



Florida Department of Transportation

**RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR**

3400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

**ANANTH PRASAD, P.E.
SECRETARY**

October 1, 2014

Lorenzo Aghemo, Planning Director
Palm Beach County Planning Division, Vista Center
2300 N. Jog Road, 2nd Floor
West Palm Beach, FL 33411

Dear Mr. Aghemo:

SUBJECT: Proposed Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan Amendment, DEO #14-3ESR

The Department has reviewed the proposed amendment to the Palm Beach County Comprehensive Plan. In accordance with ss. 163.3184(3)(b), *Florida Statutes*, the focus of our review was on major transportation issues, including adverse impacts to the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). Local governments with transportation concurrency are required under ss. 163.3180(5)(h)1.a., *Florida Statutes*, to consult with the Department when proposed amendments affect facilities on the SIS.

The proposed amendments establish a development program of increased non-residential uses and additional residential units on 3,788.6 acres of Agricultural Enclave located in the Central Western Communities of western Palm Beach County. The Agricultural Enclave is served by transportation facilities that are part of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), including SR-80 and SR-710, and by regional transportation facilities identified in the Strategic Regional Policy Plan for the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and in the Southeast Florida 2040 Regional Transportation Plan. These regional facilities include SR-80 (Southern Boulevard), SR-710, SR-7, SR-704 (Okeechobee Blvd.), and Northlake Blvd.

The Department understands the amendment's objective to better balance the jobs to housing ratio of the Central Western Communities to lessen the severity of peak hour traffic congestion on the limited number of east/west roads serving the area. The Department is concerned however, about adverse impacts to SIS and regional roadways that are essential for intra-state and regional mobility. The County's amendment identifies impacts on the following state facilities:

Adverse Impacts on State Facilities

Roadways

- SR-80 from Big Blue Trace to Pike Road
- SR-710 from Northlake Blvd to Jog Road

Intersections

- SR-80 & Seminole Pratt Whitney Road
- SR-80 & Forest Hill Boulevard
- SR-704 (Okeechobee Blvd) & SR-7
- SR-704 (Okeechobee Blvd) & Jog Road
- SR-710 & Northlake Boulevard

This proposed amendment follows other development approvals cumulatively adding trips to SIS facilities and regional corridors with more vacant land yet to request development approvals. The required number of lanes on SR-80 needed to serve existing and unbuilt development is anticipated to exceed 8 lanes east of Forest Hill Boulevard. An 8 or 8+ lane roadway configuration for a controlled access facility is indicative of the number of local and intra-regional trip purposes being served by SR-80 due to insufficient local roadway network to serve the land use patterns in the area.

As required by ss. 163.3180(5)(h)1.a., *Florida Statutes*, the Department expects to be consulted when proposed amendments affect facilities on the SIS. This consultation, and active involvement by the Department, is necessary for important state facilities to be adequately addressed as part of proposed project phasing, proportionate share contributions, and determining an effective mitigation program.

From the information provided it is unclear when and how proportionate share payments for improvements to state facilities being impacted will be coordinated with the Department and MPO so that these improvements can be considered in long range transportation plans and prioritized for potential funding at an appropriate point in time. These important details should be discussed, so that the Department and MPO can begin to evaluate and prioritize the necessary improvements and begin to investigate additional funding opportunities to accomplish the necessary roadway improvements. If and when the project is approved, the final land use information, traffic impacts, and necessary road improvement plan should be incorporated into the regional long range transportation model, FDOT SIS transportation needs and/or cost feasible plans, and MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, so that consistency in the plans and with programmed projects can be maintained.

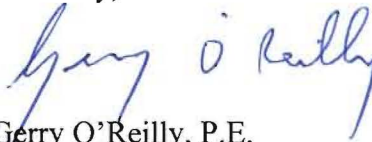
To minimize adverse impacts to SIS and regional facilities and protect the ability of the SIS to serve its strategic mobility function, the Department is including the following recommendations.

1. A long-term, system-oriented solution for access and mobility needs for the Central Western Communities should be analyzed that includes a more interconnected local roadway network capable of serving existing and proposed future land uses.

2. FDOT should have the opportunity to participate in establishing proportionate share timing, allocation amounts, project selection, and conveyance mechanisms in response to adverse impacts to important state resources, facilities, and key intersections.
3. The County is expected to participate in a FDOT SR-80 action plan that is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2015. The plan will analyze alternatives and set forth interim and long term improvements to preserve the traffic level of service within the SR-80 corridor through a minimum 20 year planning horizon. It will produce a variety of recommendations to provide for the efficient inter-regional movement of both people and goods to bring the SR-80 corridor into compliance with the Department's SIS Standards.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to participate in the review process. We are committed to working with the County in pursuing mobility solutions. If you have any comments or questions about this letter, please contact Mr. Larry Hymowitz at (954) 777-4663. A contact for more information on SIS facilities, related SIS studies, and SIS proportionate share opportunities is Ms. Lisa Dykstra at (954) 777-4360.

Sincerely,



Gerry O'Reilly, P.E.
Director of Transportation Development
District Four

GO:lh

cc: George Webb, Palm Beach County
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