

**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 May 11, 2022, at 1 p.m. in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building.

**The board unanimously approved the FY 23-24 Unified Planning Work Program**

The board unanimously approved the FY 2022/23-2023/34 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), a two-year budget plan that identifies a metropolitan planning organization's (MPO) transportation planning activities and associated funding. State and federal transportation funding agencies provide guidance on the required elements and timeframes for review and adoption of the UPWP, but the way the MPO allocates its funding for the various planning activities is at the discretion of the MPO.

- Commissioner Eggers confirmed with staff that the item in the UPWP regarding waterborne transportation included the oversight of the newly adopted phased implementation plan, as well as working with local and regional partners to secure funding and seek grants for services.
- Commissioner Long requested the Waterborne Committee research the viability of electric-powered vessels for future waterborne transportation services, and the executive director confirmed that could be included in the work activities.

**The board unanimously accepted the SunRunner Rising Development Study**

The board unanimously accepted the final recommendations from the "SunRunner Rising" Development Study, which outlined actions to create redevelopment along the [SunRunner Corridor](#) that is transit-supportive, vibrant, safe, and accessible for everyone along the new bus rapid transit line serving St. Petersburg, South Pasadena, and St. Pete Beach. These recommendations reflect the community's ideas and feedback received through various listening sessions and forums. One common theme from the stakeholders was to ensure that an interconnected network is created within the SunRunner corridor to allow people to easily get to work, restaurants, shopping, and recreation.

Highlights from the recommendations of the SunRunner Rising Study include:

- Create transit-supportive redevelopment opportunities within the station areas to promote ridership
- Create wayfinding to SunRunner stops
- Increase bike and pedestrian connections from adjacent neighborhoods
- Promote housing affordability through density bonuses and height increases
- Increase public-private partnerships, especially to address rent stabilization
- Foster workforce development partnerships by increasing educational opportunities

- Commissioner Merz clarified with PSTA staff that the downtown area included a minimum of two stories within the downtown station areas and a max of eight stories within the village and station areas. These recommendations are merely strategies and the local community will be able to tailor these to their unique needs.
- Commissioner Eggers also clarified that any zoning changes will include local community input.
- Councilmember Gabbard noted that the next steps are for municipal staff to identify zoning classifications for each station and bring these back to their respective boards for consideration and adoption.
- Councilmember Driscoll acknowledged that staff has set up this project with a well-rounded approach that enhances the quality of life and economic development. She expressed praise for the work performed by the project staff and consultants.
- Mr. Blanton noted that these recommendations serve as a useful guide for other areas in the county, including the Alt. 19 corridor. In the coming months, we will begin work on the Alt. 19 Corridor Transition Plan, which will develop a framework to use high-quality transit to better connect jobs, job training opportunities, and housing.

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

- The board recommended approval of three amendments:
  - An amendment from the City of Largo to amend the property at 1199 East Bay Drive from Retail & Services to Public/Semi-Public to allow for the expansion of an existing religious institution.
  - An amendment from the City of Largo to amend the property at 350 Seminole Blvd. from Residential Low Medium, Residential Medium, Retail & Services, and Activity Center to Recreation/Open Space and Activity Center to allow for the expansion of the existing Bayhead Park.
  - An amendment from the City of Largo to amend the property at 10050 Ulmerton Road to bring an existing non-conforming restaurant use into compliance.

### **Alex Burns, USF Intern, presented on the Pinellas Trail Speed Study**

The board heard a presentation from Alex Burns, University of South Florida Intern, on the Pinellas Trail Speed Study. With the rise in popularity and new technologies like electric bicycles, concern about users speeding on the Pinellas Trail has increased. The Forward Pinellas team heard this concern and partnered with Pinellas County Public Works to determine if people are speeding on the trail. Forward Pinellas staff analyzed data from the permanent trail counters to gain a better understanding of speed conditions on the trail and supplemented this data with in-person outreach where staff measured the speed of trail users with radar guns during peak use hours at four of the busiest trail counters. Overall, nearly all of the trail users followed the posted 20 mph speed limit. In order to address the perception of speeding on the trail, Forward Pinellas has committed to working with our partners to evaluate the adherence to the current speed limit along the trail and to increase community awareness and

education of trail issues and proper trail usage. For more information, visit:

<https://forwardpinellas.org/blog/pinellas/the-pinellas-trail-is-perception-reality-and-what-can-we-do-about-it/>

- Mayor Buljalski requested staff look at options for a physical separation of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Commissioner Eggers requested staff look at speed reduction measures (signage and/or education) within high usage areas, especially throughout downtown Dunedin.
- Mr. Blanton noted that the next steps include continual partnership and discussions with Pinellas County and other local governments.

