

MnDOT District 1 Freight Plan

Advisory Committee Meeting 2

November 30, 2018

Meeting Summary

Attendees

Advisory Committee Members

- Andrew Andrusko, MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations
- Bryan Anderson, MnDOT District 1
- Nicole George, MnDOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations
- Kate Ferguson, Duluth-Superior Port Authority
- Shaker Rabban, MnDOT Office of Transportation System Management
- Andy Hubley, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission
- Kelsey Johnson – Minnesota Iron Mining Association
- Chris Ismil, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board
- Janelle Greschner, Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board
- Ron Chicka, Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
- Mike Wenzholz, Duluth-Superior Metropolitan Interstate Council
- Jim Foldesi, St. Louis County
- Duane Hill, MnDOT District 1
- Ron Dvorak, MFAC and Lake Superior Warehousing
- Dena Ryan, Wisconsin DOT
- Cindy Voigt, City of Duluth

Project Team

- Erika Witzke, CPCS
- Eric Oberhart, CPCS
- Matt Bolf, SEH

Overview

The Project Team provided an overview of the findings from the District 1 Freight Plan Working Paper 2: Freight System Profile. This presentation of findings included 1) truck speeds and congestion, 2) highway and grade crossing crashes and risk factors, 3) Oversize-Overweight Truck Routes, 4) bridge clearances, and 5) bridge conditions. Each of these sections was followed by discussion and an opportunity for the Advisory Committee to either confirm or help course-correct the Project Team's understanding of the system and its needs.

Following this discussion, Advisory Committee members divided into three in groups where they were asked to identify key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the District's freight system, and future trends that could affect the system. After these small group discussions, each group reported their findings to the Advisory Committee as a whole.

Key Themes

Based on the small group discussions several key themes and findings emerged:

Condition and Performance Feedback

- The Project Team will check to ensure that highway crash data reflects the full range of crashes in District 1, and not just incidents on the Trunk Highway system.

- The Project Team will look into the potential breaking crash counts down by specific causes. In particular, the Advisory Committee was interested in crashes associated with alcohol or inclement weather.
- Previous statewide analysis of bottlenecks (2018 Minnesota Statewide Freight Bottlenecks) used a different data source (not StreetLight Data), and the Project Team will compare its findings against the 2018 report to ensure no potential bottlenecks were missed.
- The Advisory Committee emphasized that the impact of roundabouts on trucks and OSOW freight in particular be examined in the District 1 Freight Plan.

SWOT Reports

Below is a high-level summary of what the group reported post-roundtable discussion:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A diverse industrial base, including manufacturing and mining • A range of multimodal freight assets – a system designed to transport bulk goods • There are very few congestion issues. • Well-maintained road • Room to grow without conflicts between land uses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freight bottlenecks (vertical clearances) • Lack of system redundancy (examples: Soo Locks, CN Bridge in International Falls, MN-61) • Bridges and river crossings as chokepoints • Border crossing Hours of Service • Lack of competitive rail service outside of Duluth • Land use and freight conflicts (routing trucks through neighborhoods) • Lack of reliable freight funding • Lack of truck weight policy harmonization between states/provinces
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance low-cost spot infrastructure improvements (bypasses and widened lanes) • Improve 1st/last 3-mile connections to the Trunk Highway system • Opportunity to identify freight projects that can help improve other aspects of the system (e.g., safety) and leverage non-freight funds (e.g., safety) to make improvements • Continued development of intermodal and transfer facilities • MnDOT to be proactive in working with others • Utilize Competitive Rail Service Study / funding • Leverage private funding • Incident management (low clearance bridge that fell, rock slide) • CVAV related to truck driver shortage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truck driver shortage, life expectancy, requirement to be 21 to cross state lines (demographic “cliff” for industry) • Hazmat through communities • To some extent, at mercy of our neighbor states (WI, ON) to maintain routes that are critical to the District • Soo Lock closure • Market forces, commodity prices, tariffs • Boom/bust cycle of resource extraction, or long ramp-up time for facilities • Conflict with growing tourism traffic – Bentleyville as an example • E-Commerce – more freight traffic for same tonnage of goods • Twin Ports Interchange is going to be a temporary problem, but will be an issue for next 2-3 years • Public and private sectors move at different paces – private makes decisions more quickly

Next Meeting

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held in February. MnDOT will circulate a Doodle Poll to select a date that works for most.