

# TRANSIT PLAN

## 5.1) OVERVIEW

Transit service, whether fixed-route or demand-responsive, is intricately linked to many other governmental and planning actions. Providing fixed-route transit service relies upon and reacts to the density of development within the city, locations of transportation corridors and activity centers, and the design of developments along the corridors and centers it serves. Travel corridors and activity centers with a mix of uses and a large number of travelers provide the demand that can effectively support higher levels of transit service.

A balanced, multi-modal transportation system sometimes requires shifts in public investment given the historical emphasis on roadways and automobiles. To facilitate a higher level of transit service in the region, new developments and land use patterns should be planned in such a way as to support the non-automobile modes.

Ridership on Red Apple Transit continues to increase each year as the system becomes an integrated part of daily commuting. As population continues to grow in the MPO region, a transit needs assessment and evaluation of the current system will be essential for determining how transit can expand its services to meet future demand.



### 5.2) EXISTING TRANSIT SERVICES

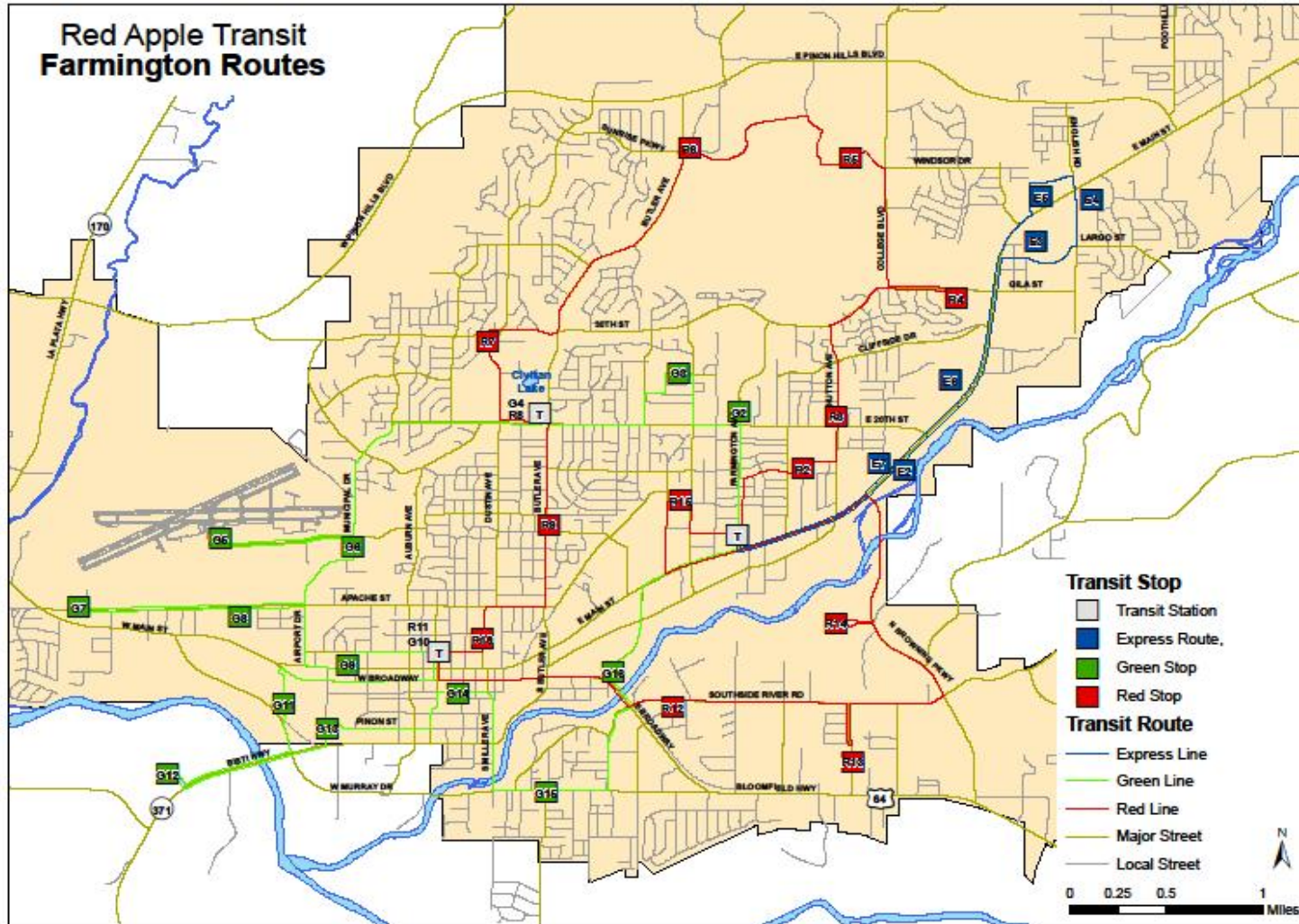
Red Apple Transit, owned and operated by the City of Farmington, is the primary transit service in the MPO region. Within the city limits of Farmington, two loop routes (Red and Green Routes) operate counter-clockwise and serve several apartment complexes, neighborhoods, and public destinations. A third route (Express Route) operates along the East Main corridor to serve the mall and many of the big box retailers. For all three routes, bus stops are found at specific locations (see Map 5-1). Buses run from 7am to 6pm Monday through Saturday. All routes are on 30 minute headways.

