

**CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CORPUS CHRISTI MPO)
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, July 20, 2023**

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

Chairperson Brian DeLatte called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

TAC Members Present:

Chairperson Brian DeLatte, P.E., City of Portland
Vice Chairperson Gordon Robinson, AICP, Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA)
Howard Gillespie, San Patricio County
Juan Pimentel, P.E., Nueces County
Jeff Pollack, AICP, Port of Corpus Christi Authority
Earnie De La Garza, P.E., City of Corpus Christi
Paula Sales-Evans, P.E., TxDOT – Corpus Christi District (CRP)

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

2. Public Comments for Items not on the Agenda

None were made or offered.

3. Approval of the June 15, 2023, TAC Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to approve the June 15, 2023, TAC Regular Meeting Minutes. Ms. Sales-Evans seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

4. Discussion and Possible Action Items

A. DRAFT Corpus Christi MPO 2023 Program for Addressing Discrimination (PAD) Approved by Resolution 23-07

The DRAFT Corpus Christi MPO 2023 Program for Addressing Discrimination (PAD) was presented at the May TAC meeting for review and discussion before it was recommended to the TPC for releasing for a one month public comment period. The 2023 PAD is a document that combined four areas the Corpus Christi MPO is required to address in the transportation planning process: Limited English Proficiency (LEP), Title VI of Civil Rights, Environmental Justice (EJ), and Advanced Racial Equity (ARE). The 2023 PAD updates the 2021 PAD with 2017-2021 American Community Survey's 5-Year Estimates data and two Executive Orders (14009 and 14091) issued by President Biden. The proposed changes are indicated by track changes and there are no additional changes made to the previously distributed draft. The Corpus Christi MPO has not received any public comment as of July 20, 2023. Mr. Casper requested the TAC to recommend the TPC approve the DRAFT 2023 PAD by Resolution 23-07.

Ms. Sales-Evans asked if there is any map that identifies disadvantaged communities in the 2023 PAD, and how the Corpus Christi MPO would reach out to these communities. Mr. Casper showed the 2023 PAD Exhibits from Page 19 which shows the Areas of Disadvantaged Populations by the Census Block Group. For the outreach effort, the Corpus Christi MPO hired a consultant team with KCS Communications as a local sub-contractor and is currently working on the comprehensive Public Participation Plan for the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) that contains several sub-plans. They provided a list of potential community events and groups to collect a wide range of perspectives. Ms. Sales-Evans suggested identifying and brainstorming the needs and means to reach out to these disadvantaged communities.

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to recommend the TPC approval of the DRAFT Corpus Christi MPO 2023 Program for Addressing Discrimination. Mr. Pollack seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

B. 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) Final Project Selection Process for CATs 2 and 4

The 2024 UTP is TxDOT's 10-year plan that programs the Category 2 and 4 projects in FY 2024 through FY 2033. The most recent 2024 UTP presentation in the June Texas Transportation Commission was attached. There is a new funding category, Category 10 Carbon Reduction Program (CR). As the Item 4B memo indicates, the Corpus Christi MPO is expecting Category 10 CR, Category 2, Category 4, Category 7, and

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Category 9 funding which totals about \$383 million over the next ten years. A total of about \$16 million in 10CR funding is available for our region and this funding is more flexible, as shown in “Eligible Projects” in the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Fact Sheets.

Mr. Pollack asked if projects are independently prioritized specifically to the new 10CR funding or if the 2045 MTP project list would be revisited for using the 10CR fund for eligible projects.

Mr. MacDonald said that the Corpus Christi MPO is currently developing a project selection tool that evaluates and prioritizes transportation projects in all Categories of 2, 4, 7, 9, and 10CR based on federally required criteria.

Ms. Sales-Evans asked if the 2045 MTP projects are grandfathered in, or if these projects would also go through the project selection tool for evaluation and prioritization.

Mr. MacDonald said that all projects across the board need to be evaluated based on performance measures and other federal requirements. Over the next 18 months, these subplans for the 2050 MTP such as Regional Safety Action Plan, Complete Streets, and so forth will be developed, and transportation needs will be identified. A call-for-projects will be issued across the board, and projects will compete with each other including the projects in the 2045 MTP. There are restrictions on eligible projects by Categories, for example, Category 2 funds can only be used for State and National Highway Systems. These restricted funds are applied first to prioritize and select projects. Then, more flexible funds are applied to the remaining projects based on scoring.

