

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

AN ASSESSMENT OF REGIONAL INDICATORS

A comparison of the element's regional indicators with the latest available data indicates general movement towards implementation of the regional plan's transportation goals. The updated indicators reveal an improved regional road network, with the notable exception of the City of Gainesville, and higher levels of public transit ridership. Within Gainesville, the region's largest urban area, the level of service of the regional road network appears to have declined while public transit ridership has dramatically increased since adoption of the regional plan in 1996. Excluding Gainesville, public transit ridership has increased region-wide, but at more modest rates.

REGIONAL GOALS AND POLICIES

REGIONAL GOAL 5.1. MAINTAIN A REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK WHICH OPERATES AT OR ABOVE THE MINIMUM LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARD CONTAINED IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLANS.

Regional indicator 5.1.1 notes that as of September, 1995, 95.2 percent of the north central Florida regional road network was operating at or above the minimum operating level of service standard identified in local government comprehensive plans. Between 1995 and 1998, the region experienced a decline in the number of miles of regional road network operating below minimum service level standards. As of December, 1998, 1,324.3 miles, or 97.5 percent, of the regional road network was operating at or above the minimum operating level of service standard identified in local government comprehensive plans.¹

The decline is not attributable to reduced traffic volumes. Rather, it is likely the result of lowered local government level of service standards combined with increased calculated maximum service volumes for certain segments of the regional road network. The increased maximum service volumes are the result of changes in the methodology employed by traffic engineers to determine the maximum traffic volumes for a given level of service standard. Regional road network segments currently operating below minimum level of service standards are identified in Table V-1, below:

¹For roads outside the Gainesville MTPo, Florida State Highway system Level of Service Summary, District II, Florida Department of Transportation, Jacksonville, FL, May 1999. For roads within the Gainesville MTPo, Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Average Annual Traffic Level of Service Report, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, April 4, 2000.

TABLE V-1

**REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK
SEGMENTS CURRENTLY OPERATING BELOW THE ADOPTED MINIMUM LEVEL
OF SERVICE STANDARD**

Road	Jurisdiction	From	To	Length (Miles)
I-75	Alachua Co.	CR 234	SR 331	8.7
I-75	Gainesville/Alachua Co.	SR 24	SR 26	1.3
SR 26	Alachua Co.	Newberry	Gainesville Urban Area Boundary	1.0
SR 26	Alachua Co.	Beginning of 4-lane	I-75	2.4
SR 26	Gainesville	North-South Drive	US 441 (W 13 th Str.)	0.5
SR 26A	Alachua Co.	SR 26 (Newberry Rd.)	SR 121 (W 34 th Str.)	1.8
SR 26	Gainesville/ Alachua Co.	SR 222 (NE 39 th Ave.)	Putnam Co. Line	11.0
SR 24	Alachua Co.	Archer	Gainesville Urban Area Boundary	5.8
U.S. 441	Gainesville	Archer Road	NW 29th Rd.	2.2
SR 121 (NW 34 th Str)	Gainesville	University Ave.	NW 16th Ave.	0.9
US 90	Lake City	I-75	SR 10-A	2.4
US 301	Starke	CR 100A	SR 16	0.9

Sources: For roads outside the Gainesville Urbanized Area, Florida State Highway System Level of Service Summary, District II, Florida Department of Transportation, Jacksonville, FL, May, 1999.

For roads within the Gainesville MTPO, Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Average Annual Traffic Level of Service Report, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, April 4, 2000.

For roads within Gainesville, Gainesville Department of Community Development, March, 2000.

For roads within unincorporated Alachua County inside the Gainesville Urbanized Area, Alachua County Public Works Department, March, 2000.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) allows local governments to set minimum level of service standards for those portions of the State highway system which are not part of the Florida Intrastate highway System. Therefore, it is recommended that Regional Indicator 5.1.1 be replaced with two regional indicators, one which measures the percentage of regional road network comprised of Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) roads operating at or above FDOT's minimum level of service (LOS) standard, and another indicator for non-FIHS facilities operating at or above the minimum LOS standard contained in local government comprehensive plans. Possible wording for the new regional indicators is as follows:

5.1.1. As of January, 1999, 2.5 percent of the north central Florida regional road network, exclusive of FIHS-designated roads, operated below the minimum operating level of service standard identified in local government comprehensive plans.

