

4: Multimodal Accessibility

Introduction

A multimodal transportation system is vital to the local and regional economy of Richmond. The Port of Richmond, Interstate Highways, and CSX and Norfolk Southern rail facilities allow freight to easily move into and out of the region. Main Street Station and the Richmond International Airport connect passengers to major markets and cities within the United States and beyond. Combined, these facilities support the Richmond economy by providing Richmond with a multimodal transportation network that facilitates the movement of goods and people, connecting Richmond to major markets across the United States and around the world.

Main Street Station

Due to its central location and historic features, Main Street Station has evolved into a hub of multimodal transportation for the Richmond region. Currently, Amtrak's Northeast Regional line provides daily service to Newport News, Washington DC, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and other northeast destinations from Main Street Station. In fiscal year 2010, 32 trains per week stopped at the station with 27,520 passenger boardings and alightings per year. Additionally, in December 2010, Megabus began service to and from Richmond via Main Street Station, linking Richmond to six other major cities along the east coast. The low-cost bus carrier provides passengers with

access to Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Hampton, Raleigh-Durham and Charlotte. In April 2011, Megabus carried 6,757 passengers to or from Main Street Station.

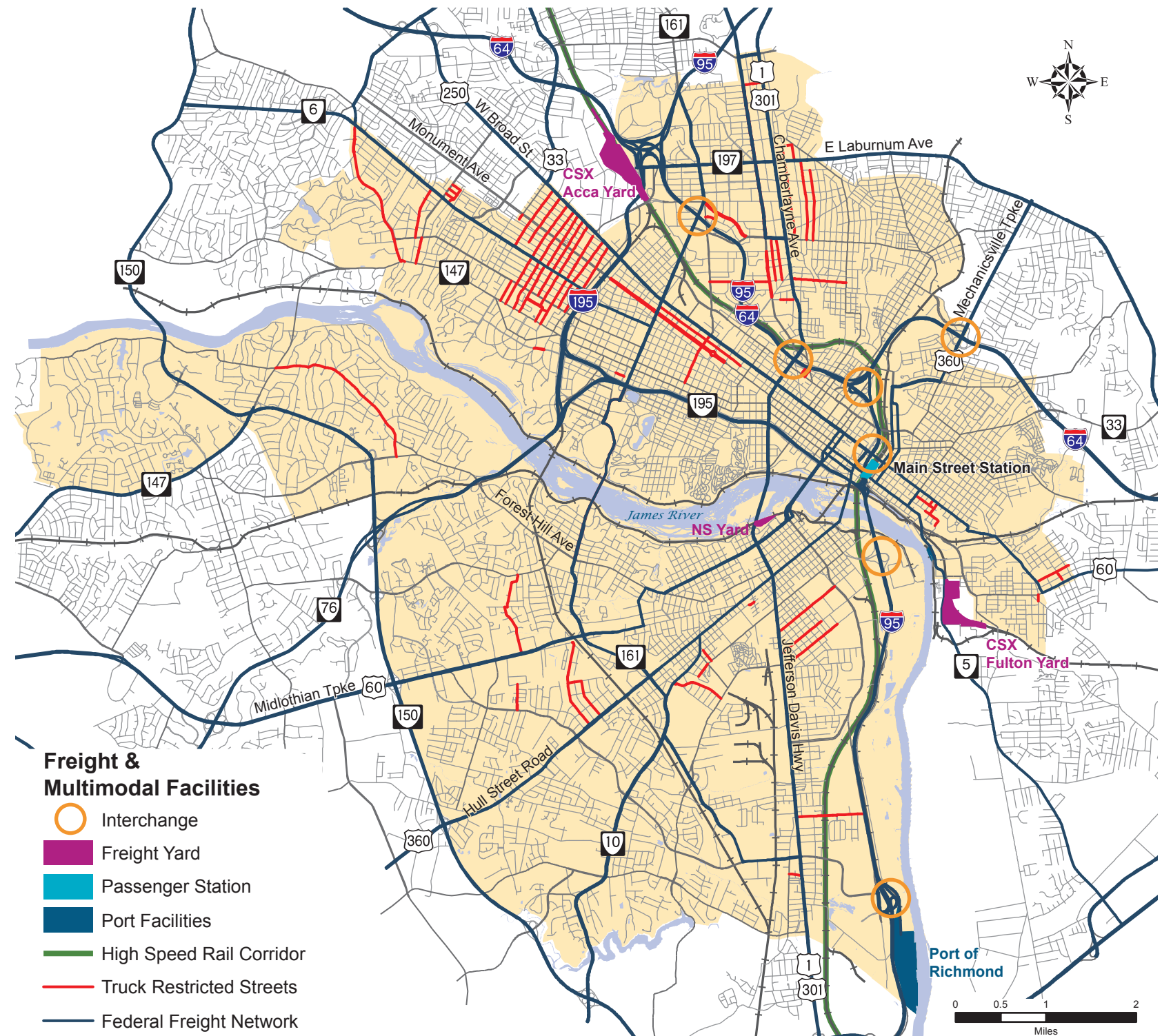
Main Street Station has great potential as a multimodal transportation hub but is limited by existing rail infrastructure.

