

Port of Salem Corridor Freight Rail Intermodal Study

Final Report



**South Jersey Transportation
Planning Organization**

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Port of Salem Corridor Freight Rail Intermodal Study

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization

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Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

I. INTRODUCTION 6

II. PREVIOUS STUDIES..... 7

III. CURRENT CONDITIONS 8

IV. OUTREACH 12

V. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS 13

APPENDICES

A. Review of Previous Studies

B. Summary of Field Work

C. Summary of Outreach Activities

D. Status of Salem Branch Improvements

E. Summary of Current Industrial Tracks

F. Traffic Assessment Technical Memorandum

G. Business Incentives Available for the City of Salem

List of Figures

1. Table of Issues and Recommendations
2. Map of Recommendations – Port Area
3. Map of Recommendations – Rail Corridor
4. Salem Marine Terminal
5. Salem Branch at Woodstown
6. Regional Roadway Access
7. Local Roadway Access
8. Former Ardagh Property
9. Salem River Shipping Channel
10. Sand for Shipping
11. Interior of Storage Shed
12. Current Salem Branch Right-of-Way
13. Potential North-South Rail Route
14. Interchange of Salem Running Track and Salem Branch
15. Salem Branch near Former Rail Yard
16. Salem Branch near Center Square Road
17. Former Freight House
18. Current View of Rail Yard
19. Industrial Track near Grasso Foods
20. Industrial Track near New Empire Blended
21. Potential Rail Extension
22. Current Sign for Northbound Traffic on Route 49
23. Current Sign for Eastbound Traffic on I-295
24. Proposed Truck Routes in Downtown and Port Area
25. Intersection of Broadway & Front Street
26. Proposed Intersection Modification
27. Key Waterfront Properties
28. Fertl Soil
29. New Empire Blended Facility
30. Philly FreightFinder
31. Previous Station Location
32. Old Station

List of Acronyms

| | |
|-------|---|
| CEDS | Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy |
| DVRPC | Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission |
| FTZ | Foreign Trade Zone |
| NJDOT | New Jersey Department of Transportation |
| SJEDD | South Jersey Economic Development District |
| SJPC | South Jersey Port Corporation |
| SJTPO | South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization |
| USACE | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Port of Salem Corridor Freight Rail Intermodal Study proposes a program of improvements that will upgrade the Port of Salem, the Salem Branch rail line, and the area's roadway network, with the objective of increasing commercial activity and related economic development. Building upon other recent studies, the South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) programmed this project to assess the potential need for and benefits of port, rail, and roadway improvements.

The City of Salem once was a busy waterfront city. Glass manufacturing and food processing were major industries, complemented by port and rail facilities. Today, Salem's economy is struggling, and its transportation infrastructure is in need of substantial upgrading. Salem County has been working on a comprehensive program of improvements to the rail line, which provides a foundation for potential additional investment.

Several recent studies have identified economic development potential related to transportation infrastructure improvements in South Jersey. In particular, the NJDOT *South Jersey Freight Transportation and Economic Development Assessment* identified a wide range of potential improvements that would increase the opportunities for economic development.

The work on the current project included reviewing previous studies, assessing existing conditions, conducting outreach with key stakeholders, and preparing a summary table of issues and recommendations, including proposed implementation strategies. This work resulted in identifying issues and recommendations in four main categories: port facilities, rail facilities, road facilities, and economic activity.

The main recommendations for the port facilities are to assess and upgrade the Port of Salem facilities, promote plans to deepen and better maintain the shipping channel, and complete the planned rehabilitation of the Salem Branch rail line to connect with the port facilities.

For rail facilities, the main recommendations are to complete the planned upgrade of the entire Salem Branch, upgrade the Salem Running Track, preserve and improve regional connectivity, improve industrial tracks, consider rehabilitating and reactivating the former Salem rail yard, and consider further extending the Salem Branch along the waterfront.

For road facilities, the main recommendations are to promote Hook Road as the main truck route connecting Salem with the interstate system, provide alternate truck routes around the downtown area to the port, and improve operations of the Broadway & Front Street intersection at the entrance to the port.

Finally, the main recommendations related to economic activity include advancing development and redevelopment of waterfront properties, exploring the potential for shipping aggregates and agricultural products, assessing regional markets for maritime shipping, and identifying other revenue opportunities for the Salem Branch rail line.

This work resulted in a Table of Issues and Recommendations (see **Figure 1**). An important element of this table is the proposed implementation strategies, which provide a guide to SJTPO and other agencies in advancing projects to funding and implementation.

Figure 1
Table of Issues and Recommendations

| <u>Issue</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Responsible Agencies</u> | <u>Funding Sources</u> | <u>Estimated Costs</u> | <u>Potential Impacts</u> | <u>Extent of Impacts</u> | <u>Probability of Implementing</u> | <u>Implementation Strategy / Next Steps</u> |
|--|---|-----------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------------|------------------------------------|--|
| Port Facilities | | | | | | | | |
| 1. Depth of channel | Continue maintenance dredging to 16’. | USACE | Federal | \$6M | Enable current shipping activity to continue. | Medium | High | Promote more frequent maintenance dredging. |
| | Advance planning to increase channel depth to 20’. | USACE, SJPC | Federal | \$10M | Facilitate larger vessels and loads at port. | Low | Low | Discuss with USACE, identify next steps for advancing planning for project. |
| 2. Condition of port facilities | Conduct survey of pier and upgrade as necessary. Prepare and implement a facilities improvement plan. | SJPC | State | Low | Increase port business opportunities and related economic development. | Medium | High | Local stakeholders coordinate with SJPC staff. |
| 3. Port – rail connectivity | Complete project to restore rail segment near the port. | County | State, County | \$3.5M | Increase port / rail shipping opportunities | Medium | High | County will oversee and monitor project progress. |
| Rail Facilities | | | | | | | | |
| 4. Connectivity to national rail network | Continue to study a north-south rail freight connection within New Jersey. | State, private | Federal, State, private | \$130M | Increase rail shipping opportunities. | Low | Low | Coordinate with NJDOT to advance further study. |
| 5. Condition of Salem Running Track | Upgrade the Salem Running Track, as previously planned. | Conrail | Federal | \$7.6M | Increase rail shipping opportunities. | Medium | Medium | Work with Conrail and legislators to promote project and obtain funding for implementation. |
| 6. Condition of Salem Branch | Continue to advance County’s plan to upgrade the Salem Branch track and related facilities. | County | Federal, State, County | \$6.7M | Increase rail shipping opportunities. | Medium | High | County should continue with its plans, also establish schedule for ongoing maintenance and repair. |
| 7. Condition of Former Salem Rail Yard | Repair siding(s) and assess feasibility of restoring yard as modern transloading facility. | County | Federal, State, County | Low | Increase rail shipping opportunities. | Medium | Medium | Add siding repair to work program, prepare request for proposals for feasibility study. |
| 8. Availability of industrial tracks | Work with adjacent property owners and businesses to upgrade industrial tracks. | County, private | Federal, County, private | Moderate | Increase rail shipping opportunities and related commercial development. | Medium | Medium | Prepare and implement plan to identify key opportunities for industrial tracks and work with private property owners to implement. |
| 9. Rail access to waterfront | Assess the feasibility of extending the rail line beyond its current terminus at Broadway. | County, private | Federal, NJDOT, County | Moderate | Increase port / rail shipping opportunities. | Low | Low | Assess the potential business demand for extending the line. |

| <u>Issue</u> | <u>Recommendation</u> | <u>Responsible Agencies</u> | <u>Funding Sources</u> | <u>Estimated Costs</u> | <u>Potential Impacts</u> | <u>Extent of Impacts</u> | <u>Probability of Implementing</u> ^{*/} | <u>Implementation Strategy / Next Steps</u> |
|--|---|------------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---|--------------------------|--|--|
| Road Facilities | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Access to Interstate system | Promote use of Hook Road as alternate truck route between Salem and I-295 / NJ Turnpike. | NJDOT | State, County | Low | Improve flow of truck traffic to and from the port area. | Low | High | Work with NJDOT to plan and implement enhanced truck route signage |
| | Redesign roadway configuration in area of I-295 and NJTP. | | Federal, State | High | Improve circulation in area of interchanges. | | Medium | Advance design of new roadway configurations. |
| 11. Trucks in downtown and port area | Promote use of Grieves Parkway as alternate route to and from the Port area, and consider designating Griffith Street as alternate truck route. | NJDOT, County, City | State, County, City | Moderate | Reduce through truck traffic in downtown. | Medium | Medium | NJDOT and local staff should coordinate to discuss and advance plans for alternate routing and related improvements. |
| 12. Broadway & Front Street intersection | Revise signal timing plan and intersection geometry. | NJDOT, City | State | Low | Improve intersection throughput and safety. | Low | High | NJDOT and City staff should review and discuss the proposed modifications. |
| Economic Activity | | | | | | | | |
| 13. Status of waterfront development | Continue planning and development efforts. Prepare updated plans, environmental assessment, market studies, and concept site plans. | County, City, SJEDD, private | State, Local, private | Low | Increase employment, income, and tax revenues, as well as new opportunities for port and rail line. | Medium | High | The County and City should continue planning efforts and obtain available financial and technical assistance. |
| 14. Potential for shipping aggregates | Investigate opportunities to increase volume of shipping aggregates through port. | SJPC, private | NA | Low | Increase shipping activity and related business. | Medium | Medium | SJPC will coordinate with U.S. Concrete to discuss additional business opportunities. |
| 15. Potential for shipping agricultural products | Study agricultural development opportunities, including potential for shipping by rail and / or port. | SJEDD, Rutgers | State | Low | Increase shipping activity and related business. | Medium | Medium | SJEDD will coordinate study, building upon previous work by Rutgers. |
| 16. Potential maritime shipping markets | Review economic and maritime commerce data and identify shipping opportunities for port and / or rail line. | SJTPO, SJEDD, SJPC, Local | State, Local | Low | Increase shipping activity and related business. | Low | Low | SJTPO should coordinate with other regional agencies in conducting analysis. |
| 17. Other opportunities for Salem Branch | Assess potential market for rail excursion service, including possibility of re-establishing station in Woodstown. | County | State, County | Low | Increased revenue from rail excursion service and overall tourism. | Low | Low | County will initiate economic / market feasibility assessment. |

^{*/} Probability of implementing is based upon an assessment considering the estimated cost, political / public acceptance, and technical feasibility.

