

A background image showing the front of a white bus with blue accents, parked on a street. The bus is slightly out of focus, and the image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing the title and subtitle.

# HART Community Sentiment Study Report

Conducted by HCP Associates on Behalf of  
the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority



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## Introduction

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The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) was created in October of 1979 to plan, finance, acquire, construct, operate and maintain mass transit facilities and supply transportation assistance in Hillsborough County. Today, the organization's mission is to take people to the places that enhance their lives.

HART is driven to serve through convenient and affordable public transportation options tailored to contemporary lifestyles, currently offering service to nearly 1,000 square miles in Hillsborough County.

The organization provides an array of services, from their streetcar system, to door-to-door service that covers defined geographic areas within the county. HART offers paratransit services that accommodate the needs of those who have difficulty using traditional modes. HART's offerings include a modernized Metro Rapid service which features limited stops and traffic signal technology; a fleet of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses which produce 30-40% less carbon emissions and pollutants than gasoline; xed-route services and express services which has a limited number of stops. Park and Ride lots allow commuters and other passengers to leave their vehicles behind and four different routes provide service to Tampa International Airport seven days a week.

New technology rollouts, like Flamingo Fare, simplify fare collection, enhance regional connectivity and reduce transfer fees for riders. Additionally, the OneBusAway app has real-time arrival and departure information to simplify trip planning. Wi-Fi on the buses allows riders to stay connected and productive during their travel times.

In an effort to engage and educate the community, HART offers a travel training program where an employee of HART will ride the bus with a passenger or group of passengers for no cost and share the best options to get riders from their personal points A to B; this program is offered in both English and Spanish.

Over the years, HART has conducted routine rider studies that have helped the organization keep a pulse on how its users perceive the services provided. At the current juncture, organization leadership made the recommendation to look beyond its user base and explore perceptions of the organization within the larger community. This recommendation resulted in HART embarking on the organization's first community sentiment study.

Following an RFP process, vendor HCP Associates was selected to fulfill the community sentiment study need. HCP was awarded the contract in January 2018.

Project kick-off discussions with HART leadership served to clarify the overarching goal of this effort, which was to provide third-party, unbiased feedback from stakeholders and the community to help the organization better understand how the community perceived HART and their efforts.

- What is top-of-mind when the community hears "HART"?
- In what ways is the organization doing well?
- What are the biggest areas where the community perceives deficiencies?
- What does the community understand about the organization and where are knowledge gaps?

Asked to develop the overall research plan, HCP developed a three-step plan to fulfill the contract and create expansive reach within the community. This plan was reviewed and approved by the Purchasing Department.

Upon completion, findings were presented to HART elected and appointed leadership.

## Methodology

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During the initial project discussion, leadership laid out HART's need for a community monitor that would capture baseline community sentiments in the form of data points to be used to help the organization monitor quantifiable improvements and take appropriate action steps, accordingly.

HCP's research team devised a mixed methodology plan that would offer HART the insight it desired. The research plan can be broken down into three phases:

1. Secondary Research, Document Review & Fact Finding
2. Stakeholder Interviews
3. Community Survey

### *Phase I: Secondary Research, Document Review & Fact Finding*

The team initiated the research process by investigating secondary data, which included HART's internal documents. The team got up-to-speed on the organization's current, pending and terminated services. HCP additionally reviewed public relations content, and HART's Success Plan, which served as a point of reference for the organization's goals and direction.

Separately, there was an extensive review of prior studies conducted by HART, APTA (American Public Transit Authority), the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI), and the Hillsborough MPO (Metropolitan Planning for Transportation).

Looking outside of the metro area brought to light common challenges and perceptions associated with and impacting transit organizations everywhere. Studies over the past 10 years conducted within the Tampa Metro Area on the general topic of transportation broadened the team's understanding for insights likely to surface again when surveying the community today.

### *Phase II: Stakeholder Interviews*

HART began this process with a sense that the community holds a diverse array of reactions to HART. Seeking a better pulse of the Hillsborough County community sentiments, HCP recommended following up the secondary research phase with primary research. Instead of taking a questionnaire directly to the community; however, HCP recommended a series of in-depth discussions with community stakeholders. These discussions would provide further insight into current sentiments and offer researchers a chance to refine the questions that would be posed to the larger community.

The research team worked with HART to create a list of nearly 100 organizations to involve in discussions; the end-goal was to speak with between 30 and 50. From that list, HART pinpointed individuals best-suited to comment. HCP reached out to the stakeholders named on the list and asked for their participation in a phone call regarding their perception and feelings about HART.

Simultaneously, the HCP research team developed a list of question prompts to use in the interviews. The HCP research team was able to speak with a total of 38 community stakeholders between May 9, 2018, and June 7, 2018, using the prompt as a guide for the semi-structured conversations.

### *Phase III: Community Survey*

After phase II was completed, common themes were extracted from the stakeholder interviews. Those common themes were formatted into questions to be distributed via online survey to Hillsborough County Residents. Again, the overarching goal was to understand how the Hillsborough County community at large perceives the organization.

The online survey was similar in many ways to the questions posed in the stakeholder interview phase; however, there were fewer opportunities for open-ended comments and a greater frequency of multiple choice questions for respondent ease.

At close, HCP collected 469 responses, providing a margin of error of  $\pm 4.5\%$ . Data from this survey offered HART the quantitative data points the organization was seeking to establish a baseline for future performance gauges.

## Phase I: Secondary Research

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During Phase I, the team engaged in extensive secondary research, which involved reviewing documents, and extracting data points from industry reports.

### *Internal HART Documents*

The secondary research process began with reading HART documents including the Success Plan, Annual Report, and HART Operating Performance Scorecard (HOPS). The purpose of this work was to help HCP establish a basis of understanding of what the organization stands for, how they wish to be perceived within the community, and standards they use to measure success.

HART's mission, vision and values bring to the surface the organization's focus on serving Hillsborough County. The mission of HART is *to take people to the places that enhance their lives*. Their tagline is *HART takes you there*; and their vision is *HART invites, inspires and implements sustainable and innovative transportation*.

This mission, vision and positioning statement present at a very high level what the organization strives to be and the image they wish to reflect onto the community. Additional internal reports highlighted the importance of technology and excitement for the new ways the organization planned to implement and enhance route efficiencies.











Internally, HART monitors its progress against a series of 14 tactics with assigned deliverables to ensure employees organization-wide are focusing their efforts on delivering high quality and valuable customer service to the taxpayers of Hillsborough County. Responsibilities are divvied into four broad areas—Operations, Administration, Executive, and Finance.

The Success Plan lays out five strategic areas of focus, under which each tactic falls:

1. Service productivity
2. Sustainable financial performance
3. Excellence in customer experience
4. Community connection
5. Employee success

It was evident from this collective document review that the organization's guiding documents and workplan strategies direct leadership and staff to place high priority on being a community partner, on being good stewards of public dollars, and on providing quality service to customers. The burning questions remained; however, does the community at large see the organization in this way?

Discussion with leadership pinpointed a series of deliverables that aligned with the organization’s five strategies, mission and vision. These were offerings they felt the organization was in place to provide at a more tactical level; the subsequent Community Sentiment survey would provide the baseline against which to judge whether the community considered HART to be actively delivering each or falling short.

 Connect People and Places	 Offer Reasonable Wait Times	 Ensure Vehicles are Clean and Well-kept
 Provide Reliable Transportation	 Create Safe Places for Riders to Wait	 Offer a Variety of Transportation Modes
 Provide Good Customer Service	 Get Riders to Destinations in a Timely Manner	 Offer Affordable Transportation Options
 Be a Good Steward of Public Dollars		

These discussions additionally gave rise to the higher-level characteristics leadership hoped the community would hold of the organization but had no current data to indicate whether this was the case. These characteristics included driving economic impact; rolling out innovative solutions; providing a diverse array of services; integrating new technology into its services; supporting community challenges like crowd control, traffic congestion and parking; providing safe modes of transportation; and making transportation options that are affordable.

## Industry Reports

In addition to reviewing HART documents, HCP conducted a detailed review of prior studies published by HART, APTA (American Public Transit Authority), MTI (Mineta Transportation Institute), and the Hillsborough MPO (Metropolitan Planning for Transportation).

Community-wide transportation is hotly debated and heavily studied from the standpoints of economic development, funding, routes, modes, rider satisfaction, etc. The secondary research reports helped identify a number of things for the HCP team, from wide-reaching as well as county-specific challenges, to ridership profiles, to aspects of the transportation sector that are not frequently featured in the Tampa Bay Area. Industry insight provides talking points for future use by HART in telling the story of its role in the community and local studies offered insight into the current sentiments or “temperature” of the public.



The following sections highlight the most insightful data points from the secondary research collected:

## THE PROFILE OF THE TRANSIT USER

**In the United States, the real demographics of public transportation users conflict with pervasive stereotypes. HCP researchers heard many of these stereotypes come through in later stages of stakeholder interviews and community comments. Helping potential users see that there is a place in public transit for all professions, backgrounds and socioeconomic statuses is an important step in raising their comfort with it. The information that follows was extracted from a 2017 report published by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA).<sup>1</sup>**

*Stereotype: Public Transit is solely for transportation disadvantaged.*

- 54% of transit users indicated there is a vehicle available to them on an ongoing basis.
- Nearly two-thirds of transit users (65%) have a driver's license.
- More riders use public transit five days a week (50%) than any other usage pattern. In addition, another 13% use it six or seven days a week.

*Stereotype: It is a mode for senior citizens and minorities.*

- 79% of riders fall into the most economically active age range 25 to 54.
- Caucasians account for the largest share of riders (40%).
- Among all transit users, 85% speak English as their primary language, while 12% speak Spanish and 3% speak other languages.
- 55% of transit riders in the United States are female.

*Stereotype: Only the poor, unemployed, uneducated and homeless use public transit.*

- Seven in 10 (71%) of transit riders are employed and another 7% are students.
- According to the Census Bureau, 13% of total U.S. households and 21% of transit households have incomes of less than \$15,000; 23% of total U.S. households and 21% of transit households report income levels at the top of the spectrum (\$100,000+).
- More than half (51%) of transit riders hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Relatively few (8%) have less than a high school education.

## PUBLIC TRANSIT USE AND PERCEPTION

**There are major generational differences in public transportation perception and usage. Millennials are strong supporters of public transportation—in fact their support is greater than any other generational group, and personal decisions further their use of public transit.**

- 58% of Millennials support providing convenient alternatives to driving such as walking, biking and public transportation.<sup>2</sup>

- 59% of Millennials support expanding public transportation, including trains and buses.<sup>2</sup>
- Millennials use transit much more than other generations; 40% took transit in the last month compared to 28% for Gen X, 19% for Baby Boomers, and 8% for Silent Generation.<sup>3</sup>
- A growing number of young Americans do not have driver's licenses. According to the Federal Highway Administration, from 2000 to 2010, the share of 14 to 34-year-olds without a license increased from 21 percent to 26 percent.<sup>4</sup>
- 44% of Millennials and 41% of Gen X agreed with the statement, "I like taking transit," while just 34% of Baby Boomers and 30% of the Silent Generation agreed.<sup>4</sup>

## REACTIONS TO FUNDING

**Nationwide, citizens show support of the use of tax dollars for public transportation improvements.**

- 73.6% of people support the use of tax dollars for creating, expanding and improving public transportation in their community.<sup>5</sup>
- Every five years the U.S. Congress reviews its spending priorities for transportation. All things considered, 66.1% Americans believe Congress should increase the level of spending for public transportation.<sup>5</sup>
- Over 75 percent of Americans support using tax dollars to create, expand and improve public transportation in their communities, and close to 70 percent believe Congress should increase the level of investment for public transportation infrastructure.<sup>5</sup>
- 78.3% of Americans agree that as our country begins to recover from tough economic times, public transportation can be a solution and help pave the way to a stronger economy.<sup>5</sup>

## SCOPE OF ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRANSPORTATION

**Public transportation is crucial to the economy—stimulating jobs and revenue through direct and indirect stimulated activities. Studies on the topic revealed transit's quantifiable impact.**

- A total of 87% of public transportation trips involve direct economic impact on the local economy.<sup>1</sup>
- Nearly 15,900 jobs are supported for a year per \$1 billion of spending on public transportation capital.<sup>6</sup>
- More than 54,200 jobs are supported for a year, per \$1 billion dollars of annual spending on public transportation operations.<sup>6</sup>
- Every \$10 million in capital investment in public transportation can return up to \$30 million in business sales alone.<sup>7</sup>
- Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$4 in economic activity.<sup>8</sup>

**Costs associated with owning and maintaining a personal vehicle are substantial. Public transportation presents a viable option for households to decrease their personal spending.**

- For every one-dollar earned, the average U.S. household spends 18 cents on transportation, 94 percent of which goes toward maintaining and operating a vehicle.<sup>7</sup>
- Each year an individual can achieve an average annual savings of over \$8,000 by taking public transportation instead of driving and by living with one less car.<sup>7</sup>

## LOCAL SENTIMENTS FOLLOWING FAILED REFERENDUMS

A report published in 2012 by the MPO and The Kennedy Group<sup>9</sup> offered uncensored insight from citizens after the 2010 referendum did not pass. The report strived to gather background and rationale for the election results. This data revealed existing perceptions of Hillsborough residents and thoughts behind the two primary challenges—getting a car-centered community to engrain transit in their culture and gaining consensus regarding how it should be funded. The following findings and summary highlights were taken from the MPO report:

**There is dissatisfaction with the current mobility options, though citizens are somewhat weary of non-car alternatives.**

- Two-thirds of respondents say they have little or no mobility options other than driving their car, and 48% say they are unsatisfied with their non-driving transportation options.
- While respondents' top priorities for transportation improvements are driving-related, improvements to other modes are also high priorities, particularly the expansion of bus services and additional pedestrian improvements.
- Many focus group participants perceived that the Tampa area and Hillsborough County are too sprawling, too car-centric, and too dispersed for mass transit to ever truly make an impact.
- Participants who were in favor of expanding mass transit generally supported a more incremental approach.

**Transit system funding is the second major topic of dissention by citizens.**

- The diversity of Hillsborough County's transportation needs presents a major challenge to building unified support for any specific funding scenario.
- There is a split view on additional funding for transportation. The funding source with the most potential viability is a ½ cent sales tax—58% of respondents support that level for transportation improvements.
- The notion of the City of Tampa moving forward with a transportation funding proposal on its own, separate from the county, generated moderate interest.
- Citizens consider public-private partnerships a reasonable approach to major transportation improvements.

There are many aspects of public transportation that get minimal to no coverage by media, elected officials, the business community, etc. Completing this initial phase of diligence prior to embarking on conversations with those in the community provided HCP's research team with a basis of information enabling interviewers to have more in-depth discussions with the stakeholders and compare reactions locally to national sentiments and standards.

<sup>1</sup>*Who Rides Public Transportation, American Public Transportation Association (APTA), 2017*

<sup>2</sup>*Open for Business: The Business Case for Investment in Public Transportation, APTA, 2016*

<sup>3</sup>*Community & Transportation Preferences Survey, U.S. Metro Areas, 2015*

<sup>4</sup>*Transportation and the New Generation: Why Young People Are Driving Less and What It Means for Transportation Policy, Frontier Group & U.S. PIRG Education Fund, 2012*

<sup>5</sup>*Americans' Support for Public Transportation, APTA & Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI), 2013*

<sup>6</sup>*Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment for American Public Transportation Association, Economic Development Research Group, 2014*

<sup>7</sup>*Public Transportation Gets Our Economy Moving, APTA, 2009*

<sup>8</sup>*Public Transportation: Moving Forward, APTA, 2010*

<sup>9</sup>*Phase Three: 2035 Plan Post Referendum Analysis Prepared for: Hillsborough MPO, The Kennedy Group, 2012*

## Phase II: Stakeholder Interviews

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Upon completion of the secondary research phase, it was evident through studies conducted by local transit organizations, recent earned media coverage, and feedback shared by HART leadership that the community was receiving an array of messages about the organization; their reaction to these messages was yet to be measured.

Before launching into a community survey, however, the team determined it best to first conduct individual interviews with community stakeholders who by the nature of their position—elected, appointed or volunteer—represented the citizens of Hillsborough County. These individuals would have the pulse of the community and could share not only their perspective, but also share feedback voiced by their clients, constituents, and peers.

HCP fielded the interviews over a series of four weeks, between May 9, 2018, and June 7, 2018. Interviews ranged from 20 minutes to one hour in length, though requests were for 30 minutes of the interviewees' time; interviewers only continued beyond 30 minutes if the person was amenable to extending the time. A copy of the interview questions and participants can be found in the appendix section.

What follows is a summary of the feedback provided in response to the key topics:



***Top-of-Mind  
Associations of HART***



***Expectations of the Organization,  
Responsibilities & Fulfillment***



***Perceptions  
of Value***



***Requests for  
Engagement***

While reviewing stakeholder feedback, it is important to note that there were only seven routine riders and three individuals who rode HART as a trial; the other 28 stakeholders were non-users and have not been on any HART vehicle. Stakeholders indicated that the comments provided are largely based on secondhand accounts, conversations with county partners, feedback from elected officials, media coverage and direct communication with HART.

## Top-of-Mind HART Associations



### BUS COMPANY

The most common association stakeholders have with HART is that it is a “**bus company**”<sup>a</sup>. Some extended this description to include other modes of transit, but the examples were primarily focused on the bus services provided by the organization. There was weak awareness of non-bus HART services by the vast majority of respondents even when the interviewer named a series of HART services and asked the stakeholders if they were familiar with each. **The ability of these stakeholders to serve as advocates and referral sources for HART is significantly challenged without familiarity of the modes available and appreciation of the scope of service**<sup>b</sup>.

- a [ “Aware of the buses.... That’s about the only service I know.”
- b [ “From my vantage point it’s a one-dimensional transit organization. They have buses. That’s it.”

