



Iowa Freight Advisory Council

Friday, December 5, 2025; 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

Iowa DOT Lincoln Highway Conference Room

800 Lincoln Way, Ames, IA 50010

<u>Time</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Presenter</u>
10:00 AM	Safety Briefing	Amanda Martin Iowa DOT
10:05 AM	Welcome & Introductions	Mike Steenhoek Soy Transportation Coalition
10:30 AM	Iowa DOT Update Update on DOT activities.	Stu Anderson Iowa DOT
11:00 AM	State Freight Plan Updates and Input Updates from Systems Planning Bureau Staff on the progress of the 2026 State Freight Plan and an opportunity to receive input from the group.	Caleb Whitehouse Iowa DOT
11:45 AM	Lunch Break	
12:30 PM	Panel: Impacts of Tariffs on Iowa's Importers/Exporters Panel on the import fees levied on Iowa businesses and their impacts to Iowa businesses and the state's economy.	Mike Steenhoek Soy Transportation Coalition
1:30 PM	FAC Vice-Chair Nominations We are seeking nominations for a new chairperson after Mike leaves his position as Chair, and Jillian Walsh takes over.	Mike Steenhoek Soy Transportation Coalition
2:00 PM	Adjourn	

Future meetings:

1. **Thursday** March 12, 2026; Ankeny
2. Friday June 5, 2026; TBD
3. **Thursday** September 24, 2026; TBD
4. **Thursday** December 3, 2026; Ankeny

Guest Wifi: IowaDOT-Guest

Password: IowaDOT!

Contact person: Caleb Whitehouse, Iowa DOT Systems Planning Bureau, caleb.whitehouse@iowadot.us

"MAKING LIVES BETTER THROUGH TRANSPORTATION"



Safety Briefing

Welcome/Introductions

Iowa DOT Update – Stu Anderson

Stu Anderson begins by welcoming the group to the newly remodeled Lincoln Highway Conference Room. Anderson also recognizes Mike Steenhoek as departing chairperson. Steenhoek has been a FAC member since 2012 and chairperson for the last 6 years. Anderson says the FAC has been extremely valuable for the DOT and receiving input from the group has been vitally important. Anderson presents Steenhoek with a plaque commemorating his service to the DOT and the Freight Advisory Council.

There is a new Iowa DOT Systems Operations Bureau Director: Wes Musgrove. Lee Wilkenson, who leads the Administrative Services division, will also be retiring.

The Iowa DOT reverted \$13.5 million from the FY 2025 budget. The FY 2026 budget is 3% below planned. FY 2026 lettings are \$40.3 million below programmed amounts. FY 2026 revenue is \$3.5 million above forecast. FFY 2026 is operating under a continuing resolution through January 30, 2026. The Iowa Transportation Commission will have the option to expand I-35 to three lanes from Ames to Ankeny through a Five Year Program amendment in June.

During the recent government shutdown, FHWA, FTA, FMCSA, NHTSA, were all fully funded. The Essential Air Service (EAS) program funding was going to run out during the shutdown, but the airlines serving subsidized airports in Iowa announced that they would continue service.

Work is underway for the 2027-2031 Highway Program. The Iowa DOT is anticipating no new revenue.

The current Surface Transportation Reauthorization expires September 30, 2026. The Iowa DOT is discussing priorities with Iowa's congressional delegation. The Iowa DOT is anticipating an extension of the current authorization bill. The Iowa DOT prefers a focus on core formula programs that give the department flexibility as new, small programs with specific eligibilities make things more difficult. Discretionary programs slow down the programming process.

Steenhoek adds that since DOTs plan their funds five-years out, consistent and clear revenue forecasts are important. Anderson says that for the first time, congress has discussed adding a federal registration fee to help pay for infrastructure costs.

The Iowa DOT is requesting \$18.7 million (3.7 percent) less than FY 2026 budget. This reduction is primarily due to lower equipment replacement costs and lower capital request for maintenance garage replacement.

Additionally, the Iowa DOT is requesting \$300,000 more for Public Transit Infrastructure program through RISE, and status quo funding for the other modal programs.

Ty Rosburg asks if the Iowa DOT would like to coordinate talking points with groups that he is involved with to push for infrastructure funding.

Steenhoek asks which DOT grant programs are the most popular. Anderson says that the State Recreational Trails program is extremely popular. The Iowa DOT receives 5-7 times more requests for funds than appropriated. Additionally, the Revitalize Iowa's Sounds Economy (RISE) program that allows cities and counties to apply for funds to build roads for new industrial parks and new businesses. The Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant Program (RRLG) is also very popular.

Steenhoek asks representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers to give updates to the group about the impact of the government shutdown on their operations.

If you wish to see a copy of the presentation, please reach out to Caleb Whitehouse at caleb.whitehouse@iowadot.us.

State Freight Plan Updates and Input

Caleb Whitehouse presents on the background of the State Freight Plan Implementation Strategies and shows the changes that were made to the wording of the strategies from 2022.

Skosey asks to add “manufacturing” to strategy 6 in addition to biofuels/energy.

Whitehouse leads the group through a mentimeter input exercise to prioritize the strategies that will be included in the State Freight Plan.

If you would like more information, please reach out to Caleb Whitehouse at caleb.whitehouse@iowadot.us.

Panel: Impacts of Tariffs on Iowa’s Importers/Exporters

Steenhoek introduces Jessica Sargent and Mark White as panelists. Sargent starts by telling the group about Sukup’s imported goods, including steel, electronics. Sukup exports finished products including grain bins, to the rest of the world.