Figure 2
Map of Recommendations – Port Area

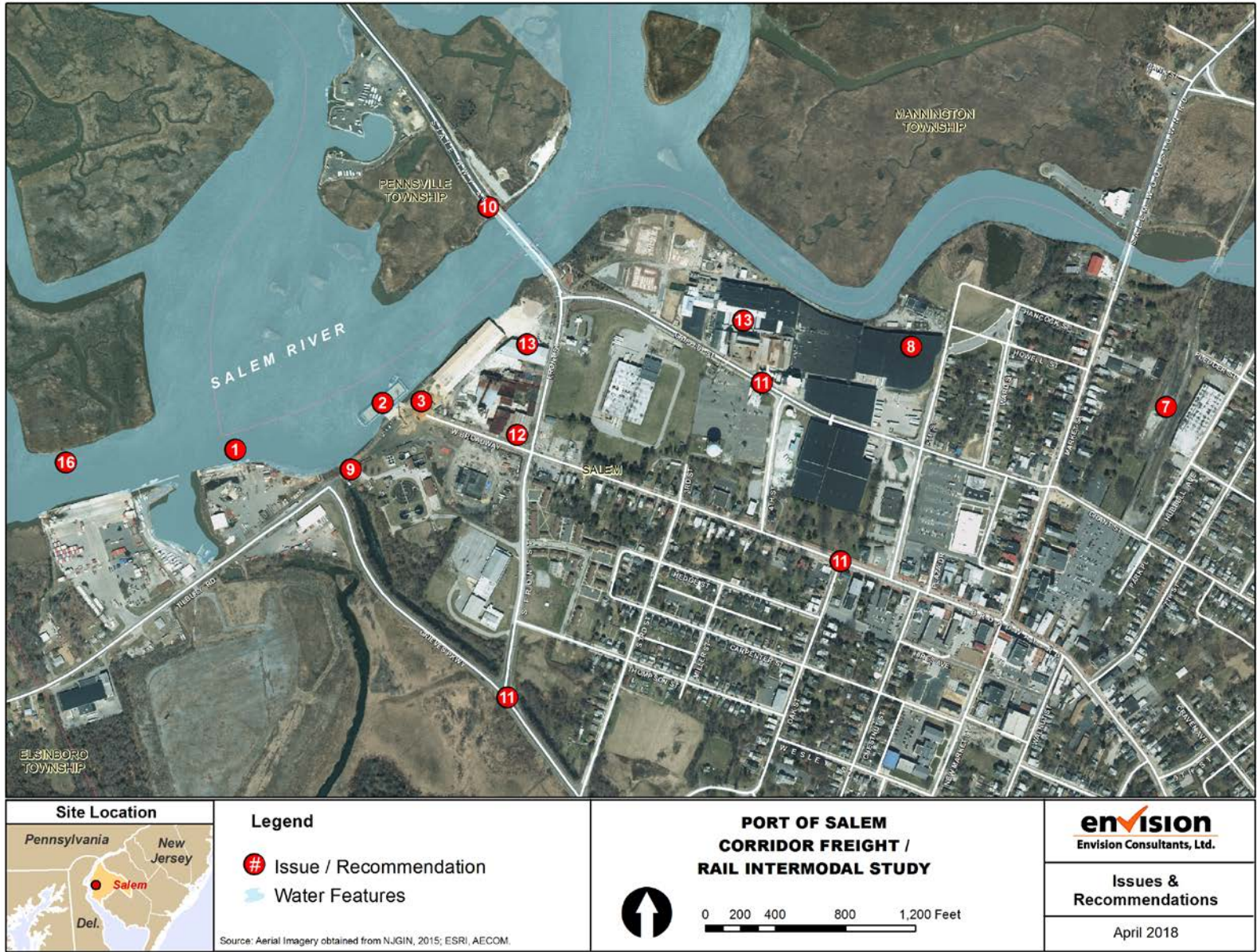
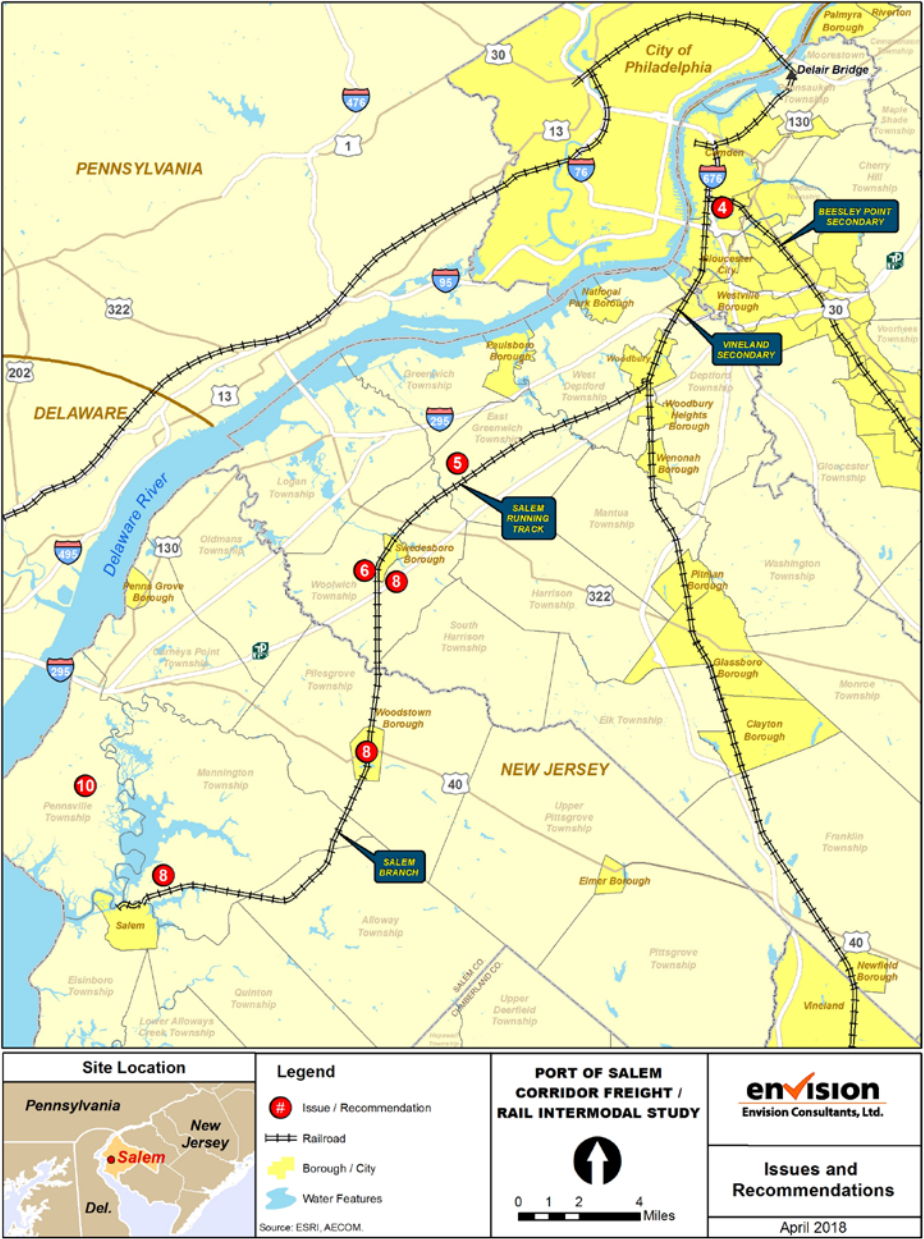


Figure 3
Map of Recommendations – Rail Corridor



I. INTRODUCTION

South Jersey has a rich legacy of marine shipping activity and freight rail service. The Port of Salem has been a port of entry since 1682, and it is one of the oldest ports on the East Coast. Freight rail has served the port since 1863, and today's Salem Branch rail line provides an opportunity to connect the port with the regional and national rail networks.

The City of Salem once was a thriving small waterfront city, with glass manufacturing and food processing being two major industries. The prosperity of these industries owed in large part to the proximity of key raw materials: a) sand for glass manufacturing and b) agricultural products, particularly tomatoes, for food processing. The presence of the port and rail line complemented the waterfront industrial businesses. Over time, however, business waned, and the condition of the port facilities and rail line have declined. The waterfront area became largely abandoned, and the economy plummeted.

Several previous studies have assessed the South Jersey intermodal transportation network and identified issues and potential improvements that would increase the opportunities for economic development. In particular, the NJDOT *South Jersey Freight Transportation and Economic Development Assessment* identified a wide range of potential improvements that would increase the opportunities for economic development. These

improvements included upgrading the Port of Salem and the Salem Branch rail line.

The main purpose of this study was to identify potential infrastructure improvements and the benefits of such improvements. SJTPO is seeking to prioritize and advance improvements for funding and implementation.

This study has produced an updated assessment and improvement plan for the Port of Salem freight corridor, including the port facilities, rail network, and road network. This plan will enable SJTPO and other stakeholders to identify specific implementation strategies for advancing the proposed improvements and improving the economic development prospects for the South Jersey region.

The work included assessing current conditions (Chapter II), (Chapter III), conducting public outreach activities (Chapter IV), and recommending infrastructure improvements (Chapter V) that will help to promote goods movement and related economic development at or near the Port of Salem and along the Salem Branch rail corridor. The key product is a Table of Issues and Recommendations, which includes proposed implementation strategies, and its accompanying detailed narrative.

A separate document provides Appendices including summaries of the review of previous studies, field visits, outreach, and traffic assessment.

The ultimate objective of this plan is to assist SJTPO and other agencies in advancing recommended improvements into project development and funding pipeline.

