

# STATE FREIGHT ADVISORY COMMITTEE



## Freight Summit and State Freight Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, December 8, 2025 | Time: 9:00 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.

### Attendees

- Shawn Ames, Maryland Aviation Administration
- Geoff Anderson, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Toluwani Awosika, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Neela Babu, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Aubrei Barton, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Stacey Beckett, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Samantha Biddle, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Dan Blevins, WILMAPCO
- Jennifer Brody, AFCO
- Samuel Brooks, District Department of Transportation
- Marissa Brown, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Sabrina Causley, The Eastern Transportation Coalition
- Jasmine Champion, FHWA
- George Chen, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Jeff Cleland, Amazon
- Matt Doyle, Maryland Department of Commerce
- Morgan Ellis, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Michele Gross, Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration
- Brian Hammock, CSX Transportation, Inc.
- Stephen Hanrahan, DDOT
- Tom Harrington, MWCOG/TPB
- Nick Henninger-Ayoub, Maryland Economic Development Corporation
- Kandese Holford, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Billy Hwang, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Ryan Iacaruso, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Nicole Katsikides, Ph.D., Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Shawn Kiernan, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Aviva Klugh, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Keith Kucharek, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
- Chris Lamm, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
- Todd Lang, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
- Jody Lassiter, CSX Transportation, Inc.
- Toria Lassiter, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Ellery Loomis, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Thomas Mackay, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Laura MacNeil, District Department of Transportation

- L'Kiesha Markley, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Michelle Martin, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Parto Mazdeyasni, Maryland Port Administration
- Roxane Mukai, Maryland Transportation Authority
- Matt Mullenax, Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle MPO
- Janie Nham, MWCOG/TPB
- Monika Pal, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
- Marygrace Parker, The Eastern Transportation Coalition
- Andrew Petrisin, Laneway
- Jeff Purdy, FHWA
- Chad Reese, WRA
- John Rotz, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Brett Ripkin, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Kathy Robertson, Maryland Transit Administration
- Brian Ryder, Baltimore Metropolitan Council
- Nanette Schieke, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Dominic Scurti, Maryland Port Administration
- Solomon Seifu, District Department of Transportation
- Bradley Smith, Maryland Port Administration
- Kipp Snow, Community College of Baltimore County
- Emma Stockton, Cambridge Systematics, Inc.
- Jason Stolicny, Maryland Transportation Authority
- Jacqueline Thorne, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- Daniel Wanke, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- Vinn White, MDOT The Secretary's Office
- L.D. White, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Christopher Wichman, Geotab
- Lamin Williams, Maryland State Highway Administration
- Darrell Wilson, Norfolk Southern

## Welcome

**Vinn White, MDOT The Secretary's Office (MDOT TSO).** White welcomed attendees, thanked speakers for joining, and acknowledged that this summit also doubles as a State Freight Advisory Committee meeting. He touched on the State Freight Plan process kicking off and that this group is crucial to that effort representing the freight community and advising the State on priorities, policies, issues, projects, and funding needs in order to advance Freight Goals and Objectives.

## Keynote

**Samantha Biddle, Maryland Transportation Acting Secretary.** Biddle welcomed attendees and highlighted Maryland's strong investment in transportation infrastructure, emphasizing significant funding for trains, freight, airports, and the port. She discussed efforts to enhance supply chain resilience and improve the flow of goods, with major projects expected to conclude early next year. Key initiatives include improving port connectivity, utilizing an \$80 million U.S. National Infrastructure Project Assistance (MEGA) Grant for the Harbor Tunnel toll plaza replacement, launching Maryland's first statewide rail grant program, and kicking off the drafting of the state's next freight plan.

*Safety*

**Stacy Beckett, MDOT TSO.** Beckett emphasized MDOT is “Serious about Safety” and highlighted Maryland’s Vision Zero goal to eliminate all vehicle-related deaths by 2030. She noted the risks at rail crossings, with a person or vehicle struck by a train every three hours and discussed the re-establishment of Operation Lifesaver in 2022—a nationally recognized rail safety education program with 26 active volunteers in Maryland. Maryland has 1,200 at-grade rail crossings, and MDOT is working on truck safety measures, including ensuring hazardous material carriers stop at crossings and verifying traffic control devices. She also mentioned the Federal Rail Administration’s (FRA) free rail crossing locator app, a statewide trespassing study funded by a grant, and the upcoming “See Tracks, Think Train Week” scheduled for September 21–27, 2026.

