



1st Quarter 2012 Newsletter July- September 2011

RED APPLE TRANSIT DATA COLLECTION

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The MPO, Red Apple Transit and LSC Consultants worked together to determine future transit needs for the area. The final study, completed in early 2011, developed recommended options for the regional routes, as well as the three Farmington routes, to modify and expand the existing system. The development of the transit study illustrated the need for transit data collection.

The MPO hired two interns who worked through the summer and into October to collect this needed transit passenger data. The interns rode the bus and collected boardings and alightments at each stop. They also recorded where passengers began and ended their trips. All of the routes (Farmington and regional routes) were tracked at least twice during the summer usually on a Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday as those days are believed to best represent a typical rider's normal routine. Farmington routes were also counted on several Saturdays to provide a snapshot of weekend ridership. Passenger counts and transfer information were also taken at key bus stops, such as Orchard Plaza, the Civic Center, and Smith's.

After reviewing the data, the following observations have been noted:

- The majority of Green Route stops are being used throughout the day;
- The Red Route "hot spots" are the transfer locations; however, boardings and departures at San Juan College increased when school was back in session;
- The popular stops on the Express Route are the Mall, Walmart, and Safeway;
- All riders on the Regional Routes go either to or from Orchard Plaza. No one was observed using the bus for travel within the neighboring cities.

The information gathered will be used to further justify the recommendations made in the Red Apple Transit Study and to evaluate the need within this region for a transit system. Staff is summarizing the data to determine trends and primary origin and destination points. Staff will also evaluate the collected data for any correlations between social economic factors and riders, attempt to understand where riders are transferring from to reach their final destination, and try to estimate the number of unique riders on the Red Apple. Once all the data has been reviewed, the MPO Staff will make presentations to the local governments.





Farmington Fire and Police Department employees monitored school zones each morning and afternoon the first week of school to ensure motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians alike were following "safe routes to school" practices.



SRTS Champion, Debra Mayeux attended the National SRTS Convention in Minneapolis in August. She was able to make some great contacts, both local and national, and returned with valuable information on hosting and participating in bike rodeos and encouraging SRTS participation by rural/tribal schools



Student arrival counts were taken during September at Apache, Ladera, McKinley, and Mesa Verde elementary schools.



All four schools that participate in SRTS were registered for the International Walk to School Day which took place on October 5th. The turnout was good and prizes were given to each student who walked to school that day.



The Farmington Walk and Roll program was awarded a \$1,000 grant to develop a "no cell phone" zone at Ladera Elementary. The movement is a grassroots effort to stop all cell phone use within a pre-determined area around the school in the hopes of creating a safer environment for those students who walk to school. The program will be drafted by the 5th grade gifted program students at Ladera following the start of school. Once finalized, the program will be presented to the School Board and Farmington City Council for their review and approval. Once approved, it is hoped that "no cell phone" zones will spread to all Farmington elementary schools.



McKinley Elementary will host a walking school bus training on November 3rd led by National SRTS representatives. These representatives will actually walk neighborhood routes to the school and develop a "walking school bus" for McKinley students to participate in. They will teach those in attendance how to do the same in their own neighborhoods.



JOINT POLICY & TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING

The MPO Policy and Technical Committees in conjunction with NMDOT District 5 held a joint meeting on July 27th to develop some maintenance strategies and begin creating partnerships to address the crumbling state highways in the MPO. Two paving projects to be completed this year by NMDOT are:

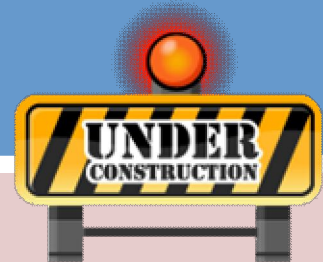
- NM 516 from mile marker 7.5 to 13.7 (from Flora Vista to Aztec)
- US 64 at Harper Hill from Troy King to NM 170

Other important outcomes of the meeting include:

- NMDOT hopes the special legislative session will dedicate some money to road maintenance that could be used for the upcoming fiscal years;
- Agreements are in place with San Juan County for maintenance;
- Maintenance for any future projects would be addressed on a project by project basis;
- There is a willingness from all parties to share resources, manpower, and equipment.

Further discussion and planning will take place with the NMDOT when they attend the MPO Technical Committee meeting in October. They are expected to review the road maintenance status over the past 5-10 years and, from that, develop a potential maintenance priority list through the MPO process.

MPO MAJOR THOROUGHFARE PLAN



After working with both the MPO Technical and Policy Committees and holding several public meetings in early 2011 with the Northeast Farmington community to present and discuss the alternatives, the MPO presented the preferred alternatives to the Farmington City Council in July. Alternative #3 of the Major Thoroughfare Plan was passed by the City Council on July 12.

At the Joint Policy/Technical Committee Meeting held on July 27, the Technical Committee, with minor revisions, recommended approval of Alternative #3 of the Major Thoroughfare Plan to the Policy Committee. The Policy Committee then voted unanimously to approve the Alternative. During September, presentations were made to the Aztec and San Juan County Commissions and the Bloomfield City Council. The three entities have approved the MPO Major Thoroughfare Plan.



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The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination.

Albert Einstein

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