Unfortunately, the current rail infrastructure north and south of Main Street Station limits the passenger train service Amtrak can provide to the

station. Specifically, the interconnections between the tracks that serve Main Street Station and the main CSX north-south line in the vicinity of Centralia preclude trains that serve destinations in North Carolina and further south from reaching Main Street Station. Furthermore, the track alignment and pattern from Staples Mill Road Station and Main Street Station, through Acca Yard, induces significant delays between the two stations. The Department of Rail and Public Transit has plans to solve both of these problems, but they remain unfunded. Due to these limitations, only Northeast Regional trains that serve the northeast corridor and Newport News currently stop at Main Street Station.



Figure 12: Multimodal Facilities



Port of Richmond

The Port of Richmond serves as an intermodal freight facility capable of transferring cargo containers across various modes of transportation. Its prime location along CSX rail and I-95 provide the port with direct access to the Northeastern and Midwestern markets of the country. Based on the Port of Richmond's 2008 Annual Report, the amount of tonnage passing through the port has steadily increased over recent years with 483,499 tons of cargo passing through the Port in 2008. The recent recession, however, has resulted in a substantial decline in activity with the loss of port calls from two major international shippers. While the port remains a key economic engine for the City of Richmond and the region, the port is still hindered by limited dock space, a small turning basin, the limitation of drafts to 22 feet, and limited land for expansion due to its physical location between the James River, I-95 and CSX railroad. To address some of these problems, the City has agreed to lease the port to the Virginia Port Authority with the hope of improving freight movement through the port by tying the port closer to the Port of Hampton Roads.



Port of Richmond

Port of Richmond, Tonnage Summary (2006-2008)			
	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008
Total Tonnage	439,145	449,875	483,499

Source: Port of Richmond, 2008 Annual Report

Richmond International Airport

The Richmond International Airport (RIC), operated by the Capital Region Airport Commission, is the fourth busiest airport in Virginia and is served by eight commercial carriers. According to the December 2009 Aviation Activity Report, RIC served 3,305,199 passengers and handled 85,245,017 tons of cargo in 2009. Both the number of passengers and amount of cargo are down slightly from 2008, mostly attributable to the economic recession.



Richmond International Airport

Richmond International Airport, Activity Summary (2008-2010)			
	2008	2009	2010
Total Passengers	3,490,356	3,305,199	3,311,747
Total Cargo (lbs.)	107,509,826	85,245,017	85,037,108

Source: Richmond International Airport, Aviation Activity Report December 2010

Freight and Intermodal Facilities

The city also contains numerous other freight and intermodal facilities in the form of rail storage yards and designated truck highway routes in the federal freight highway network. CSX maintains Fulton and Acca Yards, while Norfolk Southern operates a small rail yard just south across the James River from Downtown Richmond. The federally designated truck routes predominately consist of the interstates and highways along with other strategic routes needed to facilitate the movement in freight. All interstate interchanges in the city are with roadways that are federally designated truck routes. Conversely, the city and VDOT have restricted truck traffic on numerous city streets. Streets with prohibited truck access primarily consist of residential streets west of I-95, in Richmond's Northside to the east and west of Chamberlayne Avenue, and a few residential streets in close proximity to industrial areas. Trucks are also prohibited on Monument Avenue due to its historic significance.



CSX Acca Yard

Interstate Access Points and Gateways

I-95, often called the Main Street of the East Coast, passes through Richmond, as does I-64, a major east-west interstate connecting Richmond to the Midwest and Hampton Roads. Access to these major interstates for commuters, visitors, and freight is critical to the efficient operation of traffic and to economic development potential. The section of I-95 that passes through Richmond, was originally built as the Richmond Petersburg Turnpike by the Richmond Petersburg Turnpike Authority and was a tolled facility until 1992. Due to its age and origination as a tolled state highway, today's I-95 in Richmond does not meet current interstate standards for bridge clearances, shoulders, and interchange design.

In particular, all interchanges north of the river either lack full directional access or have confusing ramp access points. Just north of the city/county line, the Brook Road interchange only provides on-ramp access in the southbound direction and off-ramp access in the northbound direction. Just south of there, the Hermitage Road interchange similarly only provides on-ramp access in the southbound direction and off-ramp access in the northbound direction. While full directional access is provided at the Boulevard/Hermitage Road interchange, the ramp configuration is confusing and limits capacity. At Belvidere Street, no direct access is provided from southbound Chamberlayne Avenue/Belvidere Street to northbound I-95. Furthermore, northbound I-95 does not have direct access to Belvidere Street. The I-95/I-64/3rd/5th/7th Street Interchange complex has numerous atypical movements. The Broad Street interchange downtown also does not provide direct access from southbound I-95 to eastbound Broad Street, though access to the East End is available via the Franklin Street ramp just south of the main interchange. Furthermore, this interchange has some particularly tight turning radii and short weaving areas, limiting throughput of vehicles and safety.

Many of the I-95 interchanges do not provide full access and do not meet modern interstate safety standards.



I-95 Under Construction north of downtown Richmond, 1957