

INTERSTATE 75 PD&E STUDIES NEWSLETTER

We Want Your Comments!

A successful PD&E study depends on public participation in the study process. We encourage your input throughout the life of these studies.

To get more information, ask questions, and make suggestions about these studies, please contact Manuel Santos, Project Manager, at (813) 975-6173, (800) 226-7220, or email to manuel.santos@dot.state.fl.us, or Marian Scorza, Public Information Officer, (813) 975-6038, toll-free at (800) 226-7220, or email marian.scorza@dot.state.fl.us.

Send written comments to:

Ming Gao, P.E.
Intermodal Systems Development Manager
FDOT District Seven
11201 N. McKinley Drive
MS 7-500
Tampa, FL 33612-6456
ming.gao@dot.state.fl.us

Written comments may be provided by completing the enclosed comment form and placing it in one of the comment boxes at the hearing. You may also mail your comments to the address preprinted on the back of the form. All comments must be postmarked by Monday, May 17, 2010, to become part of the official public hearing record.

You can also make comments on the website at, www.mytbi.com, click on "Future Projects" then "I-75 PD&E Studies".

Manuel Santos E.I., Project Manager
Florida Department of Transportation
District Seven
11201 N. McKinley Drive
MS 7-500
Tampa, FL 33612-6456



Non-Discrimination Laws and Regulations

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact Manuel Santos, at (813) 975-6173 at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Para preguntas en Español

Valoramos la opinión del público sobre este proyecto. Si usted tiene preguntas o comentarios o si simplemente desea más información en Español, favor ponerse en contacto con el ingeniero a cargo de este proyecto, el señor Manuel Santos, al teléfono (813) 975-6173 o correo electrónico manuel.santos@dot.state.fl.us.

INTERSTATE 75 PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT STUDIES

PUBLIC HEARING NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2010



SOUTHERN STUDY - FROM MOCCASIN WALLOW ROAD IN MANATEE COUNTY TO SOUTH OF US 301 IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
(WPI Segment No. 419235-2)

NORTHERN STUDY - FROM SOUTH OF US 301 TO NORTH OF FLETCHER AVENUE IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY
(WPI Segment No. 419235-3)

Public Hearing Scheduled

Dear Property Owner or Interested Citizen:

You are invited to attend and participate in the Interstate 75 (I-75) public hearing held by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) regarding the proposed transportation improvements to I-75 from Moccasin Wallow Road to north of Fletcher Avenue in Manatee and Hillsborough Counties. The hearing is being held to give the public an opportunity to provide comments concerning the conceptual design of the proposed improvements to I-75 within the project limits. The hearing will be held at the following time and location:

Date: Thursday, May 6, 2010

Time: Open House from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Formal Presentation and Public Comment at 6:00 p.m.

Place: Florida State Fairgrounds*
Florida Center Building
4800 US Highway 301, Tampa, FL 33610
* Enter from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard entrance.
Gates open by 4:30 p.m. Parking is free.

Maps, drawings, and other pertinent information depicting the project's alignment and proposed improvements will be available for public review from Thursday, April 15 through Monday, May 17, 2010, at three public libraries and at the Florida Department of Transportation, District Seven office, located at 11201 N. McKinley Drive, Tampa, FL 33612 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. **A** Library locations and hours of operation are listed in the box below.

FDOT representatives will be available at the Fairgrounds beginning at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 6, 2010 to answer questions and discuss the project informally. Exhibits and other project related materials showing the proposed improvements will be displayed.

