

# INTRODUCTION

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), adopted by the Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is the long-range transportation plan for the urbanized region that includes the Cities of Aztec, Bloomfield, and Farmington as well as parts of San Juan County. The Plan identifies future transportation investments, policies, goals, and strategies for all modes of transportation. Through the projections of where people will live and work, the plan strives to achieve a balance among all modes of travel, such as the automobile, public transit, pedestrian and bicycle, aviation, and freight.

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan identifies specific services and projects for each mode of travel in order to create a balanced transportation system and one that meets the transportation needs of the region through 2035. Similar to virtually every community across the nation, anticipated revenues are not sufficient to fund all of the transportation needs. Therefore, projects have been prioritized for implementation so that the Plan can respond to financial constraints required by law.

The Farmington MPO adopted its first Metropolitan Transportation Plan in April 2005. This update is a continuation of the guiding document that creates the region's transportation framework for the next 25 years. The Farmington MPO is the formal regional transportation planning forum and is responsible for carrying out federal transportation regulations in order to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated, and continuing transportation planning process.



### **1.1) BACKGROUND**

The Farmington MPO is located in the northwest corner of New Mexico. The City of Farmington and the neighboring cities of Aztec and Bloomfield serve as the economic center for the Four Corners region. The MPO planning area is illustrated in Map 1-1. Several major highways connect this area to cities in New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado. The total estimated population in 2008 within the MPO planning area is approximately 98,000 people.

The Federal transportation bill - Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act - a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) - determines the planning activities of the MPO. SAFETEA-LU continues and enhances many of the planning guidelines set forth by the two previous transportation bills: ISTEA - Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (1991) and TEA-21 - Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (1998). The MPO works in cooperation with the local entities, the New Mexico Department of Transportation, and the local transit operator to develop the federally mandated planning documents and activities.

### **1.2) VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS**

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan is shaped within the framework of the vision and mission statements for the MPO. These were developed in response to the planning factors outlined by SAFETEA-LU and in cooperation with the MPO Technical Committee, the MPO Policy Committee, and NMDOT.

#### **Vision Statement**

The Farmington Metropolitan Planning Organization vision is for a safe, efficient and reliable multi-modal transportation system that meets the needs of residents and visitors in the region.

#### **Mission Statement**

Provide a forum to develop an effective transportation system to move people and goods safely, economically and efficiently while maintaining a high quality of life.

1.3) FARMINGTON MPO GOALS and OBJECTIVES

Table 1-1 describes the goals and objectives identified by the MPO that help to support and achieve the Vision and Mission statements.

