Cities’ Freight Distribution and Their Issues

Baltimore:

Baltimore County’s strategic location offers several efficient ways to transport freight throughout the city. Nearby, Baltimore has deep water port facilities which allows for both domestic and international freight shipping. In addition, the Port of Baltimore is the closest port to the midwest. It has grown to be one of the top fourteen busiest ports on the east coast. Every year, Baltimore Port moves over 33 million tons of cargo. Not only does the Port of Baltimore provide tons of goods to residents, but it has stimulated Baltimore’s economy over the years. It provides over $2.4 billion in wages to over 80,000 port-related jobs.

In addition to Baltimore’s successful sea port, it has three major airports which is just as important. Baltimore Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI), Ronald Reagan National (DCA), and Washington Dulles Airport (IAD) all provide services for both people and goods. BWI handles seven air freight carriers and services over twenty million passengers and 221 million pounds of cargo annually. Baltimore’s major airports not only connect to cities in the United States, but it also connects to international cities.

Although Baltimore has great ways of transporting large capacity freight through its strategically located port and three major airports, there are some issues that exist. First, the Port of Baltimore and its heavy shipping/transportation has resulted in toxic pollutants to both the atmosphere and the water. In 2009, Baltimore created The Port of Baltimore Clean Diesel Program. Two years into the program and a $3.5 million grant later, harbor craft and cargo-handling equipment is starting to be replaced by “cleaner” engines to reduce emissions. However, pollution is still a major issue and must be resolved by lowering toxic emissions through newer technology.

Seattle:

Because of the city’s geographical location, Seattle’s main form of freight transportation is by sea. Surrounded by two bodies of water: Lake Washington and the Pacific Ocean, one can move cargo across the Pacific Ocean or to every city on the
west coast. Even though Seattle is mainly known for marine transportation, they are also efficient by air. The Seattle-Tacoma airport offers transportation to 19 different countries and 71 domestic destinations.

The Port of Seattle is one of the main sources of freight transportation which is the home for 17 ocean carriers which travel from places like Alaska, India or China. Also, due to Seattle’s innovative vibe, the port has improved their form of transportation by making it eco-friendly. This program is called the Green Gateway for sustainable cargo which allows the port to produce the lowest carbon footprint from Asia to the Midwest.

Transportation by air is also fairly popular. Seattle’s location creates a great gateway to transport to Asia. Thus, the Seattle-Tacoma Airport is ranked as 19th in the amount of air cargo transported.

Then, Seattle’s Freight transportation by truck is not as big as their transportation by water or air since it is not a great city to transport cargo to the rest of the United States since it is cornered in the Northwest. It does have a large scale of trucks since it receives a lot of cargo from the ships, but they are mainly used to transport the cargo to larger shipping facilities in other cities. For example, the Seattle Freight Service, Inc operates 125 power units and ships to points in Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Montana.

Los Angeles (LA):

The city of Los Angeles contains one of the biggest transportation systems in the world, importing goods from China and other overseas countries, and exporting them across the United States. The Alameda Corridor (shown right) is a new railroad, built in the last 20 years, that connects Los Angeles and Long Beach, including their ports, to the continental railroad system. This is one of the major transportation systems to get goods from Asian, producer countries to consumer United States, so efficiency and speed is key. Not only must the trains used work on all of the railways in the system, but there must be massive amounts of coordination to ensure that there are no accidents and that there are no holdups in the transportation process. This is one of the main reasons that the Alameda Corridor was built. Before it’s construction, cargo trains ran on the same lines as long passenger trains, and this new railway allowed the two systems to be split, creating more efficiency for trains, and better timetables for the transportation of goods and people.

Most of the items that comes through the port and the railways in Los Angeles(LA) are large scale manufactured items, but any kind of specialty or fragile shipping into or out of LA
requires more care. This is where LA’s main airport, LAX, comes into play. LAX is Los Angeles’ main international airport for both passengers and goods. Specialty and fragile items, such as hospital or medical tools, come through the airport to reduce the chance of harmful damage being done to them.

Trucks are still a large part of the Los Angeles Transportation Network mainly for short ranges transportation. There is very little reason to put all of the incoming cargo on trains as a lot of it will be going to The city of LA and other nearby cities, so Trucks can be more efficient depending on the traffic hazards they might cause.

Without these systems, cities all over the United States, especially the western side would have to wait much longer to receive any foreign imports, especially produced goods.

Detroit
Detroit, Michigan used to be one of the most prominent manufacturing cities in the United States. With manufacturing as the main source of income for Detroit, shipment of raw material is vital for the city’s economy. Detroit is largest traditional automotive center (General Motors, Ford, Motor Company, and Chrysler). Along with producing cars Detroit has defense contracts when they make motor vehicles for the Armed Services. Finally, Detroit has an oil refinery and it produces lithium-ion batteries. For their economy it is important that Detroit finds a fast and efficient ways to ship their goods and to receive raw material needed to produce the good. Detroit has many different types of ways to ship materials or good. They use railways, aviation, trucks, and ships to transport and receive important goods.

Aviation is using the airways for shipments of goods. For the most part aviation handles the transportation of high value automotive and electronic components, emergency medical supplies, and mail/packages. Aviation is the fastest form of shipping in Detroit but it cost the most. Along with the cost, getting the goods in the city to the factories will require more money and more time lost.

Railways are also a very common for of shipping in Detroit. Railways are good because they connect Detroit with the rest of the country. Railways usually transport coal, cars, and ore. The problem with railways is that in recent years the recession bankrupted Detroit. Because of this many rail companies either lost their business or they moved to another city. As a result many tracks are left abandoned and the quantity of material coming and leaving Detroit isn’t at maximum capacity.
Trucking as a form of shipping is the most common. With the extensive highway system transporting goods across the country is very easy. Trucks usually transport auto parts and cars. This form of shipping is the cheapest but isn’t as fast as aviation or using railways. Also another problem with using trucks is the amount of CO2 that they emit. Trucks can’t carry as much as trains therefore there is need for more trucks. More trucks mean more CO2 in the atmosphere.

The last type of shipping that Detroit uses is maritime shipping. With Detroit having access to Lake St Clair and Lake Erie this allows them to ship to many parts of Canada. The city mainly uses them to ship the refined oil to Canada. This is efficient because Detroit can’t send material to other parts of the US because there aren’t any waterways that have access to other parts of the US.

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