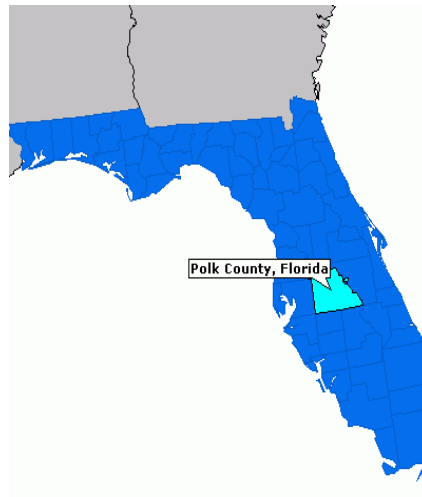


2020 POLK COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATED PLAN



FINAL

Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board Minor Update Adopted June 29, 2020

Prepared by:



The TPO planning process is conducted in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Related Statutes. Any person or beneficiary who believes they have been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or family status may file a complaint with the TPO's Title VI Specialist at (863) 534-6486, or by writing Ms. Julia Davis at Post Office Box 9005, Bartow, Florida 33831-9005.



Polk County Transportation Disadvantaged Program

PLANNING AGENCY: Polk Transportation Planning Organization
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Table 1. TDSP LCB Roll Call Vote

	A Representative of:	Voting Member	Voted	Yes	No
1	Chairperson	Mayor Pro-Tem Nat Birdsong	✓	✓	
A	Dept. of Transportation	Charlene Ross	✓	✓	
B	Dept. of Children and Families	Shirley Johnson			
C	Public Education Community	VACANT			
D	Div Edu-Voc Rehab	Katie Kummer			
E	Veterans	Joseph Lesniewicz IV			
F	Economically disadvantaged	VACANT			
G	Elderly	Marcia Staszko V-CHAIRPERSON			
H	Disabled	Lisa Peterson			
I-1	Citizen advocate	Linda West			
1-2	Citizen advocate/passenger	Sheryl Brown			
J	Children at risk	Tiara Dasher	✓	✓	
K	Local Mass Transit	Commissioner James H. "JP" Powell	✓	✓	
L	Depart of Elder Affairs	Kevin Gilds	✓	✓	
M	Transportation industry	VACANT			
N	Agency for Health Care Admin	Emily Hughart	✓	✓	
O	Agency for Persons w Disab	Carla Bettis	✓	✓	
P	Regional Workforce Dev Board	Stacy Campbell-Domineck	✓	✓	
Q	Local medical community	Joy Johnson Holly Vida	✓	✓	

The Polk County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board hereby certifies that an annual evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator was conducted consistent with the policies of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and all recommendations of that evaluation have been incorporated in this Service Plan. We further certify that the rates contained herein have been thoroughly reviewed, evaluated and approved. This Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan Update was reviewed in its entirety and approved by this Board at an official meeting held on June 29, 2020.

June 29, 2020

Date


Mayor Pro-Tem Nat Birdsong - Chairman

Polk County Local Coordinating Board

Approved by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged:

Date

David Darm, Executive Director

Figure 1: Polk TPO's certification of LCB's membership


POLK LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD MEMBERSHIP CERTIFICATION -- 06/25/2020-2					
Name: Polk Transportation Planning Organization					
Address: Drawer TS05, PO Box 9005, Bartow, FL 33831-9005					
The Metropolitan Planning Organization/Designated Official Planning Agency named above hereby certifies to the following:					
1. The membership of the Local Coordinating Board, established pursuant to Rule 41-2.012(3) FAC, does in fact represent the appropriate parties as identified in the following list, and					
2. The membership represents, to the maximum extent feasible, a cross section of the local community					
Signature:  06/25/2020					
Chandra Frederick, AICP		Executive Director			
	A Representative of:	Voting Member	Term Expires	Alternate Member	Term Expires
1	Chairperson	Mayor Pro-Tem Nat Birdsong	Appointed by TPO Board Annually; 2020 - present	No alternate	n/a
A	Department of Transportation (FDOT)	Charlene Ross	By office held	Dale Hanson Michelle Peronto	By office held
B	Department of Children and Families (DCF)	Shirley Johnson	By office held	Coleen Collinsworth Trina Roberts	By office held
C	Public Education Community	VACANT	By office held	VACANT	By office held
D	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Blind Services,	Katie Kummer	By office held	VACANT	By office held
E	Representing Veterans	Joseph Lesniewicz IV	By office held	Harry Clark Tim Kirckhart	By office held
F	Fla Assoc for Community Action representing the economically disadvantaged in the county	VACANT		VACANT	
G	Representing elderly in the county;	Marcia Staszko VICE-CHAIRPERSON	2/2020-2/2023 (2 nd Term)	VACANT	
H	Representing the disabled in the county;	Lisa Peterson	04/12/18-04/11/21 (1 st Term)	VACANT	
I1	One of Two citizen advocates in the county	Linda West	02/14/19-02/14/22 (1 st Term)	VACANT	
12	One of Two citizen advocates - person who uses the transportation service(s)	Sheryl Brown	10/11/18-10/11/21 (2 nd Term)	VACANT	
J	A local representative for children at risk	Tiara Dasher	10/11/18-10/11/21 (2 nd Term)	VACANT	
K	Local Mass Transit or Public Transit System's Board	Commissioner James H. "JP" Powell	By office held 1/8/2018	vacant	
L	A local representative of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs	Kevin Gilds	By office held	Kristina Melling	By office held
M	Local private for profit transportation industry.	VACANT		VACANT	
N	Florida Agency for Health Care Administration	Emily Hughart	By office held	Vacant	By office held
O	Agency for Persons with Disabilities	Carla Bettis	By office held	Jeannette Estes	By office held
P	Regional Workforce Development	Stacy Campbell-Domineck	By office held	VACANT	By office held
Q	Local medical community	Joy Johnson	10/11/18-10/11/21 (3 rd Term)	Holly Vida	04/11/19-04/11-21 (1 st Term)

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INTRODUCTION TO THE 2020 UPDATE TO THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN

The purpose of the Transportation Disadvantaged program is to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, individuals with lower incomes and children at risk by ensuring that the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) – the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) coordinates transportation resources provided through multiple federal and state programs. Coordination enhances transportation access, minimizes duplication of services, and facilitates the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation possible with available resources. The Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) is implemented by the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) and the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB). The TDSP is updated annually.

The organizational chart contained in **Appendix 1**, “Florida Coordinated Transportation System Organization” identifies all those who are involved in the provision of TD services in Polk County, including the CTD, TPO, TDLCB and CTC.

Completion of a TDSP is a requirement for receiving certain public transportation funds. The TDSP complies with applicable state regulations as well as federal regulations for a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. The TDSP is required for funding from the State Transportation Disadvantaged Program. The Coordinated Plan is required for funding from Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program. The TDSP/Coordinated Plan elements include a development plan, service plan, quality assurance component and a cost/revenue –rates structure component.

This TDSP/Coordinated Plan is an update to the 2016 TDSP for the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD), which became the official Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Polk County, effective April 1, 2016.

In the 2020 annual update to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan, staff from the Polk Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) worked closely with staff from the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), Citrus Connection. A committee of members of the Polk Local Coordinating Board (LCB), reviewed the draft TDSP update document, and supplied comments.

Please refer to the List of Acronyms in **Appendix 2** and the Glossary of Terms in **Appendix 3**.

Notes on the 2020 Update to the TDSP

This year, we addressed the required elements for a minor update. Those include:

- Roll Call Voting Sheet,
- Data (population and demographics)
- Needs Assessment (TIP annual element information)
- Goals, Objectives and Strategies ("GOS")
- Implementation Schedule
- Recommendations from LCB's Evaluation of CTC's FY 2018-19

And, we added this information to reflect, "What has changed."

- Additional tables in the data and demographics section of the TDSP.
- Information on the "Re-Route 2020"
- Information on changes to the Transportation Disadvantaged's Trip-Equipment Grant allocations.
- Added information on the impact of the global pandemic, COVID-19.

PART 1 – DEVELOPMENT PLAN COMPONENT

Background of the Transportation Disadvantaged Program

In 1989, the Florida State Legislature established the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) to fund and oversee the expansion of transportation services for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD). The CTD is sometimes called the TD Commission. The legislation also established a Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund (TDTF), funded from vehicle registration fees and gasoline sales taxes.

According to the Florida Statutes (F.S.), Chapter 427:

“‘Transportation Disadvantaged’ means those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life-sustaining activities, or children who are handicapped or high-risk or at-risk as defined in s.411.202.”

The CTD administers and distributes these funds to each established service area within the entire state through Community Transportation Coordinators (CTC) according to an established formula, requiring a 10 percent local match. The CTD is responsible for establishing the distribution formula, which is based on several criteria: total service area population, total system vehicle miles, total system passenger trips, and total service area square miles. Funds have been distributed to every service area’s CTC each year since 1990.

To assist with their local planning efforts, the CTD appoints a Designated Official Planning Agency (DOPA) for each service area to: staff the local coordinating board, appoint Local Coordinating Board (LCB) members, recommend the designation of the service area’s CTC, and assist the CTC in the development of the TDSP. The Polk County Transportation Planning Organization, (TPO) has been the DOPA for Polk County since 1990.

To maintain presence on a local level, the CTD has established TDLCBs for each service area that: advise them directly on local TD issues, oversee the responsibilities of their local CTC, review all existing and proposed TD programs, and recommend the use of funds received from the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund, TDTF.

Based on United States Code (U.S.C.), Code 49 Federal Regulations, and [49 CFR] the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires a similar plan entitled the *Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan*. The FTA Fact Sheet states that the purpose of the plan is:

“The human services transportation coordination provisions aim to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes by ensuring that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple federal programs. Coordination will enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate the most appropriate cost-effective transportation possible with available resources.”

The TDSP serves to satisfy the requirements of both the CTD and FTA.

Designation Date/History of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC)

Chapter 427, F.S. requires that every five years the TDLCB and the TPO recommend a single entity to the CTD, known as the CTC, to manage the countywide TD program. The purpose of the Transportation Disadvantaged Program is to ensure the availability of efficient, cost-effective, and quality transportation services for TD persons.

The role of the CTC is to coordinate cost-effective, efficient, unduplicated, and unfragmented TD services within its service area. The Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) is designated by the state TD Commission as the CTC for Polk County. The designation is effective April 1, 2016 through June 30, 2021, through an executed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the TD Commission and LAMTD.

Planning staff will work closely with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged starting in July 2020, to take the necessary steps for the designation of a community transportation coordinator, for the next contract cycle.

Appendix 4 contains the organizational chart for the Polk Community Transportation Coordinator current as of October 30, 2018.

Countywide Transit Services

In Polk County there continues to be a high demand for TD services. There has been an increase in the cost of trips, particularly in fuel and labor costs. This is attributed to the transition of the CTC from the Polk County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to the

Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD). LAMTD is a Special Taxing District and receives funding support from the BOCC, but due to Medicaid Reform¹ and other mitigating factors, the challenge remains to maximize resources for TD trips.

The county's large land area, geographically concentrated medical and social services and increasing congestion on main roads increases trip time, makes scheduling more difficult and causes the cost per trip to rise. The CTC has responded to these circumstances by implementing a real-time dispatch, routing, and scheduling system, in an effort to enhance operations, coordination efficiencies and cost-effective delivery of services.

Consistency Review of Other Plans

The Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan is consistent to the maximum extent feasible with many approved plans and documents and planning efforts in Polk County.

TPO staff reviewed pertinent portions of the following plans and this Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan is consistent with the referenced plans.

- Polk County 2060 Transportation Vision Plan
- Polk Consolidated Transit Development Plan (TDP) – “My Ride”
- Polk Transportation Planning Organization “Momentum 2040” (Long Range Transportation Plan)
- Polk County Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Unified Planning Work Program

Long Range Plan Update for 2045

In 2020, the Polk Transportation Planning Organization is updating the “Momentum 2040” (Long Range Transportation Plan), to the year 2045 planning horizon. This will be called, “Momentum 2045.” The Transit Element will be updated, as part of this effort.

¹ “Medicaid Reform” is a catch-all phrase for a change in the Florida Coordinated System, which took place statewide, in FY 2013-15. Before this change took place, non-emergency Medicaid funded trips (as well as the funding for those trips) were included in the coordinated system. This helped the coordinated system achieve high levels of cost-effective service. Now, non-emergency Medicaid funded trips are provided by businesses and agencies which operate outside of the Florida Coordinated System.

The Polk TPO regularly conducts transit studies that assist in identifying transportation barriers and issues for the transportation disadvantaged population. Some of these studies include:

- Neighborhood Mobility Audits (Case studies in underserved areas to identify connectivity and gaps in mobility infrastructure)
- Complete Streets Corridor Feasibility Study
- Evaluation of Sidewalk Coverage for Connectivity
- Roadway Safety Audits

Unified Planning Work Program

In the Polk TPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), upcoming transit studies will build upon the completed ones listed above. Additional studies will include the following:

- Neighborhood Mobility Audits for Seniors
- Bicycle/Pedestrian Outreach and Safety Education Program
- Transportation Improvement Program, (TIP)

Transportation Improvement Program-Annual Element

The FY 2020-2021 allocations from the TD Trust Fund (TDTF) are as follows:

- Trip-Equipment Grant, \$1,334,607, plus a 10% local match
- TD Planning Grant, \$ 33,327

Polk Vision

Polk Vision actively facilitates a process through which Polk County realizes its full potential. Polk Vision identifies and builds awareness of community priorities, promotes partnerships and encourages accountability. According to the Polk Vision website,

“Polk Vision is the leading collective impact organization serving the entire Polk County community. We provide central coordination to align the work of hundreds of dedicated volunteers through partnerships of public, private and civic organizations working collectively to make the shared vision of improved community prosperity for Polk County a reality! Polk Vision actively facilitates a process through which Polk County realizes its aspirations and full potential. Polk

Vision identifies and builds awareness of community partnerships and encourages accountability.”

Polk Vision has taken an active role in seeking coordinated transportation solutions, recognizing that it is a quality of life issue for the residents of Polk County.

Public Participation

The Polk TPO conducts meetings and activities of the Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged according to rules and regulations regarding open meetings in Florida. The LCB conducts an annual Public Hearing.

From mid-March 2020 to present, the contagious and deadly Novel Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has impacted the Polk TPO’s ability to interact with the public and seek their input. To accommodate for this, the TPO has implemented more creative mechanisms for public engagement and to offer greater flexibility when face-to-face interaction may be limited. This includes the use of internet-based services like social media platforms, and content on the TPO’s website. Some meetings are conducted as a hybrid, where, some people are in a meeting room, and others are on the telephone. Meetings are conducted in a variety of ways: in-person, but in larger rooms and spaced to allow for “social distancing,” which means to limit the space between people to 6 feet, in order to reduce the chances of spreading or catching the virus; sanitizing tables and other surfaces which people might touch, to reduce the spread of the virus.

SERVICE AREA PROFILE AND DEMOGRAPHICS

Land

Polk County is located in the center of Florida, 35 miles west of Orlando and 25 miles east of Tampa. It is bordered on the north by Lake and Sumter counties, on the east by Osceola County, on the south by Hardee and Highland counties, and on the west by Hillsborough and Pasco counties.

Polk County is large – larger than the State of Rhode Island! According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the county has a total area of 2,011 square miles of which 1,798 square miles is land and 213 square miles (10.6%) is water. It is the fourth-largest county in Florida by land area and fifth-largest by total area. Providing coordinated transportation is challenging to the Polk Community Transportation Coordinator because of the large land area and the numerous lakes and other water bodies, and uneven and generally concentrated locations of medical/social services and employment opportunities.

Population

According to the U.S. Census, the total population for Polk County was 602,095 in 2010. The 2018 estimate is 708,009, an increase of 17.59%. **Table 1** shows the population characteristics of Polk County and Florida from 2010-2018. It should be noted that the population growth rate of Polk County was less than the population growth rate of Florida in 2018. A similar trend is true for growth in the number of households and the number of persons per household.

Polk County is gradually becoming more dense, which contributes to a more efficient transit operating environment.

