Regional Freight Plan
FTAC Meeting #1

presented to
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

presented by
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with
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Agenda

- Introductions and Meeting Purpose
- Review Scope and Schedule
- Review Work Completed to Date
  - Stakeholder Interview Summaries
  - Land Use Analysis
  - Identification of Hot Spots
- Next Steps/Questions
Introductions

- Name
- Title and affiliation
- Role in Region’s Freight System

Why Are We Here Today?

- Initiate Birmingham Regional Freight Plan FTAC
- Review role of FTAC
- Review why freight planning is important
- Review stakeholder interview findings to date
- Engage FTAC in brainstorming sessions
What Does Participating in the FTAC Mean?

- Attend 3 meetings over next year
- Encourage freight planning best practices
- Provide voice for freight industry
- Help “tell the region’s freight story”
- Provide ongoing input on direction of project
- Review draft findings and draft report

Why is Freight Planning Important?

- Freight operations have different needs than passenger movements
  - Linked and complex supply chains
  - Regional, national and global perspective
  - Value of time considerations
  - Shipper/receiver service requirements
  - Infrastructure ownership
  - Infrastructure capacity and dimensions
  - Length of planning horizons
Why is Freight Planning Important?

- Federal guidance relating to freight transportation to states and MPOs continues to strengthen
  - Importance of freight at national level began in 1991 with ISTEA; each subsequent bill has strengthened this message
  - National freight policy designed to drive U.S. global competitiveness
- Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) passed December 4, 2015 further increased the focus and funding available for freight

What Are the Key Elements of an Effective Freight Plan?

- Freight-specific goals and policies
- Consistency/compatibility with State and federal guidance
- Freight system profile & narrative
- Land use/development opportunities
- Stakeholder involvement/engagement
- Identification, prioritization and funding of needs
- Freight performance measures/metrics
- Strategies for growth
What are the Key Components of Your Freight System?

Generators
- Extraction (quarries, mines, forest)
- Manufacturing and Production facilities
- Assembly plants
- International ports of entry

Distribution Networks
- Interstate highways
- Other freight highways & connectors
- Motor carriers
- Rail lines, yards, and terminals
- Railroads
- Waterways, marine terminals
- Barge operators
- Airports and air carriers
- Pipelines
- Distribution Centers

Receivers
- Major Institutions
- Industrial receivers (manufacturing inputs)
- Retailers
- Direct-to-Consumer

Scope of Work

- Task 1. Stakeholder Engagement
- Task 2. Data Compilation
- Task 3. Freight Profile
- Task 4. Needs Identification and Prioritization
- Task 5. Plan Recommendations
Project Schedule

| Task                                      | OCT | NOV | DEC | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP |
|-------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| PROJECT MANAGEMENT                         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Stakeholder Engagement                    | o   | o   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Data Compilation                          |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Freight Profile                           |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Needs Identification and Prioritization   |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Plan Recommendations                      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Project Team Meeting                      |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Freight Advisory Committee Meeting         |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Freight Training                          |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

Stakeholder Interviews to Date

- RPCGB
- City of Birmingham Economic Development
- Birmingham Airport Authority
- Transportation and Logistical Services (TLS)
- Watco Alabama Port Services (Port Birmingham operator)
- Birmingham Terminal Railway
- Watkins Trucking Company
- Jefferson County Development Authority
- Birmingham Business Alliance
- BNSF Railway
- Norfolk Southern
- CSX Industrial Development
- Christie Strategy Group
- Church Transportation and Logistics
- Tennessee Tombigbee Waterway Development Authority
- Alabama Trucking Association
- Parker Towing
- Warrior Tom Bigbee Waterway Association
- UAB Planning Design and Construction
- Shelby County
- Regional Traffic Management Center (TMC)
### System Strengths and Weaknesses Worksheet

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<th>Component</th>
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<td>Warehouse/distribution centers</td>
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<td>Land use designations</td>
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<td>Political support for freight</td>
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<td>Others?</td>
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### Overview of Stakeholder Input

**Waterway Movements**

- Shifts in industry have dramatically reduced demand for water transportation
  - Power plants converting from coal to natural gas
  - Wood chip market is gone
  - Export coal movements now move by rail to Mobile

- Commodities moving by water experience significant fluctuation
  - Coal is down
  - Steel is down

