

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

The Forward Pinellas Board held this public meeting in person on September 8, 2021, at 1 p.m. in the Magnolia Room at Pinellas County Cooperative Extension.

The board unanimously approved amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The board approved amendments including the reconciliation of projects included in year one (2021/22) of the TIP with projects in year one (2021/22) of the FDOT work program; the addition of a southbound left-turn lane on US 19 at the intersection of Gandy Blvd.; and the acceptance of a \$4.6 million federal grant awarded to Pinellas County from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for a “Connected Community” project to expand connected vehicle roadside units along US 19 and SR 60 along with predictive analytics for incident and congestion risk predictions. These new innovative technologies will measure and manage congestion, and help to create a safer roadway.

- Commissioner Merz clarified that these amendments would not affect any current priorities or projects in the TIP.
- Commissioner Eggers clarified with Pinellas County staff that the innovative technologies include software and roadside units located throughout the SR 60 corridor and on US 19 through the Largo and north county area to manage the traffic system more efficiently.

The board approved three amendments to the Countywide Plan Map

- The board recommended approval of three amendments:
 - An amendment from Pinellas County to amend the property at 20th Terrace SW from Residential Low Medium to Residential High to allow for single-family attached residential subdivision. (10-0)
 - An amendment from Pinellas County to amend the property at 8119 46th Avenue North from Residential Low Medium to Retail & Services to allow for the development of a pool contractor office and warehouse. (10-0)
 - An amendment from Pinellas County to amend the property at 1201 Gooden Crossing from Retail & Services to Residential Low Medium to allow for the development of three single-family detached homes. (10-0)

SPOTlight Updates

- The expansion of the entrance to Honeymoon Island State Park is expected to be completed by March 2022. In addition, Forward Pinellas and partners are developing design concepts to

improve safety and manage congestion at Alt. US 19 and Curlew Road, and along Causeway Boulevard.

- Forward Pinellas is working with FDOT and the City of Clearwater to discuss design options and questions about the Drew Street Concept Plan, and will hold public meetings as the design phase begins, with a focus on safety issues brought forward by residents.
- Forward Pinellas is beginning a safety study on Gulf Boulevard with the City of St. Pete Beach to identify speed management solutions, improve safety at roadway crossings and encourage people to travel in a safe manner. The study is scheduled to be completed in late 2022.
- Forward Pinellas will conduct a “before and after” safety study analyzing traffic behavior associated with the rectangular rapid flashing beacon at the crossing of the Duke Energy Trail at Sunset Point Road in Clearwater. The analysis will address the effects of modifications to the crossing.
- Forward Pinellas staff launched the Gateway Master Plan Dashboard to track progress on the implementation of the Gateway Master Plan. View the dashboard here: www.GatewayMasterPlan.org
- The Downtown St. Pete Mobility Study will be holding community outreach events in October to get feedback on recommended strategies and scenarios. Staff will present an action plan and recommendations to the City Council and the Forward Pinellas board in coming months.

Updates

- As a result of the Legislative Committee workshop on August 11, 2021, entitled *Finding Common Ground: A Conversation with State Legislators*, a number of legislators have pledged to work more closely with Pinellas local governments during the 2022 legislative session especially on four key topics: How do we keep our streets safe, fund our transportation system, make housing more affordable, and adapt to a changing climate.
- In January 2021, a team of reviewers from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) conducted a certification review of Forward Pinellas’ plans and programs. They found four noteworthy practices, including outreach flexibility using virtual and hybrid public involvement; complete streets grant funding; Long Range Transportation Plan 2045 Advantage Pinellas; and the 2020 Excellence in Regional Transportation Award for the LRTP. They recommended staff review the Public Participation Plan and conduct an Equity Assessment, which are both currently underway. There was one corrective action identified, and that action was remedied by Forward Pinellas shortly after the site visit and before the final Certification Report was completed.
- FDOT is updating the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Policy Plan, Florida’s high priority network of transportation facilities which are vital to moving people and freight, linking Florida’s regions, and investing in strategic transportation facilities. Mr. Blanton, Chair Rice, and Commissioner Eggers expressed their hope for more flexibility in SIS funding especially related to transit operations and parallel, arterial roads that could relieve traffic stress on SIS corridors. FDOT staff will provide specific details and recommended changes in 2022.

