

Howard Frankland Bridge (I-275/SR 93) PD&E Study (northbound) and Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation

Florida Department of Transportation District Seven
Pinellas & Hillsborough Counties | September 2013
Work Program Item Segment No. 422799 1



Dear Property Owner or Interested Citizen:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) invites you to attend and participate in a public hearing regarding the replacement of the I-275 northbound Howard Frankland Bridge in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. The hearing will be held to give the public an opportunity to express their views concerning the location, conceptual design, and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed replacement.

This public hearing will be held in two separate sessions at the following locations:

Public Hearing Session 1:

Date: Tuesday, October 8, 2013
Place: Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
3201 Scherer Drive
St. Petersburg, FL 33716
Time: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Open House
6:00 p.m. Formal Presentation

Public Hearing Session 2:

Date: Thursday, October 10, 2013
Place: Tampa Marriott Westshore
1001 N. Westshore Boulevard
Tampa, FL 33607
Time: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Open House
6:00 p.m. Formal Presentation



Department representatives will be available at each session of the hearing beginning at 5:00 p.m. to answer questions. Exhibits and other project-related materials will be displayed showing the proposed improvements. The same information will be provided at both sessions.

At 6:00 p.m., Department representatives will begin the formal portion of the hearing, which will provide an opportunity for attendees to make formal public comments. Following the formal portion of the hearing, the informal open house will resume and continue until 7:00 p.m. A court reporter will be available to receive comments in a one-on-one setting. You may mail your comments to the address preprinted on the back of the comment form or enter them on the project website. All comments must be postmarked by **Monday, October 21, 2013** to become part of the official public hearing record.

Draft study documents, and other pertinent information depicting the project's recommended alignment and proposed improvements will be available for review at the following locations from **Tuesday, September 17, 2013 to Monday, October 21, 2013:**

Pinellas Park Library
7770 52nd Street
Pinellas Park, FL 33781
Mon-Thurs 9:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.
Fri-Sat 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.


West Tampa Library
2312 W. Union Street
Tampa, FL 33607
Mon-Sat 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Sunday Closed

FDOT District Seven
ISD Office
11201 N. McKinley Drive
Tampa, FL 33612
Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday Closed

If you have questions about the project or the scheduled hearing, please contact **Kirk Bogen, P.E., FDOT Project Development Engineer**, at **(813) 975-6448** or **(800) 226-7220** or visit our project website at the location noted below.

Sincerely,

Ming Gao, P.E.
Intermodal Systems Development Manager

 For more information on this study, please visit our project website at: <http://www.mytbi.com/future-projects/> then click on Howard Frankland Bridge

This newsletter serves as notice to property owners (pursuant to F.S. 339.155) that all or a portion of their property is within 300 feet of the centerline of the proposed project. However, this does not mean that all properties will be directly affected. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation service (free of charge) should contact Lori Marable, Public Involvement Coordinator, at (813) 975-6405 or (800) 226-7220 at least seven (7) days in advance of the hearing session.

Study Purpose

A Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study is a comprehensive study that evaluates social, cultural, economic and environmental effects associated with the proposed transportation improvements. The objective of this PD&E study is to assist the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in reaching a decision on the type, location, and conceptual design of the necessary improvements for the replacement of the northbound Howard Frankland Bridge on Interstate 275 (I-275/SR 93). This bridge opened to traffic in 1959 and is nearing the end of its serviceable life. The PD&E study satisfies all applicable requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding of subsequent development phases (design and construction). A simultaneous Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation is underway to evaluate premium transit alternatives within the bridge corridor to link the Gateway area in Pinellas County to the Westshore area in Hillsborough County. This PD&E study is evaluating options for accommodating a future multimodal premium transit envelope within the Howard Frankland Bridge corridor.

Project Overview

The proposed project involves the replacement of the four-lane northbound I-275 Howard Frankland Bridge (Bridge No. 150107) over Old Tampa Bay in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. The limits of the PD&E study extend approximately one-mile beyond either end of the three-mile bridge to include portions of the existing causeway. In addition to the proposed bridge replacement, this study also considers reserving space for a future transit envelope within the existing bridge corridor. The proposed transit improvements will be consistent with the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) Master Plan, adopted in June 2011. They are being evaluated in conjunction with local premium transit initiatives, namely the Pinellas Alternatives Analysis, which evaluated premium transit service between Clearwater and St. Petersburg with an extension across Tampa Bay to Tampa across the I-275 corridor.



