

**CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)  
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) NOTES – SEPTEMBER 15, 2016**

**1. Call to Order and Quorum determination**

Meeting called to order by Mr. Sullivan at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Nueces County: Glen Sullivan, P.E., Chair; City of Corpus Christi: Dr. Raymond Chong, P.E.; City of Portland: Bryan DeLatte, P.E.; Corpus Christi RTA: Gordon Robinson, PMP; Port of Corpus Christi Authority: David Krams, P.E.; San Patricio County Commissioner Fred Nardini; TxDOT – Corpus Christi District: Paula Sales-Evans, P.E.

MPO Staff: Jeffrey Pollack: Transportation Planning Director; Brigida Gonzalez: Assistant Transportation Planning Director; Daniel Carrizales: System Administrator; Vilma Jasso: Executive Secretary; Victor Mendieta: GIS Manager, Elena Buentello: Transportation Planner.

**2. Introduction of visiting agency officials**

Chairman Sullivan welcomed all in attendance.

**3. Discussion Only:**

**A. Proposed Proposition 1 Project (US 181 overpass at Kay Bailey Hutchison Road) - Update.**

Mr. Pollack stated that over the course of successive Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) and TAC meetings in FY 2015, the decision was made to prioritize US 181 Overpass at Kay Bailey Hutchinson (KBH) as the MPO's priority project for FY 2016 & 2017 Proposition 1 dollars. Because of the project meets and imminent safety need, TxDOT has committed additional funds to augment the aggregated FY 2016 and FY 2017 Prop 1 funds and meet the full cost of project so that it can be let in fiscal year (FY) 2017. The TAC discussion provided an opportunity for TxDOT to outline the project's critical timeline requirements.

Ms. Sales-Evans stated that TxDOT, together with a consultant, is in the process of defining the project's scope. In order to define the scope, a decision as to where the overpass is to be located must be made imminently in order to meet critical milestones toward letting in FY 2017. Ms. Sales-Evans explained that project plans and environmental clearance must be ready at least three months prior to an August letting date in order for the funding to be obligated by the Federal Highway Administration. In addition, a public comment period for the area will need to be held to make the public aware of the proposal.

TxDOT is anticipating eight or nine months to prepare and six to seven months to obtain the environmental clearance once the project scope has been finalized, which means that a decision as to the preferred location for the project must be made within the next few weeks in order for the project to be let in FY 2017.

Ms. Sales-Evans also explained that the Texas Transportation Commission and TxDOT Administration want all dollars identified and planned for letting in a particular fiscal year to actually be let in that fiscal year. As such, if a delay in the project necessitates swapping funds that had been previously committed to making up the project shortfall with FY 2018 funds, project management in FY 2018 would be impacted and TxDOT would need sufficient time to manage such an arrangement.

Mr. DeLatte asked inquired as to whether the project cost is still estimated to be \$24 million.

Ms. Evans replied that this estimate holds if the overpass is constructed at the present location of KBH Rd. or if the project is shifted south; if shifting north, the project would incur some additional costs due to impact on the geometry of the interchange.

Mr. Pollack raised the question to the Committee as to how they wish to proceed in the event that the project does not meet critical milestones to allow letting in FY 2017. Ms. Evans added that there were other projects considered for the use of Prop 1 dollars, including the SH 44 overpass at Violet Rd. Ms. Sales-Evans pointed out that re-programming FY 2016 and FY 2017 Prop 1 funds to support a different project would allow more time to finalize project details for the KBH overpass while potentially enabling the MPO to utilize other sources of funding to make up the augment the Prop 1 dollars for delivery in FY2018.

Mr. Pollack echoed Ms. Evans request for input from Committee members as to whether to continue to attempt to uphold critical path milestones for realizing the KBH overpass in 2017 or whether to begin considering alternative projects for the FY2016 and FY2017 Prop 1 funds.

Mr. Krams stated that based on the information provided, the project could still be delivered if those critical decisions are made expeditiously.

Mr. DeLatte stated this project was too important to the Port, San Patricio County, and the City of Portland not to continue to try to deliver it as planned. He expressed concern that all of the collaborative work done to date to identify the gap funding needed in FY 2017 would be hard to replicate if the project were delayed. He asked about the scope of the public hearing process.

Ms. Evans said that once a decision is made on the overpass location, then work could start on project design. Two to three months would be needed to get exhibits together and to do some preliminary environmental work. An open house could be held sometime in January or February of 2017.

Mr. DeLatte stated that sensitivities among Portland residents to industrial activities have been heightened by recent events in the area.

