



August 14, 2024

The Honorable Bruce Rector, Mayor  
City of Clearwater  
600 Cleveland St., 6th Floor  
Clearwater, FL 33756

Re: Forward Pinellas Reapportionment Plan – Amended Interlocal Agreement

Dear Mayor Rector:

As you are aware, Forward Pinellas coordinates countywide land use and transportation planning to support the 25 local governments in Pinellas County. In doing so, it functions in two capacities. One as the Pinellas Planning Council (PPC) and the other as the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Metropolitan planning organizations are governed by federal and state law and are required to exist in each urbanized area greater than 50,000 residents, as designated by the Census.

The Forward Pinellas Board is now comprised of 13 members, representing eight (8) municipal governments, the Pinellas County Commission, and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA). Three of the municipal government seats are shared by multiple cities and rotate every two years, enabling the board to represent all 25 local governments.

In accordance with Section 339.175, F.S., the Governor is required to review the membership composition of each metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in conjunction with the decennial Census, and to reapportion it as necessary to comply with state and federal requirements. The Reapportionment Plan is necessary to identify the voting membership and seat terms for Forward Pinellas, both in its role as the MPO and as the PPC.

On September 13, 2023, the Forward Pinellas Board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution approving a membership Reapportionment Plan, which is enclosed for your review. That Plan was subsequently transmitted to the Governor. This week we received a letter from the Governor approving the recommended Plan.

Highlights of the new Plan include the following:

- Updating city and county population totals based on the 2020 U.S. Census;
- Reapportionment of the governing board from 13 to 19 members;
- Adding two seats for the City of St. Petersburg due to increased population;

- Adding a seat for the City of Clearwater due to increased population;
- Adding a seat for Tarpon Springs due to increased population;
- Adding a seat for the Pinellas County Commission due to increased population;
- Requiring one of the County Commission seats be from an at-large district.
- Splitting the current Inland Communities seat into two seats to allow for shorter rotation times;
  - **Inland North:** Belleair, Belleair Bluffs and Seminole
  - **Inland South:** Gulfport, South Pasadena, Kenneth City
- Lengthening the term for rotating seats from two years to three years;

With the Governor's approval letter in hand, it is now necessary to amend the Interlocal Agreement for the Creation of the Pinellas County MPO, which was originally executed in October of 2014, to allow for the expansion of the board membership. The local governments, PSTA and FDOT are required signatories on the amended agreement. Each entity with seats on the new board will have 60 days from the date of the Governor's letter, or until October 7, 2024, to make its appointment(s) to the new board which will be seated in January 2025. To that end, we are asking that you place this item on an upcoming agenda as soon as reasonably possible. We are happy to attend the meeting at your discretion to provide additional information and answer any questions as needed. This can be done with or without a formal presentation by our staff.

Please find attached the original 2014 interlocal agreement for the creation of the MPO, the amendment to the interlocal agreement, the Reapportionment Plan, a slide showing the new board composition and the letter from the Governor.

As always, we appreciate your support and the opportunity to serve your community, Pinellas County, and the region. Please feel free to contact me at (727) 464-8712 or by email at [wblanton@forwardpinellas.org](mailto:wblanton@forwardpinellas.org) if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,



Whit Blanton FAICP  
Executive Director

Cc: Jennifer Poirrier, City Manager  
Rosemarie Call, City Clerk  
Councilmember David Allbritton

Attachments