

Missouri Freight Development Overview

An in-house study by the Freight Development Team

MoDOT Summary Statement

The nation's freight system faces significant capacity issues that overflow to other transportation-related sectors in the form of congestions issues, increased shipping and consumer costs, system degradation and environmental costs. Solutions to this freight capacity crisis, and its associated externalities, will involve actions beyond the normal scope of operations and investments due to the dynamic nature of freight movement and ownership. In an effort to better gauge Missouri's location on the freight development continuum, the department's Freight Development Team has reviewed the national freight framework with the intention to better understand MoDOT's integration and potential in the freight development area. Of the seven major objectives and 25 strategies in the framework, MoDOT demonstrates activity in nearly all relevant areas. So while there is still tremendous opportunity for further freight development within the state, Missouri is aligning itself toward accommodating freight movement and development needs.

Background

MoDOT, through our division and district representatives on the Freight Development Team, has reviewed the objectives, strategies and tactics provided in the national freight framework. The completion of this effort provides a census of the department's activities in supporting freight development and demonstrates that MoDOT is not starting from scratch with its freight development efforts. MoDOT has initiated activities that support all seven objectives as well as most strategies and tactics.

The seven national freight framework objectives are:

- 1) Improve the operations of the existing freight transportation system.
- 2) Add physical capacity to the freight transportation system in places where investment makes economic sense.
- 3) Use pricing to better align all costs and benefits between users and owners of the freight system and to encourage deployment of productivity-enhancing technologies.
- 4) Reduce or remove statutory, regulatory, or institutional barriers to improved freight transportation and performance.
- 5) Proactively identify and address emerging transportation needs.
- 6) Maximize the safety and security of the freight transportation system.
- 7) Mitigate and better manage the environmental, health, energy, and community impacts of freight transportation.



Strengths

It is clear from the team's review of desired freight support activities that MoDOT is working to accommodate freight movement and related development. There are three over-arching areas that MoDOT's freight-related successes can be attributed to: 1) Corridors and Connectivity, 2) Planning and Research, and 3) Communications and Coordination.

Corridors and Connectivity

MoDOT's work on I64, kcICON, Route 60 and 67, along with work in understanding the potential of truck-only lanes, demonstrates the department is working to remove bottlenecks to freight movement. Plans and preparations are also underway with the state's two major corridors (I-70 and I-44) to ensure that these freight pipelines continue to provide the needed levels of service.

Providing for the safe and efficient movement of freight encourages private sector support of transportation investments as well as private sector investment in freight-related and support businesses in Missouri.

Planning and Research

MoDOT's planning framework recognizes projects that provide for intermodal connectivity and projects that work to reduce bottlenecks. Innovative projects that include private sector participation are also being considered to encourage remediation of freight-related bottlenecks.

Research initiatives that support freight development in Missouri include the recent UP rail capacity study, and the ongoing freight optimization study. Projects just underway include an examination of the rail and air service regulatory and business climate. These research activities are designed to provide decision makers with the information necessary to ensure that Missouri is an attractive place for the freight industry to operate and locate.



Communication and Coordination

With today's just-in-time freight system, information concerning system conditions is extremely important. MoDOT's work with dynamic message boards on major corridors, transportation communication centers in our urban hubs, and web applications, such as the road conditions map and "map my trip," provide for solid information that serve logistics operations, freight movers, as well as the general public. MoDOT also works to communicate to the public and stakeholders the value of the transportation system and the importance of transportation investments.

Internally the department works to coordinate road construction to avoid unnecessary work zone delays. The department also has established the freight development team to ensure that the various divisions and districts with freight responsibilities are aware of and responsive to department-wide activities.

MoDOT's efforts also include coordination with freight stakeholders through the department's Partnership for Innovative Efficiencies meetings. Similarly the department supports freight related development through its work with other agencies such as Economic Development, Agriculture and with private sector groups such as KC Smartport.

Opportunities

The freight development team also identified six major areas of opportunities for improvement. Additional work in these areas will prepare, and move the department and the state forward in developing its freight and logistics potential. The following areas were identified.

Communication

The freight development team represents a genuine opportunity for MoDOT to better communicate regarding freight issues, freight perspectives and activities across the department. Moving forward with the freight development team ensures that events are well communicated and resources are shared across the department.

Better Information and Freight Data Analysis

The department is working to better understand and act on freight bottlenecks. There is a need for more precise and actionable information that details commodity and goods movement as well as the logistics systems used to regulate shipments by the private sector. This information will allow the department to better plan and execute operational as well as construction strategies in support of freight development.

There is also a need to better understand the regulatory and business climate, markets and private sector incentives that drive freight movement and modal selection. Clarification of these issues will allow for the development of strategies that encourage freight development and support businesses to locate in Missouri.

Better Freight Performance Measures

There is a need to better understand our current status, relative to other states as well as towards the department's overall potential for a variety of freight measures. Private sector ownership of much of the relevant freight-related data hinders the department's ability to identify baseline conditions and to make plans for improvements. Assessing the department's freight information needs and then taking steps to acquire and use this information will allow the department to plan to succeed.

Funding

Transportation finance is severely constrained and there does not appear to be any short-term solution to this lack of funding. The development of innovative funding approaches, agency and private sector partnerships, loans and approaches to leveraging monies should be explored. It is critical that MoDOT make headway in this area. The department must provide strong support and relevant data to encourage legislative efforts to increase transportation investments that support freight development.



Increased Coordination and Information Sharing

Freight issues combine the interests of the private sector, transportation industry, and economic developers. Increased coordination and information sharing that includes coordination

Opportunities (cont'd.)

MoDOT, coordination with other agencies with a stake in freight activities (economic development, agriculture), and coordination with the private sector will benefit MoDOT and the state as a whole. These efforts will ensure all the relevant players share a common vision and goal and should reflect the prominence of this issue at the state, rather than agency level.

Summary

MoDOT's Freight Development Team has taken its first steps in accelerating freight development through this census of the department's activities, strengths and opportunities for improvement. As the Freight Development Team progresses, the issues highlighted here will be refined and prioritized. Strategies will then be developed and implemented to move Missouri forward in support of freight and logistics development.

Freight Development Team Members

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