Red Apple Transit also runs three regional routes that connect Farmington to Aztec, Bloomfield, and the community of Kirtland. These routes too have specific stops and connect to

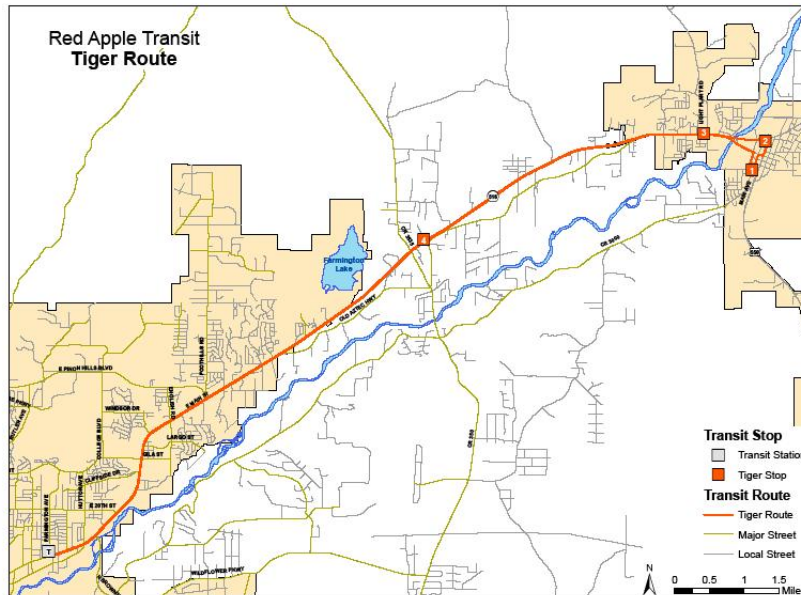
the Farmington routes at Orchard Plaza as a transfer point (see Maps 5-2, 5-3, & 5-4). The regional routes only operate three times a day: early morning, mid-day, and late afternoon.

Navajo Transit serves the Farmington area with two routes and provides connections to Shiprock and other places on the Navajo Nation. Navajo Transit has two transfer points with Red Apple at the Civic Center and at American Plaza. In December 2009, Road Runner Transit, the transit authority for the Southern Ute Tribe, began service from Ignacio, CO to Aztec with a connection to Red Apple. The route serves the Sky Ute Casino Resort and other destinations. There are seven runs a day and service occurs Wednesday through Sunday.

