

County Administrator Barry Burton

Annual Review 2022



Our vision: to be the standard for public service in America

- Strong Property Tax Values
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Behavioral Health
- Quality Workforce
- Public Health, Safety & Welfare
- Sustainability & Resiliency
- Economic Growth & Community Vitality
- Partnerships



Budget:

The FY23 Proposed Budget represents annual implementation of our County's strategic plan and the priorities we have discussed over the last year as we all strive to achieve our vision to be the standard for public service in America.

Pinellas County has proven resilient in navigating the Post-Covid economy and has financially recovered as evidenced by strong property tax values and tourism numbers. The fiscal and operational condition of Pinellas County is strong as we enter FY23.

- **Keeping the tax burden low.** For the second consecutive year, and only the second time in 35 years, the proposed budget lowers the Countywide property tax rate while maintaining and using County reserves to appropriately address one-time funding priorities. We are investing in the following priority areas within the rolled-back millage rate.
 - **Transportation and Infrastructure.** To address challenges and funding shortfalls adequate to maintain the County's vast transportation infrastructure, a dedicated millage was approved for FY22. An additional dedicated millage is proposed in FY23 to increase investments in roads, bridges, sidewalks, and other transportation infrastructure.
 - **Behavioral Health.** Established a collective performance management approach with behavioral health public service funders and instituted a contractual Optimal Data Set (ODS) requirement for all providers of behavioral health care. Established a robust Coordinated Access Model (CAM) with a centralized intake process to access care including standardized screening, triage, and scheduling practices. These investments, along with continued funding of the Sheriff's mental health squad illustrate our commitment to improving behavioral health in our communities
 - **Housing Affordability.** Housing affordability remains a top issue in Pinellas County and the Tampa Bay region as home prices and rents have risen dramatically in recent years. Rent prices in the Tampa Bay Area increased 24% in 2021 and continue to rise in 2022. Pinellas County housing programs include home buyer counseling classes, down payment and home repair loans, rental assistance, and funding for affordable housing development that includes both homeownership and rental housing. Pinellas County received \$45.7M of federal Emergency Rental Assistance Program funds in response to the pandemic and has assisted 5,443 households through May of 2022. In addition to leveraging state and federal funds through partnership with the Pinellas County Housing Finance Authority, the County and cities created the Penny for Pinellas Affordable Housing Program, an \$80.0M fund dedicated to supporting qualified development and rehabilitation projects to expand affordable housing in Pinellas County.

The BCC has approved \$23,480,000 of funding for 8 affordable housing projects since the start of the Penny 4 program. The eight projects combined will produce 1,182 units of which 890 will be restricted as affordable. Skyway Lofts is complete (65 units). The Shores is nearing construction completion (51 units) and the other 6 projects are in the development and early construction stages. The projects are listed on the web at: <https://advantagepinellas.org/homes-for-pinellas/penny-for-pinellas-housing-program/>

- **Workforce Retention and Recruitment.** We've worked hard over the last year to address high vacancy and turnover rates, yet challenges continue. We've enhanced career paths and ladders programs, instituted a remote work policy, embraced trainee programs, reclassified positions to better align with job duties, and implemented departmental recognition and incentive programs. The board has generously funded pay adjustments in support of our existing employees and recruitment of new ones.
- **Penny for Pinellas** is balanced for the 10-year term of the sales tax levy. By focusing on the original 2017 projects, updating revenue and cost estimates, and leveraging additional funding sources, such as American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, the penny is balanced.
- **ARPA Funds.** We have developed, adopted, and begun implementing a plan to invest ARPA funds into programs and projects that will have a lasting impact without creating an additional burden on future budgets. This historic \$189 million opportunity will impact underserved communities, children, and infrastructure.
- **Continue** on-going discussions with the Rays and Phillies.
- **GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Awarded** for the FY22 Budget for the 17th consecutive year.
- **Lowest per Capita Debt.** Pinellas County continues to have the lowest per capita debt among large Florida counties in FY22.



