

**March 10, 2021**

*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 March 10, 2021 at 1 p.m. in the Magnolia Room at Pinellas County Cooperative Extension. Presenters and members of the public also had the opportunity to participate virtually to ensure public safety in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the following link for more information about virtual meeting [policies and procedures](#).

#### **The board recommended denial of one amendment to the Countywide Plan Map based on staff's recommendation**

- The board recommended denial of CW 21-06 – City of St. Petersburg:
  - An amendment from the City St. Petersburg to amend the property at 1501 72nd Street North from Employment and Target Employment Center to Multimodal Corridor and Target Employment Center to develop a sports tourism facility with a public lagoon and beach area, and an apartment complex. (8-4)
  - This amendment would not provide the desired number of target employment opportunities, the Multimodal Corridor category is inconsistent with the Countywide Rules policies that preserve Industrial, Employment and Target Employment Center lands for high-wage job creation, and would significantly impact the reservation of Industrial land for future target employment needs.

Nousheen Rahman reviewed the proposed land use map amendment citing the rationale for staff's recommendation of denial. Specifically, that the proposed sports tourism facility and apartment complex is inconsistent with the characteristics of the Target Employment Center category and reduces the amount of Industrial/Employment designated land without meeting the balancing criteria. She showed four comparable Employment/Industrial sites of similar size in the county to demonstrate the employment potential of this site under the current category. The proposed use would not generate a comparable number of jobs that pay a wage higher than the countywide average. An industrial use on the site could employ up to 463 workers. A storage, warehouse or distributor could employ up to 214 workers. More specifically, she advised that the estimated average annual wage for jobs under the proposed project would be \$28,220 compared to the average annual income of \$48,901 for workers in Pinellas County. Furthermore, the proposed amendment would significantly impact the Countywide Consideration concerning the reservation of Industrial land, which includes conversion of the Employment and Target Employment Center categories.

Derek Kilborn, City of St. Petersburg staff, gave a presentation on the proposed amendment from the City's perspective and answered a variety of questions from the board members about how the Target Employment Center Overlay is applied at the city level, other possible uses for the site, the length of

time the property has been vacant, the effects of the contaminated soil from prior industrial uses, and the provisions included in the Development Agreement.

Mike Meidel, Pinellas County Economic Development, stated that the property would be better suited to industrial uses. He stated that the site is much more attractive than it was 20 years ago, citing that the remediation project to clean up the contamination is progressing. He also alerted the board members that the County is actively marketing the property for Industrial/Employment uses and is optimistic, that with the new Penny IV employment sites grant program, additional proposals for projects will be forthcoming.

Brian Aungst, Jr. (attorney representative for Porter Development), Robert Pergolizzi (Gulf Coast Consulting) and Eric Sullivan (Sports Facilities Companies) spoke in favor of the proposed amendment. They outlined the employment opportunities that would result from the sports complex and gave specifics about the workforce housing that would be created. They asserted that this type of sports tourism facility would generate an estimated \$17M in direct local revenues, as determined by Visit St. Pete Clearwater. Mr. Sullivan broke down more specifically the job creation numbers, stating that the project would create about 20 management-level jobs, each paying approximately \$50,000 in annual salary. The remaining jobs would be part-time and seasonal positions. Greg Schultz (Cardno) also spoke to address the groundwater remediation occurring on the site.

Two of the three nearby neighborhood associations, the Jungle Terrace Civic Association and the Azalea Neighborhood Association, spoke in favor of the proposed project touting the value it would bring to the community. Citizens from the third association, Crossroads Area Homeowners Association, expressed concerns about traffic, noise, public safety, proximity to the Pinellas Trail, and the remediation of the contaminated soils and groundwater.

There were more than two hours of discussion and deliberation amongst the board members to address a variety of topics including:

- The goals of Target Employment Center Overlay
- The need for high wage jobs in the County
- The need for workforce housing in the County
- Potential Industrial/Employment opportunities for the site
- Balancing the preservation of Industrial/Employment lands with the viability of this site for that type of use
- Community impacts of the proposed project
- The length of time the property has remained vacant

Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners will hear the case on April 13, 2021 in its capacity as the Countywide Planning Authority and consider Forward Pinellas' recommendation. A second public hearing is tentatively planned for May before the City of St. Petersburg City Council.

### **The board approved three amendments to the Countywide Plan Map**

- The board recommended approval of three amendments:

- Case CW 21-02, an amendment from the City of Tarpon Springs to amend the property at Anclote Blvd. and L&R Industrial Blvd. from Residential Low Medium to Public/Semi-Public to allow for the development of a public works/public storage facility. (12-0)
- Case CW 21-05, an amendment from the City of Clearwater to amend the property at 1280 and 1298 Lakeview Road from Residential Medium and Residential Low Medium categories to the Residential Low Medium category to allow for the redevelopment of an administrative office into a clubhouse. (12-0)
- Case CW 21-07, an amendment from Pinellas County to amend 140.46 acres in the Largo Tri-City Area from Retail & Services, Employment, Office, Public/Semi-Public, Residential Low Medium, Recreation/Open Space and Preservation to Activity Center and Multimodal Corridor to the application of the Largo Tri City Special Area Plan (SAP) to parcels in Unincorporated Pinellas County. (12-0)

### **The board unanimously approved amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program**

The board approved an amendment to the FY 2020/21 – 2024/25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) for the purchase of two new electric buses and a new depot charging station. This funding will allow PSTA to continue its electric bus expansion program and improve the safety and reliability of the system. The total cost of the project is \$1,239,710 and, with a federal grant as the funding source, will not affect any current projects in the FY 2020/21-2024/25 TIP.

