

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2009

Citizen Task Force in the Midst of Review of the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study

NEW BRAUNFELS – The New Braunfels Outer Loop Task Force is mid-way through their review of the New Braunfels Outer Loop (NBOL) Study which began in April of this year when the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) San Antonio District announced plans to convene a citizen task force to review the findings of the study. The Task Force is comprised of area citizens some of who were members of the two previous study work groups – the Technical Work Group and the Community Work Group – as well as additional study stakeholders identified by TxDOT, the City of New Braunfels, Comal and Guadalupe Counties. The primary focus of the task force has been to review the process utilized by consultants to develop the study recommendation to ensure the accuracy of the data collected and to ensure that the screening and evaluation tools were applied consistently throughout all parts of the study area.

The NBOL Study Task Force held its first meeting on Thursday, April 2, 2009, at the New Braunfels Civic/Conference Center from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The Task Force was introduced by Mario Medina, PE, District Engineer for the TxDOT San Antonio District. The Welcome also included comments by City of New Braunfels Mayor Bruce Boyer and Comal County Judge Danny Scheel. Since then, the task force has conducted monthly meetings to complete their charge. To facilitate the efforts of the task force, TxDOT hired Linda Ximenes, an independent facilitator with no previous involvement with the study, to work with the task force throughout this effort.

The study process is being reviewed by topic at each monthly meeting. The first topic addressed the public involvement efforts undertaken by the NBOL Study. The second topic tackled the process utilized to identify the need and purpose of the study. The following meeting outlined how environmental constraints were identified.

At each task force meeting, the task force has been presented with information on what the study team did to fulfill the study requirements. Following the presentation the task force breaks into small work groups to discuss the information presented, share their points of view and answer questions presented by the facilitator on a worksheet. The final question on the worksheet asks the small group to make recommendations for improving the process that was followed to conduct the NBOL Study. After, each small group reports out to the large group on their recommendations.

There are four remaining task force meetings scheduled. The September meeting will discuss the study's process for identifying the recommended type of facility for the loop. The selected facility type was used to determine the right-of-way width necessary for the corridor route. Facility options considered included high capacity expressway facilities similar to I-35 which require a 350-400 feet of right-of-way and narrower, lower-capacity facilities that would require 100-120 feet of right-of-way. The width of the recommended corridor was determined by doubling the width necessary to fit the recommended facility type in order to allow for maneuverability in future studies.

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The meetings held in October, November and December will analyze the screening of alternatives for each route segment and for the route as a whole. The study team will provide the task force with the information they utilized to screen alternatives and weigh options against each other to narrow the options to the final recommended corridor.

After the task force meetings have concluded, TxDOT will hold a full-day work session with the task force to review and finalize the recommendations being made to improve the study and strengthen the process. Once complete, the work conducted by the task force will be incorporated into the NBOL Study Final Report which will then be presented to Comal and Guadalupe Counties, the City of New Braunfels and other cities affected by the study area for possible adoption into their Major Thoroughfare Plans.

The next Task Force Meeting will be held on :

Monday, September 21, 2009
Texas Agricultural Education and Heritage Center
Also known as the "Big Red Barn"
390 Cordova Road, Seguin, Texas 78155
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

For more information on this and past meetings including the agenda, photos, minutes and other handouts distributed at the meetings, please visit the project website at www.nbolstudy.com and click on the 'Public Involvement' tab. To get an automatic notification of meeting dates and locations, please send an e-mail to info@nbolstudy.com and join our e-mail notifications list or call the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study Hotline at 866.704.1114.

Upcoming meeting dates include:

- Monday, October 19, 2009
- Monday, November 30, 2009
- Monday, December 21, 2009

All meetings are open to the public who is invited to attend and observe the proceedings. Time will be allocated for public comments at each meeting and comment cards will be available for public feedback.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The New Braunfels Outer Loop Study was conducted from April 2007 to July 2008 and included a study area which was approximately a 40-mile band around the City of New Braunfels and encompassed portions of Comal and Guadalupe counties. The outer loop would 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.

For more information on the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study or to view the Recommend Corridor, 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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TxDOT's five goals: reduce congestion • enhance safety • expand economic opportunity
• improve air quality • increase the value of transportation assets.

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