

STSC Members

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**SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
COMMITTEE (STSC) AGENDA
October 4, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.**

**310 Court Street, 1st Floor Conf. Room
Clearwater, FL 33756**

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

- 1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- 4. SCHOOL DISTRICT RELATED ITEMS**
 - A. Bus Stop Information Cards**
 - B. School Transportation Update**
 - C. Joint Public Service Announcements**
- 5. SCHOOL BUS STOP PRIORITIZATION**
- 6. CAMERA ENFORCEMENT IN SCHOOL ZONES & ON BUSES**
- 7. OTHER BUSINESS**
 - A. Hazardous Walking Conditions Update**
 - B. SPOTLight Emphasis Area Update**
 - C. STEPS Program – Minutes**
 - D. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update**
 - E. Request for Future Agenda Topics**
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**

Next Meeting: TBD (FEB/MAR 2024)

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School Transportation Safety Committee – October 4, 2023

2. Public Comment



SUMMARY

Anyone wishing to provide public comment may do so at this time. Each speaker will be given a maximum of three minutes.

ACTION: None required; informational item only

School Transportation Safety Committee – October 4, 2023

3. Approval of Minutes



SUMMARY

The meeting summary for the May 24, 2022, meetings are attached for review and approval.

ATTACHMENT(S): STSC Meeting Summary –May 24, 2022

ACTION: Approval of Meeting Summary

**SUMMARY OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY
COMMITTEE OF MAY 24, 2023**

The meeting was held on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at 9:00 a.m., at 310 Court Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room, Clearwater, FL, which did include a virtual option.

Members Present:

Stephanie Meyer, Chair	Pinellas County School Board
Carol Cook, Vice-Chair	Pinellas County School Board
Matt Atwell	Pinellas County School Board/Transportation
Nancy Besore	Commissioner, Safety Harbor
Mark Bunker	Councilmember, City of Clearwater
Mike Eisner	Commissioner, City of Tarpon Springs
Katie Gannon	Councilmember, City of Oldsmar
Lisset Hanewicz	Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
T. Mark Hagewood	Pinellas County School Board/Transportation
Casey Morse	Pinellas County Public Works
Doug Mullis	Citizen Representative

Members Absent:

Roger Edelman	Councilmember, City of Seminole
Jeff Gow	Commissioner, City of Dunedin
Chris Latvala	Commissioner Pinellas County
Cookie Kennedy	Beaches Representative, Mayor Indian Rocks Beach
Keith Sabiel	Councilmember, City of Pinellas Park
Joshua Shulman	PSTA Representative
Scott Swearngen	Pinellas County Long Range Planning
Marshall Touchton	Pinellas County School Board

Others Present:

Joe Camera – Zoom	Pinellas County Schools
Whit Blanton	Forward Pinellas Staff
Ariane Martins	Forward Pinellas Staff
Valerie Brookens	Forward Pinellas Staff
Chelsea Favero	Forward Pinellas Staff
Maria Kelly	Forward Pinellas Staff

1. CALL TO ORDER

Stephanie Meyer, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes for March 1, 2022, were approved with one correction, to change Commissioner Dave Eggers to Commissioner Chris Latvala and to show Commissioner Latvala as absent.

4. SCHOOL DISTRICT RELATED ITEMS

1 – Bus Stop Information Cards – T. Mark Hagewood, Pinellas County Schools, shared that each year, Pinellas County Schools (PCS) sends out post cards to each student with information regarding their bus stops. And it was requested that PCS put extra safety information on the cards. PCS Communications department is working on a QR code on the card that will link to a transportation page with extensive safety information. The cards will be mailed out two weeks before school starts.

2 – Joint Public Service Announcements – Chelsea Favero, Forward Pinellas staff shared that there has been a struggle to get in touch with school district communications due to staff turnover. Mr. Hagewood commented that the same people in communications will also be handling the public service announcements and he will make arrangements for everyone to meet this summer and work on public safety announcements.

