

## Understanding the 2010 Vote



### Number one concern: Economy & Jobs!

- "This is a bad time to raise taxes for anything."

### Transportation is still a top concern

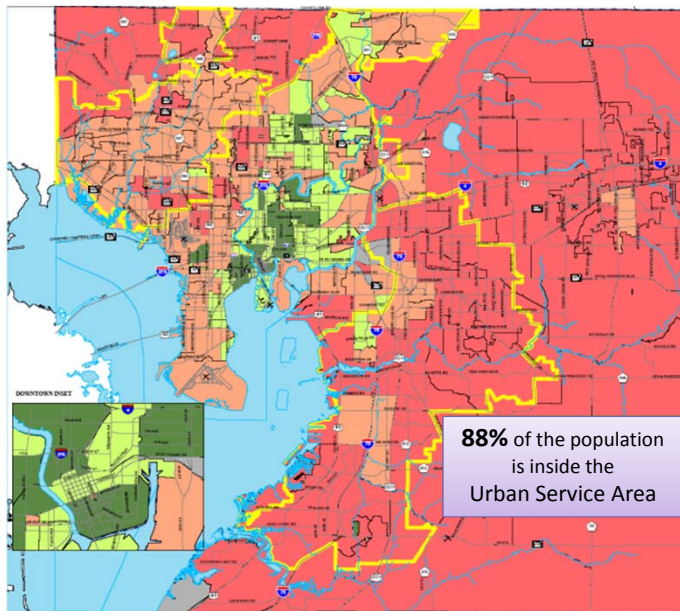
- 72% say traffic & transportation still need to be addressed

### Common themes

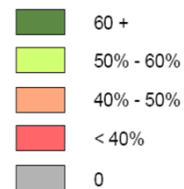
- Cost is too high
- No new taxes
- Confusion over the plan



## What did the voters say in 2010?




**Voters Approving the Transportation Tax**  
(% of Ballots Cast in Favor)



**Tampa & Temple Terrace**





## Purpose of this analysis

### Addressing the funding gap



- How do we address declining revenues for transportation?
- What alternative funding sources are available?
- What have other areas done to close the gap?

### Listening to our residents

- What types of projects are most wanted?
- What funding sources will citizens support?

### Doing more with less

- Which projects are most important?
- Are there lower-cost strategies to meet mobility needs?

## Not uncommon

### Phoenix

- 2 failed countywide attempts
- 2 cities passed, then county-wide passed in multi-jurisdictional approach

### Seattle

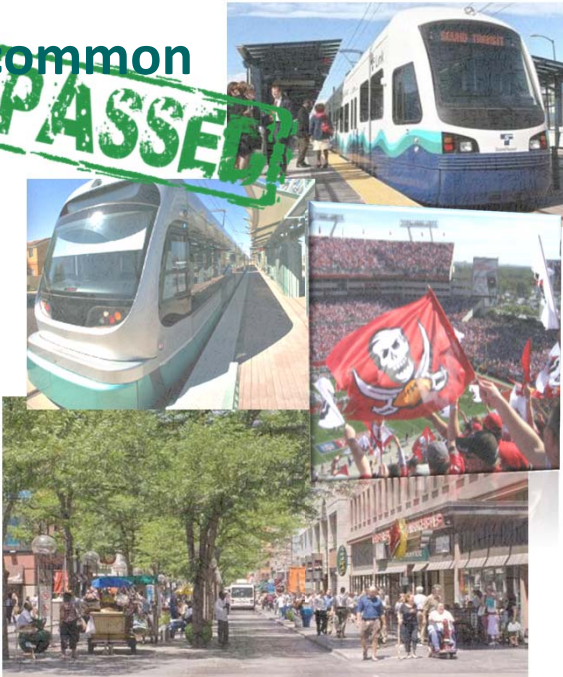
- Failed in 2007 as “big package” using 2 taxes
- Scaled back, passed in 2008

### Tampa

- Failed in 1995 as 2 taxes for schools and public safety
- Combined, added transportation and sports facility, passed in 1996

### Denver

- Failed in 1997
- Bonded existing tax to build first rail segment, passed in 2007



## How did other communities fare?



### National voting trends (2000 – 2011)

- All referenda: **70%** of **344** total passed
- Sales tax referenda: **58%** of **141** total passed
  - Less than ½ ¢: **74** total – **65%** passed
  - ½ ¢ - less than 1 ¢: **54** total – **56%** passed
  - 1 ¢: **10** total – **40%** passed\*

(unknown tax amount for other 3 passed)

\* Of the 10 that passed:

- 1 mixed transit, road, & community projects
- 1 directed only 10% of revenues to transit
- 1 funded a transit center (among other infrastructure projects)
- 1 was vetoed by the Wisconsin Governor



## Analysis – Phase 1 (early 2011) Market-research style focus groups



- 2 rounds of 8 sessions each (March & November 2011)
- Qualitative research - requires a follow-up survey to know % of residents who share the opinion
- Participants
  - Active-status voters
  - Recruited at random
  - 8 groups - by where they live
  - Mixed in age, gender, political party
  - Range of backgrounds, occupations, family status, length of residency, transportation needs, commuting patterns, etc.



## Analysis – Phase 1 Focus groups told us...



- Traffic congestion = failure to plan ahead
- Popular strategies addressed frustration with intersections
- Bicycling and walking are unsafe
- Incremental approach for major investments preferred
- Lack of specificity in expanding transit causes some hesitancy (costs, corridors, modes, timing)



## Analysis – Phase 1

### Focus groups told us...

#### On transit:

- Transit provides a choice, more than congestion relief
- Hillsborough is too sprawling for mass transit to work
- Buses are a basic public service we should have
- Many have no opinion of or familiarity with current bus system
- No clear understanding of rail modes, how they work
- Confusion about connectivity

*"Even if I take a train or bus, how do I get to where I really want to go?"*

## Analysis - Phase 2

### Hypothetical Funding Scenarios

**Local Gas Tax**

Local Gas Tax | Special Assessment District - Community | Special Assessment District - District | Mobility Fee on New Development | Express Toll Lanes with Bus Rapid Transit | Silver Intersections - Priority Lanes | Land Bank Tax | Public Service Tax

...could levy a fuel tax of one to five cents per gallon. Everyone who purchases fuel pays into the fund, including tourists, businesses, and commuters from other counties.

