



CASE STUDY

Southern California Association of Governments



The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), Regional Transportation Planning Agency and a Council of Governments for the six counties (Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura) and 191 cities in Southern California. It encompasses an area covering more than 38,000 square miles. The agency develops long-range regional transportation plans including sustainable communities' strategy and growth forecast components, regional transportation improvement programs, regional housing needs allocations and a portion of the South Coast Air Quality management plans.

Problem

The complexity of goods movement and deliveries combined with the constant innovation of various actors in the industry necessitates tailored and nuanced strategies involving multidisciplinary approaches to core issues rather than superficial addressing of negative externalities.

SCAG needed assistance understanding the impact these delivery issues and innovation in the freight and logistics industry had on their transportation network with the limited curb space available in the City of Los Angeles.

Project

Iteris was selected to provide our Specialized Consulting services to conduct a Last-Mile Freight Delivery Study. The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of last-mile delivery issues for the Southern California of Governments (SCAG) and its member Cities by examining the relationship between last-mile access conditions, the delivery of goods, and the role of last-mile delivery in the overall transportation system.

The study assesses the use of curb areas for deliveries, and the magnitude of other curb uses competing for limited curb space in the study area of the City of Los Angeles. It provides stakeholder and analytical findings and recommendations for blocks in case study areas, City of Los Angeles pilot project concepts, policy considerations and a Toolbox of Strategies for cities throughout the SCAG region to utilize when faced with their own unique delivery challenges.

Planning for efficient last-mile delivery is an ongoing and sustained activity. As land uses change and delivery operations, logistics and consumer needs and desires adjust, so to must the public agencies tools and solutions. Key drivers such as e-commerce, indicate that delivery activity and techniques will continue to proliferate, and government agencies, SCAG and its member cities are better served improving the underlying conditions and factors in the accommodation of last-mile freight rather than simply addressing its symptoms on an ad hoc basis.

Last-Mile Delivery Issues

Last-mile delivery challenges are of two basic types:

- Delivering goods on time, intact, efficiently, and safely
- Minimizing disruption and external costs to the community and the environment

However, major delivery industry challenges and trends are exacerbating these issues such as:

- Smaller, more frequent shipments for business customers
- “Densification” of Commercial and Industrial Space

- Trucking industry issues of driver shortage, hours of service, driver retention, electronic logging mandates, and truck parking
- Urban congestion affecting deliveries
- E-commerce increasing the frequency of small deliveries
- Fulfillment systems offering rapid delivery
- Alternate systems and modes such as drones, 3D printing, cargo bikes, and autonomous vehicles
- “Uberization” and “gig economy” participants



Solutions in the Last Mile

This report was prepared for SCAG and its component agencies to define their opportunities to bring solutions to last-mile freight issues while facilitating efforts, which may need partnership with other agencies, private industry, or other stakeholders.

The data, stakeholder outreach, and literature review for this study has reinforced those issues with last-mile freight delivery based on the following perspectives:

- Many see inefficient use of space
- Others see opportunities to avoid conflicts
- Others prefer to operate in a gray area of regulation
- Some are too busy to be concerned with the details of delivery conditions and simply accept conditions as they are

The strategies proposed in this study are meant to be a range of options to be considered for the specific delivery issues at the block, district, or city level. Nearly every strategy brings costs to various parties. The key is understanding the benefits of these costs so that they can be factored into decision making, piloted and addressed early within the implementation process to ensure improvements meet expectations rather than being seen as a penalty or inconvenience.