

# APPALACHIAN REGIONAL FREIGHT MOBILITY PLAN

## Appendix A STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



**DRAFT – FOR REVIEW**

Prepared for:

**APPALACHIAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Prepared by:



July 2021

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# 1. Introduction



The Appalachian Council of Governments (ACOG) serves as the regional planning organization for the six counties of the Appalachian Region of South Carolina and has a voluntary membership of 43 municipalities and three metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The Appalachian Region of South Carolina includes the counties Anderson, Cherokee, Greenville, Oconee, Pickens, and Spartanburg counties and is home to approximately 1,300,000 people, making it the largest of the 10 Councils of Government in the state of South Carolina.

The need for a comprehensive strategy to address goods movement in the region results from significant growth in both population and industry that has put pressure on existing infrastructure. The addition of Inland Port Greer's 50-acre facility in 2013 has also added significant freight-related traffic to the region's major highways and arterials.

ACOG recognizes the value of private-sector participation in the planning an efficient and effective freight transportation system. This recognition promotes the need for coordination between the public and private sectors to address challenges in the region's freight transportation system. The ACOG has also recognized the opportunity to educate the public on the importance of such a planning process, the role of freight in the local economy, and the ways in which they can be involved in said process.

Developing a Freight Plan that can identify and address the challenges facing a freight system will require outreach to and engagement of the freight community. The stakeholders will play a critical role in identifying issues, prioritizing projects, and for public and private investment in freight infrastructure and policy. Their input is required to ensure the Freight Plan reflects the real priorities of freight operators and users.

A successful engagement process will reflect the opportunities and challenges facing the freight system, its users, and providers in the Appalachian Region. The Stakeholder and Public Engagement Team for this project consists of ACOG staff, the Freight Plan's Steering Committee, and the CDM Smith team, including subconsultants, TransSystems and Modern Mobility Partners. This Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary outlines the efforts of the engagement team throughout the freight planning process.

## 1.1 About the Freight Mobility Plan

The Freight Plan is an important product that ties together findings from a series of significant regional studies and projects over the past decade. It is expected that the Freight Plan will guide project partners and stakeholders (public and private) in the development of a staged, priority-driven technical process to address future regional freight (primarily truck and rail) processes, policies and investments.

A significant amount of analysis work is expected to be undertaken as part of this process, along with the identification of best practices from other regions around the country with similar logistic, economic and land use attributes and environments.

The Appalachian Regional Freight Plan will consider the projected future growth of the Appalachian and Upstate Regions, key economic variables that are driving regional freight land use, job growth and

workforce development scenarios, and all applicable Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act requirements and Statewide Freight and Multimodal Plans for performance measurement strategies and freight sector investments.

The Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Plan will include a set of strategies to guide state, regional and local agencies in the implementation of the Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Plan findings and recommendations in both the short (3 to 5 years) and long term (6-25 years).

The Freight Plan will be multimodal, addressing all aspects of freight transportation in the Appalachian Region, including:

- Highway / Trucking
- Freight Rail
- Connections to Intermodal Facilities
- Airports / Air Cargo

## 1.2 Purpose of Stakeholder & Public Engagement

The successful development and implementation of the Freight Plan requires an ongoing relationship between the ACOG, the freight community, and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) partners Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS), Spartanburg Area Transportation Study (SPATS) and Anderson Area

Transportation Study (ANATS). Stakeholders play a critical role in identifying issues, prioritizing projects, and generating buy-in for public and private investment in freight infrastructure and policy. This Stakeholder and Public Engagement Summary outlines the approach taken to establish and maintain this



relationship with public and private freight stakeholders whose input is essential to the success of the Freight Plan. Additionally, the summary outlines ways used to engage the public and raise awareness of the freight planning process, the importance of including freight planning along with ACOGs other planning efforts, and the pivotal role of freight in the local and regional economies.

Establishing cooperative relationships with industry representatives and public sector agencies requires an intentional, tailored approach. Industry representatives look at engagement as an investment of time. If the effort has the potential to benefit their organization, they will gladly participate in the process. Their perspective is short-term and focused on their businesses’ geographic reach and bottom line. However, public sector agencies often have a longer-term and more locally focused perspective. When participants understand these differences between the localized perspectives of the public and the globalized perspectives of private-sector stakeholders, decisions can be made that benefit transportation policies and projects in the region for years to come.





## 2. Stakeholder & Public Engagement Process



### 2.1 Stakeholder & Public Engagement Approach and Results

Developing meaningful relationships with private-sector freight industries and public-sector agencies supporting the freight transportation network is the basis for this stakeholder and public engagement approach. This approach also includes high-level communication with the general public about the freight planning process and the role of freight in the economy. The methods of engagement are discussed further below.

Figure 2-1: Stakeholder & Public Engagement Approach

| <br><b>Stakeholder &amp; Public Engagement Approach</b> |                                   |   |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|
|   | <b>Steering Committee</b>         | Regional Policymakers, Elected Officials, Staff | Status Meetings, Webinars                          |
|    | <b>Freight Advisory Committee</b> | Private & Public Sectors, Universities          | In-Person Meetings, Surveys, One-on-One Interviews |
|   | <b>General Public</b>             | Citizens of the ACOG Region                     | Social Media                                       |
|   | <b>Agency Coordination</b>        | SCDOT, FHWA, Local Governments, MPOs            | Work Sessions, Emails, Data Sharing, etc.          |

### 2.2 Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is responsible for the policy-level elements of the Freight Plan. Members of the Steering Committee are listed in **Table 2-1**. The Steering Committee met monthly during the development of the Freight Plan. The meetings were structured so the first hour was for study-specific updates and discussion and the second hour was an educational lunch-and-learn on freight-related topics called the Palmetto Freight Series. Steering Committee meetings were held virtually using Adobe Connect throughout the duration of the project due to COVID-19 public health concerns and social distancing needs. (See **Table 2-2**) In-person meetings and activities were not scheduled, following the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and SCDHEC to ensure the safety of the committee members and project team. All meetings were recorded and published to the ACOG Regional Freight Mobility Plan webpage following the meeting.

