

## Local and Regional Projects Gain Support from TBARTA Board

At the January Board meeting, Tampa Mayor Pam Iorio presented an extensive overview of the Hillsborough Rail Project to the TBARTA Board. The Mayor hopes to ask Hillsborough County voters to support the plan with a one-cent sales tax referendum in 2010. If approved, this region could look forward to the first pieces of a state-of-the-art light rail system.

The Hillsborough Rail Plan, as presented by the Mayor, would connect the University of South Florida (USF), Downtown Tampa, the Westshore area, and Tampa International Airport to Linebaugh Avenue for a total of 33.5 miles of light rail. The plan also includes future connections to both Pasco and Pinellas Counties by connecting Wesley Chapel in Pasco County to USF and New Tampa; and Clearwater in Pinellas County to the Tampa International Airport.

At the February TBARTA Board Meeting, the Board voted unanimously to support the

Hillsborough Rail Plan in moving forward with a referendum. Agreement was reached among Board members that TBARTA would operate the regional system once transportation improvements begin crossing county lines.



The Board also voted unanimously to support two other transportation activities taking place in the region. First, the Board approved staff involvement in the development of a regional transit system between Citrus and Hernando Counties to ensure consistency with TBARTA's regional Master Plan. The Board then voted to support Sarasota County's Small Starts Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

By supporting these projects from TBARTA's local and regional partners, the Authority continues to show the importance of local projects fitting into a larger regional vision.