



**LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING AGENDA**

September 8, 2021 – 11:00 a.m.
12520 Ulmerton Road
Magnolia Room at Florida Botanical Gardens
Largo, FL 33774

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MAY 12, 2021**
- 3. LEGISLATIVE WORKSHOP SUMMARY**
- 4. INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT**
- 5. RECTANGULAR RAPID FLASHING BEACON LEGISLATION**
- 6. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES**
- 7. 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION DATES**
- 8. ADJOURNMENT**

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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.

Legislative Committee – September 8, 2021

2. Approval of Minutes from May 12, 2021



SUMMARY

The minutes from the previous Legislative Committee meeting are attached for the committee's review and approval.

ATTACHMENT(S): Minutes of the May 12, 2021 Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee Meeting

ACTION: Committee to review and approve the meeting minutes.

**FORWARD PINELLAS
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY
MAY 12, 2021**

Committee Members in Attendance:

Councilmember Brandi Gabbard, City of St. Petersburg, Committee Chair
Mayor Cookie Kennedy, City of Indian Rocks Beach, Forward Pinellas Vice Chair
(Representing the Beach Communities)
Councilmember David Allbritton, City of Clearwater, Forward Pinellas Treasurer
Councilmember Bonnie Noble, Town of Kenneth City
(Representing the Inland Communities)
Vice Mayor Patti Reed, City of Pinellas Park
Commissioner Michael Smith, City of Largo

Not in Attendance:

Commissioner Dave Eggers, Pinellas County
Commissioner Janet Long, Pinellas County, Forward Pinellas Secretary
(Representing PSTA)

Also Present:

Whit Blanton, Executive Director
Linda Fisher, Principal Planner
Tina Jablon, Executive Administrative Secretary
Dave Sadowsky, County Attorney's Office
Brian Lowack, Intergovernmental Liaison, Pinellas County

The Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee met in the Magnolia Room at the Florida Botanical Gardens; 12520 Ulmerton Road, Largo.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councilmember Gabbard called the meeting to order at 11:03 a.m.

Those in attendance introduced themselves.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 14, 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Smith and seconded by Mayor Kennedy, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes from the April meeting (vote: 6-0)

3. LEGISLATIVE SESSION

A. Pedestrian Crossings and Vulnerable Road Users

Whit Blanton advised the committee that the bill (HB 1113/SB 1412) on the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) failed in the Senate Appropriations Committee. Forward Pinellas was a leader of a statewide coalition that opposed the bill. He thanked Brian Lowack from Pinellas County and the City of St. Petersburg for their efforts lobbying against the bill. He pointed out that the City of Lakeland also lobbied Senator Stargell, who represents their district and is the Senate Appropriations Chair, by pointing out where five new RRFBs were going to be installed near her home. This may have persuaded her to keep it off the agenda. The bill is likely to return next session.

Mr. Blanton elaborated on SB 950, the vulnerable road users bill, which passed and was a small victory. The original bill would have forced drivers to yield a full lane when passing bicyclists. However, the final version was amended to read “safe distance not less than three feet.” This may pose challenges enforcing the law. The bill also allows bicyclists to ride two abreast, with some limitations.

Additionally, SB 278 would have imposed criminal penalties on drivers who injure bicyclists or pedestrians. However, it failed in committees as it has for several years. It will likely continue to be filed, but may not succeed as a stand-alone bill. Mr. Blanton suggested finding a way to add it on to another transportation bill.

B. Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority

Whit Blanton explained that the bill seeking to sunset the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) never gained traction and failed. However, a more friendly bill to TBARTA (SB 1194) was passed amending some of the wording in statutes. Some of the modified language removes coordination of the regional transit plan with the MPOs and re-names the Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC). The Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area Leadership Group (TMA) had suggested some amendments that were ultimately not incorporated in the final version of the bill. However, the bill does give mayors the ability to designate alternates to TBARTA, which may help in more regularly achieving a quorum.

Additionally, language providing a one-time earmark of \$1.5 million, was incorporated into the general appropriations bill, SB 2500. Mr. Blanton reminded the committee that Forward Pinellas generally opposes earmarks because they come out of the state Transportation Trust Fund and can create unintended consequences.

C. Final Status of Other Transportation Bills

Whit Blanton updated the group on a few transportation bills of significance, which included:

- SB 1276 by Senator Hooper concerning licensing fees for Electric Vehicles (EV) failed, but will likely return.
- SB 138/HB 817, providing a grant for EV infrastructure, and SB 140/HB 819, funding the grant with EV licensing fee all failed.
- HB 1283/SB 1660, a pair of bills concerning the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) which would have allowed THEA to expand into other counties failed, but will likely resurface.
- HB 839 passed, and prohibits local governments from banning gas stations within their city limits, or from requiring gas stations to provide EV charging stations.
- HB 729/SB 1364 would have limited state Transportation Trust Fund expenditures on public transportation to 25%. Typically, these expenditures are only 15%, but the upper limit is concerning. This bill would also have removed the required minimum expenditures on landscaping. Although it failed this year, it is likely to return.

- HB 1289, which passed, allows autonomous delivery vehicles to use roadways with limitations. Currently these are being utilized in college towns, paving the way for truly autonomous vehicles in the future.
- HB 91, this year's texting while driving bill was amended to be more restrictive. It did not pass, but will likely continue to return for future consideration.