Table 2-1: Steering Committee Members

| Agency  | Representative     |
|---|--------------------|
| Anderson County Economic Development, Anderson County | Burriss Nelson     |
| Cherokee County Development Board                     | Jim Cook           |
| Cherokee County Development Board                     | Ken Moon           |
| Greenville Area Development Corporation               | Mark Ferris        |
| Laurens County Development Corporation                | Jonathan Coleman   |
| Oconee Economic Alliance                              | Annie Caggiano     |
| Alliance Pickens                                      | Jeromy Arnett      |
| Spartanburg Economic Futures Group                    | Kyle Sox           |
| Cherokee County                                       | Steve Bratton      |
| Greenville County                                     | Kurt Walters       |
| Laurens County  | Jon Caime          |
| Oconee County   | Adam Chapman       |
| Pickens County  | Chris Brink        |
| Spartanburg County                                    | Billy Martin       |
| SCDOT - Intermodal                                    | Diane Lackey       |
| SCDOT - Planning                                      | Christina Lewis    |
| SCDOT - Production                                    | Jim Walden         |
| FHWA Community Planning                               | Mark Pleasant      |
| Ten at the Top - Upstate Mobility Alliance            | Michael Hildebrand |
| GSP Airport   | Mike Forman        |
| SC Ports Authority                                    | Barbara Melvin     |
| SC Ports Authority                                    | Steve Kemp         |
| SC Ports Authority                                    | Hampton Lee        |
| City of Gaffney                                       | James Taylor       |
| City of Greenville                                    | Valerie Holmes     |
| City of Greenville                                    | Allen Reid         |
| City of Greer   | Ashley Kaade       |
| City of Spartanburg                                   | Chris Story        |
| City of Woodruff                                      | Lee Bailey         |
| GPATS MPO   | Keith Brockington  |
| SPATS MPO   | Lisa Bollinger     |
| ANATS MPO and City of Anderson                        | Mike Gay           |
| Upper Savannah Council of Governments                 | Rick Green         |
| ACOG  | Lance Estep        |

Table 2-2: Summary of Steering Committee Meetings

| Date               | Topic  | Attendees |
|--------------------|--|-----------|
| June 4, 2020       | Introduction to Freight Planning                   | 25        |
| July 16, 2020      | Best Practices and Network Assessment              | 29        |
| August 13, 2020    | Land Use Analysis                                  | 26        |
| September 10, 2020 | Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures        | 23        |
| October 8, 2020    | Economic Impact Analysis                           | 18        |
| November 12, 2020  | Draft Plan Recommendations - Policies and Programs | 22        |

Input was received from committee members in a variety of ways throughout the meetings. Open discussion, virtual polling, and interactive exercises were used to gather feedback. Detailed notes on the questions and conversation were taken during the meetings. A summary of each meeting's engagement is below.

#### June 4, 2020, Introduction to Freight Planning

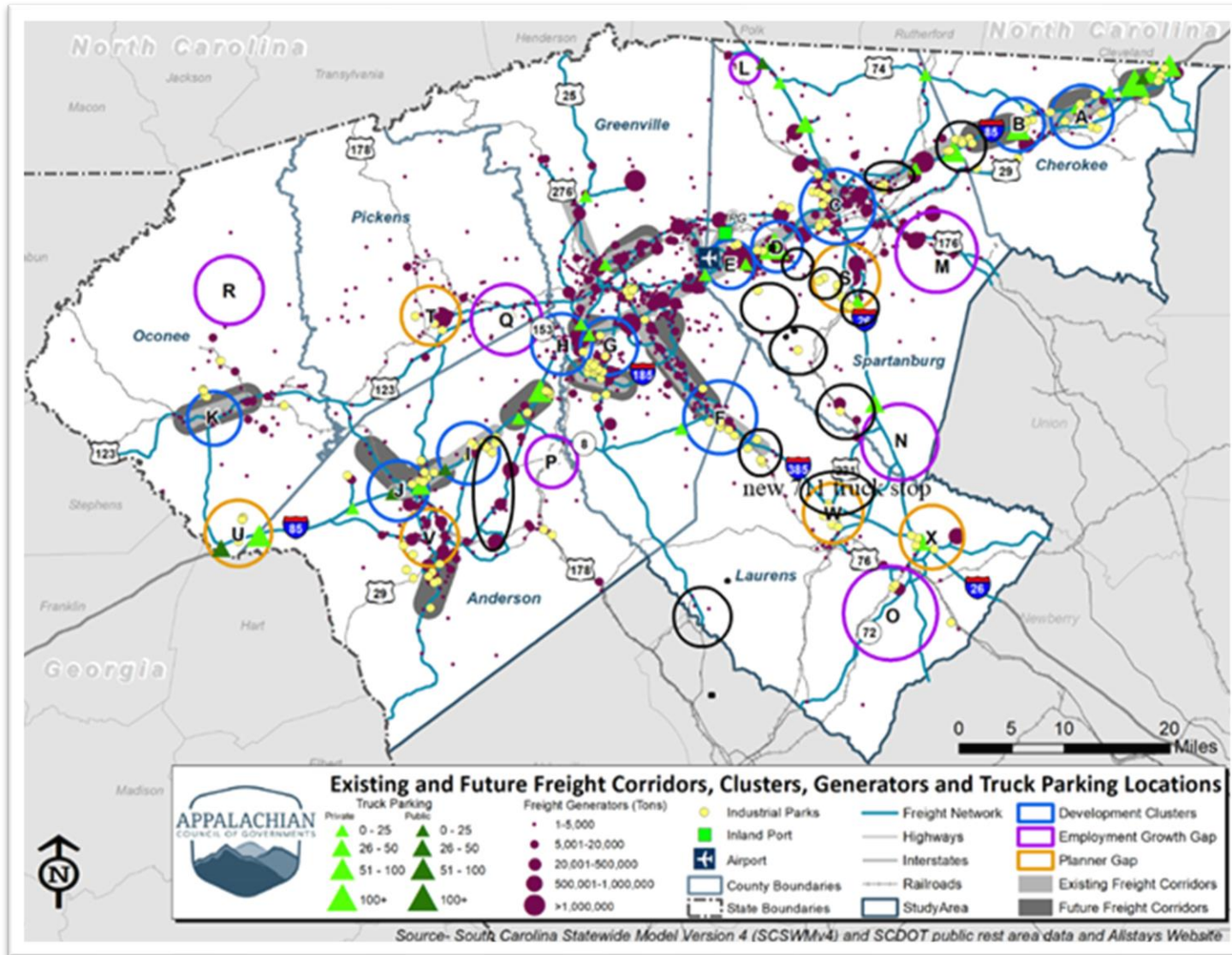
- Polling Question #1 – What is your interest in the development of a freight mobility plan?
  - The majority said they were technical planning professionals, or they were in advocacy representing an organization interested in the plan
- Polling Question #2 – Now that you know what this freight plan is, what are you most excited about?
  - The majority said integrating land use and transportation planning and fixing the condition and capacity of our highways
- Questions and Comments
  - Can you do a comparison of land use by sectors?

