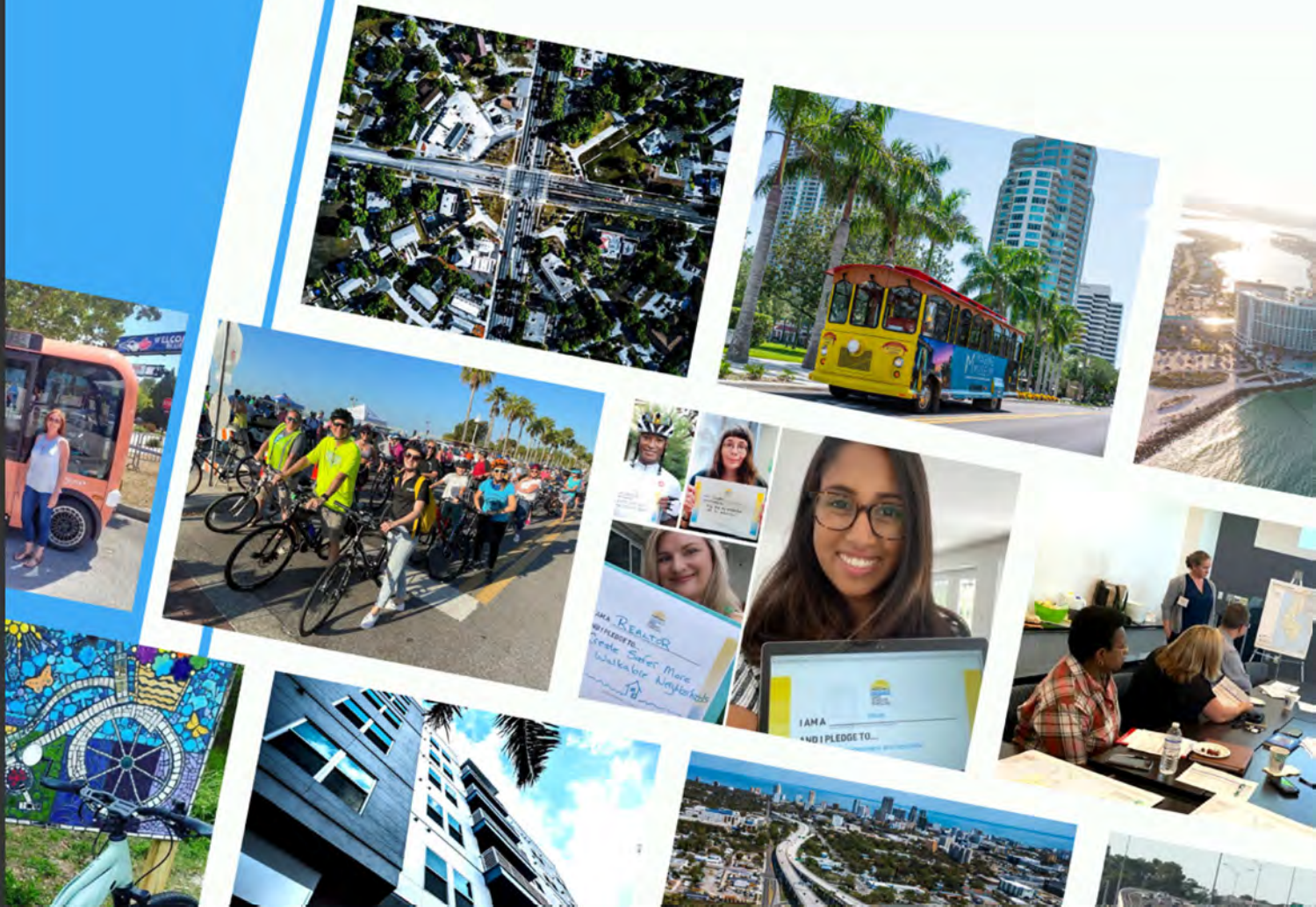




**FORWARD  
PINELLAS**  
Integrating Land Use & Transportation

# **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN**

Adopted by the Forward Pinellas  
Board on January 11, 2023



## PART I: INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

### Forward Pinellas: Who We Are

In Florida's most densely populated county, change is constant. As the Pinellas Planning Council and Metropolitan Planning Organization, Forward Pinellas strives to bring everyone together to serve the needs of our community and create a vision for the future.

With coordination of 25 local governments, almost 975,000 residents, and more than six million visitors each year, Forward Pinellas enables seamless transportation and redevelopment that provides opportunity for people and communities to thrive.

In accordance with federal law, MPOs have been established in urbanized areas with populations exceeding 50,000. The main function of MPOs is to ensure that transportation projects and plans within their designated areas and regions are developed based on a continuing, comprehensive and cooperative process guided by local public input. Functioning as a countywide land use planning authority as well as the MPO, Forward Pinellas' core functions include the development, administration and implementation of the following:

- Countywide Plan - provides for the consistency and coordination of land use planning among the County's local governments
- Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) - sets forth goals, objectives and policies and identifies transportation improvements necessary to address the needs of local communities, the County and region for a 20-year period
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – a five-year schedule of state, local and transit authority improvements

Overall, Forward Pinellas is the keeper of the vision for Pinellas County and it is our responsibility to develop a consensus throughout the community. Other key responsibilities include the adoption of a transportation project priority list and the coordination of regional transportation decision making with partner agencies in the Tampa Bay area. Central to all of these functions are the public involvement activities that ensure the agency's adopted plans and programs reflect the interests of the affected and underrepresented citizenry. To learn more about how Forward Pinellas' projects continually align with the overall vision for the community, visit: [www.ForwardPinellas.org/projects](http://www.ForwardPinellas.org/projects).

### The Purpose of Our Public Participation Plan

This Public Participation Plan (PPP) demonstrates Forward Pinellas' commitment to planning inclusively for a prosperous and equitable future for Pinellas County, its diverse communities and residents. Meaningful and effective public participation is essential to the successful implementation of a public plan or project and necessary to ensure the needs of the local citizenry are adequately addressed. In addition, public participation is necessary to gauge the effectiveness and inclusiveness of an agency's planning activities.

Forward Pinellas also prioritizes incorporating explicit consideration and response to public input received throughout all our projects and programs, but especially during the LRTP and the TIP. Any and all public comments



and participation directly influences final actions and recommendations taken throughout the specified project.

In addition, when developing the LRTP and the TIP, staff will consult with local, regional and state partner agencies, stakeholders, and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPO area to include entities that are affected by transportation, including state and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements.

This PPP provides a clear directive for the public participation activities undertaken by Forward Pinellas as they pertain to the agency’s primary responsibilities. This includes the development and implementation of the following:

- Advantage Pinellas: Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Advantage Pinellas: Active Transportation Plan
- Advantage Pinellas: Transit Plan
- Advantage Pinellas: Countywide Plan
- Advantage Pinellas: Affordable Housing Compact
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Congestion Management Process (CMP) and related corridor strategy plans
- Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Transit studies, area plans, and corridor plans
- Other activities associated with Forward Pinellas projects



Public Participation at Forward Pinellas is guided by the PPP and undertaken by all Forward Pinellas staff members. Each member of staff is responsible for participating in public outreach activities, contributing to the information and resources we provide to the public and in helping to disseminate information. The agency has a Communications Specialist on staff that organizes outreach activities and guides staff resources. The Communications Specialist can be contacted at [info@forwardpinellas.org](mailto:info@forwardpinellas.org) or at 727-464-8250.

## Development of the Public Participation Plan

Since its first adoption in 1994, the PPP has been amended several times following the completion of periodic evaluations, release of federal MPO certification review comments and legislative changes. These have been collaborative processes involving extensive input by citizens as well as Forward Pinellas partner agencies. Draft versions of the Plan amendments are initially developed by Forward Pinellas staff in accordance with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) MPO Handbook, posted online and presented to the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for discussion. Following the advisory committee discussions, a 45-day public comment period is held to allow for additional comments by citizens and partner agency staff members prior to action by the Forward Pinellas Board.

Forward Pinellas partner agencies are represented on the TCC, including representatives of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA), FDOT, the Pinellas County School System and local governments. They help to ensure that the PPP is consistent with their respective public involvement efforts and share ideas relating to their experiences in engaging citizens in the development of their plans and events. As the primary conduit

for citizen input in the planning activities of Forward Pinellas, the CAC provides invaluable assistance toward improving the effectiveness of the PPP, particularly in regard to outreach strategies. The BPAC is comprised of citizen representatives, as well as public agency staff, and informs the PPP development from the perspective of bicycle and pedestrian concerns. The combined efforts of these committees as well as others who correspond with Forward Pinellas staff are reflected in the final amendatory PPP drafts considered by the Forward Pinellas Board for approval.

## Compliance with State and Federal Requirements

The Forward Pinellas Public Participation Plan was originally adopted in 1994 in accordance with the requirements of the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). Signed into law in December 2015, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is the most recent successor to the ISTEA legislation. As with prior legislative acts following ISTEA, the FAST Act continues the strong federal emphasis on public participation. At the time of the adoption of this PPP, the 2022 Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation has been passed by Congress, but the enabling legislation is still pending, so FAST Act will continue to be referenced in this document.

All federal and state requirements are carried out throughout all MPO products, including the LRTP and the TIP. Information about how Forward Pinellas is meeting these requirements can be seen in [Appendix C: Federal Check List](#).

### *Federal Requirements*

The public participation programs of metropolitan planning processes include a proactive public participation process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and supports early and continuing participation of the public in developing plans and transportation improvement programs (TIPs). In addition, in accordance with FAST Act, MPOs shall provide and/or carry out the following:

1. Minimum public comment period of 45 days before the public participation process is initially adopted or revised;
2. Timely information about transportation issues and processes to citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of transportation agency employees, other interested parties and segments of the community affected by transportation plans, programs, and projects (including but not limited to local jurisdictions);
3. Reasonable public access to technical and policy information used in the development of plans and TIPs and open public meetings where matters related to the Federal-aid highway and transit programs are being considered;
4. Adequate notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including, but not limited to, approval of plans and TIPs;
5. Demonstration of explicit consideration of and response to public input received during the planning and program development processes;
6. Consideration of the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, including, but not limited to, low-income and minority households in an effort to ensure that the requirements of Title VI and Environmental Justice have been met during the planning process;
7. Summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments in a final plan or TIP when received as a result of the public participation process;
8. If the final transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the one which was made available

for public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues which interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public participation efforts, an additional opportunity for public comment on the revised plan or TIP shall be made available; and

9. Periodic review of the effectiveness of the public participation process to assure it provides full and open access to all.

## **Federal Coordination**

These procedures are reviewed by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration during certification reviews for Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), and as otherwise necessary for all MPOs, to assure that full and open access is provided to the MPO decision-making processes.

In addition, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) conducts a certification review of Forward Pinellas every four years to ensure we're meeting federal requirements and are being responsible stewards of the resources invested in Pinellas County.



Findings from these certification reviews directly impact the PPP and any necessary changes are made to ensure compliance with all federal requirements and considerations.

The MPO's public participation processes shall be coordinated with statewide public participation processes wherever possible to enhance public consideration of the issues, plans, and programs and reduce redundancies and costs.

The Forward Pinellas Public Participation Plan guides the agency's interactions with organizations and individuals who are affected by or involved with transportation in the county or region. This includes Federal, state, regional and local governments and elected officials, businesses and professional organizations, civic and social organizations, neighborhood and residential associations, special interest groups and interested individuals. For a full list of partners and stakeholders, see **Part II: Opportunities for Public Participation**. Pinellas County does not have any Federally Recognized Tribal agencies, however recognized Tribal agencies in the greater region are engaged in the development of the LRTP.

## **Federal Requirements for Historically Excluded, Underserved, and Under-resourced Communities**

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), and FDOT require public participation activities to address the needs of the traditionally underserved. These include people who have special cultural, racial, economic, language or ethnic characteristics, or who are low-income, poorly educated or disabled.

