

Listening Session Summary – Tennessee Statewide Multimodal Freight Advisory Committee Meeting

Sept. 7, 2022 – 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

In Person:

TDOT Region 3 Headquarters
6601 Centennial Boulevard
Nashville, TN 37243-0360

Online: Microsoft Teams

Meeting Agenda

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| 8:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m. | Welcome/Opening, Butch Eley, Commissioner |
| 8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | State Freight Update, Keith Bucklew and Peter Kauffmann, HDR |
| 9:45 a.m. – 10:05 a.m. | Break |
| 10:05 a.m. – 10:25 a.m. | Freight updates, Dan Pallme, TDOT Assistant Chief of Environment and Planning Bureau, Freight and Logistics Director |
| 10:25 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | Weight in Motion Update, Dan Pallme |
| 10:45 a.m. – 11:05 a.m. | Department-wide updates, Preston Elliott, TDOT Deputy Commissioner, Bureau Chief of Environment and Planning |
| 11:05 a.m. – 11:25 a.m. | Wrap-up/Next steps, Dan Pallme |

Meeting Summary

The Freight Advisory Committee meeting was held in person and via Microsoft Teams Wednesday, September 7, 2022. A total of 125 attendees participated – 85 online and approximately 20 people attended in person. Attendees included FHWA, FMCSA, TDOT, motor carrier industry representatives, waterways partners, Class I and short-line rail partners, consultants and Tennessee Department of Safety.

Speakers included:

- Butch Eley (TDOT Commissioner)
- Dan Pallme (DOT Assistant Chief of Environment and Planning Bureau and Freight and Logistics Director)
- Preston Elliot (TDOT Deputy Commissioner, Bureau Chief of Environment and Planning)
- Keith Bucklew (HDR Freight Plan Project Manager)
- Peter Kauffman (HDR Senior Traffic Engineer)

Meeting Purpose

The role of the Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) is to advise the TDOT Freight and Logistics Division and their project team on freight-related priorities, issues, projects and funding needs. The purpose of the meeting was to provide and discuss updates to the Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan (SMFP) and to have discussions on the following topics:

- SMFP update, with Mentimeter activity to facilitate interaction and seek stakeholders' freight perspectives and issues
- Department-wide updates
- Weigh-in-Motion implementation update

The SMFP is important, as it guides the advancement of multimodal freight transportation, assesses all freight modes and intermodal connectivity, and identifies freight needs. It also creates recommendations for policies, programs and projects, serving as a roadmap for future investment. The plan supports the Tennessee Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Meeting Kickoff

Preston Elliott, TDOT's Deputy Commissioner and Bureau Chief of Environment and Planning, started the meeting by reviewing the agenda and history of the Freight Advisory Committee. He introduced TDOT Commissioner Butch Eley, who called for the meeting to be informal and conversational. Topics from Commissioner Eley's introduction:

- Safety is TDOT's top priority
- Growth in Tennessee presents opportunities and challenges
- IMPROVE Act projects are behind schedule where they need to be
- Need to invest in infrastructure to support growth
- Growing gap in funding between what we have and what we need
- Questions from the audience
 - Increased use of electric vehicles lessens the amount of money collected through gas taxes. Is the state exploring options to make EV owners pay for roadway usage? Preston responded with information about the \$100 registration fee for EVs, but further stated it was not sufficient.
 - The state is in the interim steps of reviewing and reassessing registration fees for EVs and is exploring other options such as VMT.

Statewide Freight Plan Updates

Keith Bucklew and Peter Kauffmann, HDR

Purpose of Statewide Multimodal Freight Plan

- Guides advancement of a multimodal freight transportation system, assesses all freight modes and intermodal connectivity, identifies freight needs and issues, creates recommendations for policies, programs, projects, and processes, serves as roadmap for future investment
- Role of Freight Advisory Committee: to advise the project team on freight-related priorities.

