



2016 North Trunk Highway 65 Corridor Coalition Manufacturers Survey

Purpose

The North TH 65 Corridor Coalition is focused on improving transportation access and safety and supporting development along the TH 65 corridor in Anoka, Isanti and Kanabec Counties.

In response to concerns about traffic signals and congestion on TH 65 expressed by manufacturers, business and economic development groups, the Coalition sponsored a survey of manufacturers.

Survey Distribution

The survey was distributed to manufacturers and in some cases, other tenants of business and industrial parks along the TH 65 corridor from Blaine to Mora in March and April 2016.

Survey links were distributed by city and township officials to businesses in Blaine, Cambridge, East Bethel, Isanti and Mora.

Who Responded?

Twenty-five businesses that employ 644 people responded to the survey from throughout the corridor.

Survey Respondents		
Blaine	36%	9
Cambridge	12%	3
East Bethel	20%	5
Isanti	20%	5
Mora	12%	3
Total	100%	25



Twenty of the twenty-five respondents were manufacturers with a heavy concentration of businesses involved with precision machining of metal products. Manufactured products include medical device companies, precision-machined components, factory automation machines, conveyor components, valves and pressure regulators, pumps, heavy steel products including precision machined products, plastic injection molding, biodiesel, cabinets/finished wood products and plastic products (bags, films, sheeting). Five were involved in other businesses typically located in business and industrial parks including concrete-related construction, repair-related businesses, storage and maintenance of construction equipment and boat sales.

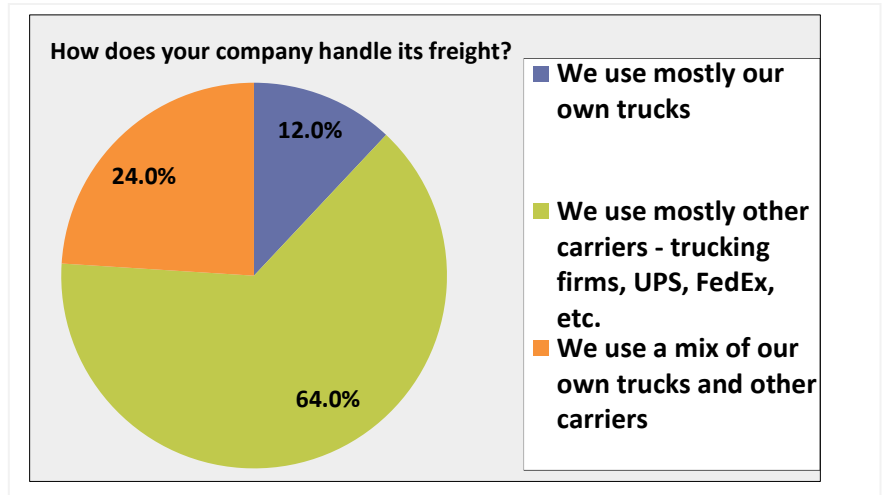


In addition, manufacturers that do not operate their own trucks identified contract carriers that haul freight for them; three contract carriers responded and participated in an interview or survey.

How much truck traffic do they represent?

The firms, not including contract carriers, estimated that they have 483 inbound semis and 487 outbound semis each week; 49 inbound box trucks and 26 outbound box trucks weekly. They use couriers and other vehicles (UPS, FedEx, delivery vans, customer vehicles) extensively.

Sixty-four percent of the businesses use mostly other carriers – trucking firms, UPS, FedEx, etc. Twelve percent use mostly their own trucks and twenty-four percent use a combination of their own trucks and other carriers.



Quantifying the cost of congestion

Respondents had difficulty quantifying the costs of congestion. No one offered an hourly estimate of operating a truck. Four indicated that the American Trucking Research Institute's most recent calculation of \$67.00 per hour is about right; two indicated "not sure" and nineteen skipped the question. Other cost related comments include:

- Not sure, it is hard to estimate (5 additional variations of this response)
- We get calls many times that trucks are running late due to traffic, resulting in personnel staying later to wait for the trucks to arrive
- We typically avoid the busy times
- Cambridge manufacturer - about five hours per week + delays for contract carriers with 50 semis and 10 box trucks
- Blaine manufacturer - about \$175 per week
- East Bethel respondent - 60 minutes



What operating challenges do businesses experience?

