



**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA**

April 13, 2022 – 11:00 a.m.
The Palm Room
333 Chestnut Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 9, 2022**
- 3. LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP**
 - A. Residential Development Projects for Affordable Housing (SB 962)
 - B. Local Business Protection Act (SB 620)
 - C. Radio Communication Systems (SB 1190)
 - D. Net Metering (HB 741)
 - E. Local Tax Referenda Requirements (HB 777)
 - F. Individual Freedom (HB 7)
 - G. Failed Bills
 - H. State Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023
- 4. FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATE**
- 5. SUMMER RECESS**
- 6. ADJOURNMENT**

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Office of Human Rights, 400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Suite 300, Clearwater, Florida 33756; [(727) 464-4062 (V/TDD)] at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Appeals: Certain public meetings result in actions taken by the public board, commission or agency that may be appealed; in such case persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at a public meeting/hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Legislative Committee – April 13, 2022

2. Approval of Minutes from March 9, 2022



SUMMARY

The minutes from the previous Legislative Committee meeting are attached for the committee's review and approval.

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of the March 9, 2022 Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee Meeting

ACTION: Committee to review and approve the meeting minutes.

**FORWARD PINELLAS
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
MARCH 9, 2022**

Committee Members in Attendance:

Councilmember Brandi Gabbard, City of St. Petersburg, Committee Chair
Mayor Cookie Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach, Forward Pinellas Chair
(*Representing the Beach Communities*) (late arrival 11:20 a.m.)
Councilmember David Allbritton, City of Clearwater, Forward Pinellas Treasurer
Commissioner Dave Eggers, Pinellas County
Councilmember Bonnie Noble, Town of Kenneth City
Vice Mayor Patti Reed, City of Pinellas Park
(*Representing the Inland Communities*)
Vice Mayor Michael Smith, City of Largo

Absent

Commissioner Janet Long, Pinellas County, Forward Pinellas Vice Chair

Also Present:

Whit Blanton, Executive Director
Linda Fisher, Principal Planner
Tina Jablon, Executive Administrative Secretary
Chris Hawks, City of Largo

The Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee met in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building; 333 Chestnut Street, Clearwater.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councilmember Gabbard called the meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM FEBRUARY 9, 2022

A motion was made by Councilmember Allbritton and seconded by Commissioner Eggers, and carried unanimously, to approve the minutes from the February meeting. (vote: 6-0; Mayor Kennedy had not yet arrived)

3. BILLS OF CONCERN

Linda Fisher began reviewing the status of bills of concern by discussing SB 398, which would cap the public transportation spending from the State Transportation Trust Fund at 25%. By comparison, its companion bill, HB 157, has been amended to remove the language requiring the 25% cap. Whit Blanton suggested it would be ideal for the language differences to be reconciled in the final bill in favor of the House version.

Mr. Blanton inquired if the committee members felt additional communication from Forward Pinellas was needed to encourage the language in the House version to be finalized. He alerted the group to the fact that this bill, if passed, could impede efforts by FDOT concerning a possible statewide passenger rail system. He suggested the bill was inspired by the road builders lobbying.

After some discussion about the current cap and the potential effectiveness of additional correspondence, a motion was made by Commissioner Smith to

recommend that the full board approve additional correspondence (via email) on the matter, this was seconded by Vice Mayor Reed, and carried by unanimous vote. (6-0, Mayor Kennedy had not yet arrived)

Ms. Fisher advised that the Industrial Land bill (SB 962) has passed both the Senate and House votes and is awaiting approval by the governor. The House version (HB 981) was laid on the table in favor of the Senate version. She further advised that the efforts to add language that would have exempted Pinellas County was unsuccessful. The bill will allow for residential and mixed-use development projects on industrial land if 10% of the residential units are affordable housing.

In response to inquiry by Councilmember Gabbard, Ms. Fisher confirmed that local governments would be permitted to have increased criteria at the local level prior to allowing for a project to be developed.

