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Carla Pfeiffer Sievers stands in front of the same barn where her mother spent her childhood in the 1920s.

Photo by [Miranda Laine](#)

"It's about the heritage"

By [Mitzie Stelte](#)

Published February 8, 2008

Dorothy Henze, 84, still lives in the home she was raised in on land that has been in her family for 135 years.

The land, 55 acres just off Texas 46, was purchased in the 1850s by her great-grandfather, a German immigrant.

Her father built the house when she was a year old; it was added on to the original kitchen of the homestead, built 100 years ago. The property also includes an original barn and smokehouse.

Her daughter, Carla Pfeiffer Sievers, and her family also live on the land and raise Dorothy's cattle.

"The family has always planned to keep the land in the family and pass it down from generation to generation," said Sievers. "As of right now, there are five generations who have rented it, and there could be five more."

This family legacy, however, is in jeopardy.

The land sits in the path of the recommended corridor for a proposed 40-mile loop around the City of New Braunfels which would encompass Comal and Guadalupe counties.

The project currently is not funded, and officials from the Texas Department of Transportation say construction of the loop could take up to 30 years; construction of the first segments could begin in as little as five years.

The land already was divided for the construction of Texas 46, said Sievers. Now, the proposed loop would take about 20 additional acres.

"It would basically take about half our land," said Sievers, "and we won't have enough room to raise our cattle, which is our livelihood."

TxDOT and RJ Rivera Associates Inc., a San Antonio-based consulting firm, unveiled a preliminary plan for the loop last June, and since then they have conducted public forums to garner public input.

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Sievers said that she wasn't able to attend the first public meeting because she had just finished chemotherapy treatments for breast cancer.

"I know that's not an excuse, but when I got the first maps, our property was not in the loop study," she said.

The loop also would affect the property belonging to her cousin, Shirley Pfeiffer Kilgore and her family, which still has original buildings from the 1830s through the early 1900s.

According to Kilgore, the Texas Historical Commission has said that their land qualifies as a historic site.

The Kilgore's land was one of the first dairy farms in New Braunfels, and on their property is an Indian burial ground which has never been touched, said Kilgore. There are also the original rock formations in the deed.

The loop would be hitting the corner of their property and would affect their cattle and sheep raising, she said. The loop would not go directly through her property, but when it's finished there will be expressways, access roads, turnarounds and other developments that will affect it.

"You're not just talking about 800 feet that this particular road would take up," she added. "There has to be another solution."

According to Texas Department of Transportation Area Engineer Greg Malatek, many ranchers and farmers have come to him with similar concerns.

People have the misconception that TxDOT is trying to go out and acquire land, said Malatek. Basically, TxDOT made the recommendation for the corridor based on the study requested by the city and the county officials, who will work with property developers to reserve right of way.

Also, while parents might plan on passing down their land so their children can continue to farm or ranch, some children might ultimately decide to do something else, he added.

Kilgore, however, said her family wants to continue the legacy of their land.

"I'm trying to keep it for my daughter and my grandchildren," said Kilgore. "It's not about the money, it's about the heritage."

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