

2010 SIS Strategic Plan Update

Urban Issues Breakout Group Meeting Summary

Meeting Date:	5/04/2009	Meeting Time:	1 - 3 PM	Type of Meeting:	Teleconference
<p>Participants: <u>Leadership Committee members:</u> Bob Ball (Florida Airports Council), Chuck Cohen (Florida Public Transportation Association), Bill Cross (Florida Public Transportation Association, designee for Joe Giulietti), Charlie Gauthier (Florida Department of Community Affairs), Pat Steed (Florida Regional Councils Association), Kathy Till (Florida League of Cities)</p> <p><u>Observers:</u> Drew Draper (RS&H)</p> <p><i>Support Staff:</i> Ed Coven (FDOT Transit Office, Lead Technical Advisor), Huiwei Shen (FDOT Office of Policy Planning), Brian Watts (FDOT Office of Policy Planning), Dennis Scott (FDOT Safety Office), Johnny Limbaugh (FDOT District 1), Lawrence Massey (FDOT District 1), Barney Bennette (FDOT District 2), Tammy Campbell (FDOT District 4), Amie Goddeau (FDOT District 4), John Zielinski (FDOT District 5), Brian Pessaro (FDOT District 7), Barbara Davis (Florida Turnpike Enterprise), Hal Beardall (FCRC-Consensus Center), Rafael Montalvo (FCRC-Consensus Center), Sarah Adams (Cambridge Systematics), John Kaliski (Cambridge Systematics), Jessica Vargas Astaíza (Cambridge Systematics)</p>					
Agenda:	1:00	Welcome and introductions Review Agenda and Teleconference Protocols			
	1:05	Review summary of first teleconference discussion			
	1:10	Review and refine initial draft policy recommendations			
	2:00	Identify and discuss additional key urban issues and questions for SIS			
		o Review and discuss passenger terminals SIS designation criteria			
		- Definition of commuter rail eligibility			
		- Identify potential changes to SIS passenger terminals thresholds			
		o Review and discuss passenger terminals connector issues			
		- Highway connectors to SIS passenger terminals			
		- Hub-to-hub connectors			
		o Update on growth management legislation			
	2:50	Discussion of next steps			
	3:00	Adjourn			

Key Discussion Comments:

The meeting's agenda consisted of two parts. First, the initial policy recommendations based on the discussion from the first teleconference were presented to the group for review and refinement. Once agreement was reached on the policy statements, additional key urban issues and potential SIS designation issues on passenger rail corridors, terminals and connectors were identified and discussed.

Initial draft policy recommendations drawn from discussion in first teleconference:

A. Maintain the emphasis of the SIS on interregional, interstate, and international travel. Invest in transit capital projects through the separate Transit New Starts program, and provide sustainable funding for this program.

- This statement does not capture the need and uniqueness of urban areas. The needs of urban areas are different from interregional and interstate needs.
- Statements B and C reflect the overall focus on the difference with urban areas. If read as a package of recommendations, I am happy with the statements.
- Statement A separates transit from the SIS, it separates transit from competing against other modes for SIS funding.
- Statements A, B, and C in their entirety seem to capture all the issues.
- Are the statements in any prioritized order?
 - No, there was no intention to prioritize the statements. They were identified with letters for discussion purposes only.
- Can the statements be combined or do they have to remain separate?
 - To present them to the Leadership Committee, they can be presented as a package.
- Statements A, B, C and D should be listed in one page, not in separate pages. All four represent a good overall package of recommendations.
 - For the presentation, each breakout group will be presenting their recommendations as one package.
- It is a good idea to look at all recommendations as a package. One concern is with statement A is the emphasis on interregional, interstate, and international travel. If SIS is intended to focus on economic benefit to the state, we need to recognize that investments within a region and in urban areas are as important as investments between regions.
- Concerning the issue of the 50% match requirement for transit, does this apply to other modes? Would like to hear a response why transit requires a higher match and other modes do not.
 - By statute, a 50% match is required for transit capital projects. Recommendation could be to

change the statutory language.

- FDOT requires a match for SIS investments in most types of public transportation project, at various levels depending on the type of project.
- For the next Leadership Committee meeting, Kathy Neill from the Office of Policy Planning will be making a presentation on the investment decision making process of the SIS to address some of these issues.
- Need to look at transit costs from the big picture, from the operations and maintenance as well.