Freight Vision and Goals

Tennessee's goals are to:

- Improve safety, security, efficiency and resiliency of the system
- Improve the state of good repair of the system
- Reduce congestion

- Improve mobility and safety with innovation and technology

Freight Planning and Demand Trends

Several factors drive freight planning, including federal regulations and state legislation. Other factors can involve transportation funding shortfalls, private sector investment potential and demands or economic development. Some trends that are influencing freight demand include demographics, technology or trade/industry growth.

Supply chains are key to the state's economic vitality and are designed with service and cost criteria. Several economists are going through a Tennessee goods and commodity flow analysis, which the Freight Plan will reference.

Bottlenecking

The plan will address existing issues in the state, including the condition of roadways and their maintenance and expansion. Finding (truck) bottlenecks along the state's interstate system is a federal requirement. 26 areas were identified. The top locations were Chattanooga's Northbound I-75 from the state line to the I-24 Interchange, Memphis' I-55 to Arkansas and multiple freeway segments in Nashville. Two aspects establish bottlenecking – absolute delay (truck delay) and reliability. Congested, urban areas impact the most people.

Supply Chain Disruptions

Supply chain disruptions include the pandemic and post-pandemic recovery, where there will likely be continuous outbreaks and inflation. Truck and rail capacity is limited and it's a bad time to negotiate labor contracts. There are regional, national and global impacts, as well (i.e. Russia-Ukraine war).

Open Discussion on Needs and Issues

There will be a comment map on the [TDOT Freight Planning webpage](#) in addition to this meeting for participants to respond.

Stakeholders raised several subjects in the meeting:

- There will be 85,000 new jobs in Tennessee. There is more demand than supply currently. Blue Oval is 8,000 more jobs.

- Concerning the area from Nashville to the east coast, service point of view for CSX and a shortage of trucks is also an issue. There are also traffic issues for truck parking, a CSX shortage of containers and an extended length of trains to two miles.
- Intermodal service from Montana to Nebraska
- BNSF Railway in Memphis – Provided comments about how chassis are used and managed. The railroad companies do not own chassis. Rather, there are multiple private and public chassis providers in Memphis.
 - Janey Camp mentioned that her organization at Vanderbilt has an ongoing project funded through the USDOT supported University Transportation Center called MarTREC (University of Arkansas). The group is -I studying the Memphis port and the chassis issues. She encouraged anyone with an interest to reach out.
- A port is opening on September 28 (adjacent to the Arcosa barge plant) and another port for 63 barges, which will help relieve some needs.

Mentimeter Survey Activity

1. Which Grand Division do you represent (in Tennessee)?

- Out of 49 responses, Middle Tennessee had the most representation in the meeting (21) whereas West Tennessee had the least (8). East Tennessee was represented by 20 people at the meeting.

2. Regarding freight transportation, what are the top three issues that concern you most? Eleven options were presented to the group, with 59 persons responding.

- Participants responded that the top priorities of concern are:
 - The condition of the state’s roadway network (28 votes)
 - Shortage of labor (23 votes)
 - Funding to maintain and expand the state’s roadway network (24)
 - Remaining issues and vote counts can be found in the [Appendix- Mentimeter Results](#).

3. Please rate the following statement from 1 (Very Poor) to 10 (Very Well):

“The current multimodal freight system supports economic development in Tennessee.”

- Participants’ average collective rating of the statement was **6.8**.

4. Focusing on transportation safety, what are top three issues that concern you most?

- Participants responded that the top three safety issues are:
 - Operator issues (speed, distractions, etc.): 40 votes

- Roadway geometry: 36 votes
- Condition and at-grade rail crossings: 22 votes
- This question yielded 55 votes total.
- Remaining issues and vote counts can be found in the [Appendix – Mentimeter Results](#).