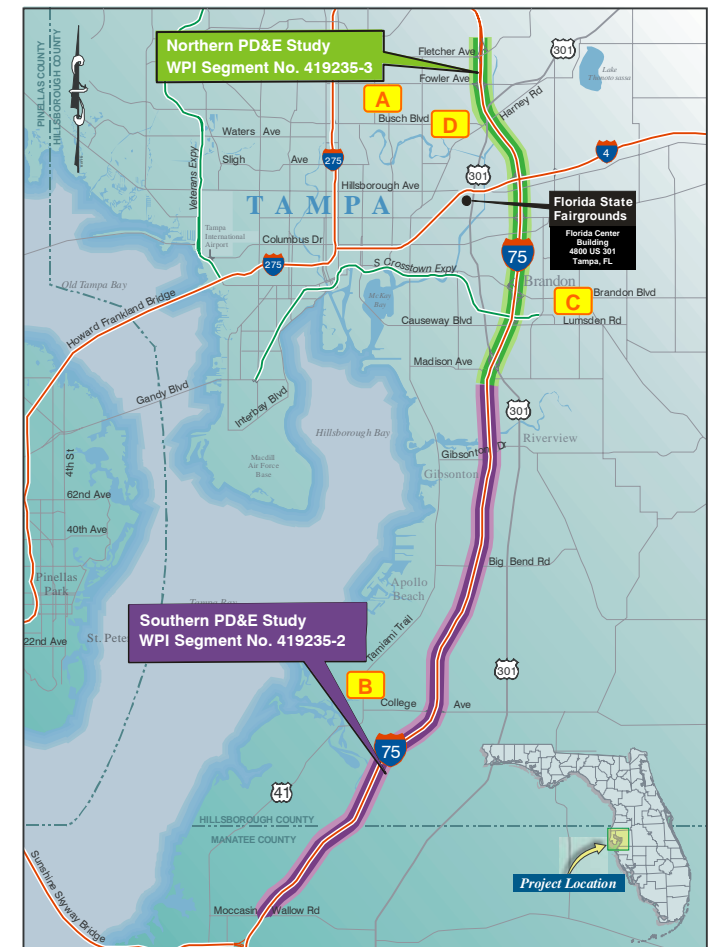
A court reporter will be available to record comments in a one-on-one setting. At 6:00 p.m., FDOT representatives will begin the formal portion of the hearing at which time formal public comments may be given. Following the formal portion of the hearing, the informal open house will resume and continue until 7:00 p.m.

This newsletter also serves as notice to property owners (pursuant to Florida Statutes 339.155) that all or a portion of their property is within 300 feet of the centerline of the proposed project. However, this does not mean that all properties would be directly affected.

We look forward to seeing you at the public hearing!

Sincerely,

Ming Gao, P.E.
Intermodal Systems Development Manager



Library Location and Information

Ruskin Branch Library **B**

One Dickman Drive, Southeast
Ruskin, FL 33570-4314
(813) 273-3652
Sunday & Monday: Closed
Tuesday: 10a.m.-6p.m.
Wednesday: 12p.m.-8p.m.
Thursday-Saturday: 10a.m.-6p.m.

Brandon Regional Library **C**

619 Vonderburg Drive
Brandon, FL 33511-5972
(813) 744-5630
Sunday: 12:30p.m.-5p.m.
Monday - Wednesday: 10a.m.-9p.m.
Thursday: 12p.m.-8p.m.
Friday & Saturday: 10a.m.-6p.m.

Temple Terrace Public Library **D**

202 Bullard Parkway
Tampa, FL 33617
(813) 506-6770
Monday & Wednesday: 10a.m.-8p.m.
Tuesday & Thursday: 12p.m.-8p.m.
Friday & Saturday: 9a.m.-5p.m.
Sunday: Closed



What is a PD&E Study?

The FDOT conducts a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). During the study, we determine the location and conceptual design of feasible build alternatives for roadway improvements and their social, economic, and environmental effects. A no-build alternative, which assumes leaving the roadways in their present state with routine maintenance, also remains a viable alternative throughout the study. The intent of the PD&E study process is to study each viable alternative and its potential impacts and to recommend the preferred alternative. This process is required by federal and state laws.

