



## Board Meeting Summary & Action Sheet

June 8, 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

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The Forward Pinellas Board held this public meeting in person on June 8, 2022, at 1 p.m. in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building.

#### **The board unanimously adopted the FY 22/23-26/27 Transportation Improvement Program**

Forward Pinellas is required to adopt the fiscal year (FY) 2022/23 – FY 2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by July 15, 2022, for the county to receive state and federal funding for transportation projects. The TIP incorporates priority projects identified within Advantage Pinellas, our Long Range Transportation Plan, adopted in 2019, as well as other projects covered in the FDOT work program. Take a look at the [new Interactive TIP Map](#) to explore all the projects included in the adopted TIP.

#### **The board adopted the Multimodal Transportation Priority Lists**

The board, acting as the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, adopted the annual Multimodal Transportation priorities, Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program projects, and Regional Transportation Priority projects. These lists are used for the allocation of federal and state funding.

#### *Multimodal Transportation Priorities*

##### *Funded priority projects:*

- Pasadena Ave. Operational and Safety Improvements
- St. Pete Complete Streets Project – 22<sup>nd</sup> St. S.

##### *Removed priority projects:*

- Clearwater Memorial Causeway Busway
- PSTA Transit along SR 60 from Tampa International Airport to Clearwater Beach

These two projects were removed due to a lack of local support and a lack of operating funds by PSTA to initiate the service to Tampa International Airport.

##### *New priority projects:*

- 62nd Ave. Complete Streets
- Alt. 19 Operational Improvements
- 34th St. Transit Capital
- Sunset Point Rd./Main St. Corridor Bicycle/Pedestrian Improvements

- Duke Energy Overpass at 4th St./Gandy Blvd.
- 78th Ave. - 49th St. to US 19
- Belleair Rd. – Keene Rd. to US 19

Forward Pinellas staff informed the board that two of its active transportation plan priorities, the Duke Energy Trail overpasses of Gulf-to-Bay and State Road 580, would not likely be constructed as overpasses due to opposition from Duke Energy because of the potential proximity to overhead power lines. Forward Pinellas will work with FDOT to continue to explore the feasibility of overpasses along the Pinellas Trail at SR 60 and SR 580, while also evaluating other at-grade crossing enhancements to improve safety, should overpasses be deemed not feasible.

- Mayor Buljalski voiced apprehension about the removal of transit capital funding for service along SR60 connecting Pinellas County to the airports and other tourism destinations. Mr. Blanton noted that PSTA does not currently have the resources to operate increased transit service.
- Commissioner Eggers, Commissioner Long and Commissioner Seel expressed concern about Duke Energy’s opposition of the Pinellas Trail Overpasses at SR 60 and SR 580 due to health and safety concerns for trail users with pacemakers. Mr. Blanton expressed his commitment to continuing advocating for the overpasses while working with FDOT on potential at-grade crossing alternatives.
- Mayor Kennedy and Commissioner Seel requested Duke Energy speak at an upcoming Forward Pinellas Board meeting.
- Vice Mayor Smith clarified the Alt. 19 Operational Improvements include upgrading signage and safety improvements.

**The board unanimously adopted the Transportation Alternatives Program and Regional Priority Lists**

The board, acting as the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, adopted the annual Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program projects and Regional Transportation Priority projects lists. These lists are used for the allocation of state and federal funding. The full list can be found here: <https://forwardpinellas.org/programs/transportation-improvement-program/>

- Commissioner Seel clarified with staff that the Sunset Point Rd./Main St. project is currently a planned corridor without an alignment designed to connect the Pinellas Trail with the Duke Energy Trail and downtown Safety Harbor. Though it will likely use existing right-of-way, Forward Pinellas will work with its partners to secure funding for an alignment study for a combination trail/path/bike boulevard, and some of it may use existing low volume streets in neighborhoods.

