

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization

Rural and Urban Critical Freight Corridors

Background

MassDOT is now in the process of preparing the Massachusetts Freight Plan, which will be completed later this year. Required under the FAST Act, one of the goals of the new Freight Plan will be to bring the state into compliance with the freight provisions of that legislation. One of these provisions is the establishment of a National Highway Freight Network (NHFN). Another is the need to identify Critical Rural and Critical Urban Freight Corridors.

National Highway Freight Network

The NHFN consists of:

- Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS) comprised of select sections of Interstates and other Non-Interstate Federal Aid Roadways;
- Non-PHFS segments of the Interstate System, and
- Rural and Urban Critical Freight Corridors.

Massachusetts can identify 75 miles of Critical Urban Freight Corridors and 150 miles of Critical Rural Freight Corridors to complete its portion of the NHFN. MassDOT has asked the MPOs to assist them in identifying these corridors in each region and has given each of them strict mileage limits based on its share of Massachusetts' urban and rural federal aid mileage. These limits for the MVMPO region are as follows:

Critical Urban Freight Corridors:	3.96 miles
Critical Rural Freight Corridors:	1.15 miles

Requirements

The Selection of Critical Urban Freight Corridors must meet at least one of the following requirements:

- Connects an intermodal facility to;
 - The Primary Highway Freight System (i.e. designated Interstates and Non-Interstates)
 - The Interstate System
 - An intermodal freight facility
- Is located within a corridor of a route on the PHFS and provides an alternative highway option important to goods movement
- Serves a major freight generator, logistics center, or manufacturing and warehouse/industrial land
- Is important to the movement of freight within the region, as determined by the MPO or State.

Merrimack Valley MPO Rural and Urban Critical Freight Corridors

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Identification Process

Merrimack Valley Planning Commission Transportation staff examined 2014 total employment, and industrial/transportation/warehousing employment data in the region along almost 18 miles of potential Critical Urban Freight Corridors to evaluate the demand for freight service and identify the sites that would be directly served by each alternative alignment.

This analysis showed that the River Road /Andover Street/Broadway/Merrimack Street corridor in Andover and Lawrence served the most employment while remaining under the MVMPO's 3.96-mile Critical Urban Freight Corridor limit. The areas served along this route include the River Road Industrial Park in Andover, the Lawrence Industrial Park and numerous manufacturing and warehousing sites along Merrimack Street in Lawrence.

This proposed Corridor also provides an alternate truck route to I-495 between Exit 44 (Merrimack Street) on I-495 in Lawrence and Exit 45 (River Road) on I-93 in Andover (see attached map).

Consequently, staff recommends the following road segments, which do directly access important industrial and warehousing areas in Andover and Lawrence, should be designated as the MVMPO's Critical Urban Freight Corridor(s):

Street(s)	Community	From:	To:	Length (mi.)
River Road/Andover Street	Andover; Lawrence	Shattuck Road	Broadway (Route 28)	2.78
Broadway (Route 28)	Lawrence	Andover St.	Merrimack St.	.43
Merrimack Street	Lawrence	Route 28	South Union St.	.61
TOTAL				3.82

Critical Rural Freight Corridors

After reviewing the potential rural sections of the NHFN in the MVMPO region, staff determined there are no candidate roadways for the Critical Rural Freight Corridor designation. Only two roadways qualify and one of those is a short section of I-95 in Newbury and Rowley, which is already on the network. The other is a short section of Ipswich Road in Boxford, which appears to be unsuitable.

Next Steps

At its April 26, 2017 meeting, the MVMPO agreed to release this proposed Critical Urban Freight Corridor for the 21-day public review and comment period that begins on April 29th and ends on May 19th. The MVMO will consider the comments received during this period and take action on this matter at its May 24, 2017 meeting.

Merrimack Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Proposed Critical Urban Freight Corridor

