

Florida Department of Transportation
PROJECT REEVALUATION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION (originally approved document)

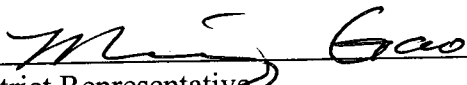
- a. Reevaluation Phase: Design Change/Construction Authorization
- b. Document Types and Dates of Approvals: Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)
approved October 27, 1987, Design Change Reevaluation approved July 7, 1992, Design
Change/Right of Way Authorization Reevaluation approved August 25, 1999
- c. Project Numbers: M-4047(40) 1113669
Federal Aid WPI No.
- d. Project Local Name, Location and Limits: Northwest Hillsborough Expressway from
Interstate 275 to S.R. 597 (Dale Mabry Highway)
- e. Segments of Highway Being Advanced: LINKS Stage 1 from I-275 to Independence
Parkway: Work Program Item (WPI) Segment Nos. 255630 1 and 255703 1; Federal Aid
Project No. SU-1842- (13)
- f. Name of Analyst: Rick Adair

II. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The above environmental document has been reevaluated as required by 23 CFR 771 and the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Manual of the FDOT. It was determined that no substantial changes have occurred in the social, economic, or environmental effects of the proposed action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the original Administrative Action remains valid.

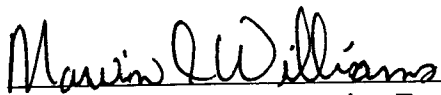
It is recommended that the project identified herein be advanced to the next phase of project development.

REVIEWER SIGNATURE BLOCK


District Representative

8/28/03
Date

III. FHWA CONCURRENCE BLOCK


FHWA Urban Transportation Engineer

9/17/2003
Date

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IV. CHANGES IN IMPACT STATUS OR DOCUMENT COMPLIANCE

	YES/NO	COMMENTS
A. SOCIAL IMPACTS:		
1. Land Use Changes	() (X)	
2. Community Cohesion	() (X)	
3. Relocation Potential	() (X)	
4. Community Services	() (X)	
5. Title VI Considerations	() (X)	
6. Controversy Potential	() (X)	
7. Utilities and Railroads	(X) ()	See Attachment A
B. CULTURAL IMPACTS:		
1. Section 4(f) Lands	() (X)	
2. Historic Sites/Districts	() (X)	
3. Archeological Sites	() (X)	
4. Recreation Areas	() (X)	
5. Pedestrian/Bicycle Facilities	() (X)	
C. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:		
1. Wetlands	(X) ()	See Attachment A
2. Aquatic Preserves	() (X)	
3. Water Quality	() (X)	
4. Outstanding Fla. Waters	() (X)	
5. Wild and Scenic Rivers	() (X)	
6. Floodplains	() (X)	
7. Coastal Zone Consistency	() (X)	
8. Coastal Barrier Islands	() (X)	
9. Wildlife and Habitat	(X) ()	See Attachment A
10. Farmland	() (X)	
11. Visual/Aesthetics	() (X)	
D. PHYSICAL IMPACTS:		
1. Noise	(X) ()	See Attachment A
2. Air	() (X)	
3. Construction	() (X)	
4. Contamination	() (X)	
5. Navigation	() (X)	

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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The discussion of the project description and history for this reevaluation is divided into three distinct periods for ease of understanding. These periods coincide with the original 1987 Northwest Hillsborough Expressway Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the 1992 Design Change Reevaluation based on the FEIS and the Northwest Expressway Master Plan, and the 1999 Design Change/Right-of-Way (ROW) Authorization Reevaluation.

In 1987, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a new limited access toll road identified as the Northwest Expressway. This original freeway was conceived to link Interstate 275 (I-275) on the south with Dale Mabry Highway on the north, a distance of approximately 16.9 miles.

