FREIGHT

Eastern Pennsylvania's historical role as an industrial and commercial hub, bolstered by its strategic location near natural resources and robust transportation infrastructure, has made it a key player in the nation's freight handling and logistics. Its proximity to major markets like New York, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, along with access to interstate highways, rail networks, international ports, and airports, drives its appeal. Affordable land compared to urban cores further enhances its attractiveness for logistics and warehousing.

The surge in e-commerce, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and declining brick-and-mortar retail, has fueled rapid growth in warehouse and distribution facilities. This expansion extends beyond metropolitan areas into historically rural parts of Eastern Pennsylvania, driven by the need for multi-stage distribution systems to meet direct-to-consumer demand. However, this growth brings significant community impacts, including:

- **Increased truck traffic**: Higher volumes strain local roads and infrastructure.
- **Reduced land availability**: Development pressures limit space for other uses.
- **Equity issues**: Disparities arise in economic benefits and environmental impacts.
- **Emergency services demand**: Greater need for fire, medical, and safety resources.
- **Housing and workforce stress**: Rising demand exacerbates affordability and labor shortages.

These challenges highlight the need for balanced planning to mitigate impacts while leveraging the region's economic advantages.

The effectiveness and efficiency of freight transportation in Berks County, as well as surrounding counties, is a major factor in manufacturing and retail costs. Manufacturers look for reliability, speed, and quality control in the carriers that deliver their raw materials and finished products. Since the mid-1990s, the retail and wholesale industries use 'just-in-time' logistics management, where retailers assume that the cost of transporting a product will be less than the cost of maintaining large inventories of the product on site. This has prompted the growth of the logistics and warehousing industries, which rely on a network of warehouses and trucks to distribute freight. This change in how retailers manage inventory has had profound transportation and land use impacts in Berks and surrounding counties and, as a result, impacts on Berks County roads.

Freight takes a prominent role in this plan due to federal legislation that emphasizes freight as an integral component of transportation planning. Federal transportation legislation developed a national freight network to help states strategically direct resources to improve highway freight movement. The identification of local freight corridors and preservation of freight mobility is a component of this Long Range Transportation Plan. By both weight and value, Berks County is primarily served by truck freight and supplemented by rail service. The County does not have a substantial air freight component as of the writing of this plan, however, Quest Diagnostics, who is one of the main commercial operators out of the Reading Regional Airport does support some freight operations. It is the intent of the Reading Regional Airport to continue to facilitate and grow freight operations at the airport.

Berks County Freight Network

Trucks move a great majority of freight (in terms of both tonnage and value) within and through Berks County, illustrating the importance of the County's highway network. From Berks County, businesses can reach nearly 40% of the United States population and 50% of Canadian customers within a one-day drive.

Truck freight is the region's most utilized method of transporting goods. Of note, the sections of Interstates 176 (15 percent truck traffic), 78 (45 percent truck traffic), 76 PA Turnpike (22 percent truck traffic) and portions of US 422, US 222, and PA 724 extending from I-176 to the Sinking Spring Intermodal Facility in Berks County are on the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Primary Freight Network (PFN). In the County, the Interstates are the primary routes transporting goods statewide. Routes 422, 222, and 61 are primary inter-county truck freight corridors. US 422 links the

Reading Metropolitan Area with Lebanon and Montgomery Counties while US 222 (22 percent truck traffic) links Reading to Lehigh and Lancaster Counties. The Fogelsville area located in western Lehigh County has seen explosive growth in warehousing in the last decade. State Route 61 provides a north-south route into Schuylkill County and a direct link to I-78 and I-81. As shown on Maps 41 and 42, most of the freight generating businesses are located along these routes.

