

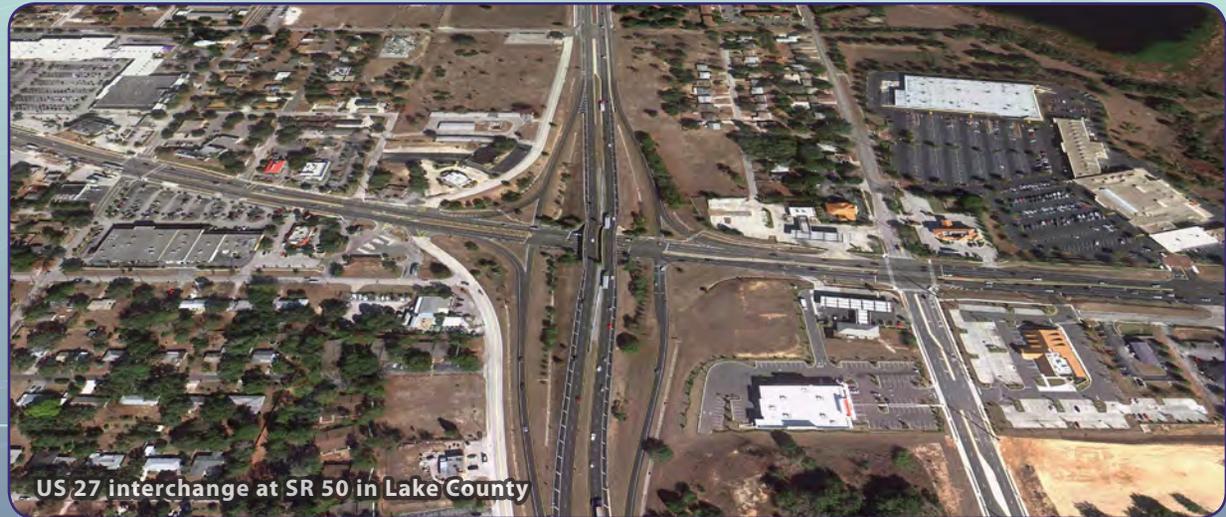


# US 27 TRANSPORTATION Alternatives Study

January 2013

State of Florida  
Department of Transportation





Dear Floridians and Visitors,

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) worked with statewide, regional, and local partners to develop the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) in 2010. The FTP is the foundation for the transportation vision of Florida and spells out the goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve this vision over the next 50 years. The FTP should help provide Florida's taxpayers with a greater return on investment, and foster conditions for the private sector to invest, grow, and provide good jobs for the state as we continue to progress forward.

This Transportation Alternatives Study of the US 27 Corridor is a high-level planning study for Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) corridor development and provides the overall framework for future development of the corridor. This study provides an assessment of mobility, freight movements, emergency management, homeland security, and economic development along the US 27 Corridor and discusses 14 alternative transportation options available for implementation. The implementation potential and anticipated benefits of each alternative are evaluated and several policy implications for the corridor are discussed.

This study will guide decisions about the future of US 27 and will enhance connectivity between the South and Central Florida regions, and other parts of the state. We commend all of our partners for their active participation and ongoing commitment to this effort.

Sincerely,

Bob Romig

State Transportation Development Administrator

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# INTRODUCTION



## Study Background

The US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study was initiated in January 2012 by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Systems Planning Office. FDOT undertook this study to develop a high level comprehensive view of the US 27 Corridor across all modes. The outcome of the study is to lay the foundation for future analysis and is not to provide specific recommendations. This summary booklet is the result of two technical memorandums developed in the process of this study, a Corridor Conditions and Needs Technical Memorandum and Alternative Options and Policy Implications Technical Memorandum.

The momentum for the US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study stems from the Future Corridors Initiative set forth in the Secretary's Transportation Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Plan. The vision for Florida's Future Corridors Initiative is to create a statewide network of high-speed, high-capacity facilities to serve as the critical foundation for the state's continued growth and development. The Future Corridors Initiative has identified potential new corridor study areas, as well as potential corridor transformation (re-use) study areas. The initial inventory of potential corridor transformation study areas included the US 27 Corridor.

## Limited Access vs. Controlled Access Facilities

In contrast to prior limited access interstate alternatives studies, FDOT recognized that US 27 would require a unique approach to provide effective solutions from a statewide perspective, since the corridor is a controlled access facility. Unlike limited access facilities such as I-95 and I-75, which are exclusively used for high-speed vehicular traffic, controlled access facilities like US 27 bisect a number of communities and serve as a main local road for many rural communities. The corridor also intersects environmental resources in the state, provides access to adjacent properties, and contains a number of at-grade crossings with rail lines and other roadways, traffic signals, and median openings.

In addition to cross-jurisdictional and interdisciplinary coordination efforts and an assessment of environmental and community resources in the development of corridor needs, site-specific field visits and additional FDOT District and regional coordination efforts were undertaken as part of this project. The purpose was to provide the framework for a context-sensitive approach to best meet statewide objectives as well as local and regional needs along the corridor. This context-sensitive approach was distinctly chosen to provide a collaborative, interdisciplinary, and holistic approach to developing multimodal transportation solutions, and to guide future phases of evaluation where additional stakeholder and public involvement will be essential to developing a joint vision for this strategic corridor.



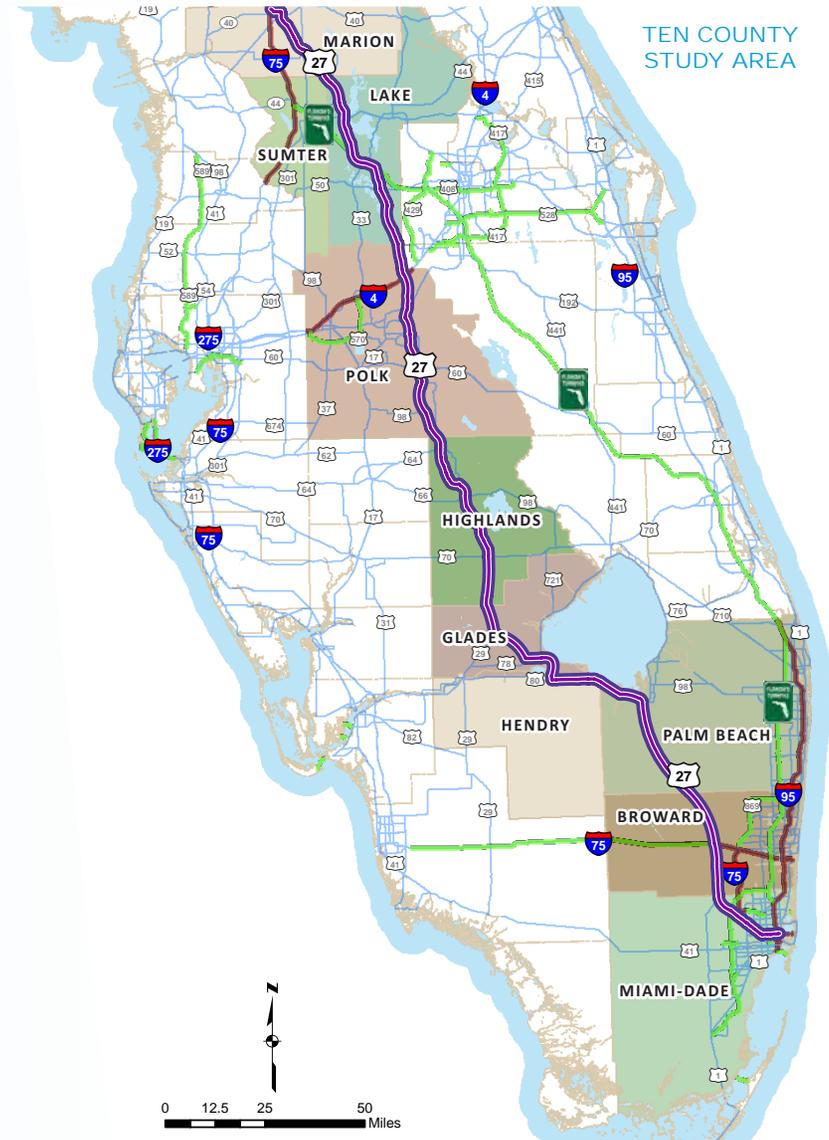
## Study Purpose

The purpose of the US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study is to analyze the existing corridor conditions, including demographics, traffic conditions, environmental considerations, emergency management and security response, homeland security, and economic development to identify needs and opportunities along the corridor. The study also identifies a range of strategies, or alternative options, for improvements along the corridor that could serve to alleviate congestion, facilitate emergency and security response, and foster economic development in the State of Florida. Although no specific projects are recommended as part of this study, a series of policy implications have also been identified for further consideration in conjunction with these alternative options.

## Study Area

As a major north-south controlled access roadway with connections throughout Florida and into other states, US 27 plays an important role in regional mobility and the state economy. The US 27 Corridor under evaluation includes ten counties throughout southeast and central Florida. The corridor spans more than 300 miles, beginning at its southern terminus in Miami-Dade County and proceeding through the central part of the state to I-75 in Marion County.

The US 27 Corridor connects to major urban metropolitan regions along the southeast coast in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties and provides connections between Tampa and Orlando. Providing direct access between the South and Central Florida regions, US 27 also acts as a major truck route and connects with a number of other important Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facilities in the state. However, portions of the corridor between these major urbanized centers remain largely rural in character and have been designated by the Governor as Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC). Adding to the diversity of the corridor, the central portion also provides tourist access to a number of natural recreation areas and regional agricultural, and the northern portion is the location of a large master-planned retirement community, The Villages. Given the length and the diverse nature of the corridor, a variety of approaches or strategies are needed to address both rural and urbanized areas and regional growth patterns.



# EXISTING CORRIDOR CONDITIONS AND NEEDS

Developing an understanding of the existing demographic and land use makeup, traffic conditions, environmental considerations, emergency management and response issues, homeland security concerns, and economic development opportunities along the corridor is essential to understanding needs and developing an array of options to both enhance the statewide effectiveness of the SIS and meet the overall goals of Florida's Transportation Plan, Horizon 2060.

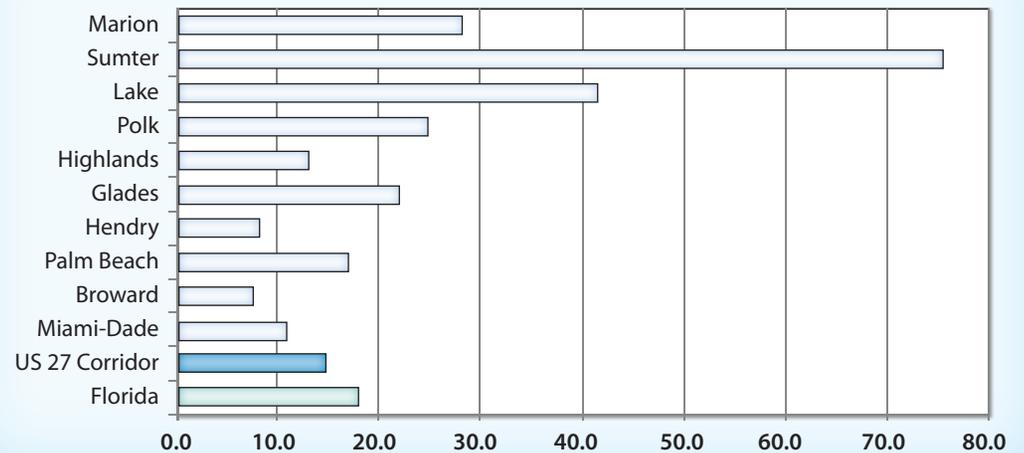
## DEMOGRAPHICS

The Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) estimates Florida's population at over 18.9 million as of April 2011. The US 27 Corridor traverses the top three most populous counties in the state: Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. Combined, these counties are home to more than 5.5 million people, or approximately 30 percent of the state's total population.

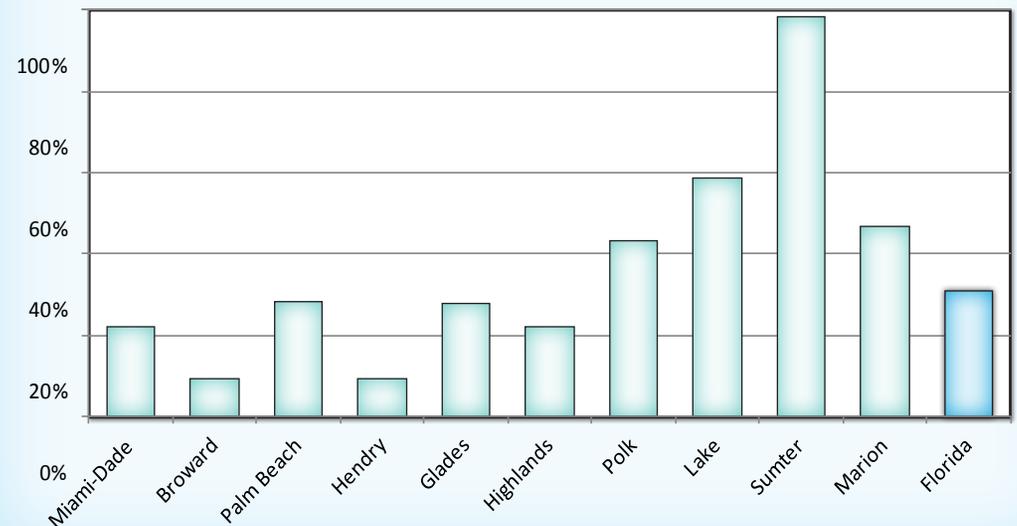
Florida's population is expected to reach nearly 25 million by 2035. During this time, Sumter County is projected to almost double in population (98.3 percent). Lake County is also anticipated to grow quickly during this time (58.5 percent). Marion and Polk Counties trail behind these top two projected growth counties, with over 40 percent growth in each, respectively. Together, these Central Florida Counties are expected to make up approximately 38 percent of the total growth in the corridor over this time.