### ***Title VI of the Civil Rights Act***

Forward Pinellas, as the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), is required to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin in programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance. Forward Pinellas does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national origin in administration of its programs, activities or services. Any person who believes she or he has been aggrieved by any unlawful discriminatory practices under Title VI may file

a complaint with Forward Pinellas. For full information about public rights under Title VI, visit: <https://forwardpinellas.org/legal/nondiscrimination-information/> Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Forward Pinellas is required to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Forward Pinellas' ADA Digital Compliance Policy identifies accommodations for all residents with disabilities, including those who are visually and hearing impaired.



Regarding accessibility for people with disabilities, staff strives to ensure that all Forward Pinellas - sponsored event locations are within one-half mile of a transit route and bus stop and are wheelchair accessible. When conducting public meetings and workshops, staff also tries to anticipate the targeted audience and have translators and suitable materials in alternative formats available when necessary.

Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Office of Human Rights, 400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Suite 300, Clearwater, Florida 33756; [(727) 464-4062 (V/TDD)] at least seven days prior to the meeting.

Forward Pinellas is committed to making our website accessible to all audiences. We strive to ensure that our website complies with WCAG 2.0 AA and all federal, state and local laws which relate to persons with disabilities (including, but not limited to the ADA, as amended, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Florida Civil Rights Act). In addition, FAST emphasizes the use of visual tools to engage citizens in the planning process. Some examples of visual tools used by Forward Pinellas include artist renderings to show before and after conditions associated with a transportation project, diagrams and flow charts to illustrate important data or trends, and computer simulations that demonstrate the effect of an intersection improvement on local traffic operations.

### ***Sunshine Laws***

Forward Pinellas complies with Florida's Government-in-the-Sunshine law, that provides a right of access to governmental proceedings at both the state and local levels. It applies to any gathering of two or more members of the same board to discuss some matter which will foresee ably come before that board for action. There is also a constitutionally guaranteed right of access. Virtually all state and local collegial public bodies are covered by the open meetings requirements with the exception of the judiciary and the state legislature, which has its own constitutional provision relating to access. For more information on Sunshine Laws, visit: <https://forwardpinellas.org/legal/public-participation-sunshine-law-reminder/>



### ***Multi-Lingual and Limited English Proficiency***

Forward Pinellas complies with Presidential Executive Order 13166, which addresses services to those individuals with limited ability to speak English. A Limited English Proficiency person is one who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English.

In the process of disseminating and collecting survey forms, staff considers the needs of those who cannot read or write and will verbally read the survey and record the respondent's comments if necessary. Staff also makes surveys available in alternative formats such as in large type, Braille or Spanish. For the most recent

Pinellas Trail survey conducted in 2019, staff was aware that a large percentage of trail users in some locations were of Hispanic origin. Consequently, a survey form was prepared in Spanish for these individuals and staff was able to provide instructions to them in their native language as well.



### ***Consideration of the Transportation Disadvantaged***

Forward Pinellas' responsibilities as the designated planning agency (DOPA) for the Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program are to provide low-cost transportation to individuals who qualify as "transportation disadvantaged" as defined by Chapter 427, Florida Statutes. To qualify as "transportation disadvantaged" and to receive TD Program services in Pinellas County, a person must have no means of transportation available, including family and friends, and have an income of less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Public input on matters related to the TD Program is mostly provided through the Local Coordinating Board (LCB), which includes several members who represent low income and physically and mentally impaired citizens. The LCB meetings also provide opportunities for public comment on matters affecting the transportation disadvantaged community. Issues addressed through the LCB typically concern access to medical appointments, job sites, dining halls, disease treatment and rehabilitation centers, and for sustenance needs (e.g., grocery, bill payment, etc.) for disadvantaged citizens.

Community workshops are also held periodically to assess the needs of the transportation disadvantaged community. Workshop participants include social service, transportation providers and public agencies as well as citizens. The results of the workshops are incorporated in the TD Service Plan, which sets forth goals and strategies for the Program.

### ***Environmental Justice (EJ) and Equity Emphasis Areas***

Forward Pinellas complies with Presidential Executive Order 12898, which addresses environmental justice in minority and low-income populations, and requires agencies to provide additional opportunities for underserved communities to participate in the planning process. Through the Equity Action Plan, adopted by the Forward Pinellas Board in 2022, Forward Pinellas works to ensure all work is inclusive and results in equitable outcomes for our entire community.



The Forward Pinellas Equity Action Plan acknowledges our responsibility as planners to plan for the needs of disadvantaged people, seek social justice, and redefine our internal structure, outreach and policies, as well as the way we plan and prioritize funding for transportation projects throughout the county, and is the latest in a long line of inclusionary planning work under Forward Pinellas.

Our work has always adhered to legal obligations, such as the **Executive Order 12891 for Environmental Justice**, which requires that federally funded actions do not disproportionately burden historically excluded low-income and racial minority communities, and **Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1992** ensuring our organization does not discriminate in any way throughout our planning practices. Furthermore, professional planners at Forward Pinellas are charged with the important responsibility to work towards achieving more equitable outcomes for all people



and especially those from underrepresented communities. For more information on best practices for outreach for underserved communities and public participation success stories, view **Part IV: Success Stories**.

More information about the Equity Action Plan can be found here: [www.ForwardPinellas.org/Equity](http://www.ForwardPinellas.org/Equity)

## Effects of the Pandemic on Public Participation

The coronavirus pandemic is one of the defining challenges of the century and will inevitably change how we plan for our future. During this time of crisis, Forward Pinellas showed significant resilience, teamwork and strength, knowing that the decisions planners make today, affects not just what happens tomorrow, but how the world is set up for generations to come. Though the pandemic brought a myriad of challenges, it also provided incredible opportunities to engage people effectively at a countywide level. With the use of social media and other digital outreach tools to get feedback and hold meetings, community members could participate from anywhere on any device and sometimes even on their own time. Forward Pinellas significantly expanded our capacity for digital engagement, undertaking virtual scavenger hunts, socially distanced and outdoor public workshops, and a plethora of virtual public meetings. While virtual options cannot replace in-person outreach, digital engagement is a noteworthy piece of the puzzle to ensure effective public participation for everyone in our community, especially those traditionally underserved audiences. For more information on public participation success stories, view **Part IV: Success Stories**.



## PART II: OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The public involvement strategies implemented through the PPP revolve around communications and outreach conducted by the Forward Pinellas team, as well as the activities of the Forward Pinellas advisory committees. This section of the Plan describes these strategies as well as how they are employed in the process of developing two of the core MPO planning documents, the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Forward Pinellas strives to respond to all public inquiries within 3 business days. The method used to respond will depend on the platform through which the inquiry is received, and may be via email, social media response or phone call. Public records requests are handled separately, according to state law.

### Advisory Committees

Forward Pinellas has nine advisory committees that provide input and recommendations on plans, programs and policies that are reviewed by the Forward Pinellas Board (the Board meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 1 pm in downtown Clearwater). These committees are comprised of citizens as well as representatives from local, regional and state agencies. As with the Forward Pinellas Board meetings, all advisory committee meetings are open to the public and opportunities are provided for public comment. Meeting information, including schedules, start times, locations and agendas, is available on the website.

Information about our committees can be found here: [forwardpinellas.org/advisory-committees/](https://forwardpinellas.org/advisory-committees/)

Forward Pinellas is always looking for enthusiastic, diverse and knowledgeable volunteers to serve on a committee to provide direction on issues, plans and policies that create a safer, more equitable, and more accessible Pinellas County. This is an excellent way for the community to get involved in what happens in their neighborhood. All applications received for advisory committees are reviewed through a lens of striving for geographic and demographic diversity, as well as applicant interest in the subject area.

Anyone interested is invited to apply to join a committee through the online application here: [forwardpinellas.org/get-involved/](https://forwardpinellas.org/get-involved/)

Residents and stakeholders can also contact the Forward Pinellas team if they need assistance filling out this form or have any questions about available positions. Anyone interested is welcome to attend and observe a meeting prior to applying to become a member. The Forward Pinellas team also actively advertises vacant positions through news releases, newsletters, Emails, social media and our website.

Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services (free of charge) should contact the Office of Human Rights, 400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Suite 300, Clearwater, Florida 33756; [(727) 464-4062 (V/TDD)] at least three days prior to the meeting.

Appeals: Certain public meetings result in actions taken by the public board, commission or agency that may be appealed; in such case persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at a public meeting/hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Forward Pinellas is committed to making our documents accessible to all audiences. If you have accessibility concerns, please contact [info@forwardpinellas.org](mailto:info@forwardpinellas.org) or call 727-464-8250. Visit <https://forwardpinellas.org/legal/website-accessibility-statement/> for more information

While all our committees are essential to the planning process, the four committees outlined below have a significant role in ensuring our communications and public participation is easy to understand, equitable, and

engaging. While these committees have regularly scheduled meetings that allow for input into items on which the board will take action, there may be times when the board needs to have an unplanned or short-notice meeting. These instances may not allow for the committees to physically meet in person in advance of the needed board action. In these situations, Forward Pinellas staff will email each committee member a summary of the item coming before the board and request any comments to be emailed back to staff in advance of the board action. Staff would then present any advisory committee member comments to the board during their discussion of the action item at hand, allowing for advisory committee input, even when typical schedules would not normally allow for it.

### ***Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee***

Formed in 2014 through the merging of individual bicycle and pedestrian committees, the Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) provides input and direction on bicycle and pedestrian related issues, plans and policies. Appointed members of the BPAC include technical representatives from various governmental agencies, law enforcement personnel and citizens. The BPAC usually meets on the third Monday of every month, at 8:30 a.m.

The responsibilities of the BPAC revolve around furthering Forward Pinellas' goal of enabling bicycling and walking to be a viable transportation choice for commuting as well as for recreational purposes in Pinellas County. The BPAC is actively engaged in the periodic update and ongoing implementation of the Advantage Pinellas: Active Transportation Plan, including its objectives and policies which guide the agency's decision making on matters relating to these travel modes.

The BPAC regularly participates in the review of road safety audits and reconstruction plans to ensure the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians are adequately addressed and take part in education initiatives to increase citizen awareness of traffic laws affecting bicyclists and pedestrians. The BPAC also appoints members to work on individual tasks or projects. Lastly, BPAC members participate on the Tri-County BPAC, a regional committee that includes members from the Hillsborough and Pasco County BPACs.

For more information about the BPAC, visit: <https://forwardpinellas.org/about-us/advisory-committees/bicycle-pedestrian-advisory-committee/>

### ***Citizens Advisory Committee***

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) is comprised of a cross section of representatives of the community, who serve as a conduit for public input to the plans and programs of Forward Pinellas. Forward Pinellas strives to appoint members that represent the demographic makeup of our communities and the various geographic areas of the county. The CAC meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7 p.m., a time selected by committee members to accommodate the diverse schedules of members.

The actions of the CAC are guided by its vision for "a community-driven, modern transportation system that is safe, provides equitable access, and efficient mobility options in support of a sustainable, healthy, livable, and economically vibrant region."

The CAC assists Forward Pinellas in addressing community needs in the development and implementation of its programs and policies. The CAC plays a key role in determining Forward Pinellas' funding priorities through the annual review of transportation project priority lists. They also regularly bring issues of concern to Forward Pinellas regarding traffic safety hazards and advocate for legislative action on issues such as texting while driving and funding for transportation projects that serve bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users. Lastly, CAC members participate on the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) Citizens Advisory Committee.

Forward Pinellas actively seeks minority representation on the CAC in accordance with its Title VI Plan. The Title

VI Plan supports CAC minority representation that more closely mirrors that of Pinellas County, which includes approximately 10 percent African American and 9.7 percent Hispanic residents. When selecting new CAC members, staff considers minority representation as the highest priority, followed by age, gender, and previous experience. Candidates who have not already served on the Committee are given preference over those who have.

For more information about the CAC and their bylaws, visit: <https://forwardpinellas.org/advisory-committees/citizens-advisory-council-cac/>

### ***Local Coordinating Board***

Established in 1991, The Local Coordinating Board (LCB) oversees the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program, which provides transportation assistance to economically and physically disadvantaged citizens. The LCB membership consists of an elected official as chairperson and representatives of social service agencies, private transportation providers, FDOT and citizens who utilize the Program. The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) also serves on the LCB in an advisory capacity. LCB members serve on various subcommittees focused on individual tasks or projects such as the annual Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Evaluation. All LCB meetings are advertised in the highest circulated local newspaper as required by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The responsibilities of the LCB are defined by **Chapter 427, Florida Statutes**. The LCB meets quarterly, on the third Tuesday of the month, at 9:15 a.m.

