



Published in
WNYC News

Why New York's Roads Are All Trucked Up

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(Isaak Liptzin / WNYC)

Oct 12, 2015 · by [Jessica Gould](#)

New York City is more truck dependent than any major city in America.

"Virtually everything we wear, eat and live in is trucked into the city. That is a unique situation in this country," said [Benjamin Miller](http://www.utrc2.org/people/benjamin-miller) <<http://www.utrc2.org/people/benjamin-miller>>, senior research fellow for freight programs at the University Transportation Research Center at City College.

The reason: New York City has no direct link to the national freight rail network, so goods coming into the ports and rail yards in New Jersey mostly cross the river by truck. According to the [New York Metropolitan](#)

Transportation Council, [<http://www.nymtc.org/>](http://www.nymtc.org/) more than 400 million tons of freight move through the New York City area every year, over 90 percent of it by truck.

As our population grows, the economy expands, and consumers shift more of their shopping online, the amount of freight coming in and out of the city is expected to increase 46 percent by 2040. If trucks continue to carry the vast majority of it, they will aggravate traffic congestion and put even more pressure on the environment.

To get trucks off the road, **Rep. Jerry Nadler** [<http://nadler.house.gov/>](http://nadler.house.gov/) has been advocating the construction of a freight rail tunnel under the Hudson River for three decades. The New York Democrat says the tunnel, which would connect the rail network in New Jersey with existing tracks in New York, would take 2,500 trucks off Hudson River crossings every day, reducing pollution, decreasing the price of goods and creating redundancy in case of an emergency.

"We have a rail system that was developed a century ago which is basically unused by freight," he said. "We should use it."

Mayor Bill de Blasio supports the tunnel plan and the Port Authority is **studying** [<http://www.panynj.gov/port/eis-tier-1-final/index.html>](http://www.panynj.gov/port/eis-tier-1-final/index.html) it. But the project is far from a done deal. For one, there is grassroots opposition: while the tunnel would reduce truck traffic regionally, residents who live near proposed unloading points don't want to see truck traffic increase in their neighborhoods. For another, there is no clear plan for how to pay the estimated \$7 billion to \$11 billion in construction costs for the tunnel related improvements.

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page and may use them in a video.