



MEMORANDUM

To: CMAP Freight Committee

From: CMAP Staff

Date: March 16, 2015

Re: Review of peer MPO freight planning efforts

Staff reviewed regional freight plans, detailed topic-specific studies, and other documents for five metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) with significant freight volumes. Those organizations included the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), Mid-America Regional Commission (MARC, Kansas City area), North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG, Dallas-Ft. Worth area), Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC, Seattle area), and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG, Los Angeles area). Staff followed up on this literature review with four interviews (ARC, NCTCOG, PSRC, and SCAG).

General Findings

While each plan or study varies from MPO to MPO, CMAP staff identified three major areas of effort from this work.

- Descriptive statistics. All MPOs collect descriptive statistics on freight movements and facilities in their regions, along with general overviews of freight and logistics concepts and terms. Some MPOs go further to track freight-related data indicators, describe trends facing the freight industry, and discuss the economic impacts of goods movement.
- Capital project lists and policy initiatives. Some MPOs identify lists of prioritized capital projects or more general project concepts (e.g., SCAG). Some MPOs identify policy initiatives such as a regional truck network on the arterial highway system (e.g., ARC) or highway-rail grade separation programs (e.g., NCTCOG).
- Detailed technical studies. Some MPOs complete detailed technical studies for particular topics (e.g., forecasting freight volumes moving through port facilities, investigating air quality improvements from improved technologies). These topics tend to reflect unique conditions within those metropolitan areas.

Considerations for CMAP Freight Planning

At the January 26, 2015 meeting of the Freight Committee, staff presented a [background paper](#) summarizing past, present, and anticipated future work related to freight at CMAP. In its rough outline for the development of the regional freight plan, that paper identified four main components likely to be included in the freight planning process:

- Investigate the existing condition of the regional freight system.
- Investigate select policy-level issues through detailed reports.
- Evaluate projects and programs.
- Develop final recommendations for the freight plan.

This outline of CMAP's freight planning process is consistent with practice at peer MPOs. The draft work plan for the existing conditions analysis (Agenda Item No. 5.0) includes numerous research items that would provide *descriptive statistics* on the state of the region's freight system. The findings from these descriptive statistics, together with stakeholder outreach, will help to identify *capital projects* for additional study and prioritization. Additionally, technical findings and stakeholder outreach will together inform select topics for *detailed technical study*; these topics would be of particular importance to the freight system in the Chicago region.