Businesses were asked to identify operating challenges due to traffic signals and congestion. Sixty percent (60%) identified **longer alternate routes** and 56% identified **safety concerns**. Twenty percent identified **additional costs** with contract carriers and couriers, while sixteen percent identified **increased maintenance** due to more stops and starts. Other concerns included load limits on alternate routes (8%) and the need for more vehicles and drivers (4%).

One large contract carrier does not experience problems because semis arrive in the Cambridge/Isanti area before traffic at 4 am and depart after traffic at 9 pm. A smaller contract carrier indicated that stoplights and congestion cause them to run more trucks and drivers, consume more fuel and pay increased maintenance costs due to more stops and starts.

Comments included:

- Congestion on Hwy 65 causes additional driver time and potential delays
- Higher employment costs due to longer drive times
- Wasted time
- Safety is the biggest concern, I drive that Hwy every day, several times. With 2 lanes going to 3 & 4 I see close calls every day (Mora/Braham area)
- Problem is rush hour traffic on 99th lane as people avoid use of 65 - can't get out of parking lot without risking life and limb.
- Current use of Davenport vs 65 by many drivers really congests our inbound and outbound usage as our facility is on it
- Extended lunch breaks
- I don't have any issues with Hwy 65

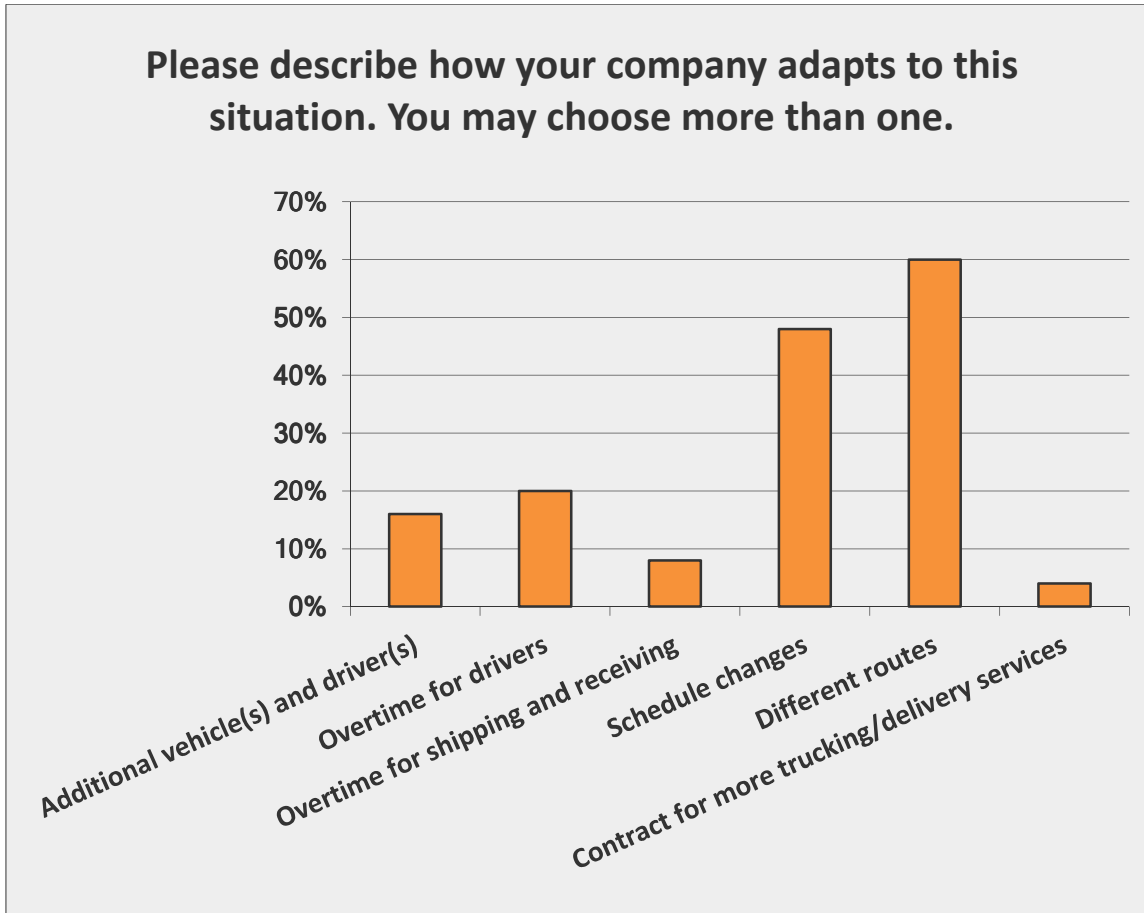
How do businesses adapt to stoplights and congestion?

