



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

Thursday, June 12, 2025
Polk County Administration Building, Commission Boardroom
330 West Church Street
Bartow, FL 33830

Voting Members Present:

Commissioner Martha Santiago
Commissioner Michael Scott
Commissioner Rick Wilson
Commissioner Rebecca Troutman
Mayor Bill Mutz
Commissioner Guy LaLonde Jr
Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley, **Vice Chair**
Commissioner Stephanie Madden
Mayor Nat Birdsong
Mayor Pro Tem Brian Yates
Commissioner Tracy Mercer
Vice Mayor Vernel Smith
Mayor Trish Pfeiffer, **Chair**
Vice Mayor Nancy Daley

South County Bloc Members:

Council Member Adam Greenway (Voting Member)
Commissioner Jim Watts
Commissioner Dawn McDonald

Central County and Ridge Bloc Members:

Commissioner Willie Quarles (Voting Member)

Advisory Members Present:

Wayne Gaither
Ryan Kordek
Heather Bryan

Other Persons Present:

Julia Davis
William Roll
Rohan Sadai
Edith Perez
Sharon Garrett

Representing:

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

City of Frostproof
City of Fort Meade
City of Mulberry

Town of Dundee

Representing:

FDOT, District One
Polk County TPO
TPO Legal Advisor

Representing:

TPO Staff
Kimley-Horn
FDOT
FDOT
Polk County Citizen

1. Call to Order

Chairwoman Pfeiffer called the TPO Board meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

2. Confirmation of Quorum

KC Rivera, Polk TPO staff, confirmed a quorum. Council Member Greenway represented the South County Bloc and Commissioner Willie Quarles represented the Central County and Ridge Bloc. Advisory Council members present were Wayne Gaither, FDOT, Ryan Kordek, Polk TPO, and Heather Bryan, Polk County Legal.

3. Opportunity for Public Comment

Chairwoman Pfeiffer opened the floor for public comment. Sharon Garrett was present to speak. Ms. Garrett expressed concern about her home and family property that are within the proposed corridors for the Central Polk Parkway East.

4. Agenda Review

Ryan Kordek, TPO Executive Director, presented the agenda which included the recognition of service to Marcia Staszko, draft meeting minutes from April 10, 2025, appointments to the Polk County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board, draft TPO Resolution 2025-04 Supporting Best Foot Forward's Pedestrian Safety Program in Polk County, draft amendments to FY 2024/25 – 2028/29 Transportation Improvement Program, draft FY 2025/26 – 2029/30 Transportation Improvement Program, Draft TPO 2025 Priority Transportation Projects, Envision 2050 Needs Assessment, and Advanced Air Mobility,

5. Recognition of Service of the Polk TPO for Marcia Staszko

Julia Davis, TPO Staff, presented a plaque to Marcia Staszko recognizing her involvement in the TD LCB since 2016 and Statewide Transportation Disadvantage since 1989. During that time Ms. Staszko taught every TD planner in the state how to prepare Bylaws, agenda packets and how to carry out the role of the designated official planning agency.

Consent Agenda

6. Approve TPO Board Meeting Minutes – April 10, 2025

7. Approve Appointments to the Polk County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TD LCB)

Motion: Motioned by Commissioner Wilson, seconded by Vice Chair Roberts McCarley. Motion carried without dissent.

Other Action Items

8. Review/Approve Draft TPO Resolution 2025-04 Supporting Best Foot Forward's Pedestrian Safety Program in Polk County

Vince Dyer, Best Foot Forward, presented the non-profit Best Foot Forward program within the Target Zero campaign. Mr. Dyer explained how the drivers yielding to pedestrians data has been collected thus far in Polk County. He also highlighted the success of a recent crosswalk enforcement operation within the County, and what future education outreach would look like. Mr. Dyer sought support for the Best Foot Forward Program in Polk County.

Motion: Motioned by Mayor Mutz, seconded by Vice Chair Roberts McCarley. Motion carried without dissent.

9. Public Hearing on Draft Amendments to FY 2024/25 – 2028/29 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Angela Kaufman, TPO Staff, presented the amendments for the FY 2024/25 – 2028/29 TIP which included I-4 (SR 400) from Galloway Rd to SR 35 and SR 544 from SR 600 (US 92) to 8th St. NW (US 17). Ms. Kaufman requested to approve the TIP Amendments as presented.

Chairwoman Pfeiffer opened the floor for public comment, seeing none Chairwomen Pfeiffer closed the floor.

Roll Call vote was taken and approved without dissent.

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

Angela Kaufman, TPO Staff, presented the draft FY 2025/26 – 2029/30 TIP with over three billion dollars in transportation investment. Ms. Kaufman explained what is contained in the 2025/26 – 2029/30 TIP including over \$760 Million for highway projects. There was a public comment period with a survey from March 7th to May 7th which we received 508 comments with the majority of comments related to US 27. Ms. Kaufman requested to approve the FY 2025/26 – 2029/30 TIP as presented.

Chairwoman Pfeiffer opened the floor for public comment.

Sharon Garrett was present to speak. Ms. Garrett has concerns about the statistics and analysis behind the TIP.

Vice Mayor Nancy Daley stated over passes over US 27 would relieve the traffic and lights.

Roll Call vote was taken and approved without dissent.