**The board recommended approval of three amendments to the Countywide Plan Map**

- The board recommended approval of three amendments:

- An amendment from the City of Clearwater to amend the vacant property on US Hwy 19N, approximately 1,170 feet south of Sunset Point Road from Retail & Services to Activity Center to allow for the development of multifamily residential homes, upon the annexation of the parcel into the City of Clearwater. (11-0)
- An amendment from the City of Clearwater to amend the property at 609 Blanche B. Littlejohn Trail from Public/Semi-Public to Residential Low Medium to facilitate the sale of this city-owned property to Habitat for Humanity for the development of detached single-family dwellings. (11-0)
- An amendment from the City of Dunedin to amend the property at 1900 San Mateo Drive from Public/Semi-Public to Recreation/Open Space to expand the existing boundaries of Hammock Park. (11-0)

### **Brian Pessaro and Scott Pringle provided an update on the Regional Rapid Transit Study**

Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) staff presented an update on the Regional Rapid Transit Concept of Operations Study for the I-275 corridor. Since May 2019, TBARTA has been conducting a Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study for Regional Rapid Transit (RRT) that would connect Pasco, Hillsborough, and Pinellas counties from Wesley Chapel to downtown St. Petersburg via the interstate system.

- Commissioner Seel clarified with staff that the TBARTA board is still discussing this concept plan and has not approved supporting funding for this project. Mr. Pessaro noted that TBARTA has not identified the local share of the operating costs for each county.
- Mr. Blanton clarified with TBARTA staff that the alignment proposed was originally identified in the Regional Transit Feasibility Plan, and a change of alignment would not be as optimal as the one identified.
- Mr. Pessaro noted that since the RRT is tied to the Tampa Bay Next project schedule for interstate modernization, making 2030 the earliest the RRT could be in operation.
- Commissioner Long voiced her desire for staff to lay the groundwork at the federal level to support this project.
- Mayor Bujalski clarified with staff that RRT operations would be contracted and most likely be a public-private partnership. She requested staff to add this topic to the next TMA and SCTPA meeting.
- Commissioner Eggers noted that in order to move forward with the RRT, the Tampa Bay region must speak with a unified voice.
- Councilmember Driscoll clarified with staff that the RRT only uses existing state right-of-way and would not infringe on nearby communities. Scott Pringle confirmed that none of the planned stations are located within the interstate right-of-way, but are in the adjacent communities.

## **The board accepted the Downtown St. Petersburg Mobility Study**

The board accepted the final recommendations from the Downtown St. Petersburg Mobility Study, which defines a series of recommended projects and next steps to more fully evaluate their feasibility. After many listening sessions, surveys, community conversations, and other engagement opportunities, the study identified recommendations directly based on the community's ideas to improve safety, mobility, accessibility, and economic vitality.

The following short-term, recommended actions from this study are designed to propel the City's goal of enhancing Downtown St. Pete as a vibrant, unique, and walkable place that benefits everyone.

- Convert 3rd/4th St. and 8th/Dr. MLK Jr. St. to two-way streets and incorporate continuous bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the corridors
- Implement an engineering feasibility study as the next step to understand the options and impacts of modifications or removal of I-175 and develop conceptual design alternatives
- Implement several projects designed to improve mobility, safety, and accessibility to hospitals and other key destinations within downtown

For more information on the Downtown St. Petersburg Mobility Study, visit: [ForwardPinellas.org/DTSP](https://ForwardPinellas.org/DTSP)

- Mr. Blanton highlighted the strong partnership with FDOT throughout this project.
- Councilmember Driscoll appreciated the excellent work and noted that this study will open the door for many opportunities throughout the community.
- Councilmember Floyd expressed his excitement for this project and encouraged FDOT and staff to ensure that if I-175 is removed or redesigned, responsible steps be taken to ensure growth and economic development doesn't result in any further displacement of the surrounding communities.
- Councilmember Gabbard echoed the excitement for this study and noted that moving forward, she hopes FDOT and staff will work collaboratively to reconnect critically important access for everyone, especially during the continued development of the Tropicana Field Master Plan.
- Commissioner Seel asked if two-way streets actually provide a safer transportation network. Councilmember Gabbard and Councilmember Driscoll noted that one-way streets create higher speeds and this area is seeing increased fatalities especially involving people walking and biking. These proposed projects will not only create a safer environment for everyone but also encourage the promotion of businesses along the corridors.

