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Improving I-10 Freight Operations With ITS

The I-10 National Freight Corridor is a pooled fund study examining ways



to improve freight operations along I-10 from California to Florida. The corridor group has studied a wide variety of alternatives including capacity improvements, modal shifts, and urban bypasses. Most of the alternatives either had minimal impact on the overall corridor operations, or were cost prohibitive.



In 2006, the corridor decided to pursue the intelligent transportation systems (ITS) option. While all options are still being considered, ITS offers the most cost effective solutions to provide immediate operational benefits. As a first step, a corridor-wide ITS architecture is being developed. While there are many state ITS architectures and regional ITS architectures throughout the corridor, the corridor-wide ITS architecture has two main purposes:

- First is to help coordinate multi-state project initiatives that would not be included as part of a statewide ITS architecture.
- Second is to fill any gaps within the existing ITS architectures. The corridor-wide ITS architecture is entirely focused on freight movement.

There are two subcommittees working in concert to help develop the ITS architecture—a border state committee and a gulf coast committee. The Technical Advisory Committee recognized that while there are many common needs throughout the entire corridor, the border states and the gulf coast states do have some uniquely different needs. So while the complete corridor-wide ITS architecture must reflect the needs of the entire corridor, it was considered best if the two committees addressed their specific needs that would then be combined into the corridor-wide ITS architecture.

As part of this effort, several technical white papers are being created to provide information relative to traveler information, emergency management, security, and incident management. These white papers will be used not only to help shape the corridor-wide ITS architecture, but to also help develop the early winner projects. The corridor-wide ITS architecture will be completed this summer.

In advance of this, the I-10 National Freight Corridor group is working hard on two other initiatives. First, the early winner projects will be submitted for federal funding under the Operational Tests to Mitigate Congestion program. Second, the I-10 National Freight Corridor was one of 15 corridors short-listed to compete for a Corridor of the Future designations. Between these two federal programs, an estimated \$125 million federal funding will be available for project implementation.

This article was provided by Jeff Hochmuth, Wilbur-Smith. For more information, please contact Mr.Hochmuth at (630) 434-8111 (ext. 630) or email JHochmuth@wilbursmith.com.

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TERL's Ramp Metering Independent Verification and Testing Program

Efforts at the Traffic Engineering Research Lab (TERL) are bringing ramp metering on controlled-access freeways closer to reality in the South Florida FDOT District 6 (Miami) area. With a joint effort between FDOT, consultants, and the software developer, TREL's Ramp Metering Independent Verification and Testing (IV&V) Program is evaluating ramp-metering firmware developed for Florida by the Southwest Research Institute (SwRI).



Under the direction of FDOT's Carl Morse, consultants Ron Meyer (PBS&J) and Walt Townsend (Siemens ITS) are conducting the IV&V. The TREL team's goal is to ensure that, when ramp metering is deployed in District 6, no technical issues exist which would impact the safety of the driving public or the efficiency of the public highway system.

Ramp metering technology involves firmware, controller hardware, mainline and ramp traffic detectors, communications, and central software. The testing at the TREL includes:

- Firmware Operation
- Firmware/Controller Integration
- SunGuideSM Configuration and Control

Firmware Operation

The team is evaluating the firmware's operation to verify proper logic flow and resulting signal behavior, and is working closely with the SwRI developers to produce an approved final version. The complex firmware employs fuzzy logic techniques to evaluate traffic conditions.

Firmware/Controller Integration

The firmware is being tested on the same hardware platform that will be employed in the planned rollout in District 6, a McCain Traffic Supply Model 170E controller, cabinet, and associated electronics. Some subtle but important integration issues have been identified and are being resolved.

SunGuide Configuration, Control and Monitoring

The ramp-metering system is connected to the SunGuide ramp metering subsystem (RMS) at the TREL's test-bed transportation management center (TMC), enabling complete end-to-end (field device to TMC) testing to be performed. The SunGuide RMS and interface are being tested to assure SunGuide compatibility, so that the District 6 regional TMC will be able to remotely control, reconfigure, and monitor each ramp-metering system that is deployed.

