

**OFFICERS:**

**RICHARD H. SIMPSON**  
CHAIRMAN

**SAM F. TURNBULL**  
STATE HIGHWAY ENGINEER

**RALPH W. HARTFIELD**  
SECRETARY

**STEPHEN C. O'CONNELL**  
ATTORNEY



**STATE ROAD DEPARTMENT OF FLORIDA**  
**TALLAHASSEE**

**MEMBERS:**

**W. HOWARD FRANKLAND**  
GAINESVILLE, FLA.

**EARL F. POWERS**  
GAINESVILLE, FLA.

**RICHARD H. SIMPSON**  
MONTICELLO, FLA.

**THOMAS S. MANUEL**  
FT. LAUDERDALE, FLA.

**J. BARTON LLOYD**  
BAYTOWN BEACH, FLA.

April 15, 1953

**FLORIDA TURNPIKE REPORT**  
**By the FLORIDA STATE ROAD DEPARTMENT**

One of the items of unfinished business facing the State Road Department in January, 1953, was the recommendation of the previous Board to build a self liquidating limited access toll turnpike from the vicinity of Jacksonville to Miami, and to build a connection from this road to the West Coast. It was quickly apparent that the proposed western leg of this proposal was unsound financially. The engineering firm of Coverdale & Colpitts in December, 1952, found that the western leg was not only unsound, but if tied to the north-south route, both would be unsound. This much was immediately apparent after a study of the two 1952 reports by Parsons, Brinckerhoff, Hall & Macdonald and the one report by Coverdale & Colpitts. Investigation proved these to be two of the outstanding engineering firms of the United States. Yet the former recommended as financially sound the route as recommended by the Florida Road Board in 1952, while the latter found the two together to be unsound while the north-south route was found to be feasible. This difference of opinion among two of the recognized experts in their field caused the present Road Board to be extremely cautious. It was our feeling, however, that the matter was

Stuart and Miami at this time, because this is the area of greatest traffic congestion. There can be no doubt that this area needs traffic relief at the earliest possible moment.

For the above reasons we hereby offer the following recommendations in regard to the Florida Turnpike:

1. That a tollpike be constructed as soon as practical with its northern extremity in the vicinity of Stuart, and its southern extremity in the vicinity of Miami. That the turnpike be of limited access, and that commercial establishments on the right of way be limited to the lowest number of vendors of food and fuel necessary for the comfort and convenience of the traveling public. Experience in the operation of this turnpike will determine the advisability of extending it northward.

2. Financing. We suggest two alternate plans of financing.

a. Through the sale of non recourse revenue certificates, with no liability to the State or State Road Department. Before issuing the revenue certificates the method of financing should be approved by the Turnpike Authority, the State Road Department, and the State Board of Administration, composed of the Governor, the Comptroller and the Treasurer. While there is a reluctance at this time to consider time payments for public benefits, still we must remember that private enterprise uses this method to advantage. Railroads, air lines, power companies, large hotels, sewer systems and other capital undertakings are largely financed by the sale of bonds or revenue certificates.

b. Through a pay-as-you-go plan. Because of the large number of bridge structures it will take two to three years to build this turnpike under any plan. We would fail in our duty if we did not call

attention to a pay-as-you-go possibility. The money from the sale of automobile license tags, (other than that going to schools by constitutional amendment) is now being diverted to the General Fund. If this amount of money were appropriated to this turnpike for a little over three years, the highway could be built without interest charges. This would save 50% of the total, and we would get twice as much highway for the money spent. The tolls could then either come back to the General Fund or go to the State Road Department for use on the primary system. We must look ahead to our highway needs. The present revenue is admittedly inadequate. Revenue from a successful toll turnpike could solve the financial problems of future Florida road builders.

