



INTERMODAL FREIGHT - UTAH'S GLOBAL FREIGHT GATEWAY

Large volumes of intermodal freight passing through Utah make the state a global gateway. Intermodal freight involves the movement of cargo in a container or trailer via multiple modes of transportation such as rail, ship or truck, without handling the freight itself when changing modes. Since 1984, a new form of intermodal shipping known as double-stack rail transport has become increasingly common as millions of containers per year are shipped in the United States. Seaports and highway-rail intermodal terminals are where these containers are transferred from one mode to another. Intermodal freight links Utah's economy with the global economy.

SALT LAKE CITY INTERMODAL TERMINAL

The Salt Lake City Intermodal Terminal (SLCIT), owned by Union Pacific Railroad, is Utah's global gateway. SLCIT provides nearby highway access to markets throughout Utah and surrounding states, and has direct service to the Ports of Los Angeles/Long Beach in southern California, the Port of Oakland in northern California, and major Midwestern and Gulf Coast terminals in Chicago, Kansas City, St. Louis, Memphis and Houston. At SLCIT, most of the inbound freight from the west consists of manufactured goods from Asia, while most of the outbound freight is food products, animal feed and seeds. A 100-car double-stack train carrying 200 containers can be unloaded in less than six hours at the terminal. The trailers and containers from arriving trains use the 1,100 parking stalls to await truck pickup anytime at this 24-hour facility. Approximately 500 to 600 containers or trailers are loaded and/or unloaded daily at SLCIT, where the current maximum volume is 1,200 units per day. While the terminal currently covers more than 240 acres, it has the capability to be expanded.

CHALLENGE TO INTERMODAL FREIGHT ACCESS

The one weakness inhibiting future growth of intermodal freight at SLCIT is its dependence on 5600 West to access both the Interstate 80 and state Route 201 freeways. 5600 West is a narrow, two-lane highway that crosses the Union Pacific's busy double-track mainline at the west end of the terminal. This at-grade highway/rail crossing results in significant delays to trucks and other vehicles on 5600 West whenever a freight train arrives, departs or passes by the SLCIT. Trucks serving the terminal are often forced to take circuitous detours through neighboring industrial parks to avoid railroad crossing delays. Mountain View Corridor is also slated to run two blocks west of the terminal. This new project may increase traffic flow in the area. However, due to funding issues, the timeline for the project is uncertain.

[READ MORE](#) ➔

ROPER AUTO TERMINAL

The Union Pacific Railroad also operates another type of intermodal freight facility in Utah. Located at the Roper Freight Rail Yard in South Salt Lake City, the Roper Auto Terminal handles inbound shipments of new vehicles for the entire state of Utah. At this facility, new vehicles are transferred from multi-level freight cars, called autoracks, to a large parking area where they are loaded onto auto transport trucks for delivery to regional dealerships. The Roper Auto Terminal is served by trains coming from southern California and the Midwest. Prior to the current recession, approximately 600 vehicles were handled through the facility each day, resulting in an average of 90 auto transport trucks departing the terminal every 24 hours.

U.S. FREIGHT FLOW



Source: Utah Department of Transportation

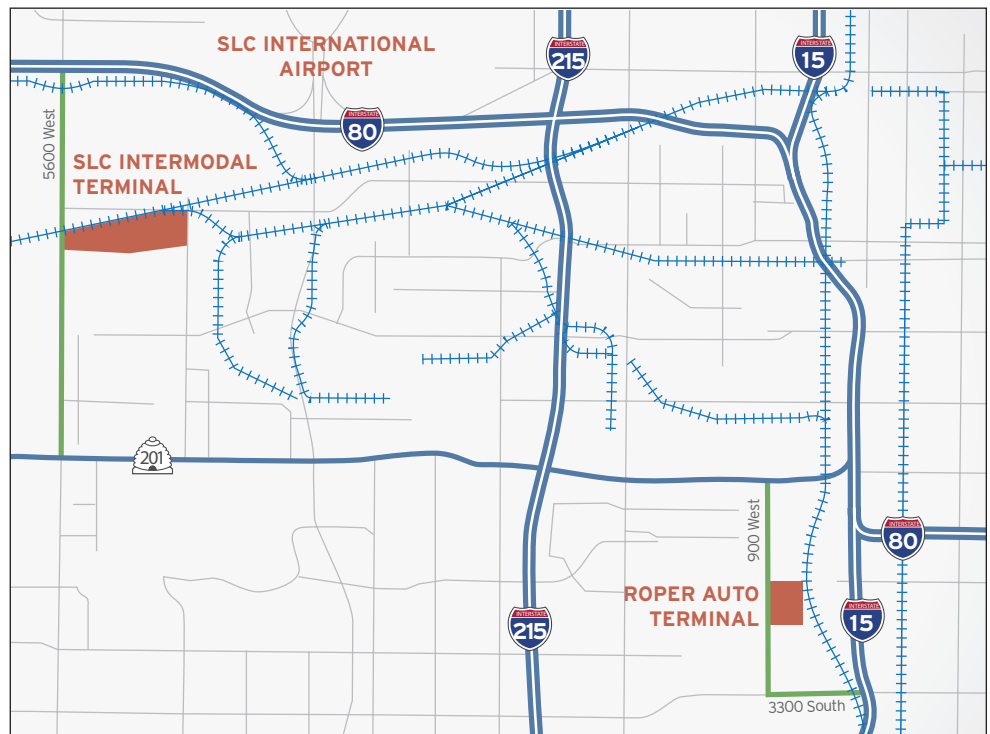
CHALLENGE TO INTERMODAL AUTO FREIGHT ACCESS

The Roper Auto Terminal accesses the national highway system via an unsignalized intersection on 900 West, which leads to the S.R. 201 and I-15 freeways. Growing traffic on 900 West is increasing delays for outbound auto shipments as trucks depart the Roper Auto Terminal.

UDOT PLANNING OPPORTUNITIES

As these intermodal facilities expand to accommodate future growth, UDOT will be looking for opportunities to improve access to the facilities while minimizing the impact of the increased traffic flow.

SALT LAKE CITY INTERMODAL/AUTO TERMINALS



Source: Utah Department of Transportation