*SFAC & State Freight Plan*

**Aviva Klugh, MDOT TSO.** Klugh discussed the State Freight Advisory Committee (SFAC) and Maryland’s State Freight Plan. The SFAC serves as a representative body for the freight community, advising on priorities, policies, projects, and funding needs to advance statewide freight goals. Membership includes MDOT, industry, associations, railroads, military, federal and local agencies, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and regional governments. The summit was the second SFAC meeting for 2025. The federally mandated State Freight Plan, updated every four years, is due in December 2026 and will align with Maryland’s 2040 Plan goals. The plan aims to build consensus, update the vision, and improve freight movement and safety. Changes from IIJA were included in the last plan, including shorter update cycles, expanded modal coverage, revised membership requirements, extended investment planning horizons, increased funding, and new environmental strategies. Klugh asked attendees to consider the State Freight Plan as they engaged with the programming of the day to provide feedback as the process kicks off.

**Part I: Operating Picture and Challenges***Modal Landscape/Hot Topics*

**Jason Stolicny, Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA)** provided an update on the Key Bridge project, which intersects with port facilities, and the implementation of All Electronic Tolling (AET). Traffic management in tunnels remains critical, with heightened enforcement for hazardous materials, weight, and height compliance. The new Key Bridge will be substantially taller at 230 feet, though still constrained by the Bay Bridge, and is currently in the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) process. Pre-construction activities include phased mechanical demolition of the existing bridge and a test pile program to advance main span foundation design.

**Dominic Scurti, Maryland Port Administration (MPA)** highlighted key initiatives at the Port of Baltimore. Updates included the Seagirt Marine Terminal improvements, the Seagirt Loop Channel deepening to 50 feet, and ongoing ecosystem restoration projects at Poplar Island and Mid-Chesapeake Bay, which use dredged material to rebuild islands. The port continues to stimulate commerce and serves as a local sponsor to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Despite losing its top ranking for autos and light trucks due to the Key Bridge collapse, the port remains first in roll-on/roll-off and sugar shipments and has maintained a top security rating for 16 consecutive years. Additional efforts include U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Ports grant-funded electrification and decarbonization measures, climate resiliency projects at Dundalk Marine Terminal, and long-term dredged material management with a 90-million-cubic-yard capacity at two Dorchester islands.

**Shawn Ames, Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA)** discussed air cargo operations at BWI Marshall, highlighting Amazon's cargo expansion and the airport's economic impact. He addressed trade pressures affecting air cargo demand, reviewed existing facilities and future cargo requirements, and emphasized growth opportunities with a 400–500-acre site available for development.

**Lamin Williams, Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)** emphasized that coordination—both internally and externally—is critical, particularly with partners such as the Port and TSO, for data collection and transfer to support performance analysis of freight movement across Maryland. Current initiatives include gathering data on trucking movements and parking, especially related to the Key Bridge, implementing updates to truck parking tools, and refining critical urban freight corridors. SHA is also actively collaborating on the State Freight Plan, the Truck Parking Study, and related efforts to ensure efficient freight flow statewide.

**After the presentations**, the discussion focused on challenges and solutions related to freight operations following the Key Bridge collapse, particularly truck parking and traffic management. Participants noted that highway improvements take time due to NEPA requirements, so efforts have centered on maximizing tunnel efficiency, stepping up enforcement, and addressing community concerns about truck traffic. Data analysis is ongoing to evaluate changes in truck parking and identify incremental improvements. On port operations, 2025 saw a strong rebound driven but was affected by factors such as new tariffs, container traffic, and shipping alliances, with opportunities emerging from projects like the Howard Street Tunnel expansion. Air cargo questions highlighted potential future shifts to Martin State and Salisbury airports to ease capacity pressures. Finally, multimodal planning was discussed, emphasizing infrastructure

capabilities, collaboration with local and state agencies, funding challenges, and partnerships with private industry to expand intermodal networks and improve cargo movement efficiency.

### *Private Sector Perspective and Reactions Panel*

- Jacqueline Thorne, MDOT TSO (moderator)
- Jeff Cleland, Amazon
- Darrell Wilson, Norfolk Southern

Wilson gave a presentation and emphasized the economic importance of freight and supply chain efficiency, noting that even a 1% change in supply chain costs can impact \$14 billion. He highlighted the company's extensive 23-state network, which serves two-thirds of U.S. consumers, and its role as the second-largest intermodal provider, with Amazon as a top customer. Norfolk Southern operates 550 active trains daily, including 80 trains between New York and Chicago, and has invested \$350 million in public-private partnerships to upgrade tunnels for double-stack containers—boosting double-stack usage to 98% and saving two days on Norfolk-to-Chicago transit times. Wilson also discussed RailPulse, an initiative to equip railcars with advanced sensors for location, condition, and health monitoring, though challenges remain with impact sensors and operational issues like hand brakes left engaged.

