

Appendix E. Designation Process for Critical Urban Freight Corridor (CUFC) and Critical Rural Freight Corridor (CRFC)

In response to FAST Act requirements, Caltrans and MPOs need to collaborate and submit nominations to FHWA for the designation of Critical Urban Freight Corridors and Critical Rural Freight Corridors (CUFC/CRFC), which are part of the National Highway Freight Network (NHFN).¹ The NHFN is the focus of funding for the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) and for federal grant programs such as FASTLANE and INFRA (for projects that support national goals identified in 23 U.S.C. 167(b) and 23 U.S.C. 117(a)(2)). The portion of the NHFN already designated by Congress is called the Primary Highway Freight Systems (PHFS) and the CRFCs and CUFCs are important freight corridors that provide critical connectivity to the PHFS. The purpose and intent of these CUFC/CRFC is provided in detail on the federal websites.

As noted in the federal guidance, there is no deadline for designating the CUFC/CRFC, and designations and de-designations will be on a rolling needs-based assessment. At any given time, California can have up to a maximum of 311 miles designated as CUFC and 623 miles as CRFC. FHWA recommends that Caltrans and MPOs work with the FHWA to develop an approach and timeline for identifying, tracking changes to, updating information on, and verifying the status of CUFC and CRFC roadways as part of the certification process.

This document describes the initial corridor designation process, assumptions applied for calculating miles, the rolling designation (or “on/off”) process, and mileage methodology assumptions. Per the FAST Act, States are responsible for designating public roads in their state as CRFCs. In accordance with 23 U.S.C. 167(e), a State may designate a public road within the borders of the State as a CRFC if the public road is not in an urbanized area.

- In an urbanized area (UZA) with a population of 500,000 or more, the MPO in consultation with the State, is responsible for designating the CUFCs.
- In an urbanized area with a population of less than 500,000, the State, in consultation with the MPO, is responsible for designating the CUFCs.

Note that if a project is on the PHFS, no CUFC/CRFC designation is required. For others, the following CUFC/CRFC nominating process will apply.

Process for CUFC/CRFC Designation in California

To initiate the coordination process, Caltrans reached out to all regional partners in October 2016. First, Caltrans and its partners formed a Technical Working Group (TWG) which met over several months to agree upon a process for the ongoing/rolling designations. The TWG reached a statewide consensus that each MPO be provided a certain “initial target allocation” out of the 311 CUFC miles, with the flexibility of temporarily increasing their target allocation by “trading miles” with donor agencies based on needs. Caltrans facilitated the process. There is no regional “target allocation” for CRFCs and Caltrans will oversee statewide distribution of CRFCs working with all regional agencies. After reviewing several potential options for the target allocations for CUFC, the MPO subcommittee developed a formula based on a 75 percent weight for the urbanized area populations and 25 percent weight on the proportion of PHFS (see **Table E.1**).

Table E.1. CUFC Target Miles and Caltrans Role in Managing the CUFC Target Miles²

MPO	Target Miles
AMBAG	3.75
BCAG	0.69
FCOG	5.35
KCAG	0.62
KCOG	5.67
MCAG	1.96
MCTC	0.87
MTC	65.07
SACOG	18.18
SANDAG	28.67
SBCAG	2.64
SCAG	160.58
SJCOG	7.76
SLOCOG	1.23
SRTA	1.8
StanCOG	4.24
TCAG	2.69
California Total	311.77
Source: California Department of Transportation, 2017	

Caltrans Office of Freight Planning will develop a Statewide critical freight corridor inventory (Scoreboard) which will include:

- A publicly available GIS mapping and a database of all critical freight corridor mileage

- A historical record of designated and de-designated miles will be maintained in GIS

After the initial CUFC designation cycle, the TWG will reconvene every quarter to review the status of the freight network and may also update this guide as needed. The initial CUFC allocation in **Table E.1** is more of a target for the purposes of soliciting CUFC mileage nominations. There will likely need to be a trading process between regions that Caltrans should oversee.

GIS Process

Refer to this web page for detailed instruction on the GIS process:

<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/ogm/gisdata.html>

CUFC “ON” Process

The MPOs identify needed CUFC miles based upon available target miles for each region and the need to apply those miles to a project for funding allocation or INFRA grant eligibility. The MPOs assign miles to a project when the CTC approves a project and obligates funds; the MPOs advise Caltrans of this and request concurrence.

Upon receipt of a concurrence letter (within 15 days of request), MPOs submit nominations directly to FHWA for urbanized areas (UZAs) with a population of 500,000 or more within MPO boundaries. For UZAs with population under 500,000, MPOs submit nominations to Caltrans for official submittal to FHWA. Caltrans adjusts CUFC target miles on the scoreboard.