Table 1. Population Characteristics of Polk County and Florida from 2010-2019.

Population Data	2010		2019		% Change (2010-2019)	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
Persons	602,095	18,801,310	724,777	21,477,737	20.38%	14.24%
Households	227,485	7,420,802	231,260	7,621,760	1.66%	2.71%
Persons per Household	2.65	2.53	2.84	2.65	7.17%	4.74%
Land area (square miles)	1,798	53,624.76	1,798	53,624.76	n/a	n/a
Persons per Sq. Mile of Land Area (Density)	335	350	403	400	20.38%	14.24

Source: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019."

Table 2. Population Characteristics of Polk County and Florida from 2018-2019.

Population Data	2018		2019		% Change (2018-2019)	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
Persons	708,009	21,299,325	724,777	21,477,737	2.37%	0.84%
Households	226,604	7,510,882	231,260	7,621,760	2.05%	1.48%
Persons per Household	2.82	2.64	2.84	2.65	0.71%	0.38%
Land area (square miles)	1,798	53,624.76	1,798	53,624.76	n/a	n/a
Persons per Sq. Mile of Land Area (Density)	393.77	397.19	403	400	2.36%	0.84%

Source: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019."

Municipalities

There are 17 incorporated municipalities in Polk County. Cities with a population of more than 10,000 in 2010 included Lakeland, Winter Haven, Bartow, Haines City, Lake Wales, and Auburndale. **Table 3** presents population trends between 1990, 2000, and 2010 for incorporated and unincorporated areas in Polk County. Davenport, Haines City, and Dundee experienced the top three population changes between 1990 and 2010, with 88.9 percent, 75.8 percent, and 59.2 percent, respectively. From 1990 to 2010, the population growth rate of incorporated municipalities (38.8%) exhibited a slower increase than the population growth rate of the unincorporated area (55.4.)

Table 3. Population Trends for Cities, Towns, and Unincorporated Areas, 1990-2010

Municipality	1990	2000	2010	% Change (1990-2000)	% Change (2000-2010)	% Change (1990-2010)
Auburndale	8,858	11,032	13,507	24.5%	22.4%	52.5%
Bartow	14,716	15,340	17,298	4.2%	12.8%	17.5%
Davenport	1,529	1,924	2,888	n/a	50.1%	88.9%
Dundee	2,335	2,912	3,717	24.7%	27.6%	59.2%
Eagle Lake	1,758	2,496	2,255	42.0%	-9.7%	28.3%
Fort Meade	4,976	5,691	5,626	14.4%	-1.1%	13.1%
Frostproof	2,808	2,975	2,992	5.9%	0.6%	6.6%
Haines City	11,683	13,174	20,535	12.8%	55.9%	75.8%
Highland Park	155	244	230	n/a	-5.7%	n/a
Hillcrest Heights	221	266	254	n/a	-4.5%	n/a
Lake Alfred	3,622	3,890	5,105	7.4%	31.2%	40.9%
Lake Hamilton	1,128	1,304	1,213	15.6%	-7.0%	7.5%
Lake Wales	9,670	10,194	14,225	5.4%	39.5%	47.1%
Lakeland	70,576	78,452	97,422	11.2%	24.2%	38.0%
Mulberry	2,988	3,230	3,817	8.1%	18.2%	27.7%
Polk City	1,439	1,516	1,562	5.4%	3.0%	8.5%
Winter Haven	24,725	26,487	33,874	7.1%	27.9%	37.0%
Incorporated	163,187	181,127	226,520	11.0%	25.1%	38.8%
Unincorporated	242,195	302,797	376,385	25.0%	24.3%	55.4%
Total	405,382	483,924	602,095	19.4%	24.6%	48.7%

Note: Source is undetermined – table not changed in 2020

Urban and Rural Areas

For planning purposes, the Polk County service area is “Urban.” Generally speaking an urban area is the incorporated area, and the unincorporated area is rural.

Table 4. Population Trends for Cities, Towns, and Unincorporated Areas, (Incorporated areas versus unincorporated areas) 1990-2010

Municipality	1990	2000	2010	% Change (1990-2000)	% Change (2000-2010)	% Change (1990-2010)
Incorporated (Urban area)	163,187	181,127	226,520	11.0%	25.1%	38.8%
Unincorporated (Rural area)	242,195	302,797	376,385	25.0%	24.3%	55.4%
Total	405,382	483,924	602,095	19.4%	24.6%	48.7%
Percent Incorporated (Urban)	40.26%	37.43%	37.57%			
Percent Unincorporated (Rural)	59.74%	62.57%	62.43%			

Note: Source is undetermined –Assessment by Polk TPO, 2020

Minorities

When compared to Florida, Polk County's minority and non-minority populations are nearly the same as the state averages. **Table 5**, shows that Polk County's minority population is 21.10 percent while the state of Florida is 22.7 percent in 2019.

Table 5. Race and Hispanic Origin, 2019

Race and Hispanic Origin	Polk County, 2019	Florida, 2019
White alone, percent	78.90%	77.30%
Black or African American alone, percent	16.10%	16.90%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.70%	50.00%*
Asian alone, percent	1.90%	3.00%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.10%	10.00%*
Two or More Races, percent	2.20%	2.20%
Hispanic or Latino, percent(b)	23.60%	26.10%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	57.90%	53.50%

Sources: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019" () corrected data record*

Table 6 shows the changes in minority populations from 2018-2019.

Table 6. Changes in Race and Hispanic Origin for Polk County from 2018 to 2019

Race and Hispanic Origin	Polk County, 2018	Polk County, 2019	Percent change from 2018 to 2019
White alone, percent	79.10%	79.9%	-0.25%
Black or African American alone, percent	16.00%	16.10%	0.63%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.70%	0.70%	0%
Asian alone, percent	1.90%	1.90%	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.10%	0.10%	0%
Two or More Races, percent	2.20%	2.20%	0%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	22.30%	23.60%	5.83%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, percent	59.30%	57.90%	-2.36%

Sources: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"; "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019"

Age Distribution

The transit-dependent population cohort, are persons under 18 years old and persons 65 years old and over. **Table 7** shows that the age distribution of Polk County is similar to the age distribution of Florida as a whole.

Table 5. Age Distribution of Polk Compared to Florida, 2019

Age and Sex	Polk County, 2019	Florida, 2019
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.80%	5.40%
Persons under 18 years, percent	22.10%	19.90%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	20.20%	20.50%
Female persons, percent	51.00%	51.10%

Sources: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019"

As can be seen in **Table 8**, the transit-dependent population cohort, persons under 18 years old and persons 65 years old and over, represented 48.1 percent of the total population in Polk County in 2019. It was 48.2% in 2018, a difference of -0.21%

Table 8. Changes in Age Distribution for Polk County, 2018 to 2019

Age and Sex	Polk County, 2018	Polk County, 2019	Percent change from 2018 to 2019
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.80%	5.80%	-6.45%
Persons under 18 years, percent	22.30%	22.10%	.90%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	20.10%	20.2%	.50%
Female persons, percent	51.00%	51.00%	0.00%
[Persons 19-64 years]	48.20%	48.10%	-0.21%

Sources: 2018 - "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"; 2019- "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019." Extrapolation of Persons 19-64, Polk TPO

Standard of Living

From 2008-2012, the per capita income in past twelve months (2012 dollars) was \$21,674 for Polk County and \$26,451 State of Florida. The Median household income for this same period was \$43,606 for Polk while the state average was \$47,309.

The Polk County per capita income in past twelve months (2017 dollars) was \$22,579 for Polk County and \$28,774 for the State of Florida. The Median household income for this same period was \$45,988 for Polk while the state average was \$50,883.

Source: 2018 - "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"

Table 9. Changes in Standard of Living, Polk Compared to Florida, 2018-2019.

Standard of Living	2018		2019		% Change (2018-2019)	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
Polk County per capita-income in past twelve months (2017 dollars) versus (2018 dollars)	\$22,579	28,774	23,812	30,197	5.46%	4.95%
Median household income	\$45,988	50883	48500	53267	5.46%	4.69%

Source: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"; "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019".

Poverty Level

Based on historical analysis combined with short-term projections, the number of families and female heads of household living below the poverty level increased an average 1.5% annually since 1990. The total percentage of families that are below the 2008-2012 poverty levels has risen to 17.5% in the county which is above the state percentage at 15.6%.

Table 10. Changes in Poverty Level, Polk Compared to Florida 2018-2019.

Poverty Level	2018		2019		% Change (2018-2019)	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
Number of people living in poverty	16.10%	14.00%	15.70%	13.60%	2.48%	2.86%

Source: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"; "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019".

The U.S. Census Bureau's 2004 American Community Survey Profile for Polk County illustrates that approximately 34.5% of families with female head of households are below the poverty level and 54% of those households have children under the age of 5 years.

In 2013, the Brookings Institute published, "Confronting Suburban Poverty in America" by Elizabeth Kneebone and Alan Berube. In their study it was reported that Polk County ranked seventh in the Nation (entire United States), at 17.7% in the highest suburban poverty rates as of 2010. When a local reporter asked what attributed to Polk being ranked so high nationwide, the Brookings Institute stated it was primarily due to the lack of public transportation and transportation options within the county.

Health Insurance

The Quality of Life in Polk County, A Needs Assessment, 2003, University of South Florida, estimated that based on the pattern of Polk County's demographics compared to the state, the number of uninsured may be as high as 25%. Although this figure is probably high, a conservative estimate is that 16% of the children and 23% of the adults, approximately 100,000 people, have no health insurance. This section will be updated when the effects of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) of March 2010, a comprehensive health care reform law, can be fully assessed. To date, Florida leaders have rejected federal money which has to be used for expansion of the Medicaid program, which has severe ramifications to the state budget in Florida.

People who do not have health insurance put off preventative care because they cannot afford it. Preventative care trips are known in advance, and a person has time to make a trip request in advance for this care.

Table 11. Changes in People without Health Insurance, Polk Compared to Florida 2018-2019.

People without health insurance	2018		2019		% Change (2018-2019)	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
Population	708,009	21,299,325	724,777	21,477,737	2.37%	.84%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years old	15.8%	15.9%	15.4%	16.0%	-2.53%	0.63%
(Estimated) Number of people in Polk without Health Insurance	111,865	n/a	111,615	n/a	-0.22%	n/a

Source: "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"; "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019".

People under age 65 with Disabilities

People under the age of 65 with disabilities rely upon the Transportation Disadvantaged Program for their transportation to life sustaining services. The estimated number of people under the age of 65 with Disabilities has increased by 1.41% from 2018 to 2019.

Table 12. Changes in People with Disabilities, Polk County, compared to Florida 2018 to 2019

People with Disabilities	2018		2019		% Change (2018-2019)	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
Population	708,009	21,299,325	724,777	21,477,737	2.37%	.84%
Persons under age 65 with Disabilities	10.70%	8.6%	10.60%	8.6%	-0.93%	0%
(Estimated) Number of people under age 65 in Polk with Disabilities	75,757		76,826		1.41%	

Sources: 2018 - "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"; 2019- "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019."

Education

In 2002-2003, the graduation rate was 65.7% compared to Florida's 69.0%. For the period of 2008-2012 persons age 25+ (82.1%) were high school graduates or higher degree compared to 51.7% in the U.S. and 18.2% had a Bachelor's degree or higher compared to the U.S. at 24.4%.

Employment

In 2010, the percentage of Polk County population 16 years of age and older in the labor force was at 58.2 percent compared to the state average of 60.4 percent. The percent of labor force employed was 85.7 percent for Polk County with the state at 86.1 percent. It should be noted, however, that the unemployment rate in Polk County was 14.3 percent in 2010 which is higher than the state average at 13.9 percent.

In March 2020, as the global pandemic COVID-19 swept worldwide, many countries and the United States required various degrees of stay-at-home measures designed to reduce the spread of the Novel Corona Virus. Work places shut down or slowed down activities. Many, many people were either laid off, or had reduced hours. The Unemployment rate in Polk County went up from around 4.90% in March 2020, to around 13.4%, in April 2020. (It has increased even more in May 2020, but the data source only shows April data.)

This has triggered a depressed economy, although the extent won't be known for some time.²

As the Pandemic continues, the number of people who are eligible for the Transportation Disadvantaged program, based on their income, may increase.

² While many people are calling the present economic situation a depression, the extent of this won't be known until quarterly indicators are reported. In other words, we won't know if we are "in" a "Depression," until after the fact. We also don't know if it is a "Recession" like in 2008, or a Depression" like in the 1930s.

Table 13. Changes in Unemployment for Polk County, Florida, and the US, 2019 to 2020

Unemployment	April 2020	March 2020	March 2019
Polk County	13.4%	4.9%	3.4%
Florida – not seasonally adjusted	13.3%	4.3%	2.9%
Florida – Seasonally adjusted	12.9%	4.4%	3.3%
United States – not seasonally adjusted	14.4%	4.6%	3.3%
United States – Seasonally adjusted	14.7%	4.4%	3.6%

Sources: <http://www.floridajobs.org/workforce-statistics/workforce-statistics-data-releases/monthly-data-releases>,

Florida labor force - statewide, counties, and MSAs , on 5/22/2020

Access to Computers and Broadband Internet Subscriptions.

Access to the Internet is becoming more and more, the way news and information is shared in our county, our country, and in fact, the world. In March 2020, as the global pandemic COVID-19 swept worldwide, many countries and the United States implemented various degrees of stay-at-home measures designed to reduce the spread of the Novel Corona Virus. People who could telecommute, or do “Work From Home (WFH), are doing that.

Impact on education

All schools in the US sent students home. Most schools continued delivering lessons through “distance learning.” This requires access to computer equipment, and to a way to access the internet. Under normal circumstances (i.e., “Before COVID-19”) people could access computers and broadband at public libraries. And, people could bring their computers to many shops, and public buildings and access the internet that way. However, during the Pandemic, most libraries and government buildings have been closed. In Polk County, the School Board and community groups put out a call to locate additional lap tops to provide to students who did not have their own computers.

According to Polk Vision and Polk County School Board representatives, “There are some informed / educated estimates that we have been working with based upon usage rates of the parent portal, numbers of students completing assignments online and the number of devices the school district deployed. We also reviewed the percent of parents responding to a poll back at the onset of COVID-19 regarding distance learning initiative. But no statistically valid number of respondents was ever achieved through the poll. With

that being said, we are utilizing 25-30% as an estimated number of the students who do not have devices sufficient to perform course work from home. Furthermore, we believe that is a low estimate. The District deployed nearly 23,000 devices with many thousands of students performing coursework with paper packets rather than on line. So whether it is a device issue or an internet access in the home issue- Polk County has a serious digital divide to address when facing distance learning and equitable access to resources."

Smart cards and Bus Passes

Access to computers and broadband has become increasingly important in order for transit customers to locate bus schedule information and to purchase bus passes.

"Digital Divide" - hypotheses

The computer and the software that runs it, are capital expenses. The machines that bring the broadband to your home or business are also capital. The broadband service, is an operating cost.

While some people simply choose not to have computers, the people who don't have computers are low-income, or elderly, or both. The people who don't have access to broadband internet are either low income, or, elderly, or live in remote/rural areas, or, both. TPO staff is researching this.

According to Polk Vision representatives, "There are other matters related to the divide...computer literacy is a very real challenge for many households. Unaccustomed to having access to the resource, parents and other adults in the home do not know how to navigate online.

Impact on paratransit

As the Pandemic continues, the number of people who may access the Transportation Disadvantaged program may increase for various reasons. Citrus Connection is communicating by phone, email, Facebook to make sure people who don't have computers can find out about their services, and to purchase bus passes. From mid-March to early June 2020, there was no face-to-face public outreach due to COVID-19

Table 14. Changes in Households with Access to computers in Polk County and Florida, 2018 to 2019

Computers and Broadband	2018		2019		% Change (2018-2019)	
	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida	Polk County	Florida
Households	226,604	7,510,882	231,260	7,621,760	2.05%	1.48%
Persons under 18 years, percent	22.30%	20.00%	22.10%	19.90%	90%	-0.50%
Households with a computer, percent	83.40%	88.10%	85.50%	89.80%	2.52%	1.93%
Households with a broadband internet subscription, percent	64.80%	78.60%	66.60%	80.80%	2.78%	2.80%

Sources: 2018 - "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2018"; 2019- "US Census Bureau Quick Facts about Polk County, 2019."

