



# Memorandum

Date: August 15, 2009

To: Adam Perez, P.E.  
FDOT Interstate Program Manager

From: Ron Gregory, AICP  
URS, Tampa Interstate Study Project Manager

Subject: **Interstate Program Manager  
Review of Florida High Speed Rail Final Environmental Impact Statement  
Reevaluation**

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A brief and preliminary review of the Florida High Speed Rail Authority (FHSRA) Reevaluation of the previously approved Federal Railway Administration (FRA) Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was undertaken for the proposed High Speed Rail (HSR) alignment in the Tampa area from 50th Street west to the Hillsborough River and proposed Downtown Tampa intermodal station. This review is based on information currently available from publicly released information, but does not include the actual Reevaluation document (which was not available to the reviewer). The review included examination of the slide show of what is referenced as the *FHSR Reevaluation Plan Set* provided by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Seven Interstate Program Manager. A cursory review of the July 19, 2005 FEIS and the October 2002 Corridor Screening Report produced by PBS&J for the FHSRA was also undertaken.

A limiting factor in this review of the FHSRA FEIS Reevaluation is the lack of technical information regarding specific engineering, planning, and environmental impacts related to the previously approved Tampa Interstate Study (TIS) FEIS/Section 4(f) and Section 106 Consultation and resulting Memorandum of Agreement for the TIS FEIS. This limits any technical evaluations of potential impacts since only the current existing conditions between 50th Street and the Hillsborough River are presented in the *FHSR Reevaluation Plan Set* provided by the FDOT District Seven Interstate Program Manager.

It is recommended that the entire FHSRA FEIS Reevaluation engineering concept be overlaid on the previously approved ultimate design concepts/plans for Interstate 4 (I-4) (between 50th Street and I-275), the Crosstown/I-4 Connector, and the I-275/I-4 interchange. This technical analysis will identify any potential conflicts between the previously approved TIS FEIS and the proposed FHSRA FEIS Reevaluation concept.

## **Design and Construction Related Issues:**

1. Potentially requires redesign of the TIS FEIS Ultimate approved plans between 50th Street and the Hillsborough River.
2. Potential conflict with the I-4/Crosstown Connector project final design and funded construction – need to overlay Connector final design plans with FHSRA FEIS Reevaluation engineering files to determine extent of potential design conflicts and impacts.
3. Potential conflict with the I-275/I-4 Downtown Tampa East Side interchange ramps associated with I-4.
4. Potential conflict with I-275 southbound to the I-4 interchange ramp.

**Environmental Approval and Permit Related Issues:**

1. Potential direct impact to the National Historic Landmark District where FHSRA right-of-way is within existing I-4 and I-275 limited access right-of-way – this may be a direct impact even if the proposed FHSRA alignment is within the previously approved TIS FEIS/Section 4(f)/Section 106 right-of-way footprint since the National Historic Landmark District boundary did not change with approval of the TIS FEIS and the TIS footprint is actually inside the District boundary. Note that page S-16 of the FHSR FEIS states that the issue of Section 4(f) was reviewed and a determination of no applicability was made by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – it is not clear that the issue was reviewed with the Department of the Interior, Advisory Council on Historic Places, and State Historic Preservation Officer. This issue could be a basis for a legal challenge since the HSR alignment is not within the original multimodal envelope provided by the TIS FEIS.
2. Potential indirect impact to the National Historic Landmark District where FHSRA alignment moves to the south side of I-4 between station #6093 and #6050 – this may result in a constructive use (view shed and noise/vibration impacts) related to the physical location of the new HSR alignment. Computer simulated view shed imaging for this segment should be undertaken.
3. Potential impact to TIS FEIS approval – FHSRA HSR alignment could result in Department of the Interior, Advisory Council on Historic Places, State Historic Preservation Officer and FHWA requiring a Supplemental EIS, a Revised EIS, or at the very minimum, a major Reevaluation of the entire TIS FEIS.
4. Potential adverse effect to previously approved, funded and implemented cultural resource mitigation for the entire Ybor City area, particularly the National Historic Landmark District where FHSRA alignment moves to the south side of I-4 between station #6093 and #6050 – this issue should be directed immediately to the TIS Cultural Resource Committee for review and discussion.

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the entire FHSRA FEIS Reevaluation engineering concept be overlaid in MicroStation CAD on the previously approved ultimate design concepts/plans for I-4 (between 50th Street and I-275), the Crosstown/I-4 Connector, and the I-275/I-4 interchange. This technical analysis will identify any potential conflicts between the previously approved TIS FEIS geometry and the proposed FHSRA FEIS Reevaluation concept.

It is recommended that documentation of direct formal coordination between the FHSRA/FRA and the Department of the Interior, Advisory Council on Historic Places, State Historic Preservation Officer, FHWA, and the TIS Cultural Resource Committee should be provided to determine further actions necessary within the National Historic Landmark District, Ybor City National Register Historic District, and the Barrio Latino Local Historic District.

cc: Lisa Heimburg, P.E., The Heimburg Group  
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TIS/IPM Files