

CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) MEETING NOTES

Thursday, August 17, 2017

1. Call to Order and Quorum determination

Mr. Sullivan called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Present: Glen Sullivan, Nueces County; Raymond Chong, P.E., City of Corpus Christi; Brett Flint, P.E., Port of Corpus Christi Authority; Howard Gillespie, San Patricio County; Gordon Robinson, Regional Transportation Authority; and, Paula Sales-Evans, P.E., Texas Department of Transportation, Corpus Christi District

Staff present: Jeff Pollack, Elena Buentello, Daniel Carrizales, Brigida Gonzalez, Victor Mendieta, and Ingrid Spear

2. Introduction of visiting agency officials

Mr. Sullivan welcomed all in attendance. Mr. Pollack introduced Ingrid Spear, the new Office Manager for the Corpus Christi MPO.

3. Discussion Only

A. Travel Demand Model (TDM) Update

Mr. Mendieta, GIS Manager for the MPO, updated the TAC on progress to date and next steps regarding the update of the MPO's TDM, which will inform the update of the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. With this iteration of the TDM, MPO staff has greatly expanded its role in model development, including:

- Creating the 2012 and 2045 networks
- Developing the 2045 demographics and employment data

The MPO is currently developing forecast year demographics and employment data. Staff will, in the coming weeks, be soliciting feedback from TAC members regarding projected growth rates based on local mapping applications, hardcopy maps, and/or one-on-one with each stakeholder to guide them through the feedback process. This input from TAC members will be used to adjust the model where necessary, after which TxDOT will validate the model and deliver back to MPO a calibrated model for use in updating the MTP (estimated November 2018).

Ms. Sales-Evans inquired as to why the update will be based on a 2012 base year. Mr. Mendieta responded that the 2012 saturation counts are the most recent available, and the timeframe over which the 2017 counts will be available is inconsistent with the requirements for this model update.

Mr. Pollack added that feedback and refinement of growth projections based on TAC members' local knowledge will be key in mitigating this lag in availability of more up-to-date saturation count data, as it will help insure that the model more accurately reflects current conditions.

B. Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Notice of Funding

TAC continued discussions about candidate projects for a collaborative proposal for the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grants program, which replaces the FASTLANE Program, for which applications are due by close of business (COB) November 2, 2017 through Grants.gov.

Mr. Pollack reported that, based on an off-line work session among TAC members and MPO staff, there appears to be only one project on the MPO's MTP that is of an appropriate size and scope to meet grant criteria and merit a Port-led collaboration. Questions arose as to whether this project—upgrading and adding direct connectors to SH 361 east of Gregory—will be sufficiently defined in time to inform the application process.

Ms. Sales-Evans commented that she has determined that the project scoping will not be done in time to meet the application requirements. Likewise, even if the project were awarded funding, the phasing of project implementation be likely not meet the required timeframe for construction per the terms of the grant because of environmental clearance and right-of-way acquisition.

Mr. Pollack stated that, given this determination, the MPO's natural course is to offer collaborative support for the projects that the Port plans to submit.

Mr. Flint reported that the Port plans to submit improvements to the ship channel, known as the Channel Improvement Project, for consideration in the large project category as well as two projects in the small project category: an Intelligent Transportation System project to address truck queueing along the Joe Fulton International Trade Corridor and dock and/or roadway projects in support of development along the La Quinta Terminal. Mr. Flint confirmed that regional endorsement through the MPO would strengthen the applications.

Mr. Pollack stated that these projects are not on the 2015-2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and thus would not offset demand for MPO funds; they are nevertheless of great importance to the region overall and directly address several priority objectives and performance measurement topics for the MPO, including economic development, freight efficiency, congestion and safety.

Mr. Pollack stated that the SH 361 project may prove to be a viable candidate for submittal for future INFRA (or equivalent) project calls; staff will continue to be watchful for such opportunities and will bring them before the TAC as they arise.

Mr. Pollack stated that staff is seeking concurrence from the TAC on a collective show of support for the Port's candidate projects. Ms. Sales-Evans commented in support of the Port projects, reiterating their value to the region. Mr. Gillespie, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Sullivan, and Dr. Chong concurred.

4. Presentation

A. Loss of Air Quality Funding for Near Non-attainment Communities

Sharon Lewis, Environmental Program Specialist with the City of Corpus Christi Environmental and Strategic Initiatives Department, summarized the impacts to our region of Governor Abbott's veto of \$6M annually in funding of air quality improvement programs in communities that are near non-attainment with federal ozone standards.

Ms. Lewis reported that the veto translates to a loss of \$200,000 per year for the next two years for our region, pending action in the next legislature. Two programs are at risk:

1. AutoCheck/CleanFleet, which provides free screening of private and fleet vehicles and offers repair vouchers for grossly polluting vehicles to reduce emissions of the precursors of ozone pollution
2. Supplemental air quality monitoring by the College of Engineering at the University of North Texas, which operates three research grade monitoring stations in Nueces County to augment data collected by the two Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) stations in order to be able to better demonstrate the impacts of long-range transport on local ozone levels

Gretchen Arnold, Chair of the Corpus Christi Air Quality Group and Pollution Prevention Partnership, has begun coordination with industry partners in an attempt to backfill the budget deficit. Local jurisdictions might consider the feasibility of a local coalition to contribute. Administrators from both programs have indicated that they could operate—although sub-optimally—on a reduced annual budget if absolutely necessary. Leaders of local jurisdictions might also consider if and how they wish to broach this issue with the Governor's office and/or Legislature with the hope of reversing this decision in the next legislative session.