II. PREVIOUS STUDIES

An important initial task of this study was to review all relevant planning or engineering studies related to the Port of Salem Corridor. This review focused on identifying each study's findings related to the corridor, describing the current relevance of these findings, and then summarizing the review. **Appendix A** provides a technical memorandum with a detailed review of each study, including the following:

- *Port Inland Distribution Network (PIDN), South Jersey Site Evaluation and Feasibility Development Study.* Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), July 2003.
- *The New Jersey Comprehensive Statewide Freight Plan.* NJDOT, September 2007.
- *Southern New Jersey Freight and Logistics Industry Context and Economic Growth Visioning Plan.* NJDOT, September 2008.
- *Long-Range Vision for Freight.* DVRPC, April 2010.
- *TIGER Grant Application, Southern New Jersey Regional Intermodal Rail/Port Improvement Program.* NJDOT, September 2009.
- *Application for Designation of the New Jersey Marine Highway Platform as a Marine Highway Project.* NJDOT, June 2010.
- *Southern New Jersey Freight Transportation and Economic Development Assessment.* NJDOT, Dec. 2010.
- *Salem County Traffic and Transportation Plan Element.* Salem County Planning Board, June 2012.

- *New Jersey Statewide Freight Rail Strategic Plan.* NJDOT, June 2014
- *New Jersey State Rail Plan.* NJ TRANSIT, NJDOT, April 2015.
- *Transportation Matters – A Plan for South Jersey.* South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO), July 2016.
- *New Jersey Statewide Freight Plan (draft).* NJDOT, September 2017.

NJDOT's work on the *Southern New Jersey Freight and Logistics Industry Context and Economic Growth Visioning Plan* and the *Southern New Jersey Freight Transportation and Economic Development Assessment* provided important background information and context for the current project. The *Southern New Jersey Freight and Logistics Industry Context and Economic Growth Visioning Plan* identified the region's assets and established vision plan elements including integrating North Jersey and South Jersey ports, enhancing the marketing of South Jersey ports, and addressing road and rail connectivity issues. The subsequent *South Jersey Freight Transportation and Economic Development Assessment* included detailed analysis of key industry clusters and transportation investment needs. This study produced a recommended program of prioritized investments to maintain, expand, and improve intermodal facilities in the South Jersey region. These investments include several that would improve goods movement and economic development opportunities related to the Port of Salem, the Salem County Short Line Railroad and the connecting rail network, and the regional roadway network.

III. CURRENT CONDITIONS

The next phase of this study was to assess the current conditions of the transportation system, along with land use and development activity.

The project team accomplished this work by reviewing available information, receiving input from stakeholders, and conducting field visits to the Port area (November 21, 2017) and the Salem Branch rail corridor (November 22, 2017). **Appendix B** provides more details of these visits.

A. Port Facilities

The Port of Salem dates back to 1682. The main commodities at that time were agricultural and forest products. Over the years, the port has seen private and public ownership and various stages of facilities and plans.

Today, the port facilities along the Salem River waterfront include both the Salem Marine Terminal, owned by the South Jersey Port Corporation (SJPC), a state agency, and the adjacent privately-owned Mid-Atlantic Shipping and Stevedoring terminal.

The port was re-designated a port of entry in 1984 and became part of a foreign trade zone (FTZ) in 1987.

The Salem Marine Terminal comprises a berth, loading / unloading area, and warehouse (see **Figure 4**). In the past, the terminal has handled bulk commodities, motor vehicles, and apparel. Today, SJPC leases its port facility property to U.S. Concrete, which makes one weekly shipment of sand via barge to the New York City metropolitan area. SJPC

owns additional land near the terminal in the waterfront area.

The Mid-Atlantic Shipping and Stevedoring terminal handles containerized cargo. Bermuda International manages weekly shipments of consumer goods from this terminal to Bermuda. Trucks bring the goods to the terminal, and the ships return from Bermuda with empty containers.

Figure 4
Salem Marine Terminal



Source: AECOM

B. Rail Facilities

Salem has had rail service since 1863. At one time, there was passenger and freight service, with many stations and sidings, along with industrial development along the rail corridor.

The current Salem Branch short line railroad runs 18.1 miles between Conrail's Salem Running Track at Swedesboro and the Port of Salem. Salem County has owned the line since 1983, and it contracts with Southern Railroad of NJ to operate service on the line.

In the not too distant past, the line served customers including Mannington Mills, Koppers Poles, and Ardagh Glass. The one current customer is the South Jersey Farmers' Exchange, which receives shipments of potash, an important ingredient in fertilizers (see **Figure 5**).

For many years, the line suffered from disinvestment and deterioration, requiring new rails, ties and ballasts, and surface leveling in some areas. These conditions led to reducing the maximum operating speed to 5 MPH, and the line is unable to accommodate the industry standard 286,000-pound rail cars.

Over recent years, Salem County has been working on a comprehensive plan to upgrade the entire Salem Branch in order to bring the line to a Class II status and allow operating speeds of up to 25 MPH. The County has completed the bulk of planned improvements, with some projects remaining.

The Salem Branch and the rest of the South Jersey freight rail network connect with the national network via the Delair Bridge north of Camden.

Figure 5
Salem Branch at Woodstown



Source: AECOM

C. Road Facilities

The roadway network serving the Port of Salem freight corridor includes state Route 49, which provides access to the interstate network, in particular Interstate 295 and the New Jersey Turnpike (see **Figure 6**). In 2005, NJDOT replaced the former Route 49 bascule bridge over the Salem River with a fixed span bridge that can be converted to a vertical lift bridge. County Road 551 (Hook Road) runs roughly parallel to Route 49 through Pennsville and provides an alternate connection to the interstate network.

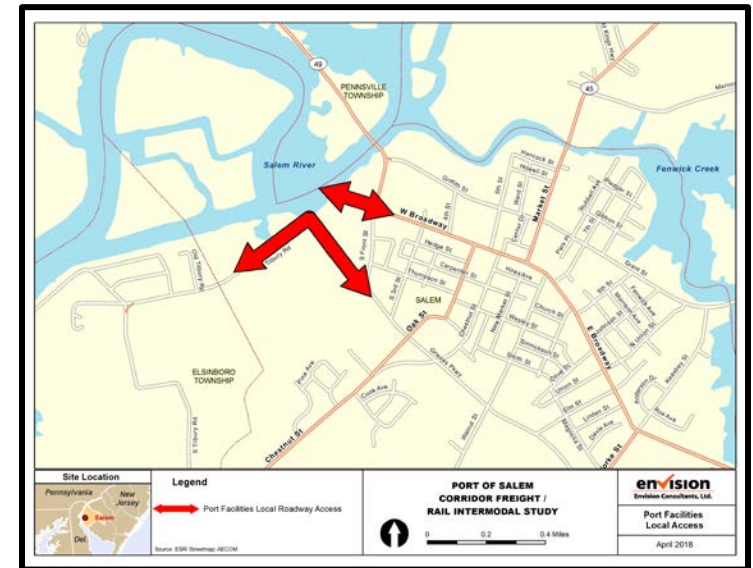
Figure 6
Regional Roadway Access



Source: AECOM

The vehicular entrance to the Salem Marine Terminal is just west of the intersection of West Broadway (Route 49) and Front Street, and the vehicular entrance to the Mid-Atlantic Shipping and Stevedoring terminal is along Tilbury Road (see **Figure 7**).

Figure 7
Local Roadway Access



Source: AECOM

D. Economic Activity

Salem once was a prosperous center of industry, complemented by its port and rail facilities. The earliest industry was ship-building, and in the 1860's, the first glass manufacturing and canning plants opened in Salem. These industries benefited from the town's proximity to key raw materials: sand for glass and farm products for canning.

Today's economy is depressed. Land valuation and tax revenues in the city have been decreasing over the past 10 years. The waterfront area has mostly vacant, abandoned, or underutilized properties. The glass industry was still a major employer in Salem until the Ardagh plant closed in 2015 (see **Figure 8**).

One current business in the waterfront area is Fertl Soil, which manufactures topdressing and other soils. Another business in the planning stages is Empire Blended, which will occupy a former Heinz plant. In coordination with improvements to the Salem Branch rail line and siding, this business plans to hire 150 workers by the end of 2018. In addition, the former Ardagh property was recently sold.

Figure 8
Former Ardagh Property



Source: AECOM

IV. OUTREACH

Another important component of this project was to conduct various outreach activities to engage and involve key stakeholders. The main outreach activities included interviews, focus groups, and a planning workshop.

Appendix C is a detailed summary of the main outreach activities, which included the following.

A. Interviews

The project team conducted an initial round of interviews with stakeholders including the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT), the South Jersey Port Corporation (SJPC), the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC), and Salem County staff. The objectives of these interviews were to introduce agency staff to the project and obtain their input on main issues and potential recommendations.

B. Focus Groups

The project team conducted two focus group sessions, which coincided with the field visits.

1. The first focus group session occurred on November 21, 2017, at the County office building. The participants included representatives of the County and waterfront businesses, such as Mid-Atlantic Shipping and Stevedoring, Bermuda

International, and Fertl Soil. The main topics of discussion were the potential for future marine shipping activity at the Port and related development in the nearby area.

2. The second focus group session occurred on November 22 at the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. The participants included representatives of municipalities including the City of Salem, Mannington Mills, rail agencies, and the South Jersey Farmers' Exchange. The topics of discussion covered a wide range including the potential for shipping agricultural products, re-using the rail facilities at Mannington Mills, and increasing shipping activity at the Port of Salem.

C. Planning Workshop

SJTPO conducted a planning workshop on Feb 12, 2018, at Vineland City Hall, featuring a presentation on the draft Table of Issues and Recommendations. Participants included representatives of NJDOT, Salem County, Cumberland County, the City of Salem, and the City of Vineland. The discussion indicated general acceptance of the issues and recommendations but raised several informational items for project team follow-up.

V. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The preceding work led to identifying key issues in each of the four main categories. These issues are as follows:

- 1) Depth of Channel
- 2) Condition of Port Facilities
- 3) Port – Rail Connectivity
- 4) Connectivity to National Rail Network
- 5) Condition of Salem Running Track
- 6) Condition of Salem Branch
- 7) Condition of Former Salem Rail Yard
- 8) Availability of Sidings and Spurs
- 9) Rail Access to Waterfront
- 10) Access to Interstate System
- 11) Trucks in Downtown and Port Area
- 12) Broadway & Front Street Intersection
- 13) Status of Waterfront Development
- 14) Potential for Shipping Aggregates
- 15) Potential for Shipping Agricultural Products
- 16) Potential Maritime Shipping Markets
- 17) Other Opportunities for Salem Branch

The following pages provide summaries of each issue, corresponding recommendations, and proposed implementation strategies. The summaries also provide information on potential impacts, estimated costs, possible funding sources, and proposed agencies responsible for implementation.

1. Depth of Channel

The current target depth of the Salem River shipping channel is 16'. The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for maintaining the channel. A 1995 USACE project widened the channel and deepened it from 12 to 16' (see **Figure 9**). Ideally, maintenance dredging to the target depth of 16' would occur every two years, but because of federal funding limitations, dredging of the channel has been occurring only about every seven years. This situation leads to instances of "spot shoals" of reduced depth, which the USACE monitors in coordination with the port facility operators. The most recent maintenance dredging project is underway and is scheduled for completion in early 2018.

Previous studies have referred to the possibility of further increasing the channel depth, which would open up the Salem Marine Terminal to a greater range of vessels. A deeper channel also could help Bermuda International to update its fleet with a vessel that can both navigate the channel and traverse the open sea. Within the past year, USACE has begun to consider the possibility of deepening the channel to 20'.

Recommendations

- a) Continue maintenance dredging to 16'. If possible, increase frequency of dredging from the current seven-year cycle.
- b) Advance planning to increase channel depth to 20'.

Potential Impacts

Continuing maintenance dredging to 16' would enable the current shipping activity to continue. Deepening the shipping channel to 20' would facilitate larger ships and loads. To this point, no specific analysis has occurred to project and quantify the benefits in attracting more commerce and related business activity. Analysis should address the types of ships that can navigate different channel depths, the types of business and commerce that these ships can serve, whether this business would be suitable for the Port of Salem, and the estimated economic impact of future business to the city, county, and region.

Estimated Costs

The estimated cost of the current periodic maintenance dredging is about \$6 million. The estimated cost of deepening the channel to 20' is \$10 million, which does not include the cost of future maintenance dredging.

Funding Sources

The source of funding for maintenance dredging is the federal Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. The anticipated source of federal funding would be from a new construction fund, separate from operations and maintenance.

Responsible Agencies

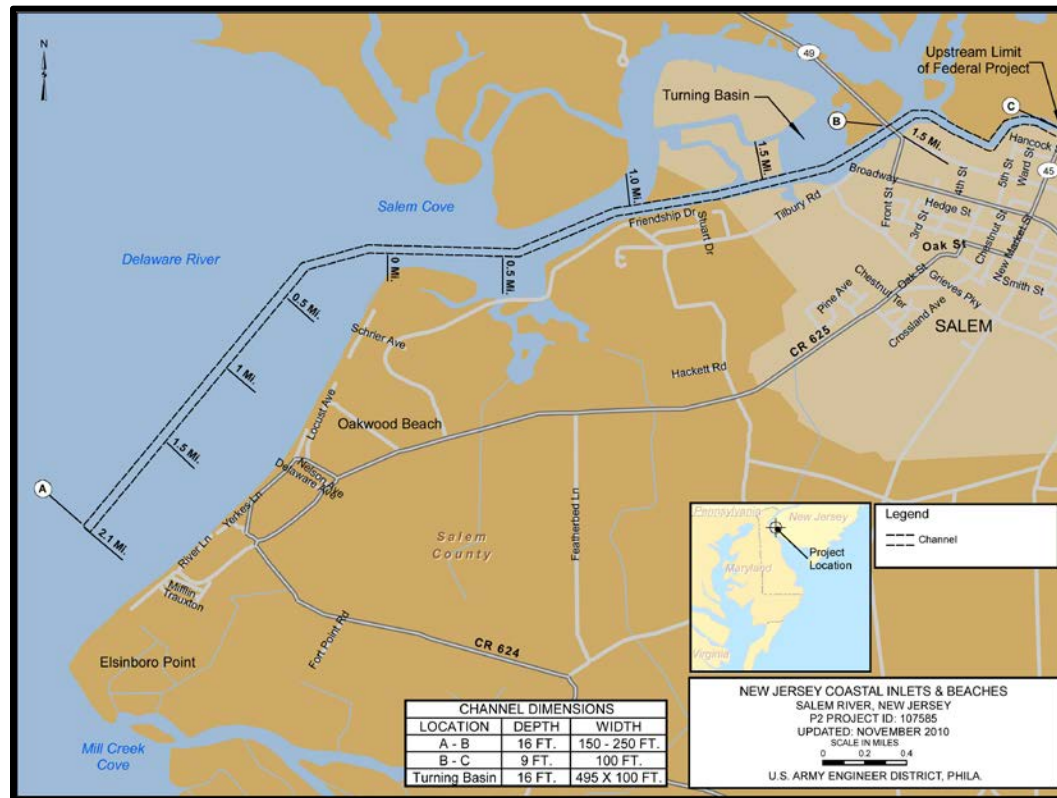
The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for maintaining the channel, and it would be the lead agency in assessing the possibility of deepening the channel. The designated local lead agency likely would be SJPC.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

Salem County, Salem City, and SJPC should work with the USACE to:

- Promote more frequent maintenance dredging to the target depth of 16'.
- Discuss the proposed project to increase the channel depth, and determine the steps necessary to advance the project, including completing a benefit-cost assessment.

Figure 9
Salem River Shipping Channel



Source: US Army Corps of Engineers

2. Condition of Port Facilities

The current Salem Marine Terminal facilities are in average physical condition. The current berth is 300' long; it appears to be pile-supported with a concrete deck. Steel sheeting is on the east and west ends of the berth. The fender system comprises large truck tires supported by steel angles and members. To the east of the pier, the Salem River embankment consists of rip rap. To the west of the pier, the embankment is also a rip rap slope with some individual piles and what appear to be broken concrete slabs on the embankment, perhaps indicating the remnants of a former pier.

Sand for shipping is unloaded onto the ground between the pier and an old storage shed (see **Figure 10**). An articulating conveyor on rubber tires on the pier loads the sand onto the barges for shipping. The storage shed currently does not seem to be used in any formal manner (see **Figure 11**).

U.S. Concrete / Eastern Concrete, which leases the SJPC port facility property for its sand shipping activity, owns an adjacent parcel on which it recently demolished a building, and it reportedly is considering new uses for this property.

Figure 10
Sand for Shipping



Source: AECOM

Figure 11
Interior of Storage Shed



Source: AECOM

Recommendations

- a) Conduct survey of pier and upgrade as necessary.
- b) Prepare and implement a facilities improvement plan. Consider the possibilities for adding new facilities, e.g. a grain elevator, to support potential increased shipping activities – consider what improvements may be appropriate to complement deepening the shipping channel to 20’.

Potential Impacts

The main anticipated impact of improving and expanding the port facilities is increased maritime shipping activity from or to the port, which ideally also would generate related economic development, all of which would increase jobs, income, and tax revenues. The improved facilities should incorporate measures to minimize potential environmental impacts, particularly dust from handling sand.

Estimated Costs

The costs of conducting a survey and preparing a facilities improvement plan should be relatively modest.

Funding Sources

The funding source for this work would be state funding through SJPC.

Responsible Agency

The SJPC would be the primary agency responsible for conducting the survey and planning work, as well as eventually implementing any facility improvements.

Next Steps

The main local stakeholders (SJTPD, Salem County, and Salem City) should engage SJPC staff to discuss and promote these recommendations.

3. Port – Rail Connectivity

The current southern terminus of the Salem Branch rail line is just south of West Broadway near the Salem Marine Terminal. Due to the track segments that still require upgrading, however, no direct connection currently exists between the rail line and the port facilities (see **Figure 12**).

The 2009 TIGER grant application included a project for dockside rail access, and the 2015-2020 South Jersey Economic Development District (SJEDD) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) included a similar project for extending rail to the port facilities. Salem County's rail rehabilitation plan includes a project to restore the rail line near the port, between West Broadway and Fifth Street, including replacing a 300-foot bulkhead along Fenwick Creek. The contract for this project commenced in December 2017, and work is estimated to be complete by the end of 2018.

Recommendation

Complete the project to restore the Salem Branch rail line segment near the port.

Potential Impact

When this project is complete, and all other segments of the rail line are functional, then it again will be possible to provide rail service directly to and from the SJPC Port of Salem facility. Restoring the port-rail connection will increase shipping opportunities, especially for bulk commodities such as aggregates and agricultural products. In particular, the new Empire Blended development is contingent upon the completion of this project.

Estimated Cost

The estimated cost of the restoring this segment is \$3.5 million.

Funding Sources

Salem County has received project funding from NJDOT Local Aid for Infrastructure, NJDOT County Aid, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for the bulkhead and hazard mitigation improvements.

Responsible Agency

Salem County owns the Salem Branch rail line and is responsible for planning and managing the improvements.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The County will oversee and monitor the progress of the current project.

Figure 12
Current Salem Branch Right-of-Way



Source: AECOM

4. Connectivity to National Rail Network

The Salem Branch rail line currently has access to the national freight rail network by connecting with Conrail's Salem Running Track at Swedesboro and then following the Vineland Secondary to a connection with the Delair Bridge, which carries rail traffic across the Delaware River to Pennsylvania.

Currently, no north-south freight rail connection exists between South Jersey and North Jersey within New Jersey. At one time, the Central Railroad of New Jersey (CNJ) Southern Division extended from North Jersey to the Delaware Bay. Part of this line, running from the north to Winslow Junction, also served passenger traffic as the famous Blue Comet route. This connection was broken in 1978 when Conrail abandoned the line between Woodmansie and Winslow Junction.

The Statewide Freight Rail Strategic Plan recommends investigating re-establishing a north-south freight connection within New Jersey and notes that NJDOT already has conducted one feasibility study in this regard. In recent years, a project has been proposed to restore service along 13 miles of line owned by Clayton Sand between Woodmansie and Lakehurst. NJ TRANSIT owns right-of-way between Woodmansie and Winslow Junction, and there are no known proposals to restore service on this segment. If service were restored on the entire route to Winslow Junction, then Salem Branch traffic could connect to Winslow Junction via the Salem Running Track, Vineland Secondary, and Beesley Point Secondary (see **Figure 13**). The latter connection, occurring at CP-Brown in Camden, would require constructing interchange track and switching equipment.

