

2017 Florida Statutes
Title XXVI
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
CHAPTER 343
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION
PART V
TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL
TRANSIT AUTHORITY

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343.90 Short title.—This part may be cited as the “Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority Act.”

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 2, ch. 2017-98.

343.91 Definitions.—

(1) As used in this part, the term:

(a) “Authority” means the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority, the body politic and corporate and agency of the state created by this part, covering Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties and any other contiguous county that is party to an agreement of participation.

(b) “Board” means the governing body of the authority.

(c) “Bonds” means the notes, bonds, refunding bonds, or other evidences of indebtedness or obligations, in either temporary or definitive form, which the authority is authorized to issue under this part.

(d)1. “Bus rapid transit” means a type of limited-stop bus service that relies on technology to help expedite service through priority for transit, rapid and convenient fare collection, and integration with land use to substantially upgrade performance of buses operating on exclusive, high-occupancy-vehicle lanes, expressways, or ordinary streets.

2. “Express bus” means a type of bus service designed to expedite longer trips, especially in major metropolitan areas during heavily patronized peak commuting hours, by operating over long distances without stopping on freeways or partially controlled access roadway facilities.

(e)1. “Commuter rail” means a complete system of tracks, guideways, stations, and rolling stock necessary to effectuate medium-distance to long-distance passenger rail service to, from, or within the municipalities within the authority’s designated region.

2. “Heavy rail transit” means a complete rail system operating on an electric railway with the capacity for a heavy volume of traffic, characterized by high-speed and rapid-

acceleration passenger rail cars operating singly or in multicar trains on fixed rails in separate rights-of-way from which all other vehicular and pedestrian traffic are excluded. "Heavy rail transit" includes metro, subway, elevated, rapid transit, and rapid rail systems.

3. "Light rail transit" means a complete system of tracks, overhead catenaries, stations, and platforms with lightweight passenger rail cars operating singly or in short, multicar trains on fixed rails in rights-of-way that are not separated from other traffic for much of the way.

(f) "Consultation" means that one party confers with another identified party in accordance with an established process and, prior to taking action, considers that party's views and periodically informs that party about actions taken.

(g) "Department" means the Florida Department of Transportation.

(h) "Limited access expressway" or "expressway" means a street or highway especially designed for through traffic and over, from, or to which a person does not have the right of easement, use, or access except in accordance with the rules adopted and established by the authority for the use of such facility.

(i) "Members" means the individuals constituting the governing body of the authority.

(j) "Multimodal transportation system" means a well-connected network of transportation modes reflecting a high level of accessibility between modes and proximity to supportive land use patterns.

(k) "Park-and-ride lot" means a transit station stop or a carpool or vanpool waiting area to which patrons may drive private vehicles for parking before gaining access to transit, commuter rail, or heavy rail systems or taking carpool or vanpool vehicles to their destinations.

(l) "State Board of Administration" means the body corporate existing under the provisions of s. 4, Art. IV of the State Constitution, or any successor thereto.

(m) "Transit-oriented development" means a mixed-use residential or commercial area designed to maximize access to public transportation and often incorporates features to encourage transit ridership. A transit-oriented development neighborhood typically has a center with a train station, tram stop, or bus station surrounded by relatively high-density development with progressively lower-density development spreading outward from the center, typically within 1/2 mile of the stop or station.

(n) "Transit station" means a public transportation passenger facility that is accessible either at street level or on above-grade platforms and often surrounded by pedestrian-friendly, higher-density development or park-and-ride lots.

(2) Terms importing singular number include the plural number in each case and vice versa, and terms importing persons include firms and corporations.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 8, ch. 2011-64; s. 54, ch. 2013-15; s. 3, ch. 2017-98. 343.92 Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority.—

(1) There is created and established a body politic and corporate, an agency of the state, to be known as the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority.

(2) The governing board of the authority shall consist of 13 voting members appointed no later than 45 days after the creation of the authority.

(a) The secretary of the department shall appoint two advisors to the board who must be the district secretary for each of the department districts within the designated area of the authority.

(b) The 13 voting members of the board shall be as follows:

1. The county commissions of Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties shall each appoint one county commissioner to the board. Members appointed under this subparagraph shall serve 2-year terms with not more than three consecutive terms being served by any person. If a member under this subparagraph leaves elected office, a vacancy exists on the board to be filled as provided in this subparagraph within 90 days.

2. Two members of the board shall be the mayor of the largest municipality within the service area of each of the following independent transit agencies or their legislatively created successor agencies: Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority and Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority. The largest municipality is that municipality with the largest population as determined by the most recent United States Decennial Census.
3. The following independent transit agencies or their legislatively created successor agencies shall each appoint from the membership of their governing bodies one member to the board: Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority and Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority. Each member appointed under this subparagraph shall serve a 2-year term with not more than three consecutive terms being served by any person. If a member no longer meets the transit authority's criteria for appointment, a vacancy exists on the board, which must be filled as provided in this subparagraph within 90 days.
4. The Governor shall appoint to the board four members from the regional business community, each of whom must reside in one of the counties governed by the authority and may not be an elected official. Of the members initially appointed under this subparagraph, one shall serve a 1-year term, two shall serve 2-year terms, and one shall serve a term as the initial chair as provided in subsection (5). Thereafter, a member appointed under this subparagraph shall serve a 2-year term with not more than three consecutive terms being served by any person.

