

INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the City of St. Petersburg (City) worked together to evaluate the operational issues at Interstate 275 (I-275) at 31st Street South interchange. **Figure 1-1** shows the study area.

I-275 is designated a SIS highway corridor as part of Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). The "SIS is a statewide network of high-priority transportation facilities, including the state's largest and most significant airports, spaceports, deep-water seaports, freight rail terminals, passenger rail and intercity bus terminals, rail corridors, waterways, and highways. These facilities represent the state's primary means for moving people and freight between Florida's diverse regions, as well as between Florida and other states and nations".¹

The I-275 at 31st Street South interchange is a partial interchange providing a southbound entrance and a northbound exit to/from I-275. The interchange provides access to Gibbs High School. The ramp terminus operates under Two Way Stop Control (TWSC).

1.1 Purpose and Need

Pedestrians and bicyclists cross the west leg of this intersection to access Gibbs High School or the Pinellas Trail that is located approximately 800 feet north of the intersection. A field review was conducted on Wednesday, February 6, 2019 that identified several conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians/bicyclists at this intersection. Also, long vehicle queues were observed for the left turn movement at the I-275 off-ramp to 31st Street South, especially during the morning peak hour. Because of the long vehicle queues at the ramp terminus, some drivers make a right turn and proceed to make a U-turn at the intersection creating unsafe situations for pedestrians, bicyclists and other drivers. Pedestrians had the most conflicts with the eastbound left-turn vehicles because of their aggressive behavior. Also, the current intersection configuration of the I-275 off-ramp to 31st Street South requires a pedestrian to cross a distance of 185 feet with no refuge. As a result, the pedestrians and bicyclists struggle crossing with vehicles turning left from the northbound approach and vehicles making the southbound right turn movement towards the I-275 southbound on-ramp. Based on this information, there is a need to make the intersection safer for all users.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate current traffic operations, identify operational deficiencies, and recommend operational improvements for the I-275 at 31st Street South interchange.

¹ *Strategic Intermodal System Handbook, Section 1: Strategic System Background, 2013*