Recommendation

Continue to advance study of an intrastate north-south freight rail connection within New Jersey.

Potential Impact

Increase rail shipping opportunities along the Salem Branch rail corridor.

Estimated Cost

The Statewide Freight Rail Strategic Plan estimates the cost of implementing this project to be at least \$130 million.

Funding Sources

It is anticipated that funding would be through a combination of federal, state, and private sources.

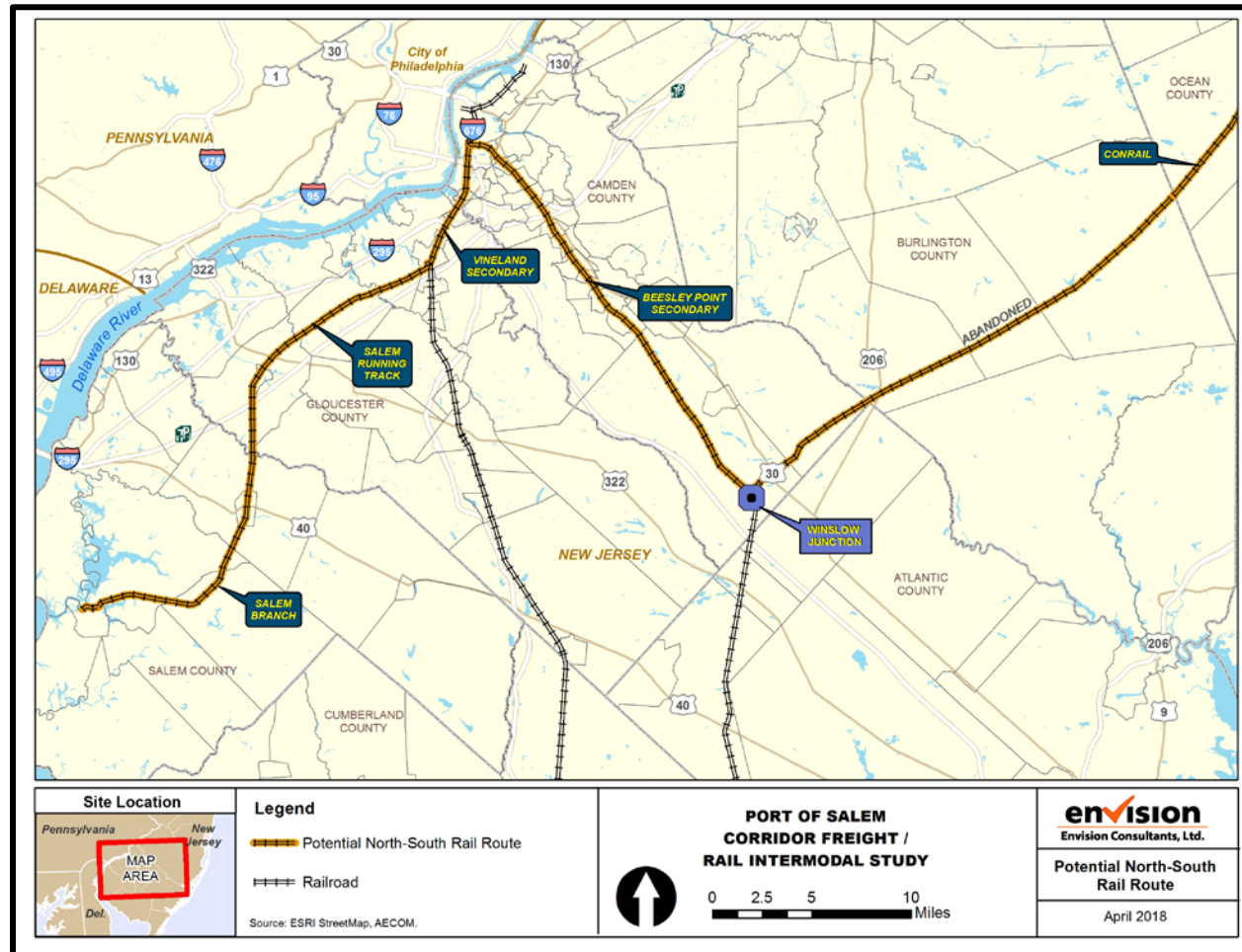
Responsible Agencies

NJDOT would be the lead agency for conducting additional planning and engineering studies, while eventual construction would be the responsibility of the public and private agencies who own the respective rail rights-of-way.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

Local stakeholders should coordinate with NJDOT to promote and advance further study.

Figure 13
Potential North-South Rail Route



Source: AECOM

5. Condition of Salem Running Track

Conrail's Salem Running Track is a rail line that runs for 10.9 miles from a junction with the Penns Grove Secondary and Vineland Secondary at Woodbury to Swedesboro where it connects with the Salem Branch rail line (see **Figure 14**). This line and the Salem Branch once together comprised the Salem Secondary. Today, the Salem Running Track essentially is an extension of the Salem Branch and provides the first link in connecting the Salem Branch with the national rail network (see Issue #4).

The need to rehabilitate this line has been identified for some time. The project has been included in DVRPC's Long-Range Vision for Freight, the New Jersey Statewide Freight Rail Strategic Plan, and the New Jersey State Rail Plan.

Recommendation

Upgrade the Salem Running Track.

Potential Impact

This project would extend the extent of improved track from the Port of Salem to the Vineland Secondary and increase the attractiveness of this corridor for rail shipping opportunities.

Estimated cost

The state rail plan estimates the cost of this project at \$7.6 million.

Funding Sources

The specific funding sources have not been identified, but it is anticipated that it will be federally-funded.

Responsible Agency

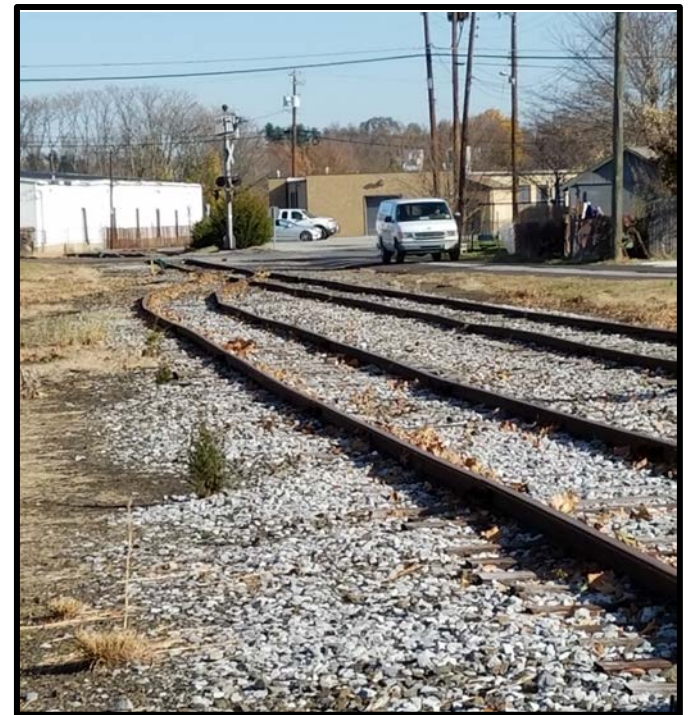
Conrail.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

Local stakeholders should coordinate with Conrail and legislators to procure funding for this project and to advance it to implementation.

Figure 14

Interchange of Salem Running Track and Salem Branch



Source: AECOM

6. Condition of Salem Branch

Previous substandard infrastructure conditions have been well-documented along the Salem Branch. These conditions have resulted in a Class 1 classification and a 5 MPH operating speed limit.

The County has been working for several years on a comprehensive effort to upgrade the entire line to a Class II classification, which would accommodate rail cars with a gross vehicle weight of 286,000 pounds and allow operating speeds up to 25 MPH.

Appendix D provides information on the status of Salem Branch improvements. The most current available information identifies the following sections that still need upgrading:

- Between West Broadway and 5th Street (see Issue #3)
- Between the former Ardagh property and Mannington Mills (see **Figure 15**)
- Just east of Mannington Mills
- Cedar Lane – Fenwick Road area in Pilesgrove
- Chestnut Run culvert replacement in Woodstown
- Millbrooke Ave – Fowell Street in Woodstown
- New Jersey Turnpike to Salem Running Track in Swedesboro (see **Figure 16**)

Recommendation

The County should continue with its plans to rehabilitate all remaining sections of track and related facilities along the Salem Branch rail line. In addition, it should establish a plan and schedule for ongoing maintenance and repair.

Potential Impacts

Increase rail shipping opportunities along the Salem Branch.

Estimated Cost

The County has estimated that the remaining improvements will cost about \$6.7 million.

Funding Sources

Funding could come from federal, state, or county sources. Federal funding could come from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), which provides funding to distressed communities for infrastructure improvements or from a USDOT FASTLANE grant, which provides funding for highway and rail projects to improve goods movement. NJDOT's FY 2018 Rail Freight Assistance Program already has allocated \$6 million in state funding. The NJDOT Local Aid and Economic Development programs may provide another funding source, possibly through the new Local Freight Impact Fund.

Responsible Agency

Salem County is the primary responsible agency.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

County should continue with its plans to complete rehabilitation of the entire Salem Branch. It also should establish a schedule and budget for ongoing maintenance and repair.

