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PUBLIC HEARING  
GANDY BOULEVARD  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT STUDY

DATE: Tuesday, August 25, 2009  
TIME: 5:00 p.m. - 7:50 p.m.  
PLACE: New Beginnings Christian Church  
4100 South Manhattan Avenue  
Tampa, Florida 33611  
REPORTED BY: SHARON K. RUBY  
Florida Professional Reporter  
Notary Public, State of Florida

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Computer-Aided Transcription



1 listed next to the board by the sign-in table as you came in  
2 the door.

3 Now to run our meeting and moderate the public  
4 testimony I'd like to introduce Mr. Whit Blanton who is with  
5 Renaissance Planning Group. Thank you. Thank you for  
6 coming this evening.

7 MR. BLANTON: Good evening everybody. My role in  
8 this project has been to serve as an independent facilitator  
9 to make sure that the project is structured so that we get a  
10 lot of good public participation, a lot of good direction on  
11 how this project proceeds, and over the last year we've held  
12 several workshops where that opportunity has been presented.

13 Tonight we're presenting to you a preferred  
14 concept, a preferred recommended alternative, and it's  
15 another opportunity for you to offer your public comment.  
16 As we get into this we'd like to present an overview of the  
17 recommended plan, and then following that presentation we'll  
18 have another presentation about some of the economic impacts  
19 of the recommended plan. And then we'll take your public  
20 comment, and we'll have an opportunity for you to offer your  
21 input on anything that you've seen on display or anything  
22 you've heard in the presentation this evening.

23 I do want to remind you that if you can please  
24 take time to fill out a speakers card. We'll need a  
25 speakers card from everybody who would like to speak. And

1 there are several people from the Expressway Authority who  
2 can take those cards, and then I'll call you up in the order  
3 that we receive the cards. In the interest of time, we'll  
4 give you about three minutes or so to comment and then we'll  
5 respond at that point.

6 So with that, what I would like to do is turn it  
7 over to Jeff Novotney with American Consulting Engineers.  
8 Jeff is the project engineer responsible for the study, and  
9 he will be walking you through the analysis and  
10 recommendations.

11 MR. NOVOTNEY: The Project Development and  
12 Environment study process includes a comprehensive  
13 evaluation of the effects of transportation projects. The  
14 engineering analysis involves developing concepts and  
15 analyzing the traffic effects. The environmental effects of  
16 the alternatives are evaluated, including impacts to the  
17 natural environments, such as wetlands and species, the  
18 physical environment such as noise and air, social-cultural  
19 impacts such as relocations and historic properties. Costs  
20 are developed and all of the above factors are compared and  
21 provided to the public for input.

22 This PD&E study began in August of 2008. The  
23 project team used information from prior studies by the FDOT  
24 and the City of Tampa as a base. On September 30, 2009 the  
25 first in the series of Project Advisory Groups or PAG

1 workshops was held with invited representatives from  
2 numerous local groups. The general public was welcome to  
3 observe and provide comments. In that workshop participants  
4 helped define and prioritize key issues within the corridor.

5           The project team summarized that information and  
6 developed a listing of possible solutions which were  
7 presented to the PAG in a second meeting on January 20, 2009  
8 again for reviewing input. After this meeting the team  
9 developed alternatives and options along the corridor which  
10 were presented to a third PAG meeting held on April 14,  
11 2009. Later that night the general public was invited to  
12 review the alternatives and provide comments as well. The  
13 project team evaluated these in more detail, dropped some  
14 options and defined a preferred alternative which is  
15 presented tonight at this public hearing.

16           Draft study documents have been prepared according  
17 to engineering and environmental evaluation. These  
18 documents include the design traffic technical report as  
19 well as the comprehensive State Environmental Impact Report.  
20 This includes not only a summary of all environmental  
21 impacts but also the preliminary engineering analysis and a  
22 collection of detailed environment documents. This  
23 collection includes documentation on wetlands, species  
24 impacts, a detailed noise study, a contamination screening  
25 evaluation and a separate historic resource assessment. All

1 documents are available for review at tonight's hearing and  
2 will continue to be available for review at the Expressway  
3 Authority's offices and the Jan Platt Library until  
4 September 8, 2009.

5 This project has been entered into the Florida  
6 Department of Transportation's Efficient Transportation  
7 Decision Making Process Screening Tool. Dozens of federal  
8 and state agencies are providing input of the possible  
9 effects on resources, such as archeological wetlands, flood  
10 plans, threatened and endangered species and mobility. This  
11 process is defined at the FDOT's ETDM website at  
12 [etdmpub.flora-etat.org](http://etdmpub.flora-etat.org) and is Project No. 12216.

13 Next we have about a ten minute long video which  
14 will show and describe the details of this project and the  
15 preferred alternative.

16 POWER\_POINT\_PRESENTATION

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17 The Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority is  
18 conducting a project development and environment or PD&E  
19 Study for the Gandy Connector in Hillsborough County.

20 Located in the South Tampa area of the City of  
21 Tampa, the limits of the project extend along US 92, Gandy  
22 Boulevard from east of the Gandy Bridge over Tampa Bay to  
23 the western termini of the Selmon Expressway near Dale  
24 Mabry, for a total length of approximately two miles.

25 Recent City of Tampa and Florida Department of

1 Transportation Studies have indicated that a need exists for  
2 a solution to address regional traffic on Gandy Boulevard.

3           There are three bay crossings that connect  
4 Pinellas to Hillsborough County, including State Road 60,  
5 Courtney Campbell Bridge, I-275, Howard Frankland Bridge,  
6 and the Gandy Bridge, which is the oldest. Gandy is the  
7 only bridge that also serves as a local arterial with direct  
8 access to businesses and communities. Because Gandy  
9 Boulevard is a key link in the regional transportation  
10 network, the mix of regional and local traffic creates  
11 congestion and conflict along the corridor. This study is  
12 designed to investigate a new toll-based solution to better  
13 accommodate regional traffic between the Gandy Bridge and  
14 the Selmon Expressway.

15           Gandy Boulevard is a four-lane divided rural road  
16 west of Bridge Street and a four-lane divided urban road  
17 with a 30 foot raised median east of Bridge Street. The  
18 minimum right-of-way for this segment of Gandy is 100 feet.  
19 It is part of the Florida Intrastate Highway System and the  
20 Strategic Intermodal System, which is a statewide network of  
21 highways, railways, waterways and transportation hubs that  
22 carry the bulk of Florida's passenger and freight traffic.  
23 Gandy Boulevard also serves as a designated evacuation  
24 route. Signalized intersections operate at Westshort  
25 Boulevard, Manhattan Avenue and Lois Avenue.

1           The purpose and need for this proposed project  
2 includes the following items: Provide additional capacity  
3 to meet future traffic demands while separating regional and  
4 local traffic. Improve local traffic operations on Gandy  
5 Boulevard. Safely accommodate non-motorized users and  
6 transit. Provide improved emergency evacuation. Provide  
7 improvements consistent with local transportation plans  
8 while minimizing community impact; and develop a  
9 transportation solution that is financially feasible to  
10 build, operate and maintain.

11           The annual average daily traffic is the average  
12 amount of traffic that crosses a given point in a 24 hour  
13 period. In 2005 the annual average daily traffic along this  
14 portion of Gandy Boulevard ranged from 33 to 45,000 vehicles  
15 per day.

16           We have determined that traffic will continue to  
17 increase. By year 2035 the traffic along this portion of  
18 Gandy Boulevard is projected to grow to about 55 to 70,000  
19 vehicles per day. Without this proposed project, the  
20 traffic congestion will become more severe and could hinder  
21 economic growth in the area served by this corridor. The  
22 Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority formulated solutions  
23 to meet future transportation needs. A separate regional  
24 facility is suggested. This regional facility involves  
25 constructing a two-way, two-lane Elevated Express Lane

1 bridge from west of Bridge Street to the western terminus of  
2 the Selmon Expressway near Dale Mabry Highway. Additional  
3 proposed improvements include ramp connection at the west  
4 end of the Elevated Express Lanes as they depart and merge  
5 to Gandy Boulevard west of Bridge Street.

6 Five different alternatives were considered for  
7 the at-grade connection on the west end of the Elevated  
8 Express Lanes. The preferred alternative relocates the  
9 existing access road to the west for the connection  
10 properties on the north and south side of Gandy Boulevard  
11 Causeway. The existing access points would become right-in  
12 and right-out to access Gandy Boulevard. The bridge piers  
13 would be located within the median of existing Gandy  
14 Boulevard.

