Focus Group Summary

Presented to:
Mid-America Regional Council and Kansas City SmartPort

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Overview

The Kansas City Regional Freight Outlook (RFO) was prepared to sustain existing momentum and further expand the region’s presence in transportation and logistics. The overall vision for the Kansas City RFO is to positively impact and accommodate the growth of freight transportation and logistics in the 18-county study area.

The Mid-America Regional Council and Kansas City SmartPort initiated the Kansas City Regional Freight Outlook. The Kansas City RFO was developed in collaboration with the Kansas and Missouri Departments of Transportation.

The overall study included a series of deliverables focused on identifying freight infrastructure needs and assessing Kansas City’s regional transportation advantages, resulting in targeted strategies and messages for the region. The following list details each of the study deliverables:

- **Freight Directory**: Inventory of the region’s 40 freight zones including modes, volumes, existing industries and presence of foreign trade zones
- **Business Survey**: Summary of 427 survey responses of businesses on freight topics important to the region
- **Focus Group Summary**: Major findings from five focus groups conducted with the general public, business and elected officials
- **Freight Infrastructure Investment Plan**: Focuses upon transportation infrastructure by freight mode and provides a set of transportation priorities for the region.
- **Regional Freight Assessment**: A comparative assessment of Kansas City against other cities in the U.S. in terms of freight activities and site selection characteristics.
- **Freight Flow Analysis**: A summary of the volume and value of freight flows in, out and through Kansas City by truck, rail, air and barge.
- **Freight and the Environment in Kansas City**: A brief white paper on environmental topics related to freight and the region.

Using the data and research from each element, a series of findings are outlined that help inform the Strategic Plan development. This Strategic Plan draws on the data and research completed as part of the overall Kansas City RFO elements related to infrastructure, freight flows and economics to create objectives, strategies, and tactics that support the regional vision. The freight Strategic Plan was created to help the region remain a vital national freight transportation hub attracting freight growth.

Finally, the Kansas City RFO Summary is a culmination of all the work completed on each individual element. The summary provides an overview of the study effort, information on infrastructure and freight flows, as well as, a summary of the surveys and comparative cities analysis. Key recommendations and critical actions are provided to narrow the focus on the near term and help to initiate and maintain the regional vision to positively impact and accommodate the growth of freight transportation and logistics in the 18-county study area.
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

During December 2008 and January 2009, ETC Institute facilitated focus groups to gather input about issues related to the development of Mid America Regional Council’s and KC SmartPort’s Regional Freight Outlook Plan. The focus groups were conducted at ETC Institute’s facility in Olathe, Kansas. A total of five focus groups were conducted. The composition of the focus groups is listed below:

- A group of business leaders were recruited at random from respondents to MARC’s 2008 Regional Freight Outlook Survey
- A “SmartPort” group which consisted of business leaders and others who are currently working with Kansas City SmartPort
- A group of residents who were recruited at random
- A group of senior staff from city and counties in the Kansas City area
- A group of elected officials from the Kansas City area

A total of 47 persons attended the five focus groups. Of the 47 individuals who attended the focus groups, there were 8 residents, 9 business leaders, 12 who are currently working with KC SmartPort, 8 city/county government staff, and 10 elected officials.

The purpose of the focus groups was three-fold: (1) to learn the participant’s perceptions and needs related to hard transportation assets (roads, bridges, railroad, etc.), (2) to learn the participant’s perceptions and needs related to land use and how freight development is located, built and interacts with the community, and (3) to learn the participant’s perceptions and needs related to funding freight infrastructure and development or prioritizing how to implement improvements or new projects.

Four major topics were covered during the focus groups.

- First, participants were asked a series of questions about the Kansas City area freight infrastructure.
- Second, they were asked to discuss their awareness of freight development in the region.
- Third, they were asked to provide their opinion about freight investment.
- Fourth, they were asked to provide their opinions about educational awareness with freight in the region.
MAJOR FINDINGS

Some of the major findings from the focus groups are highlighted below.

- **Focus group participants were generally not informed about freight issues in the region.** Excluding those who represented the freight industry, only four participants indicated that they were well informed about freight issues in the Kansas City area. The primary source of information about freight issues for most focus group participants was the local media (newspaper, television, and radio).