B. Provide flexibility to use SIS funds to invest in parallel reliever systems (e.g., local/regional roads and transit projects) to relieve congestion on SIS facilities in cases in which the reliever project would remove local trips from the SIS facility and improve the performance of the SIS facility at a lower cost than adding capacity to the SIS facility.

- Could there be a dedicated funding source within the SIS program for local and regional projects?
 - The statement is not trying to identify a source of funds, but flexibility to use funds.
- How are we going to prioritize how the funding will be spent? If we provide more flexibility, but the process for prioritization is not flexible or does not change, what have we really accomplished?
- Flexibility should be provided to identify alternate facilities that are more cost-effective in improving a high priority project.
- If we are talking about eligibility, this is not addressed in this statement. This is not trying to prioritize local projects.
- We shouldn't be deciding on an improvement based solely on its eligibility for funding but on the effectiveness of the alternative for the facility. If an improvement is the best alternative to address the issue, it should not be disregarded due to funding eligibility.
 - Suggest that we get additional feedback from the full Leadership Committee on this issue.
- Statement B is ok, it opens the door for flexible funds, but it needs to address how to prioritize projects, so we could do more and use the flexibility. We need to understand how the projects are prioritized so we know how the flexibility would work.

Question from FDOT Staff: Is it realistic to be considering using SIS funds on parallel facilities to relieve congestion on the SIS facilities given the limited funding available?

- With lower levels of funding, what are the implications of increasing eligibility for more projects (urban or regional) when there is not enough money for the eligible projects now?
- We need to determine if the alternative is a more cost-effective improvement not just an alternative thing to do. It should be done if it is cost-effective and not just a good idea. Need to look at the lower cost alternative versus the feasibility of enhancing SIS facilities, which usually has a higher cost.
- With limited funding, this is how we should be looking at projects (cost-effective alternatives). If

we can do something that can relieve SIS with limited funds, now is the time to address this.

- We are not just talking about transit investments, but other alternatives as well. We are talking about local connectors, transportation systems management (TSM), in addition to transit.

C. Support development of coordinated, regional transportation and land use strategies that ensure compatible land uses adjacent to SIS facilities and support the emphasis of the SIS on statewide and interregional needs by reducing the number of local trips on the SIS. Provide multiple transportation and land use templates that reflect the unique needs of urban, transitioning, and rural areas.

Alternative language could be:

C. Reaffirm SIS Strategic Plan, Implementation Guidance, Chapter 5: Guidance for Implementing the SIS Strategic Plan on Integration of SIS and Land Use Planning:

1. FDOT should work with DCA and other partners to develop a recommended local comprehensive land use and land management strategy that ensures compatible land uses adjacent to SIS facilities and supports the emphasis of the SIS on statewide and interregional needs.

2. Coordination of land use planning with SIS planning should occur at the regional level in addition to existing coordination at the local level through the comprehensive planning process.

3. Regional coordination of land use planning with SIS planning should differentiate between rural, transitioning and urban areas.

- What are 'compatible' land uses in statement C? It appears to put SIS in superior position and land uses in a subordinate position. I think 'balanced' is a better word to use than 'compatible'. We also need strategies to support this.
- If we reword to 'balance', we need to reword the statement to include indicate what we are trying to balance - would that be statewide SIS function with local land use decisions.
- We need to encourage balanced mixtures of land uses, discourage single uses dependent on the SIS (land use centered on SIS). We do not want 'land uses in balance' but 'balanced mix of land uses'.
- Agree, a 'balance mix' of land uses will be better for this statement.
- Recent legislative updates have made changes to transportation concurrency. This could potentially have an impact on SIS facilities and the update process. Not all the information on the impact of these legislative changes is known at this time.
 - Senate Bill 360 will automatically have exemptions on concurrency. Within two years, local governments are to adopt these policies. The new law has changed the game plan. Agencies (state and local) will need to determine on new strategies within the next two years.
 - The ability to include this new information in the committee report will be dependent on the final outcome of the legislation. It could change growth management processes considerably.
 - An update on the growth management legislation will be presented in the next Leadership Committee meeting, but the impacts still may not be completely clear.
- Replace 'templates' with 'strategies' in statement C.
- Our ability to include these recommendations (C and D) on the SIS update is questionable due to

the new legislation. Expanded use of Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas (TCEAs) will dramatically change land use planning.

