



SFRP

State
Freight & Rail
Plan

Executive Summary

April 2026



As Missouri's freight and rail networks handle nearly a billion tons of goods each year, the investments we make today will help shape our economy tomorrow. This updated State Freight and Rail Plan (SFRP) provides that roadmap – grounded in data, shaped by public input and designed for our transportation future. With the freight and rail systems helping to facilitate such a strong economic engine for the state, putting together a detailed and accurate plan that addresses current needs and anticipates those of the future is an important part of what we do as an organization.

The SFRP is a strategic document that outlines the vision, goals and priorities of Missouri's freight and passenger rail systems. It takes a look at both where we are in terms of current infrastructure conditions and where we're headed, providing goals for improving and enhancing that infrastructure, especially as technology continues to remake how business is done.

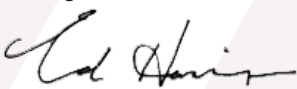
Engagement was a crucial aspect of this plan's updates. Outreach included engaging with customers as well as planning organizations and committees from around the state. Informational booths were made available at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia, and at district meetings where visitors could find out about the plan updates and provide input via surveys and comment cards. Virtual public meetings were launched via MoDOT's external website and promoted statewide through the department's social media channels. Thousands of survey responses were collected, helping to determine the needs faced by businesses, communities and users of the freight and rail systems.

We want to address real needs, which is why this plan looks at subjects like truck parking and identifies emerging trends and opportunities, all while developing Missouri's freight story, one that we want to get right.

This year's update process was unique. Over the last year, the SFRP has been updated in tandem with MoDOT's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), which serves as a roadmap for the state's transportation network through 2050. This plan looks at the needs that impact the entire system and sets up Missouri for the future of transportation. Updating both plans together allows us to zoom out, plan big, and look at how both the roadway system and the freight system come together to benefit not only Missourians, but the whole country.

It's an exciting time to be a part of the transportation planning process. Investments lead to improvements, and improvements lead to a better future. Thank you for taking the time to make your voice heard and for working with us to deliver this plan. I'm glad you're here for the ride.

Regards,



Ed Hassinger, P.E.
Executive Director

FREIGHT NEVER SLEEPS

Morning, noon and night, trucks, trains, barges, planes and pipelines crisscross Missouri bringing supplies to, through and beyond our borders. The produce of our mines, fields and factories travel the world. Daily supplies arrive on shelves – and even on our doorsteps.

Freight movement often seems invisible. But it's not magic. **Careful planning and thoughtful investment create and maintain reliable transportation systems.** It's that reliability that keeps transportation costs in check. It's that reliability that attracts new business and supports job expansion.

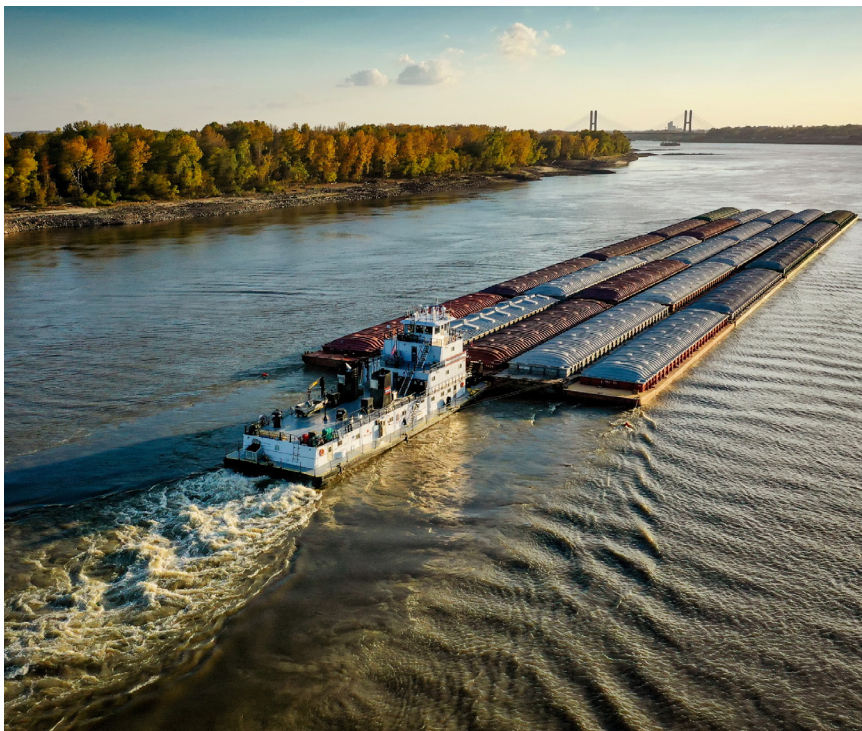
It's also a process. If we want a robust intermodal freight system (we do!), it must be maintained and expanded in anticipation of tomorrow's needs.

