



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority Seeks Volunteers to Test Connected Vehicle Technology**

### *Participating Drivers to Receive Toll Rebate*

**Tampa, FL** – After nearly two years of planning, design and testing, the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) is now recruiting volunteer drivers and pedestrians for the Tampa Connected Vehicle Pilot, a research project that has the potential to change the way people walk and drive in downtown Tampa and beyond. Eligible, participating drivers will receive a 30 percent toll rebate on the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway Reversible Express Lanes (REL).

THEA expects to equip approximately 1,600 privately owned automobiles with connected vehicle technology by May 2018. Volunteers' automobiles will be outfitted with devices that "talk" to other connected vehicles to help prevent crashes. The cars will also communicate with downtown traffic and pedestrian signals to enhance safety, improve traffic flow and even reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) will also equip 10 buses and 10 TECO Line streetcars with this technology.

Volunteers may experience the benefits of connected vehicle technology in a number of ways. For example:

- Participating drivers commuting on the REL will receive a warning when cars on the road ahead have suddenly slowed down or come to a stop.
- Participating drivers who attempt to enter the downtown end of the REL in the wrong direction will receive an alert, and other drivers on the REL will be warned of the danger.
- Participating drivers approaching the midblock crosswalk on Twiggs Street at the Hillsborough County Courthouse will receive an alert if a pedestrian is present in the crosswalk.

Because the Pilot is a research project, drivers must meet certain criteria in order to participate. For example, they must be 18 years of age or older, have a Florida driver's license, own a car that is a 1996 model or newer, and drive regularly on the REL or in the downtown deployment area. Prospective participants must take the online prescreening questionnaire at [www.TampaCVPilot.com](http://www.TampaCVPilot.com) to determine whether they are eligible.

After confirming their eligibility, prospective participants will schedule an appointment for equipment installation and training. Qualified technicians will install the equipment by appointment at the Hillsborough Community College Ybor Campus Training Center beginning in October 2017 and continuing through the end of April 2018. The equipment is free, and participating drivers will receive a

30 percent toll rebate for travel on the REL, up to a maximum of \$550. The Pilot will conclude in December 2019.

Pedestrians will be able to participate in the pilot by installing an app on their smartphones. The app, which is expected to be available for download in February 2018, will enable pedestrians to request a “walk” signal at several intersections on Meridian Avenue. On some downtown streets, it will also issue an audible alert if a bus or streetcar is starting to move nearby.

The Tampa Connected Vehicle Pilot aims to demonstrate the safety, mobility and environmental benefits of connected vehicle technology. Tampa is one of just three sites deploying the technology as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Program. The other two sites are New York City and the Interstate 80 corridor in the state of Wyoming. The Tampa project is the only one that involves local residents driving their own cars.

THEA’s partners on the \$21 million project include the U.S. Department of Transportation, the Florida Department of Transportation, the City of Tampa, HART, University of South Florida’s Center for Urban Transportation Research, Hillsborough Community College, HNTB Corporation, Siemens, Global-5 Communications and Brandmotion.

Tampa area residents who are interested in participating as drivers or pedestrians are encouraged to take the prescreening questionnaire online at [www.TampaCVpilot.com](http://www.TampaCVpilot.com).

### **About the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority**

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 Lee Roy Selmon Expressway. THEA also owns and maintains non-tolled roads, including Brandon Parkway and Meridian Avenue, and the Selmon Greenway, a bicycle and pedestrian path through downtown Tampa. All tolls collected by THEA are reinvested into projects in Hillsborough County. For more information, visit [www.tampa-xway.com](http://www.tampa-xway.com).

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