



Pinellas Assembly

TASK forces' REPORT summary

Presented
January 9, 2004



Pinellas Assembly

ANNEXATION POLICY/GUIDELINES TASK FORCE

members:

Ed Armstrong - Chairman
Roger Sellev - Vice Chairman
Dan Massaro
James S. Miles*
Judy Mitchell
Ray Neri
Grady Pridgen
David Stone

Staff Support

Jake Stowers
Asst. County Administrator
Pinellas County

Michael Gustafson
City Manager
City of Pinellas Park

*Deceased

I. VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION

	Issue	Objective	Recommendation	Process To Implement
A.	Planning/Annexation Areas	To Establish Areas Eligible For Annexation And, Conversely Those Reserved For Unincorporated Status	Restore Planning/Annexation Areas As Originally Established Under Ordinance No. 00-63	Ordinance Acted On By PPC/CPA Effective Jan. 1, 2005 Freezing Planning Area Boundaries Until Jan. 1, 2008, Or Earlier To Coincide w/Effective Date Of Referendum Process ¹
B.	Criteria For Planning / Annexation Area Boundary Amendment	To Clarify And Refine Basis For Future Boundary Amendments	Prepare Revisions That Address Public / Community Interests and Fiscal Impacts	Ordinance Acted On By PPC / CPA Correspondent w/Ordinance Freezing Planning Area Boundaries, To Be Effective Jan. 1, 2008, Or Earlier To Coincide w/Effective Date Of Referendum Process ¹
C.	Process For Planning / Annexation Area Boundary Amendment	To Clarify Who Can Initiate And To Assure Objectivity w/ Final Decision	Clarify That the County Or A Municipality May Initiate Boundary Amendment; Provide For Super-Majority Vote Of CPA To Override PPC Recommendation; And Provide For Chapter 120 F.S. Administrative Hearing Process	Ordinance Acted On By PPC/CPA Correspondent w/Ordinance Freezing Planning Area Boundaries, To Be Effective Jan. 1, 2008 Or Earlier To Coincide w/Effective Date Of Referendum Process ¹

Notes:

1. a.) All three actions (A. B. & C.) to amend Ordinance No. 00-63 to be treated as a package - all or nothing - with staggered effective dates that may be advanced to correspond w/legislative action and charter amendment processes.
 b.) Proposed freeze on planning area/annexation boundaries would not preclude amendment post Jan. 1, 2005 by action of PPC/CPA based on voluntary annexation request of property owner or by mutual agreement of County and affected municipality(ies).
2. In recognition of existing litigation challenging current voluntary annexation process, it is recommended that said litigation be stayed pending the implementation of the recommendations contained herein.

II. REFERENDUM ANNEXATION

	Issue	Objective	Recommendation	Process To Implement
A.	Governing Legislation	To Establish Exclusive Countywide Procedures To Govern Referendums	Limit Referendum Annexations To Existing Planning Areas And Seek Legislative Support To Amend Gen'l. Law	Amend Chapter 171. F.S. To Enable Home Rule Charter Counties To Adopt Exclusive Process Thru Charter Amendment
B.	Establish Exclusive Countywide Process	To Establish More Equitable Requirements And Procedures For Areas To Be Annexed (Eg. 70/30 Rule)	Identify Specific Requirements As Part Of Charter Amendment Process	Amend County Charter to Enable Process Effective Jan. 1, 2008, Or Earlier Based On Legislative Authorization
C.	Identify Areas To Be Eligible For Annexation By Referendum	To Establish Certainty And Predictability Regarding Areas Eligible For Annexation By Referendum Consistent w/ Established Planning / Annexation Areas	Identify In Map And Ordinance Form The Areas To Be Governed In Advance Of Charter Amendment	Adopt Ordinance Through PPC/CPA Process Effective Correspondent w/ Charter Amendment Effective Jan. 1, 2008, Or Earlier Based On Legislative Authorization

III. Enclaves

	Issue	Objective	Recommendation	Process To Implement
A.	Internal Enclaves (Completely Surrounded By The Same Municipality)	To Eliminate In The Interest Of More Efficient And Logical Municipal Boundaries	All Internal Enclaves Be Required To Be Annexed By Jan. 1, 2008. Any Costs Directly Incident To Annexation Of Enclaves (Other Than Changed Ad Valorem Tax, Utility Tax and Franchise Fees) To Be Borne By The Municipality	Support Proposed State Legislation Providing For Same, Or Include Enabling Provision In Amendment Of Chapter 171, F.S.
B.	Unincorporated Areas Within Municipal Planning Area Between Planning Area Boundary & Municipal Boundary	To Encourage Their Annexation Thru Voluntary Or Referendum Process So As To Fill-In Exterior Boundaries On A Prioritized, Systematic Basis. In The Alternative, Encourage Interlocal Agreement To Provide Efficient And Effective Service	Support Pro-Active Measures To Incent Annexation. Where Annexation Is Not Achievable, Encourage Interlocal Agreement For Service Delivery Between The County And Respective Municipality	Joint City-County Effort To Facilitate Annexation Wherever Achievable, Based Upon Efficient And Effective Delivery Of Urban Services

IV. OVERALL PRINCIPLES

	Issue	Objective	Recommendation	Process To Implement
A.	Properties Of Countywide Significance	To Treat These Properties As For All Others And Provide For Their Incorporation Where It Is Logical To Do So	Specifically Provide For Annexation Where The Property / Facility Is Within An Established Planning / Annexation Area, While Protecting The Fiscal, Regulatory And Operational Prerogatives Of The Responsible Countywide Entity	Identify Specific List Of Such Properties To Be Developed And Agreed to w/Respective Jurisdictions - Target Date Of Jan. 1, 2008; And Establish A Uniform Master Interlocal Agreement That Can Be Customized To Individual Properties That Is Satisfactory To The County To Protect Its Proprietary Interest While Allowing For Annexation - Target Date Of Jan. 1, 2008
B.	Incentives/Inducements For Annexation	Provide Only Those Incentives That Have A Clear Public Purpose Related To Infrastructure And Providing No Exclusive Private Benefit Or Public Subsidy	Develop Guidelines Consistent With The Statutory / Constitutional Parameters To Assist In Defining Public Purpose	Consider Amendment Of Voluntary And Referendum Annexation Procedures To Add Definitions / Criteria Regarding Broad Public Purpose - Target Date of Jan. 1, 2008
C.	Public Participation and Information	Encourage The Preparation And Distribution Of Objective, Policy Neutral Information To The Public Concerning Annexation And Participation By The Public With Annexation Decisions	Utilize Public Forums To Encourage Public Input On Annexation-Related Matters	Encourage Greater City-County Collaboration On The Production, Distribution And Public Presentations Of Annexation Matters
D.	Service Delivery Generally	The Most Efficient And Effective Delivery Of Urban Services, Including Fire, Law Enforcement, Recreation, Roadways, Drainage, Refuse Collection, Sewer And Water Etc.	Encourage The Review And Determination Of The Most Efficient Means Of Service Delivery As A Corollary Or Alternative To Annexation Policy	Consider And Implement The Recommendation From The Related Task Forces Of The Pinellas Assembly Process Dealing With These Specific Issues

	Issue	Objective	Recommendation	Process To Implement
E.	Transfer Of Jurisdictional Responsibilities Upon Annexation	To Establish Clear And Equitable Responsibility For Maintaining Certain Facilities And Operations Upon Annexation	Develop And Consumate A Master Interlocal Agreement Between The County Or Any Special District And The Municipalities With The Potential To Annex That Spells Out Both The Timing And Responsibilities For Such Things As Drainage, Highway Maintenance, Traffic Operations, Sewer, Water, Recreaton Etc., As Appropriate	Continue The Process Initiated By The County And Reach Agreement With The Cities Collectively Under An Interlocal Agreement. Perhaps Add Requirement To The Voluntary And Referendum Annexation Processes



Pinellas Assembly

City/County MSTU TASK force

MEMBERS:

R. Dick Holmes – Chairman
Carlton Ward – Vice Chairman
Beverly Billiris
Wayne Darnell
John Doran
Bill Heller
Sallie Parks
Randy Wedding

DRAFT

Staff support:

Mark Woodard
Asst. County Administrator
Pinellas County

Maureen (Mo) Freaney
Asst. City Manager
City of Dunedin

CITY/COUNTY MSTU DIVISION OF COST AND RECOVERY TASK FORCE

Name of Task Force

City/County MSTU (Municipal Services Taxing Unit) Division of Cost and Recovery Task Force

Issue Statement

Perform a base line analysis of the Municipal Services Taxing Unit including a history of how and why allocations have been done a particular way between unincorporated residents and Countywide residents. Apply a “reasonableness” standard to these allocation methodologies. Although legal factors have merit, the primary goal is the ultimate achievement of reasonableness and equity.

Task Force Objectives

1. Review perceived inequities in the assignment of taxes and fees across Pinellas County jurisdictions.
2. Review equity in the distribution of revenues and services across all jurisdictions.
3. Review perceived belief that services in the unincorporated areas are being subsidized by Countywide taxes.
4. Review perceived belief that unincorporated areas and non-residents may benefit from City services without having to pay for those services.

Task Force Members

Chairman Dick Holmes – South Pasadena
Vice Chairman Carlton Ward - Clearwater
Beverley Billiris – Tarpon Springs
Wayne Darnell - Largo
John Doran – Clearwater
Bill Heller – St. Petersburg
Sallie Parks – Palm Harbor
Randy Wedding – St. Petersburg
Maureen Freaney (City Rep.) - Assistant City Manager - Dunedin
Mark Woodard (County Rep.) – Assistant County Administrator – Pinellas County

Facts

The issue surrounding the Municipal Services Taxing Unit (MSTU) in Pinellas County has been on going since the mid-1970's. The legal basis for the debate between cities and counties throughout the state had its origin in the 1968 revision to the Florida Constitution that created the "dual taxation" issue. During the American Assembly process in May 2002 this was again at the forefront of key issues between cities and the County. The MSTU Task Force was established as one of seven Countywide Task Forces. The Task Force met 10 times from June 4 to November 12, 2003.

The MSTU is a financial tool to capture public expenditures that exclusively benefit the unincorporated area (that portion of the County not located within a City). These expenditures are then converted to taxes (i.e. property taxes) and fees that are imposed within the unincorporated area at a level necessary to support the expenditures. Property taxes, which constitute 58% of the MSTU's revenues, are the most important and are generally looked upon as the key comparative measure. For this reason, the MSTU Task Force focused on services supported by property taxes and did not review those supported by earmarked revenues like the Gas Tax and Penny for Pinellas. The total Pinellas County population is approximately 921,000. The MSTU or unincorporated area encompasses 34.3% of the total County population, 40.2% of the total land mass and about 28% of the total taxable value. Although spread throughout the County, this makes the MSTU area the largest municipal service area in the County. The balance of population, land mass and taxable value is within the 24 Pinellas County cities.

In September 1975, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners addressed the issue of "dual taxation" by voting to establish an MSTU to fund municipal services rendered exclusively within the unincorporated area. The MSTU Property Tax rate (millage) referenced earlier is essentially the equivalent of a city millage. The creation of the MSTU was challenged, but upheld by the Circuit Court in December 1975 and upon appeal to the Florida Supreme Court in 1978. Having severed the "Gordian knot of prolific legalese" as characterized by the Circuit Court's Final Judgment, issues remain even today in the identification and allocation of costs. Unlike a city, which focuses solely on municipal services, the County operates at two levels. First, it delivers a wide array of Countywide services that meet a public need regardless of political jurisdiction. These services are funded in large part through a Countywide property tax imposed throughout all of Pinellas County. Second, it is the provider of municipal services in the unincorporated area (MSTU) which are funded primarily by a property tax imposed only in the unincorporated area. In many cases, these services are separate. For example, activities including Animal Services, Mosquito Control, 911 Emergency Communications, Courts, Jail and Human Services are delivered Countywide and have no MSTU nor municipal counterpart. Sometimes, however, the same personnel, equipment and other resources that are used for Countywide services are also used to deliver MSTU services. The mowing of Rights-of-Way and the maintenance of drainage facilities (ditches) associated with roads are good examples of this. The same crew that is attending to an arterial road (a County-wide responsibility) may later in the day clear a blockage in a ditch on a local street (an MSTU responsibility). Allocating these costs can be difficult and subject to some discretion

and a variety of assumptions, but this is the nature of cost allocation. Additionally, as a result of economies of scale, the County may be able to deliver some services at lower unit costs than cities. The degree of legitimate economies of scale versus true cost of services is clearly at the heart of the debate on whether the County is subsidizing the delivery of services within the unincorporated area (MSTU), and thereby keeping its property tax rate artificially low by either improperly allocating County-wide revenues to the MSTU or allocating a disproportionate share of MSTU costs to the County-wide taxpayer. The goal of the Task Force was to review the facts surrounding the MSTU and to test the “reasonableness” of the MSTU cost allocation methodologies utilized by the County. Sound fiscal management and public policy further supported this goal.

