

**CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (CORPUS CHRISTI MPO)
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024**

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

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

TAC Members Present:

Brian DeLatte, P.E., City of Portland, Chairperson
Liann Alfaro, Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Planning Authority (CCRTA)
Tom Yardley, San Patricio County
Juan Pimentel, P.E. Nueces County
Dan McGinn, AICP, City of Corpus Christi
Paula Sales-Evans, P.E., TxDOT – Corpus Christi District (CRP)
Emily Martinez, Coastal Bend Council of Governments

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

2. NON AGENDA ITEMS PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None were made or offered.

3. APPROVAL OF THE TAC MARCH 21, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Sales-Evans made a motion to approve the March 21, 2024, TAC Regular Meeting Minutes.
Mr. McGinn seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

A. DRAFT FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The DRAFT FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) was proposed for TAC recommendation for the TPC to release for the required one-month public comment period. The approval for TPC release is necessary to meet the TxDOT scheduled adoption of the FY 2025-2028 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The TxDOT HQ must receive the final approved TIPs from all MPOs no later than June 10th, 2024. This means that the Corpus Christi MPO Draft FY 2025-2028 TIP must be released by the TPC for public comment during their May 9th meeting and the final Corpus Christi MPO DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP approved at the June 6th TPC meeting.

Mr. MacDonald mentioned the previous process of TIP project selection and prioritization, including input from members and previous approvals. He noted upcoming changes in the document due to new revenue forecasts and updated project information sheets.

Discussion:

Ms. Sales-Evans mentioned a project where there might be extra funds needing adjustment into the DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP due to cost increases beyond allowable limits. She expected clarity on this topic within two weeks. She asked about the approval timeline and if changes could be made by the next Transportation Policy Committee meeting.

Mr. MacDonald told the TAC that they could hold special meetings or workshops as needed to address any issues with the DRAFT TIP document. He emphasized the importance of meeting the June 18 deadline for uploading the document into the eSTIP Portal, but also stressed that adjustments could be made throughout the process, even after the release for the one-month public comment period. TAC members were encouraged to email any concerns they have with the DRAFT TIP document so that they can be addressed before the document's public review. Mr. MacDonald highlighted the MPO's flexibility to accommodate changes, noting that the one-month public comment period was the minimum requirement, but aimed to provide more time if possible. He reminded everyone that amendments to the TIP were always an option for TAC to consider and that most projects wouldn't be impacted until the next fiscal year starting in October 2024. This timing would allow ample time for adjustments to the DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP.

TAC APPROVED MINUTES

Ms. Sales-Evans mentioned the timeline for FHWA approval, pointing out that the first project wouldn't likely start until November or December. She stated the urgency for accurate funding details, especially for a project needing additional funds, suggesting it would be best to include correct numbers in the DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP from the start. She expressed the need for additional comments to ensure all project information is accurate before recommending it for public involvement. Ms. Sales-Evans also mentioned the importance of reviewing an updated version of the document before opening the public comment period. TxDOT is expecting alignment on these items by the end of the month.

Mr. MacDonald mentioned that the public comment period begins on May 9th, which offers enough time for offline discussions and email exchanges with TAC members to review upcoming changes. He explained that the packet for the Transportation Policy Committee will be sent out on May 2, serving as a critical deadline. Even if the TAC conditionally recommended the release of the DRAFT TIP for the one-month public comment period, updated information could be provided by May 2 for the Transportation Policy Committee's May 9 meeting. He assured that there is flexibility for last-minute changes and emphasized that the public wouldn't see the document until May 9 if the Transportation Policy Committee agreed to release it. Mr. MacDonald suggested options for the TAC, including conditional approval or tabling the item for a special meeting in the coming weeks, while emphasizing the need for time to accommodate production of the TPC Agenda Packet based on TAC discussions.

Mr. DeLatte asked Mr. MacDonald what the schedule looked like after the TPC starts the 30-day comment period on May 9th.

Mr. MacDonald explained that the DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP document would be posted on the MPO website along with advertisements for the one-month public comment period. Afterward, the TAC would review the comments at their next TAC meeting and make a recommendation for approval to the TPC. This recommendation would then go to the June 6 meeting of the TPC, which would serve as the final opportunity for public comments. He emphasized that all comments would be acknowledged and responded to, with a record of them included in the appendix of the TIP document.