For more information about the LCB, visit: <https://forwardpinellas.org/advisory-committees/local-coordinating-board-lcb/>

### ***School Transportation Safety Committee***

Established in 1998, The School Transportation Safety Committee (STSC) is made up of local elected officials and school board members that meet to address school-related transportation access and safety issues. The STSC aims to improve communication and coordination between transportation agencies and the Pinellas County School Board. The STSC was formed to address issues concerning the safe movement of students traveling to and from school. They monitor school construction projects and traffic control issues to ensure pedestrian access needs are adequately addressed. The STSC also reviews crash data and related safety concerns in the vicinity of schools as it affects student access. The STSC meets twice a year on Wednesdays at 9 a.m.

For more information about the STSC, visit: <https://forwardpinellas.org/advisory-committees/school-transportation-safety-committee-stsc/>

### **Long Range Transportation Plan**

The LRTP is the focal point of Forward Pinellas' transportation planning programs and activities. In accordance with federal requirements, the Plan assesses the transportation needs of Pinellas County and identifies the projects necessary to address those needs over a 20-year period. A new Plan reflecting the most recent population, land use, socioeconomic and employment data and associated trends is required every five years.

Forward Pinellas has branded its LRTP as "Advantage Pinellas." The Advantage Pinellas LRTP is a strategic plan that identifies ways we can improve mobility, economic opportunity and housing affordability countywide. From active transportation – like bicycling and walking – to roadway operations, transit services and even a strategy for affordable housing, Forward Pinellas, Pinellas County and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority have jointly created the Advantage Pinellas plan to improve our communities and make them safer and more equitable for everyone.

## *Impacts of Public Involvement on the LRTP*

Throughout the LRTP updates, Forward Pinellas uses extensive public involvement through a wide array of outreach and events, as listed in **Part III: A Communications Roadmap for Public Participation**. Feedback received throughout the public participation process for the LRTP is critical to gauge opinions on transportation and development throughout the region and directly influences the ultimate selection of projects to advance for funding.

## *Collecting Public Input For the LRTP*

Forward Pinellas uses a plethora of tools to collect public comments and feedback to ensure inclusive and comprehensive public participation that is accurate and truly representative of our community.

When advertising opportunities for public comment, Forward Pinellas may use any or all of the tools outlined in **Part III: A Communications Roadmap for Public Participation**.

Public involvement objectives specific to the LRTP are listed below.

- Develop an early, proactive, and ongoing public participation process that includes the general public, Forward Pinellas committees and Board, local and regional planning partners, and other stakeholders.
- Incorporate visualization techniques to help convey the transportation planning process and transportation improvements identified.
- Educate the public on planned transportation projects and raise awareness of their role in the planning process.
- Provide prompt response to input and inquiries related to the transportation planning process.
- Maintain contact with interested citizens and other stakeholders throughout the LRTP development process.
- Involve traditionally under-served persons including minority, low-income, disabled and elderly citizens.
- Focus on outreach strategies that meet people where they are, in their own communities and on their own time.

## *Creating Visualization and Survey Tools*

An assortment of visualization techniques are used to help convey information about the Plan development process and the contents of the LRTP to the public in an easy to understand format. Maps, graphics and photographs are frequently used to highlight key points of the LRTP.

Transportation surveys are used throughout the LRTP development process to gauge public opinion about current and future transportation needs and the prioritization of public funds for future transportation improvements, as well as to capture demographic information about respondents (e.g., age range, zip code, etc) to help ensure diverse participation in the surveys.

## *Working with Partners to Share Information*

Many of our community and local government partners also rely on citizen participation to frame their goals, objectives and policies, as well as ascertain the transportation needs and concerns of the local communities.

In an effort to streamline public participation and incorporate all elements of input, Forward Pinellas works with our partners to share information, so that information flows seamlessly in both directions, from the public to the governmental agencies via engagement, and in reverse via education and outreach. Receiving comprehensive feedback from the public and our partners, ensures that the needs and concerns of everyone can help to shape the direction of the LRTP. Forward Pinellas also coordinates with local government staff to ensure their transportation projects and/or planning initiatives are considered during the development of each LRTP. Through the TCC, Forward Pinellas is able to continuously engage our local government partners to ensure consistency in local planning products, while also having the ability to seek assistance from these partners in engaging the public through their own local channels.

### ***Utilizing the Skills of Our Advisory Committees***

The TCC, BPAC and CAC play a key role in the development of the LRTP and in providing a conduit for citizens to help shape the policy direction and recommendations of the Plan. The TCC reviews LRTP draft documents with particular emphasis on the data and analysis that was developed in support of the recommended transportation improvements, while the BPAC reviews the bicycle and pedestrian components of these documents. Input from the CAC, as well as from the general public and stakeholders, provide a key source of citizen input into the development of the LRTP in terms of addressing issues of greatest concern to the public. The TCC and CAC also review all proposed LRTP amendments and modifications prior to Forward Pinellas action. Other committees also review proposed amendments as they relate to their particular focus areas.

### ***LRTP Public Hearing Advertising***

Public hearing notices where public input on proposed transportation plans and expenditures is necessary to ensure the interests of citizens are given due consideration prior to Forward Pinellas adoption, are posted on the Forward Pinellas website and distributed through the agency's social media outlets. This is done at least one week prior to meetings where public hearing items will be heard.

### ***LRTP Amendments and Modifications***

Any local government or agency (e.g., PSTA, FDOT) may submit a request to Forward Pinellas to modify or amend the LRTP. Forward Pinellas staff conducts a technical review of the request, including a determination as to whether the request should be processed as a modification or an amendment.

A proposed amendment requires public review and comment and an assurance of fiscal constraint. Proposed amendments include adding or deleting projects from the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan and major changes to project costs, initiation dates, or design concepts and scopes for existing projects.

Proposed modifications follow the same review process as amendments, except that no public hearing, accompanying roll call vote or assurance of fiscal constraint is required. These are minor changes that typically involve items such as map corrections, revisions needed for consistency with the TIP, and adding unfunded projects. Procedures for processing proposed amendments and modifications to the LRTP and other core Forward Pinellas documents are summarized in [Appendix C](#).

### **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

There are four processes associated with the TIP that provide opportunities for public involvement. These processes are associated with the review and approval/adoption of the following:

- Project priority lists
- Fall TIP update
- FDOT Five-Year Work Program and annual TIP Adoption
- Proposed TIP amendments and modifications

Forward Pinellas provides ample opportunities for the public to participate in these processes largely through its network of advisory committees, including the CAC and TCC, which review, and make recommendations on, all TIP items that require Forward Pinellas Board approval. Other committees, including the BPAC, focus their review on TIP elements specific to their areas of interest. Actions of Forward Pinellas regarding the TIP follow a public hearing and consideration of recommendations and comments provided by the committees and interested citizens. Public hearing notices and agenda materials to be considered by the Board in the review of a TIP item are posted on the website no less than seven business days prior to the meeting. These hearings are advertised on the website and may be advertised using other methods outlined in **Part III: A Communications Roadmap for Public Participation**.

### *Impacts of Public Involvement on the TIP*

Throughout the TIP updates, Forward Pinellas utilizes extensive public involvement through a wide array of outreach and events, as listed in Part III: A Communications Roadmap for Public Participation. Feedback received throughout the public participation process for the TIP is critical to gauge opinions on transportation and development throughout the region and directly impacts the ultimate selection of projects to advance for funding.

### *Project Priority Lists*

The advisory committees review the project priority lists annually in the spring or early summer, depending on the timing of the Florida Legislative Session. The priorities are circulated for public comment through the Forward Pinellas website, blog posts and social media accounts. Following review and action by the advisory committees and the board, the adopted priority lists as well as any changes proposed by them are posted on the website.

### *Local Transportation Improvement Programs/Fall Update*

Locally adopted County and municipal government transportation capital improvement programs are typically included in the TIP each fall. This is done for the benefit of the public, by keeping a listing of all major transportation projects in one place. To be able to include the local government CIPs, the TIP document must be formally amended. The advisory committees are engaged in this process where they take action to amend the TIP so that local government transportation projects can be displayed alongside those that are receiving state and federal funding. Following the committee meetings, the adopted work programs are posted on the website along with maps identifying the location of the improvements. In addition, staff prepares summary tables for the website that provide abbreviated project descriptions corresponding with the maps. This information is integrated into the online Interactive TIP, allowing web viewers access to the project information without having to look through the lengthy work program documents. Forward Pinellas approves the fall update in November. Announcement of Forward Pinellas action on the fall update is also posted on the website along with the updated TIP.

### ***FDOT Work Program/Annual TIP Adoption***

In the fall of each year, FDOT holds public hearings on its draft Tentative Work Program via a live webinar presentation and maintains a website with all project information. The public is welcome to provide any comments through the website during this time. The live webinar and other public comment opportunities are advertised on the Forward Pinellas website and through social media. During this time frame, FDOT presents its draft Tentative Work Program to the Forward Pinellas advisory committees. Following the advisory committee meetings, the draft Tentative Work Program is posted on the Forward Pinellas website along with any FDOT presentation material shown at their public hearing and committee meetings. The Forward Pinellas Board reviews the draft Tentative Work Program for following the committee review and develops a letter of formal comments on the draft Tentative Work Program, considering any committee feedback. The letter of formal comments from Forward Pinellas is then transmitted to FDOT for consideration during the development of the final Five Year Work Program.

A final version of the Tentative FDOT Work Program, which is included in the annual TIP adoption, is presented to the advisory committees in the spring. Following the advisory committee meetings, the final Tentative Work Program is posted on the website along with a summary of the project descriptions and accompanying maps, similar to what is made available for the fall update. In addition, staff includes a report identifying the changes from the previous year's Work Program. This report, in addition to the maps and summary of project descriptions, is integrated into the online Interactive TIP, allowing web viewers to find the information of interest to them without having to read through the details of the Work Program document. Announcement of Forward Pinellas action on the final FDOT Work Program is posted on the website along with the new TIP.

### ***Proposed Amendments and Modifications***

A TIP amendment is a revision that involves a major project change, including addition or deletion of a project, or a major change in cost, phase, initiation date, or design concept or scope (i.e., changing project termini, or the number of through traffic lanes). An amendment requires verification of financial constraint and a public hearing and accompanying roll call vote. A modification includes minor changes to project phases, costs, funding sources of previously included projects, or initiation dates. These do not require a demonstration of fiscal constraint or a public hearing and accompanying roll call vote.

The TCC and CAC are typically the only advisory committees that review proposed TIP amendments and modifications. Following review and recommendations by the TCC and CAC, information on proposed amendments/modifications are posted on the website. This includes descriptions of the proposed changes as well as maps identifying their location. Forward Pinellas approves proposed amendments/modifications with consideration given to any comments and recommendations from the committees and interested citizens. All proposed amendments and modifications approved by the Board are posted on the website until the next fiscal year begins. Amendment and modification processes associated with the TIP and other core MPO documents are summarized in **Appendix C**.

Due to timing issues, there may be occasions when a proposed TIP amendment will need Board or Executive Director approval before the advisory committees have an opportunity to review them. This may occur with time-sensitive amendments, or when Federal funding needs to be secured for a scheduled project prior to the close of a Federal fiscal year. The latter is due to the overlapping fiscal years, July 1 – June 30 for the State and October 1 – September 30 for the Federal. In these situations, staff informs and engages committee member comments through email and phone calls, as necessary. Any comments or concerns raised by committee members that cannot be adequately addressed by staff are presented to the Board prior to their scheduled action.

