



**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**

**Washington, DC 20515**

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July 15, 2013

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**BACKGROUND MEMO**

**TO:** Members, Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Freight Transportation  
**FROM:** Staff, Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Freight Transportation  
**RE:** Roundtable Policy Discussion on “Effectively Coordinating Freight Planning Activities”

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**PURPOSE**

On Wednesday, July 17, 2013, at 10:00 a.m., in 2253 Rayburn House Office Building, Members of the Panel on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Freight Transportation will participate in a roundtable discussion on “Effectively Coordinating Freight Planning Activities.” The Panel will hear from:

- The Honorable Polly Trottenberg, Under Secretary for Policy at the United States Department of Transportation;
- Richard Biter, Assistant Secretary for Intermodal Systems Development, Florida Department of Transportation;
- Don Kopec, Deputy Executive Director for Programming and Operations, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning;
- Amy Kessler, Director of Community Development and Regional Planning, North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission; and
- Andrew Lynn, Director of Planning and Regional Development, Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

**BACKGROUND**

Planning is key to any functioning transportation system. Many governmental and non-governmental entities are involved in this process, which is a forum, developed with public input, for prioritizing transportation decision-making. When it comes to the planning of large freight projects with regional or national importance, this process becomes more complicated and important because it can involve multiple jurisdictions and require significant coordination among various entities.

*Transportation Planning Process*

Generally, state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and rural planning commissions work together to create a statewide transportation improvement plan (STIP) listing all of the transportation projects that are eligible for funding. In addition to the

STIP, these organizations may also work together to create a long-range transportation improvement plan with proposals for future consideration.

The *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act* (MAP-21) created a new apportionment for metropolitan planning. Prior to MAP-21, metropolitan planning activities were funded as a set-aside from the formula programs. Under MAP-21, states are required to use funds under this program for statewide and nonmetropolitan transportation planning activities and are required to make funds available to MPOs for metropolitan transportation planning activities. The amount of funds allocated to each MPO within a state is determined by a number of factors, including population, air quality, status of transportation planning, and transportation needs of the metropolitan area.

### *Planning Freight Projects*

While the general transportation planning process is the same for projects that directly impact freight movement and those that do not, freight projects often have difficulty competing with other projects. There are a number of possible reasons for this difficulty, including difficulty accounting for the public benefits of these projects and concerns over providing funding from one jurisdiction for projects that may primarily benefit another jurisdiction. Large freight projects often add additional layers of complexity. Many freight projects are located in urban areas, and city governments or port authorities often take a leading role in developing plans for these projects. Furthermore, freight projects often cross state boundaries, implicating multiple state departments of transportation and MPOs. Given that planning bodies are responsible for focusing on the needs and issues of their specific jurisdiction, planning for and advancing multi-jurisdictional projects requires significant coordination.

### *Case Study: CREATE Project*

The Chicago Region Environmental and Transportation Efficiency Program (CREATE) was created ten years ago as a public-private partnership between the Chicago Department of Transportation, Illinois Department of Transportation, freight railroads, U.S. Department of Transportation, Metra, and Amtrak to help mitigate the rail-related congestion in the Chicago region. CREATE consists of 70 individual projects including 25 highway-rail grade separations, six passenger-freight rail grade separations, rail infrastructure improvements, technology upgrades, viaduct improvements, grade crossing safety enhancements, and signalization.

As of May 2013, there are 17 projects completed, 11 projects under construction, 21 projects in design and environmental review, and 21 projects yet to begin. To date, over \$1.2 billion has been committed to CREATE, but the total estimate for completion is \$3.3 billion. When complete, CREATE will enhance passenger rail service, reduce motorist delays, increase public safety, improve air quality, create and retain jobs, and strengthen economic competitiveness. CREATE demonstrates how many organizations and interest groups can come together to effectively plan and fund a large freight project that will improve the efficiency, safety, and performance of the freight system in the region and across the Nation.

## KEY ISSUES

- How freight planning stakeholders can effectively coordinate efforts to ensure the timely and well-planned delivery of freight transportation facilities.
- Whether additional ways for these entities to cooperate on the planning of large freight projects can be identified.
- Identifying challenges that may impede the effective coordination of the planning for large freight projects.

## ATTENDEE BIOGRAPHIES

### The Honorable Polly Trottenberg, Under Secretary for Policy

United States Department of Transportation

- Hon. Trottenberg has served as the Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy at the United States Department of Transportation since January 2013.
- Prior to her appointment, Hon. Trottenberg served as Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy for three years and dedicated her time to surface transportation reauthorization, high-speed rail, the TIGER program, and freight policy development.
- Hon. Trottenberg has also served as the Executive Director of Building America's Future, and has twelve years of experience working with the United States Senate prior to her work at the Department of Transportation.

### Richard Biter, Assistant Secretary for Intermodal Systems Development

Florida Department of Transportation

- In November 2011, the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation named Mr. Biter as the new Assistant Secretary for Intermodal Systems Development.
- Mr. Biter maintains over 30 years of experience in transportation and policy.
- Mr. Biter was also a former Acting Associate Deputy Secretary and Director Office of Intermodalism at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

### Don Kopec, Deputy Executive Director for Programming and Operations

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

- Mr. Kopec is the deputy executive director for planning and programming at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), and he served with the Chicago Area Transportation Study in various capacities prior to the creation of CMAP in 2006.
- In his position as deputy for planning and programming, Mr. Kopec has assumed responsibility for the agency's Transportation Improvement Program, the Congestion Management Process, and Long-Range Planning.
- Mr. Kopec is the President of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

### Amy Kessler, Director of Community Development and Regional Planning

North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission

- Ms. Kessler works for the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, which is one of PennDOT's Rural Planning Organizations.
- As the Director of Community Development Ms. Kessler is responsible for regional transportation planning, project development, and transportation.
- In addition to regional planning, Ms. Kessler also serves on numerous statewide committees including transportation planning and transportation policy.

### Andrew Lynn, Director of Planning and Regional Development

Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

- As the Director of Planning and Regional Development for the NY/NJ Port Authority, Mr. Lynn is responsible for developing the port authority's regional freight plan.
- Mr. Lynn was recently named a member of the National Freight Advisory Council.
- Prior to serving on the NY/NJ Port Authority, Mr. Lynn was the Executive Director of the New York City Planning Department.