



**Freight Mobility Study**  
2006 Update



## Connecting with Global Markets

With the convergence of major interstates, railroads, seaports and airports, our region is a major freight transportation hub for Florida and the Southeast. Over 80 million tons of freight are transported throughout the First Coast by truck, rail, air and water. Trucks represent 5-30% of the trips on our three major interstates. The First Coast MPO recognizes that the continued success of the region's economy depends upon keeping freight flowing efficiently to, from and through Northeast Florida to connect with markets across the world.

## Freight's Economic Impact on the First Coast

Transportation improvements directly benefit our local economy, especially investments in highway infrastructure and airport and seaport

expansion. Approximately 16% of the first Coast region's workforce is employed in freight-related industries. JAXPORT is the single largest freight-related contributor to Northeast Florida's economy handling 16 million tons of cargo in 2005. The significant volume of freight handled by JAXPORT translates into direct and indirect economic impacts, including approximately 45,000 jobs and \$2.6 billion annually in port wages and salaries, state and local taxes and business revenue. The new \$200 million terminal under construction by Mitsui OSK Lines Ltd. is estimated to bring about 5,000 direct and indirect jobs to the port, double the port's capacity and eventually make Jacksonville one of the top 10 container ports in the country.

## Freight Mobility Study

Phase I of the First Coast MPO's Freight Mobility Study, completed in the spring of 2002, inventoried and surveyed major freight databases. Using the information developed during Phase I and after making additional on-site observations, the Phase II study, Integrating Economics with Freight Mobility, was completed this past year and establishes recommendations for improvements to local transportation and mobility resources. The study was conducted with input from the public, especially local freight stakeholders, including CSX, Norfolk Southern Railway, Florida East Coast Railway and JAXPORT, which was critical to developing the final recommendations. The key study objectives were to:

- Establish and maintain a dialogue with key public sector and private sector freight stakeholders
- Recommend improvements and other actions to be taken by both public and private sector entities to immediately address system deficiencies, as needed, to enhance safety, mobility, efficiency and competitive effectiveness of freight movement
- Establish a standing Economic Development Committee of the First Coast MPO to highlight freight and goods movement

### The BIG Idea

Meeting quarterly, the First Coast MPO's Business, Industry & Government (BIG) Transportation Roundtable brings together representatives from rail, airport, seaport, freight, chamber of commerce and economic development interests.

## Florida's Strategic Intermodal System

In response to the state's demographic and economic trends, Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) was established in 2003 to enhance our economic competitiveness by focusing limited state resources on those transportation facilities that are critical to Florida's economy and quality of life. The SIS is a statewide network of high-priority transportation facilities, including the state's largest and most significant commercial service airports, spaceport, deepwater seaports, freight rail terminals, passenger rail and intercity bus terminals, rail corridors, waterways and highways. These facilities carry more than 99 percent of all commercial air passengers, virtually all waterborne freight tonnage, almost all rail freight and more than 68 percent of all truck traffic and 54 percent of total traffic on the State Highway System. The SIS groups the state's transportation resources into three main categories:



1. Nodes/Hubs - Ports and terminals that move goods or people;
2. Corridors - Highways, rail lines, waterways, and other exclusive-use facilities; and
3. Connectors - Airplanes, highways, rail lines, transit lines, or waterways that connect nodes, corridors, and modes.

These categories were used as the basis for the following recommendations.

## Recommended Freight Mobility Improvement Projects

Many of the recommended projects will improve SIS corridors and connectors located in the First Coast MPO area, while others suggest new SIS designations and improvements to other connectors. The initial focus is on short term recommendations including: improving delays caused by poorly timed traffic signals; inadequate turning lanes; insufficient curb radii; way finding problems; or other simple problems that jeopardize the timely movement of freight within the region. These projects are being reviewed for inclusion in the Unified Planning Work Program, Transportation Improvement Program and Long Range Transportation Plan. In the long term, the freight mobility strategy ensures that SIS and other funds are spent where they are most needed.

