

## **TRENDS AND CONDITIONS RESEARCH**

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The Florida Statutes (F.S.) mandate that state agencies conduct Trends and Conditions analysis in their annual Long Range Program Plan (LRPP). “By analyzing the trends and conditions, goals and objectives, and current facilities inventory, each agency and the judicial branch shall determine its unmet and forecasted future needs.” (216.0158(1), F.S.). As a support to the 2020 Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the Short Range Component (SRC) and the LRPP, the Florida Department of Transportation Trends and Conditions process is a continuing effort that assesses the needs of stakeholders as well as monitoring the external and internal environment. Knowledge of key trends and conditions assists policymakers by identifying trends that should be acknowledged as entities prepare their long range transportation plans. With this information, policymakers and transportation professionals will be better equipped to make wise and informed decisions.

### **OBJECTIVES**

This project addresses the key trends and conditions of Florida’s Transportation System. The reports address travel demand by examining population growth and characteristics, economic factors, and travel behavior; provide information on Florida’s transportation system, including highways, air, sea, rail, transit, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities; look at the impact of the travel demand on the system in terms of system performance, safety, environmental impacts, land use, and the economy; identify policy considerations and issues such as Caribbean and Cuban relationships and their impacts on growth, immigration, competition for tourism and retirees, equity considerations and funding transportation needs, and other issues; and present findings from the analysis and discuss implications drawn from the findings for planning, research, and policy.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The principal objective is the production of information; however, that information is synthesized into findings and conclusions. The 2003 work program focused principally on assembling and formatting information; however, several major findings are apparent and will get additional attention in future work. The single most important finding relates to the continuing growth in travel demand fueled by both population growth and per capita travel

contrasted with modest growth in system capacity. This continues to create pressures on system performance and safety, and motivates efforts to find lower cost strategies to improve the operations of the system in the absence of resources for capacity expansion proportionate to demand increases. Safety remains a high priority for all levels of government and progress is being made, yet the safety consequences of transportation remain very high. The trend towards a greater appreciation of the variety of transportation modes continues with a growing body of knowledge in areas such as pedestrian walk travel, bicycle use, freight travel, and transit system performance. The role of the transportation system in ensuring economic competitiveness and supporting an attractive quality of life increasingly is recognized with databases being developed to monitor these issues. There is a growing awareness of the interconnectedness of urbanized regions, and there remains a keen interest in the environmental consequences of the transportation system.

## **BENEFITS**

This project provides a review of the key trends and conditions related to transportation in Florida, their importance to the State, and potential policy considerations and issues identified by considering the trends. This project is part of an ongoing Trends and Conditions research effort intended to support the needs of decision-makers, transportation professionals, and the interested public. Work in this area is intended to support state and local planning efforts by providing data and interpretation of important trends and conditions. As such, the documents provide information that enable informed decisions. The ultimate value to citizens results from such aids to the decision-making process, which result in transportation policies and investments that are more effective and efficient in addressing the travel needs of citizens and businesses.

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