

APPENDIX D: ENHANCING FEDERAL LANDS ACCESS

ENHANCED QUALITY OF LIFE AND ECONOMIC VITALITY THROUGH IMPROVED FEDERAL LANDS ACCESS

This 2045 MTP update is taking a closer look at the needs and priorities associated with the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) and Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP). Like the bigger pot of federal funds allocated to NMDOT and the Local Planning Agencies (LPAs) on an annual basis, the FLTP and FLAP are also funded by the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). The HTF is funded by a federal tax that collects 18 cents per every gallon purchased nationwide. The Federal Lands Highway Division (FLH) of the FHWA administers the FLTP and FLAP in close partnership with the following federal agencies:

- National Park Service (NPS)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)



The table below shows a breakdown of FLTP funding among these federal agencies nationwide. The NPS, FWS, USFS are non-competitive partners while the remaining three partners have to compete annually for their portion of the FLTP. For the non-competitive partners, the funds are further sub-allocated based on agency processes.

Federal Agencies FLTP Funding

	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	Total
NPS	\$268M	\$276M	\$248M	\$292M	\$300M	\$1.420B
FWS	\$30M	\$30M	\$30M	\$30M	\$30M	\$150M
USFS	\$15M	\$16M	\$17M	\$18M	\$18M	\$85M
BLM, USACE, BOR and IFAs	\$22M	\$23M	\$24M	\$25M	\$26M	\$120M
Total	\$335M	\$345M	\$355M	\$365M	\$375M	\$1.775B

It is important to recognize that the FLTP is stretched very thin when compared to the amount of road miles each agency has to manage for public access. For example, the USFS has approximately 65,000 miles of road it maintains as primary public access and it will only receive

\$18M in 2020.³⁴ Similarly, the BLM has approximately 45,000 miles, and the other two competitive partners (USACE and BOR) manage networks that are approximately 5,000 and 3,000 miles respectively. Thus, there is only \$26M available for about 53,000 miles of road managed by the competitive partners. The NPS and FWS (5,000 and 4,000 miles respectively) are strategically better positioned funding wise with network sizes similar to USACE and BOR and available funding set at higher levels. However, regardless of network size and available FLTP funding, each agency struggles to meet all their transportation needs. Local Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) offices throughout the state must compete regionally or nationally amongst the other offices in their respective agencies to get their projects funded.

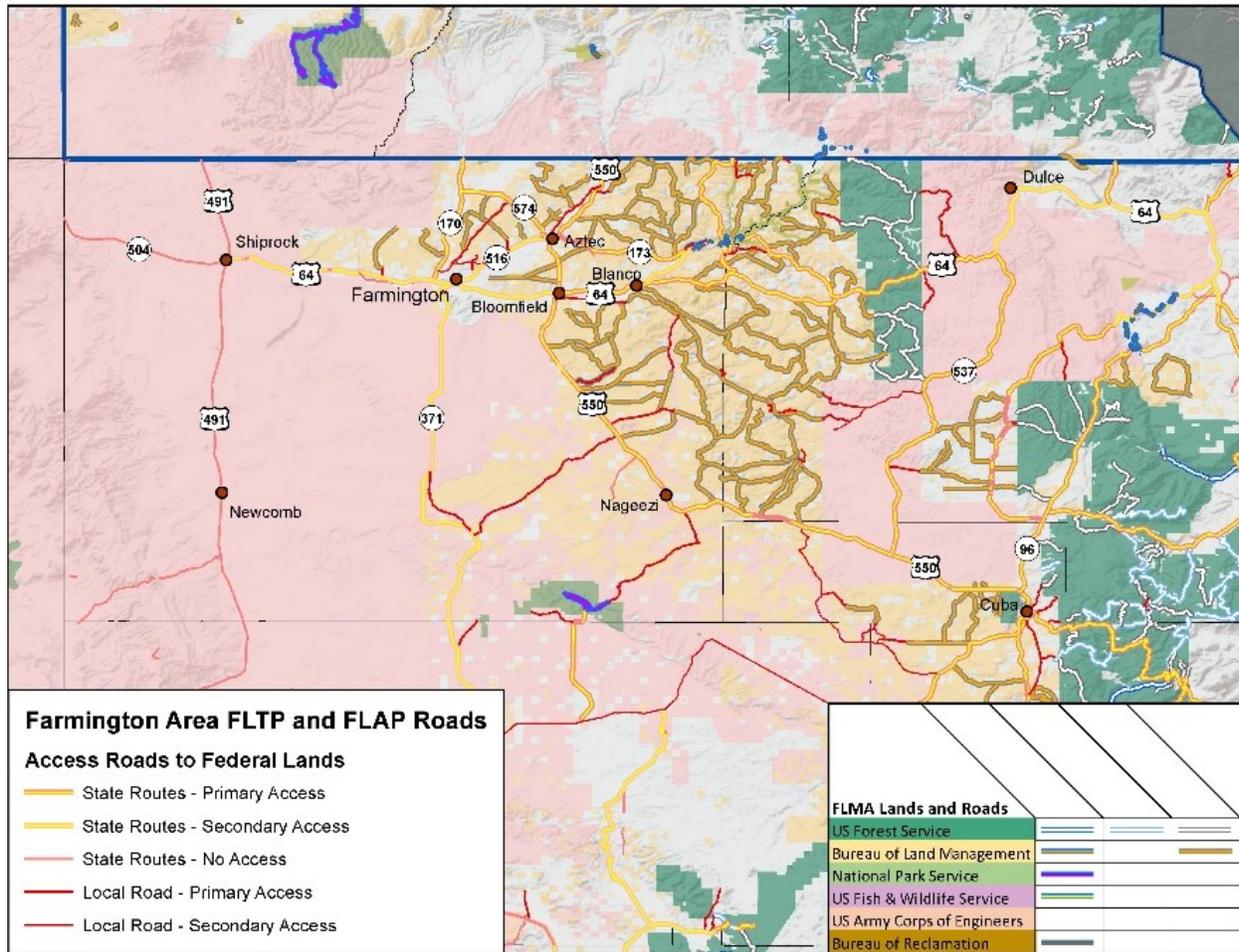
In comparison, the FLAP receives \$270M per year nationally of which the state of New Mexico receives \$7.9M. While the FLTP is prioritized by these federal agencies, the FLAP is prioritized by Program Decision Committees (PDCs) set up in each state. Projects are selected through competitive calls for projects that occur approximately every two years.

