

CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

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

With a quorum present and both the TAC Chairperson and Vice Chairperson absent, the remaining members elected Mr. Yardley unanimously as the presiding officer for this meeting.

Tom Yardley called the meeting to order at 9:00 am

TAC Members Present:

Tom Yardley, San Patricio County

Juan Pimentel, P.E., Nueces County

Liann Alfaro, Corpus Christi Regional Transportation 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 Carrizales, Victor Mendieta, and Karla Carvajal, MBA

2. NON AGENDA ITEMS PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None were offered or made.

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

Ms. Alfaro made a motion to approve the August 15, 2024 TAC Regular Meeting Minutes.

Mr. Pimentel seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

A. DRAFT Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP)

Mr. Casper presented the item.

After a 2-year process, the Corpus Christi MPO staff requested the TAC review and recommend that the Transportation Policy Committee approve the DRAFT Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP). Safety Action Plans contain strategies to reduce and eliminate serious-injury and fatal crashes on roadways. An RSAP provides a structured approach to identifying locations with needs, analyzing and diagnosing what those needs are, and prioritizing safety improvements throughout the region. This RSAP meets the requirements described in the Safe Streets For All (SS4A) requirements document and will allow entities in the region to pursue federal grant funding for road safety projects.

Discussion:

Ms. Sales-Evans raised concerns about whether previously noted feedback had been addressed in the current draft. She specifically asked about missing data, such as the placeholders (X's) in performance measures, and questioned when those gaps would be filled.

Mr. Casper responded that the plan incorporated some feedback, like clarifications on the purpose of the plan and the inclusion of an appendix showing a full list of projects and analyses. He explained that percentages tied to performance measures were still being worked on and that this data would come from the MTP [Metropolitan Transportation Plan], which would use safety data from 2016 to 2024.

Ms. Sales-Evans questioned how the plan would be presented to the Policy Committee, noting the importance of ensuring that the overarching Safe System Plan was in place before recommending the RSAP.

Mr. Casper clarified that the RSAP was built on the 2045 safety plan, with the Safe System Plan being a new requirement under recent legislation, to be implemented before the 2050 plan is finalized.

Mr. MacDonald added that the RSAP is a working document, with the potential for updates based on new data. He emphasized that the Policy Committee's recommendations would apply to goals and objectives that are flexible and subject to adjustment. The table of locations and proposed safety improvements was highlighted as a key component, with a focus on identifying 32 high-priority sites for potential projects.

Ms. Sales-Evans raised concerns about the possibility of meeting performance goals by 2028, particularly for off-system projects requiring additional agreements and local sponsorship. She suggested that timelines might need to be adjusted to ensure realistic targets, considering the complexities of funding and project implementation.

Mr. Casper proposed categorizing projects into short- and medium-term rather than attaching specific years.

Mr. MacDonald clarified that some of the timeframes referred to goals and objectives rather than the RSAP itself. He reiterated that the plan's primary purpose is to identify and address the most critical safety concerns, with local governments and TxDOT using the list of projects for funding and implementation. Mr. MacDonald also emphasized that the RSAP is a dynamic, evolving document.

Motion:

Ms. Sales-Evans made a motion to recommend the TPC [Transportation Policy Committee] approve the DRAFT Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP).

Mr. Pimentel seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

B. Corpus Christi MPO Planning Area Boundary Update

Mr. Casper presented the item.

The Metropolitan Planning Area is adjusted based on contiguous areas with urban density plus the contiguous areas that are forecast to become urban within the timeframe of the MTP (Year 2050). The Robstown Urban Area and the Ingleside-Aransas Pass-Port Aransas Urban areas are now contiguous with the Corpus Christi Urban Area and so must be incorporated into the MPO Boundary. Five options for doing this were discussed previously. Option 5, the full Combined Statistical Area was not well-received, and the consensus is that it no longer needs to be considered.

Discussion:

Mr. Yardley asked if the boundaries would remain unchanged until the next census. Mr. Casper confirmed, noting that while the governor could approve mid-cycle revisions, it's rare. He cited Orlando's mid-cycle boundary adjustment due to major growth but emphasized this was an exception.

Ms. Sales-Evans discussed option one for expanding the MPO boundary. She cautioned that setting the boundary at State Highway 35 could limit future funding, as improvements would fall under certain categories. She also raised concerns about reducing land area on the south and west sides, where housing developments are rapidly growing.

Mr. Casper reiterated that the current discussions are conceptual and that no feedback has yet been gathered from municipalities. He highlighted that since 2020, a significant portion of Nueces County's growth has occurred within the urban area, complicating forecasts for areas outside this designation.