Ms. Fisher alerted the group to the status of a set of bills on local governance which would require business impact statements prior to the adoption of any ordinance (SB 280/HB 403) and allow businesses to sue local governments for damages on losses exceeding 15% due to any laws enacted by that government (SB 620/HB 569). The Senate bills seemed to have stalled in the House. However, the House versions seem more likely to pass. Ms. Fisher pointed out that there was also a failed attempt to add language that would allow businesses to sue the state government as well.

Ms. Fisher also advised the committee that the bills related to affordable housing (SB 1170/HB 1553) and vulnerable road users (HB 743/SB 1252) never gained any traction this session.

4. TRANSPORTATION BILLS OF CONCERN

Whit Blanton, referring to the listed bills in the agenda packet, suggested that transportation was not really a high priority this session and advised the group that most of the bills related to transportation were not moving forward.

Mr. Blanton mentioned SB 410, allowing speed detection devices to be used in school zones, which had stalled on second reading in the Senate. He suggested that the Board may want to think about coming out in support of the effort next year.

5. OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST

Linda Fisher highlighted the status of a few bills related to vacation rentals, equity, virtual meetings, local referenda, net metering and radio communication systems.

Specifically, she advised that the bills on vacation rentals (SB 512/HB 325), which would allow local governments to amend grandfathered regulations to be less restrictive without losing their grandfathered status, allows local governments to require licensure and registration, and requires rental advertising platforms to collect applicable taxes stalled in the committee process. She further advised that HB 6033, which would reverse all state preemption on local vacation rentals, never acquired a Senate companion bill and was not heard by any committees.

Ms. Fisher also updated the group on the variety of proposed bills related to equity. Of them, one seems to be making its way through the process. HB 7, which would

prohibit the promoting of “divisive concepts” or “race or sex scapegoating” in employee training and would apply to all employment, membership, certification, licensing, credentialing or passing an examination, has passed in the House and is on second reading in the Senate.

Ms. Fisher advised that the bills related to virtual meetings did not gain any traction this year. However, the House version (HB 777) of a proposed bill requiring local referenda affecting tourist development taxes, ad valorem tax millages, local option fuel taxes and other local taxes/fees to be held on the date of a general election has passed both the House and Senate. In response to inquiry by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Blanton explained that the legislation would require those referenda to be voted on with a general election. Ms. Fisher further elaborated that it also expands the types of taxes/fees that must meet that new requirement.

Ms. Fisher outlined a pair of bills concerning net metering (HB 741/SB 1024) stating they would significantly decrease the amount of compensation property owners can receive for selling back excess electricity generated by their solar panels and allow the utility companies to impose additional fees. She advised that SB 1024 is on second reading in the Senate, and HB 741 has passed the House and been received by the Senate.

In response to inquiry by Councilmember Noble, Ms. Fisher clarified the intent of the proposed legislation and explained how it would differ from the current arrangements between utility companies and property owners. She suggested it would make it less appealing to purchase solar panels if you haven’t already done so.

Councilmember Allbritton inquired about the bills related to radio communication systems. Specifically, SB 1190, which has now passed the House and Senate, seems to be in conflict with the bill previously passed last year by requiring action by a date sooner than the prior legislation would have. Ms. Fisher offered to follow up with additional information.

Mayor Kennedy arrived to the meeting and requested a recap on the local governance bills which was provided by Ms. Fisher. Additionally, she added that SB 280 is stalled in the House and noted it would be worth watching to ensure the bill language isn’t inserted into another bill, likely HB 620.

Finally, Ms. Fisher advised that the building safety bill (SB 1702) which would provide for mandatory building inspections for multifamily residential buildings with more than three habitable stories above ground is on second reading, is awaiting its initial Senate floor vote. However, it has no House companion. All other bills related to this topic were never heard by any committees.

Councilmember Gabbard reminded the group that the final day for voting would likely be today or tomorrow.

Councilmember Gabbard praised Senator Hooper for his Home Town Heroes Bill (SB 788) which provides down payment assistance to law enforcement, nurses, teachers and firefighters up to 150% AMI. She advised that \$100M from SHIP funds will be used for this to be managed by the Florida Housing Finance Corporation.

