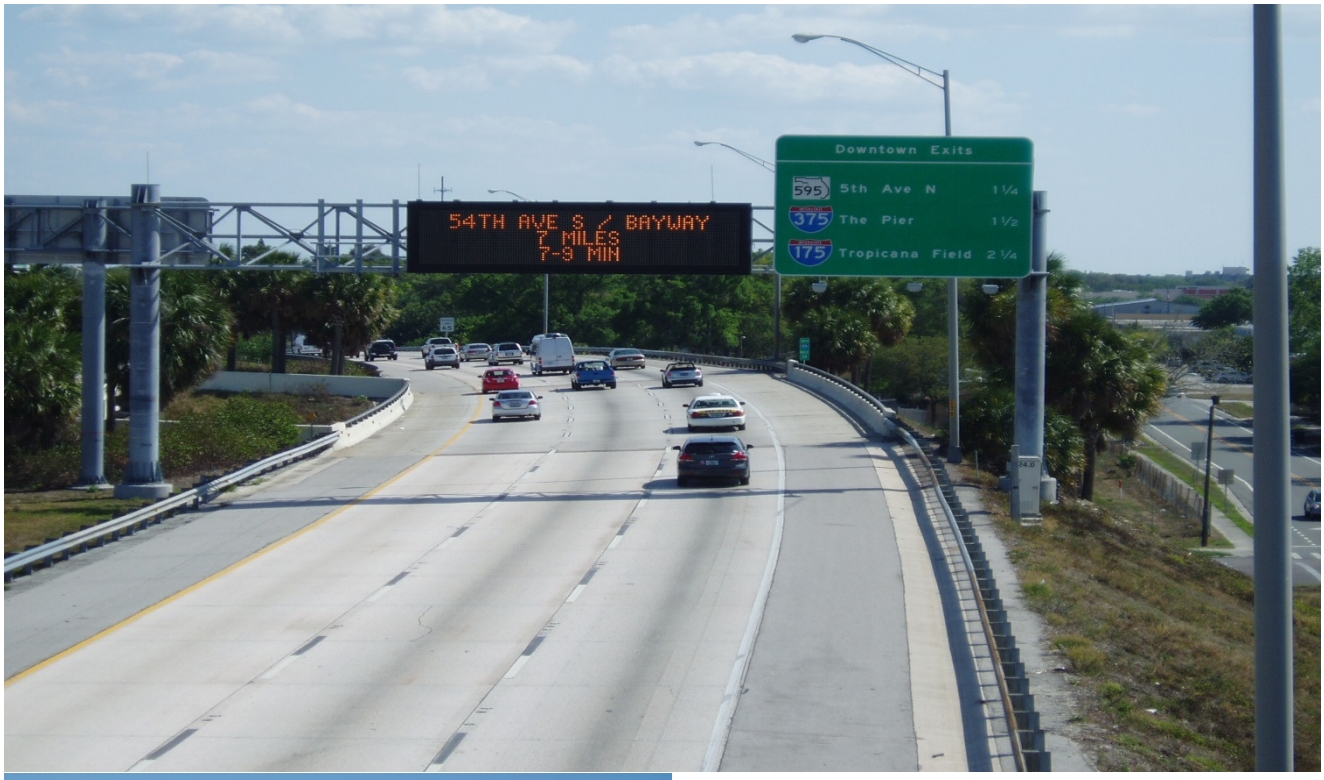

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY

Work Program Item Segment No: 424501-1

Final Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR)

Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study

I-275/SR 93

From South of 54th Avenue South
to North of 4th Street North

Pinellas County, Florida

April 2016

FDOT

Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study for (I-275/SR 93) from South of 54th Ave. S. to North of 4th St. N

Final

Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report

Work Program Item Segment No. : 424501

ETDM Project No. 12556

Pinellas County, Florida

Prepared for:

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District Seven

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April 2016

Executive Summary

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), District Seven, conducted a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to evaluate the need for capacity and operational improvements along 16.3 miles of Interstate 275 (I-275) (State Road (SR) 93) from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida.

The objective of this PD&E Study was to assist the FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in reaching a decision on the type, location, and conceptual design of the necessary improvements for I-275 to safely and efficiently accommodate future travel demand. This study documented the need for the improvements as well as the procedures utilized to develop and evaluate various improvements including elements such as proposed typical sections, special designation of travel lanes, preliminary horizontal alignments, and interchange enhancement alternatives. The anticipated social, physical, and natural environmental effects and costs of these improvements will be identified. The alternatives were evaluated and compared based on a variety of parameters utilizing a matrix format. This process identified the alternative that best balanced the benefits (such as improved traffic operations and safety) with the impacts (such as environmental effects and construction costs).

The PD&E Study satisfied all applicable federal and state requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding of subsequent development phases (design, right of way acquisition, and construction). The project was evaluated through the FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. This project is designated as ETDM Project #12556. An ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report was published on July 26, 2013, containing comments from the Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) on the project's effects on various natural, physical, and social resources. Based on the ETAT comments, the FHWA determined that this project qualified as a Type 2 Categorical Exclusion.

This Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) was prepared as a component of the PD&E Study. The WEBAR documents the proposed project's wetlands and protected species involvement. Pursuant to Presidential Executive Order 11990 entitled Protection of Wetlands, (May 1977) the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has developed a policy, Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands (USDOT Order 5660.1A), dated August 24, 1978, which requires all federally-funded highway projects to protect wetlands to the fullest extent possible. In accordance with this policy, as well as Part 2, Chapter 18 - Wetlands of the FDOT PD&E Manual, project alternatives were assessed to determine potential impacts to wetland and other surface waters associated with construction of each alternative. This report also documents existing wildlife resources and habitat types found within the project area for potential occurrences of federal- and state-listed protected plant and animal species and their suitable habitat in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 27 - Wildlife and Habitat Impacts of the FDOT PD&E Manual. Potential impacts to protected species and habitats that may support these species are also addressed in this report.

An Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment is also included as part of this report in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 11 – Essential Fish Habitat of the FDOT PD&E Manual and the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) of1996. This assesses waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, and development to maturity.

Wetlands

Wetland habitats were observed within the project corridor. Wetlands included both freshwater and saltwater systems, as well as freshwater and tidal surface waters. Forested and non-forested wetlands were present. Bald cypress was predominant in many forested areas; Carolina willow was observed in several non-forested wetlands. Mangroves were observed within surface waters at Weedon Island Preserve, abutting the bridge over Big Island Gap, and along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. The project corridor adjacent to Old Tampa Bay is within the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, an Outstanding Florida Water. Bay waters adjacent to the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway contained seagrass habitats of varying density, quality and composition. Impacts to wetlands and surface waters were estimated based on preliminary design alternatives and estimated work space to complete construction. The project would result in approximately 0.74 acres of impacts to freshwater wetlands, 0.89 acres of impact to mangrove habitat, and 0.74 acres of seagrass habitat. Mitigation would be required pursuant to S.373.4137 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C.s, 1344.

Protected Species and Habitat

The project corridor was evaluated for the presence of state and/or federally protected wildlife and habitat to support protected wildlife. Wildlife habitat observed along the project corridor included fragmented natural areas variously impacted by urban development, freshwater forest and mangrove habitat abutting established preserves, and estuarine habitats associated with Old Tampa Bay. Six listed fauna were observed during field surveys. In addition, 30 species were listed to occur or potentially occur within proximity to the project according to database reviews. Federally-protected species which occur or have the potential to occur within the project corridor include fish (Gulf sturgeon, small-toothed sawfish), reptiles (sea turtles and the eastern indigo snake), birds (wood stork and piping plover), and mammals (West Indian manatee). Two non-listed, federally protected avian species (bald eagle and osprey) may also utilize the project area. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) designated critical habitat is not found within the project limits. State-protected species known to utilize or have the potential to utilize habitat within the project corridor include one species of fish, several reptiles/amphibians, and a variety of avian species. Neither federal- nor state-listed plant species were observed within the project corridor.

Essential Fish Habitat

Estuarine habitats exist within Old Tampa Bay and tidally-connected waters are adjacent to the I-275 project. An Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment was prepared to evaluate how the proposed action would affect EFH. A freshwater, but tidally-connected canal was present along I-275 that connects Riviera Bay to Sawgrass Lake Park near Tinny Creek. Mangrove habitat was observed near Weedon Island Preserve, at Big Island Gap, and along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. Hardened seawall and natural shoreline were present along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway and seagrass habitat was mapped within Old Tampa Bay.

Tampa Bay contains EFH utilized by federally-managed species and their prey. The Preferred Build Alternative for Segment C would impact seagrass and mangrove habitats located adjacent to or within the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, an Outstanding Florida Water. Impacts to seagrass habitat would occur as a result of widening a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway.

Impacts to both seagrass habitat and mangrove habitat would occur at Big Island Gap as a result of the necessary I-275 bridge widening. In addition, impacts to mangrove habitat would also occur at a canal near Weedon Island Preserve to accommodate highway widening. The project would result in approximately 0.89 acres of impact to mangrove habitat and 0.74 acres of seagrass habitat. Impacts will be evaluated during design and mitigation will be provided pursuant to S.373.4137 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C.s, 1344.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Project Description

The Interstate 275 (I-275) (State Road (SR) 93) project corridor extends from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida, a distance of approximately 16.3 miles. The study map is shown on **Figure 1-1** on the following page. To effectively describe and evaluate the unique transportation characteristics of the project, the study corridor is divided into three segments as listed below, and graphically displayed on **Figure 1-1**:

- Segment A: From south of 54th Avenue South to I-175, a distance of 4.6 miles;
- Segment B: From I-175 to south of Gandy Boulevard, a distance of 6.0 miles; and
- Segment C: From south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North, a distance of 5.7 miles.

The study corridor is contained within the townships, ranges, and sections listed in **Table 1-1** (United States Geological Survey [USGS] Pass-A-Grille Beach, Fla. 1956; St. Petersburg, Fla. 1956; Safety Harbor, Fla. 1956).

Table 1-1. Township, Range, and Section Coordinates

Township	Range	Sections
32 South	16 East	2, 3, 10, and 11
31 South	16 East	1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 24, 26, 27, 34, and 35
30 South	16 East	6, 12, 13, 14, 23 through 26, 35, and 36

With respect to the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study section of I-275 within Segments A and B, only lane continuity improvements were evaluated. Segment C is the focus of express or managed lane improvements.

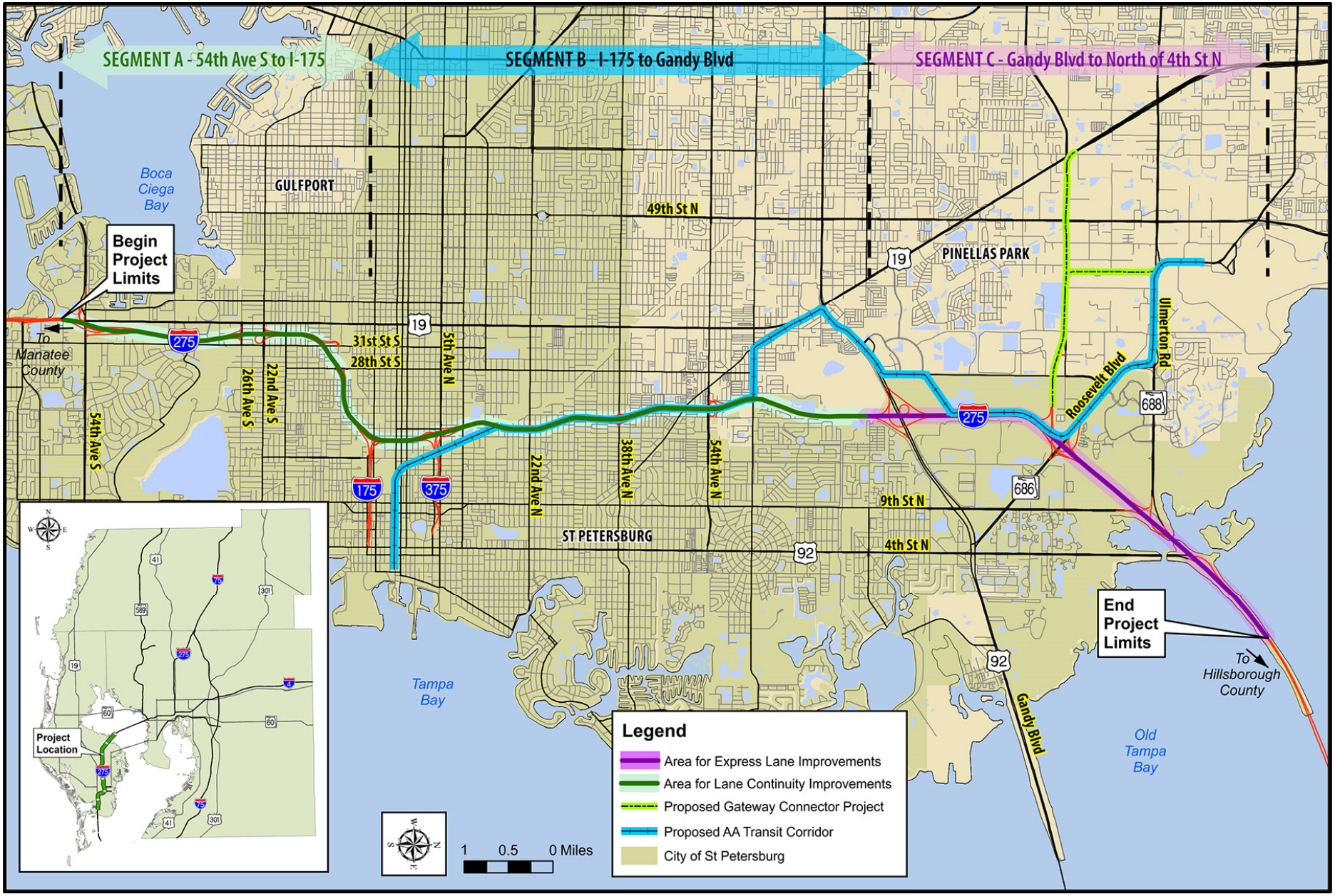

Figure 1-1. Project Location Map

1.2 Project Background

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) conducted this PD&E Study to evaluate the need for capacity and operational improvements along I-275 from 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, a distance of approximately 16.3 miles. The objective of this PD&E Study was to provide documented environmental and engineering analyses to assist the FDOT and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in reaching a decision on the type, conceptual design and location of the necessary improvements within the I-275 PD&E Study limits.

Several multimodal transportation planning studies for the I-275 PD&E Study Corridor within Pinellas County have been completed while others are presently underway. The findings from these studies are assisting the FDOT in identifying transportation improvements needed to adequately meet local and regional travel demands, as well as to support the development of the PD&E Study's Preferred Alternative. The following sections describe the relevant multimodal planning studies prepared for the I-275 corridor in Pinellas County.

1.2.1 Tampa Bay Express (TBX) Master Plan

FDOT District Seven developed the TBX Master Plan that indicates on which interstate facilities, and specific freeway segments of these facilities, it would be cost feasible to implement express lanes. This Plan ensures that the impacts of implementing express lanes on the Tampa Bay interstate system would be evaluated on a system-wide basis in lieu of treating each corridor as its own stand-alone project. The I-275 PD&E Study incorporates the TBX Master Plan improvements proposed for the I-275 study corridor as part of the Preferred Alternative along with the lane continuity improvements which would occur generally between 54th Avenue South to south of Gandy Boulevard.

Realizing a potential shortfall in funding for implementation of the Plan's ultimate capacity improvements planned for the Tampa Bay Region, the FDOT underwent an evaluation to identify a series of lower cost express lane projects that can be funded in the FDOT's Five-Year Work Program. These initial projects could be built within a five-year or less time period and then later be incorporated into the Master Plan projects at minimal additional costs. The shorter-term, lower-cost improvements are considered the "Starter Projects."

Further information regarding the development of the Master Plan and its proposed projects are documented in the TBX Master Plan document.

1.2.2 Pinellas Alternative Analysis (AA)

In addition to addressing highway capacity deficiencies, this PD&E Study also considered multimodal accommodations envisioned for the I-275 study corridor and its regional connections to the rest of Tampa Bay. The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) adopted a Transportation Master Plan for Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota Counties in May 2009. While considering all modes of transportation, the TBARTA Master Plan focused on providing the framework for an integrated transit system to serve all parts of the region. In 2009, the Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco, and Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and Citrus County all adopted the TBARTA Mid Term (2035) Networks in

their 2035 Needs plans and included several key elements of the Master Plan in their 203540 Cost Affordable Long Range Transportation Plans (LRTPs).

As a first step in moving toward implementation of this Plan, the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) had undertaken an AA for a light rail transit corridor running from the University of South Florida, through downtown Tampa, to the Westshore area. This HART analysis included a service connection to a proposed High Speed Rail station in downtown Tampa. A second AA has been completed by the FDOT, TBARTA, the Pinellas County MPO and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) for a premium transit corridor from downtown St. Petersburg, through the Pinellas Gateway area, to downtown Clearwater. In addition, the FDOT, local transit agencies, and MPOs have planned several Regional Transit Corridor Evaluations for other elements of the TBARTA Master Plan.

The 2012 Pinellas AA evaluated transit options connecting major residential, employment and activity centers in Pinellas County to Hillsborough County via the Howard Frankland Bridge corridor. The study identified a 24-mile light rail Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for its ability to offer transportation options that are safe, sustainable, affordable, and efficient. Significant countywide local bus enhancements were recommended to support the LPA, nearly doubling the existing local bus service with portions being implemented before the light rail.

A key element of the TBARTA Master Plan is to provide a transit linkage across Upper Tampa Bay linking Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties. Specifically, both the TBARTA Master Plan and the MPO LRTPs call for the linkage to be provided across the Howard Frankland Bridge (I-275/SR 93) corridor. This linkage would run from Hillsborough County's proposed Westshore Regional Multimodal Center (service connection to the proposed High Speed Rail Station in downtown Tampa) to Pinellas County's proposed Gateway Station. These stations would not serve as termini, but would allow uninterrupted transit movements from the St. Petersburg and Clearwater areas across the Howard Frankland Bridge to and through Tampa's Central Business District (CBD) and vice versa. However, for this linkage to be possible, the Howard Frankland Bridge corridor must be able to accommodate the appropriate transit provisions. The FDOT plans to replace the northbound Howard Frankland Bridge in the future since it is approaching the end of its useful service life. Therefore, the I-275 PD&E Study will provide recommended improvements that provide the transit accommodations envisioned by TBARTA and the needed highway improvements consistent with the planned northbound bridge replacement.

1.2.3 Lane Continuity Study

Completed in October 2008, the I-275 Lane Continuity Study evaluated operational improvements on I-275 from the Sunshine Skyway Bridge North Toll Plaza to Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County. The study documented existing and future operational and safety conditions within the corridor for the purposes of recommending possible improvements to alleviate identified deficiencies. The study addressed both short-term traffic operational type improvements and longer-term major geometric improvements. As a long range improvement, the study recommended providing lane improvements to achieve one additional continuous lane on I-275 in each direction from 54th Avenue South to Gandy Boulevard.

The I-275 Pinellas PD&E Study incorporated and updated the Lane Continuity Study recommendations. Currently, I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to 4th Street North has one continuous lane in the northbound direction and no continuous lanes in the southbound direction.

According to the previous Lane Continuity Study recommendations, proposed lane additions to I-275 are anticipated to provide three continuous lanes in the northbound direction and two continuous lanes in the southbound direction between 54th Avenue South and 4th Street North. These new lane connections will improve the safety for motorists traveling the I-275 corridor by substantially reducing the number of lane changes for both directions of travel. The study also recommended modifications to certain interchanges within the study limits, allowing for a more refined analysis of those locations.

1.2.4 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process

The proposed project has been evaluated through the FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process. Agency coordination for this project has been initiated as part of ETDM Project Number 12556. The FDOT received Location Design and Concept Acceptance (LDCA) from FHWA on July 15, 2016 for lane continuity improvements along I-275 from 54th Avenue South to south of Gandy Boulevard and express lane improvements related to the TBX Master Plan project along I-275 from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North.

1.3 Existing Conditions

I-275 is a limited access urban interstate highway facility that runs in a north and south direction through Pinellas County. The posted speed limit is 65 miles per hour (mph). Within the project limits, I-275 is comprised of a four-lane divided typical section with auxiliary lanes from south of 54th Avenue South to I-375. From I-375 to north of 4th Street North, I-275 is comprised of a six-lane divided typical section with auxiliary lanes.

The existing roadway typical sections, as shown on **Figure 1-2(a-f)**, are described as follows:

- Segment A (from south of 54th Avenue South to I-175): consists of four 12-foot general purpose travel lanes, two 12-foot auxiliary travel lanes, 12-foot inside and outside shoulders (10-foot paved) and generally open drainage with a median width that varies from 64 to 212 feet;
- Segment B (from I-175 to south of Gandy Boulevard): consists of six 12-foot general purpose travel lanes, two or four 12-foot auxiliary travel lanes, 12-foot inside and outside shoulders (10-foot paved) and generally open drainage with a median width that varies from 64 to 204 feet; and
- Segment C (from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North): There are four separate typical sections within Segment C (labeled separately as C1-C4).
    - C-1 (from south of Gandy Boulevard to Roosevelt Boulevard) consists of six 12-foot general purpose travel lanes, two or four 12-foot auxiliary travel lanes, 12-foot inside and outside shoulders (10-foot paved) and generally open drainage with a median width that varies from 64 to 204 feet;
    - C-2 (from Roosevelt Boulevard to south of 9th Street North): consists of six 12-foot general purpose travel lanes, zero to four 12-foot auxiliary travel lanes, 12-foot inside and outside shoulders (10-foot paved) and generally open drainage with a median width of 40 feet;
    - C-3 (from south of 9th Street North to north of 4th Street North): consists of six 12-foot general purpose travel lanes, two to four 12-foot auxiliary travel lanes, 12-foot inside and outside shoulders (10-foot paved) with a 26-foot wide concrete median containing a two-foot traffic barrier used to separate northbound and southbound traffic on I-275;

- C-4 (from north of 4th Street North to 1.0 mile south of the Howard Frankland Bridge): the I-275 causeway consists of six 12-foot general purpose travel lanes, two 12-foot auxiliary lanes, 10-foot paved inside and outside shoulders, and a 22-foot median. The face of the outside barrier mounted on the sea walls is approximately 40 feet from the travel lanes.

No dedicated transit facilities, frontage roads or high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes are currently provided within any of the I-275 mainline Segments. I-275 includes 15 interchanges within the project limits:

1. 54th Avenue South;
2. 26th Avenue South;
3. 22nd Avenue South;
4. 31st Street South;
5. 28th Street South;
6. I-175;
7. I-375;
8. 5th Avenue North;
9. 22nd Avenue North;
10. 38th Avenue North;
11. 54th Avenue North;
12. Gandy Boulevard;
13. Roosevelt Boulevard/118th Avenue North
14. Ulmerton Road/9th Street North; and
15. 4th Street North.

Figure 1-2. Existing Typical Sections

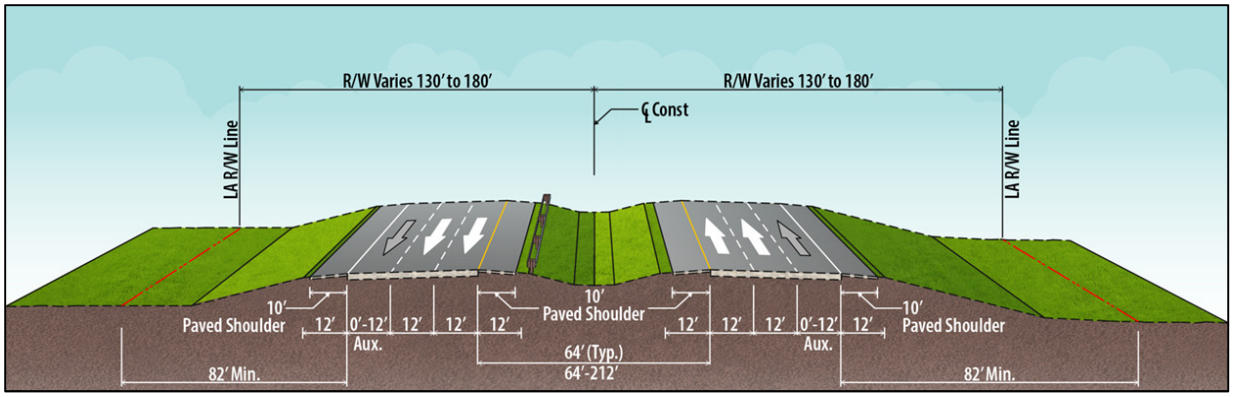

Figure 1-2a. Existing I-275 Mainline Typical Section from south of 54th Avenue South to I-175 (Segment A)

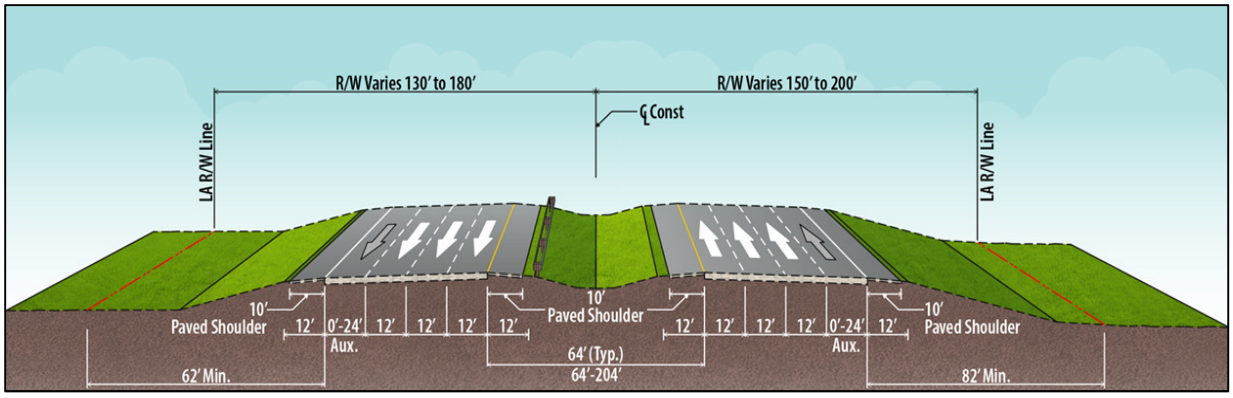

Figure 1-2b. Existing I-275 Mainline Typical Section from I-175 to south of Gandy Boulevard (Segment B)

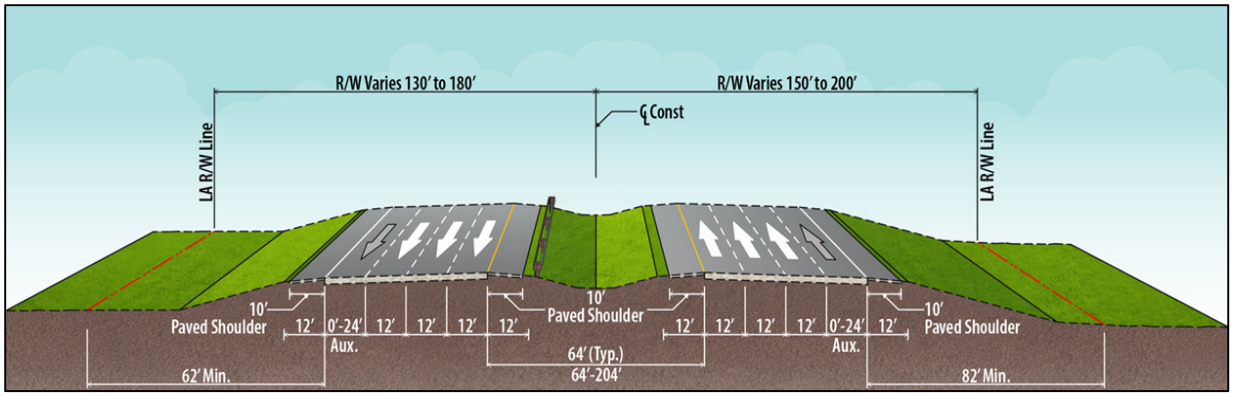

Figure 1-2c. Existing I-275 Mainline Typical Section from south of Gandy Boulevard to Roosevelt Boulevard (Segment C-1)

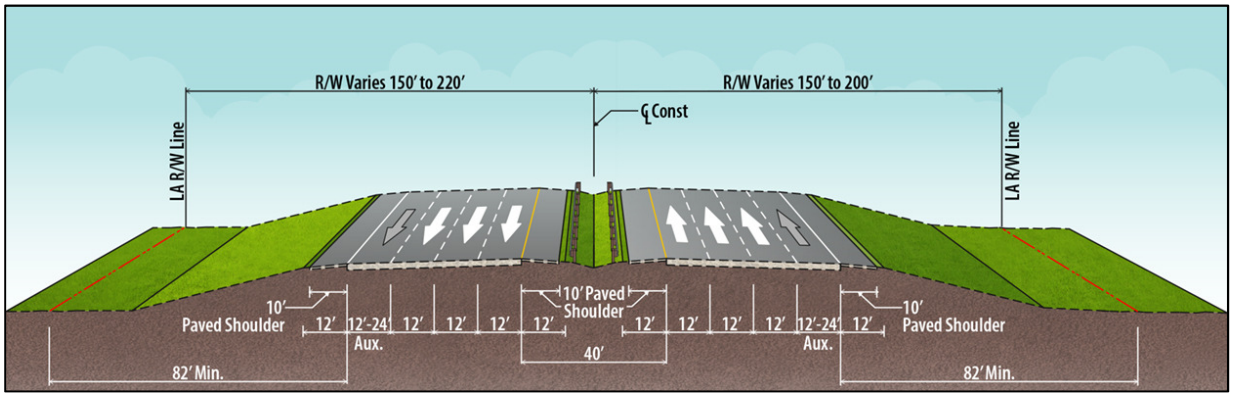

Figure 1-2d. Existing I-275 Mainline Typical Section from Roosevelt Boulevard to south of 9th Street North (Segment C-2)

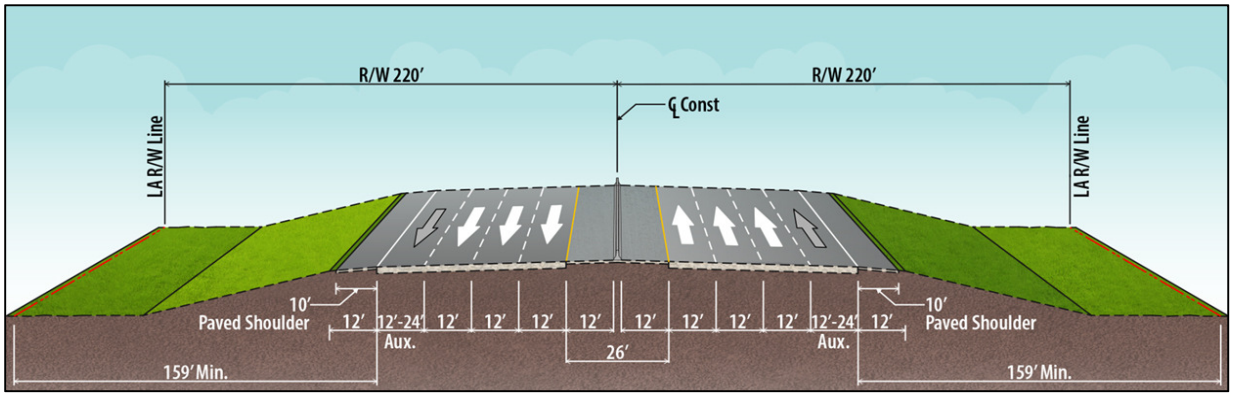

Figure 1-2e. Existing I-275 Mainline Typical Section from south of 9th Street North to south of 4th Street North (Segment C-3)

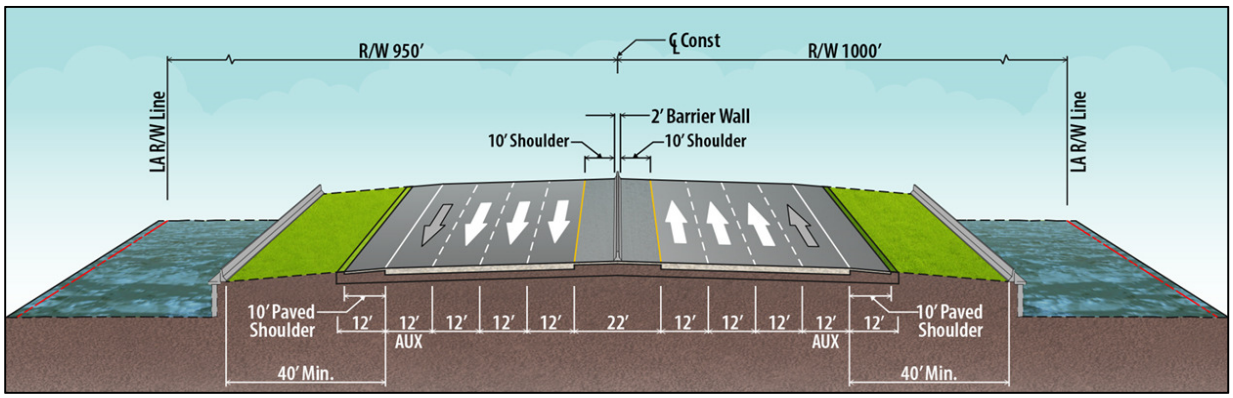

Figure 1.2f. Existing I-275 Mainline Typical Section from south of 4th Street North to 1.0 mile south of Howard Frankland Bridge (Segment C-4)

1.4 Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to provide for operational and safety improvements that maximize capacity within the I-275 corridor, improve lane continuity and connect I-275 within Pinellas County to the future network of express lanes planned for the Tampa Bay Region. Improvements are needed within the I-275 corridor to help alleviate existing traffic congestion, enhance safety and better accommodate future travel demands associated with projected growth in employment and population. The addition of special use/express lanes is included in the FDOT's Approved SIS Highway Component 2040 Cost Feasible Plan.

In 2012, Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes on I-275 ranged from a low of 82,000 vehicles per day north of 54th Avenue South to a high of 142,500 vehicles per day north of 4th Street North. Under these existing traffic loadings, several sections along the I-275 mainline operate deficiently (Level of Service – LOS E) during both the morning and afternoon peak travel periods and does not meet the minimum LOS standard D for SIS highway facilities. Without improvements, the operating conditions along I-275 will continue to deteriorate, resulting in unacceptable levels of service throughout the entire study corridor.

The following information supports the proposed project's purpose and need:

Safety/Crash Rate Issues

Crash data from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles indicated there were 2,082 crashes recorded in the project limits during the five year period of 2009 through 2013. There were a total of 976 injuries and 18 fatalities. The crash rates were higher than the average statewide crash rate for urban interstates within the vicinity of certain interchanges within the project limits, and along mainline sections between 22nd Avenue and 54th Avenue North.

Safety within the project limits will be enhanced due to maximizing capacity that will be provided by the proposed lane continuity improvements on I-275. The lane continuity improvements will reduce driving decisions related to lane changes, thereby decreasing potential conflicts among vehicles.

Lane Continuity Issues

Currently, I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to 4th Street North has one continuous lane in the northbound direction and no continuous lanes in the southbound direction. The proposed intermittent widening and restriping of existing lanes within I-275 Segments A and B comprise the lane continuity improvements that will form two continuous lanes on I-275 in each direction between 54th Avenue South and 4th Street North; thereby improving the safety of motorists by reducing driving decisions which relate to lane changes and the incidence of associated crashes.

Managed/Special Use Lanes Intent

I-275 Segment C is a component of the Tampa Bay Express (TBX) toll lanes. As part of the TBX Master Plan, one tolled lane is to be added to I-275 in each direction from Gandy Boulevard to 118th Avenue North. From 118th Avenue North to north of 4th Street North, two tolled lanes will be provided in each direction on I-275. Access will be provided between the tolled and non-tolled lanes near Gandy Boulevard, at 118th Avenue North, and between 4th Street North and the Howard Frankland Bridge.

Proposed Improvements

The proposed action involves the provision of capacity and operational improvements along 16.3 miles of I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida. This evaluation considers the operational and highway safety benefits of implementing capacity improvements and compares them to the cost savings and minimization of adverse impacts associated with a No Build Alternative. The No Build and Build Alternatives are evaluated and compared based on a variety of parameters utilizing a matrix format. This process identifies the alternative that best balances the benefits (such as improved traffic operations and safety) with the impacts (such as environmental effects and construction costs). In addition to capacity and operational improvements, the proposed action also considers the multimodal transportation needs of the I-275 project corridor, specifically incorporation of a multimodal envelope as part of the proposed improvements in order to be consistent with the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) of the Pinellas Alternatives Analysis (AA).

The Preferred Build Alternative consists of providing lane continuity improvements within Segments A and B (from south of 54th Avenue South to south of Gandy Boulevard), and express lane improvements in Segment C (from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North). The lane continuity improvements consists of intermittent widening and restriping of existing lanes on I-275 to form two continuous lanes in each direction. In Segment B, a 40-foot (ft) multimodal transportation envelope within the I-275 median is preserved for the future implementation of light rail transit use envisioned as part of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved Pinellas AA. The express lanes proposed in Segment C are part of the Tampa Bay Express (TBX) Master Plan, which consists of an integrated system of express lanes identified for the Tampa Bay Region.

The I-275 interchange modifications proposed within the project segments are as follows, these future interchange improvements will be further analyzed in appropriate interchange analysis documents:

Segment A

- 31st Street South – moving SB on ramp from a left hand merge to a right hand merge

Segment B

- 5th Avenue North – SB off ramp contains a new auxiliary lane (connected with 22nd Avenue North)
- 22nd Avenue North – SB on ramp contains a new auxiliary lane with connection to 5th Avenue North
- 38th Avenue North – Additional lane on NB off ramp (from 1 to 2).

Segment C

- 118th Avenue – new GUL and SUL ramps
- Roosevelt Boulevard – new GUL NB on ramp
- MLK Boulevard – NB on ramp widening
- Ulmerton Boulevard – NB on ramp widening
- 4th Street North – NB on ramp and SB off-ramp widening

The proposed express lane improvements initially considers (prior to the design year 2040) one express lane (EL) in each direction of I-275 from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North. This near-term express lanes project is known as the Starter Project. The longer-term Master Plan Project shall provide for one EL in each direction of I-275 from south of Gandy Boulevard to 118th Avenue North/Roosevelt Boulevard and two ELs in each direction of I-275 from 118th Avenue North/Roosevelt Boulevard to north of 4th Street North. The separately prepared Final Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) documents the engineering and environmental analyses conducted to assess the environmental and sociocultural effects of implementing the No Build and Build Alternatives.

1.5 Report Purpose

This Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) is one of several documents that were prepared as part of the PD&E Study. The WEBAR documents the project's wetlands and protected species involvement. Pursuant to the Presidential Executive Order 11990 entitled *Protection of Wetlands* (May 1977), the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) developed a policy "Preservation of the Nation's Wetlands" (USDOT Order 5660.1A) dated August 24, 1978. This policy requires that all federally-funded highway projects protect wetlands to the fullest extent possible. In accordance with said policy, and additionally with **Part 2, Chapter 18 – Wetlands** of the FDOT PD&E Manual (April 22, 2013), project alternatives were assessed (including one Build (three segments) and one No-Build) to evaluate potential impacts to wetlands and surface waters associated with each alternative.

Additionally, this report evaluates the project corridor for the existence or potential occurrence of federal- and state-listed plants and animals, as well as the presence of habitat suitable for utilization by federal- and state-listed plants and animals, in accordance with **Part 2, Chapter 17 - Wildlife and Habitat Impacts** of the FDOT PD&E Manual (November 10, 1991). An Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment has been included as a component of this WEBAR in accordance with **Part 2, Chapter 11 – Essential Fish Habitat** of the FDOT PD&E Manual (Nov. 26, 2007) and the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) of 1996.

2.0 Improvement Alternatives

A Design Traffic Technical Memorandum (DTTM) was prepared as part of the PD&E Study to document the existing travel conditions along I-275, present traffic forecasts of the opening year (2020), interim year (2030) and design year (2040) travel demand along I-275 and the crossing corridors, and summarize level of service evaluations of improvement alternatives for the I-275 mainline. The DTTM concluded that the proposed improvements should consist of providing lane continuity improvements only in Segment A (from south of 54th Avenue South to I-175), lane continuity improvements which are compatible with potential multimodal improvements in Segment B (from I-175 to south of Gandy Boulevard) and adding express lanes (ELs) to the existing general use lanes (GULs) in each direction of the I-275 mainline to form express lanes in study Segment C (from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North). For the express lane section, two ELs would be provided in each direction of the I-275 mainline to accommodate traffic volumes forecasted in the design year (2040) under the Master Plan scenario. Alternatively, one EL would be provided in each direction of the I-275 mainline under the Starter Project scenario, in order to cost effectively provide mobility options and preserve acceptable levels of service for the regional travelers prior to the design year.

2.1 No-Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative assumes that, with the exception of the improvements that are already planned and funded, the existing conditions would remain for I-275 within the project limits and only routine maintenance activities would occur until the design year 2040. The advantages to the No Build Alternative include no new costs for design and construction, no effects to existing land uses and natural resources and no disruption to the public during construction. However, the No Build Alternative would not address the project's purpose and need and would result in increased congestion and user costs. The traffic analyses for this alternative indicates that by the year 2040 a significant portion of the I-275 mainline, merge/diverge areas and ramp termini intersections would operate below acceptable levels of service.

2.2 Mainline Build Alternatives

For the I-275 mainline, two build alternatives were developed and evaluated based on alternate typical sections. In Segments A and B, the build alternative consists of lane continuity improvements, while in Segment C express lanes are considered as the build alternative. The proposed lane continuity improvements in Segments A and B provide for intermittent widening and restriping of existing lanes on I-275 to form two continuous lanes in each direction. In Segment B, a 40-foot multimodal envelope is preserved for the future implementation of light rail transit within the I-275 median as part of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) approved Pinellas AA.

As part of the Master Plan improvements in Segment C, a single express lane is to be added in the northbound direction of mainline I-275 north of Gandy Boulevard. A second express lane is added to the northbound I-275 mainline as a direct connection from the 118th Avenue North corridor. Only one access point, located between 4th Street North and the Howard Frankland Bridge, is provided for travel between ELs and GULs. In the southbound direction, two ELs on the I-275 mainline will originate from points north/east of the Howard Frankland Bridge, with one of the ELs terminating as

a direct connection to the 118th Avenue North corridor, and the second southbound I-275 mainline EL will transition back into the GULs south of Gandy Boulevard. Similar to the northbound direction, only one access point is to be located between the Howard Frankland Bridge and 4th Street North. The express lane typical section in Segment C generally consists of six GULs (three lanes in each direction) and four ELs (two in each direction). A marked four-foot buffer containing traffic delineators (i.e., vertical PVC flexible posts) separate the ELs and the GULs.

The Starter Project improvements in Segment C consist of re-designating the existing auxiliary lanes on mainline I-275 to form a single express lane in each direction from south of the Roosevelt Boulevard corridor to the Howard Frankland Bridge. Access to the EL from the GULs is provided at three locations along the northbound I-275 mainline: 1) between Gandy Boulevard and Roosevelt Boulevard, 2) a direct connection from the 118th Avenue North corridor, and 3) between 4th Street North and the Howard Frankland Bridge. In the southbound direction of mainline I-275, the single express lane originating from points north/east of the Howard Frankland Bridge will terminate south of Gandy Boulevard. Access from the EL to the GULs is provided at three locations along the southbound I-275 mainline: 1) between the Howard Frankland Bridge and 4th Street North, 2) a direction connection to the 118th Avenue North corridor, and 3) between Gandy Boulevard and 54th Avenue North.

The widening of I-275, under both lane continuity and Starter and Master Plan express lane mainline alternatives, can be constructed within the existing right of way. Additional right of way may be required, however, for stormwater management facilities and floodplain compensation sites.

A detailed description of each mainline alternative is provided in the following pages, and a graphical depiction of the conceptual design layout of the proposed build alternative is provided in **Appendix A**.

2.2.1 Mainline Build Alternative – Segment A

Mainline Build Alternative – Segment A, proposed lane continuity improvements mainly consists of providing intermittent widening that varies between 0 and 12 ft and restriping of the existing four-lane typical section with auxiliary lanes. The proposed I-275 mainline build alternative typical section in Segment A is shown on **Figure 2-1**. As seen in this graphic, widening of I-275 is only proposed to the outside in the southbound direction.

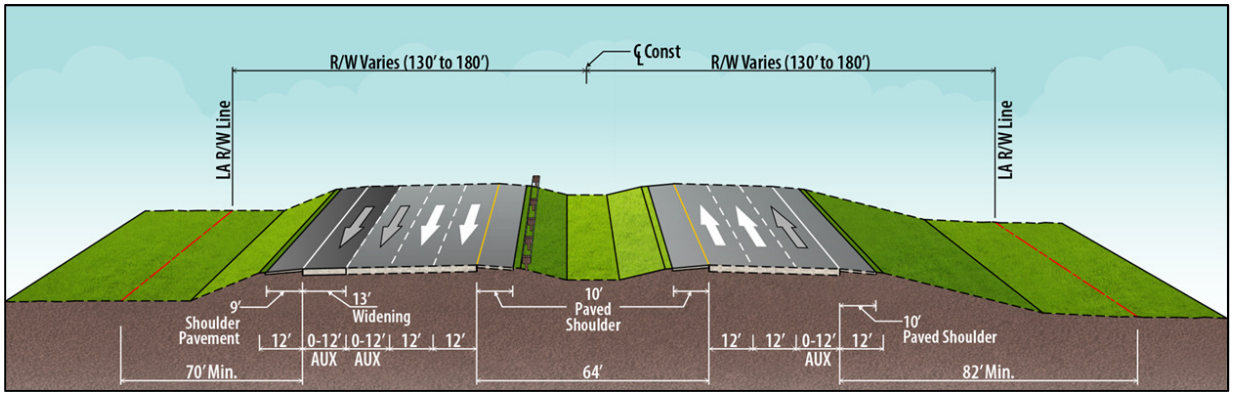

Figure 2-1. I-275 Mainline Build Alternative Typical Section from south of 54th Avenue I-175 (Segment A)

2.2.2 Mainline Build Alternative – Segment B

Mainline Build Alternative – Segment B, proposed lane continuity improvements mainly consists of providing intermittent widening that varies between 0 and 24 ft and restriping of the existing six-lane typical section with auxiliary lanes. As previously mentioned in Section 2.2, lane continuity improvements and accommodations for future light rail transit within the I-275 median as planned in the Pinellas Alternatives Analysis are provided. The proposed I-275 mainline build alternative typical section in Segment B is shown on **Figure 2-2**.

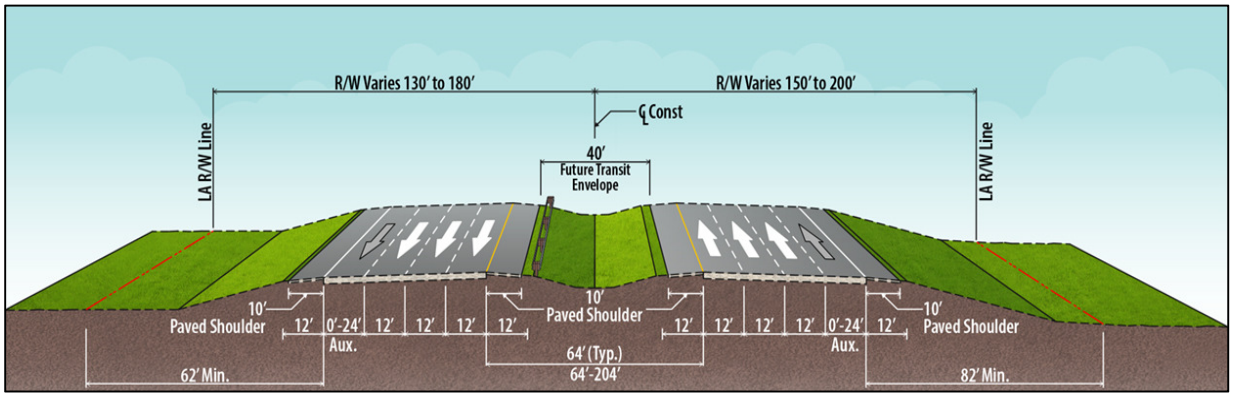

Figure 2-2. I-275 Mainline Build Alternative Typical Section from I-175 to south of Gandy Boulevard (Segment B)

2.2.3 Mainline Build Alternative – Segment C

Mainline Build Alternative – Segment C, proposed widening of I-275 consists of the addition of express lanes to form the Master Plan and Starter projects. The proposed I-275 mainline build alternative typical sections in Segment C are shown **Figure 2-3(a-d)** and **Figure 2-4(a-d)** for the Master and Starter projects, respectively.

2.2.3.1 Proposed Master Plan Improvements

The Master Plan proposes to widen the existing I-275 mainline towards the median in order to accommodate one EL in each direction from south of Gandy Boulevard to 118th Avenue North (see **Figure 2-3a** for a graphical depiction of the proposed typical section). The proposed ELs are to be separated from the GULS by a four-foot painted buffer that is to contain traffic delineators. Direct connections from the 118th Avenue North/Gateway corridor to I-275 are provided via new flyover ramps that enter and exit I-275 from the median. **Figure 2-3b** illustrates the use of Mechanically Stabilized Earth (MSE) wall to transition 118th Avenue North flyover ramps to the at-grade I-275 mainline. From 118th Avenue North to 1.0 mile south of the Howard Frankland Bridge, two express lanes are provided in each direction of travel along I-275 (see **Figure 2-3c** and **Figure 2-4d**). In order to accommodate the proposed express lanes, the existing I-275 causeway extending into Tampa Bay will need to be widened and the existing sea wall replaced.

Figure 2-3. I-275 Mainline Build Alternative Typical Sections – Master Plan Project

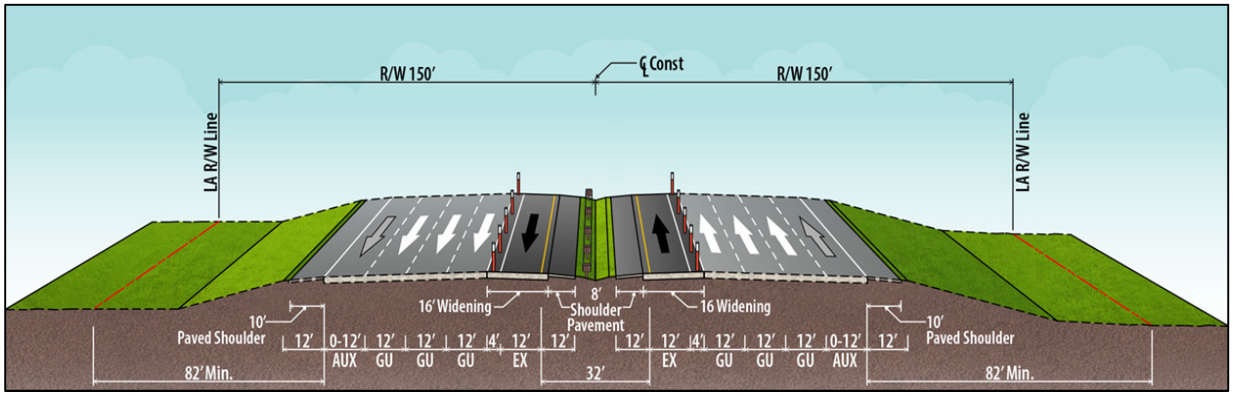

Figure 2-3a. I-275 Mainline Master Plan Build Alternative Typical Section from south of Gandy Boulevard to Roosevelt Boulevard (Segment C-MP1)

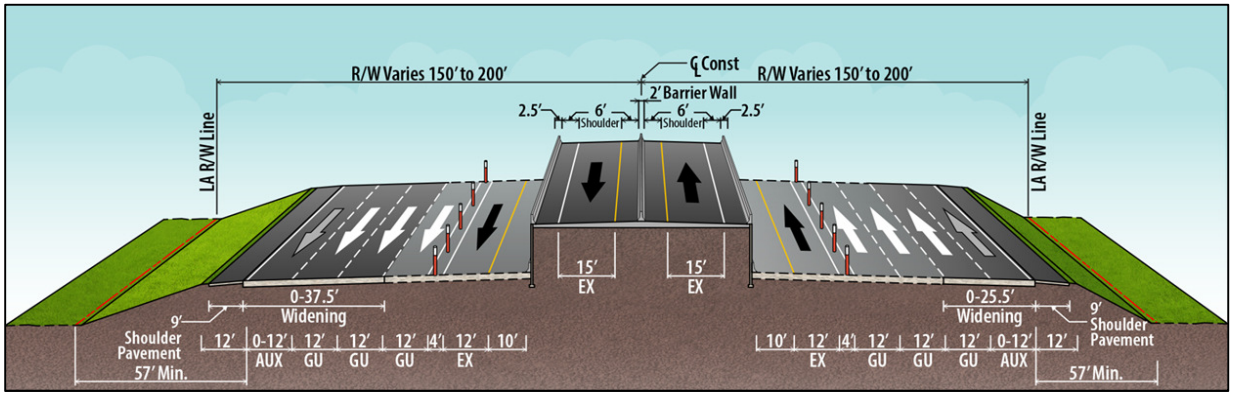

Figure 2-3b. I-275 Mainline Master Plan Build Alternative Typical Section from Roosevelt Boulevard to south of 9th Street North (Segment C-MP2)

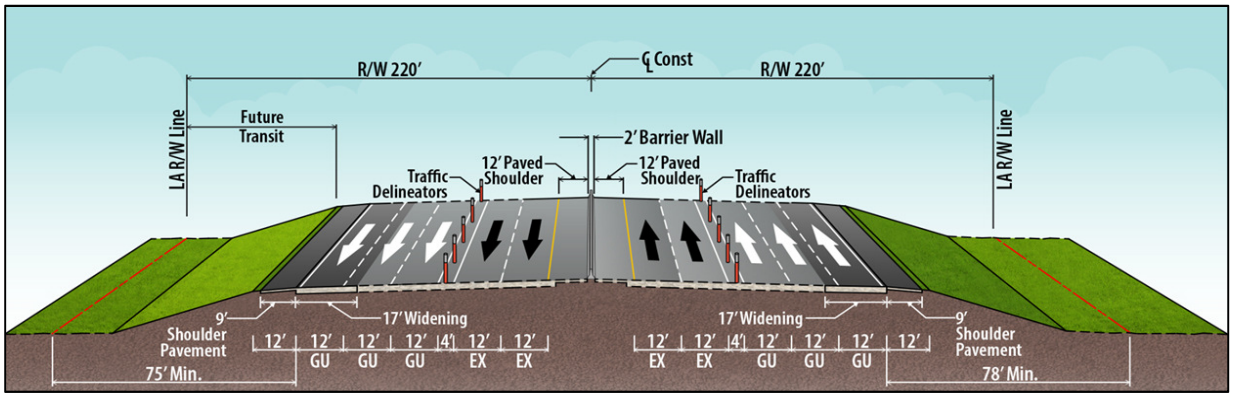

Figure 2-3c. I-275 Mainline Master Plan Build Alternative Typical Section from south of 9th Street North to north of 4th Street North (Segment C-MP3)

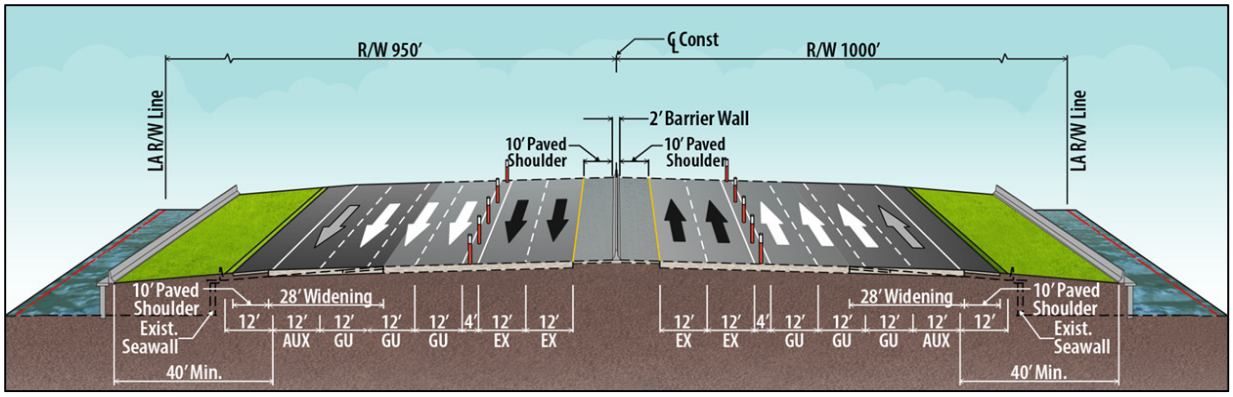

Figure 2-3d. I-275 Mainline Master Plan Build Alternative Typical Section from north of 4th Street North to 1.0 mile south of the Howard Frankland Bridge (Segment C-MP4)

2.2.3.2 Proposed Starter Project Improvements

The Starter Project improvements are similar to those of the Master Plan, with the exception that instead of two express lanes proposed in each direction of I-275 under the Master Plan Project, only one lane is provided in each direction of I-275. The southern termini of the Starter Project express lane improvements consist of a lane addition north of Gandy Boulevard, and in the southbound direction the proposed inside (i.e., towards the median) express lane transitions back into the existing southbound I-275 typical section south of Gandy Boulevard.

The Starter Plan proposes to widen the existing I-275 mainline towards the median in order to accommodate one EL in each direction from south of Gandy Boulevard to 118th Avenue North (see **Figure 2-4a** for a graphical depiction of the proposed typical section). As illustrated on **Figure 2-4b**, an MSE wall is utilized in the design of the direct connection to transition 118th Avenue flyover ramps into the at-grade I-275 mainline just south of 9th Street North. The remaining limits of the Starter Project, from north of 9th Street to 1.0 mile south of the Howard Frankland Bridge, involve outside widening and re-designating the existing auxiliary lane on I-275 to form an express lane to the inside. As shown on **Figure 2-4c** and **Figure 2-4d**, no additional travel lanes above-and-beyond the number of existing travel lanes are added under the Starter Project north of 9th Street North.

Figure 2-4. I-275 Mainline Build Alternative Typical Sections – Starter Project

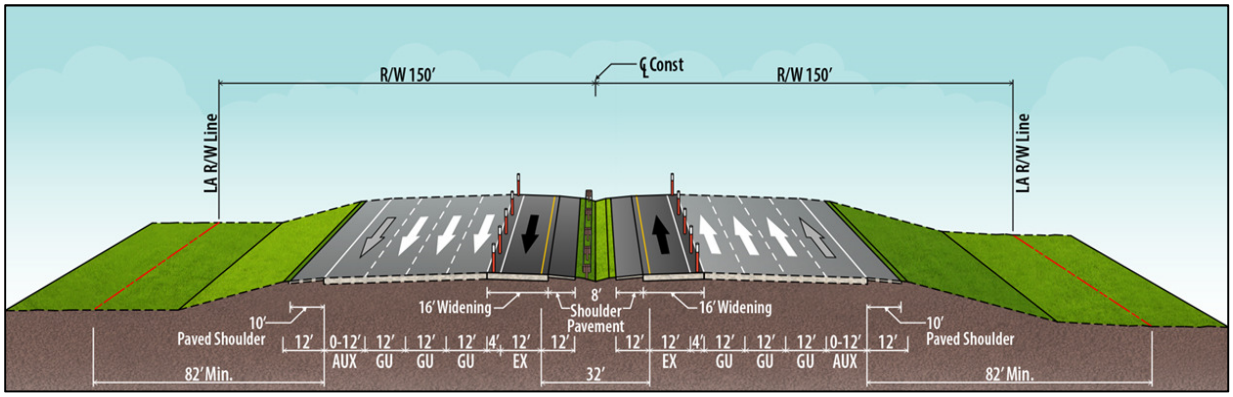

Figure 2-4a. I-275 Mainline Starter Project Build Alternative Typical Section from south of Gandy Boulevard to Roosevelt Boulevard (Segment C-SP1)

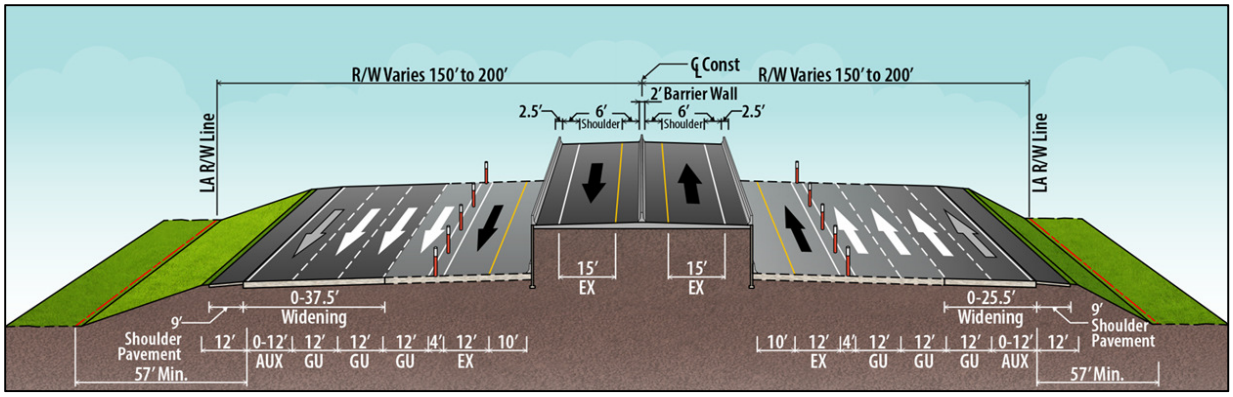

Figure 2-4b. I-275 Mainline Starter Project Build Alternative Typical Section from Roosevelt Boulevard to south of 9th Street North (Segment C-SP2)

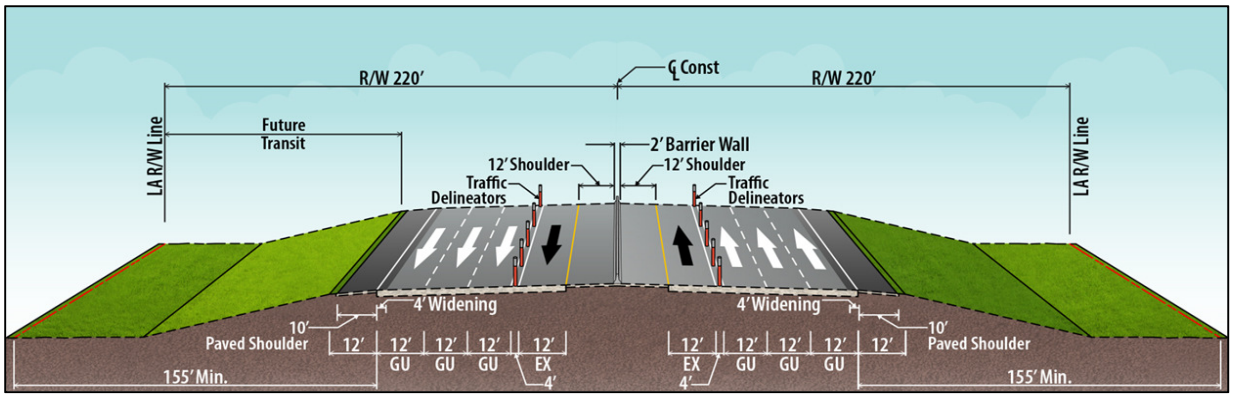

Figure 2-4c. I-275 Mainline Starter Project Build Alternative Typical Section from south of 9th Street North to north of 4th Street North (Segment C-SP3)

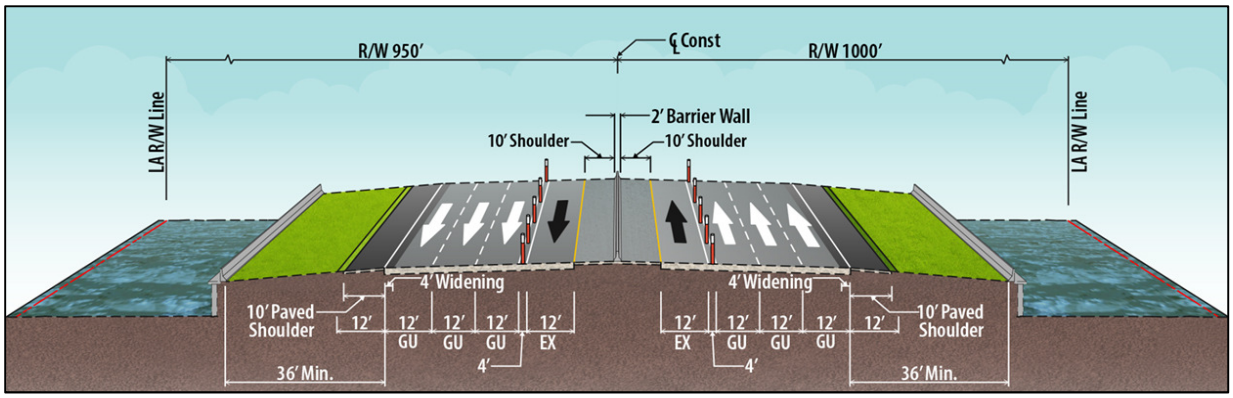

Figure 2.4d. I-275 Mainline Starter Project Build Alternative Typical Section from north of 4th Street North to 1.0 mile south of the Howard Frankland Bridge (Segment C-SP4)

3.0 Existing Environmental Conditions

3.1 Existing Land Use

Land along the I-275 project corridor was evaluated in accordance with the Florida Land Use, Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCFCS) developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT, 1999/2000) and combined desktop analysis using the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Land Use Land Cover (LULC) GIS mapping (2011), SWFWMD Seagrass Survey Data (2010), Pinellas County Aerial Images (2010), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soils data for Pinellas County (2006), National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) data, and site-specific habitat and species data collected during field evaluations conducted during June 2014. **Figures 3-1**, **3-2**, **3-3**, and **3-4** include land use maps (north to south) representative of the project corridor.

According to the SWFWMD LULC mapping, the I-275 corridor is predominantly an active transportation corridor (FLUCFCS, 8100), which has been variously impacted by roadway construction and grading, infrastructure, stormwater conveyance swales, dry and wet detention ponds, maintenance activities, and nuisance and exotic vegetation. The predominant vegetation within actively-maintained portions of the ROW included grasses and other low-cut herbs. Landscaping was present within the medians, right-of-way margins and interchanges and many roadside ditches contained ruderal and hydric vegetation.

Along the southern two-thirds of the project corridor, beginning north of Maximo Canal, the highway was surrounded nearly entirely by urban development including high density (FLUCFCS, 1300) and low density residential (FLUCFCS, 1100), commercial (FLUCFCS, 1400) and industrial services (FLUCFCS, 1500), institutional facilities (FLUCFCS, 1700), recreational facilities (FLUCFCS, 1800), and utilities (FLUCFCS, 8300) with occasional, disconnected patches of open land (FLUCFCS, 1900) and forested lots (FLUCFCS, 4340). Forested wetland fragments (FLUCFCS, 6210) generally ¼ acre or less in size were present north of 54th Avenue South, and a drainage canal was present near 26th Avenue South (FLUCFCS, 5100). Boyd Hill Nature Park is east of I-275, and south of 26th Avenue South, and the Pinellas Trail crosses I-275 north of I-175 at 2nd Avenue South.

Along the northern third of the project corridor, beginning near the southern edge of Sawgrass Lake Park, land use was more variable and open land more common, although high density residential, commercial, and industrial services were still present. Land along Sawgrass Lake Park abutting the I-275 corridor included hardwood conifer mix (FLUCFCS, 4340), cypress (FLUCFCS, 621), stream and lake swamps (FLUCFCS, 6150), and freshwater marsh (FLUCFCS, 6410). Open water reservoirs (FLUCFCS, 5300) were present along this stretch of highway and roadside ditches and canals (FLUCFCS, 5100) were common. One large canal/ditch beneath I-275 connects Sawgrass Lake Park (FLUCFCS 4340, 6150, 6440) to Riviera Bay near Tinny Creek south of Gandy Boulevard. Numerous parcels of open urban land (FLUCFCS, 1900) were also present including large tracks designated as utilities (FLUCFCS, 8300) and others abutting wetland habitats.

Estuarine habitats were increasingly common north of Gandy Boulevard with wetland forested mix (FLUCFCS, 6300) transitioning to saltwater marsh (FLUCFCS, 6420) and mangrove swamp (FLUCFCS, 6120). Much of the undeveloped land north of Gandy Boulevard to south of Big Island Gap Bridge (south of 4th Street North), is designated as Weedon Island Preserve (FLUCFCS 4260/6120). I-275 crosses the tidal waters of Old Tampa Bay (FLUCFCS, 5400) at the Big Island

Gap Bridge. From this point north, the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway was flanked by shallow drainage swales, landscaped coastal scrub (FLUCFCS, 3220), salt marsh and mangrove fringe. The final approximate half-mile of the project corridor included seawall with riprap stabilization waterward of the structure. An inventory of existing land use classifications within approximately 200 feet of the project centerline is provided in **Table 3-1**.

Table 3-1. Existing Land Use / Land Cover (FLUCFCS) within the Project Area

FLUCFCS Code		Description
100 ▪ Urban & Built Up	1100	Low Density Residential
	1300	High Density Residential
	1400	Commercial
	1500	Industrial Services
	1700	Institutional Facilities
	1800	Recreational
	1900	Open Urban Land
200 ▪ Agricultural	NA	
300 ▪ Rangeland	3220	Coastal Scrub
400 ▪ Upland Forest	4260	Tropical Hardwoods/Maritime Hammock
	4340	Hardwood Conifer Mix
500 ▪ Water	5100	Streams & Waterways
	5300	Reservoirs
	5400	Bays & Estuaries
600 ▪ Wetlands	6120	Mangrove Swamps
	6150	Stream & Lake Swamps (Bottomland)
	6210	Cypress
	6300	Wetland Forested Mix
	6410	Freshwater Marshes
	6420	Saltwater Marshes
	6430	Wet Prairies
	6440	Emergent Aquatic Vegetation
700 ▪ Barren Land	NA	
800 ▪ Transportation, Communication, Utilities	8100	Transportation
	8300	Utilities

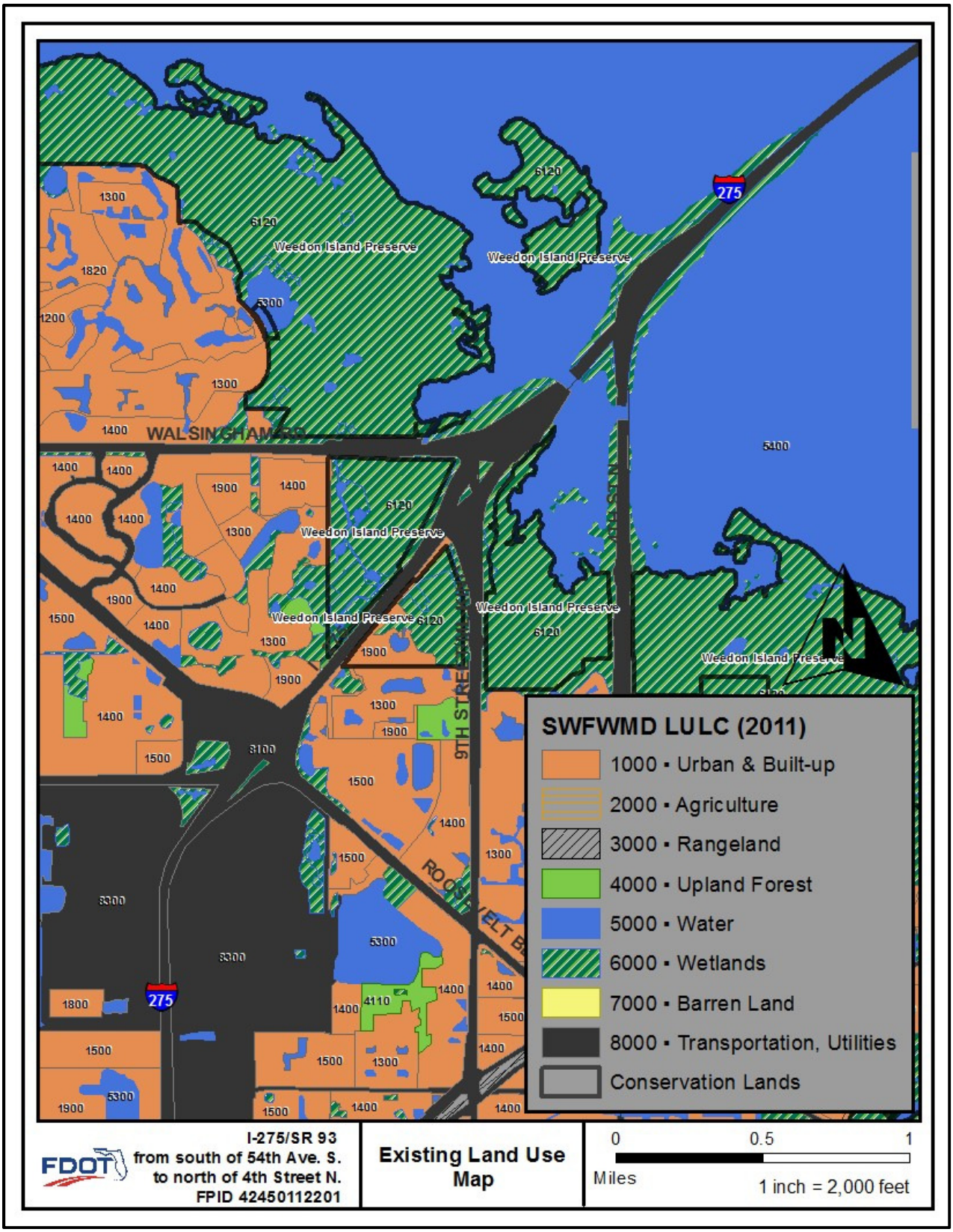

Figure 3-1. Existing Land Use Map

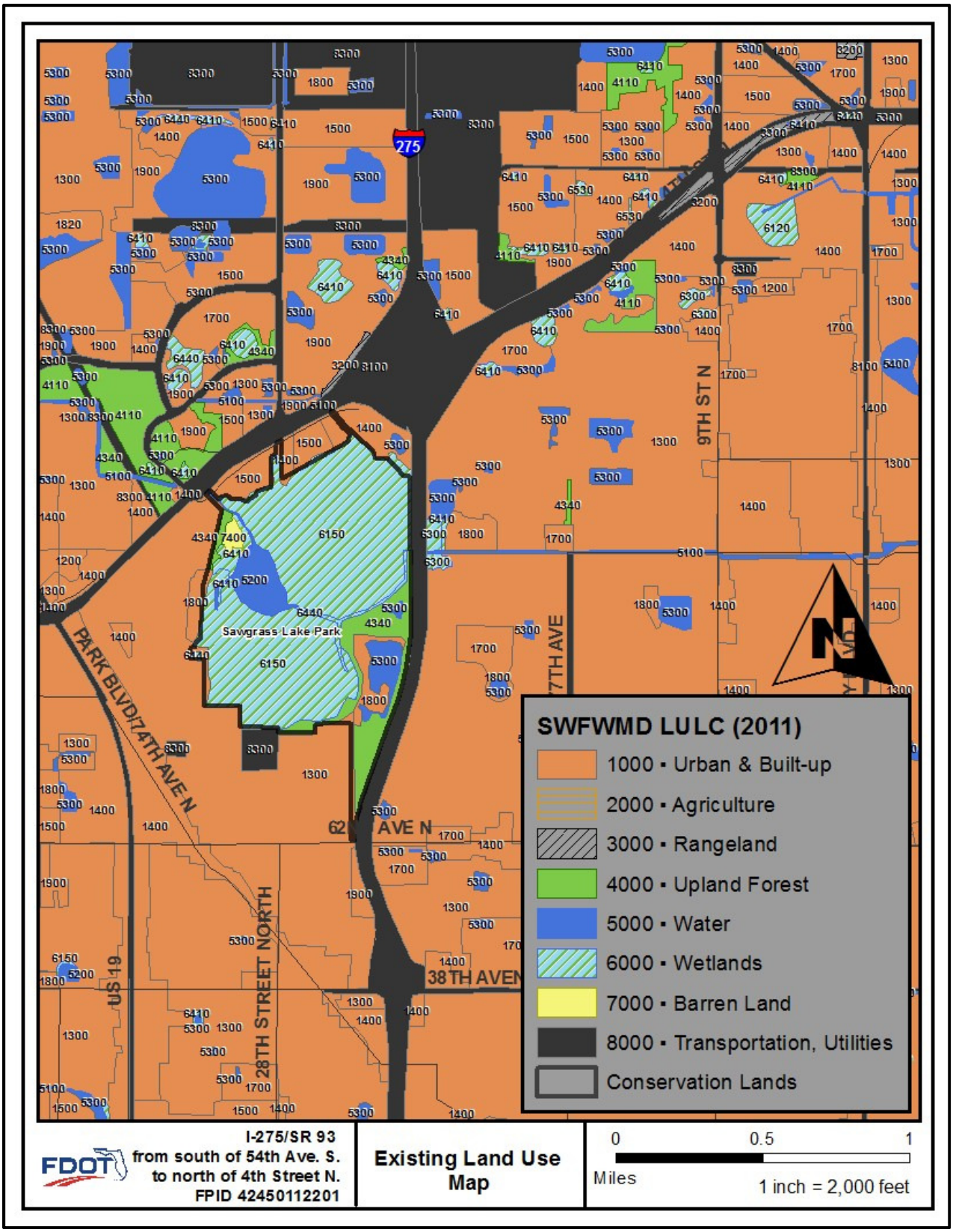

Figure 3-2. Existing Land Use Map

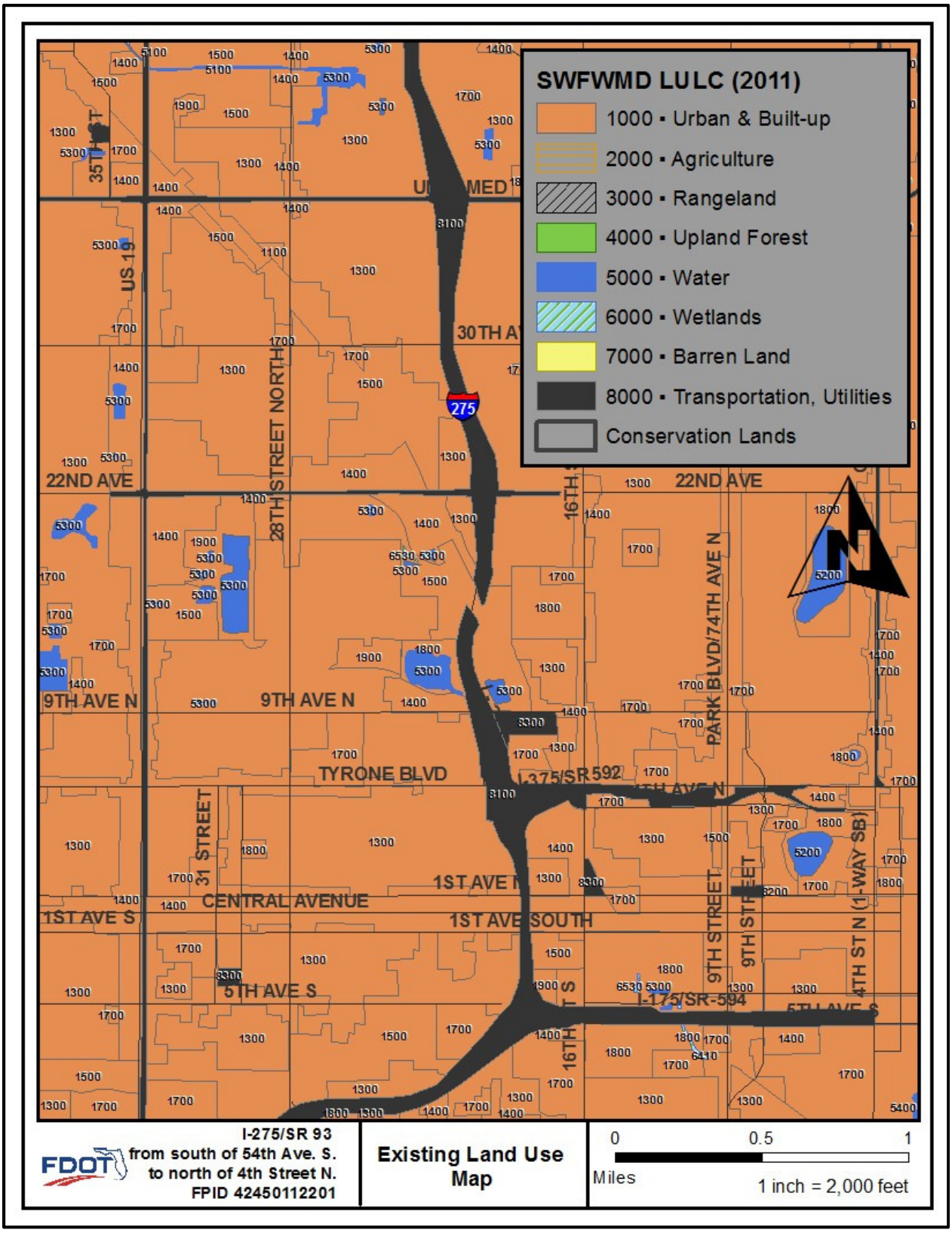

Figure 3-3. Existing Land Use Map

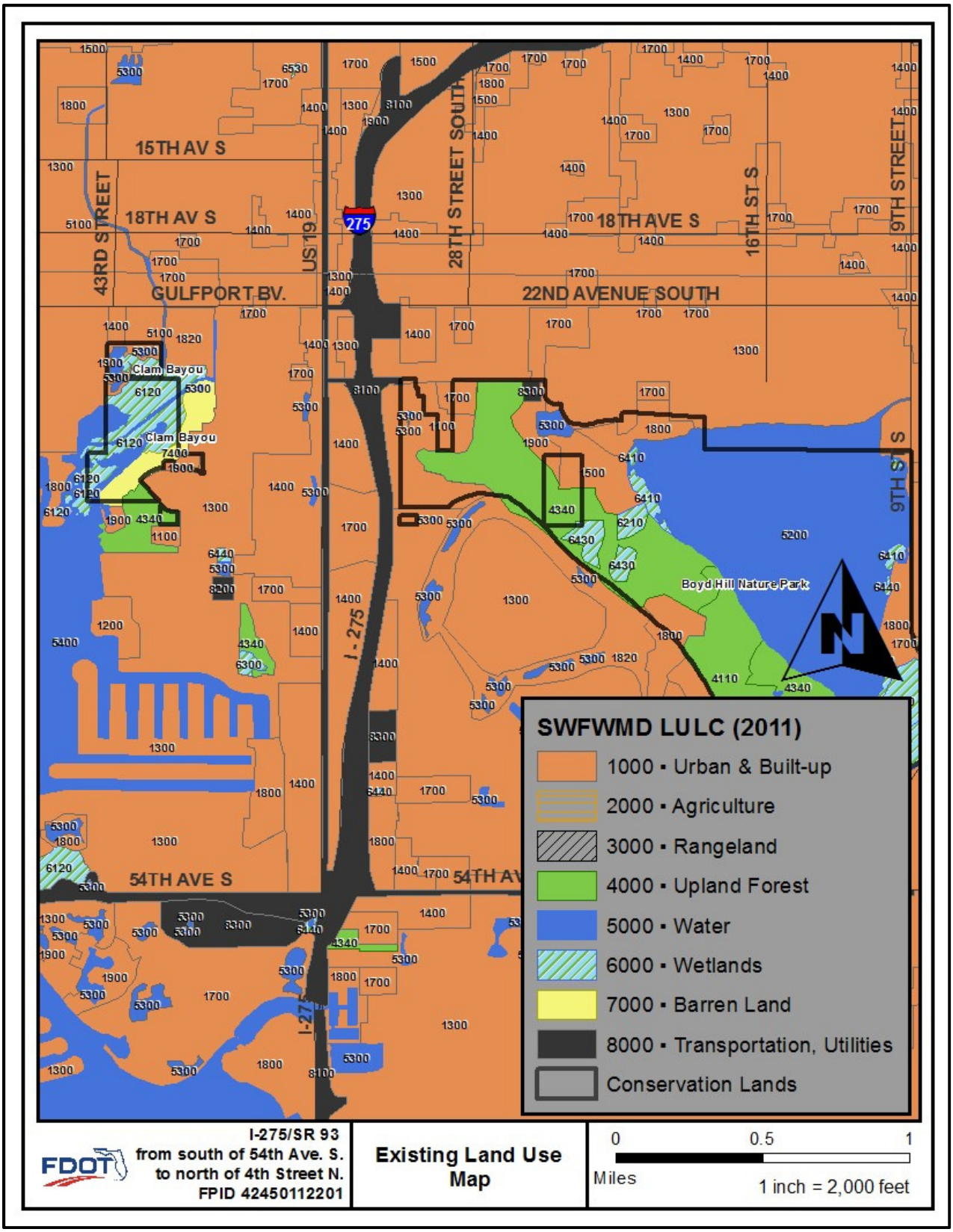

Figure 3-4. Existing Land Use Map

3.1.1 Methodology

Land use and habitat within and immediately adjacent the project corridor was evaluated during a desktop analysis using the resources stated above. Subsequent to the desktop analysis, field reconnaissance was conducted June 4, 2014 to verify and map all land use and natural habitats. Seagrass surveys were performed June 17, 2014. Wetland and surface water features, as well as the extent and density of seagrass habitats adjacent to the Howard Frankland Causeway, were subsequently mapped (1"=50") by ground-truthing 2010 aerial images. All habitats within the corridor were categorized using the most representative FLUCFCS designations and were evaluated consistent with Cowardin's *Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States* (1979). Both freshwater and saltwater wetlands were observed. Detailed descriptions of the habitats observed are included below. Seagrass and Essential Fish Habitat are discussed in **Section 6.0**.

