

**CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CORPUS CHRISTI MPO)
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, April 21, 2022**

1. Call to Order, Roll Call, and Quorum Determination

Chairperson Brian DeLatte called the meeting to order at 9:03 A.M.

TAC Members Present:

Chairperson Brian DeLatte, P.E., City of Portland

Vice Chairperson Gordon Robinson, AICP, Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority

Howard Gillespie, San Patricio County

Paula Sales-Evans, P.E., TxDOT – Corpus Christi District (CRP)

Jeff Pollack, Port of Corpus Christi Authority

Dan McGinn, AICP, City of Corpus Christi

Emily Martinez, Coastal Bend Council of Government

MPO Staff Present: Robert MacDonald, P.E.; Craig Casper, AICP; Daniel Carrizales; Victor Mendieta; and Yoshiko Boulan

2. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

None were made or offered.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MARCH 17, 2022 TAC REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to approve the March 17, 2022, TAC Meeting Minutes. Ms. Sales-Evans seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

A. FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 5

As discussed in the March TAC meeting, the Corpus Christi MPO requested \$2 million from an anticipated \$3.2 million in additional Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding that has no local match requirement. These funds will acquire or improve transportation planning tools and data using consulting services. The identified needs and deliverables, with preliminary cost estimates, are provided in the Item 4A memo. The Corpus Christi MPO TIP included a project to ‘implement enhanced tools and data analysis for use in short-range programming and long-range planning’ Project Number MPO-067 in *Table 13a, DRAFT FY 2021-2024 TIP Amendment 5 Fiscally Constrained Project List* (attachment 2). The remaining STBG funding (\$1.2 million) and the rollover Category 7 monies, approximately \$10 million, can be used for any transportation projects listed in the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), for safety projects, or to improve traffic operations, except for transit operations. The STBG fund is 100% federal, but the rollover Category 7 monies require a 20% local match.

This DRAFT FY 2021-2024 TIP with Amendment 5 has been released for the required one month public comment period by TPC and will be discussed in the May 12, 2022, TPC meeting. The Corpus Christi MPO has not received any comments as of April 21, 2022.

Ms. Sales-Evans inquired if all \$2 million will be spent on the planning-related, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) type products as listed in the memo. Mr. Casper answered that they would go to the deliverables listed in the table.

Mr. Robinson made a motion to recommend the TPC to approve FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 5. Mr. Gillespie seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

B. FY 2021 – FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment 1

As mentioned in the previous discussion item, the Corpus Christi MPO is requesting \$2 million from the STBG funds to acquire the necessary tools, data, and projects for short and long-range transportation planning. This requires amending the current FY 2021 – FY 2022 UPWP; the table in the Item 4B memo

TAC APPROVED MINUTES

shows the requested \$2 million as the additional Category 7 funds in UPWP Task 1.0. Other changes made to the FY 2021 – FY 2022 UPWP are also listed in the memo, including additional subtasks based on the new federal guidelines and allocating staff hours from subtask 4.0 into these new subtasks. This item was also approved by the TPC for the one month public comment period. The Corpus Christi MPO has not yet received any comment as of April 21, 2022.

Mr. Robinson made a motion to recommend the TPC approval of the FY 2021 – 2022 UPWP Amendment 1. Mr. Pollack seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

C. DRAFT FY 2023 and FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

The Corpus Christi MPO is required to develop the UPWP, a 2-year document laying out the Corpus Christi MPO's budget, scope, and planning efforts and activities conducted by the Corpus Christi MPO staff for the fiscal years 2023 and 2024. The tool development and data acquisition necessary for - transportation planning is the major activities in FY 2023, that is the reason for a noticeable budget allocation for UPWP Task 1.0. More regular, routine planning activities are expected in FY 2024.

As discussed in Item 4A and 4B, the Corpus Christi MPO requested \$2 million as additional Category 7 fund to be used for the identified planning needs but Corpus Christi MPO staff is estimating only \$250,000 is going to be spent in FY 2022. The remaining balance of \$1,750,000 will be rolled over to FY 2023. The table in Item 4C memo shows the rollover of \$1,750,000 as Category 7 funds in UPWP Task 1.0.

Mr. MacDonald informed the TAC that the Corpus Christi MPO is estimating to receive \$120,000 to \$150,000 more planning funds under the new IJA/BIL. Once the additional fund is officially determined, the FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP will be amended as needed.

