

# **TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2023

**9:00 A.M. - TAC REGULAR MEETING**

## **1. CALL TO ORDER, ROLL CALL, AND QUORUM DETERMINATION**

TAC Chair Brian DeLatte called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

TAC Members Present:

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

Vice-Chair Gordon Robinson, AICP, Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Planning Authority (CCRTA)

Juan Pimentel, P.E., Nueces County

Jeff Pollack, AICP, Port of Corpus Christi Authority

Dan McGinn, AICP, 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 Karla Carvajal

## **2. NON AGENDA ITEMS PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None were offered or provided to the MPO staff before the meeting.

## **3. APPROVAL OF THE TAC OCTOBER 19, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Sales-Evans made a motion to approve the October 19, 2023, TAC Regular Meeting Minutes,

Mr. McGinn seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

## **4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. TxDOT 2025 Unified Transportation Program (UTP) Projects Process and Discussion**

Mr. MacDonald presented the item stating that TxDOT and the Corpus Christi MPO update the TxDOT 10-year Unified Transportation Program (UTP) each year on a similar schedule as illustrated on the current 2054 UTP process (see Attachment 1). The approval process contains action milestones for both TxDOT and the Corpus Christi MPO to perform. The 2025 UTP will cover the 10-year time period of FY 2025 through FY 2034. The TxDOT 2025 UTP Schedule illustrates that the most recent UTP Document was made available to the public in October 2023 for projects to be considered in fiscal years 2025-2034. TxDOT and the Corpus Christi MPO are asking the TAC members to review the current set of 2024 UTP projects for possible changes: cost estimate revisions, delayed projects, and “new projects” as part of the public comment portion of the TxDOT 2025 UTP process. TxDOT headquarters is requesting the initial list of projects for the 2025 UTP on December 1, 2023. This schedule requires the TAC to recommend and the TPC to approve and submit an initial list of projects for the TxDOT-CRP District to TxDOT HQ as a first step in the year-long process.

#### **Discussion:**

Mr. MacDonald opened the floor for questions.

Ms. Sales-Evans suggests that the December 1 deadline for candidate submissions provides an opportunity to request evaluation and scoring for additional projects. The idea is to submit projects at this stage, assess funding allocations later, and make decisions based on the available budget. The transportation planning and programming division recommends considering an extra year of funding, estimating around \$25 million for Category 2 and potentially \$15 million for Category 4. There's also approximately \$20 million from previous years' allocations in Category 2. Ms. Sales-Evans emphasized the importance of updating cost estimates due to volatility but acknowledges there's time for that and encourages the MPO to identify potential projects for consideration, such as those from the MTP, including FM 43, the remaining portion of 286 for an additional northbound lane, and a project for revamping the interchange with 358 and I-37. While recognizing the momentum of existing projects, Ms. Sales-Evans raised the question of whether the MPO should leave an estimated \$60 million unallocated to projects, or consider incorporating it into a few candidate projects. Mr. MacDonald highlighted the importance of referencing the 2025 list of projects,

**TAC APPROVED MINUTES**

echoing Ms. Sales-Evans point. He pointed out the carryover dollars, particularly the \$20 million currently unallocated. Emphasizing the significant amount of available funds, estimated at \$50-60 million, he suggested considering the eligible projects from the 2045 MTP. Referring to the previously approved long-range plan, Mr. MacDonald noted that there's room to add projects from the list. While recognizing the need for TAC members to review and potentially endorse projects, he directed attention to the table, specifically highlighting Park Road 22, which remains unfunded at nearly \$80 million and falls under Category 2.

Ms. Sales-Evans highlighted a \$2 million gap in the remaining amount, emphasizing that it increases as the years progress.

Mr. MacDonald contributed by noting the increase from \$16 million to \$17.9 million.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed the district's perspective, acknowledging the need not to precede the policy board but urging consideration for potential additions in the candidates submitted on December 1. She emphasized the challenge of introducing new considerations until the discussion of the 2026 UTP. Ms. Sales-Evans encouraged identifying projects suitable for Category 2 and urban funding on state system facilities, suggesting a tentative inclusion on the list for later evaluation with the policy board. She stressed the efficiency of removing a project after submission compared to waiting a year for consideration.

Mr. MacDonald discussed the statewide funding review within a 10-year timeframe for the UTP. He highlighted the need for potential shifts in funding due to certain early years being over-programmed by billions of dollars, necessitating reallocation for some projects. Mr. MacDonald suggested the possibility of updating the project list, pending resource allocation decisions by the commission or TPP and TxDOT in the coming months.

Ms. Sales-Evans emphasized the importance of tentatively including projects in the December 1 submission to allow for consideration, as waiting until the 26th UTP process would delay new additions.

Mr. Pollack supported the idea of adding to the list as a risk mitigation strategy, advocating for demonstrating additional needs and projects to account for uncertainties and unexpected events, and promoting a strategy of over allocation to showcase flexibility.

