PROJECT SUMMARY

TAMPA HILLSBOROUGH EXPRESSWAY AUTHORITY

US 301 Study

301 PLANNING STUDY

Hillsborough County continues to grow, with many new residents moving to the eastern and southern portions of the county. This substantial growth is putting a burden on the roads in the area. In response, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners and the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) Board of Directors voted unanimously in June 2023 for THEA to conduct a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study for US 301 from the Selmon Expressway to Big Bend Road. This comprehensive study planning process identifies needs, evaluates alternatives including the no build option, calculates preliminary costs, and identifies any potential impacts of adding capacity on US 301 to alleviate congestion on US 301, I-75, and surrounding local roads.

PURPOSE AND NEED OF THE PROJECT

Purpose: Reduce congestion and improve mobility on US 301 as well as US 41, I-75, and local adjacent roads, and to improve safety for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists along US 301.

Need: Significant growth in southeast Hillsborough County is putting considerable strain on the existing transportation infrastructure. The need for this project is based on capacity and safety.

ABOUT THE CORRIDOR

The portion of US 301 as part of this project is six lanes, three in each direction. It serves as a major north/south road with a functional classification of "Urban Principal Arterial-Other." Most of US 301 is classified as a 'Suburban Commercial' corridor with a small section classified as 'Suburban Residential.'

WHAT IS A PLANNING STUDY?

The planning process begins early with data collection, analysis, and community engagement to identify potential issues and opportunities. This early start helps to shape efficient transportation decision-making that balances mobility, environment and community needs, laying the foundation for the PD&E Study. Planning is conducted transparently to ensure equitable outcomes and avoid disproportionate impacts to the community.

The PD&E Study will follow the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) environmental and engineering process to evaluate social, economic, natural, and physical impacts of various alternatives addressing the transportation need. The PD&E phase is expected to begin early 2026, with ongoing technical analysis and public engagement. Once underway, the public will have additional opportunities to participate and provide feedback. The PD&E Study process includes four steps.

Develop Alternatives → Evaluate Alternatives → Gather Public Comments → Select Preferred Alternative

EARLY DATA COLLECTION AND TRAFFIC ANALYSIS

THEA initiated early data collection and a traffic analysis to better understand the corridor characteristics and needs. The number of vehicles traveling through each intersection was gathered and combined with RITIS and Replica data. The information was used to assess various characteristics of the US 301 corridor such as traffic and congestion, travel times, speed, and information about travelers' origins and destinations. Following this initial data collection, a traffic analysis using Synchro was performed on existing (2023) traffic and future (2045) traffic forecasts from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Model (TBRPM).

Existing and Future Traffic

In total, 23 signalized intersections were analyzed between the Selmon Expressway and just south of Big Bend Road during the morning peak hour from 7:15 to 8:15am and afternoon peak hour from 4:45 to 5:45pm. Currently, the existing traffic (Annual Average Daily Traffic or AADT) averages more than 54,000 vehicles throughout the corridor. In 2045, that is expected to grow to over 71,000 without express lanes. The heaviest traffic flow is and will continue to be northbound in the morning and southbound in the afternoon.

Early Analysis

Synchro was used to analyze how an elevated toll road in the median of US 301 (with two lanes in each direction) could impact future (2045) traffic conditions. This analysis showed significant traffic demand in South County contributing to delays, with or without express lanes. However, a toll road can provide greater capacity to support almost 30% more trips through the corridor (90,000 AADT) while reducing delays by 46% during the peak hours at all intersections along US 301 when compared to No-Build.

46% of all intersections would have reduced peak hour delays with express lanes (when compared to the No-Build)

Source: Synchro analysis

Providing additional capacity to US 301 with elevated toll roads could reduce delay of 33-35% to the at-grade (not elevated) portion of US 301. Express lane drivers could have reduced delays in both peak and off-peak directions. Additional capacity along US 301 could also relieve other major parallel facilities, like I-75 and US 41.

