



Ports, Aviation and Intermodal Facilities

Introduction

Intermodal facilities are places where passengers and freight enter, leave or change modes within a transportation system. These facilities may be parking garages; where people transfer from their vehicles to pedestrian travel, seaports; where freight is transferred from ships to trucks for transport to a local goods distribution center, or airports; where people transfer from their vehicles or buses to airplanes. The SAFETEA-LU Act and its predecessors, the Transportation Equity Act (TEA 21) and Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) recognized the importance of intermodal facilities to the nation's economy, seeking to improve access to ports and airports.

Among the intermodal facilities existing in Pinellas County, are three airports, including Clearwater Executive Airpark, Albert Whitted Municipal Airport, and the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport. Other intermodal facilities in the County include the CSX rail line, the Port of St. Petersburg (the only deep water seaport in the County), bus terminals, Park-and-Ride lots and public parking lots with more than 100 spaces (see Figure 6-1). In terms of airports and seaports, only the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport falls under the jurisdiction of Pinellas County. The other airports and the Port of St. Petersburg are within the jurisdictions of the Cities of Clearwater and St. Petersburg and will not be addressed in this Element.

St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport¹

The St. Petersburg Clearwater International Airport (PIE) occupies approximately two thousand acres located along West Roosevelt Boulevard in mid-Pinellas County. The Airport has four active runways, is home to both domestic and international air carriers and is designated as a commercial service small hub airport. There are currently five passenger and two cargo carriers that serve the Airport. PIE predominantly serves general aviation activities, which comprises 85 percent (210,000) of its total operations. General aviation includes the operation of civilian aircraft for purposes other than commercial passenger transport, including personal, business and instructional flying. Military operations, including activities of the Coast Guard air stations located on site, make up 8 percent of the airport operations. The remainder of PIE operations is commercial air service and air taxi activity. The Airport served 389,997 total passengers in 2006.

Environmental Impact - Noise

Transportation Element Goal 2 stresses the need to minimize the impacts of the Airport on the environment and the surrounding area as it seeks to expand its facilities and operations. In spring 2004, the Airport established a new Noise Affairs Office with a

dedicated staff person to monitor, respond and investigate noise related issues and assist in the development of a formal noise program for the Airport.

The Airport also subscribes to a Flight Tracking System used to monitor compliance with noise abatement procedures and respond to resident complaints. The web-based system is available to the public and also serves as an educational tool that enables the community to view aircraft, flight patterns, and altitudes by way of the Internet. The Airport Noise Abatement and Mitigation Website is also used as a communication tool to help educate the community on existing noise abatement measures, Federal restrictions, and progress of the Noise Abatement Task Force.

State of Commercial Airline Industry

The St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport set a record breaking passenger level in 2004, serving over 1.3 million passengers, which represented a 34 percent increase over 2003. In 2003, the Airport enjoyed a 60 percent increase over 2002, ending the year with 997,761 passengers. In late 2004 and early 2005, the Airport experienced some commercial service cutbacks. The demise of two prominent PIE airlines, Southeast Airlines and Jetsgo, in combination with the pullout of ATA, left PIE with a 74 percent decline in passenger traffic. However, the Airport has begun recovering, reporting over 461 thousand passengers in the first six months of 2007, which exceeded the total for 2006. The current roster of passenger carriers includes USA 3000, Allegiant Air, Sun Country, Sunwing, Sky Value and Transat. Allegiant Air and USA 3000 serve 91 percent of the Airport's passengers.

Other Intermodal Facilities

Intermodal facilities, excluding the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport, play a limited role in the movement of people and goods in Pinellas County. Most of the goods transported in the County are delivered by trucks and this is only three percent or less of the County's total traffic volume. Most of the commercial goods arriving into the County are transferred at intermodal facilities located outside its borders. Regarding the movement of people, the low volume of activity at these intermodal facilities reflects the use of personal motorized vehicles as the predominant mode of travel in the County.

Bus Terminals

Figure 6-1 shows the locations of the two PSTA bus terminals at Park Street in downtown Clearwater and Central Plaza in downtown St. Petersburg. These terminals serve 13 routes each. However, Williams Park is PSTA's most active point of transfer, serving 18 routes. Tyrone Square Mall in St. Petersburg serves 13 routes. The shopping centers serving as transfer points for PSTA operations are included among the County's major trip generators and attractors shown in Figure 5-4.

Park and Ride Lots

There are four active park and ride lots in Pinellas County located in Oldsmar, Clearwater, Largo and St. Petersburg. Of the 142 marked parking spaces available in these lots, 48 (34 percent) were utilized according to a March 2006 inspection.²

CSX Transportation Railroad

Rail freight service in Pinellas County is provided by CSX Transportation via the railroad's Clearwater subdivision. The CSX Company maintains approximately 32.9 miles of branch line track, as well as several side tracks. The highest volumes shipped on the rail line (in descending order according to major commodity groupings) are pulp, paper, chemicals and allied products, lumber and wood products and petroleum and coal products. As indicated in Figure 6-1, there are several industrial parks served by the rail line. Most of the side tracks are within the industrial parks. Since the industrial areas are also on designated truck routes, these facilities are well served in terms of transportation access. However, as noted previously, rail traffic carried over the CSX line is minimal.

Although opportunities exist for intermodal shipments, there has not been significant usage of potential linkages between rail and other modes.³ There are no public side tracks in Pinellas County, as all existing side tracks connect with individual businesses. Also, there are no connections between the rail line and the ports or airports in Pinellas County.

Public Parking

The public parking lots depicted in Figure 6-1 are primarily located at municipal and County parks, beaches, and in downtown areas. At this time, the County has no plans to utilize the parking lots under its jurisdiction for ancillary purposes.

Airport Parking

The most heavily utilized intermodal facilities in Pinellas County are the parking lots at the St. Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport. Current parking capacity at the Airport is shown below. Proposed expansion to the parking areas identified in the Airport Master Plan and Figure 6.1 is designed to accommodate future demand.

Total parking spaces	1745
Short-term parking	146
Long-term parking	640
Remote-shuttle parking	959
Handicapped spaces –long & short-term	32

Endnotes

Chapter Six

1. Data sources for St. Petersburg Clearwater International Airport information presented in this chapter is derived from the Master Plan Update Final Report, January 2004, and from Airport staff.
2. PSTA, Transit Development Plan, June 2007, p. 3-28.
3. Tindale-Oliver and Associates and Wilbur Smith Associates, Pinellas County MPO, Goods Movement Study, March 1996, p.10.