

and FDOT Systems Planning Office (SPO) in January/February 2017. A copy of the signed MLOU is provided in **Appendix A**. Per the MLOU, the analysis years for the IMR are: existing (2016), opening (2020), and design (2040).

1.2 PROJECT PURPOSE AND NEED

Urban growth in Central Florida has had a significant impact on Florida's Turnpike traffic. Travel demand on the Turnpike through much of Orange and Osceola Counties has increased significantly. The Turnpike system has continued to grow as a "commuter" facility serving trips between urban centers it passes through. The Turnpike has become an important component of local transportation systems. As demand for local access grows, continued increase in traffic volumes at existing interchanges will result in future congestion. If the Turnpike is to efficiently fulfill this evolving role in the urban transportation system, it will require new or modified access points with major crossing roads and streets. It is within this context that a modification is being proposed to the existing interchange at Kissimmee-St. Cloud South (MP 242). The proposed modification would retain the existing northbound off-ramp, while adding new access ramps to and from the north.

The need to modify the Kissimmee-St. Cloud South interchange (or the benefit it will provide) is two-fold. First, it will provide a more efficient new access point to better serve trips originating or ending in St. Cloud, east of the Turnpike. Currently, these trips have to travel along U.S. 192 to access the Turnpike at the Kissimmee-St. Cloud North interchange (MP 244). Second, it will relieve traffic congestion at the Kissimmee-St. Cloud North interchange. Traffic at the intersection of U.S. 192 and Turnpike ramps/Shady Lane experiences long delays and queues under existing conditions. This is mainly due to the heavy off-ramp left-turn and U.S. 192 westbound right-turn movements to and from St. Cloud. As traffic demand continues to increase, traffic operations at this intersection are expected to deteriorate.

1.3 PROJECT LOCATION AND AREA OF INFLUENCE

The Turnpike intersects with U.S. 192/Kissimmee-St. Cloud South at MP 242 in Osceola County, Florida. The interchange provides a northbound off-ramp exit only to U.S. 192. **Figure 1.1** shows the project location. Within the vicinity of the interchange, the Turnpike has two 12-foot lanes in each direction, with 8-foot inside and 10-foot outside paved shoulders. The posted speed is 70 mph. U.S. 192 is a four-lane divided east-west arterial with a posted speed of 45 mph within the interchange study area.

The proposed modification is anticipated to impact traffic demand at the adjacent Kissimmee-St. Cloud North interchange located at MP 244. Therefore, the Area of Influence (AOI) along the Turnpike mainline extends from MP 242 to MP 244 and includes the following interchanges and intersections: