

INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS

Air, truck, and inter-city bus industries are essential components in the local economy and play a fundamental role in the Farmington transportation system. The Plan's modal system plans represent a comprehensive effort to build a multi-modal transportation system, but additional efforts are necessary to maintain the economic competitiveness and attractiveness of the region. Since many of these planning elements involve private sector entities, it is imperative to involve them in the planning process.

Freight

Coordination with private freight transportation providers, either through a task force or some other means, can provide the MPO with a wealth of information if done properly. Private companies are often hesitant to provide government entities with proprietary information. However, through their involvement they may see the virtue in sharing data, especially if it results in improvements to the transportation system that increase freight movement potential

Freight providers tend to be very knowledgeable about the bottlenecks in the system that hinder truck and other vehicle movements. In addition, they may be aware of signal timing, signage, or geometric (e.g., turning radii) deficiencies in the system. With their involvement, the MPO can develop a detailed list of improvement needs and incorporate them into the transportation improvement program (TIP) for implementation. While long-range freight planning is necessary, short-term results are also important in engaging and maintaining interest from freight providers.

Freight movements invariably impact land uses, especially along the corridors utilized by truck traffic. The level of impact is often intensified when sensitive re-

ceptors, such as neighborhoods, schools, parks, and so forth, occur along these high traffic routes. Proper long range planning and coordination with appropriate land use planners can serve to alleviate these impacts. This may include periodic designation and update of truck routes, implementation of additional limited-access roadway facilities, and other techniques.

Implementation

With the previous discussion in mind, the following actions and policies will ensure that intermodal transportation planning will occur in the FMPO area. Most of these actions take into account the need to work with the private freight moving companies to enable the best intermodal system is in place in Farmington.

INTERMODAL ACTION 1: COORDINATE FREIGHT ISSUES

The MPO should work with freight transportation companies operating in the region to identify specific deficiencies in the transportation system that hinders freight movements and to incorporate design elements for large trucks in roadway planning and design. In addition, coordination with NMDOT on freight issues could provide increased information regarding freight flows and improvement needs.

INTERMODAL ACTION 2: LAND USE CONSIDERATIONS

To the extent possible, heavy truck traffic should be separated from light vehicle traffic and sensitive land uses (e.g., neighborhoods, schools, parks, etc.). Industrial land uses should be isolated from residential and commercial areas. Land use planning activities for areas near the airport should carefully consider noise and other impacts so that only compatible uses occur.

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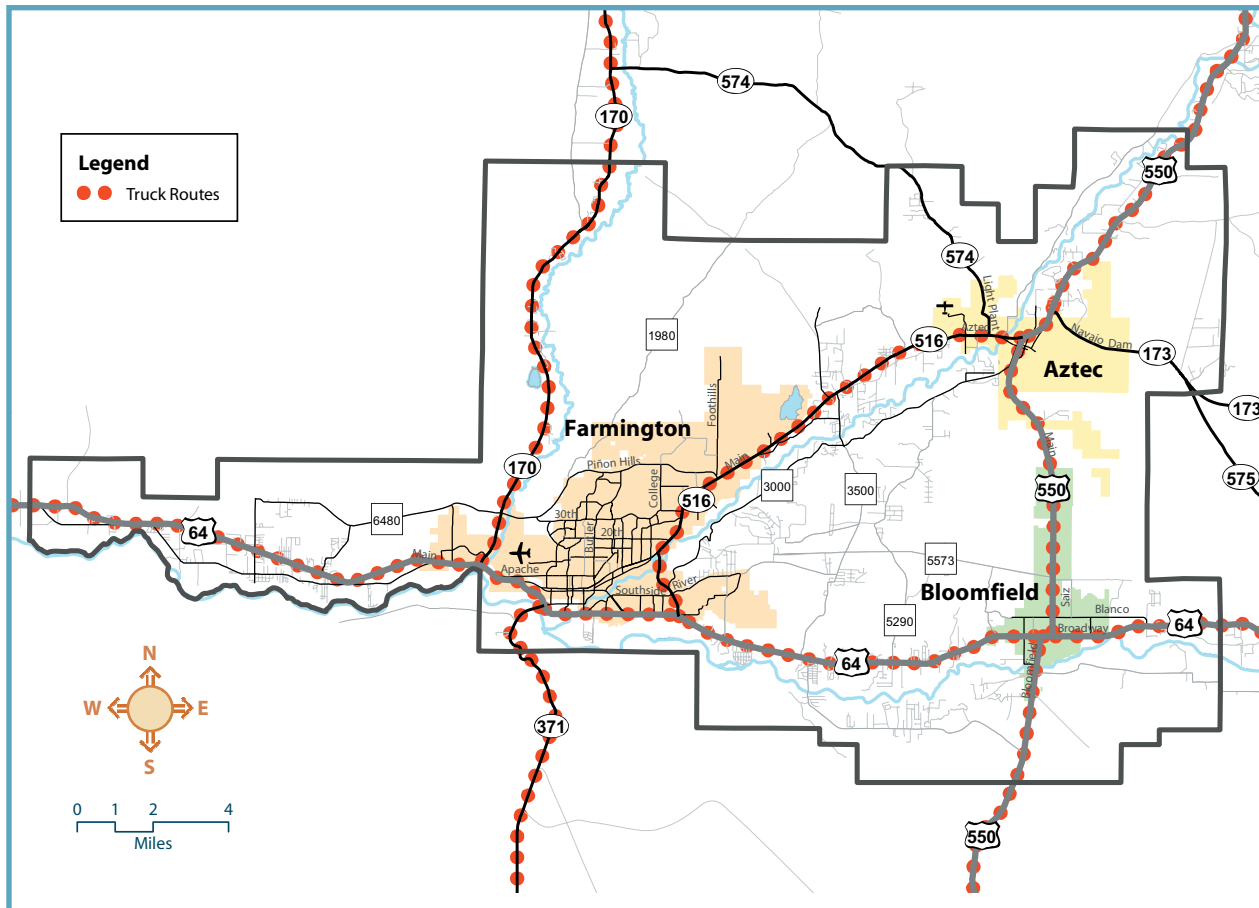
INTERMODAL ACTION 3: ROADWAY DESIGN AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Due to their large size, trucks and buses have special needs for moving through the transportation system. Roadway and access requirements for these vehicles should be considered in the design of intersections and interchanges. Roads in and around industrial areas should be designed specifically for the movement of large trucks.

