

Forward Pinellas

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<https://forwardpinellas.org/>

Department Purpose

Forward Pinellas is a land use and transportation planning agency. The agency is charged with addressing countywide land use and transportation concerns, as both the Pinellas Planning Council and Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization. Forward Pinellas not only provides a forum for countywide decision-making on transportation and land use issues, but also assists Pinellas County's 24 cities and unincorporated Pinellas County with technical support, regional coordination and policy advice and guidance.

The Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) is a dependent special district of the Board of County Commissioners. The Board of County Commissioners approves its budget and certifies its millage. The Pinellas Planning Council has existed in some form since 1965. It was reconstituted in its current form in 1988 by a special act of the State Legislature (Chapter 88-464, Laws of Florida), and approved by countywide referendum as an amendment to the Pinellas County Charter. In September 2014, the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) unified its membership with the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), as stipulated by Chapter 2012-245, Laws of Florida. The merged board is charged with addressing both countywide land use and transportation concerns within the boundaries of Pinellas County, and it has re-branded itself Forward Pinellas. Both the PPC and the MPO continue to exist as regulated separate organizations. The agency's staff are PPC employees, and the PPC is reimbursed by the MPO for applicable operating costs and staff services.

The PPC annually adopts a countywide ad valorem tax, with the corresponding millage levy authorized by the Board of County Commissioners. The maximum tax levy authorized by the Special Act (Chapter 2012-245, Laws of Florida) is one-sixth of one mill (.1666), with the FY22 millage levy of .0150 mills at 9.0% of the authorized levy. For FY23, a millage increase is being proposed to 0.0235 mills.

Topics for Discussion

- Fund Balance
 - The PPC's only financial means to fund special projects or initiatives to address countywide priorities and/or the needs of the local government partners is through the fund balance. Initiatives like the Gateway Master Plan, the Active Transportation Plan, the Safe Streets Pinellas Action Plan, the Downtown St. Petersburg Mobility Study, the Planning & Placemaking Grant Pilot Program, the Urban Design Services Pilot Program, etc. were widely supported by local government/agency partners but required a certain level of funding from the PPC. The funding level varied by project or initiative but often required PPC funding to supplement the funding from the cities and/or FDOT. Typically, this level of funding commitment and project/program leadership is only possible by accumulating enough fund balance over 2-3 budget cycles and budgeting those funds in the Contractual Support Services (Professional Services is the County system) line item. If the Appointing Authority did not have unused funds, then it cannot fulfill one of the core tenants of their agency's mission.
 - For the past few years, revenues are lower than expenditures. This causes fund balance to slowly decrease and leads to a structural imbalance in the budget.
- Proposed millage
 - The goal of the Appointing Authority is to have revenues cover expenditures so that fund balance is not reduced significantly. The purpose of this is to be able to fund new projects in future years.

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- To achieve this goal, the proposed millage for FY23 is 0.0235.

Budget Summary

The budget presented here is based on a millage increase from 0.0150 mils to 0.0235 mils. This may not be the final recommendation.

The current FY23 budget request for Forward Pinellas is \$4.9M, an increase of \$36,430, or 0.8% when compared to the FY22 Budget. With the above assumptions, Ad Valorem tax revenues are proposed to increase by \$1.1M, or 76.2%. Personal Services of \$2.1M increased \$50,300, or 2.4%. There are 19.0 FTE budgeted for FY23 with currently 3 vacant positions. Operating Expenses decreased \$457,230, or 22.6% resulting from no new projects planned in FY23 and continuing with two projects that are carrying over from FY22 in Professional Services. Reserves are budgeted to increase \$429,340 to \$1.1M, or 64.4% to achieve the goal of the Appointing Authority to have revenues cover expenditures so that fund balance is not reduced significantly. The purpose of this is to be able to fund new projects in future years.

Revenues

Major Object	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Budget	FY22 Estimate	FY23 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change
Fund Balance	1,227,159	1,310,867	1,281,147	1,811,030	1,183,070	1,061,660	(749,370)	-41.38%
Taxes	1,150,295	1,245,617	1,336,028	1,393,140	1,393,140	2,454,140	1,061,000	76.16%
Charges for Services	1,512,041	1,254,848	1,125,118	1,612,970	1,128,020	1,339,500	(273,470)	-16.95%
Interest Earnings	3,893	1,786	2,551	2,020	290	290	(1,730)	-85.64%
Revenues Total	3,893,388	3,813,118	3,744,844	4,819,160	3,704,520	4,855,590	36,430	0.76%

Expenditures

Major Object	FY19 Actual	FY20 Actual	FY21 Actual	FY22 Budget	FY22 Estimate	FY23 Request	Budget to Budget Change	Budget to Budget % Change
Personal Services	1,871,790	1,933,765	1,999,006	2,096,530	1,535,410	2,146,830	50,300	2.40%
Operating Expenses	677,395	552,752	510,502	2,027,010	1,070,360	1,569,780	(457,230)	-22.56%
Capital Outlay	0	10,849	15,197	0	0	0	0	0.00%
Constitutional Officers Transfers	25,429	34,605	37,074	29,340	37,090	43,360	14,020	47.78%
Reserves	0	0	0	666,280	0	1,095,620	429,340	64.44%
Expenditures Total	2,574,614	2,531,971	2,561,779	4,819,160	2,642,860	4,855,590	36,430	0.76%

Notes:

1. Staff names show primary responsibilities, but there is crossover in most areas.
2. Yellow border indicates future growth areas and staff collaboration.