Appointments may be staggered to avoid mass turnover at the end of any 2-year or 4-year period. A vacancy during a term shall be filled within 90 days in the same manner as the original appointment for the remainder of the unexpired term.

- (3) The members of the board shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to receive from the authority reimbursement for travel expenses and per diem actually incurred in connection with the business of the authority as provided in s. 112.061.
- (4) Members of the board shall comply with the applicable financial disclosure requirements of ss. 112.3145, 112.3148, and 112.3149.
- (5) The Governor shall appoint one of the four members appointed under subparagraph (2)(b)4. as the initial chair of the board immediately upon their appointment. The initial chair shall serve a minimum term of 2 years. The board shall elect a vice chair and secretary-treasurer from among its members who shall serve a minimum term of 1 year and shall establish the duties and powers of those positions during its inaugural meeting. During its inaugural meeting, the board shall also establish its rules of conduct and meeting procedures.
- (6) At the end of the initial chair's term, the board shall elect a chair from among the members. The chair shall hold office at the will of the board. In that election, the board shall also elect a vice chair and secretary-treasurer.
- (7) The first meeting of the authority shall be held no later than 60 days after the creation of the authority.
- (8) Seven members of the board shall constitute a quorum, and the vote of seven members is necessary for any action to be taken by the authority. The authority may meet upon the constitution of a quorum. A vacancy does not impair the right of a quorum of the board to exercise all rights and the ability to perform all duties of the authority.
- (9) Beginning July 1, 2017, the board must evaluate the abolishment, continuance, modification, or establishment of the following committees:
 - (a) Planning committee.
 - (b) Policy committee.
 - (c) Finance committee.
 - (d) Citizens advisory committee.
 - (e) Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority Metropolitan Planning Organization Chairs Coordinating Committee.

- (f) Transit management committee.
- (g) Technical advisory committee.

The board must submit its recommendations for abolishment, continuance, modification, or establishment of the committees to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives before the beginning of the 2018 Regular Session.

(10) The authority may employ an executive director, an executive secretary, its own legal counsel and legal staff, technical experts, engineers, and such employees, permanent or temporary, as it may require. The authority shall determine the qualifications and fix the compensation of such persons, firms, or corporations and may employ a fiscal agent or agents; however, the authority shall solicit sealed proposals from at least three persons, firms, or corporations for the performance of any services as fiscal agents. The authority may, except for duties specified in chapter 120, delegate its power to one or more of its agents or employees to carry out the purposes of this part, subject always to the supervision and control of the authority.

(11) Persons appointed to a committee shall serve without compensation but may be entitled to per diem or travel expenses as provided in s. 112.061.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 71, ch. 2008-4; s. 49, ch. 2016-239; s. 4, ch. 2017-98. 343.922 Powers and duties.—

(1) The express purposes of the authority are to:

(a) Plan, implement, and operate mobility improvements and expansions of multimodal transportation options for passengers and freight throughout the designated region.

(b) Produce a regional transit development plan, integrating the transit development plans of participant counties, to include a prioritization of regionally significant transit projects and facilities.

1. The authority shall provide to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, on or before the beginning of the 2018 Regular Session, a plan to produce the regional transit development plan.

2. The regional transit development plan prepared by the authority must adhere to guidance and regulations set forth by the department or any successor agency, including, but not limited to:

- a. Public involvement;
- b. Collection and analysis of socioeconomic data;
- c. Performance evaluation of existing services;
- d. Service design and ridership forecasting; and
- e. Financial planning.

(c) Serve, with the consent of the Governor or his or her designee, as the recipient of federal funds supporting an intercounty project or an intracounty capital project that represents a phase of an intercounty project that exists in a single county within the designated region.

(2)(a) The authority has the right to plan, develop, finance, construct, own, purchase, operate, maintain, relocate, equip, repair, and manage those public transportation projects, such as express bus services; bus rapid transit services; light rail, commuter rail, heavy rail, or other transit services; ferry services; transit stations; park-and-ride lots; transit-oriented development nodes; or feeder roads, reliever roads, connector roads, bypasses, or appurtenant facilities, that are intended to address critical transportation needs or concerns in the region as identified by the authority. These projects may also include all necessary approaches, roads, bridges, and avenues of access that are desirable and proper with the concurrence of the department, as applicable, if the project is to be part of the State Highway System.

(b) Any transportation facilities constructed by the authority may be tolled. Fare payment methods for public transportation projects shall promote seamless integration between

regional and local transit systems. Tolling technologies shall be consistent with the systems used by the Florida Turnpike Enterprise for the purpose of allowing the use of a single transponder or a similar electronic tolling device for all facilities of the authority and the Florida Turnpike Enterprise.

