



August 14, 2024

The Honorable Mike Wilkinson, Mayor
Town of Belleair
901 Ponce de Leon Blvd.
Belleair, FL 33756

Re: Forward Pinellas Reapportionment Plan – Amended Interlocal Agreement

Dear Mayor Wilkinson:

As you may be 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 if you have any questions or need any additional information.

Sincerely,



Whit Blanton FAICP
Executive Director

Cc: Gay Lancaster, Town Manager
Christine Nicole, Town Clerk
Councilor Chris Burke

Attachments



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

August 8, 2024

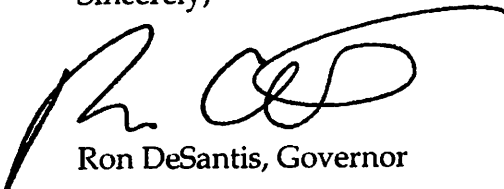
Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization
310 Court Street
Clearwater, FL 33756

To Whom It May Concern:

In accordance with s. 339.175, Florida Statutes, and Title 23 CFR Part 450, please consider this letter as formal concurrence with the Department of Transportation's recommendation that the Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization's apportionment plan meets the requirements of s. 339.175, Florida Statutes and Title 23 CFR 450.312(a).

The MPO's continued adherence to the requirements of Florida Law are of utmost importance.

Sincerely,



Ron DeSantis, Governor

CC: Mr. Jared Perdue, P.E., Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation

Jurisdiction	Number of Votes	Percent of Population	Percent of Vote
BCC	4	28.7%	21.1%
St. Pete	4	26.9%	21.1%
Clearwater	2	12.2%	10.5%
Largo	1	8.6%	5.3%
Pinellas Park	1	5.5%	5.3%
Beaches	1	3.2%	5.3%
Dunedin	1	3.8%	5.3%
Tarpon Springs	1	2.6%	5.3%
Oldsmar, Safety Harbor	1	3.4%	5.3%
Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Seminole	1	2.7%	5.3%
Gulfport, Kenneth City, South Pasadena	1	2.3%	5.3%
PSTA	1	N/A	5.3%
Total:	19	100.0%	100.0%

EXHIBIT A

PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) MEMBERSHIP REAPPORTIONMENT PLAN

Approved by the Forward Pinellas Board on August 2, 2023

Urban Area Boundary

Pinellas County is located on the Gulf coast of central Florida. While comprised of 25 local government jurisdictions (24 municipalities and an unincorporated area) and approximately 280 square miles in size, Pinellas is geographically the second smallest county in Florida. According to the United States Bureau of the Census, the entire county is urbanized and with a 2020 population of 959,107 it is Florida's most densely populated county. This is an increase from 916,542 in 2010, representing a 4.4% increase overall during the ten-year period.