Additional Demographic Data – Older Floridians

In 2019, the Department of Elder Affairs member of the LCB supplied the "Profile of Older Floridians" containing additional data on demographics of Older Floridians. That information is located in **Appendix 5**.

Major Trip Generators and Attractors

Polk County contains several types of facilities that serve as trip generators and attractors. Trip generation centers have historically been centered close to nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and high-density residential developments including traditional apartment complexes and low-income subsidized housing developments. There are forty-eight (48) nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and fifty-two (52) apartment complexes in the county. Trip attractors include medical complexes, shopping facilities, and two theme parks.

Access to Medical Care

Although non-hospital medical care is provided at clinics in almost every community, the larger hospital facilities are located only in Lakeland, Bartow, Winter Haven, Haines City, and Poinciana.

Specialized medical services are limited and there is a new, but small, Veteran's Clinic in Lakeland, which opened in 2017. As a result, it is often necessary to transport clients needing specialized services to the Tampa or Orlando areas. The average length of a trip to these areas is 50-60 miles (one way).

Medical complexes include five area hospitals, three of which are regional medical centers. There are also six (6) major medical groups that operate more than 50 individual locations throughout Polk County. The groups include, BayCare Medical Group, Bond Clinic, Central Florida Health Care, Gessler Clinic, Lakeland Regional Health, and Watson Clinic. These groups have major and satellite facilities in Auburndale, Bartow, Davenport, Haines City, Lakeland, Lake Wales, Mulberry, and Winter Haven.

In 2019, members of the Local Coordinating Board, and TPO staff worked together to develop maps of the location of medical care facilities. One such map, "Polk County Hospitals," is provided in **Appendix 6**.

Access to shopping and other activities of daily living

Three major shopping facilities are located in Polk County and include the Lakeland Square Mall, Lakeside Village, and the Eagle Ridge Mall. The two theme parks in Polk County include Legoland (opened in the fall of 2011) in Winter Haven and Fantasy of Flight in Polk City.

Inventory of Available Transportation Services

Polk County first implemented public transportation services in 1975 to provide transportation to the Polk General Hospital in Bartow, for residents who were unable to obtain transportation to the facility. In 2000, the Board of County Commissioners approved the transformation of the system to provide public transportation to underserved areas of Polk County.

In the early 1980's, Polk County Transit Service (PCTS) became involved in the coordinated transportation disadvantaged services program. In the 1990's, PCTS became the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for the County. Then, effective April 1, 2016, LAMTD became the official CTC. In order to provide cost effective and efficient transportation, the CTC seeks to ensure the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) trips with

origins and destinations in the areas served by these transit systems are provided by the fixed route service for clients able to access the fixed routes.

The Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) was created in 1980 by County Ordinance and approved by public referendum with the purpose of providing transit services in the Lakeland, Florida urbanized area. Services began in 1982. LAMTD is an independent transit authority which has been expanded to serve Pierce, Bradley, Pinedale and Mulberry areas over the past few years based on several successful referendums in those areas. LAMTD's fixed routes serve portions of the City of Lakeland, with connections to Auburndale and Bartow. The service area covers approximately 77 square miles and a service area population of 110,000 individuals.

Winter Haven Area Transit (WHAT) was established in 1997 through an Interlocal agreement between the City of Winter Haven and the Polk County Board of County Commissioners.

In 2015, LAMTD became the designated recipient for fixed route funding as recognized by the Federal Transit Administration for the Lakeland and Winter Haven urbanized areas.

As described in the Consolidated Transit Development Plan, Polk County had three transit systems that provide fixed-route services. Polk County Transit Services (PCTS), the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) and Winter Haven Area Transit (WHAT). Effective October 1, 2015, the Polk County Board of County Commissioners contracted all transit services to the LAMTD, making the first step towards the consolidation of all transit services into one agency to provide a more efficient and seamless service to Polk County residents.

The CTC currently functions as a "partial brokerage" system. As a partial brokerage, the CTC may contract with transportation operators through a Request for Qualification process with the CTC setting the minimum criteria for interested parties to become part of the system. The CTC also contracts with agencies that have vehicles for the primary purpose of transporting their own clients. These "Coordinated Contractor" trips are also part of the coordinated system.

Under the Polk County TD program, clients contact the CTC, which schedules a trip with a vehicle available in the area at the time of the request, utilizing Trapeze Scheduling Software. To ensure a trip reservation, requests for services must be received from the client or the client's care giver at least 72-hours in advance. This allows ample time to authorize the trip and determine the most appropriate method of delivery. If the schedule permits, requests made for service less than 72 hours in advance may be granted. Same day service may also be available for access to or from urgent care.

List of Private Transportation Service Providers in Polk County:

(Some of these are located in Osceola County)

Independent Community Transport
Imperial Cab
Checker Cab
Yellow Cab
Amen Taxi
Angel Taxi Cab
D & D Taxi
Polk County Taxi
Big Herb's Taxi & Shuttle
H & H Transport
Affordable Transport, Inc.
All Generations Transport Service
Trinity Non-emergency Transport, Inc.
Medical Transport Services
Integrity Medical Transportation
Beyond Transport
Freedom Medical Transport
Orlando Cab Company
Magic Shuttle
Orlando Transportation Solutions
America's Taxi
Airport & Local Taxi
Davenport Taxi
Uber
Lyft

Please note: the agencies which have Coordination Contracts with the Polk CTC are listed on Page 47

Service Analysis - Forecasting Transit Demand, Needs Assessment, Barriers to Coordination

Forecasts of Transportation Disadvantaged Population

The Florida coordinated transportation system provides trips for transportation disadvantaged persons in two population groups. Following is the definition of these two population groups.

Potential Transportation Disadvantaged population (TD Category I): All persons who are elderly, disabled, or low income.

Transportation Disadvantaged Population (TD Category II): Persons who are transportation disadvantaged according to the eligibility guidelines in Chapter 427, F.S. (i.e. persons who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation, and children who are “high risk” or “at risk”). Thus, this population group is a subset of the potential TD population group.

To estimate the number of persons in the county considered to be transportation disadvantaged, those portions of the general population that could potentially be transportation disadvantaged must be examined. In doing so, it is necessary to consider the components of the transportation disadvantaged population. These components include the population segment consisting of persons age 65 and above, the disabled population, and low-income persons.

Demand for Program Trips

Persons in Category I are eligible to receive trips subsidized by governmental and social service programs. A program trip is one made by a client of a government or social service agency for the purpose of participating in a program of that agency. Examples of program trips are Medicaid trips, trips to congregate meal sites, or trips to job training facilities.

Program Trip demand is dependent upon the existence of the program to which the potential TD population group is transported. For example, demand for trips to sheltered workshops exists only because there are sheltered workshop programs. Thus, the demand for program trips is equal to the number of trips required to take advantage of the service offered by the program. Therefore, the demand for program trips depends on the funding level for the various social service programs.

Demand for General Trips

General trips are trips made by Transportation Disadvantaged persons (Category II) to destinations of their choice (not to agency programs). Examples of general trips are trips to work or grocery stores and non-Medicaid medical trips.

Using the three-year estimates from the 2010-2012 American Community Survey, U.S. Census, the general TD population projection for Polk County is 229,695, or 38.7% of the total population.

Based on the input as stated above, 86% of the low income, non-disabled population without auto access also does not have access to public transit (16,642 individuals). This group is reliant on other means of transportation for 31,603 daily trips.

The TD population with critical needs due to severe disabilities (critical need TD population) of 20,618 could be expected to make 1,010 daily trips.

Combined, the estimated total daily demand for critical need TD trips in Polk County is 32,613 trips.

The complete Service Demand Forecasting report is located in **Appendix 7** of this report.

Needs Assessment

The TD population in Polk County is estimated to be approximately 38.7% of the total population. This population comprises our most vulnerable citizens: seniors, persons with disabilities, people with low income and children at risk. All of these categories are shown in the report in Appendix 5, and as stated in the Service Profile and Demographic Section of this TDSP, in most cases, we exceed the state average in access to care, seniors, disabled, poverty level and children at risk.

In 2016, the Polk TPO conducted Neighborhood Mobility Audits, targeting the underserved areas of the county. Using specific criteria to measure a neighborhood's access to public transit, schools, medical services, shopping, etc., connectivity barriers were identified such as lack of sidewalks, public transportation, bicycle paths, and safety issues such as lighting. The outcome of these studies will be presented to the local government jurisdictions in order to coordinate the implementation of improvements in these areas when funding becomes available. To view these studies, please go to www.polktpo.com.

Economically Disadvantaged – The provision of transportation services for those individuals that are low income and consequently cannot afford adequate transportation is one of the stated goals of the TD program. Low income is defined as at or below the

Federal Poverty Level. There are two slightly different versions of the federal poverty measure: the poverty thresholds, and the poverty guidelines.

The poverty thresholds are the original version of the federal poverty measure. They are updated each year by the Census Bureau. The thresholds are used mainly for statistical purposes – for instance, preparing estimates of the number of Americans in poverty each year. (In other words, all official poverty population figures are calculated using the poverty thresholds, not the guidelines.)

The poverty guidelines are the other version of the federal poverty measure. They are issued each year in the Federal Register by the Department of Health and Human Services. The guidelines are a simplification of the poverty thresholds for use for administrative purposes – for instance, determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs. Poverty guidelines are designated by the year in which they are issued.

To be eligible for services under the TD Program in Polk County, a person must:

- Live in Polk County. Transportation Disadvantaged eligibility will be considered for residents of Polk County with US citizenship; must be a legal resident of Polk County and of the United States. Residents of Polk County with forms of US residency other than Social Security identification such as I-551, I-10, I-20, etc., or other government issued documentation will be considered for TD Eligibility.
- Not be able to get a ride from others for life-sustaining trips
- Have documented household income which does not exceed 150% of the
- federal poverty level guidelines.

Environmental Justice (EJ) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

The Polk TPO has conducted extensive work in mapping the location at the Census Block level of the County with congregations of people who are at-poverty, or below poverty levels, or where there are congregations of non-white populations. It has also mapped locations of the population who are literate in languages other than English. The “EJ and LEP map series” are found in **Appendix 8**.

Barriers to Coordination

Transportation or mobility barriers can prevent access to life-essential services, diminish quality of life, and hinder efforts to create livable communities. A 2013 review published in

the *Journal of Community Health* found that 25% of lower-income patients have missed or rescheduled medical appointments due to a lack of transportation.

Of course, a major barrier for Polk County residents to access medical and other life-sustaining care is the geographical size of the County (over 2,010 square miles). Most services are located in the municipal areas of Lakeland and Winter Haven, while specialized services require out-of-county trips to Tampa, Orlando, Gainesville and the like.

While there is public transportation in Polk County, coverage is low, headways are long, and the major service cuts in 2015 to all of the routes makes it hard if not impossible for many to utilize the system as a whole.

Other factors certainly include the demographics described in the previous sections, but additional facts to add are:

- More than one in five (21%) of Americans age 65 and older do not drive.
- Older non-drivers have a decreased ability to participate in the community and the economy. Compared with older drivers, older non-drivers in the U.S. make:
 - 15% fewer trips to the doctor;
 - 59% fewer shopping trips and visits to restaurants; and
 - 65% fewer trips for social, family and religious activities.
- Between 2000 and 2012, the number of jobs within the typical commute distance for residents in a major metropolitan area (Lakeland-Winter Haven) fell by 7%.
- The typical commute in the Lakeland-Winter Haven metro area is 6.9 miles.
- Between 2000 and 2010, the share of jobs within 3 miles of the Lakeland and Winter Haven central business district (CBD) fell by 5%.

The 2015 Polk County Community Health Assessment reported that the barriers they identified for access to health care included “health literacy, language barriers, transportation, patient mistrust and refusal of services.” Polk Vision included statistics provided by the Polk TPO –

- 14 of the 17 cities in Polk County are currently served by fixed-route transit.
- 55.1% of residents 65 and older live in an area with minimal or no fixed-route transit.

Funding availability continues to be a major barrier to transportation services. The TD LCB has implemented a prioritization process for the type of trips performed in the coordinated system for Polk County. Lack of funding has prevented opening up trips for services beyond medical and medical-related for over a decade. Every opportunity is taken to apply for grant funding, but funding is not stable and opportunities are very competitive. Increased costs in labor, fuel, insurance, and maintenance, also add to the decreased ability to expand services in the coordinated system.

Polk County Public Transportation System Consolidation

A Polk County Regional Transportation Organization (RTO) Board was established in 2004. The transit stakeholders in Polk County established the RTO to develop and implement a strategy for the transition to a regional, or countywide, transportation authority. The RTO's major responsibility was to create the Polk Transit Authority (PTA) by 2008. Legislation to form the PTA passed successfully in the 2007 legislature and Governor Crist signed the Authority into law on June 27, 2007. This allowed for strategy development and implementation of alternative local funding sources when federal transit operating funds cease due to the release of Census 2010 data in 2012. The population numbers released in the 2010 Census indicate that both the Lakeland and Winter Haven urbanized areas now exceed 200,000 in population, 262,596 and 201,289 respectively. Urbanized areas that exceed 200,000 in population are no longer eligible for federal transit operating funds as they shift to capital only. Under either existing law or special state legislation, the PTA in Polk County would provide countywide transit services by consolidating existing providers, coordinate with other regional providers, and provide the potential for a long-term and stable source of transit funding.

The Polk BOCC approved a ballot initiative (My Ride, My Roads) for the fall of 2014 for a one-cent sales tax to be split equally between transit projects and road projects. With a successful referendum, the BOCC would repeal *ad valorem* tax currently in place, the one mill for roads would have been repealed and the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District would no longer levy a half mill within their district boundaries. The expansion of transit services throughout Polk County would undoubtedly have had a positive impact on the paratransit services in the coordinated system, more specifically the TD Program.

Unfortunately, this effort was unsuccessful, and with constrained funding looming over the existing transit agencies, this had an impact on the delivery of fixed-route services within Polk County which ultimately impacted paratransit services in the coordinated system. In the year 2015 Fixed-route services were reduced 18% during weekdays and 88% on Saturdays. There is no Sunday service, with the exception of Route 30 in the Winter Haven urban area.

Re-Route 2020

In October 2019, Citrus Connection re-worked many of its fixed routes on the Lakeland side of the county service area. Route miles increased by 5% -- by 142.62 miles on weekdays, and 10.78 on Saturdays. Since many customers in the coordinated system ride either the fixed route service, or, the ADA service, these changes should have a positive impact on the TD Program. See **Appendix 9** for the new Route Brochure, which also provides additional information about the SMARTCARD,

Goals, Objectives, Strategies ("GOS") and Implementation Schedule

The goals identified by the Polk County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board help guide the program towards producing a more efficient and effective coordinated transportation system for the disadvantaged population of Polk County. Each Goal contains an objective. Each goal contains specific action steps to achieve that Goal. These are called, Strategies. And, each Goal contains an Implementation Schedule. This is either a due-date, or an indication that the Goal is an on-going activity.

Goal 1. Enhance the availability of transportation services to meet the mobility needs of transportation disadvantaged persons.

Objective 1.1 Maximize transportation resources by using contract operators when available under a partial brokerage system and encouraging clients to use the fixed-route systems.

Strategy 1.1.1: Initiate Requests for Qualification/Requests for Proposal to acquire additional contract operators as necessary.

Strategy 1.1.2: Maintain agreements with all transportation operators participating in the trip brokerage system.

Strategy 1.1.3: Maintain performance standards for monitoring coordination agreement agencies.

Strategy 1.1.4: Require clients who live within three-quarters of a mile of a fixed route and are able to access and utilize a transit bus to use the fixed-route service.

Strategy 1.1.5: Coordinate transportation disadvantaged services with surrounding counties.

