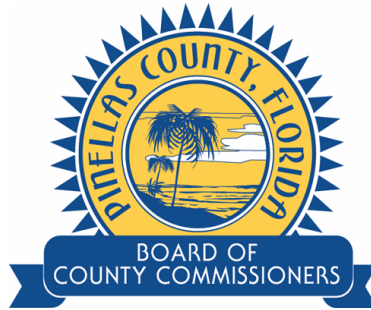


# **Pinellas County**

*315 Court Street  
Clearwater, Florida 33756*



## **Minutes - Final**

**Tuesday, December 5, 2017**

**10:30 AM**

**BCC Assembly Room**

## **Board of County Commissioners - Work Session**

*Janet C. Long, Chairman  
Kenneth T. Welch, Vice-Chairman  
Dave Eggers  
Pat Gerard  
Charlie Justice  
John Morroni  
Karen Williams Seel*

**ROLL CALL - 10:38 A.M.**

Members Present: Janet C. Long, Chairman; Kenneth T. Welch, Vice-Chairman; Dave Eggers; Pat Gerard; Charlie Justice; and John Morroni.

Members Absent: Karen Williams Seel.

Others Present: Jewel White, County Attorney; Mark Woodard, County Administrator; and Chris Bartlett, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk.

Copies of all PowerPoint presentations referred to in the minutes have been made a part of the record.

**1. David Gwynn, District 7 Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).**

Chairman Long welcomed those in attendance and introduced FDOT District 7 Secretary David Gwynn.

Mr. Gwynn conducted a PowerPoint presentation titled FDOT, distributed a map of the county highlighting specific project information, and discussed FDOT's current plans pertaining to Pinellas County. He noted that he has worked for FDOT almost two years; that he has been the District 7 Secretary for six months; and that he has 30 years of experience operating an engineering firm in the Pinellas County region.

Mr. Gwynn indicated that FDOT is funding approximately \$1.4 billion worth of projects over the next five years located in the county; and that its major initiative is the Tampa Bay Next process to help facilitate ideas that help move transportation forward and address the elements of design, demand, choice, and consensus. He related that studies indicate that peak-hour traffic could increase 72 percent by the year 2040; that the design of roads and infrastructure will not adequately address the expected level of congestion; that choices in the form of transit need to be examined closely and implemented; and that working with the public and other stakeholders will help build consensus to pursue the right projects.

Mr. Gwynn identified the Howard Frankland Bridge, the Gateway Expressway, and the I-275 Pinellas Corridor as main elements of Tampa Bay Next. He noted that FDOT is considering extending express lanes along I-275 down to the I-375 interchange; that public hearings regarding the Howard Frankland Bridge have been completed in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties; and that the bridge project will tentatively start in the fall of 2019 with funding in place in 2020; whereupon, he discussed features of the project and recent changes, and the updating of the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement in Hillsborough County, which will impact Pinellas County as it receives traffic coming over the bridge.

Mr. Gwynn indicated that construction has recently begun on the Gateway Expressway, which is scheduled for completion in 2021; and that construction projects on Ulmerton Road, Roosevelt Boulevard, and Gandy Boulevard will be completed in the next few months; whereupon, he discussed the status of various projects in the U.S. Highway 19 corridor. He stated that the Pinellas Bayway Structure E bridge project will start in 2018, noting that certain community-selected aesthetic features will be incorporated in its design.

Mr. Gwynn discussed the many ways that FDOT invests in transit solutions for the Tampa Bay region, and provided information on the following:

- Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Cross-bay Water Ferry
- Intermodal Center Studies
- Express Lane/Express Study
- TECO Streetcar Extension Study
- Innovative Circular Pilots
- Regional Transit Feasibility Plan and Project Development
- Marion Autonomous Shuttle Pilot

Mr. Gwynn related that FDOT is looking at ways to improve bicycle and pedestrian safety along Gulf Boulevard; that new markings and bicycle lanes painted in green are being used in Treasure Island and are being considered for use in Madeira Beach; and that newly designed crosswalks are being installed in Redington/North Redington Beach, and St. Pete Beach in 2018; whereupon, he discussed community outreach efforts to attend local meetings several times a week throughout the region, and the recent formation of FDOT's Mobility Innovation and Technology (MIT) Team.