15 To make this project financially feasible for the  
16 Expressway Authority, tolls would be collected for users of  
17 the Elevated Express Lanes. With All Electronic Tolling,  
18 tolls are collected electronically at highway speeds solely  
19 by special equipment located on overhead gantries using  
20 SunPass and Video Tolling technology. This technology  
21 enables customers to establish cash or credit card accounts  
22 to pay tolls.

23 By providing faster regional trip time on a safe,  
24 well-maintained highway, more customers would be encouraged  
25 to use the Expressway for their commute which also means

1 better operations on the existing Gandy Boulevard.

2           The new elevated structure will serve an important  
3 role during emergency evacuations. This new structure  
4 allows for both lanes to be turned in a single direction  
5 heading eastbound in a state of emergency. The westbound  
6 lanes of the Gandy Bridge would be closed to public traffic  
7 to prevent motorists from crossing into Pinellas County.  
8 The Elevated Express Lanes would provide two continuous  
9 eastbound lanes from Pinellas County and reserving Gandy  
10 Boulevard for South Tampa residents.

11           A number of options were evaluated for the Bridge  
12 Street area. The preferred alternative for this section of  
13 Gandy Boulevard would combine the entrances for Culbreath  
14 Key and Regency Cove to connect with Bridge Street to create  
15 a four-leg signalized intersection. This concept creates a  
16 centralized connection to Bridge Street addressing an early  
17 public concern. This concept is only viable if regional  
18 traffic is removed from Gandy Boulevard via the Elevated  
19 Express Lanes.

20           Two different operations were considered for the  
21 Westshore Boulevard and the Manhattan Avenue intersections.  
22 The preferred option retains the signalized intersection as  
23 it is today. The traffic circle option at Westshore and the  
24 traffic circle with transit stop at Manhattan are not  
25 carried forward.

1           The preferred option, to enhance transit service  
2 with benches on both sides of Gandy Boulevard near the  
3 signal at Lois Avenue. Transit amenities will be determined  
4 later in the project. Two different locations are shown on  
5 the north side and a single location on the south side.  
6 These transit features would require additional right-of-way  
7 and could potentially impact one or more commercial  
8 driveways.

9           Aesthetics will be an important design element of  
10 the proposed project. A series of before and after images  
11 were produced to show what the proposed elevated structure  
12 might look like. Additional images, visual impact of  
13 various bridge heights. In raising the bridge up to 30  
14 feet, the elevated structure would be well above street  
15 lights and signals that were installed. This height does  
16 not obstruct the view at -- and maximizes sunlight for  
17 median landscaping under the bridge.

18           At the east end connection to the Selmon  
19 Expressway the preferred alternative provides an entrance  
20 ramp from Dale Mabry Highway to the westbound direction of  
21 the Elevated Express Lanes. We have also added an exit ramp  
22 from the eastbound Elevated Express Lanes to eastbound Gandy  
23 Boulevard near Dale Mabry Highway.

24           Part of the building process is to construct  
25 segments of the structure off-site and continuously erecting

1 from one end to the other in moving operations. This method  
2 of construction will help minimize impacts on business  
3 access during construction.

4 An important component of all PD&E studies is the  
5 evaluation of the environmental effects. In accordance with  
6 state and federal requirements, they include consideration  
7 of the project's effect on the social, cultural, natural and  
8 physical environment. The environmental effects of this  
9 project are minimal. Responding to the public concern over  
10 noise, a detailed noise analysis was conducted and shows  
11 noise impact to be minimal. Over 1,200 potential noise  
12 sites were modeled and only sixteen sites or just over one  
13 percent showed a higher noise level than existing.  
14 Potential noise barriers were evaluated for cost benefits in  
15 accordance with state and federal criteria. The affected  
16 area is on the east side of the Selmon Expressway just north  
17 of Dale Mabry.

18 The Evaluation Matrix summarizes comparison  
19 factors of the build and no-build alternative including  
20 costs and potential environment impacts.

21 The no-build alternative, or do nothing  
22 alternative, will be considered viable and will remain so  
23 throughout the course of the PD&E Study. The Tampa  
24 Hillsborough Expressway Authority is evaluating the toll  
25 feasibility for this project. Costs of the preferred

1 alternative shown is approximately \$115 million. Potential  
2 funding could come from the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway  
3 Authority or other State or Local resources.

4 In summary, the preferred alternative meets the  
5 project purpose of adding regional capacity, removing  
6 regional traffic from the local lanes on Gandy, improving  
7 evacuation for both Pinellas and South Tampa residents,  
8 improving transit usage in the corridor and improving  
9 traffic operations along Gandy Boulevard. Combined, these  
10 help to preserve the future livability and sustainability of  
11 the South Tampa area.

12 MR. NOVOTNEY: The preferred alternative has been  
13 developed throughout the evolution of the study through  
14 input received. For example, the concept of the regional  
15 elevated bridge came forth from the first Project Advisory  
16 Group meeting issues as well as prior studies. The  
17 signalized connection of Bridge Street with the access to  
18 Culbreath Key and Regency Coves came from input at the first  
19 and second PAG meetings. The bus turnouts that improve  
20 transit accessibility came from the first PAG meeting and  
21 discussions with the transit agencies. Ramps were added to  
22 the east end based on input from the first two PAG meetings.  
23 Traffic circles were identified as options from PAG meetings  
24 number one and two and later dropped after meeting number  
25 three in coordination with the City and FDOT.

1            Perspectives were developed of possible aesthetics  
2            and bridge heights from the individual meetings and the  
3            first two PAG meetings. They were presented at the third  
4            PAG meeting and at this hearing. Based on concerns over  
5            business impacts stated in all the PAG meetings and meetings  
6            with individual business owners, a special study was  
7            recently completed that you will hear about in a few  
8            minutes. Throughout the study, the team solicited input and  
9            also listened. Tonight's hearing is another opportunity for  
10           input.

11           The no-build or no project alternative is also  
12           considered a viable alternative and will remain so for the  
13           duration of the study. Under this alternative, no  
14           improvements will be made to Gandy Boulevard and no elevated  
15           express lanes would be proposed. Based on the PD&E Study,  
16           there are key differences that would effect drivers and the  
17           South Tampa community when comparing the no-build or do  
18           nothing alternative and the preferred build alternative.

19           In terms of roadway capacity, the no-build  
20           alternative makes no changes while the build alternative  
21           adds a lane in each direction expanding capacity by  
22           approximately 50 percent. With this additional capacity,  
23           future traffic congestion is greatly reduced over not making  
24           improvements. Local access for the Bridge Street area and  
25           regional connections are enhanced with the build alternative

1 while no changes are made with the no-build. There are no  
2 direct impacts to environmental resources and no need for  
3 additional right-of-way with the no-build, while these are  
4 minimal with the preferred alternative. There are no  
5 capital costs with a do-nothing alternative, while if the  
6 project is toll feasible, users of the elevated lanes would  
7 help pay for the capital costs through the collection of  
8 tolls.

9           Before this hearing ends, you will have an  
10 opportunity to ask questions to our project staff over by  
11 the displays. There are several ways to make a comment as  
12 part of the public hearing record. You can speak in a  
13 one-to-one setting to the court reporter who is on hand at  
14 this hearing. The court reporter will also record comments  
15 stated at this public forum that begins here shortly. A  
16 request to speak, as Whit indicated, can be made by  
17 completing the speaker card at the sign-in table.

18           You can enter your comments electronically at the  
19 computer next to the sign-in table or complete a Comment  
20 Form provided in the brochure and drop it into one of the  
21 comment boxes here tonight. You can mail the form to the  
22 address listed on the back of the form. And, lastly, you  
23 can e-mail written comments to SueC@tampa-xway.com. All  
24 submittals must be postmarked or submitted by September 4,  
25 2009 to become part of the public hearing record. All

1 comments received, regardless of how they are submitted,  
2 will be reviewed and considered.

3 After this comment period ends, the project team  
4 will review and respond to all comments received and develop  
5 any refinements to the preferred alternative. A fourth PAG  
6 meeting will be held where any refinements are presented for  
7 their review and comment. The recommended alternative will  
8 then be presented to the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway  
9 Authority Board in a formal board meeting. At that meeting  
10 the board will seek any public input and may vote to approve  
11 the recommended alternative concepts and present them to the  
12 Florida Department of Transportation for approval. If  
13 approved, the PD&E study documents will be finalized. The  
14 next phase of the project may then move forward based upon  
15 funding availability.

