

Partner and Public Comments Report

System Designation (SD)

This report provides a comprehensive summary of comments received from 8/27/09 – 9/28/09, as follows:

- *Key themes synthesized from verbal and written comments made by partners and the public on discussion questions covered at the 12 regional workshops (these comments have been sent out previously in the three weekly reports and are included in your notebook under Tab 3).*
- *All written comments and cumulative ratings made by partners and the public on specific draft Leadership Committee recommendations and submitted on-line, by e-mail, fax or regular mail.*

Discussion Question 1: What is the appropriate size of the SIS – should it stay as it is, increase, or decrease?

Key Themes from Verbal and Written Workshop Comments:

- Many felt the SIS should increase in size to:
 - Accommodate growth and meet future requirements for movement of freight and passengers.
 - Improve integration of the modes and become more multimodal.
 - Only add connectors for military bases or add more connectors for SIS hubs.
- Many felt the SIS should stay the same size because:
 - Available funds are insufficient to meet even current needs.
 - The current SIS accommodates 99% of trips.
 - The facilities on the SIS today are the most strategically important.
- Several felt the SIS should decrease in size, primarily due to insufficient funding.

Discussion Question 2: Should separate designation criteria and policies be retained for the Emerging SIS, or should these facilities be combined into the SIS?

Key Themes from Verbal and Written Workshop Comments:

- Confusion as to the relationship of Emerging SIS to the SIS (e.g., funding) was reflected in many questions and comments.
- Many felt separate criteria should be retained for the Emerging SIS:
 - The distinction is important for proactive planning purposes.

- Emerging SIS is important to growing and developing areas, especially important to rural areas.
- Emerging SIS should include more long-term strategic facilities.
- Consider renaming Emerging SIS to clarify what it means and its relationship to SIS.
- Many felt Emerging SIS should be combined into the SIS:
 - Combining would make the SIS easier to understand and avoid confusion.
 - If SIS and Emerging SIS are treated the same, then there is no need to have separate criteria and policies.
 - A combined system could increase flexibility to respond to changing economic conditions.

Discussion Question 3: Should the SIS Plan expand designation criteria to include:

Up to 29 commenters voted “yes” or “no” on the subparts of this question (not all commenters voted on all subparts). Of the total voting for each subpart, the percentage voting in favor of inclusion is shown following each facility type below:

- **Commuter rail and other fixed-guideway systems (e.g., busways) connecting multiple urbanized areas with a single region?** 86.2% favorable
- **Hub-to-hub connectors (e.g., airport-to-seaport people movers)?** 88.5% favorable
- **Integrated logistics centers?** 57.5% favorable
- **Intermodal freight drayage routes (e.g., seaport to rail terminal)?** 69.2% favorable
- **Emerging SIS spaceports?** 62.5% favorable
- **Other types of facilities not included today?** *(Covered in themes below)*

Key Themes from Verbal and Written Workshop Comments

- Many expressed interest in expanding designation to include commuter rail as well as intercity passenger rail and high-speed rail; several stressed the importance of interconnectivity of interregional, regional and local systems to complete the trip, specifically the “last mile”.
- Some support for hub-to-hub connectors and drayage routes
- Some support for more flexibility in the designation of connectors.
- Some support for inclusion of more general aviation/reliever airports.
- Add other types of hubs to the SIS such as universities and military bases; add ferry routes.
- Beyond those facilities specified [in Question 3 above], any mode that directly contributes to or impacts the overall SIS mission should be evaluated.
- Recognition that added facilities would have to compete for funding with other SIS needs.
- Concern that adding facilities would dilute the strategic nature of the SIS.

Discussion Question 4: What other changes would you suggest regarding the SIS designation criteria and process?

Key Themes from Verbal and Written Workshop Comments:

- Comment to consider “mega regions” in the designation process.
- Comment suggesting finance as a designation factor -- balance between urban and rural areas.
- Comments that hurricane evacuation should factor into the designation discussion.
- Comments to consider potential negative impacts of SIS facilities on local facilities.
- Comment on need for criteria to look at future or potential SIS.

