STRATEGIC INTERMODAL SYSTEM

FACILITY DESIGNATION

2023

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SIS Facility Designation

Purpose

This guidance acts as an educational resource to help facilitate greater understanding of the legislative and policy framework of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), and processes for designation and planning efforts. Additionally, this document provides key resources that are available to assist in these associated tasks such as initiating a designation change request.

- Act as an educational resource to foster a better understanding of the SIS and facility designation.
- Facilitate a clearer understanding of the existing frameworks and processes of SIS designation.
- Direct users to other related resources and sources of information.

While the primary users of this guidebook are intended to be the District SIS Coordinators, the information contained within this guidebook may be useful for multiple staff members in both the Central Office and individual districts. Other users who may find this information useful may include:

- Systems Implementation Office (SIO) staff, including the Statewide SIS Coordinator and other SIS support staff;
- Central Office staff;
- FDOT Executive Leadership;
- Government officials and their staff; and
- Other transportation or planning professionals.

This document has been updated to reflect new policy direction introduced as part of the 2022 SIS Policy Plan update.

Strategic Intermodal System Overview

In December 2000, the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), set a specific objective to establish, construct, and manage Florida's Strategic Intermodal System. Within the next three years, FDOT, working with stakeholders and partners, delivered a final report to the Governor, Legislature, and Secretary of Transportation recommending criteria and thresholds for designating key elements of the SIS as well as guidance to FDOT for implementation. In 2003, the Florida Legislature and Governor established the SIS to enhance Florida's transportation mobility and economic competitiveness by focusing resources on transportation facilities and services that support critical interregional, interstate, and international trips.

The SIS represents a statewide network of high-priority transportation facilities, including Florida's largest and most significant airports, spaceports, deepwater seaports, freight rail terminals, passenger rail and intercity bus terminals, rail corridors, waterways, highways, military access facilities, intermodal logistics centers, and fixed guideway transit corridors. These facilities represent the state's primary means for moving people and freight between Florida's diverse regions as well as between Florida and other states and countries.
SIS facilities are designated using objective criteria and thresholds based on quantitative measures of transportation and economic activity. These facilities meet high levels of people and goods movement and generally support major flows of interregional, interstate, and international travel and commerce. Designated SIS facilities are identified in the SIS Atlas located on the SIO website.

SIS Statutes and Designation

The primary statutory authorization for the SIS is contained in s. 339.61 – 339.65, F.S. However, there are several additional statutory provisions that provide guidance relative to SIS funding eligibility and match requirements. The following discussion provides an overview of key statutory provisions.

Section 339.61, F.S., provides for the establishment of the SIS, funding sources, and amounts for the system. The statement of Legislative intent notes that the SIS should consist of transportation facilities that meet a strategic and essential state interest. It also notes that the limited resources available for the implementation of statewide and interregional transportation be focused on the system. This section also provides that funds paid into the State Transportation Trust Fund pursuant to s. 201.15, F.S., for the SIS are to be annually appropriated to support the program. Finally, this section provides that facilities designated as SIS are eligible for funding from the State Transportation Trust Fund, regardless of which entity owns the facility.

Section 339.62, F.S., specifies the following key SIS components:

- Highway corridors established under s. 339.65, F.S.
- The National Highway System
- Airport, seaport, and spaceport facilities
- Rail lines and rail facilities
- Selected intermodal facilities; passenger and freight terminals; and appropriate components of State Highway System, county road system, city street system, inland waterways, and local public transit systems that serve as existing or planned connectors between components
- Other existing or planned corridors that serve a statewide or interregional purpose

Section 339.63, F.S., identifies five types of SIS facilities that each form one component of an interconnected transportation system. These facility types include:

- Hubs - ports and terminals that move goods or people between Florida regions or between Florida and other markets in the United States and the rest of the world
- Corridors - highways, rail lines, inter-county urban fixed guideway transit, and waterways that connect major markets within and outside the state
- Connectors - highways, rail lines, or waterways that connect hubs and corridors
- Military Access Facilities highways or rail lines linking SIS corridors to the state's strategic military installations
- Intermodal Logistic Centers (ILC) - Section 339.63(5), F.S., provides a planned ILC may be designated as part of the SIS upon the request of the facility if it meets criteria and thresholds established by the Department pursuant to Section 339.63(4), meets the definition of ILC (identified in s. 311.101(2), F.S.), and has been designated in a local comprehensive plan or development order as an ILC or an equivalent planning term

