

# 1. Introduction

A significant volume of freight being moved by railroads today is delivered to the rails by trucks. Following the train trip, it is again moved by truck to its final destination (Figure 1). These movements between rail and truck are termed intermodal freight transportation. The most common movements involve transferring containers or trailers between railroad flatcars and trucks. This activity usually takes place at a location called an intermodal terminal.

The Detroit Intermodal Freight Terminal project (DIFT) is proposed to consist of the enhanced development of terminals operated by the four Class I Railroads<sup>1</sup> that serve Michigan to provide improved intermodal service to business and industry. Presently, there are four intermodal terminals in, or in close proximity to, Southwest Detroit: the Detroit-Livernois Yard (operated by CSX and Norfolk Southern), Norfolk Southern's Delray and Triple Crown (Melvindale) terminals, and Canadian Pacific's Expressway terminal behind the Michigan Central Depot just north of Bagley. There is another terminal in Wayne County, known as CP/Oak, located in the northwest corner of the intersection of I-96 and the Southfield Freeway. A Canadian National Railroad terminal is on the Wayne County/Oakland County border north of 8 Mile Road between I-75 and Woodward Avenue (Figure 2). Mazda has an intermodal terminal at Flat Rock in Wayne County, but it is dedicated exclusively to Mazda and not available for commercial use (Figure 2).

Recent information gathered for the DIFT project indicates the Norfolk Southern Railroad will continue to shift its intermodal operations at the NS Delray and Triple Crown yards to the Livernois-Junction Yard provided adequate improvements can be made. This will leave four intermodal terminals serving Southeast Michigan in the future (Figure 2).

It is important that the movement of freight that drives jobs and economic growth in Southeast Michigan, and plays a key role in national defense, be facilitated. It is also important to respect the quality of life of the residents in neighborhoods where terminals exist and may expand. To that end, the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) has studied the intermodal freight situation over a number of years. MDOT has now decided to proceed with preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate alternatives to improve these intermodal freight movements and their related impacts to address this issue.

<sup>1</sup>CSX, Norfolk Southern, Canadian National and Canadian Pacific

1



Intermodal freight is a method used by manufacturers to ship their products to market.

2



It is called "intermodal," because it uses two "modes" -- trucks and trains -- carrying special containers and trailers.

3



Shippers move their containers from trucks to trains and back again without repacking their products. This is more efficient and often less expensive than using trucks or trains alone.

4



Intermodal transportation is one of the fastest growing segments of the shipping business.

Figure 1  
What is Intermodal?

