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Freight Transport

2011

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

6 Freight Transport

Freight transportation is an important issue for Franklin County. The accessibility and efficiency of freight transport plays a vital role in the economy and viability of the region. Most of the freight and goods coming to and from Franklin County are being transported by truck; however, a significant amount of freight that travels through the county is being hauled over its three main rail lines. A small volume of the freight is transported by airplane.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has just completed a *State Freight and Rail Plan* (September 2010) that comprehensively examines the state's freight transportation system. This Plan looks at all modes of freight transportation and analyzes issues and opportunities for growth. The Plan notes the significance of the freight transportation links that exist in Franklin County and identifies recommendations for both the region and the state, which will be incorporated into this chapter. The Plan estimates that total freight volumes in Massachusetts are projected to increase 70 percent by the year 2030. This large increase could have a significant impact on Franklin County with its major highway routes and railroad lines.

This chapter will discuss freight transport to, from, and through the region by truck, rail, and air. This chapter will consider opportunities to improve the safety and efficiency of freight movement in the region, and will also discuss the transport of hazardous materials in Franklin County.

Existing Conditions

Major Freight Modes

Trucking

The major trucking corridors in Franklin County are: Interstate 91 (which runs north-south) and Route 2 (which runs east-west). These two highways also represent the busiest travel corridors in the region for non-commercial traffic. Other active truck routes in the region include Routes 5/10, Route 47, Route 116, Route 63, and Route 112. There are a

number of truck parking facilities on most of the major routes in Franklin County. There are parking facilities located on Route 2 West (Charlemont, MassDOT Park & Ride), Route 2A (Greenfield, MassDOT Visitors Center), Route 2 East (Montague), Route 116 (Sunderland), I-91 (Bernardston), and Route 5/10 (Whately). The Whately facility is located at the Whately Diner on Rt. 5/10, which is a full amenity truck rest stop with parking, refueling, showers, and food available.

Freight Rail

Franklin County has approximately 93 route miles of railroad, which are broken down into two north-south routes, one east-west route, and an east-west connector at the East Deerfield Rail Yard. This railyard is one of the largest railyards in New England. The map at the end of the chapter shows the location of the East Deerfield Rail Yard and the different railroad lines in Franklin County. There are three other minor rail yards in the county: in South Deerfield, Millers Falls, and Buckland. The first two are currently in use, each having only minor traffic. The Buckland Rail Yard, which is also the site of the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum, is no longer active.



East Deerfield Rail Yard, in Deerfield

Air Transport

There are two public airports in Franklin County, located in the Towns of Orange and Montague; however, neither of these airports provides air freight service. All freight in the county that is transported by air must first be trucked to an airport outside of the region. The closest locations for freight transport are Bradley International

Airport, located near Hartford, Connecticut, and Logan International Airport in Boston. New York City's major metropolitan area airports, LaGuardia Airport, J.F.K. Airport, and Newark Airport, also provide air freight transport services and are used by some shippers in the Franklin County region.

Freight Trucking

In order to provide safe and efficient transportation routes for trucks to and through the region, it is important that the region's infrastructure and systems are continually reevaluated for possible deficiencies or constraints. Improvements are undertaken as needed and as possible within given funding constraints. The following projects are major improvements that have been planned or have been recently completed with the goal of advancing the safety and efficiency for both general and freight highway transport.

Route 2 East Improvements

Several major improvements have taken place or have been planned for Route 2, the major east-west trucking corridor in Franklin County. Route 2 East refers to the stretch of Route 2 from Greenfield to Philipston. Several projects along this section have been recently constructed, are underway, or have been designed. These improvements focus on overall traffic safety and efficiency, as well as the relationship between freight trucking and non-commercial traffic.

