



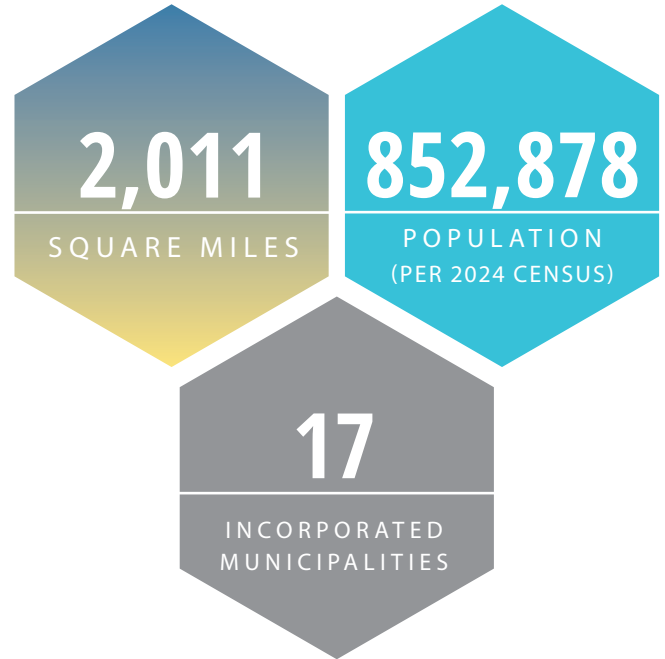
# POLK TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION YEAR IN REVIEW



# 2025

PolkTPO.com

# > POLK COUNTY BY NUMBERS



## > POLK TPO BOARD (AS OF DECEMBER 2025)

The TPO Board is comprised of elected officials, including all five county commissioners and representatives from municipalities in Polk County.

**Chair**, Trish Pfeiffer - City of Bartow  
**Vice-Chair**, Sara Roberts-McCarley - City of Lakeland

**Polk County**  
 Commissioner Martha Santiago  
 Commissioner Michael Scott  
 Commissioner Bill Braswell  
 Commissioner Rick Wilson  
 Commissioner Becky Troutman

**City of Auburndale**  
 Commissioner Jordan Helms

**City of Bartow**  
 Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer

**City of Davenport**  
 Vice Mayor Jeremy Clark

**City of Haines City**  
 Commissioner Omar Arroyo  
 Vice Mayor Vernel Smith

**South County Bloc**  
 Commissioner Dawn McDonald - Mulberry  
 Council Member Adam Greenway - Frostproof  
 Commissioner Jim Watts - Fort Meade

**City of Lakeland**  
 Mayor Bill Mutz  
 Commissioner Guy LaLonde, Jr.  
 Commissioner Sara Roberts McCarley  
 Commissioner Stephanie Madden  
 Commissioner Bill Read  
 Mayor Pro Tem Mike Musick

**City of Lake Alfred**  
 Vice Mayor Nancy Daley

**City of Lake Wales**  
 Mayor Jack Hilligoss

**City of Winter Haven**  
 Mayor Nat Birdsong  
 Mayor Pro-Tem Brian Yates  
 Commissioner Tracy Mercer

**Central County and Ridge Bloc**  
 Mayor Joe LaCascia - Polk City  
 Vice Mayor Steven Metosh Sr. - Eagle Lake  
 Mayor Phyllis Hall - Lake Hamilton  
 Commissioner Willie Quarles - Dundee

**Advisory Members**  
 FDOT District One Interim Secretary James Driggers  
 Assistant County Attorney III Heather Bryan  
 Polk TPO Executive Director Ryan Kordek





# Polk Transportation Planning Organization



## › ENVISION 2050

In 2025, the Polk TPO promoted Envision 2050 as the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) that will guide Polk County's mobility and infrastructure investments through the next 25 years. With the county's population projected to reach nearly 1.2 million residents by 2050, the plan outlines more than \$13 billion in needed transportation projects to support future growth.

Throughout the past year, the TPO emphasized public outreach, including a video series highlighting past LRTP projects including Central Polk Parkway West, Lake Silver Drive in Winter Haven and the Fort Fraser Trail extension.