Objective 1.2 Maximize transportation resources by using Computer aid Scheduling software where clients can schedule transportation from anywhere, anytime by using the Passenger portal.

Strategy 1.2.1 Clients will have the availability to schedule transportation online or over the phone.

Objective 1.3 Notifications enable the clients to receive real time information pertaining to their upcoming appointments.

Strategy 1.3.1 Clients will receive a reminder to notify them of their scheduled transportation

Implementation Schedule: On-going. This Goal has been continually met through the consolidation and coordination of services with all of the transit agencies and coordinators within Polk County.

Goal 2. Provide transportation disadvantaged services in a cost-effective and efficient manner.

Objective 2.1 Evaluate Open Brokerage of Door-to-Door Trips in the Urban Transit Service Area (UTSA)

Strategy 2.1.1: The CTC will coordinate with the Polk Transit Authority (PT) to conduct an evaluation of potential cost savings and service efficiencies of brokering ADA or other paratransit trips within the UTSA—including those in the LAMTD and WHAT service areas—on a minimum cost basis.

Objective 2.2 Evaluate Centralized Scheduling and Dispatch of All Door-to-Door Trips

Strategy 2.2.1: The CTC will coordinate with PT to conduct an evaluation of providing scheduling/dispatch of all door-to-door trips under a central system using Trapeze advanced scheduling software system.

Strategy 2.2.2: Reduce the no-show rate by consistently enforcing the no-show Strategy.

Implementation Schedule This GOS was met by the opening of the Regional Mobility Call Center in 2013 which consolidated all dispatch and scheduling duties under one umbrella.

Objective 2.3 Evaluate Establishing a Garage/Maintenance Facility in East Polk Area

Strategy 2.3.1: The CTC will coordinate with the PTA to evaluate establishing a garage/maintenance facility in East Polk County for buses, paratransit vans, and other public transit vehicles as needed.

Implementation Schedule: This is an-on-going goal.

Goal 3. Improve public awareness of the Transportation Disadvantaged Program.

Objective 3.1 Participate in Implementing a Common Marketing Plan for “Seamless” Fixed Route Transit and Paratransit Services

Strategy 3.1.1: The CTC will work jointly with PT on the development, production, and distribution of a single transit system map for customers indicating how the routes

relate to each other and a new “Ride Guide” explaining how to access all of the fixed route and paratransit services in Polk County.

Strategy 3.1.2: The CTC shall serve as a clearinghouse for information about services and funding sources for the transportation disadvantaged.

Strategy 3.1.3: Provide presentations to inform the public about the Transportation Disadvantaged Program.

Strategy 3.1.4: Distribute the new “User’s Guide” and other print material explaining the transportation disadvantaged program and other public transit services.

Implementation Schedule This GOS has been met through the development and distribution of the System Guide containing all information related to transit services available in Polk County, as well as the implementation of the “one-click, one-call center.”

Goal 4. Provide transportation services in a safe and reliable manner.

Objective 4.1 Require that transportation operators provide safe, reliable and courteous service.

Strategy 4.1.1: Ensure that all transportation operators maintain a System Safety Program Plan pursuant to Section 341.061, F.S. and Rule 14-90, FAC.

Strategy 4.1.2: Ensure that all contracted operators provide adequate passenger assistance training for their drivers.

Strategy 4.1.3: Use real-time demand responsive scheduling and dispatching system to ensure trips are provided “on time”.

Strategy 4.1.4: Monitor the CTC’s routing, scheduling, and dispatching operations.

Strategy 4.1.5: Maintain standards to promote courteous service and monitor customer satisfaction.

Strategy 4.1.6: Monitor transportation operators to ensure a reliable and adequate fleet of vehicles is maintained for the coordinate system.

Strategy 4.1.7: Research remote, real-time surveillance systems for on-board the vehicles to improve system safety.

Implementation Schedule - This is an on-going goal.

Goal 5. Ensure program accountability by collecting and reporting system and provider data in an accurate and timely manner.

Objective 5.1 Document compliance with procedures, rules and regulations established by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and the Florida Legislature.

Strategy 5.1.1: Produce an Annual Operating Report (AOR) that meets State standards.

Strategy 5.1.2: Complete an annual evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator and the Coordinated System that includes an evaluation of the standards and performance measures adopted by the Coordinating Board. This task will be done by the Polk TPO.

Strategy 5.1.3: Provide a report at each Coordinating Board meeting outlining the activities and accomplishments relative to the TDSP Goals, Objectives and Policies.

Implementation Schedule -- This is on-going.

PART II – SERVICE DELIVERY – OPERATIONS PLAN COMPONENT

Types, Hours and Days of Service by mode

General Public Fixed Route Service

LAMTD operates a fixed route transit system. In a fixed route transit system, passengers make their way to the bus and, the bus follows a route (a fixed schedule). The costs to purchase the equipment, and to operate fixed route are funded through tax dollars –the Federal Transit Administration the Florida Department of Transportation, local *ad valorem* funds, and, agreements with municipalities. These services are open to the general public.

Persons who are considered Transportation Disadvantaged, may ride the fixed route as a member of the general public, and pay the going fare at the time they get board the bus. People who meet the CTC's eligibility criteria for Transportation Disadvantaged, can have all-or-a-portion of their trips on the fixed route system, paid for through the TD Trust Fund.

People who meet the eligibility criteria for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, may also utilize the fixed route system. If an ADA eligible passenger shows their ADA Card they may ride the fixed route system at no cost.

General Public (FTA Section 5311) Policy – Rural Fixed Routes

The Community Transportation System is open to the general public through the receipt of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 operating grant funds. The FTA requires that trips paid for with these funds be scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. The CTC provides this service in the rural areas of Polk County through the rural, fixed-routes. The general public may also access the system by calling the Coordinator's local access number or toll-free number. Once the funds for the month have been depleted, the general public may only access the system by personally paying the fully allocated cost per trip if there is vehicle seating/capacity for the trip request.

Paratransit service (Demand-Response)

LAMTD also offers demand-response service, which is also called, "paratransit." All LAMTD's paratransit service is called, "PT Connect"

Some of the paratransit service is in place to provide what is called, "complementary paratransit service" according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. People who meet the eligibility criteria for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and

who are not able to use the fixed route system, may use the ADA paratransit service. There is a \$2.00 per trip co-payment for door-to-door ADA service.

People who meet the CTC's eligibility criteria for Transportation Disadvantaged, but who cannot use the fixed route service, may use paratransit, too. These trips are paid for through the TD Trust Fund. These passengers must pay a co-payment for each trip.

Because the ADA law is federal civil rights law, and the TD Program is a state program that came about BEFORE the federal ADA law, these two programs have vastly different rules and regulations!

Accessing Services

Citrus Connection's Regional Mobility Call Center, a one-call, one-click center for mobility options is located at 1290 Golfview Avenue, 2nd floor, Bartow, FL 33830.

- Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center.
- The local number is (863) 534-5500.
- The toll free number is 855-POLKBUS (765-5287)

Telephone reservations can be made from 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. on weekdays. Saturday scheduling from 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Only ADA for next service day trips will be scheduled on Saturdays. Phone lines are open from 6:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. weekdays, and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

The CTC provides all of the scheduled trips for Polk County. Service is provided Monday – Saturday. The earliest appointment time that will be accommodated is 6:15 a.m. There is no Sunday service. Reservations should be made a minimum of 72 hours in advance and may be made up to 14 days in advance for medical or medical related trips. All other categories must be scheduled within 3-7 days in advance. All scheduling must be done during normal business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., except for ADA on Saturday for next business day service). Door-to-door (Transportation Disadvantaged) service is provided for ambulatory and wheelchair passengers. Subscription trips will be allowed on a first-come, first-served basis, to the extent of funding and scheduling availability. LAMTD subscriptions shall be less than 50% of average trips books. No waiting list will be maintained for services.

ADA trips may be scheduled by close of business one (1) day in advance of the requested trip date. All trips may be scheduled up to 7 calendar days in advance. Please call no later than 3:00 P.M. Saturday for Monday, or one (1) day before a holiday for the service the day after a holiday.

Out of area trips will be provided to the requested service areas only on the days that transportation is provided to that specific service area (See Out-of-Area Transport Policy).

The LAMTD is the designated recipient for the Lakeland and Winter Haven urbanized areas and provides ADA complementary paratransit services in the Lakeland district service area as well as the Winter Haven Area Transit service area. All door-to-door service in Polk County is branded as PT Connect. All scheduling for PT Connect Services is handled through Citrus Connection Regional Mobility Call Center.

See the “Rider Brochure” in **Appendix 10** for more information.

ELIGIBILITY

It is the sole responsibility of the applicant, or responsible party representing the applicant, to apply or reapply for transportation program eligibility, including ADA in a timely manner to qualify for service to avoid service delays or interruptions. All forms and assessments must be completed prior to beginning or continuing service. Expiration dates are clearly noted on the eligibility acceptance letter. Please allow minimum processing time of **14-21** days for applications. Notification will be forwarded to the applicant via the regular US mail.

Consideration will be based on information presented by the applicant to determine the need for services; and granted to those individuals who, because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are therefore dependent on others to obtain access to medical, medical-related, or other life sustaining assistance. The rider’s fee will be determined based on the economic status of the applicant’s household using a sliding scale. See additional information under Eligibility Determination for Non-Sponsored Trips.

Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund Program (TD) dollars is a funding source of last resort. All other means of funding and transportation resources must be exhausted or non-existent with the use of TD funding. The CTC has the right to require additional information as deemed necessary before making a final decision on eligibility.

Eligibility determination requirements and processes will also pertain to bus pass assistance recipients under the TD program.

Clients are instructed to schedule trips during identified off peak hours whenever possible. Trips to out-of-county facilities are scheduled in multi-loaded, shared ride vehicles and may be scheduled on specific days and times of the week for different geographic areas.

The CTC's policy is that requests for TD services are to be received at least 72 hours prior to the date service is needed. However, consideration is given to any request made at any time, depending on availability.

In accordance with the "No-Show" Policy, the CTC will notify habitual no-show clients that they may be suspended from service delivery.

Payment for your trip must be in the form of a prepaid pass. Cash will not be accepted.

Eligibility Determination for Non-Sponsored Trips

TD funds are allocated as follows: a.) to those most in need, b.) for trips deemed most necessary, c.) using transportation services/modes that are most cost effective and d.) In a leveraged manner to receive the greatest benefit from available funds.

"Those Most in Need"

The CTC will use an enrollment process that verifies that a customer meets the following criteria:

Transportation Disadvantaged. (Is the person "transportation disadvantaged"? See definition in Glossary of Terms in **Appendix 3**.)

No Other Transportation Available. (For example, a family member is not able to provide the transportation)

No Other Funding Available. (That is, there is no agency responsible for the transportation requested, e.g. transportation of an agency client to an agency sponsored program?)

No Public Transit. (Is the trip origin and destination within a fixed route service area? If yes, the client will be advised of the route location and schedule. ADA-eligible clients will be offered an application for complementary door-to-door service.)

Ability to Pay. (Determine the individual's ability to pay and use the income/percent of full fare sliding scale table. The minimum required co-pay per one-way trip will be \$2.00.)

"Trips Deemed Most Necessary" (Medical/Medical Related are the highest priority, etc.)

PRIORITIZATION POLICY

The CTC implements an LCB approved Prioritization Policy in order to provide the most critical trips, with available funds. Since at least 2015, it has been established that Medical/ Medical Related services followed by Training for Critical Life Skills will be funded as the top two priorities. If funding allows, the other trip purposes will be considered at the discretion of the CTC.

1. Medical/Medical Related - (Ex. Life sustaining medical—dialysis, chemotherapy, radiation, other medical appointments and treatment, mental health, dental, pharmacy, physical therapy, etc.)
2. Nutrition and Life Sustaining Activities - (Ex. Grocery, medical records, hospital discharge, etc.)
3. Specific Education and Training Determined by the CTC to be for Critical Life Skills - (Ex. Sheltered workshop, specialized training for the disabled, etc.)
4. Employment - (Ex. Personal travel to employment)
5. Other Education and Training - (Ex. Personal education, training)
6. Social/Recreational and Other Activities - (Ex. Personal business, ex. Government office, bank, legal, shopping, social, recreation, etc.)

The CTC shall determine if funding is available to allow the requested trip using the above priorities established by the LCB.

Using Cost-Effective Transportation Services/Modes

The Polk County CTC and the TD Trust Fund Program require that services be provided by the least costly mode and the most efficient means (e.g., maximizing the use of fixed-route transit and multi-loading of vehicles).

Residency

Transportation Disadvantaged eligibility will be considered for residents of Polk County with US citizenship; must be a legal resident of Polk County and of the United States. Residents of Polk County with forms of US residency other than Social Security identification such as I-551, I-10, I-20, etc., or other government issued documentation will be considered for TD Eligibility."

Leverage Non-Sponsored Trip Funds

A sliding scale is used to determine the ability to pay based on a client's verified disposable net income and liquid assets. The chart used in this eligibility assessment is based on the poverty guidelines issued in the Federal Register by the Department of Health and Human Services. The guidelines are a simplification of the poverty thresholds for use for administrative purposes – for instance, determining financial eligibility for certain federal programs. Poverty guidelines are designated by the year in which they are issued.

For TD trips, the co-payment is a \$2.00 per one-way trip. The CTC may establish a different co-payment on a trip-by-trip basis for public fare customers.

In (2015) because of changes to the Medicaid laws, the CTC no longer provides trips under the Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT) program. Those trips are provided by other companies.

The CTC has implemented a “cashless fare system”. All PT Connect paratransit trips must be paid for using the PT Connect prepaid bus pass.

Bus Passes – The CTC will utilize bus passes under the Non-Sponsored Trip Program whenever possible. If a qualified TD client can use fixed-route services and cannot afford bus fare, then CTC may issue bus passes to the client. Passes may also be distributed through this program for qualified PT Connect riders who demonstrate temporary hardship and meet the eligibility criteria under the TD Program.

Arrival Window Time

LAMTD's Notification system will provide trip notification by phone 20 minutes prior to scheduled arrival window time. Passengers are requested to be ready and waiting for departure up to 15 minutes in advance of the scheduled window. If the passenger is not ready when the vehicle arrives, the 5 minute Wait Time Policy would take effect.

Wait Time Policy

Operators are permitted to wait no more than 5 (five) minutes for a passenger when they arrive within the Arrival Window Time. The No Show Policy would take effect if the passenger does not utilize the scheduled ride.

Pick Up

Passengers are expected to be ready and waiting for their ride at the door of their home or in the lobby of a complex, apartment building or other facility. There is no requirement for the passenger to wait for the ride if the operator arrives after the originally scheduled time of the trip. Passengers in facilities where the passenger will be at risk in the lobby are expected to be ready to be boarded by the driver when the driver arrives for the pickup.

Return Trips

Paratransit Passengers should be ready to be dropped off at the scheduled destinations and allow the operator to move on. Passengers in apartment complexes, assisted living facilities, health care facilities, etc., are expected to be received from the driver when the driver arrives on the premises. Operators are not permitted to enter private quarters or residences for ambulatory or wheelchair transports. Exceptions to this rule may apply during emergency evacuations.

Public Transit Utilization

The LAMTD (Citrus Connection) is the CTC for Polk County. It is also the designated recipient of federal funds for the Lakeland and Winter Haven urbanized areas. As such, they operate the Citrus Connection in the Lakeland district area, and Winter Haven Area Transit (WHAT) in the Winter Haven urbanized area. ADA complementary paratransit services are provided within each of these service areas. There is a goal / Performance Measure Standard that **35%** of the trips in the coordinated system will be placed on the fixed route system.

COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATORS—NETWORK TYPE

1. **Complete Brokerage:** System in which the CTC does not provide any of the on-street transportation services itself, but contracts with transportation providers (including coordination contractors) to provide all on-street transportation disadvantaged services.
2. **Partial Brokerage:** System in which the CTC provides some of the on-street transportation services and contracts with one or more other transportation

providers (including coordination contractors) to provide the other portion of the on-street transportation disadvantaged services.

