

MINUTES
FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 15, 2011

Policy Members Present: Sherri Sipe, City of Aztec
Pat Lucero, City of Bloomfield
Dan Darnell, City of Farmington
Dr. Jim Henderson, San Juan County

Policy Members Absent: Gayla McCulloch, City of Farmington

Staff Present: Mary L. Holton, MPO Officer
Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Martin Lucero, MPO Associate Planner
June Markle, MPO Administrative Aide

Staff Absent: None

Also Present: Ray Matthew, Planning Liaison, NMDOT
Ron Shutiva, Native American Liaison, NMDOT

1. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Henderson called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

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

Ms. Sherri Sipe made a motion to approve the minutes from the July 27, 2011 Joint Policy/Technical Committee meeting. Mr. Pat Lucero seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**3. APPROVE THE FY2012 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM BUDGET
AMENDMENT**

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item

Subject:	FY2012 UPWP Budget Amendment
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	September 8, 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 Policy Committee approve 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 remains the same at \$175,213, as does the traffic counts at \$10,680. The Federal 5303 transit fund estimate was almost right on target and ended up at \$23,096. The Farmington City Council originally approved \$294,173 for the overall MPO budget.

Since April, additional Special Obligation 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. These funds have given the MPO the largest amount of PL money ever with \$263,491. Mr. Delmagori stated that with these additional federal amounts, the MPO actually has more revenue funds than it is 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 stated that because the Federal portion has increased dramatically, the required local match dropped significantly. The local entities would have been required to pay up to \$85,184 but that has now been reduced to \$54,179.

Mr. Darnell asked how the local required match actually decreased. Mr. Delmagori replied that because the 80% Federal portion of the MPO budget increased, more of the budget is covered by Federal dollars which reduces the required over-match. There is now sufficient Federal money to carry the MPO through the entire fiscal year. Mr. Delmagori added that the MPO has identified that much of the additional funding will be used for corridor study consultants as well as to help pay for the interns used this summer for the transit survey.

ACTION: Mr. Darnell moved to approve the amendment to the FY2012 UPWP Budget. Mr. Pat Lucero seconded the motion. The motion was approved 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:	September 8, 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.
- All of the routes are being counted again in September and October to see how ridership changes with school in session.
- Staff is summarizing the data to determine trends and primary origins and destinations.
- Staff is analyzing ridership patterns to help determine the number of unique riders.

ATTACHMENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff will present some of its findings on September 15.
ANTICIPATED WORK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 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. ▪ Staff will give presentations to councils and commissions.
RECOMMENDATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It is recommended that the Policy Committee receive a report on Red Apple Transit data collection activities.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Delmagori reported that the Red Apple Study from LSC Consultants was completed earlier this year. The study illustrated the need for collecting transit data. Although ridership data is received monthly from First Transit, that information does not include more specific data such as stop-to-stop, transfers, or origin/destination. The MPO took on the role and hired two summer interns to collect the needed transit passenger data.

Mr. Delmagori stated that the interns have ridden and tracked data for each of the Farmington routes, as well as the Regional routes, at least twice this summer. Additionally, passenger counts and transfer information was taken at key transfer stops (Orchard Plaza, Civic Center, and Smith's). Mr. Delmagori reported that the MPO now believes it has a good data summary. The interns will continue accumulating data until early October to track ridership changes with San Juan College in session.

With this information in hand, the MPO will try to determine the number of unique riders – the number of individual people who are using the transit system. Mr. Delmagori reported that Staff is still reviewing the data and will have an update on this unique rider number in the next few months.

Mr. Martin Lucero explained that trips were typically taken on Tuesdays, Wednesday, and Thursdays. On the Green, Red, and Express Routes, each intern rode during the morning, mid-day, and afternoon with six hours of data being captured on each of these days. The interns rode the regional routes for all three runs on these days. That data collected during the summer months represents over 2200 riders or 30% of the total number of transit riders.

