Draft Meeting Summary

Representatives of FDOT District 4 engaged in a series of listening sessions with various planning partners in fall 2013 as part of the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan.

FDOT met with representatives of Port Everglades and the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL Airport) on October 31. The group discussed the various ways in which the operating conditions of I-95 affect the operations of the seaport and airport, and vice versa, as well as the seaport’s and airport’s future vision, strategies, measures of success, and coordination efforts with other agencies.

# Key Themes and Takeaways

* A functional transportation system is essential to the operations of both the airport and seaport, and the interstate system is a critical element. The time sensitive nature of passenger and cargo operations at both facilities makes the operating condition of I-95 extremely important.
* Both airport and seaport representatives voiced a need for a convenient, competitive, and comfortable multimodal transportation system to give airport and seaport passengers and employees choices in how they travel.
* FLL Airport’s vision is to serve its users, who are primarily leisure passengers, but also include business passengers, freight, and general aviation. FLL is an origin-destination airport, which relies more heavily on the area’s transportation network than hub airports.
* The FLL Airport is developing a Master Plan for both Fort Lauderdale and North Perry airports, which is looking at both the terminal side and land side of airport operations. Representatives from FLL voiced a desire to have other players, including the FEC railroad, transit providers, and other planning agencies “at the table.” The airport is considering further redevelopment on airport property to the west and/or north, and recognizes the need to better understand potential opportunities in these areas.
* Port Everglades’ mission is based on its business bottom line, which includes four major lines of business: cruise ships, petroleum, cargo, and real estate.
* Two major construction projects – the intermodal transfer facility and the Eller Drive overpass – are strategies to increase the efficiency of port operations and freight movement. These are two excellent examples of partnerships between the Port and FDOT.
* Both seaport and airport representatives noted the need for continual communication and coordination with railroad companies and transit service providers.
* The seaport and airport are both free enterprises, and measure success primarily through the number of passengers and freight, as well as revenues.

# Action Items

* FDOT will share the US 27 PACE study with meeting participants. This study examined the possibility of moving freight rail to the western corridor to free up the eastern rail corridor for passenger rail.
* FLL Airport staff will coordinate with FDOT, Tri-Rail, the City of Fort Lauderdale for the Wave Streetcar, FEC, and the Broward MPO in the development of the airport master plan.
* The I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan project team will revise the map series to show port and airport as SIS hubs.

# Participants

* Lois Bush, FDOT District 4, Policy Planning Section Leader
* Arlene Davis, Port Everglades, Planning
* Jessica Dimmick, Renaissance Planning Group, I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan Project Team
* Scarlet Hammons, Broward County Aviation
* Karen Kiselewski, Renaissance Planning Group, Project Manager
* Laurie McDermott, FDOT District 4, Aviation Coordinator
* Lauren Rand, FDOT District 4, Seaports Contact
* Dawn Shuman, Broward County Aviation
* Steve Wiesner, Broward County Aviation, Director of Airport Development

# Discussion

After an initial overview of the I-95 Corridor Mobility Plan project and status update, FDOT representatives and project team members engaged the representatives from the seaport and airport in a dialogue on the future of these facilities and how I-95 plays a part in that future.

## Future Vision

### Airport Vision

Representatives of the FLL Airport articulated the vision of the airport to serve the origins and destinations of this area, as compared to hub airports that primarily serve connecting flights. The airport has identified expansions to its south runway and terminal to better serve its user. It is possible that the FLL Airport will expand into the interconnected hub service.

The airport’s ultimate purpose is to serve its users, who are primarily passengers on leisure travel. The airport also serves business passengers and cargo carriers. The airport’s passengers, cargo carriers, employees, and general aviation community all use and rely on the interstate highway system.

### Seaport Vision

Port Everglades’ mission and vision are similar to those of the FLL Airport. Like the airport, the seaport’s mission is based on the bottom line from a business perspective. The seaport serves several lines of business: (1) cruise ships, (2) petroleum, (3) cargo, and (4) real estate.

The first three lines of business rely critically on the interstate system. Petroleum uses both truck and pipeline for transport purposes. Port Everglades serves all of South Florida with petroleum, including Palm Beach County via truck and Miami-Dade County via pipeline.

Port Everglades is the #1 exporter of perishables for the South Florida region, and it is essential that I-95 operates efficiently for the seaport’s tenants and cargo operators. Perishables are extremely time sensitive, despite the advances in refrigeration in trucks.

Cruise ship passengers and workers also rely on the interstate. Storage trucks supply the cruise ships with food and other supplies, and it is crucial that these trucks arrive on time.

