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Senator To Unveil Plans For Gandy Connector

By TIM BUGANSKY

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TAMPA - Residents can discuss the Gandy Boulevard connector project with state Sen. Jim Sebesta at a public hearing Monday at Robinson High School.

It's a chance many people living near Gandy Boulevard have been eagerly awaiting.

``It's about ... time, quite honestly," said David Gutchner, president of the Gandy Civic Association.

``He's been touting about his master plan for so long, it's about time he brings it to the table."

Sebesta, R-St. Petersburg, has said he will reveal a compromise Gandy connector plan that will speed traffic and spare neighborhoods.

``We are going to have a full presentation on Monday," Sebesta said. ``It will be a total discussion of Gandy Boulevard and the plans I have been working on for the past six weeks or so."

Gandy residents have staunchly opposed the two options being considered by the Florida Department of Transportation: a bypass south of Gandy or an elevated expressway running along Gandy's north side.

The hearing is scheduled for 5:30 p.m. at Robinson, 6311 S. Lois Ave. Joining Sebesta will be Ken Hartmann, DOT District 7 secretary, and Pat McCue, executive director of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority.

At Tuesday's meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Organization, McCue said the expressway authority would develop a compromise plan within 60 days.

``As far as I'm concerned, [Sebesta] and I are on the same wavelength," McCue said.

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