

District 8 Freight Plan

Working Paper 1: Communications Plan

Prepared for:

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Prepared by:



In association with:

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District 8 Freight Plan

The objective of the District 8 Freight Plan (Freight Plan or Plan) is to provide a clear understanding of the multimodal freight system, how local industries use the system and their needs and issues, so MnDOT's policy and programming decisions can be better informed in the District.

Working Paper

This Working Paper is the first in a series of six that together inform the Plan. This first Working Paper provides an overview of stakeholder outreach to be conducting during Plan development, including identifying stakeholders, techniques and timelines.

Acknowledgements

The CPCS Team acknowledges and is thankful for the input of those consulted in the development of this Working Paper, as well as the guidance and input of representatives from MnDOT and their study partners.

Opinions

Unless otherwise indicated, the opinions herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of MnDOT.

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1 | Contact List

1.1 Project Management Team Contacts

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2 | About the District 8 Freight Plan

2.1 Background

The Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT) District 8 (the District or D8) is located in Southwestern Minnesota and is made up of 12 counties: Chippewa, Kandiyohi, Lac qui Parle, Lincoln, Lyon, McLeod, Meeker, Murray, Pipestone, Redwood, Renville, and Yellow Medicine. Together, these counties hold about 14 percent of Minnesota's land area and 4 percent of the state's population. The District's major cities include Willmar, Hutchinson, and Marshall. No interstate highways directly serve District 8, nor do any airports with significant air cargo activity. Rail service in the district is provided by the BNSF, CP, Minnesota Prairie Line, Twin Cities & Western, and Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern railroads. Figure 2 provides an overview of the District's freight-relevant transportation assets.

District 8's landscape is primarily plains which are well-suited for agricultural production. As a result, the District initially developed around agriculture-related industries, including crop production and processing, and livestock production and processing. Today, the District's economy is more diversified and District's freight-related economic specialties have grown to include a variety of manufacturing. Some specific major industries in the District include heavy construction, food and livestock processing, and machinery manufacturing. The figure below highlights District 8's traded clusters, providing an indication of some of its competitive advantages. Figure 3 illustrates the distribution of freight-reliant industries across the District.

Figure 1: District 8's Key Industrial Clusters



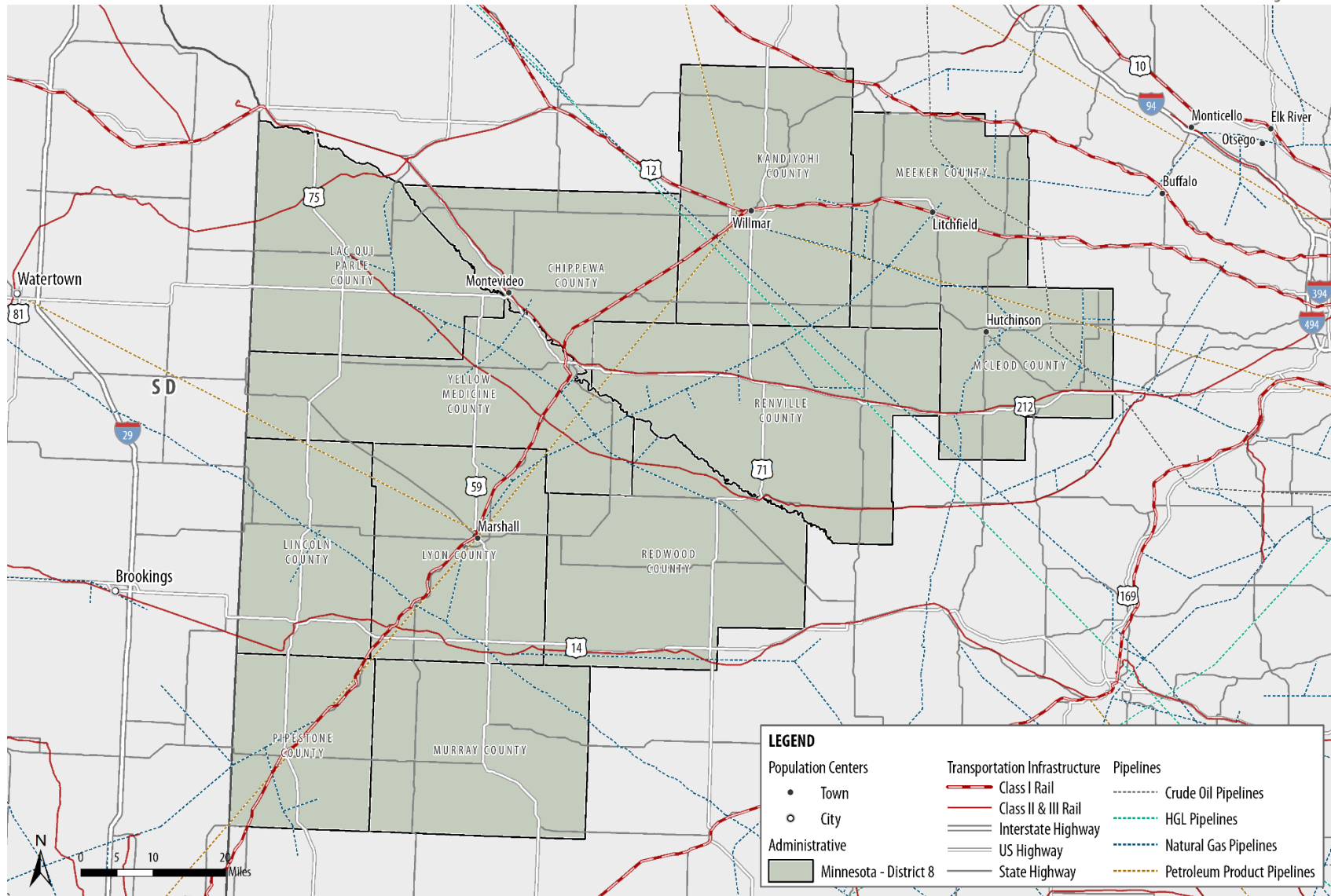
Source: US Cluster Mapping Tool. Harvard College. 2018.