Public Health, Safety and Welfare:

Providing protection to some of our most vulnerable citizens is a top priority. Collaboration with partners both internal and external was key in developing some of our most important programs such as the Tenant Bill of Rights that protects renters, the Street Medicine Program for homeless individuals, and expanding the Quick Response Team to include Law Enforcement and Fire, which will provide rapid deployment of engagement teams for substance abuse treatment. We completed Design Workshops with representatives from Central Florida Behavioral Health Network, Juvenile Welfare Board, Pinellas County Sheriff's Office, Department of Health Pinellas, and National Alliance on Mental Illness Pinellas for our Coordinated Access Model. We developed the Request for Proposals in response to the Model design and competitively procured the vendor, Unite Us, in partnership with USF College of Behavioral Health Science. Scope of work finalized with a go-live date of Spring 2023.

- The Tenants Bill of Rights ordinance goes into effect on October 3, protects renters from discrimination based on their source of income, requires landlords to provide tenants with a Notice of Rights and give advance notice of late fees and rent increases of more than 5%.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Fire Departments received an average of 788 calls per day with a 4.5-minute average response time.
- Millage rates reduced for most dependent fire districts as well as for EMS fund with no degradation of fund reserve levels and with system enhancements provided.
- Constructed new Lealman Fire Station 19 with Penny for Pinellas.
- Implemented Closest Unit Dispatch for EMS and began closest unit for Fire agencies.
- Expanding the Quick Response Team Model to include Law Enforcement and Fire. Post overdose or suspected substance use involvement LE/Fire will have the ability to refer to the quick response teams for rapid deployment of engagement teams into opioid treatment.
- Successfully implemented the Street Medicine Program which includes the delivery of primary care, wound care, dental care, and access to behavioral health care for unsheltered homeless individuals.
- Established a contractual Optimal Data Set (ODS) requirement for all providers of behavioral health care.
- Developed the robust Behavioral Health Coordinated Access Model (CAM).
- Purchased New Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) for the Healthcare for the Homeless Program.
- Expanded Opioid mitigation efforts to respond to the ongoing substance abuse crisis.
- Developed and distributed COVID-19 After Action Report.
- Successfully implemented the 5-year Pinellas County's Age-Friendly Plan.
- Implemented a Retail Pet Store Ordinance to address retail sale of dogs and cats.
- Delivered over 18 billion gallons of safe drinking water to Pinellas County customers, treated over 10 billion gallons of wastewater, and produced 6.93 billion gallons of reclaimed water, and successfully lined 12,382 linear feet of pipe.



Environmental Stewardship:

We published our first comprehensive Sustainability and Resiliency Report. We are continuing our efforts with “Green Pinellas,” a cultural and strategic approach aimed at embedding sustainability and resiliency into day-to-day actions, services, and programs. Working with all our departments we have developed a 10-year replacement plan to replace county fleet with alternative fueled vehicles. Key accomplishments in this area include:

- Published first comprehensive Sustainability and Resiliency Report.
- Created a unique tool to analyze the impacts of sea-level rise on capital infrastructure.
- Subscribed to Duke Energy Florida’s Clean Energy Connection Program to offset County energy use and advance our renewable energy goals.
- Developed a 10-year replacement plan to replace the County light duty Fleet (pick-up trucks, sedans, vans) with alternative fueled (Electric Vehicles).
- Completed an Annual Countywide Energy Use report and State of the Assets Report.
- Ranked as state leader in recycling for the sixth consecutive year.
- Implemented a new electronic noise compliant reporting system at PIE for public noise complaints.
- Earned Tree City USA community designation for the 5th year.
- Completed the Pinellas Trail North Gap project which added 6.8 miles of trail from John Chestnut Park to the Duke Energy Trailhead at Enterprise Rd. with a total of 64.7 miles of trail.
- Completed community engagement input for the South Loop Trail and initiated construction design of the segment from 126th Ave North to Haines-Bayshore Rd with FDOT grant funds.
- Developed an Injured and Nuisance Wildlife Management Policy.
- Completed the Weedon Island Management Plan Update as required by State Division of Lands.
- Received over \$17M in a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the Joe’s Creek Greenway Restoration Project to improve resiliency, floodplain capacity and water quality while offering recreational opportunities and supporting multimodal transportation.
- Received over \$829K in Resilient Florida Funding to support living shorelines and resiliency planning.
- Set aside more than \$30M in ARPA funds for Utilities to address Septic to Sewer Programs and projects aimed at improving plant operations at the South Cross Bayou Reclamation Facility.