**The panel discussion** emphasized the need for freight resiliency and preparedness against disruptions, such as regionalizing networks to keep products closer to customers and adapting operations during crises like bridge collapses or hurricanes. Technology and automation are transforming the workforce, with artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics replacing high-risk tasks and predictive systems improving rail maintenance. Recommendations for updating freight plans included prioritizing double-stack capabilities, identifying major facilities, and engaging short-line partners. E-commerce growth remains a key driver, requiring continued investment in infrastructure. On data visibility, private companies noted that proprietary systems limit sharing, though initiatives like RailPulse may offer aggregated, non-proprietary data in the future. Public-private partnerships could enable selective data sharing, but competitive concerns and contractual complexities remain significant barriers.

### *Fireside Chat with Guest Speaker*

Vinn White of MDOT TSO, held a lunchtime discussion with **Andrew Petrison, former Deputy Assistant Secretary at the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) and Founder of Laneway**. The discussion highlighted strong growth in cargo movement without major congestion issues, supported by increased investment in digital infrastructure and visibility tools to enhance resilience amid geopolitical challenges. USDOT's Multimodal Freight Office was created to provide a neutral coordination hub for federal agencies, states, and industry, elevating freight considerations within USDOT and fostering collaboration beyond the traditionally fragmented, transactional environment. FLOW, launched during pandemic-related port congestion, improves forward-looking visibility into freight demand and capacity through voluntary data sharing, governance by USDOT's BTS, and public digital infrastructure such as APIs and downloadable datasets. Recommendations for state freight plans included making them more dynamic, collaborative, and aligned with private-sector incentives, with examples like Minnesota's active advisory committee and Delaware's strong regional performance.

## **Part 2. Successes and Solutions**

### *Rail Spotlight: Howard Street Tunnel*

**Brian Hammock, CSX and Bradley Smith, MPA** presented on a transformative rail initiative to enable double-stack intermodal service and eliminate a major bottleneck on the I-95 freight corridor. The 1.7-mile tunnel, owned and operated by CSX, was originally 18 inches too short for double-stack trains. Construction began in 2022 and is expected to finish in 2026, including improvements at 22 locations between Baltimore and Philadelphia—such as bridge modifications and replacements and track lowering at 18 sites. CSX shut down tunnel traffic on February 1, 2025, and completed lowering the tunnel floor by replacing brick inverts with concrete slabs, reopening ahead of schedule on September 26, 2025. Two Baltimore bridge projects remain: Guilford Avenue (expected opening by Christmas), North Avenue, and Harford Road. The project has required rerouting about 20 trains daily with assistance from Norfolk Southern. Strong public-private partnerships and persistent prioritization have kept the project moving, supported by outreach efforts like town halls for shippers. Once complete, the project will double rail capacity, improve competitiveness regionally and nationally, and deliver benefits beyond Maryland by strengthening the I-95 freight corridor.

### *Innovative Solutions*

**Laura MacNeil and Sam Brooks, District of Columbia Department of Transportation (DDOT)** discussed Freight Complete Streets in Washington, D.C. and how DDOT is addressing the unique challenges of an entirely urban jurisdiction, where top commodities include non-metallic minerals, waste and scrap, and food for local deliveries. E-commerce growth drives demand for short-term curb access, prompting evolving curbside regulations, demand-based pricing, and enforcement through partnerships and emerging automated systems. Street design improvements include dedicated transit lanes, extended bus stops, signal phases, and conflict zone markings. Initiatives such as an e-bike delivery pilot aim to shift app-based deliveries from gas-powered vehicles to zero-emission options, reducing congestion, emissions, and improving safety. Additionally, a delivery microhub pilot uses public or private spaces for transloading freight to smaller, low-emission vehicles for final delivery, cutting vehicle miles traveled and double parking by trucks.

**L'Keisha Markley, SHA**, presented on Maryland's Statewide Truck Parking Survey, which highlights a significant shortage of truck parking, with one spot serving 11 drivers, a critical issue given that 85% of freight tonnage moves by truck. Local challenges include community resistance to truck parking and land use changes driven by economic growth and rising e-commerce demand. Regionally, MDOT has added parking at welcome centers and plans expansions at rest areas, while exploring pilot programs such as wayfinding systems to improve decision-making. The state is also leveraging grants and funding opportunities to address these growing accommodation needs. **Billy Hwang and L.D. White, Texas A&M Transportation Institute** then provided updates on truck parking initiatives, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing parking to improve freight efficiency. The Emergency Truck Parking App now integrates real-time conditions with SHA park-and-ride data using standardized criteria, with next steps including data updates, outreach, and expansion to private facilities. The Truck Parking Implementation Plan outlines a five-year framework for analyzing, prioritizing, and delivering projects, leveraging previous freight and parking studies. Additionally, the Truck Parking Visualization Tool standardizes data for all stakeholders, showing demand clusters,

utilization patterns, and underlying metrics like INRIX non-moving trips and traffic volumes. This tool supports communication, public outreach, and planning, improving over time with more data and informing MPOs and local jurisdictions through presentations and engagement.