A functional transportation system is essential to the operations of both the airport and seaport. Ms. Davis mentioned that time sensitivity regularly arises as a topic of discussion at many of the meeting she attends, including the freight advisory meetings and the customs brokers and freight forwarders meetings. Ms. Davis also mentioned the difficulty for trucks to navigate the road system – signalization and road configurations can be difficult for trucks to navigate once off of the interstate highway. The quality of the road system can influence the decisions of the freight companies.

## Airport Initiatives

### Airport Master Plan

Airport representatives informed participants that they are developing a Master Plan for the Fort Lauderdale and North Perry airports. This Master Plan is addressing both the “terminal side” and the “land side” of airport operations. Mr. Wiesner explained the terminal side concerns the operational logistics of airplane movements, such as runways, gates, and terminals, whereas the land side concerns the movement of people and goods before they interface with the airplanes and includes the parking, circulation roads, ticketing areas, and security.

### Improved Connections for Passenger and Cargo Movement

Representatives of the FLL airport mentioned the desire to explore better opportunities to link the internal circulation “donut” roads within the airport property to I-95 and other roads. They are looking into new standards for traffic flow to improve US 1 and opportunities to connect to I-595, SR 84, and Griffin Road. These connections are very important for cargo movement from the airport to the complex of warehouses west of I-95.

### Cargo Expansions

FLL Airport planners are looking at cargo expansions, but this is a niche for aviation compared to the seaport. Currently FedEx and UPS are the only cargo operators at the FLL airport. Airport staff explained there is little demand for expansion right now, but the potential for cargo expansion exists for the future. Airport staff need to examine the land use possibilities of the surrounding areas. The north side of the airport shows possibilities for redevelopment, but the land uses there are limited for airport use. Airport property west of I-95 has potential for additional airport use, but the staff needs to examine this more closely to determine what might be usable.

Airport representatives explained they are not seeing a demand for air cargo because of the economic recession. Slower modes of transportation for cargo movement have grown because of the expense of moving cargo by air. As such, the potential for diversifying the types of cargo the airport moves, such as expanding into the market for perishables like fresh flowers, remains low. The Miami airport has the infrastructure for handling these types of goods; the Fort Lauderdale airport does not yet have the ability to handle the logistics and customs issues of these types of operations.

Representatives mentioned FedEx wants the airport’s perimeter road to function better, because “they sell time, and every second counts.”

### Passenger Airline Expansion and Passenger Needs

Passenger airlines are expanding to Central and South America, and Fort Lauderdale is an alternative to flying out of the Miami airport.

Because Fort Lauderdale is an “origin and destination” airport as opposed to a “hub” airport, its passengers rely heavily on the area’s road system. Additionally, the tourists from the airport affect travel conditions because visitors are not as familiar with the road system and can cause or worsen congestion. Providing better signage is a potential strategy.

## Port Initiatives

Ms. Davis is finalizing the Port’s Strategic Plan. Additionally, the Port and other partners are undertaking several other **public-private partnerships**.

### Intermodal Transfer Facility

The Port is looking at modal interconnectivity from the freight side, and the intermodal transfer facility (ITCF) will provide a more seamless transfer for freight from ship to rail. This initiative is a true public-private partnership – the Port is providing the land and is building the facility, the private FEC railroad is providing the rail facility, and the public agency FDOT is providing the funds to build it via a loan from the State Infrastructure Fund. Ms. Davis described this project as a unique experience and a benchmark example for potential future initiatives.

### Eller Drive Overpass

Another example of a project partnership between private and public sectors is the Eller Drive overpass. FDOT is fully funding this project for Port Everglades. This project will keep the rail corridor at grade while elevating the roadway to eliminate the road and rail conflict and facilitate more efficient movement of both modes. Ms. Davis described this project as an example of the excellent relationship between FDOT and the Port, and it also demonstrates project prioritization of SIS facilities. Ms. Davis noted that the airport and seaport are SIS hubs, and suggested that FDOT revise the project maps to reflect this.

## Challenges

### Efficient and Competitive Multimodal System

Both seaport and airport representatives reiterated the need for an efficient transportation system with seamless mode transfers. While the ITCF will help address this issue for the seaport, representatives of the airport described an idealized vision of the future where cars park far away and trams shuttle people in to the airport.

Participants agreed that the region needs a multimodal transportation system where transit is convenient, comfortable and competitive to driving a car. Right now the transit system only serves those who depend on transit for mobility; there are few if any “choice” transit riders, although Tri-Rail may be an exception.

### East-West Connections

Participants noted the difficulty of moving east-west in Broward County due to congestion, and suggested that better east-west connections are needed.

## Future Opportunities

### Better Transit Service to the Airport

Airport representatives explained that transit could serve airport passengers as well as people who work at the airport. Airport employees have even greater potential to use transit, especially Tri-Rail and future FEC passenger rail service, than airport passengers. The FEC passenger rail service will offer more opportunities for transit because it “will go by the front door.”

