

APPENDIX A: OUTREACH PLAN

Project Background

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), several regional planning authorities, and area economic development agencies initiated a freight transportation planning effort to address freight concerns in Central Minnesota Regional Planning Area. The purpose of this freight planning effort is to build on prior planning activities and gain a better understanding of the demands from freight on regional transportation infrastructure and to identify projects that meet the demand of regional freight stakeholders. Information from this planning effort will help guide future investment decisions of the participating public planning agencies.

The planning effort is constructed to provide a framework that will:

- Examine local freight movements and trends not captured in larger planning studies, including region-specific and industry-specific trends and issues;
- Document existing freight transportation systems and how various elements are used by different industry sectors of the regional economy including agricultural, energy, timber, forest products; mining and manufacturing;
- Identify potential projects that address freight needs, as well as potential funding strategies and private sector partnerships; and,
- Strengthen relationships with freight and business community through outreach activities.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for the overall directions and monitoring of the project. The make-up of the committee includes; County, City, Regional Development Commissions, Federal Highway Administration, Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Mn/DOT Staff representatives. A private sector representative will be added at a later date.

Name	Organization
Steve Backowski	Morrison County Engineer
Bob Bollenbeck	East Central Regional Development Commission
Joan Danielson	Department of Employment and Economic Development
Chris Etzler	Region 5 Development Commission
Henry Fischer	St. Cloud Area Economic Development Partnership
Cathryn Hanson	St. Cloud Area Planning Organization
Lee Miller	Region 5 Development Commission
Tom Moore	St. Cloud Area Economic Development Partnership
Jordan Zeller	East Central Regional Development Commission
Brad DeWolf	Region 7W Transportation Advisory Committee
Susan Moe	Federal Highway Administration
Steve Voss	Mn/DOT District 3 Planning Director
Mary Safgren	Mn/DOT District 3 Planner
Matthew Pahs	Mn/DOT Freight Planner
Peter Dahlberg	Mn/DOT Freight Planner
Ryan Gaug	Mn/DOT Multimodal Planner
Gene Hicks	Mn/DOT Transportation Data
John Tompkins	Mn/DOT Project Manager

Central Minnesota Preliminary Freight Profile

Trucking is the dominant mode of freight transportation in the district, carrying 97 percent of originating and terminating tonnage in 2007. Significant tonnage also moves through the district on Interstate 94, US Highway 10 and the BNSF Railway corridor. District freight movement consists of large amounts of *Nonmetallic Minerals* which are mainly local moves. Other major freight commodities originating in the district include *Farm Products*, *Food Products*, *Cut Stone*, and *Paper Products*. *Electrical Equipment*, *Optical Equipment*, and *Transportation Equipment* are major valuable commodities originating in the district. The district is a major destination for *Coal Shipments*, with the power plant in Becker receiving shipments from BNSF Railway daily. St. Cloud is a major trade center for Minnesota's *Manufacturing* and *Service* industries. Major destinations of freight generated in the district include the Twin Cities, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago.

Objective of the Scope

Effectively engaging and communicating with key stakeholders and the public is an important step in building a common understanding about the important relationships between freight transportation and economic development. Input from stakeholders is an important component of transportation planning and programming resulting in better decision making for people and goods movement. In freight oriented transportation planning efforts, "engaging the private sector" is public involvement aimed at establishing two-way communication with private sector stakeholders most affected by freight-related transportation planning and investment decisions.

The SCOPE outlined below is designed to encourage stakeholders to share their knowledge and perspectives about their existing business transportation practices, challenges and opportunities affecting transportation and economic development in the region, and explore new opportunities that could enhance the economy in the future.

Engaging the Private Sector

In-Person Interviews

Traditional approaches to public involvement have had only limited success in generating the interest of freight stakeholders. In-person interviews of key freight stakeholders in the region will be a primary method of reaching out directly to businesses that rely on the region's transportation networks to receive production inputs and move finished products to consumer markets. Approximately 17 in-person interviews will be conducted by staff as part of the Plan effort. **Exhibit A-1** provides the initial sampling plan developed by the project Steering Committee for in-person interviews.