The County has one of the largest manufacturing concentrations in the region and serves as a major conduit between warehousing hubs elsewhere in Pennsylvania. This warehousing and industrial development is generally located along major freight corridors in eastern Pennsylvania, namely the Interstate system. Interstates 78 and 81 have been recognized as logistics corridors, which stretch from Northeastern Pennsylvania, through the Lehigh Valley (including Berks County as the westernmost county), and into Central Pennsylvania. Berks County is centrally located along this corridor as it is the westernmost county of the Lehigh Valley Region, which borders the southern portion of the Northeastern Pennsylvania Region, and borders Lebanon and Lancaster Counties to the east of the Central Pennsylvania Region. In addition, Berks is centrally located between industrial centers on Interstate 78. This corridor is leading in the growth of larger warehouses compared to major logistics markets in the country. Even with the growth of new larger warehouses, existing warehouses are being utilized creating a historic low of vacant warehouses along the I-78/I-81 corridor. Warehouse and distribution center development along Interstate 78 in Berks County is expected to continue to grow, particularly as properties become less available to the east of Berks County in Lehigh and Northampton Counties and New Jersey.

Truck parking has been an issue affecting drivers in recent times especially since the inception of the Electronic Logging Device (ELD) Mandate in December of 2017. With Interstate 78 being part of the logistics corridor, truck parking is of high demand across northern Berks County. When adequate truck parking is unavailable or full, some truck drivers resort to parking on the shoulders of ramps and interstates. A lack of truck parking has been recognized in Pennsylvania and state officials are searching for solutions for the safety of all drivers. PennDOT runs a public-private program that they refer to as P3. Through this program, the state of Pennsylvania works to increase the value and safety of the state's population. PennDOT has decided to use their public-private partnership (P3) program to address the state route's parking issues and create a pilot program. Another way of increasing truck parking would be to encourage developers to include an area of safe truck parking within the property they are developing for the drivers that are delivering or picking up goods at their location.

Federal, State, and Local Freight Planning

National Freight Strategic Plan

The National Freight Strategic Plan defines the US DOT's vision and goals for the national multimodal freight system, assesses the conditions and performance of the freight system and barriers to freight system performance, and defines strategies to achieve its vision and goals. The plan was developed through a multi-agency effort involving extensive consultation with freight stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. The plan is used as a guide for developing national freight policy, programs, initiatives, and investments; inform State freight plans; identify freight data and research needs; and provide a framework for increased cross-sector, multijurisdictional, and multimodal coordination and partnerships.

The freight system in the US is critical to the Nation's economic growth and prosperity. American consumers and businesses rely on a safe, efficient, and reliable freight system to sustain their way of life. The National Freight Strategic Plan incorporates stakeholder input from across the freight industry to provide a vision for the Nation's multimodal freight system and a strategy for achieving that vision. The following table outlines the strategic goals and objectives of National Freight Policy:

GOAL	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Safety Improve the safety, security, and resilience of the national freight system.	• Support the development and adoption of automation, connectivity, and other freight safety technologies • Modernize safety oversight and security procedures • Minimize the effects of fatigue and human error on freight safety • Reduce conflicts between passenger and freight traffic • Protect the freight system from natural and human-caused disasters and improve system resilience and recovery speed
Infrastructure Modernize freight infrastructure and operations to grow the economy, increase competitiveness, and improve quality of life.	• Fund targeted investments in freight capacity and national goals • Improve consideration of freight in transportation planning • Prioritize projects that improve freight intermodal connectivity, and enhance freight flows on first- and last-mile connectors and at major trade gateways • Develop a methodology for identifying freight bottlenecks across modes • Advance freight system management and operation practices • Stimulate job growth and economic competitiveness in rural and urban communities • Mitigate the impacts of freight movement on communities
Innovation Prepare for the future by supporting the development of data, technologies, and workforce capabilities that improve freight system performance.	• Support the development and adoption of automation and connectivity, including V2X (Vehicle to Everything) technologies • Support the safe deployment of UAS technology • Streamline or eliminate regulations to improve governance, efficiency, and economic competitiveness • Improve freight data, modeling, and analytical tools and resources • Strengthen workforce professional capacity • Invest in freight research • Support regulatory frameworks that foster freight innovation

Source: USDOT National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP)