MAP 5-1 – Red Apple Transit Farmington Routes

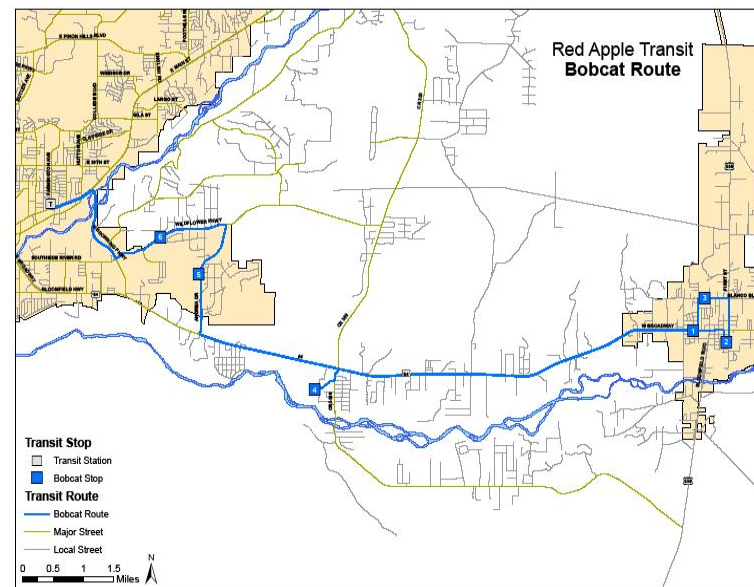


MAP 5-2 – Aztec Tiger Route



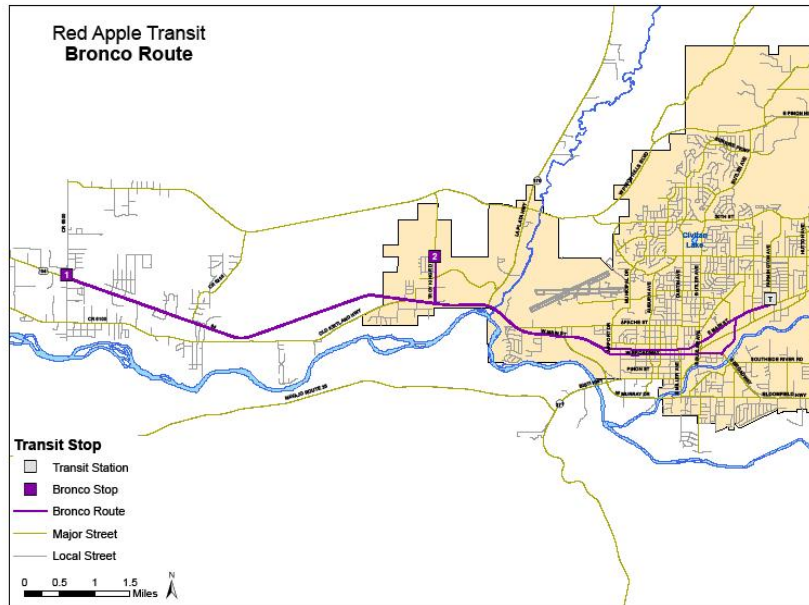
Aztec Tiger Route Bus Stops
Animas Village Apartments
Aztec Safeway
Westside Plaza
Flora Vista Circle K
Orchard Plaza Transfer Location

MAP 5-3 – Bloomfield Bobcat Route



Bloomfield Bobcat Route Bus Stops
SJRMCA Ambulance Station
Bloomfield Cultural Center
Pinos Blancos Apartments
McGee Park
SJC Detention Center
Wildflower Drive
Orchard Plaza Transfer Location