3.2 Soils

According to the USDA NRCS Soil Survey of Pinellas County (2006), the predominant soil types along the project corridor are associated with urban fill. Areas of hydric soils are present but uncommon. **Table 3-2** provides details regarding the soils mapped along this corridor. **Figure 3-5** depicts soils by hydric ranking along the project corridor.

Table 3-2. Project Soils

#	Name	Hydric	Landscape	Depth to SHW Table	Drainage Class
2	Adamsville Soils & Urban Land, 0 to 5% Slope	NO	Lower Coastal Plain	At a depth of 2 to 3 ½ft June-November	Somewhat Poorly Drained
4	Astatula Soils & Urban Land, 0 to 5% Slope	NO	Lower Coastal Plain	More than 6 feet	Excessively Drained
6	Basinger Soils & Urban Land	Unranked	Lower Coastal Plain	At surface to a depth of 1ft June-February	Poorly Drained
7	Basinger Fine Sand, Depressional	YES	Lower Coastal Plain	From 2ft above surface to a depth of 1ft June-February	Very Poorly Drained
11	Felda Soils and Urban Land	YES	Lower Coastal Plain	From surface to a depth of 1ft June-March	Poorly Drained
12	Felda Fine Sand, Depressional	YES	Lower Coastal Plain	From 2ft above surface to a depth of 1ft June-December	Very Poorly Drained
13	Immokalee Soils & Urban Land	NO	Lower Coastal Plain	At depth of ½ to 1 ½ft June-November	Poorly Drained
14	Kesson Fine Sand, Very Frequently Flooded	YES	Lower Coastal Plain	From surface to a depth of ½ft January-December	Very Poorly Drained
16	Matlacha & St. Augustine Soils & Urban Land	Unranked	Lower Coastal Plain	At a depth of 1 ½ to 3ft June-October	Somewhat Poorly Drained
17	Myakka Soils & Urban Land	NO	Lower Coastal Plain	At a depth of ½ to 1 ½ft June-November	Poorly Drained
18	Okeechobee Muck	YES	Lower Coastal Plain	From 2ft above surface to a depth of 1ft June-April	Very Poorly Drained
22	Pineda Soils & Urban Land	Unranked	Lower Coastal Plain	From surface to a depth of 1ft June-October	Poorly Drained
23	Pinellas Soils & Urban Land	NO	Lower Coastal Plain	At depth of ½ to 1 ½ft June-October	Poorly Drained
26	Pomello Soils & Urban Land, 0 to 5% Slope	Unranked	Lower Coastal Plain	At a depth of 2 ½ to 3 ½ft June-November	Somewhat poorly drained or moderately well drained
29	Tavares soils & Urban Land, 0 to 5% Slope	NO	Lower Coastal Plain	At a depth of 3 ½ to 6ft June-December	Moderately Well Drained
30	Urban Land	Unranked	Lower Coastal Plain	Urban land with soil surface mostly covered with impervious development.	

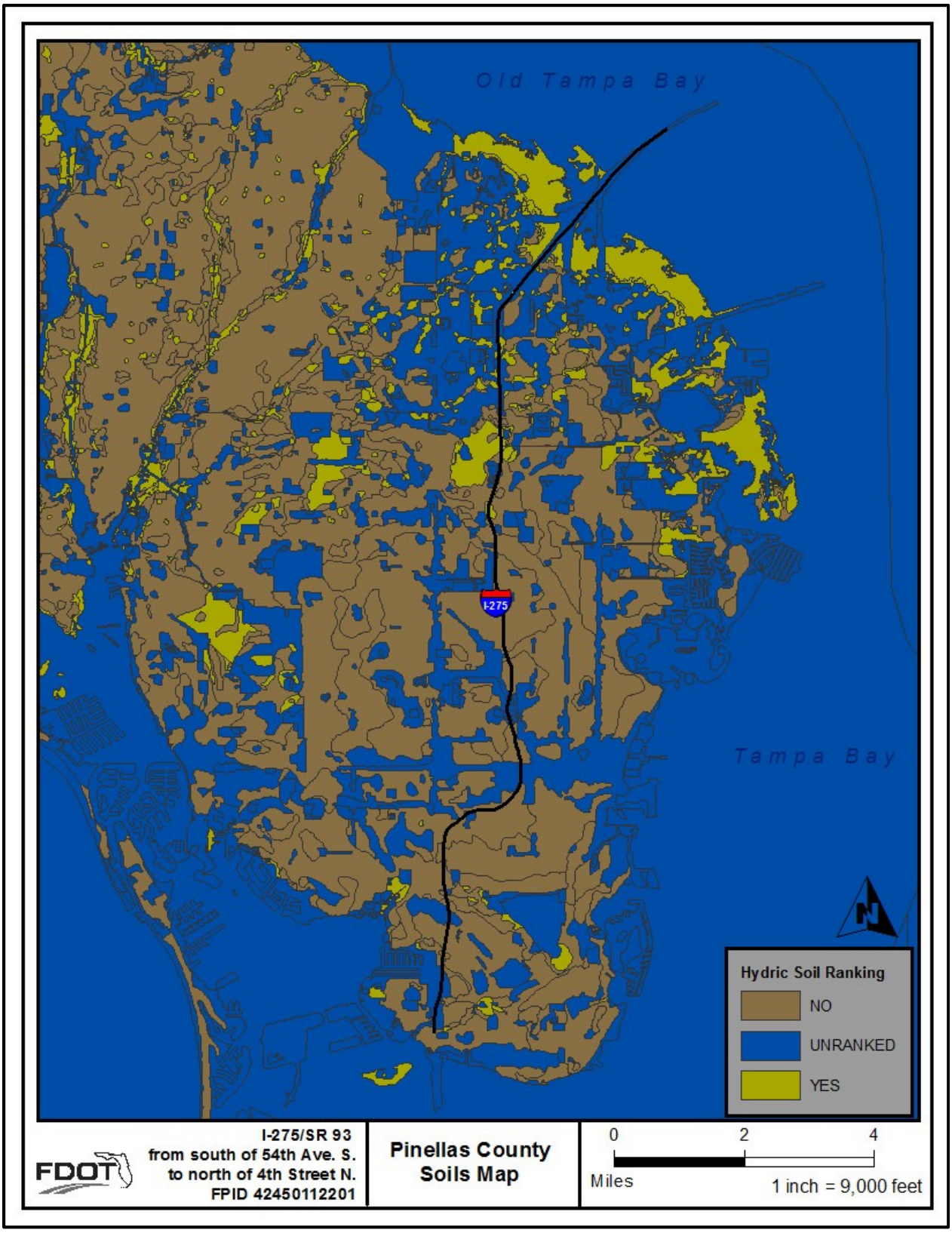

Figure 3-5. Soils Map

3.3 Natural and Biological Communities

Subsequent to the land use review, natural upland and wetland communities were evaluated in the field to characterize habitat types. Both upland and wetland habitats were observed within and adjacent to the project corridor; however all habitats have variously been affected by proximity to existing transportation infrastructure.

Habitats varied in type and quality along the project corridor. The southern two-thirds of the project were densely developed with minimal natural habitat. Some habitat fragments, forested wetlands, forested lots, and open fields were observed adjacent to and within the project corridor, and landscaped areas existed within medians and interchanges. Most areas were low to moderate quality. Natural areas along the northern portion of the project corridor were more common and included forested uplands and wetland habitats, open lands, public conservation areas, and tidal habitats within and/or abutting the project corridor. Most of the habitats in this area were considered moderate quality. The northernmost extent of the project contained causeway, which extended over Old Tampa Bay. Coastal uplands, mangrove forest and beach were present along both sides of the causeway northward to the causeway transition to seawall. Seagrass habitat of varying quality was present waterward of both the natural and hardened sections of causeway. Seagrass habitat (*i.e.* "continuous" and "discontinuous – patchy") was mapped by SWFWMD (2010) and evaluated by FDOT staff and HDR biologists June 17, 2014. Seagrass habitat is discussed in **Section 6.0**.

Field evaluations occurred within all habitat types along the project corridor to verify the extent of each habitat and to determine the presence or potential for occurrence of state or federally protected species (*i.e.* threatened, endangered, or state species of special concern). State and federally protected species are discussed in **Section 5.0**.

3.3.1 Upland Habitats and Recreational Lands

The majority of the project uplands contained urban development including high density and low density residential, commercial and industrial services, and institutional facilities. The most common undeveloped upland habitat within the project right-of-way was open land. These areas included mowed grasses within the median and along the outer limits of the right-of-way, and landscaped areas within medians and interchanges. Several undeveloped upland lots were also adjacent to the project corridor. These included disconnected patches of open land and forested lots, uplands associated with Sawgrass Lake Park, large tracks of land designated for utility services, and restoration lands abutting wetland habitats such as those along Weedon Island Preserve.

Recreational lands proximal to the project corridor included Loggerhead Marina near Maximo Canal; Boyd Hill Nature Park east of I-275 and south of 26th Avenue South; the Pinellas Trail at I-275 north of I-175 at 2nd Avenue South; community park facilities (*e.g.* Wildwood Recreation Center), private recreational facilities, public school playgrounds, Sawgrass Lake Park (including a network of recreational trails) south of Gandy Boulevard, and Weedon Island Preserve paddling trails between Roosevelt Boulevard and Big Island Gap. No state or federally protect species were observed during field evaluations in any uplands or recreational areas.

3.3.2 Wetlands and Surface Water Habitats

Wetlands and surface waters were present along the project corridor including both freshwater and saltwater systems and specifically freshwater palustrine, riverine, and estuarine wetlands, as well as freshwater and tidal surface waters.

3.3.2.1 Surface waters

The majority of surface waters were associated with roadside ditches (FLUCFCS, 5100), as well as stormwater management areas and drainage features within highway interchanges. Planted cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) was observed in some surface waters. Some surface waters were hydric-cut, although most were associated with stormwater management areas. Most roadside ditches were actively maintained and contained ruderal vegetation typical of disturbed habitats. Carolina willow (*Salix caroliniana*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), and leather fern (*Acrostichum danaeifolium*) were common in surface waters, particularly towards the northern portion of the project. Some ditches drain toward the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, an Outstanding Florida Water. Shallow intermittent conveyance swales with upland vegetation were also present. Open water reservoirs (FLUCFCS, 5300) of various sizes were observed adjacent to the project corridor.

3.3.2.2 Forested Wetlands

Forested wetlands were present along the project right-of-way north of 54th Avenue South, adjacent to Sawgrass Lake Park, and between Gandy Boulevard and Roosevelt Boulevard. Cypress (FLUCFCS, 6210) was predominant in many of these areas although red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and swamp bay (*Persea palustris*) were present in some. Carolina willow was observed in several forested and non-forested wetlands (FLUCFCS, 6180). Tidally-connected waters were observed along I-275 south of Gandy Boulevard. This included one canal connecting Riviera Bay to Sawgrass Lake Park near Tinny Creek. Leather fern was observed in this area. Sawgrass Lake Park, a 400-acre natural area, abuts the project limits and contains one of the largest maple swamps on the Gulf Coast of Florida. The area supports a variety of wildlife, including thousands of migratory birds. Sawgrass Lake Park is jointly-owned and managed by Pinellas County Parks & Conservation Resource Department, the Pinellas County School District, and the SWFWMD.

3.3.2.3 Freshwater and Tidal

A variety of freshwater and tidal habitats were observed beginning near Gandy Boulevard in the vicinity of Sawgrass Lake Park and further north near Weedon Island Preserve including creeks/canals with direct connection to tidally-influenced bays and estuaries. Leather fern was present beginning near Sawgrass Lake Park and a tidal divide was observed at a weir between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road within a ditch along the I-275 right-of-way. Wetlands in this vicinity included wetland forested mix (FLUCFCS, 6300) transitioning to saltwater marsh (FLUCFCS, 6420) and mangrove forest (FLUCFCS, 6120). Mangroves were present east and west of I-275 at the Weedon Island Preserve. The Weedon Island Preserve is a 3,190 acre natural area along Old Tampa Bay containing mangrove islands and coastal flats. The Preserve contains predominantly marine ecosystems buffered by coastal uplands. The uplands are mostly pine flatwoods with maritime hammock, shell mounds and a small remnant scrub. The land is jointly-owned by the State of Florida, Pinellas County, and Progress Energy.

3.3.2.4 Estuarine Intertidal

I-275 crosses Old Tampa Bay (FLUCFCS, 5400) north of Ulmerton Road at Big Island Gap Bridge. Two estuarine intertidal habitats (scrub/shrub mangrove and unconsolidated sand shoreline) and two estuarine subtidal habitats (submerged aquatic vegetation and open water/bay bottoms) were observed along this area.

Predominant wetland habitats observed along the project corridor area described in greater detail below:

Cypress (FLUCFCS, 6216)

Cypress was present north of 54th Avenue South, extended into the project right-of-way near Sawgrass Lake Park and between Gandy Boulevard and Roosevelt Boulevard, and was observed within some interchanges (*e.g.* 62nd Avenue North) along the project corridor. Some cypress appeared planted; some appeared to be remnant wetland communities.

Willow (FLUCFCS, 6180)

Non-forested freshwater wetlands and surface waters contained Carolina willow. In most cases, Carolina willow was predominant, but included areas with cypress, Brazilian pepper, primrose willow (*Ludwigia* spp.) and leather fern.

Mangrove (FLUCFCS, 6120)

Mangrove habitat was present within the project right-of-way including between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road associated with surface waters within Weedon Island Preserve, abutting the bridge over Big Island Gap, and along the Howard Frankland Causeway. Mangrove species included red mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*), black mangroves (*Avicennia germinans*) and white mangroves (*Laguncularia racemosa*). The eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) was observed on prop roots of red mangrove near Big Island Gap. Brazilian pepper was present near the landward extent of mangrove habitats at Big Island Gap and was intermittent along the Howard Frankland Causeway. Native landscaped buffers including sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) and southern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) were observed landward of the mangrove.

Seagrass – discontinuous (FLUCFCS, 9113) and Seagrass – continuous (FLUCFCS, 9116)

Bay waters adjacent to the Howard Frankland Causeway contained waters of sufficient depth and substrate for seagrass growth. Seagrass habitats of varying density, quality and composition were observed. Estuarine habitats included two species of seagrass as well as other submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). The majority of seagrass observed was shoal grass (*Halodule wrightii*), but manatee grass (*Syringodium filiforme*) was also present, particularly along the eastern side of the causeway. The subtidal community along the eastern side of the Howard Frankland Causeway was notably healthier and more diverse than that along the western limits of the causeway.

Seagrasses were either absent or intermittent and patchy near the seawall, probably due to reflected wave energy, substrate disruption, and shading from floating organic debris. Shoal grass was found throughout the continuous grass beds. Manatee grass was observed within the continuous shoal grass areas, which tended to be away from the shore in slightly deeper waters and predominantly on the eastern side of the causeway. Other SAV included the alga *Caulerpa sp.*, which contributed to

SAV coverage. Macroalgal epiphytes and drift algae were common within seagrass habitats and along the shoreline.

Bays and Estuaries (FLUCFCS, 5400)

The project crosses a portion of Old Tampa Bay, which connects to the Gulf of Mexico. Both hardened seawall and natural shoreline were present along the project limits. The natural shoreline contained sandy substrate along intertidal tidal habitats. The final approximate half-mile of the project corridor contained seawall with riprap stabilization. Seagrass habitat was present within Old Tampa Bay.

3.4 Significant Water and Protection Areas

Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW) and Aquatic Preserves are discussed in the ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report (**Appendix B**). This section has been prepared in accordance with *Part 2, Chapter 19 – Aquatic Preserves* and *Part 2, Chapter 21 – Outstanding Florida Waters of FDOT's PD&E Manual.*

3.4.1 Outstanding Florida Waters / Aquatic Preserves

The northern portion of the project corridor crosses a section of Old Tampa Bay within Pinellas County. The portion of the project within this region is within the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, which is an Outstanding Florida Water. The 4th Street North Bridge over Big Island Gap and a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway cross the project area. The proposed project would involve widening within existing I-275 ROW the Big Island Gap Bridge and widening along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway to a point where the Howard Frankland Bridge PD&E study (422799-1) begins. Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction to avoid impacts to water quality.

4.0 Wetland & surface water impacts

4.1 Evaluated Alternatives

Impacts to wetlands and surface waters were estimated based on preliminary design alternatives and estimated work space to complete construction. Additional ROW would be considered only for offsite stormwater treatment facilities and interchange improvements.

The study evaluated the **"No-Build" Alternative** and **"Build" Alternatives** for Segment A (from south of 54th Avenue South to I-175), Segment B (from I-175 to south of Gandy Boulevard) and Segment C (from south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North). The **"Build" Alternatives** for Segments A and B include lane continuity improvements, while Segment C includes the addition of express lanes. The **"No-Build" Alternative** assumes that existing conditions would remain for I-275 within the project limits and only routine maintenance activities would occur.

Engineering costs and ancillary costs associated with wetland and wildlife impacts were considered with regard to the **"Build" Alternatives**. Actual impact areas may be more or less depending on project engineering determined during the final design and construction phases.

4.2 Impact Evaluation

Wetlands and surface waters were observed along the project corridor including both freshwater and saltwater systems and specifically freshwater palustrine, riverine, and estuarine wetlands, as well as freshwater and tidal surface waters. The surface water impacts were associated with roadside ditches, canals and drainage features within highway right-of-way. Wetlands included freshwater forest, freshwater shrub, mangroves, and seagrasses.

The **"No-Build" Alternative** would result in no fill impacts to surface waters, wetlands or seagrass habitat and no additional impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitats. The **"Build" Alternatives** include Segments A, B and C. Impacts are not anticipated for Segment A. Impacts would occur with **"Build" Alternatives** for Segments B and C. Segments B and C require fill within surface waters, wetlands, and within waters of Old Tampa Bay, which includes the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve. Wetland impact maps are provided as **Appendix C**. Seagrass impacts are discussed in **Section 6.0** and seagrass maps are provided as **Appendix D**. Wetland mitigation in discussed in **Section 4.4**.

Surface waters would be impacted by the **"Build" Alternatives** for Segments B and C. Most surface water ditches were actively maintained and contained ruderal vegetation typical of disturbed habitats. Some of these areas drain to the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, an Outstanding Florida Water. Impacts that would occur to surface waters total approximately 4.69 acres.

Forested wetland habitat was present within the project corridor north of 54th Avenue South, along the right-of way near Sawgrass Lake Park and between Gandy Boulevard and Roosevelt Boulevard, and within some interchanges (*e.g.* 62nd Avenue North) along the project corridor. Cypress was predominant in these areas. Non-forested, freshwater wetlands including shrub and marsh habitats were also observed within the project corridor; however, impacts to these areas should be minimal. The **"Build" Alternatives** for Segments B and C would result in approximately 0.74 acres of

impacts to freshwater wetlands including approximately 0.59 acres of freshwater forested wetlands and 0.15 acres of non-forested, freshwater wetlands.

Mangrove habitat was present within the project right-of-way including between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road. Mangroves were observed within surface waters at Weedon Island Preserve, abutting the bridge over Big Island Gap, and along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. The project would result in 0.89 acres of impact to mangrove habitat including 0.73 acres around Big Island Gap and 0.16 acres to surface waters associated with the Weedon Island Preserve.

Bay waters adjacent to the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway contained seagrass habitats of varying density, quality and composition. Seagrasses were categorized as continuous or intermittent and patchy. Impacts to continuous seagrass habitat would total approximately 0.40 acres; impacts to intermittent and patchy seagrass habitat 0.34 acres.

4.3 Coordination with Permitting Agencies

The project was reviewed by an Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) as part of the ETDM screening and Advanced Notification (AN) processes. As part of the review, agency personnel commented on the potential for the project to affect wetlands, water quality and quantity, floodplains, wildlife habitat, and coastal and marine resources. Commenting agencies included the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of State, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the Federal Highway Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, NRCS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Agency comments have been addressed herein. The ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report, including comments from the aforementioned agencies, is provided as **Appendix B**. Information provided in the ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report facilitated the review of avoidance, minimization and mitigation of project impacts.

It is anticipated that the following permits will be required for this project:

- SWFWMD Individual Environmental Resource Permit
- USACE Section 404 Individual Dredge and Fill Permit
- USCG Bridge Permit at Big Island Gap Bridge per the FHWA determination following the agency's review of a Bridge Project Questionnaire on _____.
- FDEP National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit

Final agency coordination comments are provided as **Appendix H**.

4.4 Wetland Impact Mitigation

All wetland impacts resulting from construction of this project would require mitigation. Wetland impacts would be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent practical during project design and permitting. However, unavoidable direct wetland impacts would occur as a result of the proposed project. In addition, indirect secondary impacts would require consideration. Regulatory agencies generally assume indirect secondary impacts based on reduction of functional habitat value within a 25-foot buffer on all impacted wetlands. Temporary impacts would be considered for certain projects. Temporary impacts would be minimized utilizing best management practices (BMPs) and

incorporating FDOT design standards. All impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and surface waters would be evaluated using the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) (Chapter 62-345 FAC) during the design and permitting phase of the project as part of the Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) program under Part IV of Chapter 373 of the Florida Statutes.

Mitigation would be required pursuant to S.373.4137 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C.s, 1344. Mitigation alternatives were explored as part of this review. The project corridor is primarily within the SWFWMD-designated Tampa Bay and Coastal Areas Watershed (#13). Small portions of the project are within the Upper Coastal Watershed (#14). Mitigation for unavoidable wetland impacts would be restricted to the basin of impact. Private mitigation banks offer a regionally-significant alternative to mitigation. At this time, all project impacts are anticipated to be within the service area for the Tampa Bay Mitigation Bank. Final wetland impacts and mitigation requirements would be determined during the permitting phase of this project and assessed using UMAM. Mitigation for impacts to seagrass habitat is discussed in **Section 6.0.**

5.0 Protected Species and Habitat

The project corridor was evaluated for the presence of state and/or federally protected wildlife and habitat suitable to support protected wildlife in accordance with 50 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Part 402 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended, Chapters 5B-40 and 68A-27 F.A.C., and Part 2, Chapter 27 – *Wildlife and Habitat Impacts* of the FDOT *PD&E Manual.*

5.1 Methodology

Agency database searches, literature reviews, and desktop analysis using geographic information system-based (GIS) data searches were conducted in conjunction with cursory wildlife and habitat assessments that occurred in June 2014. The desktop analysis referenced the most recent databases to identify state and federally protected species and/or critical habitat occurring or potentially occurring within the project area. The ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report (**Appendix B**) was referenced to address agency comments regarding sensitive habitats and focal species deemed relevant to this project. Field surveys were conducted by vehicle and pedestrian survey along the project corridor and the portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway shoreline with the PD&E study's limits. Habitat was mapped using high resolution aerial photography obtained from Pinellas County (2010). Information sources and databases used for the analyses included the following:

- Efficient Transportation Decision Making Final Programming Screen Summary Report (FDOT Project #12556, July 2013)
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Eagle Nest database (FWC 2012)
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Manatee Synoptic Surveys ('91-'14)
- Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Wildlife Research Institute Data (various)
- Florida Land Use, Cover and Forms Classification System (FLUCFCS) Handbook (1999)
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI) Biodiversity Matrix Query (April 2014)
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory Florida Conservation Lands (June 2014)
- Florida Natural Areas Inventory Element Occurrences Pinellas County (2007)
- National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration Fisheries SE Regional Data Gulf of Mexico Fisheries (various)
- Soil Survey of Pinellas County, USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) (2006)
- Southwest Florida Water Management District, Land Use Land Cover (2011)
- Southwest Florida Water Management District Seagrass Survey Data (2010)
- Wood Stork Core Foraging Areas (2010)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Data (various data sets)

A list of protected fauna observed or potentially occurring within the project limits was compiled based on desktop research and field observations. **Table 5-1** lists federal and state protected fauna observed or potentially occurring within or adjacent to the project corridor. Each species was designated as having a low, moderate or high likelihood of occurrence based on factors such as species range and habitat type, location, patch size, and connectivity. For each species the likelihood of occurrence was ranked based on the following classifications:

Low — Species documented within Pinellas County, but with a low likelihood to occur within the project corridor due to the limited presence of suitable habitat.

Moderate — Species documented within Pinellas County or within nearby counties and for which suitable habitat is present within the project corridor; however, no documented occurrences exist.

High — Species with a high likelihood to occur within the project corridor based on known habitat ranges and the existence of suitable habitat within the project corridor. Species are known to occur within or adjacent to the project corridor or have been documented within the vicinity of the project.

5.2 Agency Coordination

Agency coordination was conducted as part of the ETDM screening and the Advanced Notification review processes. The ETDM screening process was used to identify concerns from the commenting agencies. ETDM coordination included the USFWS, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), and SWFWMD. Full agency comments are provided in the ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report in **Appendix B**. A summary of each agency's comments is provided below:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Degree of Effect - Minimal

The USFWS identified wood storks and other wading birds as potentially utilizing areas within the project corridor. The Service stated that impacts to the Core Foraging Area (CFA) of several active wood stork nesting colonies were possible and recommended that the project avoid impacts to suitable foraging habitat. If avoidance was not feasible, the Service stated that wetland mitigation with suitable foraging habitat would be required. The Service did not address impacts to resources associated with Old Tampa Bay as part of the ETDM screening.

National Marine Fisheries Service – Degree of Effect - Minimal

The NMFS stated that Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay contain estuarine habitats used by federally-managed fish species and their prey. In addition, mangrove habitat and seagrasses are found adjacent to the causeway. Federally-managed fish species and Essential Fish Habitat is addressed in **Section 6.0**.

Table 5-1. Protected Fauna Observed/Potentially Occurring within the Project Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Listing (USFWS)	State Listing (FWC)	Habitat	Probability of Occurrence
Fish					
Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi	Gulf Sturgeon	T	T	Freshwater streams; coastal waters and estuaries	Low
Kryptolebias marmoratus	Mangrove rivulus		SSC	Mangrove forests; rotten wet logs	Low
Pristis pectinata	Small-toothed sawfish	E		Coastal waters; estuarine habitats (e.g. seagrass, mangroves)	Low
Reptiles and Amphibians					
Caretta caretta	Loggerhead sea turtle	T	T	Marine water, coastal bays and estuaries, nesting on beaches	Moderate
Chelonia mydas	Green sea turtle	E	E	Bays & estuaries, shorelines, seagrass habitats, nesting on beaches	Low
Drymarchon corais couperi	Eastern indigo snake	T	T	Forested uplands & wetlands, open fields	Low
Eretmochelys imbricata	Hawksbill sea turtle	E	E	Coastal reefs, estuaries and lagoons, nesting on beaches	Low
Gopherus polyphemus	Gopher tortoise	C	T	Upland habitat with well-drained sandy soil & herbaceous forage	Low
Lithobates capito	Gopher frog		SSC	Xeric uplands	Low
Lampropeltis extenuata	Short-tailed snake		T	Sandy upland habitats	Low
Lepidochelys kempii	Kemp's Ridley sea turtle	E	E	Shallow waters w/sandy or muddy bottoms, nest on beaches	Low
Pituophis melanoluecus	Pine snake		SSC	Dry, sandy, open habitats, pine barrens, open fields, tortoise burrows	Low
Birds					
Ajaja ajaja	Roseate spoonbill		SSC	Coastal marshes, wetlands, and mangrove forest	Moderate
Aramus guarauna	Limpkin		SSC	Swamps, lakes and marshes	Low
Athene cunicularia Floridana	Florida burrowing owl		SSC	Upland fields	Low
Calidris canutus	Red knot	T		Migratory; intertidal and marine habitats; coastal inlets, estuaries, bays	Low
Charadrius melodus	Piping plover	T	T	Open, sandy and gravel shorelines and tidal flats	Moderate
Charadrius alexandrinus	Snowy plover		T	Dry, sandy beaches and mud/salt flats	Moderate
Egretta caerulea	Little blue heron		SSC	Marine and freshwater marsh, creeks and rivers	**Observed**
Egretta rufescens	Reddish egret		SSC	Tidal marsh, mangrove forest, salt/mud flats, estuarine habitat	Moderate

Table 5-1. (Continued) Protected Fauna Observed/Potentially Occurring within the Project Area

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Listing (USFWS)	State Listing (FWC)	Habitat	Probability of Occurrence
Egretta thula	Snowy egret		SSC	Marine and freshwater marsh, creeks and rivers	**Observed**
Egretta tricolor	Tricolored heron		SSC	Marine and freshwater marsh, creeks and rivers	Moderate
Eudocimus albus	White ibis		SSC	Marine and freshwater marsh, creeks and rivers	Moderate
Falco sparverius paulus	SE American kestrel		T	Open land with perch sites, diverse prey, and snags for nesting	Low
Grus canadensis pratensis	Florida sandhill crane		T	Wet prairie, lake edges, improved pasture, marshes	Moderate
Haematopus palliatus	American oystercatcher		SSC	Barren beaches, sandbars, shell rakes, salt marsh, sand flats	Moderate
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald eagle	*		Gulf coast, bays, inland lakes, rivers, forested habitat, marshes	Moderate
Mycteria americana	Wood stork	T	T	Estuarine/tidal water, marshes, streams, ponds, ditches	**Observed**
Pandion haliaetus	Osprey	**		Gulf coast, bays, inland lakes, rivers, marshes	**Observed**
Pelecanus occidentalis	Brown pelican		SSC	Marine, estuarine, and mangrove forest	**Observed**
Rynchops niger	Black skimmer		SSC	Estuaries, bays, tidal pools, creeks; nest on sandy beaches, sandbars, islands, shell banks, dredge, salt marsh	Moderate
Sternula antillarum	Least tern		T	Sandy beaches, dunes, coastal open lands, tidal marsh	**Observed**
Mammals					
Podomys floridanus	Florida mouse		SSC	Xeric uplands, sandhill and scrub	Low
Sciurus niger shermani	Sherman's fox squirrel		SSC	Open fields, pine flatwoods	Low
Trichechus manatus latirostris	West Indian manatee	E	E	Bays and estuaries, rivers, streams, springs	High

E= Endangered; T= Threatened: C = Candidate for federal listing; N = Not Listed. Florida SSC= Species of Special Concern.
* Protected - Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act and Migratory Bird Treaty Act ▪ ** Protected - Migratory Bird Treaty Act

Southwest Florida Water Management District – Degree of Effect - Minimal

The SWFWMD identified the following species could potentially utilize areas within the project corridor: small-toothed sawfish, the Gulf sturgeon, and the Florida manatee. The District stated that replacement or alteration to the Big Island Gap Bridge could impact saltwater habitat and feeding areas for aquatic birds and other aquatic life. Open waters around Big Island Gap Bridge have the potential to support the small-toothed sawfish, the Gulf sturgeon, and the Florida manatee. The Florida manatee has been observed in Old Tampa Bay. Stormwater outfalls and pipe structures extending below the mean high water and exceeding eight inches in diameter would require manatee protection grates. In addition, the District recommended that the FDOT develop a project specific manatee protection plan to eliminate the possibility of construction-related manatee injury or death. Course substrate and rock along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway have high potential to support soft coral, sponges, and other benthic communities. The District also addressed the potential to impact seagrass beds along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway, which have the potential to attract coelenterates, mollusks, baitfish and birds of prey. Mitigation measures would be required for direct and shading impacts to seagrasses and would be required to consider time lag. Potential impacts to marine benthic species and Essential Fish Habitat are addressed in **Section 6.0**.

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission – Degree of Effect – Minimal

The FWC noted the following species could potentially utilize areas within the project corridor: West Indian manatee, Sherman's fox squirrel, Florida pine snake, piping plover, snowy plover, southeastern American kestrel, American oystercatcher, brown pelican, black skimmer, least tern, limpkin, reddish egret, snowy egret, little blue heron, tricolored heron, white ibis, wood stork, roseate spoonbill, burrowing owl, eastern indigo snake, short-tailed snake, green sea turtle, Kemp's ridley sea turtle, leather back sea turtle, loggerhead sea turtle, gopher tortoise, mangrove rivulus, and the gopher frog. The Commission's review was based on the assumption that the proposed additional lanes would be constructed within existing paved portions of the I-275 right-of-way. If outward expansion beyond existing paved areas would occur within Old Tampa Bay, impacts to in-water species including the manatee, sea turtle and other marine species would need to be considered.

5.3 General Corridor Survey Results

Six listed fauna were observed within the project corridor during field surveys. In addition, 30 listed species were listed to occur or potentially occur within close proximity to the project according to database reviews and literature research.

Figure 5-1 and **Figure 5-2** depict protected species and protected habitat. **Figure 5-1** depicts avian species, including the 15-mile Core Foraging Area (CFA) buffer around two active wood stork colonies. **Figure 5-2** illustrates observations for non-avian species. The following sections provide a brief discussion of protected species and habitat known to occur in the project area or for which there is special concern based on database and literature research.

Each species is discussed based on the anticipated construction effects by referencing species data and current agency guidelines. The information is intended to provide details on the anticipated level of permitting coordination that may be required. During permitting, the federal action agency will make a "determination of effect" for federally protected species based on the proposed activities. Protected species coordination is typically required if adverse effects are anticipated.

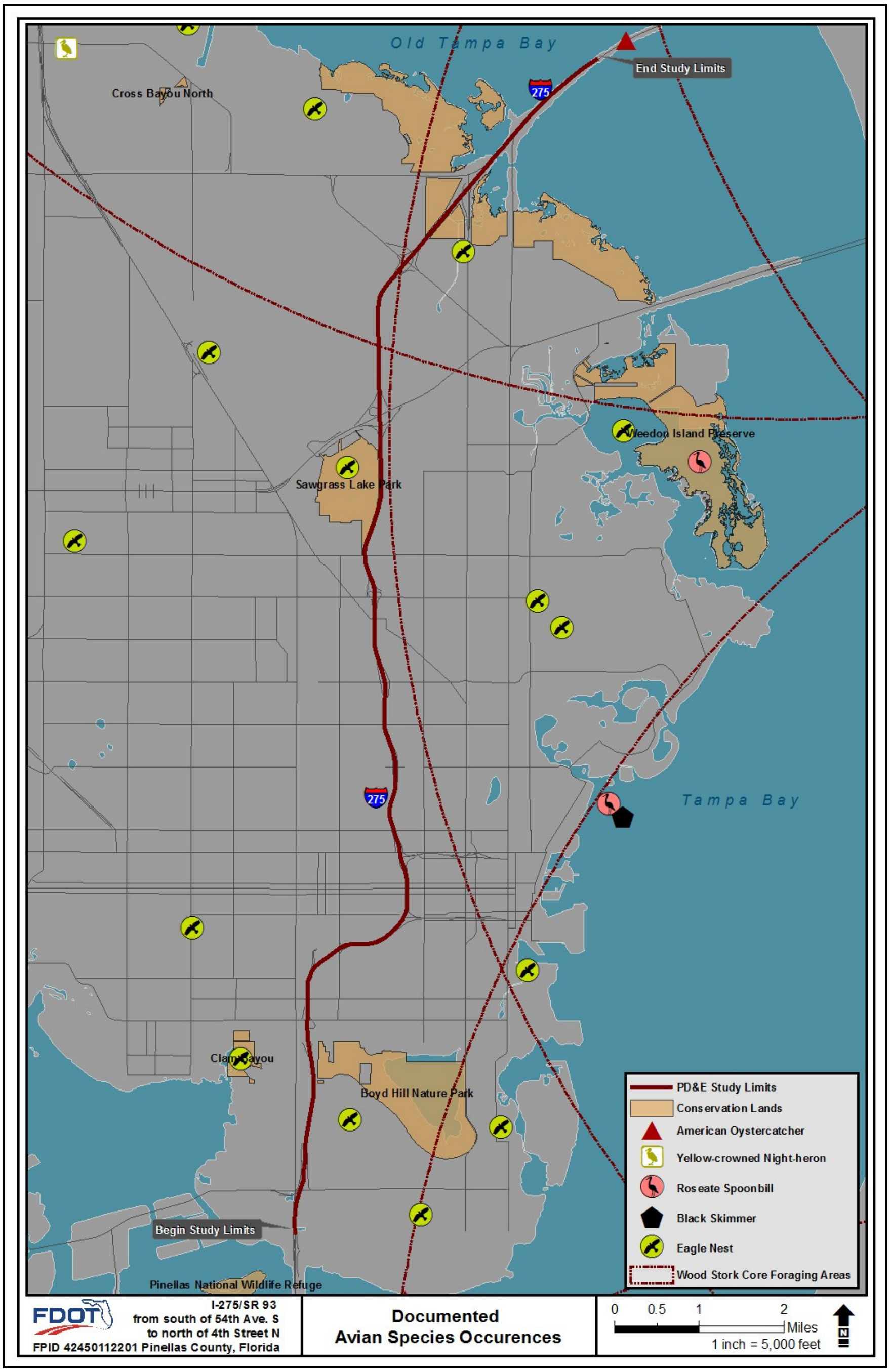

Figure 5-1. Documented Avian Species Occurrences

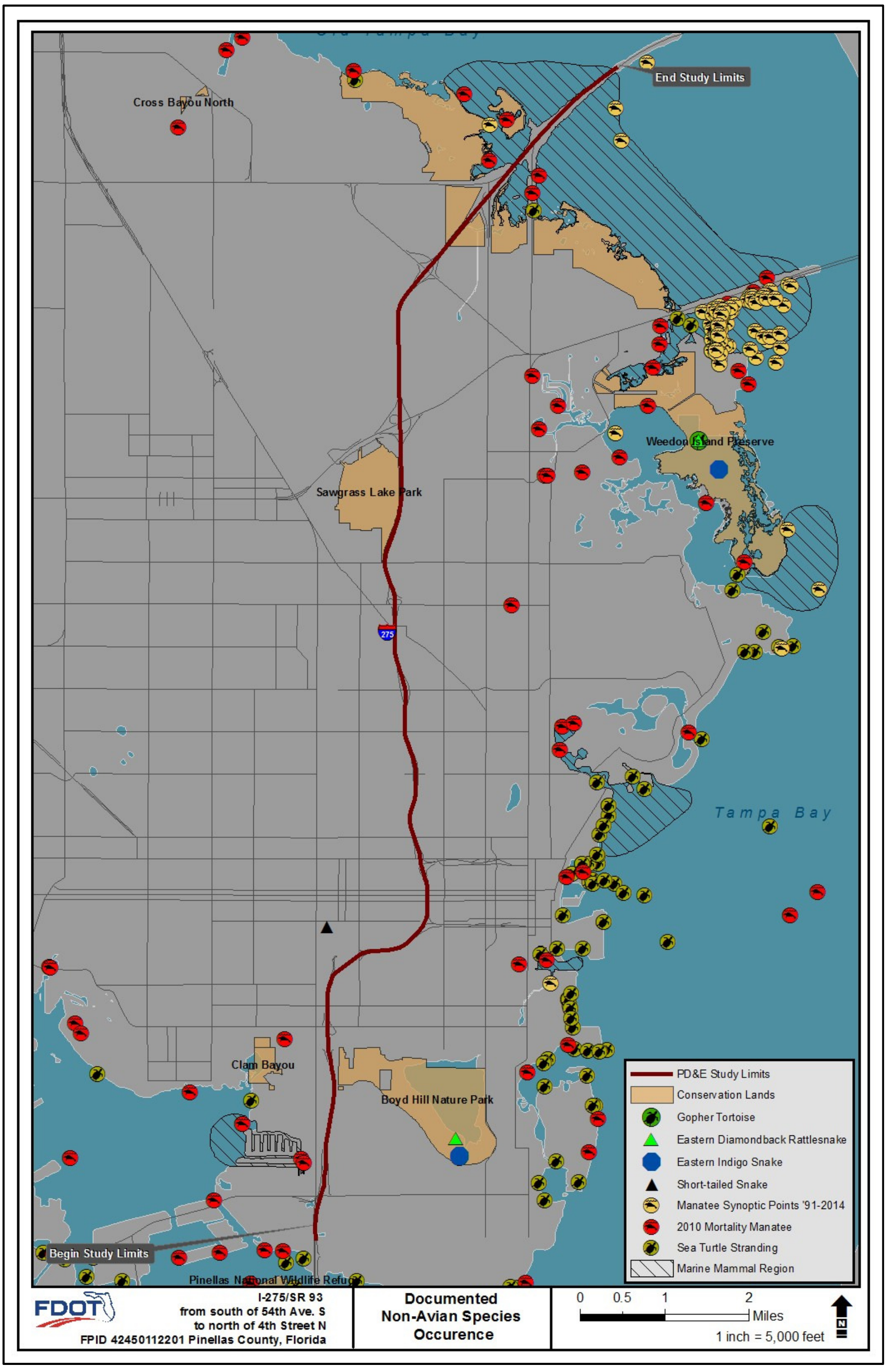

Figure 5-2. Documented Non-Avian Species Occurrence

5.4 Potential Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife habitat observed along the project corridor included fragmented natural areas variously impacted by urban development, freshwater forest and mangrove habitat abutting established preserves, and estuarine habitats associated with Old Tampa Bay.

Freshwater forested wetlands were present within the project corridor north of 54th Avenue South, within interchanges, along some surface waters, and adjacent to Sawgrass Lake Park. Cypress was the predominant vegetation in these areas. Non-forested, freshwater wetlands including shrub and marsh habitats and vegetated surface waters were also observed. Sawgrass Lake Park connects hydrologically to Riviera Bay and is known to support a variety of wildlife, including migratory birds.

Freshwater and estuarine habitats were present north of Gandy Boulevard in the vicinity of Weedon Island Preserve. Wetlands adjacent to this portion of the project contained estuarine ecosystems buffered by coastal uplands including pine flatwoods with maritime hammock, shell mounds and remnant scrub. Mangrove habitat was present within the project right-of-way including between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road associated with surface waters within Weedon Island Preserve, abutting the bridge over Big Island Gap, and along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway.

The project crosses Big Island Gap and a portion of Old Tampa Bay. Bay waters adjacent to the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway contained waters of sufficient depth and substrate for seagrass growth and natural shoreline along the causeway contained sandy and vegetated substrates along tidal and intertidal tidal areas.

Species such as fish, marine reptiles, wading birds, and marine mammals utilize the tidal habitats along the project. The project also crosses freshwater and estuarine waters considered core foraging habitat for the wood stork. An Essential Fish Habitat Assessment is provided in **Section 6.0** and includes additional details regarding marine habitats in the vicinity of the project.

5.5 Federally-listed Species

Federally-protected fauna observed within or adjacent the project corridor or which have the potential to occur within the project corridor were provided in **Table 5-1**. Species include fish (Gulf sturgeon, small-toothed sawfish), reptiles (sea turtles and the eastern indigo snake), birds (wood stork and piping plover), and mammals (West Indian manatee). Two non-listed, federally protected avian species (bald eagle and osprey) may also utilize the project area.

5.5.1 Fish

Gulf Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*)

The Gulf sturgeon is designated as a threatened species by the USFWS. It is known to forage in the Gulf of Mexico and associated estuaries and to spawn in major coastal rivers. Non-breeding populations have been found in Tampa Bay and Charlotte Harbor, while breeding populations are generally found in northern Florida. Critical Habitat for the Gulf sturgeon is not designated within or adjacent to the project corridor.

Impacts to spawning habitat would be unlikely during project construction and impacts to potential foraging grounds for non-breeding individuals would be minimal and could consist of bridge

embankment work at the Big Island Gap Bridge and construction at sea walled areas along the Howard Frankland Causeway. In project areas where the Gulf sturgeon might occur, the FDOT will commit to incorporate the NMFS and USFWS special construction provisions into construction contract documents in order to avoid impacts to the Gulf sturgeon (**Appendix E**). Given the unlikelihood of the species within the project area and the FDOT's commitment to adhere to the NMFS and USFWS construction provisions, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the Gulf sturgeon.

Small-toothed sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*)

The small-toothed sawfish is designated as endangered by the USFWS. The sawfish has been protected from harvest throughout Florida since 1992 and protected against international trade since 2007. The sawfish is a modified ray with a shark-like body found in a variety of shallow coastal and brackish waters including seagrass beds, oyster bars, mangrove shorelines, inshore bars and walled canals. Sawfish birth in Florida waters during April and May. Historically, the sawfish was found throughout the Gulf of Mexico, but is now believed confined to peninsular Florida. The project is corridor is not located in designated Critical Habitat for the small-toothed sawfish.

Road improvements are anticipated to occur at Big Island Gap Bridge and along a section of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway and in-water construction including temporary and/or permanent project impacts to resources may occur. Sandy bottom habitat, seagrasses and mangrove shoreline are present in these areas. The NMFS developed the *Sea Turtle and Smalltoothed Sawfish Construction Conditions* to protect the species during construction. Given the unlikelihood of the species within the project area and the FDOT's commitment to adhere to the *Sea Turtle and Smalltoothed Sawfish Construction Conditions*, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the small-toothed sawfish.

5.5.2 Reptiles and Amphibians

Sea Turtles

Sea turtles utilize marine waters and estuarine environments for shelter and feeding and sandy beaches for nesting. Various sea turtles listed as either threatened or endangered by the USFWS have been observed (living and dead) in and around portions of Tampa Bay, as well as using surrounding beaches, canals and estuaries including the loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green (*Chelonia mydas),* hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricate*), and Kemp's Ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*) sea turtles. Juvenile sea turtles are known to frequent bays inlet waters.

Sea turtle nesting habitat is not present within the project limits. The narrow beach zones present along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway are tidally-dynamic and do not provide suitable refuge for nesting sea turtles. However, sea turtles, in particular juvenile sea turtles, may be present in the waters within and abutting the project corridor. The FDOT will require implementation of the protocol outlined in the *Sea Turtle and Smalltoothed Sawfish Construction Conditions* during construction (**Appendix E**). Given the FDOT's commitment to adhere to the *Sea Turtle and Smalltoothed Sawfish Construction Conditions*, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** sea turtles.

Eastern Indigo Snake (*Drymarchon corais couperi*)

The eastern indigo snake is designated threatened by the USFWS. The indigo snake may be found in a range of habitats from wet prairie to pine flatwoods. The Boyd Hill Nature Park was historically known to support a population of the eastern indigo snake (<10 individuals in the 1990s); however, the population is believed to be in decline likely due to urbanization and habitat fragmentation. A second historic record exists near Weedon Island Preserve (pre-1970).

Potential, low-quality, fragmented indigo snake habitat was observed along the project corridor; however, no snakes were observed. Due to the presence of potential habitat and due to the historic occurrences of the indigo snake within Peninsular Pinellas County, the FDOT will commit to implement the USFWS *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake* during construction (**Appendix E**). Given the unlikely presence of the species in the area and the FDOT's commitment to adhere to the *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake,* it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the Eastern indigo snake.

5.5.3 Birds

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)

The wood stork is designated as threatened by the USFWS. This often transient wading bird forages in shallow water containing high prey densities and typically utilizes freshwater and estuarine habitats for nesting, foraging, and roosting. Wood storks typically nest in colonies and construct nests in a variety of forested wetland habitats including hardwood and cypress swamps, mangrove forests, and forested sloughs. The USFWS recognizes a 15-mile Core Foraging Area (CFA) radius around wood stork rookeries in Central Florida. The portion of the project corridor north of Roosevelt Boulevard falls within the CFA of two wood stork rookeries: Sheldon Road Colony and colony #615113. Both are located in Hillsborough County.

The USFWS references the Habitat Management Guidelines for the Wood Stork in the Southeast Region and the Draft Supplemental Habitat Management Guidelines for the Wood Stork in South Florida to assess wood stork impacts. The USFWS recognizes the need to protected suitable foraging habitat (SFH), which is defined as calm, relatively open waters, uncluttered by dense vegetation with a seasonal water level between 2 and 15 inches. The USFWS routinely accepts the USACE determination *may affect, but not is likely to adversely affect* for projects with insignificant impacts or for projects that avoid, minimize, and adequately mitigate the loss of SFH. The project must address wetland compensation and hydroperiod requirements or enter into formal consultation with the USFWS.

Suitable foraging habitat exists within the project corridor including freshwater and tidal marshes, herbaceous ditches, and existing stormwater management areas; however, nesting colonies were not documented within the project limits. Construction of the project will impact wetlands and surface waters. Therefore, provisions to reduce or minimize impacts to SFH will be implemented. If necessary, these measures will include provisions for wetland mitigation pursuant to Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C. 1344. Impacts to SFH within the project corridor will be re-evaluated during permitting. Due to the commitment to re-evaluate the corridor for SFH and to mitigate impacts, and based on the guidance from the Wood Stork Effect Determination Key (USFWS 2010), it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the wood stork.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

The piping plover is designated as threatened by the USFWS. This species utilizes open sandy beaches, graveled shorelines and tidal flats and mud flats. The piping plover is found along the Gulf Coast and is present in Pinellas County. The project is also within the USFWS Consultation Area for the piping plover. However, no USFWS Critical Habitat is designated within the project limits.

Minimal project impacts may occur to a narrow, tidally-dynamic beach zone present near the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway near the terminus of the seawall. However, due to the proximity of this unprotected area from the highway, utilization of the area by nesting piping plovers is unlikely. A small area of tidal mud flat is also present near Big Island Gap Bridge. However, the area is adjacent to the highway and frequented by pedestrians. Temporary or permanent impacts may occur to beach and/or tidal areas within the project limits; however, it is unlikely that habitat used by the piping plover for nesting, foraging or shelter will be impacted. Given the unlikely presence of the species within the project limits, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the piping plover.

5.5.4 Mammals

West Indian manatee (*Trichechus manatus*)

The West Indian manatee is designated endangered by the USFWS and is protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. The manatee utilizes coastal waters, bays, estuaries, and rivers throughout Florida preferring shallow waters where they forage on floating and aquatic vegetation. The project corridor is located in the USFWS Consultation Area for the West Indian manatee, although no federal sanctuaries, refuges, or critical manatee habitats exist within or adjacent to the project corridor. The area surrounding the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway along the project corridor is considered a marine mammal region and mortality locations and synoptic data (1991-2014) were obtained from the FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute showing manatee utilization in this area (**Figure 5-2**). No individuals were observed during in water field surveys.

Road improvements are anticipated to occur at the Big Island Gap Bridge and along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. Stormwater outfall pipes and structures constructed within potential manatee waters, below the mean high water line, and measuring eight inches or greater in diameter will require manatee grates to prevent manatee entrapment. Seagrasses are present in these areas and temporary and/or permanent project impacts to seagrass resources may occur. If impacts to seagrasses occur, impacts will be mitigated pursuant to S.373.4137 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C.s, 1344. In addition, the *Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work* will be implemented during construction to eliminate the possibility of construction-related manatee injury or death and these guidelines will be incorporated as part of the final project design (**Appendix E**). Since manatee grates will be required for outfall pipes and structures to prevent manatee entrapment, the *Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work* will be implemented, and impacts to seagrass habitat will be mitigated, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the West Indian manatee.

5.5.5 Non-listed, Federally Protected Species

Bald Eagle *(Haliaeetus leucocephalus)*

The bald eagle was removed from the USFWS List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife effective August 8, 2007. The bald eagle continues to receive protections through the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) (16 U.S.C. 668-668d), as amended, and the MBTA (16 U.S.C. 703-712). Construction activities are restricted within 330 feet of an active nest tree. In addition, the FWC requires adherence to USFWS Eagle Management Guidelines should construction activities occur within 660 feet of an active eagle nest during the nesting season (October 1 - May 15).

Bald eagles are particularly common along Florida's Gulf coast, as well as around bays, inland lakes, and rivers. The bald eagle typically uses forested habitats for nesting and roosting and often forages in shallow freshwater and saltwater habitats. Bald eagle nesting territories are present throughout Pinellas County. Bald eagle nests have been documented within the vicinity of the project corridor though according to the FWC Eagle Nest Locator none fall within 660 feet of the project limits. The FDOT will resurvey the project corridor during the permitting process and prior to construction. If a bald eagle nest is identified within 660 feet of the project, FDOT will coordinate with the USFWS and the FWC in accordance with the BGEPA and MBTA. Because this project will be consistent with the BGEPA and MBTA and will adhere to the USFWS Eagle Management Guidelines, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the bald eagle.

Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

The osprey is federally protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and state-protected by Chapter 68A of the Florida Administrative Code. Removal of active nests is restricted and removal of inactive nests is authorized via FWC Migratory Bird Nest Removal Permits. Ospreys forage in open water habitats along the coast and in freshwater lakes and rivers. Osprey nests can be found in large trees, on utility poles, on channel markers and on man-made platforms. Nesting season typically occurs between December and February.

An osprey was observed near the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway; however, no osprey nests were observed within the project limits. The FDOT will resurvey the project corridor for nests during the permitting process and prior to construction. If an osprey nest is identified within project corridor, FDOT will coordinate with the USFWS and/or the FWC depending on the activity status of the nest. Because this project will be consistent with state and federal regulations, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on osprey nests.

5.6 State-Protected Species

State-protected species known to utilize or have the potential to utilize habitat within the project corridor include one species of fish, several reptiles/amphibians, and a variety of avian species.

5.6.1 Fish

Mangrove rivulus (*Kryptolebias marmoratus*)

The mangrove rivulus is an amphibious fish listed as threatened in Florida in in 1977, but two years later, re-classified as a Species of Special Concern. This species utilizes mangrove forests and

stagnant tidal pools and has been found in Tampa Bay. A small area of tidal flat and mangrove fringe is present near Big Island Gap Bridge and tidally-influenced waters occur between Roosevelt Boulevard N and Ulmerton Road. Minimal temporary or permanent impacts may occur to tidal areas near Big Island Gap Bridge. Mangrove impacts are not anticipated between Roosevelt Boulevard N and Ulmerton Road. Given the potential presence of the species within the project limits and the potential for minor impacts to mangrove habitat, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the mangrove rivulus.

5.6.2 Reptiles and Amphibians

Gopher Tortoise (*Gopherus polyphemus*)

The gopher tortoise is designated as threatened by the FWC, but is not federally listed. The gopher tortoise occupies a variety of communities, preferably habitats with well-drained sandy soils and abundant herbaceous forage. Low-quality and extremely fragmented habitat with the potential to support the gopher tortoise was observed; however, due to dense urbanization along the project corridor, presence is unlikely. If the gopher tortoise or tortoise burrows are located during construction, the FDOT will apply for a relocation permit from the FWC. Due to the low-likelihood of presence along the project corridor, and the requirement to relocate tortoises, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the gopher tortoise. The gopher frog is occasionally found within gopher tortoise burrows, in particular when burrows are located in xeric habitat adjacent to ephemeral ponds. Suitable habitat conditions were not observed within the project limits. Therefore, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the gopher frog.

Short-tailed snake (*Lampropeltis extenuata*)

The short-tailed snake is designated as threatened by the FWC. This snake is found in north-central peninsular Florida and prefers longleaf pine-turkey oak forests. It has also been found in scrub and dry oak hammocks. Suitable habitat was not observed within the project limits. Therefore, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the short-tailed snake.

5.6.3 Birds

5.6.3.1 Wetland-Dependent Avian Species

This section describes state-protected, wetland-dependent avian species with the potential to utilize the project corridor. Several wading birds are listed by the FWC as threatened or species of special concern, but are not federally listed. These species may utilize ditches, marshes, tidal estuaries, and forested wetlands along the project corridor for foraging, roosting, or nesting.

The state-threatened piping plover and the endangered wood stork may occur along the corridor. Both species also receive federal protection status and have been described above.

Other state-threatened avian species with the potential to utilize the project corridor include the snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrines*), least tern (*Sternula antillarum*), and the Florida sandhill crane *(Grus canadensis pratensis*). Both the snowy plover and the least tern utilize sandy beaches and tidal flats, similar to those found along the Howard Frankland Causeway. Minimal project impacts may occur to a narrow, tidally-dynamic beach zone near the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway near the terminus of the seawall. However, due to the proximity to the highway, utilization

of this area by nesting birds is unlikely. Tidal flats are present near Big Island Gap Bridge. However, the area is adjacent to the highway and frequented by pedestrians. Temporary or permanent impacts may occur to beach and/or tidal areas within the project limits; however, it is unlikely that these areas are used for nesting, foraging or shelter. Given the unlikely presence of the species within the project limits, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the snowy plover or the least tern.

Sandhill cranes prefer wet prairies, marshy lake margins, improved pastures, and sparsely vegetated marshes, which are present in the area. All wetland impacts will be mitigated and will provide type for type replacement of habitat. Due to the dense urbanization, high volume traffic, and fragmented habitat throughout this area, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the Florida sandhill crane.

The remaining species are designated as Species of Special Concern and include the roseate spoonbill (*Ajaja ajaja*), little blue heron (*Egretta caerulea*), reddish egret (*Egretta rufescens*), snowy egret (*Egretta thula*), tri-colored heron (*Egretta tricolor*), white ibis (*Eudocimus albus*), American oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliates*), the brown pelican (*Pandion haliaetus*), and the black skimmer (*Rynchops niger*). Several species of wading birds were observed during field surveys in June 2014. Species included the great blue heron (*Ardea Herodias*), snowy egret, and little blue heron near Big Island Gap Bridge and the double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) along the Howard Frankland Causeway. Since impacts to wetland habitat will be minimized and mitigated, it is anticipated that the project ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** these species.

Florida Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia Floridana*)

The Florida burrowing owl is considered a Species of Special Concern by the FWC. The species requires dry, open, habitat with sandy soils. Although the burrowing owl has been found in Pinellas County, suitable habitat was not observed within the project limits and field surveys did not identify any individuals or burrows. Due to the lack of suitable habitat, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the Florida burrowing owl.

Southeastern American kestrel (*Falco sparverius paulus*)

The southeastern American kestrel is listed as threatened by the FWC. Kestrels frequent open pastures and agricultural lands, and prefer open lands with perch sites, a diverse prey population, and snags for nesting. Nesting snags were not observed. Suboptimal foraging habitat exists adjacent to the project limits between Gandy Boulevard and Roosevelt Boulevard. Given the mobility of this species and the absence of suitable nesting habitat, it is anticipated that the project will have ***no effect*** on the southeastern American kestrel.

5.7 Federal and State Listed Plants

The FNAI Biodiversity Matrix (**Appendix F**) was queried to develop a list of plant species with the potential to occur within the project area (**Table 5-2**). According to the query, thirteen plant species protected by the Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services (FDACS) potentially occur within the area: nine classified as endangered and four as threatened. One species, Florida goldenaster, is recognized as endangered by both federal and state rankings. Neither federal nor state listed plants species were observed within the project corridor during the PD&E surveys. Further, undeveloped areas along the project corridor were composed of habitat fringes of varying quality with various levels of disturbance. If protected plants are observed within the project limits during the design and permitting, coordination with the USFWS and/or the FDACS will be initiated.

Table 5-2. Protected Flora Potentially Occurring within the Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status	State Rank	Likely/ Potential
Nuttall's rayless goldenrod	*Bigelowia nuttallii*	N	E	Potential
Many-flowered grass-pink	*Calopogon multiflorus*	N	E	Potential
Sand butterfly pea	*Centrosema arenicola*	N	E	Potential
Hairy beach sunflower	*Helianthus debilis ssp. vestitus*	N	E	Potential
Nodding pineweed	*Lechea cernua*	N	T	Potential
Small's flax	*Linum carteri var. smallii*	N	E	Potential
Celestial lily	*Nemastylis floridana*	N	E	Potential
Florida beargrass	*Nolina atopocarpa*	N	T	Potential
Giant orchid	*Pteroglossaspis ecristata*	N	T	Potential

E = Endangered: plants native to Florida in imminent danger of extinction, the survival of which is unlikely if decline continues; includes all species determined to be endangered/threatened pursuant to the U.S. ESA. **T** = Threatened: plants native to Florida that are in rapid decline, but which have not decreased in number as to cause them to be Endangered. **N** = Not currently listed, nor currently considered for listing.

5.8 Critical Habitat

The project corridor was evaluated for Critical Habitat as defined by Congress 17 CFR 35.1532. Review of GIS data obtained from the USFWS confirms there is no designated critical habitat within the project limits. Therefore, the proposed project will have ***no effect*** on Critical Habitat designated by the USFWS.

6.0 Essential Fish Habitat

This Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) Assessment contains an evaluation of the proposed impacts on EFH associated with the I-275 project segment located over tidally-connected waters, including Old Tampa Bay. The purpose of this EFH Assessment is to enhance communication and coordination among the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), Fishery Management Councils (FMCs), and affected state and federal agencies. This EFH Assessment is provided in accordance with Part 2, Chapter 11 – Essential Fish Habitat – of the FDOT PD&E Manual and the requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSFCMA) of 1996.

As part of the ETDM screening, Fishery Biologist David A. Rydene commented on behalf of the NOAA NMFS Gulf of Mexico (Habitat Conservation Division) and stated EFH resources have been found within Maximo Channel, Riviera Bay, and Tampa Bay. The ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report, including agency correspondence, is provided as **Appendix B**. Final agency coordination comments related to the information contained in this WEBAR are provided as **Appendix H**.

6.1 Magnuson-Stevens Act

EFH is defined by the MSFCMA of 1976, as amended in 1996. The Magnuson-Stevens Act was enacted by the U.S. Congress to protect marine fish stocks and their habitat, to prevent and stop overfishing and to minimize by-catch. Congress defined EFH as “those waters and substrate necessary to fish for spawning, breeding, feeding, or growth to maturity” (16 U.S.C. 1802 (10)). The MSFCMA (Public Law 94-265, as amended) was established, along with other goals, to promote the protection of EFH in the review of projects conducted under federal permits, licenses, or other authorities that affect or have the potential to affect such habitat. Section 302 of the MSFCMA established eight FMCs. The Gulf of Mexico FMC is responsible for the creation of management standards for fishery resources in federal waters within the Gulf of Mexico from Florida to Texas and the implementation of the national standards in the Fishery Management Plans (FMP). In 1996, new habitat conservation provisions were added to the MSFCMA mandating the identification of EFH for all fish species federally managed by the FMCs and NMFS. Federal agencies that fund, permit, or implement activities that may adversely affect EFH must consult with the NMFS.

6.2 EFH Involvement

The intent of this EFH Assessment is to evaluate and describe how the proposed actions associated with the I-275 widening between Gandy Boulevard and Ulmerton Road, at the Big Island Gap Bridge, and along a section of the Howard Frankland Causeway may affect EFH designated by the NMFS and the Gulf of Mexico FMC within Old Tampa Bay and associated estuarine habitats. EFH generally includes a variety of aquatic habitats, such as rivers and creeks; estuarine wetlands; estuarine scrub/shrub mangroves and other forested wetlands; submerged aquatic vegetation; oyster reefs and shell banks; intertidal flats and shorelines; and estuarine and marine water columns. Pursuant to section 305(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Act, federal agencies must consult with NMFS regarding any of its actions authorized, funded, or undertaken, or proposed to be authorized, funded, or undertaken that may adversely affect EFH. Measures recommended by the NMFS or any FMC to protect EFH are advisory, not proscriptive. An effective EFH consultation

process is vital to ensuring that federal actions are consistent with the Magnuson-Stevens Act resource management goal.

Guidance provided by NOAA (2004), states the following must accompany an EFH Assessment:

1. Description of the action.
2. Analysis of the potential adverse effects of the action on EFH and managed species.
3. Federal agency(s) conclusions regarding the effects of the action on EFH.
4. Proposed mitigation, as applicable.

6.3 Proposed Action

The FDOT project would propose interstate improvements along I-275 (SR 93) from South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida, a distance of approximately 16.3 miles. Specific project details include:

- Segment A: From south of 54th Avenue South to I-175, a distance of 4.6 miles;
- Segment B: From I-175 to south of Gandy Boulevard, a distance of 6.0 miles; and
- Segment C: From south of Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North, a distance of 5.7 miles.

The proposed actions would include widening a section of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway within waters of Old Tampa Bay, improvements at the Big Island Gap Bridge, and work within tidal waters between Roosevelt Blvd and Ulmerton Road near the Weedon Island Preserve.

6.4 Existing Conditions

Estuarine habitats exist within Old Tampa Bay and are crossed by the I-275 project. Desktop analysis and field evaluations were conducted to verify and map existing mangrove habitats along the project corridor and to verify and/or refine the SWFWMD seagrass mapping data (2010). Per the SWFWMD 2010 data, seagrass habitats within the project corridor are categorized as either seagrass – continuous (FLUCFCS 9116) or seagrass – discontinuous (FLUCFCS 9113).

Based on field reviews conducted June 4th and 17th, 2014, the project crosses five EFH types including ditches/canals with direct connection to tidally-influenced bays, two estuarine intertidal habitats (*i.e.* scrub/shrub mangrove and unconsolidated sand shoreline), and two estuarine subtidal habitats (*i.e.* submerged aquatic vegetation and bay bottoms).

6.5 Agency Coordination – Coastal and Marine Habitats

Agency coordination was conducted as part of the ETDM screening and the Advanced Notification review processes. The ETDM screening process was used to identify concerns from the commenting agencies. ETDM coordination included coordination with the USFWS, the NMFS, and the SWFWMD. Full agency comments are provided in the ETDM Final Programming Screen Summary Report in **Appendix B**. A summary of each agency's comments is provided below:

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Degree of Effect - Minimal

Due to proximity to the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve, Weedon Island Preserve, Boyd Hill Nature Park, Sawgrass lake Park and the Pinellas NWR, the USFWS stated that the project design should incorporate drainage improvements that reduce contaminants entering Tampa Bay. Additionally, work within nearshore areas will be considered substantial.

National Marine Fisheries Service – Degree of Effect - Minimal

NMFS commented about resources within Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay, both of which contain estuarine habitats used by federally managed species and prey; Loggerhead Marina and Maximo Channel; and Sawgrass Lake which connects via canals/ditches to Riviera Bay near Tinny Creek. They noted mangrove habitat along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway and near shore seagrass beds. Direct impacts were not considered in the ETDM Report, but NMFS recommended stormwater systems to prevent indirect impacts of degraded water from reaching estuarine habitats. Direct impacts to estuarine resources will require additional coordination with NMFS staff.

Southwest Florida Water Management District – Degree of Effect - Minimal

The SWFWMD noted the close proximity of seagrasses to the causeway and the potential for shading impacts associated with bridge work over Big Island Gap. Seagrass impacts will be addressed during permitting and evaluated as direct impacts or shading. In addition to seagrass habitat along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway, SWFWMD commented on the potential to impact wetlands and restoration areas associated with Big Island Gap.

6.6 Field Survey Methodology

Habitat mapping was conducted and species surveys were undertaken along I-275 between South of 54th Ave. S. to approximately 1-mile west of the Howard Frankland Bridge and around the Big Island Gap Bridge area on June 4, 2014. Field surveys were conducted by vehicle along the road and by foot along the shoreline, and habitat was mapped using high resolution aerial photography (Pinellas County, 2010).

Subsequent seagrass surveys were conducted June 17, 2014 and involved seagrass mapping, an EFH assessment, and wildlife surveys along a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway within Old Tampa Bay. The field survey commenced at 8:30am at approximately 1.5ft mean lower low water (MLLW) (**Figure 6-1**) and was conducted along meandering transects by kayak, shallow water wading, and snorkeling. The limits of seagrass habitat were recorded using a GPS Trimble GeoXT and differentially corrected for accuracy. Seagrass habitats were delineated as discontinuous, patchy (10 to 25% coverage) or continuous (>25% coverage). The seagrass mapping was intended to verify the presence/absence of seagrass beds mapped previously by the SWFWMD (2010) and to document flora and fauna species present.

The EFH assessment included visual observation of seagrass habitats within the project area, identification of seagrass by genus and species, documentation of other submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) and epiphytes, examination of floating vegetation and bay bottom, and identification (when possible) of benthic organisms and other aquatic species.

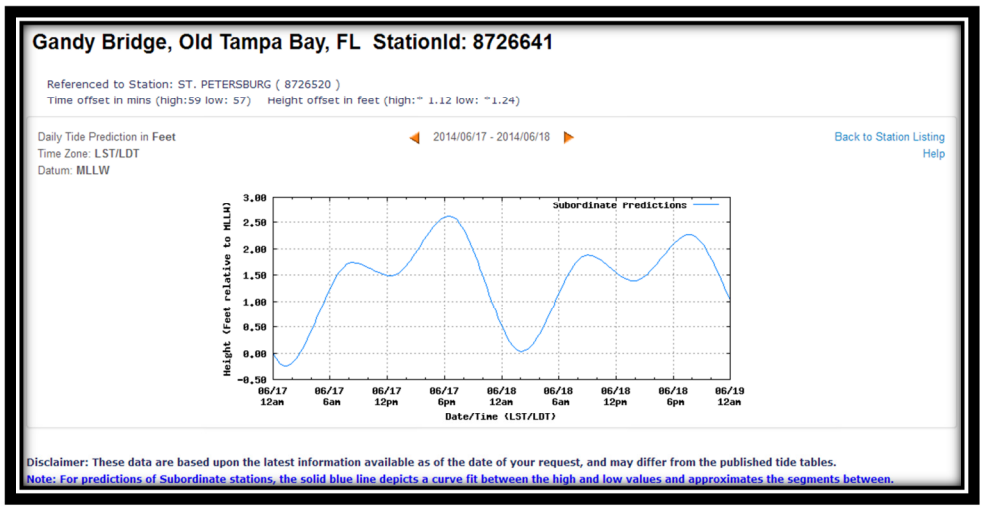

Figure 6-1. Tide Table

6.7 Results

A variety of coastal habitat communities are present along and adjacent to the project corridor including canals/ditches with direct connection to tidally-influenced bays and estuaries, two estuarine intertidal habitats (*i.e.* scrub/shrub mangrove and unconsolidated sand shoreline), and two estuarine subtidal habitats (*i.e.* submerged aquatic vegetation and open water/bay bottoms).

Predominant habitat types observed along the project corridor area described below:

Tidal canals/ditches (FLUCFCS, 5100)

Tidally-connected canals were observed along the project corridor. A freshwater, but tidally-connected canal was present along I-275 south of Gandy Boulevard. This canal connects Riviera Bay to Sawgrass Lake Park near Tinny Creek. Leather fern was observed. Further north, mangroves were observed east and west of I-275 within the canal located between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road at the Weedon Island Preserve. Construction impacts are anticipated within the I-275 right-of-way at both canal crossings.

Mangrove (FLUCFCS, 6120)

Mangrove habitat was observed at the Weedon Island Preserve, at Big Island Gap on both natural substrate and riprap and along the Howard Frankland Causeway. Mangrove habitat included red mangrove (*Rhizophora mangle*), black mangrove (*Avicennia germinans*), and white mangrove (*Laguncularia racemosa*). The eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*) was observed on prop roots of red mangrove near Big Island Gap. Brazilian pepper was present landward of the mangrove habitat at Big Island Gap and was intermittent along a section of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. Native landscape plantings including sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*) and eastern red cedar (*Juniperus virginiana*) were observed landward of the mangrove limits. Construction impacts are anticipated to mangrove habitats at Big Island Gap and near the Weedon Island Preserve.

Bay and Estuarine Waters (FLUCFCS, 5400)

Hardened seawall and natural shoreline were present along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway within Old Tampa Bay. The natural shoreline contained sandy unconsolidated substrate along the supratidal, intertidal, and subtidal zones. These relatively open areas of sand and floating algae supported benthic organisms and fish (**Table 6-1**). Bay waters adjacent to the causeway contained waters of sufficient depth and substrate for seagrass growth. Seagrass habitats of varying density, quality and composition were observed. The majority of seagrass observed was shoal grass (*Halodule wrightii*), but manatee grass (*Syringodium filiforme*) was also present, particularly along the eastern side of the causeway. Conditions along the eastern side of the causeway were notably healthier and more diverse than those along the western limits of the causeway.

Estuarine subtidal habitats exist within the I-275 construction limits. Seagrasses were either absent or intermittent and patchy near the seawall, probably due to reflected wave energy, substrate disruption, and shading from floating organic debris. Shoal grass was found throughout areas of continuous and discontinuous seagrass. Manatee grass was observed primarily within the continuous shoal grass beds, which tended to be away from the shore in slightly deeper waters and predominantly on the eastern side of the causeway. Macroalgal epiphytes and drift algae were common within the seagrass habitats and along the shoreline. Other SAV included the alga *Caulerpa sp.*, which contributed to SAV coverage. *Caulerpa sp.* is particularly common in the upper reaches of Old Tampa Bay (Yarbro, 2011). Seagrass maps generated from field data collected June 17, 2014 are provided in **Appendix D**.

Table 6-1. Wildlife Observed within Old Tampa Bay

Fish		Birds	
Anchovy	*Anchoa sp.*	Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*
Sheepshead	*Archosargus probatocephalus*	Great blue heron	*Ardea herodias*
Pipefish	*Syngnathus* sp.	Snowy egret	*Egretta thula*
Stripped burrfish	*Chilomycterus schoepfii*	Double-crested Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax auritus*
Mullet	*Mugil cephalus*	Little blue heron	*Egretta caerulea*
Cownose ray	*Rhinoptera bonasus*		
Atlantic stingray	*Dasyatis sabina*		
Inverts		**Mammal**	
Horseshoe crab	*Limulas polyphemus*	Bottle-nose dolphin	*Tursiops truncatus*
Blue crab	*Callinectes sapidus*		
Hermit crab	Not determined		
Fighting conch	*Strombus pugilis*		
Crown conch	*Melongena corona*		
Lightening whelk	*Busycon perversum*		
Tulip snail	*Fasciolaria* sp.		
Eastern oysters	*Crassostrea virginica*		
Comb jellies	Ctenophora		

6.8 Analysis of Effects on EFH

Tampa Bay contains EFH utilized by federally-managed species and their prey including within the open waters of Old Tampa Bay, the estuarine water column, and SAV, including seagrass habitat. The NMFS and the SWFWMD commented regarding impacts to EFH as part of the ETDM process; however, at the time of review, impacts to EFH were not anticipated along a section of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway or at Big Island Gap. However, the selected Preferred Build Alternative would result in construction impacts to tidal waters within a portion of Old Tampa Bay as part of the I-275 widening and at the Big Island Gap Bridge including impacts to seagrass and mangrove habitats. Potential impacts to the following species known to exist in Tampa Bay were reviewed as part of the EFH Assessment.

6.8.1 Fishery Management Plans

Species listed in the FMPs of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council (GMFMC) are available (Rev. 5/31/2012). Fisheries known to exist in Tampa Bay include the red drum (*Scianenops ocellatus*), coastal migratory pelagics, and reef fish, pink shrimp (*Farfantepenaeus duorarum*), stone crab (*Minippe mercenaria*), and spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*).

Red Drum (*Scianenops ocellatus*) is a nearshore species found in estuaries throughout the Gulf of Mexico including within Tampa Bay. They inhabit a range of habitats including estuaries, tidal inlets, tidal flats, seagrass habitats, oyster reefs, as well as deeper water habitats. The red drum is a euryhaline species able to adapt to a range of salinities from freshwater to very high sanity waters (50ppt), but prefers saltwater of 30-35 ppt. The red drum can also tolerate a range of temperatures. The red drum lives the majority of its lifecycle in nearshore waters and estuarine habitats. Estuaries provide vital nursery habitat for the red drum. Deterioration of water quality or loss of habitat can dramatically affect survival of juvenile red drum. Due to the FDOTs commitment to use BMPs during roadway and bridge construction and due to the ability of the species to utilize nearby habitat, impacts to this species are not anticipated.

The **Reef Fish** FMP includes various species of snappers, groupers, triggerfishes, jacks, tilefishes, and wrasses. Although the FMP covers 42 species, stock assessments have only been conducted on eleven species. Gray (mangrove) snapper (*Lutjanus griseus*) is abundant in Tampa Bay. Gray snapper spawn offshore but eggs and larvae move by currents into estuarine, seagrass, and mangrove habitats. Larvae, juveniles, and smaller adults are common in seagrass habitats and around mangrove roots, pilings, seawalls, and jetties. Juvenile snappers forage during the day in seagrass beds (Bortone and Williams 1986) and feed primarily on penaeid shrimp and crabs (Rutherford *et al.*1989a). Adult gray snapper are nocturnal predators that consume fish, shrimp, and crabs. (Harrigan *et al.* 1989; Hettler 1989). Habitat utilized by the gray snapper may be impacted during project construction, however, due to FDOT's commitment to utilize BMPs and due to the ability of the species to utilize nearby habitats, long-term impacts to this species are not anticipated.

The **Coastal Migratory Pelagics** FMP includes all estuaries along the U.S. and Mexico border south to the boundary between the GMFMC and the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council (SAFMC). The GMFMC and the SAFMC joint FMP includes the king mackerel (*Scomberomorus cavalla*), Spanish mackerel (*S. maculatus*), and cobia (*Rachycentron canadum*). Species included in the fishery, but not in the management unit include cero (*S. regalis*), little tunny (*Euthynnus alletteratus*), dolphin (*Coryphaena hippurus*), bluefish (*Pomatomus saltatrix*). Spanish mackerel,

although not considered estuarine-dependent, are known to infrequently utilize mouths of rivers, estuaries, and bays and is known to occur in Tampa Bay. Due to the infrequent occurrence of this species in bays and estuaries, impacts from construction are not anticipated.

Four species of shrimps are included in the species management unit of the shrimp FMP including brown shrimp (*Farfantepenaeus aztecus*), white shrimp (*Litopenaeus setiferus*), pink shrimp (*Farfantepenaeus duorarum*), and royal red shrimp (*Pleoticus robustus*). **Pink shrimp** are abundant in Tampa Bay. They are the most common species harvested in Florida. Pink shrimp occupy a variety of habitats including seagrass habitats, and in particular shoal grass beds. Juvenile shrimp are commonly found in estuaries where they burrow into the substrate by day and emerge at night. Juveniles inhabit almost every U.S. estuary around the Gulf and are abundant in Florida and both adults and juveniles are present in Tampa Bay. Some impacts will occur in seagrass habitats along a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway; however, due to the productivity of shrimp and the ability of shrimp populations to rebound quickly from one year to the next, long-term impacts to this species are not anticipated from this project.

Spiny lobster (*Panulirus argus*) has been found off shore from Tampa Bay. Although the FMP covers the Gulf regions north to Tarpon Spring, the spiny lobster is not expected to occur within the project area. The project is not expected to impact this species.

As of October 2011, the **Stone crab (*Minippe mercenaria*)** fishery in Florida waters is no longer jointly managed by the GMFMC and the State of Florida, but rather is now solely managed by the State of Florida. Although there is no formal FMP for the stone crab, its presence in highly regarded throughout Florida and it contributes significantly to the Florida fishery. It is also an important species in the assessment of Essential Fish Habitat. There are two species of stone crabs found in Florida: the Florida stone crab (*Menippe mercenaria*) and the Gulf stone crab (*M. adina*). These species interbreed creating a hybrid crab that displays traits from each species. Each species is distinguished by specific biological and ecological characteristics. The Florida stone crab is found throughout Florida and is abundant in SW Florida preferring hard bottom habitats with rocky outcrops and seagrasses. The gulf stone crab is more common in the northern and western Gulf of Mexico and prefers mud flats, oyster reefs, rock jetties, and other submerged habitats. The stone crab occurs extensively in Tampa Bay is harvested for food. Due to the resilience of this fishery and the mobility of the species, the project is not expected to have detrimental impacts to this species.

6.8.2 Project Impacts

Construction of Segment C of the I-275 project would impact seagrass and mangrove habitats. This portion of the project area drains to the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, an Outstanding Florida Water Project.

Impacts to seagrass habitat would occur as a result of widening of a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. Impacts to both seagrass habitat and mangrove habitat would occur at Big Island Gap as a result of bridge widening. In addition, impacts to mangrove habitat would also occur at a canal near Weedon Island Preserve, located between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road, to accommodate highway widening.

Mangrove habitat was present within the project right-of-way including between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road. Mangroves were observed within surface waters at Weedon Island Preserve, abutting the bridge over Big Island Gap, and along the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway associated with this proposed project's PD&E study limits. The project would result in 0.89 acres of

impact to mangrove habitat including 0.73 acres around Big Island Gap and 0.16 acres to surface waters associated with the Weedon Island Preserve.

Bay waters adjacent to a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway within this proposed project's study limits contained seagrass habitats of varying density, quality and composition. Seagrasses were categorized as continuous or intermittent and patchy. Impacts to continuous seagrass habitat would total approximately 0.40 acres; impacts to intermittent and patchy seagrass habitat 0.34 acres. Final seagrass impacts will be determined during project permitting.

6.8.3 Water Quality and Erosion Control Measures

Degradation of water quality resulting from construction or excess loading of stormwater runoff from the project has the potential to adversely impact tidal habitats in and around Tampa Bay including seagrass habitats and benthic communities. Water quality impacts from construction will be avoided and minimized through the incorporation of BMPs including, but not limited to, construction phasing, sediment barriers, floating turbidity screenings, silt fences, and other construction techniques identified during design and permitting by the regulatory agencies.

6.9 Proposed Mitigation

Impacts to seagrass habitat will be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent practical during project design and permitting. However, it is anticipated that unavoidable impacts will occur as a result of the proposed project. Temporary impacts will be minimized utilizing BMPs and incorporating FDOT design standards.

Permanent impacts will require mitigation. Impacts to seagrass habitat will be evaluated during design and permitting as part of the environmental resource permit (ERP) program under Part IV of Chapter 373 of the Florida Statutes (F.S.). Mitigation will be required pursuant to S.373.4137 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C.s, 1344. Coordination has been initiated to determine a future seagrass mitigation approach. Any mitigation decisions will be incorporated into this document prior to the public hearing.

7.0 Conclusions and Commitments

7.1 Wetland

The **"Build" Alternatives** for I-275 (SR 93) from 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County include Segments A, B and C. Impacts are not anticipated for Segment A. Impacts would occur with **"Build" Alternatives** for Segments B and C. Segments B and C require fill within surface waters, wetlands, and within waters of Old Tampa Bay, which includes the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve.

The **"Build" Alternatives** for Segments B and C would result in approximately 0.74 acres of impacts to freshwater wetlands including approximately 0.59 acres of freshwater forested wetlands and 0.15 acres of non-forested, freshwater wetlands. Segment C would result in 0.89 acres of impact to mangrove habitat including 0.73 acres around Big Island Gap and 0.16 acres to surface waters associated with the Weedon Island Preserve. Segment C would also require impacts to seagrass habitat. Impacts to continuous seagrass habitat would total approximately 0.40 acres; impacts to intermittent and patchy seagrass habitat 0.34 acres.

Wetland impacts would be avoided and minimized to the greatest extent practical during project design and permitting. All impacts to jurisdictional wetlands and surface waters would be evaluated using the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) Chapter 62-345 FAC) during the design and permitting phase of the project as part of the Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) program under Part IV of Chapter 373 of the Florida Statutes. Mitigation would be provided pursuant to S.373.4137 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C.s, 1344.