- **Focus group participants thought freight was important to the Kansas City area.** Even though awareness of freight issues was low, almost all of the participants thought freight transportation was important to the Kansas City area’s economy.

- **Focus group participants generally thought future investments in the region’s freight infrastructure will be needed.** Most of the participants thought the overall quality of the region’s freight infrastructure is good. However, at least half of the participants were concerned that the Kansas City area could be passed up for bigger markets like Chicago, St. Louis, and Dallas if the Kansas City area does not continue to improve the quality of the region’s freight transportation system.

- **Education about freight issues can help build support for freight investments.** One of the participants from the Gardner area indicated that she was totally opposed to the development of a new intermodal facility in the Gardner area when the project was originally announced. After reading newsletters that were distributed by the City of Gardner, she indicated that she became a supporter of the project because of the projected benefits to the local economy. Several other participants indicated that they became more supportive of freight investments as they learned more about freight issues.

- **Focus group participants thought there is a need for coordinated freight transportation planning in the region.** All of the focus group participants who were at least somewhat familiar with freight development issues in the Kansas City area thought there was a need for coordinated, long-term planning in the region. Some of the perceived benefits of better regional planning that were mentioned by focus group participants included: (1) reducing the negative impacts of freight on local communities, (2) minimizing the level of conflict that occurs when new freight developments are proposed, (3) enhancing the region’s attractiveness for future investment and, (4) reducing the time it takes to make improvements to the region’s freight transportation system.

Specific comments and findings from each of the five focus groups are provided on the following pages.
Ice Breaker

The moderator began the focus groups by giving participants three different topics and asking them to think of one word that came to mind for each of the topics.

**Freight Infrastructure.** The moderator first asked focus group participants to name the one word that comes to mind when they think of freight infrastructure. Specific comments are listed below.

**BUSINESS LEADER**
- Adequate
- Highways
- Rail
- Utilization
- Develop third party logistics
- Trucks
- Bridges

**SmartPort GROUP**
- Warehousing distribution
- Rail hub
- Deteriorating
- Crucial
- Development
- Communication

**RESIDENTS**
- Large
- Jobs
- Noise
- Traffic
- Eye sore
- Complicated

**CITY/COUNTY STAFF**
- Roads
Focus Group Summary Report

- Expensive
- Trucks
- Trains
- Engineering

ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Rail
- Undersize
- Congested
- Needed
- Plenty
- Movement
- Highways
- Roads
- Integration

Freight Development. The moderator then asked focus group participants to name the one word that comes to mind when they think of freight development. Specific comments are listed below.

BUSINESS LEADER

Trouble
- Aggregation
- Tariffs
- Processing information
- Software
- Users
- Capacity
- Efficiencies
- Communication
- Logistics
**SmartPort GROUP**
- Long term planning
- Convenience
- Over due
- Organization

**RESIDENTS**
- Economy
- Availability
- New
- Burden
- Trucks

**CITY/COUNTY STAFF**
- Economic
- Efficiency
- Hubs
- Infrastructure
- Logistics

**ELECTED OFFICIALS**
- Expensive
- Jobs
- Roads
- Rail
- Disconnected
- Warehouses
Freight Investment. Lastly, the moderator asked focus group participants to name the one word that comes to mind when they think of freight investment. Specific comments are listed below.

**BUSINESS LEADER**
- Taxes
- Internet
- Cost
- Investors
- Delayed
- Throughput
- Warehousing
- Red tape

**SmartPort GROUP**
- Infrastructure
- Trucks
- Long time to plan and do it
- Timing, too long
- Patience
- Green
- Commit of private dollars
- Public is lacking
- Spec buildings
- Equipment expansion
- Community support

**RESIDENTS**
- Tax
- Costly
- Progress
- Money
CITY/COUNTY STAFF

- Inadequate
- Debt
- Inadequate
- Incentives
- Returns

ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Massive
- Expensive
- Important
- Employment
- Money
- Partnership
- How much is enough
- Systems
- Parochialism
- Future
- Human capital
- Lack of priority
Topic #1: Kansas City Region Freight Infrastructure Perceptions and Awareness

Quality of the Freight System

Almost all of the persons who attended the focus groups thought the quality of the freight system in the Kansas City area was either “excellent” or “good.”