MAP 5-4 – Kirtland Bronco Route



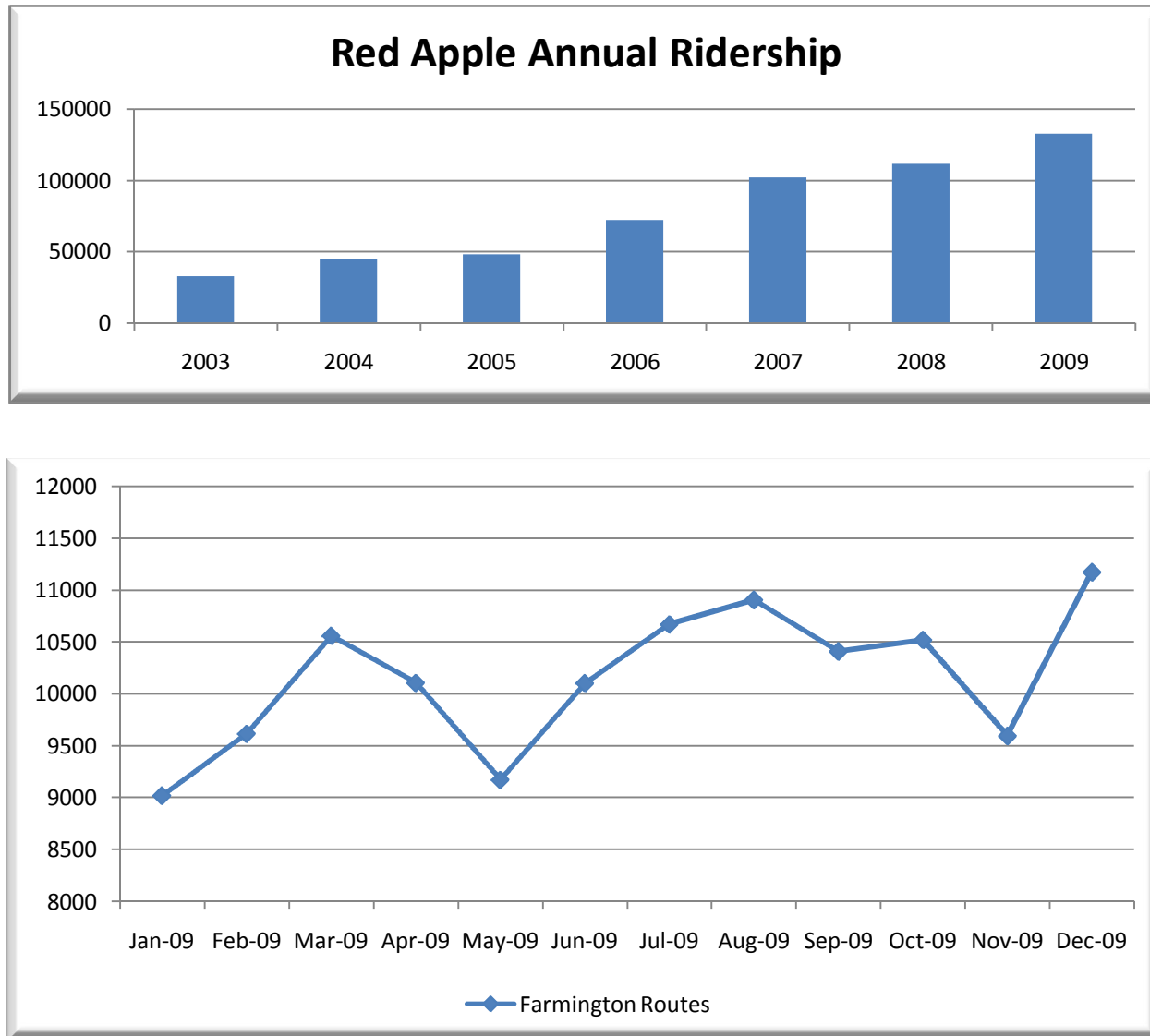
Kirtland Bronco Route Bus Stops
Central Center Kirtland
Mesa Mobile Home Park
Orchard Plaza Transfer Location

