

# STATE FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



## State Freight Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 | Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4: 00 p.m.

---

### *Attendees*

Shawn Ames (MAA)  
 Kwame Arhin (FHWA)  
 Cathrin Banks  
 M. Clay Barnes  
 Marlee Baucom  
 Brittany Brothers (MDOT)  
 Mark Chambers  
 Kevin Clarke (MAA)  
 Jeff Cleland  
 Larry Collins (BDC)  
 Marc Cote (DeIDOT)  
 Mark Crampton (MDOT)  
 Carole Delion (SHA)  
 Jerry Einolf (SHA)  
 Adam Genn  
 Joe Greco  
 David Greene (MDTA)  
 Dave Gula  
 Matthew Helminiak  
 Meredith Hill (SHA)  
 Jeffrey Hirsch (MDOT)

Tom Huesman  
 Caitlin Hughes (FHWA)  
 Gladys Hurwitz (MDOT)  
 Michael Jones  
 Nicole Katsikides (TTI for SHA)  
 Chris Lamm  
 Valorie Lacour  
 Kyle Leggs  
 Michael Levy  
 Laura MacNeil (DDOT)  
 Tom Madrecki  
 John Magness  
 L’Kiesha Markley (SHA)  
 Michelle Martin (MDOT)  
 Catherine McGhee (VDOT)  
 Robert Mercado  
 Dennis Morgan  
 Matt Mullenax  
 Roxane Mukai (MDTA)  
 Heather Murphy (MDOT)  
 Stephen Panko

Scott Pomento (SHA)  
 Chad Reese (WRA for MDOT)  
 Laura Richards  
 Kathy Robertson (MTA)  
 Harry Romano (MDOT)  
 John Rotz (SHA)  
 Leo Sawada  
 Jon Schermann  
 Nanette Schieke (MVA)  
 Dominic Scurti (MPA)  
 Bradley Smith (MPA)  
 Chris Smith  
 Kipp Snow  
 Philip Strohm (FMCSA)  
 Aaron Tomarchio  
 Jim Ward  
 Bihui Xu

\*as well as 4 un-identified users who dialed in to the meeting

### *Welcome*

**Jeffrey Hirsch, MDOT Assistant Secretary, Office of Transportation Policy Analysis & Planning.** Jeff Hirsch, as sponsor for the State Freight Advisory Committee (SFAC) welcomed attendees. He began with a brief history of the Committee, which started with about 15 people before the 2009 Maryland Freight Plan and now has nearly 50 people. Because the Freight Plan and Rail Plan are in the process of being updated, this group is crucial to those efforts representing the freight community and advising the State on priorities, policies, issues, projects, and funding needs in order to advance Freight Goals and Objectives.

### *Introduction and Mission*

**Michelle Martin, MDOT Deputy Director, Office of Planning & Capital Programming.** Michelle Martin delivered an overview of the State Freight Plan update and the important freight-related roles of the State Freight Advisory Committee (SFAC).

#### **Key roles of the SFAC (from the charter):**

1. Advise the State on freight-related priorities, policies, issues, projects, and funding needs;
2. Serve as a forum for discussion of state transportation decisions affecting freight mobility;
3. Communicate and coordinate regional priorities with other organizations (for example, among state, regional and local planning organizations);
4. Promote the sharing of information between the private and public sectors on freight issues;
5. Participate in the development of the State freight plan, and other relevant freight plans;
6. Provide recommendations for Critical Urban and Rural Freight Corridors, which should be done as part of the State freight plan process; and
7. Review and provide guidance on freight-related performance measures and performance data.

**Purpose of the Freight Plan:** To examine existing and projected conditions, and identify policy positions, strategies, and freight projects to improve freight movement efficiency and safety.

**2017 Freight Plan Vision:** *Freight travels freely and safely through an interconnected network contributing to economic viability and growth for Maryland businesses.*

Michelle Martin invited members to offer ideas on what might be missing from the past plan, and what can be updated given new industry trends, what we learned through the pandemic, and other newer technologies.

The plan has a working outline built from federal Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act requirements for the freight plan. These requirements include performance metrics, innovative technologies, analysis of trends, needs and issues, as well as a plan for investment and mitigating congestion. MDOT has a milestone schedule with a completed and approved plan by October 2022; however, most of the work should be done in 2021.

### *State of the Practice*

#### **COVID Supply Chain Public Sector Perspective**

**Heather Murphy, Director, Office of Planning and Capital Programming,** discussed revenues, projects, and partnerships.

Maryland revenues are down \$350 million this fiscal year from a year ago due to COVID-19. Freight has actually been positively helping the economy during the pandemic. This can be seen by cargo volume at the Baltimore Washington Thurgood Marshall International (BWI) Airport, work on the Howard Street Tunnel, and the Port of Baltimore is one of the largest ports for autos and roll-on, roll-off. Looking ahead at capital projects and partnerships, Heather Murphy highlighted recent and activities in the State: The Midfield Cargo Complex at BWI will accommodate the growing air cargo volumes. The Nice Bridge will help to increase reliability of the freight network. The Metsa Group, a Finnish forest industry company whose products are used for paper and pulp products, is planning to import more products through the Port of Baltimore.