INTERMODAL ACTION 4: DESIGNATED TRUCK ROUTES

Truck routes provide freight haulers with a network of the most efficient and least impacting locations for traveling through the Farmington region. Primary truck routes shall be only on US and State facilities and are shown in figure 10.1.

TRUCK ROUTES (fig. 10.1)



Air

The air needs of the Farmington MPO are served by two airports. The Four Corners Regional Airport serves the commercial airline needs in the region and also has general aviation operations. The Aztec Municipal Airport also serves the general aviation needs of the region.

Four Corners Regional Airport

Four Corners Regional Airport, located in western Farmington, is owned and managed by the City of Farmington. Currently, the airport serves the needs of three commercial airlines and includes general aviation operations as well. Those airlines account for eleven daily departures from Farmington.

The airport maintains three runways, two paved and one graded landing strip. Runway 5/23 is 6,500 feet long and 150 feet wide. Runway 7/25 is 6,704 feet long and is 100 feet wide. Runway 11/29 is a graded cross-wind landing strip which is 2,783 feet long and 100 feet wide. While runways 5/23 and 7/25 can accommodate turboprop aircraft, use of runway 11/29 is limited to only the smallest aircraft (small wingspan and low approach speeds), such as Cessna 172's, Cessna 180's, and similar aircraft.

The airport terminal is approximately 25,000 square feet and contains one departure and one arrival gate as well as airline ticket counters and offices, rental car counters and offices, and a restaurant (vacant as of September 2004). The airport also has aircraft rescue and fire fighting services, air traffic control tower, fixed based operations facilities, airport maintenance buildings, and aircraft storage and maintenance buildings.

Commercial airline service at the Four Corners Regional Airport has declined in the last decade, falling from 127,000 passengers served (arrivals and departures) in 1993 to 61,000 passengers in 2002. This decline can be attributed, in part, to the increased competitiveness of airline fares and resultant diversion of customers to Albuquerque, the move of Mesa Airlines' maintenance and headquarters facilities from Farmington to Phoenix, and the events of September 11, 2001. General aviation operations were estimated to be 157,000 operations in the year 2003, over twice the number of operations in 1992 (58,000).