Existing Conditions

Existing Bridge Structure - The northbound Howard Frankland Bridge is 3.01 miles long and approximately 62 feet wide. It consists of two 12-foot travel lanes, two 11-foot travel lanes, a 4-foot inside shoulder, and a 10-foot outside shoulder (see Figure 1-1). The posted speed limit is 65 miles per hour with 40 mph minimum. The inside shoulder width and the two 11-foot lanes do not meet current design standards for an Interstate highway. The existing typical section for both the southbound and northbound structures are shown in Figure 1-1.

Roadway Approaches - The roadway approaches on either side of the Howard Frankland Bridge include four 12-foot lanes (3 general use lanes

plus 1 auxiliary lane), 10-foot paved inside and outside shoulders, and concrete barrier walls within a 22-foot median. The causeways near both ends of the bridge include emergency access (turnaround) roadways, which run underneath the bridge ends (see Figure 1-2).

Proposed Improvements

The Recommended Alternative consists of replacing the existing four-lane northbound bridge with a wider four-lane bridge (3 general use lanes plus 1 auxiliary lane) that will be constructed between the two existing bridges, as shown in Figures 2-1 and 2-2. This proposed centered alignment would have the least impacts to seagrasses and other environmental resources. Construction of the new bridge (including temporary widening of a portion of the existing bridge) would be staged in order to maintain traffic.

This is critical at either end where the existing separation between the two existing bridges is much narrower than the 98 feet typical across the rest of the bridge.

The new northbound bridge will be constructed approximately 6 feet higher than the existing southbound bridge. This will minimize the chance of damage from waves during an extreme weather event. The new northbound replacement bridge will be constructed 4 feet wider than the existing bridge. The additional width could be used as a buffer area as transit or express lane options are implemented in the future.

Once the new northbound bridge is completed, the existing northbound structures will be removed. The estimated cost of the improvements, including the roadway transitions at either end of the bridge, is approximately \$390 million in today's dollars.

Potential Transit

In addition to the bridge replacement, a separate but related study is ongoing to evaluate the feasibility of including accommodations for premium transit services within the Howard Frankland Bridge corridor. The Department, in coordination with its agency partners on both sides of the Bay, is working to set aside space for a transit connection across the Howard Frankland Bridge that will link Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties via transit stations.

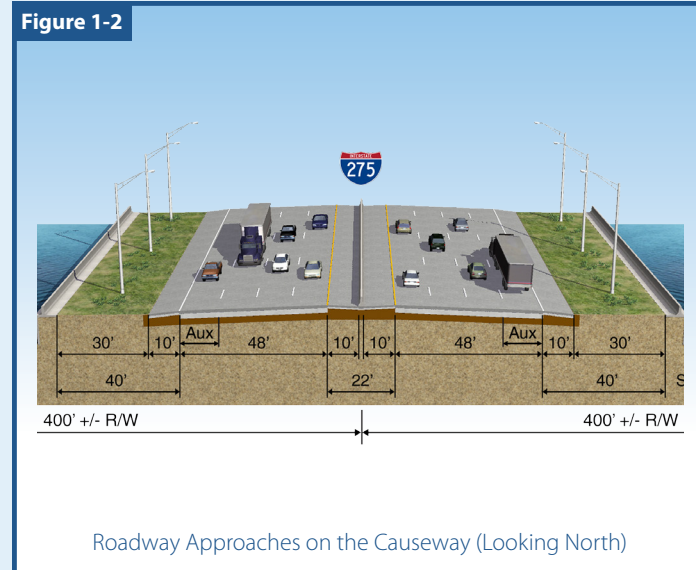
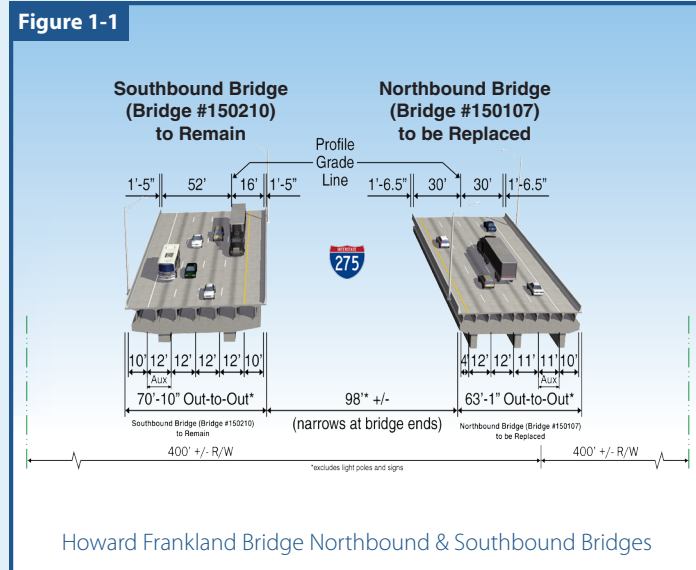
The linkage provided between Pinellas County's proposed Gateway Station and Hillsborough County's proposed Westshore Station would allow uninterrupted transit movements along the bridge. For this to be possible, however, the corridor must be capable of accommodating the selected transit option. The Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation Study identified opportunities and constraints associated with providing a potential transit envelope in conjunction with bridge replacement.

