



Jerome Schuman, Sr., a fifth generation resident (right) and Don Scharnhorst (left) mark their homes on the map showing who attended Thursday night's meeting.

TxDOT's New Braunfels Outer Loop Study Open House draws large crowd

By Jo Anne Johnson
Staff Writer

More than 500 people signed in Thursday night at Canyon High School to view TxDOT's recommended corridor for a new loop around New Braunfels and voice their opinions.

RJ Rivera Associates, Inc. prepared the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study, undertaken in April 2007, to identify a corridor for the possible development of a New Braunfels Outer Loop (NBOL). Thursday's Open House presented the recommended route for the loop as well as maps detailing the processes the study used to narrow down potential locations.

As recommended, the NBOL is a 40 mile band around New Braunfels, connecting to IH 35 on the north and south sides of the city and encompassing parts of Comal and Guadalupe counties. The loop will also require two new crossings of the Guadalupe River.

TxDOT will present their recommendations to the Cities of New Braunfels and Schertz, and Comal and Guadalupe Counties in February, who will then have to decide whether or not the NBOL will be adopted into their Major Thoroughfare Plans.

Many people in attendance Thursday night expressed dissatisfaction with the recommended route for the NBOL. Jerome Schumann Sr. showed where his home is marked for removal on the map. Mr. Schumann is a fifth generation landowner in the area, and the house to be removed was his great-grandfather's. The Relocation Assistance brochure TxDOT was offering Thursday night was little comfort to Mr. Schumann as he faced the prospect of moving his family home or watching it be torn down.

Other opposition was less personal, but no less emotional. Kevin Romig claims that a loop around the city will not really ease transportation issues, but it would increase sprawl and leapfrog development and decrease quality of life. Many people fear that New Braunfels will lose it's "small town feel" if the loop is successfully built.

Many others on hand seemed to be reconciled to the idea that a loop around New Braunfels is at least economically necessary, if not aesthetically pleasing. Phenomenal growth in the New Braunfels area is already causing traffic and congestion on the city's roadways, and the town is growing beyond the ability of the current infrastructure to handle; this is what led TxDOT to request the NBOL Study in the first place.

TxDOT is still accepting comments in writing by mail, fax or email, but they must be received by Monday, February 11, 2008.

Texas Department of Transportation c/o RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.

7410 Blanco Rd., Suite 250
San Antonio, TX 78216
Fax: 210-340-5664
Email: info@nbolstudy.com

For more information on the NBOL Study or to view the Recommended Corridor Map, call the NBOL Study Hotline at 866-704-1114 or visit www.nbolstudy.com.

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