

FAST Act Section 1116 National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) Guidance

Designating and Certifying Critical Rural Freight Corridors and Critical Urban Freight Corridors

Questions & Answers

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The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) requires the FHWA Administrator to establish a National Highway Freight Network (NHFN) to strategically direct Federal resources and policies toward improved performance of the NHFN. This network is the focus of funding under the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) and a significant funding target under the Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) Grants Program (Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program) (23 U.S.C. 117). The NHFN consists of the following four subsystems: (1) the Primary Highway Freight System (PHFS); (2) those portions of the Interstate System not part of the PHFS; (3) Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CRFCs); and (4) Critical Urban Freight Corridors (CUFCs). (23 U.S.C. 167(c)).

These Questions and Answers provide guidance for States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) that designate and submit CRFCs and CUFCs to the FHWA Administrator and certify to the FHWA Administrator that their designated CRFCs and CUFCs meet the requirements under 23 U.S.C. 167(e) and (f). (FAST Act 1116; 23 U.S.C. 167(g)).

CRFCs and CUFCs are important freight corridors that provide critical connectivity to the NHFN. By designating these important corridors, States can strategically direct resources toward improved system performance and efficient movement of freight on the NHFN. The designation of CRFCs and CUFCs will increase the State's NHFN, allowing expanded use of NHFP formula funds and FASTLANE Grant Program funds for eligible projects that support national goals identified in 23 U.S.C. 167(b) and 23 U.S.C. 117(a)(2).

The following series of questions of answers provides guidance for complying with the CRFC and CUFC designation and certification requirements under 23 U.S.C. 167(g).

Questions and Answers

Question 1: What are the requirements for designating a CRFC?

Answer 1: 23 U.S.C. 167(e) identifies the requirements for designating CRFCs. A State may designate a public road within the borders of the State as a CRFC if the public road is not in an

urbanized area (see Question 3 for more details), and meets one or more of the following seven elements:

- (A) is a [rural principal arterial](#) roadway and has a minimum of 25 percent of the annual average daily traffic of the road measured in passenger vehicle equivalent units from trucks ([Federal Highway Administration vehicle class 8 to 13](#));
- (B) provides access to energy exploration, development, installation, or production areas;
- (C) connects the PHFS or the Interstate System to facilities that handle more than:
 - 1. 50,000 20-foot equivalent units per year; or
 - 2. 500,000 tons per year of bulk commodities;
- (D) provides access to:
 - 1. a grain elevator;
 - 2. an agricultural facility;
 - 3. a mining facility;
 - 4. a forestry facility; or
 - 5. an intermodal facility;
- (E) connects to an international port of entry;
- (F) provides access to significant air, rail, water, or other freight facilities in the State; or
- (G) is determined by the State to be vital to improving the efficient movement of freight of importance to the economy of the State.

First and last mile connectivity is essential to an efficiently functioning freight system. These public roads provide immediate links between such freight generators as manufacturers, distribution points, rail intermodal and port facilities and a distribution pathway. FHWA encourages States, when making CRFC designations, to consider first or last mile connector routes from high-volume freight corridors to key rural freight facilities, including manufacturing centers, agricultural processing centers, farms, intermodal, and military facilities.

Question 2: What are the requirements for designating a CUFC?

Answer 2: 23 U.S.C. 167(f) identifies the requirements for designating CUFCs. In an urbanized area with a population of 500,000 or more individuals, the MPO, in consultation with the State, may designate a CUFC. In an urbanized area with a population of less than 500,000 individuals, the State, in consultation with the MPO, may designate a CUFC.

A public road designated as a CUFC must be in an urbanized area, regardless of whether the population is above or below 500,000 individuals (see Question 3 for more details), and meet one or more of the following four elements:

- (A) connects an intermodal facility to:
 - 1. the PHFS;
 - 2. the Interstate System; or

3. an intermodal freight facility;
- (B) is located within a corridor of a route on the PHFS and provides an alternative highway option important to goods movement;
- (C) serves a major freight generator, logistic center, or manufacturing and warehouse industrial land; or
- (D) is important to the movement of freight within the region, as determined by the MPO or the State.