Related Draft Leadership Committee Recommendations and Written Comments:

SD.1 Emerging SIS. Average rating is 3.63

- Yes. Emerging indicates that it has not met the criteria of a SIS facility yet, but is anticipated to do so within a reasonable period of time, and therefore we need to identify it and plan for it to be on the system in the future.
- Depends on how you interpret.
- Prioritize Emerging SIS.
- Future--beyond 2020 is important.
- Agree highly with this, especially for linkage to encouraging expanding modal choices other than highways.
- Why not merge them if they are treated the same?
- Yes. But change the word "Emerging" to something else, such as: Class I SIS, Class II SIS.
- Rename Emerging SIS.
- Designation policies should be different, policies for infrastructure planning should be the same.
- Separate funding.
- Change Emerging SIS to SIS.

SD.2 Highways. Average rating is 3.91

- Given that the Department has given up control on the LOS standards for the FIHS, and stated that its priority is the SIS, removing the FIHS designation and considering these facilities equal with all other state highway facilities seems reasonable. Bullet 2: Yes. Anything with a SIS designation should be considered as SIS with all the appropriate guidelines. Too confusing to do otherwise. Bullet 3: Sounds like apple pie. May want to include hurricane evacuation.

- End of last sentence in last bullet--add "and to multimodal options."
- Let state road 78 fall off the SIS.
- Either way, sometime either designation ties the hands and communities to make such roads thru urban centers appropriate in design and use.
- 3rd bullet, these criteria are not uniquely important to highways, these are important to other modes as well. Why limit their application to the highway mode?
- Linkage to alternative modal choices as another criteria for highways.
- I have been following the progress of the SIS since its inception and I suppose that the reason for bullet 1 above which I disagree with is that the SIS has essentially become the FIHS. Why, because it has degenerated from its original standards with the approval of virtually every submission to add a hub or road connector to the system. The term "Strategic" has totally lost its meaning in the context of the SIS. For example, adding the Kissimmee airport as an emerging SIS hub is ridiculous. It is a small executive airport, does not relieve Orlando International of any significant traffic, and is within 50 miles of Orlando International all of which violate the rules and policies set out in the SIS. Only airports with regularly scheduled passenger service should be on the SIS as long as they meet the passenger criteria and/or air cargo tonnage criteria. Another example is the recently approved Port of Port St Joe. This port meets absolutely none of the SIS criteria and probably never will for decades, yet it was approved thus allowing highway funds to be diverted from more critically needed SIS roads and connectors to this area with no strategic significance, i.e., no cruise ships, no container vessels, etc. It is obvious to local officials that in order to acquire transportation funding for their "high priority" roads they need to get them designated as SIS connectors and I must admit their reasoning makes for some interesting reading. If the SIS is to exist within its original definition, the criteria should be strictly adhered to with no compromises or mid course changes in definitions to accommodate a particular "hub" or "connector" that does not meet the criteria.
- No. Just re-visit designation once every 5 years during the Plan Update process.
- Reduce waste! Do not duplicate work!
- Should take the advancement of technology (ITS and automatic/robotic) driving vehicles into consideration for SIS investments. Be futuristic!
- Bullet 3: If rural employment criteria include military-yes.
- First bullet: 95%/5%; SR 16 to Starke. Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern counties have not been helped by SIS designation.

SD.3 Intraregional Rail. Average rating is 3.96

- Only if the FDOT has some role in how the system works and runs. If you do not run it or have an economic interest in how well it meets your needs, put your money elsewhere.
- And also enable metropolitan area goods and people movement on rail.
- "Urbanized" may be a limiting term where provision of intraregional rail may drive compact or more compact development thereby funding more effective and efficient transit systems.

- Include even intra region/community system.
- To the extent that SW FL regional is added.
- No these forms of transportation are local and not "strategic" in nature and do not belong on the SIS. Amtrak and the proposed high-speed rail are already on the SIS as inter city/interregional modes. The others do not belong.
- No. This is to accommodate commuters. We have to draw the line somewhere.
- Only commuter rails and Metro rails which carry high volumes of commuters should be included in SIS. LRT or BRT should not be part of SIS.
- I would agree if it included provisions for new rail in other urbanized areas.
- Tri-rail, the history of the MIC, FOX, I could go on and on the plans for rail in Florida are well intentioned but spend massive amounts of taxpayers' dollars with zero return on investment (ROI).
- Last mile critical if going forward with commuter rail. What about rural to urban connectivity?
- This is such a massive project which should be self-supporting and not take SIS funds.
- A very bad idea; would dramatically distort the inter-regional nature of SIS.
- Not in Florida in the next 10 years.
- Very bad idea; a slippery slope.

