

SR 710

CR 609 to east of SR 76

Purpose and Need

PROJECT STATUS

The purpose of this project is to increase capacity and improve safety by upgrading this section of SR 710, including the Indiantown/St. Lucie Canal Bridge. The 3.755-mile segment of SR 710 from CR 609 (Allapattah Road) on the western edge of Indiantown to just east of SR 76 and including the Indiantown/St. Lucie Canal Bridge has been designated a SIS facility.

Indiantown is a small town in a rural area with a population of 5,588 (Census 2000). Despite this small population, at LOS D-E this section of SR 710 falls short of meeting capacity demands. Safety is also compromised by the constrained right-of-way and the perception of this roadway by through-traffic as a continuation of a long uninterrupted high-speed roadway.

The Indiantown DRI is currently in the 'Pre-Application' phase. This proposed 804-acre development, if approved, would result in 1,800 residential units, 15,000 sq. ft. of retail space and 15,000 sq. ft. of office space and would increase the existing population of Indiantown by at least half- putting greater demand on SR 710, which is already failing to meet capacity demand.

System Linkage

OVERALL LINKAGE IN SYSTEM

This project consists of widening SR 710 from CR 609 (Allapattah Road) to just east of SR 76 and includes the Indiantown/St. Lucie Canal Bridge. This section of SR 710 is approximately 3.755 miles in length and is a principal arterial roadway. SR 710 has a northwest – southeast orientation, linking Okeechobee County, west Martin County, and northwest Palm Beach County, to metropolitan Palm Beach County on the Atlantic Coast. The only major roads that intersect SR 710 in the general vicinity of the project are SR 76 and County Roads 706, 726, and 609. They provide connectivity between Indiantown and Port Mayakka, Jupiter, Stuart, and Port St. Lucie, respectively. Planned widening projects for SR 710 to the east and west of the project corridor link the project corridor to SR 70 in the west and Florida's Turnpike and I-95 in the east, all of which are SIS facilities.

LOGICAL TERMINI

To the west the project corridor links to SR 70 and the eastern edge of the City of Okeechobee. CR 609 at the western terminus of the project, just west of Indiantown, links SR 70 to residential development on the north side of Indiantown and to the City of Port St. Lucie. The eastern terminus of the project corridor is at SR 76, where a 27-mile long widening project along SR 710 will link the project corridor to Florida's Turnpike and I-95 in northeast Palm Beach County. SR 70, Florida's Turnpike, and I-95 are all

designated SIS facilities. The project has an independent utility due to its character as a wider and more urbanized section on an otherwise rural roadway, and as a link between the two traffic generating highways intersecting SR 710 on either side of Indiantown.

The project corridor ends just east of SR 76 and includes the reconstruction of the Indiantown/St. Lucie Canal Bridge. A count station is located south of SR-76 (89-0149). There is a significant drop in traffic south of SR 76, suggesting that SR-76 is the traffic break, and that data from Station 89-0074, showing 11,200 AADT, is representative of traffic across the bridge, which is located north of SR 76.

Capacity

AADT for this roadway section is 11,200 with truck traffic comprising 23.31% of total traffic. Based on these values, this portion of SR 710 meets the threshold criteria for designation as a SIS facility for both AADT (9,000) and percent truck traffic (20%). The existing Level of Service (LOS) for this section of the roadway is D-E. The Adopted LOS Standard for 2-Lane FIHS Rural facilities is LOS C. The LOS becomes B once the roadway is widened to 4-Lanes. The count station south of SR 76 denotes AADT of 6,800. North of SR 76, the AADT is 11,700. SR 710 is deficient based on a current LOS below the standard for FIHS/SIS facilities. Projected 2030 AADT north of SR 76 is 27,209, which is well over capacity for a 2-lane facility.

Transportation Demand

STRATEGIC INTERMODAL SYSTEM

The Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) was established in 2003 by the Florida Legislature in order to target transportation facilities of statewide and interregional significance, focusing on the efficient movement of passengers and freight through these facilities. The five goals of SIS in order of priority are safety, preservation of existing facilities, mobility of passengers and freight, economic competitiveness for the State of Florida, and enhancement of quality of life and natural environment.

The Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) is the backbone of the highway component of the SIS. The system is composed of interconnected limited or controlled access roadways including interstate highways, Florida's Turnpike, selected urban expressways and major arterial highways.

Designation of highways as SIS facilities is based on several criteria including classification as an FIHS roadway meeting threshold Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) levels, truck traffic of greater than 20%, or national highways connecting to Georgia and Alabama. Roadways that do not currently meet the criteria and thresholds for SIS designation, but are of statewide or interregional significance, are designated as 'Emerging SIS' facilities. Emerging SIS facilities generally serve fast growing economic regions and Rural Areas of Critical Economic Concern.

SR 710 is a designated SIS Corridor on the FIHS, providing an inter-regional connection from the central region of Florida to eastern Palm Beach County. It meets the SIS criteria for freight and passenger mobility. To the east, SR 710 connects to the I-95 SIS

Corridor, and the Palm Beach International Airport, a SIS Hub. East of I-95 SR 710 becomes a SIS Connector, connecting to the Port of Palm Beach, another SIS Hub.