Airport planners envision a centralized processing facility to enhance efficiency of airport security where passengers would first go through security and then disperse into the terminal buildings. FEC service could feed into this centralized processing facility with covered moving walkways. The Airport Master Plan will consider this, and airport planning staff voiced the desire to talk with FEC to figure out what pieces of land they should set aside to support this concept. Airport staff are looking at converting a parking facility for this centralized processing facility.

### Coordination with Other Players

Airport staff mentioned that “other players need to come to the table.” The airport staff need to coordinate with transit providers and railroad companies, especially the FEC. Staff recognized there are privacy issues, but acknowledged that a lack of communication can create problems.

FDOT staff mentioned the US 27 PACE study examined the possibility of moving freight rail to the western corridor to free up the eastern rail corridor for passenger rail. FDOT said they could share this study if the airport staff are interested. Participants also mentioned other regional planning efforts such as the Broward MPO’s 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

The Airport staff also acknowledged the need to reach out to other agencies in the development of their Airport Master Plan. The FLL Airport wants to receive comments and incorporate other agencies’ feedback. Airport staff were unsure whether past master plans have been shared with others, and were willing to take the initiative to share. Coordination is particularly important for this master plan, because this is a period of dramatic change for transportation and intermodal connectivity. Airport staff identified FDOT, Tri-Rail, the City of Fort Lauderdale for the Wave Streetcar, FEC, and the Broward MPO as agencies with whom they will need to coordinate.

### Free Enterprise Operation

Participants explained that the airports must be self-sufficient and need to maximize their return on investments and the efficiency of their operations, especially because they function as a County enterprise, meaning they do not rely on tax dollars for their operations, even though they are a County agency. Additionally, the airport operates under a well-defined set of rules because they are overseen by the Federal Aviation Administration. The seaport and airport may receive financial support for capital projects, but not for operations. In general, many of the factors that affect the airport also influence the seaport.

## Indicators of Success

### Seaport Performance Measures

Ms. Davis mentioned the annual economic study for Port Everglades. The seaport almost exclusively measures success through the volume of twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), which are a measure of freight movement. The seaport also measures the number of cruise passengers. Freight and passenger movement are essentially the seaport’s “bottom line.” They generate income by moving TEUs and passengers, and therefore aim to maximize these measures.

The seaport also tracks petroleum tonnage, but this is a private operation. Petroleum companies own the land on which they operate, whereas cruise and cargo companies lease the land and docks from the seaport and pay fees based on how much cargo is shipped. The revenue from cargo and cruise leases could be another measure of success.

Port Everglades collects parking fees and Navy fees, in addition to the other sources of revenue.

### Airport Performance Measures

The airport tracks the number passenger each year, and tracks international versus domestic to understand these trends and predict future trends. FLL Airport’s Terminal 4 was designed to support either domestic or international flights through swing gate capability. This flexibility allows for internal expansions without needing additional infrastructure for customs.

The airport collects more revenue for passengers than cargo. Revenue sources include landing fees (paid by passenger, cargo, and general aviation flights), passenger facility charges, tenant fees, concession sales, and parking fees.

The airport also measures success through customer satisfaction, and has conducted surveys. Airport representatives note that customer satisfaction is driven by an individual’s entire trip from beginning to end, including factors that are outside of the airport’s control or responsibilities. Customer satisfaction needs the system to work together.

# Strategies and Indicators

The following tables list the strategies and indicators that representatives from the seaport and airport mentioned throughout the listening session.

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| Strategies |
| System-Wide* Development of Airport Master Plan
* Development of Seaport Master Plan
* Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships
* Coordinate with transit providers and railroad companies on master planning efforts

Facilities* Explore better opportunities to link internal airport circulation roads to I-95 and other roads.
* Improve traffic flow on US 1 and better connect US 1 to I-595, SR 84, and Griffin Road
* Improve the function of the airport perimeter road
* Provide better signage on all roads for visitors
* Construction of Eller Drive overpass
* Improve mode transfers
* Provide better east-west connections
* Provide a convenient, comfortable transit system that is competitive to the automobile for seaport and airport passengers

Places * Expansion of FLL Airport south runway and terminal facilities
* Explore usability of airport property west and north of current FLL Airport for possible redevelopment
* Construction of intermodal transfer center
* Enhance efficiency of airport security and ticketing procedures with a centralized processing facility that is connected to the FEC with a series of covered moving walkways
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| Indicators |
| Quantitative* Yearly volume of TEUs
* Yearly number of cruise passengers
* Petroleum tonnage
* Parking fees collected by seaport
* Navy fees collected by seaport
* Airport international and domestic passengers
* Airport revenues collected via landing fees, tenant fees, concession sales, and parking fees

Qualitative or Anecdotal* Customer satisfaction survey results
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