

Manufacturers' Perspectives on Minnesota's Transportation System

Project Summary - Summer / Fall 2016

Background

- Purpose: Understand business-specific freight transportation requirements of traded industry clusters – businesses that bring outside resources to a region and provide stable, higher-paying jobs
- Identify low-cost/high-value opportunities to provide a more responsive transportation system, focusing on infrastructure, maintenance, communication, and permitting and policy
- Staff-implemented effort from MnDOT Districts and Central Office
- Multi-organization, long-term relationship building to support economic strength by region and statewide, working with local economic development staff, county engineers, other state agencies, and the University of Minnesota



Results

- Completed projects in western Minnesota districts (MnDOT Districts 2, 4 and 8); conducted almost 250 face-to-face interviews with manufacturers, carriers, and other businesses
- Providing direct assistance based on feedback, including:
 - District 8 changed their construction detour planning to a year ahead, to allow for shipper and carrier input into the process and provide businesses with enough lead time to plan alternative routes
 - District 8 is better meeting a business' needs through information sharing regarding snow plowing
 - District 4 is adding a pedestrian crossing, a turn lane, and shoulder width improvements at specific locations that were of concern to businesses, in conjunction with upcoming planned maintenance projects
 - District 2 installed reflective chevron signs at 17 areas in the District, to give truck drivers better visual perspective around curves
 - District 2 better synchronized their snow operations with a large business' morning shift
 - The Freight Office improved aspects of the permitting process, responding to specific concerns. Additional technology improvements planned, pending new resources
 - Additional feedback is being analyzed (e.g., reviewing or conducting crash studies, infrastructure and safety features, etc.) for possible responses



- Added businesses to District media distribution lists, for timely road conditions, closures and openings information
- Validated MnDOT planning processes; many specific locations/infrastructure issues raised were already included in Districts' four-year infrastructure program
- “The biggest thing is that we are now constantly thinking about freight in our operations and decision-making.” *D8 Planning Director*

Next Steps

- Northeast Minnesota (D1) and Metro District project planned for 2016-17; implement the model in remaining MnDOT Districts within the next three years
- Continue identification of potential statewide improvements

For More Information

Visit: www.dot.state.mn.us/ofrw/mps.html

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