This article was provided by Bill Lueck, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office, based on information from Ron Meyer. For more information, please contact the following: Mr. Meyer at (850) 410-5612 or email Ronald.Meyer@dot.state.fl.us; Mr. Lueck at (850) 443-8744 or email Bill.Lueck@dot.state.fl.us; or Liang Hsia at (850) 921-7361 or email Liang.Hsia@dot.state.fl.us.

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Corridors of the Future Program

Background

Congestion in our urban areas is a growing problem that wastes tremendous amounts of time and billions of gallons of fuel annually across the nation. Congestion is getting so bad that Norman Mineta, former Secretary of Transportation, was prompted to say “Congestion is one of the single largest threats to America’s economic prosperity and way of life.” We don’t realize the magnitude of the problem, but the numbers are staggering from a national standpoint. We, as Americans, waste over 3,700,000,000 hours stuck in traffic and burn over 2,300,000,000 gallons of fuel per year, and those figures will only get worse as time goes on. That’s more than several days wasted stuck in traffic per year for the average motorist and a waste of over \$6,785,000,000 in fuel costs.

In an effort to help reduce congestion, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) launched the “National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America’s Transportation Network” in May 2006. Included as an element of the National Strategy, are the Corridors of the Future Program. Six objectives of the Corridors of the Future have been identified. These are:

1. Promote innovative national and regional approaches to congestion mitigation.
2. Address major transportation investment needs.
3. Illustrate the benefits of alternate financial models that involve private sector capital.
4. Promote a more efficient environmental review and project development process.
5. Develop corridors that will increase freight system reliability and enhance the quality of life for U.S. citizens.
6. Demonstrate the viability of a transportation investment model based on sound economics and market principles.

Corridors of the Future Solicitation

The USDOT, in the Federal Register dated September 5, 2006, solicited application to participate in the Corridors of the Future Program. The Corridors of the Future Program was established to accelerate the development of improvements to multi-state and multi-use corridors to help reduce congestion. Applications could be submitted by either the public or private sector, which identify investments that can help reduce traffic congestion. The application process was a two Phase process with the first Phase being a Corridor Proposal expressing the applicant’s interest to participate in the Corridors of the Future Program. The due date for the Corridor Proposal was October 23, 2006. The Corridor Proposals generally included a description of the corridor, preliminary improvement design features, rough estimate of the capital cost, delivery schedule, likely financing mechanism, and traffic trends.

Based on the Corridor Proposals, some of the nations highly congested corridors, that are in need of investment for the purposes of reducing congestion, were selected to move on to Phase 2 of the program. This phase was the Corridor Application phase and selected

applicants were required to submit a more detailed application that addressed the following areas:

1. Physical description of the corridor.
2. Congestion reduction strategies.
3. Use of technology to reduce congestion.
4. Economic benefit analysis.
5. Value of the improvement to the user.
6. Innovative project delivery and financing features.
7. Environmental impacts.
8. Finance plan and private sector involvement.
9. Project time line.

The Corridor Application requirements placed an emphasis on the ability to move freight traffic within the corridor. One of the areas addressed under economic benefits was commerce. The applicant needed to include an estimate of the overall corridor traffic that is likely to be freight traffic.

The Corridor Applications are due on May 25, 2007, unless an extension is granted in writing by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Chief Counsel at his discretion in response to a written request for extension.

Benefits of Being Selected

No funding has been specifically identified to support this USDOT initiative. However, being selected as a Corridor of the Future does put that corridor near the top of the list for funding opportunities as they are identified. The USDOT does commit its resources to expedite delivery of improvement to the corridor. These commitments are noted below.

- Coordination of a more efficient environmental review process.
- Accelerate review and conditional approval of experimental features under the FHWA Special Experimental Project- (SEP-) 15 process.
- Expedite commitment process for Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation (TIFIA) credit assistance.
- Conditional approval for private activity bonds
- Priority to tolling programs.
- Access to USDOT experts.

In addition, the USDOT will work with applicants to identify other possible discretionary funding sources. In essence the USDOT is setting up a program to grant priority for improving the corridors in most need of attention.

Florida's Participation

Florida has been included in three different applications. Two applications address I-95 and one application addresses I-10. The I-95 Corridor Coalition is taking the lead in submitting the first I-95 application. This application covers the entire I-95 corridor, of which Florida has the most miles. The state of North Carolina is taking the lead in submitting



the second I-95 application. The second I-95 application covers the southern portion of I-95 stretching from Florida through Virginia. Texas will be taking the lead in submitting the I-10 corridor application. This application is for the full length of I-10.



