

Chapter 2 - Stakeholder Outreach

KEY POINTS

- Stakeholder input was integral in the development of the Missouri State Freight Plan - from qualitative assessments of freight infrastructure conditions, to highlighting what the State needs to do to be economically competitive, to shaping the freight project prioritization process.
- MoDOT learned that the most effective way to gather input from freight stakeholders is to go to them, where they work and gather for industry meetings.
- Stakeholders' top concerns center on the maintenance and capacity of I-70 and the need for better multi-modal connections.

Introduction

Hundreds of freight stakeholders were involved in helping MoDOT create the Missouri State Freight Plan that identifies strategic investments in the system and helps bolster Missouri's economy today and in the decades to come. Outreach efforts focused on reaching out to stakeholders such as logistics directors, shipping managers, economic development professionals, and leaders in private industry. Those that use the system most offered their perspectives on the conditions, issues, and needs of the freight network.

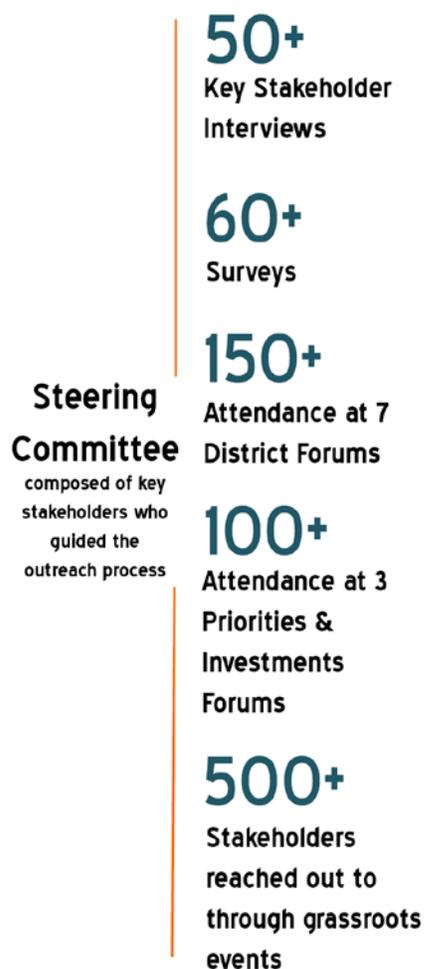
The goals of stakeholder outreach were to:

- Better understand, as an agency and as a State, what the costs are to Missouri's economy if the freight network stagnates or deteriorates.
- Articulate what freight projects would be most helpful to the State if additional funds were made available.
- Collect thoughts on making businesses and communities more competitive - whether through improvement projects or policy changes.

From November 2013 to July 2014, MoDOT engaged key freight stakeholders via surveys, interviews, multiple rounds of forums, and direct/grassroots outreach throughout the State. All activities were guided by the Freight Steering Committee made up of key stakeholders and MoDOT leadership. Figure 2-1 summarizes stakeholder outreach efforts.

Stakeholder input has influenced each piece of the Freight Plan, from the development of a prioritized project list to policy recommendations.

Figure 2-1: Summary of Stakeholder Outreach



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Guiding the Plan: How Stakeholders Provided Input

Freight stakeholders provided valuable input and helped guide MoDOT during the entire life of the project and at project milestones.

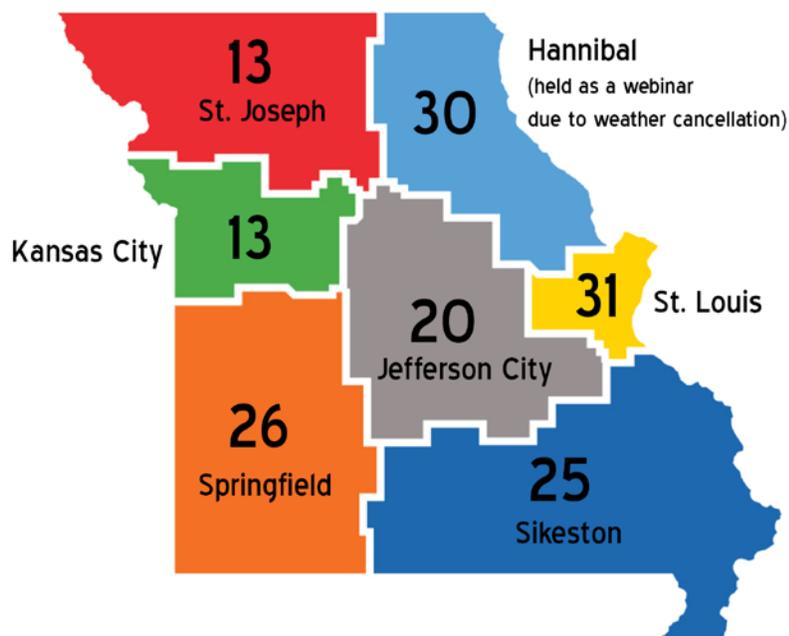
Input was provided by:

- A **Freight Steering Committee** made up of freight and State leaders and select members of MoDOT leadership. The committee—representing a diverse group of freight interests—convened monthly to provide feedback, reviewed materials, and helped connect MoDOT to other stakeholders. A full listing of Freight Steering Committee members is available in Appendix E.
- **Key Freight Stakeholder Interviews and Surveys** from leaders in freight-related services including manufacturing, economic development, logistics, and carriers. MoDOT discussed with these stakeholders the strengths, weaknesses, and investments needed in the freight network. A listing of the interviews and surveys is available in Appendix A.
- **Surveys emailed to 1,300 plus stakeholders and available on the project's website, www.MoFreightPlan.org**, to gather feedback from the general public.
- **Grassroots meetings** with currently existing freight interest groups and associations; such as supply chain management groups and trucking, port, and railroad associations throughout the State.
- **District and Regional Forums** that brought together hundreds of key stakeholders from across the State to discuss the plan with MoDOT. These forums are outlined below.

District Freight Forums (January-February 2014)

Building on the stakeholder interviews and surveys, freight forums were held in each MoDOT district to discuss freight issues and opportunities with a broader set of freight stakeholders. Forums were held across the State, as shown in **Figure 2-2**.

Figure 2-2: Number of Stakeholders in Attendance at Each District Freight Forum



In all, more than 150 stakeholders participated in these discussions and provided valuable feedback to Freight Plan efforts.

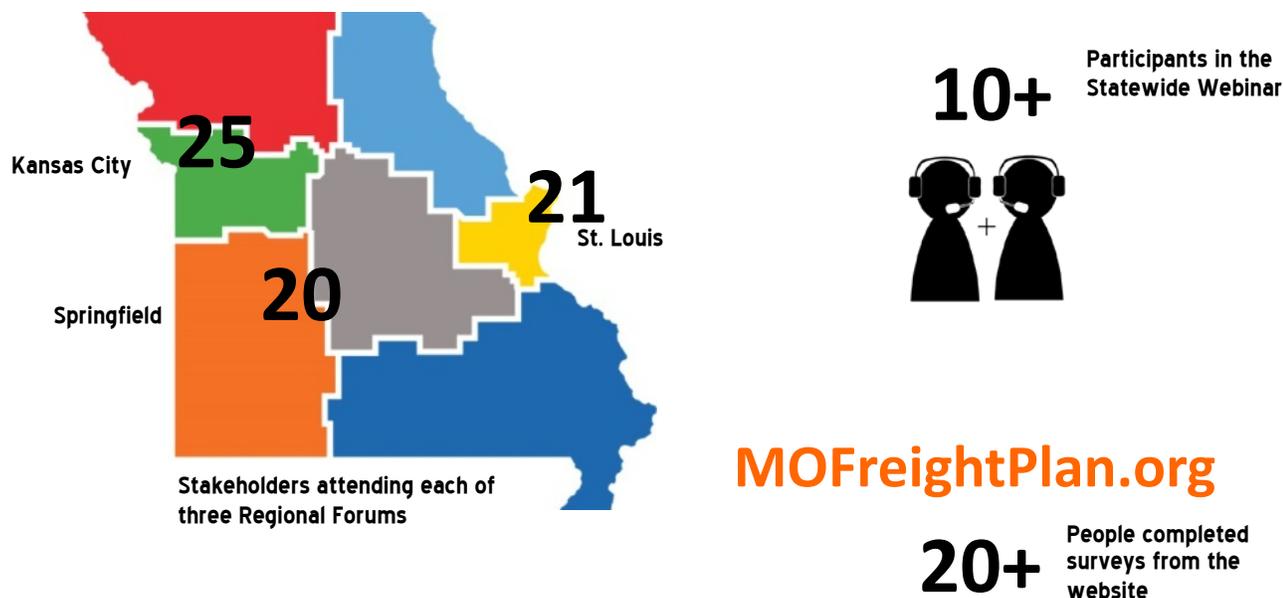
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Regional Priorities and Investment Forums (April-May 2014)

Close to 100 stakeholders were engaged in the Regional Priorities and Investment Forums. Three regional forums held in Kansas City, St. Louis, and Springfield hosted a combined total of 65 stakeholders. An additional 30 stakeholders participated in a statewide focused webinar held in early May or in surveys made available on the website for those stakeholders who were not able to participate in any of the forums (see Figure 2-3).

Stakeholders participated in several exercises to identify types of projects important to them and the region and provided guidance to the project team in creating a list of priority freight projects.

