

MINUTES
FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 25, 2011

Technical Members Present: Roshana Sullivan, City of Aztec (Alt.)
Brad Ellsworth, City of Bloomfield
Cindy Lopez, City of Farmington
Chico Quintana, City of Farmington (Alt.)

Staff Present: Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Martin Lucero, MPO Associate Planner
June Markle, MPO Administrative Aide

Technical Members Absent: Mike Huber, City of Aztec
Nica Westerling, City of Farmington
Dave Keck, San Juan County

Staff Absent: Mary L. Holton, MPO Officer

Also Present: Phil Gallegos, Assistant District Engineer, NMDOT
Ray Matthew, Planning Liaison, NMDOT
Linda Sillers, San Juan Center for Independence
Larry McCabe, San Juan Center for Independence
Blaine Watson, Animas Environmental Services

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lopez called the meeting to order at 10:03 am.

2. APPROVE THE MINUTES FROM THE JULY 27, 2011 JOINT POLICY & TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

Mr. Ellsworth made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2011 Joint Policy & Technical Committee meeting. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

3. RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF THE FY2012 UPWP BUDGET AMENDMENT

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item

Subject:	FY2012 UPWP Budget Amendment
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner

Date: August 17, 2011

BACKGROUND or PREVIOUS WORK

- The MPO prepared its FY2012 Budget based on initial funding estimates from NMDOT for FHWA PL and FTA 5303.
- Work Authorizations have been received by the MPO with official amounts for PL and 5303 funding.
- The MPO will continue to receive a base amount of \$175,213 in federal PL.
- Federal PL funding for the traffic count program will remain at \$10,680.

CURRENT WORK

- Special PL obligation funds are being provided to the MPO and the federal portion is \$76,544.
- The MPO will have \$11,734 in FY2011 federal PL carryover.
- The MPO is receiving a base amount of \$23,096 in federal FTA 5303 funding.
- In addition, the MPO federal portion of the Unexpended 5303 funds is \$6,729.
- The additional federal amounts and required matches are increasing the MPO budget from \$294,173 to \$358,175.
- Overall, the MPO budget will increase by \$64,002.
- The MPO anticipates using the additional federal funds primarily for corridor studies identified in the FY2012 UPWP.

ATTACHMENTS

- The FY2012 UPWP Budget Amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Technical Committee recommend approval of the amendment to the FY2012 UPWP Budget.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Delmagori reviewed the MPO FY2012 Budget Amendment. The FY2012 Budget was based on initial funding estimates from NMDOT for FHWA PL and FTA 5303. Mr. Delmagori stated that work authorizations have now been received and the base amount for federal PL will remain the same at \$175,213 as will the traffic counts at \$10,680. The Farmington City Council approved \$294,173 for the overall MPO budget. Since April, however, additional PL monies of \$76,544 have been given to the MPO with an additional \$11,734 in PL carryover. The NMDOT Transit Bureau also provided an additional \$6,729 in unexpended 5303 funds. Mr. Delmagori stated that with these additional federal amounts, the MPO had more funds than they were allowed to spend. A budget amendment was requested of the Farmington City Council and the overall MPO budget was increased to \$358,175 which now allows the MPO to spend all the federal money as well as the required local match.

Mr. Delmagori said the FY2012 budget is the largest the MPO has had. Additionally, this is the largest amount of federal money the MPO has had, which subsequently drops the amount of local dollars that will have to be contributed. The final FY2012 maximum

total local contribution is \$54,179. This information has been given to the finance departments of each local entity for their budget purposes.

