

TAMPA STREETCAR EXTENSION & MODERNIZATION



The Tampa Historic Streetcar System, known as the TECO Line, currently operates as a 2.7-mile-long, fixed guideway transit service connecting destinations in Downtown Tampa, Channel District, and Ybor City. Since the start of revenue service on Phase I (Ybor City to Convention Center) in October 2002 and opening of the Phase II-a (Convention Center to Whiting Street) in December 2010, the system has provided connections between Ybor City and key visitor destinations and event venues such as the Florida Aquarium, Tampa Bay History Center, Amalie Arena, and the Tampa Convention Center, as well as key employment centers.

In October 2018, supported by a three-year FDOT grant, HART initiated service improvements that have resulted in significant increases in ridership. These improvements, which include fare-free service, longer operation hours, and greater service frequency, have attracted more than 180,000 additional riders in the first four months of implementation, nearly tripling ridership over the same period the previous year.

With additional improvements, introduction of accessible, higher capacity vehicles, and extension through the Downtown core, the service has the potential to become an attractive transportation option for a broader cross-section of downtown residents, workers, students, and visitors, as well as serve as a catalyst for reinvestment and economic development. In 2017, the City of Tampa initiated the *InVision: Tampa Streetcar Feasibility Study* to evaluate modernizing and extending the Tampa Historic Streetcar System. In June 2018, the Federal Transit Administration approved entry of the proposed streetcar extension project into the Project Development phase in consideration for funding under the Small Starts program. The City of Tampa, working with Hillsborough Area Rapid Transit (HART) and Florida DOT, have been advancing planning and project development for the proposed modernization and extension.

Preferred Alternative Description

The preferred alternative selected in the *InVision: Tampa Streetcar Feasibility Study* consists of the following project elements: 1) replacement of the existing replica streetcar vehicles with modern streetcar vehicles; 2) construction of a new 1.3-mile transit fixed guideway with overhead power within existing rights-of-way from the western terminus of the existing system through the core of Downtown Tampa to Tampa Heights; 3) construction of stops along the extension

guideway; 4) modifications to the existing 2.7-mile alignment guideway, power system, and stops to support modern streetcar operations; and 5) modifications to the existing vehicle maintenance and storage facility to accommodate new modern vehicles.

