

MINNESOTA FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

STRATEGIC PLANNING Ad Hoc Working Group

Note Concerning Recommendations

The recommendations that follow are based on:

1. The original charge to the Ad Hoc Working Group.
2. The material on state freight advisory committees provided to the Ad Hoc Working Group prior to its February 26 meeting.
3. The discussion at the February 26 meeting.
4. Conversations with individuals knowledgeable concerning state FACs on a regional or national basis.
5. Discussions with MnDOT and CTS staff.
6. Interviews with state DOT staff in four states concerning their states' FACs
7. Professional experience and knowledge.

The recommendations are presented in the order and under the headings of the questionnaire used for the interviews (reviewed by the Ad Hoc Working Group prior to the interviews).

Initial Recommendations for the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee

Mission and Purpose

No major changes recommended in current Mission and Purpose statement (*attached*). The recommendations below are intended to enable the existing mission and purpose to be implemented more fully and actively.

Activities

Recommend that the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee carry out the activities below on a regular basis:

- Monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the Statewide Freight Plan, including the development of recommendations for any revisions and updates to the Plan
- Creating an annual report for the Commissioner that includes a “state of freight,” an overview of trends and important issues, and reports on the activities of the Freight Advisory Committee from the past year
- Reviewing the Minnesota Department of Transportation work plan and provide “freight impact: comments.
- Preparing white papers on specific topics or issues as thought to be necessary and useful.

Structure

Would recommend having little formality, and suggest creating a one-page document that declares the statement and purpose of the group and outlines the organizational structure.

Membership

With respect to membership the following is recommended:

- Limit members to no more than 30 to be representative of “private sector shippers, and carriers; industry associations, academia; and economic development agencies.
- State agency participants, MDOT and others, will be Ex Officio Members.
- Others, in or related to the freight sector beyond the limited set above may be Associate Members and receive information and communications and participation in meetings.

Leadership

- There should be a Chair and Vice-Chair with terms of two or three years (renewable) with the Vice-Chair succeeding the Chair.
- An “Executive Committee” should be formed to include the Chair, Vice-Chair and three to five additional members to serve as the leadership and communications group for MFAC.

Meetings

The following is recommended with respect to meetings:

- MFAC should continue the practice of holding quarterly meetings. Two of the meetings should be held in the Twin Cities and two elsewhere in the state.
- One or, if possible, two of these meetings should incorporate a freight site visit. A meeting schedule should be developed for the year showing dates and locations of the year's meetings, as well as identifying themes or particular activities and functions to be conducted at each meeting.

Communication

- Strengthen the website to keep it updated with information about upcoming meetings, agendas, minutes, and other relevant, up-to-date information for both MFAC members and external interested parties.
- Use the web-site as central location for information about other freight-significant organizations, activities and events
- Incorporate Freight Plan into the web site and provide information concerning the implementation of the Freight Action Plan.

Sub-state

- Incorporate sub-state interests into MFAC by having representation from each District as either members or "ex officio"/"associate" members.
- Rotate quarterly meetings among Districts.
- Include District reports as regular item on agendas of quarterly meetings.

Relationships

- Become a hub of information (see above under website) on organizations in the state that are significant for freight. This could be through a list of organizations on the website or another, more in-depth activity. The committee should function as a "one-stop-shop" for identifying other organizations that deal with freight and what they are doing. (scale to available resources)
- Expand and strengthen the connection between MnDOT and MFAC by creating a MnDOT-MFAC liaison team to include the Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicles as well as staff from other MnDOT units, such as planning and operations.
- To the extent possible, demonstrate MnDOT executive commitment to MFAC through participation from the Commissioner and other high level MnDOT executives.

Federal Law and Guidance:

MFAC will conform to federal law and guidance.

State Law

MFAC does not need to be incorporated in Minnesota state law.

Resources

Increase resources available for the support of MFAC consistent with decisions made about expanded activities and responsibilities such meeting and site visits around states, expanded web site, MFAC Annual Report, and freight issue white papers.

Success Factors

The MFAC Executive Committee in consultation with MnDOT should identify three to five performance measures that allow for continual evaluation of engagement from members and outputs of the committee. MFAC should maintain “a high level of customer satisfaction” reflected by the willingness of industry to serve and participate.

Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee Mission and Objectives Statement

The Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC) provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and addressing of issues between MnDOT and the private sector to develop and promote a safe, reliable, and efficient freight transportation system. MFAC is designed to be a partnership between government and business to exchange ideas, recommend policy and actions that promote safety, productivity and sustainable freight transportation systems in Minnesota.

Minnesota's freight planning activities, including the establishment of the Freight Advisory Committee, are driven by MnDOT's desire to better understand freight flows within the State and their relationship to economic competitiveness.

The Committee was established in 1998 specifically to:

- Ensure freight transportation needs are taken into account in the planning, research, investment and operation of Minnesota's transportation system.
- Establish guidelines to measure and manage the state's freight transportation needs.
- Provide input and direction to MnDOT on freight transportation policies, needs, and issues.
- Give support and input to program and research areas for MnDOT and Center for Transportation Studies (CTS) follow-up.
- Represent the needs of freight transportation to the public, elected officials, and other public agencies and organizations.

The Committee consists of representatives from private sector shippers, receivers and carriers; industry associations; academia; and economic development agencies. **Participation is open to any persons or entities from these freight stakeholder groups.**