

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Interstate 275 (I-275) is a major interstate highway that connects Pinellas and Hillsborough counties. It runs north-south from I-75 in Manatee County to SR 687 (4th Street North) in Pinellas County, and east-west from SR 687 (4th Street North) to Downtown Tampa. The alignment shifts to a north-south direction from Downtown Tampa to I-75 in Hillsborough County. I-275 is part of the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) providing connections to two major interstate highways I-75 and I-4, that are also part of the SIS.

The subject I-275 IOAR study explored interim operational improvements to improve the significant recurring congestion during both peak periods by providing three continuous lanes in the eastbound and westbound directions between Howard Frankland Bridge and Memorial Highway (SR 60). Interim operational improvement includes an additional eastbound lane along I-275 from west of Memorial Highway (SR 60) to Dale Mabry Highway (SR 600) to improve AM and PM peak period congestion near the I-275 and SR 60 interchange. In addition to the I-275 eastbound improvements, an additional lane along the westbound I-275 is added to the west of Memorial Highway (SR 60) off-ramp. These interim improvements are expected to improve operational performance along I-275 in the short-term (5-10 years). FDOT is evaluating long-term mobility alternatives, through the ongoing SEIS as part of Tampa Bay Next (TBNNext) Program, to accommodate future travel demand and improve operations along I-275. Design and Right-of-Way Phases for Section 4/5, which include the I-275 IOAR study area are funded for the SEIS.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED

The main purpose of this project is to improve an eastbound I-275 bottleneck near the I-275 and SR 60 interchange. With the proposed interim operational improvements, it is anticipated that improvements would enhance mobility and safety within the study area. These improvements are needed to provide commuters from Pinellas County enhanced mobility to Westshore and Downtown Tampa.

The main objective of the I-275 IOAR is to provide a comparison and documentation of analysis results for no-build and build conditions. The following sections provide the overview of the existing conditions of the study area, and impact of proposed operational improvements on operations along I-275 and a comparison of build and no-build alternatives for the Opening Year (2020), Interim Year (2025), and Design Year (2030).