

Mississippi River Action Plan: Workshop Summary

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■ Workshop Summary

Workshop Overview

The Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) hosted a one-day workshop to engage a range of stakeholders in the planning process for the Mississippi River Action Plan. The workshop was held on Thursday, July 27th, 2013 in Bettendorf, Iowa, and consisted of three interactive exercises with a goal of consolidating the variety of stakeholder issues, concerns and priorities into a recommended pilot project for the Iowa DOT. The pilot project was framed as a project that would test new funding mechanisms and/or new partnerships, possibly in line with the 2013 Water Resources Development Act, to repair and/or modernize the Mississippi River inland waterway system.

Attendees included a variety of area stakeholders including representatives from state Departments of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, elected officials from states bordering the Upper Mississippi River, industries related to freight transportation, and special interest groups.

Outreach

Invitees

A list of 206 area stakeholders, including representatives from state Departments of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, elected officials, industries related to freight transportation, and special interest groups (Appendix A, Invitation Mailing List), was created by the Iowa DOT and HDR Engineering, Inc. (HDR). A direct mail invitation letter was distributed to 133 of the invitees on June 7th and an email invitation was sent to 169 of the invitees on June 10th (Appendix B, Example Workshop Invitations); some invitees received both a direct mail and email invitation. Email reminders were sent on June 18th and June 25th.

MindMixer Interactive Website

All invitees were invited to visit and participate on the project's interactive website at www.IowaLockandDamActionPlan.com. This site was used to engage stakeholders and generate conversation and initial feedback prior to the workshop. Several reference documents could be found on the site, including the workshop agenda, workshop handout, versions of the *U.S. Inland Waterway Modernization: A Reconnaissance Study*, as well as links to the Iowa DOT website and other informational sources.

The site utilized a MindMixer platform; anyone could visit the site and view documents, but were asked to register with their email address and a password in order to submit ideas and comments. The site was intended for use only by the workshop invitees and project team.

Attendees were asked to provide their ideas and comments under five topics:

1. Trade growth on the Mississippi River system is projected to increase 83% by 2039. What are the immediate issues that the State of Iowa needs to address to capture the benefits of this growth?
2. Aside from Federal and State funding sources, what other potential funding mechanisms should be investigated (i.e. user fees, fuel tax, private investment, etc.)?
3. Aside from improved transportation, what other potential benefits / concerns could result from investments on the Upper Mississippi River System (i.e. environmental, recreation, industrial, etc.)?
4. A coalition of stakeholders is being formed to help Iowa DOT develop a Mississippi River Action Plan; are there individuals or organizations that you think should be involved in this coalition?
5. Do you have project suggestions or recommendations that the State of Iowa should consider for a pilot project(s) inline with goals of the Title II, Section 2025 of the WRDA 2013 Bill, Senate File 601?

By the date of the workshop, there were 29 active site participants, 15 ideas and two comments. (Appendix C, MindMixer Data).

Participant comments and ideas included:

1. Funding should come from increased user fees, including a fuel tax that would adjust with inflation.
2. Flood control improvements are the number one priority.
3. Iowa DOT should consult with other regional river system managers to find successful models for funding and improving systems.
4. Funding should not require congressional oversight.
5. The Action Plan should represent the views of taxpayer and environmental groups.
6. Inland waterways should be viewed and included in planning as part of a total intermodal transportation system.
7. Advance negotiations with the Corps of Engineers should be done to reduce paperwork and delays in the permitting process.
8. States and municipalities that provide funding for projects should consider how much control they will have in the construction process.

The site is planned for post-workshop outreach until August 7th.

Workshop Agenda & Outcomes

Attendees

Sixty people attended the workshop, as well as three project team members from Iowa DOT and five project team members from HDR (68 total). (Appendix D, Attendee List)

Agenda & Outcomes

The workshop was held on Thursday, June 27, 2013 at the Isle Hotel Conference Rooms, located at 1777 Isle Parkway in Bettendorf, Iowa. Registration began at 8:00 a.m. with the workshop commencing at 8:30 a.m. and continuing until 3:45 p.m. The workshop included an introduction from Iowa DOT Director Paul Trombino III, two presentations and a four-step process to develop a pilot project (including sessions for visioning, issues identification, issues categorization and pilot project identification). (Appendix E, Attendee Handout Packet)

Introduction: Iowa DOT Director Paul Trombino III

Iowa DOT Director Paul Trombino III welcomed attendees and emphasized that the goal of the workshop was to develop a framework for a pilot project that would test new funding mechanisms and/or new partnerships in order to repair and/or modernize the Mississippi River inland waterway system. Director Trombino outlined the Iowa DOT's interest in waterway transportation as well as waterway initiatives undertaken by the DOT (including the Lock and Dam Feasibility Study, a Governor's meeting, and the Mississippi River Action Plan).

