
New activities for rail cargo stations in urban areas

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Rail freight stations in urban areas : an important patrimony...



- In France, there are still rail freight stations in a lot of great urban areas :
 - Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Strasbourg, Lille, Bordeaux, Toulouse...
- These stations :
 - are very often well located...
 - in the heart of urban areas, which allows to deliver goods by rail at the closest to the places where they are used.
 - For example only on the territory of Paris, there are 5 freight stations representing around 50 hectares of usable space.
 - and well linked to the national railway network,
 - with a direct access to main lines,
 - offer transport and logistic facilities :
 - some of these stations have
 - a combined transport terminal (in Lille, Strasbourg...)
 - warehouses

...but a threatened patrimony (1/3)



■ Main reasons explaining this situation :

- The evolution of the needs of transport and logistic markets
 - Development of just-in-time logistic that increased the use of road transport
 - need of growing and very efficient space for logistic activities, for instance for warehousing.
 - That leads companies to build their warehouse(s) where there are great available spaces with a cheaper cost than in urban areas.
 - Some companies have only one warehouse to deliver their goods in whole France.

- The difficulty for rail freight companies to follow this evolution
 - great loss of market-shares, especially on parcels and consumer goods markets that generate significant flows in urban areas.
 - Main consequence : less and less rail freight traffic coming in / out of our rail stations located in the heart of urban areas.

...but a threatened patrimony (2/3)



■ Consequences for our sites :

- Less and less rail freight traffic
 - we become more renter out transport and logistic places than rail carrier
- Less adaptation to the demand and to the urban environment
 - Most of our stations are old and the upper point led us to reduce investments in these sites. So :
 - many warehouses are old and no more suited to the needs of actual transport and logistic activities;
 - road accesses (very often there is only one road access) are not adapted to great flows of lorries;
 - some sites give the impression of being fallow lands

■ Consequences for the future of our sites :

- The pressure to change the vocation of our sites is high
 - Local authorities want to get some of them back to use them for more urban oriented activities :
 - building of living houses, commercial and public services areas or even parks

...but a threatened patrimony (3/3)



- It is understandable because our legitimacy to keep some of these stations is weakened by :
 - the low level or above all the lack of rail freight traffic coming in / out;
 - the inadequate attention paid (in the close past) to the urban environment of our stations that generates pollution (noise, road traffic...)
 - the need for what is perceived as “free” or unused land, which is rare in urban areas

New perspectives for rail freight stations in urban areas (1/2)



- To keep its patrimony, SNCF Fret has been working on new projects for around 2 or 3 years
 - They concern our traditional markets and also new markets (presentation in the next pages)
- Our work is supported by a favourable external context which explains itself by :
 - an increase of pollution in urban areas :
 - growing saturation of road network in and around urban areas,
 - growing pollution (noise and air),
 - degradation of collect / delivery conditions for freight transport companies.
 - The becoming aware of this evolution by the public authorities :
 - creation of a national research program on goods transport in town
 - law on air quality which imposes to urban areas of more 100 000 inhabitants to set an Urban Movements Plan (PDU in french)

New perspectives for rail freight stations in urban areas (2/2)



- Effects of these PDU's
 - one of the main objectives is the decreasing of air pollution due to road traffic by a global reduction of this-one
 - some of them take goods transport into account (Paris, Lille...)
 - some of them make interesting proposals for goods transport :
 - use of alternative energies for lorries (electricity, natural gas...)
 - use of alternative transport modes : rail and waterway
 - preservation of rail freight stations and waterway ports to allow these modes to transport goods up to the heart of great urban areas.

First action for SNCF Fret : reinforce our position on traditional markets



- Some industry branches, that have a significant part of their activity in urban areas, already use rail freight transport and stations
 - beverages delivery companies, especially for cafés, hotels and restaurants use rail and are often located into the towns
 - It's the case of the 2 biggest in Paris.
 - They receive more than 200 000 Tons / Year by rail
 - building materials branch is also a “good” customer of rail for transport and use of land in freight stations
- These branches need rail transport because it :
 - allows massive transport (complete trains for the 2nd branch)...
 - at a low cost.
 - Allows an efficient use of lorries (good turn-over) because distances are short between the transshipment point and the final destination points

Second action for SNCF Fret : propose a project of urban logistic



- Aim of the project :
 - Create innovating logistic chains better adapted to great urban areas...
 - Provide a complete logistic offer
 - build a network of freight stations located as near as possible from the heart of urban areas
 - at a national scale,
 - into urban areas.
 - ...in order to :
 - improve the quality of life of the inhabitants in these areas;
 - have a more efficient goods transportation and logistic system.

