

# At the HART of the Community in 2010: A Year in Review

## To be the Best

In October, HART received the **2010 Outstanding Public Transportation System Achievement Award** among agencies in North America carrying between 4 - 20 million passenger trips. The American Public Transportation Association presented this award to recognize HART's achievements in ridership growth, financial management, environmental sustainability, workforce development and community relations.



## To Serve with Excellence

The frontlines of HART's customer service are its call takers, who handled an average of **21,300 calls each month** in 2010.

The frontlines of HART's operations are its bus operators, and in 2010, **82 were welcomed to the HART team**. Each bus operator must successfully complete an eight-week rigorous training program that consists of safety, vehicle and route familiarization, customer service, ADA compliance and more.

In March, HART launched **RouteShout**, a tool to give riders schedule information, bus stop locations and service updates, all via the Internet, smart phone, Android or iPhone.

In April, the **HARTflex** pilot program launched in Brandon and South County. This van-based service is strategically operating in areas of Hillsborough County currently not served or underserved by HART and where the population density is not suited for traditional, fixed-route bus service.



The **TECO Line Streetcar System** expanded **one-third of a mile** from Dick Greco Plaza to Whiting and Franklin Streets to bring residents into the heart of downtown Tampa and the Fort Brooke Parking Garage. This extension will be operational in December 2010.

HART improved customer facilities by installing more than **160 new shelters** in 2010, an increase over the 104 installed in fiscal year 2009. This brings the total shelter count to 530. In addition, these shelters use solar lighting to make them safer and energy efficient. Two vans were also added to the paratransit fleet to meet increased demand for HARTPlus service.

Month after month of more than 1 million in ridership made the mark in 2010, and helped HART wrap up its fiscal year 2009-2010 by recording the **highest bus ridership in its 30-year history!** Another record-breaking day was achieved Nov. 3: This is the first day in HART history that ridership tipped over the 50,000 threshold!

HART's **unique and aggressive promotional program** has helped attract new riders to transit. The first ride-free promotion was *Staycation* in April, where middle and high school students rode local and circulator routes free with a valid school identification. On Earth Day, HART offered *Ride Free with a Friend*. The *Dog Days of Summer* in August and September offered free rides on certain routes during certain weeks. Lastly, in November, voters and veterans had a chance to try transit during promotions on Election Day and Veterans Day.

## Operating Efficiently

A gas spike pinches pockets when paying at the pump for two or three family cars. Imagine the effect of higher gas prices on a fleet of more than 200 buses! In September, HART aggressively pursued low gas prices by facilitating a procurement consortium for ultra low sulfur diesel fuel, which will **save HART \$1.2 million over the next year**. In other words, HART along with PSTA and LAMTD (Citrus Connection) locked down low gas prices by purchasing fuel in advance.

### HART secured \$14.2 in grant funding:

- \$12.6 million from the Federal Transit Administration to fund several HART projects, including preventative maintenance, fleet replacement, paratransit service and construction of the Tampa International Airport Transfer Center.
- \$500,000 from a federal appropriations bill to fund bus purchases.
- \$640,200 from the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program to fund late night and weekend bus service on several bus routes.
- \$399,716 from the New Freedom Program to improve bus stop accessibility.
- \$99,929 from the New Freedom Program to fund a travel mobility trainer position.

Ever had a car that's a bottomless pit of repairs? When do repairs outrun paying for a new car? That's why it's important and efficient for HART to replace buses at just the right time before repairs consume too much time and resources. In addition, it's a matter of safety for customers. In 2010, HART replaced 29 of its 232 buses. These new vehicles (as well as all vehicles replaced in the last three years) are equipped with the latest EPA-certified, low-emission engines. HART's routing experts are constantly looking at HART's grid of connections to continuously seek modifications that will streamline service and save money. Slight route adjustments made in July and November **saved HART a total of \$660,000!**

These efficiencies and savings were critical in balancing this fiscal year's budget. Despite a decrease of \$3.5 million in ad valorem revenue from 2010 to 2011, in October, the **HART Board adopted a budget with no funding increase**. 2010 was truly a banner year at HART of doing more with less.

Efficient operations means compliance. The Bus Stop Re-Alignment Campaign began in 2009 to evaluate bus stops primarily for ADA compliance and safety. To date, 1,787 bus stops have been evaluated (853 of those were evaluated in 2010). There are a total of about 3,800 bus stops throughout Hillsborough County.



HART is operating more efficiently than ever: From securing low gas prices to regularly making route changes that meets the needs of today's riders.

## Planning for the Future

The **Rapid Transit Investment Plan (RTIP)** was developed and refined through inter-governmental coordination and public outreach. The RTIP is a long-term plan that highlights new and expanded services HART would implement throughout Hillsborough County with a dedicated funding source. The Hillsborough County Transportation Task Force was involved in developing the RTIP, which complements the Hillsborough County MPO's 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan and Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority's Regional Transit Master Plan.



In 2010, HART developed the Rapid Transit Investment Plan to find transit solutions now and into the future.

In September, a vast community outreach effort was conducted as part of the **Alternatives Analysis Study**, which was launched in the summer of 2009. The Alternatives Analysis is nearing completion and a selection of the Locally Preferred Alternative for rapid transit corridors has been rescheduled for early 2011. For more information about the Alternatives Analysis, visit [www.goHARTaa.org](http://www.goHARTaa.org)

Also in September, the HART Board approved the expansion of the **Business Diversity Program** to include a Small Business Enterprise Program for the upcoming year and potentially a Woman/Minority Business Enterprise Program in fiscal year 2012. This program expansion will contribute to the local economy by providing more opportunities for local small businesses to participate in all of HART's procurements, whether they are federally or locally funded.

## Building Relationships

In fiscal year 2010, HART supported and/or conducted **366 outreach meetings and events**, up from 133 in fiscal year 2009. These meetings have provided valuable education and were a forum to receive customer feedback.

In 2010, HART launched **A Community with HART**, a monthly newsletter available electronically or in print at the nearest HART customer service office or library.



Don't be surprised to find Rocky the Bull riding HART!

HART has taken a more active role in helping to plan for a sustainable future for this community, including participation with local governmental organizations, such as the Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the Hillsborough County Planning Commission, and the City of Tampa Housing Authority. HART participates on seven MPO standing committees, **formulating recommendations on transportation issues throughout Hillsborough County**. HART has partnered with the City of Tampa Housing Authority to incorporate internal transit circulation for the Encore Development Project, Tampa's first green master planned community featuring affordable housing.

In October, the Tampa Latin Chamber presented HART with the **2010 Hispanic Large Business of the Year Award** to recognize HART's efforts to encourage and promote diversity. Over the past year, HART has made numerous educational presentations to Hispanic groups regarding the Rapid Transit Investment Plan, launched Spanish public service announcements and supported major Hispanic events, such as Feria de la Familia in downtown Tampa and Festival del Sabor in Ybor City.

In November, for the second consecutive year, **HART partnered with the University of South Florida** during one of its football games to host a food and toy drive to benefit children and families during the holiday season. In addition, HART provided transportation to the game for youth from the Javamo's Art for Autism Foundation -- it was an opportunity for several of them to attend their first Bulls game.