16 MR. BLANTON: As Jeff indicated, there have been a  
17 number of changes along the way as this project moved  
18 forward in response to public comments and feedback on a  
19 number of different issues and options. One of those is the  
20 Evaluation Physics Impact's Economic Impact Study, and here  
21 to present that information -- this is new information that  
22 is being presented this evening -- is Steve Reich with the  
23 Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University  
24 of South Florida.

25 And as Steve presents his information, if you have

1 questions or comments you simply can comment on that during  
2 the public hearing phase, and they have a table in the back  
3 which you can also ask additional questions later. And the  
4 information he presents will be taken up at the fourth PAG  
5 meeting as indicated.

6 MR. REICH: Thank you. Good evening. I'm Steve  
7 Reich, program director at CUTR at the University of South  
8 Florida. I'm here at the public hearing tonight to share  
9 the results of the study that we just recently completed.  
10 It assesses the economic and business impacts to the  
11 proposed Gandy connector. My presentation simply will cover  
12 a brief overview, kind of why and how we conducted the  
13 assessment and to share our findings.

14 First I would like to tell you a little bit about  
15 CUTR, which stands for Center for Urban Transportation  
16 Research, and it's housed within the College of Engineering  
17 at USF here in Tampa. The center was established by the  
18 State Legislature in 1988 with a mission to serve as a  
19 resource to policy makers, transportation professionals, the  
20 education system and the public by providing quality and --  
21 high quality objective transportation research, and I stress  
22 the word objective.

23 While we are largely funded by individual  
24 sponsors, those that engage us do so knowing that we'll be  
25 professional, ethical and objective in our methods. CUTR

1 will not take on efforts to merely come up with the results  
2 that our sponsor had predetermined.

3           On this project I wanted to share a few things  
4 with you before I begin. First, the two of us that  
5 performed the majority of the work -- and in the spirit of  
6 full disclosure one of us had an association with this  
7 Authority in 2007, and that was me, where I served as the  
8 interim executive director from January 2007 to September.

9           Mr. Sisinnio Concas, which several of you met  
10 before the presentation, who works with me, performed the  
11 detailed econometric modeling and research and is a ten-year  
12 veteran in his field. His previous work includes performing  
13 economic impact analysis for the Tampa International  
14 Airport, for the highway projects in the Orlando area. His  
15 areas of expertise include parametric and non-parametric  
16 econometric modeling, time series analysis and forecasting  
17 and public policy analysis.

18           As you know, the Authority sponsored this study  
19 with an understanding that CUTR would produce the results  
20 with no interference with the Authority. In fact, this  
21 hearing was scheduled well in advance of the Authority ever  
22 even seeing or knowing our findings.

23           So the background. Due to the concerns, as was  
24 mentioned earlier, raised by some of the business owners  
25 along Gandy Boulevard, in the course of the Authority's

1 public involvement process, the Authority engaged CUTR to  
2 perform this analysis. Specifically our charge was to  
3 assess the impacts on the existing local businesses if the  
4 Gandy connector was in fact built.

5 For this analysis we had to define the limits of  
6 the study area, and they're shown here on the map. The  
7 study area covers those businesses located on the section of  
8 Gandy Boulevard that corresponds to the starting point of  
9 the build alternative located west of Westshore Boulevard  
10 and ending at the Gandy Boulevard/Dale Mabry Highway  
11 intersection. Along this 1.45 mile section of Gandy  
12 Boulevard, 97 business were inventoried.

13 Our approach to this study was the following. We  
14 conducted this basically in four steps. First we had to  
15 establish the level of current business activity. This  
16 provides a picture of local economic activity levels  
17 occurring before the current recessionary state of the  
18 economy and prior to any changes in business activity that  
19 may occur due to the reconstruction project that just  
20 finished up out there.

21 Businesses were surveyed. The Consensus Bureau  
22 business data was obtained. County tax information was  
23 accessed and estimates of employment and sales by the  
24 industry sector were made.

25 Next we had to develop a measure of sensitivity of

1 the business to traffic. Our economist developed measures  
2 of how specific businesses might be affected by the changes  
3 in traffic. These measures were developed based on previous  
4 national and academic studies and observations. Then we  
5 developed an economic model to measure the changes in sales  
6 and employment that would likely occur with changes in  
7 traffic.

8 Third in the study was the traffic analysis. The  
9 Authority's consultant traffic forecasts were analyzed to  
10 determine what future traffic would be diverted to the  
11 connector and what would happen to the future levels of  
12 congestion for Gandy Boulevard. I should note that the  
13 build alternative that we used for our study was the  
14 preferred alternative that's being presented here this  
15 evening, which is the elevated facility with the connecting  
16 ramps at Dale Mabry Highway.

17 Lastly, we were then able to forecast the changes  
18 in business activity. We made our predictions on the  
19 economic activity related to those businesses that --  
20 relying businesses on pass-through traffic and those that  
21 might be helped by improved accessibility that will be  
22 realized if the connector is built.

23 This slide summarizes the composition of those 97  
24 businesses that were included in the study. And as you can  
25 see the large pieces of the pie represent retail trade at

1 16.5 percent, finances and insurance at twelve and a half,  
2 professional and technical services at just over 11 percent,  
3 food and accommodation at 16 and a half percent, and other  
4 professional services, which is a large piece, at 18 and a  
5 half percent. What's included in that other professional  
6 services are legal services, specialized architectural and  
7 engineering services, management and technical consulting,  
8 veterinary services and personal care services.

9           From our research there are positive and negative  
10 impacts to businesses when a relief route is introduced.  
11 There are also some industry types that are not likely to be  
12 affected. The next two slides list the types of businesses  
13 and the determination of a negative, a positive or a neutral  
14 impact of moving traffic -- of moving the through traffic up  
15 on the connector. You will see in this first slide that of  
16 the eleven business types listed service stations are the  
17 most likely to be dependent on traffic for their business.

18           This is a continuation of the last slide. It  
19 shows that fast food establishments and auto repair  
20 businesses are the most likely to be negatively impacted,  
21 while for eight other types a shift in traffic is expected  
22 to either provide a benefit or create no impact.

23           The econometric model that I mentioned earlier  
24 creates a specific measure for each one of these business  
25 types and is applied to changes in traffic and then

1 translated into changes in employment and in sales. So in  
2 order -- in order to project the changes, we needed to  
3 understand what will happen to the traffic mix if the  
4 connector were to be built. And here are those numbers.

5 Under the no-build scenario traffic is projected  
6 at 60,700 on a daily basis, AADT, which you heard explained  
7 earlier in the video, and 68,500 under the build scenario.  
8 With a 25 cent toll, this discourages some traffic from  
9 using the connector at all and keeps some of the new traffic  
10 down on the surface level. So under the 25 cent toll build  
11 alternative, there will be a diversion of 29 percent of the  
12 traffic upstairs to the connector. The boulevard would  
13 carry the remainder, 60 percent local and 11 percent  
14 pass-through traffic that won't go upstairs because they  
15 don't want to pay the toll. And obviously without the  
16 connector all the traffic would be on the boulevard surface.

17 So with the current level of activity established,  
18 the traffic impacts on the businesses calculated, and the  
19 traffic split understood, we then made the calculations of  
20 the existing business mix for the study area. And what we  
21 project is that there would be an average gross sales  
22 transfer out of the study area of 1.9 million to some -- of  
23 roughly 140 million in sales. Thirteen of the over 800 jobs  
24 are estimated to move out of the study area. Food services  
25 and gasoline stations would absorb most of these losses.

1           I need to mention that these are not job loses but  
2 transfers from the area. The demand for gasoline, for fast  
3 food will still be there. So those businesses would likely  
4 be -- those pieces of those businesses would likely relocate  
5 somewhere else.

6           As I noted earlier, some businesses that rely on  
7 the ease of access for local patrons can be helped by the  
8 connector. Businesses that rely on local traffic that are  
9 projected to gain from the proposed improvement include  
10 general merchandise, retail, grocery stores, drug stores,  
11 banks and professional care services.

12           Because of the improvement in average travel times  
13 and a reduction in costs for travel, we estimate an increase  
14 in annual sales of about 800,000 and a generation of five  
15 new jobs. These gains are considered new activity and are  
16 not transferred in from some other area. So looking at all  
17 those impacts we estimate that 1.9 million of \$139 million  
18 in sales, or less than one and a half percent of the sales,  
19 and 13 of the over 800 jobs will move out of the area to  
20 other areas in the county and that five new jobs and an  
21 additional \$800,000 in new sales activity will be generated  
22 within the Gandy Corridor Study area.