Mr. DeLatte reiterated that there would be enough time by May 9 if they recommended approval for the 30-day comment period and suggested they would have adequate time offline to implement the revisions being discussed before May 9.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed confidence that they would have all the necessary information by the end of the following week, ensuring a thorough review before a TPC vote. She questioned whether TAC is comfortable with not having additional opportunities to review the document after internal meetings, and agreed with recommending the document for public comment after the May 9 meeting, with the understanding that modifications and changes would be made before the deadline date.

Mr. DeLatte asked if the DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP document would come back to TAC. Mr. MacDonald confirmed that it will come back during the one-month public comment period for recommendation for TPC approval.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed uncertainty about whether the MPO's process allows for changes after a certain point if concerns arise. She suggested that any changes made afterward would likely be additional information rather than modifications to the document. However, she indicated that she would be fine with proceeding if everyone else was agreeable.

Mr. MacDonald explained the public process regarding the TIP document, restating that it would not be public until May 9 with TPC approval to release the document. He clarified that MPO staff could distribute the document to all TAC members individually, as long as there was no communication among members. This would allow members to review and provide feedback individually to MPO staff. Mr. MacDonald mentioned that he could send a notification to TAC members specifying which pages had changed for their review. He emphasized that this approach would afford them several weeks to finalize the document for conditional release before the public comment period, ensuring it was ready by May 2 for distribution to the TPC members only.

Mr. Yardley inquired about the frequency of reviewing the FY 2025-2028 TIP after approval, asking if it's done annually or as needed. He sought clarification on the process for amendments or updates to the TIP post-approval.

Mr. MacDonald explained that typically, the TIP is reviewed on a two-year cycle, but it can be amended more frequently, even monthly if necessary, especially with the introduction of a new long-range transportation plan. He mentioned that TIP amendments can be done relatively quickly, taking about 60 to 90 days. He cited an example of a recent amendment for an electric charging station, where there was urgency at TxDOT to quickly approve the NEVI projects so they could be constructed soon. Mr. MacDonald assured the TAC that the MPO's policies and methodologies are flexible enough to accommodate changes in project costs and funding.

Ms. Sales-Evans emphasized the importance of the TIP for accessing federal funds. She also mentioned her understanding that there are quarterly revision opportunities for each year the TIP is in effect, which are official time periods for FHWA reviews or revisions. Even after the MPO takes action and makes amendments, approval from the FHWA is still required for federal funds to be used on the intended projects.

Mr. MacDonald pointed out the schedule, highlighting the time delay from the TPC's approval on June 6 to the FHWA's approval no later than October 1. He mentioned that FHWA reviews all the Texas TIPs, often resulting in a lengthy list of exceptions for larger metropolitan areas like Houston. He underscored that the projects discussed are for fiscal year 2025, and he referenced a table in the agenda packet showing the list of projects.

Ms. Sales-Evans pointed out that the Harbor Bridge mitigation projects were not listed.

Mr. MacDonald stated that the DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP document has a project rollover section in a TIP Table, and that is where some are listed, since they were programmed in prior fiscal years. He also stated that they would ensure each formatted version of the TIP project pages include accurate fiscal years and dollar amounts. He noted that the table presented as an attachment in the TAC Agenda item is a snippet of the larger 85-page document, containing previously publicized project lists. Mr. MacDonald requested TAC action to keep the process moving forward.

Recommendation:

The Corpus Christi MPO staff recommended TAC approval to recommend the TPC release the DRAFT FY2025-2028 TIP document for a one-month public comment period.

Motion:

Ms. Sales-Evans made a motion to approve the release of the DRAFT FY 2025-2028 TIP document for a one-month public comment period.

Mr. Pimentel seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. 2025-2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2050 MTP)

- 1. Vision, Goals and Objectives Discussion**
- 2. Timeline for Meetings and Events**

Federal funds for transportation projects can only be programmed for projects that are contained within the MPOs Fiscally Constrained Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The Corpus Christi 2050 MTP must be updated at least every 5 years and was last adopted on February 6, 2020.

In addition to an increase in funding for transportation, the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) brought additional planning requirements. Due to the completion of the 2020 Decennial Census, the Governor will need to approve updates to the Corpus Christi MPO Boundary. This process will begin after the 2050 MTP Small Area Forecast is approved by the TPC. As part of the overall 2050 MTP update, several other plans or products are being updated or newly created. The items listed below will need formal approval from the TPC, either separately or as part of the overall 2050 MTP. TAC will provide their recommendations to the TPC.