#### July 16, 2020, Best Practices and Network Assessment

- Polling Question #1 – Do you have suggestions for additional routes to be included in the draft freight network?
  - SC-20, Augusta Road, I-185 through Greenville County, SC 290, and SC 101 were all suggested
- Polling Question #2 – Which of the technology trends and technologies do you think is most applicable to the region?
  - Majority of respondents said Connected Vehicles, Moving the Carolinas Forward, and P3 Truck Parking Opportunities
- Comments and Questions
  - How much have those maps changed since the opening of the inland port?
  - What's happening with the change in rail densities in/out from Laurens County?
  - Can you elaborate on how urban truck traffic is studied differently than interstate/thru corridor traffic?

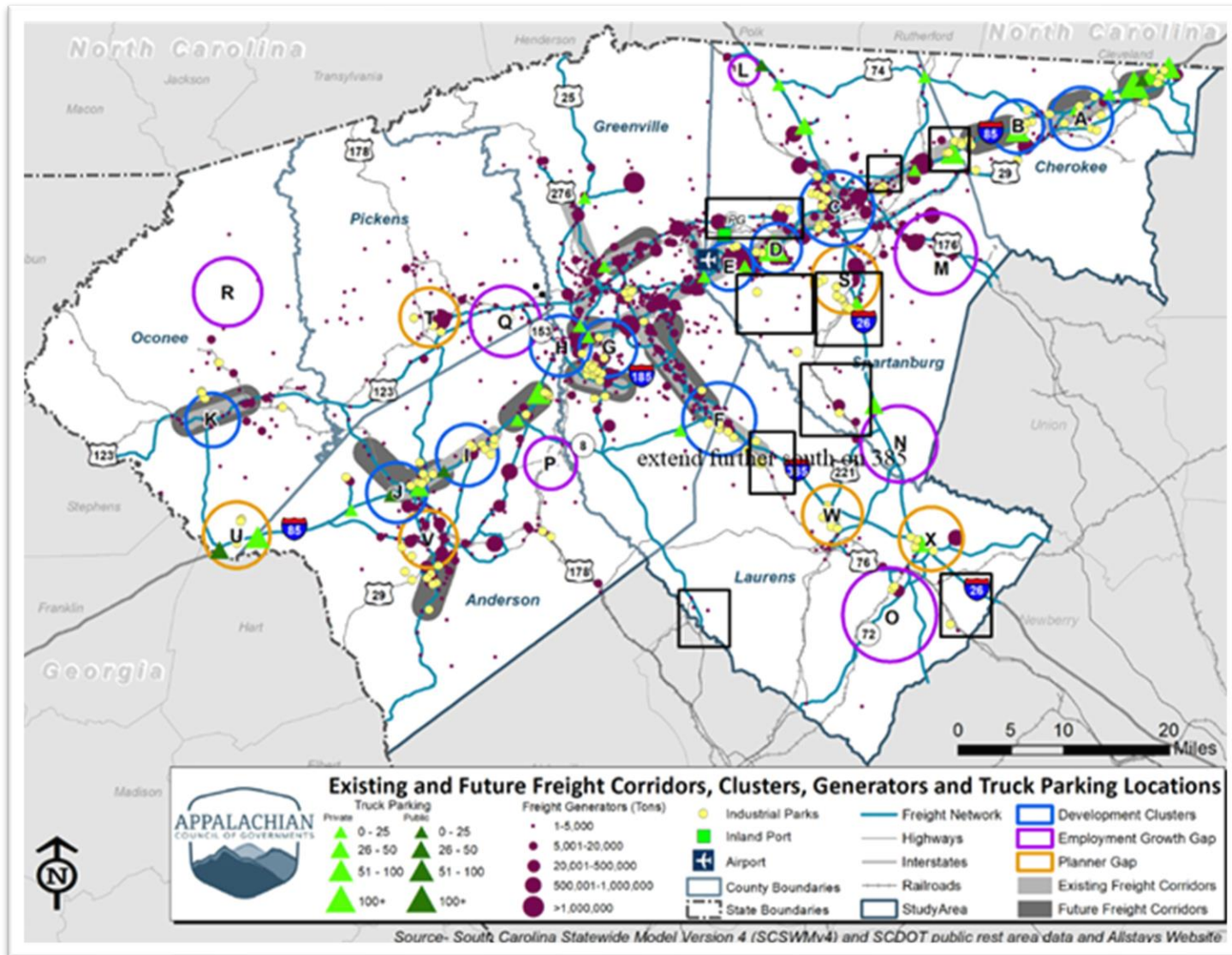
**August 13, 2020, Land Use Analysis**

- Interactive exercise mapping locations of Freight Planning Corridors we may have missed:

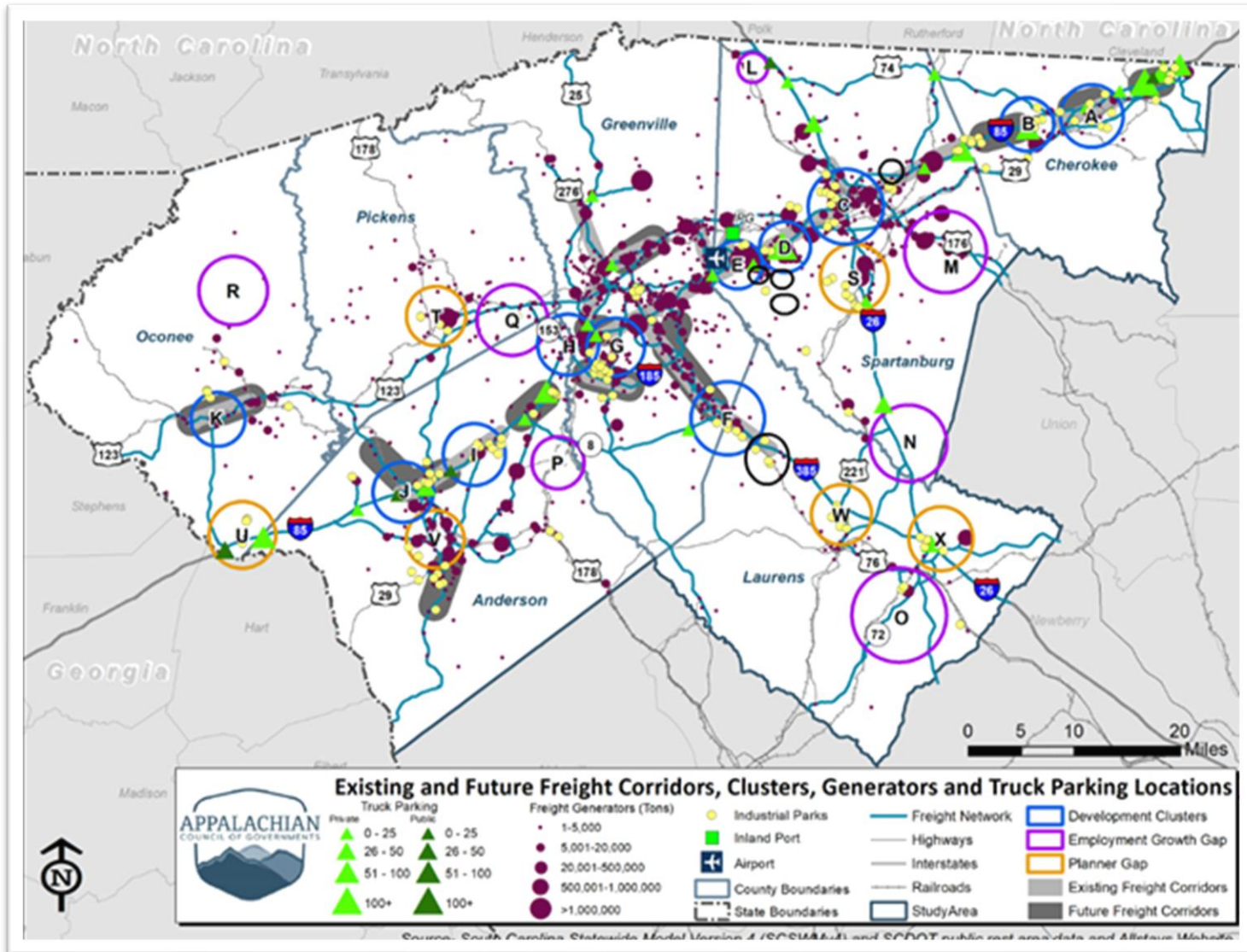




- Interactive exercise mapping where freight related employment growth is anticipated:



- Interactive exercise mapping cluster areas where freight facilities and infrastructure exist or are planned:



- Questions and Comments
  - Spartanburg does not have “Zoning” per se, what does that mean for Spartanburg? Currently they are implementing area performance planning, but it is not traditional zoning.
  - The South 28 and S US 29 Gap has very heavy industrial traffic, can we address this issue?
  - Would like to discuss closing the gap with further data from Spartanburg along SC 290 and SC 101

**September 10, 2020, Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures**

- Interactive dot exercise, where committee members were asked to put 3 stars on the draft goals and objectives that they viewed as most important:

| Appalachian Regional Freight Mobility Plan  |               |
|---|---------------|
| Goals & Objectives  | Dot Placement |
| <b>Mobility and System Reliability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce congestion on the freight transportation system</li> <li>• Improve average speed on congested corridors</li> </ul>   |               |
| <b>Safety</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the number of high crash locations that involve trucks and at-grade rail crossings</li> <li>• Improve the incident response rate to crashes on the freight system and in response to hazardous materials incidents</li> <li>• Implement enhanced Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) improvements</li> </ul> |               |
| <b>Infrastructure Condition</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain regionally significant roadways and bridges in a state of good repair</li> </ul>  |               |
| <b>Economic and Community Vitality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve access and interconnectivity of the freight transportation system to major intermodal facilities</li> <li>• Maintain or improve truck travel speed and time reliability</li> <li>• Improve the freight transportation system to accommodate supply chain immunity</li> </ul>            |               |
| <b>Environmental</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage land use planning that supports and promotes the efficient movement of freight</li> </ul>   |               |
| <b>Equity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve or maintain broad based public participation into all planning and project development processes</li> <li>• Incorporate freight mobility needs of all modes into prioritization processes</li> </ul>   |               |

- Questions and Comments
  - Regarding equity is it possible to obtain employment statistics from the transportation sector?
  - Are there any goal areas that the group might consider establishing performance targets?

**October 8, 2020, Economic Impact Analysis**

- Polling Question #1 – What freight direction has the greatest economic significance?
  - The majority of respondents said interregional freight; however, inbound and outbound freight actually have the greatest economic significance
- Polling Question #2 – What industry sector employs most in the region?
  - Manufacturing
- Polling question #3 – How will COVID-19 change freight?

- Increased reshoring, shorter supply chains, shifting international trade partners
- Questions and Comments
  - Does this information tie back to the TRANSEARCH Freight Generator/Non-Generator data?

**November 12, 2020, Draft Plan Recommendations – Policies and Programs**

- Questions and Comments
  - Do Trucks pay for parking?
  - What attributes of a location make it suitable for long term truck parking?

## 2.3 Freight Advisory Committee

A Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) was established by identifying members during the Freight Plan development process. The FAC is composed of members of the private sector including firms related to trucking, shipping, rail and aviation as well as economic development partners such as research universities, South Carolina Logistics Council, the South Carolina Ports Authority, county economic development organizations and the South Carolina Department of Commerce. The FAC members assist in identifying the needs of the Freight Plan. The purpose of FAC is to improve freight operations in the region on an on-going basis and provide the region with a more detailed understanding of freight issues that the ACOG and private industry will face in the coming years. The FAC is listed in **Table 2-3**.

