

Transportation Authorities Monitored by the Florida Transportation Commission and those Authorities' Relationship with the Department of Transportation

The Florida Transportation Commission (FTC) monitors the efficiency and effectiveness of transportation authorities created under Chapters 343, 348 and 349, Florida Statutes. There are both active and inactive Authorities: Active Authorities are currently operating or actively planning facilities; Inactive Authorities do not operate any facilities, are not in the planning stage and some meet rarely if ever.

Active Authorities
Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX)
Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)
Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX)
Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority (NFTCA)
Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA)
Santa Rosa Bay Bridge Authority (SRBBA)
South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA/Tri Rail)
Southwest Florida Expressway Authority (SWFEA)
Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA)
Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority (THEA)
Inactive Authorities
Brevard County Expressway Authority
Broward County Expressway Authority
Pasco County Expressway Authority
St. Lucie County Expressway and Bridge Authority
Seminole County Expressway Authority
Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority

The Commission has developed performance measures, operating indicators and governance criteria which are used to assess each authority's compliance with Florida "sunshine laws" related to the following: ethical conduct; conflicts of interest; public meetings; notification and operations; compliance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles; applicable laws and bond covenants.

Of the Active Authorities, the Commission has further subdivided those Authorities into "Established Toll Authorities" (currently operating existing toll roads or bridges), "Transit Authorities" (currently operating bus, rail or fixed guideway facilities) and "Emerging Authorities" (those in the planning stages). The unique relationships with the Department are described below:

Established Toll Authorities
Miami-Dade Expressway Authority (MDX) Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority (OOCEA) Santa Rosa Bay Bridge Authority (SRBBA) Tampa Hillsborough County Expressway Authority (THEA)

Each of the above Authorities:

- Is organized and operates similarly, but there are differences;
- Is governed by appointed boards of which the local FDOT District Secretary is a member (ex-officio);
- Has the ability to sell bonds to finance capital programs;
- Operates under either a Lease-Purchase Agreement (OOCEA, THCEA, SRBBA) or an Operating Agreement (MDX) with the FDOT;
- Has a part in regional planning efforts of the MPO's who typically want to know of all major projects – especially capacity enhancement projects – that may be planned in the region. They need this input to accurately adjust their regional transportation model(s) to reflect conditions now and in the future. This model is the base for congestion analysis, air quality assessments, and specific project analyses (transit and highways). So Toll Authority projects need to be coordinated with and included in that model;
- Coordinates with the MPO to develop a “Long Range Transportation Plan” (LRTP) that is fiscally constrained to reflect sources of funds to implement planned improvements. If a toll-road is included and all funding is anticipated to come from tolls then it is usually accepted into the network. For all other transportation improvements the MPO must show anticipated funding sources (state, federal, local, private) that will be used to make the improvement. Projects that will or may use federal funding must be in the LRTP as approved by the MPO;

More specifically:

- OOCEA and MDX may retain surplus revenues and develop 5-year work programs to finance capital projects;
- OOCEA and MDX conduct public hearings during the development of their respective Work Programs and coordinate with local governments, but are not required to take MPO projects as priorities nor must their projects be included in the MPO TIP or STIP (unless federal funds are provided);
- THCEA must send surplus revenues back to the Department to repay long-term debt; as a result, they have no long-term work program though planning activities occur;
- THCEA maintenance and preservation expenses (resurfacing, bridge deck replacement, etc.) are funded in the Department's work program in accordance with the Lease-Purchase agreement which follows the FDOT work program process;
- SRBBA maintenance and preservation expenses will be in the FDOT work program in accordance with the Lease-Purchase agreement and follows the work program process;
- SRBBA is running an operating deficit and is in technical default of its bonds; there are no surplus revenues which can be used for capital improvements;

Transit Authorities

Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority (LYNX)
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Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA)

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA/Tri Rail)
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Each of the above Authorities:

- Must comply with the MPO/TIP/STIP process and those projects funded through the FDOT are included in the FDOT work program;
- Receives both state and federal funds. Some federal funds flow through the FDOT and other federal funds are received directly by the Authorities from the Federal Transit Administration;
- Receives funding in the form of Block Grants (Chapter 341, F.S. for allocation formula), rail maintenance, new starts, etc.

Emerging Authorities
Northwest Florida Transportation Corridor Authority (NFTCA)
Southwest Florida Expressway Authority (SWFEA)
Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA)

Each of the above Authorities:

- Have appointed boards of which the local FDOT District Secretary is an ex-officio member;
- Has the power to sell bonds to finance capital projects;
- Must coordinate with local governments but are not required by statute to take MPO priorities or be included in the TIP or STIP unless federal funds are provided;
- Will require local government approval as specified in statute which may then cause the MPO to include the project in the local TIP/STIP;
- Projects are not in the FDOT work program unless there are loans or other funding agreements;
- Will need to coordinate with the MPO's on the long-range planning process as noted under "established authorities:" above once projects get closer to the Right-of-way and Construction phases;

More specifically:

The NFTCA:

- Has received TRIP (Transportation Regional Incentive Program) and other state funds for Master Planning and planning for specific corridors and those funding arrangements are in the FDOT work program;
- Must adopt a Master Plan and annual updates and must present those to the governing bodies of the counties within the NFTCA jurisdiction;

The SWFEA:

- Has received Toll Facility Revolving Trust Fund loans from the FDOT and those funding arrangements are in the FDOT work program;
- Is charged with the construction of said Southwest Florida Transportation System, within the geographic boundaries of Collier and Lee Counties, and is limited to the pursuit of additional lanes on Interstate Highway 75 within these counties which are tolled as express lanes;
- Shall be authorized to construct any extensions, additions, or improvements to said system or appurtenant facilities, including all necessary approaches, roads, bridges, and avenues of access, with such changes, modifications, or revisions of said project as shall be deemed desirable and

proper with the concurrence of the respective county commissions and the department if the project is to be part of the State Highway System;

- Before they proceed with a proposed project, either the Lee County Commission or the Collier County Commission must approve any proposed project for the system that may be located within the geographical boundaries of that commission's jurisdiction;

The TBARTA:

- Is required by statute to coordinate and consult with local governments on transit or commuter rail station area plans;
- Shall consult with the department to further the goals and objectives of the Strategic Regional Transit Needs Assessment completed by the department;
- Must adopt a Master Plan by July 1, 2009 and must hold one public hearing in each county represented;
- Shall present the original master plan and updates to the governing bodies of the counties within the seven-county region, to the West Central Florida M.P.O. Chairs Coordinating Committee, and to the legislative delegation members representing those counties within 90 days after adoption.
- Shall coordinate plans and projects with the West Central Florida M.P.O. Chairs Coordinating Committee, to the extent practicable, and participate in the regional M.P.O. planning process to ensure regional comprehension of the authority's mission, goals, and objectives