### LIMITED REACH

Reach concerns were illustrated through comments on the **limited footprint that HART serves despite being the transit organization for the county at large**<sup>a</sup>. Key areas of noted deficiency were Plant City, Temple Terrace, the University Area, Westshore, Northwestern Hillsborough County. Reach comments were generally more prevalent among stakeholders representing unincorporated areas. Recent route modifications resulting from the launch of Mission Max were top-of-mind for many stakeholders. They shared complaints voiced by those in the community regarding **minimal notice of the route changes and sudden bus stop removals**<sup>b</sup>. Stakeholders reported real concern over portions of the County underserved or not served by the current system and the ripple effects this causes from missing work, to medical appointments, access to services, day-to-day needs and general connections to venues that enhance quality of life. Stakeholders called for **closer analysis of travel by citizens**<sup>c</sup>—their point A and B destinations—to better align routes with need.

- a [ “Just a bus system, without much reach for the community.”
- b [ “They took bus stops away...and when that happened, we got an outcry of residents coming in to see us, to talk about how do we get this bus stop back. Because it’s really providing a challenge for residents in the community to be able to work, to school, do all the things they need to. So, we looked into it, and they said it was because of the percentage of ridership was low in these areas, or the areas they took it away. So that something we’ve been trying to figure out how to get the bus back. I think taking away a bus in a low-income community and not realizing the devastating effects that’s going to have on residents who are already making it one day at a time to throw on a barrier like that is almost crippling to a family and then really creates a poverty situation that affects a whole entire family. More outreach and understanding communities in need before making devastating blows to services in these specific areas”
- c [ “HART is going to have to be really smart at looking where people work and where people live and convenient ways that transportation can make sense for people...And that’s I think where the key is, when you look at where people are driving from, to and from work, every day and how you give them a convenient alternative is really what you’re trying to get at.”

## UNDER-FUNDED

The status of HART funding was a topic covered in every interview. Few stakeholders offered beyond a **basic understanding<sup>a</sup>** of HART funding, from the size of the overall budget, to sources of funding. The biggest area of consensus; however, was a general sense that the organization was under-funded. Stakeholders recognized this made it **difficult for the organization to fulfill its mission<sup>b</sup>**. Many also realized the comparative discrepancies in funding between other similarly-sized metro areas; they could not give hard numbers, but again, a **general sense that funding levels were significantly lower than peers<sup>c</sup>**.

- a [ *"They're horribly underfunded. I think our political environment has prohibited new sources of funding."*
- b [ *"I think there needs to be more funding coming from the county, which will enable to get more funding from the state and the feds, but we don't have a philosophy of we're going to have to make some hard decisions that may cost some more money."*
- c [ *"What I do recall, is just kind of what anybody would read in the paper, and I do seem to recall that our finding per either user or per capita or something is really well below what an average other metropolitan areas our size would be."*

## WEAK COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There were mixed perceptions of how well HART engages with the community, but the majority of stakeholders indicated a need for more proactive effort. The need expressed was two-tiered, with the first hinging on visibility of leadership and the second centering on community connection building at the staff level. Stakeholders indicating a desire for greater leadership visibility suggested that **more time spent out in the community<sup>a</sup>** explaining HART's **mission, vision, values and plans<sup>b</sup>** would help the community become more informed and would make the organization more transparent. The need for community connections by staff boiled down to what can best be defined as a community liaison position; they suggested a grave need for a proven relationship-builder to **strategically work through the major employers, county service organizations, non-profits and business networking groups to build rapport, educate on HART programs, gauge need, gather feedback, etc.<sup>c</sup>**; the result of the engagement would vary depending upon the group, but would include financial contributions/sponsorships, increased ridership and increased opportunity for referrals.

- a [ *"There's a leadership role that I think HART should be playing. And I don't think it's effectively playing that role right now."*
- b [ *"That's the most important thing, people want to...get excited about a strong vision for something and I don't know if that's been articulated."*
- c [ *"I think if they could devote more resources to that education process, that information process and really showing people all the things HART is doing, and even more importantly, what they could be doing, what this community could look like if they had X amount of dollars or X percentage more, what have you."*  
*"I don't think the community is fully aware of all that HART offers."*

## Expectations of the Organization, Responsibilities & Fulfillment



### CONNECTIVITY

A common general expectation was for the system to in most basic terms **connect people to where they need to go<sup>a</sup>**. This could be work, a doctor's appointment, to get groceries, see a movie, shop, visit friends, etc. The expectation is for this connectivity to not simply end at a county line but to extend **regionally<sup>b</sup>**. The expectation was not for this to be fully accomplished by bus, but through a mixture of mediums that combine to make up an intricate system. Stakeholders frequently referenced **first mile/last mile challenges<sup>c</sup>**; this was an area of significant deficiency for the organization, based upon a combination of feedback shared with stakeholders by their constituents and the stakeholders' **personal experiences<sup>d</sup>**.

- a [ *"To be able to connect people from their homes to work, from home to needed environments via medical, grocery, be able to move our people around our community so that our community remains a place where people want to work, live, and play!"*
- b [ *"Politics [is a limiting factor], I have to say that I've never lived in a community that does so little thinking about their growth & we're growing at such—and that's all they kind of promote. Most of the cities and suburbs & the major cities I've lived in have had master plans that tie to each other."*
- c [ *"Now, I've only heard secondhand, that the routes don't service where they need to go, they don't go to any place really that's employment sector... what do you do when you get there? You have to call a cab or uber to get where you need to go."*
- d [ *"...I rode the bus, but its quicker and cheaper for me to drive my car to work, ultimately."*

### ACCESS

Stakeholders stated time and again that Tampa Bay is a car-oriented metro area. Getting people out of their cars is a major challenge and to do so, the service that they "abandon" their car to use must be "as" reliable as their personal vehicle. "As" is in quotations because there are tradeoffs when using a mode of transit other than your personal vehicle. Lack of current reliability was named as the most frequent limiting factor for non-riding stakeholders.

**Access<sup>a</sup>** in reality is difficult to separate from **frequency<sup>b</sup>** and **reliability<sup>c</sup>**; all were indicated by stakeholders as being responsibilities of HART, and as being areas where the organization is not meeting expectation. Stakeholders commented on the lack of access to convenient stops for non-City residents, insufficient frequency making it possible for a day to be derailed by missing one's bus (particularly if connections were subsequently also missed), and inaccurate arrival times making riders late for their destinations (or connections). The ripple effects of riders missing appointments, missing work, getting fired for tardiness were not lost on the stakeholders and **nearly all had been impacted by one of these scenarios<sup>d</sup>**.

- a [ *"It would take convenience to home and reliable scheduling to use it."*



- b [ *"In my particular case, to get out of my neighborhood in Temple Terrace to get to a spot where the bus route is, is a 25-minute walk that's a hindrance—well not 25, maybe 20-minute walk but it's a hindrance. It's more efficient to jump in the car and be at work in 20 minutes."*
- c [ *"When [HART] made those changes in November, it had an impact. Well, it made it getting to work a little more challenging. For a couple of weeks, a lot of the employers were complaining about their employees getting here on time."*
- d [ *"Most of the comments we get are reliant upon work. So, residents, having real concerns and challenges with that because they're missing or showing up late to work and you only get so many shots at that and then you get let go."*

## SAFETY

Personal safety while awaiting pickup, while on the vehicle, and when walking from the destination drop-off to the rider's final destination were expressed expectations. Priorities named included discouraging homeless congregation, protection from the elements, lighting and protection from other vehicles when **waiting in high traffic volume areas<sup>a</sup>**. Comments were mixed when asked how well HART was fulfilling this expectation. Reviews of vehicle safety were very high; there were not top-of-mind concerns regarding bus accidents endangering rider safety. Personal safety perceptions; however, were less positive. Stakeholders recognized that some of the covered bus stops had been removed to deter the homeless, but the unintended consequence was eliminating **protection from the elements<sup>b</sup>**.

- a [ *"The way that I've seen a lot of the bus stops is that they're in inhospitable places. In some really high traffic areas, and as a result, cars are backed up behind it because they're having to stop and pick up people. Which doesn't lend itself to good public perception."*
- b [ *"To be honest, I would need better pick up and drop off points. I don't like the bus stop locations. I know that there are other options, but that's one of the things I always notice on the streets. Especially if there's any bad weather. I think the bus stops aren't conducive to making a lot of riders successful. If the weather is bad, they're most likely either not going to be out there for safety reasons, or they're going to show up at their destination like a mess."*

## CLEANLINESS

More than half of the stakeholders do not use public transportation. Those who do or have in the past had mixed comments regarding the cleanliness of the buses, with some commenting on the overarching **perception of the public<sup>a</sup>** that the buses are dirty simply **not being true<sup>b</sup>** and others sharing distaste for their overall experience in part due to seeing **roaches, feeling that the buses were not thoroughly<sup>c</sup>** cleaned and being turned off by the presence of homeless people at the stops and riding the buses; these were enough to deter the majority of stakeholders who had an alternative options to revert back to their personal vehicle. The takeaway was that cleanliness is not meeting expectation in part based on real experience but also strongly impacted by pervasive perceptions.

- a [ *"I also think too that there is an unfortunate stereotype that goes along with the demographic of people who use mass transit."*

- b [ *"Actually, it did impress me at how clean the buses were and how.... It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I've been on buses in Tampa 30 years ago or 40 years ago and I was not that impressed."*
- c [ *"[To routinely use] it would have to be very clean...our ladies early in the day saw a couple roaches that freaked us all out...it would need to be comfortable, absolutely for me it would need to have Wi-Fi."*

## AFFORDABILITY

Not as widely referenced, but an expressed priority of stakeholders representing service organizations and non-profits was affordability. Some referenced receiving bus passes in the past—but have not in recent months—to distribute to their clients. This was disappointing to the stakeholders in that they *knew for certain their clients used the passes<sup>a</sup>*. They saw it as a continued benefit to HART in that the passes set the habit of using the bus and after a time their clients would likely continue use. The total base of stakeholders—whether riders or not—had a *sense that HART services were very affordable<sup>b</sup>*. Those strongly familiar with transit authority funding in Hillsborough and beyond commented on how comparably affordable HART's fees are to other metro areas.

- a [ *"The majority of people are coming back for additional passes. So, I think they're utilizing them."*
- b [ *"I think it's very affordable."*
- b [ *"Their on-time performance is good, their prices are low, \$2 a ride. I think they are doing a good job with what they have to work with."*

## Perceptions of Value



All of the stakeholders were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement, “HART **delivers value to Hillsborough County**.” All but six stakeholders selected “agree” from a scale of strongly agree/agree/unsure/disagree/strongly disagree. All offered some degree of criticism, but through the criticism there were common limiting factors named that if addressed, stakeholders suggested would increase their perception of the organization’s value:

- a [ *“There should be a system to provide adequate funding for a community this size to have a good operating local transit system...I think HART is doing the best job they possibly can given the resources they have but the resources are limited...and I don’t think it’s HART’s fault.”*



**LIMITED FUNDING**—Funding is a recognized continual challenge for the organization and stakeholders expressed disappointment with the **level of outreach to the private sector as well as other organizations** to supplement the need.

- a [ *“HART is a major transit system in a major service area that does not receive major funding.”*  
*“You’ve got to have more people at the table than just HART and elected officials. You’ve got to have business groups who are part of the solution, who are standing with HART saying we’ve put together a plan that has private sector participation, we need to have our public partner come alongside us. And here is the benefit for our public partner coming alongside us.”*



**INCONSISTENT ELECTED OFFICIAL SUPPORT**—Stakeholders called **for action from and engagement by elected officials**, with many holding the elected officials accountable for HART’s limited funding and service.

- a [ *“There is a strong aversion to any kind of increase investment in the community for a long-term vision coming from the elected officials.”*  
*“More responsible decisions made by our elected officials—that has to be number one.”*



**NEWS FROM HART**—**Tell the story of what the organization is doing**; educate employers and the public of the organization’s mission, new initiatives, innovative rollouts. There were named organization accomplishments going unreported and therefore unrecognized.

- a [ *“There are good stories; real stories; and it’s about real people, with real challenges using public transit.”*
- a [ *“How many people does HART employ under the age of 27?...Every one of those people is your target because those are the people that have the ability through their communication, social networking, electronic communication to spread a word faster than we could ever do with the typical media... how do we think a little differently to get the story and the message out?”*



**LACK OF LEADING BY EXAMPLE**—*Require/encourage participation<sup>a</sup>* by board, elected officials, and community leaders. Stakeholders who actively use HART were appalled by the failure by the lack of use primarily by elected officials and the board.

- a [ *“I’m one of those people if I don’t ride the bus, I don’t know who would”*
- a [ *“You can’t have leadership that’s never ridden the system. Be it, the CEO, or board. It undercuts every legitimacy that HART is seeking to accomplish...It stops the conversation, because the conversation then becomes you don’t know what you’re talking about. And it is supported the negative tax payer perspective that we’ve got folks spending money without any knowledge of what they’re spending it for.”*



**UNREPRESENTATIVE BOARD**—Stakeholders were critical of those serving on the board, questioning the *makeup of the board<sup>a</sup>*, holding them accountable in some instances for the organization’s *financial challenges<sup>b</sup>* and demanding *better oversight, leadership and direction<sup>c</sup>*—things deemed a challenge at present with those currently in place.

- a [ *“Does the board reflect the stakeholder group in the community? Is it reflective of the community in terms of those who can really influence the outcome?”*
- b [ *“Why are there politicians on the board? I mean, who best represents the people? Wouldn’t it more be community leaders and business leaders who are actually in the community and understand the business needs and the needs of the people?”*
- c [ *“For me, as much as I want to look at the internal organization, I want to know why board members didn’t ask questions sooner rather than later.”*



**UNCLEAR FOCUS**—Be clear on the *intent of the organization<sup>a</sup>*—is it to offer transportation solutions for all or those without personal vehicle access? Most stakeholders perceived HART as serving the transportation-limited rather than choice riders and identify this as a challenge to securing additional public funding moving forward.

a

*“The way HART operates, and I get why, it’s only people that are absolutely desperate and seem perfectly OK with it.”*

*“It seems like that HART’s major mission is to provide public transportation for those who can’t, to get places rather than an alternative form of transportation.”*

*“From a political point of view, it’s very difficult. I think HART as an organization has alienated some of the County Commission members by focusing on core areas. This challenge that HART has about what do you sacrifice, you’ve got this trade-off. Is it frequency, is it geographic coverage, is it time of day?”*



**UNBALANCED SERVICE**—*Balance focus within “The City” and unincorporated areas<sup>a</sup>*; stakeholders outside of the city reported feelings of disconnect between the need and services that support their clients/employees/constituents.

a

*“Of course, the challenges when you get into the more rural areas, like South county, or Plant City, where transportation options are limited, that’s usually where we hear the most gripe—and different needs than what’s available.”*

*“As a native of Tampa, I have a recollection of the old Tampa transit bus line that was at the heartbeat of how Tampa of all neighborhoods were able to get from one point to another...Unfortunately, I don’t believe that sense of reliability or accessibility exists today as it did 40, 50 years ago.”*



**ROUTE STRATEGIC PLANNING**—More closely examine *originations and destinations<sup>a</sup>*; stakeholders shared their sense that this has not been done or not been sufficiently studied resulting in less than optimal routes.

a

*“I don’t feel like they’ve done a good job of understanding origins and destinations. The assumption is if you’re downtown, it has really good transit coverage and the University area has great transit coverage but anywhere else—I don’t think they’ve really looked at where people who work in these other key economic centers actually live. And that’s an issue.”*



**ROLE OF PUBLIC TRANSIT IN OUR CULTURE**—This was one of the least tangible but most frequently cited limiting factors to public transit use locally. Stakeholders commented on the distinct difference between the way people see public transit and the “typical transit user” in this market versus other major metro areas—in these other markets, public transit is not a conscious decision or thought; *it’s just part of who you are and what you do daily<sup>a</sup>*.

a

*“Some of the challenge that you’re going to find is getting people leave their car in their garage...that’s going to be a hard-sell. I think getting people out of their comfort zone and sitting side by side with other folks on the bus is going to be a challenge. It’s not the norm for this community, it’s not the norm for the Tampa Bay area. In NY you grow up riding the bus, it’s what you do. You grow up riding the train, it’s part of who you are as a New Yorker, it’s not part of the Tampa Bay identity. And I think as more people come to Tampa, they try, but it’s really not ready for prime time, it’s hard to make the commitment, so you lose those folks that come in with the willingness as well. Its culturally not a part of what we do in Tampa. I think that’s the challenge.”*

*“You can’t really have a good quality of life in Tampa, unless you have a car.”*

## Requests for Engagement



### VISIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

When asked how the stakeholders built the associations they have with HART, the responses were more likely outside sources (media, peers, elected officials) than from a direct experience or interaction with HART. Not all community stakeholders need to have a weekly, monthly, or even quarterly touch base meeting with HART, but the absence of these meetings and the lack of leadership visibility stakeholders indicated, make it easy for the community at large to base perceptions on outside sources. Stakeholders requested **greater visibility from HART<sup>a</sup>**, starting at the top—from presentations, to news releases, to visibility out and about engaging with HART services.

- a [
  - “They do seem to be an organization perceived to be in an ivory tower. Sitting over there, you have to go to them for information.”*
  - “Definitely would like to see [HART] more at regional meetings.”*
  - “In the past, HART used to have a lot more presentations in the community, I don’t know if that was reduced or we missed it in some kind of way.”*

### TRAVEL TRAINING OUTREACH

Numerous organizations that the stakeholders represented expressed **interest in more information on HART<sup>a</sup>** so that they could become a better resource for people who come to them for information. From the stakeholders’ comments, there appears to be a real value in the travel training program and a strategic approach to contacting businesses to **inform them of how HART can support the transit needs of their employees, clients or both<sup>b</sup>**. Stakeholders recognized the value of the travel training program as many had lost employees due to transportation challenges. Offering a resource to employees to help them get to and from work increases employee peace of mind, cuts down on turnover and thus reduces the employer cost of retraining.

- a [
  - “I don’t know where the closest pickup and drop off point is. I don’t know if it’s even relevant. Like here’s this great service, and the closest stop is a mile and a half away.”*
- b [
  - “The whole number system is ridiculous, nobody understands that. And you know, I consider us kind of professionals, you know, we could study plans, we could see that stuff. I can’t understand. I can’t understand it; my colleagues can’t understand it. Can you imagine someone just in the public understanding it? Be able to explain to someone how to use the system and I have no clue.”*

### PLANS & PROGRAMS

Stakeholders commented on the level of engagement with the community drastically improving under the prior CEO’s leadership. Katharine Eagan was **continually giving presentations<sup>a</sup>**, connecting with partners and raising the profile of awareness of what HART was accomplishing. Recognizing that the organization is seeking a permanent CEO, the stakeholders placed great importance on that individual continuing on the path set by Eagan. Those stakeholders who were not proactive in seeking meetings with HART commented on the importance of a designated person—likely the CEO, but not necessarily—to

**“beat HART’s drum” and continue to raise its profile<sup>b</sup>** of awareness. Presentations to chambers, rotaries, various professional networking groups, major employers, county commissioners, college campuses/students, trade groups, workforce pool, and others were all ways the stakeholders suggested HART could **ensure that the information getting out to the community is accurate and relevant to the organization’s goals<sup>c</sup>**.

- a [ *“I think Katharine was a very good marketer. I think even if things were going crazy behind the scenes, she’d be the one to stand up in front and talk about the positives.”*
- b [ *“HART needs to be seen relevant to every mobility piece that’s going on in Hillsborough County. And I’ve been trying to bang that drum for 10 years. If you just see yourself as a bus agency you’re going to get ignored so, you’re not you’re a mobility agency and you are involved in every facet of mobility that takes place in this County.”*
- c [ *“I love HART...I know they can do it, we just got to have the right team, the right leadership.”*

## ADDITIONAL REVENUE

There was widespread recognition that HART requires additional funding in order to increase routes and access. Hillsborough County has a multitude of companies and organizations which outsource or internally manage their transportation needs, from **Moffitt, to the VA, hotels, University of South Florida<sup>a</sup>**, etc. Stakeholders found it hard to believe that HART could not **provide these services more cost-effectively<sup>b</sup>** and present a plan to the organizations that would increase HART’s operating budget and make the service less of a hassle for the companies to run individually.

- a [ *“There’s several avenues [James A. Haley VA] currently use. One is the veteran’s transportation system. [They also] run four vehicles, and four drivers to serve four counties...they offer ambulatory and wheelchair veterans door-to-door service within a 55-mile radius. So, in my mind, that’s one area that HART would be able to partner better with the community, [giving, supplementing or adding] to the current services that are in place.”*
- b [ *“Moffitt has 500 trips a day on their own bus service that they provide, they wouldn’t dream of giving it to HART. USF has the Bull Runner that goes off campus and they wouldn’t dream of... they would not dream because I’ve heard them say it, [administration is] afraid. [The argument to administration is] it doesn’t make sense for you to run these expensive buses, because you’re not very efficient. [What they don’t know is they] should work with HART because they are coming up with creative, new ways of moving people in things that don’t look like giant 42-foot buses. They’re smaller, they’re more nimble, they’re cool, you can call one with a phone app, so they’re modern...We’re trying to get the business community to engage with HART in a way that they’ve never engaged before.”*



## FUNDING SUPPORT

Stakeholders additionally commented on funding opportunities locally as well as plans that they saw successfully implemented in other metro areas. Evaluating what major corporations are doing and how HART can create a **mutually beneficial outcome**<sup>a</sup> is critical to future funding boons. From another proactive standpoint, stakeholders urged HART to increase its corporate outreach for **sponsoring routes, sponsoring new lines or vehicles**.<sup>b</sup> Stakeholders stated this as standard practice in other metro areas.

a *“So, let’s say you’re going to spend \$60 million on a parking garage and [HART] said to them ‘look, we’re going to reduce your parking requirement by 50% so, you’re going to save \$30 million dollars and you take a third of that- \$10 million and put it in your pocket, and you take the other \$20 million and you reinvest it in an alternate transit option for your building that connects into our city.’ [HART] can do a lot with \$20 million; if you had three or four projects of five or six projects and suddenly you’ve got \$100 million coming out of the private sector that’s helping to solve that problem. So, it’s beyond just what we can do as public agencies, it has to be public/private partnership.”*

b *“This isn’t something that HART is going to solve by itself. If we really want to as a community, improve mobility choices for everyone, which directly then relate to better economic development...it’s going to take a lot of the influential stakeholders in the community to assist. It starts with [HART] and with their leadership and their board to get their act together and lead and form a coalition and get the support that makes it easier for me then to go to my board and say, ‘Yeah we should help out because now I know what the outcomes are and that it’s part of a larger plan and vision and that we’re not pouring money down a black hole.’ It is very achievable, it’s just a different approach to what they’ve been taking.”*

## Phase III: Community Survey

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### *Developing the Survey*

Phase II provided HCP with a wealth of insight from stakeholders. To collect a community-wide sample, HCP modified the questions used in the qualitative research phase and structured them for deployment in a quantitative study of community perceptions via an online survey. The survey was conducted during the month of July 2018. Responses were monitored closely to ensure feedback was being collected from all regions of the county and that the demographics were in line with county representation.

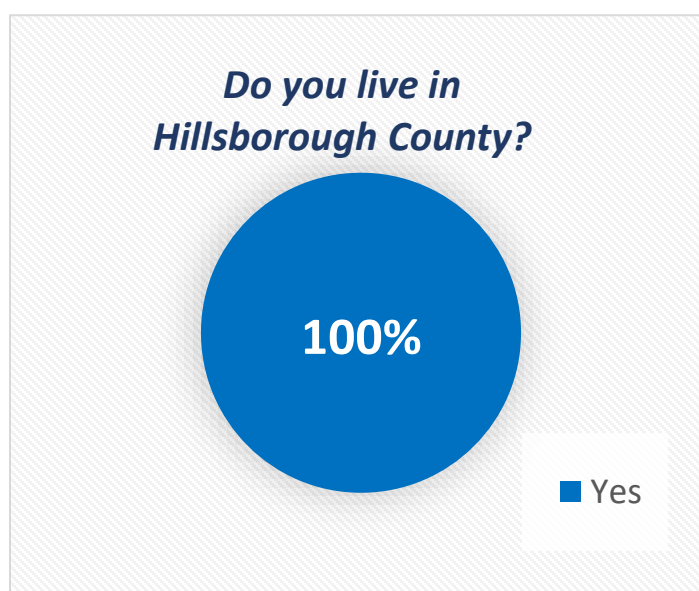
### *Online Survey*

HCP reviewed interview notes from Phase II to extract common themes, and repetitive comments from the stakeholders. The team reformatted the list of interview questions used to speak with the stakeholders, leveraging the common themes and repetitive comments to convert the open-questions into multiple-choice questions; this made the survey significantly less taxing on the respondents.

The research team coded the survey and set it up in a user-friendly online platform. Questions were extensively tested to ensure that they were not leading, the content was relevant and accurate, and the skip logic was correctly applied. HCP established the minimum response quota to achieve a  $\pm 5\%$  margin of error then worked with a panel company to begin collecting responses.

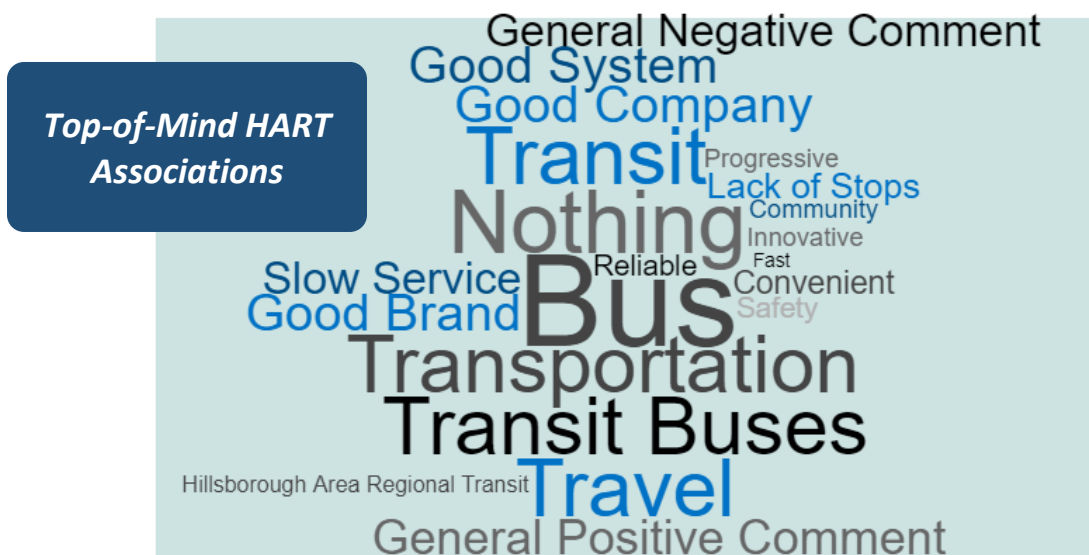
HART's Baseline Community Sentiment Survey included a total of 23 questions. Questions included a mixture of multiple choice, matrix and open-ended questions to gather perceptions of the organization, top-of-mind thoughts, use of HART services, expectations for the future, and more. Respondents completed the survey in an average of eight minutes. Responses were reviewed prior to analysis to ensure all met the residential requirements, quotas and completed the questions as directed—ending up with 469 valid responses.

The respondent base of interest to HART was Hillsborough County residents. To ensure the sample appropriately reflected the desired base, HCP set up an initial qualifying question to the survey to filter those who did live in Hillsborough County out of the survey. What follows is the analysis of the data collected.



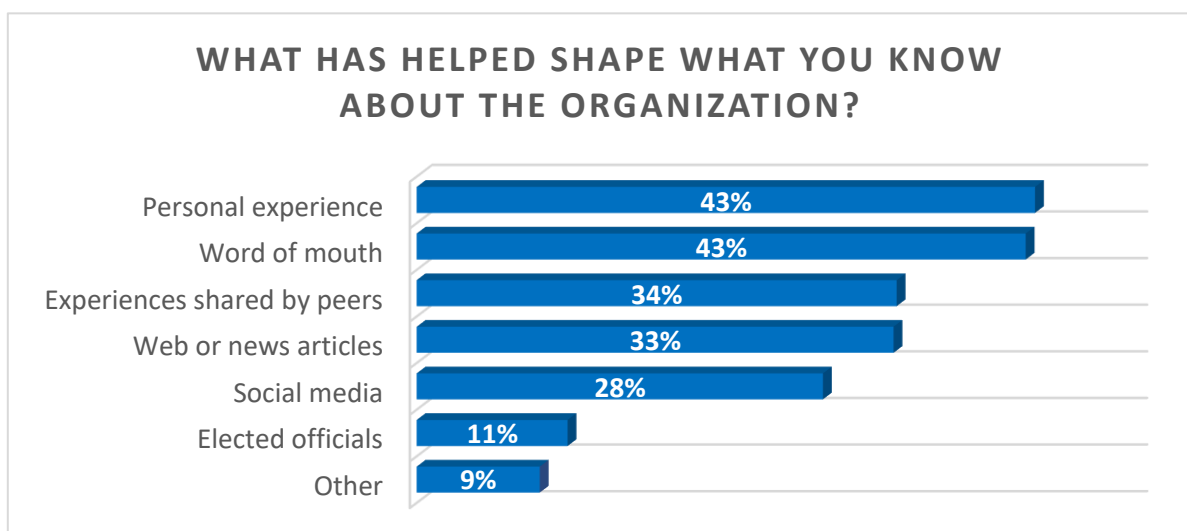
## COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS

Respondents were asked what comes to mind first when they think about HART; just like the stakeholders, the most common top-of-mind response was *bus*. Very few responded with *Hillsborough Area Regional Transit*; the responses were, however, largely appropriately transportation-themed, including references to transit and travel. Approximately one in 10 struggled with the question and shared *nothing* when asked what came to mind. Positive themed comments referenced convenience, speed, reliability and innovation. Negative themed comments referenced a lack of stops, slow service and safety concerns.

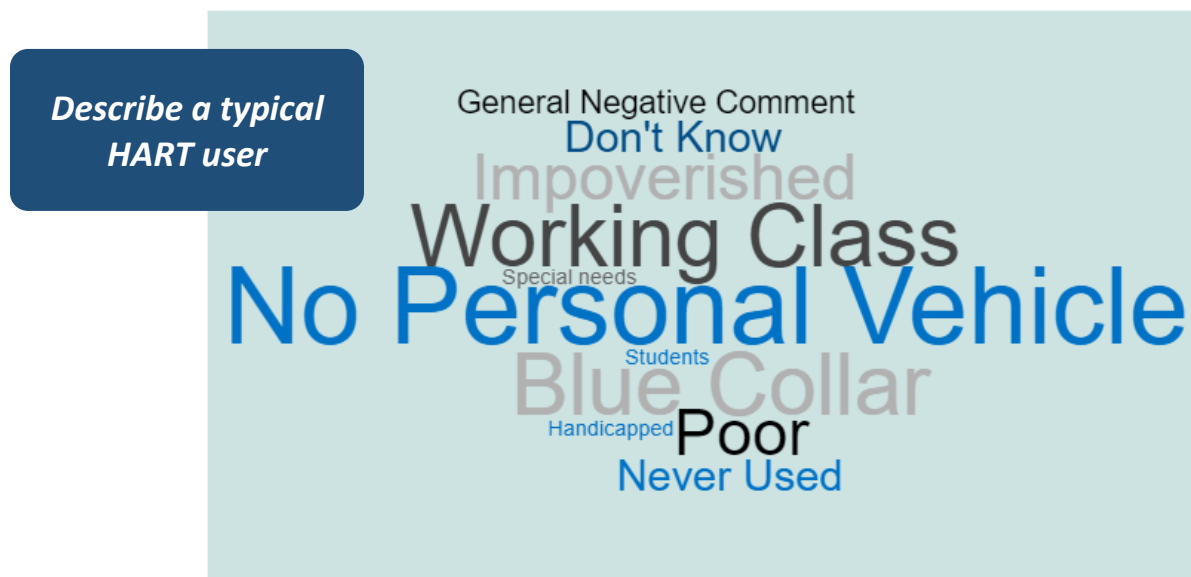


Beyond learning what the community associates with a brand, it is critical to determine how they built those associations. Respondents were asked what has helped shape their knowledge of HART—personal experience, word of mouth, media, elected officials, peers, etc. Respondents indicated that their perceptions of HART have been shaped as much by *personal experience* as *word of mouth*.

One third have also had their perceptions influenced by *peers* and the *media*. Comments in the “Other” category included respondents seeing signage, seeing HART vehicles on the road, or they were unsure.



Respondents were then asked to describe the typical HART user. Again, the community mirrored many of the responses shared during stakeholder interviews. Their perceptions of the typical HART user included someone not having a personal vehicle, being a member of the working class, handicapped residents, those with special needs, students, and essentially those who are limited in alternative transportation options; there were no mentions of choice-riders.



The respondents were also asked to use a 7-point scale to rate how well they considered HART to cater to specific groups. Given its role as the county-wide transportation organization, it is valuable for HART to understand how well the community considers it to be serving these populations. Of all the groups, respondents viewed HART as best catering to *residents without a personal vehicle*, rating this as a 5.41 out of a 7.00 scale. *Students* and the *disabled* were the second and third best catered to groups from the perspective of the respondents, each rated 5.18 out of 7.00. The group that the community viewed HART as catering to the least of all measured was *visitors and tourists* with an average rating of 4.74 out of 7.00.

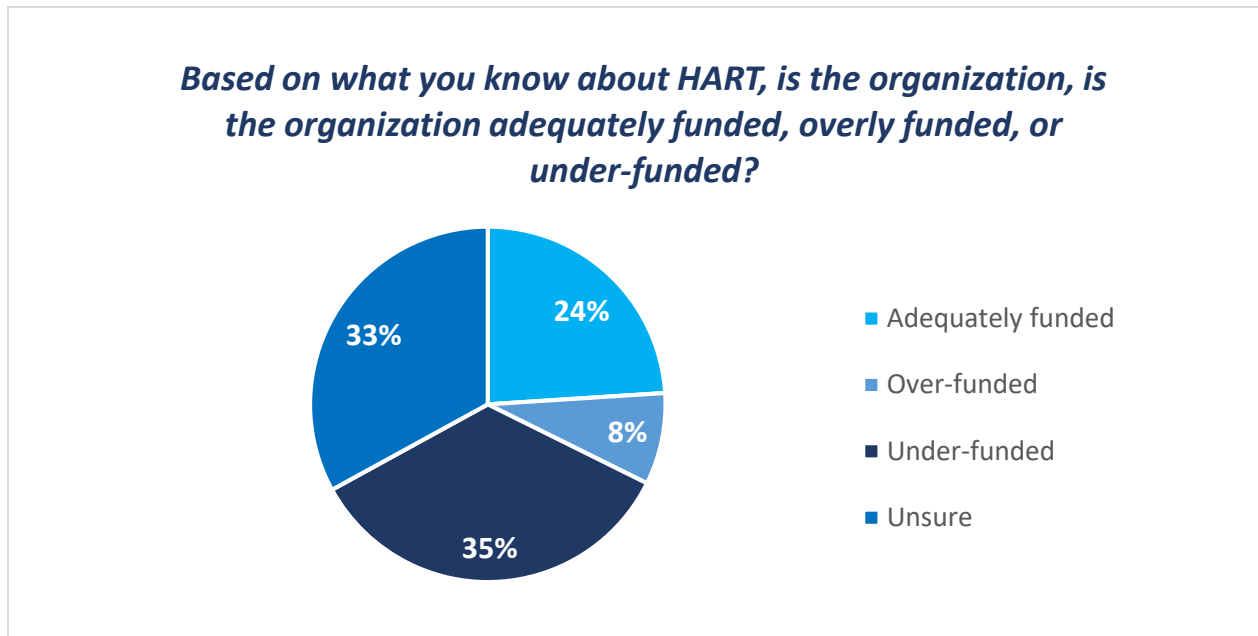
On a scale of 1 to 7, how well does HART cater to the following populations?	POPULATION	MEAN
	Residents without a personal vehicle	5.41
	Students	5.18
	Disabled	5.18
	Commuters	5.13
	Bike-riders	5.11
	Veterans	5.11
	Elderly	5.10
	Visitors/Tourists	4.74

Respondents were asked to rate how strong their association was between HART and a series of attributes for which the transit authority would like to be known. This separated strengths from opportunities; the attributes the community viewed HART as best delivering were serving as a *transportation provider* (5.46 out of 7.00) and an *economical alternative to personal vehicles* (5.12). The community drew a weaker association between HART and its role as an *integrator of new technology* (4.55) and as a *resource for crowd control during events* (4.52).

