

CHAPTER 6: INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

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Chapter 6: Intermodal Transportation emphasizes on freight transportation. Throughout the ten sections in this chapter, freight transportation, truck, rail, passenger rail, air and passenger rail, Government air, waterborne freight, intercity bus, intermodal, and a series of short and long- term policy recommendations are discussed.

TRUCK

CURRENT FACILITIES

Interstate 29 is the major transportation route going through SIMPCO's MPO planning area. I-29 provides a north/ south route for automobile, truck, and bus traffic from Sioux City into North and South Dakota, western Iowa, eastern Nebraska, and Missouri. It connects with I-90 to the north at Sioux Falls, I-80, and I-35 at Omaha and Kansas City, respectively. Other interstates that primarily serve the MPO include I-129, US 20, US 75, and US 77. US 75 and US 77 run north/south through Iowa and Nebraska, and US 20 runs east/west across Iowa and Nebraska. Figure 6.1 provides a summary of the major highways in the metropolitan area and regional connections these highways provide.

Figure 6.1: SIMPCO Metropolitan Area Major Arterials and Connected Cities



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TRUCK TRAFFIC

The trucking industry is privately owned and operated, therefore, the MPO can only provide a general overview of trucking activity in the region. There are several meat processing plants in vicinity, resulting in a large percentage of truck traffic transporting live animals to be slaughtered and processed. Such trips are approximately 100 miles, traveling from neighboring farms in Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota. As with any metropolitan area, the other major freight category includes traffic servicing the consumptive needs of the MPO area itself with commodities such as: foodstuffs, electronics, manufactured furniture, clothing, and other products.

Le Mars, IA, located northeast of Sioux City, is home to Wells Dairy and major dairy products are transported on the primary network throughout the MPO area. These products are transported in all directions of the United States and overseas via airports such as Eppley Airfield in Omaha, NE. Corn, soybeans, fertilizers, and other agricultural commodities, as well as manufactured items, are frequently transported throughout the MPO area.

Long distance truck transportation poses additional demands on the region’s roadways. As mentioned above, I-29 serves the region and is a major corridor not only for the MPO region but also for NAFTA traffic from Mexico and the Southeast, to central and western Canada. This traffic is anticipated to grow, particularly with the rise of Alberta as a significant energy and manufacturing center. Truck traffic from Minnesota to the Southwest and Mexico also places heavy demands, particularly along the Iowa Highway 60 corridor. Freight facilities and warehouses within the region include Big Soo Terminal, Burlington Junction Railroad, Cloverleaf Cold Storage, L.G. Everist, Le Mars Public Storage Inc., Big Soo Warehouse, Heyl Truck Lines, Jacobson Companies, and Nor-Am Cold Storage.

Table 6.1: 2018 Domestic Freight Flow (truck and all modes)

Domestic Inbound Freight: Units in thousands of tons				
Rank	Truck		All Modes	
#1	Cereal Grains	1,740.77	Cereal Grains	1,817.03
#2	Gravel and Crushed Stone	1,237.53	Gravel and Crushed Stone	1,314.49
#3	Other Agricultural Products	813.74	Other Agricultural Products	842.08
#4	NonMetallic Mineral Products	737.26	NonMetallic Mineral Products	758.49
#5	Other Prepared Foodstuffs, Fats and Oils	644.89	Other Prepared Foodstuffs, Fats and Oils	701.31

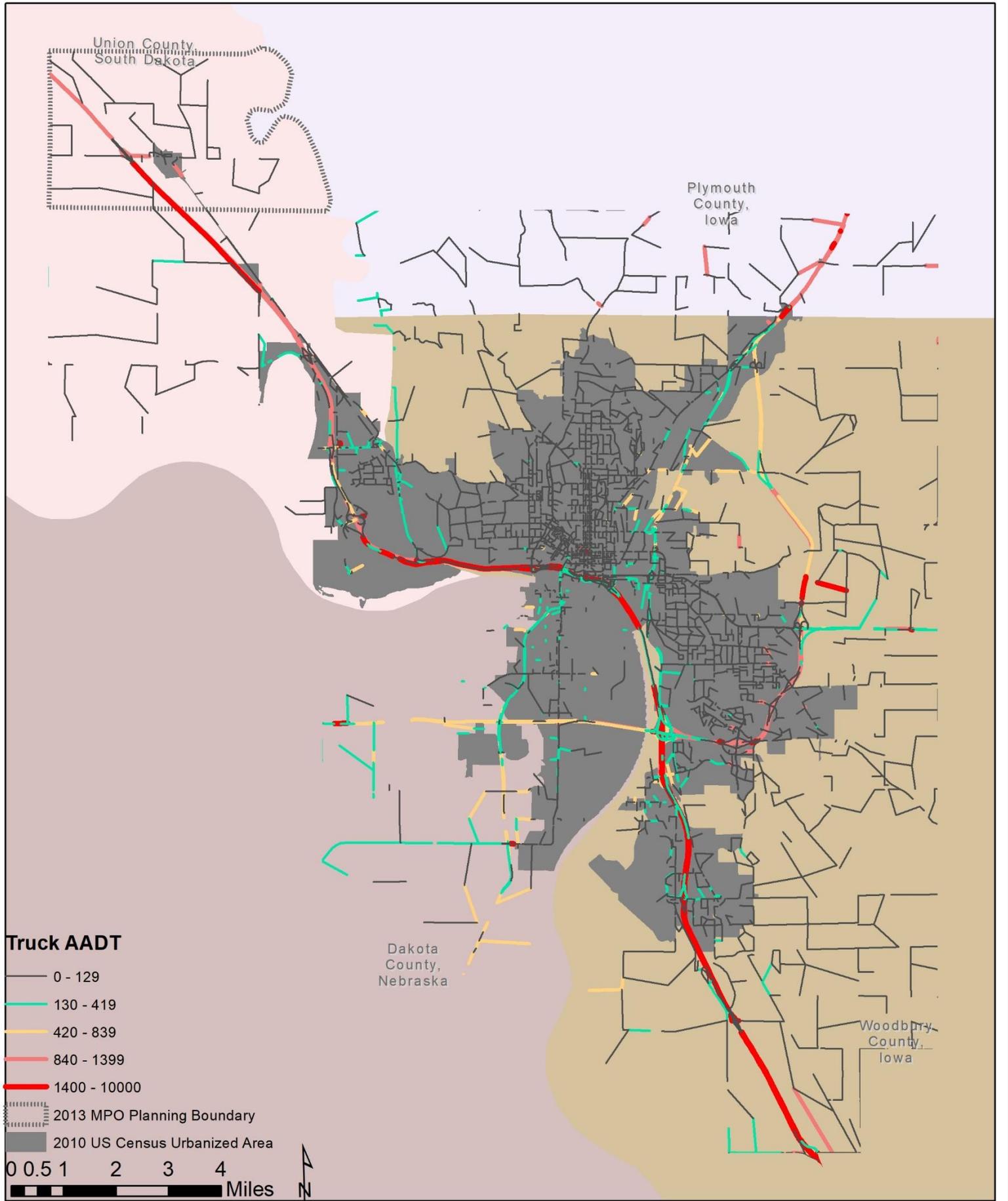
Domestic Outbound Freight: Units in thousands of tons				
Rank	Truck		All Modes	
#1	Cereal Grains	2,042.01	Cereal Grains	2,219.97
#2	Other Prepared Foodstuffs, Fats and Oils	770.07	Other Prepared Foodstuffs, Fats and Oils	1,240.21
#3	Other Chemical Products	674.29	Animal Feed and Products of Animal Origin	727.61
#4	Animal Feed and Products of Animal Origin	595.43	Other Chemical Products	679.02
#5	NonMetallic Mineral Products	568.34	NonMetallic Mineral Products	610.36

