



**NEW BRAUNFELS OUTER LOOP TASK FORCE
KICK-OFF MEETING
APRIL 2, 2009
NEW BRAUNFELS CIVIC CENTER
6:00 -8:00 P.M.**

MEETING MINUTES

Attendance:

<p>TxDOT REPS: Mario Medina, PE Clay Smith, PE Jonathan Bean, PE Greg Malatek, PE Laura Lopez Darla Laughter</p> <p>ELECTED OFFICIALS: New Braunfels Mayor Bruce Boyer Comal County Judge Danny Scheel Guadalupe County Commissioner Cesareo Guadarrama Guadalupe County Commissioner Judy Cope Comal County Commissioner Jay Milikin Comal County Commissioner Jan Kennady Comal County Commissioner Donna Eccelston Comal County Commissioner Greg Parker</p>	<p>TASK FORCE MEMBERS: In order introduced at meeting: Jim Reeves Glen Avriett Rusty Brockman Vincent Schwab Jackie Singassas Korvan Kruesler Scott Wood Dolly Williams Tom Myers Gary Cobb Kevin Lehmann Eve Hiner Ted West Roy Linnartz Sharon Levette Connie Krause Karen Deitz</p> <p>Lorenz Badding Belinda Reasor Art Brinkkoeter Dave Bretzke Phillip Schulze Cheryl Fisher Tom Hornseth Suzy Collins Bennie Bock Rod Smith Jim Folbre Shannon Mattingly Serapio Herrera Tipton Ross Donna Jones Jeff Kraft</p>	<p>CONSULTANTS: Ximenes & Associates, Inc. Linda Ximenes</p> <p>Kennedy Consulting, Inc. Kevin Kennedy, PE</p> <p>RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc. Rudy Rivera, PE Linda Vela Yobana Diaz David Rivera</p>
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The meeting followed the agenda set out. To obtain a copy of the meeting agenda, please visit www.nbolstudy.com and click on the "Public Involvement" page. There you will find the agenda and all handouts that were distributed at this Task Force meeting. The following minutes are meant to document the events of the evening in a detailed format. Verbatim transcriptions of comments are included where possible. These portions of the minutes are indicated and indented. Verbatim comments are made to the fullest extent possible but there is no guarantee of accuracy.

Agenda Item I - Welcome

Mario Medina, PE, District Engineer for the TxDOT San Antonio District convened the first meeting of the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study Task Force shortly after 6:00 PM.

[Verbatim from Mr. Mario Medina, PE] "Hello and welcome to our New Braunfels Outer Loop Study Task Force Meeting. For those that don't know me I am Mario Medina and I am the TxDOT District Engineer for San Antonio. I have been doing that job for close to seven months now. Here with us today are members of the TxDOT staff. They are the folks back here. Along with our study consultant team and also we have some of your local elected officials. I believe we have some Commissioners from Comal County and I believe some Commissioners from Guadalupe County which is great. We all know the City of New Braunfels and Comal and Guadalupe County have grown at record pace and are

continuing to grow. TxDOT as well as other local transportation partners are constantly evaluating growth to identify the areas that may have transportation needs in the future. The concept of the Outer Loop was first identified by the City of New Braunfels Major Thoroughfare plan in 1964. The most recent version of that loop is currently on the New Braunfels 2005 Thoroughfare Plan. The concept for an Outer Loop was first identified on the City of New Braunfels Major Street Plan in 1964 with revisions and updates to the Outer Loop alignment on the City's Thoroughfare Master Plan in 1999 and in the City's Thoroughfare plan of 2003-2005. Now in 2007, we, as in TxDOT, initiated the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study to update, make improvements and minimize impacts to that identified corridor. We also wanted to ensure that the corridor location would be eligible for federal funding if such funding became available in the future. Now the area studied encompassed a band of approximately 40-miles around the City of New Braunfels in both Guadalupe and Comal County. The study was meant to be a preliminary step towards the future development of a transportation corridor around New Braunfels. The purpose was to conduct the necessary planning and analysis that would be necessary for future evaluations. The goals we had for that initial study was to identify and preserve the right-of-way needs for a possible outer loop; identify the segments of independent utility, those portions of the loop that could stand by themselves; or portions of the loop that could be constructed as stand alone projects. The main thing we wanted to do was make sure that we conform with the National Environmental Policy Act otherwise known as NEPA. At the conclusion of that initial study, TxDOT staff and consultants presented a recommended corridor to the public at an Open House in January of 2008 and again at a Town Hall Meeting held by the City of New Braunfels in 2008. Now the Task Force which are the folks around here at the table here today was put together to address questions and concerns raised by the public regarding the process and some of the data that resulted from that initial study. This Task Force is comprised of members of the original Community Work Group and Technical Work Groups as well as other stakeholders identified by TxDOT and local leaders. Once we complete this the Task Force will present their findings to the City of New Braunfels, Comal County and Guadalupe County. One of the things I want to stress is that public input is extremely important to this process. We are here to listen and take input and feedback on the process undertaken for the previous study. To do this, all Task Force meetings will be open to the public and would include an opportunity for public comment. Again I want to thank you all for joining us tonight. We look forward to working with you all through the Task Force meetings. TxDOT staff and I are pleased to be here to address any question you may have. But remember this is a process. Now to facilitate the effort, TxDOT has contracted with Linda Ximenes, an independent facilitator with no previous involvement in the study. Before I introduce and ask Ms. Ximenes to come up here I would like to allow some of your local elected officials to come up here and say a few words. First I would like to introduce Mayor Bruce Boyer up here. Mayor..."

