



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AGENDA

October 9, 2019 – 11:00 a.m.
315 Court Street, 5th Floor
Board of County Commissioners Conference Room

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM September 11, 2019**
3. **2020 POLICY POSITIONS**
4. **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**
5. **OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**
6. **ADJOURNMENT**

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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.

FORWARD PINELLAS LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 11, 2019

Committee Members in Attendance:

Commissioner Dave Eggers, Pinellas County, Forward Pinellas Chair
Councilmember Brandi Gabbard, City of St. Petersburg
Mayor Cookie Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach, Forward Pinellas Treasurer
Councilmember David Allbritton, City of Clearwater

Also Present:

Whit Blanton, Executive Director
Sarah Caper, Principal Planner
Tina Jablon, Executive Administrative Secretary
Chelsea Hardy, County Attorney's Office
Brian Lowack, Intergovernmental Liaison, Pinellas County
Cheryl Reed, Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator, City of Largo
Gloria Gonzalez, City of Largo Staff

The Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee met in the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners 5th Floor Conference Room.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Eggers called the meeting to order at 12: 05 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 8, 2019

A motion was made by Councilmember Gabbard, which was seconded by Mayor Cookie Kennedy, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the May meeting (4-0).

3. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE WORK AND SUMMER LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES

Whit Blanton updated the committee on the legislative activities that were undertaken last session to include developing a variety of materials for distribution which included:

- Forward Pinellas folders
- Series of Forward Pinellas One Pagers
- A Policy Position Statement for 2019 Session
- Transportation Priorities for 2019

Whit Blanton met with the members of the Pinellas Legislative Delegation for the purpose of sharing regional and countywide transportation priorities, reminding them of the roles and responsibilities of Forward Pinellas, and creating a better appreciation for the work of the agency. The meetings were successful, and the materials were well received. Among the delegates, there was general support for the countywide transportation strategy to link housing and workforce development with transit investment corridors.

There was some discussion about ensuring North County is included in the conversations.

Whit Blanton offered a brief overview of the Transportation Priorities document highlighting how it demonstrates a balanced solution for transportation with a variety of projects.

4. LEGISLATIVE SCHEDULE AND KEY DATES

Sarah Caper reviewed the Legislative Schedule and Key Dates for the upcoming 2020 session.

5. DISCUSSION OF 2020 AREAS OF INTEREST FOR POLICY POSITIONS

Whit Blanton advised he was not aware of any new legislation being proposed that would specifically impact Forward Pinellas. He then reviewed the MPOAC Priorities and key recommendations for 2020.

The group discussed legislation from the prior session that might be worth keeping as a priority again for the upcoming session. It was decided the following items were worth continuing to follow and pursue:

- **Support Urban Agriculture**
- **Vacation Rentals**
- **Indexing of the Local Option Gas Tax**
- **Housing**
- **Support Transportation Funding**

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Legislative Committee – October 9, 2019

3. 2020 Policy Positions



SUMMARY

Staff will provide an update on the draft 2020 policy positions.

ATTACHMENT(S): Draft 2020 Policy Positions

ACTION: Committee to approve the 2020 Policy Positions.



Policy Positions – 2020

Adopted (Insert date)

SUPPORT URBAN AGRICULTURE. Local governments are discouraged from allowing urban agriculture because the Florida Right to Farm Act (Section 823.14, Florida Statutes) exempts commercial farms from most local land development regulation. This protects rural farms from encroaching suburban development, a necessary and beneficial purpose. However, the statute is broadly written and so applies to commercial farms in urban areas, which bring value to communities from a health, economic development and affordability standpoint, and where reasonable regulation is required to protect adjacent development. **Forward Pinellas supports promoting healthy communities through urban agriculture with local land development regulations that protect existing urban development.**

PROTECT TRUST FUNDS. Trust funds such as the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund and the State Transportation Trust Fund are established with a clear purpose. These trust funds should be protected and not subject to transfers to the Budget Stabilization Fund and the General Revenue Fund. **Forward Pinellas specifically supports protecting funding intended for affordable housing and other specific purposes from being transferred to other sources.**

SUPPORT FLEXIBLE AND SUSTAINED TRANSPORTATION FUNDING.

