

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

The Forward Pinellas Board held this public meeting in person on February 10, 2021 at 1 p.m. in the Magnolia Room at Pinellas County Cooperative Extension. Presenters and members of the public also had the opportunity to participate virtually to ensure public safety in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the following link for more information about virtual meeting [policies and procedures](#).

The board unanimously approved the Complete Streets Grant Program Awards

The Forward Pinellas Board awarded the City of Tarpon Springs and the City of St. Petersburg with over \$1 million for Complete Streets projects. These projects include a \$1 million construction grant and a \$100,000 concept planning grant, which focus on safety and accessibility for everyone in our community while encouraging redevelopment and economic growth.

Complete Streets projects awarded include:

[City of Tarpon Springs awarded \\$100,000 for Disston Avenue concept plan.](#)

This project's focus is to create a corridor that will revitalize a portion of the historic Union Academy neighborhood, provide more connections for people on bikes, walking or driving, and encourage desired redevelopment and economic growth. The city will spend the planning and design concept funding over the next year to develop a plan for the corridor.

[City of St. Petersburg awarded \\$1million for 22nd Street South construction project.](#)

In response to the desired revitalization and redevelopment in the Deuces neighborhood, this project will improve 22nd Street South with wider and more comfortable places for people to walk and bike. Construction funding will become available in about five years as the project is advanced for funding in the [Florida Department of Transportation Work Program](#).

- Commissioner Eggers clarified with staff that a large part of the Disston Avenue concept plan includes community outreach to ensure the project maintains the existing character and culture of the neighborhood.
- Chair Rice noted that the construction project in St. Petersburg will go a long way to revitalizing a community previously displaced by the introduction of the interstate system. In addition, Rice clarified with staff that the limits of this project are from 11th Avenue South to 18th Avenue South.

- City of St. Petersburg citizen, Mr. Charlie Guy, thanked the board for the award of the 22nd Street South construction project and noted that it will encourage economic growth and tourism in this area.

The board unanimously approved modifications to the FY 2020/21-FY2024/25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The Forward Pinellas Board approved the modifications to the TIP to reflect the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) recent reduction of funds to Forward Pinellas by about \$120,000 for FY21. The TIP modification was needed to incorporate changes due to FDOT's recent announcement that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5305 grant for FY21 match will be a 20% soft match instead of a 10% hard match (which was then matched by 10% local funds).

Mr. Blanton clarified that a hard match allows FDOT to reimburse Forward Pinellas with a cash match. With a soft match, FDOT uses toll revenue credits as a state match and Forward Pinellas is not able to be reimbursed, resulting in a reduction of funding.

The board unanimously approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the I-4 Coalition

The Forward Pinellas Board, along with all MPOs in the mid-Florida region, are developing an MOU to form a Mid/Central Florida Corridor Coalition, or I-4 Coalition, that will form a working group of staff members to explore ways to maximize efficiency of the existing network resources, identify ways to address equity in the implementation of transformative technologies, and provide regular updates on the Coalition's progress to the MPOs. The purpose of the Mid/Central Florida Corridor Coalition is to emphasize the importance of the I-4 corridor and share information, data, resources, and lessons learned with the goal of formalizing coordination and support.

- Commissioner Eggers spoke in support of this MOU, agreeing that this coordination is critically important to elevate the discussion regarding common challenges and solutions throughout the state.
- Mr. Blanton added that mobility solutions along I-4 extend beyond the roadway and should focus on the larger corridor that integrates with local roads that can directly impact each other, for better or for worse. This statewide coordination of technologies and various approaches would help calm congestion and ensure we were maximizing our resources.
- Chair Rice clarified with staff that this coalition would enhance congestion management, address incident management to increase emergency response time, and would complement the current, state evacuation plan to create an interconnected system.

The board unanimously approved the Safety Performance Measures & Targets

The safety of the transportation network is monitored in a number of ways, including through the performance measures and targets required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). While Pinellas County is experiencing a downward trend in the number of fatal and serious injury crashes

overall from the 2014-2018 reporting period, there is still progress to be made toward achieving the targets set last year. Therefore, the board approved keeping the targets the same for this year and restated the goal of zero fatalities on the transportation network.

- Mr. Blanton noted that we were not only identifying targets, but we are also proposing actions to achieve these goals with the Safe Streets Pinellas Action Plan, which will come to the board in March. This action plan has a series of strategic action items we can use as tools in partnership with FDOT, PSTA and local governments to create collective action throughout Pinellas.
- Commissioner Eggers clarified with staff that there have been no changes in the number or severity of trail-related bike crashes.

The board unanimously approved an amendment to the Pinellas County Truck Route Plan

The Forward Pinellas Board approved an amendment to the Pinellas County Truck Route Plan in response to residents in the Town of Kenneth City. This amendment will remove the truck route designation from a residential segment of 58th Street between 38th Avenue North and 62nd Avenue North.

