

Minnesota Statewide Freight System Plan

Technical Team Meeting

Key Themes

- **Freight should not solely be discussed in the freight office.** One goal of the planning process is to broaden participation and talk about freight within MnDOT and other organizations, state and local agencies, and private industry. MnDOT has historically been an infrastructure-centric agency, but when you talk to industry, key concerns include reliability, cost, regulation, workforce, and a number of issues beyond infrastructure. These factors need to be better incorporated into MnDOT.
- **Freight planning should go beyond simply “infrastructure planning.”** At a basic level, freight planning looks at how much stuff is moving – this is what you must take into account when planning infrastructure investments and policy. But the freight planning process should also look at alternative measures – what is most important to the economy, measured by value? This translates more directly into jobs and has policy and economic impacts to the State.
- **The Statewide Freight System Plan (Plan) should be thought of as investment guidance that identifies needs and projects for future focus.** It is important to synthesize freight planning with other efforts happening in MnDOT, particularly the on-going State Rail Plan. Networks, issues, needs, strategies, and projects identified as part of the Freight Plan should work seamlessly with those identified in other plans.
- **Coordination with other agencies** - such as the Department of Employment and Economic Development, is important in order to align priorities and determine the investments that produce the most return across a number of categories.
- **All industries are freight-related in one way or another** - so anything that impacts the freight system impacts Minnesota’s entire economy. The freight planning process should focus not only on existing industries, but those that are potentially key industries in the future.
- **Planning should provide insight into the sensitivity of assumptions to different changes in alternate futures**, i.e., connected vehicles, 3D printing. MnDOT should keep in mind previous planning efforts and look at how well these predictions matched with current conditions, and incorporate these insights into this current planning process.
- **MnDOT must continue to manage public awareness of issues** such as rail safety – both through the freight planning and rail planning process, and continue to provide public information on ongoing processes and allow them to provide input into the planning process.