Mayor Bruce Boyer then took the microphone and addressed the meeting.

[Verbatim from Mayor Bruce Boyer] "I like the way you put that. That you give me the opportunity to discuss this issue again. I do want to thank you all for coming this evening. It is our sincere hope that having this Task Force as opposed to a group of smaller committees and have all this other study work being done. It is our hope that the Task Force will help elevate the community input that goes into this process. We hope that that is what is going to happen through this process. I did want to mention that there has been a lot of criticism of even planning for this outer loop, and I understand that. But I also understand that if we don't plan ahead -- I know we are in a little bit of a lull right now for development but it is coming back -- and if we don't plan ahead, then we risk a lot more upset at the sensitive areas that we have in our communities. I do think it is important regardless of the outcome of this process as far as recommendations come out of it, I think we have got to plan ahead for what is coming. It is irresponsible for us if we do not do that as public officials and as a community. I want to appreciate and let you all know that we appreciate your contributions and interest to what is going on here this evening. I want to say one more time that there is no money for building this outer loop at this time. It is not in any budget. The dirt is not turning. But if we have a recommendation that is acceptable to the county and the city and this property is developed that you can have dedication of that land instead of you the taxpayer, us the taxpayer, having to go out later on and purchase that land to meet our transportation needs. It's a planning tool, yes. But it is extremely important that we do plan ahead so we can control what takes place instead of having a haphazard situation that can do a lot more damage to not only our environment but to our whole community. Please have patience with the process. Thanks so much

again for coming and being a participant in the process. Thanks to TxDOT for reopening this on a different forum with a task force which hopefully, once again, will raise the community's input into what the planning process will be. Thank you all again for coming and I will now turn it over to Comal County Judge Danny Scheel."

County Judge Danny Scheel then took the microphone and addressed the meeting.

[Verbatim from Judge Danny Scheel] "I want to thank all of you for being here tonight. I want to speak to you just a little bit from my heart. First I want to give you all some background on all of this. Before I do that I want to acknowledge my Commissioners: Jay Milikin, Jan Kennady, Donna Eccelston and Greg Parker. I believe he has already recognized Cesareo Guadarrama and Judy Cope from Guadalupe County. I have been in county government since 1995 and since 1995 as a Commissioner we have been asking TxDOT to come give us an alignment for an outer loop. Knowing the projections of the population that we knew would be here in some time. Back in 1995 we were looking at somewhere around Waco Spring Road being a good place for an outer loop which would put it right down my driveway and I supported it 100%, you can ask Greg Malatek. Unfortunately, I got a subdivision back behind me now that would not allow that to be cost effective, so then we started talking about FM 2722 or what most of you know as Bear Creek Road. Everybody knows what is across the street from Bear Creek Road now -- 468 homes -- makes it impossible again so we had to go a little further out. Comal County has been very fortunate over the past several months not to take the economic hit that the majority of the county has taken. I don't know if you are aware or not but if you look in the paper you saw that unemployment in Comal county actually dropped. We got three companies right now. The Scooter Store is in the process of hiring 500 people. Ashley Furniture is in the process of hiring 200 people. The communications company just south of town is hiring 200 people. That does not even take into consideration the Caterpillar place over in Seguin. We are not experiencing the downturn that everybody else is. It has slowed down a little bit. But it's going to come back. Every 10 years we are required to go through the census process. And we hire people to help us with that. Dr. David Wynn called yesterday from Waco and they got the figures from Texas A&M that showed Comal County population right now between 110,000 and 112,000. We are scheduled to be at 125,000 in just six years. Bruce was saying a while ago about the controversy. You know, I'm a short-timer. I'm on my last term. With the controversy that has occurred here it would be real easy for me to say 'let somebody else worry about that'. But I don't operate that way because I expect my kids and my grandkids to live here in the future and I want them to live in a viable community that does not have transportation problems that a lot of other counties have that don't plan ahead. I think back to San Antonio. Where in the world would San Antonio be today if somebody had not had the foresight to plan for Loop 1604? It's a very important thing and I know that a lot of people are affected. But it is something that is going to have to happen. I hope you will bear with us. Keep an open mind. I want to echo Bruce's comments. I hope we both live to ripe old ages but this is something that is not going to happen in our lifetimes. But if we don't set aside the right-of-way today we are going to end up. It will just keep moving further and further out as the county continues to develop. There is nobody planning to buy any ROW for this. Nobody is going to be forced out of their home anytime in the near future. It is way out there. But we need to plan ahead and prepare for those that are coming after we are gone. I thank you for your patience. I hope you take advantage of this. Get all the information. Don't listen to a few disgruntled people. Get the whole picture and then make a decision for yourself. I thank you for tonight."