D. Final Status on Other Bills of Interest

Linda Fisher spoke to the members about other bills of interest, which included:

- HB 401 passed, prohibiting local zoning regulations relating to building design for single-family houses and duplexes. There are a few exceptions, including for Community Redevelopment Areas and local governments with architectural or design review boards. Mr. Blanton pointed out that APA-Florida felt the amendments were positive, although the bill is still a big overreach. In response to query by Mayor Kennedy about a local governments ability to create a design review board in response to this bill, Ms. Fisher noted that the language concerning that was ultimately left out of the bill. She further explained that the Planners Advisory Committee would likely be discussing approaches to this new legislation and that could be reported back to the Legislative Committee for consideration.
- HB 219/SB 522, which would have worsened the state's preemption of local vacation rental regulation, failed. HB 1481/SB 1988 would have reduced some of the current preemption, but also failed. These types of bills continue to be seen every year.
- HB 403 passed, preempting licensure and regulation of home-based businesses. It is unknown if this will have an effect on vacation rentals as well. Councilmember Allbritton opined about the negative impacts this bill would create stating that the City of Clearwater had opposed it. Mayor Kennedy inquired if local governments were already regulating vacation rentals, would they be grandfathered? Ms. Fisher advised she had not seen anything to that effect, but would look into it further.
- HB 59 passed requiring a property rights element be incorporated into all comprehensive plans due with the next amendment or Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR) of the comprehensive plan. Mr. Blanton pointed out that APA-Florida is considering asking the governor to veto this legislation.
- HB 421/SB 1101 passed making it easier for property owners to take action opposing land use regulations.
- HB 35 passed allowing legal notices to be posted on websites rather than in print with some limitations.
- SB 628 on Urban Agriculture passed allowing for a pilot program to be developed.
- Councilmember Allbritton updated the group that SB 1209 passed, requiring residential buildings over four stories to install expensive bidirectional radio units to aide fire departments.
- Councilmember Gabbard advised the group that SB 60 passed, which no longer allow anonymous code enforcement claims to be reported. She expressed this may necessitate local staff being more proactive as the number of resident reports will likely decrease.

4. NEXT STEPS

Whit Blanton reminded the committee of prior discussions about the group becoming more proactive and working between sessions to look for bills that may come back, like the RRFB bill. He also expressed continued concern about earmarks and their unintended consequences and highlighted some examples.

Mr. Blanton pointed out that the federal infrastructure bill could see an influx of dollars to the region and expressed a desire for Forward Pinellas to work with the local governments to assist in prioritizing the spending of those funds.

It was suggested that a legislative workshop be held in August or September to invite local intergovernmental affairs staff, community leaders and the legislative delegation for a conversation. There was discussion about print materials to be developed on priorities, etc. The group discussed the event in further detail to begin strategizing and implementing a plan.

5. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Blanton suggested cancelling the June and July Legislative Committee meetings to allow for the workshop. A motion was made by Councilmember Allbritton, seconded by Mayor Kennedy and carried by a unanimous vote (6-0) to cancel the June and July meetings of the Legislative Committee. The committee will resume its regular meetings in September.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no additional items for discussion, the meeting adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

3. Legislative Workshop Summary



SUMMARY

On August 11, 2021, the Forward Pinellas Board hosted a workshop entitled *Finding Common Ground: A Conversation with State Legislators*, designed to build relationships between the leadership of our Pinellas communities and members of the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation, with the goal of leading to a more collaborative legislative process in the future.

The program included a moderated conversation focused 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?

The event was well-attended and included approximately 50 people, including more than 30 elected officials, state legislators, and directors of countywide and regional agencies who took part in the moderated discussion. As a result of this conversation, a number of legislators have pledged to work more closely with Pinellas local governments during the 2022 legislative session. A summary of the workshop is attached.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- Legislative Workshop Summary (Draft)
- Legislative Workshop Attendees

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY

Attendees: Attached

On August 11, 2021, the Forward Pinellas Board hosted a conversation between the leadership of our Pinellas communities and members of the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation, in order to speak with one voice on issues that are critical to the future of our communities, and find common ground between local needs and state priorities. The workshop was held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Margarete Heye Great Room at Ruth Eckerd Hall.

Councilmember Brandi Gabbard from the City of St. Petersburg, who serves as Chair of the Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee, and Whit Blanton, Forward Pinellas Executive Director, introduced and moderated the workshop. The program included an introductory presentation followed by a moderated conversation among the participants, focused 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?

Introduction

Councilmember Gabbard welcomed the participants and introduced the members of the Pinellas County Legislative Delegation in attendance.

Presentation

Mr. Blanton gave a brief presentation describing the role of Forward Pinellas in coordinating land use and transportation on a countywide basis. As a mature, coastal, urban county with 25 local governments, Pinellas is unique among Florida counties. Key goals of the Forward Pinellas work program include:

- Coordinating between the Countywide Plan, which governs land use in Pinellas County, and Advantage Pinellas, our longrange transportation plan
- Guiding growth and redevelopment to the right places, with a focus on investment in major land use/transportation corridors
- Creating affordable homes for a range of incomes, which are connected to jobs and educational opportunities through reliable transportation
- Using technology, education and design solutions to eliminate transportation-related deaths and serious injuries
- Mitigating and reinforcing the resilience of infrastructure and development in vulnerable areas

- Speaking with one voice to create strong regional connections throughout Tampa Bay

Following the presentation, Councilmember Gabbard and Mr. Blanton led a moderated conversation, posing a discussion question for each of the topic areas listed below.

Safe Streets Pinellas: A Vision to Zero

Pinellas County is infamous for its transportation-related deaths, but we've helped reduce them through proven safety measures. How do we ensure that we can continue using these measures, while exploring best practices that have been successful elsewhere?