In response to inquiry by Mr. Blanton about the status of the budget reconciliation process and the final amount for affordable housing, Councilmember Gabbard advised that no final budget has been delivered yet.

6. NEXT STEPS

The possibility of holding another legislative workshop in the Fall was briefly discussed. However, Mr. Blanton pointed out that this is an election year, and that there will be new Legislative Delegation members after November. No action was taken on this topic.

After brief discussion, the group agreed to meet in April for one final meeting to wrap up this session.

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:43 a.m.

**3A. Residential Development Projects for Affordable Housing
(SB 962)**

SUMMARY

[Senate Bill 962](#), filed by Senator Bradley, builds upon and significantly expands a recent preemption on regulation of industrial land. House Bill 1339, signed into law on June 9, 2020, allows a local government to approve an affordable housing development on any parcel designated for residential, commercial, or industrial use, notwithstanding any other law, local ordinance, or regulation to the contrary. The current bill broadens that provision to allow any approval of any residential or mixed-use residential development as long as at least 10 percent of the housing units are affordable. It passed both the House and Senate, but has not yet been signed by the governor.

The legislation allows local governments to override the Countywide Plan, which has a longstanding policy of reserving industrial land to attract and retain high-wage jobs, to allow residential and mixed-used development. However, no local government is *required* to do so.

The provisions “are self-executing and do not require the governing body to adopt an ordinance or a regulation before using the approval process.” Therefore, a local government could choose among the following approaches:

1. Approve developments on an ad hoc basis without requiring rezonings or comp plan amendments, and without adopting any guiding regulations; or
2. Create a local approval process that does not require rezonings or comp plan amendments, but imposes additional local criteria for qualifying developments (an approach taken by St. Petersburg); or
3. Continue to require the traditional rezoning and/or comp plan amendment process, which is still governed by the Countywide Plan and subject to its restrictions.

We will continue to work with our local government partners to develop a set of best practices for navigating the changes to state law as we implement the Target Employment and Industrial Land Study, currently underway and anticipated to be completed by this fall.

If signed by the governor, the law will take effect immediately.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

SUMMARY

[Senate Bill 620](#), filed by Senator Hutson, allows businesses to claim damages from a local government enacting a law that will cause a reduction of at least 15 percent of the business' revenue or profit. It would apply to businesses that have been in operation for at least three years and allow them to file lawsuits within one year following the effective date of the local action. The bill passed the House and Senate, but has not yet been signed by the governor.

While the initial bill was more broadly written, input from the Florida League of Cities and Florida Association of Counties resulted in amendments that exempt certain types of local action, including "An ordinance or charter provision that is required to comply with, or is expressly authorized by, state or federal law." The exemption explicitly includes the growth management provisions of Chapter 163, Florida Statutes, which establish minimum requirements for local comprehensive plans and land development regulations.

Other exemptions include emergency ordinances adopted under the State Emergency Management Act, other temporary emergency ordinances lasting no more than 90 days, ordinances pertaining to the Florida Building Code or Florida Fire Prevention Code, and those needed to pass budgets or implement a contract or grant. An ordinance or charter provision "intended to promote, enable, or facilitate economic competition" would also be exempt.

The claimant must provide copies of business records that substantiate the claim. Examples of business records include federal income tax returns or withholding statements, state sales tax returns, balance sheets, or other financial statements covering the three year period preceding the enactment of the ordinance or a charter provision. Damages for future lost profits may be awarded for up seven years, or the number of years the business was in operation before the local law was enacted, whichever is less. The court may award reasonable attorney fees and costs to the prevailing party.

If signed by the governor, the law will take effect immediately.

ATTACHMENT(S): ["Bill enabling businesses to sue over lost revenue from local ordinances ready for Governor's signature." Florida Politics, March 9, 2022 \(Link\)](#)

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

SUMMARY

[Senate Bill 1190](#), filed by Senator Boyd, modifies Section 633.202, Florida Statutes, which requires all new and existing high-rise buildings to meet a minimum radio signal strength for fire department communications. Existing buildings are not required to meet the statutory requirements until January 1, 2025.

