



Peer Assessment Summary: Review of State/Regional Freight Plans and Potential Best Practice Opportunities

Approach

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) has begun the process to update the State Freight Plan (SFP) for an expected revision date by Fall 2022. As an early-action step in this update, this summary compiles key findings from a high-level peer assessment review of a selection of other state and regional freight plans. The reviews focus on highlighting best practices, innovative approaches, unique plan elements, or general plan organization/presentation methods that may be relevant and beneficial in terms of helping to inform or refine the update approach for the Maryland SFP.

Peer assessment reviews included a selection of policy and industry references, statewide freight plans, and regional freight plans. These selections balanced existing best practices research alongside shared or cooperative interests in areas buffering Maryland, and across a selection of nationwide examples. Specific peer reviews encompassed resources from the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI), the American Planning Association (APA), seven state Departments of Transportation (DOT's), and four regional Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's).

Peer Assessment Review Sources:

Policy / Industry Perspectives	DOT / Statewide Perspectives		MPO / Regional Perspectives
FAST Act Requirements	Delaware	Florida	Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC)
ATRI Freight Planning Best Practice Research *	Virginia	Minnesota	New York Metropolitan Transportation Council (NYMTC)
ATRI Critical Issues in the Trucking industry	West Virginia	Washington	Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI)
APA Freight Policy Declarations and Outcomes	Pennsylvania	*	Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC)

* Included ATRI Best Practice insights from TX, GA, CA, MS, IA, FL, WA, MI, OH, NV, MD, AL

Potential Best Practice Opportunities for Maryland

Based on the peer assessment reviews, common threads were identified among the various freight-planning approaches, as well as unique aspects that may be especially relevant to anticipated freight interests in Maryland. This collective summary may be referenced to determine where current MDOT freight planning efforts may already account for similar elements or, more importantly, where there may be opportunities to refine the approach or related content as the SFP is being newly updated.

Overall findings generally confirmed there is no “one size fits all” approach, though common themes often focus on plan organization, use of freight data, and external collaboration. For use as a summary reference as the plan evolves, 13 potential best practice opportunities were compiled as follows.

Plan Linkages and Libraries

- 1 Consider all applicable resources to help align and inform the freight plan; but minimize overlap or duplication, relying instead on clear cross-references to other reports/studies

Samples: MN “Family of Plans” approach and extensive online central library of related resources

Streamlined Freight Documentation

- 2 Consider a modular development approach coupled with a high-level summary to simplify future updates and make the content more accessible for a non-technical audience

Samples: FL “visual plan” and tech memo content, NYMTC Freight 101 brochure

Alignment of Goals and Objectives

- 3 Ensure a clear linkage of goals and objectives to national requirements, broader state plans, and to organize key strategies, actions, or projects for a collaborative implementation

Samples: FL, WV, MN, or NYMTC alignment of goals and objectives across multiple plans

Active External Partnerships

- 4 Actively collaborate with MPO/RPO partners, public/private freight stakeholders, and adjacent states to support ongoing multi-jurisdictional or cross-boundary freight interests

Samples: Delmarva Freight and Goods Movement Working Group, Delaware Valley Goods Movement Task Force

Full Freight Network Coverage

- 5 Consider key freight routes, connectors, intermodal access, first/last-mile coverage, or other network needs that go beyond just the federally-designated freight network facilities.

Samples: WA Freight and Goods Transportation System, PA intermodal emphasis, WV special-use networks

Strategic Use of Freight Data and Performance Measures

- 6 Apply data and measures that mesh with plan goals and objectives, that can be easily understood and updated, and that focus on elements the state can control or influence

Samples: WA semi-annual reporting updates, OKI performance measure matrix/framework

Freight Corridors and Sub-Areas

- 7 Customize freight information, trends, needs, recommendations, or other relevant details for specific corridors, regions, counties, or other sub-areas within the broader state plan

Samples: VA Corridors of Statewide Significance, PA PREP Regions, MN District Freight Plans, SPC County Profiles

Planning for Economic Influences

- 8 Review population/employment trends and key freight-generating industries, locations, or supply chain influences across the state in a way that will inform freight-related planning

Samples: DE population/employment details, WV industry maps, PA, WA, or NYMTC supply chain infographics

Planning for Resiliency

- 9 Explore implications or scenario planning perspectives of uncertain future trends, risks, or vulnerabilities as they relate to freight resiliency (e.g. climate change, disaster response)

Samples: FL Resiliency Scenario, Technology Scenario, and Economy Scenario and related freight implications

Planning for Technology

- 10 Expand the freight planning emphasis and cross-plan coordination for potential innovative technologies and their influence or impact on the freight system or freight trends/needs

Samples: ATRI Best Practice shortcomings, OKI truck parking smart phone apps, FL Technology Scenario

Freight Project Screening and Prioritization

- 11 Consider freight project priorities in a way that meshes with and supports broader statewide programming activities and links freight goals with regional transportation goals

Samples: VTrans SMART Scale; DE screening vs. CTP process; PA freight-focused, -related, or -impacted categories

Action Item Planning

- 12 Include specific action items that will continuously advance the development of freight tools, studies, resources, or collaboration between plan update cycles

Samples: MN Freight Action Agenda, PA freight focus areas, DE Supply Chain Studies, FL recommendation sources

Interactive Online Freight Data Resources

- 13 Supplement static freight plan content with robust, interactive, online freight tools, mapping, or data dashboards with the flexibility to explore past and current freight details or locations

Samples: WA Freight Transportation System Map Application, DVRPC Philly Freight Finder, OKI Data Dashboards