

Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT)

Missouri Statewide Freight and Rail

Industry Forums Summary

Overview of Industry Forums

The Missouri Department of Transportation (MoDOT) conducted four industry forums between Tuesday, February 23, and Tuesday, March 2, 2021, via Zoom covering the topics of agriculture/agribusiness; freight carriers; warehousing and distribution; and shippers and manufacturers. These meetings lay the groundwork for recommendations for the Missouri State Freight & Rail Plan (SFRP). Topics for the plan include how to leverage for continued opportunities in the state, help MoDOT manage the shared freight and rail network, and think strategically about improving the state's transportation network.

The industry forums were designed to cover specific topics and gain feedback from industry leaders in the public and private sectors. Input is used to identify freight assets, refine the freight transportation needs assessment, and finalize the Missouri Priority Freight Network.

Questions were posed to the group regarding:

- Multimodal freight needs
- The extent to which highway, rail, air, and water needs from the 2017 Freight Plan are still important
- Critical highway and rail corridors
- Incident clearance and emergency response
- Access between urban and rural regions
- How the transportation network impacts business location decisions and economic development opportunities
- Sufficient access to legal/authorized truck parking locations
- Overall freight needs and challenges

Each industry forum started with a presentation from MoDOT about the draft SFRP. Meeting participants were then split into breakout rooms to have discussions about the information presented and discuss any questions or concerns they had. The Agriculture/Agribusiness, Freight Carriers, Warehousing & Distribution, and Shippers & Manufacturers Industry Forum summaries are below.

Agriculture/ Agribusiness Industry Forum

The Agriculture/Agribusiness Industry Forum took place on Tuesday, February 23, 2021, from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Thirteen participants attended the forum. Themes and topics discussed in the main session and breakout rooms included:

- Deficient structures on and along the Missouri River,
- Agriculture imports and exports via ports, and
- Airports in relation to agriculture.

Freight Carriers Industry Forum

- The Freight Carriers Industry Forum took place on Wednesday, February 24, 2021, from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Sixteen participants attended the forum. Themes and topics discussed in the breakout rooms included: Improved freight and rail lines between Kansas City and St. Louis,
- Engaging railroads early in the planning process,
- More at-grade separations of roads and railroad lines,
- The need to work with the state on river crossings and adding ports,
- Truck parking is a major challenge, and
- How future funding relates to the SFRP.

After the breakout sessions, the group convened and discussed:

- Additional improvements to ports to help move agriculture cargo,
- The need to modernize ports,
- The importance of truck parking,
- Airports needing to focus more on air-cargo,
- E-commerce being an issue at airports, and
- The importance of e-commerce to shippers and customers.

Warehousing & Distribution Industry Forum

The Warehousing & Distribution Industry Forum took place on Thursday, February 25, 2021, from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. Twenty-eight participants attended the meeting. Themes and topics discussed in the main session and breakout rooms included:

- Connectivity between rural and urban ports seeming better from the urban perspective than from the rural perspective,
- Growing and expanding ports in rural areas,
- Exploring technology in more detail in the recommendations and strategies, and
- Improving crash clearance zones and predetermined detour routes.

Shippers & Manufacturers Industry Forum

The Shippers Industry Forum took place on Tuesday, March 2, 2021, from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. via Zoom. The meeting had 22 attendees. Themes and topics discussed in the main session and breakout rooms included:

- Access between urban and rural areas;
- Safety, technology, mobility & reliability, asset preservation and rural highways;

- Increased access to truck parking;
- The need for improvements at Highway 6 east of Kirksville and U.S. 63;
- Peak hour travel reliability; and
- A focus on economic development.