7.2 Protect Species & Habitat

Wildlife habitat observed along the project corridor included fragmented natural areas variously impacted by urban development, freshwater forest and mangrove habitat abutting established preserves, and estuarine habitats associated with Old Tampa Bay. Six listed fauna were observed within the project corridor during field surveys. In addition, 30 listed species were listed to occur or potentially occur within close proximity to the project according to database reviews and literature research. Federally-protected fauna observed within or adjacent the project corridor or which have the potential to occur within the project corridor include fish (Gulf sturgeon, small-toothed sawfish), reptiles (sea turtles and the eastern indigo snake), birds (wood stork and piping plover), and mammals (West Indian manatee). Two non-listed, federally protected avian species (bald eagle and osprey) may also utilize the project area.

Base on this project review, the following findings were determined for federally protected species. The project:

- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the Gulf sturgeon;
- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the small-toothed sawfish;
- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the loggerhead, green, hawksbill, or Kemp's Ridley sea turtles;
- will have ***no effect*** on the Eastern indigo snake;

- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the wood stork;
- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the piping plover; and
- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the West Indian manatee.

Additionally, although the bald eagle is no longer listed as threatened or endangered, it remains protected for the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Golden Eagle Protection Act. The osprey is also protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. However, the project will have ***no effect*** on the bald eagle or the osprey.

The findings for state protected wildlife are as follows. The project:

- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the mangrove rivulus;
- will have ***no effect*** on the gopher frog;
- will have ***no effect*** on the short-tailed snake;
- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the snowy plover or the least tern;
- will have ***no effect*** on the Florida sandhill crane***;***
- ***may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect*** the roseate spoonbill, little blue heron, reddish egret, snowy egret, tri-colored heron, white ibis, American oystercatcher, the brown pelican, or the black skimmer;
- will have ***no effect*** on the Florida burrowing owl; and
- will have ***no effect*** on the southeastern American kestrel.

Designated critical habitat does not fall within the project limits. Therefore, the proposed project will have ***no effect*** on Critical Habitat designated by the USFWS.

7.3 Essential Fish Habitat

Estuarine habitats exist within Old Tampa Bay and are crossed by the I-275 project. Based on field reviews, the project crosses variety of coastal habitat communities. A freshwater, but tidally-connected canal was present along I-275 south of Gandy Boulevard. Mangroves were observed east and west of I-275 within the canal located between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road at the Weedon Island Preserve. Mangrove habitat was observed at the Weedon Island Preserve, at Big Island Gap on both natural substrate and riprap and along the Howard Frankland Causeway. Seagrass habitats of varying density, quality and composition were observed waterward of a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. Impacts to seagrass habitat would occur as a result of widening a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway. Impacts to both seagrass habitat and mangrove habitat would occur at Big Island Gap as a result of bridge widening. In addition, impacts to mangrove habitat would also occur at a canal near Weedon Island Preserve, located between Roosevelt Boulevard and Ulmerton Road, to accommodate highway widening.

Species known to exist in Tampa Bay and listed in the FMPs of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council include the red drum, coastal migratory pelagics and reef fish, pink shrimp, stone crab, and spiny lobster. However, base on standard water quality protection measures and mitigation, the project is not expected to have detrimental impacts on any of these species.

Mitigation will be provided pursuant to S.373.4137 Florida Statutes (F.S.) Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. and 33 U.S.C.s, 1344.

7.4 Commitments

In order to assure that adverse impacts to protected species or habitat will not occur within the project corridor, the FDOT will adhere to the following commitments and protection measures:

- Endangered Species Act Section 7 informal consultation will be re-initiated with the NMFS for smalltooth sawfish and swimming sea turtles during the future project's design phase once more detailed information is known for this project. The FDOT will continue coordination with NMFS on potential impacts associated with pile driving activities.
- The FDOT will adhere to the NMFS's *Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Construction Conditions (***Appendix E***)* during construction of the project.
- The FDOT will continue informal Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the USFWS for the Gulf Sturgeon during the future project's design phase.
- FDOT will incorporate the *Construction Special Conditions for the protection of the Gulf Sturgeon (***Appendix A***).*
- To assure the protection of wildlife during construction, the FDOT will implement a Marine Wildlife Watch Plan (MWWP), which includes the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC) *Standard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work*. The FDOT will require the construction contractor to abide by these guidelines during construction. The current guidelines (2011) that provide concurrent protections for manatees and sea turtles are provided in **Appendix E**.
- Special conditions for manatees will be addressed during construction and include the following:
    - No nighttime in water work will be performed. In-water work can be conducted from official sunrise until official sunset times;
    - Two dedicated (minimum one primary), experienced manatee observers will be present when in-water work is performed. Primary observers should have experience observing manatees in the wild on construction projects similar to this one;
    - All siltation barriers or coffer dams should be checked at least twice a day, in the morning and in the evening, for manatees that may become entangled or entrapped at the site.
    - Barges will be equipped with fender systems that provide a minimum standoff distance of four feet between wharves, bulkheads and vessels moored together to prevent crushing manatees. All existing slow speed or no wake zones will apply to all work boats and barges associated with construction; and
    - Although culverts are unlikely for the portion of the project in the vicinity of the Big Island Gap waterway, any culverts larger than eight inches and less than eight feet in diameter should be grated to prevent manatee entrapment. When the I-275 Big Island Gap bridge is widened, the spacing (if feasible) between the new pilings will

be at least 60 inches to allow for manatee movement in between the pilings. If a minimum of 60-inch spacing is not provided between the new piles, further coordination will be conducted with the USFWS. The existing bridge piling spacing will not need to be altered.

- No blasting is authorized for this project as part of this PD&E study. If blasting is required, informal Section 7 Consultation will be initiated with the USFWS for the manatee and with the NMFS for swimming sea turtles and the smalltooth sawfish. A blast plan and MWWP would be developed and submitted to the USFWS, NMFS and FFWCC for their approval prior to beginning blasting activities.
- No dredging is authorized for this project. If dredging is required, informal Section 7 Consultation will be re-initiated with the USFWS for the manatee.

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Appendices

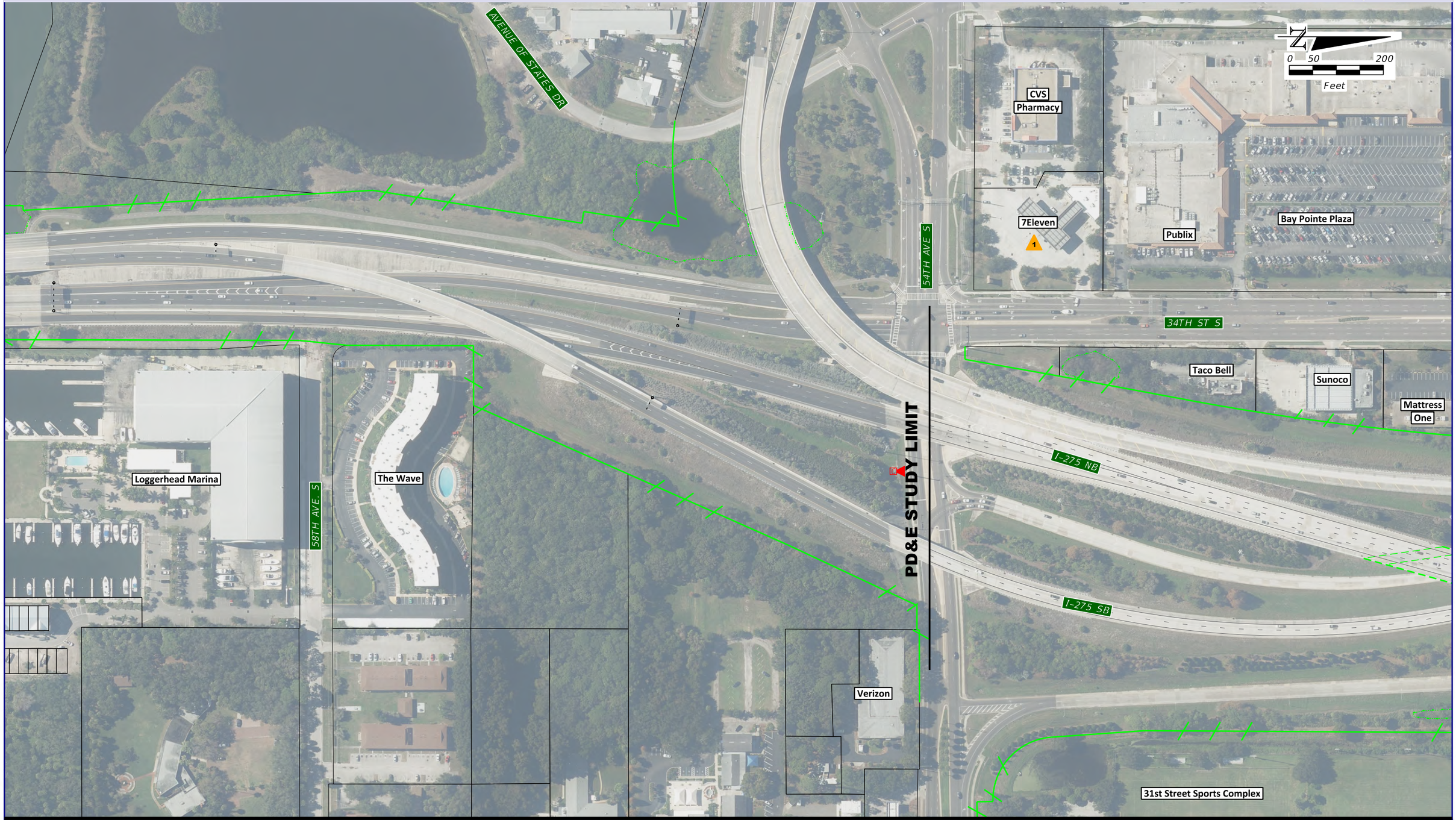
Appendix A.
Concept Plans

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

SHEET NO. 1

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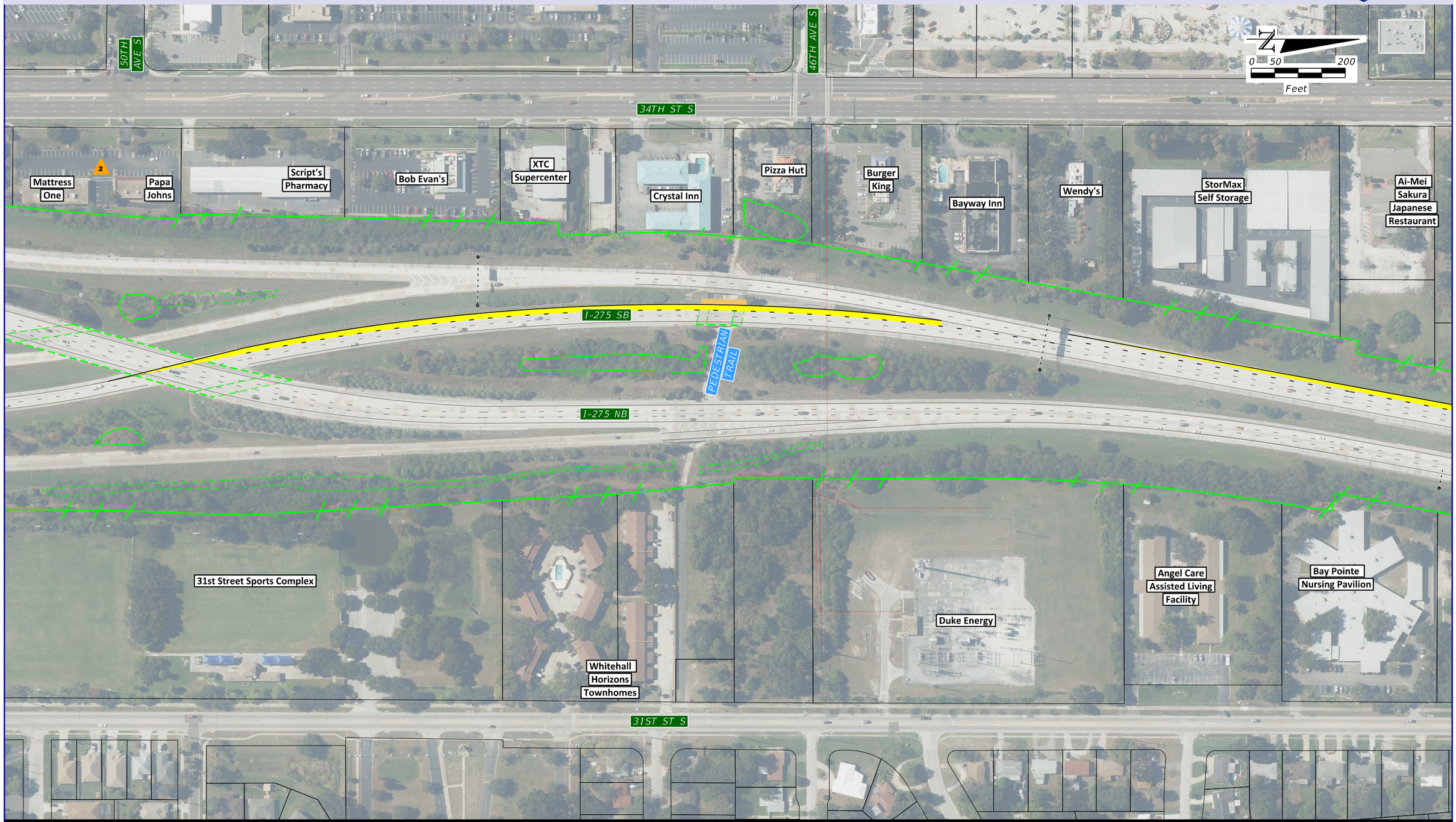
I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



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- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
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- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

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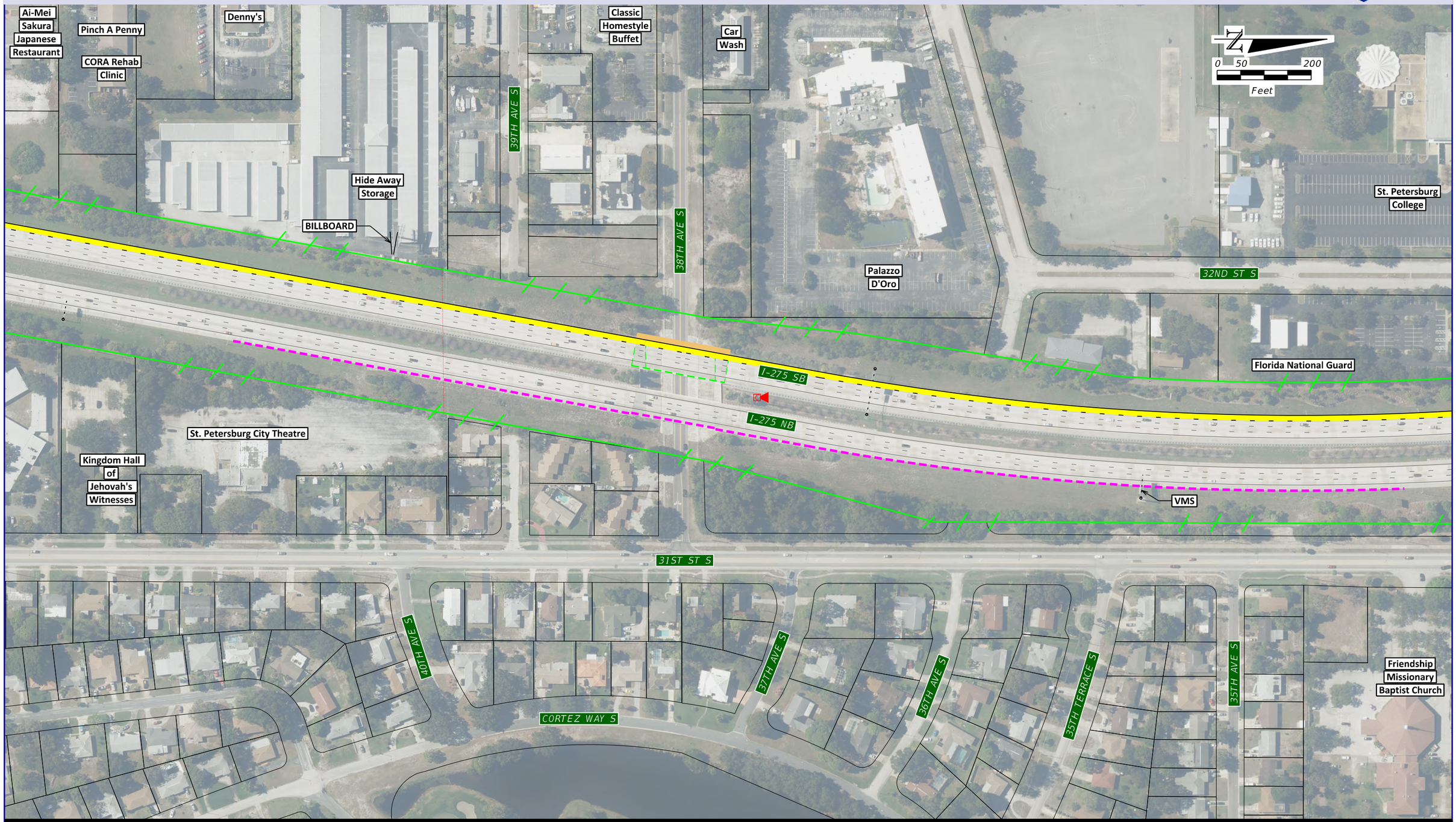
I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

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- BRIDGES
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Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

SHEET NO. 3

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

34TH ST S

St. Petersburg College

St. Petersburg College

32ND AVE S

32ND ST S

ALDI Food Market

30TH AVE S

CELL TOWER

BILLBOARD

Positive Impact Worldwide Ministries

0 50 200 Feet

Plaza

Rubber City Auto Repair

33RD ST S

I-275 SB

I-275 NB

ERIE ST S

26TH AVE S

31ST ST S

Friendship Missionary Baptist Church

Boyd Hill Nature Preserve

LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
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Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

SHEET NO. 4

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

0 50 200
Feet

34TH ST S

Plaza
KFC
31st Street Neighborhood
Liberty Tax
Brake World
Twin Brooks Commons
Alma Ingram
Classic Auto Care
Pet Pal Veterinary Clinic
Shell
Chevron
Elvis Towing & Trasport
Rental Hall

22ND AVE S
18TH AVE S
QUEENSBORO AVE S
17TH AVE S

33RD ST S

BILLBOARD

VMS

I-275 SB

I-275 NB

ERIE ST S

21ST AVE S
20TH AVE S
19TH AVE S

31ST ST S

LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

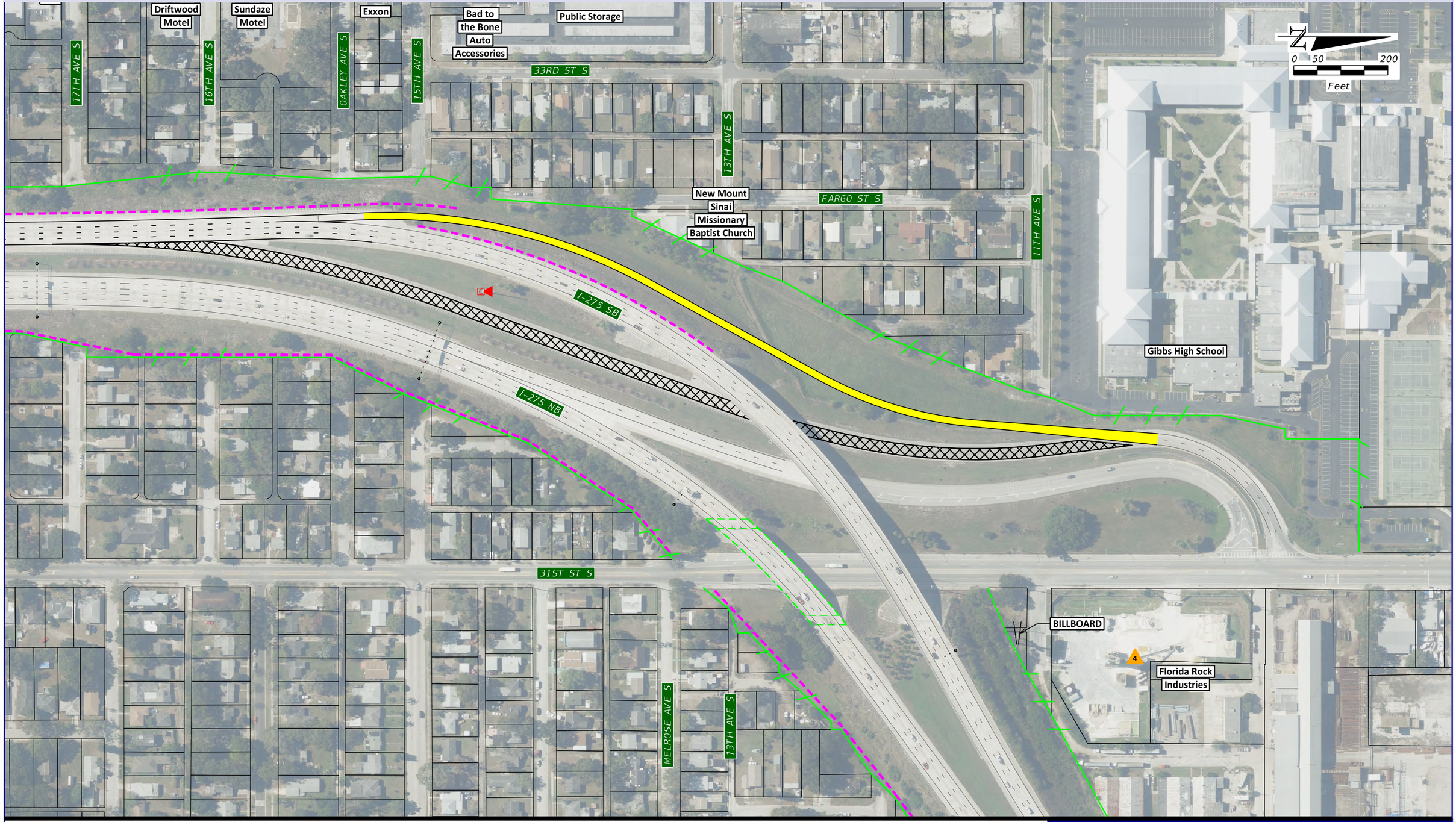
SHEET NO. 5

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

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- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
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CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

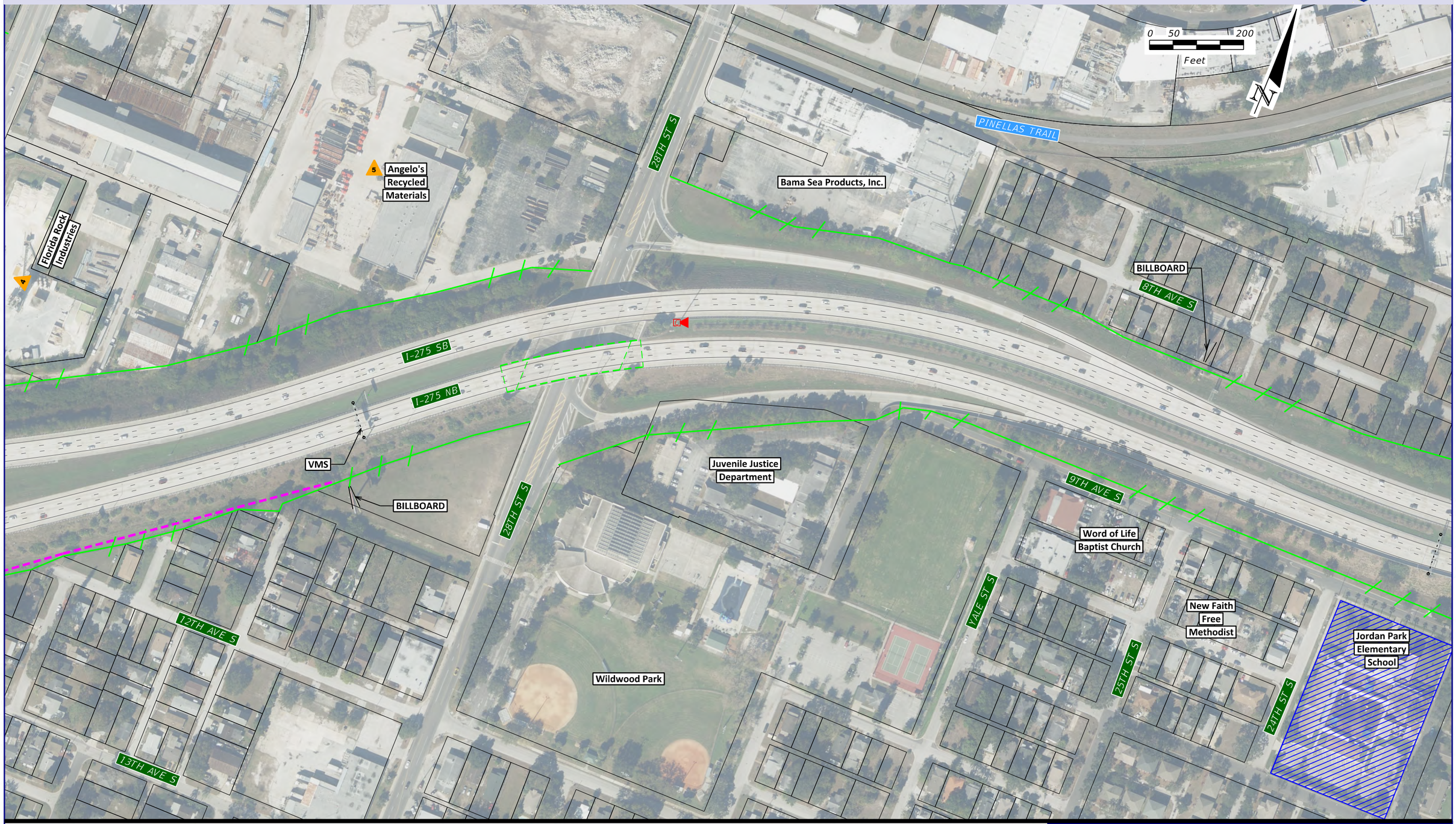
SHEET NO. 6

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

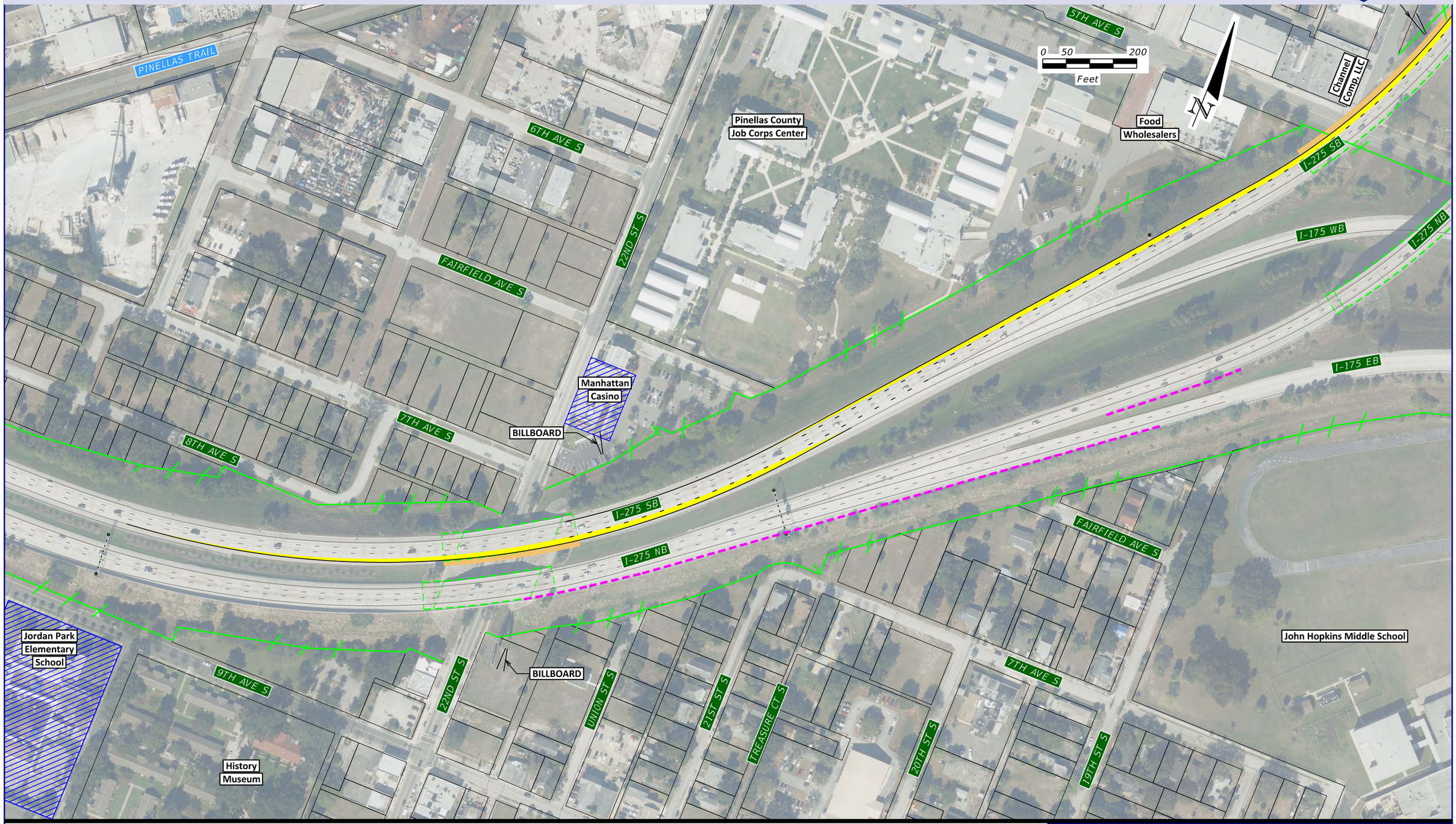
SHEET NO. 7

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

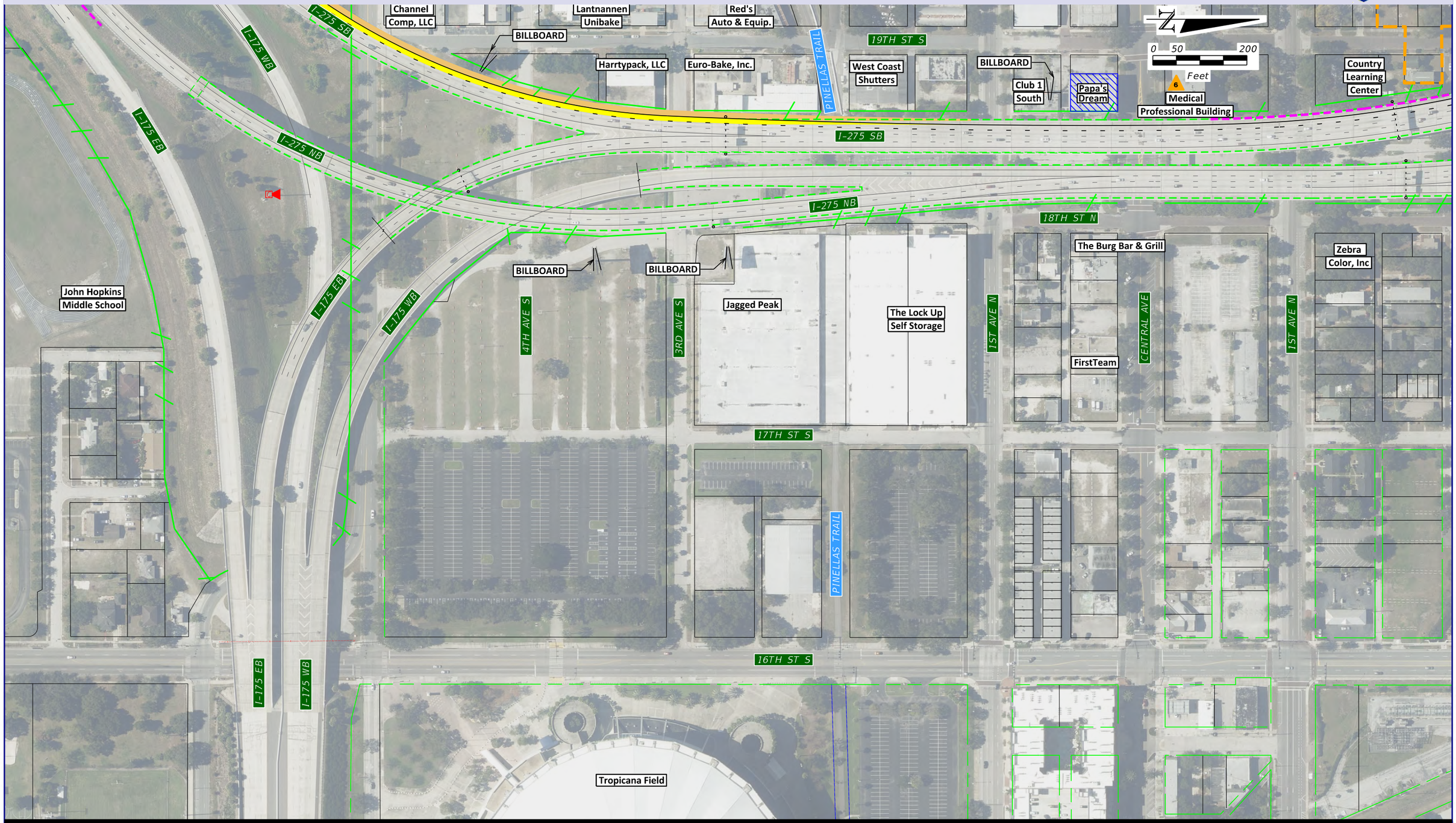
SHEET NO. 8

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

SHEET NO. 9

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

0 50 200 Feet

20TH ST N
Kenwood Dog Park
BURLINGTON AVE N
Kenwood Historic District
2ND AVE N
I-275 SB
19TH ST S
I-275 NB
Country Learning Center
Fleet Management
Turning Point
18TH ST N
Zebra Color, Inc
2ND AVE N
BURLINGTON AVE N
I-375 WB
I-375 EB
5TH AVE N
CSX RAILROAD
17TH ST S
St. Petersburg Water Resources
CSX RAILROAD

LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

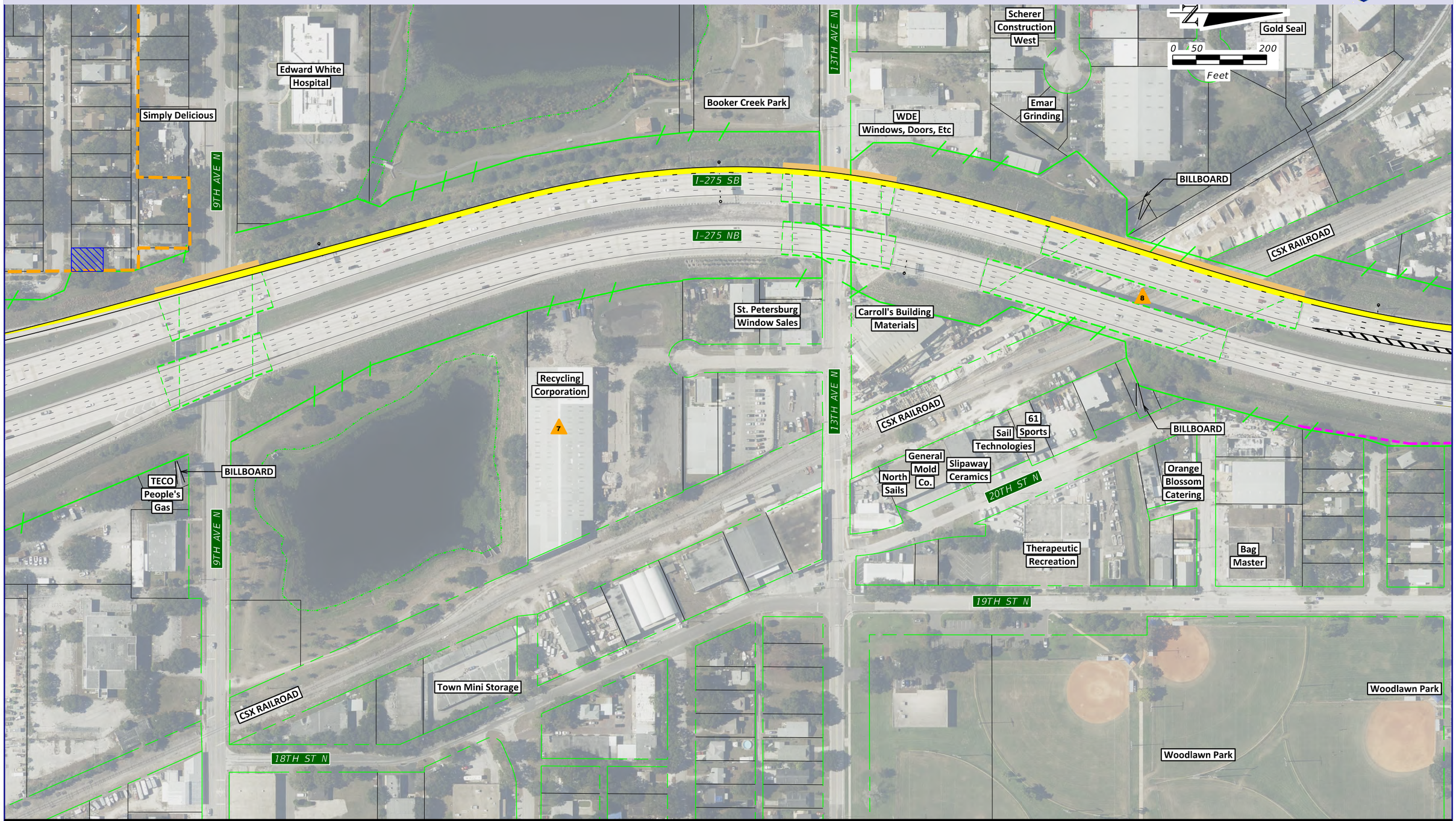
SHEET NO. 10

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

SHEET NO. 11

rhutchinson 11/20/2015 12:36:42 PM H:\PD&E\D7\I-275ManagedLanesPinellas\42450112201\roadway\PLANRD12.DGN

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

Home Depot

CSX RAILROAD

U-Stor

22ND ST N

CELL TOWER

Kenny's Landscape Services

22ND AVE N

23RD AVE N

24TH AVE N

25TH AVE N

26TH AVE N

Former Norwood Secondary School

0 50 200

Feet

I-275 SB

I-275 NB

19TH ST N

Woodlawn Park

17TH AVE N

18TH AVE N

20TH AVE N

21ST AVE N

LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

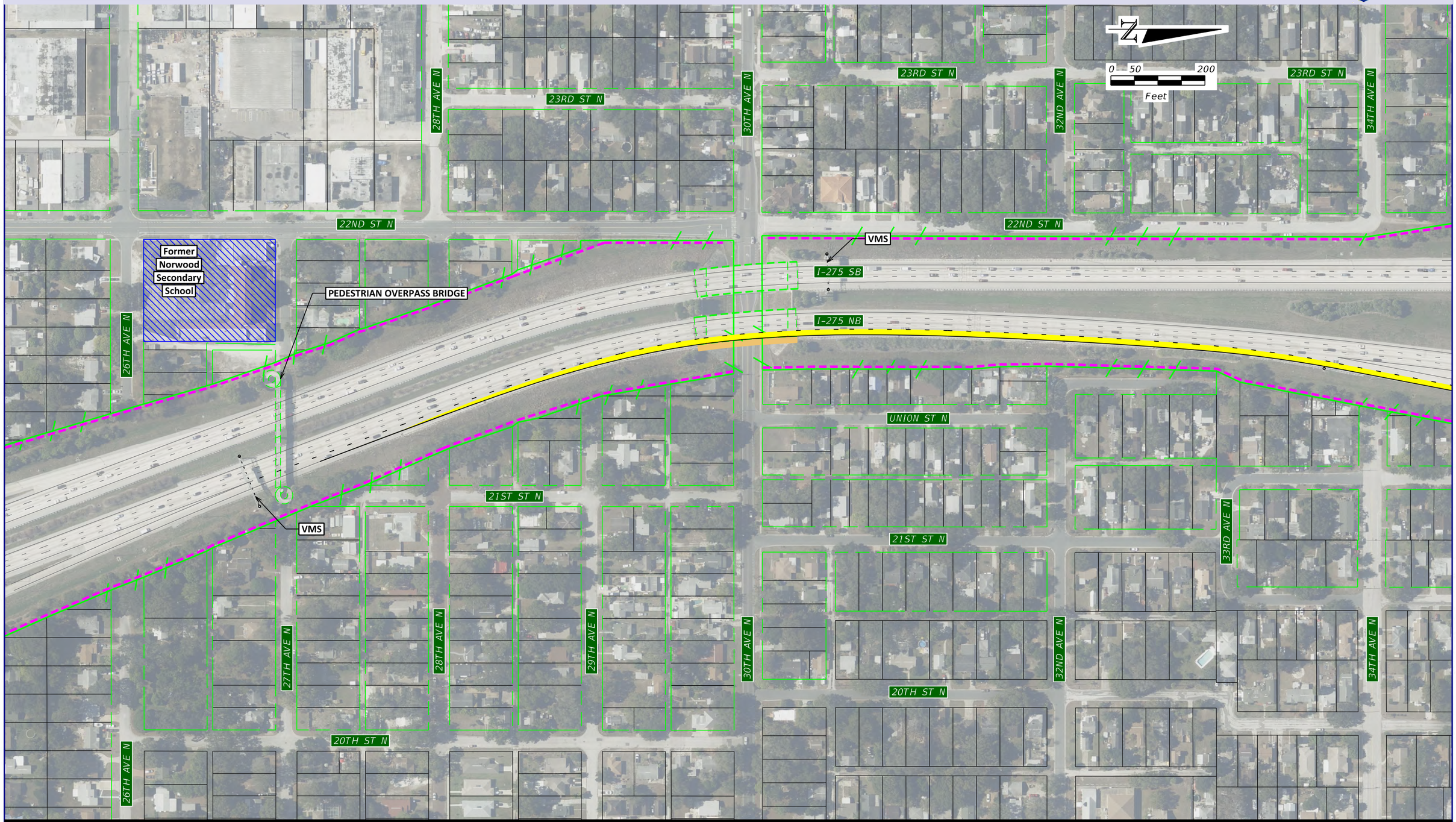
SHEET NO. 12

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

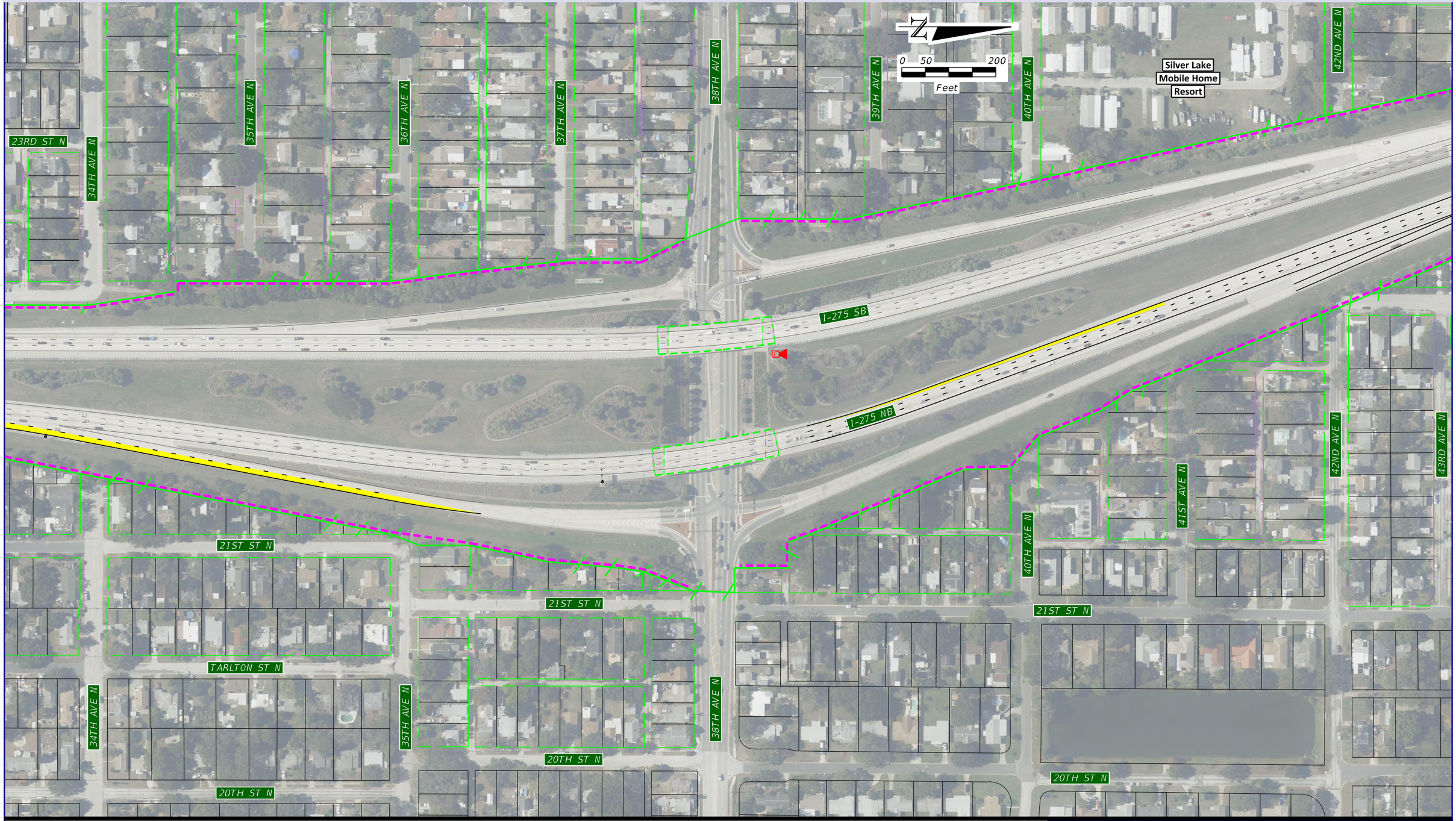
SHEET NO. 13

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

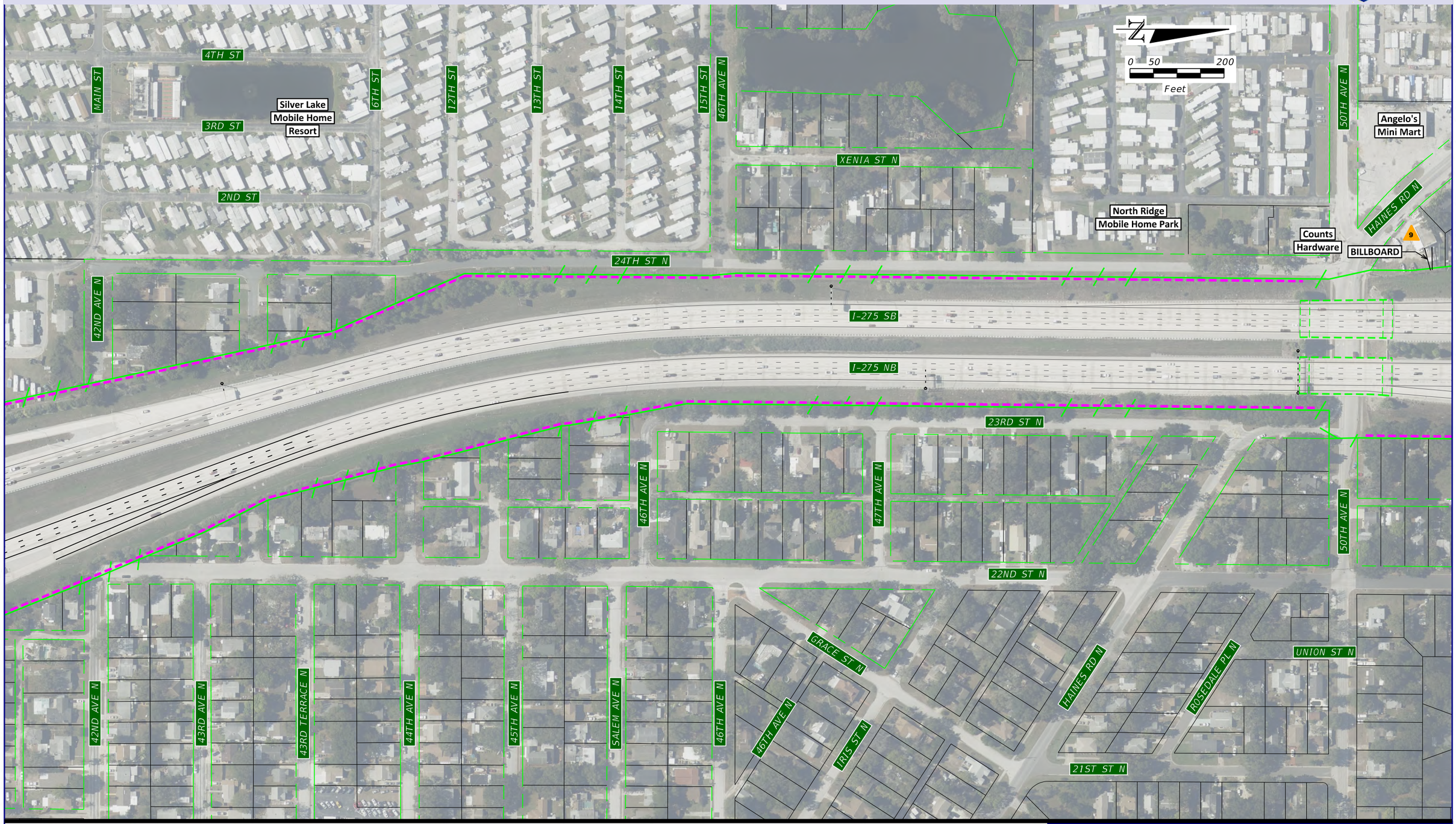
SHEET NO. 14

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

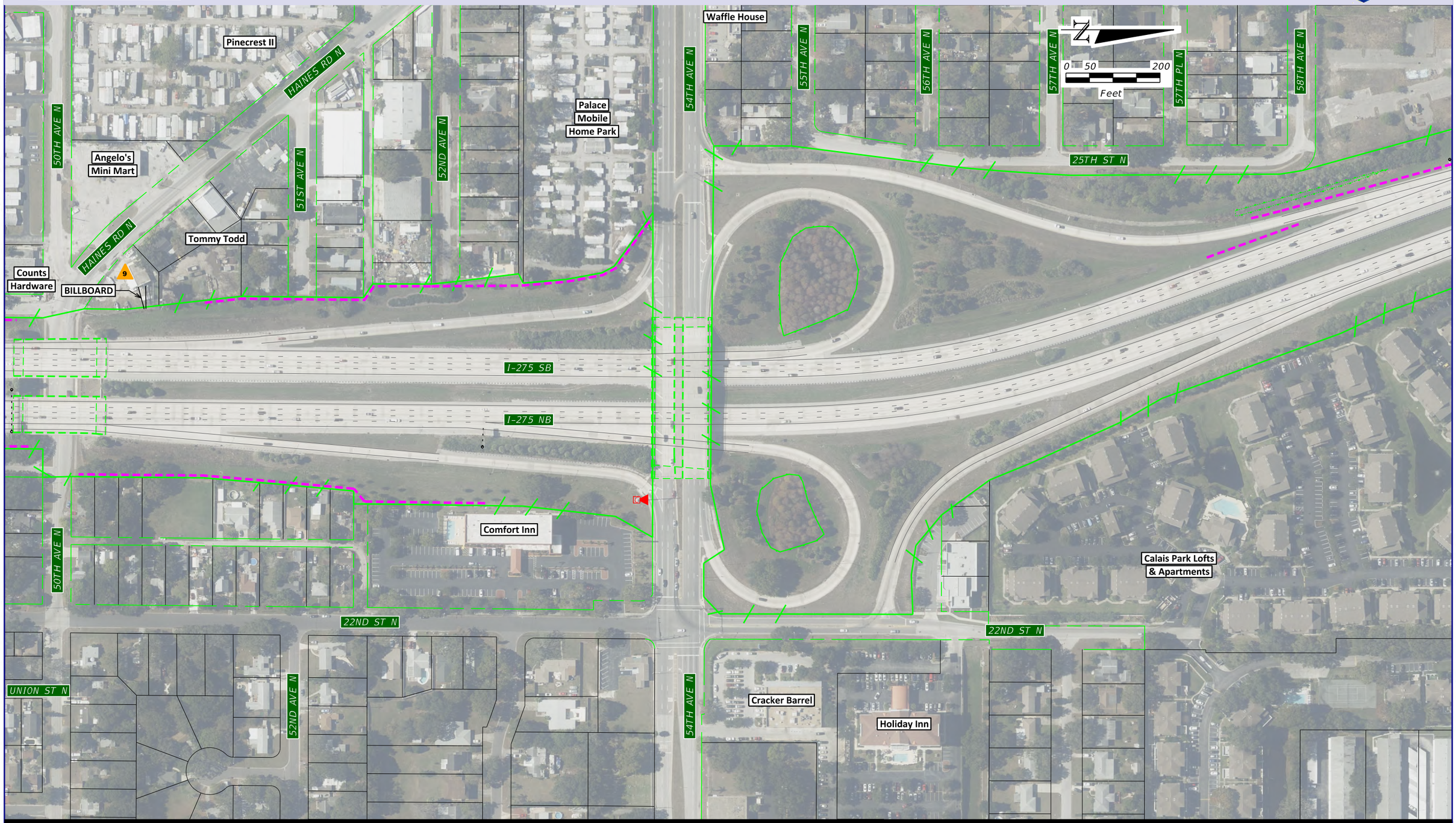
SHEET NO. 15

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

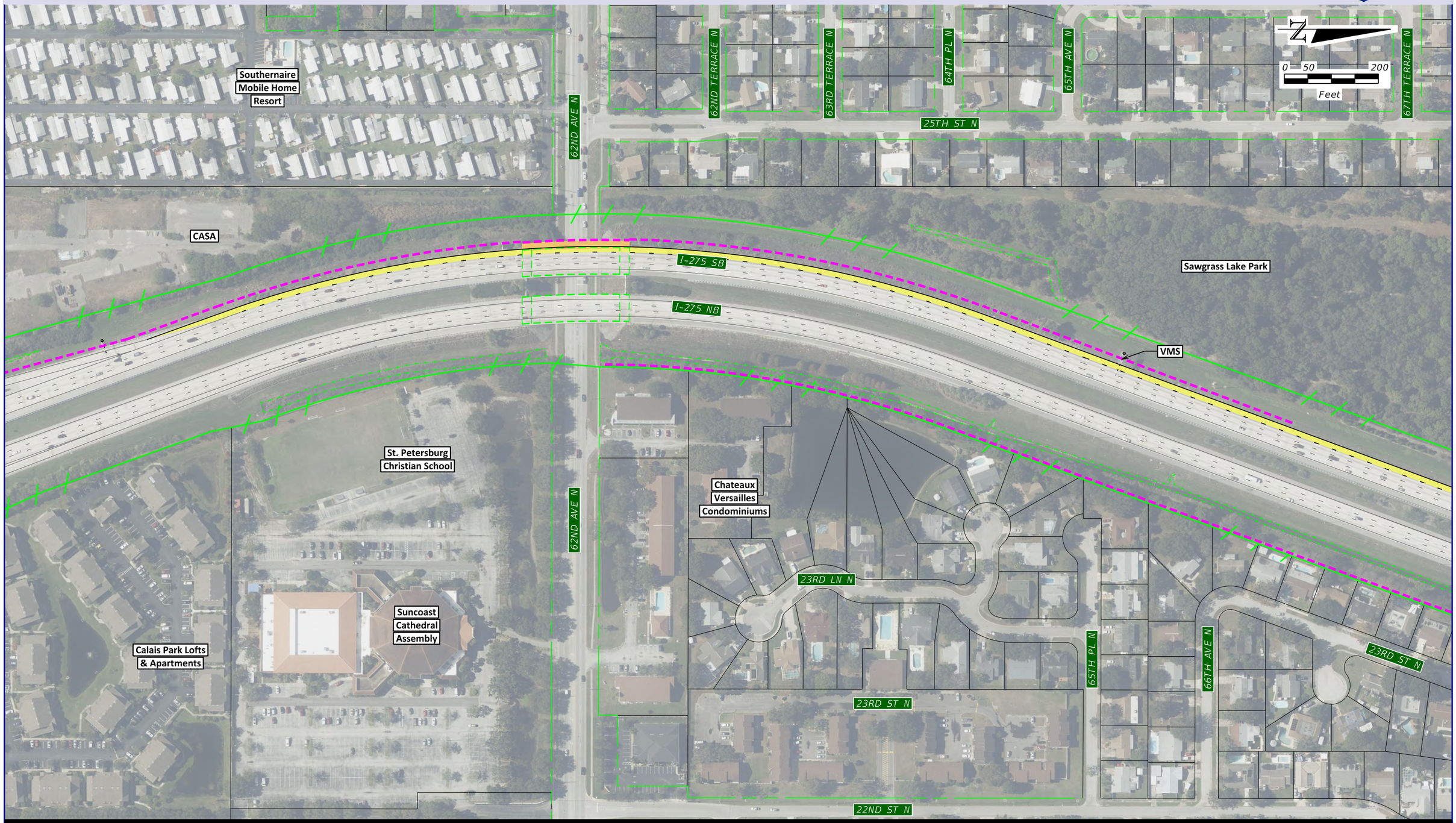
SHEET NO. 16

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

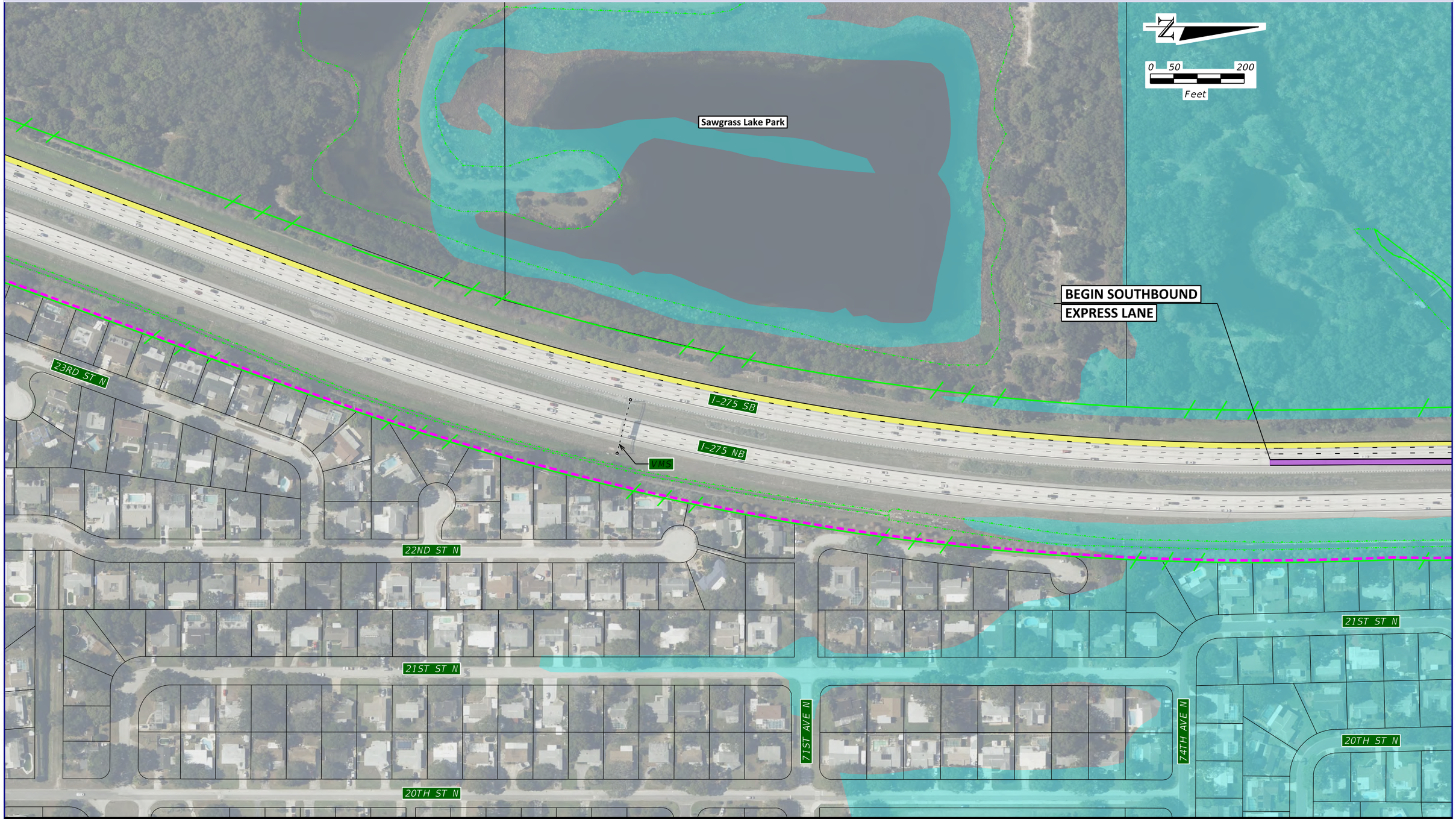
SHEET NO. 17

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- PAVEMENT WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTAMINATION
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- NOISE WALL
- ITS CAMERA
- KENWOOD HISTORIC DISTRICT

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
LANE CONTINUITY

SHEET NO. 18

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

0 50 200
Feet

Sawgrass Lake Park

Royal Palm North Funeral Chapel Cemetery

BILLBOARD

BILLBOARD

I-275 SB

3 GU + 1 AUX

1 EX

I-275 NB

21ST ST N

20TH ST N

DORCHESTER RD

83RD AVE N

Village Green Mobile Home Park

ESSEX RD N

LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

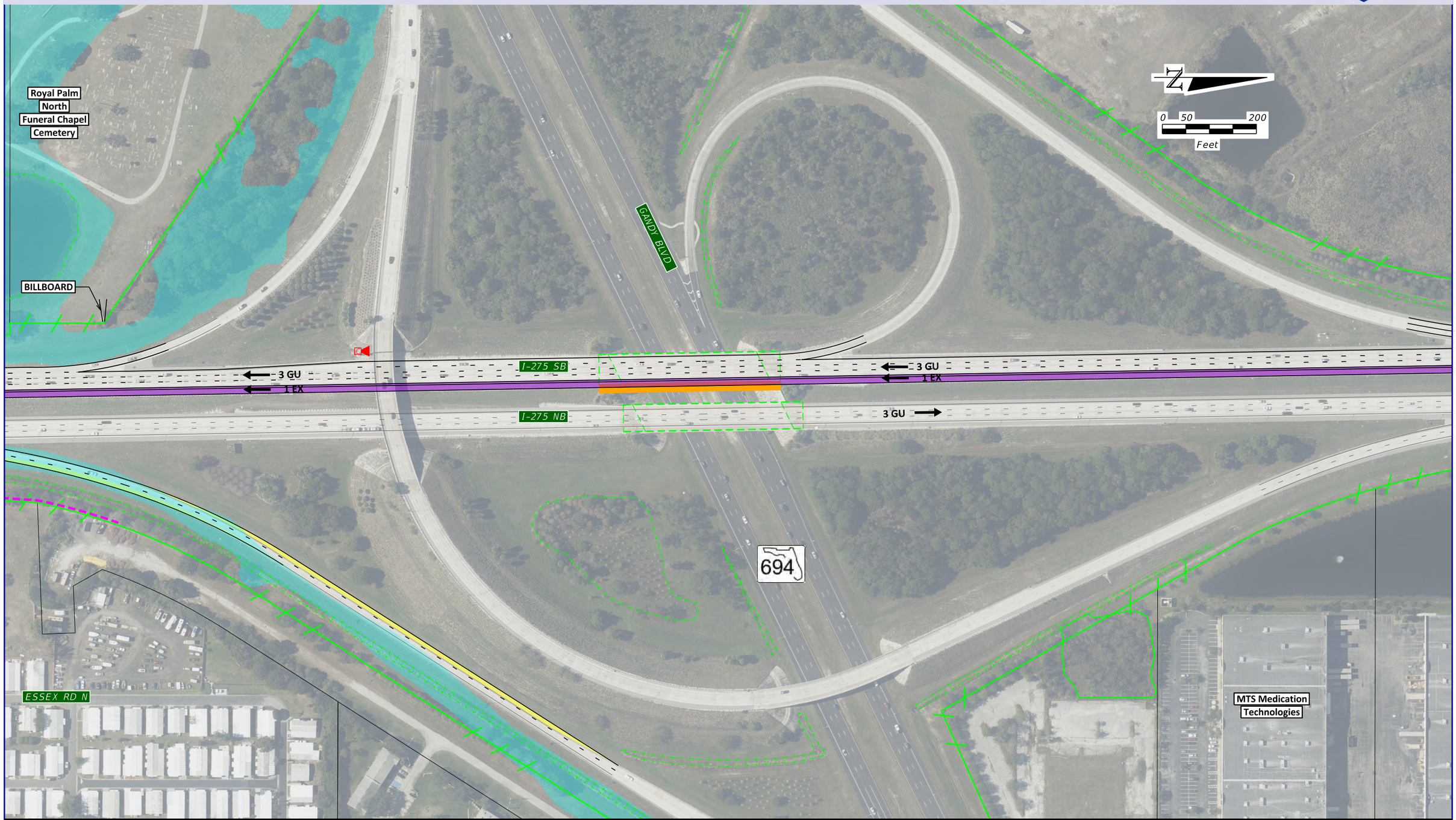
SHEET NO. 19

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 20

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

0 50 200
Feet

DUKE ENERGY TRANSMISSION

Valpak

BILLBOARD

BILLBOARD

VMS

I-275 SB

3 GU + 1 AUX

1 EX

I-275 NB

3 GU + 1 AUX

VMS

BILLBOARD

BILLBOARD

Jabil Circuit

10

ToyTown Landfill

LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

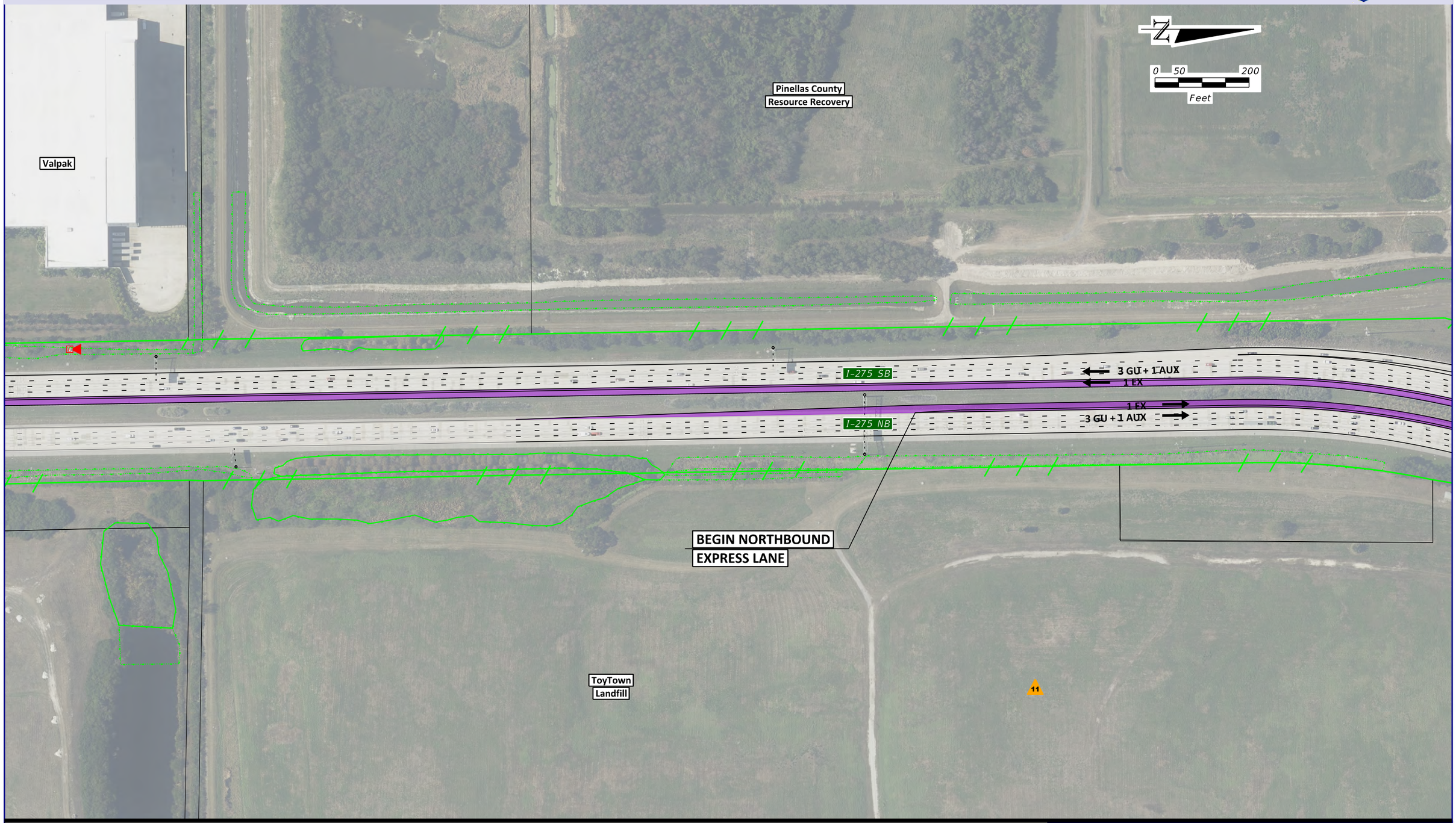
SHEET NO. 21

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

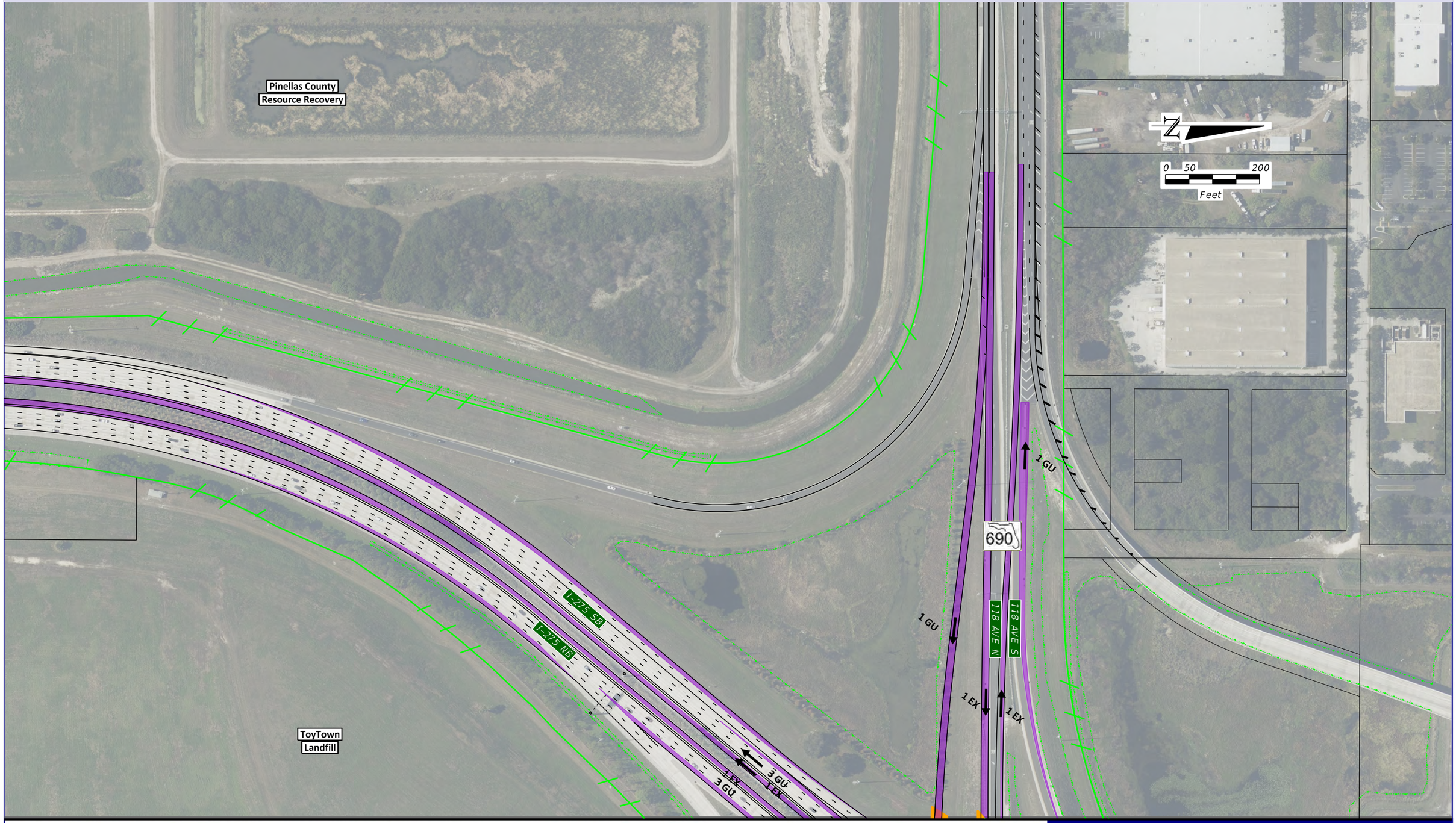
CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 22

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

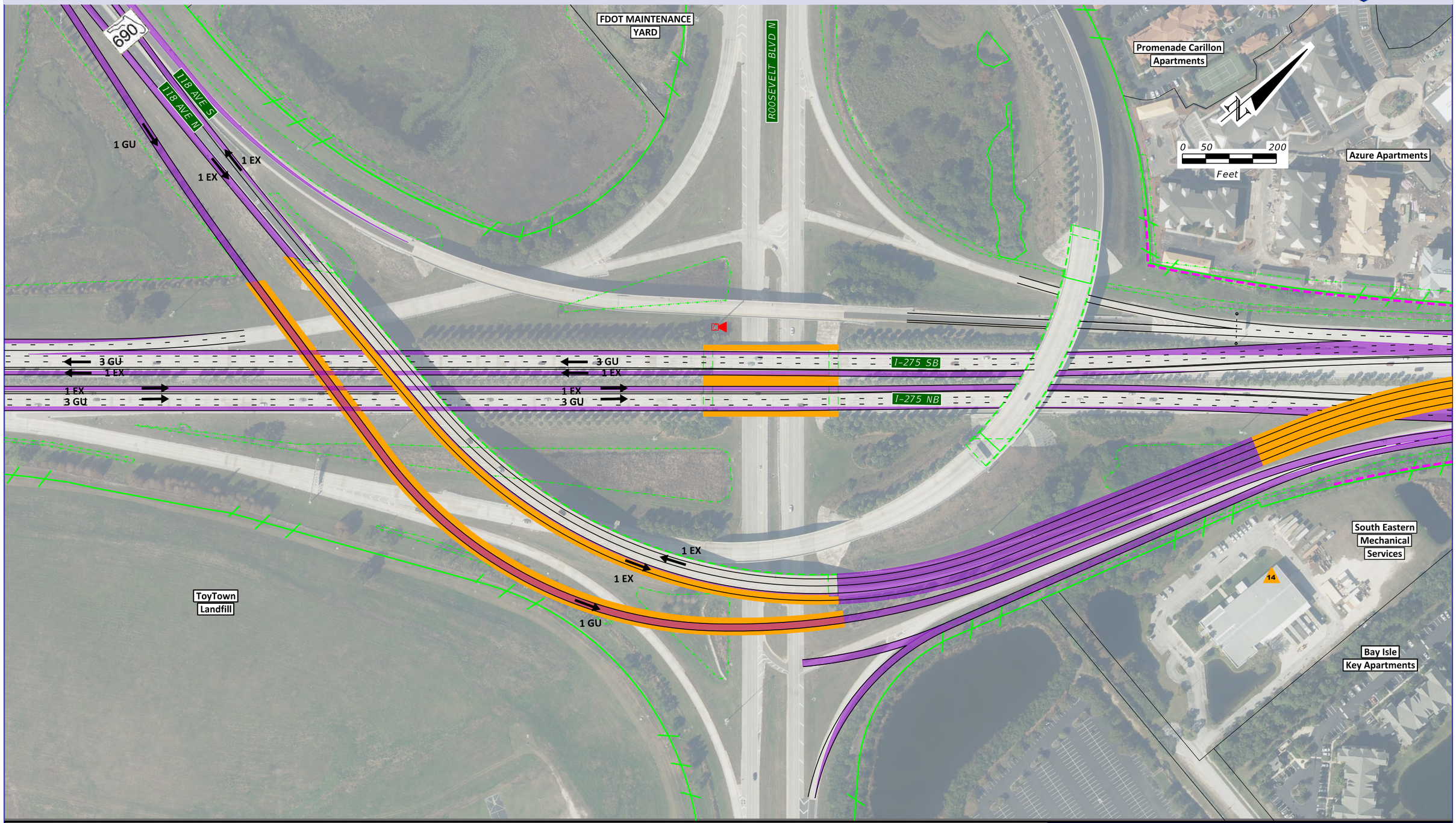
SHEET NO. 23

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

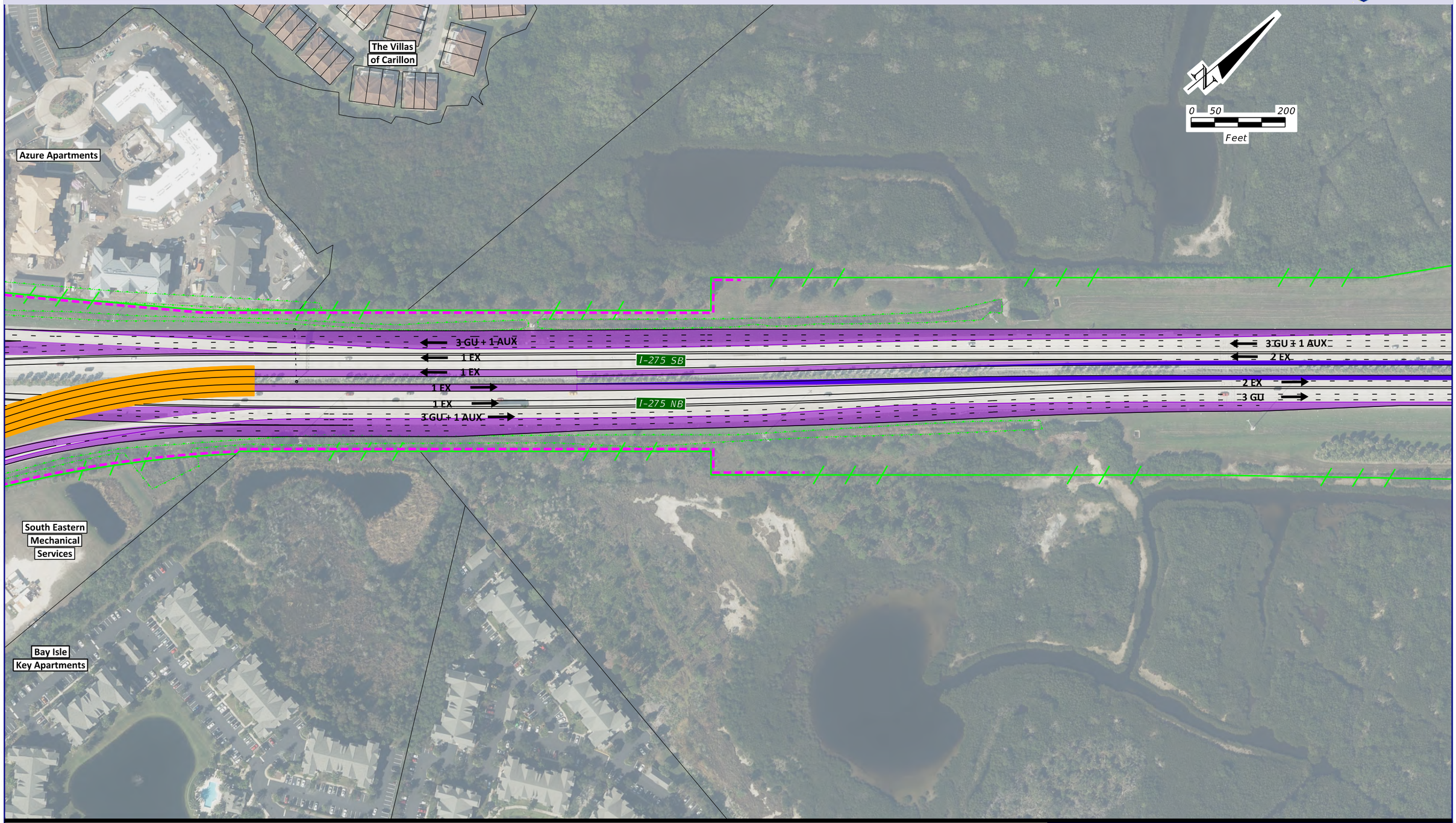
SHEET NO. 24

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

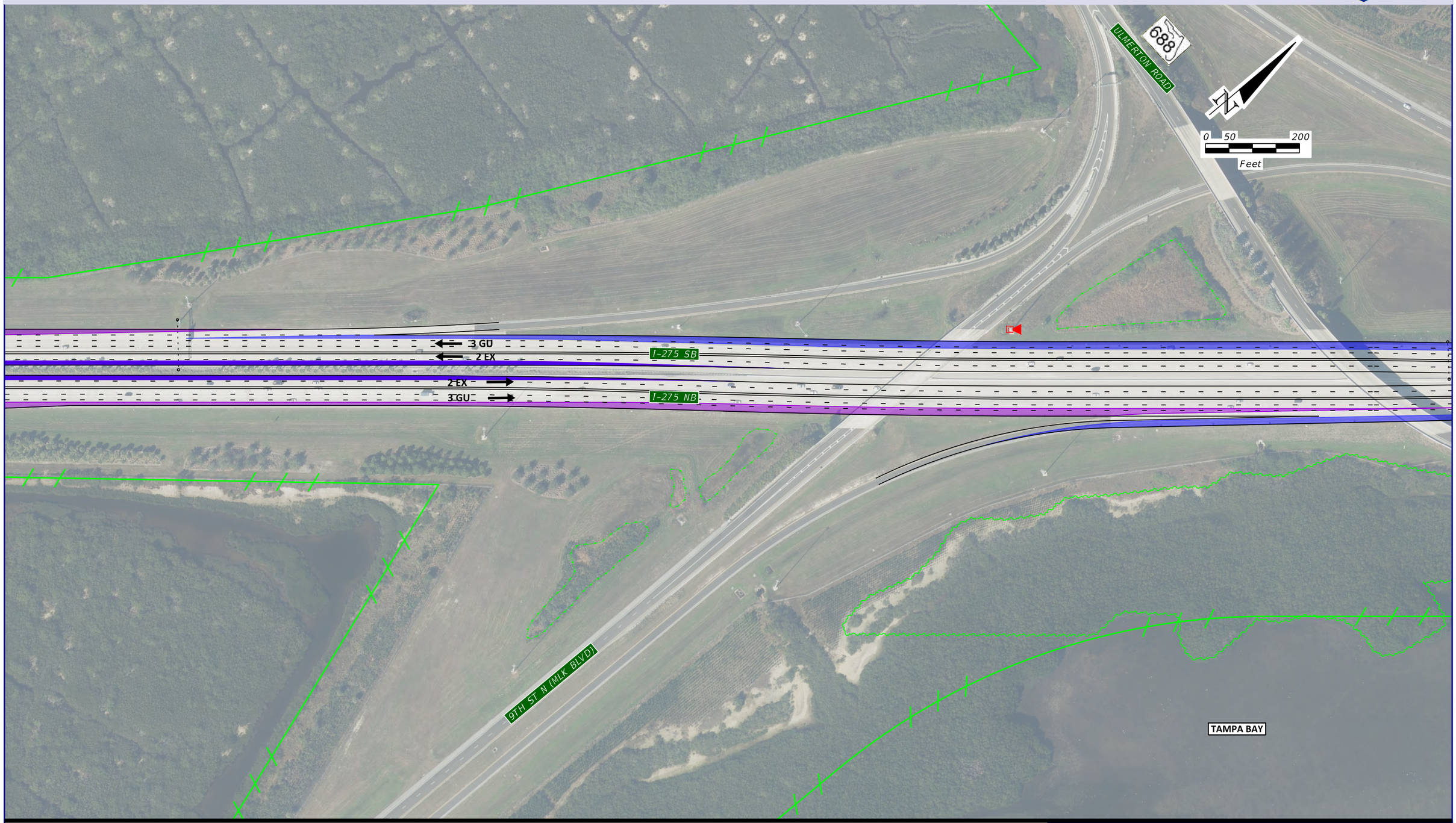
CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 25