## **The board approved the Annual PPC Budget and Millage Rate for FY 23**

The board adopted the annual Pinellas Planning Council budget for the 2023 fiscal year totaling \$4.8M and increasing the 0.0150 millage rate to 0.0235, which is equivalent to a \$1.73 increase for an average household. This budget will be updated to reflect the latest property tax revenue estimates and brought back to the Forward Pinellas Board in August. The Board of County Commissioners will be asked to approve the final budget and millage rate in September.

- Commissioner Long, Councilmember Floyd, and Councilmember Gabbard expressed their support for a minimum 5% raise for all staff in the future, and several other board members echoed their support for staff salary adjustments in this time of high inflation.

## **SPOTlight Updates**

- Forward Pinellas hosted the Gateway Partnership Meeting this month, providing a forum where partners could collaborate on projects and needs throughout the Gateway. They also discussed the possible creation of a Transportation Management Organization, funded by FDOT, so long as there is support from local businesses. More discussion on this topic will be held later this fall.
- FDOT responded to a previous request from the May board meeting regarding the pedestrian crossing on US 19 near Republic Drive, stating that any alteration to this crossing would not be technically feasible, would incur a substantial cost, and would result in a significant time delay.
- TBARTA is currently looking at alignment options for the [Urban Gondola Study](#) to downtown Clearwater. No operator has currently been identified.
- Forward Pinellas hosted the [TEILS](#) Advisory Committee Meeting and coordinated with target employers through an employer survey. Preliminary findings from the TEILS will be presented at an upcoming board meeting.

## **Other Items**

- PSTA is currently exploring several grant funding opportunities. The SunRunner Rising Transit Oriented Development Study was accepted. In addition, PSTA will be celebrating Juneteenth and LGBTQ+ Pride with customized bus wraps.
- TBARTA has identified that CSX is not interested in creating options for passenger rail, and therefore are looking for other regional transportation options. US 19 regional bus rapid transit study is still ongoing.
- Forward Pinellas is getting ready to launch the Geofencing Safety Pilot Project with FDOT and the City of Pinellas Park along Park Blvd. More information can be found at [ForwardPinellas.org/SlowYourRoll](http://ForwardPinellas.org/SlowYourRoll).
- This fall, FDOT District 7 will be hosting several workshops in each county to discuss how we can improve our safety record throughout the region.
- Forward Pinellas is currently developing a grant application for the Safe Streets for All Notice of Funding Opportunity in cooperation with several local governments.
- The July board meeting is canceled.
- The annual Joint SCTPA and Central Florida MPO Alliance meeting will be held Friday, June 10, 2022.

## Action Sheet

June 8, 2022

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

- **Consent Agenda** (vote: 9-0; Vice Mayor Reed and Councilmember Gabbard had not yet arrived)

Approved to include the following:

- A. Approval of Minutes of the May 11, 2022 Meeting
- B. Approval of Committee Appointments
- C. Acceptance of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) Grant Agreement and Adoption of Associated Resolution

- **Adoption of the FY 2022/23-2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

Following a presentation by Alexis Boback, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, adopted the FY 2022/23-2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program. (vote: 10-0; Councilmember Gabbard had not yet arrived)

- **Annual Adoption of Transportation Priority Lists**

- **Multimodal Priority List**

Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, and extensive discussion, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, adopted the Multimodal Priority List. (vote: 7-4; Mayor Bujalski, Commissioner Eggers, Commissioner Long and Commissioner Seel dissenting)

- **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program Priority List**

Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, adopted the Transportation Alternatives Program Priority List. (vote: 11-0)

- **Regional Transportation Priorities List**

Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, adopted the Regional Transportation Priorities List. (vote: 11-0)

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

Three cases were approved:

1. CW 22-12 – City of Clearwater (vote: 11-0)

2. CW 22-13 – City of Clearwater (vote: 11-0)

3. CW 22-14 – City of Dunedin (vote: 11-0)

- **Downtown St. Petersburg Mobility Study**

Following a presentation by Christina Mendoza, Forward Pinellas staff, the board accepted the study and endorsed the action plan. (vote: 10-1; Commissioner Eggers dissenting)

- **Approval of Annual Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) Budget and Millage Rate FY 23**

Following a presentation by Rodney Chatman, Forward Pinellas staff, the board approved the budget and millage rate for FY 23. (vote: 10-1; Commissioner Eggers dissenting)