



## Board Meeting Summary & Action Sheet

March 13, 2024

*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 13, 2024, at 1 p.m. in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building.

#### **The board approved the draft FY 2024/25-2025/26 Unified Planning Work Program.**

Chelsea Favero presented the draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for fiscal year 2024/25-2025/26. The UPWP is a two-year plan that identifies a metropolitan planning organization's (MPO) transportation planning activities and associated funding. The draft must be submitted to state and federal review agencies by mid-March and the final UPWP must be adopted by Forward Pinellas in May.

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

- Case CW 24-05 – A request from the City of Tarpon Springs to amend 0.88 acres of property located at 1201 Gulf Road from Retail & Services to Public/Semi-Public. The city is requesting the amendment to accommodate the new Tarpon Springs Fire Station 70, which is currently in the design phase.
- Case CW 24-06 – A request from the City of Safety Harbor to amend 0.82 acres of property located at 675 Elm Street from Public/Semi-Public to Residential LowMedium. This case involves multiple parcels that will be owned by Habitat for Humanity of Pinellas County, Inc. The city proposes to amend their future land use map for this site to increase the maximum allowable density to allow for Habitat for Humanity homes to be constructed.

#### Discussion:

- Commissioner Eggers inquired how many units are planned to be built? Marcie Stenmark, from the City of Safety Harbor, answered that they plan to build six houses.
- Case CW 24-07 – A request from the City of Safety Harbor to amend 5.07 acres of property located west of Elm St. and south of Cedar St. from Public/Semi-Public to Recreation/Open Space. The Safety Harbor Secondary School that was located on the property was demolished in 2009. The subject property is being conveyed to the City of Safety Harbor for a future park.

- Case CW 24-08 – A request from the City of St. Petersburg to amend 1.35 acres of property located at the southeast corner of Hartford Street North and 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North from Residential Medium to Multimodal Corridor. The property is owned by the St. Petersburg Housing Authority and the purpose of the proposed amendments is to allow for multifamily housing units, two additional bonus workforce housing units, and nine environmental Transferrable Development Rights (TDR) housing units. It would also permit commercial uses to be potentially developed.

Discussion:

- David Ballard Geddis Jr. provided a public comment stating that in addition to housing availability attention should also be paid to job availability and resource availability.
- Case CW 24-09 – A request from the City of St. Petersburg to amend 5.24 acres of property located at 7045 Burlington Avenue North from Public/Semi-Public to Residential Medium. The property has been owned and operated as an accessory wellness center by St. Petersburg College. The City of St. Petersburg has offered to purchase the property to construct affordable housing units. Up to 30% of the units will be allocated to St. Petersburg College students and staff.

**Forward Pinellas staff provided an update on the Housing Action Plan.**

Linda Fisher provided this bi-monthly briefing which focused on the unique needs of the senior population and the challenges they face in affording housing.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Eggers commented on the Baby Boomers’ potential effect on the housing supply. As they sell off assets and/or downsize from single-family homes to apartments more housing may become available.
- Commissioner Scott asked if we are tracking the inventory of housing that uniquely suits seniors. Linda noted this is being investigated as part of the housing action plan.
- Councilmember Allbritton noted the City of Clearwater has discussed changing the codes to be more accepting of accessory dwelling units (ADUs).
- Mayor Bujalski noted Dunedin had previously changed codes for ADUs, at the time of the last recession. Dwellers had to present proof of relationship. There has been little movement on the matter since then. Without caveats such as these, it opens the doors to vacation rentals and other unintended uses.
- Whit Blanton inquired when the public communication strategy will be presented to the board? Linda responded that it is planned for May.

**Forward Pinellas staff shared an overview of this year’s In-Service Day.**

Tina Jablon presented an overview of this year's In-Service Day. Forward Pinellas volunteered with the St. Pete Bike Co-op, a local non-profit that provides bike repair/maintenance, bike donations, and bicycle education. Forward Pinellas was also invited by the Property Appraiser's Office to educate its staff on the role Forward Pinellas plays in the county for their In-Service Day training event.

## **SPOTlight Update**

Executive Director Whit Blanton provided the following updates:

- Whit met with the Florida Department of Transportation to discuss the Gulf to Bay and Belcher Road intersection study, which investigates the traffic bottleneck. The County has asked FDOT to complete the Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study and move forward on the project. Forward Pinellas has encouraged FDOT to also consider the entire corridor and not only the one intersection. FDOT and Pinellas County are continuing to meet on the matter and will involve City of Clearwater staff as well.
- Waterborne transportation – At the last St. Petersburg Chamber meeting the scoping for an Urban Land Institute (ULI) Technical Assistance Panel was discussed to look into service to connect St. Petersburg to South Hillsborough County, particularly the Apollo Beach area, as there is heavy workforce opportunity to connect jobs and housing. Forward Pinellas has begun discussions with a consultant to do potentially conduct a market demand analysis, and will reconvene the Waterborne Transportation Committee as the scoping and work effort for the ULI panel evolves.