These ratings are based on a seven-point scale and as such, it is encouraging to see that the average associations for *transportation provider*, *economical alternative*, *parking alleviator*, *economic driver* and *matching community need* fall on the positive end (5.00-7.00) of the scale. There is, room for improvement—most notably for those topics that fall closer to the middle point of the scale (4.00) to the positive end.

<p><i>How strongly do you associate HART with the following using a scale of 1 - 7?</i></p>	ATTRIBUTE	MEAN
	Transportation provider	5.46
	Economical alternative to personal vehicles	5.12
	Parking alleviator	4.94
	Economic driver	4.85
	Matching community need with relevant services	4.83
	Traffic congestion alleviator	4.76
	Safer alternative to personal vehicles	4.74
	Source of innovative transportation solutions	4.71
	Integrator of new technology into its services	4.55
	Resource for crowd control during events	4.52

The survey briefly touched on funding. As the stakeholders pointed out in their comments, it is a very complex topic and there are numerous layers and funding sources. When asked to reflect on what they know, one in three were unsure whether funding to the organization was adequate, sufficient or excessive.



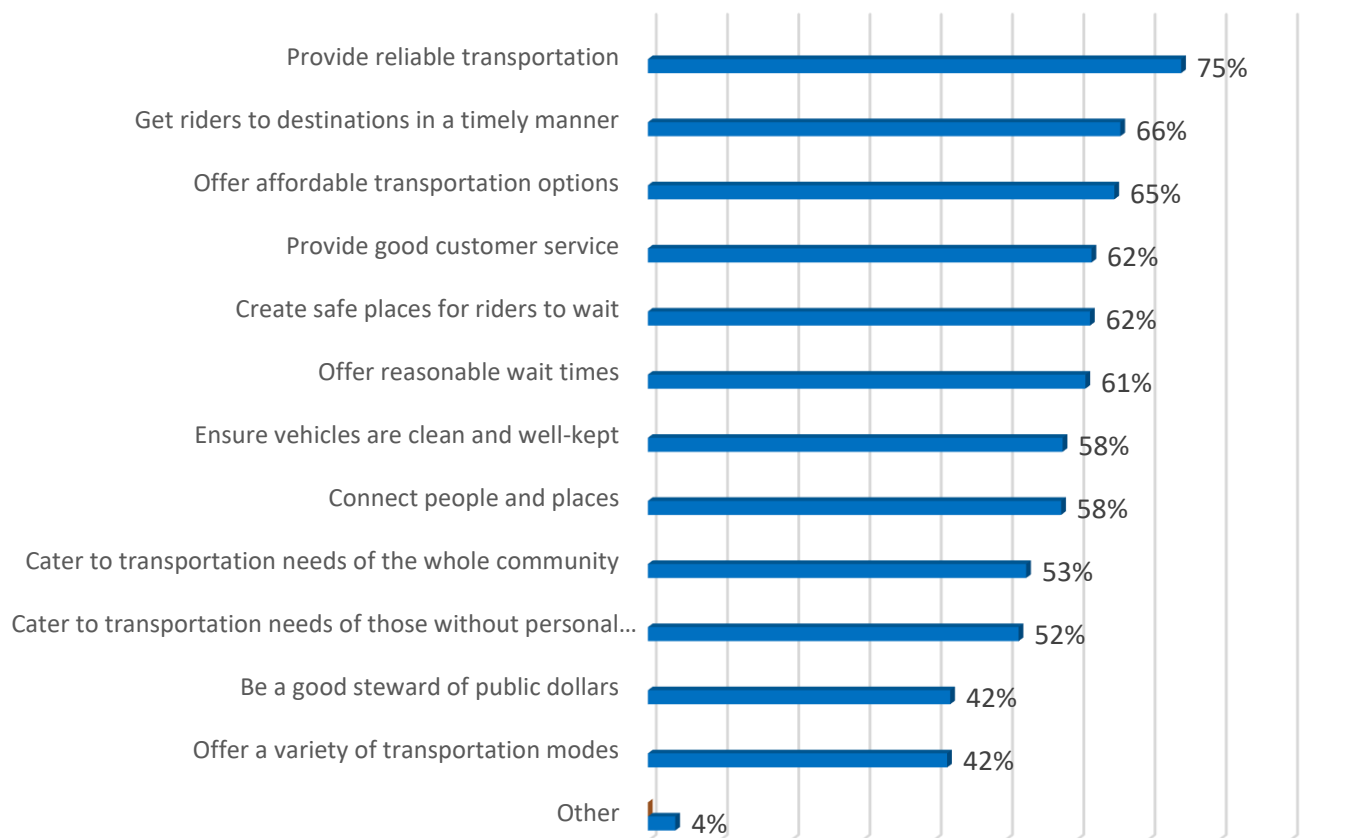
Of the remaining respondents who did indicate some knowledge of funding levels, more than half viewed the organization as being *under-funded*, over one-third considered it to be *adequately funded* and approximately 1 in 10 (8%) perceived *over-funded*.

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF HART

HART has a series of responsibilities that it strives to deliver to the community. Up until the fielding of this study, however, the organization had no indicator from the community to suggest whether the community agreed on these expressed responsibilities and furthermore how well the community perceived HART to be delivering on these responsibilities. It is critical for an organization serving the public such as HART, to ensure that what it is delivering and what the community expects from it to align.

Two questions asked helped illustrate the public's opinions. First, respondents were asked to indicate from a list what they considered to be HART's responsibilities to the community. Three-fourths of the people held HART accountable for *providing reliable public transit*. Approximately six in 10 hold HART accountable for *getting riders to destinations in a timely manner*, *offering affordable transportation solutions*, *providing good customer service*, *creating safe places for riders to wait* and *offering reasonable wait-times*. Those who answered "other" referenced high employee retention, extensive service area, aiding in heavy-traffic situations, and for the fare boxes to dispense change, in their comments. "Agreement" by half or more of respondents to a majority of the named responsibilities suggests alignment between what HART holds itself accountable for providing and what the community expects from it.

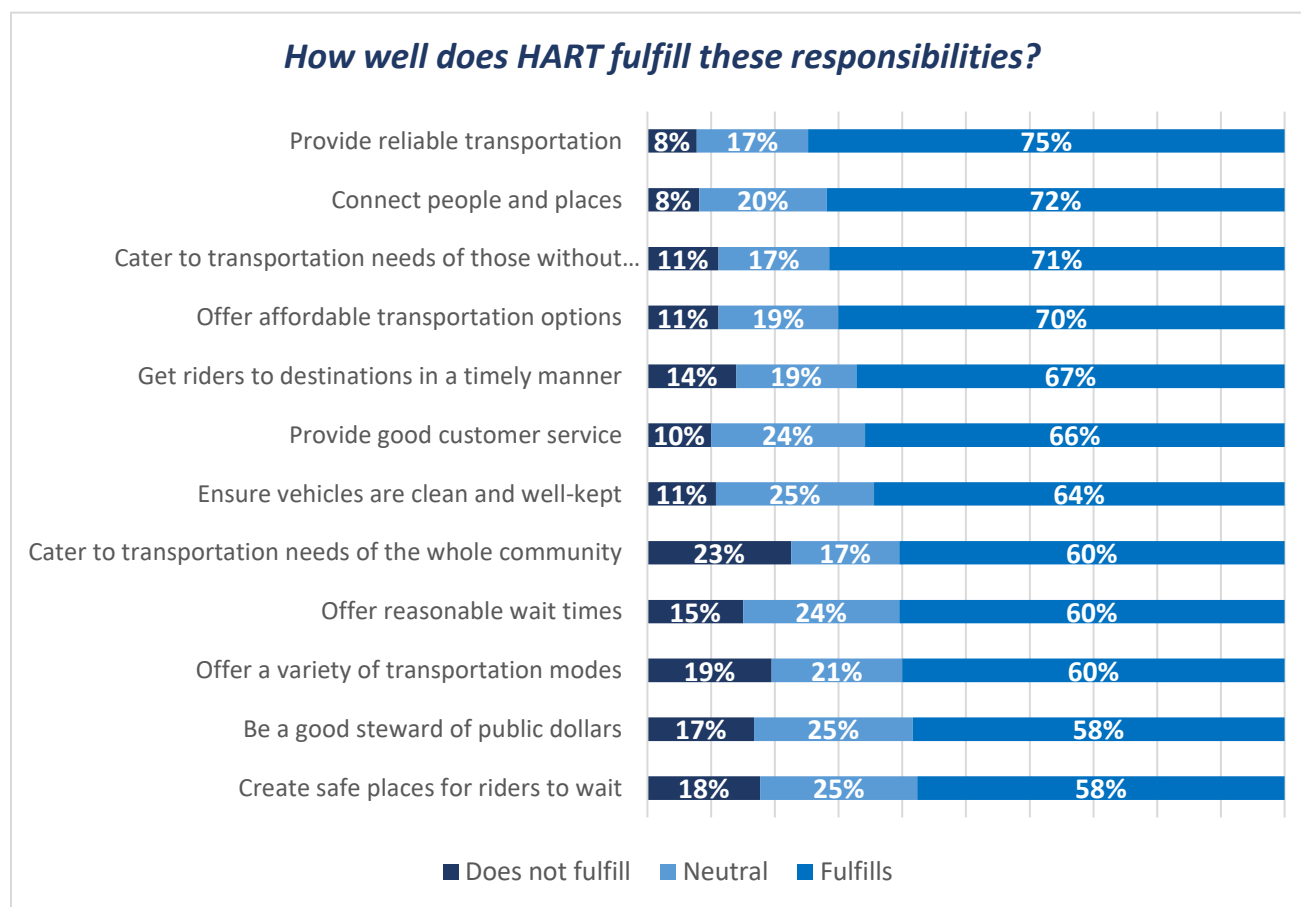
### ***What do you feel are the responsibilities of transit organizations?***



The second piece was how well the community perceived HART actually delivering on the named responsibilities—whether they were fulfilling expectations or not. Comparing responses from these two questions indicates where expectation gaps exist.

No fewer than half of respondents who agreed with the list of stated responsibilities consider HART to be fulfilling those responsibilities. The number one responsibility of the community (*providing reliable transportation*) received the largest share of *fulfill* ratings with 75%. The second and third most frequently selected responsibilities (*getting riders to destinations in a timely manner* and *offering affordable transportation options*) received “fulfill” ratings of 67% and 70%, respectively.

It is encouraging to see that there were not widespread perceptions that HART *does not fulfill* the named responsibilities; between eight and 23% of respondents indicated HART failing to fulfill named responsibilities. The area with the strongest *does not fulfill* perception was *catering transportation needs of the entire community*, with 23% indicating that sentiment. Recall that in the catering to populations question, not all groups were viewed as being catered to equally. That differentiation likely contributes to the disparity noted with this response.



***Base: Respondents who consider the item to be a HART responsibility.***

An area where HART can incite change is within the *neutral* responses; these are people in the community that simply do not have enough information about or experience with HART to commit to a perception of the organization. With outreach, those who are currently uncertain can become a part of the *fulfills* respondents.



## UNDERSTANDING PERSONAL USE: RIDER AND NON-RIDER PROFILES

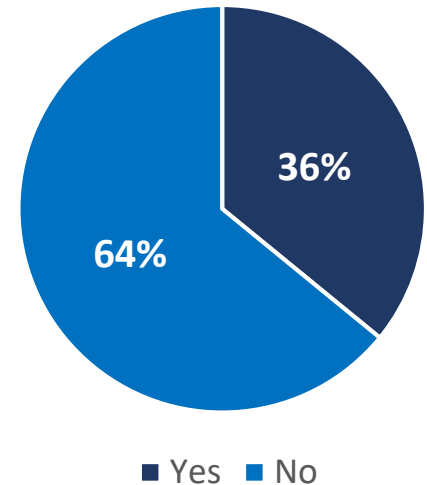
Respondents shared insight into how they use and view public transit. Approximately one-third (36%) of Hillsborough County respondents considered themselves to be routine users of public transportation. As the stakeholders and secondary research indicates, the region is heavily car-reliant.

If the respondents did not consider themselves to be a routine public transportation user, HCP proceeded to capture what would prompt them to start using it.

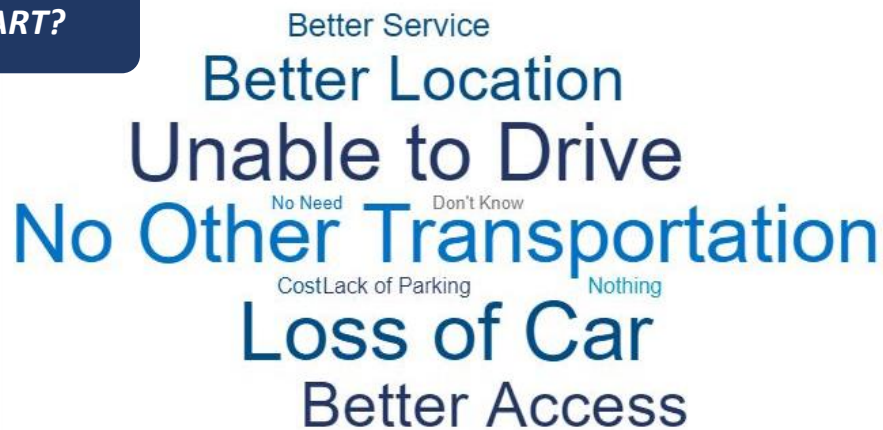
The 64% of non-routine users were asked what would prompt them to become regular users of public transportation. This question was open-ended, and the responses provided are shown below sized based upon frequency of mention.

Non-rider responses to this question mirrored their responses to who the typical public transit user is, commenting most frequently that only being unable to drive or having no other option would prompt them to use HART. This reiterates the area's car-dependent culture, the lens they place on the profile of HART riders.

***Do you consider yourself a routine public transportation user?***



***What would prompt you to use HART?***



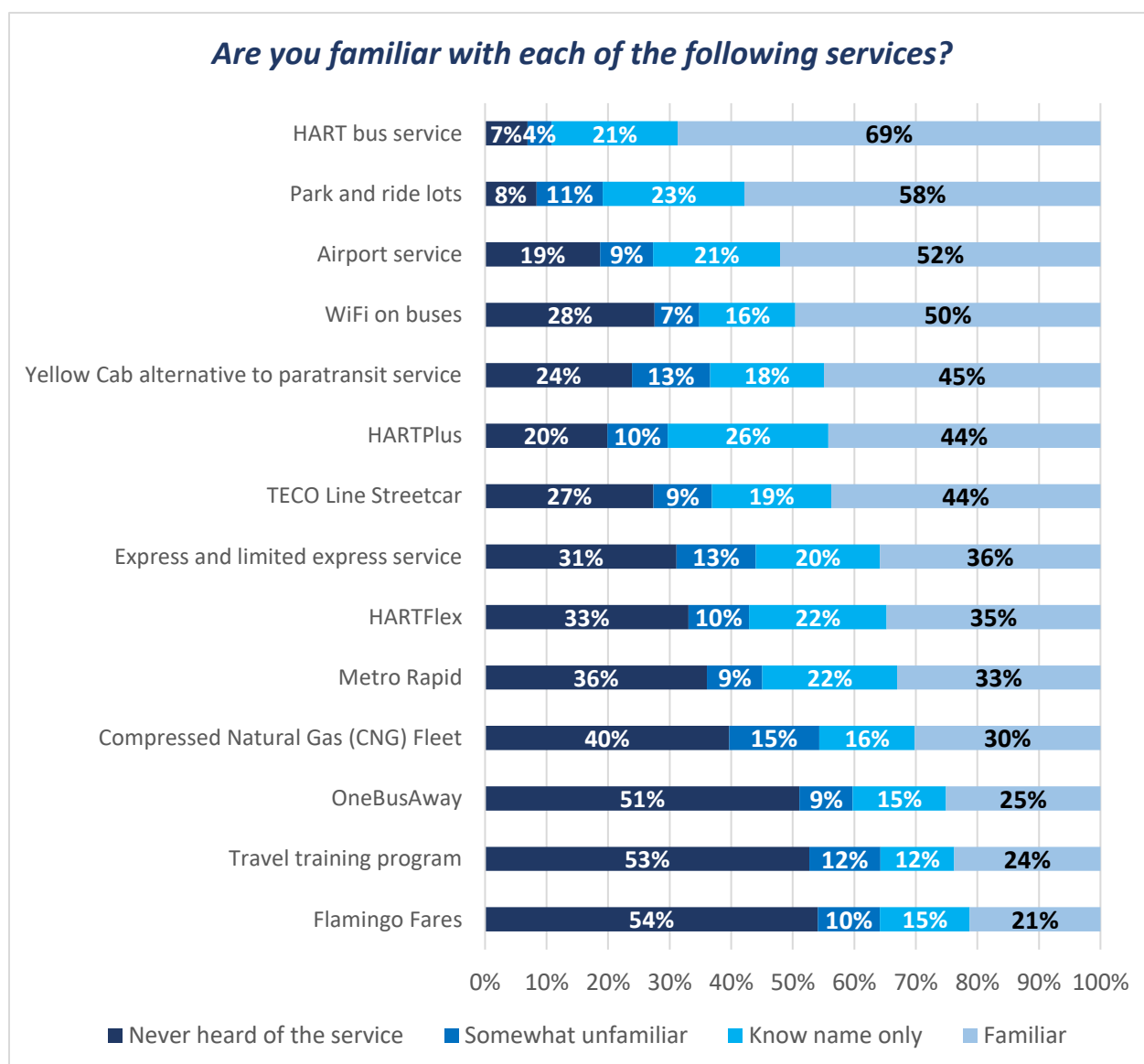
*Base: Respondents who do not consider themselves to be a routine public transportation user.*

## HART SERVICES

HART offers a variety of transportation services that extend far beyond its bus service. Many of the stakeholders indicated minimal familiarity with HART's services beyond the bus, which begged the question, did the community at large also lack familiarity?

