Polk Transportation Planning Organization

Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Board
Draft Meeting Minutes

Thursday, October 9, 2025
Polk County Administration Building, Commission Boardroom
330 West Church Street
Bartow, FL 33830

Voting Members Present:	**Representing:**
Commissioner Martha Santiago	Polk County BoCC
Commissioner Bill Braswell	Polk County BoCC
Commissioner Rick Wilson	Polk County BoCC
Mayor Bill Mutz	City of Lakeland
Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley, **Vice Chair**	City of Lakeland
Commissioner Stephanie Madden	City of Lakeland
Commissioner Mike Musick	City of Lakeland
Mayor Nat Birdsong	City of Winter Haven
Mayor Pro Tem Brian Yates	City of Winter Haven
Commissioner Tracy Mercer	City of Winter Haven
Commissioner Jordan Helms	City of Auburndale
Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer, **Chair**	City of Bartow
Vice Mayor Nancy Daley	City of Lake Alfred
South County Bloc Members:	
Commissioner Dawn McDonald (Voting Member)	City of Mulberry
Council Member Adam Greenway	City of Frostproof
Central County and Ridge Bloc Members:	
Commissioner Willie Quarles (Voting Member)	Town of Dundee
Mayor Phyllis Hall	Town of Lake Hamilton

Advisory Members Present:	**Representing:**
Wayne Gaither	FDOT, District One
Ryan Kordek	Polk TPO
Tom Norsworthy	TPO Legal Advisor

Other Persons Present:	**Representing:**
Jay Jarvis	Roads & Drainage
Adam Rose	FDOT
Erik Flemming	FDOT
Tom Phillips	Citrus Connection
Edith Perez	FDOT

Julia Davis	TPO Staff
Cindy Mitchel	TPO Staff
KC Rivera	TPO Staff
Sharon Garrett	Citizen
Barb Girtman	Ghyabi Consulting

1. Call to Order

Chairwoman Pfeiffer called the TPO Board meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

2. Confirmation of Quorum

KC Rivera, Polk TPO staff, confirmed a quorum. Commissioner Dawn McDonald 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 Tom Norsworthy, Polk County Legal.

3. Opportunity for Public Comment

Chairwoman Pfeiffer opened the floor for public comment.
Sharon Garrett voiced concerns about the possibility of losing her family land in association with the planned Central Polk Parkway.
Chairwoman Pfeiffer closed public comment.

Chairwoman Pfeiffer announced she will be leaving at ten and the Vice Chair will take over. November 4th is an election day, and this is the last meeting with Mayor Mutz. Chairwomen Pfeiffer thanked Mayor Mutz for his years of service.

4. Agenda Review

Ryan Kordek, TPO Executive Director, provided an overview of the Board's agenda and highlighted the action items which included Envision 2050, an RFP for a stop analysis passenger rail service in the I-4 corridor, a presentation and discussion on Polk County transportation projects, and an update on countywide transit service from the Citrus Connection. Following the TPO Board meeting, the annual Polk Transit Authority meeting will occur.

Consent Agenda

5. Approve TPO Board Meeting Minutes – August 28, 2025

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

7. Approve Title VI and ADA Nondiscrimination Policy Plan Update

8. Approve Consultant Services Authorization (CSA) TPO-20-1009-02-06 with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. to Provide Grant Support for the TPO's Priority Projects at a Cost Not-to-Exceed $100,000.00

Motion: Motion made by Mayor Mutz, seconded by Council Member Greenway. Motion carried without dissent.

Other Action Items

9. Review/Approve the Draft 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (Envision 2050) for the Purpose of public Review and Comment

Ryan Kordek, Polk TPO staff, stated there have been presentations provided to the Board throughout the year which highlight many of the important projects contained in the Draft 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Mr. Kordek stated the board will be asked to open a public comment period starting today and extending through December 9th, which is the adoption hearing. As part of the presentation he discussed some of the key differences in transportation since the board last adopted the LRTP five years ago. This includes growth and development, significant investment in regional highway projects by FDOT and Turnpike, as well as the availability of State and Federal funds for funding new projects. He then presented the Cost Feasible Plan for highway projects throughout the county. The Citrus Connection's recently adopted ten-year transit development plan (TDP) which is an important component of the LRTP was covered. Regional transit services such as the extension of SunRail and Brightline into Polk County was discussed. Mr. Kordek concluded his presentation by discussing the importance of safety and the ongoing efforts of Vision Zero Polk in reducing crashes. Mr. Kordek requested the Board to approve the Draft 2050 LRTP for purpose of public review and comment which will extend from October 9th to December 9th when the TPO will hold the adoption hearing on the Draft LRTP.

Motion: Motion made by Mayor Birdsong, seconded by Mayor Mutz. Motion carried without dissent.

10. Review/Approve Draft Request for Proposal (RFP) for the I-4 Regional Passenger Rail Station Planning and Feasibility Study

Cindy Mitchell, Polk TPO Staff, introduced the item and stated the RFP is in support of the action taken by the TPO at their August meeting which allocated funding in the TPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for this project. She requested the board's approval of the RFP for the I-4 Regional Passenger Rail Station Planning and Feasibility Study and explained the process of the RFP. As part of the Board's action, they appointed Commissioner Madden to serve on the RFP selection committee.

Motion: Motion made by Mayor Birdsong, seconded by Commissioner Adam Greenway. Motion carried without dissent.

11. Polk County Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Redesignation Process

Julia Davis, Polk TPO Staff, defined what the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) and Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) are and the Polk TPO's role in the process for selecting the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC).

Motion: Motion made by Mayor Mutz, seconded by Mayor Birdsong. Motion carried without dissent.