5.1.2. As of January, 1999, 3.9 percent of that portion of the north central Florida regional road network comprised of FIHS-designated roads operated below the minimum operating level of service standard established by the Florida Department of Transportation.

The regional plan currently identifies 65.2 miles of regional road network anticipated to drop below the minimum LOS by 2011. A review the most recent FDOT, City of Gainesville, and Alachua County level of service studies reveals that the number of miles anticipated to drop by 2011 has increased to 132.25. The majority of declining road segments are located within Alachua County and the City of Gainesville. Table V-2, below, identifies the segments of the regional road network anticipated to drop below the minimum level of service standard.

**TABLE V-2
REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK SEGMENTS ANTICIPATED TO DROP BELOW THE
ADOPTED MINIMUM LOS BY 2011**

Road	Jurisdiction	From	To	Miles
I-10	Suwannee County	SR 51	CR 137	9.33
I-75	Alachua County	Marion County Line	CR 234	0.99
I-75	Alachua County	CR 234	Gainesville Urban Area Boundary	7.42
US 27	Alachua County	Columbia County Line	High Springs	1.00
US 41	Columbia County	Guderon Rd.	I-10	2.69
US 90	Suwannee County	I-10	Live Oak	5.45
US 90	Live Oak	Live Oak City Limits	SR 51/US 129	1.66
US 90	Lake City	SR 10-A	US 441	0.90
US 301	Starke	Starke City Limits	CR 100A	0.87
US 301	Starke	CR 100A	SR 16	0.92
US 441	City of Alachua	SR 235	City of Alachua City Limits	2.25
US 441/41	Columbia County	I-75	US 441	10.70
US 441	Lake City	SR 10A	US 90	0.43
US 441	Lake city	US 90	Lake City City Limits	1.06

Road	Jurisdiction	From	To	Miles
SR 10A	Lake City	US 90	US 41	0.84
SR 20/SR 26	Gainesville	SR 331	SR 26	0.25
SR 20	Alachua County	CR 232	Hawthorne City Limits	5.22
SR 20	Alachua County	Hawthorne City Limits	Putnam County Line	1.48
SR 21	Bradford County	Putnam County Line	Clay County Line	3.56
SR 24	Alachua County	Levy County Line	Archer City Limits	1.88
SR 24	City of Archer	Archer City Limits	Archer City Limits	1.25
SR 24	Alachua County	Archer City Limits	Gainesville Urban Area Boundary	5.75
SR 24	Alachua County	I-75	SW 16th Ave.	2.40
SR 26	Gilchrist County	Fanning Springs City Limits	Trenton City Limits	6.90
SR 26	Gilchrist County	Trenton City Limits	Alachua County Line	9.30
SR 26	Alachua County	I-75	NW 8th Ave.	0.87
SR 26	Newberry	Gilchrist County Line	SR 45	3.02
SR 26	Newberry	SR 45	Newberry City Limits	4.43
SR 26	Alachua County	Newberry City Limits	Gainesville Urban Area Boundary	1.02
SR 26	Alachua County	Beginning of 4-lane	I-75	2.43
SR 26	Gainesville	NW 34th Str.	North-South Drive	1.40
SR 26	Alachua County	SR 222	US 301	5.52
SR 26	Alachua County	US 301	Putnam County Line	5.52
SR 47	Columbia County	I-75	Lake City City Limits	3.06
SR 121	Alachua County	Levy County Line	Gainesville Urban Area Boundary	6.59
SR 121	Gainesville	NW 8th Ave.	NW 34th Str.	1.70
SR 222	Alachua County	NE 27th Ave.	SR 26	2.06
SR 222	Alachua County	W of I-75 ramps	NW 83rd Str.	1.17
SR 222	Alachua County	NW 83rd Str.	Gainesville City Limits	2.47
SR 222	Gainesville	NW 43rd Str.	US 441	3.00
SR 247	Columbia County	CR 242	Gainesville Urban Area Boundary	5.07
SR 247	Lake City	Lake City City Limits	US 90	0.42
Total Mileage				134.25

Sources: For roads outside the Gainesville Urbanized Area, Florida State Highway System Level of Service Summary, District II, Florida Department of Transportation, Jacksonville, FL, May, 1999.