Section 339.64, F.S., requires the Department, in coordination with metropolitan planning organizations, regional planning councils, local governments, and other transportation providers, to develop a Strategic Intermodal System Plan. The plan must be consistent with the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) developed pursuant to s. 339.155, F.S., and must be updated at least once every five years, subsequent to updates of the FTP. This section provides that the plan must address the following:

- A map of existing and planned SIS facilities
- An assessment of investment needs involving SIS facilities taking into consideration infrastructure and technological improvements necessary to accommodate advances in vehicle technology, such as automated driving systems and other developments
- A project prioritization process
- A finance plan based on reasonable projections of anticipated revenues, including both 10-year and at least 20-year cost- feasible components
- An assessment of the impacts of proposed SIS improvements on military installations

Section 339.65, F.S., provides additional guidance relative to the establishment of SIS highway corridors. This section states that SIS highway corridors must include specified components of the State Highway System that meet the criteria adopted by the Department pursuant to s. 339.63, F.S. Additionally, this section directs the Department to develop and maintain a plan of SIS highway corridor projects that are anticipated to be let to contract for construction within a time period of at least 20 years.

As previously noted, there are several additional statutory provisions beyond ss. 339.61 – 339.65, F.S., that provide guidance relative to SIS funding eligibility and match requirements. For example, s. 339.135(4)(a)2, F.S., provides that the Department shall allocate at least 50 percent of any new discretionary highway capacity funds to the SIS. Any remaining new discretionary highway capacity funds are allocated to the districts for new construction. For the purposes of this section, the term "new discretionary highway capacity funds" means any funds available to the Department above the prior year funding level for capacity improvements, which the Department has the discretion to allocate to highway projects. Similarly, s. 201.15, F.S., establishes the SIS Growth Management fund for qualifying SIS projects that further state growth management goals. Additional statutory requirements are discussed in subsequent sections of the guidance document.

Florida Transportation Plan

The Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) defines Florida's future transportation vision and identifies goals, objectives, and strategies to guide transportation decisions over the next 50 years. The FTP will be achieved through specific actions by government, private, and civic partners at the state, regional, and local levels. Section 339.155, F.S., requires the FDOT to develop and annually update a statewide transportation plan, as well as implement its responsibilities under the FTP, and to use the plan as a framework to guide its investment decisions. The FTP identifies long range goals that will steer Florida's transportation policy decisions both on and off the SIS.

SIS Policy Plan

FDOT is required by Florida Statute to develop a SIS Policy Plan consistent with the FTP at least once every five years. While the FTP addresses the whole of the state's transportation system, the SIS Policy Plan addresses only SIS designated facilities. The SIS Policy Plan takes the goals of the FTP and applies them to the SIS. Policies identified in the plan help guide decisions regarding which facilities are designated as part of the SIS, where future SIS investments should occur, and how priorities should be aligned for these investments given the limited funding associated with the program. The 2022 SIS Policy Plan focused on the following policy areas: safety, resilience, technology, urban and rural mobility, and connectivity.

Defining Interregional

One of the cross-cutting issues of the 2022 SIS Policy Plan was clarifying the definition of interregional. The SIS Policy Plan defined interregional as "relating to the connection between any two or more regions". For designation purposes, the SIS focuses on connections between economic regions comprising multiple cities and counties. Enterprise Florida no longer actively maintains the economic region boundaries used for the initial SIS designation; therefore, designation decisions are now based on a combination of urbanized areas (designated by the U.S. Census) and Rural Areas of Opportunity (designated by the Governor and Legislature). Together, these boundaries guide SIS designation to facilities that connect the regions of Florida. To meet the definition of interregional, facilities must connect two or more urbanized areas or an urbanized area with a Rural Area of Opportunity.

SIS Facility Designation

Designation Criteria

The SIS designation criteria was established during the initial creation of the SIS by the governor and legislature based on recommendations offered by the SIS Steering Committee in 2003. Since that time, various updates have been made to the designation criteria. Criteria updates have also resulted from the implementation of new policy introduced as part of SIS Policy Plan updates. The last major update to the designation criteria occurred as part of the implementation of the 2016 SIS Policy Plan.

SIS vs SIS Strategic Growth

SIS Facilities: Facilities included in this category are those that were adopted during the original creation of the SIS, as well as other facilities that have been found to meet the criteria in subsequent years. A summary of the current designation criteria for SIS facilities is included later in this document.

