

Pinellas County

*315 Court Street
Clearwater, Florida 33756*



Minutes - Final

Tuesday, November 12, 2019

1:00 P.M.

BCC Assembly Room

Board of County Commissioners - Work Session

Karen Williams Seel, Chair

Pat Gerard, Vice-Chair

Dave Eggers

Charlie Justice

Janet C. Long

Kathleen Peters

Kenneth T. Welch

ROLL CALL - 3:39 P.M.

Present: Karen Williams Seel, Chair; Pat Gerard, Vice-Chair; Dave Eggers; Charlie Justice; Janet C. Long; Kathleen Peters; and Kenneth T. Welch

Others Present: Barry A. Burton, County Administrator; Jewel White, County Attorney; and Teresa Adkins, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk

1. Transportation Update

Referring to a PowerPoint presentation titled *Connecting Our Community: Using transportation to link people to jobs, housing and training*, Mr. Burton indicated that County staff has been working in conjunction with Forward Pinellas to gather input from the community regarding transportation issues; and that the results of a community survey show that traffic is the number one concern facing residents.

Mr. Burton related that there are three main issues impacting transportation: funding, lack of integration, and road congestion; whereupon, he explained that the County's transportation expenditures exceed revenue and discussed the proposed plan to address transportation needs, providing information regarding the following topics:

- Improvements to traffic light coordination
- Creation of additional turn lanes and intersection expansions
- Safety improvements along transportation corridors
- Enhancements to transit services through the utilization of regional connections
- Expansion of street lighting

In response to queries by Commissioner Long, Mr. Burton indicated that the timeline for the plan depends on a number of factors, including how many individuals utilize the service, noting that improvements would need to be prioritized differently.

Mr. Burton related that the projected cost of the plan over a ten-year period would vary based upon whether it would include improvements identified by the municipalities and enhanced transit routes, costing approximately \$906 million or \$1.3 billion, respectively.

In response to query by Commissioner Gerard, Mr. Burton explained that the estimated cost does not include any state or federal match funding; and that the County could use a local option fuel tax, a transportation sales surtax, or ad valorem taxes to fund the plan.

In response to queries by Commissioners Justice and Eggers, Attorney White indicated that Florida statutes allow maintenance and operations to be funded through a transportation sales surtax, and Mr. Burton related that the estimated cost of maintenance and operations would be approximately \$33 million a year; whereupon, he provided

detailed information regarding the three different funding options, indicating that either a half cent or full cent transportation sales surtax is the preferable option.

In response to queries and comments by Commissioner Gerard, Mr. Burton agreed that enhancements to the transportation system should include more than just maintenance improvements; that funding for additional transportation initiatives is difficult to predict; and that the plan does not currently include any local match funding for such initiatives in the cost estimates.

Responding to queries by the Commissioners, Assistant County Administrator Rahim Harji and Office of Management and Budget Analyst Krishna Gandhi clarified that the funding projections for a transportation sales surtax do not account for a recession; that they are based on the assumption that the County will receive grants, state funding, and increased sales tax revenues each year; and that revenues would be collected starting January 1, 2021.

In response to queries by Commissioner Eggers, Mr. Burton related that the plan expands certain bus route services, focusing first on the most utilized roads in the county, and discussion ensued.

In response to query by Commissioner Welch, Mr. Burton indicated that the total project cost projections have increased from previous estimates due to both the enhanced transit routes and input from municipalities regarding transportation needs.

Commissioners Justice and Eggers requested that Mr. Burton provide a timeline for when a transportation sales surtax would need to be placed on the ballot for referendum; and that future transportation presentations include more detailed funding information, a projected plan timeline, and community survey results, and Mr. Burton provided input.

The members wished Commissioners Long and Gerard a happy birthday.

ADJOURNMENT - 4:19 P.M.