

## **Wisconsin Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) Meeting 19**

Meeting Minutes from Tuesday, April 29, 2025

9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Held in-person in Madison, Wisconsin

**FAC Member Organization Representatives:** David Bizot, Shawn Brantmeier, Tom Bressner, Dr. Mei Cao, Maria Cartier, Ron Chicka, Collin Driscoll, Kari Heinrich, Chris Hiebert, Debby Jackson, Peter Kammer, Neal Kedzie, Larry Krueger, Ken Lucht, Kristi Luzar, Nick Novak, Richard Pingel, Dean Prestegard, Henry Schienebeck, Jason Serck, Sandi Siegel, Richard Stewart, Linda Swann, Evan Umpir, Thomas Winker, Don Vruwink.

**Wisconsin Department of Transportation (WisDOT) Members Present:** Secretary Kristina Boardman, Angela Adams, Stephanie Arduini, Brad Basten, Lt. Bill Berger, Nathan Bett, Ehren Bittorf, Rebecca Burkel, John Etzler, Mike Finkenbinder, Joel Gonzalez-Santiago, David Hubbard, Dave Leucinger, Andrew Levy, Merrill Mechler-Hickson, Ben Mohlke, Jennifer Murray, Briant Novinska-Lois, Claire Paprocki, Justin Shell, Sarah Simonson, Kamden Stark, Lisa Stern, Matt Sudac, Sydney Turner, Matt Umhoefer, Todd Van Fossen, Chuck Wade.

**Guests Present:** Jim Best, Libby Ogard.

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### **Welcome (9:30 a.m.)**

*Chuck Wade, Division of Transportation Investment Management (DTIM)*

Mr. Wade welcomed attendees and reviewed the agenda and contents of the meeting folders.

### **Opening Remarks (9:35 a.m.)**

*Kristina Boardman, WisDOT Secretary*

Secretary Boardman thanked the members for their ongoing participation in support of freight and the freight economy in the state. She noted the agency has improved more than 8,600 miles of road and more than 2,000 bridges since 2019. The budget submitted by Governor Evers calls for an increase in transportation revenues and includes continuation of the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP).

Secretary Boardman noted several Interstate Highway projects, including I-41 in the Fox Valley, the I-94 East/West project in Milwaukee, I-94 reconstruction near Eau Claire, and the start of planning for I-39/90/94 from Madison to Wisconsin Dells. Rest areas will be adding truck parking along I-90 near Sparta, and along I-43 in Manitowoc County. She noted the uncertainty regarding federal program funding, but assured FAC members that WisDOT would continue to deliver on project commitments. She stated the meeting would focus on the update of the State Freight Plan, and asked FAC members to help shape the future policies and programs for freight.

## **FAC Membership Update and Recap of the 18<sup>th</sup> FAC Meeting (9:40 a.m.)**

*Justin Shell, DTIM Administrator*

Mr. Shell began by noting the two new members of the FAC: Linda Swann, representing FHWA; and Nick Novak, representing the Midwest Food Products Association. He then noted how he thought about how the themes of past meetings connect to emerging issues and give context to FAC efforts. Those themes have included electrification, post-pandemic recovery, intermodal freight, and truck parking. Mr. Shell said Wisconsin has been aggressive in addressing truck parking needs; it is a national discussion fueled by great needs and efforts to improve safety. He offered his own anecdotal observation from along I-80; going east towards Washington D.C., there seem to be a lot of truck parking options, especially along the Ohio and Indiana Turnpikes. He said there seem to be fewer out west, heading towards Colorado. There need to be more efforts made to determine how we should grow our network.

With respect to the previous FAC meeting, he noted how it led into the environment of uncertainty, helping to understand and react to changes in international trade. The Canadian Consulate told us that over \$2 billion in trade moves daily between the U.S. and Canada, and that the trade with Wisconsin is over \$14 billion a year. We heard of the importance of the railroad networks for Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), and of the St. Lawrence Seaway for maritime trade. From the Mexican Consulate, we learned that Mexico has the only foreign consulate in Wisconsin. Mexico's annual trade with the U.S. is \$799 billion; much of the trade is in intermediate components that cross the border several times as they are assembled into final products. The ambition has been to grow trade and improve education.

