

**New North Transportation Alliance  
Advisory Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 13, 2013 8 a.m.  
USF Center for Urban Transportation Research**

**Attendance**

Charles White	Hillsborough County	Dan Jurman	UACDC
Sandi Moody	TBARTA	Julie Bond	CUTR, NNTA Co-Director
Christina Kopp	TBARTA		
Steve Gordillo	HDR	Sara Hendricks	CUTR, NNTA Co-Director
Randy Kranjec	Hillsborough MPO		
Steve Feigenbaum	HART	Jennifer Iley	CUTR
Randy Stribling	HART	Lorraine Duffy-Suarez	Hillsborough County Public Schools
Fredric Zerla	University Square Civic Association and THAN (Tampa Homeowners an Association of Neighborhoods)	Raymond Mensah	USF PATS
		Lisa Montelione	Tampa City Council
		Lynda Crescentini	HART
		Elba Lopez	FDOT D7
Kebreab Ghebremichael	USF Office of Sustainability	Jason Bittner	CUTR
		Brian Willis	ConnectTB
Barbara Donerly	USF Facilities Planning and Construction	Kevin Thurman	ConnectTB
		William Morris	Citizen

**Welcome/Introductions**

Barbara Donerly, Chair of the NNTA, welcomed attendees and asked for round robin self-introductions of NNTA members and visitors. Updates were given at this time also.

Julie Bond reported that the Statewide Pedestrian Safety Coalition was meeting concurrently with the NNTA meeting to determine how to reduce bicycle and pedestrian fatalities in the state. Yesterday NNTA held a press conference at USF St Petersburg, launching the first carsharing program in Pinellas County. Known as WeCar, like at the Tampa Campus, it will open to the public in three weeks. Funded by FDOT and managed by NNTA, the first bicycle repair station was installed on campus inside the Beard Garage. NNTA received a joint participation agreement from FDOT for expansion of the WeCar program and bicycle facilities improvements through use of \$190,000 of Surface Transportation Program funds.

Tampa City Council member Lisa Montelione asked to follow up regarding the definition of the NNTA area and how NNTA grant funds can dovetail with MPO TIP projects. She also reported that the Hillsborough MPO, at their last meeting, voted unanimously to approve a list of the ten regional High Priority Major Transportation Initiatives for West Central Florida that were identified by the West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee. By unanimous vote, Hillsborough MPO approved the list for further study. One of these identified priorities falls along the east boundary of New North. It

is the widening of I-75 from Hernando to Sarasota County, to at least 6 general lanes and the addition of managed lanes. Managed lanes are special lanes generally for use by transit vehicles and/or carpools, with tolls for other vehicles.

Brian Willis of Connect Tampa Bay said that their organization's purpose is to build an alliance of citizens on both sides of the Bay to push for transportation options. Connect Tampa Bay wants to give citizens with an interest in transportation options, a voice to communicate with political leaders.

Kebreab Ghebremichael of the USF Office of Sustainability announced that the Patel School is now the Patel College of Global Sustainability. The USF Office of Sustainability is working with CUTR on the Tampa Bay Clean Cities Coalition and suggested that NNTA host a presentation from the Coalition.

Christina Kopp of TBARTA announced that TBARTA is in the process of updating its master plan and it will be completed by June.

Charles White of Hillsborough County reported that the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street project is scheduled to be completed in May of this year. The Fletcher Avenue Complete Streets project is scheduled to begin June 2013.

Lorraine Duffy-Suarez of the School District of Hillsborough County announced that Riverhills Elementary School in Temple Terrace is being changed to an International Baccalaureate Elementary School.

Randy Kranjec of the Hillsborough Planning Commission announced that the Hillsborough MPO is updating its long range transportation plan at the same time as the comprehensive land use plans are being updated for the jurisdictions in the County. This provides opportunity to coordinate these plans. More information and a survey is at <http://www.hillsboroughmpo.org>

Elba Lopez, FDOT, expressed interest in learning more about the NNTA bike repair station.

Barbara Donerly, USF Facilities Planning and Construction, provided a copy of a County newsletter advertising a public hearing on the Fletcher Avenue widening Project Development & Environment (PD&E) study on March 7, Hilton Garden Inn, Temple Terrace at 6 p.m.

### **Approval of November Minutes**

The November meeting minutes were approved.

### **Presentation, Steve Gordillo, HDR, TBARTA Corridor Study, Wesley Chapel to the USF Area**

The purpose and need of this study is to identify transit options that provide mobility, economic and environmental benefits along Bruce B. Downs Blvd. (BBDB). It is for a premium transit service, meaning dedicated guideway for bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit (LRT), enhanced stations, enhanced vehicles, and transit signal priority. LRT is electrically compelled passenger vehicles on steel wheels that operate on track. BRT is bus with enhanced features. The study started 3 years ago as an extension of

HART's light rail Alternatives Analysis. BBDB is characterized by heavy congestion, heavy development, and drivers leaving BBDB to make local trips on regional facilities like I-75 and I-275.

HDR applied an iterative process using the FDOT transit model to generate ridership estimates based upon various configurations and station locations. The LRT Alternative 4 that included a terminal station at SR54/CR581, a station at Wiregrass, stations within the USF campus, but not extending to I-275 along Busch Blvd., was determined to yield highest passengers per mile and ridership of approx. 18,000 daily passengers by 2035. BRT Alternative 5, which serves the same stations as LRT 4 but also connects to I-275, had the best passengers per mile and also best ridership at approx. daily 18,000 passengers by 2035. The HART representative said that the 18,000 daily ridership estimate is too high considering service headways of 10 minutes. The FDOT representative said that these study results are in the early draft conceptual stage and can be updated per stakeholder comments. The study might lead to an alternatives analysis.