- Waterways are in good working order
  - Annual maintenance dredging
  - Funding is available given “high use” designation
  - Scheduled lock and dam replacement projects disrupt service in the short-term, but make system safer and more efficient long-term
Overview of Stakeholder Input
Waterway Movements

- Growth is dependent on
  - Roadway connectivity and capacity
    - Weight restrictions, lane width, number of lanes
  - Availability of utilities
    - Water, electric/high voltage, sewer, natural gas, fiber optic/high speed internet
  - Fire and rescue
  - Foreign Trade Zone designation
  - New/expanded rail access would help attract more distant customers

- Market limited by declining industry and proximity to agriculture

Overview of Stakeholder Input
Waterway Movements

- Port Birmingham is only facility in region with direct rail access; all others are served by truck
- Ownership looking to rebuild with new commodity mix
- Niche products include coal, chemicals, lumber
- Maximizing water and rail is priority
- Opportunities for growth and expansion depend on markets and service offerings
Overview of Stakeholder Input

Waterway Movements

- Climate controlled warehouse space needed; only have outside lay down space
- Markets shifting from iron/coal to automotive and medical; this brings new service requirements
- Have access to 3 Class I railroads
- Significant marketing is needed to promote services and capacity of Port Birmingham

Overview of Stakeholder Input

Waterway Movements

John Hollis
Overview of Stakeholder Input

Waterway Movements

- Shippers have moved away from internal traffic departments; use brokers or 3PLs
- New, reliable fleet is critical
- OS/OW regulations vary by state; significant fines if not in compliance
- Roadway network is severely congested in AM and PM peaks; off peak is OK
- Margins for van loads have been pushed down; higher profits available for niche services like flat beds
- Communication with drivers varies from text messages, to phone calls, to on-board computers
Overview of Stakeholder Input

*Trucking Industry*

- Change to hours of service regulations are exacerbating the driver shortage
- Electronic log books will decrease capacity and driver availability
- Rates will likely increase; some one day transits will become two days; some drivers will quit
- Services are available to brokers to monitor driver and carrier insurance and safety performance
- Today’s drivers want to be home weekends and holidays; recruiting and keeping drivers is difficult

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Overview of Stakeholder Input

*Trucking Industry*

- Majority of accidents involving a truck are caused by car drivers
- Police should enforce car driver behavior
- Driver age limits complicate recruiting
- Driver training is important and should be affordable
- 20/59/65 reconstruction will improve safety; loads shift with weaves; not sure if best alternative was picked
- 20/59 by airport has horrible curves and weaves in both directions
- 459 in Trussville experiences significant back ups
Overview of Stakeholder Input

**Trucking Industry**

- 65 southbound does not have enough capacity; widening should extend south to Shelby Airport
- Steep grade on 65 up to Alford Road prevents trucks from getting up to speed
- Short ramps on 65 northbound restrict trucks
- 150 provides access to Dollar General warehouse on Lakeshore; steep grade after exiting highway limits speed
- Northern beltline as planned will have limited impact
- 280 is severely congested
- Traffic weaves should be removed when possible

**Rail Industry**

- Railroads provide connections and access to regional and more distant seaports
- Service in area includes intermodal, carload, unit train
- Facilities include classification yards, intermodal ramps, transload terminals, and direct carload service via sidings
- Eastern and Westerns railroads interchange with each other and local short lines
- Limited opportunities for new rail served customers; but there is capacity available at sites currently served
- Sites with sidings typically have contracts requiring minimum service; penalties are assessed if not used
Overview of Stakeholder Input

Rail Industry

- Limestone is key outbound flow by rail; high quality limestone shipped to non-routine sites based on construction activity
- Primary focus is intermodal although the region has lots of transload customers for bulk products (e.g., plastic pellets, hazmat chemicals)
- Railroads are always looking for direct siding dependent customers
- Urban development adjacent to rail corridors and yards creates conflicts
- It is critical that rail served sites be protected for rail dependent industries

As the region continues to grow, planners need to keep freight in mind; must balance an industrial landscape with quality of life for our communities

