



TMACOG Freight Advisory Committee Agenda & Notes – January 2021

Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 11:30 a.m. via video conference

Welcome and introductions – Ray Huber, Committee Chair

1. Finding a Food Truck – Responses by state DOTs; realities truckers experienced; opportunities to adjust for future responses – Scott Grenerth, Truck Specialized Parking Services

Scott Grenerth presented on the problem of truckers being able to access food during the early days of COVID-19 pandemic. Food trucks in public truck stops became an emergency source for truckers. Scott looked at what worked and what did not. Below are some of the main points from the presentation and from the committee discussion:

- During the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic, many businesses were forced to close including restaurants at truck stops. With a strong demand for groceries, basic household and cleaning products, truckers were still hard at work and now faced the problem of not being able to find food on the road.
- Even as restaurants began to reopen, business hours were sporadic, drive throughs do not allow trucks or walk-ups, and grocery stores had limited hours or stock, especially if a trucker is arriving after a late evening delivery.
- Under normal circumstances, commercial food trucks are not allowed in truck stops on federal aid highways which include interstates. In April 2020, as an emergency measure to get food to truckers, the FHWA and many state DOTs allowed food trucks access to rest areas.
- ODOT received 275 applications from food vendors to operate in 86 rest areas. ODOT ended the food truck operations in mid-June as restaurants returned to regular schedules. Although many truckers took advantage of the trucks while they were available, there were many problems with the operation.
- Scott Grenerth researched the pandemic food truck operation for a Transportation Research Board (TRB) presentation. He used driver forums and conversations with drivers and a DOT survey through AASHTO to determine what worked and what did not.
- Some of the problems he identified included: Many DOTs did not recognize that there was a food access problem or failed to recognize the scope; some states allowed food trucks while other did not for various reasons; there was inadequate communication to drivers letting them know food trucks were available; and signage was non-existent or inadequate for drivers to see before they passed a rest area.
- From our meeting conversation: If there is a COVID scale interruption in food service in the future, federal and state authorities need to be prepared to take



immediate emergency action to safeguard vital deliveries, which includes supplying drivers; there needs to be a federal and state coordinated approach to providing food service; regulations and schedules need to be consistent across state lines; communicating the availability of food trucks needs to be improved as well as signage guiding truckers to the sites, possibly using portable signs.

A PDF of Scott's presentation will be sent to all committee members, and will be available on the Freight Advisory Committee page of the TMACOG website (www.tmacog.org) in the coming weeks.

2. Update on Regional Freight-Related News, Developments, and Projects – Roger Streiffert, TMACOG

Here are some miscellaneous freight-related items of interest:

- The American Transportation Research Institute (ATRI) has released it's 2020 top trucking industry issues. Number one for commercial drivers is *truck parking* while number one for motor carriers is *driver shortage*. The list will be sent to all committee members.
- The US 23 Centerline Study, funded by TMACOG, MORPC, and ODOT, will look for solutions for the need of a direct, efficient truck route between Toledo and Columbus. The study will concentrate on US 23 north of I-270 and is scheduled to be completed in March of 2022. Input from trucking interests will be important to the study. We will look at the study in more detail at a future meeting.
- Joe Comartin, Consul General of the Canadian Consulate in Detroit presented on the Gordie Howe Bridge construction at TMACOG's winter General Assembly. Consul General Comartin stated that they do not expect a sudden increase in truck traffic when the bridge opens in 2024, but volumes may increase as traffic patterns change in the years following the opening. We will continue to follow the bridge's construction and possible regional effects.
- The SR 795 corridor study from I-75 to I-280 is complete. A smart mobility corridor study will be completed for the same corridor. Staff will follow-up on the SR 795 corridor study results at a future meeting.
- Transport Ohio, the state's freight transportation plan, will be updated in 2021 with a completion date of January of 2022. TMACOG and the freight advisory committee will contribute to the update as requested by ODOT.
- TMACOG's 2022 annual work program (AWP) for freight planning will be completed in February. A draft document will be sent to committee members for your comments and approval in the coming weeks.
- The new Ohio Freight Advisory Council will include two MPO representatives: Robyn Bancroft from OKI (Cincinnati) and Dina Lopez from MORPC (Columbus).



The 2021 Ohio Conference on Freight will be held via video conference on May 20 and 21. Details on both to follow.

- Cleveland Cliffs' Toledo plan began operations in November 2020 and will begin shipping HBI to customers later in the first quarter of 2021. CC has also recently acquired AK Steel and ArcelorMittal USA steelmakers.
- TMACOG and others have authored resolutions supporting legislative action that will grant permanent permissive authority to hold public meetings via teleconference beyond July 1 of 2021. TMACOG is planning to use a hybrid of in-person and teleconference meetings beyond the pandemic.

3. Roundtable Discussion or Announcements – All Attendees

Tom Galloway talked about ongoing efforts to support the establishment of a National Infrastructure Bank. Information on an upcoming Zoom meeting and a link to what a NIB could mean to Michigan were sent to committee members.

Meeting Adjourned

Schedule of 2021 TMACOG Freight Advisory Committee Meetings:

Wednesday, January 27, 2021, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, March 24, 2021, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, May 26, 2021, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, July 28, 2021, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 11:30 a.m.

Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 11:30 a.m.