Future Funding

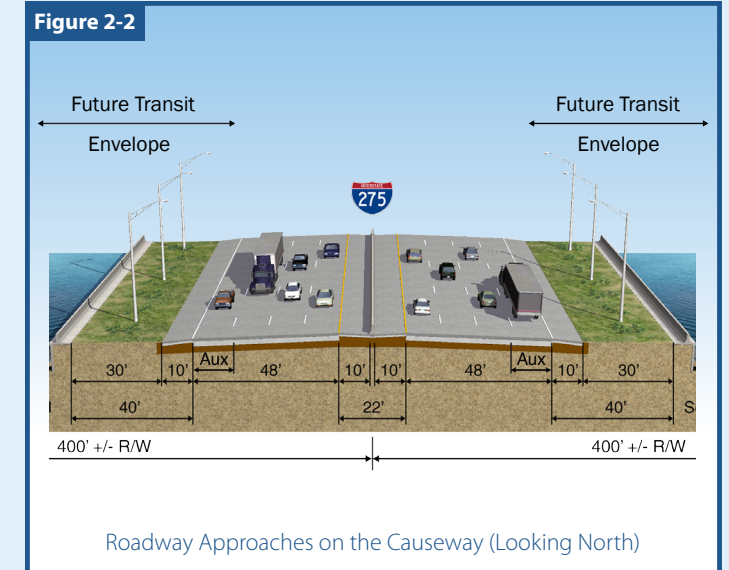
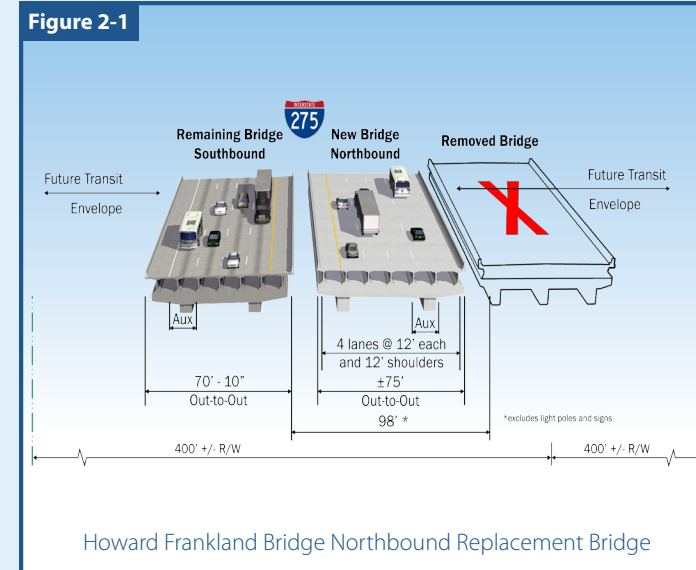
No future project phases are currently included in the adopted 5-year work program for fiscal years 2013/14 through 2017/18 (effective 7/1/2013); however, the Department is currently seeking funds to add to the work program and advance the project to the next phase.

Phase	Fiscal Year
Design Phase	Not Funded
Right of Way Acquisition	Not Applicable
Construction	Not Funded

Existing Bridge Typical Sections



Recommended Bridge Typical Sections





Howard Frankland Bridge Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation

SEPTEMBER 2013

Originally opened as a small segment of Interstate 75 (I-75), present day Interstate 275 (I-275) is now a vital link in the Bay area's transportation network. It is heavily used by commuters and truck traffic and is a critical emergency evacuation route for large portions of Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. Regionally, I-275 is part of the National Highway System, and locally it is part of Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), the Department's network that provides for the high-speed, high-volume movement of people and goods.