SIS Strategic Growth Facilities: A major component of the of the 2016 SIS Policy Plan update was the introduction of the SIS Strategic Growth designation, which updated or replaced many of the components such as the previous "Emerging SIS" designation. Facilities designated as Strategic Growth must meet the following criteria:

Must meet AT LEAST ONE of the following:

- The facility is projected to meet SIS minimum activity levels within three years of being designated; and/or
- The facility is determined by FDOT to be of compelling state interest, such as serving a unique market niche or potentially becoming the most strategic facility in a region that has no designated SIS facility.

Must meet ALL of the following:

- The facility has a current master plan as well as a prioritized list of production ready projects;
- The facility is identified in a local government comprehensive plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), Transit Development Plan, or equivalent;
- The facility has partner and public consensus on viability of a new or significantly expanded facility; and
- The facility meets Community and Environment screening criteria.

SIS Funding

There is funding available through FDOT specifically for SIS projects. For a project to be eligible for SIS funds, it must be on a designated SIS facility. Additionally, projects must increase capacity for the movement of people and goods to be eligible for SIS funding. A non-capacity project, such as a standalone pavement resurfacing project, on a SIS highway would not be eligible for SIS funding.

Designation Change Requests

As Florida's population continues to grow and transportation facilities experience increased usage, it may be necessary to designate a formerly non-SIS facility as SIS. A designation change request (DCR) serves as the formalized technical review process through which FDOT designates these non-SIS facilities as SIS. FDOT District offices are required to initiate a DCR for a new facility or service, prepare for a planned facility that they believe will meet SIS designation criteria, or to update data for an existing facility outside of the biennial review performed by FDOT Central Office.

SIS Office staff will update maps, documents, and other publications to reflect the change.

All applications for a DCR are processed through the internal DCR SharePoint site where they undergo SIS designation screening. The designation screening consists of evaluating Community and Environmental (C&E) data, and validating data and justification that the facility meets, or is projected to meet criteria for designated SIS facilities.

C&E data used for the DCR process is derived from the FDOT Efficient Transportation Decision-Making (ETDM) and the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) applications and is collected by the district staff. C&E screening data is used to analyze the environmental and community impacts of a facility and guide FDOT in the decision-making process, as well as manage facility impacts. This data applies to the designation of hubs, corridors, connectors, and military access facilities.

A non-SIS facility seeking SIS designation must also demonstrate that it meets the SIS Designation Criteria outlined in this document. FDOT district staff is responsible for providing all relevant designation criteria data, justification, and local support to central office staff. The DCR technical review process is a collaborative effort. Throughout the DCR technical review process, district and central office staff coordinate to ensure all necessary data and justifications are obtained.

Once the Designation Change Request technical review process has been completed and central office staff has determined all criteria for designating the requested facility have been met, the FDOT Secretary sends a formal letter of SIS designation approval to the FDOT District Secretary. In addition, SIS Office staff will update maps, documents, and other publications to reflect the change.

SIS Designation Criteria

The last major revisions to the SIS Designation Criteria resulted from the implementation of the 2016 Policy Plan update. The current designation criteria detailed below continues to focus on the original intent of SIS and provides a greater focus on a managed system of designated facilities.

Note: There were no changes to the designation criteria for specific facility types resulting from the 2022 SIS Policy Plan update. However, the plan update did introduce the concept of “Off SIS” project eligibility, which is a structure to allow the use of SIS funds for projects not on SIS facilities but are proven to aid the SIS network by increasing throughput and relieving congestion on SIS facilities. More information on Off-SIS projects can be found in the SIS Project Eligibility document.

FDOT occasionally reviews the designated criteria, and this is the revised designation criteria of 2023 date. Designation criteria has the flexibility to change in the future. Upon review of the designation criteria no changes were made as designation criteria aligns with the vision and goals of the 2022 SIS Policy Plans.

Hub Designation Criteria

Strategic Growth Component (For all hubs and corridors unless otherwise noted)

Must meet AT LEAST ONE of the following:

- Is the facility projected to meet SIS minimum activity levels within three years of being designated?
- Is the facility determined by FDOT to be of compelling state interest, such as serving a unique marketing niche or potentially becoming the most strategic facility in a region that has no designated SIS facility?

Must meet ALL of the following:

- Does the facility have a current master plan as well as a prioritized list of production ready projects?
- Is the facility identified in a local government comprehensive plan, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), Transit Development Plan, or equivalent?
- Does the facility have partner and public consensus on viability of a new or significantly expanded facility?
- Does the facility meet Community and Environment screening criteria?