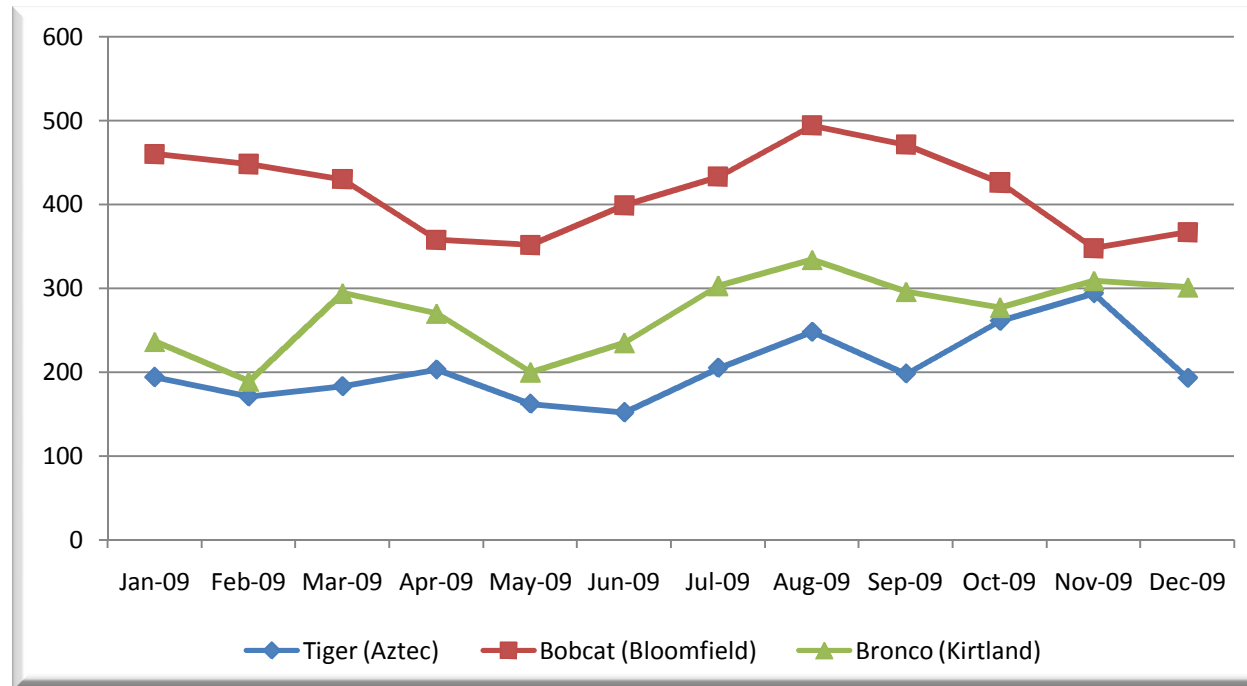
### 5.3) CURRENT RED APPLE RIDERSHIP

Annual ridership for Red Apple has steadily increased since 2003 (Figure 5-1). Monthly ridership reports provided by Red Apple show the change in ridership as the year progresses. There tends to be seasonal trends that affect ridership month to month. In 2009, ridership on the Farmington routes totaled 121,840. Ridership on the Kirtland route was 3,244, the Aztec

route was 2,464, and the Bloomfield route was 4,986. The Aztec and Bloomfield routes witnessed a decline from 2008 to 2009, whether because it has reached its service threshold or economic factors have reduced those who need to take the bus.