**Morgan Ellis, TSO** discussed the Climate Solutions Now Act, which sets a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2031. She highlighted Maryland's role in the Clean Corridor Coalition, a multistate initiative to deploy medium- and heavy-duty vehicle (MHDV) charging infrastructure along the I-95 corridor. In July 2024, Maryland secured a \$249 million grant, with an \$80 million state match, to train and support a regional workforce for this effort. The project is expected to add eight MHDV charging stations and involved extensive collaboration across multiple offices and organizations.

**Kipp Snow, Community College of Baltimore County Transportation Distribution and Logistics Institute** presented on preparing a skilled workforce for the freight industry through truck and port worker training programs. He emphasized that transportation careers remain essential as long as consumer demand exists. The Baltimore region's dynamic industry supports over 20,000 direct jobs at the Port of Baltimore and 10,000 at BWI Airport, with hundreds of thousands more indirectly linked, contributing billions in economic impact. Key challenges include labor shortages, generational divides, and adapting to technological advancements such as automation and electrification. He outlined diverse career pathways across air, rail, trucking, maritime, and logistics sectors, highlighting certifications, apprenticeships, and academic programs from high school through graduate levels. Solutions for industry include work-based learning, partnerships with education providers, customized training, and credentialing options.

#### *Industrial Development Panel*

- **Thomas Mackay, MDOT TSO (Moderator)**
- **Nick Henninger-Ayoub, MEDCO**
- **Jody Lassiter, CSX**
- **Matt Doyle, Maryland Commerce Department**
- **Jeff Purdy, FHWA**

The discussion on competitiveness emphasized Maryland's strong logistical advantages—proximity to ports, interstates, and major markets—but also its key disadvantage: a lack of business-ready industrial sites. Maryland ranks behind neighboring states due to limited site readiness programs, dense population in the east, mountainous terrain in the west, and regulatory and tax challenges. While Maryland is considered a premium location with excellent access, high labor and real estate costs make it expensive to attract businesses. Unlike Virginia, which invests \$100 million annually in site readiness, Maryland only recently launched its Certified Sites and Business Ready Sites programs through an Executive Order, with a \$3.5 million pilot and 22 sites identified. Site selection varies widely, from 250 to 25,000 acres, and readiness requires completed due diligence, infrastructure availability, and clear timelines for improvements. Challenges include local government constraints such as water capacity, land use conflicts, and NIMBY concerns, as well as workforce accessibility for rural sites. Success stories, like the redevelopment of the Cumberland site with rail access, underscore the importance of public ownership of shared infrastructure and coordinated state-local partnerships. Integrated planning is increasingly critical to address freight growth, zoning authority at the county level, infrastructure limitations, and truck parking shortages. Emerging methods to address these challenges include requiring on-site truck parking in zoning codes,

shared facilities within industrial parks, and incorporating parking needs into freight plans. Workforce access and collaboration with communities remain essential for sustainable industrial development.

### *Multistate and Regional Freight Planning*

**Marygrace Parker, The Eastern Transportation Coalition (TETC)** highlighted its role in supporting multi-state freight planning and workforce development through initiatives like the “Freight Academy” training program and resources such as the State Freight Plan Matrix, which will soon be available online. The coalition is exploring mileage-based user fees, including commercial vehicle pilots, and offers sessions on the “Value of the Corridor” to deepen understanding of regional freight significance. Upcoming resources include freight dependence data and results from the Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Studies, which identified 171 projects focused on clearance bottlenecks. TETC encourages states to share freight plan progress and leverage coalition tools and expertise for updates.

**Janie Nham, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments / National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (MWCOG/TPB)** presented that the TPB Freight Subcommittee develops a stand-alone freight plan every four years, with the next update kicking off in early 2026 and completion expected in 2027. Current trends driving freight demand include population growth of 20% by 2050, high regional incomes, and the continued rise of e-commerce and just-in-time inventory models, which increase truck usage. Key challenges include severe congestion, among the worst nationally. The previous plan addressed 20 policy topics, and future updates will continue to focus on strategies for managing growth and improving freight mobility in the region.

