

Report: Airfreight Going Up

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Airfreight in the Chicago area is expected to explode in volume over the coming decades and Elk Grove Village is expected to be one of the biggest beneficiaries of that expansion, according to a recently released Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) report.

O'Hare Airport does 99% of the current \$8 billion in Chicago area airfreight business, with Midway Airport at 1%.

Elk Grove Business Park

Sign at one of the Elk Grove Business Park's entrances.

By the year 2040, Chicago area airfreight volumes are expected to jump to \$66 billion in value. Chicagoland airfreight is expected to reach \$14 billion by 2020 and \$27 billion by 2030, according to the report.

Value of freight carried by truck through Chicagoland is expected to reach \$7.3 trillion by 2040 and rail traffic \$2.1 trillion by 2040, CMAP officials said.

The study said Chicago saw the most total freight, a third to a quarter of all shipped in the United States go through the Chicago region. The Chicago area saw freight volumes by land, air and rail totaling 12,850,000 units, equivalent to one 20-foot shipping container per unit. That compares with 12.7 million units shipped through Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA; 5.2 million through New York and New Jersey, and 2.8 million through Savannah, GA.

Freight forwarding is a major employment sector that supports freight. The highest concentration of freight related jobs in any zip code in the seven counties surrounding Chicago is 60007 (Elk Grove Village), Deputy CMAP Chief of Staff Matt Maloney said.

Elk Grove Village has the largest business park in the United States with more than 60 million sq. ft. of manufacturing and freight facilities.

Moving that freight is key to the business park's success, Elk Grove Village Mayor Craig Johnson said.

Many of those jobs are high paying logistics, supply chain management, software development and warehousing positions that include tracking and organizing shipments across the globe, CMAP analyst Garrett Ballard-Rosa said.

The business park benefits from its close proximity to O'Hare Airport, key highways and even has an internal rail line that links to Union Pacific tracks to ship goods by rail across the country.

A planned project to support freight transportation in CMAP's Go To 2040 plan is the Elgin O'Hare West Bypass Expressway (EOWB), according to Maloney.

The new highway would run on two legs: east-west from the Elgin O'Hare Expressway down Thorndale Avenue to O'Hare, and north-south from the Des Plaines Oasis on the Jane Addams Tollway (I-90) along airport property to the Tri-State Tollway (I-294) in Franklin Park.

The study said 67% of all freight travels by truck, 30% by rail and 3% by other means including water and air. In

the Chicago region, the study said just 1% of freight travels by air.

A key element of the EOWB for Elk Grove Village and surrounding suburbs is a full highway interchange at Elmhurst Road. That exit currently serves as the primary truck route in and out of Elk Grove's business park.

Funding challenges for the multi-billion dollar EOWB plan remain.