Counties in the corridor with larger base populations are expected to see larger raw growth as well. Miami-Dade County is projected to grow by the greatest numerical change (554,985), with Palm Beach County (373,742) and Polk County (261,608) also falling within the top ten counties in the state in terms of overall population growth. Lake County places 11<sup>th</sup> in raw population growth over the 2035 horizon, with 174,535 people expected to be added by 2035.

2000-2010 POPULATION GROWTH RATES



PERCENT CORRIDOR GROWTH COUNTIES AND STATE 2011-2035  
(BEBR MEDIUM PROJECTIONS)



# TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

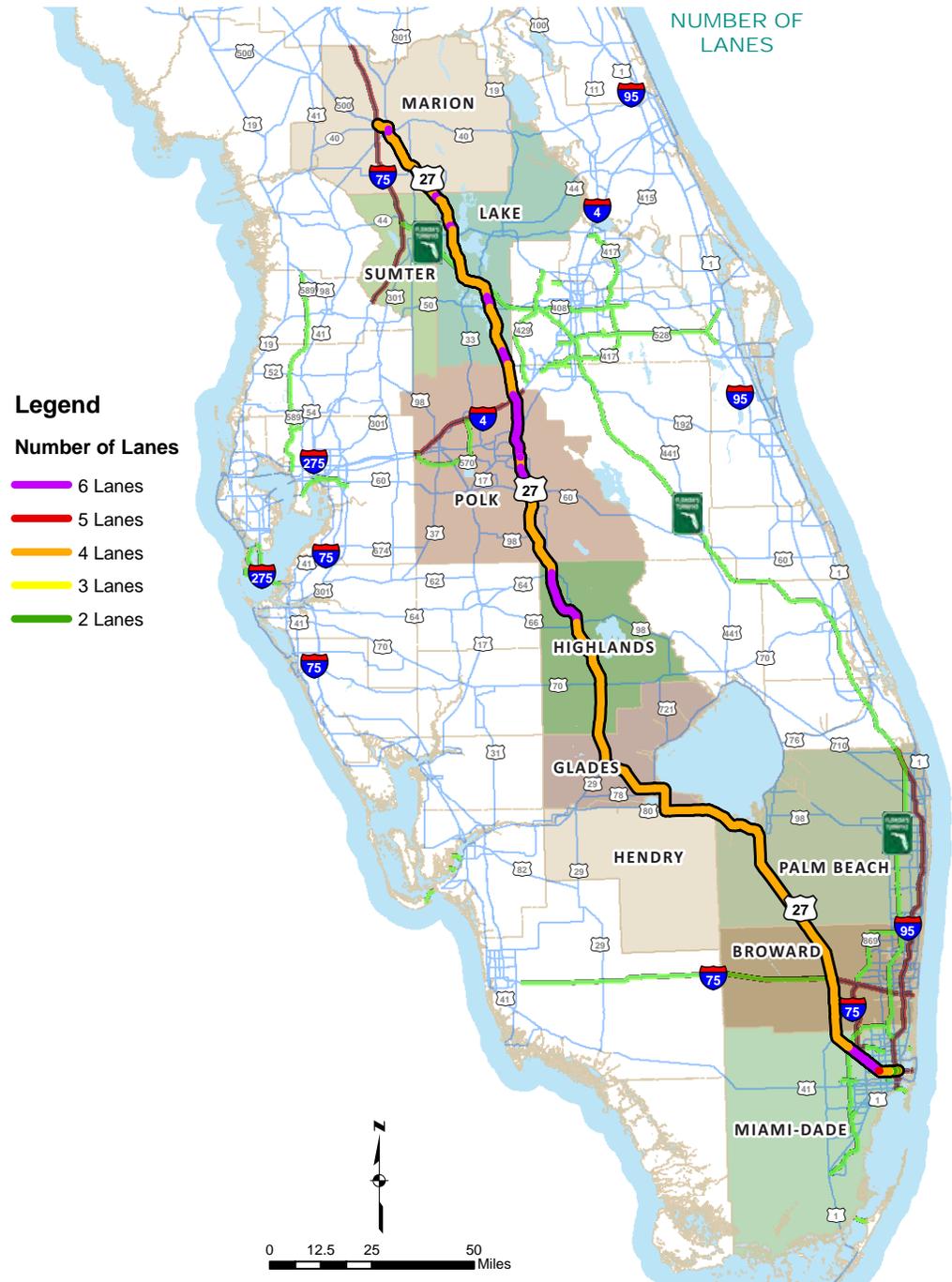
Identifying facility characteristics along the corridor helps to determine existing conditions and known traffic needs and demands along the corridor. This plays a significant role in the varying transportation conditions along the corridor, including traffic conditions, speed limits, lane needs, and right-of-way availability.

## Number of Lanes

The number of lanes along the US 27 Corridor varies primarily between four and six lanes. There are also two shorter sections of US 27 within Miami-Dade County that are two-lane with turning and parking lanes provided near the downtown area. Within the areas of US 27 not designated as a SIS facility in Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties, lane constraint policies limiting widening of US 27 to six lanes are in place or under consideration by the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

## Speed Limits

Speed limits vary throughout the corridor and lower speed limits are indicative of the locations of towns and cities along the corridor. Although a substantial portion of the corridor is largely undeveloped and operates at speed limits of 55 to 65 miles per hour, variations of speed limits through urbanized and rural towns varies from 35 to 45 miles per hour in some sections, particularly where the roadway narrows. Balancing local and regional traffic needs in these areas must be considered in developing effective alternatives for the corridor.



## Existing Traffic Conditions

Existing traffic along the US 27 corridor ranges from a high of 56,500 vehicles per day (vpd) in Polk County near I-4 to a low of approximately 6,300 vpd in Glades County north of SR 29. An existing level of service (LOS) analysis indicates that US 27 is performing relatively well overall, with LOS meeting or exceeding standards in most locations along the corridor. However, existing capacity challenges and concerns were identified in Miami-Dade County south of SR 826, in Polk County near I-4, and in Marion County where The Villages contributes to heavy traffic volumes particularly during peak season. These areas are all near major urban economic centers and improvements will be needed over time to meet increasing demands.

## Future Traffic Conditions

Future 2035 traffic volumes along US 27 are forecasted to increase significantly throughout the corridor, with the largest absolute increases located in the northern portion of the study area in Polk County north and south of I-4 and in Lake County. Dramatic increases in these overall volumes are also found in Miami-Dade County near SR 826 and at the Miami-Dade/Broward County line. The highest absolute change in average annual daily traffic (AADT) is found in Polk County south of SR 530 and US 192, where volumes are anticipated to increase by approximately 31,500 vpd. These areas will need to be considered in greater detail in terms of providing alternative strategies that could be employed to address future anticipated traffic growth. In addition, growth of the Port of Miami and planned or proposed intermodal logistics centers in this southern portion of the corridor may impact future traffic conditions and should be monitored and revised in the identification of needs within the corridor.

## Freight Mobility

Freight movement plays an important role along the corridor. Existing truck traffic ranges from a high of more than 9,862 trucks per day (tpd) in Miami-Dade County to a little more than 2,000 tpd in Lake and Marion Counties. The percentage of trucks utilizing US 27 also varies throughout the corridor, with trucks accounting for only 3.9 percent of the traffic stream in Marion County near the Lake/Marion County line and approximately 41 percent of the traffic stream in Glades County north of SR 29. Providing greater connectivity to intermodal hubs and SIS connectors is important to meeting existing and future freight demands.



## **Trip Patterns**

Trip characteristics of the corridor have a large impact on the types of alternatives that should be considered for improving mobility along the US 27 Corridor. In Miami-Dade, Broward, and Highlands Counties, a large percentage of trips along US 27 are considered local trips, starting and ending within each respective county. Notably, in Polk County, more than 70 percent of trips are local trips. In addition, it should be noted that due to the location of The Villages Retirement Community between Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties, this small one-mile area consists of local uses even though passengers in this area typically cross jurisdictional boundaries. Regional trips, those trips between the county of origin and any surrounding county, represent a significant percentage of trips for several counties. Counties with regional trips greater than 50 percent include Glades, Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties.

## **SIS Facilities**

US 27 intersects with several SIS and emerging SIS corridors including: SR 826, SR 821, SR 997, I-75, SR 80, SR 29, SR 70, SR 64, SR 60, I-4, and Florida's Turnpike.

There are two existing SIS Intermodal Freight-Rail terminals in the US 27 Corridor, one located in Miami-Dade County and the other in Broward County. The study area includes connections to three SIS deepwater seaport terminals: the Port of Miami in Miami-Dade County, Port Everglades in Broward County, and the Port of Palm Beach in Palm Beach County.

There are four SIS international airports and one gateway/reliever airport located in the study area: Miami International in Miami-Dade County, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport in Broward County, Palm Beach International Airport in Palm Beach County, Orlando International Airport in Orange County, and Kissimmee Gateway Airport in Osceola County. Any improvements to US 27 must consider potential impacts to these important statewide facilities and ways to most efficiently coordinate the SIS to meet transportation demands in the state.

## ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

This Transportation Alternatives Study is the first step in the corridor study process and serves as a generalized policy analysis to inform National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and future FDOT environmental processes. The information in this general overview comprises an initial step in identifying environmental considerations along the corridor. Further detailed analysis and on-site environmental assessments may be necessary in future phases of this study. Major environmental considerations in the corridor are discussed below:

### Water Resources

Lake Okeechobee is defined as a Class I potable water supply source. Any projects impacting the water quality of these surface waters must meet criteria as outlined in Florida Administrative Code 62-302.400. There are also five Outstanding Florida Waters (OFLs) located within 1,500 feet of the US 27 corridor. Three of these are located in Lake County, one is located in Polk County, and one is located in Miami-Dade County.

### Wetlands

In general, the southern portion of the US 27 Corridor in Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade Counties can be expected to have the heaviest presence of wetlands and floodplains due to their proximity to the Everglades and a number of publicly owned/managed conservation lands. The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is a massive environmental effort encompassing many organizations and projects. More than 80 projects are currently listed and were reviewed to determine wetland restoration areas of critical concern along the corridor. Within a ¼-mile boundary of the US 27 Corridor, 16 CERP projects have been identified and are concentrated in Highlands, Glades, Hendry, and Broward Counties.

### Flood Hazard Zones

Within the US 27 Corridor, moderate to high flood hazard zones are located in Lake and Marion Counties because of a number of surface water lakes and in Miami-Dade County near the coastline.

*“The US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study process provides an early opportunity for general conceptual transportation options to be reviewed at the statewide level by our agency partners. These partnerships, including FDOT and cooperating agencies, are instrumental in identifying environmental issues and setting a path for preservation of the State’s most valuable natural resources.”*

-US 27 Corridor Conditions and Needs Technical Memorandum, August 2012



## Farmlands

A number of agricultural uses and prime farmlands are located adjacent to the corridor. The effect of projects related to prime farmlands is an important measure of environmental impacts. Any proposed improvements to the corridor will need to analyze and document any potential impacts to these resources.

## Conservation Areas

The Hammock Lake Mitigation Bank in Polk County is located west of the US 27 Corridor, north of Haines City near CR 17/Old Polk Road. In addition, the Green Swamp Area of Critical State Concern borders the corridor on the west. It covers areas in Polk and Lake Counties, from approximately Haines City in Polk County to Clermont/SR 50 in Lake County.

## Parks and Public Lands

A number of state and local parks are located near the study corridor. Parks and recreational land uses are of particular concern to communities and conservation efforts within the US 27 Corridor. Lake Griffin State Park in Lake County is adjacent to the corridor. The remaining 13 parks identified within 1,500 feet of the corridor are local parks, predominantly located in Miami-Dade County. In addition, Sawgrass Recreational Park, located in District 4, is adjacent to US 27.

## Cultural Resources

A number of historic/archeological sites listed as eligible or potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places were identified near the study corridor, particularly concentrated in the Miami area. In addition, a few non-historic cemeteries are located adjacent to US 27 in Polk County. Although no impacts to historic/archeological resources are anticipated from this analysis, a Cultural Resource Assessment survey will be conducted in conjunction with future project activities as warranted.

## Contaminated Sites

Within 1,500 feet of the US 27 Corridor, there are two U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) National Priorities List (NPL) sites in Miami-Dade County identified for further investigation. One is located in Medley, approximately 400 feet from the US 27 Corridor, and another is located in Hialeah, approximately 900 feet from the US 27 corridor. In addition, 14 brownfield areas have also been identified near the US 27 Corridor, and are most predominant in Miami-Dade (six sites) and Marion (six sites) Counties.

The US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study process provides an early opportunity for general conceptual transportation options to be reviewed at the statewide level by our agency partners. These partnerships, including FDOT and cooperating agencies, are instrumental in identifying environmental issues and setting a path for preservation of the State's most valuable natural resources.



# EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND RESPONSE

## Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program

The Statewide Regional Evacuation Study Program (SRESP) was created to identify and implement strategies for the facilitation of evacuations. The program has allowed regions to coordinate resources and tie together all regional evacuation studies into one coordinated statewide plan.

The transportation analysis portion of the SRESP includes the creation and development of a travel demand modeling system to calculate estimated evacuation clearance times and permit regional planning councils (RPCs) to evaluate multiple “what-if” scenarios for various storm conditions.

Presently, the US 27 Corridor has nearly 42 access points to other RPC designated facilities in the SRESP evacuation network. This connectivity provides alternate routes in case any section of US 27 becomes impassable or unsafe. The counties within the study area with the highest number of evacuation network connections to US 27 are Miami-Dade, Polk, Lake, and Marion Counties. This is especially significant given the larger populations that must be moved quickly in the event of a hurricane or other event.

The geography of the state itself creates challenges for citizens during an evacuation, given the predominately northbound single direction evacuation from southern Florida. In a worst case storm scenario (Category 4 or 5 storm), the current structure of US 27 is not sufficient to accommodate evacuation trips, especially since the highway transverses through many urban areas within the corridor during hurricane events.