Respondents shared how familiar they were with HART services; based on the services people are aware of, they were asked a follow up question of how often they use those services to give HART a sense of what the community knows and where they need to boost awareness to facilitate use.

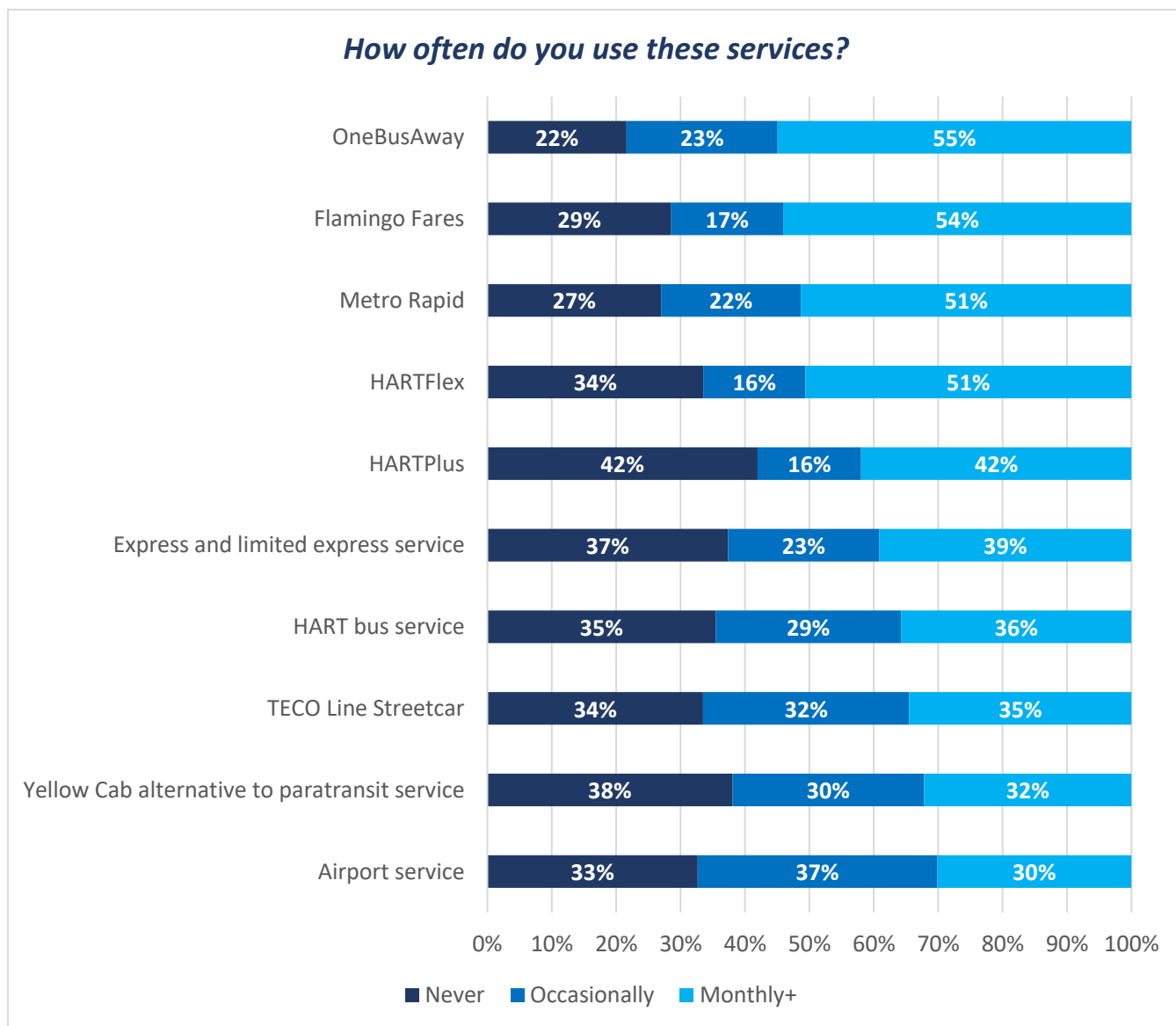
Unsurprisingly, respondents were most familiar with HART bus service (69% familiar), which was followed by park and ride lots (58%), airport service (52%) and Wi-Fi availability on the buses (50%). There was strong name recognition along with familiarity when it came to HART Plus, the Streetcar, Express service, HART Flex and Metro Rapid service. Widely unknown services included Flamingo Fares (54% never heard of service), Travel Training (53%), OneBus Away (51%).



This question provides HART with a base level of familiarity throughout the community for its various services. A lack of awareness certainly hinders potential usage. The survey additionally explored use among those who were aware of the services. See the graph on the following page.

Despite being aware of the services, one-third or more indicated never using park and ride lots, HART Plus, Yellow Cab for paratransit, express service, bus service, HART Flex, the Streetcar and airport service. For rationale, recall the perspective held by most that HART would be an option only when all alternatives were unavailable.

Services respondents were familiar with that were used at least once a month included OneBusAway, Flamingo Fares, Metro Rapid, and HARTFlex.

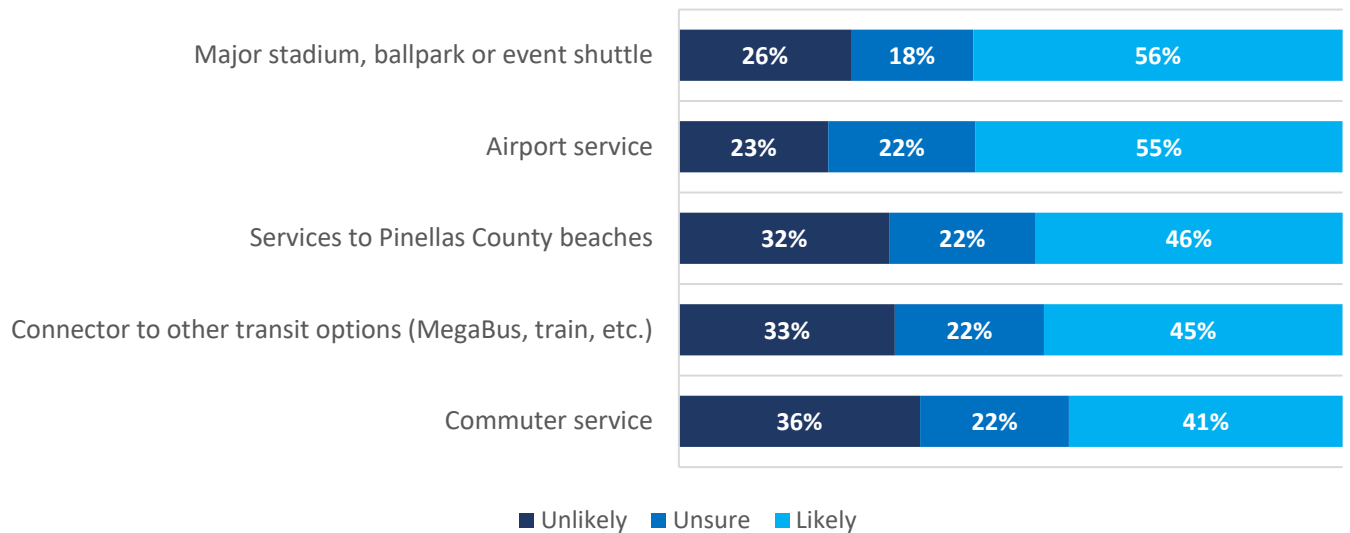


Base: Respondents who are familiar with a HART service.

Of services that HART could introduce, there was greatest interest (56% likely to use) in *public transportation to get to a major stadium, ballpark, or event shuttle*. Note the role this could play in

strengthening the community's perception of HART being a resource of crowd control at events. There was also strong interest in *airport service* (55%) and relatively strong interest in *beach service* (46%), *transit connection* (45%) and *commuter service* (41%).

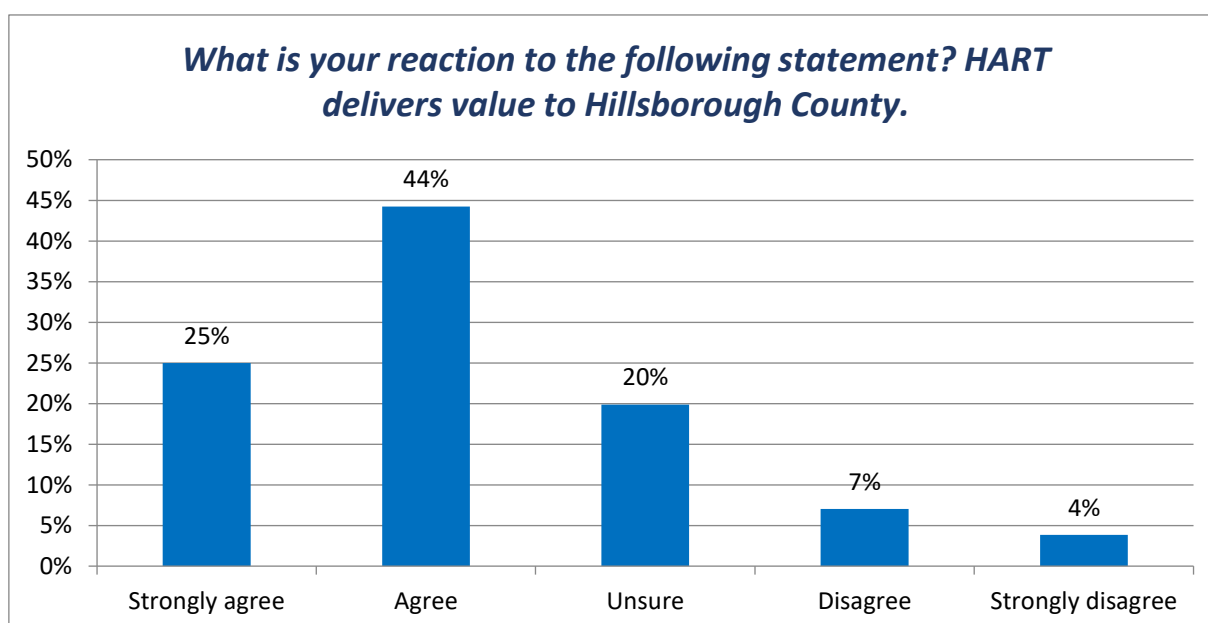
### ***How likely would you to use each of the following?***



## HART IN THE FUTURE

Respondents reacted to the statement, “HART delivers value to Hillsborough County.” Nearly seven in 10 people (69%) *agree* (strongly agree and agree combined) with the statement and one in 10 (11%) *disagree* (disagree and strongly disagree combined). One in five are unsure (20%) which is likely a result of lack of direct experience with HART, per respondent reactions to prior questions within the survey.

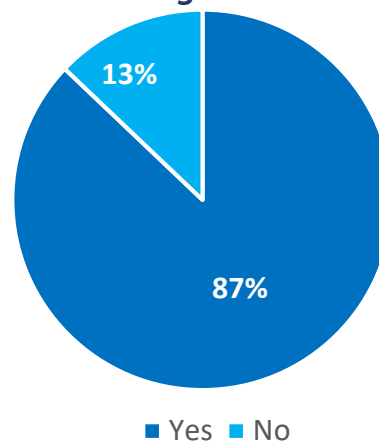
One of HART’s goals within the Success Plan is to receive a 3.00 rating on this statement. Per the respondents to the survey, their average level of agreement to the statement on a 5-point scale calculates out to 3.79.



At the close of the survey, respondents were asked to indicate whether they believed HART could provide Hillsborough County’s future transportation needs. Again, much like the feedback received from stakeholder interviews, more than four in five (87%) *agreed* that in the future, HART can provide transportation solutions for the region.

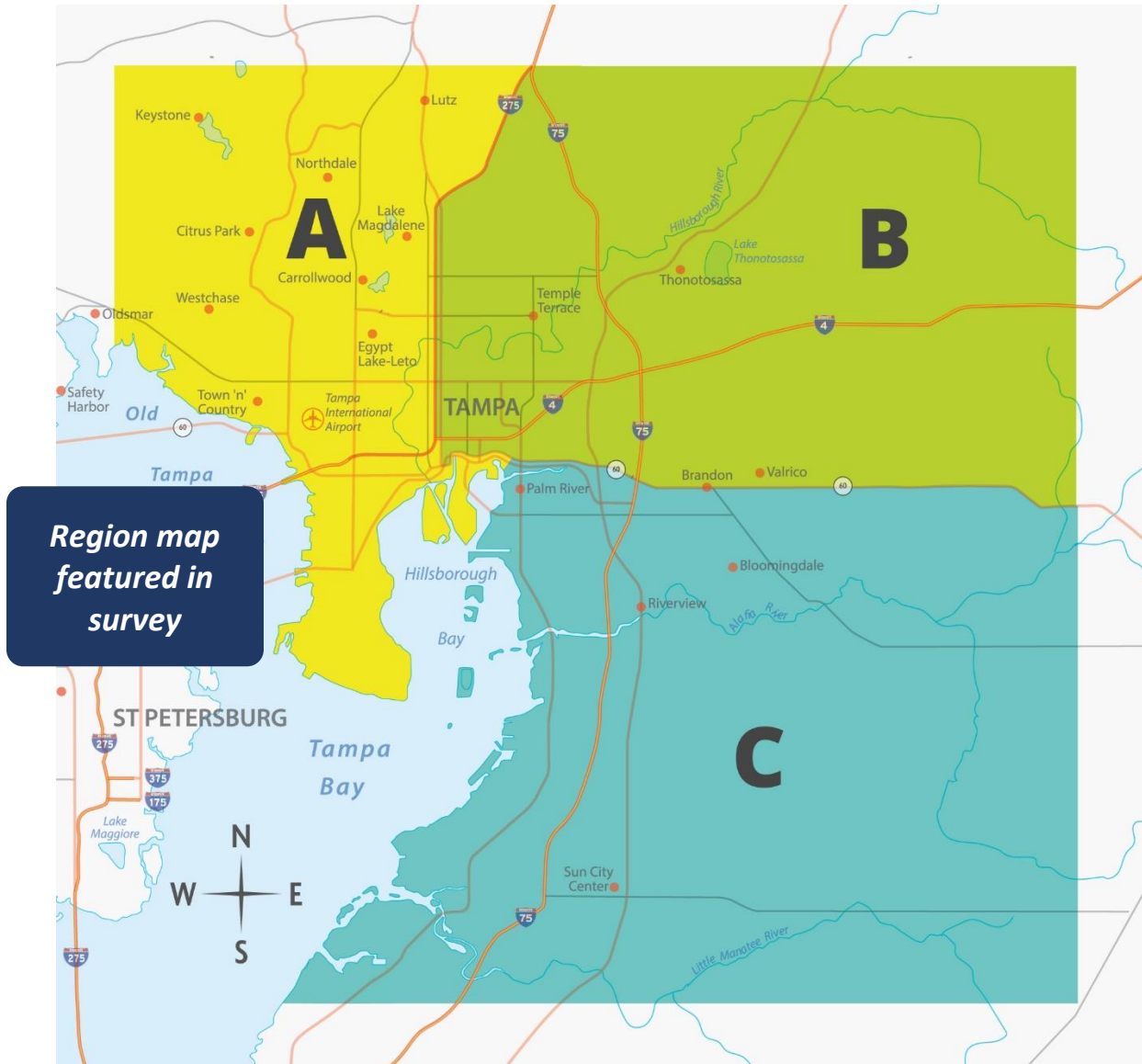
The 13% who did not think HART could be the future’s transportation solution offered their rationales which included demands for timeliness; rapid transit; less political involvement; more routes; more accessibility to the suburbs; and some saw reliance on cars making it impossible for HART to be the way of the future. These comments had been echoed by the stakeholders.

***Do you believe that HART can provide the transportation solutions of the future in the region?***



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Hillsborough County Florida			
Community Sentiment Survey 2018			
Survey Participant Profile Compared with American Community Survey 2016 estimates			
Number of Participants = 469			
Demographic Category	Survey Results	Census	Comments
Gender			
Male	38%	49%	Males underrepresented
Female	62%	51%	Females overrepresented
Age Range			
Under 25	12%	9%	Under 25 represented within margin of error
25 - 34	27%	19%	25 - 34 represented within margin of error
35 - 44	22%	18%	35 - 44 represented within margin of error
45 - 54	13%	18%	45 - 54 represented within margin of error
55 - 64	15%	15%	55 - 64 represented within margin of error
65+	13%	17%	65+ represented within margin of error
Household Income			
Under \$25,000	20%	24%	Under \$25k represented within margin of error
\$25,000 to \$49,999	29%	25%	\$25k to \$49,999 represented within margin of error
\$50,000 to \$74,999	26%	18%	\$50K to \$74,999 represented within margin of error
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14%	12%	\$75k - \$99,999 represented within margin of error
\$100,000+	12%	22%	\$100,000+ underrepresented
Region in County			
Region A	39%	42%	Region A represented within margin of error
Region B	42%	32%	Region B represented within margin of error
Region C	19%	26%	Region C represented within margin of error



*Zip code frequencies and corresponding areas*

Area	Frequency
Tampa	84
Other	68
University	41
West Tampa	30
Carrollwood	28
Brandon	26
South Tampa	23
Unincorporated Hillsborough County	23
Lutz	22
Town and Country	19
Downtown Area	18
Valrico	17
South Shore	15
Plant City	14
Riverview	9
Apollo Beach	6



## Summary of Findings

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What follows is a narrative of HCP's summary thoughts and associated recommendations upon completion of the stakeholder interview and community survey.

