

Cache MPO Freight Planning Review **April 2 – 5, 2007**

Background:

A freight planning review was conducted from April 2 – 5, 2007 conducted by Dane Ismart for the Cache MPO. The purpose of the review was to evaluate the current freight planning activities for Cache Valley and develop recommendations for future freight planning. As part of the review, a brief presentation was made to the Cache Technical Advisory Committee and on April 5, 2007 the initial results were presented to the Phase II Corridor Access Committee. A field review of freight related transportation routes and systems was conducted. Interviews were conducted with David Ledford of Miller Brother's Co., Inc. and Rich Stehmeier of the Cache Valley airport. Assistance in the review was provided by Daniel Kuhn, Freight Transportation Planner and Tim Boschert, Transportation Planner of the Utah DOT and Jeff Gilbert of the Cache MPO.

Why Conduct Freight Planning and Implement Freight Transportation Projects

As called for in Title 23, freight planning is part of the metropolitan planning process. Given the important direct and indirect contributions to the economy, it is imperative that the transportation planning process (from policy and planning to programming, project development, and operations) recognize the benefits of an efficient, reliable, and safe freight system and to ensure high levels of performance. Planning should not only look at long term freight strategies but also short term freight strategies and improvements that will help garner the momentum for the acceptance of the longer term solutions. The business community is focused on the cost of congestion and its effects on the region's ability to attract and retain businesses. Clearly, large scale improvements in congestion will require longer-term strategies that not only include potentially costly infrastructure investments, but that also help to better organize freight activities via land use.

Through an active freight planning program, the result will be a more efficient transportation system that will strengthen the economic growth of the community. The system will be more environmentally friendly and provide greater transportation safety.

Observations and Recommendations

Shown below are observations and recommendations for incorporating freight planning in the Cache Valley planning process:

Cache Valley Intermodal Transportation Center Obstacles:

1. UP has committed a large capital investment into the Salt Lake Intermodal Facility. They will utilize that facility for all intermodal freight.
2. A minimum of 1000 container movements are needed before building an intermodal operation that would be economically feasible.

3. Cache Valley currently is shipping 8 to 15 railcars per week. Current rail shipments include bulk items such as tallow, feed, and plastic pellets for Presto.
4. Existing tracks to serve an intermodal facility in Cache Valley would require extensive rehabilitation.
5. Significantly new intermodal container traffic would have to be developed before a Cache Valley Intermodal Transportation Center would be feasible.

Cache Valley Railroad Strengths, Weaknesses, and Opportunities

1. Cache Valley is currently being served by a short line rail service that is moving between 8 to 15 rail cars per week.
2. The low number of rail movements may endanger continued short line rail service.
3. Loss of rail service will affect existing industries as well as the potential for attracting new industries.
4. In order to assure future rail service, the existing rail service should be used as a strength for attracting new industries.
5. Future industrial sites should be developed around existing rail spurs where possible in order to attract new industries that depend on rail services.

Development of a Freight Action Plan

1. As part of the transportation plan, short term, low cost transportation improvements should be identified and incorporated in the TIP.
2. Examples of transportation improvements would include:
 - A. Increased curb radii to improve the ability of truck turning movements (e.g. intersection of SR 89/91 and 1000W)
 - B. Improved traffic signalization timing and locations
 - C. Improved driveway entrance geometrics.
 - D. Improved and longer turning bays
3. The freight action plan should use the freight transportation inventory developed by the Cache MPO as the initial basis of the plan. The inventory should be updated by recanvassing the manufacturers and major truck generators.

Incorporating Long Range Freight Projects in the Transportation Plan

1. Freight movement issues should be incorporated in future corridor studies. Currently there are significant truck movements on 1000 W. from SR 89\91 to Airport Blvd. Any study conducted for the 1000 West corridor as well as alternative parallel corridors should include an extensive analysis of the potential for improving truck movements to the corridor's industries and possible through trip diversion from US 89\91.
2. SR 30 is a two lane road that serves as one of the major truck entry points into Cache Valley. The impact on truck and freight movement of proposed

- improvements on SR 30 such as construction of passing lanes should be evaluated as part of a maintenance of traffic study.
3. The Cache MPO long range plan should be reviewed for proposed projects that support freight movements and identified as such in the plan.

Support of Air Freight

1. The Cache Valley Airport may experience growing activity in the future. As the airport activity increases including potential growth in air freight, improved roadway access to the airport should be considered. Improvements would include intersection improvements at the entrance of the airport. A divided throat entrance would be recommended for future consideration.
2. Roadway improvements related to the airport should be included in future airport planning activities.
3. Currently the airport has 1 flight a day from UPS. However a larger UPS plane may be scheduled in the near future. Also a new UPS building facility is being considered for 2009 or later. A new cargo sorting facility may be planned in the future.
4. The airport would like to have 2500 North improved and in the future provide further access from the west.
5. Companies like Thermo-Fisher ship a truck load per day of freight via Fed-Ex to the Salt Lake Airport.
6. FAA funding for improved road access to the airport is a low priority and none is planned during the next five years.

Safety in Planning

1. Safety records from UDOT should be reviewed to identify truck related collisions.
2. A review of rail-highway crossings should identify if any additional safety projects are needed.

Funding for Freight Projects

A funding study should be conducted to determine what opportunities exist for funding freight related projects. The study should explore the potential for using funds such as CMAQ, STP, NHS, safety funds, and the enhancement program. Funding from non-FHWA sources such as FAA and FRA funding should be considered as well. Innovative funding techniques such as public-private partnerships, donations for matching, user fees for freight related projects, discretionary programs, economic development funding should be considered and determined if they are feasible for freight related projects.

The analysis of potential funding sources should look at both the long term as well as the short term opportunities. However, the first step in looking for funding opportunities is to identify specific freight related projects and their potential benefits.

Freight Related Planning and Administrative Actions

1. Create truck flow diagrams by using existing vehicle classification counts and conducting new visual surveys on major truck routes.
2. Identify truck trip generation from major businesses and industries by updating past telephone surveys. Additional truck trip estimation may be estimated by using FHWA's Quick Response Freight Manual.
3. Identify potential short term – low cost freight related transportation improvements by updating the existing survey of Cache Valley businesses and industries. A field review should be made of the potential sites identified for improvements.
4. Incorporate as part of ongoing and future corridor studies, the impact the projects will have on the movement of freight.
5. Existing projects in the TIP and the Long Range Plan that may have an impact on freight movement should be identified.
6. As part of incorporating safety in planning, safety hot spots related to truck and rail movement should be identified. These sights should be reviewed as part of a road safety audit conducted in cooperation with UDOT.
7. Potential funding sources for freight related projects should be identified.
8. A freight advisory board should be formed to assist in identifying transportation projects that will assist in the movement of freight. The committee should meet once or twice a year to assist in development of freight related planning products.
9. Site and land use planning should be conducted to support freight activities and use of the existing freight rail services.