

August 2004

Freight Steering and Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

This document serves as a supplement to the presentations and other handouts that were available at the meeting. To request any of these other materials, please contact Travis J. Gordon.

Meeting Objectives:

1. To share the conclusions and findings of the research team with the stakeholders.
2. To assist the stakeholders in understanding the findings and assimilating those findings into their own experience and working perspectives.
3. To assist the stakeholders in developing a plan for future collaboration on the issue of freight in the Upper Midwest.

Key points from the meeting:

1. Working together as a region on freight issues could create a larger pool of resources for our region, being used more efficiently. This would give our region a competitive advantage relative to other regions of the nation and the world. Working together can also help the region interact more constructively with the larger stakeholders in freight transportation.
2. Consensus on the value of performance measures for freight in our region, but much debate on the specifics of what measures to use and how.
3. Although pass-through freight movements are of significance in the corridor, many participants were surprised to see the importance and quantity of intra-regional shipments.
4. The capacity work is a good start, but it was suggested that some areas be revisited.
5. The data reporting site is to be opened to the public
 - a. The site and data should be reviewed by state data users within the transportation agencies
 - b. *Licensing issues are holding up the opening until mid-September (9/7/04)*
6. The benefits of solving the size and weight problems do not outweigh the costs (especially political costs) of total standardization.
7. Pursuing a regional approach to CVISN is useful.
8. Several comments regarding the relationship of security to freight capacity improvements and how to take advantage of this link in the current environment.
9. Improvements for freight are almost always good for passengers, but not necessarily vice versa.
10. Academic involvement has given this effort more creativity in using the data and resources, but there may a role for consultants in future work.
11. Need to market the importance of the region, using data supporting the benefits of freight and showing that there are problems that everyone should be concerned with if we do nothing in our region.
 - a. Educate the stakeholders with appropriate materials

12. The steering committee will work to move forward on corridor efforts for the CAOs at the national AASHTO meeting next month.
13. This effort should get an official name.
14. There should be an official coalition structure, with the ideas of policy and technical committees suggested.
15. Varying, but overall positive, support for next steps presented by Suzann Rhodes
 - a. Take actions necessary to get the corridor designated as a Corridor of National Significance
 - b. Test corridor, make the region available for new approaches to freight transportation
 - c. Provide information on freight friendly provisions in Reauthorization
 - d. Provide states with specific project information
 - e. Prepare marketing brochure
 - f. Regional issues and practice workshops
 - g. Seek FHWA and AASHTO's support
16. Need to answer this question for all of the states and provinces in the region, it is the key in moving forward: *What is in it for my state?*