View the full video with more details here: <https://youtu.be/AeeD1SeO08E>

- Partially funded through Forward Pinellas' Complete Streets Grant, the City of Clearwater developed a Complete Streets Concept Plan for the Fort Harrison Avenue corridor from Belleair Road to Myrtle Avenue/Alt. 19, connecting three major destinations, Morton Plant Hospital Campus, Downtown, and the North Marina Area. After two walking audits and several public meetings, the visioning team identified improvements that improve multimodal connections, create a gateway, encourage economic vitality, and attract investment and development. The City of Clearwater plans to complete the design of the northern section and construct the demonstration projects by Fall 2022.
 - Mr. Blanton reinforced that complete streets projects focus on adapting a roadway to make it safe and accessible for all users within the context of the roadway, and eliminating travel lanes is only one tool in the toolbox. Staff will be working to provide consistent communication about complete streets as well as analyzing projects before and after a complete streets conversion to ensure we're improving areas strategically.
 - City of Clearwater Planning Director Lauren Matzke supported additional traffic analyses to ensure improved roadway functions in daily and emergency conditions.
 - Commissioner Albritton stated that every street has a different personality and the location of the Fort Harrison Complete Streets Concept Plan was ideal. In addition, demonstration projects allowed the City of Clearwater to test and refine possible solutions before significant investment and construction.
- In response to the many benefits of micromobility devices and share programs, the vastly growing popularity, and the regulatory challenges, Forward Pinellas Principal Planner Angela Ryan has developed a new Knowledge Exchange Series module devoted to micromobility, or small, lightweight transportation devices, such as electric bicycles, electric scooters, and electric skateboards. The goal of this research is to provide a proactive and collaborative approach to providing a regulatory framework for micromobility in Pinellas County. View the full Micromobility Knowledge Exchange Series here: www.ForwardPinellas.org/Micromobility
 - With the increase of micromobility on our trails, Commissioner Eggers requested we manage safety concerns through continued analysis and education.
 - Angela Ryan noted that Forward Pinellas is currently conducting a speed study on the Pinellas Trail confirming people using micromobility on trails are staying under 20mph. However, the increased usage on the trails since March 2020, along with some users not following trail rules, is leading to a negative perception. Mrs. Ryan highlighted Pinellas County's upcoming trail courtesy campaign that will help educate trail users about being respectful and sharing the trails.
 - Mr. Blanton agreed that education and communication can go a long way and suggested trail rangers help spread the message of safety and sharing the trail. Mr. Blanton noted with the unprecedented trail usage due to the pandemic, we must be mindful to manage a spectrum of different users on the trails.

Other Items

- PSTA, in partnership with Forward Pinellas, held virtual outreach for the Transit-Oriented Development pilot project entitled *SunRunner Rising*, studying how people could get to and from the SunRunner transit stations. PSTA is also celebrating their 1M Flamingo Fares passenger this week. Learn more about Flamingo Fares here: <https://flamingofares.com/>
- TBARTA approved a scope of work to advance regional public transportation through a study for regional rapid transit on US 19 between SR 54 in Pasco County and the Gateway area in Pinellas County.
- Mr. Blanton is drafting a letter to the Florida Legislature dissuading the restriction of -mid-block crossings and rapid rectangular flashing beacons due to the damaging impacts this would have on safety and equity throughout Pinellas County.
- PSTA is currently requesting funding from partners and local governments to resume regular operations of the Clearwater Ferry. In the future, PSTA will also request funding for the expansion of ferry services. In addition, the Cross Bay Ferry interlocal agreement is currently moving forward.
- Forward Pinellas is seeking an elected official to chair the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board. Thank you Commissioner Michael Smith for your service.
- We are delighted to welcome Alex Burns aboard our team as an Intern through our partnership with the Masters of Urban and Regional Planning Program at the University of South Florida.
- Early bird registration for the 2021 Gulf Coast Safe Streets Hybrid Summit is now open. Register today: www.GulfCoastSafeStreetsSummit.org/Register.

Action Sheet

September 8, 2021

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

- **Consent Agenda** (vote: 10-0)
Approved to include the following:
 - A. Approval of Minutes of the July 14, 2021 Meeting
 - B. Approval of Committee Appointments
 - C. Cancellation of the December Forward Pinellas Meeting
- **Approval of Amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**
Following a presentation by Jensen Hackett of FDOT, the board, in its role as the metropolitan planning organization, approved three amendments to the TIP. (roll call vote: 10-0)
- **Countywide Plan Map Amendment(s)**
Three cases were recommended for approval:
 1. CW 21-10 – Pinellas County (vote: 10-0)
 2. CW 21-11 – Pinellas County (vote: 10-0)

3. CW 21-12 – Pinellas County (vote: 10-0)