

Regional Freight Network Plan Highways of Commerce

Freight Corridor Screenings



ADOPTED MARCH 2012

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



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RESOLUTION FL-AL 12-09

A RESOLUTION OF THE FLORIDA-ALABAMA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADOPTING THE REGIONAL FREIGHT NETWORK PLAN FREIGHT CORRIDOR SCREENINGS

WHEREAS, the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is the organization designated by the Governors of Florida and Alabama as being responsible, together with the States of Florida and Alabama, for carrying out the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Florida-Alabama TPO Planning Area; and

WHEREAS, among the Federal Surface Transportation Act (SAFETEA-LU) planning factors is emphasis on increasing the accessibility and mobility options for people and freight; and

WHEREAS, the Florida-Alabama, Okaloosa-Walton and Bay County TPOs FY2011-FY2012 Unified Planning Work Programs include a task for Freight Plan Implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Freight Network Plan Freight Corridor Screenings were developed in a planning partnership between the Florida-Alabama, Okaloosa-Walton and Bay County TPOs, and local governments in each TPO Planning Area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FLORIDA-ALABAMA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION THAT:

The TPO adopts the Regional Freight Network Plan Freight Corridor Screenings.

Passed and duly adopted by the Florida-Alabama Transportation Planning Organization on this 14th day of March 2012.

**FLORIDA-ALABAMA TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

BY: 

Kevin White, Chairman

ATTEST: 



RESOLUTION O-W 12-10

A RESOLUTION OF THE OKALOOSA-WALTON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADOPTING THE REGIONAL FREIGHT NETWORK PLAN FREIGHT CORRIDOR SCREENINGS

WHEREAS, the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is the organization designated by the Governor of Florida as being responsible, together with the State of Florida, for carrying out the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Okaloosa-Walton TPO Planning Area; and

WHEREAS, among the Federal Surface Transportation Act (SAFETEA-LU) planning factors is emphasis on increasing the accessibility and mobility options for people and freight; and

WHEREAS, the Florida-Alabama, Okaloosa-Walton and Bay County TPO's FY2011-FY2012 Unified Planning Work Programs include a task for Freight Plan Implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Freight Network Plan Freight Corridor Screenings were developed in a planning partnership between the Florida-Alabama, Okaloosa-Walton and Bay County TPOs, and local governments in each TPO Planning Area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE OKALOOSA-WALTON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION THAT:

The TPO adopts the Regional Freight Network Plan Freight Corridor Screenings.

Passed and duly adopted by the Okaloosa-Walton Transportation Planning Organization on this 15th day of March 2012.

**OKALOOSA-WALTON TRANSPORTATION
PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

BY: 
James T. Wood Jr., Chairman



ATTEST: 

RESOLUTION BAY 12-06

A RESOLUTION OF THE BAY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADOPTING THE REGIONAL FREIGHT NETWORK PLAN FREIGHT CORRIDOR SCREENINGS

WHEREAS, the Bay County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is the organization designated by the Governor of Florida as being responsible, together with the State of Florida, for carrying out the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Bay County TPO Planning Area; and

WHEREAS, among the Federal Surface Transportation Act (SAFETEA-LU) planning factors is emphasis on increasing the accessibility and mobility options for people and freight; and

WHEREAS, the Florida-Alabama, Okaloosa-Walton and Bay County TPOs FY2011-FY2012 Unified Planning Work Programs include a task for Freight Plan Implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Freight Network Plan Freight Corridor Screenings were developed in a planning partnership between the Florida-Alabama, Okaloosa-Walton and Bay County TPOs, and local governments in each TPO Planning Area;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BAY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION THAT:

The TPO adopts the Regional Freight Network Plan Freight Corridor Screenings.

Passed and duly adopted by the Bay County Transportation Planning Organization on this 28th day of March 2012.

