
Review of Boundaries and Headquarters
of the Florida Department of Transportation
Districts & Creation of a New
District Headquartered in Fort Myers

Presented to the
2017 Florida Legislature

October 31, 2017

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Summary of Transportation Legislation

This report is intended to fulfill the requirements outlined in Section 14 of House Bill 865, which passed during the 2017 Regular Legislative Session. The language states:

“On or before October 31, 2017, the Department of Transportation shall submit to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, a report providing a comprehensive review of the boundaries and headquarters of each of the department’s districts. Along with its report, the department shall provide a study on the expenses associated with creating an additional district with the department’s Fort Myers urban office as the district headquarters.”

Readers are encouraged to consult additional information provided by the Department’s Budget Office with regard to Senate Bill 2500, the General Appropriations Act and Senate Bill 2502, Implementing the 2016-2017 General Appropriations Act, for the full adopted legislation.

Executive Summary

This report prepared by the Florida Department of Transportation consists of two parts:

- Part One looks comprehensively at the existing boundaries and headquarters of the Department’s districts. This section includes a review of previous studies on this topic.
- Part Two focuses on identifying expenses associated with the creation of an additional district with the Department’s Fort Myers urban office as the district headquarters. For this preliminary assessment, start-up, personnel, and operating costs are estimated considering readily available data, industry standards, applicable rules and regulations, and some necessary assumptions and exclusions.

The reader is advised to approach the report as a high level analysis. The methodology presented here provides only one method for the preliminary assessment of costs associated with forming a new district. This report does not represent a basis for formulating recommendations or for implementing the creation of a new district, rather the report serves as an initial assessment of the request.

Part One – District Boundaries and Headquarters

This report reviews three previous studies: a 1985 Senate Transportation Committee Report, a 2001 Florida Transportation Commission Report, and a 2006 Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) Report.

The findings and recommendations of these previous studies provide history and guidance related to district boundaries and headquarters. For example, the Senate Transportation Committee’s Report recommended that district boundaries allow production staff in each area to perform their functions at the farthest points in the district within a single work day, that district boundaries align with local entities with which the Department coordinates on a regular basis, and that district boundaries encompass both urban areas and the outlying counties to which they are major service providers.

This report also compares existing districts by population, work program allocation, the transportation network, regional governance, geographic coverage, and headquarter location. To equalize comparisons across districts, some assumptions were made.

Population distribution among the districts ranges from a low for District 3 with 1.4 million residents to a high for District 5 with 4 million residents. Typically, the districts with smaller populations have larger geographic areas. District 2 covers 11,797 square miles, while District 6 covers 2,881 square miles. The number of centerline miles managed by each District is also correlated with its geographic area. District 6 manages 700 centerline miles on the State Highway System (SHS) and 200 miles on the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). District 2

manages 2,555 centerline miles on the SHS and 906 miles on the SIS. The average five-year work program allocation is almost \$6.5 billion, with District 3's planned five-year work program at \$3.5 billion and District 5's at \$9.8 billion. A single large project, like I-4 Ultimate, can account for significant differences in work program allocations between districts.

The review of previous studies and the comparative analysis of the districts indicates the current system of districts and urban offices adequately distribute the Department's work across the state and supports the business and mission of the Florida Department of Transportation. The Department encourages efficiencies and ad hoc sharing of resources, allowing districts to cooperate to advance projects and initiatives where boundaries and proximity to resources produce benefits.

Part Two – New District Headquartered in Fort Myers

This report identifies expenses associated with establishing a new District Office headquartered in Fort Myers. Expenses include start-up, personnel, and operating costs.

Fort Myers is currently within the Department's District 1 boundaries. District 1 consists of 12 counties, with headquarters in Bartow (Polk County) and an urban office in Fort Myers (Lee County). The urban office, known as the Southwest Area Office, is established in Section 20.23, Florida Statutes, as are the seven existing districts and their respective headquarters locations.

For purposes of this report, the new District is formed from a portion of the counties currently part of District 1. Two geographical realignments are contemplated. One realignment, North-South, considers the statutory description of the urban office. The other realignment, Coastal-Inland, considers the jurisdictions of related local entities, as recommended by the 1985 Senate Transportation Committee Report. These realignments are illustrative.

The Fort Myers urban office is co-located at the Southwest Interagency Facility for Transportation (SWIFT) SunGuide Center. This location also houses the Florida Highway Patrol and is not sufficiently sized for staffing levels necessary for a new district. Due to building size

requirements, zoning, flooding, and other issues, the location of the new District Office is assumed to be in Lee County, but not limited to the City of Fort Myers. Start-up expenses include the costs of purchasing land, constructing buildings, and furnishing office facilities for the new District. A new District Materials Office is also included in the start-up cost estimates.

Estimated personnel costs are a function of projected staffing levels, which depend on how work is allocated between the existing District 1 and the new District, and must ensure efficient production and service. For this analysis, staffing levels for District 1 and the proposed new district are assumed to be equal. District 1 headquarters is currently staffed with 341 full-time equivalent positions; personnel costs are calculated at this level. The average staffing level of all seven district headquarters is 332 full-time equivalent positions. Personnel costs also consider the need for an additional 32 full-time equivalent positions for the new District Materials Office.

Operating costs include recurring costs for equipment, vehicles, contracts and consulting, repairs and maintenance, Fixed Capital Outlay, and office expenses.

One-time start-up costs are an estimated \$40 million. Recurring operating costs, including salaries and benefits are approximately \$33 million, depending on district boundaries and staffing levels. In addition to these one-time and recurring expenses, establishment of a new District, while maintaining current service levels at District 1, requires up to 373 full-time equivalent positions and their associated rate.

This report provides preliminary analysis and cost estimates, and is not intended to be conclusive or exact.