By the Committee on Transportation; and Senator DiCeglie

596-02596-25 2025462c1

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to transportation; amending s. 212.20, F.S.; requiring the Department of Revenue to distribute from the proceeds of a specified tax a specified amount monthly to the State Transportation Trust Fund beginning on a certain date; creating s. 218.3215, F.S.; requiring each county to provide the Department of Transportation with uniform project data; providing requirements for such data; requiring the department to compile the data and publish it on its website; amending s. 316.183, F.S.; requiring the department to determine the safe and advisable minimum speed limit on certain highways; amending s. 316.187, F.S.; revising the maximum allowable speed limit on certain highways and roadways; amending s. 331.3051, F.S.; conforming provisions to changes made by the act; amending s. 332.004, F.S.; revising definitions; amending s. 332.006, F.S.; revising duties and responsibilities of the department relating to airports; amending s. 332.007, F.S.; revising provisions relating to the administration and financing of certain aviation and airport programs and projects; authorizing certain airports to participate in a specified federal program in a certain manner; authorizing the department to provide for improvements to certain entities for the capital cost of a discretionary improvement project at a public-use airport, subject to the availability of certain funds; amending s. 334.044, F.S.; authorizing the department

to acquire property or property rights in advance to preserve a corridor for future proposed improvements; authorizing the department to expend from the State Transportation Trust Fund a certain amount of grant funds annually to state colleges and school districts for certain construction workforce development programs; requiring that priority be given to certain colleges and school districts; amending s. 334.065, F.S.; revising membership of the Center for Urban Transportation Research advisory board; creating s. 334.63, F.S.; providing requirements for certain project concept studies and project development and environment studies; amending s. 337.11, F.S.; clarifying a provision related to third-party beneficiary rights; revising the bidding and award process for contracts for road construction and maintenance projects; revising the circumstances in which the department must competitively award a phased design-build contract for phase one; authorizing a design-build firm to self-perform portions of work under a contract; requiring that contracts let by the department on or after a certain date for bridge construction or maintenance over navigable waters include protection and indemnity coverage; amending s. 337.1101, F.S.; prohibiting the department from creating a new contract in certain circumstances unless the contract is competitively procured; amending s. 337.14, F.S.; authorizing the department to waive contractor certification requirements for

certain projects; reducing the threshold value of contracts for which the department may waive a contract bond requirement; requiring that a contractor seeking to bid on certain maintenance contracts possess certain qualifications; amending s. 337.185, F.S.; increasing the limits of claims per contract which a contractor may submit to the State Arbitration Board; limiting the period in which an arbitration request may be made for a claim related to a written warranty or defect; amending s. 337.19, F.S.; limiting the period in which a suit by or against the department may be commenced for a claim related to a written warranty or defect for a contract entered into on or after a certain date; amending s. 337.401, F.S.; revising construction; requiring that the removal or relocation of an electric utility transmission line be at the utility owner’s expense, rather than the electric utility’s expense; requiring certain entities to make underground utilities within a right-of-way electronically detectable; requiring a utility owner to pay the authority actual damages in certain circumstances; conditioning the issuance of permits for certain utility placements on the payment of certain costs; defining the term “as-built plans”; providing submission requirements for as-built plans; requiring the submission of as-built plans before reimbursement of certain costs; amending s. 337.403, F.S.; authorizing the department to reimburse a certain percentage of costs for relocation of certain

utility facilities; revising the costs considered in determining whether the department may participate in utility work costs; revising the agreements under which the authority must bear the cost of utility removal or relocation; revising a determination that, if made by the department, authorizes the department to pay the cost of certain utility work; requiring the department and a utility owner to adhere to certain rules and procedures before issuance of the notice to initiate work; requiring the department to provide to a utility owner preliminary plans and certain notice; requiring the utility owner to submit certain plans to the department; authorizing the department to withhold certain amounts due a utility owner and the issuance of certain work permits under certain circumstances; requiring that the plans include a utility relocation schedule; providing for extensions and revisions to a utility relocation schedule in certain circumstances; providing that a utility owner is liable to the department for certain damages; requiring the department to establish mediation boards to resolve certain disputes between the department and a utility; providing mediation board requirements and procedures; providing for compensation of members of the mediation board; authorizing rulemaking; amending s. 339.175, F.S.; revising legislative intent; revising requirements for the designation of additional metropolitan planning organizations (M.P.O.'s); revising projects and strategies to be considered in

developing an M.P.O.’s long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement program; deleting obsolete provisions; requiring the department to convene M.P.O.’s of similar size to exchange best practices at least annually; authorizing M.P.O.’s to develop committees or working groups; requiring training for new M.P.O. governing board members to be provided by the department or another specified entity; deleting provisions relating to M.P.O. coordination mechanisms; including public-private partnerships in authorized financing techniques; revising proposed transportation enhancement activities that must be indicated by the long-range transportation plan; authorizing each M.P.O. to execute a written agreement with the department regarding state and federal transportation planning requirements; requiring the department, in collaboration with M.P.O.’s, to establish certain quality performance metrics and develop certain performance targets; requiring the department to evaluate and post on its website whether each M.P.O. has made significant progress toward such targets; deleting provisions relating to the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council; amending s. 339.65, F.S.; requiring the department to prioritize certain Strategic Intermodal System highway corridor projects; amending ss. 125.42, 202.20, 331.310, and 610.106, F.S.; conforming cross-references; reenacting s. 332.115(1), F.S., relating to joint project

agreements with port districts for transportation corridors between airports and port facilities, to incorporate the amendment made to s. 332.004, F.S., in a reference thereto; providing a legislative finding; requiring the department to develop a report on widening Interstate 4; providing requirements for the report; requiring the department to submit the report to the Governor and the Legislature by a specified date; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (d) of subsection (6) of section 212.20, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

212.20 Funds collected, disposition; additional powers of department; operational expense; refund of taxes adjudicated unconstitutionally collected.—

(6) Distribution of all proceeds under this chapter and ss. 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) and 203.01(1)(a)3. is as follows:

(d) The proceeds of all other taxes and fees imposed pursuant to this chapter or remitted pursuant to s. 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) shall be distributed as follows:

1. In any fiscal year, the greater of $500 million, minus an amount equal to 4.6 percent of the proceeds of the taxes collected pursuant to chapter 201, or 5.2 percent of all other taxes and fees imposed pursuant to this chapter or remitted pursuant to s. 202.18(1)(b) and (2)(b) shall be deposited in monthly installments into the General Revenue Fund.

2. After the distribution under subparagraph 1., 8.9744

percent of the amount remitted by a sales tax dealer located within a participating county pursuant to s. 218.61 shall be transferred into the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund. Beginning July 1, 2003, the amount to be transferred shall be reduced by 0.1 percent, and the department shall distribute this amount to the Public Employees Relations Commission Trust Fund less $5,000 each month, which shall be added to the amount calculated in subparagraph 3. and distributed accordingly.

3. After the distribution under subparagraphs 1. and 2., 0.0966 percent shall be transferred to the Local Government Half-cent Sales Tax Clearing Trust Fund and distributed pursuant to s. 218.65.

4. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and 3., 2.0810 percent of the available proceeds shall be transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Counties pursuant to s. 218.215.

5. After the distributions under subparagraphs 1., 2., and 3., 1.3653 percent of the available proceeds shall be transferred monthly to the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities pursuant to s. 218.215. If the total revenue to be distributed pursuant to this subparagraph is at least as great as the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, no municipality shall receive less than the amount due from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000. If the total proceeds to be distributed are less than the amount

received in combination from the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund for Municipalities and the former Municipal Financial Assistance Trust Fund in state fiscal year 1999-2000, each municipality shall receive an amount proportionate to the amount it was due in state fiscal year 1999-2000.

6. Of the remaining proceeds:

a. In each fiscal year, the sum of $29,915,500 shall be divided into as many equal parts as there are counties in the state, and one part shall be distributed to each county. The distribution among the several counties must begin each fiscal year on or before January 5th and continue monthly for a total of 4 months. If a local or special law required that any moneys accruing to a county in fiscal year 1999-2000 under the then-existing provisions of s. 550.135 be paid directly to the district school board, special district, or a municipal government, such payment must continue until the local or special law is amended or repealed. The state covenants with holders of bonds or other instruments of indebtedness issued by local governments, special districts, or district school boards before July 1, 2000, that it is not the intent of this subparagraph to adversely affect the rights of those holders or relieve local governments, special districts, or district school boards of the duty to meet their obligations as a result of previous pledges or assignments or trusts entered into which obligated funds received from the distribution to county governments under then-existing s. 550.135. This distribution specifically is in lieu of funds distributed under s. 550.135 before July 1, 2000.

b. The department shall distribute $166,667 monthly to each

applicant certified as a facility for a new or retained professional sports franchise pursuant to s. 288.1162. Up to $41,667 shall be distributed monthly by the department to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11621 for a facility for a spring training franchise. However, not more than $416,670 may be distributed monthly in the aggregate to all certified applicants for facilities for spring training franchises. Distributions begin 60 days after such certification and continue for not more than 30 years, except as otherwise provided in s. 288.11621. A certified applicant identified in this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in distributions than expended by the applicant for the public purposes provided in s. 288.1162(5) or s. 288.11621(3).

c. The department shall distribute up to $83,333 monthly to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by a single spring training franchise, or up to $166,667 monthly to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by more than one spring training franchise. Monthly distributions begin 60 days after such certification or July 1, 2016, whichever is later, and continue for not more than 20 years to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by a single spring training franchise or not more than 25 years to each certified applicant as defined in s. 288.11631 for a facility used by more than one spring training franchise. A certified applicant identified in this sub-subparagraph may not receive more in distributions than expended by the applicant for the public purposes provided in s. 288.11631(3).

d. The department shall distribute $15,333 monthly to the

State Transportation Trust Fund.

e.(I) On or before July 25, 2021, August 25, 2021, and September 25, 2021, the department shall distribute $324,533,334 in each of those months to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund, less an adjustment for refunds issued from the General Revenue Fund pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. before making the distribution. The adjustments made by the department to the total distributions shall be equal to the total refunds made pursuant to s. 443.131(3)(e)3. If the amount of refunds to be subtracted from any single distribution exceeds the distribution, the department may not make that distribution and must subtract the remaining balance from the next distribution.