- Taxes on fuel are a primary source of transportation funding for local governments. Increasing fuel efficiency, more electric vehicles in the fleet, and rising roadway maintenance and operating costs are placing pressure on local governments to search for additional funding. Local fuel taxes are not indexed to the Consumer Price Index to account for inflation, as state fuel taxes are, and therefore, revenues are declining at a faster rate. **Forward Pinellas supports the Legislature permitting the indexing of local fuel taxes for inflation to better keep pace with transportation needs like it has done for state fuel tax revenues.**
- The Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) receives the vast majority of state transportation funding. As our highway network continues to mature in urban areas like Pinellas County, and reaches a point where expansion is not a feasible or affordable option, **Forward Pinellas supports increased flexibility for SIS funds for premium or express transit operating on the SIS roadway, but not necessarily on its own fixed guideway, to enhance mobility on the SIS.** This is consistent with the legislative position of the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council.
- The Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) is a valuable transportation funding mechanism based on state and local participation through regional collaboration. Forward Pinellas believes in fostering stronger regional transportation planning and decision-making and **supports sustained funding of \$250 million per year for the TRIP program** as a way to strengthen regional partnerships to improve mobility.

DRAFT

STOP DISTRACTED DRIVING. Distracted driving poses a threat to the safety of motorists and non-motorized users. Forward Pinellas is committed to a Vision Zero initiative to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways. Between 2015 and 2018, 33 fatalities and 577 incapacitating injuries happened in Pinellas County related to distracted driving crashes (Crash Data Management System). **Forward Pinellas supports legislation that expands upon the adopted Texting While Driving law by prohibiting distracted driving by addressing the use of wireless communications devices with clear definitions and clarification on what it means to be stationary and operating.**

MAINTAIN MPO AUTHORITY FOR APPORTIONMENT STRUCTURE. State-mandated changes to metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are a recurring concern to Forward Pinellas and other MPOs statewide. **Forward Pinellas opposes one-size-fits all changes that would usurp local authority to determine the most appropriate structure of MPOs consistent with federal law and consultation with the Governor.**

SUPPORT HOME RULE. Florida is a diverse state characterized by unique communities. Pinellas County is an example of that with its many downtowns, beach communities and neighborhoods. Home rule allows local governments to align the values of a community to its ordinances and other governing elements. **Forward Pinellas supports home rule and opposes bills that erode the ability of local governments to reflect the wishes and desires of their communities.**

Legislative Committee – October 9, 2019

4. Legislative Update



SUMMARY

Staff will provide an update on state legislative matters.

ATTACHMENT(S): MPOAC Newsletter

ACTION: None required; informational item only

*Commissioner Nick Maddox
Chair*

MPOAC Legislative Newsletter – Kick Off

09/20/2019

Overview

Greetings and welcome to the first MPOAC legislative update of the 2020 Florida legislative session. It is great to be back with you and I hope you look forward to your Saturday mornings a little more now that you will be seeing your MPOAC Legislature Newsletter each week the legislature meets. You are receiving this update a bit early rather than the usual Saturday morning edition. This is due to a vacation that starts on Saturday and MPOAC can't go on vacation without first delivering your newsletter, that would not be the MPOAC way.

While the session officially begins January 14, 2020, the capitol was busy this week with pre-session committee meetings. The first week of committee meetings prior to the official 60-day legislative session are usually pretty relaxed. During last year's pre-session the first week was spent explaining the role of the committees, their purview and areas of the budget controlled for appropriations subcommittees. This year we began the first week of pre-session with budget request presentations from state agencies. Of course, we are interested in what the Florida Department of Transportation has for a budget request and here is an overview of that presentation for you. Assistant Secretary for Finance and Administration Stacie Miller presented to the Transportation and Tourism Appropriations Subcommittee and her presentation was well received. She did an excellent job and for those of you who know Ms. Miller you knew that was going to be the outcome before she even showed up at the Capitol. The overall FDOT budget request for next fiscal year is \$9.9 Billion which is down from about \$10.8 Billion this year. The budget is about 88% construction and maintenance which works out to about \$8.7B and for every \$1 B spent on construction/maintenance 28,000 jobs are created or preserved. The department has a Return on Investment ratio (ROI) of 4.4 to 1, or in other words for every dollar spent on transportation projects there is a \$4.40 benefit to Florida. A few other details about the Department of Transportation were shared with the committee. Here are some of those factoids for you. The department is planning for 6200 full time employees in the coming year. The department is responsible for about 12,000 miles of highway and 7,000 structures (read bridges). Ms. Miller also covered the overall mission of the department and it's goals: Safety, preservation of the system, relieve congestion and leverage technology. Again, the presentation and information shared with the committee were well received and generally the legislature has seemed pleased with the department over the past several sessions that I have watched.

