Talking Freight: Trucker Engagement, Outreach, and Parking Needs

Memphis MPO
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Pragati.Srivastava@memphistn.gov
www.memphismpo.org
About Memphis MPO

• Bi-State MPO – TN and MS
  ▫ **Planning area:** 2 full counties and 2 partial counties

• Coordination with West Memphis MPO, AR

• Population approx. **1.1 million**

• Employment – **1 in 4** in transportation and warehouse sector
About Memphis MPO – Freight Overview

4 R’s

ROADS

RIVER

5th Largest Inland Port

RAIL

RUNWAY

5 class 1’s railroads with over $400 million invested in last few years

Busiest cargo airport in N. America
Greater Memphis Regional Freight Plan

• The Greater Memphis Regional Freight Plan is a comprehensive examination of multimodal transportation and industrial area inventory, project needs, environmental impacts, and emerging trade & technological trends – Including West Memphis, AR

• Formal planning began May 2016

• Trucker and Public surveys conducted February 2017

• Freight Plan adopted in November 2017
Stakeholder Meetings

Meetings w/ freight companies, chambers of commerce, ports
Meetings w/ local jurisdictions
Direct survey of truckers in the Memphis area
Online survey of Memphis area residents

Regional Freight Plan

MPO committee meetings
Trucker Engagement

• Reaching out to truckers captured “Man on the Street” perspectives and concerns beyond that of corporate management

• **Obstacle:** Truck stops refused to allow surveys on premises

• **Solution:** Conducted trucker surveys at multiple repair shops, dealerships, and truck washes throughout the region

• Trucker survey conducted over two weeks at 7 locations in Tennessee, Arkansas, and Mississippi using iPads

• A survey link was also included in the back of Tennessee Trucking Newsline, but no responses were received
Trucker Survey Questions

• 10 Questions total, including:

• Where did your trip start and what is your final destination?

• What are some potential opportunities or solutions to improve freight movement?

• Were you or your business impacted by extreme weather situations in the past 5 years? If so, how and by what?

• In your opinion how would you rate the freight infrastructure condition in the Greater Memphis Area?
Trucker Survey Results

294 Survey Responses

Challenges

Extreme weather impact

Potential solutions
Trucker Survey Results

More Findings:

• ~25% of truckers surveyed identified as independent, and many of the rest worked for companies of 50 people or less

• Truckers did not express concerns about driver shortages or technological changes that troubled management

Open-Ended Responses

Some “Most Favorable Memphis Area Conditions” Responses

- Great BBQ/Great food (x5)
- Good Weather
- Elvis Presley (x2)
- “Y’all keep it moving”

Some “Most Challenging Memphis Area Conditions” Responses

- Bad drivers
- Bad Weather
- Missed Superbowl
- “Everything is bad” (x3)
Public Survey

Online Public Survey

• Promoted through social media, email, TV & print news media, public notices, etc

• Short survey intended to be quick and easy to complete

• Informs Memphis MPO about public opinion AND gets public to think about the importance of freight & shipping for the region
Public Survey Results

Have you faced any of the following issues:
(Select all that apply)

Answered: 303  Skipped: 101

- Truck Parking in neighborhoods
- Extensive Delays at Railroad Crossings
- Accidents involving trucks
- Undue noise from trucks

404 Survey Responses

Note:
- Both truckers and the public had concerns about lack of dedicated truck parking
Lessons Learned

• Identify multiple methods of outreach and discover what works

• Get creative about finding new places and workarounds when things fall through

• Shorter surveys get more results

• Look for common points among multiple groups:
  • e.g. A need for more truck parking
Next Steps

• Inventoried (High level) existing truck parking facilities, as part of Greater Memphis Regional Freight Plan

• Possibly working with State DOTs to address truck parking issues:
  • Further engage truckers and trucking association
  • Location identification
  • Explore usage of ITS solutions in providing parking availability to truckers