Source: Iowa DOT

Map 6.1 is a representation of trucking throughout the SIMPCO MPO. The truck annual average daily traffic (AADT) is represented by increasing thickness of line representing increasing AADT. The truck routes throughout the MPO area have a high AADT of just over 6,000 interstates, highways, and major arterials.



SIMPCO MPO Truck AADT



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Table 6.2: Yearly comparisons of Total Domestic Freight Flow

Total Domestic Freight, All Modes: Units in thousands of tons											
Top Commodity Groups in 2007			Top Commodity Groups in 2018			Top Commodity Groups in 2040					
Commodity		Units	Commodity		Units	Commodity		Units			
#1	Cereal Grains	3,714	#1	Cereal Grains	4,037	#1	Cereal Grains	4,684			
#2	Other Prepared Foodstuffs, Fats and Oils	1,575	#2	Other Prepared Foodstuffs, Fats and Oils	1,942	#2	Other Prepared Foodstuffs, Fats and Oils	2,675			
#3	Gravel and Curshed Stone	1,549	#3	Gravel and Curshed Stone	1,655	#3	Other Chemical Products	2,148			
#4	NonMatallic Mineral Products	1,195	#4	NonMatallic Mineral Products	1,369	#4	Gravel and Curshed Stone	1,867			
#5	Animal Feed and Products of Animal Origin	1,123	#5	Animal Feed and Products of Animal Origin	1,341	#5	Animal Feed and Products of Animal Origin	1,775			
#6	Other Agricultural Products	842	#6	Other Chemical Products	1,197	#6	Other Agricultural Products	1,758			
#7	Fertilizers	770	#7	Other Agricultural Products	1,147	#7	NonMatallic Mineral Products	1,717			
#8	Other Chemical Products	722	#8	Fertilizers	666	#8	Waste and Scrap	753			
#9	Natural Sands	516	#9	Natural Sands	581	#9	Natural Sands	709			
#10	Coal	392	#10	Waste and Scrap	503	#10	Live Animals and Fish	540			

INRIX traffic data and Iowa DOT traffic counts were used to identify highway freight bottlenecks. INRIX has a Bottleneck Ranking tool that uses recorded speeds, acquired by tracking cell phone and global positioning systems data, to determine if a section of roadway is indeed a bottleneck. Bottleneck conditions are determined by comparing the current reported speed to the reference speed for each segment of road. Reference speed values are provided for each segment and represent the 85th percentile observed speed for all time periods with a maximum value of 65 mph. If the reported speed falls below 60 percent of the reference, the road segment is flagged as a potential bottleneck. If the reported speed stays below 60 percent for five minutes, the segment is confirmed as a bottleneck location.

Locations were considered freight bottlenecks if they were identified by INRIX and also had at least 30 percent truck traffic or 5,000 trucks per day. There are two locations identified within the MPO area: I-29 N/S @ I-129/U.S. 20/U.S. 75/exit 144 and I-29 N/S @ Old Iowa 75/Industrial Rd/exit 143. Including a total of 3-4 locations identified in Woodbury County: I-29 N/S @ I-129/U.S. 20/U.S. 75/exit 144, I-29 N/S @ Old Iowa 75/Industrial Rd/exit 143, I-29 N/S @ exit 134, and I-29 N/S @ Iowa 141/exit 127. More in depth information about [bottleneck locations](#) can be found in the State Freight Plan on pages 123-127.

CHALLENGES

Based on FHWA estimates, Iowa’s transportation system facilitated the movement of approximately 1.1 billion tons of freight with an estimated value exceeding \$563 billion to, from, and within the state in 2012. The [State Freight Plan](#) indicates that a total value of goods imported into and exported out of Iowa is expected to grow from \$468 billion in 2012 to \$715 billion (a growth of 52.6 percent) in 2040. Freight that has both an origin and destination in the state is expected to grow by 27.8 percent in weight and 30.5 percent in value from 2012 to 2040. A total of 48.9 million tons worth \$32 billion is projected to travel to, from, and within the Sioux City region by 2045. Highway freight is expected to comprise a slightly smaller share of overall value, from 77 percent in 2014 to 73 percent in 2045.



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CF Industries which began in fall 2013, required more than 5,300 construction workers to complete, and has increase the amount of truck traffic significantly. The industrial site completed expansion in 2016, and is one of the country's largest agricultural nitrogen plants.



Dealing with the manufacturing and distribution of nitrogen and nitrogen fertilizer, the company expects to use both rail and truck as primary transportation methods for their finished product.



