

Congestion Buster Task Force Goods Movement Subcommittee

As of March 19, 2002

Background:

The efficient movement of goods is vital to the State's continued development and prosperity. The goods movement industry is among the most significant in New Jersey with 484,000 New Jersey workers employed in the State's transportation and distribution network.

Congestion reduces transportation efficiency, causes a loss in productivity, increases time and expense to move goods, and, ultimately, increases local consumer prices. Keeping traffic moving reduces air pollution and damage to the roads, and holds down costs.

The dominant mode for of goods movement in New Jersey is by truck. Goods movement in New Jersey is composed of three nearly equal categories: imports, exports and internal. Based on a recent NJDOT study conducted by the Voorhees Transportation Policy Institute, 96 million tons of freight comes into the state by air (0.1%), water (16.7%), rail (17.6%) and truck (65.6%). There are on average 82 million tons of freight leaving from New Jersey origins moving by air (0.4%), water (29.1%), rail (7.2%) and truck (63.3%). Truck movements most dominate intra-state shipments. Of the 82 million tons of freight moving between locations in New Jersey, the railroads move 0.4%, water carriers move 10.5% and trucks move 89.2%.

All modes of transportation are dependent on one another. However, in most cases, trucks are needed to pickup and deliver freight to and from the airport or the port, to or from the rail facility, or to and from a distribution center or large multi-purpose warehouse. Trucks exclusively serve 86% of all New Jersey communities. Trucks deliver to New Jersey's 12,370 manufacturing companies, 50,180 retail stores, 27,130 wholesale companies and pickup and deliver 100% of all agricultural products.

Trucks share highways and collector roads with private autos and buses. A substantial portion of truck traffic competes for this highway space during the weekday peak travel hours. A major reason for this is that freight transportation is a service that is dependent on the schedules established by the customer. The average business in New

Jersey operates their shipping and receiving hours between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. – Monday through Friday. Thus, many truckers are forced to use the highways during the peak hours.

If we restrict and impede the flow of goods, it will result in the trucking industry's inability to operate successfully in the State of New Jersey. This will compel shippers, receivers, distribution centers and regional warehouses to move elsewhere where transportation costs are more reasonable. If the trend continues New Jersey will become much like New York City – trucking companies and other distribution functions will find the system so difficult and unprofitable that they will stop conducting business here.

The committee respectfully submits the following suggestions to reduce congestion and aid in moving goods within the State of New Jersey:

Recommendation #1- Support the Development of a Comprehensive Freight Plan for the State

We should support the Department of Transportation's comprehensive freight plan. The plan will determine how goods movements are currently conducted, determine where it is heading and determine how do we get the system to accommodate the anticipated growth of goods movement.

The freight plan will also analyze existing freight plans and planning activities that have an impact on the transportation infrastructure. There are many local and regional organizations that are producing plans relative to goods movement. There needs to be a State coordination of these projects to avoid overlap and redundancy, as well as, how these projects affect the State's overall goals dealing with the transportation infrastructure and the flow of goods.

Who does this recommendation affect?

NJDOT

Legislation Required? No

Submitted by: Goods Movement Committee

Recommendation #2 - Conduct a Survey to Determine the Feasibility of Expanding Hours of Operation to Coordinate Truck Movements During Off-Peak Hours

Currently many businesses are open between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. The carriers must coordinate their schedules based on the needs of their customers. This results in trucks being on the road during the peak hours. We recommend that a survey of shippers, receivers and distribution centers in New Jersey be conducted to determine the feasibility of expanding hours of operations (including Saturdays) to accommodate truck pickups and/or deliveries.

If a significant number of businesses are willing to adjust their hours we recommend that NJDOT launch an out-reach program to bring together all of the parties involved in goods movement, to see if they could adjust their schedules (for example, open at 6 a.m., close at 8 p.m., and remain open to ship and receive on Saturdays).

How will congestion be reduced?

This would enable a significant amount of trucks to move outside the weekday peak hours, reducing conflict for road space with private autos.

Who does this recommendation affect?

Trucking companies

Businesses who utilize trucks for goods movement

Employees

The change in hours may require adjustments to union contracts.

What are the costs and cost savings in other areas?

There may also be some additional costs to open or close businesses at different times, however, if the program is successful, the positive impact could reduce transportation costs and significantly reduce congestion.

How will recommendation be implemented?

