



49th Meeting of the
IOWA FREIGHT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Friday, September 19, 2025; 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

TPI Composites Inc.

2300 N 33rd Ave E, Newton, Iowa 50208

Meeting objectives:

1. Provide input on emerging trends, issues, and opportunities for the State Freight Plan update.
2. Learn about Iowa Interstate Railroad and its impact to Iowa's economy.

9:00 AM

Welcome

Mike Steenhoek

Chair

Vice-Chair Nominations

9:05 AM

State Freight Plan Engagement Exercise

Caleb Whitehouse

Iowa DOT

The official FAC meeting was brief and centered around an engagement activity designed to gather additional input on freight priorities for the 2026 State Freight Plan. Caleb Whitehouse and Ethan Aamodt delivered a short presentation introducing a newly condensed list of freight priorities to FAC members. Following the presentation, members were asked to rank the ten priorities from 1 to 10, with 1 being the most important and 10 being the least.

Results of the Engagement Activity:

1. Safety
2. Funding
3. Regulatory Alignment / Trade and Tariff Negotiations
4. Labor / Workforce
5. Freight Bottlenecks / First Mile / Last Mile
6. Market Access / New Connections / Supply Chains
7. Technology / Automation / AI
8. Cybersecurity
9. Natural Hazards (Resiliency)
10. Domestic Energy Production / Bio-Renewables

After ranking the priorities, members were invited to submit anonymous comments on the revised list and their rankings. A total of sixteen comments were received: ten expressed general support, while six offered constructive critiques and feedback. The insights gathered from this engagement will inform the development of the 2026 State Freight Plan.

9:30 AM –
3:00 PM

Iowa Interstate Railroad

See schedule from IAIS

The official meeting adjourned and was followed by a presentation from Iowa Interstate Railroad. FAC members, DOT staff, and other guests boarded IAIS's historic passenger cars in Newton, Iowa for a ride to South Amana, where attendees toured the Dennis H. Miller Locomotive Shop. The tour provided

valuable insight into the behind-the-scenes work required to maintain rail locomotives and ensure efficient freight movement across Iowa.

3:00 PM **Return to Newton and Adjourn**

The day concluded with a return train ride to Newton, Iowa, wrapping up the event.

Attendance:

Members

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| X | Mike Steenhoek (Chair), Soy Transportation Coalition | X | Joe McConnell, Perishable Distributors of Iowa |
| X | Jillian Walsh (Vice Chair), Travero | X | Delia Moon-Meier, Iowa 80 Group |
| | Dr. Haozhe Chen, ISU Supply Chain Management | X | James Niffenegger, Landus Cooperative |
| X | Gabe Claypool, Des Moines Industrial | | Kelli O'Brien, Union Pacific Railroad |
| | Greg Dickinson, Ten D, Inc. Companies/Merchants Distribution Service | X | Joe Parsons, Iowa Interstate Railroad |
| | Jackson Doud, Iowa Farm Bureau | X | Ty Rosburg, Rosburg Livestock |
| | Amy Homan, Iowa Northern Railroad | | Peter Skosey, BNSF Railway |
| X | Frank Huseman, NEW Cooperative/Port of Blencoe | X | Jessica Sargent, Sukup Manufacturing |
| X | Matthew Leyser, John Deere Des Moines Works | X | Marty Wadle, Ruan Transportation |
| X | Larry Lloyd, CPKC Railroad | X | Mark White, Smith Fertilizer and Grain |
| | Doug Martin, Amazon DSM5 | | Ron White, Artco Fleeting Service |

Ex-Officio

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| | Zhi Chen, Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization | X | Scott Marler, Director, Iowa Department of Transportation |
| | Amie Davidson, Land Quality Bureau | X | Tim Marshall, Federal Highway Administration, Iowa Division |
| X | Mike Hadley, Keokuk County Board of Supervisors | | Mike Norris, Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission |
| | Mike Harrington, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship | | Lt. Blake Wittrock <i>in place of</i> Major Darren Reid, Iowa State Patrol |
| | Heather Bishop <i>in place of</i> Tom Heinold , USACE Rock Island District | X | Andrea Smith, Iowa Economic Development Authority |
| X | Sean Litteral, Federal Highway Administration, Iowa Division | X | Jodi Stephenson, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration |
| | Chuck McWilliams, USACE Omaha District | | Stephanie Weisenbach, Iowa Utilities Board |