(II) Beginning July 2022, and on or before the 25th day of each month, the department shall distribute $90 million monthly to the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund.

(III) If the ending balance of the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund exceeds $4,071,519,600 on the last day of any month, as determined from United States Department of the Treasury data, the Office of Economic and Demographic Research shall certify to the department that the ending balance of the trust fund exceeds such amount.

(IV) This sub-subparagraph is repealed, and the department shall end monthly distributions under sub-sub-subparagraph (II), on the date the department receives certification under sub-sub-subparagraph (III).

f. Beginning July 1, 2023, in each fiscal year, the department shall distribute $27.5 million to the Florida Agricultural Promotional Campaign Trust Fund under s. 571.26, for further distribution in accordance with s. 571.265.

g. To account for the impact of electric and hybrid vehicles on the state highway system and the use of taxes collected from motorists when charging such vehicles, beginning July 2025, and reassessed every 5 fiscal years, on or before the 25th day of each month thereafter, of the portion of the proceeds of the tax imposed under s. 212.05(1)(e)1.c., the department shall distribute $4.167 million to the State Transportation Trust Fund.

7. All other proceeds must remain in the General Revenue Fund.

Section 2. Section 218.3215, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

218.3215 County transportation project data.—Each county shall annually provide the Department of Transportation with uniform project data. The data must conform to the county's fiscal year and must include details on transportation revenues by source of taxes or fees, expenditure of such revenues for projects that were funded, and any unexpended balance for the fiscal year. The data must also include project details, including the project cost, location, and scope. The scope of the project must be categorized broadly using a category such as widening, repair and rehabilitation, or sidewalks. The data must specify which projects the revenues not dedicated to specific projects are supporting. The Department of Transportation shall inform each county of the method and required format for submitting the data. The Department of Transportation shall compile the data and publish such compilation on its website.

Section 3. Subsection (2) of section 316.183, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

316.183 Unlawful speed.—

(2) On all streets or highways, the maximum speed limits for all vehicles must be 30 miles per hour in business or residence districts, and 55 miles per hour at any time at all other locations. However, with respect to a residence district, a county or municipality may set a maximum speed limit of 20 or 25 miles per hour on local streets and highways after an investigation determines that such a limit is reasonable. It is not necessary to conduct a separate investigation for each residence district. The Department of Transportation shall determine the safe and advisable minimum speed limit on all highways that comprise a part of the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways and have at least ~~not fewer than~~ four lanes ~~is 40 miles per hour, except that when the posted speed limit is 70 miles per hour, the minimum speed limit is 50 miles per hour~~.

Section 4. Subsection (2) of section 316.187, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

316.187 Establishment of state speed zones.—

(2)(a) The maximum allowable speed limit on limited access highways is 75 ~~70~~ miles per hour.

(b) The maximum allowable speed limit on any other highway that ~~which~~ is outside an urban area of 5,000 or more persons and that ~~which~~ has at least four lanes divided by a median strip is 70 ~~65~~ miles per hour.

(c) The Department of Transportation is authorized to set such maximum and minimum speed limits for travel over other roadways under its authority as it deems safe and advisable, not to exceed as a maximum limit 65 ~~60~~ miles per hour.

Section 5. Subsection (14) of section 331.3051, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

331.3051 Duties of Space Florida.—Space Florida shall:

~~(14) Partner with the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council to coordinate and specify how aerospace planning and programming will be part of the state's cooperative transportation planning process.~~

Section 6. Subsections (4), (5), (7), and (8) of section 332.004, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

332.004 Definitions of terms used in ss. 332.003-332.007.—As used in ss. 332.003-332.007, the term:

(4) "Airport or aviation development project" or "development project" means any activity associated with the design, construction, purchase, improvement, or repair of a public-use airport or portion thereof, including, but not limited to: the purchase of equipment; the acquisition of land, including land required as a condition of a federal, state, or local permit or agreement for environmental mitigation; off-airport noise mitigation projects; the removal, lowering, relocation, marking, and lighting of airport hazards; the installation of navigation aids used by aircraft in landing at or taking off from a public-use ~~public~~ airport; the installation of safety equipment required by rule or regulation for certification of the airport under s. 612 of the Federal Aviation Act of 1958, and amendments thereto; and the improvement of access to the airport by road or rail system which is on airport property and which is consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with the approved local government comprehensive plan of the units of local government in which the

airport is located.

(5) "Airport or aviation discretionary capacity improvement projects" or "discretionary capacity improvement projects" means capacity improvements which are consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with the approved local government comprehensive plans of the units of local government in which the public-use airport is located, and which enhance intercontinental capacity at airports which:

(a) Are international airports with United States Bureau of Customs and Border Protection;

(b) Had one or more regularly scheduled intercontinental flights during the previous calendar year or have an agreement in writing for installation of one or more regularly scheduled intercontinental flights upon the commitment of funds for stipulated airport capital improvements; and

(c) Have available or planned public ground transportation between the airport and other major transportation facilities.

(7) "Eligible agency" means a political subdivision of the state or an authority, or a public-private partnership through a lease or an agreement under s. 255.065 with a political subdivision of the state or an authority, which owns or seeks to develop a public-use airport.

(8) "Federal aid" means funds made available from the Federal Government for the accomplishment of public-use airport or aviation development projects.

Section 7. Subsections (4) and (8) of section 332.006, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

332.006 Duties and responsibilities of the Department of Transportation.—The Department of Transportation shall, within

the resources provided pursuant to chapter 216:

(4) Upon request, provide financial and technical assistance to public agencies that own ~~which operate~~ public-use airports by making department personnel and department-owned facilities and equipment available on a cost-reimbursement basis to such agencies for special needs of limited duration. The requirement relating to reimbursement of personnel costs may be waived by the department in those cases in which the assistance provided by its personnel was of a limited nature or duration.

(8) Encourage the maximum allocation of federal funds to local public-use airport projects in this state.

Section 8. Paragraphs (a) and (c) of subsection (4), subsection (6), paragraphs (a) and (d) of subsection (7), and subsections (8) and (10) of section 332.007, Florida Statutes, are amended, and subsection (11) is added to that section, to read:

332.007 Administration and financing of aviation and airport programs and projects; state plan.—

(4)(a) The annual legislative budget request for aviation and airport development projects shall be based on the funding required for development projects in the aviation and airport work program. The department shall provide priority funding in support of the planning, design, and construction of proposed projects by local sponsors of public-use airports, with special emphasis on projects for runways and taxiways, including the painting and marking of runways and taxiways, lighting, other related airside activities, and airport access transportation facility projects on airport property.

(c) No single airport shall secure airport or aviation

development project funds in excess of 25 percent of the total airport or aviation development project funds available in any given budget year. However, any public-use airport which receives discretionary capacity improvement project funds in a given fiscal year shall not receive greater than 10 percent of total aviation and airport development project funds appropriated in that fiscal year.

(6) Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, the department may participate in the capital cost of eligible public-use ~~public~~ airport and aviation development projects in accordance with the following rates, unless otherwise provided in the General Appropriations Act or the substantive bill implementing the General Appropriations Act:

(a) The department may fund up to 50 percent of the portion of eligible project costs which are not funded by the Federal Government, except that the department may initially fund up to 75 percent of the cost of land acquisition for a new airport or for the expansion of an existing airport which is owned ~~and operated~~ by a municipality, a county, or an authority, and shall be reimbursed to the normal statutory project share when federal funds become available or within 10 years after the date of acquisition, whichever is earlier. Due to federal budgeting constraints, the department may also initially fund the federal portion of eligible project costs subject to:

1. The department receiving adequate assurance from the Federal Government or local sponsor that this amount will be reimbursed to the department; and

2. The department having adequate funds in the work program to fund the project.

Such projects must be contained in the Federal Government's Airport Capital Improvement Program, and the Federal Government must fund, or have funded, the first year of the project.

(b) The department may retroactively reimburse cities, counties, or airport authorities up to 50 percent of the nonfederal share for land acquisition when such land is needed for airport safety, expansion, tall structure control, clear zone protection, or noise impact reduction. No land purchased prior to July 1, 1990, or purchased prior to executing the required department agreements shall be eligible for reimbursement.

(c) When federal funds are not available, the department may fund up to 80 percent of master planning and eligible aviation development projects at public-use ~~publicly owned, publicly operated~~ airports. If federal funds are available, the department may fund up to 80 percent of the nonfederal share of such projects. Such funding is limited to general aviation airports, or commercial service airports that have fewer than 100,000 passenger boardings per year as determined by the Federal Aviation Administration.

(d) The department is authorized to fund up to 100 percent of the cost of an eligible project that is statewide in scope or that involves more than one county where no other governmental entity or appropriate jurisdiction exists.

(7) Subject to the availability of appropriated funds in addition to aviation fuel tax revenues, the department may participate in the capital cost of eligible public airport and aviation discretionary capacity improvement projects. The annual

legislative budget request shall be based on the funding required for discretionary capacity improvement projects in the aviation and airport work program.

(a) The department shall provide priority funding in support of:

1. Land acquisition which provides additional capacity at the qualifying international airport or at that airport's supplemental air carrier airport.

2. Runway and taxiway projects that add capacity or are necessary to accommodate technological changes in the aviation industry.

3. Public-use airport access transportation projects that improve direct airport access and are approved by the airport sponsor.

4. International terminal projects that increase international gate capacity.

(d) The department may fund up to 50 percent of the portion of eligible project costs which are not funded by the Federal Government except that the department may initially fund up to 75 percent of the cost of land acquisition for a new public-use airport or for the expansion of an existing public-use airport which is owned ~~and operated~~ by a municipality, a county, or an authority, and shall be reimbursed to the normal statutory project share when federal funds become available or within 10 years after the date of acquisition, whichever is earlier.

(8) The department may also fund eligible projects performed by not-for-profit organizations that represent a majority of public airports in this state. Eligible projects may include activities associated with aviation master planning,

professional education, safety and security planning, enhancing economic development and efficiency at airports in this state, or other planning efforts to improve the viability of public-use airports in this state.

