



FORWARD PINELLAS

Integrating Land Use & Transportation



Strategic Business Plan

Adopted 10.11.17



LEADERSHIP

LEADERSHIP
Empowerment

LEADERSHIP
Financial
Accountability

Organizational
Structure

Financial
Performance

LEADERSHIP
Institutional Credibility
& Success in Long-term
LEADERSHIP
Clear
Succession
Plan
LEADERSHIP
Professional
Development
Ability
Development
LEADERSHIP

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Beach Communities:

- Madeira Beach
- St. Pete Beach
- Treasure Island
- Belleair Shore
- Belleair Beach
- Indian Rocks Beach
- Indian Shores
- North Redington Beach
- Redington Beach
- Redington Shores

Inland Communities:

- Belleair
- Belleair Bluffs
- Gulfport
- Kenneth City
- Seminole
- South Pasadena

Chairman's Letter

The Forward Pinellas Strategic Business Plan is the result of an emerging vision for a fairly new agency. When Forward Pinellas was created in 2014, our clear charge was to integrate land use and transportation planning in a way that created public wealth and connected the communities of our county and region. This plan provides an outline for how to achieve those outcomes over the next four-year period.

What we do at Forward Pinellas is sometimes a challenge to communicate. Other agencies operate buses or build roads, things that our residents can touch and see and that affect their daily lives right now. We, on the other hand, plan for Pinellas County's future rather than the current day-to-day. But the plans that Forward Pinellas creates will help us meet challenges and seize opportunities that arise five to seven years down the road. That's not an inconceivable future - that's just about the amount of time it takes for a child to go through elementary school. The work of Forward Pinellas shapes how this county will look, operate and move in the years to come.

We have seven goals that we have set as representative of the work and values of this agency:

1. We will enable safe travel for all users.
2. We will use data to tell stories about who we are as a county and what our future should be.
3. We will plan a future for Pinellas County as a whole.
4. We will grow purposefully as an agency.
5. We will engage the public to create a future that reflects its needs and desires.
6. We will work with Pinellas County's communities to create plans that reflect their needs.
7. We will develop partnerships to strengthen our cities, county and region.

I look forward to seeing the progress toward those goals, and to working with our partners and residents to build on the distinctive character of our already strong community.


John Morroni
Chairman, Forward Pinellas Board

Who is Forward Pinellas?

Our Mission

Forward Pinellas will provide leadership to align resources and plans that help to achieve a compelling vision for Pinellas County, our individual communities and our region.

Integrating Land Use And Transportation

The defining role of Forward Pinellas is bringing land use and transportation planning efforts together into an integrated whole, from our long-range vision to the policy, funding, and technical activities that implement it. We are charged with addressing countywide land use and transportation concerns, as both the Pinellas Planning Council (land use) and Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (transportation) since the unification of the two agencies under the Forward Pinellas umbrella in 2014.

Roles and Responsibilities

We see ourselves as a facilitator as well as a planning agency: working with other agencies and regions to build consensus on what the future should look like. We are also a data source, providing research on trends and conditions in both the transportation and land use arenas. With those plans, data, and consensus, other agencies build roads, trails, or buildings and schedule bus routes.

Our Board

We are governed by a board of 13 elected officials representing communities throughout Pinellas County. These officials represent municipal governments, the Board of County Commissioners and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority.

Strategic Plan Definitions

With this strategic business plan, we have laid out seven goals that will guide our planning over the next four-year period. Each goal has corresponding objectives and initiatives.

- **Strategic Goals** are the broad outcomes that we seek to achieve.
- **Strategic Objectives** are the specific steps we will take to achieve our goals.
- **Strategic Initiatives** are programs or processes already in place, or that will be implemented in the future, that contribute to the goals and objectives.

Adapt-Build-Connect

We view the future of transportation and land use in Pinellas County - and the goals in this strategic business plan - through an A, B, and C framework: Adapt, Build, and Connect. These broad concepts help us view what we do as an agency in the big picture that incorporates the distinct identities of Pinellas County's many communities.

Adapt = Preparing for change and working with what we have

Build = Building trust and guiding growth

Connect = Working together and creating community

At heart, every project we undertake and work product we produce as Forward Pinellas is A, B, and C. The same goes for this strategic plan - every goal has a component of adapting, building, and connecting. We've grouped the goals in this plan by what areas they focus on the most, but goals grouped under an Adapt emphasis still have Build and Connect components, as well, and vice versa.