With the help of stakeholders, and based on Missouri's Long-Range Transportation Plan, **MoDOT designed this freight and rail plan to sustain today's freight infrastructure and to steer investments toward innovative and strategic future opportunities.**

Missouri's freight transportation network performance is the backbone of our economy and is key to Missourians' quality of life.

THE FREIGHT PLAN'S GOALS

MoDOT leadership carefully considered the needs of Missouri's transportation system, looked to federal goals and objectives as well as MoDOT's own strategic vision to draft goals and objectives for this effort. The department presented and discussed the draft with local, state, regional and national stakeholders, who offered comments and refinements. The goals and objectives of the 2026 SFRP are the same as those included in the LRTP. ***MoDOT identified six goals to steer the SFRP, each with specific and actionable objectives to help MoDOT reach those goals.***



STEWARDSHIP

Preserve the assets and services currently in place.

SAFE

Enhance safety for all users of the transportation system.

RELIABLE

Maintain a transportation network that is efficient and dependable.

CONNECTED

Maximize mobility and connect communities through multimodal transportation options.

INNOVATIVE

Leverage technology and creative solutions to build a future-ready transportation network.

PROSPEROUS

Drive economic growth through transportation investments



Freight in our daily lives...

Morning Cereal

I reach for my cereal. It's made in Missouri. There wasn't a lot of freight involved, right? Let's check.



