

CHAPTER 3: POLICY FRAMEWORK

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The Freight Master Plan (FMP) exists on a foundation of local, state, and federal policies relating to freight mobility and industrial lands.

FREIGHT MASTER PLAN VISION AND GOALS

The FMP is organized around an overall vision statement and 6 goals. The goals help describe what the plan is trying to achieve and shape its development. The vision and goals are informed by a broader policy framework of city, state, and federal transportation plans, primarily the Comprehensive Plan – the City’s blueprint for how growth will be accommodated over the next 20 years.

Vision

The vision for the plan expresses the desired end state, or result, of implementing this plan. The vision of the FMP is:

“A vibrant city and thriving economy connecting people and products within Seattle and to regional and international markets.”

The vision statement makes it clear that the FMP is focused on supporting Seattle’s industrial areas (and their important family-wage jobs), and ensuring Seattle is well connected to other freight networks in the region, state, and international markets. Seattle’s industrial areas are an important part of its history and economy, and a reason why the city is a hub for the state and national economies. The vision also highlights the importance of supporting a vibrant city by ensuring goods can reach retail outlets, commercial centers and home deliveries.

Goals

The vision statement is supported by six main goals that address:

- Economy
- Safety
- Mobility
- State of Good Repair
- Equity
- Environment

The goals articulate what the plan seeks to achieve over time in order to meet the vision, and also set the basis for the plan’s strategies, actions, performance measures, and prioritization framework, which are outlined in Chapters 5 and 6.

Economy – Provide a freight network that supports a thriving and diverse economy for Seattle and the region.

Like the city’s other modal master plans, the FMP is largely about supporting the city’s land use and growth strategy. The freight network developed in this plan is focused on providing connections to and within Seattle’s 2 manufacturing/industrial centers, its urban villages, and the regional freight network. By improving and maintaining an efficient freight network, Seattle can keep its competitive place in the regional and world economies for freight- related jobs.

Safety – Improve safety and the predictable movement of goods and people.

Safety is SDOT’s highest priority, and promoting a safer city is one of the department’s core values. While trucks represent a minority of vehicles on the road, their size requires thoughtful attention to the way the city’s roads are designed and managed. Trucks also need to share space in the public right-of-way with general purpose traffic, transit, and people walking and riding bicycles, so the FMP identifies design guidelines and considerations for freight movement that will help trucks travel safely and predictably with other users of the roadway.

Mobility – Reliably connect manufacturing/ industrial centers and business districts within the Seattle, regional, and international freight networks

It is important to have a defined freight network that provides good connections from the regional transportation system to the city's 2 manufacturing/industrial centers, convenient access to the industrial areas, and connections to business districts and commercial centers.

State of Good Repair - Maintain and improve the freight transportation network to ensure safe and efficient operations.

Since trucks are heavy vehicles operating on city streets, maintaining and improving the condition of those streets is fundamentally important to ensure reliable freight movement. This is particularly true of streets on the identified freight network. Keeping freight routes well maintained is also a focus of federal legislation, and is a policy priority in the State's freight plan.

Equity – Benefit residents and businesses of Seattle through equity in freight investments and improve the health of communities impacted by goods movement.

We know that the movement of goods and services provide many benefits to our community. Employment linked to the city's industrial areas and Port provides family-wage jobs in the region. However, we also know that our most highly impacted communities – situated near our most trafficked roadways – are more likely to be populated by those who are of color, foreign born, more linguistically isolated, and/or who live in lower-income households. Across the nation, race is the most significant predictor of a person living near contaminated air, soil, or water. As we continue to develop and enhance the freight network, it is important to ensure that we are not exacerbating this issue.

We can help mitigate and improve air quality, water quality, and, potential noise impacts on communities near key freight corridors by providing additional green infrastructure (like trees and vegetation) when constructing projects, and updating truck fleets with new technologies or vehicle types to be more efficient. A more detailed list of strategies and actions to address equity can be found in Chapter 5.

Environment – Improve freight operations in Seattle and the region by making goods movement more efficient and reducing its environmental footprint.