Mr. MacDonald outlined that the objective is to recommend a working boundary for further processing and eventual approval, emphasizing that future discussions will clarify growth expectations over the next 25 years.

Mr. McGinn shifted the focus to projected wastewater projects in the London area, suggesting that the influx of residents might alter density trends. He pointed out the complexities in tracking new resident data, questioning how this would affect funding allocations.

Mr. MacDonald responded that accurate information is crucial for understanding regional growth and its implications for the urban area.

Ms. Sales-Evans inquired about capturing transient populations, such as part-time residents or vacationers, in areas like Rockport.

Mr. Casper explained the Census Bureau's updated methods for identifying urban areas based on residential units rather than population. This has implications for forecasting urban growth accurately, as a significant number of new developments may not be occupied full-time.

Mr. MacDonald reiterated the need for a working boundary that reflects current trends, stating that many MPOs are undergoing similar boundary revisions due to rapid growth.

Ms. Sales-Evans inquired about the potential consequences if municipalities like Ingleside or Aransas Pass opted out of MPO participation, questioning the implications for rural funding.

Mr. Casper confirmed that while municipalities could choose not to participate, the entirety of the contiguous areas would still be included in the MPO boundary. The final boundary requires the Governors approval and an invitation from the MPO to each entity to participate.

Mr. MacDonald noted that local decisions affect not just participation but also how funding is distributed across the state, which creates a complicated relationship between rural and metro funding.

Ms. Sales-Evans raised questions about the logistics of streaming meetings, indicating the need for a separate conversation on that topic.

Mr. MacDonald emphasized that finding an appropriate venue was not a concern, highlighting that the Coastal Bend COG [Council of Governments] could accommodate meetings with up to 70 members, additionally stating that the CCRTA Board Room also had flexibility for room configurations. He shared insights about various models from Texas and expressed confidence in moving forward with the planning process, including the rewriting of bylaws once certain boundaries were established.

Mr. McGinn inquired about specific urban areas within the MPO boundary, particularly questioning the connectivity of regions like Rockport and whether substantial projects could influence planning decisions.

Ms. Sales-Evans explained that they are working on plans to improve State Highway 35 to improve connections, but they haven't yet received funding from rural sources.

Mr. McGinn agreed that understanding the implications of project funding, especially distinguishing between rural and MPO funds, was critical for future planning.

Mr. Yardley asked for clarification about whether the Rockport area is considered urban, pointing out that it was not contiguous under the first boundary option.

Mr. MacDonald pointed out that growth forecasts could change its classification.

Ms. Sales-Evans pointed out the difficulty of aligning community needs with the MPO plan and urban growth patterns.

Mr. Casper reiterated that boundaries could change before the next census, emphasizing the importance of adaptability in their approach.

Mr. MacDonald stated that a functional classification of the area would help in discussions, noting that their current data included essential safety metrics. He emphasized the importance of establishing a working boundary for the MPO. He mentioned that there are numerous other tasks to address once the boundary is set, and until that happens, all information and projections remain speculative.

Ms. Sales-Evans then expressed her inclination towards option one over option two.

Mr. McGinn indicated the boundary should include the London area, as it currently has wastewater infrastructure and is set to receive a \$16 million investment for a new wastewater lift station, which

will significantly enhance the area's density. He noted that the shift in population would likely be internal, as people move from city limits to newly developed areas without reducing urban density significantly.

Mr. Casper noted that any expansion of the urban area will come from contiguous areas that reach urban density in the small area forecast. Mr. MacDonald pointed out that any development forecast needs to reach urban density in order to be integrated.

Ms. Sales-Evans recommended option one while also considering adjustments based on the small area forecast. She noted that this would allow for a refined boundary that accommodates ongoing developments in the London and Portland areas.

Mr. MacDonald reiterated that if the committee supports option one, it will remain flexible to future adjustments based on growth patterns identified during the small area forecast process.

Mr. Casper raised two main points regarding the boundary and development issues. He emphasized that any development assumptions in areas like Portland and the southside of Corpus Christi need to be applied equally throughout the region, and that the area northeast of Aransas Pass leading up to Rockport are at or near urban density. He added that other ongoing developments may shift population growth away from areas like Portland and Port Aransas.

Mr. MacDonald responded by stating that Ms. Sales-Evans had referenced option one, which includes consideration of boundary adjustments through the small area forecast process. This would incorporate areas like London and Portland.

Ms. Sales-Evans added that the forecast would be the basis for further discussion, acknowledging that boundaries could shift based on the final small area recommendations.

Mr. Yardley asked about the population forecasts, noting the large number of new homes in Portland. He wondered how this housing growth fits with population predictions and raised concerns that the homes might be filled by people relocating within the region, rather than attracting new residents.