After the establishment of the MSTU in 1975, the County developed an administrative procedure to use annually during the budget development process to identify and allocate revenues and expenses to the MSTU. This process culminates every year in the computation of the millage rate to be imposed in the MSTU. The process originally included four “offsets” that were intended to recognize that MSTU residents were paying both a County-wide as well as an MSTU millage rate to fund certain items and as such should get a “credit” on the MSTU millage rate that they pay. For example, the statutory fees and commissions due to the Property Appraiser’s Office are not allocated to the cities and passed on to their residents through the municipal millage rate. Unincorporated residents, however, pay a portion of these costs through the various millages that are imposed upon them (i.e. MSTU, Fire, Library). The Property Appraiser “offset” had the effect of reducing the MSTU millage rate downward and increased the Countywide rate proportionally. The three other offsets were based upon a similar philosophy and had the same effect on millages.

The County employed this methodology to calculate the MSTU in a reasonably, consistent fashion over the years. Specific revenues and expenditures would be added or deleted from time to time to reflect programmatic and operational changes. Starting in FY96, however, the County began to phase-out the offsets noted above. By FY02, all four offsets had been eliminated. It was determined that these offsets could not be supported legally or with proper backup data. The removal of these “credits” increased the MSTU budget by about \$4.9 million and increased the millage rate imposed on unincorporated residents accordingly.

A review of the County’s MSTU Budget shows that about 59% is related to services provided by the Pinellas County Sheriff’s Office (PCSO). The balance is related to other property tax funded county services delivered in the unincorporated area. The Task Force’s review essentially followed this breakdown. The former, given its magnitude and the additional complexities of the 11 municipal law enforcement contracts that the PCSO provides, proved to be the most challenging and time consuming. Well in advance of the work of the Task Force, the PCSO engaged an outside consultant, Government Services Group, Inc. (GSG), to review the PCSO’s allocation of costs to the MSTU and to determine if the municipal law enforcement contracts were set at a level sufficient to recover the full cost of providing the service to the city. This engagement reflects the first comprehensive external review of the PCSO’s cost of services since the 1970’s. The last limited external review of costs occurred in 1994 as part of the Dunedin law enforcement contract. In summary, GSG found that the

PCSO's law enforcement contracts had not kept up with inflation, principally the older ones, and thus should be adjusted upward to recover the full costs of providing services. Additionally, GSG reviewed the PCSO's overall operation and recommended that a "base level of service" charge be allocated to the Countywide budget in recognition of the Sheriff's constitutional and statutory responsibilities as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer in the County. Generally, the PCSO's Deputies have the power to issue citations and make arrests throughout the County, while municipal law enforcement officers generally limited to their respective cities. This base level of service (35.7% of the total Sheriff's budget) was computed by equally weighting the MSTU's proportional share of population and geographic area. These factors were used to approximate the minimum, or base level of service, that the PCSO provides to the County. This approximation was required because specific workload measures (i.e. services delivered in the MSTU vs a city) are not always available or have not been compiled. Therefore, a minimum of 35.7% of all of the PCSO's costs of service would be assigned to the Countywide budget. A review of those benefiting from the PCSO's functions would then determine how the balance of expenses would be allocated. For example, the balance of the costs associated with the Detention, Corrections and Judicial Operations (i.e. between 35.7% and 100%) are allocated Countywide based upon the undisputed countywide benefit of a jail and court security. Conversely, the majority of the Patrol Operations function above the base level of service, after adjusting for workload, is allocated to the MSTU. Since few workload measures were available, GSG assumed a workload split of 27% in incorporated areas and 73% in unincorporated areas. This assumption was based upon their experience with other law enforcement agencies operating in similar environments. The GSG report included a model with specific inputs that can be used on an annual basis to recompute the portion of the PCSO budget that should be allocated to the MSTU. The concept of using unincorporated geographic area and population as variables to determine the "base level of service" is based on the fact that the "base level of service" would theoretically be 0% if all of the unincorporated area were annexed.

As noted, the concept of a "base level of service" is complex and controversial. It was the most contentious and highly debated issue of the MSTU Task Force. The Task Force asked GSG to appear several times to present and explain their findings. The Sheriff also appeared before the Task Force several times to offer his perspective. The City Managers Consortium established a City Technical Team comprised primarily of municipal budget and finance staff to review the GSG Report and other MSTU issues. The City Technical Team challenged the validity of any justifiable base level of service. The Task Force engaged Chiefs from the municipal Police Departments (PD) in a roundtable forum to discuss the role of the PCSO vis-à-vis their departments. Without exception, the City PDs acknowledged the role and the benefit of the PCSO and the resources that it brings to the community. Many of the smaller PD's rely upon the PCSO to handle narcotics and homicide cases. Several PD's noted that but for the "backup" that the PCSO provides to their respective departments, they might otherwise need to hire additional city personnel. The larger departments, including St. Petersburg, Clearwater and Largo, are full service in nature and rely much less upon the services of the PCSO. The Sheriff pointed out several instances over the years where the PCSO has been a key resource to these larger departments including assistance in quelling civil unrest and the provision of SWAT and Bomb Squad resources. Despite the PDs'

support for the PCSO, they emphasized that they were not able to assess the reasonableness of the costs allocated to Countywide taxpayers related to the Sheriff's services. Many actually had questions as to what their citizens actually paid for the services provided by the PCSO through Countywide taxes. Conceptually, a "base level of service" model speaks not only to the actual services that are provided on an ongoing basis, but also the potential to provide those services when and if needed. The Task Force discussed the concept in the context of the "demand model" and the frequently cited example of electricity – when you flip the wall switch, you want the light to come on.

The Task Force culminated its discussions on "base level of services" with the following listing of pros and cons, as well as alternative percentage allocation factors and their impact.

A. Base Level of Service (BLS)

<u>PRO</u>	<u>CON</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Sheriff's Constitutional Officer responsibility and accountability. ❑ PCSO historically provided for the original law enforcement of the County. Police Departments built up around it in some cases creating duplication. ❑ Service Availability (Light Switch Theory). ❑ Must be an overseer of the "Big Picture" regarding security for Pinellas County. ❑ The Sheriff's Office is available to every Pinellas resident 24 hours a day/7 days a week. ❑ If only workload figures were used and the actual workload shrunk to a minimum in incorporated areas, unincorporated residents could end up subsidizing the Sheriff's Office for Constitutional, service availability and "big picture" obligations of the Sheriff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Without a specific definition of what the BLS is, only workload should be used as base for cost allocation. ❑ Not reasonable for approximately 53% of law enforcement costs be borne by unincorporated residents when GSG Study shows 73% of direct benefits goes to unincorporated residents. ❑ Many services provided by Sheriff are provided by cities—so cities must pay twice. ❑ Per capita comparisons show a lower per capita for the MSTU and Sheriff's contracts than for Municipal Police Departments. ❑ Unless a better BLS proxy is determined, use of BLS should be discontinued. Current proxy does not provide a clear rationale. ❑ If a 73/27% workload split were used, everyone would still contribute toward the Sheriff's Statutory responsibilities.

B. BLS - Alternative Allocation Percentage Methodologies (calculated by GSG)

			<u>MSTU COST</u>
1. GSG Recommendation	37.22%	=	\$32,371,870
2. GSG Revised Populations Rec.	35.70%	=	\$33,152,570
3. Zero Base Level (Technical Team Rec.)	0.00%	=	\$51,488,732
4. Population Only	31.25%	=	\$35,438,170
5. Land Area Only	40.18%	=	\$30,851,561
6. Road Miles Only	39.44%	=	\$31,231,638
7. Assessed Property Value	29.30%	=	\$36,439,725
8. Just Property Values	28.81%	=	\$36,691,397

The formal City Technical Team Report on the matter disagreed with the entire concept of a base level of services. The Task Force indicated that measurable, verifiable workload factors would have been a better way to determine the base level of service. They concurred with GSG that these factors are not available at this time, and support the GSG report recommendations that the PCSO start to compile this data where practicable. The Task Force supported including the data in the model developed by GSG to calculate the MSTU portion of the PCSO budget. They discussed the inherent limitation of workload measures in some instances where the cost of compiling the statistics may exceed the benefit. For example, knowing the city in which a PCSO call for service or traffic citation is made with certainty may require that all cruisers be equipped with Global Positioning Systems hardware and Geographic Information Systems software – an expensive proposition. The Task Force did indicate that where workload measurement is impractical, some sampling methodologies should be utilized.

In the end, although a majority of the Task Force was not comfortable with GSG’s base level services calculation and in the absence of workload measures or a clear alternative, the Task Force did not recommend a change in the GSG methodology. Instead they determined that their work and conclusions should be forwarded to a recommended “Tax Equity Board” who would continually refine and evolve the base level amount over time and introduce workload measures where possible.

The balance of the MSTU is comprised of non-PCSO functions. Some of these services are exclusive to the MSTU. The Building Inspection department is a good example as “but for” the MSTU, the department would not be needed. In other words, if there were no MSTU, there would be no Building Department. These functions, including Code Enforcement, because of their exclusivity to the unincorporated area are funded from the MSTU at 100%. There are some functions, however, that serve both a Countywide as well as an MSTU purpose. In these cases, workload measures are used to allocate costs to the MSTU. Costs associated with storm water facilities, as noted earlier, are allocated to the MSTU. This practice as started in FY03 reallocated about \$3.9 million to the MSTU from the Countywide budget. County staff did meet with a sub-group of city managers in 2001 to review the allocation of non-PCSO costs as well as revenues. This further assisted the County in continuing to refine the allocation of costs to the MSTU. Additionally, workload measures have been reviewed resulting in more costs being allocated to the MSTU and indirect costs (overhead) have been allocated to the MSTU starting in FY03. The increase to the MSTU budget associated

with indirect costs is about \$4.1 million. The County has also allocated costs associated with new municipal services in the unincorporated area (i.e. Recreation, Connection Centers, etc.) to the MSTU. The MSTU Task Force and the City Technical Team recognized and commended County staff for their recent efforts to ensure greater equity within the non-PCSO portion of the MSTU.

In conclusion, the allocation of costs is a difficult task. The Task Force indicated the importance for continued communication between City, County and PCSO staff as the equity of the MSTU is further refined.

Findings

1. The allocation of costs between the MSTU and the Countywide budgets is a complex process based upon various assumptions. As such, there will always be room for debate regarding the methodology used and the results. No calculation will be perfect, therefore, a general standard of “reasonableness” must be applied. The duality of service provision by County government at the regional (countywide) and municipal (MSTU) level provides some unique cost allocation challenges.
2. The PCSO’s base level of service cost is the most contentious equity issue. The majority of the Task Force was not comfortable with the 35.7% base level services calculation. They felt equally uncomfortable in proposing an alternative at this time. It was felt a reliable alternative would need to evolve from better workload tracking and the on-going oversight of a Tax Equity Board.
3. The County has continually refined the non-PCSO MSTU adding costs previously allocated to the Countywide budget. The “offsets” that were established in the late 1970’s providing a credit and thereby reducing the MSTU millage rate have been phased out. Additionally, starting in FY03, the MSTU has been charged for indirect costs (overhead) - \$4.2 million in FY04. An allocation of \$3.9 million was made to the MSTU for stormwater beginning in FY03 and \$4.1 million was allocated for recreation initiatives through a direct increase in the MSTU millage in FY03.
4. The sharing of information and communications are key components of the MSTU development process. The City Technical Team and County Staff can play an important role in maintaining this dialogue.
5. Where improved workload tracking is not practical, random sampling methodologies should be utilized.
6. Consideration should be given for oversight of periodic allocation reviews by an independent agency to eliminate any perception of impropriety.

Task Force Recommendations

1. A Tax Equity Board shall be created. It should be charged to review, on a three-year basis, the cost/benefit ratio submitted by the County Budget Department and determine a fair distribution of the tax load for the services provided. Support for the Board's efforts would come from an ad-hoc staff, evolving from the technical committee utilized by the Task Force, made up of representatives from the budgetary departments of the cities and the County Budget Director. The Board's recommendations would be forwarded to the County Commission for endorsement and adoption during the normal budget cycle each year.
2. Through cooperation of the County and the cities, staff management teams should be developed to review the following remaining equity issues and provide reports on the various areas to the County Commission and the Mayors' Council:
 - Water/Sewer Surcharge (25%) for unincorporated residents within municipal service areas.
 - Fire District revenue allocation to cities.
 - Pinellas County Library Cooperative revenue allocation to cities.
 - The one-half cent sales tax revenue allocation.
3. County staff should recommend and Board of County Commissioners should approve a more definitive Fund Balance policy for the MSTU.
4. County staff and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office will review the MSTU allocation methodology with the city managers annually.

Attachments to Final Report: (Available upon request)

1. Summary Minutes (In Date Order)
2. May 2003 GSG Report
3. 9/23/03 City Technical Team Report – Sheriff's MSTU Cost Allocation Study
4. 10/27/03 GSG Response to 9/23/03 City Technical Team Report
5. 9/18/03 Non-PCSO MSTU Allocation Information Prepared by County Staff Representative Mark Woodard
6. 10/27/03 City Technical Team Report – MSTU Revenue and Cost Allocations (Non-PCSO)
7. Other Miscellaneous Resource Materials in Chronological Order



Pinellas Assembly

Fire/emergency medical services structures & Financing TASK force

Members:

Ed Hooper - Chairman
Joe Calio
Sally Foote
Michael Godich
Sally Israel
Jerry Knight
Kathleen Litton
Tim Schuler

Staff Support:

Gay Lancaster
Chief Asst. County Administrator
Pinellas County

James Callahan
Fire Chief
St. Petersburg Fire Department

**Pinellas Assembly
EMS/Fire Task Force Report
Executive Summary
December 18, 2003**

Task Force Name EMS / Fire Task Force

Issue statement/Task Force Charge

Conduct a study of the fire services countywide to assess levels of services, cost, the distribution of cost and services, and related factors. The task force should evaluate the potential for savings, improved services, and more equitable assignment of cost from consolidating districts, having cities serve parts of the unincorporated areas, and/or combining the city and county units into a single countywide fire protection system with uniform salary and benefit scales. If full consolidation is recommended, the task force should propose an approach and time-line for phasing it in. The task force should study EMS and evaluate whether cost might be lowered and/or performance improved by combining EMS with partially or fully consolidated fire protection services.