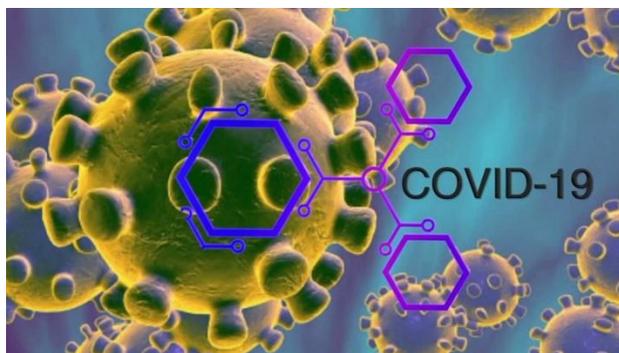
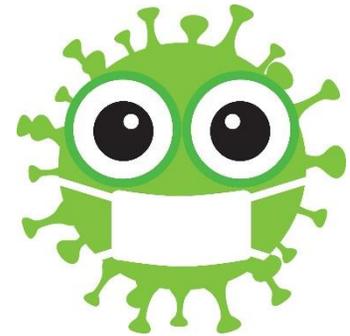
CF Industries has created the trucking capacity to be within 30,000 trucks per year. This expected increase is likely to have a direct impact on the traffic of the current infrastructure.



The completion of the Seaboard/Triumph pork processing facility in 2017, is also expected to increase the amount of truck traffic to the region. The plant has the capacity to slaughter 10,500 to 12,000 hogs per day and currently employs 1,800 workers.

Many of the SIMPCO region's roads, bridges, railways, barge terminals, and other infrastructure critical to the movement of freight are in need of significant structural improvements. In a study done by Transportation for America in 2013, Iowa's bridges ranked the third-worst nationally in terms of the overall percentage of structurally deficient bridges. However, major roads used to transport freight have improved greatly in the SIMPCO MPO in the last 20 years.

In 2020 there was a pandemic due to COVID-19 virus which has impacted transportation in many forms. Rural transit ridership has fallen 85-90%, with a similar decrease for the metro transit ridership. Statewide traffic data has shown a significant reduction in travel of 47%. The impact to air travel has been similar to what is seen in transit, and there is an ongoing issues with freight movement that has been exacerbated by the current situation (higher demand than ability to move supply).



The Iowa DOT has provided [traffic volume changes](#) since March 13, 2020. Since March 13, the peak of US/IA highway decrease in travel has reached 47%. From March 13th to September 17th 2020 interstate has seen a decrease of -24%, US/IA Highways -18%, secondary roads -12%, City street -18%, and all sites -21%.



RAIL

CURRENT FACILITIES

The railroads are a major part of the economic activity in the SIMPCO MPO region (see map 6.2). It is served by four railroads; Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), Union Pacific (UP), Canadian National (CN), and the Dakota and Iowa Railroad (DAIR). There is also a light density line, the Nebraska Northeastern (NENE) serving South Sioux City, used primarily to haul grain products and interchange with class ones, particularly the BNSF and DAIR. The railroads use five regional rail corridors:

Regional Rail Corridors in the SIMPCO MPO Region

- 1 BNSF Marshall Corridor**
The BNSF Marshall Subdivision Line runs north-northeast from Sioux City to Willmar, Minnesota. It connects there to the BNSF's Northern Transcontinental route, which provides access east to Minneapolis-St. Paul and west to Seattle, Washington, Portland, Oregon.
- 2 UP/CN Worthington Corridor**
The UP Subdivision Line runs northeast from Sioux City to Worthington, Minnesota- St. Paul. The first section of the L one between Sioux City and Le Mars run over the Canadian National's Cherokee Subdivision.
- 3 UP Sioux City Corridor**
The BNSF Sioux City Subdivision runs south from Sioux City to Council Bluffs, where it connects to UP's mainlines to the east, west and south.
- 4 BNSF Sioux City Corridor**
The BNSF Sioux City Subdivision runs south from Sioux City (on the east side of the Missouri River) to Omaha (Big Sandy), where it links with BNSF's main lines to the east, west, and south.
- 5 BNSF Aberdeen Corridor**
The BNSF Aberdeen Subdivision Line runs west through downtown Sioux City, then turns northwest and runs to Aberdeen, SD. The line is the primary corridor for freight destined to and from South Dakota.

There is overlap that occurs in two areas, the Downtown Junction and the Hoeven Valley Corridor. The Downtown Junction is west of the Floyd River in area bounded by 3rd St./Hoeven Drive, Floyd Blvd. and IA 12/Gordon Drive. East of the Junction are three major rail bridges crossing over the Floyd River. The Hoeven Valley Corridor runs between Downtown Junction and 46th St, a distance of about 4.6 miles. A total of 59 public at-grade railroad crossings are located within Sioux City. About 30 of these crossings are on the BNSF, 23 are on the UP, and 6 are on the CN. Some of the crossings indicated for each railroad are duplicates. For instance, the UP and CN cross 18th Street and utilize the same signals. There are also instances where the same railroad has multiple crossings at the same location.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Economic activity within the Sioux City region and trade with its partners generated 38 million tons of freight movement valued at \$20 billion in 2014. Rail freight accounted for about a quarter of both tonnage and value. Economic growth within the Sioux City region and increasing trade with its partners is forecast to **generate 49 million tons of freight in 2045** (an increase of 28 percent) **valued at \$32 billion** (an increase of 61 percent). Rail freight is expected to comprise a smaller share of tonnage and a higher share of value by 2045. However, it is still expected to grow by 5 percent (0.2 percent annually).



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Shippers and receivers expect that the demand for rail service will remain strong, but not grow significantly due to capacity restrictions on the major rail corridors that run through the Sioux City region. However, the projected decline in the volume of coal shipments may give Sioux City region shippers and receivers space to increase their rail shipments of field crops and processed grains, aggregates, animal feed, and other commodities.

The [State Freight Plan](#) noted that Iowa’s top five commodities by volume are cereal grains, gravel, animal feed, coal, and other agricultural products. These commodities are typically high-weight, low-value bulk shipments, which are well suited for rail transportation. In addition, the majority of Iowa’s power source is generated from coal (nearly 60 percent in 2014), though that has been declining since 2000 as wind energy gains traction statewide. Both of these power sources would also benefit from rail transportation, both for bulk coal and large equipment, such as wind turbines.

