

Intermodal Freight Technical Report *Summary*



Intermodal Freight Summary

Intermodal freight is freight which travels by two or more means of transportation. As Genesee County lies at the crossroads of I-69/I-75/US-23 and also contains the Bishop International Airport, the travel of freight through this county is high. The intermodal network in Genesee County includes trucking, aviation, railroad and marine services. Each of these important pieces of the network is examined and the current status is discussed in the following report.

There has been great effort to take advantage of the location of Genesee County through investments in Bishop International Airport. In 2009, Bishop International Airport (FNT) completed a \$33.7-million Intermodal Expansion Project designed to shift cargo between different modes of transportation. Bishop is partnering with the Genesee Regional Chamber of Commerce to foster increased job opportunities and economic diversification through the development of the intermodal hub. This is expected to increase the area's global competitiveness and foreign trade zone designation. Intermodal hubs can help to distribute freight more efficiently on the air, roadway, and railway transportation networks. This is important as our roadways are reaching capacity while our air and railway facilities are operating under capacity.

The Intermodal Freight Technical Report includes key findings from three freight-related studies that were conducted in Genesee County:

- The Intermodal Freight Study (2001) conducted a survey of area shippers to obtain information regarding origins, destinations and shipper characteristics. Findings related to the local auto industry and detailed survey results are included in this technical report.
- The Genesee County Freight Flow Report (2012) was completed by the Corradino Group and the Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce. This report evaluated the freight and logistics market in Genesee County, forecasting significant growth in overall freight flows to and from the region. Strengths and weaknesses of the region's infrastructure were also identified.
- The Genesee County Freight and Connectivity Study (2011) looked at issues with connectivity between I-475 and US-23. A preferred alternative was developed, which included various local road improvements, widening of existing roads, and the construction of new highways to address connectivity issues. Full implementation of these improvements would mean shorter travel times for freight trucking, and the potential to

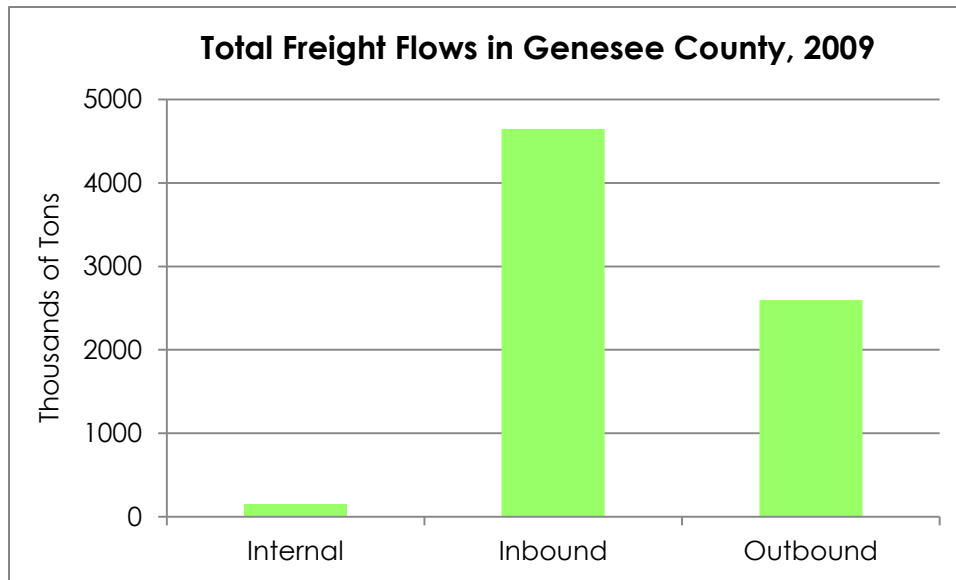
attract new businesses that might increase freight traffic in Genesee County.

The Freight and Connectivity Study proposes that the Preferred Alternative be implemented in several phases. Phase A would be completed 2015-2019 and includes the Dort Highway extension, widening of Baldwin Road from Dort Highway to Holly Road, and improvements to the Holly Road/I-75 interchange. Phase B 2020-2024 includes widening the rest of Baldwin Road from Dort Highway to US-23, and a new interchange at Baldwin Road and US-23. Phase C 2025-2029 beings construction of new freeway from US-23 to Cook Road, and Phase D 2030 and Beyond completes the new freeway from Cook Road to I-475. Phase D also includes widening of US-23 and M-15.

Trucking continues to be the dominant mode of transportation for freight movements in Genesee County. However, commercial truck traffic on highways in the county decreased from 2007 to 2012. This is reflective of statewide trends, likely due to the economic recession that occurred during this period. The transportation model developed for the 2040 Genesee County Long Range Transportation Plan projects an increase in freight related truck trips between the 2005 base year and 2040.

The technical report includes details of airports located in Genesee County, the largest of these being Bishop International Airport. Recent data shows a decrease in air cargo travelling through Bishop International Airport after 2008 due to the economic recession. Air cargo traffic was increasing again as of early 2014. Railroads are also an important part of the freight transportation network in Genesee County. As of 2014, the railroad companies operating in Genesee County included Canadian National Railway (CN), CSX Transportation, Huron and Eastern Railway (HESR), and Lake State Railway Company. According to MDOT, approximately 23 million tons of freight moved into, out of, or through the county by rail in 2011.

Though no marine freight transportation occurs within Genesee County, marine activity outside the county continues to play a role on the region. This technical report describes the influence that major Michigan ports have on the region. Cargo traffic trends at six commercial ports along Lake Huron and the St. Clair River are analyzed. These ports serve a specific market almost exclusively related to the movement of bulk commodities.



Source: IHS Global Insight, Transearch

Recommendations

- Continue to monitor railway incident data and improve safety at grade crossings.
- Continue to monitor roadway and railway capacity. National data sources need to be updated to better monitor freight flows.
- Conduct studies to monitor freight movement to, from, and through Genesee County on a regular basis.
- Continue to invest in intermodal facilities in Genesee County. This will help to better distribute freight to various modes of transportation optimizing the capacity of the air, roadway and railway transportation networks. Intermodal facilities will also help to encourage economic development in Genesee County.
- Continue to improve access to and around Bishop International Airport and other intermodal facilities through investment in roadways serving them.
- Increase connectivity to freight networks through key transportation projects such as the Dort Highway Connector identified in the Freight and Connectivity Study.
- Continue to develop the freight component of the transportation model.