SIS Commercial Service Airport

A Commercial Service Airport is defined by the Federal Aviation Administration as a publicly owned airport receiving scheduled passenger service and having 2,500 or more enplaned passengers per year. FDOT only designates primary commercial service airports, or those that have over 10,000 annual enplanements.

Size Criteria (must meet one of the following)

- ≥ 2.5% of Florida total – annual passenger enplanements.
- ≥ 2.5% of Florida total – annual freight and mail tonnage.

SIS General Aviation Reliever Airport (criteria as defined in s. 339.63 Florida Statute)

A General Aviation Airport is defined by the Federal Aviation Administration as an airport that does not have scheduled service or has less than 2,500 annual passenger boardings. It serves corporate aviation, flight schools, air charter operations, light cargo, or private pilots flying for business or recreation. Additionally, a Reliever Airport is designated by the Federal Aviation Administration to improve general aviation access in a community to relieve an nearby commercial service airport.

Must meet ALL of the following:

- The airport it relieves must be designated as SIS or Strategic Growth.
- Handles at least 75,000 itinerant (nonlocal) operations per year.
- Has a runway length of at least 5,500 linear feet.
- Capable of handling aircraft weighing at least 60,000 pounds with a dual wheel configuration which is served by at least one precision instrument approach.
- Serves a cluster of aviation-dependent industries.

SIS Spaceport

- Regularly scheduled civil, commercial, or military launches resulting in sub-orbital or orbital flights.

SIS Public Seaports Criteria

A Public Seaport is defined in Chapters 311 and 403 of the Florida Statutes. Florida's public seaports handle most of the marine cargo passing into and out of Florida. Size Criteria (must meet one of the following):

Must meet ALL of the following:

- D ≥ 1% of Florida total – annual freight volume measured in tons.
- D ≥ 1% of Florida total – annual container volume measured in twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs).
- D ≥ 250,000 annual home-port cruise ship passengers.

SIS Interregional Passenger Terminal

Size Criteria

- ≥ 100,000 annual interregional rail passengers.
- ≥ 100,000 annual interregional bus passengers.

OR (must be co-located[1]) with another interregional transit mode AND meet below size

Size Criteria

- ≥ 50,000 annual interregional rail passengers.
- ≥ 50,000 annual interregional bus passengers.
- ≥ 50,000 annual interregional rail AND bus passengers.

SIS Urban Fixed Guideway Transit Terminal

All qualifying urban fixed guideway system terminals will be included as part of the corridor designation. Terminals will be treated as SIS hubs and associated with an intermodal connector if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Are located at or near the termini of the urban fixed guideway corridor.
- Serve[2] a SIS airport, seaport, or spaceport.
- Are integrated with other SIS passenger rail or bus systems providing connections to other regions or states.
- Are co-located[1] with a major park-and-ride facility (≥ 500 spaces).

Strategic Growth does not apply to Urban Fixed Guideway Terminals

SIS Freight Rail Terminal

A Freight Rail Terminal is defined by the SIS as a break bulk point for goods moving between different modes.

- ≥ 5% of Florida total – intermodal rail units per year.

SIS Intermodal Logistics Center

An Intermodal Logistics Center is defined by SIS and Florida Statute as a facility or group of facilities serving as a point of intermodal transfer of freight in a specific area physically separated from a seaport where activities relating to transport, logistics, goods distribution, consolidation, or value-added activities are carried out and whose activities and services are designed to support or be supported by conveyance or shipping through one or more seaports as defined by Section 311.101(2), F.S.

- Meets the above definition of an ILC.
- Provides ability to accommodate and support, within a logistics chain that may span multiple modes and handling steps, domestic or international trade moving to or from a SIS seaport or airport.
- Is identified in a local comprehensive plan or local government development order as an intermodal logistics center or equivalent planning term.
- Meets minimum size thresholds for cargo throughput, consistent with existing SIS hub criteria for the type of intermodal movement primarily handled by the ILC. (e.g., air cargo-to-truck tonnage - 2.5% of Florida total; waterborne container-to-truck or -rail TEUs - 1% of Florida total; intermodal rail terminal units - 5% of Florida total).

Corridor Designation Criteria

SIS Highway Corridor

To be designated a SIS Highway Corridor, a facility must be AT LEAST ONE of the following:

- An interstate or high capacity tolled facility.
- A limited access facility (access level 1) with a SIS facility or limited access facility (access level 1) at each end[3].
- An NHS facility that connects to an urbanized area outside of Florida that is not already served by a SIS facility.
- A controlled access facility (access level 2 or 3) connecting two or more urbanized areas with a SIS facility at each end[4].
- A corridor connecting one or more urbanized areas with or through a Rural Area of Opportunity (RAO) and having an AADT of at least 6,000 or an AADTT of at least 1,000 with a SIS facility at each end[4].

