U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Federal Certification Review for the

Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization

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INTRODUCTION

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) review team conducted the 2026 Federal Certification Review (FCR) of the transportation planning process for the Corpus Christi Transportation Management Area (TMA) Metropolitan Planning Organization (Corpus Christi TMA MPO). The FHWA and FTA are required to jointly review and evaluate the transportation planning process for each urbanized area over 200,000 in population at least every four years to determine, review, assess and document Corpus Christi MPO compliance with applicable federal metropolitan transportation planning requirements and laws as stipulated in 23 CFR Part 450 and 23 USC 134.

PREVIOUS FINDINGS AND DISPOSITION

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, FHWA and FTA jointly conducted a virtual Federal Certification Review for the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization. The review evaluated the MPO's compliance with federal metropolitan transportation planning requirements and assessed the effectiveness of its planning processes. The federal review team determined that Corpus Christi MPO's process substantially met all applicable federal requirements with minor commendations and recommendations. No funding restrictions, conditional certifications, or corrective actions were imposed.

CURRENT FINDINGS

As a result of the FY 2026 Federal Certification Review, FHWA and FTA certified the metropolitan transportation planning process (MTPP) for the Corpus Christi MPO regional planning partners including Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA). There are recommendations in this report that warrant close attention and follow-up, as well as areas that regional planning partners are performing well and should be commended.

REVIEW SUMMARY

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in cooperation with the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), conducted an onsite metropolitan transportation planning certification review of the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization in February 2026. In accordance with 23 U.S.C. §§ 134–135, 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53, and 23 CFR Part 450.

The review areas, observations, commendations, recommendations as well as corrective actions are summarized in the subsequent tables. For ease, the review areas are ordered by the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) citation: 23 CFR 420.117; 23 CFR Parts 450 Subpart C; Appendix A to Part 450; as well as Part 490 Subparts B to H.

Requirements Citations & Assessment	Observations, Commendations, Recommendations and Corrective Actions
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS (MTPP) 23 U.S.C.134 49 U.S.C.5303 23 CFR 450.306	The Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization satisfies the federal Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process (MTPP) requirements by maintaining a continuous, cooperative, and comprehensive performance-driven planning framework across its region, which encompasses the cities of Corpus Christi, Portland, and Gregory, along with parts of Nueces and San Patricio Counties. To carry out this process, the MPO's governance structure relies on the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), which operate under established Bylaws & Operation Procedures and a cooperative Memorandum of Understanding. The TPC serves as the policy committee, holding regular public meetings to guide regional investments and approve critical regulatory frameworks like the Congestion Management Process (CMP), while the TAC meets regularly to support these technical and planning efforts. While the MPO maintains this collaborative structure, federal partners have identified opportunities to further strengthen these partnerships. Supported by professional MPO planning staff, the MPO cooperatively develops and updates its foundational Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and regional performance measures (PM1, PM2, & PM3) to track and achieve critical regional outcomes. Furthermore, the MPO actively incorporates the ten federal planning factors specified in 23 U.S.C. § 134(h) into this '3-C' planning framework, primarily through performance-based processes that embed key regional targets directly into the long-range MTP and short-range TIP.
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS (MTPP) ASSESSMENT: Compliant	
UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) 23 CFR 420.117 23 CFR 450.308	The FY 2025 and FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) with Amendment 1, approved by the Transportation Policy Committee on August 7, 2025, establishes a solid regulatory baseline under 23 CFR Part 450 but relies on administrative processes that could be strengthened through formalized interagency mechanisms. While the program outlines extensive technical objectives under Task 2.0 for advanced modeling—including travel demand, socio-economic allocation, and crash analysis—and recognizes the role of "collaborative partnerships" with entities like TxDOT, Nueces County, San Patricio County, and the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA), it lacks formal, binding data-sharing and governance agreements. Data assembly, update frequencies, and quality control are handled on an ad-hoc basis, which risks duplicating efforts and limits the regional utility of valuable planning tools. Furthermore, model documentation requirements and structured public access protocols for key datasets remain loosely defined rather than systematically integrated. Finally, Task 5.0 (Special Studies) remains highly ambiguous, programming $0 in funding across both fiscal years while maintaining empty, unquantifiable "To Be Determined" placeholders that obscure active planning priorities.