Ms. Sales-Evans asked if the sponsoring agencies are required to fill out the application form for not only new projects but also the 2045 MTP Projects. Mr. MacDonald answered yes due to the new federal rules and regulations. Ms. Sales-Evans said that it would be a burden to these entities if the situation is like the form provided and should be submitted within two weeks.

Mr. MacDonald explained how this process works. The application form developed by a consultant team will be introduced and explained by the consultant team through a couple of workshops. During the development of tools, the consultant team goes through the 2045 MTP projects for validation purposes. The Corpus Christi MPO staff are aware that the local entities spend a lot of money on consultants for filling out these application forms.

Mr. Pollack suggested making the application form electronic and streamlined to the evaluation system. One of the challenges for project evaluation in this kind of evaluation system is the degree of subjective evaluation, thus, there should be a component that the sponsor entities can speak of the projects in their own words.

Mr. Casper informed the TAC about the ultimate end-product of this scoring tool. The tool will be user-friendly and even the general public can submit projects they think are needed. Ms. Sales-Evans inquired as to who identifies and evaluates the need of these projects submitted by the public. Mr. MacDonald answered that a project using federal funds requires a local match, so the sponsoring agency would evaluate the project and apply for the funding. All interested entities can utilize this tool and see how their projects score in each required criteria and improve their scores by adding more features such as safety. The performance-based project selection is a federal requirement and the Corpus Christi MPO complies with this requirement via this selection tool. All projects that all partner agencies are planning in their 5, 10, or 20-years plan should be collected over the next several months. Once developed, the selecting tool will be introduced and demonstrated step-by-step by the consultant.

Mr. DeLatte inquired how ordinary citizens can fill out these applications. The City of Portland spends a considerable amount on consultant services for the technical components such as cost-estimate, environmental analyses, and so forth. Mr. Casper explained that the tool would have the necessary data set to generate a cost estimate. This kind of tool is already in use in Arizona. Mr. DeLatte expressed his concern for other factors such as utility issues. Mr. MacDonald agreed estimating project cost is difficult and MPO staff was investigating how other Texas MPOs are doing this process. He repeated that the Corpus Christi MPO staff will collect all transportation projects from partner agencies. Once the selection tool is developed, the TAC and interested agencies will go through the application of this selection methodology.

Mr. Pollack commented that soliciting public input about their needs and priorities is important. But this should be carefully done because federally funded transportation projects take considerable time and coordination with the sponsoring entity is required. The public might feel their voice is not heard. Mr. MacDonald agreed that it takes considerable time to start a transportation project due to the required steps like environmental clearance, design, utility coordination, and so forth. The Corpus Christi MPO hires a consultant team to develop a comprehensive Public Participation Plan and their efforts will cover all subplans of the 2050 MTP. The public can participate and provide their input for these sub-plans. The Corpus Christi MPO staff informs the public of the transportation planning process that involves many steps to be cleared.

Mr. Pollack said there is no need to publish data for the local-level projects that are already identified and prioritized by local governments such as bond projects, Capital Improvement Plan, and so forth. Ms. Sales-Evans said that the public should know the average time a project takes, or the project is already in some plan, or the status of the project with one click. Mr. MacDonald informed the TAC that the Corpus Christi MPO staff is collecting project information and creating a project list of all entities that are significant to our region regardless of the funding source.

Mr. DeLatte expressed his concern about the possible uncertainty and confusion. Mr. Pollack commented that the Corpus Christi MPO solicits the public's needs, but does not identify nor prescribe intervention. It is a professional engineers' or planners' job. The Corpus Christi MPO communicates and listens to people's needs, and then transportation professionals such as engineers and planners translate needs into problem solutions. Mr. MacDonald assured the TAC that the whole process would be discussed over a couple of workshops, but the first step is identifying the needs. There are about 70 projects in the 2045 MTP. But the list should be updated with partner agencies' new plans that are already identified and prioritized by each agency. Then the public will be asked if there are any projects to be considered. The attached 2024 UTP Development PowerPoint was presented in June Texas Transportation Commission. There is a new funding category, 11 CO, for cost overruns with a total amount of \$800 million over the next ten years. There is the updated TXDOT-CRP District 2024 UTP Candidate Project List. The two tables are included in the list and show the carryover money for Category 2M and 4U, and the remaining balance of about \$20 million. The Corpus Christi MPO staff asks the TAC to discuss and recommend to the TPC as the final projects list for the 2024 UTP.