**BAY COUNTY
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

BY: 

Mike Nelson, Chairman



ATTEST: 

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The following Intersections were screened in lieu of a second corridor:

SR 368 (23rd Street) and SR 390 (St. Andrews Boulevard/Beck Avenue)

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INTRODUCTION

Background

Investments in freight transportation improvements that reduce the cost of moving goods to and from markets help to increase and sustain regional and local economic growth. Additionally, adequate transportation is considered a key site location requirement for existing and new businesses because it affects the area's business costs, market, and overall competitiveness for attracting large-scale business investments. The efficient movement of goods throughout the region relies on the integration of freight infrastructure, equipment, personnel, and information systems. All of these components must work together in order to sustain the regional economy. Therefore, the movement of freight, as it relates to economic development, should be considered an important factor when developing annual priorities for transportation improvement projects as well as their design.

The *Regional Freight Network Plan* was adopted April 2010 by the Florida-Alabama, Okaloosa-Walton, and Bay County Transportation Planning Organizations (TPOs). This plan is also known as *Highways of Commerce*. "Highways of Commerce," as used in this plan, is a term that describes major freight corridors connecting the nation and even the world to the region covered by the three TPOs. The first step of implementing this plan is to conduct preliminary freight corridor screenings on identified Highways of Commerce. Preferably, the screenings should be accomplished ahead of more costly engineering studies such that the findings and recommendations can be included in the scope of the larger projects.

The scope for this project includes screening two corridors within the Bay County TPO region and three each in the Florida-Alabama and Okaloosa-Walton TPOs. However, in Bay County, there was only one corridor with scheduled work progress projects so, after consultation with the Bay TPO and West Florida Regional Planning Council (WFRPC), it was decided to screen several intersections in lieu of the second corridor. The intersections chosen have a high truck use and are primarily along US 231/US 98, the main corridor between Port of Panama City, I-10, and Alabama. Factors used to determine which corridors would be screened included:

- Location on a designated Regional Corridor of Commerce
- The potential for influencing scheduled improvement projects in the current Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)/Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Work Program.

A corridor screening is not a fully detailed study, but rather a low cost way to identify potential problems impacting trucking operations that may need further detailed study during other phases of transportation improvement projects, such as a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study or during early design phases to ensure that the need of the trucking operators are addressed. Or, in many cases, to identify minor issues that can be fixed with minimal cost of time and capital using operation and maintenance funds.

The purpose of this preliminary screening process is to use a checklist developed to guide the evaluators in determining if a corridor has potential for further, more detailed analysis for freight considerations.

These determinations should be made in a cost-efficient manner, so as not to require detailed analysis when there is not a need for it. However, in areas where potential issues are identified, more detailed analysis would be recommended in order to assist the goods movement industries in the region.

A more detailed set of goals for the preliminary screening process are as follows:

- To establish a qualitative assessment of the potential for freight and goods movement activities in the corridor,
- To identify major generators of freight and/or truck activity that may require special or further analysis,
- To identify evidence of geometric or physical constraints that may inhibit freight and truck movements,
- To identify potential safety issues associated with truck movement along a corridor,
- To determine the appropriate level of detail to be considered for follow-on activities, and
- Ensure that future improvements meet truck-friendly design standards where possible.

The activities required for the screening can be found in the *Corridor Screening Checklist* and Supplemental Intersection Data (if needed) located in an appendix for each corridor Technical Memorandum on the attached CD to complete this assessment. The checklist consists of questions designed to focus attention on potential impacts related to freight operations within the corridor. A blank (sample) Corridor Screening Checklist is provided in Tab 4.

Since this is a screening analysis, the level of detail in this phase is meant to be minimal, with follow-up analyses to be completed as necessary at locations where recommendations have been made. The goal of this preliminary screening report is to answer three questions:

- Is there sufficient freight and/or goods movement activity in the corridor to warrant a detailed follow-up study?
- What are the major issues to be addressed in the follow-up study?
- Is there physical evidence in the corridor that demonstrates a need for improvement or further study?

This preliminary screening analysis is meant to be very brief. The results of this preliminary screening analysis can then be used for the following purposes:

- To serve as input for the project scoping or for the design process to incorporate truck-friendly design features;
- To further analyze the recommendations and incorporate them into projects planned along the corridor;

- To serve as the impetus for further, more detailed analysis along the corridor through planning, traffic operations, safety, or design, as appropriate; and
- To provide input to local governments for inclusion into their planning process.

