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New Braunfels Outer Loop Study

More Than 200 People Attend Open House to View Recommended Corridor

NEW BRAUNFELS – Thursday, January 31, 2008, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) unveiled the recommended corridor for the proposed New Braunfels outer loop. The Open House was attended by more than 200 people at Canyon High School. The announcement of the recommended corridor came four months earlier than the original anticipated timeline of May 2008.

“The response to the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study has been sensational,” said Judy Friesenhahn, P.E., with TxDOT. “We have heard from numerous people through the two rounds of public meetings, comment cards, the website, hotline and individual stakeholder meetings. The abundance of information provided has allowed the study team to deliver a solid recommendation to the residents of New Braunfels, Comal and Guadalupe Counties.”

The Open House consisted of exhibits walking visitors through the study process and to the final recommendation for the proposed outer loop. Exhibits included:

- **Need and Purpose:** These exhibits provide general information about the study area need and purpose. Including information on growth in Comal and Guadalupe Counties as well as in the City of New Braunfels.
- **Environmental Constraints:** Learn more about the environmental constraints identified throughout the study process. The constraints for the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study were identified using existing data found through public databases, input from members of the public and through field verifications. These constraints were utilized to evaluate corridor options.
- **Universe of Options:** The Universe of Options exhibit illustrates a wide-range of “conceptual” options identified through various meetings with the public at the early stages of the study.
- **Facility Type Recommendation:** This exhibit describes the recommended facility types for the proposed outer loop. A facility type indicates the differences in roadway/streets by identifying the components/features specific to a certain roadway type.
- **Refined Universe of Options:** This exhibit shows the Universe of Options after refinements were made to account for trends visible in the wide-range of “conceptual” options.
- **Viable Options:** This exhibit shows the options remaining after the first round of screening. These options were first displayed at the 2nd round of public meetings held in October 2007.
- **Short List of Options:** The Short List of Options was developed by the second round of screening which eliminated options based on their impacts at the IH 35 interchange locations and the Guadalupe River crossing points.

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TxDOT's five goals: reduce congestion • enhance safety • expand economic opportunity
• improve air quality • increase the value of transportation assets.

- **Screening Criteria:** The Screening Criteria exhibit identifies those criterion selected by the study team with input and feedback from the public to reduce the number of options down to, eventually, the recommended alternative.
- **Study Recommendation Map:** After several months and numerous meetings with the public, TxDOT is ready to present the recommended corridor. This exhibit shows the recommended corridor that was developed with input and feedback from the local community over the past eight (8) months.

Numerous members of TxDOT and the study team were on hand to collect feedback and answer any questions.

The study began in April 2007 and included significant public involvement activities including: two rounds of public meetings, nine technical and community work groups, and numerous stakeholder meetings. The Universe of Options was compiled using information provided by the TWG, the first round of public meetings and input from the study team. The study team then refined the Universe of Options using trends. The Viable Options shown at the second round of public meetings were developed utilizing the following initial screening criteria:

- Minimize residential displacement
- Minimize impacts to schools
- Avoid cemeteries and prehistoric burial sites
- Avoid impacts to parks/recreational facilities
- Avoid impacts to historic resources
- Avoid impacts to landfill

The Viable Options were further refined by the study team into the Short List of Options by evaluating the crossings at IH 35 and the Guadalupe River. After presenting the Short List of Options to the CWG in December, the study team took the Short List of Options and applied multiple screening criteria to determine the recommended corridor for the proposed outer loop.

TxDOT will present the recommendation to the City of New Braunfels, City of Schertz and Comal and Guadalupe Counties in February 2008. These entities will then determine if the recommended corridor will be adopted into their respective Major Thoroughfare Plans (MTP).

About the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study

The New Braunfels Outer Loop Study includes a study area that is approximately a 40-mile band around the City of New Braunfels that encompasses portions of Comal and Guadalupe counties. The outer loop could require two new crossings over the Guadalupe River and would connect to IH 35 on the north side of New Braunfels and to IH 35 on the south side of New Braunfels. The purpose of the study was to conduct the necessary planning and analysis needed to identify a corridor for the possible development of a New Braunfels Outer Loop. The study sought to:

- Identify a potential corridor for land (right of way) preservation.
- Identify portions of the loop which could be constructed as stand alone projects.
- Follow NEPA guidelines to ensure information collected can be used for the development of future environmental documents for segments of the loop.

For more information on the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study or to view the Recommended Corridor Map, please call the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study Hotline at (866) 704-1114 or visit the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study website at www.nbolstudy.com.

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For more information, call Maggie Rios at (210) 615-5836 or Laura Lopez at (210) 615-5839. Information about TxDOT is also available through the department's World Wide Web site (<http://www.txdot.gov>).