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

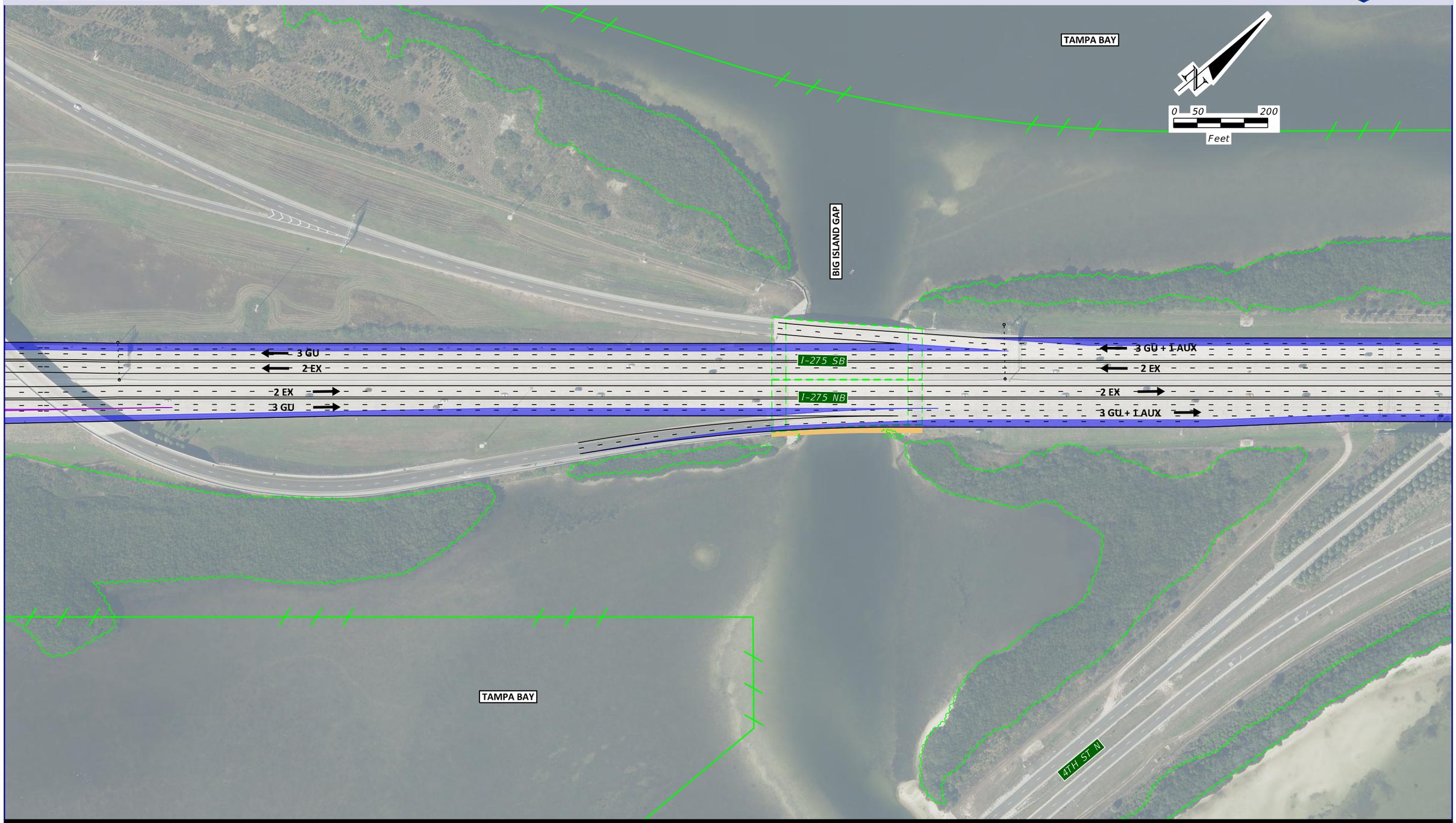
SHEET NO. 26

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

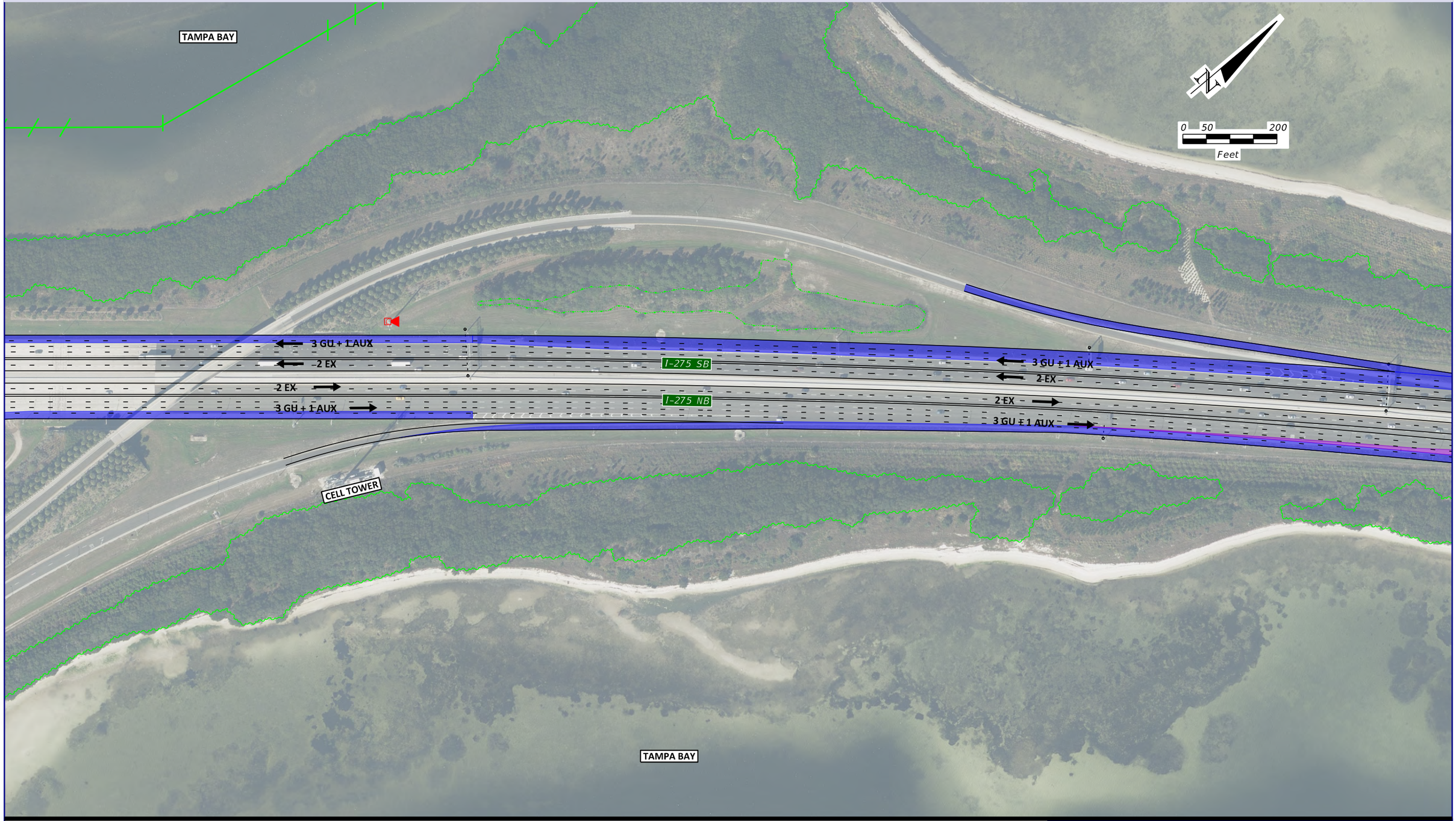
CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 27

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

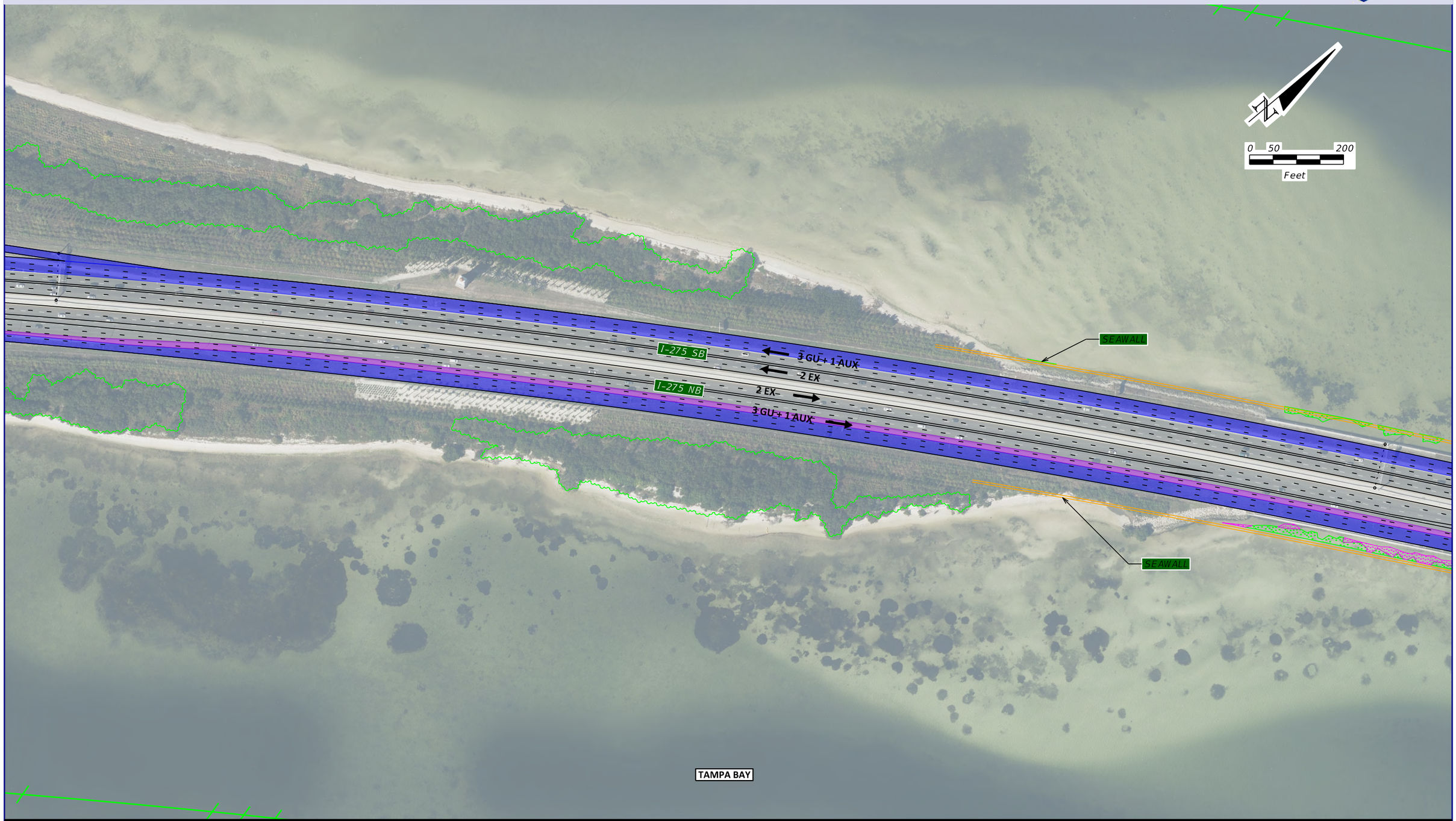
CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 28

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES
Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

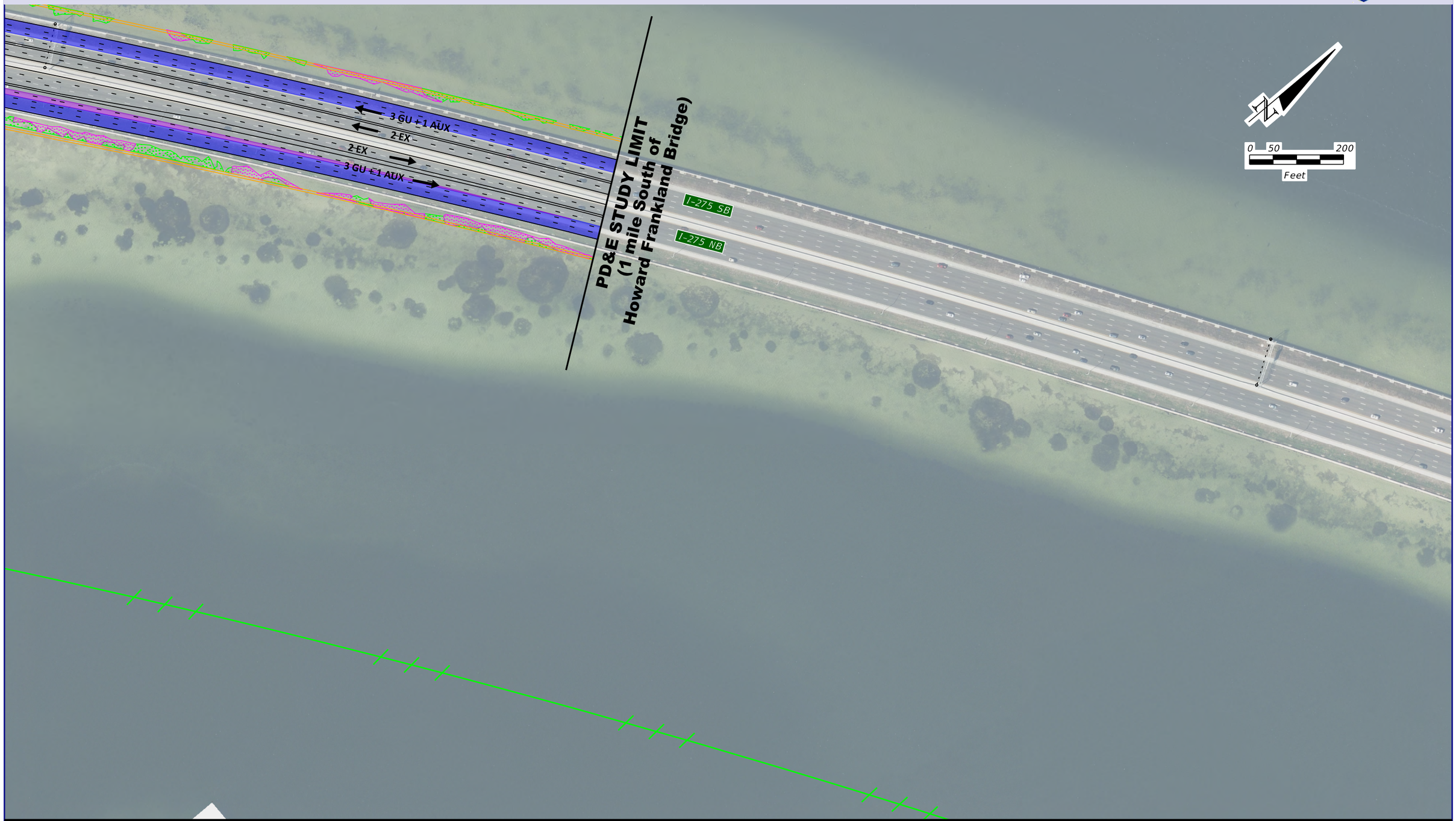
SHEET NO. 29

rhutchinson 11/20/2015 12:43:33 PM H:\PD&E\D7\I-275ManagedLanesPinellas\42450112201\roadway\PLANRD30.DGN

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- CONTINUITY WIDENING
- MASTER WIDENING
- STARTER WIDENING
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- BARRIER WALL
- HISTORIC SITE
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA

EX = EXPRESS TOLL LANES
GU = GENERAL USE LANES
AUX = AUXILIARY LANES

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS MASTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 30

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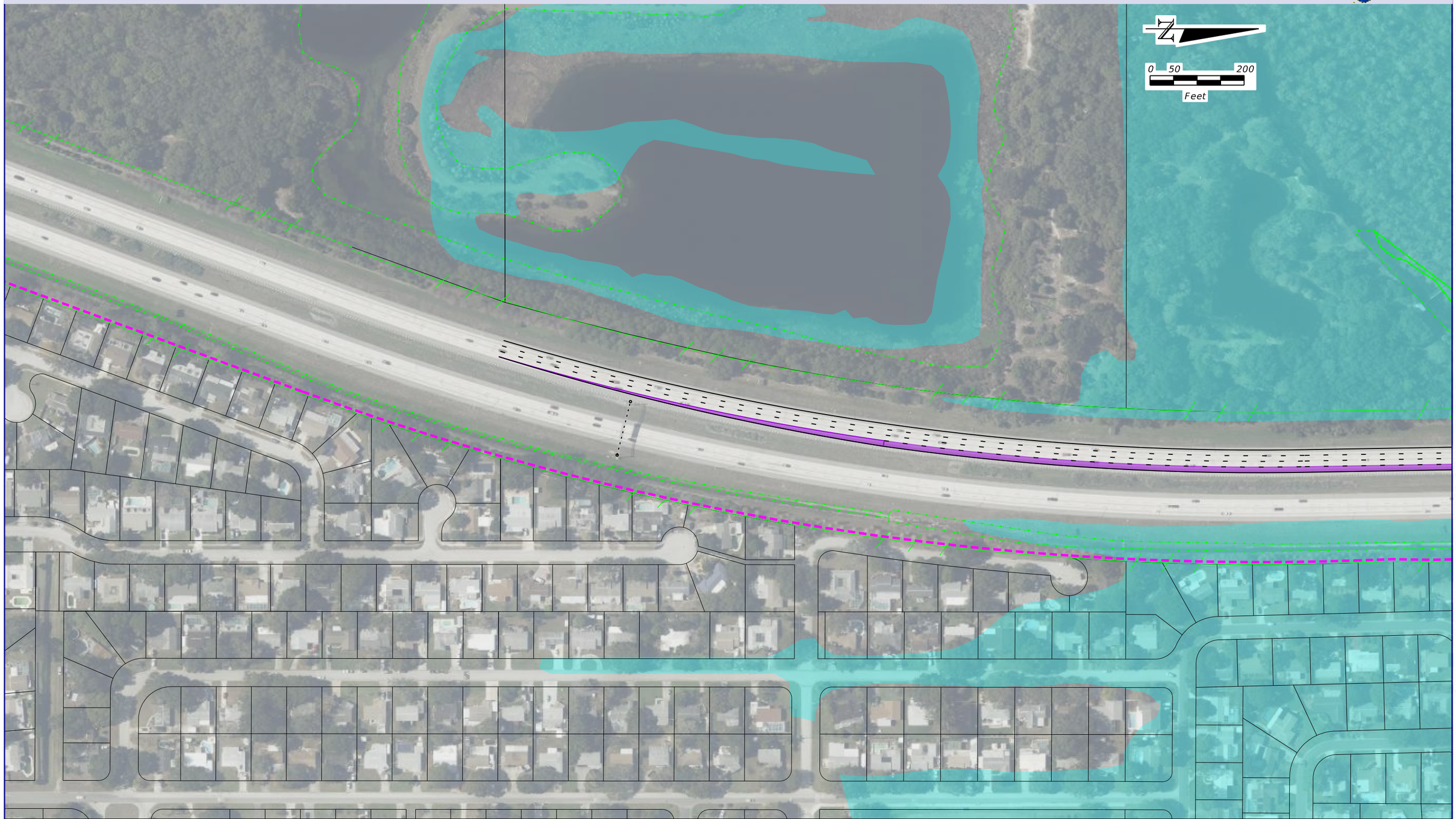
I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO.

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

0 50 200
Feet

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

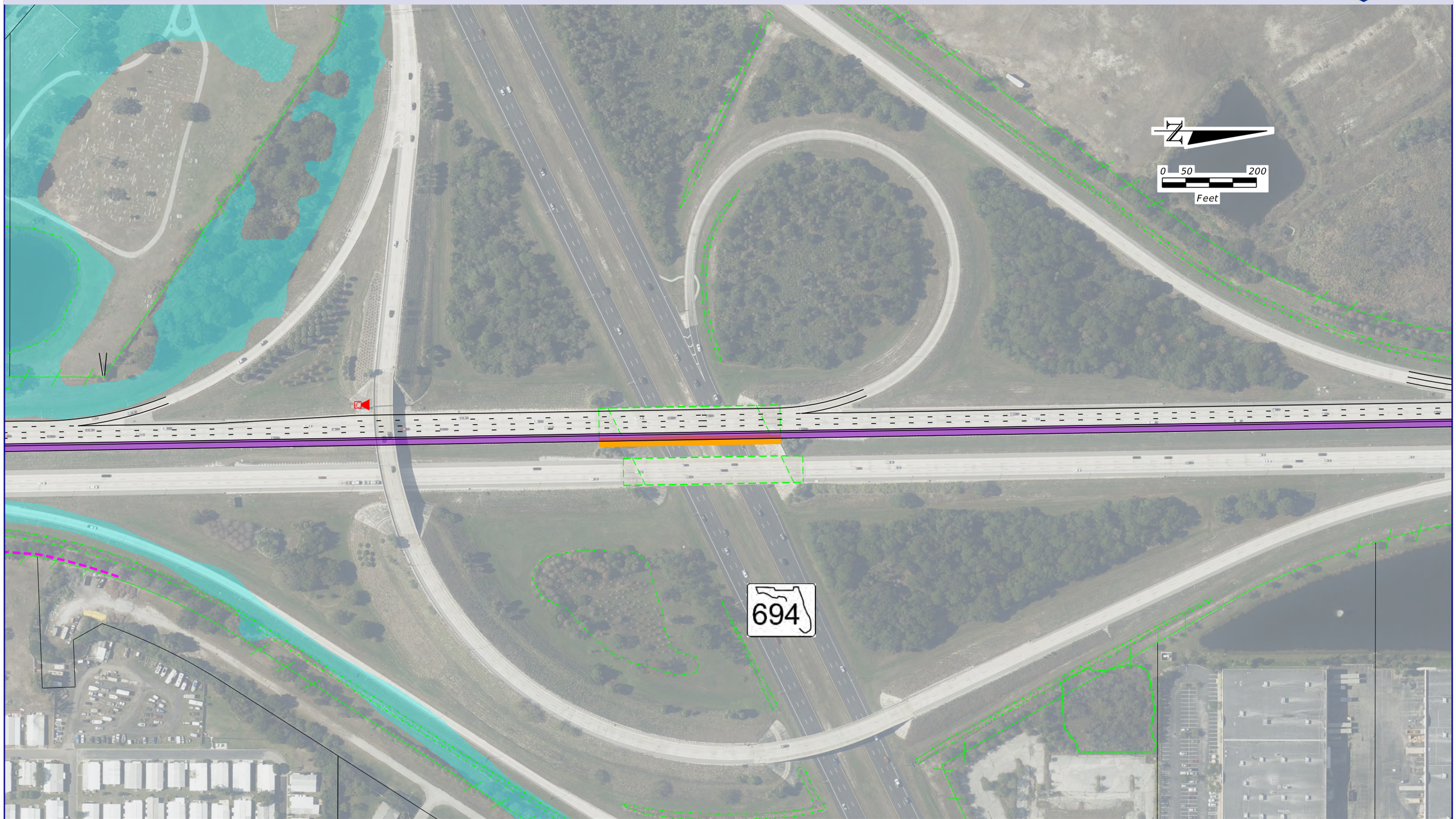
SHEET NO.

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 33

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

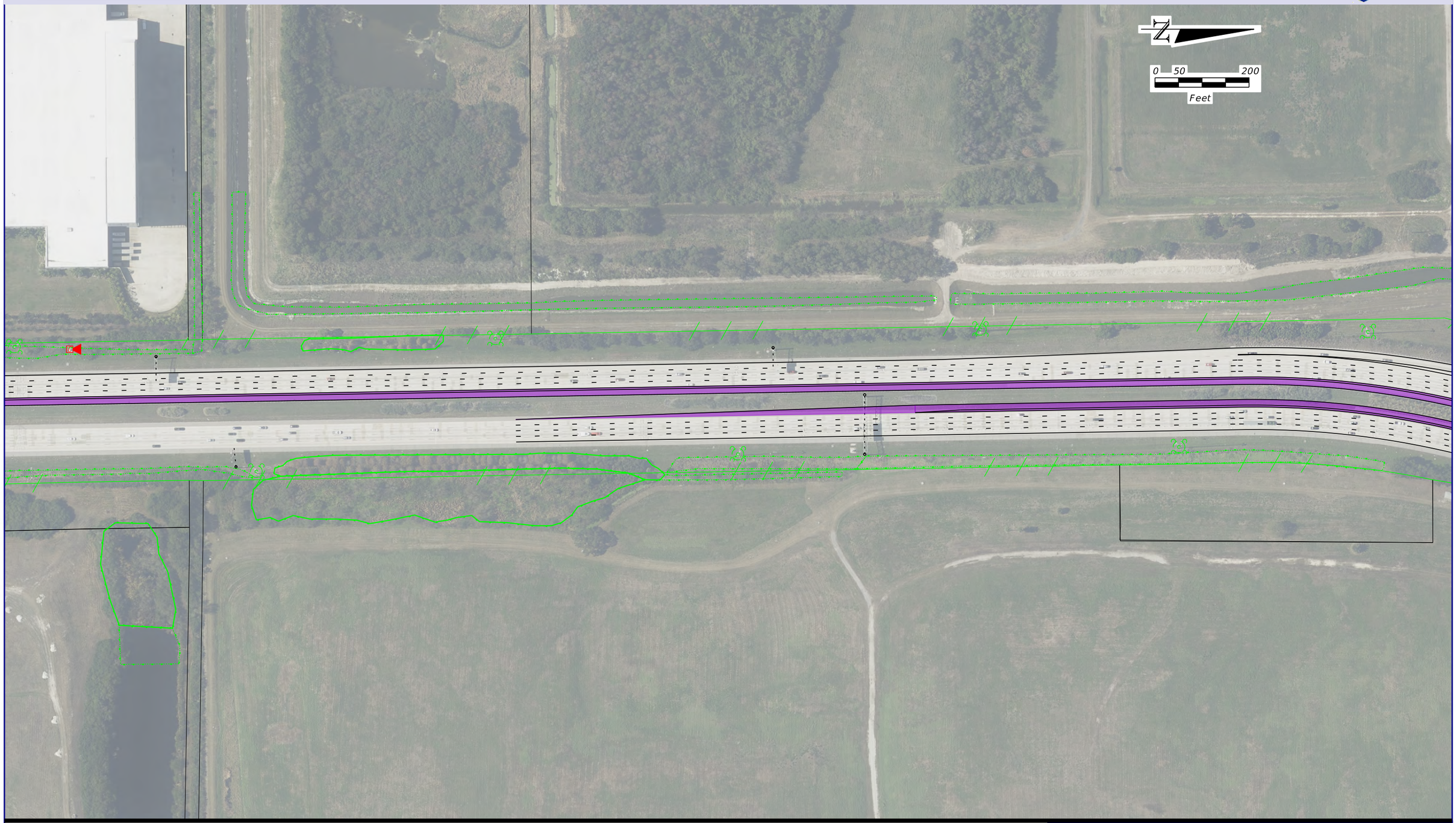
SHEET NO. 34

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 35

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

50 Feet 200

690

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 36

$USER$ $DATE$ $TIME$ $FILE$

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

FDOT

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

690

FDOT MAINTENANCE YARD

Azure Apartments

South Eastern Mechanical Services

0 50 200

Feet

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

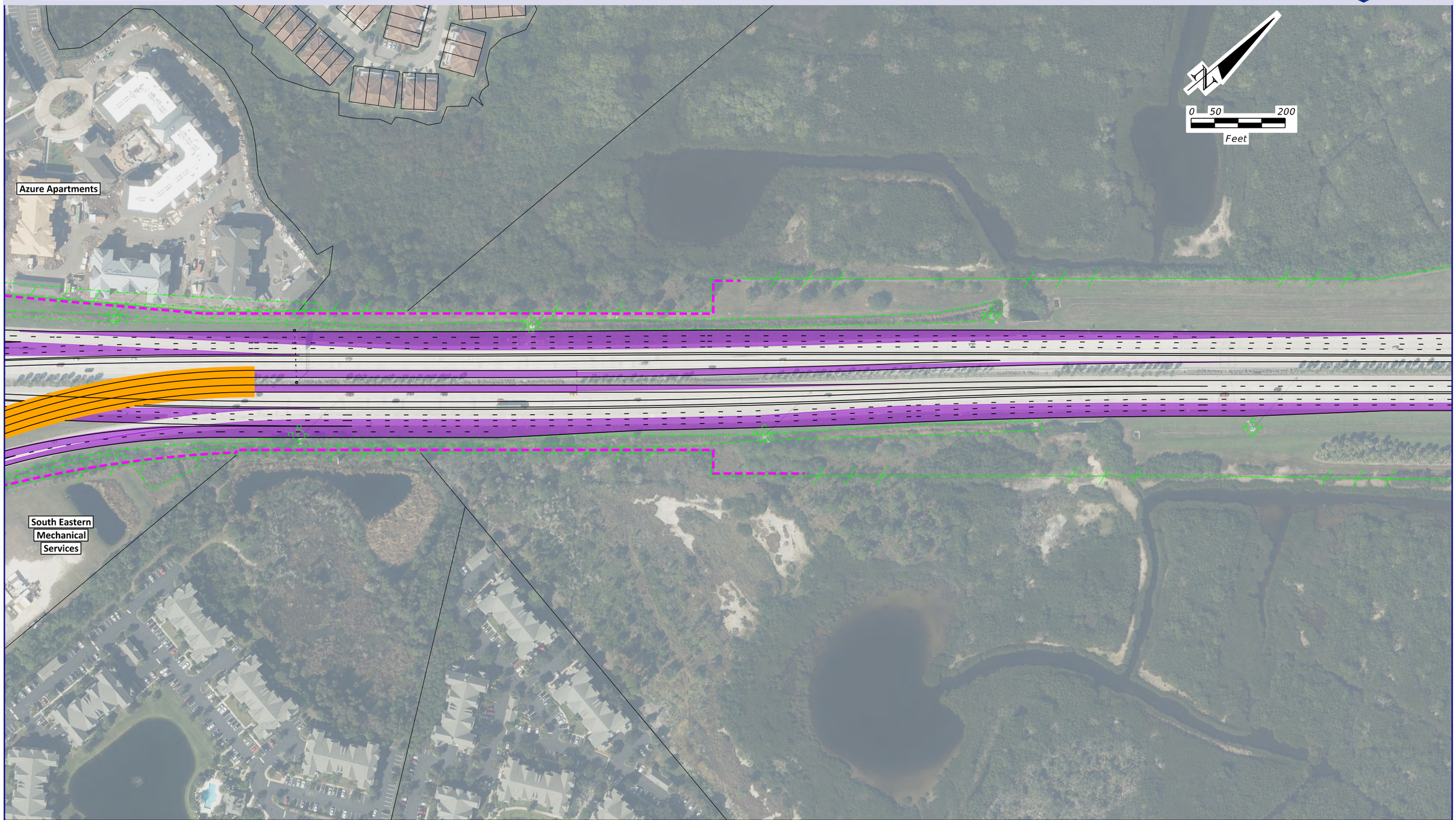
SHEET NO. 37

$USERS $DATES $TIMES $FILES

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

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- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 38

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 39

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

0 50 200
Feet

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 40

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

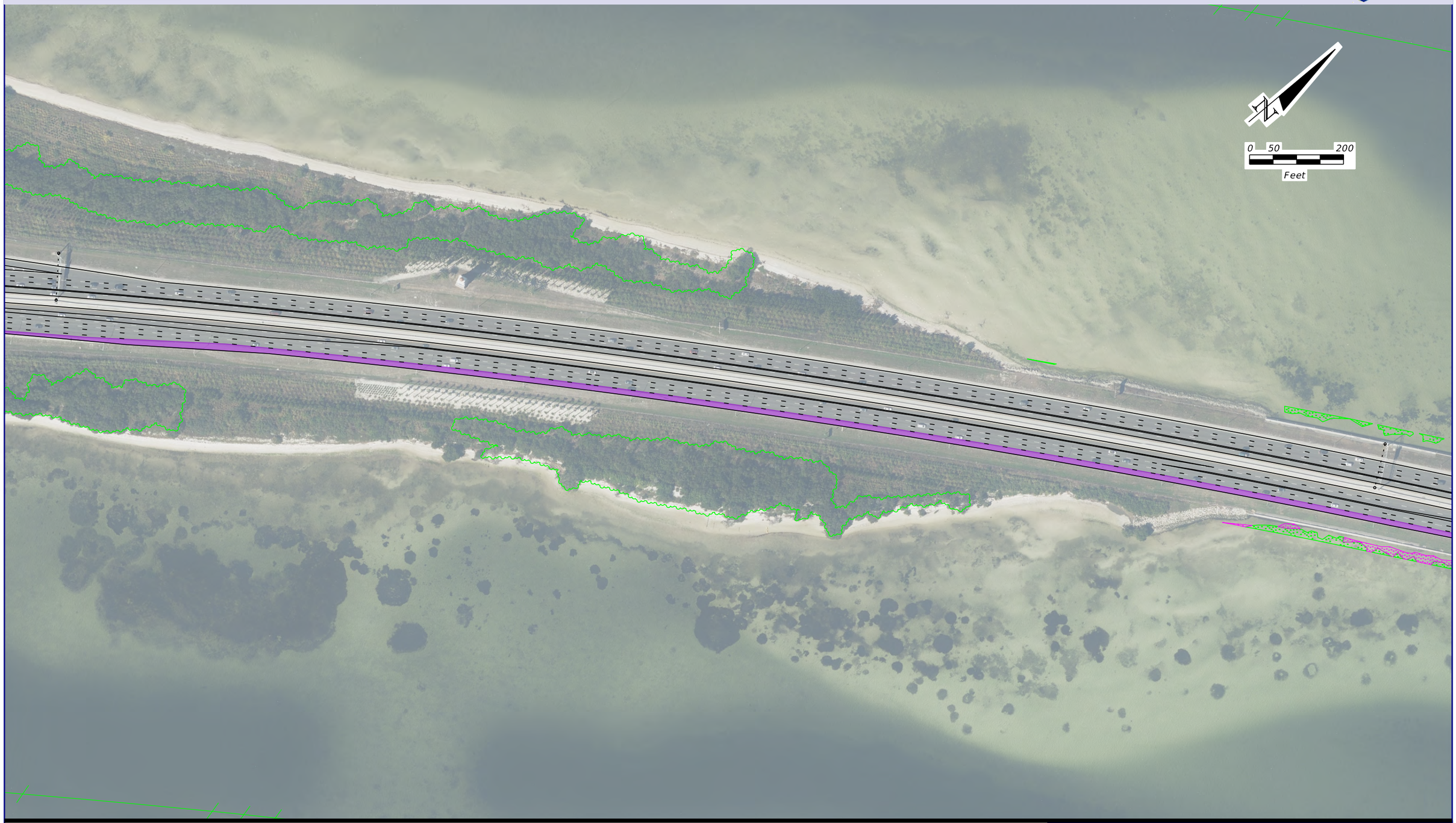
CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 41

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275



LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 42

I-275 (SR 93) PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

TAMPA BAY EXPRESS

INTERSTATE 275

PD&E STUDY LIMIT
(1 mile South of
Howard Frankland Bridge)

0 50 200
Feet

LEGEND:

- STARTER WIDENING
- PAVEMENT REMOVAL
- BARRIER WALL
- BRIDGE WIDENING
- BRIDGES
- RIGHT OF WAY
- WETLANDS
- SURFACE WATER
- MANGROVES
- FLOOD PLAINS
- CONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- DISCONTINUOUS SEA GRASS
- OVERHEAD SIGN STRUCTURE
- CONTAMINATION
- ITS CAMERA
- NOISE WALL

Aerial Photos Dec. '13 - Feb. '14

CONCEPT PLANS
EXPRESS STARTER PLAN

SHEET NO. 43

Appendix B.
ETDM Summary Report

ETDM Summary Report

Project #12556 - I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.

Programming Screen - Published on 07/26/2013

Printed on: 4/14/2014

Table of Contents

Introduction to Programming Screen Summary Report

The Programming Screen Summary Report shown below is a read-only version of information contained in the Programming Screen Summary Report generated by the ETDM Coordinator for the selected project after completion of the ETAT Programming Screen review. The purpose of the Programming Screen Summary Report is to summarize the results of the ETAT Programming Screen review of the project; provide details concerning agency comments about potential effects to natural, cultural, and community resources; and provide additional documentation of activities related to the Programming Phase for the project. Available information for a Programming Screen Summary Report includes:

- Screening Summary Report chart
- Project Description information (including a summary description of the project, a summary of public comments on the project, and community-desired features identified during public involvement activities)
- Purpose and Need information (including the Purpose and Need Statement and the results of agency reviews of the project Purpose and Need)
- Alternative-specific information, consisting of descriptions of each alternative and associated road segments; an overview of ETAT Programming Screen reviews for each alternative; and agency comments concerning potential effects and degree of effect, by issue, to natural, cultural, and community resources.
- Project Scope information, consisting of general project commitments resulting from the ETAT Programming Screen review, permits, and technical studies required (if any)
- Class of Action determined for the project
- Dispute Resolution Activity Log (if any)

The legend for the Degree of Effect chart is provided in an appendix to the report.

For complete documentation of the project record, also see the GIS Analysis Results Report published on the same date as the Programming Screen Summary Report.

#12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.

District: District 7
County: Pinellas
Planning Organization: FDOT District 7
Plan ID: 12556
Phase: Programming Screen
From: South of 54th Avenue South
To: North of 4th Street North
Financial Management No.: 42450112201
Federal Involvement: Maintain Federal Eligibility Federal Permit Federal Action Federal Funding

Contact Information: Robin Rhinesmith (813) 975-6496 robin.rhinesmith@dot.state.fl.us
Project Web Site: https://www.pinellascounty.org/mpo/
Snapshot Data From: Project Re-Published 7/26/2013
Issues and Categories are reflective of what was in place at the time of the screening event.

	Social and Economic							Cultural			Natural					Physical					
	Land Use Changes	Social	Relocation Potential	Farmlands	Aesthetic Effects	Economic	Mobility	Section 4(f) Potential	Historic and Archaeological Sites	Recreation Areas	Wetlands	Water Quality and Quantity	Floodplains	Wildlife and Habitat	Coastal and Marine	Noise	Air Quality	Contamination	Infrastructure	Navigation	Special Designations
Alternative #2 From: South of 54th Avenue South To: North of 4th Street North *Re-Published: 07/26/2013 Reviewed from 04/04/2013 to 05/19/2013)*	1	3	2	0	2	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	3

Purpose and Need

Purpose and Need

Purpose and Need Statement

The purpose of the project is to provide lane continuity, maximize the corridor's capacity, and improve the overall safety and operating conditions of the facility within the project limits.

Need

A capacity improvement is needed along I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in order to relieve a current capacity deficiency between 22nd Avenue North and Gandy Boulevard; to ameliorate projected future capacity deficiencies; to accommodate projected population and employment growth; to improve lane continuity; and because the crash rates along this segment of I-275 are higher than the statewide average crash rates. Each of these factors is discussed in more detail below.

Project Status

FDOT District 7 Planning conducted the Interstate 275 (SR 93) Lane Continuity Study which was completed in October 2008. The purpose of the Study was to evaluate and develop operational improvements in lane continuity on I-275 from the Skyway Bridge North Toll Plaza to Gandy Boulevard in Pinellas County. Also, the Study was to document existing and future operational and safety conditions within the corridor and to recommend possible improvements to alleviate any existing deficiencies. The Study addressed both short term traffic operational type improvements and longer term major geometric improvements. As a long range improvement, the Study recommended adding a lane to I-275 in each direction from the 54th Avenue South interchange area to Gandy Boulevard. According to the Study, the estimated cost for improvements is $317 million and will be implemented using Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) funds. This estimate includes Design, Construction, Construction Engineering Inspection (CEI) and 25% Project Unknowns. The current PD&E study will evaluate two alternatives, the addition of one lane in each direction and the addition of managed lanes, and will represent an extension of the studys northern limit from Gandy Boulevard to north of 4th Street North.

Plan Consistency

The addition of special use/managed lanes is included in the FDOT's Approved SIS Highway Component 2035 Cost Feasible Plan, dated December 2009, which indicates PD&E and PE ($5,350,000 and $9,416,000 respectively) are slated for funding eligibility in 2025. The Pinellas Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) was adopted on December 9, 2009, and amended April 11, 2012. The I-275 PD&E Study from Sunshine Skyway Bridge to SR 694 (Gandy Blvd.) is included in the MPO's list of 2021 - 2025 Cost Feasible Roadway Projects (Table 56. Committed, Cost Feasible and Policy Plan Roadway Project of the LRTP). Project limits, phasing and funding is consistent with FDOT's SIS 2035 Cost Feasible Plan mentioned above. This project is also consistent with the Transportation Element of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan adopted March 18, 2008. This project is being conducted in order to be consistent with other managed lane studies being conducted along I-275 and other interstates within the Tampa Bay region. The project is not listed in the 2035 LRTP for right of way or construction. The FDOT will coordinate with Pinellas County MPO to include this project in the Cost Feasible LRTP.

As an FIHS/SIS facility and part of the regional roadway network, I-275 is included in the Regional 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan developed by the West Central Florida MPOs' Chairs' Coordinating Committee (CCC) and adopted in January 2010.

Lane Continuity

Currently, I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to 4th Street North has one continuous lane in the northbound direction and no continuous lanes in the southbound direction. The proposed lane additions to I-275 is anticipated to provide three continuous lanes in the northbound direction and two continuous lanes in southbound direction between 54th Avenue South and 4th Street North; thereby potentially improving the safety of motorists by reducing driving decisions for lane changes.

Regional Connectivity

I-275 is a north-south interstate highway that is a major trade and tourism corridor and provides a loop for I-75 through urbanized areas of the Tampa-St. Petersburg area. I-275 is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS), which is comprised of interconnected limited and controlled access roadways including interstate highways, Florida's Turnpike, selected urban expressways and major arterial highways. The FIHS is part of a statewide transportation network that provides for movement of goods and people at high speeds and high traffic volumes. The FIHS is the Highway Component of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), which is a statewide network of highways, railways, waterways and transportation hubs that handle the bulk of Florida's passenger and freight traffic.

I-275 connects with multiple other SIS facilities, including Interstate 4 and Interstate 75. Preserving the operational integrity and regional functionality of I-275 is critical to mobility, as it is a vital link in the transportation network that connects the Tampa Bay region to the remainder of the state and the nation.

Safety/Crash Rates

Crash data from the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles indicated there were 2,431 crashes recorded in the project limits during the five year period of 2006 through 2010. There were a total of 1,487 injuries and 23 fatalities. The crash rates were higher than the average statewide crash rate for urban interstates around certain interchanges within the project limits, and along mainline sections between 22nd Avenue and 54th Avenue North. The crash data for the five year period of 2006 through 2010 is presented in **Table A**.

Safety within the project limits will be enhanced due to the additional capacity that will be provided by the additional lanes on I-275. Roadway congestion will be reduced, thereby decreasing potential conflict with other vehicles.

Emergency Evacuation

I-275 is a critical evacuation route and is shown on the Florida Division of Emergency Management's evacuation route network.

Future Population and Employment Growth in Corridor

The 2006 permanent population of Pinellas County, according to the Pinellas County MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), adopted on December 9, 2009 was 944,605 and was anticipated to increase by 12% to 1,060,260 by 2035. This reflected an average annual increase of 3,988 persons, or about 0.4 percent per year from the 2006 estimate. The University of Floridas Bureau of Economic and Business Research estimated the April 1, 2011, population of Pinellas County as 918,496, and projects the 2035 population to be between 746,400 (this is the low projection, which represents a decrease of 19% from the 2011 population) to 1,074,100 (the high projection, which is an increase of 17%).

Based on the Pinellas County MPOs 2035 LRTP, employment in 2006 was 565,400 and is projected to be 671,000 in 2035, an increase of 18.7%. This reflects an average annual increase of 3,641 employees, or about 0.6 percent per year from the 2006 estimate. These socioeconomic projections are used in the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM) to estimate travel demand in the future.

Due to the fact that Pinellas County is so densely populated, and there are very few large areas of developable land remaining, large scale development projects cannot be easily accommodated. Much of the future growth in the County will be provided by aggressive redevelopment programs and infill potential. Pinellas County has a healthy and diverse economic base which includes a concentration in the manufacturing industry. I-275 is an important link for travelers in the Tampa Bay area as it provides regional accessibility to area tourist and recreational destinations, major employment/activity centers, and is a popular and convenient route for commuters and other work-related travel both north and south of the area. Normal traffic growth associated with increasing population in the Tampa Bay region, as well as traffic growth from increased development activity in downtown St. Petersburg further reinforce the need for improvements in the I-275 corridor.

Current and Future Traffic

In 2010, I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to 4th Street North in Pinellas County carried 50,500 - 151,500 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) with 5% of the traffic being trucks. By 2035, I-275 within these limits is projected to reach volumes of approximately 93,200 - 214,300 AADT. The existing volume ranges on I-275 (2010 AADT) within the limits stated above were taken directly from the 2010 Florida Traffic Information (FTI) DVD, which was developed by the FDOT Transportation Statistics Office. The future year (2035) projections within the same limits were derived from the current Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM), utilizing a 0.95 MOCF on TBRPM Volumes. The truck percentage of 5% was derived by taking an average of truck percentages from all of the count stations along the corridor. Based on the Generalized Annual Average Daily Volumes for a six-lane freeway from the FDOT 2009 Quality/Level of Service (LOS) Handbook, the existing LOS is "D" or better, with the segment between 22nd Avenue North and Gandy Boulevard operating at an unacceptable LOS, currently LOS F. Without the proposed improvement, the operating conditions will continue to deteriorate and will operate at LOS "F". The accepted LOS standard for I-275 in this area is "D". The 2010 and 2035 AADT and LOS information is presented in **Table B**.

Multi-Modal Service

Existing transit service in Pinellas County within the project limits is operated by Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA). A review of the Geographic Information System analysis data from the ETDM Planning Screen indicates that there are 20 bus transit routes located within the 500-foot buffer distance. One bus route (300X) runs along I-275 from Hillsborough County and exits at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Future transit service within and/or adjacent to the project limits is planned as defined in the Pinellas County MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, the PSTA Transit Development Plan (FY2011 FY2020), and the Pinellas County Alternative Analysis. In addition to these plans, the Howard Frankland Bridge PD&E and Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation Study is considering a Managed Lanes Alternative that would connect to the project limits.

Access to Intermodal Facilities and Freight Activity Centers

The Pinellas County MPO - Goods Movement Study, December 2008, identifies the interstate system represented by I-275, I-175 and I-375 as a regional freight mobility corridor and indicates that it is essential to maintain adequate capacity and efficient operations within these corridors.

I-275 is part of the highway network that provides access to regional intermodal facilities/freight activity centers such as the Dome Industrial Center, South Central CSXT Corridor, Saint Petersburg Seaport, Port of Tampa, Gateway Triangle, Tampa International Airport and Saint Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport. Improvements to I-275 within the project limits will enhance access to activity centers in the area, and movement of goods and freight in the greater Tampa Bay region.

Purpose and Need Reviews

FL Department of Economic Opportunity

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	04/24/2013	Jeannette Hallock-Solomon (jeannette.hallock-solomon@deo.myflorida.com)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

FL Department of Environmental Protection

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	05/17/2013	Lauren Milligan (lauren.milligan@dep.state.fl.us)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

FL Department of State

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments

Understood	05/09/2013	Alyssa McManus (ammcmanus@dos.state.fl.us)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	05/10/2013	Bonita Gorham (bonita.gorham@myfwc.com)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

Federal Highway Administration

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Accepted	05/17/2013	Linda Anderson (linda.anderson@dot.gov)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

National Marine Fisheries Service

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	05/13/2013	David Rydene (David.Rydene@noaa.gov)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	04/09/2013	Rick Robbins (rick.a.robbins@fl.usda.gov)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

US Army Corps of Engineers

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	05/06/2013	Garett Lips (Garett.G.Lips@usace.army.mil)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

US Environmental Protection Agency

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	04/23/2013	Madolyn Dominy (dominy.madolyn@epa.gov)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

US Fish and Wildlife Service

Acknowledgement	Date Reviewed	Reviewer	Comments
Understood	04/23/2013	Jane Monaghan (Jane_Monaghan@fws.gov)	No Purpose and Need comments found.

Project Description Data

Project Description

Project Description Summary

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study to evaluate the need for capacity and operational improvements along I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County. A capacity project is proposed to improve the operation of I-275. The project length is approximately 16.3 miles. I-275, as it currently exists, is a limited access urban interstate highway with a four-lane divided typical section to the south of 54th Avenue South. Between 54th Avenue South and north of 4th Street North, I-275 fluctuates between four and ten lanes, but is typically a six-lane divided limited access urban interstate highway. The existing roadway has 12-foot lanes, 12-foot inside and outside shoulders (10-foot paved) and generally open drainage with a median width that varies from 40 to 65 feet. This PD&E study will evaluate ways to improve capacity, lane continuity and safety along I-275. The addition of general purpose travel lanes and interchange

improvements will be evaluated in order to improve lane continuity and address capacity needs within the corridor. The addition of managed lanes to improve capacity along the corridor and meet future traffic demands will also be evaluated. The addition of general purpose lanes, interchange improvements, and addition of managed lanes will be evaluated to increase safety along the I-275 corridor. To the maximum extent possible, roadway improvements will be constructed within the existing right of way. Additional right of way is anticipated only for offsite stormwater treatment facilities and interchange improvements.

A Planning Screen Summary Report was published for this project on March 22, 2011. Please note the limits of the Planning Screen were only from south of 54th Avenue South to Gandy Boulevard. The limits of this project were expanded to provide continuity with the managed lanes study being considered across the Howard Frankland Bridge.

Summary of Public Comments

From Planning Screen:
For the 2035 LRTP update, MPO staff has utilized a variety of tools to inform the public about the topics and issues addressed in the Plan. These include the MPO website, distribution of brochures and other printed materials, staff participation in public workshops addressing transportation issues, appearances on local radio and television stations, public speaking engagements and LRTP and related exhibits set up at local public events and festivals.

The attached PDF titled "PinellasPublicOutreach" includes survey results from 2008 and 2009, including questions on the proposed I-275 project. Additionally, a list of public involvement activities the MPO has been involved with is included.

Programming Screen:
No current public comments to date. A Public Involvement Plan will be produced in PD&E and a Public Hearing will be held to gather public input.

Planning Consistency Status

Planning Consistency Status

Are the limits consistent with the plans?	Yes

Federal Consistency Determination

Date: 05/22/2013

Determination: CONSISTENT with Coastal Zone Management Program.

Lead Agency

Federal Highway Administration

Participating and Cooperating Agencies

Participating and Cooperating agencies are not applicable for this class of action.

Exempted Agencies

Agency Name	Justification	Date
US Forest Service	There are no USFS resources in the area	10/19/2009
US Coast Guard	The are no navigable waterways	10/05/2010
Federal Transit Administration	FTA has requested to be exempt from reviewing any non-transit projects.	04/13/2011

Community Desired Features

No desired features have been entered into the database. This does not necessarily imply that none have been identified.

Communities Within 500 Feet

No communities were found within a 500 ft. buffer disance for this project.

Alternative #2

Alternative Description

Name	From	To	Type	Status	Total Length	Cost	Modes	SIS
Alternative was not named.	South of 54th Avenue South	North of 4th Street North	Widening	ETAT Review Complete	16.29 mi.	$332,000,000.00	Roadway	Y

Segment Description(s)

Location and Length

Segment No.	Name	Beginning Location	Ending Location	Length (mi.)	Roadway Id	BMP	EMP
Unnamed Segment	Unnamed Segment	South of 54th Avenue South	North of 4th Street North	16.29			

Jurisdiction and Class

Segment No.	Jurisdiction	Urban Service Area	Functional Class
Unnamed Segment	FDOT	In	URBAN: Principal Arterial - Interstate

Base Conditions

Segment No.	Year	AADT	Lanes	Config
Unnamed Segment	2010	151500	6	Lanes Freeway

Interim Plan

Segment No.	Year	AADT	Lanes	Config
Unnamed Segment				

Needs Plan

Segment No.	Year	AADT	Lanes	Config
Unnamed Segment	2035	214300	8	Lanes Freeway

Cost Feasible Plan

Segment No.	Year	AADT	Lanes	Config
Unnamed Segment	2035			

Funding Sources

Segment No.	FEDERAL	Unknown
$332,000,000.00		

Project Effects Overview for Alternative #2

Issue	Degree of Effect	Organization	Date Reviewed
Social and Economic			
Land Use Changes	1 Enhanced	FDOT District 7	05/01/2013
Land Use Changes	0 None	FL Department of Economic Opportunity	04/24/2013
Social	2 Minimal	FDOT District 7	05/01/2013
Social	3 Moderate	Federal Highway Administration	05/17/2013
Social	3 Moderate	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/18/2013
Relocation Potential	2 Minimal	Federal Highway Administration	05/17/2013
Relocation Potential	2 Minimal	FDOT District 7	05/01/2013
Farmlands	0 None	Natural Resources Conservation Service	04/09/2013
Aesthetic Effects	2 Minimal	FDOT District 7	05/01/2013
Economic	1 Enhanced	FDOT District 7	05/01/2013

Economic	0 None	FL Department of Economic Opportunity	04/24/2013
Mobility	1 Enhanced	FDOT District 7	05/01/2013
Cultural			
Section 4(f) Potential	3 Moderate	Federal Highway Administration	05/17/2013
Historic and Archaeological Sites	3 Moderate	Federal Highway Administration	05/17/2013
Historic and Archaeological Sites	3 Moderate	Seminole Tribe of Florida	05/09/2013
Historic and Archaeological Sites	2 Minimal	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Historic and Archaeological Sites	3 Moderate	FL Department of State	05/09/2013
Recreation Areas	3 Moderate	FL Department of Environmental Protection	05/17/2013
Recreation Areas	2 Minimal	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Recreation Areas	2 Minimal	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/17/2013
Recreation Areas	3 Moderate	Federal Highway Administration	05/17/2013
Natural			
Wetlands	3 Moderate	FL Department of Environmental Protection	05/17/2013
Wetlands	2 Minimal	US Fish and Wildlife Service	05/15/2013
Wetlands	3 Moderate	US Army Corps of Engineers	05/06/2013
Wetlands	3 Moderate	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/18/2013
Wetlands	2 Minimal	National Marine Fisheries Service	05/13/2013
Wetlands	3 Moderate	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Water Quality and Quantity	3 Moderate	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/18/2013
Water Quality and Quantity	3 Moderate	FL Department of Environmental Protection	05/17/2013
Water Quality and Quantity	3 Moderate	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Floodplains	3 Moderate	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/17/2013
Floodplains	3 Moderate	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Wildlife and Habitat	2 Minimal	US Fish and Wildlife Service	05/15/2013
Wildlife and Habitat	2 Minimal	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Wildlife and Habitat	2 Minimal	FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	05/10/2013
Coastal and Marine	2 Minimal	National Marine Fisheries Service	05/13/2013
Coastal and Marine	2 Minimal	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Physical			
Noise	3 Moderate	Federal Highway Administration	05/17/2013
Air Quality	2 Minimal	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/07/2013

Contamination	3 Moderate	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/17/2013
Contamination	3 Moderate	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Contamination	3 Moderate	FL Department of Environmental Protection	05/17/2013
Infrastructure	2 Minimal	Southwest Florida Water Management District	05/17/2013
Navigation	2 Minimal	US Army Corps of Engineers	05/06/2013

Special Designations

Special Designations	3 Moderate	US Environmental Protection Agency	05/18/2013
Special Designations	3 Moderate	Southwest Florida Water Management District	07/10/2013
Special Designations	3 Moderate	FL Department of Environmental Protection	05/17/2013

ETAT Reviews and Coordinator Summary: Social and Economic

Land Use Changes

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 1 *Enhanced* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the FDOT Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC) and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Enhanced.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified transportation, high density residential, commercial and services, and utilities as the four major existing land uses within the 500-foot buffer distance. The Pinellas Planning Council Countywide Future Land Use Plan (amended Oct. 16, 2012) identified planned redevelopment mixed-use, industrial, transportation/utility, medium residential, recreation/open space, and preservation as the future land uses along the project corridor.

The FDOT recommended a Degree of Effect of Enhanced because this project supports the future land use designations by providing access and connectivity to the areas that are designated as residential, neighborhood activity centers, employment centers, and commercial areas. The project is anticipated to accommodate increased travel demand resulting from area population and employment growth. The FDOT CLC recommends coordination with the County in Project Development to make sure the project is consistent with the LRTP and Comprehensive Plans.

The DEO stated the proposed project is compatible with both local governments' development plans and comprehensive plans. FDOT should reach out to local homeowners associations along the proposed project during the PD&E phase. The proposed project is on the Countys and Citys Future Transportation Map. The following land use categories surround the project: Pinellas County- preservation, recreation/open space, residential low, residential urban, commercial general, and institutional. St. Petersburg- mixed-use, preservation, transportation/utility, residential low, residential medium, institutional, commercial, activity center, residential urban, recreation/open space, residential/office general, and residential. The proposed projects impacts may affect the Sawgrass Lake Park. If the proposed project moves forward, the impacts to this potential 4(f) resource should be analyzed. Parts of the project are in the Coastal High Hazard Area, however, since this proposed project (I-275) is on a Hurricane Evacuation Route, DEO recommends the project is compatible with the local governments comprehensive plans. The project is not near a military base and is not in an area of critical state concern.

The FDOT will evaluate potential land use changes during the PD&E study.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 1 *Enhanced* assigned 05/01/2013 by Wendy Lasher, FDOT District 7

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Identified Resources:
Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
City of St. Petersburg 2020 Future Land Use Map

100-foot Project Buffer Area
Gateway Areawide Development of Regional Impact (DRI)

Calais Village Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Chateaux Versailles PUD

200-foot Project Buffer Area
Gateway Centre DRI

500-foot Project Buffer Area
North Lake Village DRI
Barkwood Square PUD
Fairview Estates PUD

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Comments on Effects to Resources:
Existing Land Uses within the 200-foot project buffer area include:

Description Acres Percentage
Transportation 590.3 76.85%
Residential High Density 40.8 5.31%
Utilities 27.8 3.62%
Commercial and Services 19.9 2.59%
Open Land 15.4 2.01%
Industrial 14.7 1.91%
Mangrove Swamps 13.8 1.80%
Bays and Estuaries 11.5 1.5%
Hardwood Conifer Mixed, Saltwater Marshes, Institutional, Wet Prairies, Recreational, and Wetland Forested Mixed are the majority of the remaining land uses.
Source: 2009 SWFWMD Florida Land Use and Land Cover

The City of St. Petersburg 2020 Future Land Use Map from the Future Land Use Element dated September 2010 shows future land use including Commercial, Mixed Use, and Residential Planned Redevelopment, Transportation/Utility, Recreation/Open Space,

Preservation, Residential Medium, Industrial General, Institutional, Activity Center, Central Business District, and Community Redevelopment District Special Designations, Residential Urban, Residential/Office General, Residential Medium, and Industrial Limited.

The addition of managed lanes/express lanes is included in the FDOT's Approved Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Highway Component 2035 Cost Feasible Plan, dated December 2009, which indicates PD&E and PE ($5,350,000 and $9,416,000 respectively) are slated for funding eligibility in 2025. The Pinellas MPO's 2035 LRTP was adopted on December 9, 2009, and amended April 11, 2012. The I-275 PD&E Study from Sunshine Skyway Bridge to SR 694 (Gandy Boulevard) is included in the MPO's list of 2021 - 2025 Cost Feasible Roadway Projects (Table 56. Committed, Cost Feasible and Policy Plan Roadway Projects of the LRTP). Project limits, phasing and funding is consistent with FDOT's SIS 2035 Cost Feasible Plan mentioned above. This project is also consistent with the Transportation Element of the Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan adopted March 18, 2008. This project is being conducted in order to be consistent with other managed lane studies being conducted along I-275 and other interstates within the Tampa Bay region. The project is not listed in the 2035 LRTP for right of way or construction. The FDOT will coordinate with Pinellas County MPO to include this project in the Cost Feasible LRTP.

As a Florida Intrastate Highway System/SIS facility and part of the regional roadway network, I-275 is included in the Regional 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan developed by the West Central Florida MPOs' Chairs' Coordinating Committee and adopted in January 2010.

A Degree of Effect of Enhanced was selected because this project supports the future land use designations by providing access and connectivity to the areas that are designated as residential, neighborhood activity centers, employment centers, and commercial areas. The project is anticipated to accommodate increased travel demand resulting from area population and employment growth.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 0 *None* assigned 04/24/2013 by Jeannette Hallock-Solomon, FL Department of Economic Opportunity

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

The following comprehensive plans were used in this review:

Pinellas County- Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, amended March 27, 2012

City of St. Petersburg- City of St. Petersburg Comprehensive Plan, Revised June 2, 2011

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The proposed project is compatible with both local governments' development plans and comprehensive plans. Pinellas County did comment that FDOT should reach out to local homeowners associations along the proposed project during the PD&E phase.

Future Transportation Map

Pinellas County and the City of St. Petersburg- Yes, the proposed project is on the County s and City s Future Transportation Map.

Future Land Use Map Categories

The following land use categories surround the project:
Pinellas County: The Future Land Use Map categories that surround the proposed project include: preservation, recreation/open space, residential low, residential urban, commercial general, and institutional.

St. Petersburg: The Future Land Use Map categories that surround the proposed project include: mixed-use, preservation, transportation/utility, residential low, residential medium, institutional, commercial, activity center, residential urban, recreation/open space, residential/office general, and residential.

Local Park
The proposed project s impacts may affect the Sawgrass Lake Park. If the proposed project moves forward, the impacts to this potential 4(f) resource should be analyzed.

Coastal High Hazard Area
Parts of the project are in the Coastal High Hazard Area, however, since this proposed project (I-275) is on a Hurricane Evacuation Route, DEO recommends the project is compatible with the local governments comprehensive plans.

Miscellaneous
The proposed project is not near a military base and is not in an Area of Critical State Concern.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Social

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the FDOT Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC), the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified several Census Blockgroups that have a median family income below $25,000 and several Census Blockgroups that have a minority population over 40% within the 500-foot buffer distance. The EST GIS also identified one Front Porch Community within the 100-foot buffer distance, one assisted housing center and two social service facilities within the 200-foot buffer distance, and two community centers, two cultural centers, four additional social service facilities, eight religious centers, and two Mobile Home and RV Parks within the 500-foot buffer distance.

The FDOT CLC stated impacts to social cohesion and community character are anticipated to be minimal since the I-275 corridor already exists and no splitting of neighborhoods or isolated areas is expected to occur as a result of this project and the project will be constructed primarily within the right-of-way. The facility will improve accessibility to residential, employment, and other regional activity centers and tourist destinations in Pinellas County and eastward to the Tampa metropolitan area. Based on 2010 American Community Survey data, written translation obligations under safe harbor are not expected for this project since the eligible Limited English Proficiency (LEP) language group is 3.02% and does not meet/exceed the threshold (constitute 5 percent or 1,000 persons or more in a project area speak a language other than English per the FDOT PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 11.2.4). There are numerous low income, LEP language groups and minority populations that need to be considered and included in the public involvement process. The FDOT CLC recommends the project should be developed in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Civil Rights Act of 1968, along with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice), which ensures that minority and/or low-income households are neither disproportionably adversely impacted by major transportation projects, nor denied reasonable access to them by excessive costs or physical barriers.

The USEPA state that the proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with social resources. The social impacts listed above must be considered during the PD&E study. In addition, a noise analysis study should be conducted if the project is expected to impact any sensitive receptors. It is recommended that public involvement be a key component of project development. The PD&E study should include a sociocultural effects analysis study which considers all potential social issues and facilities that may be affected by the project. Impact to residents and the local and business community should be avoided or minimized to the best extent practicable.

The FHWA stated that the southern two-thirds of the APE is heavily developed. Also, 45 acres of St. Petersburg Enterprise Zone, median family incomes ranging from $16,250 to $88,625, many families living under the poverty level and receiving public income, the minority population exceeding 40% in 50-100% of the census blocks overlapping this buffer, two mobile home or RV parks are within the 500-foot buffer. Federal law prohibits the disproportionate impacting of individuals of low income or minority status by federally funded transportation projects. The factors cited above suggest that the population living along the APE may be of low income or minority status, and that there may be environmental justice issues. A socio-cultural effects analysis needs to be done for this project.

A Public Involvement Plan will be produced as part of the PD&E study. The FDOT will conduct public outreach to residents and businesses in the area to solicit input. If needed the public involvement efforts will include information in Spanish and consider populations that are possibly illiterate. An Environmental Justice analysis including LEP will also be further analyzed in Project Development.

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/01/2013 by Wendy Lasher, FDOT District 7

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Identified Resources:

100-foot Project Buffer Area
Gateway Areawide Development of Regional Impact (DRI)
Pinellas Trail
Greater South Central Neighborhood Front Porch Community
Kenwood Historic District
Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Low Multi-Use Trail Priorities (1)
OGT Medium Multi-Use Trail Priorities (2)
OGT Medium Paddling Trail Priorities (1)
Calais Village Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Chateaux Versailles PUD

200-foot Project Buffer Area
Gateway Centre DRI
Jordan Park Assisted Housing
Country Learning Academy
Edward White Hospital Rehabilitation Institute
Headstart Jordan Park
World of Life Fellowship Church
Pinellas County Headstart
Sawgrass Lake Park
Weedon Island Preserve
Mount Moriah Church
Eckerd College

500-foot Project Buffer Area
North Lake Village DRI
Sawgrass Lake Park Trail
St. Petersburg Masonic Lodge Number 109
St. Petersburg WOTM 871
St. Petersburg Little Theatre
Dr. Carter G. Woodson African American History Museum
Maximo Community Playground
Palmetto Park
Pinellas Community Church
Church of God St. Petersburg
Soka Gokkai International USA
People of Christ Church
Jehovah's Witnesses Church
New Mt Sinai Missionary Baptist Church
New Pleasant Grove Baptist Church
New Faith Free Methodist Church
Norwood Secondary School
Imagine Charter School
Imagination Station Kingz Care
The Hurricane Stops Here
Farmers Retirement Center
Westcare Foundation Inc.
Wildwood Community Center
Yes I Can Christian Academy
Norwood Discipline
Assisted Living of Pinellas II
North Ridge MHP

Southernaire Mobile Home Resort
Barkwood Square PUD
Fairview Estates PUD
Boyd Hill Nature Park
Souls Harvest Fellowship
Second Chance Life Skills
Friendship Missionary Baptist Church
Suncoast Cathedral First Assembly
Wheeler Temple Church of God
Order of Sons of Italy in America
Positive Impact Worldwide

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Comments on Effects to Resources:

It should be noted that the Geographic Information System analysis indicates 25 Census Block Groups with a large group of households each with public assistance income, 27 Census Block Groups with a median family income less than $25,000, 30 Census Block Groups with a minority population greater than 40%, and a population that speaks English "Not Well" or "Not at All" within the 100-foot project buffer area.

The tables below present the demographic in the 500-foot project buffer area and for Pinellas County. According to the EST GIS analysis results, the racial and ethnic characteristics are slightly different in the project area than Pinellas County as a whole. The project area contains a higher percentage of the African-American and Other and a lower percentage White populations with the Hispanic ethnic group being the same.

There are some households that have fallen below poverty level within the past 12 months and/or have public assistance income.

Demographic/500-foot Buffer Area/ Pinellas County
White (Race)/ 68% / 82%
African-American (Race) / 22% / 10%
"Other"** (Race) / 7% / 5%
Hispanic (Ethnic Group) / 7.9% / 8%
Source: US Census Bureau (2010 US Census)
*"Other" includes Asian, Native American, Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander Alone & Other Race.

Income/500-foot Buffer Area
Median Family Income / $19,779 - $88,625
Households in the past 12 months below poverty level / 3390
Households with Public Assistance Income / 612
Source: US Census Bureau (2010 ACS)

Minority Population Greater than 40%:

There are ninety census blocks with 4,827 people within the 500-foot buffer area that contain a minority population greater than 40%. These census blocks are located throughout the entire length of the project.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Accommodations:
Based on 2010 American Community Survey data, within the project area (500-foot buffer area) there are 1,334 people (2.44 percent) who speak English "not well" and 319 people (less than 1 percent) that speak English "not at all." Therefore, written translation obligations under "safe harbor" are not expected for this project since the eligible Limited English Proficiency (LEP) language group is 3.02% and does not meet/exceed the threshold (constitute 5 percent or 1,000 persons or more in a project area speak a language other than English per the FDOT PD&E Manual, Part 1, Chapter 11, Section 11.2.4).

Impacts to social cohesion and community character are anticipated to be minimal since the I-275 corridor already exists and no splitting of neighborhoods or isolated areas is expected to occur as a result of this project and the project will be constructed primarily within the right-of-way.. The facility will improve accessibility to residential, employment, and other regional activity centers and tourist destinations in Pinellas County and eastward to the Tampa metropolitan area. There are numerous low income, LEP language groups and minority populations that need to be considered and included in the public involvement process.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Linda Anderson, Federal Highway Administration

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

The southern two-thirds of the APE is heavily developed. Within the 500' buffer is found:

1.450 acres of St. Petersberg Enterprise Zone.

2. Median family incomes ranging from $16,250 to $88,625.

3. Depending on the location, many families living under the poverty level and receiving public income.
4. The minority population exceeding 40% in 50-100% of the census blocks overlapping this buffer.
5. 2 mobile home or RV parks.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Federal law prohibits the disproportionate impacting of individuals of low income or minority status by Federally funded transportation projects. The factors cited in Direct Effects above suggest that the population living along the APE may be of low income or minority status, and that there may be environmental justice issues.

A socio-cultural effects analysis needs to be done for this project.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/18/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Resources: Social impacts such as residential populations, commuter populations, residential communities, minority or low-income populations, disadvantaged populations, archeological and historic areas or structures, etc.

Level of Importance: These resources are of a high level of importance. Impacts to these types of resources, both positive and negative, should be evaluated and documented in the PD&E phase of the project. A moderate degree of effect is being assigned to this issue for the proposed project (ETDM#12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Avenue N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:
The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the EST GIS analysis identified several Census Blockgroups that have a median family income below $25,000 and several Census Blockgroups that have a minority population over 40% within the 500-foot buffer distance. The EST GIS also identified one Front Porch Community within the 100-foot buffer distance, one assisted housing and two social service facilities within the 200-foot buffer distance, and two community centers, two cultural centers, four additional social service facilities, eight religious centers, and two Mobile Home and RV Parks within the 500-foot buffer distance. While additional right-of-way may be required depending on the typical section proposed, the project will be designed to avoid/minimize potential impacts to the community fabric/social cohesion to the greatest extent practicable. This project will be developed in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Civil Rights Act of 1968, along with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice), which ensures that minority and/or low-income households are neither disproportionably adversely impacted by major transportation projects, nor denied reasonable access to them by excessive costs or physical barriers (Environmental Protection Agency [EPA], 1994). The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with social resources.

EPA provides the following social comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase: The social impacts listed about must be considered during the PD&E study. In addition, a noise analysis study should be conducted if the project is expected to impact any sensitive receptors. It is recommended that public involvement be a key component of project development. A public involvement plan should be developed and implemented. The PD&E study should include a sociocultural effects analysis study which considers all potential social issues and facilities that may be affected by the project. Impact to residents and the local and business community should be avoided or minimized to the best extent practicable.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Relocation Potential

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the FDOT

Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Minimal.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified transportation, high density residential, commercial and services, and utilities as the four major land uses within the 500-foot buffer distance.

The FHWA identified 0.09 acre of residential development within the 100-foot buffer. Forty-two acres of residential development and six schools were identified within the 200-foot buffer. Impacts from addition of lanes is likely minimal. Because location of interchange improvements and ponds is unknown, potential impact to residential and commercial establishments is unknown.

The FDOT CLC stated that residential, commercial, and business relocations are expected to be minimal since the majority of the project will use the existing ROW. The FDOT recommends relocation effects should be further analyzed as more detailed project information and ROW needs become available. Any relocation should be evaluated so that there are no disproportionate adverse impacts to any distinct minority, ethnic, elderly, or handicapped groups and/or low-income households.

Additional right-of-way is anticipated only for offsite stormwater treatment facilities and interchange improvements. The project will be designed, however, to avoid/minimize potential relocation impacts to the greatest extent practicable. Impacts to these land uses will be considered and alternatives will be developed to avoid or minimize relocations during project development. Any relocation will be evaluated so that there are no disproportionate adverse impacts to any distinct minority, ethnic, elderly, or handicapped groups and/or low-income households.

The FDOT will develop a Conceptual Stage Relocation Plan (CSRP) as part of the PD&E study provided that any potential right-of-way acquisition outcome results in relocation needs. The FDOT will conduct public outreach to residents and businesses in the corridor area to solicit input on the project.

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/17/2013 by Linda Anderson, Federal Highway Administration

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Within 100' buffer:

Per SWFWMD Residential Areas 2009, .09 acres residential development, but probably more by 2013.

Within 200' buffer:

1. Per SWFWMD Residential Areas 2009, 42 acresresidential development
2. 6 schools

Comments on Effects to Resources:

Impacts from addition of lanes is likely minimal. Because location of interchange improvements and ponds is unknown, so is their impact to residential and commercial establishments.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/01/2013 by Wendy Lasher, FDOT District 7

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Identified Resources:

100-foot Project Buffer Area
Residential Land Uses:
Residential High Density - 0.1 acres

Commercial and Services Land Use - 0.4 acres

200-foot Project Buffer Area
Residential Land Uses:
Residential Low Density - 1.0 acres
Residential High Density - 40.8 acres

Commercial and Services Land Use - 19.9 acres

500-foot Project Buffer Area
Residential Land Uses:
Residential Low Density - 16.1 acres
Residential High Density - 368.9 acres

Commercial and Services Land Use - 133.4 acres

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Comments on Effects to Resources:
Existing Land Uses within the 200-foot project buffer area include:

Description Acres Percentage
Transportation 590.3 76.85%
Residential High Density 40.8 5.31%
Utilities 27.8 3.62%
Commercial and Services 19.9 2.59%
Open Land 15.4 2.01%
Industrial 14.7 1.91%
Mangrove Swamps 13.8 1.80%
Bays and Estuaries 11.5 1.5%
Hardwood Conifer Mixed, Saltwater Marshes, Institutional, Wet Prairies, Recreational, and Wetland Forested Mixed are the majority of the remaining land uses.
Source: 2009 SWFWMD Florida Land Use and Land Cover

The project is an interstate corridor and will utilize the existing right-of-way (ROW), but additional ROW is anticipated for off-site ponds.

A Degree of Effect of Minimal has been assigned because residential, commercial, and business relocations are expected to be minimal since the majority of the project will use the existing ROW.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Farmlands

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 0 *None* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and recommends a Degree of Effect of None.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified no prime or unique farmlands within the 5,280-foot buffer distance.

The USDA-NRCS indicated there are no Prime, Unique, or locally Important Farmland soils within any buffer widths within the project area, and therefore, no degree of effect to agricultural resources.

The project is located in an urbanized area with mostly commercial and residential land uses adjacent to the project corridor. No impacts to farmlands are anticipated.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 0 *None* assigned 04/09/2013 by Rick Allen Robbins, Natural Resources Conservation Service

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The USDA-NRCS considers soil map units with important soil properties for agricultural uses to be Prime Farmland. In addition, the USDA-NRCS considers any soils with important soil properties and have significant acreages that are used in the production of commodity crops (such as, cotton, citrus, row crops, specialty crops, nuts, etc.) to be considered as Farmlands of Unique Importance or Farmlands of Local Importance. Nationally, there has been a reduction in the overall amount of Prime and Unique Farmlands through conversion to non-farm uses. This trend has the possibility of impacting the nation's food supply and exporting capabilities.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Conducting GIS analysis of Prime Farmland (using USDA-NRCS data) and Important (Unique) Farmland Analysis (using existing 2009 SWWMD land use data and 2010 SSURGO data) has resulted in the determination that there are no Prime, Unique, or Locally Important Farmland soils within any buffer width within the Project Area. Therefore, no degree of effect to agricultural resources.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Aesthetic Effects

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the FDOT Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Minimal.

The EST GIS data identified the St. Petersburg Enterprise Zone, one noise barrier, and one residential area. There are 18 residential areas and 20 residential areas within the 200-foot and 500-foot buffers, respectively.

The FDOT CLC stated the project will utilize the existing ROW, but additional ROW is anticipated for offsite ponds. Within the 500-foot project buffer area the existing land use is primarily transportation (39%) and residential (20%), with commercial and services (7%), utilities (6%), bays and estuaries (5%) and industrial (5%). Residential areas may be affected by traffic noise. The FDOT will consider incorporating aesthetic enhancements such as landscaping or bridge embellishments, into the project plans. The FDOT will also conduct public outreach to solicit opinions and preferences from residents and businesses on potential project effects and general design concepts related to aesthetics.

The FDOT will evaluate potential aesthetic impacts as part of the PD&E study. The FDOT will consider incorporating aesthetic enhancements. A traffic noise evaluation will also be conducted as part of the PD&E study that will assess potential noise barriers along the corridor.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/01/2013 by Wendy Lasher, FDOT District 7

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Identified Resources:

100-foot Project Buffer Area
St. Petersburg Enterprise Zone
Noise Barrier (1)
Residential Area (1)

200-foot Project Buffer Area
Residential Areas (18)

200-foot Project Buffer Area
Residential Areas (20)

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Comments on Effects to Resources:

The project corridor is an interstate corridor and will utilize the existing right-of-way (ROW), but additional ROW is anticipated for off site ponds. Within the 500-foot project buffer area the existing land use is primarily transportation (39%) and residential (20%), with commercial and services (7%), utilities (6%), bays and estuaries (5%) and industrial (5%) land uses completing the majority of the classifications present.

Existing Residential Land Uses within the 500-foot Project Buffer Area (source: 2009 SWFWMD Florida Land Use and Land Cover):

Description Acres Percent
Transportation 749.9 39.33%

Residential High Density 368.9 19.35%
Residential Low Density 16.1 0.84%

Residential Total 385.0 20.19%

Commercial and Services 133.40 6.99%
Utilities 115.80 6.07%
Bays and Estuaries 98.50 5.17%
Industrial 91.40 4.79%

Residential areas in the project area may be affected by traffic noise.

A Degree of Effect of Minimal has been assigned because there are no established aesthetic features in the project area.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Economic

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 1 *Enhanced* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the FDOT Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC) and Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Enhanced.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified several Census Blockgroups that have a median family income below $25,000 and several Census Blockgroups that have a minority population over 40% within the 500-foot buffer distance. One Enterprise Zone, one Development of Regional Impact (DRI) and two Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) are located within the 100-foot buffer distance, one additional DRI is located within the 200-foot buffer distance, and one additional DRI and two additional PUDs are located within the 500-foot buffer distance.

The FDOT CLC stated that Gateway areawide development of regional impact (DRI), Calais Village planned unit development (PUD), Chateaux Versailles PUD, Greater South Central Neighborhood Front Porch Community, and St. Petersburg Enterprise zone were all identified within the 100-foot buffer. The 2006 permanent population of Pinellas County, according to the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), was anticipated to increase by 12% to by 2035, an average annual increase of about 0.4 percent per year. The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research estimated the April 1, 2011 population of Pinellas County as 918,496, and projects the 2035 population to be between 746,400 (this is the low projection) to 1,074,100 (the high projection). Based on the Pinellas County MPO's 2035 LRTP, employment from 2006 was projected to be increased by 18.7%, an average annual increase of about 0.6 percent per year. The project is expected to enhance economic activity within Pinellas County and support the future land uses identified. The FDOT CLC recommends during project development, the FDOT will conduct public outreach to solicit community opinions and preferences, including the transportation disadvantaged population, regarding this project.

The DEO states that the proposed project is not in a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern. The project has the potential to attract new development and generate jobs since it will relieve roadway congestion. Also the projects will make the facility safer, encouraging more people to be comfortable traveling the corridor, thus allowing for more customers to come to the area.

During Project Development, the FDOT will conduct public outreach to solicit community opinions and preferences, including the transportation disadvantaged population regarding this project.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 1 *Enhanced* assigned 05/01/2013 by Wendy Lasher, FDOT District 7

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Identified Resources:

100-foot Project Buffer Area
Gateway Areawide Development of Regional Impact (DRI)
Calais Village Planned Unit Development (PUD)
Chateaux Versailles PUD

Greater South Central Neighborhood Front Porch Community
St. Petersburg Enterprise Zone

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Comments on Effects to Resources:

The 2006 permanent population of Pinellas County, according to the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), adopted on December 9, 2009 was 944,605 and was anticipated to increase by 12% to 1,060,260 by 2035. This reflected an average annual increase of 3,988 persons, or about 0.4 percent per year from the 2006 estimate. The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research estimated the April 1, 2011 population of Pinellas County as 918,496, and projects the 2035 population to be between 746,400 (this is the low projection, which represents a decrease of 19% from the 2011 population) to 1,074,100 (the high projection, which is an increase of 17%).

Based on the Pinellas County MPO's 2035 LRTP, employment in 2006 was 565,400 and is projected to be 671,000 in 2035, an increase of 18.7%. This reflects an average annual increase of 3,641 employees, or about 0.6 percent per year from the 2006 estimate. These socioeconomic projections are used in the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model to estimate travel demand in the future.

Due to the fact that Pinellas County is so densely populated, and there are very few large areas of developable land remaining, large scale development projects cannot be easily accommodated. Much of the future growth in the County will be provided by aggressive redevelopment programs and infill potential. Pinellas County has a healthy and diverse economic base which includes a concentration in the manufacturing industry. I-275 is an important link for travelers in the Tampa Bay area as it provides regional accessibility to area tourist and recreational destinations, major employment/activity centers, and is a popular and convenient route for commuters and other work-related travel both north and south of the area. Normal traffic growth associated with increasing population in the Tampa Bay region, as well as traffic growth from increased development activity in downtown St. Petersburg further reinforce the need for improvements in the I-275 corridor.

I-275 is a north-south interstate highway that is a major trade and tourism corridor and provides a loop for I-75 through urbanized areas of the Tampa-St. Petersburg area. I-275 is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS), which is comprised of interconnected limited and controlled access roadways including interstate highways, Florida's Turnpike, selected urban expressways and major arterial highways. The FIHS is part of a statewide transportation network that provides for movement of goods and people at high speeds and high traffic volumes. The FIHS is the Highway Component of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), which is a statewide network of highways, railways, waterways and transportation hubs that handle the bulk of Florida's passenger and freight traffic.

I-275 connects with multiple other SIS facilities, including Interstate 4 and Interstate 75. Preserving the operational integrity and regional functionality of I -275 is critical to mobility, as it is a vital link in the transportation network that connects the Tampa Bay region to the remainder of the state and the nation.

The Geographic Information System analysis identified several populations, properties, and resources within the 100-foot project buffer area including Gateway Areawide DRI, Calais Village and Chateaux Versailles PUDs, and the Greater South Central Neighborhood Front Porch Community.

Overall, the project is expected to enhance economic activity within Pinellas County and support the future land uses identified.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 0 *None* assigned 04/24/2013 by Jeannette Hallock-Solomon, FL Department of Economic Opportunity

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

The following comprehensive plans were used in this review:

Pinellas County- Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, amended March 27, 2012

City of St. Petersburg- City of St. Petersburg Comprehensive Plan, Revised June 2, 2011

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The proposed project is not in a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern.