Major discussion points:

- A current legislative effort that would spur the removal of many Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) statewide is well-intentioned, but would have the unintended result of decreasing pedestrian safety and could ultimately cause more deaths and serious injuries on our roadways
- It's important to listen to the unique perspective of community transportation planners and local leaders, and understand that not all communities need the same solutions
- State and federal grant funding currently requires a data-driven approach, preventing us from proactively implementing roadway safety measures before someone is killed or seriously injured at a location
- The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has increased the resources it focuses on transportation safety
- FDOT named Forward Pinellas its 2020 Planning Organization of the Year in recognition of its leadership role on safety and other transportation initiatives

Finding Flexible Funding: Investing in Transportation

Most statewide transportation funding goes toward highway capacity, which is not a good fit with the developed nature of Pinellas County. What are your thoughts on providing more tools to our county to develop the transportation system it needs?

Major discussion points:

- There is a significant mismatch between the requirements of transportation funding sources and our needs in Pinellas County
- Most state and federal transportation dollars are set aside for highway building and roadway capacity expansion
- Pinellas County has few opportunities to expand the roadway network, but needs funding to increase multimodal transportation options, particularly transit
- State legislators do not want Pinellas to lose out on transportation funding and are willing to support our request for greater flexibility
- While state transportation dollars cannot be used to permanently fund transit operations, it may be possible to fund them temporarily if a project is of sufficient regional importance

- There are some transportation bottlenecks within Pinellas County, including moving traffic from east to west, and from the mainland to the beaches
- Recent legislation allows the Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) to implement projects in Pinellas County, an important resource that should be explored further
- We will focus on these issues as part of the Advantage Pinellas longrange transportation plan for 2050

Connecting Our Community: Linking Housing, Jobs & Transportation

As a developed coastal county, we have unique challenges in guiding growth and redevelopment. How can we protect the rights of individual property owners while equally recognizing the rights of their neighbors?

Major discussion points:

- Property owners have rights, but so do neighbors, particularly as redevelopment moves into areas that have not seen change for many years
- Needed public investments in underserved areas must be balanced with the potential for market-driven displacement of current residents
- It's critical to have all partners at the table, including renters, to foster equity
- Creating housing affordability requires more than just publicly-funded housing projects, and will require a combination of strategies for the public and private sector
- Forward Pinellas and Pinellas County have launched the Advantage Pinellas Housing Compact, through which all local governments will be asked to pledge to work together to find solutions to the housing affordability crisis
- Countywide, we will need an estimated 1,000 new, affordable units per year for the next decade in order to keep up with population growth
- As currently administered, the state's Sadowski Housing Trust Fund does not provide enough funding to address the statewide need for affordable housing
- The Legislature and/or local governments could potentially explore alternatives to the current housing funding model, such as:
 - o Converting the Sadowski Fund to a block grant program for counties
 - o Creation of a more robust voucher program for greater housing choice and flexibility
 - o Offering more regulatory incentives for developers to include affordable units in market rate housing
 - o Evaluating the Florida Building Code for unnecessary requirements that make housing more expensive
 - o Facilitating employer-created housing for workers

Changing the Tide: Creating a Resilient Future

The Legislature took strong steps to address resilience in 2021. How can we give local governments more tools to build on this momentum and make our communities more resilient?

Major discussion points:

- In a bipartisan effort, the Legislature created the Resilient Florida Trust Fund and established a state Chief Resilience Officer in 2021
- Any community with a resiliency plan is encouraged to file it with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection by September 1, 2021, in order to be eligible for Resilient Florida Grant funding
- The Legislature also created a tax incentive to encourage property owners to elevate buildings in flood-prone areas
- The beach communities in Pinellas are each approaching resilience in their own way, but all are taking the challenges seriously
- Pinellas County has recently conducted a sea level rise vulnerability study demonstrating the need for investment to protect critical infrastructure
- The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council has created the Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition, to which 31 local governments and 90 private sector partners have signed on
- Reevaluating how we use energy, such as transitioning to electric vehicles, will be a key part of increasing resilience in Pinellas County

Public comment

Following the moderated conversation, two citizens provided public comment:

- David Ballard Geddis, Jr., expressed concern about the legality of the Pinellas County reclaimed water system
- Becky Alfonso, Executive Director of the Florida Bicycle Association, expressed appreciation for the workshop participants and their proactive coordination on legislative priorities

Closing Remarks

Mr. Blanton thanked the workshop participants, and emphasized that this conversation is only a starting point.

Major Joanne “Cookie” Kennedy of Indian Rocks Beach, who serves on the Forward Pinellas Legislative Committee, recognized the other Forward Pinellas Board members. She thanked the workshop participants for their time and effort, and expressed hope that the work begun today will be expanded in the upcoming legislative session.

