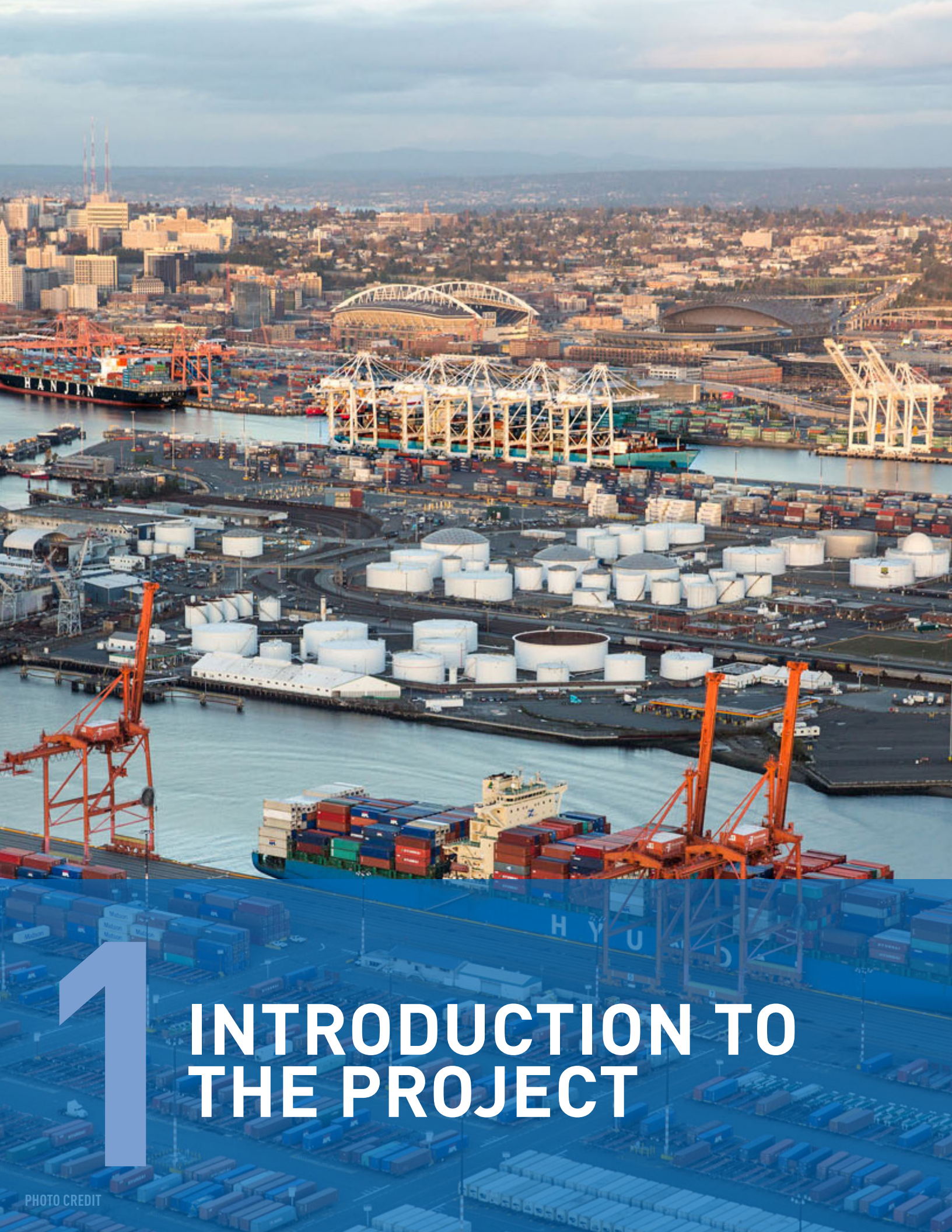


1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

PHOTO CREDIT

The Seattle Industrial Areas Freight Access Project (FAP) identifies a set of cost-effective operational, capital, and programmatic improvements to maintain and improve freight access and mobility within and between the Greater Duwamish and Ballard/Interbay Northend Manufacturing and Industrial Centers (MICs).

This Freight Access Project report, developed in concert with the Freight Master Plan and other modal plans, will lay the ground work for establishing a prioritized list of investments to keep Seattle moving goods for decades to come.

1.1 Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project is to develop and carry out a focused and pragmatic technical approach to identifying and evaluating current and future freight bottlenecks and problem locations. The result is a set of cost-effective operational, capital and programmatic improvements. These improvements are aimed at maintaining and improving truck-borne freight access, mobility, and circulation within and between the Greater Duwamish MIC and the Ballard/Interbay Northend MIC (BINMIC), including the key connections from the MICs to the regional transportation system. The project will also identify improvements from the Port of Seattle's facilities to privately-owned rail yards.

This project serves as a building block for the key policy, programmatic, and technical issues to be fully examined in the Seattle Freight Master Plan (FMP). The FMP will provide a city-wide comprehensive vision for freight transportation as well as a strategy for implementing policies and a prioritized package of project and program improvements.

NEEDS

- Growing, urban-area congestion delays freight
- Unreliable access and travel time to and between freight destinations impacts productivity and the cost of goods.
- Multiple modal demands create potential safety challenges
- Increasing congestion, especially for trucks, increases air pollution
- Improvements to support freight need to be coordinated and funded with other City investments

The Freight Access Project has identified the following topics that should be further evaluated within the context of the citywide FMP:

- overall economic importance of freight in the City of Seattle
- examine freight linkages throughout the City
- Update Major Truck Street network
- citywide policies and design standards

A memorandum outlining a strategic framework for recommendations to be considered by the Freight Master Plan is included as Appendix A.