Exhibit A-1: In-Person Interview and Electronic Survey Targets

Industry Segment or Category	Face to Face Interviews	Electronic Survey's	
Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CHS ▪ Ethanol Plant – Central MN Coop 		
General Manufacturing/ Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ C & L Distribution ▪ Cold Springs Brewery ▪ Nahan Printing ▪ Golden Plump ▪ Trident Seafoods ▪ Clow Stamping ▪ Prescription Optical 	Dezurik Jennie-O New Flyer Sunny Fresh Dan's Prize Long Prairie Packing Co. Team Industries Lindar Pequot Tool	Lexington Artic Cat J & B Wholesale Park Industries Apperts Nasch Finch
Mining/Aggregate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cold Springs Granite ▪ Aggregate Industries 	Granite City Ready Mix (Knife River) MN Minerals	
Wood and Paper Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Verso Paper 	Wausau Paper	
Transportation and Warehousing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spee-dee Delivery ▪ Yellow Freight ▪ UPS ▪ Anderson Trucking ▪ Northern Lines Railway ▪ St. Cloud Airport 	Daggett Trucking ABF Freight Vistar Corporation Con-Way Canadian Pacific RR Burlington Northern RR Meiers Transport & Warehousing Fingerhut	
Electrical Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remmele Engineering 	Electrolux - Electronics-Appliance	

The desire on the part is to expand the interview pool to include electronic surveys. Electronic surveys will be sent to as many private freight-intensive entities as possible. The electronic survey summary information will be consistent (general sense of what needs to be provided) with data gathered during the face-to-face interviews. The face-to-face interview attendance should be limited to no more than two or three persons: 1) Mn/DOT Central Office; 2) District office representative; and, 3) Steering Committee member. Surveys and interviews will provide real-world feedback for analyses conducted in other tasks of the study. Stakeholder interviews will also provide contextual information by providing insights about supply chain interactions and the adequacy/deficiency of the current transportation network. The interviews should be completed using the interview guides found at the **end of this Appendix**.

Web-Based Surveys

To provide the broadest opportunity for business sector input to the study, it is proposed that interviews be supplemented with on-line or web-based surveys that would be communicated to regional businesses by regional chambers of commerce and economic development agencies. Potential communication outlets for the Central Minnesota Regional Freight Plan may include:

- Local and Regional Chamber Newsletters
- Local Newspapers
- MPO Newsletters
- Municipal Websites
- Media Liaisons

The public planning partners involved in the planning effort will introduce these survey instruments to regional Chambers of Commerce and other business groups and ask that they communicate information about the study and the online surveys using the following text or similar overview in their newsletters or other publications:

Central Regional Minnesota Freight Plan

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) is undertaking a freight planning effort to learn more about business transportation needs across the central Minnesota region.

The purpose of this freight transportation planning effort is to gain a better understanding about freight demands on the regional infrastructure and identify projects that can accommodate current and future freight mobility needs of regional businesses. Information from this planning effort will help guide future investment decisions of the participating public planning agencies.

*The project is highly dependent on input from regional businesses. We will seek information from regional businesses about freight activity levels, supply chain structures, and opinions on transportation services within the study area. Outreach with the business community is taking place under several activities including personal interviews, a web-based survey and a regional freight forum to be held in St. Cloud at the Mn/DOT Conference Center, 3725 12th Street North, St. Cloud, MN 56303, at 3:00 p.m. **on May 17, 2010.***

We have established three survey instruments available via the web, or by mail. One survey is designed for companies that ship and/or receive products (shippers/receivers survey). Another survey has been developed for those businesses offering transportation services in the region (trucking companies, freight forwarders, etc.). And finally, a survey developed for motor carrier drivers with pick-up and delivery products.

Businesses within the region are encouraged to complete the survey and provide their input to the study. All responses will remain anonymous. Responses and information gathered from the interviews and surveys will be presented only in summary formats. The surveys take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Shippers/receivers wishing to complete the survey may go to the following link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=yP_2b1FkoJw4YCKJa_2fwZu9RA_3d_3d

Transportation service providers wishing to provide input may go to: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=MOkF_2bkqZhgnv9IDfzNdpng_3d_3d

Truck Drivers wishing to complete the survey may go to the following link: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=pwo3owJxlzePzse_2fkDz2lw_3d_3d

To learn more about the freight planning effort or the upcoming freight forum visit: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/planning/freightplan/>

District Freight Forum

To enhance the scope of freight stakeholder input within the existing budget, existing institutional relationships with organizations like the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) and regional industry groups should be leveraged to sponsor a freight forum in the Mn/DOT District 3 area. The forum will be held in St. Cloud, MN.

The St. Cloud Freight Forum will be structured to share information from Tasks 1 and 2 of the study, as well as summary information gathered through interviews and web-based surveys. The goal of the forum is to seek the opinions of the region's business leaders about the information gathered and preliminary directions emerging from the data gathered through the mid-point of the planning effort. After several initial presentations on the study process and initial findings, forum attendees will be divided into small groups to probe key issues, and identify and prioritize potential projects. A proposed agenda for the St. Cloud Freight Forum is shown in **Exhibit A-2**.