Mr. MacDonald suggested that TAC members consider adding projects from the approved 2045 MTP list to reach a target of \$60-100 million.

Ms. Sales-Evans pointed out projects like State Highway 35, 361, and 202 from the list of the last UTP but recommended exploring additional Category 7 projects, especially those labeled as purple projects in the last years of the 2045 MTP.

Mr. MacDonald proposed a TAC recommendation to add up to \$60 million from the 2045 MTP list, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing projects that were approved three to four years ago.

Mr. DeLatte raised a question about the eligibility of operations projects not listed in the MTP.

Ms. Sales-Evans explained the operations projects are eligible if they meet the criteria based on project characteristics and mentioned possible concerns about exceeding budgets at the state level.

Mr. MacDonald clarified that the TAC recommendation does not typically consider the CAT 2 and CAT 4 funding carryover issue. He expressed staff support for adding projects, leaving the decision to the TAC.

Ms. Sales-Evans discussed the deferral of the MPO-031 project and suggested considering the Interstate 37 – Highway 358 Interchange project for \$100 million. She recommended deferring certain components until the Harbor Bridge replacement project progresses, providing insights into costs and scope. Ms. Sales-Evans also mentioned ongoing projects like FM 624 and highlighted the potential significance of the interchange project due to traffic concerns.

Mr. DeLatte presented three options for the approval of the project list: approving the list as is, approving the list with an additional dollar amount and letting MPO staff select projects, or identifying projects during the meeting for prioritized inclusion.

Ms. Sales-Evans recommended identifying projects at this level to allow sufficient time for accurate data collection and effective scoring by the December 1 deadline. She suggested considering the I-37 / 358 interchange, and Weber projects, anticipating potential additional funding in the 2025 UTP.

Mr. DeLatte proposed these projects for consideration, emphasizing a preference for overpopulating the list rather than underpopulating it.

Mr. McGinn sought clarification on the 2024 approved list, specifically regarding Park Road 22.

Mr. Pollack clarified that additions would likely be placed at the bottom, ensuring they wouldn't jeopardize existing projects, and suggested a hierarchical approach based on available funding.

Mr. McGinn questioned whether the recommended changes might impact existing priorities.

Ms. Sales-Evans addressed the possibility of reshuffling priorities, emphasizing the need for project inclusion, and discussed challenges with the Park Road 22 project. She also mentioned considerations for State Highway 361, highlighting the need for its inclusion in the updated MTP for future funding.

Mr. MacDonald emphasized that the MPO guides recommendations into the TxDOT UTP process, clarifying that the MPO doesn't approve the UTP but contributes a proposed list of projects.

Mr. McGinn discussed the importance of the Rodd Field project due to increasing traffic, suggesting prioritizing it over the Weber project.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed willingness to explore submitting the operational improvement for consideration, given it aligns with the MTP and doesn't require listing.

Mr. McGinn inquired about the next steps, and Mr. MacDonald explained the submission process and timeline.

#### **Recommendation:**

The motion is for the TPC to approve the draft 2025 UTP project list that is in our packets with the addition of the three projects as identified.

#### **Motion:**

Mr. DeLatte summarized the motion made by Ms. Sales-Evans which includes the I-37/358 interchange (MPO-035), FM 43 (MPO-036), and Rodd Field Road Operational Safety Improvements (MPO-TBD) from SH 358 to Saratoga as additional projects for TxDOT consideration for the 2025 UTP.

Mr. Pollack seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. Adjusted Urban Area Status Update and Urban Density Discussion**

Mr. Casper provided an update on the final federal adjustments to the census urban area, following federal highway criteria. Recommendations were made, but some of the recommended changes, such as incorporating an area of the City of Corpus Christi city limits into the urban area, did not happen. Notably, the area on the Island between the state park and Port Aransas shifted from Corpus Christi to Port Aransas. Mr. Casper outlined the implications, including funding allocation changes.

Ms. Sales-Evans sought clarification on Gregory's boundaries.

Mr. Casper explained the next steps involve FHWA approval, and then described how federal functional classification adjustments and defining the MPO boundary will be based on the Adjusted Urban Area and the forecasted growth by 2050. Mr. Casper asked if there were any further questions.

Ms. Sales-Evans inquired about the south side, seeking clarification on the alignment of the Adjusted Urban Boundary.

Mr. Casper confirmed that it closely matched the initial proposed alignment.

Ms. Sales-Evans then highlighted the northern stop near Oso Creek, questioning if it followed the recommendations, to which Mr. Casper affirmed that it followed the creek. They discussed the urgency of

starting certain projects before there were any significant changes to the MPO boundary, which might impact funding status, with Mr. Casper inviting further questions via email.

## **B. Congestion Management Process (CMP) Working Group Goals Discussion**

Mr. Louis Cutaia, from the Halff Consultant team, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the topic. He outlined the goals of the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and its importance in managing congestion in metropolitan areas. Mr. Cutaia provided insights into the eight-step process, emphasizing the flexibility of refining goals and objectives throughout the ongoing 8-10 month process. The presentation concluded with a discussion of the revised goals and objectives.

