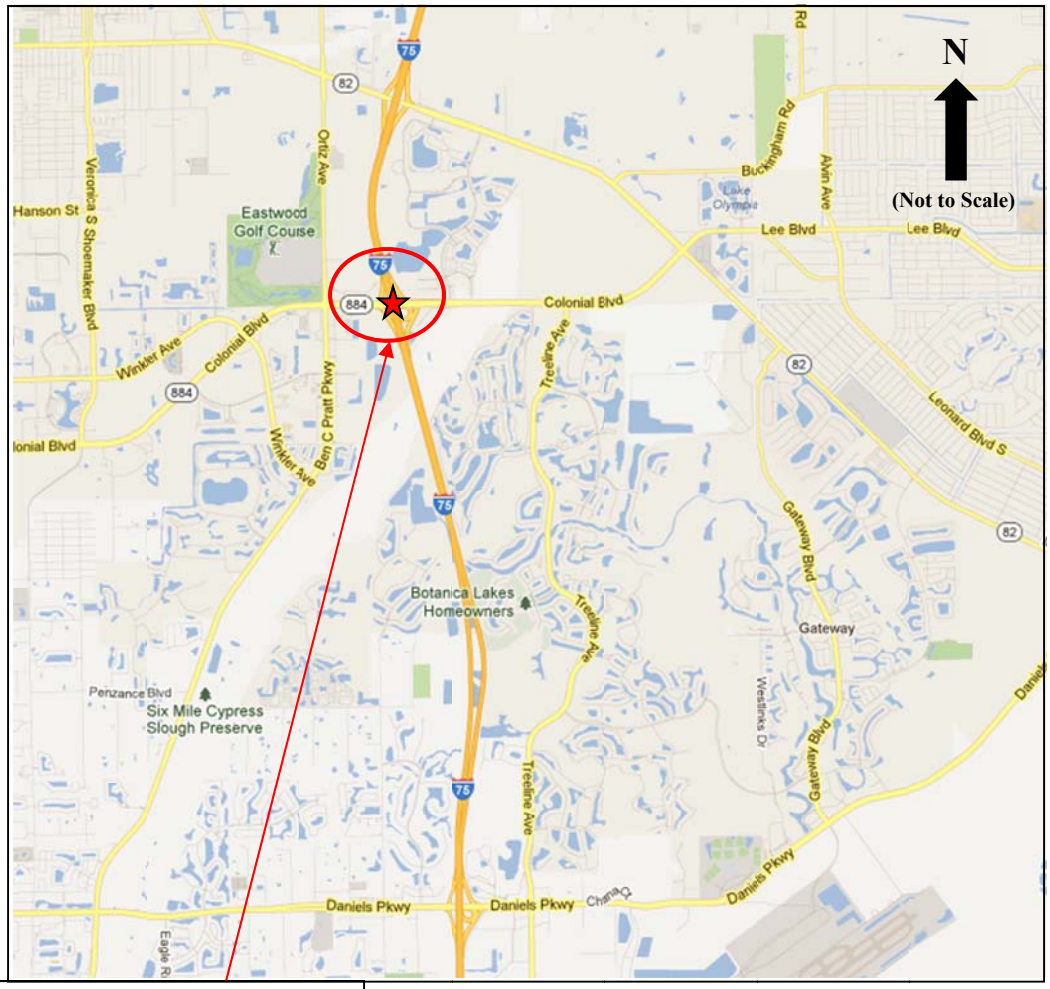
Construction funding for the DDI with a Continuous Flow Intersection (CFI) to the west of the interchange and a Superstreet (SS) to the east as the current preferred alternative is programmed in 2019.

PURPOSE AND NEED

An Interchange Modification Report (IMR) for the interchange of I-75 and SR 884 (Colonial Boulevard) was prepared per request from FDOT District 1. The project limits for the study along Colonial Boulevard extend from approximately ¼ mile west of Ortiz Avenue to approximately ¼ mile east of Dynasty Drive. The subject interchange is located in the City of Fort Myers. Colonial Boulevard, within the project limits, is located in Lee County, Florida. The location of the interchange is depicted in **Figure 2-1**.

Figure 2-1 Interchange Project Location Map



INTERCHANGE LOCATION

The purpose of this project is to re-evaluate the preferred alternative at the study interchange for improved operations to meet future traffic needs. Prior actions at this location include a Type 2 Categorical Exclusion approved by FHWA on 12/30/2002 and a System Interchange Modification Report (SIMR) approved on 8/8/2008 that recommended reconfiguring the interchange to a Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) as the preferred alternative. Implementing the SIMR preferred alternative would require replacement of the recently reconstructed I-75 bridges over Colonial Boulevard. An Interchange Operational Analysis Report (IOAR) was prepared by Lee County and approved by FHWA on 7/20/2009. Recently in 2011, FDOT widened I-75 to six lanes and widened the existing bridges over Colonial Boulevard. Also, Lee County widened Colonial Boulevard to six lanes in 2012. In order to salvage the newly widened bridges, FHWA suggested to FDOT a reassessment of the study interchange may be appropriate. This analysis was performed in accordance with the approved Methodology Letter of Understanding (MLOU), the guidelines and methodologies consistent with FHWA, FDOT and Lee County.

According to the 2035 Collier and Lee Counties Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the study section of Colonial Boulevard will be a deficient corridor. Under the existing condition as of year 2009, the level of service (LOS) for the section of Colonial Boulevard from Ortiz Avenue to I-75 is LOS F. According to the Collier and Lee Counties 2035 LRTP, the population of Lee County is expected to increase from 593,136 in 2007 to 1,034,400 in 2035 (increase = 74%) and the employment from 278,203 to 440,334 (increase = 58%).

The proposed interchange improvement at I-75 and Colonial Boulevard and the widening of Colonial Boulevard is needed to help serve travel demands created by anticipated countywide population and employment growth and is anticipated to contribute to better traffic operation. The project is anticipated to enhance overall safety, capacity, and mobility within Lee County, since Colonial Boulevard is a major principal arterial and the future land use designation along this corridor is intensive commercial. In addition, the planned improvements will enhance access to I-75. Colonial Boulevard, a regional facility, is part of the evacuation route network established by the Florida Division of Emergency Management. The improvements to interchange of I-75 and Colonial Boulevard are anticipated to enhance evacuation capacity

and traffic circulation, which will improve evacuation and response times. As a result, the safety of Lee County residents will be enhanced.

The need for this interchange improvement at I-75 and Colonial Boulevard is identified in the 2035 Highway Needs Plan and also identified on the Lee County Highway Cost Feasible Plan included in Collier and Lee Counties 2035 Regional LRTP. This has been included in **Appendix A**. The project's identified objectives meet the provisions of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) Act. Recently in 2011, FDOT widened I-75 to six lanes and widened the existing bridges over Colonial Boulevard. Also, Lee County widened Colonial Boulevard to six lanes in 2012. A number of proposed alternatives that can salvage the newly widened bridges will be considered and analyzed to address these needs.