

**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 November 9, 2022, at 1 p.m. in the Palm Room at the Pinellas County Communications Building.

**Forward Pinellas Staff updated the board on the status of the Target Employment and Industrial Land Study (TEILS) Update.**

Forward Pinellas, Pinellas County Economic Development, Pinellas County Housing and Community Development, Renaissance Planning Group, and SB Friedman Development Advisors, have been working to update the TEILS to address present challenges and identify strategies that can more effectively balance competing countywide interests. The TEILS work has identified several key target industry clusters throughout the county that pay higher than average wages, are export-oriented, and contribute substantially to the gross regional product of Pinellas County.

Jared Austin of Forward Pinellas provided an overview of the work completed to date, including draft recommendations and positive feedback from project stakeholders, and discussed the next steps in the update. The final TEILS report will be presented at the January 2023 board meeting for acceptance and endorsement of its recommendations. Based on report findings, updates to the Countywide Plan will be incorporated in spring 2023.

- Councilmember Driscoll and Commissioner Cliff Merz stated that nuances can be lost when multiple industries and skills are lumped into categories in this way (e.g., Microelectronics/Aviation and Aerospace Defense category).
- Commissioner Cliff Merz recommended a more flushed-out statement regarding Medical Technologies/Life & Marine Sciences as “not competitive with surrounding metropolitan areas” would be beneficial.
- Mayor Cookie Kennedy, Chair, requested meeting notifications and the final report be sent to board members who are leaving the board this year.
- Commissioner Dave Eggers and Mayor Julie Bujalski noted that it will be important to have guidance prepared for cities for industrial lands not included in the TECs.

**The board unanimously approved the Countywide Trends and Conditions Report.**

Robert Feigel of Forward Pinellas presented highlights of the updated Countywide Trends and Conditions Report. The Forward Pinellas Countywide Trends and Conditions Report provides a high-level, annual snapshot of the county’s transportation system. Notable trends from 2017-2021 include: traffic decreased 5%, crashes were down 2.5%, fatalities were up 6%, and injuries were down 8%.

**The board unanimously approved the Nominating Committee recommendation for the 2023 Executive Committee membership.**

At the October board meeting, pursuant to the Forward Pinellas Board Operating Procedures, the board established a Nominating Committee. Nominating Committee members include Councilmember Bonnie Noble, Mayor Cookie Kennedy, and Commissioner Cliff Merz, and met on October 24th to develop a recommended slate of officers for consideration by the full board:

- Chair – Commissioner Janet Long, Pinellas County
- Vice Chair – Vice Mayor Michael Smith, City of Largo
- Secretary – Mayor Julie Bujalski, City of Dunedin
- Treasurer – Councilmember David Allbritton, City of Clearwater

**The board unanimously agreed with the Nominating Committee’s recommendations to appoint members to the Transportation Management Area (TMA) Leadership Group, Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA), and the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC).**

Forward Pinellas Board members play a vital role in serving on a variety of other boards and committees addressing regional and statewide transportation matters. At the end of each calendar year the board makes or re-affirms appointments to these boards and committees.

**TMA Leadership Group** acts on behalf of each of the three MPOs serving the Tampa-St. Petersburg Urbanized Area (Hillsborough, Pasco and Pinellas) to coordinate transportation plans and build consensus on regional transportation priorities. Nominees include Rep – Commissioner Dave Eggers, Rep – Commissioner Janet Long, and Rep – Councilmember Gina Driscoll. Any board member can substitute and vote in place of the TMA Leadership Group Representatives.

**SCTPA** is comprised of MPO board members from the 8-county West Central Florida region to establish regional transportation priorities for funding and coordinate plans across county and urban area boundaries. The voting members are the delegates for each represented MPO, including Forward Pinellas, Hernando/Citrus, Hillsborough, Pasco, Polk, and Sarasota/Manatee. The nominee selected is Councilmember Gina Driscoll.

**MPOAC** represents Florida’s 27 MPOs with an executive director, a committee of staff directors and a governing board comprised of statewide MPO board members. Together, they provide input on federal and statewide transportation policy, establish legislative priorities, and align policy among the MPOs in the state. Nominees included: Rep – Commissioner Dave Eggers, First Alt – Vice Mayor Smith, Second Alt – Councilmember Richie Floyd.

**The board unanimously approved the 2023 Forward Pinellas Legislative Priorities and Platform.**

The Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee met on October 12<sup>th</sup> and November 9<sup>th</sup> to discuss the draft 2023 policy positions and develop recommendations for the full board’s consideration, as well as the top three legislative priorities for the year.

1. Strong local communities: support the rights of communities to govern themselves according to the wishes of their residents.
  2. Safe, effective transportation: support flexible, sustained transportation funding that meets the needs of all users, based on community context, and ensures that our streets are safe.
  3. Robust citizen participation: support increased citizen involvement in local government planning.
- The possible formation of a regional MPO was not included in the legislative priorities at this time but will be continued to be discussed among regional partners and at the local level in each county.

