

MEMORANDUM

Date: September 28, 2022

Kittelson Project No: 25697

To: Eric Taylor

From: Holly Spoth-Torres, Huddle AK

Subject: Freight Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

FAC Meeting Summary

SUMMARY:

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) held a Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) meeting on Wednesday, September 28, from 10:00 am to 11:30 am using the virtual platform Microsoft Teams. A toll-free call-in number was available for those who couldn't join virtually, and the meeting was open to the public.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an update on the Freight Bottlenecks Study completed by High Street Consulting, identify the group's top freight priorities, and discuss general feedback about the freight plan. Comments about these topics are below.

ADVERTISEMENTS:

The FAC members were invited to the meeting with an Outlook calendar invite. A public notice (attached) was posted on September 14, 2022, on the State of Alaska's Public Notices website (<https://aws.state.ak.us/OnlinePublicNotices/>) and the meeting information was posted on the project website (www.alaskamoves2050.com).

TRUCK FREIGHT BOTTLENECKS

Alice Beattie of High Street Consulting summarized the methodology and results of the Freight Bottleneck study. The methodology included stakeholder input from AMATS, FAST and the Alaska Trucking Association and information from a national dataset on delays and reliability.

Agency	Comment/Question	Answer (if applicable)
FAC Members		
ARRC	Did the survey consider bottleneck or delay issues for water port, rail, or air freight?	It is federally required to report on bottlenecks for truck freight only, and that is what this survey addressed.
Alaska Trucking Association	Weight restrictions on bridges create bottlenecks that are not reflected in travel time delays, as do weighting on trains and other bottlenecks at the Port.	The metric for the federal requirement is only travel time.
DOT&PF	Does the study look only at current conditions and not forecast conditions?	Yes, the study analyzes current conditions.

PRIORITY FREIGHT PROJECTS

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Update

The IIJA will require modifications to the LRTP/FP to meet the new requirements.

Strategies will be added to the plan to decrease:

- severity and impacts of extreme weather and natural disasters
- impacts of freight movement on local air pollution
- impacts of freight movement on flooding and stormwater runoff
- impacts of freight movement on wildlife habitat loss

Parking:

- At a high level we will be analyzing the capability of the State, in cooperation with the private sector, to provide adequate freight/truck parking facilities
- Identify the underlying causes of such a freight parking shortage

The plan will need to include a fiscally constrained list of freight projects.

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FAC Members		
Alaska Trucking Association	What does fiscally constrained mean?	Marc Luiken (MBI): Fiscally constrained means that the project list must fit within the funding that is expected to be received each fiscal year. Wende Wilber: Current budget includes 17 million/year for highway system and 1.2 million/year for rail crossings.
DOT&PF	In the summer, during construction season, there is additional truck traffic to haul materials. Please consider whether this is considered freight.	
ARRC	What does rerouting the railroad around Fairbanks do to improve freight flow?	Jackson Fox: Although an unrealistic project in the short term, the idea is to eliminate a large number of the rail crossings in the road network.
ARRC	Rerouting the railroad mainline around Fairbanks is not realistic in the short-term and quite complicated.	The project will be removed from the priority list but kept in the plan narrative to document the need.
DOT&PF	I recommend rerouting traffic to create an industrial corridor, as we shore up the link between the port and the airport in Anchorage. We need a better route than Northern Lights / Spenard / Raspberry Rd.	
ARRC	How much freight goes from the port to the airport now, and how is that projected to change?	Steve Ribuffo: The freight is mostly by-pass mail system and the Port doesn't have that data, the ocean carriers do.
Mike Thrasher (TOTE)	Moving freight via the highways is obviously adding to congestion. Additionally, there is a significant bottleneck for truck traffic coming out of the Port of Alaska and getting to the highways north and south. Consider ways	

Agency	Comment/Question	Answer (if applicable)
	to move additional freight via the railroad. The railroad currently only takes 50% of the trailers coming through the Port of Alaska.	
ARRC	Agrees with the idea of moving more freight via the railroad, however the railroad can't handle any more capacity.	
Port of Alaska (POA)	Agrees that the railroad could reduce highway congestion and would consider using POA property for railroad operations to solve the issues.	
Wende Wilber (KAI)	Is it a priority of this group to prioritize Ocean Dock Road Reconnaissance Study?	Yes, the group supports. The existing port facility is very constrained, and it effects things all the way to Fairbanks and touches all modes.
Southeast Conference	Southeast region understands the importance of the POA and suggests the plan must also consider freight corridors in SE Alaska	
Roads & Highways Advisory Board	The project list should balance long-term and short-term projects.	
FAST Planning	In the Fairbanks area, Steese Highway is the most important project. There are bridge restrictions and there is a current issue with hairpin turns related to ore haul/movement that is a short-term issue.	Wende Wilber: KAI will follow up with FAST Planning on the specific projects in Fairbanks.
DOT&PF	Truck parking has national attention. There is a global approach to facilities for trucker rest/vehicle charging. There are insufficient facilities for accommodating those needs in Alaska. Although electric charging stations are	Wende Wilber: The plan currently recommends a parking study to assess the needs related to parking.

