

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES & EARMARKS

Whit Blanton, FAICP

Executive Director



Call For Projects

Multimodal, Transportation Alternatives & Complete Streets



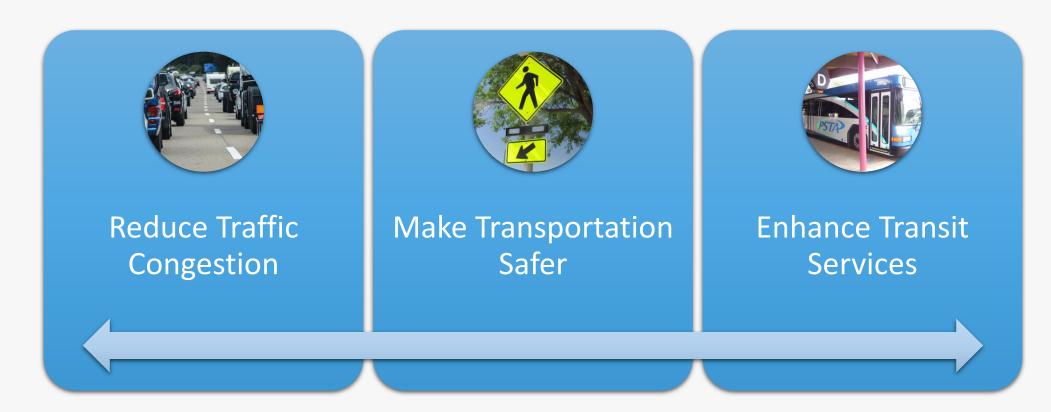
ENGAGE, ADAPT, CONNECT.





Advantage Pinellas – A Land Use & Transportation Strategy

A Balanced Solution Reflecting Our Land Use & Redevelopment Context





Multimodal Projects Priority List

- > Basis for Developing the FDOT 5-Year Work Program
- Minimum project cost \$350K
- Maximum of 3 applications/entity
- > All modes considered
- > Evaluated against criteria that support Advantage Pinellas goals





Multimodal Priority List Criteria

- Improve Safety
- Improve Mobility
- Foster Economic Growth
- Enhance Equitable Outcomes
- Protect the Environment
- Increase Resiliency





Transportation Alternatives Program (TA)

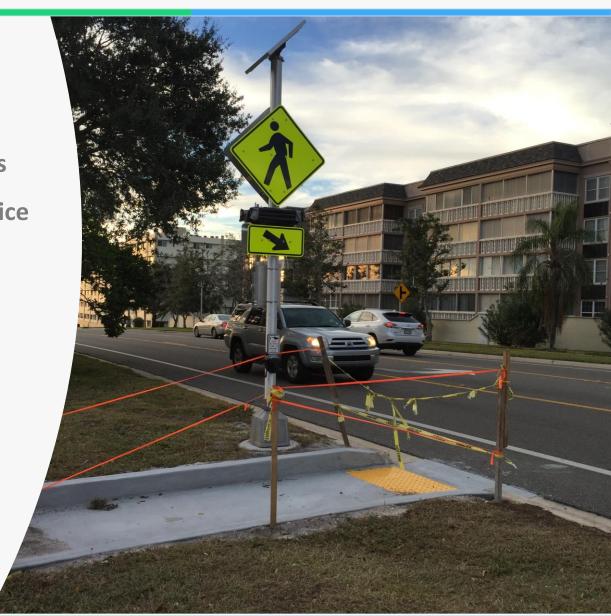
Eligible Projects

- Pedestrian, bicycle and other non-auto projects
- Infrastructure to improve access to transit service

Prerequisites

- Local Commitment
- 100% of Right-of-Way or easement
- LAP Certification (County may assist)





Complete Streets Program

Complete Streets are streets for everyone, no matter who they are or how they travel.





Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and public transportation users of all ages and abilities can safely move along and across a complete street.

