

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

**November 17, 2025**

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

Judge Krebs called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

TPC Members Present:

Judge David Krebs, San Patricio County, Chairperson  
Judge Connie Scott, Nueces County, Vice Chairperson  
Mayor Cathy Skurow, City of Portland  
Mr. David Engel, Port of Corpus Christi  
Mr. Mike Walsh, P.E. Texas Department of Transportation-Corpus Christi District  
Mr. Art Granado, Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority  
Emily Martinez, MPA Coastal Bend Council of Governments (non-voting)

MPO Staff Present:

Rob MacDonald, P.E., Jafet Flores, Harry Horak, Victor Mendieta, and Carissa Tamez

MPO Attorney:

Ms. Mary Esther Guerra, Nueces County Assistant County Attorney

**2. NON-AGENDA ITEMS PUBLIC COMMENTS**

One public comment was made on the CCRTA Fare Structure process in person and One Public Comment submitted by email.

**3. APPROVAL OF THE TPC SEPTEMBER 4, 2025, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES**

Judge Scott made a motion to approve September 4, 2025, Regular Meeting minutes.

Mr. Engel seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

**4. DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS**

**A. DRAFT 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update (2045 MTP Update) with Amendment 1**

Mr. MacDonald presented this item.

The Corpus Christi MPO staff developed the DRAFT 2045 MTP Update with Amendment 1. The specific changes to the fiscally constrained project list in the 2045 MTP Update as part of Amendment 1 were provided. All projects and programs of the Corpus Christi RTA listed in the cover memo were recently amended into the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). For consistency, these projects must be consistent and listed in both the FY 2025-2028 TIP and 2045 MTP Update.

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion:**

Judge Scott made a motion to approve the DRAFT 2045 MTP Update with Amendment 1.

Mr. Engel seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

**B. Corpus Christi MPO DRAFT 2025 Public Participation Program (PPP)**

Mr. MacDonald presented this item.

This item requested approval of the DRAFT 2025 Public Participation Plan (PPP) that was released in August for a minimum 45-day public comment period. No public comments have been received as of November 17, 2025.

Once adopted, the PPP defines the processes that the Corpus Christi MPO will use to provide any interested or potentially impacted citizens with reasonable opportunities to participate in the metropolitan transportation planning and project programming processes. This 2025 PPP identifies the outreach and involvement activities for the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan development process and updates to the FY 2025-2028 Transportation Improvement Program.

**Discussion:**

None.

**Motion:**

Mr. Engel made a motion to approve the DRAFT 2025 Public Participation Plan (PPP).

Mr. Granado seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

**C. CCRTA Proposed Fare Structure**

Mr. Robert Saldana presented this item.

The current fare structure adjustment was last changed in 2006, when it went from \$0.50 to \$0.75. Due to the downward trend of the CCRTA's current fare recovery ratio, the authority is currently proposing a new fare structure. The review process included a Title VI Fare Equity Analysis to ensure there is not a disproportionate impact on minorities. When reviewing the fare structure, the Corpus Christi Regional Transportation Authority (CCRTA) keeps three (3) objectives in mind:

1. Maintain affordability for low-income populations
2. Encourage farebox recovery in keeping with revenue goals and peer agency practices
3. Encourage ridership growth and minimize loss

**Discussion:**

Mr. Engel questioned the slide indicating that the CCRTA collects an average of \$0.25 per trip, asking how that figure was calculated.

- Mr. Saldana clarified it is calculated by dividing the total annual fare revenue by roughly 4 million yearly trips.

Mr. Engel questioned how the \$0.75 fare, after discounts, results in a \$0.25 average, and asked what the expected average fare would be with the proposed increase.

- Mr. Saldana explained that many riders from the University and Del Mar students are under contract with a preset figure, as well as Pre-K–12 students ride free, so those fares won't increase; any rise in the average fare would come from base-fare riders only.
- Mr. Engel asked whether the universities and colleges' contract fares are included in the \$0.25 average.
  - Mr. Saldana stated yes, every contract is included in the average.

Mr. Engel wanted clarification that all contracts are included in the \$0.25 average and asked whether the average fare under the new rate is known.

- Mr. Saldana explained that the focus is on the recovery ratio, not a specific average fare, noting that current ridership from universities and Pre-K–4th grade skews the average. Under Stage 2.4, the proposed increase is expected to raise the recovery ratio to 4–4.5%.

Mr. Engel asked how CCRTA plans to address riders who do not have a cell phone to access the APP GO passes.

- Mr. Saldana explained that GO Passes require a cell phone; riders without one must pay cash, and an educational process will be provided.