Figure 2-3: Number of Stakeholders Engaged in Regional Priorities and Investment Forum Activities



=~100 Engaged Stakeholders

Comment Period Process (October 2014)

The draft State Freight Plan was available for public comment from October 1 to October 31. The following outreach efforts and activities happened during the public comment period:

- A survey, targeting key stakeholders, was posted on the project website to gather input about the draft plan.
- Project team members reached out to existing groups of freight stakeholders to schedule opportunities to present the draft plan and solicit feedback.
- The draft plan was presented during a webinar on October 14 during which participants could provide comments. The presentation used during the webinar was then posted to the project website.
- Stakeholders who had previously participated in the planning efforts were sent an email outlining the variety of ways they could review the draft plan and provide comments. From that email, stakeholders could also request a speaker for a group presentation.

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The State Freight Plan website was updated to include:

- The draft plan posted for public review.
- A graphic communicating the work done to-date and the work expected in the coming months.
- A link to the survey being used to gather comments.
- Information about the webinar presentation, including a link to the presentation given during the webinar.

During the comment period, 80 comments were submitted via the website, grassroots events, and the webinar discussion.

Listening to Missourians: What MoDOT Heard

Stakeholders spoke to a number of consistent themes and helped identify a series of important projects for Missouri's freight network.

Consistent Statewide Themes

Reoccurring themes—throughout the State and regionally—emerged during stakeholder outreach. As shown in **Figure 2-4**, themes include:

- Missouri generally has a well-connected road network. It is good until there is a hiccup such as congestion, weather, or construction. However, there is a need for capacity and maintenance improvements to maintain the reliability of the network. Maintenance and improvements along I-70 were mentioned most consistently.
- There is a need to integrate freight networks for better multimodal connectivity.
- MoDOT should engage all stakeholders, both public and private. An example of a group that hasn't traditionally been engaged in freight discussions is those who represent railroads.
- There is a need to investigate possibilities for using waterways including Panama Canal expansion opportunities, increasing dredging, and updating locks and dams on the Mississippi River.

Figure 2-4: Statewide Themes During all Stakeholder Outreach Efforts

What have we heard during outreach across the state?



Generally, well-connected road network, but...



Connect all freight modes



Engage all stakeholders



Utilize waterways



Priority Project Types

During the three Regional Priorities and Investment forums, stakeholders were also asked to identify types of statewide and regional projects that MoDOT should consider high priority. They included:

All Regions

- Maintenance and improvements along I-70.

Kansas City

- Increased capacity and improvements at ports.
- Increased safety across all modes.
- Rail-highway at-grade crossing improvements and grade separations.
- Waterway and port infrastructure and terminal improvements (i.e., building, storage facilities, equipment).

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St. Louis

- Multimodal approach focused on strategic economic development efforts.
- Roadway improvements that address first and last mile as well as accommodate wider and heavier loads.
- Improved container handling for all modes.
- Improved cargo facilities, such as aprons, and their connections to warehouses or distribution centers.
- Harbor and channel dredging along the Mississippi River.
- Improved connections from airport cargo areas to other modes.

Springfield

- Maintenance on shoulders.
- Connectivity—i.e., rail spurs to industrial parks.
- Additional truck parking facilities and improving in-cab notification technologies.
- Additional roadway lanes.
- New truck arterials.