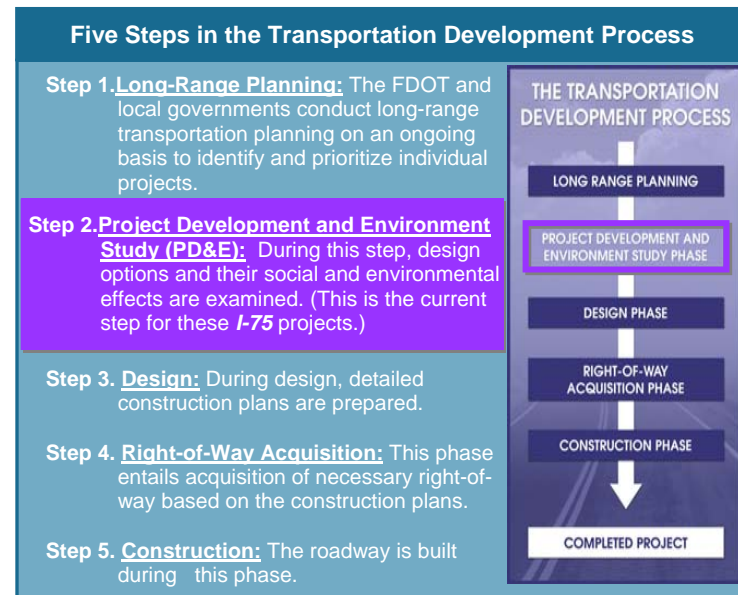
A PD&E study is finalized when the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) reviews the documentation and recommendations then provides a Location and Design Concept Acceptance (LDCA). If the study results in a build alternative selection, the project may proceed to the next phase, which is the Design phase.

Project Purpose and Description

The FDOT is conducting two PD&E studies to consider proposed improvements on two segments of I-75 in Manatee and Hillsborough Counties. The southern segment extends approximately 25.0 miles from Moccasin Wallow Road in Manatee County to south of U.S. 301 in Hillsborough County. The northern segment extends approximately 15.4 miles from south of U.S. 301 to north of Fletcher Avenue in Hillsborough County.

These PD&E studies analyzed feasible alternatives to meet projected future mobility needs based on environmental, engineering, and socioeconomic effects. Mainline improvements are anticipated to occur within the existing right-of-way. Additional right-of-way may be required for stormwater management facilities and interchange improvements.

Currently, I-75 generally has six travel lanes (three northbound and three southbound). I-75 is a major trade and tourism corridor within the Tampa Bay region and the State of Florida. Existing levels of congestion, along with anticipated traffic growth, require us to consider options to ensure that I-75 continues to operate efficiently and meets future regional mobility needs through the year 2035. The improvements we are studying will relieve traffic congestion on I-75, improve safety and emergency evacuation, and reduce emergency response times. I-75 is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System (FIHS) and the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). FIHS is a statewide highway network for high speed and high volume traffic movements. SIS is a statewide network of high priority transportation facilities, including highways, airports, seaports, railroads, and bus stations.



Existing Facilities Along I-75

Classification	Rural/Urban Principal Arterial-Interstate
Number of Lanes	Generally six to eight lanes
Lane Width	12 feet
Inside/Outside Shoulder Width	12 feet
Posted Speed Limit	70 mph
Minimum Right-of-Way	250 feet and varies



Alternatives Public Workshops

The Alternatives Public Workshops were held on June 15 and June 17, 2009 at two separate locations to facilitate public attendance. The workshops were held in an open house format, with no formal presentation. Display boards depicting the study alternatives were available to the public and a powerpoint presentation ran continuously during the workshop. In addition, website kiosks were set-up which allowed the public to navigate through the website pages and to submit comments through the "Send Us Your Comments" page. Comments received from the public were in regards to which alternative they preferred over the other. Other comments related to noise barriers and cost/funding of the projects. FDOT representatives were also questioned by the public about building a new interchange along I-75 within the southern study area.



FDOT ADOPTED 5-YEAR WORK PROGRAM Fiscal Year 2009/10 to 2013/14

TASK	Southern Study I-75 from Moccasin Wallow Road to south of US 301	Northern Study I-75 from south of US 301 to north of Fletcher Avenue
Design	Not Currently Funded	Not Currently Funded
ROW Acquisition	Not Currently Funded	Not Currently Funded
Construction	Not Currently Funded	Not Currently Funded

What Happens Next?