GROWTH MANAGEMENT LEGISLATION

Senate Bill 360, passed by the Florida Legislature during the 2005 Legislative session and signed into law by Governor Jeb Bush on June 24, 2005, updates Florida's growth management framework and is intended to "Close the Gap" between new development and construction of needed transportation infrastructure. The bill provides increased funding through new and existing capital investment programs including the state's innovative statewide multimodal transportation infrastructure program, the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). As a result of this legislation, the Department of Transportation has identified **\$2.775 Billion** of new funding available for programming on the SIS over the Department's work program timeframe (Fiscal Years 2005/06 through 2010/11). This project is part of the Department's plan for the implementation of this capacity program and illustrates how funding has been distributed across the state and all SIS modes. Funding is distributed across all SIS modes because:

- 1) the SIS is the state's highest transportation capacity priority,
- 2) improved access to and from hubs is critical to efficient operation of the SIS, and
- 3) the Department seeks to demonstrate its commitment to the SIS by addressing the highest priority system needs, regardless of mode.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANS

This project is included in the FDOT District Four SIS Cost Feasible Plan for 2025, and consistent with the Martin County Comprehensive Plan. The Martin MPO 2030 LRTP identifies the project in their needs plan. The project is also supported by the Indiantown CRA Master Plan. The project supports and improves mobility within the Indiantown redevelopment area and provides a critical link to the Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern.

Social Demands/Economic Development

EXISTING AND FUTURE MAJOR TRAFFIC GENERATORS IN THE CORRIDOR.

Major traffic generators in the area include the residents of Indiantown and the smaller towns along the northeast shore of Lake Okeechobee. Trucking and private vehicular traffic use this project corridor as the primary through-route between coastal Palm Beach County, Lake Okeechobee, and destinations beyond including Lakeland, Orlando, and Tampa.

PLANNED AND PROGRAMMED DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROJECT AREA.

The only municipality located along the project corridor is Indiantown. The Indiantown DRI is currently in the 'Pre-Application' phase. If approved, the development would bring 1,800 residential units and 15,000 square feet each of office and retail space to Indiantown. The development would use approximately 804 acres of land to the north of Indiantown and the project corridor. DOT data suggests an increasing trend in the AADT at our count station north of SR-76 based on an analysis of historical data. There are several other development proposals (including 2 DRIs) which would substantially

increase traffic in the future. Martin County concurrency has suggested that development proposals may have to be shut down as they propose adding more trips to this segment of roadway. For DRI purposes, where the buildout of the project is more long-term (e.g. 15 years), we have allowed this section of SR-710 to be considered as transitioning. That threshold would be 620 peak-hour directional vehicles. Based on the traffic data, that threshold is imminent.

OTHER PLANNED AND PROGRAMMED ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PROJECT AREA.

SR 710 is to be widened from 2 to 4 lanes from SR 70 at the eastern edge of the City of Okeechobee to CR 609 at Indiantown. The portion of SR 710 from SR 76 to Pratt Whitney Rd is proposed for expansion from 2 to 4 lanes and the portion from Pratt Whitney to SR 809 is proposed to be expanded from 4 to 6 lanes. An Interchange Justification Report will be prepared as a separate project for a possible interchange at SR 710 and I-95.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND USE IN THE PROJECT AREA

Existing land use in the area surrounding the project corridor is predominantly agricultural and residential with residential areas concentrated in Indiantown. Future land use maintains the current patterns of land use.

Modal Interrelationships

AIRPORTS

The Indiantown Airport is located on the northeast perimeter of Indiantown.

RAIL

The CSX Railway parallels SR 710 throughout the project corridor.

MASS TRANSIT

None exists. The study will also examine transit in the corridor including express bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), and commuter rail along the existing CSX track that parallels the corridor. This project is priority number 9 on the SFRTA list of SIS projects with regards to the section for the CSX extension. Funding for the SFRTA planning of this extension is requested under priority number 36 on this list for Growth Management funding potential.

Safety & Roadway Deficiencies

GEOMETRIC AND STRUCTURAL DEFICIENCIES CONTRIBUTING TO SAFETY PROBLEMS

Safety is compromised by the constrained right-of-way through Indiantown and the perception of this roadway by through-traffic as a continuation of a long uninterrupted high-speed roadway. The five-lane undivided section in Indiantown is not consistent with current District Four policy to provide a median divider on all roadways of more than two lanes. The lack of shoulders and pedestrian facilities on the 2-lane undivided St. Lucie Canal Bridge also compromises traveler safety. This bridge is functionally obsolete, consisting of 2 undivided lanes with no shoulders, bike lanes or pedestrian

facilities. The existing bridge contains non-redundant fracture critical components. The expansion to the bridge and roadway to divided facilities with adequate capacity will improve safety.

HURRICANE EVACUATION

SR 710 is an important hurricane evacuation route and these improvements will enhance evacuation capacity and reduce hurricane evacuation time.