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June 14, 1999

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IN APPLY REFER TO: HPO-FL

Mr. Kenneth A. Hartmann, District Secretary
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Tampa, Florida 33612-6456

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KAB
DS

Attention: Mr. Jeraldo Comellas

Dear Mr. Hartmann:

IMP

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Subject: - FAP No. IR-9999(43)
→ Record of Decision
FHWA-FL-EIS-95-03-F
Tampa Interstate Study (TIS)
Hillsborough County, Florida

This is a Record of Decision (ROD) for that portion of the Tampa Interstate Study (TIS) project identified in the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO's) 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan (2020 LRTP), as adopted.

Decision

The TIS project consists of approximately 24.1 km (15 miles) of multi-lane improvements to I-275 from the Howard Frankland Bridge/Kennedy Boulevard ramps and just north of Cypress Street on Memorial Highway (S.R.60) north to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard, and I-4 from I-275 (including the interchange) to east of 50th Street (U.S.41); a multi-lane controlled access facility (Crosstown Connector) on new alignment from I-4 south to the existing Tampa South Crosstown Expressway; and improvements to approximately 7.08 km (4.4 miles) of the Tampa South Crosstown Expressway from the Kennedy Boulevard overpass east to Maydell Drive, in Hillsborough County.

The TIS Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) area or footprint was originally established during the Master Plan phase (Phase I) of the study, conducted from 1987 to 1989. The TIS Master Plan Concept was approved by FHWA in November 1989,

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and adopted by the Hillsborough County MPO as part of their 2010 Long Range Transportation Plan (2010 LRTP). Following completion of the Master Plan phase, and based on the 2010 LRTP, additional detailed studies and analyses were conducted as part of the EIS phase (Phase II) of the project in order to refine alternatives, address agency and citizen concerns, and further reduce impacts. A preferred alternative was identified, the Draft EIS was published in December 1995, and a Public Hearing was held January 16, 1996. No particular areas of controversy were identified as a result of the Hearing.

Since the new 2020 LRTP has been adopted by the MPO, some portions of the TIS EIS project (specifically Design Segment 2A, stages of Design Segment 1A, and a portion of Design Segment 2B), have been omitted from the Plan because of competing transportation priorities and funding constraints.

According to the 1990 amendment to the Clean Air Act, if a proposed improvement is within a designated "non-attainment" or "maintenance" area, the project must be in conformance with the local Metropolitan Planning Organization's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Based on the recently adopted 2020 LRTP, there are only certain components of the TIS Long Term Preferred Alternative which may be advanced since approval of the first TIS FEIS ROD dated January 31, 1997. The design components (see attached Location Map) include the outside lanes of the four-roadway system in the Westshore area (Design Segment 1A); the outside lanes of the four-roadway system in the Ybor City area (Design Segments 3A and 3B); and the Crosstown Connector with auxiliary lanes on the Crosstown Expressway transitioning back to the existing alignment (Design Segment 3C). The safety and operational improvement project for the downtown I-275/I-4 interchange is not a component of the TIS Long Term Preferred Alternative but is part of the Selected Alternative identified in the FEIS and subsequent ROD. Design Segment 2A is the latest component of the Long Term Preferred Alternative to be included in the MPO's current approved conforming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

As part of advancing Design Segment 2A, on March 15, 1999, the MPO, FHWA and FTA have determined that the LRTP and TIP conform to the state's State Implementation Plan (SIP). This Design Segment project is in the conforming plan and TIP with the same design concept and scope as stated in this ROD.

This ROD identifies and establishes FHWA and FDOT decisions for advancing Design Segment 2A. It also addresses the impacts specific to this project which is now contained in the current LRTP. The intent of the FHWA and the FDOT is to ultimately construct the Long Term Preferred Alternative (the ultimate TIS footprint) as identified in the FEIS and subsequent RODs. However, this will be completed in stages, as the remaining components meet FHWA's logical termini criteria, as funding becomes

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available and as they are included in future updates of the MPO's LRTP.

This ROD discusses the alternatives considered for the entire TIS FEIS but only addresses the impacts of Design Segment 2A. It is anticipated that future RODs will cover the remaining portions of the TIS ultimate footprint, as described in the FEIS.

Alternatives Considered

A comparative analysis technique called "Tier Analysis" was used during Phase I to identify viable alternatives for the TIS. This screening process, or tiering, provided for a thorough evaluation and comparison of a large array of competing design components.

