

**CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CORPUS CHRISTI MPO)
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 21, 2024**

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

TAC Chairperson Brian DeLatte called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

TPC Members Present:

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

Jeff Pollack, AICP, Port of Corpus Christi Authority, Vice Chairperson

LiAnn Alfaro, Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Planning Authority (CCRTA)

Dan McGinn, AICP, City of Corpus Christi

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

MPO Staff Present: Rob MacDonald, P.E., Craig Casper, AICP, Daniel Carrizalez, and Karla Carvajal, MBA

2. NON-AGENDA ITEMS PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None were made or offered.

3. APPROVAL OF THE TAC FEBRUARY 15, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Sales-Evans made a motion to approve the February 15, 2024, TAC Regular Meeting minutes. Mr. McGinn seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

A. FY 2023 - 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 2

Discussion:

Mr. MacDonald introduced Amendment 2 to the FY 2023-2026 TIP. The amendment was recommended by Corpus Christi MPO staff for release for the one-month public comment period to the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC). Due to the expedited timeline for these projects to be amended into the TIP as requested by TxDOT, the Corpus Christi MPO staff started the process with the TPC. Typically for TIP Amendments, there is a change in the scope of a project, the addition of a newly funded project, or a change in funding. Public Notice #24-1 related to the DRAFT FY 2023-2026 TIP Amendment 2 was provided as Attachment 1. He outlined the projects being added to the TIP, including a NEVI charging station, Holly Rd. Train Trestle to Tourism Trail, and the removal of the Yorktown Boulevard Reconstruction Project.

Ms. Sales-Evans explained that they needed to access funds from carryover balances of CAT 7 to support a project initially planned to be funded with CAT 2. This decision stemmed from the increase in construction costs, notably due to a rise in project expenses overall and additional drainage-related expenditures. With the project's total expected cost now at \$65 million, they opted to decrease the allocation from CAT 2 to \$30 million and utilize \$35 million from the carryover CAT 7 funds. Through this proposal, utilization of CAT 7 funds would make CAT 2 funds available for future projects.

Mr. MacDonald stated the MPO staff's recommendation for the changes discussed, particularly focusing on adjusting the budget allocation to accommodate increased costs. The total cost for the project is now \$65 million, with \$30 million allocated from CAT 2 and \$35 million from CAT 7. These adjustments will be reflected in the TIP Project illustrative list and will be updated in the eSTIP formatted pages. The complete DRAFT FY 2023-2026 TIP with Amendment 2 document will be presented to the TPC in a couple of weeks. Mr. MacDonald also talked about more of the specific changes listed in the cover memo's second page. He pointed out that MPO staff has added new funding allocations reported in the 2024 Unified Transportation Program (UTP). This increased funding amounts will ensure fiscal constraint to accommodate the additional projects and other project's cost increased through Amendment 2.

Mr. McGinn asked about the NEVI station's location. He expressed curiosity about its placement, mentioning the need for more stations, especially along routes like I-37 to San Antonio. He suggested a location around mile marker 40 or 50 for the station.

Ms. Sales-Evans explained that this plan covers the entire state, but this specific location is the only one within the MPO boundary. For this project to be started, it needs to be included in the MPO's FY 2023-2026 TIP. If there were other locations, they would likely fall under the state's jurisdiction. So, it's essential to ensure that funds are allocated properly within the MPO boundary. She clarified that there may still be plans for stations along Highway 37.

Mr. MacDonald mentioned that he will email the TAC the statewide EV plan, and this first phase is part of a larger project with multiple phases. This phase focuses on spacing charging stations about 50 miles apart along the interstates. The location being discussed is close to Interstate 37 near Calallen. He also noted that this project is within our MPO boundary and needs to be included in the FY 2023-2026 TIP to qualify for federal funds.