Following the hearing, the Project Team will review all public input. They will then document the Preferred Alternative and finalize the PD&E study documents. The PD&E study is expected to be completed in the summer of 2010. The reports can then be sent to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for approval. Individuals on the project mailing list will be notified of the approved alternative. The project will move forward to the Design Phase, when detailed plans are prepared for construction. The FDOT has not programmed funding for this project within its 5-Year Work Program for Design, Right-of-Way (ROW), and Construction. The funding and timing for these phases may change depending upon funding changes with the Hillsborough and Manatee Counties Capital Improvement Plans.

Right-of-Way Acquisition Procedure

We understand that when a transportation project proposes the acquisition of private property, you may have questions and concerns. To better educate and inform you about the right-of-way acquisition process and your rights, the FDOT has created real estate acquisition and relocation brochures. These brochures and other education materials will be available at the public hearing.

Copies of the brochures may also be found on our website: <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/rightofway/Documents.shtml>

We are interested in hearing your concerns and answering your questions. We also encourage you to speak with the FDOT's Project Manager or a Right-of-Way Representative at your convenience.

Project Schedule

Activity	2009				2010	
	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Alternatives Public Workshop Newsletter announces Alternatives Public Workshop. Workshop presents alternatives under consideration and solicits public input.		★				
Develop Recommended Alternatives Based on public input and further analysis, project team selects recommended alternatives.						
Public Hearing Newsletter announces Public Hearing. Hearing presents recommended alternatives and takes comments for the official record.					★	
Final Documents and PD&E Study Completion Project team incorporates comments into preferred alternative and finalizes documents.						





Visioning

“What if This is our Last Chance to Get it Right?”

During the PD&E study, the FDOT is preparing a "vision" for the I-75 corridor. The vision will also be consistent with the 2025 Florida Transportation Plan which identifies goals, objectives, and strategies to guide transportation decisions in Florida. The I-75 vision will ensure FDOT accounts for Tampa Bay's ultimate needs, above and beyond the shorter PD&E studies' timeframe of 2035, and that interim actions are consistent as we implement improvements that collectively shape our vision.

“What if this is our last chance to get it right?” This basic question is the founding principle behind the vision. The six vision ideals are:

- a safe multimodal network
- quality of life
- economic development
- environmental stewardship
- infrastructure investment
- public participation

These lay the groundwork for our supporting goals. This vision and the supporting goals focus on “getting it right.” If this truly is the last chance to get it right, we need to prepare for the future to create the region we desire. The purpose of this vision and the goals and objectives is to establish policy that will help us work toward that future. The vision lets us picture where we want to be in 50 years, and the goals and objectives help us get there.

Potential Environmental Impacts

Potential impacts to the natural, physical, social and cultural environment have been evaluated with respect to both the No-Build and Recommended Build Alternatives. As part of this process, several separate reports have been prepared which document the anticipated impacts. These reports include: Wetland Evaluation and Biological Assessment Report, Water Quality Impact Evaluation Checklist, Contamination Screening Evaluation Report, Cultural Resource Assessment Survey, Noise Study Report, and Air Quality Technical Memorandum. Information regarding display of these documents can be found on the front page of this newsletter. An evaluation matrix summarizing the anticipated impacts will be on display at the upcoming public hearing.

Potential Section 4(f) Involvement Information

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act protects the use of significant publicly owned public parks, recreation areas, and wildlife and waterfowl refuges, as well as significant historic sites. Under this Act, a "use" occurs when a transportation project incorporates land from a Section 4(f) property or substantially impairs the use of that property without the direct transfer of property. Improvements at the Big Bend Road Interchange are anticipated to require partial use of county maintained properties classified/protected under Section 4(f). A display board will be available at the public hearing to show the anticipated impacts to these resources in order to solicit public input on the FDOT's use of this property.