Given the strong market for freight and goods movement, most stakeholders expect rail freight volumes to increase over the coming years. For many livestock processors and by-products companies, there is a strong demand for product in Mexico, China, and other Asian markets. **To meet domestic U.S. demand, some animal products are imported to Sioux City from European countries, including Denmark, Poland, and Spain. Major agricultural products processed in Sioux City, such as soybean meal, are shipped from Sioux City to Mexico, Saudi Arabia, and parts of Asia.** Local companies utilize rail intermodal service available in Omaha and Chicago to access ports on the east and west coasts for export, and vice versa for imports of consumer goods and intermediates such as animal products. Because of the strong business climate in Sioux City, none of the shipping and receiving stakeholders reported any imminent plans to relocate outside of the region. By contrast, there appear to be opportunities for business to expand in or relocate to the Bridgeport area as well as the Southbridge Business Park, both of which are rail-served areas near the Sioux Gateway Airport and Interstate 29. For example, Seaboard Triumph Foods opened a brand new hog processing facility in Bridgeport West Industrial Park in September 2017, after the stakeholder outreach was completed. The facility is situated off South Patton Street, which is already a dense industrial and manufacturing district.

In July 2009, the City of Sioux City developed the *Rail Freight Movement and Economic Development Analysis*. Phase I of the plan gives a detailed look at the inventory and operations of rail in the Sioux City metropolitan area. In August 2018, Phase II of the study identifies issues improvements and gives detailed recommendations identified improvements that fall into four following categories:

- At-grade rail/highway crossing improvements
- Rail-highway grade separations
- Downtown junction improvements
- Viaduct and bridge-clearance improvements

Grade Crossing Improvements	Rail-Highway Grade Separations	Downtown Junction Improvements	Viaduct Clearance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Street (BNSF) • Court Street (BNSF) • Iowa Street (BNSF) • Jackson Street (BNSF) • West 19th Street, Military Road (BNSF) • Tyler Street, 41st Street, Fun Place, and 46th Street 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18th Street (CN/UP) • 18th Street (BNSF) • Virginia Street (BNSF) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option A • Option B • Option C • Option D • Option E 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordon Drive Viaduct replacement • Gordon Drive Viaduct BNSF mainline clearance project



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CHALLENGES

The most frequently cited concern was the blockage of intersections at several busy grade crossings throughout Sioux City, with the BNSF's Aberdeen Subdivision along the southern edge of downtown being a top concern. Although train traffic along this route is modest, on the order of 4 to 5 trains operate daily by BNSF and DAIR, trains must move very slowly as they proceed through the downtown rail junction. These delays are extended when DAIR switches 100 car unit trains of aggregates to the L.G. Everist facility that is located immediately east of the downtown junction. In addition, a challenge for the BNSF RR is the low under-clearance for the mainline track under the Gordon Drive Viaduct. Also in the Bridgeport area, UP's daily train, referred to locally as the "cow", often gets backed up along South Patton Street, blocking grade crossings and entrances to businesses on the west side of the street. Some of these crossings lack lights and gates, which pose additional safety concerns for motorists.



Currently, there is a quiet zone designation Pearl Street, Pierce Street, and Nebraska Street, which are the three west-most crossings along the corridor. The remaining crossings include Jackson Street, Virginia Street, Court Street, and Iowa Street, which have been proposed as quiet zone crossings, but are not yet part of the quiet zone. Only by establishing a quiet zone along the entire corridor will it be possible to eliminate noise from train horns along this corridor.

The railroads are primarily focused on maintenance and safety upgrades to preserve current operations. Historically, the City has expressed a preference for lights and gates in most cases. Part of this preference is due to the Iowa Department of Transportation's (DOT) Section 130 grade crossing improvement funding program. This program enables the City to receive funding for safety improvements without requiring substantial local or private (e.g. railroad) contributions. For example, UP expressed continued support to close its crossings at 11th Street and 28th Street along the **Hoeven Valley Corridor**, a project that has been in development for several years and is now awaiting funding.



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The local rail industry's transport of Bakken crude oil through the SIMPCO MPO planning area has created recent safety concerns. Bakken crude oil is an especially explosive and flammable oil taken from the Bakken shale formation, located in Canada, Montana, and North Dakota. There have been several explosive rail incidents in the US and Canada involving Bakken crude oil. Efforts to improve safety standards have been pursued at the federal level, but local planning efforts are required to ensure that a swift and effective response is ready in case an incident occurs. Several planning methods can help ensure an improved response to any rail incident. The existing



Map 6.3: Bakken Crude Oil Rail Routes through Iowa. *Source: Iowa DOT.*

Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) should continue to work toward improved communication between emergency responders, law enforcement, planning staff, and department of transportation/roads personnel. The LEPC should address how to respond to a rail incident within the planning area. In addition, local first responders should be trained in Transportation Community Awareness and Emergency First Response (TRANSCAER). This training will prepare first responders to act appropriately when faced with an incident involving hazardous materials. Furthermore, incident management exercises can help to prepare first responders to act and identify areas for improvement within the incident planning and response process.