For a full summary of the 18th meeting, please reference the Meeting 18 minutes on the [FAC webpage](#).

## **Voices of Wisconsin's Freight-Related Industries (9:55 a.m.)**

*Collin Driscoll, Wisconsin Counties Association (WCA); and Debby Jackson, Transportation Development Association of Wisconsin (TDA)*

Ms. Jackson discussed a critical initiative of TDA – the “Six to Twenty” Program. Programs under the National Bridge Inventory give good insight on structures of 20' or greater, but there is concern over smaller structures – those from 6' to 20', including culverts and tunnel systems. Some of these structures are counted as bridges, others are not – there isn't a consistent definition or monitoring program. The challenge is that these structures hamper agricultural product movement – there's no comprehensive inventory of how many there are, where they are, and what their condition is – and so there can't be an assessment of costs to address needs. Until recently, project priorities were made using anecdotes and estimates. With the last budget, \$12.5 million was dedicated to conducting an inventory and inspection of these structures, as a partnership of WisDOT and local government

Mr. Driscoll continued by noting the partnerships WCA was able to establish were very positive; at the last update, around 17,500 structures were identified – earlier estimates calculated as many as 25,000 structures. Most of the inventories have been done; inspections started in December and January. To date, 3,500 structures have been inspected. Of those, seven percent are in poor condition; one percent are critical and in immediate need of replacement. Better numbers are expected as inspections conclude. The estimate is that once inventory and inspections are finished, \$4.9 million will be left to begin to target the lowest-grade structures.

Ms. Jackson stated the goal of the program is to improve goods movement, so the most severely deteriorated structures can be found and be addressed. There will also be a need to keep the data on

these structures updated; it can't just be a snapshot. This needs to be a management tool that allows for tracking of progress. For that to happen, advocacy will be needed – to explain to the legislature why these structures are important and why funds are needed for their improvement. The state needs structures that can handle the freight and commerce of its producers.

*Henry Schienebeck, Great Lakes Timber Professionals*

Mr. Scheinebeck noted the forest products sector is the second-largest industry in Wisconsin and reflected on the presidential executive order to harvest more timber. Mr. Schienebeck said Wisconsin has the most sustainably managed forests in the nation. To stay in business for generations, as many harvesters do, they need to follow standards like those of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and follow best management practices for water clarity, invasive species, and more. These foresters need to stay up to date on standards and certifications to maintain their preferred supplier status with buyers who value sustainability. By contrast, other countries (such as Brazil) have pulp mills that are supplied by clearcutting and displacing indigenous tribes. He said he's passionate in stressing that more wood products should be made in the U.S., because there are guarantees the forests have been managed properly. The U.S. now competes with the countries that don't "follow the rules."

Mr. Schienebeck offered a tour of a forest area for a future FAC meeting to demonstrate how the industry is ensuring timber is managed for future harvests.

*Larry Krueger, Lake States Lumber Association*

Mr. Krueger noted half the state is woodland; the hardwood trees used by his business include maple, birch, cherry, and ash, and are mostly used for flooring and cabinets. The sector employs 63,000 people and has a \$24 billion impact on the state's economy. He stated the sector is facing some of its hardest times, as production has fallen from 12.6 billion board feet to around 4 billion board feet. There had been a production boom during Covid as people spent money on their homes; since then, synthetic products have taken over – especially for moldings and flooring. He also noted that while wood is a product that locks in carbon, the production of the synthetic products releases carbon into the atmosphere.

Mr. Krueger said the trade war has led to tariffs on all items, but asked if it would lead to a fairer deal. Wisconsin exports a lot of products; China's tariffs on our products is 125 percent; Canada's are 25 percent. He noted his company had three containers set to export to China just as the tariffs hit. One order was cancelled and the container was returned; another had the order cancelled before shipping, and a third was put on a boat to China and is not being accepted – it may cost us \$11,000 to get the product back. These are just some of the horror stories out there.

As Mr. Schienebeck noted, the administration is seeking increased logging on U.S. Forest lands, said Mr. Krueger. But right now, more trees fall over from storms than are being recovered – so again, he said, instead of a harvest, the carbon gets released back into the atmosphere.