Pennsylvania 2045 Freight Movement Plan

Pennsylvania's 2045 Freight Movement Plan (FMP) was developed in conjunction with the statewide 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), providing a comprehensive strategic direction for the movement of people and goods throughout Pennsylvania. The plan highlights two of Pennsylvania's most pressing freight challenges: improving collaboration in the freight transportation/land use planning process and the shortage of truck parking. There is much at stake in addressing land use issues related to freight, particularly with the rapid growth of warehouses and distribution facilities. The access needs and the associated implications for infrastructure and traffic congestion also make the transportation/land use connection particularly important. Truck parking challenges require collaboration between varied stakeholders to address this need. PennDOT and the regional planning agencies can fulfill an important role in handling these multi-faceted issues with both local and private stakeholders. The plan's five goals and objectives for each one of them are listed in the table on the next page:

GOAL	STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES
Land Use Align freight mobility with economic development and land use	• Establish a core Pennsylvania highway freight network based on a refined methodology for identifying critical urban and rural freight corridors. • Establish statewide standards to measure benefits and costs of freight-oriented industrial development. • Collaborate with other organizations to assemble recommended industrial site development standards/ordinances.
Mobility Advance project investments that enhance freight mobility.	• Continue to identify and improve truck bottlenecks. • Preserve and enhance major freight transportation assets, including waterways, railroads, major truck corridors, and intermodal terminals, with the aim of supporting and promoting energy-efficient modes of freight transportation. • Pursue opportunities with public and private stakeholders to expand truck parking capacity. • Expand and diversify the composition of the Freight Work Group (FWG)
Analytic Tools and Processes Provide planning, data, and analytical tools for improved decision making and collaboration with freight stakeholders.	• Develop analytical tools, data, and forecasting techniques to measure costs and benefits of freight-related transportation initiatives, programs, and projects. • Enhance PennDOT's technical capabilities in freight planning, forecasting, modeling, and data. • Expand PennDOT's data repository for Pennsylvania's freight transportation system. • Develop methods to track and evaluate air cargo trends, needs, and intermodal implications. • Examine the key topic areas of the Transportation Advisory Council (TAC) truck weight exemptions study of 2020. • Develop expanded freight performance measures for Pennsylvania's Transportation Performance Report (TPR).
Operations / Safety Improve multimodal freight transportation operations and safety.	• Reduce truck-related crashes, injuries, and fatalities statewide. • Reduce FRA-reportable incidents, injuries, and fatalities statewide. • Reduce non-recurring delays on the National Highway Freight Network. • Adapt to advances in truck automation, electrification, and other technologies. • Enhance interoperability of the highway network with neighboring states.
Environmental Stewardship Reduce, avoid and/or mitigate adverse environmental impacts from Pennsylvania's freight transportation system, and plan for environmental impacts to freight movement.	• Mitigate the severity of impacts of extreme weather and natural disasters on freight mobility. • Reduce freight movement-related emissions and its impact on local air quality. • Reduce freight movement's impact on flooding and stormwater runoff. • Support planning for freight movement's impacts on loss of wildlife and habitat.

Source: PA 2045 Freight Movement Plan

After the completion of Pennsylvania's multimodal long range transportation plan in 2016, also known as PA On Track, federal requirements and parameters for designating Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs) and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs) in each state were established. PennDOT developed a detailed methodology for evaluating roadway segments across the state and prioritizing them for potential certification of CUFCs and CRFCs. This evaluation process included a wide range of criteria, such as freight tonnage, truck volumes, truck vehicle-miles traveled, proximity to major freight generators and intermodal facilities, weight restrictions, truck bottleneck locations, and others. As such, PennDOT designated a listing of proposed CUFCs and CRFCs, which FHWA certified in February 2019. Based on PennDOT's evaluation criteria State Route 61 is considered a CUFC and US 222 North is considered a CRFC in Berks County. This designation identifies routes critical to freight movement that extend the Primary Highway Freight System and allows eligibility for funding under the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP).

Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance and the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Infrastructure Plan

The Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Alliance (EPFA) is a consortium of five Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) including: the Reading Area Transportation Study (RATS), Lackawanna/Luzerne Transportation Study (LLTS), Lebanon County Metropolitan Planning Organization (LEBCO), Lehigh Valley Transportation Study (LVTS), and Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA).