FHWA encourages States, when making CUFC designations, to consider first or last mile connector routes from high-volume freight corridors to freight-intensive land and key urban freight facilities, including ports, rail terminals, and other industrial-zoned land.

Question 3: How do the rural and urban designations influence how CRFC and CUFC routes are designated?

Answer 3: [Urbanized areas](#) with a population of 500,000 or more (For the list of 2010 urban areas visit the [2010 Census Urban and Rural Classification and Urban Area Criteria webpage](#)) define which partner will take the lead in designating the CUFC routes. In an urbanized area with a population of more than 500,000, the MPO, in consultation with the State, is responsible for designating the CUFC. In an urbanized area with a population of less than 500,000, the State, in consultation with the MPO, is responsible for designating the CUFC.

The minimum population for an urbanized area is 50,000, as defined by the Census Bureau. Being located inside or outside an [adjusted urbanized boundary](#) determines whether the public road can be designated as a CRFC or a CUFC. CUFC routes must be within the adjusted boundaries of an urbanized area. CRFC routes must be outside the adjusted boundaries of any urbanized area.

Question 4: Are there mileage limitations on the extent of CRFCs and CUFCs?

Answer 4: Yes. A State may designate as CRFCs a maximum of 150 miles of highway or 20 percent of the PHFS mileage in the State, whichever is greater. For each State, a maximum of 75 miles of highway or 10 percent of the PHFS mileage in the State, whichever is greater, may be designated as CUFCs. The mileage is based on centerline roadway mileage. The table below provides the estimated maximum limit of CRFC and CUFC mileage for each State. This information can also be found [here](#). States and MPOs (for urbanized areas over 500,000) are responsible for jointly determining how to distribute the CUFC mileage among the urbanized areas.

State	CRFC Maximum Mileage Limit	CUFC Maximum Mileage Limit
Alabama	162.61	81.30
Alaska	244.45	122.22
Arizona	205.12	102.56
Arkansas	150.00	75.00
California	623.54	311.77
Colorado	160.69	80.35
Connecticut	150.00	75.00
Delaware	150.00	75.00
Dist. of Columbia	0.00	75.00
Florida	320.14	160.07
Georgia	233.84	116.92
Hawaii	150.00	75.00
Idaho	150.00	75.00
Illinois	337.08	168.54
Indiana	194.25	97.13
Iowa	150.00	75.00
Kansas	150.00	75.00
Kentucky	150.00	75.00
Louisiana	150.00	75.00
Maine	150.00	75.00
Maryland	150.00	75.00
Massachusetts	150.00	75.00
Michigan	150.00	75.00
Minnesota	150.00	75.00
Mississippi	150.00	75.00
Missouri	204.65	102.33

State	CRFC Maximum Mileage Limit	CUFC Maximum Mileage Limit
Montana	188.47	94.23
Nebraska	150.00	75.00
Nevada	150.00	75.00
New Hampshire	150.00	75.00
New Jersey	150.00	75.00
New Mexico	202.31	101.16
New York	230.42	115.21
North Carolina	206.86	103.43
North Dakota	150.00	75.00
Ohio	284.91	142.46
Oklahoma	160.32	80.16
Oregon	155.06	77.53
Pennsylvania	282.53	141.26
Puerto Rico	150.00	75.00
Rhode Island	150.00	75.00
South Carolina	150.00	75.00
South Dakota	150.00	75.00
Tennessee	211.20	105.60
Texas	745.55	372.78
Utah	182.40	91.20
Vermont	150.00	75.00
Virginia	166.69	83.35
Washington	163.31	81.66
West Virginia	150.00	75.00
Wisconsin	150.00	75.00
Wyoming	150.00	75.00

Question 5: Who certifies the CRFC and CUFC designations?

