



Mid America Freight Coalition (MAFC) Virtual Annual Meeting

Meeting Summary – Session Two: Freight Planning

Thursday, August 20, 2020

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. CDT

Summary: The second of three MAFC virtual meeting sessions focused on innovative freight planning approaches and strategies to institutionalize freight planning within transportation agencies. In response to the establishment of freight planning requirements in legislative authorizations beginning with MAP21 and expanding with FAST, MAASTO freight planners have networked and shared best practices to adopt and implement the new regulations.

In discussions regarding completing freight plans under unfolding federal guidance, State freight planners look to their peers across the MAASTO region for successful planning approaches, ways to institutionalize freight planning, and stakeholder inclusion processes. MAFC has supported the sharing of freight planning practices and information across or region to advance freight planning. In collaboration with the states, MAFC has worked to identify new analytical approaches, relevant data, freight stakeholders, and innovative programs and policies in support of freight development.

MAFC is now completing a fourth regional freight study since inception of the collaborative in 2008. MAFC operates a two-year, state-defined research agenda to address complex questions and needs of the States. Teleconferences are also held quarterly to discuss current issues and share information. Efforts are intended to support greater multistate collaboration in freight development, allow states insight into their peer's best practices, and support the regional efforts to harmonize freight movements and technologies across our region and the nation to increase the safety and efficiency of freight movement.

MAASTO States have developed a reputation across the country as innovative and progressive in their adoption and implementation of freight development and planning approaches. In this region, the agencies have been aware of the importance of freight movement and actively working together on regional freight movements and capacity since around 2006, culminating with the 2008 signing the MOU creating MAFC by the CEO's of all 10 states. With the pre-existing collaborative environment, MAASTO state freight programs matured rapidly. MAASTO States and the region as a whole, were already working towards establishment of freight as a key component of the transportation policy environment.

This second virtual session featured presentations from Michigan and Minnesota, focusing on the structure and integration of freight planning with the agencies. These two approaches to planning organization and integration provide examples for freight planning cohorts to see options, potential innovation, and integration strategies (best practices) they may benefit from in building their own program.



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Michigan presented their unique freight planning approach which combined freight, rail, and long-range plans into a single comprehensive planning document. Data is not available to gauge the level of adoption of combined plans across the U.S., but Michigan is certainly one of the first states to organize the complex timing and schedules, organizational actors, and regulations. Benefits of this approach include simplicity of a single final document, timing sequence for completion, and external agency participation. Work group members discovered the web of timing and regulations that could be streamlined. As the plan matures Michigan will be asked to provide updates to the MAFC group about the success and hinderances associated with their planning and organizational approach. Michigan's freight planning approach is detailed in their attached presentation.

Minnesota presented their approach to integrating freight planning within the overall departmental and strategic planning framework. Referred to as part of MnDOT's "family of plans", the freight plan is designed to integrate freight operations, planning, research and programing within the larger organizational framework and strategies. MnDOT was one of the first states across the U.S. to recognize freight as a critical component of the transportation system and economy. Examples of MnDOT's commitment to efforts in freight transportation include cutting-edge work in creation of a freight advisory committee in 1998, district business/freight surveys, an urban freight program, and a long history of participating in and influencing federal freight policy through AASHTO and TRB. The freight planning activities are integrated into the overall agency planning and operations as the multimodal system plan and support higher level organizational goals of quality of life, environmental health, and economic competitiveness. Minnesota's freight planning approach is detailed in their attached presentation.

The Michigan and Minnesota examples exemplify efforts to integrate and improve the freight planning process with the ultimate goal of efficient government, and increasing safety, efficiency and economic competitiveness of freight transportation. Not surprising, all ten of the MAASTO States are leaders in freight planning and operations innovations. Beginning in 2006 with a regional freight plan, followed by formation of the MAFC, and as demonstrated by longstanding leadership in national freight policy and research.



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Meeting Minutes Session Two: Freight Planning

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Attendees:

WI: Shaun Destrampe, Dave Leucinger, Mike Halsted, Dean Prestegaard, Ethan Severson, Josh Reed,
OH: Mark Locker,
MO: Cheryl Ball, Michelle Kratzer, Eric Curtit,
MN: Dan Krom, John Tompkins, Robert Clarkson, Andrew Andrusko,
MI: Elisha Wulff, Jesse Gwilliams,
KS: John Maddox, Cory Davis,
KY: Jeremy Edgeworth, Mikael Pelfrey,
IN: Leslie Morgan, Venetta Keefe, Donna Luley, Joseph Avona,
IA: Craig Markley, Garrett Pedersen, Sam Hiscocks, Justin Meade,
IL: Jim Durako, BJ Murray, Bob Innis, Clayton Stambaugh,
UW Madison: Ernie Perry, Jamie Valentine

Session Notes

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Ernie Perry
2. **Minnesota Freight Planning Approach – A Family of Plans.** Andrew Andrusko (Email: andrew.andrusko@state.mn.us Presentation link: [MnDOT Freight Planning Overview 2020.pdf](#))
 - a. The Multimodal Transportation Plan is the highest-level plan and fits under MnDOT's overarching theme and vision.
 - b. Freight Policy is part of the Freight Plan.
 - c. Freight Advisory Committee.
 - i. More involved than just freight plan.
 1. E.g., Freight during Covid-19 Pandemic.
 - d. Freight Action Agenda.
 - i. Freight Plan Objectives.
 - e. National Highway Freight Program Solicitation.
 - i. FY2010-2022.
 - ii. Surveyed local partners and stakeholders.
 - f. Two-fold
 - i. Developed process.
 - ii. Allowed spending from State.
 - g. Demand was high.
 - h. State-wide planning and district level planning.