ACTION: Mr. Ellsworth moved to recommend approval of the amendment to the FY2012 UPWP Budget. Ms. Sullivan seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

4. RECEIVE A REPORT ON RED APPLE TRANSIT DATA COLLECTION ACTIVITIES

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION Agenda Item

Subject:	Red Apple Transit Data Collection
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	August 17, 2011

BACKGROUND or PREVIOUS WORK

- The MPO and Red Apple Transit worked with LSC Consultants to determine future transit needs and make recommendations for expansion options.
- LSC Consultants developed recommended options for both the regional and Farmington routes for modifying and expanding the existing system.
- Development of the transit study illustrated the need for transit data collection.
- The information will be used to further justify the recommendations made in the Red Apple Transit Study.
- Two interns were hired for the summer to collect transit passenger data.

CURRENT WORK

- All of the routes (Farmington and regional routes) have been tracked twice this summer.
- Passenger counts and transfer information have been taken at key bus stops, such as Orchard Plaza and the Civic Center.
- Staff is summarizing the data to determine trends and primary origins and destinations.

ATTACHMENTS

- Staff will present some of its initial findings at the August 25 Technical Committee meeting.

ANTICIPATED WORK

- Data will continue to be collected in September to see how ridership changes when school is in session.
- Staff will evaluate the collected data for any correlations between social economic factors and riders.
- Staff will evaluate the need within this region for a transit system.
- Staff will try to estimate the number of unique riders on the Red Apple.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Staff will give presentations to councils and commissions. |
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RECOMMENDATION

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It is recommended that the Technical Committee receive a report on Red Apple Transit data collection activities. |
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DISCUSSION: Mr. Delmagori re-stated that the Red Apple Transit Study completed earlier this year by LSC Consultants showed the need for additional ridership data collection. Staff receives monthly totals from First Transit, but there is no specific stop-to-stop or origin/destination information. To collect the needed data, the MPO hired two interns to ride the Red Apple buses throughout the summer to collect boarding and alightment data. This latest information was collected from late June to mid-August. Data will continue to be collected throughout September and possibly into October to compare trends and to ensure San Juan College ridership numbers are captured.

Mr. Lucero reported that the ridership numbers are for the previous seven-week period. Not every route was collected for those seven weeks, but most routes have been counted at least two times to provide a two-week snapshot of the route. When route data was collected it was for a consecutive three-day period. This three-day period was usually a Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday since those days better represent a typical rider's normal routine. Data on those days was typically collected during three peak timeframes: early in the morning, during the midday, and in the late afternoon. All three of the Farmington routes were counted during these timeframes on Saturday, but none of the regional routes was counted on Saturday.

Mr. Lucero reviewed data collected for the Red Route. Patterns were noted and specific riders can almost be pinpointed based on these patterns. Ridership appeared to be down on the Red Route and Staff believes this was due to classes not being in session at San Juan College during the summer months. Once the September data is gathered, Staff hopes to see a more accurate picture of the Red Route.

Mr. Lucero said that Staff should be able to confidently back out the transfers and pass rides, and develop unique rider information that entities have been seeking, and determine the percentage of population that is using the transit system. Staff is also attempting to understand where riders are transferring from and where they trying to ultimately get to. On the Red Route the "hot spots" are the transfer locations (Civic Center, Orchard Plaza and Smith's). The State Office Building is also a popular stop, even more so than the Civic Center. Mr. Lucero explained that the State Office Building stop used to be on the Green Route and it appears that now people are getting off the Green Route at the Civic Center and transferring to the Red Route to ride to the State Office Building. The data collected so far shows that most riders on the Red Route are making short trips and are not using it for a complete round trip. Mr. Lucero said that Staff will try to determine how these riders then return to their starting point.

Mr. Lucero reported on the Green Route statistics. He noted that the Green Route has double the ridership of the Red Route. The Green Route hits all the housing and

transit-dependent neighborhoods. Mr. Lucero noted that except for the airport and City Hall, there are no dead stops along the Green Route. The Green Route stops in all the community areas and many riders transfer from this route to get to a final destination. Overall the Green Route is healthy and appears to be functioning correctly.