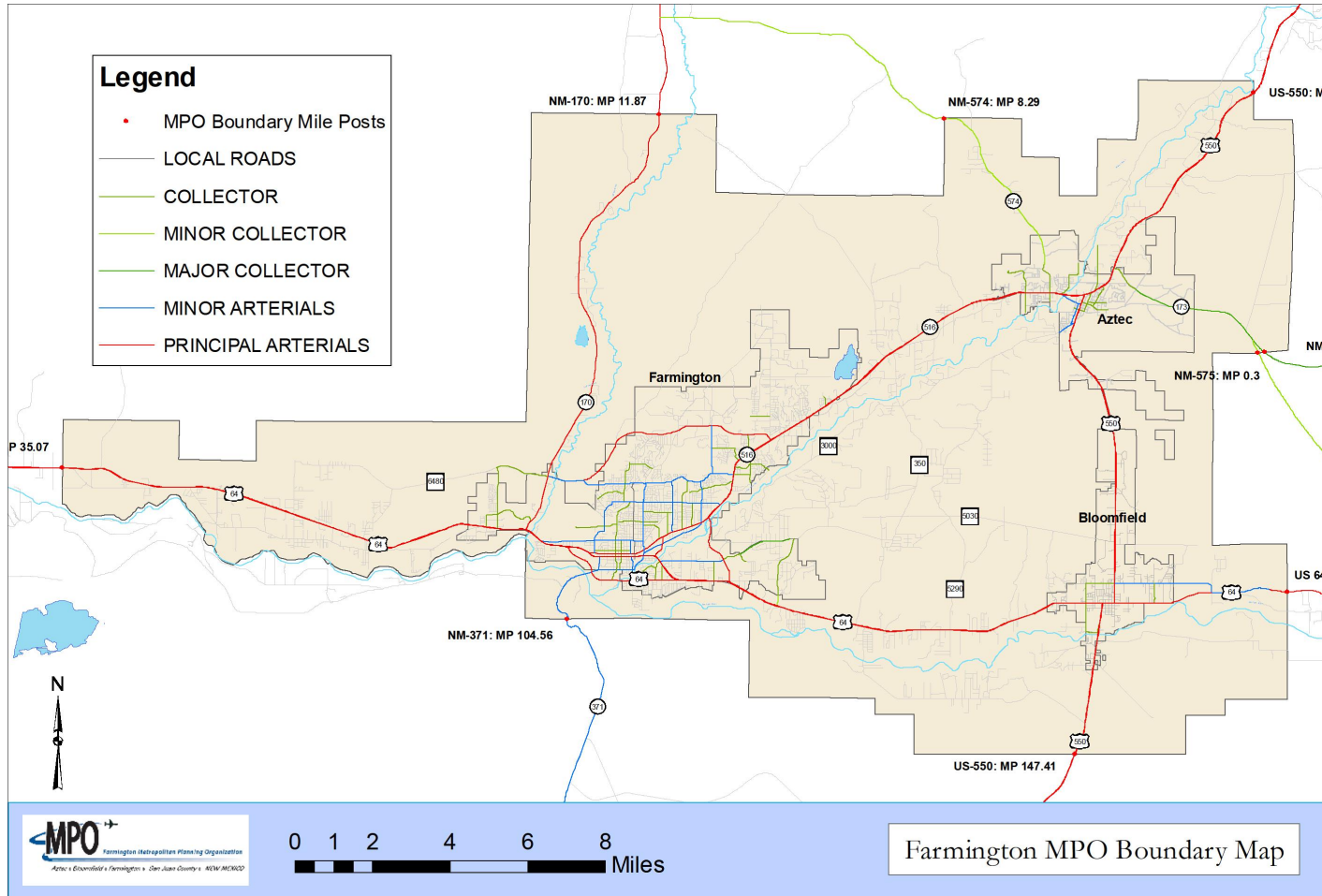


TABLE 1-1 – Goals and Objectives of the Farmington MPO

GOALS	OBJECTIVES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the economic vitality of the MPO region by providing a balanced, multi-modal transportation system that moves people, goods and information safely, economically and efficiently.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide adequate land area and access for commercial opportunities to serve future population growth</li> <li>Minimize congestion to improve delivery of goods and services</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Foster regional coordination and transportation system continuity</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximize use of current transportation system</li> <li>Involve local planners in the transportation planning process</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and connect transportation systems and associated facilities into a cohesive intermodal system</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase transit, bicycle and pedestrian connections</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize congestion on the transportation system</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize congestion and minimize delay</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide reasonable access to services and jobs for all of the region’s residents, regardless of age, income or disability</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased multi-modal accessibility</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize negative environmental impacts and enhance the environmental quality of the MPO region</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize air quality impacts</li> <li>Minimize impacts to existing neighborhoods</li> <li>Develop strategies to educate the public about how travel choices affect air quality</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and develop funding sources adequate to build, operate and maintain the metropolitan transportation system</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize total transportation system costs</li> <li>Maximize transportation system performance per project costs</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and implement new technology for balanced multi-modal transportation</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve multi-modal street design for high activity areas</li> <li>Increase mode split</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a transportation system that maintains and/or enhances the existing quality of life and works in concert with cultural and environmental resources and adopted local plans</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimize access to adjacent developments along key arterials to maximize capacity</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate transportation and land use planning to improve quality of life and to protect the natural environment</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage the local entities to integrate regional transportation policies into their adopted local plans</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure public safety for all modes</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve system safety through improved levels of service and reduced congestion</li> <li>Promote safety design practices for all modes</li> <li>Minimize emergency vehicle response time</li> </ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate with local agencies on security planning and strategies</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) technologies for improving the safety and security of transportation modes</li> </ol>