The proposed project has the potential to attract new development and generate jobs because the project will relieve congestion. Also, the proposed project will make the facility safer, which will allow people to feel more comfortable to travel the corridor. I-275 runs through the middle of St. Petersburg, which is an urban area, so the additional capacity will allow for more customers to come to the City.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Mobility

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 1 *Enhanced* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has reviewed comments from the FDOT Community Liaison Coordinator (CLC) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Enhanced.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified several Bus Transit Routes, railroad, railroad siding, and one Transportation Disadvantaged Service Provider Area within the 100-foot buffer distance.

The FDOT CLC stated that improvements to I-275 will enhance access to activity centers in the area, and movement of goods and freight in the greater Tampa Bay region. I-275 is a critical evacuation route and is shown on the Florida Division of Emergency Management's evacuation route network. The St. Petersburg Enterprise Zone is within the project area with the southern limits of the enterprise zone along I-275 at 38th Avenue South and the northern limits at 22nd Avenue north. Improvements to I-275 will enhance access to the businesses and provide enhanced mobility to residents in this area. The project should not affect any of the various planned and existing recreational trails within the project area. If it is determined in Project Development that there are any potential impacts, the FDOT will coordinate with the overseeing resource agency. A Degree of Effect of Enhanced has been assigned because the proposed improvement would improve mobility to the area and region. The FDOT CLC recommends that coordination with PSTA occur during all project phases.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 1 *Enhanced* assigned 05/01/2013 by Wendy Lasher, FDOT District 7

Coordination Document: No Involvement

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Identified Resources:
100-foot Project Buffer Area
St. Petersburg Enterprise Zone
Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) Medium Ranking Paddling Trails Priorities (1)
OGT Low Ranking Multi-Use Trails Priorities (2)
OGT Medium Ranking Multi-Use Trails Priorities (3)
Existing Recreational Trails (1)
PSTA bus routes (22)
Railways (4)

500-foot Project Buffer Area
PSTA bus routes (24)
Railways (8)
Existing Recreational Trails (5)

Comments on Effects to Resources:

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Existing transit service in Pinellas County within the project limits is operated by Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA). A review of the Geographic Information System analysis data from the ETDM Planning Screen indicates that there are 24 bus transit routes located within the 500-foot buffer distance. One bus route (300X) runs along I-275 from Hillsborough County and exits at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Future transit service within and/or adjacent to the project limits is planned as defined in the Pinellas County MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, the PSTA Transit Development Plan (FY2011 - FY2020), and the Pinellas County Alternative Analysis. In addition to these plans, the Howard Frankland Bridge PD&E and Regional Transit Corridor Evaluation Study is considering a Managed Lanes Alternative that would connect to the project limits.

The Pinellas County MPO - Goods Movement Study, December 2008, identifies the interstate system represented by I-275, I-175 and I-375 as a regional freight mobility corridor and indicates that it is essential to maintain adequate capacity and efficient operations within these corridors.

I-275 is part of the highway network that provides access to regional intermodal facilities/freight activity centers such as the Dome Industrial Center, South Central CSXT Corridor, Saint Petersburg Seaport, Port of Tampa, Gateway Triangle, Tampa International Airport and Saint Petersburg-Clearwater International Airport. Improvements to I-275 within the project limits will enhance access to activity centers in the area, and movement of goods and freight in the greater Tampa Bay region.

I-275 is a critical evacuation route and is shown on the Florida Division of Emergency Management's evacuation route network.
The St. Petersburg Enterprise Zone is within the project area with the southern limits of the enterprise zone along I-275 at 38th Avenue South and the northern limits at 22nd Avenue north. Improvements to I-275 will enhance access to the businesses and provide enhanced mobility to residents in this area.

There are various planned and existing recreational trails within the project area. This project should not affect any of these trails. If it is determined in Project Development that there are any potential impacts, the FDOT will coordinate with the overseeing resource agency.

A Degree of Effect of Enhanced has been assigned because the proposed improvement would improve mobility to the area and region.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

ETAT Reviews and Coordinator Summary: Cultural

Section 4(f) Potential

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified one existing recreational trail, three Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) multi-use trails priorities, and one OGT paddling trails priorities within the 100-foot buffer. One existing recreational trail, three OGT multi-use trails priorities, and one OGT paddling trails priorities are within the 200-foot buffer. Five existing recreational trails, two national park projects, three OGT multi use trails priorities, and one OGT paddling trails priorities are within the 500-foot buffer.

The FHWA stated that within the 200-foot buffer are many areas that are publicly accessible, and have a recreational function; Sawgrass Lake Park, Weeden Island Preserve, Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, several hiking trails, and public schools with playgrounds. There are also many acres of Ecological Greenways Critical Linkages, Florida Managed Areas, Greenways Ecological Priority Linkages, Multi-Use Trials Priorities and Paddling Trails Priorities. There are historic standing structures and archaeological sites not yet evaluated by SHPO as well as NRHP-eligible Kenwood Historic District and Jordan Park Elementary within the 200-foot buffer. There are additional archaeological sites and historic standing structures not yet evaluated by SHPO, as well as NRHP-eligible site PI00287 within the 500-foot buffer. Impacts to publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, recreational facilities of public schools whose playgrounds are open to the public for recreation, and NRHP-eligible resources may be Section 4(f) impacts. Ecological Greenways Critical Linkages, Florida Managed Areas, Greenways Ecological Priority Linkages, Multi-Use Trails Priorities, and Paddling Trails Priorities, land that is publicly owned and designated in the master plan of a city or county as a future park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl area, may be a Section 4(f) resource. All measures will be taken to develop avoidance alternatives and/or measures to minimize harm to these resources to the greatest extent practicable. The proposed project could result in moderate involvement with recreational areas.

The FDOT will identify potential impacts to Section 4(f) resources during the PD&E study.

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Linda Anderson, Federal Highway Administration

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Within the 200' buffer are many areas that are publicly owned, publicly accessible, and have a recreational function. These include:
Sawgrass Lake Park, Weeden Island Preserve, Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, several hiking trails, and and public schools with playgrounds. In addition, there are many acres of Ecological Greenways Critical Linkages, Florida Managed Areas, Greenways Ecological Priority Linkages, Multi-Use Trails Priorities, and Paddling Trails Priorities.

Also within the 200' buffer are historic standing structure and archaeological sites not yet evaluated by SHPO, as well as NRHP-eligible Kenwood Historic District and Jordan Park Elementary.

Within the 500' buffer are additional archaeological sites and historic standing structures not yet evaluated by SHPO, as well as NRHP-eligible site PI00287, Liquor Store.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Impacts to publicly owned parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges may be Section 4(f) impacts.

Impacts to the recreational facilities of public schools whose playgrounds, etc., are open to the public for recreation may be Section 4(f) impacts.

Regarding Ecological Greenways Critical Linkages, Florida Managed Areas, Greenways Ecological Priority Linkages, Multi-Use Trails Priorities, and Paddling Trails Priorities, land that is publicly owned and designated in the master plan of a city or county as a future park, recreation area, or wildlife

and waterfowl area, may be a Section 4(f) resource.

Impacts to NRHP-eligible resources may be Section 4(f) impacts.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Historic and Archaeological Sites

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Seminole Tribe of Florida, and Florida Department of State (SHPO) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified one Florida Master Site File (FMSF) Cemetery, two FMSF Historic Bridges, 76 FMSF Historic Standing Structures, five FMSF Archaeological or Historic Sites, and one NRHP-listed district (Kenwood Historic District) within the 500-foot buffer distance.

The SWFWMD stated that the SWFWMD-owned land known as Sawgrass Lake Park extends into the 200-foot buffer on the west side of the road. If historical or archeological artifacts are discovered at any time on the parcel owned by the SWFWMD, the FDOT shall immediately notify the SWFWMD and the Florida Department of State Division of Historic Resources. There is a possibility the SWFWMD owned land may be impacted by the construction of the roadway. Establishing the limits of the SWFWMD-owned Sawgrass Lake Park prior to pond siting will help reduce or eliminate potential for impacts within this parcel.

The FHWA stated the NRHP-eligible Kenwood Historic District, 2 historic standing structures not evaluated by SHPO and 3 archaeological sites not evaluated by SHPO are within the 100-foot buffer. The Aquaplex Resource Group (not NRHP-eligible), 8 historic standing structures (6 of which have not been evaluated by SHPO), 4 archaeological sites not evaluated by SHPO and Jordan Park Elementary School (NRHP-eligible) were identified within the 200-foot buffer. Five archaeological sites not evaluated by SHPO, 76 historic standing structures, and Site PI00287 (NRHP-eligible) were identified within the 500-foot buffer. Effects to historic resources from additional lanes are probably minor as there appears to be sufficient median to add two lanes within ROW. A systematic Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) of the project area of potential effect (APE) should be performed.

The Seminole Tribe of Florida stated that due to the presence of multiple sites near the project corridor, the STOF-THPO would like to request a CRAS be conducted in order to determine effects, if any, to archaeological sites within the project's APE. The STOF-THPO would like to review a CRAS before commenting on possible effects to archaeological sites in the project area.

SHPO stated that there is a high concentration of historic structures within the area of potential effect. Many are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Further consultation with SHPO may be needed after the review of the CRAS.

Several Cultural Resource Assessment Surveys (CRAS) have been prepared which overlap and are adjacent to this project corridor. When the CRAS is prepared, it will reflect the results of performing a systematic archaeological field survey and a historic structures survey for the projects APE which includes the bridges, project corridor, and stromwater management facilities. If applicable, Section 106 Consultation would be conducted to assess potential project impacts to any cultural resources that are determined eligible for listing in the NRHP.

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Linda Anderson, Federal Highway Administration

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Within 100' buffer:

1. NRHP-eligible Kenwood Historic District
2. 2 historic standing structures not evaluated by SHPO
3. 3 archaeological sites not evaluated by SHPO

Within 200' buffer:

1. Aquaplex Resource Group - not NRHP-eligible
2. 8 historic standing structures, 6 of which have not been evaluated by SHPO
3. 4 archaeological sites not evaluated by SHPO
4. Jordan Park Elementary School (NRHP-eligible)

Within 500' buffer:

1. 5 archaeological sites not evaluated by SHPO
2. 76 historic standing structures, most of which have not been evaluated by SHPO
3. Site PI00287, Liquor Store (NRHP-eligible)

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Effects to historic resources from addition of lanes is probably minor as there appears to be sufficient median to add two lanes within ROW. Effects from interchange improvements and ponds is unknown, as locations are unknown, so I am assigning a DOE of "Moderate."

A systematic CRAS of the project APE should be performed.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/09/2013 by Alison Swing, Seminole Tribe of Florida

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required
Coordination Document Comments: The STOF-THPO would like to be informed if cultural resources that are potentially ancestral or historically relevant to the Seminole Tribe of Florida are inadvertently discovered during the construction process.

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Due to the presence of multiple sites near the project corridor, the STOF-THPO would like to request a CRAS be conducted in order to determine effects, if any, to archaeological sites within the project's APE.
Comments on Effects to Resources:
The STOF-THPO would like to review a CRAS before commenting on possible effects to archaeological sites in the project area.
Additional Comments (optional):
The STOF-THPO would like to be informed if cultural resources that are potentially ancestral or historically relevant to the Seminole Tribe of Florida are inadvertently discovered during the construction process.
CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required
Coordination Document Comments:
It is SWFWMD s understanding that FDOT requests comments from SWFWMD on historical or archaeological resources through the ETDM process only when those resources are located on lands owned by SWFWMD. Thus, the Degree of Effect of minimal is based solely on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary interests and obligations. Additional coordination and evaluation of potential impacts to historical and archeological resources, regardless of land ownership, will occur as part of the environmental resource permitting process.

Pursuant to Rule 40D-4.302, F.A.C. (Additional Conditions for Issuance of Permits), applicants must provide reasonable assurance that proposed activities will not be contrary to the public interest, or if such an activity significantly degrades or is within an Outstanding Florida Water, that the activity will be clearly in the public interest. One of the factors considered in this determination is whether the activity will adversely affect or will enhance significant historical and archaeological resources under the provisions of Section 267.061, F.S.

Pursuant to Section 3.2.7.c of the District s ERP Basis of Review (available at http://www/permits/rules/); the District will review proposed secondary impacts to historical and archeological resources as part of an ERP application by the FDOT. All reasonable effort should be made to avoid impacts to significant historical and archaeological resources.

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
SWFWMD s responsibility in the ETDM review process is to identify only those historical and archeological sites located on District owned/controlled lands. Review of the District s ArcMap GIS indicates that a portion of the District Owned Land known as Sawgrass Lake Park extends into the 200 foot buffer on the west side of the road.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
If historical or archeological artifacts are discovered at any time on the parcel owned by the SWFWMD, the FDOT shall immediately notify the District and the Florida Department of State Division of Historic Resources Reference: Rule 40D-4.381(1)(w) F.A.C

Additional Comments (optional):
It is SWFWMD s understanding that FDOT requests comments from SWFWMD on historical or archaeological resources through the ETDM process only when those resources are located on lands owned by SWFWMD. Thus, the Degree of Effect of minimal is based solely on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary interests and obligations. Additional coordination and evaluation of potential impacts to historical and archeological resources, regardless of land ownership, will occur as part of the environmental resource permitting process.

Pursuant to Rule 40D-4.302, F.A.C. (Additional Conditions for Issuance of Permits), applicants must provide reasonable assurance that proposed activities will not be contrary to the public interest, or if such an activity significantly degrades or is within an Outstanding Florida Water, that the activity will be clearly in the public interest. One of the factors considered in this determination is whether the activity will adversely affect or will enhance significant historical and archaeological resources under the provisions of Section 267.061, F.S.

Pursuant to Section 3.2.7.c of the District s ERP Basis of Review (available at http://www/permits/rules/); the District will review proposed secondary impacts to historical and archeological resources as part of an ERP application by the FDOT. All reasonable effort should be made to avoid impacts to significant historical and archaeological resources.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/09/2013 by Alyssa McManus, FL Department of State

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
THERE IS A HIGH CONCENTRATION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES WITHIN THE AREA OF POTENTIAL EFFECT FOR THIS PROJECT. MANY ARE LISTED OR ELIGIBLE FOR LISTING ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.
Comments on Effects to Resources:
EFFECTS WILL DEPENDON THE RESULTS OF THE FORTHCOMING CULTURAL RESOURCES ASSEMENT SURVEY, BUT COULD RANGE FROM MINIMAL TO SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECTS. FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH THIS OFFICE AFTER THE REVIEW OF THE CRAS WILL BE LIKELY.
Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Recreation Areas

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified Submerged Lands Act, one Low Greenways Ecological Priority Linkage, two Medium and one Low Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) multi-use trails priorities, one Medium OGT paddling trails priority, and Pinellas Trail within the 100-foot buffer distance and two National Park Projects, Maximo Community Playground, Palmetto Park, Norwood Secondary School, Imagine Charter School, and Sawgrass Lake Park Trail within the 500-foot buffer distance.

The SWFWMD stated that they own the 333 +/- Acre Sawgrass Lake Park, located within the 200-foot buffer. It does not appear that existing recreational uses will be impacted within this parcel. However, impacts to all recreational areas shall be considered in evaluation of the application for an environmental resource permit. Establishing the limits of Sawgrass Lake Park prior to pond siting will help reduce or eliminate potential for impacts within this parcel.

The USEPA identified resources from the EST GIS analysis. They noted that additional ROW is anticipated only for offsite stormwater treatment facilities and interchange improvements. It is also anticipated that Section 4(f) resources will be avoided. There are some sensitive environmental and natural resource areas located near the project that should be avoided or minimized. FDOT should evaluate direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to recreation areas features such as the ones listed and any other public or private parks within the vicinity. The PD&E study should include a survey of

the area to identify if any recreation areas which would require a Section 4(f) review are present in the project area.

The FDEP stated that Weedon Island Preserve, Sawgrass Lake Park, Boyd Hill Nature Park and Pinellas Trail are located within the 500-foot buffer zone of the proposed project. These lands contain significant natural communities and numerous element occurrences of listed species. The Department is interested in preserving the area's natural communities, wildlife corridor functions, natural flood control, stormwater runoff filtering capabilities, aquifer recharge potential, and recreational trail opportunities. Therefore, future environmental documentation should include an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts of highway/bridge expansion on the above public lands and any proposed acquisition sites.

The FHWA stated also identified the recreational resource from the EST GIS analysis and assigned a Moderate DOE since locations of ponds and interchange improvements are unknown.

The FDOT will evaluate potential impacts to recreational resources along the project corridor during the PD&E study.

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Lauren P. Milligan, FL Department of Environmental Protection

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The Weedon Island Preserve, Sawgrass Lake Park, Boyd Hill Nature Park and Pinellas Trail are located within the 500-ft. buffer zone of the proposed project.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
These lands contain significant natural communities and numerous element occurrences of listed species, as indicated by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory. The Department is interested in preserving the area's natural communities, wildlife corridor functions, natural flood control, stormwater runoff filtering capabilities, aquifer recharge potential, and recreational trail opportunities. Therefore, future environmental documentation should include an evaluation of the primary, secondary, and cumulative impacts of highway/bridge expansion on the above public lands and any proposed acquisition sites.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Coordination Document Comments:
It is SWFWMD s understanding that FDOT requests comments from SWFWMD on potential recreational impacts only when those activities are located on lands owned by SWFWMD. Thus, the Degree of Effect of minimal is based solely on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary interests and obligations. Additional coordination and evaluation of potential impacts to recreational areas, regardless of land ownership, will occur as part of the environmental resource permitting process.

Pursuant to Rule 40D-4.302, F.A.C. (Additional Conditions for Issuance of Permits), applicants must provide reasonable assurance that proposed activities will not be contrary to the public interest, or if such an activity significantly degrades or is within an Outstanding Florida Water, that the activity will be clearly in the public interest. FDOT must provide reasonable assurance that the project will not be contrary to the public interest considering its effects on fishing or recreational values (Reference: Rule 40D-4.302(1)(a) F.A.C. and Section 3.2.3 of the District s ERP Basis of Review available at http://www/permits/rules/).

For the I-275 from S. of 54th Ave S to N of 4th St N project, design accommodations should be included to eliminate or reduce potential impacts to public lands and recreational areas. FDOT is encouraged to contact the District Land Management Department (in Brooksville) regarding any District-owned or managed lands that may incur actual or potential impacts resulting from a project. If necessary, final design accommodations should be included to eliminate or reduce potential impacts to public lands and recreational areas.

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
SWFWMD s responsibility in the ETDM review process is to identify only those recreation sites located on District owned/controlled lands. From the SWFWMD s Geographic Information System (GIS), the District owns the following land within the 200 foot buffer:

- The 333 +/- Acre Sawgrass Lake Park, located immediately adjacent to the west side of CR 769 (Kings Highway).

Upon analysis of the I-275 from S. of 54th Ave S to N. of 4th St N (under the EST s Recreation Areas map); it does not appear that existing recreational uses will be impacted within this parcel owned by the SWFWMD. It should be noted, however, that impacts to all recreational areas shall be considered in evaluation of the application for an environmental resource permit (refer to the Additional Comments section below).

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The District purchases and manages land in order to protect water resources. As a result, the potential exists for future recreational opportunities on the Sawgrass Lake Park. Wildlife, including Listed Species, which live on these lands, is also protected / managed.

Additional Comments (optional):
It is SWFWMD s understanding that FDOT requests comments from SWFWMD on potential recreational impacts only when those activities are located on lands owned by SWFWMD. Thus, the Degree of Effect of minimal is based solely on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary interests and obligations. Additional coordination and evaluation of potential impacts to recreational areas, regardless of land ownership, will occur as part of the environmental resource permitting process.

Pursuant to Rule 40D-4.302, F.A.C. (Additional Conditions for Issuance of Permits), applicants must provide reasonable assurance that proposed activities will not be contrary to the public interest, or if such an activity significantly degrades or is within an Outstanding Florida Water, that the activity will be clearly in the public interest. FDOT must provide reasonable assurance that the project will not be contrary to the public interest considering its effects on fishing or recreational values (Reference: Rule 40D-4.302(1)(a) F.A.C. and Section 3.2.3 of the District s ERP Basis of Review available at http://www/permits/rules/).

For the I-275 from S. of 54th Ave S to N of 4th St N project, design accommodations should be included to eliminate or reduce potential impacts to public lands and recreational areas. FDOT is encouraged to contact the District Land Management Department (in Brooksville) regarding any District-owned or managed lands that may incur actual or potential impacts resulting from a project. If necessary, final design accommodations should be included to eliminate or reduce potential impacts to public lands and recreational areas.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/17/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Resources: Recreation Areas - recreational trails, conservation lands, Florida Managed Areas, Parks, National Park Projects, and public or privately owned parks, etc.

Level of Importance: These recreational areas are of a high level of importance in the State of Florida. A minimal degree of effect is being assigned to this issue for the proposed project (ETDM #12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:
The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the EST GIS analysis identified Submerged Lands Act, one Low Greenways Ecological Priority Linkage, two Medium and one Low Office of Greenways and Trails (OGT) multi-use trails priorities, one Medium OGT paddling trails priority, and Pinellas Trail within the 100-foot buffer distance and two National Park Projects, Maximo Community Playground, Palmetto Park, Norwood Secondary School, Imagine Charter School, and Sawgrass Lake Park Trail within the 500-foot buffer distance. All measures will be taken to develop avoidance alternatives and/or measures to minimize harm to these resources to the greatest extent practicable. The proposed project could result in moderate involvement with recreational areas.

***Section 4(f) Potential**:* Additional right-of-way (ROW) is anticipated only for offsite stormwater treatment facilities and interchange improvements. It is anticipated that Section 4(f) resources will be avoided, but coordination will occur with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) during Project Development as additional ROW location needs are determined.

EPA provides the following recreation area comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase: The following recreation areas are within close proximity to the proposed project and could be directly and indirectly impacted by the interstate widening project:

Recreational Trails:
Sawgrass Lake Park Trail (500 ft)
Pinellas Trail (100 ft)

Florida Managed Areas:
Sawgrass Lake Park (200 ft)
Weedon Island Preserve (200 ft)
Boyd Hill Nature Park (500 ft)

Parks:

Maximo Community Playground (500 ft)
Palmetto Park (500 ft)

National Park Projects:
Lake Maggiore Park (500 ft)
Wildwood Park (500 ft)

There are also other recreational areas such as city-owned or privately-owned parkslisted as being within proximity of the project.

EPA is assigning a minimal degree of effect to this issue. There are some sensitive environmental and natural resource areas located near the project that should be avoided or minimized. FDOT should evaluate direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to recreation areas features such as the ones listed and any other public or private parks within the vicinity. The PD&E study should include a survey of the area to identify if any recreation areas which would require a Section 4(f) review are present in the project area. Opportunities to avoid and or minimize impacts and fragmentation to recreational resources should be evaluated and considered to the greatest extent practicable.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Linda Anderson, Federal Highway Administration

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Within 100' buffer:

1. 38 acres of Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve
2. 1 recreation trail
3. 392 acres of Ecological Greenways Critical Linkages
4. 66.5 acres Greenways Ecological Priority Linkages
5. 294 acres Multi-Use Trails Priorities
6. 62.5 acres paddling Trails Priorities

Within 200' buffer:

1.72 acres of Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve
2.2 recreation trails
3.768 acres of Ecological Greenways Critical Linkages
4.135 acres Greenways Ecological Priority Linkages
5.573 acres Multi-Use Trails Priorities
6.125 acres paddling Trails Priorities
7. Sawgrass Lake Park
8. Weeden Island Preserve

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Probably minor but because locations of ponds and interchange improvements are unknown, I am assigning a DOE of "moderate."
Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

ETAT Reviews and Coordinator Summary: Natural

Wetlands

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Marine Fisheries

Service (NMFS), US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), and the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) analysis National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) identified 0.0 acre, 0.0 acre and 2.0 acres of Lacustrine wetlands, 7.7 acres, 26.0 acres and 154.8 acres of Estuarine wetlands, and 1.0 acre, 10.1 acres and 78.4 acres of Palustrine within the 100-foot, 200-foot and 500-foot buffers, respectively.

The USFWS stated that the project area supports high quality wetland ecosystems that provide many economic benefits and ecological functions across the landscape. The Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve is within 100 feet and Boca Ciega Bay Aquatic Preserve is within 500 feet of I-275; the Weedon Island Preserve, Boyd Hill Nature Park, Sawgrass Lake Park and Pinellas NWR (approximately one mile south of project) are also adjacent to I-275. All conservation areas could be impacted indirectly by increased stormwater runoff, sedimentation and contamination from oil, grease, gas, trash, etc. that could drain into the aquatic preserve areas. The project should include drainage improvements to reduce the amount of contaminants entering Tampa Bay. All equipment staging areas should be in previously disturbed areas and well outside of any wetland buffers to prevent contamination from spills. If additional travel lanes are constructed within the existing travelway, direct impacts should be minimal. However, if additional lanes are added to the outside of the existing highway and construction involves any of the nearshore areas, direct impacts could be substantial and informal consultation should be initiated with USFWS for Florida manatees.

The NMFS stated that Resources include Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay, which contain estuarine habitats used by federally-managed fish species and their prey. NMFS staff conducted a site inspection of the project area on May 9, 2013, to assess potential concerns related to living marine resources within Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay. The lands adjacent to the proposed project are principally urban commercial and residential properties with occasional disturbed palustrine wetlands. It does not appear that the project will directly impact any NMFS trust resources. However, the projects southern terminus lies within 220 feet of boat slips at Loggerhead Marina and within 380 feet of Maximo Channel, which are both connected to Tampa Bay. The road crosses over a drainage canal connected with Sawgrass Lake. The projects northern terminus includes a portion of causeway shorelines, which contain some mangrove habitat and seagrass beds that lie adjacent to the shoreline on both sides. Increased use of the road could result in an increase in the amount of sediment, oil, and grease, metals and other pollutants reaching estuarine habitats. NMFS recommends that stormwater treatment systems be upgraded to prevent degraded water from reaching these estuarine habitats. Best management practices should be employed during road construction to control erosion and prevent siltation of estuarine habitats, especially seagrasses.

The USEPA stated that the proposed project may result in potential involvement with wetland resources, including wetlands associated with the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve and the Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve, both of which are Outstanding Florida Waters. Increased stormwater runoff and the increase of pollutants into surface waters and wetlands are also a concern. Stormwater treatment areas/ponds should be designed to protect the function of surrounding wetlands, floodplains, and surface water features. It is recommended that the environmental phase (PD&E) of the project include delineation of wetlands; functional analysis of wetlands to determine their value and function; an evaluation of stormwater pond sites to determine their impact on wetlands; a review of surface water crossings to determine their impact on wetlands and floodplains; avoidance and minimization strategies for wetlands; and mitigation plans to compensate for adverse impacts.

The FDEP identified 154.8 acres of estuarine, 78.4 acres of palustrine and 2 acres of lacustrine wetlands within the 500-foot project buffer zone. The GIS also identified 65.0 acres of mangroves, 29.8 acres of continuous seagrass beds and 30.1 acres of discontinuous seagrass beds within the 500-foot buffer. The project will require an environmental resource permit (ERP) from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The ERP applicant will be required to eliminate or reduce the proposed wetland resource impacts of highway/bridge construction to the greatest extent practicable. Minimization should emphasize avoidance-oriented corridor alignments, wetland fill reductions via pile bridging and steep/vertically retained side slopes, and median width reductions within safety limits. Wetlands should not be displaced by the installation of stormwater conveyance and treatment swales; compensatory treatment in adjacent uplands is the preferred alternative. After avoidance and minimization have been exhausted, mitigation must be proposed to offset the adverse impacts of the project to existing wetland functions and values. Significant attention is given to forested wetland systems and seagrass beds, which are difficult to mitigate. The cumulative impacts of concurrent and future transportation improvement projects in the vicinity of the subject project should also be addressed.

The SWFWMD stated that seagrasses are located in close proximity to the causeways and the most concentrated areas appear to be directly adjacent to these causeways with the seagrasses transitioning into tidal flats as they head further waterward of the bridge. The northern terminus of the proposed route sits on man-made causeways with mangrove swamps and vegetated shoreline, with vegetation indicative of the tidal nature of the system. Wetland/open water impacts can occur as a result of the placement of new pilings, as well as from the potential shading impacts associated with the replacement bridge over Big Island Gap. The SWFWMD owned recreation area, Sawgrass Lake Park, is on the west side of I-275. The 333-acre parks wetland diversity includes, but is not limited to, streams and lake swamps (FLUCCS 615), wetland forested mixed (FLUCCS 630), lakes (FLUCCS 520), and emergent aquatic vegetation (FLUCCS 644). If the proposed roadway widening occurs within the limits of the existing FDOT Right-of-Way, the area of Sawgrass Lake Park will avoid wetland impacts. A Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Survey will need to be conducted between the months of April and November as part of the permit application process. As a general guideline, the SAV Survey should be no older than 2 years due to the dynamic nature of seagrasses. Any seagrass impacts would be in the form of direct impacts and also shading impacts. Direct impacts would occur from the installation of the new pilings for the alteration of the existing bridge and shading impacts could possibly occur based upon the height of the new bridge. The main areas for the potential for wetland impacts are to the wetlands and restoration areas associated with Big Island Gap.

Expansion of the roadway outside of the existing ROW has a high potential for wetland impacts. Wetland impacts can be reduced by the following: adjustment of the alignment to avoid direct impacts to the emergent and submerged wetland areas, implementation of strict controls over sediment transport off site during construction, restriction of the activity of vehicles and equipment to only those areas that must be utilized for construction and staging, implementing effective mitigation measures to compensate for wetland impacts, and selection of treatment pond sites away from existing wetlands.

The USACE stated the EST GIS analysis National Wetlands Inventory identified 2.0 acres (0.11%) of Lacustrine, 154.8 acres (8.12%) of Estuarine, and 78.4 acres (4.11%) of Palustrine within the 500-foot buffer distance. A Wetland Evaluation/Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) will be prepared for this project. However, the corridor is highly urbanized and disturbed. Tidal wetlands and other palustrine wetlands and open waters are also present. The USACE recommends that project alternatives should be designed with avoidance and minimization in mind in order to reduce the amount of fill proposed in wetlands or waters, including options where no fill or other related impact on aquatic resources impacts will occur. The USACE will only authorize a project that is supported by evidence that the preferred alternative is the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). The PD&E team should review the 404(B)(1) Guidelines to ensure the appropriate factors are considered so that the USACE may utilize the results of the alternatives analysis during any future permit application review and evaluation. The FDOT should provide a summary, in acres, and method of impact avoidance or minimization. If unavoidable wetland impacts are anticipated, then the current preference for compensatory mitigation is purchasing mitigation bank credits from a federally approved mitigation bank. If permitted responsible mitigation is proposed, then the site proposed to offset any impacts should be identified and all measures undertaken to ensure the mitigation project complies with the requirements of the 2008 Mitigation Rule as stated in 33 CFR 332. If any new outfalls, structures, scour counter measures, temporary work platforms or other in-water work is proposed in areas that are accessible to listed (or candidate) species, the FDOT should consult with NMFS or FWS to obtain written concurrence or a biological opinion to avoid delays during the permitting phase of the project. The project team should evaluate all USACE authorizations within the area be reviewed to ensure that any proposed alternative would not impact a previously authorized USACE compensatory mitigation site.

The FDOT will prepare a WEBAR as part of the PD&E study. The WEBAR will assess locations and function of existing wetlands and the potential for impacts to these resources. As part of the WEBAR, FDOT shall research existing permits for all parcels directly adjacent to the existing and proposed right-of-way for conservation easements (perpetual or temporary), municipal consents, mitigation, or other restrictions that may exist on the adjacent parcels. Conservation easements may include, but not be limited to, easements in favor of the USACE, USFWS, FDEP, FFWCC, and SWFWMD. The FDOT research methods may include, but should not be limited to, review of permit files at the regulatory agencies, review of on-line databases, review of GIS data and shape files, review of local government land use and zoning data, contacting local governments as necessary and review of county property appraisers records. Permitting will be conducted with the appropriate regulatory agencies during any future design and prior to construction. The FDOT will take measures to minimize and/or avoid impacts to wetlands, existing conservation easements, mitigation areas or other environmentally sensitive areas.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Lauren P. Milligan, FL Department of Environmental Protection

Coordination Document: Permit Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

The National Wetlands Inventory GIS report indicates that there are 154.8 acres of estuarine, 78.4 acres of palustrine and 2 acres of lacustrine wetlands within the 500-ft. project buffer zone. The proposed project will impact the Boca Ciega Bay and Pinellas County Aquatic Preserves and Gateway Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW). The designations thus reflected in Chapters 253, 258, and 373, Florida Statutes, afford the highest level of state protection to the subject resources. Additionally, the GIS report indicates that there are 65.0 acres of mangroves, 29.8 acres of continuous seagrass beds and 30.1 acres of discontinuous seagrass beds within the 500-ft. buffer of the proposed project.

Comments on Effects to Resources:

If new construction is proposed, the project will require an environmental resource permit (ERP) from the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The ERP applicant will be required to eliminate or reduce the proposed wetland resource impacts of highway/bridge construction to the greatest extent practicable:

- Minimization should emphasize avoidance-oriented corridor alignments, wetland fill reductions via pile bridging and steep/vertically retained side slopes, and median width reductions within safety limits.
- Wetlands should not be displaced by the installation of stormwater conveyance and treatment swales; compensatory treatment in adjacent uplands is the preferred alternative.
- After avoidance and minimization have been exhausted, mitigation must be proposed to offset the adverse impacts of the project to existing wetland functions and values. Significant attention is given to forested wetland systems and seagrass beds, which are difficult to mitigate.
- The cumulative impacts of concurrent and future transportation improvement projects in the vicinity of the subject project should also be addressed.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/15/2013 by Jane Monaghan, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

This area supports high quality wetland ecosystems that provide food, water and cover for fish and wildlife, including important stopover sites for migratory birds and foraging areas for manatees.

The project description indicates that no in-water work around bridges, involving seagrass beds will be needed. Therefore, USFWS believes the direct impacts to wetlands will be minimal. These wetlands provide many economic benefits and ecological functions across the landscape, such as filtration of sediments and contaminants, protection from flooding and habitat for fish and wildlife, including migratory birds. The Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve is within 100ft and Boca Ciega Bay Aquatic Preserve is within 500ft of I-275. The Weedon Island Preserve, Boyd Hill Nature Park, Sawgrass Lake Park and Pinellas NWR (approximately one mile south of project) are also adjacent to the I-275 corridor and all conservation areas could be impacted indirectly by increased stormwater runoff, sedimentation and contamination from oil, grease, gas, trash,etc that could drain into the aquatic preserve areas. The project should include drainage improvements to reduce the amount of contaminants entering Tampa Bay. All equipment staging areas should be in previously disturbed areas and well outside of any wetland buffers to prevent contamination from spills.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
If the additional travel lanes are constructed within the existing travelway, the direct impacts could be minimal. If additional lanes are added to the outside of the existing highway and construction involves any of the nearshore areas, the direct impacts could be substantial and informal consultation should be initiated with USFWS for Florida manatees.
Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/06/2013 by Garett Lips, US Army Corps of Engineers

Coordination Document: Permit Required

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The EST GIS analysis National Wetlands Inventory identified 2.0 acres (0.11%) of Lacustrine, 154.8 acres (8.12%) of Estuarine, and 78.4 acres (4.11%) of Palustrine within the 500-foot buffer distance. A Wetland Evaluation / Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) will be prepared for this project. However, the corridor is high urbanized and disturbed. Tidal wetlands and other palustrine wetlands and open waters are also present.
Comments on Effects to Resources:
The project alternatives should bedesigned with avoidanceand minimizationin mind to reduce, to the extent practical, the amount of fill proposed in wetlands or waters.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/18/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Resources: Wetlands, wetlands habitat

Level of Importance: These resources are of a high level of importance in the State of Florida and within the project area. A moderate degree of efffect is being assigned to this issue for the proposed project (ETDM#12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Avenue N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:
The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the EST GIS analysis National Wetlands Inventory identified 2.0 acres (0.11%) of Lacustrine, 154.8 acres (8.12%) of Estuarine, and 78.4 acres (4.11%) of Palustrine within the 500-foot buffer distance. A Wetland Evaluation / Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) will be prepared for this project. The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement with wetland resources.

EPA provides the following wetlands comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase: The GIS analysis data (National Wetlands Inventory) in the EST for wetlands indicates that there are wetlands present along the roadway corridor within the 100, 200, and 500 foot buffer distances.

100 foot buffer distance:
Estuarine 7.7 acres
Palustrine 1.0 acres

200 foot buffer distance:
Estuarine 26.0 acres
Palustrine 10.1 acres

500 foot buffer distance:
Lacustrine 2.0 acres
Estuarine 154.8 acres
Palustrine 78.4 acres

The project will have potential impacts on wetland resources, including wetlands associated with the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve and the Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve, both of which are also Outstanding Florida Waters.

Other issues of concern include increased stormwater runoff and the increase of pollutants into surface waters and wetlands as a result of the roadway and other point and nonpoint sources. Every effort should be made to maximize the treatment of stormwater. Stormwater treatment areas/ponds should be designed to protect the function of surrounding wetlands, floodplains, and surface water features.

It is recommended that the environmental phase (PD&E) of the project include delineation of wetlands; functional analysis of wetlands to determine their value and function; an evaluation of stormwater pond sites to determine their impact on wetlands; a review of surface water crossings (such as bridges) to determine their impact on wetlands and floodplains; avoidance and minimization strategies for wetlands; and mitigation plans to compensate for adverse impacts.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/13/2013 by David A. Rydene, National Marine Fisheries Service

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual
Coordination Document Comments:NMFS would like to review the Wetland Evaluation/Biological Assessment Report that FDOT has already committed to producing (see Preliminary Environmental Discussion - Wetlands).

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Resources include Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay, which contain estuarine habitats used by federally-managed fish species and their prey.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the information contained in the Environmental Screening Tool for ETDM Project # 12556. The Florida Department of Transportation District Seven proposes widening I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida. FDOT s PD&E study will evaluate the addition of either general purpose or managed lanes, and interchange improvements as ways to improve capacity, lane continuity, and safety.

NMFS staff conducted a site inspection of the project area on May 9, 2013, to assess potential concerns related to living marine resources within Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay. The lands adjacent to the proposed project are principally urban commercial and residential properties with occasional disturbed palustrine wetlands. It does not appear that the project will directly impact any NMFS trust resources. However, the project s southern terminus (as shown in the project s EST map) lies within 220 feet of boat slips at Loggerhead Marina and within 380 feet of Maximo Channel. Both are connected to Tampa Bay. The road also crosses over a drainage canal connected with Sawgrass Lake to the west, and draining to Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay to the east. The project s northern terminus (as shown in the project s EST map) includes a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway (Pinellas County side). The causeway s shorelines contain some mangrove habitat and seagrass beds lie adjacent to the shorelines on both sides of the causeway. Tampa Bay contains estuarine habitats (e.g. seagrass, salt marsh, mangrove) used by federally-managed fish species and their prey. Increased use of the road could result in an increase in the amount of sediment, oil and grease, metals, and other pollutants reaching estuarine habitats utilized by marine fishery resources. Therefore, NMFS recommends that stormwater treatment systems be upgraded to prevent degraded water from reaching these estuarine habitats. In addition, best management practices should be employed during road construction to control erosion and prevent siltation of estuarine habitats, especially seagrasses.

Additional Comments (optional):
NMFS would like to review the Wetland Evaluation/Biological Assessment Report that FDOT has already committed to producing (see Preliminary Environmental Discussion - Wetlands).
CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: Permit Required
Coordination Document Comments:
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE of moderate was assigned to this issue due to the fact the wetlands will need to be delineated, quantified, and labeled on the construction plans as part of the permit review. Additional coordination with other departments within the District (Land Bureau and SWIM) and with FDEP (proprietary authorization) may increase the length of time required to issue the permit. Wetland mitigation will be required to offset the potential impacts to the wetlands located within the proposed ROW.

The District will require a delineation of the landward extent of wetland and surface water features by a qualified environmental scientist, pursuant to Chapter 62-340, F.A.C. The District recommends that the FDOT submit a Formal Wetland Determination Petition prior to the ERP application submittal. For the wetland impacts and the impacts to the creeks and analysis utilizing the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) to determine the wetland mitigation required to offset the wetland impacts. The proposed road project is located within the service area for Tampa Bay Mitigation Bank [ERP 43020546.000] so coordination with this mitigation bank may be needed during the permit application process if the proper type of mitigation credits is available. If not, other mitigation options will need to be assessed to properly offset the impacts.

If this project will require the acquisition of new right-of-way areas, the current rule for eminent domain noticing is 40D-1.603(9), FAC and requires the applicant to provide the noticing to the affected property owners. Additionally, any issued permit may include special conditions prohibiting construction until the FDOT provides evidence of ownership and control.

For ERP permitting purposes, the project area is located in the Tampa Bay Watershed. The SWFWMD has assigned a pre-application file (PA# 8974) for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. The pre-application file is maintained at the SWFWMD s Tampa Service Office. Please refer to the pre-application file when contacting SWFWMD regulatory staff regarding this project.

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The bridge near the northern terminus extends over Big Island Gap which is tidally influenced, open water associated with Old Tampa Bay. The average depth of the water below the bridge is 1-2 feet deep with the deepest channel located near the center of the bridge (reference - NOAA Nautical Chart 11416). Due to the bathymetry of the water surrounding the bridge, seagrasses are located in close proximity to the causeways. Based on the data collected by the SWFWMD Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) section, it appears the most concentrated areas of seagrasses are directly adjacent to these causeways with the seagrasses transitioning into tidal flats as they head further waterward of the bridge and causeways, in Pinellas County. The *Tampa Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan* (February 8, 1999) indicates there are three (3) types of seagrasses located within Tampa Bay. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), utilizing SWFWMD data, estimates Old Tampa Bay saw an 11% increase in seagrass coverage in the last 2 years with approximately 6, 977-acres of seagrasses in the estuary.

The northern terminus of the proposed route is situated on man-made causeways with mangrove swamps (FLUCCs 612) and vegetated shoreline (FLUCCs 652). These areas are vegetated with several species, such as seagrape (*Coccoloba uvifera)*, buttonwood (*Conocarpus erectus),* all 3 types of mangroves, shoreline seapurslane (*Sesuviium portulacastrum),* and seaside oxeye (*Borrichia frutescens*), which are indicative of the tidal nature of the system. There have been several restoration projects completed in these areas, conducted by SWIM or in cooperation with TBEP or other stakeholders. Some of these projects extend south along the propose project area towards the Roosevelt Avenue intersection.

North of 62nd Avenue North on the west side of I-275 is the District owned recreation area, Sawgrass Lake Park. This 333-acre park has had several permits to restore the area and to enhance the stormwater runoff associated with the surrounding area. The wetland diversity throughout this park includes, but are not limited to, streams and lake swamps (FLUCCS 615), wetland forested mixed (FLUCCS 630), lakes (FLUCCS 520), and emergent aquatic vegetation (FLUCCS 644).

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Wetland / open water impacts can occur resulting from the placement of the new pilings and from the potential shading impacts associated with the replacement bridge extending over Big Island Gap. Review of the Pinellas County parcels indicates that if the proposed roadway widening occurs within the limits of the existing FDOT Right-of-Way (ROW) in the area of Sawgrass Lake Park will avoid wetland impacts.

There is a possibility of seagrass impacts if the existing bridge crossing over Big Island Gap. A comparison of the 2010 seagrass survey and the 2008 seagrass survey showed an 11% increase in the seagrass coverage for Tampa Bay (*SWFWMD Seagrass 2010 Seagrass Distribution from Tarpon Springs to Boca Grande)*; therefore, it is likely the increasing coverage will continue prior to the commencement of construction. A Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) Survey will need to be conducted between the months of April and November. The SAV Survey will be reviewed as part of the permit application process. As a general guideline, the SAV Survey should be no older than 2 years due to the dynamic nature of seagrasses.

Seagrass impacts would be in the form of direct impacts and also shading impacts. The direct impacts would occur from the installation of the new

pilings for the alteration of the existing bridge over Big Island Gap. Depending on the height of the replacement bridge, shading impacts to the seagrass beds are possible. In the past, the District has accepted Contingency Plans associated with the potential shading impacts since they are difficult to predict prior to the construction of the actual structures. An example of an acceptable Contingency Plan would consist of restoration of nearby seagrass beds with prop damage using the transplanted seagrasses removed from the piling impacted areas.

Seagrass and wetland impacts would be evaluated utilizing the Uniform Mitigation Assessment (UMAM); however, the mitigation offsetting the seagrass impacts would require preservation, restoration or creation of seagrass beds. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program and SWIM are currently working on several restorations and enhancement projects located near Tampa Bay. Since Public Interest Criteria may need to be addressed as part of the review for the Sovereign Submerged Lands (SSL), it may behoove the FDOT to contact these programs to enquire about future restoration efforts for the Tampa Bay area.

While soft coral and sponges are classified as fauna, the substrate supporting their habitat would fall within the limits of the wetland / open water environment. The potential destruction of the existing habitat and colonies would require mitigation to offset the impact. Most of the conditions conducive to these environments are located outside of the shipping canals, due to water depths, so the relocation of the embedded rocks and colonies may be sufficient to offset the impacts. In addition, a matting material can be installed which may encourage an expansion of the existing colonies or habitats outside the project area. These areas should be identified and/or surveyed during the SAV survey to assist in the permit application review and assessment of total wetland / open water impacts.

Additional Comments (optional):
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE of moderate was assigned to this issue due to the fact the wetlands will need to be delineated, quantified, and labeled on the construction plans as part of the permit review. Additional coordination with other departments within the District (Land Bureau and SWIM) and with FDEP (proprietary authorization) may increase the length of time required to issue the permit. Wetland mitigation will be required to offset the potential impacts to the wetlands located within the proposed ROW.

The District will require a delineation of the landward extent of wetland and surface water features by a qualified environmental scientist, pursuant to Chapter 62-340, F.A.C. The District recommends that the FDOT submit a Formal Wetland Determination Petition prior to the ERP application submittal. For the wetland impacts and the impacts to the creeks and analysis utilizing the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method (UMAM) to determine the wetland mitigation required to offset the wetland impacts. The proposed road project is located within the service area for Tampa Bay Mitigation Bank [ERP 43020546.000] so coordination with this mitigation bank may be needed during the permit application process if the proper type of mitigation credits is available. If not, other mitigation options will need to be assessed to properly offset the impacts.

If this project will require the acquisition of new right-of-way areas, the current rule for eminent domain noticing is 40D-1.603(9), FAC and requires the applicant to provide the noticing to the affected property owners. Additionally, any issued permit may include special conditions prohibiting construction until the FDOT provides evidence of ownership and control.

For ERP permitting purposes, the project area is located in the Tampa Bay Watershed. The SWFWMD has assigned a pre-application file (PA# 8974) for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. The pre-application file is maintained at the SWFWMD s Tampa Service Office. Please refer to the pre-application file when contacting SWFWMD regulatory staff regarding this project.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Water Quality and Quantity

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

A review of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) analysis data indicates that there are 164.4 acres, 330.12 acres and 839.1 acres of 303(d) 1998 Impaired Waters within the 100-foot, 200-foot and 500-foot buffer, respectively. There are 26 USEPA Water Quality Data Monitoring Stations within the 500-foot buffer distance. There is one principal aquifer of the State of Florida and three recharge areas of the Floridan Aquifer within the 100-500 foot buffers. Watershed Conditions 305(B) are classified as 62.6% Fair, 18.27% Good, and 19.13% Poor within the 100-foot buffer distance.

The USEPA states that the following water bodies are listed on the Clean Water Act 303(d) list of impaired waters: Clam Bayou Drain (WBID#1716), Big Bayou (WBID#1709) , St. Joe Creek (WBID#1668A), Direct Runoff to Bay (WBID#1624), Old Tampa Bay (WBID#155G), Old Tampa Bay

(WBID#1558H). The following Outstanding Florida Waters (OFWs) are also located within close proximity to the project area: Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve (100-foot buffer), Gateway (200-foot) and Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve (500-foot). Potential impacts to water quality include stormwater runoff from urban sources, including roadways, carry pollutants such as volatile organics, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and pesticides/herbicides, into nearby surface water bodies. The PD&E study should include a review of water quality standards in the 303(d) listed water bodies, sources of water quality impairments, and TMDL requirements and how these regulations and/or requirements may affect the proposed project and environmental resource permits. It is recommended that FDOT consult with the FDEP water quality program on this issue. FDOT should coordinate and consult with FDEP requiring specific permitting requirements relating to this OFW. Additional stormwater retention and treatment requirements may be required.

The FDEP stated that the proposed project will impact the Boca Ciega Bay and Pinellas County Aquatic Preserves and Gateway Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW). The watershed conditions within the project area are presently considered fair. The FDEP recommends that the PD&E study include an evaluation of existing stormwater treatment adequacy and details on the future stormwater treatment facilities. The permit applicant may be required to demonstrate that the proposed stormwater system meets the design and performance criteria established for the treatment and attenuation of discharges to OFWs, pursuant to rule 40D-4, F.A.C., and the SWFWMD Basis of Review for ERP Applications. Under section 373.414(1), F.S., direct impacts to these waterbodies and associated wetlands must be demonstrated to be "clearly in the public interest" as part of the ERP permitting process.

The SWFWMD stated the northern portion of the project lies within the Pinellas County Aquatic Reserve, which is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water. The proposed project has the potential to result in water quality impacts to the OFWs. Untreated or under-treated runoff generated by the project could impact the eleven watersheds identified in the project area. As of April 2013 two of these watersheds are not currently classified as Verified impaired by the FDEP for nutrient related pollutants. Un-attenuated or under-attenuated runoff could cause flooding impacts to existing off-site stormwater management systems and drainage conveyance facilities. The SWFWMD recommends that FDOT participate as a stakeholder in future TMDL and BMAP activities by the FDEP. The SWFWMD will require that stormwater management systems that discharge directly or indirectly into waters not meeting standards, including impaired waters, provide a net improvement condition in the water body in terms of the pollutants that contribute to the water bodys impairment. A higher level of treatment may be necessary. Stormwater management systems that discharge directly into OFWs are required provide treatment for a volume 50 percent more than required for this projects selected treatment systems. Of particular interest will be the proposed sediment & erosion control plans for the entire project. If applicable, reductions in pollutant loading from stormwater runoff via stormwater treatment facilities or other BMPs will be required to implement future TMDLs and BMAPs should they be finalized and adopted. If equivalent stormwater quality treatment is to be considered, the FDOT must reasonably demonstrate the following: The alternate, contributing areas are hydrologically equivalent to the new and existing, directly-connected impervious watershed areas that would otherwise contribute to the treatment system; the pollution source and loading characteristics are reasonably equivalent, and the treatment benefits occur in the same receiving waters and in the same general locality as the existing point(s) of discharge from the new project area. It is recommended that the FDOT consider stormwater quality treatment together with water quality impacts to wetlands and other surface waters when designing the stormwater water management, components of this project.

The project will be designed to meet state water quality and quantity requirements. The FDOT will create a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) and erosion and sediment control plan during any future design phase of this project. Proper best management practices (BMPs) will be used during construction. The FDOT will coordinate with SWFWMD for water quality and will adhere to state water quality standards during permitting of the proposed project. The FDOT will prepare a Pond Siting Report and an ERP permit will be obtained from SWFWMD during any future design of this project and prior to construction.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/18/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Resources: Water Quality

Level of Importance: This resource is of a high level of importance in the State of Florida and in the project area. A moderate degree of effect is being assigned to the water quality issue for the proposed project (ETDM #12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the EST GIS analysis identified six 303(D) 1998 Impaired Waters within the 100-foot buffer distance and 26 USEPA Water Quality Data Monitoring Stations within the 500-foot buffer distance. Principal Aquifers of the State of Florida described as Other Rocks is 354 acres (90.37%) within the 100-foot buffer distance. The Recharge Areas of the Floridan Aquifer shows a Discharge of 1 to 5 as 28.54%, Discharge of Less Than 1 as 38.06%, and Recharge of 1 to 10 as 33.41% within the 100-foot buffer distance. Watershed Conditions 305(B) Fair is 62.6%, Good is 18.27%, and Poor is 19.13% within the 100-foot buffer distance. The project will be designed to meet state water quality and quantity requirements, and best management practices will be utilized during construction. The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with water quality and quantity resources.

EPA provides the following water quality comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase:

The following water bodies are listed on the Clean Water Act 303(d) list of impaired waters:

Clam Bayou Drain, WBID#1716, Impaired for dissolved oxygen, nutrients, coliforms
Big Bayou, WBID#1709, Impaired for dissolved oxygen, coliforms, nutrients
St. Joe Creek, WBID#1668A, Impaired for dissolved oxygen, coliforms, nutrients, total suspended solids
Direct Runoff to Bay, WBID#1624, Impaired for dissolved oxygen, coliforms, un-ionized ammonia
Old Tampa Bay, WBID#155G, Impaired for coliforms, mercury (fish consumption)
Old Tampa Bay, WBID#1558H, Impaired for coliforms, nutrients, mercury (fish consumption)

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) have been proposed or developed for several of these water quality standard impairments. The PD&E study should include a review of water quality standards in the 303(d) listed water bodies, sources of water quality impairments, and TMDL requirements and how these regulations and/or requirements may affect the proposed project and environmental resource permits. It is recommended that FDOT consult with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection water quality program on this issue.

The following Outstanding Florida Waters (OFWs) are also located within close proximity to the project area:
Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve (100 ft buffer)
Gateway (200 ft)
Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve (500 ft)

OFWs are provided the highest level of protection under the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Degradation of water quality in an OFW is prohibited except under certain circumstances. Pollutant discharges must not lower existing ambient water quality. Any activity within an OFW requiring a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) must be deemed to be clearly in the public interest. FDOT should coordinate and consult with FDEP requiring specific permitting requirements relating to this OFW. Additional stormwater retention and treatment requirements may be required.

Potential impacts to water quality include stormwater runoff into nearby surface water bodies. Stormwater runoff from urban sources, including roadways, carry pollutants such as volatile organics, petroleum hydrocarbons, heavy metals, and pesticides/herbicides. Proper stormwater conveyance, containment, and treatment will be required in accordance with state and federal regulations and guidelines.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Lauren P. Milligan, FL Department of Environmental Protection

Coordination Document: Permit Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The proposed project will impact the Boca Ciega Bay and Pinellas County Aquatic Preserves and Gateway Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW), which are regulated under section 62-302.700(9), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), and afforded a high level of protection under sections 62-4.242(2) and 62-302.700, F.A.C. The watershed conditions within the project area are presently considered fair.
Comments on Effects to Resources:
We recommend that the PD&E study include an evaluation of existing stormwater treatment adequacy and details on the future stormwater treatment facilities. The permit applicant may be required to demonstrate that the proposed stormwater system meets the design and performance criteria established for the treatment and attenuation of discharges to OFWs, pursuant to rule 40D-4, F.A.C., and the SWFWMD Basis of Review for ERP Applications. Under section 373.414(1), F.S., direct impacts to these waterbodies and associated wetlands must be demonstrated to be "clearly in the public interest" as part of the ERP permitting process.
Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: Permit Required
Coordination Document Comments:
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For the I-275 Improvement project, a DOE of Moderate was assigned to this issue due to the present belief that future ERP permitting is expected to be non-routine for:
- Potential impacts to existing Zone A & AE floodplains within the proposed project area.
- Potential impacts to verified impaired waters within nine (9) of the eleven (11) WBIDs noted previously.

However, the expected permitting effort by FDOT should be straight forward and a normal effort is expected on the part of SWFWMD s regulatory staff.

Specific studies that contain useful water quality and hydrologic information have been done by FDEP, the SWFWMD and the USGS. These reports can be accessed through the District s Library at http://www15.swfwmd.state.fl.us/dbtw-wpd/mywebqbe/librarybasic.htm. Type in the water body of interest, click on Submit query then click on the pull-down menu in the upper left and select Record Display Web. As of April, 2013, seven (7) reports were available dealing with Old Tampa Bay.

Impacts to existing permitted stormwater management systems may decrease performance in terms of flood management and stormwater treatment. Information on Environmental Resource Permits (ERPs), Storm Water Permits, Dredge & Fill Permits and Works of the District Permits is now available in the EST under Water Quality & Quantity > Permits. Useful (but limited) information includes the permit number, a short description of the project, name of the permittee, project acreage and an approximate location of the project (shown graphically).

As of April, 2013, the EST indicated eighty-nine (89) ERP s, three (3) Dredge and Fill Permits and one (1) Storm Water Permit have been applied for within 200 feet of this project. Similar information can be obtained from the SWFWMD s Permits Map Viewer and Environmental Resource Permit Search web sites as follows:
http://www8.swfwmd.state.fl.us/ExternalPermitting/
http://www18.swfwmd.state.fl.us/erp/erp/search/ERPSearch.aspx

Previous ERP s within the existing right of way of I-275 that may be of interest to FDOT in the future PD&E and design phases are as follows:

1034.000 - DOT-I-275/4TH ST.TO KENNEDY BLVD.
1034.001 - DOT-HOWARD FRANKLIN BRIDGE
1034.002 DOT I-275, 4TH STREET SECTION
1034.004 DOT I-275 RESURFACING #15190-3909
1034.005 DOT-I-275/9TH/BIG ISL. GAP #15190-3910
1034.007 DOT I-275 & CR 687 LODESTAR TOWER 7005
1034.008 DOT SR 93 I-275 VECP
1034.009 DOT SR 93 I-275 CITY RAMPS
2721.000 CITY OF ST PETE AIP #32
5110.000 - ST. PETERSBURG PRINTING CO.
15855.001 DOT-SR93 I-275 GANDY TO ROOSEVELT BLVD
17434.000 ST. PETERSBURG, CITY OF FIELD PARKING I-1
17434.001 ST. PETERSBURG, CITY OF TROPICANNA I-2
18980.000 DOT 118TH AVE(CR 296)EXT/I-275 CONNECTOR
18980.001 DOT CR 296 CONNECTOR STAGE 2 SEGMENT 2
18980.002 - PINE CO SR 686 RAMP P-NB I-275/WB SR686
18980.003 FDOT SR 686 RAMP P FROM NB I-275-WBV 686
24324.001 FDOT GANDY BLVD WIDENING 28TH TO MLK
18390.000 30TH AVE S FROM 31ST ST TO 34TH ST
32811.000 PINELLAS TRAIL EXTENSION NO. 06103-1

Water quantity concerns must be addressed for the project in accordance with Chapter 4 of the District s Basis of Review. This includes making provisions to allow runoff from up-gradient areas to be conveyed to down-gradient areas without adversely affecting the stage point or manner of discharge and without degrading water quality (refer to Section 4.8 of the District s Basis of Review, available at http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/permits/rules/).

The District s Basis of Review document describes design approaches and criteria that will provide reasonable assurances that the proposed surface water management systems will meet the conditions for issuance of an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP). Parameters frequently over or under estimated include: seasonal high water levels, seasonal high groundwater table elevations, soil vertical & horizontal hydraulic conductivity, depth to the soil confining units, historic basin storage, floodplain storage, conveyance way hydraulic capacity, peak discharge rates and timing, tailwater conditions in the receiving system, total discharged volume, and off-site hydrograph timing impacts. Site-specific design data is preferable to book values.

The District recommends that the FDOT consider providing a pond siting report that addresses the above referenced design approaches and criteria. For those improvements that may affect existing cross drainage facilities, an updated bridge hydraulics report(s) should be prepared and submitted with the ERP application.

If this project will require the acquisition of new right-of-way areas, the current rule for eminent domain noticing is 40D-1.603(9), FAC and requires the applicant to provide the noticing to the affected property owners. Additionally, any issued permit may include special conditions prohibiting construction until the FDOT provides evidence of ownership and control.

For ETDM #12556, the District has assigned a pre-application file **(PA #8974)** for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. File **PA #8974** is maintained at the Tampa Service Office of the SWFWMD. Please refer to this pre-application file whenever contacting District regulatory staff regarding this project.

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

As noted previously in the Special Designations section of the EST, the northern portion of the I-275 improvement project lies within the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve, which is designated as Outstanding Florida Water.

During April, 2013, the following information was obtained from the FDEP regarding Verified Impaired Waters along this project s alignment:

1. Old Tampa Bay, Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1558G) Verified impairments (as of 05/29/08) include Bacteria (in shellfish) and Mercury (in fish tissue). A TMDL was not available. However, the FDEP is working on a Reasonable Assurance Plan with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program and the Tampa Bay Nitrogen Consortium. Additional information can be found on FDEP s Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) web site at: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/watersheds/bmap.htm

2. Old Tampa Bay, Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1558H) Verified impairments (as of 05/29/08) include Bacteria (in shellfish), Fecal Coliform and Mercury (in fish tissue). WBID 1558H (Old Tampa Bay) is also on the Verified List for Nutrients (Chlorophyll-a) with an Assessment Category of 4b. A TMDL was not available. However, the FDEP is working on a Reasonable Assurance Plan with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program and the Tampa Bay Nitrogen Consortium. Additional information can be found on FDEP s Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) web site at: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/watersheds/bmap.htm

3. Roosevelt Basin (Channel 2 Subbasin), Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1624) Verified impairments (as of 05/29/08) include Dissolved Oxygen, Fecal Coliform, Nutrients (Chlorophyll-a) and Nutrients (Historic Chlorophyll-a). Two (2) TMDL documents are available at the following FDEP web site: http://webapps.dep.state.fl.us/DearTmdl/dashboardAction.do?method=tmdlPermitDetailsAction&srcWbid=1624
The first (03/31/05) EPA Established document is entitled *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Fecal Coliform in Roosevelt Basin: Channel 2 (WBID 1624)*
The second (03/01/2005) EPA Established documentis entitled *Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Fecal Coliform in Brooker Creek and Total Coliform in Roosevelt Basin: Channel 2*
A BMAP was not available from the FDEP web site.

4. Roosevelt Basin (Freshwater Segment), Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1624A) Verified impairments (as of 05/29/08) include Fecal Coliform. A TMDL and BMAP were not available from the FDEP web site.

5. St. Joe Creek (Fresh Segment), Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1668A) Verified impairments (as of 02/07/12) include Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients (Historic Chlorophyll-a). Two (2) TMDL documents are available at the following FDEP web site: http://webapps.dep.state.fl.us/DearTmdl/dashboardAction.do?method=tmdlPermitDetailsAction&srcWbid=1668A
The first (09/10/08) DEP Adopted EPA Approved document is entitled *Fecal Coliform TMDL for Saint Joes Creek WBID 1668A*
The second (06/06/2008) DEP Draft documentis entitled *Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrient TMDLs for Saint Joes Creek (WBID 1668A) and Pinellas Park Ditch No. 5 (WBID 1668B)*
A BMAP was not available from the FDEP web site.

6. Booker Creek, Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1696) Verified impairments (as of 05/29/08) include Fecal Coliform and Nutrients (Chlorophyll-a). A TMDL and BMAP were not available from the FDEP web site.

7. 34th Street Basin, Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1716A) Verified impairments (as of 02/07/12) include Fecal Coliform. One (1) TMDL document is available at the following FDEP web site: http://webapps.dep.state.fl.us/DearTmdl/dashboardAction.do?method=tmdlPermitDetailsAction&srcWbid=1716A
This (11/14/12) DEP Adopted EPA Approved document is entitled *Fecal Coliform TMDLs for 34th Street Basin (WBID 1716A), Clam Bayou Drain (WBID 1716B), Clam Bayou (East Drainage) (WBID 1716C), and Clam Bayou Drain (Tidal) (WBID 1716D)*
A BMAP was not available from the FDEP web site.

8. Clam Bayou (East Drainage), Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1716C) Verified impairments (as of 02/07/12) include Dissolved Oxygen (Nutrients), Fecal Coliform, Mercury (in fish tissue) and Nutrients (Chlorophyll-a). One (1) TMDL document is available at the following FDEP web site: http://webapps.dep.state.fl.us/DearTmdl/dashboardAction.do?method=tmdlPermitDetailsAction&srcWbid=1716C
This (11/14/12) DEP Adopted EPA Approved document is entitled *Fecal Coliform TMDLs for 34th Street Basin (WBID 1716A), Clam Bayou Drain (WBID 1716B), Clam Bayou (East Drainage) (WBID 1716C), and Clam Bayou Drain (Tidal) (WBID 1716D)*

A BMAP was not available from the FDEP web site.

9. Frenchmans Creek Basin U, Assessment Category 5, (WBID 1709F) Verified impairments (as of 02/22/08) include Dissolved Oxygen, Mercury (in fish tissue) and Nutrients (Chlorophyll-a). A TMDL and BMAP were not available from the FDEP web site.

The above impaired waters information was obtained from the Permits tab of the FDEP s TMDL Tracker, accessible at:
http://webapps.dep.state.fl.us/DearTmdl/dashboardAction.do?method=dashboard#

Comments on Effects to Resources:
The proposed I-275 improvement project has the potential to result in water quality impacts to Outstanding Florida Waters. Also, untreated or under-treated runoff generated by the I-275 Improvement project could impact the eleven (11) watersheds (WBIDs) identified in the previous section. As of April, 2013, two (2) of these watersheds are not currently classified as Verified impaired (Assessment Category 5) by the FDEP for nutrient related pollutants. However, this could change in the future as development activities increase within these respective WBIDs. The SWFWMD recommends that FDOT participate as a stakeholder in future TMDL and BMAP activities by the FDEP.

Potential impacts from the I-275 Improvement project will depend upon the required filling, encroachment or alteration of existing Zone A & AE Floodplains, Historic Basin Storage areas and (if applicable) Floodways. Un-attenuated or under-attenuated runoff could cause flooding impacts to existing off-site stormwater management systems and drainage conveyance facilities.

Additional Comments (optional):
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For the I-275 Improvement project, a DOE of Moderate was assigned to this issue due to the present belief that future ERP permitting is expected to be non-routine for:
- Potential impacts to existing Zone A & AE floodplains within the proposed project area.
- Potential impacts to verified impaired waters within nine (9) of the eleven (11) WBIDs noted previously.
However, the expected permitting effort by FDOT should be straight forward and a normal effort is expected on the part of SWFWMD s regulatory staff.

Specific studies that contain useful water quality and hydrologic information have been done by FDEP, the SWFWMD and the USGS. These reports can be accessed through the District s Library at http://www15.swfwmd.state.fl.us/dbtw-wpd/mywebqbe/librarybasic.htm. Type in the water body of interest, click on Submit query then click on the pull-down menu in the upper left and select Record Display Web. As of April, 2013, seven (7) reports were available dealing with Old Tampa Bay.

Impacts to existing permitted stormwater management systems may decrease performance in terms of flood management and stormwater treatment. Information on Environmental Resource Permits (ERPs), Storm Water Permits, Dredge & Fill Permits and Works of the District Permits is now available in the EST under Water Quality & Quantity > Permits. Useful (but limited) information includes the permit number, a short description of the project, name of the permittee, project acreage and an approximate location of the project (shown graphically).

As of April, 2013, the EST indicated eighty-nine (89) ERP s, three (3) Dredge and Fill Permits and one (1) Storm Water Permit have been applied for within 200 feet of this project. Similar information can be obtained from the SWFWMD s Permits Map Viewer and Environmental Resource Permit Search web sites as follows:
http://www8.swfwmd.state.fl.us/ExternalPermitting/
http://www18.swfwmd.state.fl.us/erp/erp/search/ERPSearch.aspx

Previous ERP s within the existing right of way of I-275 that may be of interest to FDOT in the future PD&E and design phases are as follows:

1034.000 - DOT-I-275/4TH ST.TO KENNEDY BLVD.
1034.001 - DOT-HOWARD FRANKLIN BRIDGE
1034.002 DOT I-275, 4TH STREET SECTION
1034.004 DOT I-275 RESURFACING #15190-3909
1034.005 DOT-I-275/9TH/BIG ISL. GAP #15190-3910
1034.007 DOT I-275 & CR 687 LODESTAR TOWER 7005
1034.008 DOT SR 93 I-275 VECP
1034.009 DOT SR 93 I-275 CITY RAMPS
2721.000 CITY OF ST PETE AIP #32
5110.000 - ST. PETERSBURG PRINTING CO.
15855.001 DOT-SR93 I-275 GANDY TO ROOSEVELT BLVD
17434.000 ST. PETERSBURG, CITY OF FIELD PARKING I-1
17434.001 ST. PETERSBURG, CITY OF TROPICANNA I-2
18980.000 DOT 118TH AVE(CR 296)EXT/I-275 CONNECTOR

18980.001 DOT CR 296 CONNECTOR STAGE 2 SEGMENT 2
18980.002 - PINE CO SR 686 RAMP P-NB I-275/WB SR686
18980.003 FDOT SR 686 RAMP P FROM NB I-275-WBV 686
24324.001 FDOT GANDY BLVD WIDENING 28TH TO MLK
18390.000 30TH AVE S FROM 31ST ST TO 34TH ST
32811.000 PINELLAS TRAIL EXTENSION NO. 06103-1

Water quantity concerns must be addressed for the project in accordance with Chapter 4 of the District s Basis of Review. This includes making provisions to allow runoff from up-gradient areas to be conveyed to down-gradient areas without adversely affecting the stage point or manner of discharge and without degrading water quality (refer to Section 4.8 of the District s Basis of Review, available at http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/permits/rules/).

The District s Basis of Review document describes design approaches and criteria that will provide reasonable assurances that the proposed surface water management systems will meet the conditions for issuance of an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP). Parameters frequently over or under estimated include: seasonal high water levels, seasonal high groundwater table elevations, soil vertical & horizontal hydraulic conductivity, depth to the soil confining units, historic basin storage, floodplain storage, conveyance way hydraulic capacity, peak discharge rates and timing, tailwater conditions in the receiving system, total discharged volume, and off-site hydrograph timing impacts. Site-specific design data is preferable to book values.

The District recommends that the FDOT consider providing a pond siting report that addresses the above referenced design approaches and criteria. For those improvements that may affect existing cross drainage facilities, an updated bridge hydraulics report(s) should be prepared and submitted with the ERP application.

If this project will require the acquisition of new right-of-way areas, the current rule for eminent domain noticing is 40D-1.603(9), FAC and requires the applicant to provide the noticing to the affected property owners. Additionally, any issued permit may include special conditions prohibiting construction until the FDOT provides evidence of ownership and control.

For ETDM #12556, the District has assigned a pre-application file **(PA #8974)** for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. File **PA #8974** is maintained at the Tampa Service Office of the SWFWMD. Please refer to this pre-application file whenever contacting District regulatory staff regarding this project.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Floodplains

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified 83.5 acres (21.34%) of Zone AE and 27.7 acres (7.07%) of Zone VE within the 100-foot buffer distance, 2.9 acres (0.38%) of Zone A, 199.2 acres (25.93%) of Zone AE and 56.2 acres (7.32%) of Zone VE within the 200-foot buffer distance, and 27.7 acres (1.45%) of Zone A, 559.3 acres (29.33%) of Zone AE and 136.9 acres (7.18%) of Zone VE within the 500-foot buffer distance.

The SWFWMD stated that potential impacts for the project will depend upon the required filling, encroachment or alteration of existing (or future) Zone A and AE Floodplains, Historic Basin Storage areas and (if applicable) Floodways. The SWFWMD will require compensation for fill (or other encroachments) into floodplains, floodways and historic basin storage areas up to the 100-year event if such encroachment(s) will adversely affect conveyance, storage, water quality or adjacent lands. The FDOT may reduce the degree of effect for flooding by restricting the filling/encroachment into floodplain, constructing stormwater treatment ponds outside floodplain, and providing equivalent compensation for lost floodplain.

The USEPA states that development within the 100-year floodplain is of a high level of importance. Construction of roadways within the floodplain should not impede, obstruct or divert the flow of water or debris in the floodplain which would alter the roadways discharge capacity or otherwise adversely affect public health, safety and welfare, or cause damage to public or private property in the event of a flood. Any development within the 100 -year floodplain has the potential for placing citizens and property at risk of flooding and producing changes in floodplain elevations and plan view extent, as well as reducing vegetated buffers that protect water quality. A Location Hydraulics Report (LHR), as well as an evaluation of floodplain impacts and alternatives will be prepared as part of Project Development. Efforts should be made to avoid or minimize impacts to flood plain resources and function. The PD&E phase of the project should include an evaluation of floodplain impacts. FDOT should consider alternatives to avoid adverse

effects and incompatible development in the floodplains. Engineering design features and hydrological drainage structures should be such that stormwater transport, flow, and discharge meet or exceed flood control requirements.

The FDOT will evaluate floodplain impacts and evaluate compensation opportunities for any floodplain encroachment and lost floodplain storage. Compensatory mitigation will be provided if mitigation is deemed necessary by regulatory agencies. A Location Hydraulics Report (LHR) will be prepared in Project Development. An evaluation of floodplain impacts and alternatives to avoid adverse effects and incompatible development in the floodplains will also be undertaken. Effort will be made to avoid or minimize impacts to floodplain resources and functions. Engineering design features and hydrological drainage structures will be intended such that stormwater transport, flow and discharge meet or exceed flood control requirements. The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with floodplain resources.

No comments were received from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Resources: Floodplains

Level of Importance: Development within the 100-year floodplain is of a high level of importance. Construction of roadways within the floodplain should not impede, obstruct or divert the flow of water or debris in the floodplain which would alter the roadway?s discharge capacity or otherwise adversely affect public health, safety and welfare, or cause damage to public or private property in the event of a flood. A moderate degree of effect is being assigned for the proposed project (ETDM #12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the GIS analysis Special Flood Hazard Areas identified 85.7 acres (21.9%) of Zone AE and 26.1 acres (6.67%) of Zone VE within the 100-foot buffer distance, 202.6 acres (26.38%) of Zone AE and 52.5 acres (6.83%) of Zone VE within the 200-foot buffer distance, and 564.6 acres (29.61%) of Zone AE and 123.0 acres (6.45%) of Zone VE within the 500-foot buffer distance. A Location Hydraulics Report (LHR) will be prepared in Project Development. An evaluation of floodplain impacts and alternatives to avoid adverse effects and incompatible development in the floodplains will also be undertaken. Efforts will be made to avoid or minimize impacts to floodplain resources and functions. Engineering design features and hydrological drainage structures will be intended such that stormwater transport, flow, and discharge meet or exceed flood control requirements. The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with floodplain resources.

EPA provides the following floodplain comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase: A review of GIS analysis data (Special Flood Hazard Areas) in the EST at the programming screen phase of the project indicates the following approximate acreage within the 100-year floodplain, as designated primarily by Zones AE and VE of the flood hazard zone designation (FEMA Special Flood Hazard Areas):

100 foot buffer distance:
Zone AE ? Approx 86 acres ? Approx 22% of total acres
Zone VE ? Approx 26 acres ? Approx 7% of total acres

200 foot buffer distance:
Zone AE ? Approx 203 acres ? Approx 26% of total acres
Zone VE Approx 52 acres ? Approx 7% of total acres

500 foot buffer distance:
Zone AE ? Approx 565 acres ? Approx 30% of total acres
Zone VE ? Approx 123 acres ? Approx 6% of total acres

General comments relating to floodplains include the fact that any development within the 100-year floodplain has the potential for placing citizens and property at risk of flooding and producing changes in floodplain elevations and plan view extent. Development (such as roadways, housing developments, strip malls and other commercial facilities) within floodplains increases the potential for flooding by limiting flood storage capacity and exposing people and property to flood hazards. Development also reduces vegetated buffers that protect water quality and destroys important habitats for fish and wildlife. The area surrounding the proposed roadway is expected to experience growth which would also have indirect and cumulative effects on floodplains in the area.

The PD&E phase of the project should include an evaluation of floodplain impacts. FDOT should consider alternatives to avoid adverse effects and incompatible development in the floodplains. Efforts should be made to avoid or minimize impacts to floodplain resources and functions. Engineering design features and hydrological drainage structures should be such that stormwater transport, flow, and discharge meet or exceed flood control requirements. Consultation and coordination with appropriate flood management agencies should occur relating to regulatory requirements, avoidance,

minimization and/or mitigation strategies.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: Permit Required
Coordination Document Comments:
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE of Moderate was assigned to this issue due to the present belief that future ERP permitting is expected to be non-routine for expected impacts to existing (or future) Zone A & AE floodplains within the proposed areas of:
- New stormwater management ponds.
- Roadway widening.
- Alterations of existing cross drains.
However, the expected permitting effort by FDOT should be straight forward and a normal effort is expected on the part of SWFWMD s regulatory staff.

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The following information was obtained from the FDOT s Environmental Screening Tool (EST) and supplemented with information from the SWFWMD s Geographic Information System (GIS):

Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) areas of interest include the following:
- Zone A: representing less than one (1) % of I-275 within the 200 foot buffer.
- Zone AE: representing approximately twenty six (26) % of I-275 within the 200 foot buffer.
- Zone VE: representing approximately seven (7) % of I-275 within the 200 foot buffer.
- Zone X: representing approximately fifty eight (58) % of I-275 within the 200 foot buffer.
- 0.2 Percent Annual Chance Flood Hazard: representing approximately nine (9) % of I-275 within the 200 foot buffer.
Approximate locations of these DFIRM Zones can be viewed within the EST under the Floodplains map and > *Water Resource* > *DFIRM Flood Hazard Zones* layer. Graphically, the greatest concentration of floodplains appear from the beginning of the project to approximately 3300 feet north of 54Th Avenue South, south of 26th Avenue, and from approximately 4800 feet south of Gandy Boulevard to the end of the project. Of particular interest are the following:
- Wetlands & water bodies within the Frenchmans Creek Basin U (WBID 1709F).
- Wetlands & water bodies within the Clam Bayou (East Drainage) (WBID 1716C)
- Sawgrass Lake and its tributaries within the Sawgrass Lake Basin (WBID 1661).
- Wetlands and water bodies within the 77th Avenue Canal Basin (WBID 1661E).
- Wetlands and water bodies within the freshwater segment of the Roosevelt Basin (WBID 1624A) and within the marine segment of the Roosevelt Basin (WBID 1624)

As of April, 2013, the following DFIRM / FIRM Panel Numbers for the I-275 Improvement project (from north to south) can be obtained from the FEMA Map Service Center at:
https://msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/FemaWelcomeView?storeId=10001&catalogId=10001&langId=-1

Panel # 12103C0144G: Effective Date 09/03/03
Panel # 12103C0143G: Effective Date 09/03/03
Panel # 12103C0206H: Effective Date 08/18/09
Panel # 12103C0208H: Effective Date 08/18/09
Panel # 12103C0216G: Effective Date 09/03/03
Panel # 12103C0218G: Effective Date 09/03/03
Panel # 12103C0281G: Effective Date 09/03/03
Panel # 12103C0283G: Effective Date 09/03/03

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Potential impacts for the I-275 Improvement project will depend upon the required filling, encroachment or alteration of existing (or future) Zone A & AE Floodplains, Historic Basin Storage areas and (if applicable) Floodways.

Additional Comments (optional):

The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE of Moderate was assigned to this issue due to the present belief that future ERP permitting is expected to be non-routine for expected impacts to existing (or future) Zone A & AE floodplains within the proposed areas of:
- New stormwater management ponds.
- Roadway widening.
- Alterations of existing cross drains.
However, the expected permitting effort by FDOT should be straight forward and a normal effort is expected on the part of SWFWMD s regulatory staff.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Wildlife and Habitat

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), and recommends a Degree of Effect of Minimal.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified that the project within the Greater Tampa Bay Ecosystem Management Area 100% within the 100-foot buffer distance. Rare and Imperiled Fish list four occurrences and two Woodstork Core Foraging Areas are within the 100-foot buffer distance.

The SWFWMD stated the bridge replacement or alteration over Big Island Gap will occur over open salt water and provides habitat and feeding areas for several birds and aquatic life forms. The substrate near the causeways has a high potential of habitats for soft coral, sponges and other benthic communities. Several threatened species associated with open water include; the Small Tooth Sawfish, Gulf Sturgeon, and the Florida Manatee. Impacts to seagrasses will need to be mitigated in a manner which would offset the habitat loss. The UMAM would account for the time lag associated with the time it would take for the seagrass bed to be restored to its current production level. A survey of the area will be needed to determine the type and coverage area for these benthic communities as part of the evaluation for the permit application. The Florida Manatee has been observed in Old Tampa Bay and is a listed threatened species. Additional measures will be required in order to protect this mammal during the construction process for this site. Stormwater outfall pipes and structures extending below the Mean High Water Line, exceeding eight inches in diameter, will require manatee grating to be installed over the waterward end to ensure no manatees can become entrapped. Wildlife and Habitat impacts can be reduced by the following: Adjustment of the alignment to avoid direct impacts to the emergent and submerged wetland areas, implementation of strict controls over sediment transport off site during construction, restriction of the activity of vehicles and equipment to only those areas that must be utilized for construction and staging; and implementing effective mitigation measures to compensate for seagrass/wetland impacts.

The USFWS stated that the roadway passes through the Core Foraging Areas (CFA) of at least five active nesting colonies of the endangered wood stork. The loss of wetland within a CFA could result in the loss of foraging habitat for the wood stork. The USFWS recommends that impacts to suitable foraging habitat be avoided. The USFWS encourages the use of the Wood Stork Effect Determination key developed with the USACE.

The FFWCC stated that land cover within the overall assessment area classified as High or Low Impact Urban Lands totals 1,536.3 acres (80.6 percent), Upland Forests account for 162.1 acres (8.5 percent), while Wetlands cover 198.8 acres (10.4 percent). The FFWCC listed the species which are Federally listed as Endangered (FE) or Threatened (FT), or State Threatened (ST), or Species of Special Concern (SSC) that may occur along the project area. Field studies will be required to verify the presence or absence of listed wildlife species and the quality of upland and wetland habitat resources. Within the assessment area there are 9 Biodiversity Hot Spots capable of supporting 7 or more focal species, or with specific species occurrence records, and 6 Priority Wetlands capable of supporting 1 to 3 focal species in uplands and 4 to 6 or 7 to 9 focal species in wetlands. Public land adjacent to the I-275 ROW includes Boyd Hill Nature Park owned and managed by the City of St. Petersburg; Sawgrass Lake Park, owned by SWFWMD and managed by Pinellas County; and Skyway Fishing Pier, part of the Florida State Parks System. Direct effects of the project could be minimal, as long as additional lanes are constructed along the existing paved areas and/or within the highway median. If outward expansion of the existing ROW is required or replacement or expansion of existing bridges becomes necessary, then project effects could be substantial. In this event avoidance and minimization measures will have to be addressed through coordination with our Imperiled Species Management Section in Tallahassee. The FFWCC recommends that the PD&E Study address natural resources by including the following measures for conserving fish and wildlife and habitat resources that may occur within and adjacent to the project area. Plant community mapping and wildlife surveys for the occurrence of wildlife species listed by our agency as Endangered, Threatened, or Species of Special Concern should be performed, both along the ROW and within sites proposed for Drainage Retention Areas. A plan should also be implemented to avoid and minimize project effects to the extent practicable. Drainage Retention Areas and equipment staging areas should be located in previously disturbed sites to avoid destruction of or degradation of native habitat. A compensatory mitigation plan should include the replacement of any wetland, upland, or aquatic habitat lost as a result of the project. Replacement habitat for mitigation should be type for type, as productive, and equal to or of higher functional value.

The FDOT will prepare a Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) during the PD&E study. This report will assess potential species and existing habitat within the project area. This report and the FDOTs findings will be coordinated with the USFWS and FFWCC.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/15/2013 by Jane Monaghan, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Federally listed species and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Project Description Summary

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study to evaluate the need for capacity and operational improvements along I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County. A capacity project is proposed to improve the operation of I-275. The project length is approximately 16.3 miles. I-275, as it currently exists, is a limited access urban interstate highway with a four-lane divided typical section to the south of 54th Avenue South. Between 54th Avenue South and north of 4th Street North, I-275 fluctuates between four and ten lanes, but is typically a six-lane divided limited access urban interstate highway. The existing roadway has 12-foot lanes, 12-foot inside and outside shoulders (10-foot paved) and generally open drainage with a median width that varies from 40 to 65 feet. This PD&E study will evaluate ways to improve capacity, lane continuity and safety along I-275. The addition of general purpose travel lanes and interchange improvements will be evaluated in order to improve lane continuity and address capacity needs within the corridor. The addition of managed lanes to improve capacity along the corridor and meet future traffic demands will also be evaluated. The addition of general purpose lanes, interchange improvements, and addition of managed lanes will be evaluated to increase safety along the I-275 corridor. To the maximum extent possible, roadway improvements will be constructed within the existing right of way. Additional right of way is anticipated only for offsite stormwater treatment facilities and interchange improvements.

