

# Downtown/Regional Freight Delivery Symposium

Baltimore, MD - March 2017



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

Executive Summary



## Background

On March 29, 2017, the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB)—the metropolitan planning organization for the Baltimore region—hosted the Baltimore Downtown/Regional Freight Delivery Symposium. The Symposium was held with assistance and sponsorship from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Freight Management and Operations.

The Symposium was part of a larger series of Downtown Delivery Symposia sponsored by ITE and FHWA. These Symposia aim to improve first- and last-mile freight movements and deliveries in downtown/urban areas by connecting freight and logistics industry stakeholders with freight transportation professionals in the public sector.

Through this initiative, FHWA and ITE aim to ensure that public sector transportation planners, engineers, and policy-makers, along with their freight and logistics industry partners, are all on the same page—and at the table—to identify solutions that facilitate urban goods movement.

## Freight in the Greater Baltimore Region

The Greater Baltimore Region is the leading goods movement center in the State of Maryland. Due to its location within the Boston-Washington corridor, Baltimore is a critical node for both national and international freight movements. Freight volumes on Baltimore's regional transportation network are projected to double between 2003 and 2030, in part as a result of regional economic growth. While much of the region's freight

transportation infrastructure operates reliably at present, congestion on these facilities due to increases in both passenger and freight traffic is expected to pose new challenges in the near future. For example, BRTB anticipates a growing need to better manage and provide for urban truck parking, and to foster dialogue with freight logistics providers/vehicle operators and local communities to ensure a balanced approach in meeting the needs of all roadway users (see Figure 1).

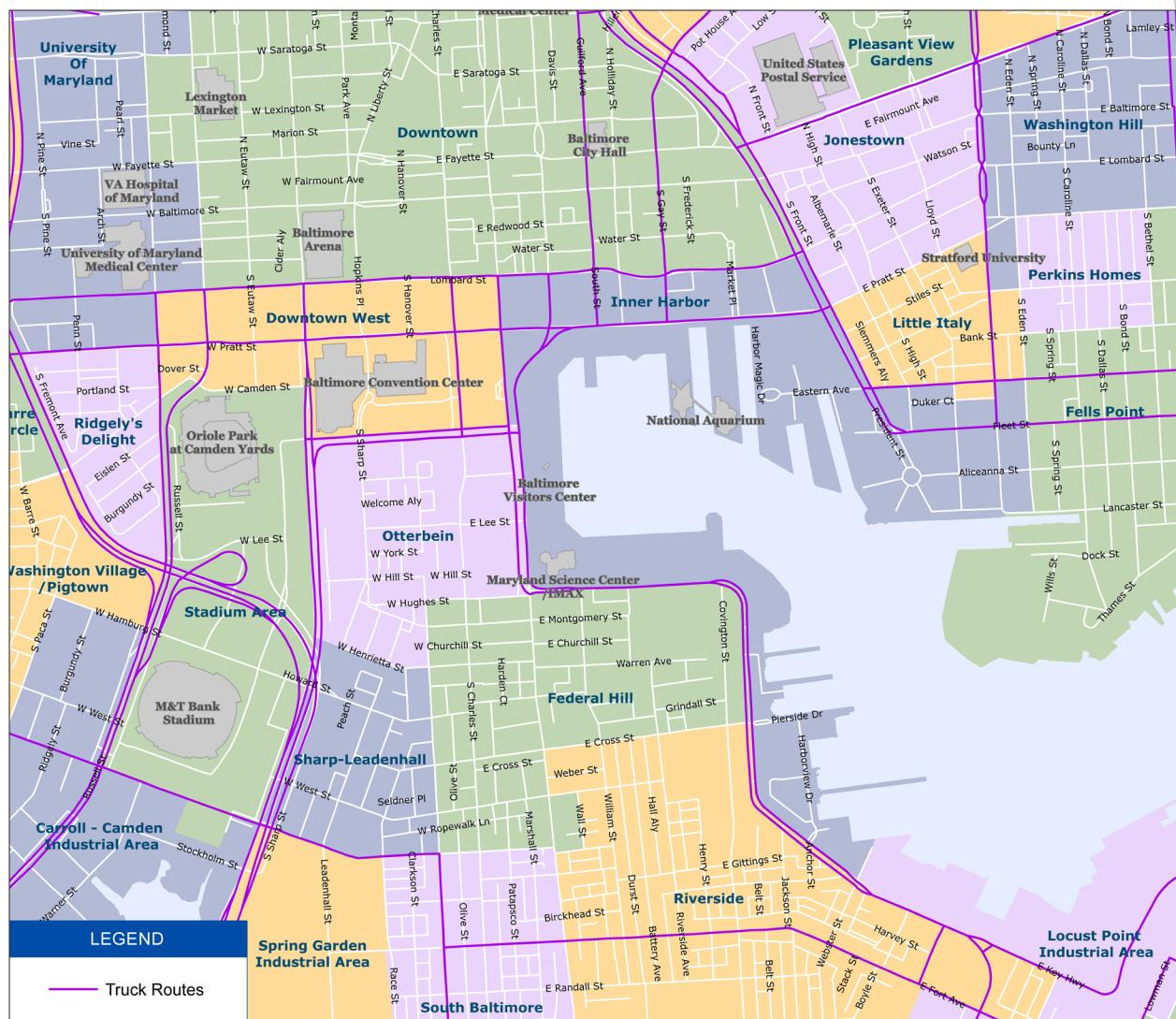
The region is experiencing freight movement challenges in two key areas: the City of Baltimore's Central Business District (CBD) and the new Tradepoint Atlantic development at Sparrows Point in Baltimore County. The CBD is a busy tourist area with a limited grid system and many ongoing development projects producing increased congestion (see Figure 2). Tradepoint Atlantic is a 3,100-acre, multi-modal logistics facility in development on the site of a former Bethlehem Steel plant, located less than 10 miles from downtown

