Introduction

The movement of freight plays an important role in economic growth. The significance of freight transport is obvious in economies dominated by industries that ship massive quantities of heavy and/or bulky materials. However, even in economies dominated by financial, insurance, service industries, and advanced manufacturing, such as that of the Capitol Region, efficient movement of freight is still vital. Per the Code of Federal Regulations §450.306 and §450.316, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), which is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the region, has an important role in freight planning. As such CRCOG has developed a planning process that fulfills these mandated planning requirements.

CRCOG Freight Planning Approach

Due to the location of CRCOG within the Northeast, freight planning in the region requires a state and multi-state approach. A very important part of CRCOG’s freight planning strategy is close coordination with the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), neighboring planning organizations, as well as rail, truck, and air freight operators. This is to ensure that all aspects of freight movements within the region are reflected in the planning efforts at the State and New England level. CRCOG’s freight strategy is a top-down and bottom-up approach where all entities collaborate to ensure that freight planning and public freight transportation infrastructure are addressed on all levels.

Current State of Freight in the CRCOG Region

The primary modes of freight movement in the Capitol Region are trucks, rail, air, water, and pipelines. The tonnage of freight in the region is projected to increase by 0.8 percent annually between 2014 and 2040. In Connecticut trucks carry over 90 percent of the freight, in terms of both tonnage and value. About 40 percent of truck traffic in the CRCOG region is through traffic, and inbound freight exceeds outbound freight by more than a 2:1 margin. Interstates highways are the main channel for truck traffic, with an estimated 80 percent of truck freight moved on these highways. There are two main truck traffic bottlenecks in the Capitol Region: I-84 at its interchange with I-91 and I-91 at its intersection with Route 5/15 (Charter Oak Bridge). I-84 at its interchange with I-91 has been listed on the American Transportation Research Institute’s (ATRI) top100 truck bottleneck list. The current regional truck travel time reliability (TTTR) index in the regions 1.85, however, CRCOG has adopted CTDOT’s target of 1.83. Per Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) standards, reliable truck travel times are indicated by a TTTR index that is less than 1.50.

Freight Factsheet

The primary route for moving rail freight to, from, and through the Capitol Region is the Hartford Line between New Haven and Springfield. The Connecticut Southern Railroad (CSO) carries freight for the national rail freight carrier CSX over this line. Other rail freight carriers in the region include Central New England Railroad, Providence and Worcester Railroad, Pan Am Southern, and the New England Central Railroad. It is estimated that the maximum truck-to-rail mode shift in the Capitol Region is about 12 percent.
There are no major inland or deep-water seaports in the CRCOG Region. However, the three main ports in Connecticut (Bridgeport, New Haven, and New London) are all connected to the CRCOG Region through highways, rail lines, and pipelines. The expansion of the Panama Canal is expected to shift freight to East Coast ports (Boston, New York and New Jersey), which are in proximity to the CRCOG Region. However, this is not expected to have a significant impact on the mode or direction of freight movements in Connecticut.

Pipeline Map

- Terminal Point

Out of the 212 million tons of freight moved over Connecticut’s transportation system in 2014, about 288,000 tons (0.1 percent) were moved over pipelines. Petroleum products are transported into and through the CRCOG Region by a private pipeline network that originates at the Port of New Haven. Terminal points are located in Wethersfield, Hartford, and Windsor Locks (Bradley International Airport). Additionally, portions of the Tennessee and the Algonquin lines run through the region.

Find out more about freight planning in the Capital Region or Connecticut by visiting https://crcog.org/transportation/multi-modal-planning/freight/

https://portal.ct.gov/DOT/Freight/CTDOT-Freight-Program-Main-Page

References