Mr. Krueger noted the cost of moving product currently heavily favors trucking; moving product to Chicago costs around \$800 by truck versus \$1,300 by intermodal container. Exporting out of Chicago or Minneapolis is costly and frustrating. He believes there are opportunities to explore with CPKC at Portage, and that the Northeast Phase II Intermodal Study may find potential. Wisconsin remains the most expensive state east of the Mississippi from which to ship, according to Mr. Krueger. A new intermodal ramp is needed. Products need to come in and go out – international trade needs help.

*Sandi Siegel, ME Dey & Company*

In her update of the current conditions for trade, Ms. Siegel noted the first quarter of 2025 was good, with volumes of imports increasing as importers were shipping product early to try and beat tariffs and get products physically into the United States. Now, she said it's chaotic; tariffs changed four times in one day (April 8). Both imports and exports have been impacted; outbound freight has been halted due to retaliatory tariffs. Orders have been cancelled. Some imports have been diverted to Canada where the products can be sold there. The imports from China (as of the FAC meeting) had tariffs of up to 170 percent levied; some of these tariffs hit while goods were in transit. Cargo owners were faced with either stopping the order and returning it or diverting it. Vessel companies have had a lot of blank [cancelled] sailings. With demand down, rates have fallen a bit; so even though it's typically in May that annual contracts are negotiated, those discussions have been postponed.

Ms. Siegel expects trucking volumes will continue to grow in the short term; air freight will be impacted by the removal of the \$800 de minimis threshold for imports of small packages from companies like Temu – those duties will raise costs and reduce demand. But as imports slow, there will be a slowdown in trucking. Logistics professionals need to stay on top of these changes on a daily basis – and hope for positive outcomes in negotiations. One FAC member asked about the proposed fees on Chinese vessels to dock at U.S. ports. Have the vessel companies moved their fleets? What have been the effects of these fees? Ms. Siegel replied that the proposal is not in place yet; comments on the proposal were still open as of the meeting date. The idea is to charge all Chinese-owned vessels large fees at every U.S. port – so multiple fees if multiple ports. These costs will be passed on to the cargo owners. Since there are a large percentage of Chinese-owned vessels in service, Ms. Siegel hoped for a negotiated outcome. Dave Leucinger added that the proposal could also cover all Chinese-manufactured vessels as well.

*Jim Best, Air Cargo*

Mr. Best began by recommending and praising the M.E. Dey website for information on tariffs and trade conditions. He noted his history of almost 50 years in air cargo and agreed that intermodal freight is critical for commerce. He then gave an overview of a public-private partnership at the Milwaukee Airport that was finalized two months ago. The agreement is for development of a 340,000 square foot global air freight terminal, which will have 68 truck docks and serve all of Wisconsin and parts of Northern Illinois. There will be room to handle seven 747-size aircraft. Mr. Best said that the cost of operations at Milwaukee will be a 60 percent savings over those at O'Hare in Chicago; further, it will take 20,000 trucks per year off I-94 between Chicago and Milwaukee. At least two global airlines are considering changing their operations to Milwaukee. The goal is to be fully operational by November of 2026.

#### **ARIP – Wisconsin Agricultural Road Improvement Program (ARIP) – Update (10:10 a.m.)**

*Merrill Mechler-Hickson, WisDOT*

*Tom Winker, Vice-Chair, Wisconsin Towns Association*

In a follow-up presentation from FAC Meeting 18, Merrill Mechler-Hickson updated members on the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP) grants awarded under Round Two. In a recap of the guidelines of the one-time program, he noted the economic justification, removing load postings on rural local roads. In 2024 there were two separate solicitations for applications – one from February through April for \$50 million; another from July through September for \$100 million. In Round One, 153 applications were received requesting \$227 million in assistance. After evaluation, 37 projects in 28 counties were funded. These projects helped improve transportation for 5.3 million tons of agricultural products. In Round two, 220 applications requesting \$333 million were evaluated (including some unsuccessful applicants from Round One). From these, 55 projects in 36 counties succeeded in receiving

awards that will improve transportation for 10 million tons of agricultural products. Combined, both rounds saw 299 unique applications requesting assistance for \$507 million in project costs, demonstrating the continued need for this pool of funding.