The Howard Frankland Bridge is the central bridge spanning Old Tampa Bay from Clearwater/St. Petersburg to Tampa, Florida. It is one of three bridges connecting Pinellas County and Hillsborough County; the others being the Gandy Bridge and the Courtney Campbell Causeway. The Howard Frankland carries I-275 and is by far the most traveled of the bay area bridges; carrying an average of 142,000 vehicles per day across Tampa Bay. By 2040 that volume is expected to increase to more than 200,000 vehicles per day. Based on this projected traffic increase, the Florida Department of Transportation is conducting two regional studies: the *Tampa Bay Express Master Plan Study* to evaluate the feasibility of adding express lanes to Bay area interstates and the *Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation* to study the feasibility of adding a future premium transit service within the I-275 corridor.

Congestion Across the Bay

For many commuters, daily gridlock is a fact of life. Many of us deal with traffic congestion on a daily basis. According to the US Department of Transportation (USDOT), **45% of traffic congestion is caused by preventable, recurring traffic issues.** Recurring traffic congestion occurs when too many vehicles use the same roads at the same time and there isn't enough space on these roads for everyone. Traffic congestion associated with most metropolitan areas can, and often does, have negative environmental, social, and economic effects.

To combat these effects, several congestion management options are being considered along I-275 within the Howard Frankland Bridge corridor. The first and more near-term option is the establishment of tolled express lanes. The addition of express or "managed" lanes is an innovative, low-cost alternative to traditional highway construction and the benefits (reduced congestion and fast, reliable travel times for commuters and buses) can be realized almost immediately.

The second, more long-term, consideration involves reserving or "setting aside" space within the I-275 corridor for premium transit in the future. The addition of a premium transit service will be needed to address our area's growing transportation challenges; however, the exact type of service is still being discussed by local agencies and area officials.

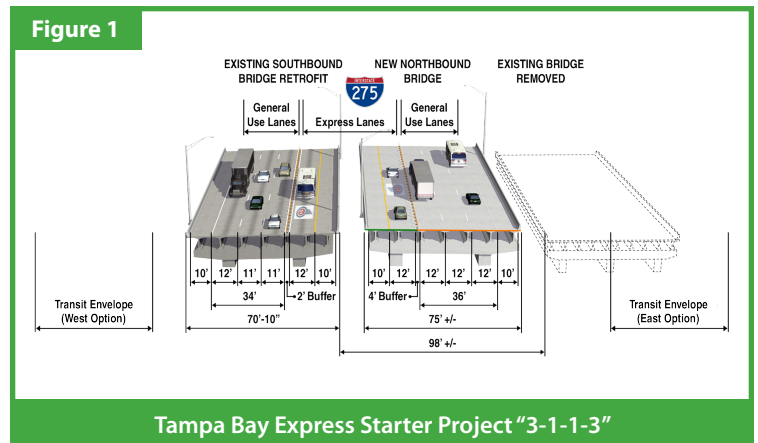
Express Lanes: Beyond the Bridge

The FDOT is continuously working to improve Florida's transportation network; recognizing that congestion isn't limited to a specific roadway and doesn't end at a county line. This is why the Department is



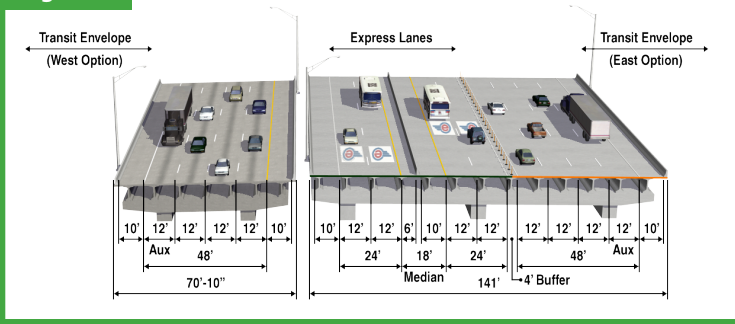
conducting the *Tampa Bay Express Master Plan Study* to evaluate a future **system** of tolled express lanes in order to provide additional capacity for interstate highways in the Tampa Bay area.

