

TRENDS AND CONDITIONS RESEARCH SUPPORT

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 2025 Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the Short Range Component (SRC), and the LRPP, the FDOT Trends and Conditions process is a continuing effort that assesses the needs of stakeholders and monitors the external and internal environments. Knowledge of key trends and conditions assists policy makers by identifying trends that should be acknowledged as entities prepare their long range transportation plans. With this information, policy makers and transportation professionals are better equipped to make wise and informed decisions.

OBJECTIVES

This project addresses key trends and conditions of Florida’s transportation system. Five major tasks were designed to provide planners and policy makers with supportive information and analysis:

Task 1 - Trends and Conditions Research Reports

This initiative is a major element in the ongoing work program. Several major reports have been prepared through this effort: *Policy Considerations* (final), *Strategic Intermodal System Report* (draft), *Population Growth and Characteristics* (major update), *The Roadway System* (major update), *Travel Demand and Travel Behavior* (major update), and *Tourists and Visitors* (major update). A revision of the *Trade and Freight Transportation Demand* report is underway. <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/trends/tc-report/>

Task 2 – FDOT Transportation Indicators Website

This reference website is updated on a monthly (or more frequent) basis as pertinent data becomes available. <http://www.indicators.cutr.usf.edu>

Task 3 – Florida Transportation Trends and Conditions Pocket Guide - 2005

This document was completed in the fall of 2005. It is being distributed and is available online: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/planning/policy/trends/pg05.pdf>.

Task 4 - Florida Commuting Worker Flow Website

This website provides information on commuting flows in Florida. It was completed in 2005 and is continuously maintained as part of the ongoing Trends and Conditions work program. <http://www.j2w.usf.edu/default.asp>

Task 5 - Policy Research on Florida Transportation Policy issues

CUTR monitors transportation policy issues relevant to trends and conditions research, including new data releases and national and state information products. This task includes providing support to FDOT for developing the Florida Transportation Cost Report, making various presentations, and planning activities such as the FTP update. In 2005, the recently released 2004 American Community Survey results were analyzed in a draft research note provided to FDOT. Additionally, a review of Florida VMT trends was carried out and a draft research note was provided to FDOT that aimed at Florida travel growth.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This project continued the focus of previous trends and conditions research with regard to assembling and formatting information. The overall message contained in the cumulative body of products paints a picture of transportation being critical and pervasive in virtually all aspects of quality of life—from accessibility to the economy, the environment, and safety—for businesses, residents, and visitors in Florida. The importance of transportation is growing: demands are outpacing supply and individuals and systems are adapting to an ever-changing situation. These trends create uncertainty and require changes, with regard to issues ranging from increased travel times to the manner in which transportation services and infrastructure are funded.

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 decision making. The ultimate value to citizens is in the fact that these decisions can result in transportation policies and investments that are more effective and efficient in addressing the travel needs of citizens and businesses. Feedback being received on various initiatives indicates that the materials are being read and that they are influencing policy discussions and decision making for transportation.

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