In 2014, the District's manufacturers and other freight stakeholders were consulted as part of MnDOT's pilot Manufacturer's Perspective study. The issues identified by the study included the need for wider shoulders or four-lane roads, and concerns about weight limits, bridge clearances, and roundabouts. As with other Districts, freight operations during winter can be complicated or delayed by heavy snowfall events.

Figure 2: District 8 Freight System

CPCS Solutions for growing economies

Minnesota Multimodal System
MnDOT District 8 Freight Plan

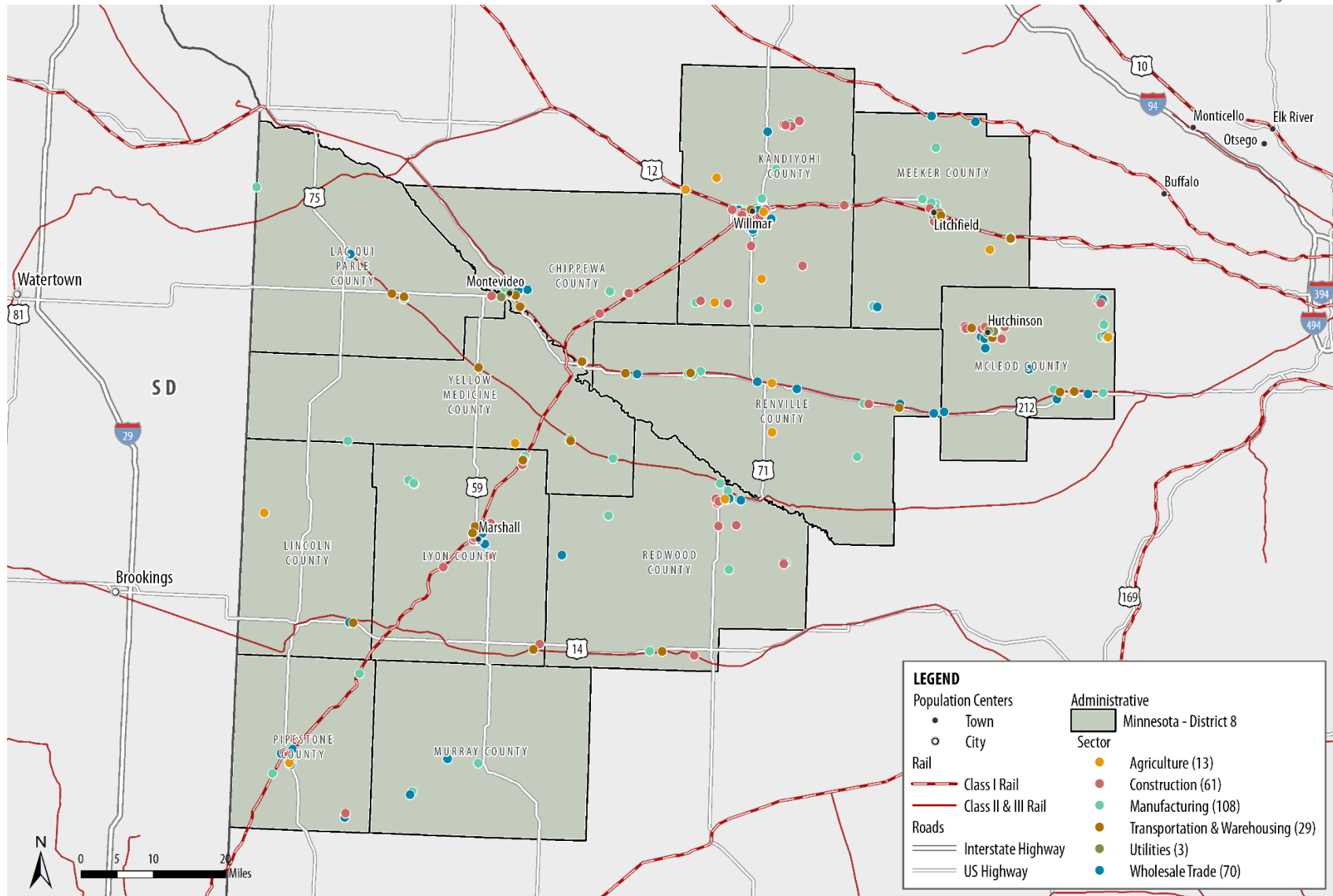


Source: CPCS analysis of National Transportation Atlas data. 2019.