The microphone then went back to Mr. Mario Medina. Mr. Medina recognized elected officials in attendance. He acknowledged Councilwoman Belinda Reasor from the City of Marion. (Ms. Reasor serves on the Task Force). He then opened the floor for any of the elected officials in the audience to address the meeting. Mr. Medina then turned the meeting over to the facilitator, Ms. Ximenes.

Agenda Item II – Introductions

Ms. Ximenes introduced herself and said that she had met some of the Task Force members during short meetings prior to this meeting. She thanked them for their time and for agreeing to participate on the Task Force. Ms. Ximenes then asked task force members, staff, and consultants to introduce themselves.

Task Force Member Introductions:

- Jim Reeves, representing the Guadalupe River Oaks Property Owners Association.
- Glen Avriett, county extension agent for Comal County. Ag and natural resources primarily.
- Rusty Brockman, with the Great New Braunfels Chamber of Commerce.
- Vincent Schwab, Comal County resident.
- Jackie Singassas, farmer/rancher.
- Korvan Kruesler, Comal County resident.
- Scott Wood with the New Braunfels Running Club
- Dolly Williams interested in the Starkville area primarily. Comal County resident.
- Tom Myers, Comal County resident.
- Gary Cobb, Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited.
- Kevin Lehmann, Comal County Farm Bureau and Guadalupe County farmer/rancher, resident.
- Eve Hiner member of the Seguin Planning Zoning Commission and Long-Range Planning Committee.
- Ted West Federal Highway Administration out of Austin.
- Jeff Kraft farmer and rancher in Comal and Guadalupe County.
- Roy Linnartz Comal County Independent School District.
- Donna Jones concerned citizen.
- Sharon Levette with Citizens Alliance for Smart Expansion.
- Connie Krause represents historical cemeteries of Comal County and also a farmer/rancher.
- Karen Deitz, Comal County resident and representing a ranching family off of 306.
- Lorenz Badding Comal County resident.
- Belinda Reasor City Councilwoman for Marion.
- Art Brinkkoeter Comal County resident.
- Dave Bretzke Comal County resident.
- Phillip Schulze here to represent my family and our farm in Guadalupe County.
- Cheryl Fisher Guadalupe County Resident
- Jeff Joel City of Schertz (sub for George Antuna)
- Tom Hornseth Comal County Engineer.
- Suzy Collins, Comal County resident.
- Bennie Bock, Comal County resident
- Rod Smith, Comal County resident and active with the Chamber on transportation issues.
- Jim Folbre, City of Santa Clara Planning and Zoning.
- Shannon Mattingly, Director of Planning for the City of New Braunfels.
- Serapio Herrera, Guadalupe County resident.

TxDOT staff introductions:

- Mario Medina, PE (TxDOT San Antonio District, District Engineer)
- Clay Smith, PE (TxDOT San Antonio District, Director of Transportation Planning and Development)
- Jonathan Bean, PE (TxDOT San Antonio District, Interim Transportation Planning Director)
- Laura Lopez (TxDOT San Antonio District, Public Information Office)
- Darla Laughter (TxDOT San Antonio District)
- Greg Malatek, PE (TxDOT New Braunfels District Engineer)

Consultants:

- Rudy Rivera, PE (RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.)
- Yobana Diaz (RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.)
- Linda Vela (RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.)
- Kevin Kennedy (Kennedy Consulting Inc.)
- David Rivera (RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.)