### *Perceptions*

HART does not suffer from brand confusion—by and large the community knows the name and associates the organization with transportation. The scope of HART's services; however, is widely unacknowledged by the community. Through both stakeholder interviews and responses to the community sentiment survey, the low levels of awareness of the array of services beyond traditional bus was alarming; it was alarming in that these community stakeholders cannot possibly be proponents or advocates of the organization if they have a modest at best appreciation for its capabilities. Additionally, the public—who in large are not utilizing HART services—have just a fraction of awareness of the total scope of the organization; this lack of knowledge makes the community hard-pressed to see HART as innovative, as having major economic impact, and is likely to drastically color their reactions to the topic of funding.

People have built their perceptions of the organization nearly as equally from personal experience as word of mouth. As indicated when asked for frequency of use, the “personal experience” is more likely to be based on a trial or past usage than a routine habit of taking public transit or deep familiarity with the system. Additional influencers are anecdotes from peers and media coverage. All of these sources dwarfed the influence (in this context) of elected officials.

This finding was contrary to the stakeholder interview phase; elected officials were named in nearly every stakeholder interview conducted—some in glowing terms but more frequently in a critical light. Stakeholders placed great weight on their influence when it came to funding and community support of the organization.

The impact of these other sources of influence, as captured by the community survey, makes it paramount for HART to work on its community outreach to all—elected, appointed, community leaders, and citizens of Hillsborough.

- **Challenge Community Leaders**—Leaders who currently support HART need to talk the talk and walk the walk; leaders who do not support need to give it an honest try. Set up public transit trials and capture footage and photography from the exercises.
- **Proactively Reach Community Organizations**—Look at the current routes and inventory companies, organizations, service centers and non-profits that fall along the routes; set up travel training programs and custom presentations for these groups.
- **Present at Every Opportunity**—Secure opportunities to speak to chambers, leadership groups, professional organizations, Rotary/Kiwanis/Lion's/etc., to share new efforts underway, accomplishments, future plans—anything to help increase HART's scope of potential positive word of mouth.
- **Promote Services Awareness**—Many do not know about the variety in services HART offers nor what services are provided based upon current naming/branding of each. Educate the community on what services HART offers and the corresponding name. This is particularly applicable to the mobile application. As riders become increasingly attuned to mobile efficiencies, make sure it is

seamless for them to find the application rather than “stumble upon” it; for example if you search “HART” in the app store today using an Apple device, nothing returns from the search, but if you search “HART bus” there are matches. On an Android, OneBusAway is the sixth result and is not branded as HART in any fashion making it necessary for the rider to explicitly know the name of the desired app.

## Routes

Stakeholders were critical of route accessibility and the community echoed their sentiments through the survey. The majority of responses given when the community was asked, “*What would make you use HART?*,” were out of HART’s control (nothing, being unable to drive, no longer having another option). The exceptions were pickup locations, route accessibility and better service. Under-utilization (seeing “empty” buses) and low ridership numbers incited comments that HART needs to do more in the way of point of origin/destination analysis to provide optimal routes.

- **Analyze Hillsborough County**—Look at the residents within Hillsborough County; understand behaviors, major employers, commutes, and traffic patterns. This will uncover adjustments to service and routes.
- **Analyze Routes**—Look at your highest capacity, mid-capacity and low-capacity routes; focusing on mid and low-capacity, cross-reference major needs that are directly on the route lines (grocery, pharmacy, clinic, retail) and direct market to neighborhoods with stops along those same routes.
- **Enhance User-Friendliness**—Respondents echoed needs for better accessibility. Depending on the respondent it meant ensuring bus stops are ideal for Florida’s ever-changing weather conditions, placing stops in safe destinations set back from traffic, sensitivity to first mile/last mile conditions, accommodating more bicycles on the front of the bus, or sometimes on the bus. The results to the user survey will surely offer a wealth of areas for improvement for the organization to take to heart given their origination from actual users.
- **Consider Renaming**— Consider ways of breaking down the “barriers to entry” for new users. Numerous stakeholders and select community survey respondents referenced taking public transportation and specifically riding the bus as being an intimidating process. People do not like to feel “stupid.” Figuring out the proper route and reading a bus schedule take time and patience. Route numbering does not coincide with street names or destinations which makes current labels seemingly arbitrary. Follow some first-time users to get a taste for the process. One of the worst things that can happen is for an interested user to be turned off at the start.

## Funding

Stakeholders and community respondents who expressed some degree of familiarity with HART’s financial standing were cognizant of funding deficiencies. The sentiment was not unanimous, as many respondents to the community survey are unfamiliar with HART funding and therefore could not comment.

There is widespread acknowledgement that budgets are too small to be all things to all citizens. Patience among stakeholders is growing thin; however, over frustrations with politicians “kicking the can” and

gridlock is intensifying. It is imperative from the stakeholders' perspective that alternative funding sources not only be pursued but pursued aggressively.

Respondents to the community survey were not able to articulate the need for alternative funding; they were more prone to mentioning needs that in order to fulfill require extended funding (shorter wait times, extended routes, greater accessibility), but did not address how to go about getting the necessary funding.

Stakeholders did broach successful models from other cities, from corporate sponsors, to branded route lines, to public/private partnerships, replacing third-party contractors—the community is a phenomenal source of information for the HART organization and collaborating to hear ideas of what stakeholders have seen work well elsewhere can offer big relief and future sustainability.

- **Collaborate**—There are many opportunities for innovation through partnerships. Utilize partnerships and leverage the private industry for support. Host an open forum where HART brings in stakeholders to discuss these alternative models.
- **Tap Entrepreneurial Minds**—Host a “hack-a-thon” style event where entrepreneurs are invited to participate in transit-oriented problem solving exercises.
- **Be Data-Driven**—Stakeholders want to make/see decisions made based on statistics. Tie asks for increases in funding to the number of riders reached, rationalize route changes or new routes with the employment centers and amenities reached.

## *Telling the Story*

There is additionally room for HART to broaden community understanding of its mission and vision. What is the organization in place to do and additionally how well are they doing it? The community offered high marks with regard to HART's responsibilities being on point, but when it comes to the root of the organization, and what big picture needs it will provide in the future—no one other than HART can tell that story.

- **Be Clear**—Start every presentation, meeting and brief with a reference to the HART mission. Calling back to what you are in place to do keeps all on point and delivering against your commitments.
- **Spread the Good News**—Flood all outgoing mediums with good news; you cannot control what gets published by the media, but you can control your social platforms, news feed, original content, self-published newswire releases, etc.
- **Engage the Employees**—HART employees are a major resource in telling the story; they can be some of your biggest advocates. Require participation and use of HART transit options during training and onboarding for new employees (and even board members).
- **State the Impact**—Make a closer association between HART and economic development—connecting people to jobs, medical appointments, shopping, errands, tourist destinations. Stakeholders saw great potential for HART to tell the story of its economic impact but perceived the organization as falling short in telling that story.

- **Manage Expectations**—Talk about the tradeoffs that come with public transportation use. While your travel time may increase, in exchange for your keys, riders have more R&R time, they can use the time typically spent in traffic being productive—even teleconferencing into meetings.
- **Transparency**—Publish data routinely; ensure the data points are compiled in one place and easy to access/locate/navigate on your website. Make sure they are updated on a quarterly or annual-basis. This is helpful for the public to see as well as employees. It tells the story HART is keeping itself accountable by “laying their cards on the table.”

There is additionally a major discrepancy between the nationwide profile of the transit user, which is more or less a microcosm of the US, and the profile of the transit user in Hillsborough County—whether the profile is based on reality or respondent perception. Respondents see users locally to be solely non-choice riders and this mentality poses a major challenge to drawing residents out of their cars.

- **Involve Your Advocates**—Follow different classes of current users and allow them to tell their story. Any one of the stakeholders interviewed who routinely use HART services would be happy to engage. Capture their preconceived notions prior to using a HART service, their experiences—the good and the bad.

## *HART's Value*

Putting the criticisms and critiques aside, stakeholders and respondents to the community survey alike shared strong levels of agreement regarding HART delivering value to the County and belief that HART can be the solution for the future. This optimism makes it paramount for HART to continue a positive trajectory, relying on data-driven decision-making, exponential increases in community outreach, proactive “storytelling” of organization accomplishments, and securement of alternative funding sources.

## Appendix A: Online Survey

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The purpose of this survey is to establish a baseline of what the community knows about the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) and how they view its service to the community.

To begin the survey, please click “next.”

### INTRODUCTION

**1. Do you live in Hillsborough County?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No <Terminate>

**2. What comes to mind first when you think about HART?**

---

**3. What has helped shape what you know about the organization? Select all that apply.**

- ☐ Social Media
- ☐ Elected officials
- ☐ Word of mouth
- ☐ Personal experience
- ☐ Web or news articles
- ☐ Experiences shared by friends and family
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TRANSIT AUTHORITY

**4. What do you feel are the responsibilities of transit organizations? Select all that apply.**

- ☐ Connect people and places
- ☐ Provide reliable transportation
- ☐ Provide good customer service
- ☐ Be a good steward of public dollars
- ☐ Offer reasonable wait times
- ☐ Create safe places for riders to wait
- ☐ Get riders to destinations in a timely manner
- ☐ Ensure vehicles are clean and well-kept
- ☐ Offer a variety of transportation modes
- ☐ Offer affordable transportation options
- ☐ Cater to transportation needs of the whole community
- ☐ Cater to transportation needs of those without personal vehicle access
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**5. How well does HART fulfill these responsibilities?**

**Does not fulfill**

**Completely fulfills**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- a. <Items selected in Q4 will appear here >

**ABOUT HART**

**6. Describe the typical Hillsborough County public transit user, in your view.**

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**7. How well do you feel that HART caters to each of the following populations on a scale of 1 to 7:**

**Does not cater to**

**Completely caters to**

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

- a. Students
- b. Disabled
- c. Elderly
- d. Bike-riders
- e. Residents without a personal vehicle
- f. Veterans
- g. Commuters
- h. Visitors/tourists

**8. How strongly do you associate HART with the following using a scale of 1-7, where 1 represents do not at all associate, 4 is unsure, and 7 is strongly associate?**

- a. Transportation provider
- b. Economic driver
- c. Source of innovative transportation solutions
- d. Matching community need with relevant services
- e. Integrator of new technology into its services
- f. Resource for crowd control during events
- g. Parking alleviator
- h. Traffic congestion alleviator
- i. Safer alternative to personal vehicles
- j. Economical alternative to personal vehicles

**9. What is your reaction to the following statement? *HART delivers value to Hillsborough County.***

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Unsure
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree

## TRANSIT USE

**10. Do you consider yourself a routine public transportation user?**

- a. Yes <go to Q12>
- b. No <go to Q11>

**11. What would prompt you to regularly take public transportation?**

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## HART SERVICES

**12. Are you familiar with each of the following?**

Extremely familiar - Somewhat familiar - Know name only - Somewhat unfamiliar -  
Never heard of the service

- a. Flamingo Fares
- b. HART bus service
- c. Metro Rapid
- d. TECO Line Streetcar
- e. HARTFlex
- f. HARTPlus
- g. Yellow Cab alternative to paratransit service
- h. OneBusAway
- i. Park and Ride lots
- j. Travel training program
- k. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fleet
- l. WiFi on buses
- m. Airport Service
- n. Express and limited express service

**13. How often do you use these services? (Note: Only those rated as “familiar” in Q12 will be piped in for rating here)**

- a. Monthly
- b. Weekly
- c. Daily
- d. Occasionally
- e. Never

**14. How likely would you to use each of the following?**

**Very likely - Somewhat likely - Unsure - Somewhat unlikely - Very unlikely**

- a. Major Stadium, Ballpark or Event shuttle
- b. Airport service
- c. Connector to other transit options (MegaBus, Train, etc.)

- d. Commuter service
- e. Services to Pinellas County beaches

## **MODES OF TRANSPORTATION**

**15. What modes of transportation do you use to get around? Select all that apply.**

- ☐ Personal vehicle
- ☐ Uber/Lyft
- ☐ Carpool/vanpool
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Personal bike
- ☐ Rental bike
- ☐ Streetcar
- ☐ Trolley
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

**16. Do you believe that HART can provide the transportation solutions of the future in the region?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
  - i. What is needed in order for this to be the case?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**17. Based on what you know about HART, is the organization adequately funded, overly funded, or under-funded?**

- ☐ Adequately funded
- ☐ Over-funded
- ☐ Under-funded
- ☐ Unsure



## DEMOGRAPHICS

1. Within what region of Hillsborough County do you live?

- a. Region A
- b. Region B
- c. Region C

2. What is your zip code? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your gender?

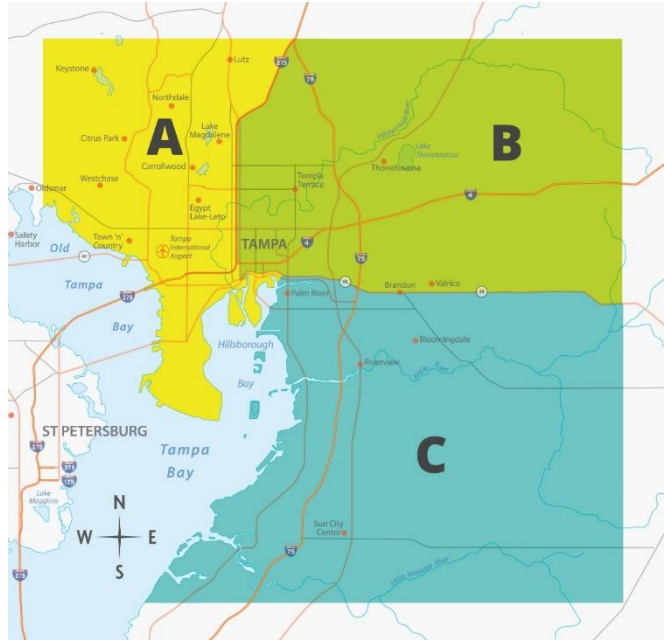
- a. Male
- b. Female

4. What is your age?

- a. Under 25
- b. 25 - 34
- c. 35 - 44
- d. 44 - 54
- e. 55 - 64
- f. 65+

5. What is the total annual income of your household?

- a. Under \$25,000
- b. \$25,000 to \$49,999
- c. \$50,000 to \$74,999
- d. \$75,000 to \$99,999
- e. \$100,000+



## Appendix B: Stakeholder Interview Questions

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- 1. What comes to mind first when you think about HART? –OPEN**
  - a. What do you know about the organization?
  - b. What has helped shape what you know about the organization? (Note: Could include media, elected officials, personal experience, peer anecdotes, etc.)
- 2. What do you feel are the responsibilities of transit organizations? –OPEN**
- 3. How well does HART fulfill these responsibilities? –OPEN**
- 4. Describe the typical public transit user, in your view. –OPEN**
- 5. How well do you feel that HART caters to each of the following populations on a scale of 0-10:**
  - a. Students
  - b. Disabled
  - c. Elderly
  - d. Bike-riders
  - e. Residents without a personal vehicle
- 6. How strongly do you associate HART with the following? (scale: 1-7 where 1 represents do not at all associate, 4 is unsure and 7 is strongly associate)**
  - a. Transportation provider
  - b. Economic driver
  - c. Source of innovative transportation solutions
  - d. Matching community need with relevant services
  - e. Integrator of new technology into its services
  - f. Resource for crowd control during events
  - g. Parking alleviator
  - h. Traffic congestion alleviator
  - i. Safer alternative to personal vehicles
  - j. Economical alternative to personal vehicles
- 7. What is your reaction to the following statement? HART delivers value to Hillsborough County. (scale: 1-5)**
  - a. Strongly agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Unsure
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly disagree
- 8. Are you familiar with each of the following? (scale: extremely familiar- somewhat familiar-know name only-somewhat unfamiliar-never heard of the service) –Ask Y/N for stakeholders**
  - a. FlamingoFare (consolidate fare payment system)

- b. HART bus service
- c. Metro Rapid (rapide bus service)
- d. TECO Line Streetcar
- e. In-Towner (rubber wheel)
- f. HARTFlex (van service)
- g. HyperLINK (first mile/last mile extension to front door)
- h. HARTPlus (paratransit for special needs riders)
- i. Yellow Cab alternative to paratransit service
- j. OneBusAway (trip planning app)
- k. Park and Ride lots
- l. Travel training program (educational for employers to share with employees)
- m. Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fleet
- n. WiFi on buses
- o. Airport Service

**9. (Responses familiar) How often do you use these services?**

**10. How likely are you to use each of the following:**

- a. Major Stadium, Ballpark or Event shuttle
- b. Airport service
- c. Connector to other transit options (MegaBus, Train, etc.)
- d. Commuter service

**11. What would prompt you to regularly take public transportation? –OPEN**

**12. What are your typical local travel patterns (region where live, routes used for work, travel for work/leisure)? –OPEN**

**13. What modes of transportation do you use to get around? –OPEN**

- a. Personal vehicle
- b. Uber/Lyft
- c. Carpool/vanpool
- d. Bus
- e. Personal bike
- f. Rental bike
- g. Streetcar
- h. Trolley
- i. Bike rental

**14. How satisfied are you with the modes you use? (scale: extremely satisfied-satisfied-somewhat satisfied-somewhat dissatisfied-dissatisfied-extremely dissatisfied)Note: Only options chosen above will be rated**

**15. How can HART be an engaged agency with your organization? –Customize-OPEN**

- a. What role do you believe you personally and/or your organization can play in helping HART meet your expectations?

**16. Do you understand how HART is funded? –OPEN**

- a. Do you have a sense of whether it is funded at a level comparable to its peers, over-funded or under-funded?

**17. Do you believe that HART can provide the transportation solutions of the future in the region?**

**–Yes/No**

- a. If no, what is needed in order for this to be the case?

