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Hillsborough County Commission Joins Gandy Opposition
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Residents and business owners who oppose a controversial Florida Department of Transportation project for Gandy Boulevard won a strong ally Tuesday in the Hillsborough County Commission. Commissioners voted to ask Gov. Jeb Bush to side with the Gandy community and order the DOT to adopt the "no build" option residents desire. They also asked Bush to order the DOT to move ahead with \$23 million in improvements previously promised for Gandy Boulevard. The governor also is being asked to appear before the commission in October to address the Gandy situation. Commissioner Jim Norman raised the issue during a land use hearing, presenting a letter signed by representatives of affected neighborhoods and groups, including Regency Cove, Gandy Civic Association, Guernsey Estates, and the Hillsborough Association of Chambers of Commerce. The road project would have either a 2.5-mile overpass costing \$310.6 million, or a 3.1-mile bypass south of Gandy that would cost \$277.3 million. The overpass would displace 37 businesses north of Gandy. The bypass would displace 168 apartment units, 18 businesses and 16 homes. There is precedent for Bush to block the proposed Gandy Connector project. Gov. Reubin Askew stopped a planned Gandy expansion in 1974 in response to local opposition.

-- Orval Jackson , Tampa Tribune