

Air Profile

Freight and Goods Movement Study- Phase I

Air Freight

The Nashville International Airport covers 4,417 acres and is served by 17 scheduled air carriers. The scheduled passenger carriers provide direct service to 81 different markets and make extensive global connections. Freight facilities are located adjacent to the airport's passenger terminal. The Nashville Air Cargo Link all-cargo complex is located across the airfield from the passenger facility. These cargo connections help meet the high speed transportation needs of area industries such as Dell, whose business model depends on rapid integration of components to the market. The automotive manufacturers also are occasionally dependent on air cargo to keep their assembly lines moving, and the health care facilities require rapid transport from time to time.

Continued development and improvement of the airport facilities for freight purposes plays an important role in attracting and retaining business of this type. The more "high tech" the industry, the more likely it is to require air transport as part of its operating strategy. While growth in air traffic will not likely reduce the number of trucks on the highway, it is still an integral part of the transportation infrastructure requiring the same careful planning as the rest of the network.

The nation's two largest integrated air freight carriers are FedEx and UPS. Both carriers maintain air hubs a short distance from Nashville. FedEx has their main air facility in Memphis, a 215 mile drive west on I-40, and UPS has a hub at Louisville, KY, 175 miles north on I-65. The practical result of this proximity to the air hubs is that shipments tendered to either of these companies - nominally considered air freight - in fact is moving by truck out of Nashville. In order to make the cutoff times for their departing flights at these hub facilities, feeder trucks out of Nashville must leave the city during rush hour. The arrival side is a little more flexible as the trucks can travel early in the morning; however, they depart the airport some time after planes have landed, and after Nashville shipments have been separated from others at the hub. The end result of this condition is that I-65 on the north side of the city and I-40 on the west side both have particular importance to these two major entities. The traffic situation and potential congestion on either of these routes can cause serious delays in the movement of their shipments.

