

June 12, 2019

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 board adopted the new 2019/20- 2023/24 Transportation Improvement Program

- The annual TIP adoption process involves incorporating FDOT's five-year final tentative work program
- Project highlights include:
 - Construction in 2020 of Bus on Shoulder on I-275
 - Right of Way and Design in 2024 for I-275 lane continuity/express lanes from 54th Ave. S. to Roosevelt Blvd.
 - Construction for various Complete Streets improvements and sidewalks
 - Construction advanced to 2022 for a pedestrian overpass on US 19 at Harn Blvd
 - Construction in 2024 of the 71st Street Trail Connector from the Pinellas Trail to 38th Ave N
 - Construction in 2024 for the Pinellas Trail Loop Phase 3 & 4, from Ulmerton to 126th Ave.
- Forward Pinellas Planner Jared Austin also demonstrated the draft Interactive TIP
 - The interactive map shows project locations along with the project name, project number, responsible agency, and will be adding costs/timelines in the future
 - The draft TIP is available at <http://arcg.is/0CfKif>, and currently requires a username (TIP2019) and password (forward2019)
 - When final, the Interactive TIP will be available to the public and will not require a username or password

The board also approved a new set of transportation project priorities

- The 2019 priority lists look at what kind of projects Forward Pinellas should ask FDOT to advance in its next five-year work program
 - Projects remain on the list until construction is completed
- New projects on the unfunded multimodal priority list include:
 - \$1M for the St. Petersburg Complete Streets project on 22nd Street South
 - \$1.5M for PSTA to replace buses
 - Operational improvements at the entrance to Honeymoon Island State Park to mitigate congestion on the Dunedin Causeway
 - Investments in the US19 corridor to support express transit
 - Gulf Boulevard sidewalk improvements in Indian Shores and Indian Rocks Beach
 - An aerial transit feasibility & operations plan for Clearwater & Downtown St. Petersburg
 - A PSTA Intermodal Center for downtown Clearwater
 - A 4th Street trail connection to the Howard Frankland Bridge between Gandy Blvd and the Big Island Gap Bridge
 - An Ulmerton trail connection to the Howard Frankland Bridge between Fountain Parkway N and I-275
 - A corridor study of State Road 580 to identify operational and safety improvements
 - A corridor study of Drew Street to identify operational and safety improvements
- County Commissioner Dave Eggers asked about safety concerns about trail crossing on SR 580, to which staff replied that grant funding for trails may be available in the future for this project
- Regionally, the TMA Leadership Group had advanced a Top 5 set of priorities, which were also approved by the Forward Pinellas Board:
 - SR 60/275
 - I-75 at Overpass
 - I-75 at Gibsonton

- I-275 operational improvements
- Central Avenue BRT

FDOT staff and leadership from the Town of Indian Shores presented to the board on a drainage and safety issue on Gulf Boulevard

- FDOT is undertaking a project to partially fix drainage problems on Gulf Boulevard
 - The pervious asphalt on the road installed about a decade ago does not work in sandy environments, leading to pooling in the roadway
 - The flooding is often in the shared-use lane of the roadway that bicyclists and pedestrians use due to a gap in the sidewalk network that stretches from Park Boulevard to Walsingham Road
 - Pinellas County has contributed funds to move the utilities
- FDOT is already building sidewalks in conjunction with the drainage project from Park Boulevard to 195th because there is adequate 60-foot right of way (ROW) to do so
- FDOT is also exploring options for closing the sidewalk gap where right-of-way is limited in Indian Shores from 195th Ave to Whitehurst Ave.
 - However, because the FDOT funding for the drainage project is already allocated, the drainage project and sidewalk projects would need to be two separate projects, with the sidewalk project constructed afterward
 - The separation of the projects caused concern among board members over the length of time Gulf Boulevard would be under construction, as well as the overlapping costs for new drainage that would need to be discarded and redone during the sidewalk project
 - FDOT stated there was no way to combine both projects because funding had already been allocated for drainage construction but no funding had been set aside for the sidewalk
 - Delaying drainage construction would require a revision of the plan and a change order
 - In addition, the right of way acquisition could take time due to federal process for property taking
 - The sidewalk and drainage project was added to the Forward Pinellas project priority list
- FDOT and the project consultant presented concepts for filling the sidewalk gap
 - The majority of the corridor is a 40-foot right of way (ROW) from 195th Avenue to the Eastern Sea wall, and from 1st Avenue to Walsingham Road
 - Four options were presented for the 195th to Whitehurst gap:
 - The preferred option was Option 2, with an 8-foot shared use sidewalk with a raised curb on both sides, and 10-foot travel lanes
 - Option 2 was the preference of the town – as well as the TCC, CAC, and BPAC – due to being the lowest cost option for an elevated sidewalk/bike path as it would maintain the existing center line of the roadway
 - Would cost about \$10M
 - Would also require reclaiming public right-of-way that has been encroached upon by private property such as mailboxes and fences
- Board members had questions about whether the community had given input yet, and whether residents had been asked about whether they wanted to maintain parking on the road, as well as whether utilities would have to be relocated
 - They also expressed that without full costs, including ROW purchases, it was difficult to make an educated decision
 - FDOT staff said they would anticipate some more utility relocations and that public input would be sought going forward with the Option 2 recommendation
- The Forward Pinellas board approved Option 2 as the recommendation, pending additional input from the community
 - FDOT had requested a recommendation for a preferred option so that if the funding came through they could have a project ready to go

