

**THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY**

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The Forward Pinellas Board held this public meeting in person on February 8, 2023, at 1 p.m. in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building.

**The board provided unanimous endorsement of the Regional Transportation Priorities.**

Chelsea Favero provided an overview of the projects included in the Regional Transportation Priority List. In accordance with the processes established through the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA), the regional priority lists are formally endorsed by the governing body of each member MPO and transmitted to the Florida Department of Transportation for consideration with the development of the Five-Year Work Program.

- Regarding the priority of I-275 express lanes, Councilmember Floyd expressed his support for the potential for transit use in the express lanes and ability to do congestion pricing. It was clarified by FDOT that the new lanes would include tolls and dynamic pricing. Prospective transit projects utilizing the lanes are under discussion.

**The board adopted the Safety Performance Measures and Targets for the next year.**

Per the Federal Highway Administration, states, and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) must adopt targets for defined performance measures, including safety targets, and demonstrate progress towards achieving those targets on an annual basis. Chelsea Favero of Forward Pinellas presented a progress review of the targets that were adopted in February 2022. Forward Pinellas staff recommends that new targets be set for serious injuries and serious injury rates, based on crash statistics, and recommends all other targets remain the same for the coming year.

- Commissioner Eggers requested clarification on how the number of fatalities correlates to the number of crashes, and why serious injuries have trended downward. While 2021 had a spike in fatalities the number of total crashes remained steady. Serious injuries are down likely due to advancing vehicle safety.
- Commissioner Eggers raised the need for high-risk areas to be elevated quicker with immediate short-term solutions, to avoid future deaths.
- Commissioner Brian Scott inquired if there is data on electric vehicles due to their higher weight relative to gas-powered vehicles. This measure is currently not being tracked and will be brought before law enforcement partners for possible future tracking.

- Mayor Bujalski suggested the inclusion of data that elucidates if crashes are in high tourism areas and if individuals involved are visitors or not.
- Councilor Burke suggested the inclusion of number of citations versus crashes.

**The board approved proposed amendments to the FY 2022/23-2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

Jensen Hackett from the Florida Department of Transportation presented seven proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These projects include Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant awards and addition of construction funding for crossing modifications.

- The motion passed for approval of amendments 1-3, with Commissioners Eggers and Scott dissenting.
- The motion passed unanimously for approval of amendments 4-7.

**The board recommended approval of one amendment to the Countywide Plan Map.**

Case CW 23-02 – A request from Pinellas County to amend a 4.29-acre property located at 2669 St. Andrews Blvd. from Public/Semi-Public to Residential Rural. It is the intent of the applicant to relocate the current maintenance facility for a golf course to an adjacent property and redevelop the amendment area with three single-family homes.

**Forward Pinellas staff presented a draft version of the Forward Pinellas Apportionment Plan.**

Chelsea Favero provided an overview of the apportionment process and presented the staff-recommended changes. Per Section 339.175, F.S., each MPO is required to review its voting membership composition following the decennial Census, and to apportion it as necessary to comply with state and federal requirements. The apportionment plan is necessary to identify the voting membership and rotational seat terms for all Forward Pinellas members and must ultimately be approved by the Governor.

Forward Pinellas staff is recommending changes to the voting structure of the board to account for the latest population data released from the 2020 Census and shorten the length of time in between terms for shared seats. This proposal will increase the number of seats on the Forward Pinellas Board from 13 to 15 voting members and restructure the shared seats to allow rotating members to have lengthier three-year terms.

- Multiple board members noted their preference for adding seats to the overall board, to maintain or increase impact, rather than reallocating an existing full-time seat to a rotating seat (e.g., Dunedin).

- Councilmember Floyd noted the need for consistent, objective criteria for apportionment in the future.
- Forward Pinellas staff will bring back a revised apportionment plan based on the discussion.

**Forward Pinellas staff updated the board on the preliminary Pinellas Planning Council FY24 Budget Development.**

Rodney Chatman outlined the status of the Pinellas Planning Council FY24 Budget. Budgeted funds are used to carry out the primary responsibilities of the PPC, which include the administration of the Countywide Plan, providing technical assistance to our local government partners, and conducting special studies and research. Forward Pinellas is preparing a preliminary budget outline with consideration to projected property tax revenues increase, salaries and benefits increase, and operating expense line-item increases. Pinellas County’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has requested that two proposed budgets be developed this year. One scenario considering a seven percent increase in property tax revenues and one that uses property tax revenues based on the “roll back rate.” A preliminary budget outline is due to OMB by March 3, 2023. A draft budget will be developed by staff and brought back to the board for further discussion in March.

- The millage rate approved by the County Commission last year for the Planning Council is 0.0210.

**The board presented a Staff Service Award to Nousheen Rahman.**

Forward Pinellas staff member, Nousheen Rahman, was presented with a Staff Service Award for her three years of service.