(c) The authority shall coordinate and consult with local governments on transit or commuter rail station area plans that provide for compact, mixed-use, transit-oriented development that will support transit investments and provide a variety of workforce housing choices, recognizing the need for housing alternatives for a variety of income ranges.

(3)(a) The authority shall develop and adopt a regional transit development plan that provides a vision for a regionally integrated transportation system. The goals and objectives of the plan are to identify areas of the region where mobility, traffic safety, freight mobility, and efficient emergency evacuation alternatives need to be improved; identify areas of the region where multimodal transportation systems would be most beneficial to enhance mobility and economic development; develop methods of building partnerships with local governments, existing transit providers, expressway authorities, seaports, airports, and other local, state, and federal entities; develop methods of building partnerships with CSX Corporation and CSX Transportation, Inc., to craft mutually beneficial solutions to achieve the authority's objectives, and with other private sector business community entities that may further the authority's mission, and engage the public in support of regional multimodal transportation improvements. The plan shall identify and may prioritize projects that will accomplish these goals and objectives, including, without limitation, the creation of express bus and bus rapid transit services, light rail, commuter rail, and heavy rail transit services, ferry services, freight services, and any other multimodal transportation system projects that address critical transportation needs or concerns, pursuant to subsection (2); and identify the costs of the proposed projects and revenue sources that could be used to pay those costs. In developing the plan, the authority shall review and coordinate with the future land use, capital improvements, and traffic circulation elements of its member local governments' comprehensive plans and the plans, programs, and schedules of other units of government having transit or transportation authority within whose jurisdictions the projects or improvements will be located to define and resolve potential inconsistencies between such plans and the authority's developing plan.

(b) The authority shall consult with the department to further the goals and objectives of the Strategic Regional Transit Needs Assessment completed by the department.

(c) Before the adoption of the regional transit development plan, the authority shall hold at least one public meeting in each of the counties within the designated region. At least one public hearing must be held before the authority's board.

(d) After its adoption, the regional transit development plan shall be updated every 5 years before July 1.

(e) The authority shall present the original regional transit development plan and updates to the governing bodies of the counties within the designated region, to the TBARTA Metropolitan Planning Organization Chairs Coordinating Committee, and to the legislative delegation members representing those counties within 90 days after adoption.

(f) The authority shall coordinate plans and projects with the TBARTA Metropolitan Planning Organization Chairs Coordinating Committee, to the extent practicable, and participate in the regional M.P.O. planning process to ensure regional comprehension of the authority's mission, goals, and objectives.

(g) The authority shall provide administrative support and direction to the TBARTA Metropolitan Planning Organization Chairs Coordinating Committee as provided in s. 339.175(6)(i).

(4) The authority may undertake projects or other improvements in the regional transit development plan in phases as particular projects or segments become feasible, as determined by the authority. The authority shall coordinate project planning, development,

and implementation with the applicable local governments. The authority's projects that are transportation oriented must be consistent to the maximum extent feasible with the adopted local government comprehensive plans at the time such projects are funded for construction. Authority projects that are not transportation oriented and meet the definition of development pursuant to s. 380.04 must be consistent with the local comprehensive plans. In carrying out its purposes and powers, the authority may request funding and technical assistance from the department and appropriate federal and local agencies, including, but not limited to, state infrastructure bank loans.

(5) The authority is granted and may exercise all powers necessary, appurtenant, convenient, or incidental to the carrying out of the aforesaid purposes, including, but not limited to, the following rights and powers:

(a) To sue and be sued, implead and be impleaded, and complain and defend in all courts in its own name.

(b) To adopt and use a corporate seal.

(c) To have the power of eminent domain, including the procedural powers granted under chapters 73 and 74.

(d) To acquire by donation or otherwise, purchase, hold, construct, maintain, improve, operate, own, lease as a lessee, and use any franchise or property, real, personal, or mixed, tangible or intangible, or any option thereof in its own name or in conjunction with others, or any interest therein, necessary or desirable for carrying out the purposes of the authority.

(e) To sell, convey, exchange, lease as a lessor, transfer, or otherwise dispose of any real or personal property, or interest therein, acquired by the authority, including air rights.

(f) To fix, alter, establish, and collect rates, fares, fees, rentals, tolls, and other charges for the services and use of any light rail, commuter rail, heavy rail, bus rapid transit, or express bus services, ferry services, highways, feeder roads, bridges, or other transportation facilities owned or operated by the authority. These rates, fares, fees, rentals, tolls, and other charges shall always be sufficient to comply with any covenants made with the holders of any bonds issued pursuant to this part; however, such right and power may be assigned or delegated by the authority to the department.