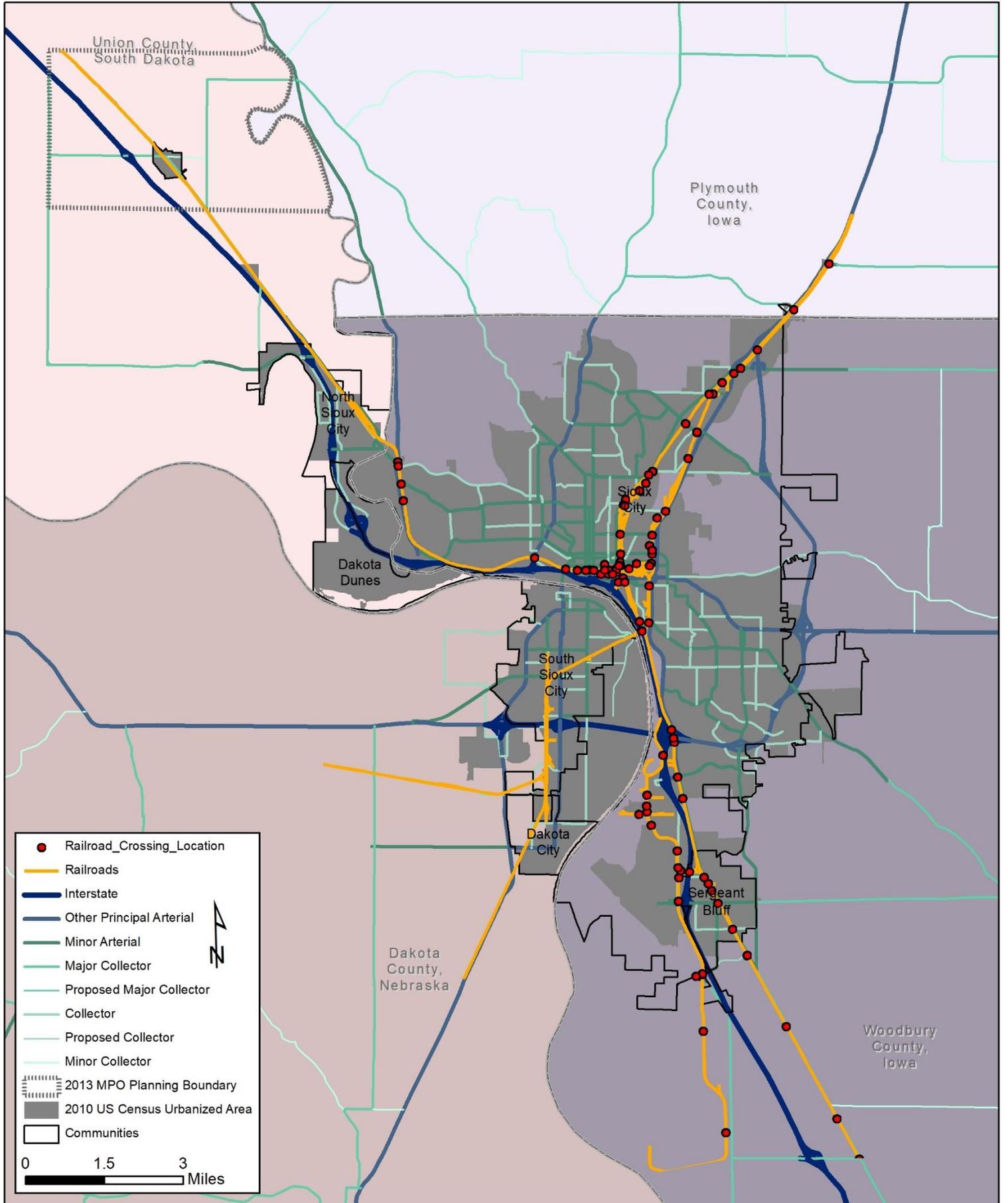


PIPELINES

The SIMPCO MPO planning area has a large quantity of pipelines carrying various products. At this time, the MPO does not have involvement with pipeline planning, challenges, and implications. For a map of these pipelines visit the [National Pipeline Mapping System](#).



SIMPCO MPO Rail



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PASSENGER RAIL

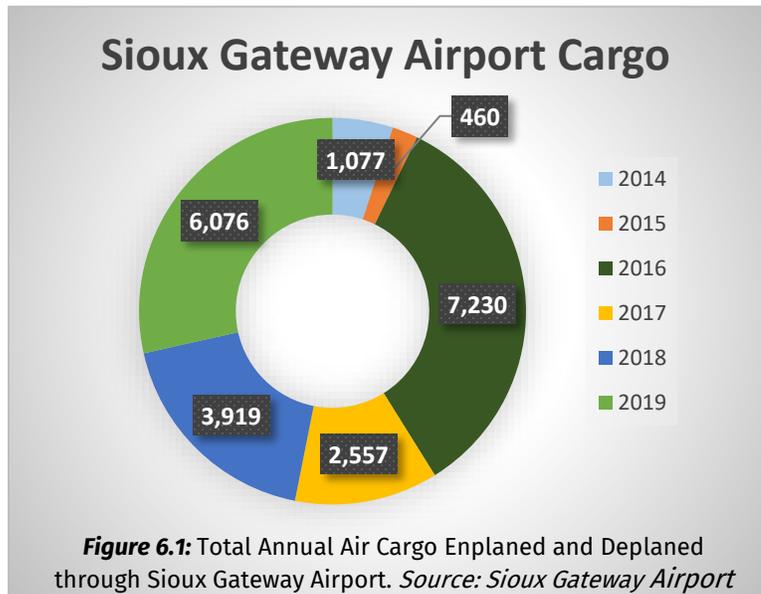
CURRENT FACILITIES

There is no passenger rail service in the metropolitan area, and it is unlikely that it will develop over the planning horizon, barring a major shift of transportation priorities at the national level. The closest passenger service is the current AMTRAK California Zephyr, which passes through Omaha and Lincoln, NE in route to Emeryville, CA (San Francisco Bay Area) and Chicago, IL. Should there be a shift of national priorities, the most likely and economic route would be a connection between Sioux Falls, SD and Kansas City, MO via Sioux City, IA and Omaha, NE. Such a service would most economically use short self-propelled units commonly called Diesel Multiple Units (DMU) or in the future Fuel Cell Multiple Units if they become available. The routing would hypothetically use the BNSF alignment between Sioux Falls and Sioux City and the UP from Sioux City to Omaha and Kansas City.

AIR

CURRENT FACILITIES

The main air terminal for the SIMPCO MPO region is the Sioux Gateway Airport/Colonel Bud Day Field, located on the southern edge of Sioux City to the west of Sergeant Bluff (see Map 6.3). The airport is owned by the city of Sioux City and is governed by a Board of Trustees that reports to the City Council, while the day-to-day operation of the airport is undertaken by a professional airport director hired by the City Council. The Iowa Aviation System Plan identifies the Sioux Gateway Airport as a Commercial Service airport. Commercial Service airports support scheduled airline service and have the infrastructure and services available to support a full range of general aviation activity. American Airlines, the airport's only commercial carrier, normally offers three daily flights to Chicago and one each day to Dallas.