The MPOs referenced above have collaborated to address the unique opportunities and challenges associated with freight industry growth, such as impacts to mobility, safety, land uses, and maintaining a state of good repair of the transportation infrastructure across the region. The 10-County EPFA region (Berks, Carbon, Lackawanna, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, and Schuylkill Counties) is among the largest and fastest-growing freight handling regions in the country, with rapid development and redevelopment for warehouse and distribution functions. One of the first outcomes of this alliance is the region's freight plan known officially as the Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Infrastructure Plan: https://epennfa.org/

The Eastern Pennsylvania Freight Infrastructure Plan identifies challenges and develops opportunities for infrastructure investments and policy guidance that address the challenges of continued expansion of freight in the region, including those focused on mobility and reliability, safety and security, or infrastructure condition. The plan focuses on three key elements:

1. **Infrastructure:** Roads, bridges, pavement, rail facilities, rest areas/parking facilities
2. **Activity:** Truck traffic, bottlenecks, crashes, commodities, truck parking
3. **Land Use:** Freight generators and development areas that are directly linked to infrastructure and activity

In the early stages of plan development, a project specific public survey was deployed to obtain input from local residents and visitors, who were asked to identify and provide known concerns and opinions regarding freight transportation within the EPFA region. One of the questions asked was to list specific locations where your daily travel is impacted by trucks or freight. A review of responses indicated numerous corridors identified by more than 100 individual responses. More than 25% of all respondents highlighted I-78 or US 22 as routes where their daily travel is impacted by freight. Additional routes highlighted include Interstates (80, 81), US 222, State Routes (309, 100, 33, 512, 248, 191, 329, 61) and Airport Road (connecting to Lehigh Valley International Airport). Key locations along these corridors that were identified most frequently as they pertain to Berks County are listed below:

- I-78 – Exit 23 – Shartlesville
- US 222 – Bypass, Kutztown Road to I-78

EPFA Regional Action Plan

Freight, goods movement, and trucks are visible elements of daily life in Berks County, not only serving the needs of local and regional residents, but consumers throughout the northeastern United States and beyond. The County's geographic location uniquely positions it as a critical link in the regional and national freight network, strengthening the region's importance as a hub of freight-focused employment. Continued regional growth in the freight and goods movement sector creates challenges for infrastructure, land use, and the safety of all roadway users. The EPFA regional action plan outlines actions that, when implemented incrementally, will allow for local or regional investments that address existing challenges and the adoption of policies that will better plan for future challenges.

The Regional Action Plan is focused on two elements:

> **Infrastructure** recommendations are physical locations in need of improvements or further study that have been identified based on input from the analysis of the Regional Freight Profile, Stakeholder Input, and results of the Public Survey

Policy recommendations are local or regional policy guidelines identified based on input received from Agency Partners and Stakeholders, as well as those that reflect current regional or statewide planning best practices.

Infrastructure Recommendations: Infrastructure improvement locations were generated from three elements: those identified through the data analyzed as part of the development of the regional freight profile, as well as those identified from stakeholder session feedback, or through the public survey. The infrastructure recommendations are listed in numerical order. With number one being the highest priority.

1. Allentown Pike, US 222 Business to PA 73 (issues: safety, bottleneck) **(1)**
2. US 222 Business at US 422 Interchange (issues: safety, bottleneck) **(2)**
3. Downtown City of Reading (issues: safety, bridge condition, pavement condition) **(2)**
4. I-78/PA 61 (issues: safety, bottleneck) **(1)**
5. PA 12 near US 222/PA 183 and PA 61 (issues: safety, bridge geometry) **(1 @ 183)**
6. US 422 at PA 662 (issues: safety, bridge geometry)
7. US 422 at US 222 (issues: safety, bridge geometry)
8. US 222 Business (Lancaster Avenue), PA 625 to US 422 (issues: bottleneck, bridge geometry) **(2)**
9. US 222 at PA 73 (issue: safety) **(1)**
10. US 222/PA 662 (issue: safety) **(1)**
11. US 422 at PA 724 (issue: safety) **(2)**
12. US 422 at US 422 Business and US 422 at US 222 Business (issue: safety) **(2)**
13. US 222 (Allentown Pike), at US 222 Business Interchange (issue: bottleneck)
14. US 222, PA 73 to PA 662 (issue: bottleneck) **(2)**
15. US 222 Business – South 4th Street, Pine Street to Laurel Street (issue: bottleneck)