One major Route 2 East project that has been completed was the relocation of Route 2 away from the Erving Paper Mill in Erving. The relocation was necessary to relieve the on-road blockage that occurred when freight trucks were loading or unloading at the mill. This project addressed the overall safety and efficiency of traffic on Route 2 by ensuring that freight deliveries to the paper mill do not create a hazardous impasse. The relocation was completed in November 2006 and truckers and motorists have indicated that it was a significant improvement over the previous roadway configuration.

Other recent improvements on Route 2 East include the addition of climbing lanes and turning lanes to improve the roadway's safety. The addition of climbing lanes in Orange and Athol were designed to help address the issue of bottlenecked traffic when freight trucks slow on the steep inclines. Turning lanes have been added in Ervingside to decrease the hazard that unexpected stops and turns can have on traffic flow. Freight trucks are particularly susceptible to this, as they cannot slow the momentum of their vehicles quickly. Two bridges were also reconstructed in Ervingside, with the road profile lowered to improve sight distance. Additional turning lanes are planned for Farley and Erving Center and are currently under design.



New retaining wall along Route 2, in Erving

Another major improvement project that has been completed is the creation of a truck weigh station on Route 2 westbound in Athol. This was the first weigh station along the Route 2 corridor. The presence of the weigh station will help ensure that freight trucks on Route 2 are not carrying excessive weight that could potentially cause safety issues along the corridor or damage the highway infrastructure, such as its many bridges.

Safety improvements are currently underway on Route 2 in Orange. These include exit and climbing lane improvements. These projects will make the exits safer by decreasing the severity of the exit ramp curves, which are particularly important for top-heavy vehicles such as freight trucks. The location of the improvements is significant since

one of the selected exits, the Route 202 interchange, is near a large industrial park, thus increasing the volume of freight trucks using the exit. More information on the Route 2 East improvements can be found in Chapter 13: "Transportation Safety" of this RTP.

Route 2 West Improvements and Studies

Improvement projects have also been completed, designed, or explored for Route 2 West, which in Franklin County spans from Greenfield to Charlemont. During the creation of the 2003 Regional Transportation Plan, a number of issues related to the safe and efficient movement of freight by trucks on Route 2 West were identified. Improvements have taken place to address some of these issues, but further exploration and funding is needed to address all of the identified problems.

Along Route 2 West in Charlemont, there were three bridges that needed either replacement or rehabilitation. Due to their poor conditions, all three had weight restrictions that limited their use by heavy freight trucks. These projects have now been completed with designs to ensure safe passage for freight trucks and other vehicles.

Another major improvement project along Route 2 West that has been recently completed is the redesign of the Route 2 Rotary. The improvements were aimed at addressing safety issues, including trucks crowding out other vehicles on the rotary. The projects included redesigning and clearly delineating travel lanes in the rotary, expanding or reconfiguring the exit/entrance ramps for I-91 and Routes 2 and 2A, and adding signage to better direct traffic flow. The project also redesigned Route 2 at Colrain Road, just west of the rotary, to facilitate trucks turning onto Colrain Road and to add pedestrian facilities. Recent studies and anecdotal evidence have shown that this project has been a large success in terms of safety.

The FRCOG has performed several preliminary studies regarding further improvements along the Route 2 West corridor. In the 2009 *Route 2 West Safety Study*, it was recommended that a climbing

lane be added to the westbound lane of Route 2 over Greenfield Mountain. Currently, slow-moving traffic (usually freight trucks) going up Greenfield Mountain on Route 2, which has one lane in each direction, often use the roadway shoulder as a second travel lane. However, the shoulder is not wide enough to accommodate tractor-trailers, leaving these large trucks to straddle both the breakdown lane and travel lane, creating a hazardous situation as the faster moving vehicles in the travel lane are forced into the oncoming lane in order to pass. The *Route 2 West Safety Study* concluded that there is enough pavement width on the roadway to accommodate a climbing lane, but not enough to have a desirable shoulder width. The *Study* recommended that a climbing lane be created, even with a smaller shoulder, as this would be a safer alternative to the current situation.