Answer 5: 23 U.S.C 167(g) provides that each State or MPO that designates a corridor as either a CRFC or CUFC must certify to the FHWA Administrator that the designated corridor meets the applicable CRFC or CUFC requirements. The FHWA Division Office, acting on behalf of the FHWA Administrator, is responsible for reviewing the certification and forwarding it to FHWA Headquarters (HOFM-1) within 10 business days of receiving certification documentation. HOFM uses the information to periodically update the NHFN maps and tables to reflect CRFC and CUFC additions and changes on the FHWA freight Web site found [here](#). Although there may be other participants in the collection and reporting process, the ultimate responsibility for the accuracy and timely reporting of CRFC and CUFC designations lies with the State and/or MPO.

Question 6: What must CRFC and CUFC certifications include?

Answer 6: In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 167(g)(2), each State or MPO that designates a corridor as a CRFC or CUFC must certify to the FHWA Administrator that the corridor meets the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 167(e) or 167(f), respectively. Note that when a State or MPO designates a public road as a CUFC, it must document in its certification that it has consulted with the other, as required by 23 U.S.C. 167(f)(1) and (2). The cap on the CUFC mileage designation is established on a Statewide basis (23 U.S.C. 167(f)(4)), and therefore, the State DOT and MPOs in the State should work together to certify appropriate routes while staying within the Statewide cap. Appendix A provides examples for use in developing letters and documents to comply with the above requirements.

Additionally, when applicable, a State providing a certification under 23 U.S.C. 167(g)(2) should indicate that the designated freight corridors have been or (as of December 4, 2017) how it will be incorporated into the State Freight Plan under 49 U.S.C. 70202(b).

See Question 7 for the documentation that should be submitted for the identification of CRFCs or CUFCs.

Question 7: What information should a State or MPO submit to the FHWA Administrator identifying CRFC and CUFC routes and facilities?

Answer 7: The table in Appendix A identifies the documentation that should be submitted with the certification of the CRFC and CUFC routes and facilities. The following codification should be used when identifying routes and freight facilities. Include all associated CRFC_ID or CUFC_ID codification for each CRFC and CUFC routes and facilities (e.g., A, C, and E).

CRFC_ID	Route/facility descriptor:
A	Rural principal arterial roadway with a minimum of 25 percent of the annual average daily traffic of the road measured in passenger vehicle equivalent units from trucks
B	Provides access to energy exploration, development, installation, or production areas
C	Connects the PHFS or the Interstate System to facilities that handle more than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 50,000 20-foot equivalent units per year; or - 500,000 tons per year of bulk commodities;
D	Provides access to a grain elevator, an agricultural facility, a mining facility, a forestry facility, or an intermodal facility
E	Connect to an international port of entry
F	Provides access to significant air, rail, water, or other freight facilities
G	Corridor that is vital to improving the efficient movement of freight of importance to the economy of the State.
CUFC_ID	Route/facility descriptor:
H	Connects an intermodal facility to the PHFS, the Interstate System, or an intermodal freight facility.
I	Located within a corridor of a route on the PHFS and provides an alternative highway option important to goods movement
J	Serves a major freight generator, logistic center, or manufacturing and warehouse industrial land
K	Corridor that is important to the movement of freight within the region, as determined by the MPO or the State

Question 8: Are States or MPOs required to submit identified CRFC and CUFC routes and facilities as a geospatial network database?

Answer 8: No. However, while submitting this data is optional, States and MPOs with a geospatially enabled public roadway network or base map are encouraged to submit designated CRFC and CUFC routes in a Linear Referencing Systems (LRS) dataset. The datasets that are to be assembled by the States can either be submitted to FHWA as character separated value (CSV) files or entered manually on-screen via the HPMS software web application provided by FHWA. This will facilitate FHWA's review of the roadway mileage documentation in a timelier manner and with greater accuracy, efficiency and precision. Additionally, this will allow better coordination and integration with other LRS networks (e.g., Highway Performance Monitoring System (HPMS), National Highway Planning Network (NHPN), etc.) and enable State and MPO use of [All Roads Network Of Linear referenced Data \(ARNOLD\)](#).

Question 9: Do all CRFCs and CUFCs need to be designated and certified at one time?