## Comprehensive Emergency Management Plans

Chapter 9G-6 of the Florida Administrative Code requires each county to develop a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP). The CEMPs for the ten counties in the US 27 Corridor, as well as the rest of the counties in the state, are operation-oriented documents. The CEMPs establish the framework for an effective system to ensure counties and their municipalities will be adequately prepared to deal with the occurrence of emergencies and disasters.

Based on a review of the ten-county CEMPs, a number of general considerations are needed in providing safe evacuation planning. Specific considerations for evacuation within the US 27 Corridor include the potential for fresh water flooding during hurricane events, susceptibility to wildfires, the potential breach of Lake Okeechobee as a result of flooding, and response times for law enforcement and rescue in rural areas of the corridor.



## HOMELAND SECURITY

On US 27, various law enforcement agencies are used to monitor and control passenger and commercial traffic, investigate accidents, and provide general security enforcement. From day to day, these agencies help regulate the safety of the US 27 Corridor; however, these agencies have major responsibilities with regard to homeland security as well as emergency response and recovery actions during a disaster. The roles and responsibilities of various law enforcement agencies along the US 27 Corridor are described below.



**The Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE)** is a key player with regard to its commitment to domestic security in Florida. FDLE is given its authority by Florida Statutes, Chapter 943, Department of Law Enforcement Act. FDLE operates the Florida Fusion Center (FFC), which has a significant role in passing intelligence to state and local partners. The FFC, located in Tallahassee, serves as Florida's primary fusion center for gathering, processing, analyzing, and disseminating criminal intelligence, terrorism, and homeland security information. If a suspicious activity or potential public safety threat along US 27 is reported to the local law enforcement agency, this information can then be communicated through regional fusion centers or directly to the FFC.

**The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV)** is the parent agency for the Florida Highway Patrol (FHP). FHP promotes safety on US 27 and all Florida highways through enforcement as well as educational efforts. FHP publishes road closure information and provides it to the Division of Emergency management (DEM). One of the main goals of FHP is to attempt to reduce criminal activities occurring on Florida's highways through detection, prevention, and enforcement of criminal laws relating to highway violence, transportation of illegal drugs/contraband, auto theft, driver license fraud, and emissions fraud.

**The County Sheriff's Offices** are the chief law enforcement entities in each county of the US 27 study area. Both the sheriff's offices and police departments in the corridor have the responsibility to take action in homeland security events within their communities and their jurisdictions. These agencies are the primary first responders when a disaster strikes. For example, local Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams could be called in the case of a terrorist event on US 27. Local law enforcement agencies also have primary control over evacuation traffic control and reentry for their respective municipalities.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Robust rural communities are essential to the overall success of the State's economy. While Florida's urban communities have grown rapidly over the past 50 years, its rural communities have not shared this growth and prosperity. Because most rural areas continue to experience severe and sustained economic distress, the State has designated 29 of its 32 rural counties and five communities as Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC).

The proximity of US 27 to the RACECs serves as an important component in providing much needed exposure to these geographic areas. The US 27 Corridor runs through and provides access to a number of counties and communities designated as RACEC.

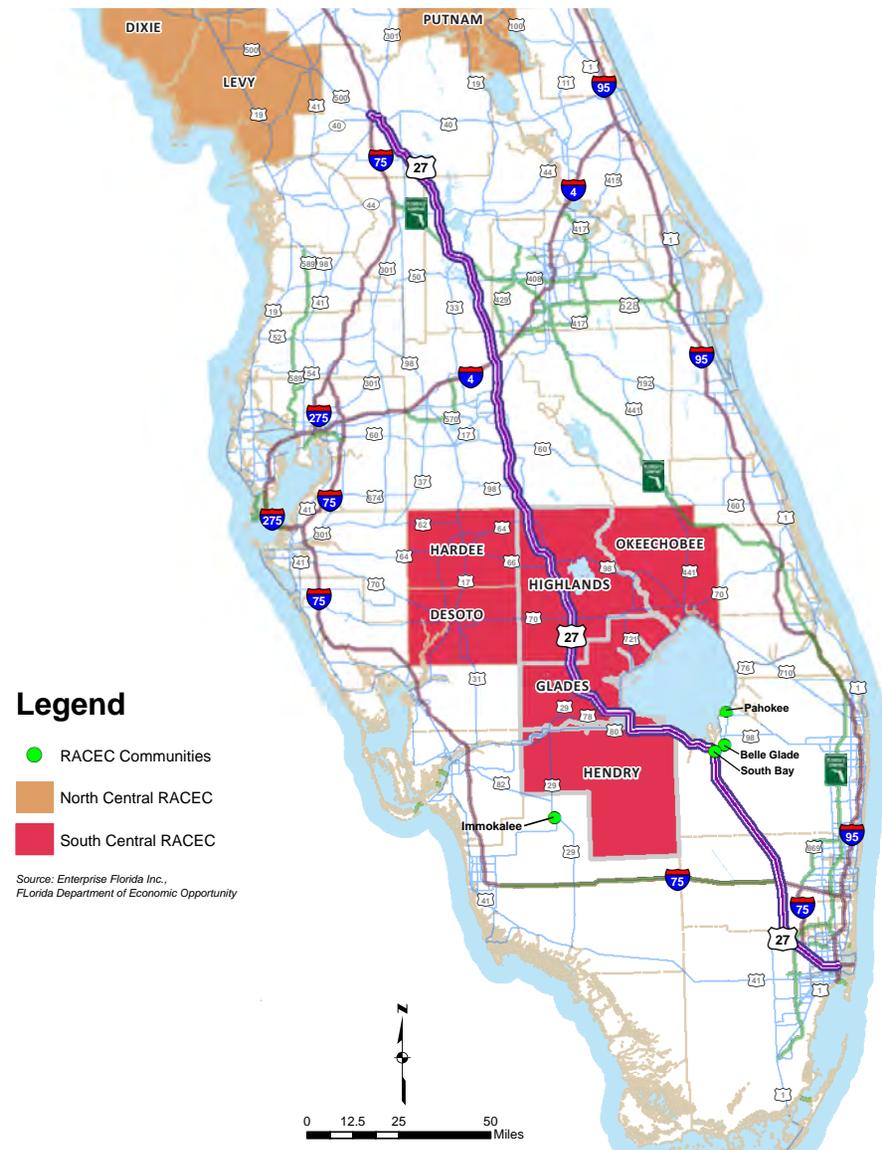
Within the study area, Highlands, Glades, and Hendry Counties are designated as RACEC counties. These counties are part of the South Central RACEC, which also contains Okeechobee, Hardee, and DeSoto Counties. The towns of Pahokee, Belle Glade, and South Bay, located in Palm Beach County, are also designated as RACEC communities. West of the corridor and with access provided from SR 29 and US 27, the Town of Immokalee in Collier County is designated a RACEC.

RACEC catalyst sites, such as Sebring in Highlands County, provide Rural Infrastructure Funds and Community Development Block Grants for improvements that may support job-creating industries and enhance economic development.

Improvements in these areas should be closely coordinated with the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) to ensure that local visions and plans for the corridor are consistent with what improvements are proposed.

*"Rural area of critical economic concern means a rural community, or a region composed of rural communities, designated by the Governor, that has been adversely affected by an extraordinary economic event, severe or chronic distress, or a natural disaster or that presents a unique economic development opportunity of regional impact."*

Per 288.0656(2)(d) Florida Statutes



## Enterprise Zones

A key strategy supporting economic development in the state is the use of Enterprise Zones to provide tax incentives in key areas identified for development and revitalization. Within the US 27 Corridor, there are a total of ten Enterprise Zones. These include Enterprise Zones in Miami-Dade County the Broward County/Fort Lauderdale area, and Palm Beach County, as well as in Hendry, Glades, Highlands, and Sumter Counties. Areas in Pahokee in Palm Beach County, Lakeland in Polk County, and Ocala in Marion County have also been identified as areas where economic development initiatives are underway to improve the corridor. Providing sufficient access for businesses in these areas of the corridor will be needed to provide efficient transportation infrastructure.



## Growing Retirement and Health Industries

Economic development in the corridor is also burgeoning as residential and commercial development has spurred intense growth and economic development in recent years. Recent retiree development in Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties has generated new commercial business, providing new regional jobs and seasonal economic and traffic variations with transient residents during the peak months of November through May. In addition, with the location of a number of regional hospitals along the corridor, a growing health care industry has begun to flourish around these hospitals and along the US 27 Corridor. A number of economic development plans have recognized this industry as a key job creator and considerations for these economic development plans should be considered in the development of alternative strategies.



## Tourism

Tourism is also important to the corridor. Special tourism considerations for the US 27 Corridor include tourist traffic from Orlando-area theme parks and regular generators like the football games in Miami; a relatively new theme park, LegoLand, in Polk County just west of the corridor in Winter Haven; and a series of annual local events such as Sebring's "Twelve Hours of Sebring" and the Leesburg Bikefest. These events generate massive traffic and are worth further consideration in the development of alternatives that address these economic generators. In addition, a number of scenic natural areas, RV Parks, campgrounds, and motels are located in the center of the state in locations like Lake Placid, Sebring, and northward at Bok Tower in Lake Wales and in Ocala, which attract tourists within and outside of the state who desire to take advantage of the abundance of natural resources and scenic wildlife the area has to offer. Addressing economic development in the corridor will require balancing tourism and mobility needs with the preservation of the scenic quality that US 27 is known for in the central to southern portion of the state.



## Scenic Highways and Byways

The Florida Scenic Highway Program highlights the state's historic and scenic highways throughout the state. These highways draw attention to the state's cultural, recreational, natural, archeological, historical, and scenic features. The benefits of the program include showcasing and protecting the natural resources of the state and promoting tourism and economic development through the communities these highways travel through. There are three designated scenic highways or byways that may be accessed through the US 27 Corridor: Ridge Scenic Highway, Green Mountain Scenic Byway, and the Florida Black Bear Scenic Byway.



# BALANCING CORRIDOR NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stretching over 300 miles in length and traversing ten counties and four FDOT Districts, the landscape of the US 27 Corridor is as diverse as the state itself. Because of this, there is a need to integrate alternatives as part of more strategic and context-sensitive strategies to effectively balance the needs of passenger and freight mobility with community and regional visions for economic growth. An effective, well-thought-out integration of strategies has the potential to make the US 27 Corridor a vibrant place to live, work, and travel. The following major themes were identified through the corridor needs analysis and site visit findings, and should be considered in effectively integrating strategies for US 27.

## Facilitating Freight Movements

From a statewide perspective, the US 27 Corridor is an important SIS facility because it provides direct access and connectivity through the center of the state. Its location provides strategic connectivity to major interstate facilities such as I-75, I-95, and Florida's Turnpike as well as other regional destinations east and west of the corridor. Realizing its strategic location and propensity for providing enhanced connectivity between regions and across the state, a number of plans have emerged to create a multimodal system of gateways and logistics centers to enhance the efficiency of freight movements. Inland ports in South Florida and Intermodal Logistics Centers (ILCs) planned in Palm Beach and Glades

Counties near Lake Okeechobee, in Polk County along SR 60 near Winter Haven, and in Marion County adjacent to I-75 are just some examples of these planned strategies. To leverage these plans and succeed in meeting statewide economic visions for attracting trade, investment, and skilled workers to the state, it will be essential to integrate and prioritize these plans into a systematic freight network in coordination with private development trends.



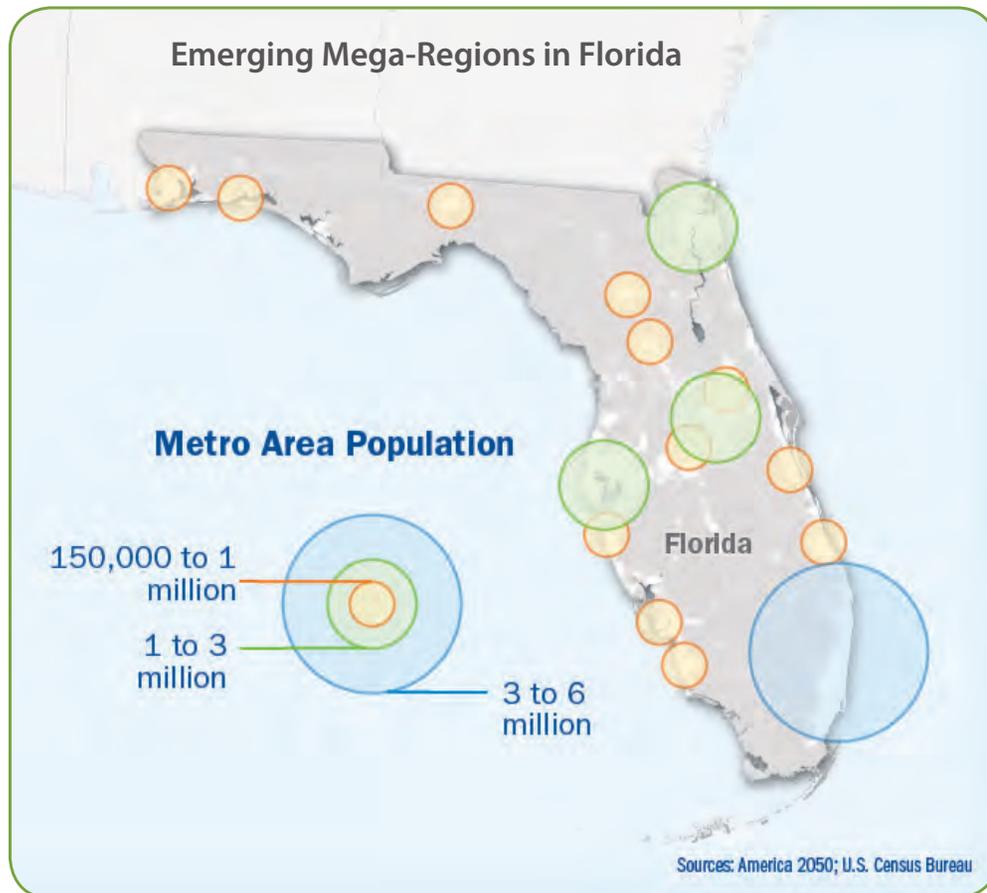
## Supporting Rural Community and Economic Development

At the same time, the growth and development within the US 27 Corridor are equally important to meeting statewide visions for creating vibrant urban and rural communities where residents have increased choices about where to live, work, learn, play, and shop. Throughout Florida's "Heartland" in Glades, Hendry, and Highlands Counties are a number of small, historic communities like Clewiston, Moore Haven, Lake Placid, Sebring, and Avon Park which continue to reflect the scenic beauty and rural hometown character of Florida. These areas support Florida's oldest resource industries like agriculture, fishing, forestry, and mining, and act as natural recreational destinations. They have adapted over time to incorporate emerging health industries into their local economies. These communities have also been designated RACEC, and improvements need to be sensitive to impacts on these communities. Operational and safety improvements and maximizing investments in freight and intermodal connectivity to create jobs are just some of the alternative options that may prove effective in these rural and historic areas.



