Annual Report

Independent Oversight Committee

2019
**Message from the Chair**

Hillsborough County is gaining in both people & jobs and seems destined to emerge as the next major metropolis of the southeast. As anyone who lives here knows, however, transportation improvements are sorely needed. Less than 30% of our population currently has access to acceptable bus service. Some of our roads have not been repaved in 80 years. 14% of our bridges are classified as obsolete or deficient. Congestion on major roads is estimated to cost Hillsborough County nearly $2 billion per year in lost productivity. Worst of all, we continue to rank among the most dangerous counties in the nation for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians.

On November 6, 2018, Hillsborough County voters made a commitment to fund transportation improvements by voting for a one-cent sales tax for transportation.

This past year, the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART), Hillsborough County, and the cities of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City, developed detailed project plans outlining how they plan to use these funds to rebuild critical transportation infrastructure, improve public transportation, provide more mobility options, manage traffic congestion, and improve safety for all users. Over time, these investments will make the transportation network more safe, convenient, and comfortable for all of Hillsborough County’s communities.

Oversight is critically important to ensuring that the surtax funds are invested in the approved manner. To achieve this, the Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) was created to monitor and oversee the expenditure of the revenue raised by Hillsborough County’s transportation surtax.

The IOC is entrusted with reviewing each project plan for compliance with governing law. It is the IOC’s responsibility to ensure that all projects are completed in accordance with the provisions of Hillsborough County Charter Amendment X1, County Ordinance 19-20, and other requirements.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Sean Shaw, IOC Chair

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**Summary of findings from the 2019 Audit**

During fiscal year 2019, a total of $187,277,337 of Transportation Improvement Surtax revenue was recorded by applicable governments. None of this money was spent during fiscal year 2019 due to pending litigation.

Clerk of Court & Comptroller of Hillsborough County Pat Frank contracted with Cherry Bekaert LLP, a certified public accounting firm, to conduct an independent audit of the distribution and expenditure of Transportation Improvement Surtax proceeds for the purpose of determining the Clerk’s and each Agency’s compliance with the provisions of Hillsborough County Charter Amendment X1, County Ordinance 19-20, and other requirements.

No audit findings were noted by the auditors. On page 1 of the Transportation Improvement Surtax audit report, Cherry Bekaert LLP stated:

In our opinion, the Statement of Transportation Improvement Surtax Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position of the Clerk is presented in accordance with the requirements set forth in Note 1, and the Clerk complied with the compliance requirements set forth in Notes 3 and 4 in all material respects, as of and for the year ended September 30, 2019.

See the Transportation Improvement Surtax audit report for more information. bit.ly/IOCFinancialAudits
HART receives 45% of the surtax proceeds which must be used to improve our transit system. These funds are required to be invested according to the following formula.

- 45% or more on enhancing bus services
- 35% or more on expanding public transit options
- Any remaining funds may be spent on permissible transit projects

The governing law states that 54% of the surtax proceeds (the “general purpose” portion) shall be distributed to the county and to each municipality in accordance with their relative populations. Because the distribution is based on population, it is subject to change based on future growth patterns. As of 2020, the general purpose portion is distributed accordingly: Hillsborough County receiving 40% of the surtax proceeds, City of Tampa 12%, Plant City 1.2%, and Temple Terrace 0.8%.

The Hillsborough Metropolitan Planning Organization receives 1% of the surtax proceeds for planning and development purposes, including data collection, analysis, planning, and grant funding to assist the agencies and the IOC in carrying out their purposes.

- Minimize potholes by resurfacing “all” roads on time (vs. 60% resurfaced on time without the surtax)
- Improve traffic flow, reducing delay from future growth 44% (vs. a 28% reduction without the surtax)
- Reduce fatal and injury crashes by 35% (vs. a 15% reduction without the surtax)
- Expand bus service and run it more often on 800 miles of roads (vs. 300 miles without the surtax)
- Install “complete streets” treatments on 350 miles of high-crash roads, streetlights on 500 miles of unit roads, and fill 1400 miles of sidewalk gaps (vs. 150 miles of “complete streets” treatments without the surtax)
- Build 150 miles of trails (vs. 50 miles without the surtax)
- Rehabilitate 14 bridges per year (vs. 2 per year without the surtax)

Because Temple Terrace and Plant City are both defined as a Small Agency based on population, they may use their distribution of the funds on any transportation improvements, including road and bridge improvements; expansion of public transit options; fixing potholes; enhancing bus service; relieving rush hour bottlenecks; improving intersections; and making walking and biking safer.