(10) Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, and unless otherwise provided in the General Appropriations Act or the substantive bill implementing the General Appropriations Act, the department may fund up to 100 percent of eligible project costs of all of the following at a public-use ~~publicly owned, publicly operated~~ airport located in a rural community as defined in s. 288.0656 which does not have any scheduled commercial service:

(a) The capital cost of runway and taxiway projects that add capacity. Such projects must be prioritized based on the amount of available nonstate matching funds.

(b) Economic development transportation projects pursuant to s. 339.2821.

Any remaining funds must be allocated for projects specified in subsection (6).

(11) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, a municipality, a county, or an authority that owns a public-use airport may participate in the Federal Aviation Administration Airport Investment Partnership Program under federal law by contracting with a private partner to operate the airport under lease or agreement. Subject to the availability of appropriated funds from aviation fuel tax revenues, the department may provide for improvements under this section to a municipality, a county, or an authority that has a private partner under the

Airport Investment Partnership Program for the capital cost of a discretionary improvement project at a public-use airport.

Section 9. Subsections (6) and (35) of section 334.044, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

334.044 Powers and duties of the department.—The department shall have the following general powers and duties:

(6) To acquire, by the exercise of the power of eminent domain as provided by law, all property or property rights, whether public or private, which it may determine are necessary to the performance of its duties and the execution of its powers, including, but not limited to, in advance to preserve a corridor for future proposed improvements.

(35) To expend funds for ~~provide~~ a construction workforce development program, in consultation with affected stakeholders, for delivery of projects designated in the department's work program. The department may annually expend up to $5 million from the State Transportation Trust Fund for fiscal years 2025-2026 through 2029-2030 in grants to state colleges and school districts, with priority given to state colleges and school districts in counties that are rural communities as defined in s. 288.0656(2), for the purchase of equipment simulators with authentic original equipment manufacturer controls and a companion curriculum, for the purchase of instructional aids for use in conjunction with the equipment simulators, and to support offering an elective course in heavy civil construction which must, at a minimum, provide the student with an Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10-hour certification and a fill equipment simulator certification.

Section 10. Subsection (3) of section 334.065, Florida

Statutes, is amended to read:

334.065 Center for Urban Transportation Research.—

(3) An advisory board shall be created to periodically and objectively review and advise the center concerning its research program. Except for projects mandated by law, state-funded base projects shall not be undertaken without approval of the advisory board. The membership of the board shall be composed ~~consist~~ of nine experts in transportation-related areas, as follows:

(a) A member appointed by the President of the Senate.

(b) A member appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(c) The Secretary of Transportation, or his or her designee.

(d) The Secretary of Commerce, or his or her designee. ~~including the secretaries of the Department of Transportation, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Commerce, or their designees, and~~

(e) A member of the Florida Transportation Commission.

(f) The nomination of the remaining four members of the board shall be made to the President of the University of South Florida by the College of Engineering at the University of South Florida.~~, and~~ The appointment of these members must be reviewed and approved by the Florida Transportation Commission and confirmed by the Board of Governors.

Section 11. Section 334.63, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

334.63 Project concept studies and project development and environment studies.—

(1) Project concept studies and project development and environment studies for capacity improvement projects on limited access facilities must include the evaluation of alternatives that provide transportation capacity using elevated roadway above existing lanes.

(2) Project development and environment studies for new alignment projects and capacity improvement projects must be completed within 18 months after the date of commencement.

Section 12. Subsections (1) and (4), paragraph (b) of subsection (7), and subsection (15) of section 337.11, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

337.11 Contracting authority of department; bids; emergency repairs, supplemental agreements, and change orders; combined design and construction contracts; progress payments; records; requirements of vehicle registration.—

(1) The department shall have authority to enter into contracts for the construction and maintenance of all roads designated as part of the State Highway System or the State Park Road System or of any roads placed under its supervision by law. The department shall also have authority to enter into contracts for the construction and maintenance of rest areas, weigh stations, and other structures, including roads, parking areas, supporting facilities and associated buildings used in connection with such facilities. A contractor who enters into such a contract with the department provides a service to the department, and such contract does not ~~However, no such contract shall~~ create any third-party beneficiary rights in any person not a party to the contract.

(4)(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b), the department

may award the proposed construction and maintenance work to the lowest responsible bidder, or in the instance of a time-plus-money contract, the lowest evaluated responsible bidder, or it may reject all bids and proceed to rebid the work in accordance with subsection (2) or otherwise perform the work.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary:

1. If the department receives bids outside the award criteria set forth by the department, the department must:

a. Arrange an in-person meeting with the lowest responsive, responsible bidder to determine why the bids are over the department's estimate and may subsequently award the contract to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder at its discretion;

b. Reject all bids and proceed to rebid the work in accordance with subsection (2); or

c. Invite all responsive, responsible bidders to provide best and final offers without filing a protest or posting a bond under paragraph (5)(a). If the department thereafter awards the contract, the award must be to the bidder that presents the lowest best and final offer.

2. If the department intends to reject all bids on any project after announcing, but before posting official notice of, such intent, the department must provide to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder the opportunity to negotiate the scope of work with a corresponding reduction in price, as provided in the bid, to provide a best and final offer without filing a protest or posting a bond under paragraph (5)(a). Upon reaching a decision regarding the lowest bidder's best and final offer, the department must post notice of final agency action to

either reject all bids or accept the best and final offer.

(c) This subsection does not prohibit the filing of a protest by any bidder or alter the deadlines provided in s. 120.57.

(d) Notwithstanding the requirements of ss. 120.57(3)(c) and 287.057(25), upon receipt of a formal written protest that is timely filed, the department may continue the process provided in this subsection but may not take final agency action as to the lowest bidder except as part of the department's final agency action in the protest or upon dismissal of the protest by the protesting party.

(7)

(b) If the department determines that it is in the best interests of the public, the department may combine the design and construction phases of a project fully funded in the work program into a single contract and select the design-build firm in the early stages of a project to ensure that the design-build firm is part of the collaboration and development of the design as part of a step-by-step progression through construction. Such a contract is referred to as a phased design-build contract. For phased design-build contracts, selection and award must include a two-phase process. For phase one, the department shall competitively award the contract to a design-build firm based upon qualifications, provided that the department receives at least three statements of qualifications from qualified design-build firms. If during phase one the department elects to enter into contracts with more than one design-build firm based upon qualifications, the department must competitively award the contract for phase two to a single design-build firm. For phase

two, the design-build firm may self-perform portions of the work and shall competitively bid construction trade subcontractor packages and, based upon these bids, negotiate with the department a fixed firm price or guaranteed maximum price that meets the project budget and scope as advertised in the request for qualifications.

(15) Each contract let by the department for performance of bridge construction or maintenance over navigable waters must contain a provision requiring marine general liability insurance, in an amount to be determined by the department, which covers third-party personal injury and property damage caused by vessels used by the contractor in the performance of the work. For a contract let by the department on or after July 1, 2025, such insurance must include protection and indemnity coverage, which may be covered by endorsement on the marine general liability insurance policy or may be a separate policy.

Section 13. Subsection (3) is added to section 337.1101, Florida Statutes, to read:

337.1101 Contracting and procurement authority of the department; settlements; notification required.—

(3) The department may not, through a settlement of a protest filed in accordance with s. 120.57(3) of the award of a contract being procured pursuant to s. 337.11 or related to the purchase of commodities or contractual services being procured pursuant to s. 287.057, create a new contract unless the new contract is competitively procured.

Section 14. Subsections (1), (2), and (8) of section 337.14, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

337.14 Application for qualification; certificate of

qualification; restrictions; request for hearing.—

(1) Any contractor desiring to bid for the performance of any construction contract in excess of $250,000 which the department proposes to let must first be certified by the department as qualified pursuant to this section and rules of the department. The rules of the department must address the qualification of contractors to bid on construction contracts in excess of $250,000 and must include requirements with respect to the equipment, past record, experience, financial resources, and organizational personnel of the applying contractor which are necessary to perform the specific class of work for which the contractor seeks certification. Any contractor who desires to bid on contracts in excess of $50 million and who is not qualified and in good standing with the department as of January 1, 2019, must first be certified by the department as qualified and must have satisfactorily completed two projects, each in excess of $15 million, for the department or for any other state department of transportation. The department may limit the dollar amount of any contract upon which a contractor is qualified to bid or the aggregate total dollar volume of contracts such contractor is allowed to have under contract at any one time. Each applying contractor seeking qualification to bid on construction contracts in excess of $250,000 shall furnish the department a statement under oath, on such forms as the department may prescribe, setting forth detailed information as required on the application. Each application for certification must be accompanied by audited, certified financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards by a

certified public accountant licensed in this state or another state. The audited, certified financial statements must be for the applying contractor and must have been prepared within the immediately preceding 12 months. The department may not consider any financial information of the parent entity of the applying contractor, if any. The department may not certify as qualified any applying contractor who fails to submit the audited, certified financial statements required by this subsection. If the application or the annual financial statement shows the financial condition of the applying contractor more than 4 months before the date on which the application is received by the department, the applicant must also submit interim audited, certified financial statements prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and auditing standards by a certified public accountant licensed in this state or another state. The interim financial statements must cover the period from the end date of the annual statement and must show the financial condition of the applying contractor no more than 4 months before the date that the interim financial statements are received by the department. However, upon the request of the applying contractor, an application and accompanying annual or interim financial statement received by the department within 15 days after either 4-month period under this subsection shall be considered timely. An applying contractor desiring to bid exclusively for the performance of construction contracts with proposed budget estimates of less than $2 million may submit reviewed annual or reviewed interim financial statements prepared by a certified public accountant. The information required by this subsection is confidential and exempt from s.

119.07(1). The department shall act upon the application for qualification within 30 days after the department determines that the application is complete. The department may waive the requirements of this subsection for projects having a contract price of $1 million or less which have diverse scopes of work that may or may not be performed or $500,000 or less if the department determines that the project is of a noncritical nature and the waiver will not endanger public health, safety, or property. Contracts for projects that have diverse scopes of work that may or may not be performed are typically referred to as push-button or task work order contracts.