Ms. Evans stated that the public involvement on a project is simpler if an overpass is lined up with the existing location of a road; the state would not recommend initiating a public conversation without having the appropriate timeframes and information available.

Mr. Pollack concluded the discussion by stating that, based on comments made, the Committee had indicated a clear commitment to continuing to pursue delivery of the KBH overpass project as planned, and key stakeholders had been informed and understood the critical milestones for decisions about fundamental project details that were required to allow this to happen.

## **B. Establishing planning targets for Category 2.**

Mr. Sullivan asked Ms. Evans to explain to the Committee what kind of input the District was seeking regarding Category 2 funds.

Ms. Evans said that Category 2 funds are metropolitan corridor funds allocated to MPOs for prioritization and project selection on the state highway system. She stated that Cat 2 funds were typically committed to larger mobility projects. The August Unified Transportation Program (UTP) identifies a total of about \$180M in Cat 2 funds for our MPO over the next ten years (FY 2017 - FY 2026).

Ms. Evans suggested that the TAC consider a comprehensive list of projects for prioritization over a ten-year period and indicated that the District had identified six such projects.

Mr. Krams asked about a schedule and funding requirements of those projects.

Mr. Pollack suggested a workshop at the conclusion of the October TAC meeting and indicated that MPO staff would distribute a list and map of all projects from the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) that could be candidates for Cat 2 funding (i.e. those on the state system), including the six identified by the District to date.

Ms. Evans stated that part of the motivation for initiating this discussion was ensuring that members have realistic expectations about how long it takes to go through a project development process.

#### **4. Staff Briefing:**

##### **A. Strategic Plan for Active Mobility update**

Mr. Pollack reminded members of the completion of the Bicycle Mobility Plan in January and adoption by City of Corpus Christi and pending adoption by City of Portland, and indicated that implementation is progressing more quickly than anyone had expected. He reported that staff had conducted some preliminary to identify priority locations for the enhancement of pedestrian infrastructure and had convened the project Steering Committee in July. At that meeting, Steering Committee members provided guidance that suggested that the MPO could likely be more effective at this time by offering on-demand planning products to assist in prioritization of capital investments on an iterative basis as opposed to creating a formal Pedestrian Mobility Plan. To that end, MPO staff were deferring production of a formal Phase 2 of the Strategic Plan for Active Mobility in favor of more flexible and adaptive working planning products that would address this need.

##### **B. Regional Parkway Mobility corridor PEL**

Mr. Pollack stated the planning team is a month away from providing a final report. Stakeholder comments have been captured and reflected in the evaluation of alignment alternatives for Segments A and B. He reported that the last major consideration to address is the relative weighting of the influence of the COBRA zone designation on prioritization of alternatives; the planning team will be holding a work session on 9/23 to delve into this issue.

##### **C. Transportation Policy Committee meeting – November 3, 2016**

Mr. Pollack informed the TAC that several TPC members reported conflicts with the next regularly scheduled meeting of the TPC on October 6<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Pollack said that this meeting will thus likely be cancelled due to lack of quorum.

#### **5. Future Agenda Items.**

Mr. Robinson stated that he would like to update the TAC about what the RTA will be doing with their Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding.

Ms. Evans mentioned that TxDOT-Austin continues to ask about the status of the various TAP projects, as some funds must be obligated by the end of FY 2016 and others that need to be obligated by the end of FY 2017. She also reminded all Committee members that as TAP recipients, establishing an Advanced Funding Agreement is the crucial first step in implementation of TAP projects.

Mr. Vourcos informed the TAC that TxDOT has been working with Mr. DeLatte and the City of Portland to get the City's TAP funds obligated before the end of the fiscal year so as to avoid any loss of TAP funds.

Mr. Vourcos also stated that it will be important for the City of Corpus Christi's two FY 2016 TAP projects, the hike and bike paths in Garcia Park and Schannen ditch, be let by August 2017, so as to avoid any loss of TAP funds.

Mr. Sullivan asked if the US 181 overpass at Kay Bailey Hutchison Road project would need to be brought back as an agenda item in a future TAC meeting.

Ms. Evans said that periodic updates would be appropriate as progress is made toward letting in FY 2017. She stated that if fundamental project details are not defined before the October TAC meeting so as to allow project design to begin (thus meeting critical milestones), then future discussions will be necessary to define an alternative path forward.

**6. Public Comments on Agenda Items.**

There were no public comments.

**7. Adjourn.**

The meeting adjourned at 10:03 a.m.