The DRAFT FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP also reflects the new requirements under the IJA/BIL, Executive Orders, and Planning Emphasis Areas provided by FHWA/FTA. These requirements are listed in the Item 4C memo; some requirements are continued from the previous transportation laws but Tackling Climate Change, Equity, and Justice⁴⁰, and integrating virtual public involvement are all new. The Corpus Christi MPO needs to incorporate and reflect these new requirements in the FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP.

Ms. Sales-Evans suggested to distribute the rollover of \$1,750,000 Category 7 fund more evenly to FY 2023 and FY 2024 for flexibility. Mr. MacDonald answered that the TxDOT Finance Division advised to use the current funding level to develop a UPWP. The funding level and the progress of tool development and data acquisition in FY 2023 are still very uncertain and the Corpus Christi MPO is anticipating the changes and amendment(s) made to the FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP as these factors become more certain. The Corpus Christi MPO is hopeful that the necessary tools and data listed for the additional \$2 million will be delivered within 18 months, between FY 2022 and FY 2023, so that the Corpus Christi MPO can start the data-driven, systematic planning activities in FY 2024. Also, the Corpus Christi MPO is trying to secure and allocate the \$2 million 100% federal funding as soon as possible; however, the Corpus Christi MPO accepts the TAC's recommendation if the TAC considers splitting the \$1,750,000 more evenly as a better idea. The requested \$2 million requires a non-construction Advanced Finance Agreement (NCAFA), and the Corpus Christi MPO will have a meeting with TxDOT Finance and TPP Division on how to convert Category 7 money to PL fund on April 22, 2022.

Ms. Sales-Evans made a motion to recommend to the TPC to approve the DRAFT FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP with the modification to Category 7 Funds 2023; allocate \$1,250,000 in FY 2023 and \$500,000 in FY 2024. Mr. Gillespie seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

D. Surface Transportation Block Grant Set-Aside (STBG-SA) CAT 9 Call-for-Projects Selections

The submitted projects and initial scoring for these projects were presented in the March TAC meeting for comments. As of April 21, 2022, the Corpus Christi MPO has not received any comments. The Corpus Christi MPO staff had a meeting with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and TxDOT TPP Division and confirmed that all projects are eligible for STBG-SA/CAT 9 funding and all projects can be fully funded except for the Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail project because the project exceeds the \$2 million award limit. Thus, the Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail will be awarded the maximum of \$2

million. The Corpus Christi MPO staff recommends the TAC to recommend the TPC to award all projects with the \$2 million limit.

Mr. Pollack inquired if there are extra funds available for fully funding the Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail project. Mr. Casper answered that there is, however; since the \$2 million limit for the maximum awarding amount was stated in the guidance for this 2022 Call-for-Projects, FHWA and TxDOT ruled the limit stands even if there are extra Category 9 funds. The Corpus Christi MPO staff had a meeting with the City of Portland and discussed this issue. Since the Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail project needs one or two years to be moved forward, the Corpus Christi MPO staff thinks there would be future funding opportunities to support this project. The Corpus Christi MPO is anticipating additional funding under the new IJA/BIL and is preparing for a \$200 million Call-for-Projects for all categories of funding in the next year.

Mr. Pollack inquired Ms. Sales-Evans, TxDOT-CRP, if this \$2 million threshold causes the City of Portland to do the 2nd Advanced Financial Agreement (AFA) for the exceeded \$132,000. Ms. Sales-Evans answered it might be depending on what Category funding is used; it may be possible to amend the AFA and avoid the 2nd AFA but she was not certain. She is also concerned about the lapsing Category 9 funds. Mr. MacDonald informed the TAC the lapsing Category 9 funds is one of the topics of the Corpus Christi MPO staff and TxDOT Finance and TPP Divisions meeting on April 22, 2022. The Corpus Christi MPO has approximately \$1.4 - \$1.6 million in Category 9 funding that may lapse this fiscal year. However, TxDOT may be able to shift the lapsing money among Texas MPOs, for example, El Paso MPO has several Category 9 projects that are shovel-ready when additional funding becomes available. That way, these funds can avoid lapsing. Also, the Corpus Christi MPO is considering the Memorial Parkway Hike and Bike project Phase 2 for the possibly lapsing funds if the current AFA is amended. Ms. Sales-Evans commented that if the Memorial Parkway Hike and Bike project AFA can be amended, she believes the Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail AFA can be amended as well. However, if the Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail project has two different Call-for-Projects, different CSJ Numbers and so forth, it will be difficult to amend the AFA.

