



## REPORT FOR ACTION

# Freight and Goods Movement Strategy Framework

**Date:** October 3, 2017  
**To:** Public Works and Infrastructure Committee  
**From:** General Manager, Transportation Services  
**Wards:** All Wards

## SUMMARY

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Toronto's evolution as a world-class city rests on the ability of its infrastructure to carry people, goods, and services across the City in an efficient manner. The City's vision as detailed in the Official Plan supports the development of a robust goods movement sector, as goods movement is vital to the City's continued economic health and competitiveness. The opportunity to develop a Plan that details our objectives in building a strong goods movement sector is key to keeping Toronto as a preferred destination for commercial, residential, and recreational development.

The City's Official Plan calls for a Complete Streets approach to mobility for all road users, including those associated with goods movement. This presents an opportunity to envision major roads in the City as part of a streamlined distribution system for goods movement throughout the City and across the region. Where the City's railway and roadway networks interface, the identification of freight facilities and distribution centres furthers the vision of a City that achieves a balanced approach to the movement of goods with the movement of people. Recent growth in both jobs and population highlight the need to attain this balance.

The City of Toronto is experiencing unprecedented growth, evidenced on our streets by everyday traffic congestion and increased demands on curb space attributable to the rise of e-commerce and associated delivery systems. Given these demands and the proliferation of new technologies in the goods movement industry as well as in curbside management, there is a need to assess the current state of goods movement and develop a City-wide plan to ensure the efficient and effective movement of goods in the City of Toronto now and in the future. With a focus on safety, sustainability, and innovation, a City-wide Freight and Goods Movement Strategy will provide an opportunity to support the City's Official Plan and allow for manageable growth for the City on all fronts.

This report responds to a request from the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee to provide:

1. A framework for a city-wide freight and goods movement strategy; and
2. An update on the use of police escorts or alternative service providers for oversized loads traveling through the city.

The report outlines various factors to be considered for the development of a robust Freight and Goods Movement Strategy for Toronto. The framework defined in this report was developed in consultation with a number of industry stakeholders, and will serve as the basis from which Transportation Services will undertake a comprehensive study through a consultant assignment.

The report also provides detail on the rationale for requesting police escorts during the transport of excess loads, recent changes to the Highway Traffic Act (HTA) that now authorize the escorting of excess loads by private companies, and outlines changes to Transportation Services' process which has discontinued the need for police escorts.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. The Public Works and Infrastructure Committee receive this report for information.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

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There are no financial implications associated with the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

Funding for the consultant study to develop the City-wide Freight and Goods Movement Strategy (approximately \$700K) will be submitted for consideration as part of the 2018-2027 Capital Budget & Plan for Transportation Services during the 2018 Budget process.

The Deputy City Manager & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

## **DECISION HISTORY**

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In its meeting on April 12, 2017, PWIC [PW20.10] "requested the General Manager, Transportation Services, in consultation with the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture and other appropriate officials, to report to PWIC on October 18, 2017:

- a. *On the deployment of police escorts or alternative service providers for oversized*

*loads, including:*

- 1. the origin and established criteria for such deployment;*
- 2. the feasibility of developing non-police escorted routes;*
- 3. the establishment of preferred routes for oversized loads in and out of employment areas; and*
- 4. the experience and policies of municipalities adjacent to the City.*

*b. with a framework for a city-wide freight and transportation plan, including:*

- 1. Where adjacent municipal freight plans exist, ensure that they are integrated and participatory in this comprehensive study."*

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.PW20.10>

## **COMMENTS**

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### **Current Freight Objectives and Policies in Toronto's Official Plan**

The unprecedented residential and commercial growth currently being experienced by the City of Toronto and the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is in many ways dependent upon the growth of the freight sector and its ability to efficiently deliver goods across the region. The transportation network in the City and across the region must be adequately planned and managed to accommodate the movement of people, goods, and services now and into the future to support sustainable growth.

