

NHS Intermodal Connectors

“The Last Mile”

Tony Furst

FHWA

Director, Office of Freight Management and Operations



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

National Highway System Intermodal Connectors



**Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation**

Intermodal Connectors: Number and mileage

<i>Connectors to</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Miles</i>
Ports (ocean and river)	253	532
Airports	99	221
Truck/Rail Terminals	203	354
Pipeline/Truck Terminals	61	115
Total Number of NHS Freight Terminals	<u>616</u>	<u>1222</u>

History

- National Highway System (NHS) Designation Act of 1995 directed the Secretary of Transportation to submit a list of intermodal connectors as part of the NHS.
- Section 1106(d) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) directed the Secretary to conduct a review of the condition of, and improvements since the designation of, the NHS connectors that serve seaports, airports, and other intermodal freight transportation facilities.
- The Administration proposed targeted efforts to improve intermodal connectors through Freight Transportation Gateways; Freight Intermodal Connections, and Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovations Act (TIFIA) sections of its reauthorization bill.
 - ⇒ 2% set aside of NHS funds
 - ⇒ Exemption Provision
 - ⇒ 90% Federal match

Key Findings on NHS Connector Condition

- Poor Physical Condition
 - Connectors to ports were found to have twice the percent of mileage with pavement deficiencies when compared to non-Interstate NHS routes
 - Connectors to rail terminals had 50 percent more mileage in the deficient category when compared to non-Interstate NHS routes.
 - Connectors to airport and pipeline terminals generally in better condition

 - Investment levels on all connectors were comparable with investment levels on the non-Interstate NHS (average/mile).
 - Most of the investment was concentrated on a small group of high-profile terminal projects such as the Alameda Corridor or the San Francisco Airport.

 - Poor Geometrics and Physical Deficiencies
 - Inadequate turning radii
 - Inadequate shoulder width
 - Lack of stabilized shoulders
 - Inadequate travelway width
 - Drainage/Flooding
-

Impediments to Improving Connectors

- Lack of priority accorded to freight in the planning and programming process.
- Public planning agencies are not fully aware of the importance of freight to the economy of their region and to the Nation as a whole.
- Introducing new projects, especially freight projects, into the pipeline is a political challenge (Competing priorities --- limited revenue)
- Most NHS intermodal freight connector improvements are not understood or well defined. Lack attention from decision makers and constituents.
- Optimal management of the intermodal connectors can only be achieved when public, private, and multi-jurisdictional elements are coordinated.

Next Steps

- Establishment of Intermodal Connector Condition and Reporting Mechanism
 - Maximum utilization of data available in current systems such as the Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS) and National Bridge Inventory (NBI)
- Continue to institutionalize freight into the planning and programming process
- Develop more complete methods for assessing benefits of investments in intermodal connectors and other freight projects
- Encourage Public/Private Partnerships
- Develop new proposals for the next reauthorization if conditions are still a problem

Contact Information

- **Tony Furst**
Tony.Furst@dot.gov
202-366-2201
<http://www.dot.gov/freight>