EMPHASIS ON



ADAPT

Adapt means that as a county, we need to be ready for change. We need to respond to a shifting economic market, plan for changing demographics, embrace technology, and recognize our environmental vulnerability. We also need to understand a changing policy environment that is experiencing the biggest shift in decades - one that shifts more decision-making to states and depends increasingly on private-sector investment.

At the regional level, we need to respond by creating a regional vision and funding strategy. Our planning and design needs to be performance-based and outcome-driven. We also need to adapt our aging and fully developed transportation network, with more than 30 “saturated” intersections that fail mobility standards. We can do that by setting a target for a network that is more balanced and connected.

Three of our seven goals place emphasis on adapting:

- 1. We will enable safe travel for all users.**
- 2. We will use data to tell stories about who we are as a county and what our future should be.**
- 3. We will plan a future for Pinellas County as a whole.**

Initiatives

Working with law enforcement, other professional stakeholders, and community groups, this agency is creating a **Vision Zero** action plan with the goal of significantly reducing severity of traffic crashes and eliminating traffic deaths. With Pinellas County and Tampa Bay having one of the highest fatality rates for pedestrians and bicyclists nationwide, the Vision Zero action plan is essential to helping Pinellas County move from a car-centric model to one that places the lives of vulnerable users as its first priorities.

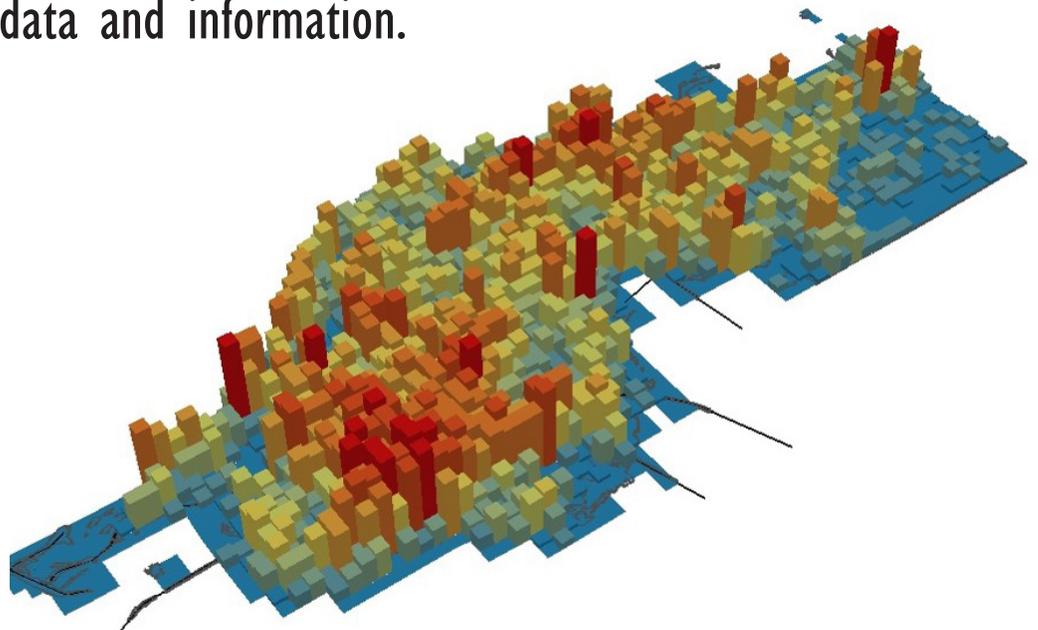
Through the **Complete Streets** initiative, Forward Pinellas is working to make our roadways safe and accessible for all users. Our Complete Streets grant program that funded its first projects in 2016 provides money to incentivize corridor redevelopment. One construction project and two concept plans were slated for funding in 2016 - the construction project recommended \$1 million to build a wider sidewalk on 34th Street South in the Skyway Marina district of St. Petersburg. Planning grants were made to the City of Clearwater for Drew Street and to Pinellas County for 54th Avenue North in Lealman. As another part of our Complete Streets planning on West Bay Drive in Largo and Belleair Bluffs, a pilot project plan would reduce speeding and make street crossings safer.

A focus on **Connected Networks** emphasizes intuitive design that enables seamless integration between modes, planning for surface streets and closing critical gaps in the biking and sidewalk networks. Signage and wayfinding markings are low-hanging fruit that are easily corrected. Connecting networks also includes more holistic improvements to transition from neighborhood streets to trails to roadways safely, or making sure an accommodation for bicyclists or pedestrians fits the character of the roadway and surrounding area. This will be a key strategic feature of our new Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan.