The bill allows “two-way radio communication enhancement systems or equivalent systems” to be used to meet the statutory requirement, and provides an exemption for some buildings. The bill has passed the House and Senate, but has not yet been signed by the governor.

According to the sponsor, the bill is intended to provide clarification to the current requirements of the statute and Florida Building Code. The use of two-way radio communication enhancement systems is explicitly allowed as an alternative to structural retrofits for existing buildings that do not meet minimum radio signal strength.

The bill also creates an exemption for apartment buildings that are 75 feet or less in height if they are constructed using wood framing, have fewer than 150 dwelling units, and if all dwelling units discharge to the exterior or to a corridor that leads directly to an exit. The language incorporated input from the Florida Fire Marshals and Inspectors Association and the Emergency Communications Industry of Florida.

If signed by the governor, the law will take effect on July 1, 2022.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

SUMMARY

[House Bill 741](#), filed by Representative McClure, amends Section 366.91, Florida Statutes, which governs how public utilities compensate customers who generate renewable energy, a practice known as “net metering.” Typically applied to residential households with rooftop solar panels, net metering currently allows customers to purchase electricity from the utility when needed, then sell back any surplus electricity generated at other times for up to a 100% credit.

The bill significantly reduces the amount of compensation that customers will receive, while grandfathering current net metering customers for a period of 20 years. It also authorizes utilities to charge new fees to “ensure that the public utility recovers the fixed costs of serving customers that own or lease renewable generation,” with no upper limit on the amount that can be charged.

Lower compensation rates will be phased in over a period of five years beginning in 2024. The following rates will apply to customers who begin net metering during the specified timeframes:

- Between January 1, 2024, and December 31, 2025, the credit is reduced to 75%.
- Between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2026, the credit is reduced to 60%.
- Between January 1, 2027, and December 31, 2028, the credit is reduced to 50%.
- Effective January 1, 2029, the credit will be determined by new rules adopted by the Public Service Commission.

Customers who begin net metering prior to January 1, 2029, will be grandfathered for 20 years at the compensation rate that was in effect when they began. There is no similar limitation on fees that may be assessed.

The bill has generated significant opposition from the solar energy industry and its supporters, with calls for Governor DeSantis to veto it. If signed by the governor, the law will take effect on July 1, 2022.

ATTACHMENT(S): [“Rooftop solar industry urges DeSantis to veto net metering bill.” Bay News 9, March 24, 2022. \(Link\)](#)

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

SUMMARY

[House Bill 777](#), filed by Representative Robinson, specifies that required or optional local referenda to levy certain taxes shall be held on the date of a general election. The bill does not make any changes to the referendum requirements for these taxes, only the timing of when already required or optional referenda must take place.

Taxes affected by the bill include:

- Tourist development tax (Section 125.0104, Florida Statutes [F.S.])
- Tourist impact tax in an Area of Critical State Concern (Section 125.0108, F.S.)
- Ad valorem tax to fund an independent special district for children’s services (Section 125.901, F.S.)
- Ad valorem tax for county purposes, including dependent districts, in excess of 10 mills (Sections 200.071 and 200.091, F.S.)
- Ad valorem tax for municipal purposes in excess of 10 mills (Sections 200.081 and 200.101, F.S.)
- Ninth-cent fuel tax (Section 206.41(1)(d) and 336.021, F.S.)*
- Local option fuel tax (Sections 206.41(1)(e) and 336.025, F.S.)**
- School district millage election (Section 1011.73, F.S.)

* May be enacted either by extraordinary vote of the governing body or by referendum.

** May be enacted either by supermajority vote of the governing body or by referendum.

If signed by the governor, the law will take effect on October 1, 2022.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

SUMMARY

[House Bill 7](#), filed by Representative Avila, amends the Florida Civil Rights Act (Section 760, Florida Statutes) to prohibit employers, educators, governmental agencies, and others from promoting concepts related to structural racism and other forms of discrimination. Training or education on the prohibited topics may not be made a condition of employment, membership, or credentialing by any such entity. Discussion of the concepts as part of a course of training or instruction is not prohibited if presented “in an objective manner without endorsement of the concepts.”