**Brian Ryder, Baltimore Metropolitan Council** presented its Freight Dashboard, built on the InSITE travel demand model and developed in Tableau in 2018. The dashboard allows users to sort and filter freight data by year, county, and TAZ (Traffic Analysis Zone) level, providing detailed insights into commercial service and delivery patterns. This tool supports regional freight planning and analysis and is accessible at [baltometro.org/tableau/freight](http://baltometro.org/tableau/freight).

**Daniel Wanke, American Association of State and Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO)** outlined national freight policy priorities and updates to the National Freight Strategic Plan, which emphasizes safety, security, resiliency, modernization, competitiveness, quality of life, and workforce development. Recommendations include greater flexibility in funding formulas, improved coordination across freight networks, and streamlined permitting processes. States are encouraged to propose additions to the USDOT National Multimodal Freight Network map and focus on truck parking solutions, including maintenance and coordination of locations across states. AASHTO also shared resources such as a truck parking report from 47 states and noted the Volpe Center’s new visualization for the National Highway Freight Network. Upcoming presentations will provide further guidance on these initiatives.

After the presentations, the discussion on multistate compacts revealed that, despite two decades of dialogue, there is limited consensus on scalable, proven models for freight-focused agreements. No widely accepted best practices currently exist, and progress is difficult to measure. Participants emphasized the need for continued exploration through national forums and standing committees like AASHTO. A key challenge is that infrastructure initiatives often become overly process-driven, with excessive focus on governance structures, which delays or prevents actual investment and implementation.

### **Part 3: Performance and Plan Targets**

#### *Freight Plan and Performance*

**Toria Lassiter, SHA** discussed federal requirements under Transportation Performance Management (TPM), which mandate performance targets for the National Highway System (NHS). SHA, which authored the 2017 freight plan and contributed to the 2022 update, is responsible for federal performance measures, identifying top truck bottlenecks, and developing the freight investment plan. The Truck Travel Time Reliability (TTTR) measure, a key freight reliability metric from TPM, is incorporated into the state freight plan and will be reported in October 2026, with adjustments made following the Francis Scott Key Bridge collapse. SHA also manages National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) formula funds by identifying and prioritizing projects aligned with state freight plan goals, using performance-based decision-making that overlays the Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) with bottleneck maps to guide investment planning.

#### *Facilitated Feedback*

**Chris Lamm, Cambridge Systematics** led an interactive session to get attendees' feedback at the end of the Freight Summit.

The first question was: “I learned \_\_\_\_\_ today that I will take back to my work.” Answers included:

- Information for CDL drivers that we should consider linking to on website
- That MDOT is updating their freight plan
- Federal and MPO tools that can help analyze the state freight network
- Freight is the glue to all goods and services
- About economic development activities
- About specific roles of MPOs and MDOT modes in freight planning
- TPB is doing freight plan at same time
- There are small scale economic development opportunities that could be better coordinated between commerce and MDOT
- Importance of local govt participation
- About the relationship between state economic development and commerce agencies and the freight and developer sector
- I learned more about MDOT's state of freight. The good they are doing and the areas of opportunity MDOT is considering.
- More about railroads and shippers (Amazon)
- The latest in workforce development resources
- Maryland has some good opportunities to connect their workforce to business needs
- MDOT and an MPO are updating freight plans at the same time
- MDOT freight plan development timeline
- There are lots of topics that MDOT can include in the freight plan update to enhance the product. So much good information shared today.
- About the broad impacts of rail projects
- State freight plan matrix, multi-modal freight network AASHTO comments and visualization tool

- Freight and safety like railroad crossings
- Focus on data
- Impressed by Howard Street Tunnel project

The second question was: “**The Maryland State Freight Plan can support my work by \_\_\_\_\_.**” Answers included:

- Informing of the connectivity, coordination, efficiency, regulation, and resiliency of Maryland Freight
- Strategically leveraging data and information to seek resources and justify the need to address things like truck parking, land use and workforce needs around projects
- Aligning freight plans to include workforce development training
- Showing what areas need more CDL drivers so that we can target education and resources to those parts of the state
- Integrating land use planning and site development resources
- Addressing the needs that are not popular - space for truck parking
- Informing freight performance measures in the next Attainment Report major update
- As an MPO, we can use a State Freight Plan to prioritize and score freight projects
- Lesson learned: HST had support in documents like the freight plan from a broad group of stakeholders
  - Adding that other entities can point to the plan to support funding applications (CCBC)
- Lesson learned from Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Study (MAROPS) benefits
  - But also make sure you are getting good data — MAROPS did not have a data plan to measure success. It was more anecdotal.

***Next Meeting: TBD in 2026***