Many of the reasons that focus group participants gave for their rating were related to road infrastructure, road networks (ability to move around the City), central location, and focused on multi-modal. Several participants commented that they thought it was great that there is a focus on long range planning in the Kansas City area. Only 1 of the 37 participants rated the quality of the freight system in Kansas City “poor.” The remaining 6 gave an “average” rating.

The Freight Systems Impact on Residents

Residents were asked to identify the impact the freight system in the Kansas City area has on them. The majority of the residents indicated that they felt the freight system has “no impact” on them. A few of the residents indicated it had a “positive” impact and 2 residents felt it had a “negative” impact. The reasons for their ratings are provided below by response.

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

- The freight system created jobs which in turn benefits our local economy
- I would agree. The economic implications the freight system has here in the metro far exceed the negative impacts

**NEGATIVE IMPACT**

- The large trucks beat up the roads
- The large trucks create too much congestion.
- I know we need trucks on the road but not during peak hours.

**NO IMPACT**

- I just don’t know enough about what the freight system is to answer.
- I think there are positives and negative which in the end cancel each other out
What Participants Like Best about the Freight System in Kansas City

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS GROUP

- The North/South corridor is great.
- The East/West corridor is great.
- Kansas City is centrally located.
- The rail hubs here are top notch.
- Traffic is light and not much congestion in the metro.
- We are close to the state line.
- BNUP rail access makes rail great.
- Highways from Mexico to Canada go through Kansas City.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP

- Rail is great.
- I-35 being in the NAFTA corridor is big.
- Central location.
- Self awareness, we know what we have to do.
- Inter modal model is great.
- Rail hubs.
- We have great trucking companies.
- Long range planning.
- Lack of traffic congestion.
- Opportunity to develop land and business.
- The highway system and road infrastructure.
- Rail ramps. We can service other areas via our ramps.
- We are an overnight truck ride away from Chicago, St Louis, and most other major freight cities.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP

- I know it is important to move freight.
- The rail system here seems to be good.
- KC metro has a lot of access to highways.
- KC is a central hub.
- Employment opportunities exist here.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF GROUP

- The Interstate system is connective and bypasses are great.
- Rail has a lot of connectivity and can take trains every which direction.
- Rail tracks.
- Rail yards.
- Interstate highways.
- Rail moves larger quantities and is a competitive advantage we have here.
- Interstate capacity.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE ELECTED OFFICIALS GROUP

- Good network of roads.
- Good network of rails.
- Accessibility.
- Creates new jobs.
- We have a good airport system.
- The central location.
- Intermodal structure in Gardner will add new jobs.
- KCI has open land available for development.
- Lot of miles of roads.
- Great rail and trucking hubs.
- Good diversity.

What Participants Like Least about the Freight System in Kansas City

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS GROUP

- Road maintenance on the Missouri side is terrible.
- The lose of manufacturing companies has hurt us.
- Road in Missouri are terrible.
- Distance from the airport to the center of KC. I wish it was closer.
- St Louis to Kansas City is a problem. Need to add lanes and fix bridges and the smoothness of the road.
- The lack of reload facilities.
- Tax structure to draw new business is terrible.
- Need to add lanes to the I-70 Kansas City/St. Louis corridor.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP

- Economic realities of competing with other markets Chicago.
- Few third party logistics carriers.
- Don’t have the manufacturing buildings to attract new business.
- For truck traffic I think we are getting more congested in the area, need more lanes.
- We are not promoting Kansas City as a transportation freight hub.
- We are getting too spread out.
- I-70 could use some improvement.
- Water transportation is ignored almost completely.
- Kansas City is not a major city which hurts us.
- We don’t have the distribution yards we need.
- The quality of roads need to be upgraded.
- I think the rail ramps all smashed together is a shame, it would be nice to have diversity.
- Roads headed East need some work.
- Air transport is weak in Topeka.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP

- I’m concerned with the extra truck traffic.
- KCI is shutting down some of their air operations which I just do not agree with.
- The damage to the roads caused by the freight system.
- The added the security that we would need because Kansas City is a growing freight hub.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF GROUP

- The future funding needed to address needs of intermodal yards.
- The shift from yards from the central urban core of the City to outside suburban areas.
- The transfer between modes sometime takes too long.
- The capacity of the roads might be a problem in the future because the dollars won’t be there.
- Expansion of the Interstate system.
- Public perception of thinking freight development is bad.
- Highways are near capacity.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE ELECTED OFFICIALS GROUP

- Grade crossings
- Distance to the airport
- Missouri road conditions
- Capacity is lacking
- Upgrading and expanding the highway system
- Lack of light rail
- Road maintenance is lacking especially on the Missouri side
- Bridge maintenance
- Bridge availability
- Danger of hazardous waste on the roads
- Maintenance
- Poor road condition of roadways

The Future Needs of the Region

Almost all of the persons who attended the focus groups thought the regions freight system would be able to meet the future needs of the region.

Many of the reasons that focus group participants gave for their rating related to the land available for expansion, traffic capacity, and the use of a long range plan. Only 5 of the 47 participants indicated that they did not think the freight system would meet our region’s future needs. Four participants did not know.

In addition, focus group participants were asked what they though the greatest unmet needs are for freight infrastructure in the Kansas City Region. Some of their responses are provided below.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP

- Moving building supplies into the area
- New places for aircraft to land
- Moving groceries into the area

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE ELECTED OFFICIALS GROUP

- Leadership
- Lack of funding to make necessary improvements to infrastructure
- Definitely a lack funding
- Educating the public on freight issues
- Finding funding sources
Topic #2: Kansas City Region Freight Development Awareness

The moderator next moved on to the topic of development awareness. The purpose of these next questions was to learn the participant’s perceptions and needs related to land use and how freight development is located, built and interacts with the community. We considered freight development to be things like a railroad yard, a warehouse/distribution center, an industrial park, etc.

Barriers to Overcome to Facilitate Freight Development. The moderator first asked focus group participants to identify specific barriers that need to be overcome in order to facilitate freight development in the Kansas City area. Some of those barriers are provided below.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS

- Too many empty warehouses.
- Obsolete warehouse.
- No manufacturers to fill warehouses.
- Distribution centers don’t employ enough people to buy the goods.
- Corporate tax is too high and completely out of line.
- The state line really makes you coordinate with local governments. Sometimes that can be a barrier.
- I think the city is trying to market itself as a freight moving community, I think the Kansas side is more supportive then Missouri.
- KCMO mayor doesn’t promote the city as freight city.
- Wyandotte County took farmland and built a great business and produced a lot of tax revenue. Wyandotte County should be looked at as a model. No enough counties follow their lead.
- All the local governments should get together and coordinate better.
- It doesn’t make sense to put the airport up North when the people who fly are in the South.
- Long term planning for the airport was a good idea, developing business around the airport hasn’t kept up.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP

- There are short windows of opportunity and Kansas City gets passed up because we don’t have good enough coordination to get the ball rolling quickly enough.
- We are hesitant because we don’t want to spend the money, we don’t think the tax base is there. We need to throw some incentives out there and start developing the community. There is a lack of a plan to help support these things.
- Locally there is support but to execute the plan barriers exist.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF

- Getting over the public’s perception of not wanting freight in their backyard.
- Lack of commitment to cross jurisdiction planning. Need a regional approach.
- NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) is a problem in the southland.
- Where is it located? That is the million dollar question that is fought over.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Educating the public about the opportunities freight provides.
- The politics of it all, getting people to work together.
- Lack of coordination with KDOT and MoDOT plans.
- NIMBY.
- Public opinion.
- Developing new hubs.
- Looking at it from a regional perspective. Cooperation.
- Isolating freight traffic separate from vehicles.

Major Competitors. The moderator then asked focus group participants to identify the cities they thought were Kansas City’s major competitors. The cities identified by participants are provided below.