Wood Stork (*Mycteria americana*)

The project corridor is approximately 16.3 miles long. The roadway passes through the Core Foraging Areas (CFA) of at least five active nesting colonies of the endangered wood stork. The Service has determined that the loss of wetlands within a CFA due to an action could result in the loss of foraging habitat for the wood stork. To minimize adverse effects to the wood stork and other wetland dependent species, we recommend that impacts to suitable foraging habitat be avoided. If this is not feasible, minimization and mitigation with suitable foraging habitat will be required. The Service encourages the use of the Wood Stork Effect Determination Key developed with the Army COE. Please refer to the North Florida Field Office website for WOST colony locations. http://www.fws.gov/northflorida

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The project has the potential to affect wetland ecosystems that wood storks and other wading birds depend on for foraging andnesting.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: Permit Required

Coordination Document Comments:

The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) of minimal regarding this section. While there are a number of threatened and endangered species that may inhabit the area, ensuring the continuing safety of these animals would require coordination with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and their regulations. Correspondence with FFWCC, regarding permitting concerns for Howard Frankland Bridge, would be a completeness item during the permitting process.

The following comments are offered in the event that the FDOT elects to pursue an Environmental Resource Permit General Permit for Construction for the project.

Old Tampa Bay is a known manatee use area; it is recommended that the FDOT develop a project-specific manatee protection plan to eliminate the possibility of construction-related manatee injury or death in the project area

For ERP permitting purposes, the project area is located in the Tampa Bay Watershed. The SWFWMD has assigned a pre-application file (PA# 8974) for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. The pre-application file is maintained at the SWFWMD s Tampa Service Office. Please refer to the pre-application file when contacting SWFWMD regulatory staff regarding this project.

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The bridge replacement or alteration over Big Island Gap will occur over open salt water, which is providing habitat and feeding areas for several birds and aquatic life forms. As discussed briefly in the Wetland Section of SWFWMD s EST comments, the substrate near the causeways has a high potential of habitats for soft coral, sponges and other benthic communities.

In addition to the benthic communities, threatened species that may be located within the scope of the project area for bridge over Big Island Gap includes the Small Tooth Sawfish, Gulf Sturgeon, and the Florida Manatee.

Seagrass beds serve as a fishery for shallow-water feeders and bottom feeders. These fish serve as food for other aquatic animals and birds alike. Based on the bathymetry shown on the NOAA Navigational Chart 11416, it appears the shallow water areas adjacent to the causeway sections would draw coelenterates, mollusks, baitfish and birds of prey. The aquatic fauna is quite diverse in the habitats associated with the Howard Frankland Bridge.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
While there are many mammals, ovarian, and aquatic species that can be found in the water and air surrounding the Big Island Gap Bridge, SWFWMD permits will be written as they relate to threatened / endangered species and the potential habitat impacts associated with wetlands and the protected bottom lands.

As discussed in the Wetlands Section of SWFWMD s EST comments, impacts to seagrasses will need to be mitigated in a manner which would offset the habitat loss. The UMAM would account for the time lag associated with the time it would take for the seagrass bed to be restored to its current production level, both for the seagrasses as food for certain species and for the habitat value for the fish, crustaceans, and snails. This value may affect the total area to be preserved, restored, or created to offset the wetland impact.

Disruption of the coarse sand substrate with embedded rocks will have a negative influence on the current production levels for colonies of soft corals and sponges. A survey of the area will be needed to determine the type and coverage area for these benthic communities as part of the evaluation for the permit application.

The Florida Manatee has been observed in Old Tampa Bay. The Florida Manatee is a listed threatened species and will require additional measures to be in place in order to protect this mammal during the construction process for this site. A Specific Condition will be used in the ERP outlining the standard operating procedure during the demolition of the old bridge and construction of the replacement bridge. Please be advised that stormwater outfall pipes and structures extending below the Mean High Water Line, exceeding 8 inches in diameter, will require manatee grating to be installed over the waterward end to ensure no manatees can become entrapped. [Reference - Grates and Other Manatee Exclusion Devices for Culverts and Pipes (February 2011), available at http://myfwc.com/media/415238/manatee_grates.pdf].
Additional Comments (optional):
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) of minimal regarding this section. While there are a number of threatened and endangered species that may inhabit the area, ensuring the continuing safety of these animals would require coordination with Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and their regulations. Correspondence with FFWCC, regarding permitting concerns for Howard Frankland Bridge, would be a completeness item during the permitting process.

The following comments are offered in the event that the FDOT elects to pursue an Environmental Resource Permit General Permit for Construction for the project.

Old Tampa Bay is a known manatee use area; it is recommended that the FDOT develop a project-specific manatee protection plan to eliminate the possibility of construction-related manatee injury or death in the project area

For ERP permitting purposes, the project area is located in the Tampa Bay Watershed. The SWFWMD has assigned a pre-application file (PA# 8974) for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. The pre-application file is maintained at the SWFWMD s Tampa Service Office. Please refer to the pre-application file when contacting SWFWMD regulatory staff regarding this project.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/10/2013 by Bonita Gorham, FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The Office of Conservation Planning Services of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has coordinated an agency review of ETDM #12556, Pinellas County, and provides the following comments related to potential effects to fish and wildlife resources on this Programming Phase project.

The Project Description Summary states that this project involves a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study that will evaluate two Alternatives for construction of one additional lane in each direction on I-275 and the addition of managed lanes, and Interchange improvements within the project area in Pinellas County. The I-275 project area extends from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North, a total distance of 16.3 miles. FDOT states that the project is needed to improve capacity, lane continuity, and the operational efficiency of I-275. FDOT also states that to the maximum extent possible, all construction improvements on the roadway will be within the existing Right-of-Way (ROW), however, additional ROW will be needed for offsite Drainage Retention Areas (DRAs) and Interchange improvements. Our Agency provided comments on this project during the Planning Phase in October 2009 and our current input represents resource information for the entire project alignment, including the expanded project limits and any potential wildlife and habitat resource updates in the data bases since our original comments.

The project area was evaluated for potential fish, wildlife, and habitat resources within 500 feet of the proposed alignment. Our assessment shows that the project area is in metropolitan St. Petersburg, and Landcover within the overall assessment area classified as High or Low Impact Urban Lands totals 1,536.3 acres (80.6 percent), Upland Forests account for 162.1 acres (8.5 percent), while Wetlands cover 198.8 acres (10.4 percent). Wetlands include Open Water (124.5 acres 6.5 percent), Freshwater marsh (1.6 acres 0.08 percent), Mangrove Swamp (27.6 acres 1.5 percent), Coastal Saltmarsh (3.3 acres 0.17 percent), Sand- Beach (1.8 acres 0.09 percent), Shrub Swamp (5.3 acres 0.28), and Hardwood Swamp (34.7 acres 1.8 percent). Uplands are represented by Upland Hardwood Forests and Hammocks (36.5 acres 1.9 percent), Dry Prairie (16.7 acres - 0.87 percent), Mixed Hardwood Pine-forests (13.3 acres - 0.70), and Pinelands (85.2 acres).

Based on range and preferred habitat type, the following species which are Federally listed as Endangered (FE) or Threatened (FT), or State Threatened (ST), or Species of Special Concern (SSC) may occur along the project area: West Indian manatee (FE), Sherman s fox squirrel (SSC), Florida pine snake (SSC), piping plover (FT), snowy plover (ST), Southeastern American kestrel (ST), American oystercatcher (SSC), brown pelican (SSC), black skimmer (SSC), least tern (ST), limpkin (SSC), reddish egret (SSC), snowy egret (SSC), little blue heron (SSC), tricolored heron (SSC), white ibis (SSC), wood stork (FE), roseate spoonbill (SSC), burrowing owl (SSC), Eastern indigo snake (FT), short-tailed snake (ST), green sea turtle (FE), Kemp s ridley sea turtle (FE), leatherback sea turtle (FE), loggerhead sea turtle (FT), gopher tortoise (ST), mangrove rivulus (SSC) and gopher frog (SSC).

In our original review in 2009, GIS analysis revealed several specific characteristics associated with lands along the entire project alignment that provide a good indication of potential habitat quality or sensitivity that will require field studies to verify the presence or absence of listed wildlife species and the quality of upland and wetland habitat resources. Within the assessment area there are 9 FWC Biodiversity Hot Spots capable of supporting 7 or more focal species, or with specific species occurrence records, and 6 Priority Wetlands capable of supporting 1 to 3 focal species in uplands and 4 to 6 or 7 to 9 focal species in wetlands.

Adjacent to the causeway approach to the Sunshine Skyway Bridge are vast seagrass beds that support a highly productive marine ecosystem and an excellent sport fishery. I-275 runs through both the Boca Ciega Bay Aquatic Preserve and the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve. Public lands adjacent to the I-275 ROW include Boyd Hill Nature Park owned and managed by the City of St. Petersburg; Sawgrass Lake Park, owned by the Southwest Florida Water Management and managed by Pinellas County; and Skyway Fishing Pier State Park, part of the Florida State Parks system. The Pinellas National Wildlife Refuge is also within one mile of the project area.

Comments on Effects to Resources:

Based on the project information provided, we believe that direct effects of this project could be minimal, provided that the proposed additional lanes are constructed along the existing paved portions of the I-275 ROW or within the highway median. If outward expansion of the existing ROW into natural areas is required, or replacement or expansion of existing bridges which was not mentioned in the project description becomes necessary, then project effects could be substantial, especially along the causeway leading to the Sunshine Skyway Bridge and a host of in-water impacts to the Florida manatee and sea turtles and other species. In this event avoidance and minimization measures will have to be addressed through coordination with our Imperiled Species Management Section in Tallahassee at imperiledspecies@myfwc.com or at (850) 922-4330.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Coastal and Marine

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Minimal.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) indicates that eight environmentally sensitive shorelines, two Aquatic Preserves, 65.0 acres of mangrove swamp, and 59.89 acres of Continuous and Discontinuous Seagrass Beds are within the 500-foot

buffer distance and the Coastal Barrier Resource System within the 5,280-foot buffer distance.

The SWFWMD stated that I-275 extends across Big Island Gap, and the area below the existing bridge is tidally influenced and is a part of the Tampa Bay Estuary System, which is part of an Outstanding Florida Waterway and an Aquatic Preserve. It is also a part of the Tampa Bay Watershed. Seagrass beds present along the causeways associated with the northern terminus and extending towards the Howard Frankland Bridge are particularly vulnerable to increased turbidity and sedimentation. Several environmental groups, such as the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), have invested interest in the ongoing protection of this area, particularly near the Howard Frankland Bridge, Big Island Gap and Sawgrass Lake. TBEP, in conjunction with the SWFWMD Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program, has invested time and monies into restoration, preservation and enhancement efforts around Old Tampa Bay. The portion of the project near the northern terminus has the potential to generate increased sedimentation that may degrade water quality and damage seagrass beds. Coordination with governmental groups and private groups; specifically the Tampa bay Regional Planning Council, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, FFWCC and the Army Corp, is required as part of the Coastal Zone Management plan.

The NMFS listed resources to include Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay, both which contain estuarine habitats used by federally-managed fish species and their prey. NMFS staff conducted a site inspection of the project area on May 9, 2013, to assess potential concerns related to living marine resources within Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay. The lands adjacent to the proposed project are principally urban commercial and residential properties with occasional disturbed palustrine wetlands. The project does not appear to directly impact any NMFS trust resources; however, the projects southern terminus lies within 220 feet of boat slips at Loggerhead marina and within 380 feet of Maximo channel, which are both connected to Tampa Bay. The road also crosses over a drainage canal which drains to Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay to the east. At the north end of the causeways shoreline contains some mangrove habitat, and seagrass beds lie adjacent to the shoreline on both sides of the causeway. Tampa Bay contains estuarine habitats utilized by federally-managed fish species and their prey. Increased use of the road could result in an increase in the amount of sediment, oil and grease, metals and other pollutants. NMFS recommends stormwater treatment systems be upgraded to prevent degraded water from reaching these estuarine habitats, and best management practices should be employed during road construction to control erosion and prevent siltation of estuarine habitats.

The FDOT will prepare an EFH Assessment as part of the Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) during the PD&E study. This report will assess potential species and existing habitat within the project area. This report and the FDOTs findings will be coordinated with the appropriate regulatory agencies.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/13/2013 by David A. Rydene, National Marine Fisheries Service

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual
Coordination Document Comments:NMFS would like to review the Wetland Evaluation/Biological Assessment Report that FDOT has already committed to producing (see Preliminary Environmental Discussion - Wetlands).

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Resources include Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay, which contain estuarine habitats used by federally-managed fish species and their prey.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the information contained in the Environmental Screening Tool for ETDM Project # 12556. The Florida Department of Transportation District Seven proposes widening I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida. FDOT s PD&E study will evaluate the addition of either general purpose or managed lanes, and interchange improvements as ways to improve capacity, lane continuity, and safety.

NMFS staff conducted a site inspection of the project area on May 9, 2013, to assess potential concerns related to living marine resources within Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay. The lands adjacent to the proposed project are principally urban commercial and residential properties with occasional disturbed palustrine wetlands. It does not appear that the project will directly impact any NMFS trust resources. However, the project s southern terminus (as shown in the project s EST map) lies within 220 feet of boat slips at Loggerhead Marina and within 380 feet of Maximo Channel. Both are connected to Tampa Bay. The road also crosses over a drainage canal connected with Sawgrass Lake to the west, and draining to Riviera Bay and Tampa Bay to the east. The project s northern terminus (as shown in the project s EST map) includes a portion of the Howard Frankland Bridge Causeway (Pinellas County side). The causeway s shorelines contain some mangrove habitat and seagrass beds lie adjacent to the shorelines on both sides of the causeway. Tampa Bay contains estuarine habitats (e.g. seagrass, salt marsh, mangrove) used by federally-managed fish species and their prey. Increased use of the road could result in an increase in the amount of sediment, oil and grease, metals, and other pollutants reaching estuarine habitats utilized by marine fishery resources. Therefore, NMFS recommends that stormwater treatment systems be upgraded to prevent degraded water from reaching these estuarine habitats. In addition, best management practices should be employed during road construction to control erosion and prevent siltation of estuarine habitats, especially seagrasses.

Additional Comments (optional):
NMFS would like to review the Wetland Evaluation/Biological Assessment Report that FDOT has already committed to producing (see Preliminary

Environmental Discussion - Wetlands).

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: Permit Required

Coordination Document Comments:

The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE of minimal was assigned to this issue due to the routine nature for SWFWMDS involvement with this type of noticing. Wetland impacts to the seagrasses will be addressed through permitting for the site during the review period. Future permitting should involve routine interaction with the SWFWMD s regulatory staff.

Choosing construction means and methods to minimize fugitive construction materials and pollutants discharge would be useful to minimize temporary and permanent impacts.

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

I-275 extends across Big Island Gap, which is a section of Old Tampa Bay. The area below the existing bridge over Big Island Gap is tidally influenced and is part of the Tampa Bay Estuary system, which is part of an Outstanding Florida Waterway and an Aquatic Preserve beginning at the Pinellas County line. It is also part of the Tampa Bay Watershed. Beds of seagrasses are present in Old Tampa Bay along the causeways associated with the northern terminus and extending towards the Howard Frankland Bridge. These seagrass beds are particularly vulnerable to increased turbidity and sedimentation.

Several environmental groups have an invested interest in the ongoing protection of the resources associated with Old Tampa Bay, such as the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP). TBEP, in conjunction with the SWFWMD Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program, has invested time and monies into restoration, preservation and enhancement efforts around Old Tampa Bay. Many of their ongoing efforts are located near the Howard Frankland Bridge, Big Island Gap and Sawgrass Lake.

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The portion of the project near the northern terminus has the potential to generate increased sedimentation that may degrade water quality and damage seagrasses beds within Old Tampa Bay. While there may be direct wetland / bottom land impacts to these resources, additional impacts may occur as they relate to the existing recreation, ecotourism, and environmental preservation efforts by governmental groups and private environmental groups. Coordination with these stakeholders, specifically the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, Tampa Bay Estuary Program, FFWCC, and the Army Corp, is required as part of the Coastal Zone Management plan.

Additional Comments (optional):

The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE of minimal was assigned to this issue due to the routine nature for SWFWMDS involvement with this type of noticing. Wetland impacts to the seagrasses will be addressed through permitting for the site during the review period. Future permitting should involve routine interaction with the SWFWMD s regulatory staff.

Choosing construction means and methods to minimize fugitive construction materials and pollutants discharge would be useful to minimize temporary and permanent impacts.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

ETAT Reviews and Coordinator Summary: Physical

Noise

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) analysis identified one Noise Barrier, Noise Barrier ID 1210710315190341912, located within the 100-foot buffer distance. The EST identified transportation, high density residential, commercial and services, and utilities as the four major land uses within the 500-foot buffer

distance and nine additional group care facilities, one laser facility, two parks, eight religious centers and two schools are located within the 500-foot buffer distance. With the exception of the one identified laser facility, there are no eye clinics, hospitals, or other features that may be sensitive to potential noise and vibration effects located within the 500-foot buffer distance.

The FHWA stated that the southern two-thirds of the area of potential effect (APE) is heavily developed with residences, churches, a hospital and other health care facilities, schools, parks, and cultural centers within the 200-500 foot buffer. Additional lanes may mean a higher volume of vehicles and increased noise from tires on pavement, brakes, engines, exhaust, etc. A noise study is required for the entire APE.

The FDOT will prepare a Noise Study Report (NSR) during the PD&E study. The NSR will evaluate all potential noise-sensitive receptors.

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Linda Anderson, Federal Highway Administration

Coordination Document: PD&E Support Document As Per PD&E Manual

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Thesouthern two-thirds of the APE is heavily developed with residences, churches, a hospital and otherhealth care facilities, schools, parks, and cultural centers within the 200-500' buffer.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Additional lanes may mean a higher volume of vehicles and increased noise from tires on pavement, brakes, engines, exhaust, etc. Given that the southern two-thirds of the APE is heavily developed,a noise study is required for the entire APE.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Air Quality

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Minimal.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) indicates the project is located within two air quality maintenance areas and one presumptive nonattainment area within the 100-foot buffer distance. One ambient air monitoring station and one USEPA power plant are within 5,280-foot buffer distance.

The USEPA identified the resources in the EST identified above. The project is expected to have minimal air quality impacts; however, there should be a review of potential air quality impacts. Air quality monitoring should be conducted using current and proposed air quality requirements and standards in an approved software program. The model should be used to determine whether any conformity issues or violations are anticipated within the project area and/or within the counties. It is recommended that the environmental reviews of the project include hot spot analyses at the points in time and places where congestion are expected to be greatest, as well as in areas of sensitive receptors. Any State Implementation Plans for air quality relating to the two air quality maintenance areas and one presumptive nonattainment area should be reviewed and a determination made as to whether the project will have an additional impact to any National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

The FDOT will conduct an air quality screening test for this project during the PD&E study.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/07/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required
Coordination Document Comments: As population growth and vehicle volumes increase, there is the potential to have air quality conformity and non-attainment issues in the future. FDOT, MPOs, municipalities, and regional planning agencies should conduct air quality modeling as traffic forecasts increase.

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Resources: Air Quality

Level of Importance: Low, due to minimal degree of effect. A minimal degree of effect is being assigned to the air quality issue for the proposed project

(ETDM #12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:
The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the project is located within two air quality maintenance areas and one presumptive nonattainment area within the 100-foot buffer distance. One ambient air monitoring station and one USEPA power plant are within 5,280-foot buffer distance. The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement with air quality resources.

EPA provides the following air quality comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase: Although the project is expected to have minimal air quality impacts, there should be a review of potential air quality impacts. It is recommended that the environmental review phase of this project include air impact analyses which documents the current pollutant concentrations recorded at the nearest air quality monitors, an evaluation of anticipated emissions, and air quality trend analyses. It is also recommended that environmental reviews of the project include hot spot analyses at the points in time and places where congestion are expected to be greatest or in areas of sensitive receptors. Air quality modeling using an approved software program should be conducted to determine whether any conformity issues or violations of air quality standards are anticipated within the project area and/or counties. Current and proposed air quality requirements and standards should be used in modeling software programs.

Any State Implementation Plans forair quality relating to the two air quality maintenance areas and one presumptive nonattainment area should be reviewed anda determination made as towhether the project will have an additional impact to any National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

Additional Comments (optional):
As population growth and vehicle volumes increase, there is the potential to have air quality conformity and non-attainment issues in the future. FDOT, MPOs, municipalities, and regional planning agencies should conduct air quality modeling as traffic forecasts increase.
CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Contamination

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), and the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), and recommends a Degree of Effect of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) indicates that there is one brownfield area within the 100-foot buffer distance and four Brownfield locations, two petroleum contamination monitoring sites, and one Super Act Risk source are within the 200-foot buffer. There are four brownfield areas, four hazardous waste facilities, 17 petroleum contamination monitoring sites, one Super Act Well, nine USEPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) regulated facilities, and seven Super Act Risk Sources within the 500-foot project buffer zone. Any source identified will be assessed to determine the need for remediation during construction.

The FDEP stated a Contamination Screening Evaluation should outline specific procedures to be followed in the event that drums, wastes, tanks or potentially contaminated soils are encountered during construction. If contamination is discovered during construction, the FDEP and Pinellas County should be notified, and the FDOT may need to address the problem through additional assessment and remediation activities. Reference should be made to the most recent FDOT specification entitled "Section 120 Excavation and Embankment -- Subarticle 120-1.2 Unidentified Areas of Contamination of the Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction" in the project's construction contract documents that would require specific actions by the contractor in the event of any hazardous material or suspected contamination issue arises. Depending upon the findings of the Contamination Screening Evaluations and the proximity to know contaminated sites, projects involving dewatering should be discouraged or limited, since there is a potential to spread contamination and affect contamination receptors, site workers and the public. Any land clearing or construction debris must be characterized for proper disposal, and potentially hazardous materials must be properly managed. Early planning is essential to meet construction and cleanup timeframes. Innovative technologies, such as special stormwater management systems, engineering controls and institutional controls, such as conditions on water production wells and dewatering restrictions, may be required, depending on the results of environmental assessments.

The SWFWMD states that contamination sites (or potential contamination sites) of particular interest to them include the Brownfield areas adjacent to I-275 and the one Super Act Risk Source (Shell Tanker Spill) near the north end of the Gandy Boulevard entrance ramp to I-275. The area is characterized by a two-aquifer system that includes the Surficial and Floridian aquifers. Within a 200-foot buffer the pollution potential of the intact Surficial Aquifer is high as indicated by DRASTIC weighted index of approximately 177. The pollution potential of the Floridian Aquifer is lower as indicated by DRASTIC weighted index of approximately 62. FAVA Surficial Aquifer System is classified as more vulnerable within the 200-foot buffer for 88 +/-percent of the project length. FAVA Floridan Aquifer System is classified as more vulnerable within the 200-foot buffer for 75 +/-percent of the project length. If any contaminated sites are disturbed during construction it could result in surface and/or groundwater pollution; particularly at the

location of the Brownfield areas and the Super Act Risk Source (Shell Tanker Spill). To minimize groundwater and surface water pollution potential the FDOT should conduct an Environmental Audit at the appropriate level, prepare an appropriate Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER), avoid known contaminated sites where possible in the selection of the project alignment, avoid/minimize all construction activity in proximity to known sinkholes along or near the projects alignment, evaluate potential stormwater treatment pond sites for the presence of contamination, design and construct stormwater management facilities to avoid breaching the upper confining unit and utilize temporary drainage & erosion control through areas of potential contamination. Contamination sources such as existing fuel storage tanks, fuel pumps, and septic tanks shall be removed or abandoned properly. In addition, existing wells in the path of construction shall be properly plugged and abandoned by a licensed well contractor.

The USEPA stated that any source identified will need to be assessed to determine the need for remediation during construction. The environmental review phase of the project should evaluate whether the classification of this area as a Brownfield Site will impact the roadway project. The USEPA recommends that a Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER) be conducted during the environmental review (PD&E) phase of the project. If any contaminated site features are to be impacted or removed during the construction phase of the project, sampling and analysis should be conducted to determine if pollutants are present above regulatory levels. If high levels of pollutants are identified, remediation may be required prior to commencement of construction of the project. Any anticipated remedial, removal, or cleanup activities should be discussed and outlined in the CSER.

The FDOT will prepare a CSER as part of the PD&E study. Any potential contamination source identified will be assessed further during any future design of the project in order to determine the need for remediation during construction.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Resources: Soils, groundwater, surface water which have the potential to be negatively affected by contaminated site features such as underground petroleum storage tanks, industrial/commercial facilities with onsite storage of hazardous materials, solid waste facilities, and hazardous waste facilities. etc.

Level of Importance: These resources are of a high level of importance in the State of Florida. A moderate degree of effect is being assigned for the proposed project (ETDM #12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the EST GIS analysis identified one Brownfield location boundary within the 100-foot buffer distance and four Hazardous Waste Facilities, 17 Petroleum Contamination Monitoring Sites, one Super Act Well, nine USEPA Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Regulated Facilities, and seven Super Act Risk Sources within the 500-foot buffer distance. A Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (CSER) will be prepared for this project. Any source identified will be assessed to determine the need for remediation during construction. The proposed project is expected to result in moderate involvement with potential sources of contamination.

EPA provides the following contamination comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase: EPA reviewed the GIS analysis data for buffer distances of 100, 200, and 500 feet and noted that contaminated site features were located within the project location. These include: Brownfield Location Boundaries, Compliance & Enforcement Tracking Facilities, Hazardous Waste Sites (500 ft), Petroleum Contamination Monitoring Sites, Storage Tank Contamination Monitoring Sites, and USEPA RCRA facilities.

Brownfield projects are defined as abandoned, idled or under-utilized property where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by the presence or potential presence of environmental contamination. Previous thriving areas of economic activity are listed as Brownfield if the area is abandoned by contamination from past uses. Areas being unused or under-utilized are impediments to economic development in rural and urban communities. Redeveloped, these Brownfield areas can be catalysts for community revitalization. The Brownfield program brings together federal agencies to address cleanup and redevelopment in a more coordinated approach. Often times, federal grant programs and public/private organizations assist in the cleanup and redevelopment of Brownfield areas. The environmental review phase of the project should evaluate whether the classification of this area as a Brownfield Site will impact the roadway project.

EPA is assigning a moderate degree of effect for this issue for the proposed project. There are not a substantial amount of contaminated site features within the project area. However, EPA is recommending that a Contamination Screening Evaluation be conducted during the environmental review (PD&E) phase of the project. This type of study should include a survey of the area to confirm the location of current listed contaminated site features, along with other contaminated site features which may have been previously located in the area. Documentation of environmental impacts associated with contaminated sites or contaminated facilities should be included in the report.

If any contaminated sites features (e.g., petroleum storage tanks) are to be impacted or removed during the construction phase of the project, sampling and analysis should be conducted to determine if pollutants are present above regulatory levels. If high levels of pollutants are identified, remediation

may be required prior to commencement of construction of the project. Any anticipated remedial, removal, or cleanup activities should be discussed and outlined in the Contamination Evaluation Screening report.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required
Coordination Document Comments:
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this I-275 Improvement project, a DOE of moderate was assigned to this issue due to the present belief that future ERP permitting is expected to be non-routine for:
- The nearby brownfield areas.
- The Super Act Risk Source (Shell Tanker Spill) located near the north end of the Gandy Boulevard entrance ramp to I-275.

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Information regarding proposed off-site stormwater management facilities will not be available until after the subsequent PD&E and design phases of this project. Therefore, the SWFWMD utilized the FDOT s Environmental Screening Tool (EST) (supplemented with information from the SWFWMD s Geographic Information System (GIS) for identifying potential contaminated sites that may affect subsequent Environmental Resource Permits (ERPs) for the FDOT. The facilities of concern within 200 feet of this I-275 project include (but are not limited to) the following:

Brownfield Locations: Three (3) facilities.
Hazardous Waste Facilities: No reported facilities.
Petroleum Contamination Monitoring Sites: One (1) reported facility.
Storage Tank Contamination Monitoring: Three (3) reported facilities.
Super Act Risk Sources: One (1) reported facility.
Super Act Wells: No reported facilities.
Toxic Release Inventory Sites: No reported facilities.

Detailed information regarding known contaminated sites can be obtained from the appropriate GIS themes / layers in the EST. In view of the current / past land uses in the project area, there may be other (unknown) contaminated sites.

Contamination sites (or potential contamination sites) of particular interest to the SWFWMD include the following:
- The Brownfield areas adjacent to I-275. According to the EST, these facilities are identified as *St. Petersburg, Pinellas County Lealman Area-Wide,* and *Sod Farm Site* brown field areas.
- The one (1) Super Act Risk Source (Shell Tanker Spill) near the north end of the Gandy Boulevard entrance ramp to I-275.

From the SWFWMD s GIS, the proposed I-275 improvement project does not appear to lie within a Sensitive Karst Area (SKA). In addition, no reported / documented sinkholes were identified within 200 feet of the proposed alignment. However, one (1) Subsidence Incident Report was identified on the FDOT s EST within the 500 foot buffer. Within the one (1) mile buffer, the EST reported a total of five (5) Subsidence Incident Reports (reference: the FDOT s EST Contaminated Sites Map and > *Geology* > *Subsidence Incident Reports* layer).

From the SWFWMD s GIS and the FDOT s EST, the project area is characterized by a two-aquifer system that includes the Surficial and Floridan aquifers.

Within a 200 foot buffer of I-275, the pollution potential of the intact Surficial Aquifer is high as indicated by DRASTIC weighted index of approximately 177. The pollution potential of the Floridan Aquifer is lower as indicated by DRASTIC weighted index of approximately 62.

FAVA Surficial Aquifer System:
Classified as More Vulnerable within the 200 foot buffer for 88 + / - % of the project length, Unknown Description for 3 + / - % of the project length and Vulnerable" for the remaining 9 + / - %. Graphical locations of the Surficial FAVA can be viewed within the FDOT s EST under the Contaminated Sites map and > *Water Resource* > *Surficial Aquifer System Response* layer.
FAVA Floridan Aquifer System:
Classified as More Vulnerable within the 200 foot buffer for 75 + / - % of the project length, Unknown Description for 1 + / - % of the project length and Vulnerable" for the remaining 24 + / - %. Graphical locations of the Floridan FAVA can be viewed within the FDOT s EST under the Contaminated Sites

map and > *Water Resource* > *Floridan Aquifer System Response* layer.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
If encountered and disturbed during construction along the segment route, any contaminated site could result in surface and / or groundwater water pollution, particularly at the location of the Brownfield areas and the Super Act Risk Source (Shell Tanker Spill) near the north end of the Gandy Boulevard entrance ramp to I-275.

Additional Comments (optional):
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this I-275 Improvement project, a DOE of moderate was assigned to this issue due to the present belief that future ERP permitting is expected to be non-routine for:
- The nearby brownfield areas.
- The Super Act Risk Source (Shell Tanker Spill) located near the north end of the Gandy Boulevard entrance ramp to I-275.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Lauren P. Milligan, FL Department of Environmental Protection

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The GIS report indicates that there are 4 brownfield areas, 4 hazardous waste facilities, 17 petroleum contamination monitoring sites, 27 storage tank contamination monitoring sites, and 9 RCRA regulated facilities identified within the 500-ft. project buffer zone.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Contamination Screening Evaluations should outline specific procedures that would be followed by the applicant in the event that drums, wastes, tanks or potentially contaminated soils are encountered during construction.

In the event contamination is detected during construction, the Department and Pinellas County should be notified, and the FDOT may need to address the problem through additional assessment and remediation activities. Reference should be made to the most recent FDOT specification entitled "Section 120 Excavation and Embankment -- Subarticle 120-1.2 Unidentified Areas of Contamination of the Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction" in the project's construction contract documents that would require specific actions by the contractor in the event of any hazardous material or suspected contamination issue arises.

Depending on the findings of the Contamination Screening Evaluations and the proximity to known contaminated sites, projects involving "dewatering" should be discouraged or limited, since there is a potential to spread contamination to previously uncontaminated areas or less contaminated areas and affect contamination receptors, site workers and the public. Dewatering projects would require permits / approval from the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Any land clearing or construction debris must be characterized for proper disposal. Potentially hazardous materials must be properly managed in accordance with Chapter 62-730, F.A.C. In addition, any solid wastes or other non-hazardous debris must be managed in accordance with Chapter 62-701, F.A.C. Petroleum cleanups must be managed in accordance with Chapter 62-770, F.A.C.

Please be advised that a new rule, 62-780, F.A.C., became effective on April 17, 2005. In addition, Chapters 62-770, 62-777, 62-782 and 62-785, F.A.C., were amended on April 17, 2005, to incorporate recent statutory changes. Depending on the findings of the environmental assessments, there are "off-property" notification responsibilities potentially associated with this project. These rules may be found at the following website: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/waste/.

Based on our experience, the accurate identification, characterization and cleanup of sites requires experienced consulting personnel and laboratory support, management commitment of the project developers and their representatives, and will likely be very time-consuming. Early planning to address these issues is essential to meet construction and cleanup (if required) timeframes. Innovative technologies, such as special stormwater management systems, engineering controls and institutional controls, such as conditions on water production wells and dewatering restrictions, may be required, depending on the results of environmental assessments.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Infrastructure

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Minimal.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified 513 linear feet, 1,036 linear feet and 2,745 linear feet of railroad within the 100-foot, 200-foot and 500-foot buffer, respectively. One wireless antenna structure location was identifed within the 200 -foot buffer distance, and one Federal Aviation Administration Obstruction was identifiedwithin the 500-foot buffer distance.

SWFWMD identified several SWFWMD-owned/controlled/cooperative data collection sites and survey benchmarks near the project corridor. Construction activities related to the project and associated surface water management facilities have the potential to damage the districts data collection stations or to impair their collection functions. Of heightened concern are the benchmarks noted previously. Communication with the Districts Data Collection Bureau (Brooksville) during the design phase can greatly reduce the potential for impacts to these structures and monitoring wells.

The FDOT will assess potential impacts to existing infrastructure and take measures to minimize any project related impacts.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/17/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required
Coordination Document Comments:
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. A DOE of minimal was assigned to these issues due to the present belief that little or no adverse impacts to infrastructure (owned or controlled by the SWFWMD) are expected.

The SWFWMD requests that FDOT avoid disturbing data collection facilities or adjacent survey benchmarks. Coordination with the District s Hydrologic Data and Survey Sections in Brooksville will be helpful in protecting these infrastructure components.

For ETDM #12556, the District has assigned a pre-application file **(PA# 8974)** for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. File **PA# 8974** is maintained at the Tampa Service Office of the SWFWMD. Please refer to this pre-application file whenever contacting District regulatory staff regarding this project.

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The following information (regarding SWFWMD owned / controlled / cooperative data collection sites) was obtained from the SWFWMD s GIS system, and was analyzed for information within 500 feet of the I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N. project:

SITE_ID: 670015
SITE_NAME: Sawgrass Lake Canal at Structure Downstream
SITE_TYPE_DESC: Canal
STATUS_DESC: Active
AGENCY: SWFWMD / US Geological Survey
STR: 26-30-16

SITE_ID: 670014
SITE_NAME: Sawgrass Lake Canal at Structure Upstream
SITE_TYPE_DESC: Lake Outfall
STATUS_DESC: Active
AGENCY: SWFWMD / US Geological Survey
STR: 26-30-16

SITE_ID: N/A
SITE_NAME: Sawgrass Lake
SITE_TYPE_DESC: Flood Control Structure
STATUS_DESC: Active
AGENCY: SWFWMD
ADDRESS: 7400 25th Street N., St. Petersburg, 33702

SITE_ID: N/A
SITE_NAME: Sawgrass Lake
SITE_TYPE_DESC: Structure Access Point
STATUS_DESC: Active
AGENCY: SWFWMD
ADDRESS: I-275 and 54th Avenue North

The SWFWMD has cooperative programs with NGS, FDEP and other local agencies to establish and maintain benchmarks throughout the District. The following Benchmarks are located near this proposed I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N. project:
Site_Name: Sawgrass BM-1
Site Type: Disc in concrete
STR: 26-30-16

Site_Name: Sawgrass BM-2
Site Type: Monument
STR: 26-30-16

Site_Name: Sawgrass BM-3
Site Type: Disc in concrete
STR: 26-30-16

Beginning on 09/04/12, the SWFWMD revised its website to provide benchmark data that is searchable by section, township and range, or by interactive map. The URL for this website is as follows:
http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/data/surveycontrol/

Comments on Effects to Resources:
Construction activities related to the project and associated surface water management facilities have the potential to damage the Districts data collection stations or to impair their collection functions. Of heightened concern are the benchmarks noted previously
Additional Comments (optional):
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. A DOE of minimal was assigned to these issues due to the present belief that little or no adverse impacts to infrastructure (owned or controlled by the SWFWMD) are expected.

The SWFWMD requests that FDOT avoid disturbing data collection facilities or adjacent survey benchmarks. Coordination with the District s Hydrologic Data and Survey Sections in Brooksville will be helpful in protecting these infrastructure components.

For ETDM #12556, the District has assigned a pre-application file **(PA# 8974)** for the purpose of tracking its participation in the ETDM review of this project. File **PA# 8974** is maintained at the Tampa Service Office of the SWFWMD. Please refer to this pre-application file whenever contacting District regulatory staff regarding this project.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Navigation

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has reviewed comments from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and recommends a Degree of Effect of Minimal.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified no navigable waterways within the 500-foot buffer distance; however, there is one bridge over Big Island Gap within the project limits.

The USACE stated potential navigable waterways are along the corridor. Any permanent or temporary structures, outfalls, fills, or dredging activites may affect navigation.

The FDOT will evaluate horizontal and vertical clearance of the existing and proposed bridges over potential navigable waterways.

No comments were received from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 2 *Minimal* assigned 05/06/2013 by Garett Lips, US Army Corps of Engineers

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
Potential navigable waterways are along the corridor.
Comments on Effects to Resources:
Permanent or temporary structures, outfalls, fills, or dredging activities may affect navigation.
Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

ETAT Reviews and Coordinator Summary: Special Designations

Special Designations

Project Effects

Coordinator Summary Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/15/2013 by FDOT District 7

Comments:
The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has evaluated comments from the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and recommends a Degree of Effect (DOE) of Moderate.

The geographic information system (GIS) data from the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) identified three Outstanding Florida Waters; Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve within the 100-foot buffer distance, Gateway within the 200-foot buffer distance on the north end of the project, and the Boca Ceiga Bay Aquatic Preserve within the 500-foot buffer distance, but south of the project.

The USEPA classified Special Flood Hazard Areas, public lands, Aquatic Preserves, Outstanding Florida Waters, and mangroves as of a high level of importance. The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement with Outstanding Florida Waters and aquatic preserve resources since the project does not cross over these waters. There are sensitive environmental and natural resource areas located directly adjacent to the project. The Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve includes near shore habitats along sandy beaches and mangrove dominated shorelines. Submerged habitats include oyster bars, seagrass beds, coral communities, and spring fed caves. Abundant islands, including those formed from dredge spoil material, are also part of the preserve. Approximately 1/3 of Florida's coral species can be found in the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve. Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve includes unspoiled mangrove islands as well as miles of canals bounded by seawalls. These preserves include the western portion of Tampa Bay (including Safety Harbor and Old Tampa Bay), Clearwater Bay, St. Joseph Sound, oceanic waters westward to the county line, as well as certain fresh waters such as Lake Tarpon and portions of Lake Seminole. Pollutant discharges must not lower existing ambient water quality. Any activity within an OFW requiring a Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) must be deemed to be clearly in the public interest. FDOT should coordinate and consult with FDEP requiring specific permitting requirements relating to this OFW. Additional stormwater retention and treatment requirements may be required. Mangroves are present in the area surrounding the proposed project. The proposed project and further urbanization of the corridor has the potential to impact these environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources. Some potential impacts include increased stormwater runoff or dredging, loss of habitat due to development and urbanization, and degradation of water quality. Also, the shorelines may be subject to erosion which could lead to invasion of exotic species. The PD&E study should evaluate the degree of impact to these types of resources. Impact to environmentally sensitive and valuable resources such as the ones listed above should be avoided or minimized to the best extent practicable.

The FDEP states the proposed project will impact the Boca Ciega Bay and Pinellas County Aquatic Preserves and Gateway OFWs. The watershed conditions within the project area are presently considered fair, and recommends that the PD&E study include an evaluation of existing storm water treatment adequacy and details on the future stormwater treatment facilities. The permit applicant may be required to demonstrate that the proposed stormwater system meets the design and performance criteria established for the treatment and attenuation of discharges to OFWs, pursuant to rule 40D-4, F.A.C., and the SWFWMD Basis of Review for ERP Applications. Direct impacts to these waterbodies and associated wetlands must be demonstrated to be "clearly in the public interest" as part of the ERP permitting process.

The SWFWMD indicates the northern portion of this project is within 200-feet of Outstanding Florida Waters identified as Gateway and Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve. The Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve also encompasses Sovereign Submerged Lands (SSL) in Pinellas County. The project lies within several FDEP watersheds (WBIDs). The proposed project has the potential to result in water quality impacts to Outstanding Florida Waters, and to delay the recovery of Impaired Waters as a result of undertreated or untreated stormwater runoff during and after construction. If the bottom lands are determined to be titled to the State of Florida, a SSL Authorization from the Board of Trustees (BOT) will need to be obtained or the existing authorization will need to be modified to account for the changes in the proposed construction. SSL Proprietary Authorizations for work performed in

Pinellas County will be orchestrated through the SWFWMD. In addition to the SSL Proprietary Authorization for the proposed construction, Public Interest Criteria will need to be assessed.

The FDOT will evaluate potential impacts to special designations as part of the PD&E study. The FDOT will design the project to meet SWFWMD water quality standards pursuant to state rules and statutes and the ERP Basis of Review (BOR), as well as criteria set forth by other regulatory agencies.

No comments were received from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/18/2013 by Madolyn Dominy, US Environmental Protection Agency

Coordination Document: To Be Determined: Further Coordination Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:

Resources: Special Flood Hazard Areas, Public Lands (such as conservation easements, preserves, and conservation areas), Aquatic Preserves, Outstanding Florida Waters, Mangroves

Level of Importance: The resources listed above (identified as special designations) are of a high level of importance in the State of Florida. A moderate degree of effect is being assigned to this issue for the proposed project (ETDM #12556, I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N.).

Comments on Effects to Resources:

The preliminary environmental discussion comments state that the EST GIS analysis identified three Outstanding Florida Waters; Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve within the 100-foot buffer distance, Gateway within the 200-foot buffer distance on the north end of the project, and the Boca Ceiga Bay Aquatic Preserve within the 500-foot buffer distance, but south of the project. The proposed project is expected to result in minimal involvement with Outstanding Waters resources since the project does not cross over these waters.

The preliminary environmental discussion comments also state that the EST GIS analysis identified two aquatic preserves in the projects area; Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve within the 100-foot buffer distance and the Boca Ceiga Bay Aquatic Preserve within the 500-foot buffer distance, but to the south of the project. The proposed project will have minimal to no involvement with the aquatic preserves since the resources are primarily south of the project limits and this project does not cross over these preserves.

EPA provides the following special designations comments based upon its review of the project at the programming screen phase: EPA is assigning a moderate degree of effect to this issue due to the fact that there are sensitive environmental and natural resource areas located directly adjacent to the project. The following features identified as Special Designations are listed to be within proximity of the proposed project:

Aquatic Preserves:
Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve -
The Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve was established on March 21, 1972 and was designated as an Outstanding Florida Water on March 1, 1979. The Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve is located on the Gulf coast of west central Florida, and include the state-owned submerged land in Pinellas County waters. The preserve encompasses 336,265 acres of state-owned submerged land. The surrounding area is one of the most urbanized areas in Florida, and as such has special management needs. The preserve includes nearshore habitats along sandy beaches and mangrove dominated shorelines. Submerged habitats include oyster bars, seagrass beds, coral communities, and springfed caves. Abundant islands, including those formed from dredge spoil material, are also part of the preserve. Approximately 1/3 of Florida's coral species can be found in the Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve.

Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve-
The Boca Ciega Bay Aquatic Preserve was designated in 1968. Boca Ciega Bay was designated as an aquatic preserve to aid in halting the wholesale dredging and filling of the bay which occurred with the finger fill developments of the 1950s. Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve was designated to help prevent the events in Boca Ciega Bay from being repeated elsewhere. Due to the broad expanse of the preserves, almost all habitats and levels of impact can be seen. These preserves include the nearly pristine waters offshore of Palm Harbor as well as the heavily impacted waters of Boca Ciega Bay. There are unspoiled mangrove islands as well as miles of canals bounded by seawalls. These preserves include the western portion of Tampa Bay (including Safety Harbor and Old Tampa Bay), Clearwater Bay, St. Joseph Sound, oceanic waters westward to the county line, as well as certain fresh waters such as Lake Tarpon and portions of Lake Seminole. (Source: FDEP)

Outstanding Florida Waters:
Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve (100 ft buffer)
Gateway (200 ft)
Boca Ciega Aquatic Preserve (500 ft)

OFWs are provided the highest level of protection under the Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Degradation of water quality in an OFW is prohibited except under certain circumstances. Pollutant discharges must not lower existing ambient water quality. Any activity within an OFW requiring a Florida

Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) must be deemed to be clearly in the public interest. FDOT should coordinate and consult with FDEP requiring specific permitting requirements relating to this OFW. Additional stormwater retention and treatment requirements may be required.

The GIS analysis data indicates that mangroves are present in the area surrounding the proposed project. Mangroves contribute significantly to the overall health of Florida s southern coast and contribute significantly to the economy of coastal counties in Florida. Mangroves provide many valuable functions such as providing food and nutrients for marine organisms, providing habitat and nursery grounds for marine organisms, serving as nesting sites for various birds, serving as storm buffers by reducing wind and wave action in shallow shoreline areas, and assisting in protection water quality by filtering runoff and trapping sediments and debris from adjacent uplands.

The proposed project and further urbanization of the corridor has the potential to impact these environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources. Some potential impacts include increased stormwater runoff or dredging, loss of habitat due to development and urbanization, and degradation of water quality. Also, the shorelines may be subject to erosion which could lead to invasion of exotic species.

The PD&E study should evaluate the degree of impact to these types of resources. Impact to environmentally sensitive and valuable resources such as the ones listed above should be avoided or minimized to the best extent practicable. Special permitting requirements may apply to mangrove activities or impacts. Coordination with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) will be required.

Public Land - Sawgrass Lake Park, Weedon Island Preserve, Boyd Hill Nature Park - See comments under Recreation Areas issue for information regarding these public lands.

Brownfield Location Boundaries- See Comments under Contaminated Sites issue for information regarding Brownfield areas.

Special Flood Hazard Areas - See Comments under Floodplains issue regarding potential floodplain impacts.

Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 07/10/2013 by Chastity LaRiche, Southwest Florida Water Management District

Coordination Document: Permit Required
Coordination Document Comments:
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD?s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE ofModerate was assigned to this issue due to probable discharges to Outstanding Florida Waters and the additional effort to address SSL issues. ERP permitting is expected to be more difficult, and will require close coordination and considerable effort on the part of the SWFWMDs permitting staff.

In those portions of the project that directly discharge into OFWs, additional water quality treatment will be required. Proposed wetland impacts associated with the OFW designation will also be of concern to the SWFWMD.

SSL Authorization may need to be addressed if the submerged lands are determined to be owned by the State. Changes to existing easements or leases have the potential to take a considerable amount of time, along with the evaluation of Public Interest Criteria.

Direct Effects
Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The Environmental Screening Tool (EST) indicates the northern portion of this project is within 200-feet of Outstanding Florida Waters identified as Gateway and Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve. The Pinellas County Aquatic Preserve also encompasses Sovereign Submerged Lands (SSL) in Pinellas County.

The EST also indicates the proposed I-275 improvement project lies within the following Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) watersheds (WBIDs):
- Old Tampa Bay (WBID?s 1558G and 1558H)
- Roosevelt Basin (Channel 2 Subbasin) (WBID 1624)
- Roosevelt Basin (Freshwater Segment) (WBID 1624A)
- Sawgrass Lake (WBID 1661)
- 77th Avenue Canal (WBID 1661E)

- St. Joe Creek (Fresh Segment) (WBID 1668A)
- Booker Creek (WBID 1696)
- 34th Street Basin (WBID 1716A)
- Clam Bayou (East Drainage) (WBID 1716C)
- Frenchmans Creek Basin U (WBID 1709F)

All of the above WBID?s, except 1661 and 1661E, are classified impaired by FDEP. An approximate (graphical) location of these eleven (11) WBIDs can be viewed within the EST. Additional comments (by the SWFWMD) on impaired waters can be found in the Water Quality & Quantity section of the EST.

As previously noted in the Contaminated Sites section of the EST, the proposed I-275 improvement project does not appear to lie within a Sensitive Karst Area (SKA). In addition, no reported / documented sinkholes were identified within 200 feet of the proposed alignment. However, one (1) Subsidence Incident Report was identified on the FDOTs EST within the 500 foot buffer. Within the one (1) mile buffer, the EST reported a total of five (5) Subsidence Incident Reports (reference: the FDOTs EST Contaminated Sites Map and > *Geology* > *Subsidence Incident Reports* layer).
While a SSL title determination was not requested from the FDEP at this time,the construction of the proposed improvements has the potential to require Proprietary Authorization from the State of Florida Board of Trustees.

Comments on Effects to Resources:
The proposed I-275 improvement project has the potential to result in water quality impacts to Outstanding Florida Waters, and to delay the recovery of Impaired Waters as a result of undertreated or untreated stormwater runoff during and after construction.

The proposed construction has the potential to extend beyond the established limits set by the Quitclaim Deed referenced above and may require additional Proprietary Authorization from the State of Florida Board of Trustees. If the bottom lands are determined to be titled to the State of Florida, a SSL Authorization from the Board of Trustees (BOT) will need to be obtained or the existing authorization will need to be modified to account for the changes in the proposed construction. SSL Proprietary Authorizations for work performed in Pinellas County will be orchestrated through the District. In addition to the SSL Proprietary Authorization for the proposed construction, Public Interest Criteria will need to be assessed.

Additional Comments (optional):
The SWFWMD has assigned a Degree of Effect (DOE) based on the potential need for increased coordination or effort associated with the SWFWMD?s proprietary or regulatory interests and obligations. For this project, a DOE ofModerate was assigned to this issue due to probable discharges to Outstanding Florida Waters and the additional effort to address SSL issues. ERP permitting is expected to be more difficult, and will require close coordination and considerable effort on the part of the SWFWMDs permitting staff.

In those portions of the project that directly discharge into OFWs, additional water quality treatment will be required. Proposed wetland impacts associated with the OFW designation will also be of concern to the SWFWMD.

SSL Authorization may need to be addressed if the submerged lands are determined to be owned by the State. Changes to existing easements or leases have the potential to take a considerable amount of time, along with the evaluation of Public Interest Criteria.

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Degree of Effect: 3 *Moderate* assigned 05/17/2013 by Lauren P. Milligan, FL Department of Environmental Protection

Coordination Document: Permit Required

Direct Effects

Identified Resources and Level of Importance:
The proposed project will impact the Boca Ciega Bay and Pinellas County Aquatic Preserves and Gateway Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW), which are regulated under section 62-302.700(9), Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), and afforded a high level of protection under sections 62-4.242(2) and 62-302.700, F.A.C. The watershed conditions within the project area are presently considered fair.
Comments on Effects to Resources:
We recommend that the PD&E study include an evaluation of existing stormwater treatment adequacy and details on the future stormwater treatment facilities. The permit applicant may be required to demonstrate that the proposed stormwater system meets the design and performance criteria established for the treatment and attenuation of discharges to OFWs, pursuant to rule 40D-4, F.A.C., and the SWFWMD Basis of Review for ERP Applications. Under section 373.414(1), F.S., direct impacts to these waterbodies and associated wetlands must be demonstrated to be "clearly in the public interest" as part of the ERP permitting process.
Additional Comments (optional):

CLC Commitments and Recommendations:

Project Scope

General Project Commitments

Date	Description
09/30/2010	The ETDM Planning Screen review began on 10/21/09 and was completed on 12/5/09. The Purpose and Need Statement, as originally submitted to the ETAT, indicated that two Special Use Lanes (SULs) would be added in each direction on I-275 from Sunshine Skyway Bridge to SR 694 (Gandy Boulevard) interchange. This alternative (Alternative 1) has been eliminated because updates to the project have been made based on the 2008 Interstate 275 (SR 93) Lane Continuity Study conducted by FDOT. These updates show that only one SUL is proposed to be added in each direction on I-275 between the 54th Avenue South interchange north to the SR 694 (Gandy Boulevard) interchange. The Purpose and Need Statement, GIS analysis, and Map viewer have been updated in the EST and being rescreened as Alternative 2.

Required Permits

Permit	Type	Conditions	Review Org	Review Date
Large Construction (>= 5 AC)	Stormwater		FDOT District 7	07/03/12
Environmental Resource Permit	Water		FDOT District 7	07/03/12
Individual Permit	USACE		FDOT District 7	07/03/12
Environmental Resource Permit	State		FDOT District 7	07/03/12
Section 10/Section 404 Department of the Army Permit	USACE		FDOT District 7	01/11/13

Required Technical Studies

Technical Study Name	Type	Conditions	Review Org	Review Date
Location Hydraulics Report	ENGINEERING		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Bridge Development Report	ENGINEERING		FDOT District 7	01/11/2013
Public Involvement Plan	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Noise Study Report	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Contamination Screening Evaluation Report	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Public Hearing Transcript	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Traffic Analysis	ENGINEERING		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Public Hearing Scrapbook	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Comments and Coordination Report	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
VE Info Report	ENGINEERING		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Preliminary Engineering Report	ENGINEERING		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Air Quality Technical Memorandum	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Cultural Resource Assessment Survey	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Interchange Modification Report (IMR)	ENGINEERING		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Type II Categorical Exclusion	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	07/03/2012
Wetlands Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report	ENVIRONMENTAL		FDOT District 7	01/11/2013

Class of Action

Class of Action Determination

Class of Action	Other Actions	Lead Agency	Cooperating Agencies	Participating Agencies
Categorical Exclusion	None	Federal Highway Administration	Cooperating agencies are not applicable for this class of action.	Participating agencies are not applicable for this class of action.

Class of Action Signatures

Name	Agency	Review Status	Date	ETDM Role
Theresa Farmer	FDOT District 7	ACCEPTED	07/16/2013	FDOT ETDM Coordinator
Linda Anderson	Federal Highway Administration	ACCEPTED	07/25/2013	Lead Agency ETAT Member

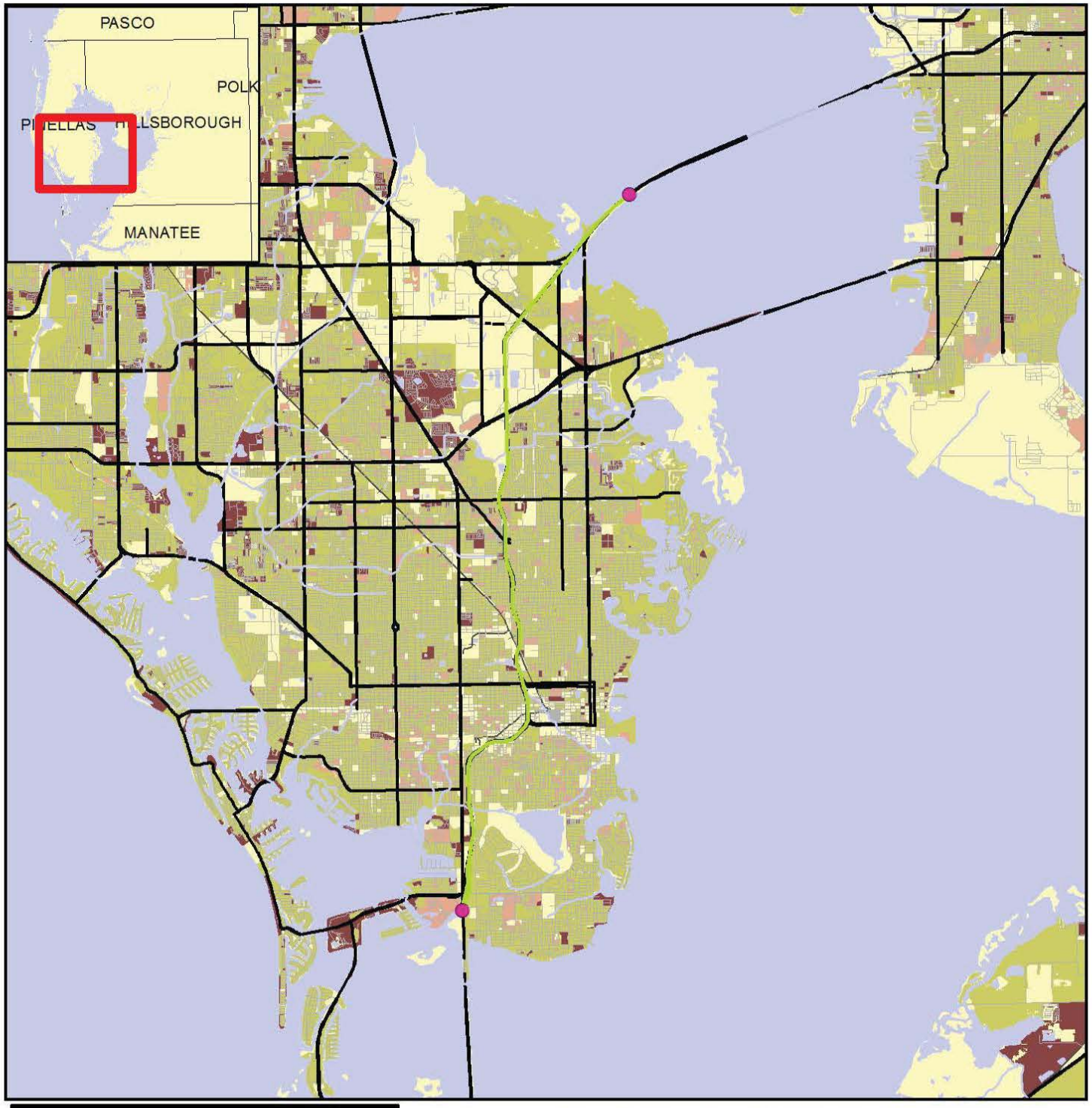
Dispute Resolution Activity Log

There are no dispute actions identified for this project in the EST.

Hardcopy Maps: Alternative #2

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 7.5 Miles

N W E S

Population Age Distribution Map

ETDM Alternative Point
ETDM Alternative Terminus
ETDM Alternative Segment
ETDM Alternative Polygon

Major Road
Local Road or Trail
Railroad
River, Stream or Canal
Water Body

Median Age

0 - 18
18 - 30
30 - 65
> 65

Data Sources:
US Geological Survey
FL Department of Transportation
NAVTEQ
US Census Bureau (2000)

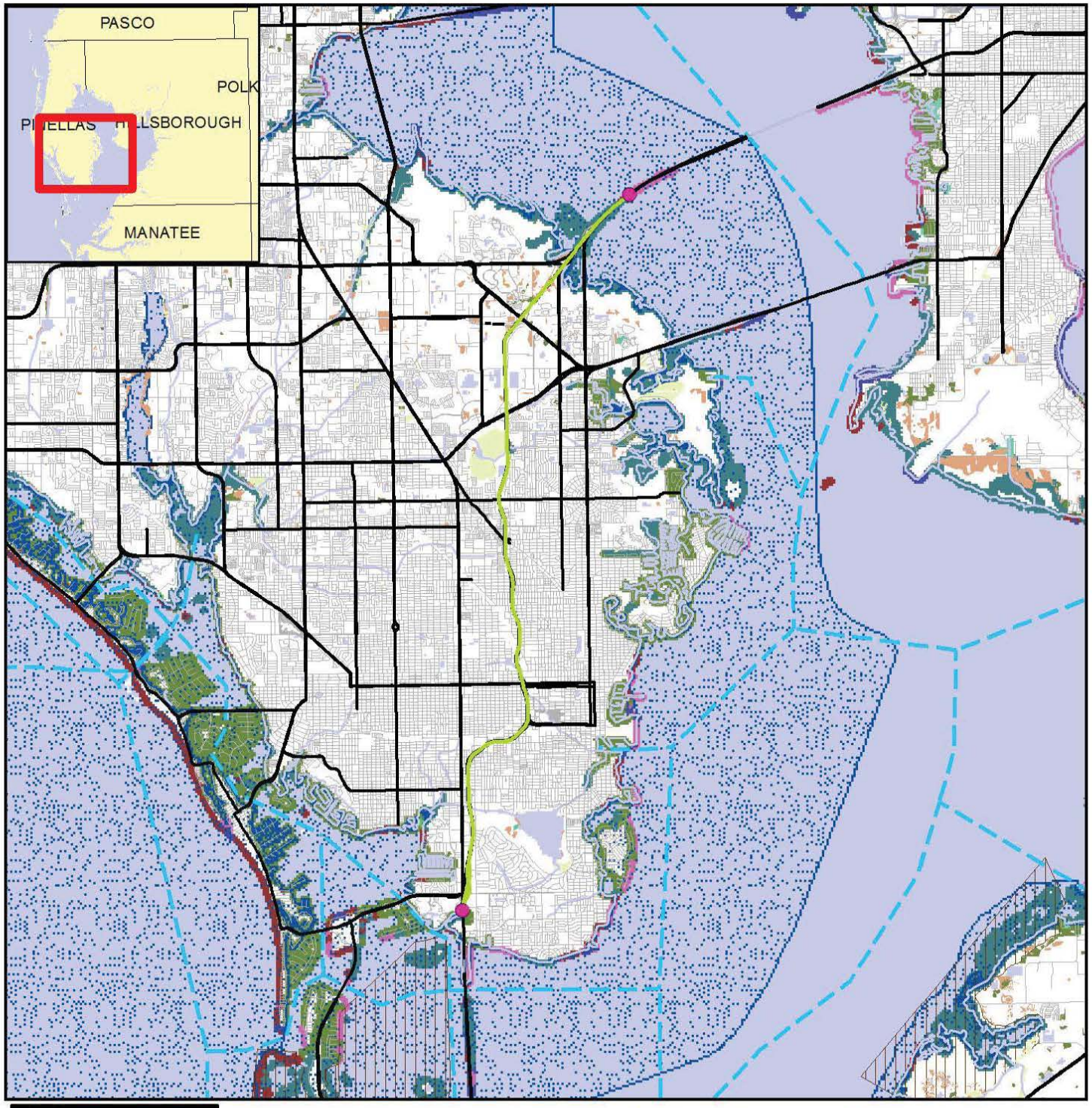
etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 4 Miles

N W E S

Coastal and Marine Resource Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Aquatic Preserve
- Navigable Water Way
- Continuous Seagrass
- Discontinuous Seagrass
- Coastal Barrier Resource Area
- Swamp or Marsh
- Exposed Rocky Platform
- Sand Beach
- Gravel Beach/Riprap
- Exposed Tidal Flat
- Sheltered Tidal Flat
- Mixed Sand And Gravel Beach
- Sheltered Rock/Seawall/Vegetated
- Exposed Vertical Rocky Shore/Seawall

Data Sources: NAVTEQ; US Geological Survey; Florida Marine Research Institute; Florida Department of Transportation; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association; Florida Water Management Districts

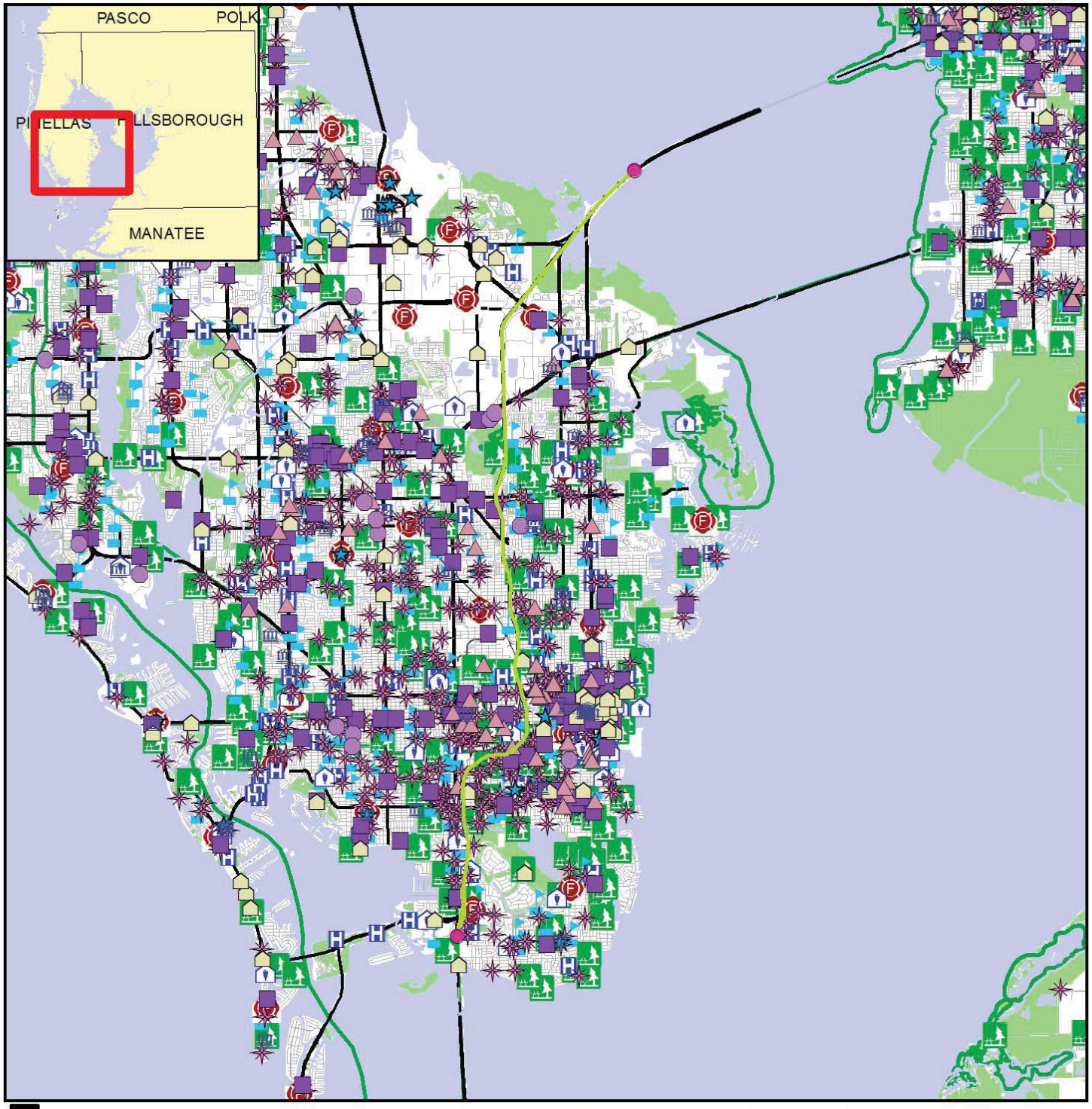
etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 0.5 Miles

N
W
E
S

Community Facilities and Services Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Government
- Civic Center
- Cemetery
- Social Service
- Community Center
- Law Enforcement
- Place of Worship
- Cultural Center
- Fire Station
- Health Care
- School
- Park
- River, Stream or Canal
- Recreational Trail
- Railroad
- Community Boundary
- Water Body
- Conservation or Recreation Area

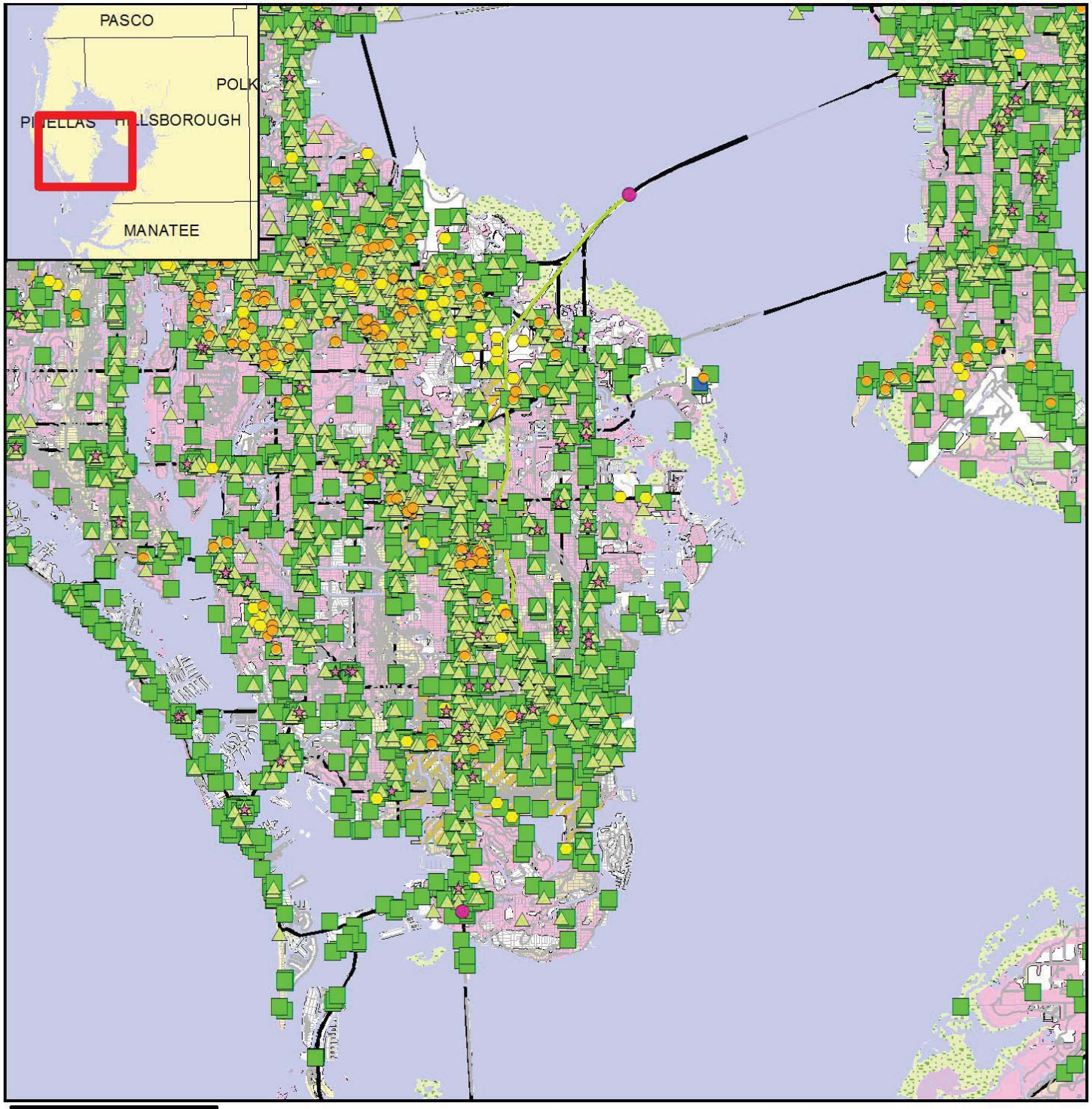
Data Sources:
US Geological Survey; FL Department of Transportation; NAVTEQ; FL Property Appraisers; FL Natural Areas Inventory

etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making — Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 3/26/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 4 Miles

N W E S

Potential Contamination Assessment Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Canal
- Toxic Release Inventory
- Dry Cleaning Facility
- Solid Waste Facility
- NPL Remediation Site
- Hazardous Material Site
- Power Plant
- Superfund Site
- Nuclear Site
- FDEP Tanks
- Brownfield Area
- 5 FT Contour
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh

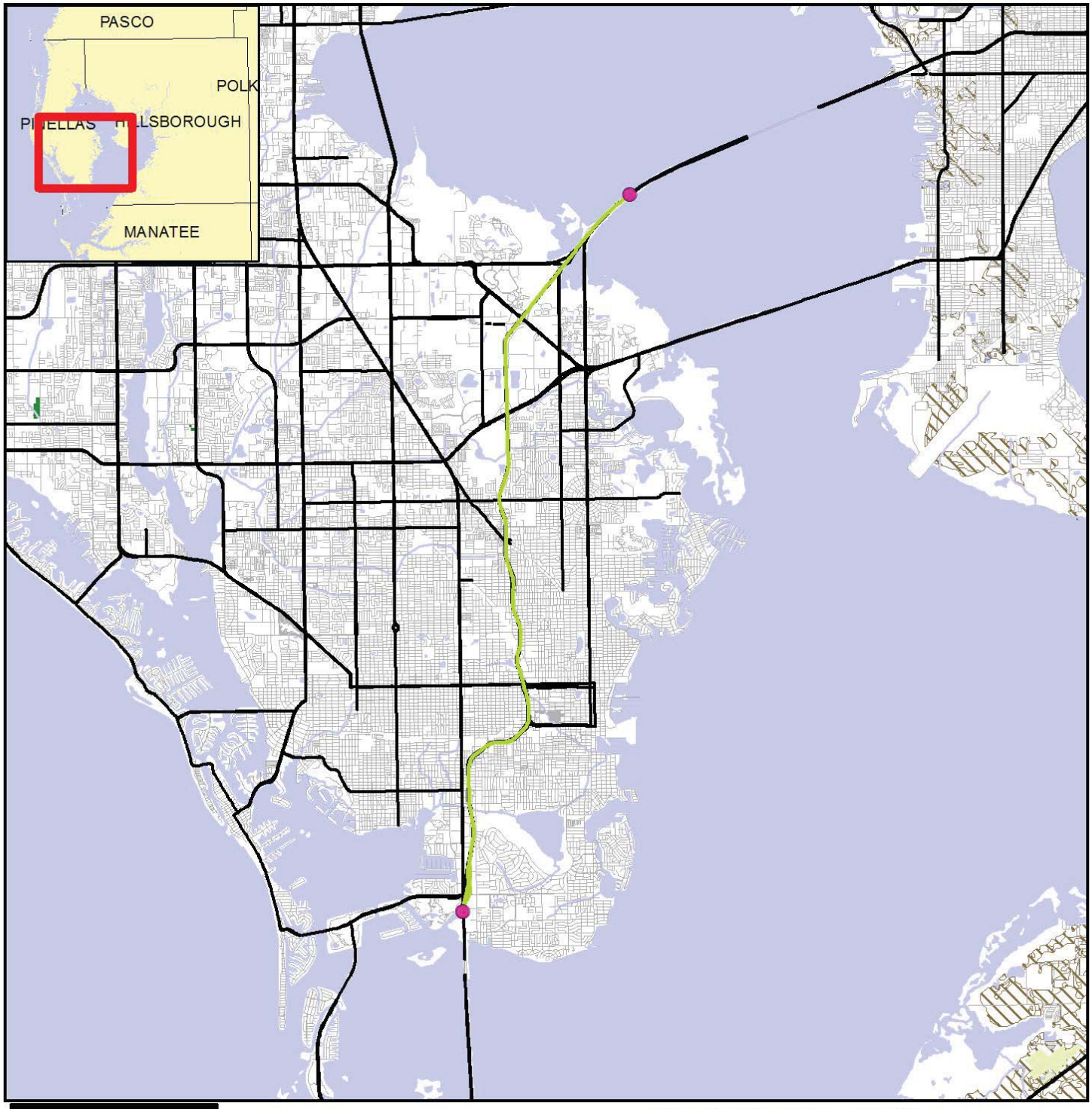
Data Sources:
NAVTEQ; US Geological Survey; FL Department of Transportation; FL Department of Environmental Protection; FL Water Management Districts; US Environmental Protection Agency; Natural Resource Conservation Service

etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making — Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



Farmlands Resource Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Prime Farmland Soils
- Cropland/Pastureland
- Nurseries/Vineyards
- Specialty Farms
- Tree Crops
- Rural Open Lands

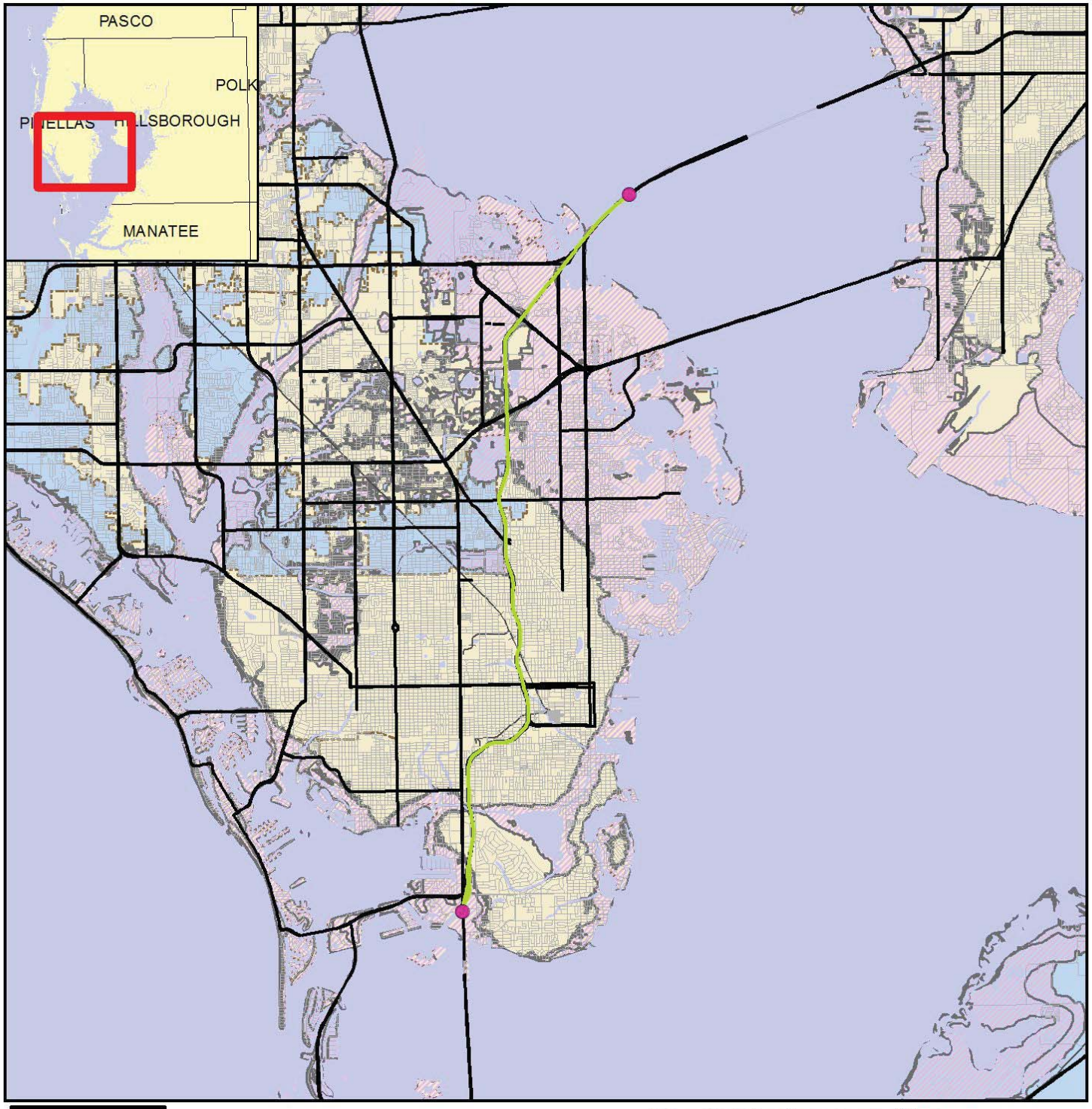
Data Sources: NAVTEQ, Florida Water Management Districts, US Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conseration Services

etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making — Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



Floodplain Resource Map

0 3 Miles

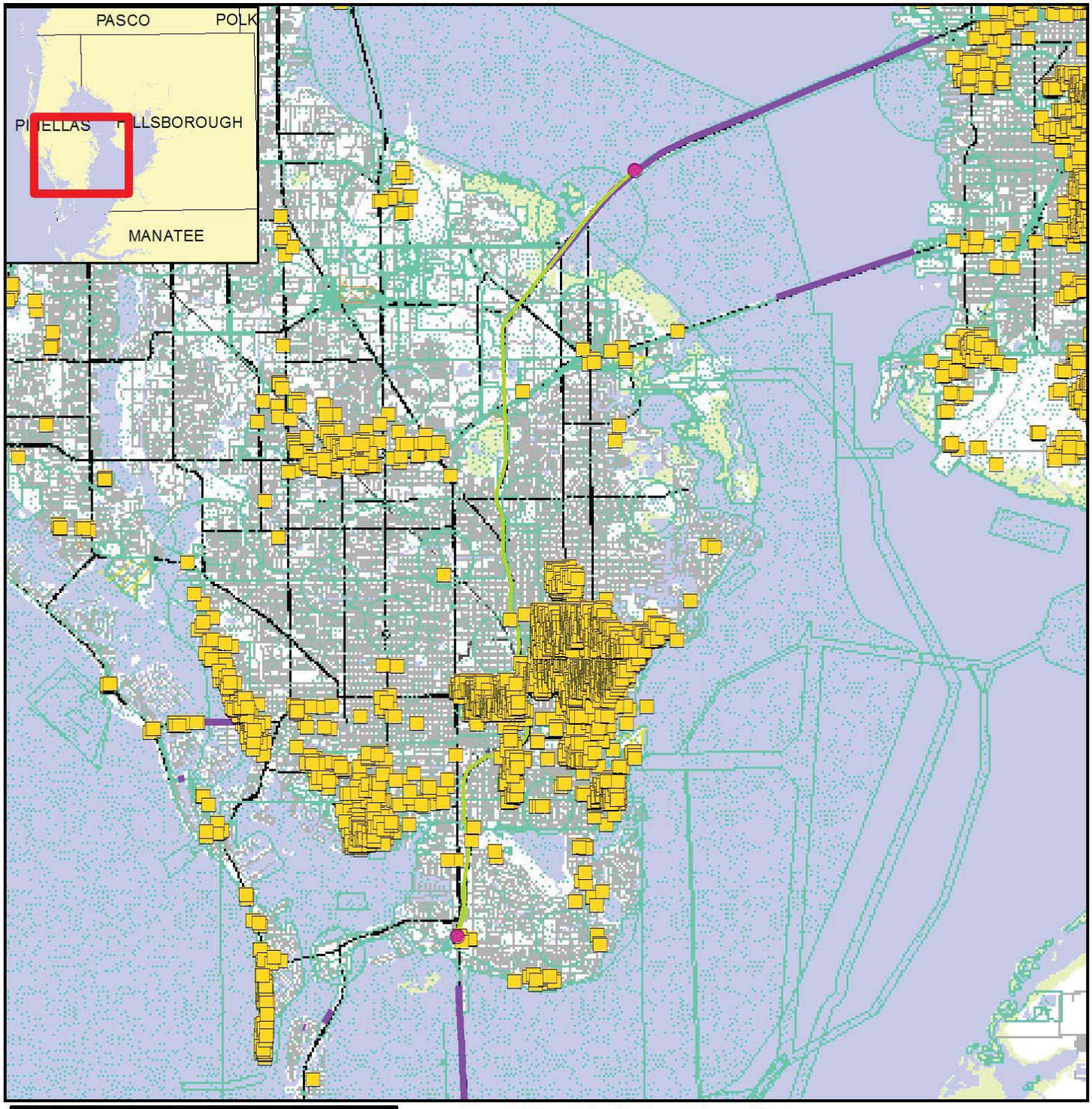
N W E S

ETDM Alternative Point
ETDM Alternative Terminus
ETDM Alternative Segment
ETDM Alternative Polygon
Major Road
Local Road or Trail
Railroad
River, Stream or Canal
Water Body
City Limits
County Boundaries
Special Flood Hazard Area

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
Federal Emergency Management Agency

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 7 Miles

N W E S

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
Florida Department of Transportation
Florida Department of State,
Bureau of Archaeological Research

Historic Resources Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh
- Railroad
- Historic Structure
- Historic Cemetery
- Historic Bridge
- Historic Resource Group
- Cultural Resource Field Survey Area
- State Historic Highway