Opponents have described the bill as ambiguous and likely subject to future litigation. Among its provisions are that a person must not be compelled to “feel guilt, anguish, or other forms of psychological distress” regarding issues of structural discrimination, which will likely be difficult to define or enforce.

The Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association has called for Governor DeSantis to veto the bill, citing the history of the planning field in creating the patterns of institutionalized inequality whose existence the bill denies, and its responsibility to reverse its legacy.

If signed by the governor, the law will take effect on July 1, 2022.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- HB 7 Veto Request by the Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association, March 29, 2022
- [“Florida Legislature Amends Florida Civil Rights Act to Restrict Topics Employer Can Discuss in Training.” *National Law Review*, March 11, 2022 \(Link\)](#)

ACTION: None required; informational item only.



American Planning Association
Florida Chapter

Making Great Communities Happen

March 29, 2022

DELIVERED BY EMAIL

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
 Office of the Governor
 The Capitol
 400 S. Monroe St.
 Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Re: Veto Request of HB 7

Dear Governor DeSantis:

The Florida Chapter of the American Planning Association (APA Florida) respectfully requests that you veto HB 7.

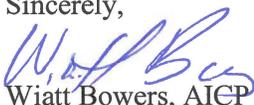
APA Florida is the state’s largest professional planning organization, with almost 3,000 members working as planners for private developers and landowners, local governments, state and regional agencies, and interest groups. APA Florida holds among its core principles the tenet that planners must “seek social justice by identifying and working to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, emphasizing our special responsibility to plan with those who have been marginalized or disadvantaged and to promote racial and economic equity.”

Our professional Code of Ethics is clear that planners must urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions that do not help meet all residents’ needs, and to recognize and work to mitigate the impacts of existing plans and procedures that result in patterns of discrimination, displacement, or environmental injustice. We are called to recognize our unique responsibility to eliminate historic patterns of inequity tied to planning and institutional decision-making, and to have special concern for the long-range consequences of past and present actions. Our Code of Ethics also charges us to commit ourselves to making ethical judgments in the public interest balancing the many competing agendas with careful consideration of the facts and context, informed by continuous, open debate.

HB 7 will inhibit an awareness and honest assessment of the historical inequities that have shaped and continue to shape how our communities grow and our residents prosper. The bill’s provisions are ambiguous, subjective, and open to individual interpretation. The actual implementation of the provisions is unclear and again can be very subjective. Furthermore, language added to SB 2524, a budget conforming bill, which was not included in HB 7 and impacts the enforcement of HB 7 on state universities further exacerbates this concern. The added requirement, in section 9 of SB 2524, provides for a loss of performance funding by a state university found to have a substantial violation. The violation finding can be made by a court of law, the Board of Governors or simply a standing committee of the Legislature. This provision is onerous and will hinder the debate and education at the university level necessary to effectively recognize and remedy institutional bias, exclusion, and inequity.

We therefore respectfully request that you veto HB 7.

Sincerely,



Wiatt Bowers, AICP
 President, APA Florida

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Melissa Dickens, AICP
 VP, Communications

3G. Failed Bills

SUMMARY

The following are bills we tracked this session that did not pass, but which may hold continuing interest to the committee.

Bills That Passed At Least One Chamber

- [HB 157](#) (Andrade) originally proposed to limit state spending on public transportation projects (such as transit, airports, and regional transportation authorities) to no more than 25% of annual revenues deposited into the State Transportation Trust fund, excluding funds needed for matching federal grants. That language was later removed, and the bill was amended to establish a transportation research program called the Implementing Solutions from Transportation Research and Evaluating Emerging Technologies Living Lab (I-STREET) at the University of Florida. It passed the House but died in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Its companion bill [SB 398](#) (Hooper), which retained the original 25% cap, died on the Senate calendar.
- [SB 280](#) (Hutson) proposed to require each local government to prepare a business impact statement before the adoption of a proposed ordinance. Local governments would have been required to suspend enforcement of any ordinance facing a legal challenge. It passed the Senate but died in messages to the House.
- [HB 7069](#) (Perez) proposed to require any condominium building that is three stories or high to be recertified by an engineer once it's occupied for 30 years, or 25 years if within three miles of a coastline. The bill would also have required a "structural integrity reserve study" to be performed every 10 years, to identify any needed repairs and ensure that the condominium association has sufficient reserves to cover them. Different amended versions of the bill were passed by the House and Senate, and it died in returning messages to the House. As discussed in the attached article, a special session may be called to take up this issue again.
- [SB 728](#) (Harrell) proposed to create an Advanced Air Mobility Study Task Force adjunct to the Department of Transportation, and create a statutory definition for eVTOL aircraft, which uses electric power to hover, take off, and land vertically without a runway. It passed the Senate but died in messages to the House.