Truck climbing Greenfield Mountain along Route 2

Additionally on Greenfield Mountain, there has been concern about safety issues related to trucks traveling eastbound down the mountain towards the congested commercial area just prior to the rotary. This section of Route 2 has a steep 6 percent grade and the concerns were related to trucks' ability to safely brake before the congested area. The *Route 2 West Safety Study* recommended that ITS (Intelligent Transportation Systems) be installed on Route 2 eastbound coming down the mountain to warn freight truck drivers if they are at risk of overheating their brakes as they travel down the incline. In the *Safety Study*, it was determined that a truck escape route was not justified at the time.

Challenges to Freight Trucking

Aside from Route 2, there are other locations in Franklin County that present challenges to freight trucking, and may need improvements. In many cases, roadways are too narrow or intersection widths inadequate for freight traffic and turning. In other cases, bridges have insufficient clearance for larger vehicles. Below are a few specific constraints associated with freight trucking.

- Bank Row, Greenfield: There is a clearance problem with the train overpass. Freight trucks are forced to avoid this central artery to downtown Greenfield. This site has not yet been identified as a priority bridge improvement.
- Main Street onto Chapman Street, Greenfield: It is difficult for tractor-trailers to make this turn because of parking on both sides of the street. Because of the intersection's downtown location, the removal of on-street parking is not a desirable option.
- Turners Falls Road, Montague: Trucks traveling north on Turners Falls Road have difficulty turning onto Turnpike Road. This intersection has not yet been planned for improvements.
- Montague City Road and Cheapside Street intersection, Greenfield: There is a low bridge at the curve where Montague City Road and Cheapside Street intersect. The low bridge limits truck access to the nearby industrial area, and as a result, trucks often need to use long alternative routes. Options such as raising the bridge or lowering the road would pose significant challenges. Another option, which has been mentioned, is widening the sharp curve. This intersection needs further study before improvements can be planned.
- General Pierce Bridge, Greenfield: This bridge is currently under preliminary design for a major rehabilitation that will take place once the reconstruction of the Gill-Montague Bridge has been completed. At the public forums for this RTP, local trucking companies expressed concern with

the current weight limit on this bridge, which is 36 tons. For larger trucks that exceed this, they must use an alternate route on Mountain Road, which was not designed for large trucks. To resolve this conflict, there are two options. The first is to raise the railroad bridge on Cheapside Street to 13'6". The other option is to increase the weight limit on the General Pierce Bridge, when it is rehabilitated, to 49 tons.

- Iron Bridge, Shelburne Falls: The historic iron bridge separating the towns of Shelburne and Buckland in Shelburne Falls is a historic bridge that was rehabilitated in 1997. Its low clearance prevents larger trucks from accessing the Buckland side of Shelburne Falls from Route 2/Maple Street. Trucks must travel further west on Rt. 2 and enter Buckland via State Street to avoid being stuck at the Iron Bridge. Better signage and information provided by GPS companies is needed to help freight trucks access the correct side of Shelburne Falls by the correct exit from Rt. 2.

Scenic Byways

Another issue related to freight transport involves the region's many scenic byways and the fact that these scenic byways are located on roadways that also serve as major trucking routes. There is one nationally-designated and four Massachusetts-designated scenic byways that run through the county. Scenic byways represent travel corridors with unique scenic, cultural, and tourism value. A possible conflict exists along these byways in that they call for an increased sensitivity to, and preservation of, rural and scenic qualities while also serving as major trucking corridors. Although no significant changes in freight trucking routes are recommended at this time, the special characteristics of scenic byways needs to be taken into consideration when planning improvements for these roadways. For more information on Franklin County's scenic byways, please refer to Chapter 15: "Scenic Byways and Tourism."