Answer 9: No. There is no deadline for designating and certifying CRFCs and CUFCs. These designations may occur at any time, may be full or partial designations of the CUFCs or CRFCs mileage, and the two types do not need to be designated at the same time. Designations and certification may be provided to FHWA on a rolling basis. (23 U.S.C. 167(g)(1)). Whether the routes are part of an initial designation or subsequent removal or change, routes may be designated as long as the CRFC or CUFC requirements are met and the total CRFC or CUFC designation does not exceed the maximum mileage limit (23 U.S.C. 167(e) and (f)). Of particular **note**, there are project funding and other timeline implications that should be considered for designating and certifying CRFC and CUFC routes. See Questions 10 and 11 for more details. Because of this, FHWA recommends that States and MPOs work with the FHWA Divisions to develop an approach and timeline for identifying, tracking changes to, updating information on, and verifying the status of CRFC and CUFC roadways as part of the certification process.

Question 10: Can a State spend NHFP funding on CRFCs and CUFCs before designation and certification?

Answer 10: No. A CRFC or CUFC must be designated and certified before authorizing the use of NHFP funds on the route. (23 U.S.C 167(i)(3)(A) and (B)). NHFP funds can be authorized once the FHWA Division Office verifies that the certification is accurate. Additionally, the FASTLANE Grants Program includes eligibility for highway freight projects carried out on the NHFN. If a project is not on the PHFS and not on the Interstate system, then a CRFC or CUFC must be designated and certified for highway freight projects to qualify under that FASTLANE eligibility. (23 U.S.C 117(d)(1)(A)(i)).

Question 11: Do the CRFC and CUFC routes need to be included in the State Freight Plan?

Answer 11: No. CUFCs and CRFCs may be submitted for review separately from a State Freight Plan. FHWA recommends that the State Freight Plans are updated to include these routes once designated and certified, but a State does not need to wait to submit an initial State Freight Plan for compliance under 23 U.S.C. 167 (49 U.S.C. 70202(b)(3)) if no CUFC or CRFC routes have been designated.

Question 12: What are the goals of the NHFP?

Answer 12: 23 U.S.C. 167(b) establishes the goals of the NHFP. These goals are:

(1) to invest in infrastructure improvements and to implement operational improvements on the highways of the U.S. that—

(A)) strengthen the contribution of the NHFN to the economic competitiveness of the U.S.;

(B) reduce congestion and bottlenecks on the NHFN;

(C) reduce the cost of freight transportation;

(D)) improve the year-round reliability of freight transportation; and

(E)) increase productivity, particularly for domestic industries and businesses that create high-value jobs;

(2) to improve the safety, security, efficiency, and resiliency of freight transportation in rural and urban areas;

(3) to improve the state of good repair of the NHFN;

(4) to use innovation and advanced technology to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the NHFN;

(5) to improve the efficiency and productivity of the NHFN;

(6) to improve the flexibility of States to support multi-State corridor planning and the creation of multi-State organizations to increase the ability of States to address highway freight connectivity; and

(7) to reduce the environmental impacts of freight movement on the NHFN.

Question 13: What is the National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN)?

Answer 13: The FAST Act directs the Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy to establish an interim National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN) by June 4, 2016, and—after a public comment period— designate a final NMFN by December 4, 2016. (49 U.S.C. 70103). The interim NMFN must include: the NHFN (including designated CRFCs and CUFCs), freight rail systems of Class I railroads, public ports of the U.S. that have total annual foreign and domestic trade of at least 2,000,000 short tons; inland and intra-coastal waterways of the U.S.; the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence Seaway, and coastal and ocean routes along which domestic freight is

transported; the 50 airports located in the U.S. with the highest annual landed weight; and other strategic freight assets. (49 U.S.C. 70103(b)(2)). The FAST Act requires the Under Secretary to re-designate the NMFN every 5 years. (49 U.S.C. 70103(d)).

Question 14: Can planned roadways and freight facilities be designated as part of a CRFC or a CUFC?