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	not super relevant to Alaska, there is a need for drivers to have space to safely pull over, get rest, and keep their engines running in cold conditions. The idea is to have stakeholders pool funds to study the issue and figure out what DOT&PF can do to address the needs.	
DOT&PF	Is there anything from the defense logistics perspective that we're missing, or we should be addressing?	Robert Sherrill (JBER): The key areas for the military have been the port, port access, and port freight movement. In addition, when they send convoys along the highways, they need the parking for resting, to allow other traffic to go through,
Wende Wilber (KAI)	Does the military have any documentation about how much space is needed when convoys travel along the highways?	Robert Sherrill: He doesn't have the specifics, but it's usually 10-15 large trucks. Or a group of smaller trucks.

After the FAC discussion, consensus was reached on the following freight priority projects:

1. Ocean Dock Road Feasibility Study – Reduce the bottleneck coming out of the Port of Alaska
2. Railroad – Port of Alaska – Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport Feasibility Study
3. Steese Highway Ore Haul Improvements – Tetlin to Fort Knox
4. Truck Parking Study

GENERAL FAC FEEDBACK

- What three things do you like most about the Freight Plan?
- What three things would you change about the Freight Plan?
- How would you like to see the FAC continuing to support the DOT&PF freight planning efforts in the future?

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FAC Members		
FAST Planning	Like the layout and graphics of the freight plan. Have the proposed corridors shown in figure 8 been submitted to FHWA for designation?	<p>DOT&PF: They have not. Waiting for an official letter from the AMATS policy board or freight to request the designation.</p> <p>AMATS: That letter has been sent. We will follow up to confirm.</p>
DOT&PF	Thanks for the effort to represent all modes and address multimodal nature and working together as a state	

Final Comments:

The intent is the FAC will remain active, regroup in early 2023 to establish bylaws and continue as a formal Freight Committee.

A revised Freight Plan is due to FHWA by October 27. The Long Range Transportation Plan is out for public comments now, that phase ends on October 31, and the plan will be revised and wrapped up in January.

If there are additional comments on the Draft Freight Plan, please have to the project team no later than October 7.

ATTENDANCE

Name, Agency	Email	Role:
Alice Beattie, High Street Consulting		Guest Speaker
Brian Lindamood, Alaska Railroad Corporation	admin@AlaskaRailroad.onmicrosoft.com	STAC/FAC
Connor Erickson, Alaska Energy Authority	cerickson@akenergyauthority.org	STAC/FAC member designee

Name, Agency	Email	Role:
Robert Venables, Maritime Advisory Board	venables@aptalaska.net	STAC/FAC
Jackson Fox, FAST Planning	jackson.fox@fastplanning.us	STAC/FAC
Aaron Jongenelen, AMATS	Aaron.jongenelen@anchorageak.gov	STAC/FAC
Aves Thompson, Roads and Highways Advisory Board	admin@RStreetStrategies.onmicrosoft.com	STAC/FAC
Stephen Ribuffo, Port of Alaska	steve.ribuffo@anchorageak.gov	STAC/FAC
Robert Sherrill, JBER	robert.sherrill@dla.mil	STAC/FAC
Jonathan Cecil, Anchorage Planning Department	jonathan.cecil@anchorageak.gov	STAC/FAC member designee
Christel Burgess, Fairbanks Airport	Christel.burgess@alaska.gov	STAC/FAC
Joe Michel, Alaska Trucking Association	joe@aktrucks.org	FAC
Mike Thrasher, Totem Ocean Trail Express	mthrasher@totemocean.com	FAC
Kathryn Wenger, FHWA	kathryn.wenger@dot.gov	FAC
John Taylor, DOT&PF	eric.taylor@alaska.gov	DOT&PF Project Team
Judy Chapman, DOT&PF	judy.chapman@alaska.gov	DOT&PF Project Team
Daniel Smith, DOT&PF	daniel.smither@alaska.gov	DOT&PF Project Team
Jodi Gould, DOT&PF	jodi.gould@alaska.gov	DOT&PF Project Team
Todd E. Vanhove, DOT&PF	todd.vanhove@alaska.gov	DOT&PF Project Team
James Marks, DOT&PF	james.marks@alaska.gov	DOT&PF Project Team
Brian Funkhouser, Michael Baker International	Brian.Funkhouser@mbakerintl.com	Consultant Team
Marc Luiken, Michael Baker International	Marc.Luiken@mbakerintl.com	Consultant Team
Claire Dougherty, Kittelson & Associates, Inc	cdougherty@kittelson.com	Consultant Team
Rachel Grosso, Kittelson & Associates, Inc	rgrosso@kittelson.com	Consultant Team
Wende Wilber, Kittelson & Associates, Inc	wwilber@kittelson.com	Consultant Team
Holly Spoth-Torres	holly@huddleAK.com	Consultant Team

Name, Agency	Email	Role:
Mandy Powers, Huddle AK	mandy@huddleAK.com	Consultant Team
Patrick Whitesell, Michael Baker International	Patrick.Whitesell@mbakerintl.com	Consultant Team
Adam Moser, DOT&PF		Guest
Robert – Southeast Conference		Guest