

# U.S. CONTAINER TRADE OUTLOOK

LAEDC International Trade  
Outlook Conference

June 5, 2014

Scudder Smith

Parsons Brinckerhoff

# Agenda

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- U.S. Container Trade:

Why the Fundamentals are Important

- Panama Canal Expansion Impacts:

Myths vs. Reality

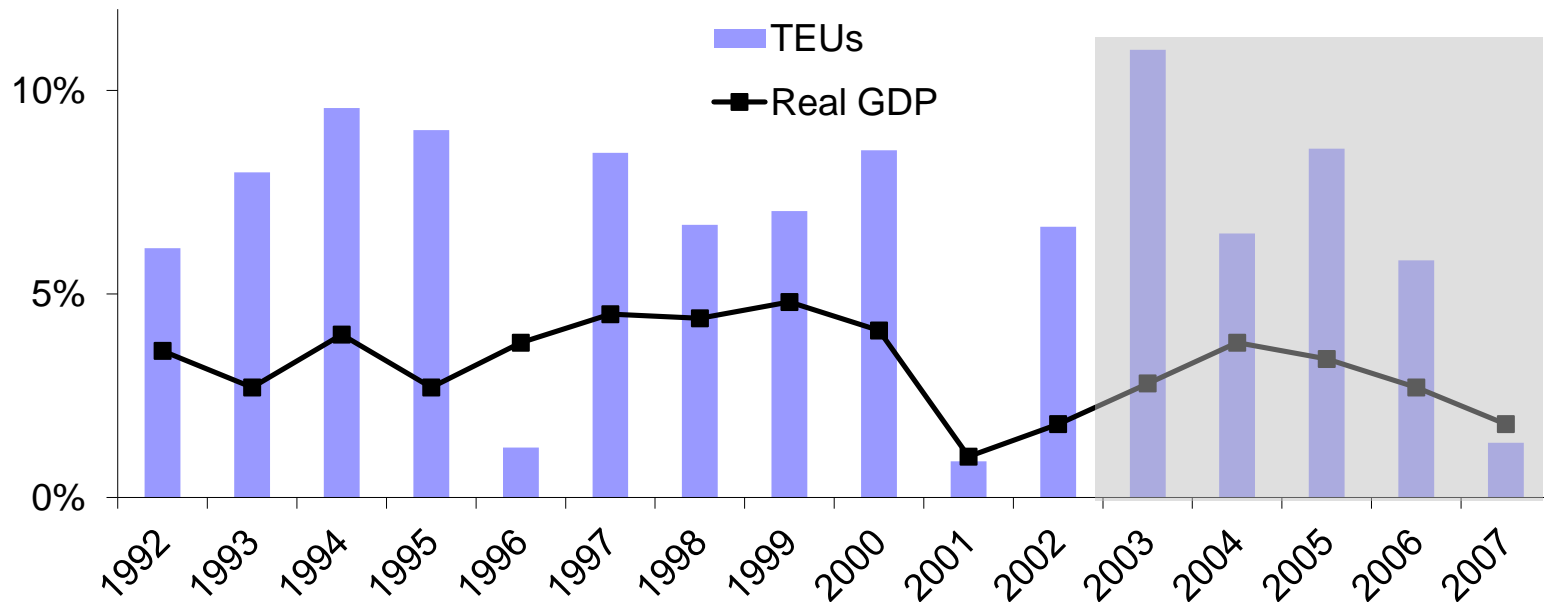
- Implications for Southern California

# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals - History

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## ■ 2003-2007

- Five Years of High Growth
- Container Trade = Multiple of GDP ?

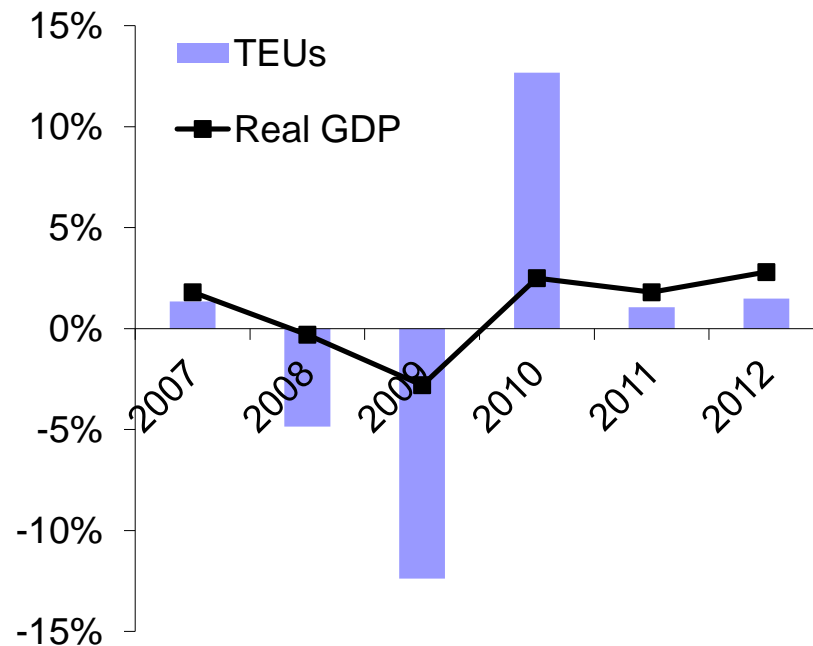


# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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## ■ 2008-2012