- If the legislature makes dense urban land areas become automatic TCEAs, then to me that would make even more of a case for using SIS funds on parallel facilities or transit projects.
- A note could be included in the draft recommendations to the Leadership Committee stating that statements C and D are draft language pending implementation of Bill 360. Refinement of that language could happen in the future.
- Do not like the alternative language. First, it does not seem like FDOT's job is to develop comprehensive land use. FDOT should not be in the driver's seat. Secondly, it is not clear what number 2 means. How does regional level coordination play out? To what is the regional level referring?
- The regional level would be the regional visions. Visions are long term and are where we can make real changes.
- Not comfortable with alternative language, the initial draft statement C captures alternative language and is easier to understand.
- The initial draft statement C is broad enough to allow for what may be coming with the new legislation. We will have a new game plan and alternative language is not specific to address them.
- Alternative language takes away from the package of A through D together.

D. Support potential changes to urban growth management policies to link development approval to overall measures of mobility rather than to highway level of service. These mobility measures should consider impacts on both intraurban mobility and statewide mobility using the SIS.

- This captures what was said in the last meeting.
- What are 'measures of mobility'?
 - The concept is not to use a single measure, but to use a measurement of how are we moving people on the trips they need. These might include considerations of the use of transit, accessibility, and connectivity.
- If we want to promote more compact urban development, we need to use measures other than highway movement. Example, a commuter rail station will provide sufficient mobility to support a proposed development compared to level of service improvements.
- Should these measures of mobility be defined now?
 - They will be defined later in the process. This recommendation is just laying out the concept.
- Have a multi-modal standard instead of just a highway one.
- From the local standpoint, if we are linking development approval to overall mobility measures, at some point they need to be defined. 'Overall' measures seem too broad.

- The report to the Leadership Committee should fully document the concept to explain the broad statement, maybe use 'multi-modal' instead of 'overall'.
- I think development approval inside urban areas should be based on achieving multi-modal quality of service standards (like what FDOT requires for a Multimodal Transportation District instead of meeting the highway LOS for the SIS. This, however, will necessitate that local governments make the effort to adopt multi-modal standards.
- Multi-modal levels of service have been adopted in counties, MPOs, and local government but they do not apply to SIS corridors. Governments do not get credit because the measure is not the SIS level of service measure (i.e., highway LOS).

Question from FDOT Staff: How do we reconcile the need to reduce local traffic on the SIS to maintain an efficient system, with ideas related to relaxing levels of service on SIS facilities to help create density that can be served by transit?

- These are competing statements to support compact development in order to support alternative modes. You need congestion to support urban development.
- We were talking about moving local traffic off the SIS onto local streets to improve the efficiency of the SIS; this could be accomplished through transit alternatives.
- There may be other options (e.g., ramp metering) to keep the SIS operating efficiently and discouraging local traffic on the SIS.
- Traffic signal prioritization on the local roads on the peak direction could encourage local use of alternate facilities.

Potential designation issues: Definition of commuter rail eligibility

Questions for discussion: Maintain designation based on connectivity to Amtrak? Consider designation based on connectivity among multiple metropolitan areas within a single economic region? Retain policy of designating all corridors with scheduled interregional service, or create a threshold?

- Tri-Rail is imperative in the South Florida region to the function of I-95. Regardless of what happens to Amtrak, Tri-Rail is FDOT's partner to make I-95 function.
- Criteria based on just Amtrak using the same corridor as commuter rail is not as important as the importance of commuter rail as an alternative. That criterion is not enough.
- If we want to take more people off of I-95, you want to promote Amtrak services for interstate travel but also we want to promote commuter rail.
- When the 2002 SIS plan was being developed, Tri-Rail was the only commuter rail in the state. Because it operates on a SIS corridor and is connected with Amtrak, it was designated as passenger rail corridor. The question is, do we retain these more narrow criteria for commuter rail or open it up to be based on the connectivity of the corridor among multiple metropolitan areas, even if within a single economic region?
- The Tampa Bay Regional Transportation Authority (TBRTA) proposed commuter rail corridors will serve multiple corridors that Amtrak currently does not serve. So connectivity with Amtrak

should be a bonus, not a single criterion

- Do we want to be promoting connectivity to metropolitan urban areas or running parallel to SIS corridors? Connectivity to Amtrak could be an either/or.
- It is more important to have a commuter rail parallel to SIS facility than to Amtrak.
- Ultimate goal of commuter rail is to connect other areas within the economic region. Designation should consider connectivity among multiple urban areas.
- The nature of the designation could be the boundaries itself. For example, Tri-Rail operates in a 72 mile corridor and it crosses multiple regions.
- Criteria need to be more explicit for future commuter rail systems. Consider adding criteria to connect multiple urban areas with a region.
- In 2002, every interregional passenger rail corridor, regardless of the activity level on that corridor, was designated. No numerical threshold was adopted because the steering committee did not want to limit passenger rail corridor development to a threshold. Should we consider a threshold now?
- Leave as is since a threshold may limit the development of more rail corridors in the state.
- Agree, to encourage more commuter rail, retain as it is.

