

“WHAT IF THIS IS OUR LAST CHANCE TO GET IT RIGHT?”

The Interstate 75 Vision

Imagine traveling Interstate 75 in 2050. Cruising along, you notice that Interstate 75 is different than the interstate of the past. It is a multimodal transportation corridor that conveys people and goods safely and seamlessly within and beyond the Tampa Bay region. Special lanes service long-distance drivers, separating them from the local commuters on their way to work. There's transit in the right-of-way and transit stations with park and ride lots. Overhead electronic signs alert motorists of incidents or traffic interruptions, while cameras feed real-time information to a central monitoring station. The corridor provides mobility and accessibility to other modes of transportation at airports, seaports and rail lines. In addition to multi-transportation modes, the corridor also accommodates utilities. The entire corridor is developed to blend harmoniously with the local environment. Transportation improvements for the corridor are made to enhance economic opportunities, consider travelers' diverse needs, protect the environment, and improve quality of life. Transportation investments help to maintain the current facilities and accommodate future needs. Continuous involvement of the Tampa Bay region's community leaders and citizens guide corridor decisions which integrate community desires with multimodal transportation facilities.

The Florida Department of Transportation Vision

The Florida Department of Transportation (Department) has adopted a vision statement to guide their efforts, mission and values. It states the following:

Our Vision - Serving the people of Florida by delivering a transportation system that is fatality and congestion free.

Our Mission - The department will provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity and preserves the quality of our environment and communities.

Our Values - The fundamental principles which guide the behavior and actions of our employees and our organization.

Integrity - “We always do what is right”

Respect - “We value diversity, talent and ideas”

Commitment - “We do what we say we are going to do”

One FDOT - “We are one agency, one team”

Trust - “We are open and fair”

Customer Driven - “We listen to our customers”

Why now? Why 2050?

The Tampa Bay region is at a crossroads, facing a great chance to “get it right.” Other urban areas struggle with limited mobility and are constrained by past short-sighted planning decisions. The Tampa Bay region has a unique opportunity to realize its Vision by developing a longer range plan now as if this is the last chance to get it right. As our population grows, an increased demand for transportation will follow. How will we handle this increase? The time is now while we still have opportunities. In the Tampa Bay region, opportunities still exist...to plan for multimodal transportation corridors...to collaborate with developers on access... to form public-private partnerships... to work with local governments on land use decisions...to minimize costs now and avoid future price hikes... to protect our environment...to get it right.

We must not let these great opportunities pass us by. And considering I-75 is such a vital transportation link, we must not be bound and constricted by short sighted planning... we must look farther into the future. A traditional planning study typically looks at a 25-year horizon, in this case, recommending our 2035 needs. Therefore, if this is our last time to get it right, we need to visualize 2050 to ensure we account for our ultimate needs, above and beyond the shorter timeframe of 2035. Our ultimate needs for I-75 will not become reality overnight, but instead will be fashioned over time as we implement improvements that collectively shape our vision.

Why a Vision?

“What if this is our last chance to get it right?” This basic question is the founding principle behind the Vision. For the I-75 corridor, the Department intends to enhance the quality of life, increase the region’s economic competitiveness, support regional multimodal transportation options and protect the environment by strengthening the transportation infrastructure to support the effective, efficient and safe movement of people and goods.

The six Vision ideals – economic development, infrastructure investment, quality of life, environmental stewardship, public participation, and a safe multimodal network – are the groundwork for our supporting goals. This Vision and the supporting goals focus on “getting it right.” If this truly is the last chance to get it right, we need to prepare for the future to create the region we desire. The purpose of this Vision and the goals and objectives is to establish policy that will help us work toward that future. The Vision lets us picture where we want to be in 50 years, and the goals and objectives help us get there.

The I-75 Vision will serve as corridor policy guidance to assist the Department and other state and local governments in making decisions to meet mobility needs and enhance community livability. We must concentrate efforts and accommodate major changes in the transportation system to preserve and enhance Tampa Bay’s – as well Florida’s - economic development, trade, tourism, quality of life, viability, and sustainability.

To that end, the Vision is consistent with the comprehensive statewide transportation direction which recognizes the vital relationship between the transportation system (air, rail, marine, highway, and transit), the efficient movement of people, goods and services (intra- and inter-regional), and economic sustainability for the state of Florida. I-75 is a vital link in the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), a statewide network of high-priority transportation facilities. The SIS includes critical corridors (rail, highway and waterway) and hubs (seaport, airport and rail terminal).

The Vision is also consistent with the 2025 Florida Transportation Plan (Plan) which identifies goals, objectives, and strategies to guide transportation decisions in Florida. The Plan addresses how Florida's transportation system can meet the mobility needs of our growing population, make our economy more competitive, cultivate more vibrant communities, and preserve our natural environment; all the while using innovative funding mechanisms.

The Vision can be realized and the goals of the Plan can be achieved when interested parties work together collaboratively, with clearly defined roles; and coordinate with other statewide transportation planning initiatives.

Vision Components

The I-75 Vision incorporates different tools to accommodate various travelers.

Users on I-75, including people, goods and services, are diverse. There are those who travel within the region to and from home, work and school, and their daily activities; those who simply pass through the region without stopping; and those from outside the region who make the Tampa Bay region their destination.

The multimodal component, including highway, rail and transit modes offers a variety of mode choices. General use lanes (GULs) are for any and all travelers, and special use lanes (SULs) are for transit or specific travelers such as high occupant vehicles, or those paying a toll in certain sections. While not directly on the I-75 corridor itself, seaports and airports are also prime considerations for the transfer of people and goods between modes.