Agenda Item III – Overview of the Task Force’s Charge

Ms. Ximenes thanked all those in attendance and introduced Mr. Clay Smith, PE from TxDOT to outline the Task Force charge.

[Verbatim from Clay Smith, PE, TxDOT San Antonio District] “Thank you Linda. My name is Clay Smith with TxDOT San Antonio District. Been doing this for almost 32 years. Actually started working in New Braunfels in summers in 1975. The area looks a lot different today than in 1975. I am here to talk to you this evening exactly what the Task Force is pulled together today and for the next few months to do. As Mario stated earlier the Task Force is made up of previous members of the Community Work Group and the Technical Work Group plus some additional members identified by TxDOT and others in cooperation with local leaders so we could get a good cross section of people to help us with this task. The task force was formed in response to concerns and questions regarding the previous study. We are here to listen and get input regarding those concerns and to learn how to best address them. TxDOT’s goals for the Task Force are to review the process used to identify the recommended corridor, review the data used to evaluate options and ensure that the screening and evaluation tools were applied consistently through all parts of the study. So what does this mean?

First, we want to review the process used to identify the recommended corridor. The facilitator, Linda, will discuss with you our recommended strategy for tackling the work that needs to be undertaken and a schedule to do this effectively. What we will do is incorporate your feedback and ideas into the schedule in a way that makes the most sense and the most effective way. This is not a new study as was mentioned earlier. We will not be starting from scratch. That wouldn’t be feasible to do that. What we will be doing is to review the process used to develop the study to ensure it was technically adequate and to resolve any issues that might arise.

The second goal is to review the data used to evaluate these options. Throughout the upcoming meetings you will be able to review the process and the data used in the previous study. This is your opportunity to strengthen these areas where there are concerns about the data. Again we are not starting from scratch nor are we initiating a new data gathering effort. This is a high level effort in order to gather the data to make this route study corridor recommendation.

The third goal of the Task Force is to ensure that screening and evaluation tools were applied consistently throughout all parts of the study. Linda will guide you in the discussion regarding the previous screening and evaluation tools used for the outer loop study. You will also be presented with information from the consulting team laying out the screening and evaluation tools they used to formulate the recommended corridor. You will then have the opportunity to analyze the process used by the study to ensure that these criteria were utilized throughout the corridor consistently. TxDOT is committed to bring this transparency in our process and to ensure that the process was consistent and adequate. Our hope is to engage your participation through the course of these meetings and enable us to do just that. As we assess the work previously done and begin our close study of the process, tools and data the Task Force will be allowed to make recommendations on how best to resolve any identified issues in the process.

I would like to add a few other recommendations that I think, or some things that you may want to consider -- one might be aesthetics. There are folks on the panel that bring planning expertise -- without getting into the colors but there might be something there in terms of next steps in terms of establishing a theme or themes. So that when a developer comes in, as the Judge mentioned, to build a section its built with some aesthetics that match the community and what the community might want to see. Another might be suggestions on zoning or land use in terms of how that would fit in with the area and how that might blend into maybe modes of transportation. In San Antonio, their MPO integrates modes of transportation. Whether it be transit elements or a combination of modes, or maybe some statements on what’s next. As the study is turned over to the City and County that there could be some next steps in terms of looking at various modes, aesthetics or land use that could compliment.

The culmination of the work done by the Task Force will be incorporated into the previous Draft Report as a Phase II or amendment to the report. We realize up front that the process may be tedious. We appreciate you being here. It is our goal to be as methodical as possible to ensure the efforts of the Task Force are put to the best use possible and we meet the goals of being sensitive and beneficial to the community.

As I close I would like to appreciate Judge Scheel and Mayor Boyer, Council and Commissioners Court, staff for your vision in transportation planning. I graduated in 1973 here from Comal County. Graduated in 1973 from a small 2A high school. Now we have three high schools in Comal County. And it took an hour and a half to be bussed into Canyon here in New Braunfels. And the area continues to grow. There were 18,000 in New Braunfels back then, now we are over 50,000 in this metropolitan area, and the issue is that it is going to continue to grow. It is how we look at the land use and transportation and those two things together in planning for the future. We do want to do good planning and provide for the future. With that, Linda I turn it over to you.”