### **Chelsea Favero presented the Draft Transportation Priorities**

Forward Pinellas adopts project priority lists for its Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) annually to ensure that the county is eligible to receive state and federal funding for transportation projects. These lists include Multimodal Transportation Priority, Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program projects, and Regional Transportation Priority projects. The approved priority lists are used by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in the development of its Five Year Work Program. Final lists will be brought back to the board for action in June.

- Mayor Buljalski clarified with staff that the Skinner Blvd Complete Streets project has been moved to FY24.
- Commissioner Eggers would like to see the Duke Energy Trail overpass across SR580 move to a higher priority. He also clarified with Mr. Blanton that other trail bridge crossings on the priority list include overpasses at Roosevelt, SR 60, and Gandy Blvd.

### **SPOTlight Updates**

- Mr. Blanton wrote a letter to the Florida Division of State Parks to request funding for design and construction for the Honeymoon Island State Park roundabout at the park's entrance.
- The next Gateway Partnership meeting on June 3 will discuss further implementation steps and possible projects that could be funded under the FDOT Commute Options Funding Program.

### **Other Items**

- Public Comment:
  - Mr. Todd Pressman requested the board hear a future presentation on an adjustment to a pedestrian crossing on US 19 near Republic Drive associated with a programmed construction project. Mr. Blanton and FDOT District 7 Secretary Gwynn advised that any new design proposals would need to go through all advisory committees and FDOT before coming back to the Forward Pinellas Board and could result in additional costs and delays as the US 19 design is complete. The board voted, four to seven, to deny this request.

- PSTA has increased eligibility opportunities for Transportation Disadvantaged residents. In addition, the City of Dunedin hosted a block party to announce the new Autonomous Vehicle Advantage (AVA) shuttle.
- TBARTA is leading a Regional Rapid Transit project connecting Pasco and Pinellas along US 19, and an executive team meeting is planned this month to refine the number and location of proposed stations along the corridor.
- The MPOAC recently voted to approve statewide freight project priorities.
- Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Notice of Funding Opportunity for the Safe Streets For All program has been issued. Forward Pinellas staff will also learn more about the Reconnecting Communities Grant program for possible future grant opportunities including the Downtown St. Pete Mobility Study.
- With the completion of the Pinellas Planning Council audit, Forward Pinellas staff is reevaluating options for the FY23 budget to ensure that projected revenues cover the agency's expenses. The final audit showed a significantly lower carryover balance from the prior fiscal year, and even with a higher property valuation, this results in an operating deficit for FY23. Staff updated the board on some of the scenarios Forward Pinellas is considering as it develops the final budget for board approval in June.
  - Overall, the board showed support for additional funding options and noted the cut in millage rate that occurred in the past was not intended to be permanent.
  - Commissioner Merz agreed that reserve funds should not be cut and he requested that staff explore options to lower the cost of Intergovernmental Service Charges.
  - The board also expressed strong support for salary adjustments for agency staff in light of inflation costs to help retain and recruit high-performing employees.

## **Action Sheet**

**May 11, 2022**

At its May 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 April 13, 2022 Meeting
  - B. Approval of Committee Appointments
  - C. Acceptance of Quarter Two Financial Report
- **Adoption of the FY 23-24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**  
Following a presentation by Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, adopted the FY 23-24 Unified Planning Work Program. (vote: 11-0)
- **Countywide Plan Map Amendment(s)**  
Three cases were approved:
  1. CW 22-09 – City of Largo (vote: 11-0)
  2. CW 22-10 – City of Largo (vote: 11-0)
  3. CW 22-11 – City of Largo (vote: 11-0)

- **SunRunner Rising Development Study**

Following a presentation by the consultant team from Kimley-Horn (Jared Schneider and Eric Bosman), the board accepted the study. (vote: 11-0)