Seattle has a long history of environmental stewardship and, through the 2013 Climate Action Plan, the City is committed to reach zero net greenhouse gas emissions (GHE) by 2050. As outlined in this plan, we can take actions to ensure better operations along key freight corridors and improve street conditions to reduce water and air quality impacts. In 2016, Seattle released an Equity & Environment Agenda to call on the entire community to advance equity in our environmental work across the city. Freight operators can also help Seattle reach these goals by continuing to modernize freight fleets, exploring alternative freight vehicles, and reducing engine idling. The City can mitigate impacts on communities through investments that support freight mobility, community health, and our environment.

PLANNING CONTEXT

The FMP is part of a broader set of policy documents that discuss freight mobility. This section of the plan summarizes several of these policy documents and outlines how the plan is consistent with the broader themes in them.

Federal and State Freight Planning

Freight planning has received heightened focus at the federal and state levels in recent years. This is great news, as it provides a wealth of information and a strong foundation on which to base the City's first FMP. The federal and state efforts are highlighted below.

The FAST Act and the National Freight Strategic Plan

The 2015 federal surface transportation reauthorization legislation, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, includes freight planning and project delivery provisions. It establishes for the first time a national highway freight program with funding dedicated to a new National Highway Freight Network (NHFN).

Among the goals of the freight program are to:¹

- Invest in infrastructure and operational improvements to strengthen economic competitiveness; reduce congestion and bottlenecks; reduce the cost of freight transportation and improve its year-round reliability; and increase productivity, especially for domestic industries that create high-value jobs
- Improve the safety, security, efficiency, and resiliency of freight transportation in urban and rural areas
- Improve the efficiency and productivity of the NHFN, its state of good repair, and its use of innovation and advanced technology for safety, efficiency, and reliability
- Reduce the environmental impacts of freight movements on the NHFN

Dedicated freight funding (described further in Chapter 6) may be used mainly on the NHFN, with up to 10% available for freight rail and ports. In the state of Washington, the NHFN has three components:

- A Primary Freight System totaling 817 centerline miles of existing roadways, consisting chiefly of interstate highways and intermodal connectors
- Critical Urban Freight Corridors to be defined by the State and regional metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) up to a maximum of 82 miles
- Critical Rural Freight Corridors to be defined by the State up to a maximum of 163 miles

The FAST Act encourages development of State Freight Advisory committees and requires the creation of State Freight Plans to improve coordination of freight transportation planning. Washington State updated its freight mobility plan in 2014. The FAST Act also establishes a National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN, including the NHFN, rail lines, and major sea and air ports) and mandates that the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) produce a National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP).

The NFSP must:

- Assess the condition and performance of the NMFN, forecast future demands, and identify bottlenecks
- Identify major corridors and trade gateways, encompassing access to manufacturing, agriculture, energy, and other natural resources
- Encourage multijurisdictional collaboration
- Assess physical, institutional, and financial barriers to improvement
- Define strategies for intermodal freight connectivity
- Specify best practices for enhancing the system

Washington State Freight Mobility Plan

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has led development of the State Freight Mobility Plan to ensure that the transportation system in Washington state supports and enhances trade and sustainable economic growth. As one of the most trade-dependent states in the nation, Washington relies on an efficient freight transportation network.

The strategic goals of the Freight Mobility Plan are as follows:

- Improve the contribution of the freight transportation system to economic efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness

¹Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. Page 92. December 2015 www.congress.gov/114/bills/hr22/BILLS-114hr22enr.pdf

- Reduce congestion on the freight transportation system
- Improve safety, security, and resilience of the freight transportation system
- Improve the state of good repair of the freight transportation system
- Use advanced technology, performance management, innovation, competition, and accountability in operating and maintaining the freight transportation system

Local Planning

A number of local planning efforts also contribute to the development of the FMP. The most noteworthy is Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan. In addition, other city plans, policies, and design manuals influenced the development of the FMP, and in turn may be influenced by the FMP in their future updates. These include:

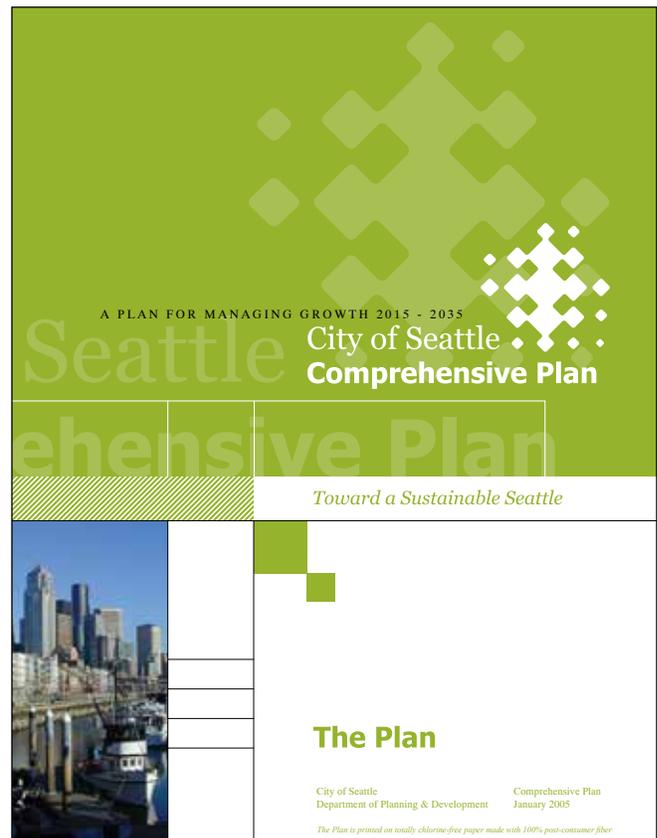
- Comprehensive Plan
- Move Seattle 10-year strategic vision
- Modal master plans for transit, pedestrians, and bicycles
- Complete Streets policy
- Climate Action Plan
- Industrial Areas Freight Access Project
- Right-of-Way Improvements Manual

Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan

The City of Seattle is generally guided on land use and transportation policy issues by the 2015 Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle*. The Comprehensive Plan is organized around a set of 4 core values:

- Community
- Environmental Stewardship
- Economic Opportunity and Security
- Social Equity

As described above, many of the goals in the FMP are consistent with the broader core values of the Comprehensive Plan (environment, economic opportunity, and equity). While the FMP primarily deals with transportation issues around freight mobility, one of the major purposes of the plan is



to support the City’s overall land use and growth strategy, which includes promoting and protecting industrial lands.

The Comprehensive Plan is currently undergoing a major update (likely to be adopted later in 2016), but the overall growth strategy of the plan will not fundamentally change. The primary strategy for accommodating future growth in Seattle is around concentrating growth in centers, including the City’s 2 manufacturing/industrial centers. This growth strategy is called the Urban Village Strategy.

Seattle’s Comprehensive Plan contains several elements, or chapters, with goals and policies that speak to the importance of industrial lands and the importance of industrial businesses to the city’s overall economy. Those elements include:

- Urban Village Element
- Land Use Element
- Container Port Element
- Transportation Element

Urban Village Element

The plan's Urban Village Element has several goals and policies that summarize the importance of Seattle's industrial lands:

UVG19 Ensure that adequate accessible industrial land remains available to promote a diversified employment base and sustain Seattle's contribution to regional high-wage job growth.

UVG21 Encourage economic activity and development in Seattle's industrial areas by supporting the retention and expansion of existing industrial businesses and by providing opportunities for the creation of new businesses consistent with the character of industrial areas.

UV20 Designate the following locations as manufacturing/industrial centers:

1. The Ballard Interbay Northend Manufacturing/Industrial Center
2. The Duwamish Manufacturing/Industrial Center

UV21 Promote manufacturing and industrial employment growth, including manufacturing uses, advanced technology industries, and a wide range of industrial related commercial functions, such as

warehouse and distribution activities, in manufacturing/industrial centers.

Land Use Element

One of the primary purposes of the manufacturing/industrial center designation (both in Seattle's Comprehensive Plan and the regional Vision 2040 plan) is to promote the retention and growth of industrial and warehouse land uses. The FMP is largely focused on ensuring that there is a connected, resilient freight network that can support these policies. The City's overall policies on industrial lands are contained in several policies in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element:

LUG22 Provide opportunities for industrial activity to thrive in Seattle.