Figure 3: District 8 Freight-Related Business Establishments

CPCS Solutions for growing economies

Minnesota Freight-Related Establishments (RefUSA, 2018)
MnDOT District 8 Freight Plan



Source: CPCS analysis of National Transportation Atlas and ReferenceUSA data. 2019.

2.2 Project Objectives

The objective of the District 8 Freight Plan is to build on past efforts, including the Minnesota Statewide Freight System and Investment Plan, the Manufacturer’s Perspectives studies, and others, and close the information gaps to:

Provide a clear understanding of the multimodal freight system, how local industries use the system, and the system needs, issues, and opportunities so MnDOT can make better-informed policy and investment decisions in District 8.

In line with MnDOT’s scope of work, the District 8 Freight Plan will include economic and freight profiles (including descriptions of freight infrastructure and how local industries use it), identification of multimodal freight system needs, issues, and opportunities, a summary of possible next steps for Central Office and District 8 planners and engineers, a list of specific projects that should be considered for future freight-related investment, and conceptual design and cost information for a list of specific projects that should be considered for future freight-related investments.

2.3 Project Structure

2.3.1 Key Questions

To achieve the project objective, we will work with MnDOT to address several “key questions.” We have framed this series of questions to respond to all items in the Scope of Work and Deliverables. Figure 4 lists these key questions and their relationship to the major tasks of the District 8 Freight Plan.

Figure 4: District 8 Freight Plan Key Questions

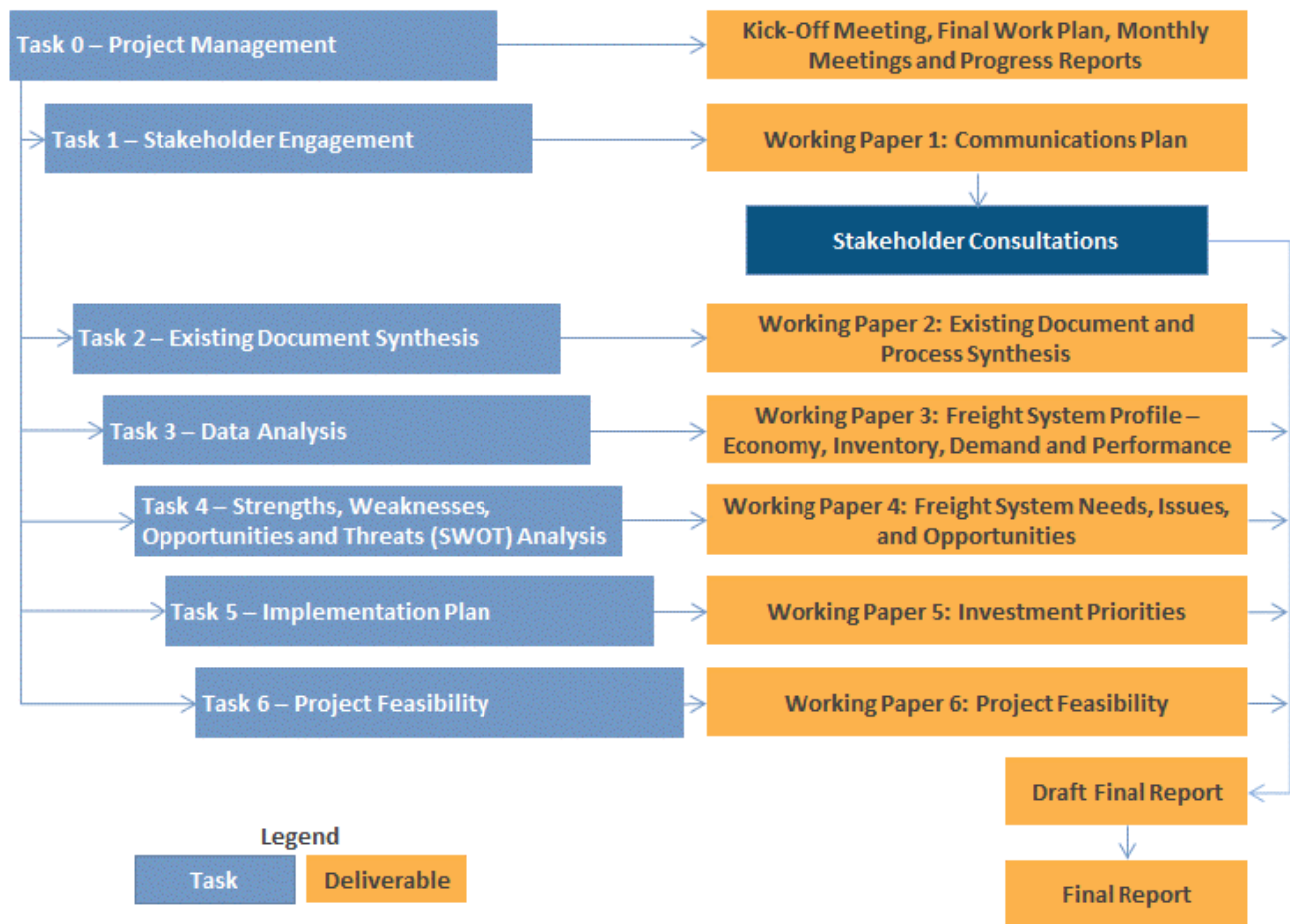
| Task / Questions |
|---|
| Task 1 – Stakeholder Engagement |
| 1. Who are the District’s freight system stakeholders and how should they be engaged? |
| 2. What are the needs and issues of these stakeholders (with emphasis on freight system users representing the District’s key industries)? |
| Task 2 – Existing Document Synthesis |
| 3. What elements from statewide freight planning and manufacturers’ perspectives studies are relevant to the District (including stakeholders consulted, needs and issues identified, freight project- and policy-related recommendations, etc.)? |
| 4. What findings from other regional plans and studies should be further explored and advanced? |
| Task 3 – Data Analysis |
| 5. What are the District’s economic profile and key industries? |
| 6. What are the District’s key freight corridors and how are they used? |
| 7. What are the most pressing safety, condition, and performance issues in the District? |
| Task 4 – Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats |
| 8. What major trends could impact the use, condition, or performance of the freight system in the future? |

