

# **CORPUS CHRISTI METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION TRANSPORTATION POLICY COMMITTEE (TPC) REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

**October 3, 2024**

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

Judge David Krebs called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

### **TPC Members Present:**

Judge David Krebs, San Patricio County, Chairperson

Mayor Cathy Skurow, City of Portland

Mr. David Engel, Port of Corpus Christi

Mayor Paulette Guajardo, City of Corpus Christi

Mr. Mike Walsh, P.E. Texas Department of Transportation-Corpus Christi District

Ms. Emily Martinez, Coastal Bend Council of Governments

Ms. Alexandra Fielder, Nueces County Attorney's Office

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 TPC SEPTEMBER 5, 2024 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Mayor Guajardo made a motion to approve the September 5, 2024 minutes.

Mayor Skurow seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

## **4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS**

### **A. Corpus Christi MPO Planning Area Boundary Update**

Mr. Casper presented the item.

The Metropolitan Planning Area is adjusted based on contiguous urban areas plus the contiguous areas that are forecast to become urban density within the timeframe of the MTP (Year 2050). Five options were discussed previously. Option 5, the full Combined Statistical Area covering six counties was not well-received, and the consensus is that it no longer needs to be considered. The MPO staff and TAC discussed the options at the September 19th TAC meeting and jointly recommend using the MPO boundary identified in Option 1 with possible future modifications to accommodate the allocation of households and jobs to 2050 as part of the Small Area Forecast processes.

### **Discussion:**

Mayor Skurow raised a question regarding how entities decide to participate in the MPO and what the process entails if they initially decline to join. She additionally asked how entities could later opt to participate and what procedures would be in place for that.

Mr. Casper responded that if the TPC approves the proposed Option 1, the MPO would initiate contact with the entities to explain what the MPO does, the implications for them, and both the positive and negative impacts of participation. He stated that the MPO would also need to adjust its Bylaws to accommodate new members.

Mayor Skurow expressed concern that if entities choose not to join now, they may miss important opportunities that could disrupt years of planning.

Mr. Walsh provided an example, noting that Robstown, which is not currently part of the MPO boundary, would have access only to specific funding, such as CAT 4 Rural Connectivity dollars. He explained that

once an entity joins the MPO, they would not be able to access those rural funds anymore, which might be a critical consideration for their decision.

Mayor Skurow highlighted the importance of understanding the consequences of joining or not joining the MPO, particularly regarding the potential loss of funding.

Mr. MacDonald emphasized the risk of losing access to rural funding, which could be a key factor for local entities considering joining the MPO. As an example, he stated that TxDOT is planning to create a major interstate around Sinton, and if the MPO's boundaries extend to that area, the funding for the project would need to come from the MPO funding, which currently lacks sufficient funds for a project of that magnitude. He also noted that in their discussions with potential members, it is crucial to clarify the implications of joining the MPO, helping them understand the organization's purpose and the financial responsibilities involved to ensure they can make informed decisions.

Mayor Skurow asserted that the decision to participate should not be taken lightly, as it has implications for future planning and funding opportunities.

Mr. Walsh remarked that entities might be hesitant to join the MPO due to concerns over losing access to specific funding sources, which could affect their decision-making process. He indicated that the MPO would need to provide clear information about funding sources and the benefits of participation.

Mr. MacDonald acknowledged that previous discussions had centered around the risks of losing access to crucial funding, such as federal dollars, if entities do not join.

Mr. Casper mentioned that while specific processes exist, there is room for flexibility in mid-cycle adjustments, but they are not typical.

Mayor Skurow restated that a clear understanding of the participation process and the associated implications would help entities make informed choices about joining the MPO.

**Motion:**

Mayor Guajardo made the motion to approve Option 1 MPO Boundary in Attachment 1 as the working DRAFT Corpus Christi MPO Boundary for use in the 2050 MTP process and application for MPO Boundary Change and Redesignation through TxDOT to the Governor.

Mr. Walsh seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

**B. DRAFT Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP)**

Mr. MacDonald introduced the item.

