

**Ybor City Community Redevelopment Area
Community Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary**

February 25, 2025, at 4 p.m.

Entrepreneur Collaborative Center, 2101 E. Palm Ave, Tampa, FL 33605

I. Attendance

CAC Member (Last, First)	Seat	Organization	CAC Term Expires	Present or Absent
Austin, Marcia	At-Large	Resident	2025	P
Aye, Olivia	At-Large	Property owner	2025	P
Baia, Larissa	Ex-Officio	Hillsborough Community College	2026	P
Bailey, David	Ex-Officio	Historic Ybor City Neighborhood Civic Assoc.	2026	P
Barbas, Stephen	Ex-Officio	Ybor City Museum Society	2026	P
Barrie, Brittney	At-Large	Work/Own Barrie Hause	2025	P
Calzon, Manny	Ex-Officio	Historic Social Clubs	2026	P
DeGeorge, Tom	Ex-Officio	Ybor Merchants Assoc.	2026	P
Erion, Carisa	At-Large	Work at Casa Ybor	2025	P
Iavarone, Carmine	At-Large	Restaurant/Property Owner	2026	A
McIntyre, Rich	At-Large	Business Owner	2026	P
Murphy, Michael	At-Large	Property Owner	2025	P
Pinillos, Walter	Ex-Officio	Gaybor District Coalition	2026	P
Rhodes, Carolyn Cheatham	Ex-Officio	East Ybor & Gary Neighborhood Civic Association	2026	P
Simmons, Rich (Chair)	At-Large	Property Owner	2025	P
Trueba, Arnold	At-Large	Hillsborough County Sheriff's office	2025	P
Wojtowicz, Chris	At-Large	Property Owner	2025	P
Capitano Sr., Joe	Emeritus	Property Owner	NA	A
Costantino, Fran	Emeritus	Property Owner	NA	P (v)

Other Attendees: Lee Bell, Mark Rendini, Jack Smith, Michael English, Brian Allen, Justin Willits, Danny , Roberto Torres,

City Staff: Brenda Thrower, Chris Ullian, Captain Dan College, Mike Peterson, Crytal Shiver

Start Time: Chair Rich Simmons called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. A quorum was present with 17 members in attendance and 2 absent.

- II. **Action Item:** Approval of the Ybor CAC Minutes from February 25, 2025. The minutes were offered for review and comment. Hearing no comments, Chair Simmons entertained a motion to approve. ***There was a motion (Wojtowicz/Barrie) to approve February 25, 2025, CAC meeting minutes. Vote passed unanimously.***
- III. Public Comment: none
- IV. Community Policing Updates
 - **Tampa Police-** Captain College introduced Sergeant Crystal Shiver, who is also the LBGTB Coordinator. A PRIDE with TPD coffee event is planned at District 3 with the community and she passed out flyers. Captain College reported on the monthly crime stats. The Kight Parade went very well with low incidents for a parade of that size. TPD has a lot of support from Hillsborough Sheriff's office, and they have been fantastic partners. Rhodes commented about the disbanding area created additional traffic in the neighborhood, but it was not a huge issue. TPD is trying to steer people from the floats back west as soon as they can to keep the disruption down.
 - **Homeless Liaison** – Captain College reported on homeless situation, since Officer House was not available. A new officer has joined the unit since Officer Daniel Perez was transferred and he will be introduced at a future meeting.
 - **Code Enforcement** – Reports were distributed to the CAC and the parking lot enforcement has been going on for some time. Barrie asked about the cases that were being tracked. There were 24 lots, 16 had to meet the requirements by 2/6. Seven lots are being assessed a daily fee. They are continuing to monitor the lots and cite violators. Barrie commented with all the construction/development is affecting business and many are trying to stay in business. Businesses are having to put out A-Frame signs to advertises that they are open. How can businesses work with Code Enforcement to be lenient during this period of construction? Code is not confiscating signs if they are next to the building. Business directional signage will be installed with the next phase of the bricking project to assist businesses. Bailey asked about A-Frame parking lot signs and why they haven't been removed. If its on private property, they do not confiscate. They work with BLC on approvals and would defer to them on what to enforce. Rhodes asked about the vacant lot on North 22nd Street with vehicles on it. Its not a paid parking lot and code had them remove the signage on it. Simmons thanked for the spreadsheet that was forwarded to the CAC, but not in the packet.
 - **YES Team** – Mark Rendini provided a detailed YES Team Activity report this month with statistics and pictures. There is an increase in homelessness with folks walking around. Overall, the stats are good, and they are pleased with them.