Economic Growth and Community Vitality:

- Implemented the Penny IV Employment Sites Program for development of new office and industrial space suitable for target industry employers.
- Three conditionally approved Employment Sites Program (ESP) projects will create 256,350 square feet of new industrial and manufacturing space as well as a new, multi-use sensitive compartmented information facility to attract and serve targeted industries.
- Reached over 500,000 employed in Pinellas County in December and Pinellas County had a 2.6% unemployment rate (0.3 points below the Florida average).
- Awarded over \$12.1 million in County contracts to 66 local small businesses enrolled in the Small Business Enterprise (SBE) Program.
- Pinellas County employees provided over 1,595 hours of one-on-one consulting, 13 new businesses opened their doors and created over 62 jobs. These efforts brought in over \$5.0M in loans and grants for Pinellas companies, increased sales by over \$11.0M and created or retained nearly 2,000 jobs and \$85.0M in capital investment through business assistance, expansion, and relocation efforts.
- Updated the Ad Valorem Tax Exemption program to better manage use of incentives for recruiting and retaining target industries to Pinellas County.
- Managed a record tourism year with more than 13.1 million visitors year-to-date and a projected FY22 total of almost 15.4 million.
- Pinellas County continues to be a national market leader within the Top 25 metropolitan statistical area (MSA) in three key areas (Occupancy, Average Daily Rate (ADR) and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR)). For calendar year 2021, we led in occupancy, were 4th in ADR and 3rd in RevPAR.
- Adopted the updated Pinellas County Comprehensive Plan, PLAN Pinellas, to guide decision-making for future land use, mobility, public services, and other quality of life issues.
- PIE expanded to 65 non-stop destinations, the most in its history, and added two new commercial airlines, and has had four record months for enplanements, with total passengers expected to be over 2 million, the most in PIE's history.
- Conducted a review of Economic Development efforts on a regional basis, with specific focus on governance at the County level and how that integrates with regional partners. Convened a stakeholders focus group (including municipalities and chamber groups) to discuss issues and identify potential governance structure improvements, developed an industry committee to provide recommendations on the role and membership of the PCED Industry Council, and re-established cooperative relationships with partner organizations across the County and region.
- As part of our ongoing planning related to potential reuse of the Toytown landfill site, we have done preliminary analysis of the potential cost of stabilization of the area for reuse, undertaken a study of the potential for using the part of the site for youth sports activities, and secured \$15 million in funding from the State to support future youth sports development on the site. Next steps will be discussed at the joint BCC/TDC meeting in November.

Infrastructure and Efficiencies:



- Implemented Cityworks, a new asset management system that catalogues infrastructure and fixed assets on a common platform that will be used to determine asset longevity, service demands and related enterprise measures providing projections and data to make repair, renewal, and replacement decisions.
- Completed implementation of Global Positioning System (GPS) monitoring in all County rolling stock, providing operating metrics for driving dynamics, location, fuel usage, idle time, and vehicle usage.
- Created a Purchasing SharePoint intake site to improve the efficiency of the required competitive process for procuring goods and services.
- Conducted a complete redesign of the Pinellas County website to improve accessibility and user experience, making it easier for residents and other stakeholders to access information and services.
- Obtained two grants totaling \$27.1M for Wastewater Collection System Improvements in 15 mobile home parks identified through the Mobile Home Parks (MHP) initiative; \$2.1M from the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Council for engineering and design work; and a \$25.0 M Resilient Florida Grant from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) for construction of the Mobile Home Community Sewer Collection System Improvements.
- Obtained a \$3.4M Resilient Florida grant from FDEP for Utilities Building Hardening and Reliability Improvements to support staging and emergency operations during hurricane related events.
- Milled and resurfaced approximately 80 lane miles as part of the Pavement Preservation Program.
- Developed a proactive sidewalk maintenance plan to enhance pedestrian and bike safety, including The Safe Routes to Schools Program in underserved neighborhoods which is funded with ARPA.
- Completed nearly 70% of backlogged sidewalk repairs using \$4.0M in one-time funding for a 2-year repair strategy aimed at reduced liability and better connectivity.
- Developed visioning plan for county trail system and completed a Pinellas Trail Speed Study and an online survey about E-Bikes with Forward Pinellas. A courtesy campaign and new signage are aimed at addressing use and behavior.
- BDRS completed its review and update of all Development Code chapters and associated regulations relating to development services. The County Stormwater manual was also updated, and several code flexibilities were identified to assist customers with developing challenging sites.
- DRS completed the second phase to evaluate the County's Development Process. The Project Management pilot program was implemented as a result of recommendations for efficiencies and improvements stemming from this evaluation. Initial performance measures have been identified, and a customer survey created to gauge the success of the project management testing program.
- Management identified more than 30 initiatives for process improvement, prioritized by Operational Impact (Customer Service, Technology, Operations, Organizational Change Management, and Governance), budget impact, and funding requirements. Teams are managing project plans, tracking milestones, and effecting change.
- The department implemented QLess to help manage in-person queueing and provide customer service data.
- Contractor Licensing Department completed an overhaul of the new contractor application and change of status process to improve transparency, accountability, and data collection.



