



JOINT MEETING OF THE CHARLOTTE COUNTY-PUNTA GORDA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD AND LEE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD

**Burnt Store Road Presbyterian Church, Stewart Hall,
11330 Burnt Store Road, Punta Gorda, Florida
Friday, February 14, 2025, at 9:30 a.m.**

Meeting Minutes

Agenda Item #1 - Call to Order/Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Charlotte County Commissioner/Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO Chair Christopher Constance, who then chaired the meeting.

The Lee County MPO Board roll was called by Lee County MPO staff. A quorum was present. Lee County MPO Board Members in attendance included Lee County Commissioners Cecil Pendergrass and Brian Hamman; City of Cape Coral Councilmembers Laurie Lehmann, Derrick Donnell, Bill Steinke, Joe Kilraine, Rachel Kaduk; City of Fort Myers Councilmember Teresa Watkins Brown; Town of Fort Myers Beach Councilmember/MPO Board Chair John R. King; City of Sanibel Vice-Mayor Michael Miller; City of Bonita Springs Councilmembers Laura Carr and Chris Corrie.

The Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO Board roll was called by Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO staff. A quorum was present. Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO Board members in attendance included Charlotte County Commissioners Christopher G. Constance, Thomas Thornberry, Kenneth Doherty, and Joseph Tiseo; and City of Punta Gorda Councilmember Jeannine Polk.

Others in attendance included the following – L.K. Nandam, Pam Barr, Michelle Simmons, Bryn Parsons, Stephen Pack, Jason Mobsby, James Heffelfinger, and Jimmy Vilce with FDOT; Kristin Caruso and Jay Winter with Scalar; Matthew Yarosewick with Quest; Steve Nappi and Cal Santarelli with H&H; Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO staff D’Juan Harris, Lakshmi Gurram, Wendy Scott, Bekie Leslie, Sierra Ray Scott; Lee County MPO staff Don Scott, Ron Gogoi, and Brian Raimondo; Lee County MPO Legal Advisor Derek Rooney, Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Legal Advisor Janette Knowlton; members of the public - Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss, Tony Alle (FMA), Faith Harris, Gary Harrell, Richard Kirchhoff (CC-PG MPO Citizens Advisory Committee), Jeff Lustig, Derek Felder (Lee County MPO LCB), Charlie Whitehead (News Press), Carl Burnside, Dr. Charles Darley, Steve Crane, and Polly Crane. Local government staff present were Shaun Cullinan and Ben Bailey with Charlotte County Community Development, John Elias with Charlotte County Public Works, Robert Hancik with the Charlotte County Airport Authority; Richard Lehmkuhl and Carl Bengel with City of Punta Gorda, and Rob Price and Keith Riddle with the Lee County Department of Transportation.

Agenda Item #2 – Invocation

Chair Constance gave the invocation.

Agenda Item #3 - Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda Item #4 - Chair Comments

Chair Constance provided welcome comments.

Agenda Item #5 - Approval of Agenda

Commissioner Brian Hamman moved the approval of the agenda, and Commissioner Joseph Tiseo seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #6 - Public Comments on Agenda Items

The following members of the public provided public comments on agenda items: [Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss](#) (Agenda Item #8 related to Burnt Store Road Corridor Projects) and [Mr. Steve Crane](#) (written comment emailed prior to the meeting and print version handed out at the meeting). Chair Constance referred back to the minutes that were included in Agenda Item #5. Mr. Scott noted the minutes were approved by each individual Board in the prior year and were included for informational purposes only.

Agenda Item #7 - Review and Comment on the Joint Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Project Priority List

Mr. Scott discussed the new Joint Transportation Regional Incentive Program (TRIP) Project Priority List. (All presentation slides for each agenda item have been combined and posted in a link at the end of the minutes.) Commissioner Hamman asked about the State taking over Burnt Store Road. Mr. L.K. Nandam discussed a trade possibility, funding opportunities, and the difficulty of legislative tradeoffs. Mr. Scott addressed new interchange discussions (IJR's). Councilmember Kilraine asked about timeline and funding. Chair Constance questioned the prior Burnt Store Road swap history. Mr. Scott talked about a prior statewide functional classification study. Commissioner Doherty mentioned former state secondary roads that were all turned over from FDOT with some gas tax monies. Commissioner Pendergrass provided additional context and historical perspective.

Agenda Item #8 - Summary of the Burnt Store Road PD&E Public Meeting and Update on Corridor Projects

Mr. Jimmy Vilce project manager with FDOT introduced Ms. Kristin Caruso with Scalar consulting who then provided a summary of the Burnt Store Road PD&E Study and showed a brief video that can be viewed here: [Burnt Store Intersection](#). Chair Constance inquired about future bike/ped crossings. Ms. Caruso noted for the purpose of the PD&E, bike/ped crossings were not examined, but they will be looked at in the future. Mr. Vilce provided additional information on future provisions. Ms. Caruso noted that the public hearing on January 28 had over forty in-person attendees and sixty virtual attendees and continued with her presentation with additional information on the study. Mr. Harris then provided an update on the Charlotte County side. (All presentation slides for each agenda item have been combined and posted in a link at the end of the minutes.)