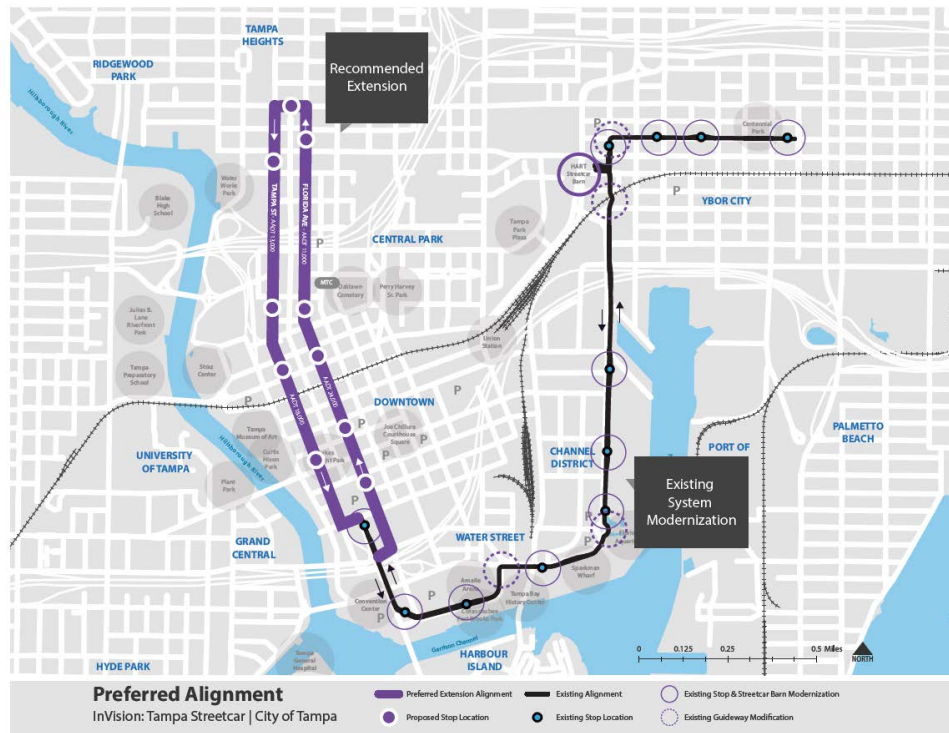
Vehicle Technology

Modern streetcar vehicles were selected as the preferred vehicle technology for operations along the existing system and extension. The modern streetcar provides the highest-capacity vehicle of the options considered (continued use of historic replica trolleys and premium bus). The configuration of the modern streetcar, with multiple, wide doors and level-boarding heights, would facilitate easy access by the greatest share of the population, including those with mobility challenges. With many portions of the route in a dedicated guideway, a modern streetcar would be able to move large numbers of people while minimizing constraints posed by traffic congestion. The modern streetcar's larger passenger capacity makes it the most efficient of the options in terms of cost per rider. In a rapidly-growing urban center like Tampa, this capacity provides the greatest degree of system flexibility for meeting mobility demands on a day-to-day basis, and over the long term.

Extension Alignment

The evaluation of alignment alternatives resulted in the selection of an extension traveling 1.3 miles north from Downtown to Palm Avenue within existing rights-of-way. The proposed extension alignment is proposed as a north/south couplet pairing Florida Avenue and Tampa Street. The alignment begins near the existing streetcar terminus at Whiting Street and Franklin Street. From the existing track on Franklin Street, the northbound track extension turns east at Brorein Street, then turns north at Florida Avenue to extend through the Downtown Core and Tampa Heights to Palm Avenue. At Palm Avenue, the

TAMPA STREETCAR EXTENSION & MODERNIZATION



alignment turns west and travels two blocks before turning south onto Tampa Street. The southbound alignment runs along Tampa Street to Whiting Street. At Whiting Street, the alignment turns east to link back to the existing downtown streetcar terminus at the Whiting Street Station.

Extension Stops

To accommodate modern streetcar vehicles and allow for shared use by other transit vehicle types, stops along the extension will be designed with a 14-inch-high platform section for level, ADA-compliant streetcar boarding and a lower, 8-inch-high platform section for bus boarding. The overall footprint of the extension stops will be similar in scale to stops on the existing line, and measure approximately 10-feet-wide by 100-feet-long. New and retrofitted stops will have similar amenities, which will include canopy/covered area; seating, railings, trash receptacles; system information map, kiosk, signage; lighting and security elements; and ADA-compliant access and ramps.

One of two stop types will be constructed along the extension. Some stops will be positioned in the parking lane to the right of the guideway, while other stops will be positioned along existing sidewalks adjacent to the guideway. The type of stop depends on the guideway location in the street. During the project development phase of the project, primary stop locations have been identified as well as optional locations for several stops. All stops, both primary and optional, are being evaluated for potential impacts. All potential stop locations are shown on the map above.

Existing Guideway Modifications

Four locations along the existing streetcar guideway will require reconstruction to accommodate the larger turning radius of a modern streetcar vehicle. Starting at the northern end of the existing guideway, the four locations are:

- » Near Jose Mart Park in Ybor City.
- » South of East 5th Street near the intersection of the streetcar and CSX tracks.
- » Near East Cumberland Avenue at the roundabout in the Channel District.

- » The intersection of Channelside Drive and Old Water Street near the Tampa Bay History Center and Amelia Arena.

To serve modern streetcar vehicles, modifications to the existing traction power system will also be required. Modifications will include upgrading the system from trolley wire to overhead contact system to accommodate modern streetcar vehicles. This change can be accomplished using the existing power sources and pole/arm systems.

Existing System Stop Modifications

Each of the eleven stops along the existing streetcar line will be retrofitted to accommodate modern streetcar vehicles. Proposed stop modifications will occur with the footprint of the existing stop. The existing stops currently include a high-block boarding platform designed to accommodate the higher interior floor of replica streetcar vehicles. The existing 12-foot by 12-foot high block platforms and ramps will be removed and replaced with a new 14-inch high platform.

Existing shelters and other equipment and amenities will be removed and reinstalled or replaced in-kind. Future design phases will determine if the new concrete platform will be constructed around the existing columns or if the shelters will be removed and installed on the new platform or replaced in-kind. At all of the existing stops, the construction of new platforms will require removal of the existing concrete sidewalks, curb, and platforms, so that the new platform and ramps may be constructed.

Please visit the following website for more information on the proposed extension and modernization planning effort www.tampagov.net/streetcar.

For specific questions, please contact:
Milton Martinez, P.E.
City of Tampa
(813) 274-8998
Milton.Martinez@tampagov.net