**How much could it cost me?**  
Average 3-person household: less than 20¢ per day

**How much could a gas tax generate?**  
Countywide: \$5.8M (1¢) - \$29.2M (5¢) per year

In October 2011, a gallon of unleaded gas ranged from \$3.35 to \$3.40. With an additional five cents, it would cost \$3.40 to \$3.53.

**What could it pay for?**

- BRIDGE REPAIRS
- NEEDS FROM COMMUNITY PLANS AROUND THE COUNTY SUCH AS COMPLETING THE EXTENSION OF GORNTO LAKE ROAD IN BIRLAISON
- SIDEWALK REPAIRS AND INSTALLATION
- BETTER BUS STOPS AND MAINTAINING SERVICE
- ROAD REPAIRS

## Analysis – Phase 2 Focus groups told us...

### On taxes:

- Local sales tax & local gas tax were the most well-received funding scenarios for transportation
- More positive about scenarios that improve the overall transportation system throughout the county, not just in small, defined areas
- Deep lack of trust in local government's ability to be accountable, transparent, consistent



## Analysis – Phase 2 Focus groups told us...

### On taxes:

- General agreement that there's a problem: Growth will continue here, and transportation is inadequate now... much less meeting future needs
- But: concern / skepticism about government accountability and transparency is a major obstacle to support of any funding scenario
- Concerns about 'bait and switch' (Florida Lottery example)
- Some concerns about developer waivers



## Listening to Hillsborough residents



### Statistically Significant Telephone Survey

- Conducted July 31 – August 5, 2012
- Quantitative research ("How many feel this way?")
- Participants
  - **806** active-status voters
  - Distributed by County Commission districts
  - Oversample of **100** interviews in City of Tampa
  - Balanced to reflect county's gender, registered party affiliation
- Margin of error
  - Topline, district-wide results have **±3.7%** margin of sampling error, at **95%** confidence level
  - Results by district have **±6%** margin of sampling error



## General perceptions & attitudes



Thinking about the issues facing the Tampa Bay area, in your opinion ... what is the most important issue facing the Tampa Bay area today? (open end)

Nearly ½ of respondents identify **jobs and the economy** as the most important issue. Combined 15% cite transportation issues (roads, public transportation and traffic). Four years ago, top issue was taxes, followed by transportation issues.

Jobs/employment	39%
Economy	9%
Public Transportation	9%
Crime	7%
Education	4%
Politics/city hall/city finances	4%
Roads	3%
Traffic	3%
Housing/foreclosures	3%
Homelessness	1%
Other (misc.)	9%
Don't know	6%

} 48%

From 2008 - Hillsborough County Survey

"What is the #1 issue that you would like local officials to address?" [open-ended question]

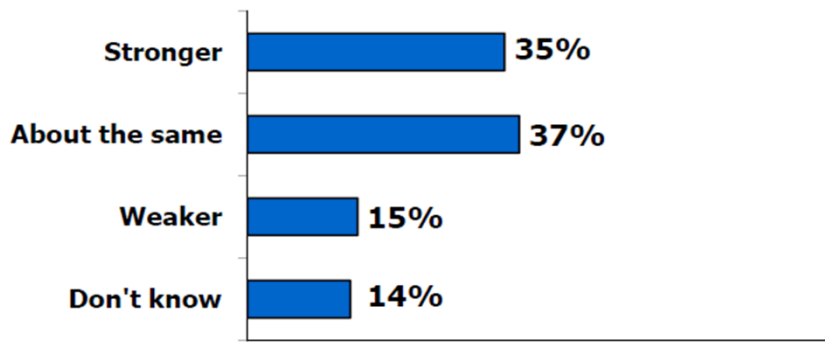
1. High property taxes 12%
2. Taxation – general 10%
3. Traffic congestion 6%
4. Poor transportation system 6%
5. Roads/highways need improvement 5%



## Mild optimism



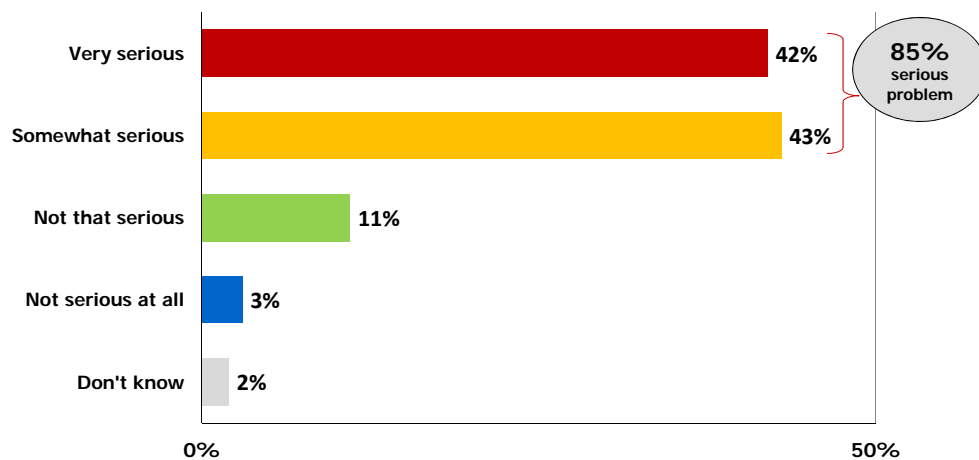
"Thinking about the local economy, do you believe the economy in the Tampa Bay area will be stronger a year from now, about the same, or weaker in a year?"

