

Record Level \$2.5 Million in TBARTA Funding Approved to Advance Regional Transit in Tampa Bay

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TAMPA, Fla. (June 26) – Florida’s new fiscal year budget includes a record \$2.5 million in funding for TBARTA, the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority. In signing the state budget, Governor Ron DeSantis approved increased spending on regional transit initiatives in Tampa Bay, including \$1 million specifically on advanced transit technologies.

“We thank the governor, state legislators, and all of TBARTA’s many proponents for their faith in our work and their support for regional transit in Tampa Bay,” said David Green, TBARTA’s Executive Director. “Our rapidly growing population is further proof that Tampa Bay needs, wants, and is ready for world-class transit that improves economic vitality and better connects residents, workers, and visitors.”

The record level of nonrecurring funds for TBARTA includes \$1.5 million for agency operations and administration and an additional \$1 million to study and develop transit innovations. Those new technologies include smart city innovations, autonomous vehicles, multimodal transportation, hyperloop technology and zero-emissions transit, among others.

“I am excited to have had the opportunity to secure \$2.5 million in funding for TBARTA this session,” said Florida State Representative Jackie Toledo, R-Tampa. “This appropriation will allow TBARTA to move the agency and our region forward, hire the appropriate staff needed to execute their mission as set forth by the Florida Legislature and to invest the resources into innovative transit projects.”

“The extra funding to study new technologies is unprecedented and especially exciting,” Green said. “It allows us not only to consider cutting-edge solutions for Tampa Bay’s transit needs, but to do so with high priority on sustainable public transit. TBARTA is committed to efficient, affordable, and environmentally-friendly transit that keeps our economy vibrant and our community healthy.”

The funding comes at a busy time for the authority. In 2017, the Florida legislature installed TBARTA as Tampa Bay’s regional transit facilitator serving Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas counties. The state also required TBARTA develop a 10-year transit strategy. That project, branded Envision 2030, is now underway. Envision 2030 will culminate with a Regional Transit Development Plan (RTDP) covering 2021-2030 that will be delivered to the Florida Department of Transportation next year.

TBARTA is also in the project development and environmental study phase of a 41-mile bus rapid transit project connecting Wesley Chapel, the University of South Florida, downtown Tampa and St. Petersburg. TBARTA is now coordinating with stakeholders and the public on design alternatives, studying their social, environmental and economic impacts, and developing recommendations for a potential capital investment grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

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The Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) works to advance regional transportation needs in Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas counties. Our purpose is to plan, develop, fund, implement, and operate a world-class regional transit system in Tampa Bay. For more information, visit www.TBARTA.com.