State Hwy 371

Crownpoint, NM 87313

**Four Corners Freight Rail
Feasibility Study: Public
Information Meeting**

Wednesday, June 21

4 - 7 p.m.

Newcomb High School

US Highway 491

Newcomb, NM 87455



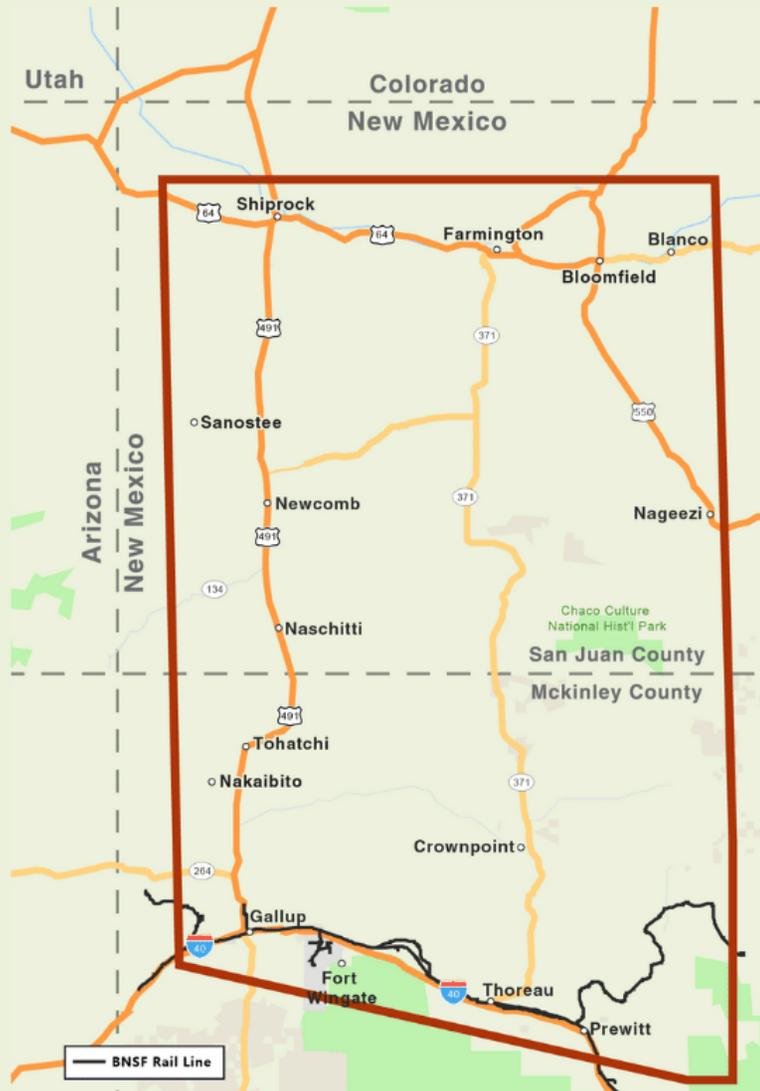
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Lowerpoint Rd, State Hwy 371
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**Four Corners
Freight Rail
Feasibility Study:
Public Information
Meetings**



Four Corners Freight Rail would boost economy

San Juan County, Navajo Nation working together on rail project

BY DAVID EDWARD ALBRIGHT
TRI-CITY RECORD

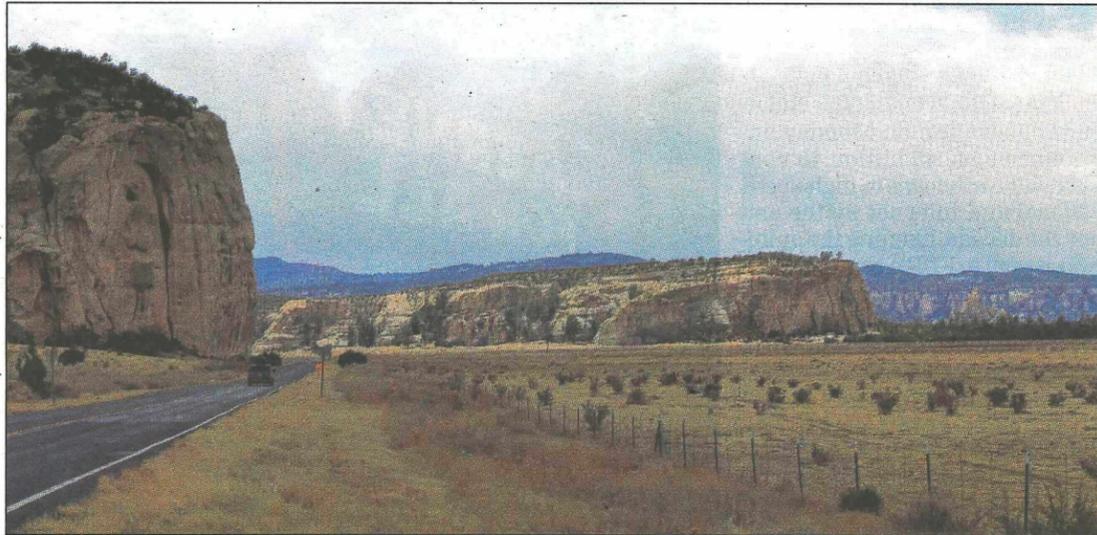
San Juan County, along with the Navajo Nation and the Federal Railroad Administration, are studying the economic feasibility of a freight rail service to the Four Corners Region. Two public input meetings were held in June and the study is scheduled to wind up in 2024.

San Juan County manager Mike Stark, who is serving as the point man for the project, said in a phone interview that he shared with those who attended a recent community input meeting at the Senior Center in Fruitland information on the proposed freight rail project.

Stark said for "citizen awareness," he discussed "what we're doing and why, our partnership with the Navajo Nation and having the study done to determine if it makes sense to bring a freight rail line from the I-40 corridor to Farmington."

The proposed greenfield rail line would connect Farmington to Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway near Gallup, approximately 120 miles south.

Rail service to the Farmington



Stock photo

The Four Corners Freight project would connect rail service to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway near Gallup.

area can be traced back to 1983, with the Economic Review for a Railroad serving San Juan County. The report estimated a need for rail transport related to coal mining within three to five years, with "side benefits" for lower-cost transporting of farm commodities and general cargo. The report did say that without "the vast number of coal leases" in the area the construction costs would difficult to

justify.