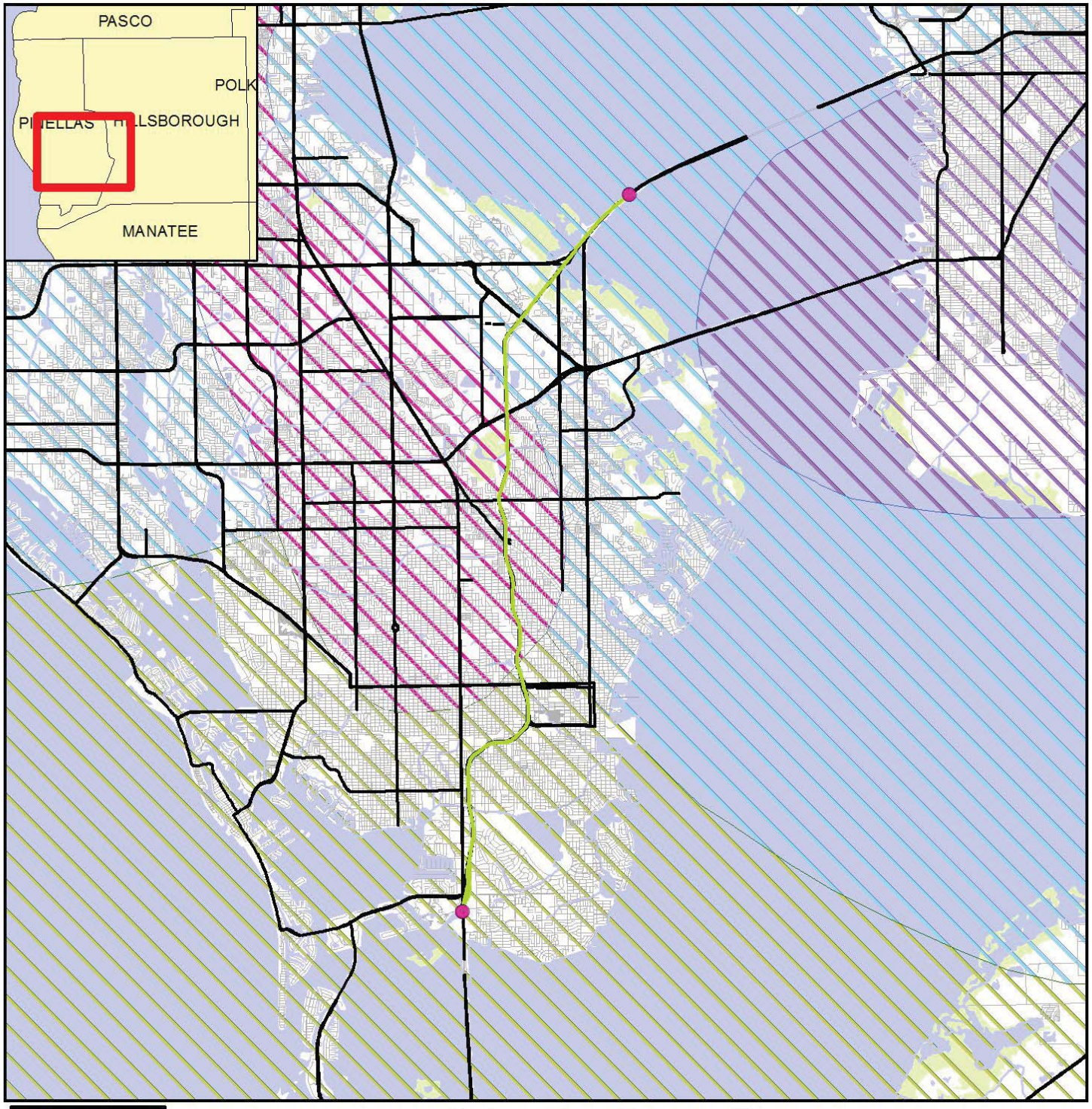
Note: Historic properties depicted on this map represent resources listed in the Florida Master Site File excluding archeological site locations, which, pursuant to Chapter 267.135, Florida Statutes, may be exempt from public record (Chapter 119.07, Florida Statutes). Absence of features on the map does not necessarily indicate an absence of resources in the project vicinity.

etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making — Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 3/26/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 3 Miles

N W E S

Hydrogeology Resource Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh

Recharge Areas of the Floridan Aquifer

- Discharge 1 TO 5
- Discharge > 5
- Disharge < 1
- Recharge 1 TO 10
- Recharge > 10
- Recharge < 1

Geological Epoch

- Eocene
- Holocene
- Miocene
- Miocene/Pliocene
- Oligocene
- Oligocene/Miocene
- Pleistocene
- Pleistocene & Holocene
- Pliocene
- Pliocene/Pleistocene

Data Sources: NAVTEQ; US Geological Survey; Florida Department of Transportation; South West Florida Water Management District; Florida Geological Survey

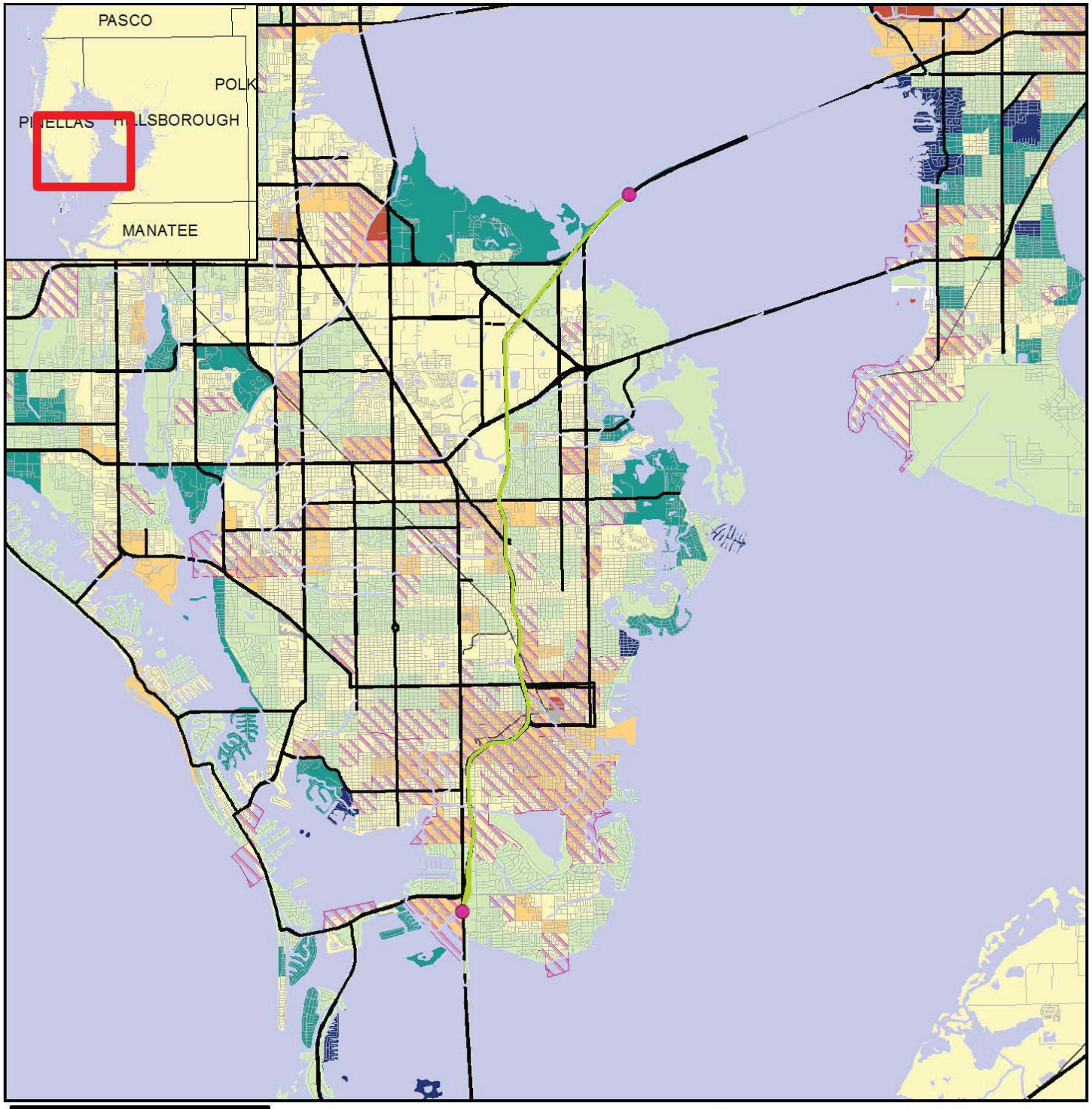
etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



Income Distribution Map

ETDM Alternative Point
ETDM Alternative Terminus
ETDM Alternative Segment
ETDM Alternative Polygon
Major Road
Local Road or Trail
Railroad
River, Stream or Canal
> 20% Below Poverty
Water Body

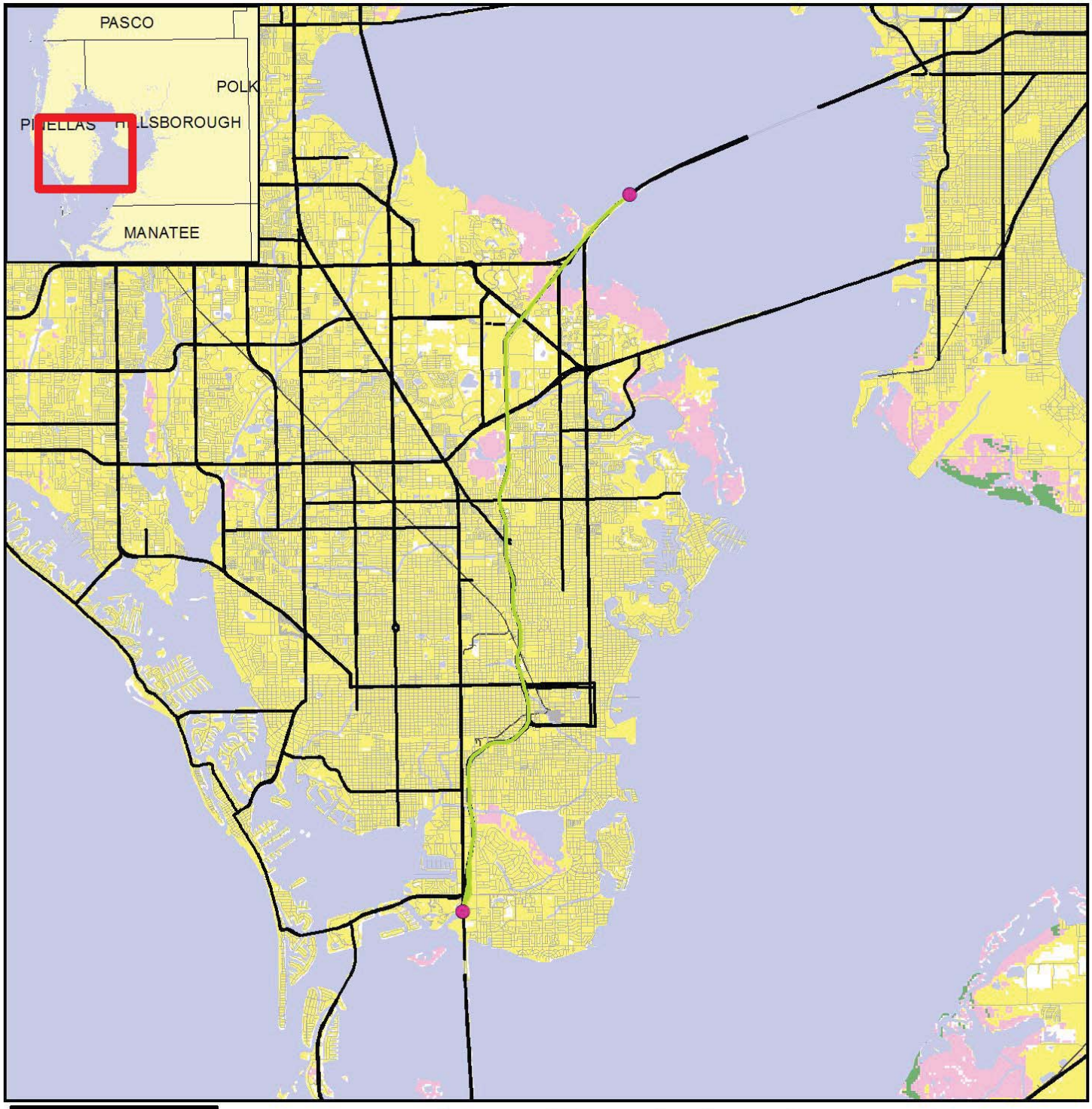
Median Household Income

0 - 10000
10001 - 29999
30000 - 49999
50000 - 79999
80000 - 125000
> 125000

Data Sources:
US Geological Survey
FL Department of Transportation
NAVTEQ
US Census Bureau (2010)

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 4 Miles

N W E S

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
Florida Department of Transportation
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Integrated Wildlife Habitat Ranking System Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Low Habitat Quality
- Medium Habitat Quality
- High Habitat Quality

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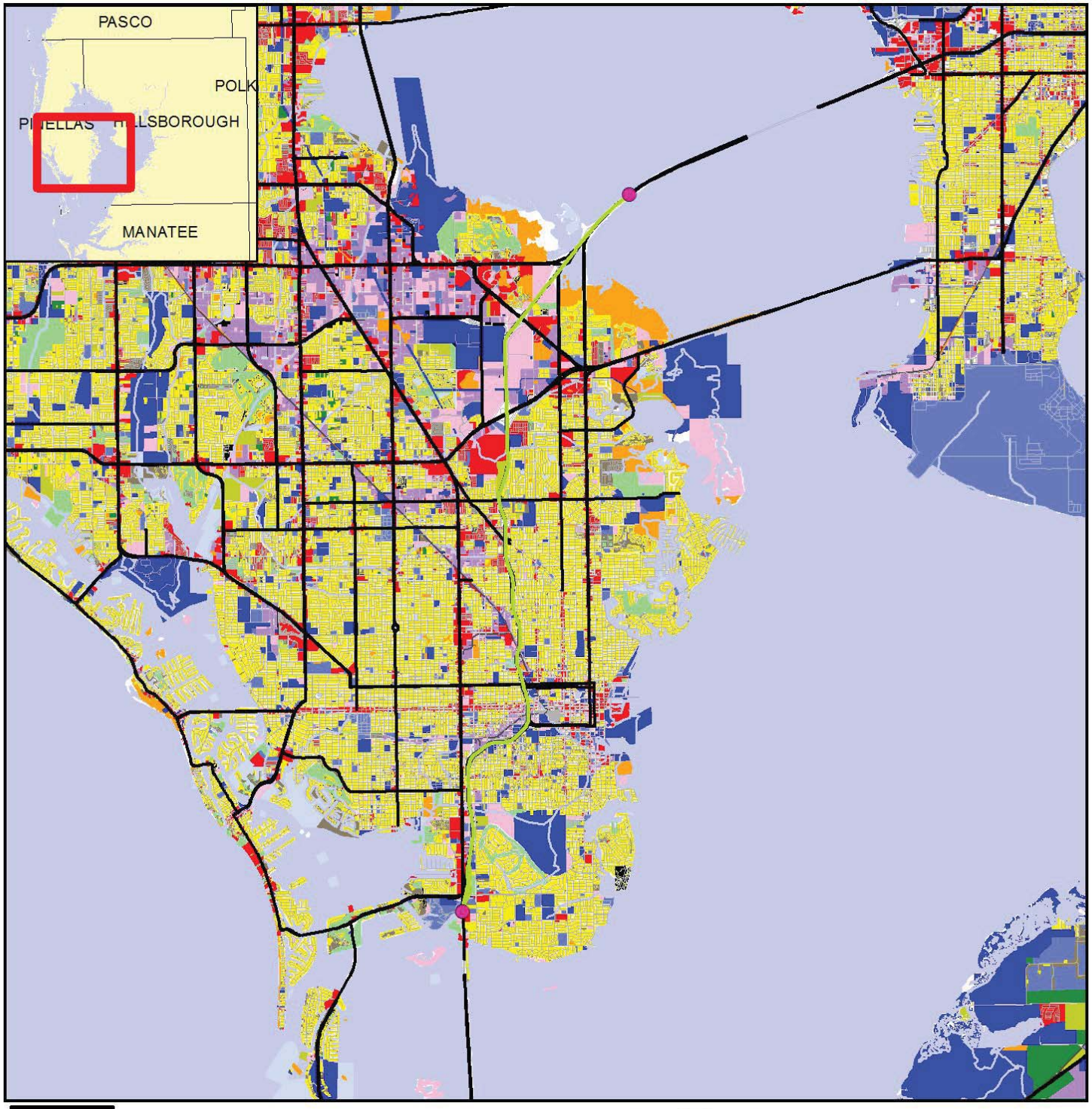
Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 2 Miles

N
W E
S

Land Use Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Canal
- Agricultural
- Industrial
- Institutional
- Mining
- Open (Not Agricultural)
- Other
- Public
- Right-of-Way
- Recreational
- Residential
- Retail/Office
- Vacant (Residential)
- Vacant (Nonresidential)
- Water
- No Data

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
Florida Department of Revenue
Florida Department of Transportation
Florida County Property Appraiser Offices

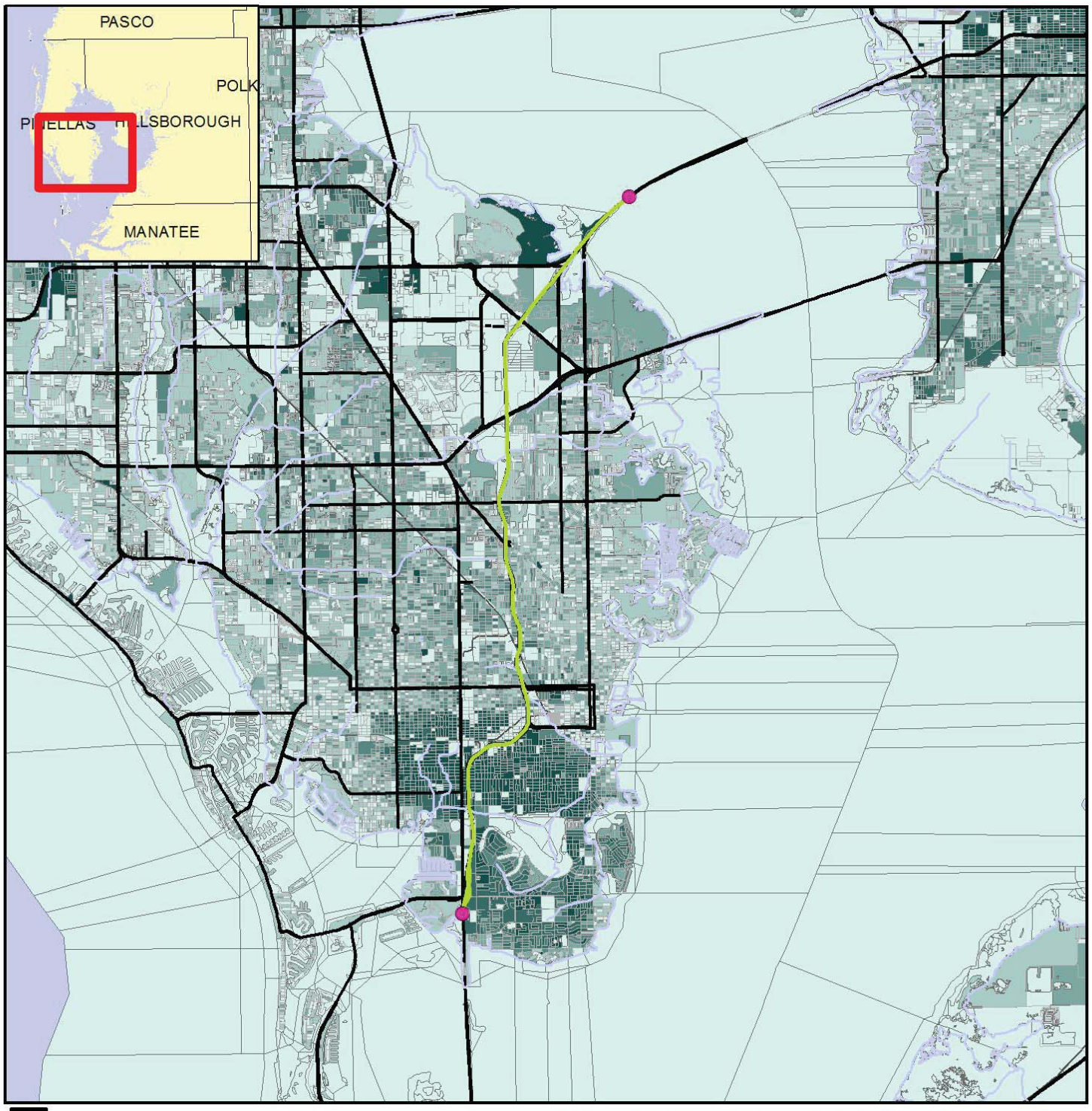
etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 0.7 Miles

N
W E
S

Data Sources:
US Geological Survey
FL Department of Transportation
NAVTEQ
US Census Bureau (2010)

Minority Population Distribution Map

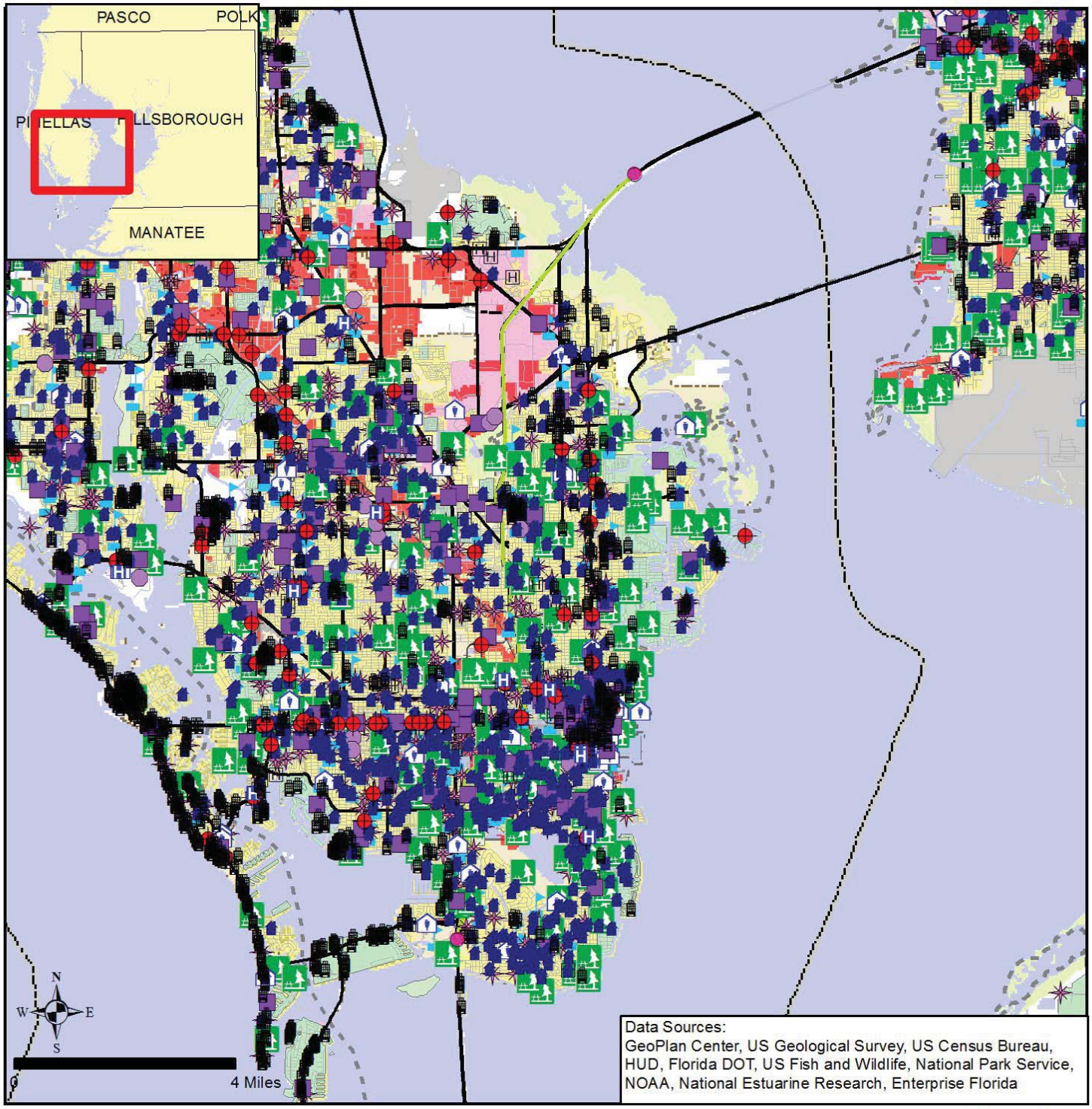
- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body

Percent Minority Population (2010)

0 - 6 | 7 - 20 | 21 - 40 | 41 - 60 | 61 - 85 | 86 - 100

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North

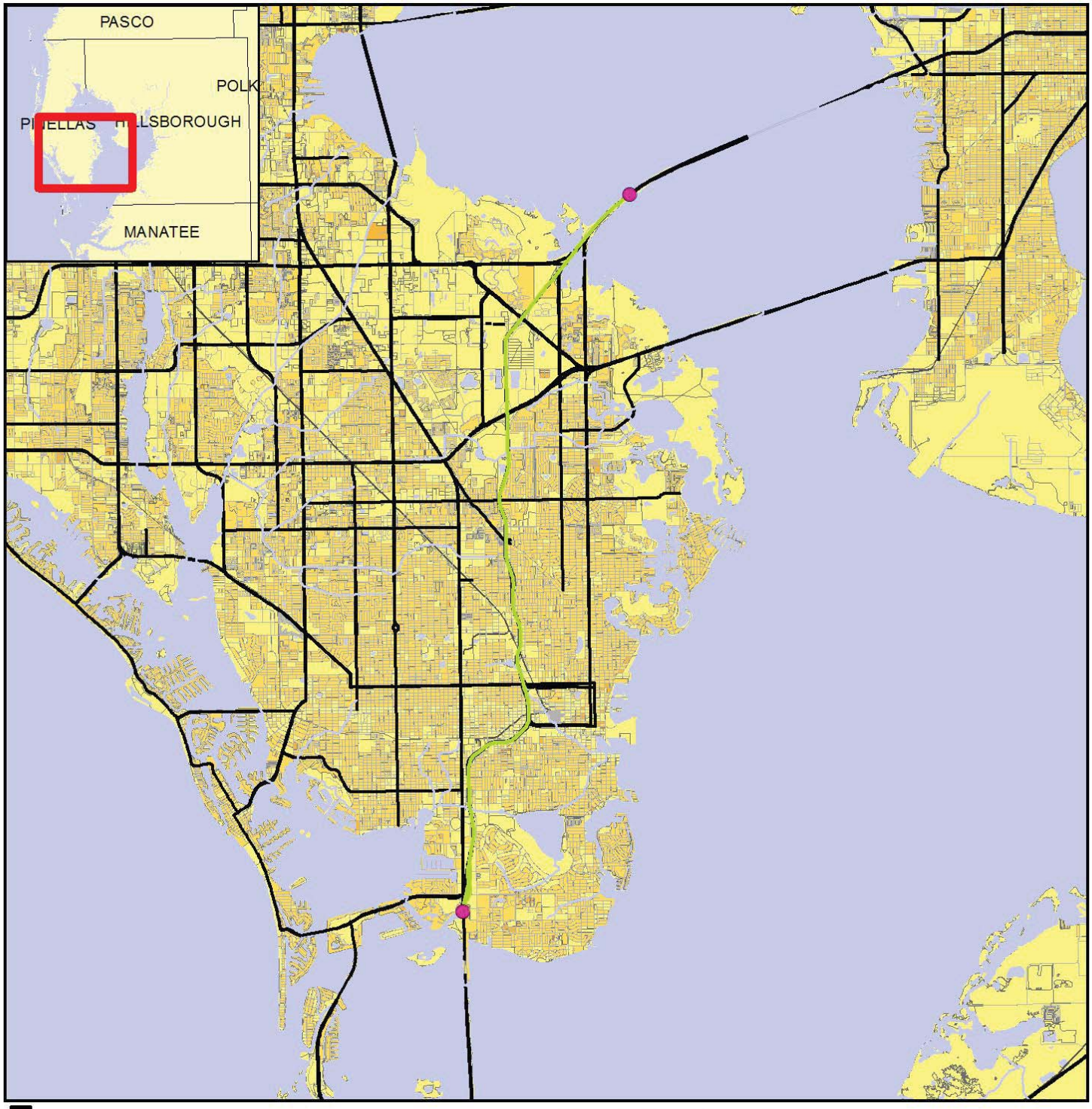


Noise Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- County Boundaries
- City Limits
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Noise Barriers
- Existing Trails
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh
- Airport
- Condo Owners Associations
- Hospitals
- Laser On-site
- Group Care Facilities
- Cemetery
- Community Center
- Cultural Center
- Health Care
- Park
- Place of Worship
- School
- Historic Cemetery
- Planned Unit Developments
- Wildlife Refuges
- National Parks
- National Park Projects
- Marine Sanctuaries
- Military Installations
- Industrial
- Residential
- HUD Renewal
- Nat'l Estuarine Reserves
- Enterprise Zones
- DRI

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 0.4 Miles

N
W E
S

Data Sources:
US Geological Survey
FL Department of Transportation
NAVTEQ
US Census Bureau (2010)

Population Density Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body

Population per Acre (2010)

0 - 4.9 | 5 - 29.9 | 30 - 99.9 | 100 - 349.9 | 350 - 800 | > 800

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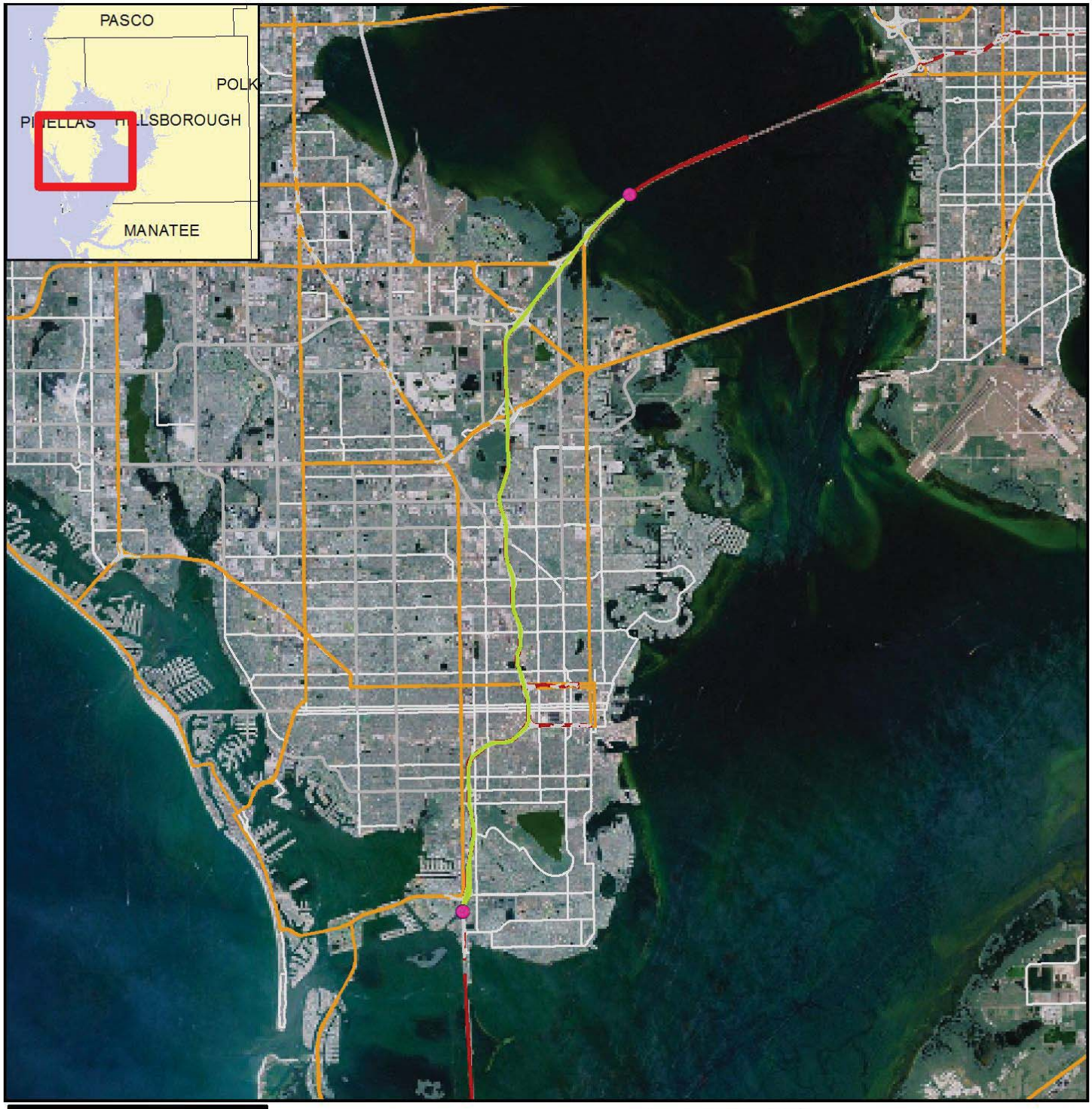
Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 5 Miles

Project Aerial Map

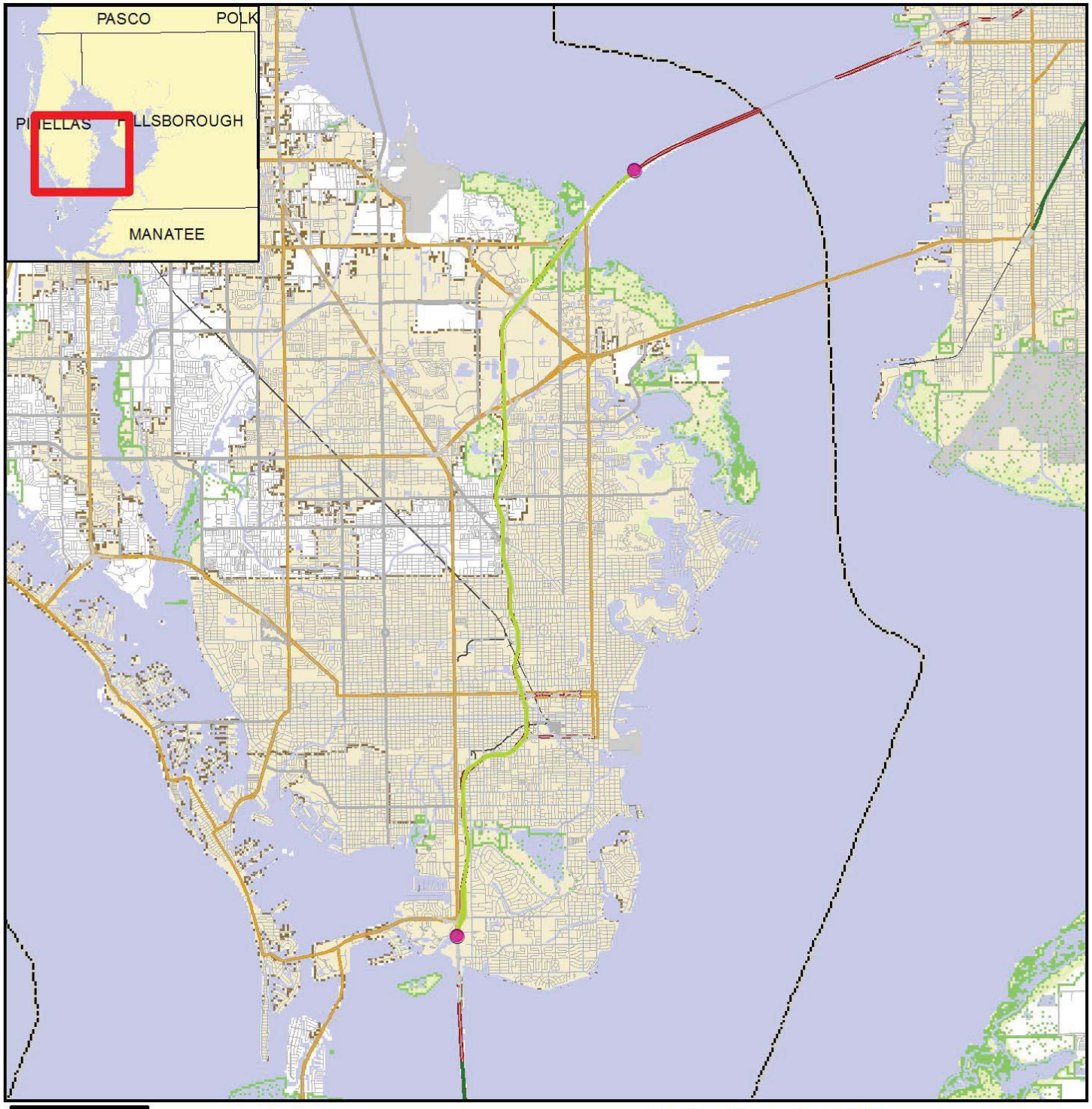
N
W E
S

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Primary and Limited Access Highway
- Secondary, Unlimited Access Highway
- Other Highway Feature
- Local Road

Data Sources:
Highways - NAVTEQ
Digital Orthophotograph - US Geological Survey

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 2.5 Miles

N
W E
S

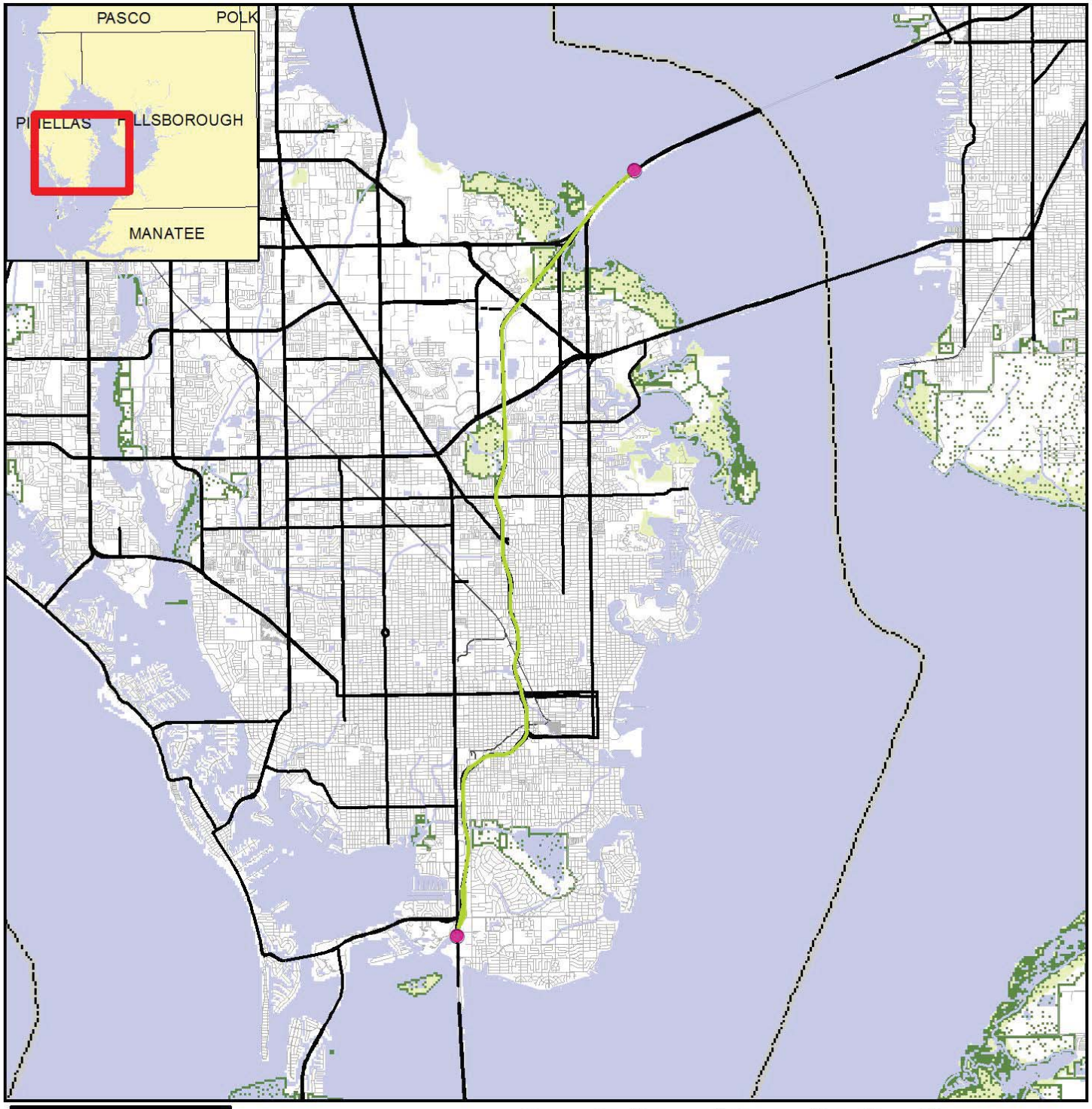
Project Location Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh
- Managed Conservation Lands
- Toll Road
- Railroad
- Airport
- City Limits
- County Boundaries

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
US Census Bureau
County Property Appraisers
Florida Natural Areas Inventory

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 4 Miles

N
W E
S

Conservation and Recreation Area Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh
- Conservation or Recreation Area
- Railroad
- County Boundary

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
Florida Natural Areas Inventory

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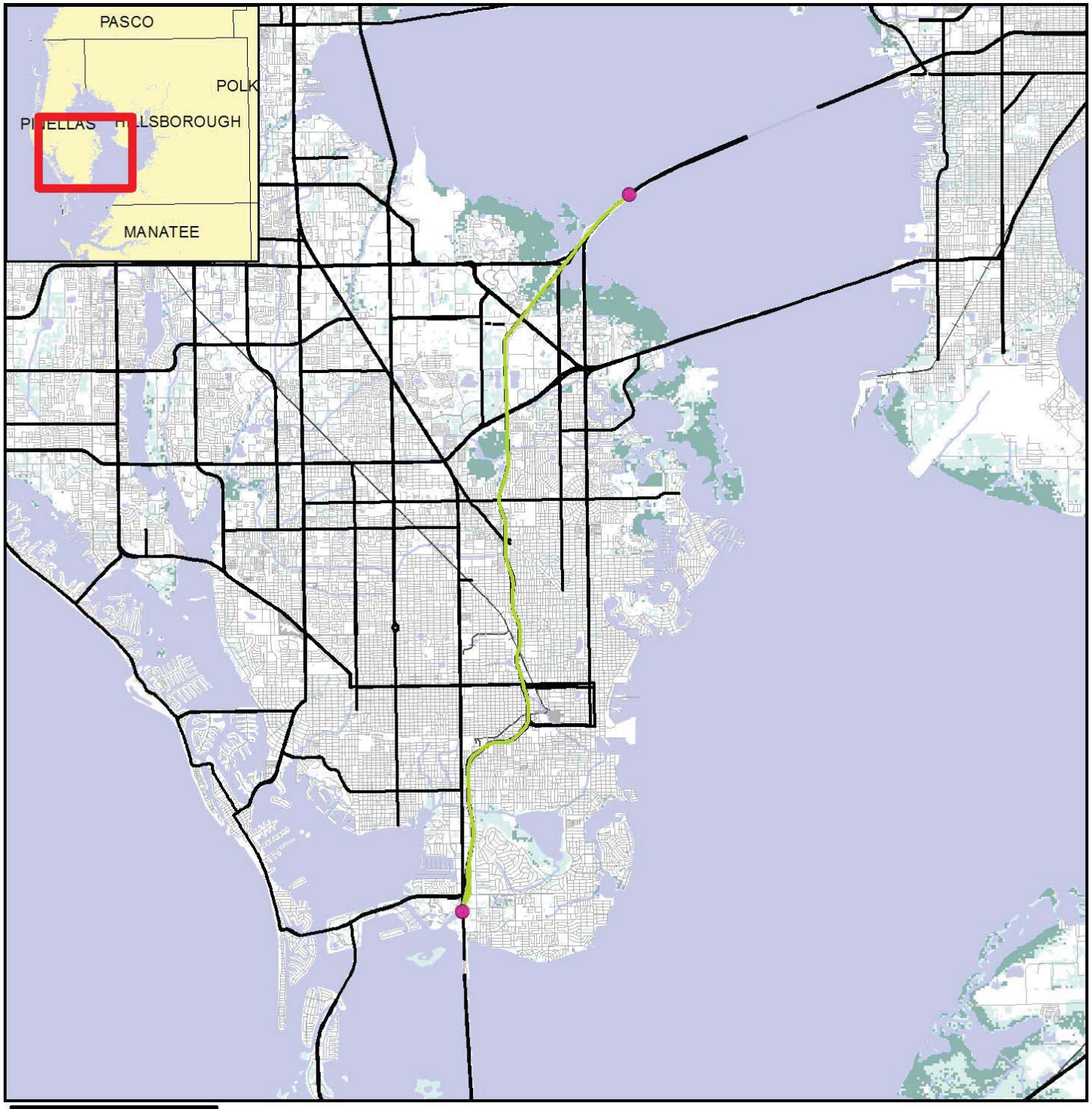
Map Generated on: 3/26/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 4 Miles

N W E S

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
Florida Department of Transportation
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

Species Potential Habitat Model Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- Railroad
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body

Potential Habitat Richness

- 1 - 2 Species
- 3 - 5 Species
- 6 - 8 Species
- 9 - 10 Species
- 11 - 13 Species

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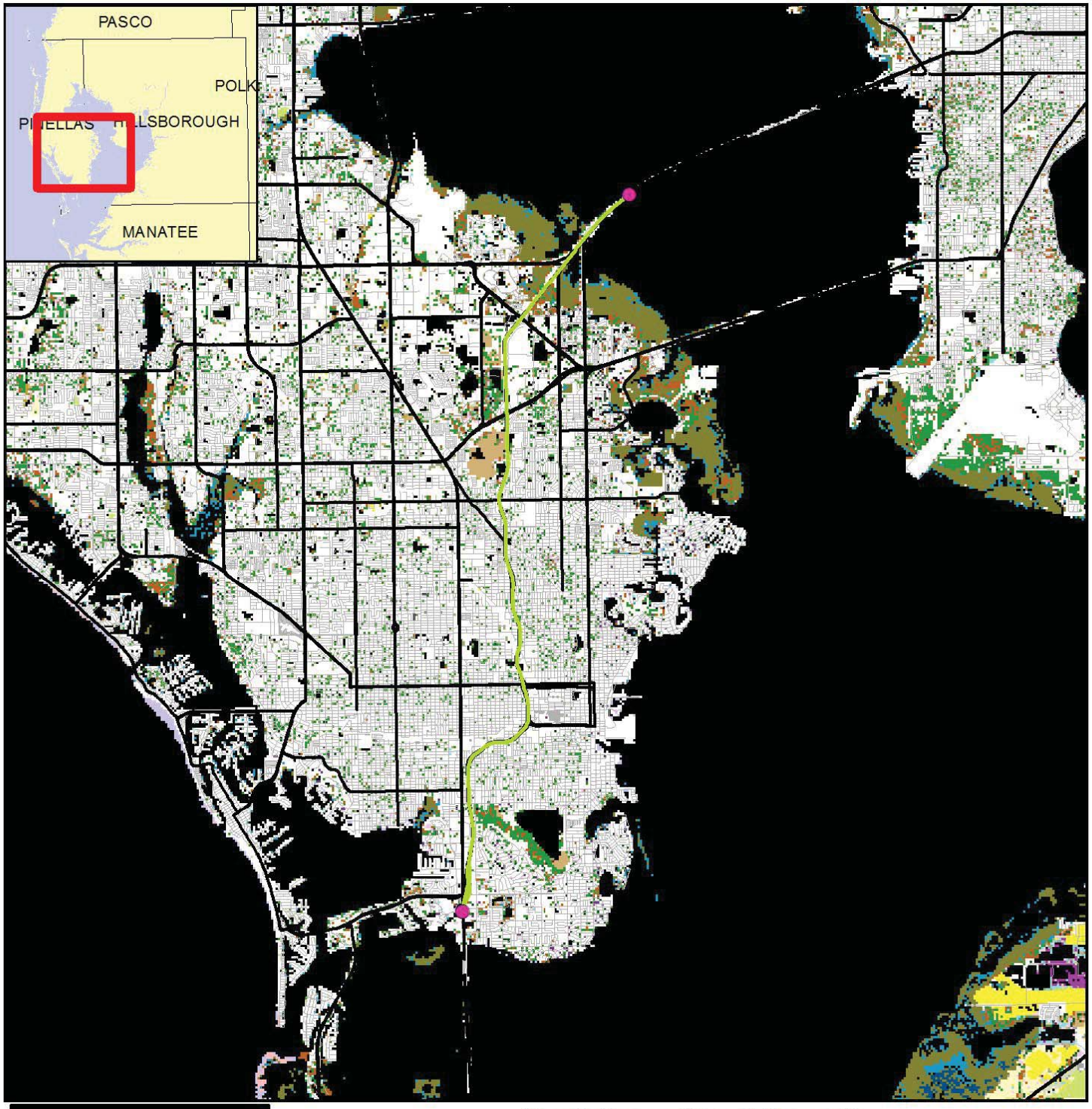
Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 5 Miles

Vegetation and Land Cover Map

- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Point
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail

- Not Classified
- Coastal Strand
- Sand/Beach
- Xeric Oak Scrub
- Sand Pine Scrub
- Sandhill
- Dry Prairie
- Mixed Hardwood-pine Forest
- Hardwood Hammocks and Forests
- Pinelands
- Cabbage Palm-live Oak Hammock
- Tropical Hardwood Hammock
- Freshwater Marsh and Wet Prairie
- Sawgrass Marsh
- Cattail Marsh
- Shrub Swamp
- Bay Swamp
- Cypress Swamp
- Cypress/Pine/Cabbage Palm
- Mixed Wetland Forest
- Hardwood Swamp
- Hydric Hammock
- Bottomland Hardwood Forest
- Salt Marsh
- Mangrove Swamp
- Scrub Mangrove
- Tidal Flats
- Open Water
- Shrub and Brushland
- Grassland
- Bare Soil/Clearcut
- Improved Pasture
- Unimproved Pasture
- Sugarcane
- Citrus
- Row and Field Crops
- Other Agriculture
- Exotic Plants
- Australian Pine
- Melaleuca
- Brazilian Pepper
- High Impact Urban
- Low Impact Urban
- Extractive

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ; Florida Department of Transportation; Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

N W E S

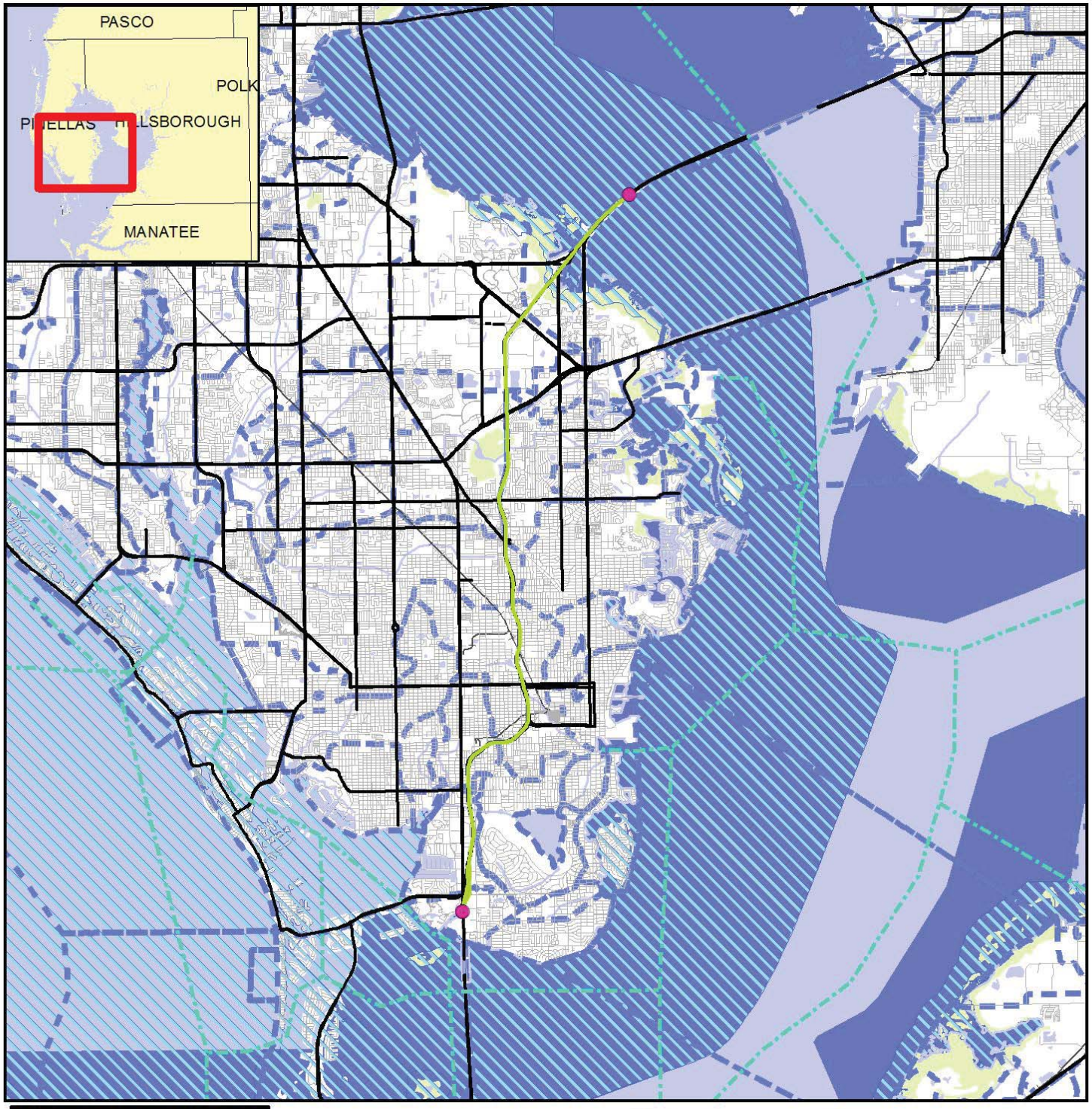
etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



0 5 Miles

N W E S

Water Resources Map

- ETDM Alternative Point
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- Railroad
- 1st Magnitude Spring
- River, Stream or Canal
- Navigable Water Way
- SFWMD Canals
- Drainage Basin
- Outstanding Florida Water
- Surface Water Class I
- Surface Water Class II
- Water Body
- Swamp/Marsh
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail

Data Sources:
NAVTEQ
US Geological Survey
Florida Department of Transportation
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Geological Survey
US Bureau of Transportation Statistics

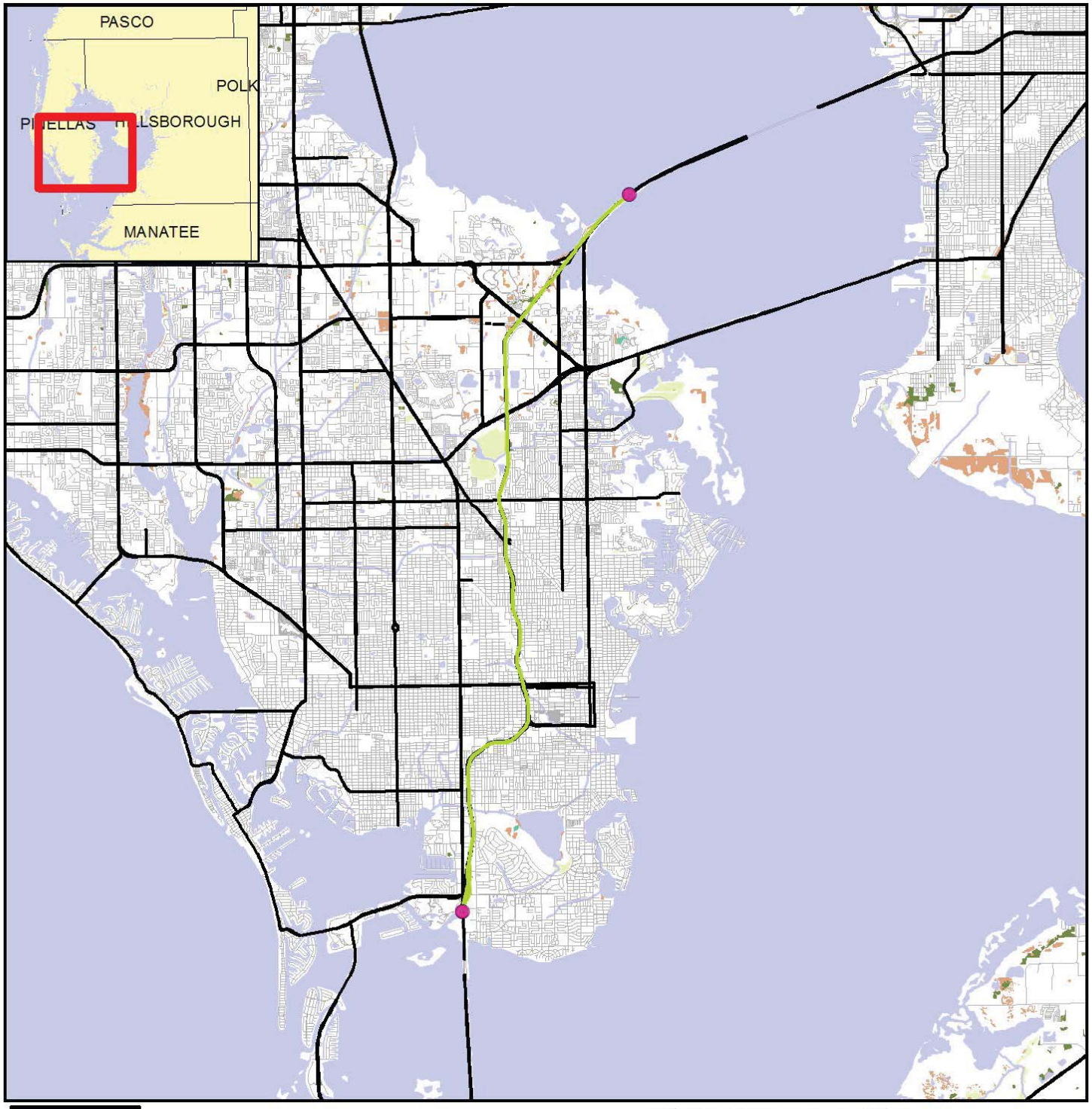
etdm Efficient Transportation Decision Making

Environmental Screening Tool est

Map Generated on: 1/22/2013

12556 I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., Alternative #2

South of 54th Avenue South to North of 4th Street North



Wetland Resource Map

N
W E
S

- ETDM Alternative Polygon
- ETDM Alternative Segment
- ETDM Alternative Terminus
- ETDM Alternative Point
- Major Road
- Local Road or Trail
- River, Stream or Canal
- Water Body
- Non-vegetated Wetland
- Vegetated Non-forested Wetland
- Wetland Forested Mixed
- Wetland Coniferous Forest
- Wetland Hardwood Forest

Data Sources: NAVTEQ; Florida Water Management Districts; US Geological Survey

Appendices

Advanced Notification Comments

There are no comments for this project.

GIS Analyses

Since there are so many GIS Analyses available for Project #12556 - I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., they have not been included in this ETDM Summary Report. GIS Analyses, however, are always available for this project on the Public ETDM Website. Please click on the link below (or copy this link into your Web Browser) in order to view detailed GIS tabular information for this project:

http://etdmpub.fla-etat.org/est/index.jsp?tpID=12556&startPageName=GIS%20Analysis%20Results

Special Note: Please be sure that when the GIS Analysis Results page loads, the **Project Re-Published 7/26/2013Milestone** is selected. GIS Analyses snapshots have been taken for Project #12556 at various points throughout the project's life-cycle, so it is important that you view the correct snapshot.

Project Attachments

Note: Attachments are not included in this Summary Report, but can be accessed by clicking on the links below:

Date	Type	Size	Link / Description
04/04/2013	AN Package	1.68 MB	http://etdmpub.fla-etat.org//est/AN_Package.jsp?pkg=2404 AN Package
04/04/2013	Form SF-424: Application for Federal Assistance	102 KB	http://etdmpub.fla-etat.org//est/servlet/blobViewer?blobID=14227 Form SF-424: Application for Federal Assistance
02/11/2013	Scope of Work	87 KB	http://etdmpub.fla-etat.org//est/servlet/blobViewer?blobID=13867 Reference Tables
09/30/2010	Ancillary Project Documentation	98 KB	http://etdmpub.fla-etat.org//est/servlet/blobViewer?blobID=10374 I-275 (SR 93) Lane Continuity Study
09/30/2010	Ancillary Project Documentation	67 KB	http://etdmpub.fla-etat.org//est/servlet/blobViewer?blobID=10375 E-mails between FDOT and FHWA on updating the Purpose and Need Statement
10/08/2009	Ancillary Project Documentation	75 KB	http://etdmpub.fla-etat.org//est/servlet/blobViewer?blobID=8674 Pinellas Public Outreach

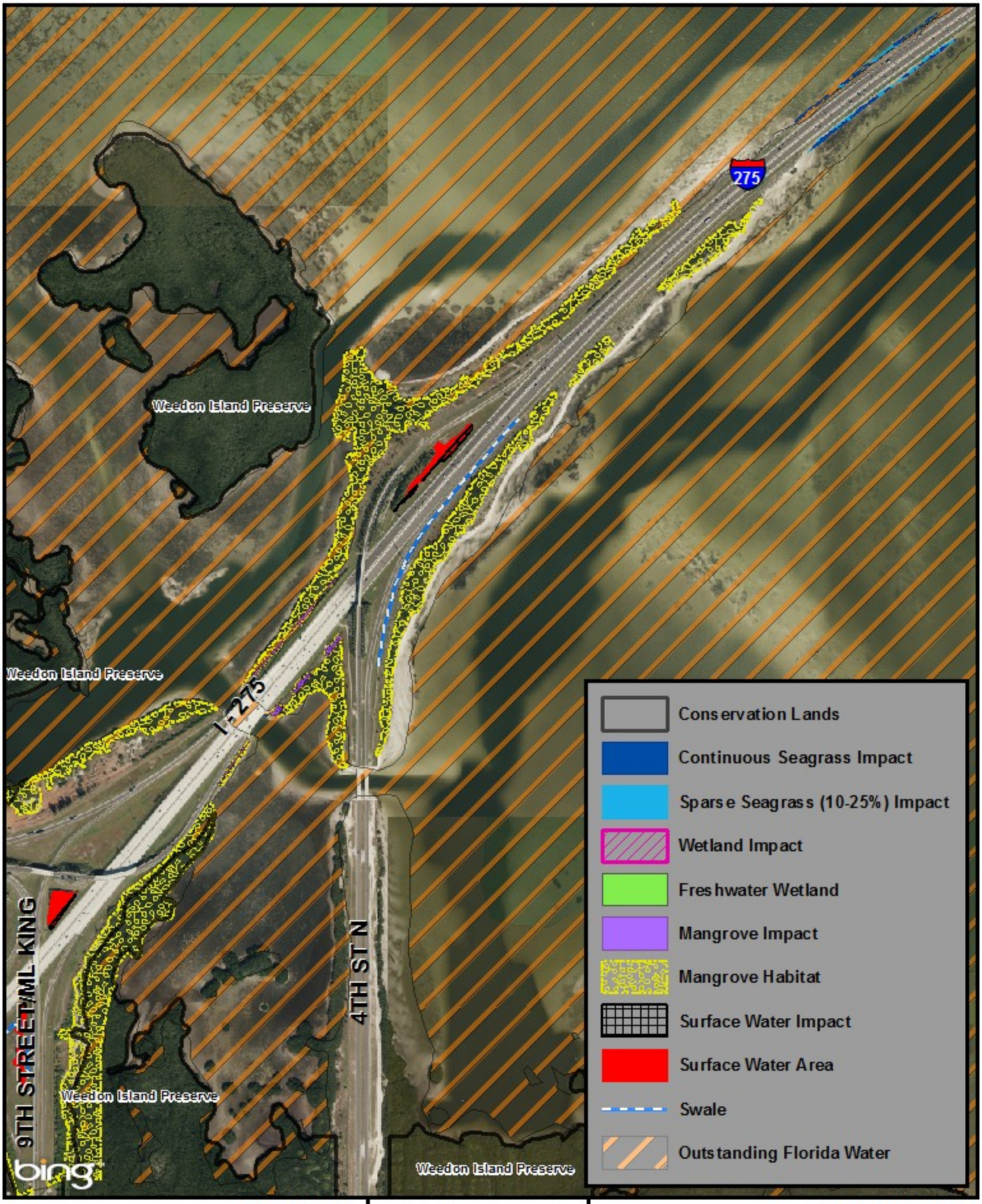
Degree of Effect Legend

Color Code	Meaning	ETAT	Public Involvement
N/A	Not Applicable / No Involvement	There is no presence of the issue in relationship to the project, or the issue is irrelevant in relationship to the proposed transportation action.	
0	None (after 12/5/2005)	The issue is present, but the project will have no impact on the issue; project has no adverse effect on ETAT resources; permit issuance or consultation involves routine interaction with the agency. The *None* degree of effect is new as of 12/5/2005.	No community opposition to the planned project. No adverse effect on the community.
1	Enhanced	Project has positive effect on the ETAT resource or can reverse a previous adverse effect leading to environmental improvement.	Affected community supports the proposed project. Project has positive effect.
2	Minimal	Project has little adverse effect on ETAT resources. Permit issuance or consultation involves routine interaction with the agency. Low cost options are available to address concerns.	Minimum community opposition to the planned project. Minimum adverse effect on the community.
2	Minimal to None (assigned prior to 12/5/2005)	Project has little adverse effect on ETAT resources. Permit issuance or consultation involves routine interaction with the agency. Low cost options are available to address concerns.	Minimum community opposition to the planned project. Minimum adverse effect on the community.
3	Moderate	Agency resources are affected by the proposed project, but avoidance and minimization options are available and can be addressed during development with a moderated amount of agency involvement and moderate cost impact.	Project has adverse effect on elements of the affected community. Public Involvement is needed to seek alternatives more acceptable to the community. Moderate community interaction will be required during project development.

4	Substantial	The project has substantial adverse effects but ETAT understands the project need and will be able to seek avoidance and minimization or mitigation options during project development. Substantial interaction will be required during project development and permitting.	Project has substantial adverse effects on the community and faces substantial community opposition. Intensive community interaction with focused Public Involvement will be required during project development to address community concerns.
5	Potential Dispute (Planning Screen)	Project may not conform to agency statutory requirements and may not be permitted. Project modification or evaluation of alternatives is required before advancing to the LRTP Programming Screen.	Community strongly opposes the project. Project is not in conformity with local comprehensive plan and has severe negative impact on the affected community.
5	Dispute Resolution (Programming Screen)	Project does not conform to agency statutory requirements and will not be permitted. Dispute resolution is required before the project proceeds to programming.	Community strongly opposes the project. Project is not in conformity with local comprehensive plan and has severe negative impact on the affected community.
	No ETAT Consensus	ETAT members from different agencies assigned a different degree of effect to this project, and the ETDM coordinator has not assigned a summary degree of effect.	
	No ETAT Reviews	No ETAT members have reviewed the corresponding issue for this project, and the ETDM coordinator has not assigned a summary degree of effect.	

APPENDIX B
Wetland Impact Maps

Appendix C.
Wetland Impact Maps



FDOT

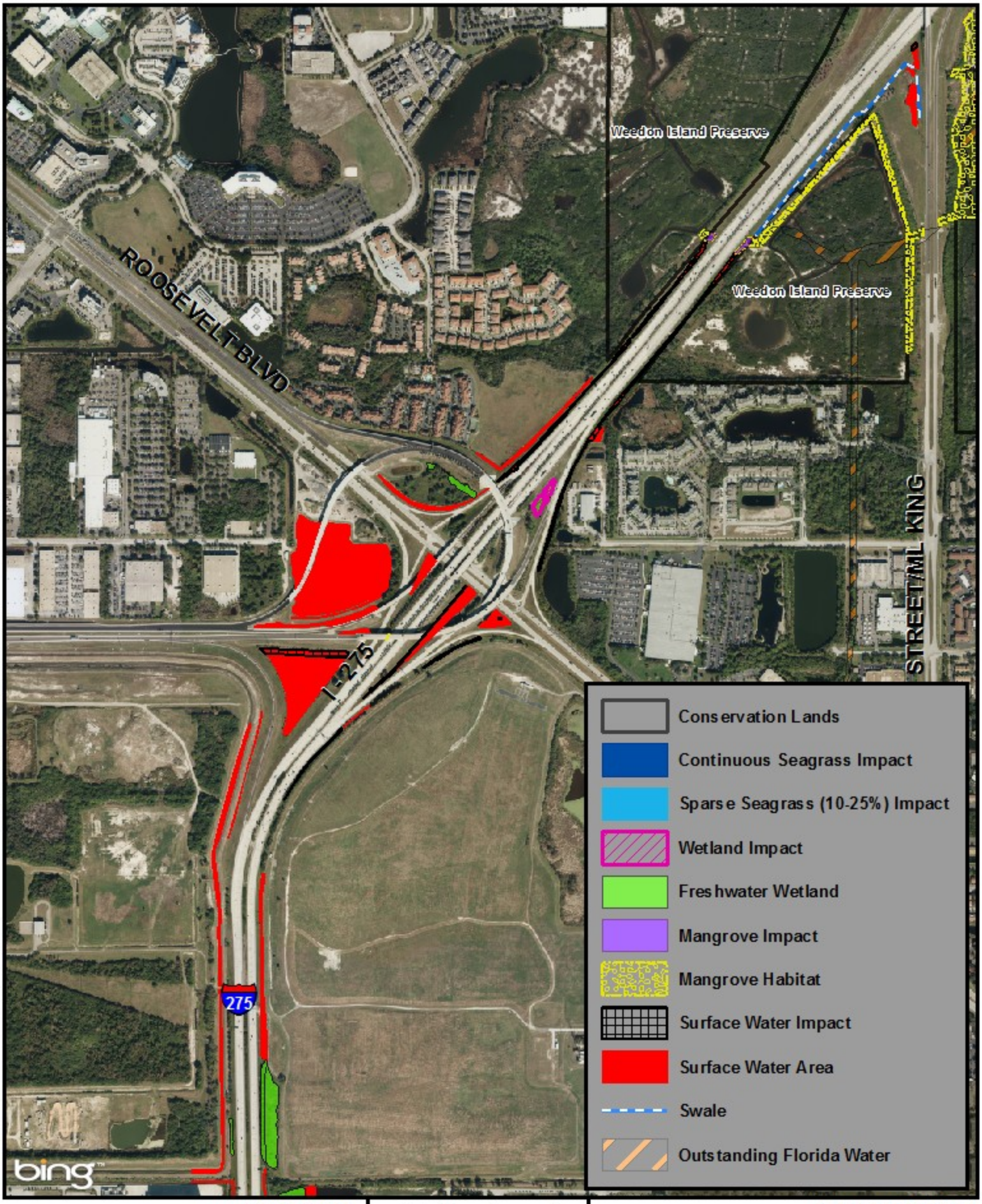
I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands and Surface Water Impact Map

1 inch = 1,000 feet

0 0.25 0.5
Miles NORTH

Sheet No. 1 of 6



FDOT

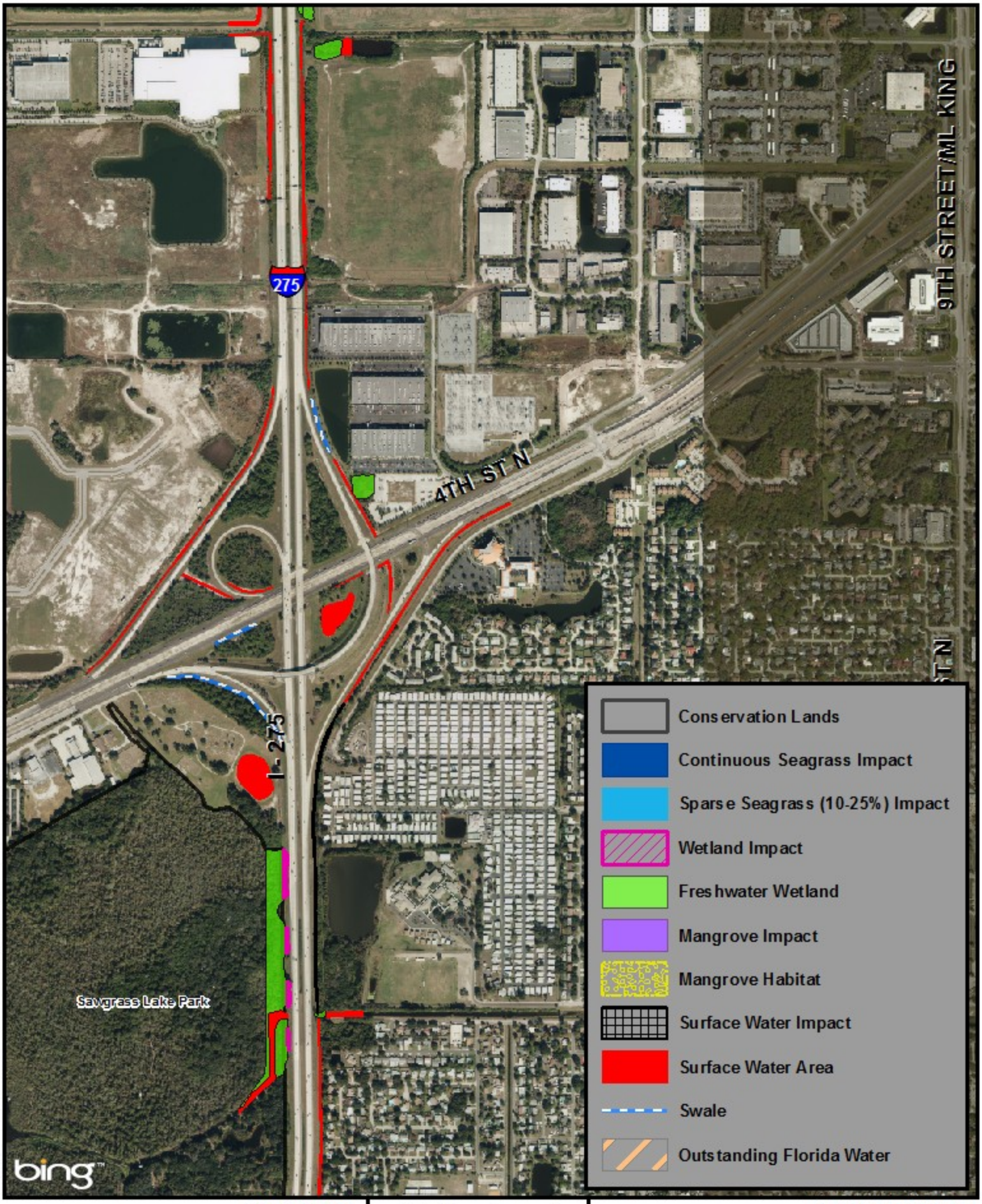
I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands and Surface Water Impact Map

1 inch = 1,000 feet

0 0.25 0.5
Miles NORTH

Sheet No. 2 of 6



FDOT

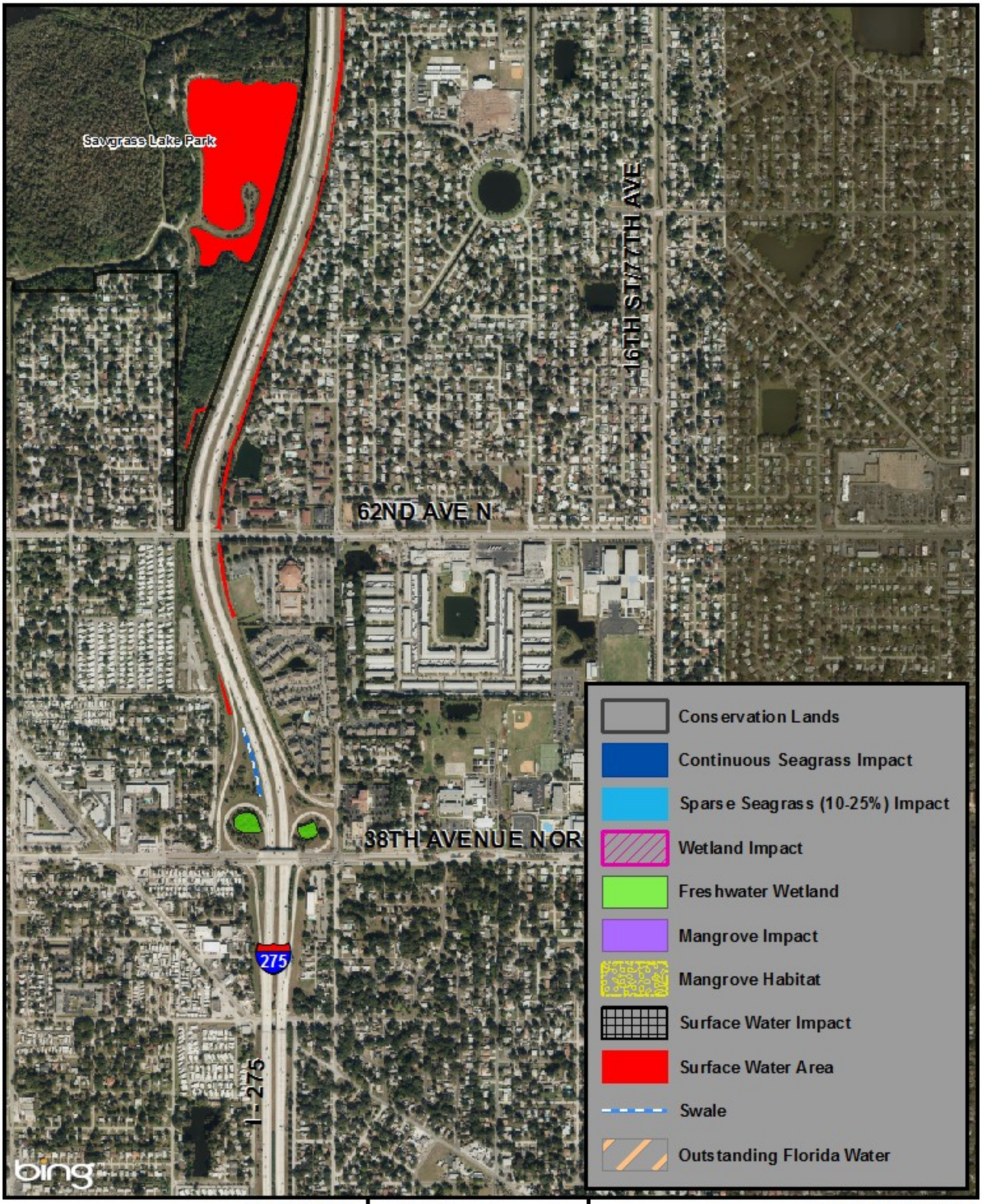
I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands and Surface Water Impact Map

1 inch = 1,000 feet

0 0.25 0.5
Miles NORTH

Sheet No. 3 of 6



FDOT

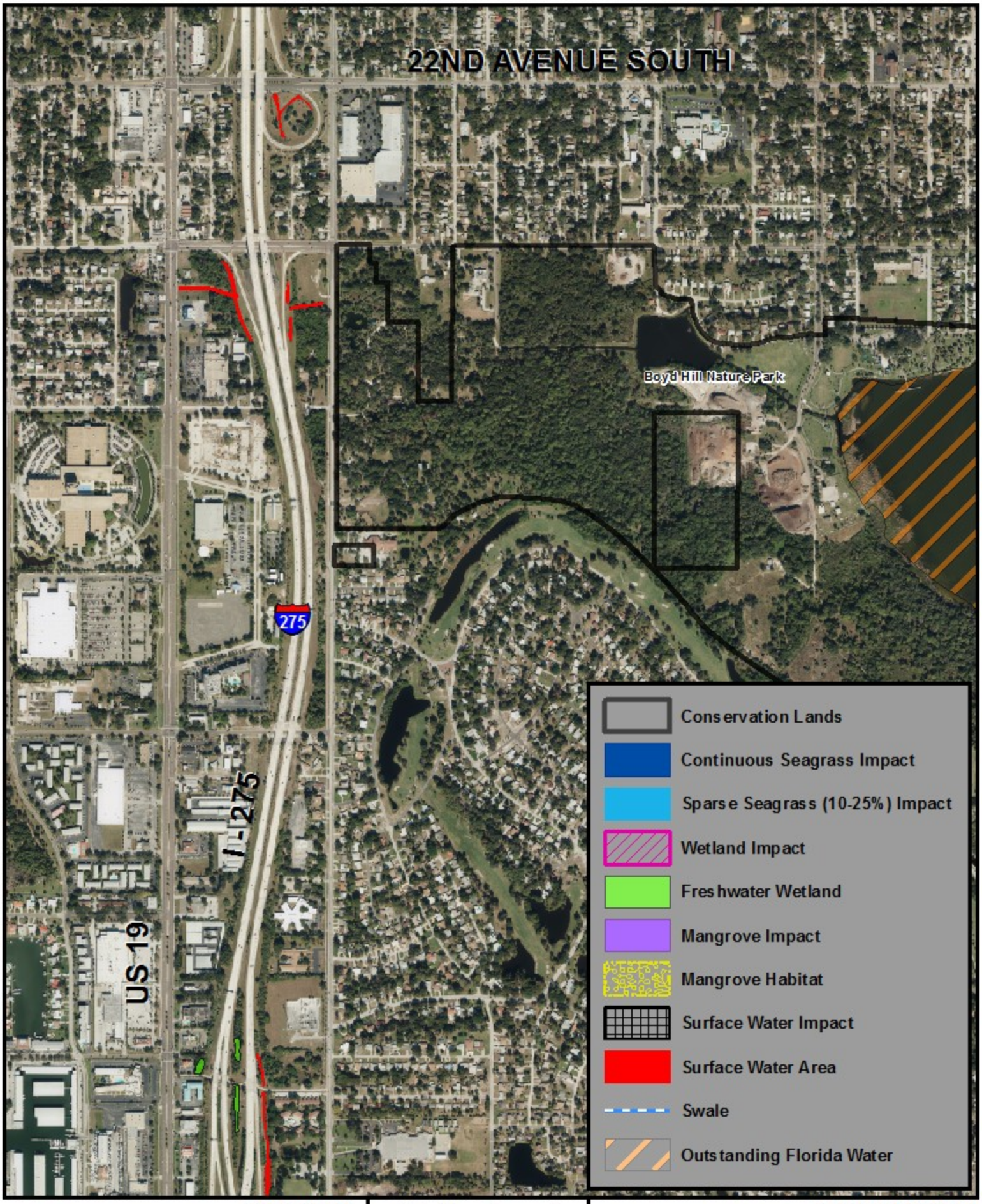
I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands and Surface Water Impact Map