## Appendix C: Participating Stakeholders

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<b>HART Stakeholders</b>	<b>Affiliations</b>	<b>Job title</b>
1. Mel Jurado	City of Temple Terrace	Mayor
2. Eric Hart	Tampa Sports Authority	President/ Chief Executive Officer
3. Angela Medero	Hillsborough County Social Services	Contract Manager
4. Courtney Orr	Ybor City Development Corporation	Manager
5. Brenda Thrower	Ybor City Development Corporation	Economic Development Specialist
6. Ann Kulig	Westshore Alliance	Director of Marketing
7. Steve Spina	City of Zephyrhills	City Manager
8. Beth Alden	Plan Hillsborough	Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Executive Director
9. Craig Richard	Tampa EDC	President and Chief Executive Officer
10. Rick Homans	Tampa Bay Partnership	President and Chief Executive Officer
11. Rob Lamke	MOSI	Chief Operating Officer
12. Mary Jo McKay	Hillsborough County, Aging services	Manager
13. Anika Coney	Hillsborough County, Aging Services	Grants, Programs & Services Compliance Coordinator
14. Manny Leto	Tampa Bay History Center	Director of Marketing and Communications
15. Patrice Gingras	University Mall	Mall Manager
16. Mike Merrill	Hillsborough County	County Administrator
17. Jay Botsch	WestShore Plaza	General Manager
18. Karen Kress	-Hillsborough County City-County Planning Commission -Tampa Downtown Partnership	-Commissioner -Director of Transportation and Planning
19. Mickey Jacob	-BDG Architects -Tampa Downtown Partnership	-Chief Marketing Officer -Board Chairman
20. Bob Rohrlack	Tampa Chamber	President and Chief Executive Officer
21. Frank Strom	Hillsborough County, consumer & Veteran Services	Director
22. Sarah Combs	University Area CDC	Executive director and Chief Executive Officer

23. Mark House	Beck	Director of Strategic Projects
24. Ray Chiaramonte	TBARTA	Executive Director
25. Calvin Williams	University of South Florida	Vice President for Administrative Services
26. Raymond Mensah	University of South Florida	Director of Parking and Transportation Services
27. Joe Lopano	Tampa International Airport	Chief Executive Officer
28. Janet Scherberger	Tampa International Airport	Vice President-Communications
29. Jeanette LaRussa Fenton	West Tampa Chamber	Economic Development Advisor
30. Edward Ellsasser	PrimeGroup Insurance	President
31. Roger Germann	The Florida Aquarium	President and Chief Executive Officer
32. Dr. Ron Vaughn	The University of Tampa	President
33. Santiago Corrada	Visit Tampa Bay	President and Chief Executive Officer
34. Bob Morrison	Hillsborough County Hotel Motel Association (HCHMA)	Executive Director
35. Sandy Murman	-Hillsborough County -HART -Metropolitan Planning Organization	-County Commissioner -Board Member -Board Member
36. Mark Sharpe	!P	Chief Potential Officer
37. Linda Olson	WaVe	President/Chief Executive Officer
38. Les Miller	-Hillsborough County -HART	-County Commissioner -Board Chair

## Appendix D: Stakeholder Quotes

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### What comes to mind first when you think about HART?

- f. "That especially in the suburbs, some of the seniors who live, who came from larger cities said they actually were able to actually use public transportation in the larger cities, but now that they're here it's not an option for them."
- g. "Bus service and you also have specialized transportation like door-to-door service."
- h. "I think of bus lines."
- i. "Just a bus system, without much reach for the community."
- j. "Mass transit."
- k. "I mean the region's primary public transit is one of the first thing that comes to mind."
- l. "So, I'm thinking the diversification and the transportation option that you guys can provide for a varying type of population"
- m. "It's our bus system that is grossly underfunded to meet the needs of the community."
- n. "Aware of the buses, that's about the only service I know."
- o. "I mean, dysfunction"
- p. "If you say a scale of 1 to 10, just an initial guy good feeling, it's basically a 5."
- q. "I still think of HART, and I think most people do in terms of bus service as opposed to transit."
- r. "For me, loss of ridership."
- s. "So, when you are referring to HART, you're really talking about public transportation in the area, correct?"
- t. "I mean, that's what comes to mind, also that they've been hamstrung by funding for a long, long time and it's been very difficult for them to really improve service."
- u. "But, my impression is one of a mediocre organization that's not contributing as much as is needed in a difficult transportation situation for our community."
- v. "As a native of Tampa... Tampa and Hillsborough has grown tremendously, and unfortunately, I don't believe that sense of reliability or accessibility exists today as it did 40, 50 years ago."
- w. "For me, it's basically buses for people without the ability to afford anything but a bus."
- x. "The first thing I think of is a transit agency that doesn't have enough money to do what it needs to do."
- y. "So, I'm a little dismayed at how inefficient it seems to be, and how it doesn't really seem to be servicing the needs of folks that don't have transportation."

- z. "I would say that it is overall negative."
- aa. "Probably, dated."
- bb. "Underfunded."
- cc. "HART is a major transit system in a major service area that does not receive major funding."
- dd. "So, an organization that's trying to do a lot with very little."
- ee. "...they're trying to do a lot of things, but they don't really have the funding to do—because they're always scraping along..."
- ff. "Underfunded! Inadequate service."
- gg. "So, I would say underfunded."
- hh. "The budget that they have to work with and transportation needs of that area are just so great that it's really hard for them to be successful in all those areas with the funding that they're allotted."
- ii. "Aware of the busses.... That's about the only service I know."
- jj. "Just the fact that they lose money and the ridership is low and it doesn't seem to be as efficient as it should be."
- kk. "I'm not impressed with the organization, I haven't been."
- ll. "What comes to mind is that it's an organization that is supposed to help solve transit needs in the community."
- mm. "... probably a challenged perception overall"

**What has helped shape what you know about the organization?**

- nn. "I think to help move the citizens from point A to point B. To actually—to help improve their quality of life by allowing them to actually get to where they need to go."
- oo. "I think it's important to get your citizens from point A to point B efficiently."
- pp. "County agencies and county partners and a lot of our customers actually have good information."
- qq. "Mostly streetcar."
- rr. "Obviously the paper, you see that stuff."
- ss. "Well I just, you know, the surface of like the communications that come via email and that they look like they're pretty, you know, structured well and informative, so my perception positively comes from their communication that they send out."
- tt. "Media coverage..."
- uu. "So, it's been—my personal relationship with them has been on and off I guess."
- vv. "Other elected officials and personal experience"



- ww. "Most of the time, I hear it directly from HART like the HART newsletter or HART social media."
- xx. "It is what I see while I'm in my commute. What I see in the media, and what I hear from my friends and employees that use the HART system."

**What do you feel are the responsibilities of transit organizations?**

- yy. "To provide affordable and frequent transportation, especially in the inner core growing areas to the general public."
- zz. "Obviously, I believe that they are responsible for providing the best public mass transit, public transportation system here in the County, in Hillsborough."
- aaa. "Its top priority is to improve mobility for everyone. Choices, options for everyone."
- bbb. "Help as many people as possible get from place to place."
- ccc. "I think that their responsibilities are to provide cost-effective transportation options to the community. To better basically the quality of life."
- ddd. "A board that's aware of rider needs and the types of needs."
- eee. "At its most basic level, you're really trying to provide options in my opinion, at a basic level."
- fff. "To provide dependable, safe, transit options for all sectors of the community."
- ggg. "It's to move the most amount of people in a safe and effective way."
- hhh. "To be able to connect people from their homes to work, from home to needed environments via medical, grocery, be able to move our people around our community so that our community remains a place where people want to work, live, and play!"
- iii. "I would say to provide transportation options for all residents"
- jjj. "I believe, I guess in my personal opinion there probably there to provide safe, and reliable, and most importantly cost-efficient transportation to our citizens for multiple reasons..."
- kkk. "I think they should be the prime transportation entity driving all the efforts."
- lll. "It's providing adequate funding for the segment of the community that can't afford their own transportation, so they can get around the community, and get to work, get to the things they need to do, the store and all that, and being able to provide that service."
- mmm. "That they offer fast, reliable, and good quality service in—to major areas of our community—that they offer major transportation service to job centers in our community."
- nnn. "Well, HART's responsibilities should be to provide a adequate and efficient transit system..."
- ooo. "Obviously, I think it's the movement of people throughout the area, whatever the area might be."

- ppp. "I think it's like a pyramid: the bottom of the pyramid is to provide pretty good, broad transportation for many people who haven't got other means to travel to get to their jobs. As you move up the pyramid, you find more selected opportunities for better service."
- qqq. "From a transportation perspective, the responsibility that as I can see it is for them to support the community, regardless of who it is when it comes to transportation."
- rrr. "Beyond buses—you know I think if we were looking at some alternatives, I think that would be a great opportunity for HART."
- sss. "Reliable, reliable and safe, affordable, and easily accessible."
- ttt. "I think they're in place to provide transportation for people for work, for medical, for their basic necessities, and to get around the city."
- uuu. "By large it's to act, I believe to act as a viable option to individual transportation needs..."

#### **How well does HART fulfill these responsibilities?**

- vvv. "Yeah, I wouldn't be able to answer that because again I don't have a lot of interaction with them, so I wouldn't want to say otherwise."
- www. "Of course, the challenges when you get into the more rural areas like South County, or Plant City, where transportation options are limited, that's usually where we hear the most gripe—and different needs that what's available."
- xxx. "I think their efficiency rates are good and I think they're doing a good job. But their funding is so low. I don't see how they can dig their way out of it with the funding sources they currently have."

#### **Describe the typical public transit user, in your view.**

- yyy. "I would—this would be a stereotype because it's my educated guess, it would be people that don't have their own transportation."
- zzz. "I think it's a wide range. I think it's everything."
- aaaa. "And they don't have other means, so you're typically held to that bus service."
- bbbb. "I think if we can change that mentality to where it's something that could be for everybody."
- cccc. "The sense I have is it's more the more moderate to low income riders and older riders."
- dddd. "...there's a lot of Hillsborough County, City employees, professionals that also ride it. So, I think a PR awareness campaign, having some fun with the image of HART would greatly benefit in trying to overcome that stereotype."
- eeee. "Working class folks, probably people that are hourly workers. People that don't have access to a car for whatever reason or cannot drive a car."
- ffff. "Yeah, I don't want this to come off the wrong way—it seems like that HART's major mission is to provide public transportation for those who can't, to get to places rather than an alternate form of transportation."

- gggg. "I think their demographic is generally what they call transportation disadvantaged—which is people who don't have other options. Not to say that there aren't others that use transit, but I think—that's my perception is that is the majority of people using their transit, people that don't have other options."
- hhhh. "I think obviously most people would think that it is working-class individuals in the poorer neighborhoods. Although, you have a second demographic as well who are the suburban commuters who ride the express bus."
- iiii. "People who otherwise wouldn't get around because they don't have a car, so this is their only option."
- jjjj. "I don't have those statistics handy, but what I've seen is—so, it's typically generally I believe it is folks who are at a lower income level, although I'm not saying that they are I guess they're the working poor."

### **What would prompt you to regularly take public transportation?**

- kkkk. *"To be honest, I would need better pick up and drop off points. I don't like the bus stop locations. I know that there are other options, but that's one of the things I always notice on the streets. Especially if there's any bad weather. I think the bus stops aren't conducive to making a lot of riders successful. If the weather is bad, they're most likely either not going to be out there for safety reasons, or they're going to show up at their destination like a mess."* – non-user
- llll. *"It would take convenience to home and reliable scheduling to use it."*—non-user
- mmmm. *"[Understanding your job nature, if it was more reliable] I would use it."*—non-user
- nnnn. *"If reliability was taken care of."* – non-user
- oooo. *"I think it's frequency, knowing that—I have to be able to get from my house in an effective way and not in some sort of loop that's going to that 45 minutes when I can more or less get to work in my car in about 10, so I think that's the challenge."*—used streetcar
- pppp. *"Cause it wouldn't be bad for me to do that."*—non-user
- qqqq. *"If I had [park and ride lot, WiFi access, an express lane, and could get work done on the bus and know what time you'd get into work] here, I would ride it everyday to work."* – non-user
- rrrr. *"I think if [stops and more frequency] were fixed! I don't like driving. I hate driving. If those were fixed, I probably would ride the bus."*—non-user
- ssss. *"For me personally, it would take more than [frequency]."* – non-user
- tttt. *"Yeah, frequency and availability of the routes. And then also—accuracy on time, ensuring that you'd get from point A to point B in a time period."* – non-user
- uuuu. *"Probably nothing."* – non-user
- vvvv. *"It would have to be frequent, meet my schedule for coming and coming. It would have to be within 20 minutes of how long it takes me to get from point to point."*—non-user

www. *"I think from my perspective would be access." – non-user*

xxxx. *"Beyond accessibility and frequency, those are the big two!" – trial rider*

yyyy. *"It would have to be very clean...our ladies early in the day saw a couple roaches that freaked us all out" – trial rider*

**How can HART be an engaged agency with your organization? /Be better engaged/any need/ anything more you would like to see happen between the two organizations? What role do you believe you personally and/or your organization can play in helping HART meet your expectations?**

zzzz. *"We have, the extend that we've wanted to work together, we've always been able to get ahold of them."*

aaaa. *"I think they've opened [communication] up. We met with them twice now and they seem to be making changes."*

bbbb. *"I would like to have more frequent staff level coordination."*

cccc. *"We engage them when there's a need to address specific transit needs for prospects that we're working with. And they've been very responsive in that regard, very responsive."*

dddd. *"So, I think there's—it would probably require a conversation to kind of know on HART's end what they would really be most interested in."*

eeee. *"I think and maybe that's what it was, they had more outreach workers back in the past."*

ffff. *"Some of the challenge of course is that people are always going from one thing to the next so you kind of need to get them when they're in route to something else."*

gggg. *"I haven't really spoken to them about this probably in a couple years."*

hhhh. *"I don't know I guess that would probably be a question for HART."*

iiii. *"Quarterly updates might be good, so that we have regular communication with them."*

jjjj. *"They do seem to be an organization perceived to be in an ivory tower. Sitting over there, you have to go to them for information."*

kkkk. *"I'm going to say that I have not personally had any interaction with HART. I would probably answer that by saying I, probably, and our organization probably needs to."*

llll. *"I think we're as much in the loop as we want to be."*

mmmm. *"I would love for us to set to establish a hospitality transportation model. And that may mean a series of planning meetings."*

nnnn. *"We're the ones that have to initiate it."*

**Do you understand how HART is funded?**

oooo. *"For me, as much as I want to look at the internal organization, I want to know why board members didn't ask questions sooner rather than later"*

- ppppp. *"I think there needs to be more funding coming from the county, which will enable to get more funding from the state and the feds, but we don't have a philosophy of we're going to have to make some hard decisions that may cost some more money."*
- qqqqq. *"I would imagine they're underfunded."*
- rrrrr. *"I would say, they have got... we—we as a community have to figure out a way to get a dedicated... additional dedicated funding source for transit."*
- sssss. *"Probably at one-half or one-third of where they need to be in terms of their public funding levels."*
- ttttt. *"What I do recall, is just kind of what anybody would read in the paper, and I do seem to recall that our finding per either user or per capita or something is really well below what an average other metropolitan areas our size would be."*
- uuuuu. *"No, I can't answer that."*
- vvvvv. *"I just have heard about underfunding, that's all I've ever heard."*
- wwwww. *"I'm not aware."*
- xxxxx. *"There should be a system to provide adequate funding for a community this size to have a good operating local transit system instead of one they spent so little per capita, and you probably know what those numbers are... I think HART is doing the best job they possibly can given the limited resources they have but the resources are limited, and I don't think that that's good. And I don't think it's HART's fault."*
- yyyyy. *"They're horribly underfunded. I think our political environment has prohibited new sources of funding."*
- zzzzz. *"I don't know what their operating budget is."*
- aaaaa. *"I don't know enough about how HART operates to really have an educated answer on that."*
- bbbbb. *"So naturally I would gravitate towards their budget is not what it ought to be."*
- ccccc. *"Well I know it's underfunded."*
- dddddd. *"I don't know. I would have no idea. I mean, they're always whining that they don't have enough money."*

**Do you believe that HART can provide the transportation solutions of the future in the region?**

- eeeeee. *"Yes, I do."*
- ffffff. *"Absolutely! 100%."*
- gggggg. *"It's nice to know, I guess, there's an alternative if I needed it. But I'm not gonna rely on them. I don't know, I guess I never really think of them as an option, I don't know."*
- hhhhhh. *"I do believe so, some of the challenge that you're going to find is getting people leave their car in their garage."*

- iiiiii. *"Yes, I absolutely believe if they are willing to get serious in a strategic plan and innovation with accountability and—I think there is an absolute possibility."*
- jjjjjj. *"Do I think it's possible, yes."*
- kkkkkk. *"I think they would need to grow staff and simply because its going to be doing more."*
- llllll. *"Yes, absolutely."*
- mmmmmm. *"Yes."*
- nnnnnn. *"Yes, with the caveat that they're going to need to bridge gaps with Pinellas and Pasco and they need to become more regional than the Hillsborough."*

**If you could give the new CEO guidance what would it be?**

- oooooo. *"I think they're going to have to be creative in terms of how they look at the business and really formulate a realistic business plan and that's gonna require dealing with some very uncomfortable issues like: taxation, who gets served and who doesn't get served, the politics of it."*
- pppppp. *"I think you need to find someone who is a visionary and someone who has courage."*
- qqqqqq. *"I think they need to come with the attitude of I don't know."*
- rrrrrr. *"You can't have leadership that's never ridden the system. Be it, the CEO, or board."*
- ssssss. *"Well, for one, condense all those programs you mentioned."*
- tttttt. *"Visionary, deal maker, strategic thinker, get it done guy—or girl..."*
- uuuuuu. *"So, I think HART needs to know how to walk into that room and say to the board members and say to the board members and say hey this is the money we got and we're going to make it work. But that means private partnerships are even that much more important."*
- vvvvvv. *"Somebody who can find a way to help the region get unstuck in the politics and just get stuff done."*
- wwwwww. *"And whether that's figuring out how to—there needs to be some additional revenue stream and it point... I think the underlying thing is that the case needs to be made for an effective inter-transit system in Hillsborough County and in Tampa Bay and I think HART needs to be part of making that case first."*
- xxxxxx. *"I think having somebody that kinda understands how things work together and [Jeff] certainly has a lot of experience in the finances part."*
- yyyyyy. *"I would go see the CEOs and business leaders in the community and say you know what, we're here to solve—serve the vast majority of the population."*
- zzzzzz. *"Keep it in a budget. Look to outsource maintenance and other costly areas where you could eliminate staff."*
- aaaaaaa. *"So really employing a lot of data to start creating some believers in some forward-thinking ways."*

