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Tampa Connected Vehicle Pilot Program Enters New Phase

Program brings cutting-edge technology to downtown

TAMPA, Fla. (September 20, 2016) — The Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) Connected Vehicle (CV) Pilot Deployment Program is reaching its first major milestone and entering a new phase of development, bringing Tampa a step closer to the future of transportation. THEA’s project management team heads to Washington, D.C., this week to meet with U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) officials for the official kickoff of Phase 2, which will include the design and deployment of CV technology in downtown Tampa.

The CV pilot, which is funded by a contract with USDOT, is expected to reduce the risk of crashes, enhance traffic flow and even shrink the city’s carbon footprint. THEA completed the concept development and planning phase, or Phase 1, in August, and USDOT finalized a cooperative agreement initiating the new phase in early September.

Tampa was one of three sites in the nation to be selected for the pilot program, which seeks to spur innovation among early adopters of connected vehicle applications. The other two sites are New York City and the Interstate 80 corridor in the state of Wyoming.

“We’re bringing transportation into the 21st century, and Florida is going to be at the center of it all. Tampa will be among the first cities in the nation to use the latest technology to make it safer and easier to drive,” said Sen. Bill Nelson.

Connected vehicle technology achieves safety, mobility and environmental benefits by enabling vehicles to communicate with each other and with elements of the infrastructure. In Tampa, THEA and its partners will install 40 wireless communication devices called roadside units on the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway Reversible Express Lanes (REL), Meridian Avenue, Channelside Drive and other downtown roadways. Other devices, called onboard units, will be installed in 10 HART buses, 10 TECO Line Streetcar System trolley cars and 1,500 privately owned vehicles. THEA and its partners will also develop mobile apps to enhance pedestrian safety.



“The progress that the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority is making with the connected vehicle pilot deployment program will drive the future of transportation,” said state Sen. Jeff Brandes. “Tampa is leading the nation in the effort to bring connected vehicle technology to real city streets.”

As part of the new phase, THEA and its partners aim to address numerous safety and mobility issues. For example:

- **Rush hour safety and congestion relief.** CV technology will help prevent crashes on the REL during peak travel times by alerting drivers of hazards on the road ahead.
- **Wrong-way drivers.** Onboard units will alert drivers who are attempting to enter the REL in the wrong direction, and will warn other drivers when a wrong-way driver has entered the roadway.
- **Pedestrian safety.** Many crosswalks will be equipped with roadside units to warn oncoming drivers when a pedestrian is present in the crosswalk. Participating pedestrians will also receive warnings on their smartphones.
- **Improved safety and on-time performance for public transit.** Connected buses will communicate with traffic signals to receive priority in order to arrive on time, and streetcar operators will receive warnings when a driver or pedestrian is attempting to cross the track.
- **Traffic monitoring.** Downtown Tampa’s transportation management center will use CV data to improve traffic flow in real time.

As part of Phase 2, THEA plans to recruit volunteer drivers beginning in the fall of 2017 to participate in the pilot. After approximately 20 months, the project will enter a third, 18-month operational phase to be concluded in late 2019.

In Phase 1, THEA has worked closely with many partners, including the Florida Department of Transportation, City of Tampa, Hillsborough County, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART), the University of South Florida’s Center for Urban Transportation Research, HNTB Corporation, Siemens, BrandMotion, Sirius XM, Global-5 Communications and businesses in the deployment area.

About THEA

The Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) is a user-financed public agency led by a board of local citizens. Operating with no tax dollars, THEA develops and owns toll highways, including the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway, as well as non-tolled roads, including Brandon Parkway and Meridian Avenue. All tolls collected by THEA are reinvested back into projects in Hillsborough County. For more information, please visit www.tampa-xway.com.

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More resources, including graphics, a project overview, video and animation, are available at <http://DriveTHEA.com/news>.