Freight Topics

Dan Pallme began his presentation with an overview of the departments in the Freight and Logistics Division of TDOT:

- Rail Safety and Inspection – five employees to review each crossing in the state, and to address employee issues
- Rail Engineering – \$5.3M budget, manages the state’s Highway-Railroad Grade Crossing Program (also referred to as the Section 130 Program) which was updated this year
- State Safety Oversight – Program required by Federal Transit Administration (FTA), applies to all transit agencies not regulated by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- Freight Planning/Grants – staff of four, manages the Tennessee Short Line Railroad Preservation grant and applies for federal grants
- Multimodal Transportation Division – includes and Bike/Ped Planning; focus on safety

The Freight Planning Strategic Plan Objectives:

- Collaboration with staff to determine a fair chance for advancement by 12/31/25
- Planning process that is timeline and data driven by 12/31/23
- Maximize collaboration for safety and economic benefits by 12/31/24

Highlights Since 2021

- Memphis Freight Flows – Duplication of NEP project and the draft is being reviewed in 2022, based on a Chattanooga project (THRIVE) that explored a regional employment and freight despite state boundaries
- Bottleneck Analysis (HDR) – reviewing draft, will be sent to FHWA this month
- University of Memphis – Understanding Freight Impacts on Tennessee Communities completed September 2022
- Water Research Project – University of Memphis – and investigation on the location of prime sites along waterfronts; literature review due November 1, 2023
- Blue Oval City – Transit study
 - Goal is to have 50% of employees to take transit of any type

- RFP will be released later this month with a quick timeline (study completed April 2023)
- Safety perspectives in Freight – National EV Infrastructure Plan, hydrogen truck program, platooning legislation (two wirelessly connected trucks following each other) and autonomous vehicles

Statewide Weigh-in-Motion

The Statewide Weigh-in-Motion program has been in development since 2019 and changes the current weigh-in-motion system by scaling the loads as they go. Its purpose is to enforce trucks that bypass scales. The project is slated to really be implemented in February 2023. The scale will evaluate the safety ratings of the driver and trucking company. If the truck is overloaded, it will automatically route it into the scales and the driver will be ticketed. 30 locations will undergo this change, which the installation of new sensors (Kistler 9195).

TDOT Updates

The normal fiscal year budget is \$2.6B and IJA added 30 percent to budget. The current budget is \$3.1B, which includes \$600M (one time) from the general fund, where the traditional revenue is primarily gas tax. However, inflation has eroded some of the additional budget's capacity to deliver work, noting the Improve Act did not index for fluctuations in fuel costs. The IJA bill is like the previous federal bill, but places more emphasis on equity, sustainability, technology and provides more discretionary opportunities for investment in communities. TDOT will continue to partner with communities, MPO's and industries in pursuit of grant funding under the bill. Tennessee was awarded three RAISE grants, totaling \$63M.

The Integrated Program Delivery (IPD) is speeding up project delivery with a goal of typical delivery in five years.

TDOT is also starting an internal initiative, Empower People and Influencing Culture (EPIC), for leadership and project management. It is designed to allow staff to advance in their careers through multiple tracks – leadership, project/program Internal organizational changes are planned to be implemented in January 2023.

Appendix

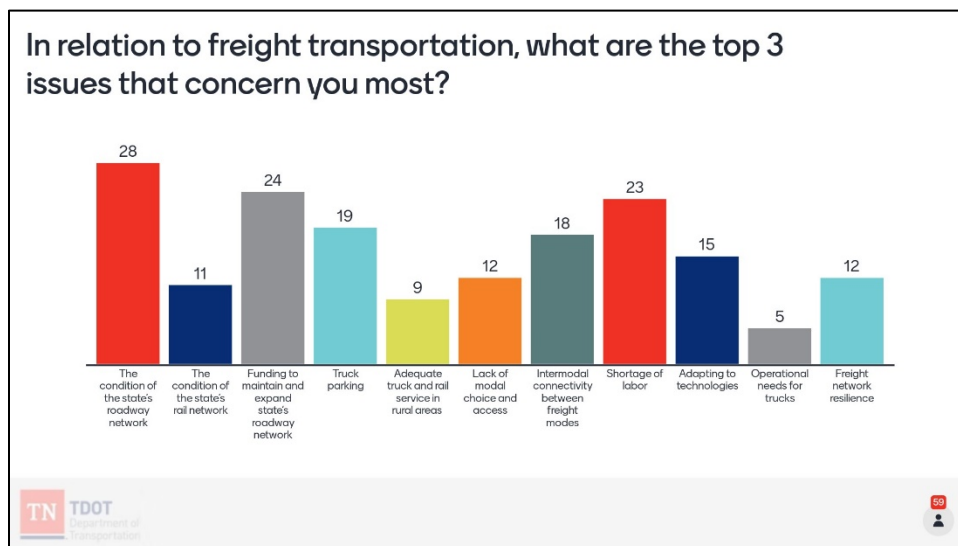
Mentimeter Results

Question one: Which Grand Division do you represent?