Forward Pinellas staff gave an overview of proposed changes to the Countywide Plan standards

- The Countywide Plan is periodically updated in response to changing conditions and needs
 - It's based on Pinellas by Design, a countywide visioning effort in 2005, based on the county transitioning from mostly suburban to urban redevelopment
 - In 2015, added the transit-oriented land use vision map, which was coordinated with the Greenlight referendum
- The current update to the Countywide Plan includes:
 - New land use strategy map - new premium transit corridor designation to recognize Central Ave BRT and other priority transit corridors rather than a single light rail transit alignment
 - Revised framework for adopting and amending activity center and multimodal corridor designations
 - Recommending amendment process be revised to allow transit-related densities and intensities in more locations with standard public hearings (Tier II), instead of requiring additional justification (Tier III)
 - Reducing activity center subcategories from eight to four:
 - Urban Center - major downtowns that serve as the employment, retail, residential and public focal points of the county/region – 200 units/acre, 8.0 floor area ratio
 - Major Center - downtowns, town centers and redevelopment districts that are focal points of their communities/the county – 150 units/acre, 5.0 floor area ratio
 - Community Center - focal points for their communities – 90 units/acre, 3.0 floor area ratio
 - Neighborhood Center - focal points for surrounding neighborhoods – 60 units/acre, 2.0 floor area ratio
 - New Activity Center size criteria
 - Maximum 500 acres (½ mile radius from transit stop)
 - Larger than the maximum ok if organized into subareas
 - If municipality is too small, minimum waived
 - Multimodal corridors - provide connections between transit hubs; currently have three, will expand to four
 - Premium - 60 units/ acre, 4.0 floor area ratio maximum
 - Primary - 50 units/acre, 3.0 floor area ratio
 - Secondary - 40 units/acre, 2.5 floor area ratio
 - Supporting - 30 units/acre, 2.0 floor area ratio
 - Automobile-oriented uses (storage/warehouse, businesses with drive-throughs, vehicle/equipment service) would be reviewed as Tier III, requiring additional justification
 - Creating a new Planned Redevelopment District category
 - Alternative to Activity Center and Multimodal Corridors
 - Less density/intensity, more permissive
 - Enable bonus provisions to encourage transit-supportive mixed use development in other areas
 - Adding density bonuses for missing middle housing and vertical mixed use
 - A proposed strategy for priority corridor funding would link land use and transportation
 - Corridors that are adopted Activity Center or Multimodal Corridor, along with additional planning requirements such as Complete Streets and mixed use, would receive priority for funding in the MPO Five Year Work Program
 - The board authorized advertising the proposed amendments to the Countywide Plan, and the amendments will come back to the board in July
 - Board members emphasized that they wanted to plan for future growth in the right areas, and not just to accommodate the growth Pinellas County already has

Forward Pinellas staff presented the Advantage Pinellas Update, focused on the Resilient Tampa Bay project that the Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas MPOs are conducting jointly

- The MPOs, along with the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council and FDOT District 7, were awarded a Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Resilience and Durability to Extreme Weather grant
- Over the last 60 years, there was a 6-inch sea level rise, which the next 20 years are anticipated to bring
- The project partners came up with a creative approach to the project
 - Considers sea level rise, increased precipitation, and storm surge
 - For 2045, the low end prediction is .83 ft of sea level rise, and the high scenario is just over 2 ft
- The project weighted areas for “critical transportation facilities” based on several factors, including evacuation routes, population, employment density, and environmental justice areas
 - Under almost every scenario, Pinellas County has the highest level of lane miles impacted by flooding in the region
- A final resilience report will be issued in the fall
 - The report will include a toolbox of strategies that communities can use to make roads more resilient
 - The report will inform decisionmaking through its incorporation into each MPO’s long range transportation plan

The board unanimously approved the 34th Street Lane Repurposing Project

- The project has been a partnership between FDOT, Forward Pinellas, and the City of St. Petersburg, with the support of the Skyway Marina District
- With FDOT scheduled to resurface 34th Street South in 2022, the project looked to address pedestrian safety and accessibility in the corridor
 - The corridor is a 2-mile section of roadway from 54th Ave. S to 30th Ave S., part of which is adjacent to I-275
 - Currently, the road is operating at less than 50% of its current six-lane capacity
 - Travel lanes would be narrowed to between 10 and 12 feet to accommodate up to 10-foot sidewalks and pedestrian crossings
 - Landscaping would be added in medians to provide a pedestrian refuge
- Improvements include Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes on the right of the road for buses and turning traffic, pedestrian crosswalks, and wide sidewalks on both sides of the road
 - In a survey Forward Pinellas conducted, 80% of respondents support accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians, while 54% support the conversion to BAT lanes
 - Board members discussed the need for accurate messaging on this project, focusing on the new purpose for the BAT lanes so that residents don’t see it as a lane elimination
- Design is scheduled for 2020, with construction scheduled in 2022

