

Public Involvement

A public hearing was held on February 25, 2020 and February 27, 2020. The hearing provided information about the Preferred Alternative and allowed for residents, business owners, tenants and those interested, to submit comments and express views concerning the location, conceptual design, and social, economic, and environmental effects of the proposed project. The hearing included an open house and formal presentation. The public was given the opportunity to provide comment by mail, in writing or verbally at a microphone during the formal presentation, or to a court reporter at the hearing.

One hundred and forty-three (143) members of the public signed in at the public hearing. Eleven (11) comments were collected at the meeting; 22 persons spoke during the formal session and 125 additional comments were received by mail, email, and through the website during the official comment period which ended March 12, 2020. A transcript of the public hearing is provided in the Comments and Coordination Report, available on the project website, www.tampainterstatestudy.com.

Preferred Alternative

The project's purpose is to upgrade the safety and efficiency of the existing I-275 and I-4 corridors, while maintaining access to the surrounding community. It is also to provide congestion relief and accessibility to improve mobility, travel times, system linkages and multimodal connections, while supporting regional economic development goals and enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors. The Preferred Alternative includes the full reconstruction of the Westshore Area Interchange (SR 60/ I-275) and will include general purpose lanes and tolled express lanes. Tolled express lanes will also be added along the I-275 corridor connecting the Howard Frankland Bridge and Westshore Area to Downtown Tampa. Operational improvements within the Downtown Tampa Interchange (I-275/I-4) will enhance safety and traffic operations. Improvements within the study corridor are divided into Segments as seen in Figure 1. Improvements are proposed in Segments 1A, 2A, 2B, and 3A. There are no improvements proposed in Segments 3B or 3C under the Preferred Alternative.

I-275 from the Howard Frankland Bridge to North of the Hillsborough River

The proposed improvements on I-275 from the Howard Frankland Bridge to Rome Avenue include the existing four general purpose lanes and two new express lanes in each direction, auxiliary lanes in between ramps, and full reconstruction of the Westshore Area Interchange (I-275/SR 60). The interchange will include new general purpose "flyover" ramps and the addition of tolled express lanes and ramps. The express lane improvements will provide direct connections from I-275 to/from the Veterans Expressway, Independence Parkway, Courtney Campbell Causeway, Tampa International Airport, and Himes Avenue. An express lane entrance ramp to southbound I-275 will be added at Reo Street. The median of I-275 will be preserved for future fixed-guideway transit.



Figure 2 – I-275/SR60 Interchange Proposed Improvements Conceptual Rendering

At a local level, the improvements will provide a benefit to the walk/bike network and traffic circulation in the Westshore Business District by reconnecting Reo Street, Occident Street, and Trask Street beneath the interstate. Reconnecting these streets will relieve traffic bottlenecks on West Shore Boulevard and improve access and connectivity. A shared use path will be constructed along the west side of Reo Street, providing connectivity from the shared use path across the Howard Frankland Bridge to Cypress Point Park. Lighting improvements and other minor enhancements will be added to existing underpasses.

From Rome Avenue to north of the Hillsborough River, improvements include the addition of express lanes along I-275 that will terminate into Downtown Tampa. As part of the new configuration, drivers accessing Downtown Tampa from the northbound I-275 general purpose lanes will exit exclusively to Tampa Street. Northbound express lane traffic will exit via a direct connect ramp to Ashley Drive. Southbound I-275 on-ramps for both general purpose and express lanes will remain at Tampa Street. Access to northbound

I-275 will remain at Ashley Street and the ramp bridge will be reconstructed to accommodate future demand. In Downtown Tampa, improvements will be made along Scott Street to provide enhanced access to northbound I-275 and I-4.

Operational Improvements within the Downtown Tampa Interchange (I-275/I-4)

The proposed operational improvements will address most of the existing bottlenecks and high crash rates drivers experience. Some of the existing bridges in the Downtown Tampa Interchange will be removed, replaced, or widened. Bridges that are widened will be brought up to current standards.

Southbound I-275 to Eastbound I-4

The improvements from southbound I-275 to eastbound I-4 consist of widening the existing flyover ramp to two lanes and extending the existing southbound auxiliary lane from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The existing southbound exit ramp to Floribraska Avenue will remain open. The improvements include relocating the exit ramp to Ybor City and East Tampa from the existing location at 21st/22nd Streets to 14th/15th Streets and widening East 13th Avenue to better facilitate access to 21st/22nd Streets.

Westbound I-4 to Northbound I-275

The improvements from westbound I-4 to northbound I-275 consist of widening the existing one lane exit ramp to northbound I-275 to two lanes. The additional lane will continue along northbound I-275 to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard exit ramp. The Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard exit ramp will be widened to two lanes.

Westbound I-4 to Southbound I-275

The improvements from westbound I-4 to southbound I-275 consist of widening the two-lane ramp to southbound I-275 to three lanes. The exit ramps to Downtown Tampa will be adjusted to improve spacing so drivers can more efficiently exit to downtown. Exits will provide the same access as today to Orange Avenue, Jefferson Street, Ashley Drive, and Doyle Carlton Drive. Along southbound I-275, full shoulder widths will be provided from Palm Avenue to Jefferson Street.

I-4 from West of the Selmon Expressway Connector to East of 50th Street

There are no improvements in this area as part of the TIS SEIS.

The table below outlines the timing and funding for the improvements associated with the Preferred Alternative

FDOT Adopted 5-Year Work Program Fiscal Year 2020/2021—Fiscal Year 2024/2025		
I-275 from Howard Frankland Bridge to North of Hillsborough River		
Design	ROW Acquisition	Construction
Included in Design Build Construction Funded (2023/2024)	Funded (2020/2021 – Ongoing)	Funded (2023/2024)
Downtown Tampa Interchange (I-275/I-4) Operational Improvements		
Design	ROW Acquisition	Construction
Not Currently Funded	Not Currently Funded	Not Currently Funded
I-4 from East of 22nd Street to East of 50th Street*		
Design	ROW Acquisition	Construction
No Further Improvements	N/A	N/A

*A portion of TIS Segment 3B overlaps with partially funded improvements of Tampa Bay Next Section 8, (Financial Project Identification Number 431746-3-52-01), including the beginning of the express lane system heading east on I-4.

FDOT has conducted extensive public engagement throughout this study and will continue to engage the public and coordinate with local agencies throughout future project phases.