The Task Force Chair met with the City and County representatives on Friday, September 19, to outline the committee's future agenda to ensure completion by the target month of January. An agenda was distributed separating the task force mandate down into four major components:

- A. Savings (Consolidation and/or Regionalization, Joint Purchasing of Insurance and Other Commodities)
- B. Service Improvement (ISO Rating, Fire and Life Safety Codes, Hydrants and Infrastructure)
- C. Equitable Assignment of Costs (Fees, Tax Equity, Specialty Team Support)
- D. EMS Transport

Task Force Objectives

To provide integrated, high quality, efficient, and cost-effective fire protection and emergency medical services throughout Pinellas County by fairly compensated and well- trained personnel with due regard for the safety of the community and service providers through enactment and enforcement of uniform codes and paid for by as uniform a method of collection as possible by all consumers of services.

A. Savings

1. Consolidation and/or Regionalization - Evaluate the potential for savings, improved services, and more equitable allocation of cost by consolidating districts, having cities serve parts of the unincorporated areas, and combining fire service agencies into a single countywide fire protection system with uniform salary and benefit scales. The task force should propose an approach and time-line to phase it in along with the recommendations presented.

2. Joint Purchasing of Insurance and Other Commodities - Assess the current purchasing programs.

B. Service Improvement

1. ISO - Consider how the Insurance Services Office (ISO) Division of Commercial Risk ratings for the fire services in Pinellas County can be improved.
2. Fire and Life Safety Codes - Review the State of Florida Legislature actions relative to Fire and Life Safety Codes and develop a strategy for seeing the needs of Pinellas County are appropriately addressed.
3. Fire Hydrants and Water System Standard – Consider a countywide minimum standard for the installation of fire hydrants, water mains and water available for firefighting.
4. Equipment Compatibility – Review policies and practices for improving equipment compatibility among fire services countywide.

C. Equitable Assignment of Costs: Study the fire services countywide and review levels and distribution of services, cost of services, the allocation of costs, and related factors including:

1. Fees – Evaluate the benefits of alternative fire funding sources.
2. Tax Equity – Evaluate the current funding methodologies to determine if costs are fairly spread over the properties and people receiving services.
3. Specialty Team Support – Review the composition, training, and funding for each of the Special Services Programs including, Hazmat, Technical Rescue and Marine/Water Rescue.

D. EMS Transport: Study EMS Transport and evaluate whether cost might be lowered and/or performance improved by partially or fully combining EMS Transport with fire services.

Task Force Members

Ed Hooper, Chairperson
Joe Calio
Sally Foote
Sally Israel
Jerry Knight
Kathleen Litton
Timothy Schuler

Staff Support

James Callahan, Fire Chief, City of St Petersburg Fire Rescue Department
Alternate: E. Carroll Williams, Fire Chief, City of Largo Fire Rescue Department

Findings and Facts

A. Savings

1. Consolidation and/or Regionalization - It was the consensus that, while additional discussion may be necessary, it seems there is no driving force for a recommendation at this time. As a result of the current 9-1-1 call center and dispatch system together with automatic aid and closest unit response regardless of the jurisdiction, Pinellas County Fire Services are already functionally consolidated, even though areas such as administration, finances, personnel and equipment may not be as efficient and equitable as they might be if partially or wholly consolidated.

It was stated that regionalization or reduction of the number of fire districts may make sense, but that current fire and EMS service contracts may make it a long-term endeavor. There have been some changes in the make-up, primarily due to annexations and contractual agreements in the Belleair/Belleair Bluffs area, Kenneth City, Redington Beaches, Tierra Verde, Gandy and High Point districts and through the creation of special independent fire districts since the last Charter Revision Commission reviewed EMS and fire services. It was generally thought that these consolidations could happen naturally over time, and that it is unlikely to occur or be successful through the application of pressure. The committee strongly supports voluntary regionalization efforts that would improve service and cost efficiencies.

The committee discussed service contracts and the potential of agencies entering into contractual agreements to provide services that relied on neighboring departments to fulfill them through automatic aid. It was recommended that the County Fire Authority review these contracts and ensure that each contracting agency has its own resources necessary to fulfill the contract requirements and that the charge for services is appropriate.

2. Joint Purchasing of Insurance and Other Commodities - The Task Force observed that the practice of joint purchasing for expendable supplies and commodities, uniforms, and equipment be supported and encouraged in the fire service Countywide. For example, the Florida Association of Counties, Florida Sheriffs Association, and Florida Fire Chiefs Association recently developed a cooperative program for the purchase of all fire apparatus, rescue vehicles, ambulances, and law enforcement vehicles. This is a very comprehensive and cost effective program that covers the full range of Public Safety vehicle requirements.

In addition, cost savings may be achieved by group purchasing of health insurance, workers compensation, and other similar benefits.

B. Service Improvement

1. ISO – The current ISO classifications for Pinellas County Fire Departments range from a Class 2 to a Class 5. There are many benefits that encourage an improved ISO rating and result in reduced fire insurance rates. Many improvements have been made since the last countywide study in 1990 and should contribute to a reduced ISO classification. Fire insurance rates are one of the significant overhead costs to businesses and manufacturing which might locate in Pinellas County. Any reduction in those fire insurance rates would be a benefit to locating a business in Pinellas County.

2. Fire and Life Safety Codes - During the 2003 session, the Florida State Legislature adopted Senate Bill 592, which exempted certain condominium unit owners from retrofitting their units with fire sprinkler systems. The current State Uniform Building and Fire / Life Safety Codes were adopted by the state a few years ago and both contain provisions for amending or modifying the codes without having to go back to the state legislature.

3. Fire Hydrants and Water System Standards - Currently the water systems in the county do not use the same standard for the location and minimum fire flow requirements for fire hydrants.

4. Equipment Compatibility – There is only some limited incompatibility of equipment used by the fire service in the County (i.e. breathing apparatus).

C. Equitable Assignment of Costs

1. Fees Equity – There is in excess of \$18 billion of property in Pinellas County that is tax-exempt. Although these properties impose proportionate service demands on fire service, they do not contribute any funding to support fire services.

2. Tax Equity – Property owners in the unincorporated, dependent Fire Districts are assessed at varying millage rates for the same level of services.

3. Specialty Team Support

Specialty teams are necessary for unique countywide hazardous materials and rescue incidents. Specialty teams are comprised from several, but not all, of the fire agencies. All communities benefit from the readiness of these resources to respond, but all do not contribute to funding each service.

Hazardous Materials Team (St. Pete, Largo, Seminole, Palm Harbor, Pinellas Park)

The County contributes \$117,650 annually towards funding training programs, physical exams, operating supplies, maintenance and capital equipment for the Hazardous Materials Team. In addition, four (4) of the five (5) vehicles assigned to the Hazardous Materials Team were purchased by the County and are included in the County's Vehicle Replacement Program at an annual cost of \$65,000.

Technical Rescue Team (St. Pete, Clearwater, Seminole, Pinellas Park, Largo)

The Technical Rescue Team receives approximately \$24,000 annually from the County for operating supplies and training programs. The County also purchased the four (4) vehicles assigned to its team.

Water/Marine Rescue (10 agencies with boats)

Pinellas County is surrounded on 3 sides with water and is dotted by numerous ponds, lakes and thousands of public and backyard swimming pools. Each of these bodies of water represents the potential for injury and death. Public safety agencies have a responsibility to respond to any type of emergency whether it is on land or the water and each uses various resources to serve its community. There is no countywide standard for water rescue response as there is for HAZMAT and Technical Rescue.

Water operations are divided into several categories and each requires a different type of response to mitigate the situation:

- Marine rescue for boaters in distress
- Marine search operations for lost boaters
- Search operations for lost swimmers
- Recovery operations for drowned swimmers
- Recovery operations for lost or stolen items and evidence investigations
- Swimming pool drowning incidents

The county Fire and EMS Authorities do not provide any direct funding for the water rescue programs but do pay firefighter and paramedic salary cost as part of the Fire District and EMS District contracts for services with the cities and independent fire districts.

D. EMS Transport –

The EMS Authority is empowered to assess up to 1.5 mills for Emergency Medical Services through a countywide ad valorem tax. Through strong financial controls, the EMS Authority has been able to keep the EMS tax rate the same or lower level in 8 of the last 10 years. The current millage rate is 0.68 and funds ALS First Responder Services countywide. Collections from ambulance services offset taxes by several million dollars each year and cover the full cost of the ALS ambulance contract and County EMS Administration. The current ambulance contract requires a minimum 10-minute response time to 90% of emergency calls in Pinellas County.

Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Savings

- **Conclusion A. 1. Consolidation and/or Regionalization Consensus Vote**
Agencies should be encouraged to continue cooperative efforts to provide effective and efficient services and, where possible, merge organizations where efficiencies and cost savings benefit the community.
 - **Recommendation A.1.**
The committee strongly supports voluntary regionalization efforts that improve service and cost efficiency. It is recommended that the County Fire Authority review contracts to ensure that each contracting agency has its own resources necessary to fulfill the contract requirements and that the charge for services is appropriate.
- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**
 - Fire Station List
 - Personnel List
 - Apparatus List
 - Current Millage Rates
 - Budget Documents
 - Fire District Maps
- **Implementation:**
 - There is no implementation schedule at this time.
- **Ramifications of No Action:**
 - The Pinellas County Fire Protection and EMS System are considered to be world class. Opportunities for improved efficiency may not be realized.

- **Conclusion B.2 Fire and Life Safety Codes Consensus Vote**
 In 2003, the Florida Legislature enacted Section 617.01041, F. S. that exempted certain high-rise condominium owners from retrofitting their buildings with fire sprinkler systems. The task force objects to legislation that would weaken State Building and Fire / Life Safety Codes as they relate to fire safety.
 - **Recommendation B.2.1**
 It is recommended that the Pinellas County legislative delegation prepare and support legislation which would restore the Fire Sprinkler Systems retrofit provision in the State Building and Fire / Life Safety Codes and require a phased-in full compliance by all high-rise residential occupancies over 75 feet in height.
 - **Recommendation B.2.2**
 It is also recommended that the Pinellas County legislative delegation be requested:
 - (A) to oppose legislation which would amend or change the State of Florida Building and Fire/Life Safety Codes, and
 - (B) to support sending notification of any future requested legislative changes to the appropriate Florida state code enforcement and/or oversight agency for review and consideration.
- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**
 - Section 617.01401, F.S. and SB-592.
- **Implementation:**
 - The local legislative delegation should be advised prior to the beginning of the 2004 legislative Session that there is a process in existence to address code changes. As an example, legislation was passed under Section 617.01401, F.S. to permit condominium residents to exempt themselves from retrofitting high-rise buildings with built-in fire protection systems.
 - The County Legislative liaison should be made aware of the pending legislation and oppose the item.
- **Ramifications of No Action:**
 - If no action takes place it is possible that all or many of the older high-rise residential property owners will opt to exempt themselves from the retrofit requirements and over time injuries and fatalities to the residents and the firefighters who must respond to the fires will increase. As buildings age they become more susceptible to fire and thus are in need of built-in fire protection systems to assure the life safety of the occupants.
 - The failure to retrofit jeopardizes life safety and adversely affects ISO ratings and insurance costs and increases the cost of fire protection.
 - It is possible more legislation will be filed which may have the potential to continue to weaken the Building and Fire / Life Safety Codes. For example, it appears legislation will be filed again this coming year (2004), which will affect another portion of the retrofit requirements relating to balcony and hand railings.

- **Conclusion B.3 Fire Hydrants and Water System Standard Consensus Vote**
There are numerous fire hydrant and water system standards throughout Pinellas County. Most cities have their own standards and the county has an internal hydrant policy. These standards and policies vary in many technical aspects.
 - **Recommendation B.3**
It is recommended that a standard be developed and implemented countywide for the installation of fire hydrants and which establish the minimum water flow requirements necessary for firefighting operations.
- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**
 - Proposed amendment to the Pinellas County Code, Chapter 62, which establishes a minimum standard for installation of fire hydrants and available fire flow.
- **Implementation:**
 - Draft document was sent for the county's contract review on 11/24/03
 - Propose a public hearing to be scheduled prior to 3/1/04
- **Ramifications of No Action:**
 - If no action is taken there will be no consistent standard for spacing and installing fire hydrants and ensuring adequate fire flow.
 - Residents and property owners will be jeopardized by the lack of access to adequate water supply during fire events.