PHOTO CREDIT: WSDOT

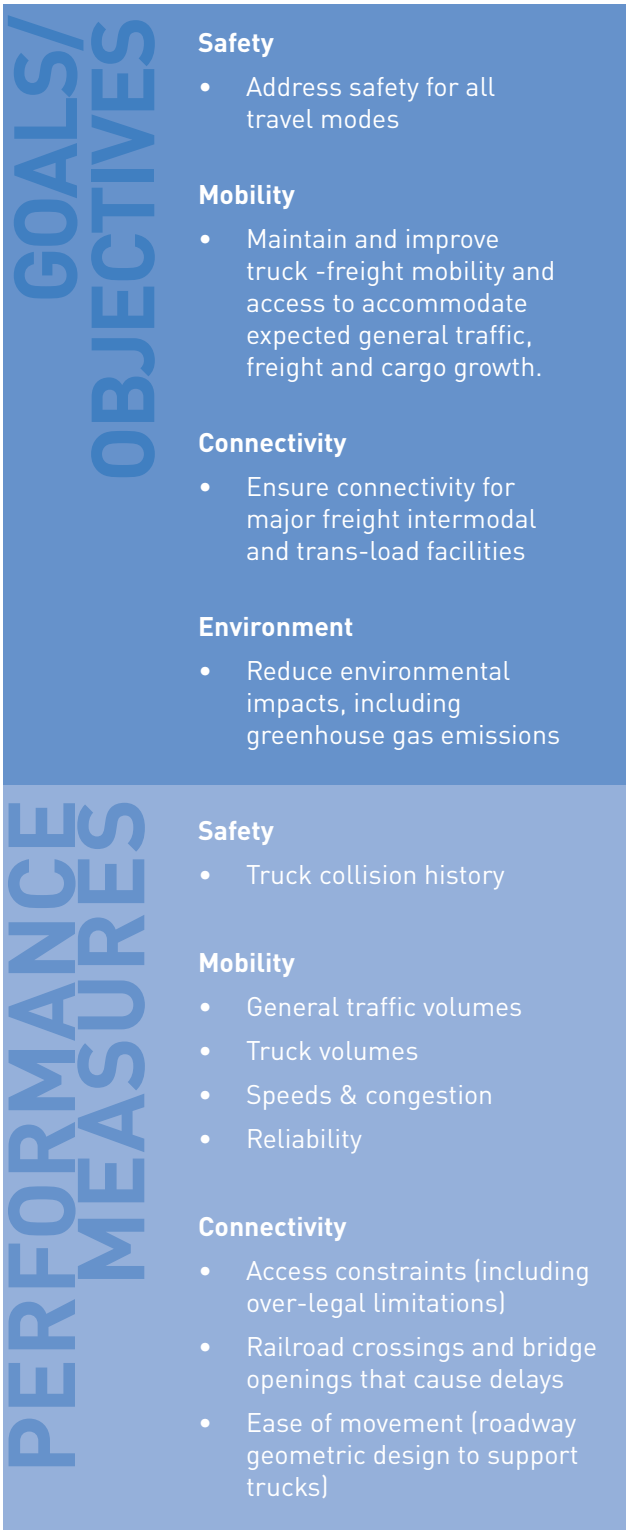
In 2015, the Seattle City Council Transportation Committee is expected to consider legislation to establish a Heavy Haul Network of streets between the Port terminals and nearby intermodal facilities on which the City will permit heavy drayage vehicles up to 98,000 pounds to travel without dividing their loads. Doing so will bring the Port of Seattle on par with other competitor ports along the West Coast. It facilitates more efficient operations in transporting goods to and from terminals and rail yards and intermodal facilities. There would be a low-cost annual permit to incentivize use and limit any potential financial burden on drayage drivers. Permit requirements would include twice-yearly Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) inspections to ensure those vehicles transporting these loads meet basic safety and operations requirements. The legislation would, if adopted, establish an additional Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer (CVEO) position to enforce truck rules and regulations in the vicinity of the heavy haul network and ensure vehicles aren't transporting heavy loads outside those identified streets. The Port of Seattle has agreed to contribute up to $250,000 through 2016 to help get the program up and running and fund operations, recognizing the low-cost permit revenues may not fully recover program startup and ongoing costs. The Port has also agreed to work with the City to identify infrastructure needs and funding opportunities associated with the heavy haul network.

1.2 Goals and Workplan

The transportation improvement projects identified within the study area were driven by project goals and objectives, which were partially developed through input from the Seattle Freight Advisory Board (FAB) and targeted stakeholder interviews. Stakeholder interviews gathered input from freight businesses and organizations operating within the Greater Duwamish MIC and BINMIC in order to identify potential solutions and options to improve truck travel. FAB input and the interviews helped identify freight needs, define goals, and establish performance measures as shown in the image on this page.

The FAB also helped define the workplan strategies of the project which include:

- Assess existing conditions, data needs, trends, and future conditions for long-haul, regional, drayage and local pick-up/delivery truck freight movement needs.
- Identify, evaluate, and recommend a prioritized list of capital and operational improvements, including options for freight truck priority on Major Truck Streets and Port terminal connector routes.
- Develop and categorize implementing actions in near-term, mid-term and long-term timeframes.
- Report on joint Seattle Department of Transportation / Port of Seattle efforts to assess a potential heavy haul truck network between key terminal locations and rail yards.
- Identify potential policy, programmatic, and design issues for further evaluation within the Seattle Freight Master Plan.
- Engage key stakeholders throughout the study process.



1.3 Report Organization

The Seattle Industrial Areas Freight Access Project Report is organized to follow the progress of the analysis and evaluation.