## Understanding Emerging Mega-Regional Development

A number of increasingly urbanized areas are prominent throughout the corridor. These areas reflect the growth of mega-regions in Miami, Orlando, and Tampa and the rise of master-planned, mega-retirement communities like The Villages Retirement Community in Sumter County. These patterns of development have literally transformed the landscape of the US 27 Corridor and provide both new opportunities and challenges for developing effective transportation solutions.



## Addressing the Needs of Urban and Regional Growth

In contrast to maturing urbanized and mega-regional areas, such as Miami, rapid urban development has occurred in “The Four Corners” area, including Polk and Lake Counties, as well as in Sumter and Marion Counties. These counties have seen some of the greatest population growth in the state over the last ten years and continue to adapt to the new opportunities and challenges of such growth. A number of areas in Lake and Polk Counties near the Four Corners area act as bedroom communities to the Central Florida mega-regions, while other areas of northern Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties have experienced exponential growth in housing and population resulting from The Villages Retirement Community and other new commercial development. Development patterns in these areas vary widely, with some portions of the corridor still retaining a rural character.

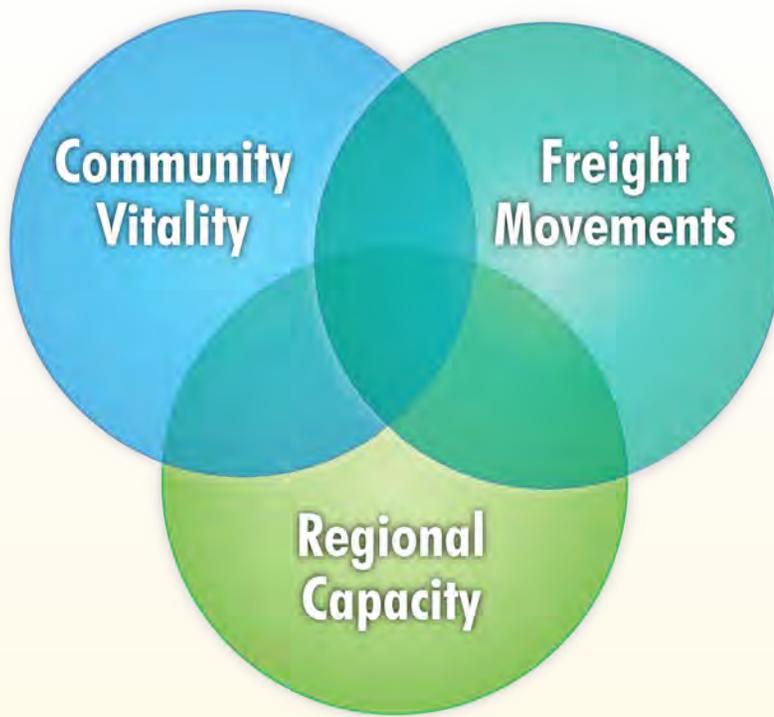


# ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Developing comprehensive context-sensitive solutions requires coordinating strategies that meet the multi-faceted statewide goals of alleviating congestion, facilitating emergency and security response, and fostering economic development in the state. The 14 distinct alternative approaches identified for the US 27 Corridor are focused on three distinct categories: community, freight, and regional capacity and movement strategies.

Although no specific recommendations are provided with these alternatives, effective management and planning for the US 27 Corridor will require a mix of these strategies.

## Context-Sensitive Alternatives Approach



### COMMUNITY FOCUSED ALTERNATIVES

Access Management
Other Transportation Systems Management
Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs
Interregional Transit and Commuter Services
Parallel Local Relievers

### FREIGHT FOCUSED ALTERNATIVES

Parallel Freight Rail
Inland Port Concepts
Intermodal Logistics Centers (ILCs)
Improved SIS Integration
Truck-Only Lanes

### REGIONAL CAPACITY FOCUSED ALTERNATIVES

Passenger Rail
Adding Capacity to US 27
New Location Corridors
Managed Lanes

# COMMUNITY VITALITY FOCUS

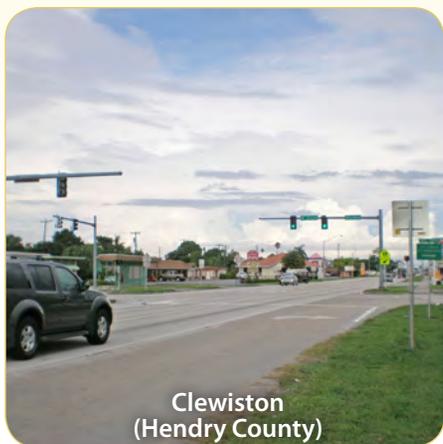
The community vitality focused alternatives represent a number of transportation systems management and operation (TSM&O) and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies for improving the US 27 Corridor.

These techniques focus primarily on maximizing the existing investment in the transportation network. These practices can be best utilized in areas along the corridor where community growth and development have led to more complex local and regional travel demands, and where there are joint land use and transportation goals in place to enhance economic vitality. These options provide low-cost alternatives to capacity improvements and can provide short-term positive enhancements which are better suited to meeting community needs in the corridor.

In some cases, consideration for higher cost alternatives, such as local reliever improvements, may be appropriate given current conditions, right-of-way availability, and local development.

Community Vitality Alternatives	
Access Management	Involves the planning and coordination of the location, number, spacing, and design of access points such as driveways and street connections, medians and median openings, traffic signals, and intersections. Examples include corridor access management plans and district-wide guidance.
Transportation Systems Management	Comprises intersection turning movement improvements, traffic signal optimization programs, pedestrian crossings, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) such as variable speed limits, and enhanced signage.
Tourist-Oriented Directional Sign Program	Allows qualified county and municipal governments to install guide signs on the state highway system to identify local facilities, parks, libraries, tourist attractions, etc., supporting local economic development.
Interregional Transit and Commuter Services	Includes carpool, vanpool, ridesharing, park-and-ride, cross county bus services, bus service, express bus services, and bus rapid transit.
Parallel Local Relievers	Consists of adding capacity to an adjacent facility which will in turn reduce congestion on US 27, improving access from US 27 to reliever roads, including intersection, signal timing, turn lanes, and median improvements.

## EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITIES IN THE US 27 CORRIDOR



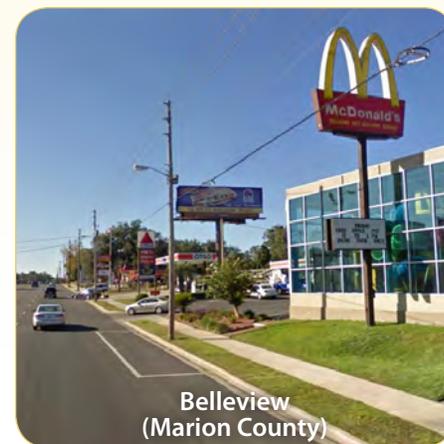
Clewiston  
(Hendry County)



Moore Haven  
(Glades County)



The Villages Retirement Community  
(Sumter County)



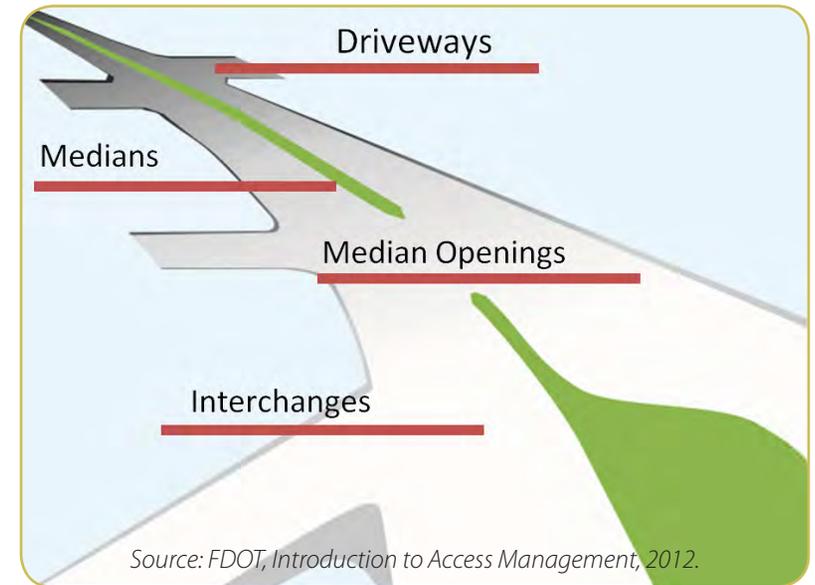
Bellevue  
(Marion County)

## ACCESS MANAGEMENT

Access management is the planning and coordination of the location, number, spacing, and design of access points such as driveways and street connections, medians and median openings, traffic signals, and intersections. The ability to effectively manage access onto and off of the US 27 Corridor could increase roadway capacity, improve safety by reducing crashes, and decrease travel times. Chapter 14-97 in the Florida Administrative Code provides existing guidance to assist in the realization of access management in the state.

Active access management plans provide an opportunity for connecting land use and transportation which changes the traditional land use-transportation cycle, improves overall efficiency and safety in the corridor, and has the potential for local economic development by supporting greater nodal development. To do this, access management must consider and incorporate all modes of transportation, carefully consider larger network connectivity issues for the SIS, and work with local and regional land use visions and plans. It must also balance access and mobility in a way appropriate for differing area types within the corridor. The most effective access management plans combine land use and zoning options to help balance local access and development needs with larger statewide mobility goals.

Ultimate control of access management policies along the corridor falls to local and regional governments for implementation. However, FDOT may help to facilitate this coordinated approach through establishing regional corridor access management guidelines that consider the unique growth and development conditions and design considerations to be considered within the corridor.



### Existing Access Management Plans

- District 1 US 27 Corridor Access Management Plan in Highlands County from one mile south of SR 70 to one mile north of US 98 (completed in 2008)
- District 5 Accomplishing Access Management on the FHHS: The US 27 Corridor in Ocala/Marion County (completed in 2002)

### Potential Benefits

- Support a balance of mobility and accessibility
- Integrate land use and transportation goals and policies
- Low-cost, easy to implement improvements
- Delay the need for more expensive roadway widening projects
- Enhance safety for all users of the roadway
- Promote alternative transportation solutions
- Facilitate efficient through movements and assist orderly growth

### Potential Drawbacks

- Formal agreements may be required for effective coordination
- Competing local visions for the future and statewide goals
- More extensive public and stakeholder outreach needed for successful plans
- Need to coordinate existing access management plans and action plans with this more comprehensive regional approach

# TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT (TSM)

TSM refers to other low-cost system management and operation strategies employed to increase efficiencies in the transportation network and promote safety. These include, but are not limited to, the following improvements: intersection turning movement improvements, traffic signal optimization programs, pedestrian crossings, Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), and enhanced signage. These types of improvements represent another performance-driven approach for addressing congestion and safety issues.

## Examples and Opportunities

- **Variable speed limits** were recently completed along a section of US 27 within FDOT District 4 in Broward County. Variable speed limits are speed limits that change based on road, traffic, and weather conditions. Implementation may be particularly useful in areas within District 1 and 4 where the roadway is unimpeded by traffic signals or development for large stretches of the corridor.
- **Turn lane efficiencies** have also proven successful along the corridor for reducing congestion. For example, a one-mile segment of US 27 in Sumter County implemented a continuous right lane to alleviate traffic congestion in this area caused by increased development. Additional signal timing/GPS improvements are being considered in this area to facilitate safer and more efficient traffic movements, especially during the peak season for The Villages Retirement Community.
- **A traffic signal optimization improvement** exists in Miami just south of Florida's Turnpike. There are also a number of short bridges connecting freight truck hubs along South River Drive to the US 27 Corridor. A number of these locations co-mingle with local traffic and traffic queuing occurs at these traffic signals with US 27. These areas may benefit from a renewed review of traffic signal operations to improve traffic and safety conditions in these areas.
- In addition, there is a potential for **signage improvements** to improve safety conditions, informing drivers of changes in speed limits expected ahead through the smaller, rural towns of Clewiston and Moore Haven. In Moore Haven, FDOT has installed a series of signs over the Caloosahatchee Canal to improve safety as freight and other traffic enters the town. Sign distances along the bridge may be reviewed to provide additional safety measures.



## Potential Benefits

- Offers lower cost techniques
- Encourages coordination of transportation improvements
- Reduces delays and travel times with responsive systems
- Coordinating traffic signals decreases fuel consumption and vehicle emissions
- Managing traffic incidents improves traveler safety and detecting incidents quickly restores lost capacity
- Provides options for enhanced freight and goods movement through targeted ITS initiatives

## Potential Drawbacks

- Limited funds availability in transportation budgets
- Possible difficulties with public/private sector information sharing

## TOURIST-ORIENTED DIRECTIONAL SIGN PROGRAM

By definition, tourist oriented directional signs are “way finding” signs of standard size and design, usually white on blue. The intent is to safely direct tourists to local destinations whose major portion (51 percent) of income is derived from patrons traveling 20 miles or more. Through the Tourist Oriented Directional Signing (TODS) Program, FDOT allows qualified county and municipal governments to install guide signs on the state highway system to identify local facilities, parks, libraries, tourist attractions, etc.