The board approved one amendment to the Countywide Plan Map

- The board recommended approval of one amendment:
 - An amendment from the City of Largo to amend the property at 6021 142nd Avenue North from Public/Semi-Public to Office to allow for the use of the building as private office space. (11-0)

Other Items

- PSTA Activities-
 - PSTA proposed a Sustainable Strategic Plan aiming for the “Gold Recognition” sustainability status from the American Public Transportation Agency.
 - PSTA now leads the state with the largest fleet of hybrid buses.
 - PSTA officially opened the first Inductive Wireless Electric Bus Charging Station on the east coast of the United States.
- TBARTA Activities-
 - Senator Brandes filed a bill in the Florida Senate to dissolve TBARTA as a regional transit agency.
 - Mr. Blanton addressed the impact of the bill and how it may affect regional collaboration on a range of transportation issues from planning to funding and operation of transit services. He expressed the importance of continuing efforts to strengthen regional transportation in Tampa Bay.
- Through coordination with FDOT and Pinellas County, funding is in place for the Dunedin Causeway project including roadway improvements, new crosswalks, and enhanced technology. However, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection removed the

improvement of the Honeymoon Island State Park entrance from their funded projects for FY21 due to Covid-related budget cuts. Forward Pinellas is working with the City of Dunedin to try to remedy this issue. Mayor Bujalski added that this project would alleviate a significant amount of congestion on the Dunedin Causeway and hopes the crosswalk can be completed by July.

- By April, TBARTA plans to advance a proposal for the Aerial Feasibility Study, which would be an engineering and planning feasibility analysis of downtown St. Petersburg and downtown Clearwater to Clearwater Beach.
- Several local cities have submitted legislative earmark requests, which, if approved, would push back projects currently in the FDOT Work Program. Mr. Blanton implored each of the board members to spread the word that there is no legislative “set aside” for earmarks and is open to ideas about what we can do to reinforce the current process to get projects funded without earmarks.
- Common ideas from the board workshop in January included building regional partnerships as well as focusing on jobs, employment, tourism, resiliency, safety and funding. These ideas will help staff develop new SPOTlight areas for board approval. In addition, Forward Pinellas will restart conversations on transportation funding with Pinellas County and PSTA.
- FDOT developed an Electric Vehicle Master Plan to encourage the furtherance of electric vehicles throughout Florida. An aggressive adoption of electric vehicles in Florida could affect our transportation revenues by up to 30% by the year 2035. Nationwide, agencies are looking for alternatives that would provide a sustainable funding source as an alternative to the gas tax.
- Forward Pinellas staff announced the debut of its new website, www.ForwardPinellas.org, featuring a streamlined, modern design, improved functionality, and easy access to essential information to help our residents and partners learn about what’s going on in their community and how they can get involved in these decisions.
- Forward Pinellas is pleased to announce our 2nd self-guided “Bike Your Own City” scavenger hunt for residents throughout Pinellas County during the entire month of March to celebrate Florida Bike Month. To learn more, visit: www.ForwardPinellas.org/BikeYourCity

Action Sheet

February 10, 2021

At its February meeting, the Forward Pinellas Board took the following official actions:

- **Consent Agenda** (vote: 11-0)

Approved to include the following:

- A. Approval of Minutes of the January 13, 2021 Meeting
- B. Approval of Committee Appointments
- C. Acceptance of Quarter One Financial Report

- **Modification to the FY 2020/21 – FY 2024/25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Following a presentation by Forward Pinellas staff and public hearing, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the modification to the TIP to adjust FDOT's match for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5305 Grant for FY21 to a 20% soft match instead of the previous 10% hard match from the state along with a local 10% match. This will result in a reduction of available funds to Forward Pinellas of about \$120,000 for FY21. (vote: 11-0)

- **Countywide Plan Map Amendment(s)**

One case was recommended for approval:

1. **CW 21-04 – City of Largo** (vote: 11-0)

- **Memorandum of Understanding for I-4 Coalition**

Following a presentation by staff member Chelsea Favero, the board authorized the Executive Director to execute the final version of an MOU for the creation of an I-4 Corridor Coalition. (vote: 11-0)

- **Complete Streets Grant Program Awards**

Following a presentation by staff member Angela Ryan, the board approved the grant awards as outlined. (vote: 11-0)

- **Safety Performance Measures and Targets**

Following a presentation by staff member Chelsea Favero, the board approved the Safety Performance Measures and Targets as outlined. (vote: 11-0)

- **Amendment(s) to Pinellas County Truck Route Plan**

Following a presentation by staff member Chelsea Favero, the board approved the amendment to the Pinellas County Truck Route Plan to remove the truck route designation along a residential segment of 58th Street between 38th Avenue North and 62nd Avenue North in Kenneth City. (vote: 11-0)

- **Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee Update**

Following an update by the executive director, the board voted to authorize the Executive Director to draft two letters. The first letter is to US DOT and the Biden Administration to encourage the adoption of a Vision Zero Program at the federal level. The second letter is to Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg to congratulate him on his appointment and outline some key issues regarding the MPO, funding autonomy and sustainability of the Transportation Trust Fund. (vote: 11-0)