Additional studies were conducted in 1991, 1998, 2008, 2013, 2015, 2020 and 2022.

Even with all these studies, the project never progressed because of a lack of key partnerships and funding.

Stark said they will look at both state and federal grant opportunities, as well as, some of the short line rail operators.

Funding for the recent study came from a \$2 million awarded to the county through the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development Transportation Discretionary Grant Program, administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The study was conducted by HDR, an international company that specializes in environmental sciences and sustainability and

resiliency, among numerous services.

A partnership between San Juan County and the Navajo Nation was formed by a Historic Memorandum of Understanding in February 2020. It created the collective framework of cooperation to bring rail service to the Farmington area.

The proposed routes will be primarily through Navajo Nation land. Stark said the partnership with the Navajo Nation "really opened the door for obtaining the grant ... and without them we wouldn't be where we're at today."

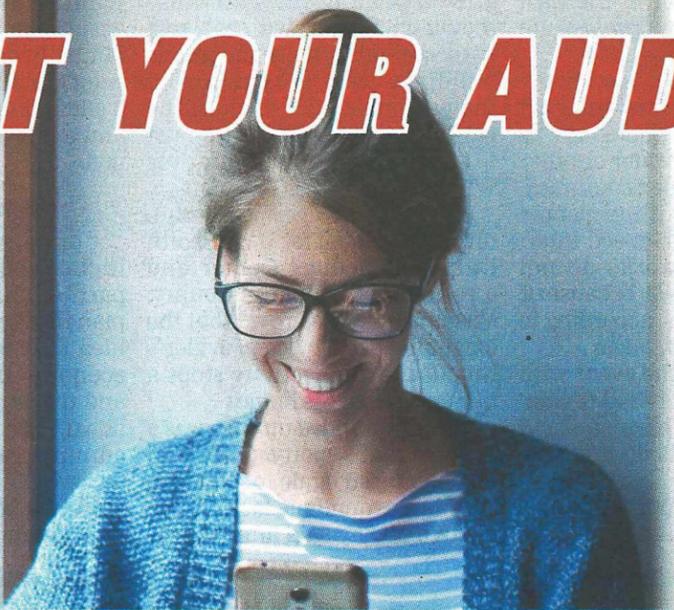
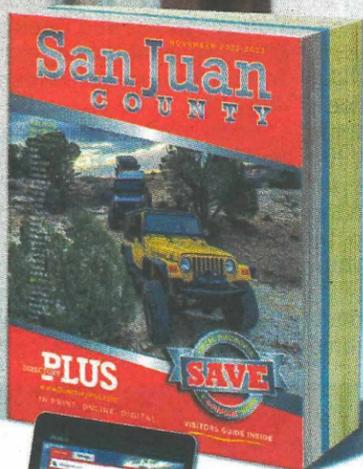
When asked about Navajo President Buu Nygren's support of the rail project, Stark said that before Nygren took office he was briefed and "he did give us the thumbs-up and said that we should continue exploring the opportunities."

Public meetings were held on June 21 in Newcomb and June 22 in Crownpoint, in addition to two meetings last September in Shiprock and Farmington.

According to Stark there were about 30 people who attended the Newcomb meeting and about 15 to 18 people at the Crownpoint meet-

See RAIL, 5A

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Independently

Rail

Continued from 4A

ing at Navajo Technical University.

Community concerns from those affected by the impact of the rail service are being considered.

Stark said, "I think we get concerns about the location of where the prospective line would go. You know, folks concerned if it's going to be in their backyard ... the noise and/or visual impact," adding that holds true whether it's a "rail line, a highway or water line, for that matter."

People at the meetings were asked where they would like to see the rail service located and if they were missing any opportunities on the import/export list of proposed goods.

Stark said no additional meetings are planned, but "we do anticipate as we get near the end of the study that we will circle back with input meetings."

The feasibility study will determine if the project is economically sound and, if so, it will be used as a "marketing document to funding agencies, whether it's the private or public sector," Stark said.

According to Four Corners Freight's website, primary benefits of the project include reducing the amount of commercial truck traffic and decreasing the potential for crashes.

The study stated that about 40%

of U.S. freight is shipped by railway, more than any other mode of transportation. Rail produces fewer greenhouse gases, 2.1%, compared to idling trucks that contribute approximately 20% of carbon emissions.

According to Four Corners Freight, moving freight by rail rather than trucks lowers greenhouse gas emissions by up to 75%, and that if 50% of truck traffic moving at least 750 miles went by rail instead, greenhouse gases would fall by 26.2 million tons.

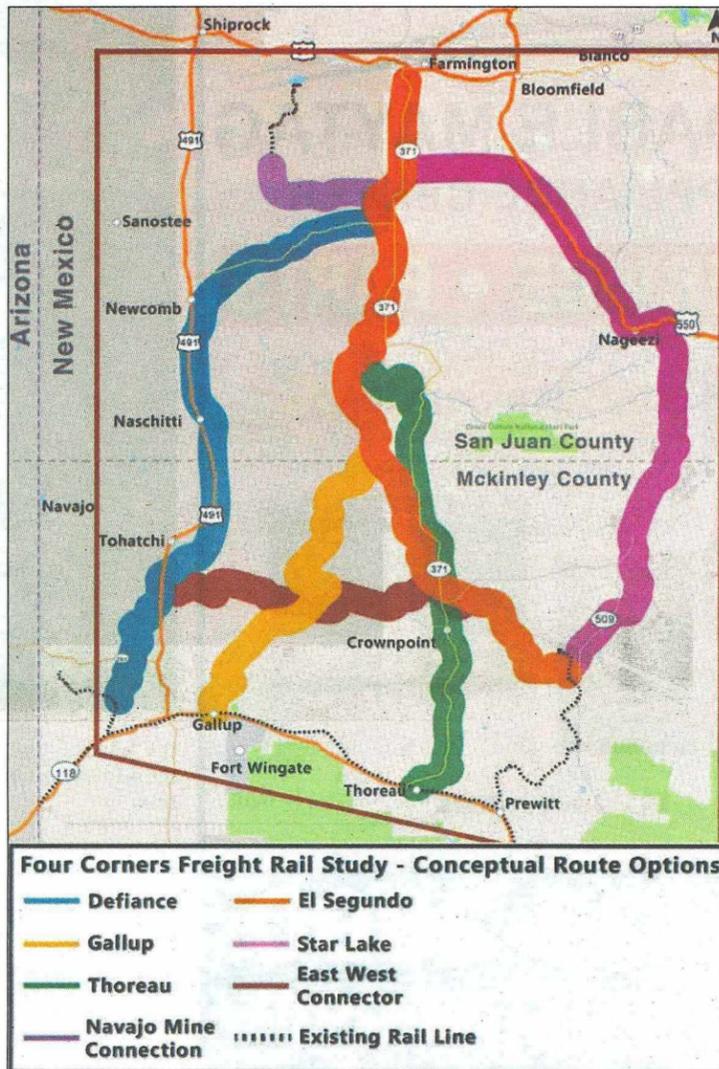
Railroads are the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land, moving an average of one ton of freight more than 480 miles per gallon, according to the study. On average, railroads are three to four times more fuel-efficient than trucks. A single freight train can carry the freight of several hundred trucks.