Mr. Lucero next discussed the Express (Blue) Route. On the front side of this route, riders are using it mainly to go from Orchard Plaza to either the Mall or Wal-Mart, although all the stops in between are being accessed. On the “back trip”, however, Mr. Lucero noted that most riders return directly to Orchard Plaza. This route serves as destination points for riders because of all of the shopping centers it goes to. It doesn’t appear, however, that riders are able to use this route to get to their destination point from their homes, but must transfer to the Express Route to get to their end destination.

Mr. Lucero noted a drop in ridership on the Bloomfield Regional Route that could be due to school being out for the summer or to the road construction along US 64. This route is being used as a commuter route and not for internal circulation within the City of Bloomfield.

The Aztec Regional Route is similar to the Bloomfield Route in that riders are using it to go straight into Farmington and back. Mr. Lucero stated that riders are boarding at one location in Aztec, but on the return trip they are alighting at a different location. This could mean that a transit rider gets a ride over to the Aztec Safeway to catch the Red Apple. On their return trip, with no ride available to take them back to their original starting point, they get off at the closest bus stop to their destination and walk from there.

Mr. Lucero reported that the Kirtland Regional Route is also similar to the other two Regional Routes in that more riders use it to return to Kirtland than are using it to get into Farmington. Mr. Lucero noted that riders could be getting a ride into Farmington, but rely on the Red Apple to get back out to Kirtland.

Mr. Lucero said that approximately 2,200 trips have been counted this summer accounting for a sizeable portion of the overall Red Apple routes. Staff believes this a statistically sound view of summer ridership and plans to now track fall ridership data with the schools back in session. From this information and from the monthly rider totals received from First Transit, Staff will work to draw appropriate conclusions and create an accurate ridership percentage.

Ms. Lopez asked if Staff had attempted to calculate the unique rider. Mr. Lucero said Staff is working on several valid approaches that could be used to calculate the unique rider. Mr. Delmagori stated that what should also help in determining this information is that for the next two weeks the interns will be at transfer points tracking where riders transfer to and from. This data should also provide a good snapshot of the peak season vs. the off season. Mr. Lucero added that there were other changes happening such as the relocation of the San Juan Center for Independence, possibly moving the current stops and adding on-demand stops to the routes.

Ms. Sillers asked about para-transit. Mr. Lucero said that information had not been gathered. Adult riders were tracked as an adult and a child rider was tracked as a child. Staff did want some demographics, so riders were tracked as either adult male, adult female, or child. Ms. Sillers also asked about a reverse route. Mr. Lucero replied that this had been discussed with First Transit recently. First Transit is working to determine if headways in both directions would be detrimental to riders because of the hour-long turnaround time. They are trying to determine what would be more convenient for riders as the current fleet is unable to keep the headways at one-half hour increments and still have buses travelling in both directions.

Ms. Sillers commented that riders had waited for an hour at Orchard Plaza or the Civic Center when the scheduled bus did not arrive. She added that ridership would pick up if service was more dependable. Mr. Lucero stated that Staff believes that First Transit is working to improve the dependability of the service and are considering the purchase of two new smaller vehicles to improve the overall dependability of the fleet. Ms. Sillers also added her concerns about the hospital stop. She stated that it is very difficult for a disabled individual to access the stop because they must first get across the street and then go up a set of stairs. Mr. Delmagori and Mr. Lucero responded that they would again bring this concern to the attention of First Transit.

Ms. Sillers said she is grateful to have the Red Apple Transit, but believes there are improvements that still need to be made. Mr. Delmagori said improving the system's efficiency is part of what this summer's data collection hopes to achieve.

ACTION: The report was received.

5. RECEIVE A REPORT FROM NMDOT

DISCUSSION: Mr. Phil Gallegos reported that at the Joint Policy and Technical Committee Meeting held in July, Mr. Miguel Gabaldon committed to providing a list of maintenance accomplishments in the MPO for the past ten years and establishing a priority list of projects. NMDOT will have this list ready to present to the Technical Committee at the September meeting.