The sections below and on the next page show how the surtax revenue will be divided among the agencies in Hillsborough County.

The surtax allows Hillsborough County, the cities, and HART to make progress on key performance metrics. Looking at the future 25 years from now, the Metropolitan Planning Organization forecasts that with the surtax, we can:

- Minimize potholes by resurfacing “all” roads on time (vs. 60% resurfaced on time without the surtax)
- Improve traffic flow, reducing delay from future growth 44% (vs. a 28% reduction without the surtax)
- Reduce fatal and injury crashes by 35% (vs. a 15% reduction without the surtax)
- Expand bus service and run it more often on 800 miles of roads (vs. 300 miles without the surtax)
- Install “complete streets” treatments on 350 miles of high-crash roads, streetlights on 500 miles of unit roads, and fill 1400 miles of sidewalk gaps (vs. 150 miles of “complete streets” treatments without the surtax)
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- Rehabilitate 14 bridges per year (vs. 2 per year without the surtax)
Before any of the agencies spend surtax money on projects, agency project plans must be approved by their governing body and certified by a professional engineer or procurement professional that the plans comply with the law. If these criteria are met, the surtax plans are then submitted to the IOC for review. These checks ensure a transparent process in which agencies are accountable to taxpayers.

On November 21, 2019, after thoroughly reviewing all agency project plans, the IOC certified that the surtax plans submitted by the local governments and HART comply with governing law. The following sections describe some highlights of each plan. To see a full list of projects for each agency, please visit our web page bit.ly/HillsboroughIOC.

Hillsborough County

Home to about 1 million people, Hillsborough County is a large municipality. Because it has such an immense population, it is required to allocate a percentage of its surtax revenue toward specific project categories. The county owns more than 7,000 miles of pavement and more than 250 bridges, and in this first year, will invest $30 million to maintain and rehabilitate these critical structures.

Safety is a major concern for county residents, as Hillsborough has consistently ranked toward the top of most dangerous metro areas in the nation. To address this issue, the Vision Zero movement resolves to create a future with zero serious injuries and fatalities on our roadways. To begin making progress toward Vision Zero, nearly $60 million will be invested to improve safety at intersections, near schools, and do Complete Streets treatments on 17 corridors. 25 intersections will be improved with enhancements like turn lanes, medians, signals, and bike/pedestrian treatments. This, along with a total expansion of the Traffic Management Center, will reduce traffic jams and lead to marked improvements in travel time reliability. Last but not least, the County will begin work on 11 trail projects to promote recreation and commuting.

City of Tampa

The City of Tampa will commit to spending more than $15 million to rehabilitate the Bermuda Blvd. seawall and the Broerein and Cass St. bridges, as well as resurface pavements in five neighborhoods across the city. This amount far exceeds the minimum required percentage for spending in this category and signals the City’s commitment to properly maintaining its existing assets.

Traffic is a real problem in the urban core, and the City of Tampa will invest $13 million to alleviate congestion on some of the worst offending roads. Ybor City, for example, will receive 15 upgraded traffic signals to improve traffic flow through the neighborhood, and extension of the streetcar will allow some travelers to get out of the car and onto a modern transit vehicle.

15 city streets will be enhanced with Complete Streets treatments, including things like roundabouts, sidewalks, bike facilities, crosswalks, or other safety enhancements.

City of Plant City

Plant City will use its share of the surtax to repave 10 miles of neighborhood streets to reduce potholes and improve driving safety across 40 neighborhoods.

City of Temple Terrace

Temple Terrace will invest more than $4 million in several pavement rehabilitation projects to prevent further deterioration of local roads. Nearly $300,000 will be invested in bicycle and pedestrian improvements to help create a safe walking environment along 122nd and 127th Avenues, and for students at Woodmont Charter and Temple Terrace Elementary schools. Finally, pavement markings and signage replacements will promote safety and placemaking.