Rail



Truck



Barge/Ship



Car



Delivery Truck



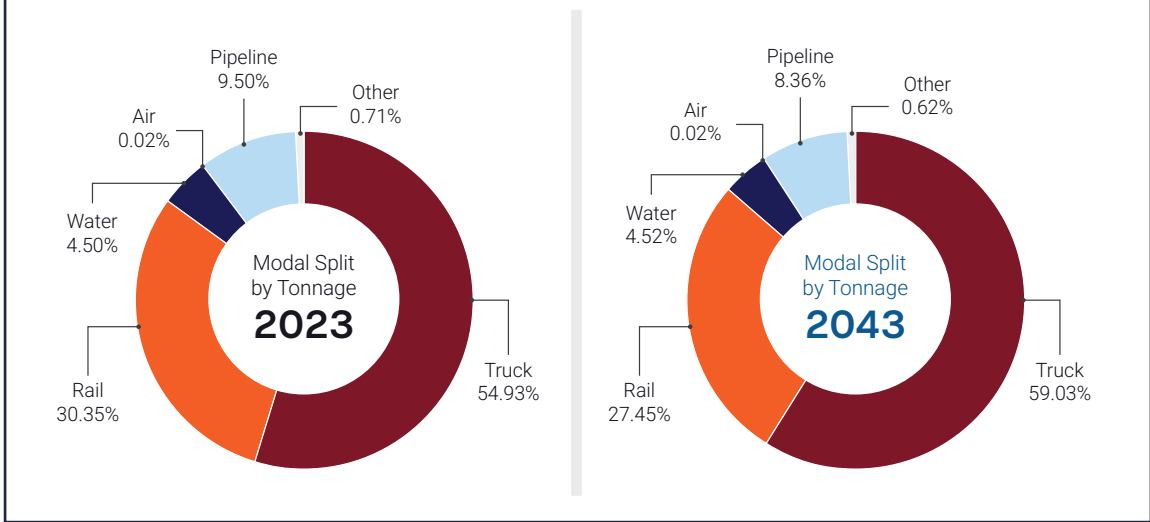
Drone



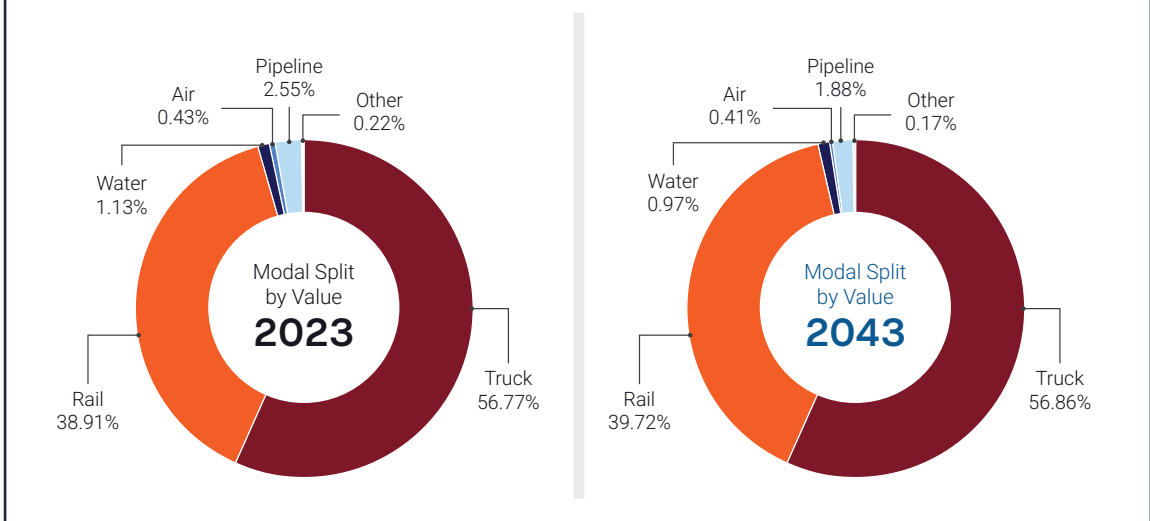
MISSOURI SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION: CEREAL