	Last Name	First Name	Title	Organization
1	Alfonso	Becky	Executive Director	Florida Bicycle Association
2	Allbritton	David	Councilmember	City of Clearwater
3	Amos	Kimberly	Legislative Aide – Councilmember Brandi Gabbard	City of St Petersburg
4	Beckman	Kathleen	Councilmember	City of Clearwater
5	Blaxberg	Katie	Legislative Aide – Rep. Chris Latvala	Florida Legislature
6	Boehmer	Laura	Contract Lobbyist	Pinellas County
7	Borchers	Cassandra	Chief Development Officer	Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority
8	Brandes	Jeff	Senator	Florida Senate
9	Bujalski	Julie	Mayor	City of Dunedin
10	Burke	Brendan	Legislative Aide – Rep. Nick DiCeglie	Florida Legislature
11	Call	Rosemarie	City Clerk	City of Clearwater
12	Cavalli	Peter	City Manager	Town of Kenneth City
13	Chaney	Linda	Representative	Florida House of Representatives
14	Colletti	Zachary	Legislative Aide – Sen. Jeff Brandes	Florida Legislature
15	Diamond	Ben	Representative	Florida House of Representatives
16	DiCeglie	Nick	Representative	Florida House of Representatives
17	Eggers	Dave	Commissioner	Pinellas County/ BCC Chair
18	Esposito	Robert	Government Affairs Liaison	FDOT
19	Farrell	Joe	VP of Public Affairs	Pinellas Realtor Organization
20	Fay	Aubrey	Legislative Aide – Rep. Linda Chaney	Florida Legislature
21	Gabbard	Brandi	Councilmember	City of St Petersburg
22	Gao	Ming	Modal Development Administrator	FDOT
23	Geddis, Jr.	David B.	Citizen	
24	Gow	Jeff	Vice Mayor	City of Dunedin
25	Green	David	Executive Director	TBARTA
26	Gwynn	David	District Secretary	FDOT
27	Harvey	Dan	Member	St Pete DNA Board of Directors
28	Hayes	Steve	President & CEO	Visit St. Pete/Clearwater
29	Herndon	Matthew	Legislative Aide – Rep. Ben Diamond	Florida Legislature
30	Kennedy	Cookie	Mayor	City of Dunedin/ FP Vice Chair
31	King	Carson	Legislative Aide	City of Largo
32	Knutson	Kevin	Assistant County Administrator	Pinellas County
33	Koster	Traci	Representative	Florida House of Representatives
34	Latvala	Chris	Representative	Florida House of Representatives
35	Lettelleir	Matt	Advocacy Manager	St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce
36	Long	Janet	Commissioner	Pinellas County
37	Lowack	Brian	Government Affairs	Pinellas County
38	Loyd	David	Director of Business Development	Amplify Clearwater
39	Mathis	Jason	CEO	St. Petersburg Downtown Partnership
40	Matzke	Lauren	Assistant Director of Planning & Development	City of Clearwater
41	Morris	Anne	Assistant County Attorney	Pinellas County Attorney's Office
42	Noble	Bonnie	Councilmember	Town of Kenneth City
43	Overend	Ashley	Legislative Aide – Commissioner Kathleen Peters	BCC
44	Rayner	Michele	Representative	Florida House of Representatives
45	Reed	Patti	Councilmember	City of Pinellas Park
46	Riba	Mari	Legislative Aide – Sen. Ed Hooper	Florida Legislature
47	Robinson	Jamie	Vice-Mayor	City of Largo - President Suncoast League of Cities
48	Rouson	Darryl	Senator	Florida Senate
49	Seel	Karen	Commissioner	Pinellas County
50	Sobush	Dave	Director, Policy & Research	Tampa Bay Partnership
51	Sullivan	Sean	Executive Director	Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council
52	Tabertshofer	Derick	Legislative Aide – Rep. Traci Koster	Florida Legislature

4. Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

SUMMARY

On August 10, the Senate on Tuesday approved the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act ([H.R. 3684](#)), a sweeping proposal to invest in the nation's transportation, energy, water and communications infrastructure. The bill would provide \$973 billion over five years from FY 2022 through FY 2026, and incorporates authorizing bills for the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021 ([S. 1931](#)) and Surface Transportation Investment Act ([S. 2016](#)). The bill must still pass the House, which is anticipated to take up the measure by late September.

Proposed transportation expenditures include:

- Roads & Bridges: \$110 billion
- Transit: \$39 billion
- Rail: \$66 billion
- Safety: \$11 billion
- Airports: \$25 billion
- Ports & Waterways: \$17 billion
- Electric vehicle chargers: \$7.5 billion
- Electric buses: \$7.5 billion

The bill also sets aside \$1 billion to create a new Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. The pilot includes \$150 million for planning grants and \$350 million for capital construction grants to remove or mitigate physical infrastructure that creates barriers to communities, such as highways, viaducts and other principal arterial facilities. Counties would be able to apply directly to USDOT for funding.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- **UPDATED FACT SHEET: Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**
- [Summary by the National Association of Counties \(link\)](#)

ACTION: None required; informational item only.

BRIEFING ROOM

UPDATED FACT SHEET: Bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

AUGUST 02, 2021 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

On July 28, the President and the bipartisan group announced agreement on the details of a once-in-a-generation investment in our infrastructure, which was immediately taken up in the Senate for consideration. The legislation includes around \$550 billion in new federal investment in America's roads and bridges, water infrastructure, resilience, internet, and more. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will grow the economy, enhance our competitiveness, create good jobs, and make our economy more sustainable, resilient, and just.

The legislation will create good-paying, union jobs. With the President's Build Back Better Agenda, these investments will add, on average, around 2 million jobs per year over the course of the decade, while accelerating America's path to full employment and increasing labor force participation.

President Biden believes that we must invest in our country and in our people by creating good-paying union jobs, tackling the climate crisis, and growing the economy sustainably and equitably for decades to come. The bipartisan legislation will deliver progress towards those objectives for working families across the country. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act:

- Makes the largest federal investment in public transit ever
- Makes the largest federal investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak
- Makes the single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system

- Makes the largest investment in clean drinking water and waste water infrastructure in American history, delivering clean water to millions of families
- Ensures every American has access to reliable high-speed internet
- Helps us tackle the climate crisis by making the largest investment in clean energy transmission and EV infrastructure in history; electrifying thousands of school and transit buses across the country; and creating a new Grid Deployment Authority to build a resilient, clean, 21st century electric grid

The President promised to work across the aisle to deliver results for working families. He believes demonstrating that democracies can deliver is a critical challenge for his presidency. Today's agreement shows that we can come together to position American workers, farmers, and businesses to compete and win in the 21st century.