Special Presentations

- A. **Streetcar Fare Free Funding Request** – Michael English, Chair of the Tampa Historic Streetcar Inc. Board introduced streetcar funding issue and Justin Willits from HART presented a power point presentation. He explained the governance structure of the TECO Line Streetcar with HART (operator), City of Tampa (owner), and Tampa Historic Streetcar Inc (advisory/oversight). Since October 2018, HART discontinued the fares on the streetcar since they received a federal FDOT grant along with matching contributions. In

October 2024, the \$700K grant expired and now there is a budget shortfall. Streetcar ridership has increased by 339% since implementing the fare-free service since October 2018. Currently, four CRA's have been supporting the streetcar annually and today, there is a request to ask the CRA's for additional funds to offset the loss of the federal grant of \$700,000 and to keep the streetcar fare free. HART provided the results from a recent ridership survey which showed strong support from the community to keep the streetcar free. There are about a million more riders on the streetcar each year since it's free. If they add a fare, ridership and frequency is expected to decrease, still creating a budget shortfall to continue operating the system. Willits said the request today for the Ybor City CRA is for an additional \$234K, about 1/3 of the cost of the \$700K to maintain the free service. These moneys would be reappropriated in the current FY25 budget with \$100K reallocated in Ybor CRA 1 from the HART Bus Stops, a deferred project. Thrower explained that the funding request of \$234K- Ybor City be divided 80/20 with Ybor CRA 1 at \$196K and Ybor CRA II at \$38K. Bailey suggested supplementing the streetcar operations by asking for donations with installing a "tip jar" and promoting it with a QR code with #streetcartipjar. Any additional moneys would help, and streetcar fans may be willing to donate. Willits said this is a good idea to share with the THS Inc. Board. Wojtowicz asked about the ability to support the streetcar with tax increment financing. Thrower said that an eligible project needs to be in the plan, in the budget and consistent with state statute. Tampa CRA is already funding the streetcar annual among 4 CRAs so it's an eligible expenditure. Barrie asked what advertising would be available for Ybor with community's support. There was a question about the interior advertising opportunities and maybe posting a sign saying that free fares are funded by these 3 CRA districts. Barbas said he would eliminate the stops near the Port of Tampa since they have never contributed to the streetcar and receive the benefits. Simmons ask about the future funding plan since today's request will only get us through this fiscal year. Willits said this is a question for the City of Tampa, the owner of the streetcar. He understands that there are conversations about increasing the streetcar special assessment since it's never been done and possible changing the exemption for residential property owners. He hopes that the city plans for it in their annual budget. English elaborated on the history of the streetcar system and the special assessment district which he helped establish 25 years ago. There was a suggestion about engaging other partners in the funding of the streetcar like Visit Tampa Bay. Wojtowicz feels that the streetcar is a service that our CRA should pay for since Ybor directly benefits from it along with Channel District and Downtown CRAs.

There was a motion (Wojtowicz/Barbas) to recommend funding an additional \$234,000 from the Ybor City I (\$196K) and Ybor City CRA II (\$38K) for FY25 budget. Vote was unanimously approved.

- B. 7th Avenue Intersection Survey and Design-** Nick Bennett, Project Team, presented the cost proposal to design the intersections along 7th Avenue for the next segment of bricking. We have the street segment design completed but we do not have the design for the intersections in that scope of work. Therefore, we need to engage a consultant to complete the intersection design that would also include ADA design for crossings at the intersections. A cost estimate from Mobility for survey and design for four intersections came in at \$113K. Wojtowicz asked about 16th Street intersection during Phase 1 and why we didn't have to have additional design work. Thrower explained that intersection was completed years ago when we designed the 13th Street pedestrian way linking the Centro Ybor Parking Garage to 7th Avenue. The other intersections along 7th Avenue vary and additional design work is necessary to tie those intersections with brick to the street segments and bring them up to ADA compliance. There was a question about the entire street segment and including a scope of work that would entail survey and

design for all the intersections as a cost saving measure. Bennett said that we are designing the brick street project in phases and in accordance with the budget. Thrower said the project is being completed over time. Wojtowicz was concerned about the costs and suggested exploring the engagement of a consultant to survey and designing all the intersections. Barrie mentioned that we don't want to have outdated plans down the line. Rhodes asked about waiting to get all the street intersections completed at once. Historic preservation recommends that the intersections and street segments be completed together.

There was a motion (McIntyre/Wojtowicz) to recommend \$113,000 for the survey and design of the intersections for 7th Avenue between 17th and 20th Streets. Vote passed 10-0 with Rhodes abstaining.

Reports

a. CAC Chair Report- Rich Simmons

- i. **YCDC Inc. Update** - YCDC is still processing paver orders but Joyce Lucas is on vacation in Europe for some time so there is a slight delay.

b. CRA Staff Reports

- i. **Projects Report**– Barrie asked about the Stormwater study and any follow up since its not on the list. Staff to follow up with Stormwater staff. The HART Bus stops will be deferred to FY26.
- ii. **Grants Report** – included in the packet.
- iii. **Housing Report** – included the packet .
- iv. **Manager Meeting** –Thrower mentioned the CAC Training on March 10th from 4:30 to 7 p.m. scheduled here at the ECC again and all are welcome to attend. Fiesta Day was fantastic last Saturday and thanked Lee Bell from the Ybor Chamber and the YES Team. Tampa CRA had a booth with lots of visitors inquiring about the grant programs

Announcements/ New Business - None

Chair Simmons adjourned the meeting at 5:19 p.m.