Agenda Item #9 - Status of the SR 31 Projects

Mr. Scott and Mr. Harris presented information on the status of the SR 31 projects. Mr. Nandam added that projects, both state and private, total \$800 million, the SR 78 bridge is financed in FY 26-27 with the goal to finish design. Councilmember Derrick Donnell commented on the need for public education on driving roundabouts. Mr. Scott discussed educational efforts and additional information that could be provided to the public. It was noted the presentation slides will be included in the minutes. (All presentation slides for each agenda item have been combined and posted in a link at the end of the minutes.)

At this point in the meeting, Chair Constance asked for a Vincent Road discussion. Mr. Rob Price with the Lee County Department of Transportation discussed the policy regarding acceptance of maintenance of a road in which it must add something beneficial to improve the Lee County network. He noted the Board is free to disagree with recommendation. He added there is no need for pavement maintenance at this time. He continued that the lane that is being added to Vincent may have to be taken over due to project impact, and Lee County only has a few MSBUs. Chair Constance recommended the southern half of Burnt Store Marina

be considered for an MSBU and asked the Lee County Commission to consider it and provided the example of Charlotte with Hillsborough for the North Port area. Mr. John Elias with the Charlotte County Public Works echoed Chair Constance's statements. It was noted the estimate for the Lee County portion south side is \$387,000 and the MSBU agreements with City of Punta Gorda and City of North Port were described. Commissioner Tiseo recommended an estimate be provided on anticipated costs. Commissioner Pendergrass asked about one County taking responsibility and mentioned the Coconut Road agreement with three jurisdictions is similar. Mr. Elias described how the road developed to the marina. Commissioner Hamman asked what the plan was when it was built. Commissioner Doherty gave a brief history of the Burnt Store Marina and Burnt Store Isles and noted that Lee County never accepted the plat. He then suggested that Lee County take Burnt Store Marina and set up an ad valorem MSTU taxing unit with a millage for all properties in the Burnt Store Marina and then give Charlotte County the funding. Chair Constance added this is a nice primer for a future joint meeting. Mr. Elias commented that another option is to split the cost.

Agenda Item #10 – Long Range Plan Development Coordination

Mr. Lakshmi Gurram presented the 2050 Charlotte County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), and Mr. Scott presented the Lee County 2050 LRTP. Mr. Gurram then presented an East West connection alternate between US 41 and Burnt Store Road. Chair Constance commented on the importance of regional coordination (All presentation slides for each agenda item have been combined and posted in a link at the end of the minutes.)

Agenda Item #11 – Information and Review of the Regional Lee/Charlotte-Punta Gorda/Sarasota Manatee MPO's Interlocal Agreement

Mr. Harris presented the review of the Interlocal Agreement. Chair Constance thanked the three MPO Directors for coordinating.

Agenda Item #12 - Next Meeting Date

It was noted that the 2026 joint meeting would be held in late February 2026.

Agenda Item #13 - Staff Comments

Mr. Harris provided a heartwarming farewell speech as this was his last meeting as Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO Director. Mr. Scott commented on his appreciation for working with Mr. Harris.

Agenda Item #14 - Public Comments

No public comments were made.

Agenda Item #15 - Member Comments

Among the comments made were discussion of: well wishes for Mr. Harris, appreciation for Mr. Harris' exemplary service, keeping things local, Cape Coral evacuation important, blessings for Mr. Harris, thanks for Mr. Harris, importance of strong cooperation, emphasis on completing Burnt Store Road and access to I-75, difficulty in replacing Mr. Harris as he set the bar so high, Mr. Harris as a subject matter expert, Mr. Harris' professionalism, thanks for Mr. Harris' steadfastness, continued blessings from God for Mr. Harris, thanks to Mr. Harris for his service, importance of working together, Mr. Harris will be missed, hope that road decisions remain local, regional cooperation is important, and God bless Mr. Harris. Chair Constance noted a Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO meeting and farewell to Mr. Harris will follow the adjournment of the joint meeting.

Agenda Item #16 - Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:53 a.m.

All meeting presentations can be viewed at the following link: [Joint MPO Presentations](#)

An audio recording of the meeting can be accessed at the following link: [Joint MPO 02/14/25](#)

All interested parties are invited to appear and be heard on each of the above items. Written comments filed with the MPO will be considered. Copies of all of the above proposed documents are available by calling the Lee MPO Office at 239-244-2220 or the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Office at 941-883-3535.

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