3. **Sole Source:** System in which the CTC provides all the coordinated on-street transportation disadvantaged services, and has no providers or coordination contractors.

Transportation Operators and Coordination Agreements

LAMTD is the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). It functions as a “PARTIAL BROKERAGE” CTC which means that it provides transportation for the transportation disadvantaged non-sponsored clients. It also utilizes some social service agencies that have their own vehicle fleet to provide their own transportation services for their clients and have executed Coordination Agreements with the CTC. **Table 15** provides a list of the agencies with whom the CTC has Coordination Agreements.

Table 15. Coordination Agreement Agencies for FY 2020-2021

Name	Contact Person	Service	Clients
Alliance for Independence	Katie Tinsley	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Clients
Compassionate Transportation	Shanae Kelly-Bellamy	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Open to Public
Divine Hope Transportation	Karen Worrell	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Public, Clients
Education & Empowerment Inc.	Kimberlee Moore	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Clients
Elder Point Ministries	Lacey Gardner	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Public, Clients
Faith in Action	Mildred McMillan	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Public, Clients
Goodwill Industries Suncoast Inc.	Richard Lawhead Angela Combee	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Clients
Noah's Ark	Niki Norris	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Program Participants
Peace River Center	David Blackwelder	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Program Participants
Polk Training Center	Linda West	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Program Participants
Sunrise Community of Polk County	Sherrie Seruss	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Program Participants

Source: CTC, April 2020

School Bus Utilization

Under State provisions, local Boards of Education are required to provide transportation for students attending primary, secondary and high school facilities including, but not limited to, public, private and charter schools. Due to limited availability, LATMD is unable to assist in the provision of this transportation.

School buses are utilized during evacuations for emergencies and disasters.

Community of Learning Transportation Services (COLTS) Program

LAMTD has entered into a Universal Access Program Agreement with the School Board that makes it possible for all public school high school students in the County to use public transportation for free. The Community of Learning Transportation Services (COLTS) Program has been very successful since implementation and still growing.

Community of Learning Transportation Services (COLTS) Program and COVID-19

Citrus Connection and Polk County Public Schools (PCPS) have partnered to provide students 8 years of age and older free public transportation until further notice to assist families with local travel during the Covid-19 outbreak.

Citrus Connection and PCPS have a long-standing partnership to provide transportation through the Community of Learning Transportation Services (COLTS) Program, which provides subsidized public transit for high school students. The district and Citrus Connection have agreed to open the service to children 8 years of age and older.

In the midst of the Covid-19 public health crisis, Citrus Connection will continue to provide public transit service on all routes and will follow the guidelines of the Florida Department of Transportation. If FDOT calls for the suspension or reduction in service, Citrus Connection will honor that order.

For more information about Citrus Connection services, visit www.ridecitrus.com. Additional information can be obtained by calling customer service at 863- 688-7433 or quality assurance at 863-733-4242.

Vehicle Inventory

The vehicle inventory for the coordinated system is located in **Appendix 11** of the TDSP. This inventory contains the vehicles involved in providing coordinated trips in Polk County. It includes all the vehicles referenced in the Annual Operating Report.

System Safety Program Plan – SSPP and System Security Plan, SSP

The annual System Safety Program Plan/System Security Plan Certification form is located in **Appendix 12** of the TDSP. This certification form was combined this year.

Inter-County Services

Coordination efforts between adjacent counties are encouraged, due to the close proximity of the transit boundaries. One example of coordination is the implementation of the Pick-Up Line service in the Poinciana area. This service is operated by Transitions under contract to the LAMTD. This service provides travel and connectivity to public transportation for Polk and Osceola Counties, and is funded by the Polk County Board of County Commissioners.

LAMTD's coordination efforts now seeks partnership with the Hillsborough Area Transit (HART) in efforts to connect Polk and Hillsborough's communities by implementing a pick up line in the Plant City area.

Natural Disaster/Emergency Preparedness

From building fires and water pipe breaks in nursing homes, to forest fires or hurricanes, LAMTD plays an important role in Polk County's Emergency Response Plan, and is classified as ESF-1 for emergency operations. When an evacuation requiring transportation is declared by Polk County Emergency Management, the Polk County School Board and the CTC (LAMTD) will activate their plans to ensure that transportation services are provided in a timely manner. The following vehicles are available to provide transportation to primary and special care shelters or appropriate medical care facilities.

Standard School Buses and Vans/Buses - The School Board will provide school buses and the LAMTD will provide vans and/or buses to transport ambulatory people.

Lift-Equipped Vehicles - The School Board and the LAMTD will provide buses equipped with lifts to transport individuals who use wheelchairs.

Ambulances - Polk County Emergency Medical Services (EMS) ambulances will transport individuals requiring medical attention during transportation.

Inclement Weather

Inclement weather (including but not limited, hurricane conditions, torrential rain, high winds) may result in the LAMTD system operating behind schedule or ceasing service for a period of time. If LAMTD determines that service may be running behind schedule due to inclement weather, LAMTD reserves the right to prioritize trips on these days in the following order; medical, medical related, life sustaining, support group, other.

Education Efforts/Marketing

Presentations on the Citrus Connections Transportation Solutions include TD funded program and services are made at agency meetings and at county and city sponsored events. Ride Guide information is distributed to target groups like senior citizens and newcomers. The objective for the future of transportation for Polk County is to implement a common marketing plan for the provision of “seamless” transit services. This has been accomplished by the consolidation of all transit services into the LAMTD/Citrus Connection.

Travel Trainer

Citrus Connection Transit services is a valuable community resource that can be intimidating for those unfamiliar with the system. Passengers capable of utilizing the Fixed Route bus may require some assistance before doing so. Citrus Connection has a travel training program to provide comprehensive instruction in real-life transit scenarios in order to familiarize the passengers with local transportation options. Our expert travel trainer is your partner in removing community barriers by helping passengers travel independently, safely, and confidently. The benefits of travel training are two-fold. For individuals receiving travel training, increased confidence and self-reliance are immediate results of learning to travel independently. These skills improve the passenger’s quality of life by encouraging community integration, participation in recreational, employment opportunities, and overall independence. Travel Training also benefits the clients and the communities we work with by reducing program expenses and paratransit utilization while increasing the use of cost -effective public transit systems.

Travel Training topics include:

- Safety awareness
- Reading and using the maps and schedules
- Trip planning, including making transfers
- Paying fare
- Street crossing safety

- Accessibility features of buses, stops, terminals
- Emergency skills
- Following appropriate social behavior and system rules
- Requesting stops and assistance with special needs
- Judging distance and time

PART III – QUALITY ASSURANCE COMPONENT

This Component of the TDSP contains three elements:

- A. Service Standards
- B. Evaluation and Monitoring
- C. Performance standards

Part III- Quality Assurance –Element A – Service Standards

In 1990, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged recommended a small set of “standards” which were put into Rule 41-2.006, Florida Administrative Code. This list was amended in 1992, twice in 1996, then in 1998, 2001, and 2018.

The Commission’s intent was to provide a list of topics which the CTC (and the LCB) needed to address, in a “standardized” way, across the state. The LCB, together with the CTC developed policies to meet the standards. Then, the LCB could refer to this information when conducting the annual evaluation of the CTC. Service effectiveness standards should be jointly established by the CTC and the Local Coordinating Board. Those standards should give the Local Coordinating Board information on how effectively the CTC is operating.

There are two types of “Standards” in the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan:

A-1 --STANDARDS REQUIRED BY RULE 41-2.006, Florida Administrative Code (FAC): The first set of standards are those called out in Rule 41-2.006, Florida Administrative Code, regarding Insurance, Safety and Standards. They are a list of **topics** which the CTC and LCB are required to address. They are listed in order according to the Rule 41-2.006, FAC.

A-2--LOCAL STANDARDS: The second set of standards in the TDSP are known as “local standards.” These are topics the CTC chooses to address, or which the LCB recommended the CTC address.

A-1: STANDARDS REQUIRED BY RULE 41-2.006, FAC

Liability Insurance– 41-2.006(1)

The Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) shall ensure compliance with the minimum liability insurance requirement of \$200,000 per person and \$300,000 per incident, which are comparable to Section 768.28(5), Florida Statutes, and limits for all transportation services purchased or provided for the transportation disadvantaged through the CTC. The CTC will indemnify and hold harmless the Local, State, and Federal governments and their entities, departments, and the Commission from any liabilities arising out of or due to an accident or negligence on the part of the CTC and all Transportation Operators under contract to them. Any liability insurance coverage in excess of \$1 million per incident, where its cost is included in the service rate, must be approved by the Commission before its cost is included in any purchase of service contract. Documentation from the CTC must fully justify the need for the additional insurance coverage. The justification will identify the reasons for the additional coverage, the incremental cost of the additional coverage on each unit of transportation service and the estimated additional annual cost to each contracting agency/entity. The Polk County Coordinated System has established a \$300,000/combined single limit.

Safety Requirements– – 41-2.006(2);

Each CTC, and any transportation operators from whom transportation service is purchased with local government, state or federal transportation disadvantaged funds, shall ensure the purchaser that their operations and services are in compliance with the safety requirements as specified in Section 341.061(2)(a), Florida Statutes, and Chapter 14-90, F.A.C.

Weapons & Contraband or Illegal Activity

Weapons, concealed or otherwise, contraband and illegal activity are strictly prohibited on LAMTD vehicles.

Abusive Behavior

Abusive behavior of any type, directed towards LAMTD employees or passengers, will not be tolerated. Instances of abuse will be thoroughly investigated on a case-by-case basis and transportation services may be interrupted while the investigation is pending. The severity of the instance will determine the penalty and may range from a letter of warning to criminal prosecution. LAMTD reserves the right to suspend and/or revoke transportation privileges in cases of abusive behavior when the safety and well-being of the employees and/or passengers is compromised.

Under Florida Statute 784, assault against a Transit employee while engaged in the performance of his or her duties is a misdemeanor of the second degree or a misdemeanor of the first degree depending on the gravity of the offense. Battery against a transit employee while engaged in the performance of his or her duties could be constituted as a misdemeanor of the first degree or a felony of the third degree depending on the gravity of the offense.

Code of Conduct

To help ensure the safety, security, comfort and convenience of all those who use our services, LAMTD has established a Code of Conduct to regulate conduct on LAMTD property. Our aim is for transit passengers to enjoy a safe, secure, comfortable and inviting atmosphere, and to improve the overall efficiency of the transportation system.

The bus driver's primary job is to operate the bus safely. If problems arise on the bus, the bus driver's first priority is to determine if a person's safety or security is at stake. The driver will assess the severity of the problem and resources available, and respond accordingly. The bus driver, at his/her discretion, may choose to talk to the passenger, call for assistance, submit a report on the incident at the end of their shift, or take no immediate action. In the case of minor infractions of the code of conduct, LAMTD's general guideline for the driver would be to continue on the route rather than inconvenience other riders by delaying service. In either scenario, the operator is required to submit a report on the incident at the end of their shift.

The bus driver is the person in authority onboard the vehicle at all times. Enforcement of the code of conduct is handled through a network of professionals that can be called upon by the bus driver, if and when needed.

The Code of Conduct guidelines apply to all activities that occur in or on:

- LAMTD buses and vehicles, or those of its contracted transportation providers
- Transit Service Centers
- Park and ride lots
- Bus Terminals or Bus Shelters
- Other passenger facilities

Those in violation will be asked to leave the vehicle or facility immediately.

LAMTD Rider Rights and Responsibility and Code of Conduct:

- Respect other passengers' privacy
- Do not cause safety problems (i.e., distract the driver in any way)
- Use headphones
- No eating, smoking or littering
- No alcoholic beverages
- No open beverage containers
- No weapons of any kind
- Do not harass driver or other riders
- Do not lie down on the seats
- Respect property of the transit agency
- Bring correct change
- Be ready to board and unboard safely
- Use LAMTD services and facilities for transportation purposes only

A. Prohibited Conduct

The following conduct is prohibited on LAMTD vehicles (owned or operated), within or upon LAMTD facilities and properties, and in connection with LAMTD provision of public transportation services:

- Committing any act which tends to create or incite, an immediate breach of peace, including, but not limited to (a) fighting, (b) obscene language, and (c) personally abusive epithets, words or language of an offensive, disgusting or insulting nature to a LAMTD operator or Administrative staff.
- Discarding litter other than in designated receptacles;
- Allowing any animal to run at large, to unreasonably disturb others, or interfere with transit-related activities;
- Roller-skating, roller-blading or skateboarding;
- Riding bicycles, unicycles, mopeds and motorcycles, except where vehicle travel and access is permitted;
- Eating or drinking on LAMTD vehicles or in prohibited areas of LAMTD facilities and properties;
- Operating, stopping, standing or parking a vehicle in any roadway or location restricted for use only by LAMTD vehicles or otherwise restricted;
- Extending an object or a portion of one's body through the door or window of a LAMTD vehicle while it is in motion;

- Hanging or swinging on bars or stanchions, with feet off the floor, inside a LAMTD vehicle or other LAMTD property; hanging onto or otherwise attaching oneself at any time to the exterior of a LAMTD vehicle or other LAMTD property;
- Using a LAMTD facility for residential or commercial parking purposes;
- Performing non-emergency repairs or cleaning of a vehicle on LAMTD property;
- Failing to present a valid, un-expired pass, ticket or otherwise failing to pay the appropriate fare as established by LAMTD;
- LAMTD no longer uses or issues transfers
- Bringing onto LAMTD property odors which unreasonably disturb others or interfere with their use of the LAMTD system, whether such odors arise from one's person, clothes, articles, accompanying animal or any other source;
- Engaging in illegal activity
- Except at a designated place, smoking or carrying a lighted or smoldering pipe, cigar, or cigarette;
- Playing any radio, recorder, or other sound-producing equipment, except that nothing herein shall prohibit the use of such equipment when connected to earphones that limit the sound to individual listeners or the use of communication devices by LAMTD employees, LAMTD contractors or public safety officers in the line of duty;
- Spitting, urinating or defecating on LAMTD properties or vehicles;
- Carrying any flammable liquid, explosive, acid, or other article or material likely to cause harm to others except that nothing herein shall prevent a person from carrying a cigarette, cigar, or pipe lighter or carrying a firearm or ammunition in a way that is not otherwise prohibited by law;
- Intentionally obstructing or impeding the flow of LAMTD vehicles or passenger traffic, hindering or preventing access to LAMTD vehicles, facilities, and properties, or otherwise unlawfully interfering with the provision or use of public transportation services;
- Disturbing others by engaging in loud, raucous, unruly, harmful, or harassing behavior;
- Destroying, defacing, or otherwise damaging property of LAMTD;
- Carrying any alcoholic beverages or controlled substances, unless otherwise authorized by law;
- Drinking an alcoholic beverage or possessing an open container of the same.
- Carrying, exhibiting, displaying, or drawing any firearm, dagger, sword, knife or other cutting or stabbing instrument, club, or any other weapon apparently capable

of producing bodily harm, in a manner, under circumstances, and at a time and place that either manifests an intent to intimidate another or that warrants alarm for the safety of other persons;

- Manufacturing, selling, delivering, or possessing with the intent to manufacture, sell, or deliver a controlled substance or who sells for profit any controlled substance or counterfeit substance on a LAMTD vehicle, properties or facilities to include but not limited to; transfer center, bus shelter, bus stop, or park and ride lots;
- Entering a LAMTD vehicle with live pets or other animals, with the exception of service animals, that are not in a suitable pet carrier;
- Entering a LAMTD vehicle not wearing any type of footwear, with the exception of passengers using a wheelchair or similar device or children that are being carried;
- Using a public address system, loudspeaker or other sound amplifying device;
- Sleeping, camping or storing personal property on benches and floors on or within LAMTD vehicles or LAMTD facilities and properties, unless otherwise authorized by law;
- Entering or remaining upon any non-public areas of LAMTD facilities and properties, including, but not limited to, staging areas, work areas and equipment rooms, except when authorized by LAMTD or its designee;
- Engaging in commercial activities, except as such activities are authorized by LAMTD or its designee in a written permit, license, concession contract, lease or other written authorization;
- Engaging in public communication activities.
- Engaging in any civic, cultural and other special event, not included in the definitions of commercial or public communication activities, except as such activities are authorized by LAMTD or its designee in a written permit, license, concession contract, lease or other written authorization;
- Committing any act which tends to create or incite, or creates or incites, an immediate breach of peace, including, but not limited to (a) fighting, (b) racing, (c) obscene language and noisy or boisterous conduct tending to cause a breach of the peace, and (d) personally abusive epithets, or words or language of an offensive, disgusting or insulting nature, which epithets, words or language when addressed to the ordinary citizen are, as a matter of common knowledge, inherently likely to provoke a violent reaction of fear, anger or apprehension;
- Using of LAMTD vehicles, facilities, and properties for non-transit-related activities, except as authorized by LAMTD;

- Entering LAMTD vehicles, facilities, and properties when lacking the ability, because of illness or intoxication, to care for one's self;
- Dumping any materials whatsoever on LAMTD property, including but not limited to chemicals and automotive fluids;
- Throwing an object at LAMTD property or at any LAMTD person in LAMTD property;
- Falsely representing oneself as eligible for a special or reduced fare or obtaining any permit or pass related to the LAMTD system by making a false representation;
- Falsely claiming to be a LAMTD bus operator or other LAMTD employee; or through words, actions, and/or the use of clothes, insignia, or equipment resembling department issued uniforms and equipment, creating a false impression that he or she is a LAMTD operator or other LAMTD employee;
- Violating any federal, state, or municipal civil and criminal laws.

