

January 25, 2019

Secretary David Gwynn  
Florida Department of Transportation, District Seven  
11201 N Malcom McKinley Drive  
Tampa, Florida 33612-6403

RE: Reconstruction of Westshore Area (SR 60/I-275) Interchange

As Mayor and on behalf of the City of Clearwater, I respectfully submit this letter in support of an advancing the prioritization of the Westshore Interchange (I-275/SR60) Reconstruction project to an earlier implementation schedule. FDOT District Seven progress on planning and implementing road improvements throughout the Tampa Bay region is commendable. The construction of the Courtney Campbell multiuse trail, the reconstruction of the Howard Frankland Bridge, the proposed Westshore Intermodal Center, and the State Road 60 Multimodal study will bring major improvements to transportation congestion and access for city residents, visitors, and businesses. The city is actively exploring various transportation options for all modes to improve access from Tampa International Airport to our businesses and beaches.

Addressing the bottleneck at the Westshore Interchange is a fundamental component of these projects' goals. The Westshore District on the east side of the bridge combined with the Pinellas County Gateway on the west end form one of the largest employment areas in the Southeast and serve a rapidly growing regional population. The city does not believe that delaying construction funding for ten years is wise and in the best interest of the City of Clearwater and the Tampa Bay region. In that timeframe, traffic volumes will increase significantly and the full utilization of other improvements may be hampered.

Until resolved, the interchange will continue to be a bottleneck in Florida's Strategic Intermodal System within Tampa Bay and diminish the effectiveness of other major infrastructure investments such as the Howard Frankland Bridge. In addition to relieving pressure on the regional roadway network, reconstructing the interchange will also enable local street connectivity in the Westshore District to strengthen local access and reduce congestion on SR 60 and I-275 and enable regional transit connectivity. It is imperative this project be a top transportation project priority to improve the travel time reliability, safety and personal mobility in the Tampa Bay Region.

The City of Clearwater strongly supports regional transportation connectivity and mobility as critical to its preeminent position as an international tourist destination and fundamental to the success of our economic and livability goals. This critical link in our regional system should not undermine all the other valuable work being done. Therefore, the City of Clearwater supports the advancement of this project timeframe and looks forward to continued collaboration with FDOT on this priority project as well as other projects within District Seven.

Sincerely,

George N. Cretekos  
Mayor  
City of Clearwater