Figure 15

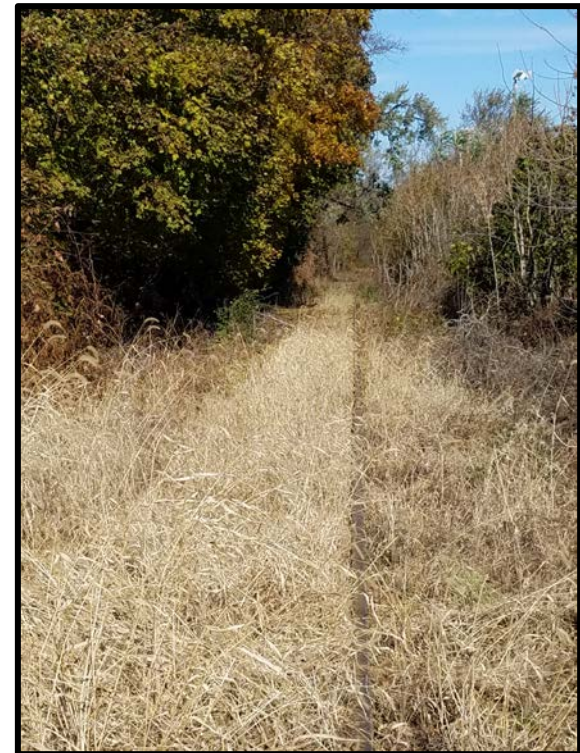
Salem Branch near Former Rail Yard



Source: AECOM

Figure 16

Salem Branch near Center Square Road



Source: AECOM

7. Condition of Former Salem Rail Yard

The Salem Branch rail yard in Salem once was very active. It contained 11 to 12 spurs, an automobile platform and ramp, a potato house, a freight house, a freight platform, a passenger station, several passenger platforms, a tool house, a coal bin, a water tank, a calf pen, a cattle pen, a milk platform with shelter, an oil house, and wagon scales. Today, several rail spurs remain along with the former freight house and a few remnants of the previous facilities (see **Figures 17 and 18**).

In conjunction with the rehabilitation of the Salem Branch line, the former rail yard seems to provide an opportunity for renovating into a modern transloading facility. Transloading opportunities would focus upon truck-to-rail or rail-to-truck movements.

Any concept design for the yard should take into account its location adjacent to residential areas, in order to minimize possible impacts. The design should include protective fencing for safety, as well as to prevent trespassing and vandalism.

Recommendations

- In the near future, rehabilitate one or two of the yard tracks to make them available for rail operations.
- For the longer term, conduct an assessment / feasibility study for restoring and using the former rail yard site as a modern transloading facility.

Potential Impacts

Increase rail shipping and related commercial development opportunities.

Estimated Cost

The cost of rail track is about \$300 per foot. The cost of a feasibility study would be relatively low.

Funding Sources

As with other Salem Branch improvements, funding could come from federal, state, or county sources.

Responsible Agency

Salem County would be the lead agency in overseeing improvements to the former Salem rail yard.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The County should incorporate rail yard track improvements into its Salem Branch improvement plan, and it should prepare and issue a request for proposals for a feasibility study.

Figure 17
Former Freight House



Source: *Reconnaissance-Level Architectural Survey of the Salem Railroad, Salem County, 2014.*

Figure 18
Current View of Rail Yard



Source: AECOM

8. Availability of Industrial Tracks

Industrial tracks provide direct access between a rail line and adjacent businesses for loading and unloading. Businesses typically are responsible for owning and maintaining these tracks. A recent historic study and survey of the Salem Branch found that the line once had many industrial tracks; the City of Salem had nearly one mile of industrial tracks serving its numerous businesses. Using historic maps and aerial photographs, the study identified at least 20 industrial tracks that have been removed. The study also identified the following locations of existing industrial tracks (**Appendix E** provides more details):

- Near Grasso Foods -- the County owns and maintains this track, which is in good condition (see **Figure 19**).
- Woodstown – there are two active industrial tracks, including the one that serves the South Jersey Farmers’ Exchange, along with several abandoned tracks.
- Mannington Mills – there are two industrial tracks, one on each side of the main line, and a short spur. The plant has a siding with bulk material unloading facilities that it used previously, and the company has indicated that it may be interested in leasing these facilities.
- Former Ardagh plant – there are two industrial tracks, one at the east end and one on the north side of the former plant. This property was recently sold, and interest has been expressed in restoring one industrial track for new business use.

In addition, there are plans to restore an industrial track to the former Heinz plant as part of redeveloping that property for Empire Blended (see **Figure 20**). This new business has proposed to use the Salem Branch to carry about 26 rail cars per week when fully operational.

Also, the County has suggested the possibility of constructing a new industrial track to serve the County landfill.

Recommendation

The County should work with adjacent property owners and businesses to upgrade Salem Branch industrial tracks, in order to foster business development and rail shipping opportunities.

Potential Impacts

Increase rail shipping and related commercial development opportunities immediately adjacent to the rail corridor.

Estimated Costs

The cost of planning for new industrial tracks is relatively low. The cost of design and construction will depend on various factors including required earthwork, curvature, length of track, and switches.

Funding Sources

Public agency funding could come from federal, state, or county sources, while private property owners or businesses also could contribute funding for improvements.

Responsible Agencies

The County would manage this initiative in coordination with private property owners and businesses.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The County engineering and economic development departments should coordinate to prepare and implement a specific development and improvement plan for Salem Branch industrial tracks and work with private property owners and businesses to implement the plan.

Figure 19
Industrial Track near Grasso Foods



Source: AECOM

Figure 20
Industrial Track near New Empire Blended



Source: AECOM

9. Rail Access to Waterfront

As described under Issue #3, a project is underway to restore the Salem Branch rail line to its terminus at West Broadway near the Salem Marine Terminal. A review of old maps finds that the rail line once extended south beyond its current terminus, serving additional waterfront properties (see **Figure 21**). For example, the line once extended to the site of the current Fertl Soil plant. A site inspection of this property found what appears to be a former rail dock adjacent to the existing building, but there is no evidence of track.

The 2009 TIGER grant application included a project for extending the rail line to the Mid-Atlantic Shipping and Stevedoring terminal, and the SJEDD CEDS included a similar project.

Recommendation

Assess the feasibility of extending the Salem Branch rail line beyond its current terminus at West Broadway.

Potential Impacts

Increase port / rail shipping opportunities and related economic development.

Estimated Cost

The SJEDD CEDS estimated the cost of extending the line to Mid-Atlantic Shipping and Stevedoring at \$475,000.

Funding Sources

It is anticipated that the County would seek federal or state funding support for this project.

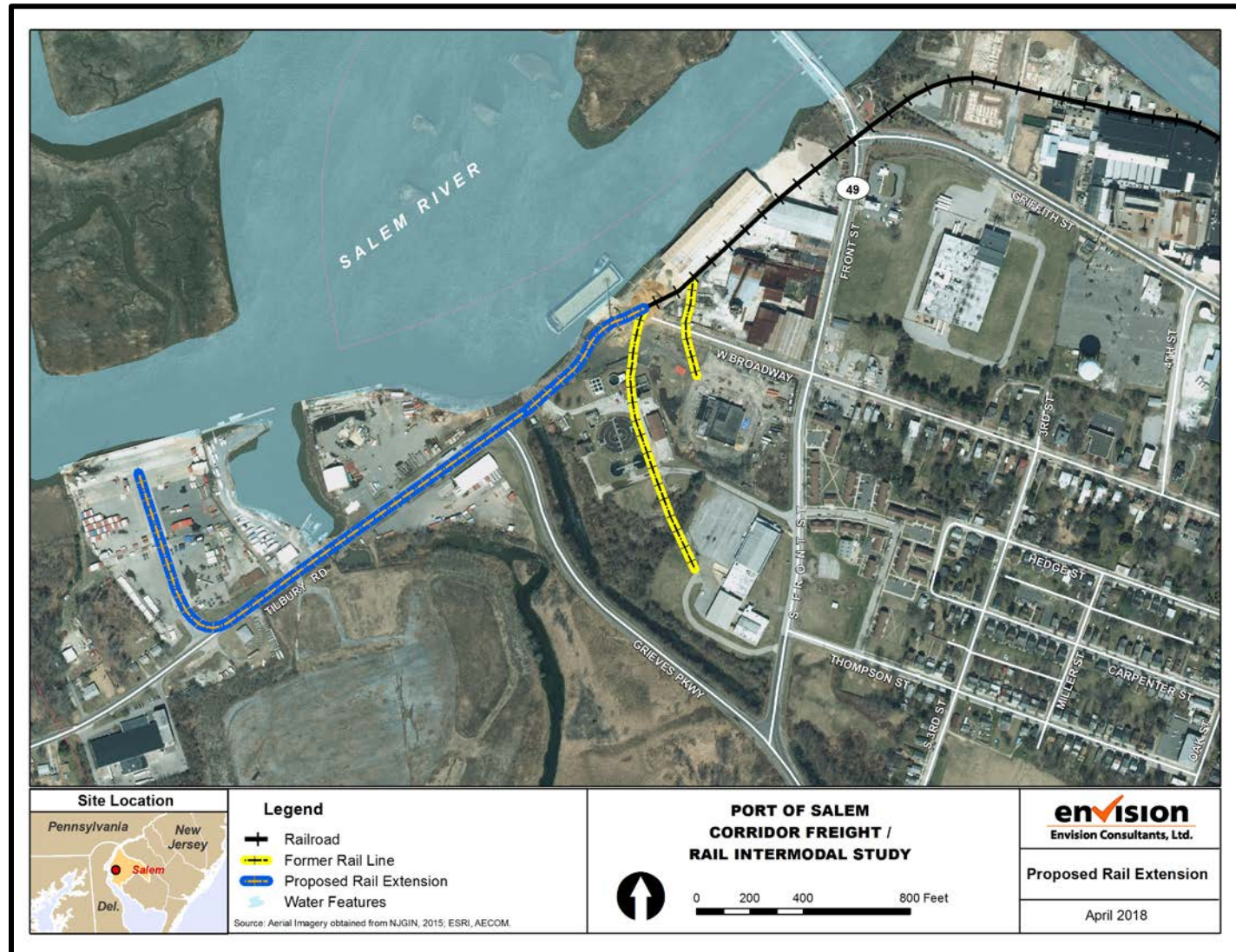
Responsible Agency

Salem County would be the lead agency in planning and implementing this project.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The County first should assess potential business demand for extending the line.