Ms. Sales-Evans stated that if the reduced budget would mean operation of only two of the three current supplemental monitoring stations, then any regional coalition should strive to fund the full program budget.

Mr. Pollack pointed out that funding the implementation of the Strategic Plan for Active Mobility is a critical and low-hanging opportunity to address mobile sources of ozone (or the precursors thereof), which is even more critical in the face of this loss of funding. He stated that the combined cost of fully funding AutoCheck and the supplemental monitoring programs as well as investing in bicycle infrastructure pales in comparison to the cost to the region of falling out of air quality attainment for ozone. Mr. Pollack implored TAC members to visit with their delegates on the Transportation Policy Committee (TPC) about the issue to remind them of the upcoming presentation and discussion at the September 5th meeting of that body.

5. Staff Briefing

A. Congestion Management Process (CMP) Narrative Refinement

Mr. Pollack informed the TAC that work continues to update the CMP narrative to satisfy the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Staff is looking forward to additional feedback during a call with FHWA on August 23rd.

B. Autonomous and Connected Vehicle Presentation (September, 21 TAC) and TX Mobility Summit 2.0 (October 16-17)

Mr. Pollack announced that Dr. Kristie Chin from the University of Texas, who coordinates the Texas Innovation Alliance and was instrumental in Austin's designation as one of ten Autonomous Vehicle Proving Grounds by the US Department of Transportation, will be presenting to the TAC on September 21st. Mr. Pollack encouraged all TAC members to share news of this event within their organizations to maximize participation. Mr. Pollack also shared the draft agenda for the 2nd Annual Texas Mobility Summit. He indicated that he and Chris Caron, District Engineer for the TxDOT-CRP District, attended the inaugural event last year and plan to do so again this year. He inquired about interest among TAC members and in furnishing a larger delegation from our region.

Mr. Flint, Mr. Gillespie, Dr. Chong, and Mr. Robinson indicated interest in participating in the delegation.

C. Transportation Alternatives Call for Projects

Ms. Buentello, transportation planner for the MPO, informed the TAC that the MPO's call for Transportation Alternatives Set Aside Projects would open on September 19th and remain open until December 13th.

Ms. Sales-Evans inquired about the total funding available (just under \$1M for two years) and asked what the minimum project size would be.

Mr. Pollack stated that \$150K had been the minimum in the last call, but that staff was still evaluating this.

Ms. Sales-Evans encouraged staff to consider larger minimum project budgets given the arduous administrative process associated with implementation.

Mr. Pollack stated that applicants were encouraged to structure their proposals to be scalable to afford MPO staff reviewers maximal flexibility in allocating funds, and, as such, award amounts had historically ended up well above the minimum project size.

Mr. Pollack reminded the TAC that Ms. Buentello would be the MPO point of contact for Transportation Alternative-related inquiries. He stated that staff is eager to work with prospective applicants to develop project ideas.

D. Planning Law Seminar (September 8, 2017)

Mr. Pollack distributed the draft agenda and registration form for a Planning Law Seminar that the MPO is co-hosting with the TX Chapter of the American Planning Association on September 8th. Mr. Pollack encouraged all TAC members to share the flyer with whomever might be interested from their respective organizations.

E. TxDOT/MPO Strava Data Workshop (September 19, 2017)

Mr. Pollack announced that the MPO will be co-hosting a workshop (one of three in the state) on the use of Strava data for mobility planning on September 19th. TxDOT has signed a three-year contract with Strava to acquire data for the entire state for use in mobility planning by any interested public entity. Mr. Pollack stated that while the Corpus Christi MPO already has an existing contract with Strava to acquire regional data and used these data in development of the Bicycle Mobility Plan, MPO staff would be participating in this event. He encouraged TAC members to spread word of this opportunity.

F. Transportation Policy Committee Meeting, Revised Date (September 5, 2017)

6. Future Agenda Items

7. Public Comments on Agenda Items

Opportunity for public comment on any Agenda Item or any subject within the Committee's jurisdiction (except a matter related to pending litigation) is provided at the conclusion of the meeting, or as specified by the Chairperson of the TAC. Proceedings are recorded. We ask that remarks be brief (limited to three minutes), that you identify yourself, and give your address.

8. Adjourn

All meetings of the MPO committees are open to the public. Any persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services are requested to contact the MPO at 884-0687 at least 48 hours in advance so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Información en Español: Si usted desea esta información en Español o si desea explicación sobre el contenido, por favor llámenos al teléfono (361) 884-0687 o comuníquese con nosotros mediante correo electrónico a ccmpo@cctxmpo.us. Nuestras oficinas están ubicadas en el 602 N. Staples Street, Suite 300, Corpus Christi, TX 78401. Copias se proveerán a petición.