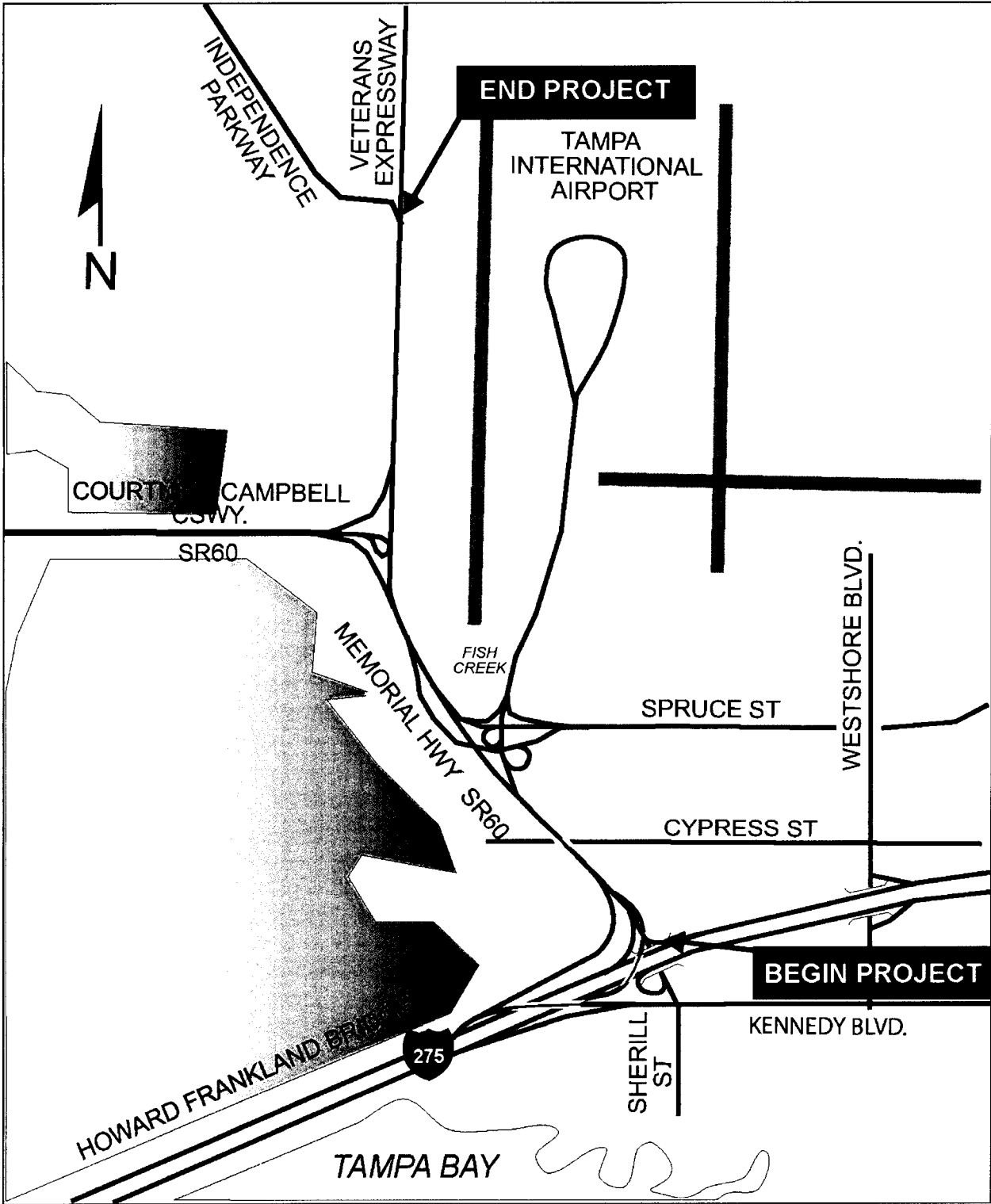
The portion of the Northwest Expressway from I-275 north to Independence Parkway was originally designated as LINKS Segments 1 and 2 (partial) within the 1987 FEIS. In 1989, the Hillsborough County Expressway Authority completed its Northwest Expressway Master Plan. This 1989 Master Plan was developed to complement the 1989 Tampa Interstate Study Master Plan adopted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and FHWA in 1989. As part of this cooperative planning effort, the Northwest Expressway from I-275 north to Independence Parkway was divided into three distinct design segments. Segment 1A, which included the I-275 interchange with S.R. 60/Northwest Expressway and extended northward to Cypress Street, was incorporated into the Tampa Interstate Study and was no longer included in the Northwest Expressway FEIS concept. Segment 1B, which included the Northwest Expressway from south of Cypress Street north through the Tampa International Airport/Spruce Street interchange, ended at Fish Creek just south of S.R. 60/Courtney Campbell Causeway interchange. Segment 1C, beginning at Fish Creek and proceeding north to Independence Parkway, included the S.R. 60/Courtney Campbell Causeway interchange with the Northwest Expressway. Segments 1B and 1C are the focus of this reevaluation (see Exhibit 1, Project Location Map).