Figure 21
Potential Rail Extension



Source: AECOM

10. Access to Interstate System

The main state roadway connection between the Port of Salem and the interstate roadway network is Route 49, which runs between Salem and I-295 and the NJ Turnpike. Route 49 runs through downtown Pennsville as Broadway, with a 35 MPH speed limit, five signalized intersections, bus stops, and adjacent residential and commercial development – all of which are not conducive to this road serving as a primary through truck route. SJTPO's 2005 *Route 130 / 49 Corridor Study* includes several recommendations that would further detract from the road's suitability as a truck route; these recommendations include providing pedestrian improvements, a roundabout, and additional traffic signals.

County Route 551 (Hook Road) currently provides an alternate truck route, roughly parallel to Route 49. NJDOT has installed signage along northbound Route 49 on the approach to the Hook Road intersection, advising motorists to use Hook Road to reach I-295 and the Turnpike (see **Figure 22**). No similar signage is located in the area of the I-295 and NJ Turnpike interchanges to advise motorists heading toward Salem (see **Figure 23**). The 2005 study recommended installing signage for eastbound traffic crossing the Delaware Memorial Bridge to use Hook Road. Further, the roadway and interchange configuration in the area of the I-295 and NJ Turnpike interchanges is somewhat confusing, and the 2005 study included recommendations for simplifying and improving the connectivity of the road network in this area.

Recommendations

Promote the use of Hook Road as the designated truck route between Salem and I-295 and the NJ Turnpike. Provide signage for eastbound traffic crossing the Delaware Memorial Bridge and near the interchange of I-295 to advise trucks heading toward Salem to use Hook Road instead of Route 49. Advance the design of projects to address the configuration and improve circulation in the area of the I-295 and NJ Turnpike interchanges.

Potential Impacts

Provide a more convenient and efficient route for truck traffic heading to and from the Port of Salem. Improve safety and quality of life along Broadway in Pennsville.

Estimated Costs

The cost of adding more signage is relatively low, while the cost of roadway improvements would be relatively high.

Funding Sources

Funding for these improvements likely would be a combination of federal and state funding.

Responsible Agencies

NJDOT will be the lead agency responsible for planning and implementing these improvements.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The County should contact NJDOT to discuss a plan for implementing the truck route signage recommendations and the status of redesigning the roadway configuration in the area of the I-295 and New Jersey Turnpike interchanges.

Figure 22
Current Sign for Northbound Traffic on Route 49



Source: nj.com.

Figure 23
Current Sign for Eastbound Traffic on I-295



Source: Google Earth.

11. Trucks in Downtown and Port Area

State Route 49 runs along Broadway, the main street of downtown Salem. Some through truck traffic runs along Broadway, including trucks carrying sand from the U.S. Concrete sand mine in Quinton to the Salem Marine Terminal. This truck traffic may have some negative impacts including congestion and noise in the downtown area.

Grieves Parkway, a municipal road, provides a potential alternate route for trucks currently traveling through downtown on Broad Street. Grieves Parkway originally was intended to be an alternate route, but as designed, it includes several stop signs. The 2010-2011 SJEDD CEDS included a project to reconstruct Grieves Parkway to industrial use standards and install traffic signals. A 2012 SJTPO study examined the feasibility and cost of such improvements and recommended a phased plan for converting this road to a bypass of the downtown area – the 2012 County Traffic and Transportation Plan references these findings. A FY 2017 NJDOT Municipal Aid award provided some funding to the City for reconstructing Grieves Parkway.

Recommendations

Make Grieves Parkway the designated route for trucks currently traveling along Broadway to and from the Port area. Elements include prohibiting through truck traffic along Broadway, installing regulatory and directional signage, improving the intersections with East Broadway and Front Street, and re-assessing the current stop-controlled intersections.

Similarly, consider designating Griffith Street as an alternate route for trucks that currently travel to and from the Port area via Market Street and Broadway. This action would include improving the intersection of Market & Griffith and improving the intersection of Front & Griffith, which would include allowing left turns from Griffith onto Front (see **Figure 24**).

Potential Impacts

These actions would reduce through truck traffic in downtown Salem, thereby reducing traffic congestion, reducing noise, improving safety, and enhancing the downtown area for business. Grieves Parkway runs near the high school and elementary school, and the City may wish to seek a Safe Routes to Schools grant from NJDOT to conduct a study to ensure that the increased truck traffic does not have a negative impact on pedestrian or vehicular flows to and from these schools. The following website provides information on New Jersey's program: <http://www.state.nj.us/transportation/business/localaid/srts.shtml>

Estimated Costs

The costs of the proposed actions would depend largely upon the costs of the required intersection improvements.

Funding Sources

The funding for the improvements may be a mix of state and local funding. The source of state funding could be the new Local Freight Impact Fund.

Responsible Agencies

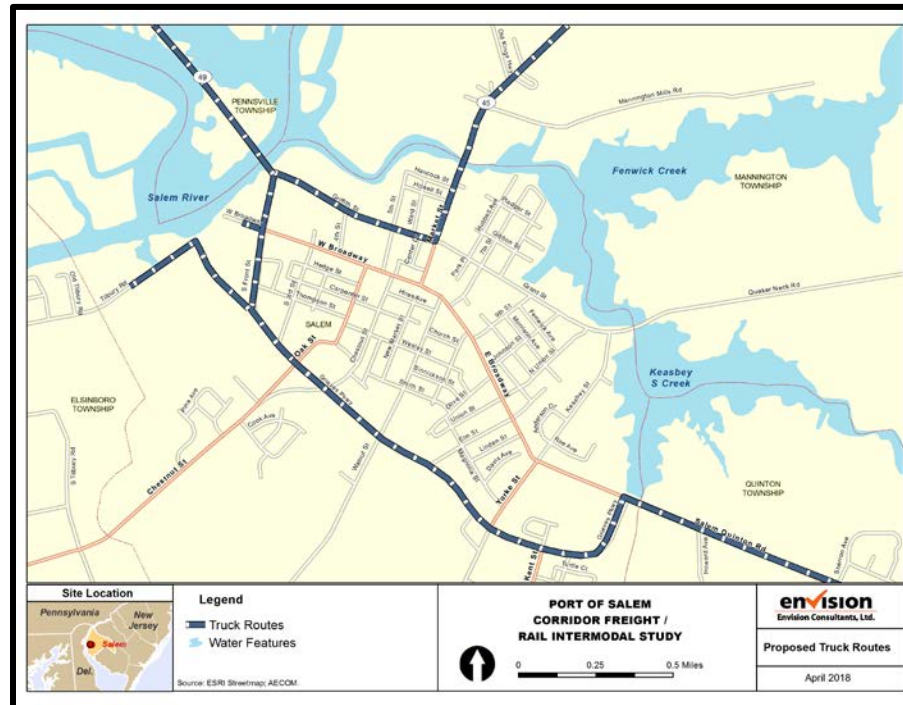
NJDOT, County, City

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The City should engage NJDOT to discuss and advance plans. The City should include local businesses and residents in outreach efforts to discuss the benefits and costs of the current condition versus the recommendations.

Figure 24

Proposed Truck Routes in Downtown and Port Area



Source: AECOM

12. Broadway & Front Street Intersection

The intersection of West Broadway & Front Street (see **Figure 25**) is located at the main vehicular entrance to the Salem Marine Terminal. This intersection experiences especially heavy traffic during the afternoon peak hour (3-4 PM), due to the volume of traffic on northbound Front Street, mostly attributable to commuters leaving work at the nearby Salem-Hope Creek nuclear power plant complex. The addition of a new reactor, as proposed, would generate even more traffic. In addition, the current intersection geometry may not facilitate efficient truck turning movements. In particular, it is difficult for trucks exiting the port facilities on Broadway to turn right onto southbound Front Street.

Recommendations

- Review and revise the signal timing plan as necessary to ensure optimal traffic flow
- Move back the stop line for the northbound Front Street approach to allow improved turning movements from eastbound West Broadway onto southbound Front Street (see **Figure 26**)

Potential Impacts

Improve intersection throughput and safe turning movements.

Estimated Costs

The proposed improvements would have a relatively low cost.

Funding Sources

It is anticipated that NJDOT would provide labor resources or funding for these improvements.

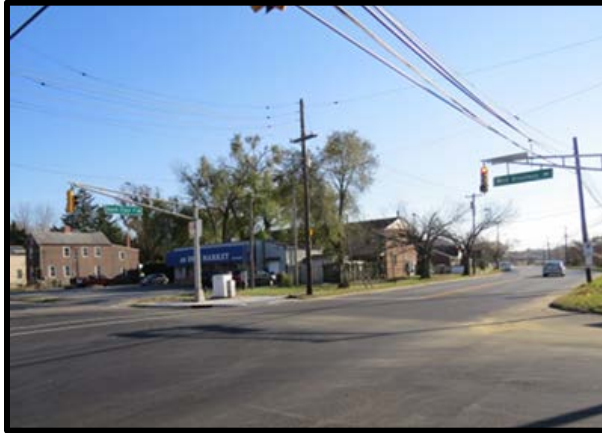
Responsible Agencies

The north and east legs of this intersection are under state jurisdiction, while the west and south legs are under municipal jurisdiction.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The City should engage NJDOT to discuss and review the operations of this intersection and the proposed improvements. **Appendix F** provides more details on the assessment of traffic issues and recommendations.

Figure 25
Intersection of Broadway and Front Street



Source: AECOM

Figure 26
Proposed Intersection Modification



Source: AECOM

13. Status of Waterfront Development

The waterfront area in the City of Salem currently has limited business activity. Most major properties are abandoned or vacant. In recent years, however, new development prospects have been emerging, including the following (see **Figure 27**):

- Fertl Soil is a manufacturer of topdressing and other specialty soils. The company has indicated the possibility of moving some products by rail or port (see **Figure 28**).
- Empire Blended is phasing in operations at the former Heinz plant. This business will involve manufacturing caulk from sand, and the company plans to use the rail line, with a restored siding, to transport incoming raw materials and outgoing product (see **Figure 29**).
- The former Ardagh glass manufacturing has been abandoned since 2015, although a portion of it has been in use for a warehouse operation. The property recently was sold, and the new owner is considering plans for new business, including a sand drying operation.