- Quality of life considerations can limit available workforce
- Grade crossing projects are always a priority
- Bike and pedestrian projects should avoid heavy rail corridors
- Municipal zoning is an issue; industrial areas are being redeveloped into residential lofts
- Rail traffic is anticipated to grow in the future in Birmingham area
- Grade crossing closures benefit rail operations but are hard to accomplish
Overview of Stakeholder Input

**Air Industry**

- 12k foot runway; category 2 airport; 2nd runway 7100 feet
- Fedex and UPS operate daily service
- Unleased cargo apron available for growth
- Runway and taxiway are too close together; impedes operations in bad weather
- Village Creek runs through airport; has environmental issues; limits opportunities for critical airport improvements
- East cargo area would require new roadway access
- Airport has significant land available to develop; access to vacant land is limited

Overview of Stakeholder Input

**Air Industry**

- Cargo marketing is limited; limited to integrators today
- Airlines have consolidated; larger planes
- Success will be driven by business and population growth; disposable income is critical
Overview of Stakeholder Input

**Economic Development, Counties, Cities**

- Network of industrial parks throughout region
- Development authorities (county, city, etc.) locate and develop land, recruit businesses, and maintain common elements
- Majority of industrial parts are full; always looking for more land
- Redevelopment of brownfield sites is expensive with liability issues
- Municipalities have access to funding grants
- Preferred locations are near interstates, have rail service, access to utilities
- Size and operation varies
Overview of Stakeholder Input
Economic Development, Counties, Cities

- Companies range from light manufacturing, to warehouse and distribution facilities
- Many suppliers to auto manufacturing plants outside the region locate in these parks
- Northern beltline will improve regional mobility
- Airport has limited space and handles limited cargo; redevelopment opportunities exist (unused hangers at airport offer 1.2 million square feet)
- Economic development tool kits are useful
- Regional leaders are pro-business and fiscally responsible
- State is good, not great, but good; competition drives everything

Region needs to provide variety of industrial parks (premium as well cheaper options)
- Improved marketing is critical to ensure the region consistently gets short listed when competing for new projects
- Birmingham should continue to work to improve its image as a place companies and workers want to locate and live
- Region has identified target businesses (automotive, aerospace, chemicals, finance, life sciences, manufacturing)
- Warehouse and distribution will always be a priority
- Time to market and access to market is critical and the region has a strong transportation system
Overview of Stakeholder Input
Economic Development, Counties, Cities

- Many national trucking firms have operations in region
- Technology is a major focus (Tech Birmingham, Innovation Depot)
- Airport has potential to grow cargo; this would be beneficial but there are challenges
- Airport hosts FTZ 98 there are several subzones; FTZ status is not extensively used
- Expansion of FTZ to cover Port Birmingham will be helpful
- Roadway access to port drops from 4 to 2 lanes
- Grow Alabama Initiative identifies transportation

Overview of Stakeholder Input
Economic Development, Counties, Cities

- Significant congestion on 65 southbound and on 280
- Topography of region limits land availability for new warehouse and distribution center developments
- Last mile connections to sites is critical part of development
- Region should capitalize on transportation assets
- Workforce training programs exist
Initial Land Use Analysis

- Significant portion of region consists of open space
- Residential and commercial uses are centered in the urban core
- Warehouse and distribution uses are focused along key roadway and rail corridors

Other Considerations

Bridge Locations, Intermodal Connectors, Fatal Accidents
Traffic Management Center

Key Hotspots Monitored

- I-65 at the 20/59 Ramp
- I-65 at 3rd Ave N
- I-65 before Alford
- I-65 at Lakeshore
- 20/59 at Arkadelphia
- 20/59 at Airport Highway
Traffic Management Center

Key Hotspots Monitored

- I-65 at 3rd Ave N

Traffic Management Center

Key Hotspots Monitored

- I-65 before Alford
Traffic Management Center
Key Hotspots Monitored

- I-65 at Lakeshore

Traffic Management Center
Key Hotspots Monitored

- 20/59 at Arkadelphia
Traffic Management Center

Key Hotspots Monitored

20/59 at Airport Highway

Examples of Deficiencies

Pour Pavement Condition
Trucks Routed Through Neighborhood
Pour Pavement Condition
Congestion Adjacent to Interchange
Next Steps/Questions

- Complete remaining data collection
- Analyze economic database
- Prepare freight system profile
- Begin to identify needs list

QUESTIONS?