



Oklahoma Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Meeting #4
October 23, 2017
MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees

Project Management Team

Dawn Sullivan
Linda Koenig, ODOT Project Manager
Joe Bryan, Consultant Project Manager

ENTITY/AGENCY

ODOT Director of Capital Programs
ODOT, Strategic Asset & Perf. Management Division
WSP

FAC Members or Alternates Present

John Sharp
Jennifer Sebesta
Paul Cristina
Craig Conrad
Bill Blankenship
Troy Rigel
Chris Couch
Isaac Akem
Larry Ramsey
Viplav Putta
Andrew Scherman
Jim Rodriguez
Derek Sparks
Lynne Jones
Betty Thompson
Jon Chiappe
Craig Moody
Matthew Swift
Cassandra Duff Caldwell
Brad Beam

ENTITY/AGENCY

ACOG
ACOG
BNSF Railway
Central Freight Lines
Choctaw Nation
Co-Mark Equity Alliance
Ditch Witch
FHWA - OK - Planning
Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
INCOG
McAlester Army Ammunition Plant
Oklahoma Aggregates Association (OKAA)
Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce
Oklahoma Corporation Commission
Oklahoma Department of Agriculture
Oklahoma Department of Commerce
ODOT, Rail Programs Division
ODOT, Strategic Asset & Perf. Management Division
ODOT, Waterways Branch
Tinker Air Force Base

ODOT Staff

Jared Schwennesen
Mitch Surret
Sam Coldiron
Dustin Thoendel
Ginger McGovern

ODOT, Environmental Services Division
ODOT, Legal Division
ODOT, Strategic Asset & Perf. Management Division
ODOT, Strategic Asset & Perf. Management Division
ODOT, Traffic Engineering

Guests

Craig Conrad
Central Freight Lines



Freight Plan Consultant Team

Keith Angier
Alan Meyers

MacArthur Assoc. Consultants
WSP

Invited Organizations Not Attending

Chesapeake Energy
Chickasaw Nation
Consolidated Grain & Barge
Devon Energy
Dolese
Farmrail
FedEx
McCorkle Truck Lines
Oklahoma Grain & Feed Association
Oklahoma Highway Patrol
Oklahoma Office of Energy and Environment
Oklahoma Railroad Association
Oklahoma Trucking Association
Oklahoma Turnpike Authority
ONE Gas
Pelco Structural, LLC
Port of Catoosa
Port of Muskogee
Seaboard Foods
Spirit AeroSystems
Sunoco Logistics
Tulsa Airport
Tulsa Chamber of Commerce
Union Pacific
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Tulsa District
United Petroleum Transports, Inc.
UPS
Walmart
Webco Industries, Inc.

Welcome and Introductions

Linda Koenig welcomed the attendees to the final Freight Advisory Committee Meeting and asked each to name one thing they learned during the study. Attendees introduced themselves and offered the following thoughts:

- General understanding of freight movement
- Diversity of transportation modes and commodities
- Low visibility but high importance of Oklahoma's ports
- Importance of connecting routes between Oklahoma and Texas; value of US 69, I-44, I-35
- Surprising amount of pass-through freight
- Importance of freight movement to Oklahoma's economy
- Importance of safety and efficient processing of credential/safety checks

- Economic cost of bottlenecks
- Shipper need for supply chain reliability
- Opportunity for growth in bulk rail for heavy commodities; expected growth in LTL truck traffic; strong overall growth forecast
- Potential roles for new and emerging technologies, and challenge of forecasting a changing world
- Need for safety in current and future operations
- Effects of electronic logging and continuing truck driver shortages
- Importance of continuing communication and dialog among freight stakeholders; value of strong partnership between ODOT and private sector; value of having all modes and key commodities represented in the process

Joe Bryan, the WSP Project Manager, asked for approval of the minutes of FAC Meeting #3; the minutes were approved without opposition.

Presentation Summary

Joe Bryan led a slide presentation and discussion addressing the following items: Update on Multimodal Freight Investment Program; Candidates for Critical Rural Freight Corridors; Draft Plan; and Anticipated Schedule for FHWA adoption.

Update on Multimodal Freight Investment Program

Joe reviewed the previously agreed-on selection criteria for identifying projects to be listed in the freight investment program: safe and secure travel, infrastructure preservation, mobility, economic vitality, environmental responsibility, and efficient intermodal system management and operation.