Mr. Darnell asked why Staff elected to survey only Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and not include a Saturday. Mr. Martin Lucero stated that each Farmington route was counted on a Saturday in either June or July. No Saturday counts were done on the Regional routes. Mr. Martin Lucero said that the counts on Saturday showed a different type of rider and frequency of ride, and data collected tended to detract from the normal routine pattern seen on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

Mr. Martin Lucero stated that ridership counted on the Green Route totaled about 1000 individuals during the summer months. As riders boarded, the interns noted whether the

rider was a male, female, or a child. As riders alighted, that information was tracked on a separate matrix. This information was then compiled into a colored spreadsheet which showed both cool and hot boarding/alightment combinations. For this route, the transfer points of Orchard Plaza, the Civic Center and Smith's are the key stops. Mr. Lucero noted that the Green Route serves the transit-dependent areas and almost all the stops on the Green Route are being used. This is a very healthy route.

Mr. Martin Lucero reported that ridership counted on the Red Route, which totaled about 600, appeared to be low with San Juan College not in session. The Red Route also had quite a few dead stops. The popular stops were at the transfer point locations and Staff believes that once San Juan College is in session, it will be a popular stop as well. Mr. Lucero noted that unlike the Green Route, the Red Route does not stop at many housing complexes, but does travel to the college, stores and offices – the end destination points. The survey data shows that riders are initially boarding the Green Route and then transferring to the Red Route in order to reach their final destination point.

Mr. Darnell asked how valid this information would be once anticipated route changes were made in October. Mr. Martin Lucero stated that the information being gathered is what is driving future changes and gives a basis to work from. Mr. Darnell also asked about proposed new stops in Spencerville, Lee Acres, and Wild Horse Valley. Mr. Lucero said that once the new route system is in place, this type of data gathering would need to be re-done. Staff has drawn up some potential realignment recommendations and maps for Farmington's Assistant City Manager to consider. Mr. Delmagori added that data collection is an ongoing process, but that what has already been collected gives us the needed baseline to work from. Mr. Lucero restated that overall ridership numbers are received from First Transit each month but those numbers did not answer questions from the entities such as where do riders get on/off, where do riders transfer to/from, and can a stop be moved/added without significant impact to current riders. Staff could not provide answers to these questions because that data was not available. This summer's data collection is giving Staff the necessary data to make informed decisions.

Mr. Martin Lucero noted that riders using the Express (Blue) Route are boarding at Orchard Plaza and taking it to the end destinations such as Wal-Mart, Safeway, K-Mart and then getting back on and riding directly back to Orchard Plaza. Riders cannot use this route to get directly from their homes to their end destinations.

Mr. Martin Lucero reported that riders are not using the Bloomfield Route for internal circulation. Riders are boarding at one of the Bloomfield stops, riding it all the way into Orchard Plaza and, on the return trip, they return to their starting point. There has been a drop in the Bloomfield ridership which could partially be due to the US 64 road construction and to the college being out for the summer.

Riders on the Aztec Route are boarding at all the stops except for Westside Plaza and riding all the way into Orchard Plaza. Mr. Martin Lucero noted that when the riders return to Aztec, they are alighting at different places. 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. Similar to the Bloomfield route, no one is using the bus for internal circulation in Aztec.

Mr. Martin Lucero reported that the Kirtland Route is 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 added that all the stops locations are used on the return runs.

Mr. Martin Lucero stated that Staff plans to have firm ridership numbers at the next Committee meeting. This will include a unique rider number for each route as well as a unique rider number for the overall system. Mr. Darnell asked what methodology was being used to determine the unique rider. Mr. Martin Lucero said that Staff had developed two methods in their effort to find the individual riders and watch for trip patterns. The data collected has shown rider patterns and Staff is beginning to be able to match up those patterns with specific riders. Mr. Martin Lucero said that the preliminary information is showing a 65-80% individual rider number.