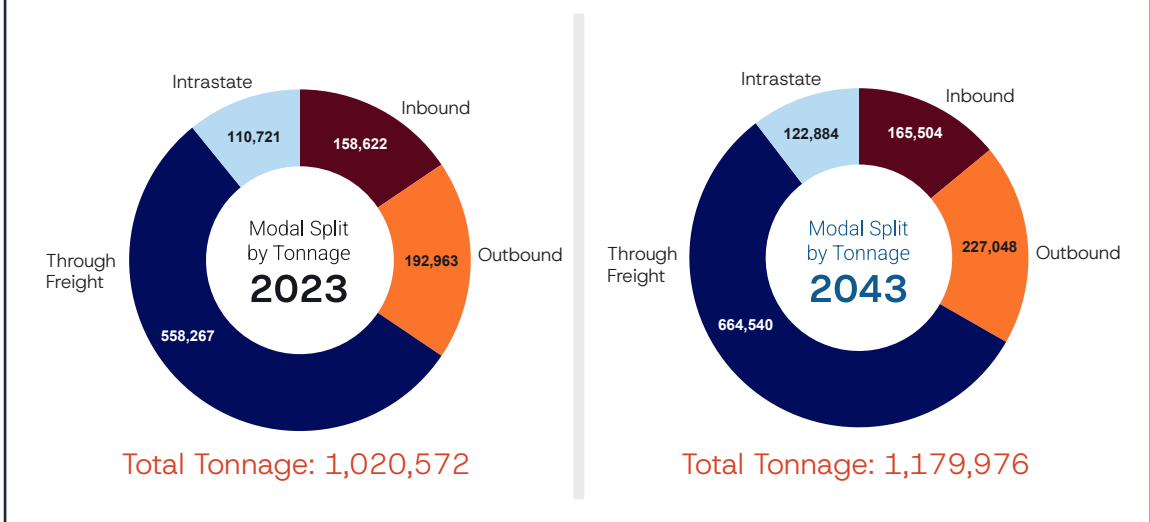
Freight Movement by Tonnage



Freight Movement by Value



Freight Flows by Tonnage



MISSOURI'S FREIGHT SYSTEM

Missouri is a place of convergence. It's where the mighty rivers, the Missouri and Mississippi meet, where roads and railroads intersect, then spread again in a network of options. Freight moves in, out and through.

Along the way, expansive warehouses, distribution centers and even cave systems hold goods in store, shortening travel times from order to delivery.

Turning points and options abound, making Missouri a point of collection, connection and flexibility in the nationwide flow of freight.

A free-flowing system attracts new business and injects vitality into Missouri's economy.

As the volume of freight grows, as is expected during the next 20 to 30 years, investment in infrastructure can address and even prevent congestion and bottlenecks. This is vital because in freight, as is true in so many cases, time is money. ***Keeping transportation systems reliable and smooth is key to attracting and retaining businesses and the jobs on which we rely.***



A robust freight network supports and builds Missouri agriculture, healthcare and all manner of business, attracting investment and desirable jobs.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

Missouri Freight by the Numbers

<p>7th largest highway system</p>	<p>Approximately 34,000 centerline miles with nearly 1,384 miles of designated interstate system.</p>
<p>11th largest rail network in the U.S</p>	<p>Approximately 6,300 miles of rail network with more than 5,300 at-grade road crossings.</p>
<p>5 Class I freight railroads</p>	<p>Missouri freight railroads include BNSF, CPKC, CSX, NS, and UP with 13 Amtrak stations.</p>
<p>10th in the nation for inland waterway miles</p>	<p>The State of Missouri contains 1,050 miles of navigable waterways.</p>
<p>19 public river port authorities + 200 private ports/docks/terminals</p>	<p>Connects shippers and receivers to the Ohio, Tennessee and Illinois Rivers and Gulf Coast ports.</p>
<p>3 primary commercial service airports – cargo airports</p>	<p>Freight aviation rapidly moves high value and time-sensitive goods across the state and beyond. Kansas City International Airport (MCI), St. Louis Lambert International Airport (STL), Springfield-Branson National Airport (SGF)</p>

Transload Facilities

Privately owned transload facilities transfer goods between trucks, trains and barges, strengthening Missouri's competitiveness by allowing shippers nimble flexibility among transportation options.

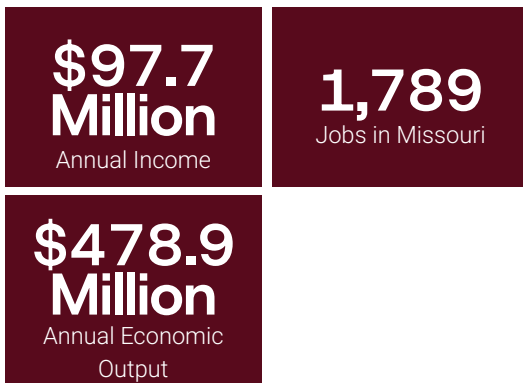
Missouri features several key transload facilities offering rail-to-truck transfer services that handle diverse commodities, including dry/cold storage, agricultural products, and industrial materials.