Also this week we heard from Representative Sprowls (District 65 – Pinellas) who outlined his vision for the next two sessions of the legislature. Representative Sprowls is presumed to be the next Speaker of the House. He was designated this week by his fellow Republicans to lead next year. Representative Sprowls impressed all by indicating his desire to work with everyone in the House, both Republicans and Democrats when he said "I'm not here today to tell you what our agenda will be. That is something we'll figure out together. But I am here today to say this: What we do together needs to matter." After he was formally elected Representative Sprowls spoke to the need to increase cash reserves and to create a new fund for disaster recovery. He stated that the legislature has a spending problem which points the idea that he will be very conservative with the

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budget. He may have reason to be concerned though, nationally there are uncertainties about the economy related to tariffs and the unknown that they create looking forward. This was gleaned from a presentation given to the Senate Appropriations Committee this week by Amy Baker, coordinator of the Legislature's Office of Economic and Demographic Research. She presented the Long Range Financial Outlook for Florida and of course you cannot look at Florida's economy without looking at the national picture. Here in Florida we have positive news. Florida has recovered from the great depression and 2016 was marked as the point of full recovery. Interestingly, our recovery has been carried by big growth in tourism while residential construction has lagged. Ms. Baker does not forecast a recession for Florida in the next three years, just a normal ebb and flow to the economy which may create some small fluctuations in state revenues. She did note that nationally economists are split about 50/50 on what the economy will do over the next three years and if a national recession is coming.

As of writing, there are no transportation bills filed and only four bills to name transportation facilities for persons. A few transportation safety bills have been filed and there is a Micro Business bill that references transportation but is focused on advancing small businesses. We can expect to see some issues outside of transportation which will get a lot of attention. How much momentum those issues carry into the middle and end of session is tough to say. Keep in mind that determining today what are going to be the hot issues the last week of session is a bit like looking into a crystal ball at this point. The legislature is a dynamic environment and issues that can't, or won't, get traction quickly move aside for new issues.

We do need to compliment a few of our legislators who consistently have brought forward transportation safety bills. You will note a pattern over the past three years or so, Senator Keith Perry (Gainesville) and Representative Emily Slosberg (Boca Raton) have regularly introduced bills benefiting our system safety. This year is no different and we thank them for their efforts to bring safety to our mobility in Florida. Please take a minute to look at SB 158 and HB 179 in the last section of this newsletter.

The schedule of pre-session committee weeks is shown below along with key dates for the 2020 Florida Legislative Session. After this initial newsletter, all updates to bills shown below will be shown in **RED** so you can quickly distinguish between updates and old news. A few bills have been filed, many more will be filed over the coming months. Your MPOAC Legislative Update will keep you apprised of newly filed bills and changes to existing bills. It's new legislative session, here we go!!

Grab a cup of coffee and enjoy this edition of the MPOAC Legislative Update.

Important Dates for the 2020 Legislative Session

- August 01, 2019 – Deadline for filing claim bills.
- November 22, 2019 - Deadline for submitting requests for drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, including requests for companion bills.
- January 10, 2020 - Deadline for approving final drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, including companion bills.
- January 14, 2020 - Regular Session convenes, deadline for filing bills for introduction.
- February 29, 2020 - All bills are immediately certified, motion to reconsider made and considered the same day.
- March 03, 2020 – 50th day of Session. Last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings.
- March 13, 2020 – 60th day - Last day of Regular Session.