The potential goods carried outbound from this region by rail include farm products, recyclables, food products, energy and manufactured goods.

Inbound goods would include minerals, forest products, fertilizers, fuel and metals.

Navajo Agricultural Products Industry CEO Dave Zeller said the project would "not just benefit NAPI, but I think the whole Four Corners Region."

As a large farm that ships a high volume of product currently being shipped by trucks, Zeller said freight would "allow us to



Proposed rail lines discussed in a recent study.

ship product more cheaply down to the I-40 corridor, whether it's hay, beans, corn or wheat."

Zeller said it would help to lower the cost of bringing in other products like fertilizer, as well. He is optimistic about the project coming to fruition.

"I think there's a very realistic possibility that it will ... be worked out," but he believed the study would "reveal that it is a very feasible concept."

John Byrom, Business Development Manager for PESCO, said in a phone interview that freight rail service would especially help reduce shipping costs to coastal destinations. ... We would certainly support it. ... Everything we buy and sell comes in on trucks."

He added that with rail service PESCO "would be able to extend our competitive footprint."

Currently PESCO sells their products primarily across the Western states. Byrom said their shipping costs are higher than their competition in Houston or Denver because of the absence of rail service.

As a member of Four Corners Economic Development, Byrom believes the rail service would provide a boost to the economy, particularly in attracting new manufacturing businesses.

"We lose out on a tremendous number of potential new companies who would like to expand," he said, adding that it would definitely help as a recruiting tool.

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Freight Rail Line Feasibility Study San Juan County, New Mexico

“Opening the doors of economic opportunity”

Public Meeting - Wednesday, June 21, 2023
Newcomb High School
Newcomb, NM

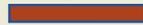
Public Meeting - Thursday, June 22, 2023
Navajo Technical University
Crownpoint, NM



4 Corners Freight Rail
Feasibility Study

Welcome and Introductions

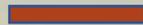
Navajo Nation



San Juan County



Newcomb High School / Navajo Technical University



HDR



Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

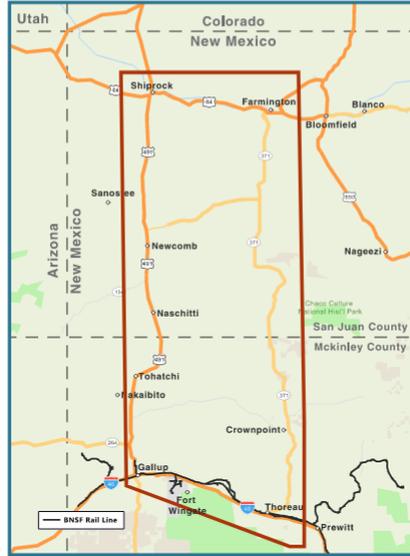


YOU'RE INVITED!

Public Information Meetings on the Four Corners Feasibility Study – September 13-14, 2022

San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, and the Federal Railroad Administration are studying the economic feasibility of freight rail service to the Four Corners region. The addition of this service would not only add freight rail to the region but could also potentially reduce commercial traffic, decrease the potential for traffic accidents, and open up the doors of economic opportunity to the region.

The Four Corners Freight Rail Study Team will be holding Public Information meetings to introduce the study to the community and share information on what the project benefits are, the funding and the study timeline.



Public Information Meetings

Tuesday, September 13, 4-7 p.m.
Phil L. Thomas Performing Arts Center
US Highway 64
Shiprock, NM 87420

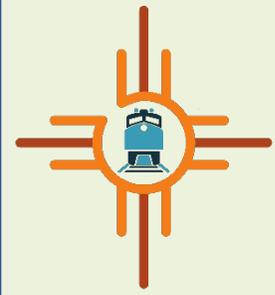
Wednesday, September 14, 4-7 p.m.
Farmington Civic Center
200 W. Arrington St.
Farmington, NM 87401

Persons with disabilities should contact Mike Stark at (505) 334-4271 to arrange for assistance. Individuals who require auxiliary aids or a translator for non-English speaking residents for this meeting should contact San Juan County at least two days before the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Learn more at: www.4cornersfreightrail.com

Initial Public Information Meetings

- Two public information meetings held in September of 2022.
 - Sept 13th in Shiprock
 - Sept 14th in Farmington
- Meetings were to inform the public about the project.
- Received initial feedback from the public in attendance.