- **Conclusion B.4 Equipment Compatibility Consensus Vote**
All firefighting equipment should be compatible.
 - **Recommendation B.4**
It is recommended that all jurisdictions and fire officials work toward total compatibility of equipment countywide.
- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**
 - There are no attachments.
- **Implementation**
 - Make recommendation to jurisdictions and Fire Officials.
- **Ramifications of No Action:**
 - Some limited incompatibility of equipment will continue to exist.

C. Equitable Assignment of Costs

- **Conclusion C.1** **Fees** **Consensus Vote**
There is in excess of \$18 Billion of property in Pinellas County that is tax-exempt. Although these properties impose proportionate service demands on fire service, they do not contribute any funding to support fire services.
 - **Recommendation C.1**
It is recommended that a countywide non-ad valorem assessment or fee, exempting only government and public educational facilities, be adopted as a funding alternative for fire services. Each jurisdiction should adopt the new funding method.
- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**
 - Sarasota County, City of Tallahassee and Pinellas Suncoast Fire Rescue District Fire Fee Schedules
- **Implementation:**
 - Hire a consultant to review potential for non-ad valorem assessment fee
 - Develop a countywide plan for review during FY 04/05
 - Determine which departments and municipalities will participate
 - Amend County Code 62 to reflect new funding mechanism
 - Implement assessment fee with FY 05/06
- **Ramifications of No Action:**
 - Current users and property owners that are exempt from existing property taxes will continue to use the service and place additional loads on the fire system without paying any of the cost.

- **Conclusion C.2 Tax Equity**

The current millage rates in the unincorporated dependent fire districts range from 1.299 to 3.608. Because of the countywide Automatic Aid Agreement and closest unit response system, all residents in the unincorporated area receive the same level of fire service.

- **Recommendation C.2**

If the recommendation for a countywide non-ad valorem assessment or fee is not implemented as outlined in C.1., the committee recommends that a uniform millage rate or fee be adopted for the unincorporated dependent fire districts.

- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**

- Current Millage Rates
 - Budget Documents

- **Implementation:**

- Develop a plan for implementation of uniform millage or fee in the unincorporated area
 - Determine new millage rate
 - Amend County Code 62 to reflect new funding mechanism
 - Implement during FY 05/06 budget

- **Ramifications of No Action:**

- Property owners in the unincorporated dependent districts will continue to be assessed unequal millage rates for the same level of fire service.

- **Conclusion C.3 Specialty Team Support Consensus Vote**
A funding mechanism should be implemented that provides funding to the departments that provide specialty team services to offset the cost of extraordinary overtime for training, equipment and other associated expenses. Marine and Water Rescue teams should be evaluated and coordinated on a countywide basis.
 - **Recommendation C.3.1**
It is recommended a plan be developed which utilizes the personnel, equipment and expertise of the public safety agencies within the county and establishes the minimum standards for participation and coordination of the marine and water rescue operations.
 - **Recommendation C.3.2**
It is recommended that the county establish a cost center within the General Fund Budget to provide Specialty Team training and equipment for members of the Hazmat, Technical Rescue, and Water Rescue teams.
 - **Recommendation C.3.3**
It is recommended that alternative funding sources and mechanisms be researched and considered for supporting the cost of Specialty Teams. For example, surcharges, fees, fines or assessments could be charged to chemical producers, commercial entities, and other beneficiaries of the specific rescue service.
- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**
 - There are no attachments
- **Implementation:**
 - Prepare a budget in spring of 2004
 - Create a cost center in the County General Fund in spring of 2004
 - Implement new funding system in the FY 05/06 Budget
- **Ramifications of No Action:**
 - Emergency Management and Fire District funds would continue to underwrite portions of the cost of the Hazardous Materials Team and the Technical Rescue Team.
 - The lack of funding and uniform standards for a countywide Water Rescue program will continue to exist.

D. EMS Transport

- **Conclusion D. EMS Transport** **Consensus Vote**
The EMS Authority should continue to strive for the highest quality Advanced Life Support (ALS) Ambulance Services at the most reasonable cost.

- **Recommendation D.1**
The task force recommends that representatives of stakeholders (Fire Chiefs' Association, AMR, EMS Authority Staff, Office of the Medical Director) discuss the EMS Transport system concerning possible improvements of service.
 - A. All interested parties shall be afforded an opportunity to present their views to this review committee.

 - B. The review committee shall conduct their discussions within calendar year 2004.

- **Indicate if there are attachments of background data.**
 - There are no attachments

- **Implementation:**
 - Any change in the EMS System should be carefully evaluated and methodically implemented by the EMS Authority. Representatives of stakeholders (Fire Chiefs' Association, AMR, EMS Authority Staff, Office of the Medical Director) shall meet in 2004 to discuss possible improvements of service in the EMS Transport system.

- **Ramifications of No Action:**
 - An opportunity for improvement to our existing high quality EMS System may be missed.



Pinellas Assembly

health care services TASK force

MEMBERS:

Ronnie Duncan – Chair
Larry Archbell
Alan Bomstein
Dr. William Hale
Nancy Hamilton
Elizabeth Mayhangian
Dr. Carrie Nero
Jonathan Wade

Staff support:

Evelyn R. Bethell, Director
Pinellas County Human Services Dept.

Virginia Rowell
Intergovernmental Relations
City of St. Petersburg

Pinellas Assembly Health Care Services Task Force Report Executive Summary

Name of task force

Health Care Services

Issue statement

The health care needs of indigent residents are a countywide issue requiring greater collaborative efforts.

Task Force Objectives

Develop methods for increased collaboration and planning to address the health care needs of indigent residents countywide.

Task Force Members

*Ronnie Duncan, Duncan Companies, Chair
Alan Bomstein, Creative Contractors
Jonathan Wade, Director, Worknet One Stop*

*Dr. William Hale
Nancy Hamilton, CEO, Operation PAR
Dr. Carrie Nero, Director Minority Health, Pinellas
County Health Department
Larry Archbell, CEO, Suncoast Hospital*

Elizabeth Mayhangian, Citizen, Pinellas Park

Staff:

*Evelyn R. Bethell, Director, Pinellas County Human Services Department
Virginia Rowell, Intergovernmental Relations, City of St. Petersburg*

Findings and Facts

Health care issues and access to care in Pinellas County is not limited to or focused only on the indigent. Although this is a major component, the health of the entire community is critical to the current and future quality of life and to the continued economic engine on which the County's vitality is based.

Traditional health care for the community cannot continue to be provided primarily by the not-for-profit and profitable health care providers in the private sector. An equitable partnership must be created involving both public and private stakeholders.

Although there are numerous public sector programs and providers, there appears to be little coordination and limited awareness throughout the larger public and private network. There is no one "clearing house" for public and private sector programs in the County. As a result, there is a disjoint within the larger system leading to duplication, overlap or lack of certain services and creating consternation among the public and users of health care services. No continuity exists in communication/education and service and delivery.

Three primary issues exist: (1) Access to health care coverage/services, (2) the efficient delivery of services and, (3) the funding of service providers both public and private. The County currently pays some proportionate share (funding) into a state health care "pool" (as do other counties and hospitals) based upon the percentage of indigent and yet receives a small, disproportionate share of that money in return from the state. State funding is difficult to estimate in that statute provides for funding but that funding must be appropriated each year. The Legislature has not maintained the appropriation of some funding (in particular since 1991).

Funding also is available through EMS. However, this funding source is problematic and the appropriation process should be reviewed/revised. State and/or federal funding is available for public sector programs but local service providers are unable to take advantage of certain funding due to human resource constraints – no other "party"

exists to develop grants or request funding on behalf of some programs. The result is that money is often left on the table and opportunities to pursue or leverage funding are missed.

The Partnership for a Healthier Pinellas initiative incorporates many of the same principles as the Health Care Services Task Force and because the Partnership is currently working to address similar issues, we would like to recognize those efforts and offer support for its work.

Conclusions and Recommendations – (Note: Individual consensus votes are not noted as the Task Force was in full agreement on each issue.)

- **Conclusion A**

There appears to be a disconnect among service providers resulting in duplication, inefficiencies, and lack of collaboration. The general public and business community are often unaware of availability of programs/services.

- **Recommendation 1 Statement**

Create better-defined coalitions and new partnerships through education. Identify stakeholders and create educational opportunities for collaborative growth, learning and education.

- **Recommendation 2 Statement**

Develop incentives to reward innovative coalition/partnerships.

- **Conclusion B**

There is a lack of communication and outreach to the people, businesses and other governmental agencies regarding the multitude of services available to assist with improving the health and well being of the Pinellas County public. The lack of communication and outreach negatively impacts the cost and quality of service provided within our regional community.

- **Recommendation 1 Statement**

Utilize the *Partnership for a Healthier Pinellas* to develop communication opportunities to educate other partners in the collaborative as well as the public, local government agencies, health care providers and other populations affected by service availability.

- **Recommendation 2 Statement**

Develop marketing strategies to promote health related programs and projects taking place in the Pinellas County community.

- **Recommendation 3 Statement**

Create a public information outreach program that would participate in studying trends, measures and other quantitative and qualitative data to monitor the status of health care and well being in Pinellas County.

- **Conclusion C**

In order to pursue improved health care and well being for the Pinellas County community, it is necessary to identify viable funding sources. Directly related to funding sources, is the identification of the optimal use of the available financial resources.

- **Recommendation 1 Statement**

Identify and pursue various sources of private and public sector funding for health care and well being initiatives.

- **Recommendation 2 Statement**

Identify various options for using acquired funds for health care and well being initiatives and partnering with other entities where appropriate.

- **Recommendation 3 Statement**

Create a 501(c)3 to assist in funding acquisition.

- **Conclusion D**

There is a critical need to identify and utilize and pursue appropriate legislative options to improve and enhance health care options for the Pinellas County community.

- **Recommendation 1 Statement**

Appropriate funding for a lobbyist dedicated to federal/state/local health care initiatives.

- **Recommendation 2 Statement**

Identify and pursue the change of specific rules/statutes at both national/state levels that benefit health care and well being initiatives by leveraging/generating funding (such as HealthFlex Plan pilot; Medicaid reform; EMS funding redistribution, advocacy to maintain levels of state funding for state administered programs).

- **Conclusion E**

It is essential to implement long-term visioning and planning processes to guide the efforts needed to ensure the most effective and efficient provision of health care services to the community.

- **Recommendation 1 Statement**

Develop a strategic planning process based on five (5) year planning cycles.

- **Recommendation 2 Statement**

Hire and work with a consultant to develop the first (1st) five (5) year strategic plan.

- **Recommendation 3 Statement**

Identify best practices to guide and measure future work.

Summary

There are several strategies and action steps that are recommended in this Report. The Health Care Services Task Force developed these recommendations in concert. Each strategy has an associated cost or capital or resource requirement and the Task Force recognizes this requirement. However, the Task Force believes that it is more important to first develop the concept or strategy and if it receives consensus and adoption, the cost or resource allocation can then be addressed.

Developing an understanding and acknowledgement between the County, public and private providers, the business community, and the community at large as to the depth and impact of the issue in Pinellas County is the key to the success of the Task Force's recommendations. Primary to accomplishing this task is the "need to be on the same page" and the development of a public awareness program incorporating the aforementioned initiatives and strategies in order to better equip the community to address current and emerging needs.

The creation of an overall communications program as an initiative between the County and the many other service providers and programs, both public and private, as well as the business community would allow us to promote a better understanding of funding sources - (i) public legislative/statutory programs (ii) public sector grants (iii) private sector grants (iv) County initiatives and potential changes (v) state (such as Medicaid) funding and potential changes.

It is essential to seek enhanced focused political discussion on the health care issue, as it now has become a "crisis". This requires public communication and education through the media and private sector that should be coordinated with local elected bodies.



Pinellas Assembly

Law enforcement structures & financing TASK force

Members:

Terry England – Chair
Bruce Geer
Jack Latvala
Nancy Loehr
Lisa McIntyre
Charles Rainey
David Welch
John Zurenda

Staff Support:

James Dates, Director
Pinellas County Department
of Justice & Consumer Services

Sidney Klein, Police Chief
City of Clearwater

Pinellas Assembly Report

Task Force:

Law Enforcement Structures and Financing Task Force

Issue Statement:

The task force was established to review areas in which law enforcement processes within Pinellas County could be streamlined to promote cost savings and enhanced public safety for citizens.

Task Force Objectives:

The task force objectives as established included: 1) Identify functional areas where additional efficiencies and/or cost savings could be accomplished, 2) Explore identified areas through research and input from affected agencies, 3) Provide positive recommendations on identified items that would provide benefit to Pinellas County.

Task Force Members:

Committee: Terry England, Chair

Bruce Geer

Jack Latvala

Lisa McIntyre

Charles Rainey

David Welch

Nancy Loehr

John Zurenda

Staff: James Dates

Sid Klein

Findings and Facts:

The task force found a number of examples of agencies working together to enhance public safety within the county. Although there were a number of areas in which agencies work closely together every day, agencies acknowledged, and helped to identify, additional areas in which processes can be improved. A number of functional areas were identified for exploration by the task force. These areas covered issues ranging from improving daily operational processes and services to the status of existing programs and technology.

During the task force process, a retreat was held between all of the law enforcement agencies within Pinellas County to help identify areas for improvement. These items were discussed and positions on each item were presented to the task force. Task force chair Terry England was present at the law enforcement retreat.