| Task / Questions |
|--|
| 9. What are the common needs, issues, opportunities, and challenges identified from stakeholder outreach, previous plan review, and new data analysis? |
| 10. What strategies (projects, programs, policies or partnerships) should be advanced to mitigate the threats and weaknesses, and take advantage of the strengths and opportunities, of the District's freight system? |
| Task 5 – Implementation Plan |
| 11. What criteria should be used to evaluate the District's projects or project concepts? |
| 12. Which projects or project concepts meet the District's overall goals, address the needs and issues identified, and/or leverage/unlock opportunities? |
| 13. What project concepts (new projects) warrant advancement to pre-feasibility and scoping? |
| Task 6 – Project Feasibility |
| 14. What are the potential environmental, social, economic, and engineering challenges associated with each of these projects? |
| 15. What is the order of magnitude costs of these projects? |

2.3.2 Work Plan Overview

In line with the Key Questions, the following figure presents an overview of tasks for developing the District 8 Freight Plan. Each of these tasks will be complemented by stakeholder insights, as further described in this Communications Plan.

Figure 5: District 8 Freight Plan Work Plan and Deliverables



3 | Communications Goals and Expected Outcomes

3.1 Goals

The aim of stakeholder engagement is to meaningfully engage a broad array of public and private sector stakeholders to guide the development of the Plan and to gather their perspectives on the freight system, how freight-dependent industries use the system, current needs and issues, and potential opportunities.

This Communications Plan has been developed as a proactive and transparent guide for public and private freight stakeholder engagement activities related to developing the District 8 Freight Plan. The goals for communication during Plan development are to:

- Maintain regular contact with stakeholders to inform them of Plan development and findings,
- Provide opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the planning process and influence recommendations,
- Enable MnDOT and the Project Team to hear and respond to stakeholder concerns and incorporate them as appropriate, and
- Build support for Plan recommendations.

3.2 Expected Outcome

The intended outcome is that public and private freight stakeholders will have actively participated in the planning process and assisted MnDOT in shaping the District 8 Freight Plan.

4 | Target Audiences and Key Stakeholders

4.1 Target Audiences

Not every audience shares the same level of interest or commitment to the planning process. As a result, it is important to offer opportunities for different levels of involvement. Some audiences desire to simply be informed of the Plan, while others need a greater level of involvement due to their role in plan implementation. The general audiences listed below require participation levels customized to their unique needs consistent with the Communications Plan goals.

4.1.1 Minnesota Department of Transportation

The District 8 Freight Plan is a plan for the State of Minnesota. As the state's transportation agency, MnDOT plays a critical role in implementing the direction outlined in plans such as this. It is important that MnDOT's Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations and other linked staff (e.g., investment planners, data analysts, public outreach, etc.) be engaged in the planning process, so they have input into the process and will be in a position to effectively advance Plan recommendations.

4.1.2 Freight Stakeholders

As the ultimate beneficiary of this update, Minnesota's broad range of public and private sector freight stakeholders will play an important role in assessing and forming recommendations for the District 8 freight system. Like MnDOT, there are partner agencies and organizations that will play a key role in advancing Minnesota's freight system towards plan goals and outcomes. These include freight shippers and carriers, manufacturers, facility owners/operators, economic development organizations, City and County governments, the Minnesota Freight Advisory Committee (MFAC), and RDCs (Regional Development Commissions), and many others. Section 4.2 lists a comprehensive set of initially identified stakeholders; stakeholders will continue to be added to these lists as the project evolves and as specific needs are identified.

4.1.3 General Public

The general public is a key audience that the plan intends to reach. The interests of the general public may be less specific than that of freight stakeholders, but are no less important. Those with any level of interest should have the opportunity to learn about the Plan and provide input. Several outreach techniques will be used with the goal of reaching a broad audience.

4.2 Key Stakeholders

The District 8 Freight Plan will engage a variety of internal (MnDOT) and external public and private sector stakeholders. Target audiences have been grouped into five key stakeholder categories that are tied to the techniques used to engage them during Plan development. These categories are:

- Project Management Team, and other key staff to keep apprised of ongoing project management activities
- Advisory Committee
- Technical Team
- Freight Stakeholders (one-on-one consultation targets)
- General Public

4.2.1 Project Management Team

The creation of this Plan will be a coordinated effort led by a Project Management Team (PMT) comprised of the individuals shown in the following figure. The PMT will be responsible for overseeing all tasks associated with developing the District 8 Freight Plan and coordinating tasks with the broader project team.

