



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan is the foundation for transportation planning in our region and helps decision makers understand the social, economic, and environmental impacts of transportation and land-use decisions. This chapter outlines the goals and scope of the 2020-2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

CHAPTER 1

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As the federally-designated metropolitan planning organization for the Corpus Christi area, the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization (Corpus Christi MPO) is responsible for developing and maintaining a long-range regional transportation plan and the supporting short-range implementation program for the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Area. The Corpus Christi MPO metropolitan planning area is shown in Exhibit 1-1.

Long-range transportation plans are required to comply with federal and state laws for regional and statewide planning, in order for the region to be eligible for federal transportation funding.

All transportation projects that could significantly alter transportation or air quality within the metropolitan planning area, no matter what the source of funding, must be included in the plan.

The primary purpose of the plan is to develop a strategy for the best use of public funds in achieving community goals.

The regional transportation plan provides the foundation for all other aspects of transportation decision-making by establishing the vision and goals for regional transportation, evaluating the system as a whole, and then identifying strategies for implementation. It also presents an opportunity for decision makers to understand the broader social, economic, and environmental impacts of transportation and land-use decisions.

The region's previous transportation plan, the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and its air-quality conformity analysis, were adopted in December 2014. This 2020-2045 MTP updates that plan and addresses all of the performance-based planning requirements of Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The plan examines current regional conditions, takes into account updated socioeconomic projections and changing growth patterns, and describes the financial resources available through current law and how well those resources will meet transportation system needs in the Corpus Christi region through 2045. The form and functions of the multimodal regional transportation system are described, the Corpus Christi region's approach to coordinating planning concerns is presented, and the proposed fiscally-constrained multimodal system is listed. Environmental-impact mitigation and monitoring is defined, and projects that illustrate how the region