The City will need to coordinate and collaborate with regional partners to establish a goods movement network and strategic plan that addresses the unique issues faced by the City and freight operators within Toronto, is compatible and integrated with the freight plans of its partners, and is supported by technology and curbside management strategies to best manage parking and loading activities. The Freight and Goods Movement Strategy will need to ensure goods movement to, from, and within Toronto can be done in an efficient, effective and sustainable manner while facilitating innovation in order to maintain the economic health and vibrancy of the city. The Strategy must also recognize and address the challenge of balancing the needs of freight operations and design standards with the needs of other modes that also rely on Toronto's street network to travel safely and efficiently.

The City's Official Plan contains several supportive objectives and policies that will guide the development of a Toronto Freight and Goods Movement Strategy. Relevant policies are summarized Attachment 1.

In addition to the City's Official Plan, there are a number of Council approved plans, guidelines, and strategies, listed below, which will influence the development of the City's Freight Transportation Plan.

- Climate Change and Clean Air Action Plan (2007)
- Walking Strategy (2009)
- Seniors Strategy (2013)

- Congestion Management Plan (2016 - 2020)
- Ten Year Cycling Network Plan (2016)
- Vision Zero Road Safety Plan (2016)
- Complete Streets Guidelines
- Curb Radii and Lane Width Guidelines (2017)
- TransformTO (2017)

As noted above, many partner agencies have advanced freight and goods movement plans--both at the regional scale and at the neighborhood scale. For example, Peel Region has recently developed the Peel Region Goods Movement Strategic Plan 2017-2021 and Toronto Region Board of Trade is examining regional goods movement through the Toronto-Waterloo Corridor and is working towards a comprehensive, multi-modal strategy for timely and efficient goods movement. The Finch West Goods Movement Strategy is being initiated in partnership with local Business Improvement Areas and Metrolinx for the area around the future Finch West Light Rail Transit line. That strategy is focused on the unique needs of that area, as is the work currently being done by the Pembina Institute and City Planning for the neighborhood. The proposed Freight and Goods Movement Strategy will incorporate relevant information from both the regional and local scaled efforts already completed or underway, and will address the unique challenges with goods movement and loading on Toronto's street network.

## **Issues to be addressed**

Key questions to be addressed through the Freight and Goods Movement Strategy include:

1. How can the City use its influence and authority to optimize the location of truck traffic generators (existing and future) within the City in order to improve the efficiency of truck movements, ensure safe movement, and reduce emissions?
2. Are there measures the City can implement to facilitate truck movements through the City while minimizing impacts to other modes of transportation? This will include developing a comprehensive freight network/routes, revisiting design standards related to road geometrics, and identifying priorities for curbside loading.
3. What opportunities exist for shippers and carriers to innovate in the distribution system of goods that will minimize their logistic costs and help reduce truck traffic in the City?
4. Are there opportunities for businesses to consolidate warehousing, delivery timing, and pooling? What are the impacts of future technologies on production and distribution of goods?
5. How can the City ensure smooth movement of truck traffic across its boundaries, in and out of adjacent municipalities - some of which house major terminals (e.g., railway yards and airports)?

## **Framework for a City-Wide Freight and Goods Movement Strategy**

To guide development of the Freight and Goods Movement Strategy, a framework (set out below) was developed in consultation with a number of industry stakeholders to serve as the basis from which Transportation Services will undertake a comprehensive study through a consultant assignment.

## Policy Framework

The Freight and Goods Movement Strategy will consist of a cohesive policy direction and a program of actions including specific initiatives for implementation in the short, medium and long term to ensure the City can best manage the current and future demands of the freight industry in light of Toronto's brisk growth and development and changing street environment. This will include a vision and key principles, goals and objectives, as well as the following elements:

### *Freight Network:*

- Identify primary routes used by trucks and assess how they integrate with neighbouring networks of adjacent municipalities.
- Identify current and emerging major truck traffic generators, high truck usage corridors and intermodal shipping centers (roads, rail, air).
- Develop a City network that includes primary routes currently used by trucks and protects for future routes.
- Develop a preferred network to accommodate oversized loads
- Ensure the freight network complements other related city transportation policies and initiatives.