NJDOT survey the businesses in New Jersey

Legislation Required? No

Submitted by: Goods Movement Committee

Recommendation #3 - Provide Incentive for more Carriers to use NJ Turnpike

For a variety of reasons, truck operators find disincentives for using the Turnpike. The NJ Turnpike Authority should take a number of steps to encourage truck use of its facility.

To encourage truckers to select the turnpike as a more efficient route:

- **Reduce the tolls via E-Z Pass Volume Discounts**

While congestion pricing may have an impact on a commuter's decision to adjust their driving times or may even encourage them to use mass transit, these options are not available to trucks. If anything, congestion pricing encourages truckers to use non-toll roads, when possible.

A congestion-buster policy should be established to encourage truckers to use E-Z Pass as widely as possible on the NJ Turnpike. This would involve using E-Z Pass to implement an incentive toll structure, implementing E-Z Pass on all toll lanes, and, eventually, installing high-speed E-Z Pass for trucks.

The current E-Z Pass discount program does not provide a significant incentive for trucks to utilize the Turnpike. It is recommended that discussions be conducted with the Turnpike Authority to devise an all-hours discount plan that would encourage more truckers to use their facilities.

- **Change the current Truck/Bus/Car Corridor from Exit 8A – Exit 14 to Truck and Bus Only Corridor**

A significant amount of freight moves between exits 8A and 14. Currently the turnpike splits into two sections; one for cars only and the other for cars/trucks/buses. There is also an HOV lane (left lane) for cars and buses on this section which has resulted in the cars not being able to get safely to their exits because the trucks are backed-up in the two remaining right lanes.

- **Support the NJ Turnpike's Plan to Increase Truck Parking Spaces**

We should support the Turnpike's plan to increase the number of truck parking spaces along the turnpike's rest areas.

How will congestion be reduced?

Increase EZ Pass Volume Discounts

Provides an incentive for trucks to use the turnpike instead of other roadways.

Exit 8A – Exit 14: Trucks and Buses Only

By limiting the cars/trucks/bus lanes to trucks and buses only, it will improve the flow of traffic, encourage more trucks on the system, aid in moving bus passengers and improve safety.

Truck Parking Spaces

It would be a positive incentive for out-of-state truckers to use the turnpike instead of other roads that do not provide rest area accommodations.

Who does this recommendation affect?

New Jersey Turnpike Authority

What are the costs and cost savings in other areas?

Currently, trucks make up 17% of the traffic on the Turnpike and are responsible for 35% of its toll income. While there would be a reduction in income for the Turnpike Authority, such an approach would ease congestion on alternative routes.

How will recommendation be implemented?

Negotiate with the NJ Turnpike Authority

Legislation Required? No

Submitted by: Goods Movement Committee

Recommendation #4 - Support the following roadway improvement projects

The following roadway projects will reduce congestion and improve safety in congested areas with high truck volumes thereby improving the efficiency of the intermodal goods movement system:

Tremley Point Project (Linden) – The project proposed by the Union County Department of Economic Development, provides for enhancing Exit 12 of the NJ Turnpike to provide direct access to the area. Tremley Point is served by rail that can connect regionally and nationally. The area is within 6 miles of Newark Airport and within a 20-mile radius of New York and North Jersey. Currently trucks and cars avoid Exit 12 due to significant congestion.

This project will significantly reduce truck traffic in both Middlesex and Union Counties on Routes 1 and 9 and feeder roads to Tremley Point. The project also has the potential to create jobs and tax ratables. The project is already funded.

North Avenue Alignment Project – There are two North Avenue projects proposed by the Union County Department of Economic Development that would reduce congestion. The projects include improvements at the Dowd, Division and North intersection and a major overhaul of the access into the port, IKEA and the Jersey Gardens area. The significant improvements to the North Avenue and Kapkowski area are designed to create a separation of port/truck traffic and the traffic destined to the commercial, hotel and office uses developing in the area. Among the benefits of these improvements, there would be direct access from the turnpike into the port and a better flow of movements between the port area and Route 1 and Route 9 along North Avenue.

It is anticipated that once the federal Port Security bill is passed, all ports will be required to restrict traffic into the ports. This project will aid significantly in meeting security concerns at the port by splitting the port traffic from the commercial traffic. Preliminary estimated cost for the improvements is between \$150-\$200 million.

Route 1 & 9 Viaduct over the Elizabeth River – Replace the existing historic bridge and widen the road to three lanes in each direction. Construction cost estimate: \$60,000,000.

