

NM 159 Vehicle Restrictions Study & Analysis Public Meeting

October 5, 2023

The public meeting for the NM 159 Vehicle Restrictions Study & Analysis Public Meeting was held on Thursday, October 5th from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at the Glenwood Community Center. 31 attendees signed in and eight members of the project team were present. The Project Team presented a slideshow on a projector. Brad Julian from NMDOT welcomed everyone and provided a project overview and study purpose. Bert Thomas with Bohannon Huston went over the existing conditions and concerns, the vehicle tracking analysis, the conclusions and recommendations, and then opened the meeting to questions and comments.

Questions and comments are summarized below.

Vehicle Requirements

- There are over 90 signs in the 1st 9 miles. There is a 10 MPH sign and a 15 MPH sign as you get into town. One should be removed.
 - Response: Outdated signs will be removed as appropriate.
- The study needs to clarify whether vehicle length restrictions are measured as wheelbase or as overall length.
- There is a bridge at MP 9.15 that previously had a 7-ton weight limit placed on it. The community says it is in poor condition.
- General concern about what the vehicle length restrictions would mean for locals. (Would a large stock trailer be allowed, or would it need a permit?)
 - Response: It was mentioned that the permitting agency does offer multiple use oversize vehicle permits, and that may be an option for the locals. Some discussion took place as to whether a pilot car should be required or recommended for a vehicle over 30 feet in length.
- What is the weight limit for the road?
 - Response: Since the previous bridge structure necessitating the 7-ton weight limit was removed and replaced with a bridge that will accommodate a standard legal load the 7-ton weight limit is no longer applicable to the study corridor.
- The bridge at milepost 9.15 can't handle large vehicles.
- Is the mirror legal? It is dangerous.
 - Response: NMDOT needs to look into mirrors, they are not regulated.
- Can we require blue flags on trucks so we can see them?
- How do restrictions on vehicle length get enforced?

- Response: Law enforcement would pull over a vehicle if they believe that it exceeds the maximum length.
- How quickly can we get the signs up?
 - Response: The yellow caution signs can go up as soon as the district approves them. The white regulatory signs with restrictions need to be approved by the commission.
- The community would like to have some form of a follow-up meeting to discuss the final recommendations.
 - Response: It was mentioned that if the restrictions go in front of the commission, it would provide the community another opportunity to provide input and hear the findings.

Traffic

- The museum in Mogollon has 75 – 100 visitors every day.
 - Response: The vehicle count is an average – the 75 to 100 visitors are total number of people but the number of vehicles may be closer to 50 or fewer.
- Much of the traffic on NM 159 experiencing difficulties are vehicles using GPS services that route them along NM 159 as the shortest route. Google still thinks the road is 78 East, but it hasn't been since the 70s.
 - Response: District Engineer, Aaron Chavarria said the NMDOT has some contacts at Google and may be able to work with them to eliminate this suggested route.

Road Maintenance

- Curbs along NM 159 are not regularly cleaned. Vegetation has encroached on portions of the road and reduces usable driving area. The blade operator isn't clearing the ditches, snow melts and we get black ice.
 - Response: District Engineer replied that these will be addressed with the maintenance crews
- There were generally maintenance concerns of varying magnitude that the community expressed for the whole corridor.
- Mogollon is a tourist town and should welcome all these different people. Can we widen the road?
 - Response: Alternate funding options may be available for evaluating roadway improvements, however due to existing physical constraints, widening the existing roadway may not be feasible.
- Why didn't you fix the road 10 years ago when you repaired the bridge?
 - Response: We didn't have issues with our construction trucks on the road back then.

Road Conflicts

- There was a vehicle stuck on NM 159 last week. (Week of 9-25-2023)
- Over the years there have been 3+ 50' trailers routed along NM 159 by GPS services get stuck.
- A resident was driving along NM 159 when they came upon a non-local driver stopped in the road, laying on the ground having a panic attack. -They surmised that this was due to the roadway.

- An audience member suggested an alternate idea. The gentleman suggested developing a new roadway into Mogollon coming from Claremont (A location north of Mogollon) to reduce conflicts on NM 159. He claims that there is an existing dirt road which is a forest road for a portion of the way and an abandoned two-track for the rest of the way.
 - This is not within the scope of this study but the idea can be further discussed with the County and NMDOT District to determine if an alternate route might be possible.

A revised Study Report will be posted in the future with documentation of all public comment.

Project Team

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