Roads, Bridges, and Major Projects

One in five miles, or 173,000 total miles, of our highways and major roads and 45,000 bridges are in poor condition. Bridges in poor condition pose heightened challenges in rural communities, which often may rely on a single bridge for the passage of emergency service vehicles. The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will invest \$110 billion of new funds for roads, bridges, and major projects, and reauthorize the surface transportation program for the next five years building on bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization bills passed out of committee earlier this year. This investment will repair and rebuild our roads and bridges with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity, and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians. The bill includes a total of \$40 billion of new funding for bridge repair, replacement, and rehabilitation, which is the single largest dedicated bridge investment since the construction of the interstate highway system. The bill also includes around \$16 billion for major projects that are too large or complex for traditional funding programs but will deliver significant economic benefits to communities.

Safety

America has one of the highest road fatality rates in the industrialized world. The legislation invests \$11 billion in transportation safety programs, including a new, \$5 billion Safe Streets for All program to help states and localities reduce crashes and fatalities in their communities, especially for cyclists and pedestrians. It includes a new program to provide grants to community owned utilities to replace leaky and obsolete cast iron and bare steel natural gas pipelines, some of which are over 100 years old. It will more than double funding directed to programs that improve the safety of people and vehicles in our transportation system, including highway safety, truck safety, and pipeline and hazardous materials safety.

Public Transit

America's transit infrastructure is inadequate – with a multibillion-dollar repair backlog, representing more than 24,000 buses, 5,000 rail cars, 200 stations, and thousands of miles of track, signals, and power systems in need of replacement. The legislation includes \$39 billion of new investment to modernize transit, and improve accessibility for the elderly and people with disabilities. That is in addition to continuing the existing transit programs for five years as part of surface transportation reauthorization. In total, the new investments and reauthorization provide \$89.9 billion in guaranteed funding for public transit over the next five years. This is the largest Federal investment in public transit in history, and devotes a larger share of funds from surface transportation reauthorization to transit in the history of the programs. It will repair and upgrade aging infrastructure, modernize bus and rail fleets, make stations accessible to all users through a new program with \$1.75 billion in dedicated funding, and bring transit service to new communities with an additional \$8 billion for Capital Investment Grants. It will replace thousands of transit vehicles, including buses, with clean, zero emission vehicles through an additional \$5.75 billion, of which 5 percent is dedicated to training the transit workforce to maintain and operate these vehicles. And, it will benefit communities of color since these households are twice as likely to take public transportation and many of these communities lack sufficient public transit options.

Passenger and Freight Rail

Unlike highways and transit, rail lacks a multi-year funding stream to address deferred maintenance, enhance existing corridors, and build new lines in high-potential locations. The legislation positions Amtrak and rail to play a central role in our transportation and economic future. This is the largest investment in passenger rail since the creation of Amtrak 50 years ago. The legislation invests \$66 billion in rail to eliminate the Amtrak maintenance backlog, modernize the Northeast Corridor, and bring world-class rail service to areas outside the northeast and mid-Atlantic. Within these totals, \$22 billion would be provided as grants to Amtrak, \$24 billion as federal-state partnership grants for Northeast Corridor modernization, \$12 billion for partnership grants for intercity rail service, including high-speed rail, \$5 billion for rail improvement and safety grants, and \$3 billion for grade crossing safety improvements.

EV Infrastructure

U.S. market share of plug-in electric vehicle (EV) sales is only one-third the size of the Chinese EV market. The President believes that must change. The bill invests \$7.5 billion to build out the first-ever national network of EV chargers in the United States and is a critical element in the Biden-Harris Administration's plan to accelerate the adoption of EVs to address the climate crisis and support domestic manufacturing jobs. The bill will provide funding for deployment of EV chargers along highway corridors to facilitate long-distance travel and within communities to provide convenient charging where people live, work, and shop. Federal funding will have a particular focus on rural, disadvantaged, and hard-to-reach communities.

Electric Buses

American school buses play a critical role in expanding access to education, but they are also a significant source of pollution. The legislation will deliver thousands of electric school buses nationwide, including in rural communities, helping school districts across the country buy clean, American-made, zero emission buses, and replace the yellow school bus fleet for America's children. The legislation also invests \$5 billion in zero emission and clean buses and \$2.5 billion for ferries. These investments will drive demand for American-made batteries and vehicles, creating jobs and supporting domestic manufacturing, while also removing diesel buses from

some of our most vulnerable communities. In addition, they will help the more than 25 million children and thousands of bus drivers who breathe polluted air on their rides to and from school. Diesel air pollution is linked to asthma and other health problems that hurt our communities and cause students to miss school, particularly in communities of color and Tribal communities.

Reconnecting Communities

Too often, past transportation investments divided communities – like the Claiborne Expressway in New Orleans or I-81 in Syracuse – or it left out the people most in need of affordable transportation options. In particular, significant portions of the interstate highway system were built through Black neighborhoods. The legislation creates a first-ever program to reconnect communities divided by transportation infrastructure. The program will fund planning, design, demolition, and reconstruction of street grids, parks, or other infrastructure through \$1 billion of dedicated funding in addition to historic levels of major projects funding, for which these investments could also qualify.

Airports, Ports, and Waterways

The United States built modern aviation, but our airports lag far behind our competitors. According to some rankings, no U.S. airports rank in the top 25 of airports worldwide. Our ports and waterways need repair and reimagination too. The bill invests \$17 billion in port infrastructure and \$25 billion in airports to address repair and maintenance backlogs, reduce congestion and emissions near ports and airports, and drive electrification and other low-carbon technologies. Modern, resilient, and sustainable port, airport, and freight infrastructure will support U.S. competitiveness by removing bottlenecks and expediting commerce and reduce the environmental impact on neighboring communities.