Purpose of Key Stakeholder Input

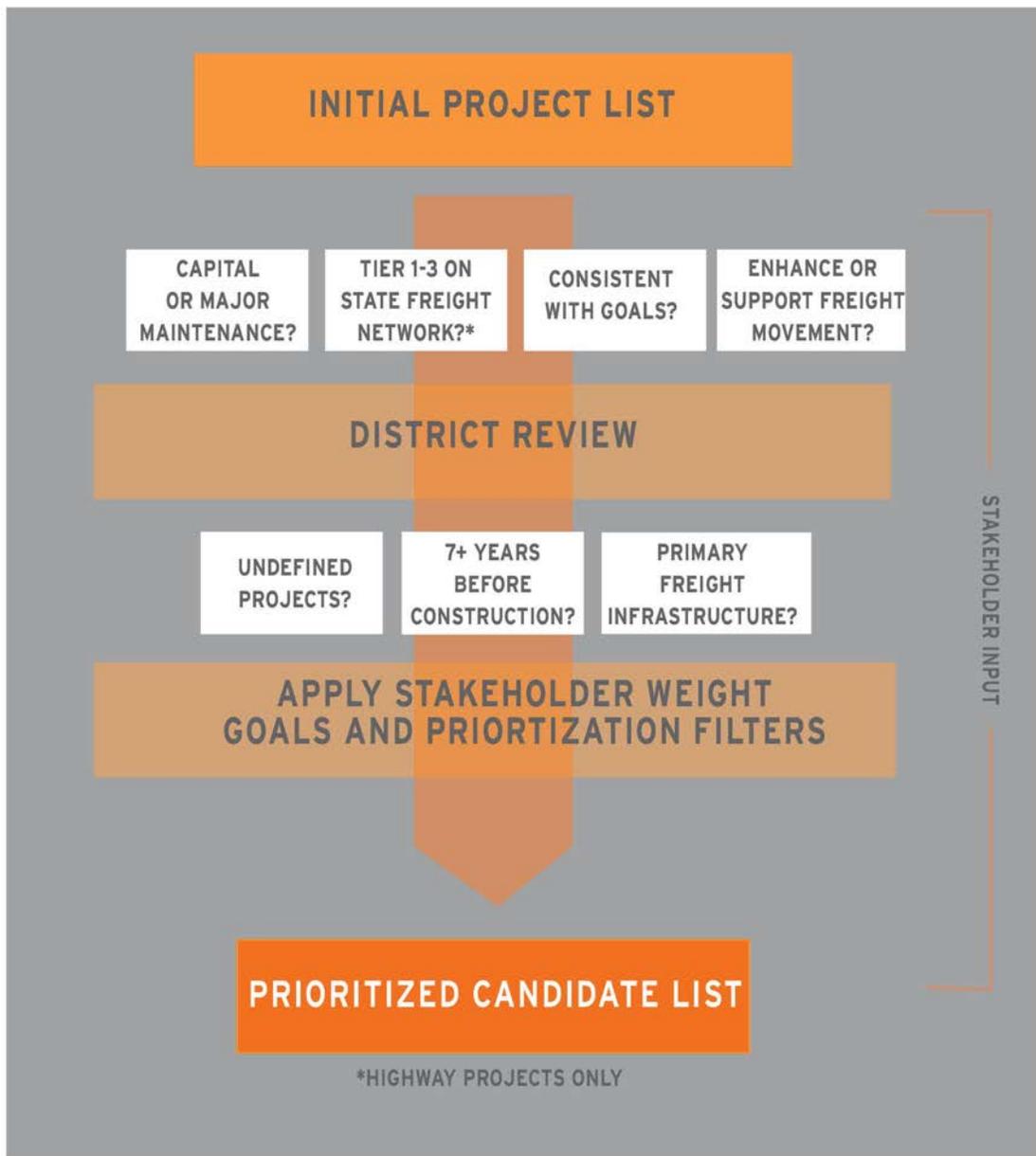
MoDOT used more than 1,300 stakeholder contacts during the Freight Plan process to develop a plan well-vetted by Missourians who are the most involved and affected by freight network movement and development. The purpose of these open dialogues with key stakeholders was to gather input on stakeholders' priorities as well as to inform them on plan progress.

Stakeholders provided input on:

- An inventory of freight assets and assessment of needs that includes statewide data that did not exist before this plan.
- What Missouri needs to do to be competitive and attract economic development to the State.
- A defined State freight network.
- Weighted freight goals and priorities that line up with goals of the State's last long-range planning effort.
- Strategic recommendations and an action plan (found in Chapters 9 and 10) that can be used moving forward.
- A list of prioritized investments and a project list based on the weighted goals and priorities from stakeholders; see **Figure 2-5** for how stakeholders were involved in crafting this list.

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Figure 2-5: Project Prioritization Process Using Stakeholder Input



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Forming Partnerships and Moving Forward

After the Missouri State Freight Plan has been finalized and recommendations have been made, MoDOT will continue to build upon relationships formed and enhanced during the Freight Plan process. There is a commitment that this Freight Plan will not sit on a shelf and gather dust, regardless of existing transportation funding.

A complete listing of strategic recommendations from the Freight Plan is covered in Chapter 9. Listed below are examples of those that MoDOT will continue to work on with key stakeholders:

- Implementing a freight advisory committee made up of leaders from the public sector, private companies, elected or appointed officials, and other planning partners.
- Improving multimodal connectivity.
- Helping in future efforts to develop comprehensive freight corridors.
- Working to leverage private sector investment to gain political support for public investment.
- Ensuring rural accessibility/just-in-time performance needs are considered during planning and project selection.
- Working to create statewide and district processes for programmatic freight projects.

Lessons Learned

Through drafting and vetting this Freight Plan, stakeholders communicated and reaffirmed some lessons for MoDOT on how best to communicate with them, engage additional stakeholders, and identify high level concepts always to consider when discussing freight in Missouri.

- Engaging all freight interests is more complicated than simply having public meetings. The most effective way to engage with these stakeholders is by doing grassroots outreach and going to meet private stakeholders at industry-specific events and conferences.
- Economic development and freight go hand-in-hand. Be prepared to talk about economic impacts.
- There are opportunities for no- or low-cost partnerships to enhance freight opportunities in the State.
- Public and private stakeholders are concerned about a lack of adequate dedicated revenue for transportation projects.