Unincorporated County (Mid, South, and North County):

Community plans were developed for unincorporated areas to establish community strategies and goals and guide the County in identifying projects and project funding. These plans served as a guide when investing ARPA dollars within the community.

- Using the community plans as a guide, substantial ARPA dollars were allocated to address community priorities such as:
 - Retrofit the existing regional storm water facility in Palm Harbor and expand its capacity, thus providing a strong foundation for redevelopment in the downtown area.
 - Transform the former High Point Elementary into a community park, which has been a priority for years.
 - Transform an underutilized stormwater facility into a community park in the heart of the Dansville community.
 - Remediate the former 119th St. Landfill to activate it as recreation open space.
 - Enhance Ray Neri Park in Lealman.
- Partnered with the Economic Development Department to provide a menu of resources to the business community within unincorporated Pinellas. For example:
 - North County there has been a particular focus on assisting the steady growth and development of downtown Palm Harbor in a manner fitting with the existing community and guided by the Downtown Palm Harbor Master Plan. Key partnerships have been forged with the Palm Harbor Chamber of Commerce and community stakeholders including the Palm Harbor Community Services Agency.
 - Mid-County community advisory groups were formed to assist in the creation of community development plans to guide improvements to the High Point Neighborhood and Greater Ridgecrest Area.
 - South County there has been a focus on guiding the Lealman Exchange Community Center which acts as a hub for programs and services that meet the needs of the Lealman community. The goal is to bring attention to the resources offered by Economic Development and other partners. Communication material as well as engagement is underway.
- Downtown Palm Harbor Streetscape and Parking Strategic Action Plan. Increased activity in downtown increased demand for parking and improved street environments. Working with our partners to produce a plan for parking strategies and streetscape improvements within Downtown Palm Harbor that can be used by County staff, developers, and property owners. The Plan will include a list of priority improvements, funding opportunities as well as a landscape maintenance plan. As with the creation of the Form-Based Code, this plan will assist as we continue to activate downtown Palm Harbor. Community engagement is underway with the goal of a final plan before the end of the year.

- Lealman CRA. The creation of an annual work plan that is guided by the nine objectives identified helping us be more strategic and consistent as programs are activated and investments are made.
 - The residential and commercial façade programs as well as the alleyway cleanup, murals and gateway and wayfinding signage deployment are transforming and uplifting the community one investment at a time.
 - The work plan reflects a new program to support promotional and special events within the CRA. An Events committee has been formed and preparations are underway to activate the following three events:
 - Lighting of Lealman Tree in December of 2022
 - Honey and Arts Festival in February of 2023
 - Fourth of July Fireworks in 2023
 - The recently approved Home Investment program with Habitat for Humanity and Home Rehabilitation program with Rebuilding Together Tampa Bay will help us target dilapidated units for redevelopment of single homes as well as bringing those units up to code.
 - The transition of having the St. Pete group manage and operate the Lealman Exchange has taken place. The goal is to activate the Exchange through the lens of a collective impact model. Forty-five organizations have expressed interest in participating in our efforts to provide the community with the programs and activities they have identified.
- MSTU Special Project Grants intended to support culture, recreation, and community engagement opportunities for residents in unincorporated areas that are comparable to those opportunities which municipalities typically provide to their residents:
 - North County: Palm Harbor Library, Palm Harbor Parks and Recreation, East Lake Library, East Lake Recreation, FEAST and EmpowHERment
 - Mid/South County: Feather Sound Community Services District and Seminole Junior Warhawks
 - Lealman: Florida Dream Center and PAL