#### Other quotes:

- *"I have no idea what bus- where the bus stops are, I have no idea what numbers they are, I don't know where the bus takes you, I just want to know where the person standing by the side of the sign, like oh yeah we have a bus route that goes through I guess, but if someone walks in the door "where can I take the closest bus" I would go uhhhh. We're not good at helping being ambassadors for them. But that could happen if they had a community person"*
- *"Politics [is a limiting factor], I have to say that I've never lived in a community that does so little thinking about their growth & we're growing at such—and that's all they kind of promote. Most of the cities and suburbs & the major cities I've lived in have had master plans that tie to each other."*
- *"For instance, doing these circulator routes throughout the community to help build ridership and connection into the communities that they can't serve with regular bus service right now., you know because they lack funding. It's just stuff like that they really lack, those partnerships and collaborations especially in areas they need service like E and S County, well actually everywhere in the unincorporated areas. They have all their service probably ... 75-80% of their services in city limits. They just haven't reached out to try and develop more partnerships."*
- *"I believe in public transportation, I grew up in a large metropolitan area where hopping on the rapid transit and hopping on a bus was second nature and absolutely a way to grow up, so I know what mass transportation can do."*
- *"I think it's a political and local will, it's not been a priority that has pushed to the forefront of this community."*
- *"I think what they've done effectively is created an image, that's almost like, they were very good at the public relation side, so I think that was really very much Katherine for talking about that"*
- *"This isn't something that HART is going to solve by itself. It kind of gets back to my comments about community stakeholders and others. If we really want to as a community, improve mobility choices for everyone, which directly then relate to better economic development, being able to attract the kind of workers/wages/employers, it's going to take-- if that's important to our community which I think it is, it's going to take a lot of the influential stakeholders in the community to assist and it isn't just something we can just say to HART "well good luck, you're out there on your own." But having said that, it starts with them and with their leadership and their board to get themselves, get their act together and lead and form a coalition and get the support that makes it easier for me then to go to my board and say "yeah we should help out because now I know what the outcomes are and that it's part of a larger plan and vision and that we're not pouring money down a black hole." It is very achievable, it's just a different approach to what they've been taking."*
- *"And HART is in a leadership role, I mean—being in Hillsborough County, being the hub of Tampa Bay, this is the core of the regional transit network, and so there's a leadership role that I think HART should be playing. And I don't think its effectively playing that role right now."*
- *"I mean, I've been to meetings where he's come in late and he "I took HART" or "I took the bus", or it took him, take him all day to get from Brandon to I guess the airport or something."*

- *“Definitely would like to see [HART] more at regional meetings.”*
- *“In the past, HART used to have a lot more presentations in the community, I don’t know if that was reduced or we missed it in some kind of way.”*
- *“That’s the most important thing, people want to feel... they want to get excited about a strong vision for something and I don’t know if that’s been articulated.”*
- *“I think their service is focused on serving one small part of the county and I don’t feel like they’ve done a good job of understanding origins and destinations. Like where people are specifically commuting from and to. The assumption is if you’re downtown, it has really good transit coverage and the University area has great transit coverage but anywhere else—I don’t think they’ve really looked at where people who work in these other key economic centers actually live. And that’s an issue.”*
- *“That’s really what marketing at this point is all about... creating stories, telling stories from a particular person’s point of view, or family’s point of view to get that message across.”*
- *“So, in my mind, that’s one area that HART, if there was an opportunity would be able to partner better with the community, is giving-- either supplementing or adding to the current services that are in place. Right now, disabled American veterans also provides vans and the VA provides the volunteer drivers that basically offer door-to-door shuttle service.”*
- *“Well, we all don’t know about these services, we’re never gonna use it. But that community liaison or outreach person could help people navigate if they’re wanting to change their demographic, they gotta put themselves in those environments of the demographic they want. Community education which leads to all that.”*
- *“See it as being there are specific needs in each area, they don’t tie well together, and their services don’t—you can’t get across bridge well. If you’re someone that has socioeconomic, how do you get to the beaches? It’s a difficult process to do that.”*
- *“Anything I would say would be a personal—I don’t know—I think you do have to show that relevance to community and I don’t know if that’s through a PR campaign or if its showing up in those communities and showing how an average Millennial in Seminole Heights use HART to get around... I think it’s showing that you’re—how you’re relevant.”*
- *“So, let’s say you’re going to spend \$60 million on a parking garage because of the requirement of parking, you know you have land cost and construction cost at about \$30,000 a space these days. And you said to them look, we’re going to reduce your parking requirement by 50% so, you’re going to save \$30 million dollars and you take a third of that- \$10 million and put it in your pocket and buy you the nicest yacht you’ve ever seen, and you take the other \$20 million and you reinvest it in an alternate transit option for your building that connects into our city. You can do a lot with \$20 million if you had 3 or 4 projects of 5 or 6 projects and suddenly you’ve got \$100 million coming out of the private sector that’s helping to solve that problem. So, it’s beyond just what we can do as public agencies, it has to be public/private partnership in terms of land use and have it in the future, how are we going to utilize the resources we have available to us with creative options and land use that will help us solve that problem for private sector investments.”*



- *"And HART is in a leadership role, I mean—being in Hillsborough County, being the hub of Tampa Bay, this is the core of the regional transit network, and so there's a leadership role that I think HART should be playing. And I don't think it's effectively playing that role right now."*
- *"You can't really have a good quality of life in Tampa, unless you have a car."*
- *"I probably will never have [my wife] take me or pick me up at the airport again because that was good service, it was better than taking the car. So, I, being a logical person, like most people are, I think will do that."*
- *"The 95x and the—you know it's all these numbers that don't make sense."*
- *"In my particular case, to get out of my neighborhood in Temple Terrace to get to a spot where the bus route is, is a 25-minute walk that's a hindrance—well not 25, maybe 20-minute walk but it's a hinderance. It's more efficient to jump in the car and be at work in 20 minutes."*
- *"A circulator with small fleet vehicles has a huge impact. It's kind of like the downtowner, we want to do the uptowner. So, like the downtowner, the uptowner becomes relevant to all of our anchors. So, I've got each anchor now invested, some of them financially."*
- *"While I would love to have the presentation, so we can have more engagement with our staff and community as far as resources and value, I know don't know the benefit to it, because like I said, I don't know where the closest pickup and drop off point is. I don't know if it's even relevant. Like here's this great service, and the closest stop is a mile and a half away."*
- *"I also think too that there is an unfortunate stereotype that goes along with the demographic of people who use mass transit"*
- *"The majority of people are coming back for additional passes. So, I think they're utilizing them... But being able to track the actual passes would be ideal. I don't know if it's something that's actually reportable, I've just been told otherwise, but tracking the usage of a pass."*
- *"Now, I've only heard secondhand, that the routes go- they don't service where they need to go, they don't go to any place really that's employment sector. Or they don't-so you know- you can ride them from geographic location to geographic location but what do you do when you get there. You have to call a cab or uber. To get where you need to go."*
- *"So, you reel it into your commute is more than just the time you spend on the bus. It's the time that saves you from your daily life activities that you normally spend time on. It gives you more time to go to the little league field, or go workout, or spend time with your family, etc., etc. That's the way we need to spin it; how do we change the quality of life by doing this."*
- *"How many people does HART employ under the age of 27. Do we know that? Can we get that info? Because every one of those people is your target for doing that because those are the people that have the ability through their communications, social networking, electronic communication to spread a word faster than we could ever do with the typical media. I'm just trying to do it through a different... how do we think a little differently to get the story and the message out."*
- *"I think that these conversations about [HARTs] initiatives are happening at a very, very high level and I don't think they're making it down to the community or to [HART] users."*

- *"I think partnering with local organizations who have those community connections... Meeting residents where they are in life, finding out what agencies or organizations who do have those relationships and utilizing those to make sure there is that desired outcome of information being spread."*
- *"Doing these—go and meet the folks that are using your services type thing. And I think that would help. I don't think the community is fully aware of all that HART offers."*
- *"So, I'm not saying it has to be a HART bus, I'm saying HART needs to be seen relevant to every mobility piece that's going on in Hillsborough County. And I've been trying to bang that drum for 10 years. If you just see yourself as a bus agency you're going to get ignored so, you're not you're a mobility agency and you are involved in every facet of mobility that takes place in this County."*
- *"I think Katharine really left a very strong brand and mark on the organization in terms of her passion, energy, commitment to innovation, to partnership, things like that."*
- *"So how do you get the private sector to be able to generate services that they make money on that gives you a discount for doing that because it's much easier to do it in bulk for them then for us to walk in and get in my car and drive to Publix..."*
- *"I'd like to comment that I think HART's reputation has greatly improved over the last five years."*
- *"So, there was some allocation in there for bus passes because that was one of the critical needs for homeless veterans and getting them employment and transportation. So, we were able to utilize that and assist them in getting bus passes through HART."*
- *"Meeting residents where they are in life, finding out what agencies or organizations who do have those relationships and utilizing those to make sure there is that desired outcome of information being spread."*
- *"When we were in Phoenix, they really made the point when they campaigned there they made the case that you may not be riding public transit, but the nurse at the hospital, the person checking you out at the grocery store, the mechanic, all these other people are using public transit and it's a key part of creating quality of life that your neighbors and the people you associate with every day, many of them are using or would use public transit if it were available. And it's all part of creating a quality of life in the community. It's just like a utility that we need to have here- just like turning on the water and turning on the electricity, you've got to turn on the public transit. And I don't think we understand that."*
- *"From a political point of view, it's very difficult. I think HART as an organization has alienated some of the County Commission members by focusing on core areas. This challenge that HART has about what do you sacrifice, you've got this trade-off. Is it frequency, is it geographic coverage, is it time of day."*
- *"It seems like that HART's major mission is to provide public transportation for those who can't, to get places rather than an alternative form of transportation."*
- *"Well looking at the private sector is how does the private sector have incentives in order to get that leverage."*

- *"So, in my mind, that's one area that HART, if there was an opportunity would be able to partner better with the community, is giving—either supplementing or adding to the current services that are in place."*
- *"I think it's meant to be a service for the community in regard to a quality of life as it relates to culture and employment."*
- *"I think Katharine was a very good marketer. I think she- even if things were going crazy behind the scenes, she'd be the one to stand up in front and say- talk about the positives, kinda shelter the organization and the problems."*
- *"I think that's going to take some combination... yes with the caveat that they're going to need to bridge gaps with Pinellas and Pasco and they need to become more regional than the Hillsborough."*
- *"I love HART and I stay on there because I just know if I stick with it long enough, it will change. I know they can do it, we just got to have the right team, the right leadership."*
- *"I think it has to solve its funding dilemma. I think the facts speak for themselves that this organization is on a per capita basis on a -- is locally underfunded."*
- *"Actually, it did impress me at how clean the busses were and how.... It wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. I've been on busses in Tampa 30 years ago or 40 years ago and I was not that impressed."*
- *"They're definitely wrapped up in the inefficiencies. And when they made those changes, in November it had an impact. Well, it made it getting to work a little more challenging. For a couple of weeks, a lot of the employers were complaining about their employees getting here on time and things like that. It was a learning curve for sure."*
- *"Okay, there's more responsible decisions made by our elected officials, that has to be number one."*
- *"So, they've got to expand their information. It's kind of like none of knew we needed an iPhone. You know, it's the same thing. You know, if you don't have transit available to you, again in suburban areas, you're not going to think to use it."*
- *"There is a strong aversion to any kind of increase investment in the community for a long-term vision coming from the elected officials."*
- *"So, it was short notice, and we found out kind of talking to other entities as opposed to the information coming from HART."*
- *"Again, reflecting back to does the board reflect the stakeholder group in the community? Is it reflective of the community in terms of those who can really influence the outcome?"*
- *"...there's frustration that the ridership levels, the numbers, aren't really known. They're not publicized."*
- *"I think if they could devote more resources to that education process, that information process and really showing people all the things HART is doing, and even more importantly, what they*

*could be doing, what this community could look like if they had X amount of dollars or X percentage more, what have you."*

- *"From my vantage point it's a one-dimensional transit organization. They have busses. That's it."*
- *"Most of the comments we get is reliant upon work. So, you know—residents, having real concerns and challenges with that because they're missing or showing up late to work and you only get so many shots at that and then you get let go."*
- *"If the purpose of HART is to transport people who don't have transportation around, then do away with HART and get more Uber cars."*
- *"I think you could do something like if there's enough interest, the way I would do it have HART identify two or three problems that they think technology might be able to solve. Then they should do a couple of information sessions in different parts of the community where they're like here are the problems that we want to solve, and we're going to put it out there these are the kinds of solutions or things that we're thinking about... Have a small cash prize... It maybe could give the HART organization an opportunity to find some talent... I think it would be a phenomenal from a story creation standpoint if you can face the story that a local solution serve a piece of our transportation issue."*
- *"HART is going to have to be really smart at looking where people work and where people live and convenient ways that transportation can make sense for people other than people jumping in their car and sitting in traffic for an hour. And that's I think where the key is, when you look at where people are driving from, to and from work, everyday and how you give them a convenient alternative is really what you're trying to get at."*
- *"Katharine was one of the better ones. She seems like she had- was getting it together over there but I know the staff has been very cyclical in that organization, as soon as- you know, working there at any one time."*
- *"Why are there politicians on the board? I mean, who best represents the people? Wouldn't it more be community leaders and business leaders who are actually in the community and understand the business needs and the needs of the people."*
- *"It seems like they're—it's like trying to get water from a stone, you can't have high expectations of an agency that has no resources."*
- *"The private sector is going to pay ... And I think there is a place for that with technology and what they're doing today, I think that's a lay-up, I think somebody goes- somebody from HART goes "I'm gonna partner with somebody", and "let's do it this way", public funds, private funds, and let's get this thing rolling."*
- *"Well, certainly I think HART has all it can do to just provide the services they provide with the limited funding they have. So, I can understand why there's not a lot of time or resources to devote to strictly spreading the word about it. The focus has been a lot on trying to expand HART and educating people about that. A lot of people just don't realize the many things that HART does."*

- *"...I rode the bus, but its quicker and cheaper for me to drive my car to work, ultimately. There were not a lot of professionals and stuff when I took it, I didn't mind. I saw my old bag boy from the grocery store, apparently, he is now homeless, and remembered me from 10 years ago!"*
- *"I don't know what their plan is or their goals or their mission or their—what do they want to achieve? I guess you asked me what I think it should be, but what do they think it should be, and what are they trying to accomplish?"*
- *"One thing I learned early is that if you put a frog in cold water you can turn it up to it boils and he won't jump out, and he'll be okay. But if you turn on high automatically and he jumps out, then that's what happens. When you just drop a route, people get upset, people are confused."*
- *"I think the system at this point lacks widespread community champions at levels in the community that are influential. There's plenty of folks out there who ought to be signing up to do that, mainly in the corporate community. It's just like anything else, whether it's a baseball stadium or whether its other kinds of transportation... it's not enough to just say well government needs to fix it when you're dealing with a situation where there's opposition to new taxes, there's really a disdain for local government at the state level and federal level. Then you look at who really benefits, certainly the people who have jobs that rely on transit benefit, but so do employers."*
- *"There are not enough people in this market willing to that sees the needs for transit."*
- *"I would say, less elected, more business, community leaders [on the HART board]... I guess I would say more community folks, less elected folks, however those community folks obviously what I would say should be appointed by elected officials and some governing bodies."*
- *"We're behind the curve, our roads are inadequate, the transportation approaches seem to be inadequate, or planning seems to be pretty spotty, occasional, and not well integrated. So, we're not doing very well on our trans-planning and HART is unfortunately part of that."*
- *"I think if you use the model of the employment centers as your guideline that begins to set the table for how to serve."*
- *"Getting veterans to their appointments at VA James Haley. There's several avenues they currently use, one is called—if you may already know this—it's the veterans transportation system it was developed in 2015... And James Haley currently runs only four vehicles, and four drivers to serve four counties—so that's one driver per county, but basically, they offer ambulatory and wheelchair veterans door-to-door service within a 55-mile radius."*
- *"You've got to have more people at the table than just HART and elected officials. You've gotta have business groups who are part of the solution, who are standing with HART saying we've put together a plan that has private sector participation, we need to have our public partner come alongside us. And here is the benefit for our public partner coming alongside us."*
- *"Of course, the challenges when you get into the more rural areas, like South county, or plant city, where transportation options are limited, that's usually where we hear the most gripe—and different needs than what's available."*
- *"It's just stuff like that they really lack, those partnerships and collaborations especially in areas they need service like East and South County, well actually everywhere in unincorporated areas."*

- *"HART seems to me that it probably falls victim to political culture more than service culture and practical culture."*
- *"It might not be a bad idea to get people to ride the buses as experience."*
- *"You can't go to Tallahassee or Washington D.C. and ask for money for something that you are not putting money into at the local level."*
- *"I think it's requiring a definite kick in the ass to the mid-level staff."*
- *"So, the bottom line is that the makeup of the HART board to me does not want to give consideration of increasing the mileage that could give HART more funding."*
- *"I think there was some notification sent out, but it wasn't by any means that we're going to take away your bus type of... I think it was changes are happening, they're reviewing things, and something might happen."*
- *"I think the first mile/last mile is a challenge everywhere."*