From the applicants, the USDOT will select up to five corridors to designate as Corridors of the Future. The I-95 corridor is one of the most congested corridors in the nation and services a significant portion of the nation's population. It is a vital corridor to the movement of people and goods along the eastern seaboard. The I-10 corridor is also a major corridor for commerce and links three of the four most populated states in the nation. It is vital to the east/west movement of commerce in the nation.

Various bottle necks and capacity constraints exist regarding rail along these two corridors that impacts the ability of rail to handle the commerce traffic that is necessary for the economy of this country. The I-95 and I-10 corridors play an important role in this regard. Because of the strategic importance of both the I-95 and I-10 corridors, these corridors stand a very good chance of getting selected as two of the Corridors of the Future.

This article was provided by Gene Glotzbach, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office. For more information, please contact Mr. Glotzbach at (850) 410-5616 or email Gene.Glotzbach@dot.state.fl.us.

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Introducing the Wayfinding Sign Program

Destination guide (wayfinding) signs installed on the Interstate and principal arterials are intended to provide guidance and confirmation to our state's highways, municipalities, theme parks, universities, state parks, and many other attractions to which motorists travel "over hundreds of miles" to visit. Wayfinding signs help motorists navigate their trip in relationship to the Official Florida Transportation Map. Because of the many sign requests received by the FDOT, criteria has been developed to qualify destinations for signing which the FDOT fabricates, installs, and maintains. The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) limits the number of destinations permitted per wayfinding sign to minimize the time eyes are off the road and distractions from the driving.





Destinations to which municipalities and counties may offer wayfinding signs are limited through the FDOT. These destinations include facilities such as: high schools, town halls, libraries, recycle centers, and local parks. As an extension of their community identity, municipalities may also replace standard white-on-green geographic identification guide signs with custom “Welcome” (place name) signs at their jurisdictional boundary lines. The FDOT also

has programs to permit special-event portable changeable message signs and banners across the highways.

The basic criteria developed by the FDOT leaves a prominent gap in destination/directional signing, limiting the venue to civic, cultural, visitor, historic, and recreational facilities having local significance as well as interest to tourists unfamiliar with local roads.

As the FDOT Districts were approached by local jurisdictions to permit wayfinding signs, several wayfinding plans were approved in the absence of a statewide definition. Tallahassee, Jacksonville, Delray Beach, and Lakeland were the first at providing signs and symbols to create community identity and help travelers find their way from place to place.

The first official wayfinding sign entry appeared in the Millennium Edition of the MUTCD; and with this came a call for standardization of the criteria for this type of sign program. The FHWA prohibits the use of different color sign backgrounds to provide color-coding of destinations and requires that the color-coding shall be accomplished by the use of different colored square or rectangular panels on the face of the guide signs. On June 23, 2006, the FDOT received approval for an FHWA Request to Experiment to perform an “Evaluation Study on Wayfinding Signs for the State of Florida.” Florida’s approved wayfinding standards allow the use of different color backgrounds, which is currently different from [Section 2D.03 of the MUTCD](#). Therefore, Florida must receive approval from the FHWA prior to any sign installations. This request to experiment will be handled through the State Traffic Engineering and Operations.

The FDOT, in cooperation with the Florida League of Cities, developed statewide criteria for wayfinding signs on our State Highway System. These standards (Rule Chapter 14-51, Part V, F.A.C., Florida’s Highway Guide Sign Program) provide local governments with the flexibility to design their own wayfinding sign system while still maintaining federal and state sign standards in order to safely guide motorists to their destinations. Wayfinding signs to be installed in the FDOT’s maintained right-of-ways must be designed in conformance with the same legibility and retro-reflectivity requirements as standard highway guide signs.

The development of a great wayfinding system involves a collaborative effort to address elements of city-specific characteristics, civic visual identity, and aesthetics to the project’s total environmental communication. Community planners and design professionals should endeavor to create consistent navigation clues in their public places. Identifying destinations and then information sequencing defines a wayfinding system’s success or failure. Graphics placed on signs, color coding, maps, banners, brochures, and Web sites, can be used to provide orientation, direction, identification, and regulatory information. Additional clues

given by roads, building layouts, lighting, and information kiosks allow people to quickly grasp the environment.