Forward Pinellas also has developed a web-based TIP application that allows the public to query and view TIP project information on the Pinellas County Geographic Information System (GIS). This interactive tool can be found here: <https://pinellas-egis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/5b74d64c553a49fca0349b33154c4e6c>

## PART III: A COMMUNICATIONS ROADMAP FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

With almost 1 million people living in Pinellas, Forward Pinellas continually works to provide clear, timely, and vetted information. In return, our community's voice is critical to ensuring we are planning for everyone. Our audience consists of elected officials, planners, local government staff, professional partners, and the public. We are here to help them grow, sustain and transform: whatever it takes to move Pinellas forward.

The purpose of this section is to create a roadmap of possible communications methods for public participation. Essentially, through the planning process we identify the tools used to get public feedback, such as visualization tools, survey tools, etc. However, the success of these tools can only be defined if we have the communications methods to reach our audience, especially those who have been historically underserved. While each planning process requires a tailored communications strategy to identify the best communications methods to use to reach the intended audience, Part III: A Communications Roadmap for Public Participation is intended to provide a menu of communications methods for future use.

### **Digital Storytelling**

#### *Website*

Since Forward Pinellas first published its website in 1998, it has been an essential tool for public outreach and input in the Forward Pinellas public involvement process. The website serves as a central repository of Forward Pinellas plans, documents, agendas and meeting notices. It also provides web viewers with access to Forward Pinellas Board and advisory committee rosters, video streams of the monthly Board meetings, general information about transportation topics and surveys where they can submit their comments and opinions about transportation in the county and region. In 2021, Forward Pinellas debuted a new website, featuring a streamlined, modern design with improved functionality, and easy access to essential information to help our residents, partners, and stakeholders learn about how they can get involved in decisions that affect their community.

#### *Blogs*

Forward Pinellas' blogs provide residents with a snapshot of who we are and what we do as an agency. Posts often have information about current trends and issues as well educate and illustrate key issues or projects and partner initiatives at Forward Pinellas. All Forward Pinellas staff members are encouraged to contribute to the agency's blog by providing data, content or their writing expertise.

#### *Social Media*

Social media is a pivotal tool for public outreach and communications. Platforms currently used by Forward Pinellas include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Youtube. Forward Pinellas can also partner with local governments to post information on Nextdoor whenever needed. In 2011, the MPO adopted a set of policies governing its use of social media. These were updated in 2017 and more recently in April 2019 (see **Appendix C**). The policies are designed to ensure that Forward Pinellas' employment of social media applications is in compliance with applicable state and local laws and policies that govern public correspondence, records, and industry best practices.



## ***Emails***

Emails update our current audience about projects, upcoming events, meeting information, etc.

## ***Newsletters***

Newsletters provide a snapshot of current issues, trends and events to our audience through emails and social media.

## ***Virtual Listening Sessions***

Virtual Listening Sessions allow for small-group and large-group community conversations and are particularly useful for traditionally unengaged audiences, especially those who have full-time jobs, families, and other responsibilities that keep them from attending in-person workshops.

## ***Virtual or Hybrid Town Hall Meetings***

Virtual or Hybrid Town Hall Meetings feature live or virtual panel discussions with elected officials and transportation agency representatives addressing issues associated with planning processes, including the LRTP and TIP. Questions can be submitted to the panel guests from participants via in-person, telephone, and through online platforms either prior to the event or in real time.

## ***Webinars***

Webinars provide Forward Pinellas with a tool to provide timely and accurate information to our audience, educate our local partners and residents on a particular process, or have two-way conversations and discussion on planning processes.

## ***Videos***

Videos provide our audience with engaging, educational information in a short amount of time. Videos are often used to explain complicated planning processes and items through an understandable and entertaining method.

## ***Forward Pinellas Meeting Broadcasts***

Forward Pinellas meetings are broadcast on Pinellas County's government access channel (PCC-TV). The telecasts are shown on channel 637 on Bright House Networks, 18 on Wide Open West (WOW) Network, and 44 on Verizon. Live video streams of the meetings are also available on Youtube, which is accessible from the Forward Pinellas website. A link to the meeting archives, where viewers can replay the entire meeting or a particular agenda item, is also available on the Forward Pinellas website.

## ***Media Relations***

While media attention can only be guaranteed through paid ads, there are many ways to provide information to the media for consideration in news outlets. Tampa Bay has one of the largest media markets in the country

and the topic of transportation is in the top 10 most popular topics of interest to our residents. The results from media relations methods outlined below are often more effective than the purchase of individual ads.

## ***News Releases***

News Releases provide the Tampa Bay Media Market with the latest information for residents and partners.

## ***Media Alert***

Media Alert is an online tool that provides urgent, critical, or emergency information to the media quickly and in real-time.

## ***Television and Radio Shows***

Several television and radio shows in Tampa Bay provide Forward Pinellas opportunities to inform a variety of audiences on trends, issues, planning projects, upcoming events, and other ways residents can get involved with the decision-making process.

## ***PIO Networks***

Forward Pinellas collaborates with local, regional, state, and national Public Information Officer networks that can be utilized when promoting public participation opportunities.

## **In-Person Public Outreach**

### ***Public Hearings***

Public hearings are defined in the FDOT Public Involvement Handbook as formal meetings required by a regulation where citizen comments are recorded as public record. They typically involve specific time frames for public notice and written comments. Forward Pinellas holds public hearings for all Board actions relating to adoption and amendment of the TIP and LRTP. Public hearings are also held for PPP amendments. Board actions on TIP and LRTP public hearing items are determined by a roll call vote. These hearings allow for open Board member discussion and citizen comments in a public forum. Processes involved in the review and approval of proposed amendments and modifications associated with core Forward Pinellas planning documents, including the LRTP, TIP and PPP, are summarized in [Appendix E](#).

### ***Community Meetings***

Through regular attendance and presentation opportunities, community meetings provide an opportunity to inform invested residents and stakeholders on local upcoming projects and planning processes that affect them and their community as well as provide an outlet to gain critical local perspective and feedback.

## ***Charettes and Workshops***

Charettes are an urban planning technique for consulting with stakeholders and involving them in the physical design or planning of the community. Charettes are typically intense, possibly multi-day, events involving municipal officials, developers, and local residents. A charette promotes joint ownership of solutions to problems and attempts to diffuse traditional confrontation between residents, developers, and local government officials. Public workshops allow citizens to learn about Forward Pinellas plans and programs, ask questions and converse with transportation leaders, and provide comments. Workshops can be in a traditional, building environment, but can also be organized as outdoor, drive through, or hybrid workshops.

- Outdoor workshops set up booths, exhibits, interactive components, and presentation materials in an outdoor location where residents can walk around to gain information, ask questions and give feedback.
- Drive through workshops allow residents to drive up to booths and exhibits, gaining information, asking questions, and providing feedback in a short amount of time.
- Hybrid workshops contain a traditional in-person component but also include an online informational and participation opportunity. This could be a separately viewed webpage with online activities, modules, and feedback elements, or it could be a presentation that is viewed in-person and online, simultaneously.

## ***Community Events***

Attending community events allows Forward Pinellas to “meet people where they are” and reach a broad cross section of county residents representing different age, race and income groups. By tending exhibits or display tables, staff can interact with citizens, respond to their questions and comments and distribute and collect surveys. The exhibits often display story boards featuring information on Forward Pinellas programs, topics, and specific projects, including the LRTP. In addition, Forward Pinellas often uses interactive activities, such as games, picture opportunities, and contests, that attract a variety of demographics and encourage residents to get involved. There are also opportunities for stationed exhibits at area libraries, city halls and other community buildings that direct people to an online survey or survey cards for them to leave feedback on site.

## ***Civic and Business Group Meetings***

Forward Pinellas actively seeks opportunities to speak with civic, professional and business organizations about transportation plans and programs as a means to share information, collect feedback and to discuss issues of concern with them. Forward Pinellas also participates in the Pinellas County Speaker’s Bureau, which is administered by the Pinellas County Communications Department. Citizen and business group representatives use the Speaker’s Bureau to request presentations from Forward Pinellas and County staff on topics of interest to their organizations.

## ***Focus Groups***

Focus groups provide an opportunity to receive feedback from specific population groups about transportation issues addressed by Forward Pinellas. Focus groups generate ideas and obtain feedback on specific topics related to transportation concerns and topics and include representatives from underserved communities, diverse age cohorts, and specific geographic areas around the county. The results of the discussions provide meaningful input for the development of planning processes.

## ***Walking Tours/Audit***

Walking Tours or Audits are used with local community partners and other agency partners to identify specific needs and resource allocations within a specific neighborhood or community. They provide opportunity to build close relationships with key stakeholders and disperse selective information as needed.

## **Other Outreach Strategies**

### ***Flyers, brochures, and one-pagers***

Flyers, brochures, and one-pagers provide information within a graphic, understandable, snapshot that residents and others can easily take away and use later. They also are an excellent way to provide information on community boards and newsletters.

### ***Transit Vehicle Outreach***

Flyers or posters can be posted on local busses or transit stations with the partnership of the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA). These flyers can be used to facilitate text message surveys, or other tools to collect key input from transit riders.

### ***Mailing Lists***

Mailing lists are a way to reach homeowners and renters, especially in relation to a particular geographic location. Forward Pinellas can also partner with local utility billing departments to distribute mail inserts that notify residents about planning processes directly affecting their community.

### ***Road signs***

Road signs and lawn signs provide information about an event or topic and are placed along the road. Forward Pinellas partners with our local government partners to use portable dynamic message signs to share information, where appropriate. Lawn signs can also be used to provide time sensitive information to a specific location or geographic area.

The content of the signs should be tailored to ensure the information is contextually appropriate for the area. Over-the-road signs should avoid fatality information or text that could be considered distracting to drivers as this could be counterproductive.

### ***Contests***

Various contests can provide an opportunity to build relationships with the community and spur interest in planning projects. These contests could include art, video, music, etc. and be targeted toward specific geographic areas and demographic groups.

## ***Public Art Projects***

Public art is not only a tool to beautify the community and make our roads safer, it can also be an excellent outreach tool to educate residents and local community members about planning projects and how they can get involved.

## **Employing Audience-Sensitive Tools**

Public participation methodologies are not “one size fits all.” Though all the outreach methods outlined above are excellent tools for planning projects, there is a strategy to ensuring we reach specific audiences, especially those households who are traditionally underserved, through many different communication and outreach tools. Whether a project’s audience includes one or all of these categories, this section outlines audience-sensitive communications tools that ensure equitable, inclusionary, and effective public participation.

When creating a strategy for communications for a project, staff also conducts an initial scan of the context of the environment and acknowledges neighborhood specific considerations such as the level of trust for government, how well established the community is within the area, and any racial controversy or other prejudice that has affected the community in the past or currently impacts members of the community. In addition, Forward Pinellas encourages building relationships with community leaders through local religious organizations, neighborhood associations, community centers, local business centers, and any other partners that could help us truly listen to our community members and capture their voices.

## ***Communities in Equity Emphasis Areas***

Households within communities in Equity Emphasis Areas often include parents with full-time jobs, single parents, adoptive and foster parents, people without cars, people with limited higher-educational opportunities, limited transportation options, and limited resources for items such as gas, internet, digital devices, etc.

### **Recommended Outreach Methods:**

- Webpage
- News Releases (especially in minority communities)
- Social Media
- Virtual Listening Sessions
- Hybrid Town Hall Meetings
- Community Meetings
- Community Events
- Focus Groups
- Flyers
- Mailing Lists
- Road Signs
- Public Art Projects

## ***Seniors***

Seniors often include people who are retired or work minimally. Many are not able to drive cars and have limited transportation options. While they may have resources, such as internet and devices, they may be uncomfortable using them and prefer in person outreach methods.

Recommended Outreach Methods:

- Webpage
- News Releases
- Social Media (especially Facebook)
- Hybrid Town Hall Meetings
- Community Meetings
- Flyers
- Mailing Lists

## ***College Students***

College students are notoriously difficult to reach as they are usually focused on school, socializing, and work. In Pinellas County, the University of South Florida, St. Pete College and Eckerd College are the primary institutions of higher education. Their student's schedules are usually variable from month to month and they often do not have or want a car. They have limited resources for items such as gas, food, etc. but often have internet and digital devices needed for their coursework. They are constantly bombarded by social media, surveys, ads, etc. and, while they are passionate and have an interest in their community, they have difficulty finding time to get involved with local government. Focusing on reaching this category by "meeting them where they are" is especially important.

Recommended Outreach Methods:

- Webpage
- News Releases
- Social Media
- Videos
- Community Events (especially pop up events around colleges)
- Focus Groups
- Flyers
- Road Signs
- Contests

## ***Parents and Children***

Parents are often focused on day-to-day concerns, such as work, school, extracurricular activities, financial management, etc. Though they understand the importance of getting involved with local government and see the direct impacts, they need outreach that will accommodate to their needs. While they may have access to cars, internet, digital devices, etc. they need to be able to get involved however, and whenever, is convenient for them. Focusing on short, digital surveys, that have an interactive component can provide excellent feedback, as well as attending sporting events and other community events. In addition, student contests can prove extremely valuable for bringing awareness to a planning project or trending issue.

### Recommended Outreach Methods:

- Webpage
- News Releases
- Social Media
- Videos
- Emails
- Newsletters
- Virtual Listening Sessions
- Virtual or Hybrid Town Hall Meetings
- Television and Radio Shows
- Community Events
- Civic and Business Group Meetings
- Workshops (especially when they have a component for children)
- Flyers
- Road Signs
- Contests

## ***Limited English Proficiency***

Persons who have a limited ability to speak English often face many challenges when participating in decision-making processes. They usually have limited educational opportunities, limited transportation options, and limited resources for items such as gas, internet, digital devices, etc. Those who do have digital devices can often participate in a virtual capacity due to translation technologies. However, in person participation can prove difficult especially if there is no one on staff who is multi-lingual. The key with this category is to find excellent partner groups who can be a translator and advocate.

### Recommended Outreach Methods:

- Webpage (multi-lingual)
- Social Media
- Videos (multi-lingual)

- Community Meetings
- Community Events
- Focus Groups
- Flyers
- Public Art Projects
- Coordination with Key Advocacy Centers, such as the Clearwater Hispanic Outreach Center or the Lealman and Asian Neighborhood Family Center.

## ***Persons with Disabilities***

It is essential to reach all persons with disabilities including those who are visually and hearing impaired. These households have limited transportation options and resources. They have specialized assistive technology that can prove beneficial so long as digital elements, such as websites, surveys, videos, documents, etc. are digitally compliant. Participating in in-person events can be difficult as many rely on caretakers for transportation. Working with community groups who specialize in persons with disabilities is vital to reach this category as they can often help ensure materials are ADA compliant and can even sometimes translate information into braille for persons who are visually impaired.

### Recommended Outreach Methods:

- Local Coordinating Board
- Transportation Disadvantaged Groups
- Community Advocates/Surrogates
- Webpage
- News Releases (especially in minority communities)
- Social Media
- Virtual Listening Sessions
- Hybrid Town Hall Meetings
- Community Meetings
- Community Events
- Focus Groups and Interviews
- Flyers
- Mailing Lists
- Public Art Projects



## *Equity Emphasis Area Households*

Households within communities in EJ and Equity Emphasis Areas often include parents with full-time jobs, single parents, adoptive and foster parents, people without cars, people with limited educational opportunities, limited transportation options, and limited resources for items such as gas, internet, digital devices, etc.

Recommended Outreach Methods:

- Webpage
- News Releases (especially in minority communities)
- Social Media
- Connections with trusted organizations and agencies in communities
- Virtual Listening Sessions
- Hybrid Town Hall Meetings
- Community Meetings
- Community Events
- Focus Groups
- Flyers
- Mailing Lists
- Road Signs
- Public Art Projects

## **Coordinating with Local Partners and Stakeholders**

Forward Pinellas' partnerships are essential to engage all our residents in Pinellas County, especially those who are disadvantaged and/or underserved. Forward Pinellas prioritizes new concepts of reaching people "where they are" through digital storytelling, outreach events, partnership opportunities with board and committee members, local libraries, local law enforcement, extension offices, local non-profits, local colleges and universities, schools, professional planning organizations, and other transportation organizations. Local partners are critical to effectively reaching our community members as they know their communities intimately and often already have mechanisms in place to reach the public.

Key partners include but are not limited to:

### **Local Agency Partners**

- **Municipal Governments**
- **Pinellas County Government**
- **Pinellas County Property Appraiser's Office (PAO)**
- **Pinellas County School District**
- **Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)**

## *Community Partners*

- **Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg**
- **BIG-C**
- **Creative Pinellas**
- **Safety Harbor Art & Music Center**
- **Local Chambers of Commerce**
- **St. Pete Downtown Partnership**
- **Action 2000**
- **Hispanic Outreach Center**
- **AMPLIFY Clearwater**
- **League of Women Voters**
- **Pinellas Race Equity Leadership Council**

## *State and Regional Partners*

- **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)**
- **Sun Coast Transportation Planning Alliance (SCTPA)**
- **Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC)**
- **Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD)**
- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)**
- **Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC)**
- **Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR)**
- **Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)**
- **Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA)**

## PART IV: SUCCESS STORIES

### Safe Streets Pinellas

In Pinellas County, two people are killed or seriously injured on our roadways every day on average. Forward Pinellas has created Safe Streets Pinellas, a Vision Zero program working toward having zero deaths and serious injuries on our roadways by 2045.

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, our Safe Streets Pinellas outreach that was originally planned as in-person events was altered to include an eight-week social media campaign that included an online, interactive comments map, fun trivia quizzes, a virtual art contest and online pledges. Each week, we had new opportunities for the public to engage with us and tell us where they were seeing transportation issues. We also pushed the information out through a new Safe Streets website, news releases, blogs, videos and Email blasts. Through our online social media campaign, we reached more than 44,000 people and engaged with 1,900 people.

Forward Pinellas worked with many partners to hold what we call “demonstration projects,” each testing different strategies to try to reduce the number of deaths on our roads. We held an outdoor educational event in coordination with the installation of a new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB). This was at the location where a woman, Carmen Chavez, was killed while riding her bike. The event included a ceremony honoring Carmen, the unveiling of the RRFB, and a public education event to demonstrate how to use this technology and encourage people to stay safe on the road. Several local politicians attended the event and four major news stations published stories featuring the event.

We also held an outdoor, hybrid workshop for 150 committee members to show them where we were at with our Safe Streets program and get their feedback on how we should make decisions going forward. Committee members could cycle through booths where they could scan QR codes to learn more, talk to staff, interact with visualization and prioritization displays, and fill out a survey. For those who were not able to join the event in person, we set up “virtual” booths using pre-recorded videos through our website and sent this out through Email blasts and E-Newsletters.

### Downtown St. Pete Mobility Study

In the 1960s, the development of a large highway overpass resulted in the displacement of a historically African American community in Downtown St. Pete. In 2020, Forward Pinellas began working with the Florida Department of Transportation and the City of St. Petersburg on the Downtown St. Pete Mobility Study (DTSP) to engage the entire community to help define a vision for mobility in the greater Downtown area, look at ways to improve mobility, livability and economic vitality and identify and prioritize projects and programs that will benefit everyone in the community.

We created four surveys, created a new website, and we used a new outreach software that facilitated an online, interactive “Comment Board” allowing residents to drop a pin on a map to identify problem areas, upload pictures, and even comment and like other residents’ posts. Staff also hosted more than ten community outreach events and nine online and in person listening sessions. Participants were able to join the conversation from any device and have meaningful discussions building consensus with other members of their community and our team. This outreach was supplemented with several social media campaigns, news releases, Email blasts, blogs, E-Newsletters, flyers, brochures, videos, and media partnerships. Overall, more than 1000 people responded to the surveys, more than 1000 people viewed the online Comment Board, and more than 100 stakeholders participated in virtual and in person community conversations.

Results from this outreach directly influenced the outcomes at each phase of the project and ultimately played a significant role in determining the final recommendations. For more information about this project, visit [www.ForwardPinellas.org/DTSP](http://www.ForwardPinellas.org/DTSP).

## **Bike Your City – Virtual & In Person**

Forward Pinellas hosts an annual “Bike Your City” group bike ride to encourage safety education and advocacy throughout our communities. Originally planned as an in person ride for March 2020, staff transitioned to a self-guided virtual “Bike Your City” scavenger hunt where riders could enjoy riding around one of our beautiful cities finding scavenger hunt locations. During the scavenger hunt, participants took “selfie’s” at the locations and then submitted them through a virtual photo map we created through Arc GIS software. Participants could ride to a local art center and help create a bike safety themed mosaic art piece that was then permanently installed in the city park. To capstone the event, we brought together community leaders and experts on bike advocacy in a free, public webinar.

During previous, in person Bike Your City events, there was an average of 100 participants. However, throughout the first virtual Bike Your City, more than 550 people joined the online ride and during the second Bike Your City more than 1500 people participated. In March 2022, Forward Pinellas hosted an in person Bike Your City guided bike ride, garnering more than 200 participants.

The increase of participants was not only influenced by the ability for riders to join the virtual ride on their own time and in an area that is more convenient for them, but also by the increase of public outreach and communication including news releases, social media campaigns, blogs, Email blasts, road signs, posters, brochures, and community events.

## PART V: MONITORING AND EXPANDING ENGAGEMENT

Forward Pinellas actively monitors and reviews key performance indicators (KPIs) to determine effectiveness, efficiency, and enhancement opportunities for the Public Participation Plan (PPP). Each quarter, staff performs a review and assessment of the KPIs within the PPP through the Quarterly Communications Report. This report analyzes the status of Forward Pinellas' goals, objectives, and strategies and identifies opportunities for improvement. The Quarterly Communications Report is reviewed by the Forward Pinellas Board and several committees.

The Key Performance Indicators, **Appendix A**, include the specific measurable outputs that demonstrate the Public Participation Plan's effectiveness, equitability, and inclusivity.

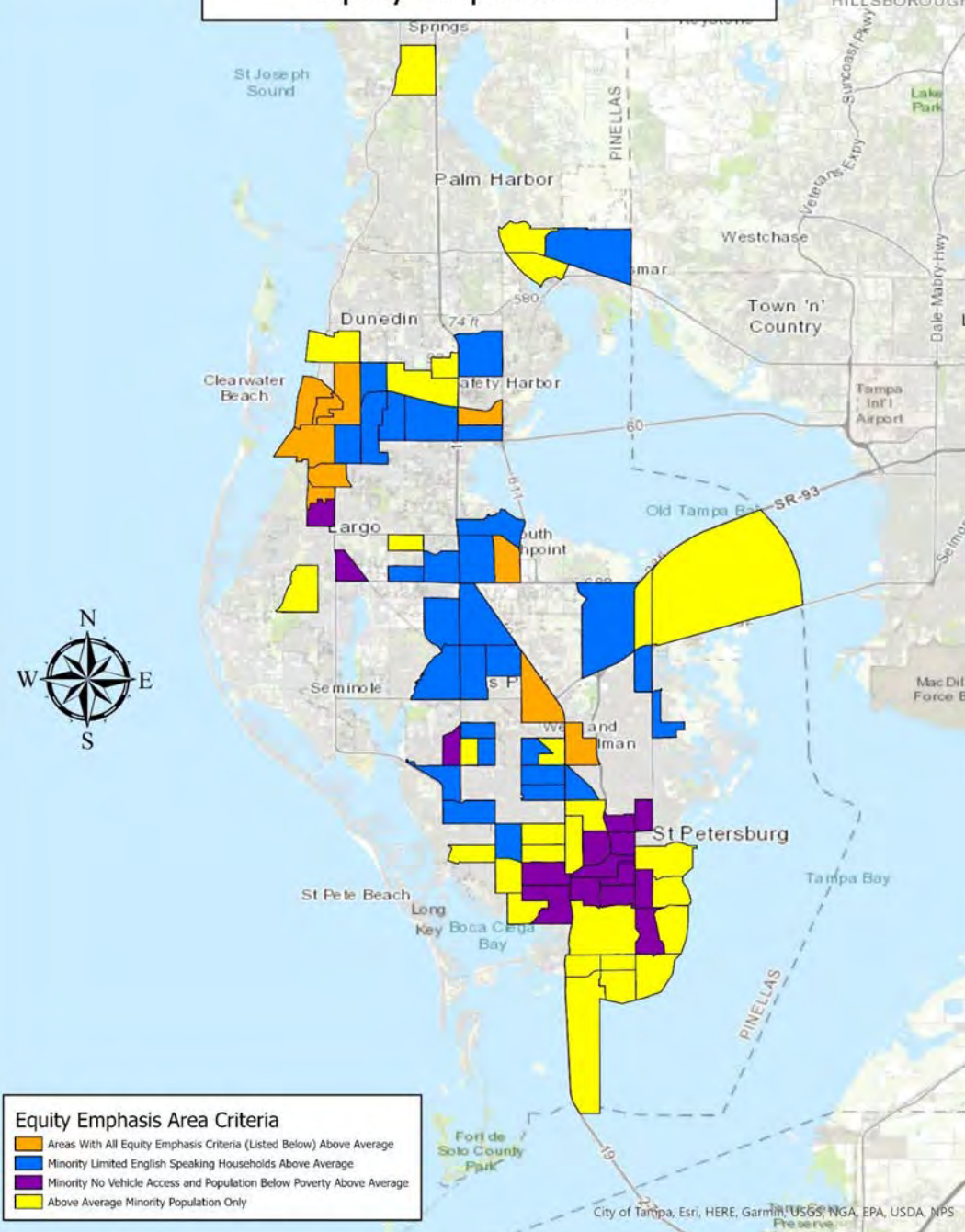
### Responding to Public Input

Forward Pinellas is committed to not just collecting public comments, but to effectively adjusting course depending on the feedback received and where appropriate. Staff routinely receives questions and comments from the public in the course of various planning studies and incorporates that feedback into the final recommendations to the board. One such example of this is during the development of the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Forward Pinellas conducted significant outreach activities during the course of the LRTP development. Beginning the planning effort with a statistically valid survey helped to set the framework for the wants and needs of the community. Follow-on outreach activities sought to confirm what the statistically valid survey laid out, and further solidified the desire of our community to have the agency invest in multimodal transportation projects, not just continuing to widen roadways. This led to the investment strategy in the 2045 LRTP committing 100% of flexible funding resources to non-vehicular capacity projects.

In addition, staff has committed to an internal goal of responding to individual inquiries within 48 hours of receipt. If a resolution to an inquiry is not found within 48 hours, staff will still make contact with the person making the inquiry to acknowledge receipt.

Collecting public input alone is not sufficient. As an agency, our plans, programs and priorities must take this input to heart and reflect the needs and desires of our citizens.

# Equity Emphasis Areas



**Equity Emphasis Area Criteria**

- Areas With All Equity Emphasis Criteria (Listed Below) Above Average
- Minority Limited English Speaking Households Above Average
- Minority No Vehicle Access and Population Below Poverty Above Average
- Above Average Minority Population Only

Key Performance Indicator	Current Status - 2022	Target Goal - 2023	Target Goal - 2024	Strategic Business Plan Alignment	Equity Action Plan Alignment
Social Media Campaigns Created	15	40	100	Goal 2.1: Use data to tell stories about who we are as a county and what our future should be.	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Social Media Campaigns Created (Spanish)	0	10	25	Goal 3.2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process	1. Remove Barriers for Political Voice
Social Media Campaigns Created (EJ Areas)	3	15	30	Goal 3.2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process	1. Remove Barriers for Political Voice
Social Media Followers	4444	6000	10000	Goal 5. 1: Increase understanding through dialogue and active listening, reaching beyond our comfort zone to engage people from all walks of life	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Social Media Impressions	121300	200,000	300,000	Goal 5: Engage the public to create a future that reflects its needs and desires	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Blogs Created	6	15	25	Goal 5.2: Use storytelling to highlight issues and solutions	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Blog Views	1200	3000	5000	Goal 5: Engage the public to create a future that reflects its needs and desires	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Webpages Created	7	10	15	Goal 5.2: Use storytelling to highlight issues and solutions	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Website Hits (Overall)	419,000	500,000	550,000	Goal 3.2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
News Releases Created	4	10	15	Goal 5.2: Use storytelling to highlight issues and solutions	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
News Stories	32	45	60	Goal 5.2: Use storytelling to highlight issues and solutions	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Videos Created	3	5	10	Goal 5.2: Use storytelling to highlight issues and solutions	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Videos Created (Spanish)	0	2	4	Goal 3.2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process	1. Remove Barriers for Political Voice
E-Newsletters Created	3	9	15	Goal 5.2: Use storytelling to highlight issues and solutions	4. Strengthen Awareness and Agency Accountability
Community Events Hosted or Attended	11	15	20	Goal 5.3: Represent the public to become a force for positive change in the community and region	2. Local Organization Collaboration
Community Events Hosted or Attended (EJ Areas)	3	5	10	Goal 3.2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process	2. Local Organization Collaboration
Educational Events Hosted or Attended	2	4	6	Goal 5.3: Represent the public to become a force for positive change in the community and region	2. Local Organization Collaboration
Educational Events Hosted or Attended (EJ Areas)	2	3	4	Goal 3.2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process	3. Increase Access to Opportunity
Business Events Hosted or Attended	3	5	10	Goal 7.3: Work cooperatively with partners throughout Tampa Bay to build a more vibrant, livable and resilient region that adds value to the quality of life assets in Pinellas County	2. Local Organization Collaboration
Business Events Hosted or Attended (EJ Areas)	0	2	4	Goal 3.2: Serve as a facilitator to ensure an equitable and inclusive decision-making process	3. Increase Access to Opportunity

## MPO Public Participation Plan Document Review

MPO:		FHWA Reviewer:	
District:		Date:	
Last Plan Update:		FDOT MPO Liaison:	
Web Address:		FHWA Planner:	
MPO Public Involvement			

### Process and Strategies

Question	Y	N	Remarks/Observations
1 Does the PPP provide summary language which defines a process for providing interested parties* with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process [450.316 (a)]?	<i>Part I: "Compliance with State and Federal Requirements"; Part II: "Advisory Committees", "LRTP", "TIP"; Part III: "Digital Storytelling", "In-Person Public Outreach"</i>		<i>It might be helpful to develop a one-pager or something to get all of this information in one place for interested citizens (could be separate from PPP, but just a thought)</i>
2 Does the plan provide summary information about what the MPO is and what the MPO's role is in the metropolitan planning process [450.316 (a)]?	<i>Part I: "Who We Are"</i>		
3 Does the plan indicate how to get involved in the planning process, including how to serve on MPO committees [450.316 (a)]?	<i>Part II: "Advisory Committees"</i>		
4 Does the plan provide contact information for MPO staff and/or the person responsible for public involvement at the MPO [450.316 (a)]?	<i>Part II: Advisory Committees</i>		
5 Does the plan provide a description of general planning documents (TIP, STIP, LRTP, CMP, PPP) and/or a glossary of frequently used planning terms [450.316 (a)] ?	<i>Part I: "Purpose of the PPP"; Part II: "TIP", "LRTP"; Appendix F</i>		
6 Does the plan include a glossary of frequently used planning terms, acronyms and/or terms of art, commonly used in the planning process such as ADA, Title VI, EJ and LEP [450.316(a)(1)(iii)]?	<i>Appendix F</i>		
7 Does the plan provide a description of the "current" public outreach strategies used to engage the public in the transportation planning process [450.316 (a)]?	<i>Part III</i>		
8 Does plan provide detail on how it engages in public education efforts designed to make the transportation planning process and decisions it produces easier to understand in a laypersons' terms [450.316 (a)]?	<i>Part II: "LRTP", "TIP"; Part III: "Employing Audience-Sensitive Tools"</i>		
9 Was the participation plan developed by the MPO in consultation with all interested parties* [450.316 (a)(1)]?	<i>Part I: "Development of the PPP"</i>		



10	Is there a discussion about how the public participation plan was developed or when it was last updated [450.316 (a)(1)]?	<i>Part I: "Development of the PPP"</i>		
11	Is there language in the public participation plan which references how the process addresses the principles of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 [450.316 (a)(1)]?	<i>Part I: "Compliance with State and Federal Requirements", "Federal Requirements for Historically Excluded, Underserved, and Under-Resourced Communities"</i>		

Outreach and Engagement				
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Question	Y	N	Remarks/Observations	
12 Does the plan describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for providing adequate public notice of public participation activities[450.316 (a)(1)]?	<i>Part I, "Compliance with State and Federal Requirements"; Part III: Appendix B</i>			
13 Does the plan provide detail about MPO board and committee meeting times and locations [450.316 (a)(1)(i) and 450.316(a)(1)(v)]?	<i>Part II: "Advisory Committees"</i>			
14 Does the plan discuss when and where <i>public meeting</i> and <i>hearings</i> will be held [450.316(a)(1)(V)]?	<i>Part III: "In-Person Public Outreach"</i>			
15 Does the plan detail procedures for 'unplanned' or 'short notice' meetings [23 CFR 450.326(a) and 23 CFR 450.316(a)]?	<i>Part II: "Advisory Committees"</i>			
16 Does the plan provide detail about providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes [450.316(a)(1)(ii)]?	<i>Part III: "Digital Storytelling", "Employing Audience Sensitive Tools"</i>			
17 Is the MPO's web address listed in the Public Participation Plan [450.316(a)(1)(iv) and 450.316(a)(1)(i)]?	<i>Part I: "Who We Are"</i>			

Visualization				
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Question	Y	N	Remarks/Observations	
18 Does the plan describe the availability of public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web [450.316 (a)(1)(iv)]?	<i>Part III: "Digital Storytelling"</i>			
19 Does the plan describe techniques for employing visualization** techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs [450.316 (a)(1)(iii)] ?	<i>Part II: "LRTP", "TIP"</i>			
20 Is the format of the plan user friendly and does it include visual images to help with the "readability" of the plan [450.316 (a)(1)(iii)] ?	Yes			

Transportation Plan(s) Document Review				
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Question	Y	N	Remarks/Observations	
21 Does the plan provide detail relating to plan document review (LRTP, TIP, PPP etc.) including information about the timeframe for public review and comment, at key decision points [450.316(a)(1) and 450.316 (a)(1)(ii)]?	<i>Part II: "LRTP", "TIP"</i>			
22 Is there discussion in the plan about the plan (LRTP, TIP, STIP) <i>amendment</i> process, including how a member of the public can comment and/or review amendments to a planning document before and after the amendment is executed [450.316(a)(1)(i) and 450.316(a)(1)(ii)]?	<i>Part II: "LRTP", "TIP"</i>			

23	Does the plan detail how consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP will be handled [450.316(a)(1)(vi) and 450.316(a)(1)(viii)]?	Part II: "LRTP", "TIP"		
24	Does the plan indicate how many days and/or by what method responses submitted for public input will be responded to [450.316 (a)(1)(viii)]?	Part II: "Opportunities for Public Participation"		
25	Does the plan specify a minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO [450.316(a)(3)]?	Part I: "Compliance with State and Federal Requirements"		

**Underserved Populations**

Question		Y	N	Remarks/Observations
26	Does the plan describe strategies for seeking out and considering the needs of the traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services [450.316(a)(1)(vi)(II)]?			
		Part III: "Employing Audience Sensitive Tools"		
27	Based on the demographic profile or community characteristics survey of the area, does the plan describe outreach and/or consideration for other underserved populations such as the disabled, elderly, Limited English Proficient, and youth [450.316(a)(1)(vii)]?			
		Part III: "Employing Audience Sensitive Tools"		
28	Does the plan detail how those with special needs can request reasonable accommodation [450.316(a)(1)(vii)]?			
		Part II: "Advisory Committees"		
29	If there are Indian tribes in this MPO area, does the public participation plan detail how the MPO involves the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP [450.316 (b)(3)(c)]?	N/A		

**Measures of Effectiveness**

Question		Y	N	Remarks/Observations
30	Does the plan reference coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes [450.316(a)(1)(ix)]?			
		Part I: "Compliance with State and Federal Requirements"		
31	Does the plan discuss a strategy for periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process [450.316(a)(1)(x)]?			
		Part V: "Monitoring and Expanding Engagement"; Appendix B		

**Comments on the MPO's Public Participation Plan:**

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## **Forward Pinellas Internet Social Network Policy**

Forward Pinellas utilizes social media within the various public involvement strategies for the distribution of news and information regarding Forward Pinellas projects, programs and events and also as a means to collect citizen feedback on Forward Pinellas activities and related transportation issues.

The social networking programs and applications currently being utilized by Forward Pinellas in carrying out its PPP objectives include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and Youtube. The use of these applications is discussed throughout the PPP. Forward Pinellas anticipates expanding its use of social media on an ongoing basis to improve the reach and effectiveness of its PPP, as needed. Therefore, the policies and procedures described here apply to other social networking applications Forward Pinellas may use in the future, in addition to those currently in use.

## **Forward Pinellas Social Media Policies**

With its growing popularity and large number of users, social media has far reaching potential as a tool for engaging the public in the MPO planning process. However, with this communication tool comes a responsibility to ensure that correspondence posted by Forward Pinellas staff is fact based and non-biased, maintained and updated on a regular basis, compliant with applicable laws and County policies and not a source for creating new public documents. Listed below is a set of policies that encompass these responsibilities and provide guidelines for the establishment and operation of social networking sites.

1. Forward Pinellas social networking sites shall be supervised and administered by the Forward Pinellas web manager.
2. The web manager shall be responsible for reviewing all information before it is posted on social networking sites to ensure that the material is appropriate for public viewing.
3. All Forward Pinellas social networking sites shall adhere to Florida Sunshine Law, Public Records Law and all other applicable state, Federal and local laws, regulations and policies including all information technology and records management policies of Pinellas County.
4. Forward Pinellas social networking sites and entries shall clearly indicate that any articles and content posted or submitted for posting are subject to public disclosure.
5. Forward Pinellas shall include an introductory statement on its social networking sites that clearly specify their purpose and topical scope. Forward Pinellas social networking sites shall link back to its website for forms, documents and other information.
6. Forward Pinellas' social networking comments containing any of the following forms of content shall not be posted:

- a. Comments not topically related to the particular site being commented upon;
  - b. Profane language or content;
  - c. Content that promotes, fosters, or perpetuates discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, age, religion, gender, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, national origin, physical or mental disability or sexual orientation;
  - d. Sexual content or links to sexual content;
  - e. Solicitations of commerce;
  - f. Conduct or encouragement of illegal activity;
  - g. Information that may tend to compromise the safety or security of the public or public systems; or
  - h. Content that violates a legal ownership interest of any other party.
7. All social networking sites shall clearly indicate they are maintained by Forward Pinellas and shall have staff contact information prominently displayed.
  8. Forward Pinellas shall use a general office e-mail account for its social networking sites.
  9. Forward Pinellas shall not follow private citizen or commercial profiles from within its social networking profile.
  10. Forward Pinellas' communication on social networking sites shall be mainly one-way. After its initial posting, Forward Pinellas will not respond to subsequent viewer comments/messages except for purposes of clarification or matter-of-fact response to a question regarding the subject matter.
  11. Documents posted on social media sites shall be in PDF format with optical character recognition (OCR). Website Images shall have "alt text," where appropriate, to accommodate blind and visually impaired users.
  12. Photos uploaded to Forward Pinellas social networking sites shall be labeled and text captions and descriptions shall also be provided as applicable.
  13. The Forward Pinellas logo shall be used as the agency picture on social networking sites.
  14. Forward Pinellas shall avoid creating new material on social networking sites. Instead, material from existing websites or previously published documents shall be used.

### Review Process for Amending and Modifying Forward Pinellas Plans and Work Programs

Document/Action	Basis for Amendment/Modification	Review/Action					Pub. Hrg.+	Roll Call Vote	Agency Review **	Schedule Requirements/Notes	++Fiscal Constraint	Notice Method
		BPAC	TCC	CAC	LCB	FP Board						
Long Range Transportation Plan												
Amendment	Adding or deleting projects, major changes to project costs, initiation dates or design concepts and scopes	X*	X	X		X	X	X	FDOT, FHWA, FTA, FAA		X	website, social media, agenda distribution
Modification	Minor changes (e.g., map corrections, revisions for TIP consistency, adding unfunded projects)	X*	X	X		X			FDOT, FHWA, FTA, FAA (advise of change)			website, social media, agenda distribution
Unified Planning Work Program												
Amendment	Change to approved FHWA budget for the UPWP; and/or scope of task; and addition or deletion of a task					X			FDOT, FHWA	FDOT has 10 days to review and FHWA has 10 subsequent days to provide a response. Pursuant to Board resolution, Executive has authority to approve amendments as necessary. Board is informed in situations when this occurs.		agenda distribution
Modification	Doesn't change approved FHWA budget, scope of task or add/delete task								FDOT, FHWA (advise of change)			

## Review Process for Amending and Modifying Forward Pinellas Plans and Work Programs

Document/Action	Basis for Amendment/Modification	Review/Action					Pub. Hrg.+	Roll Call Vote	Agency Review **	Schedule Requirements/Notes	++Fiscal Constraint	Notice Method
		BPAC	TCC	CAC	LCB	FP Board						
Public Participation Plan												
<u>Amendment</u>	Substantive revision to objectives, strategy or measure of effectiveness	X	X	X		X	X		FDOT, FHWA, FTA, FAA***	45 day open comment period before board action		website, social media, agenda distribution
<u>Modification</u>	Minor changes and updates to narrative, descriptions, use of public involvement tools, discussion of activities											website, social media
Transportation Improvement Program												
<u>Amendment</u>	Addition or deletion of project or change that impacts fiscal constraint or changes scope of work. Priority list changes involving project rankings, addition of projects		X	X		X	X	X	FDOT, OPP, FAMO	Minimum 7 day public notice required prior to FP Board meeting. OPP reviews and forwards State TIP amendment requests to FAMO. They consolidate all requests into single amendment submission to FHWA.	X	website, social media, agenda distribution
Modification or Administrative Amendment	Modification is revision involving minor changes to project phase costs, funding sources of previously included projects and phase initiation dates. Administrative amendment occurs during three month gap, July-September, between state and federal fiscal years when projects added to year one of new tentative FDOT Work		X	X		X	X		FDOT, OPP, FAMO			website, social media, agenda distribution

**Review Process for Amending and Modifying Forward Pinellas Plans and Work Programs**

Document/Action	Basis for Amendment/ Modification	Review/Action					Pub. Hrg.+	Roll Call Vote	Agency Review **	Schedule Requirements/Notes	++Fiscal Constra int	Notice Method
		BPAC	TCC	CAC	LCB	FP Board						
	Program must be added to current year TIP.											
<b>Active Transportation Plan</b>												
Amendment	Substantial adjustment of planned facility alignment, extents or location or addition or removal of planned facility	X	X	X		X				Active Transportation Plan is an element of LRTP. Amendment may require LRTP modification.		website, social media, agenda distribution
Modification	Change to narrative or description, map correction, update of map template or base map information, designation of existing facility											reflected in on-line Master Plan and GIS
<b>Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan</b>												
Amendment	Change to service plan element affecting program operations				X	X			CTD			website, social media, agenda distribution
Modification	Change to Plan narrative, descriptions, corrections								CTD (advise of change)			reflected in online TDSP

## Review Process for Amending and Modifying Forward Pinellas Plans and Work Programs

Document/Action	Basis for Amendment/ Modification	Review/Action					Pub. Hrg.+	Roll Call Vote	Agency Review **	Schedule Requirements/Notes	++Fiscal Constra int	Notice Method
		BPAC	TCC	CAC	LCB	FP Board						

Notes:

*\*If proposed amendment is related to bicycle/pedestrian issue, project, etc.*

*\*\*Where federal agency review is required, FDOT provides amendment and supporting documentation to them*

*\*\*\*During annual/quadrennial certification reviews*

*+Public hearing records public comments into official public record*

*++Amendment must include assurance of fiscal constraint*

*1) Website notice of public hearings provides email link for individuals to comment on proposed amendment(s) if they are unable to attend the hearing in person.*

*2) The Forward Pinellas Executive Director has the authority to approve amendments/modifications to plans and programs approved by the Board, including the LRTP, when such action is needed to obtain State or Federal approval within a constrained timeframe. This policy was adopted by MPO resolution in 2008. It also stipulates that the Executive Director consult with the Board Chairman prior to executing the amendments and that a report describing the amendments be provided to the Forward Pinellas Board at their next meeting.*

Key:

*BPAC - Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee      FP - Forward Pinellas*

*CAC - Citizens Advisory Committee    FTA - Federal Transit Administration*

*CTD - Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged      GIS - geographic information system*

*FAA - Federal Aviation Administration      LCB - Local Coordinating Board*

*FAMO - Federal Aid Management Office      OPP - Office of Policy Planning (FDOT)*

*FDOT - Florida Department of Transportation      TCC - Technical Coordinating Committee*

*FHWA - Federal Highway Administration*



## **GLOSSARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING TERMS & ACRONYMS**

**ADVANCED TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (ATMS)** – Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technology that focuses on the coordination of traffic signal timing. It integrates hardware, equipment and technology, such as advanced vehicle detectors, closed circuit (CC) TV cameras and other electronic communication systems, to operate the traffic signals more efficiently.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)** – Prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodation, communications, and governmental activities. It applies to all publicly funded transportation facilities and transit vehicles and requires transit agencies to provide complementary paratransit service within the fixed-route service area to those persons unable to use fixed-route service because of a disability.

**AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC (AADT)** – The total volume of traffic on a highway segment for one year, divided by the number of days in the year.

**BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)** – Forward Pinellas appointed committee comprised of representatives of various government agencies, law enforcement officials and private citizens interested in bicycle and pedestrian issues. The BPAC advises Forward Pinellas on matters concerning the planning and development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities and encouraging bicycling and walking in Pinellas County and the region.

**BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN** – An element of the Forward Pinellas Long Range Transportation Plan, the Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan identifies existing trails, bicycle lanes and sidewalks throughout Pinellas County. The Plan serves as a guide for the planning and development of a comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian facility network that seeks to make these travel modes viable alternatives the personal automobile for commuting as well as recreational purposes. This will be re-titled as the “Active Transportation Plan” following its update in 2019.

**BIKES ON BUSES** – Allows Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) riders to mount their bikes on racks installed at the front end of PSTA buses to continue their trip as a bus passenger. The racks accommodate up to two bikes. Bike on bus accommodations are also offered in Hillsborough through Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) and Pasco County through Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT).

**BUS RAPID TRANSIT** – A flexible high performance form of premium transit that combines features of rail systems with those of on-road vehicles, and is characterized by being able to operate in special purpose lanes or on city streets. BRT stations are used as an intermodal hub and activity center for the community. Service is frequent enough that passengers do not need a schedule. Intelligent transportation system (ITS) technology keeps track of vehicles, provides passengers with updated travel information, and improves safety.

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)** – Comprised of citizens representing municipal area and at-large membership appointed by Forward Pinellas to review transportation issues and topics before they are presented to the Board. They are the primary conduit for public input in the MPO planning process.

**COMMISSION FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED (CTD)** - An independent State agency responsible for the coordination of transportation services for older adults, persons with disabilities and low income and children at-risk. The CTD is responsible for overseeing local Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) programs, designating local planning agencies, approving the appointment of community transportation coordinators and contracting with CTCs and State transportation providers.

**COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR (CTC)** – Responsible for managing the operations of the Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program and for the delivery of trips to individuals qualified to receive services through the Program. The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) is the designated CTC for Pinellas County.

**CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS (CMP)** – A systematic process designed to address transportation problems through the implementation of small scale physical improvements and strategies designed to improve the operations, safety and efficiency of all travel modes.

**DESIGNATED OFFICIAL PLANNING AGENCY (DOPA)** – Provides planning services in accordance with Chapter 427, F.S., for the local Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program. These include staff support to the Local Coordinating Board (LCB), evaluation of the local community transportation coordinator (CTC) and the administration and implementation of the TD Service Plan. Forward Pinellas serves as the DOPA in Pinellas County.

