

Freight Access Measures



Client

Federal Highway Administration American
Association of State Highway and
Transportation Officials

Facts

Period	2016
Project Country	United States

For the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in collaboration with the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), EDR Group (now EBP) developed a guide to the measurement and evaluation of freight accessibility.

Freight accessibility reflects the ability of industries to move goods to their customers and to access material inputs from suppliers. Without such access, trade is constrained and regions face challenges in attracting and sustaining business activity. Public focus on freight performance measurement has grown throughout the past decade. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century law (MAP-21) highlighted the critical role that freight plays in our nation's economic vitality and required freight measurement along with the development of tools and approaches to support freight analysis, planning, and project development. Responding to this interest and need, the FHWA commissioned several projects to grow the practice of freight performance measurement and identified accessibility as a critical performance area necessary for understanding the freight story.

Building on a body of prior work relating market access conditions to economic productivity, EBP was chosen to develop a guide to the measurement and evaluation of freight accessibility. This work included a review of ways that business location and productivity can be affected by differences in local access to the backbone interstate highway system and to intermodal freight facilities - as reflected in measures of the availability, time, distance, cost, reliability, and frequency of freight services. The study developed recommendations regarding the definition and interpretation of freight access metrics and developed several case studies to illustrate how those metrics can be implemented and used in the real world, using the types of tools and data already available within State DOTs and MPOs. A key finding of the work was that while there will be continuing advancements in methodologies and available tools, there is sufficient information for these measures to be useful now. Moreover, the use of freight access measures offers insights into the value of the transportation system not adequately captured by more traditional performance measures alone.

Contact Persons