



**Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Board
Draft Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, April 9, 2026
Polk County Administration Building, Commission Boardroom
330 West Church Street
Bartow, FL 33830

Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Martha Santiago
Commissioner Bill Braswell
Commissioner Rick Wilson
Mayor Sara Roberts McCarley, **Chair**
Mayor Pro Tem Guy LaLonde, Jr.
Commissioner Mike Musick
Commissioner Terry Coney
Commissioner Ashley Troutman
Mayor Brian Yates
Vice Mayor Jordan Helms
Commissioner Omar Arroyo
Vice Mayor Vernel Smith
Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer
Vice Mayor Nancy Daley

South County Bloc Members:

Commissioner Dawn McDonald (Voting Member)
Council Member Adam Greenway, **Vice-Chair**

Central County and Ridge Bloc Members:

Mayor Phyllis Hall (Voting Member)

Advisory Members Present:

Wayne Gaither
Ryan Kordek
Dane Norman

Other Persons Present:

Angela Kaufman
Tracy Mullins
Cindy Mitchell
Lorenzo Thomas
Darryl Richard
Myrtice Young

Dave Newell
Matt McIntosh
Andy Nicol

Representing:

Polk County BoCC
Polk County BoCC
Polk County BoCC
City of Lakeland
City of Lakeland
City of Lakeland
City of Lakeland
City of Lakeland
City of Winter Haven
City of Auburndale
City of Haines City
City of Haines City
City of Bartow
City of Lake Alfred

City of Mulberry
City of Frostproof

Town of Lake Hamilton

Representing:

FDOT, District One
Polk TPO Director
TPO Legal Advisor

Representing:

Polk TPO Staff
Polk TPO Staff
Polk TPO Staff
Polk TPO Staff
FDOT
Polk County Historic
Preservation
FDOT Freight Coordinator
FDOT Consultant/GFT
FDOT Consultant/GFT

Edith Perez
Robert Lee
Sharon Garrett

FDOT
Member of the Public
Member of the Public

INTRODUCTION

1. Call to Order

Chair Sara Roberts McCarley called the TPO Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Confirmation of Quorum

Angela Kaufman, Polk TPO staff, confirmed a quorum. Commissioner Dawn McDonald represented the South County Bloc and Mayor Phyllis Hall represented the Central County or Ridge Blocs. Advisory Council members in attendance included Wayne Gaither (FDOT), Ryan Kordek (Polk TPO), and Dane Norman (Polk County Legal).

3. Opportunity for Public Comment

Chair Roberts McCarley opened the floor for public comments.

Rober Lee expressed concerns about the projected Central Polk Parkway East location and provided a petition in opposition to this project.

Sharon Garrett expressed concerns about the potential loss of her family land in connection with the planned Central Polk Parkway.

Chair Roberts McCarley closed public comment.

4. Agenda Review

Ryan Kordek, Polk TPO Director, provided an overview of the agenda and noted that the minutes had been revised and copies have been distributed. He explained there were a number of administrative items to be reviewed including resolutions, grant contracts, and budget items. In terms of action items, the agenda includes a proposed amendment to the TIP related to Moving I-4 Forward, a proposal to designate State Road 60 as a state designated scenic highway, and the review/approval of a contract with HDR, Inc., for the preparation of the I-4 Corridor Intermodal Planning and Feasibility Study.

CONSENT AGENDA

5. Approve TPO Board Meeting Minutes – February 12, 2026

6. Approve Polk TPO Executive Director Quarterly Timesheets and Expense Reimbursements

7. Approve Polk TPO's 2025 Certification Review

8. Approve Draft TPO Resolution 2026-03 Authorizing the Chair to File a Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund Planning-Related Activities Grant Application

9. Approve the Amended and Restated Interlocal Agreement with Central Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Alliance (CFMPOA)

10. Approve Selection Committee's Recommended List of General Planning Consultant Firms in Response to the TPO's Request for Proposals (RFP No. 25-687)

Motion: Motion made by Vice-Chair Greenway, seconded by Commissioner A. Troutman. Motion carried without dissent.

OTHER ACTION ITEMS

11. Public Hearing on Draft Amendments to FY 2025/26 – 2029/30 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Angela Kaufman, Polk TPO, provided a summary of the proposed amendment to the TIP and explaining the amendment allowed for an additional lane to be constructed on the west side of I-4 between US 27 to County Road 532 (Osceola Polk Line Road). The public hearing for this amendment to the TIP was published in the local newspaper and online but received no comment.

Chair Roberts McCarley opened the floor for public comments. There were none. The floor was closed for public comments.

Motion: Motion was made by Commissioner Rick Wilson and seconded by Commissioner A. Troutman.

Roll Call vote was taken and approved without dissent.

12. Review/Approve Draft Polk TPO Resolution 2026-04 Supporting the Designation of State Road 60 as a Scenic Highway

Darryl Richard, FDOT State Landscape Architect, provided a summary of the designation process.

Myrtice Young, Historic Preservation Manager, explained the benefits and attributes that could be expected if State Road 60 were to become a scenic highway. A video pointing out local landmarks that could be associated with the scenic highway designation was presented with the presentation.