23           The impacts that were presented so far related  
24 only to the study area and clearly are important, and that  
25 was the main focus of the study, but it was -- we feel it's

1 as important to place it in some kind of context of what the  
2 project may provide in terms of benefits for the region.  
3 These could include travel time savings, changes in  
4 emissions, impact of construction expenditures.

5 We estimate for this type of project and a project  
6 of this size 1,458 jobs will be supported during its  
7 construction, 853 direct jobs, 255 indirect, that is the  
8 people that supply the materials and such, and 350 induced  
9 jobs. Those are jobs associated with the money that those  
10 other guys spend. Please understand that it's -- in an  
11 attempt not to overestimate the impact, these are the total  
12 jobs supported for the duration of the construction period.  
13 So, for example, if the construction were to last three  
14 years, divide that number by three and it will translate  
15 into about 486 jobs as the calculation in the slide shows.

16 Similarly for the construction period we estimate  
17 that within Hillsborough County an additional 3.5 million  
18 will be added to the tax rolls due to increases in sales,  
19 property, motor vehicle and other taxes generated as a  
20 result of the construction of the connector.

21 While the last two slides indicate significant but  
22 temporary savings, the benefits here that are being  
23 calculated are ongoing and shown on a yearly basis. Because  
24 of improved travel conditions that are forecast in the area  
25 associated with building the connector, the estimated annual

1 savings to the region of about 1.8 million annually due to  
2 travel time savings, nearly 40,000 annually, plus reduced  
3 emissions, and about 28,000 in reduced costs associated with  
4 reduction in crashes.

5 So in summary of the two different kinds of  
6 impacts, at the regional level a little over 1,450 jobs for  
7 a three-year period, 3.4 million for the construction period  
8 and the additional taxes to Hillsborough County, ongoing  
9 savings of 1.8 million in travel time savings, 67,000 in  
10 ongoing savings due to the air quality and safety benefits.

11 And for the local Gandy impact area, a transfer of  
12 gross sales of about 1.9 million or one and a half percent  
13 of total sales, 13 of 800 jobs, and clearly there was three  
14 kinds of traffic dependent businesses that would be the ones  
15 that would be most impacted. An estimated increase in  
16 annual sales of about 800,000 and a creation of five new  
17 jobs.

18 I really appreciate your attention, and I thank  
19 you for letting me present the results of the study.

20 MR. BLANTON: Okay. Now we're going to turn it  
21 over to your opportunity to provide comments, but before we  
22 do so I just wanted to remind you about a couple things.  
23 When you came in there was a news letter and a comment form  
24 and a sign-in sheet at the table there. If you didn't get a  
25 chance to sign in or grab those materials, please do so, so

1 that we can communicate with you and any follow-up  
2 information after this public hearing.

3 I have some comment forms here. I'm going to call  
4 your names in just a moment. I do want to point out that  
5 sometimes in these kind of projects there are unavoidable  
6 impacts that happen to businesses and there is a relocation  
7 that has to happen. With the preferred concept here, as  
8 Jeff described earlier, there is one business that is so  
9 affected.

10 And Patrick McGuire is the Expressway Authority's  
11 general consultant. Patrick, if you could stand up. So if  
12 you have -- if you're affected or think you might be  
13 affected and have questions about relocation, Patrick is the  
14 guy to see. And he'll be around all evening to address any  
15 questions you might have. Again, that's one business with  
16 the preferred concept.

17 In addition, again a reminder, to your -- comments  
18 that you can make here as part of this public hearing, you  
19 can certainly write down the comments in a number of  
20 different ways, and you can either send them electronically  
21 or mail those comments in. Again by September 4th is the  
22 date that we need those comments in.

23 Before we begin your testimony, your input on this  
24 process, I do want to recognize a few folks who are here  
25 tonight. I'd like to recognize Commissioner Rose Ferlita,

1 Hillsborough County Commission, and Councilman John  
2 Dingfelder.

3 And then we have a couple of Expressway Authority  
4 board members here. Don Phillips stepped out for a moment,  
5 okay, and Rebecca Smith.

6 Are there any other elected officials or board  
7 members or their representatives here that I didn't catch,  
8 if you could identify yourself? Okay. All right.

9 Okay. What I would like to do now is Jeff is  
10 going to help me here with the timing. I'm going to call  
11 individuals up in the order that we received their comments.  
12 When you come to the microphone, if you could state your  
13 name and your address, please, for the record.

14 First we have Neil Cosentino.

15 MR. COSENTINO: Good evening everyone and thank  
16 you for the opportunity here to explain what happened in the  
17 year 2000. And there were four engineering companies that  
18 put together a design, and the companies of Richardson  
19 National Construction, Chase Atlantic Corporation, and  
20 another company, Pace Atlantic, and also DOT employees  
21 worked on the studies of doing a cut and cover instead of an  
22 elevated highway, a four-lane cut and cover.

23 And the results were that the underpass is  
24 feasible. They called it an underpass, and we call it a cut  
25 and cover now. The underpass option as to lowest total

1 costs, the underpass option meets all Gandy MIS capacity  
2 requirements. The underpass option costs 73 million, and  
3 the underpass meets traffic and public community  
4 requirements.

5 What's interesting is no one mentioned the  
6 community. We talk about alligators and we talk about  
7 turtles, but it's the people. And no one does the study on  
8 the people, how this impacts the people. They're talking  
9 about business. That's good. But we are communing and,  
10 therefore, that should be a separate entity that has to be  
11 discussed, and it hasn't been.

12 Now, if any of you have been to Las Vegas you'll  
13 know that when you come out of the terminal and go to the  
14 casinos you go underneath Las Vegas Airport. Do you  
15 remember that? And that is a cut and cover. So if you  
16 think of the Gandy community as the airport at Las Vegas,  
17 you can see how easy it is to understand that you can go  
18 under an airport, just like you can go under the Gandy  
19 Boulevard.

20 So in conclusion there is another alternative. It  
21 hasn't showed up. We've paid for it. There hasn't been a  
22 comparative analysis made, and we insist that one is done  
23 because we paid for it. So thank you very much.

24 MR. BLANTON: You have 45 seconds.

25 MR. COSENTINO: I have 45 seconds to make the

1 case. I think I've made the bullets here. Thank you very  
2 much.

3 MR. BLANTON: You're certainly welcome to come up  
4 here to the podium. We also have a microphone here in the  
5 middle of the room that may be more accessible to folks.

6 Our next speaker -- and again if you could give  
7 your address and your name -- is Rick Joyner.

8 MR. JOYNER: Hi. My name is Rick Joyner. I live  
9 at 4602 West Paul Avenue in South Tampa. I've been a  
10 resident of South Tampa since 1982. I've been in many  
11 meetings regarding Gandy in the last few years, probably the  
12 last 10 or 15 years, and I'm here to urge your support to  
13 allow this overpass to be built for the following reasons.

14 One, studies indicate that the future traffic  
15 volume demand that these changes be made. A recent article  
16 in the St. Pete Times reports that traffic will increase  
17 from 42,000 to 48,000 vehicles by 2015. That same article  
18 reports that by building the overpass traffic on Gandy will  
19 decrease by 14 percent down to 36,000 vehicles a day.

20 I realize many businesses are opposed to this  
21 elevated highway. The Expressway study indicates that a  
22 minimum number of businesses may be impacted. Many  
23 businesses have been hurt by the economy and have been hurt  
24 through the recent construction along Gandy. I agree  
25 another major disruption of traffic along Gandy could be

1 detrimental to the local businesses. Engineers have agreed  
2 that this elevated highway, if approved, will be built in  
3 sections with minimal interruptions. The entire stretch of  
4 Gandy will not be disrupted as in the past.

5           The Expressway Authority believes that they can  
6 pay for this with toll dollars. I think this is important,  
7 that they're not trying to pay for this out of the scarce  
8 tax dollars. This may be our only opportunity to see an  
9 improvement without having to rely on tax dollars to pay for  
10 it.

11           We cannot afford to pass up this opportunity. We  
12 must be prepared now in case of evacuation of the Tampa Bay  
13 area due to a hurricane. Existing highways cannot handle  
14 the load. This elevated highway will provide additional  
15 escape in case of emergencies.

16           Gandy residents continue to complain about  
17 traffic. They also continue to deny any suggestions for  
18 improvements. The residents were against the bypass attempt  
19 several years ago. They were against widening Gandy and  
20 they were against the recent improvements made to Gandy  
21 Boulevard. How can we continue to complain about traffic,  
22 continue to complain about the businesses, continue to  
23 complain about the appearance without being willing to  
24 accept some changes.