### **The board unanimously approved and accepted the PPC and MPO Audits**

Each year Forward Pinellas undertakes an independent professional financial audit of its two legal agencies, the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) and the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). After a review of the financial records, it is the auditor’s opinion that the MPO had one material weakness over a financial close process due to a prior period restatement, and both the PPC and MPO have complied in all material respects with applicable financial requirements for the year ended September 30, 2020.

### **Other Items**

- The board recognized March as Florida Bike Month, supporting bike safety and advocacy all year long. To celebrate Florida Bike Month, residents can join our virtual Bike Your City scavenger hunt the entire month of March. For more information, visit [www.forwardpinellas.org/bikeyourcity](http://www.forwardpinellas.org/bikeyourcity)
- The board unanimously approved a resolution to support the Safe Streets Pinellas Action Plan. For more information, visit [www.forwardpinellas.org/safestreets](http://www.forwardpinellas.org/safestreets)
- Jensen Hackett, FDOT, updated the board on the addition of temporary delimiters, signage and reflective striping on U.S. 19 at 297<sup>th</sup> Avenue North in response to several serious injury crashes in the vicinity of the intersection of U.S. 19 and Curlew Road. A permanent mobility and safety reconstruction project at this intersection is set to begin construction in February 2022.

- Mr. Blanton noted that Forward Pinellas has requested funding from DOT to address interim improvements on U.S. 19 at Gandy Park Boulevard in coordination with the City of Pinellas Park.
- Mr. Blanton also notes that in response to two Legislative Committee requests, Forward Pinellas will be writing a letter of opposition to HB 1113 concerning the modification or removal of Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons, as well as a letter of opposition to House Bill 55, which prohibits design standards for single and duplex housing, creating a barrier to integrating in-fill development.

**The following items were deferred to the next meeting**

- Staff is proposing to remove and add several projects to the [Multimodal Priority List](#). The Multimodal Priority List is not yet final and will be brought back to the board for adoption before July 1, 2021.
- Staff will provide an overview of the research conducted as part of the [TOD Knowledge Exchange Series](#), as well as an update on the status of the SunRunner TOD Strategic Plan.

**Action Sheet**

**March 10, 2021**

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

- **Proclamation affirming March as Florida Bicycle Month**  
Angela Ryan, Forward Pinellas Active Transportation Planner, provided a brief presentation to the board about the virtual Bike Your *Own* City 2021 event being hosted by Forward Pinellas in support of Florida Bicycle Month in March. The board approved a proclamation affirming March as Florida Bicycle Month. (vote: 12-0)
- **Consent Agenda** (vote: 12-0)  
Approved to include the following:
  - A. Approval of Minutes of the February 10, 2021 Meeting
  - B. Approval of Committee Appointments
  - C. Receive and File Community Transportation Coordinator Annual Evaluation
  - D. Approval of 5305 PSTA Joint Participation Agreement
  - E. Approval of Scope and Fees for Waterborne Travel Demand Forecasting
- **Amendment to the FY 2020/21 – FY 2024/25 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**  
Following a presentation by FDOT staff and public hearing, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the amendment to the TIP which allows PSTA to continue its electric bus expansion program and improve safety and reliability of the system.

(vote: 12-0)

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

Three cases were recommended for approval:

1. **CW 21-02 – City of Tarpon Springs** (vote: 11-0, Commissioner Long had stepped out)
2. **CW 21-05 – City of Clearwater** (vote: 12-0)
3. **CW 21-07 – Pinellas County** (vote: 11-0, Mayor Bujalski had left the meeting)

One case was recommended for denial:

1. **CW 21-06 – City of St. Petersburg** (roll call vote as follows: Mayor Bujalski, Commissioner Long, Vice Mayor Allbritton and Councilmember Gabbard in support with Councilmember Rice, Mayor Kennedy, Commissioner Eggers, Commissioner Smith, Commissioner Gerard, Commissioner Seel, Councilmember Noble, and Vice Mayor Merz opposing)

- **PPC and MPO Audits**

Following a presentation by the auditors, the board approved and accepted the audits for both the PPC and the MPO. (vote: 9-0, Councilmember Gabbard, Mayor Bujalski and Councilmember Noble had stepped out)

- **Resolution Supporting Safe Streets Pinellas Action Plan**

Following a presentation by staff member Sarah Caper, the board adopted a resolution in support of the Action Plan. (vote: 8-0, Mayor Kennedy, Councilmember Gabbard, Mayor Bujalski and Councilmember Noble had stepped out)

- **Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee Update**

Following an update by the executive director, the remaining board members (lacking a quorum) consented to allow the Executive Director to draft letters of opposition regarding the bills related to the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (HB 1113 and SB 1412) and the prohibition on building design standards (HB 55 and SB 284) which is in line with the previously adopted policy positions of the board.