Appendix B: Stakeholder Outreach Summary

(2022 Washington State Freight System Plan Update)

Draft: July 29, 2022

DRAFT COPY – Outreach in Progress

Please note that this Stakeholder Outreach Summary is scheduled to be finished in September 2022, when outreach for the public review of the draft plan is complete.

This current outreach summary is not complete and is subject to change.

Appendix B: Stakeholder Outreach Summary documents the 2022 Washington State Freight System Plan Update’s stakeholder outreach process, thematic findings, and how the findings were used within the plan.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
Stakeholder and Public Outreach Strategy

Outreach and engagement aim to inform, educate, and provide opportunities for stakeholders to participate in the 2022 Freight System Plan Update and provide useful and timely feedback to support planning and technical analysis. The outreach strategy was crafted to satisfy FHWA requirements and WSDOT’s standards for engagement and accessibility, and to advance equitable community participation.

Three targeted audiences

1. Internal Stakeholders: WSDOT Divisions and Teams

WSDOT Rail, Freight and Ports Division engaged coworkers who are working on plans and projects that may affect freight. Internal stakeholders include various offices within WSDOT with plans or knowledge relevant to freight transportation.

Key WSDOT staff were engaged through:

- Presentations to standing committees and work groups (i.e. Planning Managers and Multimodal Technical Forum).
- An electronic survey on issues, trends, and needs related to freight movement in existing plans and workstreams, as well as relevant data that is available.
- Follow up consultations to ensure further opportunity for discussion and input.

2. External Stakeholders: Subject Matter Experts

WSDOT conducted in-depth interviews with identified freight Stakeholders that included the types of groups recommended in federal guidelines for Freight Stakeholder Committees and in the 2020 WSDOT Freight Stakeholder Group Report.

Examples include representatives of the ports, freight railroads, shippers, carriers, freight-related associations, third-party logistics providers, and the industry workforce.

Interviews were also conducted with representatives of Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations on key trends, needs, and issues they perceive related to freight and how National Highway Freight Program funds could be invested and might be matched.

3. External Stakeholders: Broader Communities

Outreach also will be conducted among ultimate consumers of freight, neighbors to freight activities, those who may depend on freight for their livelihood, and the public who may have an interest in freight movement. Education was important element of the outreach to the broader communities to ensure freight transportation planning issues resonated with the audience. Specific targets of broader outreach were tribal, environmental justice communities, and environmental and public health interests. Broader community engagement included:

- Post project information on the WSDOT website and conduct on-line open houses to solicit feedback
- Disseminate “Quick Hit” articles through social media channels on major freight topics (i.e. environmental, technology, social issues) to pique the interest of readers, help the public learn more about issues important to freight, and provide opportunities to share their perspectives
• Share easy-to-read fact sheets and short videos highlighting specific topic areas and soliciting feedback
• Share electronic information (online posts, videos, emails) for organizations to use in reaching their members and networks
• Develop and distribute online surveys to solicit public feedback, using paid promotions to targeted audiences to reach those who might otherwise not be reached
• Host a webinar(s) for interested parties to share information and allow for one-on-one questions and answers

Outreach Efforts to Date

Internal Outreach to WSDOT Stakeholders

Outreach to internal stakeholders in WSDOT has been a continuous effort since before the formal start of the FSP update process. However, there have been notable outreach events conducted, and these events are noted below.

Internal Survey

In November 2021, Rail, Freight, and Ports staff distributed an internal survey Word document to other WSDOT Offices, Divisions, and Regions. This survey was created and distributed to help meet three main goals:

1. Identify how other groups’ work intersects with freight transportation.
2. Collect feedback on freight-related needs and issues identified in ongoing work and stakeholder outreach.
3. Identify plans, data, and other resources that may be relevant for the development of the FSP.
4. Provide other groups with the opportunity to learn more about WSDOT’s freight work.

Internal Meetings

Currently, FSP updates and request for information have been provided at two WSDOT meetings, with a third meeting expected:

- WSDOT Multimodal Technical forum (April 20)
- WSDOT Planning Mangers Meeting (April 26)
- WSDOT Training and Data Academy (June 22)

External Outreach

Like internal engagement, external engagement has continued throughout the plan process, with earlier efforts focused on consultations to collect feedback about freight transportation assets, needs, and issues, and more-recent efforts focused on sharing information about plan findings and collecting feedback on those findings.

Consultations

The purpose of consultations was to conduct small-group discussion with freight transportation stakeholders, with the goal of better understanding the freight transportation, its uses, needs and issues, impacts and potential improvements. Figure 1 lists the consultations completed during the FSP’s development.
Freight Subject Matter Experts

- Washington Public Ports Association
- Washington Trucking Association
- Spokane Airports
- Palouse RTPO
- Washington State Tree Fruit Association
- Shaver Transportation
- Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
- Spokane Regional Transportation Council
- Oregon Department of Transportation
- Washington State Department of Commerce
- WSU Freight Policy Transportation Institute
- Idaho Transportation Department
- Boeing
- Regional Transportation Council
- Port of Camas-Washougal
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway
- ILWU
- US Oil & Refinery
- Port of Bellingham
- Washington Association of Wheat Growers
- Port of Seattle
- Teamsters
- The International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program
- Port of Pasco Economic Development
- Clark County
- Port of Seattle – Air Cargo
- University of Washington Supply Chain Transportation Center
- BP
- City of SeaTac
- Washington Department of Agriculture
- Washington State Potato Commission

Equity Interviews

- Port of Seattle – Community Engagement
- Washington Department of Public Health, Environmental Justice Council
- The Nature Conservancy
- Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, Yakima
- Asian Pacific Islander Coalition, Chairs
- Washington Department of Agriculture

Presentations, Group Meetings and Listening Sessions

Larger group meetings and presentations were opportunities to provide different groups with information about the plan process and preliminary findings. In addition to these informational presentations, WSDOT conducted “listening session” meetings that were tailored with the primary goal
of collecting feedback from participants.

Figure 2: DRAFT External Outreach Meetings and Outreach Events

- FSP update for Washington Public Ports Association (Dec 14)
- Informational Webinar for NHFP Project Requests (Jan 19)
- Whitman County Local Emergency Planning Committee (Feb 17)
- Tribal Listening Session (April 11)
- Truck Driver Listening Session (April 18)
- Washington Public Ports Association Spring Meeting (May 4)
- General Information Public Webinar (May 11)
- Freight Plan Webinar for MPOs and RTPOs (June 14)

Online Survey and Freight Plan Email

To facilitate further outreach and collect feedback to inform development of the draft FSP, WSDOT circulated an online public survey in June through email and the WSDOT Facebook page. As of writing, this survey had over 380 responses, and feedback on key trends, needs, and issues has been incorporated into the draft FSP.

Themes from Feedback

Some common comments from external feedback include:

- Continued concern about the shortage of truck drivers. This was a very frequent comment from consultations, and survey respondents ranked this topic as the most-important freight challenge in Washington.
- Truck congestion and congestion caused by truck traffic is a concern in urban areas, particularly in areas around major freight facilities such as warehouses and ports.
- Continued supply chain disruptions are a concern for all industries, as well as many consumers and community members who responded to the public survey.

How Feedback is Being Used

Feedback has been incorporated into the draft plan document in multiple ways. First, assessments of needs and issues in the plan and appendices reflect problems and challenges mentioned through outreach. Second, the plan’s implementation strategies respond to these needs and issues and reflect solutions that stakeholders raised as being important or relevant.