Ms. Sales-Evans suggested a non-sequential approach to displaying the goals and objectives to eliminate the giving the impression that safety is a lower priority.

Mr. Cutaia acknowledged the input highlighted the iterative nature of the CMP process and thanked the TAC Members for their attention.

## **C. CMP Working Group Functional Classification (FC) Update Discussion**

Mr. DeLatte introduced agenda item number five, focusing on the CMP Working Group's discussion about functional classification updates.

Mr. Casper then introduced Ed Elam, from Alliance Transportation Group. Alliance is a subconsultant to Halff Associates. Mr. Elam explained the federal eight-step process.

Mr. Elam emphasized the importance of considering project priorities, land use changes, and the impact on traffic operations. He detailed the criteria for defining the functional classification, highlighting the need for stakeholder input. Ed discussed the current network's composition, focusing on major highways and their role in regional mobility. He addressed potential changes in functional classification, mentioning specific projects like SH 286 and State Highway 44 that require consideration. Ed explained the evaluation process for potential changes, including examining traffic volumes, vehicle speed, and adjacent land uses. The discussion also touched on the characteristics of different road classifications, such as interstates, principal arterials, and collectors. Ed presented data on current network usage and sought input on identifying major activity centers based on population and employment data within the MPO boundary. He emphasized the collaborative nature of the process, seeking approval and input from the MPO throughout the development of the functional network.

Mr. Pollack raised a concern during the meeting, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach when considering the reclassification of local or neighborhood streets. He suggested avoiding automatic upgrades based solely on criteria like Average Daily Traffic (ADT) and urged a more comprehensive evaluation to preserve the character and function of such streets.

Mr. Elam acknowledged the importance of considering existing road issues and assured the TAC that additional information and insights would be shared throughout the process.

Ms. Sales-Evans added to the discussion, pointing out the absence of Del Mar's campus south in the major activity centers list.

Mr. Pollack highlighted the relevance of data from the bicycle mobility plan and urged the examination of hotspots identified in GIS. The discussion also touched upon traffic calming programs, and Mr. McGinn mentioned challenges with speed bumps and the absence of an official program. Mr. Pollack had to leave the meeting, expressing the need for additional coordination with Mr. Casper.

Ms. Sales-Evans emphasized the importance of cooperation in functional classification beyond boundaries. The meeting concluded with Mr. Elam discussing the upcoming steps in the Congestion Management Process (CMP) and Mr. Cutaia outlining the next iteration involving defining the CMP network and obtaining data for performance measures. The attendees were thanked for their time, and further engagement was anticipated in the new year.

## **D. Receive Comments from TAC members from October meeting information:**

- i. CMP/FC Working Group**
- ii. Regional Safety Action Plan Draft Documents**

iii. **DRAFT Resiliency Plan Technical Memo 2 Comments**

Mr. MacDonald provided an overview of items, including the CMP functional class and the regional Safety Action Plan. He encouraged TAC members to share their feedback, either during the meeting or through email.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed her intention to provide comments later via email.

**6. TAC MEMBER STATEMENTS ON LOCAL AGENCY ACTIVITIES OR ITEMS OF INTEREST**

Mr. MacDonald shared positive news about TxDOT offering \$50,000 to each MPO for safety planning, with the Corpus Christi MPO receiving approval for the funding scope. The discussion continued with updates on the resiliency planning technical memo and a request for CMP working group names.

Mr. Casper asked TAC members to provide names of people they think should be involved in the CMP working group.

Mr. DeLatte reported progress on the FM 893 project, indicating that the Corps of Engineers had approved the permit. Ms. Sales-Evans sought a timeline for breaking ground, emphasizing the importance of project continuity. Mr. DeLatte relayed that Dr. Banks would be in contact with Ms. Sales-Evans to pass along that information.

Mr. Pollack highlighted successful grant agreements, mentioning initiatives like the creation of a digital twin and modular deployment within asset management.

Mr. McGinn announced the approval of a grant for the Holly Trail-Trestle project, emphasizing its significance for both recreation and mobility. Mr. McGinn discussed the need for improvement in the East-West movement across Flour Bluff. Mr. Pollack and Mr. McGinn highlighted the importance of connectivity and crossings in the area.

**7. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

<b>A. Transportation Policy Committee:</b>	<b>Regular Meeting</b>	<b>December 7, 2023</b>
<b>B. Joint Regional Traffic Safety Task Force</b>	<b>Regular Meeting</b>	<b>December 13, 2023</b>
<b>C. Technical Advisory Committee:</b>	<b>Regular Meeting</b>	<b>December 21, 2023</b>

Mr. DeLatte provided updates on upcoming meetings, with the possibility of the TAC meeting on December 21 being canceled for the holidays.

**8. ADJOURN TAC REGULAR MEETING**

Mr. DeLatte adjourned the meeting at 10:28 AM.