25           Gandy is a gateway to Tampa. I believe that we

1 have the opportunity for Gandy to become a unique shopping  
2 area with restaurants, stores and shops that local residents  
3 want to visit. It's time for a change. Gandy cannot stay  
4 the way it has in the past. We must prepare for the growth.  
5 Yes, we're going to have growth. I urge our elected  
6 officials to get behind and support this.

7 MR. BLANTON: Our next speaker is Bill Wilson.

8 MR. WILSON: My name is Bill Wilson. I live at  
9 4225 Aegean Drive, which is right down the street a couple  
10 of blocks from Gandy. And my comment is directed towards  
11 the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority as well as our  
12 esteemed leaders in the room. That we hope that the  
13 overwhelming majority, which is my opinion based on my  
14 interaction directly with the residents that -- right around  
15 Gandy. Is the overwhelming opposition to this project going  
16 to be considered when they vote? That's all I want say.

17 MR. BLANTON: Vivian Hart. You can use that  
18 microphone if you wish. Whatever is easier.

19 MS. HART: I have seven points that I would like  
20 to make out. First of all, you say do nothing. We have  
21 already done something. We have already improved Gandy  
22 Boulevard. And it's really -- well, how can you say we're  
23 doing nothing. We've done something that we have not even  
24 given it a chance to work.

25 And the counts that you have that you keep talking

1 about in the future, when was the last time that you did the  
2 count? Another thing, the people are very distrusting about  
3 having this road, this upper deck. If you remember in 2004  
4 how many of the pillars had problems on them and had to be  
5 redone. How many -- it also fell. Well, Gandy people don't  
6 want to experience that again. Do we have the same  
7 contractor? Are these jobs also that you're talking about  
8 for local people or are these the people that are out of  
9 town, they're going to come and do their job, they're going  
10 to leave and they could care less about what happens to us  
11 at this end?

12 I've also lived in Gandy for over 30 years, raised  
13 two kids in the area. I love South Tampa. It's one of the  
14 best places in all of Tampa. Tamp is a great city. Let's  
15 bring it up, not bring it down. The Crosstown, when you go  
16 across it now, it's like you're going on a road in Disney  
17 World. You go right through town.

18 You really don't -- you know, it may be a fast  
19 route. The upper deck is not built for Tampa residents.  
20 It's built for Brandon. Brandon uses it. Every time I go  
21 to use it I can't because the traffic is coming into town  
22 and I'm trying to go east of town. So, therefore, I never  
23 had the opportunity to use the deck.

24 I don't understand why you keep saying do nothing,  
25 because we have already done something. And you're talking

1 about \$115 million, which right now our economy is in such a  
2 way that where does that -- \$115 million is probably a drop  
3 in the bucket to the Expressway, but to us it's a lot of  
4 money.

5           Anyway, when was the last count that you did on  
6 the cars? Let's give Gandy Boulevard a chance, because even  
7 when we have football games we synchronize the lights. The  
8 traffic flows, you're talking about a minute or two, not  
9 more than five minutes, of somebody's time that's from  
10 another county. Hello. That's the time to cool down.  
11 Maybe you could just sit and just relax a little bit. Thank  
12 you very much.

13           MR. BLANTON: Thank you for your comments.

14           I had no trouble with the first few names. I'm  
15 probably going to have some trouble on a couple more.  
16 Mikael Eskildsen. Close maybe? I apologize if I  
17 mispronounce your name.

18           MR. ESKILDSEN: That's okay. My name is Mikael  
19 Eskildsen. I'm the owner of Scan Designs on 40221 West  
20 Gandy Boulevard. A year or so ago I was invited to be on  
21 that advisory group that was held down at a school, and we  
22 were set up and we were hoping we could voice our opinion.  
23 Apparently we couldn't. It was all questions that was led  
24 by TIA in a direction they want the outcome to be. And I  
25 was not the only one. There were some of these people that

1 is in this room tonight that didn't fill out all the  
2 questions because no matter what they did TIA would come up  
3 with their own outcome.

4 So I talked to several business people in the area  
5 and we got petitions going in the local businesses on Gandy  
6 Boulevard. And I have 1,500 people that came by the local  
7 businesses to support us, that we don't want an elevated  
8 highway. All the studies that you have done is the same  
9 people who come to Gandy Boulevard. Nobody took into  
10 consideration that when 275 is done, the widening, the  
11 airport exit and the Veterans Expressway is all done it  
12 would eliminate a lot of traffic coming into Gandy that goes  
13 straight through. And another one is if somebody can name  
14 just one place in the United States where crime did not rise  
15 and property value did not decrease from an elevated road.

16 MR. BLANTON: A number of people are asking  
17 questions as part of their comments, and as part of the  
18 public record there will be some responses to those  
19 questions posted at the Expressway Authority.

20 The next speaker is Jim Kotsiviras. I did my  
21 best.

22 MR. KOTSIVIRAS: Hi, everybody. My name is Jim  
23 Kotsiviras. I'm a local strip mall owner, a couple strip  
24 malls on Gandy Boulevard, 4644 West Gandy Boulevard. I  
25 represent all my tenants. And as far as like what Mikael

1 was saying, the studies and all that to spend that kind of  
2 money, \$115 million for 1.45 miles of highway is -- I mean  
3 you guys didn't give a chance for Gandy Boulevard to see  
4 what it could do.

5 I mean we've got a website, [savegandy.com](http://savegandy.com),  
6 everybody. Just look at the video of the current traffic  
7 flow. Traffic flow is great. There is no waiting or no  
8 nothing.

9 And I want to know everybody here who is against  
10 the building. Okay. It's a little bit overwhelming that  
11 everybody don't like this. So, you know, I think that, you  
12 know, you should voice an opinion for the local people. And  
13 you guys are going to be creating vacancies. I mean we've  
14 gone through the build of Gandy Boulevard. I've already  
15 lost four tenants, and by doing this more you guys are going  
16 to leave me with no tenants at all.

17 So instead of spending the money, \$115 million to  
18 put an elevated, buy all the businesses on Gandy, our  
19 current market value before this study, and make it a  
20 straight street, you know, on the road instead of doing a  
21 build on top and then creating vacancies.

22 You've got 7 percent sales tax that goes to the  
23 Florida Department of Revenue. You guys are going to be  
24 losing that. You've got one percent going to Hillsborough  
25 County. And obviously I mean you guys are looking for your

1 pocket -- you guys are looking for 68,000 cars. That is  
2 8,000 cars more than a no-build. So for 8,000 cars per day  
3 you spend \$115 million. Come on. It doesn't -- it doesn't  
4 make feasible sense.

5 And plus, you know, a hurricane evacuation route,  
6 this is -- just started this because, you know, people were  
7 against it. Now when a hurricane -- the winds get 50 miles  
8 an hour, they close all the bridges. So after 50 miles an  
9 hour that whole Crosstown is going to be useless. So if you  
10 have a contra-flow coming from on Gandy Boulevard, you got  
11 everybody -- the police or whatever directing the traffic.  
12 I mean you don't need this bridge.

13 Everybody just go to [savegandy.com](http://savegandy.com), go to the  
14 website. I think we can put that money to use better.  
15 That's the longest walking bridge in the world, you know.  
16 Let's keep the record. Thank you.

17 MR. BLANTON: The next speaker is John Totten.

18 MR. KOTSIVIRAS: And, by the way, here are some  
19 cards, [savegandy.com](http://savegandy.com), if anybody wants to pick up a card.

20 MR. TOTTEN: Good evening. I'm John Totten. I  
21 live at 4612 West Price Boulevard -- West Price Avenue.  
22 I've only lived here three years, and when I got here Gandy  
23 Boulevard looked horrible. Since the improvements have been  
24 done, it's flowing great. To reiterate what the other  
25 people have said, give that a chance. The construction on

1 275, it's coming. I live right there three streets south of  
2 it. I have no problem with the traffic there. I moved in  
3 there. I saw the street. I knew it was, as you guys call  
4 it, a corridor. People that live here call it Gandy  
5 Boulevard because it is our back yard. It's our  
6 neighborhood. It's one of our streets.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Speak in the mike, please.