5. SCHOOL BUS STOP PRIORITIZATION

Ms. Favero reminded members there are 96,000 students in the district and 40,000 are eligible for transportation under the current system and district transports 26,000 daily from nearly 9,000 bus stops countywide. The STEPS (School Transportation Enhancement and Pedestrian Safety) Committee, made up of law enforcement officers, public work staff, FDOT and decision makers, meets monthly to focus on transportation safety to and from school. STEPS identifies issues that come to this committee of professionals and assign the problem to the proper department to get it fixed. All concerns received by the district are investigated by district staff. In addition, the district conducts bus stop evaluations and all bus stops do meet minimum safety criteria. Staff received direction from the STSC to do some enhanced education directly targeted to the students, which staff and the district responded with the bus stop information cards and public service announcements. County staff is continually conducting cross walk and pedestrian safety education, however, there is still concern about the safety of public-school bus stops. Staff received direction from the STSC to coordinate countywide, identifying a funding source and to come up with a process to direct the funding to make our safe school bus stops even safer. After meeting with several committees, STEPS, Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) made up of law enforcement, FDOT and Public Works and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) made up of engineers and planners throughout Pinellas County, a prioritization process was achieved to evaluate bus stops and direct funding to those stops that would benefit most from additional investment. The prioritization process was reviewed with the committee. Mike Eisner with Tarpon Springs inquired about an RFP for additional lighting costs. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

A. SCHOOL District Related Items Update

For Hazardous walking conditions, PCS usually reviews this item, but in their absence, Ms. Morse shared reviewing the walk paths has begun and hope to be completed by mid-summer. Vice-Chair Cook commented her appreciation for the continued support on making sure sidewalks are put in where they were needed to make sure travel to school is safer.

B. Pinellas SPOTlight Emphasis Areas Update

Regarding the SPOTLight emphasis areas, for A Vision for US19, US19 is under construction from north of SR580 to Curlew Road. Medians have been closed that may impact routing for the buses, and this construction will last for about six years. Bus stops along this route will be impacted. When completed, there will be a pedestrian underpass at Republic Drive, a pedestrian underpass at Boy Scout Road and an overpass at Northside Drive. Staff is working with all the local governments on population and employment projections out to 2050 and working with Marshall Touchton to review the projections as they tie in with the Target Employment and Industrial Land Study. The Study is for looking at opportunities to redevelop underutilized industrial lands and possibly introduce residential which could impact school facilities.

C. STEPS Program

Minutes and Agendas were provided in the agenda packets. The Crossing Guard shortage was discussed immensely. St. Petersburg is short 10 crossing guards, Clearwater is short 20 crossing guards, Pinellas County Sheriffs Department is short 91 crossing guards. This will affect our school zones on how the kids will get to school.

D. Correspondence

At the last meeting, this committee took action to ask that the Forward Pinellas Board send a letter to our legislative delegation in support of three pieces of legislation. There were actually two separate motions taken. The second motion was regarding the bill of student start times, unfortunately this item was left off the letter, however all three pieces of legislation passed. This letter is included in the agenda packet for reference. These bills related to automated camera enforcement in a school speed zone, automated camera enforcement of passing school buses and student start times for middle and high schools. These acts are awaiting funding for the local governments to enable and execute them.

E. Requests for Future Agenda Topics

No topics were requested.

F. Comments

Commissioner Eisner is hoping a bulk RFP will be established to help with the cost of lighting the bus stops. Research will be done this summer and an update brought to the fall meeting.

Vice-Chair Cook asked the committee if the STSC meeting information was brought back to their municipalities and were there any comments or concerns in their areas. Commissioner Eisner commented that Tarpon Springs discussed concerns at their last council meeting. A traffic study was done in Tarpon Springs and results have not yet been shared, however the Chief of Police expressed concerns of now there is a mountain of red tape before any answers can be given. Tarpon Springs has identified where cross walks, were stop signs, and where flashing lights should be.

Our newest Forward Pinellas staff member, Valerie Brookens was introduced. She will be managing the Safety Program, implementing our Safe Streets Pinellas and eventually taking over leading the STSC.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The Committee adjourned at 9:56 am. The next meeting will be held on October 4, 2023.

SUMMARY

A. Bus Stop Information Cards

In 2022, the School District received a request that additional transportation safety information be provided to students that may be riding the school buses. It was noted that the district is already providing bus stop information cards to each student eligible to ride the bus, and that links to transportation safety information could possibly be added to these cards. The district will provide an update on these information cards and of the transportation safety information that was provided with them.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item only

B. School Transportation Update

The School District will provide an update on topics relating to bus service for the new school year which will include topics such as, reduction of arterial stops, bus ridership, and the availability of bus drivers, and how it compares to last school year.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item only

C. Transportation Safety Public Service Announcements

In late 2022, Forward Pinellas, School District and Pinellas County agreed to work together to develop a series of informational videos to improve awareness and understanding of safe transportation practices, related to students and families. These videos have not been produced but there are several free resources that could be used and shared on social media. October 16-20th is National School Bus Safety Week and would be a great opportunity to share safety related educational materials. Below are the links to the free resources:

1. <https://trafficsafetyteam.org/traffic-safety/school-bus-safety/>
2. <https://www.alerttodayflorida.com/Kids>

3. <https://www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/get-materials/school-bus-safety/school-bus-passing>

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: As deemed appropriate, based on discussion

SUMMARY

Since receiving direction from the STSC in March, Forward Pinellas staff has been working with the School District, Pinellas County and the local governments to develop a methodology to prioritize school bus stop enhancements and to identify a funding source for improvements. Meetings have been held with planners, engineers and Florida Department of Transportation staff to develop a process that would include an initial screening process and then further evaluate school bus stops to identify those that could potentially benefit the most from evaluation and investment. An overview of the criteria developed was shared at the last meeting.

Due to some unforeseen challenges in working with the bus stop data, the process to prioritize stops is still underway. Staff will provide the committee with an overview of the work completed to date and highlight how the prioritization will move forward.

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item only

SUMMARY

The Florida Legislature passed 2 bills that became effective July 1, 2023 related to the enforcement of school zone speed limits (HB 657) and enforcement of bus stopping laws (SB 766) through the use of cameras. Staff has researched jurisdictions in Florida that are taking steps toward implementing the use of cameras for enforcement. The results of this research will be presented to the committee for discussion.

ATTACHMENT(S): Municipalities List and Website Links

ACTION: None required; informational item only

ATTACHMENT

Identified municipalities that are taking steps to implement HB 657 and SB 766

HB 657 - School Zone Cameras

1. City of Eustis - Cameras will go live in two Eustis school zones in August.

The fine will be \$100, which is broken down to \$20 to the Department of Revenue, \$60 to the county or municipality, \$3 to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, \$12 to the school district the camera is in and \$5 to the Law Enforcement Agency School Crossing Guard Program. <https://www.clickorlando.com/traffic/2023/07/19/our-kids-are-out-here-eustis-police-chief-talks-new-speed-cameras-in-florida-school-zones/>
<https://youtu.be/J98K9zDrRn0>

2. Miami-Dade, Miami Gardens, Pinecrest.
<https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article279208654.html>
3. Hillsborough County Commission already unanimously voted to look into launching a school speed zone detection program, which would include speed cameras.
<https://www.fox13news.com/news/some-school-zones-getting-speed-cameras>
4. Winter Garden -<https://www.clickorlando.com/news/investigators/2023/08/17/speeding-in-a-florida-school-zone-heres-why-you-can-still-get-a-ticket-without-an-officer-there/>

SB 766 - Stop Arm Violations

1. Brevard, Flagler, Osceola and Seminole counties plan to enforce the new law by fining drivers who illegally pass buses. They are trying to figure out who will monitor the cameras and issue the tickets. <https://www.clickorlando.com/news/local/2023/08/09/these-central-florida-school-districts-are-using-a-new-tool-to-keep-children-safe/>

7. A- E Other Business

A. Hazardous Walking Conditions Update

The Hazardous Walking Conditions are periodically re-evaluated to determine if a hazard exists. School District staff will provide an update to the committee on where they are in the process.

B. Pinellas SPOTlight Emphasis Areas Update

Forward Pinellas staff will provide a brief update on the status of activities related to the three SPOTlight emphasis areas.

C. STEPS Program – Minutes

The School Transportation and Enhanced Pedestrian Safety (STEPS) Committee is facilitated by the Pinellas County School Board and was created as a forum to discuss and address traffic safety issues around Pinellas County Schools. The STEPS committee consists of technical planning/engineering staff from the local governments and agencies throughout the County. Attached are meeting summaries and agendas from their meetings since the last STSC.

ATTACHMENT(S): (additional STEPS information will be emailed separately)

- STEPS July 2023 Meeting Agenda
- STEPS July 2023 Meeting Minutes
- STEPS August 2023 Meeting Agenda
- STEPS August 2023 Meeting Minutes
- STEPS September 2023 Meeting Agenda
- STEPS September 2023 Meeting Minutes

D. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Update

Forward Pinellas has begun development of the next long range transportation plan (LRTP) for Pinellas County – Advantage Pinellas. Advantage Pinellas is the vision for the county's transportation future. Advantage Pinellas is a strategic plan to improve mobility and economic opportunity countywide by setting transportation funding priorities. As a metropolitan planning organization, Forward Pinellas determines what transportation projects should receive state and federal funding in Pinellas County with the LRTP. To develop the long-range transportation plan, we look at future projected growth and travel trends in the region and conduct outreach with the public to identify what transportation projects should be funded to meet our county's needs. An

interactive website, [Advantage Pinellas Participation Challenge](#) has been launched as a tool to gather feedback from the public.

E. Solar Lighting at Bus Stops

Requested agenda item by Commissioner Mike Eisner of Tarpon Springs.

F. Request for Future Agenda Topics

The STSC members may discuss any suggestions for future agenda topics.

STEPS Meeting Agenda for July 2023

School Transportation & Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Committee

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WPSC or on Microsoft Teams

- I. **INTRODUCTIONS-ATTENDANCE**

- II. **APPROVAL OF June 19th, 2023 Meeting Minute**
No June meeting

- III. **NEW GENERAL BUSINESS**

SRTS stamp: at Betty Ln and Rosery Rd

Middle Schools: awareness of the upcoming changes to arterial stops, allowing all administrators and varying agencies to adjust allowing our students to be safe.

Crossing guard times and locations: please email to jerichok@pcsb.org to be added to the Pinellas County Schools website.

- IV. **COMMITTEE BUSINESS/UPDATES**
Crash Data-will send with meeting minutes

- V. **NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNED**

*** **August 16th, 2023** at WPSC located at 11111 Belcher Road South, Largo
or “Microsoft TEAMS” at 10:30a.m.***

All STEPS meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month

STEPS Meeting Minutes for July 2023

School Transportation & Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Committee

Wednesday, July 19, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WPSC or on Microsoft Teams

I. INTRODUCTIONS-ATTENDANCE

Richard Allison, Mahshid Arasteh, Matt Atwell, Valerie Brookens, Joe Camera, Rodney Due, Kelly Jericho, James Long, Melissa Mehling, Casey Morse, Dawn Pecora, Jerry Reynolds, Norm Runkles, Mike Ulbrich and Autumn Westermann

II. APPROVAL OF June 19th, 2023 Meeting Minute

No June meeting

III. NEW GENERAL BUSINESS

SRTS stamp: James Long from the City of Largo presented slides/map of intersection at Betty Ln and Rosery Rd. Looking for input on best way to proceed with the improvement plans. Contact information was emailed to Mr. Long

Middle Schools: Joe Camera wanted to bring awareness of the upcoming changes to arterial stops, allowing all administrators and varying agencies to adjust allowing our students to be safe. Going from 200 arterial stops to 73 arterial stops this upcoming school year. Don't want students walking more than 2 miles to school.

Crossing guard times and locations: Please email to jerichok@pcsb.org to be added to the Pinellas County Schools website. All requests for flashing lights maintained by Pinellas County need to be sent to Casey Morse to allow time to process before school starts.

If available Casey will request message boards for the 1st few weeks of school for areas where school times are changing and will increase traffic patterns(East Lake Rd.)

School Zone Camera/Ticket System-Effective July 1st a 3rd party company is offering services to all jurisdictions -Valerie Brookens will reach out to jurisdictions looking to move forward.

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS/UPDATES

Crash Data and 2023-2024 School Bell times attached.

V. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNED

***** August 16th, 2023** at WPSC located at 11111 Belcher Road South, Largo
or “Microsoft TEAMS” at 10:30a.m.***

All STEPS meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month

STEPS Meeting Agenda for August 2023

School Transportation & Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Committee

Wednesday, August 16, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WPSOC or on Microsoft Teams

VI. **INTRODUCTIONS-ATTENDANCE**

VII. **APPROVAL OF July 19th, 2023 Meeting Minute**

No June meeting

VIII. **NEW GENERAL BUSINESS**

Requesting a crosswalk on Countryside Blvd: email from Ms. Shaffer concerning location of bus stop for Dunedin Middle School

Madeira Beach Fundamental

Hazardous Walk Review

IX. **COMMITTEE BUSINESS/UPDATES**

X. **NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNED**

***** September 20th, 2023** at WPSOC located at 11111 Belcher Road South, Largo
or “Microsoft TEAMS” at 10:30a.m.***

All STEPS meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month

STEPS Meeting Minutes for August 2023

School Transportation & Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Committee

Wednesday, August 16, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WPSC or on Microsoft Teams

I. INTRODUCTIONS-ATTENDANCE

Mahshid Arasteh, Matt Atwell, Tony Boone, Valerie Brookens, Joe Camera, Renee Cooper, Jim Curtis, Tim Jacobson, Marvin Jefferson, Kelly Jericho, Lt. Timothy Kelly, James Long, David Lutz, Melissa Mehling, Casey Morse, Dawn Pecora, Ginger Regalado, Jerry Reynolds, Norm Runkles, Hailey Sequeira, Marshall Touchton, Mike Ulbrich and Autumn Westermann

II. APPROVAL OF July 19th, 2023 Meeting Minute

July minutes approved by Norm Ruckles and Dawn Pecora

III. NEW GENERAL BUSINESS

Requesting a crosswalk on Countryside Blvd: Casey Morse will investigate the current situation and included the necessary person to handle the request. 10 arterial stops at this location.

Madeira Beach Fundamental: Dangerous student behavior while crossing. Two mass crossings with about 40-50 students at a time. Mike Ulbrich spoke with school police and trying to identify specific students and work with parents to stop the issues/safety concerns. Casey also received calls from Fish Market again about parents blocking customers from entering in and out. She suggested to allow the first 2 weeks of school routine to settle in.

Hazardous Walk Review: Four meetings occurred over the summer and looking to switch to spring for the 23-24 school year. Autumn will send to all participants of the committee with exact locations and why to be removed from the list. Proposed to finish review and sign off on in the next 2 weeks if agreed upon. Please add Valerie Brookins to committee emails.

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS/UPDATES

Garrison Jones Elementary: City of Dunedin project will shut down two main roads to school Solan Ave and Garrison Road. Jerry Reynolds requested an onsite meeting.

Dunedin Elementary: Dawn Pecora conducting an onsite to start the process to place crossing guards at New York Ave and Roanoke St.

Crash Data attached.

V. **NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNED**

***** September 20th, 2023** at WPSC located at 11111 Belcher Road South, Largo
or “Microsoft TEAMS” at 10:30a.m.***

All STEPS meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month

STEPS Meeting Agenda for September 2023

School Transportation & Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Committee

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WPSM or on Microsoft Teams

- I. **INTRODUCTIONS-ATTENDANCE**

- II. **APPROVAL OF August 16th, 2023 Meeting Minute**

- III. **NEW GENERAL BUSINESS**

- IV. **COMMITTEE BUSINESS/UPDATES**
Construction starting September 25, 2023: all lanes of County Road 1, between Saddle and Wexford Drive, will be closed for emergency sewer pipe replacement. The roadway is expected to be closed for 4 weeks. Will impact sidewalk on the west side of CR-1. Schools effected will be notified. (Elisa Nelson Elementary, Ozona Elementary, Palm Harbor Middle and Palm Harbor University.

- V. **NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNED**

*** **October 18th, 2023** at WPSM located at 11111 Belcher Road South, Largo
or “Microsoft TEAMS” at 10:30a.m.***

All STEPS meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month

STEPS Meeting Minutes for September 2023

School Transportation & Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Committee

Wednesday, September 20, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WPSOC or on Microsoft Teams

I. INTRODUCTIONS-ATTENDANCE

Mahshid Arasteh, Valerie Brookens, Renee Cooper, Tim Jacobson, Kelly Jericho, David Lutz, Melissa Mehling, Casey Morse, Dawn Pecora, Ginger Regalado, Jerry Reynolds, Norm Runkles, Hailey Sequeira, Marshall Touchton, Mike Ulbrich and Autumn Westermann

II. APPROVAL OF August 16th, 2023 Meeting Minute

Norm Runkles and Dawn Pecora

III. NEW GENERAL BUSINESS

IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS/UPDATES

Construction starting September 25, 2023: all lanes of County Road 1, between Saddle and Wexford Drive, will be closed for emergency sewer pipe replacement. The roadway is expected to be closed for 4 weeks. Will impact sidewalk on the west side of CR-1. Schools effected will be notified. (Elisa Nelson Elementary, Ozona Elementary, Palm Harbor Middle and Palm Harbor University.

Notes: 7am-7pm, small portion of the road and sidewalk affected.

Seminole Elementary Crosswalk: Casey Morse will check the progress on getting side bar moved back on the west bound side.

Madeira Beach Fundamental: Casey Morse received a call from the Fish Market. Due to parents blocking his business entrance a delivery was unable to be made and business was lost. Casey will request a direct patrol-tickets will be issued with no warning. Mike Ulbrich will inform the principal that tickets will start being issued.

V. NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNED

***** October 18th, 2023** at WPSOC located at 11111 Belcher Road South, Largo

or “Microsoft TEAMS” at 10:30a.m.***

All STEPS meetings are scheduled for the 3rd Wednesday of the month