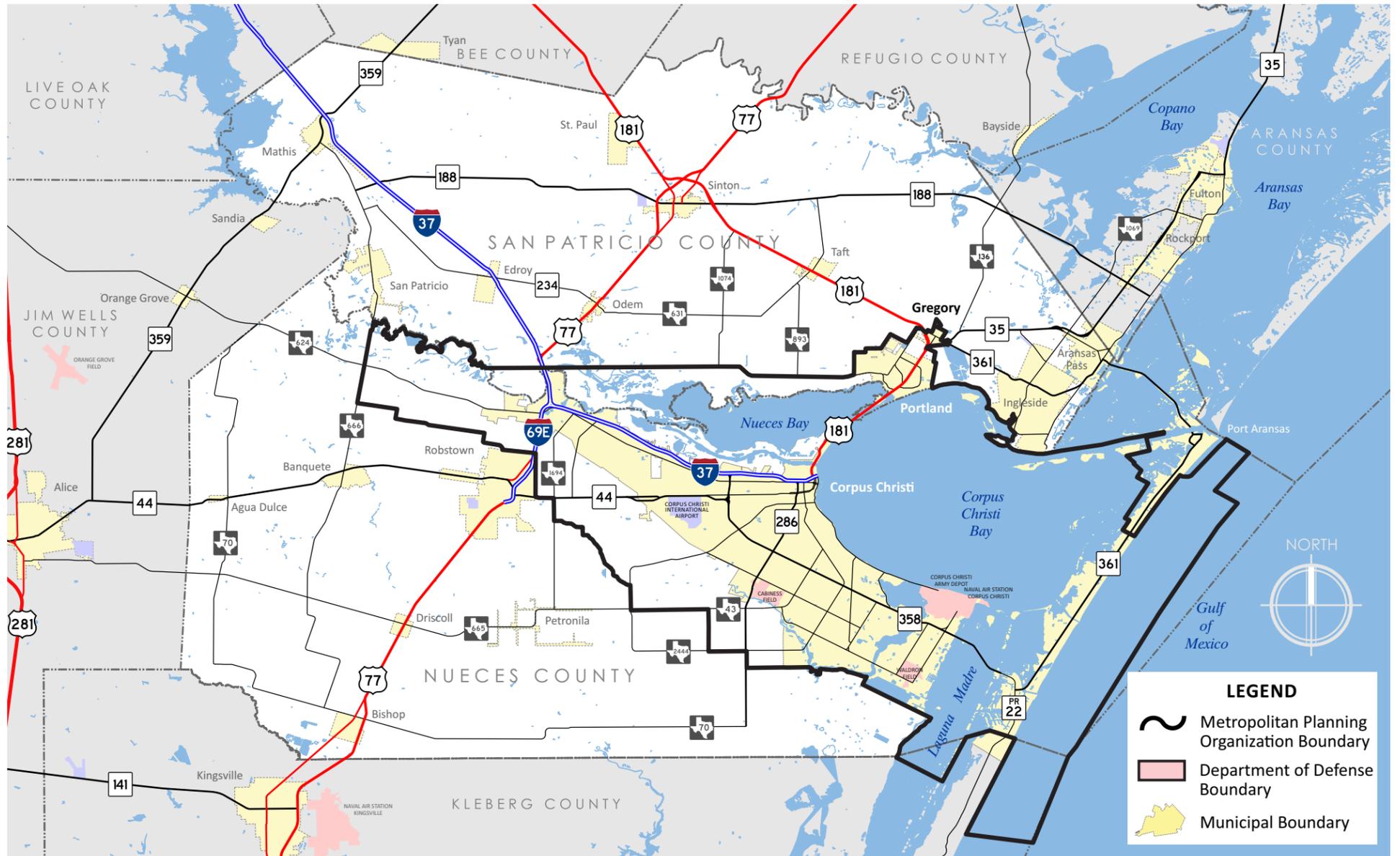


Exhibit 1-1. Map of Corpus Christi MPO Metropolitan Planning Area

would tackle unmet needs if more funding were available are listed. In its entirety, the plan meets the requirements for its composition and preparation process, and demonstrates conformity with applicable laws and regulations.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

All federal transportation legislation passed by Congress since 1991 emphasizes:

- Efficient use and preservation of existing transportation infrastructure
- Synergistic relationships between transportation modes
- Inclusion of private citizens and stakeholders in planning
- The need for plans to be financially constrained, which means that projects and can only be included in the plan if specific funding is reasonably available to pay for them.

Long-range transportation plans must extend at least 20 years beyond their end date (24+ years at adoption) and use the latest available estimates and assumptions for population, land use, travel, employment, congestion, and economic activity. The transportation plan must be reviewed and updated every four years, and the Metropolitan Planning Organization must demonstrate that transportation activities are consistent with air-quality goals.

Transportation planning within metropolitan areas is defined by three major pieces of federal legislation:

1. Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (FAST Act, the current enactment of federal transportation legislation)
2. The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
3. The Civil Rights Act of 1964

The FAST Act, signed into law by President Obama in December 2015, incorporates performance goals, measures, and targets into the process of identifying necessary transportation improvements and selecting projects. The long-range plan must describe the performance measures and targets used in assessing system performance and progress in achieving them.

CLEAR AIR ACT AMENDMENT

The FAST Act is linked to the Clean Air Act Amendments, which recast transportation planning to ensure that it will help, not hinder, the region in continuing to meet federal air-quality standards. It encourages reduced auto emissions and fewer trips by single-occupant vehicles, and it promotes the use of alternative transportation modes, including transit and bicycles, as a viable part of the transportation system.

CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

Requirements within the FAST Act are similarly linked to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, which states that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The Civil Rights Act bars intentional discrimination, as well as disparate impact discrimination (i.e., a neutral policy or practice that has a disparate impact on protected groups.)

Additionally, funding recipients must follow these fundamental environmental justice principles found in Executive Order 12898:

- Avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority and low-income populations.
- Ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially-affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.
- Prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The objective of regional long-range transportation planning is to provide a strategic framework for the development, operation, and management of the transportation system within the larger context of an MPO's economic, social, mobility, and environmental goals. Planning conducted within this framework must be flexible to adapt to changing economic and technological conditions and forward-thinking enough to maximize return on investment, all while minimizing negative impacts.

Transportation planning is a process of balancing goals to improve the quality of life for the region's citizens. This process is coordinated among federal, state, and local governments and private transportation providers to continuously anticipate and respond to the comprehensive transportation needs of people and goods moving throughout the region, fostering economic activity, and enabling access to and