In response to queries by the members, Mr. Gwynn indicated that connected vehicles will advance faster than autonomous vehicles; that some connected vehicle technology is already available in newer automobiles; that future technology might include roadside elements to communicate upcoming road hazards or notifications that there are pedestrians in the vicinity; and that it will likely be ten years or more before significant technology is in place such as an entire lane being utilized as a connected vehicle lane. He noted that acceptance of fully autonomous vehicles will depend on the public's willingness to use roads that include driverless vehicles; whereupon, he referred to a drawing of the Howard Frankland Bridge proposal and pointed out which lane could be used for autonomous vehicles in the future, and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Morroni stated that FDOT's communication and involvement in the community has been at a high level; and that its staff is very responsive to constituent issues. He thanked Mr. Gwynn for his efforts and information, and several members concurred.

2. Pinellas County Coordinated Transportation Program  
- Update from Forward Pinellas, Planning and Public Works.

Mr. Woodard related that the item is a collaboration between County and Forward Pinellas staffs; that the presentation will walk through what happens from the time a transportation need is identified to when a project is conceived to address it; and that the presenters will discuss the different roles and responsibilities of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), federal and state partnerships, and staff.

Public Works Director Rahim Harji conducted a PowerPoint presentation titled *Doing Things! Pinellas County's Transportation Program* and discussed how transportation initiatives align with the County's Strategic Plan and address needs and improvements requested by the public as documented in the Citizens Survey.

Mr. Harji related that transportation projects start with the Long Range Transportation Plan which contains the concepts for improvements developed by Forward Pinellas; that once a concept is defined, the Planning Department identifies how it will impact the local community; and that Public Works will then program the work into the County's Capital Improvement Plan and later move into the construction phase to build the needed assets. He noted that the entire process is a partnership from start to finish between all three departments along with FDOT, local communities, and other stakeholders.

Forward Pinellas

Forward Pinellas Executive Director Whit Blanton related that the U.S. Department of Transportation through the Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations has implemented the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act; and that Forward Pinellas, as the MPO for Pinellas County, is the conduit to receive federal dollars through FDOT. He indicated that the federal government provides funding and policy direction to the state to carry out the mandate; that Forward Pinellas carries out its responsibilities in coordination with the state; and that this structure has tangible implications when working to fund specific transportation projects.

Mr. Blanton noted that the role of Forward Pinellas is to provide leadership and align regional plans and resources that help achieve a compelling vision for Pinellas County, its communities, and the Tampa Bay region; that the organization does not build roads or maintain and operate transit systems; and that many jurisdictional entities work closely with Forward Pinellas to make informed decisions on transportation and land use issues; whereupon, he discussed the following main areas of responsibility for Forward Pinellas:

- Countywide Land Use Plan
- Long Range Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program

Responding to query by Chairman Long, Mr. Blanton related that Forward Pinellas coordinates certain planning efforts through a multi-county process involving other regional

authorities and committees; and that it focuses more on the Pasco, Hillsborough, and Pinellas County area through the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area Leadership Group, which holds approximately five meetings each year and recommends regional priorities to each MPO for adoption.

Mr. Blanton indicated that the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) sets performance measures and achievable targets on a five-year schedule; that safety targets are for one year; and that projects must be identified that can deliver results that meet the identified targets in the program. He related that Forward Pinellas is adopting shared targets with Pasco and Hillsborough Counties; and that the first portion of the TIP document will consist of the regional plan followed by the specific plans for Pinellas and the other two counties, and discussion ensued.

In response to query by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Blanton noted that the spending priorities within the TIP must be consistent with and reinforce the Long Range Transportation Plan; that construction projects may take seven to ten years to progress from concept to delivery; and that having better long-term vision helps to minimize delays or having to restart projects back at square one. He stated that the Long Range Plan is essentially a resource allocation document at a 50,000-foot level; that local resources must be committed as matching funds in order to secure federal or state funding; and that the local funding source would depend on the type or scope of the specific project; whereupon, he discussed characteristics that make Pinellas County unique and distinctive.

Discussion ensued, and responding to queries by the members, Mr. Blanton related that each household in the area spends approximately 60 percent of its income on housing and transportation when it should be 45 percent; that the spending level becomes even more acute as people age; and that inadequate access to needed services can lead to isolation and declining health.

Chairman Long noted that transportation-related technology could be transformational and is changing rapidly; and that current funding mechanisms do not move fast enough to take advantage of new technology; whereupon, she requested that Forward Pinellas along with FDOT provide guidance as to ways to advocate and accelerate the funding process. In response, Mr. Blanton indicated that due to multiple funding sources, it is unlikely that a project's delivery time can be reduced; that gas taxes are the primary funding source of transportation projects; and that with the increasing use of electric, driverless, and connected vehicles, gas tax revenues will continue to decline, and discussion ensued with input by Mr. Gwynn.