Mr. DeLatte explained to the TAC that the yellow line shown in Item 4D – Attachment 1 is the proposed construction of \$2.1 million that goes up the old railroad corridor to 4th Avenue and eventually connects in to the railroad Hike and Bike bridge the Corpus Christi MPO funded several years ago. Due to the environmental concern, the connecting point between the red existing trail and the new trail must be the exact spot as shown on the map and the construction cost cannot be trimmed less than \$2 million. The City of Portland does not want to go through three separate AFAs for this project. The completion of an AFA and environmental work needs some time, therefore; the City of Portland wants to place this project in the later years of the 4-years Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for additional funding and avoid any gaps between phases. Mr. Pollack inquired if there is any discretionary funding available for this \$132,000 shortfall. Mr. Casper answered that due to the competitive project selection process requirement by FHWA, it seems unlikely. Ms. Sales-Evans stated that the Category 9 fund is for construction only and while the City of Portland is working on the entire environmental work for this project, it would take at least one year to complete. Then a more accurate cost estimate can be done with one AFA to include the entire scope. Mr. DeLatte agreed that the environmental work should be all the way to Phase 4, and the City of Portland would look at it, but also the City of Portland hopes a simple administrative modification can be sought as a solution for this problem. Ms. Sales-Evans suggested no limit placed for the next Call-for-Projects. The Corpus Christi MPO staff agreed; no limit will be placed on Call-for-Projects in the future. Previous CAT 9 Calls-for-Projects were issued by fiscal year with around \$500,000 funding, thus it was only applicable for the small-scale projects. The Corpus Christi MPO bundled the funds this time so that bigger projects can be awarded for this Call-for-Project. The intention of the \$2 million limit was for distributing about half of the funding to 1 project so that there were funds for as many projects region-wide, not just one or two big projects. Mr. MacDonald assured the TAC that the Corpus Christi MPO staff will seek a solution for this shortfall and consult FHWA/TxDOT if the Category 7 monies or other funding can be used for this Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail project as supplemental funding.

Mr. DeLatte appreciated these comments from the TAC members, and Mr. Casper and Mr. MacDonald for their efforts to fund all projects by consulting FHWA and TxDOT.

Mr. Pollack suggested using the modular increments for the project scope and cost. For example, the Sunset Lake Hike and Bike Trail projects is a single segment, thus no smaller increments. If the smallest discrete segment is identified, the Corpus Christi MPO can be more flexible for awarding the funds. Mr. DeLatte agreed; the City of Portland's Memorial Parkway Hike and Bike Project was initially one segment, from all the way from Buddy Ganem to Wildcat Drive, but made it into two phases by independent utilities. This change allowed the City of Portland to move forward to the 2nd phase in a relatively short time. Mr. MacDonald said the suggestion is noted for the next Call-for-Projects guidance discussion.

Mr. Pollack made a motion to recommend the TPC approve the award for all seven projects. Mr. Gillespie seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. MacDonald congratulated the entities who submitted these awarded projects. This TAC recommendation will be brought to the TPC in their May 12, 2022 meeting for approval.

E. FY 2023 – 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Project Selection

The Corpus Christi MPO is required to develop and submit the FY 2023 – 2026 TIP after the required public involvement process to TxDOT by June 24, 2022, as shown in attachment 1, *2023 – 2026 STIP TIMETABLE*. To meet this deadline, this action item needs to go through the TAC discussion and recommendation, a one month public comment period, then be approved by the TPC in its June meeting. The Corpus Christi MPO staff is hoping that all available funds of Category 2, 4, 7, and 9, totalling \$176 million are allocated and programmed without delay. The estimated funding for Category 7 is \$66 million including the expected rollover funding of \$23 to \$26 million. The distribution of these funds over the next four years will be based on the project selection.

The Item 4E memo described how the Corpus Christi MPO staff developed the proposed *DRAFT FY 2023 – 2026 TIP Fiscally Constrained Project List*: (1) Use the existing 2020 – 2045 MTP Project List as a universal project list, (2) Incorporate the Category 2 and Category 4 projects submitted by TxDOT-CRP, attachment 2. The Corpus Christi MPO sent the TAC members the transit project list that would be included in this FY 2023 – 2026 TIP electronically before this meeting. The final FY 2023 – 2026 TIP submitted to TxDOT in June needs to include the required performance measures and targets and project list for both Highway and Transit in the TxDOT eSTIP format.