Transportation of Wide Loads

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Commercial Motor Vehicle Center is responsible for permitting

the transportation of non-reducible loads, also referred to as “wide-loads.” If a transporter wishes to move a load of twelve feet or more in width over state highways, they are required to apply for a “daily trip” permit. In Franklin County, wide loads are permitted only on Interstate 91, Route 2, and Route 116.

The transportation of wide loads is a growing issue of concern for Franklin County. Many of the wide-load trucks today are trailers that are 53 feet in length or longer and which cannot be accommodated on most roads in Franklin County, or much of New England. As trucks become even bigger, it is impractical, and in many locations not possible, to widen and straighten local rural roads to accommodate large-sized trucks. The wide loads are larger than one lane width and therefore can crowd other vehicles, forcing them aside as they pass through.

The increasing interest of renewable energy powered by wind also has a potentially significant impact on the type and number of wide loads passing through Franklin County. Franklin County, especially the western portion of the county, and neighboring Berkshire County are rich in wind resources. Wind turbines have already been installed locally, such as at Berkshire East Ski Resort in Charlemont, and large-scale wind farms have been planned for the Towns of Monroe and Hawley and their neighboring Towns of Florida and Savoy. The wind turbines are constructed on-site with very large prefabricated components. These individual components can range from 115 to 160 feet in length and must be transported via roadway to often remote areas. For comparison, the average 18-wheeler tractor-trailer ranges in length from 70 to 80 feet in length from the front of the cab to the end of the trailer. The recently constructed wind turbine at Berkshire East is 277 feet tall with the blades completely vertical. To construct the structure, 17 truckloads delivered parts to the site.¹ As more wind turbines are planned for sites in Franklin County and adjoining regions, the issue of

¹ Broncaccio, Diane, “Tower of Power,” *The Recorder*. December 2, 2010.

transportation of turbine segments is a large one. A study should be performed examining which roads would be best suited to handle the unique demands of these loads.

Freight Rail Transport

While the vast majority of freight is shipped by truck in New England, MassDOT has projected that the amount of rail freight shipments will double over the next 20-30 years. This increase could have a significant impact on Franklin County as two major New England rail lines pass through the region.

Rail Lines

As highlighted earlier, Franklin County has 93 route miles of railroad, including two north-south routes and one east-west route. There is a map of the rail lines at the end of this chapter. The north-south routes are the Connecticut River Main Line (owned by Pan Am Railways) and NECR Main Line (owned by New England Central Railroad). The east-west line is the Freight Main Line route for Pan Am Southern. This route runs along Route 2 and follows the Deerfield River. A small east-west/north-south connector, the East Deerfield Route, is also owned by Pan Am Railways.

The following information on the three primary rail lines in the county is based on information from MassDOT’s *Massachusetts State Rail Plan* (Sept. 2010):

- **Freight Main Line:** (also known as the “Patriot Corridor”) This rail line is owned by Pan Am Southern (PAS), which is a joint venture between Norfolk Southern and Pan Am Railways (PAR) that was formed in 2008. A part of this joint venture is the planned rehabilitation of 138 miles of track, replacement of ties, and the addition of over 35 miles of new rail between Ayer, MA and Mechanicville, NY. These improvements will allow for increased freight capacity to be transported with a higher 286,000 pound weight limit and first generation double-stack capability. The improvements will also increase track speeds. The joint venture will

create another Class I freight railroad in Massachusetts for increased competition.

The east-west Freight Main Line is the railroad's most important line in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts – serving up to 5 million tons annual of freight between eastern Massachusetts and eastern New York (near Albany). It provides an important link for the paper and lumber industries in northern New England and Canada. There are two east-west rail lines in Massachusetts (the other roughly follows the Massachusetts Turnpike), but this route has fewer and less severe grades because of the 6-mile Hoosac Tunnel that runs through, rather than over, the Berkshire Mountains. While the Hoosac Tunnel is an important advantage for this line, it does limit the freight capacity that can be hauled due to tunnel height restrictions (19'6").