(g) To borrow money and to make and issue negotiable notes, bonds, refunding bonds, and other evidences of indebtedness or obligations, either in temporary or definitive form, hereinafter in this chapter sometimes called "revenue bonds" of the authority, for the purpose of financing all or part of the mobility improvements within the region, as well as the appurtenant facilities, including all approaches, streets, roads, bridges, and avenues of access authorized by this part, the bonds to mature not exceeding 40 years after the date of the issuance thereof, and to secure the payment of such bonds or any part thereof by a pledge of any or all of its revenues, rates, fees, rentals, or other charges.

(h) To adopt bylaws for the regulation of the affairs and the conduct of the business of the authority. The bylaws shall provide for quorum and voting requirements, maintenance of minutes and other official records, and preparation and adoption of an annual budget.

(i) To lease, rent, or contract for the operation or management of any part of a transportation system facility built by the authority. In awarding any contract, the authority shall consider, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The qualifications of each applicant.
2. The level or quality of service.
3. The efficiency, cost, and anticipated revenue.
4. The construction, operation, and management plan.
5. The financial ability to provide reliable service.
6. The impact on other transportation modes, including the ability to interface with other transportation modes and facilities.

(j) To enforce collection of rates, fees, tolls, and charges and to establish and enforce fines and penalties for violations of any rules.

- (k) To advertise, market, and promote regional transit services and facilities, freight mobility plans and projects, and the general activities of the authority.
- (l) To cooperate with other governmental entities and to contract with other governmental agencies, including the Federal Government, the department, counties, transit authorities or agencies, municipalities, and expressway and bridge authorities.
- (m) To enter into joint development agreements, partnerships, and other agreements with public and private entities respecting ownership and revenue participation in order to facilitate financing and constructing any project or portions thereof.
- (n) To accept grants and other funds from other governmental sources and to accept private donations. However, the authority shall not be directly eligible for Transportation Regional Incentive Program funds allocated pursuant to s. 339.2819, except through interlocal agreement with an eligible recipient.
- (o) To purchase directly from local, national, or international insurance companies liability insurance that the authority is contractually and legally obligated to provide, notwithstanding the requirements of s. 287.022(1).
- (p) To enter into and make lease-purchase agreements with the department for terms not exceeding 40 years or until any bonds secured by a pledge of rentals thereunder, and any refundings thereof, are fully paid as to both principal and interest, whichever is longer.
- (q) To make contracts of every name and nature, including, but not limited to, partnerships providing for participation in ownership and revenues, and to execute all instruments necessary or convenient for the carrying on of its business.
- (r) To do all acts and things necessary or convenient for the conduct of its business and the general welfare of the authority in order to carry out the powers granted to it by this part or any other law.
- (6) The authority shall institute procedures to ensure that jobs created as a result of state funding pursuant to this section shall be subject to equal opportunity hiring practices as provided for in s. 110.112.
- (7) The authority shall comply with all statutory requirements of general application which relate to the filing of any report or documentation required by law, including the requirements of ss. 189.015, 189.016, 189.051, and 189.08.
- (8) The authority does not have power at any time or in any manner to pledge the credit or taxing power of the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof, nor shall any of the authority's obligations be deemed to be obligations of the state or of any political subdivision or agency thereof, nor shall the state or any political subdivision or agency thereof, except the authority, be liable for the payment of the principal of or interest on such obligations.
- (9)(a) An action by the authority regarding state funding of commuter rail, heavy rail transit, or light rail transit, as defined in s. 343.91, or any combination thereof, requires approval by a majority vote of each M.P.O. serving the county or counties where such rail transit investment will be made, and the approval by an act of the Legislature.
- (b) Subject to the requirements of s. 106.113, the authority may not engage in any advocacy regarding a referendum, ordinance, legislation, or proposal under consideration by any governmental entity or the Legislature which seeks to approve the funding of commuter rail, heavy rail transit, or light rail transit, as defined in s. 343.91, or any combination thereof.
- (10) The authority must conduct a feasibility study, through an independent third party, for any project of commuter rail, heavy rail transit, or light rail transit, as defined in s. 343.91, or any combination thereof, before proceeding with the development of the project and before any related contract is issued. The feasibility study shall be submitted, upon completion, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the boards of county commissioners of Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas Counties.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 83, ch. 2014-22; s. 21, ch. 2014-223; s. 50, ch. 2016-239; s. 5, ch. 2017-98.

343.94 Bond financing authority.—

(1) Pursuant to s. 11(f), Art. VII of the State Constitution, the Legislature approves bond financing by the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority for construction of or improvements to commuter rail systems, transit systems, ferry systems, highways, bridges, toll collection facilities, interchanges to the system, and any other transportation facility appurtenant, necessary, or incidental to the system. Subject to terms and conditions of applicable revenue bond resolutions and covenants, such costs may be financed in whole or in part by revenue bonds issued pursuant to paragraph (2)(a) or paragraph (2)(b), whether currently issued or issued in the future or by a combination of such bonds.

(2)(a) Bonds may be issued on behalf of the authority pursuant to the State Bond Act.

