

MnDOT District 8 Freight Plan

September 12, 2019 Advisory Committee Meeting Meeting Themes and Reflections for Internal Discussion

Key Themes:

- The importance of local last-mile connections to the trunk highway network.
 - Last-mile connections can be affected by flooding.
 - Safety concerns at local road intersections with trunk highways.
- The need for balanced truckloads in and out of the District’s manufacturing areas, reducing empty “backhaul.”
- Connections to other regions, and activity in other regions is important to District 8’s freight system.
 - Need to understand how Metro congestion affects District 8.
 - New industrial development in South Dakota (such as mega-dairies or new ethanol plants) will have effects on the District 8 freight system.

Strengths:

- Good work ethic.
- Good job on preventative maintenance on trunk highways.
- Rural nature of District – removed from congestion of the Twin Cities.
- Strong agricultural and manufacturing industry bases.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of interstate highways and 4-lane trunk highway capacity.
- Non-trunk highways have condition issues (pavement and bridges).
- Overall road condition is expected to decline in the future.
- Lack of roadway access control or management.
- Roads are planned for or viewed as “single-use” – example is planning for bicycles is potentially in conflict with trucks.
- Captive rail service or a lack of rail service in some communities.

Opportunities:

- Communications (improve operations, construction planning with major industries, education for public, safety programs like Operation Lifesaver, etc.)
- Emerging sources of good data to inform planning and operations.

- Plan may identify low-cost improvements with big freight benefits (especially for safety).
- Creation of additional or more permanent transloading facilities to give more businesses access to rail service.
- Explore the potential for improved backhaul for the region's freight operations.
- Changing energy production – continued development of wind, solar, and bio-fuel.

Threats:

- More severe and more frequent extreme weather events can damage infrastructure and disrupt freight operations.
- Industry changes are impacting system use and condition. For example, I-29 dairy development in South Dakota may increase truck traffic on some roads in western District 8.
- Limited funds for continued maintenance, or expansion.
- Declining or flat population growth will limit available workforce.