The current \$24 Million project (with the Federal Aviation Administration funding 90 percent of the project) to implement a secondary runway replacement is expected to be complete by July 2020. The new runway is officially known as the 17/35 runway, and intersects the airport's main runway. In all, the south 4,500 feet of the existing runway will be reconstructed, as well as construction of the new 1,000-foot extension of Runway 35 and Taxiway C to the south. Other elements include demolition of the north 1,200 feet of Runway 17 and Taxiway C,



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construction of a new connector taxiway at the end of the new Runway 17, reconstruction of a portion of Taxiway D, and the demolition of Taxiway B.

There is no dedicated cargo carrier (such as FedEx, UPS, Emery, Airbourne etc.) serving Sioux Gateway Airport, in part due to proximity of Omaha's Eppley Field and Sioux Falls' Joe Foss Field, which are served by major air cargo companies, the cargo passing through Sioux Gateway Airport is handled by the passenger airline, American Airlines. Figure 6.1 shows the total yearly amounts of air cargo through Sioux Gateway Airport Cargo.

PASSENGER AIR

CURRENT FACILITIES

Sioux Gateway Airport is classified as a non-hub commercial service airport. There are presently three daily flights to Chicago and one flight each day to Dallas, TX. All are through American Airlines, and connect to Chicago O'Hare International Airport and Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport. Previously, the major airline that serviced the Sioux Gateway airport was Delta; however, they were replaced in 2012. Figure 6.3 (page 6-9) illustrates the annual number of passenger enplanements, or the number of passengers boarding aircraft at Sioux Gateway Airport, since 2008. The large number of service in 2008 is due to having a second carrier, Frontier Airlines, which served Sioux Gateway airport from October 2007 to May 2008. In 2013 Frontier chose to service the Sioux Gateway airport again, however, they were purchased by another company and pulled within a year from many small airports. Frontier only continued their services in large cities.

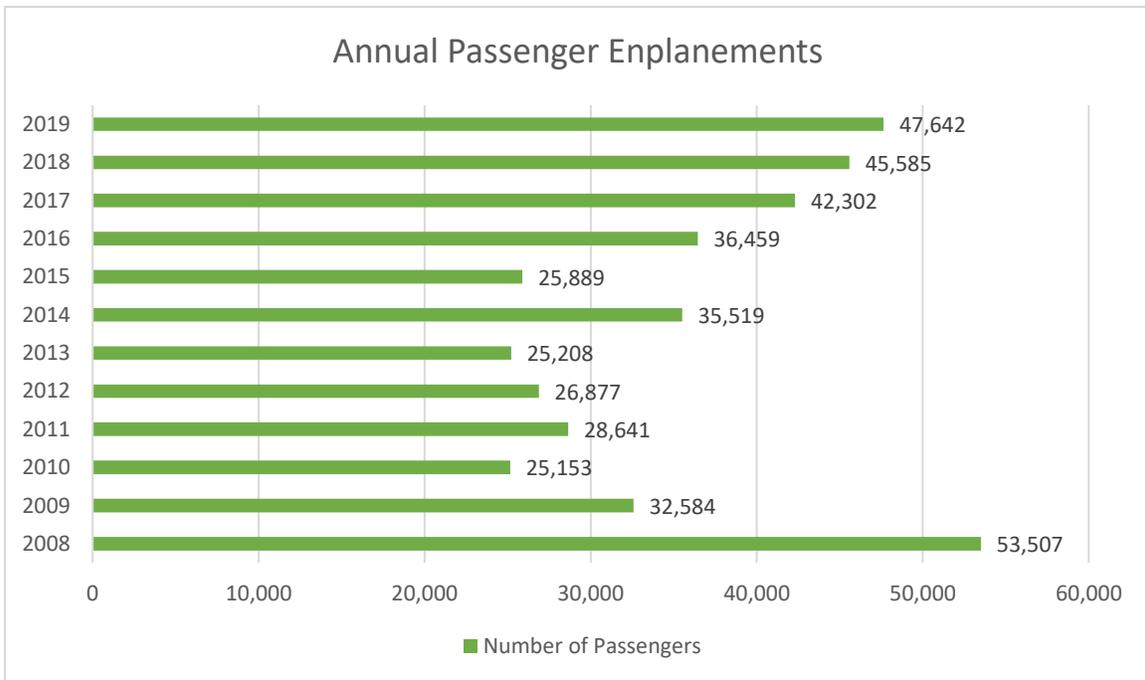


Figure 6.3: Total Annual Passenger Enplanements at Sioux Gateway Airport.