- Historic Downturn in the Economy
- Unprecedented Drops in Container Trade



# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

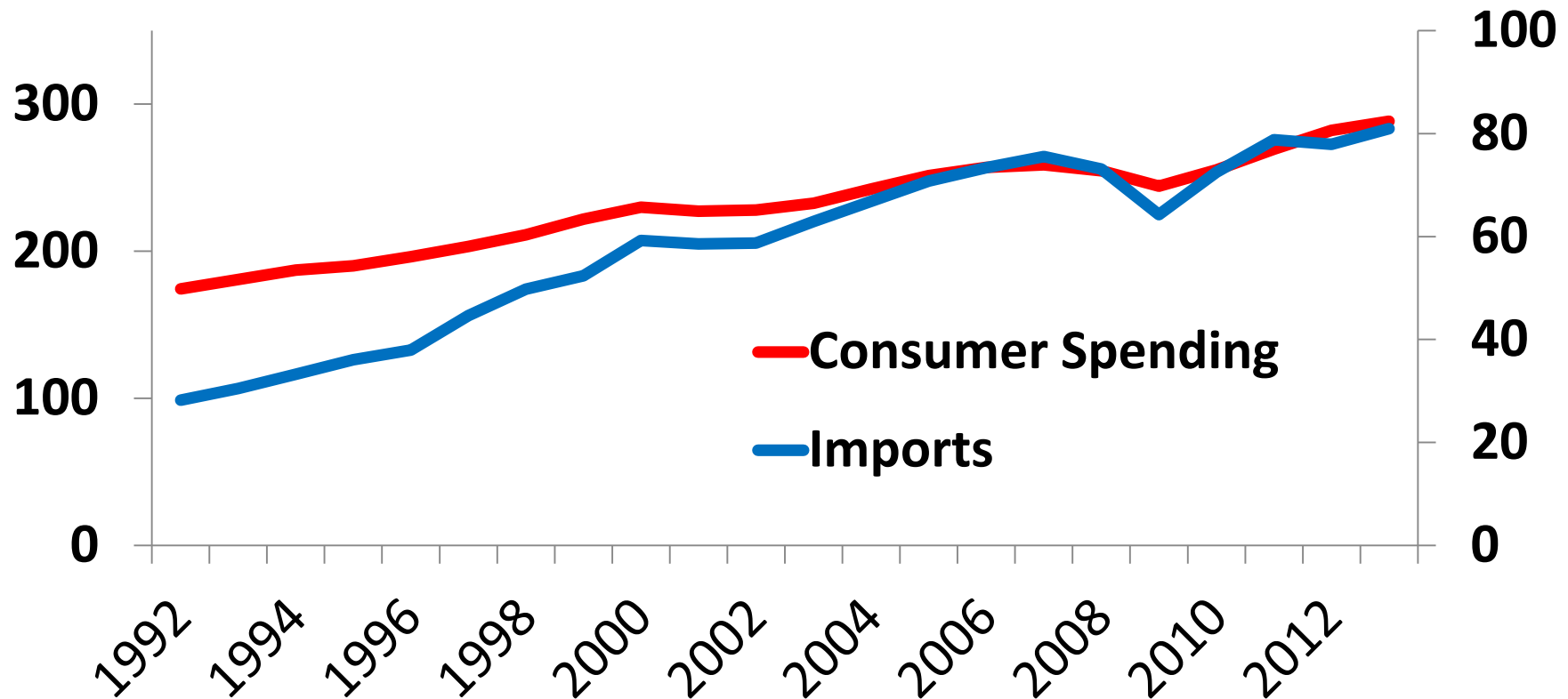
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- Fundamental Drivers of U.S. Container Demand
  - Real U.S. economic sectors
    - Import/export imbalance
  - Containerization
  - U.S. import propensity (outsourcing)
  - Sourcing/Routing
  - Product-specific factors

# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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## ■ U.S. import propensity (outsourcing) - Apparel

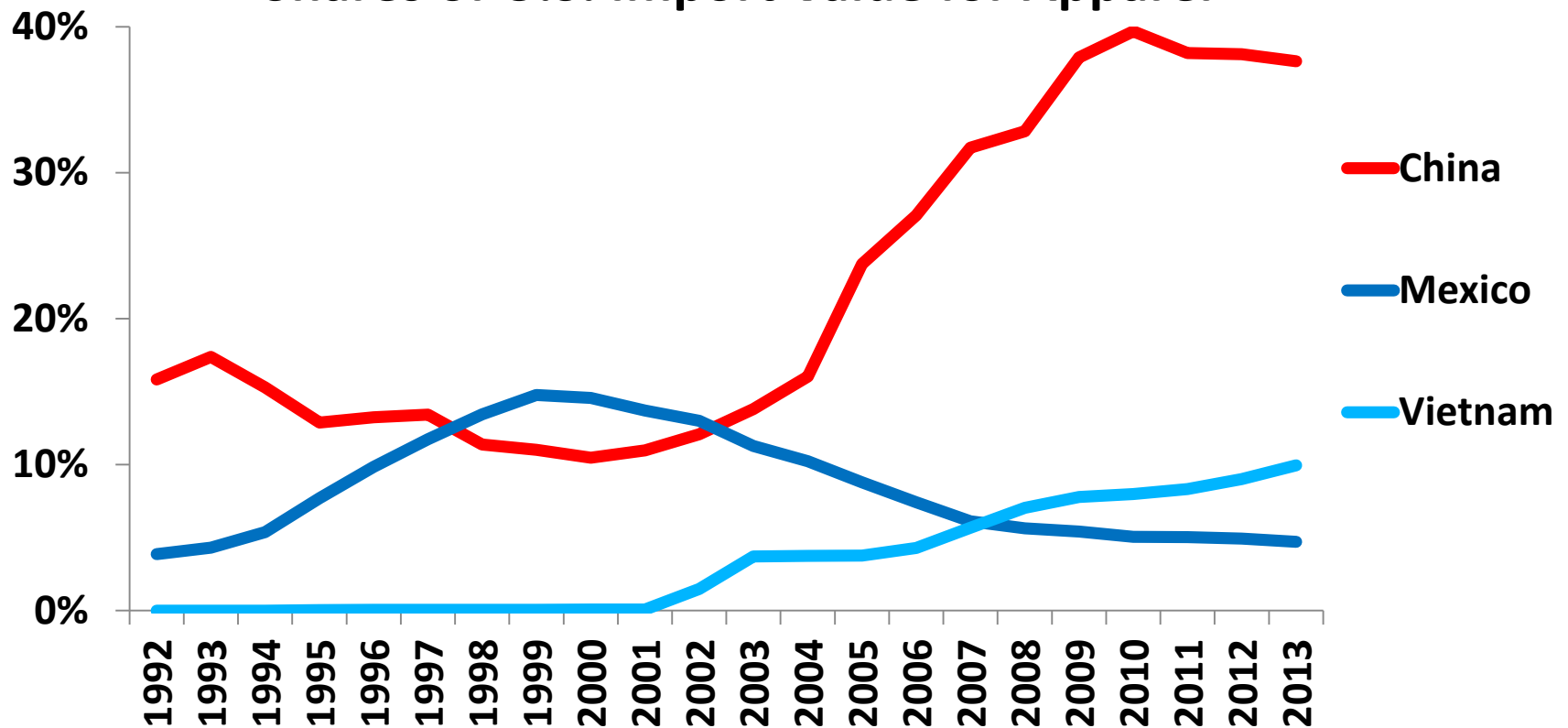


# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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## ■ Sourcing/Routing

Shares of U.S. Import Value for Apparel



# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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- **U.S. Economic Sectors**