**Committee Meeting schedule prior to the official
Legislative Session beginning on January 14th**

September 2019 - Week of the 9th – Legislative Budget Committee Meets
September 2019 - Week of the 16^h
October 2019 - Week of the 14th
October 2019 - Week of the 21st
November 2019 - Week of the 4th
November 2019 – Week of the 12th
December 2019 - Week of the 9th

Legislation of interest to the membership

This is a summary of transportation related bills filed and published on the legislature’s website as of September 19, 2019. More bills will be filed during the 2020 session and as they are made available the newly filed transportation bills will be added to this list. The bills are listed in numerical order for your convenience. As the session progresses and the number of bills tracked in this newsletter grows, this ordering of bills will make it easier to follow the status of any particular bill you are tracking.

HB 37: School Bus Safety – (Zika; Co-Introducers: DiDeglie; Grieco) – Identical Bill SB 290 by Hooper. Revises civil penalties for certain violations relating to stopping for a school bus. Filed in the House.

SB 76: Transportation Disadvantaged – (Book) – Requiring community transportation coordinators, in cooperation with the coordinating board, to plan for and use any available and cost-effective regional fare payment systems that enhance cross-county mobility for specified purposes for the transportation disadvantaged; requiring each coordinating board to evaluate multicounty or regional transportation opportunities to include any available regional fare payment systems that enhance cross-county mobility for specified purposes for the transportation disadvantaged, etc. Referred to Infrastructure and Security; Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; Appropriations.

HB 133: Towing and Immobilizing Vehicles and Vessels – (McClain) – Authorizes local governments to enact rates to tow vessels on private property & remove & store vessels; prohibits counties or municipalities from enacting ordinances that impose costs or penalties on owners, persons in control, or lienholders of vehicles or vessels or that require wrecker operators or towing businesses to accept specified form of payment; authorizes persons to place liens on vehicles or vessels to recover fees or charges; removes requirement regarding notices & signs concerning towing or removal of vehicles & vessels & liability for attorney fees; authorizes court to award damages, attorney fees, & court costs in certain cases. Filed in the House.

SB 158: Child Restraint Requirements – (Perry) – Identical to HB 6011 by Rommel. Increasing the age of children for whom operators of motor vehicles must provide protection by using a crash-tested, federally approved child restraint device; increasing the age of children for whom a separate carrier, an integrated child seat, or a child booster seat may be used, etc. Referred to Children, Families, and Elder Affairs; Infrastructure and Security; Rules.

SB 178: Public Financing of Construction Projects – (Rodriguez) - Prohibiting state-financed constructors from commencing construction of certain structures in coastal areas without first conducting a sea level impact projection study; requiring the Department of Environmental Protection to develop by rule a standard for such studies; requiring the department to enforce certain requirements and to adopt rules, etc. Referred to Environment and Natural Resources; Infrastructure and Security; Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, Environment, and General Government; Appropriations.

HB 179: Safety Belt Usage – (Slosberg) – Requires each passenger in a motor vehicle or autocycle to be restrained by a safety belt or child restraint device. Filed in the House.

SB 216: Assistance for Micro Businesses – (Rodriguez) – Authorizing certain local governments to set aside up to a specified percentage of funds for procuring personal property and services for the purpose of entering into contracts with micro businesses; providing eligibility for micro businesses under the Microfinance Loan Program; providing eligibility for micro businesses under the Department of Transportation’s highway project business development program, etc. Referred to Innovation, Industry, and Technology; Infrastructure and Security; Appropriations.

SB 290: School Bus Safety – (Zika; Co-Introducers: DiDeglie; Grieco) – Identical Bill HB 37 by Zika. Revises civil penalties for certain violations relating to stopping for a school bus. Filed in the Senate.

SB 308: Traffic Offenses – (Baxley) – Citing this act as the "Vulnerable Road User Act"; providing criminal penalties for a person who commits a moving violation that causes serious bodily injury to, or causes the death of, a vulnerable road user; requiring that the person who commits the moving violation pay a specified fine, serve a minimum period of house arrest, and attend a driver improvement course; requiring that the court revoke the person’s driver license for a minimum specified period, etc. Filed in the Senate.