B. Trespass Enforcement

1. Removal from LAMTD Vehicles, Facilities, and Properties.

Any person engaging in prohibited conduct under the provisions in Section A may be refused entrance upon or ordered to leave LAMTD vehicles, facilities and properties by a law enforcement official, LAMTD personnel as authorized by the Director, or authorized personnel of a contracted service provider. Failure to immediately comply with such a removal order may be grounds for prosecution for criminal trespass and/or unlawful bus conduct.

2. Exclusion from Service.

- (a) **Basis for Exclusion.** Engaging in prohibited conduct as described under Section A shall be cause for excluding or restricting a person from entering and using all or any part of LAMTD vehicles, facilities, and properties for a period of time not to exceed one year, unless otherwise authorized by Director or their designee.
- (b) **Notice Procedure.** LAMTD shall give a person to be excluded from LAMTD vehicles, facilities, and properties written notice, by personal delivery or by mailing a copy, by U.S. mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the person's last known address. The notice shall specify the reason for exclusion, identify the scope, duration, and effective date of the exclusion, and explain the appeal process.
- (c) **Constructive Notice.** Receipt of a notice is construed to have occurred if the person knew or reasonably should have known from the circumstances that he/she is excluded from LAMTD vehicles, facilities and properties. Receipt of a notice is also

presumed to have been accomplished three (3) calendar days after the notice has been placed in the U.S. mail to the person's last known mailing address.

(d) Immediate Refusal or Removal. A person may be immediately re-seated, refused transportation, or removed from LAMTD vehicles, facilities, and properties without prior written notice if the person has engaged in prohibited conduct under Section A or at LAMTD's discretion, poses a safety or security risk, interferes with or impinges on the rights of others, impedes the free flow of the general public, or impedes the orderly and efficient use of LAMTD vehicles, facilities, and properties.

(e) Types of Exclusion. Exclusion may be limited to bus stops, super-stops LAMTD Central Station or LAMTD vehicles.

The actual exclusion period imposed may be shorter or longer depending on the circumstances of each case.

Driver/Employee Training Requirements – 41-2.006(2) – Safety Requirements

All drivers/employees will be trained in accordance with requirements under the Coordinated System. Training will be provided by approved trainers as identified by the Coordinator. An employee training log will be kept and updated to include dates of all refresher trainings and available for monitoring by the CTC.

Training will include at a minimum:

- Transportation Safety Institute – Bus Operator training
- Instruction on daily vehicle inspections
- Passenger Assistance Techniques
- Training in daily passenger manifests, vehicle condition reports, incident reports, accident reports and procedures
- Sensitivity and Awareness Training
- Security Awareness

Drug and Alcohol Policy – 41-2.006(3), and also 41-2.006(4)(a).

Each CTC, and any transportation operators from whom service is purchased or funded by local government, state or federal transportation disadvantaged funds shall assure the purchaser of their continuing compliance with the applicable state or federal laws relating to drug testing (specifically, Section 112.0455, Florida Statutes; Rule 14-17.012 and Chapters 59A-24 and 60L-19, F.A.C.; and 41 U.S.C. 701; 49 C.F.R., Parts 29 and 382; and 46

C.F.R., Parts 4, 5, 14, and 16). The Polk County Coordinated System adheres to the Florida Department of Transportation Drug and Alcohol Policy established and approved by the LAMTD Board and incorporated within each contract.

Drug and alcohol testing for safety sensitive job positions within the coordinated system regarding pre-employment, randomization, post-accident, and reasonable suspicion as required by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration.

Transportation of Personal Care Attendant and Dependent Children (PCA, Escorts and Companions) – Rule 41-2.006(4)(b)

Personal Care Attendant (PCA)

The ADA law defines a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) as someone who provides assistance in activities of daily living for the passenger that he or she is unable to provide for him or herself. One (1) PCA must be allowed to ride at no charge per ADA law.

For the TD Program, a Personal Care Attendant (PCA) is required for children under age eight (8) and individuals requiring special loading assistance. The PCA must be able to provide the necessary assistance to the passenger. The need for PCAs are determined during the eligibility process for individuals requiring special loading assistance and must be medically necessary. PCAs ride for free once documentation of the need is stated on the eligibility form.

Companions

Companion passengers are friends or family members of a passenger, but they are not defined as a PCA.

All LAMTD/ADA passengers shall be allowed one companion rider regardless of age to accompany them at the current rate of the passenger fare when prearranged. **This companion must be made known to the Scheduler at the time the request for transportation is made.** A companion may not be another LAMTD eligible rider. All eligible LAMTD riders must schedule their trip separately under LAMTD scheduling guidelines.

PCAs are counted as passengers and Companions are counted as revenue passengers for NTD reporting.

Child Restraint Devices – Rule 41-2.006(4)(c)

Use of child restraint devices shall be determined locally as to their responsibility, and cost of such device in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

For paratransit trips within the Polk County Coordinated System, the CTC does not provide child restraints or child restraint devices for use in its paratransit vehicles. Due to sanitary reasons related to transmittal of communicable diseases, it is the responsibility of the passenger, or their accompanying parent or Personal Care Attendant to provide child restraint devices, if needed. These cannot be left on the vehicles.

Passenger Property – 41-2.006(4)(d)

Passenger property that can be carried by the passenger and/or driver in one trip and can safely be stored on the vehicle shall be allowed to be transported with the passenger at no additional charge. Additional requirements may be negotiated for carrying and loading rider property beyond this amount. Passenger property does not include wheelchairs, child seats, stretchers, secured oxygen, personal assistive devices, or intravenous devices.

Within the Polk County Coordinated System, passengers must be able to independently carry any items brought onto the vehicle. Drivers will not be allowed to carry passenger property, other than on and off of the vehicle, unless prior approval has been made through central schedule/dispatching and with the CTC Program Manager's approval. Regarding oxygen units, only personal/portable oxygen units accompanying the passenger shall be transported and must be properly secured or stowed during transit.

Bags Policy (LOCAL)

Operator will assist with three (3) large or six (6) small bags per trip, per elderly or disabled passenger. Assistance with bags would be given upon request of the passenger. A bag would be defined as one large paper or plastic sack (weight not to exceed 10 pounds) or two small plastic bags (weight not to exceed 5 pounds each). Any item meeting the preceding requirements may be substituted for a "bag." Any passenger violating this policy will be given one (1) letter of warning. A second occurrence will result in denial of transportation. Escorts may accompany (when scheduling permits) to assist with shopping bags. Shopping trips should be limited to an amount of bags being loaded that will not interfere with scheduled route and paratransit service times. Passengers are expected to load and unload quickly to allow the route to continue in service.

Vehicle Transfer Points – 41-2.006(4)(e)

Vehicle transfer points shall provide shelter, security, and safety of passengers. The Polk County Coordinated System does not currently use vehicle transfer points for paratransit trips. In the event that transfer points are needed, the transfer will take place at a location that provides shelter, security, and safety of passengers.

Local Toll Free Phone Number– 41-2.006(4)(f)

A local toll free phone number for complaints or grievances shall be posted inside the vehicle. The local complaint process shall be outlined as a section in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan including, advising the dissatisfied person about the Commission's Ombudsman Program as a step within the process as approved by the local Coordinating Board.

Vehicles providing paratransit service within the Polk County Coordinated System shall have signs posted within sixty (60) days of contract execution listing the CTC's toll free telephone number for comments/complaints (fixed route public transit operators within the Coordinated System may instead post their local toll free telephone number) and a toll free telephone number for comments/complaints to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged Ombudsman. The CTC's and the Ombudsman's toll free numbers will also be listed in the CTC's users guide along with information on how to file a complaint. The CTC has an adopted grievance procedure approved for the Polk County Coordinating System. Any complaints or grievances not resolved between both parties within 30 calendar days will be referred to the Grievance Subcommittee of the Polk County Transportation Disadvantaged Coordinating Board.

Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center.

The local number is (863) 534-5500.

The toll free number is 855-POLKBUS (765-5287)

Out of Service Area Trips– 41-2.006(4)(g)

The CTC recommends program participants request to be transported to sources of medical care within his/her locality, except when the required medical care is not available within that locality. For the purpose of this policy, the locality is defined as the recipient's county of residence. When the required medical care is not available within the recipient's county of residence, out of area trips will be considered when supporting documents are

presented to justify the necessity to be transported out of area. All trips will be provided in the most cost-effective and most appropriate mode of transportation available at the time of the request.

Out-of-service area medical appointments must be scheduled at least seventy-two (72) hours in advance and not more than one week in advance. Exceptions to the seventy-two (72) hour or less scheduling rule include extenuating circumstances such as:

- follow up appointments in less than seventy-two (72) hours
- urgent care
- hospital and emergency room discharges
- transportation to appointments made to replace missed appointments that were not caused by the recipient's negligence

Customers may be multi-loaded with other customers traveling in the same general vicinity.

Medical documentation is required to verify the service cannot be received locally.

All out-of-county trips of more than 100 miles must be prior-approved by the Program Supervisor.

The LAMTD will only coordinate transportation for residents of Polk County. Residents of other counties will be referred to the transportation provider in their county of residence.

Trip reservations for out-of-county transportation are accepted Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Out-of-service area trips requested for same day is not available.

Days, Service Hours and Areas of Service for Out-of-Area Trips:

Locations:	Days of Travel:
Osceola and Orange Counties	Tuesdays and Thursdays
Tampa Area	Monday through Friday
Other Areas	Wednesdays, Thursdays

Customers requiring out-of-county transportation must schedule appointments so that they are cared for or treated between the hours of 9:00 AM and 12:00 Noon.

Customers traveling to Osceola and Orange counties as well as the Gainesville area will be connected with Lynx or Access Lynx Paratransit Services.

Out of Area Pick-up and Drop-off Windows

There is a minimum 2 hour pick-up and drop-off window for out-of-county trips. This means that a person could be picked-up as early as 2 hours before his or her requested pick-up time.

Trips will be multi-loaded in vehicles with other passengers who share common pickup and/or travel destinations whenever convenient for the transit agency.

Necessary & Convenience Trips

Necessary trips are defined as trips for the purpose of Medical, Medical Related or other Life Sustaining. Convenience trips are defined as any trip that does not fall under the categories listed above as Necessary trips.

Taking the passenger to the nearest bus stop to utilize fixed route bus and dial-a-ride service is an option which will be used at the discretion of the transit agency whenever suitable and reasonable.

The CTC reserves the right to restrict service due to capacity and funding constraints. Requested trips may not always be able to be accommodated. Alternatives to requested dates and times for trips will be offered wherever possible.

Personal Assistance

An enrollee who can walk to and from a vehicle, his or her home, and a place of medical services without such assistance is deemed not to require personal assistance.

No personal assistance will be provided that requires installation, removal, adjustment or other interference with medical equipment or devices. Portable oxygen apparatus may be lifted or carried by the non-emergency stretcher driver or attendant.

Personal assistance will not be provided when hazards and harmful situations exist such as uncontained secretion of bodily fluids, open wounds, etc. The direction of the transit agency's staff will be accepted when an on-site assessment and observation of potential harmful situations exist. Transportation may be denied when such uncorrectable situations exist.

We are committed to providing transportation services with a high regard for the person's safety, dignity and respect. Ensuring the paratransit passenger's dignity allows the passenger to feel as if they are being treated respectfully. To avoid sensitivity issues and misunderstandings, passengers are required to wear appropriate clothing at all times during transport.

If an individual's weight exceeds the manufacturer's capacity limit for the wheelchair lift, the Operator will not be able to load the passenger. The Operator will contact the Dispatch center to request guidance.

Non-Emergency Stretcher Transport

The Polk County CTC does not provide or contract to provide non-emergency stretcher transportation under the Transportation Disadvantaged funded program.

Scheduling and Pick-Up Window

Except for subscription service, routine appointments may be scheduled with a minimum of three (3) days advance notice, and up to (14) days in advance.

Polk County CTC scheduling staff may be reached during normal office hours (Monday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. through 3:00 p.m.).

Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center.

The local number is (863) 534-5500.

The toll free number is 855-POLKBUS (765-5287)

Trips may be provided by LAMTD staff or through a contracted transport provider.

Vehicle Cleanliness – 41-2.006(4)(h)

Interior of all vehicles providing service in the Polk County Coordinated System shall be free from dirt, grime, oil, trash, torn upholstery, damaged or broken seats, protruding metal or other objects or materials which could soil items placed in the vehicle or provide discomfort for the passenger.

Billing Requirements– 41-2.006(4)(i)

Billing requirements of the CTC to subcontractors shall be determined locally by the local Coordinating Board and provided in the local Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan. All bills shall be paid within 7 calendar days to subcontractors, after receipt of said payment by the CTC, in accordance with Chapter 287.0585, Florida Statutes.

All Polk County Coordinated System contracted operators will invoice the CTC by the end of the week following service delivery, on the appropriate invoice forms made a part of the operator's contract. Invoices will be logged in by the CTC Fiscal Unit and will be handled invoice by invoice, first come, first reviewed. The operator will be reimbursed

within 45 days of receipt of an approved, final, corrected invoice. This is covered in the operator's contract.

Passenger/Trip Database– 41-2.006(4)(j)

Passenger/trip data base must be maintained or accessible by the CTC on each rider being transported within the system.

For all trips provided by the Polk County Coordinated System, including trips provided by the CTC or brokered to coordinated operators, passenger/trip data will be collected and entered into the CTC's Trapeze automated scheduling and dispatch system. Each coordinated operator will keep the appropriate information necessary to satisfy the CTC in making eligibility assessments and fulfilling reporting requirements as determined by any and all funding agencies. These requirements are outlined in each contract.

Adequate Seating– 41-2.006(4)(k)

Adequate seating for paratransit services shall be provided to each rider and escort, child, or personal care attendant, and no more passengers than the registered passenger seating capacity shall be scheduled or transported in a vehicle at any time. For transit services provided by transit vehicles, adequate seating or standing space will be provided to each rider and escort, child, or personal care attendant, and no more passengers than the registered passenger seating or standing capacity shall be scheduled or transported in a vehicle at any time.

The Polk County Coordinated System will ensure that vehicle seating will not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity or, when applicable, the Florida Department of Transportation seating guidelines.

Driver Identification and Uniform Requirements– 41-2.006(4)(l)

Each driver must have photo identification that is in view of the passenger. Name patches, inscriptions or badges that affix to driver clothing are acceptable. For transit services, the driver photo identification shall be in a conspicuous location in the vehicle.

All drivers for the Polk County Coordinated System will have a picture identification displayed at all times when transporting passengers. The driver may also be identified by a standard uniform.