Motion:

Mr. Pollack made a motion to approve the FY 2023 - 2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment 2. Ms. Sales-Evans seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update: Vision, Goals and Objectives Discussion

Mr. Casper presented the update on the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), focusing on its vision, goals, and objectives. The Corpus Christi MPO staff is seeking input into the number of and topic of goals for use in developing the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2050 MTP). During each MTP development cycle, the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization (Corpus Christi MPO) reviews and can revise its Vision, and associated Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures. It is essential that the vision and policies advocated in the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan be consistent with the visions, goals, and transportation policies in subplans (safety plan, congestion management plan, etc.) and partner agencies' plans.

Ms. Sales-Evans mentioned that having fewer goals makes them easier to handle, and she proposed aligning them with the 2045 plan. She suggested considering a focus on making transportation systems more resilient and redundant, which aligns with FHWA guidelines.

Mr. Casper agreed that having a shorter list would work better. He mentioned that the previous 2045 MTP, had eight goals. He listed potential new goals, like improving travel and tourism and making transportation more reliable.

Ms. Sales-Evans commented that she wants to combine certain goals, and Mr. DeLatte agreed, stating that having fewer goals increases the likelihood of achieving them.

Mr. Casper explained that goals help create ways to measure progress, showing how things are now and how close they are to reaching the goals. He mentioned that some goals, especially about safety, are required by federal law, so it's essential to remember that during future discussions.

Mr. Pollack recommended keeping goals broad and timeless, with measurable targets and timeframes set as objectives underneath. He suggested consolidating goals into a few key ones and ensuring that objectives are specific and measurable to track progress effectively.

Mr. Casper proposed beginning with a set of goals and then adapting objectives accordingly, pointing out how the attachments illustrate changes over time.

Ms. Sales-Evans concurred.

Mr. MacDonald said they'll follow the given direction, observing how other MPOs in Texas are simplifying their goals and objectives for long-range plans, and will customize their approach accordingly for their next presentation.

Mr. Pollack suggested that numbers four and six on the list are secondary benefits, achievable if the other goals are effectively pursued, and proposed integrating them into the other goals to maintain strategic direction without losing focus on efficiency and regional economic activity.

Mr. McGinn highlighted the significant decrease in projected 2050 regional population over the past five years in the region, suggesting a reevaluation of goals and projects based on new data, even though some projects are already underway, to better match the current demand in the area.

Ms. Sales-Evans suggested including a tourism component when considering facility needs, noting that census data might not accurately reflect the demand from both permanent and visiting residents in certain areas.

Mr. MacDonald acknowledged two important points: the need to consider population allocation and employment when connecting special generators, and the relevance of the recently updated population projection from the State Demographer for their analysis. He also noted the importance of considering recent population projections in upcoming plans such as the resiliency and active transportation plans, as it might influence the priorities and weighting of factors in these plans. Mr. MacDonald emphasized a focus on safety improvements within the MPO boundary, mentioning plans to incorporate this focus into smaller forecasts and sub-plans. He highlighted an example of a safety project included in the 2025 UTP, indicating a shift towards prioritizing safety projects based on analysis by TxDOT and the MPO. Additionally, he encouraged considering factors like tourism growth and local plans when prioritizing projects and customizing the regional plan to accommodate various needs and priorities.

B. Resiliency Plan Critical Infrastructure Review

Mr. Casper discussed the new focus on resiliency and the progress made in identifying threats to transportation infrastructure. He mentioned the need to prioritize critical roads, bridges, and culverts using specific criteria and requested feedback on how to weigh these criteria. Additionally, he referred to maps showing potential impacts and explained the complexity of the process due to the large amount of data involved.

Ms. Sales-Evans asked for clarification on the definition of an evacuation route, inquiring whether it was designated by local emergency management, the County map, or elsewhere. She raised a point about Highway 361 on Mustang Island not being designated as an evacuation route, suggesting that many people in the area might believe it should be.