Requirements Citations & Assessment	Observations, Commendations, Recommendations and Corrective Actions
UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) ASSESSMENT: Compliant 1. Recommend re-framing the UPWP as a Cooperative Regional Work Plan: Transition the program's narrative to clearly define mutual responsibilities, joint studies, and shared regional goals. Rather than framing tasks solely as MPO staff duties, explicitly document the operational support, technical resources, and staff time committed by municipal, county, transit, and port partners. 2. Recommend establishing explicit data-sharing agreements (DSAs) and Governance Policies: Draft and execute formal DSAs with member agencies (local cities, counties, TxDOT, CCRTA, and Port of Corpus Christi). These policies must explicitly define: Data Ownership, Update Cadence, and Data Quality Standards 3. Recommend that TxDOT Formulate and implement a Model Documentation and Public Access Protocol: Require all regional models developed under Task 2.0 (such as the travel demand, crash, and socio-economic allocation models) to undergo comprehensive, peer-reviewed documentation. Implement a centralized public access protocol to deliver raw, non-sensitive planning datasets and interactive e-dashboards directly to member agencies, educational partners, and the public, maximizing the return on public planning investments. 4. Recommend resolution to task 5.0 (Special Studies) placeholder ambiguity: Create a standardized administrative amendment process where empty placeholders are forbidden. If there are no programmed special studies or active funds for a two-year planning cycle, the MPO must formally annotate Section VI with a "No Active Studies Programmed" statement and a brief narrative justifying why these resources are not utilized, rather than trying to quantify unhelpful, blank subtasks.	
MPO DESIGNATION & REDESIGNATION 23 CFR 450.310	The Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization was established in 1974 and serves as the federally designated MPO for the Corpus Christi, Texas region and includes Nueces and San Patricio Counties, and the Cities of Corpus Christi, Portland, and Gregory. The Corpus Christi MPO is responsible for coordinating regional transportation planning and managing the allocation of transportation funding in accordance with federal regulations. The MPO's structure is formally documented through adopted bylaws, which establish the roles and responsibilities of the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC), the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and six (6) MPO staff. The TPC serves as the policy and decision-making body, while the TAC provides technical analysis, recommendations, and professional input to support policy actions. MPO staff provide day-to-day administration, technical planning, coordination, and documentation of federally required planning products.
MPO DESIGNATION & REDESIGNATION ASSESSMENT: Compliant	

Requirements Citations & Assessment	Observations, Commendations, Recommendations and Corrective Actions
METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA (MPA) BOUNDARIES 23 U.S.C. 134(e) 23 CFR 450.312(a)	The Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary must be periodically updated to include the adjusted Urbanized Area Boundary (UZA). The MPO, in continuous coordination with TxDOT and local agencies, executed two successive boundary reviews and update cycles to resolve this requirement. The first update, adopted on January 2, 2025, was submitted to the TxDOT Planning Division but returned to the MPO for reconsideration. This return was driven by TxDOT concerns that the proposed geographic contractions would orphan critical, active state highway projects—specifically along the SH 286 extension and the high-growth London area corridors (FM 43 and FM 2444). TxDOT continued partnering with the MPO throughout the subsequent second review process, participating in joint technical workshops to resolve geographic, municipal transit, and project-tracking alignment issues. This collaborative effort resulted in the formal adoption of a revised, mutually agreeable MPA boundary in April 2026, which was resubmitted to the TxDOT Planning Division for final state review and Governor action.
METROPOLITAN PLANNING AREA (MPA) BOUNDARIES ASSESSMENT: Non-Compliant **Correction Action:** The Federal team requires that TxDOT (TPP) completes processing this boundary update. If action is not taken within 90 days of this report's publication FHWA/FTA may withhold joint STIP approvals located within the existing or proposed geographic boundaries of the Corpus Christi MPA.	
MPO PLANNING AGREEMENTS 23 U.S.C. 134(d) 23 CFR 450.314(a) Transit Planning 49 U.S.C. 5303 23 U.S.C. 134	The Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization possesses a documented organizational structure, established Bylaws, and clear policy board authority; however, there is room for improvement in documentation, training, and governance transparency. Although the planning agreements remain valid, they are dated, and the original signatories have since retired or passed away, which limits active executive accountability under current leadership. Furthermore, federal partners observed a lack of documentation to track document reviews, feedback, or changes identified by regional planning partners. Currently, there is no standardized process or centralized joint log to officially document periodic interagency reviews—even when no changes are made—leaving the MPO without a verifiable baseline of review and concurrence to demonstrate continuous, collaborative maintenance of these critical agreements.
MPO PLANNING AGREEMENTS ASSESSMENT: Compliant **Recommendation:** • Recommendation: Administrative refresh to update signatories on MPO Planning Agreements to reflect current leadership. This maintains executive accountability without requiring a renegotiation of terms. • Recommendation: Implement a centralized electronic "review and concurrence" joint review log. To officially document periodic reviews, even when there are no changes, satisfying documentation of review, and annotates baseline of document approval.	