Iowa DOT

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| X | Ethan Aamodt, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau | X | Renee Jerman, Iowa DOT Legislative Compliance |
| X | Stu Anderson, Iowa DOT Transportation Development Division | | David Lorenzen, Iowa DOT Systems Operations Division |
| X | Mikel Derby, Iowa DOT Government and Community Relations | X | Amanda Martin, Iowa DOT Modal Transportation Bureau |
| X | Kyle Durant, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau | | Tammy Nicholson, Iowa DOT Modal Transportation Bureau |
| X | Brenda Freshour-Johnston, Iowa DOT Systems and Administration Bureau | | Garrett Pedersen, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau |
| | Melissa Gillett, Iowa DOT Chief Operating Officer | X | Charlie Purcell, Iowa DOT Project Development |
| X | Jim Glaspie, Iowa DOT Modal Transportation Bureau | X | Jeff von Brown, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau |
| X | Sam Hiscocks, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau | | Andrea White, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau |
| | Maria Hobbs, Iowa DOT Modal Transportation Bureau | X | Caleb Whitehouse, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau |
| | Alex Jansen, Iowa DOT Central Programs Bureau | X | Lee Wilkinson, Iowa DOT Administrative Services Division |
| X | Spencer Thompson, Iowa DOT System Planning Bureau | | |

Guests

| | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| X | Ryan Nonnemaker, CPKC Railroad | | Dr. Chad Hart, ISU Economics |
| | Peiter Hjertstedt, CPKC Railroad | X | Ray Gaesser, Iowa Transportation Commission |
| | Jeff Price, CN Railway | X | Matt Dickinson |
| X | Chuck McWilliams, USACE Omaha Distric | X | Robin Pruisner, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship |
| X | Gunnar Olson, DMAMPO | X | Darrell Colvin, Federal motor Carrier Safety Administration |

A photograph of a white Mack truck and a green Brent 572 conveyor truck. The green truck is dumping a load of orange-brown material into the back of the white truck. The scene is set outdoors at sunset or sunrise, with a clear sky and some trees in the background. The text "Revisiting Freight Priorities" and "Freight Advisory Council" is overlaid on the image.

Revisiting Freight Priorities

Freight Advisory Council

IOWA | DOT

Revised Priorities List

| Category | Description |
|---|--|
| Funding | Reliable and accessible funding is essential to address key freight transportation challenges. |
| Safety | Safe freight operation is a key priority for operators and drivers |
| Market Access/ New Connections/ Supply Chains | Reliable access to international markets and resilient supply chains are critical for Iowa's economy. Strengthening multimodal connections and creating new connection to provide shippers with more options and minimizes disruptions. |
| Labor/Workforce | Hiring and retaining skilled workers is vital to ensure efficient freight movement and avoid service disruptions. |
| Regulations and Regulatory Alignment/ Trade and Tariff Negotiation | Aligning regulations reduces barriers to freight efficiency, while fair and cooperative trade agreements are crucial for increasing Iowa's competitiveness in global markets. |
| Technology/ Automation/ AI | Tracking and implementing emerging technologies, including automation and AI, can improve freight service and reduce costs, but also increase energy demands. |
| Domestic Energy Production/ Bio Renewables | Expanding renewable and domestic energy sources reduces reliance on foreign oil, lowers emissions, and supports Iowa farmers through bio renewable fuels. |
| Natural Hazards (resiliency) | A resilient freight system safeguards Iowa's supply chains against disruptions from floods, droughts, and severe weather, helping prevent economic setbacks. |
| Cybersecurity | Protecting digital infrastructure is critical to safeguard freight systems from cyber attacks. |
| Freight Bottlenecks/ First Mile/Last Mile | The first and last miles of freight movement are often the most critical parts of Iowa's freight network. When paired with bottlenecks, these corridors can slow freight movement, making effective management essential for efficiency statewide. |