Other Notable Failed Bills

- [HB 743](#) (McClain) and [SB 1252](#) (Baxley) proposed criminal penalties for a moving violation that causes serious bodily injury or death of a vulnerable road user. Would have required payment of a fine, a minimum period of house arrest, completion of a driver improvement course, and revocation of driver license for a minimum specified

period. Neither bill was heard by any committee. Similar bills have been submitted in multiple legislative sessions.

- [SB 410](#) (Rodriguez) proposed to authorize counties and municipalities to enforce school speed zones through use of speed detection systems. It died on the Senate calendar. Similar bills [HB 189](#) (Duran) and [HB 797](#) (Overdorf) were also submitted, but not heard by any committee.

ATTACHMENT(S): [“Florida lawmakers may return for multiple special sessions.” WFLA.com, March 23, 2022 \(Link\)](#)

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

3H. State Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

SUMMARY

The legislature session concluded with the passage of a state budget totaling \$112.1 billion. [House Bill \(HB\) 5001](#), the General Appropriations Act, is the largest in the state's history. A number of issues we've tracked during the session are featured in the budget.

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is a key issue receiving support in this year's budget, with legislators allocating a record \$362.7 million to statewide housing programs. Of that amount, \$100 million is earmarked for a new Hometown Heroes program offering homebuyer assistance to critical workers such as nurses, police officers and teachers. While the parameters of the program are not included in the budget, a statutory framework was proposed by Senator Hooper from the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation in [Senate Bill \(SB\) 788](#).

The funding for the Hometown Heroes program will be drawn from the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program, which is financed by the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund. The fund has frequently been targeted for "sweeping" of monies to other causes. Last year, the percentage of state documentary taxes that flow into the fund was permanently reduced, but greater protections against sweeping were enacted. During this year's session, [SB 1170](#) would have also made dramatic changes to SHIP itself, transferring responsibility for administering much of the program from the state to county governments, but that bill was unsuccessful.

Earmarks from the State Transportation (Primary) Trust Fund

Three local earmark bills were incorporated into the final budget:

- [HB 2833](#) (Koster): City of Oldsmar – Provides an appropriation of \$1,000,000 for improvements to Douglas Road.
- [HB 4371](#) (Chaney): Madeira Beach – Provides an appropriation of \$1,000,000 for improvements to 1st Street East, 2nd Street East, Harbor Drive, and Municipal Drive.
- [HB 4381](#) (Chaney): Town of Redington Beach – Provides an appropriation of \$750,000 for resurfacing interior roads within the city limits from 155th Avenue to 164th Avenue. The original request was for \$1,500,000.

Gas Tax Holiday

The budget allocates \$200 million from the General Revenue Fund to implement the Florida Motor Fuel Tax Relief Act of 2022, a state gas tax holiday for the month of October included in [HB 7071](#). Motorists will save about \$0.27 per gallon. The funding shortfall will be made up from federal coronavirus relief funds. To ensure that the majority of the benefit goes to residents

and not tourists, legislators selected October, in which the state typically sees a lower number of visitors.