To save on travel it is proposed that the St. Cloud Freight Forum would be held in conjunction with a Steering Committee Meeting that would occur before the forum. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss issues, seek clarification and gather input on prioritization regarding issues that will be addressed in the forum, or gathered through previous stakeholder activities.

Exhibit A-2: Sample Agenda for a Regional Freight Forum in St. Cloud

Meeting Agenda for the Freight Forum	
1:00 – 2:00	Steering Committee Meeting
2:45 – 3:00	Registration
3:00 – 3:15	Introductions and Welcome
3:15 – 3:45	Regional Freight Plan Overview and Purpose Presentation on Regional Freight Profile: demographics, key commodity flows, markets and modes. Presentation on Regional Freight Network Inventory: nodes, networks and bottlenecks
3:45 – 5:00	Small Group Breakout Sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highway Issues – Truck size and weight, key corridors, operations and projects • Railroad Issues – Service, capacity and projects • Air Freight Issues – Capacity, future needs and projects
5:00 – 5:30	Small Group report out and Wrap-up

If the meeting arrangements allow, the forums can also provide opportunities to complete additional interviews.

Open House

Upon completion of the Draft Freight Plan Report, an Open House will be held to present the findings and recommendations. The Open House will be an informal setting in which the public and private sector interests will get information about the Plan. A short presentation will be

made. Participants will be encouraged to give opinions, comments, and preference to staff either orally or in writing.

Comment Period – 30 Days

Public and Private comments on findings and recommendations will be collected within this 30-day period.

Response and Summary Period – 30 Days

After the 30-day comment period, Mn/DOT will have 30 days to post comments and summarize responses in the final report.

Scenario Planning for Freight Planning

- Globalization increase connectivity
- Fuel cost volatile – unpredictable
- Transportation is a response to demand
- Containerization – concentrates global shipping
- Freight infrastructure projects take many years to build at a substantial
- NIBY – BANANA
- Multi-jurisdictional

APPENDIX B: EXISTING FREIGHT PROGRAMS

The following sections review the Mn/DOT and private sector programs that have an impact on freight activity in the Central Minnesota study area:

Trucking Programs

Commercial Vehicle Operations oversees truck regulatory and administrative programs. There are four primary focus areas within CVO: safety, conformity, efficiency, and mobility. The core activities that reside under these focus areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Conduct vehicle safety inspections; issue permits for vehicles that are oversize or overweight;
- Provide truck size and weight policy and coordinate maintenance of all weight scales facilities;
- Provide technical assistance at hazardous materials transportation incidents; review and audit carrier operating records;
- Conduct training classes; and,
- Provide outreach on technical topics related to driver qualifications, vehicle safety, carrier operating requirements and transportation regulations for hazardous materials.

In general, the CVO area is directed toward improving transportation safety operations of motor vehicles and compliance with laws, rules, and statutes related to those operations, rather than to specific freight system enhancement.

Several industries interviewed in Central Minnesota expressed concerns over the application of truck regulatory programs:

Wind Turbine Equipment Hauling

Wind turbine equipment (both blades and tower sections) are moving frequently from the Port of Duluth to and from wind farms in southwestern Minnesota and manufacturing facilities in adjoining states to Minnesota has illuminated the need for routes support a variety of over-size loads.

St. Cloud, Minnesota is home to one of the nation's largest hauler, Anderson Trucking Service (ATS), of wind turbine equipment. Furthermore ATS is a recognized leader in Specialized/Flatbed Transportation.

Milk and Dairy-Based Hauling

Stearns County is ranked 1st of Minnesota counties, and 21st in the U.S. for their "value of sales" in milk and other dairy products from cows. The movement of milk and other dairy products has been altered to their primary market, the Twin Cities metro area, to avoid congestion. A milk hauler interviewed expressed need to increase the capacity of milk hauled to the Twin Cities metro area. A suggestion by the hauler is to allow for an extension to be added to the trailer to increase weight capacity. An analysis is needed to evaluate the suggestion.

Rail Programs

Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program

The Minnesota Rail Service Improvement Program was established in 1976 to prevent the loss of rail service on lines subject to abandonment. The five subprograms that fall under the broader MRSI program are presented below.