SmartPort GROUP
- Chicago
- Dallas
- Indianapolis
- Memphis
- Louisville

CITY/COUNTY STAFF
- Chicago
- St Louis
- Dallas
- St Louis
- Atlanta
• Illinois not really sure
• Wichita
• Topeka
• Omaha and the UP
• Oklahoma City BNSF
• Chicago
• Dallas

**BUSINESS LEADERS**

• St Louis and Omaha
• St Louis and Dallas
• Chicago
• Indianapolis
• Denver
• Oklahoma City
• Memphis
• Chicago rail system is great, they ship to Dallas and other places
• Memphis rail is great
• Chicago would be a good stop for east-west coast traffic
• Lake Michigan ports are great
• If you can get to Chicago you can get it any where you need
• Indianapolis has made improvements to road infrastructure and bridges
• Sprint ships things to Chicago but not here to Kansas City, it doesn’t make any sense
Topic #3: Kansas City Region Freight Investment Awareness

The moderator next moved on to the topic of investment awareness. The purpose of these next questions was to learn the participant’s perceptions and needs about funding freight infrastructure and development or prioritizing how we implement improvements or new projects.

Funding of Freight Projects. The moderator first asked focus group participants who they thought should fund freight projects and why? Participants provided a wide variety of opinions on how the funding of freight projects should be paid for. Specific comments about who should fund freight projects and why are listed below.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS

- They should be funded through import tariffs.
- I think that an aggressive tax policy (KCMO drop earnings taxes) should be developed.
- I believe that investors should pick up the tab through tax incentives.
- There should be a rebate on utilities tax.
- I think that there should be a property tax decrease for a number of years.
- I would like to see tax increment financing.
- I believe that they should promote a central location in the US that would be better suited as the freight hub, but could also be a manufacturer.
- They should develop a bi-partisan committee and get aggressive about bringing people in. I think that they need to sell KC as a freight hub.
- Think that projects should be funded through incentives.
- I think that TIFs need to have strict regulations with no pork barrel.
- I think that they should be funded through property tax.
- I believe that they should fund the projects through rebates.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP

- I think that the private sector is willing to put the money in to expand.
- The public isn’t as willing as the private.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF

- I think that there should be a buy-in from each party because with freight, you can have the luxury of a third party.
- I think that it should be multi-faceted.
- It should be funded through a commercial development model.
- I think that it should be funded through federal and state because they use the roads.
- I think that they should re-look at gas tax.
- There should be a grouping of different players; state, local, and federal. The on-going maintenance comes down to a community issue. A partnership with the developer and the community seems to work well and is amicable.
- I think that because of the economic development side and growing in the community that it is part of the local government’s responsibility.
- We need to give developers incentives to entice them to come and grow communities.
- I know that in the Chicago areas, established communities have done this and found that it has benefited them.
- I think that tax deferrals are shooting us in the foot.
- I think that there is the issue of collusion vs. competition.
- I think that land will be hard to find for developers.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Primary users should.
- Businesses definitely.
- The private sector.
- Private public partnership.
- Federal, State and Private.
- Coordinated plan with everyone.
- Consumer ultimately pays, so us.
**Whether Governments Should Be Involved.** After those in attendance shared their comments on who they thought should fund freight projects the moderator then asked focus group participants whether or not governments should be involved and if so, what should the role of public agencies be in terms of funding freight investments. Specific comments are provided below.

**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP**
- The county has kicked in 14 million and the city about 30 million. I think that if BNSF puts in first, then we in the public should follow.
- I think that there is an attitude that we need to hire someone who is cheap. We cannot “save” ourselves into success; I think that we need to spend money wisely to grow.
- I think that we have an opportunity with watershed. We have an advantage and we don’t communicate that.

**Funding Needs for Region’s Freight Transportation Infrastructure.** The moderator then asked focus group participants how well informed they are about funding needs for the region’s freight transportation infrastructure. Specific ratings and comments are provided below and on the following page.

**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS**

Of the 9 Business Leader focus group participants, two-thirds indicated that they were “not well informed” about funding needs for the region’s freight transportation infrastructure. In addition, 1 participant indicated being “very well informed” and 2 indicated being “somewhat well informed.”