Our Partners

The proposed improvements to I-75 have considered and are consistent with the plans of other agencies, such as,

- Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority
- Hillsborough County
- Manatee County



Study Alternatives

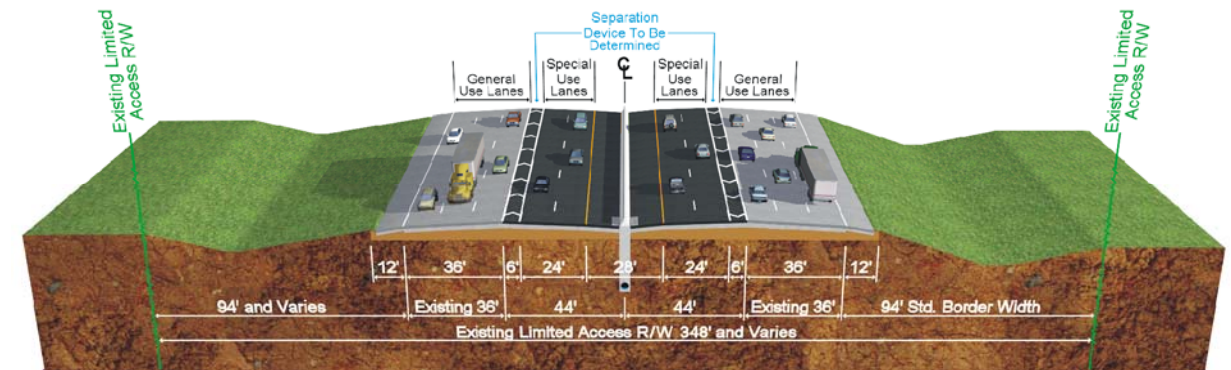
No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative assumes that, with the exception of routine maintenance activities, no new improvements will occur along I-75. The projected No-Build Alternative year 2035 Annual Average Daily Traffic volumes for I-75 are expected to range from 89,700 to 207,900 vehicles per day (vpd). The no-build traffic analysis indicates that by the year 2035, about a quarter of the mainline freeway segments in the project area should be expected to operate below acceptable levels of service. Also, all interchanges would have ramp areas and/or ramp intersections that do not meet acceptable levels of service. Nonetheless, the No-Build Alternative will remain a viable alternative through the study process.

Recommended Build Alternatives

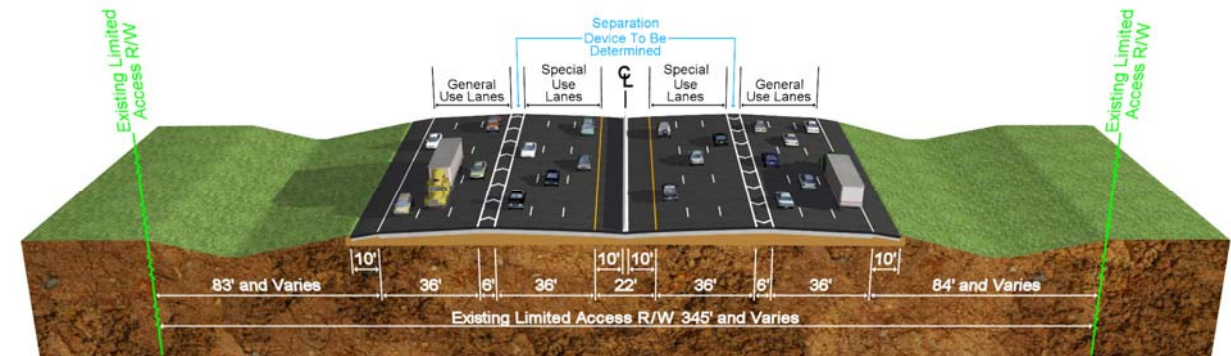
Southern Study (from Moccasin Wallow Road to south of US 301)

The Recommended Build Alternative for the southern study (shown below) contains three 12-foot General Use Lanes (GULs) in each direction on the outside and two Special Use Lanes (SULs) in each direction on the inside. More information regarding GULs and SULs can be found on the next page. The GULs and the SULs are separated by a 6-foot buffer in each direction. For most of the corridor, the border width would be the same as the existing and equal to or greater than the standard 94-foot border. Most of this widening will be done to the inside of the existing lanes.



Northern Study (from south of US 301 to north of Fletcher Avenue)

The Recommended Build Alternative for the northern study (shown below) contains three 12-foot GULs in each direction on the outside and three 12-foot SULs in each direction on the inside. The GULs and the SULs are separated by a 6-foot buffer in each direction. More information regarding GULs and SULs can be found on the next page. The northbound and southbound travel lanes are separated by a barrier wall with 10-foot inside and outside shoulders in each direction. Most of this widening will be done to the inside of the existing lanes within the existing right-of-way.



