

Questions and Answers from Gandy Public Hearing August 25, 2009

A table of past projects may be found on our website – www.tampa-xway.com. This table shows previous projects, the original cost of the project, the cost of the project in today's dollars and the impacts to residential and commercial properties. On the website, click on Projects, then Gandy Project.

Two Lanes versus Four Lanes

Q: When will the second two-lane elevated highway be built? / What side of Gandy will be used for the second two lane elevated bridge?

A second bridge is not required for accommodating the regional through traffic that would be diverted away from Gandy Boulevard. Less than 40% of the traffic using the Gandy Bridge is regional (with no destination within the Gandy/South Tampa area), therefore representing less than one lane of traffic on the Gandy Bridge. The current two-lane solution is also a toll facility which means that it will not capture 100% of the regional traffic because there are always a number of drivers who prefer not to pay tolls when given the choice.

Based on the combination of the constraints of the Gandy Bridge and the implementation of tolls, only about one third of the traffic using the Gandy Bridge is predicted to use the elevated express lanes. Even if that number were to grow by double, there would still be enough capacity to handle the traffic on the express lanes. In addition, FDOT has no plans to widen or improve the Gandy Bridge for at least 50 years.

Therefore, there is no need to have more than one lane in each direction on the new structure in the foreseeable future.

Economic Impact

Q: Why was the impact on the Community not considered, loss of property values, loss of Quality of Life, loss of development opportunities, and noise and visual pollution?

The "Draft Environmental Technical Compendium" documented numerous impacts.

While some elements regarding "quality of life" are subjective, many of the components of that affect quality are objective and can be documented, for example - improving travel times, reducing traffic congestion, less fuel consumption, improving air quality, improving access to residential and commercial locations, improvements to landscaping, accommodating multi-modal transportation through improved transit locations - all will have very positive affects on quality of life.

Based on the technical studies conducted, there should only be minimal noise impacts (not much different than the noise impacts that will occur with the growth in traffic on Gandy if nothing is improved) and there are little or no impacts to any of the other elements of the physical and natural environment.

Based on the independent "Economic and Business Impact Assessment" study undertaken by the University of South Florida, there is no evidence that any loss of property values or development opportunities will occur.

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Economic Impact continued

The study did find that there would be businesses that may be impacted by this elevated structure (such as fast food and gas stations), but that other businesses would benefit from removing the regional traffic and improving access (services such as hair cutting and grocery stores).

In general, with this elevated structure, there is minimal impact on the environment, including air pollution. By using the connector, fewer motorists would be waiting at traffic lights, wasting gas and contributing to the air pollution. Motorists would be able to continue at highway speeds to their destination outside of the Gandy area.

All documents related to the Gandy project are available for review on our website – www.tampaxway.com. Click on “Projects and then choose “Gandy Project”.

Q: What will an elevated road do to the remaining small businesses on Gandy that are already harder to get to from the recent “beautification” project?

The access to all properties remains exactly the same. No driveways, median openings or turn lanes would be closed or changed as a result of the elevated project.

In addition, the elevated structure will allow the Expressway Authority to construct a new intersection at Bridge Street, and reconfigure the entrances for Culbreath Cay and Regency Cove. This intersection will all full cross corridor entrance and exit for these citizens.

Traffic

Q: Is it (the Gandy Connector) necessary?

Our study showed that without the Gandy Connector traffic will increase along Gandy Boulevard generate additional traffic congestion and result in worsening levels of service.

Q: When was the last time a traffic count was conducted on Gandy Boulevard?

Actual traffic counts on Gandy Boulevard were not taken during the study because the construction that was underway since 2007 created traffic conditions that were not normal for this corridor. The counts that were used for the study were those taken by the Department of Transportation just prior to the beginning of the construction. The future traffic projections used those counts and then factored in the current economic conditions along with future population and employment growth projected by the University of Florida and the future plans for development within the region. The Department of Transportation will resume annual traffic counts later this year or early 2010.

If the elevated project moves forward, the Tampa Hillsborough County Expressway Authority will conduct a much more detailed investment grade traffic and revenue study that will perform new traffic counts and time & delay studies for Gandy Boulevard.

Q: How many people come across that bridge every morning and take that ramp eastbound and get on the Crosstown?

Currently approximately 6,400 vehicles access the Selmon Expressway everyday.

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Traffic Continued

Q: What percentage of traffic use Westshore, Manhattan or Dale Mabry?

Approximately 35% of the traffic coming east across the Gandy Bridge has no destination in the Gandy area. While a majority of this traffic distributes to the three main roadways (Westshore, Manhattan and Dale Mabry), there is a significant amount that also uses other north-south and east-west streets within this area to cut through local neighborhoods in an effort to avoid the congestion on Gandy Boulevard. The elevated express lanes will give this cut-through traffic an attractive alternative to using the local neighborhood streets.

Tampa Hillsborough County Expressway Authority.

Q: Who would pay for this elevated highway?

The Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority (THEA) would pay for this project. As a toll agency, THEA would sell bonds to finance this project. Tolls collected pay for the operations, maintenance and preservation of the system – the Selmon Expressway.

Q: Is the “opposition” to this project going to be considered?

The THEA Board members will consider all public input when making the final decision related to accepting the project as well as the needs of the local community and the region as Gandy Boulevard (US 92) functions as both an important regional highway and a local city street. That includes public input provided at the Project Advisory group meetings, at the public workshop and public hearing, at the numerous local and regional public agency meetings (the city of Tampa, FDOT, the MPO, EPC, etc.), from unsolicited input received through emails and letters, and at the more than 70 individual and group meetings that THEA conducted within the south Tampa neighborhoods affected by this project.

Q: In 2004, how many of the pillars for the reversible express lanes had problems and had to be redone? Do we have the same contractor?

The cause of the sinking of the piers on the Reversible Lanes Project was a result of faulty geotechnical testing. At the time, over 40 experts agreed on a solution for the problem. As a result, new standards for construction of this type of bridge were adopted. The elevated structure would be built using these new standards and site specific geotechnical analysis for each pier location would be preformed.

Also, we are at the planning stage of this project. A contractor has not been selected.

Cut and Cover – Tunnel

Q: Why was the Cut and Cover not an option? / Why not consider running rail into the Cut and Cover?

The Cut and Cover option was looked at in 2002. At that time, the cost was over \$502 million. Both the Cut and Cover and Rail options were looked at during pervious studies in 2002 and not carried forward because of costs.

To construct a cut and cover, one side of the road would be completely removed; a large trench dug, a concrete box added and then the road would be redone. Then the next side of the road would have to be done. This would be extremely disruptive to the businesses on Gandy Boulevard as well as to the traffic on this road.

Gandy Lights

Q: The street lights, are on all day. So who is going to pay for that? Why would they have them all on all day?

The City of Tampa is responsible for the lighting and has been advised of the issue.

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Please direct comments to:

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