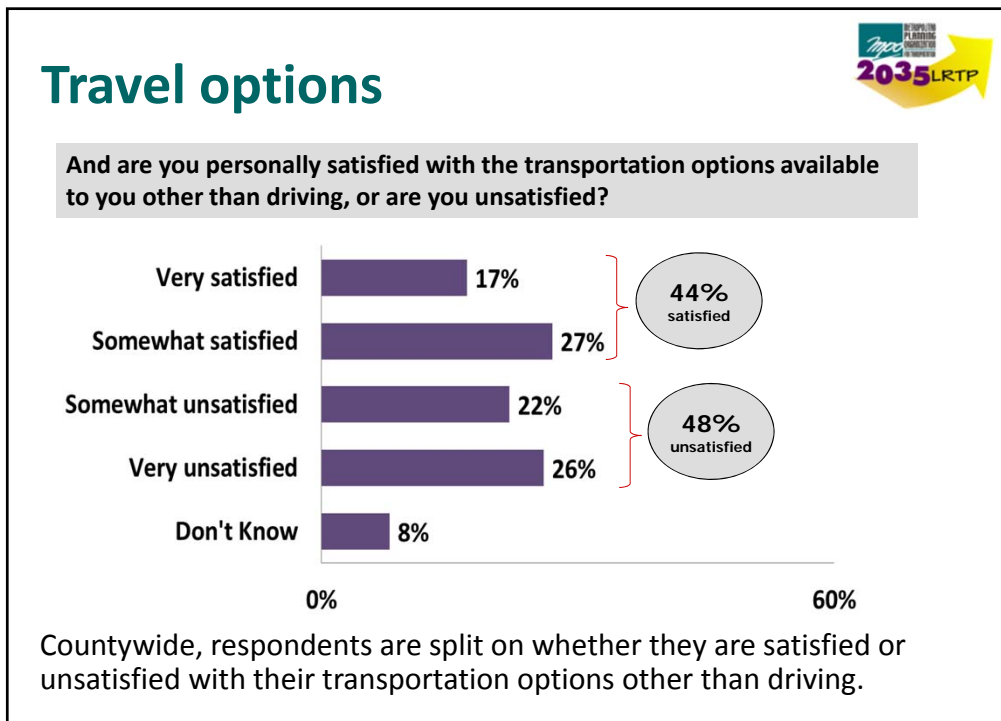
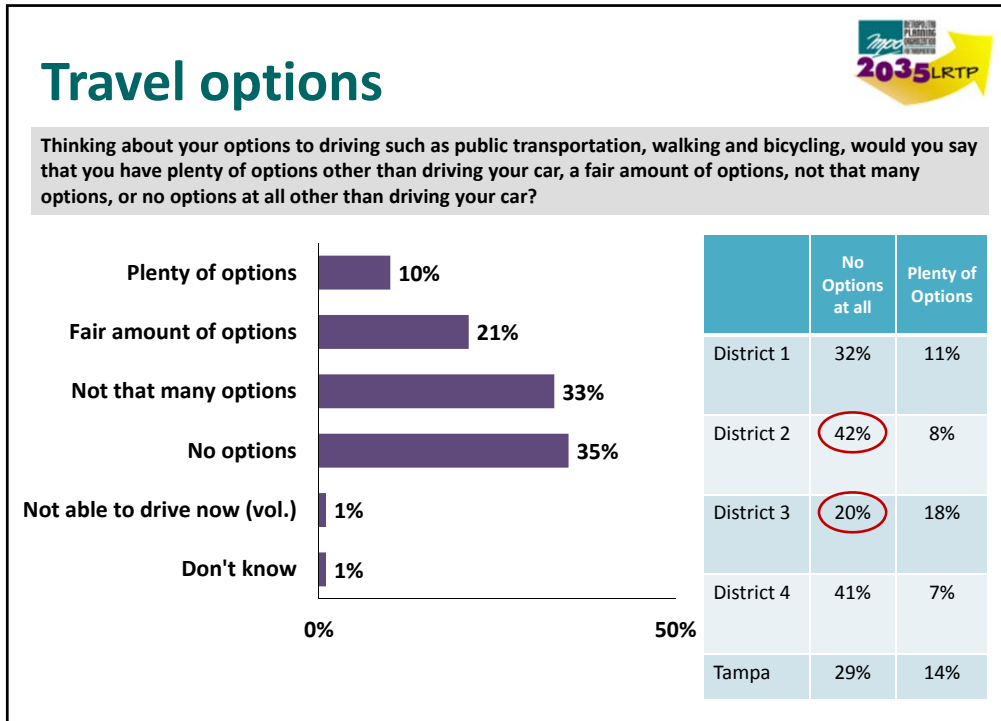


