

Port Manatee Connector PD&E STUDY from Port Manatee to I-75

Project Overview

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2008

Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) Project Number (No.): 7619
Federal Aid Project No.: 8887-358-A
Financial Aid Project No.: 422724-1-22-01

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), initiated the Port Manatee Connector Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study in May 2008. The PD&E Study involves the analysis of viable alternatives for enhanced access between Port Manatee in Manatee County and Interstate 75 (I-75). To meet the purpose and need objectives of the project, proposed improvements may include upgrades to existing roadways and alternatives on a new east-west alignment. The Port Manatee Connector will provide access to Port Manatee at US 41 and connect to a new or modified interchange with I-75 within the study area. The PD&E Study process will involve the development and evaluation of existing roadways and potential new roadway alignments, and the evaluation of environmental impacts and construction related costs in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related federal and state requirements. The study area for the Port Manatee PD&E Study generally extends from south of I-275 to south of State Road 674 (SR 674) and from the Tampa Bay coast line to east of I-75, in northern Manatee County and southern Hillsborough County.

PLANNING, DESIGN, RIGHT OF WAY AND CONSTRUCTION

The PD&E Study is anticipated to be complete in 2011. Design, Right of Way acquisition and Construction are not funded in the current FDOT Adopted Five-Year Work Program.

STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of the PD&E Study is to develop and evaluate viable alternatives that will improve goods movement and traffic flow between I-75 and Port Manatee, which are both designated on Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) plan. The objective of this PD&E Study is to provide the information necessary to reach a decision on the type, design, and location of the Port Manatee Connector in an effort to enhance regional connectivity, system linkage, mobility, accommodate expected traffic needs, support economic development and provide an additional evacuation route for the surrounding community.

PROJECT NEED

An enhanced roadway connection from I-75 to Port Manatee in Manatee County would serve as a crucial freight route, improve the overall efficiency of the existing highway network and relieve congestion at the gateway to the port. The need for the Port Manatee Connector is supported by local, statewide and nationwide land use, economic and growth objectives based on the following factors:

- I-75 and Port Manatee are both included in Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) plan.
- The proposed facility is identified in the 2030 SIS Multi-Modal Unfunded Needs Plan.
- The proposed facility is identified in the 2030 Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Cost-Feasible Plan as a needs project.
- The proposed facility promotes international and statewide trade transportation networks.
- Port Manatee is the closest deep-water U.S. port to the Panama Canal (under expansion).



With the planned expansion of Port Manatee, in conjunction with the anticipated population and employment growth in the vicinity of the Port, the Port Manatee Connector will play a critical role in accommodating travel demands and improving the movement of goods and people.

PROJECT STATUS

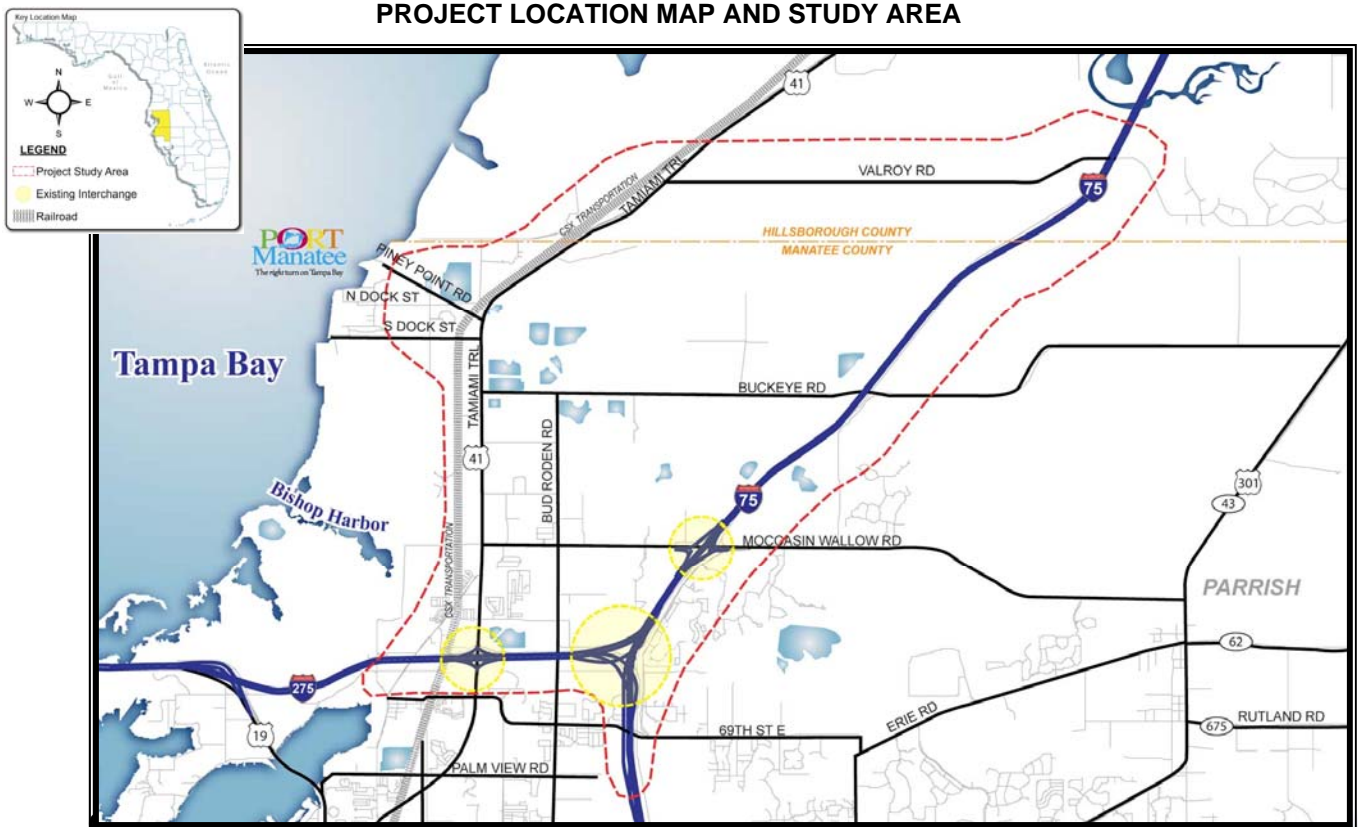
The PD&E Study began in May 2008. Public outreach activities, data collection and traffic studies are in progress. A Purpose and Need Public Meeting is scheduled for September 30, 2008 to provide the interested public with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft purpose and need statement developed for the project. Upcoming project activities include the development of future traffic projections and corridor development and analysis. Anticipated key project milestones include a corridor workshop in fall 2008, an alternatives workshop in fall 2009 and a public hearing in 2010.


OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Community input is solicited throughout the PD&E process. Opportunity for public input will be provided through public meetings, public workshops, a public hearing, newsletters and through the project website. Coordination with affected Federal, State, and local agencies; project stakeholders and the interested public who have expressed interest in this project has been undertaken and will continue.

Agency scoping was initiated during ETDM to provide an opportunity for input into the project's purpose and need and to identify significant project concerns. As part of the scoping process, a Purpose and Need Public Meeting is scheduled to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft purpose and need statement developed for the project. A subsequent Alternatives Public Meeting is anticipated for spring 2009 to provide the public an opportunity for input into the alternatives analysis and development.

PROJECT LOCATION MAP AND STUDY AREA





For additional information on this project or if you would like to schedule a meeting, please contact:

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