Introduction

Momentum 2040 represents the Long Range Transportation Plan for Polk County through the planning horizon year of 2040. The term “Momentum” is representative of both the mobility provided by the transportation system in the plan and, more importantly, the progress and advancement of growing economic opportunities and the quality of life provided to the residents and visitors in Polk County. Polk County has a strong heritage of industries supported by a robust transportation network—the Momentum 2040 plan represents the next chapter in our County’s future.

The Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) is the County’s metropolitan planning organization (MPO) responsible for coordinating transportation planning within Polk County providing connectivity to the adjacent counties. The planning process for Momentum 2040 was guided by the TPO’s elected Board, the TPO’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Polk TPO’s Adviser Network’s. The Technical Advisory Committee provides technical review, supervision, and assistance to the TPO on transportation planning matters for Polk County and consists of planners, engineers, managers from member governments, and non-voting representatives from state and federal agencies. The Polk TPO’s Adviser’s Network is the TPO’s primary mechanism for citizen involvement and consists of 202 members who typically participate in quarterly meetings to address major transportation issues. The Momentum 2040 Plan facilitates a countywide, cooperative planning process that serves as the basis for spending the counties’ and regions’ state and federal transportation funds for improvements to roads, bridges, public transit, freight routes, and bicycle and pedestrian networks.

The Momentum 2040 Plan characterizes current and future transportation needs and highlights the multimodal recommendations to address these needs. The plan must be reviewed and updated every five years. In addition, the plan must be fiscally constrained, meaning the TPO cannot plan to spend more money than it can reasonable expect to receive for project implementation through the year 2040. A further consideration is that the eligibility of projects to receive federal funding is dependent on their inclusion in the Momentum 2040 Plan.

Federal Legislation and Guidance

The Momentum 2040 Plan is governed by the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), which was signed into law on July 6, 2012. MAP-21 allocated a total of $105 billion for surface transportation programs in its first two fiscal years (FY 2013 and FY 2014). The goals of MAP-21 include strengthening America’s highways, establishing a performance-based program, creating jobs and supporting economic growth, supporting the United States Department of Transportation’s aggressive safety agenda, streamlining Federal Highway Administration transportation programs, and accelerating project delivery and promoting innovation. This legislation has been superseded by the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) which was signed into law on December 4, 2015. Thus, the FAST Act became law after the commencement of the adoption phase of the Momentum 2040 Plan and occurred six days before the formal adoption of the Momentum 2040 Plan on December 10, 2015. While the changes to the Metropolitan Planning process for the development of long range transportation plans were minor, it is anticipated that future rule making associated with the FAST Act may require future action by the Polk TPO prior to the next regularly scheduled plan adoption which would normally occur in 2020.
Plan Organization
This report is organized with an emphasis on the adopted plan and summarizes the activities and assumptions that were used to develop the plan. A Technical Appendix is a companion document to this report and a summary report has also been prepared that summarizes the adopted transportation plan in a more concise fashion.

Chapter 1 Plan Overview
This chapter provides an overview of the key themes and challenges facing the County that must be considered for the transportation plan.

Chapter 2 Goals, Objectives, & Performance Targets
This chapter identifies how the guiding goals and objectives that were used for the development of the plan and the performance targets that were developed to measure success.

Chapter 3 Planning Assumptions
This chapter highlights the planning requirements and process used to develop the transportation plan including the forecast of population and employment, as well as the travel demand model used to forecast future travel needs performance.

Chapter 4 Transportation Plan
This chapter documents the cost feasible plan which stands as the transportation plan for the Polk TPO. This chapter identifies the sources of funding for the plan for each of the modes of travel included in the plan, as well as unfunded transportation needs.

Chapter 5 Cost Feasible Plan Highlights and Priority Projects
The Momentum 2040 cost feasible plan is a robust plan that expands beyond the traditional roadway projects. Key priorities of the plan are highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 6 Public Involvement
This chapter details the concerted effort the Polk TPO made to solicit and obtain a diverse set of input.

Chapter 7 Performance Evaluation
Performance evaluation is a new requirement for transportation plans. This chapter documents the performance of the Momentum 2040 plan and the environmental mitigation activities that were undertaken for the plan.

Chapter 8 Plan Implementation
Many activities need to take place for the plan to be a success. This chapter documents the implementation activities that are unique to this Plan or Polk County. This chapter also summarizes the process for making amendments (changes) to the plan.

Multi-modal facilities are vital to the Polk County transportation infrastructure and provide health benefits.
Key Themes

The Momentum 2040 Plan embodies five key themes that influence the allocation of resources and initiatives undertaken in the plan:

1. Safe Transportation Network
   Many urban areas of our county have roadway designs that do not address the needs of the communities they serve. The TPO’s Complete Streets program, Neighborhood Mobility Audits, and Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plans seek to retrofit these corridors and target safety partnerships to improve safety.

2. Protect and Enhance Communities
   The plan fundamentally was based on the assumption that transportation projects should not include any fatal flaws in the form of significant adverse impacts to the environment or communities. Both the Complete Streets program and Neighborhood Mobility Audit improvements will enhance our local communities.

3. Preserve the Existing System Enhancements
   Our transportation heritage has left us an inheritance in the form of a robust roadway network. We are responsible for preserving this network for future generations and enhancing the system in a cost-effective fashion. The Congestion Management Process will continue its cost-effective strategies of implementing strategic intersection improvements that can delay or eliminate the need for major roadway expansion projects; as well as adding multimodal and safety improvements to otherwise routine roadway resurfacing projects.

4. Support Economic Development
   The plan includes both funded capacity projects and unfunded “Illustrative Projects” that seek to enhance our economic competitiveness. Funded projects include Interstate 4 managed lanes and improvements to US 27. Unfunded Illustrative Projects include the Central Polk Parkway and expansion of SunRail into Polk County.

5. Efficient Transportation Network
   Overall much of the transportation network in Polk County is relatively congestion free. This plan seeks to prioritize roadway projects that provide the greatest benefit to efficient travel in the County.

Significant Challenges

The Momentum 2040 Plan builds upon the previous plan adopted in December 2010 titled the 2035 Mobility Vision Plan and many of the projects identified in that plan continue their path to implementation in this plan. It is important to note that significant challenges influence the Momentum 2040 Plan.

1. Safety Concerns
   Our community similar to other communities in Florida is confronted by frequent fatality and severe injury crashes that are not compatible with our community expectations. This plan makes significant investments in funding safety improvements to support a movement “Toward Zero Fatalities.”

2. Growth and Demand
   Our strategic location in Central Florida, robust highway network, and recent strong industry growth makes Polk County well positioned as we emerge from the Great Recession with significant growth. It is forecasted that the population in Polk County will grow by nearly 400,000 persons and nearly 190,000 employees. This will place significant demand on our highway network, especially in northeast Polk County.

3. Declining County Revenues
   While spending on major state highways is forecasted as an increase in this plan there is a significant decrease in County transportation funding which builds and maintains our local and county roadways and supports our public transportation system. While providing local transportation projects continues to become more expensive, our local revenues in this plan have decreased from $1.4 billion to $250 million. As a result, this plan will result in fewer county roadway improvements and less public transportation improvements.
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