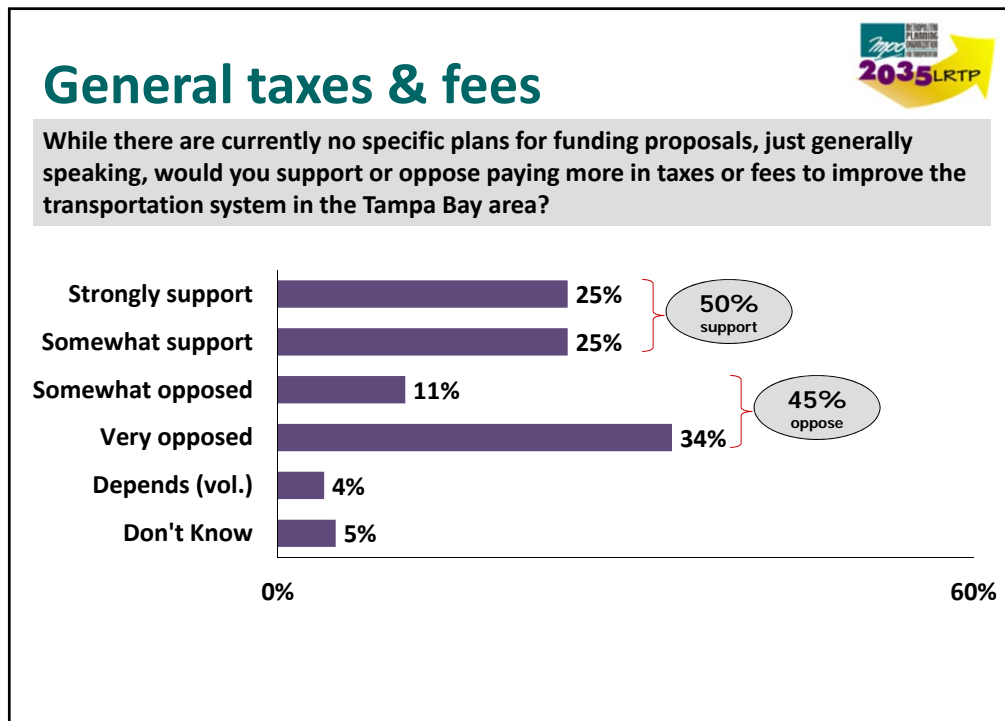
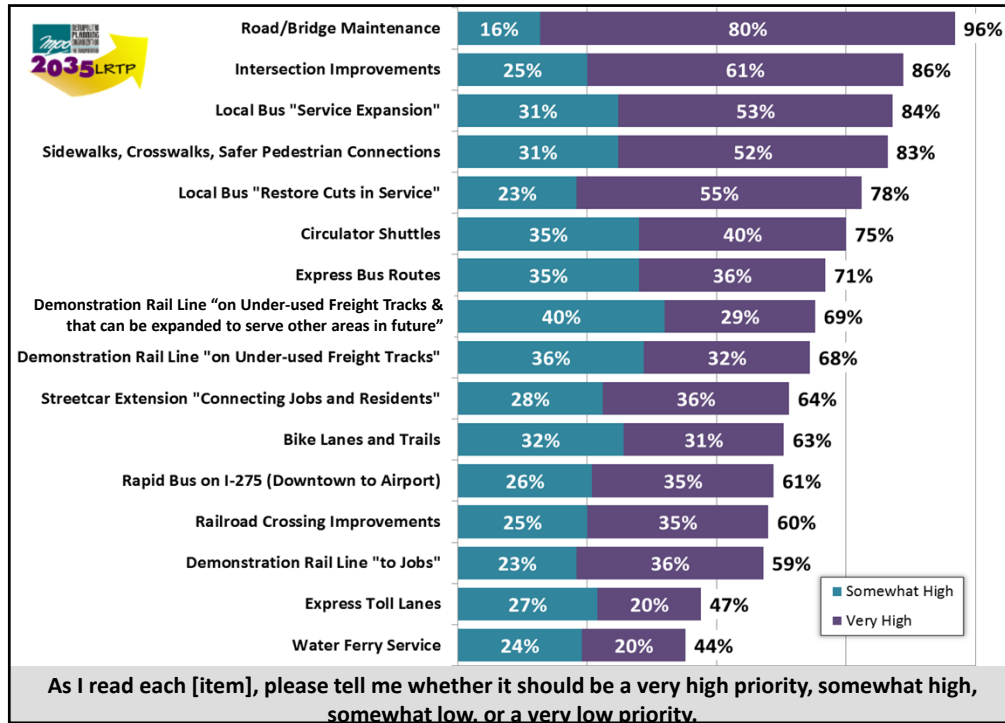
## Traffic congestion



How serious of a problem is traffic congestion in the Tampa Bay area?







## Taxes & fees: Reasoning



What is the main reason why you support/oppose paying more in taxes or fees to improve transportation? (open end)

### Support (400)

### Oppose (359)

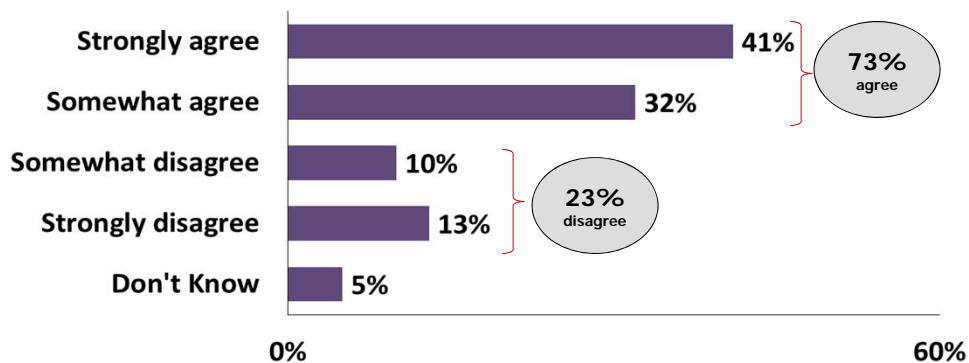
Good for community, business	23%	Raise taxes/can't afford	54%
Needed/needs to be done	21%	Mistrust gov't/poor planners	14%
Willing to pay for improvement	17%	Unnecessary/not needed	10%
Alleviate traffic congestion	15%	Private funding/different funding	10%
Support (general)	10%	Don't use/wouldn't use	6%
		Oppose (general)	6%
		Poor use of money/higher priorities	3%

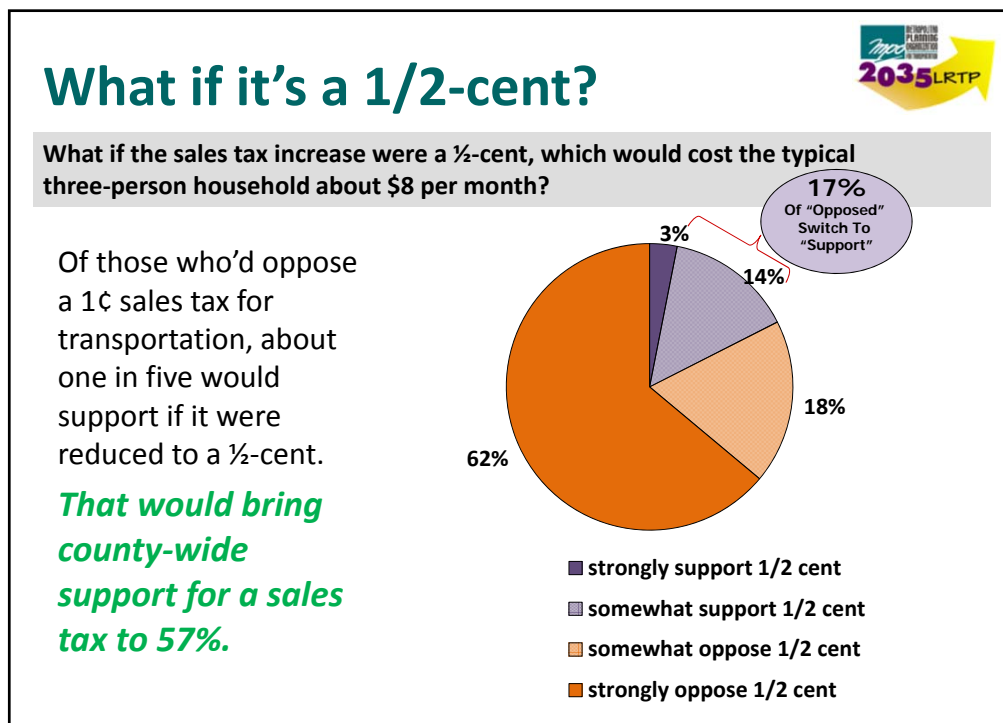
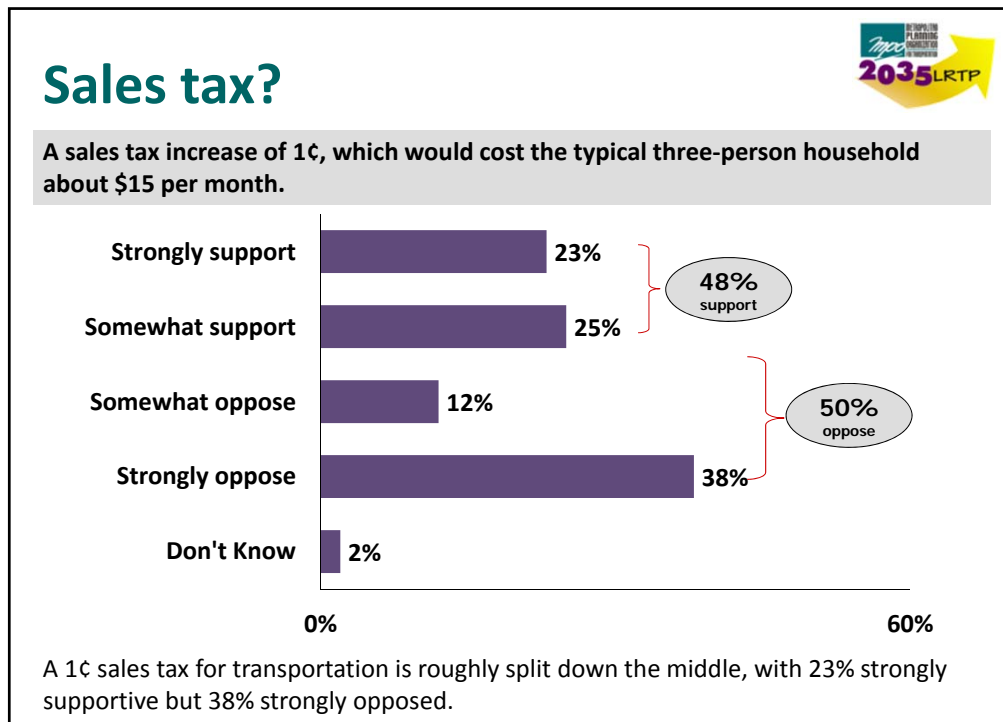


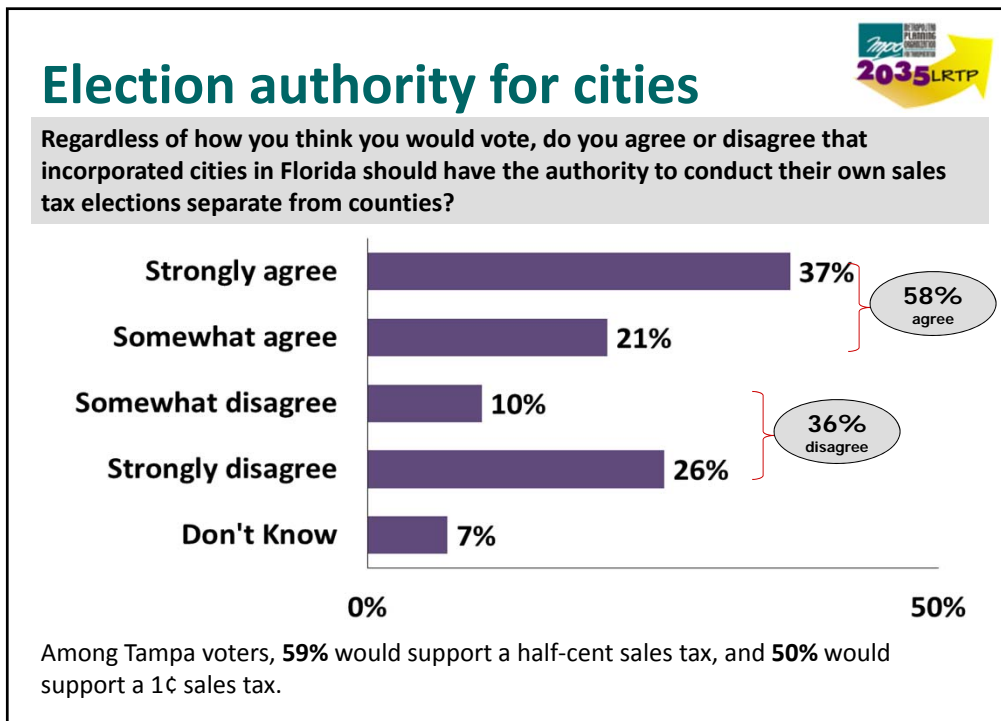
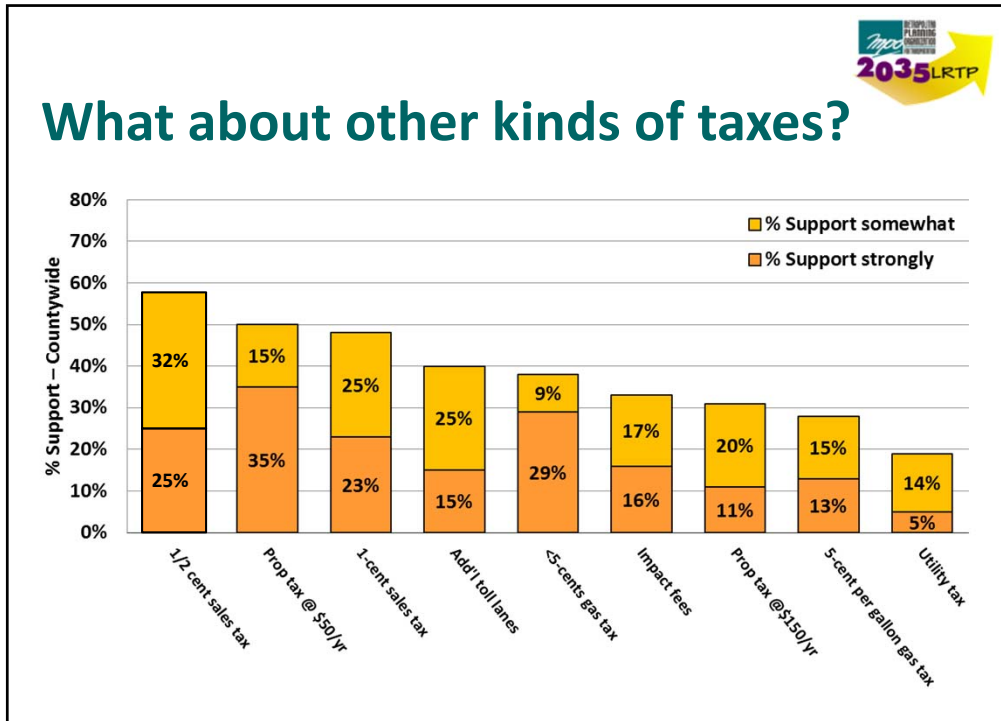
## Tax for transit?



Public transportation is currently funded through local taxes, like other community facilities such as libraries, parks, schools and road maintenance. Do you agree, or disagree, that local taxes should be used to fund public transportation?



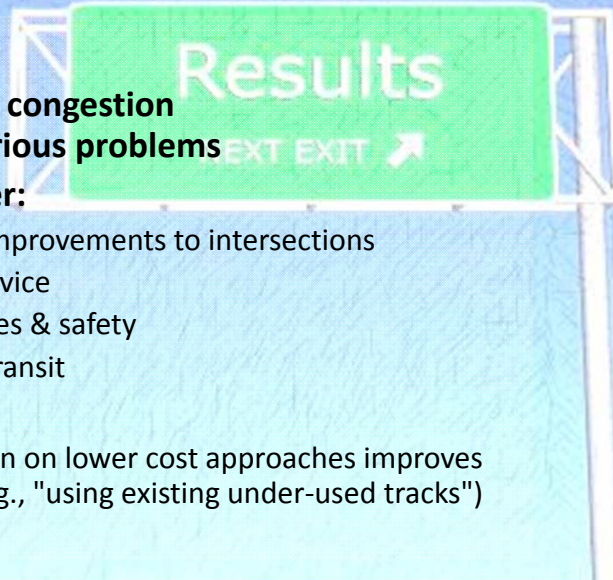




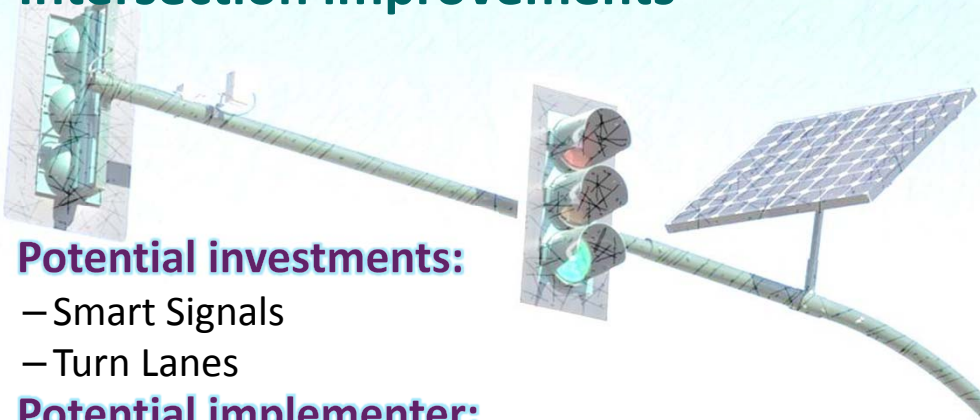
## Telephone survey summary

### Key themes

- **Transportation & congestion are viewed as serious problems**
- **Priorities, in order:**
  - Maintenance & improvements to intersections
  - Expanded bus service
  - Pedestrian facilities & safety
  - Incremental rail transit
- **Rail transit**
  - Adding information on lower cost approaches improves the receptivity (e.g., "using existing under-used tracks")



## Intersection improvements



### Potential investments:

- Smart Signals
- Turn Lanes

### Potential implementer:

- Hillsborough County

### Addressed in:

- ATMS Program & Intersection Master Plan

## Bus system expansion

### Potential investments:

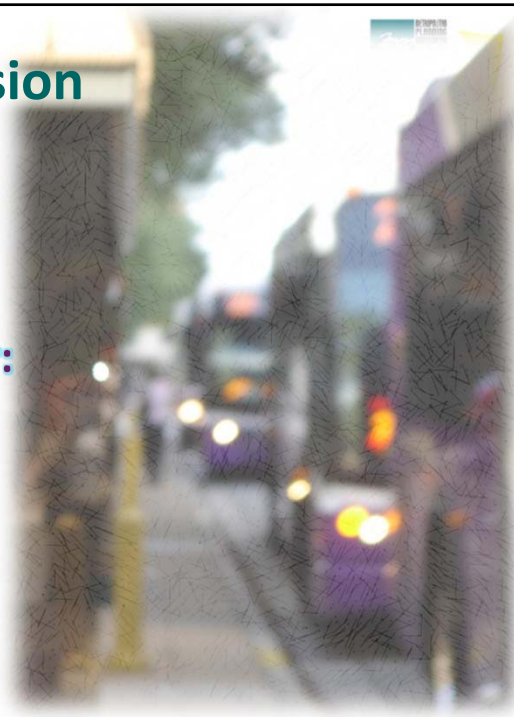
- Express Bus
- Circulators

### Potential implementer:

- HART

### Addressed in:

- Transit Development Plan





## Safe walking & trails

### Potential investments:

- Trails & sidewalks
- Safer crossings

### Potential implementers:

- Hillsborough County
- City of Tampa

### Addressed in (respectively):

- Greenways & Trails Master Plan
- Tampa Walk/Bike Plan



## Return to local communities

### Potential implementers:

- Split among local governments for neighborhood & community needs

### Potential investments:

- Railroad Crossings
- SouthShore Water Transit
- Central Tampa Streetcar Extension
- Other local priorities



## Lower-cost hybrid rail technology

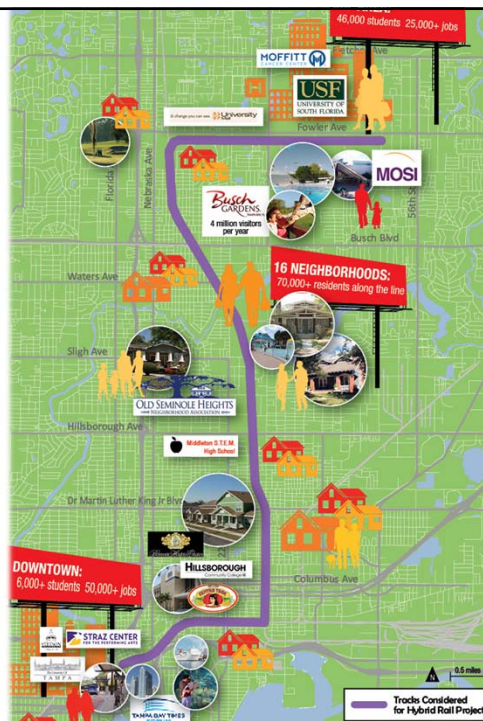


- **Modern self-propelled vehicles**
  - No overhead wires
  - Not much larger than LRT
  - Nimble turning & acceleration
- **Reuse existing tracks**
  - Little right-of-way needed
  - Passenger trains run during the day, freight at night
  - Solidly built vehicles per Federal Rail Administration



## Hybrid rail pilot

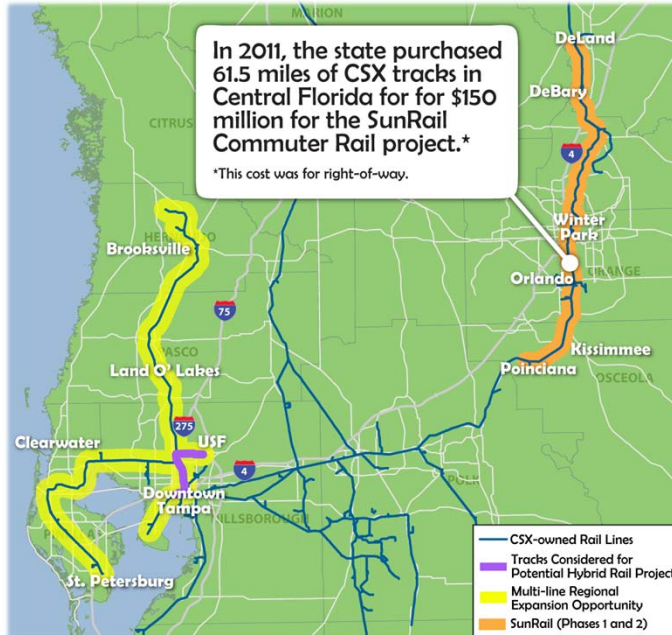
- **Reuse existing freight rail corridor**
  - Requires agreement with CSX
  - Could be operational sooner than light rail
- **Cost to build this line, USF to Downtown**  
(broad brush, very preliminary)
  - Light rail: \$862 M
  - Hybrid rail: \$240 M - \$490 M
- **Focus on rush hours to reduce operating costs**



## Hybrid rail pilot

### Expansion opportunities

- More than 100 miles of CSX-owned tracks in Tampa Bay area
- Potential to expand & connect passenger rail service to multi-destination system
- In SunRail's case, FDOT purchased 61.5 miles of tracks from CSX for \$150 million (\$2.4 million/mile)




## Special-lane rapid bus

- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in express tolled lanes**
  - Assumes FDOT builds new tolled express lanes on I-275
  - Connect Downtown Tampa, Westshore, and Tampa International Airport **in 22 minutes!**

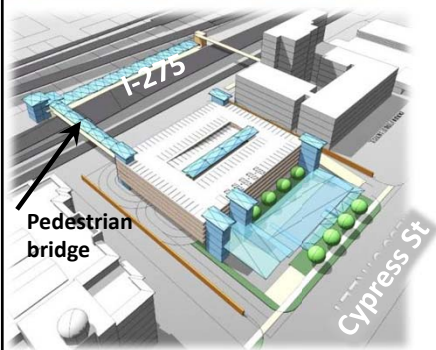


## Special-lane rapid bus.

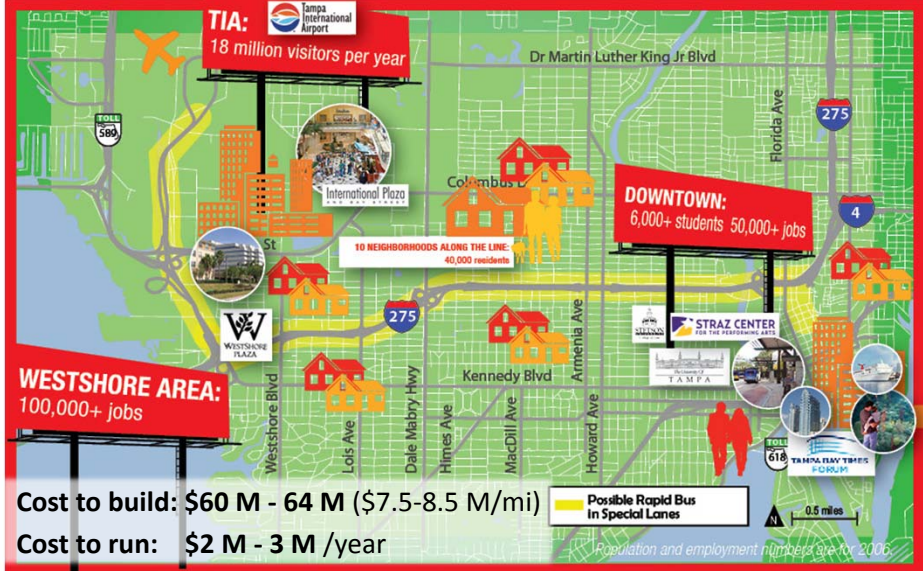


**Stations:**

- Build in median
- Access to:
  - Neighborhoods
  - Business districts
  - Sidewalks
  - Circulator bus routes
- Permanent, prominent stations can attract development



## Special-lane rapid bus pilot



**TIA:** Tampa International Airport  
18 million visitors per year

**WESTSHORE AREA:** 100,000+ jobs

**DOWNTOWN:** 6,000+ students 50,000+ jobs

10 NEIGHBORHOODS ALONG THE LINE: 40,000 residents

**Cost to build:** \$60 M - 64 M (\$7.5-8.5 M/mi)  
**Cost to run:** \$2 M - 3 M /year

**2035 LRTP**

**STRAZ CENTER FOR THE FUTURE OF TAMPA**

**TAMPA FLAY TIMES FORUM**

Population and employment numbers are for 2006.

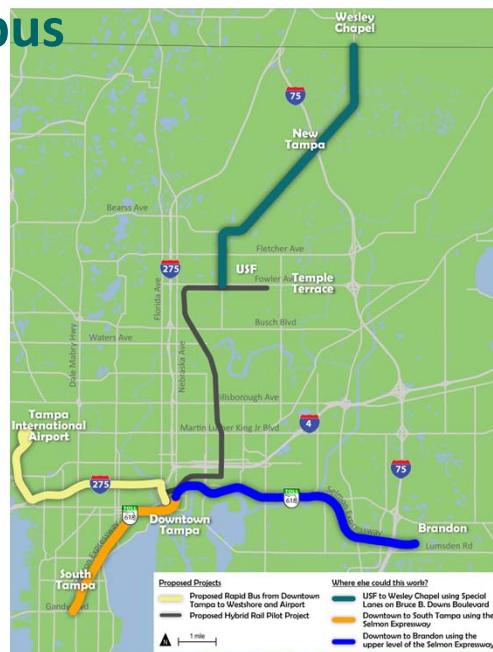
## Special-lane rapid bus

Where else could this work?

- USF to Wesley Chapel
- Downtown to South Tampa
- Downtown to Brandon



Artist's sketch of Bruce B Downs Boulevard after widening, with one carpool/bus lane



## Funding strategies with possible majority support



Sales tax referendum options:

- ½¢ Countywide
- 1¢ City of Tampa **only**
- ½¢ City of Tampa **only**

With any option, we **must**:

- Ensure **accountability & transparency!**



## Could we really afford to build rail?

### Half-cent countywide option

- Annual revenues: **\$100 million** (estimate for '15)
- Hybrid rail pilot project: **~20%**
  - *Assumes no federal or state grants are received, and fares cover 20% of operating cost*
- Remaining for intersections, maintenance, safe walking, bus improvements:
 

**~80%**



## Could we really afford to build rail?

### One-cent Tampa-only option

- Annual revenues: **\$55 million** (estimate for '15)
- Hybrid rail pilot project: **~35%**
  - *Assumes no federal or state grants are received, and fares cover 20% of operating cost*
- Remaining for intersections, maintenance, safe walking, bus improvements:
 

**~65%**



## Could we really afford to build rail?

### Half-cent Tampa-only option

- Annual revenues: **\$27 million** (estimate for '15)
- Hybrid rail pilot project: **~75%**
  - *Assumes no federal or state grants are received, and fares cover 20% of operating cost*
- Remaining for intersections, maintenance, safe walking, bus improvements:
 

**~25%**

### Accountability is key!

**Independent oversight group is needed.**

**Hillsborough MPO has structure in place without adding a new tier of bureaucracy.**

- ✓ **Citizen review committee (CAC)**
- ✓ **Transportation departments/agencies review committee (TAC)**
- ✓ **Final approvals by council of elected officials from cities and county (MPO Board)**
- ✓ **Annual public hearing on priorities for spending**
- ✓ **Regional coordination with CCC & TBARTA (formal agreements in place)**
- ✓ **Land-use coordination with the Planning Commission**

