

### **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 118<sup>th</sup> Avenue, 102<sup>nd</sup> 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.