Route 1 & 9 Widening in Edison, Woodbridge, Rahway and Linden – A series of 5 separate projects that collectively will widen Route 1 to three lanes in each direction, improve intersections, add auxiliary lanes, reconfigure the Route 35 interchange and replace structurally deficient bridges over Conrail, the Rahway River and Route 35. These projects will alleviate the severe congestion and improve safety. Construction cost estimate: more than \$100,000,000.

Route 1 & 9 Truck over St. Pauls Avenue in Jersey City (This project is part of Portway) – Replace the existing bridge over St. Pauls Avenue with a new viaduct and new interchange connections between Routes 1 & 9, Route 7, Route 139 and Route 1 & 9 Truck. This project will add capacity and provide a through traffic bypass of the Tonnele Circle. Construction estimate: \$243,000,000.

Route 3 in the vicinity of the Passaic River – Replace the bridge over the Passaic River, widen the road, improve the horizontal and vertical geometry. Construction estimate: \$200,000,000.

Route 9 Victory Circle Elimination – Eliminate the existing Route 9 and 35 Victory Circle and provide a grade-separated interchange. Also, widen Route 9 to three lanes in each direction to eliminate the current bottleneck. Construction estimate: \$19,000,000.

Route 35 Victory Bridge – Replace the structurally deficient and functionally obsolete moveable swing bridge with a new high level fixed bridge. Construction estimate: \$124,000,000.

Route 46 Intersection/Interchange Improvements – Intersections of Route 46 with Fairfield Road/Little Falls Road, Passaic Avenue/Two Bridges Road, Clinton Road and Plymouth Street in Essex and Morris Counties - a series of projects to improve traffic flow and safety by realigning ramps, adding auxiliary lanes, overhead signs etc. Construction estimate: \$9,000,000.

I-80/I287 Interchange Improvements – Improvements include ramp reconfiguration, acceleration and deceleration lanes and other safety improvements. Construction estimate: \$30,000,000.

Route 206 and Rising Sun Road – Construction of a new connector road between Rising Sun Road and Road 206 in Bordentown, pavement rehabilitation on Old York Road and Rising Sun Road and the reconstruction of the intersection of Route 206 and Route 68. Construction estimate: \$18,000,000.

Doremus Avenue Roadway (This project is part of Portway) – Continuation of improvements to Doremus Avenue (bridge replacement project currently under construction) – widening the roadway, adding full width shoulders, improving drainage and providing a direct connection from the Port to Route 1 & 9 Truck. Construction estimate: \$22,000,000.

Portway – The volume of goods moved through the ports is expected to triple in the next 20 years. In order to meet this tremendous demand, the New Jersey Department of Transportation is advancing a series of road improvements referred to as “Portway.” Portway is a series of freight improvement projects that will strengthen access to and between the Newark-Elizabeth Air/Seaport Complex, intermodal rail facilities, trucking and warehousing/transfer facilities, and the regional surface transportation system. These facilities and their access routes are the front door to global and domestic commerce for the State and the greater metropolitan New York region. Portway is also being planned to target and capture freight services and related economic development along its path. NJDOT will join with local communities and state agencies to encourage brown field remediation at adjacent development sites.

Phase 1 of Portway extends approximately 6 miles from Ports Newark and Elizabeth in the south to the vicinity of County Road in the North. The majority of the Phase 1 work is along existing roadways. The exception is a new bridge over the Passaic River connecting Doremus Avenue and Central Avenue, and a new roadway located to the west of Route 1 & 9, and extending from the vicinity of Tonnele Circle to the vicinity of County Road. Phase 1 of Portway consists of 11 projects being undertaken by the NJDOT and two PANYNJ projects. Phase 1 is estimated to cost approximately \$800,000,000.

How will congestion be reduced?

All of the roadway projects focus on infrastructure improvements that would reduce congestion or improve safety.

Legislation Required? No

Submitted by: Goods Movement Committee

Recommendation #5 - Experiment with Truck Only Lanes in Highly Congested Roadways

England has started to experiment with truck only lanes on highly congested roadways as a way to improve the flow of goods. We would recommend that the NJDOT should be authorized to study the viability of creating truck only lanes where it would aid in reducing congestion.

Who does this recommendation affect?

NJDOT

What are the costs and cost savings in other areas?

Congestion relief for both trucks and commuters would result in a savings of time and fuel and would reduce pollution.

Legislation Required? No

Submitted by: Goods Movement Committee