

AGENDA ITEM SUBMITTAL

Otero County Commission

Submitted by: RB Nichols, County Attorney

Meeting date: Thursday, May 11, 2023

Subject:	Request approval of Resolution No. 5-11-23/111-55 approval to apply for Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program (DCIP) grant for La Luz Gate Road Project.
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Research/Background:

The US Department of Defense (DoD) Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program (DCIP) has is a grant to assist State and local governments to address deficiencies in community infrastructure supportive of a military installation and has developed an application procedure whereby the Governmental Unit may submit an application for financial assistance. Otero County applied for this grant in 2022 but was unsuccessful. This year Otero County's proposal is much more thorough and stands a greater chance of success.

There are three gates that provide entry to the Holloman AFB via two roadways: US 54/70 provides access to two gates and La Luz Gate Road provides access to the third gate. As a major transportation corridor, US 54/70 is vulnerable to congestion, and when accidents occur, especially those involving heavy vehicles that transport hazardous materials, the highway may close. In the event of such closures, one or both of the gates off of US 54/70 will not be reachable, and all Holloman AFB traffic diverts to La Luz Gate Road, minimizing potential disruptions to logistical operations and other operations.

However, La Luz Gate Road requires reconstruction in order to continue to provide, first and foremost, safe and reliable access to Holloman AFB. Otero County is requesting \$16,905,668.37 for the La Luz Road Reconstruction Project through a grant from the Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot (DCIP) Program. The DCIP Program is designed to address deficiencies in community infrastructure, supportive of a military installation, in order to enhance military value, installation resilience, and military family quality of life.

This project's improvements ultimately safeguard and enhance the base's military value and resilience while improving quality of life, safety, economic, environmental, and social equity outcomes. These benefits to the military installation likewise benefit the surrounding underserved communities in which the base's servicemembers and civilian employees live, work, and play. The La Luz Gate Road Reconstruction project enhances current and future mission capabilities by ensuring a safe, reliable route of entry to and exit from Holloman AFB. The existing conditions of the roadway may put at risk the operational readiness of this installation, notably during extreme weather events which, in turn, may compromise operational readiness of the Department of Defense's total force (including joint warfighting). Because the La Luz Gate deals with industrial vehicles, it is essential to improve La Luz Gate Road so that the availability and condition of Holloman AFB land, facilities, and airspace are adequately maintained.

As determined by the drainage, environmental, and traffic reports already completed, La Luz Gate Road is in imminent need of reconstruction. Risks of flooding due to insufficient drainage infrastructure along the roadway and undersized culvert crossings beneath the roadway endanger the safety and operations of the installation, its servicemembers and their families, its workforce, and visitors. The proposed improvements:

- Contribute to continued smooth logistical operations, such as transferring personnel and materials, in support of ongoing deployment and the installation's ability to effectively respond to emerging threats.
- Enable La Luz Gate Road to handle the extra wear and tear from the existing flow of heavy vehicles.
- Enable La Luz Gate Road to handle increased heavy traffic in the event that US 54/70 closes, preventing access through the south and west gates.

The La Luz Gate Road Reconstruction project will enhance the quality of life for Holloman AFB servicemembers, their families, and the installation's workforce in myriad ways. The proposed improvements:

Increase roadway safety.

- Reduces the risk for fatalities and injuries on La Luz Gate Road for all users.
- Reduces congestion and related accidents on US 54/70 by maintaining a dependable, safe alternate route.
- Provides a safer route to schools for servicemembers whose children are enrolled in public and private schools throughout the community.
- Reduces workforce and family stress, which typically increases productivity.

Maintain access to Holloman AFB.

- Provides dependable, safe access to the installation for the significant portion of the Otero County population that is employed by Holloman AFB.
- Provides economic and environmental benefits to the installation workforce and the wider community.

Provide economic and environmental benefits.

- Members of the workforce who commute from Historically Disadvantaged areas and live closer to the gate off of La Luz Gate Road than the gates off of US 54/70 will have a shorter commute, saving gas and time.
- Maintaining this alternate route reduces traffic volumes on US 54/70 and associated negative impacts to the environment.

Fiscal Impact/Funding Sources:

Staff/Department Recommended Actions:

County Attorney Review (*if needed*):

Supporting Documents/Attachments/Links

RESOLUTION NO. 5-11-23/111-55