Requirements Citations & Assessment	Observations, Commendations, Recommendations and Corrective Actions
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) Interested parties, participation, and consultation 23 U.S.C. 134(i)(6) 23 U.S.C. 134(g) 23 CFR 450.316 and 23 CFR 450.324(g)	The Public Participation Plan (PPP) was adopted by the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) on November 17, 2025, following the required public review period, to guide public participation activities associated with the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Congestion Management Process (CMP), and other MPO planning products The MPO has demonstrated full compliance with the public participation requirements, effectively establishing a clear framework for public involvement that includes targeted outreach to underserved populations and embraced virtual engagement options, the PPP is proactive and effective, and the public engagement continues to show improvement with CCRTA partnership.
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN (PPP) ASSESSMENT: Compliant • Commendation: The MPO has a dynamic public participation plan that was revised to show their efforts to be proactive rather than reactive. The staff learned that in the past the MPO meetings attracted low attendance and redirected much of their public involvement meetings to attend and present at local agency and community meetings where the public attended to comment. Public involvement appeared to be dynamic with the MPO attending several local community meetings for outreach instead of expecting the public to attend an MPO meeting. • Recommendation: Improve documentation of public participation and appendix summary highlighting public comments and MPO responses.	
CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS (CMP) 23 U.S.C. 134(k)(3) 23 CFR 450.322	The Congestion Management Process (CMP) report was approved by the Transportation Policy Committee on February 6, 2020. It complies with Federal Requirements under 23 CFR 450.322 by establishing a systematic approach to managing congestion through the identification of performance measures, evaluation of strategies, and involvement of stakeholders in the planning process. It was not clear how CMP effectively integrates multimodal transportation considerations, but it does provide a framework for continuous monitoring and improvement (excluding multi-modal improvement), thereby adhering to the prescribed federal guidelines. It was noted that the evaluation methods and process for the 2020 CMP remain unclear. A new CMP is under development and scheduled to be approved in April 2026. It was noted that the number of corridors increased (doubled) due to the data sets used, and although fixed transit routes were included in the CMP development; ridership and transit delay were not considered or included, and corridors were not prioritized.
CONGESTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS (CMP) ASSESSMENT: Compliant • **Recommendation:** Improve documentation and traceability issues, institutionalize CMP monitoring and reporting, produce an annual or biennial system performance strategy.	

Requirements Citations & Assessment	Observations, Commendations, Recommendations and Corrective Actions
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) & 23 U.S.C. 134, 168 23 CFR 450.324 & Appendix A AIR QUALITY CLEAN AIR ACT 42 U.S.C. 7401 40 CFR Part 93	The Corpus Christi MPO adopted the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update on February 6, 2025. The MTP is a federally mandated long-range planning document developed by the Corpus Christi MPO through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) planning process in coordination with TxDOT and the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA). Spanning a 20-year forecasting horizon from 2025 to 2045, the 2045 MTP Update provides a performance-based framework to prioritize capital allocations and guide transportation strategies for an integrated regional multimodal network. To comply with federal regulations, the plan must remain strictly fiscally constrained and utilize year-of-expenditure (YOE) values for both project costs and revenues. While the MTP effectively integrates active transportation networks and supports regional safety targets, a critical compliance gap exists that public transit project programming does not span the required 20-year long-range planning horizon, creating a multimodal disconnect in the outer years of the plan. To resolve this deficiency, the MPO must collaborate with the CCRTA to program transit capital, operational, and system-preservation projects—using cost-banded programs or long-range illustrative lists—across the entire planning horizon through 2045. Corpus Christi MPO is an attainment area.
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) & AIR QUALITY CLEAN AIR ACT ASSESSMENT: Noncompliant Corrective Action: CCRTA is to provide the MPO with a full 20-year transit capital, maintenance and operation programs to be incorporated into MTP's project list within 90 days of the publication of this report. This will ensure the integrated multimodal transportation system covers the entire long-range forecasting horizon.	
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) 23 U.S.C. 134 23 CFR 450.326 23 CFR 450.334	The FHWA and FTA jointly reviewed the MPO's FY 2025–2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with Amendment 2 to assess compliance with federal planning and programming requirements. Based on the review, the MPO TIP substantially complies with applicable federal regulations. The TIP is fiscally constrained, performance-informed, developed through a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C) process. No deficiencies were identified that would jeopardize federal certification. Opportunities exist to enhance documentation and traceability to further strengthen compliance and audit readiness.
TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) ASSESSMENT: Compliant **Recommendations:** • Maintain brief periodic documentation demonstrating CMP monitoring, evaluation, and application to TIP project selection. • Enhance performance-based programming transparency by explicitly linking major TIP projects to adopted performance goals and targets.	