The 2020-2045 MTP DRAFT Fiscally Constrained Project List for MPO Funding shows the potential projects for FY 2023 – 2026 TIP with the estimated funding. Based on the previous discussions and TxDOT-CRP's 2023 UTP project list, the following projects are newly added or advanced: (1) MPO Planning Tools and Studies (MPO-067), (2) Regional Traffic Operations Improvement and Safety Countermeasures (MPO-068), (3) Yorktown Blvd. (MPO-024), (4) SH 286 from Agnes/Laredo to SH 358 (MPO-032), (5) Northwest Blvd. (MPO-033), and (5) newly awarded STBG-SA/CAT 9 projects. The STBG-SA/CAT 9 projects are treated as a group project so that the Corpus Christi MPO can be flexible for programming these projects in the four-year window without revision. This table is for illustrative-purpose and will be included in the Appendices section in the FY 2023 – 2026 TIP.

The Texas Transportation Commission launched a state-wide Safety Task Force and mentioned that unobligated Category 5, 7, and 8 funding will be used for this effort. The Corpus Christi MPO staff proposed to allocate \$5 million to the Regional Traffic Operations Improvement and Safety Countermeasures project as a placeholder to prevent losing the ability to select projects for the Category 7 funds. The Yorktown Blvd project was moved up due to the City of Corpus Christi's application for the RAISE grant. If this project is selected, the Corpus Christi MPO will amend the FY 2023 – 2026 TIP. Mr. McGinn commented that the project limit of the City of Corpus Christi applied for RAISE grant (Rodd Field to Mud Bridge) is different from the one on the list (Rodd Field to Laguna Shores). Mr. MacDonald acknowledged the discrepancies; the limit in the list was the original project and the City of Corpus Christi applied the RAISE grant for the segment of the original project. These details will be clarified and amended as the FY 2023 – 2026 TIP is developed.

Ms. Sales-Evans questioned that if the project list is fiscally constrained because some projects are lower in the cost estimate as well as the funding estimate is higher. Ms. Sales-Evans mentioned that traditionally the TIP is developed with the previous year's UTP funding levels due to the timeline for TIP development occurs from October to June and UTP approval in August. The funding estimate in 4E is based on the preliminary 2023 UTP that has more funding due to the new IJJA/BIL and expected rollover monies.

Mr. MacDonald explained the allocation of Category 2 and 4 funds are based on the TxDOT-CRP's 2023 UTP project list. He reminded the TAC that the Corpus Christi MPO staff has been asking for the most current project status and cost estimate for allocating funding and programming these projects in the four-year window for several months for developing the FY 2023 - 2026 TIP, but there was no update from any entities. Thus *The 2020-2045 MTP DRAFT Fiscally Constrained Project List for MPO Funding* is a best estimate the Corpus Christi MPO staff made from available information.

Mr. Casper mentioned it is still possible to swap the projects based on the TxDOT-CRP's prioritization, for example, removing SH 358 Ramp Reversal (\$35 million) and programming SH 361 (\$38 million) and use Category 7 fund to fill the shortfall.

Ms. Sales-Evans stated that the Corpus Christi MPO staff considered these projects listed in the *2020-2045 MTP DRAFT Fiscally Constrained Project List for MPO Funding* are all programmable, while TxDOT-CRP considered some projects, such as SH 361 and SH 35 projects, are beyond this FY 2023 – 2026 TIP years. She requested holding a separate meeting with the Corpus Christi MPO staff to discuss this issue and/or holding a workshop as the TAC. Mr. MacDonald agreed, the Corpus Christi MPO needs the information from the sponsor agencies and will discuss the priorities with the TAC. Due to the deadline, this item must go to the TPC in the May 12, 2022 meeting. If the Corpus Christi MPO could not make the deadline, the first opportunity to receive the funding will be either October or November.

Mr. Casper reminded the TAC that a project must be in the fiscally constrained 2045 MTP project list in order to be included in the FY 2023 – 2026 TIP. The newly added projects, MPO Planning Tools and Studies (MPO-067) and Regional Traffic Operations Improvement and Safety Countermeasures (MPO-068) are considered as programs and not projects, and these programs are exempted from this requirement.

Mr. MacDonald reminded the TAC that the Corpus Christi MPO staff provided the Member Agency Project and Program Update during the TAC meeting for months and he requested the TAC to inform the staff during or after the meeting. Ms. Sales-Evans commented about the possible misunderstanding she had about what information was needed; she thought the TxDOT-CRP and the Corpus Christi MPO staff have been communicating well regarding the project status, the budget, and so forth. She requested the Corpus Christi MPO staff to identify what information is exactly needed. Mr. MacDonald explained that the information Corpus Christi MPO needed is sponsor agencies' input to allocate the funding with their priorities, project readiness, and project cost estimates in the 2045 MTP universal project list for FY 2023 – 2026 TIP.

Mr. Casper added that the status of each project such as under NEPA, design, ROW acquisition, etc., impacts the project priorities and it helps the Corpus Christi MPO's planning and programming of TIP. He inquired if creating a questionnaire to get the necessary information is helpful. This subject will be discussed later.