### 1.4) RECENTLY COMPLETED REGIONAL PROJECTS

Some projects identified in the MTP adopted back in 2005 have been completed during the last five years. They include:

Roadway	Location	Description
Phase 1 of the US 64 Farmington to Bloomfield Project	Farmington	Intersection improvements at US 64/Browning Parkway and widening 0.5 miles east of the intersection.
US 550 (Main Ave)	Aztec	Travel lane reconfiguration, new parking lanes, sidewalk improvements
Piñon Hills Blvd	Farmington	Widening of road to 4 lanes
Preliminary Engineering and Design	Farmington, San Juan County, Aztec	Piñon Hills Extension over Animas River from East Main to CR 3000 Upgrading CR 3900 from CR 3000 to CR 390 Phase 1A of the East Arterial Route in Aztec

Bicycle/Pedestrian	Location	Description
Sullivan Ave	Farmington	New bike lanes from Main Street to 20 <sup>th</sup> Street
Piñon St.	Farmington	New bike lanes from Murray to Miller
Ruth Lane	Bloomfield	New bike lanes from US 64 to West Blanco Blvd
NM 516 & US 550	Aztec	Wide shoulders marked as bike routes within the City Limits
Ash St.	Aztec	New bike lanes from Llano to NM 516
Chaco St.	Aztec	New bike lanes from NM 516 to Ash St.
Rio Grande Ave	Aztec	New bike lanes from Blanco to US 550
US 64	Farmington	New sidewalks from Malta to Hillside (north side only)
San Juan Blvd	Farmington	New sidewalks from Butler to Main St.
West Blanco Blvd	Bloomfield	New sidewalks from US 550 to Ruth Lane
Pedestrian Bridge	Aztec	New bridge across the Animas River from Riverside Park to Hartman Park

In August 2006, Red Apple Transit created the Bloomfield Bobcat route from Orchard Plaza in Farmington to the Cultural Center in Bloomfield and headway times on the Farmington routes were reduced from one hour to 30 minutes. In December 2009, Road

Runner Transit, the transit authority for the Southern Ute Tribe, began service from Ignacio, Colorado to Aztec, New Mexico with a connection to the Red Apple Transit.

**1.5) SAFETEA-LU PLANNING FACTORS**

Federal guidance of MPO planning activities is achieved through the eight SAFETEA-LU planning factors. Examples of how the MPO can meet these factors are described as follows.

- 1) *Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.*

<b>Description</b>	Transportation decisions spur economic development by providing convenient access to jobs and making the system more reliable. Transportation projects also create local jobs.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make accurate predictions regarding future employment growth and identify transportation projects to best serve these areas</li> <li>▪ Seek transportation projects that reduce consumer cost and which in turn can stimulate the economy</li> </ul>

- 2) *Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.*

<b>Description</b>	Regardless of mode, residents and visitors must have proper facilities and amenities to reach destinations safely.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Retrofit existing corridors using access management techniques</li> <li>▪ Provide key pedestrian amenities at critical intersections</li> <li>▪ Adopt Complete Streets policies to facilitate proper street design</li> </ul>

3) *Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.*

<b>Description</b>	In the event of an emergency, the transportation system must be able to accommodate the needs of people. The MPO should seek to bring together transportation decision makers and emergency personnel to coordinate security plans.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify critical transportation facilities for evacuation planning</li> <li>▪ Provide a forum for security and transportation agencies to coordinate prevention strategies</li> </ul>