White says that Smith Fertilizer and Grain imports crop nutrients and crop protection. Right now, anhydrous ammonia and phosphorus are both much more expensive than last year. It’s hard to measure the impact of these increases yet. China has purchased less than half of what they committed to. Japan and Mexico are also big trade partners for Iowa agribusiness.

Steenhoek asks how imported goods reach Iowa. White says the goods movements are impacted by the war in the Middle East. Additionally, it is easier for some exporters to send products to Brazil instead of the US. Most of these added costs are felt by the farmers.

Smith says that their exports are primarily corn and soybeans. Smith also provides road material for various municipalities. Smith says that they usually use the river for exports of soybeans. However, they have shifted more towards domestic use.

Steenhoek says that any product put on a barge will be sent to the export market. Steenhoek asks Sargent how the shift towards domestic steel production has impacted Sukup. Sargent says that the tariffs increased prices of steel. Sukup receives steel from Gary, Indiana and brings it to the state by truck to their facility in Manly, Iowa. Steenhoek asks if Sukup has received any feedback from customers. Sargent says there have been some disruptions to supply, but for the most part, Sukup has been able to pass on the increased cost to customers.

Sargent says that Sukup attempted to preempt the tariffs by moving some supply to Canada. Sargent says that they spent a lot of extra hours trying to get finished goods near Canada so that they could send things across the border quickly. Sukup’s Canadian dealers prepared trucks in advance to bring things across. Sukup initially tried to “ride the wave” and deal with tariffs but found that it was easier to just swallow the cost and pass it along.

Doug Martin says suppliers brought things to Amazon early due to the threat of tariffs. Marty Wadle says that Ruan saw a lot of “front loading” as well. Domestic producers of metals happened to benefit from tariff policy. Matt Leyser says that John Deere experienced a lot of starting and stopping of manufacturing because of changes in tariff policy.

Steenhoek asks if anyone else has experienced any different trade flows because of changes in trade policy. White says that companies above them have reached out to different countries to find nutrient products. Martin asks if there has been more injection in Canadian ports to avoid American ports. Steenhoek says he knows there was a threat from the administration to try to prevent that behavior, but it hasn’t been manifested in a change in behavior from shippers. Wadle says that Laredo is now the largest port in the US because of nearshoring.

Dr. Haozhe Chen says that since the new administration took over, there were twenty-four tariff policy changes, and the unpredictability has made it harder for firms to invest and plan. He also says that firms moving production out of China have experienced good results. He says that firms are only able to share 5% of the cost of tariffs with the customer.

Steenhoek says that tariffs are an additional cost that can be absorbed by either the customer, shipper, or manufacturer. White says that the customer (as in the farmer) is absorbing most of the cost of tariffs.

Tom Heinold asks if anyone is paying attention to the taconite industry considering the new lock near Sault St. Marie. The new lock will create greater efficiencies in that industry.

Mike Hadley says the word of the day is “unpredictability”. For farmers, it is nothing new. He says that ultimately, everything will be okay, and we’ll all laugh about it in 5 years.

FAC Vice-Chair Nominations

Steenhoek says that Marty Wadle was nominated to serve as Vice-Chair and has agreed to serve. He asks for additional nominations. None are heard, so Wadle is confirmed as Vice-Chair starting in 2026.

Steenhoek concludes his final meeting by thanking everyone for participating and thanks Iowa DOT for being so easy to work with.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 PM.

Attendance

Members

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

Ex-Officio

Present	Name	Representing
X	Amie Davidson	Iowa DNR Land Quality Bureau
	Ray Gaesser	Iowa Transportation Commission
X	Mike Hadley	Keokuk County Board of Supervisors
	Mike Harrington	Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
X	Tom Heinold	USACE Rock Island District

X	Sean Litteral	Federal Highway Administration, Iowa Division
X	Chuck McWilliams	USACE Omaha District
	Scott Marler	Director, Iowa Department of Transportation
X	Mike Norris	Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission
X	Lt. Blake Wittrock <i>in place of</i> Major Darren Reid	Iowa State Patrol
X	Andrea Smith	Iowa Economic Development Authority
X	Jodi Stephenson	Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration
X	Stephanie Weisenbach	Iowa Utilities Board
X	Addison Williamson	Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Iowa DOT

Present	Name	Representing
	Ethan Aamodt	Systems Planning Bureau
X	Stu Anderson	Transportation Development Division
	Mikel Derby	Government and Community Relations
	Kyle Durant	Systems Planning Bureau
	Brenda Freshour-Johnston	Systems and Administration Division
	Melissa Gillett	Chief Operating Officer
X	Jim Glaspie	Modal Transportation Bureau
X	Travis Halm	Systems Planning Bureau
X	Sam Hiscocks	Systems Planning Bureau
X	Maria Hobbs	Modal Transportation Bureau
X	Alex Jansen	Motor Vehicle Division
X	Renee Jerman	Legislative Compliance
X	Amanda Martin	Modal Transportation Bureau
	Tammy Nicholson	Modal Transportation Bureau
	Wes Musgrove	Systems Operations Division
X	Garrett Pedersen	Systems Planning Bureau
X	Charlie Purcell	Project Development
	Jeff von Brown	Systems Planning Bureau
	Andrea White	Systems Planning Bureau
X	Caleb Whitehouse	Systems Planning Bureau
X	Lee Wilkinson	Administrative Services Division