Mr. Engel asked whether all bus riders have some type of electronic device.

- Mr. Saldana stated that a high percentage of riders have a device or phone to use the mobile app.

Mr. Engel emphasized ensuring that all eligible riders would still be able to receive the discount.

- Mr. Saldana confirmed yes.

Mr. Engel asked about the MPO's role and questioned why they need to approve the increase instead of leaving it to the CCRTA board.

- Mr. MacDonald explained that under a new state law, MPO involvement is required for fare increases. The law, included in Transportation Code Title 6, Subtitle 6, establishes a fare review process, where fares automatically take effect unless the MPO votes against the base fare.
- Mr. Engel clarified that the committee's role is not to vote yes, but only to vote no if they oppose the fare increase.
- Mr. Granado explained that the proposed fare increase was first introduced about a year ago with input from the cities and counties served by CCRTA. CCRTA has had only one fare increase in 40 years, though agencies like FTA and MONARC recommend increases every 3-4 years. Senate Bill 1371 allows CCRTA to proceed unless the MPO votes no. If no action is taken, the increase automatically takes effect 60 days after the vote (around November 26–27). Public input from thousands of riders was considered, and CCRTA feels the increase is necessary given the long period without a fare adjustment. He also noted that at \$0.75, CCRTA fares are among the lowest compared to other cities, emphasizing that the increase is necessary, because the current fare is unsustainable, reinforcing the need for the increase. Mr. Granado expressed surprise that financial information was not provided but hoped his explanations would clarify the issue. He noted that detailed financial information is also available on the CCRTA website.
- Mr. Engel noted that reviewing the budget would have been helpful due to the limited financial information. He initially didn't understand the MPO's role in the vote but now recognizes it affects all communities CCRTA serves.
- Ms. Guerra stated that she had sent Mr. Engel a copy of the state law that was highlighted so you can see what the MPO's role was in the process.
- Mr. Engel stated he understood but remained unsure why the MPO needed to vote on this issue.
- Mr. Derrick Majchszak, CEO of the CCRTA, noted that this legislation had already been enacted in Austin many years ago and that Capital Metro uses the exact same process. He explained that when the transit agencies were originally formed, they operated under different rules, which over time led to variations in regulations across the state.

Mayor Skurow addressed the second public comment included in the agenda packet, noting that it raised valid questions. She asked whether there had been an opportunity to review and respond to those questions.

- Mr. Saldana explained that the financial figures being compared come from different types of data, mainly from the National Transit Database, which does not account for several important factors. He noted that a reported \$6 million gap between revenues and expenses is misleading because it excludes major costs such as employee benefits, particularly healthcare, which alone totals \$4-5 million annually. He added that budgeted revenue projections can also distort the picture; for example, the agency anticipated \$42 million in sales tax revenue but has only received about \$750,000 less.

Mayor Skurow questioned why the agency's fare recovery rate has declined—from 6.5% before COVID, to 3.6% in 2023, and now down to 2.4% and asked for an explanation of the drop.

- Mr. Saldana explained that the fare recovery rate has dropped because the RTA's expenses have risen significantly since COVID. Costs for goods, services, tariffs, and buses have all increased and capital expenses alone are up about 35% over the last four years, while sales tax revenue has only grown 15–16%. These rising costs are outpacing revenue growth. During COVID the agency managed better financially because it received federal relief funds, but those funds are no longer available.
- Mayor Skurow acknowledged Mr. Saldana's explanation but pointed out that the fare recovery rate dropped from 3.6% to 2.4% in just the past two years, and tariffs are not yet affecting them. She emphasized that tariffs cannot explain this 1.2% decline.
- Mr. Saldana explained that the drop in fare recovery is due to reduced fare collection. Many riders are being allowed onto buses without paying the full fare, and each unpaid ride costs the agency about \$0.25, contributing to lower fare revenue.

Mayor Skurow noted that the fare structure indicates the CCRTA subsidizes about 95% of all trips, meaning riders pay only about 25% of the actual cost. She then questioned which specific groups are riding for free and contributing to the reduced fare recovery.