Figure 6: Project Management Team

| Organization | Contact |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| MnDOT Central Office | Andrew Andrusko |
| MnDOT District 8 | Lindsey Bruer |
| Project Team – CPCS | Erika Witzke |
| Project Team – CPCS | Eric Oberhart |
| Project Team – SEH | Chris Hiniker |
| Project Team – SEH | Justin Black |
| Project Team – SEH | Scott Hotchkin |

4.2.2 Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee (AC) will guide plan development, in particular as it relates to keeping “the big picture” in focus regarding policy direction or strategic recommendations. The AC will be provided copies of the Working Papers and Freight Plan report and may provide written comments or verbal comments during AC meetings. The PMT will determine how to address the comments provided.

Membership

The AC will have multidisciplinary, executive-level membership reflecting leadership both within MnDOT, but also at other state agencies and organizations with freight interests. As AC members are identified, they will be added to the following table.

Figure 7: Advisory Committee Membership

| | Organization | Contact |
|---|--|----------------|
| 1 | Southwest Regional Development Commission | Netty Fiedler |
| 2 | Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission | Chad Kingstrom |
| 3 | Mid-Minnesota Development Commission | Donn Winckler |
| 4 | Kandiyohi County | Mel Odens |
| 5 | City of Hutchinson | Kent Exner |
| 6 | City of Olivia | Dan Coughlin |
| 7 | Schwanns | Vicki Schwartz |

| | Organization | Contact |
|----|-------------------------|--|
| 8 | FedEx | Mike Frisvold |
| 9 | Friendship Homes | Mark McMahon |
| 10 | First District | Chuck Nelson |
| 11 | SMBSC | Todd Geselis |
| 12 | TC&W Railroad | Mark Wegner |
| 13 | BNSF Railway | Lydia Bjorge |
| 14 | DPS | Jean Cemensky |
| 15 | Midwest Shippers | Bruce Abbe |
| 16 | Jennie – O Turkey Store | Melanie Faust |
| 17 | Viessman Trucking | Ryan Viessman |
| 18 | FHWA | Kris Reisenburg |
| 19 | MnDOT Office of Freight | Andrew Andrusko |
| 20 | MnDOT District 8 | Lindsey Bruer, Jon Huseby, Susann Karnowski, Mandi Lightizer-Schmidt |
| 21 | MnDOT OTSM | TBD |

4.2.3 Technical Team

The Technical Team (TT) will provide technical perspectives and a logic check during Plan development. During plan development, select TT members may be individually consulted to delve deeper into technical issues related to their areas of expertise. The TT will be provided copies of the Working Papers and Freight Plan report and may provide written comments or verbal comments during TT meetings. The PMT will determine how to address the comments provided.

Membership

The TT members are “the implementers,” staff that will largely be responsible for following through with Plan recommendations. The TT will have a multidisciplinary membership, but will largely be representative of MnDOT central office and District 8 technical staff, and select public sector staff such as regional development commission staff. As TT members are identified, they will be added to the following table.

Figure 8: Technical Team Membership

| Organization | Contact |
|--|---|
| MnDOT Office of Freight | Andrew Andrusko |
| MnDOT District 8 | Lindsey Bruer, Susann Karnowski, Megan DeSchepper |
| MnDOT – OSTM | TBD |
| Southwest Regional Development Commission | Netty Fiedler |
| Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission | Dawn Hegland/Chad Kingstrom |
| Mid-Minnesota Development Commission | Donn Winckler |

4.2.4 Freight Stakeholders

Freight stakeholder engagement will be important to Plan development for several reasons. Engagement will supplement quantitative data on freight system use, including the type and volume of goods moved, key modes and routes used, and their origins and destinations; to identify relevant

needs and issues and possible stakeholder solutions; and help validate our data analysis, helping to explain patterns in the data, such as major interchange nodes or traffic flows.

It is desired that a list containing a cross-section of public and private sector freight stakeholders involved in, or impacted by, the movement of goods in District 8 be established. Appendix G of the 2014 manufacturers' study indicates each of the businesses consulted for that effort. The Project Team will discuss with MnDOT if there is a reason to newly meet and engage with any of the businesses previously contacted. The following figure displays a sample consultation list, which will be reviewed with MnDOT before conducting consultations.