Mr. Mechler-Hickson said the economic impacts will be especially felt by the agricultural producers, including forestry, dairy, grain, and fruit and vegetable producers. Other sectors to benefit include ethanol, animal feed, and fertilizer. One estimate has 6,000 jobs benefitting from these two rounds. He directed attendees to the ARIP web page to view the final report.

As structured, ARIP was a one-time item in the state budget, Mr. Mechler-Hickson said. Any possibility of a future ARIP will depend on future state budgets. Given the successful process established by these two rounds of applications, the [ARIP website](#) would be able to handle any future funding opportunities.

Tom Winker added that as co-chair of the ARIP program (with Tim Fiocchi of the Farm Bureau Federation and with contributions from Henry Schienenbeck), he is optimistic that the ARIP will be continued due to the need and the process established for awarding the grants. He said the Wisconsin Towns Association will lobby for its continuation and that the “6 to 20” culverts and bridges will be another factor in emphasizing the needs of rural roads.

#### **Intermodal Report Update – Presentation (10:25 a.m.)**

*Dave Leucinger, WisDOT*

Dave Leucinger gave the FAC members an update on the Intermodal Report Update, which was nearing release at the time of the meeting. He noted the report was an update and supplement to the 2019 report, rather than a full rewrite. He briefly went through the timeline of the first Intermodal report, from the meetings of the Intermodal Subcommittee of the FAC in 2017 and 2018, to the issuance of the report in March 2019, accompanied by subsequent outreach summits in Milwaukee and Appleton.

Mr. Leucinger then noted the 2019-21 Biennial Budget established funding for regional intermodal studies, which included the East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission’s (ECWRPC) Northeast Wisconsin Intermodal Freight Facility Study - Phase I (completed in May of 2022) and the North Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission’s (NCWRPC) Intermodal Terminal Opportunities for Wisconsin and Eastern Minnesota (completed in August 2024). He also noted that the ECWRPC began a Phase II study in April of 2024, and that in summer 2023 Governor Evers directed WisDOT to update the March 2019 Report.

In discussing the goals of the 2025 Update, Mr. Leucinger noted the two areas of focus are data and factors shaping operations. He also noted the 2025 report is more focused on Wisconsin’s freight operations and factors shaping availability and viability of intermodal facility development. The 2025 Update also incorporates findings from the two regional studies into a discussion of opportunities. Within the data, the update addresses port volumes, trade lanes, global and North American supply chain factors, and rail mergers and partnerships. There are also updates to the terminal data and information for northern Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, as well as updates to the current inland maritime operations. The report also includes updated data and analysis on rates for container movement into the Midwest from both coasts, and drayage rates to and from the terminals in Chicago / Joliet and the Twin Cities.

Mr. Leucinger emphasized the critical importance that the two regional studies had played in development of the Update. The Phase I ECWRPC study was conducted to assess market feasibility. That report concluded that threshold could be reached with as little as seven percent of demand, and that the region had several feasible sites. However, most of the region's potential intermodal traffic is outbound domestic freight and railroads would be challenged by traffic imbalances and interchange costs and delays in Chicago.

The NCWRPC study provided a detailed regional assessment of the freight users, commodities, and trends shaping and limiting opportunities. It also identified the most promising lanes for single-line operations (Texas, California, Kansas City, Memphis) and potential lanes with interchange to a different rail company (Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, Georgia). This study developed a weighted methodology to rank potential intermodal terminal locations, using criteria such as Class I rail access, available land, highway access, keystone customers, and local support. Applying these and other factors, the most promising sites were identified along CPKC in the Milwaukee area and CN in the North Fond du Lac area. However, sites along the UP in southeastern Wisconsin could be elevated to the upper tier if height clearance issues on their corridor could be addressed.

Of note, Mr. Leucinger said both regional studies reaffirmed WisDOT's 2019 Intermodal Report assertions that successful intermodal operations require lane balance, sufficient and sustainable volumes, project champions and/or anchor customers, and multi-level facilitation by governments. He added that container owners need to have their containers moving, and importers typically pay most of the costs for container movement. He also noted Wisconsin has more overseas imports than exports, but more domestic outbound freight than inbound freight. Further, much of Wisconsin is within the catchment areas of Chicago and Minneapolis, and that tracking end-to-end container shipping is complicated by Canadian port arrivals and drayage through Chicago. In addition, system 'shocks' at bottleneck points and economic uncertainties have been influencing freight volumes and rates.

