

February 9, 2022

Please note that this summary has not been approved as the official minutes of the board.

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

The Forward Pinellas Board held this public meeting in person on February 9, 2022, at 1 p.m. in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building.

The board unanimously adopted the Safety Performance Measures and Targets for 2022

The board adopted the Safety Performance Measures and Targets, aiming for a 20% reduction in fatalities and a five% reduction in serious injuries, with the long-term goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries by 2045. New 2020 data for Pinellas County shows a 1% increase in fatalities and an 8.1% decrease in serious injuries (based on 2016-2020 averages compared to 2015-2019 averages). Though the five-year average showed a 3.8% decrease in pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities, 2021 has seen a record number of deaths and those numbers are not yet included. Forward Pinellas is committed to working toward our Safe Streets Pinellas Vision Zero goal through speed studies, supporting safety-related legislation, adopting priority projects in the Transportation Investment Program (TIP), and encouraging all local communities to support the implementation of the Safe Streets Pinellas Action Plan.

- Commissioner Smith clarified with staff that the reason we're retaining our targets and not trying to decrease them at this point is because the existing targets have not yet been achieved, but are still considered achievable, but only if others are willing to help. To reach this goal we need legislative support, law enforcement support, and state/local partner support.
- Commissioner Eggers requested we increase the utilization of speed feedback signs throughout the county. Mr. Blanton agreed with this idea and confirmed he would look into a solution.
- Mayor Kennedy requested staff consider bringing more consistency to speed limits on corridors that go through small communities that have varying speed limits.
- Commissioner Eggers responded that speed limits should be set based on the road design and not for continuity.

Dr. Cynthia Johnson presented Private Sector Perspectives - Pinellas County's Economic Development Vision

Pinellas County Economic Development (PCED) Director Dr. Cynthia Johnson discussed their vision to build a more resilient, inclusive, and equitable Pinellas County. As a long-time key partner of Forward Pinellas, PCED helps create an environment where businesses want to move, current businesses can thrive, and where the workforce wants to live. Dr. Johnson strives to intentionally create opportunities to meet the needs of underrepresented communities, which builds a more resilient community that serves all generations. PCED is proud to promote innovation and entrepreneurship through the [ARK Innovation Center](#), committing to equitable development and job creation, which will arrive in St. Pete

in 2022. Dr. Johnson closed her presentation with her theory of Four Teambusters: Lack of Trust, Lack of Transparency, Turf Wars, and Transition. She stated, “Our goal [at PDEC] is we are trusting, we honor tradition but don’t allow us to keep us from moving forward, we are one Pinellas and we’re transparent.” Forward Pinellas is thankful for PDEC’s partnership in moving Pinellas forward.

- Commissioner Long clarified with Dr. Johnson that PCED, Forward Pinellas, and the City of St. Pete are working with a developer who has proposed a mixed-use development policy framework in the 22nd St. S. area. Discussions are ongoing and all parties are hopeful that we can work together to find a solution.
- Commissioner Merz appreciated Dr. Johnson’s perspective of “One Pinellas” and echoed the importance of incubators to the success of innovators and businesses. He asked if PCED considered working with the small business association and development centers.
- Dr. Johnson noted that PCED is the lead agency for the Florida Small Business Center and has subcenters in eight different chambers and several libraries to “meet the businesses where they are.” PCED looks forward to continuing to strengthen that relationship with our small businesses and providing access to everyone.
- Councilmember Gabbard applauded Dr. Johnson’s approach to be more intentional and meet the needs of all our businesses in Pinellas County, as well as the effort to move forward on the partnership for the proposed 22nd St. S. Project.
- Councilmember Driscoll echoed the appreciation for working on the 22nd St. S. Project, noting that when we talk about “Industry,” this is not the antiquated version of smokestacks and noisy factories – but rather, [everything from financial service offices to software developers to research labs](#).
- Mayor Kennedy clarified with Dr. Johnson that they are creating a platform where businesses can see what PCED offers and how to take advantage of these opportunities.
- Commissioner Eggers stated he was glad PCED is a partner on the [TEILS Update](#) and would like staff to be mindful that industrial land must be available for businesses to come to Pinellas County.