Ms. Sipe asked if there were plans to include a stop at or near the Good Sam Center in Aztec. Mr. Martin Lucero commented that the route times for Aztec are not maxed out and since Westside Plaza is not currently being used, a stop at or within ½ mile of Good Sam could be considered. Ms. Sipe asked how a change of this kind could be implemented. Mr. Lucero recommended contacting First Transit and Mr. Bob Campbell, but changes in the Regional Routes can be initiated by that entity's Council.

ACTION: The report was received.

5. RECEIVE A REPORT FROM NMDOT

DISCUSSION: Mr. Ray Matthew reported that the House of Representatives had a voice vote that approved the continuation of SAFETEA-LU for six months. This is good news as the federal rates for NMDOT are fairly high and this results in a comparable amount of PL funds for the MPOs. This bill is expected to move through the Senate to avoid the same situation that impacted FAA when funds were frozen and employees had to be furloughed.

The safety project application deadline is January 6, 2012 and it is expected there will be more funds available than in the past. Mr. Matthew said the Traffic Safety Bureau will be making a special presentation at the MPO Quarterly Meeting in Santa Fe later this month. Because New Mexico does not meet the federal standards for DWI convictions or the helmet safety law, they are mandated to spend a portion of STP funds on safety programs. In the past, this money has been spent on behavioral programs, and this year an executive decision was made to spend all money on capital projects.

Mr. Matthew complimented the MPO on the transit planning activities. He added that using the interns for data collection was cost effective and will allow for a deeper analysis of the data by MPO Staff.

6. RECEIVE A STATE REPORT ON THE 2011 TRAFFIC COUNT PROGRAM

Subject:	2011 Traffic Count Program
Prepared by:	Martin Lucero, MPO Associate Planner
Date:	September 8, 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 Technical Committee reviewed the traffic count locations at their August 25th committee meeting and found no conflicts with the approved list.
- The MPO will work with TRA to schedule the counts in early October.
- It is anticipated that the 2011 Traffic Counts will be returned to the MPO by early November for review.
- The MPO will submit the 2011 Traffic Counts to NMDOT prior to the January 2012 deadline for approval.

ATTACHMENTS

- The 2011 traffic count location list.

RECOMMENDATION

- Staff recommends that the Policy Committee receive a report on the 2011 Traffic Count Program.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Martin Lucero discussed the Traffic Count Location list for 2011. The traffic count consultant will be here in early October to take 85 volume counts, as well as speed and class counts for 27 of the 85 count locations. The information collected will assist Staff in revising the traffic model and providing details of what is really occurring on the roadways.

The Technical Committee reviewed the traffic count list and all those on the list should be maintenance-free and available for the consultant to access. Mr. Martin Lucero commented that the consultant has provided good service and last year's counts were completed ahead of schedule. The speed/class counts provide valuable information on

the types of traffic traveling that section of road, helps with determining possible reasons for high accident rates, and can be used for economic development purposes to evaluate potential customer volume for a new development.

Mr. Darnell asked if additional locations could be counted or if a specific location could be counted outside of the yearly traffic count program. Mr. Martin Lucero stated that Mr. Steve Krest, Traffic Engineering Administrator for the City of Farmington, can conduct a week long count at a specific location. Mr. Lucero said this type of count would be routine if a large development was being considered. Ms. Mary Holton said that if the traffic data is not readily available, the ultimate burden to obtain that information rests with the developer and this information would be required by the City of Farmington before any zoning change was granted.

7. RECEIVE A STATUS REPORT ON TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION

FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION Agenda Item

Subject:	Transportation Reauthorization
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	September 8, 2011

BACKGROUND or PREVIOUS WORK

- SAFETEA-LU has been extended through Continuing Resolutions for the past few years.
- SAFETEA-LU is currently set to expire on September 30, 2011.
- Congress is expected to extend the current bill through January 31, 2012 which will maintain current funding levels.