Figure 9: Freight Stakeholders for Consultation

| Type | Targets |
|---|---|
| Public Agencies | |
| 1 | Highway 23 Corridor Coalition |
| 2 | Marshall Area Transportation Group |
| 3 | South Dakota DOT |
| Rail Stakeholders | |
| 4 | BNSF |
| 5 | CP |
| 6 | TC&W / MPL |
| Manufacturers and Shippers | |
| 7 | 3M (Hutchinson) |
| 8 | Schwan Food Company (Marshall) |
| 9 | Farm-Rite Equipment (Dassel & Willmar) |
| 10 | Friendship Homes (Montevideo) |
| 11 | Central Minnesota Fabricating (Willmar) |
| 12 | Hutchinson Manufacturing (Hutchinson) |
| 13 | Extreme Panel Technologies (Cottonwood) |
| 14 | West Central Steel (Willmar) |
| 15 | Daktronics (Redwood Falls) |
| Agribusiness and Food Processing | |
| 16 | Jennie-O Turkey Store (Willmar) |
| 17 | New Horizons Grain (Pipestone) |
| 18 | Riverview Dairy (Morris) |
| 19 | Turkey Valley Farms (Marshall) |
| 20 | First District Association (Litchfield) |
| 21 | Pipestone Veterinary Services (Pipestone) |
| 22 | Tru Shrimp (Balaton) |
| 23 | ADM (Marshall) |
| Trucking Carriers | |
| 24 | FedEx (Willmar) |
| 25 | Anderson Trucking (St. Cloud) |
| 26 | Kottke Trucking (Buffalo Lake) |
| 27 | Bradley Trucking |
| 28 | Eickhoff Trucking (Marshall) |
| 29 | Truck Transport (Willmar) |
| 30 | Viessman Trucking (Gary SD) |

4.2.5 General Public

Broad stakeholder engagement will be conducted to involve all parties that may be interested in District 8 freight planning efforts, including the general public, and will be accomplished via a targeted public open house and other general engagement techniques. These activities will largely be led by MnDOT, with key information and select support provided by the Project Team.

5 Outreach Techniques

5.1 Techniques

The Project Team plans to use several techniques to engage with a broad array of stakeholders during the development of the District 8 Freight Plan. These techniques will include:

- Regular progress meetings
- Advisory Committee and Technical Team Meetings
- One-on-one freight stakeholder consultations
- Public Open Houses
- Broad engagement and information sharing

5.1.1 Regular Progress Meetings

The PMT will regularly meet (approximately monthly) via conference call, or in person, as tied to other in-person activities, to continually monitor progress toward Plan development.

5.1.2 Advisory Committee and Technical Team Meetings

The Advisory Committee and Technical Team will meet throughout Plan development in a roundtable or online setting suitable for open discussion.

In-person meetings will be held in MnDOT District 8, at venues coordinated by District staff.

It is important to communicate meeting information early and consistently so that the large number of stakeholders to be engaged can appropriately mark their calendars and arrive to the discussion prepared. Meeting information will be transmitted to the AC and TT members approximately 3 weeks in advance of each meeting.

Advisory Committee Meeting Schedule and Topics

The Advisory Committee is slated to meet four times during plan development. Each of these meetings will be coordinated to precede the Technical Team Meetings (either on the same day or within 1 week). Preliminary agenda topics for the AC meetings have already been identified and will be kept at an executive level.

Figure 10: Proposed AC Meeting Agendas

| Meeting 1 – Agenda (Month 3) | Meeting 2 Agenda (Month 6) | Meeting 3 Agenda (Month 8) | Meeting 4 Agenda (Month 11) |
|--|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Working Paper 2 Confirm Plan Goals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freight system profile Summary of findings – needs, issues & opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freight Plan Recommendations Evaluation of projects and concepts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present major findings and Plan deliverables Receive feedback |

Technical Team Meeting Schedule and Topics

The Technical Team is slated to meet four times during Plan development. In addition to these set meetings, a subset of TT members may also meet on an ad-hoc basis to drill deeper into select technical topics. Preliminary agenda topics for the TT meetings have already been identified; unlike the AC, this group will dig into and discuss Plan details, including the project approach and analysis techniques. These meetings may be conducted in-person or online.

Figure 11: Proposed TT Meeting Agendas

| Meeting 1 – Agenda (Month 3) | Meeting 2 Agenda (Month 6) | Meeting 3 Agenda (Month 8) | Meeting 4 Agenda (Month 11) |
|--|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Work Plan Confirm Plan Goals Discuss MnDOT approach to freight investment decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freight system profile System condition and performance eval. Stakeholder findings – needs, issues & opportunities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freight Plan Recommendations Evaluation of projects and concepts Advancement of projects to pre-feasibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present major findings and Plan deliverables Receive feedback |

5.1.3 Freight Stakeholder Consultations

Up to thirty (30) One-on-one consultations, conducted in person and on the phone, will supplement quantitative data analysis during Plan development. The approach to stakeholder consultations consists of four primary steps:

1. **Develop Stakeholder List.** A list of public and private sector stakeholders involved in, or impacted by, the movement of goods in District 8 will be established in coordination with MnDOT (see Section 4.2.4).
2. **Develop Consultation Guide(s).** A series of open-ended questions based on the type of stakeholder consulted, e.g., private vs. public, key industry vs. carrier, etc. will be developed. This will also ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to identify and speak about issues that may not have been picked up by the data. The preliminary consultation guide is provided in **Appendix A**.

3. **Conduct Outreach.** One-on-one consultations with direct, open-ended questions will be conducted using a combination of email, phone and face-to-face interviews. Up to 30 consultations are targeted, to augment the interviews conducted during the 2014 Manufacturer’s Perspectives study.
4. **Document Findings.** Consultation findings will be documented in a consistent format (completed questionnaires) which will be shared between the team to ensure relevant knowledge is transferred and built upon in subsequent consultations. For the avoidance of doubt, completed consultation notes will not be shared with MnDOT; stakeholders are often less open in interviews if they have concerns that the information they provide will not be kept confidential. However, a summary of the key information we learn from stakeholders will be developed in a consolidated/anonymized format and included as part of Working Paper 4: Freight System Needs, Issues, and Opportunities.