FIGURE 5-1 – Annual Ridership on Red Apple Transit





#### 5.4) POTENTIAL TRANSIT DEMAND

Certain population types tend to use transit more often than the choice rider, in other words those who are transit dependent are more likely to use the system than those who own a personal automobile. Those population types that are typically transit dependent include those younger than 18, the elderly, those with a disability, households that do not own a vehicle, and low-income households. Census 2000 data provides these populations by census tract. MPO staff collected this information for analysis to better understand

where the focus of transit service should be. The data for these population types was compared to total population of these census tracts to determine a percentage of the total population. The 2000 Census was used as a basis and the same methodology was used to estimate out to 2008. Further projections of potential transit demand were also developed for 2020 and 2035. When comparing the four years of data, several census tracts began to rise to the top because they had large numbers of these population types:

- The area of Farmington bounded by 30<sup>th</sup> Street, East Main, and Sullivan
- The north and west areas of Crouch Mesa
- The southeast portion of Crouch Mesa/Northwest Bloomfield

Using data by Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ), staff grouped population and employment data to project where the largest areas of growth are expected to occur in 2020 and 2035. Population density maps were also developed as a way to gauge locations of high concentrations of population and employment. Besides further growth within the three cities, Crouch Mesa and Kirtland will become the fastest growing areas within the MPO.