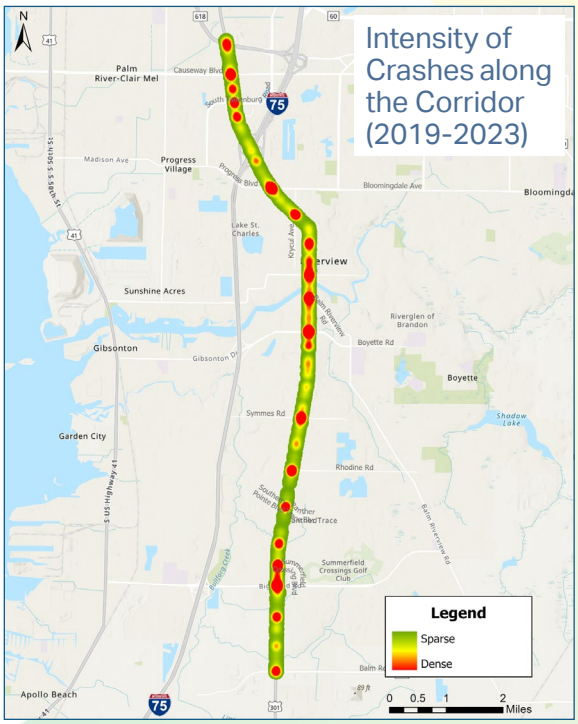
Express lanes could save up to 81% of travel time during peak periods*

- From Big Bend to Selmon Expressway: save **62 minutes**
- From Gibsonton to Selmon Expressway: save **36 minutes**
- From Bloomingdale to Selmon Expressway: save **12 minutes**

*Time savings based on Northbound AM Peak from Big Bend Road to Selmon Expressway

Safety

A safety analysis was conducted to understand the historical crash trends and level of stress along the corridor for vulnerable users like pedestrians and bicyclists. From 2019 to 2023, there were 2,936 crashes recorded along US 301 through the study area, with vulnerable users experiencing a high level of stress throughout a majority of the corridor. Crashes are only expected to increase slightly (+0.5%) despite the higher volumes of trips expected with express lanes.



ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

Partner Agencies

Collaborating with our partners Hillsborough County and FDOT was an important part of the initial planning process. The project team partnered on public outreach with Plan Hillsborough's Community Plan workshops in Valrico (September 2024) and Riverview (March 2025).

The project team also initiated FDOT's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) review, Florida's process to review potential environmental effects. ETDM will continue into the PD&E phase.

Community Stakeholders

Understanding community priorities and providing a means for residents and businesses to be involved is a top priority. This early-stage engagement provided the opportunity to understand potential issues prior to the PD&E and keep those interested in the project informed.

Outreach Materials and Activities

Outreach materials and activities included:

- Unified Project Branding
- Fact Sheet *(English and Spanish)*
- Public Preference Survey
- Video Presentation *(English and Spanish)*
- Website *(selmonstudies.com/us-301-study/)*
- Social Media Communication
- Speakers Bureau Presentations
- Community Meetings

Speaker's Bureau

In fall 2024, a Speaker's Bureau program was initiated to provide public engagement opportunities for residents and business along the US 301 Study corridor. The project team contacted and offered presentations to 65 organizations within 1/4 mile of the project corridor, including homeowners associations, civic groups, and chambers of commerce.

The presentation included details on the study's purpose and need, corridor safety and traffic analysis, the PD&E process, and THEA's organizational history. Attendees could provide comments and ask questions.

Video recordings of the Speaker's Bureau presentation in both English and Spanish narration were posted on the project website, for those who did not have the opportunity to attend a meeting.

Community Meetings

In December 2024, three community meetings were held at locations (north, central and south) along the corridor. The workshops provided an additional opportunity to gather feedback, comments, and opinions. The meeting included a video presentation detailing the project, informational boards, and interaction with project representatives. A total of 76 people attended the workshops. Attendees were encouraged to fill out a comment card either in-person or online.

Public Preference Survey

To gauge community opinion, an online survey was launched on July 30, 2024, and promoted through THEA's mailing lists, social media channels, and at outreach events. The survey contained 10 questions, requesting information about experiences on US 301 and gauging support for THEA to explore alternatives to ease traffic congestion. A total of 7,242 responses were received through December 31, 2024.

How has traffic congestion on US 301 impacted your daily life?	
Traffic congestion often frustrates me	64%
I am less likely to shop or go to a business	55%
I plan my travel to avoid US 301	33%
Travel on US 301 makes it difficult for me to get to work	25%
It makes little difference	12%

Are you supportive of THEA exploring alternatives to ease congestion on US 301?	
Yes	95%
No	5%

Meeting summaries and survey results are available in the US 301 Study Comments and Coordination Report.

STUDY SCHEDULE