Potential designation issues: Potential changes to SIS passenger terminals thresholds

Questions for discussion: Should the minimum threshold for SIS and Emerging SIS continue to be a fixed number or should another threshold related to a national total be used? Should the 50-mile distance criterion for Emerging SIS be re-evaluated? Is it an appropriate distance? Should it be the same for all types of terminals?

- The Emerging SIS 50-mile criterion was not designed with passenger terminals in mind. It works for seaports and airports. The 50-mile distance is the same for all types of terminals, regardless the mode.
- Passenger rail corridors have no threshold but passenger terminals do, is this inconsistent?
 - Without a threshold for passenger terminals, small Amtrak and Greyhound stations would be eligible, diluting the strategic nature of the SIS.
- Does it make sense to have the Emerging SIS distance criterion for passenger terminals?
- Passenger terminals should not be limited by the 50-mile criterion.
- Commuter rail stations are usually within 5 miles of each other, so the 50-mile rule should not apply to them.
- Consider the passenger terminals threshold criteria (100,000 passengers for SIS and 50,000 passengers for Emerging SIS) by looking at the statewide average for each mode (Amtrak, Greyhound, and commuter rail).

Potential designation issues: Passenger terminal connectors

Questions for discussion: Is it necessary for every passenger terminal to have a highway connector? Should transit, bicycle, and pedestrian access improvements to passenger terminals be eligible for connector funding? Should standards for passenger terminals reflect mobility measures rather than highway LOS?

- With 23 highway connectors in FDOT D4, the majority are for Tri-Rail. Level of service is not applicable for transit access. We should be looking at bike and pedestrian access improvements, as well as bus shelters. One connector should be enough, do not support adding more connectors. Highway level of service can be a problem for connectors to transit stations.
- Yes, transit/bike/pedestrian improvements should be eligible. The goal is to encourage people to use alternate transportation options other than cars.

Potential designation issues: Hub-to-hub connectors

Question for discussion: Should hub-to-hub connectors be considered/designated?

- Which types should be designated? Originally only hubs to corridors were designated, not hubs to hubs. Should the SIS consider them? For example, the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC)/Miami International Airport (MIA) connector would be a direct transit passenger connection between the airport and the intermodal center (transit, intercity bus, interstate rail, rental cars, and others).
- You will need a threshold for hub-to-hub connectors. For example, a cab company could say they are a hub-to-hub connector connecting passengers to a cruise port.
- We may need a threshold and/or specify the technology being used. However, the more we add to the SIS is concerning. The funds are not growing and adding more will dilute the funding. The more we add, the less strategic the SIS will be.
- The idea is to allow passengers to complete a single trip. For example, the MIC to MIA connector is an exclusive passenger service between the two. Its only purpose is to complete the interregional, interstate, international trip. Should we consider hub-to-hub connectors as a stand alone facility or as part of the hubs connecting to it (MIC and MIA) which are SIS hubs already?
- Are these hub-to-hub connectors in need of funding for expansion/improvements? Are the facilities serving their function?
 - Funding has been an issue for the MIC/MIA connector.
 - The Fort Lauderdale Airport - Seaport connector is going through the NEPA process and funding is also an issue. But in the future the roadway connecting these two hubs will fail based on future demand and capacity and that's when a people mover would be the only viable option.
- Are we considering passenger hub-to-hub connectors only? How about inland ports and freight villages?
 - That is being discussed by the Trade and Logistics Breakout Group.

Action Items:

- Send additional comments/questions to Brian Watts, FDOT Office of Policy Planning.
- Staff will finalize language for draft policy statements based on this meeting's discussion.
- Next meeting of the Urban Issues Breakout Group will be at the next Leadership Committee meeting, May 19-20, 2009, in Orlando, FL.
- Kathy Till volunteered to be the group's spokesperson and will present a brief update on the Breakout group draft policy recommendations to the Leadership Committee. Staff will work with Kathy to prepare a presentation for the full group meeting.
- Presentation and meeting summary will be posted on-line (www.sisupdate.org).