Planning is key to our success: The upcoming State Rail Plan and State Freight Plan will get us ready for freight trends and disrupters. Our job at MDOT is to make sure the public sector is helping with goods movement.

**Mark Crampton | MDOT Assistant Secretary of Operations** talked about the COVID response in Maryland and its impacts on the freight network. Early in 2020 at the beginning of pandemic, hospitals were down to a 3-day supply of personal protective equipment (PPE). The State has worked with industries to source supplies of PPE and other items as they shifted in some cases to make COVID related items. MDOT has partnered well with Maryland Department of Health on making PPE and medical equipment available. For some time, the State has been maintaining a 6-month supply of PPE in its warehouse spaces and they continue to ship and receive PPE. This translates to 700,000 square feet of warehouse space 80% with PPE.

Future efforts include the eventual decommission of medical tents and other assets. There also will be a need to sort and store items the state intends to keep. State positivity rates are down to 3.5 % from more than 9% in January. Variables to future progress depend on vaccine efficacy and the variants emerging.

### COVID Supply Chain Industry Perspective

#### **Michael Levy, Senior Vice President, Digital and Innovation, USP**

The United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) is based in Rockville Maryland. The compendium for the US in terms of standards for medicine are recognized in many countries. They have sites wherever medicine is made, including Brazil, Germany, China, India, etc.

More than 9,000 USP Standards provide quality benchmarks across the supply chain. Two types of standards are the following:

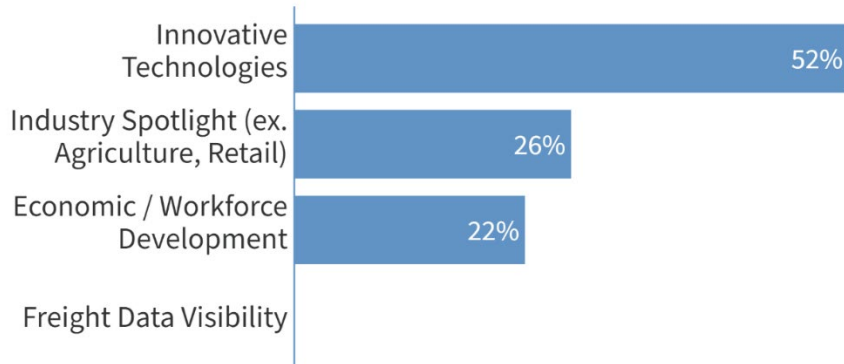
- Documentary standards: Provides information and methods needed to assess quality. Generic medicines are an example.
- Reference Standards: A benchmark to compare tested material.

The pandemic has shifted USP's focus to addressing the supply chain challenges that emerged. There were two that included:

- Supply chain vulnerabilities. Modernization has shifted the process to just-in-time deliveries. This means that any change in demand or a disruption in supply (both happened in the pandemic) creates drug shortages.
  - All actors of the supply chain have to balance cost, quality, and resilience. Optimizing for the cost is a race to the bottom with a negative impact on quality and resilience.
  - 62% of drug shortages in the US were caused by quality issues.
- Delivering vaccines and treatments for COVID-19
  - USP white paper identifies key actions to secure a more resilient supply chain.
    - Diversify supply chain.
    - Local production is part of that.
    - Invest in more advance manufacturing.
    - Data sharing among the industry, which is necessary for transparency.

**Future Topics Poll**

Attendees voted on possible topics for the next meeting:

**Next Topic: What Should It Be?***Federal Update*

**Caitlin Hughes, Director of Freight Management and Operations, FHWA**, provided updates on federal actions that impact freight. These include new grant opportunities and data tools.

Freight planning grant opportunities include the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant program which will be published soon. Congress provided \$1 billion for the BUILD program in 2021. Already, the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program is announced. The deadline for applications is March 19, 2021. Approximately \$889 million will be available for INFRA grants in 2021. These grants are made possible by another extension of the FAST Act authorization.

In terms of freight data tools, Hughes outlined a few of them for the group:

- Freight Analysis Framework Version 5 (FAF5) has been released; however, it does not have projections yet. Federal data tools.
- The Freight Mobility Trends Dashboard offers data on delay, travel time index, planning time index, and congestion cost. Critical role of 95. Truck parking needs.
- National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) and Other Sources of Information.
- FHWA worked on Permit Data Harmonization Project with the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)<sup>1</sup>. The study identified opportunities to harmonize how information is displayed on commercial vehicle special permits.

<sup>1</sup> <https://systemoperations.transportation.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2020/11/Permit-Data-Harmonization-Report-FINAL.pdf>

*Maryland State Update***Rail Plan**

**Harry Romano, Rail Program and Policy Manager, MDOT**, discussed progress on the State Rail Plan which includes Commuter Rail (MARC), Freight Rail (CSX and the short lines) and Intercity Passenger Rail (Amtrak). It does not cover mass transit. There is a federal requirement for updates every four years. The Plan is developed in conjunction with other plans such as the Maryland Statewide Transit Plan, the 2040 Maryland Transportation Plan, and the Freight Plan, to name a few.