For roads within the Gainesville MTPo, Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area Average Annual Traffic Level of Service Report, North Central Florida Regional Planning Council, April 4, 2000.

For roads within Gainesville, Gainesville Department of Community Development, March, 2000.

For roads within unincorporated Alachua County inside the Gainesville Urbanized Area, Alachua County Public Works Department, March, 2000.

It is recommended that two additional regional indicators be added to Regional Goal 5.1 which identify the number of miles of regional road network anticipated to drop below the minimum applicable level of service standard. Possible wording for the new regional indicators is as follows:

5.1.3. As of January, 1999, 8.4 percent of the north central Florida regional road network, exclusive of FIHS-designated roads, are anticipated to drop below the minimum operating level of service standard identified in local government comprehensive plans by 2011.

5.1.4. As of January, 1999, 13.9 percent of that portion of the north central Florida regional road network comprised of FIHS-designated roads, are anticipated to drop below the minimum operating level of service standard established by the Florida Department of Transportation by 2011.

Table V-3, below, identifies major improvements to the regional road network which were completed between July, 1996, and December, 1999. Major completed projects include the widening of Interstate Highway 75 from four to six lanes throughout the region. Aside from I-75, additional lanes were added to approximately 6.9 miles of regional road network during this period. Most of the additional lane mileage was added in Alachua County. Eight turn lane projects were completed throughout the region at regional road intersections. Four of these projects were in Alachua County.

**TABLE V-3
COMPLETED REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS
1996-1999^a**

Jurisdiction	Project	From	To	Length (miles)	Description
Gainesville	SR 129 (NE 23 rd Ave @ NE 9 th Street				Added turn lanes
Gainesville	US 441/SR 20 @ CR 235A				Added left turn lanes
Gainesville/Alachua County	SR 121 (SW 34 th Str)	SR 331 (Williston Rd)	SR 24 (Archer Rd)	1.6	Added lanes
Alachua County	SR 26	CR 241 North	End of Curb & Gutter	2.56	Added lanes
Alachua County	SR 331 (Williston Rd)@SW 23 rd Str				Added left turn lanes
Gainesville	SR 226 (SW 16 th Ave) @ Entrance to VA Hospital				Added left turn lanes

Jurisdiction	Project	From	To	Length (miles)	Description
Alachua County	I-75	Marion Co. line	S of SR 121 (Williston Rd)	9.30	Added lanes
Gainesville/Alachua County	I-75	S of SR 121 (Williston Rd)	S of SR 222 (NW 39 th Ave)	7.39	Added lanes
Lake City	SR 10 (Duval Str)	Division Str	Lamond Ave.	1.10	Added lanes
Lake City/Columbia County	US 90 W	E of I-75	SR 247 (Branford Hwy)	1.25	Added lanes
Lake City	US 41 @ Waldo Str				Added left turn lanes
Lake City/Columbia County	I-75	S of I-10	Suwannee Co. line	3.73	Added lanes
Columbia County	I-75	Alachua Co. line	M.O. 9.8	9.80	Added lanes
Lake City/Columbia County	I-75	S of US 90	I-10	7.70	Added lanes
Lake City/Columbia County	I-75	M.P. 9.8	S of US 90	9.20	Added lanes
Gilchrist County	SR 26	Wacassassa Rd	CR 337N	1.39	Added left turn lanes
Gilchrist County	SR 26 @ CR 55A				Added left turn lanes
Hamilton County	I-75	Suwannee Co. Line	N of SR 51	9.78	Added lanes
Hamilton County	I-75	N of SR 51	N of SR 6	9.40	Added lanes
Hamilton County	I-75	N of SR 6	Georgia state line	9.57	Added lanes
Suwannee County	US 129	Palm Ave	I-10	.36	Added turn lanes

^aExcludes road improvements not deemed to increase road way capacity, such as replacement traffic signals, resurfacing, and widening projects.