(2) Certification is ~~shall be~~ necessary in order to bid on a road, bridge, or public transportation construction contract of more than $250,000. However, the successful bidder on any construction contract must furnish a contract bond before ~~prior to~~ the award of the contract. The department may waive the requirement for all or a portion of a contract bond for contracts of $250,000 ~~$150,000~~ or less under s. 337.18(1).

(8) This section does not apply to maintenance contracts. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a contractor seeking to bid on a maintenance contract that predominantly includes repair and replacement of safety appurtenances, including, but not limited to, guardrails, attenuators, traffic signals, and striping, must possess the prescribed qualifications, equipment, record, and experience to perform such repair and replacement.

Section 15. Subsections (4) and (5) of section 337.185, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

337.185 State Arbitration Board.—

(4) The contractor may submit a claim greater than $250,000 up to $2 ~~$1~~ million per contract or, upon agreement of the parties, greater than ~~up to~~ $2 million per contract to be arbitrated by the board. An award issued by the board pursuant to this subsection is final if a request for a trial de novo is not filed within the time provided by Rule 1.830, Florida Rules of Civil Procedure. At the trial de novo, the court may not admit evidence that there has been an arbitration proceeding, the nature or amount of the award, or any other matter concerning the conduct of the arbitration proceeding, except that testimony given in connection with ~~at~~ an arbitration hearing may be used for any purpose otherwise permitted by the Florida Evidence Code. If a request for trial de novo is not filed within the time provided, the award issued by the board is final and enforceable by a court of law.

(5) An arbitration request may not be made to the board before final acceptance but must be made to the board within 820 days after final acceptance or within 360 days after written notice by the department of a claim related to a written warranty or defect after final acceptance.

Section 16. Subsection (2) of section 337.19, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

337.19 Suits by and against department; limitation of actions; forum.—

(2) For contracts entered into on or after June 30, 1993, suits by or ~~and~~ against the department under this section must ~~shall~~ be commenced within 820 days of the final acceptance of the work. For contracts entered into on or after July 1, 2025, suits by or against the department under this section must be

commenced within 820 days of the final acceptance of the work or within 360 days after written notice by the department of a claim related to a written warranty or defect after final acceptance ~~This section shall apply to all contracts entered into after June 30, 1993~~.

Section 17. Present subsections (3) through (9) of section 337.401, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (4) through (10), respectively, paragraph (c) is added to subsection (1) and a new subsection (3) is added to that section, and paragraph (b) of subsection (1), subsection (2), paragraphs (a), (c), and (g) of present subsection (3), present subsection (5), paragraph (e) of present subsection (6), and paragraphs (d) and (n) of present subsection (7) of that section are amended, to read:

337.401 Use of right-of-way for utilities subject to regulation; permit; fees.—

(1)

(b) For aerial and underground electric utility transmission lines designed to operate at 69 or more kilovolts which ~~that~~ are needed to accommodate the additional electrical transfer capacity on the transmission grid resulting from new base-load generating facilities, the department’s rules shall provide for placement of and access to such transmission lines adjacent to and within the right-of-way of any department-controlled public roads, including longitudinally within limited access facilities where there is no other practicable alternative available, to the greatest extent allowed by federal law, if compliance with the standards established by such rules is achieved. Without limiting or conditioning the department’s

jurisdiction or authority described in paragraph (a), with respect to limited access right-of-way, such rules may include, but need not be limited to, that the use of the right-of-way for longitudinal placement of electric utility transmission lines is reasonable based upon a consideration of economic and environmental factors, including, without limitation, other practicable alternative alignments, utility corridors and easements, impacts on adjacent property owners, and minimum clear zones and other safety standards, and further provide that placement of the electric utility transmission lines within the department's right-of-way does not interfere with operational requirements of the transportation facility or planned or potential future expansion of such transportation facility. If the department approves longitudinal placement of electric utility transmission lines in limited access facilities, compensation for the use of the right-of-way is required. Such consideration or compensation paid by the ~~electric~~ utility owner in connection with the department's issuance of a permit does not create any property right in the department's property regardless of the amount of consideration paid or the improvements constructed on the property by the utility owner. Upon notice by the department that the property is needed for expansion or improvement of the transportation facility, the electric utility transmission line will be removed or relocated at the utility owner's ~~electric utility's~~ sole expense. The ~~electric~~ utility owner shall pay to the department reasonable damages resulting from the utility owner's ~~utility's~~ failure or refusal to timely remove or relocate its transmission lines. The rules to be adopted by the department may also address the

compensation methodology and removal or relocation. As used in this subsection, the term "base-load generating facilities" means electric power plants that are certified under part II of chapter 403.

(c) An entity that places, replaces, or relocates underground utilities within a right-of-way must make such underground utilities electronically detectable using techniques approved by the department.

(2) The authority may grant to any person who is a resident of this state, or to any corporation that ~~which~~ is organized under the laws of this state or licensed to do business within this state, the use of a right-of-way for the utility in accordance with such rules or regulations as the authority may adopt. A utility may not be installed, located, or relocated unless authorized by a written permit issued by the authority. However, for public roads or publicly owned rail corridors under the jurisdiction of the department, a utility relocation schedule and relocation agreement may be executed in lieu of a written permit. The permit or relocation agreement must require the permitholder or party to the agreement to be responsible for any damage resulting from the work required. The utility owner shall pay to the authority actual damages resulting from a failure or refusal to timely remove or relocate a utility. Issuance of permits for new placement of utilities within the authority's rights-of-way may be subject to payment of actual costs incurred by the authority due to the failure of the utility owner to timely relocate utilities pursuant to an approved utility work schedule, for damage done to existing infrastructure by the utility owner, and for roadway failures

caused by work performed by the utility owner ~~issuance of such permit~~. The authority may initiate injunctive proceedings as provided in s. 120.69 to enforce ~~provisions of~~ this subsection or any rule or order issued or entered into pursuant thereto. A permit application required under this subsection by a county or municipality having jurisdiction and control of the right-of-way of any public road must be processed and acted upon in accordance with the timeframes provided in subparagraphs (8)(d)7., 8., and 9 ~~(7)(d)7., 8., and 9~~.

(3)(a) As used in this subsection, the term "as-built plans" means plans that include all changes and modifications that occur during the construction phase of a project.

(b) The authority and utility owner shall agree in writing to an approved depth of as-built plans in accordance with the scope of a project.

(c) The utility owner shall submit as-built plans within 20 business days after completion of the utility work which show actual final surface and subsurface utilities, including location alignment profile, depth, and geodetic datum of each structure. As-built plans must be provided in an electronic format that is compatible with department software and meets technical specifications provided by the department or in an electronic format determined by the utility industry to be in accordance with industry standards. The department may by written agreement make exceptions to the electronic format requirement.

(d) As-built plans must be submitted before any costs may be reimbursed by the authority under subsection (2).

(4)(a) ~~(3)(a)~~ Because of the unique circumstances applicable

to providers of communications services, including, but not limited to, the circumstances described in paragraph (e) and the fact that federal and state law require the nondiscriminatory treatment of providers of telecommunications services, and because of the desire to promote competition among providers of communications services, it is the intent of the Legislature that municipalities and counties treat providers of communications services in a nondiscriminatory and competitively neutral manner when imposing rules or regulations governing the placement or maintenance of communications facilities in the public roads or rights-of-way. Rules or regulations imposed by a municipality or county relating to providers of communications services placing or maintaining communications facilities in its roads or rights-of-way must be generally applicable to all providers of communications services, taking into account the distinct engineering, construction, operation, maintenance, public works, and safety requirements of the provider's facilities, and, notwithstanding any other law, may not require a provider of communications services to apply for or enter into an individual license, franchise, or other agreement with the municipality or county as a condition of placing or maintaining communications facilities in its roads or rights-of-way. In addition to other reasonable rules or regulations that a municipality or county may adopt relating to the placement or maintenance of communications facilities in its roads or rights-of-way under this subsection or subsection (8) ~~(7)~~, a municipality or county may require a provider of communications services that places or seeks to place facilities in its roads or rights-of-way to register with the municipality or county. To

register, a provider of communications services may be required only to provide its name; the name, address, and telephone number of a contact person for the registrant; the number of the registrant's current certificate of authorization issued by the Florida Public Service Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, or the Department of State; a statement of whether the registrant is a pass-through provider as defined in subparagraph (7)(a)1. ~~(6)(a)1.~~; the registrant's federal employer identification number; and any required proof of insurance or self-insuring status adequate to defend and cover claims. A municipality or county may not require a registrant to renew a registration more frequently than every 5 years but may require during this period that a registrant update the registration information provided under this subsection within 90 days after a change in such information. A municipality or county may not require the registrant to provide an inventory of communications facilities, maps, locations of such facilities, or other information by a registrant as a condition of registration, renewal, or for any other purpose; provided, however, that a municipality or county may require as part of a permit application that the applicant identify at-grade communications facilities within 50 feet of the proposed installation location for the placement of at-grade communications facilities. A municipality or county may not require a provider to pay any fee, cost, or other charge for registration or renewal thereof. It is the intent of the Legislature that the placement, operation, maintenance, upgrading, and extension of communications facilities not be unreasonably interrupted or delayed through the permitting or

other local regulatory process. Except as provided in this chapter or otherwise expressly authorized by chapter 202, chapter 364, or chapter 610, a municipality or county may not adopt or enforce any ordinance, regulation, or requirement as to the placement or operation of communications facilities in a right-of-way by a communications services provider authorized by state or local law to operate in a right-of-way; regulate any communications services; or impose or collect any tax, fee, cost, charge, or exaction for the provision of communications services over the communications services provider's communications facilities in a right-of-way.