Figure 1: Forward Pinellas Urban Boundary

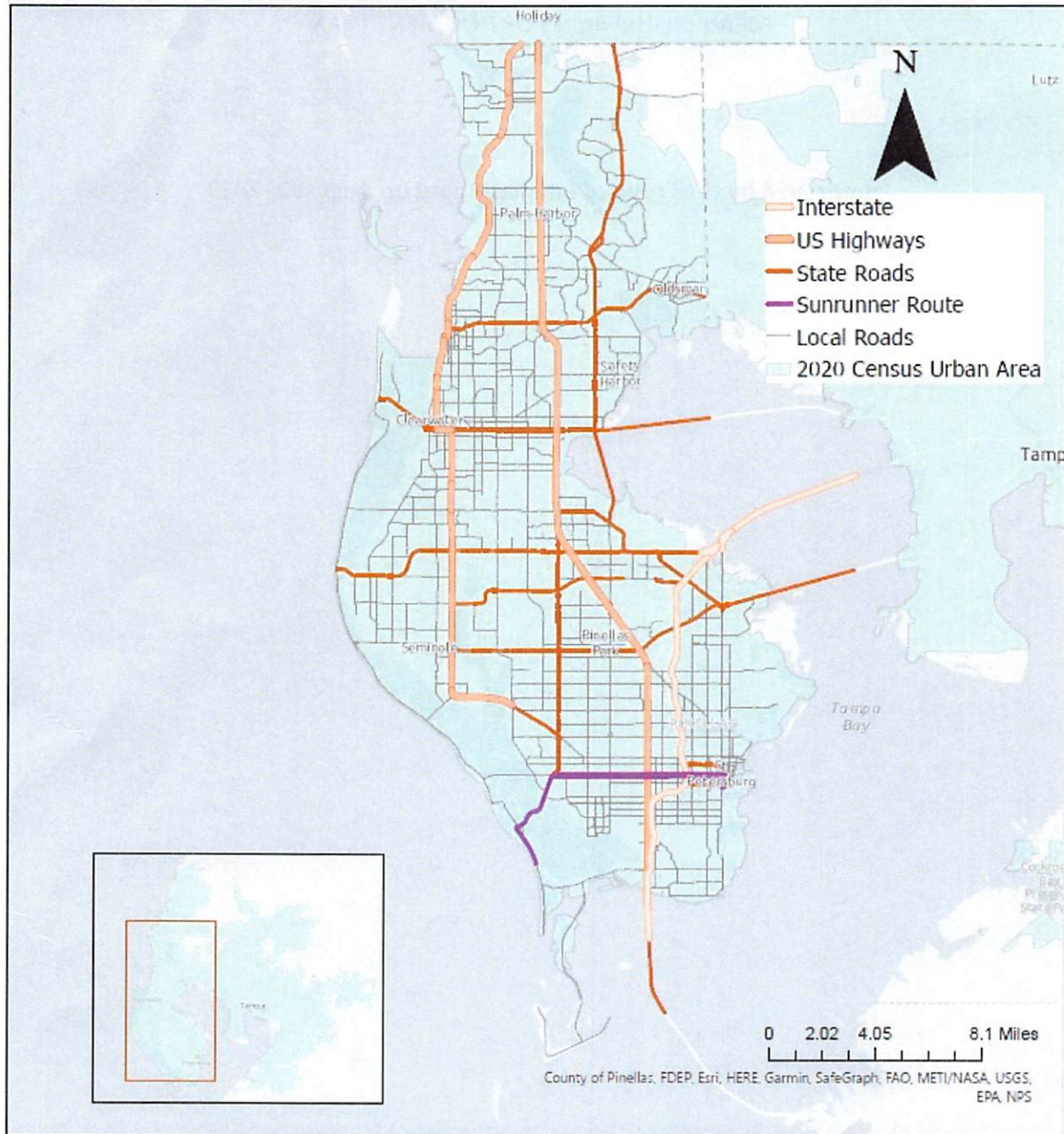


Table 1: Forward Pinellas 2010 and 2020 Population by Jurisdiction

	2010 Population	2020 Population
Belleair	3,869	4,273
Belleair Beach	1,560	1,633
Belleair Bluffs	2,031	2,311
Belleair Shore	109	73
Clearwater	107,685	117,292
Dunedin	35,321	36,068
Gulfport	12,029	11,783
Indian Rocks Beach	4,113	3,673
Indian Shores	1,420	1,190
Kenneth City	4,980	5,047
Largo	77,648	82,485
Madeira Beach	4,263	3,895
North Redington Beach	1,417	1,495
Oldsmar	13,591	14,898
Pinellas Park	49,079	53,093
Redington Beach	1,427	1,376
Redington Shores	2,121	2,176
Safety Harbor	16,884	17,072
St. Pete Beach	9,346	8,879
St. Petersburg	244,769	258,308
Seminole	1,7233	19,364
South Pasadena	4,964	5,353
Tarpon Springs	23,484	25,117
Treasure Island	6,705	6,584
UNINCORPORATED	270,494	275,669
Total Population	916,542	959,107

Source: 2010 and 2020 Census

Federal and State Law

Federal law (Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 450) provides that a metropolitan planning organization shall be designated for each urbanized area with a population of more than 50,000 individuals. The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was created in 1977 pursuant to the provisions of federal rules and regulations and companion state laws. Chapter 339, Subsection 339.175(3)(a), F.S., provides that the voting membership of a metropolitan planning organization shall consist of not fewer than five or more than 25 apportioned members, the exact number to be determined on an equitable geographic-population ratio basis, based on an agreement among the affected units of general-purpose local government and the Governor, as required by federal regulations.