(1): Improved prior to plan completion
(2): Programmed in FFY 25-27 TIP

Policy Recommendations: Policy recommendations have been developed through input received from EPFA members, stakeholder session feedback, and comments received from the public survey. Policy recommendations were developed around different action areas; each is discussed separately below. Timeframes for implementation are Short-Term (less than one year), Mid-Term (1-2 years), and Long-Term (more than 2 years). Key action areas include:

Regional Coordination: Regional coordination is a prerequisite for regional policy. Given that the EPFA region includes 5 MPOs, 10 counties, and 400 municipalities, if coordinated policies are to be developed and advanced, a sustainable mechanism for that coordination must be put in place.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Regional Coordination	Develop EPFA common goals and objectives.	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Standardize formal meetings of the EPFA to advance outcomes of the Plan and support future needs associated with freight development.	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Proactively track approved or proposed freight or logistics-focused developments to identify roadway connections that may need future investments.	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Track AADTT annually to identify locations where growth in truck use may warrant a focused study or analysis	Short-Term
Regional Coordination	Track industrial real estate market trends to identify new and emerging industrial clusters, types of facilities being developed, etc.	Mid-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Regional Coordination Actions

- Initial EPFA contacts should coordinate a meeting, workshop, or virtual focus group to identify common goals and objectives that EPFA will aim to achieve.
- EPFA members should Initiate the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the EPFA as an entity focused on the unique transportation and land use needs of freight within the region (the EPFA MOU was approved by each of the five MPO's effective_____2025).
- Establish regular monthly or quarterly EPFA meeting schedules. Ensure each member has an identified responsible point of contact. Appoint secretary to maintain roster of current contacts, and to create and maintain a shared file location (Dropbox, SharePoint, or similar) for EPFA information and materials.
- EFPA membership should prepare a database of approved or proposed developments to identify roadways in need of future investments, particularly those that may not be currently used by freight traffic.
- Additionally, EPFA members should actively track AADTT annually to determine roadways within the region where expanded truck use may need further study. Identify trends and areas where there are significant changes that need further investigation.
- EPFA core members should review industrial real estate data and trends on an annual or triennial basis. This analysis should focus on clusters where development activity is growing or emerging, identify the types of industrial buildings being developed, and consider impacts and needs. This may require the identification of MPO resources to pay for data and analysis.
- In developing a work program, each EPFA member should consider the feasibility of expanding the geographic scopes of transportation or freight-focused studies to include multiple EPFA member geographies.

Land Use: Land use recommendations are primarily centered on a need to advance regional or multi-jurisdictional zoning, or the development of model ordinance support for EPFA municipalities. As a matter of practice, few freight plans – whether modal, statewide, or regional in nature – attempt to address the critical relationships between freight transportation and the freight land uses that generate the underlying demand, primarily because transportation agencies preparing the plans have jurisdiction over transportation assets but not land use decisions, which are made locally.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Land Use	Develop regional land use guidance document for EPFA member municipalities, including best practices guidance - especially in rural agricultural areas susceptible to change	Mid-Term
Land Use	Develop public information materials (documents, videos, etc.) to educate the public, elected officials, etc. on land use trends, impacts of certain development types in response to or anticipation of public concerns. Leverage TRB guidance and other existing materials as much as possible.	Mid-Term
Land Use	Perform an assessment of developable land, identifying potential conflicts, more/less desirable areas to focus development, etc.	Mid-Term
Land Use	Advance development of regional zoning guidance for industrial and warehousing uses.	Long-Term
Land Use	Consider opportunities for multi-jurisdictional land use planning, focused on industrial or warehousing uses.	Long-Term

Land Use	Advance development of regional zoning language that support truck parking on-site at industrial, distribution, or warehouse sites.	Long-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Land Use Policy Actions

- The EPFA should establish a standing working group representing interested regional planning agencies, counties, and municipalities, and subsequently charge the working group to implement the following:
    - Create a library of potentially applicable land use and zoning texts from regional, state, and national best practice, tapping resources such as Transportation Research Board (TRB), American Planning Association (APA), and USDOT.
    - Agree on recommended regional ordinance language guidance for use by counties or municipalities.
    - Perform consistency reviews with LRTPs and other governing policies to ensure any guidance documents align with local goals, objectives, or outcomes.
    - Perform outreach to and inform municipalities about the availability of the regional guidance and benefits of their use; promote dialogue and coordination between adjacent or interdependent municipalities.
    - Track and monitor the deployment of language guidance across the region.
- Additionally, EPFA members should track available or developable land at a regional level to identify where growth in existing or the development of future industrial clusters may be most likely. This may also provide opportunities to focus development in more desirable areas by local or regional stakeholders.