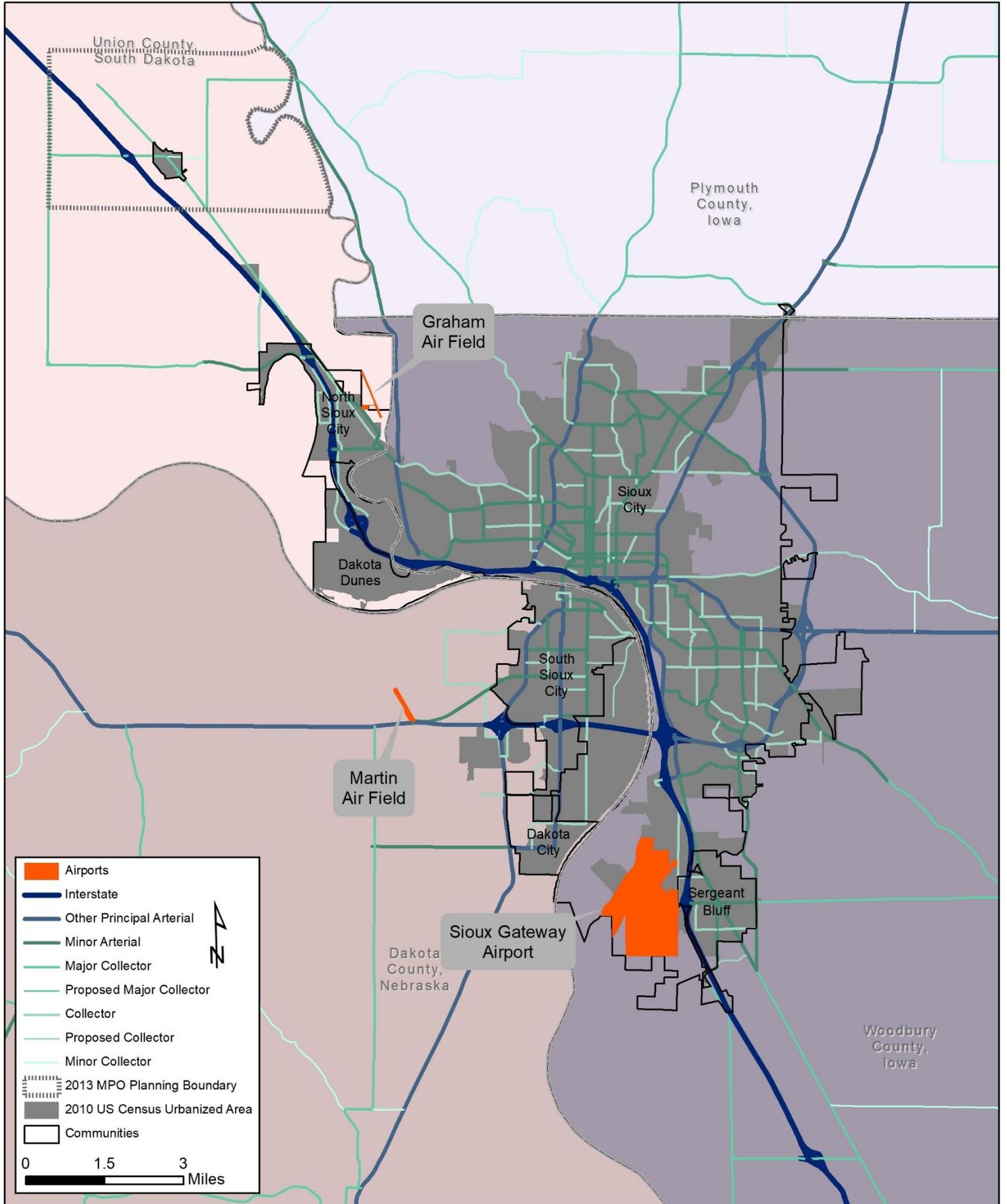
Source: Sioux Gateway Airport



Map 6.3

SIMPCO MPO Airports

There are 3 airports in the MPO Planning Boundary:
Sioux City Gateway Airport, Martin Air Field, and Graham Air Field





The Sioux Gateway Airport loses market share of counties and communities on the periphery of this service area to Omaha and Sioux Falls. In order to capture market share, the airport must provide a comparable level of service and fare rate to its competitors to the north and south, or at least competitive enough to deter the potential passengers from driving extra miles. Recent improvements to the terminal facility include a complete rehab of the terminal including restaurant, waiting area, restrooms, ticket counters, and baggage claim areas. A new canopy was installed at the front entry for passenger loading and unloading.

In the past, Sioux Gateway Airport participated in the US DOT's Essential Air Service (EAS) program and received funds in order to remain commercial airline services. The federal assistance helps subsidize airline operation costs which helps maintain competitive fares for commercial flights. The program subsidized the Sioux Gateway Airport's existing American Airlines service to ensure competitive rates. In 2011, United Airlines out-bid American Airlines' proposed annual federal subsidy bid. American Airlines then decided not to subsidize and instead continue their services without subsidizing. They have since kept their original scheduled flights and added two more daily flights.



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, American Airlines halted service to the Sioux City Gateway Airport in October 2020. The Airport Board of Directors stated that they will look into the use of Essential Air Service Program once again to continue flights out of Sioux City. In September 2020, Sioux City Council approved the terminal lease for SkyWest airlines which would allow United Airlines to begin a roundtrip flight out of Sioux City to Denver starting in mid-October. **There are two privately owned airports are located within the metropolitan area** for local commuters and owners of small aircraft. North Sioux City is home to Graham Field Airport, which is located one mile north of the city and boasts two concrete and turf runways. Martin's Field is located three miles southwest of South Sioux City and has two asphalt runways.



AIR AND PASSENGER

CHALLENGES

The Siouxland Gateway Airport currently lacks an all-cargo carrier. The airport’s service area is large enough to support such a carrier and would benefit from such services. However, it is a challenge to attract an all-cargo carrier given the nearby competition in Omaha and Sioux Falls which currently provide air cargo carriers. The Sioux Gateway Master Plan notes many companies are utilizing just-in-time freight practices, which in most instances are better accommodated by air freight than by truck.

 <p>While the number of daily flights has increased, there are only two destinations offered by American Airlines (Chicago and Dallas). That is, if a local resident wishes to fly regional, they are more likely to book elsewhere in order to avoid longer flight times and layovers.</p>	 <p>Local planning efforts should include designating a local campaign or air service recruiting task force to reach out to air service providers in order to create more choices for regional fliers.</p>
 <p>Sioux Gateway Airport flights (along with other small airports) are always one of the firsts to get canceled when weather conditions are dangerous. Seats are always completely booked, and at times overbooked.</p>	 <p>When such events happen, it creates very long delays because there are no seats available for other scheduled flight times.</p>

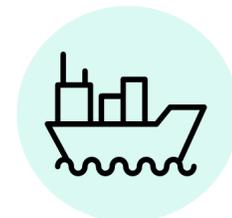
In early 2013 frontier chose to provide their low fare services at the Sioux Gateway Airport, many local residents purchased flights but were disappointed when Frontier announced an early seasonal discontinuation on October 24, 2013 just months before the holidays. Frontier offered three flights per week, with departures to Denver International Airport, and return flights to Sioux City on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays additional to American Airlines’ two daily flights. In 2020, American Airlines halted service due to the COVID-19 pandemic creating low demand and the expiration of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES)

Act. Contingency planning should be used in order to plan and prepare for an unexpected change in the amount of local air service. Such changes may include an air carrier deciding to no longer service the MPO area or the loss of EAS funding. Contingency planning can prepare locals for these changes and have a plan in place to fill loss of service.