In the early 1990s, the Northwest Expressway proceeded to construction from approximately Independence Parkway (north of S.R. 60) to its northern terminus at Dale Mabry Highway. A reevaluation of the FEIS for this project was approved by the FHWA in 1992. This 1992 reevaluation also addressed the 1989 Northwest Expressway Master Plan improvements from Cypress Street north to Independence Parkway.

The FDOT Turnpike District took over this project in 1992 and subsequently the Florida Legislature renamed the toll road Veterans Expressway. The Veterans Expressway was opened to traffic in 1994. There was no action taken at that time to complete the Master Plan concepts south of Independence Parkway. Presently, the two design segments previously identified as Design Segment 1B (S.R. 60/Spruce Street interchange) and Design Segment 1C (S.R. 60/Courtney Campbell Causeway interchange) are at 30% and 60%, respectively.

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EXHIBIT 1
PROJECT LOCATION MAP



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Upon approval of the Tampa Interstate Study FEIS/Record of Decision (ROD) in January 1997, the FDOT initiated planning to stage the eventual construction of the entire freeway system that incorporates both the 1992 Reevaluation of the Veterans Expressway and the Tampa Interstate Study I-275 improvements. This staged implementation includes the freeway system beginning with the interchange of the Veterans Expressway with S.R. 60, proceeding south to I-275, then north along I-275 to downtown Tampa. This overall freeway system is identified as the LINKS project. The LINKS project has been divided into three manageable and realistically programmable construction segments. This current reevaluation is only for Stage 1 of the LINKS project.

Stage 1 of the LINKS is the first section in the vicinity of the Westshore Business District and Tampa International Airport (TIA). This Stage begins at Cypress Street and continues north to the southern terminus of the existing Veterans Expressway in the vicinity of Independence Parkway. Stage 1 includes the previously identified Segments 1B and 1C. Both of these segments were previously included in the 1992 and 1999 Reevaluations.

V. EVALUATION OF MAJOR DESIGN CHANGES AND REVISED DESIGN CRITERIA (e.g., Typical Section Changes, Alignment Shifts, Right-of-Way (ROW) Changes, Bridge to Box Culvert, Drainage Requirements, Revised Design Standards).

This current LINKS Stage 1 Reevaluation addresses a series of design changes since FHWA approval of the 1999 Reevaluation. Through additional studies, design refinements, and coordination with the City of Tampa and the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority (HCAA), the FDOT has designed minor changes in roadway alignments, number of lanes, ROW limits, and surface street connections. These modifications are displayed on Exhibits 2, 3 and 4.

VI. MITIGATION STATUS AND COMMITMENT COMPLIANCE

Mitigation

Of the 33.19 acres (ac) of impacts resulting from the construction of the LINKS Stage I project, 4.92 ac consist of upland-cut, non-tidal ditches and ponds, and do not require mitigation. Mitigation for the remaining 28.27 ac of wetland impacts has been approved by the permitting agencies. The 0.23-ac seagrass impact will be mitigated through creation of 1.0 ac of seagrass habitat immediately adjacent to the impact area. The Southwest Florida Water Management District's (SWFWMD) Surface Water Improvement and Management Division will provide mitigation for the remaining 28.04 ac of impact pursuant to the provisions of Section 373.4137 Florida Statutes.

Commitments

There are no new commitments to be stated with respect to the design changes associated with this Reevaluation as compared to the 1999 Reevaluation.