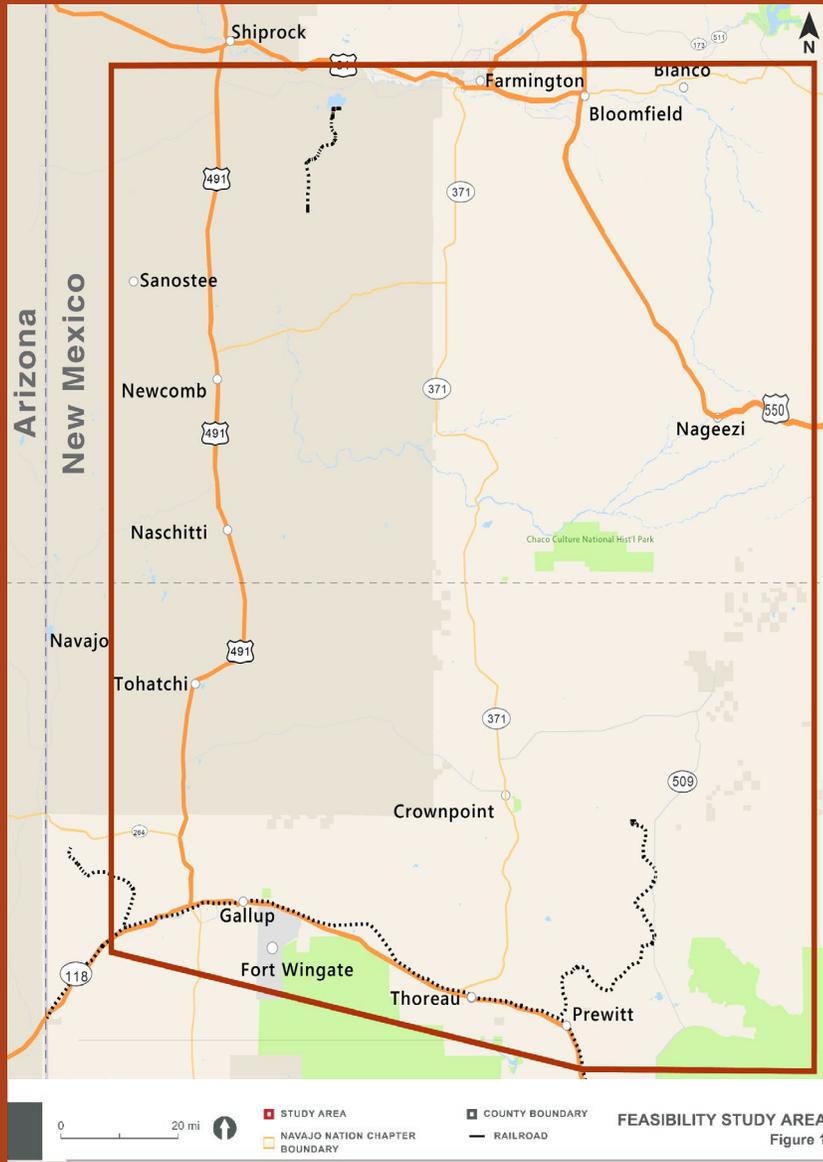
ABOUT THE PROJECT

During the feasibility study, the project team will identify and evaluate potential route alignments, transloading facilities, and rights-of-way. Environmental impacts will be studied, as well as the integration of railroad project development.

Research by the New Mexico Economic Development Department and the City of Farmington found nearly \$20 billion worth of products in projected demand for transport by the railroad industry. A Four Corners rail line could capture a high percentage of the demand when connected to the present BNSF railroad that runs east and west in the southern portion of the Navajo Nation.

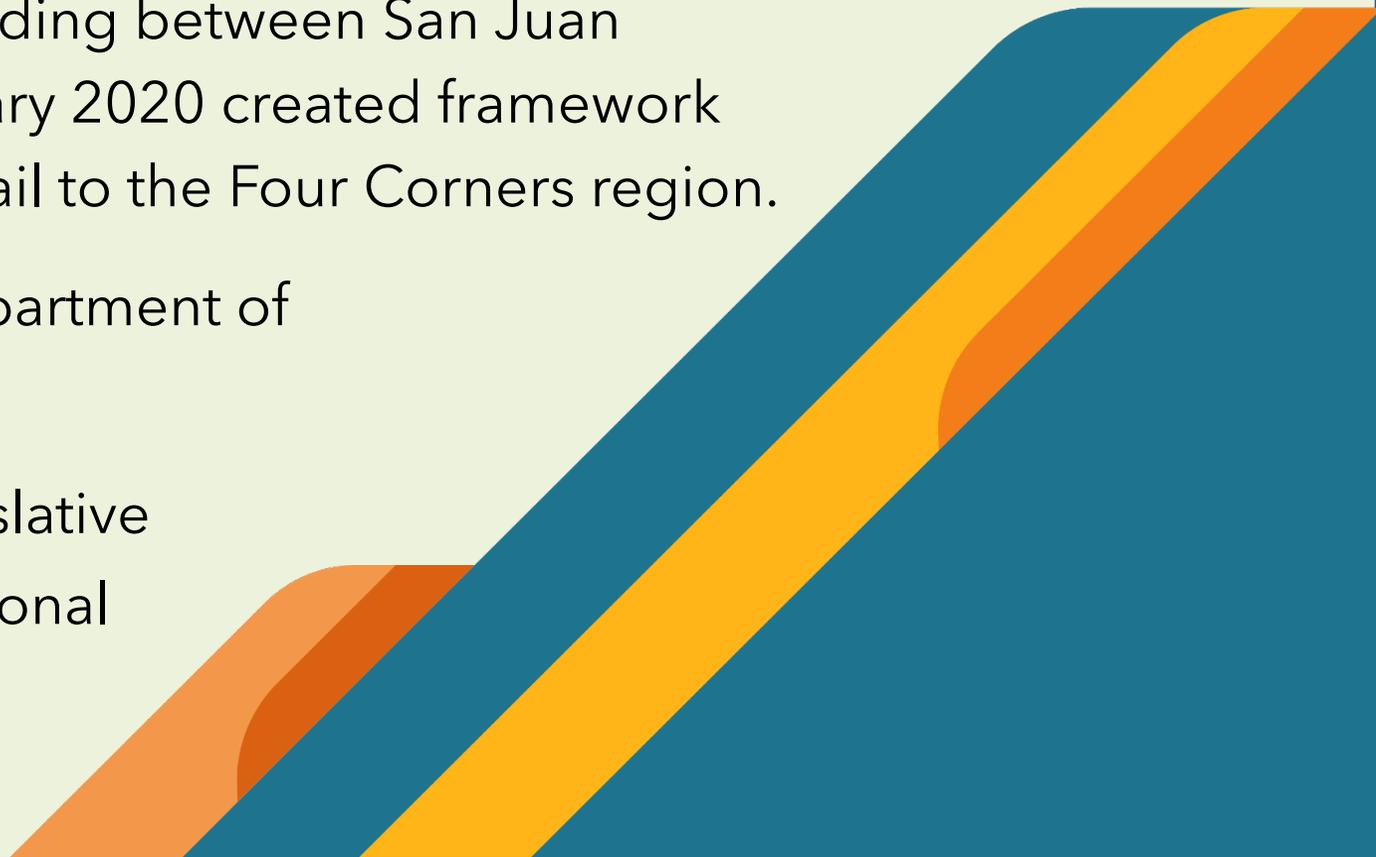


PROJECT OVERVIEW



- Despite 140,000 route miles, the U.S. freight rail network does not currently serve San Juan County, the Navajo Nation, or the greater Four Corners region.
- This proposed project would see the construction of a rail spur and related facilities along U.S. 491/U.S. 371 through the Navajo Nation, connecting the I-40 corridor freight rail system operated by Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) comprising approximately 100 miles.
- This study will develop activities and alternatives for a proposed new rail line between San Juan County near Shiprock, with a connection to the BNSF Southern Transcontinental Railway near Gallup, which runs between Chicago and Los Angeles.