Complete Streets Program

Construction Projects (up to \$1 million)

- Minimum Criteria
 - Local support
 - Demonstrate support as a redevelopment catalyst
 - Land use connection
 - Serve multiple modes
 - LAP certification (or agreement)
 - ROW available or secured

Concept Planning (up to \$100,000)

- Minimum criteria
 - Local support
 - Demonstrate how project serves as redevelopment catalyst
 - Land use connection





Legislative Priorities





Support Urban Agriculture



Stop Distracted Driving



Protect Trust Funds



 Maintain MPO Authority for Apportionment Structure



 Support Flexible & Sustained Transportation Funding



Support Home Rule





- Support Urban Agriculture
 - Forward Pinellas supports promoting healthy communities through urban agriculture with local land development regulations that protect existing urban development.



- Protect Trust Funds
 - Forward Pinellas specifically supports protecting funding intended for affordable housing and other specific purposes from being transferred to other sources.







- Forward Pinellas supports the Legislature permitting the indexing of local fuel taxes for inflation to better keep pace with transportation needs like it has done for state fuel tax revenues.
- Forward Pinellas supports increased flexibility for SIS funds for premium or express transit operating on the SIS roadway, but not necessarily on its own fixed guideway, to enhance mobility on the SIS.
- Forward Pinellas supports additional flexibility of Other Arterials program funds to enable urban corridor improvements that strengthen the safety and multimodal accessibility of the state highway system.
- Forward Pinellas supports sustained funding of \$250 million per year for the TRIP program as a way to strengthen regional partnerships to improve mobility.





- Stop Distracted Driving
 - Forward Pinellas supports legislation that expands upon the adopted Texting While Driving law by prohibiting distracted driving by addressing the use of wireless communications devices with clear definitions and clarification on what it means to be stationary and operating.



- Maintain MPO Authority for Apportionment Structure
 - Forward Pinellas opposes one-size-fits all changes that would usurp local authority to determine the most appropriate structure of MPOs consistent with federal law and consultation with the Governor.



- Support Home Rule
 - Forward Pinellas supports home rule and opposes bills that erode the ability of local governments to reflect the wishes and desires of their communities.



2020 Legislative Fight – Rectangular Rapid-Flashing Beacons

In 2020, Senate Bill 100, which would have forced the removal of many Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) across the state, advanced all the way to its final stop, the Senate Appropriations Committee.

- Top countermeasure to improve roadway safety
- Reduces pedestrian crashes by 47%
- Increases motorist compliance by 80%
- 98% of fatal crashes are located in places outside of a RRFB crosswalk





Legislative Issues to Monitor for 2021



- Broaden the ability of local governments to use discretionary sales surtaxes (e.g., Penny for Pinellas) to fund affordable housing
- Budget reductions due to COVID-19
- Further restrictions on local governments' ability to raise local revenue for transportation
- Restore local governments' authority to regulate vacation rentals
- Respect and affirm local governments' authority to regulate the character of their communities through land use regulation, including building design
- Increase state funding support for local resiliency planning



The Problem with Earmarks





Five Problems with Legislative Earmarks

- 1. Earmarks do not grow the funding pie.
- 2. Earmarked local projects force other priority projects out.
- 3. If the governor vetoes the earmark project, that money is gone from the budget.
- 4. FDOT is prohibited from working on the project that was vetoed for the next fiscal year.
- 5. Earmarked projects only include one phase of a transportation project. If prior phases still need to be completed, that money will sit.

"Earmarks are like jumping the line at the movie premier. They subvert the process and undermine the efforts of everyone who plays by the rules."





When "Good" Earmarks Go Bad

- In last year's budget, a "goodwill" earmark for TBARTA meant the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority lost \$1 million that was slated for replacing the aging and undersized transfer center in downtown Clearwater.
- Another earmark in Hillsborough County eliminated five other safety projects that FDOT had planned to fund.
- Language in an earmark is key: if the earmark is for "design," the money cannot be used for evaluating alternatives or construction.



There's More Than One Way

- Submit a Call For Projects
- Look for other grant opportunities
 - Safe Routes to Schools
 - Highway Safety Improvement Program





Earmarks Consultation & Assessment

- Thinking of a Legislative Earmark? We can help!
 - Helping with the Call For Projects Submittal Process
 - Finding other funding sources
 - Identifying what other projects may be affected by your Earmark
 - Getting the language right to do what you want done







Let's Talk Legislative Priorities and Earmarks ~



Thank You

Whit Blanton, FAICP Executive Director

wblanton@forwardpinellas.org | 727. 464. 8712