The first test sites approved are:

- The City of Miami Beach where their Wayfinding Plan is being site-reviewed for permit approval.
- The City of Miami Beach, who walked through their process step-by-step with the District 6 Traffic Operations Office. Miami Beach's investment included private research to control-test a sample of signs with a font other than those currently acceptable for destination guide signing. After much preparation, FAC 14-51 Part V and the Miami Beach Wayfinding Sign System were accepted as the basis of the FDOT's request for experiment.



When a sign lacks clarity due to illegible lettering when viewed from a distance, or if it contains an inaccurate, ambiguous message, or if it doesn't meet drivers' expectations in format, then the sign design can cause navigation and safety problems. The FDOT's primary consideration rests on presenting motorists with the information they need to navigate, and promoting safety.

This article was provided by Arlene Kern, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office. For more information, please contact Ms. Kern at (850) 410-5418 or email Arlene.Kern@dot.state.fl.us.

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ITS Florida, FDOT, and ITS America Team Up For 'Smart Car' Demo



On the morning of Tuesday, April 3, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, ITS Florida teamed up with the FDOT and ITS America to demonstrate the latest advancements in vehicle infrastructure integration (VII) technology. The event presented the 120 attendees, including intelligent transportation systems (ITS) developers and managers, engineering students, and members of the media, with recent VII innovations. Additionally, it provided the audience with the unique opportunity to ride in a specially equipped vehicle capable of delivering a traffic signal violation warning to the driver.



The VII event on April 3 in Orlando demonstrated "smart car" technology.

The VII event was the result of a public-private partnership between the FDOT, ITS America, ITS Florida, Econolite, TechnoCom, and Raytheon to develop this dynamic technology into a viable safety feature for drivers.

The Orlando demonstration was held in conjunction with the FDOT's Annual ITS Working Group Conference on April 3-4 at the Rosen Shingle Creek. Many participants attended the demonstration earlier in the day, and then headed over to the conference.

Attendees also had an opportunity to learn more about the history of ITS advances in Central Florida, including early testing of the first onboard navigation system and the introduction of electronic toll transponders by the Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA) in 1994. "We're one of



Part of the driving course set up for the VII demonstration at the Orange County

the leaders in the country in providing real-time information to the motoring public,”

said Mike Snyder, Executive Director of the OOCEA. “I’m very encouraged by where we’ve gotten to and how quickly we’re moving.”

Convention Center parking lot.

The goal of VII development is to create a nationwide network in which “smart cars” and other vehicles communicate wirelessly with each other and the roadway infrastructure in order to improve safety and reduce congestion. The test vehicle provided at this recent demonstration communicated with a traffic signal and analyzed speed and location information to determine the risk of an unsafe passage through the intersection. Participants also observed emergency vehicle preemption of traffic signals and in-vehicle signing that provided visual indicators of upcoming traffic signals and alerted drivers to construction zone activities.

“It’s exciting to see the way technology is actually going to be able to make things safer for the average driver,” said Rick Morrow, a traffic operations engineer with FDOT. “As we use this [VII] technology to integrate with the vehicle and make traveling safer, it’s certainly something we want to support and make happen.”



FDOT’s George Gilhooley, one of the driving forces behind VII technology, discusses the demonstration.

The future deployment of VII safety technology will require a public-private partnership. The auto industry will be responsible for equipping the vehicles, while local, state, and federal transportation agencies will have to build new intelligent transportation technologies into highways and intersections. “I think VII shows people there is the technical ability to enhance information provided to the car in order to make driving a safer experience. We still have 43,000 [driving-related] deaths a year. In order to tackle this, we’ve got to take that next step and bring the two environments together,” said FDOT’s George Gilhooley.

VII testing spearheaded by the automotive industry is also currently underway in Central Florida. DaimlerChrysler has a fleet of vehicles on the roadways of Orlando that are communicating with roadside radios and sending real-time information back to company computers. Testing will soon begin in Michigan on 20 real-world uses of VII, including signal-timing optimization, electronic payment, and navigation applications. Based partially on the results of this testing, a decision on the viability of this new technology is expected to be issued by a joint committee of the US Department of Transportation, 11 state Departments of Transportation (including FDOT), and a consortium of major automobile manufacturers.

