

Florida Planning Emphasis Areas-2020

The Florida Department of Transportation Office of Policy Planning develops *Planning Emphasis Areas* on a two-year cycle in coordination with the development of Metropolitan Planning Organizations' respective unified planning work programs. Emphasis areas set planning priorities, support the Florida Transportation Plan, and give importance to topic areas which MPOs are encouraged to address as they develop their planning programs. Implementation of the seven goals of the Florida Transportation Plan requires embracing innovation; extensive collaboration across jurisdictions, modes and disciplines; an emphasis on customer service; data and performance feedback; and strategic investments for the efficient and effective allocation of resources.

Metropolitan Planning Organizations should consider the following four topics when updating their Unified Planning Work Plan.

Safety

Safety has been a federal planning priority over numerous iterations of the transportation legislation. As stated within the FAST Act planning factors, metropolitan areas should "increase safety for motorized and non-motorized users." The state of Florida has expanded on this concept further by becoming a Vision Zero area, with a stated goal within the Florida Transportation Plan of zero fatalities across the state's transportation system. FDOT adopted their Strategic Highway Safety Plan in 2016, which provides more information about how the state intends to address transportation safety in the coming years.

Since the MPOs are being asked to report on and monitor their progress against their adopted safety performance measures, MPOs need to account in their UPWP for the effort necessary to satisfy these federal requirements. Additionally, MPOs are encouraged to consider how to expand upon the level of analysis and reporting required by the performance measurement process to further study their unique safety challenges. This approach may include the identification of safety needs in the MPO's LRTP or TIP, stand-alone safety studies for areas or corridors, or safety considerations within modal planning elements.

System Connectivity

Connectivity is a concept that is emphasized both at the federal and state levels. Within the FAST Act, one of the ten planning factors states, "enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight." Within the Florida Transportation Plan, system connectivity is addressed within four different goals.

- Make our economy more competitive
- Increase opportunities for access to transit and other modes

- Provide a more efficient and mobile transportation system
- Meet the needs of a growing and changing population

A connected system is often more cost-effective and better able to address natural and manmade constraints.

For MPOs, system connectivity should be considered within several contexts. First, MPOs should emphasize connectivity within their boundaries to serve the unique needs of their urban and non-urban jurisdictions. This requires coordination with member jurisdictions to identify their connectivity needs while also understanding how current and future land uses impact or can help augment connectivity. Second, MPOs should consider connectivity beyond their boundaries and emphasize continuity on those facilities that link their MPO to other metropolitan and non-urban or rural areas. Third, connectivity for MPOs should include multimodal linkages that are supportive of both passengers and freight. A connected network supports users traveling by a variety of modes, including first and last mile linkages.

Resilience

With the passage of the FAST Act, resilience was introduced as a federal planning factor: “Improve the resilience and reliability of the transportation system and mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.” Resilience is defined as the ability to adapt to changing conditions and prepare for, withstand, and recover from disruption. These conditions can encompass a wide variety of environmental, technological, economic, or social impacts.

MPOs can address resilience within their planning processes by leveraging tools such as the FHWA Resilience and Transportation Planning guide and the FDOT Quick Guide: Incorporating Resilience in the MPO LRTP. It should be noted that while these documents focus primarily on the development of MPO LRTPs and TIPs, addressing resilience should be a consideration within every planning document prepared by an MPO. MPOs should place a particular emphasis on coordination with agency partners responsible for natural disaster risk reduction, or who may be developing local resilience planning initiatives. Additionally, MPOs should consider the additional costs associated with reducing vulnerability of the existing transportation infrastructure. Proactive resiliency planning will help the MPO develop planning documents that are ultimately more realistic and cost-effective.

ACES (Automated/Connected/Electric/Shared-use) Vehicles

According to the Federal Highway Administration, “Transportation is in the midst of disruptive change from new technologies (automated and connected vehicles); new institutions (shared mobility firms); and changing attitudes (reduced car ownership). Across the nation, transportation planners are under pressure to develop performance-oriented policies, plans, and investment decisions that consider an increasingly complex transportation landscape. In the process, planners need to consider, but cannot yet reliably predict, the potential impact of



disruptive and transformational Connected Vehicle (CV) and Automated Vehicle (AV) technologies on safety, vehicle ownership, road capacity, VMT, land-use, roadway design, future investment demands, and economic development, among others. While some forms of CV and AV are already being deployed across the United States, significant unknowns exist regarding the rate of technology adoption, which types of technologies will prevail in the marketplace, the interaction between CV/AV vehicles and various forms of shared mobility services, and the impacts of interim and widespread levels of CV/AV usage.”

Adopting and supporting innovative technologies and business practices supports all seven goals of the Florida Transportation Plan and the federal planning factors found in the FAST Act. ACES may lead to great improvements in safety, transportation choices, and quality of life for Floridians, our visitors, and the Florida economy. Though there is a great deal of speculation and uncertainty of the potential impacts these technologies will have, MPOs need to determine how best to address the challenges and opportunities presented to them by ACES vehicles.

Contact Information:

Mark Reichert, FDOT Administrator for Metropolitan Planning

850-414-4901

mark.reichert@dot.state.fl.us