

PAC AGENDA – SUMMARY AGENDA ACTION SHEET

DATE: February 2, 2026

ITEM	ACTION TAKEN	VOTE
1. <u>CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS</u>	<p>The PAC held its February 2, 2026, meeting in the Palm Room at 333 Chestnut Street, Clearwater.</p> <p>The Chair, Andrew Morris, called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and the members introduced themselves.</p> <p>Committee members in attendance included: Andrew Morris, Britton Wilson, Luis Garcia, Danielle Stewart, Tatiana Childress, Cecilia Chen, Kathy Gademer, Wesley Wright, Allie Keen, Jared Austin, Marcie Stenmark, Braydon Evans, Mark Griffen and Jacob Labutka (late arrival 1:38 p.m.).</p> <p>Forward Pinellas staff included: Rodney Chatman, Emma Wennick, Linda Fisher, Nicole Galasso, Kyle Simpson, Nousheen Rahman and Tina Jablon.</p> <p>Others in attendance included: Kimberly Mejia (late arrival 1:33 p.m.)</p>	
2. <u>APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 5, 2026 PAC MEETING</u>	<p>Motion: Tatiana Childress Second: Britton Wilson</p>	13-0
3. <u>REVIEW OF FORWARD PINELLAS AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY 11, 2026 MEETING</u> <u>PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS</u> A. <u>Countywide Plan Map Amendments</u> 1. Case CW 26-03 – City of Largo	<p>Motion: Mark Griffin Second: Allie Keen</p>	13-0

4. PLANNING TOPICS OF INTEREST

A. Local Government Grant Program Funding Recommendations

Kyle Simpson reminded the PAC members of the intent and purpose of the Local Government Grant program offered by Forward Pinellas. He explained that the review subcommittee met just prior to the PAC meeting and handed out copies of the score sheets for reference.

Mr. Simpson then provided an overview of the subcommittee scoring and thought process behind the recommendations citing the selected applications have stronger safety connections. The subcommittee felt that funding the Kenneth City application would see greater impacts for the smaller city by leveraging funding in a city where fiscal resources are more constrained than that of Pinellas County.

Mr. Simpson then outlined the subcommittee recommendations as follows:

- Kenneth City for \$150,000 in Planning funds for a citywide context-appropriate multimodal study
- St. Petersburg for \$3,000,000 in Construction funds for signal technology investments along a couple of their High Injury Network Corridors, namely MLK and 18th Ave. S.

The PAC made a recommendation to the Forward Pinellas Board to approve the subcommittee recommendations as outlined.

Motion: Jared Austin

Second: Mark Griffin

14-0

B. Multimodal Accessibility Index (MAX) Update

Emma Wennick reminded the PAC members of what the Multimodal Accessibility Index (MAX) is and its intended purpose. She stated that annually Forward Pinellas staff provide an update to the PAC to highlight key changes from the previous year.

Ms. Wennick advised that since 2025, the average MAX Index score increased from 7.1 to 8.1 primarily due to improvements in transit coverage and frequency, expansion of micro-mobility infrastructure, and cumulative gains across several multimodal facilities. Other factors contributing to the higher average score included updates to GIS data and refined feature counts.

Ms. Wennick noted that while the average score has increased, the relative distribution of scores remains consistent because higher-density, multimodal areas continue to achieve the highest scores, while suburban, car-oriented areas generally remain lower.

Lastly, Ms. Wennick provided examples of how to use the MAX Index when evaluating land use amendments to demonstrate the value of the tool in offering a more comprehensive approach to assessing mobility compared to traditional Level of Service (LOS).

C. Countywide Rules Subthreshold Amendments

Linda Fisher reminded the PAC members of last year's amendment package that made it part way through the approval process before being paused to consider some additional changes to gain efficiencies in response to concerns that were expressed by some county commissioners. Specifically, to address the length of time the Countywide Plan Map amendment process takes and unincorporated County cases being duplicative.

Referring to the Pinellas County Charter and the Special Act, Ms. Fisher outlined some legal constraints within which any additional amendments to the Countywide Plan must remain compliant. She also outlined the legal principle that must govern any proposed changes which includes that unelected staff may make administrative decisions that apply

“clear, objective standards” already adopted. Elected officials must make decisions involving “policy choices, discretion, or value judgments,” which require public notice and a hearing. She advised that amendments to the categories on the Countywide Plan Map fall into the latter category.

Ms. Fisher stated it is possible within these parameters to redefine what triggers a Countywide Plan Map amendment as has been done in the past, most recently in 2015. She then outlined what would be needed to do so as follows:

- Justification for treating some amendments differently
- A set of criteria to identify appropriate map amendments
- Formal delegation of staff authority in the Countywide Rules
- Opportunity to appeal staff decisions to the Forward Pinellas Board and Countywide Planning Authority

Addressing each of these needs, Ms. Fisher offered a proposed justification as outlined in section 6.1.2.4 of the Rules concerning Subthreshold Map Amendments. She then outlined the proposed new criteria to qualify an amendment as subthreshold as follows:

- Parcels of 5 acres or less in size
- No increase to densities or intensities in the Coastal High Hazard Area
- No inconsistency with the Scenic/Noncommercial Corridor
- No increase to densities or intensities in an underperforming MAX Index cell
- If in an Activity Center (AC) or Multimodal Corridor (MMC), doesn't exceed maximum adopted density/intensity standards
- If in an AC, MMC or Target Employment Center, doesn't eliminate employment categories or permitted uses
- If adjacent to another jurisdiction, must document that they do not object

- If adjacent to a public school or adding 25+ dwelling units, document that the school district has been notified

Ms. Fisher then offered examples of what would and would not trigger a Tier II amendment if these proposed changes were implemented. She advised that of the cases that went before the Forward Pinellas Board in 2025, only two would have qualified as subthreshold if this criterion was applied. She also noted, however, that 2025 was overall a slow year for land use cases and this would account for approximately one in five of all cases.