3. That it be built by the Florida Turnpike Authority if such an authority is authorized by the Florida Legislature. That this method be followed in preference to financing through the Improvement Commission. After careful study we recommend the Turnpike Authority rather than the private system of building. It is our further recommendation that Florida business leaders be drafted to serve on the Authority, and that their terms be staggered to take politics out of the management of this important state agency.

Our reason for recommending against building the turnpike by a private corporation can be summarized into three statements. First, if it is good for private industry, it is good for the State. Second, it would be necessary to have State control of a private corporation through members on the Board of Directors in order to control costs so that the road could be turned over to the State with all bills paid in the shortest

possible time. Third, a private corporation would have to pay corporation income taxes, advalorem tax on the highway, and many other taxes which would materially increase the total cost.

Our reason for suggesting Legislative approval hinges around two points. First, many lawyers have considerable doubt concerning the legal authority of the Improvement Commission to undertake a project of this kind. Our second reason is that we feel the project is too large and too important to Florida to be determined by nine men. (The Road Board is composed of five members, and its chairman is a member of the five-man Improvement Commission). From a legal standpoint it would be better to have direct Legislative directive. From a democratic standpoint it would be more desirable that the responsibility for the decision include the people's elected representation in the Legislature.

4. That a continuing study be made of the route to be followed north of Stuart, and that the balance of the north and south route be built if it is determined to be financially sound by the Turnpike Authority and such determination approved by the Legislature.

5. It is our recommendation that the Turnpike Authority be separate and distinct from the State Road Department, but that overlapping membership would be desirable in order that the Authority might avail itself of the facilities and personnel of the Road Department organization.

of great enough importance to the State to require us to make a thorough and complete investigation of all possibilities for solving the problem of travel from the Georgia line to the southern end of Florida.

It was apparent that the spectacular growth of Florida in recent years and the desire of tourists to visit all sections of Florida makes some new through North and South highway desirable. There can be no doubt that a free State financed highway would be most desirable. A thorough study was made of this possibility. The cost of such a highway would be between \$175,000,000 and \$200,000,000, depending on the route and the type of construction. Four cents of the seven cent gasoline tax is used by the Road Department to maintain and construct the primary highways in Florida. One cent of the gasoline tax brings in between nine and ten million dollars annually. Taking the high figure, we might expect \$40,000,000 of State funds each year. This can be matched by available amounts from the Federal Bureau of Roads to raise the total to close to \$50,000,000 per year for primary road purposes. Regular maintenance and administration must be deducted, leaving about \$36,000,000 available for primary construction and rehabilitation. The other three cents of the gasoline tax are going at the present time to construction and maintenance of the secondary system of roads. In order to deal in smaller figures, let's break this down. There are five Districts in Florida. It is not always customary to divide the money evenly, but for comparison let's break it down that way. Then each District might expect to spend about seven million dollars each year on primary highways. For the extreme example let us look at the Second District more closely. This District includes Nassau County on the north,

the City of Jacksonville, and south to the St. Johns County line. It extends west to the west boundary of Madison County, and thence back south including Gainesville. Let us keep in mind that in all this territory we have approximately seven million dollars to spend each year. We now know the size of this District and the amount of money available for it. Let us look at some of the immediate needs. We cannot look at all of them because of the need to keep this report brief, but here are some of them:

1. The Jacksonville Expressway. A firm commitment by the former Board to complete the job. Amount needed . . . \$36,000,000, or approximately all of the income of the District for five years.

2. Material improvement to U. S. Highways #1, #17 and #301 in the District. These are very badly needed improvements and \$15,000,000 would not be a high estimate.

3. Improvement to U. S. Highway #90 for a distance of at least fifty miles at a cost of \$4,000,000.

4. Improving U. S. Highway #41, about \$5,000,000.

5. Four-lane and rebuild U. S. Highway #19 from Capps to Chiefland. This is one of the most dangerous and most seriously overloaded roads in all Florida. Ten million dollars could be spent to advantage here.