**The board unanimously approved the Fall Update of the FY 2022/23 – FY 2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).**

Ariane Martins of Forward Pinellas presented the Fall Update of the FY 2022/23- FY 2026/27 Transportation Improvement Program. Each year in the fall Forward Pinellas updates the TIP to include the recently adopted transportation capital work programs of the local governments, including local airports, Port of St. Petersburg, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 Grant Program allocations.

- In response to questions from Commissioner Eggers, Erin Lawson, with Public Works and Transportation Engineering, clarified the Sunset Point Road improvement includes sidewalks and enhancements to the roadway, with no widening. Erin also noted a guardrail design is complete and out for bid for the Keystone Rd corridor adjacent to the Tri County Trail connection. It is a traditional guard rail set on the side of the road, between the trail and the road.
- Vice Mayor Michael Smith and Mayor Julie Bujalski inquired about projects involving West Bay Drive, Starkey Road and the Dunedin Causeway Bridges, and county staff provided responses on anticipated timing for design and construction, respectively.

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

The board recommended approval of three amendments:

- Case CW 22-21 – A request from Pinellas County to amend a 13.1-acre property at 10055 Seminole Blvd. from Office and Preservation to Employment and Preservation. The property consists of a 60,000 square-foot office building and the applicant proposes to utilize the

property for light manufacturing, assembly, and processing. The proposed amendment would designate the 5.5 acres of uplands to the Employment category while maintaining the Preservation designation for existing wetlands.

- Case CW 22-22 – A request from the City of Safety Harbor to amend a 3.6-acre property located at 3404 and 3406 Enterprise Rd, a property comprised of two parcels located on the corner of Enterprise Rd. and a CSX Railroad line, from Residential Very Low to Residential Low Medium. It is the intent of the applicant to develop single-family detached dwellings on the property at a higher density.
- Case CW 22-23 – A request from the City of Clearwater to amend two properties totaling 0.891 acres located at 110 N. McMullen Booth Road from Residential Low Medium to Public/Semi-Public. The proposed amendment requests to revise and expand the parking lot for a church to create a more comprehensive parking plan.

### **The board presented Staff Service Awards to Linda Fisher and Sandra Knoebel.**

Forward Pinellas staff members Sandra Knoebel and Linda Fisher were presented Staff Service Awards for 35 years and 25 years, respectively, of service to the citizens of Pinellas County. Thank you to Sandra and Linda for their hard work and dedication.

### **SPOTlight Updates**

- Executive Director Whit Blanton provided updates on US 19 construction projects with FDOT.
  - The pedestrian underpass, south of Republic Drive, will add just over \$1-2 million to the total cost of a \$242 million capacity project. This project includes one underpass, one overpass, and one shared access at Boy Scout Rd., along with the construction of an interchange at Curlew Rd.
  - Forward Pinellas staff met with FDOT about future interchanges on US 19 north of Curlew and Tampa Road. Questions persist for the necessary treatments at Alderman Road, Klosterman Road, Tarpon Avenue, and Alternate US 19. FDOT conducted an evaluation upon request and has presented its findings to Forward Pinellas staff. The department recommended Alderman and Klosterman would likely need to be interchanges as well, with potential at-grade improvements at the Tarpon Road and Alt 19 intersections. This will be discussed in more detail at an upcoming board meeting or workshop.
    - Commissioner Dave Eggers stressed the importance of interchanges to keep traffic moving without adding lanes, as well as the use of new technologies.
    - Forward Pinellas' LRTP has funding allocated for technology investments that could be considered to complement Pinellas County's work on a Connected Communities grant project.

- Sidewalk improvement plans for Gulf Boulevard in the Town of Indian Shores are still in progress. The town is working with FDOT to reduce the overall project cost estimate by identifying potential ways to reduce right-of-way costs.
- Outreach activities are underway for the Advantage Alt 19 Investment Corridor Plan. Board members are encouraged to attend and/or promote future workshops. Information about the plan is available at: [Advantage Alt 19](#). The results of the community outreach will be shared with the board in early 2023.