11. Review/Approve Draft TPO 2025 Priority Transportation Projects

Ryan Kordek, TPO executive director, presented the 25 priority projects that included highways, intersections, complete streets, transit, bicycle/pedestrian, and multi-use trails. The majority of these projects come from the TPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and annually the TPO sets priorities and requests funding from the FDOT to implement these projects. Mr. Kordek stated similar to last year, FDOT continues to see a significant resurfacing need on the state highway system and these projects must be funded first before new roads or road widening projects can be programmed by FDOT. Ryan displayed a map that depicted the level of congestion currently experienced on Polk County's major road network and highlighted the highway priorities being considered this year. One of the top priorities of the TPO, he emphasized, is State Road 60 in eastern Polk County between CR 630 and the Osceola County Line. The TPO applied for grant funding through the National Highway Freight Program to help fund right-of-way (ROW) and design phases for this project and staff is recommending the Board allocate \$2M in TMA-SU funds as a match for the grant.

Mayor Birdsong asked about the carbon reduction funds that Florida DOT returned to federal DOT and were programmed on a Winter Haven project.

Wayne Gaither of FDOT responded that 3-5 years ago there was a federal bill passed that provided funding for projects that can lead to a reduction in carbon emissions (Carbon Reduction funds). FDOT programmed these funds on projects such as complete streets, multimodal, and transit projects. Recently, the decision from FDOT was to send the monies back to Washington due to certain stipulations associated with the Carbon Reduction funding. However, FDOT was able to fund a majority of the projects that were impacted by this decision with the exception of the Eight St. NW and Avenue L NW Complete Street project which is still in need of funding, and this is why the Polk TPO has made it a priority project.

Commissioner Scott asked about the scoring method of the need based on the priority list. Mr. Kordek responded, there are different funding sources along with criteria with a detailed scoring system, and a subcommittee who helped develop the priority list.

Commissioner Troutman asked about the priority project with US 98 widening and proceeded to ask Wayne Gaither about the state taking over County Line Road. Mr. Gaither acknowledged Commissioner Troutman's question and will find out.

Motion: Motioned by Vice Chair Roberts McCarley, seconded by Commissioner Watts. Motion carried without dissent.

Presentations and Status Reports

12. Envision 2050 Needs Assessment

Ryan Kordek, TPO executive director, introduced this item and stated Envision 2050 is scheduled to be adopted by the Board at the December TPO meeting. Mr. Kordek then presented some completed projects that were first contemplated in the TPO's Long Range Transportation Plans. He pointed out the County has grown by 127,832 residents since 2020

and by 2050 we are projected to have 1.1 million residents. Mr. Kordek then introduced and turned the presentation over to William Roll of Kimley-Horn.

Mr. Roll discussed the highway needs throughout the county highlighting the major projects such as Interstate 4, the Central Polk Parkway and projects in northeast Polk County. Mr. Kordek then presented candidate safety, complete street, bicycle/pedestrian and multi-use trail projects being considered in the plan.

Julia Davis, TPO Staff, presented the transit needs which included the SunRail extension, new bus routes, additional squeeze services, as well as capital, technology, and policy needs. Lastly, Ms. Davis summarized the Public Comments received thus far on Envision 2050 and stated the TPO would be hosting a virtual workshop scheduled for June 20th.

13. Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)

Rohan Sadai, FDOT, introduced Advanced Air Mobility (AAM). He explained the difference between a drone and EVTOL. AAM would rely on airport infrastructure with the need of vertiports for charging. Mr. Sadai presented a map with all the possible airport locations for AAM throughout Florida. Lastly, Mr. Sadai informed the board of the upcoming workshops in Bartow and Ft. Myers.

Commissioner Madden asked about the utility capacity of electricity being used and who is first in line to apply for a vertiport.

Mayor Mutz informed Lakeland is planning out the 20-year tech plan with AAM in mind. Mayor Mutz believes this will be convenient for smaller airports with connectivity.

Vice Mayor Pro Tem Yates asked if the plans for a train system should continue or proceed with AAM.

Mr. Sadai explaining EVTOL will hold around four to five people while a train can hold two thousand.

Mr. Gaither added FDOT is following the trends for transportation.

Commissioner Roberts McCarley stated we need to do it all by investing in both trains and AAM.

Mr. Sadai stated the electrical cost is extremely high, which is why airports are hesitant on vertiports.

Reports

14. Executive Director's Report

Ryan Kordek stated he recently spoke with the Turnpike's project manager for the Central Polk Parkway East and the Turnpike will likely provide an update in the fall at either the October or December Board meeting.

15. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report

Wayne Gaither, FDOT, provided an update on the legislative session, educational training programs, and the ongoing search to fill L.K.'s position. Mr. Gaither answered Commissioner Troutman's previous question about road transfers and stated there are discussions across the state with jurisdictional transfers all depending on how the road is being used. There are some

state roads functioning as local roads while local roads are now functioning as state roads. As of now the discussions are in the preliminary stages.

Edith Perez, FDOT, informed the board about the TRIP and CMS application funding deadline is June 30th. She also discussed a Safe Streets and Roads for All grant funding opportunity which supports local, regional, and tribal initiatives to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries.

16. Opportunity for Public Comments

Chairwoman Pfeiffer opened the floor for public comment. Ms. Garrett stated concerns about her home with the proposed corridors of the Central Polk Parkway (East).

17. Board Members Comments

Commissioner Roberts McCarley praised the staff and pointed out that past planning efforts forecasted the growth we're experiencing today.

Commissioner Michael Scott stated DOT is doing well with US 98 North project, but the contractor is violating the traffic control.

18. Adjournment – Next meeting date is August 28, 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 11:26 a.m.

Respectfully transcribed by KC Rivera, TPO Office Manager IV.

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.