Mr. Leucinger added that the CPKC Railway merger marked another significant change, opening single-line rail service between the Midwest and Mexico. As Mexico's industrial base expands, this merger – and other collaborative services (such as the UP / CN Falcon service) are strengthening the north – south flow for rail and intermodal freight, a shift from the previous west – east paradigm. All these factors have contributed to a volatile rate environment, with some delivered costs from Asia using east coast ports being lower than those through west coast ports. He added that the Phase II Intermodal report from ECWRPC should give further data on potential champions for intermodal service and identify some of the more promising locations for a potential facility location.

Mr. Leucinger concluded by noting the large pool of intermodal stakeholders and the need for communication and partnerships across the entire set of participants. The current uncertainty means old paradigms may no longer apply, but that new opportunities may emerge. Collaboration and communication are more important than ever, as well as maintaining a long-term perspective. WisDOT will continue to assist with education and communication.

### **State Freight Plan Part 1: Background and Structure (10:55 a.m.)**

*Matthew Umhoefer, WisDOT*

The next presentation reintroduced the FAC to the existing State Freight Plan (SFP), and to the process for its next iteration. Matt Umhoefer discussed what the SFP provides: vision and goals for Wisconsin's freight program, positioning the state to remain competitive in the global marketplace. The plan is

multimodal and looks a decade ahead to freight needs in the state. Its importance is in consolidating all WisDOT freight policies in a single document, strategically identifying freight needs that support the state's economy. The SFP also allows WisDOT access to a freight-specific pool of federal funding. That linkage was established by federal law in December 2015; since then, WisDOT has published two SFPs – one in 2018 and the second and current one in 2023. The last federal reauthorization required states to submit new freight plans every four years.

Mr. Umhoefer noted the FAC has been a key stakeholder in the development of the two previous SFPs, with the content of each meeting either directly or indirectly shaping the content and policies. He offered the example of June 2022, where discussions on the impacts of e-commerce and freight's interaction with the environment were incorporated into the SFP.

The federal funding under the first SFP amounted to over \$120 million, Umhoefer said. These funds were applied to Major projects on I-39/90 and I-43. The first SFP also marked the development of the Multimodal Freight Network Tool and set the stage for the Intermodal Subcommittee and Intermodal Report. The Second SFP is expected to bring \$136 million in federal fiscal years 2023 through 2027. It consolidated freight policies and strategies from multiple planning documents and discusses macro-level trends and challenges. The federal freight funds have been more geographically distributed, including projects in the Fox Valley on I-41 and I-94 in the Eau Claire area. It also addresses a local road designated federally as a Primary Highway Freight Connector: South Lincoln Memorial Drive at Port Milwaukee.

Mr. Umhoefer then outlined the 17 requirements of SFPs under 49 USC 70202. Among the requirements he highlighted are the critical rural and urban freight corridors; he noted WisDOT worked with SEWRPC and others on designated these routes. He also noted the required inventory of bottlenecks and solution strategies, and how data from the American Transportation Research Institute shows Wisconsin has made significant progress on its major bottlenecks. Mr. Umhoefer also noted the environmental elements which were a challenge for some states, and the consultation with FACs requirement that underscores the value of the Wisconsin FAC.

In the next iteration of the SFP, Mr. Umhoefer noted the expected sections will cover stakeholder engagement, freight system conditions and performance, modal freight forecasts, the economic context of freight, trends and challenges, freight policies and strategies, system needs, and a freight investment implementation plan. The timeline includes mileposts in spring and summer 2026 for sharing the Draft SFP outline and developing an investment plan, followed by a public comment window in late fall 2026, edits and submission to the U.S. DOT, and anticipated approval of the third Wisconsin SFP by late spring 2027. Three additional FAC meetings will occur along this timeline, giving multiple opportunities for the FAC to shape content and priorities. WisDOT will also conduct outreach and presentations to multiple stakeholder organizations.