MISSOURI'S PUBLIC PORTS ECONOMIC ACTIVITY:



MISSOURI RIVER RUNNER ECONOMIC ACTIVITY:



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF FREIGHT TO THE STATE OF MISSOURI

Missouri's public ports generate substantial economic activity by serving as multimodal freight hubs that connect industries across the state to national and international markets through the Mississippi and Missouri River systems. **Public ports handle an average of approximately 6.4 million tons of freight annually valued at more than \$2.7 billion, supporting key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, mining, and construction.** Port operations and port-dependent industries collectively support nearly 31,000 jobs, generate approximately \$1.5 billion in labor income, and contribute roughly \$5.6 billion in statewide economic output, while also producing more than \$475 million annually in state and local tax revenues.

The Missouri River Runner generates approximately \$478.9 million in annual economic activity statewide, supporting 1,789 jobs and \$97.7 million in annual income.

Freight in our daily lives...

Midday Medicine

I check in with my cousin who is undergoing skin cancer treatment in Phoenix. He tells me the radiotherapy is having an effect. I smile, knowing that the medicine at the center of his treatment originates in Missouri.

The University of Missouri Research Reactor (MURR®) is the source of a broad base of nuclear products key to many types of cancer research, diagnosis and treatment. These high-value, time-sensitive products are shipped nationwide and beyond in casks that contain the products' radioactivity – even in the event of a crash.



Truck

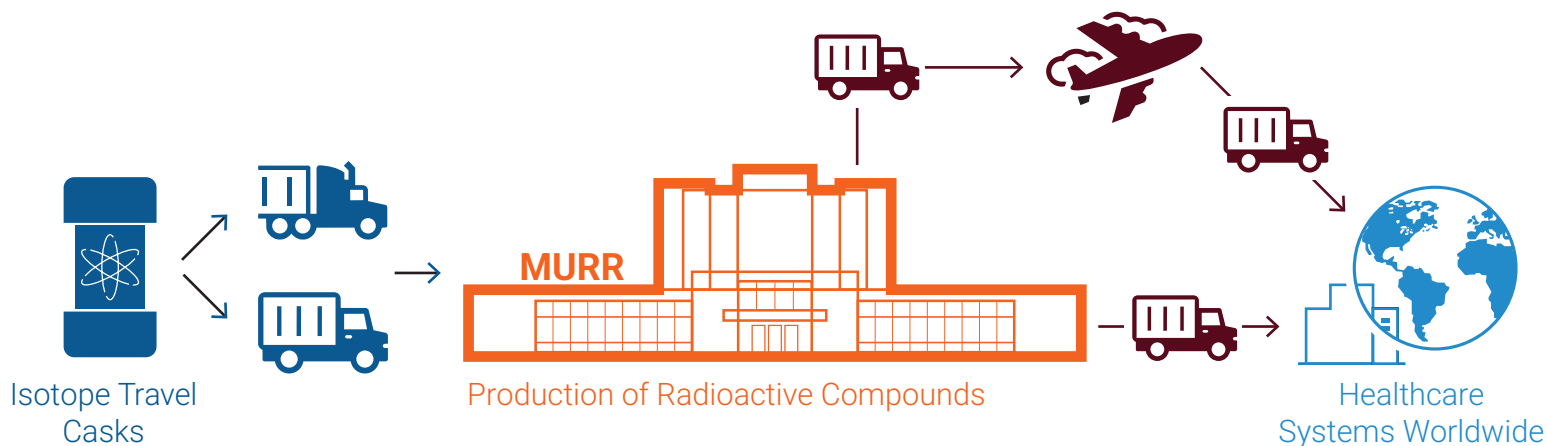


Delivery Truck



Cargo Aircraft

MISSOURI SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION: MEDICAL SUPPLIES



RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

Expand truck parking spaces along Missouri freight corridors to increase safety and reduce operational costs.

