



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 27, 2026, 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. A quorum was present for both MPOs.

Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO Board members in attendance included Charlotte County Commissioners Christopher G. Constance and Joseph Tiseo; Charlotte County Airport Authority Thomas Thornberry; and City of Punta Gorda Vice Mayor Jeannine Polk.

Lee County MPO Board Members in attendance included Lee County Commissioners David Mulicka and Kevin Ruane; City of Cape Coral Councilmembers Laurie Lehmann, Joseph Kilraine, Bill Steinke and Rachel Kaduk; City of Fort Myers Councilmember Teresa Watkins Brown; City of Bonita Springs; Mayor Mike Gibson and Councilmember Jim Fitzpatrick; City of Sanibel Mayor Michael Miller; Village of Estero, Mayor Joanne Ribble.

Others in attendance included the following – FDOT: Wayne Gaither, Stacy Booth, Marcellus Evans and Jason Heironimus; Charlotte County – Punta Gorda MPO staff Lakshmi N. Gurram, Bekie Leslie, and Mark Yaxis; Lee County MPO staff Don Scott, Ron Gogoi, and Calandra Barraco; Lee County MPO Legal Advisor Derek Rooney; Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Legal Advisor David Thomas; Lee BoCC staff Pamela Smith and Anne Campbell; City of Cape Coral staff Laura Dodd and Charles Parish; Charlotte County Administrator Hector Flores; Local government staff present were Shaun Cullinan with Charlotte County Community Development, John Elias with Charlotte County Public Works, Robert Hancik with the Charlotte County Airport Authority; Carl Bengé with City of Punta Gorda, and Rob Price with the Lee County Department of Transportation; members of the public - Annette Warren, Kevin Black, Tom Akins, Joe Rio, Jacqueline Kangas, Joe Rice, Jim Jabconsky, Jeff Lustig, First Baptist Church of Punta Gorda Pastor Bill Frank, Richard Russell (CC-PG MPO Citizens Advisory Committee), Jill Hartman (CC-PG MPO CAC), Lee MPO LCB Derek Felder, BSCC Germaine Hyatt, Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss, Mr. DeHedlund, Frank Chick Petrosino and Craig Mueller.

Agenda Item #2 – Invocation

Pastor Bill Frank gave the invocation.

Agenda Item #3 - Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Agenda Item #4 - Chair Comments

Chair Miller thanked the church and commented on regional coordination between Lee and Charlotte Counties. Chair Constance provided welcome comments and stated the importance of regional coordination between the two boards.

Agenda Item #5 - Approval of Agenda – Previous joint meeting minutes

Councilmember Joseph Kilraine moved the approval of the agenda, and Commissioner Kevin Ruane seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. The minutes were approved by each individual Board in the prior year and were included for informational purposes only.

Agenda Item #6 - Public Comments on Agenda Items

- The following member of the public provided comments on agenda items: Dr. Mary Ellen Kiss provided the following [statement](#) on behalf of the Burnt Store Corridor Coalition, regarding road safety on Burnt Store Road. She read a statement emphasizing the importance of continue safety improvements, increased surveillance, and enhance enforcement along the corridor. The statement referenced safety projects such as intersections improvements, roadway segment improvement, and speed limit reductions in key areas. Dr. Kiss emphasized that Burnt Store Road serves as the primary evacuation route for thousands of residents in two counties, extending from Pine Island Road to Jones Loop Road.

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

Mr. Scott presented 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).

Mr. Gurram noted that the only change to this list from previous year is the addition of the new Tuckers Grade Extension project. This project proposes the construction of a new roadway extending Tuckers Grade from the current terminus at US 41 to Burnt Store Road.

Agenda Item #8 - Summary of the Burnt Store Road Project Phases and Interim Safety Projects

Mr. Scott and Mr. Gurram presented project phases for Burnt Store Road in Lee County and Charlotte County respectively. (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. Gurram provided an update on the status of the SR 31 projects. Mr. Scott highlighted the SR 78 to Lake Babcock Dr. project, which includes a proposed new roadway 200-300 feet east of the existing SR 31. A typical cross-section and rendering of the project were provided which is included in the presentation slides linked at the end of these minutes.

Mr. Gurram highlighted SR 31 at CR 74 project, which includes the construction of a roundabout at the intersection. Construction is underway and expected to be completed in Summer of 2026.