Resilience and Western Water Infrastructure

Millions of Americans feel the effects of climate change each year when their roads wash out, airport power goes down, or schools get flooded. Last year alone, the United States faced 22 extreme weather and climate-related

disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion each – a cumulative price tag of nearly \$100 billion. People of color are more likely to live in areas most vulnerable to flooding and other climate change-related weather events. The legislation makes our communities safer and our infrastructure more resilient to the impacts of climate change and cyber-attacks, with an investment of over \$50 billion. This includes funds to protect against droughts, floods and wildfires, in addition to a major investment in weatherization. The bill is the largest investment in the resilience of physical and natural systems in American history.

Clean Drinking Water

Currently, up to 10 million American households and 400,000 schools and child care centers lack safe drinking water. The legislation’s \$55 billion investment represents the largest investment in clean drinking water in American history, including dedicated funding to replace lead service lines and the dangerous chemical PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl). It will replace all of the nation’s lead pipes and service lines. From rural towns to struggling cities, the legislation invests in water infrastructure across America, including in Tribal Nations and disadvantaged communities that need it most.

High-Speed Internet

Broadband internet is necessary for Americans to do their jobs, to participate equally in school learning, health care, and to stay connected. Yet, by one definition, more than 30 million Americans live in areas where there is no broadband infrastructure that provides minimally acceptable speeds – a particular problem in rural communities throughout the country. The legislation’s \$65 billion investment – which builds on the billions of dollars provided for broadband deployment in the American Rescue Plan – will help ensure every American has access to reliable high-speed internet with an historic investment in broadband infrastructure deployment, just as the federal government made a historic effort to provide electricity to every American nearly one hundred years ago.

The bill will also help lower prices for internet service by requiring funding recipients to offer a low-cost affordable plan, by requiring providers to

display a “Broadband Nutrition Label” that will help families comparison shop for a better deal, and by boosting competition in areas where existing providers aren’t providing adequate service. It will also help close the digital divide by passing the Digital Equity Act (which creates new grant programs for digital inclusion), by requiring the Federal Communications Commission to adopt rules banning digital redlining, and by creating a new, permanent program to help more low-income households access the internet. Over one in four households will be eligible for this new Affordable Connectivity Benefit.

Environmental Remediation

In thousands of rural and urban communities around the country, hundreds of thousands of former industrial and energy sites are now idle – sources of blight and pollution. 26% of Black Americans and 29% of Hispanic Americans live within 3 miles of a Superfund site, a higher percentage than for Americans overall. Proximity to a Superfund site can lead to elevated levels of lead in children’s blood. The legislation invests \$21 billion in environmental remediation, making the largest investment in addressing the legacy pollution that harms the public health of communities and neighborhoods in American history, creating good-paying union jobs in hard-hit energy communities and advancing economic and environmental justice. The bill includes funds to clean up Superfund and brownfield sites, reclaim abandoned mine land and cap orphaned gas wells.

Power Infrastructure

As the recent Texas power outages demonstrated, our aging electric grid needs urgent modernization. A Department of Energy study found that power outages cost the U.S. economy up to \$70 billion annually. The legislation’s roughly \$65 billion investment includes the single largest investment in clean energy transmission in American history. It upgrades our power infrastructure, including by building thousands of miles of new, resilient transmission lines to facilitate the expansion of renewable energy. It creates a new Grid Deployment Authority, invests in research and development for advanced transmission and electricity distribution technologies, and promotes smart grid technologies that deliver flexibility and resilience. It invests in demonstration projects and research hubs for

next generation technologies like advanced nuclear, carbon capture, and clean hydrogen.

Offsets

In the years ahead, the legislation will generate significant economic benefits. It is financed through a combination of redirecting unspent emergency relief funds, targeted corporate user fees, strengthening tax enforcement when it comes to crypto currencies, and other bipartisan measures, in addition to the revenue generated from higher economic growth as a result of the investments. In addition, the White House intends to move forward with planning for the auction of new spectrum, in coordination with DOD, under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

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5. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon Legislation

SUMMARY

In 2020 and 2021, Representative Fine and Senator Perry filed unsuccessful legislation that would have significantly limited state and local governments' ability to use yellow rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) at pedestrian crossings. The bills sought federal authorization to convert existing RRFBs from yellow to red, and in the likely event the request were denied, would have required existing RRFBs on roadways over a threshold speed limit and number of lanes to be removed. The legislation would likely have resulted in the removal of hundreds of RRFBs statewide, preventing local governments from using a proven safety measure and putting many pedestrians at increased risk. Forward Pinellas sent letters of opposition to the bills during both sessions.

Among the legislators who worked to defeat or favorably modify the bills were Representatives Toledo and Chaney. Representative Toledo has stated that she expects the legislation to be refiled this year. She suggests that it may be more effective for MPOs to send letters of opposition in September, even if the bills are not yet filed, in order to give House and Senate members more time to read the letters and prepare for amendments.

Late in the 2021 session, the Federal Department of Transportation worked with Representative Chaney to prepare a compromise amendment which would have removed a number of objectional provisions. While Representative Fine was reportedly amenable to the amendment, since the bill was no longer advancing, the amendment was never filed.

Staff recommends that Forward Pinellas send a letter of opposition to the legislation before the session begins, using the proposed amendment as a starting point.

ATTACHMENT(S): Proposed amendment to House Bill 1113 from 2021

ACTION: Committee provide direction to staff.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Sophia Nelson Pedestrian Safety Act."