Source: Florida Department of Transportation, District II, Lake City, FL, June, 2000.

Table V-4, below, identifies scheduled improvements to the regional road network between 2000 and 2005, as identified by the FDOT and the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area (MTPO). The table identifies 36.9 miles of regional road network scheduled for the construction of additional lanes and 17 intersection turn lane projects. Most of the new construction is scheduled to occur within Alachua County.

TABLE V-4
SCHEDULED REGIONAL ROAD NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS
2000-2005

Jurisdiction	Project	From	To	Length (miles)	Description
Gainesville MPO	SR 222 AT: I-75	I-75/SR 222	I-75/SR 222		Replace 2-lane bridge with 4-lane bridge with sidewalks & bike trail over I-75
Gainesville MPO	SR 26 AT: SW 5th Ter AT: W 6th Str				Intersection Improvements: Realignment/Turn Bay/Lane
Gainesville MPO	SR 24 AT: Fred Bear Dr AT: SW 40th Blvd				Intersection Improvements: Realignment/Turn Bay/Lane
Gainesville MPO	SR 222 (NW 39th Ave) AT: SR 121 (NW 34th Str)				Intersection Improvements: Realignment/Turn Bay/Lane
Gainesville MPO	SR 331 (Williston Rd) AT: I-75				Intersection Improvements: Realignment/Turn Bay/Lane
	SR 26 (Newberry Rd)	W of CR 241	CR 241	1.6	Add lanes
	SR 20 (Hawthome Rd)	Lakeshore Dr	CR 235	5.5	Add lanes
Alachua County	US 441 @ CR 235A				Add left turn lanes
Alachua County	SR 121	SR 331	SR 24		Add lanes & reconstruct
Alachua County	SR 20	End of curb and gutter	CR 325	5.452	Add lanes & reconstruct
Alachua County	SR 24	SR 45	Parker Rd	3.52	Add lanes & reconstruct

Jurisdiction	Project	From	To	Length (miles)	Description
Alachua County	SR 20	CR 325	US 301	6.223	Add lanes & reconstruct
Alachua County	SR 26	W of CR 241		1.601	Add lanes & reconstruct
Alachua County	SR 26	SR 45 W of CR 241		4.970	Add lanes & reconstruct
Alachua County	SR 26 @ W 266 Str				Add left turn lanes
Bradford	SR 200 @ CR 225				Traffic Signal
Columbia	SR 10	Division Str	Lamond Ave.	1.251	Add Lanes & Reconstruct
Columbia	SR 47	I-75	US 41	3.733	Add Lanes & Reconstruct
Columbia	US 90	E of I-75	E of Commerce Blvd	0.218	Add Lanes & Rehab Pavement
Columbia	US 90	E of I-75 to SR 247	SR 247	1.251	Add Lanes & Reconstruct
Columbia	US 41/441 @ CR 778 @ CR 18 @ CR 238				Add Turn Lanes
Columbia	US 441 @ Waldo Street				Add Left Turn Lane
Columbia	SR 247 @ CR 242				Add Turn Lane
Columbia	SR 247 @ CR 242B				Add Turn Lane
Columbia	SR 47 @ CR 240 @King Rd				Add Turn Lanes
Gilchrist	SR 26 @ Wacassassa Rd @ CR 337				Add Left Turn Lanes
Columbia	SR 26 @ CR 341				Add Left Turn Lanes
Hamilton	SR 145 @ Linvingston Str				Add Right Turn Lanes
Suwannee	US 90 @ Mitchell Rd @CR 133				Add Left Turn Lanes
Taylor	US 27 @ Center Str				Add Left Turn Lanes

Jurisdiction	Project	From	To	Length (miles)	Description
Union	S 121 @ Rec Complex Rd				Add Left Turn Lanes

Sources: Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization for the Gainesville Urbanized Area, Fiscal Years 1999/2000 - 2003/2004 Transportation Improvement Program, July, 1999.