There is no Strategic Growth component for highway corridors

SIS Rail Corridor

SIS Rail Corridor

- Mainline rail corridor that is operated by a Class I or Class II railroad with two or more average daily trains.

Strategic Growth Rail Corridor, must be AT LEAST ONE of the following:

- Rail corridor operated by a Class III carrier maintained to FRA Track Class III or better with two or more average daily trains[5].
- Rail corridor determined by FDOT to be of compelling state interest, such as creating a significant economic development opportunity.

SIS Waterway Corridor

Must meet one of the following:

- Coastal Shipping Lanes[6] and Intracoastal Waterway - Designated intracoastal waterway or coastal shipping lane handling international waterborne trade.
- Inland Deep Draft Waterway – authorized depth greater than or equal to 14 feet. ≥ 5% of Florida Total – annual total waterway freight tonnage.
- Inland Shallow Draft Waterway – authorized depth less than 14 feet. ≥ 5% of Florida Total – annual domestic waterway freight tonnage.

Urban Fixed Guideway Corridor

- Urban fixed Guideways are defined by the SIS as a form of transit consisting of facilities dedicated to vehicles operating only on a guideway constructed for a specific mass transit purpose (e.g., commuter rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit).
- Urban fixed guideway transit corridors within or connecting multiple census designated urbanized areas and serving as a regionally significant facility.

INTERMODAL CONNECTOR DESIGNATION CRITERIA

Hub to Corridor Connector (highway, rail, or waterway)

- Connects to the nearest or most appropriate SIS corridor to facilitate interregional, interstate, or international trips.

Meets the following conditions where possible:

- Ability to accommodate significant flows of interregional, interstate, or international trips to/from a hub.
- Ability to provide high-speed, high-capacity, limited access service.
- Ability to provide the most direct access.
- Ability to provide two-way directional movement.

More than one connector of the same mode to a single hub can be designated if any of the following conditions are met:

- Hub meets both freight and passenger thresholds, and freight and passenger handling facilities
- Hub has multiple terminals or terminal areas with discrete access points
- Existing interregional flows of people or goods are divided significantly among more than one mode or more than one major geographic flow
- Separating passenger and freight connections improves overall mobility to/from the hub
- Allowing multiple options provides needed redundancy and resiliency

Hub to Hub Connector

Intermodal Freight Drayage Route

- Route provides direct connection from one SIS hub to another SIS hub.
- Route's primary purpose is to move freight from one SIS hub to another SIS hub via public access

Intermodal Passenger Transfer Facility

- Majority of trips on route are for interregional or interstate passengers.

Military Access Facility

A Military Access Facility is defined by the SIS as an intermodal connector designation (highways, rail lines, waterways, and other exclusive use facilities) linking key strategic military installations to the closest and most appropriate SIS corridor.
Must meet one of the following:

- Designate as "Military Access Facilities" Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) roads and Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET) rail lines serving main entrance(s) of U.S. Department of Defense military installations with at least 4% of Florida total military and civilian personnel.
- Designate as "Military Access Facilities" primary roads and rail lines serving main entrance(s) of military installations designated as the Governor's Continuity of Government site(s).

FOOTNOTES

1. For the purposes of designation, co-location is defined as multiple services sharing the same space or being located directly adjacent to one another.

2. For the purposes of designation, facilities are considered to serve a SIS airport, seaport, or spaceport if they are colocated or directly connected in close proximity to the SIS airport, seaport, or spaceport, meaning there are no additional stops or transfers, they are within a short walking distance, or are connected by a short shuttle or people mover ride.

3. If a limited access facility serves as the primary emergency evacuation route of statewide significance, it may be designated even if it is not connected to another SIS or limited access facility at one end.

4. In an area where multiple parallel facilities are connecting to the same urbanized areas or contiguous urbanized areas, only the facility/facilities that meet(s) Criteria 1-3 will be designated. If none of the parallel facilities meet Criteria 1-3, the facility meeting criteria 4 or 5 with the highest AADT will be designated.

5. Exception is SFRC (Tri-Rail) which provides trackage rights to CSX for freight movements.

6. For the purposes of designation, Coastal Shipping Lanes are federally designated Marine Highway Routes identified by the United States Maritime Administration.


FDOT