### Examples and Opportunities

This strategy could be used more specifically within the corridor to reinforce economic development efforts in RACECs along the corridor, including Hendry, Glades, and Highlands Counties. A number of localities in these areas contain historic communities and directional signage could have positive impacts on travel into these areas. In addition, a number of scenic highways and byways and natural sites in Polk County along with a number of RV resorts and destinations in Marion County might benefit from these signs. Lesser known roadside attractions may also be considered, such as Bok Tower in Polk County, The Presidents' Hall of Fame Museum in Lake County, and a number of smaller RV and resort motels along the corridor.



### Potential Benefits

- Promotes local culture and sustainable tourism as often no franchise or national chains are included
- Allows each local government the flexibility to create criteria for designations to suit the area
- Creates validity when fabricated and installed according to FDOT standards and specifications
- Addresses tourist-related safety with a problem-related solution, particularly in urban areas

### Potential Drawbacks

- Does not directly benefit emergency management or mobility
- Could create problems due to limits on the number of destinations included in each location
- Usually requires local governments to construct, maintain, and operate sign program. Some areas may not have adequate resources, particularly in rural areas.

## INTERREGIONAL TRANSIT AND COMMUTER SERVICES

A coordinated effort to provide transit and commuter service alternatives in communities, using existing or low cost resources, can be beneficial to the development of public transit statewide and also can assist in efforts to relieve traffic congestion, improve air quality and assure energy conservation. These programs encourage public/private partnership to provide brokerage services to employers and individuals for:

***Carpools***

***Vanpools***

***Park and rides***

***Regular and express bus service***

***Emergency ride home services***

***Group taxi services***

***Implementation of shuttle services***

***Preferential parking for ride-sharers***

***Telecommuting***

***Bicycling/walking programs***

### **Examples and Opportunities**

Some intercity bus services, including Greyhound and Red Coach, travel through the corridor. In addition, the following fixed-route and commuter services are known to operate within or near the US 27 Corridor:

#### ***District 6 South Florida***

- South Florida Commuter Services
- Miami-Dade Transit (MDT)
- Tri-Rail
- Hialeah Transit System
- 95 Express

#### ***District 4 Southeast Florida***

- South Florida Commuter Services
- Broward County Transit
- Palm Tran

#### ***District 1 Southwest Florida***

- Commuter Services for Southwest Florida
- Winter Heaven AREA Transit (W.H.A.T)

#### ***District 5 Central Florida***

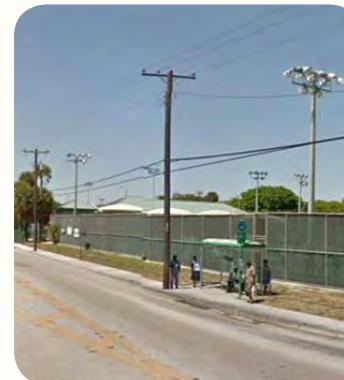
- ReThink
- LYNX
- SunTran
- LakeXpress
- Sumter County Transit

### Potential Benefits

- Improved community mobility and increasing access to employment locations
- Commuter's options and flexible schedules shown to reduce employee turnover
- Reduced overhead costs
- Tax savings benefits for the company and its employees
- Reduced need for parking
- Less air pollution
- Less fuel consumption helping with energy conservation efforts
- Reduced need for costly highway improvements
- Fewer vehicles on the road, resulting in faster response times for emergency vehicles

### Potential Drawbacks

- Limited funds availability in transportation budgets
- Greater population and employment densities are generally needed to provide fixed-route services
- Initial construction costs are typically not recovered by passenger fares



Bus stop west of I-95 near NW 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Moore Park (Miami)



Clermont Park and Ride in Lake County

## PARALLEL LOCAL RELIEVERS

In some cases, making improvements to parallel arterial or collector roads may be considered an option for improving traffic flow and providing alternatives for local traffic on US 27. This option is particularly useful in already heavily congested areas where local relievers already exist adjacent to the corridor. These improvements may involve adding capacity, improving access from US 27 to reliever roads, and intersection, signal timing, turn lanes, and median improvements. There are also opportunities to integrate corridor development with local street networks to enhance local connectivity.

### Examples and Opportunities

North of the intersection of US 27 and Palmetto Expressway (SR 826) in District 6, a local frontage road east of the corridor provides additional local travel options. In addition, South River Drive is a parallel facility to US 27 connected by short connector bridges over the canal. This parallel local roadway provides alternative access to a concentration of industrial and freight development. Improvements to both of these parallel roadways and the potential to create more short bridge connectors to better connect to South River Drive may be worthy of further investigation in this area. Signal timing improvements and strategies to separate out local and freight traffic crossing these short bridges may also be considered.

Within Sebring in Highlands County, a parallel local frontage road exists west of US 27 between Tanglewood Drive and Ponce de Leon Boulevard and provides local business and residential access. Improving capacity along this parallel reliever and better integration with local street networks may be worthy of further investigation to provide better separation of local traffic from freight traffic along the corridor.

In District 5 in Lake County, a feasibility study is underway to assess a US 27 Reliever facility (i.e., Rolling Acres Extension) parallel to US 27 between SR 44 to the south and CR 466 to the north. The results of this study will identify the potential benefits to US 27 and determine whether this off-line improvement is justified.

### Potential Benefits

- Reduced congestion
- Reduced travel times
- Diversion of local trips from US 27
- Improved emergency response
- Improved freight flow
- Increased connectivity
- Lowered production and distribution costs
- Increased productivity

### Potential Drawbacks

- Land use impacts
- Potential impacts to the human, natural, and physical environment
- High right-of-way costs



Parallel local reliever to US 27 in Miami-Dade County

# FREIGHT MOVEMENTS FOCUS

The freight-focused alternatives represent a number of existing, planned, and potential strategies for improving freight movements to meet statewide goals. These techniques focus primarily on maximizing freight opportunities and demands along the corridor. These strategies can be best implemented in areas along the corridor where freight improvements and investments best serve economic vitality throughout the state and provide enhanced options for freight distribution along the SIS.

There are a number of initiatives already underway in the corridor to improve freight connections, including:

- Port and FEC freight rail improvements in Miami and the Hialeah Rail Yard
- Potential US 27 parallel freight rail corridor from Hialeah to south of Lake Okeechobee
- Potential inland port intermodal logistics centers (ILCs) in Palm Beach and Hendry Counties near Lake Okeechobee within the study corridor
- Planned Winter Haven Rail Terminal and ILC in Polk County adjacent to SR 60 and the US 27 Corridor
- Planned Ocala 489 Commerce Park ILC at the intersection of I-75 and US 27 in Marion County.

Ultimately, the key to success for freight initiatives and opportunities in the corridor lie in the ability to integrate initiatives in a statewide, systematic manner. Scenario planning techniques and more refined analysis of commodity flows and statewide traffic models will be needed to create a cohesive concept for intermodal freight movements along the entirety of the corridor and throughout the state. Coordination between FDOT and private rail and other entities will also be essential to the effective implementation of these strategies.



Freight Focused Alternatives	
<b>Parallel Freight Rail</b>	CSX, FEC, Southern Florida Northern, U.S. Sugar
<b>Inland Port Concepts</b>	Developing inland distribution areas as an extension of services provided at a major seaport
<b>Intermodal Logistics Centers (ILCs)</b>	Freight Activity Centers, Freight Terminals, Freight Villages, among others
<b>Improved SIS Integration</b>	Adding capacity and accessibility to east-west connecting roadways, relieving traffic from other SIS facilities; enhanced connectivity to SIS hubs, including airports.
<b>Truck-Only Lanes</b>	Add full truck-only lanes, auxiliary truck-only lanes, operational improvements



## PARALLEL FREIGHT RAIL

The freight rail system is an important part of the nation's freight transportation system and is critical to the economy. Given the efficiencies realized by freight rail modes, domestic rail-highway intermodal service has been rapidly growing since 2000. Rail ton miles during this period have been growing faster than truck ton miles. With a moderate three percent per year growth in the U.S. economy, domestic freight tonnage is expected to increase by 57 percent by 2020. The U.S. Department of Transportation recently forecasted freight railroad demands are expected to increase to 88 percent by 2035 from 2002 levels. This forecast stresses the urgent need for adequate investment in rail capacity in the years ahead to meet the anticipated growth.

While it is expensive to add highway capacity to the existing highway system, freight rail is still an underutilized mode of freight transport. The choice between using trucks or freight rail depends on the shipper's logistics costs. However, factors such as reliability, flexibility, cost, timeliness, security, and the value of the freight all go into the decision on whether to use trucks or freight rail.

### Examples and Opportunities

Southeast Florida faces a number of opportunities for efficient freight. As the home to the largest urbanized populations in the state, a series of ports are located near a series of statewide SIS highway facilities providing connectivity throughout the state. With limited roadway capacity in the more urbanized areas of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, new freight rail options west of these areas are under consideration along US 27. This parallel rail option, along with potential ILCs in Palm Beach and Glades Counties may provide significant economic development opportunities in these areas as new employment centers arise to meet the demands of freight. In coordination with the potential ILC locations, the parallel rail facility may enhance regional distribution efficiency and multimodal freight options from the number of ports located along the southeast coast to locations through the state.

In addition, FDOT District 4 is currently conducting the US 27 Multimodal Planning and Conceptual Engineering (PACE) Study to investigate the technical and economic feasibility of developing the US 27 Corridor to accommodate multimodal options, including rail and highway modes.



### Potential Benefits

- Reduces highway maintenance costs due to lower truck vehicle miles traveled
- Helps lower highway vehicle congestion and delays
- Cheaper and more cost-effective than trucking or aviation for transporting goods over long distances
- Generates less air pollution per ton-mile than trucking

### Potential Drawbacks

- Slower speeds and congestion at rail crossings
- Expansion efforts on the physical capacity of the railroads can be costly to implement/maintain
- Potential impacts to the human, natural, and physical environment

## INTERMODAL LOGISTICS CENTERS (ILCS)

Intermodal Logistics Centers (ILCs) vary significantly in terms of operations, facilities and magnitudes. For the purposes of this study, ILC concepts are discussed in two distinct ways given their functional differences: the first ILC concept related to those ILCs that are located in close proximity of a major port, such as those within Districts 4 and 6; and secondly to describe ILCs located some distance from a major port, such as those in Districts 1 and 5, which also provide the ability for the exchange of freight from one modal options to another.

ILCs adjacent to major ports are generally understood to be facilities directly tied to one or more seaports which serves as an extension of services provided at that seaport. More specifically, once unloaded from a ship, the moving of containers between modes (truck to rail, etc.) can be accommodated off the port site at an ILC acting as transfer centers for shipping containers between modes.

### Examples and Opportunities in District 6 and 4

Adjacent to the US 27 Corridor, the Port of Miami is the largest container port in the state, handling nearly 30 percent of all containers moving through Florida's ports. The Port also serves nearly one-third of all cruise passengers in the state. Recently, re-construction of the on-port rail and bridge connection was initiated. In addition, FEC Railway is funding line improvements to connect to the Hialeah Rail Yard. This improvement may transform the Hialeah Rail Yard into an inland port serving the needs near the corridor and providing an alternative to traditional truck traffic along constrained roadways near downtown Miami.

Recognizing the important role the southeast Florida region plays in initiating freight distribution across the state and anticipated increases in freight traffic resulting from shifts in global trade patterns, FDOT has undertaken a number of studies to support the freight program. Most recently, the Interregional Transportation Infrastructure Needs Study (ITINS) was completed by FDOT District 4 to summarize the possible transportation infrastructure impacts and needs associated with the development of three potential inland port ILCs located in Palm Beach, Glades, and St. Lucie Counties.

ITINS provides a series of scenarios concerning ultimate development of these ILCs and possible infrastructure needs arising from these scenarios. The proposed ILCs in Palm Beach and Glades Counties are of particular relevance because of their potential impacts to the US 27 Corridor. The potential development of these ILCs is also being considered as part of a separate study to evaluate the potential for freight rail connectivity along US 27.



### Potential Benefits

- Encourages economic development by creating new market opportunities and enhancing overall efficiency
- Alleviates congestion with improved intermodal connectivity, dispersal of truck traffic, and diverting truck trips to rail
- Diverting truck trips to rail provides emissions reductions and fuel efficiencies in the movement of containers
- Supplementary operations at an inland port, such as air cargo, could also help to reduce growth pressures on major commercial airports

### Potential Drawbacks

- Capital costs required to acquire land and construct such a facility are high
- Additional costs include improvements to the local and regional roadways to accommodate heavier trucks
- Potential impacts to the human, natural, and physical environment

## INTERMODAL LOGISTICS CENTERS (ILCs), CONT'D

ILCs near major ports represent just one type of ILC existing or planned along the US 27 Corridor. Within and adjacent to the US 27 Corridor are a number of other ILCs that serve essential functions for the freight network within the state by efficiently distributing freight goods throughout the state and to other markets. Although not directly tied to a port, they are located strategically within the state nearby other SIS facilities such as I-75, Florida's Turnpike and I-4.

These ILCs are characterized by their ability to create modal shifts in the transport of freight, providing active distribution centers and industrial activities adjacent to modal shift facilities, and exhibiting unified management of the facility. Where appropriate, they may also support activities such as office space, restaurants, and hotels.

### Examples and Opportunities in Districts 1 and 5

There are two logistics clustered ILCs proposed along or near the corridor which may have important implications to the statewide freight network as well as to the US 27 Corridor. They are:

- The Winter Haven Terminal Facility and ILC in Polk County near SR 60 and US 27
- The Ocala 489 Commerce Park in Marion County at US 27 and I-75.