(b) Alternatively, the authority may issue its own bonds pursuant to this part at such times and in such principal amount as, in the opinion of the authority, is necessary to provide sufficient moneys for achieving its purposes; however, such bonds may not pledge the full faith and credit of the state. Bonds issued by the authority pursuant to this paragraph or paragraph (a), whether on original issuance or on refunding, shall be authorized by resolution of the members thereof, may be either term or serial bonds, and shall bear such date or dates, mature at such time or times, not exceeding 40 years after their respective dates, bear interest at such rate or rates, be payable semiannually, be in such denominations, be in such form, either coupon or fully registered, carry such registration, exchangeability, and interchangeability privileges, be payable in such medium of payment and at such place or places, be subject to such terms of redemption, and be entitled to such priorities on the revenues, rates, fees, rentals, or other charges or receipts of the authority, including revenues from lease-purchase agreements, as such resolution or any resolution subsequent thereto may provide. The bonds shall be executed either by manual or facsimile signature by such officers as the authority shall determine; however, such bonds shall bear at least one signature that is manually executed thereon, and the coupons attached to such bonds shall bear the facsimile signature or signatures of such officer or officers as shall be designated by the authority and have the seal of the authority affixed, imprinted, reproduced, or lithographed thereon, all as may be prescribed in such resolution or resolutions.

(c) Bonds issued pursuant to paragraph (a) or paragraph (b) shall be sold at public sale in the manner provided by the State Bond Act. However, if the authority, by official action at a public meeting, determines that a negotiated sale of such bonds is in the best interest of the authority, the authority may negotiate the sale of such bonds with the underwriter designated by the authority and the Division of Bond Finance within the State Board of Administration with respect to bonds issued pursuant to paragraph (a) or solely by the authority with respect to bonds issued pursuant to paragraph (b). The authority's determination to negotiate the sale of such bonds may be based, in part, upon the written advice of the authority's financial adviser. Pending the preparation of definitive bonds, interim certificates may be issued to the purchaser or purchasers of such bonds and may contain such terms and conditions as the authority may determine.

(d) The authority may issue bonds pursuant to paragraph (b) to refund any bonds previously issued regardless of whether the bonds being refunded were issued by the authority pursuant to this chapter or on behalf of the authority pursuant to the State Bond Act.

(3) Any such resolution or resolutions authorizing any bonds hereunder may contain provisions that are part of the contract with the holders of such bonds, as to:

(a) The pledging of all or any part of the revenues, fares, rates, fees, rentals, or other charges or receipts of the authority, derived by the authority.

- (b) The completion, improvement, operation, extension, maintenance, repair, or lease of the system and the duties of the authority and others, including the department, with reference thereto.
 - (c) Limitations on the purposes to which the proceeds of the bonds, then or thereafter to be issued, or of any loan or grant by the United States or the state may be applied.
 - (d) The fixing, charging, establishing, and collecting of rates, fees, rentals, or other charges for use of the services and facilities constructed by the authority.
 - (e) The setting aside of reserves or sinking funds or repair and replacement funds and the regulation and disposition thereof.
 - (f) Limitations on the issuance of additional bonds.
 - (g) The terms and provisions of any lease-purchase agreement, deed of trust, or indenture securing the bonds or under which the same may be issued.
 - (h) Any other or additional agreements with the holders of the bonds which the authority may deem desirable and proper.
- (4) The authority may employ fiscal agents as provided by this part or the State Board of Administration may, upon request of the authority, act as fiscal agent for the authority in the issuance of any bonds that are issued pursuant to this part, and the State Board of Administration may, upon request of the authority, take over the management, control, administration, custody, and payment of any or all debt services or funds or assets now or hereafter available for any bonds issued pursuant to this part. The authority may enter into any deeds of trust, indentures, or other agreements with its fiscal agent, or with any bank or trust company within or without the state, as security for such bonds and may, under such agreements, sign and pledge all or any of the revenues, rates, fees, rentals, or other charges or receipts of the authority. Such deed of trust, indenture, or other agreement may contain such provisions as are customary in such instruments or as the authority authorizes, including, but without limitation, provisions as to:
- (a) The completion, improvement, operation, extension, maintenance, repair, and lease of highway, bridge, and related transportation facilities and appurtenances and the duties of the authority and others with reference thereto.
 - (b) The application of funds and the safeguarding of funds on hand or on deposit.
 - (c) The rights and remedies of the trustee and the holders of the bonds.
 - (d) The terms and provisions of the bonds or the resolutions authorizing the issuance of the bonds.
- (5) Any of the bonds issued pursuant to this part are, and are hereby declared to be, negotiable instruments and have all the qualities and incidents of negotiable instruments under the law merchant and the negotiable instruments law of the state.
- (6) Notwithstanding any of the provisions of this part, each project, building, or facility that has been financed by the issuance of bonds or other evidence of indebtedness under this part and any refinancing thereof are hereby approved as provided for in s. 11(f), Art. VII of the State Constitution.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 9, ch. 2011-64; s. 6, ch. 2017-98.