Items determined to be infeasible for consideration at this time or unnecessary to law enforcement processes were discarded and not carried forward for recommendation. Some of these items included consolidation of all law enforcement services (removed 5-1 with mention that this is not the appropriate time, but that it may be something to pursue

in the future), participatory management of consolidated services(removed 5-1), expanded air support(removed 6-0), school programs(DARE, etc-removed 6-0), School Resource Officer employment(removed 6-0), etc. The remaining task force recommendations are items that are able to be accomplished and that will have a significant impact on Pinellas County. For these recommendations, funding was not part of the consideration. It is anticipated that the recommendations could be implemented over time. Six(6) members of the task force were present for the final recommendation meeting on October 28, 2003. Attachments to this report include:

- Municipal Report to the Law Enforcement Structures and Financing Task Force
- Pinellas County Sheriff's Office Report to the Law Enforcement Structures and Financing Task Force
- Pinellas Police Standards Council Retreat Report from August 2003
- Pinellas Police Standards Council Post Retreat Results

Conclusions and Recommendations:

- **Conclusion A:**

The Pinellas County Sheriff's Office has significant forensic capabilities that would benefit Pinellas County agencies and would provide standard services countywide.

- **Recommendation 1: Consensus Vote 5-1**

It is recommended that the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office provide forensic services countywide.

- **Recommendation 2: Consensus Vote 5-1**

It is recommended that the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office take over property and evidence storage and disposal services countywide

- **Recommendation 3: Consensus Vote 5-1**

It is recommended that the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office take over fingerprint services countywide.

-

- **Conclusion B: Consensus Vote 6-0**

Agencies should be able to provide traffic enforcement and crash investigations within the jurisdictions of other agencies when appropriate.

- **Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that the task force support the establishment of mutual aid agreements already in process to include traffic enforcement and crash investigations on streets contiguous to the jurisdiction of participating agencies.

- **Conclusion C: Consensus Vote 6-0**

Individual agencies currently receive information and track and disseminate notifications on sexual offenders and predators. This can be a time consuming process which currently requires agencies to frequently update and maintain their own separate processes for notification.

- **Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office take over sex offender and predator management and notification services countywide in order to facilitate a standard, centralized approach.

- **Conclusion D: Consensus Vote 6-0**
All agencies within Pinellas county have to regularly transport prisoners to the county jail. This process can be very time consuming and takes needed resources away from regular patrol.
 - **Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office establish a prisoner transport service to move prisoners from agency locations to the county jail.

- **Conclusion E: Consensus Vote 5-1**
Agencies participating in the consolidation of services need to be involved in the process to understand how the functions will be carried out and act in an advisory role on the establishment of the consolidated services for their jurisdiction.
 - **Recommendation 1:** It is recommended that the Pinellas Police Standards Council members act in an advisory role in the establishment of consolidated countywide services.

- **Conclusion F:**
Coordinated Information Technology efforts are vital to enhancing public safety and saving money. Often, agencies pursue technology needs specific to their own department with little or no coordination between surrounding jurisdictions.
 - **Recommendation 1: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support a coordinated countywide law enforcement records depository
 - **Recommendation 2: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support coordinated mobile data efforts
 - **Recommendation 3: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support the coordination of consolidated electronic traffic tickets.
 - **Recommendation 4: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support the creation of a centralized record management system for law enforcement.
 - **Recommendation 5: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support the upgrade of countywide radio system emergency capabilities.
 - **Recommendation 6: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support the creation of a countywide pawn records database that is in progress.
 - **Recommendation 7: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support the establishment of a countywide emergency radio channel that can be monitored by all agencies so officers can call for assistance without waiting for relays through dispatch.

- **Recommendation 8: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support the development of a streamlined approach to traffic records that would reduce the data entry load and make records easily available within the criminal justice system.
- **Recommendation 9: Consensus Vote 6-0**
It is recommended that the task force support the development of a countywide autodialer approach to provide access to autodialer capabilities to all law enforcement agencies with Pinellas County.



Pinellas Assembly

recreation structures & financing TASK force

Members:

Jerry Provenzano – Chairman
Carlen Peterson – Vice Chairman
Jim Appelt
Chris Eaton
Elizabeth Darnell
John Day
Steve Heller
Ralph Marlow

Staff Support:

Elizabeth Warren, Director
Pinellas County Parks Department

Lynn Rives, Parks & Recreation Director
City of Oldsmar

**PINELLAS ASSEMBLY
RECREATION, STRUCTURES AND FINANCING TASK FORCE REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
December 19, 2003**

Name of Task Force

Recreation, Structures and Financing Task Force

Issue statement

It is our overall recommendation that the County, Cities and not for profit organizations continue to search for and participate in mutually beneficial programs to provide recreational opportunities for all citizens. The spirit of mutual trust, respect and cooperation that is so prevalent in sports must also take hold in this endeavor of intergovernmental relationships.

Task Force Objectives

1. ToyTown Property
2. Pinellas County School Board
3. Therapeutic Recreation
4. MSTU
5. Municipal Recreation Card Fee Reimbursement
6. Grants
7. Sponsorships
8. Redevelopment

Task Force Members

Jerry Provenzano – Chairman
Carlen Peterson – Vice Chairman
Elizabeth Warren – County Staff Support
Lynn Rives – City Staff Support
Jim Appelt
Chris Eaton
Elizabeth Darnell
John Day
Steve Heller
Ralph Marlow

Findings and Facts

The Recreation Task Force has met since the summer and heard numerous presentations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of recreational opportunities available to the residents of Pinellas County. We also heard from several special interest groups as to their wants and needs.

One of the obvious conclusions is that virtually all public athletic/recreation complexes in Pinellas County are actually in and have been developed by the individual municipalities. Citizens in the unincorporated areas of Pinellas County are usually required to pay an additional fee to the individual City in order to participate in activities on City facilities. This seems fair since City taxpayers have invested some significant funds to acquire and develop those complexes.

In the very recent past, Pinellas County has seen the wisdom in the establishment of working relationships with selected Cities and the School Board, as the opportunities have arisen. One stellar example of such cooperation is the arrangement between the County and Dunedin centering on the use of St. Andrew's Golf Course. Such cooperative effort is long overdue. Only through an atmosphere of **mutual trust, respect and cooperation** will all Pinellas County residents be able to reap the benefits from available recreational opportunities.

This effort, under the banner of the Pinellas Assembly has brought together 69 of Pinellas County's top business and professional leaders to serve on 7 different Task Forces. Over the past few months, there have been countless meetings and thousands of volunteer hours logged with the common goal of exploring ways that Pinellas County and the 24 municipalities within the County can work together toward common goals.

The committee held 14 meetings, reviewed data, heard from 14 different speakers, and assessed both the short term and long term needs of the county (municipalities and unincorporated areas) and makes the following observations:

1. ToyTown Property

- Municipalities are not able to accommodate all of the need of unincorporated population in their recreation programs. Many of their programs are at capacity with their own population served.
- Recreation needs are shifting as the demographics of the county change. Additionally recreation needs and interests are changing and expanding due to the interest in new types of activities such as extreme sports, innovative team events, and sports brought by foreign visitors and residents.
- Recreational needs will increase in the county due to the increasing interest in exercise in the U.S.
- Rounds of golf have been steadily declining in most regions of the U.S. including Florida. Many of the areas golf courses are struggling and the addition of a new one would negatively impact these courses. Based on the trends, golf does not appear to be a sport on the rise in this County.
- By providing additional recreational facilities the County could reduce the demand in some of the municipalities programs thus allowing them to have space for the unincorporated population. If the County has new fields for certain uses, then the municipalities could shift some activities to those County fields thereby increasing capacity for other activities.
- As a former land fill the ToyTown facility has limited future uses.

2. Pinellas County School Board - An obvious problem facing growth and development of recreational facilities in Pinellas County is the shortage of available land for such use in the county. A viable solution to the problem is to open school board property and athletic facilities, when not in use, to the public. It can be argued that tax payers' money is used to purchase and maintain said property and, therefore, the public should have access to the property when not in use by the school. With the exception of a few joint use agreements, this does not occur and, in fact, most schools are fenced and locked after school hours, precluding the public from using the property.

As mentioned, the school board currently has several joint use agreements with various municipalities and is not opposed to entering into more of such agreements. The principle concern of the school board is the possible liability associated with opening school board

property during non-school hours. Accordingly, the current after school hour users of school board property are those organizations with insurance that relieves the school board of potential liability. Thus, the school board is amenable to joint use of its property, if the school board is relieved of liability for such use. Another factor to be considered is the operating and maintenance costs of using school property during non-school hours.

In addition to existing school board facilities in Pinellas County, there are thirteen undeveloped sites, totaling three hundred and thirty five (335) acres held in a school board land bank for future use. (Information given by Jim Miller at the June 26 meeting - see minutes) These acres, conceivably, could be used as field space until needed for school board use. It should also be noted that there are twelve municipalities without schools within their boundaries.

3. **Therapeutic Recreation** – Recreation is a service that should be available to all of Pinellas County citizens, including the special needs population. Our review of recreation programs in Pinellas County shows a lack of available inclusionary programs and facilities. St. Petersburg is the only city in Pinellas County that has a thriving therapeutic recreation program. Capacity issues need to be addressed. Clearwater, Largo and Dunedin are making tentative steps into therapeutic recreation but are a long way away from a thriving program. Transportation to and from centers seems to be a much needed service.
4. **MSTU** – Pinellas County seeks to promote access for unincorporated residents into City run facilities. It is our considered opinion that the County should increase the portion of MSTU dollars that are currently directed toward recreation. Conservative estimates are that well over \$100 million have been invested by the Cities into recreational facilities around the County. Offering funding of \$1.8 million per year is inadequate for full participation in municipal facilities.
5. **Municipal Recreation Card Fee Reimbursement** - Currently unincorporated residents who must pay the non-resident fees are eligible to apply to Pinellas County for a reimbursement of those fees.
6. **Grants** - One of the stated desires of County staff is the attempt to “level the playing field” with respect to the additional fees currently paid by unincorporated residents when participating in Municipality hosted activities.

The Cities are autonomous with respect to creation of their own taxes and fees. The County can only offer incentives to the Cities in order to have some of those fees reduced.

7. **Sponsorships** - Encourage the County and Municipalities to provide opportunities for appropriate commercial messages and recognition of financial support. Sponsorship advertising and signage can provide significant dollars to augment municipal and County budgets.
8. **Redevelopment** - There is very little open land available within Pinellas County for recreational or any other use. We are facing a wave of re-development throughout the County. Most Cities and the County have open space/recreational components in their current codes. Since many of the parcels for re-development were developed prior to the adoption of these codes and since most land use agreements run with the land, consideration of this topic may be appropriate.

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. ToyTown Property

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

Based on those observations the committee makes the following recommendations regarding the 270 acres at ToyTown:

- a. The ToyTown acreage should be used for the development of recreational multi-use fields, not a golf course.
- b. The County should appoint a task force to address the development of this sports/recreational multi-use field complex at ToyTown. This task force would review the needs, costs and options for construction and management. These multi-use fields could include sports fields (soft ball, soccer, rugby, Frisbee golf, etc.), bike trails, extreme sports areas (skate boarding, bmx track, etc.), food areas; running and walking trails; areas designed for team competitions; etc. for the needs of county residents.
- c. The county should seek input on the types of sports facilities needed in such a complex from the recreational directors of all municipalities. Each municipality does not have the capacity to build facilities for every emerging sport. For example it is not realistic for each municipality to construct a BMX track. These types of specialized needs should be incorporated into a countywide sports complex or at least be addressed in a countywide recreation plan.
- d. In addition to providing increased recreation space and opportunities for our residents, the proposed complex could provide substantial economic impact by hosting invitational tournaments and events.

2. Pinellas County School Board

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

We recommend encouraging a joint use agreement between the School Board, the County and all municipalities, where appropriate, for use of all recreational facilities. Further, risk management research should be conducted to resolve the issues concerning the potential liability and responsibility associated with the use of said facilities. In addition, research should be conducted to determine how best to apportion operating and maintenance costs incurred when school property is used during non-school hours.

3. Therapeutic Recreation

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

We recommend that City and County staff be directed to survey and inventory therapeutic recreation needs and gaps in Pinellas County. They should explore the possibilities to partner with non-profits and or hospitals. Staff will establish by January 2005, a Directory of Services, programs (fee and free) and determine budget estimates for providing therapeutic recreation in north, mid and south county. Pinellas County should act as a broker and not the sole provider of these services.

4. MSTU

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

We recommend the County should increase the MSTU dollars currently directed toward recreation.

5. Municipal Recreation Card Fee Reimbursement

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

We recommend that only households that qualify for the School Lunch Programs or other such public assistance would be eligible for a “Municipal Recreation Card Reimbursement”. We further recommend that those households that qualify be admitted to their program of choice without the need to pay the up-front fees to the City, and that the City involved request fee reimbursement from Pinellas County. We further recommend that qualifying households be limited to one “Recreation Card Reimbursement” per calendar year, per person. When applicable, a family recreation card should be utilized; otherwise reimbursement would be on a per capita basis.