Motion: Motion was made by Commissioner LaLonde, Jr. and seconded by Commissioner A. Troutman.

Commissioner Pfeiffer commented about her involvement since inception and expressing her support for the project.

Vice-Chair Greenway commented that he supports the project but stated concern about the safety issues already existing on State Road 60 and asked if this designation would prevent the expansion of State Road 60 in east Polk County, or any other projects to increase the safety of this highway.

Mr. Kordek stated the scenic highway designation will not prevent or hinder any projects of this highway and might enhance the ability to emphasize the need for these projects.

Commissioner Wilson stated his support for the designation but stated the expansion portion of State Road 60 needs to occur and Osceola County needs to move forward with their portion of this highway's expansion.

Chair Roberts McCarley stated her connection to State Road 60 and expressed support for the designation.

The motion carried unanimously.

13. Review/Approve Consultant Services Authorization (CSA) TPO-25-686-01-01 with HDR Engineering, Inc. to prepare the I-4 Intermodal Passenger Rail Station Planning and Feasibility Study at a Cost Not-to-Exceed \$500,000.

Cindy Mitchell, Polk TPO Staff, provided a description of the study and requested the Board to approve the contract and CSA with HDR Engineering, Inc.

Motion: Motion made by Vice-Chair Greenway, seconded by Commissioner A. Troutman.

Commissioner Braswell expressed his disapproval of SunRail expansion providing funding facts. He stated concerns about the long-term financial responsibility of the County and citizens in Polk County.

Mr. Kordek clarified the purpose of the TPO's project stating this study will be an evaluation of candidate stops along the I-4 corridor for high speed rail and not for SunRail expansion which is proposed along the US 17/92 corridor.

Commissioner Santiago stated the study is needed to provide more information to make a more informed decision in the future.

Commissioner Musick expressed concerns about the future financial responsibilities the City of Lakeland might have related to commuter rail but overall approves of the study.

Chair Roberts McCarley acknowledged the clarification between Sun Rail and the high speed rail projects and reflected about the Brightline development from Orlando International Airport to Miami and how a couple of counties along the path of this rail did not participate initially and the benefit of completing a study now would prepare the County to make more informed decisions.

Mr. Kordek confirmed Chair Roberts McCarley's statement regarding the County of Stuart "playing catch up" to have a Brightline stop established after the rail line was already created. He stated that within the scope of the contract, a lot of public engagement was injected into this project to ensure public input is considered. Commissioner Braswell stated there had been a past meeting with Brightline and was told that Polk County might get a stop. He expressed concern about a private project

and the taxpayers funding a study for a private business. He noted that Brightline has gone into junk bond status.

Mr. Kordek explained that Brightline projects have had some public support and investment, and, in the future, it would be the decisions of the local agencies to contribute funds to such projects. This study would help support those types of decisions.

Chair Roberts McCarley suggested there be some clarification regarding “intermodal” and look at intermodal or different modes of transportation, it typically is a space to have bus, air advanced mobility or other public services around the station and this initial investment is necessary to offer various modes of transportation in a holistic manner.

Mayor Yates commented on the junk bond status and did a quick AI search and found that Brightline could be in default by 2027 and expressed concerns.

Mr. Kordek acknowledged the financial difficulties of Brightline and explained that another entity could assume responsibility and investment into high speed rail if this business fails. There has already been a significant investment in infrastructure between Orlando and Miami and another company could take over the service in the future.

Commissioner Coney stated support for the study.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Musick, seconded by Commissioner A. Troutman. Commissioner Braswell, Mayor Yates, and Mayor Hall voted against the motion. The motion passed with 14 members for the motion and 3 against the motion.

14. Review/Approve Draft TPO Resolution 2026-05 approving the Amended Fiscal Year 2024/25 – 2025/26 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Authorizing the TPO Chair to Execute the Amended Metropolitan Planning Organization Funding Agreement

Mr. Kordek introduced agenda items 14 and 15 together and stated each item will requires separate action. He began by explaining the current FY 2024/25-2025/26 UPWP is being amended to move a large portion of the funds that were designated for the I-4 Intermodal Passenger Rail Station Planning and Feasibility Study to the new FY 2026/27 – 2027/28 UPWP. Staff is then also requesting the Board to approve the new FY 2026/27 – 2027/28 UPWP. Current and future projects were identified. The Adviser Network was notified and provided input on the new UPWP.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner A. Troutman, seconded by Commissioner Santiago. Motion carried without dissent.

15. Review/Approve Draft TPO Resolution 2026-06 approving the Fiscal Year 2026/27 – 2027/28 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) and Metropolitan Planning Organization Funding Agreement

See agenda item 14.

Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Wilson, seconded by Commissioner Coney.
Motion carried without dissent.

PRESENTATIONS AND STATUS REPORTS

16. Polk County Freight Plan

Wayne Gaither, FDOT District 1, introduced a new staff member, Dave Newell, FDOT Freight Coordinator.