343.941 Bonds not debts or pledges of faith and credit of state.—Revenue bonds issued under the provisions of this part are not debts of the state or pledges of the faith and credit of the state. Such bonds are payable exclusively from revenues pledged for their payment. Each such bond shall contain a statement on its face that the state is not obligated to pay the same or the interest thereon, except from the revenues pledged for its payment, and that the faith and credit of the state is not pledged to the payment of the principal or interest of such bond. The issuance of revenue bonds under the provisions of this part does not directly, indirectly, or contingently obligate the state to levy or to pledge any form of taxation whatsoever, or to make any appropriation for their payment. No state funds shall be used to pay the principal or interest of any bonds issued to finance or refinance any portion of the authority's transportation projects, and each such bond shall contain a statement on its face to this effect.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254.

343.943 Covenant of the state.—The state does hereby pledge to, and agrees with, any person, firm, or corporation or federal or state agency subscribing to or acquiring the bonds to be issued by the authority for the purposes of this part that the state will not limit or alter the rights hereby vested in the authority and the department until all bonds at any time issued, together with the interest thereon, are fully paid and discharged insofar as the same affects the rights of the holders of bonds issued hereunder. The state does further pledge to, and agree with, the United States that, if any federal agency constructs or contributes any funds for the completion, extension, or improvement of the system or any part or portion thereof, the state will not alter or limit the rights and powers of the authority and the department in any manner which would be inconsistent with the continued maintenance and operation of the system or the completion, extension, or improvement thereof or which would be inconsistent with the due performance of any agreements between the authority and any such federal agency. The authority and the department shall continue to have and may exercise all powers herein granted so long as necessary or desirable for the carrying out of the purposes of this part and the purposes of the United States in the completion, extension, or improvement of the system or any part or portion thereof.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254.

343.944 Remedies of the bondholders.—

(1) The rights and the remedies in this section conferred upon or granted to the bondholders are in addition to and not in limitation of any rights and remedies lawfully granted to such bondholders by the resolution or resolutions providing for the issuance of bonds or by a deed of trust, indenture, or other agreement under which the bonds may be issued or secured. If the authority defaults in the payment of the principal of or interest on any of the bonds issued pursuant to the provisions of this part after such principal of or interest on the bonds becomes due, whether at maturity or upon call for redemption, and such default continues for a period of 30 days, or if the authority or the department fails or refuses to comply with the provisions of this part or any agreement made with, or for the benefit of, the holders of the bonds, the holders of 25 percent in aggregate principal amount of the bonds then outstanding may appoint a trustee to represent such bondholders for the purposes hereof, if such holders of 25 percent in aggregate principal amount of the bonds then outstanding shall first give notice of their intention to appoint a trustee to the authority. Such notice shall be deemed to have been given if given in writing, deposited in a securely sealed postpaid wrapper, mailed at a regularly maintained United States post office box or station, and addressed, respectively, to the chair of the authority.

(2) Such trustee and any trustee under any deed of trust, indenture, or other agreement may and, upon written request of the holders of 25 percent or such other percentages as are specified in any deed of trust, indenture, or other agreement aforesaid in principal amount of the bonds then outstanding, shall, in any court of competent jurisdiction, in his, her, or its own name:

(a) By mandamus or other suit, action, or proceeding at law or in equity, enforce all rights of the bondholders, including the right to require the authority to fix, establish, maintain, collect, and charge rates, fees, rentals, and other charges adequate to carry out any agreement as to or pledge of the revenues or receipts of the authority, to carry out any other covenants and agreements with or for the benefit of the bondholders, and to perform its and their duties under this part.

(b) Bring suit upon the bonds.

(c) By action or suit in equity, require the authority or the department to account as if it were the trustee of an express trust for the bondholders.

(d) By action or suit in equity, enjoin any acts or things that may be unlawful or in violation of the rights of the bondholders.

(3) Any trustee, when appointed as aforesaid or acting under a deed of trust, indenture, or other agreement, and regardless of whether all bonds have been declared due and payable,

may appoint a receiver who may enter upon and take possession of the system or the facilities or any part or parts thereof, the rates, fees, rentals, or other revenues, charges, or receipts from which are or may be applicable to the payment of the bonds so in default and operate and maintain the same for and on behalf of and in the name of the authority and the bondholders, and collect and receive all rates, fees, rentals, and other charges or receipts or revenues arising therefrom in the same manner as the authority might do, and shall deposit all such moneys in a separate account and apply such moneys in such manner as the court shall direct. In any suit, action, or proceeding by the trustee, the fees, counsel fees, and expenses of the trustee and the receiver, if any, and all costs and disbursements allowed by the court shall be a first charge on any rates, fees, rentals, or other charges, revenues, or receipts derived from the system or the facilities or services or any part or parts thereof, which rates, fees, rentals, or other charges, revenues, or receipts may be applicable to the payment of the bonds so in default. Such trustee, in addition to the foregoing, possesses all of the powers necessary for the exercise of any functions specifically set forth herein or incident to the representation of the bondholders in the enforcement and protection of their rights.

