



Recommended FDOT Corridor Plan Evaluation Principles

Overarching considerations:

Need - What are the numbers? Existing and projected future trips, passenger and commodity commerce? Basis of estimates of future travel demands within/between these large areas?

Analysis – Using the existing and projected future trips (passenger and commodity commerce) what type(s)/level and mix of transportation infrastructure meets the need? Include evaluation of alternative modes and transportation mixes/options that may mitigate, lessen or handle projected volume (roads, rails, and technology and/or design changes)?

Purpose - Selection of types/level and mix of transportation infrastructure that meet the need.

Guiding Principle Statement on the FDOT transit corridors:

The decisions that will be made on transportation corridors are not solely driven by regional visions or predictions of population growth and its location. They will be choices between policy alternatives that will have profound impacts on the state, its people, and its environment for decades and perhaps centuries. The choice will be between smart growth and its opposite.

Smart growth choices will hold valuable "non-adaptive" resources paramount in the planning process (habitat and other conservation areas--recharge, water quality protection, etc.) Road alignments, access, future land use, and even existing land use, can all be directed towards other social and economic objectives over the planning horizon of 50 years. Smart growth choices will yield a better quality of life and a better allocation of Florida's economic, environmental, and human resources.

Transportation corridors are powerful landscape shaping and transforming tools, and therefore, the net impacts of any corridor proposal must be evaluated in terms of the complete costs of its implementation, the economic values of any associated losses in regional ecosystem functions, and the economics of transportation alternatives.

In shorthand -- impact nothing until you have a really good handle on the long term impacts of the decision to develop a corridor because the effects are not reversible.

After analyses/justification has been completed and a transportation corridor for particular type(s) of infrastructure deemed necessary, other finer grain questions must be addressed:

- Avoidance of protected areas and high quality natural habitat such as State and National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, Forests, Florida Forever and P-2000 tracts, Areas of Critical Concern, other statutory designated areas for preservation/conservation including Wekiva Protection Area, Everglades Protection Area, Aquatic Preserves. Avoidance of Everglades' restoration projects outside the EPA and other important mitigation areas (fed, state, and local) and any conservation easements held by the local, state or feds. But be willing to propose solutions that are outside the box for consideration.
- Wildlife Corridor Protection – Commitments to bridging, wildlife crossings where complete avoidance is not possible. Identification of known corridors in DOT planning and design process.
- Commitment to use of established data bases to inform avoidance/wildlife crossing and bridging decisions – FNAI, FWC “Closing the Gaps”, CLIP etc.
- Protection of the natural and open space areas identified and Florida’s rural landscape generally from sprawl induced by the availability of new transportation corridors and interchanges
- Interface between FDOT corridor planning and county comprehensive plan decisions - require or facilitate special planning processes to counteract the tendency toward uncontrolled sprawl
- Should engage in “Wekiva Task Force” type land use planning processes or FS 380 “Resource Planning and Management Committee” processes to produce land use guidance in critical areas such as Northern Everglades, Everglades Headwaters and Green Swamp
- Must have Opportunities for FDOT/Natural Resource Agency/Environmental Community collaboration to achieve compatible shared objectives
- Shared land or conservation easement acquisition in conjunction with road right-of-way acquisition (similar to what was achieved in the case of Wekiva Parkway)
- Coordinated use of mitigation/establishment of special mitigation banks to acquire critical land and water resources as a result of mitigation needs presented by new road corridors
- Do not modify limitations on FDOT R.O.W. acceptance through donation, easement or undervalued sales

- Whatever corridor planning moves forward that it does not circumvent or be counter to existing State conservation priorities - placement of any hard infrastructure through the remaining green infrastructure components will require great care and innovation
- Must move forward with a strong multi-modal and evolving transportation technologies approaches as a part of any corridor contemplation and planning - new road construction should not be a sole/dominant approach though it is part of the mix for future transportation needs
- High importance of factoring in land use implications of new corridor planning – not just the incremental impacts of a linear path of a facility through a landscape, but impacts resulting from the placement of exits and access points that affect patterns of development relative to local comprehensive plans and other regional plans.
- Important for proposed corridors to establish the basis for beginning a “need” analysis – must make a fundamental statement/premise that connectivity between identified economic centers (major cities), including predictable travel times, is critical to long term economic prosperity.
- Forecast of future demand in vehicle trips, and trucks/goods is important but must be transparent and reasonable
- In making decisions on whether or not to build hard infrastructure, our analysis needs to be sure that we haven’t missed the “no build” alternative.
- An assurance that new corridors are being planned for limited access
- The use and efficacy of the ETDM on-line GIS Analysis must be clarified. While all the listed data layers are available, it is not clear how FDOT actually uses that data. For example, the Green Swamp was not cut from corridor study areas - state parks were not cut from corridor study areas. It is dangerous to show areas that include such features if FDOT wants to avoid controversy. Are they used at all in developing potential corridors and as a filter to exclude, or at least indicate, the basic landscape vulnerabilities and green-to-hard infrastructure corridor and land use development incompatibilities?