SD.4 Freight Rail Terminals and Corridors. Average rating is 3.95

- A combination of tonnage and units handled may be more appropriate. Some ports may manage bulk commodities while others have a container focus. Probably need both criteria.
- Also recognize cross-function planning for land use, people movement, metro/local energy, environment, housing and economic development.
- Think in terms of integrated freight and passenger service within existing rights of way-- support public acquisition of existing rail rights-of-way so public investment results in public returns.
- Whatever is most productive for getting freight off roads and onto trains?
- Question is too complex. I agree strongly with third bullet, but I am unclear about the first bullet
- 4+ New rail terminals?
- 4+ Continue freight rail data collection?
- Freight rail is actually more important strategically than passenger rail. The criteria should be changed for rail intermodal based on the number of container/trailers that are loaded/unloaded at the terminals. Each container/trailer represents at least two truck trips on local connectors (one in and one out). Therefore a 100-car container train could have an impact of between 200 and 800 truck trips depending on whether it is double stacked and the mix of containers and trailers. It is important that the local connector roads be brought

up to "truck friendly" standards. In fact any SIS designated roadway should have specific truck design criteria applied and any improvements should have to meet these design standards to obtain funding.

- Railroad companies don't want to develop anything with the state. When rail has something to gain from SIS (such as a project) they'll come to the table.
- Freight Rail is market driven. Let the private operators do the investment.
- Bullet One: What about yardage or volume-based?
- I agree with Bullet 3 but not 1 and 2.

SD.5 Intermodal Connectors. Average rating is 4.10

- Include bike/pedestrian component in plans and funding.
- Include [District] 1 & SW Florida.
- Not sure what you are getting at but it sounds good.
- Let's not complicate things.
- Allow a system of road connection to be designated J/A North Access Road.
- Include residential hubs where worker trips to industrial/freight hubs originate.

SD.6 Hub-to-Hub Connectors. Average rating is 3.98

- Probably based on passengers carried.
- But think statewide, region wide and metro area--all must intersect.
- If it improves transit options.
- As long as SW FL [District] 1 is included.
- Absolutely not. These are not "Strategic" systems no matter what the locals think and do not belong on the SIS.
- This just keeps the transit people happy. Leave it alone.
- Not without a serious funding/operating source.
- Provide better connectivity between modes
- Hub-to-Destination points would also be good.
- Include residential and Park and Ride hubs.
- Yes; but should serve more than one mode or more than one user.
- Not in Florida in the next 10 years.
- Another slippery slope to avoid.

SD.7 Intermodal Freight Drayage Routes. Average rating is 3.75

- Agree.
- Yes but this must be worked out with regional, metro, local government land use planners to enhance economic development and environmental preservation which is one key to economic value.
- Trains on roads? Better get trains on rails.
- Absolutely. Since the hubs are SIS the roads connecting them should be SIS and should be required to meet truck friendly design standards.
- Oh please! This is a local issue. Don't complicate everything.
- Yes; but remember drayage can be very short to tens of miles in length (one side of town to the other).

SD.8 Community and Environmental Screening Process. Average rating is 3.91

- Consistent with above comment
- But transformation of existing corridor from one form of transportation (automobile; freight rail) to a multi-modal system should not bog down in environmental review if right of way doesn't expand.
- Very important part of any plan.
- Explain from question: "SIS community and environmental screening process"
- I am concerned that a vocal environmentally forward minority could adversely impact the economic development process.
- After "resource agencies" add "partners" as defined for NA.1. The NGOs should be included here.
- One more hoop to impede progress. Enough is enough.
- More paperwork without progress. Most SIS alignments exist to use that...for new facilities, a PD&E before full design should be enough.
- What is this (ETDM)?

SD.9 Emerging SIS Spaceports. Average rating is 2.98

- Not clear; assumptions made.
- Not informed enough to know what's best.
- Space is not important to me.
- This is a non-player. Cape Canaveral is the only designated spaceport and seriously doubt that there will others in the next 50 years.
- When they build it, we can talk about it at the next Plan update process.
- This should be a federal concern.

- Moving people and freight into space is not needed.
- Yes including emerging.
- Not now.
- Questionable.
- I respectfully request that criteria for the designation of existing and emerging spaceport hubs not be finalized until after the completion and release of the Spaceport Master Plan effort that is currently underway by Space Florida. My own understanding is that the goal for the release of the Spaceport Master Plan is November 2009.
- Slippery slope - premature at best.