6. Grants

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

We recommend that through the “Quid Pro Quo” of a grant-funding program, individual Cities could choose to avail themselves of County funding grants for recreational purposes. Depending on the size of the grant requested, the City could be requested to reduce the non-resident fee by a negotiated amount for a negotiated time.

7. Sponsorships

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

We recommend that the study objectives should include the identification of market potential; estimated revenue projections; various levels of sponsorship and naming rights opportunities in comparison to other governmental contracts and offer the ramifications and opportunities of each sponsorship level. This should involve synthesizing successful programs and identifying good “fits” for the community.

8. Redevelopment

All in Agreement – Consensus Vote 8-0

We recommend the County and Cities explore the idea of an open space/recreation component when a parcel of land is up for redevelopment.

**PINELLAS ASSEMBLY
RECREATION, STRUCTURES AND FINANCING TASK FORCE REPORT
SPECIFIC BACKGROUND ON TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS**

Summary of Facts and Conclusions

The Recreation Task Force has met since the summer and heard numerous presentations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of recreational opportunities available to the residents of Pinellas County. We also heard from several special interest groups as to their wants and needs.

One of the obvious conclusions is that virtually all public athletic/recreation complexes in Pinellas County are actually in and have been developed by the individual municipalities. Citizens in the unincorporated areas of Pinellas County are usually required to pay an additional fee to the individual City in order to participate in activities on City facilities. This seems fair since City taxpayers have invested some significant funds to acquire and develop those complexes.

In the very recent past, Pinellas County has seen the wisdom in the establishment of working relationships with selected Cities and the School Board, as the opportunities have arisen. One stellar example of such cooperation is the arrangement between the County and Dunedin centering on the use of St. Andrew's Golf Course. Such cooperative effort is long overdue. Only through an atmosphere of **mutual trust, respect and cooperation** will all Pinellas County residents be able to reap the benefits from available recreational opportunities.

This effort, under the banner of the Pinellas Assembly has brought together 69 of Pinellas County's top business and professional leaders to serve on 7 different Task Forces. Over the past few months, there have been countless meetings and thousands of volunteer hours logged with the common goal of exploring ways that Pinellas County and the 24 municipalities within the County can work together toward common goals.

Implementation:

Since our recommendations involve study and evaluation by municipalities and Board of County Commissioners, we are not recommending any specific implementation path so the issues of legalities, funding and personnel needs are not addressed.

Ramifications of No Action:

If no action were taken, the ramifications would be a continuation of the existing situation.



Pinellas Assembly

transportation integration TASK force

Members:

Frank Murphy – Chairman
Kevin Schuyler – Vice Chairman
Don Crane
Joel Giles
Roy Harrell
Jim Holton
Ed Hawkes
Joe Kubicki
Julio Maggi

Staff Support:

Brian Smith, Director
Pinellas County Planning Department

Pete Pensa
City of Largo

White Paper for the Transportation Integration Task Force of the Pinellas Assembly Transportation Integration Committee

Issue Statement:

Pinellas County is at a watershed moment in time. To sustain economic development, Pinellas County must continue to grow and maintain a transportation infrastructure that supports growth by promoting the efficient movement of people and goods. However, there remains little “Greenfield” land for development, and limited opportunity to build or expand roadways within its geographic boundaries.

During the past half century, our land use policies and transportation strategies have produced sprawl and almost total automobile dependence. The time is now for a “sea change” in land use policy and transportation strategy that will dramatically reduce automobile dependence, increase transportation efficiency and enhance our quality of life.

This task force recommends an aggressive, multi-pronged approach that simultaneously addresses (1) land use policy, (2) transportation funding, and (3) transportation capacity improvements.

Land Use Policy

We must acknowledge that Pinellas is an urbanized county. Our zoning codes and development regulations should be immediately revamped to provide for increased density and mixed use development in focused areas together with appropriate public open space, based on a consensus of a comprehensive vision for the future. These policies should foster mutually beneficial partnerships between the public and private sectors. Public policy should enlist the economic self-interest of the free markets in the service of the community. Infill redevelopment should be particularly encouraged and nurtured in a manner that provides for internal capture of vehicle trips and converts vehicular trips to pedestrian trips, thereby significantly reducing automobile dependence and allowing for more efficient utilization of existing roadways, while strengthening our neighborhoods, communities, institutions and social fabric. New development and redevelopment patterns will emerge as a result of such new policies, dramatically improving the level of service of our transportation infrastructure before spending a single dollar on capacity improvements. These development patterns will create ridership characteristics that will support future mass transit, and attract creative individuals, businesses, industries and capital.

Transportation Funding

There are several improvements that should be made to our existing roadway network. The existing systems for coordination and control of traffic signals should be upgraded and integrated. Planning and right-of-way acquisition for future fixed-guideway mass transit infrastructure should be undertaken. Beautification of existing traffic corridors should be accomplished. Regrettably, current funding levels for transportation are woefully inadequate (more than a half billion dollars short for roadway capacity projects alone). Therefore, Pinellas County should immediately (and simultaneously with an overhaul of its land use policies), enact its maximum local gasoline tax option, and leverage that revenue stream to create as large a pool of funds as possible to construct as many of the necessary roadway capacity improvements set forth in this white paper as possible. This revenue stream could be leveraged to perhaps more than \$400mm. Since this will not be enough to complete all the required capacity improvements, the County should aggressively pursue additional federal and state funds on the strength of its willingness to take full advantage of its local taxation options. In addition, there are various other funding sources that should be carefully explored such as (1) additional sales tax, (2) FIHS dollars, (3) transit surtax, and (4) tolls.

Transportation Capacity Improvements

There are several roadway capacity improvements that must be completed as set forth in this white paper. These improvements are at various stages of planning and funding. They include significant improvements to US 19, Ulmerton Road, Gandy Blvd, Roosevelt Blvd and the 118th Street Connector. In addition, improvements must be made to Gulf Blvd to ensure the continued vitality of the beaches and the tourism industry that is one of the cornerstones of our vibrant economy. At some point, the existing, independently operating traffic signal control systems throughout the County should be upgraded and integrated. The Pinellas trail system must be completed. The new development and redevelopment patterns that will emerge from the revamped land policies will create the ridership characteristics to economically support future mass transit. Provisions should be made now to efficiently implement a fixed-guideway component of comprehensive transportation strategy as the demand arises. Timely implementation of capacity improvements, pursued simultaneously with sweeping land use policy changes and effective funding strategies will foster intelligent growth, nurture economic development and enhance quality of life.

Do we want to be a first tier metropolitan area? Or are we content with second or third tier status? It starts with a vision of what Pinellas County wants to be in 10, 20, 50 years. It will gain momentum on strength of courageous leadership and persuasive articulation of that vision. It will take flight only upon the aggressive and simultaneous implementation of sweeping land use policy changes and effective funding strategies for the transportation infrastructure improvements required to sustain growth and economic development while enhancing quality of life. Success will depend on the willingness of this community to make the tough choices and the necessary sacrifices to achieve greatness. The alternative is mediocrity, stagnation and eventual decline.

Task Force Objective:

The Pinellas community will have completed specific actions to create mobility improvements for the County. These improvements will occur in the next five years and prepare us for the future. The actions taken will reflect the transportation importance of Pinellas County to the entire Tampa Bay community as it relates to the seamless movement of people and goods. These actions, which will flow from a decision-making mechanism and structure, will be planned to enhance the quality of life of our community. Our quality of life enhancements will ensure the safety of our community, the improvement of the environment and the economic strength of Pinellas County

Task Force Members:

Frank Murphy, (Chairman)
Don Crane,
Roy Harrell,
Jim Holton
Joe Kubicki, Non voting
Julio Maggi
Kevin Schuyler, (Vice Chairman)
Ed Hawkes,
Joel Giles
Brian Smith, Staff Support, County
Pete Pensa, Staff Support, City
Eva Andujar, Recording Clerk, St. Petersburg

Finding and Facts

The Committee during the course of several months convened 8 fact-finding sessions concerning the status of transportation in Pinellas County. Through those sessions, the committee gained an understanding of the issues and the various government initiatives that were responding to those issues. The committee evolved

into a good general understanding of the practical concerns with what can really be done concerning transportation in Pinellas County. Several themes begin to evolve that have helped the committee to focus its efforts. One theme is that of quality of life, and that perspective for the citizens of Pinellas County. There appears to be a strong sense of interest in matters that come under this heading of quality of life. In addition, the committee has observed that what were viewed as solutions 30 years ago are no longer viewed in the same light. Therefore, the committee sees the County expanding from a focus on highway improvements, to a focus on other means of travel, such as transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes. It is also observed that whatever direction is taken with respect to transportation initiatives, there is the need to view the governance and the revenue sources in that regard. It was with these considerations in mind that the committee has developed a series of findings and facts which are the subject of this section of the report.

TRAFFIC CONTROLS

The situation of traffic controls within Pinellas County was evaluated in some depth. Traffic Controls encompass signage (both regulatory, and non regulatory), controls during construction, railroad crossings, school crossings, traffic signals, pavement markings, roadway median openings, traffic calming, to name several of a multiplicity of functions. The State Department of Transportation controls these functions on the State highway System. However, on the County roadway system, these traffic controls are governed by the County in the unincorporated area, and governed by the the various municipalities in their jurisdictions. It should be noted that there is another level of roadways referred to as collectors and local roads. These are controlled by whichever jurisdiction they fall within. This is the system within which the 790 traffic signals within Pinellas County are operated. It was concluded that most of the items under the subject of traffic control would be appropriately handled at the local jurisdictional level (City or County) because of the community level of sensitivity. However the committee identified the functions of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) portion of the traffic signal system which includes approximately 400 signals, which should be separated out for countywide management, since the management of traffic on the major arteries should be a priority that should not vary from one jurisdiction to the next. There is discussion of an interlocal agreement between the County and cities to accomplish this. It was concluded as a minimum there should be a central agency or committee that would manage the equipment and software that is used for the ITS throughout Pinellas County. This agency should be the County. In addition, the County should administer protocols that place a priority on the efficient movement of traffic, both under normal conditions, and under conditions where traffic needs to be adjusted due to incidents or special situations. It was further concluded that the financial responsibility for this part of the signal system should be placed at the county level. However it must be emphasized that there are many functions such as the priority for pedestrian movement or special events that have a community interest. These system decisions that affect such concerns should be approached in a way that takes into account those community concerns. Therefore, whatever decision making procedure is used for the countywide signal system, there needs to be a provision for input or involvement from local agencies.

ROADWAY CAPACITY

The committed plans for roadway improvement as identified in the MPO plan were assessed. There is already a regional roadway network which would provide considerable capacity for the movement of traffic, not only in the County, but also to locations outside the County. While it is recognized that Pinellas County is built to a point where there are limited opportunities for new roadway corridors, there are several existing corridors that are identified for capacity expansion. This would include such corridors as US 19, Ulmerton Road, the Roosevelt/118th Ave. connectors and Gandy Blvd.

Specifically US 19 is to be a controlled access roadway, with service roads, from SR 580 to 49th Street. US 19 is the subject of a channelized median program in conjunction with an added lane project. The combination of these initiatives will make US 19 an excellent north/south artery through Pinellas County. Since this is a State corridor, the funding for this program has been derived through the efforts of the MPO and FDOT. Most of the improvements for US 19 are either in place or programmed for the next 5 years. The

exception is the section of US 19 between SR 60 and Whitney Road. At this time there is not adequate funding committed for the construction work in that area.

Ulmerton Road is the major east/west artery of the County and it is programmed to be a 6 lane arterial. It should be noted that there is considerably less right of way in this corridor than US 19, and considerable less opportunity for improvement. Funding is also needed for construction of key sections of this roadway. These sections are from west of 38th Street to I275, and from west of Belcher Road to west of Keene Road.

The third regional capacity initiative is in the Roosevelt Blvd. Area. The MPO plan defines an expressway that would connect the south end of the Bayside Bridge to I-275. This is referred to as the new Roosevelt Connector. To provide system continuity, the 118th Ave. connector is a proposed expressway that would connect US 19 to the new Roosevelt Connector. With this initiative, a traveler can proceed north on the interstate from St. Petersburg, then proceed west on the Roosevelt/118th Connector System to US 19 and proceed north. This will all be done without the driver encountering a traffic light. It should be noted there is very little construction money that is assigned or available to this connector system.

The fourth capacity corridor is the conversion of Gandy Blvd. to a controlled accesses facility. This corridor would start at US 19 and proceed east to the causeway. Included within this corridor would be a major interchange at the crossing of 4th and 9th Streets, which would be the priority improvement in this corridor. The preliminary corridor evaluations have been completed, but there are no funds committed to the design or construction of this improvement.

In summary, the priorities for capacity improvements are: US Hwy 19, Ulmerton Road, Roosevelt/118th Ave Connectors, and Gandy Blvd. It must be emphasized these corridors are all identified in the MPO plan and the FDOT program. The strategic issue for these projects is the funding requirements. It should be noted from the background materials in the appendix of this report that these projects would total \$1.1 billion. The committee would note that while other road improvements have been identified, these road improvements which are located on the State system, would provide considerable Countywide benefit to the County, and should be the subject of not only local the gas tax commitment, but also federal and State revenue initiatives, and possibly in some form, a toll initiative. A suggested approach would be as follows: U.S. 19 would continue to be funded by special allocation efforts from federal and State Sources. The same approach could apply to the completion of the Ulmerton Road corridor. However, the Roosevelt/118th connector system improvements should be evaluated with respect to the feasibility of whether the system can be implemented using revenues that are generated from some form of toll and bonding system. The committee would question the feasibility of this full connector system without some form of toll revenues.