Mr. Gallegos said that NMDOT would be sending the MPO an administrative adjustment for the year-end closeout project at the Troy King intersection. The project cost has now been set at \$1,000,000 rather than the original estimate of \$2,000,000. The bid for this project is expected to go out in October or November. Mr. Gallegos also stated that NMDOT anticipates having enough money to take the NM 516 pavement project through Aztec.

Mr. Gallegos reported a new construction phase of US 64 in Bloomfield. Beginning with the first week of September the traffic control is changing. The roadway will be taken down to three lanes; one lane in each direction with a continuous left-turn lane. NMDOT hopes this change will help with the problem of rear-end collisions in the construction zone.

Mr. Gallegos said that the year-end closeout is going smoother this year thanks to the established protocols.

Mr. Ray Matthew said that there has been a new proposed bill that would be a two-year continuation of the current federal funding bill. Passage of this bill would be good since current federal funding levels are fairly high. He reported that other bills talked of cutbacks and all the bills, including this proposed bill, speak to collapsing categories. He said each state would have nine broad program areas and they would have the discretion to choose to fund those categories as they saw fit. Currently many of the categories have set amounts which are determined by formulas. The planning funds under the continuation bill would stay about the same. Mr. Matthew added that the current formula was altered to favor the smaller MPOs which he believes has benefitted FMPO by allowing them to receive a larger share of PL funds.

Mr. Matthew commented on the ozone situation and proposed legislation. The old standards were established during the Bush Administration which superseded the recommendations of the EPA and went with a much higher ozone standard. The EPA has since reviewed these standards and now has a recommended range. Both San Juan County and Rio Arriba County would be in non-compliance with any new ozone standard. The announcement of the new regulations was postponed a year ago, and Mr. Matthew stated they just received another postponement announcement. He said this issue is currently mired in politics and he would keep the Technical Committee up to date on the issue. If a new standard is implemented, planning requirements would have to be changed.

Mr. Lucero asked if Roswell had met the population density level to become an MPO. Mr. Matthew said that NMDOT's preliminary examination of the census data shows that they have. He added that NMDOT would not take any action until the official notice from the U. S. Census Bureau is released. Mr. Delmagori said that the official data for urban areas is not expected to be published until next year. Mr. Matthew stated he believed the Census Bureau was modifying the definition of "urban area". He said there had been a key change in the definition of contiguous urban area which is how Farmington became an MPO. The result was that Aztec, Bloomfield, and parts of San Juan County could be included as part of the MPO definition. Mr. Delmagori added that there has been no further discussion about the tier system for MPOs based on population.

Ms. Lopez asked about the collapsing of the federal categories and whether that meant the State or communities would decide on funding for the different categories. Mr. Matthew said all the legislation he has seen on this issue gives the State the authority to decide how much would be funded and which categories would be funded. Mr. Gallegos added that should this legislation pass, District 5 funding of TPE projects would likely stay the same as this program has been very beneficial to the smaller communities. Mr. Gallegos did state that if the target amount is reduced, than program funds would have to be cut and all available funds then used to maintain driving surfaces. If funds were to be cut severely, NMDOT would go into a maintenance mode except for completing required ADA upgrades. Mr. Matthew said that the continuation bill is the most favorable, but with this bill Congress must put money back into the highway trust fund which typically results in a political battle.

ACTION: The reports were received.

6. REVIEW THE 2011 TRAFFIC COUNT LOCATION LIST

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION Agenda Item

Subject:	2011 Traffic Count Program
Prepared by:	Martin Lucero, MPO Associate Planner
Date:	August 17, 2011

BACKGROUND

- The MPO maintains traffic counts for 221 locations throughout the MPO boundaries.
- Locations are taken according to a three year cycle and periodically change due to the deletion or addition of various locations.
- The 2011 Traffic counts are the second year of the three year cycle.
- Counts that were not approved last year or were affected by road construction will be counted in 2011.
- The MPO expects to take 87 volume counts in 2011.
- The MPO anticipates that speed and class count information will be provided for 27 of the 87 count locations.