### Potential Benefits

- Removes long distance trucks from US 27 with a mode shift to rail
- Minimizes the interaction between truck and passenger traffic in dense urban areas
- Consolidates smaller truck loads into fewer loads and assists in reduced emissions
- Encourages economic development by reducing the cost of trucking
- ILCs attract ancillary, support business activities benefitting the host communities

### Potential Drawbacks

- Requires a large development area
- Potential land use conflicts due to industrial operations housed within an urban area
- Potential impacts to the human, natural, and physical environment
- May require large amount of land acquisition



CSX Intermodal Facility under construction in Winter Haven

Source: Tampa Bay Partnership, 2012



## IMPROVED SIS INTEGRATION

The US 27 Corridor provides key access throughout the center of the state and connects with other SIS facilities essential for goods movement throughout the state. The US 27 Corridor has the potential to act as a reliever for statewide and regional freight movement utilizing truck and rail modes, thereby improving system-wide performance of the SIS throughout the state. Efficient and effective access to these facilities serves statewide goals to improve mobility and support economic development.

Improvements to better integrate connecting east-west facilities along the corridor may include, but are not limited to: road widening, intersection and/or ramp improvements, potential for flyovers and other options for creating seamless transition between facilities, and tolling feasibility studies and other measures. In addition, the US 27 Corridor provides access to the Miami International Airport which is a SIS designated airport. Coordination to enhance accessibility to and from this airport may be considered to improve freight movements as well. Developing these strategies will need to be balanced with local and regional visions along the corridor to fulfill public participation requirements, ensure community support, and develop a balanced approach which facilitates freight goods movement along the corridor and throughout the state.

### Examples and Opportunities

The US 27 Corridor also connects with a number of SIS and emerging SIS corridors throughout the ten county study area, including the following by FDOT District:

#### District 6 (Miami-Dade County)

- I-95
- SR 826 (Palmetto Expressway)
- SR 821 (Florida's Turnpike)
- SR 997 (Krome Avenue)

#### District 5 (Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties)

- Florida's Turnpike (Lake County)
- I-75 (Marion County)

#### District 1 (Hendry, Glades, Highlands, and Polk Counties)

- SR 80 (Hendry County)
- SR 29 (Glades County)
- SR 64 (Highlands County)
- SR 60 (Polk County)
- I-4 (Polk County)

#### District 4 (Broward and Palm Beach Counties)

- I-75 (Broward County)
- SR 80 (Palm Beach County at South Bay)



Source: SIS and Emerging SIS: Hubs, Corridors, and Connectors in District 6 (Miami), 2008

### Potential Benefits

- Potential for reduced congestion on other statewide facilities
- Provide greater freight connectivity throughout the state
- Potential for deviating freight traffic from US 27 to other facilities in more urbanized areas and where community development is directly adjacent to the corridor
- Potential for trucks to connect to planned and potential ILCs throughout the corridor

### Potential Drawbacks

- Will require enhanced coordination with local and regional plans to effectively integrate statewide freight movement needs with regional growth and economic development plans
- Must be approached systematically as part of the statewide freight network to address private sector freight movement needs
- Potential higher costs to implement flyovers or other mechanisms to create a seamless network

## TRUCK-ONLY LANES

Truck-only lanes are special use lanes separating trucks from passenger traffic. This strategy is designed to reduce congestion, increase the longevity of pavement, and expand the economic benefits of streamlined freight mobility. In addition, tolls may be imposed to generate revenue. Two common methods of separating trucks from general traffic are lane striping and concrete barriers. According to national best practices research, barrier separated dedicated truck lanes achieve optimum feasibility when truck volumes exceed 30 percent of the total vehicle mix, peak hour volumes exceed 1,800 vehicles per lane-hour, and off-peak volumes exceed 1,200 vehicles per lane-hour.

### Examples and Opportunities

FDOT District 5 has prepared a document entitled Truck-Only Lane Quick Reference to provide a general introduction to truck-only lanes, discuss current status, and provide quick reference to basic design criteria for these facilities. It also includes typical sections for buffer and barrier separated truck lanes for informational purposes.

There are currently no existing truck lanes along the US 27 Corridor. Based on the sampling of traffic count locations provided through this study, the only areas within the corridor close to meeting the 30 percent guideline for truck traffic are within Hendry and Glades Counties. Additional data on peak and off-peak vehicles per lane mile would be needed to support implementation of this strategy.

Further investigation may be warranted to determine how truck traffic volumes may be expected to increase in these counties as a result of implementation of ILCs. A mix of strategies to improve east-west SIS highway connectivity and establish truck only lanes may be an opportunity for further analysis.

## WHERE TO BUILD TRUCK-ONLY LANES



30% of Vehicle Mix

1,800 Vehicles per Lane-hour  
During Peak Hours

### Potential Benefits

- Reduces many passenger vehicle and heavy truck conflicts
- Contributes to the reduction of congestion and emissions
- Improves travel speed and safety in general purpose lanes
- Provides economic benefits in terms of more efficient movement of goods resulting in reduced freight costs

### Potential Drawbacks

- Costs to implement are generally higher than adding general purpose lanes to a highway
- Potential for access and mobility issues
- Difficulties may arise when accidents occur or during maintenance
- May be viewed by the public as providing a minimal overall benefit because passenger traffic will not be able to utilize them
- May discourage growth of the rail system

## REGIONAL CAPACITY FOCUS

While both the community vitality and freight focused alternatives concentrate on maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the transportation network, regional capacity focused strategies represent ways to move more people in a proactive manner along the corridor in response to increasing demands on the network over time.

Urbanized and expansive growth in a number of locations along the US 27 Corridor continues. In Miami-Dade County, for example, the corridor covers some of the largest urbanized areas in the state and serves both commuter and significant truck traffic originating from the number of intermodal connections near the coast. In addition, the “Four Corners” region in the heart of the mega-region of Central Florida through Polk and Lake Counties has seen exponential population growth in recent years with a number of developments of regional impact (DRIs) and a series of retirement communities dominating residential development patterns in these once rural areas. In Lake, Sumter, and Marion Counties, The Villages Retirement Community has transformed this portion of the corridor and surrounding area to the fastest growing area in the state. With these factors in mind, providing responsive transportation infrastructure to efficiently move people and goods now and into the future is of key importance to the state.

### Regional Capacity Alternatives

<b>Passenger Rail</b>	Promoting high speed rail, commuter rail, Amtrak, and light rail
<b>Adding Capacity to US 27</b>	Adding general purpose lanes, new interchanges, and implementing operational improvements
<b>New Location Corridors</b>	Identifying new location arterials and new grade-separated crossings for local connectivity
<b>Managed Lanes</b>	Adding new auxiliary lanes including high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, reversible lanes, express lanes, vehicle restricted lanes, and dedicated bus lanes

# Regional Capacity



## PASSENGER RAIL

Passenger rail service presents a mobility option to serve statewide passenger movements in a more efficient and effective manner. As growth and development spur greater congestion, alternatives to single-driver automobile use are being explored throughout the state. One of the major goals and objectives of the FTP, Horizon 2060, is to improve mobility and connectivity for people and freight by developing a statewide high-speed and intercity passenger rail system which connects all regions of the state and links to public transportation systems.

### **Examples and Opportunities**

Passenger rail systems relevant to US 27 considered for this alternative mobility option include Amtrak, the newly proposed All Aboard Florida initiative to connect Orlando to Miami through high-speed passenger rail service, and commuter services including the South Florida Tri-Rail System and a proposed Orange Blossom Express commuter rail corridor along US 441 in Lake and Orange Counties. Although a number of these options are outside of the US 27 Corridor, these options provide regional passenger mobility which will have a statewide impact on the transportation network.



### **Potential Benefits**

- Divert passenger trips, thereby reducing congestion
- Reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gases (GHGs)
- Job creation and economic development around station locations
- Anticipated to improve accessibility to airports and seaports
- Better connectivity between northern and southern sections of Florida

### **Potential Drawbacks**

- Limited funds available in transportation budgets
- Initial construction costs typically not recovered with passenger fares
- Potential impacts to the human, natural, and physical environment

## ADDING CAPACITY TO US 27

To meet increasing transportation needs, FDOT is focused on key strategies to improve traffic flow on strategic intermodal facilities, such as US 27. These strategies include adding new roadway capacity where it provides the most benefit. Although the majority of the corridor is currently performing at acceptable levels of service, traffic demands in the corridor are expected to continue to increase with continued urban development. These development patterns include urban development in Hialeah and Miami, the explosive development in the central and northern portions of the corridor, and expansive freight plans throughout the corridor which will help distribute freight more efficiently throughout the state.

### Examples and Opportunities

A number of roadway widening projects are planned within the corridor. Through the 2035 planning horizon, the US 27 Corridor is planned as a four- to six-lane facility. It is important to note, in some areas like Lake County, lane constraint policies exist to limit the widening of US 27 to a maximum of six lanes. Alternative strategies will be needed in these areas to meet anticipated traffic demands where roadway widening is not feasible by these policy restrictions.

### Potential Benefits

- Reduced congestion, travel times and improved freight flow
- Decreased interference between through traffic and short local trips
- Increased connectivity
- Improved emergency response
- Lowered production and distribution costs

### Potential Drawbacks

- Potential high implementation costs, especially in congested urban areas, where right-of-way will likely be required
- Displacement of the community by acquisition of additional right-of-way
- Potential impacts to the human, natural, and physical environment



US 27 in Broward County

## NEW LOCATION CORRIDORS

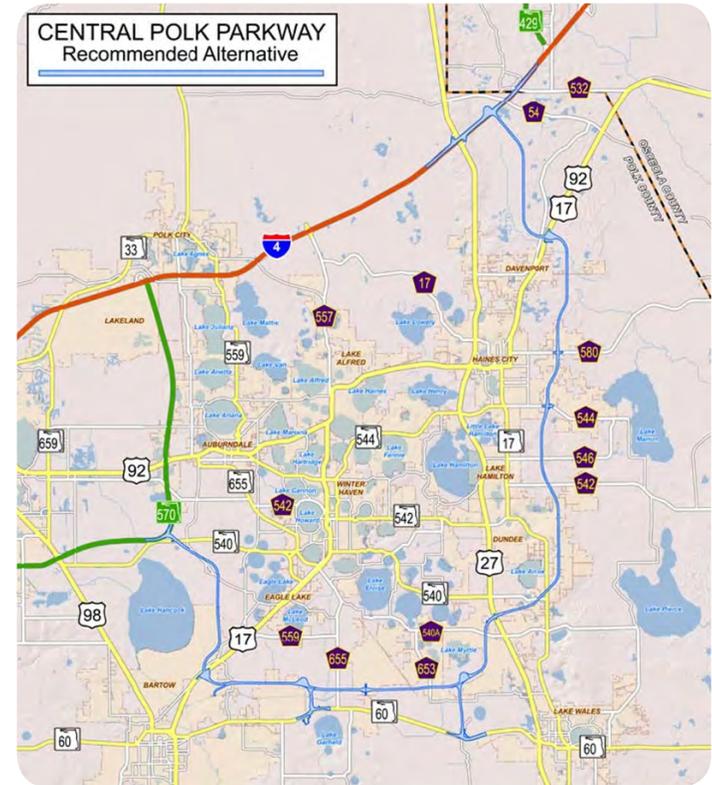
This alternative involves building one or more entirely new roadway facilities to help reduce traffic congestion on US 27, facilitate emergency and security responses, and foster economic development. In some locations, growth and development pressures have created increased needs for regional connectivity and enhancing freight mobility to support economic development opportunities within the state. In these areas, new location corridors may be proposed to alleviate congestion and address the needs of the regional transportation network in a proactive manner.

### Examples and Opportunities

Given the tremendous growth and development along and near the corridor in proximity to I-4 in Polk County, FDOT District 1 completed a study for the new Central Polk Parkway. The proposed parkway would extend from the Polk Parkway (SR 570) at SR 540 west of Winter Haven and loop through south central Polk County. The objective of the new facility is to provide an additional north-south facility to enhance mobility, increase accessibility, and improve emergency evacuation and response times. The addition of another north-south facility to the network is anticipated to reduce traffic congestion, including truck traffic, on several corridors in central Polk County, particularly parallel facilities such as US 98, US 17, and US 27. The Central Polk Parkway is being planned to support the increased travel demands expected from the continued residential and employment growth projected within the County and throughout the entire region. This new roadway will also connect with I-4 between US 27 in Polk County and SR 429 in Osceola County. This I-4 interchange is currently going through the Interchange Access Review process to narrow down the alternative locations.

### Potential Benefits

- Overall reduction in congestion and vehicle hours traveled (VHT)
- Possible vehicle operation costs savings with better connectivity
- Improves emergency management by providing alternate route to US 27
- Additional revenue could be generated if location is developed as a toll facility
- Provide safety benefits through reduced congestion and reduction of incidents
- Potential economic benefits due to business and residential development along new corridor location



Source: Recommended Alternative, Central Polk Parkway Final State Environmental Impact Report, March 2011

### Potential Drawbacks

- Large capital and maintenance costs associated with new corridor development
- High right of way costs
- Limited funds availability in transportation budgets
- In urban areas with limited location options, major impacts to existing land uses
- Potential impacts to the human, natural, and physical environment
- Can contribute to urban sprawl
- Congestion reduction on US 27 will most likely be only temporary because demand for highway facilities historically increase over time

## MANAGED LANES

Managed lanes, as defined by FDOT, are highway facilities or sets of lanes within an existing highway facility where operational strategies are proactively implemented and managed in response to changing conditions with a combination of tools. These tools may include accessibility, vehicle eligibility, pricing, or a combination. The goal of managed lanes is to aid in alleviating congestion, improve safety conditions, and enhance mobility in a more cost-efficient manner but still maintaining the integrity of the US 27 Corridor. Managed lanes include the following:

- **Express Lanes** are a type of managed lane which uses access and vehicle eligibility requirements in combination with congestion pricing. The pricing manages the congestion in these lanes by ensuring trip time reliability at a certain speed threshold.
- **Reversible Lanes** are lanes in which traffic may travel in either direction depending on traffic conditions and time of day. Typically, they are meant to improve traffic flow in the peak direction during both the morning and afternoon rush hours. This is accomplished by daily phasing-in of traffic to the reversible lane using overhead message boards, special signing, and traffic control safety devices (signal lights, gates, vehicle restraints, etc.) on a regularly scheduled daily time interval.
- **High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), High Occupancy Toll (HOT), Value Priced Lanes, and Dedicated Bus Lanes** are each specific types of special use lanes. HOV lanes or carpooling lanes are reserved for vehicles with a driver and one or more passengers. HOV lanes may either be designated simply by diamond markings, double-white line striping, or separated by a physical barrier. HOT lanes give single occupancy motorists access to HOV lanes by paying a toll; however, “toll lanes” can be in combination with most of the other managed lanes. Typically, the tolls are variable depending on time of day and traffic conditions.