#### **State Freight Plan Part 1: Background and Structure – Tabletop Discussions (11:15 p.m.)**

This information has been collected in a separate document.

## **State Freight Plan Part 2: Summary of Policies (12:35 p.m.)**

*Dave Leucinger, WisDOT*

*Sarah Simonson, WisDOT*

Following lunch, Dave Leucinger and Sarah Simonson presented an overview of the SFP policies. Mr. Leucinger said the current SFP policies represent a collection of policies and practices from existing programs, affirmation of existing policies from the first SFP and from other plans (including Connect 2050 and the State Rail Plan), streamlining of redundant policies, and recognition of federal requirements. A total of 73 policies were separately identified, and then grouped either by mode or by an “all modes” theme. Policies for highways and local roads were dominant, with 31 separate policies. For the other modes, multiple policies were identified for rail (13 policies), maritime (5), and pipeline (4). The clusters under “all modes” included environmental (6 policies), “other” (8), and “all modes” (4).

Mr. Leucinger then offered the FAC examples of policies in which WisDOT has made demonstrable progress. One policy, to “Investigate ways to simplify, streamline, and provide more permitting options” has been achieved through an updated online automated permit issuance system. Another accomplishment is the policy “Preserve a sub-system of Wisconsin’s State Highways that accommodate over-height loads (up to 20 feet), over-weight and oversize loads.” This policy has been achieved through the maintenance of statewide, regional, and Milwaukee County routes for OSOW, High Clearance, and Wind Towers. Another example of a policy accomplishment was “Support an increase in the availability of truck parking and related infrastructure at state-owned facilities and raise the awareness of its availability,” which was addressed through multiple projects to increase capacity, upgrade rest areas, and provide capacity information.

There are other SFP policies that are “still in progress,” Mr. Leucinger said. One is the policy to “preserve the local road and bridge system.” This activity is ongoing, through continued collaboration with MPOs, RPCs, counties, and municipalities, along with advocacy for and grants awarded under the Agricultural Roads Improvement Program (ARIP). Another policy still in progress is “Complete [the] currently enumerated Southeast Wisconsin Freeway Megaprojects Program [projects].” At present, the I-94 North-South project has been completed; meanwhile, projects are underway on I-43 North and I-894, while agreements are in place for I-94 East-West.

Other “in progress” policies cover other modes. For example, a rail policy says that WisDOT will “...continue to work with different stakeholders following the conclusion of the FAC’s Intermodal Subcommittee.” In support of the development of intermodal freight opportunities, WisDOT has supported two regional intermodal freight studies, is participating in a current regional study, is updating its previous intermodal report, and continues to have multiple discussions with interested stakeholders and groups. For the policy to “Preserve Wisconsin’s branch and short line network,” WisDOT has continued freight rail program loans and grants to improve infrastructure on light-density freight rail lines. Another ongoing policy on the maritime side is to “Examine and address roadway issues at ports.” In support, WisDOT has held ongoing discussions on improved access, including at Port Milwaukee – which will receive federal freight funding for roadway improvements under its designation as an intermodal connector.

## **State Freight Plan Part 2: Summary of Policies – Tabletop Discussions (12:55 p.m.)**

This information has been collected in a separate document.



### **State Freight Plan Part 3: Options for Improvement (1:10 p.m.)**

*Dave Leucinger, WisDOT*

*Sarah Simonson, WisDOT*

The final presentation provided a context for potential options to improve the SFP in its next iteration. Mr. Leucinger noted there were several opportunities for potential improvements. Among these are improvements in freight forecasts, using new and improved public sources, having data with a greater level of granularity, and possibly access to anonymized private sector data. There is also the opportunity to update the freight factor scoring tool, and to potentially review and adjust the methodology applied to create the scoring. One other likely improvement will be a greater discussion and consideration of resiliency and risk assessment. There will likely be the opportunity to incorporate WisDOT-developed methodology focused on flood vulnerability, while also referencing examples from other states. The discussion of resiliency and the metrics used to measure it are also being considered.