### *Technological Opportunities:*

- Identify strategies to address the impacts and opportunities presented by technological advancements on production and distribution of goods. This will include a best practices review, both nationally and internationally, to identify and evaluate the tools and tactics other jurisdictions are using and evaluate their applicability for Toronto. Some examples include:
  - identification of freight/shipping methods used;
  - managing the operational needs of various truck sizes (i.e., geometric solutions);
  - introducing technology to manage through movement as well as curbside strategies (Intelligent systems);
  - defining the tools necessary to create innovative freight hubs (e.g., sharing of docks or yards, staggering delivery times, off-peak deliveries with tax incentives, sharing of delivery vehicles);
  - ensuring land use is planned such that freight hubs or clusters are located near complementary uses (e.g., commercial, industrial, etc.) instead of conflicting uses (e.g., residential, educational/institutional, healthcare facilities, etc.) complementary land uses;
  - maintaining acceptable operations for both transit and trucks on truck routes (e.g., bus bays/laybys etc.); and
  - enhancing communication with freight industry leaders and operators to identify and manage emerging issues.

### *Social and Environmental Impacts:*

- Ensure that impacts of the existing freight and goods movement system and any proposed changes are assessed from a social equity and environmental perspective (e.g., noise reduction, greenhouse gas reduction).

### *Implementation Plan:*

- Identify specific projects, programs, standards and tools that will improve freight and goods movement consistent with the goals set forth in the strategy.
- Prioritize solutions taking into consideration benefit/cost, safety objectives, mobility, economy, equity, and funding considerations.
- Define and implementation plan with short, medium, and long-term projects/initiatives based on priorities.
- Identify performance measures and reporting timeframes.

## **Engagement**

Extensive engagement will be undertaken to develop the Plan and a range of industry stakeholders have already been consulted to feed into formulation of the framework which will guide development of the Plan. These include freight industry members, businesses, local and regional governments, non-profit organizations, local foundations, ministries, agencies, as well as logistics experts and academic partners.

Engagement will be conducted through focus group discussion, surveys, and direct engagement stakeholders to help identify the wide range of issues impacting freight and goods movement such as time of day restrictions, curbside restrictions, road capacity, the absence of existing dedicated routes, land use conflicts, and regulatory restrictions.

Regular check-ins with stakeholders will be held to ensure the developing plan is addressing the issues identified and we will work closely with adjacent municipalities, such as Peel Region, to ensure that this plan builds upon the experience and understanding other jurisdictions have gleaned from their extensive freight strategy development process.

## **Police Escort for Excess Loads**

On April 12, 2017 the Public Works and Infrastructure Committee requested by way of a motion, information on Transportation Services' practice with respect to the need for police escorts whenever excess loads are transported and whether alternative service providers could offer the same service instead of Toronto Police.

## **Current Highway Traffic Act Regulation**

The transport of oversized loads is regulated under the Highway Traffic Act (HTA), R.S.O. 1990, c. H.8. The HTA sets limits on truck and load weight and dimensions, which if exceeded require a permit from the local road authority.

### *Police versus Private Escort*

The HTA places the responsibility on road authorities to enforce the Act's requirements for oversized loads and does not make any specific reference regarding the need for police escorts. Although the escort of certain loads could be provided by private "pilot vehicle" companies, the Transportation Services practice was that excess loads (i.e., loads greater than those identified in the HTA) be escorted by police. The rationale for the use of a police escort was primarily because they have certain powers assigned to

them under the HTA and would be able to ensure safety and address unexpected situations during the transport of a load.

### **Practice in other Municipalities**

A limited scan of practices in adjacent jurisdictions was conducted to understand if they required police escorts for oversized loads. York Region and Markham require a police escort be provided for excess loads, while Peel and Mississauga determine the need on a case by case basis as does Ottawa.