In response to query by Mr. Woodard, Mr. Blanton noted that adding support for Federal Transit Capital Grants and Community Development Block Grants in the County's Federal Legislative Priorities would help facilitate the flow of Federal Highway Administration dollars to the region; and that infrastructure planning principles from the American Planning Association could be a helpful reference when considering vehicle technology and infrastructure.

### Planning Department

Pinellas County Long Range Planning Manager Scott Swearengen discussed the roles of the Planning Department including current and long-range comprehensive planning, and community planning in the unincorporated areas of the county. He related that comprehensive planning helps to guide the future vision of the county; that the Planning Department works to develop policies that help realize the strategic vision; that the department looks for opportunities for economic investment and safety improvements within the communities; and that staff regularly reviews development proposals to ensure compliance with the policies that have been established.

Mr. Swearengen indicated that the department is working to update both the Land Development Code and the Comprehensive Plan for the County; that the updated Land Development Code final draft is nearly complete; and that the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan is being scrutinized in order to ensure that policies are geared toward redevelopment and changes in vehicle technology; whereupon, he discussed the department's efforts in the unincorporated areas to help identify the needs and issues at a grass-roots level within the community and the relationships between Planning, Public Works, and Forward Pinellas.

Mr. Swearengen discussed leveraging the "3R" process, which includes resurfacing, restoration, and rehabilitation, relating that as a road needs servicing, there is an opportunity to evaluate the surrounding area's context and land use; and that it may be cost effective to include utility, Complete Streets, and other improvements in the project design.

Responding to query by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Swearengen noted that during the planning process, the department works with the municipalities to make sure that the County plan aligns with the City's Comprehensive Plan policies; and that this ensures that the needs of both organizations are being met; whereupon, he discussed a Complete Streets project in Lealman as an example of the process, and discussion ensued.

### Public Works

Transportation Manager Ken Jacobs related that after establishing the funding, the next step in the process is to develop the Capital Improvement Program (CIP); that the CIP typically details a one- to ten-year plan and includes projects utilizing revenue from the Penny for Pinellas surtax; and that current transportation needs in the county total approximately \$900 million, which must be balanced to meet the actual funding that becomes available. In response to query by Commissioner Welch, he indicated that 45 percent of the next Penny was allocated for transportation; that the projected tax revenue would equal approximately \$411 million; and that other funding sources are available; whereupon, he discussed the County Paving Program as an example of balancing the needs of the community with the proper funding level and commitment, and discussion ensued.

Chairman Long stated that the Board is at a pivotal moment and must begin to think outside of the box in terms of the County's revenue streams; that there are sources of revenue that can be redirected for transportation and infrastructure needs; and that she suggests the members discuss the issue either during the current meeting's legislative discussion or as part of the next Strategic Planning workshop, and discussion ensued.

Mr. Jacobs indicated that the CIP is updated frequently to ensure the anticipated revenue matches the projected funding of the adopted projects; that once adopted, the project is better defined with finer details; and that larger projects, such as bridges, will often require a Project Development and Environmental Study (PD&E), while other projects might require a Preliminary Engineering or other report. He noted that in either case, Forward Pinellas and the Planning Department are integral to the studies in the form of citizen engagement, multijurisdictional representation, and regional perspective.

Mr. Jacobs related that the County is shifting its focus from development to redevelopment; that roadways are designed to accommodate all modes of traffic; and that as part of the design phase, staff works to incorporate the policies of the Board and its Strategic Plan. He noted that designing roads that accommodate bike lanes, pedestrian facilities, and the network of interconnected trails is done in conjunction with Planning and Forward Pinellas.

#### Conclusion

Mr. Harji related that Public Works is engaging project stakeholders earlier in the process and has improved communication with its partners; that a portfolio approach is being adopted to help address multiple issues like transportation, drainage, and sidewalks together in one project, and that the Planning Department is conducting a vulnerability study of the entire county that will be used to help design future projects. He noted that a new planning tool is being utilized that projects sea-level rise specific to a project; and that the County's new Enterprise Asset Management system will help staff identify infrastructure areas of concern earlier than in the past, resulting in cost savings down the line.

In response to queries by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Harji explained that the sea-level rise tool identifies risk specific to the life of a project; that it uses scientific data to show inundation maps at different levels and times for the developers to incorporate into the scope of the project; and that it prevents having to redesign a project at a later stage of development, and discussion ensued.