- **Consumer Spending**

- Durables
- Nondurables

- **Fixed Investment**

- Residential
- Commercial Structures

- **Inventories**



- **Import Product Detail**

- **Food and Beverages**

- **Apparel**

- **Furniture**

- **Appliances**

- **Consumer Electronics**

- **Vehicle Parts**

- **Building Materials**

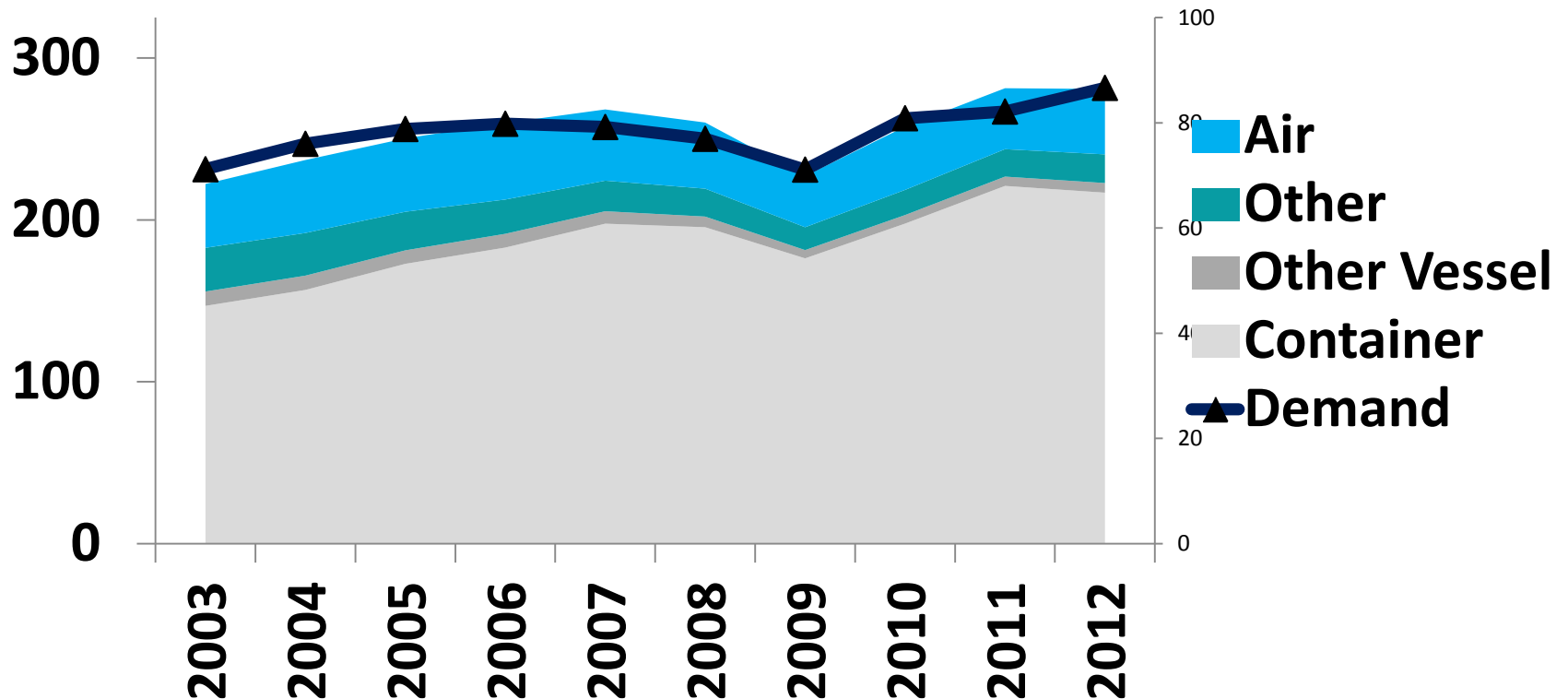
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# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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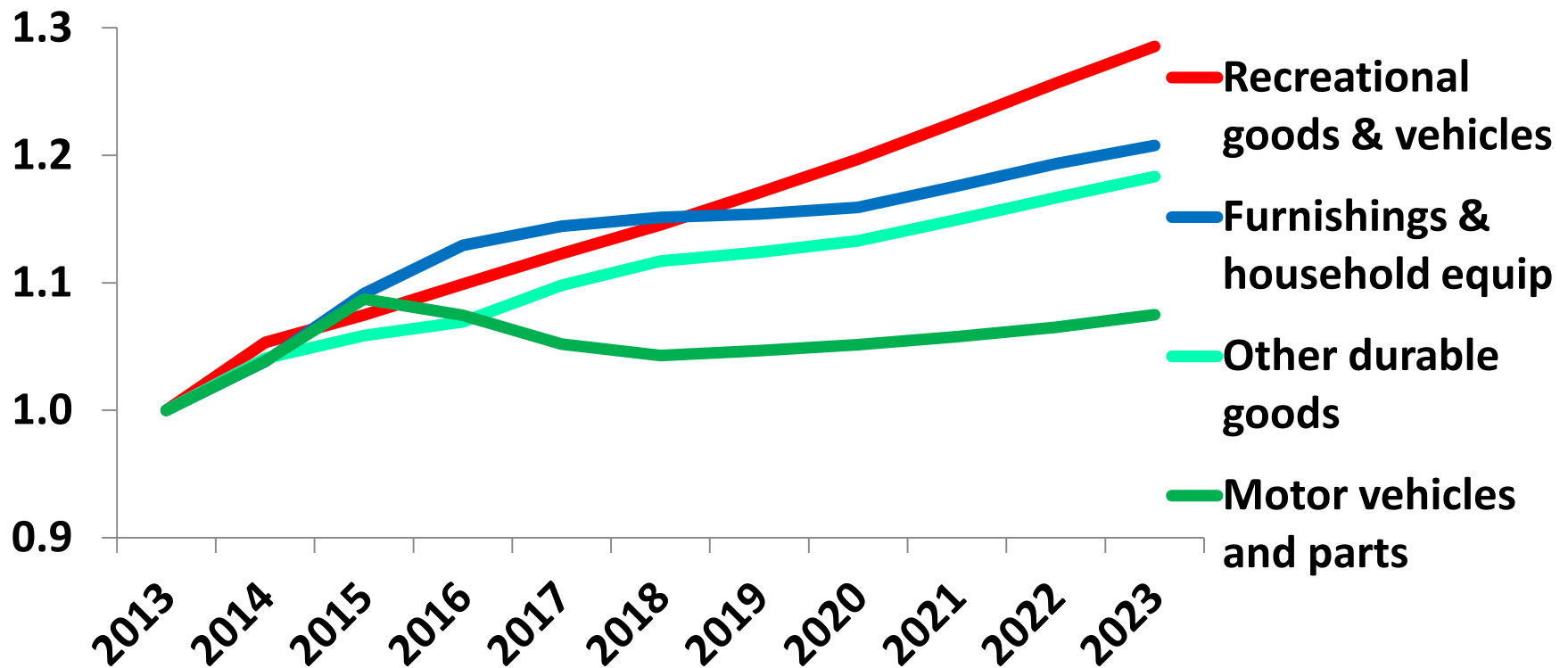
## ■ Apparel Modal Detail



# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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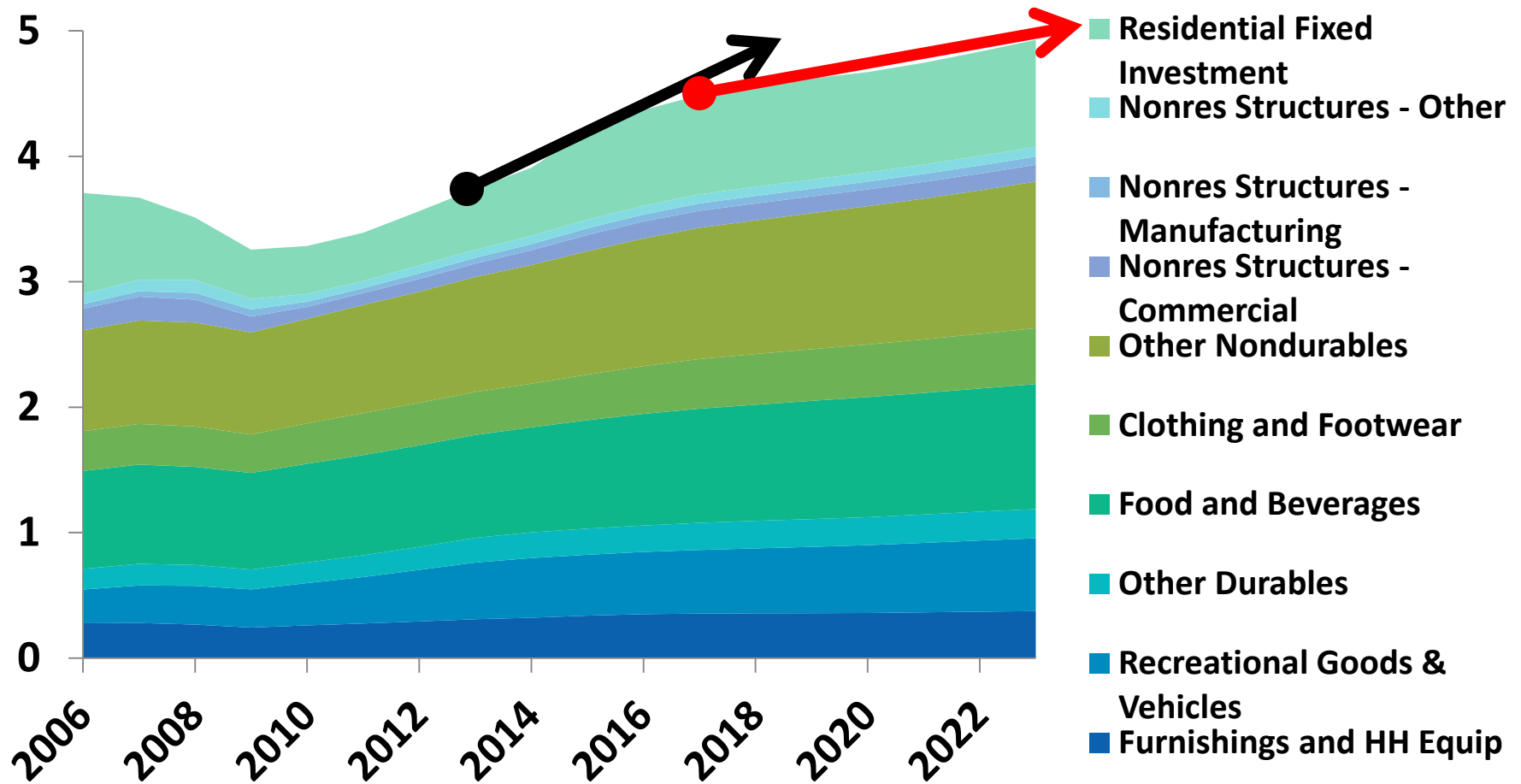
## ■ U.S. Consumer Spending – Durable Goods



# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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## ■ Total of Real GDP Components



# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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## ■ Real GDP Components Summary

- Residential fixed investment growth 3X GDP, highest growth in first four years.
- High growth in **furnishings and household equipment** through 2016.
- Slightly outpacing GDP:
  - Nonresidential structures
  - Consumer spending on recreational goods
  - Non-durable goods, excluding gasoline
- Growth slower than GDP: Other durable goods

# U.S. Container Trade Fundamentals

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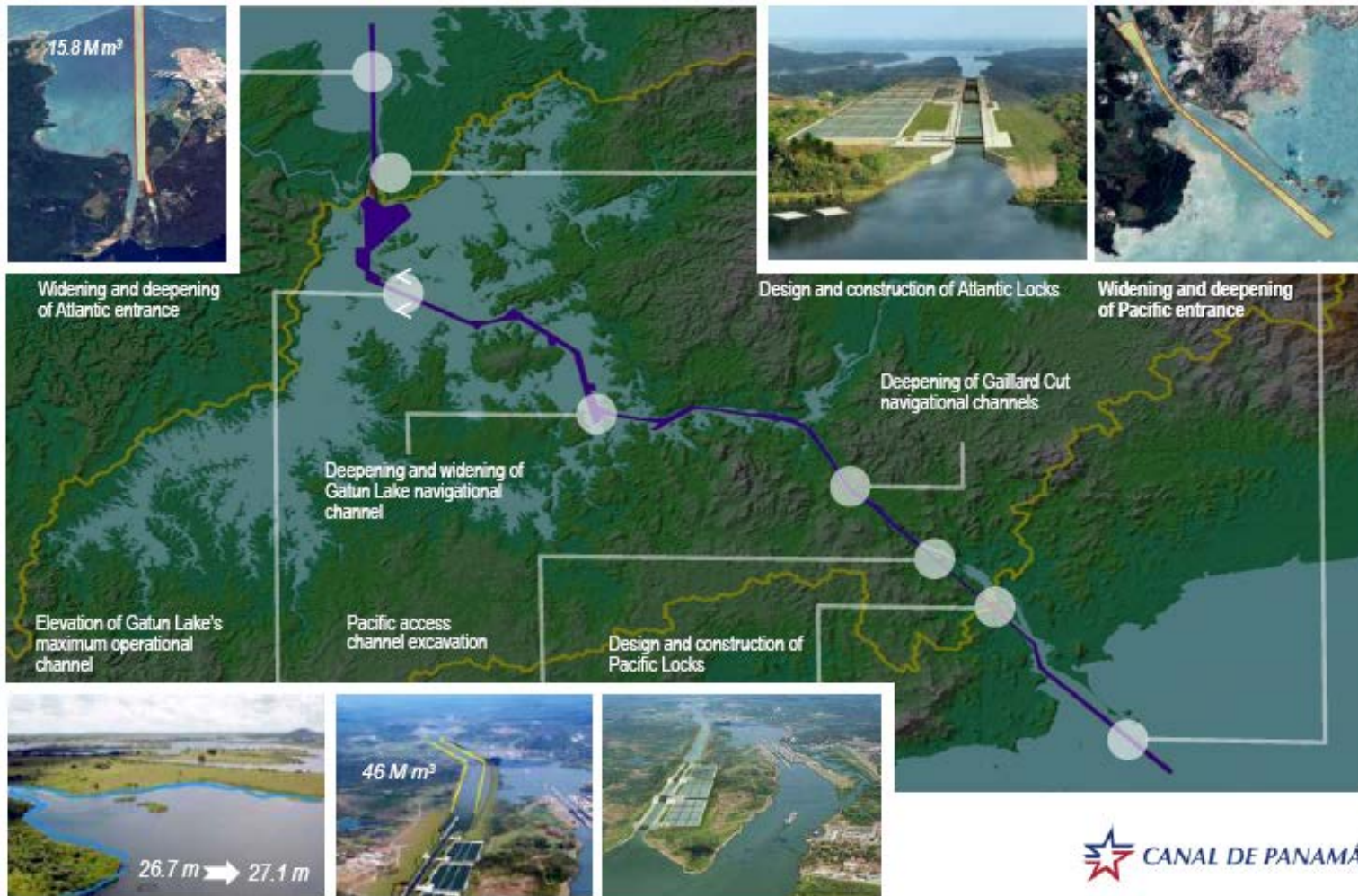
- **Early growth in U.S. container import volumes in 2014 to 2017, led by housing related goods, should not be taken as an indicator of a return to high long term growth rates.**