- **Connecticut River Main Line:** This rail line is owned by Pan Am Railways (PAR). PAR is a Class II rail carrier with connections to the NECR rail line in Montague and Northfield. This line will soon also be carrying passenger rail due to funding received from the 2010 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), which will fund track improvements and passenger platform construction along the line. One of the passenger rail stops will be in Greenfield at the newly constructed Franklin Regional Transit Center. The track improvements will also allow for greatly increased speeds along this line for freight traffic.
- **NECR Main Line:** This rail line is owned by New England Central Railroad (NECR), which is a Class III railroad. The line is composed of 53 miles of right-of-way between Monson and Northfield. It has a major rail facility located in Palmer in Hampden County, where it interchanges with CSX. The line also interchanges with PAR in Northfield and Montague in Franklin County. An additional connection is made in Millers Falls with Vermont Railway (VTR). These large numbers of connections makes this line competitive with the national rail system. This line is also a major north-south corridor for the New England region, connecting Canada with

Connecticut. Average annual freight rail tonnages is 1.3 million tons, much of it composed of lumber products shipped from Canada.

Railyards

There are limited public railroad loading areas suitable for transloading in Franklin County. A transloading facility refers to a terminal where freight is transferred from one mode to another. Transloading facilities enable companies that are not located along rail lines to combine lower cost rail hauling with truck delivery. Typical goods that move through transloading terminals include: lumber, sheetrock, plastic pellets, bulk paper rolls, pipes, and bulk liquids such as fuel oil.² Modern transloading facilities are accessible to major highways, have many tracks, covered warehousing, and room for storing and moving tractor-trailers. While Franklin County does not have a transloading facility, below is an inventory of the rail facilities in Franklin County and a general evaluation of the facility's potential for transloading freight.

- **East Deerfield Railyard:** The East Deerfield Railyard, located off River Road, is partially owned by the Commonwealth (MassDOT), but is subject to permanent easement for railroad uses by Pan Am Southern. The railyard is one of the largest railyards in New England and is located on the Freight Main Line that travels east-west and the Connecticut Main Line that travels north-south. The yard is approximately one and a half miles long and a half-mile wide. It has the capacity to sort and hold up to 900 rail cars per day. Approximately 600 to 900 cars pass through the yard on a daily basis. The railyard is used primarily as a classification yard for trains coming from the Pan Am north-south and east-west main rail lines. There are several public unloading tracks, and other tracks with the potential for public unloading. Only one track appears to be used for unloading now, primarily for unloading sodium chloride. The East Deerfield Railyard is located between two rivers on the east and

² Indus-Rail Co., Preliminary Report Freight Diversion Study, conducted for the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, 1999, p. 5.

west, wetlands on the north, and a residential neighborhood on the south. The road access to the railyard was improved in 2003 as a result of a project that increased bridge clearance at the River Road bridge. This helped immensely in providing direct road access from the facility to the Route 5/10 corridor and Greenfield. The Deerfield Master Plan (2000) suggested that the railyard could be an appropriate location for a future transloading facility. The railyard was used for some transloading of freight historically. A modern transloading facility would require additional storage space and equipment at the railyard, but is feasible for the site. One result of a new transloading facility would be increased traffic in and out of the railyard. Another concern of expanding the facility is the potential for contamination and adverse impacts on the natural resources in the vicinity, including the Deerfield River (located ¼ mile west from the railyard) and the Connecticut River (located ¼ mile east and ½ mile to the north of the yard).