GOAL 2: We will use data to tell stories about who we are as a county and what our future should be.

Objective 1: Tell data-driven stories about Pinellas County's past, present and future to help support more informed decision-making.

Objective 2: Continue to serve as a go-to source for countywide land use and transportation data and information.



A heat map from a transit suitability analysis by planner Brett Burks indicating what parts of the county could be most supportive of transit.

Initiatives

Evolving Measures of Effectiveness are key to ensuring that Pinellas County is evaluating its transportation progress with the best tools available. Whether it's a Level or Quality of Service that goes beyond just roads, destination accessibility, the State of the System report, or crash mapping, these measures need to reflect data that fit the direction we want to go as a county in making transportation accessible for all users. Other available measures, such as Bicycle Stress Level or Multimodal Quality of Service, can give us a better idea of what options may work to provide travel choices and reduce road congestion – rather than just widening lanes.

With **Local Mapping Assistance**, Forward Pinellas seeks to become the go-to source for maps with a message. Producing clear, consistent maps that are useful to governments and citizens alike, we will create maps that are also storytelling tools. In addition, we will serve as the repository for future land use maps, ensuring that people know where to look when they have a question about development.

Tapping into **Big Data** will allow us to provide analytical evidence that supports our mission, as well as helping our agency to establish a performance-based, outcome-driven planning process required for MPOs under federal law. We will examine what new software, tools, regional partnerships and staff training may be necessary to take advantage of the data that are available to help staff, elected officials and the public understand important conditions, trends and outcomes that affect the entire Pinellas community. We will continue participating in the regional data working group and development of a shared data portal to update and review useful transportation data.

Using **Survey Research** tools will help us to understand the needs and priorities of Pinellas County's residents and communities. We will partner with other agencies, and possibly regionally, to gain data that is relevant to Forward Pinellas projects and plans. In the age of Big Data, many surveys are being conducted and there is a wealth of information on people's desires and preferences – we should take advantage of that where possible to develop plans likely to have public support out of the gate.

GOAL 3: We will plan a future for Pinellas County as a whole.

Objective 1: Provide leadership for strategic planning decisions that affect Pinellas County's future.

Objective 2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process.

Objective 3: Conduct useful research and analysis that increases understanding and helps equip our partners with effective solutions to various challenges.

Objective 4: Identify sufficient funding for our transportation needs to maximize financial feasibility.



A still from a video that was part of the Knowledge Exchange Series project on microbreweries.

Initiatives

Through the **Knowledge Exchange Series**, Forward Pinellas staff works to address planning areas where our local communities may need guidance. Examining topics that include “Finding the Missing Middle of Housing” and “Microbreweries as Catalysts for Downtown Redevelopment,” these projects help local governments learn more about new ways to encourage quality redevelopment.

Pinellas County continues to grow and renew itself through redevelopment. By **Implementing the New Countywide Plan**, Forward Pinellas provides guidance to ensure growth goes to the right areas and that our communities retain their distinctive character. The Countywide Plan works to channel new growth into urban centers and corridors that can be served by many kinds of transportation, while preserving our stable neighborhoods and land needed for economic development. Two years into using the new plan, we continue to look for ways to streamline the countywide planning process while maintaining essential land use protections and providing direction for the future.

In the face of emerging environmental challenges, **Developing Resilience** is essential to ensuring that Pinellas County remains strong, competitive, and a great place to live. To support a resilient county, we must assess vulnerabilities and develop strategies for our residents’ safety and sustained economic development of our communities. In the wake of Hurricane Irma, and the first major activation of the county’s Emergency Operations Center for Forward Pinellas, it is an ideal time to re-examine our role as a countywide agency in terms of disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

As a result of the **2017 Economic Symposium**, Forward Pinellas has committed to taking steps to increase Pinellas County’s economic competitiveness. We will work to establish a stronger link between transportation, land use and economic development efforts, including a renewed focus on this relationship at the regional level based on input from a broad spectrum of stakeholders. We have also reiterated our commitment to improving transit along higher-density corridors that serve mixed-use centers and places of employment. Lastly, we plan to sponsor a design competition along with a new Planning & Placemaking Grant Program in 2017/18, encouraging urban and walkable design to make our communities more attractive to the next generation of skilled workers.

EMPHASIS ON



BUILD

Build is about more than simply creating roads or buildings. We will guide planned growth to the right locations, yes, but we also build community and capacity, build trust through greater transparency, build connected networks, and make wise investments connected to networks that build public wealth. We can do this through engaging in open-ended conversations with our community, where we truly want to hear the answers they provide.