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VII. PERMIT STATUS

The following provides for the status of environmental permits by each regulatory agency for the segment being advanced. The agencies are U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACOE), Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Tampa Port Authority Board (TPAB).

WPI Segment No. 255630:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Status</u>
USACOE	Individual No. 200105084	Issued: January 30, 2003 Expires: January 30, 2008
SWFWMD	ERP No. 43000920.004 No. 44000920.005	Issued: May 22, 2003 Expires: May 22, 2008
FDEP	NPDES	Issued 48 hours prior to construction.
TPAB	Major Work Permit	Applied for September 2001 Permit expected by end of September 2003

WPI Segment No. 255703:

<u>Agency</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Status</u>
USACOE	Individual No. 200205816	Issued: June 13, 2003 Expires: June 13, 2008
SWFWMD	ERP No. 43002958.002 No. 43002958.003	Issued: February 25, 2003 Expires: February 25, 2008
FDEP	NPDES	Issued 48 hours prior to construction.
TPAB	Minor Work Permit	Applied for August 2003 Permit expected by end of October 2003

ATTACHMENT A

LINKS Stage 1 from I-275 to Independence Parkway Reevaluation

Utilities and Railroads

A specially designated utility corridor is being implemented on the west side of the project from the intersection of Cypress Street and Ramp B3 and extending north to the proposed grade separation for the Hyatt Grand Hotel on the Courtney Campbell Causeway. Relocation of utilities into this existing vacant corridor located outside the controlled access limits of the LINKS Stage 1 facility will occur under a separate "Design-Build" contract prior to construction of LINKS Stage 1. As such, construction of the LINKS Stage 1 project will have no effect on utilities in that area. Providing a separate utility corridor outside the roadway area will enable easy access for repairs and installation with no disruption of traffic.

Wetlands

Wetland and other surface water impacts resulting from the proposed design changes of the S.R. 60 (Memorial Highway) improvements have increased from the approximated 17.37 ac identified in the approved 1999 Reevaluation to 33.19 ac identified as part of this Reevaluation. This increase is attributed to roadway design changes and to more detailed identification (including jurisdictional surveys) of wetlands within the project area during the permit application phase of the project.

The LINKS Stage 1 improvements have been permitted as two separate projects, the first from Courtney Campbell Causeway to Fish Creek (WPI 255630 1), and the second from Cypress Street to Fish Creek (WPI 255703 1). The wetland impacts have been permitted by Section 404 permits from the USACOE (Permit Nos. 200105084 and 200205816) and Environmental Resource Permits from SWFWMD (Permit Nos. 43000920.004 and 43002958.002). Copies of these permits are included in the project files.

Of the 33.19 ac of impacts, 4.92 ac consist of upland-cut non-tidal ditches and ponds, and do not require mitigation. Mitigation for the remaining 28.27 ac has been approved by the permitting agencies. The 0.23-ac seagrass impact will be mitigated through the creation of 1.0 ac of seagrass habitat immediately adjacent to the impact area. Mitigation for the remaining 28.04 ac of impact will be provided by the SWFWMD's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Division pursuant to the provisions of Section 373.4137 Florida Statutes. Under this statute the FDOT will pay a mitigation fee for state funded roadway projects to the regional water management district in lieu of other wetland mitigation projects. The funds will be used for wetland habitat creation and restoration projects within the Tampa Bay area.

Wildlife and Habitat

Based on recent field reviews, there are no changes in potential impacts to listed threatened and endangered species since the 1999 Reevaluation. Neither the 1987 FEIS nor the 1992 and 1999 Reevaluations addressed Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) since the EFH rules had not been promulgated at that time. The following describes designated EFH within the project area and the potential impacts to EFH resulting from construction of the project.

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LINKS Stage 1 from I-275 to Independence Parkway Reevaluation

Tampa Bay is within the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's (GMFMC) area of jurisdiction, which extends from the Texas/Mexico border to the Florida Keys and seaward to the limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone (200 nautical miles from the baseline of the territorial sea).

