

FUT Symposium 2012-10-01

Urban Freight for Livable Cities:

-How to deal with collaboration and trade-offs.

B. Multi-level and multi-modal interaction: Interaction between different levels of administration and modes of transportation

Local/global interactions: Solving freight externality problems in trade node cities

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Urban freight is a growing problem for all cities; truck deliveries account for a substantial share of urban traffic, and contribute to congestion, emissions, noise and other problems. Freight problems are particularly severe in trade node cities – cities that are major nodes in the global economy and serve as hubs for national and international trade flows. Trade node cities are typically the largest metropolitan areas where major ports, airports, distribution centers, and intermodal hubs are located. These activities become notable elements in the urban landscape, often generate significant externalities, and are important contributors to the local economy.

Local authorities face many challenges in addressing externalities generated by trade node related flows: 1) the basic drivers of international trade flows are global and largely beyond the control of local actors; 2) local authorities have limited jurisdiction to regulate or control national or international flows; 3) freight problems typically do not respect political boundaries, further limiting one authority's ability to act; 4) the complexity and number of actors in the supply chain makes negotiations difficult and outcomes uncertain. Using examples from North America, this presentation examines efforts to reduce congestion and environmental impacts of truck and rail traffic. Strategies and their effectiveness depend upon the competitive position of the trade node within the national or global network, the relative importance of trade to the local economy, the extent of fragmentation of political authority, and the capacity of the region to capture resources from higher levels of government or the trade industry.