Our state and federal legislators need to hear a clear and unified message from our communities and our partners. We can share data, ideas, plans and resources instead of acting in competition. As Forward Pinellas, we can be a facilitator and liaison to help governments and agencies collaborate.

Two of our seven goals place emphasis on building:

- 4. We will grow purposefully as an agency.**
- 5. We will engage the public to create a future that reflects its needs and desires.**

GOAL 4. We will grow purposefully as an agency.



Forward Pinellas staff members Alicia Parinello and Maria Kelly help build a Habitat for Humanity house during the county's in-service day.

Objective 1: Build a culture of teamwork and collaboration.

Objective 2: Organize the agency in a way that reflects our evolving mission and role and is adaptive to changes in regional planning.

Objective 3: Develop staff members and identify advancement opportunities for them.

Objective 4: Assess funding levels necessary to pursue our goals as an agency, community and region.

Initiatives

Not all of our initiatives are dry or chock-full of acronyms; **Staff Team-Building** allows the Forward Pinellas team to build camaraderie, whether through group service activities or using our unique set of combined skills to get out of an escape room. Forward Pinellas seeks to be an agency where employees have loyalty and connections with each other that go beyond work projects.

As the agency staff changes with departures and retirements, **Transition Planning** is essential to seeing the agency grow in a way that is structured and maintains the institutional knowledge that comes with a long-tenured staff. Mentoring, training, and departmental self-evaluations can ensure a smooth future as long-term staff members retire. In addition, strategic hires can allow Forward Pinellas to grow in a way that fits with our goals and values as an agency.

With a continued concentration on **Internal Communications**, we look to increase transparency within our agency as well as a sense of a shared mission. If staff members know of developments within the agency – and those outside of the agency with the potential to affect them – as they happen, this will promote a better understanding of what we are working toward together and the obstacles we face as well as an increasing connection between the land use and transportation aspects of Forward Pinellas’s mission. Increased information sharing from the top-down through middle managers will contribute to this initiative’s success.

Encouraging **Professional Certifications** among staff members, and providing the resources and flexibility that they need to make those career achievements happen, will enable our staff to be more successful in their roles here, and also provide opportunities for career advancements. In addition, other types of professional certifications, such as LEED certification, would make Forward Pinellas more capable of creating certain types of plans, allowing us to become a more well-rounded agency.

GOAL 5: We will engage the public to create a future that reflects its needs and desires.

Objective 1: Increase understanding through dialogue and active listening, reaching beyond our comfort zone to engage people from all walks of life.

Objective 2: Use storytelling to highlight issues and solutions.

Objective 3: Representing the public to become a force for positive change in the community and region.



Public engagement is essential to the planning process, and all plans need public buy-in to succeed. Staff member Susan Miller participated in the planning for the St. Petersburg Bike Share System.

Initiatives

Implementing a **Communications Strategy**, along with the MPO's Public Participation Plan, seeks to increase awareness of Forward Pinellas's contributions and mission, which in turn will enable us to seek greater public input before a project goes into design stage. This encompasses traditional outreach in the form of workshops and other public outreach, but also includes social media, media relations and the creation of strategic planning documents to guide the agency's efforts.

With **Community Conversations**, we seek to engage the public in a different way than with our typical workshops. By coming to the public not with a project or a problem but with an open conversation, we have a chance to speak about who Forward Pinellas is and what we do. These conversations also give us the opportunity to hear from residents about how they feel transportation and land use plans are working in their community, and how we could do better. We scheduled three conversations around the county in fall 2017 and plan to schedule more in other areas in the future.

The next **Long Range Transportation Plan** will be a new plan that looks at Pinellas County's multimodal transportation future with an original viewpoint reflecting the further integration of land use and transportation decision-making. The plan will be aligned with the Florida Department of Transportation's planning process for Tampa Bay Next and the Regional Premium Transit Feasibility Plan. We will also collaborate with the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area Leadership Group partners to examine scenarios at a regional level that inform wise regional and county-specific decisions. As always, we will seek public input to determine the future that our communities would like to see.

EMPHASIS ON



CONNECT

Connecting people and places is at the heart of what we do. It means strengthening our transportation networks to move people and goods effectively and expand travel choices. It means working as one region to unite communities through transportation. Connection establishes a sense of identity and attachment to place, and it provides avenues for meaningful dialogue.

We can build connections through developing complementary regional transit services so that transit gets people to the destinations where they need to go. We can connect Pinellas County's distinctive downtowns with newly planned areas that are walkable, dense, and close to employment - creating a network of special places where people want to live and are proud to call home.

