



Board Meeting Summary & Action Sheet

July 12, 2023

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 July 12, 2023, at 1 p.m. in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building.

The board approved the annual Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) Budget and Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2024. Additionally, a letter will be sent to the County Commission expressing the board's concerns about the "roll-back" rate.

Rodney Chatman presented the PPC's Fiscal Year 2024 Budget. Budgeted funds are used to carry out the primary responsibilities of the PPC. Since the May board meeting, the Pinellas County Office of Management and Budget (OMB) advised the budget be based on the current millage rate and standard property tax revenue projections. The Fiscal Year 2024 budget presented is based on a projected 11.7% increase in property tax revenues and a flat millage rate of 0.0210 mils.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Eggers expressed his concern about the 11% property tax considering the rate of inflation.
- Mayor Bujalski and Chair Long relayed discussion from the Executive Committee regarding the organizational need for currently unfilled positions, particularly a grants writer position and a technical analyst position.
- Councilor Burke also expressed concern about the lack of staff positions and having to pull from reserves to balance the budget.
- Whit Blanton suggested moving forward with the staff recommendation and millage, considering the need to approve a budget. Then, the board can revisit the budget around October with a strategy for addressing staffing concerns. He also forwarded that the position would be titled as a grants & partnerships position and would have more expansive job responsibilities beyond grant writing.
- Mayor Bujalski proposed that a letter be sent to the County Commission that shows the board's support to add the grants and partnerships position.

The Forward Pinellas Board voted to reconvene at a Special Meeting in August to finalize and approve the Apportionment Plan.

At the request of the board, Chelsea Favero brought back the Forward Pinellas Apportionment Plan. Reviewing the apportionment plan is a state and federal requirement and is necessary to identify the

voting membership and rotational seat terms for the Forward Pinellas Board. Alternatives presented address comments made by board members in May that any plan moving forward provide for more proportionate representation from all members, while also adhering to the legal requirements that the Board of County Commissioners retain a minimum of 20% of the seats, and retaining a seat for the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority.

Discussion:

- The following discussion points relate to Tarpon Springs having a designated seat on the board.
 - Mayor Vatikiotis of Tarpon Springs expressed the desire for formal representation for Tarpon Springs on the board, citing there were multiple projects affecting Tarpon Springs brought up, just today, with no opportunity for input.
 - Chair Long noted the board has multiple members who represent the entire county and a rotating seat that represents Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs specifically.
 - Councilmember Driscoll added there is a space after each discussion item for public comment which would be an ideal opportunity for input.
 - Councilmember Buchman, the current representative for Tarpon Springs, expressed that he believes a designated seat for Tarpon Springs would be beneficial.
 - Mayor Will likes the staff recommendation of 15 seats, but with the extra seat to Tarpon Springs instead of St. Petersburg.
 - Councilor Burke cited the success of the board's function in allocating funds to Tarpon Springs for projects despite not having a designated seat.
- Councilmember Muhammad noted that aside from having a formal seat on the board, there are also multiple ways municipalities can get involved and make their voice heard. In the example of Tarpon, projects are being funded, so their interests are being served.
- Assistant City Manager Dan Slaughter of Clearwater relayed Councilmember Albritton's support for alternative 2 as the most equitable option regarding population.
- Commissioner Jeff Gow of Dunedin forwarded the importance of maintaining a seat for Dunedin, especially considering its tourism impact (e.g., Jolley Trolley routes, visits to the Chamber of Commerce, Honeymoon Island visitation).
- Councilmember Driscoll added that although a precedent has been set to allot seats by population, an exception has been made previously for Dunedin after much consideration, and thus, is not inconceivable to do so for other cities.
- Commissioner Eggers suggested that in the context of considering a future regional MPO, more representation on the board is preferred and desires another seat for St. Petersburg based on population.
- Commissioner Eggers also proposed an edit to alternative 3 to make a total of 19 seats, with an additional seat to St. Petersburg. This plan maintains the proportion needed from the Board of County Commissioners. Multiple other board members noted their support of this new proposal.

- Whit Blanton said state statute limits the board to 25 members; so, 19 members could work. A larger board may just mean longer meetings and less one-on-one time between members and the Executive Director.
- Whit Blanton also clarified that we are required to submit the Apportionment Plan at this time, per FDOT and as a follow up to the census, but can revisit it at any time without a specific deadline.
- After Commissioner Eggers' proposal failed to garner 10 votes representing 75 percent of the board's membership, the board voted to schedule a special meeting to revisit the proposal.

The board adopted the Housing Action Plan.