How did we get here?

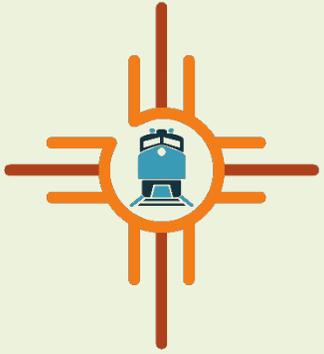
- Rail feasibility studied multiple times over the past 50 years- the project never moved forward due to lack of key partnerships and funding, which are now in place.
 - Historic Memorandum of Understanding between San Juan County and Navajo Nation in February 2020 created framework for collective cooperation to bring rail to the Four Corners region.
 - Project funded via \$2 million US Department of Transportation "BUILD" grant.
 - Support from San Juan County Legislative Delegation, Four Corners Congressional Delegation, and the NMDOT.
- 

Funding Source: USDOT's BUILD Transportation Grant

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)
Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage
Development (BUILD) Transportation Grant

The FY 2019 BUILD program gave special consideration to projects aiming to improve infrastructure conditions, address public health and safety, promote regional connectivity, or facilitate economic growth or competitiveness. San Juan County was awarded a BUILD Grant to support a pre-NEPA project development and alternatives analysis study for a proposed new rail line between San Juan County and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) national freight network along the Interstate 40 corridor.





WHY FREIGHT RAIL?

- About 40% of U.S. freight is shipped by railway, more than any other mode of transportation¹
- Fewer greenhouse gasses (GHGs)
 - Rail accounts for only **2.1%** of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions². In contrast, idling trucks contribute approximately 20% of annual U.S. carbon emissions.
 - Moving freight by rail rather than trucks lowers greenhouse gas emissions by up to **75%**
 - If 50% of truck traffic moving at least 750 miles went by rail instead, GHGs would fall by ~26.2 million tons
- Railroads are the most fuel-efficient way to move freight over land
 - moving an average of one ton of freight more than 480 miles per gallon
 - On average, railroads are three to four times more fuel-efficient than trucks. A single freight train can carry the freight of several hundred trucks³

¹- FHWA, Freight Analysis Framework, Version 4.5.1, ²- U.S. EPA data, ³- Texas Highway Transportation Institute's 2019 Urban Mobility Report
Source- Association of American Railroads

Lack of Transportation Infrastructure in the Four Corners Area





Public Involvement/ Agency Coordination

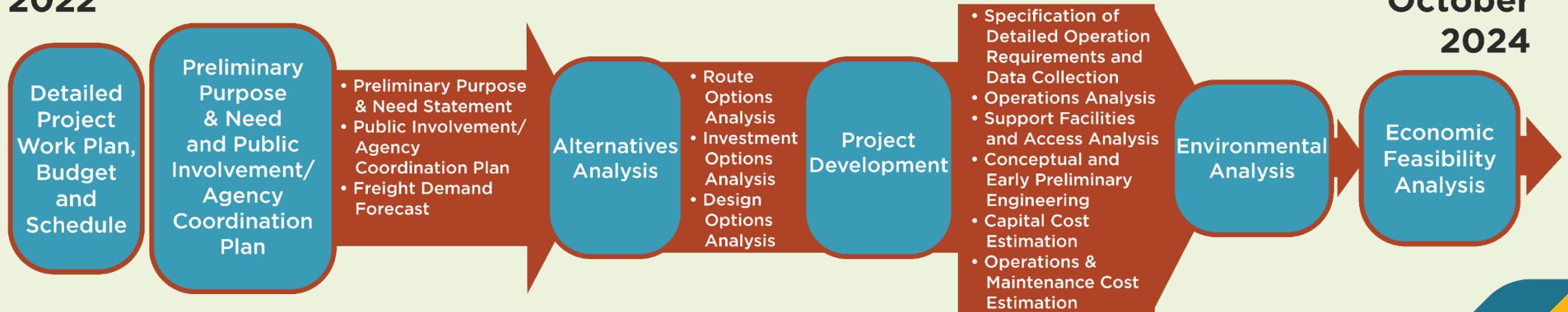
- Subcontract with Al Henderson, AHEC and Tom Chee, Consultant
- Identify 32 chapters that will likely be impacted by the project and obtain resolutions
- Contact each chapter for a consultation
- Present to Navajo Nation elected leaders, NNC committees, departments, agencies and other interested parties
- Coordination with BNSF

