NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF MPOs
FREIGHT WORKING GROUP

January 20, 2022
Virtual Meeting
2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

MEETING NOTES

1. **Participating**

   - BMTS – Leigh McCullen
   - CDTC – Chris Bauer (Chair)
   - DCTC – Mark Debald, Tara Grogan
   - GBNRTC – Richard Guarino
   - GTC – Jody Binnix
   - NYMTC – Leslie Fordjour, Yevgeniy Galinski
   - OCTC – Lauren Bennett, Zack Coleman
   - SMTC – Mike Alexander (Co-Chair)
   - UCTC – David Staas
   - WJCTC – Kris Reff
   - NYSDOT – David Rosenberg, Jim Davis
   - FHWA – Gautam Mani
   - NYSAMPO Staff Support – Richard Denbow (Cambridge Systematics)

2. **Roll Call**

   Bauer opened the meeting and conducted the roll call.

3. **Freight Working Group Work Plan Update**

   Bauer reviewed the current Freight Working Group work plan and the proposed changes for the updated work plan. A draft revised work plan will be reviewed by the Directors and approved by the end of March.

4. **Freight in the New Transportation Bill**

   Denbow discussed freight provisions in the new Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) enacted 11/15/2021. IIJA contains five years of funding for transportation. The scope of programs is very broad and includes roads and bridges, rail, transit, ports, airports, water infrastructure, electric grid, and broadband. Total investment is more than $1T, of which $567B is for USDOT. This includes $383B from the Highway Trust Fund, which is $273B over FAST Act baseline, and $184B in direct appropriations from the General Fund. For competitive programs, $187B was provided for 13 existing programs and 21 new programs.

   Discretionary programs in IIJA for which freight projects are eligible to apply include:

   - INFRA Grant Program - Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects: Freight-specific competitive grant program with broad applicant eligibility that provides funding

for large highway and bridge projects, as well as port, rail, intermodal, and rail-highway at-grade crossing and grade separation projects.

- National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program: Fully multimodal competitive grant program available to a wide variety of large transportation infrastructure projects.

- Local and Regional Project Assistance (TIGER/BUILD/RAISE) Grant Program – The program is fully multimodal and open to a broad range of eligible transportation projects.

- Railroad Crossing Elimination Program: Discretionary grant program for highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects, including: grade separations or closures; track relocations; installation of related protective devices, signals or signs; and related planning or environmental reviews.

- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program: Discretionary grant program for passenger and freight rail safety, efficiency, and reliability improvement projects.

- Port Infrastructure Development Program: Provides grants to improve facilities, operations, and intermodal connections within seaports and inland ports.

- Rural Surface Transportation Grants: Improve and expand the surface transportation infrastructure in rural areas to increase connectivity, improve the safety and reliability of the movement of people and freight, and generate regional economic growth and improve quality of life.

- Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Program: Study and competitive grants to reduce truck idling and emissions at ports.

- Transportation Access Pilot Program: Funds pilot programs to develop or acquire an open-source accessibility data set with measures of the level of access by multiple transportation modes to jobs, education, various services, and other important destinations, including measuring the level of access to important destinations for different freight commodities.

- Multi-State Freight Corridor Planning Program: Creates new grants that can be provided to multi-state freight compacts or states seeking to form a compact. Grants may provide not more than $2M for operations to a state compact or states seeking to form a multi-state compact. Funding may be provided during the first two years of the compact.

IIJA increases investment in multimodal freight infrastructure include more formula dollars ($7.2B for National Highway Freight Program) and $28B for freight projects/planning through formula and competitive funding. There is expanded eligibility for freight projects, and creation of a Office of Multimodal Freight Infrastructure and Policy within USDOT that will carry out a national multimodal freight policy and administer grant programs.

Policy and process changes include:

- USDOT will develop a National Freight Strategic Plan
- New requirements for State freight plans to address:

- Commercial vehicle parking, supply chain cargo flows, inventory of commercial ports, impacts of e-commerce, and impacts of freight movement on the environment
- Increases the amount of national freight program funding a state may obligate to freight intermodal or freight rail projects to 30% (from 10%)
  - Lock and dam modernization and marine highway corridor projects are now eligible under this allowance
- State freight plans must consider an 8-year forecast period (was five years)
- State freight plans must be updated every four years (was five years)
- Allows the designation of more miles as critical rural freight corridors and critical urban freight corridors
- Expands the list of officials requiring representation on state freight advisory committees
  - Also adds a requirements that committee members have sufficient qualifications to serve

Mani said FHWA divisions will soon get guidance on the freight planning requirements.

5. Use of Transearch Data in Planning Activities

Fordjour said NYMTC used Transearch data as part of their recent RTP update. Galinsky asked if anyone has used FAF instead of Transearch? Bauer said he has used both, for the most part, Transearch has been pretty good, particularly with county to county flows and industries they have a good handle on. There were some flows that were hard to explain. They use both sources knowing that each has strengths and weaknesses. A big difference is geography. With FAF, geography does not align with MPO boundaries. Rosenberg followed up to say there are there are many differences between the two datasets but FAF is built off the Commodity Flow Survey which is produced every five years. Transearch is produced each year. Transearch also has a much more robust carrier survey.

6. AVAIL Freight Tool Development

Bauer mentioned that the SUNY-Albany AVAIL team has discussed that they are building a freight tool that will use the freight components of the NPMRDS. We may want to coordinate with the Modeling WG. Davis said AVAIL helped put together the original ATLAS. This effort would bring it up to date. It will evolve over time to be more robust for freight data access. Bauer said this will be a great tool, especially for smaller MPOs that are looking for a good picture of freight activity in their regions.

7. Effects of COVID-19 on Freight Discussion

Debald: Anecdotally they are noticing an increase in local delivery vans in his region. This is creating some operational and safety issues due to trucks stopped in the road. There isn't a lot of data available to measure this and get a handle on it.

Bauer: Agreed. In the Albany region there have been two Amazon distribution centers built in a year and a half. Galinsky said a lot of work is underway in the NYMTC region to designate curb space for loading and unloading throughout the day.

8. Updates from Stakeholders

Bauer: CDTC is starting a regional truck parking study soon. Truck parking has been a top issue for their freight advisory committee. Looking at truck parking through the lens of what

they can do locally or regionally, for example, zoning laws, providing additional parking. He will be happy to present that when they are done.

Fordjour: There are two studies in the NYMTC region to report on. The first is a Clean Freight Corridors study that will be completed in April. They also have a regional waste movement study beginning soon that will focus on the movement of municipal waste and construction debris.

9. **Adjourn**

Bauer adjourned the meeting at 3:02 p.m.