Ms. Sales-Evans commented that she thought the TPC approval is unnecessary unless it is formally assuring their support of these projects because the 2024 UTP is currently under the public comment period and the Texas Transportation Commission will adopt the 2024 UTP in their August meeting. Mr. MacDonald said that the Corpus Christi MPO staff has been presented this item for months and provided the opportunity to the partner entities to update the list. There were no proposed changes, thus this is the final confirmation. Ms. Sales-Evans said that historically UTP would not be revised once the public comment period starts, unless there is a major change that needs to be reflected. Minor adjustments will be made based on the project status, and these changes will be reflected in the next UTP. The next UTP process starts in September. She recommends adding the UTP schedule to the Corpus Christi MPO's planning schedule.

Mr. Gillespie made a motion to recommend approval of the 2024 UTP Project List as is to the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). Ms. Sales-Evans seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

5. Information Items

A. Small Area Forecast Control Totals and Disaggregation Methodology

Mr. Casper briefed the TAC on the current status of the Small Area Forecast Control Totals. The population and employment forecasts are key factors to identify future transportation needs in the region. The Corpus Christi MPO staff is going to use a population to jobs ratios to develop the employment forecast. The Texas Demographer released their population forecast but not the employment forecast yet.

Mr. Casper provided the Aransas, San Patricio, and Nueces Counties' 1990-2022 Historic Population data combined with 2020-2050 three versions of Forecast Growth. The top two numbers shown on the table are from the State Demographer, and the bottom number is from a private demographic projection firm, Woods and Poole (attachment 1). As the graph and table show: (1) the State Demographer's population forecast is much lower than the previous forecast, (2) there are considerable differences between the State

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Demographer's and Woods and Poole numbers. According to the State Demographer, the population growth in Texas is now caused by migration, not the birth rate over the death rate, and the State Demographer provided two scenarios for the migration forecast. Woods and Poole will update their numbers within two or three months. These numbers are presented to the Small Area Forecast Task Force in their next meeting. They will recommend the control totals to the TAC, and TAC will recommend it to the TPC. These population and employment numbers will be allocated to traffic analysis zones (TAZs) and multiple scenarios will be developed with a simulation software called UrbanSim.

Ms. Sales-Evans asked if the pandemic and its impact were taken into consideration. Mr. Casper explained the deaths by the pandemic have been taken into consideration. But there is also a noticeable drop in the birth rate (except for some African countries) concurrently occurring nationally and internationally and there is no longer a source of population growth. The State of Texas is the fastest growing state, but the population growth is concentrated in the area called the Texas Triangle, Dallas/Fort Worth – Austin – Houston, and other Texas counties are either stable or declining in population.

Ms. Sales-Evans asked if the outreach effort to some entities such as Independent School Districts who have their enrollment numbers and future school plans is made. Mr. MacDonald answered that these entities were invited to participate in the Small Area Forecast Task Force discussions. The Consultant team, Freese and Nichols will meet the Small Area Forecast Task Force next week and discuss these numbers.

B. Regional Traffic Safety Task Force Recap from July 12, 2023

Mr. MacDonald briefed on the July 12 Regional Traffic Safety Task Force meeting. The Task Force met on July 12, 2023. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) reported on their wrong-way driver enforcement efforts. They are still stationed at strategic locations on a 24/7 basis. There was an interesting incident, two sober drivers went the wrong way to get on the Harbor Bridge during daylight but self-corrected and did not continue the wrong way. Each law enforcement agency has its own database, and the sharing of these databases is under discussion.

The State of Texas formed a Statewide TxDOT and MPO Traffic Task Force two years ago. The Task Force will be dissolved next month and each MPO was provided a DRAFT 2023 Safety Planning Report. The Corpus Christi MPO received the report about two weeks ago. The report will be reviewed, and comments/feedback will be submitted to Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) for finalization and inclusion in the Statewide Report. Each MPO will receive additional funding of \$50,000 annually for safety planning. The Corpus Christi MPO staff will report on this funding once more information becomes available.