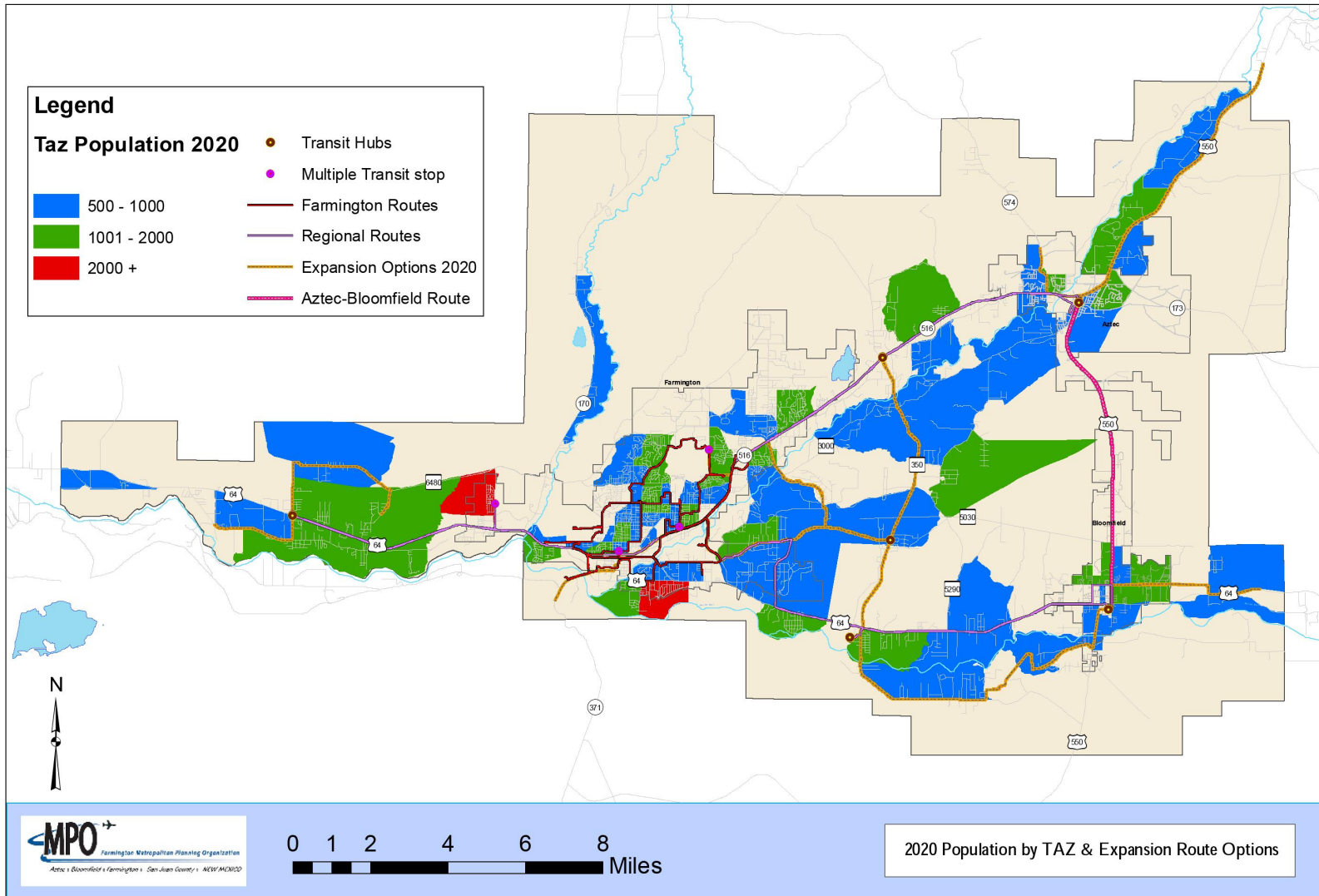
### ***5.5) FUTURE EXPANSION OPTIONS***

In Farmington, any future transit expansion will require the conversion of the one directional loop system into a two-directional line route system. The line routes should run along many of the city's arterial streets and link popular public destinations from all parts of the city. The line routes should cover more geographic areas of the city and should create several more transfer points.

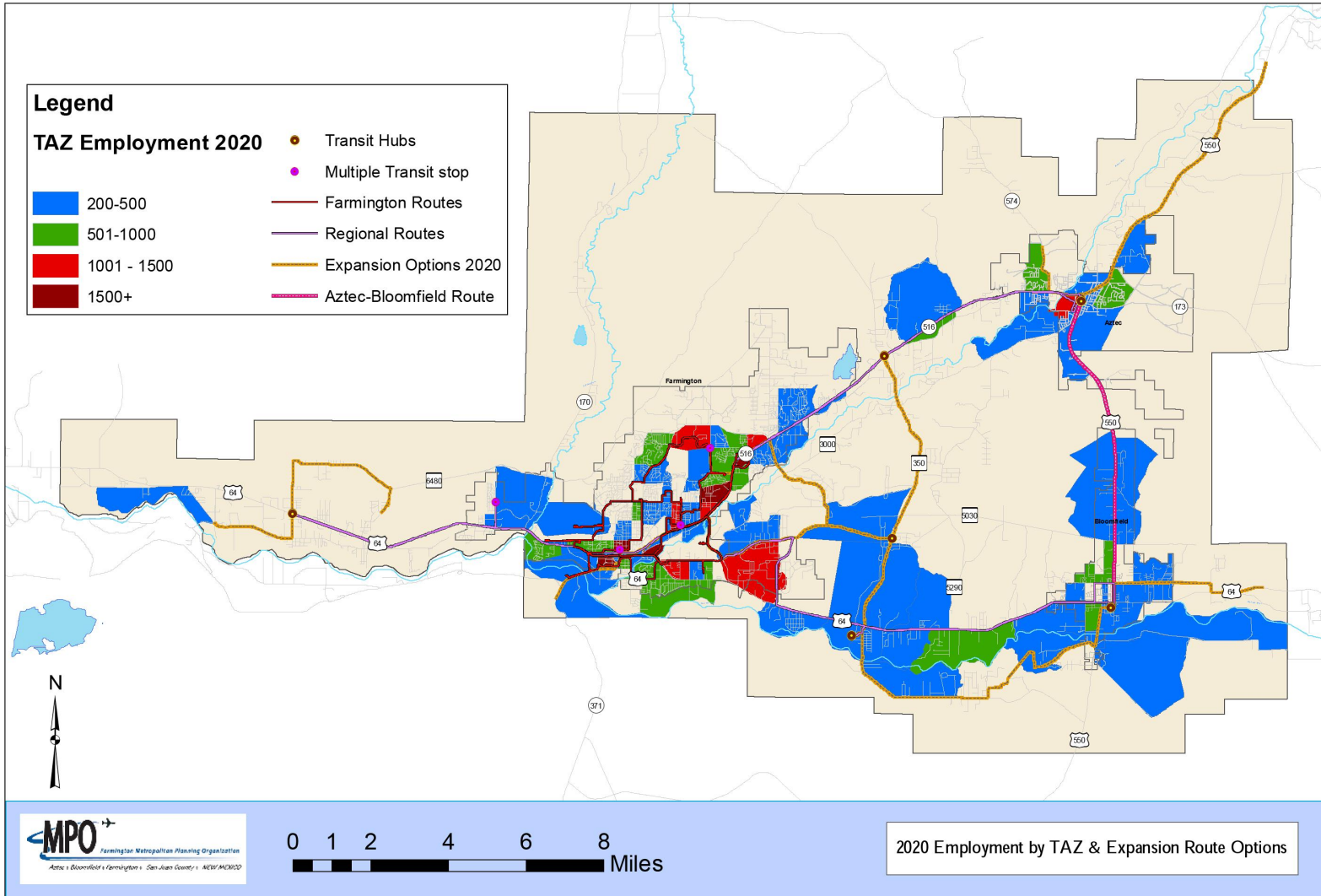
On the regional side, existing routes were overlaid on the 2020 and 2035 population/employment maps to see how many growth areas are already served by transit. Staff then proposed locations for future transit hubs and possible route expansion to serve more areas of the MPO (Map 5-5). The existing regional routes would become the main service lines by adding more stops and running more often. To support those routes, feeder bus lines could be implemented within Aztec, Bloomfield, Kirtland, and Crouch Mesa. Routes would all meet and create transfer points at the regional transit hubs.

