

Minutes
Middle TN Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Meeting
March 10, 2015
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Vanderbilt University

Members Attending :

Stan Williams, Clarksville MPO
Steve Sparks, Robertson Chamber
Mary Connelly, Nashville MPO
Tanisha Hall, TDOT
Angie Midgett, TDOT
Carlos McCloud, TDOT
Bob Rock, TDOT
Max Baker, AECOM
Kayla Ferguson, RPM
Janey Camp, VU
Bob Stammer, VU
Corbin Davis, FHWA TN
Brian Caldwell, TDOT
Craig Philip, VU
Liza Joffrion, TDOT

Opening Comments

Tanisha Hall welcomed everyone to the meeting (on a rainy day). Those attending introduced themselves and told who they represented.

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 can be updated and revised as necessary.

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.
- There was a question as to the estimated date of completion for the Phase 3 model; the response was that the model is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2015.

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 are now online for public review and comment.

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.
- It was mentioned 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/or TDOT.
- There were questions as to what kind of projects would be included in the final plan, including high-speed rail lines and passenger rail lines. It was mentioned that this plan must balance between being fiscally-constrained and including potential projects in order to be eligible for federal funds; as such, the plan will address the need to study these types of projects, but not the projects themselves.
- There were questions as to the current status of litigation against the Tennessee Department of Revenue by the Class I rail lines. **Liza Joffrion** with TDOT's Division of Multimodal Transportation Resources responded by saying that the issue was far from being resolved, but cited other court conclusions drawn in similar legal battles faced by the state of Alabama. Currently there are no alternative sources for funding shortline transportation.
- **Stan Williams** (Clarksville MPO) expressed the opinion that the Plan shouldn't be finalized until the litigation holding up funding for shortline rail transportation is resolved since that issue greatly impacts funding for rail investments by TDOT.

- FAC members questioned the impacts of funding cuts to the Shortlines. Stakeholder interviews revealed that cuts in funding for Shortlines will definitely impact the major employers using those lines.

Freight Profiles

Freight Newsletter

- **Bob Rock** and **Carlos McCloud** 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.

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. It was also mentioned that UT is currently in the process of creating a video highlighting economic impacts of aeronautics.

Region Report

FAC Committee

- **Carlos McCloud** (TDOT) asked for recommendations in terms of companies and/or individuals who should be included in FAC events.
- It was mentioned that the Executive FAC would likely meet this summer during a discussion on the frequency of meetings.
- In a conversation regarding participation in the Middle Tennessee FAC, it was mentioned that the key to sustaining input from the private industry in these committees is providing them with tangible benefits from participating.
- Due to scheduling changes and conflicts, there was no update on TDOT projects within Middle Tennessee; however, comments suggested that these have been helpful in the past and would be welcomed in the future.

MPO Update

- **Stan Williams** gave an update on the Clarksville MPO's freight activities. The most notable news was that CMAQ funds have been awarded to R.J. Corman in conjunction with the MPO to construct approximately 1,100 feet of new shortline track.
- **Mary Connelly** gave an update on the Nashville MPO's freight activities. The MPO is currently in the process of updating their regional freight plan for which two of the main deliverables will be model land use ordinances and a designated regional truck route network.

Featured Speaker

- **Craig Philip** of Vanderbilt (formerly with Ingram Barge Company) gave a presentation on adapting to climate change with respect to his experience in waterway transport.

Discussion Items

- **Carlos McCloud** led a brief discussion and facilitated questions on public-private partnerships.

Conclusion

- **Tanisha Hall** thanked everyone for attending and supporting the FAC in Middle Tennessee.