Though MoDOT pioneered conversion of weigh stations and rest areas to truck parking, a shortage remains. The gap between an already inadequate supply and demand is projected to grow substantially by 2050. A recent discretionary grant to increase parking availability on I-70 will reduce this gap.

RECOMMENDATION:

Add welcome center, rest area and public truck parking sites to the MoDOT Traveler Information Map and/or update the existing rest area, welcome center and truck parking map.

Truck drivers and other motorists would benefit from improved visibility of parking information on MoDOT's web resources, particularly during emergencies.

RECOMMENDATION:

Modify at-grade railroad crossing prioritization framework to address awkward intersection approach grades, skewed visual angles and other physical factors that impede sightlines and increase safety risks.

State and federal funds are set aside for at-grade railroad crossing projects. Modifying MoDOT's prioritization process to emphasize factors reflecting travelers' ability to see oncoming trains will continue to address safety risks at these crossings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

Support development of intermodal and transload facilities to strengthen modal shift opportunities, reduce roadway deterioration from heavy vehicle movements, and enhance connections between Missouri's highway, rail, waterway, and air freight networks.

Being able to easily transfer bulk cargo and standardized freight containers between rail, water and highway modes gives shippers cost effective transportation options, but only when the means to transfer them from one mode to another exist. Developing more locations to distribute cargo throughout Missouri's freight system could increase efficient movement and reduce risk to travelers.

RECOMMENDATION:

Partner with Class III railroads for funding to upgrade trackage to accommodate industry standard railcars and increase safety at grade crossings.

Class III railroads directly serve many agricultural and industrial sites such as grain elevators, factories and warehouses on lines built before today's larger rail cars existed. An infrastructure boost could re-ignite capacity and allow more freight to move from first mile to last mile by rail. Limited capital investment resources delay or prevent Class III railroads' ability to address efficiency and active rail crossing warning system upgrades. Missouri, acting in partnership with Class III rail lines, could reduce cost and congestion for shippers, receivers and highway travelers.

RECOMMENDATION:

Prioritize targeted improvements in partnership with Amtrak and railroads to maintain and improve on-time performance for the Missouri River Runner and other shared use corridors.

Competing interests between freight and passenger rail can pose operational challenges along shared use corridors. Targeted investments can help alleviate chokepoints along these critical corridors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

Incorporate freight infrastructure resilience into project prioritization and scoping.

Reliability is a key factor for goods movement. Extreme weather events reduce reliability. Optimizing resources through interagency coordination can provide clearer understanding of system risk, guide investment prioritization, and enhance emergency preparedness.

RECOMMENDATION:

Incorporate trucking industry perspectives into work-zone standard protocols for construction and maintenance operations to improve freight safety and reliability.

Considering truck drivers' needs in work-zone design, such as careful planning of lane widths, could reduce crash risks and increase operational efficiency. Improvements in communication about active construction, including real-time messaging, could also enhance safety and freight reliability.

RECOMMENDATION:

Work with regional planning organizations to identify locations needed for truck staging to reduce congestion, unauthorized parking, and improve effectiveness of state-provided long-term parking.

Drivers often need to pull off the road to wait for a dock appointment time at their next stop. Having staging areas at or near major freight generating sites, rather than many miles away allows commercial drivers to make best use of their time. Imagine, fewer trucks on the road during peak congestion periods and enough long-term parking so drivers aren't forced to rest on highway ramps and shoulders.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION:

Establish a coordinated statewide freight data and governance framework to support continuous collaboration among MoDOT, MPOs, Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs), ports, railroads, and private-sector partners.

Though cities, counties, regional organizations and transportation modes work together to produce periodic transportation and freight plans, ongoing coordination could generate better outcomes for all. Missouri can build a framework statewide freight practitioners can use to share collected data; coordinate project prioritization; and measure system performance.

RECOMMENDATION:

Support development and marketing of “freight-ready” industrial sites adjacent to multimodal corridors.