Federal Railroad Administration's Process

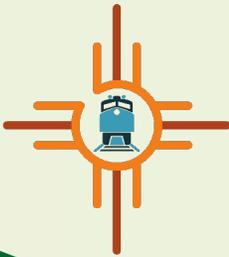


May
2022

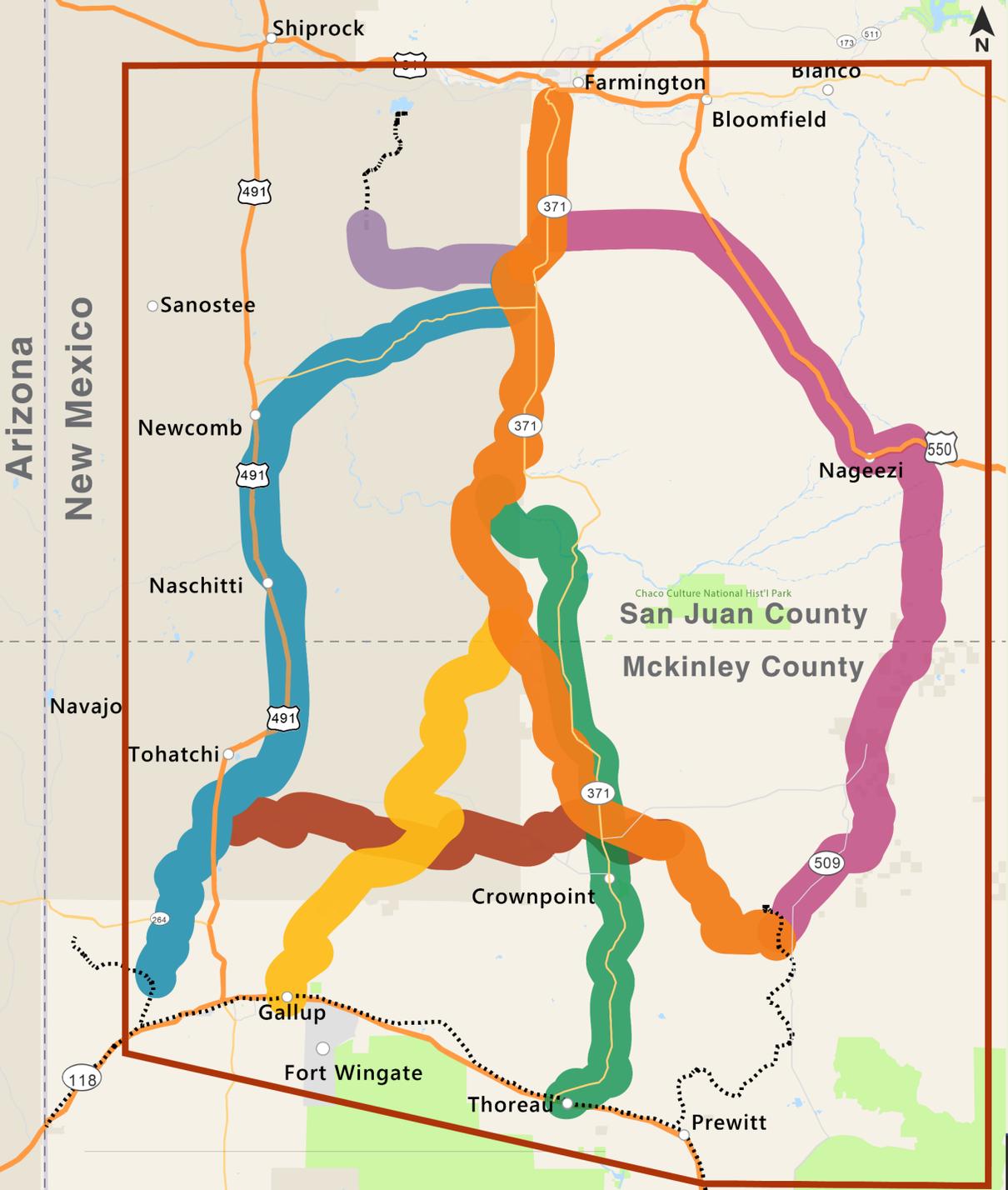
Complete:
October
2024



Potential Goods Shipped By Rail

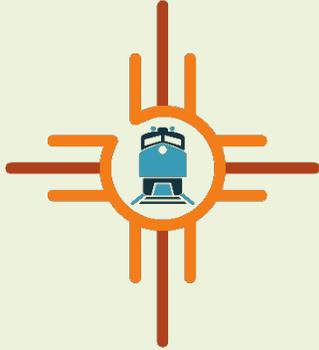


Recommended Alignment Routes



Four Corners Freight Rail Study - Conceptual Route Options

 Defiance	 El Segundo
 Gallup	 Star Lake
 Thoreau	 East West Connector
 Navajo Mine Connection	 Existing Rail Line



Tell us what you think & stay connected

- Take a moment to share your thoughts
- Sign up to receive study updates



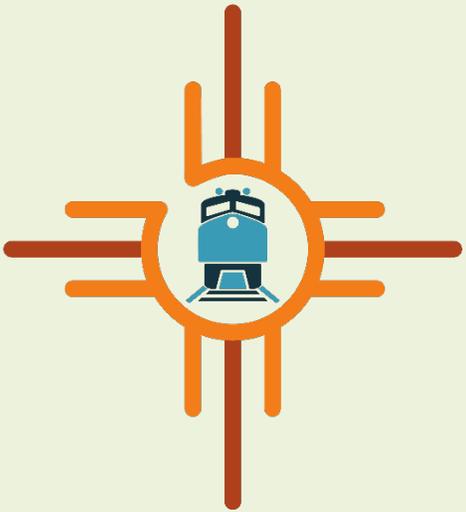
Fill out a comment card, or just leave us your email address. We'll add you to our contact list and ensure you get the latest updates and information about the Four Corners Freight Rail Line Feasibility Study.

Visit the website: **4CornersFreightRail.com**



info@4cornersfreightrail.com

Questions?



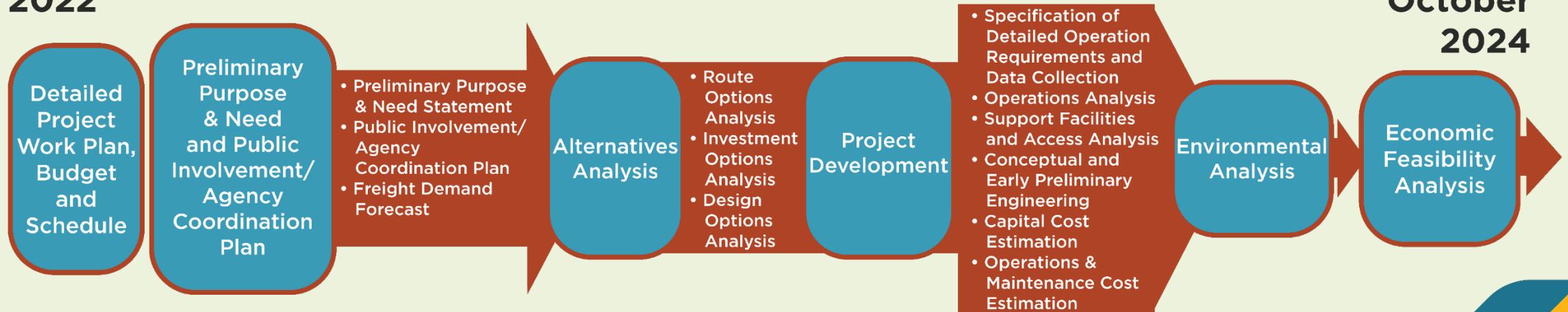
4 Corners Freight Rail
Feasibility Study