This article was provided by Daniel Fuller, Global-5. For more information, please contact Mr. Fuller at (407) 571-6797 or email DanielFuller@global-5.com.

For more information on ITS Florida, please check the ITS Florida Web site at www.itsflorida.org or contact Diana Carsey, Executive Director, at (727) 409-5415 or email CarseyD@verizon.net.

If you wish to contribute an article to the *SunGuide Disseminator* on behalf of ITS Florida, please email Anita Vandervalk at AVandervalk@camsys.com.

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Editorial Corner: FDOT's Annual ITS Working Group Conference—An Annual Success Story

Past to Present to Future

The FDOT's Annual ITS Working Group Conference (WGC) has come a long way from its roots—starting as the FDOT ITS Working Group Meeting back in October 2000. That first working group meeting was held in Orlando, Florida, and was attended by 56 people, primarily made up of FDOT personnel. Over the following years, the FDOT ITS Working Group Meeting's popularity continued to grow and in 2004, the FDOT ITS Working Group Meeting was nominated and received an ITS America Best of ITS Award in the Marketing and Outreach category. The FDOT ITS Working Group Meeting has continued to live up to the standards recognized by the ITS America award. For the last three years, what was the FDOT Working Group Meeting has transformed into a once-a-year event—the FDOT's Annual ITS Working Group Conference. This year saw record attendance levels with 230 registered attendees, up from 174 the previous year!



Reflecting back to the first Annual ITS WGC, FDOT took a step towards allowing participants to set up exhibits. In 2004, the WGC was held in Miami. There were a total of ten exhibitors, set up outside the conference room in the hotel's hallway.

Last year, in Jacksonville, our exhibitors grew to 20 and had two rooms dedicated to their displays. This year FDOT had 25 exhibitors in a roomy hall at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando. Next year we hope to allow 30 exhibitors. Most of these exhibitors have been persistent in exhibiting each year at the conference, and we thank them.

WGC Format

The FDOT's Annual ITS WGC was held on April 3-4, 2006, at the Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando. The time-tested presentation format included project updates given by the FDOT Central Office ITS Program, all Districts, Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority, and Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority. Interspersed in these updates were presentations, including:

- Statewide Traffic Engineering Warehouse For Archived Data,
- FDOT's ITS Wide Area Network South Florida Deployment and Florida LambdaRail,

- FlexBus: An ITS-based Flexible Transit Service For Altamonte Springs, and
- 511 – Powerful Proven Partnerships.

For the first time, to end each day, the ITS Program included panel discussions. Tuesday's panel discussed congestion mitigation; and Wednesday's panel subject was innovative funding for ITS. The panels were a great success as indicated in the results from FDOT's survey.

The presentations are all located on the FDOT's ITS Program Web site at http://www.dot.state.fl.us/trafficoperations/ITS/Projects_Deploy/WGC.htm.

WGC Survey

Recently, the ITS Program sent out a survey to the conference attendees with the intent of receiving performance feedback. To date, the feedback indicates that:

- Attendees felt the presentations provided useful knowledge,
- The panel discussions were an overall successful addition to the format,
- The facility was an excellent choice, and
- The conference was well-attended.

Some recommended areas for improvement included:

- The lack of more refreshments,
- The need for more microphones during panel discussions, and
- The sharp drop off in attendance on the second day, especially after lunch.

The ITS Program is still searching for ways to keep attendance levels up on the last conference day and we encourage suggestions. Overall, the indicators point to a highly successful conference.

Next Year

In putting together the WGC survey results, the ITS Program is already carefully considering how to improve next year's conference. As we work towards improving the WGC each year, we hope that you continue to participate as attendees, presenters, panelists, and exhibitors.

This editorial was provided by Karen England, PBS&J. For more information, please contact Ms. England at (850) 580-7867 or e-mail KarenEngland@pbsj.com.

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FDOT Equipment Certification

The FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office, through the Traffic Engineering Research Laboratory (TERL), is responsible for approving all traffic control signal devices.

Approved devices are kept on the FDOT Approved Products List (APL), a listing of devices that may be relied upon as meeting FDOT specifications, standards, or other criteria.