Road Design and Maintenance: Winter weather, storm events, and work zone activities can create temporary disruptions in the availability and use of key truck routes, ranging from reduced capacity and performance to full unavailability for periods of time. Truck routes within the EPFA region should be actively managed to reduce the frequency and severity of disruption to the extent practical.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Road Design and Maintenance	Focus on improving winter maintenance along key truck routes.	Short-Term
Road Design and Maintenance	Develop resilient road design guidelines to avoid or mitigate flooding and other risks.	Mid-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Road Design and Maintenance Policy Actions

- County agencies should work with PennDOT district offices to establish or reinforce coordinated plans across responsible jurisdictions for priority snow removal on key truck routes.
- EPFA members should share information and manage work zone activities related to municipal or county projects to minimize impacts to freight operations and particularly to communities where trucks might seek to re-route.
- County officials should collaborate with PennDOT district officials on the investigation of weather vulnerabilities on key truck routes and develop plan to prioritize improvements and actions to reduce those vulnerabilities.

- EFPA members, in partnership with local officials and PennDOT, should identify and adopt resilient road design guidelines. EFPA members should advocate for federal or state funding for resilience projects and apply for grants (or advise applicants in the region) as appropriate.

Truck Operations: Policy recommendations within the truck operations action area include addressing challenging issues associated with safe truck parking and the routing and operations of trucks on highways and in communities.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Truck Operations	Identify local or regional ordinances that allow for or support development of truck parking opportunities within the County.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Advance local freight studies for urban areas identified as needing infrastructure improvements, including Allentown, Reading, Scranton, and Lebanon	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Advance County-wide study to Identify locations that may support truck parking within Berks County.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Advance regional Truck Route study.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Develop Regional Routing Study focused on need for wayfinding signage to avoid bridge strikes, etc.	Mid-Term
Truck Operations	Anticipate the potential for new technologies (autonomous vehicles, AI routing, alternative delivery technologies) to change how trucks move to, from, through, and within the region. Assess readiness, opportunities to lead demonstration projects, etc.	Long-Term
Truck Operations	Assess corridor-level demand for alternative fuels (e.g., hydrogen) and electric charging	Long-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Truck Operations Policy Actions

- Establish core working group of EPFA representatives to:
  - Compile reports of unauthorized parking activities and related incidents, and regularly develop and update data on authorized and unauthorized truck parking activities;
  - Work in a coordinated manner with state agencies and private sector developers on increasing the inventory of "mainline" (Interstate or highway-based) parking;
  - Research, as part of the Land Use/Transportation coordination, the application of zoning to increase the inventory of on-site parking within-facilities;
  - Perform and support county/subregion feasibility evaluations on the potential for (and acceptability of) managed local truck parking facilities.
- For urban areas identified as infrastructure priorities, individual MPOs should work with the associated municipality to advance city-specific truck studies, including a review of where and how trucks interact with cyclists or pedestrians.

- Advance EPFA regional truck route study. This includes compiling potential routes or restrictions, as appropriate, as well as necessary traffic or infrastructure data to support this effort;
- Develop a coordinated EPFA strategy to develop, distribute, and promote preferred route information to regional truck operators and dispatchers;
- Stay apprised of new and emerging technologies and their applications. These could be topics at future EPFA meetings. EPFA members should collaborate with the Pennsylvania Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), private companies, and/or academic institutions that may be looking for opportunities to deploy or pilot new technology.

- Collaborate with PennDOT and USDOT partners to advance improvements associated with alternative fuel corridors within the EPFA region.