Description of the project (1/2)



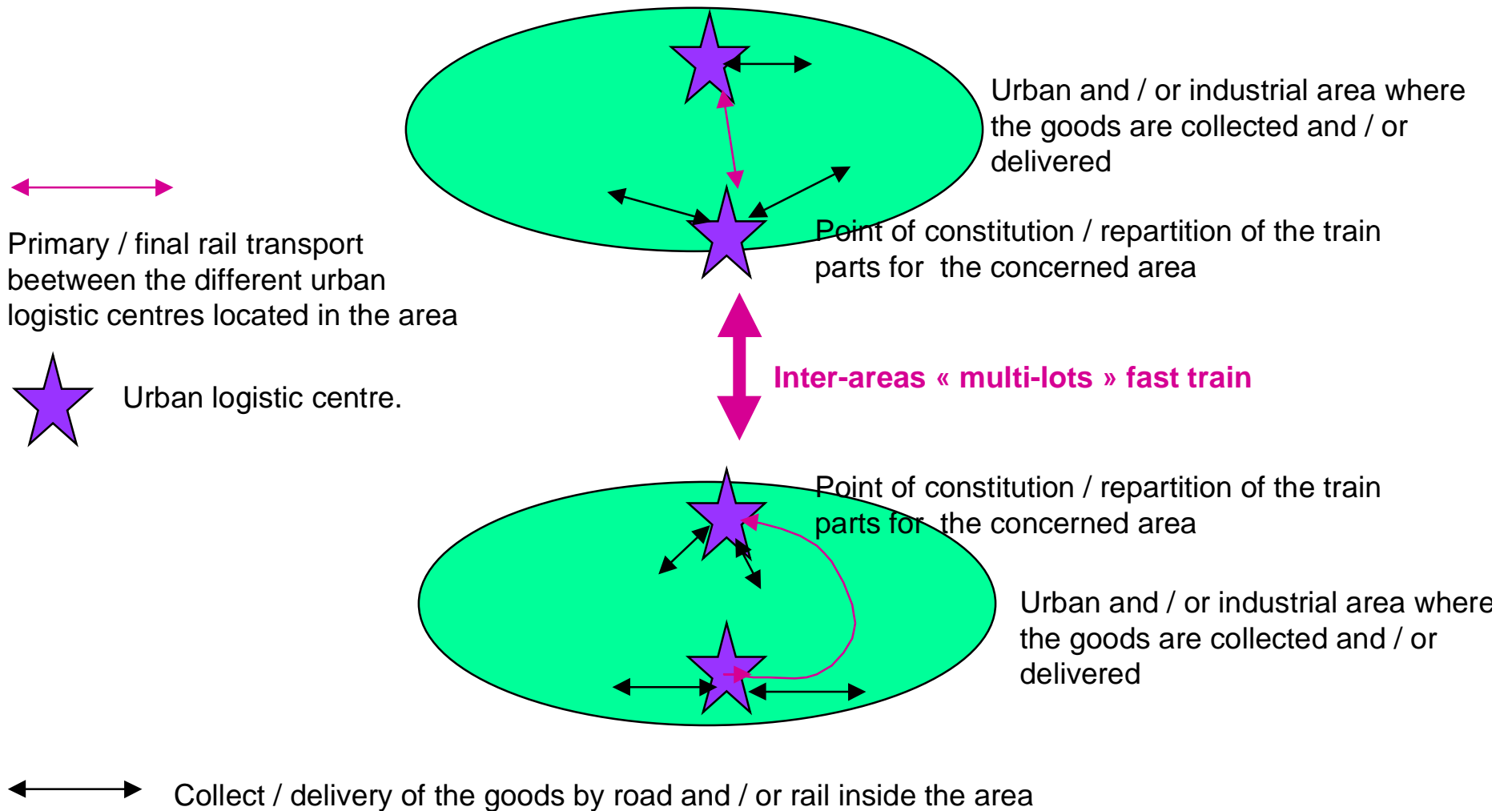
- Use of rail transport between great urban areas and into these one :
 - Using rail allows to enter to the heart of the areas where there are freight stations and to avoid the more and more current traffic jams in and around the city centres
 - The main rail transport (between 2 areas) will be realised by “multi-lots” fast trains
- Creation of urban logistic centres in our freight stations where the goods will be loaded / unloaded, transferred from train to lorry or the contrary
 - These centres will provide services such as :
 - storage, picking;
 - commercial services for mail-order companies, retailers (show-room for instance)...