**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP**

Of the 12 SmartPort Group focus group participants, half (6) indicated that they felt they were “somewhat well informed” while the other half (6) felt that they were “not well informed.” No one indicated that they were “very well informed.”

- I believe that those who can afford to invest now will really be well off down the road.
- I think that there should be some type of statistical analysis shown so that we know information on KC and not just the U.S.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS

Of the 8 Resident focus group participants, one-fourth (2) indicated that they were “somewhat well informed” and the remaining three-fourths indicated that they were “not well informed”. It should also be noted that no one said that they were “very well informed.”

- I think that highway use taxes are probably used.
- I believe that most of the residents think that the government funds freight.
- I would not pay more property taxes.
- I think that it is good to give tax incentives to new companies.
- I believe that you have to do it to compete with other cities.
- I think that City officials are generally doing a good job of trying to develop the city.
- I believe that there are more taxes here than in California.
- I think that Gardner did okay. They did a full pamphlet spread so they did a good job informing the public.
- I think that Spring Hill could push for more new business.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF

Of the 8 City/County Staff focus group participants, three felt that they were “somewhat well informed” and the remaining five felt “not well informed.” Again no one indicated that they were “very well informed.”

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Of the 10 Elected Officials, only one indicated that they were “not well informed” about funding needs for the region’s freight transportation infrastructure. In addition, 3 participants indicated being “very well informed” and the majority (6) indicated being “somewhat well informed.”
Where Participants Have Learned About Funding Issues. Once focus group participants were finished rating and commenting on how well informed they were about funding needs, the moderator asked them to indicate where they have learned about funding issues. Specific comments about where they learned of funding issues are provided below.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS
- I have learned about funding issues through my own corporate findings.
- I’ve learned about it by doing research for clients.
- I have read trade publications, etc. and learned about this issue through these.
- I receive a newsletter every week.
- I regularly listen to the news.
- I have learned about funding issues through experience, use of rail, and trucks piggy backing.
- I have learned about it through meetings and financing.
- I have been to planning commissions and learned about funding issues.
- I have learned about funding issues through experience.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP
- I have received information through BNSF
- I believe that there are problems with the integrity of information.
- I have received internal corporate email channels.
- I have learned of it through forecasting.
- I’ve heard about the funding issues through word of mouth and through informal networks.
- I have received information through SmartPort.
- I have read information in the Journal of Commerce regarding this issue.
- I have visited the local customs office and received information there.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF
- I think that over the course of the last three years, just reading and understanding the freight industry, working with people in the economic field, and watching negotiations play out gives you a fairly good handle on it.
- Learned about funding issues from reading papers, but it’s hard to know what to believe.
- I learned about it through reading the newspaper.
- I know that the industry is all anecdotal.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE ELECTED OFFICIALS

- In Overland Park we don’t differentiate between the two. So I can’t answer.
- Just by exposure
- Limited exposure
- Just from past experiences in the industry
- Infrastructure stimuli
- Just having dealt with the intermodal for the last four years in Gardner
Topic #4: Educational Awareness

Where Participants Get Information about Freight Issues in the Kansas City Area

During the focus group, participants were asked where they get information about freight issues in the Kansas City area. The educational awareness questions were asked in order to better understand how to market and communicate with specific groups about freight issues. These comments summarize where individual groups get their information about freight issues. Listed below are some of the comments that were provided by participants from each of the groups.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS GROUP

- General media
- News
- KC traffic association
- Internet
- Trade Journals
- Freight brokers
- Government
- Customers
- News
- Trade Publications

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP

- The Olathe Link, newsletter
- No information currently
- Gardner Newsletter
- Word of mouth
- Not getting any information currently
- Nothing regarding freight issues
- KC Star

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF GROUP

- Google or the Internet
- Word of mouth
- Press media
- Media
• BOCC meetings
• Reaching out to peers and talking with experts

CONTINUED SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF GROUP

• Freight books
• The newspaper
• BNSF studies and report
• Read information from MARC, Transportation Matters
• KDOT releases
• State Federal stuff
• Interact with economic development people
• News TV
• Council members
• KCADC