Section 2. Section 316.0756, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

316.0756 Traffic control signal devices and pedestrian control signals at crosswalks other than at intersections.—

(1)(a) Before the installation of a pedestrian crosswalk after October 1, 2021, on a public highway, street, or road which is located at any point other than at an intersection with another public highway, street, or road, a traffic engineering study must be conducted by a Florida licensed professional engineer which recommends the installation of such crosswalk.

(b) Before the installation of a pedestrian crosswalk with a rectangular rapid flashing beacon after October 1, 2021, on a public highway, street, or road which is located at any point other than at an intersection with another public highway, street, or road, the municipality in which the mid-block crossing is to be installed shall pass a resolution to authorize the installation of any rectangular rapid flashing beacon.

(c) Beginning October 1, 2021, only a pedestrian crosswalk that is located on a public highway, street, or road that has no more than four lanes or for which the speed limit is 35 miles per hour or less may be controlled by yellow rectangular rapid flashing beacon traffic control devices.

(d)(b) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary:

1. Upon approval of the Federal Highway Administration, the Department shall convert all existing uncontrolled mid-block crossings that conform to the most recent Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and other applicable Department of Transportation standards, manuals, and specifications from yellow rectangular rapid flashing beacons to mid-block pedestrian signals and must include a pedestrian-facing sign containing language stating duties applicable to a pedestrian, as provided in this chapter. A pedestrian crosswalk on a public highway, street, or road that has a posted speed limit of 30 miles per hour or more which is located at any point other than at an intersection with another public highway, street, or road must conform to the requirements of chapters 4D and 4E of

2. A pedestrian crosswalk on a public highway, street, or road that has a posted speed limit of 29 miles per hour or less which is located at any point other than at an intersection with another public highway, street, or road must include a pedestrian-facing sign containing language stating duties applicable to a pedestrian, as provided in this chapter.

(c) Traffic control signal devices and pedestrian control signals at crosswalk locations described in subparagraph (b)1. must be coordinated with traffic control signal devices at intersections adjacent to the crosswalk, and such traffic control signal devices at intersections adjacent to the crosswalk must be taken into consideration as provided in the most recent Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and other applicable Department of Transportation specifications.

(2) By October 1, 2024, the entity with jurisdiction over a public highway, street, or road with a crosswalk described in subsection (1) which is in existence on October 1, 2021, shall ensure that such crosswalk is controlled by coordinated traffic control signal devices and pedestrian control signals as

~~required under subsection (1). Alternatively, the entity with jurisdiction may remove any such existing crosswalk.~~

(3) By October 1, 2022, the Department of Transportation shall submit to the Federal Government a request for authorization to allow yellow rectangular rapid flashing beacon traffic control devices to be replaced by red rectangular rapid flashing beacon traffic control devices. If the Federal Government grants the request, the applicable entity must replace all yellow rectangular rapid flashing beacon traffic control devices at each crosswalk described in subsection (1) or subsection (2) with red rectangular rapid flashing beacon traffic control devices within 12 months after the date of federal authorization. If the Federal Government denies the request, the applicable entity ~~may~~ ~~must~~ remove any ~~all~~ yellow rectangular rapid flashing beacon traffic control devices from each crosswalk described in subsection (1) or subsection (2) by passing a resolution requesting that the Department remove mid-block crosswalks on the state highway system with rectangular rapid flashing beacons ~~October 1, 2025~~. The entity with jurisdiction over such crosswalk may retrofit the crosswalk with legally acceptable equipment.

Section 3. The Legislature finds and declares that this act fulfills an important state interest.

Section 4. This act shall take effect October 1, 2021.

Amendment Explanation

Section 2. –

(1)(b)

- This draft adds language requiring the approval, by resolution, of the appropriate local government before the installation of any new Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB).
 - This gives local governments an additional level of approval before RRFBs are installed on state roads.

(1)(c)

- Requires that no new RRFB may be installed on facilities with over 4 lanes and/or with a posted speed limit of over 35mph.
 - This codifies current FDOT practice in terms of the allowable conditions and placement of mid-block crosswalks with RRFBs in the state.

(1)(d) 1.

- Adds language requiring mid-block crosswalks with RRFBs be converted to mid-block pedestrian signals (MPS) wherever possible, upon approval of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
 - Mid-block pedestrian signals are over-head signals designed for pedestrian crosswalks.
 - Mid-block pedestrian signals are currently part of a pilot program between FDOT and FHWA.

(3)

- Adds language requiring that if FHWA does not approve a proposal to allow Red RRFBs, then local governments who wish to do so, may pass a resolution to remove any existing RRFBs in their community.

6. Preliminary Discussion of Legislative Priorities

SUMMARY

The Legislative Committee is tasked with recommending an annual set of legislative priorities to focus on during each session. Upon board approval and further direction, those priorities serve as the basis for coordinating countywide messages and communicating with responsible entities.

The draft 2022 policy positions have been updated from those of the previous year for the committee's consideration and discussion.

ATTACHMENT(S): Draft 2022 Forward Pinellas Legislative Priorities

ACTION: Committee to provide direction to staff.



Draft Policy Positions – 2022

FIND FLEXIBLE SOLUTIONS TO FUND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY.