## Other Items

- PSTA Report
  - Pinellas County funding for Clearwater Transit Center: Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer, gave a presentation on an interlocal funding agreement with Pinellas County. PSTA has developed a project budget of \$44.5 million, including contingency for the design and construction of the Clearwater Transit Center. An estimated \$10 million funding gap exists and the County, recognizing the benefits of the transit center to the entire county, agreed to provide up to \$8 million of any final funding gap. The PSTA board unanimously approved the agreement.
  - PSTA's state lobbyist outlined the 2023 State Legislative priorities, which were approved unanimously. Highlights include Electric Transit Vehicle Infrastructure, maintenance, and enhancement of the Regional TD Tampa Bay Program, and added flexibility of State Transportation funding to allow it to be used for transit and to allow for pre-award authority for state grants.
  - PSTA's federal lobbyist outlined the 2023 Federal Legislative Priorities, which were approved unanimously. Highlights include:
    - Passage and signing into law FY23 Appropriations Bills to secure funding for solar-powered electric bus and facility charging infrastructure and to ensure the highest possible FTA funding levels.
    - Maintenance of existing, fair regional funding split for FY2023 Federal Funds.
    - Prioritization of funding from USDOT grants for a Congressional Directed Spending request for Battery storage and electric bus charging infrastructure. Also, prioritization of LONO funding, Bus & bus facility funding, ferry service capital investment, and other federal funding for transit.
  - PSTA's Heather Sobush and Whit Blanton of Forward Pinellas will be presenting a statewide webinar Monday, November 14, at the request of the FDOT on best practices in MPO and Transit Agency Coordination, particularly as it relates to the Transit Asset Management Plan and Public Transportation Safety Management Plan. It is a recognition of best practice in Florida for the high level of coordination between Forward Pinellas and PSTA.
- TBARTA Report
  - Commissioner Janet Long reported that TBARTA is becoming insolvent due to a lack of state funds and withdrawal of contributions from member jurisdictions and will

request the legislature repeal the agency. A plan to discontinue operations will be presented at the January board meeting.

- She said a representative from CSX attended TBARTA's November board meeting to share information about their plans in Tampa Bay. It was suggested the MPOs carry the discussion forward.
- She discussed the US 19 Regional BRT project that will now be transitioned to the MPOs and transit agencies.
- Work is complete on the Pinellas Aerial Gondola Feasibility Study. Clearwater City Council will discuss in the coming months whether to advance a project or not.
- Demand for the vanpool program, Commute Tampa Bay, continues to grow. There were 194 vanpools in October, an all-time high.
- The Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit Vision Zero Hero Award was given to Mike Riordon at the summit on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- The Board recognized veterans in attendance for their service in celebration of Veterans Day: Councilmember Bonnie Noble, Mike Riordon, Rodney Chatman, and Robert Feigel.
- Outgoing Board Members Mayor Cookie Kennedy, Commissioner Cliff Merz, and Councilmember Bonnie Noble will be recognized at the Forward Pinellas Workshop in December.
- The Executive Director commended Commissioner Karen Seel for recently receiving the prestigious Outstanding Elected Official Leadership award from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

## **Action Sheet**

**November 9, 2022**

At its November 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 October 12, 2022 Meeting
  - B. Acceptance of Quarter Four and Year-End Financial Reports
  - C. Affirm Executive Committee Recommendation for Executive Director Pay Increase
  - D. Approval of Scope and Fee for Regional Needs Assessment
  - E. Approval of 2023 Board and Committees Meeting Schedules
  - F. Acceptance of the Planners Advisory Committee (PAC) Roster for 2023
  - G. Countywide Plan Map Annual Update – Official Acceptance
  - H. Urban Design Services Pilot Program Recommendation – Oldsmar
- **Fall Update to the FY 2022/23 – 2026/27 TIP**

Following a presentation by Forward Pinellas staff, Ariane Martins, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved the fall update to the TIP. (roll call vote: 11-0)

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

Three cases were approved:

1. CW 22-21 – Pinellas County (vote: 11-0)
2. CW 22-22 – City of Safety Harbor (vote: 11-0)
3. CW 22-23 – City of Clearwater (vote: 11-0)

- **Countywide Trends and Conditions Report**

Following a presentation by Forward Pinellas staff, Robert Feigel, the board accepted the Countywide Trends and Conditions Report (vote: 11-0)

- **Nominating Committee Report and Election of Officers for 2023**

Following an introduction by the Executive Director, the board elected its officers for 2023 as recommended by the Nominating Committee as follows: (vote: 11-0)

- Chair – Commissioner Janet Long, Pinellas County
- Vice Chair – Vice Mayor Michael Smith, City of Largo
- Secretary – Mayor Julie Bujalski, City of Dunedin
- Treasurer – Councilmember David Allbritton, City of Clearwater

- **SCTPA, TMA and MPOAC Committee Appointments**

Following an introduction by the Executive Director, the board appointed members to the committees as follows: (vote: 11-0)

- SCTPA – Councilmember Gina Driscoll
- TMA Leadership Group – Commissioner Dave Eggers, Commissioner Janet Long and Councilmember Driscoll
- MPOAC – Commissioner Dave Eggers, Vice Mayor Michael Smith and Councilmember Richie Floyd

- **Forward Pinellas Legislative Priorities**

Following an outline by the Executive Director, the board adopted its legislative priorities for 2023. (vote: 11-0)