(c) Any municipality or county that, as of January 1, 2019, elected to require permit fees from any provider of communications services that uses or occupies municipal or county roads or rights-of-way pursuant to former paragraph (c) or former paragraph (j), Florida Statutes 2018, may continue to require and collect such fees. A municipality or county that elected as of January 1, 2019, to require permit fees may elect to forego such fees as provided herein. A municipality or county that elected as of January 1, 2019, not to require permit fees may not elect to impose permit fees. All fees authorized under this paragraph must be reasonable and commensurate with the direct and actual cost of the regulatory activity, including issuing and processing permits, plan reviews, physical inspection, and direct administrative costs; must be demonstrable; and must be equitable among users of the roads or rights-of-way. A fee authorized under this paragraph may not be offset against the tax imposed under chapter 202; include the costs of roads or rights-of-way acquisition or roads or rights-

of-way rental; include any general administrative, management, or maintenance costs of the roads or rights-of-way; or be based on a percentage of the value or costs associated with the work to be performed on the roads or rights-of-way. In an action to recover amounts due for a fee not authorized under this paragraph, the prevailing party may recover court costs and attorney fees at trial and on appeal. In addition to the limitations set forth in this section, a fee levied by a municipality or charter county under this paragraph may not exceed $100. However, permit fees may not be imposed with respect to permits that may be required for service drop lines not required to be noticed under s. 556.108(5) or for any activity that does not require the physical disturbance of the roads or rights-of-way or does not impair access to or full use of the roads or rights-of-way, including, but not limited to, the performance of service restoration work on existing facilities, extensions of such facilities for providing communications services to customers, and the placement of micro wireless facilities in accordance with subparagraph (8)(e)3 ~~(7)(e)3~~.

1. If a municipality or charter county elects to not require permit fees, the total rate for the local communications services tax as computed under s. 202.20 for that municipality or charter county may be increased by ordinance or resolution by an amount not to exceed a rate of 0.12 percent.

2. If a noncharter county elects to not require permit fees, the total rate for the local communications services tax as computed under s. 202.20 for that noncharter county may be increased by ordinance or resolution by an amount not to exceed

a rate of 0.24 percent, to replace the revenue the noncharter county would otherwise have received from permit fees for providers of communications services.

(g) A municipality or county may not use its authority over the placement of facilities in its roads and rights-of-way as a basis for asserting or exercising regulatory control over a provider of communications services regarding matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Florida Public Service Commission or the Federal Communications Commission, including, but not limited to, the operations, systems, equipment, technology, qualifications, services, service quality, service territory, and prices of a provider of communications services. A municipality or county may not require any permit for the maintenance, repair, replacement, extension, or upgrade of existing aerial wireline communications facilities on utility poles or for aerial wireline facilities between existing wireline communications facility attachments on utility poles by a communications services provider. However, a municipality or county may require a right-of-way permit for work that involves excavation, closure of a sidewalk, or closure of a vehicular lane or parking lane, unless the provider is performing service restoration to existing facilities. A permit application required by an authority under this section for the placement of communications facilities must be processed and acted upon consistent with the timeframes provided in subparagraphs (8)(d)7., 8., and 9 ~~(7)(d)7., 8., and 9~~. In addition, a municipality or county may not require any permit or other approval, fee, charge, or cost, or other exaction for the maintenance, repair, replacement, extension, or upgrade of

existing aerial lines or underground communications facilities located on private property outside of the public rights-of-way. As used in this section, the term "extension of existing facilities" includes those extensions from the rights-of-way into a customer's private property for purposes of placing a service drop or those extensions from the rights-of-way into a utility easement to provide service to a discrete identifiable customer or group of customers.

(6) ~~(5)~~ This section, except subsections (1) and (2) and paragraph (4)(g) ~~(3)(g)~~, does not apply to the provision of pay telephone service on public, municipal, or county roads or rights-of-way.

(7) ~~(6)~~

(e) This subsection does not alter any provision of this section or s. 202.24 relating to taxes, fees, or other charges or impositions by a municipality or county on a dealer of communications services or authorize that any charges be assessed on a dealer of communications services, except as specifically set forth herein. A municipality or county may not charge a pass-through provider any amounts other than the charges under this subsection as a condition to the placement or maintenance of a communications facility in the roads or rights-of-way of a municipality or county by a pass-through provider, except that a municipality or county may impose permit fees on a pass-through provider consistent with paragraph (4)(c) ~~(3)(c)~~.

(8) ~~(7)~~

(d) An authority may require a registration process and permit fees in accordance with subsection (4) ~~(3)~~. An authority shall accept applications for permits and shall process and

issue permits subject to the following requirements:

1. An authority may not directly or indirectly require an applicant to perform services unrelated to the collocation for which approval is sought, such as in-kind contributions to the authority, including reserving fiber, conduit, or pole space for the authority.

2. An applicant may not be required to provide more information to obtain a permit than is necessary to demonstrate the applicant's compliance with applicable codes for the placement of small wireless facilities in the locations identified in the application. An applicant may not be required to provide inventories, maps, or locations of communications facilities in the right-of-way other than as necessary to avoid interference with other at-grade or aerial facilities located at the specific location proposed for a small wireless facility or within 50 feet of such location.

3. An authority may not:

a. Require the placement of small wireless facilities on any specific utility pole or category of poles;

b. Require the placement of multiple antenna systems on a single utility pole;

c. Require a demonstration that collocation of a small wireless facility on an existing structure is not legally or technically possible as a condition for granting a permit for the collocation of a small wireless facility on a new utility pole except as provided in paragraph (i);

d. Require compliance with an authority's provisions regarding placement of small wireless facilities or a new utility pole used to support a small wireless facility in

rights-of-way under the control of the department unless the authority has received a delegation from the department for the location of the small wireless facility or utility pole, or require such compliance as a condition to receive a permit that is ancillary to the permit for collocation of a small wireless facility, including an electrical permit;

e. Require a meeting before filing an application;

f. Require direct or indirect public notification or a public meeting for the placement of communication facilities in the right-of-way;

g. Limit the size or configuration of a small wireless facility or any of its components, if the small wireless facility complies with the size limits in this subsection;

h. Prohibit the installation of a new utility pole used to support the collocation of a small wireless facility if the installation otherwise meets the requirements of this subsection; or

i. Require that any component of a small wireless facility be placed underground except as provided in paragraph (i).

4. Subject to paragraph (r), an authority may not limit the placement, by minimum separation distances, of small wireless facilities, utility poles on which small wireless facilities are or will be collocated, or other at-grade communications facilities. However, within 14 days after the date of filing the application, an authority may request that the proposed location of a small wireless facility be moved to another location in the right-of-way and placed on an alternative authority utility pole or support structure or placed on a new utility pole. The authority and the applicant may negotiate the alternative

location, including any objective design standards and reasonable spacing requirements for ground-based equipment, for 30 days after the date of the request. At the conclusion of the negotiation period, if the alternative location is accepted by the applicant, the applicant must notify the authority of such acceptance and the application shall be deemed granted for any new location for which there is agreement and all other locations in the application. If an agreement is not reached, the applicant must notify the authority of such nonagreement and the authority must grant or deny the original application within 90 days after the date the application was filed. A request for an alternative location, an acceptance of an alternative location, or a rejection of an alternative location must be in writing and provided by electronic mail.

5. An authority shall limit the height of a small wireless facility to 10 feet above the utility pole or structure upon which the small wireless facility is to be collocated. Unless waived by an authority, the height for a new utility pole is limited to the tallest existing utility pole as of July 1, 2017, located in the same right-of-way, other than a utility pole for which a waiver has previously been granted, measured from grade in place within 500 feet of the proposed location of the small wireless facility. If there is no utility pole within 500 feet, the authority shall limit the height of the utility pole to 50 feet.

6. The installation by a communications services provider of a utility pole in the public rights-of-way, other than a utility pole used to support a small wireless facility, is subject to authority rules or regulations governing the

placement of utility poles in the public rights-of-way.

7. Within 14 days after receiving an application, an authority must determine and notify the applicant by electronic mail as to whether the application is complete. If an application is deemed incomplete, the authority must specifically identify the missing information. An application is deemed complete if the authority fails to provide notification to the applicant within 14 days.

8. An application must be processed on a nondiscriminatory basis. A complete application is deemed approved if an authority fails to approve or deny the application within 60 days after receipt of the application. If an authority does not use the 30-day negotiation period provided in subparagraph 4., the parties may mutually agree to extend the 60-day application review period. The authority shall grant or deny the application at the end of the extended period. A permit issued pursuant to an approved application shall remain effective for 1 year unless extended by the authority.

9. An authority must notify the applicant of approval or denial by electronic mail. An authority shall approve a complete application unless it does not meet the authority's applicable codes. If the application is denied, the authority must specify in writing the basis for denial, including the specific code provisions on which the denial was based, and send the documentation to the applicant by electronic mail on the day the authority denies the application. The applicant may cure the deficiencies identified by the authority and resubmit the application within 30 days after notice of the denial is sent to the applicant. The authority shall approve or deny the revised

application within 30 days after receipt or the application is deemed approved. The review of a revised application is limited to the deficiencies cited in the denial. If an authority provides for administrative review of the denial of an application, the review must be complete and a written decision issued within 45 days after a written request for review is made. A denial must identify the specific code provisions on which the denial is based. If the administrative review is not complete within 45 days, the authority waives any claim regarding failure to exhaust administrative remedies in any judicial review of the denial of an application.

10. An applicant seeking to collocate small wireless facilities within the jurisdiction of a single authority may, at the applicant's discretion, file a consolidated application and receive a single permit for the collocation of up to 30 small wireless facilities. If the application includes multiple small wireless facilities, an authority may separately address small wireless facility collocations for which incomplete information has been received or which are denied.

11. An authority may deny an application to collocate a small wireless facility or place a utility pole used to support a small wireless facility in the public rights-of-way if the proposed small wireless facility or utility pole used to support a small wireless facility:

a. Materially interferes with the safe operation of traffic control equipment.

b. Materially interferes with sight lines or clear zones for transportation, pedestrians, or public safety purposes.

c. Materially interferes with compliance with the Americans

with Disabilities Act or similar federal or state standards regarding pedestrian access or movement.

d. Materially fails to comply with the 2017 edition of the Florida Department of Transportation Utility Accommodation Manual.

e. Fails to comply with applicable codes.

f. Fails to comply with objective design standards authorized under paragraph (r).