- Taxes on fuel are a primary source of transportation funding for local governments. Increasing fuel efficiency, more electric vehicles in the fleet, and rising roadway maintenance and operating costs are placing pressure on local governments to search for additional funding. Local fuel taxes are not indexed to the Consumer Price Index to account for inflation, as state fuel taxes are, and therefore, revenues are declining at a faster rate. **Forward Pinellas supports the Legislature permitting the indexing of local fuel taxes for inflation to better keep pace with transportation needs like it has done for state fuel tax revenues.**
- The Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) receives the vast majority of state transportation funding. As our highway network continues to mature in urban areas like Pinellas County, and reaches a point where expansion is not a feasible or affordable option, **Forward Pinellas supports increased flexibility for SIS funds for premium or express transit operating on the SIS roadway, but not necessarily on its own fixed guideway, to enhance mobility on the SIS.** This is consistent with the legislative position of the Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council.
- The Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) is a valuable transportation funding mechanism based on state and local participation through regional collaboration. Forward Pinellas believes in fostering stronger regional transportation planning and decision-making and **supports sustained funding of \$250 million per year for the TRIP program** as a way to strengthen regional partnerships to improve mobility.
- Increasing flexibility of funds in urban areas enables MPOs and transit agencies to collaborate on priorities and direct resources to projects where they are most needed. In contrast, the use of legislative earmarks merely reallocates funding from existing priorities, reducing funding for needed local transit projects. **Forward Pinellas supports the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area position calling for increased flexibility for state transportation funding programs in urban areas while discouraging the use of earmarks.**

ENSURE A TARGETED, FOCUSED AND COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TOWARD SAFETY.

- Distracted driving poses a threat to the safety of motorists and non-motorized users. Between 2015 and 2019, 42 fatalities and 480 incapacitating injuries happened in Pinellas County related to distracted driving crashes (Crash Data Management System). **Forward Pinellas supports legislation that expands upon the adopted Texting While Driving law by prohibiting distracted driving by addressing the use of wireless communications devices with clear definitions and clarification on what it means to be stationary and operating.**
- Rectangular rapid flashing beacons (RRFBs) at pedestrian crossings have proven effective at reducing injuries and fatalities for vulnerable road users. Studies by the National Academies of Science and the Federal Highway Administration show that RRFBs increase driver yielding rates between 73-96% and reduce pedestrian collisions by 47%. **Forward Pinellas supports continued local authority over the use of RRFBs.**

- Safe Streets Pinellas is a collaborative effort to create a transportation system that is safe for everyone. On average, two people are killed or seriously injured each day in Pinellas County (Crash Data Management System). Forward Pinellas created Safe Streets Pinellas, a sustained effort of education, research and transportation facility improvements, based on the vision that not one person should be killed or seriously injured using our roadways. **Forward Pinellas supports state funding to address high injury corridors, conduct demonstration projects, and educate the public to ensure that Pinellas County streets are safe.**

KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES STRONG AND INDEPENDENT, WHILE WORKING TO SOLVE BIGGER CHALLENGES TOGETHER.

- Florida is a diverse state characterized by unique communities. Pinellas County is an example of that with its many downtowns, beach communities and neighborhoods. Home rule allows local governments to align the values of a community to its ordinances and other governing elements. **Forward Pinellas supports home rule and opposes bills that erode the ability of local governments to reflect the wishes and desires of their communities.**
- In 2011, the Florida Legislature passed legislation curtailing the ability of local governments to regulate vacation rentals, defined as residences that are rented out to visitors on a short-term basis. Preemption of this local authority impairs the ability of communities to determine their own character and protect neighboring homes from the impacts of incompatible tourist-related uses. **Forward Pinellas supports the restoration of local authority to regulate vacation rentals.**
- Building design is essential to community character. Particularly for mature communities such as those in Pinellas County, where neighborhoods are established and new development is primarily infill and redevelopment, design standards ensure that new residential structures fit in aesthetically and functionally, without disrupting quality of life for existing residents. **Forward Pinellas supports local authority to regulate community character through building design.**
- Trust funds such as the Sadowski Housing Trust Fund and the State Transportation Trust Fund are established with a clear purpose. These trust funds should be protected and not subject to transfers to the Budget Stabilization Fund and the General Revenue Fund. **Forward Pinellas supports protecting funding intended for affordable housing and other specific purposes from being transferred to other sources.**
- State-mandated changes to metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are a recurring concern to Forward Pinellas and other MPOs statewide. **Forward Pinellas opposes one-size-fits all changes that would usurp local authority to determine the most appropriate structure of MPOs consistent with federal law and consultation with the Governor.**

ENHANCE RESILIENCE TO GUARANTEE THE SAFETY AND PROSPERITY OF OUR COMMUNITIES AND MAINTAIN OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

- The Resilient Tampa Bay Transportation Study, of which Forward Pinellas was a partner along with other MPOs and regional agencies, found that 19% of the Tampa Bay region's roadways are highly or moderately vulnerable to storms, sea level rise, and heavy precipitation. The State can take a leadership role by providing funding to harden infrastructure, conduct vulnerability assessments on transportation projects, incentivize resilient development, and support research and mitigation for sea level rise. **Forward Pinellas supports state funding assistance to address the impacts of climate change and increase the resiliency of our communities.**

7. 2022 Legislative Session Dates

SUMMARY

The dates for the 2022 session of the Florida Legislature are as follows:

August 1, 2021	Deadline for filing claim bills
December 3, 2021	5:00 p.m., deadline for submitting requests for drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, including requests for companion bills
January 7, 2022	5:00 p.m., deadline for approving final drafts of general bills and joint resolutions, including companion bills
January 11, 2022	Regular Session convenes 12:00 noon, deadline for filing bills for introduction
February 26, 2022	Motion to reconsider made and considered the same day All bills are immediately certified
March 1, 2022	50th day – last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings
March 11, 2022	60th day – last day of Regular Session

ATTACHMENT(S): None

ACTION: None required; informational item only.