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ)** – The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws regulations and policies. Environmental justice is a mandate of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the result of Executive Order 12898 signed by President Clinton in 1994.

**FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA)** – An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) that supports State and local governments in the design, construction, and maintenance of the Nation’s highway system (Federal Aid Highway Program) and various federally and tribal owned lands (Federal Lands Highway Program). Through financial and technical assistance to State and local governments, FHWA is responsible for ensuring the safety of the County’s roads and highways.

**FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA)** – Provides financial and technical assistance to local public transit systems, including buses, subways, light rail, commuter rail, trolleys and ferries. FTA also oversees safety measures and helps develop next-generation technology.

**FIXING AMERICA’S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION (FAST) ACT** – The FAST Act was signed into law in 2015. It authorized over \$305 billion in long-term funding for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment, including highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act succeeds the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (*SAFETEA-LU*), 1998 Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP 21) Act and the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA).

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT)** – Formed in 1969, FDOT is a decentralized agency responsible for the development, maintenance and regulation of public transportation systems and facilities in the state. The mission of FDOT is to provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of the environment and local communities.

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT) WORK PROGRAM** – This is the State Five-Year Work Program of transportation improvements prepared in accordance with Section 339.135, Florida Statutes. It provides direction on where and when to build projects and how to fund them. The first year of the program authorizes FDOT to expend funds to complete the scheduled projects. The last four years of scheduled projects are included for planning purposes. The FDOT Work Program is also included in the Forward Pinellas Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

**FLORIDA TRANSPORTATION PLAN (FTP)** - Defines Florida’s future transportation vision and identifies goals, objectives, and strategies to accomplish that vision. The FTP is the statewide long range transportation plan for all of Florida.

**FORWARD PINELLAS** – Countywide land use and transportation planning agency resulting from the consolidation of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) in 2014. The agency is served by a 13 member board representing the County’s local governments and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA).

**HILLSBOROUGH AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT (HART)** – The primary transit provider in Hillsborough County, HART provides fixed route bus and door to door paratransit service and operates the Tampa Electric Company (TECO) Line Streetcar System.

**INTELLIGENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS (ITS)** – Encompasses a broad range of advanced technology solutions designed to improve the efficiency and safety of transportation facilities and services. Examples of ITS technology include coordinated traffic signal controls, smart phone applications to monitor traffic conditions, variable message signs, intersection cameras monitoring vehicle speeds and automated bus fare systems.

**LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS)** – A qualitative measure of roadway performance expressed in letter

grades ranging from A through F, with A roads operating under optimum free-flow conditions and F roads operating under the most deficient conditions characterized by forced-flow traffic with considerable delays.

**LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (LEP)** – Refers to individuals whose primary language is not English and have difficulty communicating effectively in English. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 requires MPOs and other recipients of federal funding to take reasonable steps to make their programs, services and activities accessible to persons with LEP. The MPO Title VI Plan includes an element addressing the agency’s approach to accommodating people who are LEP.

**LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (LCB)** – A 15 member board comprised of representatives of the Forward Pinellas Board, social service agencies, PSTA, private transportation providers, School District, FDOT and citizens responsible for governing the Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged Program. The LCB identifies local service needs and provides information, advice and direction to the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) on the coordination of services to be provided to the transportation disadvantaged within their local service area. The LCB also serves as an advisory committee to Forward Pinellas, which is the designated official planning agency (DOPA) for the Pinellas County Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program.

**LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)** – A 20-year strategy plan developed to guide the investment of public funds in transportation facilities while addressing all major modes of transportation including automobile, bicycle, air, rail, surface freight, and pedestrian travel. The LRTP is a federal MPO requirement that also identifies the transportation goals, objectives and priorities of Pinellas County and the region.

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)** – Created under federal and state law to provide a forum for cooperative decision-making in regard to regional transportation issues. Metropolitan planning organizations ensure that existing and future expenditures of governmental funds for transportation projects and programs are based on a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (“3-C”) planning process. Membership includes elected and appointed officials representing local jurisdictions and transportation agencies.

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ADVISORY COUNCIL (MPOAC)** – A statewide organization created by the Florida Legislature to augment the role of the individual MPOs in the cooperative transportation planning process. The MPOAC assists MPOs in carrying out the urbanized area transportation planning process by serving as the principal forum for collective policy decisions.

**PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ACTION PLAN (PSAP)** – Developed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) through the collaborative efforts of Forward Pinellas and community stakeholders, the PSAP is designed to help local government agencies address pedestrian crash issues specific to their jurisdiction. It is intended to help these agencies understand the tools and organizational changes necessary to improve pedestrian safety.

**PINELLAS PLANNING COUNCIL (PPC)** – Pursuant to a special act of the State Legislature (Chapter 88-464, Laws of Florida), the PPC serves as the advisory body to the Countywide Planning Authority, and is responsible for coordinating countywide land use planning and maintaining and implementing the Countywide Plan. The PPC and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) consolidated in 2014 and now serve under a joint policy making board operating as Forward Pinellas.

**PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY (PSTA)** – The primary provider of public transportation services in Pinellas County. Their services include fixed route bus and the transport of individuals with disabilities through their Dial-A-Ride Transit (DART) program.

**PINELLAS TRAIL SECURITY TASK FORCE (PTSTF)** – Comprised of elected officials, law enforcement personnel and County staff, the PTSTF monitors and addresses issues affecting the safety of the Pinellas Trail.

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT (PD&E) STUDY** – A process developed to ensure that the design of transportation projects appropriately reflects and incorporates the unique engineering and community characteristics of the area. The FDOT created the process to ensure that projects receiving Federal aid follow the policies and procedures outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act.

**PUBLIC HEARING** - Formal meetings required by regulation, rule or policy where public comments are recorded into official public record. Public hearings invite public comment but do not offer a question-and-answer format as is typically provided for at a public meeting.

**RIGHT OF WAY (ROW)** – A type of land easement, either granted or reserved, for transportation and/or utility purposes.

**ROAD SAFETY AUDIT (RSA)** - Formal safety performance examination of a road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary team. It qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements for all users.

**ST. PETE-CLEARWATER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (PIE)** – Located in the mid-county Gateway area, PIE is an international, commercial service airport operating under the authority of the Board of County Commissioners.

**SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) PROGRAM** – Funded and managed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the SRTS Program helps communities address school transportation needs while encouraging more students to walk or bicycle to school. The SRTS Program provides funding for projects such as sidewalks, shared-use paths, flashing beacons and median refuge islands.

**SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE (STSC)** - Established by the MPO in 1998, the STSC is made up of representatives of the School Board, Board of County Commissioners and

local municipalities. The STSC considers transportation and safety matters concerning the safe movement of students traveling to and from school. They serve in an advisory capacity to Forward Pinellas.

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PLAN** – Approved by the Forward Pinellas Board in 2017, this Plan guides the communication efforts of Forward Pinellas as it relates to land use as well as transportation planning. The Strategic Communications Plan complements and is consistent with the PPP.

**STRATEGIC INTERMODAL SYSTEM (SIS)** –The Governor and Legislature established the SIS in 2003 to focus the state’s limited transportation resources on the facilities most significant for interregional, interstate, and international travel. The SIS is the state’s highest priority for transportation capacity investments and a primary focus for implementing the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP), the state’s long-range transportation vision and policy plan.

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (STP)** – A block grant program authorized under the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act that allows for flexibility in State and local transportation decisions and provides flexible funding to address multimodal transportation needs.

**TAMPA BAY REGIONAL PLANNING COUNCIL (TBRPC)** – One of 11 regional planning councils in Florida, established by the Legislature to coordinate planning for the 43 jurisdictions in the Tampa Bay region. Specific duties include environmental management, economic analysis, and water quality, emergency preparedness, and hurricane evacuation planning.

**TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (TBARTA)** – Created by the Florida State Legislature in 2007, TBARTA is responsible for developing and implementing a regional transit development plan and to improve mobility and transportation options for the West Central Florida region consisting of Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco and Pinellas counties.

**TAMPA BAY AREA REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (TBARTA) CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)** – Comprised of residents and business representatives from the Tampa Bay area, members are appointed by the TBARTA Board to advise them on a range of regional transportation issues. They are also responsible for assisting in the development and maintenance of a regional transit master plan. There are 25 members serving on the TBARTA CAC.

**TAMPA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (TIA)** – The largest airport in the Tampa Bay region, TIA is a public airport that opened in 1971 at its current location six miles west of downtown Tampa. The Airport serves more than 16 million daily passengers.

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)** – Represents local governments, the School District, PSTA, PPC, and Pinellas County. They assist Forward Pinellas by reviewing transportation plans and programs and making recommendations based on their technical adequacy. There are 31 voting members on the Committee.

**TITLE VI** – Refers to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, and national origin in programs and activities receiving federal financial assistance.

**TITLE VI PLAN** – As a direct recipient of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds, Forward Pinellas is required to document its compliance with Title VI requirements through the submittal of a Title VI Program once every three years. This documentation is included in the MPO Title VI Plan. Included in the documentation is the process involved in submitting and investigating a Title VI complaint, public involvement efforts targeting environmental justice communities, minority representation on advisory committees and providing people with limited English proficiency (LEP) access to the MPO planning process.

**TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP)** – PSTA’s planning, development and operational guidance document required for Florida Public Transit Block Grant funding. The TDP is used in creating the mass transit elements of the Forward Pinellas Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the FDOT Work Program.

**TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)** – A type of community development that includes a mixture of housing, office, retail and/or other amenities integrated into a walkable neighborhood and located within a half-mile of a transit stop or terminal.

**TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES (TA)** – Provides Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program funding for projects and activities encompassing a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity. Forward Pinellas adopts a priority list of projects for TA funding each year for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

**TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)** – The application of strategies and policies to reduce demand for single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Common TDM strategies include the promotion of vanpooling services, transit use, and telecommuting.

**TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED (TD) PROGRAM** – Supported by funding provided through the Florida TD Trust Fund, the TD Program provides low cost transportation to individuals who, because of a physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation. For these individuals who do not already receive transportation services from a sponsoring agency, the TD Program provides them access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, and other life-sustaining activities. Children who are handicapped or “high risk” or “at risk,” as defined in Ch. 411, F.S., also qualify for TD Program services

**TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP)** – A five-year program of transportation improvements adopted annually by Forward Pinellas. The TIP incorporates state and federal work programs along with the capital improvement programs/elements of the local governments within Pinellas County.

**TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT AREA (TMA)** – Urbanized areas with populations of over 200,000 are designated as TMAs and are subject to federal planning requirements. The Tampa Bay TMA is populated by over 2.4 million people and includes portions of Hillsborough and Pasco counties and nearly all of Pinellas County. Transportation plans and programs within a TMA must be carried out by the MPO(s) in cooperation with the state and transit operators and based on a continuing and comprehensive planning process.

**TRANSPORTATION REGIONAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM (TRIP)** – State funded program created to improve regionally significant transportation facilities in "regional transportation areas". The funds are intended to provide incentives for local governments and the private sector to help pay for critically needed projects that benefit regional travel and commerce.

**TRI-COUNTY BICYCLE PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BPAC)** – Comprised of BPAC representatives from Pinellas, Pasco and Hillsborough counties, the Tri-County BPAC formed in 2015 to coordinate planning efforts involving the development of regional bicycle/pedestrian facilities and to address regional issues affecting with these travel modes.

**UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP)** – Federally required biennial statement of MPO planning work. The UPWP includes a description of planning tasks and resulting products, agencies that will perform the work, time frames for completing the work, and associated costs and the source(s) of funds.

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (USDOT)** – Established in 1966, the USDOT is a federal Cabinet department responsible for ensuring a *fast, safe, efficient, accessible and convenient transportation system that meets vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of American citizens*. The agency oversees the operations of several subsidiary agencies that include the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), Federal Railroad Administration and Maritime Administration.

**VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED (VMT)** – Calculated by multiplying the average (mean) of the total average annual daily traffic volume (AADT) by the length of the segment where the data is collected, in centerline miles. It is used to identify travel habits within an urbanized area.