



Joint Transportation Funding & Coordination Workshop
Board of County Commissioners, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, Forward Pinellas
and Mayor's Council
Minutes
January 18, 2019

Attendees: Attached

The Workshop began at 8:09 AM. Commissioner Dave Eggers welcomed participants and briefly talked about the importance of transportation in the region and the need for funding for improvements and expansion. Councilmember Darden Rice continued the welcome address by speaking on unemployment, minority rates, resiliency, and affordable housing, and how transportation is linked to these important issues.

- Interactive Polling – What are the transportation needs and how do we fill the gaps? The group was asked to participate in an interactive poll.
- Transportation 101 – Hosts of the Workshop from Forward Pinellas, Pinellas County and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) gave presentations on transportation and funding. Whit Blanton, Executive Director of Forward Pinellas, talked about the Advantage Pinellas Long Range Plan. Ken Jacobs, Pinellas County Public Works Transportation Division Director, presented on the Local Option Fuel Tax, also known as the Gas Tax, and the declining status of the County's Transportation Trust Fund. Debbie Leous, Chief Financial Officer at PSTA, talked about the needs of transit riders and the innovative programs PSTA has implemented. She also mentioned the fact that PSTA is the lowest funded transit agency in the nation and faces a funding shortfall of revenues relative to expenses.
- Small Group Discussion – The participants broke out into small groups to discuss transportation funding issues and ways to achieve their goals for better transportation in Pinellas County and the Tampa Bay area. Each group reported out on discussions that took place at their table. Some of the topics discussed included: transportation options and connecting to other regions, future technology, funding that is tied and matched to the needs of the public, creating better regional coordination, local funding sources, safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, mobility access, efficient travel, community in the future, land use changes, night/weekend service and more frequency, vehicles used for transportation, completion of US 19, home based operations, online shopping, mixed use development, rental apartments, transit hubs, multiple modes, first mile/last mile for riders, connecting to key activity centers, Howard Frankland re-development, congestion, education on safety, freight train in Pinellas Park, traffic jams heading to the beaches, various taxes for funding, partnerships, Intelligent

Transportation Systems (ITS), attracting choice riders, changing the perspective of public transportation, access to job centers, attracting large employers, and creating walkable communities. All groups agreed that funding should come from everyone: businesses, tourists, and residents, as well as users of the system.

- Interactive Plenary Discussion – Attendees participated in the same interactive poll as earlier in the meeting, followed by a brief Q&A session with the presenters.
- Panel Discussion – Panel members Mayor Kriseman, Commissioner Seel, Jillian Bandes, and Darryl Henderson provided their vision for a great community, moderated by Mike Meidel. They also gave their views on pursuing a sales tax referendum. It was noted that 30% of sales tax comes from tourists. There was consensus by the panel members that agencies from all counties in the region, as well as the business community, must work together in order to grow and improve the Tampa Bay area. Commissioner Seel mentioned other funding options that should be explored.
- Regional Transportation Decision-Making
 - MPO Regional Coordination Best Practices Study Presentation – The group received a presentation on the study conducted by Stantec and the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR).
 - Discussion of Study Recommendations – There was a brief discussion on the study recommendations, including a long-term recommendation of merging area Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), followed by a few questions from participants.

Commissioner Eggers made some closing remarks. The workshop concluded at 1:33 PM.