LUG24 Preserve industrial land for industrial uses and protect viable marine and rail related industries from competing with non-industrial uses for scarce industrial land. Give special attention to preserving industrial land adjacent to rail and water dependent transportation facilities.

LUG25 Promote high-value-added economic development by supporting growth in the industrial and manufacturing employment base.



Container Port Element

The Comprehensive Plan also has a Container Port Element, which recognizes the importance of the Port of Seattle as a vital economic development entity and cargo gateway. The Container Port Element contains several goals and policies that support retention of this function, including:

CP6 Monitor, maintain, and improve key freight corridors, networks, and intermodal connections that provide access to cargo container facilities and the industrial areas around them to address bottlenecks and other access constraints. Provide safe, reliable, efficient, and direct access between Port marine facilities and the state highway or interstate system, and between Port terminals and railroad intermodal facilities, recognizing that Port operations must address other transportation needs, such as pedestrian safety.

CP8 Maintain the City's classification of "Major Truck Streets." Because freight is important to the basic economy of the City and has unique right-of-way needs to support that role, freight will be a major priority on streets classified as Major Truck Streets. Street improvements that are consistent with freight mobility but also support other modes may be considered on these streets.

Transportation Element

As required by the Growth Management Act, Seattle's Comprehensive Plan contains a Transportation Element. The Transportation Element is intended to be consistent with, and help implement, the land use vision for the City (articulated in the plan's Urban Village and Land Use Elements).

The Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is written at a fairly high level, and is intended to help frame more specific goals, policies, and strategies in other documents, including all of the city's modal plans

(Bicycle Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Transit Master Plan, and now the FMP).

In the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, there are several goals and policies that relate to freight mobility (several of which may be revised in the planned Comprehensive Plan update). These goals and policies include:

T10 Designate, in a freight master plan, a truck street classification network to accommodate trucks and to preserve and improve commercial transportation mobility and access.

TG18 Preserve and improve mobility and access for the transport of goods and services.

TG19 Maintain Seattle as the hub for regional goods movement and as a gateway to national and international suppliers and markets.

T48 Recognize the importance of the freight network to the city's economic health when making decisions that affect Major Truck streets as well as other parts of the region's roadway system. Complete Street improvements supporting freight mobility along with other modes of travel may be considered on Major Truck Streets.

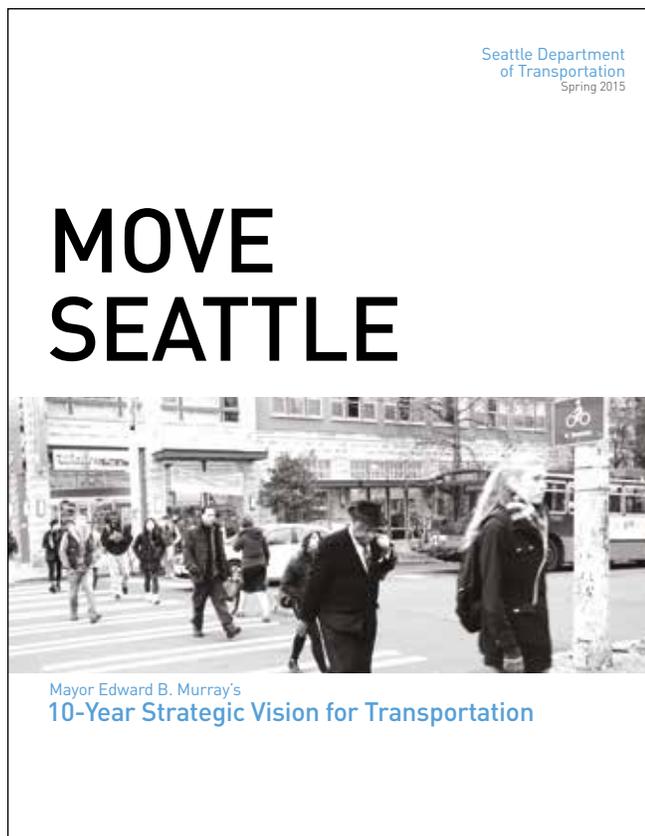
T51 Consider the needs for local delivery and collection of goods at businesses by truck when making street operational decisions and when developing and implementing projects and programs for highways, streets and bridges.