One initial improvement that will be necessary before any type of expansion will be the location of a transit hub within the City of Farmington. The hub should be located in the vicinity of residential and commercial development and should be accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists. Once a location is established, modifications to the Farmington routes can occur.

MAP 5-5 – Proposed Regional Expansion of the Red Apple Transit System



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## 5.6) TRANSIT EXPANSION IMPLEMENTATION

The local transit system continues to grow year after year, and there is an understanding that the system will need to expand in order to serve more people and areas within the MPO region. The Farmington MPO will work in cooperation with Red Apple Transit on a transit needs assessment and evaluation of the existing transit system to develop a fixed-route and demand response public transit system that serves all areas within the MPO region in the most efficient, economical, and effective manner. A comprehensive study of the Red Apple Transit system will determine the type of transit services needed in the MPO by 2020. To be consistent with the 2035 planning horizon of this document, additional estimated services by the year 2035 will be based upon the recommendations for 2020 that result from the study.

The transit study is expected to achieve the following key outcomes:

- Determine the most feasible options for expansion of the system to meet existing and projected needs of the community
- Determine optimum locations for a transit hub terminal in Farmington as well as in the other places in the MPO region
- Determine if bi-directional, linear routes would better serve the public than the existing loop system and identify how to transition from the existing loop system to a bi-directional line route system

- Determine feasible routes and schedule changes to improve service levels by 2015 and 2020

Identification of new expansion routes will assist in determining:

- Projected annual ridership by the year 2020
- Future bus stop locations
- Fleet and personnel needs
- Capital and operating costs
- Future headway times

The major findings and recommendations from the transit study will be incorporated into the Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

### 5.7) TRANSIT POLICIES

To support implementation of an expanded transit system and to promote efficiency, Red Apple Transit should use the following policies as guidance:

- Ensure all bus stops are ADA accessible and that sidewalks are constructed to provide direct access to the stops
- Provide bus shelters at main public destinations
- Encourage mixed use development and higher density areas that support transit
- Identify activity, retail centers and business parks that serve as transfer hubs for transit routes
- Monitor and modify transit service in response to future growth and changes in development patterns
- Develop a long term funding strategy for sustaining the expansion of the system