12. An authority may adopt by ordinance provisions for insurance coverage, indemnification, force majeure, abandonment, authority liability, or authority warranties. Such provisions must be reasonable and nondiscriminatory. An authority may require a construction bond to secure restoration of the postconstruction rights-of-way to the preconstruction condition. However, such bond must be time-limited to not more than 18 months after the construction to which the bond applies is completed. For any financial obligation required by an authority allowed under this section, the authority shall accept a letter of credit or similar financial instrument issued by any financial institution that is authorized to do business within the United States, provided that a claim against the financial instrument may be made by electronic means, including by facsimile. A provider of communications services may add an authority to any existing bond, insurance policy, or other relevant financial instrument, and the authority must accept such proof of coverage without any conditions other than consent to venue for purposes of any litigation to which the authority is a party. An authority may not require a communications services provider to indemnify it for liabilities not caused by

the provider, including liabilities arising from the authority's negligence, gross negligence, or willful conduct.

13. Collocation of a small wireless facility on an authority utility pole does not provide the basis for the imposition of an ad valorem tax on the authority utility pole.

14. An authority may reserve space on authority utility poles for future public safety uses. However, a reservation of space may not preclude collocation of a small wireless facility. If replacement of the authority utility pole is necessary to accommodate the collocation of the small wireless facility and the future public safety use, the pole replacement is subject to make-ready provisions and the replaced pole shall accommodate the future public safety use.

15. A structure granted a permit and installed pursuant to this subsection shall comply with chapter 333 and federal regulations pertaining to airport airspace protections.

(n) This subsection does not affect provisions relating to pass-through providers in subsection (7) ~~(6)~~.

Section 18. Present subsections (2) and (3) of section 337.403, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as subsections (4) and (5), respectively, new subsections (2) and (3) are added to that section, and subsection (1) of that section is amended, to read:

337.403 Interference caused by utility; expenses.—

(1) If a utility that is placed upon, under, over, or within the right-of-way limits of any public road or publicly owned rail corridor is found by the authority to be unreasonably interfering in any way with the convenient, safe, or continuous use, or the maintenance, improvement, extension, or expansion,

of such public road or publicly owned rail corridor, the utility owner shall, upon 30 days' written notice to the utility or its agent by the authority, initiate the work necessary to alleviate the interference at its own expense except as provided in paragraphs (a)-(k) ~~(a)-(j)~~. The work must be completed within such reasonable time as stated in the notice or such time as agreed to by the authority and the utility owner.

(a) If the relocation of utility facilities, as referred to in s. 111 of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, Pub. L. No. 84-627, is necessitated by the construction of a project on the federal-aid interstate system, including extensions thereof within urban areas, and the cost of the project is eligible and approved for reimbursement by the Federal Government to the extent of 90 percent or more under the Federal-Aid Highway Act, or any amendment thereof, ~~then in that event~~ the utility owning or operating such facilities must ~~shall~~ perform any necessary work upon notice from the department, and the state must ~~shall~~ pay the entire expense properly attributable to such work after deducting therefrom any increase in the value of a new facility and any salvage value derived from an old facility.

(b) The department may reimburse up to 50 percent of the costs for relocation of publicly regulated utility facilities and municipally owned or county-owned utility facilities, and 100 percent of the costs for relocation of municipally owned or county-owned utility facilities located in a rural area of opportunity as defined in s. 288.0656(2), on the State Highway System after deducting therefrom any increase in the value of a new facility and any salvage value derived from an old facility upon determining that such reimbursement is in the best

interests of the public and necessary to expedite the construction of the project and that the utility owner has relocated its facility at least 5 percent ahead of the time allotted for relocation per the latest approved utility relocation schedule.

(c) ~~(b)~~ When a joint agreement between the department and the utility is executed for utility work to be accomplished as part of a contract for construction of a transportation facility, the department may participate in those utility work costs that exceed the department's official estimate of the cost of the work by more than 10 percent in addition to any costs identified in paragraph (a). The amount of such participation is limited to the difference between the official estimate of all the work in the joint agreement plus 10 percent and the amount awarded for this work in the construction contract for such work. The department may not participate in any utility work costs that occur as a result of changes or additions during the course of the contract.

(d) ~~(c)~~ When an agreement between the department and utility is executed for utility work to be accomplished in advance of a contract for construction of a transportation facility, the department may participate in the cost of clearing and grubbing necessary to perform such work.

(e) ~~(d)~~ If the utility facility was initially installed to exclusively serve the authority or its tenants, or both, the authority must ~~shall~~ bear the costs of the utility work. However, the authority is not responsible for the cost of utility work related to any subsequent additions to that facility for the purpose of serving others. For a county or

municipality, if such utility facility was installed in the right-of-way as a means to serve a county or municipal facility on a parcel of property adjacent to the right-of-way and if the intended use of the county or municipal facility is for a use other than transportation purposes, the obligation of the county or municipality to bear the costs of the utility work extends ~~shall extend~~ only to utility work on the parcel of property on which the facility of the county or municipality originally served by the utility facility is located.

(f) ~~(e)~~ If, under an agreement between a utility owner and the authority entered into after July 1, 2009, the utility conveys, subordinates, or relinquishes a compensable property right to the authority for the purpose of accommodating the acquisition or use of the right-of-way by the authority, without the agreement expressly addressing future responsibility for the cost of necessary utility work, the authority must ~~shall~~ bear the cost of removal or relocation. This paragraph does not impair or restrict, and may not be used to interpret, the terms of any such agreement entered into before July 1, 2009.

(g) ~~(f)~~ If the utility is an electric facility being relocated underground in order to enhance vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety and in which ownership of the electric facility to be placed underground has been transferred from a private to a public utility within the past 5 years, the department shall incur all costs of the necessary utility work.

(h) ~~(g)~~ An authority may bear the costs of utility work required to eliminate an unreasonable interference when the utility is not able to establish that it has a compensable property right in the particular property where the utility is

located if:

1. The utility was physically located on the particular property before the authority acquired rights in the property;

2. The utility demonstrates that it has a compensable property right in adjacent properties along the alignment of the utility or, after due diligence, certifies that the utility does not have evidence to prove or disprove that it has a compensable property right in the particular property where the utility is located; and

3. The information available to the authority does not establish the relative priorities of the authority's and the utility's interests in the particular property.

(i) ~~(h)~~ If a municipally owned utility or county-owned utility is located in a rural area of opportunity, as defined in s. 288.0656(2), and the department determines that the utility owner is unable, and will not be able within the next 10 years, to pay for the cost of utility work necessitated by a department project on the State Highway System, the department may pay, in whole or in part, the cost of such utility work performed by the department or its contractor.

(j) ~~(i)~~ If the relocation of utility facilities is necessitated by the construction of a commuter rail service project or an intercity passenger rail service project and the cost of the project is eligible and approved for reimbursement by the Federal Government, ~~then~~ in that event the utility owning or operating such facilities located by permit on a department-owned rail corridor must ~~shall~~ perform any necessary utility relocation work upon notice from the department, and the department must ~~shall~~ pay the expense properly attributable to

such utility relocation work in the same proportion as federal funds are expended on the commuter rail service project or an intercity passenger rail service project after deducting therefrom any increase in the value of a new facility and any salvage value derived from an old facility. In no event is ~~shall~~ the state ~~be~~ required to use state dollars for such utility relocation work. This paragraph does not apply to any phase of the Central Florida Commuter Rail project, known as SunRail.

(k)~~(j)~~ If a utility is lawfully located within an existing and valid utility easement granted by recorded plat, regardless of whether such land was subsequently acquired by the authority by dedication, transfer of fee, or otherwise, the authority must bear the cost of the utility work required to eliminate an unreasonable interference. The authority shall pay the entire expense properly attributable to such work after deducting any increase in the value of a new facility and any salvage value derived from an old facility.

(2) Before the notice to initiate the work, the department and the utility owner shall follow a procedure that includes all of the following:

(a) The department shall provide to the utility owner preliminary plans for a proposed highway improvement project and notice of a period that begins 30 days and ends within 120 days after receipt of the notice within which the utility owner shall submit to the department the plans required in accordance with paragraph (b). The utility owner shall provide to the department written acknowledgement of receipt of the preliminary plans.

(b) The utility owner shall submit to the department plans showing existing and proposed locations of utility facilities

within the period provided by the department. If the utility owner fails to submit the plans to the department within the period, the department is not required to participate in the work, may withhold any amount due to the utility owner on other projects within the rights-of-way of the same district of the department, and may withhold issuance of any other permits for work within the rights-of-way of the same district of the department.

(c) The plans submitted by the utility owner must include a utility relocation schedule for approval by the department. The utility relocation schedule must meet form and timeframe requirements established by department rule.

(d) If a state of emergency is declared by the Governor, the utility is entitled to receive an extension to the utility relocation schedule which is at least equal to any extension granted to the contractor by the department. The utility owner shall notify the department of any additional delays associated with causes beyond the utility owner's control, including, but not limited to, participation in recovery work under a mutual aid agreement. The notification must occur within 10 calendar days after commencement of the delay and provide a reasonably complete description of the cause and nature of the delay and the possible impacts to the utility relocation schedule. Within 10 calendar days after the cause of the delay ends, the utility owner shall submit a revised utility relocation schedule for approval by the department. The department may not unreasonably withhold, delay, or condition such approval.

(e) If the utility owner does not initiate work in accordance with the utility relocation schedule, the department

must provide the utility owner a final notice directing the utility owner to initiate work within 10 calendar days. If the utility owner does not begin work within 10 calendar days after receipt of the final notice or, having so begun work, thereafter fails to complete the work in accordance with the utility relocation schedule, the department is not required to participate in the work, may withhold any amount due to the utility owner for projects within the rights-of-way of the same district of the department, and may exercise its right to obtain injunctive relief under s. 120.69.

(f) If additional utility work is found necessary after the letting date of a highway improvement project, the utility must provide a revised utility relocation schedule within 30 calendar days after becoming aware of the need for such additional work or upon receipt of the department's written notification advising of the need for such additional work. The department shall review the revised utility relocation schedule for compliance with the form and timeframe requirements of the department and must approve the revised utility relocation schedule if such requirements are met.

(g) The utility owner is liable to the department for documented damages resulting from the utility's failure to comply with the utility relocation schedule, including any delay costs incurred by the contractor and approved by the department. Within 45 days after receipt of written notification from the department that the utility owner is liable for damages, the utility owner must pay to the department the amount for which the utility owner is liable or request mediation pursuant to subsection (3).

