

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY FREIGHT COALITION

2010 CONFERENCE & ANNUAL MEETING

CURRENT PROJECTS

MVFC 05: MULTIMODAL FREIGHT BOTTLENECKS AND ALLEVIATION STRATEGIES FOR THE UPPER MIDWEST REGION

According to the 2005 FHWA-sponsored report, "An Initial Assessment of Freight Bottlenecks on Highways," more than 60 highway-related freight bottlenecks exist in the Mississippi Valley region. Three of the largest bottlenecks in the country are in Chicago and cause more than 38.4 million annual hours of delay for all vehicles. Bottlenecks in all modes significantly increase the cost of transporting goods through the region, which in turn contributes to the decline of the nation's transportation cost advantage. This project seeks to: identify freight bottlenecks on regionally significant routes and modes including highway, rail, and water; identify and apply criteria to rank the bottlenecks within each mode; assess bottleneck rankings across the multiple modes of transportation; develop an inventory of planned projects across the region for addressing identified bottlenecks; and, recommend additional bottleneck solutions for the region.

MVFC 07: 2008 MVFC WORKSHOP ON RESPONDING TO NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES

Recognizing current and future funding challenges, SAFETEA-LU authorized the formation of two primary commissions to review transportation policy and revenues: the National Commission on Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue and the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Finance Commission. In a similar vein, AASHTO recently sponsored a transportation vision summit that attracted key transportation leaders. ARTBA released its Critical Commerce Corridors Proposal and has asked the MVFC to endorse it. The MVFC Board of Directors met to discuss these issues during their July meeting. This dialogue will lead to specific recommendations or projects.

MVFC 08: MVFC OUTREACH MATERIALS

The general public and policy makers of the Mississippi Valley region are often ill-informed on subjects relating to freight. This project seeks to create creditable, illustrative, and understandable outreach materials to educate the general public and policy makers about the importance of freight to the economy of the Mississippi Valley region and the fragility of the freight transportation system. These materials will emphasize the importance of freight investments and focus on the movement of commodities through the region, including wheat, corn, machinery, wind energy components, retail goods, and automotive supplies.

MVFC 10: TRANSPORTATION PROFILES FOR MVFC COMMODITIES

The freight network of the Mississippi Valley region carries in needed materials and products from outside the region, ships out these products to their markets, and carries pass-through traffic across the region. For freight planning, it is critical to know the shipping processes of major commodities into and out of the region in terms of their origin/destination, mode choices, cost characteristics, and their transportation requirements in terms of time, reliability, and cost. This project focuses on outbound traffic of products grown or manufactured in the Mississippi Valley region and seeks to develop common commodity profiles for a select number of agricultural and industrial products.

MVFC 11: PERFORMANCE MEASURES FOR EVALUATING MULTI-STATE PROJECTS

This project builds upon the performance measures being identified and used for multi-state alliances and interstate corridor projects and will explore the transferability of these performance indicators across different multi-state efforts and make recommendations for establishing performance measures for multi-state freight projects. It will also use the work being done for AASHTO on possible national reauthorization to define measures—such as speed, reliability, and safety—that are appropriate for regional freight projects.

MVFC 12: CRITICAL SECTIONS AND RESILIENCY OF FREIGHT CORRIDORS IN THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY REGION

Efficient goods movement is reliant on a complex multimodal transportation system comprised of many components. Major interstate highway corridors support high volumes of freight and passenger travel and serve as the critical backbone for freight and passenger mobility. The goal of this project is to identify critical nodes and segments, including intermodal connectors, which are most vulnerable to disruption and identify inadequate freight capacity on alternate routes along the I-35, I-70, I-80, I-90, and I-94 corridors within the Mississippi Valley region. This project will identify and create an inventory of critical sections of the freight transportation network along the region's corridors. This project will produce an inventory of segments in need of enhancement and recommend strategies for navigating traffic onto alternate routes in times of need.



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COMPLETED PROJECTS

MVFC 01: REGIONAL FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION WORKSHOP AND MEETINGS

Recognizing current and future funding challenges, Congress created The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission in 2005 under Section 1909 of SAFETEA-LU to examine the condition and future needs of the nation's surface transportation system. The Mississippi Valley Freight Coalition provided testimony to the Commission on its vision of the freight transportation system in the Midwest. This vision includes the role of the federal government in freight activities, as well as the need for funding and a multi-modal approach.

MVFC 02: LOGISTICS FOR THE PUBLIC SECTOR TRAINING COURSE

The primary purpose of this course is to provide information to public sector (DOT and Metropolitan Planning Organization) staff who work with freight providers or in freight planning or logistics. This information will help them better understand the needs of the freight community and help them better perform their daily activities. The goal is not to develop trained logistics specialists, but rather to make public sector employees familiar with issues and concepts that are significant to the industry. The course is now available on the CFIRE website.

MVFC 03: MODEL FREIGHT PLANNING APPROACHES

The primary purpose of this project is to gather best practices related to freight planning for medium- and large-size Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and their affiliated state DOTs and to provide better tools to the DOT and MPO staff who work with freight providers or in freight planning. The primary product of this project is a guidebook that can help state and MPO planners prepare the freight components of their long-range plans. Since this an applied product, it meshes with the requirements of the planning processes and with the level of expertise present at state and MPO planning agencies. The guidebook is also available as a series of audio-enhanced PowerPoint presentations.

MVFC 04: MISSISSIPPI VALLEY FREIGHT COALITION EXPANDED TRUCK PARKING

This project builds upon the Federal Highway Administration's Study of Adequacy of Parking Facilities on the National Highway System, which was completed in 2002 and outlined the lack of adequate parking facilities for truckers and the mismatch between available facilities and trucker needs with regard to location, amenities, and functional characteristics. The urgency of this issue is a result of the increasing volume of commercial traffic on the Interstate Highway System, new Hours of Service (HOS) regulations implemented by the FHWA in 2005, growing incidents on truck parking ramps, and increasing awareness of the connection between driver fatigue and traffic accidents.

MVFC 06: MISSISSIPPI VALLEY FREIGHT INFORMATION CLEARINGHOUSE

Reliable and timely information is essential to efficient and safe commercial vehicle operations. However, as freight-travelers make their way through multiple localities in the region, the current decentralized structure of the region's information infrastructure results in suboptimal driving decisions being made by motor carriers. Proliferation of the current information systems is a problem, as is the consistency and completeness of the information in these systems. This project creates a centralized, one-stop shop for freight information in the Mississippi Valley region that allows freight-travelers to make accurate and up-to-the-minute adjustments in their routes, in order to improve efficiency and lower costs for freight travel throughout the region.

MVFC 09: REGIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REAUTHORIZATION

This effort builds on an earlier effort by the MVFC to agree on broad concepts and prepare testimony for the National Surface Transportation Revenue and Policy Commission. That testimony, which was delivered in the spring of 2007 by Kirk Steudle (Michigan Department of Transportation) and Teresa Adams (University of Wisconsin-Madison), raised a number of issues that require evaluation in the context of reauthorization: adequate investment in the total freight transportation system; a freight specific revenue source that can be used for both highway and non-highway infrastructure; strong national leadership in defining freight systems and investment policies; new institutional arrangements to facilitate national transportation systems that cross state lines and include private interests; the need for an integrated, multi-modal freight transportation system; the need for a national rail policy; and, the need to invest in maritime (Great Lakes and river) transportation facilities. Performance measures were not discussed in the initial testimony, but subsequent Commission work made it clear that performance management must be included in any further considerations.

