

# Minnesota Statewide Freight System Plan

## Advisory Committee Meeting

### Key Themes

- **Minnesota GO is an overarching vision guiding the State’s transportation system planning and development.** The investments and policy that Minnesota is making now will determine the shape of the transportation system for the next generations. The planning process should involve a way to deal with unknown elements – we can’t predict what will happen in 50 years, but good planning can guide us through uncertain scenarios.
- **The Statewide Freight System Plan (Plan) needs to tell a compelling freight “story” and to answer the question “What does this mean for me and for my region?”** A key concern is balancing the importance of freight as an economic driver with the need to move freight in a way that is minimally disruptive to Minnesota residents. Public outreach, both during and after the plan is critical to “sell” the residents and political leaders of the state on the importance of freight movements.
- **Freight is global in scale.** Goods not only move within the State, but are connected with supply chains worldwide. Freight relates to other aspects of the economy - employment, workforce concentrations, physical facilities, etc. These are all key components to emphasize in the freight plan. Many key challenges and issues for freight transportation in Minnesota are based on ongoing issues outside the State – the movement (or lack thereof) of grain by rail, oil and containers moving through the State via rail, challenges on the Mississippi River system.
- **The Plan should lead to action and drive investment in the transportation system.** It is important to know how freight projects are defined and what the freight needs are to qualify for current and potential future funding and/or financing. Partnerships with other agencies, private industry, and investors are key to accomplishing projects such as high speed rail lines. These partnerships should lead to positive collaboration and influence departmental actions to further shared goals.
- **Industry is a key component to Minnesota’s economy - “In Minnesota you still make things.”** The State is actively pursuing partnerships with businesses that are investing in future technology and products that will improve quality of life. Challenges across a multitude of issues, including finding a diverse and qualified workforce, influence where businesses locate and how they operate.
- **Lessons from the private sector should be incorporated into the freight planning process.** How do we measure outcome? How do we measure return on investment on projects?
- **Minnesota’s industries are shifting their supply chains in ways that impact their use of the transportation system.** Businesses are aiming to create shorter lead times, are looking at total costs (including supply chain and transportation costs) instead of solely product costs, and are developing closer relationships with suppliers and improving their inventory management.

