



Freight-21:

A National Strategic Freight Mobility Program & Trust Fund

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**Coalition for America's
Gateways and Trade Corridors**



The Vision

The United States freight transportation system will ensure the efficient, reliable, safe, and secure movement of goods and support the nation's economic growth while improving environmental quality.

Framework for a National Freight Policy, US DOT



The Problem

Our nation's economic growth and prosperity depend on the vitality of our multimodal freight transportation system, which we have neglected as a national priority. Failing to invest in this key national asset carries serious and well documented consequences.

“Current volumes of freight are straining the capacity of the transportation system to deliver goods quickly, reliably, and cheaply. Anticipated long-term growth of freight could overwhelm the system's ability to meet the needs of the American economy...”

The Freight Story 2008, US DOT FHWA, November 2008

A Growing Consensus for a National Freight Program

- National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission (1909)
- AASHTO
- ARTBA
- NRC
- ATA
- AAPA
- US Chamber
- And many others, including the GAO:

GAO recommends “a national strategy to transform the federal government’s involvement in freight transportation projects. This strategy should include defining federal and nonfederal stakeholder roles and using new and existing federal funding sources and mechanisms to support a targeted, efficient, and sustainable federal role.”



National Strategic Freight Mobility Program & Trust Fund

The creation of a National Strategic Freight Mobility Program and Trust Fund (FTF) will require:

- National strategy for planning & investment
- Merit-based criteria for prioritizing projects
- Predictable, dedicated, sustained funding for freight infrastructure
- Partnership with the private sector to anticipate and meet the needs of system users



FTF: National Strategy for Planning & Investment

- Establish a new USDOT Office of Multimodal Freight
- Implement new discretionary grant program, for freight only, on a competitive basis with objective criteria
 - Coordinate with states and MPOs
 - State freight plans for every state should identify needed projects and collectively provide the basis for a national freight plan
 - Collect data and perform long-term analysis
 - Focus on nationally and regionally significant infrastructure
 - Coordinate policy with other federal agencies
 - Engage with private sector partners
 - Provide a framework for environmental sustainability and assistance for communities with local mitigation



FTF: Merit-based Criteria for Prioritizing Projects

- Identify and prioritize projects that improve national freight efficiency and system performance
- Document direct and indirect public benefits
- Objective, mode-neutral criteria
- Multi-jurisdictional and multi-state projects eligible
- Awards made with full-funding grant agreements



FTF: Predictable, Dedicated, Sustained Funding for Freight Infrastructure

An adequate, guaranteed funding stream, which will grow commensurate with the demand for freight infrastructure, is needed to:

- Meet the current backlog of neglected connectors, bottlenecks and other present day needs.
- Provide continuing improvements, encourage adoption of new, green technologies, and respond to changing trade routes of the future.
- Incentivize state and local investment and leverage the widest array of public and private financing.



FTF: Partnership with the Private Sector

The new freight program must work with private sector partners in two ways:

- Leverage private participation and give transportation agencies the largest toolbox of options possible
- Establish USDOT advisory board to maintain support for the user fee structure by providing the counsel of private sector users, maintain efficiency in program implementation and ensure a forum for expanding the information platform for the new program



FTF: Revenue Sources

- A new user fee dedicated to the FTF for freight transportation infrastructure only
 - Assessed as broadly as possible, on all domestic and international freight, without advantaging or burdening any sector or mode
- Does not preclude other new and current revenue sources



The Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors

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