

# Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors Budget Workshop Minutes

**Date:** July 15, 2021  
**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Benjamin H. Pingree, PLACE Director  
**Subject:** Summary Minutes to Board of Directors Budget Workshop of May 27, 2021

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## **MEMBERS PRESENT**

<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>CITY</b>
Commissioner Nick Maddox, Vice-Chair	Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox, Chair
Commissioner Kristin Dozier	Mayor John Dailey
Commissioner Carolyn Cummings	Commissioner Curtis Richardson
Commissioner Brian Welch	Commissioner Jeremy Matlow
Commissioner Rick Minor	Commissioner Jacqueline Porter
Commissioner Bill Proctor	
Commissioner Jimbo Jackson	

## **I. WORKSHOP ITEM**

Ben Pingree introduced the item and outlined presentation points including process, timeline, revenue estimates, and recommendations for the Blueprint and Office of Economic Vitality (OEV) Capital Improvement Programs (CIP).

Tres Long provided a brief presentation on the budget process and revenue estimates including an estimated 8% revenue increase for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, 2.5% increase for FY 2023-2024, and 2% increase for FY 2025-2026. The presentation also included updates on operating fund balances, federal economic recovery act reimbursements, and anticipated sales tax revenue increases.

Autumn Calder provided a brief presentation on the draft FY 2022 Operating Budget and five-year CIP for Blueprint Infrastructure including, an estimate sales tax revenue of \$30.16 million for FY 2022 (66%) and a draft Operating Budget that included the previously approved staff increase as well as cost of living adjustments. The presentation also included funding allocations to 16 infrastructure projects in FY 2022, annual City and County allocations, a five-year CIP totally \$359.5 million with \$210 million total value of projects in the Southside Action Plan area, and two long-term planning scenarios that included A) impacts of debt services for bonds and B) fully funding all 27 sales tax projects.

Cristina Paredes provided a brief presentation on the draft FY 2022 Operating Budget and five-year CIP for OEV including, an estimated sales tax revenue of \$5.5 million for FY 2022 (12%) and a draft Operating Budget that included one staff position, cost of living adjustments, and programs for MWSBE advertising. The presentation also included proposed funding allocations for annual commitments, magnetics, MWSBE

activities, and a multi-year marketing campaign to drive business development activities. A copy of the full presentation is on file at the Blueprint offices.

**Mayor Dailey moved, seconded by Commissioner Jackson, to approve Options 1.**

**Option 1: Accept the Workshop Item on the Fiscal Year 2022 Proposed Operating Budget and Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Proposed Capital Improvement Program for the Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency and approve enumerated recommendations.**

- **Recommendation #1: Allocate the remaining balance of \$1,066,571 in the Blueprint 2000 Infrastructure operating fund to the Magnolia Drive Trail project and allocate the remaining balance of \$2,687,832 in the Blueprint 2020 Infrastructure operating fund to the Northeast Corridor Connector: Bannerman Road project.**
- **Recommendation #2: Allocate \$1,000,000 of the CEDR CARES Act reimbursement to repay Leon County and the City of Tallahassee for their advance funding of BRIF.**
- **Recommendation #3: Allocate \$140,500 of the CEDR CARES Act reimbursement to the Strategic Marketing and Communication program and allocate \$10,000 of the CARES Act reimbursement to Industry Academies and B2B Outreach to facilitate women- and minority-owned business communication outreach efforts and support for MWSBE entrepreneurship programs.**
- **Recommendation #4: Combine the remaining LEAN project balance of \$205,000 with the \$595,000 reimbursed by Leon County through the CARES Act and allocate \$400,000 each to Lake Lafayette & St. Marks Regional Park and to Monroe-Adams Corridor Placemaking.**
- **Recommendation#5: Program \$7,547,732 of the anticipated FY 2021 ARPA funding for Blueprint Infrastructure into the Northeast Corridor Connector: Bannerman Road project and program \$1,000,000 of funding available to the Office of Economic Vitality into the TCC athletic facility enhancement project, should the IA Board choose to move forward with the new economic development project at the May 27 meeting immediately after this workshop. Program OEV's remaining \$372,315 into the Future Opportunity Leveraging Fund (FOLF).**
- **Recommendation #6: Amend the FY 2021 budget to increase sales tax revenue and project allocations, Blueprint Infrastructure requests its allocation of \$1,320,000 be made to the Northeast Corridor Connector: Bannerman Road project in order to fund the widening from Tekesta Drive to Preservation road approved by the IA Board at the September 17, 2020 IA Board meeting. The Office of Economic Vitality requests to transfer its allocation of \$240,000 to**