Presentation 1: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Gary Meden with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) presented on the background and current state of the Upper Mississippi Lock and Dam system, including information on the system operation and traffic flow/priority, funding trends and opportunities, and current issues that prevent necessary maintenance and improvement.

Presentation 2: U.S. Inland Waterway Modernization Study Outcomes

David Johnson of HDR presented the key findings and outcomes of the *U.S. Inland Waterway Modernization: A Reconnaissance Study*, completed in April 2013 for the Iowa DOT.

Key Findings

1. No action will result in loss of economic benefits and a missed opportunity with Panamax.
2. Partial divestiture should be examined if there is no new funding, but will need more study.
3. Public Private Partnerships are not an option until major system repairs and upgrades are completed.
4. Increased funding from traditional sources can only be part of a more comprehensive funding system.

Recommendations for Congress

1. Pass the 2013 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Bill.
2. Allow pilot programs for non-federal sponsors to work on federal projects.
3. Allow alternative project delivery and funding.
4. Adequately fund USACE Civil Works and Navigation Programs.
5. Explore indexing fuel tax rates to inflation.
6. Authorize USACE to study additional funding options.

Recommendations for the State of Iowa

1. Create a coalition of Upper Mississippi River states and inland waterway interest groups to drive the legislative agenda.
2. Implement a pilot project in line with the 2013 WRDA Bill.

Visioning Process

The visioning session was intended to define opportunities and constraints of the system and develop a unified vision for the action plan. The session included a summary of discussions on the project website and an overview of the afternoon break-out session.

Participants were broken into eight groups, of approximately the same size, and asked to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the current lock and dam system (referred to as a SWOT analysis). Each group then reported on their activity, and a master list of SWOT items was compiled. Participants received three sticker ‘dots’ for each SWOT category and were asked to vote for the items in each category they felt were most important; participants could use their dots in any way they saw fit, including placing all three dots by one item. (Appendix F, SWOT List)

Table 1: Top 5 Items from each Category of the SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
1. The Mississippi River provides an efficient way to move goods environmentally and economically. (27 votes)	1. The lack of consistently sufficient funding for river infrastructure and Operations & Maintenance. (18 votes)
2. The Mississippi River is a significant economic asset. (24 votes)	2. The lack of awareness and understanding among policymakers. (18 votes)
3. The benefits of the river extend to all of society. (18 votes)	3. The risk of structural deficiencies due to age. (15 votes)
4. The river links the Upper Mississippi region to the world. (15 votes)	4. Inadequate dollars. (14 votes)
5. The Upper Mississippi provides for multiple uses. (9 votes)	5. Fragmented decision making at federal, state, and local levels. (13 votes)
Opportunities	Threats
1. To piggy-back on national infrastructure initiatives. (19 votes)	1. The lack of funding. (29 votes)
2. To spur local economic development. (16 votes)	2. Major failure of a system component. (29 votes)
3. To ease congestion on other modes. (15 votes)	3. Losing global competitiveness. (20 votes)
4. To use public-private partnerships. (11 votes)	4. Deferred maintenance. (20 votes)
5. To capture Post-Panamax opportunities. (9 votes)	5. Lack of predictable funding. (6 votes)

Issues Identification & Categorization

The visioning session was intended to help understand the full breadth of issues faced by navigation interests on the Upper Mississippi River Inland Waterway Navigation System. Workshop participants were separated into groups by the project team, based on the organizations they represented, to discuss the lock and dam system from these particular points of view: Environmental, Regulatory, Economic, Navigation, and Recreation. Participants were not required to take part in the small group they were assigned, and group sizes ranged from four to fifteen or more.