Status of the Budget

The budget has passed the House and Senate, but has not yet been signed by the governor, who has the ability to enact line-item vetoes. Governor DeSantis has stated publicly that he intends to veto some items this year. Once signed, the budget will take effect on July 1, the beginning of the state fiscal year.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- [“Florida legislative session ends with vote on \\$112 billion state budget.” Tallahassee Democrat, March 14, 2022 \(Link\)](#)
- [“Budget, hundreds of bills await governor's signature as 2022 legislative session wraps.” WPTV West Palm Beach, March 18, 2022 \(Link\)](#)

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

4. Federal Funding Update

SUMMARY

[H.R. 2471](#), the federal government’s Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2022, was signed into law by President Biden on March 15, 2022. A \$1.5 trillion discretionary funding package spanning 12 appropriations bills for the fiscal year, the act benefits from increased funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The package includes \$81 billion for the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies. Summaries of the federal priorities and local projects to be funded by the package are attached.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- [Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies fact sheet, House Appropriations Committee, March 9, 2022 \(Link\)](#)
- “Here’s which Tampa Bay projects got federal funding from the \$1.5 trillion bill.” *Tampa Bay Times*, March 8. 2022

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

Here's which Tampa Bay projects got federal funding from the \$1.5 trillion bill

Romy Ellenbogen – Tampa Bay Times

Published Mar. 18

The \$1.5 trillion federal budget bill recently passed by Congress includes millions of dollars in projects for Tampa Bay.

Hometown legislators asked for, and got, money for high-speed internet in affordable housing communities, wastewater system upgrades, renovations for the Science Center of Pinellas County and more. President Joe Biden signed the bill earlier this week, which includes provisions to help the Ukrainian government.

The spending plan revived the tradition of earmarks for the first time in a decade, allowing members to submit and fund pet projects in their communities.

The practice was banned in 2011 after accusations of corruption and misuse. The new guidelines prohibit projects for for-profit companies and require the requests to be posted online with a financial disclosure certifying the member and member's family would see no financial benefit.

Both Democratic and Republican legislators from Tampa Bay submitted requests for projects in their districts. Here's a rundown.

U.S. Rep. Kathy Castor, D-Tampa

Castor secured more than \$10 million through nine projects that focus on mental health care, education, cancer research and more.

"I'm pleased to support three projects aimed directly at lifting up and connecting our diverse Tampa communities," Castor said in a statement. "These initiatives will drive our economy, keep our neighbors plugged in, and modernize local infrastructure."

- **\$2,000,000** to H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute for AI/machine learning to accelerate cancer research: develops computer infrastructure to assist in gathering cancer data.
- **\$520,000** to Tampa Housing Authority for Connectivity for Prosperity: increases in-home high-speed internet in affordable housing communities.
- **\$382,000** to City of Tampa for technology enhancements (digital storage of body cam footage): increases access to body-worn camera data for the Tampa Police Department and helps data be uploaded and evaluated more quickly.
- **\$2,125,804** to University Area Community Development Corporation Inc. for cultural campus warehouse renovation and site work: connects community residents with quality-of-life services.

- **\$1,000,000** to University of South Florida for enhancing STEM teacher preparation in the Tampa Bay region: prepares science, technology, engineering and math teachers for instruction and creates a pipeline to Hillsborough County Public Schools.
- **\$1,000,000** to City of Tampa for Fair Oaks Redevelopment Senior Center: connects seniors with community health and cultural services.
- **\$300,000** to Urban League of Hillsborough County Inc. for the Hand Up Program: links students who age out of school with training and paid pre-apprenticeships.
- **\$2,000,000** to Mental Health Care Inc. (Gracepoint) for Mariposa Women's Neuropsychiatric Hospital: funds 24 psychiatric beds for women.
- **\$800,000** to Hillsborough County for Town 'N' Country Septic-to-Sewer: funds the replacement of legacy septic tanks to increase water quality.

U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Palm Harbor

Bilirakis brought in more than \$13 million for 10 local projects that include money for wastewater treatment systems, workforce training and mental health services.

"While I am no proponent of big government spending, I have a duty to ensure my community receives its fair share of allocated federal resources and to be transparent about my efforts to prioritize these important projects," he said in a statement.