(4) This section or any other section of this part does not authorize any receiver appointed pursuant hereto for the purpose of operating and maintaining the system or any facilities or part or parts thereof to sell, assign, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of any of the assets of whatever kind and character belonging to the authority. It is the intention of this part to limit the powers of such receiver to the operation and maintenance of the system or any facility or part or parts thereof, as the court may direct, in the name of and for and on behalf of the authority and the bondholders. In any suit, action, or proceeding at law or in equity, a holder of bonds on the authority, a trustee, or any court may not compel or direct a receiver to sell, assign, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of any assets of whatever kind or character belonging to the authority. A receiver also may not be authorized to sell, assign, mortgage, or otherwise dispose of any assets of whatever kind or character belonging to the authority in any suit, action, or proceeding at law or in equity.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 10, ch. 2011-64.

343.947 Department may be appointed agent of authority for construction.—The department may be appointed by the authority as its agent for the purpose of constructing and completing transportation projects, and improvements and extensions thereto, in the authority's regional transit development plan. In such event, the authority shall provide the department with complete copies of all documents, agreements, resolutions, contracts, and instruments relating thereto; shall request the department to do such construction work, including the planning, surveying, and actual construction of the completion, extensions, and improvements to the system; and shall transfer to the credit of an account of the department in the treasury of the state the necessary funds therefor. The department shall proceed with such construction and use the funds for such purpose in the same manner that it is now authorized to use the funds otherwise provided by law for its use in construction of commuter rail systems, transit systems, ferry systems, roads, bridges, and related transportation facilities.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 7, ch. 2017-98.

343.95 Acquisition of lands and property.—

(1) For the purposes of this part, the authority may acquire private or public property and property rights, including rights of access, air, view, and light, by gift, devise, purchase, or condemnation by eminent domain proceedings, as the authority may deem necessary for any purpose of this part, including, but not limited to, any lands reasonably necessary for securing applicable permits, areas necessary for management of access, borrow pits, drainage ditches, water retention areas, rest areas, replacement access for landowners whose access is impaired due to the construction of a facility, and replacement rights-of-way for relocated rail and utility facilities; for existing, proposed, or anticipated transportation facilities within the region designated by the authority; or for the purposes of

screening, relocation, removal, or disposal of junkyards and scrap metal processing facilities. The authority may condemn any material and property necessary for such purposes.

(2) The right of eminent domain herein conferred shall be exercised by the authority in the manner provided by law.

(3) When the authority acquires property for a transportation facility within the designated region, the authority is not subject to any liability imposed by chapter 376 or chapter 403 for preexisting soil or groundwater contamination due solely to its ownership. This subsection does not affect the rights or liabilities of any past or future owners of the acquired property, nor does it affect the liability of any governmental entity for the results of its actions which create or exacerbate a pollution source. The authority and the Department of Environmental Protection may enter into interagency agreements for the performance, funding, and reimbursement of the investigative and remedial acts necessary for property acquired by the authority.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 8, ch. 2017-98.

343.96 Cooperation with other units, boards, agencies, and individuals.—Express authority and power is hereby given and granted to any county, municipality, drainage district, road and bridge district, school district, or any other political subdivision, board, commission, or individual in or of the state to make and enter into contracts, leases, conveyances, partnerships, or other agreements with the authority within the provisions and purposes of this part. The authority may make and enter into contracts, leases, conveyances, partnerships, and other agreements with any political subdivision, agency, or instrumentality of the state and any and all federal agencies, corporations, and individuals for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this part.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254.

343.962 Public-private partnerships.—

(1) The authority may receive or solicit proposals and enter into agreements with private entities or consortia thereof for the building, operation, ownership, or financing of multimodal transportation systems, transit-oriented development nodes, transit stations, or related facilities within the jurisdiction of the authority. Before approval, the authority must determine that a proposed project:

(a) Is in the public's best interest.

(b) Would not require state funds to be used unless the project is on or provides increased mobility on the State Highway System.

(c) Would have adequate safeguards to ensure that additional costs or unreasonable service disruptions would not be realized by the traveling public and citizens of the state in the event of default or the cancellation of the agreement by the authority.

(2) The authority shall ensure that all reasonable costs to the state related to transportation facilities that are not part of the State Highway System are borne by the private entity or any partnership created to develop the facilities. The authority shall also ensure that all reasonable costs to the state and substantially affected local governments and utilities related to the private transportation facility are borne by the private entity for transportation facilities that are owned by private entities. For projects on the State Highway System or that provide increased mobility on the State Highway System, the department may use state resources to participate in funding and financing the project as provided for under the department's enabling legislation.