Linda Fisher of Forward Pinellas presented the Housing Action Plan. The Housing Action Plan creates a policy framework that will guide the efforts of the Housing Compact. Participating local governments of the Housing Compact are committed to developing a common set of policies and resources to make it easier to create both traditional affordable housing and diverse market-rate housing. With the plan approved, it will be forwarded to the other Compact Partner local governments for their endorsement, beginning with the Board of County Commissioners.

Discussion

- Mayor Will requested clarification on the Housing Action Plan's intent to address racism and the intersection of race/ethnic identity and public health. Linda noted research shows ethnic minorities disproportionately experience social stressors, such as poverty and discrimination, which negatively impact their health and access to housing. This topic emerged from extensive community discussion across the county.

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

Jensen Hackett from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requested the Forward Pinellas Board's approval of an amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Amendment-FPN 440247-1 - SR 686/Roosevelt from E of US 19 E of Lightwave Drive. This amendment is for design funds for a resurfacing project along Roosevelt Blvd in the amount of \$1,205,904. This amendment is needed to obtain federal authorization in advance of the start of the project later this year.

The board adopted the FY 2023/24-FY2027/28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Forward Pinellas is required to adopt a fiscal year (FY) 2023/24 – FY 2027/28 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by July 15, 2023, for the county to receive state and federal funding for transportation projects. Ariane Martins presented highlights of the projects included in FDOT's FY 2023/24 – FY 2027/28 Final Tentative Work Program, which are to be incorporated into the TIP.

The board approved the Multimodal Priority List along with a letter to the Florida Department of Transportation to expedite the I-175 Project Development and Environmental Study.

Forward Pinellas adopts project priority lists for its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on an annual basis. These lists are used for the allocation of federal and state funding. Since the last update to the Multimodal Priority List, 12 projects were allocated funding and staff proposed the addition of several new projects.

Discussion:

- Mayor Bujalski inquired about the timeline for the SR 580 corridor study completion. It will be completed by the end of the year.
- Chair Long asked for the time frame for all priorities listed. The long list of funded projects will either be completed or under construction within the next five years. For unfunded projects, the timeline is unclear. To devote attention to completing these projects in a timely manner, Forward Pinellas is not requesting new multimodal priority projects from local governments in the current call for projects.
- Executive Director Whit Blanton requested the board submit a letter, along with the priority list, to the Florida Department of Transportation to communicate a sense of urgency in funding the I-175 Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study, a priority from the Downtown St. Pete Mobility Study. The City of St. Petersburg requested this project be funded as soon as practical to align with the redevelopment of the historic Gas Plant neighborhood.
- David Geddis Jr. expressed concern about the roundabout in Palm Harbor, citing recent damage to a couple of vehicles.

The board approved the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Priority List.

Forward Pinellas adopts project priority lists for its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on an annual basis. These lists are used for the allocation of federal and state funding. Since the last update to the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Priority List, three projects were allocated full funding and five new projects were proposed.

The board approved the PPC and MPO Annual Audits for Fiscal Year 2022.

Lauren Strobe of Cherry Bekaert presented the independent professional financial audit reports of the PPC and MPO, which are conducted each year. The MPO and PPC are in full compliance with all applicable financial requirements.

The board adopted a resolution recommending approval of the proposed amendments to the Countywide Plan and transmitting the package to the Countywide Planning Authority.

Jared Austin presented Countywide Plan amendments that address the 2023 Target Employment and Industrial Land Study (TEILS) Update.

Discussion:

- Councilmember Driscoll asked how much is needed to complete the requirements for the Special Area Plan. Forward Pinellas has a meeting with St. Petersburg staff frequently regarding this. The timeline is to have the amendments to the board by January. For the Warehouse Arts District, Liz Abernethy has submitted a budget request and the completion of that planning process can take 6-9 months. In the meantime, St. Petersburg has held community charettes to further clarify the vision for the Warehouse Arts District.
- Mayor Bujalski inquired if other cities also proposed employment centers that have not been completed. The Lealman Community Redevelopment Area (CRA) Advisory Committee has recently approved budgeting funds for a master plan effort that would meet these criteria, and another is proposed in the City of Tarpon Springs, but staff has not indicated the desire to move forward yet.
- Commissioner Michael Smith asked where the proposed changes originated and how long cities had to review them. Cities have been involved throughout the entire TEILS process, with multiple one-on-one meetings. The TEILS subcommittee included local elected officials, private sector stakeholders, and target employers. Feedback from cities has been incorporated and they have been supportive of the proposed changes.