The goal of project selection was to identify the top projects eligible for National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) funding over the next five years. Candidate projects had to be: included in the first five years of ODOT's 8-Year Construction Work Plan; located on an interstate highway, Critical Rural Freight Corridor (CRFC) candidate mileage, or Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CUFC) mileage; and top-scoring on quantitative metrics addressing the selection criteria above. Joe reminded the group that the Interstates, about 15 miles of intermodal connector highways, plus the CUFC and CRFC miles make up the National Highway Freight Network. Highways on this network are eligible for projects funded by the NHFP money or by INFRA grants.

A total of 54 top-rated projects were identified, with a total investment cost of \$817 million dollars. Looking at the list, 25 of the projects involve capacity improvements, while 29 involve operational improvements. A total of 22 of the projects are on CRFC candidate mileage; 32 are on interstate highways, with 1/3 of these in rural areas and 2/3 in urban areas.

Considering requirements for the use of state and other funds to match federal funds, the identified projects represent an opportunity to spend up to \$591 million in federal funding. However, only \$101 million in NHFP funding is available over the five-year funding period. Therefore, ODOT considered additional screening factors, including level of funding, contribution to corridor-level improvements, geographic diversity, division priorities, balance of large and small projects, and criteria scoring results.

The recommended program for using Oklahoma's NHFP funds includes 18 projects, with a total cost of \$251 million, of which \$100 million is from NHFP. Twelve of the projects are on CRFC candidate mileage, while six are on interstates. Fourteen of the projects are capacity improvements, while four are operational improvements. Joe emphasized that all 54 of the top tier freight projects are funded in the Construction Work Program, and projects not utilizing NHFP funds are being funded from other sources.

In addition to \$817 million in highway project investment, Oklahoma's five-year multimodal freight program includes waterway and rail projects, bringing the total investment package to \$875 million. Four waterway projects totaling \$8.7 million are being funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, while eleven rail projects totaling \$49.8 million are being funded by private railroads, with support from federal, state, and local sources.

Joe noted that the addition of substantial private investment, particularly by the railroads, would very likely bring the five year freight transportation infrastructure total to well over a billion dollars in the state.

The freight program was designed to address many of Oklahoma's freight bottlenecks. However, 25 identified bottlenecks are not associated with a planned project. These represent opportunities for investment in future years of planning and capital programming.

Candidates for Critical Rural Freight Connectors

Next, Joe addressed the development of recommended highway segment mileage to be designated as Critical Rural Freight Connector mileage, consistent with FAST Act requirements. The process included identifying: National Highway System (NHS) highway segments that qualify as rural; high truck volume and high truck percentage routes; and other mileage that connects to major freight generators. Up to 160 centerline miles can be designated as CRFC, but the designations can be changed; the main reason to designate mileage, or to revise designations, is to allocate NHFP funds. The recommended designation of Oklahoma CRFC mileage is on segments of US 54, US 69 and US 81, (consistent with investments listed in the five-year multimodal freight program) and on other segments of US 69 (which provides critical connections).

Discussion of Draft Plan

Next, Joe discussed the Draft Plan development and review process. A draft was reviewed by ODOT staff and the Oklahoma Transportation Commission; an updated draft was posted for OFAC review and public comment on October 9; and final updates will be made and submitted to FHWA no later than October 27. FHWA has already reviewed interim work products, to minimize the need for final adjustments. After the Draft Plan is finalized, ODOT will: submit a formal request to FHWA for the designation of CRFC mileage; execute the freight investment plan and other strategies and policies outlined in the freight plan; consider ways to address highway freight bottlenecks in the next CWP; and communicate with the FAC on an as-needed basis to address key freight issues.

Open Discussion

Joe led an open discussion to address concerns, questions, and comments on the draft freight transportation plan, and to request that the FAC vote its acceptance of the Draft Plan and recommendation for FHWA approval of the Draft Plan. Linda Koenig provided a summary of comments received from the public during the review period which closes today. She advised that comments came from rural and urban counties including Cleveland, Creek, Texas, Tulsa, Payne and Woodward Counties. The majority of respondents indicated an interest in freight rail, highway freight, and economic development. Responders also said that the plan identifies freight issues and needs in Oklahoma, and that the plan will help ODOT meet the goal of providing a safe, reliable and productive multimodal freight transportation system. Ms. Koenig said that specific comments included thoughts about the importance of addressing bottlenecks, planning for the next generation of freight transportation, and recognizing the importance of freight transportation to economic development.

FHWA Plan Approval Schedule

To wrap up the formal presentation, Joe presented an overview of the FHWA plan approval schedule, showing submittal of the plan to FHWA in October, with FHWA approval and ODOT posting of the Final Oklahoma Freight Transportation Plan anticipated in December of 2017.

Questions, Answers, and Comments

Questions, answers, and comments made during the presentation and open discussion are summarized below.

