## **[OnTrackNorthAmerica](https://www.ontracknorthamerica.org)** is a nonprofit transportation consultancy and think tank committed to co-leading society in redesigning our industrial systems to support sustainable life. Industrial systems are the complete set of commercial, policy, and planning activities that deliver materials and products for modern civilization’s survival and satisfaction. From the inputs of raw materials, labor, land, transportation, power, and infrastructure to the process and activities needed to convert those raw materials into finished products, we must conceive of industrial systems as a whole. Too often, industrial sectors operate in fragmented silos striving to reach arbitrary and, at times, conflicting goals.

Competition has limited the efficiency of our industrial systems. Supply chains have evolved as a chaotic response to individual shippers and developers' indiscriminate land transactions, regardless of the transportation inefficiencies those choices impose. How we move freight between industrial locations must be a central focus in industrial systems planning. North America currently underutilizes freight railroads despite the fact that rail is often economically, environmentally, and geographically superior to other modes of moving freight over land. Climate change, air pollution, congested highways, and dependence on oil diminish our quality of life. Railroads, ocean carriers, freight forwarders, ports, trucking companies, distributors, and shippers must cooperate and coordinate in transitioning to a comprehensive, multimodal supply chain.

As a society, we don’t lack intelligence. We lack a communication framework that builds solutions without being derailed by excessive competition, mistrust, or vested interests focused on short-term profits. OnTrackNorthAmerica uses IntelliSynthesis®, our patented inquiry-based methodology for efficiently gathering collective intelligence into productive solutions. Using the most advanced communication technology, we convene stakeholders in IntelliConferences to collaboratively design the most efficient action plans for industrial transportation.

**Michael Sussman** began his career in transportation in 1994 by launching [Strategic Rail Finance](http://www.strategicrail.com/), a North American transportation-industry consulting firm. He went on to found OnTrackNorthAmerica in 2007 advising private and public sector clients in 44 states and Canada.

* In 2023 OnTrackNorthAmerica led a four-county stakeholder process in New Mexico in the aftermath of a 450,000-acre forest fire. This work resulted in the [New Mexico Forestry Business Plan](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/nm-sustainable-forestry-business-plan/).
* In 2021 OTNA convened hundreds of transportation stakeholders in the process of creating [Nevada’s 2021 State Rail Plan](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/nevada-state-rail-plan/), supporting the Nevada Department of Transportation in a new whole-systems paradigm for freight rail planning.
* On December 11, 2008, OTNA convened a [five-hour summit of industry and government leaders in the U.S. Capitol Building](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/Resolution-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf) to consider new collaborative approaches to freight transportation efficiency.
* On December 8, 1998, OTNA convened a [rail transportation conference in the U.S. Capitol Building for 55 congressional staff](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/1998-Invitation-US-Congressional-Briefing-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf), praised by many as the finest briefing they had ever attended.

He has contributed considerable time to improving public policy by meeting with staff or leaders of 68 U.S. Senate offices and 135 U.S. House offices.

* In March of 2011 Michael was the only private sector invitee to a [U.S. House Railroad Subcommittee Staff Workshop](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2011-Invitation-US-Congress-Rail-Workshop-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf) exploring ways to improve the FRA RRIF loan program.
* On February 17, 2011, Michael [testified before the U.S. House of Representatives Railroad Subcommittee](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2011-Testimony-US-Congressional-Hearing-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf)on reforms to the Federal Railroad Administration’s Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) program.
* On October 19, 2005, Michael [spoke before the Surface Transportation Board](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2005-Testimony-Surface-Transportation-Board-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf) on the 25th anniversary of the Staggers Rail Act of 1980.

Those efforts were acknowledged

* On April 5th, 2024, Michal received the President’s Award from the [Transportation Research Forum](https://trforum.org/).
* Thank you letters from [Republican House Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Frank Wolf](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/Thank-You-Letter-US-Rep-Wolf-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf) and [Democratic Senator Jay Rockefeller’s Chief of Staff](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/Thank-You-Letter-US-Sen-Rockefeller-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf).
* In 2003 he contributed to Washington State produce shippers by designing and writing important elements of the [Washington State Produce Railcar Pool Act](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2003-Reference-Letter-2-WSDOT-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf) as passed by the 2003 state legislature.
* In 1999 he worked with the Federal Railroad Administration to eliminate audited financial statement requirements for Class II and III railroads from the [Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing Act (RRIF loan program)](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/OMB-Caused-the-Delay-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf).
* In November of 1997 he was responsible for having freight rail projects made eligible in [H.R.115 – the National Infrastructure Development Act](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/OnTrackNorthAmerica-105v106.pdf).

Michael has had several academic collaborators over the years to help bring focus to the pressing matters of our time:

* Penn State’s Center for Research in Conflict and Negotiation. Dr. Barbara Gray the former director of the Center, [wrote me a letter of support](file:///C:\Users\Public\Letter%20-%20Penn%20State%20University.html).
* Partnering with the University of Tennessee to create the[Land Freight Lifecycle Impact Calculator](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/land-freight-lifecycle-impact-calculator/).
* Michael hosted at Temple University to deliver on December 5th, 2023 the [OnTrack2025 IntelliConference](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/your-invitation-to-the-ontrack2025-intelliconference/).

Michael has had articles published in several transportation industry journals.

* + - * [Railway Age, December 2014, “Revitalizing Direct Rail Service”](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/2014/12/revitalizing-direct-rail-service/)
      * [Railway Age, April 2011, “A RRIF-Centered Capitalization Growth Strategy”](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/A-RRIF-Centered-Capitalization-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf)
      * [Railway Age, September 2008, “Leveraging Capital for the Entire Industry”](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/Leveraging-Capital-for-the-Entire-Industry-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf)
      * [Transportation Quarterly, Fall 2002, “Regional and Short Line Railroads in the United States”](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/Regional-and-Short-Line-RRs-in-the-US-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf)
      * [Association of Transportation Law, Logistics & Policy, Fall 2000, “Assessing the Process of Creating the RRIF Program](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/Assessing-the-Process-of-Creating-the-RRIF-Program-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf)”
      * [Progressive Railroading, June 1998, “Getting a Lender’s Attention”](https://ontracknorthamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/Getting-a-Lenders-Attention-OnTrackNorthAmerica.pdf)