**the Strategic Marketing and Communication project to be utilized for multi-year national marketing campaign, support the Love Your Local business marketing, and launch the new MWSBE communications initiatives.**

- **Recommendation #7: Approve the Proposed FY 2022 Implementing the Greenways Master Plan Work Program**
- **Recommendation #8: Approve the proposed projects for implementation under the FY 2022 Bike Route System Work Plan**
- **Recommendation #9: Direct staff to incorporate Scenario A as the long-term implementation strategy for Blueprint 2020 Infrastructure, providing full funding for all Regional Mobility and Gateway Projects (expect those on state roads consistent prior IA Board direction), full funding for all CCQ projects, and partial funding for Tharpe Street.**
- **Recommendation #10: Approve the addition of a MWSBE Analyst position for contract monitoring and compliance.**

Commissioner Minor questioned how the current 20-year revenue projection compared to pre-pandemic projections of 2019. Tres Long stated that the pandemic it was slightly lower than 2019, projections and anticipated returning to pre-pandemic levels in FY 2022.

Commissioner Dozier acknowledged the cost of bond financing and nearly 50% increase in interest over the past year. She noted that staff recommended moving forward with all of the projects, based on work completed to date and the community benefits generated, despite the increase in interest to advance fund projects. Ben Pingree concurred and that there would be substantial competition nationwide for federal investments into infrastructure. There did not appear to be any benefit to waiting for rate purposes.

Commissioner Dozier expressed her concerns about the increased debt services, due to advance funding many projects, and the cost of expanding project scopes, to include underground utilities, for example. She understood the reasoning to advance fund Southside projects, and with the significant work also occurring on the Northside, she felt that it was important to recognize that those decisions pushed other, valuable community projects to the out-years of the 2020 Blueprint program. She expressed concern for project creep and ability of the IA Board, to respond to proposals in the future. Ben Pingree stated that it would be a challenge to complete the 27 infrastructure projects. However, the Blueprint team would find creative solutions to that challenge, as evidenced in the budget workshop item. Blueprint would be responsive to the stakeholders of each project. It was essential however, that project scopes stay within the funding constraints identified through the bonding process.

Commissioner Dozier stated that it was also important to note that the only ability to be responsive to expansion of projects in the future, would be through not advance funding all of the projects on the list. She noted that the current debt service estimates

were \$192 million, over the life of the bond, and that it would be the limit imposed on any future expansion under consideration.

Commissioner Proctor expressed similar concerns and questioned if the Fairgrounds was still a funded project. Ben Pingree confirmed that it is on the list of funded projects.

Commissioner Richardson expressed his gratitude for the advancement of the Magnolia Trail project to enhance pedestrian safety and provide a uniform aesthetic from South Meridian Road to Apalachee Parkway. Autumn Calder clarified that the uniform appearance would extend from South Monroe to Apalachee Parkway and does include the modification to the previously constructed South Monroe to Pontiac Drive phase. Furthermore, the Blueprint team would break ground for construction on the modified design in 2021.

Commissioner Richardson stated that the additional position in the MWSBE office was critical for contract monitoring and the success of the program. Additionally, the Sales Tax Committee committed to an equitable distribution of projects that was evidenced in the number of funded Southside projects that extended to all residents the sense of place of living in an All-American city. Furthermore, in support of Scenario A, Commissioner Richardson stated that one of the things that allowed for the sales tax extension was the promise to complete every project on the list.

Commissioner Welch spoke to the growth and development of northeastern Tallahassee-Leon County and the needs that presented. He appreciated the impacts of debt services and the creativity of staff in addressing the needs of the community that growth presented.

Commissioner Matlow noted that cost of living allocations were not distributed for 2020 and strongly advocated for making employees whole in 2021. Regarding the scenarios presented in the agenda material, Commissioner Matlow questioned the timeframe for completing the Connectivity, Community Enhancement, and Quality of Life (CCQ) projects. Autumn Calder stated that it would vary over the lifetime of the program, depending on the project. The Market District and Orange-Meridian Placemaking, the top two CCQ projects, would be fully funded and into construction by 2023. Some projects could be funded in phases, such as the Midtown Placemaking project, which the IA Board previously approved funding for phase 1, for improvements to Thomasville Road to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Funding for Phase 2, which included improvements on Monroe Street and Thomasville Road, north to the five-point intersection, was programmed after 2030.