Federal Railroad Administration's Process



May
2022

Complete:
October
2024





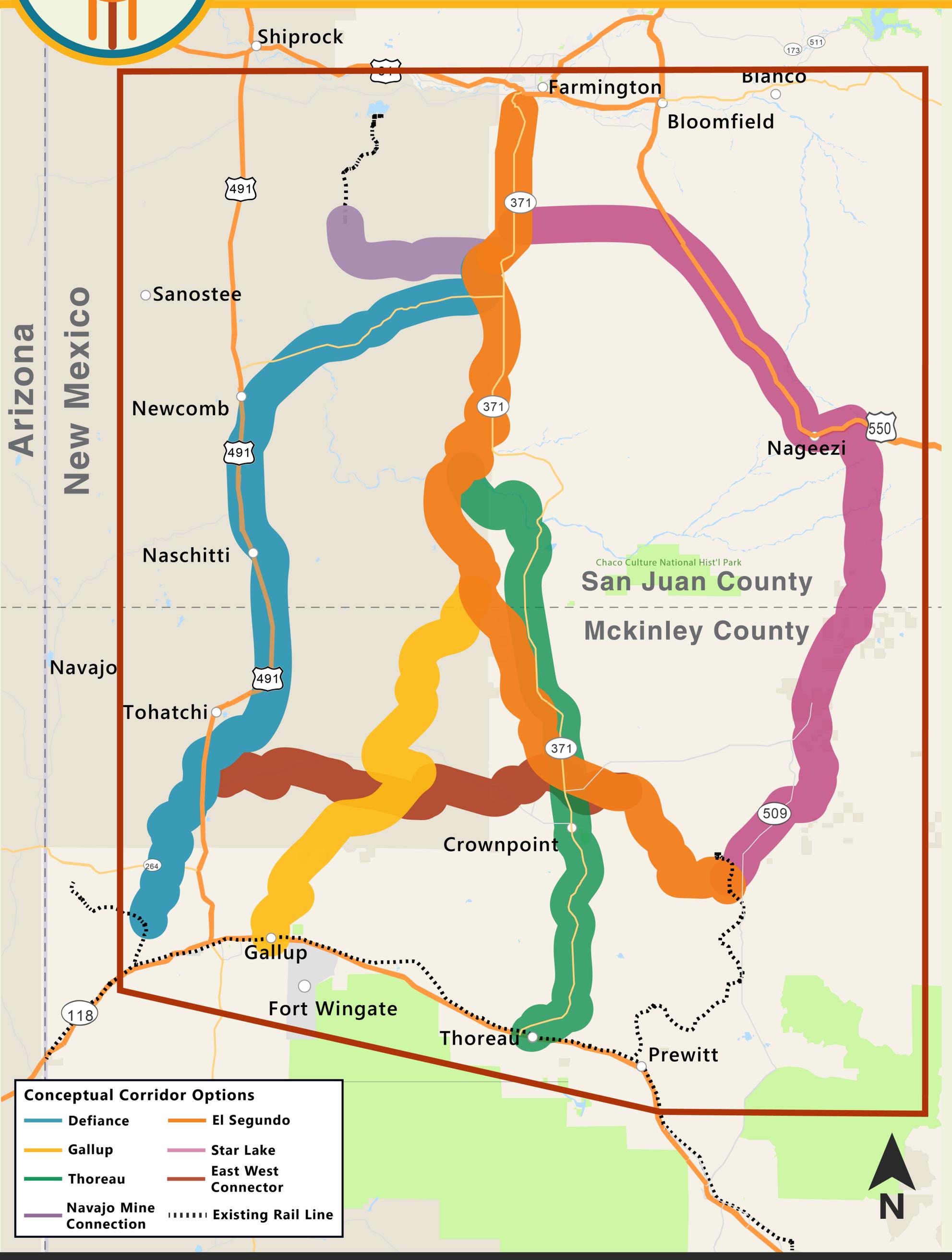
Project Benefits

The new connection to the BNSF freight rail network, one of the largest freight railroads in North America, will improve the efficiency of the overall freight transportation system in the Four Corners region. It will also expand economic opportunities for the region, including the Navajo Nation.

- The project will provide an attractive resource for businesses considering locating to or expanding in the Four Corners region.
- A freight rail connection to the Four Corners region would reduce the cost of shipping goods to and from the Four Corners region. The project supports the efficient movement of freight and people by making connections to the existing BNSF freight network. It also makes the region competitive by decreasing shipping costs.
- The project will reduce the amount of freight traffic on U.S. 491, U.S. 550 and other regional collector and local roads thus decreasing the potential for accidents and providing a less congested and safer transportation system.
- Reduction of truck traffic on these roads furthers the goals of stretching road construction and maintenance expenditures.
- Moving freight by rail rather than trucks reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 75%.



Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study



Arizona
New Mexico

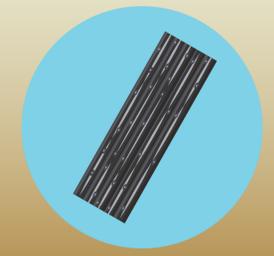
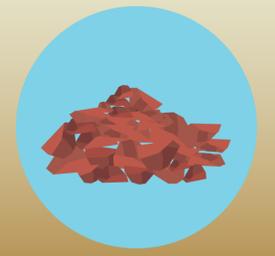
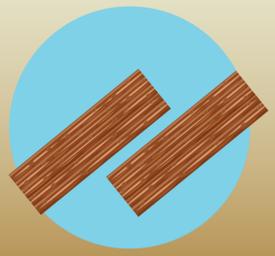
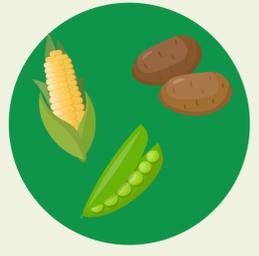
San Juan County
Mckinley County

- Conceptual Corridor Options**
- Defiance
 - Gallup
 - Thoreau
 - Navajo Mine Connection
 - El Segundo
 - Star Lake
 - East West Connector
 - Existing Rail Line



Four Corners Freight Rail Feasibility Study

Potential Goods Shipped by Rail



Tell us what you think & stay connected

- Take a moment to share your thoughts
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Visit the website: **4CornersFreightRail.com**



info@4cornersfreightrail.com

Public Comments

Public Meeting: June 21-22, 2023

#	Date Received	Received Via	Question/Comment
1	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Please keep us informed
2	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	A rail will benefit everyone. Housing, transportation, roads, broadband is all economic development. We need to create jobs, end poverty on the Nation, and build community. I grew up at the Grey Hills and lack of housing and a job here, now, I live in Shiprock.
3	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	I am for anything new. I have family here in Newcomb, Naschitti, and Tohatchi. I look forward to this planned railroad. Looking at the future economies, jobs, trade here in the communities and opening new growth for families. YES!
4	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	My thought is to have the railway along Highway 371 since they have grain, NAPI, and hay to transport, and also offer from Farmington to I-40 Gallup. Roads damage my big trucks on N-5 & 491. Other thought is to have a rail runner like from Albuquerque to Santa Fe- where the public can use it. Gas too high. As much as all production is going on. Who benefits? Navajos or Whites? We don't see any \$\$\$ for improvements still dirt roads. To be tax NN & toll free.

