

The St. Petersburg - Clearwater International Airport

Clearly, the St. Petersburg - Clearwater International Airport is the Area's major transportation facility. It is critical to the Pinellas County economy, both as an employer and as the means to move goods nationally and internationally. The movement of goods in and out of the Area is so important that the entire 2,000 acre Airport property, including the Airport Business Center and Industrial Park, is designated as a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ193).

The Airport has undergone recent renovation, including construction of a multi-million dollar U.S. Customs and Immigration Facility and a new baggage claim area, and plans are underway to expand an existing runway to 10,000 feet to accommodate non-stop trans-Atlantic flights. Although two major passenger carriers in financial difficulty recently left the Airport, planning to attract future carriers requires an ongoing commitment to upgrade and expansion.

The 2004 Airport Master Plan Update was made available for public review and comment in the summer/fall of 2003, and several subsequent public meetings were conducted in the Area. The Master Plan Update details long range plans for Airport operations over the next twenty years and the facilities to support those operations. An approved Master Plan is required in order to make the Airport eligible for Federal Aviation Administration and Florida Department of Transportation monies, and is critical to addressing a changing Airport environment. The Airport Master Plan also describes planned uses on Airport-owned property not associated with Airport operations.

Roadway Infrastructure and Improvements

In regard to roadway improvements, the three highest priorities (according to the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization's recently adopted 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan) are U.S. Highway 19, Ulmerton Road, and the Roosevelt/CR296 Connector (including 118th Avenue, 102nd Avenue and Bryan Dairy Road). These are the major transportation facilities serving the Gateway Area, and are among the heaviest traveled roadways in the County. These roads also traverse several different jurisdictions and are impacted by development approvals by the County, as well as several municipalities, including the cities of Largo, Pinellas Park and St. Petersburg.

U.S. Highway 19, Roosevelt Boulevard, Ulmerton Road and Interstate 275 are all currently experiencing level of service, or operating, deficiencies associated with traffic volumes. While development in the Gateway Area can add trips to the deficient roadways and exacerbate road congestion levels, all of the vehicle trips do not originate from development in the Area, nor is a Gateway property necessarily their destination. Traffic might simply be passing through the Area using the major road system. For all of these reasons, transportation planning for the Gateway Area remains a challenge.

Planned roadway improvements that will affect the Gateway Area are summarized in **Table 3**. In addition, **Figure 5** is included to depict planned road improvements in the Area as well as their proximity and relationship to major employers (DRIs) and Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) routes and stops. These planned improvements amount to an expenditure of almost a half billion dollars over the 22-year period from now to the Year 2025.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in cooperation with the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, is charged specifically with developing and maintaining plans for improving the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS), or more recently transitioning to the Strategic Intermodal System, or SIS. In this regard, FDOT has recently completed a roadway-widening project on Interstate 275 in Pinellas County, and is planning phase one construction of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) improvements (e.g., coordinated signals via fiber optics, centralized controls, etc.) on both Interstate 275 and U.S. Highway 19. Specifically, on Interstate 275, closed circuit television will be installed for both incident detection and traveler information. On U.S. Highway 19, FDOT plans include coordinated signals managed through a centralized control center. FDOT is also partnering with the County and the municipalities to implement ITS improvements on non-FIHS facilities such as Ulmerton Road.

**TABLE 4
GATEWAY AREA PLANNED ROAD PROJECTS**

	Road	From	To	Existing Lanes	Project Description (Lanes-Facility Type)	Const. Year	Cost (in thous.) *
1	CR 296/Roosevelt Bl. Connector	East of 40th St.	West of 28th St.	N/A	Construct 6P	By 2006	\$30,742
2	CR 296/Roosevelt Bl. Connector	North of Ulmerton Rd.	East of 40th St.	N/A	Construct 6P	By 2025	\$125,984
3	CR 296/Roosevelt Bl. Connector	49th St. Bridge	North of Ulmerton Rd.	4D	Reconstruct to 6P	By 2025	\$117,900
4	CR 296/Roosevelt Bl. Connector	At 49th St. Interchange		N/A	Construct 6P	By 2025	\$74,000
5	CR 296/Roosevelt Bl. Connector	At I-275		N/A	Construct Interchange	By 2025	\$43,700
6	CR 296/Roosevelt Bl. Connector	At I-275		N/A	Construct Ramp	2007	\$19,623
7	East-West 118 th Ave. Expwy	US Highway 19	East of 40th St. /CR 296	6D	Reconstruct to 6P **	By 2015	\$103,903
8	Gandy Blvd.	US Highway 19	West of Grand Ave.	4D	Reconstruct to 4P	By 2025	\$20,975
9	Gandy Blvd.	West of Grand Ave.	West of I-275	4D	Reconstruct to 4P w/ overpass - Grand Ave.	By 2025	\$36,058
10	Gandy Blvd.	West of I-275	East of 9th St.	4D	Reconstruct to 4P w/ overpass - 16th St.	By 2015	\$77,003
11	Gandy Blvd.	East of 4th St.	West of 9th St.	4D	Reconst. to 4P w/ intrchgs. at 4th and 9th St.	By 2015	\$41,470
12	Roosevelt Blvd.	Ulmerton Rd.	28th St. North	4D	Reconstruct to 6D	By 2015	\$16,144
13	Roosevelt Blvd.	I-275	4th St. North	4D	Reconstruct to 6D	By 2015	\$14,991
14	Ulmerton Rd.	East of U.S. Hwy. 19	East of 49th St. North	4D	Reconstruct to 6D	2005	\$19,506
15	Ulmerton Rd.	West of 38th St.	West of I-275	4D	Reconstruct to 6D	By 2015	\$19,600
16	US Hwy 19	North of 49th St.	South of 126th Ave. North	6D	Reconst. to 6P w/ Intrchg at 118th Ave.	2006	\$70,536
17	126th Ave. N.	34th Street	US Hwy. 19	OD/2D	Construct 2D/4D	2020	\$10,000
						TOTAL	\$842,135

Project Description Notes:

1) D = Divided median 2) P = Partially controlled access

* cost figures are based on the MPO 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan, adopted 2004, and MPO Transportation Improvement Program

** Funding is only available for ROW acquisition at this time. Preliminary estimate for 6P is \$250,000,000