Mr. Casper explained that they would be willing to include Highway 361 as an evacuation route if the state maps were updated accordingly, highlighting the extensive technical analysis required for designation due to its importance in accommodating a large population capacity.

Ms. Sales-Evans emphasized the importance of considering both statewide and regional evacuation routes for resiliency and redundancy purposes, suggesting a need to prioritize routes that serve as evacuation paths, regardless of official designation.

Mr. Casper mentioned that designating something as an evacuation route would have ramifications, such as requiring it to be raised above flood levels, which could impact nearby properties, highlighting the complexities involved in such decisions.

Ms. Sales-Evans proposed consolidating multiple segments of the same corridor into fewer sections to improve the resiliency plan's effectiveness and simplify the process.

Mr. Casper acknowledged the complexity of establishing weighting criteria for the resiliency plan and proposed a workshop to navigate through it. He urged everyone to consider the criteria thoughtfully, highlighting the critical path of the plan to identify infrastructure vulnerabilities, propose solutions, and develop projects with benefit-cost analysis for funding competition in the long term.

Mr. MacDonald asked for feedback from the TAC members on whether the maps provided in their packets helped to identify various facilities.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed confusion regarding the critical roadways map and its legend, particularly regarding the interpretation of line thickness based on standard deviation, emphasizing the importance of making information understandable to the public for effective planning purposes.

Mr. DeLatte inquired about the correlation between line darkness on the map and segment condition, particularly noting a darker red line possibly indicating a deteriorating road segment just outside the MPO's jurisdiction, questioning if jurisdictional boundaries influenced decision-making regarding road improvements.

Ms. Sales-Evans explained that funding and design complexities affect upgrades, especially concerning the Robstown relief route's connection to I-69, requiring coordination with Robstown. She noted that project prioritization involves more than just boundaries, emphasizing collaboration and planning efforts with various stakeholders.

C. MPO Project Lists Discussion

Mr. MacDonald provided an overview of the upcoming four-year FY 2025-2028 TIP, detailing the existing project lists and funding allocations. He emphasized the significance of member input in selecting and prioritizing projects, stressing alignment with state transportation goals to avoid allocation penalties for underutilized MPO-directed funds. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of actively selecting projects to ensure compliance and effective use of resources, with the goal of avoiding penalties for the MPO and maximizing transportation project delivery.

Ms. Sales-Evans highlighted the statewide goal of maximizing federal funding usage by fully utilizing allocations and minimizing unspent balances, ensuring effective utilization of funds across all MPOs.

Mr. MacDonald emphasized the importance of utilizing allocated funds effectively statewide to ensure Texas can access federal funding from other states with unspent allocations.

Mr. Casper highlighted discussions from a recent meeting in D.C. where many states are struggling to spend their allocated funds, leading to the potential reallocation of \$10 billion in August. He also emphasized the importance of considering the purchasing power of allocated funds over time, noting that funds allocated now may have different values in the future.

Mr. MacDonald urged consideration of updated cost estimates for projects in the next 4-year plan, advising review of the 2045 MTP list due to likely increases in costs, with the goal of fully utilizing TIP funds and seeking additional funding as needed.

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

Mr. Casper mentioned to the TAC that the new population forecast was discussed by the Texas State Demographic Center earlier that day, and for those interested, signing up at the state demography office provided updates on the growth numbers across the state.

Mr. Pollack discussed the ongoing scoping of a grant pursuit for the EPA Clean Ports Program, outlining plans to identify various equipment, including forklifts and trucks, with a potential future scope involving the conversion of electrified components to hydrogen, aimed at addressing industrial demand and facilitating the transition to hydrogen fueling for transit fleets.

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

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| A. Transportation Policy Committee: | Regular Meeting | April 4, 2024 |
| B. Technical Advisory Committee: | Regular Meeting | April 18, 2024 |
| C. 2050 MTP Public Meetings: | | April 23-25, 2024 |

8. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 9:56 a.m.