St. Petersburg Councilmember Darden Rice presented the PSTA Activities Update

- The update focused mainly on safety precautions taken to protect bus drivers after the fatal assault of a HART driver in Tampa, as well as developments in the Central Avenue BRT project
 - PSTA is developing a plan to add barriers for bus driver safety to the entire bus fleet as soon as possible
- At the time of the meeting, the St. Pete Beach City Commission had just met to discuss the Central Avenue BRT project
 - The City of St. Petersburg was about to vote to approve a \$4M contribution for the project
- Forward Pinellas Executive Director Whit Blanton gave a summary of the commission meeting, which he had attended
 - He supported the option for the buses to turn around in a County-owned park on St. Pete Beach, rather than stopping at 75th Avenue
 - Stopping at 75th Avenue would require riders to transfer to another service to access the beach and hotels, which would diminish the efficiency of the route

- Board members voiced the opinion that the BRT route would be beneficial to St. Pete Beach and were concerned about the effect further compromises to the planned service might have on ridership

FDOT Secretary David Gwynn discussed the previous evening's Hillsborough MPO board meeting

- The LRTP amendment that included interim improvements to the I-275 downtown interchange passed by a 10-6 vote
- This is an issue that is sure to remain controversial, as some Hillsborough MPO members feel that highway investments downtown are anti-transit

Other Items

- The board recognized staff members for their service: Planning Division Manager Rodney Chatman (5 years), Accounting Services Coordinator Rebecca Stysly (3 years), and Secretary Maria Kelly (3 years)
- New Principal Planner Christina Mendoza, who recently joined the agency from consultant Gannett Fleming, was introduced to the board
- The board approved a 3% pay raise consistent with all employees in the County's Unified Personnel System and a one-time increase in car allowance for the Forward Pinellas Executive Director
- TBARTA has received a \$2.5M appropriation from the legislature; \$1.5M for operating, and \$1M to do innovative transit option studies
- The Tourist Development Council and the Board of County Commissioners both have upcoming workshops to discuss transportation funding
- Forward Pinellas is transferring supervision of the multimodal impact fee to Pinellas County Planning

Action Sheet

June 12, 2019

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

- **Consent Agenda** (vote: 10-0, Commissioner Seel had not yet arrived)
Approved to include the following:
 - A. Approval of Minutes of the May 8, 2019 Meeting
 - B. Approval of Committee Appointments (BPAC and TCC)
 - C. Approval of Interlocal Agreements for Planning & Place-Making Grants with the cities of Tarpon Springs and Largo
 - D. Authorization to Seek Quotes for the Collection of Traffic Counts
 - E. Approval of Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan Updates
 - F. Approval of Scope of Services for Advantage Pinellas Cost Feasible Plan Development
- **Adoption of the FY 2019/20 – FY 2023/24 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
Following a presentation by Forward Pinellas staff and public hearing, the board adopted the FY 2019/20 – FY 2023/24 TIP. (vote: 11-0)

- **Annual Adoption of Transportation Priorities**
 Following a staff presentation and public hearing, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the 2019 Multimodal Transportation Priority Projects List, the 2019 Transportation Alternatives Program Priority List, the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) 2019 Top Priorities, and the TMA 2019 Top Priorities for Multi-use Trails. (vote: 11-0)
- **Gulf Boulevard Drainage/Sidewalk Project**
 Following a presentation by FDOT and commentary from the City of Indian Shores, the board endorsed concept #2 for the project pending additional community input. (vote: 11-0)
- **Proposed Amendments to the Countywide Plan – Authorization to Advertise**
 Following a staff presentation, the board, in its role as the Pinellas Planning Council, voted to authorize advertising for a public hearing to be held in July to consider the proposed amendments to the Countywide Plan (vote: 10-0, Commissioner Seel had left the meeting)
- **34th Street Lane Re-purposing Project**
 Following a staff presentation, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the 34th Street Lane Re-purposing Project as outlined. (vote: 10-0, Commissioner Seel had left the meeting)
- **Executive Director Annual Performance Evaluation**
 Following presentation of the Executive Committee recommendations as made by Chair Eggers, the board approved the First Amendment to Employment Agreement with Executive Director Whit Blanton. The Amendment authorized a one-time salary increase of \$1500.00 (equivalent to \$125/month) to adjust for travel within the region (FDOT District 7) effective for July 1, 2019. The board also approved a salary increase equal to that received by all UPS employees (3%) effective October 1, 2019. (vote: 10-0, Commissioner Seel had left the meeting)