Agenda Item IV – Review the Desired Results of the Meeting

Ms. Ximenes proceeded to review the desired results of the meeting which included:

- To establish roles and responsibilities for the Task Force members, consultants, TxDOT, and the facilitator.
- To have the Task Force members get to know each other better and what everybody's interests are. Another goal was to establish procedural guidelines.
- To review and agree on a schedule of meetings from now until December. Ms. Ximenes said that hopefully the Task Force would not go to December but she was not sure. She mentioned that the scheduling was done with information from the Task force members that were interviewed so that conflicts could be minimized and Task Force members would have dates with plenty of advance notice.
- To establish a consensus decision making process to be utilized in making decisions and recommendations.
- Task Force to decide on the distribution of the Task Force Roster. She said several Task Force members stated they would like information on how to contact individuals on the Task Force, so the Task Force will need to decide how much information they would like to release to the general public to be included on the Task Force Roster.
- Lastly, to allow for public comment at the end of the meeting.

Agenda Item V – Review the Agenda

Ms. Ximenes then reviewed the Agenda. The next item on the Agenda was to 'Create Guidelines for Working Together'. After that the Agenda included a Warm-up Activity. Ms. Ximenes mentioned that since the meeting began late there might not be time for this activity. During "Establishing Guidelines" Ms. Ximenes said the Task Force would go over the "Roles and Responsibilities of the Task Force Members, Consultants and TxDOT". She referred to the "Procedural Guidelines" list which would be used as a discussion list for setting the procedure for the meetings. The Task Force will then review and agree on a schedule of meetings. The meetings are scheduled for the third Monday of every month. The last item on the Agenda is to decide on the distribution of the Task Force Roster. She said the public would have an opportunity to comment at the conclusion of the meeting. She also said that part of the procedural guidelines are to determine how much time to allow for public comment and how late the Task Force is willing to stay to hear the public out.

Ms. Ximenes acknowledged that there was a lot of attendance from people outside the Task Force. She announced that the public would be allowed to make comment at the conclusion of the meeting and that they would be provided with a microphone to address the Task Force and all the public in attendance.

Agenda Item VI – Create Guidelines for Working Together

Roles and Responsibilities of Task Force Members, consultants and TxDOT

Ms. Ximenes referred to a handout titled "Task Force Roles & Responsibilities". She said the top of the sheet included the Task Force Member Charge which Mr. Clay Smith addressed earlier in the meeting.

Ms. Ximenes then outlined her role as facilitator.

- Her main role in moving the process along was to operate as a neutral, objective party. She said she was not previously part of the study and would not be involved as the study continues.

- To get the group to come to consensus on whatever it is that the group needs to come to consensus about. Ms. Ximenes said that could include her talking to individuals one-on-one or in small groups as her role is to mediate and work amongst the Task Force.
- To organize and conduct the meetings. She said she hoped to design the meetings to do what needs to get done. She is responsible for the process of the meetings and not the content.
- To keep the discussion focused and encourage participation from all Task Force members.
- To enforce the ground rules that are set by the Task Force. She also said that her preference would be for this to be a shared responsibility and that the Task Force members would also help monitor each other.
- To serve as a timekeeper and a scribe. She said that she would record comments on the flip chart for the committee and that these would in turn be projected onto the screen for everyone to see.

Ms. Ximenes then outlined the roles and responsibilities of the Task Force members. She said that the Task Force member's roles include:

- Attending and actively participating in the Task Force Meetings.
- To serve as a liaison to their constituencies.
- To acknowledge that there are divergent viewpoints and opinions and to respect each other's opinion and to work towards consensus.
- To be aware that they may be asked to serve on subcommittees.
- To provide input and feedback to the technical staff to help them to better understand community issues. Ms. Ximenes said that this would be documented as much as possible. She said that one of the things being considered were comments received from people who felt their input was not taken into account. For this reason, Ms. Ximenes said that it was her intent to document, as much as possible, how their input is used and addressed.
- To collaborate constructively with one another and that all discussions, regardless of differing opinions, are productive and helpful.
- To review and become familiar with all reports and data provided in order to fully understand the study process. She said that there would be sensitivity to not overloading people with information and to give feedback on how much information was enough or too much.
- To give input and feedback on the public participation activities and materials.

Ms. Ximenes outlined the roles of TxDOT to include:

- To actively listen to comments and concerns;
- To provide the task force with the technical information necessary to make informed decisions
- To engage resource agency support as needed. She said this could mean bringing in someone from the State Demographers office or other resources as needed or requested.
- To provide guidance on how the recommendations by the Task Force will be addressed.
- To provide feedback to the Task Force on how their input will be utilized.

Ms. Ximenes then outlined the responsibilities of the consultant team including RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc. and Kennedy Consulting, LTD which include:

- To actively listen to comments and concerns.
- To provide the Task Force with the technical information necessary to make informed decisions.
- To be available to develop displays and exhibits as requested by the Task Force on specific issues and concerns.
- To provide logistical support for the meetings.