The Plan is set to be completed in September 2021. Outreach has included a website, meetings and a public survey, which ended January 29<sup>th</sup>. Feedback so far has shown a need for intermodal connections, increased access to the Port of Baltimore and better marketing of rail and rail-served sites. Interviews with stakeholders are upcoming, as well as focused meetings on topical areas such as, Class I / Metropolitan Freight, Short Line / Rural Freight, and Passenger Rail. There is also a 16-member stakeholder committee with representation from MPOs, railroads, and state agencies. The next advisory committee meeting is May 19, 2021.

**Port of Baltimore Howard Street Tunnel**

**Brad Smith, General Manager for Strategic Initiatives, MDOT**, discussed the progress on the Howard Street Tunnel project. The original tunnel was completed in 1890 and 1895; and it was extended in the 1980s. The tunnel is 1.7 miles long, and is owned, maintained, and used by CSX. The project will loosen a longstanding freight bottleneck by allowing double stack railcars to the Port of Baltimore.

There are three components to the project and different cost outlays for each, including:

- 48-inch drainage structure completed in 2019: \$22.5 million
- Reconstruction of the 1895 tunnel: \$263.2 million
- Clearance improvements at 22 locations between Baltimore and Philadelphia: \$180.3 million
- Total cost: \$466 million

The project is now under National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) Environmental Assessment (EA) 30-day review. This review, open to the public, ends on March 30. Brad Smith said that the environmental impacts were minimal, with some historic impacts. Once final NEPA approval is obtained, CSX can proceed with work in phases.

**Truck Parking**

**Nicole Katsikides, MDOT Consultant/Texas Transportation Institute** outlined her research using INRIX data to support state truck parking programs. Maryland recently completed the Truck Parking Study. The INRIX trip data was used for analysis that would inform the truck parking programming in the State. Historically Maryland has relied on manual counts, but the cost of this is too high for little return. In her study, Nicole Katsikides also compared and validated the results from both manual counts and the INRIX sample data and they were both quite close.

MDOT SHA's Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering (OPPE) has successfully used the trip data for truck parking analytics. While the commercial vehicle waypoint data was most useful, the trip data helped to identify some of the origins and destinations of trucks parking in Maryland. The waypoint data helps to identify where trucks are parking. The path data helps to show the supply chains supported by the parking, which is useful in regional discussions to support freight flows,

routing and in identifying TSMO information exchange solutions.

Visibility value-adds include being able to see how long a truck is parked and what time and day of the week. The data informs the agency on what geographic and temporal truck parking needs and demands are, so that planning can best address them such as parking expansion needs. We can see origins and destinations of less than one-hour ramps, trucks, northbound.

Next steps include working with INRIX for real-time data feed. Going forward, we hope to use this type of data to continue to explore how to use it in our day-to-day work. We are looking at the truck parking analytics it can provide and considering building some tools to help us understand truck parking routinely.

### *Updates from the Committee*

**Louis Campion, Maryland Motor Truck Association**, discussed trends in trucking from the industry perspective.

Currently, there is pressure to deliver goods and reduce emissions. The challenges are many. The needs for trucking are different than those of passenger vehicles and even among the different truck types, whether medium duty, heavy duty, or short haul. Electric vehicle charging stations are still not consistent enough for wide adoption by the trucking industry.

In terms of COVID, trucking has fared better than most industries as it is considered essential. However, it depends on the sector of trucking: Winners include groceries, refrigerated products and e-commerce. Sectors such as fuel haulers, restaurant delivery, construction and office moving did not fare so well.

**Tom Madrecki, Consumer Brands Association** talked about supply chain, packaging, and product regulation from the perspective of consumer-packaged goods industry.

COVID had an impact on the industry that was mostly positive. But it has changed the way the supply chain works. It has accelerated e-commerce growth by 5-10 years. Previously, digital grocery retail operated on:

- Online marketplaces: Amazon, Instacart
- Traditional brick-and-mortar selling online: Target, Walmart.
- Pureplays: Chewy, AmazonFresh
- And Direct-to-consumer brand sites: Gillette, Neutrogena

The packaged foods industry is evaluating solutions to keep pace with these new trends. Currently there is no single one. Contactless delivery is being evaluated, as well as new pick-up and delivery concepts, especially in the edible perishable category. Packaging changes are necessary and differentiated retail and fulfillment models are in play.

### *Housekeeping and Administration*

**Michelle Martin, MDOT Deputy Director, Office of Planning & Capital Programming.** Martin discussed membership being evaluated by both members and MDOT on an annual basis. Members are invited to let her know if they would like to hold an SFAC meeting before the next scheduled meeting.

*Next Meeting: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 | 2:00 p.m.*