

# Marketing Campaign and PHBs Improve Safety for Pedestrians in Tampa

Florida Department of Transportation

## KEY ELEMENTS:



Crash reduction



Public outreach

The Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization identified East Hillsborough Avenue in Tampa, Florida as a high crash and high use corridor for pedestrians. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7 installed Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons (PHBs) along the corridor to control traffic at midblock crossings and unsignalized intersections. FDOT observed reduced pedestrian crashes within a year of the installation.

## IMPLEMENTATION

In fall of 2015, FDOT installed PHBs at 11th Street, 37th Street, and 46th Street where marked crosswalks did not previously exist. Due to right-of-way constraints, FDOT mounted the PHBs within existing raised medians and created an accessible pedestrian refuge area within those medians.

FDOT upgraded roadway lighting along the entire corridor to LED, but at the PHB locations, FDOT installed pedestrian actuated lighting that illuminates the crosswalk when someone presses the pushbutton for the PHB. While the Florida Traffic Engineering Manual states that “crosswalk illumination shall be provided



Figure 1. Billboard advertisement used by FDOT to educate the public about PHBs and remind drivers to yield to pedestrians.<sup>2</sup>

## Case Study: Marketing Campaign and PHBs Improve Safety for Pedestrians in Tampa

EDC-4 STEP: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc\\_4/step.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/innovation/everydaycounts/edc_4/step.cfm)

at all newly constructed uncontrolled approaches,” District 7 adopted pedestrian actuated lighting as a best practice since most new uncontrolled crosswalks have either a PHB or a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon. The PHB project used a unique approach to contracting that enables FDOT to reduce the time from concept to construction. FDOT uses the “Design-Build Push-Button” mechanism to address safety issues of medium complexity by including the designer and contractor on the same contract so that potential constructability problems can be identified and remedied early in the design process.

FDOT embarked on a multi-pronged education campaign because the three PHBs were the first installations on Tampa’s State road system. District 7’s Bicycle & Pedestrian Safety Specialist, Alex Henry, said it was important to ensure that people walking, biking, or driving along the corridor knew how to properly interact with the new devices. FDOT partnered with the Center for Urban Transportation Research to develop a media plan that allowed for both reach and frequency to the targeted audience (those in a two-mile radius around Hillsborough Avenue). FDOT utilized a combination of bus benches, billboards, door hangers, and geo-targeted mobile ads to create awareness for the new crosswalks. The budget for the education campaign was approximately \$18,000. FDOT also partnered with McDonald’s® to include a coupon along with the door hangers and on-street education was conducted on two separate occasions. “Our on-street education efforts have also

allowed us the opportunity to get feedback from the surrounding community who have been very receptive and appreciative of the improvements,” said Henry.

### RESULTS

FDOT’s initial observations showed that some drivers misunderstood the PHB, so the agency installed signs on the mast arm that read: “Stop on flashing red then proceed if clear.” For the year immediately following the installation of the PHBs, Hillsborough Avenue saw a decrease in bicycle and pedestrian crashes—7 crashes compared to the previous six-year average of 20. FDOT plans to conduct a formal evaluation of crash trends, crossing behavior, and driver compliance in 2018.

Year	Crashes
2010	17
2011	20
2012	27
2013	24
2014	14
2015	19
2016	7

Six-year average: 20 crashes per year

PHBs installed Fall 2015

Figure 2. Hillsborough Avenue bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

“The initial crash reduction we’ve seen on East Hillsborough Avenue has been very encouraging. I think it is proof positive that a combination of relatively inexpensive and easy to implement countermeasures can help to make an impact on even our most challenging corridors.”

—Alex Henry, Florida DOT District 7  
Bike/Ped Safety Specialist

### References

1. Hillsborough County Metropolitan Planning Organization, “East Hillsborough Avenue Corridor Study,” (2013). <http://www.planhillsborough.org/east-hillsborough-avenue-corridor-study/>
2. Florida Department of Transportation.