Ms. Sharon Levette had a question regarding the complete transparency that was discussed. She asked about Linda Ximens's role as a neutral objective party. She clarified that Ms. Ximenes was being paid by TxDOT and wanted clarification regarding Ms. Ximenes's previous involvement with TxDOT and whether that would impair her from being an objective party.

Ms. Ximenes said she has worked on previous studies with TxDOT. She mentioned she would not insult TxDOT but would also not insult the Task Force. If she did something that made TxDOT not want to work with her then that was their decision. She clarified that the agreement with TxDOT was that she was to be a neutral

party and she assumed that they were operating under good faith in that regard. She further clarified that she was contracted to RJ RIVERA and RJ RIVERA was contracted with TxDOT.

Ms. Lavette had a question regarding the 'Roles and Responsibilities of the Task Force' regarding how information would be shared with the Task Force when a subcommittee was put together.

Ms. Ximenes said that was a procedural guideline and the issue would be addressed by the Task Force on how they would like to handle the information coming from subcommittees to the Task Force.

Ms. Levette asked another question regarding a statement from the newsletter that was mailed out. The newsletter stated that the "Task Force would be presenting the final study to the New Braunfels City Council". She had a question as to whether this would be a part of the Task Force's role.

Ms. Ximenes clarified that the Task Force would make recommendations that would be submitted to TxDOT to be included as an Appendix or Amendment to the Study Report. The report would then be given to the City Council, Counties and Cities involved on behalf of TxDOT. She said the Task Force would not be making any direct presentations to elected officials.

A Task Force member had another question regarding the roles of the Task Force making recommendations on the process and conclusions reached by the study. They wanted to know if there would be a mechanism for getting a recommendation out of the group. Ms. Ximenes clarified that the Task Force will be making recommendations and that would be further discussed when the schedule is discussed. She said the Task Force would be making recommendations about the process. Clarification was asked to address whether that included the conclusion of the study. Ms. Ximenes said that as she understood it, they would be able to make recommendations on the conclusion of the study as part of reviewing the process, data and evaluation tools.

No other questions were asked and the Task Force continued to the next item.

Establish General Guidelines

Ms. Ximenes then led the group in discussion regarding establishment of the general guidelines. She referred to a handout titled "What Should Be Considered in the Development of Procedural Guidelines". The first item on that handout was "The decision-making process (consensus)".

She recommended utilizing a consensus process rather than Robert's Rules of Order for conducting Task Force meetings. She suggested to avoid a voting process where a majority can override a minority dissenting opinion. With the consensus process, she said everyone can speak their mind and make proposals. She referred to another handout titled "Resource Pages. Proposal Based Decision-making: The Rule of Thumb". She said that consensus means that the group finds a proposal that is acceptable enough that everyone can support it and no one opposes it. It does not mean you love it but it means that you can support the proposal in the way that it is outlined. She said it is really about having everyone on the Task Force be willing to move forward with whatever the recommendation is or whatever the proposal is that is being made. The process is one where you pick a particular topic. She said that as the Task Force discusses various topics somebody will make a proposal. She said this is similar to making a motion but does not require a second. Each proposal is then written down, reviewed, and discussed by the Task Force. She said the Task Force can discuss the pros and the cons of the proposal and can even modify it. As facilitator, Ms. Ximenes would then take a temperature from the task force, not a vote, to see how many in the group can support the proposal. This is done by asking for a show of thumbs up for "I can support this", thumbs down for "I cannot support this" and thumbs sideways for "I'm not sure". She said the discussion would then continue to discern Task Force members concerns and what changes need to be made to the proposal in order for more people to support it. She then said what options the group would have if they were not able to get someone to give thumbs up. First, she said the group has to generally accept that you cannot oppose something simply because you do not like it. She said it has to be because it violates a principal and then that individual would be asked to make a suggestion about what would have to change in order for them to accept it. If you have one, two or three people who have a thumb to the side then you discuss the issue further to get to consensus. She said another option would be to allow a smaller group to discuss the issue further and then bring it back to the committee and a final option would be for the opposing individual to stand aside and let the proposal move forward. She

said if an individual did choose to stand aside, their stated concern for not supporting the proposal would go on the record and is then tagged indefinitely to that proposal. Finally, she said the proposal can be considered blocked but only when the group feels there is a substantial reason for not moving forward.

Ms. Ximenes then asked if there was a proposal to use the Proposal Based Decision-Making Process.

Ms. Levette proposed the use of the Proposal Based Decision-Making Process with a 50 plus 1 percent majority.