Florida Department of Transportation, District II, Florida's Adopted Five Year Work Program, July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2004, Lake City, Florida, July 1, 1999.

It is recommended that tables V-1 through V-4 be incorporated into the Regional Transportation Element conditions and trends statement.

REGIONAL GOAL 5.2. MITIGATE ADVERSE IMPACTS TO REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH ENROLLMENT GROWTH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA.

The indicators for this regional goal note that, as of September, 1995, the University of Florida had no off-campus parking areas. Furthermore, as of September, 1995, the University of Florida offered no night classes. Also, during the 1994-95 school year, the University of Florida housed 24.5 percent of its students on-campus.

While the updated data is not directly comparable, it nevertheless suggests that the university has made some movement toward implementing Regional Goal 5.2. Most notably, the university has added night classes. During the fall, 1999, semester, 593 class sessions with a duplicated enrollment of 20,357 began after 5:00 pm on week nights.² Although no off-campus parking lots have been constructed, the number of students housed on-campus has increased. During the 1994-95 school year, 5,692 students, or 17.7 percent of the student body, lived in on-campus housing (exclusive of fraternities and sororities). During the 1999-2000 school year, the number of students residing in on-campus dormitories rose to 6,908. However, due to increased enrollment at the university, the percentage of students living in on-campus dormitories dropped to 16.0 percent of the student body. In the fall of 1994, the university's enrollment was 37,343 students. By the fall of 1999, enrollment had increased to 43,046.³

²Office of Institutional Research in conjunction with the Office of the University Registrar, University of Florida, June, 2000. Based on weekday classes beginning after 5:00 pm. If a course meets Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, it is counted as three class sessions since it meets three times. The number of students equals the students in each class session. Therefore, a class of 30 students which meets three times per week equals 90 students in the reported student statistic. Excludes TV replay classes which do not require on-campus attendance.

³Office of Campus Planning and Construction Management, University of Florida, June, 2000.

The university's Office of Campus Planning and Construction Management indicates the number of students living in on-campus fraternities and sororities is not readily available. Therefore, it is recommended that Policy 5.2.2 be revised to track only those students living in on-campus dormitories. Possible wording for the revised policy is as follows:

Policy 5.2.2. Increase the percentage of students living in on-campus dormitories ~~on campus~~ from the ~~current~~ 1999-2000 school year level of ~~24.5~~ 16.0 percent.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the current regional indicators for Regional Goal 5.2 be replaced with the following:

5.2.1 During the 1999-2000 school year, the University of Florida had no off-campus parking areas.

5.2.2. During the fall, 1999 semester, the University of Florida offered 593 class sessions with a duplicated enrollment of 20,357 beginning after 5:00 pm on week nights.

5.2.3. During the 1999-2000 school year, 16.0 percent of University of Florida students lived in on-campus dormitories.

REGIONAL GOAL 5.3. MAXIMIZE THE USE OF THE GAINESVILLE REGIONAL AIRPORT BEFORE DEVELOPING A NEW REGIONAL AIRPORT.

Regional Indicator 5.3.1 notes that, in 1992, Gainesville Regional Airport enplaned 140,134 passengers and 212 tons of freight cargo. In 1994, Gainesville Regional Airport enplaned 134,346 passengers and 255 tons of freight cargo.⁴ Between 1996 and 1999, enplaned passengers decreased by 6.0 percent, from 328,076 in 1996 to 308,263 in 1999.⁵ The 1994 cargo data is the most recent data available.

Regional Policy 5.3.1 calls for the coordination of development plans between the airport authority, the city, and the county to avoid unnecessary conflicts, to ensure the safety of airport operations, and to allow for future increases in the operational capacity of the airport. Regional review of local government comprehensive plan amendments affecting the airport have focused on implementation of this regional policy. The decline in passenger traffic is not believed to be the result of any conflicts or restraints placed upon the airport as a result of local government comprehensive plan policies or development constructed near the airport since adoption of the regional plan in 1996. It is recommended that the regional indicator be updated to reflect the 1999 passenger enplanement data and the 1994 cargo data.