The SR 31 widening project from Cypress Pkwy to CR 74 was also discussed and noted as an unfunded need. (All presentation slides for each agenda item have been combined and posted in a link at the end of the minutes.)

Agenda Item #10 – Long Range Plan Development Coordination

Mr. Lakshmi Gurram presented the 2050 Charlotte County Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), including cost feasible plan and unfunded needs. Mr. Scott presented the Lee County 2050 LRTP cost feasible and unfunded needs.

Mr. Gurram noted that many of the projects included in the Charlotte County 2050 LRTP focus on intersection improvements intended to enhance safety and extend the life of existing roadways before major roadway capacity improvements are required. This strategy is intended to delay the significant costs associated with large roadway expansion projects. Major roadway improvements discussed included Harborview Road, Taylor Road, and Tuckers Grade.

Mr. Scott highlighted plans for a potential new I-75 interchange in Northern Lee County. The Interchange Justification Report (IJR) identifies a potential location between north SR 78 and south of Tuckers Grade. There was also a brief discussion regarding the increased costs of projects compared to previous years.

(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 the Southwest Florida Passenger Rail Priority Request

Mr. Scott presented this item and highlighted the importance of completing the study in the event passenger rail service is extended Tampa to Orlando. Although the project currently unfunded, it is anticipated that passenger rail service to Southwest Florida could potentially be developed through a public-private partnership.

(All presentation slides for each agenda item have been combined and posted in a link at the end of the minutes).

Agenda Item #12 – Transportation Legislative Update

Mr. Scott presented an overview of current transportation-related legislative bills of interest. Links to the bills discussed are provided at the end of the meeting minutes.

Mr. Scott noted that many of the bills discussed are like those introduced in the previous legislative session and currently do not have companion bills.

The following bills generated discussion:

- HB 243 / SB 382 regarding electric bicycles, scooters, and motorcycles. Commissioner Constance noted that Charlotte County recently reviewed regulations related to these modes of transportation and adopted regulations addressing speed limits and operating locations.
- HB 543 regarding transportation. Members of both MPO Boards expressed concerns regarding a proposed amendment to the bill scheduled for a vote in March. The amendment would require Charlotte, Lee, and Collier Counties to submit a feasibility report to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House evaluating the benefits, costs, and process of consolidating the counties into a single MPO.

Commissioner Constance noted that the Transportation Legislative Update was a valuable agenda item and suggested including it as a regular topic at future joint meetings.

(All presentation slides for each agenda item have been combined and posted in a link at the end of the minutes).

Agenda Item #13 – Next Meeting Date

It was noted that the next joint meeting is scheduled for February 26, 2027.

Chair Constance mentioned the possibility of scheduling a special meeting at the end of May to further discuss Agenda Item 12 and indicated that the meeting may include the Collier County MPO.

Commissioner Tiseo agreed that a regional meeting involving the three MPOs could be beneficial for discussing regional priorities.

Mr. Scott stated that staff from both MPOs would explore scheduling options and coordinate with the Collier County MPO if necessary.

Agenda Item #14 - Staff Comments

Mr. Scott and Mr. Gurram thanked both Boards and reiterated the importance of continued regional coordination.

Agenda Item #15 - Public Comments

No members of the public spoke.

One public comment card was submitted at the beginning of the meeting located [here](#) by Mr. Russell of Charlotte County. The comment stated: "Harborview Road and the I-75 interchange must be improved before Charlotte County provides Buc-ee's a certificate of occupancy."

Agenda Item #16 - Member Comments

Councilmember Joseph Kilraine expressed appreciation to both counties for their support of improvements along Burnt Store Road.

Commissioner Kevin Ruane emphasized the need for additional funding sources for transportation projects and noted that funding opportunities may continue to be limited in the future.

Commissioner David Mulicka commented on HB 543 and stressed the importance of maintaining separate MPOs while continuing regional coordination.

Chair Constance thanked everyone for attending and reiterated the importance of collaboration between the two MPO Boards. He also complimented staff from both MPOs for their coordination on regionally significant transportation projects.

Agenda Item #17 - Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

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

An audio recording of the meeting can be accessed at the following link: <https://m.soundcloud.com/user-390911534/02-27-26-joint-lee-charlotte>

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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