Missouri Partnership, the Missouri’s Department of Economic Development, SmartPort, and Freightway all have programs to identify properties ready for freight generator development. MoDOT can coordinate with local and regional partners to advance site readiness for logistics-focused industries.

RECOMMENDATION:

Encourage reliable investment in first- and last-mile non-highway freight infrastructure to reduce highway congestion and improve statewide system efficiency.

What’s the biggest sticking point for freight in any mode? The first and last mile of its movement. That’s where the most handling activities occur, often within tight quarters. MoDOT’s support of streamlined grant program requirements could result in quick completion of high-impact projects that make freight movement more nimble and resilient.

RECOMMENDATION:

Continue monitoring TPIMS and TPAS efforts nationwide to evaluate whether these technologies are appropriate and cost-effective for implementation in Missouri.

Adequate truck parking is essential for the safety of all travelers. Strict Federal regulations limit truck drivers’ on-duty hours so they can obtain adequate rest. However, a nationwide truck parking shortage makes it difficult for truck drivers to find safe and reliable parking spaces. Missouri can build more truck parking inventory while monitoring other states’ efforts to notify drivers of available parking. It can also explore public-private partnerships, other agreements and crowd-sourced data platforms.



Freight in our daily lives...

Work Begins

I'm met at the door by a chorus of hungry cries. It's dinnertime for my pets. The only delivery system they're concerned about is the package-to-bowl kind. I'm thankful those packages arrive directly on my threshold.



Rail



Truck



Barge/Ship



Car

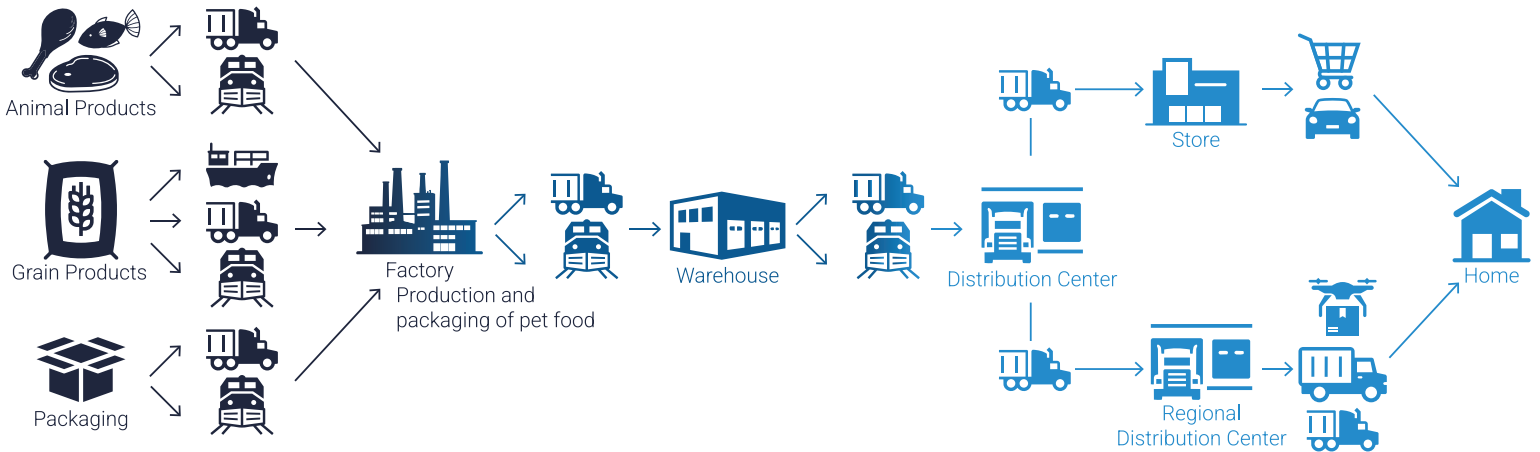


Delivery Truck



Drone

MISSOURI SUPPLY & DISTRIBUTION: PET FOOD





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