The City has been active with land use and redevelopment planning, and it recently completed an updated redevelopment plan. This plan proposes a waterfront redevelopment zone with three sections. One section would be a business park, which would allow a range of maritime and industrial uses; another section would be a mixed-use transition zone, which would accommodate a mix of uses including public, residential, commercial, and retail; and the third section is designated for open space. The City's Brownfields Development and Commerce Department continue to collaborate with community and government representatives to provide incentives to potential investors (see **Appendix G**).

Recommendations

Continue planning and economic development efforts for the waterfront area. Prepare updated plans, conduct environmental assessments and remediation, conduct market studies / analyses, and prepare concept site plans.

Potential Impacts

Increased development will increase employment, income, and tax revenue, as well as possibly generating new shipping opportunities for the rail line and port facilities.

Estimated Costs

The costs of planning and marketing studies are relatively low.

Funding Sources

The City may be able to obtain funding from the state or private property owners or businesses for conducting necessary studies.

Responsible Agencies

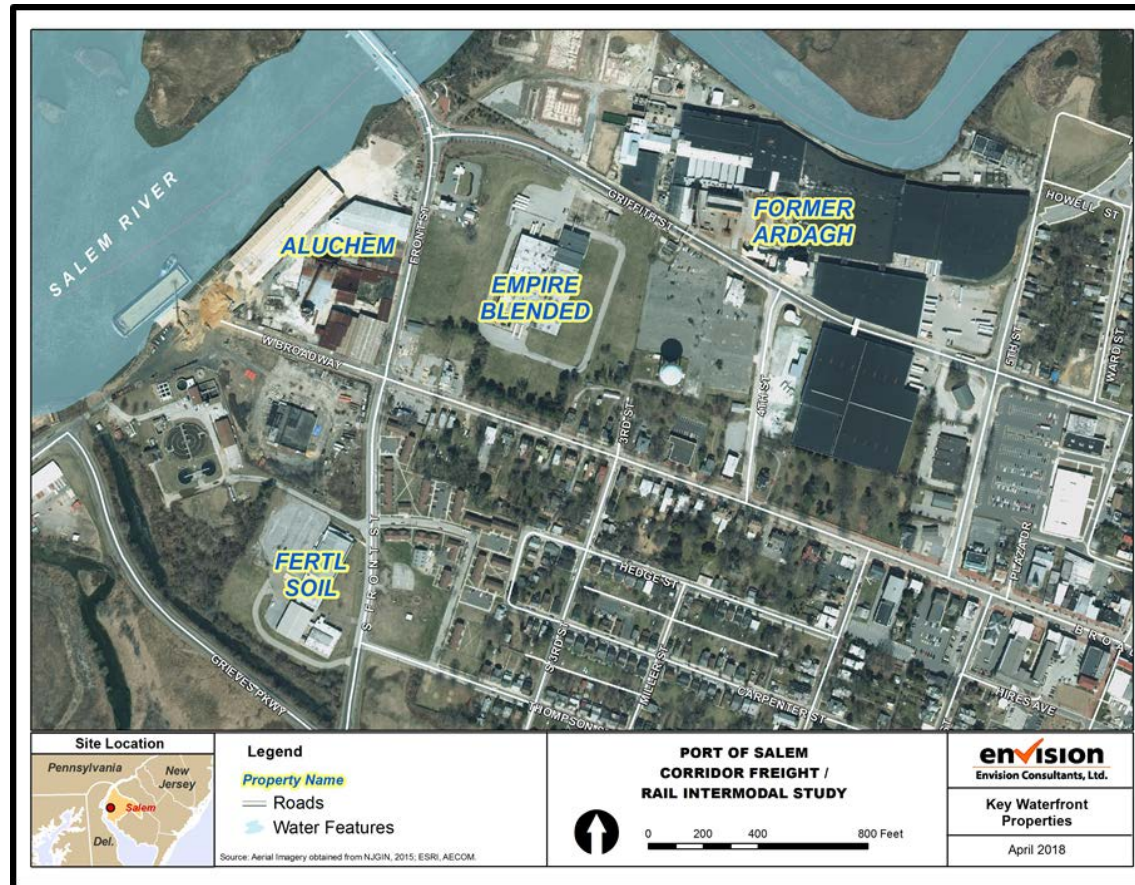
The South Jersey Economic Development District (SJEDD) may be able to assist the City in conducting some studies.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The City and County should continue their planning efforts. They should seek to identify specific development opportunities for which they might seek financial and technical assistance from other agencies, e.g., SJEDD, for more detailed marketing studies.

Figure 27

Key Waterfront Properties



Source: AECOM

Figure 28
Fertl Soil



Source: fertl-soil.com

Figure 29
New Empire Blended Facility



Source: AECOM

14. Potential for Shipping Aggregates

Bulk commodities, including aggregates (such as sand, gravel, and crushed stone), traditionally have been the main commodities at the Port of Salem and on the Salem Branch, and they seem to provide the best potential for future expansion of port and rail shipping activity.

Previous studies (e.g., the Port Inland Distribution Network study) have identified the potential for shipping aggregates from the Port of Salem, particularly to the New York City metropolitan area. The South Jersey region has many sand mines, which could be the suppliers of materials to ship from the Port. As previously described, the current activity at the Salem Marine Terminal is to ship out one barge of sand per week, and U.S. Concrete / Eastern Concrete reportedly is considering possibilities for expanding its business at the port. Any plans for expanding the shipping of aggregates should consider means of mitigating possible impacts including controlling dust (see Issue #2) and managing truck traffic (see Issue #11).

Recommendation

Investigate opportunities to increase the volume of aggregates shipped through the Port.

Potential Impacts

Increased shipping of aggregates could increase employment, income, and tax revenues.

Estimated Costs

The costs of this recommendation are relatively low.

Funding Sources

It is not anticipated that any direct financial assistance will be necessary.

Responsible Agencies

The responsible agencies will be SJPC, U.S. Concrete, and possibly other private businesses.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

SJPC and U.S. Concrete should discuss opportunities for increasing the amount of sand or related products shipped from the Salem Marine Terminal.

15. Potential for Shipping Agricultural Products

Salem has a long history of shipping agricultural products via rail and port. In the 1980s, the Port of Salem did handle some agricultural products, and at one time the port facilities included grain storage facilities.

Project stakeholders have proposed the possibility of shipping agricultural products via the rail line and / or port. A recent study by the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station identified the potential for shipping soybeans by container.

Recommendation

Continue to study agricultural development possibilities, including a focus on potential for shipping agricultural products by rail or port.

Potential Impacts

Increased shipping of agricultural products would benefit the port and rail line, as well as the agricultural community.

Estimated Costs

The costs of this recommendation are relatively low.

Funding Sources

Funding may be availability from a state agency or Rutgers.

Responsible Agencies

Potential lead agencies for this work may be SJEDD or Rutgers.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

SJEDD, in coordination and cooperation with Rutgers, should study specific opportunities for shipping South Jersey agricultural products by rail and / or water.

16. Potential Maritime Shipping Markets

No overall economic / marketing analysis is available to indicate what markets may be favorable to increasing commercial activity at the Port of Salem or along the Salem Branch rail line.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) maintains the PhillyFreightFinder on-line program <https://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/phillyfreightfinder/>, started in 2013, a product of DVRPC's continuing, comprehensive freight planning program. This program enables carriers and shippers to participate in the metropolitan planning process and identifies freight transportation trends and needs in the region (see **Figure 30**).

Also, the *East Coast Marine Highway Initiative M-95* identifies potential origin-destination combinations serving the Delaware River, which potentially could utilize Salem's port facilities.

Recommendation

Work to develop analysis that identifies potential shipping opportunities for the Port of Salem and / or Salem Branch.

Potential Impacts

This work may lead to generating increased commercial / economic activity.

Estimated Costs

The estimated costs of this recommendation are relatively low.

Funding Sources

Funding for this recommendation may include a mix of state and local sources.

Responsible Agencies

SJTPO, SJEDD, SJPC, County, and City

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

SJTPO should coordinate with other regional planning agencies in identifying available information and preparing a coordinated and updated analysis of the commercial prospects for the Port of Salem corridor.

Figure 30
Philly FreightFinder



Source: DVRPC

17. Other Opportunities for Salem Branch

The County has invested substantial funding in upgrading the Salem Branch rail line, but the projected return on this investment essentially is unknown at this point. It thus may be prudent for the County to consider other business and revenue opportunities for the rail line. One possibility is for a passenger excursion rail service, as proposed in the Salem County Economic Development Strategic Plan.

The County could coordinate such a service with other current tourism and eco-tourism efforts. Such a service would require passenger station facilities. One potential station location, in addition to Salem, would be Woodstown. The original station was located near the intersection of East Avenue (US 40) & East Grant (see **Figure 31**). The actual old station facility still is intact (see **Figure 32**), but it has been moved to the intersection of US 40 & Commissioner's Pike in Upper Pittsgrove, about 3.7 miles east of its original location.

Figure 31
Previous Station Location



Source: Google Earth

Figure 32
Old Station



Source: <https://forums.nipinebarrens.com/threads/old-train-station.5951/>

Recommendation

Study the feasibility of implementing a passenger rail excursion service on the Salem Branch rail line.

Potential Impacts

The new excursion service could generate revenue for the rail line, as well as to complement the County's overall tourism marketing efforts.

Estimated Costs

The cost of a feasibility study is relatively low. The cost of implementing the service is unknown at this point.

Funding Sources

The County may be able to obtain state funding to assist with this study.

Responsible Agencies

The County is the primary agency responsible for planning and implementing this recommendation.

Implementation Strategy / Next Steps

The County Economic Development Department should initiate an economic / market feasibility for rail passenger excursion service.

Summary of Implementation Strategies / Next Steps

In sum and in general, the proposed recommendations and corresponding implementation strategies call for the main local stakeholders – SJTPO, the County, and the City – to coordinate with each other and with other important jurisdictional agencies including SJPC, USACE, NJDOT, Conrail, and private interests to promote and advance the recommendations.

An important element of these efforts will be to allocate or obtain funding. In addition to the possible funding sources identified for each recommendation, other potential funding sources may include the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA), the Delaware River Port Authority (DRPA), the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA), and the issuance of tax-exempt bonds.