Lastly, Ms. Fisher outlined the next steps which would include bringing the item back to the PAC for a formal recommendation, a public hearing before the Forward Pinellas Board and two public hearings before the Board of County Commissioners, in its role as the Countywide Planning Authority. Currently, Forward Pinellas staff is in the process of introducing the proposed changes and doing outreach to garner support before moving into the formal adoption process.

Britton Wilson asked about including Institutional and church-owned properties in the subthreshold category as she believed was done in the past. In response, Rodney Chatman stated this is in the early stages of development and staff is still working with the Forward Pinellas Board on it. Therefore, any input from the PAC is welcome and will be considered.

Mr. Chatman pointed out that an “escape clause” would be included to allow Forward Pinellas staff to request a public hearing before the Forward Pinellas Board on any qualifying subthreshold amendments that are deemed complicated, or staff are unsure about. Linda Fisher added that it would be similar to the language found in the Rules related to map adjustments.

Andrew Morris expressed concern about a lack of predictability in the process given the “escape clause” and asked for an example of how it would be used. Ms. Fisher described a

	<p>past case that met the criteria for a map adjustment, but was 50 acres in size, which was considered significant enough to warrant a formal map amendment. She added that the “escape clause” is very rarely used and is only intended for unusual circumstances.</p>	
<p><u>D. Truth in Annexation Worksheet – New Platform</u></p>	<p>Linda Fisher reminded the PAC members that the “annexation wars” of the late 1990s through the 2000s were the rationale behind the creation of the Truth in Annexation Worksheet. The Worksheet allows citizens to have the most accurate information available in one place for reference when considering annexation of a particular parcel of land.</p> <p>Ms. Fisher stated that the Worksheet has gone through several iterations over the years since its start as a simple Excel spreadsheet to the online version that exists today. The online version allows users to enter information regarding a parcel and receive the specifics about the fiscal impacts of an annexation from one municipality to another. The online version is updated every two years to ensure the accuracy of the data.</p> <p>Ms. Fisher advised that the Worksheet is once again being updated to a new and improved version and is in the final phases of development. She stressed that the underlying data is the most important and must be provided by each local government to ensure accuracy. Ms. Fisher requested that the PAC members respond to the email that was previously sent to provide the current underlying data that is needed for completion of the latest update.</p>	

E. Legislative Update

Nousheen Rahman updated the PAC members on the status of several bills of interest that are making their way through the legislative process which included:

- SB 48/HB 313 Accessory Dwelling Units
- SB 208/HB 399 Infill & Compatibility
- HB 927/SB 1138 Private Providers of Planning Services

Ms. Rahman also advised that Forward Pinellas staff are still monitoring some bills that have not seen any major updates to date which include:

- SB 840 which also modifies last year's SB 180
- HB 675/SB 756 proposing minor changes to the Live Local Act
- SB 948 Florida Starter Homes Act
- HB 105, SB 1014 and HB 323/SB 910 regrading miscellaneous preemptions

Lastly, Ms. Rahman provided an update on the many bills regarding proposed changes to property taxes. She noted that there are common themes across all the bills. All apply only to homesteaded properties, do not apply to school taxes, require a referendum, and prohibit local governments from reducing spending on law enforcement (or first responders generally). Ms. Rahman pointed out that the Property Appraiser's Office has developed a dashboard to outline the probable tax impacts for each of the proposed bills.

5. OTHER PAC BUSINESS/PAC DISCUSSION AND UPCOMING AGENDA

A. Upcoming Land Use Cases & Pre-App Meetings

Upon call for any upcoming cases to be discussed, Pinellas County, the City of St. Petersburg, the City of Largo, and the City of Pinellas Park noted items that may be forthcoming and offered some details for each.

<p>B. <u>Interesting Topics from Your Planner's Notebook</u></p>	<p>Rodney Chatman alerted the PAC members to an ongoing phishing scheme involving planning agencies. The scammers are emailing applicants requesting money be wired to process applications. Information is likely being pulled from publicly accessible documents online using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to aid the process. Allie Keen offered a potential solution of not including the applicant's contact information in the board agenda packet as has been implemented in the City of Tarpon Springs.</p> <p>Additionally, Rodney Chatman thanked those PAC members who have taken the survey that was sent out by Forward Pinellas staff advising that the information provided will be used to inform the development of the FY27 Pinellas Planning Council budget for special projects.</p> <p>Lastly, Mr. Chatman stated that the Live Local Dashboard, as created by Forward Pinellas, continues to garner attention around the state. He reminded the committee members that the tool is only as useful as the information uploaded to it and encouraged members to provide the needed information to Emma Wennick each month when requested to ensure the continued usefulness of the tool.</p>	
<p>6. <u>INFORMATIONAL ITEMS</u></p> <p>A. <u>CPA Actions and Forward Pinellas Administrative Review Items</u></p>	<p>Rodney Chatman advised the PAC members that there were no public hearings held by the Countywide Planning Authority, no map adjustments and no Tier I amendments processed during the noted time period.</p>	
<p>B. <u>March PAC Meeting to Include Orientation</u></p>	<p>In response to inquiry by the PAC Chair, Andrew Morris, Rodney Chatman advised that that PAC Orientation would be included as part of the regular agenda for the March meeting.</p>	
<p>7. <u>UPCOMING EVENTS</u></p>	<p>The Chair highlighted the upcoming events of interest.</p>	
<p>8. <u>ADJOURNMENT</u></p>	<p>There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:39 p.m.</p>	

Respectfully Submitted,

PAC Chair

Date