



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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NDOT AND COUNSELOR CHAPTER KICK-OFF N46/N474 PAVING PROJECT



Counselor Chapter officials, NDOT, NM DOT, Sandoval County Public Works and community members discuss the N46/N474 Project.

COUNSELOR CHAPTER-On Thursday, February 27, the Navajo Division of Transportation and the Counselor Chapter held a kick-off meeting for a paving project that will improve Navajo Route 46 (N46) and Navajo Route 474 (N474).

The meeting was attended by representatives from NDOT's on-site engineering and design consultants Wilson and Company, New Mexico Department of Transportation, Sandoval County Public Works and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Eastern Agency.

The N46/N474 Project will design and construct 11.5 miles of roadway starting at the intersection of US 550 and N46, then south to the junction of N474 where it continues for approximately six miles.

Currently, the project has been allocated \$14.8 million in Tribal Transportation Improvement Plan funds which will cover the complete cost of design but will only cover paving the five mile stretch from US 550 south on N46. The total cost for paving the entire 11.5 miles is estimated at \$35.5 million.

The project faces a budget shortfall of approximately \$20.5 million which will be needed to complete the paving of N474.

Counselor Chapter Community Services Coordinator Samuel Sage said community members have called for improvement on these roads for decades. Sage is thankful that the project is actually getting started.

"This kick-off is a long time coming. I believe some chapter officials have been pushing for this project since the mid-70s," Sage said. "Our community members see surveyors out on the road and get excited only to be disappointed when they don't return. Today our community members are very excited that it's going to happen."

During stormy and winter conditions, the road is subject to being muddy and impassable. Because the roads are school bus routes, they affect attendance and Sage said this project will benefit education.

Both Counselor Chapter President Harry Domingo and Vice-President Laura Lopez said they were thankful that the project is starting.



Counselor community members give their input on the proposed alignment.

Lopez, who was raised in Counselor Chapter, said the community is appreciative.

“People are struggling on these roads,” she said. “There is a lot of wear and tear on vehicles from the road.”

NDOT Principal Engineer Daryl Bradley said one purpose of the meeting was to introduce the design team to the chapter.

“Working together and moving forward, the chapter will have a better idea of what the design looks like,” Bradley

said. “After completing design, the project will be bid out for construction.”

Accordingly, the project is in the beginning phase of design and proposed alignment. At the meeting, chapter members were able to look at the proposed alignment and provide their input.

NDOT and the Counselor Chapter estimate that construction will begin in 2021.

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