Responding to query by Commissioner Justice, Mr. Harji indicated that the portfolio approach is being utilized earlier in the overall process to better focus on what multiple issues need to be addressed, and Mr. Woodard stated that the approach also defines the priority of the project; and that a project addressing multiple needs would have a higher priority than a project that addresses a singular need.

**Meeting Recessed: 12:24 P.M.**

**Meeting Reconvened: 1:07 P.M.**

3. US 19 Market Study Findings and Recommendations.

Study Overview

Principal Planner Caroline Lanford introduced the item and related that transportation facility changes are in the works for the U.S. Highway 19 corridor between Curlew Road and Klosterman Road; and that the study will help the County identify redevelopment opportunities and create future plans for the area; whereupon, she introduced Consultant Steve Schukraft from HDR.

Mr. Schukraft conducted a PowerPoint presentation titled US 19 Corridor - Curlew Rd to Klosterman Rd Market/Economic Analysis and noted that he would be joined by SB Friedman Development Advisors Senior Vice President Geoffrey Dickinson in the presentation. He related that economic and demographic conditions, patterns of land use development, and market potentials of land use categories have been evaluated in the study; and that a plan is being developed to help create Comprehensive Plan provisions, zoning standards, and capital investment strategies.

Mr. Schukraft provided information on the history and existing conditions of the corridor and related that it provides strong regional connectivity; that there is a limited secondary street network that hinders movement between private parcels; and that the road demonstrates an automobile-oriented pattern of development. He indicated that pedestrian and transit accommodations are limited; and that it is very difficult to understand the area's identity; whereupon, he noted that the existing interchanges are the most accessible and visual locations in the corridor, as they provide both local and regional access; and that areas with more limited access present certain challenges with regard to planned improvements.

Mr. Dickinson discussed the market study process and projected demographic growth in terms of housing, noting that between 200 and 2,000 new housing units could be added to the area in the next 20-plus years; that housing construction would more likely include attached homes rather than single-family homes; and that the challenge will be to find sites for development or that have the potential for rehabilitation.

In response to query by Chairman Long, Mr. Dickenson stated that affordable housing was not analyzed in the study; that including affordable housing units would be driven by County policy; and that it would be feasible to include some ratio of affordable housing in the expected 200 to 2,000 new units.

Mr. Dickinson related that current hotel market performance is insufficient to support additional development; that corporate office space in the corridor is limited and has very specific location requirements; and that similar to retail, medical office space must be located a short distance away from the people seeking its services. He noted that there is potential for 50,000 to 55,000 square-feet of new office space in the area by 2023; and that development would likely follow existing location patterns; whereupon, he discussed various conditions that might attract new businesses to the corridor.



Mr. Dickinson indicated that retail is oversupplied in the corridor; that sales are localized; that businesses do not attract regional customers and must continue to adjust to the rising preference to shop online; and that redevelopment should consider a more commercialized corridor with a greater mix of uses. Responding to queries by the members, he related that existing projects from Largo to Tarpon Springs will help identify the dynamics concerning retail performance in different environments; and that oversupplying retail space in a corridor that lacks enough support inevitably leads to many vacancies and empty storefronts; whereupon, he summarized the corridor's market potential noting that there is potential for new housing and demand for office space; that there is insufficient support at this time for additional hotel development; and that retail will remain a challenge as demand for new retail is weak.

#### Strategic Planning

Mr. Schukraft explained that the study should help address how zoning could be changed to support a wider range of uses in the area; and that it looks at the corridor at the Comprehensive Plan level and does not suggest specific outcomes for individual parcels. He noted that there is limited potential to drive transformational change due to the crossroads and frontage locations being largely built out; that the improvements to U.S. Highway 19 will benefit some parcels and challenge others; and that the County should focus on land use changes in areas with strong locational and access advantages.

Referring to a sequence of map overlays of the area, Mr. Schukraft discussed the planning framework of the corridor while highlighting existing residential locations, areas of redevelopment potential, functional classifications of existing roadways, and planned U.S. 19 interchanges. He indicated that the center definition would shift to embrace improved site connectivity; that development strategies would need to include a broader mix of permitted uses, similar parking standards across categories, targeted economic development assistance for parcel consolidations, and other incentives; and that enhanced pedestrian and transit accommodations and landscape/aesthetic improvements would be among investments the County could make to reinforce the area's identity through the corridor; whereupon, he discussed potential primary and secondary center locations and ways that his staff would work with the County to outline objectives and strategies to help refine its land development policies.

