

Minutes
West TN Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Meeting
February 11, 2015
9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
University of Memphis
Executive Training Center

FAC Members Attending :

Pragati Srivastava, Memphis MPO
Dexter Muller, Memphis Chamber
Michael Garriga, BNSF
Jim Kvedaras, CN
Scott Sigman, Farmer, Lumpe & McClelland
Chad Bowman, City of Memphis

Others Attending:

Tanisha Hall, TDOT
Angie Midgett, TDOT
Carlos McCloud, TDOT
Bob Rock, TDOT
Marty Lipinski, University of Memphis
Aury Kangelos, TDOT
Max Baker, AECOM
Kayla Ferguson, RPM
Michael Welch, TDOT Region 4
Dan Pallme, University of Memphis
Blake Swaggart, ECD
Mike Golias, University of Memphis
Sabya Mishra, University of Memphis
Brandon Akins, TDOT Region 4
Eric Jessup, Informa Economics
Sajid Hossain, Memphis MPO

Opening Comments

Dan Pallme welcomed everyone to the University of Memphis. **Bob Rock** welcomed everyone to the first West Tennessee FAC meeting of 2015, and all those present introduced themselves.

Plan Updates

Freight Plan

- **Bob Rock** gave an update on the Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan.
- It was mentioned that the Plan has undergone extensive internal review by TDOT directors and that it is currently being reviewed by TDOT upper management before submittal to FHWA.
- It was emphasized that even after the Freight Plan has been submitted and approved by FHWA it is still a working document, and will be updated as needed.

Travel Demand Model Update

- **Bob Rock** also presented an update on the new statewide travel demand model.
- It was communicated that TDOT now has a working travel demand model with estimated truck flows using ATRI data. Phase 3 of the model will make use of the TRANSEARCH data to estimate commodity flows on the network.
- There was a discussion on the inclusion of rail assignments in the statewide model. It was very clear that this is currently being discussed and that no decision has been finalized as to whether this can be done with a large degree of accuracy.
- Members from CN and BNSF rail lines echoed the issue with coordinating TDOT's planning efforts and the private rail industry priorities due to the difference in planning horizons. It was reiterated that the dynamics of the private industry were too fluid to plan for investments more than 3 years in advance.

Long-Range Transportation Plan Update

- **Tanisha Hall** gave an update on the progress made in the development of TDOT's 25-Year Long-Range Transportation Plan.
- Executive leadership at TDOT have approved policies for incorporation into the eight policy papers that will serve as the foundation for the Plan. The topics for these policy papers were briefly discussed and it was mentioned that they would be online for public review and comment.
- Questions regarding funding for transportation initiated a discussion on the possibility of funding bills by the Governor or the General Assembly. However, it was concluded that seeking an increase in the State gas tax was still "up in the air" at this point in time.
- A draft copy of the latest Multimodal Access Policy was handed out to meeting attendants. FAC members were encouraged to review and comment about the inclusion of freight in the policy. Tanisha mentioned that electronic copies would be made available for review.
- **Scott Sigman** pointed out that the policy allows TDOT the right to not provide multimodal access in areas with scarcity in population. It was mentioned that particularly in rural, agricultural areas, the population may be scarce but that they have freight needs and in turn, multimodal access needs.

Rail Plan Update

- **Max Baker** (AECOM) provided a brief update on the progress made in the Statewide Rail Plan.
- The task of inventorying the rail lines in Tennessee has been completed and the next step is to identify projects that need to be in this plan.
- A representative from CN inquired as to whether projects that would not be funded with Federal dollars needed to be included in this plan. It was agreed that any rail projects, whether or not they plan to seek Federal funds, should be included to ensure coordination regarding investments made by the private industry and TDOT.

Freight Profiles

Freight Newsletter

- **Bob Rock** presented the first issue of a freight newsletter that TDOT has begun to develop. It is envisioned that this will be published on the TDOT website as well as emailed to FAC members and any other interested stakeholders across the state.
- The idea behind the newsletter is that it would be used to communicate freight-related project information to the industry and highlight companies, individuals, or projects pertaining to freight in Tennessee.
- **Scott Sigman** proposed the idea of using a moderated blog format where contributing authors could provide content for the newsletter, which would ultimately reduce the effort TDOT is likely to face in producing the content.

Freight Brochure

- **Max Baker** (AECOM) provided a brief description of the freight brochure that is currently under development in coordination with TDOT's other freight planning efforts.
- The brochure is envisioned to be a brief one-page document that can be used to advertise TDOT's involvement in freight planning and investments. It will likely highlight commodities and freight movements critical to Tennessee.
- There was also mention of a freight video that is currently under development and its use for educating the public on the importance of freight to Tennessee's economy.

Region Report

FAC Committee

- **Scott Sigman** prompted a discussion on the need for more communication between the Regional FACs. He proposed the idea of a conference call or webinar, open to any FAC member, which would serve as an update for statewide freight issues in hopes that this would encourage members to think more about the integration of freight statewide instead of regionally.

TDOT Region 4 Projects

- **Mike Welch** provided an update on critical freight-related projects in West Tennessee.
- Specific projects discussed included the I-40 bridge seismic retrofit, I-240 widening, Lamar Avenue widening, I-55 Crump Interchange, and I-269 among many others.

MPO / NFAC Update

- **Pragati Srivastava** gave an update on recent activity by the National Freight Advisory Committee (NFAC). Memphis was recently the host for various NFAC members where a tour of freight facilities was conducted throughout the city.
- NFAC, which serves to guide the USDOT in all things freight, has recently completed the development of a national freight policy.
- The Memphis Area MPO has just completed a survey of freight stakeholders and is in the process of developing a freight plan and freight profile for the Memphis area.
- There was also mention of a newly-developed online mapping tool that allows users to see all projects going on in Memphis.
<https://gis.memphismpo.org/mpo-viewer/mpo-viewer-overall/>

Freight Transportation Update

- **Eric Jessup** of Informa Economics gave a PowerPoint presentation about trends that are occurring in freight transportation.
- The presentation dealt with highway, water, and rail transportation.
- The presentation highlighted trends within the freight industry, from what is being shipped, to where it is being shipped.
- Eric concluded his presentation by showing what is being shipped into and out of Tennessee.

Conclusion

- **Tanisha Hall** thanked everyone for attending and supporting the FAC in West Tennessee.
- It was decided that the survey questions that were to have been asked would be sent to the members as an online survey (Survey Monkey).
- The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.