Jared Austin then presented Countywide Plan amendments that address the Multi-Modal Accessibility Index (MAX) Update.

Discussion:

- Mayor Bujalski noted that it would be easier to vote on the change if there was a map that shows the scores on the major roadways. Cities could also use it as a guiding model when proposing projects. Jared Austin noted there is an online interactive map available and added that this new index allows for more flexibility, so projects that would be automatically denied according to the original level of service can move forward for consideration.
- Jared Austin clarified projects just need a score improvement, and do not have to be scored at the average of 7.5. Intersection improvements count, which go into the CIP and TIP and are counted in the MAX scoring. Roadway level of service will still be part of the consideration.

Lastly, Linda Fisher presented Countywide Plan Amendments on additional planning topics that have been discussed with our member local governments to include Transfers of Density/Intensity, Multijurisdictional Activity Centers, the Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA), Density/Intensity Bonuses and a few housekeeping amendments.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Eggers inquired about how density is transferred. Linda elaborated that it is possible to transfer density and intensity and is based on square footage. The amount is the same before and after; it just moves. The floor area ratio is not transferred, because it can create an inequality.

The board recommended approval of the following amendments to the Countywide Plan Map.

- Case CW 23-05 – A request from Pinellas Park to amend a 12.9-acre property located at 10601 US Highway 19 North from Retail & Services to Employment. The applicant desires to utilize a portion of the site for outdoor storage, retaining the existing 125,460 square foot structure for warehouse uses and constructing a new 600 square foot structure at the front of the site.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Eggers inquired if the warehouse is at risk with the new designation, emphasizing that warehouse space is vital for employment. Pinellas Park staff, Derek Reeves, clarified the warehouse will be kept and that this amendment would incentivize industrial use going forward.
- Case CW 23-06 – A request from the City of Tarpon Springs to amend a 1.06-acre property located at 200 Dixie Highway from Residential Medium to Public/Semi-Public. The city has owned and utilized this property to support its public utility operations. While the current Residential Medium category permits these uses up to a 3-acre maximum, the local future land use category does not, thus triggering the amendment.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Smith inquired if there were public comments on the amendment. Tarpon Springs staff, Ali Keen, shared that one individual living in the vicinity had an objection to prospective future improvements to the site, not the current amendment.
- Case CW 23-07 – A request from Pinellas County to amend an 18.5-acre property located at 13690 Stoneybrook Drive from Employment, Target Employment Center, and No Designation to Public/Semi-Public and Target Employment Center. To ensure that the St. Pete-Clearwater International Airport (PIE) can adequately accommodate the demand expected during the 20-year planning period, the new master plan identified several improvements that are necessary to maintain a safe and efficient facility and maximize the airport's flexibility to respond to future development opportunities, such as the construction of a partial parallel taxiway southeast of Runway 4-22.

Discussion:

- Councilor Burke requested clarification on where the new taxi route would be located and how it may affect the noise level for residents. Tom Jewsbury, Executive Director of

the St. Pete/Clearwater Airport, shared that a completed analysis showed minimal to no change in noise level.

Forward Pinellas staff presented a status update to Forward Pinellas Board on the Advantage Pinellas 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

Chelsea Favero provided an overview of the activities underway to develop Advantage Pinellas 2050. Forward Pinellas, as the MPO for Pinellas County, is required to develop a long range transportation plan (LRTP) every five years. Thus far, a statistically valid survey has been completed identifying priorities for investment and a website developed that provides an additional tool for public feedback. A kick-off event is being scheduled and in-person outreach opportunities are planned for fall 2023 to spring 2024.

Discussion:

- Mayor Bujalski noted it is important to coordinate with information from Visit St. Pete/Clearwater reports, particularly regarding visitors' extensive use of cars. Chelsea Favero shared that this will be incorporated using the following data sets: location mapping of hotel and motel units, average annual daily traffic rates, which include tourists' movement, and a regional visitor's survey from FDOT, conducted in coordination with the Visitors Bureau.
- Chair Long also added the need to consider the future influence of technology. Chelsea confirmed this will be included as well, such as the impacts of automated vehicles, electric vehicles, and charging infrastructure.
- Councilmember Muhammad expressed the need to communicate why some public desires cannot be met. Chelsea provided examples of challenges in addressing the public's desires, such as widening roads and expanding bike trails. She added the agency's outreach results from five years ago was a key data point that enabled more flexibility in how federal funds may be utilized for future LRTPs.

Forward Pinellas staff presented an update on the Advantage Alt 19 project.