A contract carrier responds to congestion and stoplights by taking different routes, adding vehicles and drivers and passing along higher transportation costs to the manufacturers.

Sixty-percent of businesses (15) said they use alternate routes. Forty-eight percent (12) made schedule changes; twenty-percent pay overtime for drivers; sixteen-percent (4) use additional vehicles and drivers; eight-percent (2) pay overtime for shipping and receiving and four-percent (1) indicated that they contract for more trucking and delivery services. In the comments section two identified safety concerns and one identified that it increases courier



expenses due to time in transit. Time wasted for business travelers was also identified as an increased expense.



What areas were identified as the most troublesome?

Businesses and contract carriers identified the following as “most troublesome to you or your transportation providers”. Most respondents focused on intersections in Blaine south of 117th and north of US 10 or I-694, but some respondents identified other areas and signal characteristics as problematic.

- No flashing lights on approach to stop lights, which causes traffic at 65-70 mph to suddenly brake when the light changes.
- Inconsistent yellow times, so “making a light” or slamming on the brakes, or gradually slowing down are all equally likely to happen, causing accidents.
- Constant stoplights, even when there is no cross traffic waiting.
- 98th to US Highway 10



- Traffic signals
- Every stoplight along the corridor
- Lights in Blaine, Bunker Lake, Constance, Crosstown and Viking Blvd
- About 3 pm it backs up from 93rd to 109th and we have a ton of people using side roads
- I-694 to 117th
- Co Rd 10 north through 117th Ave
- Intersections at 93rd Lane and Hwy 65 and 109th and Hwy 65
- Hwy 65 and 93rd
- Hwy 65 and 99th lights are horrible
- 65 and 99th
- 109th
- Hwy 65 and 5
- The biggest back-up and concern for safety is at Hwy 65 and 187th Ave as well as Hwy 65 and 181 Avenue. It is very dangerous and backed up during morning and afternoon rush. This gets worse if the weather is bad with cars and trucks waiting on tur lanes for the traffic to clear. When the turn lanes back up there is inadequate visibility as well as reduced deceleration for those turning off of the highway.
- TH 65 from Blaine to Isanti
- None; none except during soccer season
- Isanti, Mora
- Perhaps a "local" Isanti thing? Westbound Cajima at Hwy 65 has the stop line about ten feet from the Hwy 65 northbound lanes. EXCEPT that across the intersection at eastbound Cajima at 65, the stop line is about 25 feet from the southbound Hwy 65 lanes, which inhibits cross traffic visibility with the pine trees to the north lining the west side of Hwy 65. Poor design with no apparent reason. Makes crossing the intersection an adventure, and dangerous.

Suggested Improvements

Respondents shared the following suggestions for specific improvements on Highway 65.

- Flashing yellow caution lights prior to intersection when signal will turn red soon
- Longer deceleration/turn lanes. Acceleration lanes for north and south bound access to Hwy 65
- Eliminate stop lights where possible
- No stoplights, add turn arounds and off ramps
- Remove traffic signals
- More overpasses



- More roundabouts
- Continue to minimize cross streets, long term continue to work on to make into controlled access especially on the southern end
- No, short of turning it into a freeway. I like the rotary system but there are too many lanes for it to work well.
- Continue to take out stoplights like you have done a little further north of 109th
- More lanes
- Reduce access points
- Stop the "nuisance" lights that only turn red when you're approaching and stay red for 5 seconds. No reason for this except to slow down traffic.
- So they have to decide whether Hwy 65 is a "highway" or simply a rural road needlessly punctuated with stoplights. Speed up to 65, slow down to zero, repeat constantly. Schizophrenic highway design.
- Off ramps should have been installed on the Paul Parkway bridge
- 4 lanes north of Cambridge