TRANSIT

The history of mass transit in Pinellas County, and the current operations of not just the PSTA bus system, but also several specialized trolley systems has been carefully evaluated. It was noted that there was considerable interest in the County in using alternative means of transportation, other than car travel. However, the committee also notes that the current bus system is not viewed as an attractive option or an adequate response to that interest. Traditional bus service does not appear to be what the general public is interested in. If the County is to proceed forward, making mass transit a viable alternative, it has to be provided in a way that people will be attracted to use the system, as opposed to using it because there is no other alternative. This would mean that service must be focused and designed in response to what peoples needs are, and that that service be attractive and enjoyable to use. The success of the Gulf Beach trolley is noted as an example of this. Since this trolley service was installed, its ridership has steadily climbed and it is an example of the type of service that people would prefer.

Another aspect of the transit situation is the fact that PSTA does not include all of the communities in Pinellas County. The cities of Treasure Island, St. Pete Beach, Belleair Beach, Belleair Shores and Kenneth City and the unincorporated areas of Tierra Verde and South Pasadena Fire Department are not included in

the authority service area. For transit to be truly effective as a mode, there should be an agency that can function countywide with a revenue source that is countywide.

The Pinellas Mobility Initiative is a program bought forward under the sponsorship of the MPO. This program will provide a significant transportation alternative with the use of a guideway technology connecting key points throughout the County. This system has been approved by the MPO to proceed into the preliminary engineering phase. As Pinellas County looks toward its future, this is the type of transportation that must be provided. In addition to this guideway system, there is the need to emphasize other forms of transit service. There needs to be not only the expansion of such service as the Gulf Beaches Trolley to provide such services as the connectivity from the Gulf Beaches to Downtown St. Petersburg, but also there is the need to provide premium express service to move the commuters and other non-leisure travelers to and from their destination that is competitive with the automobile. Such services would set up a transition of use leading to that of the Guideway System.

The appropriate steps should be taken to ensure not only that the funding is provided for the next phase of this guideway system, but that activities be initiated to identify the corridors that should be preserved for the system, and with development plans then focused along those corridors, thereby increasing the feasibility of that transit program. In that regard, the first phase of that system should include the corridor beginning in the Clearwater Beach/Downtown Clearwater area traveling east to the St. Petersburg/Clearwater Airport, and then south to the downtown St. Petersburg area. This would be followed by a second phase that would run from downtown St. Petersburg west to the Tyrone area and then north to downtown Clearwater, which will form a complete loop.

There is the priority need to focus on Governance and the revenue source for this initiative. It makes sense that one agency should be responsible for mass transit at the trolley level, at the bus level, and the guideway level of service. This makes sense, not only from a governance and coordination of service perspective, but in terms of how the revenue may be applied. There is available to Pinellas County the use of a transit surtax, which is a sales tax of up to 1 percent that maybe applied if consent from a referendum is obtained. It has been concluded that this revenue source could support all that is envisioned with respect to mass transit requirements, and provide the funding needed for the other modes that might be in support of this system. The committee concludes that a new countywide form of transit governance is needed that has the ability to provide these services. The transit governance should take into account a membership that reflects the revenues that would be provided to the system. However the committee also concludes that the governance of that transit agency must be carefully designed so that the decisions are community based. This is extremely important in that this form of transportation has considerable interaction with communities and development that is along the system corridors.

GULF BLVD ENHANCEMENT

Gulf Blvd, which connects the 12 beach communities of the County, is a significant economic development feature. There are 5 million tourists a year that visit Pinellas County, and their primary objective in doing so is the Gulf Beaches. It must also be recognized that this same environmental feature is a significant attraction and amenity to the residents of the County. The third point in that regard is that there are many businesses that either locate to this area, or stay in this area due to the Gulf Beaches. A special Gulf beaches Trolley service has been instituted that has proved to be very successful and furthers the concept of the Gulf beaches as a unified corridor with connecting destinations. It is for these reasons that the committee believes Gulf Blvd. should be prioritized for enhancement as a corridor. This enhancement would include those various initiatives that come under the heading of livable community and quality of life provisions. This corridor should not only be attractive, but it should be functional for people to use. The corridor should not only be the subject of design features including way-finding signs, landscaping, streetscape, and utility under grounding, but also such community features as characteristic trolley service, bicycle friendly provisions, and pedestrian safety provisions are critical. These initiatives should all be followed with a common theme

of design, function and communication. Gulf Blvd. must then be approached as not just a transportation corridor, but as an experiential corridor that is treated as a significant quality of life component of the County. Funding for this corridor should be viewed as a countywide responsibility but should be approached as a financial partnership with the 12 beach communities, where those communities provide a share of the funding.

CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION AND STREETScape

A significant aspect to transportation is that of quality of life. Transportation improvements are made and provided for so that people can travel through the County pursuing their various destinations during the course of the day. This transportation purpose should be approached on a comprehensive basis. Attention should be given to how people make their trip, or their experience of the trip, rather than just getting people from one point to another. The corridors that people use should be landscaped, and include other streetscape provisions that make the people's experience in the corridor not only pleasing, but also non-aggravating. It is recognized that that people spend a considerable amount of their time traveling by car, transit, walking or by bike, that this time should be viewed as more than just functional. It is felt that if landscaping and streetscaping are incorporated into all of the transportation work, there will be two benefits. The first benefit is that it will be easier to implement the concept if it is approached on an across the board basis. The second point is there will be considerable savings if certain basic ingredients are incorporated in all projects. It is the conclusion that all the major corridors in the County should be subject to landscaping and streetscaping provisions, and that provisions with a revenue set-aside, should be made for the installation, maintenance, and ongoing upkeep of such a program.

LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The approach to transportation must be broad based and comprehensive. Transportation can no longer be viewed as a subject that is of a single mode and which does not take into account interaction with development and the community. It is for this reason that the committee believes that as part of the transportation program the concept of a livable community should be embraced. There is now the public awareness and expectation of the fact that transportation should now include as a priority not just transit service, but also bicycle provisions, pedestrian provisions, and any other means whereby people can travel. This means that provisions need to be made for following the transit initiatives, the trailways plans, and the sidewalk and pedestrian initiatives that have been identified by the MPO, and local governments in their adopted plans. An example of this type of facility is the Pinellas Trail, which is a 15 foot wide paved non-vehicular corridor running through the entire urban area of the County. 100,000 people a month use this Trail with two thirds of those trips being for a work, school, shopping or social purpose. Another example of the growing awareness of the priority for these alternative modes is the 15 million dollar program underway to construct sidewalks and pedestrian crossings along the entire length of US 19, from Tarpon Springs to St. Petersburg. A third initiative highlighting this interest in the County is the MPO's Pedestrian Committee proposal to establish pedestrian safety zones where pedestrian movement would be prioritized over expedited vehicle movement in areas that justify such treatment. These programs show the growing focus that is being placed by the communities in the county on livable community provisions. Funding is needed to assist the communities and the county in responding to their need. In conjunction with this, the approach to development needs to be adjusted to be focused on a broader concept, rather than approaching each development in isolation. It has come to be recognized that a sense of place is important in that regard. A sense of place is really the responsibility of the community through its government or governments. How the public places including structures and open space, and connecting ways are defined, sets the basis for what the private sector does, not only in response to regulations, but also in response to this public interest or demand. As Pinellas County becomes more urbanized, this aspect of the development of a community becomes more of a priority. It is therefore the conclusion of the committee that in conjunction with the broad initiatives to provide transportation facilities, there must also be an initiative by the MPO, the County and local agencies that is supported by policy and funding that focuses on a sense of place and provides a way for

people to move in a non-vehicular way within and through the communities of the County with a sense of place.

TRANSPORTATION REVENUES

It is recognized that additional revenues are needed to fulfill the public's expectation for a transportation system that maintains and expands on the quality of life of the residents and visitors. There are several options as to how these revenues can be pursued. Each of these revenue sources have different purpose expectations, different procedures, different effects upon individuals, and generate different amounts of money. Currently there is in State law the unused authority to levy an additional 6 cents on the sale of gasoline. Five of those cents falls under a procedure requiring an agreement among the County and the cities as to how the funds are allocated. The County Commission has the authority to establish up to 5 cents per gallon, but the distribution of these funds would then be governed by this interlocal agreement. The other part of that gas tax concerns one penny, which is called the 9th cent, and is subject to a different procedure. This other 1-cent must be approved by the BCC, but does not require an agreement between the cities and the County. The total annual revenue that can be derived from these sources is \$21 million.

In reviewing the law and its purpose it was concluded that this gas tax initiative should be project driven. That is, State law makes it clear that this option was created to respond to needs that were developed from a comprehensive plan. This should be the primary factor behind discussions on this tax. There has been discussion as to a percentage split between the cities and the County, but there has been no resolution on this question. It is the conclusion that the first determination should be what the gas tax is for in terms of projects, or programs, and once this is established then any split or division of funds should be based upon the furtherance of those projects or plans.

Related to this gas tax option is the need to extend the current local 6 cents gas tax that is due to expire in 2007. Local agencies are reliant on 4 cents of these funds for the operation and maintenance of the local highway systems. This option should be extended and consideration should be given to applying the available 2 cents (currently tied to bonded indebtedness until 2007) to projects that would be proposed as part of the additional gas tax proposal. Consideration could also be given to bonding this revenue source to support roadway capacity or other projects. However, this proposal is qualified by the fact that this gas tax source has to date been used for the maintenance and operation of the County Highway System and is currently subject to an interlocal agreement between the cities and the County. Therefore, before it is assumed 2 cents can be applied to further bonded indebtedness or transportation improvements, consideration must first be given to the system maintenance requirements.

Another revenue source is entitled The Transit Surtax. This is an up to 1 percent sales tax that can be authorized by the BCC through a referendum. This tax is for the purpose of a guideway transit system and related bus improvements and operations. A section of this law does allow for 25 percent of the revenues of this source to be used for non-transit. However, that provision does not apply in Pinellas County. It is concluded that the legislation should be fixed to make this provision available to this county. Since the transit surtax, if approved at its full amount, can generate 116 million dollars a year, this would be a very significant revenue source, and more than adequate to fund a proposed guideway system in the future. The transit surtax is a viable revenue source that should be considered by the County to fund the transit program.

The other potential source for transportation projects is that of tolls. The public has not viewed the use of tolls in Pinellas County positively in the past. However, if an acceptable means of provision were presented, this could significantly help with the construction of highway facilities. But tolls must be carefully structured because if they do not collect revenues as expected, then replacement revenues are taken from the existing gas tax revenues for that area, which could affect the funding of other projects. The committee believes the use of the toll procedure should be explored for the Roosevelt /118th Ave. Connector System, but caution

would be appropriate due to the impact this would have on other revenue sources if it were not successfully carried out. Another option to consider is increasing toll on the Skyway Bridge, where there is considerably more control on trip diversions. The funds from this expanded Skyway Bridge Toll Program could be applied to other facilities designated to receive those funds, such as the Roosevelt/118th Ave. Connector System.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee using as the basis the findings and facts stated in the previous section have drawn the following conclusions and recommendations.

TRAFFIC CONTROLS

- There should be one County-wide entity in charge of the ITS portion traffic signal system , which would encompass approximately 400 traffic signals within Pinellas County. Pinellas County is a logical lead agency for that purpose. The County should be responsible for the provision and operation of that system, and should be funded for that purpose.
- The balance of the local traffic signals and traffic controls should remain under the jurisdiction of the local communities.
- With the County responsible, there should be an advisory procedure established, where local agencies can provide input to signal system operation.

ROADWAY CAPACITY

- A continued priority should be placed on improvements to key roadways in the County that include US Hwy 19, Ulmerton Road, and Roosevelt/118th Ave. Connectors and Gandy Blvd.

TRANSIT

- Transit governance must be modified to function on a countywide basis encompassing all jurisdictions in the County .
- This governance should take into account the significant role Pinellas County will have in the revenue sources.
- The transit surtax should be considered as a viable revenue source for future transit improvements.
- The Pinellas Mobility initiative should be funded for the next phase of development and in addition, measures should be taken to ensure that the identified corridors and related right of way are preserved for this future system.
- Intermediate transit service improvements should be implemented concerning expanded trolley service and premium express bus service where the focus is on providing a service that attracts riders that have an alternative.

GULF BLVD. ENHANCEMENT

- The Gulf Blvd enhancement project should be funded and implemented as a countywide project in partnership with the beach communities.
- Countywide funds should be assigned to this program with the understanding that the beach communities will provide matching funds for the improvements.

CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION

- A program should be established and funded for corridor beautification and streetscape improvements throughout Pinellas County.

LIVABLE COMMUNITY

- The MPO, the municipalities and the County should work together to restructure and emphasize the provision of transportation services that further the livable community initiative in Pinellas County.
- This initiative would include focused transit service, the Trailways projects, bicycle provisions, pedestrian provisions and sense of place provisions for communities.