Drivers providing Polk County Coordinated System paratransit services, including through coordination agreements, shall be required to announce and identify themselves by name and company in a manner that is conducive to communications with the specific passenger, upon pickup of each rider, group of riders, or representative, guardian, or

associate of the rider, except in situations where the driver regularly transports the rider on a recurring basis.

General Passenger Assistance – 41-2.006(4)(m)

Drivers providing Polk County Coordinated System paratransit services shall provide the passenger with boarding assistance, if necessary or requested, to the seating portion of the vehicle. The boarding assistance shall include opening the vehicle door, fastening the seat belt or utilization of wheel chair securement devices, storage of mobility assistive devices, and closing the vehicle door. In the door-through-door paratransit service category, the driver shall be required to open and close doors to buildings, except in situations in which assistance in opening/closing building doors would not be safe for passengers remaining on the vehicle. Assisted access must be in a dignified manner. At no time shall the vehicle leave the sight of the operator. The operator will not enter the residence. Operators will assist with bags for elderly and disabled persons pursuant to the adopted Bag Policy. Assistance will not be given if the operator determines the area from the door to the vehicle to be unsafe for the passenger and themselves. This includes walkways that are not clear of objects and/or debris.

Drivers may not assist wheelchair up or down more than one step, unless it can be performed safely as determined by the passenger, guardian, and driver. Assistance will not be given if steps or ramps appear not to be properly constructed or maintained. If the passenger does not concur with the operator's professional determination of the area, he or she may call into the dispatch office and a supervisor will be dispatched to the address in question for a second opinion of the area in question. The supervisor will notify the passenger when the determination is made and proper documentation of the determination will be maintained in the client's file.

Smoking, Eating and Drinking– 41-2.006(4)(n)

Smoking is prohibited in any vehicle. There will be no smoking in any vehicle serving the Polk County Coordinated System. There will be NO eating or drinking on the vehicle, by the passenger or the driver.

No-Shows – 41-2.006(4)(o); and Cancellations

Citrus Connection Passenger No-Show Policy

Effective September 2015

Citrus Connection has adopted a new ADA Para transit Passenger No-Show policy in an effort to bring our riders more efficient para transit service, and to be up-to-date with the Federal Transit Administration best practices, and with community input.

No-shows are recorded each time a para transit passenger makes a late cancellation, forgets to cancel, declines their trip at the door, or is not available for pick-up for their scheduled trip.

Cancellations

Cancellations are accepted as late as one hour before the scheduled trip. Cancellations made less than one hour before a scheduled trip are considered a no-show.

Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center.

The local number is (863) 534-5500.

The toll free number is 855-POLKBUS (765-5287)

Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center to cancel a trip.

No Show Policy

No show/late cancellations represent 10 percent (10%) or more of their scheduled trips and the rider has four (4) or more no-shows in a calendar month this will result in a violation and will increase each month that the passenger exceeds the no-show threshold.

Penalties

- 1st violation - Passenger will receive communication alerting them of the no show/late cancellation.
- 2nd second violation- passenger will receive a warning letter
- 3rd violation- final warning, communicated by email
- 4th violation- 7 day suspension
- 5th violation – 30 days suspension

Habitual no shows will be addressed in accordance with the policy.

No Show Notifications

Passengers will be notified of every no show; passengers will receive written notification starting with the second no show.

Passengers with concerns about a No Show are encouraged to call the Manager of the Regional Mobility Call Center. Passengers who wish to appeal an ADA suspension may download a form at www.ridecitrus.com or request a form be sent to them.

No Shows beyond a Passenger's Control

Passengers are not responsible for no-shows resulting from sudden illness, family or personal emergency, transit connection or appointment delay, extreme weather conditions, operator error, or other unforeseen reasons for which it's not possible to call the Paratransit Dispatch line to cancel in time or take the trip as scheduled.

Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center.

The local number is (863) 534-5500.

The toll free number is 855-POLKBUS (765-5287)

Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center to cancel a trip.

Suspensions

If a passenger exceeds the no-show threshold, they will receive a suspension letter, proposing to suspend service within one week and outlining the appeals process

Late Cancels Policy

Trips not cancelled at least 60 minutes prior to scheduled pick up time will result in a no-show and the No Show Policy would be effective.

Two-way Communication (communication equipment) – 41-2.006(4)(p)

All vehicles providing service within the Polk County Coordinated System shall be equipped with two-way communications in good working order and audible to the driver at all times to the base.

COMMUNICATIONS: Cellular Phone & Electronics Devices Policy

The intent of this policy is to ensure the Safety of passengers, pedestrians, other citizens and employees of the District. The District will not be liable for the loss of or damage to, personal cellular phones and similar devices brought into the workplace.

POLICY: GENERAL

A. Support/Administrative Employees

- Cellular phone usage is allowed during working hours but calls must be limited and must not interfere with the employee's job duties and responsibilities.
- Support staff may not use their personal cell phones in any of the safety sensitive areas outlined above.
- Support staff may not use their personal cell phones during the operation of a company vehicle unless equipped with hands-free technology (Bluetooth).

B. Safety Sensitive Employees and Bus Handlers

- Cellular phones, electronic devices and accessories to include a blue-tooth ear piece may be carried on the bus; however, these devices may not be powered on or visible during operation of the bus or in the act of performing a safety sensitive function. In addition, devices and accessories may not be carried onto the maintenance shop floor (levels 1 & 2).
- The use of all cellular phones and electronic devices (non-district issued), to include talking, texting, instant messaging or e-mailing while performing any safety sensitive duty is strictly prohibited. To use a cellular phone or electronic device you must be on an authorized break (for Bus Operators, this means the end of the line), and in a non-safety sensitive area.
- The use of bus radios (hand-held), MDTs, GPS and mobile computers to include staff and maintenance vehicle radios, to conduct District business is considered essential communication and is authorized communication equipment. All communications must be kept to an essential minimum; the use of this communication must be at an authorized bus stop, in a parking lot and out of the flow of traffic.

EMERGENCY EXCEPTIONS:

1. When involved in an accident/incident and moving the vehicle is not feasible.
2. When the vehicle has a mechanical breakdown and the vehicle cannot be moved.
3. When advised by Law enforcement that a vehicle cannot be moved.
4. When advised by supervisory personnel or the Control center that a vehicle cannot be moved.
5. When under duress.

C. Policy Applicability: Staff with District-issued cellular phones

Revised 12/2013

District staff who use District-provided cell phones, while in a District-owned vehicle or in their own personal vehicle, will be equipped with hands free Bluetooth technology devices; these devices will be required for use with all company-issued cell phones. In no case is District staff allowed to use company-issued cell phones during the operation of a bus or while performing other safety sensitive duties.

PRIVACY – Employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy in any equipment issued by the District, including but not limited to cell phones and blackberries. All company

equipment, including voicemail messages, e-mail messages and text messages contained on such equipment, is subject to search and review by the company at any time without prior notice.

D. Management responsibility

Management will randomly monitor compliance of this policy.

Management will investigate all allegations of non-compliance of this policy.

E. Violations

Violation of this policy will result progressive discipline up to and including termination.

Air Conditioning/Heating– 41-2.006(4)(q)

All vehicles providing service within the coordinated system shall have working air conditioners and heaters in each vehicle. Vehicles that do not have a working air conditioner or heater will be scheduled for repair or replacement as soon as possible.

If the heat or air-conditioning malfunctions in a vehicle providing service within the Polk County Coordinated System, the driver must have CTC permission to finish the day. Vehicles with malfunctioning heater or air conditioning systems must be repaired before the next service day.

First Aid– 41-2.006(4)(r)

First Aid Policy shall be determined locally and provided in the TDSP. This policy will be clarified in the next annual update of the TDSP.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)– 41-2.006(4)(s)

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) policy shall be determined locally and provided in the TDSP. This policy will be clarified in the next annual update of the TDSP.

Driver Criminal Background Screening– 41-2.006(4)(t)

All drivers in the Polk County Coordinated System must submit to a Florida Department of Law Enforcement background screening. Upon determination of an unfavorable report, the driver will be terminated.

Public Transit Ridership – 41-2.006(4)(u)

The CTC and the Local Coordinating Board should jointly establish a percentage of total trips that will be placed on the fixed route system.

A Polk County Coordinated System standard has been jointly established by the CTC and the local Coordinating Board that fixed-route trips will equal at least **35%** of total trips.

Pick-up Windows – 41-2.006(4)(v) and On-Time Performance – 41-2.006(4)(w)

The Polk County Coordinated System has established a standard of 90% on-time performance for all completed trips. The “On-time” window has been defined as no more than fifteen minutes before or later than the scheduled pick up time. “Will Call” or trips for return pick-up, between the hours of 6:15 a.m. and 6:15 p.m., will be evaluated on the one (1) hour return time of pick-up for trips in Polk County, unless another time is agreed upon. Trips for return pick-up, between the hours of 6:15 p.m. and 6:15 a.m., will be evaluated on the two (2) hours return time of pick-up for trips in Polk County, unless another time is agreed upon, and within a reasonable time for return trips for pick-up outside the County.

Advance Reservation Requirements – 41-2.006(4)(x)

Within the Polk County Coordinated System, except for ADA paratransit trips, a minimum of 72 hours (3 days) notification is required for scheduling trips. With the exception of ADA paratransit trips, trips that are requested less than 72 hours in advance may be scheduled only on a space available basis. ADA paratransit trips will be provided in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and LAMTD’s adopted procedure.

Performance measures to evaluate safety (Accidents) 41-2.006(4)(y)

The CTC and local Coordinating Board will review accident data at least annually. CTC Performance Standards are no more than 1.0 accidents per 100,000 miles on the paratransit system, and, no more than 1.0 accidents per 100,000 miles on the fixed-route system.

Performance measures to evaluate reliability of vehicles (Road calls)– 41-2.006(4)(z)

The CTC and local Coordinating Board will review road call data at least annually. CTC Performance Standards are at least 30,000 miles between road calls on the paratransit system, and at least 10,000 miles between road calls on the fixed-route system

Call Hold Time– 41-2.006(4)(aa)

Within the Polk County Coordinated System, all calls go into a queue to be answered and callers should not be placed on hold for longer than two minutes without status announcements.

Complaint Standard – 41-2.006(4)(bb)

The Polk County Coordinated System standard is no more than two (2) complaints per 1,000 trips.

Complaints and Grievance Procedures

The CTC has an adopted complaint and grievance procedure. The LCB reviews this annually and did so in November 2018. Any complaints or grievances not resolved between both parties within 30 calendar days will be referred to the Grievance Subcommittee of the TD LCB. **(See the Grievance Policy in Appendix 13.)**

A-2: LOCALLY DEVELOPED POLICIES NOT CONTAINED IN RULE 41-2

Lost and Found Policy

The Lakeland Area Mass Transit District d/b/a Citrus Connection and Winter Haven Area Transit assumes no responsibility whatsoever for the care and/or protection of any personal belonging left unattended on its property, and for loss, under any circumstance, including theft, vandalism, or malicious mischief, of such belonging. For lost or abandoned property, the above referenced agencies shall retain custody of the property for 90 days. After 90 days the items will be donated to a non-profit organization.

Service Animals

LAMTD vehicles will allow **service animals** to board their vehicles. Pets or companion animals will not be transported on LAMTD vehicles, caged or otherwise.

The ADA defines a service animal as any guide dog, signal dog, or other animal individually trained to provide assistance to an individual with a disability. Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that the individual with a disability cannot perform for him or her. "Seeing eye dogs" are one type of service animal, used by some individuals who are visually impaired.

The care or supervision of a service animal is solely the responsibility of his or her owner. The passenger and the service animal may be asked to exit the vehicle if the service animal's behavior poses a direct threat to the health or safety of others.

Mobility Devices, Ramps, Curbs & Steps

Operators will assist passengers in manual mobility devices up or down one curb or standard size step if it is safe to do so. Operators will take an **unoccupied** manual mobility device up or down no more than 3 steps.

All ramps and walkways must be cleared of clutter or debris and properly maintained to allow a safe area for the operator to assist. If the area is deemed unsafe, assistance for the passenger will not be given and transportation will be denied for that trip unless the passenger can meet the operator at the vehicle.

Mobility Devices

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discriminating against individuals with disabilities in providing transportation services. All wheelchairs and their users must be transported. A "wheelchair" is defined by the ADA as a mobility device which safely fits on a passenger lift or ramp.

Operators must require that a passenger permit his/her wheelchair to be secured, if the wheelchair can be properly secured. If the bus securement system cannot be used properly on a particular wheelchair, operators must use their "best efforts" to restrain or confine the wheelchair to the securement area and advise the wheelchair passenger of a potential hazard. At the user's request, Operators may not deny transportation to wheelchair users because his/her wheelchair cannot be secured satisfactorily by the bus securement system.

Operators are to assist passengers in using passenger seat and/or shoulder belts upon request. The use of seat/shoulder belts is at the option of the passenger, but is strongly recommended by the transit agency. If an operator asks the wheelchair passenger to use the seat/shoulder belt and the passenger refuses, the operator should immediately notify the dispatcher/supervisor that the operator did make an attempt to have the wheelchair passenger use the seat/shoulder belt, and the passenger refused.

While the operator may recommend that passengers using "scooters" transfer from the "scooter" to a bus seat if the person is willing to do so, the passenger is not required to transfer.

Intending passengers using a mobility device not a common wheelchair shall not be transported by LAMTD vehicles.

Operators are not permitted to drive or operate a motorized mobility device. Operation of the device is the sole responsibility of the passenger or their designee.

Reporting Elderly and Disabled Abuse

LAMTD is committed to report abuse, neglect and exploitation. LAMTD employees are mandated to report any suspected or known abuse, neglect or exploitation to the State of Florida Central abuse Registry.

All employees of LAMTD who know or have reasonable cause to suspect that a child, elderly person or disabled adult is or has been abused, neglected or exploited, shall immediately report such knowledge or suspicion to the State of Florida Abuse Registry and Tracking System by calling the statewide toll free telephone number 1-800-96ABUSE or by faxing this information to Registry and Tracking System (1-800-914-0004) using the Department of Children and Families Abuse/Abandonment /Neglect/Exploitation Fax Transmittal Form. The employee's direct supervisor should be notified in writing.

Vehicle Securement

Vehicles will not be left running and unattended; however, vehicles with passengers may be locked with the windows down and the key removed.

Group Trips

The Polk CTC will consider group trips on a first come-first served availability basis. All passengers in the group must meet LAMTD qualifications and adhere to the policies and procedures of the transit agency. All passengers and assistants must pay the fare agreed upon at the time the trip is arranged. The fare is due upon entrance of the vehicle unless other arrangements have been previously arranged and agreed upon by the transit agency. LAMTD is unable to transport group trips for students attending primary, secondary, high school or other education facilities as an alternative to school board transportation. Group trips that cannot be accommodated by LAMTD have the option of contacting private transportation organizations to inquire into chartering services.

ADA Compliance

An agency or operator within the Polk County Coordinated System shall assure compliance with the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990, as it is amended from time to time.

Request for Bids/Proposals/Qualifications (Local Policy)

The CTC will use the Request for Qualifications process in procurement of service providers under the coordinated system. The process is in accordance with LAMTD policies.

Periodically, for-profit operators are provided the opportunity to respond to a Letter of Interest that has been publicly noticed by the CTC. Through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process (competitive procurement process required by Florida Statutes), operators are evaluated to determine those who are qualified and subsequently selected to contract with the CTC to provide transportation services within the coordinated system. As operator contracts expire, each existing operator has an opportunity to renew their contract, based upon contract fulfillment. The following table reflects the maximum (not-to-exceed) reimbursement rates.

The RFQ remains in full force and effect for a period of one year. Rate increases will only be considered if additional funding is obtained from funding agency, such as the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged for TD services.

In the event funds to provide said services become unavailable then all contracts and agreements will be null and void.

Part III- Quality Assurance –Element B – Monitoring and Evaluation

Quality Assurance monitoring and evaluation occurs at many levels of the TD Program.

The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) - Quality Assurance Performance Reviews (QAPE).