FAC Questions (Q), Answers (A), and Comments (C)

- (Q) Would the project selection approach work on other kinds of candidate projects in the future?**
- (A) Yes, the objective metrics could be applied in the same way. The projects have to be defined sufficiently so that the proposed project can be assessed against the criteria.
 - (C) The project to replace rail bridges at I-240 in south Oklahoma City might be better characterized as a highway project, more than a rail project, since it doesn't add capacity or performance for the railroad.
 - (A) Mr. Moody said that the I-240 project is important to the highway reconstruction. On the other hand, the bridge is deficient; and if it failed, it would definitely have a negative impact on railroad operations. The Cherokee Yard / 23rd Street Bridge project in Tulsa might be viewed similarly, where the improvements were driven by highway issues, but there was also value to the railroad. Mr. Moody advised that ODOT invested more than \$13 million in the Tulsa project - which added a through track and a runaround track that provides mobility benefits mobility for the railroad.
 - (C) In some cases, where a bottleneck is shown without an associated project, a project that addresses it may be in the last three years of the Eight-Year Construction Work Plan.
 - (A) Yes, the projects reviewed were those in the first five years of the Eight-Year Construction Work Plan (CWP).
- (Q) What is the term of spending for the \$100 million in NHFP funds?**
- (A) This is the amount available over five years, and it will need to be supplemented by other funds to implement the full multimodal freight program. Table 18 in the Draft Plan Report summarizes the projects and their funding sources.
- (Q) When did the public comment period open?**
- (A) October 9th.
- (Q) What projects on the list will be fully completed, including all phases of work?**
- (A) Some of the projects in the multimodal freight program are part of larger phased projects in the CWP, and at the end of the five-year investment period there may be phases remaining to be implemented in years 6, 7 and 8 of the Eight Year Construction Work Plan. In other cases, the multimodal freight program completes projects in their entirety. It's useful to look at the multimodal freight program in tandem with the Eight Year Construction Work Plan.
 - (C) As an educational document, it would be useful for the Draft Plan Report to note that private railroads invest heavily in their own networks to serve customer needs. The Draft Plan should be clear that private railroads – and not the public sector -- are responsible for identifying and addressing rail bottlenecks or service issues. It would be useful to differentiate between railroad-identified information and issues as stated by other parties, because perceptions differ. In particular, a national railroad disagreed with characterizations that suggest or imply its network is hindered, bottlenecked, congested, capacity-constrained, obsolete, and/or suffering from a lack of investment.
 - (A) These points can be addressed in edits to the Draft Plan.

(Q) What is the evolution of this work, beyond five years?

- (A) It's likely the work will be updated during the next five years. Also, ODOT will need to track progress and performance, refresh the analysis of freight needs, assign responsibilities to address strategies and policies, and continue freight planning efforts to remain timely and forward-looking.
- (C) Additional feedback to the Draft Plan was received through the online survey. Freight rail, highway freight, and economic development were highlighted as important considerations. Comments also said that the Plan should define the state's needs and help ODOT provide a safe, reliable and productive multimodal freight transportation system.
- (C) Freight planning can help support the state's economy. Integrating freight transportation, economic development, military activity and industrial activity is important.

(Q) Does the multimodal freight program address heavy-load transportation?

- (A) Generally yes, although "super load" handling remains a case-by-case issue.
- (C) FHWA does not approve metropolitan long range or statewide long range transportation plans. FHWA's involvement is primarily to review the freight investment element and ensure that funds are used consistent with applicable law. The approach that FHWA will use is similar to that used in reviewing the State Transportation Improvement Program.

FAC Approval of the Draft Plan and Closing Remarks

Following the questions and comments, Joe Bryan asked the committee if it would recommend FHWA approval of the Draft Plan, subject to adjustments/comments discussed during the meeting. Several FAC members in attendance responded in the affirmative. There was no dissent. Joe Bryan asked if it was the consensus of the group that the Draft Plan should be provided to FHWA with the FAC recommendation of approval. There was a resounding "yes" and no negative responses from the group. Joe thanked the group for its consent, and for its exceptional contributions to the work effort.

Linda Koenig then briefly reviewed the next steps in the review and approval schedule. Linda noted that FAC members were a valuable resource and there may be occasion to draw on their expertise again at some point in the future, if members are amenable.

Finally, Dawn Sullivan thanked the FAC members for their strong commitment of time, expressed appreciation for the efforts of ODOT technical staff and the consultant team, and adjourned the meeting.

*Submitted by:
Alan Meyers, WSP
October 26, 2017*