TRANSPORTATION REVENUES

- It is recognized that the transit surtax should be considered the viable revenue source for the Pinellas Mobility Initiative. With the referendum to be held at a later date, once the program has been defined in enough detail, to be taken to the public for a decision.
- The Local Option Gas Tax of 5 cents and the 9th cent gas tax for a total of 6 cents should be instituted based upon a program of projects
- The priorities for this gas tax funding should be capacity improvements to US 19, the capital portion of the ITS function of traffic controls, and Ulmerton Road.
-
- Consideration should be given to bonding, utilizing the state infrastructure bank loan program and the leveraging of federal and state funds to accomplish these priorities at the earliest time.
- The other priorities documented in this report deserve serious consideration for funding and should be the subject of further evaluations.
- Other revenues should be considered such as toll revenues for capacity projects in this report that are not listed in the gas tax priorities.

LIST OF APPENDIXES

- A. Subjects Considered
- B. Estimate of Program Costs
- C. Pinellas County Corridors Chart provided by FDOT
- D. Suggested Finance plan

APPENDIX A

SUBJECTS CONSIDERED

The Task Force convened and conducted a series of eight fact-finding sessions. That included the following subject areas:

- A. Alternative Transportation Revenues
- B. The MPO and the MPO's Long Range Plan
- C. US 19 Improvements
- D. City and County jurisdictional responsibility for traffic control
- E. Land Use and development pattern documentation.
- F. The Tampa Bay Partnership approach
- G. The State High Speed Rail program
- H. Pinellas Mobility Initiative
- I. The Transit Initiative of St. Petersburg and Clearwater
- J. The current GIS mapping and data system
- K. Liveable Community provisions.
- L. Trail and Bikeway provisions
- M. The PSTA program
- N. The St. Petersburg /Clearwater International Airport Program
- O. Pedestrian provision
- P. The current US Hwy 19 Improvement Program
- Q. Corridor Landscape and Beautification Initiatives
- R. The Gulf Blvd. Beautification/Enhancement program
- S. The CUTR program
- T. The Economic/Redevelopment Initiative
- U. Major unfunded transportation projects in Pinellas County.

For each of these subjects, the Task Force invited guest speakers in to discuss with them in depth the subjects as they relate to Pinellas County. From these discussions, a concept evolved as to how these various subjects would fit together. It was clear that with each of these subjects, there were the questions of integration, or how agencies within Pinellas County work together.

ESTIMATE OF PROGRAM COSTS

ITS SIGNAL SYSTEM

Capital Cost - \$53 million
20 Year O & M - \$48.6 million

CAPACITY PROJECTS

US Hwy 19 – Whitney Rd to SR 60	119, 200, 000
Roosevelt Connector	392, 399, 220
Ulmerton Road Segments	62, 000, 000
118 th Ave. Connector	250, 000, 000
Gandy Blvd.	138, 000, 000
	<u>\$900,300,000</u>

MOBILITY INITIATIVE (Transit)

	<u>Capital</u>	<u>O&M – Year</u>
Guideway System	\$1,430M	\$10-15 M
	PE 12 M	
Trolley System	\$5.5M	\$2.9M
Express Bus System	\$20M	\$4.8M

GULF BLVD.ENHANCEMENT

\$75M – Full Treatment
50M – Limited Treatment

CORRIDOR BEAUTIFICATION

\$30 M*

LIVABLE COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Trails	\$68M Full MPO Plan
Sidewalks	\$25M*
Bike Lanes	\$25M*

* These numbers may be low and need further refinement and will need to be community based

Dissenting Opinions
of the
Pinellas Assembly Final Report

Dissenting Opinion
Lealman Boundary Line
Movement Recommendation

Ray Neri
Annexation Task Force Committee Member

December 8, 2003

To: Council of Mayors and the Board of County Commissioners
From: Ray Neri, Annexation Task Force Committee Member
Subject: Dissenting Opinion

The Annexation Task Force has completed its work and is forwarding its recommendations for consideration. My fellow committee members did an admiral job of weighing the many difficult issues of contention that annexation has wrought. As you are all well aware, annexation has been an extremely complex issue because of its profound impact on city and county tax bases and a host of other issues to numerous to list. I would like to commend our chairman, Mr. Ed Armstrong, for his leadership and the thoughtfulness and wisdom demonstrated by my fellow committee members. I feel fortunate to have been given the privilege of serving as a member on this panel of such remarkable people.

The recommendations you will be receiving from the Annexation Task Force Committee has the unanimous approval of the entire committee with the exception of one recommendation. The exception is to the recommendation that the Lealman annexation lines be moved back to their original positions. It is this recommendation with which I strongly disagree and take issue with and is the reason for my dissenting opinion.

During our task force sessions, representatives from several cities attended and provided our committee with invaluable input and insight on their positions on the subject of annexation. Mr. Stanton from Largo, Mr. Ely from Seminole and Mr. Healy from the PPC, attended most of the Annexation Task Force meetings and were strong advocates for their position on the annexation issue. After much discussion it was brought to our attention by city representatives that the main underlying issue with the Lealman line movement was one of a violation of trust by the county. It is precisely this declaration and the recommendation that the Lealman lines be restored to their original position with which I take issue. I believe that 0063 was not an ordinance carved in stone but rather a framework by which voluntary annexation disputes could be resolved and with which the CPA retained authority to make adjustments for inequities not foreseen by the placement of the voluntary annexation lines.

Lealman's request for relief was brought before the BCC, the PPC and finally the CPA, who decided by a 5 to 1 vote that the oversight of the line placement in Lealman needed to be corrected. I felt then, as I feel today, the CPA made the correct and courageous decision and motivated solely to do the right thing. They acted to correct an oversight which created an unforeseen burden on the residents of Lealman. How this action became a breach of trust in the minds of some I still do not understand and possibly never will. Surely any city or the residents of any community outside a city's boundary, should have the same expectation of an equitable resolution of an *unforeseen* hardship created by a county ordinance regardless of the good intent of that ordinance. The decision of the CPA was consistent with other similar decisions they have made.

Had the same "trust" argument been applied to the Dome issue, for example, St. Petersburg's residents would have been saddled with an additional tax burden that was *not foreseeable* when the residents of St. Petersburg voted for the bond issue to build the stadium. The county did the right thing and offered relief by assuming ownership of the Dome thereby eliminating that

unforeseen tax obligation imposed by a court decision. The County Commissioners arrived at their decision because it was the right thing to do. In Lealman's case it was the annexation lines established by 0063 which substantially cut into Lealman's Independent Fire District's tax base and any subsequent annexations resulting from the placement of those lines would severely impact the residents of the fire district with a larger tax burden.

I do not see the difference in the relief Saint Petersburg sought from the county than that which the residents of Lealman sought. In both situations a *past action* brought about an *unforeseen result*. In both cases the *unforeseen result* adversely affected residents and in both cases the county saw fit to step in to do the right thing. It simply is not acceptable or equitable for an issue of "trust" to be raised when the county has demonstrated and has applied a rational of fairness to residents both inside and outside the boundaries of a city.

I believe the residents of the unincorporated area have become more resistant to annexation precisely because of polarizing issues like this. I believe the major reasons for the increasing desire of residents to remain in the unincorporated area is the result of the complete urbanization of the county in general, county government effectively addressing the needs and concerns of its residents, both within and out of cities, and the underestimated strong sense of community that exists in many parts of the unincorporated area. This strong sense of community and resistance to annexation has been demonstrated many times over the past several months. Cove Cay rejected Largo's annexation attempt even though Largo was willing to spend city funds to affect the annexation. Five separate referendum actions by Seminole have recently been rejected, even with the promise of lower taxes and more services. The Wrens Way community, when given the opportunity to vote, opted not to be annexed only to have their will overthrown by the imposition of sewer indentures. A county survey mailed to residents in northwest Lealman, in mid 2003, resulted in an overwhelming rejection of being included in Pinellas Park's annexation planning area. Other communities abutting the northwest portion of Lealman, which were in Pinellas Park's planning area, had requested to be removed from Pinellas Park's planning area in order to remain in the unincorporated area. The people are speaking, they only need to be heard.

While I personally had difficulty supporting the absorption of internal enclaves because of my strong personal belief in property rights, the arguments brought forth by both city and county representatives, outlining the difficulties of providing efficient services and the challenge of being able to be responsive to health and welfare issues, persuaded me to change my position. The arguments were compelling and I, along with my fellow committee members, voted for the absorption of enclaves because it was the right thing to do.

It is my hope that both the Board of County Commissioners and the Council of Mayors will support the permanency of the Lealman boundary line movement. The line movement was the right thing to do then and is still the right thing today and should not be the focus of a "trust" issue which may overshadow the committee's other recommendations. All I ask is that fairness guide you in making your decision.

**MSTU TASK FORCE REPORT DISSENTING OPINION
OF WAYNE DARNELL**

(As Submitted on December 15, 2003 Via Email)

I am unable to support this document as written. After all the hearings and hours and hours spent analyzing the MSTU, this Task Force was never given the chance to reasonably meet as a complete group to thoroughly discuss our conclusions and make recommendations. The final meeting in November was scheduled knowingly to exclude three members. Only five attended, so only five had input for the conclusions. This left out of the discussions three members, who could have had different opinions and thus a totally different vote and outcome. The last meeting in October had five in attendance. I believe we must be allowed to meet as a complete group, so all our opinions are known. I do hope everyone could agree to meet for one hour to accomplish this. If enough feel this way and vote "no" on this document, we can then get together as a group and make a real difference for this County. This document's conclusions are so general and lacking substance, I will not agree this is the best we can do. To state in the final conclusions of this document to establish another board to continue to study the MSTU allocations is nothing more than a "cop-out". This states we failed as a Task Force to make meaningful and reasonable recommendations. The largest amount of this Task Force's time was spent on analyzing the Sheriff's budget and allocations to the MSTU, however we failed even to say the methodology in computing this allocation (base level of service) was incorrect and should be discarded. The overall report appears a nice staff written report. It gives a nice summary of the past etc., but it fails in meeting the big goal of providing guidance and recommendations of substance. If this Task Force can be compared to a jury, then we must meet as a total jury and totally discuss the issues without further input from staff or outside parties. This is the only way a conclusion may be achieved and "thorny" and difficult problems overcome. To give up this easily and without adequate discussion is unacceptable to me and horribly unfair to the citizens of Pinellas County. We were not even allowed to vote on each conclusion separately on E-mail, so our individual votes could be tabulated and recorded. I feel many other conclusions could have been presented and voted separately, so a true conclusion could be presented. Since my only choice is to accept this document basically "as is" or reject it--my choice must be to reject it.

MIAMI
ORLANDO
ST. PETERSBURG

TALAHASSEE
TAMPA

WEST PALM BEACH

CARLTON FIELDS

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

One Progress Plaza
200 Central Avenue, Suite 2300
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-4352
P.O. Box 2861
St. Petersburg, Florida 33731-2861

727.821.7000
727.822.3766 fax
www.carltonfields.com

January 8, 2004

VIA FACSIMILE

The Hon. Karen Williams Seel
County Commissioner-District 5
Pinellas County, Board of County Commissioners
315 Court Street
Clearwater, Florida 33753

Re: Pinellas Assembly Transportation Integration Task Force

Dear Ms. Seel:

I cannot support the recommendations of the Pinellas Assembly Transportation Integration Task Force, on which I served. While there were majority votes for each recommendation, there was no real consensus among the task force members and some of the recommendations either are not supported by, or are contradicted by, the evidence received by the task force.

One of the key presentations to the task force was by Mr. Richard Gehring of Prime Interests, Inc., who is serving as the lead consultant to the County with respect to its economic development/redevelopment efforts. He made it clear that the mid-County area will play a crucial role in the County's economic growth. His presentation and the bulk of the other evidence the task force received shows it is imperative to support capacity improvements in the mid-County area that, in turn, support economic growth there. Other presentations made it clear that if an additional six-cent gas tax were fully leveraged, with DOT's help it would be possible to complete planned improvements to U.S. 19, 118th Avenue North, Roosevelt Boulevard, and Ulmerton Road in mid-County.

The discussion regarding the gas tax increase made it clear that the many cities in Pinellas County generally are unhappy with the current split of gas tax revenues and would likely oppose any further increase without a more favorable split. There was some suggestion, however, that the cities could be convinced to support a plan to devote the entire amount to capacity improvements in mid-County.

The Hon. Karen Williams Seel

January 8, 2004

Page 2

The only finding on which the task force achieved real consensus was that current land use regulations negatively impact road capacity and mobility. I fully support the task force's recommendation to re-write the land-use code to permit mixed-use development and to reduce automobile dependence

The task force received no evidence that replacing the existing traffic-signal control systems with an expensive new traffic-signal control system under Country control would be of any value. In fact, all of the evidence I heard suggests it would be unnecessary and unwise.

The evidence received by the task force suggests only that beautification of Gulf Boulevard should be handled like any beautification project, with appropriate priority given in view of the impact on tourism.

The task force did not receive enough information to evaluate the existing transit system, the proposed monorail system, transit governance issues, or the merits of a transit surtax.

I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the task force and hope my comments are useful to you as you consider the task force's recommendations. If you have any questions, please call me.

Sincerely,

CARLTON FIELDS, P.A.



JOEL B. GILES

JBG:lr

c: Mr. Joseph J. Kubicki (via fax)