Mr. MacDonald explained that the Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP) is based on a detailed analysis of safety data, containing more than 800 pages and identifying 32 key locations for proposed safety improvements. He mentioned the RSAP aims to reduce serious injuries and fatalities by focusing on these priority areas and that it aligns with broader safety goals like TxDOT's "Road to Zero" and the City of Corpus Christi's Vision Zero program, which seek to eliminate traffic deaths in the region by 2050. Mr. MacDonald introduced Chris Caron, the lead consultant from Halff Associates, to provide further details on the RSAP.

Mr. Caron introduced his colleague, Emily Barker, who authored the RSAP. He explained that the goal of the RSAP is to enhance roadway safety in alignment with the federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant program. This plan aims to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 50% by 2035, and zero fatalities by 2050. Mr. Caron noted that the planning process involved collaboration with various stakeholders, including the MPO's regional traffic safety task force, and online surveys. The crash analysis examined data from 2014 to 2021 to identify trends in crashes and emphasizes key focus areas like impaired driving and post-crash care. He highlighted the 153-mile High Injury Network in the MPO study area with disproportionate severe crashes. This delineation helped determine where safety improvements are most likely to be effective. Mr. Caron stated that they were able to identify 32 high-

priority locations for safety enhancements, each detailed in the report with information on safety issues and potential improvements.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Walsh inquired when the next update was for the RSAP.

Mr. Casper explained that updates should ideally occur every two years, aligning with updates to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and that they plan to use the most recent data for the 2050 MTP, including data from years 2022-2023, to refine the analysis.

Mr. Walsh raised concerns about suggesting variable speed limits that can't be implemented yet, as the necessary devices have not been approved, even though recent legislation supports them.

Mr. MacDonald acknowledged that while variable speed limits are not yet fully implemented, there are other proven countermeasures like enforcement and design changes that could still address safety issues on SPID. He emphasized that the RSAP offers a range of possible improvements for locations.

Mr. Engel asked what happens after the RSAP's approval, specifically regarding funding.

Mr. MacDonald responded that having an approved RSAP is a prerequisite for accessing federal funds like the SS4A grants. He explained that once the RSAP is approved, the list of prioritized projects is shared with TxDOT and local governments, who then decide which projects to fund and implement, using a combination of federal, state, and local funding sources.

Mr. Casper noted that upcoming funding opportunities include TxDOT's Category 5 funds and the Highway Safety Improvement Program, which could support the RSAP's goals.

Mayor Skurow stated the importance of data collection, especially as vehicle automation and AI become more common, suggesting that tracking data on crash-avoidance technology could support safety initiatives.

Mr. Casper added that TxDOT is working on updating crash records to include such information, which would also require local law enforcement participation in reporting crash data involving new vehicle technologies.

Mayor Skurow emphasized that while the impact of certain safety measures may be difficult to quantify, she believes it would make a difference.

**Motion:**

Mr. Engel made a motion to approve the DRAFT Regional Safety Action Plan (RSAP).

Mayor Skurow seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

**C. TPC Meeting Location Change Proposal**

Mayor Guajardo presented the item.

Mayor Guajardo expressed gratitude to the RTA for providing a temporary space while City Hall's Council Chambers were being renovated. She highlighted that the newly renovated chambers at City Hall are now ready and extended an invitation to return to their original location for meetings. Mayor Guajardo emphasized that, while the RTA has been accommodating, City Hall offers better accessibility and parking for public meetings, which she believes will benefit attendees.

**Discussion:**

Mayor Skurow stated that she is neutral on the decision, mentioning that traveling to the current building is not an issue for her unless there is strong opposition from any other TPC members to move back to City Hall.

### **Motion 1:**

Mayor Guajardo made the motion to untable the item.

Mayor Skurow seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

### **Motion 2:**

Mayor Guajardo made the motion to change the TPC Meeting Location Change back to Corpus Christi City Hall.

Mr. Engel seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

## **5. INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **A. DRAFT Active Transportation, Complete Streets and Micro-mobility Plan**

Mr. Kevin St. Jacques from Freese and Nichols, presented the item.

The Corpus Christi MPO is providing the preliminary draft of the Active Transportation, Complete Streets, and Micro-mobility Plan (Active Transportation Plan) to the TPC for review and feedback. The TPC will later be asked to release the draft Active Transportation Plan for a one-month public comment period during the November meeting, with final approval anticipated in December.