Tier 1 Analysis - The first tier examined two-, four-, and six-lane roadway system alternatives; double decking; high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) access and alignments; interchange types and locations; and multiple shifts in the roadway centerline. Impacts to land use, the environment, and the community as well as accessibility, permitability, constructability, and cost were all evaluated during Tier 1. Through the analysis process, the two-roadway system and double-decking were eliminated from future consideration because of anticipated traffic volumes, complications with interchange movements, and cost-effectiveness. In an effort to avoid or minimize Section 4(f) involvement at hundreds of historic properties and several public parks located in the vicinity of the existing interstate corridor, a number of alternatives and alignment shifts were developed and evaluated. Several concepts of the six-roadway and four-roadway systems, with HOV provisions in the median, were carried throughout for further analysis. In addition, several interchange and HOV alignment concepts were carried through for further evaluation.

Tier 2 Analysis - The second tier analysis continued to define the positive design components, collect public input throughout public meetings and speakers bureaus, and refine the design alternatives. In an effort to build consensus, particular attention was given to comments from the local community, City of Tampa, and interested agencies with respect to land use impacts, access, interchanges, ramps, and frontage roads. The Tier 2 alternative concepts were presented to the public for review and comment at the first Alternatives Public Meeting. The comments received as a result of that meeting are summarized in the Public Meeting No. 2 Comments Summary Working Paper (September 1988).

Tier 3 Analysis - After a review and evaluation of the comments received during the comment period, the remaining alternatives were refined using more stringent standards and detailed information. The Tier 3 alternatives were presented at the second Alternatives Public Workshop. The comments received as a result of that meeting are summarized in the Public Meeting No. 2 Comments Summary Working

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Paper (January 1989). Comments received as a result of the second public workshop were more specific about local and commercial access issues, the aesthetics of the roadway, and potential mitigation measures to reduce noise levels. In an effort to respond to the public's concerns about right-of-way acquisition and related issues, impacts to property adjacent to the proposed improvements were further evaluated. It was determined that right-of-way impacts could be further reduced by reducing both the number of roadway lanes proposed and the right-of-way required. Through this evaluation, alternatives were developed which would provide an acceptable level of service (LOS) commensurate with the associated social, economic, and environmental impacts. After review of these comments, the selected concepts were carried forward to the Draft Master Plan.

The TIS Draft Master Plan concept was presented to the public for review and comment at the third Alternatives Public Workshop. The TIS Master Plan Concept was approved by FHWA in November 1989 and adopted by the Hillsborough County MPO as part of the previous 2010 LRTP. The TIS Master Plan Report (August 1989) is published separately.

A no-action alternative was evaluated for the year 2010 to identify the traffic operations impact of not implementing the Long Term Preferred Alternative in the study area. It was determined that the no-action alternative does not provide an adequate transportation facility for future traffic demand. However, the no-action alternative was carried through the public hearing for this project.

Following completion of the Phase I Master Plan, additional detailed studies were conducted as part of the Phase II EIS to refine alternatives and further reduce impacts. The refinement and continuing development of alternatives through this systematic process assisted in providing the necessary documentation as to the logical process and selection of viable alternatives. This process also provided the necessary documentation for alternatives eliminated in the evaluation process, or modifications to form "new" alternatives. Finally, through an extensive public involvement program, this process enhanced the community's ability to better understand and follow a rather complex technical process in a step-by-step manner until the selection of a reasonable and viable alternative was reached.

Due to the TIS project being located in a highly urbanized area, impacts to the biological and physical environment would be minimal and consequently, they had a minor role in the development of the Selected Alternative which is the "Environmentally Preferred Alternative." However, potential impacts to the human environment were major factors in the alternatives development, evaluation and selection process. Additionally, the alignment and composition of the Long Term Preferred and Selected Alternatives were influenced by adjacent properties which are protected by Section 4(f)

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of the U.S. DOT Act of 1966. The proposed rights of way and alignment for the Long Term Preferred and Selected Alternatives were shifted to avoid or minimize encroachments into these adjacent properties.

Description of the Selected Alternative for Design Segment 2A

Design Segment 2A extends from the vicinity of the Himes Ave. half-interchange to the vicinity of the Hillsborough River. It involves constructing the outside lanes of the four-roadway system (see attached typical section). This is to be part of the Design Segment's stage construction of the Long Term Preferred Alternative as contained in the TIS FEIS.

Impacts associated with this Segment being advanced include potential impacts to the West Tampa National Register Historic District, one individually listed National Register Site, the Fernandez y Rey House, increased noise levels at approximately 461 noise sensitive sites, relocations of residences, businesses and community features.