To support transparency and engagement, the Polk TPO hosted two live-streamed public forums and maintained a dedicated project website where residents could review maps, explore plan materials and submit comments for future planning consideration. Project details can be found on [PolkTPO.com](https://PolkTPO.com).

Envision 2050 was adopted on Dec. 9, 2025. With adoption complete, the plan now moves into the implementation phase, where the TPO will begin prioritizing projects for funding and development in coordination with local governments, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and regional partners.



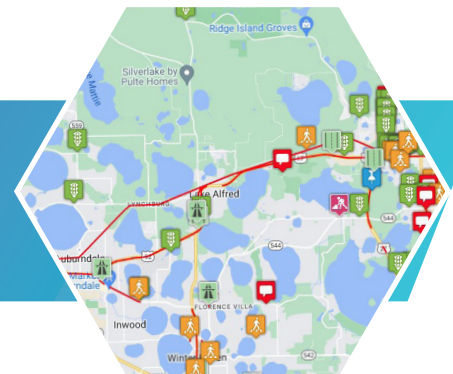
PAST LRTP PROJECTS

Video Series



LIVE STREAM FORUMS

June and October 2025



PUBLIC FEEDBACK

Maps and Surveys



## › TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN ADOPTION

The Polk TPO adopted Citrus Connection's new Transit Development Plan (TDP) last year following their presentation at the December 2025 TPO Board meeting. The five-year plan outlines strategies to expand mobility options, modernize transit services and strengthen regional connectivity across Polk County. Developed through a collaborative process, the plan reflects significant leadership and technical support from TPO staff, who ensured consistency with regional growth, multimodal priorities and long-range transportation goals. Engineering and planning firm Benesch provided additional expertise in data analysis, route evaluation and scenario development to refine the final recommendations.

Public engagement played a central role in shaping the plan. Citrus Connection and TPO staff conducted rider surveys, community workshops, pop-up events and stakeholder meetings to gather input from residents across the county. That feedback directly informed priorities such as expanded service hours, improved stop amenities and better access to jobs and healthcare. The adopted plan positioned Citrus Connection to deliver a more efficient, equitable and forward-looking transit network, supporting the region's continued growth under the banner of "Progress in Motion."

## › POLK TPO STAFF SPOTLIGHT

In fall 2025, Transportation Planning Administrator Julia Davis, AICP, retired after eight years of passionate service to the Polk Transportation Planning Organization.

Davis spent decades working in transit planning and transportation-disadvantaged coordination. She earned her American Institute of Certified Planners credential in 1999. Her career included roles with LeeTran, the Lee Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council and the Florida Department of Transportation.



Before joining the Polk TPO in 2017, Davis operated an independent transportation planning, public involvement and creative outreach consulting business.

During her tenure at the Polk TPO, Davis became a trusted voice in the community. She was known for her outreach style, public speaking, historical storytelling, training programs and aerial photography, which supported transportation planning and public information efforts.

Her experience and enthusiasm for public service will be missed by colleagues across Polk County and Florida's transportation community.



## › CENTRAL POLK PARKWAY GROUND BREAKING

In October 2025, Polk TPO leadership joined state and local partners to celebrate the start of construction on the Central Polk Parkway extension. Bartow City Commissioner and TPO Chair Trish Pfeiffer, Winter Haven Mayor Nat Birdsong and TPO Executive Director Ryan Kordek attended the groundbreaking ceremony to commemorate this long-planned regional mobility investment. Polk TPO extends its appreciation to FDOT and FDOT's Turnpike Enterprise for delivering this critical project.

The extension will add 2.6 miles of new four-lane tolled roadway from U.S. Highway 17/State Road 35 to State Road 60, easing congestion and improving access to major corridors, including Interstate 4. The six-year project includes modern safety features such as roadway lighting, updated signage, pavement markings, guardrail and wrong-way driving detection technology.



*Photo credit: Gary White/The Ledger*

For the Polk TPO, the start of construction represents the implementation of a project first introduced in the TPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, showcasing the result of decades of planning, coordination and partnership. The groundbreaking marked a major step toward improving mobility, supporting economic growth and strengthening the transportation network throughout Polk County.