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- i. District Freight Plan development goal is to use outreach from local partners and align with state freight plan.
 - j. Lessons Learned:
 - i. Prioritize key freight related efforts and products.
 - ii. Resources are limited.
 - iii. Integrating freight into everyday operations is difficult and ongoing.
 - iv. Public significantly more engaged online during Covid-19 pandemic.
 - v. Transcendental public issues – truck safety, truck parking, rail safety, railroad crossings, rail access, freight, and economic development.
 - vi. Internal consensus building is important in guiding future efforts.
 - k. Q&A
 - i. Q. Is FAC a voting committee?
 - A. Freight Advisory Committee is strictly advisory.
 - ii. Q. Are district plans multimodal or road/bridge only?
 - A. Funding works with formula distribution for trunk highway system, as they are Minnesota’s biggest asset. District level discussions are primarily on roads and bridges, but northern regions lean toward rail and rail access. Intermodal terminals in central region address highway to rail, and to air. Highway freight plan intends to connect regional needs with funding, e.g., air cargo.
 - iii. Q. Buy America is a challenge to building projects. Is Minnesota seeing issues with securing inputs like steel?
 - A. Yes. Minnesota has started purchasing steel in advance for certain types of projects. Obtaining quantities needed is a challenge. Twin Ports region is one large project example. Minnesota produces a lot of iron, and supports Iron Range worker, residents, and the state sees a benefit despite the challenges.
 - iv. Q. Are plans on the MnDOT website?
 - A. Yes: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/freight/index.html> and <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/freight/districtfreightplan/>
- 3. Michigan’s Freight Planning Approach – Combined Plans.** Elisha Wulff (Email: wulffe@michigan.gov Presentation link: [MM2045 MAFC AnnualMeeting Aug2020.pdf](#))
- a. Michigan Mobility 2045 (MM2045) Plan Integration.
 - b. Integrate SLRTP, Freight, and Rail Plans.
 - c. Requirements include freight as one element for all plans integrated.
 - d. Plan Integration.
 - i. Plan Development.
 - 1. Greater efficiencies.
 - ii. Plan Content.
 - e. Two-Phased Approach.



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- i. Phase 1 Framing the Plan.
 - ii. Phase 2 Plan Development.
- f. Integration Matrices are being developing and will be a tool for navigating the integrated plan.
 - i. Plan requirements.
 - ii. Rail Plan Requirements.
- g. Public Outreach – Phase 1 outreach was held in conjunction with other meetings, conferences, associations, and project meetings. Also held Telephone Town Halls and used the Metroquest tool (<https://metroquest.com/>).
- h. Public Outreach – Phase 2 included Metroquest surveys, telephone town halls, and virtual regional freight forums.
- i. Freight Advisory Committee Visioning Findings:
 - i. Asset Management-Infrastructure Durability are critical.
 - ii. Comprehensive Modal Inclusion.
 - iii. Economic Geography.
- j. MM2045 Guiding Principles:
 - i. Modal Choice.
 - ii. Preservation.
 - iii. Future Orientated.
 - iv. Quality of Life.
- k. MM2045 Goals and objectives.
- l. FHWA was supportive with plan integration and developing the strategies under the larger objectives.
- m. Challenges of Creating and Implementing an Integrated Transportation Plan:
 - i. Multiple owner and operators of transportation systems (all modes.)
 - ii. New technologies.
 - iii. Coordination/outreach with partners and public stakeholders.
- n. Coordination and Organizational Structure – results in educating internally on how freight is a key element in decision making processes which will be a strong asset.
- o. Q&A:
 - i. Q. Chap. 7 community environment and health. Have you received feedback from community on how it impacts health?
 - A. Mostly trucking, emissions, perceived damage to pavement. Looking to address it more in this plan than 2017 plan.
 - ii. Q. Will you explain more on the metroquest survey?
 - A. Public involvement team can give more detail, but generally, it was pushed hard. Posted on FB, Instagram, Twitter, and aggressively shared with Michigan Trucking Association, Rail Association, and any meetings project members were available to present on the plan. Each project member works to get survey



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distributed. Metroquest is more interactive and engaging than Survey Monkey.

- iii. Q. Metroquest was used in MO and it was successful. Is there a rail use metric, for example specifics for passenger rail?
 - A. Michigan Association of Rail Passengers is an engaged and aggressive association in Michigan. They helped get the word out on the survey.
- iv. Q. How much money to implement a survey?
 - A. Elisha will provide at a future time.
- v. Q. By integrating Freight and Rail plans into your LRTP, are representatives from either group concerned that their concerns will be diluted in a larger plan, or are those concerns overcome by getting more visibility in an LRTP platform?
 - A. Working on it throughout the process.

4. MAFC Research Agenda Status, Ernie Perry.

- a. Currently taking comments from States on the final draft of the Rail Waybill report.
- b. 75% complete on MAASTO Freight Alignment project. Understanding Regional Assets for Freight Movement and Economic Development.
- c. Characteristics and Importance of Freight Aviation in the MAASTO Region.
- d. Covid-19 research items and collaborative marine freight planning.
 - i. Phase II MAFC Research Priority Projects:
 - 1. Covid-19 disruptions: Freight system and agency operational changes affecting freight planning.
 - 2. Collaborative freight planning and economic development: maximizing marine and water freight plans across marine freight corridors.
 - 3. Covid-19 disruptions: Best practices to address financial, logistics and social system impacts.
- e. TPIMS, going fine and cleaning up data.

- 5. **Conclusion:** The third session will focus on other regional collaborative efforts to advance freight planning and operations. The session will feature a presentation on freight technologies as part of the FHWA National Economic Partnership Program and will feature work in the area of truck permitting by representatives of the OSOW and MCC groups with MAASTO.

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