49 participants answered the question, with eight persons representing West Tennessee, 21 for Middle Tennessee, and 20 for the east.

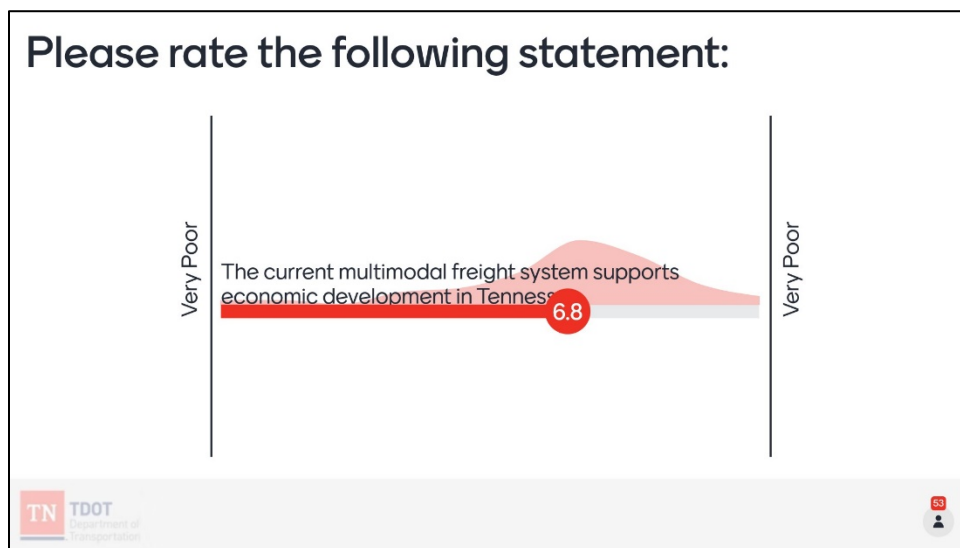
Question two: In relation to freight transportation, what are the top three issues that concern you most?



Issues listed:

- The condition of the state’s roadway network – 28
- The condition of the state’s rail network – 11
- Funding to maintain and expand state’s roadway network – 24
- Truck Parking – 19
- Adequate truck and rail service in rural areas – 9
- Lack of modal choice and access – 12
- Intermodal connectivity between freight modes – 18
- Shortage of labor – 23
- Adapting to technologies – 15
- Operational needs for trucks – 5
- Freight network resilience – 12

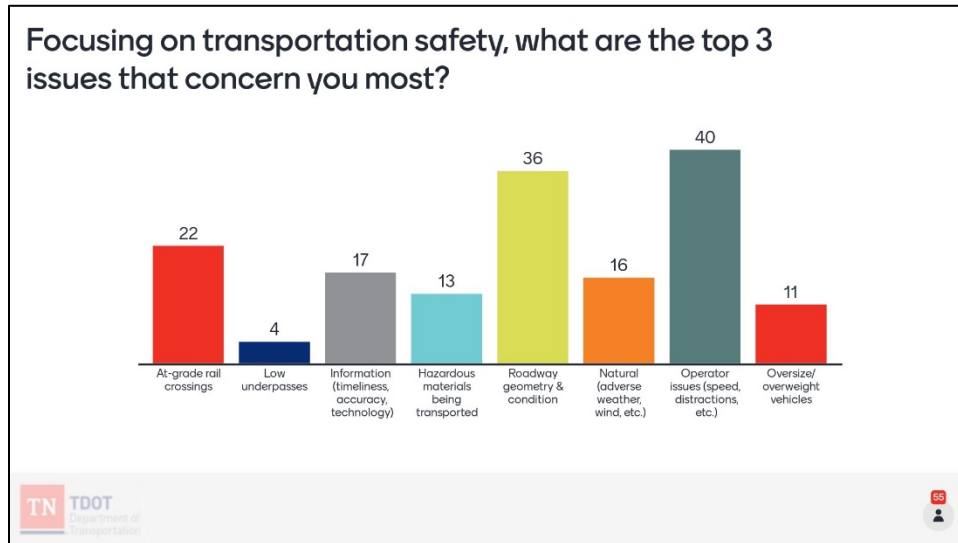
Question Four: Please rate the following statement:



The score is a weighted average of 52 votes.