Description of the project (2/2)



- Use of road transport materials that are adapted to traffic and delivery in urban area :
 - Use of “clean” lorries (electric or gas powered) for goods transport round each centre.
 - Due to the arrival of goods by rail in stations located very near from their places of final consumption, the lorries will only run on short distances.
 - It's not the case today for a lot of urban deliveries realised from warehouses that are 20, 30 km or sometimes more faraway from city centres.
- Use of transport and handling materials that simplify the delivery, the loading and unloading of goods and / or of containers
 - “Light” combined transport techniques are interesting for this project
 - With these solutions, it isn't necessary to use traditional container handling systems.

Summary diagram



Main results of the first feasibility study of the project (1999 / 2000) (1/2)



- The project interests a lot of industry branches that have a significant part of their activity in urban areas
 - Beverages delivery
 - General wholesale, retail companies and department stores
 - textile (wholesale, retail and also specialised road carriers)
 - road carriers, especially parcels transport companies
 - mail-order companies
- It seems to be economically viable
 - For many of the interested industry branches the cost of their transport chain would be reduced by using a rail - road organisation instead of their actual “all road” organisation
 - In this field, one of the most important point is the optimisation of the initial / final road transport (better turn-over / vehicle) allowed by the reduction of distances covered by the lorries.
 - A limit : the costs of organisation change hadn't been valued in this study

Main results of the first feasibility study of the project (1999 / 2000) (2/2)



- It seems to be a long term project
 - There are many oppositions to change in this field
 - the economical interest doesn't seem to be enough to convince the potential users of our system to change their actual organisation
 - the rules for urban goods delivery are insufficient and / or bad applied / respected
 - conservatism of many interested economic actors (transport companies and wholesalers and retailers)
- These results were insufficient to “launch” directly a commercial offer based on our project but interesting enough to carry on in the chosen way
 - The future evolutions in this field take form from now on
 - growing need of new services for urban distribution (e-trade, development of home deliveries...)
 - multiplying of projects on this subject coming from French / European public and private authorities

Short presentation of our actual projects (1/3)



■ 3 concrete projects today

- they are complementary because they permit to test different elements of the project and the interest of the concerned actors for these one.

■ The Lille ↔ Paris relation

- aim : create a daily train shuttle between stations located in the heart of the 2 towns
 - the train will be able to transport goods in conventional wagons or in containers (use of light combined transport techniques)
 - realisation of a commercial study to check the real interest of the market for this offer
 - calendar :
 - end of 2001 for the results of the study
 - 2002 for the launching of the train shuttles (naturally if the results of the study are positive)

Short presentation of our actual projects (2/3)



■ Toulouse

- Creation of an urban logistic center. The project will essentially concern :
 - the use of “clean” lorries to deliver parcels (at the beginning) in the city centre.
 - Our parcels transport company (SERNAM) will take part to the experiment by using a clean lorry to deliver parcels in the concerned part of the town
 - Our will is to replace a traditional fuel lorry by an electric one (partnership with EDF, French electricity company)
 - the other potential markets for this project in order to extend the goods flow going through the urban logistic centre
 - realisation of market study
 - something to notice : there is already a daily fast train relation between Toulouse and Paris (in the 2 directions)
 - Calendar : beginning 2002 for the vehicle and for the results of the study

Short presentation of our actual projects (3/3)



- Strasbourg
 - Creation of an urban logistic center.
 - Original aspect in this project : search of complementarities between this centre and the combined transport terminal which is located in the same site
 - First step : realisation of a feasibility study in order to launch an experiment
 - Calendar : 2002 for the results of the study

- New projects are now in discussion in other French towns
 - Lyon...

Conditions of success (1/2)



- Work in a partnership way
 - such projects won't be developed without discussions with the interested partner :
 - local public authorities
 - for environmental aspects...
 - and also to convince them from the importance of keeping land dedicated to transport and logistic activities in the heart of their cities
 - potential customer of the system
 - to convince them from the interest of using the urban logistic system
 - to share the know-how that are necessary to the project :
 - road delivery,
 - logistic services offered.

Conditions of success (2/2)



- Pay seriously attention to the insertion of the project in its urban environment
 - reflexion on the arrangement of our urban freight stations
 - work on road accessibility of the sites and on flows management around them
 - work on external aspects of the sites : find efficient and pleasant transitions between the pure urban middle and the logistic dedicated area
 - use of innovating materials in order to reduce noise and gas pollution
 - research on more silent wagons
 - use of clean lorries, especially electric