The vision and goals of the FMP are very consistent with and help add specificity to these Comprehensive Plan goals and policies. The policies make reference to "Major Truck Streets," which is a freight designation that was developed many years ago. This FMP has a new, more comprehensive freight network discussed in Chapter 4 with a number of freight designations, and it preserves the use of the "Major Truck Streets" designation.

Move Seattle Strategic Plan

In 2014, the City produced Move Seattle: Mayor Murray's 10-Year Strategic Vision for Transportation. The document summarized SDOT's (and the City's) core values for the transportation system, which are:

- A Safe City: Our goal is to eliminate serious and fatal crashes in Seattle
- An Interconnected City: Our goal is to provide an easy-to-use, reliable transportation system that gives you the options you want when you need them
- A Vibrant City: Our goal is to use Seattle's streets and sidewalks to improve the city's health, prosperity, and happiness
- An Affordable City: Our goal is to give people high-quality and low-cost transportation options that allow them to spend money on things other than transportation
- An Innovative City: Our goal is to understand and plan for the changes of tomorrow, while delivering great service today



The goals in the FMP align with these Move Seattle core values. One Move Seattle section in particular, the Vibrant City section, lists a number of actions to improve mobility for freight and delivery vehicles. These actions include completing the FMP, making spot improvements for trucks, implementing pilot freight-only lanes in the Duwamish MIC, and collecting better data about truck volumes on Seattle's streets.

In addition to laying out specific actions, Move Seattle also includes a 10-year capital project priority list for multimodal improvements around the city. Several of these projects would improve the movement of goods, including:

- East Marginal Way Corridor Improvements
- South Lander Street Grade Separation/ Railroad Crossing
- 1st Avenue South Corridor Improvements
- Delridge Avenue SW Corridor Improvements

Move Seattle also emphasizes the need for all of the modal master plans to be considered together, in an integrated fashion, to ensure that Seattle has a fully interconnected transportation system to move people and goods.

Modal Master Plans

In addition to the FMP, the City has 3 other citywide modal master plans: the Transit Master Plan, the Bicycle Master Plan, and the Pedestrian Master Plan. Each of these plans is somewhat similar in that they identify policies, projects, programs, performance measures, and priorities to advance their respective modes of transportation.

Many of the modal plans identify needs on the same streets and corridors. When implementing projects identified in one modal master plan, SDOT staff need to consult all other master plans to understand the demands on specific streets and corridors. At times, they must try to reconcile different needs identified in the respective master plans. This is one reason for the importance of the new right-of-way allocation policy developed

as part of the Comprehensive Plan update anticipated in 2016.

SDOT not only develops modal master plans, but has dedicated funding to implement these plans. In the recent Move Seattle levy, there is \$1.5 million annually allocated for freight spot improvements. The FMP will provide guidance for how this funding is allocated.

Right-of-Way Allocation Policies

As part of the anticipated 2016 major update of the Comprehensive Plan, there are a series of new policies relating to right-of-way allocation and how decisions are made with regard to using street space. The policies establish 6 essential functions of the street right-of-way:

- Mobility (moving people and goods)
- Access for people (e.g., bus stops and short-term passenger vehicle parking)
- Access for commerce (e.g., loading spaces for trucks)
- Activation (e.g., parklets)
- Greening (street trees, green stormwater infrastructure, etc.)
- Storage (longer-term storage of vehicles)

The policies state that, in making right-of-way decisions, SDOT should accommodate as many of these functions as possible and look to the modal master plans to identify modal needs on individual streets and corridors. This is one reason why having a comprehensive, connected freight network designated in the FMP is so important.

Complete Streets Ordinance

The Seattle City Council adopted a Complete Streets ordinance in 2007. The ordinance articulates the City's commitment to:

- Plan for, design, and construct all new City transportation improvement projects to provide appropriate accommodation for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all abilities, while promoting the safe operation for all users

The Complete Streets ordinance defines the Major Truck Street network within Ordinance 122386 Section 3:

“Because freight is important to the basic economy of the City and has unique right-of-way needs to support that role, freight will be the major priority on streets classified as Major Truck Streets. Complete Street improvements that are consistent with freight mobility but also support other modes may be considered on these streets.”