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE ELECTED OFFICIALS GROUP

• WERC
• Talking to people
• Word of mouth
• Newspaper
• Media
• Legislative staff
• Rail industry
• Trucking industry
• Experience
• Mayor’s caucus
• Internet
• City staff
• University research
• Association publications
Freight Related Issues Participants Cared Most About

Residents were then asked what freight related issues they cared most about. The educational awareness questions were asked in order to better understand how to market and communicate with specific groups about freight issues. These comments summarize some of the issues that are most important to them regarding freight issues. Listed below are some of the comments that were provided by participants from the resident group.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP

- I want information that gives me the big picture on freight issues
- When certain freight issues will be coming up
- How much will it cost me
- The timeframe for projects
- Economic impact
- How many jobs it will bring in

Participation in Future Discussion/Meetings about Freight Infrastructure, Development and Investment in the Kansas City Area

Participants were asked how likely they would be to participate in future discussion/meetings about freight infrastructure, development and investment in the Kansas City area. Listed on the next page is the willingness for which participants from each of the groups were willing to participate in future discussions/meetings. Then each group was asked what would increase their interest in participating.

WILLINGNESS OF BUSINESS LEADERS GROUP

- Very Willing - 5
- Somewhat Willing - 4
- Not Willing – 0

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS GROUP

Why are you likely to participate and/or what types of things could be done to increase your interest in participating?

- If there is an agenda with clear objectives and what will be done
- It has to be something I’m somewhat knowledgeable about and interested in
- I would come if there were issues that would help improve the business economy because that would help me as a business man
- Put out a schedule
Focus Group Summary Report

- I would be interested but I feel I have limited insight into most issues
- I am interested in what SmartPort is doing so I would come
- It depends on how exciting SmartPort makes the topic
- As long as we get more customers involved in this process I am interested
- I am interested in the growth and prospects

**WILLINGNESS OF SmartPort GROUP**
- Very Willing - 8
- Somewhat Willing - 4
- Not Willing - 0

**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP**

*Why are you likely to participate and/or what types of things could be done to increase your interest in participating?*

- If there is a self surveying issue
- Having people to talk to in SmartPort helps us find answers or find those who can get answers
- It gives you advance knowledge of things you would like to know. There is a lot of networking which is really good from a business standpoint
- We all believe in the vision. Its great SmartPort is so proactive
- The bottom line is Kansas City is underutilized. SmartPort will be the ones to get the ball rolling
- They carry themselves professionally, and represent KC well
- Scarborough got involved with SmartPort and they have helped a lot
- I didn’t know why Topeka is involved, but someday cargo will be empty in Kansas City and I’m only 70 miles down the road. We have an interest in seeing Kansas City succeed

**WILLINGNESS OF RESIDENTS GROUP**

- Very Willing - 4
- Somewhat Willing - 3
- Not Willing - 1

**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP**

*Why are you likely to participate and/or what types of things could be done to increase your interest in participating?*

- Need to give more notice up front and do something to get people interested
- Paid incentives are great
- It just depends on if the topic affects me
- Depends on the topics and if they intrigue me
- Phone call is the best way to get me there
WILLINGNESS OF CITY/COUNTY STAFF GROUP

- Very Willing - 6
- Somewhat Willing - 2
- Not Willing - 0

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF GROUP

Why are you likely to participate and/or what types of things could be done to increase your interest in participating?

- If the issues were regarding transportation matters
- If there were round table discussions
- MARC Round tables
- If City manager groups were at these meetings

WILLINGNESS OF THE ELECTED OFFICIALS GROUP

- Very Willing - 10
- Somewhat Willing - 0
- Not Willing – 0

Priority Placed on Freight Planning and Improvements Over the Next Ten Years

Residents were asked how much of a priority should be placed on freight planning and improvements for the region over the next ten years. Then they were asked what freight related issues would be the most important/what issues they thought would be more important than freight-related issues over the next ten years. Listed below is how high a priority residents’ placed on freight issues over the next ten years.

PRIORITY OF FREIGHT PLANNING AND IMPROVEMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP

- Very High - 2
- High - 5
- Medium - 1
**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP**

What freight-related issues would be the most important/what issues would be more important than freight-related issues over the next ten years?

