

Regional Freight & Goods Movement Study Summary

The Regional Freight & Goods Movement Study is currently underway and progressing as anticipated. The project is currently approximately 60% complete, with anticipated completion in October 2015. For the purposes of this study, CDTC's Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) is acting as the project's Steering Committee. The project consultant is Resource Systems Group (RSG). Highlighted below are some of the efforts undertaken by the Study to date.

Existing Conditions, Trends, and Forecasts

Providing a transportation system that facilitates cost-effective freight mobility requires an understanding of supply chain and logistics behaviors and an evaluation of existing freight movement patterns. Available data for all modes of freight (truck, rail, air, water, and pipeline) were collected and analyzed to help better understand existing and future forecasted conditions. Some examples of data sources utilized were the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Freight Analysis Framework (FAF3), Port Import/Export Reporting Service (PIERS), and Bureau of Transportation Statistics - Air Carrier Statistics (T-100).

Forecasts suggest that New York State's (NYS) economic growth will significantly increase the volume of freight moved within the state. In the CDTC region, it is projected that commodity flows will grow between 2012 and 2040 from 103 million annual tons to nearly 173 million annual tons, a 60 percent increase. The Existing Conditions, Trends, and Forecasts Report, available upon request, provides details on existing and projected freight movements in the CDTC region by mode, as well as for the various commodities moving to, from, and through the region.

Stakeholder Outreach

One of the most important aspects of Freight Planning is gathering information and viewpoints from the providers and users of the freight system. An extensive Stakeholder Engagement Plan was developed and executed as part of the Study process. Stakeholders included manufacturers, representatives from all modes of freight transport, public agencies (e.g. planning departments, chambers of commerce, and local governments), distribution centers, and industrial parks. The engagement plan included focus groups, individual interviews, targeted group meetings, and presentations.

Freight Priority Network

The Capital District Freight Priority Network (FPN), first created in 1997, is intended to help the CDTC and its planning partners identify and prioritize transportation investments related to helping freight and goods move efficiently and safely within, to, and from the region. The proposed 2015 update of the FPN includes the three new categories of FPN facilities (major, minor, connector) and also identifies where major freight-supportive land uses currently exist around the region. The draft proposed FPN is currently being reviewed by the Freight Advisory Committee; the final FPN will be adopted by CDTC.

Land Use

As with all of CDTC's planning efforts, there will be an emphasis on collaborative and cooperative regional transportation and land use planning, as well as efficient and safe freight movement, and residents' quality of life. Regional growth affects economic development and the demand for freight and goods movement. The final Study will identify types of freight-supportive land uses that local governments could use in planning, economic development, zoning, and capital programming. Applying these land use categories in planning, as well as the suggested zoning and regulatory guidelines, will help mitigate the negative community-level impacts of freight movement and facilitate more efficient, safe, and economical logistics operations.

Recommendations

The Study is moving into the phase of developing draft recommendations for consideration. Recommendations will include programs & policies, freight-supportive land use planning best practices, small-scale "low hanging fruit" project recommendations, larger-scale projects of regional significance, and suggested projects for further study.

Some examples of the types of projects that could be included in the final recommendations:

- Supporting the replacement of the Livingston Ave. Bridge
- Increasing the number of truck rest areas/parking areas
- Encouraging the NYS Thruway to permit more over-dimension and over-weight vehicles
- Improving operations on the NYS Canal System to encourage more commercial use
- Promoting better freight-supportive land use planning
- Supporting a Container-on-Barge service between the Port of Albany and the Port of New York/New Jersey
- Encouraging efforts to mitigate the impacts of crude oil rail cars near populated areas