Forward Pinellas staff presented updates on the Advantage Pinellas Investment Corridor Transition Plan for Alternate US 19 (SR 595)

Forward Pinellas will begin the Advantage Pinellas Investment Corridor Transition Plan to develop recommendations for Alternate US 19 (SR 595). As part of the Advantage Pinellas Investment Corridor Strategy, this redevelopment effort will encourage enhanced transit service and other multimodal transportation options to link jobs, education, and housing.

The board unanimously approved a modification to the FY 21/22-25/26 Transportation Improvement Program

Forward Pinellas receives federal and state grant funds through FDOT on a two-year Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) cycle. During the January meeting of Forward Pinellas, the board voted to

modify the UPWP. The currently adopted TIP (FY21/22-FY25/26) must be modified to reflect a reduction in available transit planning funds by \$145,332 for FY22. This reduction is a result of a new state matching policy for a particular federal planning grant.

- Mr. Blanton advised that this \$145,332 reduction in federal transit planning funds will affect Forward Pinellas' ability to provide for all the needs in Pinellas County. We appreciate Pinellas County's stated partnership to continue their 10% local contribution to help our financial position.

The board recommended approval of an amendment to the Countywide Plan Map

- The board recommended approval of the following amendment to the Countywide Plan Map:
 - An amendment from the City of Tarpon Springs to amend the property at the southwest corner of Highland Ave. and South Pinellas Ave. from Retail & Services and Residential Low Medium to Retail & Services to designate the property under one land use category, and allow for the use of the property as a medical office.

SPOTlight Updates

- Forward Pinellas kicked off the Target Employment & Industrial Lands Study (TEILS) Update, meeting with the consultants and partners, including PCED and Pinellas County Housing and Community Development, discussing goals and objectives for the project. The primary focus of the study is to identify lands that should be preserved or converted for target employers, lands that could be subject to mixed-use development in the future, and how countywide planning efforts can be adapted to suit these needs. The project is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2022. For more information on this project, visit: www.ForwardPinellas.org/TEILS
- The Town of Indian Shores approved their preferred alternative for a sidewalk on Gulf Blvd. They chose the option with a sidewalk and bike lane on both sides of the road and two travel lanes. Forward Pinellas is working with FDOT staff to add this project to the new 5th year of the state's Work Program.
- Forward Pinellas staff held individual meetings with committee members to discuss the Waterborne Transportation Policy and will present the committee's recommendations to the Forward Pinellas board this spring.

Other Items

- PSTA is moving forward with the SunRunner Rising Development Study and is continually working to replace the aging bus fleet with electric transit. They are also partnering with the City of Clearwater to provide a free Park & Ride service during spring break.
- TBARTA is completing the Urban Gondola Study but pivoting to focus on the City of Clearwater due to local support. FDOT is continuing to communicate with CSX about potential acquisition or use of those tracks.
- Mr. Blanton and Councilmember Gabbard attended meetings in Tallahassee and discussed several bills we support and some of concern, including the advancing [Senate Bill \(SB\)](#)

[962](#) and [House Bill \(HB\) 981](#). They spoke with several representatives about finding a compromise that would respect our home rule and allow Pinellas County to retain the ability to make decisions for our communities.

- Forward Pinellas would like to pursue a strategy to seek legislative approval to conduct select advisory meetings virtually to serve our citizens in a meaningful way. Mr. Blanton will bring back more information on this at a later date.
- Forward Pinellas staff are currently developing a summary of construction projects with the estimated timelines for start and completion dates that will be easy to reference.
- Pinellas County citizen Mike Riordon provided public comment and implored the board to support reducing the posted speed limit on Drew St. to 30 mph and increase enforcement for those speeding in order to increase the safety of this area.

Action Sheet

February 9, 2022

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 12, 2022 Meeting
 - B. Approval of Committee Appointments
 - C. Acceptance of Quarter One Financial Report and Budget Amendment
- **Approval of Modification to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
Following a presentation by Alexis Boback, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the modification to the TIP as outlined. (roll call vote: 11-0; Councilmember Floyd had not yet arrived)
- **Countywide Plan Map Amendment(s)**
One case was approved:
 - 1. CW 22-03 – City of Tarpon Springs (vote: 11-0; Councilmember Floyd had not yet arrived)
- **Safety Performance Measures and Targets**
Following a presentation by Alexis Boback, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, adopted the safety performance measures and targets as outlined. (vote: 11-0; Commissioner Long had stepped out)