The correspondent map shows the primary public access network and FLTP color coded by the federal agency that owns the routes. The red and gold routes represent the state and local routes that provide primary access to the FLTP and are eligible to receive funding through the FLAP. Three critical considerations need to be made when looking at these routes:

1. The priorities for the FLTP routes are determined by the federal agencies that own them and those set priorities are one of the main factors that influence how FLAP funding will be allocated.
2. For projects that are identified on the state routes highlighted in gold, there is an opportunity to leverage FLAP funding with other pots of funding managed by the FMPO and NMDOT.
3. For projects that are identified on the local routes highlighted in red, FLAP provides a rare opportunity for local agencies to receive federal funding for their roads to the extent that those projects can be shown to enhance primary access to the adjacent federal lands and align with the priorities of the federal agency in charge of those lands and a portion of FLTP funding.

³⁴ There are 370,000 miles of FS roads, 267,000 miles of which are open to public motorized use. 65,000 miles are open and maintained for use by low clearance (passenger car) vehicles, and thereby considered “public roads” as defined by 23 CFR 460.2(c) or 660.103. Of those 65,000 miles of public roads only 29,000 miles are designated as FLTP roads and therefore eligible for the \$18M. Also within that funding level are 30,000 miles of FLTP trails. Separately, I think it is important to communicate that the FLTP program is intended to fund improvements, not maintenance. The different levels of maintenance standards within the 370,000 miles of FS roads are balanced against our appropriated funding for maintenance. Improving a road under FLTP does not particularly relate to our fiscal ability to meet maintenance needs. In the big picture, we should consider that some FLTP projects may actually lead to an increase in maintenance costs. With the same maintenance funding levels, that could result in a lower standard of maintenance elsewhere, and potentially a reduction in mileage of public roads.

FMPO Area FLTP and FLAP Roads



From a planning process standpoint, the differing approach to project prioritization and selection between the FLTP and FLAP creates several challenges in terms of aligning project priorities among FLTP partners and the PDCs in each state. In New Mexico, the PDC is made up of a tri-party member group that includes representatives from FLH, NMDOT, and a person from the Association of Counties. Additionally, FLH convenes a Transportation Advisory Group (TAG) to help evaluate the projects submitted during each FLAP call for projects. The TAG is comprised of a representative from each federal agency, and while TAG members are not formally part of the PDC, they are very influential in the project selection process.

NEXT STEPS – FEDERAL LANDS TRANSPORTATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND PRIORITIZATION

Now that the inventory of FLTP and FLAP routes have been identified, the next steps in the planning process are to assess the needs associated with these network segments and prioritizing them for eventual project development. In this process, it is important to recognize the limitations in the availability of funding that all agencies grapple with and the importance of understanding the varying priorities and land management goals that exists within the federal agencies involved.

In terms of assessing needs and prioritizing them, the next step will focus on working with the Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMAs), NMDOT, and MPO/RTPO Members to **conduct a virtual Needs Assessment workshop** to identify a preliminary set of transportation project needs intended to enhance access to the federal lands in the FMPO area and surrounding region. Areas within the FMPO area transportation network where there might be overlap in needs between the FLTP, FLAP, and the bigger pot of NMDOT funding are of particular interest. Using the established forums and other engagement opportunities built into the transportation planning process, the FLMAs hope to work with NMDOT and the members of the adjacent jurisdictions to move the most important FLTP and FLAP needs identified into the project development pipeline.