## **Other Items**

- Regional Activities Report:
  - At its last meeting, the TMA leadership group discussed the governing board structure for a potential regional MPO. They found consensus regarding the role of regional transportation operators. These would be considered regional entities and, thus, should not come out of Hillsborough's voting allocation by population, so long as the representative from these regional entities is not an elected official. The role of transit operators will be discussed at the next meeting and the role of smaller cities in the fall.
  - The TMA leadership group also unanimously approved a statement to encourage Brightline to build a new segment from Orlando to Tampa, as well as the expansion of Amtrak in the Interstate 4 corridor. The Forward Pinellas Board endorsed the statement, which will be shared with the other MPOs in the I-4 corridor for their consideration.
- Whit Blanton provided the following legislative updates (not an exhaustive list):
  - House Bill 1487 did not pass. It would have reorganized the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's governing structure.
  - SB 1032 / HB 7049 did not pass. It entailed significant revisions to the operations of MPOs, such as tracking burdensome performance metrics, and the elimination of the MPO Advisory Council.

- HB 1301 passed and will require any governmental entity proposing to repurpose existing traffic lanes to conduct a traffic study, notify all affected property owners and local governments 180 days in advance, and hold a public meeting 30 days in advance.
- SB 328 passed regarding affordable housing. The bill originally proposed to delete industrial from eligible types of land and reduce the preemption of building height, but those provisions were removed due to opposition from the real estate industry.
- Regarding the 34<sup>th</sup> Street South complete streets project - Representative Chaney has organized a town hall meeting on Monday, March 25, 6-8 pm, at St. Pete Beach Community Center. There will be a panel discussion that includes Whit, a representative from PSTA, FDOT, and the City of St. Petersburg.
  - Councilmember Floyd expressed concern for the location of the meeting. He wants to ensure the voices of those who live around this project are heard.
  - Whit Blanton has mentioned to FDOT and the City of St. Petersburg to have a meeting with the Skyway Marina District since they, initially, propelled this project idea forward.
- Whit Blanton provided a summary of the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Ranking Exercise from the February Forward Pinellas Board Work Session. As part of the exercise, board members ranked various modes of transportation for future investment priority. Premium transit turned out to be the mode with the most consensus for priority.
- Public engagement policy discussion:
  - Whit Blanton clarified that Forward Pinellas is a conduit for projects that initially come as a request from the local governments or FDOT. Forward Pinellas does not create and push out projects to communities. Forward Pinellas is considering a public engagement policy for approved and prioritized projects that are advancing through the state's five-year work program and the MPO's adopted Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).
  - Commissioner Eggers noted the need for more targeted outreach, such as using an email database organized by geographic areas and specific topic areas of interest. Whit Blanton noted Forward Pinellas is currently collecting emails via the [advantagepinellas2050.org](http://advantagepinellas2050.org) website.
  - Vice Mayor Knapp shared that the City of Oldsmar adopted a public engagement policy last year based on a model by the International Association of Public Participation. It outlines a spectrum of engagement, from informing to empowering. As a project comes up, you can reference the model to determine what level of engagement is needed or desired for that specific project.
- Public Comment: David Ballard Geddis Jr. provided a general critique of the process government takes to solve problems.

At its March 2024 meeting, the Forward Pinellas Board took the following official actions:

- **Consent Agenda** (vote: 10-0)

Approved to include the following:

- A. Approval of Minutes of the February 14, 2024 Meeting
- B. Approval of Committee Appointments
- C. Acceptance of the Community Transportation Coordinator Annual Evaluation
- D. Approval of Forward Pinellas/FDOT Joint Certification Statement and Summary
- E. Approval of Scope and Fee for Housing Regulatory Toolkit

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

Following presentations by Emma Wennick, Forward Pinellas staff, and public hearings, five cases were recommended for approval:

- 1. Case CW 24-05 – City of Tarpon Springs (vote: 10-0)
- 2. Case CW 24-06 – City of Safety Harbor (vote: 10-0)
- 3. Case CW 24-07 – City of Safety Harbor (vote: 10-0)
- 4. Case CW 24-08 – City of St. Petersburg (vote: 10-0)
- 5. Case CW 24-09 – City of St. Petersburg (vote: 10-0)

- **Regional Activities Report**

As part of the Regional Activities Report, the Executive Director sought the endorsement of the draft statement supporting passenger rail in the I-4 corridor being contemplated by the Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance. The board voted in favor of supporting the statement. (vote: 10-0)

- **Draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the draft UPWP for transmittal to review agencies. (vote: 10-0)