8 MR. TOTTEN: Sorry about that. Still a lot of  
9 negatives with the economics, the noise, lights, the  
10 eyesore.

11 The gentleman from USF, I appreciate your time and  
12 your education, but I don't -- believe your numbers are kind  
13 of pie in the sky. I think time would have been better  
14 served going to other cities where they've built elevated  
15 roads to see what the economic impacts were there in those  
16 cities, actually a real live rat that you could test on  
17 instead of just -- you know, I can come up with numbers too.

18 But rebuttal to some of these things on your  
19 slide, this is just a transit route. And this whole issue  
20 of a transit route for St. Pete, if there is a hurricane and  
21 if we have a Katrina come in as they did in Louisiana,  
22 they're going to open up the Crosstown, both sides, heading  
23 out of town. They're going to do the same thing on Gandy.  
24 If you need to go west, you're going to cross Gandy and go  
25 west -- north of Gandy or south of Gandy if you live here

1 locally.

2 But if everybody is evacuating, they're going to  
3 open all four lanes as it is anyhow, and all four lanes are  
4 going to get on the Crosstown as it is anyhow. Two elevated  
5 lanes are not going to help anything. I don't know if this  
6 is a job preservation for your agency or for somebody's  
7 company or something like this. I don't know. But go do it  
8 in someone else's backyard. We don't need it. It's not  
9 necessary.

10 Thank you for your time to voice our opinion.  
11 Please, representatives from the City, take our word as you  
12 saw and I think we will get some more signatures on this and  
13 go house to house. If you want to put something out, put  
14 out a mailing in this area and see how many people show up.  
15 I'm sure you probably don't want to do that because you're  
16 going to need a bigger room, but I appreciate your time.

17 And, please, let's unite and get with Mikael and  
18 Scan Designs. I'm sorry I haven't been back to the next --  
19 meetings. Kick me. But next time we go to TIA, however you  
20 pronounce it, let's have our act together and present a very  
21 good argument. Thank you very much.

22 MR. BLANTON: The next speaker is Joseph  
23 Launikitis.

24 MR. LAUNIKITIS: Good evening. My name is Joe  
25 Launikitis. I reside at 460 Summer Sails. I'm here on

1     behalf of my parents, William and Patricia, who reside at  
2     5004 Hesperides, which just happens to be one block away  
3     from Gandy Boulevard.

4             Now, there are a lot of things -- I want to  
5     reflect back on what Mr. Cosentino said when he opened this  
6     up. I think a lot of this study, number one, talks about  
7     net benefits with the rest of the county, not to this  
8     particular area. That's the first issue.

9             Mr. Cosentino brought up the fact that I think  
10    we're dedicating a lot of time talking about environmental  
11    impact when -- and I know a lot of people here and I grew up  
12    with a few. I went to high school with some people here.  
13    But I can tell you that there are no manatees that live or  
14    work on Gandy Boulevard.

15            The bottom line is what this affects or who this  
16    affects. It affects the people here. I think we've seen  
17    that the overwhelming majority of people here object to this  
18    project. Unfortunately I have also been told that  
19    regardless of what the people have, regardless of the  
20    opposition, that they can go ahead and proceed with this  
21    anyway.

22            The bottom line is that when you look at these  
23    studies and these studies don't impact this particular  
24    area -- we've heard a lot about hurricane evacuation. The  
25    bottom line when it comes to that is that we're not -- the

1 people who live in this area aren't going to have the  
2 additional entry ramps onto this expressway. It's not going  
3 to affect our evacuation either way.

4           What John brought up was the fact that this was  
5 going to benefit South St. Petersburg people and regional  
6 people as they described who are simply passing through.  
7 The bottom line is we've got a 30 foot elevated what I would  
8 like to refer to as a bridge. I also, too, am offended by  
9 the term corridor because people live and work in this area.

10           My parents have been here for almost 50 years.  
11 When -- my father I can only imagine on July 4th barbecuing  
12 gets to look up at a 30 foot structure with 10 to 15,000  
13 cars passing by at night lighting up Gandy Boulevard and --  
14 in addition to the exhaust and in addition to the light and  
15 in addition to the noise. I can tell you from Gandy I can  
16 hear that train on Tyson. If you're going to try to tell me  
17 I can't hear something a block away, I think you're wrong.

18           When it comes to businesses, even though I  
19 appreciate the information provided by USF, the bottom line  
20 is that, you know, the businesses -- or their analogies or,  
21 excuse me, their examples, the majority of those, you know,  
22 dealt with industries that aren't in or located off of  
23 Gandy. There are no warehouses other than the old Macy's or  
24 something, but there is nothing like that. There is no --  
25 there is no trucking or anything like that.

1           There are businesses that people go to. I know  
2 Bob personally at the UPS Store. I know a lot of people who  
3 work out there. What's going to happen when businesses move  
4 out, we're going to see dilapidated buildings. We're going  
5 to see graffiti on the walls. Quite frankly I enjoyed the  
6 elevated expressway pictures here, but I just drove in from  
7 East County and I can tell you that grass doesn't grow under  
8 these expressways. It's dirt and it's garbage.

9           And the bottom line is I keep hearing the  
10 reference to Gandy, a main street. I don't know how many  
11 people here have been to a main street that has a bridge  
12 running right down the center of it. As a main street  
13 element as you keep implying or trying to color this thing,  
14 this project as being, in fact what this is is living under  
15 the bridge. It will affect these people. It won't affect  
16 animals, but it will affect these people. It will affect  
17 their house.

18           You know, it will define this community. People  
19 will know that, hey, well, I'll tell you where to go. They  
20 live in ranch houses underneath the bridge, or, you know,  
21 just go right underneath the overpass and that's how you're  
22 going to get to, you know, wherever. So it will define this  
23 community. It will separate south of Gandy from north of  
24 Gandy, and I think it will have a tremendous impact on not  
25 just the community.

1           You know, that's another thing to talk about. We  
2 talk about environmental impact. We ought to start talking  
3 about social and cultural. This is a social and cultural  
4 impact. The feedback from these people here --

5           MR. BLANTON: Can you wrap it up?

6           MR. LAUNIKITIS: I thought I was on the clock.

7           MR. BLANTON: You're done. You can finish that --

8           MR. LAUNIKITIS: We oppose this. I think the  
9 majority of people do oppose this, and I would hope that our  
10 legislatures and commissioners and everyone takes that  
11 message that the people don't want it here and there are  
12 other alternatives.

13           MR. BLANTON: Thank you for your comments.

14           We have one more card. If anybody else would like  
15 to speak after this card, please fill in a card and we'll  
16 give you an ample opportunity. Alan Steenson is our next  
17 speaker. Is Alan still here? There he is.

18           MR. STEENSON: Good evening, all. For the record  
19 my name is Alan Steenson, 4100 West Leila Avenue, Tampa,  
20 Florida, 33616, a proud resident of South Tampa for 37  
21 years. I'm also the president of the Gandy Civic  
22 Association.

23           Before I go on further I would like to submit for  
24 the record I have a series of e-mails I put out. It's not a  
25 very scientific study, but I can assure you and I will be

1 more than happy to present these in electronic form if  
2 asked, but I have 48 opposed, 13 in support and two  
3 non-committed. And I would like these to go into the  
4 record.

5 Now, our position here tonight is not to try for  
6 us to sell you on this project. Your position is to sell  
7 this community on that project. And I personally don't  
8 think you've done that. I don't think you've done that.  
9 This community has been beaten around and we've been kicked  
10 around for over 20 years. There are a couple of people out  
11 there -- you know, we just finished a \$22 million job. I  
12 ask you people to go out there at 7:00 tomorrow morning and  
13 park at the abandoned Shell Station at Gandy and Westshore  
14 and watch how quickly the traffic clears. DOT and Pepper  
15 have done a wonderful job.

16 These traffic -- I don't know. Would somebody in  
17 this room tell me how many people come across that bridge  
18 every morning and take that ramp eastbound and get on the  
19 Crosstown. I've not seen those numbers. Has anybody in  
20 here seen those numbers? I haven't.

21 They're telling us that 30 -- correct me if I'm  
22 wrong, 35 to 40 percent of the traffic has no destination on  
23 Gandy. My question is what percentages of them have a  
24 destination off of Gandy that go south -- north and south on  
25 Westshore, north and south on Manhattan, north and south on

1 Dale Mabry or go all the way to Bayshore. How many of those  
2 people come across the bridge every night and every morning  
3 and go back every evening that work at MacDill.

4 Again, we're not trying to sell our position. You  
5 need to sell the project to us, and I don't think that's  
6 accomplished on that. Thank you.

