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Money planned for Gandy connector

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Abstract:

[Pat McCue]'s comments came during a meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization in which state transportation officials gave an update on the Gandy Connector project.

Homeowners near Gandy and several Hillsborough County commissioners disagree.

[Jim Sebesta] said last month that he has a viable alternative for Gandy, but is waiting for state engineers to review it before making it public.

Full Text:

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The director of the agency that runs the Lee Roy Selmon Crosstown Expressway said Tuesday he plans to set aside funding to help build a high-speed link to the Gandy Bridge.

"We are not going to stand back for 20 years before this thing goes forward," said Pat McCue, director of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority.

McCue's comments came during a meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization in which state transportation officials gave an update on the Gandy Connector project.

The state is considering two options for connecting the expressway and bridge: an elevated highway to the north of existing Gandy Boulevard and a bypass to the south through neighborhoods. It also could do nothing.

McCue said future traffic estimates warrant pursuing the project.

Homeowners near Gandy and several Hillsborough County commissioners disagree.

The state plans to select a proposal in December and make a final decision in

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April, pending the result of the project's engineering study.

MPO members said they preferred to wait for the study before taking a position on the project. They also want to hear from state Sen. Jim Sebesta, R-St. Petersburg.

Sebesta said last month that he has a viable alternative for Gandy, but is waiting for state engineers to review it before making it public.

The state has money to design the project, but none to buy the land or do the construction. If funded, work would begin in 15 to 20 years.

Officials have not ruled out charging a toll.