**Figure 1: Example of urban freight delivery/parking in downtown Baltimore**



Source: BRTB

**Figure 2: Schematic of truck routes in Baltimore's CBD**



Source: BRTB

Baltimore. With FedEx Ground as an anchor tenant, the site's warehouses and retail spaces are under construction; the site is expected to be fully operational within the next ten years. Tradepoint Atlantic is projected to generate 36,000 daily, two-way trips by 2025, 47 percent of which are anticipated to be truck trips. Both Tradepoint Atlantic and the CBD are integral components of the Baltimore region's freight system. As freight traffic continues to increase within the region (particularly in and around the CBD and Tradepoint Atlantic facility), stakeholders across the Baltimore region are working to proactively manage the impact on surrounding businesses and communities.

## Purpose and Overview

The Baltimore Symposium provided an opportunity for local and regional freight stakeholders to interact with and learn from one another about strategies to mitigate current and future congestion on the freight transportation network. The event supported BRTB in continuing its commitment to manage regional freight transportation challenges, as well as to identify, plan for, and implement solutions that will address future challenges. BRTB collaborated with the Maryland Department of Transportation and other local and regional stakeholders to ensure that the Symposium content was broadly applicable and could serve as a model for ongoing and future partnerships. The Symposium was attended by over 60 people representing numerous agencies

and organizations within the public and private sectors, including representatives from city and county agencies, industry associations, and private consulting firms. The Symposium included five sessions during which participants:

- Identified **congestion** and **illegal truck parking** as some of the region's **key freight mobility challenges**;
- Learned about planning, engineering, and management **strategies for mitigating these challenges**;
- Discussed how to apply strategies to address freight traffic in and around the **CBD** and **Tradepoint Atlantic**; and
- Developed a pre-action plan, identifying **short-term next steps and champions** to lead new initiatives.

## Highlights of Event Discussions

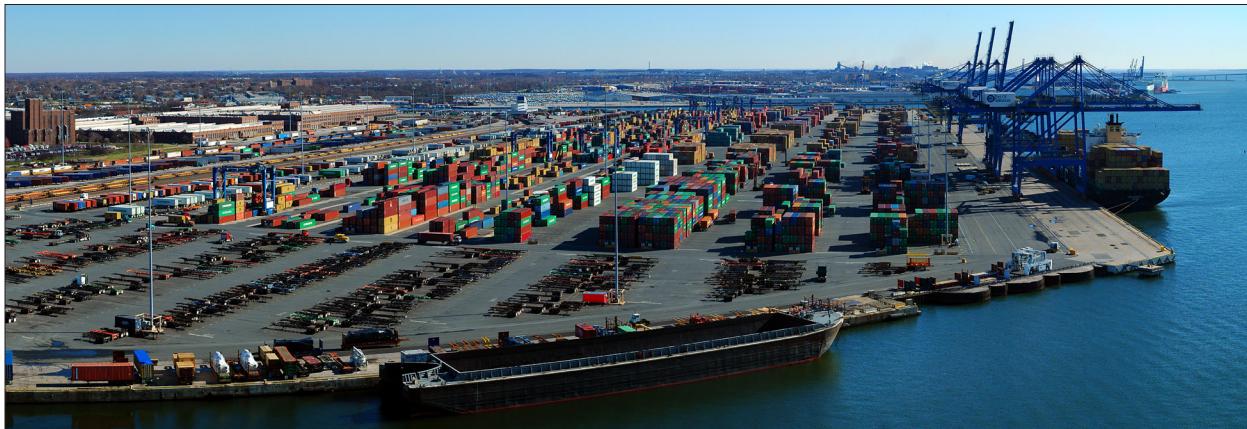
Local and regional stakeholders identified two general areas of opportunity that are emerging and will continue to evolve as a result of increased regional economic activity:

- 1) improving congestion management and
- 2) improving dialogue among freight operators/logistics providers and local communities to better address the needs of moving freight within a community context.

- Specific concerns included **incidences of increased illegal truck parking and negative impacts of moving freight traffic through residential areas**, including environmental impacts. Stakeholders have collaborated to address these and other concerns through proactive freight planning at the State and regional levels, but there are opportunities to do more.
- Given **increases in container traffic at the Port of Baltimore and broader regional economic trends**, stakeholders identified as a priority the need to better manage truck access into, out of, and through residential and commercial areas (see Figure 3).
- Freight carriers such as UPS are implementing strategies **to facilitate freight mobility in downtown areas** to ease roadway congestion and illegal truck parking.
- **Challenges to roadway freight in urban areas also extend to other modes in the region.** For example, limited existing rail infrastructure can lead to congestion and safety concerns. Railroad operators are identifying operational and capital improvement strategies to reduce delay and environmental impacts.

After learning about key freight challenges in Baltimore, participants engaged in a brief training module to learn more about the Transportation Research Board's National Cooperative Freight Research Program

**Figure 3: Seagirt Marine Terminal, Port of Baltimore**



Source: Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pobmd.jpg>

Report 33, Improving Freight System Performance in Metropolitan Areas: A Planning Guide (Report 33). Using Report 33 as a framework, participants walked through the process of defining a set of regional freight issues, their contributing factors, and goals for addressing the issues. Participants also discussed performance measures to assess progress made toward reaching the goals, and specific initiatives that could be deployed.

The initiatives discussed were tailored to the Greater Baltimore region, although participants acknowledged that many could be applied in other areas with appropriate adaptations. Examples of initiatives discussed during the Symposium included the following:

- **To mitigate congestion (particularly in and around Baltimore's CBD and Tradepoint Atlantic):** consider strategies such as off-peak delivery pilots, rail freight double-stacking, package consolidation, and mixed-use parking.
- **To improve safety and comfort for all road users:** consider strategies such as separating pedestrian and cycling trails from motorized vehicles, developing dedicated parking for tour buses, and implementing educational and enforcement campaigns.
- **To better manage truck parking:** investigate opportunities to implement more onsite truck parking or leverage underutilized lots as staging areas during construction of new facilities.
- **To improve communication among freight vehicle operators/logistics providers and community residents:** improve curbside/street signage for truck drivers (e.g., to demonstrate correct loading/unloading practices), develop global positioning system (GPS)-integrated truck route maps for truck drivers, implement demand management strategies (e.g., deploy time limits during which freight vehicles

can enter residential areas), and take advantage of existing forums (such as BRTB's Freight Movement Task Force) to convene stakeholders and identify their needs and ideas.

## Next Steps

- In October 2017, BRTB/BMC staff were invited to a joint meeting of ITE and the American Society of Highway Engineers, Chesapeake, to recap the Symposium—its purpose, the information received during the breakout sessions, and BRTB's next steps (<http://chesapeake.ashe.pro/2017/10/10/october-17-traffic-meeting/>).
- In 2018, BRTB's Freight Movement Task Force plans to incorporate input from the Symposium into an action plan and in updates to the MPO's long-range plan.
- According to BRTB, one of the most valuable outcomes from the Symposium is a new working relationship with UPS. In December 2017, BRTB coordinated with UPS to organize a tour of a local small package facility for the Freight Movement Task Force.
- UPS has also expressed willingness to work with BRTB and a local jurisdiction on developing solutions for specific freight delivery challenges in downtown Baltimore.

## To host a Downtown Delivery Symposium in your area, please contact:

### Douglas Noble

Institute of Transportation Engineers  
dnoble@ite.org  
202-785-0060 ext. 148

### Tamiko Burnell

FHWA Office of Freight Management and Operations  
tamiko.burnell@dot.gov  
202-366-1200

For more information on freight resources, please visit <https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/fpd/>