

Gandy Traffic Statistics

My name is Anne O'Hara and I live at 4601 W. Hawthorne Rd, one quarter of a city block north of Gandy Blvd. I see from my own observations of traffic on Gandy Blvd. that the volume of cars has been pretty uniform during the 14 years I have lived here. I wanted to be able to prove that. So I looked at the traffic statistics developed by our own county agencies. The statistics prove that my theory is correct: traffic volume has remained CONSTANT for over ten years on Gandy Blvd. I also learned that only about three fifths of the traffic on Gandy Blvd. leaves Hillsborough County to go across the Gandy Bridge into Pinellas County.

Traffic numbers on Gandy Blvd between S. Westshore on the west side to S. Dale Mabry on the east side have been FLAT at 40,000 cars (that is roughly 20,000 cars in each direction) for the ten (10) years between 1990 and 2000. The numbers peaked in 1999 at 48,000 and dropped sharply back down again to the previous level of 41,000 in 2000, probably because of the Howard Frankland Bridge construction. Remember, these numbers come directly from the Hillsborough Planning Commission and from Hillsborough County Planning and Growth Management Department.

Now let's compare Gandy Blvd. with Hillsborough Ave. between N. Dale Mabry and Rome Ave. where 43,763 cars traveled each day in 2001. As you can tell, the traffic volume is roughly comparable if slightly heavier. That road was just improved to FOUR lanes to handle that traffic. As far as I know, there are no plans for an elevated highway of any kind on that road.

We went a step further to answer two crucial questions: How much of the traffic is local Hillsborough County traffic? How much of the traffic crosses the bridge to Pinellas County?

Looking at the numbers from Planning and Growth Management Dept., the figures show that out of 50,459 cars recorded at Gandy Blvd and S. Dale Mabry, only 30,355 of those traveled past S. Westshore to or from Pinellas County, or roughly three out of five cars. These numbers match the numbers used by the Florida Department of Transportation in a letter to Bob Hart of the Gandy Civic Association in the year 2000. The letter says that 15,500 eastbound cars and 16,000 westbound cars travel the Gandy Bridge each day.

Don't forget, the numbers are constant over a ten-year period according to the Metropolitan Planning Commission figures. The clear trend is FLAT, no increase over ten years.

On August 15, 2002, Donald J. Skelton, Director of Planning and Production at FDOT predicted that there will be 65,000 cars on Gandy in the year 2020. At that time, if we use the three out of five car rate, there would be 39,000 cars traveling to and from Pinellas County each day, 9000 more than there are now: that is, 4500 more cars each way. Not a very high number compared to many other roads in Hillsborough County.

In July, we personally delivered the signatures of approximately 500 people in South Tampa who oppose the destruction of our business district to Ken Hartmann at the Florida Department of Transportation on McKinley Drive. Those signatures represent the people living not only in Regency Cove and Guernsey Estates, but in Brandychase and The Villas, the local people who shop on Gandy, those two out of five cars that do not cross the Gandy Bridge on a daily basis.

As for Gandy's being a viable evacuation route from Pinellas County, the Pinellas County director of emergency management told the St. Pete Times last week that motorists can use Gandy as an evacuation route with or without a direct link to the Crosstown. It just takes longer. I quote David Bilodeau, "The whole Gandy corridor has been up in the air for many years, I'm not counting on it at all."

Based on this information, it's plain to see that the Hillsborough County Commission has done the right thing in supporting the wishes of the population of South Tampa without harming the interests of our Pinellas neighbors in the least.

I urge each one of you to carefully review the statistics that I have presented here today. And I recommend that this Board vote to send a letter to the Governor supporting NO BUILD on Gandy. And I thank you for your attention and for your support.