# Fundamental Drivers of Volume are Changing

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- Other fundamental drivers of historic growth have reached limits and/or may reverse course:
  - Containerization (of imports)
  - Increased import propensity due to re-shoring
  - International sourcing from China moving to Mexico
  - International routing through Mexico or Canada

# Panama Canal Expansion: Program Elements





# Panama Canal Expansion: Locks

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Source: [www.pancanal.com](http://www.pancanal.com)



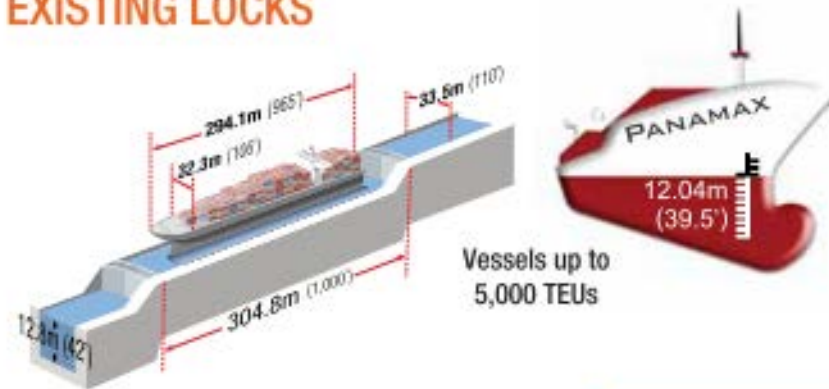
# Panama Canal Expansion: New Locks

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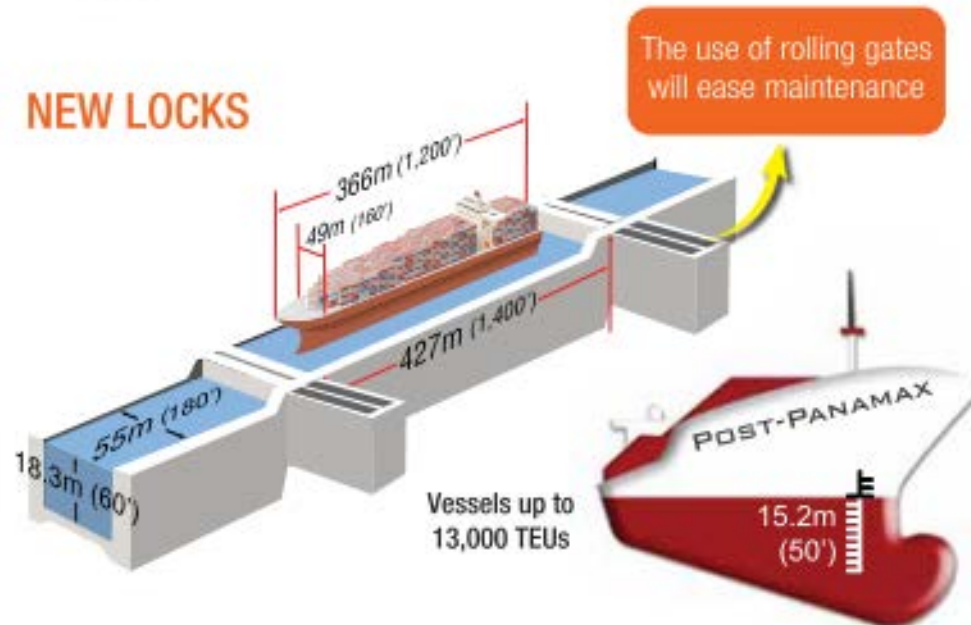


# Panama Canal Expansion: Larger Ships

## EXISTING LOCKS



## NEW LOCKS



# Panama Canal Expansion: U.S. Trade Lanes

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- Panama Canal trade is concentrated in U.S. routes
- Largest trade lane is Northeast Asia – U.S. East Coast



# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts

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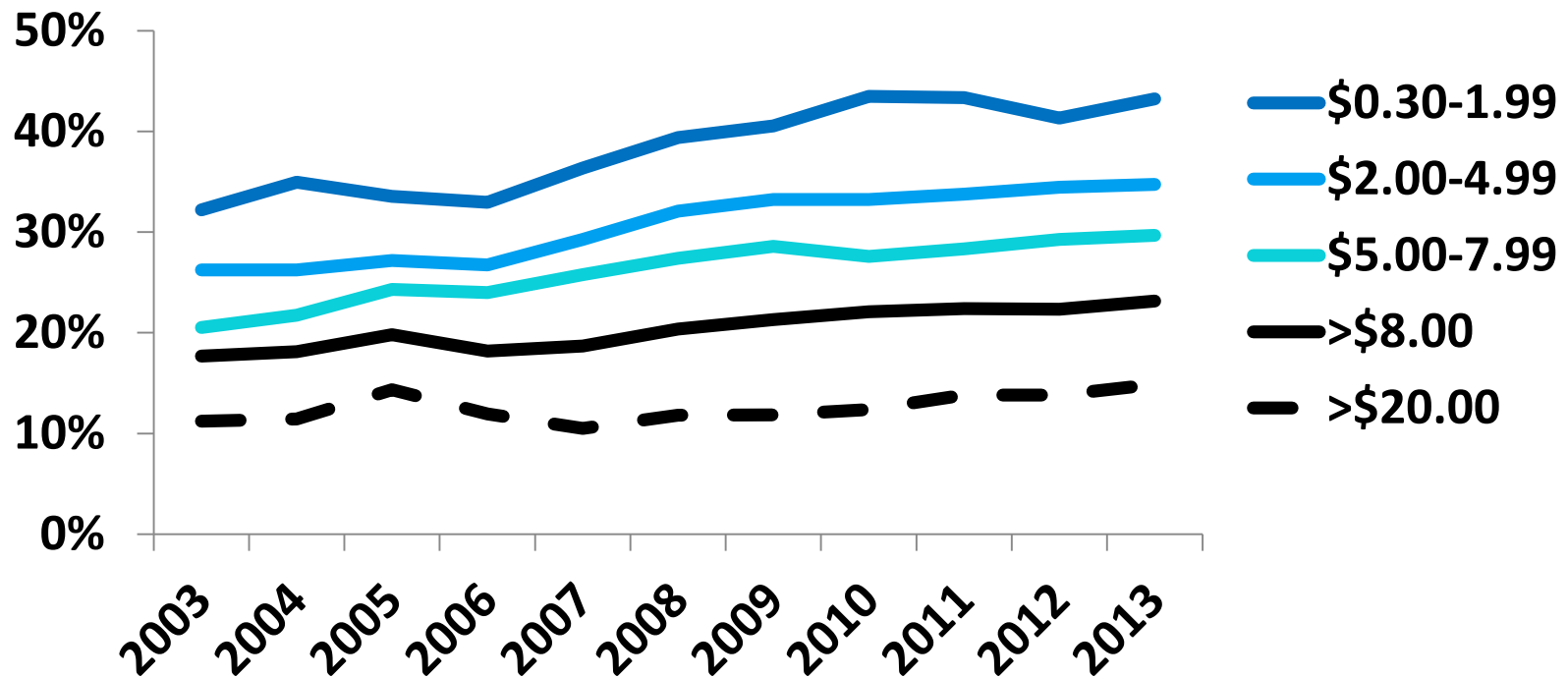
- Three interrelated factors will affect potential shifts:
  - History of shifts and remaining potential
    - Supply chain network development
  - Market segments and drivers
    - Competitive dynamics
  - Transportation cost reductions
    - Port readiness and inland infrastructure

# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts – Recent History

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- Significant shifts have already occurred over the past decade
- This trend may continue apart from expansion impacts

## East and Gulf Coast Share of NE Asia Container Volume Tonnage by 2013 \$/kg



Sources: US Census Bureau and Parsons Brinckerhoff analysis

# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts – Supply Chains

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## ■ Flexibility and redundancy / closeness to end markets



### Container Port (CP)

- Gateway for goods
- Intermodal transfer
- Often land constrained



### Import Distribution Center (IDC)

- Unloads containers, redirects goods
- Preferably near port



### Inland Port (IP)

- More land for intermodal transfer and import DCs



### Mixing Center (MC)

- Mixes domestic & import goods for distribution
- Stores, consolidates, redirects goods
- Uses, not keyed to intermodal service



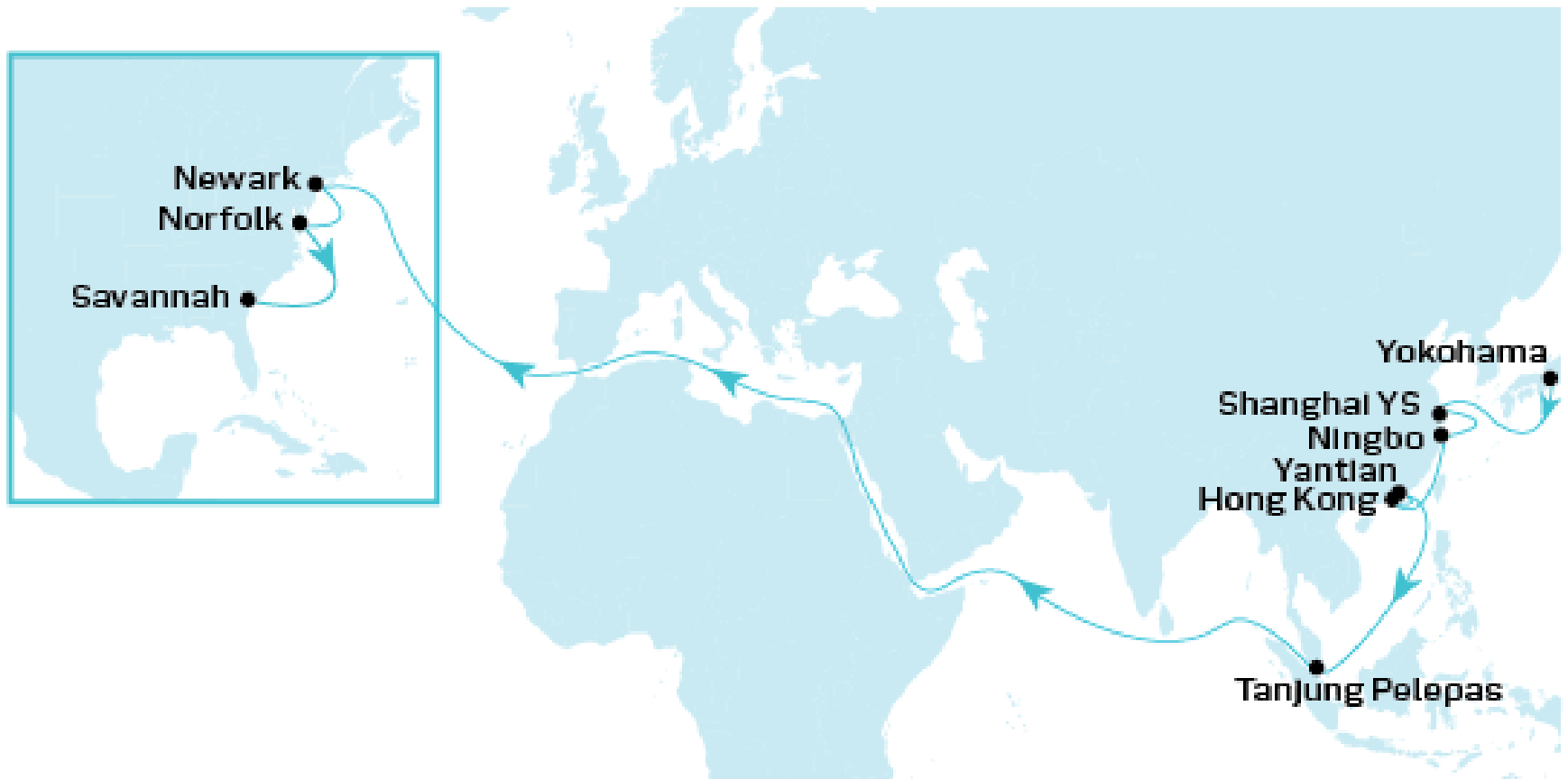
### Intermodal Logistics Center (ILC)

- Container transfer hub (rail ⇌ truck)
- Distribution keyed to intermodal service

# Global Shipping Alliances: G6 and P3

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## Maersk Transpacific 3 Eastbound Service





# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts – Market Segments

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- **All containers are not created equal**
  - Container volumes are too often thought of as homogeneous and destined for a general U.S. inland destination
  - Distinct market segments have significantly different drivers:
    - Sources/destinations
    - Product type and end uses
    - Product value
    - Mode of transport (air, truck, rail, barge)