(3)(a) The department shall establish mediation boards to resolve disputes that arise between the department and utilities concerning any of the following:

1. A utility relocation schedule or revised utility relocation schedule that has been submitted by the utility owner but not approved by the department.

2. A contractor's claim, approved by the department, for delay costs or other damages related to the utility's work.

3. Any matter related to the removal, relocation, or adjustment of the utility's facilities pursuant to this section.

(b) The department shall establish mediation board procedures, which must include all of the following:

1. Each mediation board shall be composed of one mediator designated by the department, one mediator designated by the utility owner, and one mediator mutually selected by the department's designee and the utility owner's designee who shall serve as the presiding officer of the mediation board.

2. The mediation board shall hold a hearing for each dispute submitted to the mediation board for resolution. The mediation board shall provide notice of the hearing to each party involved in the dispute and afford each party an opportunity to present evidence at the hearing.

3. Decisions on issues presented to the mediation board must be made by a majority vote of the mediators.

4. The mediation board shall issue a final decision in writing for each dispute submitted to the mediation board for resolution and shall serve a copy of the final decision on each party to the dispute.

5. Final decisions of the mediation board are subject to de

novo review in the Second Judicial Circuit Court in and for Leon County by way of a petition for judicial review filed by the department or the utility owner within 30 days after service of the final decision.

(c) The members of the mediation board shall receive compensation for the performance of their duties from deposits made by the parties based on an estimate of compensation by the mediation board. All deposits will be held in escrow by the chair in advance of the hearing. Each member shall be compensated at $200 per hour, up to a maximum of $1,500 per day. A member shall be reimbursed for the actual cost of his or her travel expenses. The mediation board may allocate funds for clerical and other administrative services.

(d) The department may establish a list of qualified mediators and adopt rules to administer this subsection, including procedures for the mediation of a contested case.

Section 19. Present subsection (10) of section 339.175, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (11), a new subsection (10) is added to that section, and subsection (1), paragraph (a) of subsection (2), paragraphs (b), (i), and (j) of subsection (6), paragraphs (a), (b), and (d) of subsection (7), and present subsection (11) of that section are amended, to read:

339.175 Metropolitan planning organization.—

(1) PURPOSE.—It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage and promote the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of multimodal ~~surface~~ transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight and foster economic growth and development within and through

urbanized areas of this state while balancing conservation of natural resources ~~minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption, air pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions through metropolitan transportation planning processes identified in this section~~. To accomplish these objectives, metropolitan planning organizations, referred to in this section as M.P.O.'s, shall develop, in cooperation with the state and public transit operators, transportation plans and programs for metropolitan areas. The plans and programs for each metropolitan area must provide for the development and integrated management and operation of transportation systems and facilities, including pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities that will function as an intermodal transportation system for the metropolitan area, based upon the prevailing principles provided in s. 334.046(1). The process for developing such plans and programs shall provide for consideration of all modes of transportation and shall be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive, to the degree appropriate, based on the complexity of the transportation problems to be addressed. To ensure that the process is integrated with the statewide planning process, M.P.O.'s shall develop plans and programs that identify transportation facilities that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to facilities that serve important national, state, and regional transportation functions. For the purposes of this section, those facilities include the facilities on the Strategic Intermodal System designated under s. 339.63 and facilities for which projects have been identified pursuant to s. 339.2819(4).

(2) DESIGNATION.—

(a)1. An M.P.O. shall be designated for each urbanized area of the state; however, this does not require that an individual M.P.O. be designated for each such area. Such designation shall be accomplished by agreement between the Governor and units of general-purpose local government representing at least 75 percent of the population of the urbanized area; however, the unit of general-purpose local government that represents the central city or cities within the M.P.O. jurisdiction, as defined by the United States Bureau of the Census, must be a party to such agreement.

2. To the extent possible, only one M.P.O. shall be designated for each urbanized area or group of contiguous urbanized areas. More than one M.P.O. may be designated within an existing urbanized area only if the Governor and the existing M.P.O. determine that the size and complexity of the existing urbanized area makes the designation of more than one M.P.O. for the area appropriate. After July 1, 2025, no additional M.P.O.'s may be designated in this state except in urbanized areas, as defined by the United States Census Bureau, where the urbanized area boundary is not contiguous to an urbanized area designated before the 2020 census~~, in which case each M.P.O. designated for the area must:~~

~~a. Consult with every other M.P.O. designated for the urbanized area and the state to coordinate plans and transportation improvement programs~~.

~~b. Ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, the consistency of data used in the planning process, including data used in forecasting travel demand within the urbanized area.~~

Each M.P.O. required under this section must be fully operative no later than 6 months following its designation.

(6) POWERS, DUTIES, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The powers, privileges, and authority of an M.P.O. are those specified in this section or incorporated in an interlocal agreement authorized under s. 163.01. Each M.P.O. shall perform all acts required by federal or state laws or rules, now and subsequently applicable, which are necessary to qualify for federal aid. It is the intent of this section that each M.P.O. be involved in the planning and programming of transportation facilities, including, but not limited to, airports, intercity and high-speed rail lines, seaports, and intermodal facilities, to the extent permitted by state or federal law. An M.P.O. may not perform project production or delivery for capital improvement projects on the State Highway System.

(b) In developing the long-range transportation plan and the transportation improvement program required under paragraph (a), each M.P.O. shall provide for consideration of projects and strategies that will:

1. Support the economic vitality of the contiguous urbanized metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity, and efficiency.

2. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.

3. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available to people and for freight.

4. Protect and enhance the environment, <u>conserve natural resources</u> ~~promote energy conservation~~, and improve quality of life.

5. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes and contiguous urbanized metropolitan areas, for people and freight.

6. Promote efficient system management and operation.

7. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.

8. Improve the resilience of transportation infrastructure.

9. Reduce traffic and congestion.

~~(i) By December 31, 2023, the M.P.O.'s serving Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties must submit a feasibility report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives exploring the benefits, costs, and process of consolidation into a single M.P.O. serving the contiguous urbanized area, the goal of which would be to:~~

~~1. Coordinate transportation projects deemed to be regionally significant.~~

~~2. Review the impact of regionally significant land use decisions on the region.~~

~~3. Review all proposed regionally significant transportation projects in the transportation improvement programs.~~

(i)1.~~(j)1.~~ To more fully accomplish the purposes for which M.P.O.'s have been mandated, the department shall, at least annually, convene M.P.O.'s of similar size, based on the size of population served, for the purpose of exchanging best practices. M.P.O.'s may ~~shall~~ develop committees or working groups as needed to accomplish such purpose. At the discretion of the department, training for new M.P.O. governing board members

shall be provided by the department, by an entity pursuant to a contract with the department, by the Florida Center for Urban Transportation Research, or by the Implementing Solutions from Transportation Research and Evaluation of Emerging Technologies (I-STREET) living lab ~~coordination mechanisms with one another to expand and improve transportation within the state. The appropriate method of coordination between M.P.O.'s shall vary depending upon the project involved and given local and regional needs. Consequently, it is appropriate to set forth a flexible methodology that can be used by M.P.O.'s to coordinate with other M.P.O.'s and appropriate political subdivisions as circumstances demand~~.

2. Any M.P.O. may join with any other M.P.O. or any individual political subdivision to coordinate activities or to achieve any federal or state transportation planning or development goals or purposes consistent with federal or state law. When an M.P.O. determines that it is appropriate to join with another M.P.O. or any political subdivision to coordinate activities, the M.P.O. or political subdivision shall enter into an interlocal agreement pursuant to s. 163.01, which, at a minimum, creates a separate legal or administrative entity to coordinate the transportation planning or development activities required to achieve the goal or purpose; provides the purpose for which the entity is created; provides the duration of the agreement and the entity and specifies how the agreement may be terminated, modified, or rescinded; describes the precise organization of the entity, including who has voting rights on the governing board, whether alternative voting members are provided for, how voting members are appointed, and what the

relative voting strength is for each constituent M.P.O. or political subdivision; provides the manner in which the parties to the agreement will provide for the financial support of the entity and payment of costs and expenses of the entity; provides the manner in which funds may be paid to and disbursed from the entity; and provides how members of the entity will resolve disagreements regarding interpretation of the interlocal agreement or disputes relating to the operation of the entity. Such interlocal agreement shall become effective upon its recordation in the official public records of each county in which a member of the entity created by the interlocal agreement has a voting member. Multiple M.P.O.'s may merge, combine, or otherwise join together as a single M.P.O.

(7) LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.—Each M.P.O. must develop a long-range transportation plan that addresses at least a 20-year planning horizon. The plan must include both long-range and short-range strategies and must comply with all other state and federal requirements. The prevailing principles to be considered in the long-range transportation plan are: preserving the existing transportation infrastructure; enhancing Florida's economic competitiveness; and improving travel choices to ensure mobility. The long-range transportation plan must be consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with future land use elements and the goals, objectives, and policies of the approved local government comprehensive plans of the units of local government located within the jurisdiction of the M.P.O. Each M.P.O. is encouraged to consider strategies that integrate transportation and land use planning to provide for sustainable development and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The approved long-range

transportation plan must be considered by local governments in the development of the transportation elements in local government comprehensive plans and any amendments thereto. The long-range transportation plan must, at a minimum:

(a) Identify transportation facilities, including, but not limited to, major roadways, airports, seaports, spaceports, commuter rail systems, transit systems, and intermodal or multimodal terminals that will function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system. The long-range transportation plan must give emphasis to those transportation facilities that serve national, statewide, or regional functions, and must consider the goals and objectives identified in the Florida Transportation Plan as provided in s. 339.155. If a project is located within the boundaries of more than one M.P.O., the M.P.O.'s must coordinate plans regarding the project in the long-range transportation plan. ~~Multiple M.P.O.'s within a contiguous urbanized area must coordinate the development of long-range transportation plans to be reviewed by the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council.~~

(b) Include a financial plan that demonstrates how the plan can be implemented, indicating resources from public and private sources which are reasonably expected to be available to carry out the plan, and recommends any additional financing strategies for needed projects and programs. The financial plan may include, for illustrative purposes, additional projects that would be included in the adopted long-range transportation plan if reasonable additional resources beyond those identified in the financial plan were available. For the purpose of developing the long-range transportation plan, the M.P.O. and the

department shall cooperatively develop estimates of funds that will be available to support the plan implementation. Innovative financing techniques may be used to fund needed projects and programs. Such techniques may include the assessment of tolls, public-private partnerships, the use of value capture financing, or the use of value pricing. Multiple M.P.O.'s within a contiguous urbanized area must ensure, to the maximum extent possible, the consistency of data used in the planning process.