### **Transportation Services' Revised Practice on Police Escort**

Recent amendments to the HTA provide new authorities to private escort providers to be able to direct traffic around excess load movements. With these new authorities the additional oversight once required through police escorts is no longer necessary. As of August 1, 2017, and with concurrence from Toronto Police and Legal Services, Transportation Services has removed the requirement for police escort from its standard permit conditions and replaced it with a "pilot vehicle" requirement to be provided by the transport company.

This change in no way exposes the City to any additional liability. Instead, applicants will have direct access to a competitive marketplace with an increased number of options available to them to secure their own excess load escort provider.

### **Preferred Routes for Oversized Loads**

The Freight and Goods Movement Strategy will develop routes to specifically accommodate oversized loads travelling into and out of employment areas in the City. Routes with obstacles to oversized loads, such as low overpasses, narrow rights of way, and other concerns will be screened out, and routes providing the most direct access between employment areas and the freeway network surrounding the City will be prioritized.

## **CONTACT**

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## **SIGNATURE**

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Barbara Gray  
General Manager, Transportation Services

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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Attachment 1 - Official Plan Policies in Support of Freight and Goods Movement



## **Attachment 1 - Official Plan Policies in Support of Freight and Goods Movement**

### **a) Goods Movement (Chapter 2):**

*"The efficient and safe movement of goods is vital to the economic health and competitiveness of Toronto and the larger region. The key elements of the goods movement system in the City are the major road and rail freight networks and the pattern of collection and distribution points they serve. The challenge is to develop and maximize the efficient use of this system by such means as:*

- *joint distribution centres and consolidated delivery services;*
- *rationalization of road/rail freight movements;*
- *selectively increasing road capacity for trucks, including priority truck lanes;*
- *increasing off-street loading, servicing and courier facilities;*
- *lower emission freight vehicles and increased local production and distribution;*
- *designated truck routes; and*
- *encouraging the freight industry to explore new technologies and practices."*

### **b) Under Section 2.1 of the Official Plan (BUILDING A MORE LIVEABLE URBAN REGION) policy number 1 (e):**

- *"1. Toronto will work with neighbouring municipalities, the Province of Ontario and Metrolinx to address mutual challenges and to develop a framework for dealing with growth across the GTA which:*

*e) increases the efficiency and safety of the road and rail freight networks in the movement of goods and services;"*

### **c) Under Section 2.2 of the Official Plan (Structuring Growth in the City: Integrating Land Use and Transportation) policy number 3 (e):**

- *"3. The City's transportation network will be maintained and developed to support the growth management objectives of this Plan by:*

*e) supporting the implementation of measures for the long-term protection of 400-series highways and those major roads that play a vital role in the City's freight distribution system;"*

### **d) Under Section 2.4 of the Official Plan (Bringing the City Together: A Progressive Agenda of Transportation Change) policy number 12 provides guidance on actions that should be undertaken and considered by the City to ensure freight movement is aligned with Council's wishes.**

- *"12. The City will work with other orders of government, other municipalities, representatives from across the goods movement industry and the public to develop a comprehensive multi-modal strategy for the safe, efficient and*

*environmentally sustainable movement of goods within the GTHA. This strategy will include:*

*a) the documentation and sharing of best practices and participation in freight data collection program for the GTHA;*

*b) promotion of environmentally sustainable modes and technologies;*

*c) identification of innovative approaches for urban freight movements;*

*d) the establishment of a study of potential measures to encourage long distance freight trips not serving Toronto to bypass the City by using alternative corridors such as Highway 407 and those provided by the rail network;*

*e) identification of infrastructure needs;*

*f) guidelines for the preparation of local Freight Audits to assist in making informed decisions to enable the safe and efficient movement of freight;*

*g) policies for the improved management and more effective use of: 400-series highways; major roads that play a vital role in the City's freight distribution system; rail corridors; and, freight terminals; and*

*h) freight supportive integrated land use-transportation policies."*