This system (Tampa Bay Express) could include more than 90 miles of express lanes along I-275, I-4, and I-75. The master plan study is developing both near-term, low-cost starter projects as well as long-term future investment projects. In regards to the Howard Frankland Bridges, the starter express lane concept consists of converting the auxiliary lane on both bridges to an express lane and leaving the remaining three lanes as general purpose lanes in each direction - commonly referred to as a "3-1-1-3" configuration (**Figure 1**). No additional construction would be required to implement this project along the bridge, except for future restriping and added signage.



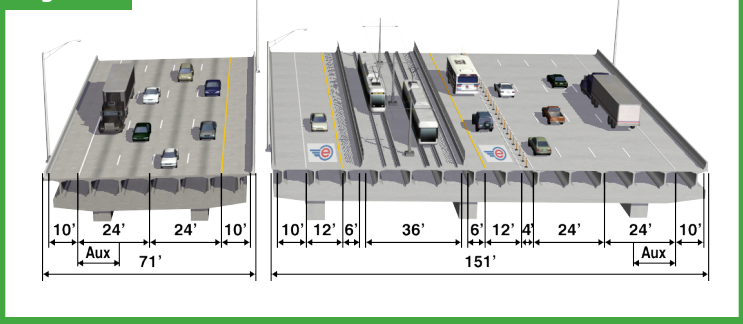
As traffic volumes continue to increase and additional express lanes are needed, the bridge would need to be widened. Since the northbound bridge is currently being evaluated, steps can be taken now to ensure that future expansion costs would be minimal. One of the suggested bridge expansion concepts includes reconfiguring the northbound bridge to carry two northbound and two southbound express lanes plus three general purpose lanes and an auxiliary lane. The southbound bridge would carry three general purpose lanes plus an auxiliary lane. This is commonly referred to as a "4-2-2-4" configuration (**Figure 2**). The new northbound replacement bridge could be constructed so that it could be easily retrofitted and widened to accommodate this option in the future.

Figure 2



Tampa Bay Express Long Term Project "4-2-2-4"

Figure 4



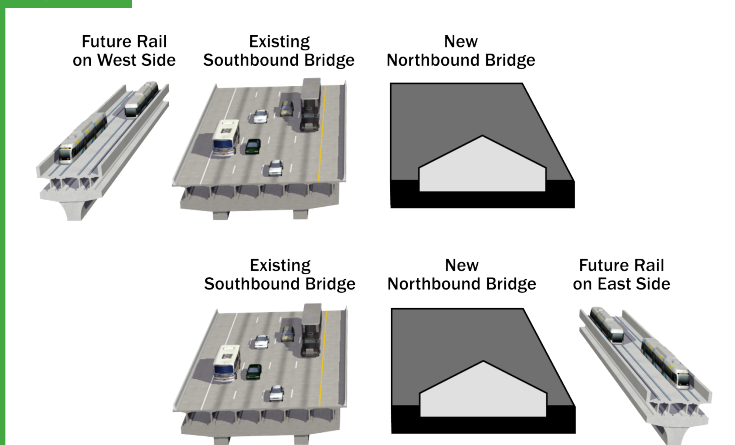
Long Term Express Lanes and Integrated Rail "4-1-R-1-4"

Express Lanes Plus: A Premium Transit Option

As our region continues to grow, so should our transportation options. To better meet this future demand, the Department is conducting a transit study to evaluate the feasibility of providing a premium transit service within the I-275 corridor.

A key focus area of the **Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation** is the Howard Frankland Bridge and the unique challenges that implementing a premium transit service presents. Implementing a premium transit service requires early planning, community support, and agency cooperation. While the mode, or service type, is still being discussed by local agencies and area officials, the Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation recommends reserving or "setting aside" space within the bridge corridor right of way for **premium transit** service in the future. This space, also known as a **transit envelope**, can be located in one of three areas within the bridge corridor: to the west of the existing bridges, to the east of the existing bridges, or integrated into the center of the new northbound bridge.

Figure 3



Future Transit Options - Separate Rail Guideway

Both the west side and east side transit envelope options would involve the construction of a separate structure and would require additional study to determine the most cost-effective location (Figure 3); however, should the long-term express lane option "4-2-2-4" be implemented, the integrated transit option could be easily incorporated by removing one express lane in each direction. This modification would provide the space necessary to carry a premium transit option, like light rail transit (LRT), on the bridge between the two remaining express lanes. This option is referred to as a "4-1-R-1-4" configuration (Figure 4).