(d) Indicate, as appropriate, proposed transportation enhancement activities, including, but not limited to, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, trails or facilities that are regionally significant or critical linkages for the Florida Shared-Use Nonmotorized Trail Network, scenic easements, landscaping, integration of advanced air mobility, and integration of autonomous and electric vehicles, electric bicycles, and motorized scooters used for freight, commuter, or micromobility purposes ~~historic preservation, mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff, and control of outdoor advertising~~.

In the development of its long-range transportation plan, each M.P.O. must provide the public, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the long-range transportation plan. The long-range transportation plan must be approved by the M.P.O.

(10) AGREEMENTS; ACCOUNTABILITY.—

(a) Each M.P.O. may execute a written agreement with the department, which shall be reviewed, and updated as necessary, every 5 years, which clearly establishes the cooperative relationship essential to accomplish the transportation planning requirements of state and federal law. Roles, responsibilities, and expectations for accomplishing consistency with federal and state requirements and priorities must be set forth in the agreement. In addition, the agreement must set forth the M.P.O.'s responsibility, in collaboration with the department, to identify, prioritize, and present to the department a complete list of multimodal transportation projects consistent with the needs of the metropolitan planning area. It is the department's responsibility to program projects in the state transportation improvement program.

(b) The department must establish, in collaboration with each M.P.O., quality performance metrics, such as safety, infrastructure condition, congestion relief, and mobility. Each M.P.O. must, as part of its long-range transportation plan, in direct coordination with the department, develop targets for each performance measure within the metropolitan planning area boundary. The performance targets must support efficient and safe movement of people and goods both within the metropolitan planning area and between regions. Each M.P.O. must report progress toward establishing performance targets for each measure annually in its transportation improvement plan. The department shall evaluate and post on its website whether each M.P.O. has made significant progress toward its target for the applicable reporting period.

~~(11) METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COUNCIL.~~

~~(a) A Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council is created to augment, and not supplant, the role of the individual M.P.O.'s in the cooperative transportation planning process described in this section.~~

~~(b) The council shall consist of one representative from each M.P.O. and shall elect a chairperson annually from its number. Each M.P.O. shall also elect an alternate representative from each M.P.O. to vote in the absence of the representative. Members of the council do not receive any compensation for their services, but may be reimbursed from funds made available to council members for travel and per diem expenses incurred in the performance of their council duties as provided in s. 112.061.~~

~~(c) The powers and duties of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council are to:~~

~~1. Establish bylaws by action of its governing board providing procedural rules to guide its proceedings and consideration of matters before the council, or, alternatively, adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement provisions of law conferring powers or duties upon it.~~

~~2. Assist M.P.O.'s in carrying out the urbanized area transportation planning process by serving as the principal forum for collective policy discussion pursuant to law.~~

~~3. Serve as a clearinghouse for review and comment by M.P.O.'s on the Florida Transportation Plan and on other issues required to comply with federal or state law in carrying out the urbanized area transportation and systematic planning processes instituted pursuant to s. 339.155. The council must also report annually to the Florida Transportation Commission on the~~

~~alignment of M.P.O. long-range transportation plans with the Florida Transportation Plan.~~

~~4. Employ an executive director and such other staff as necessary to perform adequately the functions of the council, within budgetary limitations. The executive director and staff are exempt from part II of chapter 110 and serve at the direction and control of the council. The council is assigned to the Office of the Secretary of the Department of Transportation for fiscal and accountability purposes, but it shall otherwise function independently of the control and direction of the department.~~

~~5. Deliver training on federal and state program requirements and procedures to M.P.O. board members and M.P.O. staff.~~

~~6. Adopt an agency strategic plan that prioritizes steps the agency will take to carry out its mission within the context of the state comprehensive plan and any other statutory mandates and directives.~~

~~(d) The Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council may enter into contracts in accordance with chapter 287 to support the activities described in paragraph (c). Lobbying and the acceptance of funds, grants, assistance, gifts, or bequests from private, local, state, or federal sources are prohibited.~~

Section 20. Subsection (4) of section 339.65, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

339.65 Strategic Intermodal System highway corridors.—

(4) The department shall develop and maintain a plan of Strategic Intermodal System highway corridor projects that are anticipated to be let to contract for construction within a time

period of at least 20 years. The department shall prioritize projects affecting gaps in a corridor so that the corridor becomes contiguous in its functional characteristics across the corridor. The plan must ~~shall~~ also identify when segments of the corridor will meet the standards and criteria developed pursuant to subsection (5).

Section 21. Subsection (5) of section 125.42, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

125.42 Water, sewage, gas, power, telephone, other utility, and television lines within the right-of-way limits of county roads and highways.—

(5) In the event of widening, repair, or reconstruction of any such road, the licensee shall move or remove such water, sewage, gas, power, telephone, and other utility lines and television lines at no cost to the county should they be found by the county to be unreasonably interfering, except as provided in s. 337.403(1)(e)-(k) ~~s. 337.403(1)(d)-(j)~~.

Section 22. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 202.20, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

202.20 Local communications services tax conversion rates.—

(2)

(b) Except as otherwise provided in this subsection, "replaced revenue sources," as used in this section, means the following taxes, charges, fees, or other impositions to the extent that the respective local taxing jurisdictions were authorized to impose them prior to July 1, 2000.

1. With respect to municipalities and charter counties and the taxes authorized by s. 202.19(1):

a. The public service tax on telecommunications authorized

by former s. 166.231(9).

b. Franchise fees on cable service providers as authorized by 47 U.S.C. s. 542.

c. The public service tax on prepaid calling arrangements.

d. Franchise fees on dealers of communications services which use the public roads or rights-of-way, up to the limit set forth in s. 337.401. For purposes of calculating rates under this section, it is the legislative intent that charter counties be treated as having had the same authority as municipalities to impose franchise fees on recurring local telecommunication service revenues prior to July 1, 2000. However, the Legislature recognizes that the authority of charter counties to impose such fees is in dispute, and the treatment provided in this section is not an expression of legislative intent that charter counties actually do or do not possess such authority.

e. Actual permit fees relating to placing or maintaining facilities in or on public roads or rights-of-way, collected from providers of long-distance, cable, and mobile communications services for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999; however, if a municipality or charter county elects the option to charge permit fees pursuant to s. 337.401(4)(c) ~~s. 337.401(3)(c)~~, such fees shall not be included as a replaced revenue source.

2. With respect to all other counties and the taxes authorized in s. 202.19(1), franchise fees on cable service providers as authorized by 47 U.S.C. s. 542.

Section 23. Paragraph (e) of subsection (2) of section 331.310, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

331.310 Powers and duties of the board of directors.—

(2) The board of directors shall:

(e) Prepare an annual report of operations as a supplement to the annual report required under s. 331.3051(15) ~~s. 331.3051(16)~~. The report must include, but not be limited to, a balance sheet, an income statement, a statement of changes in financial position, a reconciliation of changes in equity accounts, a summary of significant accounting principles, the auditor's report, a summary of the status of existing and proposed bonding projects, comments from management about the year's business, and prospects for the next year.

Section 24. Section 610.106, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

610.106 Franchise fees prohibited.—Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the department may not impose any taxes, fees, charges, or other impositions on a cable or video service provider as a condition for the issuance of a state-issued certificate of franchise authority. No municipality or county may impose any taxes, fees, charges, or other exactions on certificateholders in connection with use of public right-of-way as a condition of a certificateholder doing business in the municipality or county, or otherwise, except such taxes, fees, charges, or other exactions permitted by chapter 202, s. 337.401(7) ~~s. 337.401(6)~~, or s. 610.117.

Section 25. For the purpose of incorporating the amendment made by this act to section 332.004, Florida Statutes, in a reference thereto, subsection (1) of section 332.115, Florida Statutes, is reenacted to read:

332.115 Joint project agreement with port district for transportation corridor between airport and port facility.—

(1) An eligible agency may acquire, construct, and operate all equipment, appurtenances, and land necessary to establish, maintain, and operate, or to license others to establish, maintain, operate, or use, a transportation corridor connecting an airport operated by such eligible agency with a port facility, which corridor must be acquired, constructed, and used for the transportation of persons between the airport and the port facility, for the transportation of cargo, and for the location and operation of lines for the transmission of water, electricity, communications, information, petroleum products, products of a public utility (including new technologies of a public utility nature), and materials. However, any such corridor may be established and operated only pursuant to a joint project agreement between an eligible agency as defined in s. 332.004 and a port district as defined in s. 315.02, and such agreement must be approved by the Department of Transportation and the Department of Commerce. Before the Department of Transportation approves the joint project agreement, that department must review the public purpose and necessity for the corridor pursuant to s. 337.273(5) and must also determine that the proposed corridor is consistent with the Florida Transportation Plan. Before the Department of Commerce approves the joint project agreement, that department must determine that the proposed corridor is consistent with the applicable local government comprehensive plans. An affected local government may provide its comments regarding the consistency of the proposed corridor with its comprehensive plan to the Department of Commerce.

Section 26. (1) The Legislature finds that the widening of

Interstate 4, from U.S. 27 in Polk County to Interstate 75 in Hillsborough County, is in the public interest and the strategic interest of the region to improve the movement of people and goods.

(2) The Department of Transportation shall develop a report on widening Interstate 4, from U.S. 27 in Polk County to Interstate 75 in Hillsborough County, as efficiently as possible which includes, but is not limited to, detailed cost projections and schedules for project development and environment studies, design, acquisition of rights-of-way, and construction. The report must identify funding shortfalls and provide strategies to address such shortfalls, including, but not limited to, the use of express lane toll revenues generated on the Interstate 4 corridor and available department funds for public-private partnerships. The Department of Transportation shall submit the report by December 31, 2025, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Section 27. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.