Matt McIntosh, FDOT Consultant/GFT, provided a presentation explaining the purpose of the study, how the study was conducted, and what methodology was used in the study. The final recommendations of the study identify areas of critical need on existing roadways and networks. Stakeholder meetings occurred during the study to provide input and insight.

Chair Roberts McCarley commented about the necessity of freight and how freight traffic affects the mobility of all in Polk County.

17. Working Towards Target Zero

Wayne Gaither, FDOT District One, introduced John Kubicki before his presentation.

Chair Roberts McCarley explained that at a previous meeting, members were asking about where the safety data comes from and thanked Mr. Gaither for addressing this request.

John Kubicki, FDOT Safety Group, provided a presentation explaining the safety data derived from the law enforcement agencies' reports. He provided some statistics about the deaths in District One and Polk County. There are 11 safety projects that total about \$15 million in Safety Funds programs for fiscal years 2026-2031. The safety strategic plan for District One will include educating the public and focusing on getting into the schools.

Commissioner Santiago commented there is a behavior problem within Polk County drivers.

Commissioner LaLonde, Jr. asked about Memorial Boulevard projects in Lakeland.

Mr. Kubicki responded they have identified two locations that have occurrences of accidents which are on the west side of Memorial Boulevard near the Polk Parkway and near State Road 33. But he was unfamiliar with specific projects.

Commissioner A. Troutman asked about the educational aspect of the plan and if it is limited to just K-12 schools.

Mr. Kubicki stated they are working with the Polk County Sheriff's office and university police departments. He deferred to Keith Roberts for more information about how this occurs.

Commissioner A. Troutman asked specifically about educating the older drivers.

Mr. Kubicki responded that there are targeted marketing efforts and there is a “car fit” program.

Commissioner A. Troutman asked about engaging the private sector like working with car dealerships.

Mr. Kubicki stated that car ratings for crash tests are involved. He then explained that local businesses such as Enterprise Rent-a-Car on State Road 92 have coordinated with them and provide tip cards and AARP is a member of their board and also the health care industry is represented, and they coordinate with them for crash data.

Commissioner Coney commented about the training for young drivers in the education system and asked if there are any modifications being made to address the need for improved driving education.

Mr. Kubicki stated they help advise the state about the driving tests and what ‘s included in the driving manual.

Chair Roberts McCarley stated there are specific benefits to driving education in the schools.

Commissioner Santiago recommended that US 27 needs to have rules to keep the trucks in the right lanes.

REPORTS

15. Executive Director’s Report

a. Meeting Packets

Mr. Kordek explained the logistical issues that have been occurring with TPO Board meeting packets arriving late through the mail. He encouraged members to access the digital packets that are provided by staff a week ahead of the meeting. Staff will also provide extra copies of printed packets and make them available to members at the meetings.

b. Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA) Meeting – April 10, 2025

Mr. Kordek spoke about the upcoming meeting and encouraged the TPO’s members to attend the meeting.

c. Joint SCTPA/CFMPOA Meeting (Sun Trax) – June 5, 2026

Mr. Kordek announced a joint meeting is being planned with our MPO/TPO counterparts in Tampa Bay and Central Florida. The meeting will be hosted by the Polk TPO and be held at the Turnpike’s SunTrax facility in Auburndale.

16. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report

- a. Edith Perez, FDOT announced the Transportation Alternative/Congestion Management application cycle is closed; applications were due in GAP by 3/31. We hoped that anyone who was interested in this funding took the opportunity to apply.

A total of six applications were submitted for funding consideration, three for Winter Haven, two for Lakeland and one for Bartow.

- b. The 2-year UPWP FY 26/27-27/28 total allocation is \$2,730,292 and must be adopted by May 15. Once the new UPWP has been finalized and adopted, an amendment will be required to add the carry-over funds of \$500K from the previous contract (G2V52) into the new contract (G3P39). After the funds are authorized, the budgetary ceiling will increase to \$3,230,292. It is important to note that this funding is contingent and not guaranteed.
- c. As we work to wrap up the FY 27-28 2 year UPWP, next up is the development of the next 5 year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). FDOT TIP files were downloaded on April 2, 2026, and provided to the Polk TPO to begin the process. The adopted TIP is due to FDOT by July 15th.

Chair Roberts McCarley asked Mr. Kordek about the UPWP amendment.

Mr. Kordek explained the steps needed before the amendment can be processed.

17. Opportunity for Public Comment

Chair Roberts McCarley opened the floor for public comments. Seeing none, closed the floor.

18. Board Member Comments

Chair Roberts McCarley opened the floor for board member comments.

Commissioner Arroyo explained that he did not run for the commissioner's office in Haines City and thanked everyone. He will no longer be a sitting member on the TPO Board.

19. Adjournment – Next meeting date is June 11, 2026.

Motion to Adjourn: Motion made by Commissioner Coney, seconded by Commissioner Santiago.

The meeting adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

Respectfully transcribed by Angela Kaufman, TPO Transportation Planner.

Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes, states that if a person decides to appeal any decision made by a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, he may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.