Mr. Victor Jordan (ALDOT) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He stated that this is the first FAC meeting, with later communication to occur through email and/or physical meetings. The Freight Plan is scheduled for completion by the end of this year. Everyone present introduced themselves.

Mr. Rod Wilburn, AICP (JRWA) then stepped up and provided an overview of the meeting agenda with a PowerPoint and handouts. He told the attendees to feel free to raise any questions they may have as we proceed through the presentation, unless they prefer to hold them until the end. He stressed that the team welcomes any comments attendees have on the materials presented today, such as the mission and vision, after they have had an opportunity to review the materials in more detail. In addition, FAC members are encouraged to share this and other study information with others in their organizations, as well as with their memberships if applicable, and to let them know that all comments are welcomed.

Mr. Wilburn then began through the PowerPoint slides. He briefly covered the following slides:

- Presentation Agenda
- Overview of Freight Plan
- MAP-21 Interim Guidance for Statewide Freight Plans
- Draft Mission and Vision Statements
- FAC Role and Expectations
- Peer Review

Questions raised during/after Mr. Wilburn’s presentation included:

- **Will megaregions be touched on?** The team will look at where the federal government (FHWA) is on this issue. The analysis process for the Freight Plan comes from FHWA data, which is not tied to megaregions.

- **Will trucks be modeled?** Yes, at the statewide level. The analysis will look at all modes of the network, including how each mode works internally (within Alabama) as well as how it touches other parts of the region and the nation. The team anticipates preparing a ‘briefing paper’ to provide suggestions at the MPO level to carry this information into their metropolitan work.

- **Will technologies be included?** Yes, with regard to the state of its industry wide and nationally. The industries themselves (e.g., trucking) are the most informed on the applicability and cost/benefit of available technologies. The team also hopes to capture changes modally and intermodally.

Mr. Wilburn then turned the presentation over to Dr. Michael Anderson, P.E. (JRWA). Dr. Anderson indicated that he is responsible for the technical aspects. He stated that the analysis will rely on data from FHWA’s most recent Freight Analysis Framework (FAF), Version 3.5, which was released in early May 2015. This data has FHWA’s ‘seal of approval’ for the future forecast based on existing commodity movements (gathered through an extensive survey process).
Dr. Anderson stressed that it is important for the stakeholders to review the FAF data, which details FHWA’s projections for 2040 based on existing commodity movements. He noted that the interim Summary Report #1 covering Freight Plan tasks 1-3 presents the existing conditions data from FAF3.5 in numerous tables, and that this interim deliverable will be available for stakeholder review after ALDOT has reviewed the document and submitted their comments to the team to address. Stakeholders are asked to forward any comments and/or contradictory information for the team to review.

The slides covered by Dr. Anderson, including a brief summary of his comments, include:

- **Summary Flow Characteristics**—This slide shows four different tables that provide an overview of the data. It is important to note that these tables show only limited selections of the available data. For example, the FAF distributes movements across eight different modes, and commodities are identified by 43 different NAICS codes. For this presentation, only the top several were selected. Complete information for the existing conditions (2012) is available in the interim Summary Report #1, with future projections to be presented in the next interim deliverable.
  - The Origin/Destination table shows the change in kilotons moved from 2012 (the base year) to 2040 (the horizon year). In total, a 60% increase is expected, with imports/exports through the Port of Mobile to increase 250%-300%.
  - The Mode table shows an increase in trucks, with a slight decrease in rail.
  - The State table, not surprisingly, shows that most of the top 5 destinations for Alabama freight are adjacent states.
  - The Commodity table shows a significant increase in logs, a doubling of cereal grains, and a modest increase in coal. It should be noted that manufacturing does not make the top 3.

- **Statewide Modeling Effort Overview**—This slide shows the key steps in the process of taking the FAF data, which is at a statewide level, and disaggregating it to the local level using Census employment data and the network infrastructure.

- **Sample Report Mapping**—This slide is an example of where the data analysis can take us. This slide was taken from the previous Alabama Statewide Freight Study and Action Plan, completed in 2010. Overlaying the data highlights locations with high truck traffic per lane and locations with high volume to capacity (V/C) ratios, thereby helping to identify locations where truck related improvements may be warranted to mitigate overall roadway congestion.

- **ALDOT Freight Planning Website**—Ms. Carla Bamatraf (JRWA) showed attendees how to access ALDOT’s new Freight Planning webpage, which is still in development. Detailed instructions are provided on this slide for future reference. In addition, a specific email address for comments can be accessed from the website (alabamastatewidefreightplan@dot.state.al.us).

- **ALDOT Mapping**—Dr. Anderson and Ms. Bamatraf showed the draft maps that ALDOT has prepared and posted to the freight planning webpage. Mr. Jordan reiterated that these are draft maps and that ALDOT welcomes any comments. Additional maps will be posted as they are prepared.
Topics/Questions for FAC Input—Attendees were asked to provide any input or comments on the topics/questions, which also accompanied the reminder email sent in advance of the meeting.

Questions raised during/after Dr. Anderson’s presentation included:

- **Is river/barge traffic included?** Yes. The slides are only an overview, and only the top few are presented for demonstration purposes.

- **Will 2040 be translated into modes?** Yes, the same as for existing (2012) – by tonnage per commodity per industry. The consultant team is responsible for loading that data onto the network and mode using a particular methodology.

- **Will the database be made available?** The deliverables associated with the Freight Plan include interim summary reports, the final plan, and appendices/supplements as appropriate. Included in the appendices/supplements will be the data files. As with all data from similar statewide efforts, requests for specific information and/or data should be directed to the appropriate ALDOT staff (Victor Jordan).

- **What were the criteria for freight generators on that ALDOT map?** This initial draft version utilized available data. Please forward any additions you think should be considered.

- **Will EDPA (Economic Development Partnership of Alabama) be contacted regarding marketing and megasites throughout the state?** The team wants your contacts, so please forward any you have so that we can reach out to them.

- **Is GPS archive data on origins/destinations for trucks available?** Yes, the majority of larger trucking companies have this information from their dispatch systems. Contacts to them about getting some of this data or findings might yield results.

The next steps presented on the final slide were quickly reviewed prior to closing the meeting. It was again stressed that we want to hear comments and input from a large group of stakeholders and contributors, and attendees were again asked to disseminate the Freight Plan information within their organizations.

At the request of the Birmingham and Mobile MPOs, the JRWA team committed to continuing coordination with them, in one-on-one meetings if necessary, in order for them to provide more detailed information regarding their specific freight conditions and needs.