

Federal Transportation Bill Requirements for MPO Plans

From the federal perspective, planning for freight changed in 1991 with the introduction of the

ISTEA required MPOs to develop plans that addressed the efficient movement of freight and access to ports, airports, and intermodal facilities.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). ISTEA required the Metropolitan Planning Organizations and State Departments of Transportation to conduct freight planning as one of fifteen factors to be considered as they developed state and local transportation plans (ISTEA § 1024, codified at Section 134 of Title 23 of United States Code).

This was mirrored in the two subsequent re-authorization acts, the 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). SAFETEA-LU also added some specific freight orientated sections to fund large scale freight preservation projects such as the Alameda Corridor in California, CREATE in Chicago, and border trade and corridor facilities.

TEA-21 required that the metropolitan planning process for freight seek to:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area by promoting and enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system—across and between modes—for people and freight
- Promote efficient system management and operation
- Include the freight community in the development of both the Regional Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan

SAFETEA-LU added the following:

- MPOs are encouraged to consult and coordinate with planning officials responsible for other types of planning activities affected by transportation including planned growth, economic development, environmental protection, airport operations, and freight movement.
- Safety and security of the transportation system are now separate planning factors that are to be considered during the metropolitan planning process.

SAFETEA-LU also added specific programs which included:

- A Truck-parking facilities pilot program
- A highway-railroad crossing safety improvement funding program
- An allowance to construct truck-idling reduction facilities on interstate highway rights-of-way
- A highway bridge funding program



- A new program for research, training and education to support freight transportation planning
- A freight intermodal distribution pilot program. This program gave grants to facilitate intermodal freight transportation initiatives at the state and local level to: relieve congestion; improve safety; and provide capital funding to address infrastructure and freight distribution needs at inland ports and intermodal freight facilities.