Rail Policy Recommendations: Rail freight has positive and negative effects in the EPFA region. It offers an alternative to truck transportation over longer distances for regional freight shippers and receivers. But rail service also generates and concentrates truck trips at rail/truck transfer points, creating community impacts as well as development pressures. Increasingly, as the length of trains increase, at-grade crossings experience blockages while trains are switched in and out of railyards and customer facilities. Railroads are a critical part of a balanced freight ecosystem, and while they receive attention and planning through federally mandated state rail plans and other programs, it is also important to address local benefits and impacts.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Rail	Coordinate with passenger rail studies in Reading, Wilkes-Barre, Allentown	Short-Term
Rail	Coordinate with upcoming State Rail Plan effort	Short-Term
Rail	Work with existing rail operators and rail-served businesses to develop strategy aimed at limiting traffic impacts from stalled/idling/slow trains.	Short-Term
Rail	Perform a regional analysis of grade crossing safety aimed at identifying and prioritizing crossings in need of safety improvements.	Mid-term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Rail Policy Actions:

- Establish core working group of EPFA representatives to:
    - Identify and, to the extent practical, protect rail-adjacent development sites for use by rail-served industries (possibly following the model of NJTPA's Freight Rail Industrial Opportunities study);
    - Perform regional analysis of rail grade crossing safety, blockages, and other impacts;
    - Work with railroads and rail-served facilities to reduce the duration/frequency of grade crossing blockage events;
- Identify an EPFA member to proactively represent the alliance as a steering committee member for the Pennsylvania State Rail Plan
- Actively coordinate and collaborate with development and deployment of passenger rail studies throughout the region.

Air Cargo Policy Recommendations: Air cargo is important for EPFA shippers and receivers, particularly given the expansion of ABE as a cargo hub. Additional air cargo needs are met by large national and international airports such as Philadelphia and Newark-Liberty/JFK, with air freight being trucked to and from these and other airports. This action area is focused on air-side facility recommendations, with land-side recommendations generally associated with specific infrastructure improvements or those found in the Truck Operations action area.

The airside facilities at ABE lack the capacity to serve existing and future cargo needs associated with the rapid growth of freight within the EPFA region. Investments in air cargo within the region should focus on the development of dedicated airside cargo (including cross-dock) facilities at ABE that increase efficiencies and reduce truck demand within the region.

In January 2024, the Lehigh-Northampton Airport Authority (LNAA) was awarded a $40.8M federal grant to fund the construction of the Northside Logistics and Cargo Complex (NLCC), a consolidated multimodal cargo facility at Lehigh Valley International Airport (ABE) in Lehigh County, Pennsylvania with connectivity to the National Highway System via designated truck routes and critical urban freight corridors. This initiative continues to utilize the regional freight

corridors and utilizes available FHWA and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) funding currently in place to develop additional air cargo capacity for the region.

The Reading Regional Airport is currently poised to offer space for air cargo carriers at its facility and intends to market itself as a potential location for air cargo carriers looking to expand their operations in the region. Through coordination with the Reading Regional Airport Authority, we will continue to monitor the status of air freight in Berks County to ensure adequate planning and implementation in support of future growth in this area.

Freight Workforce Access Recommendations: Freight generating and receiving facilities depend on workers, and those workers depend on reliable transportation options to and from the workplace. For those without a personal automobile or regular shared ride, active transportation and public transit are the primary options for workplace access. However, as freight facilities continue to develop outside of established clusters and regional transportation routes, they become increasingly difficult to reach. Providing workplace access options supports opportunities for the economically disadvantaged, while also expanding the pool of potential workers for freight facility operators and helping fill labor pool shortfalls. In other regions, major employers have established their own van and private transit services to fill gaps in the public transportation system.

Action Area	Recommendation	Timeframe
Freight Workplace Access	Identify underserved transit corridors and consider an expansion of service for major freight generating nodes	Mid-Term

Source: Eastern PA Freight Infrastructure Plan

Freight Workplace Access Policy Actions:

- Establish core working group of EPFA representatives to identify underserved transit corridors
- Partner with transit operators to identify opportunities to expand workforce access options, including: active transportation improvements; public transit service expansion; and private or public-private partnership van services.
- Partner with ridesharing or Transportation Management Associations (such as CommutePA) to link employees in need with industrial activity nodes.