



MEDIA RELEASE

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New Braunfels Outer Loop Study ***TxDOT Holds Second Round of Public Meetings*** ***Unveiling the Eagerly Awaited Viable Options in the Study Area***

NEW BRAUNFELS – Tuesday, October 9, 2007, the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) held the first public meeting in a second round of public meetings regarding the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study. The first round of public meetings was held in June 2007. The public meeting was attended by more than 200 area residents at Byron P. Steele II High School.

The open house, consisting of seven stations, prior to the presentation provided participants a story of how the study is unfolding. The Universe of Options, the Refined Universe of Options and the Viable Options stations generated the most interest among attendees. The initial group of conceptual options (Universe of Options) was developed with existing data, including information received as a result of public involvement activities; data collected at the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study Technical Work Group, the Community Work Group, the first round of public meetings and general public input, it resembled a spaghetti bowl. The challenge was to examine the study area relative to the study's need and purpose, and identify routes that had a possibility of meeting the identified needs. For the purpose of examining the options, the loop was split up into six legs with SH 46, IH 35, FM 306, and FM 1044 used as dividers between the legs. As a result, the Universe contained more than 45,738 possible corridor combinations.

The Refined Universe of Options provided a snapshot of the options remaining after the initial screening process, which reduced the number of options down to a more manageable list of viable options. Environmental constraints such as those ranked during the first round of public meetings were used as some of the screening criteria. The list of initial screening criteria was presented along with the smaller set of viable options. Initial screening criteria included:

- Minimizing residential displacement
- Minimizing impacts to schools
- Avoiding cemeteries and prehistoric burial sites
- Minimizing impacts to park and recreational facilities
- Avoiding landfills
- Avoiding historic resources

The Viable Options maps generated the most excitement among attendees at the meeting. The Viable Options Map was displayed in a manner in which people viewing the maps could easily identify their piece of property in relation to the viable options presented on the maps. Participants also had the opportunity to ask questions and voice comments or concerns to the consultants and TxDOT representatives at each of the stations.

“Public involvement has been an on-going effort in the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study,” said Judy Friesenhahn, P.E., with TxDOT. “The study team has received invaluable input from the public involvement efforts that are taking place and we hope to continue the momentum throughout the course

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of the study. The team of consultants is documenting all of the information that is collected and will take it into consideration before providing the final recommendation to TxDOT in spring 2008. ”

The public meeting began with an open house consisting of maps and displays describing the study area, the current identified constraints, the Universe of Options, the Refined Universe of Options and screening criteria. This was followed by a study update presentation given by Kevin Kennedy, P. E. with Kennedy Consulting, Ltd. Following the presentation, participants had the opportunity to go to different stations around the cafeteria to view the study area, ask questions and provide input regarding constraints, the Universe of Options and the screening criteria. The meeting concluded with each station giving a report on comments and concerns relayed by participants and a public comment session.

The Study Area 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 is to conduct the necessary planning and analysis needed to identify a corridor for the possible development of a New Braunfels Outer Loop. The study will seek to:

- Identify a potential corridor for land (right of way) preservation.
- Identify and prioritize segments of the loop that are needed sooner than others.
- Follow NEPA guidelines to ensure information collected can be used for the development of future environmental documents for the segments of independent utility.

For more information on the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study, 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. Maps and photographs of the study area are available to members of the media upon request.

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