TN DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION PLANS

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Freight Trends

Trucks: Approximately 75% of freight movement in TN is by truck, ranking our state 6th in the nation for the amount of cargo carried by truck. The trucking industry employs 4% of the state's workforce. The just-in-time inventory management system of retailers and manufacturers have driven freight to trucks from rail and waterway.

Distribution Industry: TN is home to FedEx, the largest air freight company in the world. TDOT expects the total amount of freight moving within the state by all modes of transportation to increase more than 70% over the next 25 years.

Rail: The TN rail system has been shrinking. Much of the freight traveling to and through our state comes from other states. In 2004 intermodal freight (rails carrying semi-trailers) was the largest source of revenue for railroads, surpassing coal which had held the top spot for 100 years.

Vehicle Miles Trends

Vehicle Miles is the sum of all miles traveled in the state by vehicles over a calendar year.

Growing Faster than Population: Between 1980 and 2000, TN population grew 20%, but vehicle miles increased 100%. The actual length of available roads increased by about 5%. Urban and rural sprawl and suburbanization have changed where and how we work, shop, and play. We have increased the number of trips we take in our cars and the length of the average trip has grown.

TDOT projects that the travel time between cities in TN will increase 15 to 33%, requiring the construction of more lane miles and roads.

Congestion: Most congestion occurs in the urban areas of the states. New road construction and improvements to existing roads have not kept pace with the growth in vehicle miles traveled. Between 1993 and 2003, the estimated hours of annual delay for commutes increased for 20 to 37 hours in Nashville and from 15 to 35 hours in Memphis.

Almost 60% of all roadway congestion is non-recurring, caused by crashes, breakdowns, or spills. Less than half of the congestion is the result of the number of cars on the road exceeding the road's capacity to handle them.

Interstate Infrastructure: The national interstate highway system is now 50 years old. Many older state-maintained roads and bridges do not meet current standards. Over the next 25 years, 63% of the more than 8,000 bridges on the state system will be approaching the end of their engineered life span.

Aviation

TN Airports: TN has 14 regional airports and six commercial airports.

TDOT's 25 Year Investment Plan

Highways and Intelligent Transportation Systems: $95.5 billion

- Highways include state roadways and bridges. TDOT plans for an 18% increase in highway construction spending over the next 25 years. Funds would be used to

construct new routes, add lane miles, maintain existing roads and bridges, and safety improvements.

- Intelligent Transportation Systems (SmartWay) use technology to improve the efficiency of the transportation system without relying on new or wider roads. Cameras and high-speed communications can aid in responding to road emergences and clearing traffic delays. Travelers can get real-time information on their cell phone to so they can avoid traffic snarls. In other states, these systems have increased system efficiency 10 to 15%.

Aviation, Rail, and Waterways: $19.6 billion

- Aviation includes airside projects (runways, taxiways, aprons, and utilities) and landside projects (terminals, hangers, parking facilities), land acquisition, security fueling systems, and airport access.
- Rail projects include proposed upgrades to the Class I rail mainlines around the state, the shortline rail improvement program, the costs of the four most promising intercity passenger rail corridors, and the preliminary cost of implementing the TN section of a high-speed rail corridor to Atlanta.
- A group of waterway system projects overseen by the US Army Corps of Engineers includes replacement of the Chickamauga Lock in Chattanooga, intermodal rail and highway links to the ports, funds for new port development, and port security improvements.

Public Transportation, Demand Management, and Bicycle/Pedestrian: $14.6 billion.

- Among the public transportation needs TDOT identified are proposed rail systems in Memphis and Nashville, bus rapid transit in the Sevierville corridor, new transit systems in emerging transit markets, and the general expansion of conventional transit services in all urban and rural service areas.
- Transportation Demand Management includes park-and-ride lots, vanpooling and employee commuting programs, coordinating land use and transportation planning, and promoting and increasing transportation choices for people and freight.
- Bicycle/Pedestrian includes improved bicycle facility maintenance, making state transportation handicapped accessible, grant programs for bicycle systems, pedestrian systems, safe-route-to-school projects, and completion of eight statewide bicycle routes.
- State funding for public transportation is slated to increase 45%.

State Funding of Transportation

History: In 1923, the state placed a gas tax of two cents per gallon. A motor fuel (diesel) tax was put into place that equaled the gas tax of seven cents in 194l. The gas tax did not increase until 1989 when the state increased it to 18.4 cents per gallon. TDOT receives 60% of these funds.

TDOT Sources of Revenue for its 2005 Budget of $1.6 Billion: State - 52% Federal - 46%, Local - 2%.

Resources: TN 25 Year Transportation Plan: TDOT (2005)

Louise Gorenflo prepared this fact sheet, the 16th in a series to encourage civic involvement in community problem-solving. Contributions made to The Learning Community are tax deductible. You may send your contributions to or request information from The Learning Community at 184 Hood Drive, Crossville TN 38555 (484-2633.)