5.1.4 Public Open House

MnDOT will organize one public open house for the project, approximately timed with month 11. The Project Team will provide information to support this meeting.

This meeting will provide an opportunity for the general public and District 8 freight stakeholders to review plan recommendations and provide comments prior to finalizing. The Project Team will provide support to this MnDOT-led meeting.

The Project Team will work with MnDOT on any follow-up required based on any comments received during the meeting.

5.1.5 Broad Engagement and Information Sharing

This Plan will also consider other broad engagement and information sharing activities.

- **Project Website.** The Project Team will work with MnDOT to engage stakeholders online via a dedicated District 8 Freight Plan webpage on the MnDOT website. This webpage will be a place to post Working Paper deliverables and other relevant Plan information such as maps, surveys, and information on upcoming public and stakeholder meetings. The webpage will include a “comments” section to collect input throughout Plan development. Comments will be monitored and managed by MnDOT, with Project Team support, as needed, in responding to comments received.
- **Use Established Channels of Stakeholder Communication.** There are several existing stakeholder meetings/events/platforms that may be used, as needed, to disseminate information on the Plan throughout development, including:
 - Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) Meeting (audience is city & county engineers, a few county commissioners, transit rep, some economic development professionals & some local public health professionals).
 - Regional Development Commission (RDC) Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings (audience is city & county engineers, some industry

representatives, some township officials, some county commissioners & some local businesses).

- County Board & Local Unit of Government (LUG) State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP)/Capital Highway Investment Plan (CHIP) outreach presentations (audience is full county boards & city staff).
- Southwest Private Industry Council.
- **Other Engagement Activities.** The Project Team will work with MnDOT to ensure that baseline project information, assumptions, and findings are openly shared with interested parties and that they have an opportunity to comment (as desired). Several techniques will be used specifically during month 6 (in lieu of a formal open house), but may also be used at other points during Plan development, including:
 - News stories about the Freight Plan in local newspapers
 - Surveys
 - Google voice phone line
 - Facebook & Twitter posts

5.2 MnDOT and Project Team Roles in Communication

Communications for the District 8 Freight Plan are a shared responsibility between MnDOT and the Project Team. The Project Team will drive the development of the deliverables, and MnDOT will aid the Team in ensuring this information is communicated with Plan stakeholders, as appropriate. Figure 12 outlines MnDOT and Project Team roles during Plan development.

Figure 12: MnDOT and Project Team Roles

| Activity by Key Stakeholders | | Description | MnDOT | Project Team |
|--|--|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Project Management Team | | | | |
| Monthly Calls | Set monthly calls and agenda. Convene meetings. | | Participate | Lead |
| Advisory Committee and Technical Team | | | | |
| Membership | Identify and confirm membership of the Advisory Committee and Technical Team. | | Lead | Support |
| Member Communications | Provide timely information to members via email. Receive and filter comments and share with the Project Team, as needed. | | Lead | |
| Meeting Logistics | Coordinate meeting rooms/facilities, provide refreshments (as needed), and other day-of meeting activities. | | Lead | |
| Meeting Materials | Develop meeting agendas, presentation materials, discussion guides, displays, etc. | | Support | Lead |
| Freight Stakeholders | | | | |
| Roster | Develop a roster of stakeholders for one-on-one consultations. | | Support | Lead |

| Activity by Key Stakeholders | Description | MnDOT | Project Team |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------|
| Consultations | Conduct consultations, including contacting stakeholders, setting meeting time/location, providing discussion guide in advance, processing information, etc. for inclusion in the Plan. | Support (as appropriate) | Lead |
| General Public | | | |
| Plan Webpage | Develop and maintain a webpage to house information during Plan development. | Lead | |
| Webpage Content | Develop information to post on the webpage (e.g., Working Papers, meeting information, etc.). | Support | Lead |
| Contact Information | Provide a comment box, email, and/or phone contact information on the webpage. The contact will receive and filter comments and share with the Project Team, as needed. | Lead | |
| Open House Logistics | Coordinate meeting rooms/facilities, provide refreshments (as needed), and other day-of meeting activities. | Lead | |
| Open House Materials | Develop presentation materials, discussion guides, displays, etc. | Support | Lead |
| Other Broad Engagement | Share information with interested stakeholders, as opportunities are available (e.g., ongoing District meetings/platforms, local newsletters, media, etc.) | Lead | Support |

6 | Public Involvement Schedule

6.1 Project Schedule

As shown in the following figure, the District 8 Freight Plan has an approximate 12-month project timeline, beginning in April 2019 and ending by March 30, 2020. Several outreach touch points are shown on the figure, aligned with project tasks. Formal meeting time points have been identified in orange (specific meeting dates will be set collaboratively with MnDOT and key stakeholders). An effort was made to group meetings together to conserve time and budget resources.

The Communications Plan will be updated, as needed, should the schedule or desired approach to engagement change during plan development.