The Governor, in accordance with 23 U.S.C. s.134, may provide for MPO members who represent municipalities to alternate with representatives from other municipalities within the metropolitan planning area that do not have members on the MPO. With some exceptions, County Commission members shall comprise not less than one-third of the MPO membership. One exception is in metropolitan areas, wherein Section 339.175(3)(b), F.S., allows voting membership on the MPO for authorities or other agencies not under the jurisdiction of a general-purpose local government represented on the MPO, which have been created by law to perform transportation functions and are performing such functions. In Pinellas County, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) is such an authority. Because the PSTA has membership on the MPO, the County Commission representation is reduced to at least 20% of the voting membership, as allowed by law. All voting members shall be elected officials of general-purpose local government.

Section 339.175(4) F.S., provides that the Governor, with the agreement of the affected units of general-purpose local government as required by federal rules and regulations, apportion the membership on the applicable MPO among the various governmental entities within the area.

Current MPO Board Composition

Presently, the MPO is comprised of 13 voting members, representing the 24 municipal governments, the Pinellas County Commission and PSTA. One municipal government seat is shared by three north county cities (Oldsmar, Safety Harbor, and Tarpon Springs), one seat is shared by the inland cities (Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Gulfport, Kenneth City, Seminole and South Pasadena) and one seat is shared by the beach communities (Belleair Beach, Belleair Shore, Indian Rocks Beach, Indian Shores, Madeira Beach, North Redington Beach, Redington Beach Redington Shores, St. Pete Beach and Treasure Island). On the current board, the County Commission represents the unincorporated area of Pinellas. In addition, the District Seven Secretary for the Florida Department of Transportation, or a designee, serves as a non-voting technical advisor to the MPO.

Proposed MPO Board Composition

Consistent with the board action taken on August 2, 2023, the MPO proposes to reapportion its board membership by adding six additional seats, for a total of 19 board members. This reapportionment is proposed to reflect a desire by our local communities that share seats to have longer, and more frequent, opportunities to serve, while also re-balancing the weight of the votes for our jurisdictions following the 2020 Decennial Census. Our experience since 2014 is that two-year terms for rotating seats is insufficient for members to gain knowledge to be as effective as other members, and it also inhibits leadership opportunities on the board. Two additional seats for the City of St. Petersburg and one additional seat for the City of Clearwater are also being added to reflect the relative number of residents in those jurisdictions, a new seat is being created for the City of Tarpon Springs and an additional seat is being added for the Board of

County Commissioners (BCC) to ensure a minimum of 20% of the vote be retained for the BCC, per State Statute. To develop the Reapportionment Plan, population numbers from the 2020 Census were utilized.

The 10 beach communities located along Gulf Boulevard (referenced above), plus the City of Clearwater, formed a consortium in January 1990 called the Barrier Islands Government Council, Inc. (a.k.a. the BIG-C). By agreement of the consortium members in 2011, the following provisions for appointments have been established for the seat to be rotated among the municipalities:

- The appointed elected official will serve a two-year term.
- The appointed elected official may be reappointed for up to four successive two-year terms, for a maximum term of eight years.
- The BIG-C (excluding Clearwater), by majority vote, shall recommend appointments from nominations of elected officials provided by individual member municipalities.
- The municipal government board on which the recommended elected official serves shall confirm the appointment and transmit the name of the appointee to the MPO; and
- If the appointed elected official is unable to complete their two-year term for any reason, the same procedure used for the original appointment by the BIG-C and the appointing municipality shall be followed.

This Reapportionment Plan creates an additional seat for the six inland municipalities (Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Gulfport, Kenneth City, Seminole, and South Pasadena), providing more opportunities for those communities to have an opportunity to serve on the board.