As a result of this preliminary screening process, Preliminary Freight Corridor Screening Technical Memorandums were produced that can be provided to the appropriate staff at FDOT district or county for follow-up, if needed. The technical memorandum summarizes key findings, conditions, and recommendations. Each memorandum will include a copy of the field notes, as well as aerial views of key intersections and photographs as necessary to document the issues.

If the process adopted for this project is deemed acceptable to the WFRPC, the three participating TPOs, and the FDOT District 3, it is recommended that a Preliminary Freight Screening be conducted for new projects in the FDOT Work Program that impact a designated Regional Corridor of Commerce. Freight-related issues identified can then be incorporated within the scopes of the new projects that will maximize goods movement efficiency within the corridor.

Corridors Screened

Based on coordination with WFRPC and representatives from FDOT District 3, and each of the participating counties the following corridors were selected for initial freight related screening.

Florida-Alabama TPO

- US 29 from W. Burgess Road to Old Chemstrand Road
- N. Palafox Street (SR 95) from W. Leonard Street to Brent Lane
- US 90 from Avalon Boulevard to SR 87 South

Okaloosa-Walton TPO

- SR 85 from John King Road to Airport Road
- US 98 from the Destin Bridge to the Walton County Line
- US 331 from Edgewood Circle to US 331 North

Bay County TPO

- SR 22 (Wewa Highway) from Star Avenue to US 98 Business
- The following Intersections were screened in lieu of a second corridor:
 - SR 368 (23rd Street) and SR 390 (St. Andrews Boulevard/Beck Avenue)
 - US 98 (15th Street) at Jenks Avenue, US 98 Harrison Avenue, and US 231 and Harrison Avenue
 - US 231 at N. East Avenue
 - US 231 at Transmitter Road

Subsequent to the initiation of this study and after the corridors were selected, the City of Pensacola mayor announced an initiative to transform the Port of Pensacola to pursue new industry. An additional Freight Plan Implementation Study is recommended to address the current and future freight accommodations, deficiencies and potential improvements for connections between the Port of Pensacola and the Freight Network relevant to the identified changes in freight industry at the Port.

Methodology

The screenings were conducted in two phases. The first phase was an in-house data collection effort for the corridor and the second phase was a field review of the corridor.

Phase I: In-house Data Collection

- Existing traffic including truck counts
- Typical section
- Available right-of-way (ROW)
- Available capacity and level of service (LOS)
- Existing land use information
- Location of railroad crossings within, adjacent to, or in the vicinity of the corridor
- The number of signalized and non-signalized intersections, median openings, and the estimated number of driveways
- Crash data when available
- Identify potential trouble spots using the latest available aerial photography from the County Property Appraiser's Geographic Information System (GIS) site (preferred) or Google Earth

Phase II: Field Review

The field review is observation oriented and is used to validate the information gathered during Phase I and observe traffic operations within the corridor to assess the impacts on trucking operations, as well as to identify physical problems that make it difficult for truck drivers to operate efficiently within the corridor. The following actions take place during the field review:

- Verify in-house data collection
- Identify physical characteristics and issues
- Identify recent improvements and their impact on freight operations
- Observer operational characteristics of the roadway and intersections
- Identify areas where truck operators have issues

- Identify nearby freight generators such as industrial areas, mining activities landfills, construction sites, and commercial sites
- Observe and identify potential safety issues
- Photograph issues and problem locations

Preliminary Freight Corridor Screening Technical Memorandums

The Preliminary Freight Corridor Screening Technical Memorandums are filed by TPO in the following sections of this report. Although the technical memorandums are co-located in this document, they are actually individual stand-alone reports.

Each Preliminary Freight Corridor Screening Technical Memorandum summarizes the corridor description, findings, and recommendations. Note that the recommendations are not based on an in-depth technical review, but are rather a suggestion for consideration as part of larger detailed studies such as a PD&E, intersection capacity study, or design phase review. In some cases, simple maintenance is required that will not only benefit trucking operations, but other vehicles as well. These maintenance issues can normally be completed at low cost.

The process does not end with this report. It is important that follow-up action be taken to ensure that the recommendations are included in the scoping of scheduled projects on the corridors. A prioritized list of the recommendations for each report is provided in Tab 5.