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**HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY NEWS**

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**County Celebrates Groundbreaking of US 301 Project**

Hillsborough County, the Florida Department of Transportation, local developers and community representatives put the first shovel in the ground today on a long-awaited improvement on US. 301 in Riverview. The \$110 million project is unique because of the cooperative partnership between the state, county and the developers that provided the funding which has advanced project construction by almost 10 years.

The current construction project will improve a six-mile segment of U.S. 301 from Gibsonton Drive to County Road 672/Balm Road. Improvements consist of widening the road from a two lane rural road to a six-lane divided highway with a 22-foot median. Pedestrian features will include a five-foot sidewalk on the west side and a 12-foot multi-use path on the east side.

This project began in 2005 when the County approved an agreement with nine developers to provide partial funding of widening U.S. 301 to four lanes from Gibsonton Drive to S.R 674 (Sun City Center). Additional funds were provided by a second group of developers in 2008 which allowed the County and Florida Department of Transportation to expand the design of the project to six lanes.

The cost of the current phase is approximately \$110 million, which includes construction, design, studies, acquisition and administrative costs. The State is contributing \$47 million to the project. A portion of this amount, \$32.9 million, is from a grant that the County received from the State in October 2007, which is awarded to communities that have congested state roads.

Developers are contributing about \$42 million to the project and the County will be contributing about \$20 million.

This project is scheduled to begin construction in November and be completed and open to traffic in the summer of 2012.

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