Other potential improvements in the next iteration of the SFP could expand themes not thoroughly addressed in previous versions, Mr. Leucinger said. One theme would be that of harmonization and collaboration – a discussion of how WisDOT works with surrounding states, with communities inside of Wisconsin, and with the private sector to improve freight movement. This section could look at developing new policies on cooperation and sharing of information and could highlight some of the freight studies from the Mid-America Freight Coalition. Another thematic area that may be expanded is that of freight safety and security. Through this section, the SFP could provide greater recognition of WisDOT's roles and partnerships on freight safety, including improved connections to the Strategic Highway Safety Plan. This section could also provide opportunities to discuss and highlight the private sector efforts on safety and security, including accomplishments and ongoing concerns.

Mr. Leucinger then offered a vision of another potential improvement for the SFP – enhancing the narrative and graphs with video clips. These could provide visual demonstrations of freight operations, narrated by WisDOT officials or by industry experts. These clips could also illustrate areas and topics of concern, discuss challenges and options, and offer brief interviews with key players in freight operations and economic development in Wisconsin. Finally, the next SFP could look to other states for examples of ideas on content and structure to see if there are better organizational ways to convey information on SFP policies.

### **State Freight Plan Part 3: Options for Improvement – Tabletop Discussions (1:20 p.m.)**

This information has been collected in a separate document.

### **Report Out of Tabletops (1:40 p.m.)**

#### Table 1

- There is a need to make the plan easier to understand, especially the policies, such as making it concise and simple.
- The plan should be the primary tool for grant applications.
- The plan should also talk about the successes from the past and be able to point to the successes.
- It would be beneficial to include documentation and case studies.

Table 2

- The overall process is working well.
- The plan should look at the connectivity and connection points between the topics and modes.
- The plan should be agile and flexible enough to respond changes.
- Look at outcome-specific policies as well as look at how the modes connect to those outcomes.
- Demonstrate how the various topics are connected through visualizations and values, as well as the who, when and why.
- Mention career opportunities with the various industries.
- Make the plan more visual.

Table 3

- A lot of discussion across the three parts centered around funding, such as including information on the impact of tariffs, how projects are being funded, and incentives for businesses.

Table 4

- It will be important to get the people who know about the intermodal closures and the challenges surrounding intermodal to the table. As well as lean on freight brokers to discuss intermodal challenges.
- Fully electronic permitting and/or a national e-permitting system that drivers could access.
- Create a story map for the freight plan to tell a story about freight in the state.

Table 5

- A distinction between intrastate, interstate, and international trade/travel.
- More outreach to individual companies.
- Discussion on the supply chain and critical inputs, including things like embargos. Does the state have a role in mitigating the impacts of embargos?
- Add resiliency and redundancy in the plan.
- Additional focus on military freight.
- Further explore the idea of a story map.

Table 6

- The policies seem siloed and need to be connected across the modes as well as a demonstration of how the policies connect to each other.
- Discuss data validity, as well as data limitations.
- The department should hold roundtables with industry leaders and determine how the policies align with industry needs.

Table 7

- A more holistic approach to what is being brought to the table, such as joint financing committees and cross-departmental coordination, such as DNR.

Other Comments

- The work that is being done, especially with permitting, is excellent. Wisconsin has the best system for permitting.

**Closing Remarks (1:55 p.m.)**

*Matt Umhoefer, WisDOT*

In his closing remarks, Mr. Umhoefer thanked attendees for sharing their time and information with WisDOT, noting once again the importance of their role in shaping the next iteration of the SFP.

**Field Trip: Walgreen's Distribution Center, Windsor, WI (3:00 p.m.)**

Following the formal meeting of the FAC, approximately 25 members and WisDOT staff traveled to the Walgreen's Distribution Center in Windsor, WI. The facility handles the non-pharmaceutical portion of Walgreen's business – from food to household products. The facility covers more than 920,000 square feet and utilizes a vertical rack system to hold pallets of products for orders. Product orders are transmitted and picked in a sequence where trailers are loaded so that the final store destination is loaded first. The facility serves 695 different Walgreen's retail locations in Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, Iowa, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and Northern Illinois. On average, the facility receives and places 85,000 cases of products daily; it ships an average of 73,000 cases daily.

Intermodal freight is used by Walgreens in limited amounts. The entire corporation receives approximately 8,000 intermodal containers per year; the Windsor site averages 30 containers per week.