

Port Manatee Connector PD&E STUDY

from Port Manatee to I-75

Project Overview (December 2009)

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 a range of 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 U.S. 41 and connect to a new or modified interchange with I-75 within the study area. The study area generally extends from south of I-275 to south of State Road 674 (S.R. 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. The next stages of project development (including 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.

PROJECT NEED

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. As part of the scoping process, a Purpose and Need Public Meeting was held on September 30, 2008 to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the Draft Purpose and Need Statement developed for the project. A Corridor Public Workshop was held December 11, 2008 to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the potential corridors developed for the project.

Following the Corridor Public Workshop, the potential corridors were analyzed based on several factors including purpose and need, environmental involvement, and engineering considerations related to feasibility. Based on the corridor analysis and project consultation with FHWA, all five of the potential corridors warrant further analysis to provide a more detailed estimate of the potential range and significance of impacts for any potential improvements. Therefore, the study team is currently developing representative alignments within the project corridors and evaluating the impacts associated with each alignment. Upon completion of the alignment evaluation effort and in consultation with FHWA and resource agencies, the alignments that meet the Purpose and Need and which are reasonable will be identified. The reasonable alternatives, along with the No Build Alternative, will be carried forward for detailed analysis as part of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

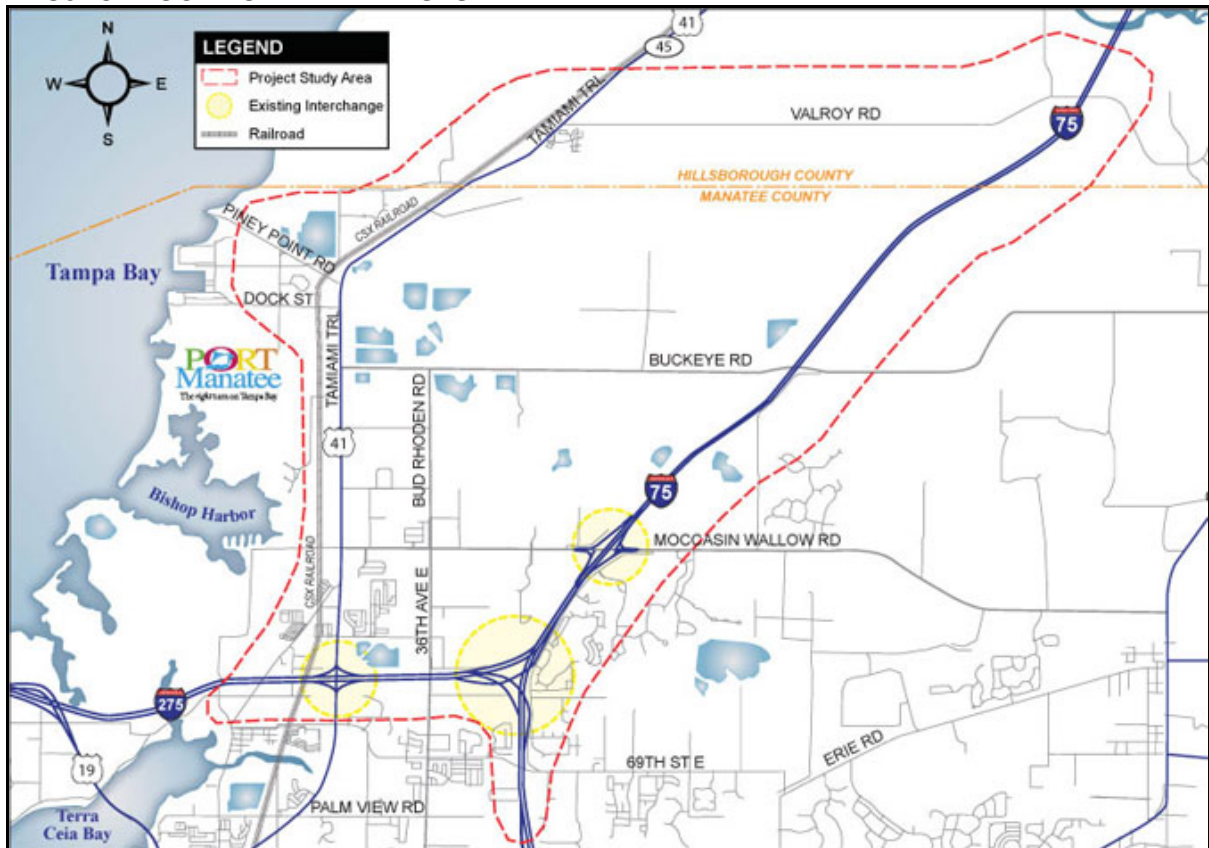
The next public meeting is anticipated for early 2010 to provide the public an opportunity for input into the development and analysis of the alignments. Notifications of public meetings will be posted to the Web site and mailed to property owners within the study area and individuals who have requested to be included on the project mailing list.

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 Web site. 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.



PROJECT LOCATION MAP AND STUDY AREA



CONTACT INFORMATION

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

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