- **South Deerfield:** There is a small rail facility in South Deerfield, off of Elm Street and Tine Drive. The facility has two public unloading tracks and a small amount of use. The access is poor to both tracks and there are no storage capabilities. The site was used for small-scale transloading historically, but would likely not be suitable for a larger-scale facility now.
- **Millers Falls:** The Millers Falls railyard is located off of East Main Street, at the junction of two major railroad lines, the NECR and the PAR. The yard includes a disconnected facility with a dock and ample trailer storage on the PAR side. NECR has three public railroad tracks used for unloading sodium chloride with poor track access and limited trailer storage.
- **Buckland:** There is a small railyard in Buckland, off of Depot Road, at the site of the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum. The yard, which was last used for transloading in 1987, includes four tracks adjacent to the PAS east-west Freight Main Line. The yard is owned by a private firm. The road

access from the facility to Route 2 is poor and travels through the densely developed village of Shelburne Falls. The facility would need significant upgrading to be a viable transloading facility.

Current Activities and Future Planning

Transport of Hazardous Materials

In August 2006, the Franklin County Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC) completed the creation of a Regional Hazardous Materials Emergency Plan (HMEP) with support from the FRCOG. The development of the HMEP served several purposes, including compliance with the statutory requirements that all regional Emergency Planning Committees develop, exercise, and annually review a Hazardous Materials Emergency Plan. Also, no regionally focused planning tool had previously existed to describe and analyze hazardous threats in Franklin County. Third, a regional plan was needed to standardize Hazardous Materials release reporting, notification, and response.

Among the HMEP’s priorities is addressing the potential issues associated with the freight transport of hazardous materials and having an emergency plan for hazardous material spills. The HMEP assumes that virtually all railway and road corridors transport hazardous materials at some times and that, consequently, any rail line or roadway can be a potential hazardous material spill site.

Table 6-1: Estimated Level of Hazardous Material Transport on Area Roadways

Roadway	Number of Tank or Van Trucks Carrying Hazardous Materials per Hour
Interstate 91	10
Route 2	2
Other major roadways (Route 5/10, 63, 47, 116, 202, 8A, 78, 122, 142, 2A)	1 or 0

Based on a one-time survey conducted in 2003. Source: Franklin County Regional Emergency Planning Committee, “Franklin County Hazardous Material Emergency Plan and Maps,” 2006.

Table 6-2: Estimated Level of Hazardous Material Transport on Area Rail Lines

Rail Line	Trains per Day (General Merchandise)	Average Number of Cars per Train	Average Number of Cars per Train with Hazardous Material
PAS Freight Main Line	10 – 24	50	4
Connecticut River Main Line	2 – 3	30	2
East Deerfield Rail Yard	10 – 15*	n/a	2 – 5
NECR Main Line	2	60	5

*Trains passing through the yard. Based on a one-time survey conducted in 2003.

Source: Franklin County Regional Emergency Planning Committee, "Franklin County Hazardous Material Emergency Plan and Maps," 2006.

The HMEP includes an analysis of the level of hazardous materials transported in the region on major roadways and on rail lines. This analysis is based on a one-time study of the level of general freight transport on rail facilities and major roadways, and the amount of freight traffic that contained hazardous materials. This study was conducted in 2003. The study estimated that approximately 13 to 15 trucks per hour traveling through the region contain hazardous materials. Most of these trucks are on Interstate 91. For rail transport, it was estimated that there are 100 to 130 train cars with hazardous materials passing through the region each day. The study also found that up to 500 rail cars were stopped at the East Deerfield Rail Yard at any given time, with 20 to 50 of them containing hazardous materials. The only known significant transportation change since the 2006 HMEP report is the increase in ethanol transport by rail through the county. A training activity to address this topic is planned within the next year, according to the Chair of the Franklin County Emergency Preparedness Committee.

Chemical Incident Exercises and Response

The Franklin County Regional Emergency Planning Committee (REPC) has conducted a number of training exercises in the last few years for dealing with chemical spills. In 2004, in the first such training exercise in more than a decade, FRCOG and the REPC conducted a full-scale training exercise at

the Buckland Trolley Museum Railyard in Shelburne Falls. The exercise provided an opportunity to practice chemical spill response through a scenario of a chemical leak caused by a car crash with a rail tank car on an active rail line. The exercise was attended by responding departments from surrounding towns, the regional district (District 4) Hazardous Materials Team, and rail employees.