The CTD conducts reviews of each CTC in the state of Florida, on a regular two-year cycle. The Polk CTC's last QAPE by the CTD was conducted in 2018. The CTD has recently indicated that Polk will be visited again in FY 2019-20, to review the FY 2018-19 fiscal year.

The Process by which the LCB Conducts the Annual Evaluation of the CTC

The Community Transportation Coordinator role, is the result of a contract between the CTC and the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. It is not a local contract. Nevertheless, the Polk LCB serves as "the eyes and ears of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged," and so, a primary task of the TD LCB is to continually evaluate the services provided by the CTC. The TD LCB must provide the CTD and the TPO with an annual evaluation of the CTC's performance, including a recommendation as to whether to retain the current coordinator.

The purpose of this evaluation is to ensure that the most cost-effective, efficient, non-fragmented, unduplicated, appropriate, reliable, and accountable transportation services are provided to the local TD population.

The CTC is evaluated according to the required sections of the Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation LCB/CTC Evaluation Workbook, which was developed by the CTD. The CTC is also evaluated by locally adopted performance standards, which have been described previously in this document, and which are summarized at **Table 8**.

After the LCB establishes the evaluation period, staff requests the necessary statistical data from the CTC. In addition, staff requests output from on-board MDTs, a select sample of driver logs to review on-time and travel-time performance, and a select sample of eligibility files to ensure compliance and performance in all areas of CTC practices. The CTC Evaluation Subcommittee will also conduct client satisfaction surveys to users of the door-to-door service and the bus pass program. Staff may also contact clients or funding agencies to determine their satisfaction with the TD services received.

Polk TPO staff tabulates this information and draft a report for the review of the TD LCB CTC Evaluation Subcommittee. Staff revises the document per the committee's request and gathers any additional information needed to fully evaluate the CTC's performance.

Next, the evaluation is presented to the full TD LCB for their review and approval, directs staff to make any appropriate revisions, and recommends the adoption of the document. Finally, the evaluation report is forwarded to the CTD and the Polk TPO.

In FY 2018-19, there was a change made to the distribution of the TD Planning Grant funds which are normally allocated to the Designated Official Planning agency. The Designated Official Planning Agency, Polk TPO, uses those funds to staff the Local Coordinating Board, and carry out the required activities of the TD Program. One of those activities is the annual evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator. In FY 2018-19, the Legislature changed the language for the distribution of the TD Planning Grant funds, so they would go to the Community Transportation Coordinator. The CTD created a work-around contract so that the Planning Agency would receive funds to carry out the required Planning tasks through the CTC. Because of this, the LCB did not conduct an Evaluation of the CTC's FY 2017-18.

FY 2018/2019 Evaluation Related Highlights **EXCERPTED FROM THE FY 2018-19 EVALUATION REPORT**

This evaluation is for FY 2018/19 or the period July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019, (2019). Historical performance comparison data is from the Community Transportation Coordinator's **2019 Annual Operating Report (AOR)**. Another primary source used was the FY 2019 Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged **Annual Performance Report, (APR)**. The 2019 APR contains data for the years 2017, 2018, and 2019.

- The 2018/19 Annual Operating Report was submitted on time.
- The CTC continued implementing the bus pass program resulting in better utilization of TD funding, and the opening of all categories in the Prioritization Policy.

An evaluation committee consisting of Polk TPO staff and members of the Local Coordinating Board met with representatives of the CTC to review the evaluation process. Each member of the LCB committee, agreed to take a ride on the paratransit services. Their experiences are described in the Evaluation report.

Due to COVID-19, Polk TPO planning staff conducted the bulk of this evaluation in house this year. Polk TPO staff and representatives of the CTC met via teleconference several times to discuss the performance measure outcomes for FY 2018/19. Planning staff then sent the Draft report out to the Evaluation Committee members for their review and comment.

Recommendations for improvement:

Recommendation #1 The CTC's Quarterly Reports provided to the LCB meetings, need to cover the key data points for the Performance Measures listed in the TDSP (and see **Table 1** in this evaluation,) based upon the same definitions as the Annual Operating Report. The TPO and CTC staff will work towards this in FY 2020-21.

Timeline for Compliance: September 2020.

Recommendation # 2 CTC should ensure that all Coordination Contractors present their FTA Grant applications to the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) for review, "for coordination purposes," at the December 2020 LCB Meeting.

Timeline for Compliance: December 2020.

COMMENDATIONS:

1. The CTC has made significant progress in having as many eligible paratransit passengers as possible switch from demand response door-to-door service, to the fixed route services. This is achieved either on the fixed route service, for ambulatory people who can ride the fixed route, or, on the ADA service. This has been achieved with workshops, and travel training.
2. The CTC reduced the number of miles per roadcalls from 2018 to 2019. The number of Miles between Roadcalls **decreased by 138.78%** from (25,951) in 2018 to (10,888) in 2019.

Contract Evaluations and Monitoring by the CTC.

The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged requires the CTC to have a written contract monitoring process in place to evaluate its coordination contractors and transportation operators.

Contract compliance monitoring within the Coordinated System is done by management staff and includes on-site visits. Monitoring of standards is done on an annual basis using reports required from providers and reports generated by the CTC's computer assisted scheduling program. Monitoring results are available to assist in the local Coordinating Board's annual review of contract conformance with TDSP standards.

Beginning in FY 2020-21, the will CTC collect ridership and accident information on a monthly basis, and report it to the LCB on a quarterly basis.

The Community Transportation Coordinator conducts on-going monitoring of these aspects:

- Service Effectiveness
- Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Vehicle Utilization
- Service Availability
- Reliability
- Safety and Training
- Monitoring Procedure

The CTC is responsible for assuring that operators and contractors are monitored at least once a year. Monitoring will include annual inspections for the following:

- Vehicles,
- Insurance renewals and updates,
- Staff training,
- License and permit checks,
- Client feedback on performance,
- Non-discrimination policies,
- Invoice verification to include,
 - actual trip length verification,
 - cost per trip verification,
- Accident records,

- Fully allocated cost review,
- System Safety Plan adherence,
- Client complaints, and
- Trip logs.

Contract Evaluation

At the time the CTC receives applications for funding under Federal Transit Administration Section 5310, the TD LCB, Polk TPO, and the CTC review the reasonableness of the application and whether or not the trips could be provided by the CTC. Coordination contracts are only extended to those agencies that can provide transportation more efficiently and cost effectively. Coordination contracts are then reviewed prior to renewal.

LAMTD - Community Transportation Coordinator Vehicle Compliance Policy

SCOPE

- To make sure that Coordinating Agencies are in full compliance with 14-90 regulations.
- Identify responsibilities of the CTC, Coordinating Agency and Monitor.

PROCESS

- (a) Upon completion of a vehicle inspection the Monitor will provide a monitoring report to both the CTC and the Coordinating Agency.
- (b) A formal letter will be sent by the CTC to the Coordinating Agency stating the corrective actions required and the time frame allowed for corrective actions.
- (c) After inspection for compliance, the Monitor will send a formal finding to the CTC and Coordinating Agency.
- (d) If corrective actions have still not been completed by the agency within the time frame identified, the CTC will send a formal letter requesting the vehicle be removed from services until which time the Monitor gives their formal response that the vehicle is in full compliance.
- (e) If discrepancies require immediate removal of vehicle from revenue operations, the CTC will send a formal request for the removal of the identified vehicle from service until which time the Monitor submits a formal response that the vehicle is in full compliance.

DISCREPANCY CATEGORIZATION

1. Discrepancies requiring immediate removal of vehicle from revenue operations:
 - (a) Any defect that will jeopardize the safe operation of the vehicle, including, but not limited to, tires, brakes, steering gear, and exhaust system.
 - (b) A lack of or defects in securement devices, including, but not limited to, seats, seat belts, wheelchair restraints, and child restraints.
 - (c) A lack of or defects in safety devices, including fire extinguishers, first-aid kits, and reflective triangles.
 - (d) Carrying a number of passengers on board the vehicle exceeding the manufacturer's designated rating for the vehicle.
 - (e) Any unsafe transport or stowage of passenger property or any of the following: wheelchairs, child seats, stretchers, personal/portable oxygen, personal assistive devices, or intravenous devices.
 - (f) Absence of any form of communication between the driver and his/her dispatcher.
2. Discrepancies that must be corrected within eight hours before the vehicle may be returned to revenue service:
 - (a) Malfunctioning vehicle air conditioning systems, if applicable for the season.
 - (b) Malfunctioning vehicle heating systems, if applicable for the season.
3. Discrepancies that must be corrected within seven calendar days:
 - (a) Evidence that the vehicle's driver is not following accepted passenger assistance techniques or providing courteous service.
 - (b) Failure to have the provider's identification and vehicle number affixed to the exterior of the vehicle; to have the required placarding on board the vehicle in view of the passengers; and, for the drivers to have proper identification and/or uniforms.
 - (c) Evidence that passengers' consumption of food or beverages is creating an unsafe or unsanitary condition.
 - (d) Vehicle interiors with dirty or damaged seats that could soil items placed in the vehicle or provide discomfort to the passenger.
 - (e) Damage to the vehicle through accidents or wear and tear that does not present a professional image for passengers transported by Polk County-sponsored providers.

Part III- QUALITY ASSURANCE: – Element C—PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The TD Program Performance Measures shown in **Table 16** are derived from the Polk Transportation Disadvantaged Program’s goals, objectives, and strategies, as well as from the service standards and policies contained in the TDSP, and provide the basis for an annual evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator.

The Community Transportation Coordinator tracks these metrics, and conducts on-going monitoring of paratransit service and fixed route service.

Table 16. TD Program Performance Measures – 2020

Performance Measure	Target
Potential TD Population Served	At least 5%
Percent of Trips on Fixed-Route	At least 35%
Average Cost per Trip	No greater than \$19.00
Average Cost per Paratransit Trip	No greater than \$35.00
Accidents per 100,000 Vehicle Miles (Paratransit)	No more than 1.0
Accidents per 100,000 Vehicle Miles (Fixed-Route)	No more than 1.0
Vehicle Miles between Road Calls (Paratransit)	At least 30,000
Vehicle Miles between Road Calls (Fixed-Route)	At least 10,000
Complaints per 1,000 Paratransit Trips	No more than 2.0
On-Time Performance	At least 90%

PART IV: COST/REVENUE ALLOCATION AND RATE STRUCTURE JUSTIFICATION

The Novel Corona Virus SARS-CoV-2 was detected in late 2019, and named COVID-19 in March 2020. This worldwide Pandemic has significant impacts for health, society and the economy. At the time of this writing, most non-essential businesses were closed in Florida from mid-March 2020 until mid-May 2020. These events have had an impact on system performance for FY 19-20, and it is anticipated there will be resulting economic impacts in FY 2020-2021, also.

PUBLISHED RATES FOR SERVICE

The Polk County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board must annually review, discuss and approve the Rate Calculation Model contained in the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.

The Commission has established the Rate Calculation Model, a standard process for the development of rates for the transportation services that are arranged or provided by the CTC. This model has been used to develop the local rate for all purchasing agencies, except fixed route and bus passes. The Rate Calculation Model worksheets and rates for services are reviewed and updated annually, and may be found in the **Appendix 14** of the TDSP. This process allows for annual changes based on fluctuating expenditures and revenues and must be approved by the Commission.

Once the CTC presents its rates to the LCB, then, the information contained in the Rate Calculation Worksheets is inserted into the TDSP. This information becomes the "Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund published rates for service" shown in **Table 17. When the CTC invoices the Commission or participating agencies in the coordinated system for trips, the CTC does so according to the "published rates for service."** This is for the demand-response door-to-door TD service.

Rates for Service

Table 17. Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund Published Rates for Service, 2020

Type of Service	Per Mile*	Pickup Fee
Ambulatory	\$4.40	\$-0
Wheelchair	7.54	\$-0

*Note: Per mile reimbursement is calculated using the latest up-to-date technology available, i.e. Trapeze Software and GIS technology.

BUS FARES

When people ride the fixed route transit system, or use the ADA service, these are the fares—what they pay when they board the bus/van.

Table 18. Bus Fares -- 2020

Fare Type	One-Way Fare
Regular Adult	\$1.50
Students (all ages)	\$1.25
Senior Citizens* (65 years and older)	\$0.75
Disabled Citizens*	\$0.75
Children (under 7 years with adult)	Free
ADA/PT Connect	\$2.00
ADA Fixed Route	Free
Children Fixed Route (7 and under accompanied by adult)	Free

*These fares are available to senior citizens and disabled individuals (including those who have illness, injury, or other temporary or permanent incapacity or disability.)

Bus Passes

Bus passes are a way of purchasing rides in advance. Bus passes are utilized whenever possible as a cost-effective means of transporting clients. They will be reimbursed at the current published rates provided in schedules. Current prices for bus passes for the Lakeland Area Mass Transit District (LAMTD) and Winter Haven Area Transit (WHAT) in their respective service areas are presented in **Table 19**.

Table 19. Bus Passes – 2020

Pass Type	Price
Unlimited Monthly Pass (31 days)	\$47.00
Unlimited Weekly Pass	\$12.00
Adult Day Pass	\$3.00
Student Day Pass	\$2.50
Senior/Disabled Day Pass	\$1.50
Senior Weekly Pass	\$9.00
Senior Monthly Pass	31.50
Smart Card	\$2.00

Paratransit (PT) Passes are \$2.00 each and may be purchased as a single pass or in booklets of ten (10).

CASHLESS FARE

Purpose:

To assist in improving operator performance; to make the travel experience more convenient for the customer.

DEFINITION: "PT Connect" is the single brand name for paratransit (door-to-door) services throughout Polk County, a single brand name and a cashless fare system for door-to-door service.

PROCEDURE: The paratransit operators will no longer accept cash payments on board for the rides. Riders must present a "PT Connect" pass for their fare at the time of boarding. Passes are \$2.00 each and may be purchased as a single pass or in booklets of ten (10):

By Mail: LAMTD
Citrus Connection – 1212 George Jenkins Blvd., Lakeland FL 33802
By Phone: (863) 534-5500 or (863) 688-RIDE (7433)
On-Line: www.ridecitrus.com
In Person: WHAT Terminal – 555 Ave. "E" NW, Winter Haven
Citrus Connection – 1212 George Jenkins Blvd., Lakeland
Regional Call Center–1290 Golfview Ave., 2nd FL, Bartow (Human Services)
Or at the Lakeland Transfer Center: 200 N. Florida Avenue, 33802

Passes may be purchased with cash, Master Card/Visa, debit cards or money orders. Personal checks will not be accepted. A minimum of ten (10) passes must be purchased in a single transaction when using debit or credit cards.

Passengers may call the Regional Mobility Call Center.

NOTE: Also refer to NO PAY COPAY POLICY

Fare Collection Policy *Include No Pay Policy and Cashless Fare Policy

All clients provided transportation services sponsored by the Transportation Disadvantaged Non-Sponsored Trust Fund Program will be required to pay a minimum of \$2.00 for each one-way trip. (Round trip cost will be a minimum of \$4.00.) The actual trip cost will be determined when the trip request is made.

For more information about the cashless fare system, see **Appendix 9**.

LIST OF APPENDICIES for Polk TDSP 2020 Annual Report

These appendices are located in a stand-alone packet

Appendix 1: Florida Coordinated Transportation System

The organizational chart, Florida Coordinated Transportation System Organization identifies all those who are involved in the provision of TD services in Polk County, including the CTD, TPO, TDLCB and CTC.

Appendix 2: List of Acronyms

Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms

Appendix 4: CTC's Organizational chart

Appendix 5: Profile of Older Floridians (2019) DOEA

Appendix 6: Map- Location of Polk County Hospitals

Appendix 7: Forecast of Transportation Disadvantaged Population (Demand Model)

Appendix 8: Maps of Environmental Justice (EJ) and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) areas

Appendix 9: Citrus Connection SYSTEM GUIDE – Re-Route 2020 and SMARTCARD

Appendix 10: Paratransit Rider Brochure

Appendix 11: Vehicle Inventory

Appendix 12: SSPP Certification Form

Appendix 13: Grievance and Complaint Procedures

Appendix 14: Rate Calculation Model