The Consultant Team, Halff Associates, and their subcontractor DiExSys, participated and did presentations in the July 12 meeting. DiExSys presented three crash diagnoses, rural, urban and a corridor for traffic engineering analyses. The Corpus Christi MPO consultant team is planning to do crash diagnosis for at least 20 locations, provide 20 solutions, and propose programming \$50 million worth of safety projects.

The overall attendance and discussion were great and shared useful information among the participants.

C. FY 2023 and FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) – Update Other Regionally Significant Transportation-Related Planning Activities.

Mr. Casper reminded the TAC of the upcoming FY 2024 UPWP updates and requested to provide any regionally significant transportation-related planning activities by the partner agencies. The list of activities in the FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP was provided as a reference.

Mr. MacDonald informed the TAC on the additional \$1.8 million COVID rescue funds (CRRSAA) has become available and must be obligated. The Corpus Christi MPO and TxDOT discussed and determined that the money would cover additional tasks for the \$2 million transportation planning tools project that is currently underway. The next step is to amend the Non-Construction Advanced Funding Agreement and subsequently, the FY 2023 and FY 2024 UPWP and FY 2023-2026 TIP.

D. 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update

Mr. Casper updated the TAC on the 2050 MTP. The Corpus Christi MPO is expecting the first version of urban areas smoothing maps that will determine the MPO boundary with the Small Area Forecast recommendation. Then, functional classification is conducted as a part of the Congestion Management

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Process. Mr. Casper provided four preliminary drafts of susceptible intersections, the 25 most congested locations, and the four identified most congested corridors, as handouts. These maps are still a work in progress and Mr. Casper asked if there are any questions to contact him.

6. Regional Grant Coordination Topic

A. Corpus Christi MPO Regional Coordination Group for Federal Transportation Grants Update

Mr. MacDonald informed the TAC of the federal grants. The Notice of Funding Opportunity is issued for the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods (RCN) program. This program combines two grants, Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants. All NOFOs including Mega, INFRA, and RCN are attached.

The FY 2023 Low- or No-Emission Vehicles Program and FY 2023 Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) selected projects were announced. No projects were awarded in the Corpus Christi region. The links to the awarded projects are in the Item 6A memo.

Mr. MacDonald asked the TAC to share their entities' interest in applying for these grants listed in FY 2023 Competitive Grant Summary Table.

Mr. Pollack commented that the Port of Corpus Christi's grant activities team has a rolling list of all their grant pursuits and results in tabular form and suggested he talk to the Director of Grant Management.

7. Regional Freight Topic

A. List of Port of Corpus Christi Projects from the 2024-2025 Texas Port Mission Plan

Mr. MacDonald provided the TAC with the 2024-2025 Texas Port Mission Plan as this month's freight topic. The Texas Port Mission Plan is a sub-plan of the Statewide Plan. The Port of Corpus Christi has three Capital Projects, totaling \$415.9 million. These projects' detailed information is also included. There are twelve projects listed in the Port Connectivity Report and one of these projects is the Nueces Bay Causeway Elevation, the estimated project cost is \$340 million.

Mr. Pollack explained that these Port Connectivity projects are on the rolling list and have been on the docket with TxDOT for several years. These are operationally beneficial, yet not burning priorities.

Mr. MacDonald briefed on the 2050 MTP Freight Chapter. The 2045 Freight Chapter will be updated with the most current information available in the 2050 Texas Delivers Plan.

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

Ms. Sales-Evans informed the TAC of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) training held in Austin on July 19, 2023. TxDOT Corpus Christi District staff attended, but the Corpus Christi MPO Staff did not. She mentioned that there might be a one-on-one training session if a District requests it. If she gets any information, she will let the Corpus Christi MPO staff know. There is a strong emphasis on the possible August STIP revision for consistency with the 2024 UTP and FY 2023-2026 STIP.

Mr. Gordon informed the TAC that Mr. Derrick Majchszak has been selected for the Chief Executive Officer of the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA) effective on July 1, 2023.

Ms. Sales-Evans requested that the 2050 MTP become a standing item on the TAC agenda. Mr. Casper agreed that this is valuable, given the schedule and number of ongoing items.

9. Upcoming Meetings/Events:

A. Small Area Forecast Task Force:	Meeting	July 27, 2023
B. Transportation Policy Committee:	Regular Meeting	August 3, 2023
C. Technical Advisory Committee:	Regular Meeting	August 17, 2023
D. Regional Traffic Safety Task Force:	Meeting	September TBD, 2023

10. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.