CURRENT WORK

- Both the House and Senate are drafting bills for reauthorization.
- The House is calling for a 6-year bill at about \$230 billion.
- The Senate is proposing a 2-year bill at \$86 billion.
- Full details are provided in the status report from AMPO.

ATTACHMENTS

- Transportation reauthorization update provided by AMPO on September 7.

ANTICIPATED WORK

- Monitor the impacts of extensions and proposed reauthorizations on federally funded projects in the MPO and in the State.

RECOMMENDATION

- It is recommended that the Policy Committee receive a status report on transportation reauthorization.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Delmagori reported that the House of Representatives has granted an extension of the overall bill that expired in 2009, but there is no comprehensive reauthorization yet in place. Both the House and Senate have drafted bills for reauthorization, but there are significant discrepancies between the two. The extension just passed will buy time but the long term impact and direction are uncertain.

Mr. Delmagori stated that the urbanized areas census data will be wrapping up in the spring of 2012 and will determine new population areas that may impact reauthorization. Staff will continue to provide updates as more information becomes available.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

**FARMINGTON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Agenda Item**

Subject:	Information Items
Prepared by:	Joe Delmagori, MPO Planner
Date:	September 8, 2011

INFORMATION ITEMS

- a. **MPO Quarterly Meeting.** The next MPO Quarterly will be hosted by the Santa Fe MPO. A Policy Committee representative has been invited to attend the discussions on Reauthorization and impacts to state transportation funding. There will also be an open forum to discuss other areas of concern.
- b. **MPO Major Thoroughfare Plan.** MPO staff is seeking approval of the MPO Major T-Plan by Aztec, Bloomfield, and San Juan County during the month of September.
- c. **Small MPO Peer Exchange on Traffic Modeling.** Joe Delmagori attended this discussion on modeling needs and capacities for small MPOs in Washington DC on August 29-30. The meeting was hosted by FHWA.
- d. **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.

- e. **FY2011 UPWP 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.
- f. **Other.**

DISCUSSION: Mr. Delmagori reported that the next MPO Quarterly will be held on September 28th in Santa Fe. The meeting will also include a Policy Committee Summit where Policy Committee members from the New Mexico and El Paso MPOs can discuss common issues. Along with Mr. Delmagori, Mr. Darnell will be attending as the Farmington MPO's Policy Committee representative.

MPO Staff is seeking approval of the MPO Major T-Plan. Mr. Delmagori will be making this presentation to Aztec, Bloomfield, and San Juan County during the month of September.

Mr. Delmagori reported on attending the Small MPO Peer Exchange on Traffic Modeling in Washington, DC in August. The purpose was to discuss how the traffic model is integrated into the planning process, how it is operated and maintained, and how effective the model is. Mr. Delmagori stated that the Farmington MPO is one of the few MPOs that have an in-house modeling program. Most of the other MPOs said they must rely on their DOT to provide this information. The FHWA said they would summarize the meeting and provide a report on the discussion to all those who attended.

Mr. Delmagori and Mr. Martin Lucero attended FHWA training on environmental justice and performance measures in El Paso in August. Mr. Delmagori said that when the Public Participation Plan comes up for renewal in January, Staff will have the tools and opportunity to improve the environmental justice section of the PPP as needed. The performance measures part of the training was a heads-up should a reauthorization bill be passed that would require specific performance measures be set. Staff now has the needed information on how to set and apply those measures to the long range plan.

The FY2011 UPWP Year End Report is available for viewing on the MPO website.

9. BUSINESS FROM THE CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS AND STAFF

DISCUSSION: Mr. Pat Lucero complimented the work of Staff.

10. BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

DISCUSSION: Mr. Ron Shutiva, Native American Liaison for NMDOT also echoed the good work of this MPO and said he believed their work was held in high regard by other MPOs in the state.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pat Lucero made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sherri Sip seconded the motion. Dr. Henderson adjourned the meeting at 2:40 p.m.

Dr. James C. Henderson, Chair

June Markle, MPO Administrative Aide