



## Florida Department of Transportation Research

### Florida Official Transportation Map – User Expectations, Interests, and Preferences

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Tourism is Florida's single largest industry. Florida's many attractions and its year-round mild climate draw over 80 million tourists annually. An important part of assuring that visitors have a happy stay in Florida is making sure they know about activities and places of interest and how to can get there. To this end, the state of Florida's tourism arm, VisitFlorida, aids visitors in planning their trips through a wide variety of information. As part of this service, VisitFlorida provides the Florida Official Transportation Map. This publication contains a detailed map of Florida, featuring roads, airports, insets of select cities, and other tourist information. The map is prepared by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and it is the most up-to-date map of Florida's highways that visitors can get.

The Florida Official Transportation Map is revised annually, and in 2013, the FDOT Surveying and Mapping Office took over from VisitFlorida the responsibility for preparing the map cartography. As part of preparing a new edition, FDOT contracted Florida State University's Survey Research Laboratory to survey map users and determine what features of the map they most appreciated and what changes in the map they would like. Those surveyed included travelers of Florida's highway system and government agencies that contributed data for the map. The map is an information tool, but it is also an important marketing tool, and it is produced through sponsorships. Therefore, the project goals were to enhance the design and usefulness of the map, to better target potential sponsors for the map's production, and to increase interest in Florida destinations.

Surveys about the Florida Official Transportation Map were conducted among three groups: tourists and visitors to Florida; Florida residents; and city, state, and federal offices that contributed data used in creating the map, referred to as the internal and external stakeholders. The

researchers designed the survey instrument in consultation with FDOT staff. Potential respondents were provided with the 2013 Florida Official Transportation Map, a copy of the survey, and instructions. Surveys for visitors and Florida residents differed slightly from the surveys for internal and external stakeholders. In both surveys, respondents were informed or queried about a number of topics, including how and why the map was obtained, formatting and display options, advertisements, background information, and evaluating the legends, insets, and transportation boxes on the map.

Over 900 survey packets were distributed at VisitFlorida Welcome Centers, over 1,000 were sent to Florida residents by mail, and a similar number were sent to visitors by mail. Surveys were sent to 63 internal and external stakeholders identified by FDOT. Response rates varied from 17% for internal stakeholders to 5% for visitors contacted by mail.

The results of the surveys were compiled by the researchers and delivered to FDOT with a complete listing of specific comments made by users. While the survey revealed a generally good level of satisfaction with the Florida Official Transportation Map, it also revealed areas that could be strengthened to produce a more useful and productive map.



*The Florida Official Transportation Map is given to over 2 million visitors each year.*