At a Crossroads: Congestion Management and Transit Options

In order to ensure that we are fulfilling the needs of our transportation infrastructure in the years to come, we will need to look at the "big picture" for the Howard Frankland Bridge. The current PD&E study is only evaluating the replacement of the existing northbound bridge. Beyond considering an extra four feet of bridge width and a possible transit envelope, the study is not considering the environmental impacts of a wider structure or of a separate structure across Tampa Bay. Projects like those discussed above certainly won't come together overnight, but we need to start somewhere.

Our area would benefit from addressing this challenge sooner rather than later. The northbound Howard Frankland Bridge is more than 50 years old and has never been replaced. Since its original design and construction in the 1960s, residential and commercial growth has strained the corridor beyond its capacity, increasing delays and limiting economic activity. Although the bridge structure has been reinforced and repaired over the years, the northbound bridge is nearing the end of its useful life.

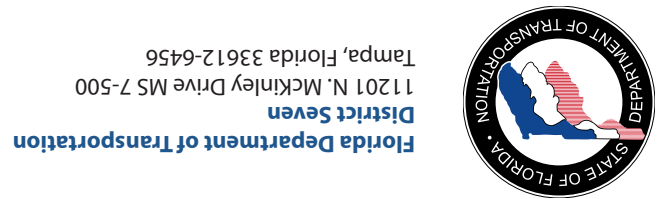
However, no single transportation agency can tackle this challenge alone. In addition to the Florida Department of Transportation, other agencies and local governments are involved in developing, implementing and maintaining regional projects, including the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) and the Metropolitan Planning Organizations in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties. We will need to work together to achieve our shared goals.

This is our opportunity to do something new, while also addressing issues of congestion, pollution, land use and economic development. We must plan for our future now. Together, we can keep Florida at the forefront of the global economy.

For additional information on the **Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation** or the **Tampa Bay Express Master Plan Study**, please contact:

Kirk Bogen, P.E.
Project Development Engineer
813-975-6448
kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us

You can also visit the project website: www.mytbi.com/future-projects, then click on Howard Frankland Bridge.



Contact Information

We encourage your participation in this Howard Frankland Bridge (I-275/SR 93) PD&E Study and the Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation. If you wish to discuss any issues related to this project, please contact **Kirk Bogen, P.E.**, Project Development Engineer, at **(813) 975-6448** or by email to: kirk.bogen@dot.state.fl.us; or **Kris Carson**, Public Information Officer, at **(800) 226-7220** or by email to: kristen.carson@dot.state.fl.us. Written comments may be sent to:

Ming Gao, P.E.

Intermodal Systems Development Manager
Florida Department of Transportation, District Seven
11201 N. McKinley Drive, MS 7-500
Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

En Español

Si usted tiene preguntas o comentarios o si simplemente desea mas informacion sobre este proyecto, favor de ponerse en contacto con el señor **Manuel Santos**, al teléfono **(813) 975-6173** o correo electrónico manuel.santos@dot.state.fl.us.

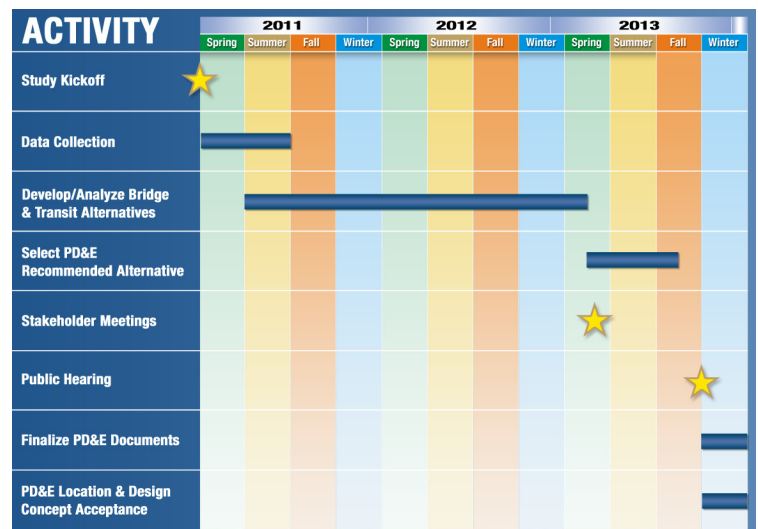
Non-Discrimination

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Study Schedule

The study will be completed by Winter 2013/14.

Below is the study schedule:



For more information on this study, please visit our project website at: <http://www.mytbi.com/future-projects/> then click on Howard Frankland Bridge