Categories of EFH affected by the proposed project include estuarine emergent wetlands (18.63 ac), mangrove wetlands (5.22 ac), mud and sand substrates (4.19 ac), submerged aquatic vegetation (0.23 ac), and estuarine water column (4.42 ac - includes water column above mud and sand substrates and submerged aquatic vegetation). These habitats typically provide nursery and foraging habitat for forage species and recreationally important marine fishery species such as spotted sea trout, flounder, croaker, black drum, menhaden, striped mullet, and blue crab. These organisms serve as prey for other fisheries managed under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act by the GMFMC, such as red drum, mackerels, snappers, and groupers, and highly migratory species managed by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), such as billfishes and sharks.

The GMFMC has identified and described EFH for 26 representative managed species and the coral complex. Additionally, EFH requirements have been described for 21 species of highly migratory species (swordfish, tuna, and sharks) managed by the NMFS (NMFS, 2002). Of the 26 representative species listed by the GMFMC, eight species have designated EFH within the project limits. Of the 21 species managed by the NMFS for which EFH has been designated, only the bull shark (*Carcharhinus leucas*), lemon shark (*Negaprion brevirostris*), and bonnet head shark (*Sphyrna tiburo*) are reported to commonly occur and have identified EFH in estuaries of the Gulf of Mexico. All of the estuarine habitats within the project limits provide nursery and foraging habitat for prey species consumed by the above-listed managed species and other recreationally important marine species.

Although construction of the project will result in EFH losses, the project is not expected to adversely affect any GMFMC or NMFS managed species following the successful implementation of the proposed mitigation plan for wetlands and open water habitats. In their review of Section 404 Permit No. 200105084 (from Courtney Campbell Causeway to Fish Creek), the NMFS has approved the proposed mitigation for EFH impacts. For Section 404 Permit No. 200205816 (from Cypress Street to Fish Creek) the NMFS has stated, "Based on our assessment of the project, we anticipate that any adverse effects that might occur to living marine resources, including Essential Fish Habitat, would be minimal and, therefore, we do not object to authorization of the project as currently proposed." Copies of correspondence with the NMFS are included in the project files.

Noise

The Stage I project was evaluated for the effects of traffic noise on the Dana Shores neighborhood. A previous noise analysis was documented in a Noise Study Technical Memorandum (revised August 2000). Subsequent to the traffic noise analysis, public meetings were held with the Dana Shores residents as part of the reevaluation process being performed for this project. In response to comments from the Dana Shores residents, the modeled noise barriers were analyzed to minimize effects to the aesthetic view as seen from the residences. Consistent with the previous August 2000

ATTACHMENT A
LINKS Stage 1 from I-275 to Independence Parkway Reevaluation

analysis, 65 dBA was considered an approach of the Noise Abatement Criteria. The most recent unit cost of \$25 per square foot was used to determine noise barrier cost.

The results indicate that the modeled barrier(s) would have a cost per benefited receiver that exceeds the FDOT cost reasonableness criteria of \$30,000/benefited receiver or they wouldn't reduce projected noise levels by at least 5 dBA.

Also, the previous noise studies for this project did not include an analysis for the Hyatt's Casita units. The results of the noise barrier evaluation for these units indicate that a noise barrier 8 ft high and 925 ft long would provide a reduction of at least 5 dBA to the 12 Casita units that would experience a predicted noise level of 65 dBA, or greater. Additionally, one unit with a predicted noise level less than 65 dBA would be benefited. Using a cost of \$25 per square foot, the noise barrier has a total cost of \$185,200 and a cost per benefited Casita unit of \$14,240. The cost per benefited Casita unit is below the \$30,000 criteria. Therefore, the FDOT plans to provide a barrier for this site provided the property owner agrees to it. Those discussions are currently underway.

ATTACHMENT A
LINKS Stage 1 from I-275 to Independence Parkway Reevaluation

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TAMPA INTERNATIONAL



WPI SEGMENT NOS.: 255630 I & 255703 I
STATE PROJECT NOS.: 10140-1552 & 10130-1549
FEDERAL AID PROJECT NO.: SU-1842(13)
WPI NOS.: 711387I & 7113944

DATE: 02-24-99