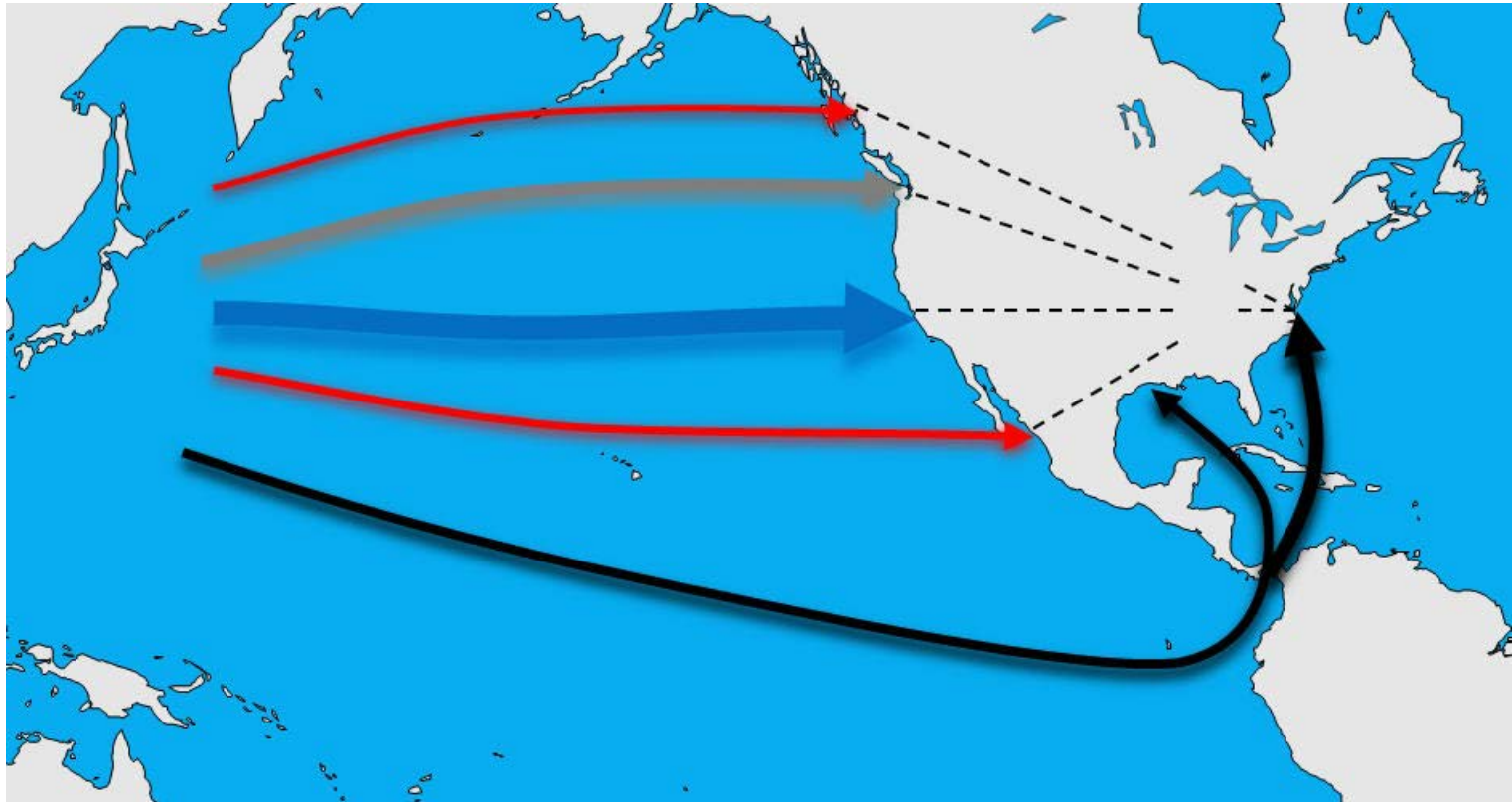




# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts - Competition

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- Who are competitors for serving U.S. markets?  
West Coast vs. Canal? West Coast vs. East Coast railroads?



# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts - Competition

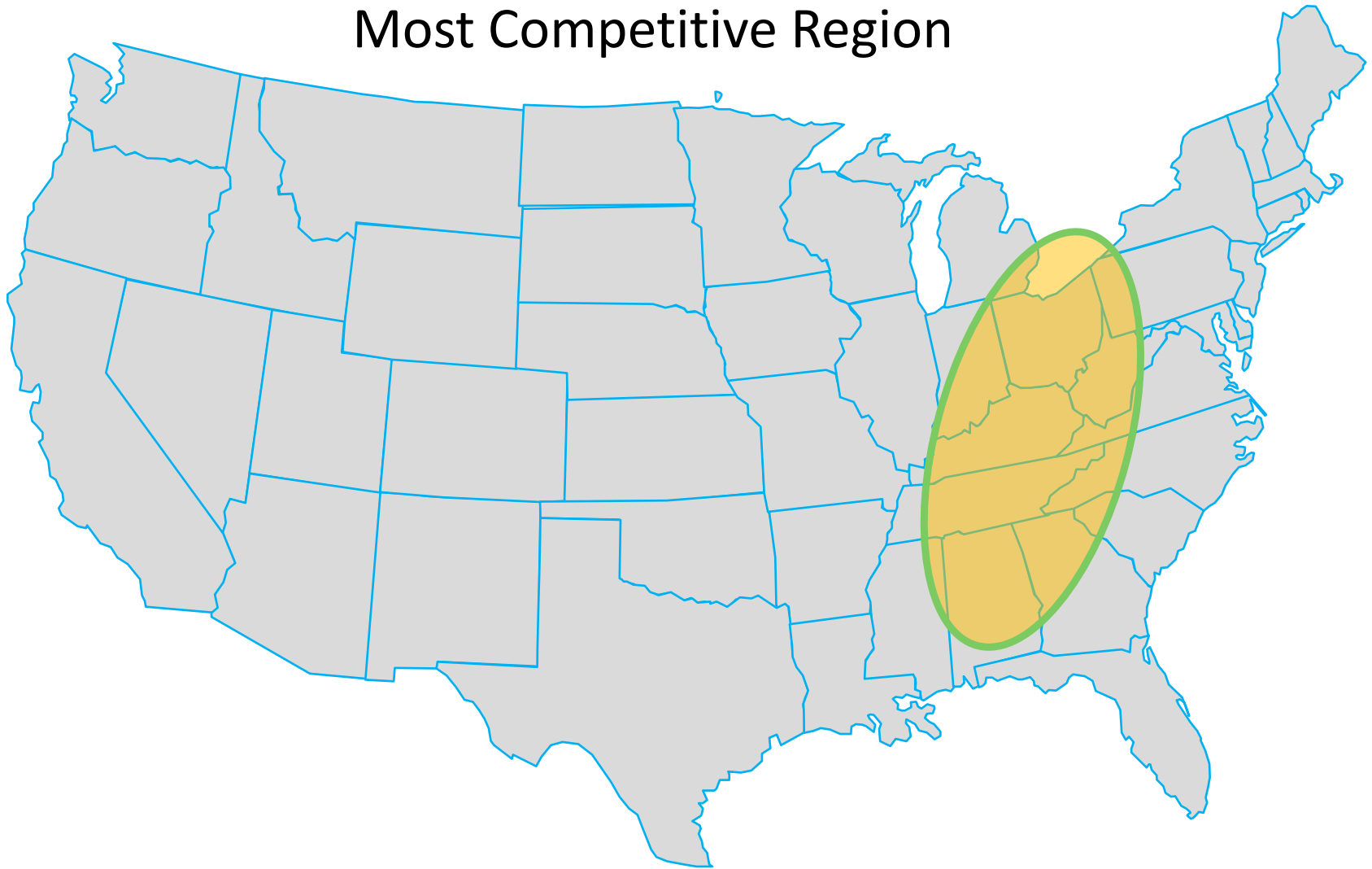
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- **“Competitors” have:**
  - Different capabilities to segment the market and price services:
    - Premium versus slower and less frequent services
    - Origin/destination pricing vs. Canal tolls

# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts - Competition

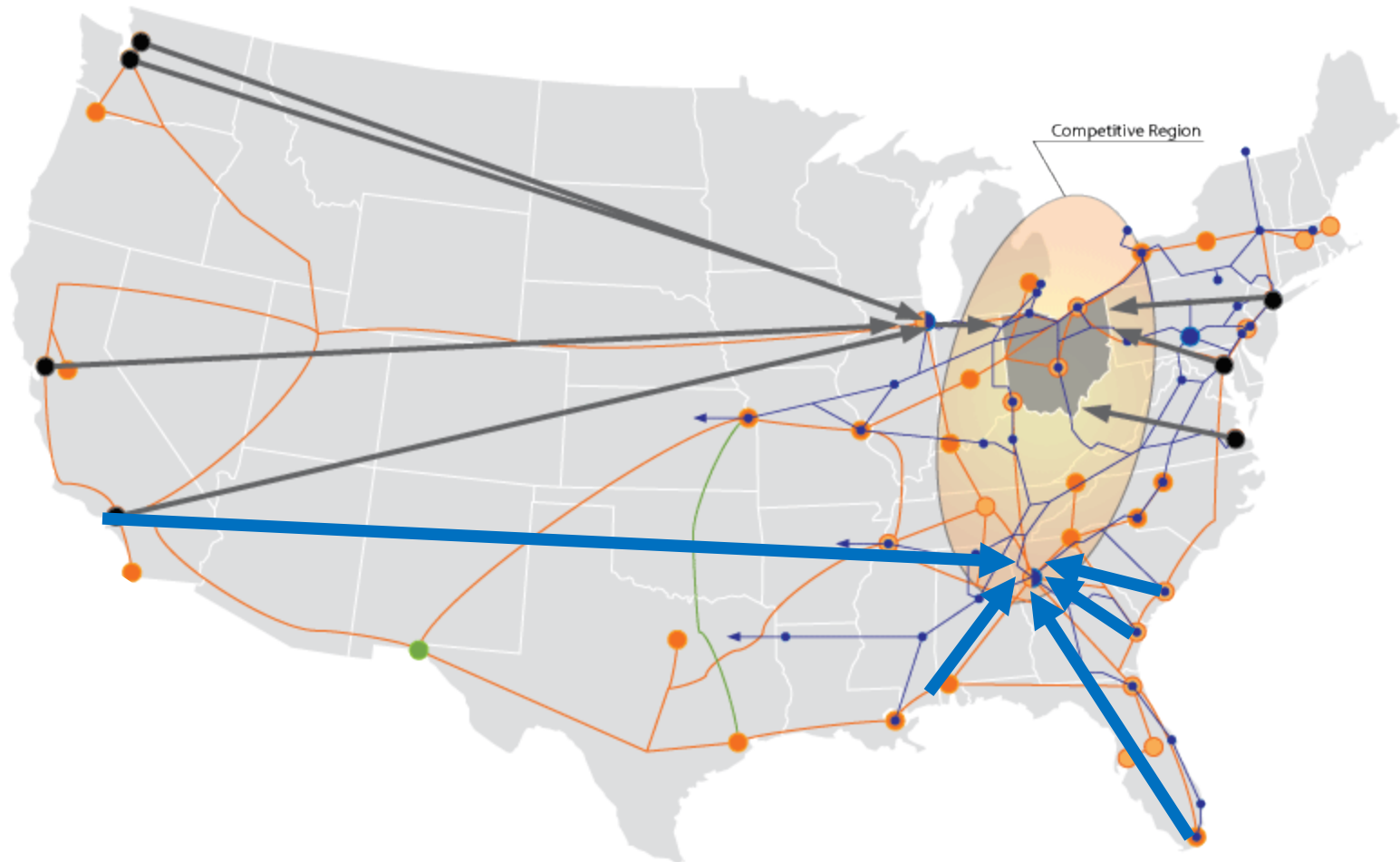
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Most Competitive Region



# Expansion Impacts: Coastal Shifts – Southeast

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# Expansion Effects: Coastal Shifts – Cost Reductions

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## ■ A variety of cost factors are likely to affect potential shifts

- Per TEU cost reduction to the US East Coast -  
13,000 TEU vessel rather than a 5,000 TEU Panamax vessel \$400
- Cost reductions must be ***realized by shippers*** to affect shifts ↓
  - Carriers, US and transshipment ports and the Panama Canal will likely retain a portion of East Coast cost reduction savings
  - Net savings passed on to shippers could be: \$200
- Cost reductions are ***relative*** to those on the West Coast leaving a comparative per TEU cost reduction of: ↓  
\$100

# Expansion Effects: Port Readiness

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- US ports capable of handling much larger ships:
  - US East Coast ports
    - New York/New Jersey, Baltimore, Virginia, Miami
  - Other major ports are less certain
    - Charleston, Savannah
- Multiple ports of call are desired by liner companies to fully utilize larger ships, i.e. 2-3 calls on US East Coast

# Panama Canal Expansion Impacts - Summary

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- The historic frenzy about coastal shifts is overblown
- There will be shifts, but not explosive
  - Major factor is the development of supply chain networks
  - Net cost reductions are likely less than expected
  - Competition between the West Coast and Panama Canal will be less than imagined
  - Shifts are likely focused on the Ohio Valley and Atlanta regions
  - Shifts could evolve slowly depending on Southeast port development and use of transshipment
  - Local impacts could be significant

# Implications for Southern California

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- Five-year U.S. container volume growth appears positive
- Long term volume growth is likely modest
- Beware a “return to normal” view of U.S. volume growth
- Direct Panama Canal expansion impacts on coastal trade are likely to be minimal and gradual
- Pay attention to fundamentals (product detail, economic sectors, sourcing, ...) for U.S. as well as coastal trade
- Examine upside potential/downside risk



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- Thank You
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