Mr. Casper outlined the upcoming critical path items for approval by the TPC over the next 10 to 12 months. These include small area forecast scenarios, federal functional classification, Regional Safety Action Plan, 2050 MTP Goals and Objectives, Bicycle-Pedestrian-Active Transportation Plan, Regional Complete Streets Policy, Congestion Management Process, Regional Resiliency Plan, Regional Freight and Urban Goods Plan, Airport Plan, Ports Strategic Plan, Regional Financial Plan, MPO Boundary Adjustment, Regional Safe System Plan, And Environmental Mitigation. He emphasized the importance of these plans and their alignment with various state and federal requirements, noting that some plans are incentivized by reduced local match requirements for federal funds. He invited questions from the attendees.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed confusion regarding the sequencing of efforts related to the Corpus Christi MPO boundary. She highlighted that while certain plans and items tied to the boundary, such as the Congestion Management Process (plan) and functional classification, are scheduled to occur before the boundary is finalized in winter, there appears to be a lack of clarity regarding the defined area for these efforts.

Mr. Casper mentioned that while the Corpus Christi MPO boundary remains unchanged until approved by the Governor, planning efforts can proceed within the existing boundary. He indicated that there might be an opportunity to amend items within a certain timeframe after the boundary is approved, typically occurring every 10 years, although he was unsure of the exact duration for amendments. Additionally, he noted that MPO boundaries generally don't expand significantly, and many regions in Texas choose to use the Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) as the boundary.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed a desire for a more holistic approach to planning, particularly concerning the Regional Safety Action Plan, Bicycle And Pedestrian Active Transportation Plan, and Regional Complete Streets Policy. She suggested that these elements should be examined together to ensure consistency and coherence in their goals and efforts. She questioned the organization of the planning documents, specifically mentioning the 2050 MTP goals, and emphasized the importance of aligning these plans to work together effectively.

Mr. Casper mentioned that the plans are ordered based on their current timeline. They're making sure that consultants working on different plans, like the bicycle-pedestrian plan and the regional complete streets policy, are coordinating closely. They're also ensuring consistency and sharing data between these plans and the Safety Action Plan. While the order of the plans might change, MPO Staff aims to align the plans logically and integrate their goals and objectives into the overall 2050 MTP as needed.

Ms. Sales-Evans raised concerns about the crash data and how it's incorporated into the Regional Safety Action Plan and Complete Streets initiatives. She emphasized the importance of considering recent events and changes, suggesting that the plans should be flexible enough to address evolving issues.

Mr. Casper responded by explaining the technical necessity of analyzing crash data over a period of three to five years to avoid recency bias and ensure rigor in the analysis. He mentioned ongoing efforts to clean and process the 2022 data and prepare for use of the 2023 data when TxDOT closes the year. He highlighted the challenges involved in maintaining data quality. Overall, they discussed the balance between addressing recent incidents and considering broader trends in crash data analysis for effective planning and decision-making.

Ms. Sales-Evans pointed out it could be challenging to explain why some incidents take precedence in transportation planning. She notes that incidents can be influenced by various factors like behavior, decisions, or infrastructure issues. While she understands the need for a structured process, she suggests considering evolving situations and past improvements made in certain areas. She proposed that planning methods should be flexible enough to address changing dynamics and improve situations where needed, even if they don't align with the usual process.

Mr. MacDonald explained the challenge of planning transportation projects, noting that it typically takes several years before construction can begin. He mentioned that urgent issues like safety concerns may need immediate action outside of the regular planning process. For instance, fixing problems like wrong-way drivers on the Harbor Bridge required immediate attention from relevant law

enforcement and TxDOT. Despite these challenges, he stressed the importance of using best technical practices and up-to-date data in planning studies to inform decision-making and eventually develop projects and programs to address various issues.

Ms. Alfaro asked if the MPO conducted educational activities.

Mr. MacDonald mentioned that TxDOT is actively engaged in educational initiatives, including school visits, public safety events with demonstrations on impaired driving, and grant funding for local law enforcement efforts. However, he emphasized that these activities and funding do not involve the MPO, as our focus is solely on planning and identifying funding transportation infrastructure projects and programs.

Ms. Sales-Evans suggests exploring the possibility of using Category 7 funds for additional outreach and education initiatives, which could be integrated into existing plans like the Complete Streets or Regional Safety Action Plan.

Mr. Casper added that when compared against equivalent Texas roads, Corpus Christi has an unusually high frequency and extent of high injury network routes, identified through calculations comparing safety performance functions developed by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI). He emphasized the importance of education and outreach efforts to address this issue and improve road safety in the region.