4) *Increase the accessibility and mobility of people and for freight.*

<b>Description</b>	Destinations that are easily accessible help reduce travel time and transportation related costs. Transportation should make it convenient to reach neighborhoods and public locations. Mobility is typically measured by distance covered and travel speed.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide mode choice for improving travel options</li> <li>▪ Maintain mobility on regional corridors through access management principles</li> </ul>

5) *Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life, and promote consistency between transportation improvements and State and local planned growth and economic development patterns.*

<b>Description</b>	Transportation plans must consider their impact to the environment and quality of life. Transportation and land use planning plays an integral role in reducing sprawl and reinforcing the importance of a centralized economic business district.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand transit, bicycle, and walking options for system users</li> <li>▪ Integrate local land use planning strategies into the development of transportation plans</li> </ul>

6) *Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.*

<b>Description</b>	A well-balanced transportation system enables users to transfer between modes and does not require complete dependence on one mode, particularly the automobile.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure walking and biking facilities are connected to transit stops</li> <li>▪ Develop intermodal facilities between air and freight for the efficient movement of goods</li> </ul>

7) *Promote efficient system management and operation.*

<b>Description</b>	Existing infrastructure should be optimized through the implementation of systems and projects that preserve capacity and improve security, safety, and reliability.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop programs and strategies for arterial management, signal synchronization, and traffic incident management to reduce congestion and delay</li> <li>▪ Implement Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) elements for optimal traffic operations</li> </ul>

8) *Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.*

<b>Description</b>	System preservation can reduce costs and improve the life spans of existing infrastructure.
<b>MPO Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve right-of-way (ROW) for future expansion of existing roadways</li> <li>▪ Preserve future corridors for future facilities before land is developed</li> <li>▪ Enact pavement preservation strategies for roads and bridges before serious repair is needed</li> </ul>

**1.6) LIVABILITY PRINCIPLES**

In 2009, the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) created an interagency partnership to help improve access to affordable housing, to provide more transportation options, and to lower transportation costs while protecting the environment in communities nationwide. This partnership has

developed six livability principles as a way to coordinate federal transportation, environmental protection, and housing investments. These principles are factored into many of the goals and policies identified in this document.

**1) *Providing more transportation choices***

*MPO Actions:*

- Make stronger investments in multi-modal transportation
- Identify expansion routes for Red Apple Transit to serve more population and employment areas
- Fund regional and local bicycle/pedestrian projects to develop a network that links neighborhoods, jobs, and recreational destinations

**2) *Expanding access to affordable housing, particularly housing located close to transit***

*MPO Actions:*

- Identify new transit service in the vicinity of existing affordable housing
- Continue to construct sidewalks and bike facilities in neighborhoods with high concentrations of affordable housing

**3) *Enhancing economic competitiveness—giving people access to jobs, education and services as well as giving businesses access to markets***

*MPO Actions:*

- Encourage local planning agencies to promote in-fill development which helps cluster businesses together and maximizes the efficiency of existing transportation infrastructure
- Designate freight corridors and truck routes that efficiently distribute local goods

**4) *Targeting federal funds toward existing communities to spur revitalization and protect rural landscapes***

*MPO Actions:*

- Place emphasis on road projects that improve conditions within urban cores
- Fund transit-oriented development and facilities that promote walking and biking

**5) *Increasing collaboration among federal, state, and local governments to better target investments and improve accountability***

*MPO Actions:*

- Encourage participation from representatives of all levels of government for the development of local and regional priorities
- Work with NMDOT to program and fund prioritized projects

**6) *Valuing the unique qualities of all communities--whether urban, suburban, or rural***

*MPO Actions:*

- Provide convenient transportation choices for accessing local national monuments and landmarks
- Protect the rural landscape of this area by reducing sprawl and encouraging system preservation strategies