REGIONAL GOAL 5.4. REDUCE THE UNMET GENERAL TRIP DEMAND OF THE

⁴1997 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 13.92.

⁵"Gainesville Regional Airport Passengers Deplaned, Enplaned", Gainesville Regional Airport Authority, July, 2000, Gainesville, FL.

NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED POPULATION.

Regional Indicator 5.4.1 notes that an estimated 807,917 general demand trips for the transportation disadvantaged, 82.8 percent of total estimated demand, were unmet in 1995. No new information is available on unmet trips for the transportation disadvantaged population. It is anticipated that new estimates will be published after the release of the year 2000 census. Therefore, paratransit ridership statistics are used as a proxy measure since most paratransit trips are made by the transportation disadvantaged. As indicated in Table V-5, north central Florida paratransit ridership decreased by 6.6 percent between 1996 and 1999.

The decline in ridership has not been as pronounced outside of Alachua County. For the 10-county area exclusive of Alachua County, paratransit ridership increased by 6.2 percent during this period. Similarly, while paratransit funding levels for the region was flat during this period, the 10-county area experienced a 5.5 percent increase in funding. Alachua County paratransit funding decreased by 7.1 percent between 1996 and 1999.

In 1999, the region's transportation disadvantaged transit service providers experienced a drop in Medicaid transportation funding. Additionally, in 1999, the state's Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, a primary funding source for the state's transportation disadvantaged service providers, ran out of surplus funds which were relied upon in previous years to fund service providers. The depletion of the surplus resulted in a drop in funding from this revenue source in 1999. It is unclear what impacts these declining revenue sources will have on future paratransit ridership.

TABLE V-5

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA PARATRANSIT RIDERSHIP
FISCAL YEARS 1995-96 AND 1998-99**

County	FY 1995-96	FY 1998-99	Pct. Change
Alachua	239,337	176,078	-26.4
Bradford	42,945	61,048	42.2
Columbia, Hamilton, Suwannee	190,467	201,169	5.6
Dixie	11,850	12,050	1.7
Gilchrist	4,969	6,056	21.9
Lafayette	11,785	12,282	4.2
Madison	37,041	36,296	-2.0
Taylor	39,057	33,773	-13.5
Union	31,407	29,802	-5.1
Region	608,858	568,554	-6.6
Region w/o Al. Co.	369,521	392,476	6.2

Source: 1996 & 1999 Annual Performance Reports, Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, Tallahassee, Florida.

TABLE V-6

**NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA PARATRANSIT FUNDING
FISCAL YEARS 1995-96 AND 1998-99**

County	FY 1995-96	FY 1998-99	Pct. Change
Alachua	\$2,361,806	\$2,192,689	-7.1
Bradford	366,330	341,602	-6.8
Columbia, Hamilton, Suwannee	929,921	836,887	-10.0
Dixie	326,320	442,055	35.5
Gilchrist	119,319	137,976	15.6
Lafayette	171,593	152,952	-10.9
Madison	445,048	617,026	38.6
Taylor	482,117	454,970	-5.6
Union	204,565	228,757	11.8
Region	5,407,019	5,404,914	0.0
Region w/o Al. Co.	3,045,213	3,212,225	5.5

Source: 1996 & 1999 Annual Performance Reports, Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged, Tallahassee, Florida.

Given the infrequency of the decennial census, it is recommended that the following regional indicators be added to this regional goal:

5.4.2. In fiscal year 1998-99, 568,554 paratransit trips were made in the region.

5.4.3. In fiscal year 1998-99, north central Florida paratransit service providers reported annual operating revenues of \$5,404,914.

It is further recommended that tables V-5 and V-6 be incorporated into the Regional Transportation Element conditions and trends statement.

REGIONAL GOAL 5.5. INCREASE THE PERCENTAGE OF NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA RESIDENTS USING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AS A PRIMARY MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION.