- **\$1,600,000** to City of Oldsmar for the Oldsmar State Street drainage ditch: for work on ditch bank erosion in the emerging downtown redevelopment area.
- **\$1,000,000** to Pasco County Board of County Commissioners for rural northeast Pasco community park site acquisition: helps execute Pasco County Parks' master plan for rural east Pasco of adding a community park for every 20,000 people by helping acquire land.
- **\$1,750,000** to City of Dade City for the Dade City Wastewater Treatment Plant: helps relocate a wastewater facility that was placed in a historically Black neighborhood in the 1950s as a move toward environmental justice.
- **\$1,500,000** to City of Zephyrhills for a lift station and force main project: makes changes to the wastewater system for water flow and water quality protection. The proposal said it will take 300 residents off septic systems.
- **\$240,000** to Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners for Pinellas County tidal check valves project: installs 15-25 tidal check valves to prevent saltwater intrusion.
- **\$1,750,000** to Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners for the Pinellas County Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) Public Safety System: provides funding to move to a single system for all emergency dispatch in Pinellas County.
- **\$2,000,000** to Community Health Centers of Pinellas Inc. for the mental health collaborative project between Premier Community Health Center and Community Health Centers of Pinellas County: allows health centers to increase the number of patients seen for mental health treatment.
- **\$3,000,000** to AmSkills for the AmSkills Workforce Training Innovation Center: serves as a workforce training area for the Holiday, New Port Richey and Port Richey communities.
- **\$750,000** to U.S. Institute Against Human Trafficking for its human-trafficking prevention initiative in Tampa Bay: expands prevention and intervention actions and long-term support care for victims of human trafficking.

- **\$200,000** to The Pasco-Pinellas Public Defender's Office for its INTERCEPT Project: creates a dedicated position for an employee to identify people with vulnerabilities like homelessness and food insecurity, and connect them with services.

U.S. Rep. Charlie Crist, D-St. Petersburg

Crist's projects brought in more than \$11 million for nine projects, including those focused on body cameras, public transit, child health care and education.

"The People's House has once again delivered for Floridians," Crist said in a statement. "Our historic, bipartisan funding bill tackles some of our biggest challenges at home and abroad, while also directly benefiting you — my neighbors in Pinellas."

- **\$2,000,000** to University of South Florida College of Marine Science for infrastructure to address flooding risks due to climate change at the community Level: helps design systems to determine flooding parameters and work with local governments to mitigate flood risk.
- **\$144,000** to Clearwater Police Department for the mental health co-responder program: pairs a police officer with a mental health professional to respond to calls for people in crisis.
- **\$230,000** to City of Largo for police officer body-worn cameras for the Largo Police Department: helps secure body cameras for the Largo Police Department that will record any time a weapon is drawn.
- **\$700,000** to Pinellas County for a sanitary sewer interceptor at Pinellas Park: designs and constructs a sanitary sewer force main with greater capacity.
- **\$1,500,000** to City of Clearwater for Imagine Clearwater: helps fund restoration of Clearwater waterfront park as part of the Imagine Clearwater project.
- **\$1,200,000** to Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority for on-route induction charger: helps construct two electric bus charging stations.
- **\$3,000,000** to Pathfinder Outdoor Education for St. Petersburg's Science Center: helps renovate and restore the Science Center of Pinellas County.
- **\$500,000** to Mental Health for Heroes Inc. for collaborative mental health services for first responders: allows first responders to apply for a grant to access mental health counseling for reduced or no cost.
- **\$2,000,000** to Lions Eye Institute for Transplant and Research Foundation for the Pediatric Vision Center: helps create a pediatric vision center at the nonprofit institute to give comprehensive services for children who lack access.

U.S. Rep. Daniel Webster, R-Clermont, did not submit any community projects for funding. U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan, R-Bradenton, did not immediately return a request for comment, and the one project submitted by U.S. Rep. Scott Franklin, R-Lakeland, was not funded.

5. Summer Recess

SUMMARY

The 2022 Legislative Session ended on March 14. The committee has elected to use this month's meeting for a wrap-up of the 2022 session, and to pause meetings until the Fall in preparation for next year's session, which begins on March 7, 2023. This item is set aside for any closing thoughts or direction that the committee wishes to provide ahead of the summer recess, including development of priorities for the 2023 Session.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: As determined appropriate by the committee.