



PLANNING FOR GOODS MOVEMENT: ONTARIO'S FREIGHT-SUPPORTIVE GUIDELINES & OFF PEAK DELIVERIES PILOT

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ABSTRACT

As communities grow and change it has become increasingly important to understand, plan and design for the movement of freight in order to maintain goods movement efficiency and the economic competitiveness of communities, while integrating and balancing the needs of other transportation system users and the compatibility of surrounding land uses. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation has developed Freight-Supportive Guidelines to assist municipalities, planners, engineers, developers and other practitioners in creating safe and efficient freight-supportive communities. The Guidelines provide land use planning, site design, road design and operational best practices, examples and implementation tools that are applicable to a wide range of communities and municipalities across Canada. Transportation demand management strategies can also be used to improve the efficiency of urban freight movement. During the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation conducted a pilot to explore the potential of using off-peak deliveries as an urban freight transportation demand management strategy. The pilot allowed businesses and municipalities to explore the suitability and potential benefits and challenges of off-peak deliveries.

Keywords: freight, goods movement, land use planning, site design, off-peak deliveries, demand management

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As communities grow and change it has become increasingly important to understand, plan and design for the movement of freight in order to maintain goods movement efficiency and the economic competitiveness of communities, while integrating and balancing the needs of other transportation system users and the compatibility of surrounding land uses.

Goods movement supports thousands of jobs in Ontario and generates billions of dollars in trade. Implementing strategies that support efficient movement of freight is important for all municipalities and communities seeking to attract new industry and for addressing the needs of existing businesses. Communities specifically designed to accommodate the movement of freight are safer and more livable, and consumers there have better access to goods and services. Incorporating freight movement into the design of communities and transportation systems can also help protect the environment by reducing travel times, vehicle delays and associated air pollution.

In January 2016, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation published Freight-Supportive Guidelines to assist municipalities, planners, engineers, developers and other practitioners in creating safe and efficient freight-supportive communities. The Guidelines provide land use planning, site design, road design and operational best practices, examples and implementation tools that are applicable to a wide range of communities and municipalities across Canada.

The presentation will discuss key freight-supportive strategies, from undertaking a freight audit to better understand and address local goods movement to details such as site access arrangements, loading dock design and signal timing.

In order to plan for freight, it is critical to understand local needs and challenges. The Guidelines set out a process for undertaking a freight audit in order to identify issues affecting local freight movement, collect baseline information and from these establish planning, policy and infrastructure priorities needed to support the safe and efficient movement of freight. These may include identification and protection of linkages to future or existing employment areas, existing major goods movement facilities, corridors for movement of freight within and between neighbouring jurisdictions and areas for new freight-intensive land uses, facilities and corridors as appropriate. Ensuring that the appropriate land uses are located near freight facilities and corridors and planning for separation or buffering of sensitive land uses is also a critical to planning for safe and efficient movement of freight over the long term.

At a more detailed level, appropriate design of sites and adjacent roads is important to support efficient goods movement and avoid conflicts with other road users, including transit vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists. This includes providing for and clearly designating safe access routes and appropriate loading zones for delivery vehicles, separated from areas of high pedestrian/cyclist activity.

Operational strategies, such as appropriate signal timing, facility design, way-finding and truck route guidance, can also have a significant impact on the efficient movement of freight through communities.

Creating communities designed to accommodate and support movement of freight is important to the sustainability of the Ontario economy, helping to maintain a high quality of life in the province. Implementing the strategies presented in these guidelines through context-sensitive design and based on local needs will help produce a safe, efficient and sustainable goods movement network that is integrated with the community.

Transportation demand management strategies can also be used to improve the efficiency of urban freight movement. During the Toronto 2015 Pan Am and Parapan Am Games, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation conducted a pilot to explore the potential of using off-peak deliveries as an urban freight transportation demand management strategy. The pilot allowed businesses and municipalities to explore the suitability and potential benefits and challenges of off-peak deliveries.

Key findings from the Off-Peak Deliveries pilot will also be presented.

Off-Peak Deliveries (OPD) mean receiving and shipping outside of standard business hours (typically between 7:00pm and 6:00am). 40 municipalities and more than 100 businesses participated during the Games period, including over 500 receiver locations across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH). An estimated 18,400 deliveries were diverted off-peak during the games, which resulted in approximately 4,500 diverted truck trips. The pilot demonstrated that OPD can benefit both the public and businesses. Key benefits include congestion management and productivity benefits. Options for mitigating the potential barriers of corporate structures, noise impacts, and noise bylaws will also be highlighted.

The presentation will engage the audience in the challenges associated with planning for the movement of freight across communities, and provide practical strategies to make use of these new opportunities.