Commissioner Matlow questioned the possibility of reimbursement to CCQ projects, if Blueprint were able to leverage state or federal funding in the future for roadway projects for example. Ben Pingree stated that both scenarios were created from the perspective of 'living within our means,' despite the strong history of collaboration and leveraging funds. In any scenario though, Blueprint would continue to collaborate with state and federal agencies to leverage funds. Historically, Blueprint had the greatest success in leveraging funds through transportation infrastructure projects. When successful, Mr. Pingree confirmed that the funding received through those efforts would have a ripple effect through the road and CCQ projects.

Regarding debt service, Commissioner Matlow stated that he agreed with expediting the Northeast Park and advance funding the Fairgrounds project, as they did not drive the bulk of the debt service. However, the \$60-70 million roadway projects that were not community priorities, for example Northeast Gateway, could be delayed. Delaying just that project by ten years, would better financially position the IA Board to balance it all. Furthermore, would allow additional time to consider alternative alignments for the roadway. He felt that it would be smart, rational, and reasonable to reconsider previous IA Board decisions to expedite and advance fund projects, in order to ensure that Blueprint could deliver on the promises made to Tallahassee-Leon County.

Commissioner Proctor questioned if local roads, for example Tharpe Street, qualified for leveraging opportunities through state or federal funds. He proposed that the IA Board follow potential infrastructure dollars for Tharpe Street, Woodville Highway, and the completion of Crawfordville Highway to the county line. Furthermore, Commissioner Proctor expressed his disappointment with the lack of racial diversity in the technical support for infrastructure projects. He reiterated the need for a Contract Compliance and Monitoring position for the MWSBE office and suggested that it apply to the planning and development teams too because of the breadth of intellectual talent available in the multi-racial residents of Tallahassee-Leon County.

Commissioner Dozier echoed Commissioner Richardson's comments regarding the 27 infrastructure projects promised through referendum. However, only two projects were identified at that time for the 12% allocated to economic development. The balance, as she understood it, was intended to provide flexibility, responsive to and create new opportunities. The IA Board realized some of those opportunities with the incubator that was coming on line at Innovation Park, microloan programs for minority and women owned businesses, and the response to a pandemic.

Regarding the Convention Center, Commissioner Dozier stated that it was clear that \$30 million would not get a Convention Center. Staff clearly stated in the agenda material that with a \$30 million commitment, OEV would be required to cut all existing economic development programs with the exception of those that they were legally obligated to fund. (The list of specific programs was on page 63 of the agenda item.) She felt that was dramatic and with all due respect to the OEV staff, if the IA Board retained the commitment to \$30 million, she was unsure of the need to retain current staffing levels without the other projects in the program. She further quoted the agenda material stating, but for the OEV programs, Tallahassee-Leon County would be at risk of losing 1800 jobs and \$347 million in economic impact.

Commissioner Dozier questioned what the budget scenario might be if the IA Board opted not to bond the original \$20 million commitment. Based on her own calculations, and accounting for other commitments beyond the convention center, there would be less than \$10 million remaining for OEV over the lifetime of the sales tax. Yet, the IA Board allocated \$9.2 million of economic development funds, in just seven months; assuming the IA Board approved the \$2.5 million at the IA Board meeting later that afternoon. She stated that she would like to see a "Scenario B" for OEV.

Commissioner Dozier expressed her desire for the IA Board to understand the impacts and opportunity cost of pursuing a convention center sized allocation, prior to

economic development project discussions at the Board meeting later that day. She questioned at what point the IA Board was willing to leave opportunities such as Project Juggernaut, Project Mango, or a robust workforce development program on the table. Diversifying the economy of Tallahassee-Leon County was generations' long goal. Currently there was more funding, opportunity, and structure to achieve that goal than before. If the IA Board moved forward with approval of a large project at the later Board meeting, the economic development budget would reach its ceiling within the next four years. Meaning that OEV and the IA Board would not have the ability to commit to any business that wanted to come to Tallahassee-Leon County and take advantage of the Targeted Business program or anything else.

**The motion passed 9-3 (weighted: 51-19) with Commissioners Matlow, Porter, and Proctor dissenting.**

II. **ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

*The next Blueprint Intergovernmental Agency Board of Directors Meeting  
is scheduled for  
**May 27, 2021, at 3:00 p.m.***