#### **Discussion:**

Mr. MacDonald provided some background on the current process. He referenced the memo shared with the TPC, which included numerous links. He mentioned that this work has been ongoing for nearly two years in collaboration with the consultant team. Mr. MacDonald stated that the draft materials are currently for review only, with no immediate request for approval. He emphasized that the TPC has been provided with 60 days to review the chapters, appendices, and the overview presentation before being asked to approve the Active Transportation Plan in December. In November, the TPC will be asked to release the document for a one-month public comment period. These 60-day and one-month review periods allow for thorough consideration before the final approval. He noted that the draft lays the groundwork for the future of active transportation in the Corpus Christi MPO Region, with feedback from stakeholders, the public, and technical staff to be incorporated into the final document.

### **B. Regional Focus Groups Update**

Mr. MacDonald presented the item.

Mr. MacDonald provided an overview of the efforts to gather public opinion on transportation, highlighting the challenges many MPOs and governments face in receiving input from residents. To address this, the MPO hired a consulting firm, ETC Institute from Kansas City, to conduct focus groups with a demographically representative sample of the community, based on the latest U.S. Census data. The firm facilitated 10 focus group sessions (8 virtual, 2 in-person) each involving 8 to 10 participants, and gathered insights on various transportation topics. No MPO staff was present, ensuring unbiased input.

Mr. MacDonald explained that the focus group discussions covered key issues like safety, bike and pedestrian infrastructure, autonomous vehicles, and transit services, among others. A notable finding he highlighted was a strong public skepticism towards self-driving vehicles, as well as concerns about how transportation funds are currently being spent. He stated that many participants expressed hesitancy to support additional transportation funding without a clearer understanding of how existing funds are managed. He also noted the request for enhanced transit services, including 24-hour operations, and a focus on infrastructure maintenance, such as addressing potholes, improving road markings, and adding street lighting, especially near parks and trails.

Mr. MacDonald stated that the MPO plans to further engage with the consultant for a deeper analysis and intends to share the final report with the TPC once it is complete. He mentioned that the MPO will integrate these insights into planning efforts.

### Discussion:

Mayor Skurow highlighted that Portland conducts a survey every two years, covering topics like sidewalks, lighting, and safety. She suggested that if the MPO has specific questions to include, they should coordinate with local governments during survey efforts to ensure alignment and address any deeper questions.

Mr. Casper added that a key observation from the focus groups was concern over aggressive driver behavior, such as speeding and running red lights, which were the most frequently mentioned issues.

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

Mr. Walsh noted that there was a public scoping meeting scheduled for that afternoon, beginning at 3:00 PM, regarding the proposed Regional Parkway Project. He mentioned that the scoping meeting would take place at Mansion Royale and invited anyone interested to attend.

## 7. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

### A. 2050 MTP Public Meetings:

**October 1 and 2, 2024**

### Discussion:

Mr. MacDonald reported that the MPO recently invited the public to discuss transportation issues related to the 2050 MTP in the Bayside Area and the Island. Although turnout was modest, attendees participated in an exercise to allocate a hypothetical billion dollars in funding across categories like potholes and transit, helping the MPO gauge public funding priorities.

Mayor Skurow raised concerns about balancing public needs versus wants in funding requests, suggesting it would be beneficial to understand the reasoning behind these requests.

Mr. MacDonald acknowledged this, explaining that while the allocation exercise gauges priorities, future public meetings would provide context on traffic safety analyses and the importance of enforcement, engineering, and education. He highlighted the MPO's commitment to engaging the community through workshop-style meetings and online surveys, ensuring that a broad range of opinions are captured for future planning efforts.

### B. TxDOT Regional Parkway/North Padre Island Project Public Meeting: **October 3, 2024**

### C. Small Area Forecast Task Force: **October 16, 2024**

### Discussion:

Mr. MacDonald explained that the proposed boundary change will be guided by adjustments based on expected growth areas identified in the small area forecast. He stated that this forecast predicts population and employment trends that should inform the TPC on the eventually approved MPO boundary. For now, some areas of growth currently lie outside the current MPO Boundary. He also mentioned that the plan will be presented to the SAF Task Force and the TAC before returning for final approval.

### D. Technical Advisory Committee: **Regular Meeting/Workshop October 17, 2024**

### E. Transportation Policy Committee: **Regular Meeting November 7, 2024**

## 8. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 2:59 p.m.