Goals and Objectives

Goal: Provide a safer I-75 for residents, businesses, and visitors

- **Improve safety** of all modes operating in the corridor.
- **Enhance the movement of goods and freight** by providing a safe interface between trucks and passenger vehicles on the corridor.
- **Reduce fatalities/injuries and the rates of motor vehicle incidents** through design techniques and the application of the "4 E's" – engineering, education, enforcement, and emergency response strategies
- **Make strategic safety investments** where opportunities for safety improvements are greatest, as identified by best available data and trends that preserve and maintain the functionality and aesthetics of the transportation system.
- **Improve evacuation routes** by creating an enhanced roadway network, including the I-75 corridor, which allows for efficient and expeditious evacuation.

Goal: Strengthen the region's economy through enhanced mobility for people and goods

- **Reduce delays and improve travel time reliability** by developing transportation solutions that increase efficiency and enhance performance for movement of people and goods.
- **Facilitate economic development** opportunities in Florida's economically distressed areas by improving transportation access from these areas to markets and to seaports and airports in a manner that reflects regional and community visions.

- **Enhance tourism and recreational opportunities** for residents and visitors to the region through development of public transportation infrastructure.
- **Improve linkages, primarily north-south**, to create a transportation system that works together to connect the Tampa Bay region to its markets in the southeast and other areas of the country and the world.
- **Enhance the movement of goods and freight** by providing adequate access and egress between I-75 and centers of economic activity.
- **Provide efficient transfers between modes and facilities** for both people and goods, between transportation modes and between the SIS and other transportation facilities, such as seaports, airports and rail facilities.
- **Preserve new capacity for growth** on the SIS for projected growth in trips, especially for trips associated with economic competitiveness and the global economy.
- **Develop multimodal systems to expand transportation choices**, support community visions and offer more options for mobility.
- **Reduce travel by single occupant vehicles** and per capita vehicle miles traveled by single occupant vehicles, especially during peak hours of highway use. Expand capacity/mobility through SUL congestion management techniques such as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV), High Occupancy Tolling (HOT) and toll lanes, transit ways, etc.
- **Ensure accessibility to all transportation choices for all users**, including young, elderly, disabled, and economically disadvantaged persons.

Goal: Invest necessary funding to provide cost efficient maintenance and preservation of the current transportation infrastructure and make sustainable future transportation investments that link investment decisions to transportation needs

- **Develop and secure additional funding for future I-75 improvements** through the evaluation and enhancement of existing and new funding mechanisms.
- **Increase cooperation and collaboration** between the Department, regional organizations, local governments, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority, Manatee County Area Transit, Hillsborough County Aviation Authority, tolling authorities (Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Authority and the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority), the Federal Transit Administration, Port Manatee, Port of Tampa, other transportation agencies, and utility providers.
- **Enhance the movement of goods and freight** by providing capacity and operational improvements and policies that promote the safe and efficient movement of trucks.
- **Coordinate funding sources** to leverage federal, state and local resources. Encourage local or private funding to be consistent with the Vision.
- **Identify gap between available funding and needs** so as to balance the allocation of resources between current and future transportation needs.
- **Recognize the urgency to prioritize needs and make investments** now to avoid substantially higher costs in the future.
- **Maintain transportation system** through regular inspections of all elements of the transportation system to protect the public's investment for the future.
- **Eliminate the operation of illegal, overweight vehicles** (commercial motor vehicles) on the transportation network by maximizing the use of alternative modes to transport overweight and oversize loads.

Goal: Enrich quality of life and encourage responsible environmental stewardship

- **Conserve and optimize non-renewable resources** and promote the use of renewable resources (materials, facilities, and sources of energy) and include strategies to decrease greenhouse gases and air pollutants.
- **Accommodate human scale** by planning, developing, implementing, and funding I-75 transportation system improvements such as transit-oriented development, and other community-enhancing features, unless inappropriate.
- **Maximize use of existing infrastructure** to optimize the efficiency of Florida's transportation system by implementing operational, management, access, and land use strategies that support the intended use of each element of the system identified as part of evolving statewide, regional, or community visions.
- **Preserve natural environment by** planning, designing, and constructing transportation facilities in a manner that preserves and, where feasible, restores the function and character of the natural environment and that avoids, minimizes or mitigates adverse impacts.

Goal: Encourage participation in the continuing development and enhancement of the I-75 Vision

- **Improve communications** between local, regional and state transportation agencies and the general public. Encourage local and regional agencies and interest groups to coordinate with the Department in the development of local and regional transportation priorities.
- **Ensure and improve consistency** through coordination with regional and local communities to assure priorities, plans and visions are consistent with one another.
- **Improve land use and transportation coordination** decisions among state government, local governments, and metropolitan planning organizations to ensure that future growth is sustainable.
- **Enhance regional coordination** through the development of regional visions and action plans that integrate transportation, land use, economic, community, and environmental systems to guide transportation decision making and investments. Focus attention on meeting regional mobility needs that transcend traditional jurisdictional boundaries, and ensuring connectivity between SIS, regional, and local facilities.
- **Provide the public opportunities and mechanisms** (websites, forums...) to get involved early and proactively in the transportation decision making process, including easily understood and complete information, timely public notice, and full public access to key decisions.

Conclusion

Through this Vision and these goals, the Department aspires to make the future of transportation in the Tampa Bay region not only different than today, but better than today. If we plan for the future, as if it were our last time, we can get it right.