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Federal Highway Administration Resource Center • Atlanta

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 5

MARCH, 2003



Florida Steering Mobility In The Right Direction

Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS)

Increasingly, states are taking a more holistic approach linking major arteries, hubs and corridors to improve movement of people and goods through and around their states. Focus is shifting to meet the needs of users for business and pleasure on a transportation system basis rather than mode by mode. Florida's Department of Transportation (FDOT) has taken a large first step toward this newer way of thinking strategically about meeting its needs for enhanced mobility, as it exists today and for the future.

The RC's "Progress In Motion" newsletter is a time sensitive continuous resourceful way to share valuable technology and/or information that are taking shape that can help your programs/goals.

We encourage you to send in any information that you feel is important enough to be shared. We want to know about it.

Editor

Timothy Barkley
Marketing Technology Specialist
404.562.3732
timothy.barkley@fhwa.dot.gov

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For Support and Services:

FHWA-RESOURCE CENTER • ATLANTA

Suite 17T26
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3104

Hours of Duty: 7:30-4:00 EST
Telephone: 404.562.3570

www.fhwa.dot.gov/resourcecenters/southern

Building on the decision to do so with its Transportation Plan update in 2001, Florida's DOT Secretary Tom Barry commissioned a blue ribbon Steering Committee in early 2002 to initiate planning for a Statewide Intermodal System (SIS) in 2002. The Steering Committee was charged to develop a vision for such a system, and to recommend criteria for designating what facilities and services should be part of a SIS. After a year's work through extensive committee work and public outreach, the committee's report has been accepted, and will move into the Florida legislative process during 2003. From the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) perspective, Florida has taken an innovative step to steer mobility in the right direction.

The Florida SIS proposal was developed in close coordination and consultation with the Governor's office, leaders within the Florida legislature, and the Florida Transportation Commission. The Steering Committee responsible for SIS development included leaders from all aspects of transportation stakeholders, including representatives from all transportation modes, users, builders, designers, local governments, and advocates for strong communities and environmentally responsible growth. Florida Division Administrator Jim St. John represented the United States

"The acceptance of this report marks a milestone for transportation planning and future performance in Florida, and a major tool for the FHWA to achieve its strategic goals partnering with Florida DOT and its many stakeholders."

- Mr. Jim St. John, FHWA Florida Division Administrator

Department of Transportation and FHWA as an active member of the Steering Committee.

The SIS defines transportation facilities within Florida of strategic importance. It includes hubs, corridors and connectors vital to successful movement of people and goods. Criteria for facilities to be included on the SIS are based on current measures of demand and performance in large part developed from earlier FHWA and USDOT efforts to define a National Highway System (NHS) and a National Transportation System (NTS). The SIS also provides for Emerging Facilities, that is those not currently meeting the full criteria, but indicating

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they may do so in the future (generally exceeding 50% of the full criteria).

Florida highways on the NHS form a near one to one relationship with the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS). The top 75% or so of FIHS/NHS routes meet the traffic and freight criteria to be corridors on the new SIS, including all Interstate routes in Florida (3700 miles of roadways). Other key corridors include 1600 miles of mainline freight and passenger rail lines, Florida's Atlantic and Gulf Inter-coastal Waterways, and the planned high-speed rail corridor.

Initial SIS hubs include seven commercial service airports, seven deep-water seaports (serving both freight and passenger/cruise needs), five intercity bus terminals, five intermodal passenger terminals (including the Miami Intermodal Center at Miami International Airport, a USDOT Major Project), and the national spaceport at Cape Canaveral.

SIS connectors will link SIS hubs to SIS corridors. As we know, failure to provide good connections between the various transportation modes is historically a weakness in transportation planning, financing and delivery. To plan intermodally is made more complex because some modes are privately owned and financed, some are publically owned and financed, while others are public/private in nature. As a result, many modal facilities are grossly underserved by deficient connections between major transportation facilities, especially for freight needs. The legacy of neglect leaves significant transportation challenges, and many of these carry with them significant

The SIS Steering Committee Final Report of Recommendations for Designating Florida's Strategic Intermodal System has been posted on the Florida SIS Web site at:

<http://www11.myflorida.com/planning/sis/steering/report/default.htm#final>

community and environmental challenges to be solved as well.

The plan envisions a transportation system that will enhance Florida's economic competitiveness. Florida's future economic health will depend on

"The SIS will enable Florida stakeholders to focus energy, and hopefully resources, on solving the most acute intermodal connector locations and situations."

- Mr. Jim St. John, FHWA Florida Division Administrator

a transportation system that provides seamless and efficient movement for growing numbers of residents and tourists, and goods within Florida and to and from markets in other states and nations. In announcing SIS recommendations, FDOT Secretary Tom Barry, State Transportation Planner Ysela Llorca, and FHWA Florida Division have reached an important milestone for improved transportation in the state.

The next steps include having the Florida Legislature and Governor officially designate the SIS. This will be accomplished through an amended state transportation law. Following system designation, the FDOT expects to develop a priority plan for implementation, and to request a funding program to address SIS facility and SIS connector needs.

Through the Florida Division, FHWA will continue to support:

- **SIS concepts, and be a resource to the State processes**
- **Help describe how a SIS program meshes with Federal programs**
- **Describe the benefits and consequences in terms of social, economic environmental and engineering challenge**
- **And implement the program as ultimately legislated**

In doing so, this allows the FHWA to advance our safety, environmental stewardship and congestion relief goals in an intermodal fashion to our mutual benefit. There is great value in FDOT's SIS report that can assist other states that are in the same process or planning to enhance their intermodal system. We will continue track the state of Florida as it steers its intermodal system into the future.

For more information please contact:

*Stacie Blizzard, Florida Division, FHWA
email: Stacie.Blizzard@FHWA.dot.gov
Phone: (850) 942-9650 x 3014*

*Terry Kraft, Florida Department of
Transportation Planning
Email: Terry.kraft@dot.state.fl.us
Phone Toll-free: 1-866-747-3368
(In Tallahassee Area): (850) 414-4801*