**SPOTlight Updates**

- Executive Director Whit Blanton provided updates on
  - Gulf Blvd Safety Study Community Meeting, February 15 at 5pm, at St. Pete Beach.
  - Forward Pinellas submitted a proposal for Alternate 19 to be a pilot project for the new program, “High-Capacity Transit Corridor Program.” The proposal asks for operating or capital assistance funding.
  - Whit presented the final Target Employment & Industrial Lands (TEILS) Study to city and county managers with an emphasis on it being the foundation for the Long-Range Plan.

**Other Items**

- PSTA Report
  - Incoming Board Members are Commissioners Brian Scott and Chris Latvala.

- The Board voted to approve a SunRunner design services contract amendment for another station near the Pier in downtown.
- The Board approved the commitment of federal funding for the Clearwater Transit Center and agreements with the City of Clearwater related to the exchange of land and the Park St. Terminal Lease.
- PSTA is exploring options to extend the fare-free period on the SunRunner and ways to offset fare revenue loss.
- Regional Activities Report
  - TBARTA board voted to dismantle their agency by 2024. With it, there is a need to reallocate their programs, such as the van pool program.
  - Discussion has begun on a possible MPO merger for a regional MPO. The next time this topic will arise is the March 24<sup>th</sup> Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) Leadership Group meeting.
- Legislative Committee Update:
  - Proposed Senate Bill 102, a preemption bill for housing, which would expand affordable housing funding while it would also restrict local government's ability to regulate density and height of buildings in their community. Comments have been submitted to the Florida League of Cities.
  - Proposed Senate Bill 64 would provide no more than 20% of state transportation trust fund dollars on public transit. Currently, there is a floor of 15% that must be spent, leaving a difference of 5%.
- The Citizen Advisory Committee expressed concerns about Nursery Rd and Belleair Rd, between US 19 and Belcher Rd, regarding safety, congestion, drainage, and visibility.
- Commissioner Brian Scott inquired about 5F on the Consent Agenda – “Approval of the New Agreement with PSTA for 5305 Funding.” Whit Blanton clarified the funding comes to the MPO from the Federal Transit Administration. Forward Pinellas has an interlocal agreement with PSTA to share some of those funds. When PSTA took over the Transit Development Plan in 1990s, the MPO started allocating a portion of the 5305 funding to PSTA for planning activities.
- Board member group photos were taken.

## Action Sheet February 8, 2023

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

- **Consent Agenda** (vote: 12-0)  
Approved to include the following:
  - A. Approval of Minutes of the January 11, 2023 Meeting
  - B. Approval of Committee Appointments
  - C. Approval of Modifications to the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
  - D. Approval of the Scope and Fee for Statistically Valid Survey
  - E. Approval to Release Procurement 23-0365-RFP Planning Support Services
  
- **Consent Agenda Item 5F for Approval of New Agreement with PSTA for 5305 Funding**  
This item was pulled from the Consent Agenda by Commissioner Scott to be acted on separately. After clarification, the board approved the agreement. (vote: 12-0)
  
- **Proposed Amendments to the FY 2022/23-2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program**  
Following a presentation by Jensen Hackett, FDOT, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the first three amendments to the TIP. (roll call vote: 10-2; Commissioners Eggers and Scott dissenting)
  - Amendment #1- 448807-1, PSTA Clearwater Multimodal Transit Center.
  - Amendment #2- 448852-1, PSTA Discretionary Electric Buses and Charge Station 5339(B).
  - Amendment #3- 451129-1, PSTA On-route Induction Charging Infrastructure – St. Petersburg & Clearwater.

Following additional presentation by Jensen Hackett, FDOT, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved amendments four through six to the TIP. (roll call vote: 12-0)

- Amendment #4- 452520-1, PSTA Areas of Persistent Poverty Grant.
- Amendment #5- 452084-1, 46th Ave N at Railroad.
- Amendment #6- 449128-1, Alt US 19/SR 595/5th Ave N from 22nd St N to 55th St N.
- Amendment #7- 256931-4, Gandy Blvd. from 4th St to W of Gandy Bridge.

Following presentation of the last amendment by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, the board approved the final amendment to the TIP. (roll call vote: 12-0)

- **Countywide Plan Map Amendment(s)**  
One case was approved:
  1. CW 23-02 – Pinellas County (vote: 12-0)
  
- **Safety Performance Measures and Targets**  
Following a presentation by Forward Pinellas staff, Chelsea Favero, the board adopted the

Safety Performance Measures and Targets. (vote: 12-0)

- **Board Endorsement of Regional Transportation Priorities**

Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, the board endorsed the regional priority lists of the Transportation Management Area Leadership Group (TMA) and the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA).

(vote: 12-0)