- Mr. Saldana replied that about 65,000 fare tokens are distributed to various agencies.
- Mayor Skurow asked whether any guidelines or requirements are provided to agencies regarding how the distributed tokens should be used once they receive them.
  - Mr. Saldana responded that there are no specific guidelines for how the tokens are spent. He added that they are primarily given to non-profits and to riders who cannot afford the fares.
- Mayor Skurow expressed concern about the lack of accountability for the 65,000 tokens, asking whether all tokens are being distributed, how they are being used, and which demographic groups are receiving them. She emphasized that 65,000 is a significant number and questioned how and where the tokens are being passed out.
- Mr. Majchszak explained that the state, through the Workforce Commission, controls who receives transit tokens and in what amounts, which have not increased. Programs like Mission 911 provide tokens to help people go to pay bills or commute to work. Additionally, a program allowing ISD students to ride buses for free has increased daily student ridership from 200–250 to about 1,200, effectively expanding subsidized transportation.
- Mayor Skurow requested assurance that CCRTA has accountability measures to ensure distributed tokens reach riders most in need. She suggested a simple one-page summary to the various agencies on accountability for the tokens.
  - Mr. Saldana added that apart of the tokens they distribute, and customer service staff will go out to see how much more they may use. Ms. Montez can help clarify more.
- Mr. Saldana noted that, in addition to distributing tokens, customer service staff follows up to assess additional usage, with Ms. Montez providing further clarification.
  - Ms. Sharon Montez, Managing Director of Capital Programs and Customer Service, explained that agencies receiving tokens report back to CCRTA on a quarterly basis. Most recipients are nonprofits, including Driscoll, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Workforce, and Veterans Services, and they are required to report token usage to CCRTA.
- Mayor Skurow inquired whether anyone can receive tokens through a nonprofit agency and asked if any agencies have requested more than their allotted amount.
  - Ms. Montez stated historically, agencies have not requested more than their allotted tokens. Some agencies do not use their full allocation and report unused tokens, and CCRTA will adjust funding as updates are submitted, as noted by Mr. Saldana.
- Mayor Skurow inquired whether universities, Del Mar College, and schools are subsidizing fares at full price.
  - Mr. Majchszak clarified that the University contributes annually approximately \$400,000 annually to cover fares, extra services, and free rides for their students.

- Mayor Skurow noted that it is difficult to make a decision based on the information presented. She acknowledged the need for a fare increase, given no increase in over 40 years, but emphasized the importance of presenting multiple options with a balanced budget—such as the impact of no increase, a partial increase, or a full increase. She requested that if a fare increase moves forward, measures ensure that those most impacted can still access free rides and that CCRTA makes tokens available to people in need. She also inquired whether tokens are available at the Coastal Bend COG (CBCOG) office.
  - Ms. Martinez confirmed that tokens are not available at the CBCOG office.
- Mayor Skurow stated that it is concerning that the CBCOG does not have tokens to distribute and suggested the CCRTA Board should review this issue.

Mr. Engel stated that the TPC must trust the CCRTA Board’s recommendation, noting that while more information would be helpful, there is no reason not to trust the Board.

#### **Motion:**

Mr. Engel made a motion to approve the new proposed fare structure.

Mr. Granado seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

#### **After Motion Discussion:**

Judge Scott asked whether the proposal would move forward regardless of the committee’s approval by November 26, 2025.

- Mr. Granado responded that the MPO can only vote “no”.
- Mr. Majchszak clarified that the 60-day deadline would be November 30, 2025.
- Mr. Granado explained that while the committee could vote yes, in the past when there was a quorum issue and a vote was not held before the deadline, the proposal would have gone into effect regardless of approval.
- Judge Scott acknowledged that the MPO does have a role in the decision-making process.
- Mr. Granado clarified that a “no” vote means no and a “yes” vote means yes.
- Judge Scott agreed with Mr. Engel, stating that the committee must trust the CCRTA Board to make the best decision.
- Mr. Granado stated that the CCRTA Board has done a thorough job assessing the fare process. He noted that CCRTA serves 4 million riders annually, prioritizing rider safety and efficiency, and would not take actions that jeopardize those goals. He talked about how he is a public transit user, and that it is in fact reliable to use. He mentioned exploring ways to encourage rider app usage for fare features and expressed hope that the MPO will vote yes.

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

- Mr. Walsh discussed TxDOT’s End of the Streak Campaign. He mentioned that November 7<sup>th</sup> was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being the last day someone did NOT die on a Texas road. He stated Texans are good at wearing their seatbelts.

### **6. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

<b>A. Regional Traffic Safety Task Force</b>	<b>Virtual Meeting</b>	<b>November 19, 2025</b>
<b>B. Technical Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Regular Meeting</b>	<b>November 20, 2025</b>
<b>C. Transportation Policy Committee:</b>	<b>Regular Meeting</b>	<b>December 4, 2025</b>
<b>D. Technical Advisory Committee</b>	<b>Regular Meeting</b>	<b>December 18, 2025</b>

### **7. ADJOURN**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m.