Responding to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Schukraft indicated that the frontage road conditions change as it moves through the corridor; that there will likely be enhanced pedestrian and transit accommodations at the primary and secondary centers; and that it is unknown at this time what FDOT has planned for frontage road access. He noted that transit service is not yet defined as to its path through the corridor; and that defining the framework of the corridor's centers will help drive decisions on how best to accommodate transit and pedestrian traffic; whereupon, he related that when the right zoning is in place, the market will naturally respond as to the redevelopment of individual parcels.

4. FY 2018 Federal Legislative Program.

Mr. Woodard related that the Board will meet with the Federal Legislative Delegation on February 22, 2018; that staff is seeking feedback regarding the Board's federal program and priorities; and that after incorporating the Board's feedback, staff will present the final amended program to the Board on December 12 for its consideration.

Special Assistant to the County Administrator Canaan McCaslin referred to a PowerPoint presentation and briefly discussed various items on the 2017 Federal Legislative Program, including the reauthorization of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and opposition to offshore drilling, noting that the Board sent a letter to the federal government voicing its concerns.

Intergovernmental Liaison Brian Lowack provided updates regarding the listed priorities and noted the current position and status of the issues. He related that the NFIP will be funded through December 22; that the House has passed the 21st Century Flood Reform Act, which includes increased costs to policyholders and unfunded mandates to local governments; and that Senators Rubio and Nelson are sponsors of a related Senate bill that is considered more consumer-friendly.

Mr. Lowack related that regional transportation and combining county Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are no longer priorities of the current administration, and Chairman Long stated that it should remain a high priority for the Board, asking for the members' support. Following lengthy discussion, Mr. Woodard summarized the conversation, indicating that there is consensus to maintain a dialogue around regional solutions to transportation needs; and that the Board remains undecided as to what organizational model would work best in the region; whereupon, he suggested that the Board include advocacy for regional transportation solutions in its list of legislative priorities, and Chairman Long concurred.

Mr. Lowack discussed two new items included in the list of priorities: supporting appropriations to fund programs relating to the opioid crisis, and opposing tax reform that would eliminate private activity bonds and advanced refunding of municipal bonds. Responding to query by Commissioner Justice, he indicated that the County's legislative representative, Van Scoyoc Associates, would speak in greater detail regarding both items at the Board's next meeting.

Mr. Lowack reviewed the upcoming schedule, noting that the Board will meet on December 12 to finalize its list of priorities for the Federal Legislative Program; that the 115th Congress of the State Legislature will commence on January 3, 2018; and that the Board will meet with the Federal Delegation on February 22. Responding to his query, several members indicated an interest in adding support for Community Development Block Grants to the list of priorities, and discussion ensued.

Other Business

Chairman Long related that the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) has received a \$1 million commitment from the Florida Legislature to help sustain the new agency, and she asked the members to include the Board's support of the commitment as part of its State Legislative Program, and no objections were noted.

Chairman Long initiated a discussion regarding a Senate Bill proposing changes to the state statute regarding the Tourist Development Tax. She noted that the bill would allow spending bed tax revenue on transportation and infrastructure; that the Board's State Legislative Program indicates opposition to changing the statute; and that she believes the Board should modify its position. Referring to previous discussion, Mr. Woodard related that the Board indicated that it may change its position upon consideration of a specific bill, and Commissioner Gerard stated that the members have not seen a copy of the proposed bill.

During discussion, Chairman Long related that she had addressed the issue with the Tourist Development Council (TDC), and the members were not opposed as long as it did not impact funds set aside for advertising and marketing; and that projections indicate that the number of visitors to Pinellas County could grow to 34 million in the next five to six years, increasing congestion and the impact on the infrastructure. She stressed that it is important for the Board to be part of any discussion regarding changes to the statute, and Commissioner Justice concurred. Noting that he had viewed the referenced TDC meeting, Commissioner Welch provided input and stated that the Board needs to stay vigilant in order to understand what the Legislature is trying to accomplish with any changes.

Mr. Lowack provided an update on the bill's current status, stating that the Senate Bill and its companion bill in the House have each been assigned to three committees; and that the Senate Bill has passed through its first committee by a unanimous vote, and discussion ensued regarding the language of the proposed bill and the possible consequences of spending bed tax revenue on infrastructure.

**ADJOURNMENT - 2:18 P.M.**