6. Other needed improvements in this District will total at least \$20,000,000.

The above figures are just round numbers and the estimates are not presumed to be accurate, but they do point out that in this one District today there is need for between ninety and one hundred millions

of dollars to be expended on primary highway improvement. This, of course, is twelve to fourteen times the amount of money currently available each year in the District. At the current rate of income for road building it is easy to see that we are at least twelve years behind in this District. The other Districts are not too different, although the problem of the Jacksonville Expressway makes the needs in the Second District extraordinary.

With the above needs in mind it was not too difficult to decide that there was absolutely no use to seriously consider the building of a north to south highway with State funds to meet the present day needs.

One alternative considered was the four-laning of U. S. Highway #1. While this is essential and highly desirable, it will not fill the need for a north and south turnpike unless most of the cities and towns on its route are by-passed. This by-passing would be very expensive and would materially lengthen the highway. It is our belief that this highway is used by sufficient numbers of local people and tourists, with headquarters at some city on the highway, together with local truck hauling, to make the four-laning of this road necessary at this time. This project has been commenced by this Board.

The only other alternative seems to be a limited access highway to be paid for by those who use it. For almost the same reasons listed above, other states have turned to this type of highway for relief from traffic congestion caused by the largest number of cars ever on our highways and by the apparent desire of our people to see more of their native land. The five day week in the industrial areas is an actuality. Retirement

ment systems and planned vacation times are taking our people to the highways of this country by the millions. The States of Pennsylvania, Maine, Oklahoma, Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, New York, New Jersey and Georgia have written turnpike enabling Acts into their statutes. Many other states are now considering similar action.

The following are extracts from 1953 messages of Governors to State Legislatures:

Gov. Dan Thornton of Colorado: "If you and I, as leaders of Colorado, have the vision and courage, we can assure Colorado and its future generations the great benefits that will accrue from a modern trans-continental highway by planning now for an adequate tunnel under the Continental divide." (He suggested tolls as one method of construction of the tunnel.)

Gov. William G. Stratton of Illinois: "I suggest that the Legislature give immediate and serious consideration to the possibility of . . . super or specialized traffic highways to be financed through tolls."

Gov. William S. Beardsley of Iowa: "Iowa stands athwart a main east-west artery of highway commerce of our nation. If we do not furnish the cross-country link, it is probable that other states will do so. With the rapid development of toll road systems in the various states of the nation, we should be prepared to deal with any and all eventualities."

Gov. Edward F. Arn of Kansas: "A few years hence will undoubtedly see a turnpike constructed east to west across the nation. Kansas should be prepared to have such a route pass within its borders . . . I believe the turnpike is the answer to many of our highway problems."



Gov. Phil M. Donnelly of Missouri: "The 66th General Assembly . . . appointed a joint turnpike committee to study the general subject of turnpikes and toll roads . . . I call your attention to the report of this committee and ask that it be given careful consideration."

Gov. Alfred E. Driscoll of New Jersey: "I am pleased to be able to report that the plans for extension of the New Jersey Turnpike have been substantially completed and that work on several of these extensions will be begun in the near future."

Gov. Dennis J. Roberts of Rhode Island: "We have many advocates of a limited access highway to . . . run through the southern part of the state . . . It may be that such a project would serve a real need and increase our tourist and recreation income . . . We might consider financing it by a toll system."

Gov. Allan Shivers of Texas: "Create a toll road authority, in the hope that properly sponsored and supervised toll roads are the answer to some of our gravest problems in traffic congestion and construction costs."

Gov. Walter J. Kohler, Jr., of Wisconsin: "I urge that you give your wholehearted support to the legislative council proposal for the establishment of turnpike authority for Wisconsin."