## › FORT FRASER TRAIL EXTENSION

Last year, Polk County Government and the Polk TPO continued work on the 2.4-mile Fort Fraser Trail extension between U.S. Highway 98 and Lakeland Highlands Road (County Road 37B). The original trail ran parallel to U.S. Highway 98 from Winter Lake Road (State Road 540) in Lakeland to State Road 60 in Bartow, with trailheads at Polk State College and in Highland City. The extension connects more than 36 miles of paved and unpaved multi-use trails, strengthening regional mobility for people walking or biking.

This collaborative effort earned Polk County Government and the Polk TPO the Bike/Walk Central Florida 2025 Wheel of Achievement Award, recognizing the Fort Fraser Trail Extension as a standout project that improves safety and expands accessible transportation options. The award highlights initiatives that make Central Florida's streets and trails safer and easier to use for all, reflecting a shared commitment to building a more connected transportation network.





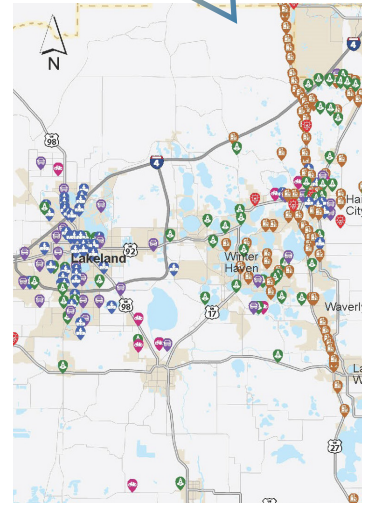
## › VISION ZERO POLK

Vision Zero Polk continued to serve as Polk TPO's comprehensive safety campaign through the past year, centered on the goal of eliminating traffic deaths and serious injuries across all modes of travel. The initiative brings together data analysis, community partnerships and public outreach to build a transportation system where everyone, whether walking, biking, driving or rolling, can travel safely.

Polk TPO continued this work through development of the Vision Zero Action Plan, a framework that identified priority corridors, key safety strategies and community-driven solutions.

Public input played a major role, with residents sharing their safety concerns and ideas through surveys, community meetings and online feedback opportunities. Additional information on Vision Zero safety initiatives and studies are available online at [PolkTPO.com](http://PolkTPO.com).

Here are some of the events Polk TPO participated in that align with the Vision Zero initiative:



## › BIKE SAFETY EVENT

On March 28, 2025, Polk TPO staff participated in the Cycle Celebration event in Bartow, partnering with FDOT's Commute Connector to promote transportation safety and highlight the range of travel options available to residents. Before the guided bike ride began, Bartow City Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer issued a proclamation underscoring the importance of educating commuters about their transportation choices and encouraging safer, more sustainable travel habits.

As part of the TPO's broader Vision Zero Polk efforts, the event offered an opportunity to engage directly with the community, share safety resources that make it easier for people to walk, bike, and choose alternative modes of transportation across Polk County.





## ➤ CROSSWALK SAFETY - BEST FOOT FORWARD

Polk TPO supported pedestrian safety in 2025 by participating in two Best Foot Forward crosswalk enforcement events. Best Foot Forward is a regional pedestrian safety initiative that works with law enforcement, local governments and community partners to improve driver yielding behavior and reduce crashes at marked crosswalks. In June of last year, Polk TPO supported this commitment by passing a resolution in support of Best Foot Forward's pedestrian safety program.

On July 31, 2025, Polk TPO staff joined the Best Foot Forward team and the Winter Haven Police Department Traffic Unit, where officers stopped 26 drivers and educated them on Florida's law requiring motorists to yield to pedestrians in marked crosswalks.

On Aug. 6, 2025, Polk TPO partnered with Polk Vision, Bartow City Commissioner Trish Pfeiffer and the Bartow Police Department at Shumate Drive and East Clower Street in Bartow. The event emphasized safe driving and walking in school zones and busy crossing areas.

Together, these efforts reinforced Polk TPO's commitment to safer, more walkable communities and aligned directly with the goals of Vision Zero Polk.



➤ Winter Haven





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