Answer 14: Yes. A State or MPO may designate a planned public road or facility critical to the future efficient movement of goods as long as it meets the certification requirements. This may be based on projected forecasts of freight movements, scheduled construction of new intermodal facilities, etc. Adequate information should be gathered and documented to sufficiently verify the extent of a State or local jurisdiction's or Federal agency's ownership of a future facility. A CRFC or CUFC must be designated and certified before authorizing the use of NHFP funds on the route. See Question 10 for more details. For FASTLANE grants, if an applicant's request for funding is contingent on a new highway being designated as a CRFC or CUFC, the application should include information sufficient to demonstrate that the State and/or Metropolitan Planning Organization will make such designation before obligation of a FASTLANE grant, that the planned public road or facility is critical to the future efficient movement of goods, and that the CRFC or CUFC meets the criteria described in 23 U.S.C. 167(e) (for CRFCs) or 23 U.S.C. 167(f) (for CUFCs).

Question 15: How does a State calculate percent of the annual average daily traffic of the road measured in passenger vehicle equivalent units from trucks?

Answer 15: Passenger Vehicle Equivalent (or passenger car equivalent (PCE)) is a Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) term used to convert trucks to the equivalent number of passenger vehicles in areas of operational analysis such as Level of Services and other congestion analysis for extended length of highways. HCM 2010 Volume 2 Chapter 11 (or HCM 2000 Chapter 21) provides the generic PCEs for trucks and buses as follows: Level Terrain - 1.5; Rolling Terrain - 2.5; and Mountainous Terrain - 4.5. Terrain type definitions are found in the same HCM chapters and correspond with AASHTO's Green Book definitions. Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) and Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic (AADTT) data sources are found [here](#). To calculate percent of the AADT of the road measured in passenger vehicle equivalent units from trucks:

$$[(AADTT \times PCE)/AADT]$$

Question 16: Can a non-PHFS Interstate System route be designated as a CRFC or CUFC?
(Added May 23, 2016)

Answer 16: Yes, the law does not prohibit the designation of a non-PHFS Interstate System route as a CRFC or CUFC. For a CRFC, the designated public road cannot be in an urbanized area and must meet one or more of the elements listed in 23 U.S.C. 167(e)(1). For a CUFC, the designated public road must be in an urbanized area and meet one or more of the elements listed in 23 U.S.C. 167(f)(3). Note that the designation of a non-PHFS Interstate System route as a CRFC or CUFC will count against the cap on mileage designation, which is established on a Statewide basis (23 U.S.C. 167(e)(2) and (f)(4)).

Appendix A: The following examples are contained in the guidance for your use in the development of letters and documents to comply with the above requirements. Figure 1 is a certification letter that can be modified, and Figure 2 is a sample table that can be modified to document the list of CRFC and CUFC routes and connectors in the State.

Figure 1

(AGENCY LETTERHEAD)

(Date)

(Name) Division Administrator, Federal Highway Administration

(Address)

Dear _____:

STATEMENT: As required by 23 U.S.C 167(g), and other pertinent Federal regulations, the following table identifies critical freight corridors in accordance with the current FHWA guidance covering the designation and certification requirements.

CRITICAL RURAL FREIGHT CORRIDOR CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the public roads listed in the table below meet the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 167(e) as designated CRFC routes and connectors.

I further certify that the length in centerline mileage is accurate and does not exceed the maximum mileage limit, that the designated freight corridor have been coordinated with the appropriate stakeholder groups, and (as of December 4, 2017) that the freight corridors have been, or will be incorporated into the State Freight Plan prior to FHWA authorizing the use of Federal funds.

CRITICAL URBAN FREIGHT CORRIDOR CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the public roads listed in the table below meet the requirements of 23 U.S.C. 167(f) as designated CUFC routes and connectors.

I further certify that the applicable consultation requirements under 23 U.S.C. 167(f)(1) or (2) have been satisfied,

I further certify that the length in centerline mileage is accurate and does not exceed the maximum mileage limit, that the designated freight corridor have been coordinated with the appropriate stakeholder groups, and (as of December 4, 2017) that the freight corridors have been, or will be incorporated into the State Freight Plan prior to FHWA authorizing the use of Federal funds.

Dated at _____, this _____ day of _____, 2____

Sincerely, _____