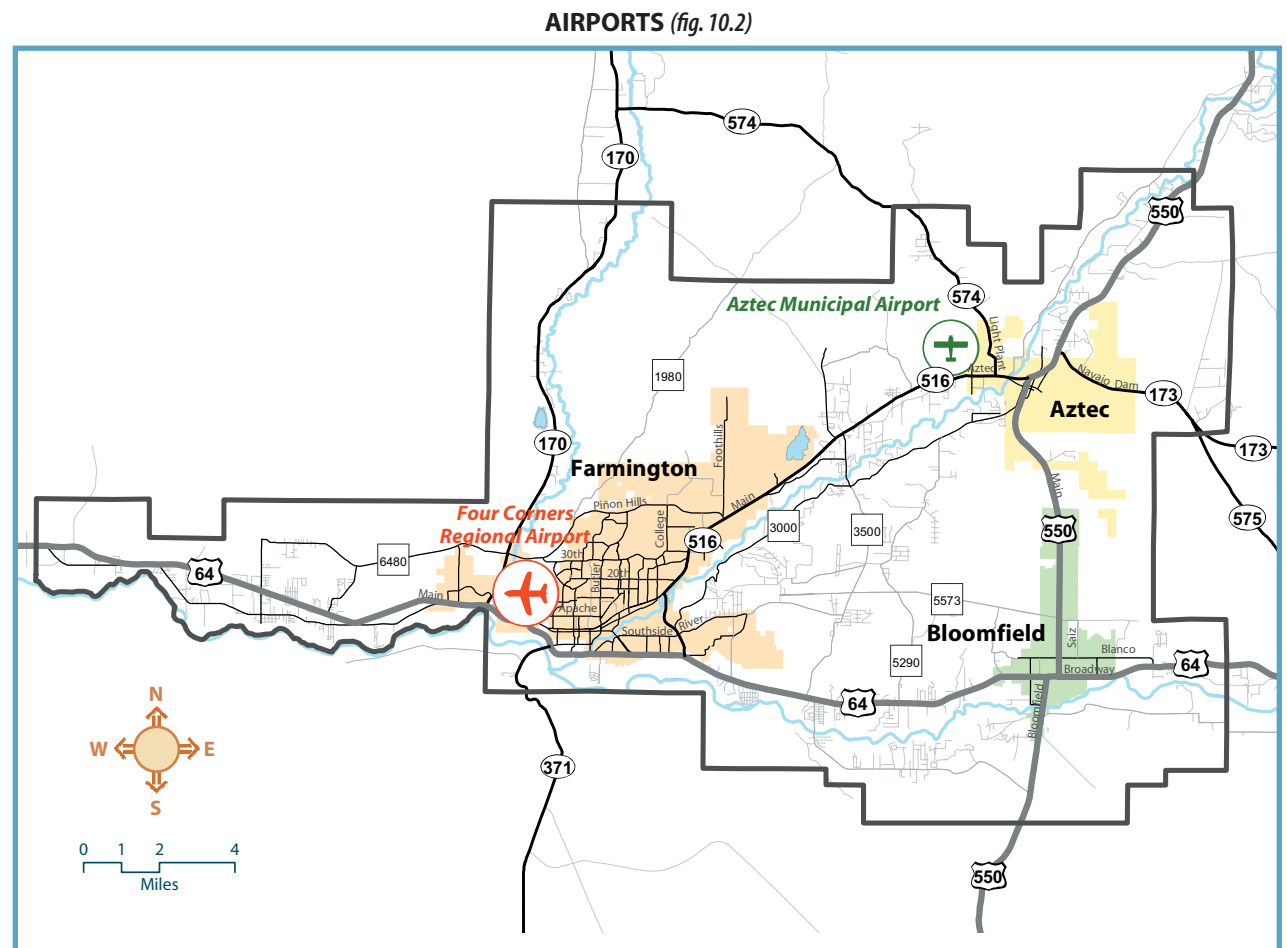
The Airport Master Plan completed in September 2004 recommends improvements to the runway facilities to ensure that FAA approved Runway Service Area requirements are met. The recommendations would maintain the length of Runway 7/25 and decrease the overall length of Runway 5/23. These improvements would continue to support the 19 seat Beechcraft 1900 turboprop aircraft that currently serve the commercial airline needs at the Four Corners Regional Airport.

The Airport Master Plan anticipates that by 2023, commercial airline service will have completely converted to jet service. This would require a longer runway or runways if commercial service is to be maintained at the airport. The maximum runway length possible utilizing the existing runways would be 7,250 feet and at a rather large cost. The regional jets most commonly in use in the United States require runway lengths of ap-

proximately 10,000 feet at the altitude of Farmington when operating at full capacity. Several smaller regional jets can operate with a 7,000 foot long runway, but they are uncommon in the United States.

The Airport Master Plan continues that if commercial airline service is to be served in Farmington in 2023, that either a new runway will need to be developed or the airport relocated. There is room for the airport to

expand to the north and lay out an acceptable 10,000 foot airstrip alignment. The proposed alignment would require the acquisition of approximately 647 acres of land and realignment of Piñon Hills Boulevard and 30th Street. It estimates an approximate cost of \$39 million. The Airport Master Plan recommends that a detailed preliminary engineering feasibility study of the proposed alignment be undertaken.



Aztec Municipal Airport

Aztec Municipal Airport is owned and managed by the City of Aztec and is located at the western edge of the Aztec. This general aviation airport maintains two paved runways. Runway 8/26 is the main runway and is 4,300 feet long and 50 feet wide. The crosswind runway is Runway 4/22 which is 2,850 feet long and 40 feet wide. Runway 8/26 has a retro-reflective landing light system which is visible from approximately 1.5 miles away when the approaching aircraft uses its landing lights. Services available at the airport include parking tie-downs and fuel (100 low-lead and Mo-Gas). Eight aircraft are currently based at the airport: six single engine airplanes and two ultralights. Aircraft operations average 23 take-offs/landings per week, with approximately 83% of those being transient operations and 17% local general aviation.