It is interesting to note that the turnpike idea is not new in Florida. In 1941 a proposal for a super highway on the East Coast was considered. The brochure on this subject estimates that the road could have been built at that time for around \$36,000,000. In or about 1943 a private concern considered asking for authority to build the road as a

private venture. A survey was made at this time that followed a central Florida route. The Road Department had two studies made in 1952, and the Capital Engineering Company of Dillsburg, Pa., has just completed another. The route proposed by the Capital Engineering Company begins near Jacksonville, and proceeds almost due south to the vicinity of Orlando, and then bears southeast to meet the coast near Stuart. The advantage of the inland route is that it would serve the great agricultural areas of the Everglades and Central Florida. In addition, it would be traveled by those going to and from the Tampa Bay area.

This Road Board thought it important for its Members to visit some of the successful turnpikes. Consequently, a delegation from the Board, with our Chief Engineer, visited the Pennsylvania Turnpike, the New Jersey Turnpike and the Garden State Parkway. The latter is still under construction. There can be no doubt that the Pennsylvania and New Jersey turnpikes are serving a useful purpose in the areas which they serve. Both are extremely successful from a financial standpoint. We had long conferences with the Pennsylvania Turnpike Authority and with those in charge of the New Jersey Turnpike. We discussed the problems of construction and operation with them. Among other things, we asked to see the "Ghost Towns" that the turnpikes were supposed to have created. We were shown thriving cities, both large and small, on or near the turnpikes, and all seemed to be prosperous. There were new motels and small industry to show that there was even more travel in these towns than before the building of the turnpikes. We attach as part of this report a detailed study of several Pennsylvania towns by a Pennsylvania newspaper to support this observation.

In order to observe the volume of traffic on parallel highways, we left the turnpike at New Brunswick, N. J., and traveled north on U.S. Highway 51. We found this free road four-laned and in good condition. It was lined with slow moving traffic. We were told that although it is not over a mile from the turnpike, it carries much more traffic than does the turnpike. We found the parallel roads in both states in good repair and carrying heavy traffic loads.

Our group returned to Florida feeling that the turnpikes were practical, that they did not tend to harm by-passed communities, and that they had good public acceptance. The last was emphasized in Pennsylvania by the statement that the Pennsylvania Legislature is practically unanimous in each request to add to the turnpike there.

The one thing that we did not have the answer to was - will it pay in Florida? It must be quickly admitted that we do not have, in this State, the large centers of population, the industry found in the states visited, or the vast number of vehicles operating in these areas. It is true that we have more people coming into our state for purely recreational purposes than do the others. It is also a fact that a large percentage of our economy is agricultural and is dependent upon fast moving transportation for its very existence.

The outside engineers' studies on this problem of the road paying its way were not too convincing to us. Their studies indicated to us that the East Coast Route would not pay immediately, but by applying the experience of the other states the induced traffic would make it a successful venture. The feasibility rested on this induced or increased traffic.

If we could be sure it would materialize, the venture would be successful and the increased traffic would mean millions of additional dollars to our people. Most of those in a position to know seem to think that the inland route would be much more profitable. This Board is inclined to agree with this position, although no official detailed study has been made of the inland route.

At this stage of our study we called upon our own engineers in the State Road Department to make a cost estimate of a turnpike from Stuart to Miami. These engineers put in several days of constant study on the project. They have given us some very useful and helpful information. Their estimates of costs are higher and revenue lower than estimated by the outside engineers. Their studies convince us that every precaution must be taken to avoid the disastrous mistakes made in the planning of the Buccaneer Trail and the Jacksonville Expressway. A further survey is needed by recognized experts in this field in order to determine the length of time needed to pay for such a highway.

Our engineers also pointed out to us the very startling fact that the highway could be built for just half the total money on a pay-as-you-go basis. Construction costs are higher in this area than in many others because more bridges are needed here. Of \$50,000,000 estimated as the total cash cost, \$10,000,000 would be spent for bridges. On a thirty year time basis \$96,000,000 would be required to retire the debt. We will comment further on the pay-as-you-go plan later.

Our engineers were asked to study only the areas between