- Roads are being built and expanded to accommodate truck traffic so it must be very important
- Building businesses is a higher priority
- Growing the local economy is most important
- Increasing the number of jobs
- Education is more important
- New soccer fields
- Economic growth is what makes it a high priority
- It would grow the airport
- Lower priority would be improving Kauffman and Arrowhead stadiums
- Public transportation is more important
- I need to know more about things before I know how important it is

**Final Comments**

At the end of the focus group, participants were given a chance to provide any final comments about freight-related issues that they would like to address or discuss that had not already been discussed. These comments generally summarized the issues that participants cared about most. Listed on the next page are some of the closing comments that were provided by participants from each of the groups.

**SELECTED COMMENTS FROM BUSINESS LEADERS GROUP**

- I would like to be made aware of what is going and their plans.
- You never see ads on how great Kansas City is.
- We need to promote growth by stopping the export of jobs.
- More emphasis on small businesses. It creates 75% of the growth in the US.
- Promote the positioning of Kansas City to logistics people as the place to be, because of its central location.
- We need to share information, we never advertise ourselves.
- I appreciate the opportunity and this is a good thing, great forum I appreciate it.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM SmartPort GROUP

- SmartPort needs to set their bar very high.
- The general public is typically left in the dark.
- Residents are concerned with large trucks on the road. They are not concerned with the money they are bringing in.
- We need to educate the public and make them realize it is important.
- The general public is completely uneducated when it comes to the importance of moving freight and the benefits they get from having large hubs in Kansas City.
- Need to be some planning for truck routes.
- The labor rate advantage in Mexico and other areas is a concern. I wonder if SmartPort should be thinking about building manufacturing.
- MARC needs to be doing something on a more regional level.
- All the large players are looking to cut cost so we need to build an infrastructure that will allow them to save. That will help to give us a competitive advantage.
- The easier we can make it for folks to get in here, the more benefits we will get in return
- It needs to be an easy process to bring players in.
- The foundation has been laid; it is time for phase two. We need to figure out our competitive advantage and what we can give the players.
- I think sustainability is important.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM RESIDENTS GROUP

- Traffic congestion is the main concern for me.
- Pollution
- Just having good drivers for safety reasons.
- Security issues
- Contamination from overseas flights.
- We need to be informed if they plan on building in the neighborhood.
- I think it would be important to our economy to improve freight infrastructure.
- I just want to know timelines. When are they breaking ground?
- I would like more information. Maybe a designated website.
- Just more information and education. Be clear on expectations.
- Good reliable and easy to understand information about freight-related issues. The website idea would be great.
SELECTED COMMENTS FROM CITY/COUNTY STAFF GROUP

- Concerned with environmental impact freight has on the environment.
- Need to educate people more. I think they could do a better job bringing together the freight industry with local government and helping both sides understand how to work together and cooperatively for the greater good, maybe MARC could take that role.
- Having operations run on non-peak hours for safety reasons.
- Presenting some case studies to make us understand what can be expected. Don’t only present the positives.
- Economic development is good for all of us. We all can benefit from the regions success with freight transportation.
- Being new to the whole game I echo more cooperation between separate entities. We need to think like a region and help other cities pass things because we can all benefit from it.
- There needs to be a better job of promoting ourselves as a freight area and entice industry to come to Kansas City because they can move freight all over the country and relatively cheaper than other places. It can help our communities.
- I think KDOT and MoDOT know what they need to do to enhance road networks to help freight transportation.

SELECTED COMMENTS FROM THE ELECTED OFFICIALS GROUP

- Take a step back and coordinate better with government.
- I appreciate this forum. This was great.
- Rail is a public monopoly but a strictly private business.
- Why can have light rail along I-35.
- Thanks for the invitation.
- Beautification and enhancement is priority.
- There is a dire need for north/south interstate and Cass County.
- We have a lot of land to develop in Cass County.
- I would like to know how we get elected officials involved and the public, we should have influence.
- Need to look at enhancing public transit.
- There is a need for an integrated transportation system.
- Find a way to get people form Johnson County to airport.