Regional Indicator 5.5.1 notes that in 1990, 1.2 percent of northcentral Florida residents used public transportation as a primary means of travel to work.⁶ Although the data source for the indicators is the 1995 Florida Statistical Abstract, the abstract obtains its data from the decennial census. The year 2000 census data will not be published until after the Council's January, 2001, submittal deadline. Therefore, public transit ridership statistics for the Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS), the region's largest public transit system, is used as a proxy measure. Between 1996 and 1999 RTS fixed route ridership increased by 65.2 percent, from 1,148,568 to 3,299,933.⁷ The growth in ridership was primarily due to the University of Florida student government providing a subsidy to RTS in exchange for allowing university students to ride the system free of charge. Therefore, it is recommended that the following regional indicator be added to this regional goal:

5.5.2. The 1999 Gainesville Regional Transit System fixed-route ridership was 3,299,933.

IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

The Regional Transportation Element supports local government comprehensive plans by calling for non-FIHS facilities which are part of the regional road network to operate at or above the minimum level of service standard established in local government comprehensive plans. For FIHS facilities, the regional plan calls for minimum level of service standards as established by the Florida Department of Transportation. All north central Florida local government comprehensive plans, with the exception of the City of Gainesville Transportation Concurrency Exception Area, call for these minimum level of service standards.

IMPACT OF CHANGES IN STATE STATUTES AND RULES AS WELL AS THE STATE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Growth Policy Act, enacted by the Chapter 99-378, Laws of Florida, will necessitate changes to the element's goals and policies. The act allows for the creation of Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas (TCEAs) under certain circumstances within urban areas for purposes of encouraging infill development and redevelopment in order to reduce urban sprawl. Additionally, the act calls for regional agencies such as regional planning councils to promote urban infill and redevelopment. The act allows the creation of TCEAs for areas identified in local government comprehensive plans as urban infill and redevelopment areas. To assure consistency with the act, it is recommended that Regional Goal 5.1 be amended as follows:

⁶Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida, 1995 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 13.01.

⁷Gainesville Rapid Transit System, June 2000.

REGIONAL GOAL 5.1. Maintain a regional road network which operates at or above the minimum level of service standard contained in local government comprehensive plans for those segments located outside Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas.

SUCSESSES AND SHORTCOMINGS

The successes of the Regional Transportation Element have been identified in other sections of this report and will not be repeated here. Most of the shortcomings appear to be linked to a lack of funds for infrastructure improvements. Perhaps the most significant shortcoming of the regional plan has been the City of Gainesville's adoption of a TCEA, which allows segments of the regional road network within the TCEA not part of the FIHS to drop below the minimum level of service standard contained in the city's comprehensive plan. The TCEA is viewed as a shortcoming as it is a formal recognition by a local government of its inability to maintain the minimum level of service standard established in its comprehensive plan for roads within the TCEA. Another shortcoming has been the lack of construction of off-campus parking facilities by the University of Florida. Finally, paratransit ridership levels for the transportation disadvantaged have declined slightly since 1996.

UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Annual reports prepared by the Council since 1996 contain a section entitled Upcoming Activities, which outlines actions and work activities of the Council for the upcoming year. While Regional Transportation activities contained in the annual reports are consistent with the goals and policies of the Regional Transportation Element, the annual report statements represent an unanticipated opportunity to amend regional plan policies to more accurately reflect Council actions in support of regional goals.

The 1996, 1997, 1998, and 1999 annual reports state that the Council will continue to conduct studies to coordinate transportation services to disadvantaged individuals and to provide staff support to county coordinating boards. This action is consistent with Regional Policy 5.4.3 which calls for the Council to provide technical assistance to designated north central Florida community transportation coordinators. Additionally, the 1997, 1998, and 1999 annual reports contain the following Upcoming Activities statements:

Working in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation, Council staff will update this five-year funding program of transportation projects for the Gainesville metropolitan area;

Each year, Council staff will update level of service information concerning the amount of traffic congestion on arterial and collector roads in the Gainesville metropolitan area;

The MTPO will review the currently adopted long-range transportation plan to identify whether any changes need to be made in the project priority list;

Annual bicycle counts will be taken at a number of intersections in the Gainesville metropolitan area to monitor bicycle ridership trends.