Mr. Casper acknowledged that many of the homes under development are not yet built but are planned based on future demand. He mentioned that the population forecast comes from the state demographic office and is relatively low for the region, with around 25,000 new residents expected between now and 2050.

Mr. MacDonald pointed out the difficulty in small area forecasting, noting that despite many new homes, population estimates stay low due to slow development. He emphasized the need to use state demographic and water forecasts to match infrastructure.

Mr. Yardley shared his concern that if the forecasts remain too low, they could lead to under planning for critical resources. He raised similar issues with groups like the Nueces River Authority, warning of the risks of underestimating population growth.

Mr. McGinn highlighted slow population growth in some areas, like Port Aransas and the island, where homes are being built mainly as second homes. He suggested that families might be moving to more practical areas like London for better amenities, selling their island homes for profit. He believes these trends, along with vacant or deteriorating housing, will shape internal migration and development plans.

Mr. MacDonald agreed that these dynamics will be crucial in shaping the small area forecast. He added that while this process occurs every five years, adjustments will be necessary as circumstances evolve.

Mr. Casper noted that the state demographic office would release updated forecasts by the end of November, but they would need to proceed with the current plan in the meantime.

Motion:

Ms. Sales-Evans made a motion to recommend the TPC approve using option 1 for the DRAFT Corpus Christi MPO Planning Area Boundary Update as a working boundary for use in the 2050 MTP development.

Mr. McGinn seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

5. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Focus Group Update

Mr. MacDonald presented the item.

As part of the Public Outreach Process, the Corpus Christi MPO contracted with a private consultant to conduct a total of 10 focus groups: 8 online and 2 in person. These focus groups were statistically valid for the region. The focus groups were conducted during the week of September 9-13. He provided TAC with early observations received from the consultant team.

Discussion:

None.

B. DRAFT Congestion Management Process (CMP) Multi-Modal Performance Measures

Mr. Casper presented the item.

The Corpus Christi MPO staff asked the TAC to discuss the multimodal performance measures for the Congestion Management Process. As part of Metropolitan Planning, Congestion Management performance measures are used to: identify locations currently experiencing congestion problems, to support assessment and prioritization of congestion mitigation projects, and to conduct post implementation evaluation of implemented projects. The application of performance measures in this context often means that the performance measures selected for monitoring system-level congestion and tracking regional objectives must be tailored to be applicable at a segment, link, or intersection scale.

Discussion:

Mr. Yardley asked how often performance measures such as travel time and congestion duration are taken.

Mr. Casper explained that while such measurements were historically infrequent, advancements in big data now allow for daily reports on traffic at various intersections in the city. He noted that these measurements are part of a federal initiative aimed at performance-based planning, gathering data from cell phones.

Ms. Sales-Evans highlighted a misunderstanding regarding the corridors of note, stating that she realized only part of the relevant document was distributed, leading to confusion. She expressed a desire to better understand how these corridors are evaluated.

Mr. Casper clarified that the corridors are designated based on quantitative analysis, and their designation is informed by previous congestion management plans.

Ms. Sales-Evans expressed concern that annual average daily traffic numbers do not accurately reflect seasonal congestion in tourist areas. She questioned how this discrepancy could impact the analysis of recurring versus incidental, (no-recurring) congestion issues.

Mr. Casper acknowledged this challenge, explaining that their new travel model aims to account for peak traffic hours and seasonal variations, and stated that the development of this model is ongoing.

Ms. Sales-Evans asked about performance measures related to reducing lane closures due to crashes.

Mr. Casper noted the absence of a dedicated traffic management center in their region, making it challenging to manage real-time incidents. He mentioned that the federal government requires gathering such data, which is a topic for further discussion.

Ms. Sales-Evans queried how to track the increase in multimodal transportation use within the planning area.

Mr. Casper indicated that data sources for evaluating various transportation modes are becoming available, primarily through private companies.

Mr. MacDonald added that it is important to align performance measures with existing data and resources.

Ms. Sales-Evans suggested that the focus should be on developing incident management processes and architecture within a specific timeframe. She questioned whether MPO funds could support this initiative, emphasizing that implementing such measures might be more important than immediately reducing congestion times.

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

Ms. Sales-Evans invited the committee to attend TxDOT's Public Meeting regarding the initiation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Regional Parkway – North Padre Island project.

7. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

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| A. 2050 MTP Public Meetings: | October 1-2, 2024 |
| B. Transportation Policy Committee Regular Meeting: | October 3, 2024 |
| C. Small Area Forecast Task Force: | October 16, 2024 |
| D. Technical Advisory Committee Regular Meeting: | October 17, 2024 |

8. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:48 a.m.