

**Infrastructure and Environment Committee
City of Toronto**

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IE16.1 Freight and Goods Movement Strategy**

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Preamble

- Thank you, Mr. Chair and the committee for providing me with this opportunity to speak to you on the release of the “Freight and Goods Movement Strategy”.
- I am Dr Judy Farvolden, the Executive Director of the University of Toronto Transportation Research Institute, which we refer to as UTTRI.
- Our goods movement work is conducted through the Smart Freight Centre, a collaboration between the University of Toronto, McMaster University and York University, launched in April 2019 with seed funding from Region of Peel.

Freight and Goods Movement Strategy

- As is noted in the Freight and Goods Management Strategy, the City of Toronto does not yet have a policy or plan focused on the movement and coordination of freight activity. Its time that it did. We spend a lot of time in our region talking about the movement of people but have only recently begun to pay significant attention to the movement of goods.
- The proposed Freight and Goods Movement Strategy very aptly identifies both “issues” and “opportunities”.
- There are so many issues. What do you think when you are on one of our urban highways or a Toronto street with a lot of truck traffic? Do you have safety concerns? Do you fume as you sit in congestion with trucks slowly accelerating?
- Or do you think, thank goodness those trucks are transporting the things my family and I need to my grocery store. But as it gets to your grocery store, do you worry about the fumes that truck is emitting as it moves through your constituent’s neighbourhoods? We know that some neighbourhoods bear a disproportionate share of the burden of truck volumes, noise, negative health impacts, etc.



- In the fall of 2019, like the City of Toronto, the Smart Freight Centre was focussed on congestion management and preparing for growth and people’s changing consumption patterns, and how that would increase the number of delivery vehicles on the road, the demand for access to curb space to load and unload, and emissions.
- If we thought we were being disrupted before, in the spring of 2020 congestion was a memory but, limited by stay-at-home orders, people’s consumption patterns drastically changed. What will future demand patterns look like when we emerge from COVID19 and our roads are once again busy connectors of economic activity? It has never been more urgent to develop a strategy for freight and goods movement.
- But let’s consider the opportunities. With a healthy municipal and coordinated regional strategy, we will facilitate the movement of goods through the logistics supply chain that connects the producers of raw materials to the manufacturers, the manufacturers to the distributors, the distributors to the wholesalers and retailers and ultimately, to consumers who, increasingly, want goods delivered to their front doors.
- Who knew that the freight and goods movement industry contributes about 30% of the City of Toronto’s GDP and that 630,000 people – 44% of Toronto’s workforce – are employed in freight and goods movement-related activities? By improving system performance, like travel time reliability, and by increasing access to loading and unloading zones, the Freight and Goods Movement Strategy supports economic competitiveness, local industry and all of these jobs.
- A Strategic Truck Network designed with both system performance and equity, environment and safety considerations addresses the needs of all residents, including vulnerable road users – seniors, youth, pedestrians and cyclists.
- We don’t want to experience the chaos like that reported around downtown distribution centres in New York City. The strategy proposes ways of dealing with the increased delivery demand with innovative short-term strategies, like using delivery vans as mobile pick-up and drop-off locations in repurposed parking lots, and longer-term strategies that would use land-use policies to create regional drop yards.
- The strategy also proposes to deal with short-term issues through street management and longer-term issues through street design and redesign, some of which requires the involvement of the Ministry of Transportation.
- The seventh of the seven goals of the Freight and Goods Movement Strategy is “adaptability”, the ability to identify, anticipate and adapt to emerging trends, innovations and risks affecting the freight and goods movement industry.
- And the Strategy mentions that it will be supported by parallel work at the Smart Freight Centre.

Smart Freight Centre Expertise in Urban Freight and Goods Movement

- Identifying, anticipating and adapting to emerging trends, innovations and risks is the definition of the Smart Freight Centre's research program.
- In June, we submitted a \$9 million grant proposal to the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council. This project, titled CLUE: City Logistics for the Urban Econom, has four themes and 24 projects. Of particular interest to the City of Toronto are projects
 - to understand and mitigate the impacts of e-commerce on neighbourhoods;
 - for a curbside loading zone pilot with video recognition software provided by Bosch;
 - for safer interactions between trucks and vulnerable road users, where we will partner with CHET, which will apply its experience in truck driver training;
 - for the off-peak delivery extended pilot, which builds on our previous pilot, with partners recruited by the Retail Council of Canada and data insights provided by Geotab. Geotab is an Oakville-based company that has data-collecting devices on millions of vehicles around the world and a statistically significant representation of freight and goods movement data in the Toronto area. We have been eager to partner with Geotab and this creates the opportunity.
- The Smart Freight Centre and its partners are exceedingly well positioned to support the City in understanding the impacts of freight and goods movement.

Requests

- We have a few requests to make as you go down this road.
- **Preserve access to data.** We need data to identify, anticipate and adapt to emerging trends in consumer preferences and risks inherent in legacy and novel delivery methods. The Smart Freight Centre aspires to support our government partners with evidence in support of decision making. Where is evidence-based decision making without data? So, while protecting privacy, it's important that the City has access to the data it needs to understand the needs of its residents, and the demand freight and goods movement is placing on our public roads and at the curbside.
- **Continue to take a leadership position.** As it has in the development of so many other transportation policies, Toronto is leading again. I believe the Freight and Goods Movement Strategy will provide an excellent roadmap for the City's goods movement strategy and will be one of the definitive references for other jurisdictions that will consult it for guidance in drafting their own plans.

- **Continue to create opportunities for partnership and collaboration.** Transportation Services is well known and respected for its contributions and productively exploiting opportunities for pilots and partnerships. The Smart Freight Centre is grateful to be among those partners and to be supporting delivery pilot projects.
- **Connect with the Smart Freight Centre.** I hope you will contact the Smart Freight Centre to learn more about urban goods movement or to discuss goods movement issues that concern you. We welcome opportunities to share more information about our research and to tell you more about how that research can be useful to the City of Toronto.

Closing

- Among the lessons of 2020, we know we need to be able to anticipate and respond to emerging trends, because the future will not be like the past.
- Thank you, Mr Chair and thanks to the committee for allowing me this opportunity to speak on behalf of colleagues at the Smart Freight Centre.