Requirements Citations & Assessment	Observations, Commendations, Recommendations and Corrective Actions
TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES (TPM) **Performance Based Planning** **PM1 – Safety** 23 CFR 490.207 **PM2 – Pavement & Bridge Condition** 23 CFR 490.307 **PM3 – System Performance** 23 CFR 490.507 **PTASP – Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan** 49 CFR 673.11 **TAM – Transit Asset Management** 49 CFR 625.45	Corpus Christi MPO demonstrates compliance with Performance-Based Planning Process (PBPP) and transportation performance management (TPM) as required by metropolitan planning regulations (23 CFR Parts 450 and 490). The MPO utilizes performance measures related to safety (PM1), pavement and bridge conditions (PM2), and system performance (PM3), ensuring that these metrics guide planning processes. Collaboration with TxDOT and the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA), allows Corpus Christi MPO to set and support consistent regional performance targets in the metropolitan area. Performance measures and targets are fully incorporated into the 2025-2045 MTP Update and the FY 2025-2028 TIP, guiding investment decisions and project prioritization. The MPO integrates PBPP elements across documents, ensuring that performance measures related to safety, infrastructure, and transit assets are consistently applied. The relationships between the 2025-2045 MTP Update, FY 2025-2028 TIP, FY 2025 and FY 2026 UPWP and 2025 CMP further enhance consistent planning practices.
TRANSPORTATION PERFORMANCE MEASURES ASSESSMENT: Compliant	

LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS FEEDBACK

The local elected officials in the area who spoke with the Federal team were very complimentary of the MPO staff and interactions with Board members including policy board quorum and stability. The elected officials shared that due to small local government staffing and expertise there are limited opportunities to compete for federal funding. The interviews also highlighted several recurring themes. Both Participants emphasized that regional collaboration remains the greatest opportunity for improvement. While coordinating among the MPO, TxDOT, transit agencies, and local governments regularly, broader collaboration among regional partners and elected officials was identified as an ongoing challenge that can affect decision making and implementation of regional priorities. The prolonged MPO boundary modification process was discussed as an example of where additional coordination and communication could improve outcomes, although both participants indicated that the issue appears to be moving towards a resolution.

PUBLIC LISTENING SESSION

A public listening session for the Federal Certification Review was held on February 12, 2026, from 4:30pm to 7:30pm. No one from the public attended

FHWA & FTA Certification Review -Planning and Public Meetings

As part of this process the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration sought public input concerning the metropolitan transportation planning process within the Corpus Christi metropolitan planning area. Representatives from the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration were available to receive public comments on the metropolitan transportation planning process at a Public Listening Session. Staff from TxDOT, CCRTA, and the MPO attended, however no one from the public took advantage of the public listening session.

FHWA & FTA JOINT DETERMINATION

Based on the results of the 2026 Transportation Management Area (TMA) Certification Review of the Corpus Christi Transportation Management Area, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Texas Division and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Region VI have determined that the Corpus Christi Metropolitan Planning Organization's transportation planning process substantially complies with the federal requirements set forth in 23 CFR Part 450. The review found that the MPO's operations, procedures, and documentation demonstrate adherence to federal guidelines designed to ensure transparency, coordination, and efficiency in transportation planning activities.

The certification review identified two corrective actions that must be addressed within six months of the publication of the review report. These corrective actions are intended to strengthen compliance in a specific area and further enhance the effectiveness of the MPO's planning process.

The FHWA and FTA certify that the Corpus Christi metropolitan transportation planning process meets the standards required for continued designation as a Transportation Management Area, maintaining eligibility for federal transportation funding and preserving the integrity of regional transportation planning.