*Table 2-3: Freight Advisory Committee Members*

| Agency   | Representative    |
|--|-------------------|
| BMW Manufacturing  | Alfred Haas       |
| SC Ports Authority   | Hampton Lee       |
| SC Ports Authority   | Mike Hoffman      |
| Carolina Piedmont Shortline RR   | Billy Tucker      |
| C.H. Robinson  | Brandon Huell     |
| Norfolk Southern   | Brian Gwin        |
| Michelin   | Leesa Owens       |
| G & P Trucking   | Clifton Parker    |
| Maritime Association of South Carolina   | Heather Holmquest |
| Continental Tires  | Corey Mabry       |
| SCDOT  | Doug Frate        |
| SCDOT  | Diane Lackey      |
| SCDOT  | David Gray        |
| Sunland Logistics  | Elijah Ray        |
| NAI Earle Furman   | Hal Johnson       |
| Clemson University - ICAR  | Jack Ellenberg    |
| CSX Railroad   | John Dillard      |
| U of SC - Operations and Supply Chain Center at the Darla Moore School of Business | Linda Oldham      |
| SC Trucking Association  | Rick Todd         |
| GSP Airport  | Scott Carr        |
| SC Logistics   | Taylor Jackson    |

The FAC met virtually two times around key plan development milestones. Due to COVID-19 public health concerns, both meetings were held virtually. FAC members were also invited to attend the virtual Lunch & Learn portion of the Steering Committee meetings in order to provide more value and offer an educational component to the committee. (See **Table 2-4**)

*Table 2-4: Summary of Freight Advisory Committee Meetings*

| Date               | Topic                            | Attendees |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| July 30, 2020      | Introduction to Freight Planning | 13        |
| September 24, 2020 | Freight Plan Status Update       | 12        |

The Federal FAST Act encourages a regional Freight Advisory Committee be empaneled and continue to function outside of the plan development process. After the plan is developed, the committee should evolve to be an effective and representative voice on regional freight issues.

The FAC met twice virtually during the planning process. Due to COVID-19 public health concerns, both meetings were held virtually. Detailed notes were taken during the meetings and a recording of each meeting was made available online after the meeting. A summary of each meeting's content is below:

#### **July 30, 2020; Introduction to Freight Planning**

- Present to the Freight Advisory Committee:
  - A high-level introduction to the Freight Mobility Plan
  - What is the plan?
  - Website/Contact – how to stay involved
- Gather input on:
  - What is missing?
  - What chapter are you most interested in? Policy, projects, funding, etc.
  - What other freight related topics are of interest to you?
- Share the FAC's role in the project:
  - Assist in identifying the needs of the Freight Mobility Plan and validate the needs
  - Provide the region with a more detailed understanding of freight issues that the ACOG region and private industries are facing/will face in the future
  - Advocate for the recommendations presented in the Freight Mobility Plan
  - Stay engaged and provide feedback

#### **September 24, 2020; Freight Plan Status Update**

- Present to the Freight Advisory Committee:
  - Network Assessment Analysis
  - Network Performance Metrics
  - Steering Committee Feedback

- Gather input:
  - Confirm Network Determination
  - Land Use Analysis
  - Land Use Mapping
  - Steering Committee Feedback
  - Summary of Findings
- Gather input
  - Confirm Mapping and Findings
  - Best Practices/Peer Review Analysis
  - Summary of Case Studies
- Gather input
  - Discussion of applicable best practices for the ACOG region

## 3. Stakeholder Outreach



The stakeholder outreach for the development of the Freight Plan included a series of interviews and online surveys. There was one round of industry interviews and one online survey during the course of the Freight Plan. Stakeholders were identified through contacts within ACOG, the Steering Committee and the consulting team. The outreach activities are further described below in order of completion.

### 3.1 Industry Interviews

**Industry Interview GOAL:**

Understand the Current Condition & Performance of the Freight Transportation Network

The first round of outreach included interviews with freight industry representatives, including both transportation providers and shippers, and regional manufacturing and distribution companies to solicit input on the current condition and performance of the freight transportation network. These interviews were conducted by ACOG and the consulting team as one-on-one phone interviews.

Questions were tailored to the particular interviewee based on their mode, geographic reach, size, etc. Four recurring themes emerged from the interviews: Coronavirus (COVID-19) impacts, traffic challenges and opportunities, multimodal transportation, and issues facing trucking and logistics.

### 3.2 Online Survey

**Online Survey GOAL:**

Understand the Current Condition & Performance of the Freight Transportation Network

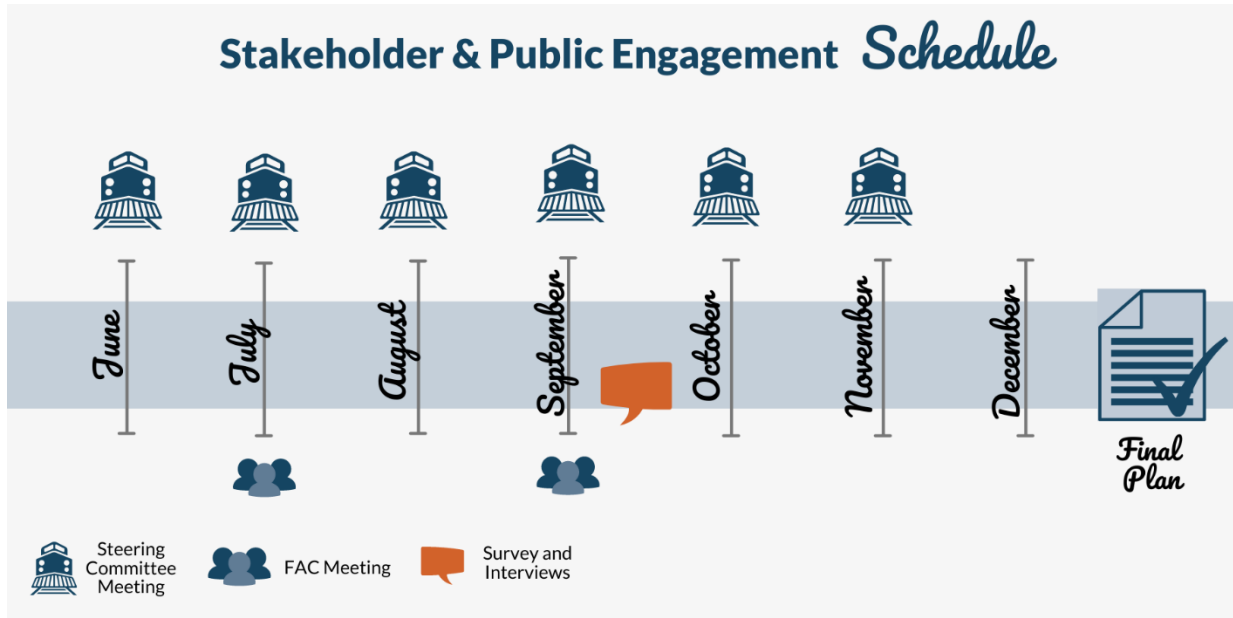
An online survey included 17 questions to receive feedback related to identified needs and priorities for the regional freight system was part of the outreach to the community. The ACOG, Steering Committee and consultant team developed the survey questions and the web-based survey was distributed by the ACOG. A summary

of the responses can be found in Appendix A.