Both BRT and LRT located along the outside of the BBDB corridor would require additional right of way (ROW). BRT 5 with ROW acquisition would cost approximately \$79 million and \$90/hour operating cost. LRT 4 would cost \$653 million and \$300/hr operating cost. HDR and FDOT explained that the LRT 4 is cost prohibitive, particularly because the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will not consider it for New Starts funding since it does not go into an urban core.

Cost estimates do not include ROW acquisition for park and ride lots at all stations. Discussion focused upon the idea for park and ride lots at stations, particularly in places like New Tampa where subdivisions are not designed to be served by transit and it would take longer to walk to a station than to drive to work. FDOT explained that park and ride lots were not considered in the study because FDOT is not in a position to provide any type of service from residential areas to BBDB. It would be up to the individual communities or County to provide the auxiliary service to transport people to BBDB. The transit model incorporated the assumption that people from New Tampa residential areas will first travel to BBDB in order to use the transit service.

Discussion focused upon the timing of stakeholder involvement and what degree of stakeholder input there should be in conceptual studies. Discussion also focused upon funding constraints that would seem to dictate implementing transit service in incremental phases versus the point of view that the public is ready to support larger scale transit projects. It was suggested that the 'political capital' of elected leadership is best spent to fight for public transit projects that are big, bold, and will last for a century. That in order for public transit to succeed, it needs to be done on a grander scale, even if it costs much more money up front. It was also suggested that conditions have changed in the past year regarding technologies and opportunities from other complementary transportation projects that may allow more favorable consideration of the more expensive LRT alternative.

#### **Update by Steve Feigenbaum, HART, about new MetroRapid (BRT) Service**

The new MetroRapid service along Fletcher and Nebraska Avenues will kick-off on May 28 and run for two weeks on a trial basis, with official opening June 2 or June 9. It will be fare free initially. There is

signal priority, meaning that if a route is running late, the signal will hold a green so bus can get through. Stations are currently under construction and all will include fiber optics. There are three types of stations, 'A' station is smaller capacity like at Telecom Park, 'C' is a full station that includes ticket vending, such as that found at the University Area Transit Center (UATC) on 131<sup>st</sup> Avenue and also at the park and ride lot at Hidden River. All construction is being funded by the Hillsborough County Transportation Bond. USF students can ride for free. HART is working with CUTR and Georgia Tech on the One Bus Away cell phone app field test. It indicates when the next bus is coming. It will start in summer and it is hoped that it will eliminate the need for many signs and LED signs at stations. If successful with One Bus Away, HART will not need to put real time information signs at all stations. The Fletcher/Nebraska MetroRapid line has the highest ridership potential due to transit dependency. If successful, plans will proceed for MetroRapid to Brandon, along Dale Mabry, downtown Kennedy Blvd. to the airport and along BBDB. More information is on the HART website at <http://www.gohart.org> Handouts were distributed.

#### **Private citizen suggestion for a New Tampa Flex Route**

Bill Morris works at CUTR but is a resident of Tampa Palms and spoke to NNTA as a citizen. He wanted to go from Lowe's to the UATC but found that the 51X, which is the only service that serves New Tampa, no longer serves the university area. Bill proposed a flex route concept. Flex route is a zonal service that is a hybrid of fixed route transit and door to door paratransit. USF students can ride for free on HART flex. This zonal service concept is a part of HART's Transit Development Plan now but the economy has not recovered sufficiently to fund expansion of the flex program. Bill is proposing for consideration, a flex service zone design that is 2 miles wide E/W and 3 miles wide N/S, from I-75 and BBDB to the north, to UATC to the south. This flex zone would serve Tampa Palms and the north campus community and serve the medical facilities. There is enough coverage within the USF Tampa campus for safe drop-off locations and to make everything within walking distance. The entire zone measures 5 miles N/S as the crow flies and 3 miles E/W at its widest point. That is about 14 sq miles which would make this zone the largest in HART flex service. He said that USF might want to consider this as part of their overall transportation program. There are other zone concepts that also could be considered. The HART rep said that HART actually has two flex zone concepts for the New Tampa area for priority implementation when funding is available, recognizing that there is very little service in New Tampa now.

The Tampa Councilmember said she wants to concentrate attention on the New Tampa area because constituents do not see the BBDB widening as the relief they need. Beyond Tampa Palms, K-Bar Ranch is starting to build out. MI Homes is starting to do road work near Pasco County line for another 1,100 homes. She wants to float the flex route idea to New Tampa residents during a series of listening tours and also consider public private partnerships with major employees, considering that the VA Hospital, Moffitt and USF all have separate shuttle and bus systems that take ridership from HART. She said that maybe we can bring everyone to the table to fund something like the BRT service funded by a major hospital in Cleveland. She thinks that if New Tampa residents can leave their cars at home and use an effective transit service, they will pay for it. Maybe there is a partnership opportunity with a major retailer with excess parking, or for those who drive their kids to school, to partner with the Hillsborough

County School District at some locations where there might be sufficient land for a park and ride. Parents can drop off children at school, park, then take transit.

**Next Meeting**

The next NNTA meeting will be Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at CUTR.

**Meeting Adjourned at 9:55 a.m.**