

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.

11  
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

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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.