5	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Avoid Indian Abatement to cut down time required for gathering allottees' consent. Use existing ROW to run freight rail parallel. Defiance Route is promising as it avoids allotments parallel to existing highway ROW, supports chapter development projects that are near existing Highway 491, and keeps large portion of the project on Navajo land/central. Existing cattle fencing and other infrastructure can potentially be boosted, Southern portion has existing rail network --> potential distribution center, Navajo control.
6	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Great idea. Future jobs & development.
7	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	If you guys can open back up the Navajo Power Plant and the San Juan Power Plant, I'll say ok.
8	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Route Preference- #1 Defiance, #2 Thoreau – Naschitti resident
9	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Route Preference- No railroad on 491. Livestock & families in area.
10	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Route Reference- No-in-or around 491.
11	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Route Preference- Sheep Springs, NM
12	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Route Preference- 371 route to Thoreau.
13	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Route Preference- Put railroad around Nageezi to connect to Star Lake Railroad.

Appendix C – Public Comments

14	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	Route Preference- We don't want another railway along El Paso/water and gas line.
15	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	I am an Eastern Land board member for District 16. I think the Defiance route would be best. As Mr. Tsosie mentioned there are less allotments. I think Defiance was the original plan. My only concern would be the maintenance. Vandalism and theft of gates and fences allowed livestock to wander onto the railway. Will there be reimbursement for livestock owners should this happen? How easily will it be to contact 4 corners freight rail, should this need to be reported?
16	6/21-6/22	In-Person Public Meetings	<p>Dear Commission:</p> <p>I am in support of a rail service that would provide service to the Northwestern New Mexico area.</p> <p>1) Highway US 491:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - heavily traveled and used by trucking companies in transporting freight to and from points north, Utah, Idaho, and Northwest Coast. - Mexican nationals use it to move material to/from those same areas mentioned above. - the heavy use causes elevated wear and tear on the highway (potholes, rutting) which in turn shortens the lifespan of private vehicles. <p>2) Allow for another means of transporting people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - historical modes of public transportation involved Greyhound, Trailways that served this segment of the state and other areas and no longer exist

- As a member of the US Navy, I constantly have to travel- via air from Durango/La Plata County Airport (predominately) or ABQ Sunport to other airport hubs. And, I have to drive to these locations, oftentimes, leaving from home more than 4 hours prior to departure. This would be another available mode of transportation to use.

-Europe and Eastern Asia have a well-developed rail system that move goods and humans.

3) If you build it, users will come!

- case in point: Burnham/Teec Tso Sikaad, did not have public water or electricity servicing the private homes, except for a small percentage.

- beginning in 2002, electricity and water utility was extended in 95% of the community. Around the same time, N5 was paved connecting US491 and NM 371 and now serves as a thoroughfare.

- Nowadays, there are homes along those three infrastructures.

4) Serve as a gateway to the Four Corners area.

- Europe and Asia have a well-developed rail system that moves goods and humans.

- this will allow access to the Four Corners area sites of attractions.

- ride from Chicago on the Southwest Chief to Gallup or Thoreau then up to the Four Corners area to explore Chaco, Salmon Ruins, Aztec Ruins, Mesa Verde, Bears Ears, Telluride, Silverton Ski, Window Rock, Canyon de Chelly. Imagine that!

5) Existing Peabody Mine Rail

- greater than 75 miles

- repurpose
- from Thoreau to just south of Navajo Agriculture Products Industry (NAPI) Farms or Monsisco Mesa

As an estimator at Navajo Engineering and Construction Authority, one of the Navajo Enterprises, I am sure that is another area NECA could assist in providing construction of the subgrade.

Thank you for your consideration and allowing me to share my support.

Public Comments

Comment Period: December 20, 2022 – July 23, 2023

#	Date Received	Received Via	Question/Comment
1	12/20/22	Email	<p>Dear 4 Corners Freight,</p> <p>Will the Amtrak Pioneer train return to service again? I would appreciate taking that train from Seattle to Portland to Boise to Ogden (north of Salt Lake City) so it goes on the faster route to Cheyenne, Wyoming and then goes south to Denver to Pueblo, Colorado and then on the way to Texas. There is a lack of passenger rail that goes north to south in the western continental USA.</p>
2	12/23/22	Email	We do not want a rail going through Littlewater!!!
3	5/8/23	Online Comment Form	The route is unclear. Only shows existing line.
4	5/30/23	Online Comment Form	NO RAIL, TRAINS, AND FREIGHT THROUGH LITTLEWATER, SAN JUAN COUNTY.
5	5/30/23	Email	<p>All,</p> <p>We do not want a rail and trains going through our communities, specifically Littlewater, San Juan County, PERIOD.</p>

6	6/8/23	Email	<p>My company currently ships water to the Navajo Nation and a route deeper into the reservation would be amazing. We are looking at 100 car unit trains into this area if we had the rail access.</p> <p>If there is anything we can do to help facilitate this we would love to help.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
7	6/8/23	Email	<p>Seen you are having some additional meetings in June. Are any going to be held in the Farmington area again?</p>
8	6/8/23	Online Comment Form	<p>I am a rail shipper to the Gallup Region and have many potential customers in that area and would love to see this happen. If there is anything I can do to make this happen that would be great. Please let me know.</p>
9	6/13/23	Online Comment Form	<p>Just interested on the project, I've retired from BNSF in 2018 with 15 years of combined service, from 1969 to 1974, and 2009 to 2018, and retired with 34+ years with the BMLP railroad from 1974 to 2008, which was the coal hauling railroad from Page to Black Mesa, serving the Navajo Generating Station. Mainly involved with maintenance on both railroads.</p>
10	6/17/23	Online Comment Form	<p>Is this the beginning of a railroad from Gallup to I-70 north of Moab?</p>
11	6/22/23	Email	<p>I'm working on a story about the Four Corners Freight Rail project. Who would be the best person to speak to?</p> <p>Thanks</p>

Appendix C – Public Comments