Mr. DeLatte inquired how other MPOs are dealing with this process. Mr. MacDonald answered that the other MPOs such as San Antonio, Houston, Austin, and Dallas/Fort Worth typically do Call-for-Projects and collect most updated information. The Corpus Christi MPO is currently hiring a consultant to create the application form and a systematic project selection tool and are hoping to start using these in the next funding opportunity.

Mr. McGinn inquired when the next opportunity is to look at the Fiscally Constrained Project List. Mr. McDonald answered that the development of the MTP, a 25-year Long-Range Plan, will start within two years with the mentioned tools and forms. Mr. McGinn informed us that the City of Corpus Christi needs to update the project list with the newly developed areas and the new Bond projects.

Mr. McGinn made a motion to table this item and hold a special meeting later date. Ms. Sales-Evans seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. MacDonald said the Corpus Christi MPO staff will hold a meeting with the sponsor agencies and rectify, then set up the date for the special TAC meeting.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Traffic Crash Analysis Update

This information item was deferred to the later TAC meeting with more information.

B. Member Agency Project and Program Updates

Mr. DeLatte informed that the City of Portland’s Memorial Parkway Hike and Bike Project Phase 1 is halfway completed, and the City of Portland City Council authorized the Phase 2 design/engineering work on April 19, 2022.

Ms. Sales-Evans informed the TAC that FM 893 (Moore Ave.), TxDOT-CRP, and the consultant team discussed the project details with the City of Portland, approximately 60% is complete. Once all details are determined, the project will go to bid process. The SH 358 (SPID) Ramp Reversal project is approximately 30% complete, has been environmentally cleared, there are a few parcels TxDOT needs to revisit but it should not affect the project going to bid in FY 2024. SH 286 (Crosstown Expressway) extension project is 40% complete, environmental clearance is done, currently in the process of ROW acquisition. FM 624 (Northwest Blvd.) is in the process of executing a consultant contract. As soon as the Consultant is on board, TxDOT will discuss with the City of Corpus Christi for the final scope of project and go through the public involvement. The Consultant will work on the design, environmental work, public involvement, ROW, and so forth, and this project should be ready for FY 2023 – 2026 TIP. Feasibility studies for SH 361 and SH 35 projects are done, next step is environmental clearance, verification if ROW acquisition is needed. These projects need more work to be done and the bidding timeline is FY 2027.

Mr. McGinn reported the City of Corpus Christi’s Westside-area Development Plan is near completion, and the Bayside-area Development Plan will be started soon. Corridor evaluation on Alameda Street and Staples Street will be conducted. He mentioned that this information is available on the City of Corpus Christi’s website.

6. REGIONAL FREIGHT TOPIC

A. FREIGHT TOPIC (TX Multimodal Freight Network)

Mr. Casper reported the three major topics discussed by the Texas Freight Advisory Committee held on April 6, 2022, as this month’s freight topic: Critical Rural Freight Corridor, Safety Assessment of the Texas Freight Network, and Initial Needs Assessment. The first topic is identifying the critical rural freight corridor for designation. Second topic is regarding the safety on the Texas Highway Freight Network. Key data shows the overall fatality rate is increased by 15% in 2021 from 2020. Truck-involved fatalities decreased but the work-zone crash increased drastically. Third topic is the initial needs assessment of Texas Freight Network with six criteria. The link was provided for more information and Mr. Casper encouraged the TAC to check these interesting statistics and graphics.

7. TAC Member Statements on Local Agency Activities or Items of Interest

Mr. Pollack reported the Port of Corpus Christi Authority’s Strategic Plan update is two-thirds done; the Port is vigorously pursuing the Federal and State Grant opportunities for the facilities, infrastructure, and transportation including the rail. The Port will share the updated plan with the TAC.

8. Upcoming Meetings/Events:

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| A. Transportation Policy Committee Regular Meeting: | May 12, 2022 |
| B. Regional Traffic Safety Task Force Meeting: | May 12, 2022 |
| C. Technical Advisory Committee Regular Meeting: | May 19, 2022 |
| D. Regional Traffic Safety Task Force Work Groups Meeting: | May 19, 2022 |

Mr. MacDonald informed the TAC that the TPC meeting would be rescheduled for May 12, 2022, instead of May 5, 2022, due to the Hurricane Conference schedule conflict. The Regional Traffic Safety Task Force meeting and Regional Traffic Safety Task Force Work Groups meeting have been cancelled and the next meeting will be in June.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:43 A.M.