1. CSX Intermodal Hub Pickettville Road Extension - construct approximately 1/2-mile extension of Pickettville Road/(Robinson Road W.) to Pritchard Road opposite to Sportsman Club Road.
2. FEC Intermodal Hub - construct access improvements to the terminal via the current SIS connector as well as intersection improvements near the terminal.
3. Norfolk Southern Intermodal Hub Norfolk Southern (NS) Intermodal Terminal Hub Connector Improvements - connect NS to I-295 via Pickettville Road: I-295 to Pritchard Road to Old Kings Road to Pickettville Road to Edgewood Drive to the terminal entrance; improve the Pickettville Road Bridge to eliminate current weight restrictions to Pickettville Road.
4. Norfolk Southern Double Track Project - add track between the north end of the Simpson Terminal to the south end of CSX Lacy Siding to provide connection between both yards at grade.
5. Jacksonville International Airport (JIA) North International Airport Boulevard - add a new road (JIA North Access Road) as the continuation of International Airport Boulevard to separate truck traffic using the warehouse and distribution facilities at the private Tradeport property, public airport air cargo and US Postal facilities from the passenger traffic using SR 102 (Airport Road) to access the main passenger terminal at JIA.
6. Jacksonville Port Authority (JAXPORT) Talleyrand - create new interchange at the current SR 15 (Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway)/21st Street/Phoenix Avenue interchange and improve the 21st Street/ Talleyrand Avenue intersection.
7. Cargo Tracking Project - develop a secure Internet-based data management system to track containers entering and leaving the Blount Island Hub.
8. Rail Switching Yard Expansion - add tracks from existing Talleyrand Marine Terminal on-site rail facilities to the F&J switching yard to accommodate projected annual increase of 8,000 rail cars.
9. JAXPORT Blount Island and Dames Point - extend New Berlin Road South (at the point it turns east under SR 9A, south of Heckscher Drive) south to Dames Point Road to provide another access to the Dames Point Terminal that is under development; extend existing rail due south in the same area as the New Berlin Road South extension (once on the terminal the rail will be looped to serve all port tenants).
10. New Berlin Road Extension - extend New Berlin Road South (at the point it turns east under SR 9A, south of Heckscher Drive) south to Dames Point Road to provide another access to the Dames Point Terminal that is under development and extend existing rail due south in the same area as the New Berlin Road South extension.
11. Other Duval County Projects - construct I-295 at Commonwealth Avenue interchange improvements to alleviate congestion near regional distribution centers; complete major interchange reconstruction of SR 23 (Branan Field-Chaffee Rd.) at US 90 (and I-10) and reconstruction of I-95 at I-295/SR 9A interchange.
12. Port of Fernandina Emerging Hub (Nassau County Projects) - improve intersection of I-95 and SR 200 by placing a yield sign along the northbound I-95 off-ramp and consider an acceleration lane; widen 11 miles of SR 200 from I-95 to the Amelia River Bridge (at the Intracoastal Waterway) and create grade-separated interchanges at SR 200 with US 17, Chester Road and CR 107, to promote free flow traffic along the emerging SIS connector.
13. Clay County Projects - improve Reynolds Industrial Park entrance (at SR 16 and Reynolds Boulevard) for truck access.
14. St. Johns County Projects - improve turn storage lanes at I-95 interchanges with CR 210 and SR 16; improve turn radius at intersection of SR 207 at Dobbs Road Cutoff (near Dobbs Road).





### **Beyond the Horizon**

Planning for freight mobility will be even more critical as our local resources expand to take advantage of national and global trade opportunities. Due to the lead time needed to plan, fund, and construct transportation improvements, we must develop and maintain relationships, share information and address issues before new contracts arise. The First Coast MPO will continue to convene quarterly meetings of the BIG Roundtable and seek the input of all who have a stake in the economic viability of our freight-related industries.

**We thank the following organizations for their ongoing participation:**

**Antrak**  
**Clay County Chamber of Commerce**  
**CSX**  
**Florida Department of Transportation**  
**FEC Railway**  
**Jacksonville Aviation Authority**  
**Jacksonville Chamber of Commerce**  
**Jacksonville City Council**  
**JAXPORT**

**LANDSTAR**  
**Nassau County Economic Development Board**  
**Norfolk Southern**  
**Representative Ander Crenshaw's Staff**  
**Senator Bill Nelson's Staff**  
**Senator Mel Martinez's Staff**  
**St. Augustine/St. Johns County Airport Authority**  
**Tioga Group**

**We welcome new members to the BIG Transportation Roundtable.  
Please contact us if you are interested in participating.**



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