In addition to these types of managed lanes, truck-only lanes are another form of managed lane concepts available. Because these are more related to freight mobility management, this strategy is discussed as a separate strategy within this report.



### Examples and Opportunities

Currently, volumes along the US 27 Corridor do not support investment in managed lanes. However, given the number of freight and population growth scenarios within various portions of the corridor, these strategies may be explored in tandem with other options to proactively address needs from increased development. The context for these types of improvements will be key to identifying areas of the corridor where this option may be feasible and where it is neither feasible nor desirable for the surrounding community.

### Potential Benefits

- Reduce congestion and create more travel options, such as use of transit
- Pricing strategies manage demand and generate revenue
- Some lane types may be constructed within existing right-of-way
- Potential to reduce community cohesion

### Potential Drawbacks

- For all managed lanes, limited funds availability in transportation budgets
- Potential impacts to the human, natural and physical environment

## COMPARATIVE SUMMARY

All of the alternatives considered provide some positive impact in terms of mobility, freight movements, emergency response, homeland security, and economic development. To provide a summary evaluation of the alternative options considered, information for each alternative was generalized to a rating scale based on its individual impact to the main goals of the study. The degree of impact was determined using relative low, medium, and high impacts as follows:



**Mobility** – All alternatives improve mobility in some form, either for passenger movements, freight movements, or a combination of the two. Three symbols indicate these alternatives have the largest positive impact to mobility in terms of improved traffic flow, reduced congestion, and modal choices. Two symbols indicate some reductions in congestion and increased modal choices. One symbol indicates those alternatives with the smallest impact on improving mobility along the US 27 Corridor.



**Freight Movements** – Three symbols indicate the alternative provides enhanced benefits for facilitating freight movements, such as improving efficiencies of freight movement. Two symbols indicate an alternative has some positive and some negative effects on freight movements. One symbol indicates the alternative will have a negligible impact on freight movements.



**Emergency Response** – Three symbols indicate a positive impact to emergency response by providing additional capacity for evacuation efforts or improving communication for response efforts. Two symbols indicate some positive and some negative effects of the alternative with little overall change to emergency response. One symbol indicates the alternative will have a negligible effect on emergency response.



**Homeland Security** – Three symbols indicate the alternative provides benefits to homeland security preparedness, such as increased communication or ability to respond to incidents. Two symbols indicate the alternative has some positive and some negative effects, while one symbol indicates the alternative will have a negligible impact on homeland security.



**Economic Development** – All alternatives improve economic development to some degree, typically in terms of job creation, spurring new businesses or commercial developments, or a combination of factors. Three symbols indicate these alternatives have the largest positive impact to economic development within the US 27 study area, while two symbols indicate some increase in economic development activities. One symbol indicates alternatives with the smallest impact on economic development along the US 27 Corridor.



**Affordability** – Three symbols indicate the alternative is highly affordable compared to other alternatives and generally costs significantly less than other alternatives. Two symbols indicate the alternative has a medium cost level, while one symbol indicates the alternative has significant cost issues and is likely expensive.



**Ease of Implementation** – Three symbols indicate the alternative is easy to implement, with little or no right-of-way required, minimal environmental mitigation efforts, and can be completed within a few years time. Two symbols indicate the alternative takes longer to implement and may require some right-of-way, mitigation efforts, or longer to design and construct. One symbol indicates the alternative will take much longer to implement and will require coordinated efforts of various agencies and groups over a multiple-year period.

## SUMMARY OF IMPACTS BY ALTERNATIVE OPTION

	Mobility	Freight Movements	Emergency Response	Homeland Security	Economic Development	Affordability	Ease of Implementation
Access Management							
Transportation Systems Management							
Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs							
Interregional Transit and Commuter Services							
Parallel Local Relievers							
Parallel Freight Rail							
Inland Port Concepts							
Intermodal Logistics Centers (ILCs)							
Improved SIS Integration							
Truck-Only Lanes							
Passenger Rail							
Add Capacity to US 27							
New Location Corridors							
Managed Lanes							

# POLICY IMPLICATIONS

While the US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study identifies numerous alternative transportation options available for improving mobility, freight, emergency management, security response, and economic development along the US 27 Corridor, it does not recommend specific projects or solutions for implementation. Through the identification of these alternative options, several policy implications emerged for consideration in conjunction with the implementation of alternatives. These policy implications can be summarized in six major initiatives, including:

- Developing a Context-Sensitive Solutions Approach
- Enhancing Public and Interregional Coordination
- Strengthening the Land Use and Transportation Connection
- Providing Modal Options
- Providing a Safe and Secure Transportation System
- Securing Funding.



These policy initiatives echo the sentiments of the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the state's long-range transportation plan. The FTP identifies the goals, objectives, and strategies to guide transportation decisions and addresses how Florida's transportation system can meet the mobility needs of our growing population, help make our economy more competitive, help build great communities, and help preserve our natural environment. Solutions for US 27 are consistent with these goals and objectives and maintain that active planning techniques to achieve these goals can result in prosperous, well-balanced communities across the state.



## DEVELOPING CONTEXT-SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

Context-sensitive solutions (CSS) is a proactive, collaborative, interdisciplinary approach to transportation decision making, project development, and implementation, taking into account the views of stakeholders, and the local areas where a project will exist, be operated and maintained. CSS considers the physical setting in which a project or activity is to be implemented, and seeks to enhance and conserve community defining features and environmental resources. This approach seeks to balance safety and mobility with local priorities.

- FDOT Context-Sensitive Solutions Policy, November 2008

CSS is guided by core principles which allow for the development of quantifiable and action-oriented performance measures.

**According to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), a CSS approach is guided by four core principles:**

1. Strive towards a shared stakeholder vision to provide a basis for decisions.
2. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of contexts.
3. Foster continuing communication and collaboration to achieve consensus.
4. Exercise flexibility and creativity to shape effective transportation solutions, while preserving and enhancing community and natural environments.

This study provides the starting point for this CSS approach. In assessing the travel demands of people and goods moving along the US 27 Corridor, a comprehensive framework for identifying needs was formulated. Field visits and additional outreach with state and regional agency partners through this study provided key insights into corridor needs and potential alternatives.

From these study processes, a comprehensive context was developed, including meeting community vitality, freight needs, and regional capacity needs through a variety of options. In future studies, incorporating these focus areas will require enhanced public and stakeholder coordination to further develop a shared vision for the US 27 Corridor.

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENT

AESTHETICS

HARMONY

SAFETY-MOBILITY

HISTORIC

PD&E STUDY

CONTEXT SENSITIVE SOLUTIONS

"The CSS approach seeks to balance safety and mobility with local priorities."

*CSS adds lasting value.*

"It is the policy of FDOT to use a CSS approach on transportation projects and activities for all modes appropriate to scale, cost, location, and schedule."

Source: FDOT District Four, 2009

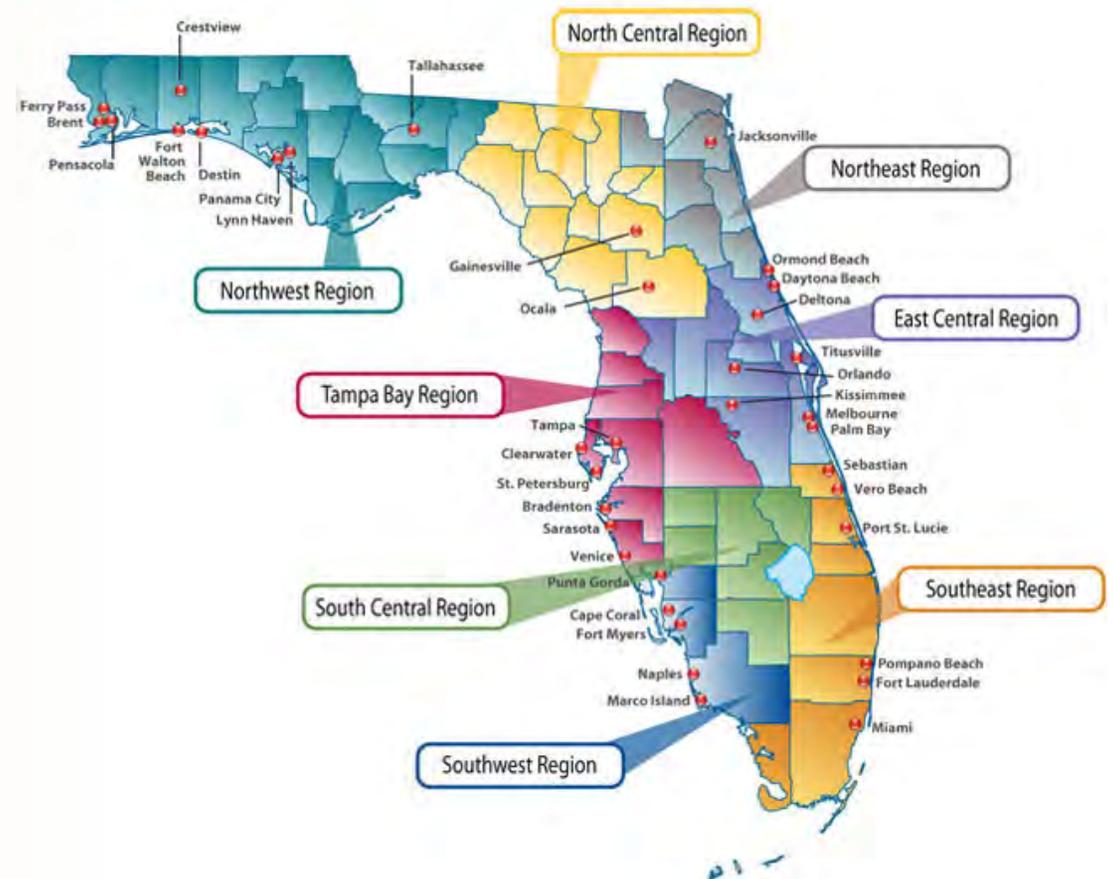
## ENHANCING PUBLIC AND INTERREGIONAL COORDINATION

This US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study provided coordination and consultation with statewide agencies and with local agencies through coordination by FDOT Districts. FDOT Districts led the coordination effort with organizations throughout the state, including regional planning councils, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and local governments. As future phases of study move forward for the US 27 Corridor, extended public and agency outreach techniques will be essential to implementation of this approach.

The State of Florida should promote growth leadership through regional visioning initiatives. Regional visioning efforts engage experts and the public in a process to establish transportation and community development goals for a specified point in the future. These efforts are in line with a proactive, systems-based approach to growth leadership.

Developing a greater understanding of the importance of connectivity between rural and urban areas is also important to meeting rural challenges in the corridor. In particular, internal connectivity among rural areas may provide opportunities for coordinated economic development. Improved personal mobility can also enhance economic development by expanding access, improving employment opportunities, and supporting increased commercial activity.

Finally, as efforts advance and specific recommendations are made, the study will progress through further planning evaluation as well as the federal NEPA and FDOT environmental processes. These efforts ensure interregional and agency coordination throughout the process and strive to assure projects considered address a full array of environmental impacts.



Source: Enterprise Florida, October 2012

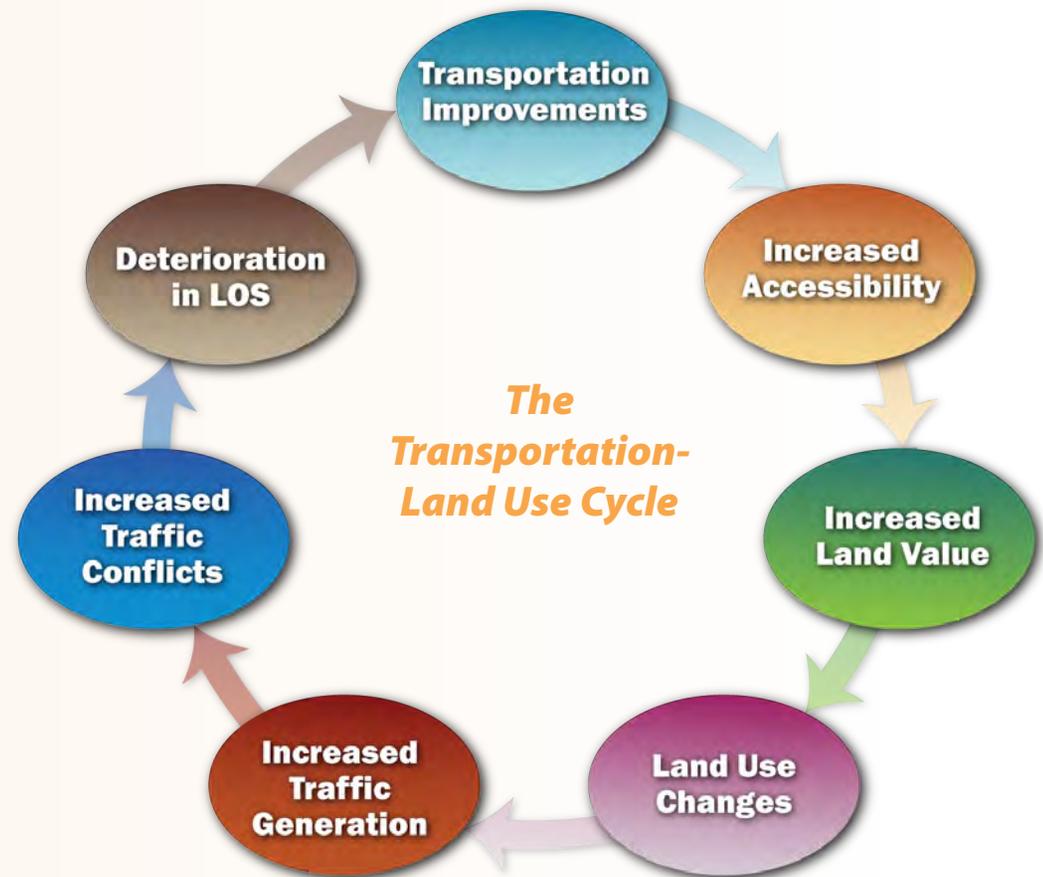


## STRENGTHENING THE LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION CONNECTION

The relationship between land use and transportation is interconnected and reciprocal; land use creates a demand for transportation facilities and transportation facilities support economic development generating additional demand. As a result, it is important to strengthen linkages between land use and transportation planning.