WATERBORNE FREIGHT

CURRENT FACILITIES

Sioux City is the northernmost navigable point on the Missouri River for barge traffic. This is due to the dam crossings on the Missouri River north of Sioux City, which have no locks allowing boat passage. The Sioux City region is the head of a nine-foot-deep, 735-mile navigational channel. This channel stretches down to the Missouri River’s confluence with the Mississippi River, north of St. Louis. During non-drought years, the metropolitan area takes advantage of its position on the river as a port for barge freight. For the past several years drought



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conditions in much of the upstream areas of the Missouri River have hampered barge navigation. In 2013, the portion of the Missouri River stretching from Kansas City, MO to Sioux City, IA was designated by the US Transportation Secretary as Marine Highway M-29. This designation may prove important for waterborne freight transportation within the SIMPCO MPO area. The designation makes port facilities along the route eligible to apply for federal funds. These federal funds can be used to improve or expand existing waterborne freight infrastructure. The SIMPCO MPO should communicate with existing port facilities to determine if a desired project may qualify for federal assistance.

After an 11-year period of no barge activity, in 2014 the Missouri River brought in a shipping barge into Sioux City. The barge was contracted by CF Industries to haul heavy equipment to its expanding Port Neal complex. It's the first craft of its kind to ship to the Sioux City area since 2003. Figure 6.4 provides yearly totals from 1991. According to figures released by the



Army Corps of Engineers, there was no barge traffic to Sioux City in 2001, 2003-2008 or from 2008-2019. This lack of traffic was due, in part, to vessel draft restrictions put into place because of drought conditions. **In 2011, the Missouri River flooded** due to a record snowfall in the Rocky Mountains of Montana and Wyoming along with near-record spring rainfall in central and eastern Montana. All six major dams along the Missouri River released record amounts of water to

prevent overflow which led to flooding threatening several towns and cities along the river from Montana to Missouri. Since then, there has been flooding almost yearly leaving water levels too high for barge traffic.

In 2019, the Missouri River Basin experienced more historic flooding. The year had the second highest runoff recorded, with the flooding in 2011 being the highest runoff recorded in 122 years. The 2019 flood was triggered by a bomb cyclone, a historic storm of great intensity combined with frozen soil which failed to absorb runoff and led to unprecedented runoff to local streams and rivers, including the Missouri River. Water levels remained high for the remainder of 2019 due to wet weather conditions and oversaturated soils. It is anticipated that flooding will continue into 2020 because repairs to the lower basin levee system have been nearly impossible with the continued flooding events.

Although just south of the MPO boundary, in 2020 NEW Cooperative, Inc started working on the development of a barge port two miles west of Blencoe in Monona, County. Once completed, this facility would become the northernmost port on the Missouri River between St. Louis and Sioux City.

Figure 6.4: Yearly Barge Traffic, in Thousands of Short Tons

Year	Total								
1991	202	1997	309	2003	0	2009	0	2015	0
1992	218	1998	249	2004	0	2010	0	2016	0
1993	231	1999	234	2005	0	2011	0	2017	0
1994	263	2000	300	2006	0	2012	0	2018	0
1995	165	2001	0	2007	0	2013	0	2019	0
1996	257	2002	125	2008	0	2014	0		

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



CHAPTER 6: INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

CHALLENGES

From 1988 to 2007, a string of droughts contributed to a drop in the river's water level, making it difficult to navigate. During the same period, environmental groups successfully fought the Army Corps of Engineers to release less water from its reservoirs into the river in order to protect native wildlife. In 2011, one of the largest floods occurred leaving water levels too high for barge traffic. In 2019, the river experienced historic flooding due to a weather condition known as a “bomb cyclone”. Flooding events such as in 2011 and 2019 make navigation difficult on the Missouri River. **The loss of navigation has affected the Siouxland businesses that rely on barge transportation to deliver products like fertilizer, steel and asphalt, forcing them to divert more shipments to more-costly rail and truck.** Rates for hauling such shipments up the river is about half the cost of transporting the material by rail. Resulting in higher than normal costs to purchase such materials.



There are seven port facilities in the Sioux City area, six of which are privately owned.

The public port facility is owned by the City of Sioux City. Of the private facilities, there are two in Sergeant Bluff and four in Sioux City.



Of these privately held facilities, four were operational in the year 2000. All of the privately-owned facilities have rail connections to the UP Railroad.

INTERCITY BUS

CURRENT FACILITIES

The metropolitan area is presently served by one intercity bus line, Jefferson Lines, which provides service to Omaha, Sioux Falls, and other destinations to the north and south. The Sioux City terminal for Jefferson Lines is the MLK Jr. Transportation Center in downtown Sioux City, which provides automobile and bike parking as well as taxi access. The MLK Jr. Transportation Center is also the focal point of SCTS.

INTERMODAL

CURRENT FACILITIES

FHWA maintains a nationwide list of intermodal connectors, of which the SIMPCO MPO has two. The Big Soo Terminal is a port terminal serving as a connector between the barge docks and I-29. The other intermodal connector is a truck/pipeline terminal that serves as a connector between the terminal and US 75. As stated above, the principal passenger intermodal connecting facility is the MLK Jr. Transportation Center downtown where intercity, taxi and city transit as well as pick up/drop off service is available. A multi-level parking ramp is located immediately above the transfer center.



CHAPTER 6: INTERMODAL TRANSPORTATION

RECOMMENDATIONS

Planning for intermodal cooperation occupies problematic territory for local governments and MPO's, as the primary participants in passenger and cargo transport are private firms such as airlines and barge, truck, and railroad companies. In addition, with the exception of the airport and the MLK Jr. Transportation Center, all of the existing and potential intermodal facilities mentioned in this chapter are privately owned. Under these circumstances it is difficult to compel specific actions, but broad recommendations are listed:

5-Year

- From an Intermodal Advisory Committee to study the freight industry in the tristate area and how it affects and is affected by the associated transportation system.
- Invite intermodal representatives (both passenger and freight) to be a consultant in the MPO process. Representative could serve in an advisory capacity to the Transportation Technical Committee.
- Establish contingency planning for the sudden removal of airline services for the region
- Develop response, recovery and resiliency efforts and plans for intermodal transportation related to the pandemic and other significant events.

25-Year

- Strongly consider and implement recommended projects listed in the City of Sioux City Rail Freight Movement and Economic Development Analysis
- Expand quiet zones in the Sioux City Leeds and Riverside neighborhoods.
- Monitor national developments in intermodal transport for passengers and freight and seek to act quickly on opportunities as they present themselves.
- Continue communication with various airlines and seek to act quickly on opportunities that will encourage residents to fly with Sioux Gateway Airport.