Ms. Ximenes clarified that this was not a majority wins. The consensus works till there is complete consensus on the proposal. If there are two people who do not agree, then those two people would work with another small group who do support the proposal, plus the facilitator to put forth a new proposal and the process starts all over again. The intention is to keep working at it until there is a proposal that everyone supports.

There was a proposal by a Task Force Member to use the Proposal Based Decision-Making Process. Ms. Ximenes then took a temperature. All thumbs went up.

Mr. Tipton Ross joined the table and it was agreed that Mr. Ross would meet with Ms. Ximenes after the meeting to discuss the proposal.

The next item under “What Should Be Considered in the Development of Procedural Guidelines” was “Expected Outcome of the Task Force Work”. Ms. Ximenes said that she would put all the procedures set during this discussion together into a document that will be the Procedural Guidelines for the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study Task Force. This document will be sent out to the Task Force with the minutes of the meeting [Note: Since not all of the items were discussed at this meeting this will be included with future meeting minutes]. Ms. Ximenes said that the Task Force will make recommendations that will be included in the final report. Recommendations will address how the process could have been different. You will also look at conclusions and make sure the criteria were applied evenly across the study area.

Next, Ms. Ximenes said the Task Force would need to set an attendance policy. A Task Force member asked if it would be appropriate to have a stand in. Ms. Ximenes said this would be up to the Task Force to decide. Mr. Ross commented that maybe each Task Force member is allowed one absence and that it could not be abused. Another Task Force member said each substitute would need to be prepared to stand in place of a Task Force member. This would include making them aware of the consensus process and other procedures. Another Task Force member said that the person sitting next to them left due to a work obligation and that he would need to miss the next two meetings. Other discussion points during the attendance policy setting included:

- Difficult to say what the policy should be since the Task Force was just presented with the Schedule and did not have the ability to compare with our calendars. Suggested tabling the discussion until the next meeting.
- Ms. Reason said she has a City Council meeting on the 3rd Monday of each month.
- It might be inevitable that someone might miss a meeting. It should be decided now who that substitute is going to be and get them up to speed now. If that is accepted as a good idea, we should choose that alternate at this time.
- I would like to make that a proposal. Felt those at the table could also utilize folks sitting in the audience if they do not have an alternate in mind.
- I propose that we make a decision about having an alternate and reach consensus as to whether to allow alternates.
- Asked to modify the proposal to add “an informed alternate” First Proposer: Agreed

Ms. Ximenes then asked who would be doing the informing. She offered the possibility of having an initial meeting for Task Force members who missed the meeting to get them up to speed on the process and that this meeting could be opened up to potential alternates. She asked for a temperature on this proposal and found the group did not have consensus. She asked the individual to explain their concerns. The Task Force member wanted to know what the consequences would be if someone did not have an alternate or if they did

not keep their alternate informed. Since the group did not reach consensus, the discussion continued as follows:

- Task Force Member Concern: Looking around I can see a lot of people in the room at this table that could serve as each other's alternates? Would this be better than having to bring in a new set of people?
- Task Force Member Concern: Looking at the schedule and proposals this is an extremely cumbersome project. There are eight meetings and that is too long. Ms. Ximenes clarified that the meetings are scheduled through December but that hopefully those would not all be needed.
- Reply: It would be hard to get an alternate up to speed for the duration of the meetings. If you are here you cared enough to come. If you miss two then we have a 20% excuse rate and that is pretty broad.
- Task Force Member Comment: If you have alternates you should have named alternates that have been identified and either you or your alternate show up to take part in the meeting.
- Task Force Member Comment: It was suggested to have a make-up meeting for those Task Force Members who were not here would it be possible for our named alternates to also attend that make-up meeting.
- Task Force member Comment: We do not need alternates. If we miss a meeting we should be responsible for getting caught up on what was discussed. But we should limit the number of meetings that can be missed.
- Task Force Comment: Getting a copy of the minutes would help those who could not attend get caught up.
- Follow-up: Would be difficult to coordinate everyone's schedules. The thing that would help would be to have prep material. It would help to have the materials ahead of time so that we could prepare for the meetings.

Ms. Ximenes then summarized all comments to this point. She then opened the floor and asked for a proposal that could incorporate these items.

- Task Force Member Comment: The agenda states that one of the said roles of the Task Force Members was to serve as a liaison to their constituents. I agree with a prior comment to allow Task Force Members to use each other and work together to stay up to speed.
- Task Force Member Proposal: Proposal that there be no attendance rules.
- Ms. Ximenes offered a caveat that if you are not in attendance then the decisions made during that meeting will stand and not be revisited.
- Task Force Member: If we knew what was being discussed at that meeting.
Ms. Ximenes said that yes, Task Force members would have Agenda's ahead of time so they would coordinate with another Task Force member to speak for them if there is something of concern for you. Otherwise they would hold their peace. Ms. Ximenes said that this was all contingent on the fact that meeting materials be presented ahead of time. Clarification was received that one week ahead of time would be sufficient.
- Task Force Member Comment: Would like to still have the option to have an alternate.
- Task Force Member Comment: If alternates are allowed it is up to the Task Force member to have debriefed the alternate and not have them derail the process by being uninformed.