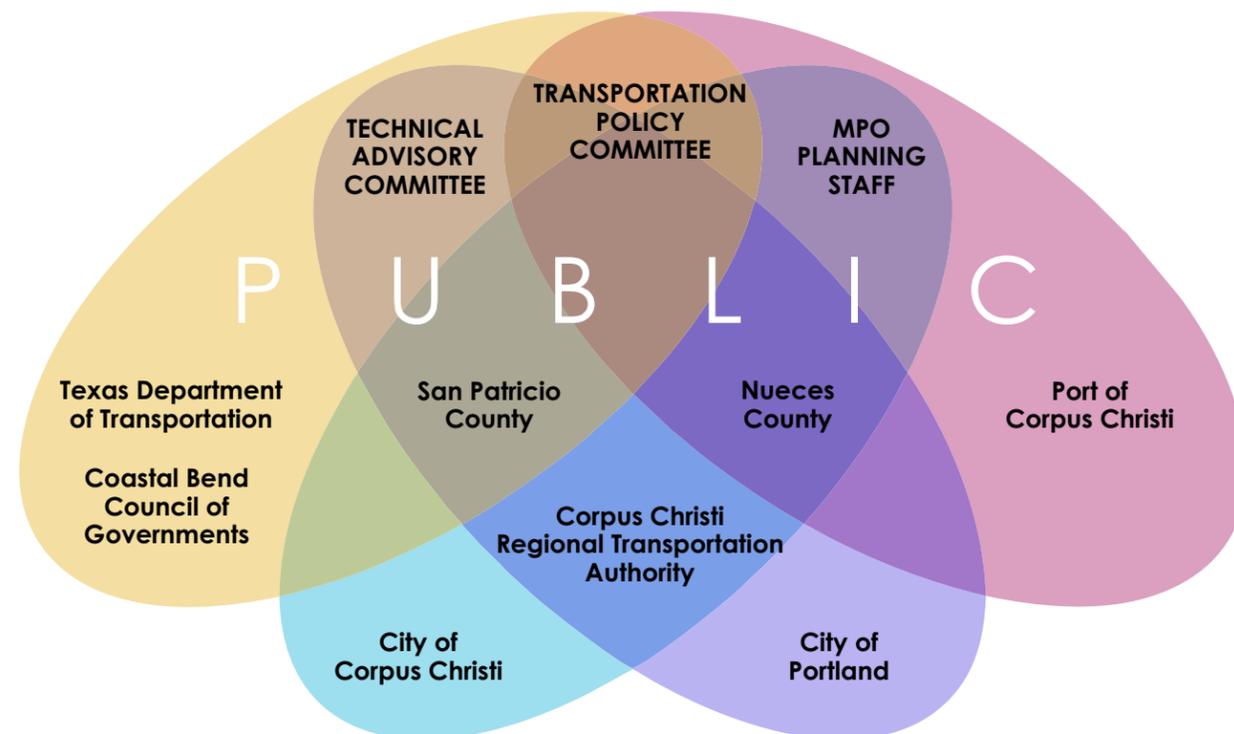
from areas outside the region. The plan documents this process and presents the system improvements for all modes of transportation for the Corpus Christi metropolitan planning area through 2045.

The Corpus Christi MPO, is the federally-designated MPO for the Corpus Christi metropolitan area and derives its authority from Title 23, United States Code 134. Formed in May 1972, under Texas laws regarding regional planning and intergovernmental contracting, the Corpus Christi MPO is not a unit of local government, but an organization of local governments and agencies whose purpose is to identify regional problems and opportunities, develop solutions, and make recommendations on region-wide strategies. The Corpus Christi MPO's Transportation Policy Committee consists of elected officials and appointed members from the local participating cities, counties, Council of Governments, the Regional Transit Agency, the Port Authority, and the State DOT, governs the Corpus Christi MPO.

This plan:

- Describes the multimodal transportation system components designed to facilitate mobility of people and goods throughout the region.
- Identifies how the transportation system, as recommended herein, assures maintenance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and meets the mobility needs of persons with disabilities.
- Is fiscally-constrained, meaning it includes only fully funded projects.
- Includes a list of illustrative projects that would be funded if additional sources of revenue are identified.

Exhibit 1-2. Illustration of Corpus Christi MPO Committee Structure



- Identifies all funding—federal, state, local, and private—that is reasonably anticipated to be available during the period 2020 to 2045.
- Uses year-of-expenditure value for both project costs and revenues.

The FAST Act requires that the MPO planning process be continuing, cooperative and comprehensive. The Corpus Christi MPO's governing board, committee structure, and public outreach programs support cooperation. Chapter 2 in this document, Planning Process and Public Participation, discusses the public process in depth. The Corpus Christi MPO's committee structure allows opportunities for stakeholder agencies to be involved in regional transportation planning. The Corpus Christi MPO's committee meetings are open to the public and each agenda sets aside time for public comment on any matter, and for public comment on each item before any action is taken. Exhibit 1-2 illustrates the Corpus Christi MPO committee structure.

DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This plan is an update to the previously adopted long-range plan, the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The 2020-2045 MTP is composed of three volumes:

- 2020-2045 MTP Executive Summary
- 2020-2045 MTP containing 14 chapters
- 2020-2045 MTP Appendices (which provide supporting documentation)