(3) The authority may request proposals and receive unsolicited proposals for public-private multimodal transportation projects, and, upon receipt of any unsolicited proposal or determination to issue a request for proposals, the authority must publish a notice in the Florida Administrative Register and a newspaper of general circulation in the county in which the proposed project is located at least once a week for 2 weeks requesting proposals or, if an unsolicited proposal was received, stating that it has received the proposal and will accept, for 60 days after the initial date of publication, other proposals for the same project

purpose. A copy of the notice must be mailed to each local government in the affected areas. After the public notification period has expired, the authority shall rank the proposals in order of preference. In ranking the proposals, the authority shall consider professional qualifications, general business terms, innovative engineering or cost-reduction terms, finance plans, and the need for state funds to deliver the proposal. If the authority is not satisfied with the results of the negotiations, it may, at its sole discretion, terminate negotiations with the proposer. If these negotiations are unsuccessful, the authority may go to the second and lower-ranked firms, in order, using the same procedure. If only one proposal is received, the authority may negotiate in good faith and, if it is not satisfied with the results, it may, at its sole discretion, terminate negotiations with the proposer. Notwithstanding this subsection, the authority may, at its discretion, reject all proposals at any point in the process up to completion of a contract with the proposer.

(4) Agreements entered into pursuant to this section may authorize the public-private entity to impose tolls or fares for the use of the facility. However, the amount and use of toll or fare revenues shall be regulated by the authority to avoid unreasonable costs to users of the facility.

(5) Each public-private transportation facility constructed pursuant to this section shall comply with all requirements of federal, state, and local laws; state, regional, and local comprehensive plans; the authority's rules, policies, procedures, and standards for transportation facilities; and any other conditions that the authority determines to be in the public's best interest.

(6) The authority may exercise any of its powers, including eminent domain, to facilitate the development and construction of multimodal transportation projects pursuant to this section. The authority may pay all or part of the cost of operating and maintaining the facility or may provide services to the private entity, for which services it shall receive full or partial reimbursement.

(7) Except as provided in this section, this section is not intended to amend existing law by granting additional powers to or imposing further restrictions on the governmental entities with regard to regulating and entering into cooperative arrangements with the private sector for the planning, construction, and operation of transportation facilities.

(8) The authority may adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement this section and shall, by rule, establish an application fee for the submission of unsolicited proposals under this section. The fee must be sufficient to pay the costs of evaluating the proposals.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 29, ch. 2013-14.

343.97 Exemption from taxation.—The effectuation of the authorized purposes of the authority created under this part is for the benefit of the people of this state, for the increase of their commerce and prosperity, and for the improvement of their health and living conditions, and, because the authority performs essential governmental functions in effectuating such purposes, the authority is not required to pay any taxes or assessments of any kind or nature whatsoever upon any property acquired or used by it for such purposes, or upon any rates, fees, rentals, receipts, income, or charges at any time received by it. The bonds issued by the authority, their transfer, and the income therefrom, including any profits made on the sale thereof, shall at all times be free from taxation of any kind by the state or by any political subdivision, taxing agency, or instrumentality thereof. The exemption granted by this section does not apply to any tax imposed by chapter 220 on interest, income, or profits on debt obligations owned by corporations.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254.

343.973 Eligibility for investments and security.—Any bonds or other obligations issued pursuant to this part shall be and constitute legal investments for banks, savings banks, trustees, executors, administrators, and all other fiduciaries and for all state, municipal, and other public funds and shall also be and constitute securities eligible for deposit as security

for all state, municipal, or other public funds, notwithstanding the provisions of any other law to the contrary.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254.

343.975 Complete and additional statutory authority.—

(1) The powers conferred by this part are supplemental to the existing powers of the board and the department. This part does not repeal any of the provisions of any other law, general, special, or local, but supplements such other laws in the exercise of the powers provided in this part and provides a complete method for the exercise of the powers granted in this part. The projects planned and constructed by the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws. The extension and improvement of the system, and the issuance of bonds hereunder to finance all or part of the cost thereof, may be accomplished upon compliance with the provisions of this part without regard to or necessity for compliance with the provisions, limitations, or restrictions contained in any other general, special, or local law, including, but not limited to, s. 215.821. An approval of any bonds issued under this part by the qualified electors or qualified electors who are freeholders in the state or in any other political subdivision of the state is not required for the issuance of such bonds pursuant to this part.

(2) This part does not repeal, rescind, or modify any other law relating to the State Board of Administration, the Department of Transportation, the Tampa-Hillsborough County Expressway Authority, or the Division of Bond Finance within the State Board of Administration; however, this part supersedes such other laws as are inconsistent with its provisions, including, but not limited to, s. 215.821.

(3) This part does not preclude the department from acquiring, holding, constructing, improving, maintaining, operating, or owning tolled or nontolled facilities funded and constructed from nonauthority sources that are part of the State Highway System within the geographical boundaries of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority.

History.—s. 1, ch. 2007-254; s. 9, ch. 2017-98.

343.976 Effect on local government action.—This act does not prohibit any local government that is a member of the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority from participating in or creating any other transit authority, regional transportation authority, or expressway authority.