Groups were asked to answer the same four questions, based on the perspective of their group:

1. Trade growth on the Mississippi River system is projected to increase 83% by 2039. What are the immediate issues that the State of Iowa needs to address to capture the benefits of this growth?
2. Aside from Federal and State funding sources, what other potential funding mechanisms should be investigated (i.e. user fees, fuel tax, private investment, etc.)?
3. Aside from improved transportation, what other potential benefits / concerns could result from investments on the Upper Mississippi River System (i.e. environmental, recreation, industrial, etc.)?
4. A coalition of stakeholders is being formed to help Iowa DOT develop a Mississippi River Action Plan; are there individuals or organizations that you think should be involved in this coalition?

Participants then came back into a large group and reported on their small-group findings. (Appendix G, Small-Group Reports) General themes were taken from these reports to inform the pilot project discussion.

Table 2: Themes from Issues Identification & Categorization

Issue Themes	
Alternative funding	Legislation
Bonding	Multi-modal system planning
Economic benefit	Predictability and certainty in funding and operations
Environmental sustainability	Public awareness
Demand	Public benefits
Global competitor	Regional planning
Jobs/workforce	Service Consolidations
Industry	Whole system management
Integrated water management	

Pilot Project Discussion and Identification

Workshop attendees remained in one large group for the pilot project discussion facilitated by Theresa McClure of HDR. Participants were asked for their ideas for specific pilot projects and what elements a pilot project should include.

Table 3: Pilot Project Discussion

Implementation/Build Projects
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve Lock 15 with a fixed guide wall• Public, Private, Partnership with Soybean Council on maintenance and mechanical operations• Standardize the entire lock and dam system• Branding/public awareness campaign• Select an implementation project based on USACE prioritization• Improve Lock 18 as a multi-modal operation
Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• State investment/bonding• Investigate current Harbor Maintenance Fund framework to identify elements applicable to Inland Waterways• Alternative funding sources with and without the USACE• Evaluate using dam pools for upstream and downstream benefits• An Upper Mississippi River Business Plan• Highlight value/efficiency of predictable funding• Examine return of the state/ federal fuel user fees• Investigate use of shorter life-span locks or smaller investments now• Regional Freight Study

Next Steps

The next steps for the project have been identified as:

1. **Engage stakeholders and workshop attendees to foster partnerships for Iowa DOT lock and dam modernization efforts.** Iowa DOT should capitalize on the momentum built by the workshop and current national attention on inland waterways (surrounding the 2013 WRDA bill) to build support for the pilot project and other future efforts. Iowa DOT should keep stakeholders engaged by communicating how they can continue to be involved in rehabilitating and modernizing the lock and dam system. Iowa DOT should use the workshop stakeholder list as a contact list for distribution of future lock and dam related information and should utilize the existing project MindMixer site to encourage further engagement for attendees as well as stakeholders that were not able to attend the workshop. Once a pilot project is decided, stakeholders should be re-engaged and informed how they can be involved during the implementation process.
2. **Develop a specific pilot project based on the results of the workshop.** Representatives from the state of Iowa, including the Iowa DOT, and partner states should work with the USACE to further refine and prioritize a list of capital projects for implementation. The group should begin with the prioritized list of projects in the Rock Island District created by Gary Meden, USACE (Table 4), and consider ideas generated from the workshop.

Table 4: Prioritized Projects in the Rock Island District

Project	Cost Estimate (\$M)	Funding Type
Lagrange Major Rehab	56.5	Construction
Lagrange Miter Gates	4.0	O&M
Peoria Miter Gates	4.0	O&M
Lagrange Lock Major Maint	14.3	O&M
Joliet Channel Wall Repair	5.1	O&M
Miss. Miter Gates 3 locations	23.1	O&M
Miss. Bulkhead Slots 7 locations	54.2	O&M
Dresden Replace Dam Gates	9.9	O&M
O'Brien Major Maintenance	13.0	O&M
Dam Gate Rehab (L/D 15, 21, 22)	13.0	O&M
L/D 19 Concrete work	34.0	O&M
O'Brien Major Rehab	23.9	Construction
L/D 15	TBD	TBD
L/D 18	TBD	TBD
Total	255.0	

O&M = Operations and Maintenance
 TBD = To Be Determined

■ References

Referenced Materials and Citations

1. HDR Engineering, Inc. *U.S. Inland Waterway Modernization: A Reconnaissance Study*. Apr 2013.