1 inch = 1,000 feet

0 0.25 0.5
Miles NORTH

Sheet No. 4 of 6



FDOT

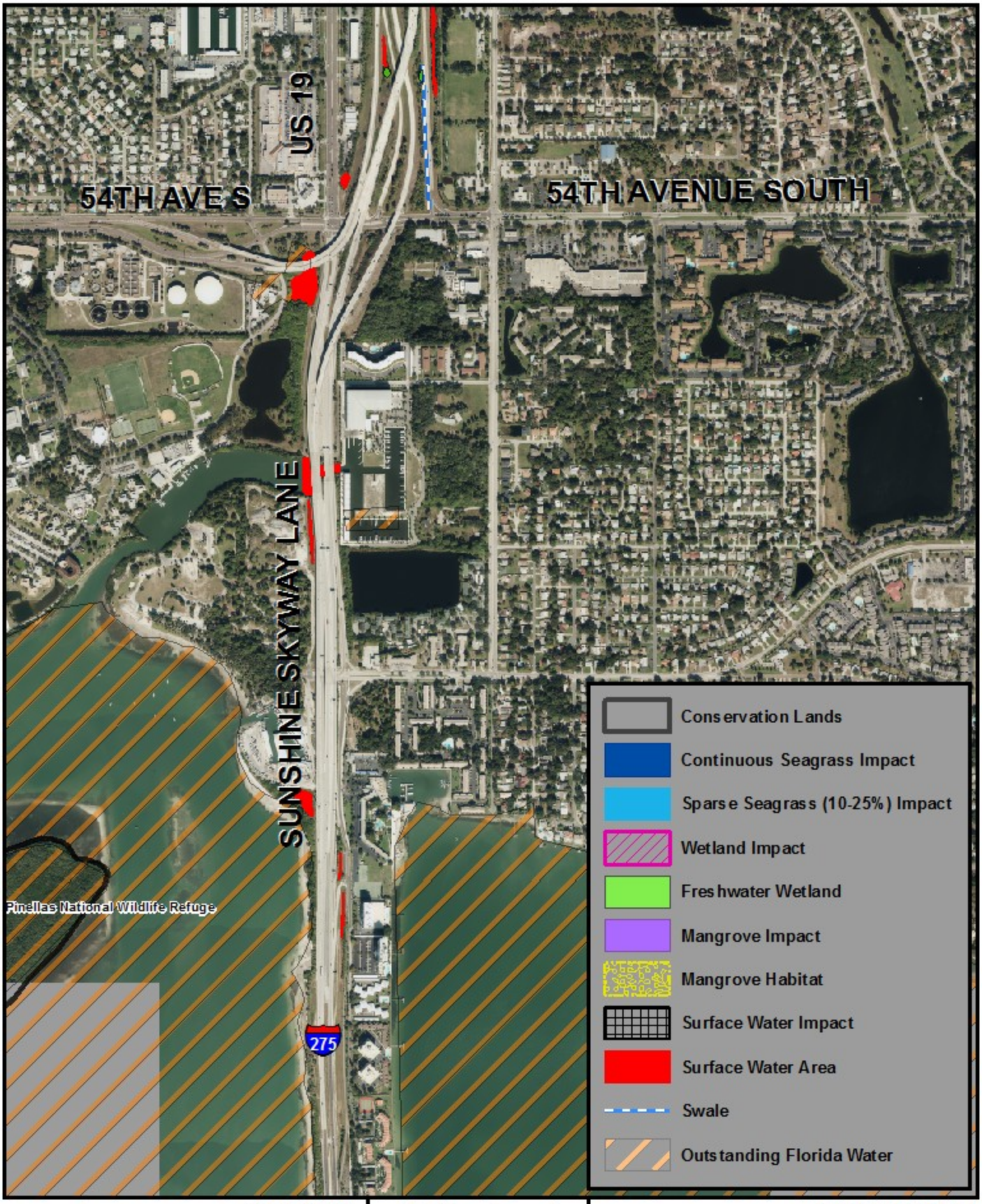
I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands and Surface Water Impact Map

1 inch = 1,000 feet

0 0.25 0.5
Miles NORTH

Sheet No. 5 of 6



FDOT

I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

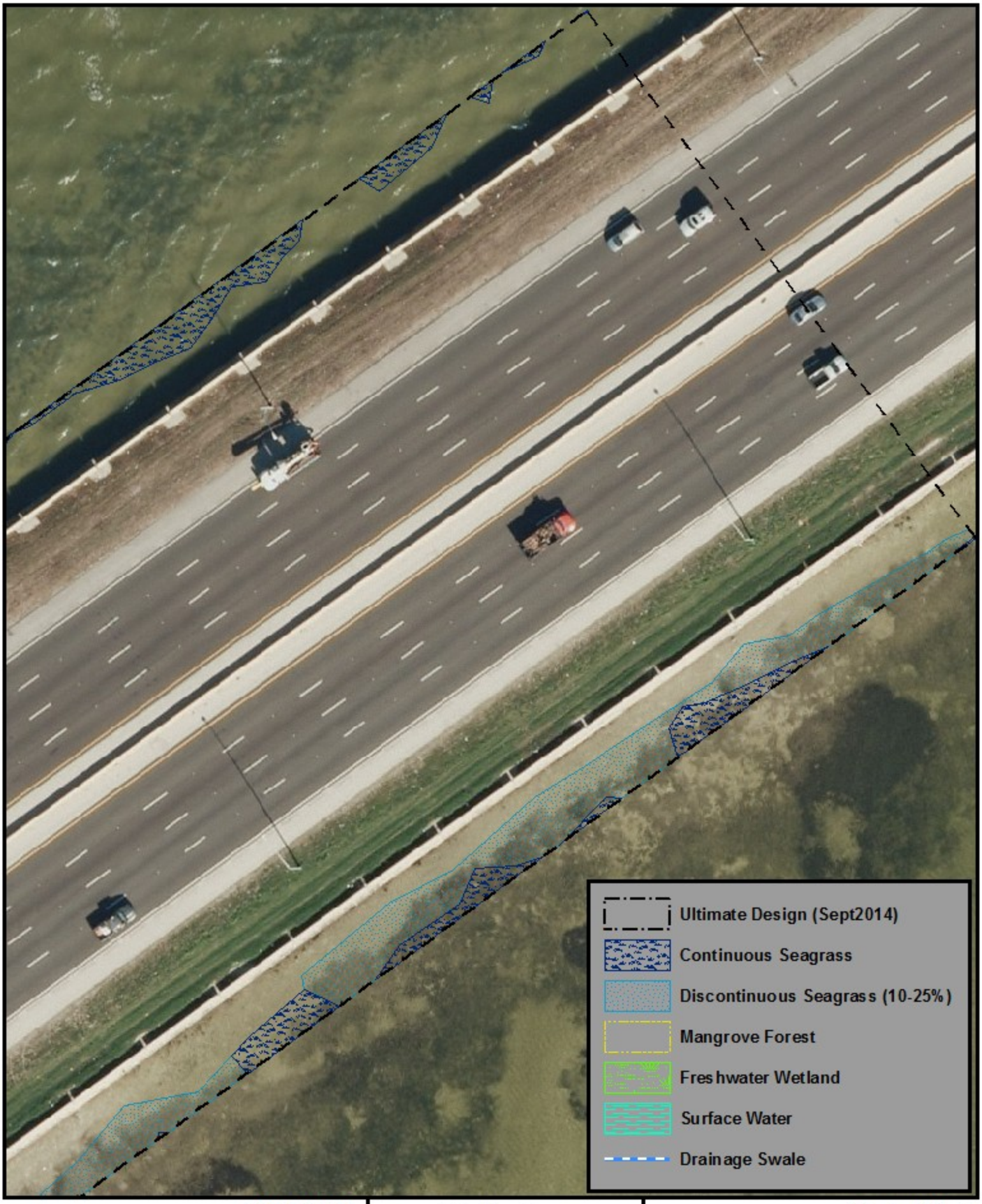
Wetlands and Surface Water Impact Map

1 inch = 1,000 feet

0 0.25 0.5
Miles NORTH

Sheet No. 6 of 6

Appendix D.
Seagrass Habitat Impact Maps



FDOT

I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands, Surface Waters and Seagrass Map

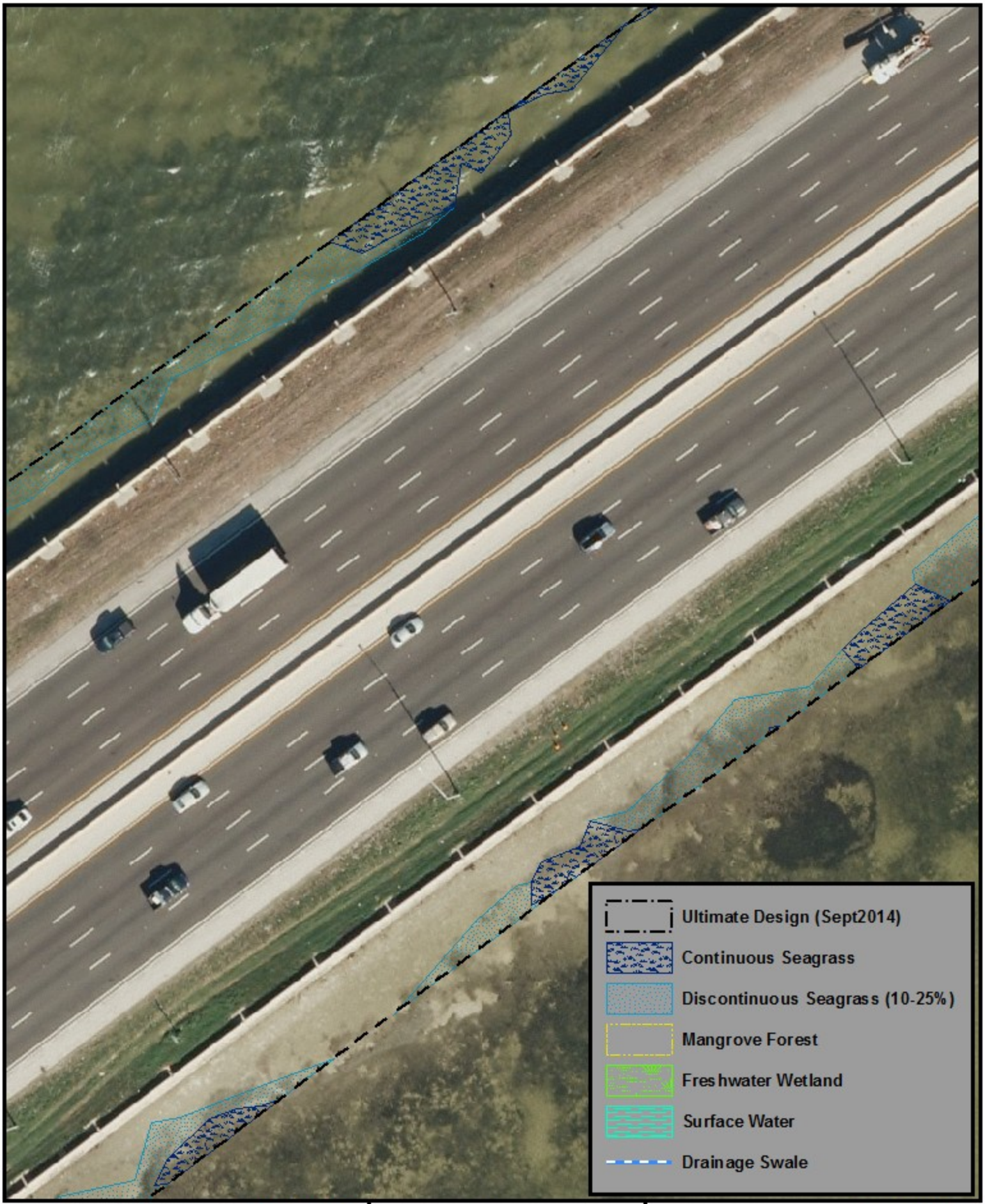
1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100

Feet

NORTH

Sheet No. 1 of 5



FDOT

I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands, Surface Waters and Seagrass Map

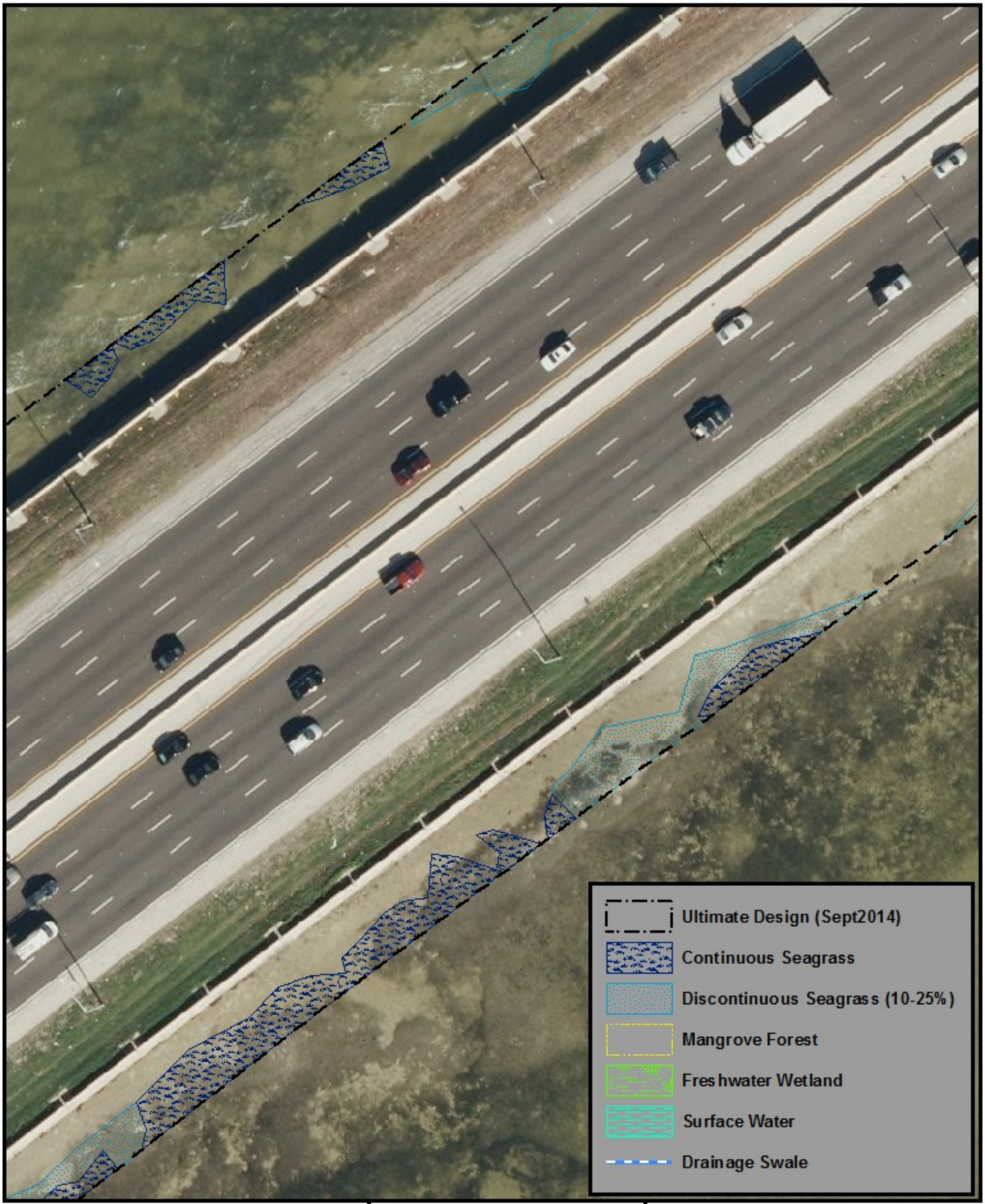
1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100

Feet

NORTH

Sheet No. 2 of 5



FDOT

I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands, Surface Waters and Seagrass Map

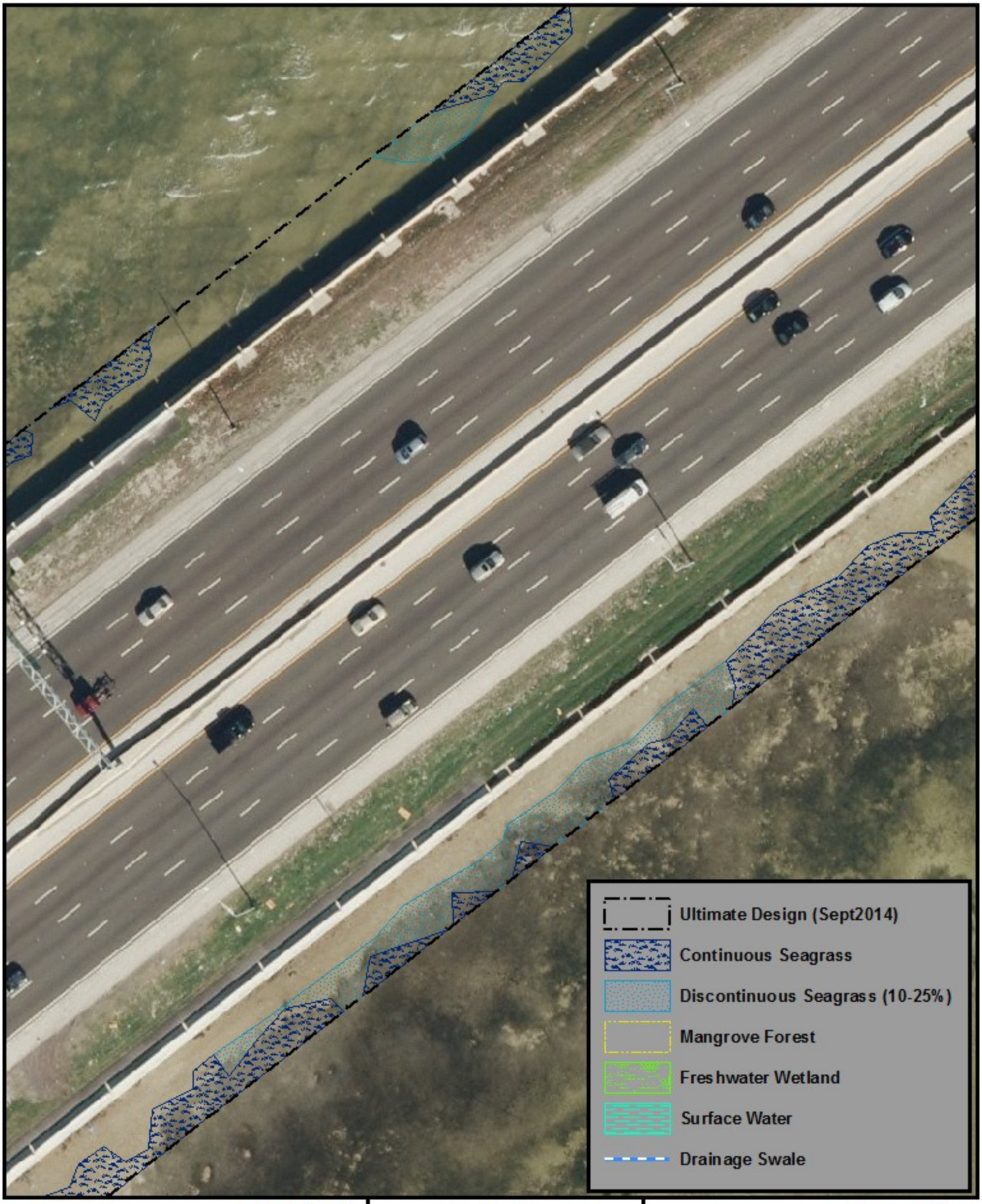
1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100

Feet

NORTH

Sheet No. 3 of 5



FDOT

I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands, Surface Waters and Seagrass Map

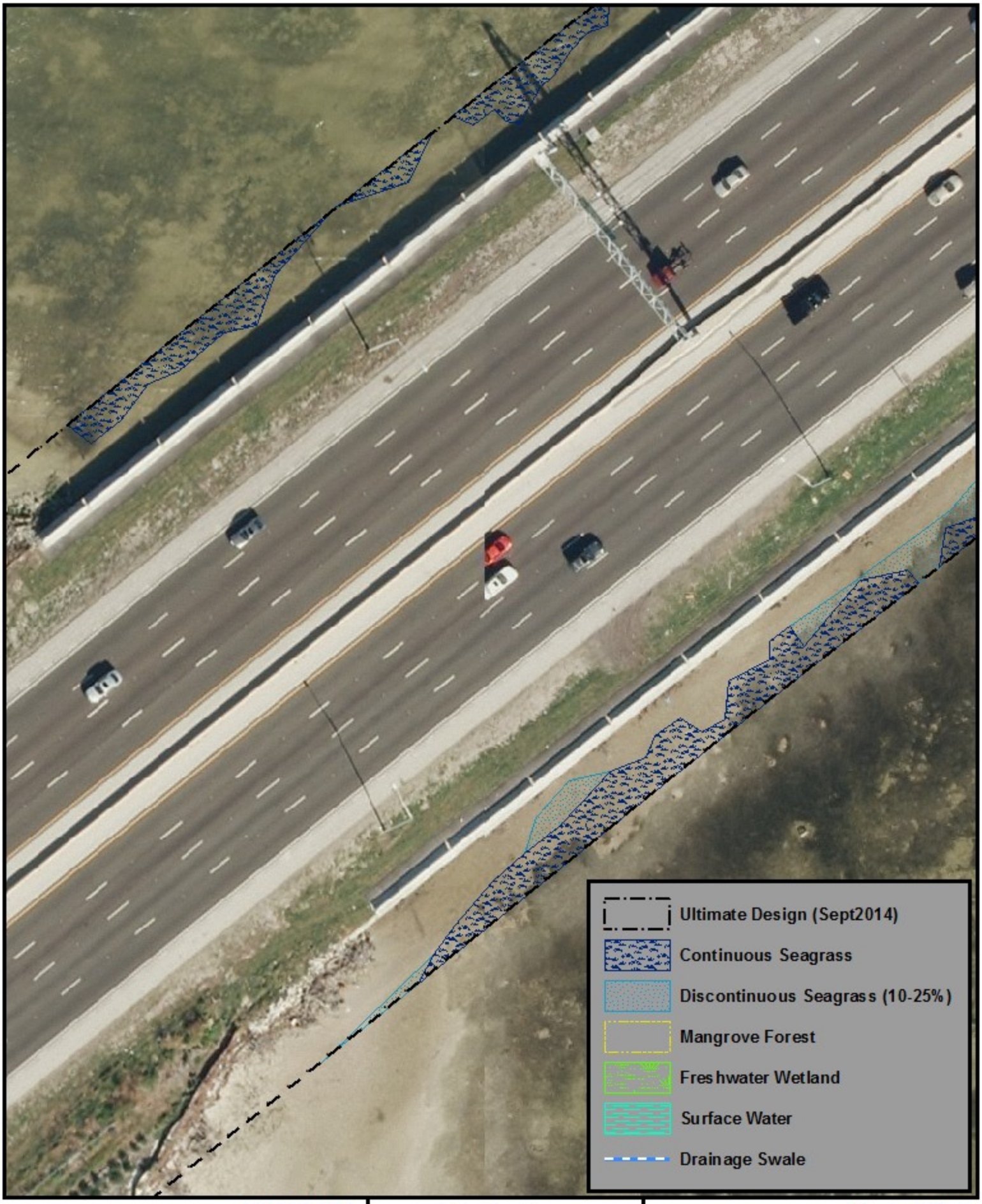
1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100

Feet

NORTH

Sheet No. 4 of 5



FDOT

I-275/SR 93
from south of 54th Ave. S.
to north of 4th Street N.
FPID 42450112201

Wetlands, Surface Waters and Seagrass Map

1 inch = 50 feet

0 50 100

Feet

NORTH

Sheet No. 5 of 5

Appendix E.
Agency Species Management Plans

STANDARD PROTECTION MEASURES FOR THE EASTERN INDIGO SNAKE
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
August 12, 2013

The eastern indigo snake protection/education plan (Plan) below has been developed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in Florida for use by applicants and their construction personnel. At least **30 days prior** to any clearing/land alteration activities, the applicant shall notify the appropriate USFWS Field Office via e-mail that the Plan will be implemented as described below (North Florida Field Office: jaxregs@fws.gov; South Florida Field Office: verobeach@fws.gov; Panama City Field Office: panamacity@fws.gov). As long as the signatory of the e-mail certifies compliance with the below Plan (including use of the attached poster and brochure), no further written confirmation or "approval" from the USFWS is needed and the applicant may move forward with the project.

If the applicant decides to use an eastern indigo snake protection/education plan other than the approved Plan below, written confirmation or "approval" from the USFWS that the plan is adequate must be obtained. At least 30 days prior to any clearing/land alteration activities, the applicant shall submit their unique plan for review and approval. The USFWS will respond via e-mail, typically within 30 days of receiving the plan, either concurring that the plan is adequate or requesting additional information. A concurrence e-mail from the appropriate USFWS Field Office will fulfill approval requirements.

The Plan materials should consist of: 1) a combination of posters and pamphlets (see **Poster Information** section below); and 2) verbal educational instructions to construction personnel by supervisory or management personnel before any clearing/land alteration activities are initiated (see **Pre-Construction Activities** and **During Construction Activities** sections below).

POSTER INFORMATION

Posters with the following information shall be placed at strategic locations on the construction site and along any proposed access roads (a final poster for Plan compliance, to be printed on 11" x 17" or larger paper and laminated, is attached):

DESCRIPTION: The eastern indigo snake is one of the largest non-venomous snakes in North America, with individuals often reaching up to 8 feet in length. They derive their name from the glossy, blue-black color of their scales above and uniformly slate blue below. Frequently, they have orange to coral reddish coloration in the throat area, yet some specimens have been reported to only have cream coloration on the throat. These snakes are not typically aggressive and will attempt to crawl away when disturbed. Though indigo snakes rarely bite, they should NOT be handled.

SIMILAR SNAKES: The black racer is the only other solid black snake resembling the eastern indigo snake. However, black racers have a white or cream chin, thinner bodies, and WILL BITE if handled.

LIFE HISTORY: The eastern indigo snake occurs in a wide variety of terrestrial habitat types throughout Florida. Although they have a preference for uplands, they also utilize some wetlands

and agricultural areas. Eastern indigo snakes will often seek shelter inside gopher tortoise burrows and other below- and above-ground refugia, such as other animal burrows, stumps, roots, and debris piles. Females may lay from 4 - 12 white eggs as early as April through June, with young hatching in late July through October.

PROTECTION UNDER FEDERAL AND STATE LAW: The eastern indigo snake is classified as a Threatened species by both the USFWS and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. "Taking" of eastern indigo snakes is prohibited by the Endangered Species Act without a permit. "Take" is defined by the USFWS as an attempt to kill, harm, harass, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, trap, capture, collect, or engage in any such conduct. Penalties include a maximum fine of $25,000 for civil violations and up to $50,000 and/or imprisonment for criminal offenses, if convicted.

Only individuals currently authorized through an issued Incidental Take Statement in association with a USFWS Biological Opinion, or by a Section 10(a)(1)(A) permit issued by the USFWS, to handle an eastern indigo snake are allowed to do so.

IF YOU SEE A <u>LIVE</u> EASTERN INDIGO SNAKE ON THE SITE:

- Cease clearing activities and allow the live eastern indigo snake sufficient time to move away from the site without interference;
- Personnel must NOT attempt to touch or handle snake due to protected status.
- Take photographs of the snake, if possible, for identification and documentation purposes.
- Immediately notify supervisor or the applicant's designated agent, **and** the appropriate USFWS office, with the location information and condition of the snake.
- If the snake is located in a vicinity where continuation of the clearing or construction activities will cause harm to the snake, the activities must halt until such time that a representative of the USFWS returns the call (within one day) with further guidance as to when activities may resume.

IF YOU SEE A <u>DEAD</u> EASTERN INDIGO SNAKE ON THE SITE:

- Cease clearing activities and immediately notify supervisor or the applicant's designated agent, **and** the appropriate USFWS office, with the location information and condition of the snake.
- Take photographs of the snake, if possible, for identification and documentation purposes.
- Thoroughly soak the dead snake in water and then freeze the specimen. The appropriate wildlife agency will retrieve the dead snake.

Telephone numbers of USFWS Florida Field Offices to be contacted if a live or dead eastern indigo snake is encountered:

North Florida Field Office – (904) 731-3336
Panama City Field Office – (850) 769-0552
South Florida Field Office – (772) 562-3909

PRE-CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

1. The applicant or designated agent will post educational posters in the construction office and throughout the construction site, including any access roads. The posters must be clearly visible to all construction staff. A sample poster is attached.

2. Prior to the onset of construction activities, the applicant/designated agent will conduct a meeting with all construction staff (annually for multi-year projects) to discuss identification of the snake, its protected status, what to do if a snake is observed within the project area, and applicable penalties that may be imposed if state and/or federal regulations are violated. An educational brochure including color photographs of the snake will be given to each staff member in attendance and additional copies will be provided to the construction superintendent to make available in the onsite construction office (a final brochure for Plan compliance, to be printed double-sided on 8.5" x 11" paper and then properly folded, is attached). Photos of eastern indigo snakes may be accessed on USFWS and/or FWC websites.

3. Construction staff will be informed that in the event that an eastern indigo snake (live or dead) is observed on the project site during construction activities, all such activities are to cease until the established procedures are implemented according to the Plan, which includes notification of the appropriate USFWS Field Office. The contact information for the USFWS is provided on the referenced posters and brochures.

DURING CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

1. During initial site clearing activities, an onsite observer may be utilized to determine whether habitat conditions suggest a reasonable probability of an eastern indigo snake sighting (example: discovery of snake sheds, tracks, lots of refugia and cavities present in the area of clearing activities, and presence of gopher tortoises and burrows).

2. If an eastern indigo snake is discovered during gopher tortoise relocation activities (i.e. burrow excavation), the USFWS shall be contacted within one business day to obtain further guidance which may result in further project consultation.

3. Periodically during construction activities, the applicant's designated agent should visit the project area to observe the condition of the posters and Plan materials, and replace them as needed. Construction personnel should be reminded of the instructions (above) as to what is expected if any eastern indigo snakes are seen.

POST CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES

Whether or not eastern indigo snakes are observed during construction activities, a monitoring report should be submitted to the appropriate USFWS Field Office within 60 days of project completion. The report can be sent electronically to the appropriate USFWS e-mail address listed on page one of this Plan.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, FL 33701

SEA TURTLE AND SMALLTOOTH SAWFISH CONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS

The permittee shall comply with the following protected species construction conditions:

a. The permittee shall instruct all personnel associated with the project of the potential presence of these species and the need to avoid collisions with sea turtles and smalltooth sawfish. All construction personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of these species.

b. The permittee shall advise all construction personnel that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing sea turtles or smalltooth sawfish, which are protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.

c. Siltation barriers shall be made of material in which a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish cannot become entangled, be properly secured, and be regularly monitored to avoid protected species entrapment. Barriers may not block sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish entry to or exit from designated critical habitat without prior agreement from the National Marine Fisheries Service's Protected Resources Division, St. Petersburg, Florida.

d. All vessels associated with the construction project shall operate at "no wake/idle" speeds at all times while in the construction area and while in water depths where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. All vessels will preferentially follow deep-water routes (e.g., marked channels) whenever possible.

e. If a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish is seen within 100 yards of the active daily construction/dredging operation or vessel movement, all appropriate precautions shall be implemented to ensure its protection. These precautions shall include cessation of operation of any moving equipment closer than 50 feet of a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish. Operation of any mechanical construction equipment shall cease immediately if a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish is seen within a 50-ft radius of the equipment. Activities may not resume until the protected species has departed the project area of its own volition.

f. Any collision with and/or injury to a sea turtle or smalltooth sawfish shall be reported immediately to the National Marine Fisheries Service's Protected Resources Division (727-824-5312) and the local authorized sea turtle stranding/rescue organization.

g. Any special construction conditions, required of your specific project, outside these general conditions, if applicable, will be addressed in the primary consultation.

Revised: March 23, 2006
O:\forms\Sea Turtle and Smalltooth Sawfish Construction Conditions.doc

CONSTRUCTION SPECIAL PROVISIONS
GULF STURGEON PROTECTION GUIDELINES
(PURSUANT TO NMFS AND USFWS)

The Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*) is listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened. It is managed under the joint jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Potential habitat for the Gulf sturgeon is located within the limits of this project.

The following special provisions will be incorporated into any construction contract where involvement with sturgeon may occur:

The FDOT has coordinated with the NMFS and USFWS early in the project development stage. The following provisions are intended to avoid/ protect known spawning habitats, nursery areas, feeding areas and thermal refuges.

1. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) shall advise all FDOT project personnel and Contractor personnel on the project that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing or killing sturgeon. The FDOT and the Contractor will be held responsible for any sturgeon harmed, harassed, or killed as a result of the project activity.

2. The FDOT shall provide information to all FDOT and Contract personnel for identification of sturgeon.

3. Appropriate work shift personnel will be instructed in the appearance, habits, biology, migratory patterns, and preservation of sturgeon. At least one of these trained personnel will be on site during construction activities to maintain a constant surveillance for these species, assure the cessation of activities (such as dredging, excess turbidity, and construction barge activity), which may endanger these species, and assure that uninhibited passage for the animals is provided.

4. Post signs on site warning of the presence of sturgeon, of their endangered status and federal protection, and precautions needed.

5. Turbidity from construction activity will be adequately controlled to prevent degradation of the quality and transparency of the water. When sturgeon are present, turbidity curtains of appropriate dimension will be used to restrict the animals' access to the work area. Pollution booms or turbidity curtains should use tangle resistant or hemp rope when anchoring, or employ surface anchors' to prevent entangling sturgeon. Continuous surveillance will be maintained in order to free animals which may become trapped in silt or turbidity barriers.

6. No dredging of the river bottom will be conducted for barge access.

7. Drilled shaft pile construction will be used whenever prudent and feasible as determined by FDOT.

8. Care shall be taken in lowering equipment or material below the water surface and into the stream bed. These precautions will be taken to ensure no harm occurs to any sturgeon which may enter the construction area undetected.

9. Construction debris shall not be discarded into the water.

10. If the use of explosives is necessary, the following protection measures will be employed for projects in FDOT's District 3

    a. In riverine areas:
        - No blasting will occur in known spawning, staging, feeding, or nursery areas.
        - In-water explosive work should be avoided between the months of April to October.
        - If explosive work becomes necessary within the April to October time frame, a non-lethal "Fish Scare" charge will be detonated one minute prior to detonation of the underwater blast.

    b. In estuarine areas:
        - No blasting will occur in known spawning, staging, feeding, or nursery areas.
        - In-water explosive work should be avoided between the months of October to April.
        - If explosive work becomes necessary within the October to April time frame, a non-lethal "Fish Scare" charge will be detonated one minute prior to detonation of the underwater blast.

    c. In the event that a sturgeon is killed during blasting, the NMFS and the USFWS will be notified immediately.

    National Marine Fisheries Service
    by email at:
    takereport.nmfsser@noaa.gov

    US Fish and Wildlife Service
    1601 Balboa Ave.
    Panama City, Florida 32405
    Tel: (850) 769-0552

11. Any sturgeon carcass will be secured on site or held in a freezer until an agency representative arranges for its transport for analysis.

12. Following completion of the project, a report summarizing any involvement with sturgeon will be prepared for USFWS and NMFS.

MANATEE and MARINE TURTLE CONSTRUCTION CONDITIONS FOR IN-WATER WORK

The permittee shall comply with the following conditions intended to protect manatees and marine turtles from direct project effects:

a. All personnel associated with the project shall be instructed about the presence of marine turtles, manatees and manatee speed zones, and the need to avoid collisions with (and injury to) these protected marine species. The permittee shall advise all construction personnel that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees which are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the Florida Manatee Sanctuary Act.

b. All vessels associated with the construction project shall operate at "Idle Speed/No Wake" at all times while in the immediate area and while in water where the draft of the vessel provides less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. All vessels will follow routes of deep water whenever possible.

c. Siltation or turbidity barriers shall be made of material in which manatees and marine turtles cannot become entangled, shall be properly secured, and shall be regularly monitored to avoid manatee entanglement or entrapment. Barriers must not impede manatee or marine turtle movement.

d. All on-site project personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of marine turtles and manatee(s). All in-water operations, including vessels, must be shutdown if a marine turtle or manatee comes within 50 feet of the operation. Activities will not resume until the animal(s) has moved beyond the 50-foot radius of the project operation, or until 30 minutes elapses if the animal(s) has not reappeared within 50 feet of the operation. Animals must not be herded away or harassed into leaving.

e. Any collision with or injury to a marine turtle or manatee shall be reported immediately to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Hotline at 1-888-404-3922, and to FWC at ImperiledSpecies@myFWC.com. Collision and/or injury should also be reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (for north Florida, Jacksonville 1-904-731-3336 or for south Florida Vero Beach 1-772-562-3909).

f. Temporary signs concerning manatees shall be posted prior to and during all in-water project activities. All signs are to be removed by the permittee upon completion of the project. Temporary signs that have already been approved for this use by the FWC must be used. One sign which reads *Caution: Boaters* must be posted. A second sign measuring at least 8 ½" by 11" explaining the requirements for "Idle Speed/No Wake" and the shut down of in-water operations must be posted in a location prominently visible to all personnel engaged in water-related activities. These signs can be viewed at MyFWC.com/manatee. Questions concerning these signs can be sent to the email address listed above.

g. Lighting on offshore or onshore equipment including dredge, crew boats, and all ancillary vessels shall be minimized through reduction, shielding, lowering, and appropriate placement to avoid excessive illumination of the water's surface and visibility from adjacent marine turtle nesting beaches while meeting all Coast Guard, EM 385-1-1, and OSHA requirements. Light intensity of all fixtures on the vessels shall be reduced to the minimum standard required by OSHA for General Construction areas, in order not to misdirect marine turtles. Lights used to survey nearshore or inlet waters for manatees and sea turtles shall be mounted as low as possible and aimed to minimize visibility from adjacent nesting beaches. Shields shall be affixed to the light housing and be large enough to block light from all lamps from being transmitted outside the construction area.

CAUTION: MANATEE HABITAT

All project vessels

IDLE SPEED / NO WAKE

When a manatee is within 50 feet of work
all in-water activities must

SHUT DOWN

Report any collision with or injury to a manatee:

Wildlife Alert:

1-888-404-FWCC(3922)

cell *FWC or #FWC

Appendix F.
Florida Natural Areas Inventory
Biodiversity Matrix

1018 Thomasville Road
Suite 200-C
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-224-8207
850-681-9364 fax
www.fnai.org

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

Biodiversity Matrix Query Results

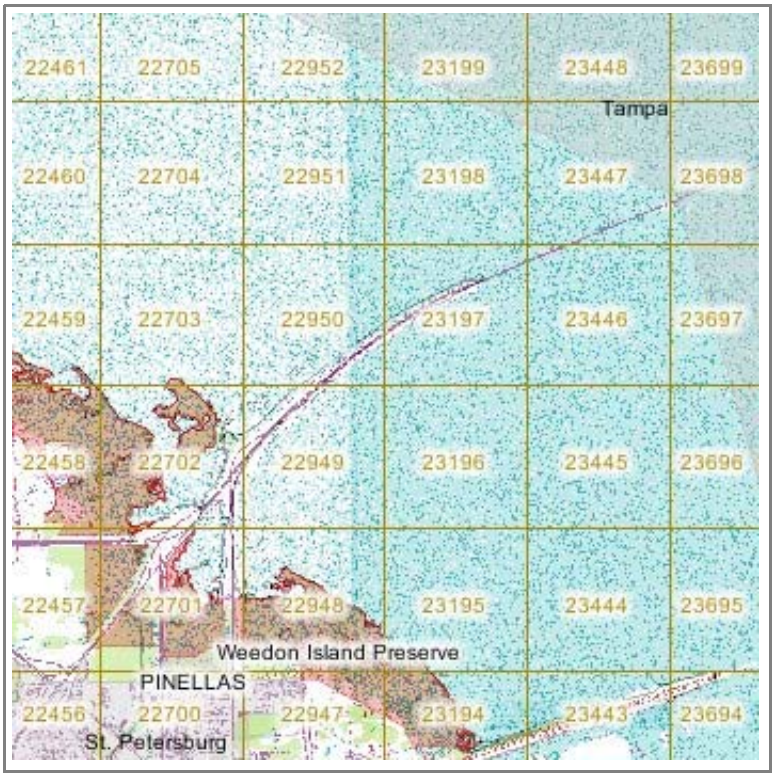
UNOFFICIAL REPORT

Created 8/19/2014

(Contact the FNAI Data Services Coordinator at 850.224.8207 for information on an official Standard Data Report)

NOTE: The Biodiversity Matrix includes only rare species and natural communities tracked by FNAI.

Report for 10 Matrix Units: 22701 , 22702 , 22948 , 22949 , 22950 , 23196 , 23197 , 23198 , 23446 , 23447



Descriptions

DOCUMENTED - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit.

DOCUMENTED-HISTORIC - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit; however the occurrence has not been observed/reported within the last twenty years.

LIKELY - The species or community is *known* to occur in this vicinity, and is considered likely within this Matrix Unit because:

1. documented occurrence overlaps this and adjacent Matrix Units, but the documentation isn't precise enough to indicate which of those Units the species or community is actually located in; *or*
2. there is a documented occurrence in the vicinity and there is suitable habitat for that species or community within this Matrix Unit.

POTENTIAL - This Matrix Unit lies within the known or predicted range of the species or community based on expert knowledge and environmental variables such as climate, soils, topography, and landcover.

Matrix Unit ID: 22701

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

2 **Likely** Elements Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mesic flatwoods	G4	S4	N	N

Mycteria americana Wood Stork	G4	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit ID: 22702
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mycteria americana Wood Stork	G4	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit ID: 22948
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mycteria americana Wood Stork	G4	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit ID: 22949
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mycteria americana Wood Stork	G4	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit ID: 22950
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mycteria americana Wood Stork	G4	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit ID: 23196
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 23197
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 23198
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 23446
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 23447
0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit IDs: 22701 , 22702 , 22948 , 22949 , 22950 , 23196 , 23197 , 23198 , 23446 , 23447
25 **Potential** Elements Common to Any of the 10 Matrix Units

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi Gulf Sturgeon	G3T2	S2	LT	FT
Ammodramus maritimus peninsulae Scott's Seaside Sparrow	G4T3Q	S3	N	SSC
Calopogon multiflorus Many-flowered Grass-pink	G2G3	S2S3	N	LE
Centrosema arenicola Sand Butterfly Pea	G2Q	S2	N	LE
Charadrius melodus Piping Plover	G3	S2	LT	FT
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback	G2	S2	LE	FE
Drymarchon couperi Eastern Indigo Snake	G3	S3	LT	FT
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill	G3	S1	LE	FE
Eumops floridanus Florida bonneted bat	G1	S1	PE	ST
Forestiera segregata var. pinetorum Florida Pinewood Privet	G4T2	S2	N	N
Gopherus polyphemus Gopher Tortoise	G3	S3	C	ST
Grus canadensis pratensis				

Florida Sandhill Crane	G5T2T3	S2S3	N	ST
Haematopus palliatus American Oystercatcher	G5	S2	N	SSC
Helianthus debilis ssp. vestitus Hairy Beach Sunflower	G5T2	S2	N	N
Lechea cernua Nodding Pinweed	G3	S3	N	LT
Linum carteri var. smallii Small's Flax	G2T2	S2	N	LE
Mustela frenata peninsulae Florida Long-tailed Weasel	G5T3	S3	N	N
Nemastylis floridana Celestial Lily	G2	S2	N	LE
Nolina atopocarpa Florida Beargrass	G3	S3	N	LT
Picoides borealis Red-cockaded Woodpecker	G3	S2	LE	FE
Rallus longirostris scottii Florida Clapper Rail	G5T3?	S3?	N	N
Sciurus niger shermani Sherman's Fox Squirrel	G5T3	S3	N	SSC
Setophaga discolor paludicola Florida Prairie Warbler	G5T3	S3	N	N
Trichechus manatus Manatee	G2	S2	LE	FE
Ursus americanus floridanus Florida Black Bear	G5T2	S2	N	ST*

Unofficial Report

These results are considered unofficial. FNAI offers a Standard Data Request option for those needing certifiable data.

1018 Thomasville Road
Suite 200-C
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-224-8207
850-681-9364 fax
www.fnai.org

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

Biodiversity Matrix Query Results

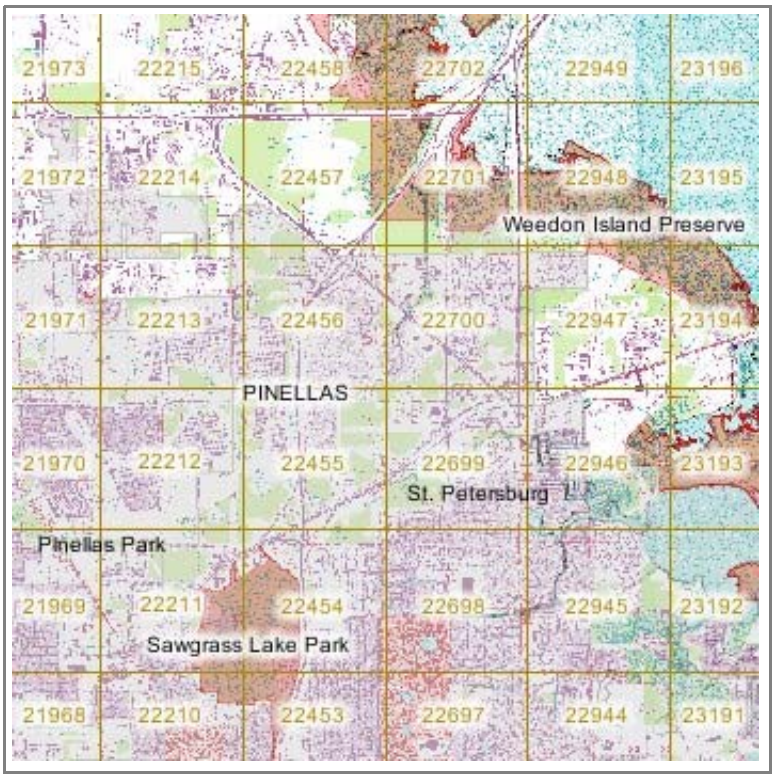
UNOFFICIAL REPORT

Created 8/19/2014

(Contact the FNAI Data Services Coordinator at 850.224.8207 for information on an official Standard Data Report)

NOTE: The Biodiversity Matrix includes only rare species and natural communities tracked by FNAI.

Report for 5 Matrix Units: 22454 , 22455 , 22456 , 22457 , 22701



Descriptions

DOCUMENTED - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit.

DOCUMENTED-HISTORIC - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit; however the occurrence has not been observed/reported within the last twenty years.

LIKELY - The species or community is *known* to occur in this vicinity, and is considered likely within this Matrix Unit because:

1. documented occurrence overlaps this and adjacent Matrix Units, but the documentation isn't precise enough to indicate which of those Units the species or community is actually located in; *or*
2. there is a documented occurrence in the vicinity and there is suitable habitat for that species or community within this Matrix Unit.

POTENTIAL - This Matrix Unit lies within the known or predicted range of the species or community based on expert knowledge and environmental variables such as climate, soils, topography, and landcover.

Matrix Unit ID: 22454

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

2 **Likely** Elements Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Haliaeetus leucocephalus Bald Eagle	G5	S3	N	N

Mesic flatwoods	G4	S4	N	N

Matrix Unit ID: 22455

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mesic flatwoods	G4	S4	N	N

Matrix Unit ID: 22456

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mesic flatwoods	G4	S4	N	N

Matrix Unit ID: 22457

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

2 **Likely** Elements Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mesic flatwoods	G4	S4	N	N
Mycteria americana Wood Stork	G4	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit ID: 22701

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

2 **Likely** Elements Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Mesic flatwoods	G4	S4	N	N
Mycteria americana Wood Stork	G4	S2	LE	FE

Matrix Unit IDs: 22454 , 22455 , 22456 , 22457 , 22701

29 **Potential** Elements Common to Any of the 5 Matrix Units

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi				

Gulf Sturgeon	G3T2	S2	LT	FT
Ammodramus maritimus peninsulae Scott's Seaside Sparrow	G4T3Q	S3	N	SSC
Athene cunicularia floridana Florida Burrowing Owl	G4T3	S3	N	SSC
Bigelowia nuttallii Nuttall's Rayless Goldenrod	G3G4	S1	N	LE
Calopogon multiflorus Many-flowered Grass-pink	G2G3	S2S3	N	LE
Centrosema arenicola Sand Butterfly Pea	G2Q	S2	N	LE
Charadrius melodus Piping Plover	G3	S2	LT	FT
Corynorhinus rafinesquii Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat	G3G4	S2	N	N
Dermochelys coriacea Leatherback	G2	S2	LE	FE
Drymarchon couperi Eastern Indigo Snake	G3	S3	LT	FT
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill	G3	S1	LE	FE
Eumops floridanus Florida bonneted bat	G1	S1	PE	ST
Forestiera segregata var. pinetorum Florida Pinewood Privet	G4T2	S2	N	N
Gopherus polyphemus Gopher Tortoise	G3	S3	C	ST
Grus canadensis pratensis Florida Sandhill Crane	G5T2T3	S2S3	N	ST
Helianthus debilis ssp. vestitus Hairy Beach Sunflower	G5T2	S2	N	N
Lechea cernua Nodding Pinweed	G3	S3	N	LT
Linum carteri var. smallii Small's Flax	G2T2	S2	N	LE
Mustela frenata peninsulae Florida Long-tailed Weasel	G5T3	S3	N	N
Nemastylis floridana Celestial Lily	G2	S2	N	LE
Nolina atopocarpa Florida Beargrass	G3	S3	N	LT
Picoides borealis Red-cockaded Woodpecker	G3	S2	LE	FE
Podomys floridanus Florida Mouse	G3	S3	N	SSC
Rallus longirostris scottii Florida Clapper Rail	G5T3?	S3?	N	N
Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus Snail Kite	G4G5T2	S2	LE	FE
Sciurus niger shermani Sherman's Fox Squirrel	G5T3	S3	N	SSC
Setophaga discolor paludicola Florida Prairie Warbler	G5T3	S3	N	N
Trichechus manatus Manatee	G2	S2	LE	FE
Ursus americanus floridanus Florida Black Bear	G5T2	S2	N	ST*

Disclaimer

The data maintained by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory represent the single most comprehensive source of information available on the locations of rare species and other significant ecological resources statewide. However, the data are not always based on comprehensive or site-specific field surveys. Therefore, this information should not be regarded as a final statement on the biological resources of the site being considered, nor should it be substituted for on-site surveys. FNAI shall not be held liable for the accuracy and completeness of these data, or opinions or conclusions drawn from these data. FNAI is not inviting reliance on these data. Inventory data are designed for the purposes of conservation planning and scientific research and are not intended for use as the primary criteria for regulatory decisions.

Unofficial Report

These results are considered unofficial. FNAI offers a Standard Data Request option for those needing certifiable data.

1018 Thomasville Road
Suite 200-C
Tallahassee, FL 32303
850-224-8207
850-681-9364 fax
www.fnai.org

Florida Natural Areas Inventory

Biodiversity Matrix Query Results

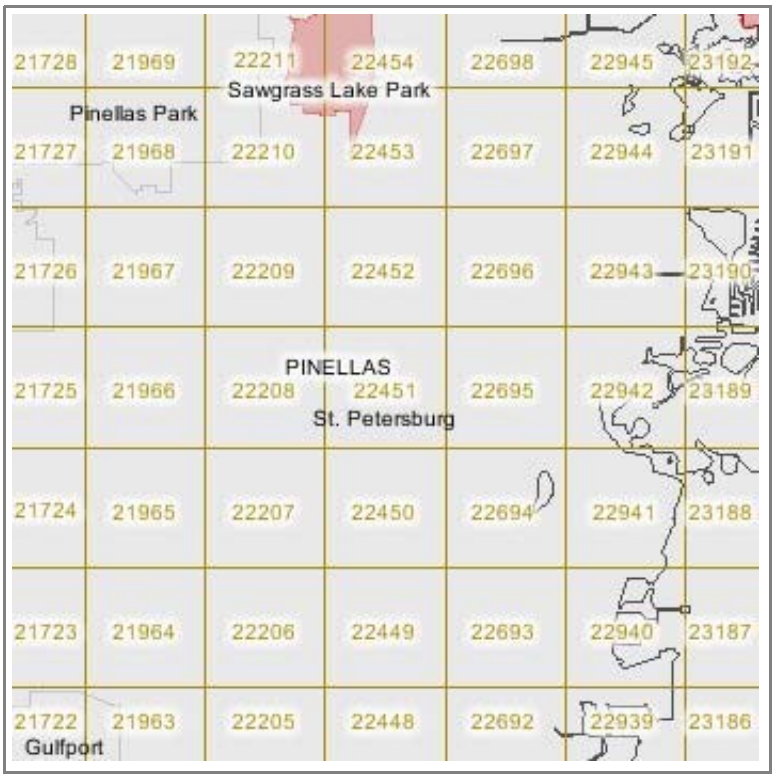
UNOFFICIAL REPORT

Created 8/19/2014

(Contact the FNAI Data Services Coordinator at 850.224.8207 for information on an official Standard Data Report)

NOTE: The Biodiversity Matrix includes only rare species and natural communities tracked by FNAI.

Report for 5 Matrix Units: 22449 , 22450 , 22451 , 22452 , 22453



Descriptions

DOCUMENTED - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit.

DOCUMENTED-HISTORIC - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit; however the occurrence has not been observed/reported within the last twenty years.

LIKELY - The species or community is *known* to occur in this vicinity, and is considered likely within this Matrix Unit because:

1. documented occurrence overlaps this and adjacent Matrix Units, but the documentation isn't precise enough to indicate which of those Units the species or community is actually located in; *or*
2. there is a documented occurrence in the vicinity and there is suitable habitat for that species or community within this Matrix Unit.

POTENTIAL - This Matrix Unit lies within the known or predicted range of the species or community based on expert knowledge and environmental variables such as climate, soils, topography, and landcover.

Matrix Unit ID: 22449

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 22450

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 22451

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 22452

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 22453

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit IDs: 22449 , 22450 , 22451 , 22452 , 22453

18 **Potential** Elements Common to Any of the 5 Matrix Units

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Athene cunicularia floridana Florida Burrowing Owl	G4T3	S3	N	SSC
Bigelowia nuttallii Nuttall's Rayless Goldenrod	G3G4	S1	N	LE
Centrosema arenicola Sand Butterfly Pea	G2Q	S2	N	LE
Corynorhinus rafinesquii Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat	G3G4	S2	N	N
Drymarchon couperi Eastern Indigo Snake	G3	S3	LT	FT
Eragrostis pectinacea var. tracyi Sanibel Lovegrass	G5T1	S1	N	LE
Forestiera segregata var. pinetorum Florida Pinewood Privet	G4T2	S2	N	N
Gopherus polyphemus Gopher Tortoise	G3	S3	C	ST
Lampropeltis extenuata Short-tailed Snake	G3	S3	N	ST
Lechea cernua Nodding Pinweed	G3	S3	N	LT
Linum carteri var. smallii Small's Flax	G2T2	S2	N	LE
Mustela frenata peninsulae Florida Long-tailed Weasel	G5T3	S3	N	N
Nemastylis floridana Celestial Lily	G2	S2	N	LE
Nolina atopocarpa Florida Beargrass	G3	S3	N	LT
Podomys floridanus Florida Mouse	G3	S3	N	SSC

Pteroglossaspis ecristata Giant Orchid	G2G3	S2	N	LT
Rana capito Gopher Frog	G3	S3	N	SSC
Rostrhamus sociabilis plumbeus Snail Kite	G4G5T2	S2	LE	FE

Disclaimer

The data maintained by the Florida Natural Areas Inventory represent the single most comprehensive source of information available on the locations of rare species and other significant ecological resources statewide. However, the data are not always based on comprehensive or site-specific field surveys. Therefore, this information should not be regarded as a final statement on the biological resources of the site being considered, nor should it be substituted for on-site surveys. FNAI shall not be held liable for the accuracy and completeness of these data, or opinions or conclusions drawn from these data. FNAI is not inviting reliance on these data. Inventory data are designed for the purposes of conservation planning and scientific research and are not intended for use as the primary criteria for regulatory decisions.

Unofficial Report

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Florida Natural Areas Inventory

Biodiversity Matrix Query Results

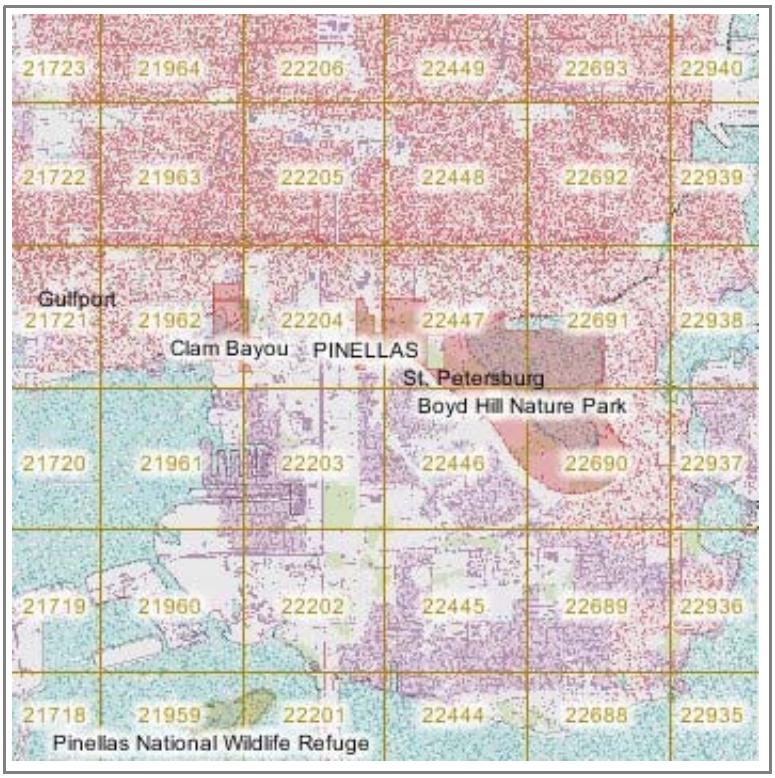
UNOFFICIAL REPORT

Created 8/19/2014

(Contact the FNAI Data Services Coordinator at 850.224.8207 for information on an official Standard Data Report)

NOTE: The Biodiversity Matrix includes only rare species and natural communities tracked by FNAI.

Report for 5 Matrix Units: 22202 , 22203 , 22204 , 22205 , 22448



Descriptions

DOCUMENTED - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit.

DOCUMENTED-HISTORIC - There is a documented occurrence in the FNAI database of the species or community within this Matrix Unit; however the occurrence has not been observed/reported within the last twenty years.

LIKELY - The species or community is *known* to occur in this vicinity, and is considered likely within this Matrix Unit because:

1. documented occurrence overlaps this and adjacent Matrix Units, but the documentation isn't precise enough to indicate which of those Units the species or community is actually located in; *or*
2. there is a documented occurrence in the vicinity and there is suitable habitat for that species or community within this Matrix Unit.

POTENTIAL - This Matrix Unit lies within the known or predicted range of the species or community based on expert knowledge and environmental variables such as climate, soils, topography, and landcover.

Matrix Unit ID: 22202

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 22203

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Bigelowia nuttallii Nuttall's Rayless Goldenrod	G3G4	S1	N	LE

Matrix Unit ID: 22204

0 **Documented** Elements Found

1 **Documented-Historic** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Glandularia tampensis Tampa Vervain	G2	S2	N	LE

1 **Likely** Element Found

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Bigelowia nuttallii Nuttall's Rayless Goldenrod	G3G4	S1	N	LE

Matrix Unit ID: 22205

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit ID: 22448

0 **Documented** Elements Found

0 **Documented-Historic** Elements Found

0 **Likely** Elements Found

Matrix Unit IDs: 22202 , 22203 , 22204 , 22205 , 22448

23 **Potential** Elements Common to Any of the 5 Matrix Units

Scientific and Common Names	Global Rank	State Rank	Federal Status	State Listing
Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi Gulf Sturgeon	G3T2	S2	LT	FT
Ammodramus maritimus peninsulae Scott's Seaside Sparrow	G4T3Q	S3	N	SSC
Athene cunicularia floridana Florida Burrowing Owl	G4T3	S3	N	SSC
Bigelowia nuttallii Nuttall's Rayless Goldenrod	G3G4	S1	N	LE
Centrosema arenicola Sand Butterfly Pea	G2Q	S2	N	LE
Charadrius melodus Piping Plover	G3	S2	LT	FT
Dermochelys coriacea				

Leatherback	G2	S2	LE	FE
Drymarchon couperi Eastern Indigo Snake	G3	S3	LT	FT
Eragrostis pectinacea var. tracyi Sanibel Lovegrass	G5T1	S1	N	LE
Eretmochelys imbricata Hawksbill	G3	S1	LE	FE
Forestiera segregata var. pinetorum Florida Pinewood Privet	G4T2	S2	N	N
Glandularia tampensis Tampa Vervain	G2	S2	N	LE
Gopherus polyphemus Gopher Tortoise	G3	S3	C	ST
Lampropeltis extenuata Short-tailed Snake	G3	S3	N	ST
Lechea cernua Nodding Pinweed	G3	S3	N	LT
Linum carteri var. smallii Small's Flax	G2T2	S2	N	LE
Nemastylis floridana Celestial Lily	G2	S2	N	LE
Nolina atopocarpa Florida Beargrass	G3	S3	N	LT
Podomys floridanus Florida Mouse	G3	S3	N	SSC
Rallus longirostris scottii Florida Clapper Rail	G5T3?	S3?	N	N
Rana capito Gopher Frog	G3	S3	N	SSC
Setophaga discolor paludicola Florida Prairie Warbler	G5T3	S3	N	N
Trichechus manatus Manatee	G2	S2	LE	FE

Appendix G.
Representative Photographs

Howard Frankland Causeway – I-275 southbound (view looking west along seawall)

Howard Frankland Causeway – I-275 southbound (view looking east along seawall)

Howard Frankland Causeway – I-275 southbound (view looking west)

Howard Frankland Causeway – I-275 southbound (view looking east)

Big Island Gap Bridge – I-275 southbound (view looking south)

Big Island Gap Bridge – I-275 southbound (view looking north)

I-275 southbound (view looking south near Roosevelt Blvd.) - Surface Water Impact Area

I-275 southbound (view looking north) – Sawgrass Lake Park - Cypress

I-275 southbound (view looking south) – Sawgrass Lake Park - Cypress

I-275 southbound – Sawgrass Lake Park - Cypress

I-275 southbound (view looking north) – Sawgrass Lake Park - Cypress

I-275 southbound (view looking west) – Sawgrass Lake Park – Surface Water

I-275 southbound (view looking south) – Sawgrass Lake Park - Cypress

I-275 northbound south of Gandy Blvd. (view looking south) – Surface Water

I-275 northbound south of Gandy Blvd. (view looking south) – Surface Water

I-275 northbound south of Gandy Blvd. (view looking north) – Surface Water

I-275 northbound south of Roosevelt Blvd. (view looking north) – Surface Water

I-275 northbound south of Roosevelt Blvd. (view north) – Cypress in I-275 right-of-way

I-275 northbound south of Roosevelt Boulevard (view east) – Cypress near canal

I-275 northbound south of Roosevelt Blvd. (view south) – Cypress in I-275 right-of-way

I-275 northbound south of Roosevelt Boulevard – Cypress in I-275 right-of-way

I-275 northbound south of Roosevelt Blvd. (view north) – Surface Water

I-275 northbound north of Roosevelt Blvd. (view north) – Surface Water

Big Island Gap Bridge – I-275 northbound (view looking south)

Big Island Gap Bridge – I-275 northbound (view looking south)

Big Island Gap Bridge – I-275 northbound (view looking south)

Big Island Gap Bridge – I-275 northbound (view looking south)

I-275 northbound (view looking northeast) – Howard Frankland Causeway

I-275 northbound (view looking southwest) – Howard Frankland Causeway

I-275 northbound (view looking northeast) – Howard Frankland Causeway

I-275 northbound – Howard Frankland Causeway

I-275 northbound (view looking northeast) – Howard Frankland Causeway

Appendix H.
Agency Coordination

United States Department of the Interior

U. S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

7915 BAYMEADOWS WAY, SUITE 200
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32256-7517

IN REPLY REFER TO:
FWS Log No. 41910- 2015-I-0297

July 17, 2015

Nicole Selly
District 7 Environmental Administrator
Florida Department of Transportation
11201 N. McKinley Dive
Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

RE: PD&E Study (I-275/SR 93)
FDOT Work Program Number: 424501-1
Pinellas County, Florida

Dear Ms. Selly:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has completed its review of the final draft Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E) and Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR). The PD&E Study evaluates the need for capacity and operational improvements along 16.3 miles of Interstate 275 (I-275) (State Road (SR) 93) from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida and satisfies all applicable federal and state requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding of subsequent development phases (design, right of way acquisition, and construction). The Service provides the following comments in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

The Service received a request from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for informal consultation on March 24, 2015, to review the WEBAR dated March 2015. It is our understanding that the FDOT intends continue informal consultation for the project's effects on the listed species during its future permitting process. In compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, FDOT agrees not to begin construction on the project as described in the WEBAR, or otherwise make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that precludes the implementation of any reasonable and prudent measures until informal consultation with the Service is completed. The Commitments and Recommendations Section of the final FHWA approved NEPA document for the project will include a commitment to continue informal Section 7 consultation with this agency during the project's future permitting process. Given this commitment and based on the current project development and environment study phase information for the proposed project, we are providing the following review of the project's potential to affect species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Wood stork (*Mycteria americana*)

Wood storks depend on wetlands for foraging and nesting. In Florida, wood storks have been documented foraging in forested wetlands, cypress domes, fresh water marshes, retention ponds and roadside ditches. Two active nesting colonies and their associated core foraging areas are found within 15 miles of the proposed road improvement project. The FDOT is committed to reducing the direct and indirect impacts of this project on wetlands throughout the planning, design, and permitting phase of this proposal. In addition, the agency has committed to providing the appropriate mitigation to compensate for any loss of suitable wood stork foraging habitat. Based on this commitment and our review of the information available in the WEBAR the Service could concur with a 'may affect, but not likely to adversely affect' determination for the wood stork.

Florida Manatee (*Trichechus manatus latirostris*)

The WEBAR concluded a 'may affect, not likely to adversely affect' determination for the Florida manatee and FDOT listed several action items in the WEBAR to protect manatees for the duration of the project. No critical habitat has been designated within this area known as Old Tampa Bay. The level of manatee use in the area is considered high. The Service appreciates the inclusion of the action items noted in the WEBAR and could support a determination of 'may affect but not likely to adversely affect'. We understand that the following special conditions will be implemented:

- 2011 In-Water Construction Conditions will be followed.

- A Manatee Protection Plan will be developed and submitted to the Service at least 60 days prior to the start of construction with manatee observer names and qualifications listed. Agency approval is contingent on our concurrence with FDOT's determination of may affect but not likely to adversely affect.

- Dedicated, experienced, manatee observers will be present if in-water work is being performed. All siltation barriers or coffer dams should be checked at least twice a day for manatees that may become entangled or entrapped at the site.

- FDOT will conduct a seagrass survey during the growing season within two years prior to the start of construction.

- Any culverts larger than eight inches in diameter below mean high water should be grated to prevent manatee entrapment. The spacing between the bridge pilings will be at least 60 inches apart to allow for manatee movement in between the pilings.

- Barges will be equipped with fender systems that provide a minimum standoff distance of four feet between wharves, bulkheads and vessels moored together to prevent crushing manatees between the barges or between the barge and work site. All existing slow speed or no wake zones will apply to all work boats and barges associated with the construction.

- No dredging is proposed at this time. If dredging is needed, consultation should be reinitiated.

- FDOT understands that blasting will result in a 'may affect' determination and FDOT would initiate formal ESA consultation.

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*)

Temporary or permanent impacts may occur at the beach and or tidal areas within the project limits. FDOT has determined that it is unlikely that piping plovers use the proposed project area for foraging or shelter. Based on the description of the habitat and our site visit to the project area on July 15, 2015, the Service could concur with a 'may affect but not likely to adversely affect' determination for this species.

Gulf Sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*)

FDOT has committed to follow the *Special Construction Conditions for the Gulf Sturgeon* and to ensure that observers watch for this species. Because there is suitable habitat for this species within the action area and the special conditions will reduce the risk of take, the Service could concur with a 'may affect but not likely to adversely affect' determination for this species.

Sea Turtles

FDOT has determined that sea turtle nesting habitat is not present within the project limits. However, sea turtles, in particular juvenile sea turtles, may be present in the waters within and abutting the project corridor. The FDOT will require implementation of the protocol outlined in the *Sea Turtle and Smalltoothed Sawfish Construction Conditions* during construction. Given the FDOT's commitment to adhere these special conditions, the Service could concur with the determination of 'may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect' for these species.

This letter does not represent a biological opinion as described in Section 7 of the ESA nor a final concurrence with project effects on listed species as determined by the FDOT. New information regarding species status, presence, changes to and refinement of the proposed project, and potential adverse effects not initially considered may increase the risk of adverse effects to a level at which take is reasonably certain to occur. All additional information available will be evaluated when ESA consultation is reinitiated.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

The FDOT is statutorily obligated to mitigate all wetland impacts according to the Clean Water Act and the Section 404 permitting process through the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, the State of Florida also requires the demonstration of avoidance, minimization and mitigation of wetland impacts. During the design and permitting phase the FDOT has committed to avoiding and minimizing the direct and indirect effects of this project on wetland ecosystems.

If you have any questions, please contact Lourdes Mena at (904)731-3119. Thank you for considering the effects of your proposal on fish and wildlife, and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

Sincerely,

for Jay B. Herrington
Field Supervisor

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Commissioners
Richard A. Corbett
Chairman
Tampa

Brian Yablonski
Vice Chairman
Tallahassee

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Chief of Staff

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Executive Director
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(800) 955-8770 (V)

MyFWC.com

April 15, 2015

Ms. Nicolle Selly
Environmental Specialist
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Seven
11201 North McKinley Drive
Tampa, FL 33612
Nicolle.Selly@DOT.state.fl.us

Re: I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S. to North of 4th Street N., PD&E Study, Pinellas County, Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report

Dear Ms. Selly:

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) staff has reviewed the Draft Final Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR) for the above-referenced project, prepared as part of the PD&E Study. We reviewed the south portion of this project (south of Gandy Boulevard) in 2009 and 2010 through FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process (ETDM 12556). It is notable that ETDM 12556 did not include the current project's right-of-way expansion into Old Tampa Bay at the west end of the Howard Frankland Causeway. We provide the following comments and recommendations for your consideration in accordance with Chapter 379, Florida Statutes, and Rule 68A-27, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

The project involves an evaluation of capacity and operational improvements along 16.3 miles of I-275 from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County. In general, the section of I-275 south of Gandy Boulevard would have an additional auxiliary lane in each direction, while the section north of Gandy would have two additional lanes in each direction. The project would result in approximately 0.59 acres of impact to freshwater forested wetlands, 0.15 acres of impact to herbaceous freshwater wetlands, 0.89 acres of impact to mangrove wetlands, and 0.74 acres of impact to seagrass habitat. The project vicinity consists of mostly urbanized lands with some remnant pine/hardwood mix landcover, along with freshwater and estuarine wetlands increasing in coverage along the northern portion of the project.

To determine the required mitigation, the wetland impacts of the project would be assessed during the permitting phase using the Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method. All impacts are anticipated to be within the service area of the Tampa Bay Mitigation Bank. Mitigation for seagrass impacts, presumably a seagrass planting project, will be determined via interagency coordination. Seagrass planting projects frequently yield less than the desired results, often because of avoidable problems with project design. The FWC's Fish and Wildlife Research Institute has evaluated seagrass restoration techniques in Tampa Bay, and can provide technical assistance in the design of a mitigation project. The Seagrass Research Team in St. Petersburg can be contacted at (727) 896-8626 or technical assistance can be coordinated through the staff identified at the close of this letter.

The WEBAR evaluated potential project impacts to 29 wildlife species classified under the Endangered Species Act as Federally Endangered (FE) or Threatened (FT), or by the State of Florida as Threatened (ST) or Species of Special Concern (SSC). Listed species were evaluated based on range and potential appropriate habitat or because the project is within a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Consultation Area. Included were: Gulf sturgeon (FT), smalltooth sawfish (FE), eastern indigo snake (FT), loggerhead sea turtle (FT), green sea turtle (FE),

hawksbill sea turtle (FE), Kemp's ridley sea turtle (FE), piping plover (FT), wood stork (FT), Florida manatee (FE), rivulus (SSC), gopher frog (SSC), gopher tortoise (ST), short-tailed snake (ST), Florida sandhill crane (ST), southeastern American kestrel (ST), brown pelican (SSC), least tern (ST), Florida burrowing owl (SSC), snowy plover (ST), American oystercatcher (SSC), black skimmer (SSC), osprey (SSC), reddish egret (SSC), snowy egret (SSC), little blue heron (SSC), tricolored heron (SSC), white ibis (SSC), and roseate spoonbill (SSC). The osprey should be removed from this list since only the Monroe County population is classified as SSC. Four additional state-listed species have been documented in this general area of Pinellas County, although they would have a low probability of occurrence in the project work site. They are the pine snake (SSC), limpkin (SSC), Sherman's fox squirrel (SSC), and Florida mouse (SSC).

Also evaluated was the bald eagle, which has been removed from state and federal listing but is still governed by the state bald eagle rule and the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. The FWC has developed a bald eagle management plan to further guide eagle conservation in Florida.

Project biologists made a finding of "no effect" for the eastern indigo snake, short-tailed snake, gopher tortoise, gopher frog, Florida sandhill crane, burrowing owl, and southeastern American kestrel, due to a lack of suitable habitat for these species within the project area. We agree with these findings. A finding of "no effect" was also made for the bald eagle and osprey, however, this would only apply to the nests of these raptors. For all the other listed species, their findings were "may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect", and we agree with these determinations provided that appropriate wetland and seagrass mitigation replaces any lost habitat value.

We support the project commitments for protected species, which include the following:

1. The FDOT will resurvey the project corridor for bald eagle nests during the permitting and design phase of the project. Should a bald eagle nest be built prior to or during construction within 660 feet of the construction limits, precautions will be followed based on the USFWS *Bald Eagle Management Guidelines.*

2. The standard FDOT *Construction Precautions for the Eastern Indigo Snake* will be followed during construction.

3. In the unlikely event that a gopher tortoise or burrow is discovered in the project corridor, the FDOT will secure a relocation permit from the FWC.

   Please reference the FWC's Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines (Revised April 2013 at http://www.myfwc.com/media/1410274/GTPermittingGuidelines.pdf) for survey methodology and permitting guidance prior to any construction activity. Specific guidance in the permitting guidelines includes methods for avoiding permitting as well as options and state requirements for minimizing, mitigating, and permitting potential impacts of the proposed activities. Any commensal species observed during the burrow excavations should be handled in accordance with Appendix of the Gopher Tortoise Permitting Guidelines. To the maxmum extent possible, the FWC also recommends that all staging and storage areas be sited to avoid impacts to gopher tortoise burrows and their habitat.

4. The S*tandard Manatee Conditions for In-Water Work* will be implemented during construction to eliminate the possibility of construction-related manatee injury or death, and these guidelines will be incorporated as part of the final project design. Stormwater outfall pipes and structures constructed within potential manatee waters, below the mean high water line, and measuring eight inches or greater in diameter will be required to have manatee grates to prevent manatee entrapment.

5. Wetland impacts will result in loss of wood stork foraging habitat, thus requiring mitigation acceptable to the USFWS. This mitigation should also help compensate for habitat loss for the other potentially affected wading birds.

6. The FDOT will require implementation of the protocol outlined in the *Sea Turtle and Smalltoothed Sawfish Construction Conditions* during construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the WEBAR for the I-275 project in Pinellas County. If you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Jane Chabre either by phone at (850) 410-5367 or at FWCConservationPlanningServices@MyFWC.com. If you have specific technical questions regarding the content of this letter, please contact Brian Barnett at (772) 579-9746 or email brian.bamett@MyFWC.com.

Sincerely,

Jennifer D. Goff

Jennifer Goff
Land Use Planning Program Administrator
Office of Conservation Planning Services

jdg/bb
ENV 1-13-2
I-275 from South of 54th Avenue S to North of 4th Street N_20895_041515

cc: Dr. Margaret Hall, FWC, Penny.Hall@MyFWC.com
Mr. Kent Smith, FWC, Kent.Smith@MyFWC.com

From:	Baird, Tera
To:	Selly, Nicole
Cc:	Heath Rauschenberger
Subject:	FWS Log No. 2015-I-0297, PD&E Study (I-275/SR 93)
Date:	Friday, June 19, 2015 4:19:59 PM

RE: PD&E Study (I-275/SR 93)

FDOT Work Program Number: 424501-1

Pinellas Counties, Florida

Dear Ms. Selly:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has completed its review of the final draft Project Development and Environment Study (PD&E) and Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report (WEBAR). The PD&E Study evaluates the need for capacity and operational improvements along 16.3 miles of Interstate 275 (I-275) (State Road (SR) 93) from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida and satisfies all applicable federal and state requirements, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), in order for this project to qualify for federal-aid funding of subsequent development phases (design, right of way acquisition, and construction). The Service provides the following comments in accordance with section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (Act), as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

The Service received a request from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for informal consultation on March 24, 2015, to review the (WEBAR) dated March 2015. It is our understanding that the FDOT intends to continue informal consultation for the project's effects on the listed species during its future permitting process. It is understood that the Service's informal consultation on the project will be concluded before the project advances to the construction phase. In this case FDOT, in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, agrees not to begin construction on the project as described in the WEBAR, or otherwise make any irreversible or irretrievable commitment of resources that precludes the implementation of any reasonable and prudent measures until consultation with the Service is completed. The Commitments and Recommendations Section of the final FHWA approved NEPA document for the project will include a commitment to continue Section 7 consultation with this agency during the project's future permitting process. Given this commitment and based on the current project development and environment study phase information for the proposed project, we are providing the following review of the project's potential to affect species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

Wood stork

Wood storks depend on wetlands for foraging and nesting. In Florida, wood storks have been documented foraging in forested wetlands, cypress domes, fresh water marshes, retention ponds and roadside ditches. As noted in the WEBAR, the Service is currently utilizing a 15 mile core foraging area around active colonies in central Florida to evaluate the effects of wetland destruction with respect to forage availability for wood storks. Two active nesting colonies and their associated core foraging areas are found within 15 miles of the proposed road improvement project. The FDOT is committed to reducing the direct and indirect impacts of this project on wetlands throughout the planning, design, and permitting phase of this proposal. Also, the agency has committed to providing the appropriate mitigation to compensate for any loss of suitable wood stork foraging habitat. Based on this commitment and our review of the information available in the WEBAR the Service could concur with a 'may affect, but not likely to adversely affect' determination for the wood stork.

Florida Manatee

The WEBAR concluded a 'may affect, not likely to adversely affect' determination for the Florida manatee and FDOT listed several action items in the WEBAR to protect manatees for the duration of the project. No critical habitat has been designated within this area known as Old Tampa Bay. The level of manatee use in the area is considered high. The Service appreciates the inclusion of the action items noted in the WEBAR and could support a determination of 'may affect but not likely to adversely affect'. We understand that the following special conditions will be implemented:

· 2011 In-Water Construction Conditions will be followed.

· A Manatee Protection Plan will be developed and submitted to the USFWS at least 60 days prior to the start of construction with manatee observer names and qualifications listed. Agency approval is contingent on our concurrence with FDOT's determination of may affect but not likely to adversely affect.

· Dedicated, experienced, manatee observers will be present if in-water work is being performed. All siltation barriers or coffer dams should be checked at least twice a day for manatees that may become entangled or entrapped at the site.

· FDOT will conduct a seagrass survey during the growing season within two years prior to the start of construction.

· Any culverts larger than eight inches in diameter below mean high water should be grated to prevent manatee entrapment. The spacing between the bridge pilings will be at least 60 inches apart to allow for manatee movement in between

the pilings.

· Barges will be equipped with fender systems that provide a minimum standoff distance of four feet between wharves, bulkheads and vessels moored together to prevent crushing manatees between the barges or between the barge and work site. All existing slow speed or no wake zones will apply to all work boats and barges associated with the construction.

· No dredging is proposed at this time. If dredging is needed, consultation should be reinitiated.

· FDOT understands that blasting will result in a 'may affect' determination and FDOT would initiate formal ESA consultation.

Piping Plover

Although piping plovers have not been sighted within the footprint of the project, pedestrian observations occurred outside wintering or migration period for the species. Temporary or permanent impacts may occur at the beach and or tidal areas within the project limits. FDOT has determined that it is unlikely that piping plovers use the proposed project area for foraging or shelter. During the design phase, if it is determined that suitable wintering habitat may be impacted by the future project, we recommend observations occur during migration or wintering periods. Based on the description of the habitat, the Service could concur with a 'may affect but not likely to adversely affect' determination for this species.

Gulf Sturgeon

FDOT has committed to follow the Special Construction Conditions for the Gulf Sturgeon and to ensure that observers watch for this species. Because there is suitable habitat for this species within the action area and the special conditions will reduce the risk of take, the Service could concur with a 'may affect but not likely to adversely affect' determination for this species.

Sea Turtles

FDOT has determined that sea turtle nesting habitat is not present within the project limits. However, sea turtles, in particular, juvenile sea turtles, may be present in the

waters within and abutting the project corridor. The FDOT will require

implementation of the protocol outlined in the Sea Turtle and Smalltoothed Sawfish Construction Conditions during construction. Given the FDOT's commitment to adhere these special conditions, the Service could concur with the determination of 'may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect' for these species.

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

The FDOT is statutorily obligated to mitigate all wetland impacts according to the Clean Water Act and the Section 404 permitting process through the Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, the State of Florida also requires the demonstration of avoidance, minimization and mitigation of wetland impacts. During the design and permitting phase the FDOT has committed to avoiding and minimizing the direct and indirect effects of this project on wetland ecosystems.

This email does not represent a biological opinion as described in Section 7 of the Act nor a final concurrence with project effects on listed species as determined by the FDOT. New information regarding species status, presence, changes to and refinement of the proposed project, and potential adverse effects not initially considered may increase the risk of adverse effects to a level at which take is reasonably certain to occur. All additional information available will be evaluated during the project design phase. If you have any questions, please contact Tera Baird at (904)731-3196. Thank you for considering the effects of your proposal on fish and wildlife, and the ecosystems upon which they depend.

--
Tera K. Baird
North Florida Ecological Services Office
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
7915 Baymeadows Way, Suite 200
Jacksonville, FL 32256-7517
TEL: 904.731.3196
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
263 13th Avenue South
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov

May 4, 2015 F/SER46:DR

Ms. Nicole Selly
Environmental Specialist
Florida Department of Transportation
11201 North McKinley Drive
Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

Ref.: WPI Segment Number 424501-1, Florida Department of Transportation District 7, I-275 (SR 93) widening from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North, Pinellas County, Florida

Dear Ms. Selly:

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has reviewed the information you have provided regarding the I-275 widening PD&E study. This letter responds to your conclusions regarding Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species under NMFS's purview and Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act Essential Fish Habitat (EFH), as part of the reasonable assurance process required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). You have requested that NMFS review the Draft Final Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report and provide support for moving the project forward toward determining a finding under the National Environmental Policy Act. Our comments are provided in accordance with provisions of Section 7 of the ESA of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Reauthorization Act of 2006. NMFS believes that, to the extent practicable at this stage of the project, FDOT has addressed NMFS's previous comments in relation to the project.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) proposes widening I-275 (SR 93) from south of 54th Avenue South to north of 4th Street North in Pinellas County, Florida.

FDOT has determined that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect (NLAA) Gulf sturgeon (*Acipenser oxyrinchus desotoi*), smalltooth sawfish (*Pristis pectinata*), and swimming sea turtles including loggerhead (*Caretta caretta*), green (*Chelonia mydas*), Kemp's ridley (*Lepidochelys kempii*), and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) sea turtles. NMFS cannot provide concurrence or non-concurrence with these NLAA determinations at this time because sufficiently detailed project information is not yet available for NMFS to conduct an analysis as part of the ESA Section 7 consultation process. In addition, uncertainty remains regarding how construction impacts to ESA-listed species will be minimized. However, NMFS believes it can provide reasonable assurance that the Section 7 consultation can be completed as an informal consultation as the project moves forward and project details and commitments are finalized.

NMFS has reviewed the information regarding impacts to wetlands due to the project. It appears that the preliminary assessment of impacts to estuarine wetlands and other NMFS trust resources

comprising Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) is accurate. NMFS believes that if appropriate compensatory mitigation is provided for those unavoidable wetland impacts that do occur, the project will not have an adverse impact on EFH. Further coordination with NMFS will be required to identify appropriate mitigation, especially for seagrasses and mangroves.

If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact me at (727) 824-5379, or by email at David.Rydene@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

David Rydene, Ph.D.
Fishery Biologist