### 3.3 Stakeholder Involvement Schedule

The stakeholder involvement schedule is shown **Figure 3-1**.

Figure 3-1: Stakeholder & Public Engagement Schedule





## 4. Public Outreach



While the primary outreach targets for the Freight Plan are those industry and agency stakeholders, the ACOG recognizes the importance of being transparent with the public about its planning processes and informing the public about the study's findings. The freight industry's role in economic, and thus community development, is often undervalued by the public. The public does not normally think about the connection between the jobs within the community and the movement of those goods created when waiting at a railroad track or frustrated in traffic. For successful long-term implementation of the efforts developed within the Freight Plan, public understanding, and support, for these planning principles should be achieved.

Key messages to the public included:

- What is a Freight Mobility Plan and why is it important to me and my community?
- What are the findings and suggestions of the freight plan, and what does that mean to me?
- What is currently going on with the Freight Mobility Plan?
- What are the modes of freight transportation in the community?
- The economic benefits of freight, drawing specific examples.

### 4.1 Outreach Tools and Summary

#### 4.1.1 Social Media

Social Media posts with suggested text, graphics, and hashtags were developed monthly for ACOG that included a series educational components and highlights from the monthly steering committee. These posts were provided to ACOG to be published through the already-established ACOG social media channels. Project Manager, Lance Estep, also published posts directly to his LinkedIn profile for further engagement.

Figure 4-1: Social Media Post Examples

Are you wondering how COVID-19 could impact freight? We will likely see increased reshoring, shorter supply chains, and shifting international trade partners caused by the virus. #freight #transportation #logistics

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Thank you to everyone who participated in our Appalachian Regional Freight Industry Survey! Check out some highlights from what we learned from YOU! #freight #transportation #trucking #logistics

### WHAT DID WE HEAR FROM YOU?

THE MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS ...

- DO NOT USE TRAFFIC APPS TO HELP ASSIST IN THEIR COMMUTE OR DELIVERY
- ARE MOST CONCERNED WITH TRAFFIC CONGESTION/ VOLUMES WHEN DRIVING
- DO NOT THINK TRUCK PARKING FACILITIES ARE ADEQUATE IN OUR REGION
- WOULD LIKE TO SEE ADDED CAPACITY TO IMPROVE FREIGHT MOBILITY

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Do you know which South Carolina interstate accommodates the most freight by tonnage?

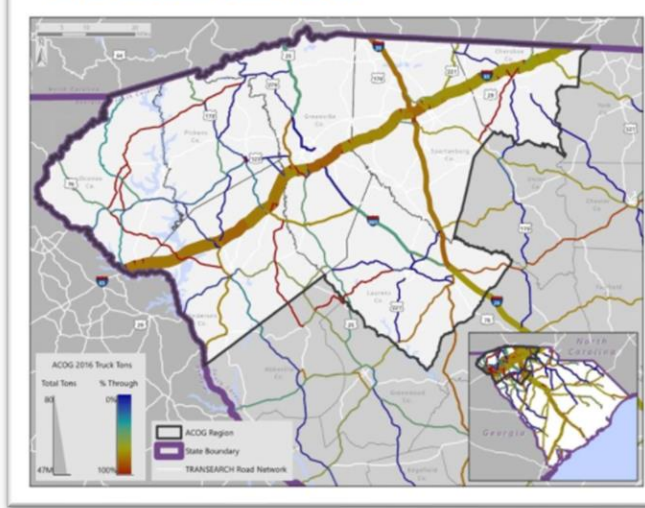
- I-26 Lowcountry
- I-26 Midlands
- I-85 Upstate
- I-95 Pee Dee
- I-95 Lowcountry
- I-77 Piedmont

Learn this and more about freight in the state by watching our Palmetto Freight Series Lunch & Learn presentation from September 10th: <https://lnkd.in/gtqVtNf>

Not surprising, I-85 handles the largest share of the freight-related truck traffic in the Upstate. In 2016, I-85 carried 42% of the region's freight-related truck traffic; 73% went straight through the area without stopping. #freight #transportation #trucking #logistics

### DO YOU KNOW?

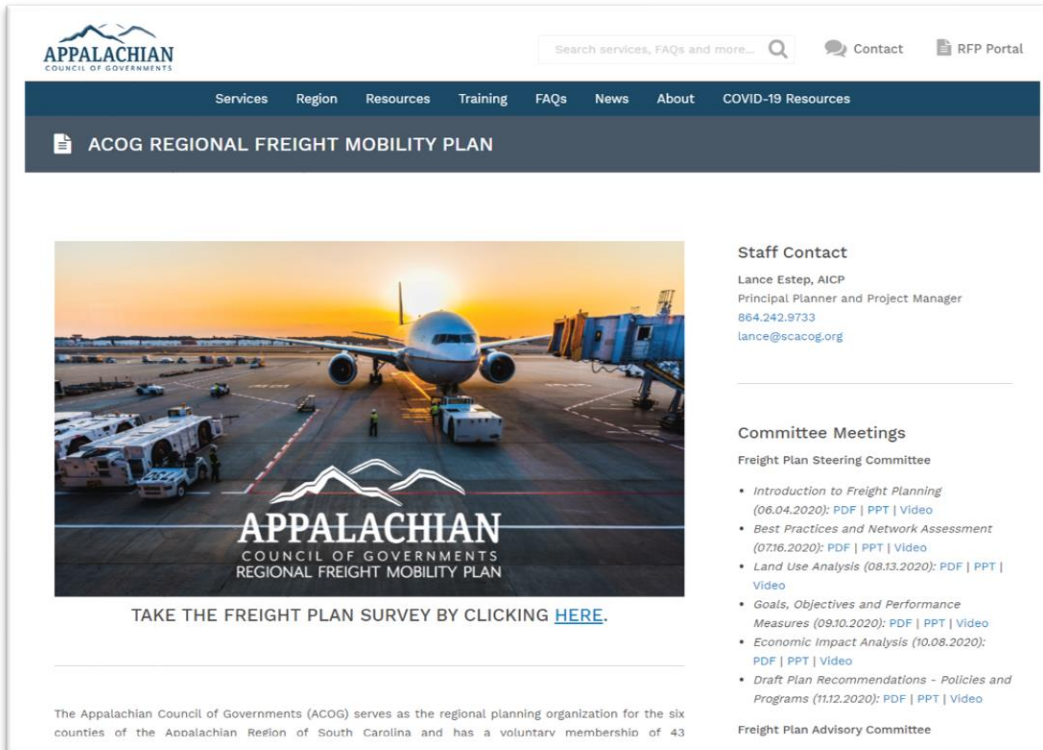
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## 4.1.2 Website

