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What We Mean By “Actionable Shipper Data”?

The concept and terminology emerged from collaboration through the CN/WCGroup Advisory Board, Intermodal Working Committee, [circa 2014](#). By 2018-2020, Actionable Shipper Data became the foundation for the [LSSA/MITech Data Co-op Project](#), supported by an omnibus Confidentiality and Antitrust Compliance Agreement structure (see [final report](#) posted 4/3/2020).

Today, the concept of Actionable Shipper Data has entered the “big data” era. One of the more likely avenues is the data and data science resources of [Breakthrough](#), Green Bay, WI.

Actionable Shipper Data has at least three dimensions as "Aggregated Actionable Shipper Data" ("AASData" or “AASD”) and "Actionable Shipper Data" ("ASData" or “ASD”).

- The first dimension and use of AASData (principally, rather than ASData) is for decisions on railroad operations changes and, beyond, potential for converting over-the-road truckloads to underutilized existing rail capacity.
- The second dimension is for decisions on new rail and rail-related infrastructure investments.
- The third dimension and use is for rail rate and service negotiations and tenders of freight. A "classic co-op shippers association" (such as LSSA) may lawfully negotiate rail rates and services (with individual railroads or multiple railroads participating in specific routes) using both AASData and/or individual shipper ASData.

The natural next step is **Rail Infrastructure Investment and Operations Planning (“RII-OP”)**, *i.e.*, demand-side data and analytics, near real-time data, on a scale sufficient to support:

- Grant funding applications for longer term investments in rail and rail related facilities necessary to expand and optimize conversion of over-the-road truckloads to rail (carload, transload) and rail intermodal; and
- Identification of opportunities for improving, in the nearer term, utilization of under-utilized existing rail and rail intermodal capacity.

RII-OP is, we think, a revolutionary tool for public agencies, with respect to freight, to identify trade-offs for infrastructure investments in highways, rail and other modes. It is also a tool for railroads, truckers and shippers to explore opportunities for mass conversions of over-the-road truckload freight to rail or rail intermodal.