Since the completion of the HMEP in 2006, mock chemical spill exercises have been carried out for four Franklin County communities as part of implementing the plan. These exercises were designed to test the regional preparedness for dealing with chemical releases and the coordination of different agencies in addressing such situations and in dealing with evacuations.

Franklin County experienced a real chemical spill in 1999 when a train derailed in Charlemont and dumped an estimated 6,000 gallons of liquid latex into the Deerfield River. In September 2006, a freight train headed to the East Deerfield Railyard derailed onto its side with 20 cars carrying feed grain and vegetable oil going off the tracks. Fortunately, none of the cars ruptured. The rapid response to this derailment demonstrated the good coordination between local, regional, and state officials. The REPC has been called out on nine different occasions since 2007 to assist with chemical incidents in Franklin County.

Freight Diversion

Throughout New England, trucking is the predominant means of transporting freight. One of the recommendations of the Massachusetts *State Freight and Rail Plan* is to increase the amount of freight shipped by rail, rather than by truck. The Plan found that reducing the amount of truck shipping in the state would have many benefits, including: improved air quality, decreased highway maintenance costs, reduced fuel consumption (rail has 1.9 to 5.5 time greater fuel efficiency), and reduced shipping costs (rail is 50 percent less than

improvements needed to increase the use of rail in the county.

Statewide Freight Transportation Planning

MassDOT has recently completed the Massachusetts *State Freight and Rail Plan*. This plan sets state priorities for freight by all modes within Massachusetts. As part of this planning process, MassDOT also produced a stand-alone *State Rail Plan*. These plans have identified goals, issues, and recommendations for freight transport, some of which have been highlighted below.

Goals

- Reduce delays and bottlenecks
- Provide competitive, low-cost shipping to Massachusetts' industries
- Promote transportation with less environmental impact
- Encourage effective shared use of rail

Issues

- Poor air quality and increased carbon emissions associated with trucking
- Increased costs of pavement and bridge maintenance with trucking
- Weight and height restrictions on rail lines constrain freight shipping by rail
- Larger size of new rail cars make rail transport in Massachusetts more expensive due to size limitations on its railways (exception-loading)

Recommendations

- Increase the share of rail freight transport in Massachusetts
- Upgrade railways to accommodate larger rail cars
- Develop a state-wide inventory to identify sites suitable for large-scale freight uses
- Adopt a freight-intensive land use program that would preserve rail access to businesses

Recommendations for Freight Transport

- Work with MassDOT and the Town of Greenfield to create a **climbing lane along Route 2 West** up Greenfield Mountain.
- Investigate the feasibility of installing **ITS on Route 2** eastbound heading down Greenfield Mountain to aid trucks in braking safely.
- Continue to assist with the current and planned improvement projects in **Route 2 East** and to monitor how they impact freight trucking.
- As more data becomes available, continue to monitor the **Greenfield Rotary** and assess its impact on truck traffic and safety.
- Continue to work with local communities and highway officials to address **safety concerns related to trucks transporting wide loads** through Franklin County.
- Conduct an inventory of roads in Franklin County that can potentially accommodate **wide loads for wind turbine transport**.
- Continue to monitor and assess the **transport of hazardous materials** in the region and to develop, update, and coordinate plans with the Regional Emergency Planning Committee and appropriate agencies for responding to a hazardous materials spill.
- Conduct an update of the **Freight Users Survey** and more fully assess the potential for diversion of rail freight and transloading facilities.
- Conduct a study to assess which **roadway crossings of rail lines** are potentially the most hazardous, and to recommend changes to improve the safety of these locations.
- Rehabilitate the **General Pierce Bridge** with an increased weight limit of 49 tons to make truck shipping through the region more efficient and safe.
- Evaluate the options of improving the **Montague City Road and Cheapside Street** intersection, where a low bridge impedes truck traffic.