Presentation materials and other documents are posted regularly by ACOG on the ACOG Regional Freight Mobility Plan webpage accessible to the public, [www.scacog.org/acog-freight-plan](http://www.scacog.org/acog-freight-plan). The website also includes an FAQ section, link to the public survey, contact information, and all meeting materials and recordings.

Figure 4-2: Webpage for ACOG Regional Freight Mobility Plan



## 4.2 Coordination of Other Plans

The consultant team will coordinate with existing regional transportation plans to ensure that freight-related issues and projects are documented and addressed in the Freight Plan. This coordination will ensure that the Plan fits into the overall transportation program for the ACOG. Other planning documents will include:

- Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP)
- Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP)
- Comprehensive Transportation Plans (CTP)
- South Carolina Statewide Freight Plan
- South Carolina Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan
- South Carolina Comprehensive State Rail Plan
- SC Ports Authority Inland Port Greer Master Plan
- GSP International Airport Master Plan

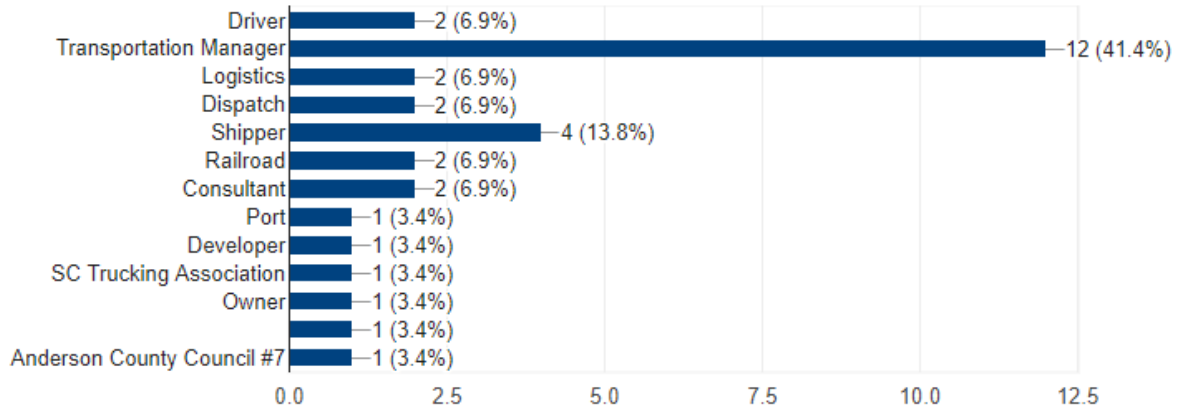
# Appendix A: Survey Results Summary

ACOG REGIONAL FREIGHT MOBILITY PLAN



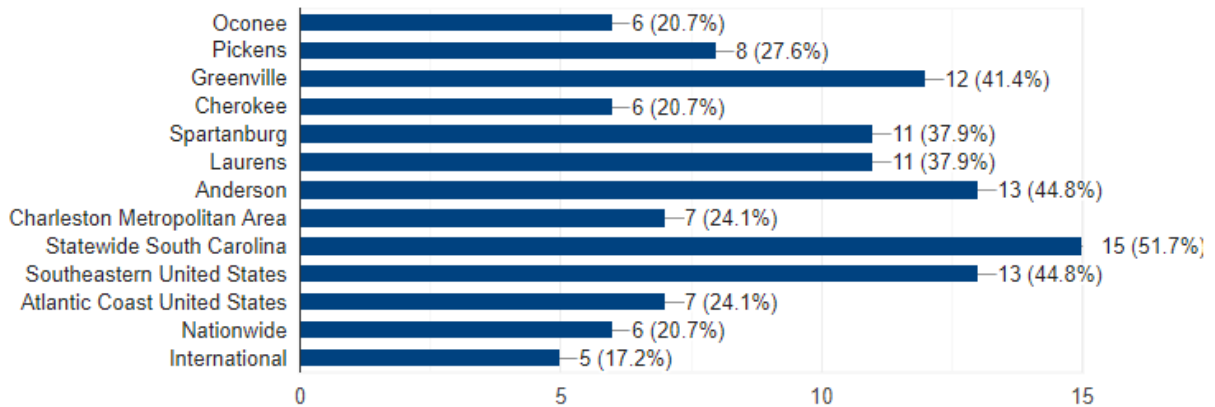
What is your role in the freight industry?

