

NYSAMPO Freight Working Group

Background

According to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) *Freight Analysis Framework*, the volume of freight moving within, to, and from New York State annually will increase 140 percent from 475 million tons to 1.14 billion tons between 2010 and 2040. New York State is not an anomaly in this regard. As a result, transportation policymakers and agencies at all levels in both the public and private sectors are placing a greater emphasis on addressing the needs of freight as a means of promoting economic development.

Many of the goods transported on New York State's highways, railroads, and waterways move not just through its metropolitan areas but will originate in and be destined for them as the primary areas of production, demand, and, therefore, commerce. To address the opportunities and issues related to the increase of goods projected to be moved on the surface transportation system, the New York State Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (NYSAMPO) has formed its Freight Working Group.

Purpose

The purpose of the NYSAMPO Freight Working Group is to promote:

- 1.) knowledge transfer on technical freight planning activities
- 2.) further integration of freight into the metropolitan planning processes conducted by MPOs
- 3.) coordination of freight planning activities among MPO, New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), and FHWA staff.

1. Knowledge Transfer – MPOs in New York State have various levels of experience and staff capabilities in freight planning, including multiple MPOs that have completed or are in the process of developing freight plans for their respective regions. Over the past few years, NYSDOT has completed *NEW YORK STATE RAIL PLAN 2009 - Strategies for a New Age*, which includes a major freight component, and FHWA has expanded freight-related resources that are available to state DOTs and MPOs including the Freight Performance Measure Workshop that was held in three locations throughout New York State in May 2012 as well as other workshops. FHWA also provides freight commodity flow data as well as other data products. The sharing of knowledge on planning activities and initiatives relevant to freight among MPOs, NYSDOT, and FHWA will, ideally, raise the overall technical capacity in this field both within the 13 metropolitan areas and statewide.

2. Integration – There is an increased recognition among policymakers at all levels and industry professionals that freight will require greater consideration in the planning and investment decision making processes of transportation agencies. At the national level, freight has received increased attention by Congress in the development of the June 28 version of MAP21, a surface transportation authorization proposal and this is supported by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. A greater emphasis on and inclusion of

freight in the metropolitan planning process is necessary to ensure that regional needs are met and should be done in a manner that proactively addresses any formal requirements or guidance issued subsequent to rulemaking at the federal level.

3. **Coordination** – The needs of shippers, carriers, and receivers is not contingent on arbitrary state or even national political boundaries. The movement of goods is determined by global forces that require a broader perspective to identify projects, programs, and strategies that increase reliability, minimize delay, and mitigate environmental impacts. Just within New York State, the marine terminals under the jurisdiction of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and international border crossings between the United States and Canada have implications for all 13 metropolitan areas. Identifying mutually beneficial solutions to improve the efficiency of freight movement across metropolitan areas (either adjacent to each other or along major trade corridors) and statewide requires a mechanism for discussing and considering perspectives of all affected.

4. **Formulate and implement a public outreach/public involvement freight education program** -
There is a great disconnect between the benefits of the freight transportation system and the communities they serve often resulting in misinformation and a poor image of the freight industry. This group should discuss methods of bridging this gap and carrying some kind of meaningful outreach to the general public of what the freight industry does and why they do it in addition to the benefits received.