Land use decisions, such as where to develop new residential neighborhoods or locate new shopping centers or schools, have significant impacts on the US 27 Corridor and are typically made by local governments. Alternatives presented in this report, such as active access management plans, provide some mechanism for strengthening linkages between land use and transportation planning in the US 27 Corridor. Policy considerations for employing access management will require close coordination with regional and local land use plans.

Land use decisions also impact emergency management and homeland security efforts. For example, residential development location and density greatly impact emergency evacuation efforts. While local land use improvements are an important economic development mechanism, their development should also be balanced with emergency management needs. Appropriate local circulation and connectivity within local communities and connectivity to numerous regional transportation systems are important components to balance economic development with emergency management needs. Finally, local land use decisions should foster the transportation system supporting community livability and be implemented in an environmentally responsible manner.



## PROVIDING MODAL OPTIONS

The ability to expand the footprint of the US 27 Corridor is limited in some areas. For example in South Florida, build-out of the corridor is generally complete and adjacent land uses and right-of-way acquisition costs generally prohibit the ability to expand the corridor. While corridor expansion options are appropriate in some areas and investments can clearly be made in relieving physical and operational bottlenecks, investments in the US 27 Corridor should focus on a combination of modal alternatives to provide greater choices, both in terms of passenger and freight movements.

Modal options are also important from an emergency management standpoint. Enhanced transportation options will provide additional opportunities for an emergency evacuation or moving supplies into an area during recovery operations. For example, passenger rail options can provide additional capacity to move citizens out of a region, while freight rail track improvements can move supplies back into a region.

The development of park and rides, express bus services, and regional commuter services are also important in providing modal options. However, development densities are not great enough in less urbanized portions of the corridor to support some of these modal alternatives. New or improved corridors can help to address major gaps in connectivity and service, and can be leveraged over time to provide increased modal options in developing communities.

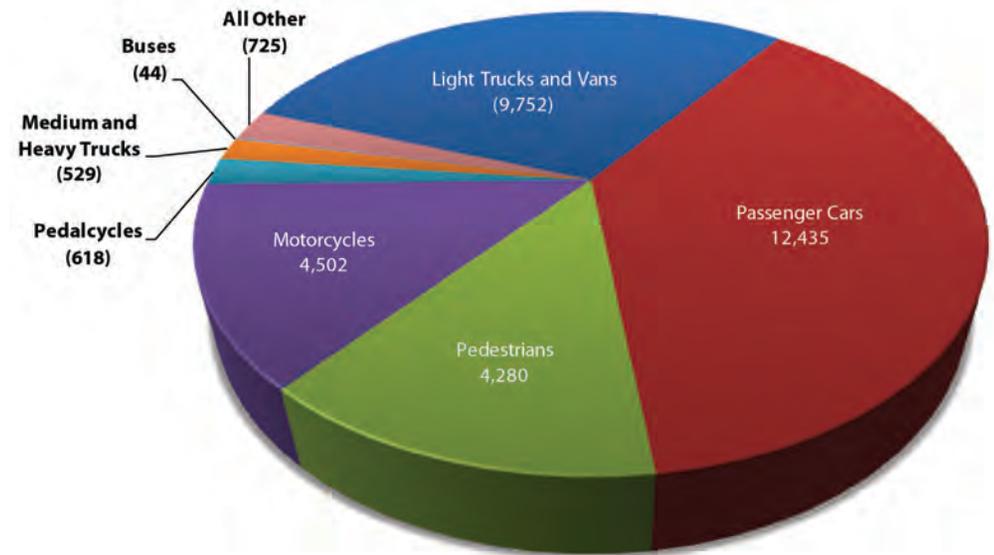


## PROVIDING A SAFE AND SECURE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Safety and security considerations must be integrated into any alternative. All aspects of transportation planning should address safety and security concerns during the development of alternatives, while at the same time continuing to improve passenger and freight mobility. Passenger safety and security is critical for successful implementation of new transportation alternatives, while the security of the corridor's freight transportation system is crucial for continued economic development.

Some of the alternatives within this report, such as transportation systems management alternatives, attempt to proactively address community safety concerns within the corridor. Real-time emergency response times along the corridor can also be improved by adding capacity to the US 27 Corridor and parallel corridors, and by the development of new corridors. Policies which consider managed lanes and truck-only lanes also promote reduced passenger vehicle and heavy truck conflicts. Finally, utilization of regional traveler information signs to inform travelers of transportation system updates may be a significant aid to public safety along US 27.

### National Highway Fatalities in 2010



Source: National Transportation Safety Board



## SECURING FUNDING

Revenue for transportation expenditures is generated from multiple sources. While there are many categories of funding sources available, funds generally come from the following generalized sources:

### ■ *State Funds*

- » Fuel tax (gasoline, diesel, aviation fuel)
- » Fees (initial registration, tag, rental car surcharge)
- » Documentary stamp revenue

### ■ *Federal Funds*

- » Highways (Federal gas tax – distributed to states)
- » Transit (funds distributed to providers)

### ■ *Other Funds*

- » Turnpike and tolls
- » Bonds
- » Local revenues (local motor fuel taxes, local option sales taxes and other sources)



Funding alternatives along the US 27 Corridor will be challenging in the present economic climate, as state and local governments struggle with transportation funding shortfalls. A number of alternatives, such as access management and transportation systems management options, are low-cost policy or operational improvements which focus on efficiency by maximizing the investment in the existing transportation infrastructure along US 27.

Other US 27 alternative options, like lanes, certain types of managed generate revenue from user fees. However, the revenue is not usually sufficient to cover more than the operating and maintenance costs. Significant initial investments are typically required for development of new systems and major modifications to existing systems.

Additional investments and ancillary improvements may be required to support a consistent and connected system throughout the state as well. Freight oriented alternatives, in particular, may have significant positive impacts to economic development within the state and should continue to be pursued. Policies and initiatives to support development of planned Intermodal Logistics Centers (ILCs) and parallel freight rail corridors may have a lasting return on investment for the state.

# SUMMARY

FDOT's Systems Planning Office is tasked with implementing the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) in the state and to provide guidance and policies in implementing the SIS. US 27 is currently designated as a SIS facility. The overall purpose of the SIS is to improve mobility for residents, businesses, and visitors and to enhance economic competitiveness in the state.

Studies such as the US 27 Transportation Alternatives Study help provide a systematic and strategic view of the state's SIS facilities. These plans expand on corridor and district level plans to provide a greater cohesive narrative which can help prioritize investments to best address mobility and economic vitality at a statewide level. However, one of the great challenges is balancing overall transportation network connectivity needs across the state and within the corridor with emerging growth patterns, community visions, and the new growth opportunities. A context-sensitive approach will help establish a shared vision for the development of the corridor.

The 14 alternative options provided in this report offer a positive impact in terms of mobility, safety, environmental considerations, emergency management, security response, and economic development. All of the identified alternatives improve mobility in some form, either for passenger movements, freight movements, or a combination of the two. All of the alternatives also improve economic development to some degree, typically in terms of improving efficiencies of goods movement, job creation, spurring new businesses or commercial developments, or a combination of factors.

An effective, well thought out integration of strategies has the potential to make the US 27 Corridor a vibrant place to live, work, and travel. The implementation of alternative strategies should not be viewed as "a one size fits all" solution, but with the view to incorporate a multitude of strategies which best balance the mobility needs of people and freight while fostering regional and statewide connectivity and economic opportunities throughout the corridor.

## Policy Considerations

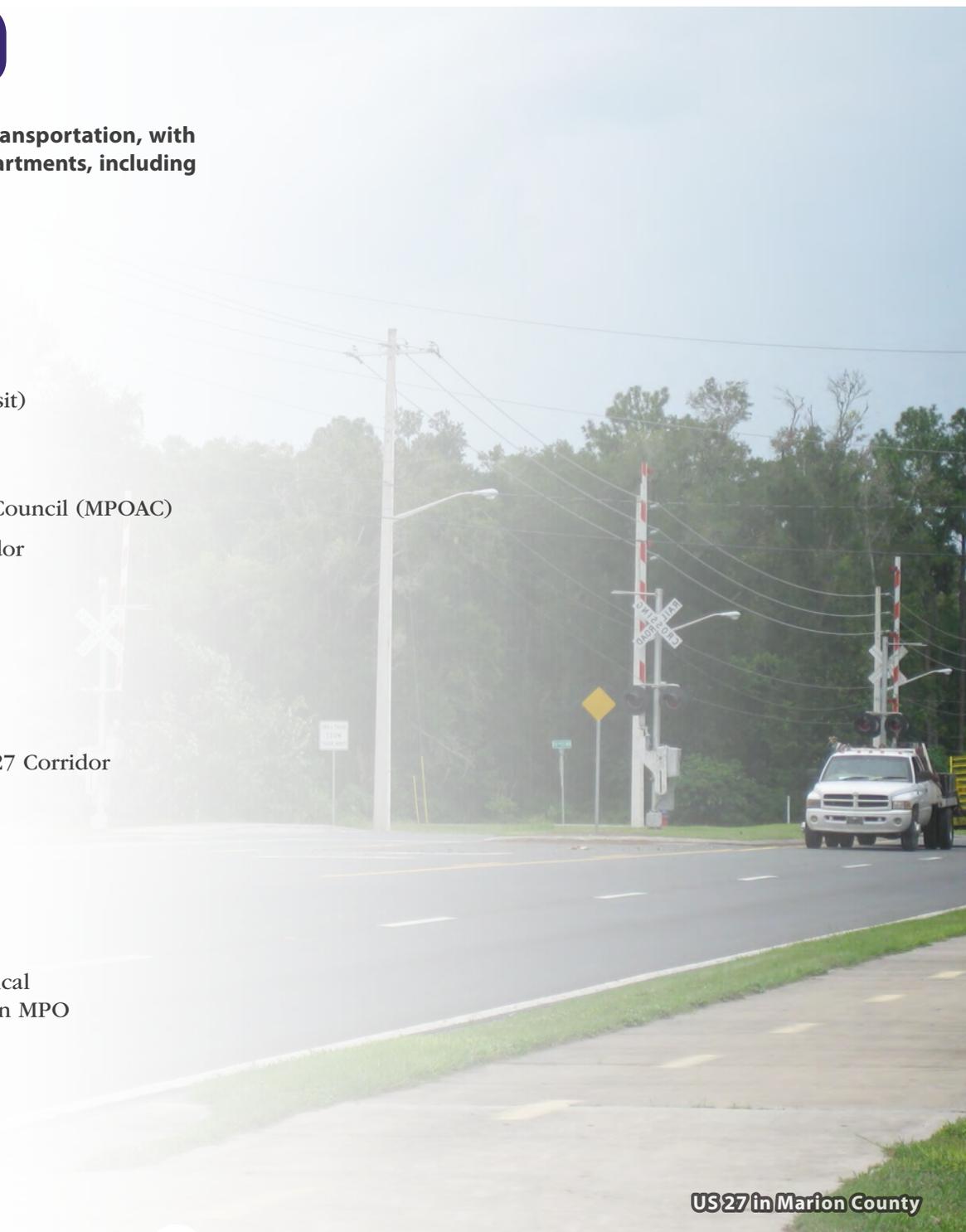
- Developing a Context- Sensitive Approach
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- Providing Modal Options
- Providing a Safe and Secure Transportation System
- Securing Funding



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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- Florida Department of Law Enforcement
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- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
- FDOT Districts One, Four, Five, and Six
- FDOT Modal Offices (Airports, Rail, Seaports, and Transit)
- Other FDOT Offices (Safety, Traffic Operations, Environmental Management, and Policy Planning)
- Florida Metropolitan Planning Organizations Advisory Council (MPOAC)
- Five Regional Planning Councils along the US 27 Corridor
  - » *East Central Florida RPC*
  - » *Central Florida RPC*
  - » *Withlacoochee RPC*
  - » *Treasure Coast RPC*
  - » *South Florida RPC*
- Six Metropolitan Planning Organizations along the US 27 Corridor
  - » *Ocala/Marion County TPO*
  - » *Lake-Sumter Counties MPO*
  - » *Polk County TPO*
  - » *Palm Beach County MPO*
  - » *Broward County MPO*
  - » *Miami-Dade County Urbanized Area MPO*
- Three Counties in the South Central Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern (RACEC) areas not represented by an MPO
  - » *Highlands County*
  - » *Glades County*
  - » *Hendry County*



**US27 in Marion County**

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