INTERSTATE 75

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT & ENVIRONMENT STUDIES



INTERSTATE 75
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PUBLIC HEARING NEWSLETTER

Interchange Concepts

There are 10 interchanges within the project limits, three in the southern segment and seven in the northern segment. The FDOT is analyzing design concepts for each interchange. Potential improvements include modifications to the exit and entrance ramps, addition of turn lanes at intersections, addition of collector-distributor roads, or reconfiguration. The Recommended Build Alternatives will be on display and discussed in further detail at the public hearing.

Interim Improvements

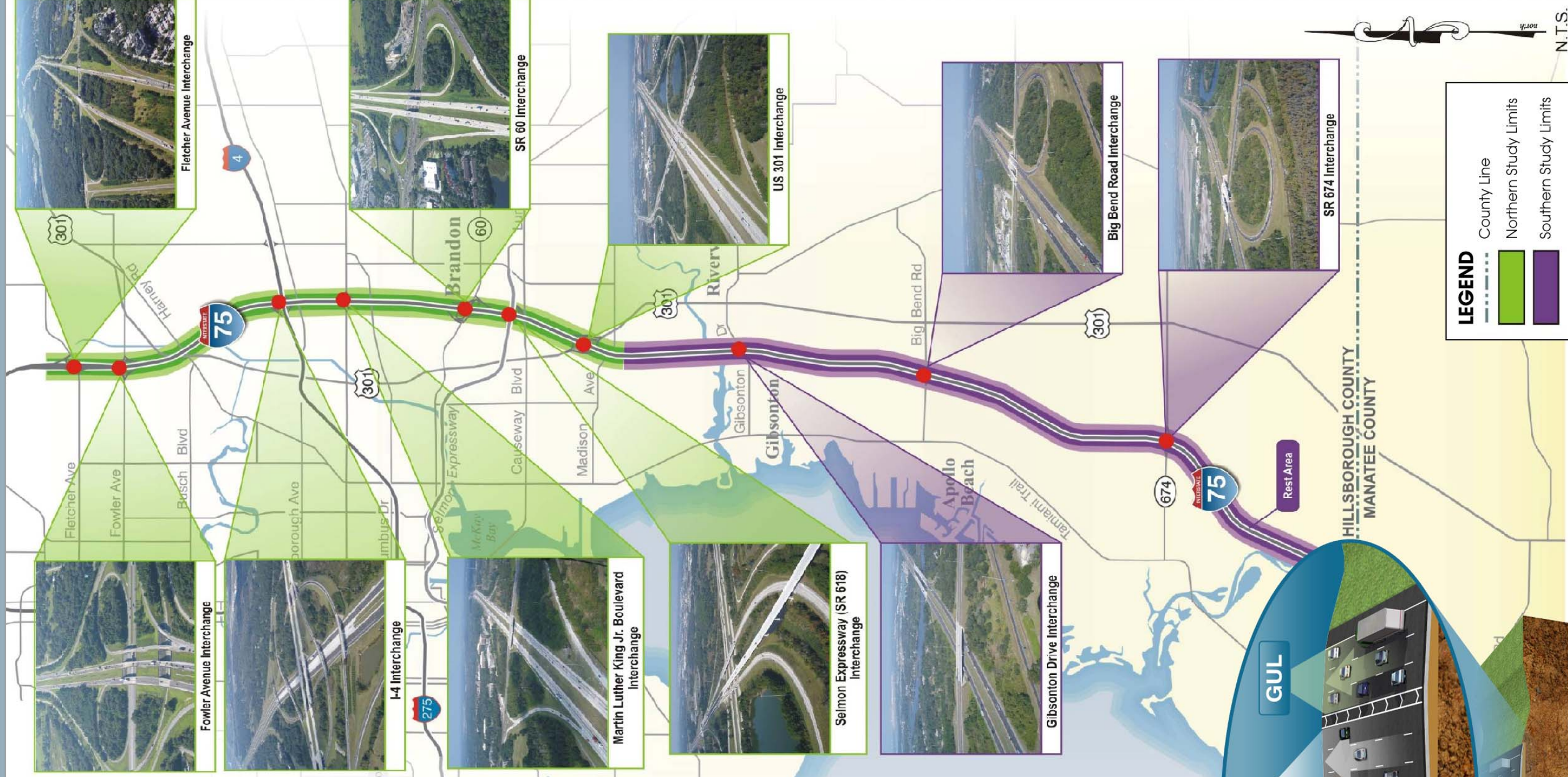
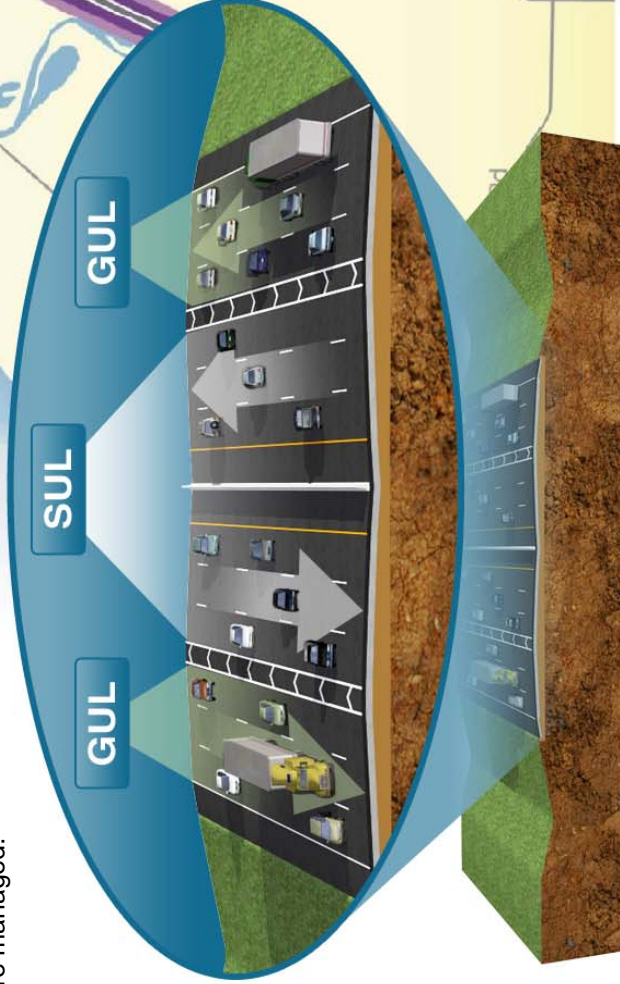
The Recommended Build Alternatives for these projects are being considered to address future traffic projections for year 2035. Now that the Recommended Build Alternatives have been selected through the PD&E process, we are looking for opportunities for interim operational projects to ease existing or near-term traffic issues. Building the ultimate projects at one time will be very costly; therefore, the FDOT will consider building interim or separate parts of these projects over time, as smaller amounts of funds become available. These types of improvements could range from adding new lanes along certain sections of I-75 or the ramps, to altering traffic configuration or movements within some interchanges. These interim improvements will be coordinated with the ultimate conceptual designs to minimize reconstruction when the ultimate preferred alternatives are constructed. These interim improvements will be shown in more detail at the public hearing.

What are Special Use Lanes?

The Special Use Lane (SUL) concept is basically an "interstate within an interstate" where a set of lanes within the interstate are separated from the General Use Lanes (GULs). The GULs can be used by any vehicle. The SULs and GULs are separated by a 6-foot painted separation which could include plastic pylons or other devices. Interchange access from the SULs may be provided less frequently than that of the GULs to ease travel for those making longer regional trips. The SULs may be managed by the following:

- Tolling options
- Access
- Vehicle Type, and/or Vehicle Occupancy.

Future studies would evaluate how the SULs are managed.



Go to www.mytbi.com and click on "Future Projects" then "I-75 PD&E Studies" for more information!