NOTE: Although large MPOs are technically only responsible for designating miles within the UZAs with population of 500,000 or more, they will nominate ALL urban miles within MPO boundaries, and seek concurrence from Caltrans. Caltrans will provide concurrence based on statewide and interregional plans and policies, for both CUFC and CRFC nominations.

CUFC “OFF” Process

When project funding has been obligated (funds transferred), the MPOs can then de-designate those miles from its respective CUFC target allocation for the region. Caltrans adjusts the CUFC scoreboard accordingly.

CUFC “Swap” Process

When a loan of CUFC miles is negotiated from one region to another, Caltrans shall approve of the swap and indicate this swap on the publicly posted CUFC scoreboard. An official letter requesting the swap will be submitted to Caltrans, followed by an official response from Caltrans.

CRFC Process

Statewide, the 623 CRFC miles will be managed by Caltrans as part of the assignment process. The “need” for CRFC designations, based on an initial call for shovel-ready projects, is estimated to be much less than the miles allocated to California. Therefore, Caltrans has proposed a list of criteria to prioritize corridors (if CRFC mileage needs are more than the federally allocated 623 miles).

CRFC Assignment

The large MPOs and the smaller MPOs similarly submit their CRFC requests to Caltrans. Caltrans then submits requests to FHWA California Division Office. Caltrans maintains a CRFC scoreboard similar to the CUFC Scoreboard

Mileage Methodology and Assumptions**Interchanges**

If one of the interchange roads is on the PHFS, no additional miles are required for this interchange project. This includes reconfiguring ramps, widening an overcrossing, signaling ramps, and/or adding connections to reduce weaving which will improve operations for the mainline, particularly if congestion on the ramps/non-PHFS crossing causes queues to extend onto the PHFS. This is consistent with clarification that FHWA provided at the April 3, 2017 meeting of the TWG.

If neither of the roads is on the PHFS, the project sponsor should measure the distance on the mainline segment that corresponds to the largest project “footprint.” For example, if the interchange project includes adding a new lane on one of the highways in addition to ramp modifications, the CUFC/CRFC would correspond to the distance of the widening component of the project. Per the logic for an interchange on the PHFS, only one of the intersecting roads needs to be designated as a CUFC/CRFC.

- If an interchange project includes significant mainline widening, the portion of the widening beyond the extent of the interchange would need to be designated as a CRFC/CUFC.
- If the interchange is on the PHFS, then the interchange would be exempt, and mileage would only be assigned to the widening portion of the project beyond the interchange extents on a non-PHFS route.

New Roadway Alignment Projects

Projects that would construct new alignments should use the mileage of the new alignment for designating a CUFC/CRFC. If the new alignment is planned to replace a route currently designated as part of the PHFS, no mileage is needed to be assigned to this project.

Roadway Projects Crossing Urban/Rural Boundaries

The urban portion of the project would be assigned CUFC and the rural portion of the project would be assigned CRFC mileage.

Port Projects

Statewide, port projects (seaport, airport, land port) cannot amount to more than 10% of the State's entire FAST Act Formula funds. No CUFC miles should be assigned.

ITS Projects/Non-Traditional Projects/Emission Reduction Projects

Intangible operational improvements such as ITS projects, incentives for near-zero emission technology or upgrading truck scales do not require CUFC/CRFC miles.

Grade Crossing Improvements

Grade crossing improvements like safety measures associated with implementing rail quiet zones and multimodal infrastructure at rail crossings are not roadway projects. No CUFC/CRFC miles should be assigned.

Grade Separation Projects

If the project would separate rail from a roadway that is already the PHFS, no CUFC/CRFC miles should be assigned. This is consistent with clarification that FHWA provided at the April 3, 2017 meeting of the TWG. If the project would separate rail from a roadway off the PHFS, the non-PHFS roadway would need to be designated as CUFC/CRFC and mileage should be measured along the length of the project footprint. In both cases, rail grade separation needs no CUFC/CRFC.

Endnotes

- ¹ “Fast Act, Section 1116 National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) Guidance: Designating and Certifying Critical Rural Freight Corridors and Critical Urban Freight Corridors.” U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. April 26, 2016. [Ops.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/crhc/sec_1116_gdnce.htm](https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/crhc/sec_1116_gdnce.htm).
- ² Unpublished document. California Department of Transportation. “Critical Urban/Rural Freight Corridor Designation Process” Handout. 2017.