One seat will be shared by Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, and Seminole. The following terms and rotational procedures for these alternating seats the members will share are as follows:

- The appointed elected official will serve a three-year term.
- The order of rotation will be Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, and Seminole.
- If a municipality decides to defer its term of appointment, the process will proceed to the next city in the order and the deferring city will go to the end of the rotational order.
- A municipality in a rotating seat may retain its seat beyond the normal 3-year cycle if the other two municipalities in the rotation agree to not appoint a member to the board from their respective jurisdiction.
- If the appointed elected official is unable to complete their three-year term, that municipality Commission/Council will appoint another elected official for the balance of the term.

One seat will be shared by Gulfport, Kenneth City and South Pasadena. The following terms and rotational procedures for these alternating seats the members will share are as follows:

- The appointed elected official will serve a three-year term.
- The order of rotation will be Gulfport, South Pasadena, Kenneth City.
- If a city decides to defer its term of appointment, the process will proceed to the next city in the order and the deferring city will go to the end of the rotational order.
- A municipality in a rotating seat may retain its seat beyond the normal 3-year cycle if the other two municipalities in the rotation agree to not appoint a member to the board from their respective jurisdiction.
- If the appointed elected official is unable to complete their three-year term, that City Commission/Council will appoint another elected official for the balance of the term.

One seat shall be shared by the municipalities of Oldsmar and Safety Harbor. The following terms and rotational procedures for these alternating seats the members will share are as follows:

- The appointed elected official will serve a three-year term.
- The order of rotation will be Oldsmar, Safety Harbor.
- If a city decides to defer its term of appointment, the process will proceed to the next city in the order and the deferring city will go to the end of the rotational order; and
- If the appointed elected official is unable to complete their three-year term, that City Commission/Council will appoint another elected official for the balance of the term.

Nonrotational seats will be apportioned as follows:

- Four seats for representatives from the Board of County Commissioners, one of which must be from an At-Large District
- Four seats for representatives from the City of St. Petersburg
- Two seats for representatives from the City of Clearwater
- One seat for a representative from the City of Largo
- One seat for a representative from the City of Pinellas Park
- One seat for a representative from the City of Dunedin
- One seat for a representative from the City of Tarpon Springs
- One seat for a representative from the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority

The District Seven Secretary for FDOT, or a designee, will continue to serve as a non-voting technical advisor to the MPO.

Table 2: Forward Pinellas Apportionment Plan

Jurisdiction	Number of Votes	Percent of Population	Percent of Vote
BCC	4	28.7%	21.1%
St. Pete	4	26.9%	21.1%
Clearwater	2	12.2%	10.5%
Largo	1	8.6%	5.3%
Pinellas Park	1	5.5%	5.3%
Beaches	1	3.2%	5.3%
Dunedin	1	3.8%	5.3%
Tarpon Springs	1	2.6%	5.3%
Oldsmar, Safety Harbor	1	3.4%	5.3%
Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Seminole	1	2.7%	5.3%
Gulfport, Kenneth City, South Pasadena	1	2.3%	5.3%
PSTA	1	N/A	5.3%

Membership

All voting representatives shall be elected officials of general-purpose local governments, except, to the extent that the MPO includes, as part of its apportioned voting membership, a member of a statutorily authorized planning board or an official of an agency that operates or administers a major mode of transportation. All individuals acting as a representative of the governing board of the County, the city or authority shall first be selected by said governing board.

The voting membership of an MPO shall consist of not fewer than five or more than 19 apportioned members, the exact number to be determined on an equitable geographic-population ratio basis by the Governor, based on an agreement among the affected units of general-purpose local government as required by federal rules and regulations and shall be in compliance with 339.175(3) F.S.

In the event that a governmental entity that is a member of the MPO fails to fill an assigned appointment to the MPO within sixty days after notification by the Governor of its duty to appoint a representative, the appointment shall then be made by the Governor from the eligible individuals of that governmental entity.

Terms

Unless otherwise outlined, the term of office of members of the MPO shall be four years and shall begin on January 1st of the calendar year, or as early as possible in the calendar year, depending upon election cycles, and concluding at the end of the calendar year. The membership of a member who is a public official automatically terminates upon said official leaving the elective or appointive office for any reason, or may be terminated by a majority vote of the total membership of the governmental entity represented by the member, or the BIG-C for the beach communities. A vacancy shall be filled by the original appointing entity for the duration of the term.