Christina Mendoza presented the status of the Advantage Alt 19 project. To date, the project team has completed the corridor characteristics and opportunities analysis and is currently wrapping up the redevelopment vision for the corridor. This vision encourages the incorporation of enhanced transit service and other multimodal transportation options to link jobs, job training, and workforce housing. Next steps are to finalize the Redevelopment and Transit Vision and another round of public outreach this fall.

The board welcomed new Forward Pinellas staff.

The board welcomed Valerie Brookens (Principal Planner) and Emma Wennick (Program Planner) to the Forward Pinellas team.

Other Items

- PSTA Report
 - The PSTA Board approved General Services Contracts for work that relates to engineering, planning, project development, and technology assessment.
 - The PSTA Board also approved a new program to provide free fares to Veterans for implementation later this year.
 - Ridership has been increasing. May 2023 was 17% higher compared to May 2022 and year to date is 24% higher.
- Regional Activities Report
 - The Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA) adopted the Transportation Regional Incentive Program Priorities (TRIP) and the Multiuse Trail Priorities (MUT). A new addition to the TRIP priority list is 126 Ave N. The Multiuse Trail Priorities now also include the completion of the Pinellas Trail Loop and Joes Creek Greenway Trail.
 - SCTPA launched a regional needs assessment as part of the LRTP.
 - Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) Leadership Group is starting a public engagement phase to ask citizens around the tri-county area how transportation decisions should be made. A survey will go out later this month.
- Public Comment:
 - David Geddis Jr. expressed his concern over how the Pinellas County Variance of Reclaimed Water affects the water supply and his religious beliefs.

Action Sheet July 12, 2023

At its July 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 May 10, 2023 Meeting
 - B. Approval of Committee Appointments
 - C. Acceptance of Quarter Two Financial Statement and Approval of Budget Amendment(s)
 - D. Adoption of Resolution Authorizing Execution of Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) Grant Agreement
 - E. Approval of Funding Agreement for Complete Streets Project with the City of Pinellas Park
 - F. Approval of Release of Procurements for Auditing Services; Crash Data, Traffic Counts, and Level of Service Database Program; and Accounting Services
 - G. Approval of PSTA Transit Planning Funding Agreement

- **Proposed Amendments to the FY 2022/23-2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program**
Following a presentation by Jensen Hackett, FDOT, and a public hearing, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved an amendment to the TIP. (roll call vote: 11-0)
- **Adoption of the FY 2023/24-2027/28 Transportation Improvement Program**
Following a presentation by Ariane Martins, Forward Pinellas staff, and a public hearing, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, adopted the TIP. (roll call vote: 11-0)
- **Annual Adoption of the Multimodal Priority List**
Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, and a public hearing, the board adopted the Multimodal Priority List. (vote: 11-0)
- **Annual Adoption of the Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Priority List**
Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, and a public hearing, the board adopted the TA Program Priority List. (vote: 11-0)
- **Countywide Plan Map Amendment(s)**
Following presentations by Rodney Chatman, Forward Pinellas staff, and public hearings, three cases were approved:
 1. CW 23-05 – City of Pinellas Park (vote: 11-0)
 2. CW 23-06 – City of Tarpon Springs (vote: 11-0)
 3. CW 23-07 – Pinellas County (vote: 11-0)
- **Proposed Amendments to the Countywide Plan**
Following presentations by Jared Austin and Linda Fisher, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the Pinellas Planning Council, adopted a resolution recommending approval of and authorizing the transmittal of the amendment package to the Countywide Planning Authority. (vote: 10-1; Commissioner Smith dissenting)
- **PPC and MPO Annual Audits 20201-2022 (FY22)**
Following a presentation by Lauren Strobe from Cherry Bekaert, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization and the Pinellas Planning Council, approved and accepted the annual audits for each agency. (vote: 11-0)
- **Approval of Annual PPC Budget and Millage Rate for FY24**
Following a presentation by Rodney Chatman, Forward Pinellas staff, the board adopted a resolution approving the annual budget and millage rate for the PPC and authorized transmittal to the BCC for final approval with a letter stressing the need for additional staffing (at least one position), along with a budget that would support that effort. (vote: 10-1; Commissioner Eggers dissenting)
- **Housing Action Plan**
Following a presentation by Linda Fisher, Forward Pinellas staff, and discussion, the board approved the Housing Action Plan. (vote: 10-1; Mayor Will dissenting)

- **Forward Pinellas Apportionment Plan**

Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, and extensive discussion, the board was unable to obtain the necessary votes to adopt its Apportionment Plan. The board voted to hold a special meeting as soon as possible, but no later than August 31st) to revisit the matter. (vote for a special meeting: 11-0)