CURRENT WORK

- The traffic count list was reviewed and approved by the Policy and Technical committees in May and June.
- The location list is attached for final review, particularly for any locations that might conflict with road construction projects.
- The MPO will work with TRA to schedule the counts in September and October.

ATTACHMENTS

- The 2011 traffic count location list.

RECOMMENDATION

- Staff recommends that the Technical Committee review the 2011 Traffic Count Location list.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Lucero stated that the 2011 traffic counts are scheduled for the end of September. The contractor will take the majority of the counts during the first visit and will make a second visit to re-set any counts that fail. The MPO expects to take 87 volume counts and that speed and class count information will be provided for 27 of the 87 count locations. Mr. Lucero asked the Technical Committee members to review the list of locations to be counted this year. There are a few locations in Farmington and one in Bloomfield that Staff would like verification on:

- Apache from Auburn to Dustin
- Apache from Dustin to Butler
- Dustin from Apache to Ute
- Ute from Dustin to Butler
- US 64 from US 550 (First St.) to CR 4899 (Bloomfield)

Ms. Lopez will check on each of the Farmington locations identified and notify Staff. Mr. Lucero stated that Staff tries to ensure the location list is accurate for the consultant and swaps out locations beforehand if there are known construction issues. This ensures the most counts are taken each year. Mr. Ellsworth said he was not aware of any traffic flow issues that would disrupt the Bloomfield traffic count noted above.

ACTION: The Traffic Count Location List was reviewed.

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION Agenda Item

Subject:	Information Items
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	August 17, 2011

INFORMATION ITEMS

- FY2011 Performance & Expenditure Report.** The year-end report that summarizes MPO planning work and budget expenditures has been provided to NMDOT, FHWA, FTA, and the local entities. It is available on the MPO website.
- Small MPO Peer Exchange on Traffic Modeling.** Joe Delmagori has been invited by FHWA to attend this discussion on modeling needs and capacities for small MPOs. The meeting will be held in Washington DC on August 29-30.
- FHWA Training on Environmental Justice and Performance Measures.** Staff attended this training in El Paso on August 3-4. The training outlined elements of environmental justice that need to be in the MTP and Public Participation Plan. Examples of performance measures were discussed in anticipation of potential requirements that might be in the new federal transportation bill.
- Other.**

DISCUSSION: Mr. Delmagori stated that the MPO's FY2011 Performance & Expenditure Report has been distributed to the governing agencies and is available for viewing on the MPO webpage.

Mr. Delmagori was invited by the FHWA to attend a small MPO peer exchange on traffic modeling needs that will be held in Washington, D.C. on August 29-30. There will be MPO representatives from various regions in the country. The purpose is to discuss how the MPOs use their models, what is and is not working, what resources are needed, and what type of challenges are faced by having an effective model on hand. Mr. Delmagori and Mr. Lucero attended a FHWA training meeting in El Paso in early August on environmental justice and performance measures. The environmental justice training focused on identifying low income and minority groups and some techniques to use for the Long-Range and Public Participation Plans. Much of what was discussed has already been achieved by Staff, but the information will help strengthen other areas of the MPO. Mr. Delmagori stated that the MPO's Public Participation Plan is up for renewal in another month with completion by January 2012. Staff will also review the MTP to see if there is any additional information to include regarding environmental justice.

Mr. Delmagori reported that the performance measures portion of the training was to provide information about the new transportation bill that could require MPOs to identify performance measures as they relate to safety, accessibility, and mobility. MPOs could now be required to set more specific, concrete targets and demonstrate achievement of those goals. No requirements have yet been published.

8. BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS AND STAFF

There was no additional business from the Chairman, Members or Staff.

9. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There was no additional business from the floor.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Sullivan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Quintana seconded the motion. Ms. Lopez adjourned the meeting at 10:55 a.m.

Cynthia Lopez, Chair

June Markle, MPO Administrative Aide