6.1.1 Project Management Team

The PMT meetings will be convened on a monthly basis to track overall Plan progress. These meetings will be held via conference call, but will be in person, as appropriately tied to other in person project activities.

6.1.2 Advisory Committee

The Advisory Committee is slated to meet four times, during months, 3, 6, 8, and 11. Each of these meetings will be coordinated to immediately precede or follow the Technical Team Meetings.

6.1.3 Technical Team

The Technical Team is slated to meet four times, during months 3, 6, 8 and 11. In addition to these set meetings, a subset of TT members may also meet on an ad-hoc basis to drill deeper into select technical topics.

6.1.4 Public Open House

A Public Open House is slated for month 11, and will be coordinated to coincide with Advisory Committee and Technical Team meetings slated for that month.

6.1.5 Broad Engagement

Online engagement will occur throughout the Plan development process.

Figure 13: District 8 Freight Plan Project Schedule

| Project Months | Project Months | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | April | May | June | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar |
| Task 0 - Project Management | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| Task 0.1: Project Kick-Off Meeting (and on-going project management) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 0.2: Literature Review and Initial Data Collection | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 0.3: Revise Work Plan, as needed | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 1 - Stakeholder Engagement | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 1.1: Communications Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 1.2: Advisory Committee and Technical Team Meetings | | | 2 | | | 2 | | 2 | | | 2 | |
| Task 1.3: Freight Stakeholder Consultations | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 1.4: Broad Stakeholder Engagement | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 2 - Existing Document Synthesis | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 2 - Existing Document Synthesis | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 3 - Data Analysis | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 3.1: District Economic Profile | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 3.2: District Freight System Profile | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 3.3: Freight System Condition and Performance | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 4 - Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 4.1: Synthesize Freight System Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 4.2: Develop Freight System Recommendations | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 5 - Implementation Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 5.1: Evaluate Infrastructure Projects | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 5.2: Establish Project Rankings | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 6 - Project Feasibility | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 6.1: Preliminary Design Concepts | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Task 6.2: Planning Level Cost Estimates | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Reporting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Draft Working Papers | 1 | 2 | | | 3 | | 4 | | 5 | | 6 | |
| Draft District Freight Plan | | | | | | | | | | | D | |
| Final District Freight Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | F |

Legend

Work Activity

Meeting

Working Paper or Report

7 | Evaluation of Efforts

7.1 Evaluation

Stakeholder outreach will be evaluated by the project team on a quarterly basis. Evaluation of techniques will be based on the following (example) criteria.

7.1.1 Quantitative

- How many formal stakeholder meetings have taken place? What was the attendance?
- How many stakeholder consultations have taken place?
- How many people attended public open houses?
- How many hits on the project website? How many downloads of project documents?

7.1.2 Qualitative

- What kind of feedback was received from the stakeholder meetings and other opportunities?
- Were the locations of the meetings appropriate?
- Have stakeholders expressed any particular challenges regarding their participation in the process?
- Have multimodal freight interests been represented? Different geography?
- Have key demographic groups (e.g. Title VI and EJ populations) been represented?

The evaluation of all outreach activities will be summarized and documented as part of the Draft and Final District 8 Freight Plan.

Appendix A Preliminary Consultation Guide

The following is a preliminary guide to prompt discussion during freight stakeholder consultations.

Consultee Information

| | |
|--|--|
| Date | |
| Contact Name/Title | |
| Contact Details | |
| Organization Type (Truck-TL/LTL, Rail,) add specifics as available | |
| Permission to Attribute? | |

Background Questions

- Please provide an overview of your business, including:
 - Where you operate (e.g. national/international regions, states, or cities).
 - The commodities you handle.
 - The transport modes you use.
- Does your business have expansion or other plans for the future? (District 8-specific, if possible).

Key Issues and Obstacles

- From your perspective, what are the three most significant transportation issues in District 8? How do these impact the movement of freight?
 - Physical Infrastructure Issues and Obstacles – Examples: Congested locations, access to other modes/regions, safety issues, geometric issues (e.g., tight turning radii, lane drops, low clearance restrictions), truck parking or other issues.
 - Policy Issues – Examples: Delivery restrictions, route restrictions (e.g., truck-prohibitive bridge weight limits, truck route restrictions), transportation system funding, hours of service requirements, available/skilled workforce, business incentives, or other issues.
- From your perspective, what are the top three transportation system improvements/solutions to these issues (physical or policy related) in District 8 that would help improve the movement of freight, and how would these help?
- Do you see a need for construction project that would improve the flow of freight in the region?

6. From your perspective, what are the top three non-transportation issues in District 8 and what policies might improve these issues?
7. What transportation policies or assets are working well in District 8, or what should MnDOT make sure it does *not* change in the future?

Key Routes

8. What are the most heavily relied-upon routes and corridors for long-distance movements (i.e., interstates or other non-interstate principal routes) and why are those routes important?
9. What are the most heavily relied upon routes and corridors for local delivery within District 8 (i.e., first/last-mile routes critical to getting to points of drop-off/pick-up) and why are those routes important?
10. What are the most critical connections to other modes in District 8 (e.g., grain elevators)?

Other Comments

11. What technological, policy, or other trends do you see impacting the freight system?
12. Please comment on any other issues that may be pertinent to this project?
13. Who else should we consult with during this project?