Partnerships:

- Adopted the Advantage Pinellas Housing Compact establishing a framework for multi-jurisdictional cooperation to address affordable housing across boundaries.
- Launched Homes for Pinellas website, for residents and partners seeking information about the collective efforts to increase affordable housing.
- Established community-based citizen volunteers in Greenwood and South St. Petersburg to improve code compliance, increase rate of lost pets returned to owners, and serve as liaison with PCAS about animal related issues in the community.
- Participated in CareerSource Summer Internship Program for low-income students.
- Partner with Pinellas County Schools in On the Job Training program for special education students.
- Implemented Return to Field Program in collaboration with Friends of Strays, reducing cat intakes.
- Partnered with Humane Society of Pinellas to provide 3 community-based vaccination clinics in underserved communities.
- Partner with 4 county food banks to provide donated pet food for families.
- Completed 8 branding and recognition events within unincorporated communities; Lealman, Palm Harbor, and Ridgecrest/Dansville.
- Provided communications support for key priorities of the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC), including a 5-year annual report on affordable housing, the Crystal Beach Historical Marker dedication, Joe's Creek grant, and Lealman farm share event.
- The first-ever Building Officials Roundtable was hosted to improve communications with County and Municipal Building Officials.
- Continued with COVID PPE distribution to partners with six events and over 2 million items disseminated.



Quality Workforce:

Like many other employers, we have had our share of challenges retaining employees in the unprecedented job market. It is important that we invest in our most valuable asset – our employees - while being mindful of our taxpayers. All employees have experienced the same inflation, fuel increases, and cost escalations that we have seen across the region and the nation. We tried to offset some of this by building equity into the increases and helping our front-line workers. I am committed to continue working to retain a quality workforce and maintaining a quality level of service for our citizens. Some of the other initiatives we put in place are listed below:

- The career paths and ladders program implementation started in nine (9) departments, representing about 1,200 employees, half of which were eligible for career path incentives.
- Working from lessons learned during COVID-19, a Remote Work Policy for classifications under the County Administrator was implemented to establish criteria and work rules for employees that may work remotely, subject to written approval and on-going performance expectations.
- Implemented departmental recognition and incentive programs.
- Continue to recognize outstanding service of employees at the BCC Meetings.
- Engaged Human Resources to form a Diversity Committee with all Appointing Authorities.
- Scheduled employee forums with all my employees yearly.
- Work in the field with employees on In-Service Day and show up at worksites as time permits to interact with employees at non-scheduled times.
- Initiated Mingle with the County Administrator for lunch at the Food Truck site on campus.

I would like to extend my appreciation for the amazing work done by my Team. One of the best parts of my job is getting to work with employees that are ambitious and knowledgeable while remaining kind, empathetic, and helpful to our citizens. I am honored to be working and learning from every employee.

I would also like to thank you, the Board of County Commissioners, the Public, Constitutional Officers, Appointing Authorities, and all our Partners, we could not accomplish this alone.

2022 Highlights of Employee/Community Involvement



In-Service Day with Employees

Tampa Bay Resiliency Coalition

Housing Affordability Roundtable - United Way Suncoast and the Tampa Bay Partnership



Restoring the American Dream Affordable Housing Conference



Food Truck Mingle with Employees

Dunedin Chamber Leadership Breakfast Speaker



Panel Member at Leadership St. Pete,
a division of St. Petersburg Area Chamber of Commerce



Upper Tampa Bay Chamber of Commerce
Trustee Meeting Speaker

Farm Share, Lealman Connection Center

The St. Pete Chamber's Annual Meeting

City Managers Monthly Meetings

Administrators Meetings
Pinellas/Pasco/Hillsborough

CNCN Meetings

Employee Forums

Honoring Community Leaders Breakfast



2022 Highlights of Grants Awarded

\$332.7 MILLION

Duke Energy Foundation Grants

Florida Housing Grants

Housing and Urban Development Grants

Federal Aviation Grants

American Rescue Plan Grants

Florida Sports Foundation Grants

Health and Human Services Grants

Department of Justice Grants

Emergency Management Grants

Economic Opportunity Grants

Transportation Grants

Environmental Protection Grants

South Florida Water Management District Grants