29 responses



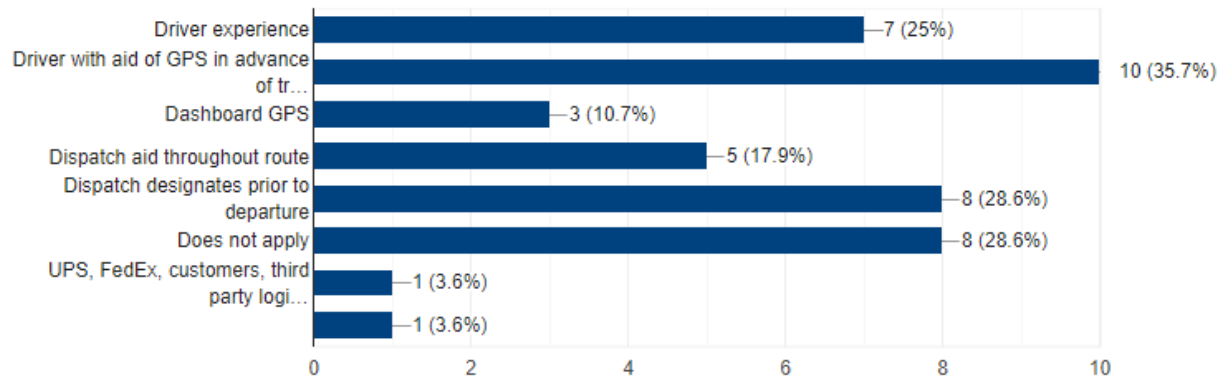
What best describes your operational coverage? (check all that apply)

29 responses



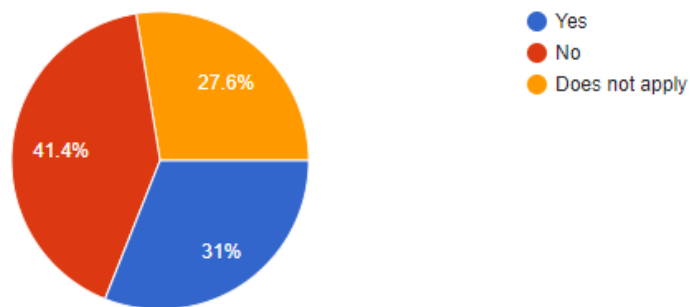
How are your truck routing decisions made? (check all apply)

28 responses



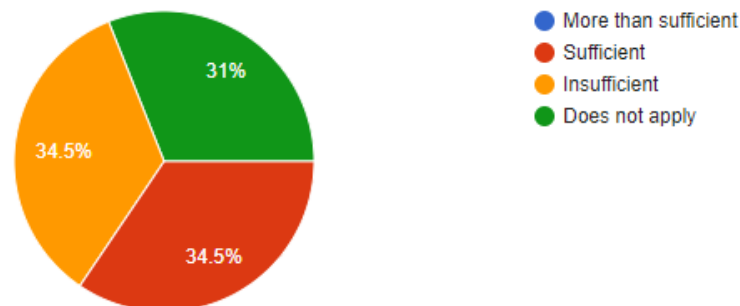
Do you use any traffic apps to assist in daily commute and/or delivery?

29 responses



Are the truck facilities in the Appalachian Region sufficient?

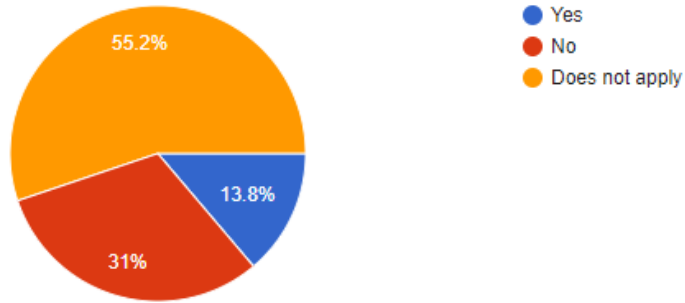
29 responses



Do you have any concerns when parked/resting/waiting for deliveries in your truck?

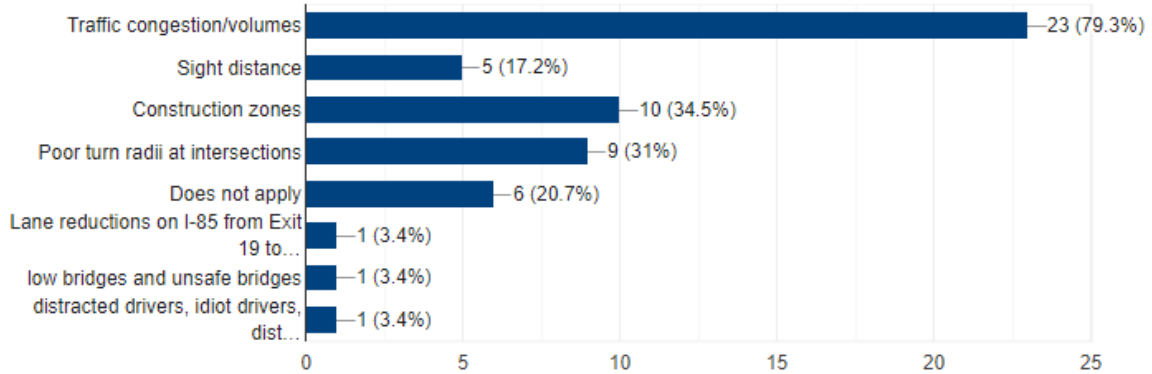


29 responses



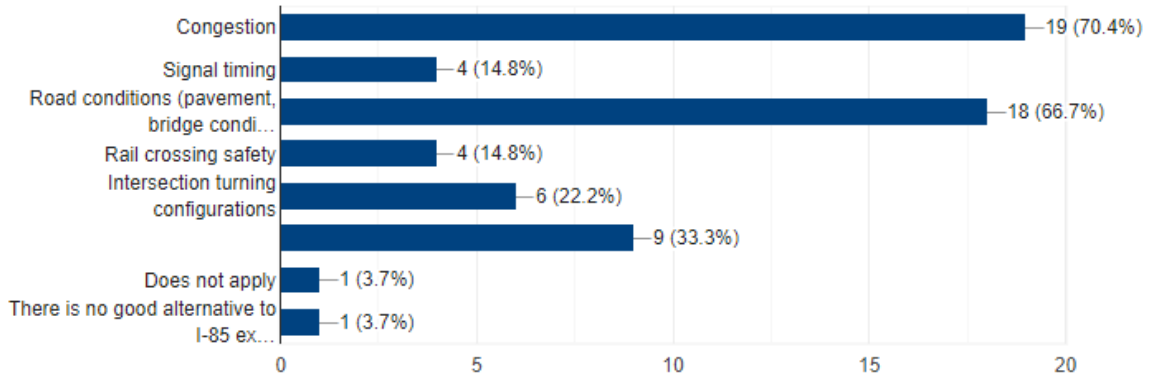
What are the greatest safety concerns you face while driving?

29 responses



What are the biggest challenges you face in delivering freight to and within the Appalachian Region? (Check all that apply)

27 responses



With regard to the global pandemic, how would you say your operations have changed since March 2020?

23 responses

