

Minutes
Executive Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Meeting
August 22, 2014
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
16th Floor, J.K. Polk Building

FAC Members Attending :

Pragati Srivastava, Memphis MPO
Scott Sigman, FLM
Don Loftis, Olin Corporation
Stan Williams, Clarksville MPO
Randy Richardson, Port of Memphis
Connie Vaughan, McKee Foods
Kent Starwalt, Tennessee Roadbuilders Association
Lena Coradini, Ingram Barge

Others Attending:

John Schroer, TDOT Commissioner
Toks Omishakin, TDOT
Paul Degges, TDOT
Tanisha Hall, TDOT
Steve Allen, TDOT
Liza Joffrion, TDOT
Angie Midgett, TDOT
Carlos McCloud, TDOT
Bob Rock, TDOT
Preston Elliott, RPM
Max Baker, AECOM
Lee Hutchins, AECOM
Kayla Kelly, RPM
Dan Pallme, University of Memphis
Mark Burton, University of Tennessee
Scott Allen, FHWA
Pam Kordenbrock, FHWA
Mark Abkowitz, Vanderbilt University

Opening Comments

- The availability of funding for projects of any kind, including freight projects, was discussed by **Commissioner Schroer**.
- It was announced that TDOT would likely be decreasing the letting of projects in the coming months due to limited federal funding, but that the amount by which it decreases likely wouldn't be noticeable in urban areas.

- The question arose as to how industry prioritization of freight projects gets included in the project planning process. It was mentioned that freight industries quantify return on investment differently at times which could yield different priorities.

National Freight Discussion – FHWA (Pam Kordenbrock)

- Congress has issued an extension of MAP-21 funding to cover TDOT from August 1, 2014 to May 31, 2015; the amount of federal funds allocated to TDOT is approximately \$543 million.
- FHWA has prepared cash management procedures in the event that a funding proposal is not passed before this extension expires in June.
- From the National FAC, which includes 47 members, a total of 81 recommendations were made to US DOT for the National Freight Plan. These fell into three categories including:
 - An assessment of statutory, regulatory, technological, institutional, financial, and other barriers to improved freight transportation performance (including opportunities for overcoming the barriers);
 - Best practices for improving the performance of the national freight network; and
 - Best practices to mitigate the impacts of freight movement on communities.
- The USDOT National Freight Strategic Plan is expected to be complete in October 2015.
- Regarding the National Freight Network and the Primary Freight Network, there were over 1,200 comments received by FHWA. These comments fell into the following three categories:
 - The lack of a multimodal freight network
 - The purpose of the network
 - The 27,000 centerline miles criteria – Was it enough? Where did it come from?
- FHWA is conducting a Truck Parking Survey to examine the availability of truck parking on public facilities.
- Oversize/Overweight Truck Study currently being conducted by FHWA; there was a question regarding its anticipated completion date.

Draft Tennessee Statewide Freight Plan Discussion – AECOM

- **Lee Hutchins** gave a PowerPoint presentation about what we have accomplished and where we are with the Freight Plan
- There was a discussion as to how the Freight Plan was going to be distributed to surrounding states for comment.
- There was discussion regarding modal congestion with regard to return on investment. Incentivizing modal shifts may oftentimes be more cost-effective than trying to address/relieve congestion on roadway corridors.
- There was mention of scenario testing (e.g. changes in population or employment growth, shifts in goods produced or consumed, modal shifts or increases in goods movements, etc.) within the context of the Freight Plan to determine and quantify those impacts relative to freight plan recommendations.

Reports from Regional FAC Chairs

- **West Tennessee (Scott Sigman)**
 - Determined 8 top priorities that can be classified into immediate needs and long-term needs. It was mentioned that the West TN FAC looked at the region with sub-regions relative to project needs.
 - The West TN FAC modified one project to include all segments along Holmes Road in more of a corridor approach instead of a segmented approach.
 - Access to the Brownsville Super Site was also prioritized as a project. The West TN FAC determined that if the site could be 'shovel ready' on the rail side with all of the preliminary engineering and design completed, it would likely be more attractive to potential industries. There was mention that ECD has already identified and planned for investment in two different rail lines to the site.
- **Middle Tennessee (Stan Williams)**
 - The vastness of the project list was discussed; ultimately it was concluded by the Middle TN FAC that the project list needs to be trimmed down to 15 projects or less as there is currently \$1.4 - \$2 billion worth of projects listed.
 - There was discussion in Middle TN that the Freight Plan needed to look at scenarios to determine and quantify the impacts of various scenarios on the project list.
- **East Tennessee (Don Loftis)**
 - The East TN FAC meeting had 30 attendees – 10 FAC members and 20 from other organizations.
 - The East TN FAC handpicked priority projects, but is currently working on 10-15 top projects.
 - One member felt that rail was not adequately addressed within the Freight Plan and that it was more of a tactical plan as opposed to a vision plan.

Next Steps

- It would be helpful for the FAC members to know the overall schedule of the Freight Plan and the deadlines for the comments on the document.
- Members were told that their comments needed to be sent to TDOT (Bob Rock) within the next couple of weeks.

Final Remarks

Toks Omishakin closed out the meeting by discussing 3 things needed by the Freight Plan: 1) Vision, 2) Priorities, and 3) Funding. He explained that we need a fiscally constrained plan, but that is hard when we don't know what our funding will be. Toks also reminded the FAC members how important their input is to the process.