Mr. MacDonald provided an overview of the upcoming Safe System Plan, a comprehensive strategy to tackle safety concerns in transportation, covering various aspects like emergency medical care accessibility. While the MPO will supervise the plan's development, its implementation falls under the jurisdiction of local governments. He emphasized the availability of federal grants available for initiatives such as Complete Streets and Active Transportation projects and programs. Mr. MacDonald highlighted the responsibility of local entities to apply for and efficiently utilize these funds to go towards improvements in transportation safety. Additionally, he discussed examples from across Texas where similar initiatives have been successfully implemented using federal safety grants, showcasing the potential impact of effective utilization of available resources. Mr. Casper cited an example from Chicago, where the approach to emergency medical response is using drones in congested urban areas to transport needed medicine directly to crash locations. He discussed the use of Category 7 funds for such initiatives.

Shifting the focus to vision and goals, he presented ten draft vision statements crafted based on discussions from the previous month. These statements incorporate elements from local and state plans to provide a framework for further refinement. Regarding goals, he outlined five conceptual areas: safety, community quality of life, economics, transportation technology, and environmental preservation. Seeking feedback, he invited discussion on resonant or conflicting vision elements. None were given. He emphasized the importance of creating SMART objectives aligned with these goals to track progress and assess project effectiveness over time. Finally, he solicited input on additional or alternative goal areas for consideration. None were given.

Ms. Sales-Evans raised a question about the alignment of goals with the efficient movement of people and goods, referencing ongoing efforts such as the Congestion Management Process (plan).

Mr. Casper suggested that this objective would intersect with the goal of regional prosperity within the economics domain, as it involves saving both travel time and money.

Ms. Sales-Evans brought up whether the goals clearly prioritize the efficient movement of people and goods. She suggested that while efficient and effective investments are highlighted, it's unclear if the primary goal is specifically focused on ensuring efficient transportation. She expressed a desire to see how these goals will translate into improvements that can be implemented and measured effectively.

Mr. MacDonald acknowledged the need to refine the goals to cover all key ideas, like efficient traffic flow and road maintenance. He stressed the need to condense the goals to a manageable number and invited input on refining them. He suggested reviewing examples from other MPOs to guide the process and aims for clear, straightforward goals that capture the MPO's objectives.

Mr. Casper asked about vision statements, prompting Ms. Sales-Evans to request more time for review. Mr. Casper suggested revisiting the topic next month.

Mr. McGinn emphasized the importance of efficient road usage, maintenance, and resilience, suggesting updates to incorporate these aspects.

Ms. Martinez praised Laredo's vision statement as a model to follow. Mr. Casper appreciated her input and invited further comments or questions.

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

Mr. MacDonald provided an update on federal grants, highlighting opportunities available through the federal Infrastructure and Jobs Act. He discussed ongoing grant request such as the RTA's efforts to promote lower-emission vehicles, and the proposed rail yard expansion project led by the Port of Corpus Christi that will seek federal grant funding. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of initiatives like the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant in enhancing transportation safety. He also shared examples of successful federal grant applications within Texas, including the Reconnecting Communities (RCN) grants awarded to projects like the \$105 million Austin RCN Grant related to the TxDOT I-35 reconstruction project in Austin.

Mr. MacDonald encouraged committee members to consider potential grant opportunities and assured them of support from the MPO staff throughout the application process. He stressed the significance of maximizing available federal funding for transformative transportation projects. The committee was invited to provide input on potential grant opportunities. Mr. MacDonald concluded by reiterating the importance of working as one coordinated region to secure and utilize federal grants effectively.

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

Mr. Yardley attended the Texas Desalination Association legislative workshop in Austin. Although not directly linked to transportation, he stated that the event holds significance for the region's future growth. He also mentioned a public comment session by TCQ on the desalination project at the American Bank Center later that evening.

Mr. DeLatta provided an update on the FM 893 (Moore Avenue) project in Portland, mentioning a companion drainage project currently out to bid. He reported that all the required rights-of-way have been acquired, and bids will be opened in approximately two weeks. This progress is expected to facilitate the FM 93 project. Additionally, he mentioned the ongoing construction of the Broadway Boulevard expansion and traffic improvements between Walmart and Target in Portland, anticipating its full opening to traffic within the next two weeks.

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

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| A. Transportation Policy Committee: | Regular Meeting | May 9, 2024 |
| B. Technical Advisory Committee: | Regular Meeting | May 16, 2024 |
| C. 2050 MTP Public Meetings: | | May TBD, 2024 |

8. ADJOURN

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