The final two of our seven goals place emphasis on connectivity:

- 6. We will work with Pinellas County's communities to create plans that reflect their needs.**
- 7. We will develop partnerships to strengthen our cities, county and region.**

GOAL 6: We will work with Pinellas County's communities to create plans that reflect their needs.

Objective 1: Develop and implement plans for corridors and special planning areas.



Downtown Dunedin has many characteristics of a 20-minute neighborhood.

Objective 2: Provide transportation options and economic opportunity to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Objective 3: Plan for a future of healthy, active communities with residents as a priority.

Initiatives

Understanding, encouragement and recognition of **20-Minute Neighborhoods** is central to the mission of Forward Pinellas. Our strength as a county is founded on the unique culture and character of our many communities, neighborhoods and districts. People want to be in places that are distinctive, welcoming, inclusive and accessible. Such places build broad public wealth by enabling connections, providing economic opportunity and inspiring creativity. They can serve as focal points for regional connectivity, enabling a walkable environment essential for efficient public transportation. Forward Pinellas will highlight characteristics of 20-minute neighborhoods, reflecting community values, strengthening assets, and overcoming barriers. We will work with our partners to build this concept into the planning principles that guide redevelopment and transportation investments.

The first **SPOTlight Emphasis Areas** chosen in 2014 – A Vision for U.S. 19, Enhancing Beach Community Access, and the Gateway Mid-County Master Plan – have guided our planning process over the past years. Projects such as the S.R. 60 corridor implementation plan, the U.S. 19 economic analyses and the safe access to transit study, and the upcoming Gateway Master Plan were developed with SPOTlight in mind. As the emphasis areas goals continue to be met, the board will create new focus areas with multi-jurisdictional impact and serve transportation and land use critical needs.

In the **Whole Community Planning** concept, Forward Pinellas will work with Pinellas County Public Works and Pinellas County Planning to look outside the box of what a community needs at that moment. Whole community planning tries to address all the community's needs proactively and comprehensively with the best use of resources instead of solving problems one by one and in silos as they arise.

Working with the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, Forward Pinellas's **Transportation Disadvantaged Program** supports public transit options for low income individuals in our community. Pinellas residents who are unable to transport themselves and are at or below 150 percent of federal poverty guidelines are eligible for the TD Program, which provides bus passes with a co-payment and door-to-door trips. The TD Late Shift Pilot Program provides late night work trips to participants. Through this and future pilot programs, the TD Program will provide low income individuals greater access to transportation options, services and employment.

GOAL 7: We will develop partnerships to strengthen our cities, county and region.

Objective 1: Work with other public agencies to define area needs and advance complementary projects.

Objective 2: Create opportunities for private sector investment to help achieve positive outcomes for the public.

Objective 3: Work cooperatively with partners throughout Tampa Bay to build a more vibrant, livable and resilient region that adds value to the quality of life assets in Pinellas County.



The City of Clearwater received the inaugural Partners in Action Award for its new U.S. 19 development code.

Initiatives

By producing **Regional Work Products**, we will strengthen our commitment to regional planning while maintaining the local components that are necessary to planning Pinellas County's specific future. These regional products – such as a regional Long Range Transportation Plan with local elements, or the regional transit plan that the new Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority will produce - offer Forward Pinellas a part in speaking with one voice about our regional transportation future. As we become more regional by default, with residents commuting across county lines, these work products allow a say in what a regional future looks like while maintaining local control at home.

By working with the **Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group and the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority**, Forward Pinellas participates in a regional conversation about what the future of transportation and transit should look like. We seek to be a leader in these conversations and ensure that the work that these groups do is productive and beneficial not only to Pinellas County but to all members. Our participation and partnerships with these groups also allows us a voice in shaping whatever regional changes to transportation planning may arise.

Increased coordination with transportation operators, including the **Florida Department of Transportation and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority**, leads to a better outcome for residents and for our planning process. More coordination from the outset allows all agencies to be involved in the planning and design process earlier, talk about issues as they develop, and take advantage of potential mutual projects and synergies. This coordination also creates and strengthens relationships with other agencies, enabling easier problem solving when issues do arise.

Expanding the **Partners in Action** award program, which recognizes local governments for their contributions to creating development that aligns with the Countywide Plan, will laud cities for the efforts they make to develop places that have distinctive character and are attractive for economic development. While the Countywide Plan contains certain requirements, the Partners in Action program recognizes those who go above and beyond to make Pinellas County a place where people want to live.



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