We want to hear from you!

While these surtax plans have been created by the local governments, in coordination with the public, we invite all Hillsborough County residents to submit their ideas for new projects. If you have a good idea, please visit bit.ly/IOCprojectrequest to submit it to us, or pitch the idea in-person at the annual public hearing, which is typically held in the month of April or May each year.
Fixed guideway projects, such as a commuter rail or streetcar, will likely represent the largest investments funded with the surtax revenues. These modes will become the centerpieces of Hillsborough County's revitalized transportation system.

In 2020, HART will take the first steps toward overhauling the system by extending and modernizing Tampa's historic streetcar to make it a truly viable transportation option for those in downtown Tampa, Ybor City, the Channel District, and surrounding neighborhoods.

HART's TRANSITFORMATION Plan was the first plan certified by the IOC. This milestone was met with applause by those in attendance as it marked a big step toward funding transportation improvements. TRANSITFORMATION has the potential to provide critical connections for those living and working near Sligh and Columbus Aves, MLK and Kennedy Blvds, 22nd and 30th Streets, Paimetto Beach, South Tampa and South County, and the University Area.

HART will use its Bus Services portion of the funds to restore service on Routes 4, 41, 44 and 46, which had been eliminated due to Mission Max economizing efforts. On the weekend, buses on Routes 9, 15, 31, 12 and 42/45 will arrive every 30 minutes (60 minutes frequency for Route 31). Weekday frequency will also be enhanced to every 15 minutes for Routes 30 and 32, and to 30 minutes for Routes 12 and 42/45.

The rest of the Bus Services portion will improve the rider experience and buy 16 new Compressed Natural Gas buses, ten of which will be dedicated paratransit vehicles. Looking toward the future, HART will purchase 10 new battery-electric buses to continue express route service while also reducing vehicular emissions. Several capital projects will also be advanced, including a new maintenance facility capable of servicing the expanded fleet, and improvements to bus shelters and stops.

$83 million of the $88 million available in the Public Transit Options portion will be held in reserve to spend in future years.
The Independent Oversight Committee (IOC) was created by the same governing law which enacted the one-cent transportation sales surtax. The IOC consists of at least 12 Hillsborough County residents who are appointed by a governing or administrative body. Members serve at the pleasure of the appointing body on a voluntary basis, without compensation, for up to three years. There are currently 13 members of the IOC, two of whom are experts in either transportation, planning, sustainability, engineering or construction; one of whom is an attorney and member of the Florida Bar; one of whom is a land use or real estate expert; and, one of whom is a certified public accountant.

The primary charge of the IOC is to oversee both spending of the transportation surtax and implementation of the projects identified in each Agency’s Project Plans. This is accomplished by ensuring a transparent process of reviewing an annual audit of the surtax proceeds; certifying that Agency Project Plans comply with governing law; preparing an annual report summarizing the results of the annual audit; and, reviewing projects proposed by citizens.

The IOC is proud of the work its inaugural members have done over the past year. Each has devoted many hours to preparing for, and attending, meetings; overseeing project plan compliance; and, diligently disclosing findings to the public.
IOC Committee Members

**Chair Sean Shaw**, appointed by HART Board of Directors

**Vice Chair Chip Fletcher**, appointed by Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

Vanetta Kilpatrick, appointed by Hillsborough County BOCC

Audrey Sullivan Moore, appointed by Hillsborough County BOCC

Robert Hunter, appointed by Hillsborough County BOCC

Arthenia Joyner, appointed by Mayor, City of Tampa

Rick Fernandez, appointed by Tampa City Council

Jay Hollenkamp, appointed by Mayor, City of Plant City

Dan Aprile, appointed by Mayor, City of Temple Terrace

Dustin Lemke, appointed by HART Board of Directors

Manuel Menendez, appointed by Hillsborough County Clerk of Circuit Court

Ray Chiaramonte, appointed by Hillsborough County Property Appraiser

Dan Raulerson, appointed by Hillsborough County Tax Collector

IOC staff support provided by Hillsborough MPO

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