12. Proclamation of the Polk TPO Recognizing October as Greenways and Trails Month
Ryan Kordek, Polk TPO staff, presented the Proclamation recognizing October as Greenways and Trails month with Florida having 1,300 trails and 120 of those trails are in Polk County. Mr. Kordek highlighted the construction of the Fort Fraser Trail Extension which is currently underway connecting the cities of Bartow and Lakeland and the Fort Fraser Trail Bridge at State Road 60 (Van Fleet Drive) in Bartow which is funded with construction starting early next year.

Council Member Greenway mentioned on the Proclamation and starting with the first sentence should end with a “semicolon and” and not a “period” throughout the Proclamation.

Motion: Motioned by Council Member Greenway with the noted changes of “; and”, seconded by Mayor Mutz. Motion carried without dissent.

Presentations and Status Reports

13. Update on Polk County Projects
Jay Jarvis, Polk County Roads and Drainage Director, presented an update on the major Polk County Projects. Which included Fort Fraser Trail Extension from US 98 to Glendale Street, Thompson Nursery Road Extension from US 17 in Eagle Lake to US 27, CR 557 from US 17/92 to I-4, and Power Line Road from US 17/92 to State Road 17 (Scenic Highway). Mr. Jarvis discussed the cost and expected completion and timing for each of the projects.

A long discussion ensued between the Board and Mr. Jarvis on the referenced projects.

14. County Line Road Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Study
Adam Rose, FDOT, introduced Eric Flemming, Project Manager on the US 92/County Line Road PD&E Study from Amberjack Boulevard to Frontage Road South. The goal of the project is to remove vehicle and pedestrian conflicts with CSX at County Line Road, which is a SIS Highway Corridor. FDOT’s study shows with the large quantity of traffic, County Line Road will need to become a six-lane roadway to be at an acceptable level of service for year 2050. The study has three alternatives including an elevated intersection, a Northeast quadrant roadway, and a Northwest quadrant roadway. Mr. Rose mentioned there is currently no future funding for the project.

15. Citrus Connection Update
Tom Phillips, General Manager of the Citrus Connection, gave a brief history of Citrus Connection. Mr. Phillips stated 80 cents of every dollar goes directly to transit operations, 70% of riders using Citrus Connection are using it to get to work, and 60% of those riders do not have access to a personal vehicle. In the 2022 census, Polk County was identified as the seventh poorest suburban area in the United States. In 2015, there was a consolidation of

services with the Citrus Connection and Polk County. Citrus Connection also has a Universal Access Program (UAP) where there are partnerships who pay for the bus fare for their employees and students. Other services include partnerships with park and ride facilities, the Squeeze, Tigertown Express, Light Up Bonnet Springs, and the Sun-N-Fun Express.

Commissioner Roberts McCarley thanked Mr. Phillips for the service Citrus Connection provides. Commissioner Santiago and Mayor Mutz also thanked Mr. Phillips and staff.

Commissioner Brasswell asked about school transportation and security.
Mr. Phillips stated they have been working with the school district and informed them that statistically children are safe on the bus.

Reports

16. Executive Director's Report
Mr. Kordek discussed the meetings TPO staff have participated in recently, including the Four Corners Council on August 22nd, an FDOT US 27 Workshop on September 18th, the Central Florida MPO Alliance (CFMPOA) meeting is tomorrow October 10th, and he encouraged the TPO's CFMPOA members to attend the meeting in Orlando. Upcoming meetings include an Envision 2050 TPO public workshop on October 15th, an Envision 2050 workshop with the Bartow City Commission in November, and a public workshop to discuss the Polk Vision Zero Action Plan in Winter Haven on October 28th.

Lastly, Mr. Kordek announced that Julia Davis, TPO Transportation Planning Administrator, is retiring. She has a long a decorated planning career and has worked for the Polk TPO since 2017.

Commissioner Robert McCarley thanked Julia Davis for her service and asked other board members to present Ms. Davis with a plaque from Citrus Connection.
Julia Davis gave a short speech and thanked the Board for their support through the years.

17. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Report
Edith Perez, FDOT, shared that FDOT's Safe Routes to School application cycle is open till January 31st , 2026, FDOT will be holding a webinar for Polk Trails on October 15th from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. registration is required, also an in person public meeting for State Road 563 median modification is scheduled for October 16th at 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. The Office of Policy Planning has scheduled an FMPP meeting for October 22nd and the MPOAC meeting will be on October 23rd. District One is working on the Draft Five Year Work Program; there will be in person and virtual meetings on October 24th at both Bartow and Fort Myers FDOT offices. October is Pedestrian Safety month, and White Cane Day is on October 24th where we celebrate the vision impaired and raise awareness for their safety and Buckle Up Phone Down Day is October 25th.

18. Opportunity for Public Comment

Commissioner Roberts McCarley opened the floor for public comment.
Barb Girtman of Ghyabi Consulting and Management shared a public meeting will be held on November 18th at 5:30 p.m. in Kissimmee at the Reunion Resort and Golf Club for the Move Florida Forward projects phases one, two, and five.
Commissioner Roberts McCarley closed public comment.

19. Board Member Comments
Commissioner Roberts McCarley opened the floor for board comments.
Commissioner Madden advocated for the bicycler's safety in the Lakeland Highlands area and in particular the need for a route or path between Lakeland Highlands Scrub and Carter Road Park through the City's Seven Wetlands Park.
Commissioner Roberts McCarley closed public comment.

20. Adjournment – Next meeting date is December 9, 2025.
The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.
Motion: Motion made by Commissioner Wilson, seconded by Commissioner Santiago.

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.