7 MR. BLANTON: We have one more comment card from  
8 Mark Rubio.

9 MR. RUBIO: Good evening everyone. My name is  
10 Mark Rubio. I'm at 5401 South Dale Mabry. I'm a business  
11 owner down here. I've had my office down here for ten  
12 years. I've got affordable apartments down here. I've got  
13 an office. I've got three restaurants, retailers, that rent  
14 from me. I've also got some on Dale Mabry. But I also have  
15 my residence. I raise my family down here.

16 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Get closer to the mike.

17 MR. RUBIO: Sorry. So I also have my family down  
18 here. So I do have a lot at stake. I'm down here every  
19 single day driving these roads. And I'm so excited that the  
20 road is finally complete. And anyone that doesn't live here  
21 that's on these committees and the city counsel, they need  
22 to come drive in the morning like Al said. In the evenings  
23 I take my little girl to karate every day at 5:30. I drive  
24 the road. The traffic is good.

25 Now, it's not Westshore. You can't go down

1 Westshore. But Gandy is gorgeous and it's really great.  
2 I've got numerous -- I was born and raised here. I've been  
3 here my whole life. I grew up in Wellswood on the other  
4 side of town. I grew up in Wellswood, and I've been down  
5 here for about 25 years in South Tampa.

6 I've gotten numerous calls of people driving down  
7 Gandy that live all over the community, especially in South  
8 Tampa. They say they love being here. They love seeing  
9 Gandy, because people avoided Gandy before. Why? Gandy was  
10 thought of just kind of the armpit. But guess what, it is  
11 the gateway to our city, one of three major gateways from  
12 Pinellas County.

13 How in the world could we let a gateway coming  
14 from the St. Pete area and have a bridge that's connected  
15 that's just going to really -- going to really demise this  
16 whole community. All the restaurants like they said in the  
17 studies, these restaurants are going to be shut down.  
18 They're going to be boarded up and they already said they're  
19 leaving. They can't go through any more construction.  
20 They're barely hanging in there in these economic times.

21 You know, my wife works. She works in Pinellas  
22 County. She goes across the bridge every single day. You  
23 know, it's been a pleasure. That's a nice drive, you know.  
24 And now we've got Gandy, you know, which is -- you know, to  
25 me, one of the things with a working wife, spouse, and we're

1 always eating out -- there is one thing, we have to eat out  
2 a lot.

3 You know, we've got little ones, picking up food,  
4 and we've got a lot of nice places to go. And so if they  
5 leave what's that going to do to the community, you know.  
6 We want restaurants. We want UPS. We want, you know, the  
7 nail salons, haircutting places, all these places. And so I  
8 just think it's just terrible to see these businesses leave  
9 in the near future.

10 The one thing they said on the economic impact  
11 study, real estate rental leasing is a positive. I don't  
12 know how in the world that could be a positive. They're  
13 going to be shut down. It's just absolutely crazy. I'm  
14 against it. I'm against it. I'm against it. And I hope,  
15 you know, that this doesn't happen. Thank you.

16 MR. BLANTON: Cards keep trickling in a little  
17 bit. I have one more speaker. Don Phillips.

18 MR. PHILLIPS: I moved here six years ago. I'm  
19 speaking tonight not as a member of the Authority but as  
20 your neighbor. When I moved here six years ago I came here  
21 as a developer and I developed two projects in this  
22 neighbor, Casa Bella south of Westshore -- it was an old  
23 mobile home park -- and the Reason Allow (phonetic) property  
24 which is behind the warehouse at Tyson. I built a part of  
25 the Bridgedale Trail that has been built south of Gandy. I

1 secured the right-of-way for part of it but -- at Tyson,  
2 which actually is owned by the City of Tampa. I don't think  
3 they knew it at the time, at that time all of the opposition  
4 for the most part, some of you that were there may recall --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Speak into the mike.

6 MR. PHILLIPS: -- was due to traffic. I'm not the  
7 most technically proficient person. Sorry. But in that  
8 period of time coming down here one of the first people I  
9 ever met was Al Steenson. And we stood up at the Howard  
10 Johnson's and he rained heck down on me because he thought  
11 that I missed a procedural element, and out of that we  
12 became friendly. And since that time we've remained  
13 friends. And then I've come to know many people in this  
14 community very closely as friends and employed many people  
15 in this community as a result of the friendships that came  
16 out of honorable and honest discourse over the issues that  
17 we were faced with because I was developing in your  
18 neighborhood.

19 To this end I have come to love this community. I  
20 would do nothing to harm this community, and in fact since  
21 coming to this community as a single man I am married with  
22 four children and we now live in the Westshore Yacht Club  
23 right in the middle of this community. So this project is  
24 not only very near and dear to me as a young man that has  
25 tried to make a positive impact on a community and give of

1 his time and his money but also as a young man that is  
2 raising his family, as many of you have raised your families  
3 in this community.

4           There is no conspiracy. I sit on this Authority  
5 today by the very encouragement of the people in this  
6 community because I wanted to be able to advocate fairly for  
7 the community. So I -- we appreciate the commentary. I am  
8 one of you. There is no dark conspiracy, and this comes  
9 because of the many tortured pleas over the years of people  
10 saying please do something about these challenges. So thank  
11 you for that.

12           I'm not speaking to you from this microphone at  
13 this present time as a member of the Authority. I have a  
14 natural conflict perhaps in that regard, but I just wanted  
15 to introduce myself to you and thank you all of you for your  
16 input in this. Thank you.

17           MR. BLANTON: You do have the option if you wanted  
18 to talk directly to the court reporter you can do that. I  
19 have one more card from Dante Conto. That's the last card I  
20 have. If anybody else has any more cards, please feel free  
21 to turn them in.

22           MR. CONTO: My name is Dante Conto. This is the  
23 first public speaking I've done since I'm in grade three.  
24 So please bear with me because I'm not really good at this.  
25 I moved down here about ten years ago and I have my shop in

1 Port Tampa. And I'm trying to become part of the community.  
2 I like the community. I moved my family here. We have  
3 become friends and neighbors. And I don't want to get  
4 anybody upset. I'm here to do good.

5           You know, I started my business down here with a  
6 couple of wheelbarrows and a shovel and I've employed up to  
7 45 people. I just live down the street. I can almost see  
8 my house from here. I worked on the church next-door. You  
9 know, I did -- I'm part of it. I employ people. I go to  
10 people's houses. I'm friends. But I've been around. I'm  
11 getting old now. I'm 52. I've been to cities where they  
12 have overpasses, like the one that they propose.

13           I think it needs work. Yes, I think it needs some  
14 work. There are some good ideas. And I've seen them -- I  
15 haven't seen the businesses next to it get buried. I've  
16 seen the businesses thrive. I think there is more work to  
17 be done, but I don't think that anybody is here to hurt  
18 anybody. And I don't want to make a misstatement because I  
19 have a lot of invested here, like my business, like my home.

20           And I've seen it work up north. I've seen it work  
21 in other areas. I can give you the numbers. Any impact on  
22 the vehicles that are coming by, no, I don't know that.  
23 I've just seen what I've seen and I just go by what I know.  
24 You can't -- you can't sell me on an allusion.

25           If you want to talk about it after, I can tell you

1 where I'm from and where they built the overpasses and where  
2 the businesses have thrived. And if you need to go look I  
3 think you go down 275 and Ybor City and you can see the  
4 thriving McDonald's they have at the underpass there. I've  
5 been there. I've seen it.

6 We've got to do something. If Gandy stays like  
7 this -- ten years ago I told my wife, hey, listen, I don't  
8 want to come down here because this place ain't going to  
9 change, but I've seen the change in the last ten years. And  
10 as I'm getting older I don't want to turn into my dad, I  
11 don't want to see any change, but there has to be change  
12 because the kids need it too.

13 MR. BLANTON: You have a few more seconds.

14 MR. CONTO: Because when the kids get 20 years old  
15 they're not going to be able to drive on Gandy. It's going  
16 to be jammed. There is going to be new construction at the  
17 corner of Westshore and Gandy. You're going to have  
18 New Port, Georgetown, they're going to be building there.  
19 It's going to be congested.

20 There are going to be people that are going to be  
21 going to these restaurants, and I don't think they're going  
22 to let it go. I don't think the land value is going to go  
23 down. I'm in the construction business. The only way it's  
24 going to go is up.

25 And I thank you for your time. Thank you very

1 much.