West Tampa National Register Historic District - Construction of the Selected Alternative will impact 6 contributing structures in the District and one individually listed structure, the Fernandez y Rey House. There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the District. The Selected Alternative includes all possible planning to minimize harm resulting from such use. The proposed improvements minimize, to the greatest extent possible, the number of relocations and the number of historic structures within the proposed right-of-way while preserving important community features and their unique identity. The FHWA has determined that this use will not substantially impair the integrity or significance of the District. Elements of the TIS Urban Design Guidelines (under separate cover-December 1994) and the Memorandum of Agreement (TIS FEIS Appendix E) serve as mitigation for impacts to the West Tampa neighborhood.

The Selected Alternative addresses the urgent interchange and capacity needs within the limits of the Long-Term Preferred Alternative. Throughout its limits, the Selected Alternative will provide greatly improved ramp geometrics in the most critical areas, improve merge, diverge and weaving operations. The majority of these improvements will be constructed in their ultimate locations and are completely compatible with future plans of the Long-Term Preferred Alternative. The Selected Alternative will not incorporate HOV lanes or Park-n-Ride lots. Those design features have been planned as part of the TIS Long-Term Preferred Alternative.

The FEIS contains an adequate, detailed statement of the following: proposal description and purpose; probable impact of the proposal; alternatives; unavoidable adverse environmental effects; short-term impacts verses long-term benefits;

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irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources; and measures to minimize harm. The proposal is in conformance with the State Implementation Plan (SIP) and will not cause or exacerbate existing violations of any of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

The Section 4(f) Evaluation contained in the FEIS describes the project's involvement with historic properties and park land protected by 49 USC 303 as well as measures to minimize harm. The provisions of 36 CFR 800 have been fulfilled as applicable.

The Statement has been coordinated with and endorsed by appropriate local, state, and federal agencies, and also made available for public comment at a public hearing. The proposal is well accepted, without significant opposition and is, therefore, not considered controversial.

Measures to Minimize Harm

This project incorporates all practical measures to avoid or minimize environmental harm. Although some significant impacts will occur, every effort will be made to minimize impacts through the institution of feasible measures applicable to each situation. The relocation of individuals and families will be unavoidable. Relocation assistance and payments will be provided. Extensive public input and creative community suggestions regarding design and mitigation measures have led to the protection of, and in some instances the enhancement of, community cohesion. Historic resources currently exist within the areas of proposed right-of-way. Relocation of the structures at 1920 Laurel Street, 1924 Laurel Street, 1930 Laurel Street and 2324 Laurel Street (where feasible) will be pursued, in addition to the relocation assistance and payments to be provided to residents of such structures.

Construction activities in the vicinity of drainage structures will be in accordance with Best Management Practices for erosion control and water quality considerations. Preliminary evaluations have also indicated that retention and/or detention areas may be viable considerations in water management techniques relating to highway storm water runoff hydraulics, and mitigation for wetland impacts will be incorporated as applicable and feasible. These wetland sites will be affected primarily by filling activities necessary to widen the existing roadway and construct a new roadway.

The following mitigation measures are discussed and committed to in the FEIS:

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities - Pedestrian and bicycle travel along interstates and expressways is prohibited. However, the proposed interstate improvements include provisions for the future development of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations on cross streets beneath the interstate. The FDOT is committed to developing new

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interstate overpasses which ensure that all cross streets have sufficient room to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians during future local road improvement projects.

Construction - Construction activities will result in temporary air, noise, water quality, traffic flow, and visual impacts for those residents, businesses, and travelers within the immediate vicinity of the project. The impacts will be effectively controlled in accordance with FDOT's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction. In addition to the following accepted standards, the FDOT is committed to implementing the following specific construction impact mitigation measures where they are determined to be feasible and economically reasonable:

1. The Contractor may be required to use static rollers for compaction of embankments, subgrade, base, asphalt, etc. in specific construction areas.
2. If pile driving is necessary, this construction operation may be restricted to the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. to avoid interfering with any adjacent noise or vibration sensitive land uses.
3. Preformed pile holes may be required where they are in proximity to vibration sensitive land uses to minimize vibration transfer.
4. Back-up alarm noise from heavy equipment and trucks should be minimized, when feasible, by requiring the Contractor to operate in forward passes or a figure-eight pattern when dumping, spreading, or compacting materials.
5. Restriction of operating hours for lighting the construction areas will be determined and may be required of the Contractor prior to beginning construction activities requiring lighting.
6. Coordination with the local law enforcement agencies will be undertaken prior to commencing construction activities to ensure that construction-related impacts are minimized or adequately mitigated when work during non-daylight hours is required.

Noise Barriers - The TIS Master Plan Report (August 1989) first discussed the feasibility of noise abatement measures to mitigate noise impacts. Due to the high number of noise sensitive sites identified and evaluated and in response to public comments received throughout the study, the FDOT and FHWA are committed to providing noise barriers as part of the project. The FDOT is committed to providing noise barriers that meet both the acoustic and aesthetic goals of the project as identified in the TIS Master Plan Report, the Urban Design Guidelines, and the Noise Study Report. The economically reasonable noise barrier locations are identified in the

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FEIS on page 4-75 and on Exhibit 4.8. Specific noise abatement measures will be reevaluated during final design.

Historic Resource - A Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) has been prepared to address mitigation measures for direct and indirect impacts to historic resources. The TIS Effects Analysis Report (November 1995) evaluates the impacts to historic resources along the project corridor. The Effects Analysis Report addresses effects of the project on the West Tampa National Register Historic District, the Tampa Heights Multiple Property Listing (since approval of the TIS DEIS, this resource has been listed on the *National Register of Historic Places* as the Tampa Heights National Register Historic District), the Ybor City National Historic Landmark District, and individual properties either listed or eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*. The MOA includes FDOT commitments for the mitigation of impacts to historic structures within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) including the proposed moving and rehabilitation of certain historic structures, and numerous design amenities defined in the TIS Urban Design Guidelines.

Urban Design Guidelines - The TIS Urban Design Guidelines, approved by FHWA in December 1994, have been developed to minimize indirect adverse visual and auditory impacts to land uses adjacent to the system and to users of the freeway. The goal of the guidelines is to ensure a consistent, aesthetically pleasing design and to mitigate adverse effects of the project on the residents, neighborhoods, and businesses indirectly affected. The TIS Urban Design Guidelines will serve as guidelines and mitigation measures for the Section 106 process by providing design standards for unique areas within the corridor including West Tampa, Ybor City, Seminole Heights, Tampa Heights, downtown Tampa, and Westshore. In addition, the Urban Design Guidelines specify mitigation measures for indirect adverse effects to historic properties and communities in the vicinity of the project. The Urban Design Guidelines provide guidance on specific aesthetic design requirements for bridge structures, retaining walls and embankments, noise walls, lighting, fencing and sign supports, stormwater and surface water management areas, landscaping, public art, utilities, mounds and grading, and recreation facilities.

Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) Northern Transit Terminal - Based on the anticipated involvement with HART's existing Northern Transit Terminal, the FDOT is committed to not adversely affecting service operations during implementation of the Selected Alternative. In coordination with HART, the FDOT will implement the best option available to ensure fulfillment of this commitment. Separate Mobility MIS, High Speed Rail and Electric Street Car studies are being conducted by other agencies. The FDOT will work with the agencies to ensure that the Northern Transit Terminal's involvement with the studies and the TIS project is adequately coordinated. The status of this commitment will be addressed in future reevaluations of the FEIS.

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In addition, closure of the existing I-4/40th Street interchange will result in more circuitous travel for buses accessing the HART Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility on 21st Street. The FDOT will continue the ongoing coordination with HART to explore options which reduce the excess travel distance.

Monitoring or Enforcement Program

Personnel of the FDOT have developed extensive operating procedures to ensure compliance with the various environmental commitments. The FDOT's Environmental Commitment Compliance Program is outlined in a January 15, 1982-memorandum from Mr. Paul N. Pappas, former Secretary of the FDOT. In addition, appropriate personnel from the FHWA Division Office participate in the development of individual projects to ensure that environmental commitments are incorporated into the project design and construction plans. FHWA Transportation and Supervisory Transportation Engineers also review the plans, specifications, and estimates (PS&E) for all interstate Federal-Aid highway projects to ensure that all environmental commitments have been implemented.

Comments on Final EIS

As of January 21, 1997 (the FEIS comments due date), the FHWA and the FDOT had received one comment. The U.S. E.P.A. recommended that the affected noise sensitive areas be involved in the design and placement of noise barriers to the maximum extent feasible. The FHWA and the FDOT have been coordinating barrier design and locations with the affected noise sensitive areas as part of the TIS project to date and will continue to do so as the various components of the project are implemented in the future.

A Legal Sufficiency review has been obtained from the FHWA's Legal Counsel for this Amended ROD. Prior concurrence of the Washington Office is not required for this project.

Sincerely yours,



For: James E. St. John
Division Administrator