The City's Complete Streets ordinance recognizes the unique demands of Major Truck Streets in moving freight. SDOT implements the Complete Streets policy through an assessment tool (a checklist) that evaluates projects against the policy. The Complete Streets assessment helps identify improvements that can be incorporated into the project to balance the needs of all users. As the FMP replaces the Major Truck Street network with an expanded freight network, the Complete Streets checklist will be revised as needed to reflect the updated network and reference any applicable design guidelines in the updated Right-of-Way Improvements Manual.

Climate Action Plan

In 2013, the City Council adopted a major update to the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP). The updated CAP was developed to help implement the Council's goals (as established in Resolution 31312) of being "climate neutral" (producing zero net greenhouse gas emissions) by 2050. The CAP articulates a comprehensive strategy for reaching this goal over time, and contains a number of actions for both the near term (2015) and longer term (2030).

As noted in the CAP, approximately 40% of all greenhouse gas emissions in Seattle are generated by the road transportation sector. The 2012 Seattle Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (published April 2014) states that, in 2012, road transportation (especially passenger travel) accounted for the largest share (64%) of Seattle's core emissions – those emissions that the city has the greatest opportunity to control. Of that percentage, freight contributes 19% and passengers contribute 45%. The interesting trend is that, while Seattle's population has grown 23% from 1990 to 2012 and jobs have increased 14% over that same time period, core greenhouse gas emissions have actually declined by 4%. Emissions have also decreased on a per person basis.²

The CAP included a near-term (2015) action to:

- Develop an FMP that includes goals to make freight movement more efficient and reduce its impact on greenhouse gas emissions

In addition to near-term actions, the Climate Action Plan includes two longer-term (2030) actions that relate to freight mobility. These are:

- Support programs that help heavy duty truck owners and operators transition to more efficient vehicles and cleaner fuels
- Continue efforts to preserve Seattle's industrial lands, which provide local jobs and have efficient access to a deep water port, rail lines, and highways

Based on this direction, the FMP includes analysis of sustainable freight practices for incorporation into the plan. Improving the environment is also one of the six main goals of the FMP.

Industrial Areas Freight Access Project

The Seattle Industrial Areas Freight Access Project (FAP) was a targeted look at Seattle's 2 MICs – the Greater Duwamish and the Ballard/Interbay Northend. The FAP was developed jointly by SDOT and the Port of Seattle and was completed in 2015. The project focused on the



²City of Seattle. 2012 Seattle Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. April 2014. www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OSE/2012%20GHG%20inventory%20report_final.pdf

connections within and between the MICs, as well as to the regional and state transportation networks. It identified truck -freight transportation infrastructure investments needed over the next 20 years to keep Seattle’s industrial lands vibrant and productive.

Projects identified in the FAP have been incorporated into the FMP. The FAP also served as a building block for the key policy, programmatic, and technical issues examined in the FMP.

Right-of-Way improvements Manual

The Right-of-Way Improvements Manual (ROWIM) is an online resource developed by the City of Seattle to help property owners, developers, architects, landscape architects, and engineers involved with the design, permitting, and construction of improvements to Seattle’s street right-of-way. It serves as a link between high-level city transportation goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan and specific design standards articulated in the city’s Standard Specifications for Road, Bridge, and Municipal Construction. This latter document ensures consistent construction methods, materials, and final products.

The ROWIM considers and attempts to balance the access and mobility needs of all users of the street right-of-way: pedestrians, non-motorized vehicles, automobiles, transit, and freight. Procedures and design criteria consider the critical balance among safety, preservation and maintenance of roadway infrastructure and utility services, and preservation of our environment.

Knowing that all projects have site-specific opportunities and constraints, the ROWIM articulates the City’s design standards and guidance for street right-of-way improvements and describes a deviation process to achieve flexibility when practical.

The ROWIM is updated, as necessary, to reflect the City’s growth and vision for the future. The 2016 update will contain specific information on turning radii, lane widths, and other design elements that will be used when designing projects, including freight projects.