2 MR. BLANTON: Is there anyone else that would like  
3 to speak? Okay. Do we have a hand over there from Al?

4 Al, we'll allow you a minute just to respond.

5 MR. STEENSON: I know I've had my three minutes,  
6 and this is follow-up on that gentleman's comments. We  
7 understand we've got an issue down here. And I have told  
8 the community, I've told my members, I've told many of you  
9 sitting over a beer we can't continue to be a part of the  
10 problem. We've got to be a part of the solution. And the  
11 only way we're going to do that is to try to get this  
12 community to come together, you folks, whether it be the  
13 Expressway Authority or DOT, but we can't continue to be a  
14 part of the problem. We have got to -- everybody in this  
15 room has got to be a part of the solution. Thank you very  
16 much and be safe going home.

17 MR. BLANTON: I want to thank everybody for your  
18 comments tonight. We will take these comments very  
19 seriously and where you've raised questions again there will  
20 be responses.

21 The public hearing transcript, written comments,  
22 exhibits and reference materials from this meeting will be  
23 available for your inspection at the Tampa-Hillsborough  
24 County Expressway Authority, 1104 East Twiggs Street, Suite  
25 300, in Tampa, and they'll be available within three weeks.

1 And then you'll have time to review those.

2 I'd like to bring Joe Waggoner back up here for  
3 some concluding comments.

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is that going to be at the  
5 library also?

6 MR. BLANTON: That's correct at the library as  
7 well.

8 MR. WAGGONER: It's approximately 7:47. I hereby  
9 officially close the formal portion of the public hearing  
10 for the Gandy Boulevard PD&E Study. The Tampa-Hillsborough  
11 County Expressway Authority thanks you for attending. I  
12 wish you good night. And, again, thank you for your  
13 comments. You will receive responses to the information  
14 you've heard tonight. Thank you.

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## COMMENTS\_TO\_THE\_COURT\_REPORTER

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MS. GILBERT: Wynelle Gilbert. I've lived here since 1963 and I live three and a half blocks north of Gandy on South Park. So this to me when it first came up I was against it because it's going to ruin our neighborhood. Not only will we have this horrendous thing to be looking at aside from that, but the fact that all the noise and pollution, we already get that from the Crosstown right behind our houses. So now we're going to get more of it.

And the thing I don't understand is I have been across Gandy Bridge many times and I have been in different kind of cars with the high winds, 40 miles per hour, 60 miles per hour. It literally will pick up a small car, a Volkswagen. I mean really picking it up and it will go all over the road.

I don't understand when a wind from a hurricane comes how they think they're going to get all these people across that bridge. It's going to be highly dangerous. And the whole thing is they ruined our businesses down here on Gandy. They ruined our access to it. The way the setup of the road, I don't want to say it on here because -- but my father used to say they've got us going all over west hell and back to get around here to get us into the businesses where we used to just turn and go into the businesses.

And these are the people that we support to take

1 good care of us and we have all these years. This is going  
2 to kill us. It's going to kill them. It's going to kill  
3 our neighborhood. And I don't care how you cut it I just  
4 can't be for it. And I'm almost 82. So I'm not going to be  
5 here so terribly much longer. I might not even be here when  
6 they do build it, but I'm here because I try to help whoever  
7 is coming behind me in that neighborhood. It's not just my  
8 neighborhood. It's on either side of Gandy. It's impacting  
9 us.

10           And too I'm worried because I don't want to drive  
11 under one of those overpasses. I'd be claustrophobic under  
12 that thing. What I'm wondering is when -- I guess Pinellas  
13 and all their famous homeless they'll be coming and they'll  
14 be under there with their tents and everything setting up  
15 under that, you know, bridge. So where -- our whole  
16 neighborhood is going to be inundated with this for no  
17 reason.

18           And the traffic, the only time that we have heavy  
19 traffic on Gandy is in regular peak traffic hours, just like  
20 Dale Mabry, Florida Avenue, wherever, the interstate. It's  
21 the same thing. Once they've gone we're back to normal.  
22 But now the way it's all been redesigned -- I wrote a letter  
23 to the Tribune and I said, okay, they're putting this -- you  
24 know, they're going to have a Garden of Eden running down  
25 the center and that's going to be lovely. I said we're not

1 improving ourselves at all. We'll still have four lanes  
2 just like we have, two on either side.

3           The only thing we got was an extra turn lane at  
4 Manhattan and at Westshore. So I said that really didn't  
5 help us out any, and I said that island going down the  
6 center is nothing but a preface for those beautiful Y-shaped  
7 supports that are going to be put in for that bridge.

8           I just feel like this whole thing is a fiasco, and  
9 the way Gandy is set up now is a fiasco and if they build  
10 this bridge it will kill us. So that is the way I feel  
11 about it. And I don't know that I'll be here when you get  
12 it built. Maybe I'll be gone, but by God I'll fight as long  
13 as I can. Thank you very much.

14           MS. MALO: Eileen Malo. I'm south of Gandy. The  
15 number one thing that -- everything that's happened around,  
16 you know, in the last couple of years in this area, nobody  
17 stops to think that those of us south of Gandy, we have no  
18 other way out. If we can't get across Gandy, we have no  
19 other way out.

20           All we have is water on three sides, and every  
21 time they come up with all these new ideas it makes it even  
22 worse. I mean I've been here for fifty some years and I  
23 just don't like what they're doing to our whole area, our  
24 whole neighborhood. I just don't see any real progress for  
25 it. I mean it's -- the way they handled it.

1           Something I noticed this week, I noticed that the  
2 new lights they put in, the street lights, they're on all  
3 day. So who is going to pay for that? The people probably.  
4 Why would they have them all on all day? I can't figure it  
5 out. It's just kind of a shock. But, anyway, I definitely  
6 do not like the -- even the thought of having the overpass.  
7 I mean that will really shut us off and out. It's just not  
8 right.

9           MR. MESSER: Elroy Messer, 4106 West Coachman  
10 Avenue. Now basically I'm retired military and we bought  
11 here in 1976 because of the nice quiet neighborhood, easy  
12 access and so on to the bridge and so on. And so I'm really  
13 not real happy to see this come in. I fear the noise level  
14 will increase greatly as I'm just a little bit north of  
15 Gandy.

16           I also know when they have these overpasses or  
17 bridges up above you do get homeless people and this type  
18 that come underneath because it's sheltered. So I -- even  
19 to the point with the bridge high enough, just about as high  
20 as it's going to be, there will be diesel oil stuff in the  
21 air is what I'm trying to say that will come off of that.  
22 So our nice, dreamy neighborhood is going to be a racetrack  
23 for those that want to quickly go from Selmon across the  
24 bridge and over to St. Petersburg.

25           So it will benefit I'm sure in the case

1 of hurricanes and for those people, other people,  
2 St. Petersburg and so on, the traffic flow, but as far as  
3 us, the people who live here, I don't really see any  
4 advantage. Nothing but heartbreak for us. Graffiti, you  
5 know, things like this, it will come in. There is no  
6 question about it. And, like I say, it's going to ruin the  
7 neighborhood.

8           One other thing. Right where I live on Coachman  
9 we flood by a nice -- a nice rain will actually flood us.  
10 We've had water in our houses and so on. I don't know what  
11 this may or may not do for us, but we need some flood relief  
12 that they've been promising since 1976 for us on South Lois  
13 and West Coachman Avenue, and that's -- you know, that's  
14 never addressed. Now we're going into all of this. I don't  
15 know. You know, I think we'll just keep on flooding  
16 probably. My wife would say ditto.

17           MR. TEAHAN: My name is Tim Teahan. I'm the vice  
18 commander of the US Coast Guard, Flotilla 79, at  
19 5108 West Gandy Boulevard. We're located at the Gandy boat  
20 ramp. Our concern is focused on the signs that we use to  
21 publicize our safe boating courses.

22           Looking at the maps and the renderings it appears  
23 as if at least the westbound passenger cars will not be able  
24 to see the sign, and I have a real concern about that.  
25 60 percent of our attendees of our weekly boating courses

1 are there because they saw the sign from Gandy Boulevard,  
2 and I want to make certain that there are -- that these  
3 concerns are dealt with by the Authority and your engineers.

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1 STATE OF FLORIDA )  
2 COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH )

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4 I, SHARON K. RUBY, Registered Florida Reporter,  
5 and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at  
6 large, hereby certify that the Public Hearing was recorded  
7 in Stenotypy by me and that the foregoing pages constitute  
8 a true and correct transcription of my recordings thereof.

9 WITNESS my hand and seal this 11th day of  
10 September, 2009, at Tampa, Hillsborough County, Florida.

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Court Reporter  
My Commission Expires:

