

By Senator Burgess

23-00989B-23

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to regional transportation planning;
3 providing legislative findings and intent; requiring
4 the Department of Transportation, or its consultant,
5 to conduct a study regarding the Hillsborough Area
6 Regional Transit Authority and the Pinellas Suncoast
7 Transit Authority; specifying requirements of the
8 study; requiring the department to submit a report to
9 the Governor and Legislature by a specified date;
10 providing an effective date.

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12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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14 Section 1. (1) The Legislature finds that, given this
15 state's rapid population growth, coordination of transportation
16 planning, particularly regional transportation planning, is
17 critical to the safe and efficient management, operation, and
18 development of public transit systems. The Legislature questions
19 whether the merger of the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit
20 Authority (HART) and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
21 (PSTA) would result in operational efficiencies and reduced
22 administrative costs and further a regional approach to transit.
23 It is the intent of the Legislature to explore the merger or
24 dissolution of the governance, staff, operations, funding, and
25 facilities of the HART and the PSTA with the goal of enhancing
26 regional transit service and connectivity in the Tampa Bay Area.

27 (2) The Department of Transportation, or its consultant,
28 shall conduct a study of the potential merger of the HART and
29 the PSTA into one entity responsible for regional planning and

23-00989B-23

20231532__

30 operation of a public transit system covering the Tampa Bay
31 Area. The study must address how the HART and the PSTA could be
32 merged to facilitate delivery of improved transit services in
33 the Tampa Bay Area. The study must address all of the following:

34 (a) Governance structure, including governing board
35 membership, terms, responsibilities, officers, powers, duties,
36 and responsibilities.

37 (b) Staff organization.

38 (c) Funding options and implementation of the merger.

39 (d) Facilities ownership and management.

40 (e) Financing of current and future facilities and
41 operations.

42 (f) Current financial obligations and resources.

43 (g) Any legal or financial impediments to or limitations on
44 such a merger.

45 (h) The advantages and disadvantages of a merged entity.

46 (i) Any other matters deemed necessary or appropriate by
47 the department.

48 (3) As a part of the study specified in subsection (2), the
49 department, or its consultant, shall also study the potential
50 dissolution of the HART and the advantages and disadvantages of
51 such an action.

52 (4) By January 1, 2024, the department shall submit a
53 report detailing the results of the study specified in
54 subsections (2) and (3) to the Governor, the President of the
55 Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

56 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023.