Freight and Livability

## *Getting goods to people safely and efficiently*

Getting goods to people and businesses is an essential part of building stronger regional economies, increasing community quality of life, and maintaining the nation's role in a global economy. While freight movement can impact livability and community quality of life, careful planning can help balance freight and livability needs. Communities can be aesthetically pleasing, safe, and walkable, while still providing efficient access for large trucks, rail lines, and other modes of transportation. The HUD-DOT-EPA livability principles call for enhancing economic competiveness, through reliable and timely access to jobs and services, and expanded business access to markets, as well as for supporting existing communities and valuing communities and neighborhoods.[1] American businesses transported over 16 billion tons of raw materials and finished goods in 2009,

Container ships are a key part of intermodal freight transport. (www.sharjahairport.net/)

with a value of $14.6 trillion, with steady growth expected over the next several decades.[2] Coordinated planning to maintain economic competiveness includes identifying appropriate transportation investments to move goods through ports, and in and out of manufacturing and warehousing districts, while minimizing impacts on adjacent communities. Planning for this growth –and the associated ports, shipping, warehousing, and manufacturing jobs– requires balancing the location and design of facilities for goods movement with context-sensitive design of multimodal transportation networks at the community and neighborhood level.

Success Stories

Regional freight planning can support livability. CREATE, or Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency program, is an FHWA-funded project that is helping to improve freight and livability in the Chicago area. CREATE is a partnership between U.S. DOT, the State of Illinois, City of Chicago, Metra, Amtrak, and the nation's freight railroads, and is investing billions in critically needed improvements to increase the efficiency of the region's rail infrastructure. Twenty-five new roadway overpasses or underpasses will be added where traffic (automobiles, pedestrians, bicycles, buses and trucks) currently crosses railroad tracks, which will increase safety and efficiency and
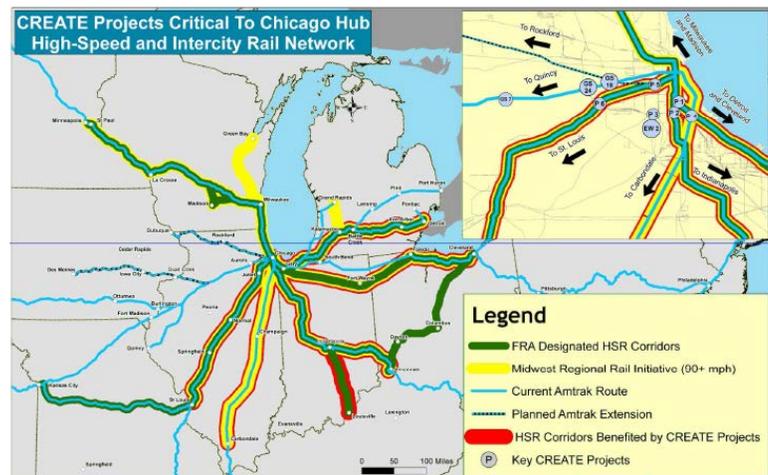
The Chicago region's CREATE project will help eliminate conflicts between freight, passenger, and high-speed rail and roadways. (www.createprogram.org)

---

[1] *Livability in Transportation Guidebook*, FHWA 2010. http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability/case_studies/guidebook/

[2] Freight Facts and Figures 2010, Federal Highway Administration, Office of Freight Management and Operations, January 2011, http://www.ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/freight_analysis/nat_freight_stats/docs/10factsfigures/index.htm

Creating more livable communities through transportation choices

reduce emissions. Passenger and freight tracks will be separated, track upgrades will be made, and several other projects will be done. For area residents, CREATE means reduced traffic delays, shorter commute times, better air quality, and increased public safety. For workers and businesses, it means better access to jobs and enhanced economic opportunities.[3]

Freight villages support regional economies and community livability. Raritan Center, NJ, is an example of an industrial complex that has evolved into a Community Integrated Freight Village (CIFV) – a freight hub with an emphasis on community-oriented commercial activities. Trucks have convenient access to Interstate 95, a nationally-important truck corridor, helping to reduce truck volumes on most roadways near the site. Rail traffic in Raritan Center grew from 700 cars in 1964 to about 5,000 cars per year in 2007. Rail and marine-based initiatives are being pursued to continue growth, with a plan to rehabilitate an existing waterfront terminal to create "Port Raritan," which could include an ethanol barge/ship-to-rail transfer facility. This will make the freight village multimodal and expand the center's economic benefits to the area. The complex has a variety of commercial facilities, such as retail shops, restaurants, cafes, and non-freight office buildings used by local businesses. These make Raritan Center a valuable economic contributor to adjacent towns, while helping to buffer the industrial center from residential areas, lowering the impact of industry and shipping on residents.[4]

Raritan Center freight village is well located for maritime, roadway, and rail shippers and businesses. (Google maps)

LA's Alameda Corridor connects both businesses and communities. The Alameda Corridor is a 20-mile rail cargo expressway between the Port of Long Beach and the City of Los Angeles, including a series of bridges, underpasses, overpasses, and street improvements that separate freight trains from street traffic and passenger trains. The $2.4 billion project includes a 10-mile long submerged central portion, lowering the railway lines to maintain speeds and reduce noise and air pollution. Thirty bridges reconnected communities that were separated by surface tracks.[5] As a result, freight rail movements are more efficient and traffic congestion on surface roadways is reduced because at-grade crossings are eliminated. Improvements along Alameda Street include multiple community revitalization and beautification projects to improve areas along the corridor. Train emissions and noise pollution have been reduced, and emissions from idling automobiles and trucks have decreased.

Freight train below-grade crossing on the Alameda Corridor, Source: www.aaroads.com/california/ca-047.html

Coordinating 'last mile' deliveries pays off for everyone. To reduce impacts of truck deliveries in neighborhood business districts during congested peak hours, USDOT partnered with New York City to create the Off-hour Delivery Program. Instead of making deliveries to businesses during business hours, shipments are coordinated for delivery before or after hours. This helps to cut back on missed deliveries for businesses, ensuring those businesses received their necessary products, while truck drivers make deliveries more efficiently.

---

[3] www.createprogram.org/about.htm; www.createprogram.org/linked_files/2011_February_Overview.pdf

[4] www.nymtc.org/project/freight_planning/frtvillage/FrtVillage_files/Task_3_Report_April_2009F2.pdf

[5] Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority. www.acta.org/projects/projects_completed_alameda_factsheet.asp

Federal Highway Administration: **www.fhwa.dot.gov/livability**
Partnership for Sustainable Communities: **www.sustainablecommunities.gov/**

It also helps to reduce traffic congestion on the road during peak hours, reducing short-term parking issues for both cars and trucks, improving safety for pedestrians and bicyclists due to reduced truck double parking and improved air quality.[6]

---

[6] New York City Off-hour Delivery Program. www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/motorist/offhoursdelivery.shtml