

NEWS RELEASE

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GOVERNOR SIGNS LEGISLATION CREATING TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

TAMPA BAY, FL (July 28, 2007) – Governor Charlie Crist today signed into law legislation which creates the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA.)

The Authority is established to improve mobility and expand multimodal transportation options for passengers and freight within the seven-county region. The legislation creating the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority comprises the counties of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas and Sarasota.

TBARTA will have responsibility to plan, develop, finance, build and operate regional transportation facilities. Up until the bill becoming law, there had not been an existing organization in place in the Tampa Bay region capable of accomplishing this mission.

“The signing of this legislation marks a significant milestone for the mobility of our region,” said Representative Bill Galvano, Chair of the Bay Area Legislative Delegation (BALD). “The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority is the vehicle we have needed to take action and positively change the future of our region.”

“Our citizens want and need transportation choices,” said Senator Mike Fasano who serves as the BALD Vice Chair. “Since our dynamic, multi-county region is increasingly one interconnected market for commuters, businesses, freight-haulers, and tourists, a regional approach to transportation make imminent sense.”

“The Governor and our local legislators worked tirelessly to make this important first step towards regional connectivity in Tampa Bay a reality today, and they deserve our thanks and praise,” said Dr. Judy Genshaft, President of the University of South Florida and Chair of the Tampa Bay Partnership. “Transportation is the number one priority of the Tampa Bay Partnership and TBARTA will be crucial for the future economic well being of our region.”

Dr. Genshaft added, “Together we got it done. The way the business community and the Bay Area Legislative Delegation united in their commitment for an integrated multimodal transportation system focused on transit was truly amazing.”

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Florida Department of Transportation District 7 and District 1 have pledged to provide staff support to TBARTA through creation of the legislatively mandated “Regional Multimodal Master Plan” in concert with the “Interstate of Transit” project. FDOT District 7, in conjunction with FDOT District 1, conducted a strategic regional transit needs assessment, now referred to as the ongoing “Interstate of Transit” Plan initiative. When both plans are combined, the product created will provide an actionable vision of the region’s future transit development scenarios with a high-level overview of potential intermodal transit projects and multimodal corridors.

About the Bay Area Legislative Delegation

The Bay Area Legislative Delegation is comprised of state legislators representing the Tampa Bay region from districts in the counties of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota. The success of formalizing the Bay Area Legislative Delegation, which represents 25 percent of the Florida legislature, has created a mechanism to harness the region’s collective clout around issues of regional significance.

About Tampa Bay Partnership:

The Tampa Bay Partnership is the regional organization that brings the communities of Tampa Bay together to accelerate life’s possibilities through advocacy, marketing, research and leadership. Founded in 1994, the Tampa Bay Partnership provides regional economic development for the metro areas of Tampa/St. Petersburg/Clearwater, Lakeland, and Sarasota/Bradenton/Venice and the counties of Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota.

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