

# Community Forum #2 Mobility for Life

Sept. 24 @ Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland

*Watch the PG-TV replay of the event by clicking here*



The Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) hosted a community forum to educate the public on initiatives and resources related to transportation and aging in place. Prior to and during the forum the TPO collected public comment regarding transportation needs for seniors in Polk.

The TPO welcomed three special guests who helped educate the audience on transportation options for seniors aging in place: Gail Holley, the director and research director of the FDOT's Safe Mobility for Life program; Tammy Wright, the executive director of Lakeland Vision; and Adam Purcell, a project planner for URS Corporation who the TPO hired to craft a technical memorandum on senior access to transit in Polk County.

This report provides a snapshot of the event, a compilation of the transportation improvements suggested by the public and results of an Aging in Place Survey the TPO conducted. The information received at this forum and all meetings of the Adviser Network helps guide the TPO's development of priority projects and future updates to the long range transportation plan.



Polk Transportation  
Planning Organization

41 in-person participants

15 people completed online  
survey prior to event

Forum was livestreamed on  
PG-TV website

## Resources for Polk County's Aging Population as Presented at the Forum:

**Lakeland Vision Council on Seniors Aging in America Study**  
Study can be downloaded online at:  
[www.lakelandvision.org/About/2012-Projects.aspx](http://www.lakelandvision.org/About/2012-Projects.aspx)

**Florida Senior Safety Resource Center**  
Includes transportation search, at:  
[www.fssrc.php.ufl.edu](http://www.fssrc.php.ufl.edu)

**Safe and Mobile Seniors**  
Includes community resources, a "Find a Ride" function and guides, at: [www.safeandmobileseniors.com](http://www.safeandmobileseniors.com)

**Aging in Place Transit Memorandum**  
A TPO funded report on senior access to transit in Polk; final draft will be put on [www.polktpo.com](http://www.polktpo.com)

# Public Comments

A total of 53 public comments were received through the forum and online survey regarding how transportation planning could be improved to better serve Polk County's aging population. The comments are separated into in four sections: transit-related improvements, road/street improvements, pedestrian-focused improvements and "other." **All comments highlighted in red are suggestions that were made by more than one person.**

**Upon review of the comments there are three areas of suggested improvements that received more attention than any other. They are:**

**1. Future development should be designed with an emphasis on constructing and connecting sidewalks that help people get to and from destinations such as public transit, retail, restaurants and religious / worship centers**



**2. More safe and covered bus shelters should be constructed, especially in the vicinity of senior living facilities**

**3. It should be a priority to require that all nursing homes, senior centers and assisted living centers are adequately served by handicap accessible public transit options**



## Transit-Related Improvements

- Shorter headway times for bus routes
- **More routes and more stops**
- Express busses to Tampa and Orlando
- Expand bus service hours
- **Make sure all nursing homes and assisted living centers are adequately served by handicap accessible busses**
- **Construct parking lots at main transit stops to make more accessible**
- Bring high speed rail to Polk County
- Long range plans should focus on public transportation for all
- More education regarding the need for assistance for elderly and disabled transit riders
- Support the MyRide program that Polk Transit is implementing
- More convenient access to Watson Clinic
- **Install more safe and covered bus shelters, especially near senior living facilities**
- ADA service for Route 22XL of Citrus Connection



## Road / Street Improvements

- Focus on implementing more Complete Streets features throughout the county
- Construct speed bumps around Lake Hollingsworth
- **Create more bus pull-offs so people don't have to get stuck behind transit vehicles**
- Remove unnecessary "school zone" traffic signs where schools no longer exist
- Expand right-of-way widths



- Keep up with road maintenance



## Pedestrian-focused Improvements

- **More room on the shoulder of roads for people using motorized wheelchairs and/or golf carts**
- More multi-modal trails
- Sidewalks on Berkley Rd. in Auburndale
- Create public education geared toward encouraging people to use sidewalks and cross at crosswalks
- **Develop with an emphasis on constructing and connecting sidewalks that help people get to destinations, i.e. public transit, retail and/or restaurants**
- **Safer, more protected bike routes**
- **Install more street lights throughout the county**



## All Other Suggestions

- **Cars that drive themselves**
- Have more public education sessions like the Mobility for Life Forum
- **Educate citizens on resources available to them**
- Increased marketing and education of transportation options that already exist in the county
- Support non-profit agencies who provide transportation
- Support coordination of transportation and community agencies
- Reduce driver speed through better enforcement of speed limits