Rail Line Rehabilitation Program

This program provides low- or no-interest loans to rehabilitate and preserve rail lines. Upon completion of the rail rehabilitation project, the railroad repays the state on a negotiated per-car basis or at a predetermined fixed rate.

Rail Purchase Assistance Program

This program helps regional rail authorities purchase rail lines if a financial analysis shows that the line can operate at a profit, that purchase cost and necessary rehabilitation will not exceed benefits and that the regional railroad authority is capable of operating the rail line or can contract with an operator to do so.

Rail User and Rail Carrier Loan Guarantee Program

This program helps shippers and carriers to obtain loans for rail rehabilitation and capital improvements. The program guarantees up to 90 percent of the loan.

Capital Improvement Loans

This program lends rail users up to \$200,000 or up to 100 percent of the project, whichever is less, to improve rail facilities. Capital improvement loans are available to improve rail service through construction or improvements to rail line segments (i.e., side track and team track connections); and, to construct or improve facilities used to load, unload, store and transfer freight and commodities. Loans are repaid on a quarterly basis or a lump sum within 10 years.

Exhibit B-2: Capital Improvement Loan Usage in Central Minnesota

Year	Improvement	Location	Amount
1997	Track-upgrade	St. Cloud	\$196,833
2009	Track-upgrade & Extend track	Aitkin	\$166,900
2010	New Track	Cold Springs	\$200,000
Total			\$563,733

Rail Safety – Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program

The purpose of the Minnesota Railroad Grade Crossing Safety Improvement Program is to promote and enhance safety at highway-rail grade crossings in the state. Typical projects include installation of signals, signal upgrades, signage, pavement markings, lighting, crossing surface improvements, crossing closures and roadway relocations, improved sight conditions, improved crossing alignments, and grade separations.

Since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, 10 percent of Minnesota's federal Surface Transportation Program funds are set aside for safety activities. Of this amount, approximately \$4 million annually has been provided for highway-rail grade crossing safety improvements. Opportunities may also exist to partner with some of the private rail companies as they upgrade their tracks or make other improvements. Additional funding also is available through the federal government for crossings on high-speed rail corridors.

Mn/DOT develops an annual list of proposed grade crossing safety improvement projects and forwards it to the appropriate ATP for prioritization with other transportation-related projects. The appropriate road authorities are notified and asked to commit matching funds to leverage the federal transportation funds being sought for inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Program.

While there is no specific criterion for identifying projects that are selected for funding under this program, consideration is given to the number of crashes and fatalities, sight distance, train speeds, the number of trains and the amount of vehicular traffic crossing the tracks.

The effectiveness of the grade crossing safety program is evidenced by the fact that, over the past 10 years, the number of crashes has continued to decline. Annual crash and fatality rates at highway-rail grade crossings has been a generally decreasing trend. In 1970, 392 crashes and 36 fatalities occurred. By 1990, 115 crashes and 14 fatalities occurred. This trend has continued into 2004, when only 67 crashes and 11 fatalities occurred.

Exhibit B-2: Grade Crossing Crashes and Fatalities, 2004

Year	Crashes	Fatalities
2005	56	7
2006	59	10
2007	46	3
2008	52	6
2009	35	4
2010	35	2

Source: Office of Freight and Commercial Operations

Private Freight Rail Programs/Initiatives

BNSF Commerce Corridors – www.corridorsofcommerce.com

BNSF recently launched a new initiative, Commerce Corridors; these Corridors carry the raw materials that provide power to our homes, food and clothing for our families, agricultural products that feed the world, and the goods that drive our economy. Corridors of Commerce create jobs, deliver safety and environmental benefits, and promote U.S. economic competitiveness and growth. Corridors impacting Central Minnesota are the MidCon and Great Northern Corridor. This initiative spawned industrial development ideas in the cities of Big Lake, St. Cloud and Isanti Counties.

Northern Line Railway – www.anacostia.com/nlr/n1r.html

A short line rail service provider operating BNSF trackage in Central Minnesota. NLR serves distribution facilities and connects daily with the BNSF mainline network. Primary Commodities handled are: *Aggregate Materials, Building Products, Chemicals, Coal, Food Products, Lumber, Manufacturing Goods, Paper, Scrap, and Stone*. Major customers include Borgert Products, Cold Springs Granite, Electrolux, Maiers Transport, Northern Metals, Knife River Corp., Manions Wholesale, Mathew Hall Lumber, Quad/Graphics, Martin Marietta, and Smufit-Stone Container Corp. Also operating transloading facilities in St. Cloud, Cold Springs and Waite Park, Minnesota.