Score	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number of Votes	1	1	0	3	4	8	16	12	5	2

Question Five: Focusing on transportation safety, what are the top three issues that concern you most?



Issues Listed:

- At-grade rail crossings – 22
- Low underpasses – 4
- Information (timeliness, accuracy, technology) – 17
- Hazardous materials being transported – 13
- Roadway geometry and condition – 36
- Natural (adverse weather, wind, etc.) – 16
- Operator issues (speed, distractions, etc.) – 40
- Oversize/overweight vehicles – 1

List of Attendees

Andy Alden
 Tausha Alexander
 Veronica Allen
 Tim Andrews
 Gina Anzaldua
 Bruce Applegate
 Joe Arbona
 Glenn Berry
 Mary Butler
 Janey Camp
 Meredith Cebelak
 Grant Chaney
 Phillip Christian
 Michelle A. Christian
 David B. Clarke
 Mike Conger
 Mary Connelly
 Jeffrey Cornett
 Jennifer Coulter
 Lisa Cross
 Gene Davis
 Gilberto Deleon
 Rich DesGroseilliers
 William Downey
 John Dudas
 Troy J. Ebbert
 Julie Ellis
 Allen England
 Mavrick Fitzgetald
 Ignatious Fomunung
 David C. Freeman
 Lindsay Frilling
 Michael Garriga
 Michail Gkolias
 Diego Guadalupe
 Brian Hall
 Lee D. Han
 Stephanie R. Hargrove
 Robbie Hayes
 Steve Hiatt
 Karen Hjerpe
 Wayne Hoffman
 Lynda Hogue

Bruce Hohorst
 Marc Holcomb
 Lydia Holmes
 Richard R. Holt
 Benny Hopkins
 Sajid Hossain
 Liza Joffrion
 Cline Jones
 Peter Kauffmann
 Asad Jan Khattak
 Holly Kirby
 Pam Kordenbrock
 Boris Kort-Packard
 Amy Kosanovic
 Elizabeth Lawlor
 Kevin Layne
 David Lee
 Xiaoming Li
 Vasileios Liatsos
 Don B. Loftis
 Stephanie Mann
 Chris McPhilamy
 Shannon Millsaps
 Chase Milner
 Sabyasachee Mishra
 Kenny Monroe
 Amy Moore
 Steven Peterson
 Shahram Pezeshk
 Craig Phillip
 Elliott Pinson
 Ian Preston
 Sammy Reid
 Stephanie Roberts
 Henry Seaton
 Pragati Srivastava
 Ryan Swindell
 Thiera Taylor
 Richard Teubner
 John Tompkins
 Trung Trinh
 Connie Vaughan
 Kevin Walker

Jacob Weir
 Stan Williams
 Perry Wilson
 Melissa Ziegler

TDOT Staff

Erik Anderson
 Ben Bolton
 Brooxie Carlton
 Joe Deering
 Troy J. Ebbert
 Butch Eley
 Preston Elliott
 Allen England
 Lizzy Gaviria
 Antoine Hawkins
 Jonathan E. Haynes
 Chanel Hippix
 Amy Kosanovic
 Casey Langford
 Kevin Layne
 David Lee
 Chris McPhilamy
 Melanie Murphy
 Andrea Noel
 Ashley Owens
 Daniel Pallme
 Jonathan Russell
 Sean Santalla
 Ronda J. Sawyer
 Will Snyder
 Thiera Taylor
 Jacob Thompson

Consultant Team

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 Stephanie McCullough