

1.0 CENTRAL MINNESOTA FREIGHT PLAN

1.1 Introduction/Overview

An efficient freight system is essential to enhancing the Minnesota's economic competitiveness in the national and global marketplace. District 3 in central Minnesota plays an important role in facilitating the movement of freight and goods throughout the state. The primary modes of freight transportation in central Minnesota are truck, rail, air, and pipeline. Each of these modes provides different types of services, and move different types of cargo with various challenges.

Truck Transportation via Interstate 94 corridor - predominate corridor for truck traffic; decreasing truck speed, overnight truck parking availability

Rail Transportation - lack of intermodal facilities, limited rail access facilities

Air Transportation - challenges in retaining air passenger/air cargo facilities

Central Minnesota has the largest population base outside of the Minneapolis/St. Paul metro area and will experience the highest growth rate percentage in population and vehicle miles traveled; there are immediate concerns to address freight transportation in this study area.

This report identifies and explores the challenges facing freight transportation and provides recommendation for improvements.

1.2 Goals of the Study

The goal is to provide a framework to:

- Identify industry- and region-specific trends as they relate to freight transportation and their solutions;
- Plan for improvements to freight movements specific to the region; and,
- Strengthen freight considerations in public project planning and investment decision-making.