The APL is a means for the FDOT to meet *Florida Statute 316.0745, Uniform Signals and Devices*, which states, “All official traffic control signals or official traffic control devices purchased and installed in this state by any public body or official shall conform with the manual and specifications published by the Department of Transportation pursuant to subsection (2).”

More information on the FDOT APL may be viewed at www.dot.state.fl.us/TrafficOperations/Traf_Sys/terl/apl.htm. Specific approved products in the FDOT APL may be searched at www3.dot.state.fl.us/trafficcontrolproducts/.

For more information, please contact Carl Morse, FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Office, at (850) 410-5417 or email Carl.Morse@dot.state.fl.us.

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Announcements

Congratulations Liang Hsia

Liang Hsia has been recognized as a Davis Productivity Award. Approximately 56 FDOT nominations were recognized with certificates, plaques, and cash prizes. There were a total of 15 cash prizes. Count on Liang to take top prize, he was the sole recipient of the \$2,000 cash prize. He is being recognized for managing the Statewide SunGuide Transportation Management Center Software Project.

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Visit Florida at ITS America 2007 Annual Meeting and Exposition

FDOT is participating as an exhibitor at the ITS America 2007 Annual Meeting and Exposition in Pam Springs, California, from June 4-6, 2007.

A booth partnership was put together to feature Florida's live center-to-center transportation management center demonstration. The booth partnership is comprised of FDOT Central Office's ITS Program and FDOT District 4.

Stop by to see the demonstration. FDOT will be at Booth 809.

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Good Luck Jesus!

After 16 years of service, Jesus Martinez has decided to leave FDOT and join the private

sector. Jesus has accepted a position with Southwest Research Institute to assist them with the many projects/tasks they have in Florida and other parts of the country.

Please join us in wishing Jesus the best of luck!

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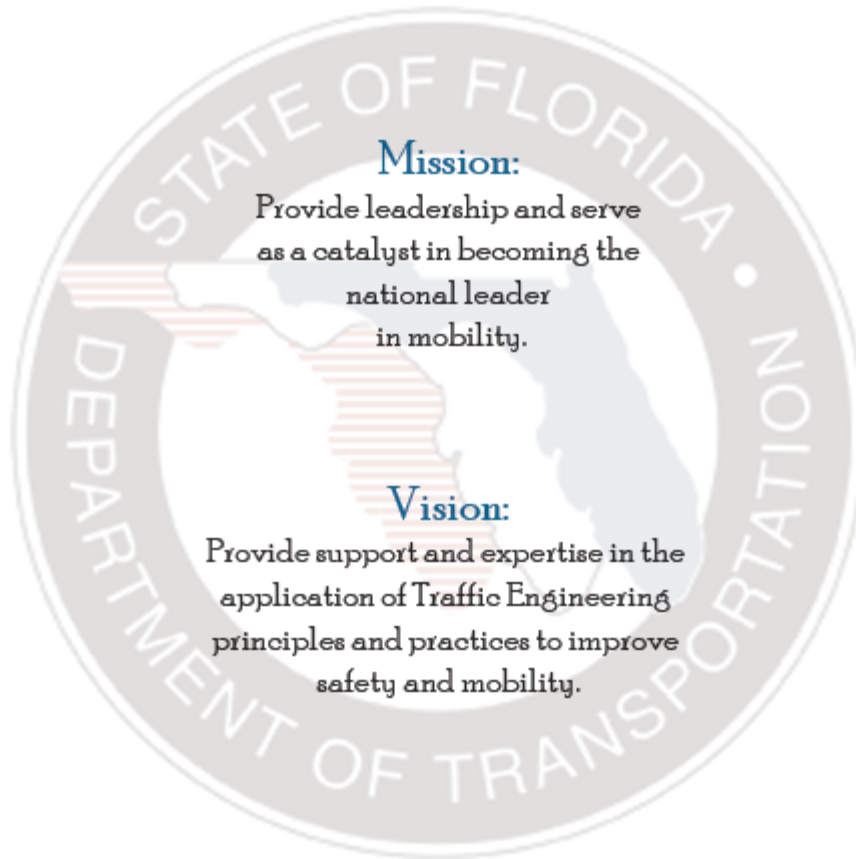
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FDOT Traffic Engineering and Operations Mission and Vision Statements



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