



Sandy Murman

December 16, 2019

HEADLINES FROM HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY



Commissioner Sandy Murman attended a recent Fabulous Friday lunch hosted by Bob Clark at the Columbia Restaurant. The owner of Tampa Steel Erecting, Bob Clark and his family have built Florida’s oldest steel erecting company. Every Friday for the past 18 years, Bob invites 14 people to lunch.



[Plans unveiled for dedicated bus lanes from downtown Tampa to USF](#)

Hillsborough’s transit agency is refining plans for dedicated bus lanes that would allow riders to travel from downtown Tampa to the University of South Florida area without getting backed up in traffic. The lanes, which would separate buses from other traffic, are a major component of bus rapid transit — a transit option that usually comes with other amenities like special stations and street-level level boarding. The bus rapid transit line in Tampa would provide connections with the regional route and with a planned extension of the Tampa streetcar that would reach north to Palm Avenue.



[Here's how Port Tampa Bay ranks among top cruise ports](#)

Port Tampa Bay is one of the best places to cruise out of in the world, according to the number of passengers it sees. There were nearly 600,000 cruise line embarkations at the Tampa port last year. The port has seen 47.7 percent growth since 2016. Port Tampa Bay broke another record this fiscal year after it welcomed 1.15 million passengers- the second year in a row its topped 1 million. [CLICK HERE](#) for a complete list.



[The Florida Aquarium partners to help save our coral reefs](#)

Researchers at the University of Florida, in partnership with The Florida Aquarium, have discovered a novel method of culturing long-spined sea urchins, a species that is ecologically vital to the Florida Keys’ vulnerable coral reefs. Scientists from the UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) and Aquarium biologists will breed these urchins for use in the “Mission: Iconic Reefs” project, a multi-partner coral reef restoration initiative.



[Nursing rooms, water bottle stations and pet relief](#)

Water bottle filling stations, nursing rooms and service animal relief areas are coming to Tampa International Airport. Tampa International Airport has long been known for providing an outstanding guest experience and these new amenities build on that legacy of putting our passengers first. Each of the airside – A, C, E, and F – will get service animal relief area and two water bottle fill stations. Airside A, C and E will get nursing rooms.

Big Bend Road At I-75 Interchange Scheduled For \$65 Million Widening And Improvements



The rendering shows I-75 from north to south, Apollo Beach to the right and Riverview to the left. For more information, contact Manny Santos, E.I. Public Works project manager, at 635-5400 (CIP Project Number: 69657000) or visit www.hillsboroughcounty.org/en/government/county-projects

By Brian Bokor

Big Bend Rd. will be widened from four lanes to six with construction beginning in late 2021. The 1.6-mile project will stretch between Covington Garden Dr. and Simmons Loop and will include enhanced pedestrian, bicycle and bus facilities. Pedestrian safety features will include wide sidewalks and enhanced crosswalks and signals.

The joint design-build project between Hillsborough County and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was initially planned to be completed in two phases and take up to 10 years. It will now be done simultaneously as a single six-year project. The new anticipated completion date is slated for late 2024. Northbound improvements to the Big Bend Rd./I-75 interchange include constructing a new northbound on-ramp for westbound Big Bend Rd. traffic which will realign the traffic from a left-turn across travel lanes to a right-hand lane merging onto the interstate.

Southbound improvements to the Big Bend Rd./I-75 interchange include constructing a new off-ramp for westbound Big Bend Rd. traffic which will eliminate the need to cross Big Bend Rd. exiting I-75 from the north. The southbound I-75 off-ramp will also be lengthened in order to eliminate backups into travel lanes on I-75. Eastbound Big Bend Rd. travelers will have an additional exit lane added and will continue to use the same traffic pattern as is currently utilized without having to share the exit with vehicles heading west.

Old Big Bend Rd. will be reconstructed to avoid the ramps to be built as part of the Big Bend Rd./I-75 interchange along with a roundabout utilized at the Old Big Bend Rd./Bullfrog Creek Rd. intersection. Signal improvements at Covington Garden Dr. and Simmons Loop as well as improved storm water drainage are part of the \$65,500,000 project, of which FDOT will be contributing \$20,000,000. Hillsborough County is also pursuing additional funding (Build Grant) from the Federal Highway Administration to offset local county funds.

UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE COUNTY

Wednesday, December 18th – 9:00 AM

Regular BOCC Meeting, County Center

STAY CONNECTED

WHAT'S ON THE BOCC AGENDA?

[Click on this to see a list of BOCC Agendas](#)