These actions are consistent with Regional Policy 5.1.5, which calls for the Council to provide technical assistance to the Gainesville Urban Area Metropolitan Transportation Organization. Therefore, no amendments are proposed as a result of the unanticipated problems and opportunities.

**NEED FOR PLAN AMENDMENTS AND NEW ACTIONS TO ADDRESS PLANNING
ISSUES IDENTIFIED IN THE EAR**

Various recommendations have been included in earlier sections of this review regarding possible changes to the plan's Regional Transportation Element. This section recaps the recommended amendments.

1. Replace Regional Indicator 5.1.1 with two regional indicators, one which measures the percentage of regional road network which is comprised of FIHS roads operating at or above FDOT's minimum LOS, and another regional indicator for non-FIHS facilities operating at or above the minimum LOS contained in local government comprehensive plans. Possible wording for the new regional indicators is as follows:

5.1.1. As of January, 1999, 2.5 percent of the north central Florida regional road network, exclusive of FIHS-designated roads, operated at or above the minimum operating level of service standard identified in local government comprehensive plans.

5.1.2. As of January, 1999, 3.9 percent of that portion of the north central Florida regional road network comprised of FIHS-designated roads operated at or above the minimum operating level of service standard established by the Florida Department of Transportation.

2. Add two regional indicators to Regional Goal 5.1 which identify the number of miles of regional road network anticipated to drop below the minimum applicable level of service standard. Possible wording for the new regional indicators is as follows:

5.1.3. As of January, 1999, 8.4 percent of the north central Florida regional road network, comprised of non-FIHS roads, are anticipated to drop below the minimum operating level of service standard identified in local government comprehensive plans by 2011.

5.1.4. As of January, 1999, 13.9 percent of that portion of the north central Florida regional road network comprised of FIHS-designated roads, are anticipated to drop below the minimum operating level of service standard established by the Florida Department of Transportation by 2011.

3. Incorporate tables V-1 through V-4 into the Regional Transportation Element conditions and trends statement.

4. Amend Policy 5.2.2 to track only those students living in on-campus dormitories. Possible wording for the revised policy is as follows:

Policy 5.2.2. Increase the percentage of students living in on-campus dormitories ~~on campus~~ from the ~~current~~ 1999-2000 school year level of ~~24.5~~ 16.0 percent.

5. Update the regional indicators for Regional Goal 5.2 as follows:

5.2.1 During the 1999-2000 school year, the University of Florida had no off-campus parking areas.

5.2.2. During the fall, 1999 semester, the University of Florida offered 593 class sessions with a duplicated enrollment of 20,357 beginning after 5:00 pm on week nights.

5.2.3. During the 1999-2000 school year, 16.0 percent of University of Florida students lived in on-campus, non-fraternity/sorority housing.

6. Amend Regional Indicator 5.3.1 to reflect 1994 data on traffic at Gainesville Regional Airport. Possible wording for the amended regional indicators follows:

5.3.1. In 1999, Gainesville Regional Airport enplaned 308,263 passengers. In 1994, the airport enplaned 255 tons of freight cargo.⁸

7. Add the following regional indicators to Regional Goal 5.4:

5.4.2. In fiscal year 1998-99, 568,554 paratransit trips were made in the region.

5.4.3 In fiscal year 1998-99, north central Florida paratransit service providers reported annual operating revenues of \$5,404,914.

8. Incorporate tables V-5 and V-6 into the Regional Transportation Element conditions and trends statement.

9. Add the following regional indicator to Regional Goal 5.5:

5.5.2. The 1999 Gainesville Regional Transit System fixed-route ridership was 3,299,933.

⁸“Gainesville Regional Airport Passengers Deplaned, Enplaned”, Gainesville Regional Airport Authority, July, 2000, Gainesville, FL, and 1997 Florida Statistical Abstract, Table 13.92.

10. Amend Regional Goal 5.1 to recognize Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas. Possible wording for the amendments follows:

REGIONAL GOAL 5.1. Maintain a regional road network which operates at or above the minimum level of service standard contained in local government comprehensive plans for those segments located outside Transportation Concurrency Exception Areas.