

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 to conduct a study  
 5 regarding the potential merger or dissolution of the  
 6 Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority and the  
 7 Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority; specifying  
 8 requirements of the study; requiring the department to  
 9 submit a specified report to the Governor and  
 10 Legislature; 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 or dissolution of the Hillsborough Area  
 20 Regional Transit Authority (HART) and the Pinellas Suncoast  
 21 Transit Authority (PSTA) would result in operational  
 22 efficiencies and reduced administrative costs and further a  
 23 regional approach to transit. It is the intent of the  
 24 Legislature to explore the merger or dissolution of the  
 25 governance, staff, operations, funding, and facilities of the

26 HART and the PSTA with the goal of enhancing regional transit  
27 service and connectivity in the Tampa Bay Area.

28 (2) The Department of Transportation, or its consultant,  
29 shall conduct a study of the potential merger of the HART and  
30 the PSTA into one entity responsible for regional planning and  
31 operation of a public transit system covering the Tampa Bay  
32 Area. The study must address how the HART and the PSTA could be  
33 merged to facilitate delivery of improved transit services in  
34 the Tampa Bay Area. The study must address all of the following:

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

38 (b) Staff organization.

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

40 (d) Facilities ownership and management.

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

43 (f) Current financial obligations and resources.

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

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

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

49 (3) As a part of the study specified in subsection (2),  
50 the department, or its consultant, shall also study the

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51 potential dissolution of the HART and the PSTA and the  
52 advantages and disadvantages of such an action.

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

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