Ms. Ximenes took another temperature and the result was that there were still several thumbs down. The discussion continued.

- Thumbs Down Comment: Was not sure that the alternate would vote their interest if they serve as each other's alternates. If alternates are an option then they should all have one or not.
- Thumbs Down Comment: Felt it was a better option to have the Task Force members serve as each other's alternates.
- Task Force Member Comment: Would the facilitator be willing to act as an alternate if someone felt there was not another Task Force member that represented their interests.

Ms. Ximenes then took another temperate on no attendance rules with caveat that if you are not in attendance topics will not be revisited. At this time, all thumbs were up and consensus had been reached on this point. Ms. Ximenes then took a temperature on another part of the proposal that Task Force members be each other's alternates they cannot attend. Several thumbs were down on this part of the proposal. Another

temperature was taken on the proposal to provide materials ahead of time, all thumbs were up, and a decision was made on this issue. Another proposal was made to have meeting minutes a week after each meeting.

Ms. Ximenes then summarized the proposal to allow informed alternates and several thumbs were down. The discussion regarding the allowance of alternates continued as follows:

- Task Force Member: Has problem with optional alternates. Either have them or do not have them.
- Task Force Member: Alternate idea adds a whole lot of complexity. If next meeting is fifty percent alternates that would be a very different meeting.
- Proposal: Proposal to not allow alternates. If you are unable make a meeting, you communicate with other Task Force Members to find out what is going on.
- Task Force Member: If something is of interest to you then you should be in attendance. If you have a concern about something on the agenda then be sure to attend.
- Ms. Ximenes: Proposal to not allow alternates and to instead communicate with Task Force Members if they are going to miss a meeting.
- Clarifying Question: If you are not in attendance you can have another Task Force member speak for you but they still represent themselves in the consensus reaching.
- Task Force Member: Concern about not allowing alternates. Would like to be sure that someone would be there for her if she could not attend and it would be her responsibly to ensure they have all the information. She would be happier if that were an option.
- Linda Ximenes asked to clarify if they felt there was not another Task Force Member that could represent her interests.
- Task Force Member: If I could not make a meeting then I am more comfortable having an alternate that can better serve my interest than a fellow Task Force Member.
- Task Force Member: Would like option to have an alternate. If it became a problem then it could be revisited.

Ms. Ximenes then interrupted and said there was a note passed to her that a few of the public in attendance included some high school students that would like to make a public comment for class credit and would also like to leave. She said they would have to wrap-up the discussion to allow public comments. The discussion then continued:

- Task Force Member: Preference would be to not allow alternates because they have experience with alternates derailing meetings. But if the Task Force could have disciplined that could be controlled.
- Ms. Ximenes said that if some wanted an option but there was concern about having that alternate be informed enough to fill in for a Task Force member, maybe Task Force members could name their alternate ahead of time. Further, if that alternate is not up to speed then the Task Force could ask them to step away from the table.
- Proposal: Select an alternate and indicate who that would be by the next meeting. Alternates can be dismissed if they are not informed.
- Task Force Member: Would it be possible that if we have the option of having an alternate and name them at this point in time then that alternate would be in attendance as part of the audience at the meetings so they are aware of what is being discussed so that they have a responsibility as well.
- Proposal: Select an alternate and indicate who that would be by the next meeting. The alternate would sit in the audience. Alternates can be dismissed if they are not informed.

At this point, Ms. Ximenes took a temperature to see how much support there was for this proposal. Two Task Force members indicated that they were still unsure. They asked for clarification regarding the appointing of an alternate. They wanted to be sure it was optional and that they would not be required to appoint an alternate. Ms. Ximenes said it would be only if you choose to have an alternate. She then took another temperature and all of the Task Force members agreed with the proposal to allow informed alternates if they are selected by the next meeting and if they can be dismissed if they are not informed or impeding the process.

All in all, the following decisions were made by the Task Force at this meeting:

- Optional to select an alternate
- Need to indicate who that will be by next meeting
- Alternate will be in attendance in the audience at meetings

- Alternate can be dismissed if they are uninformed
- There is no attendance policy
- Decisions stand and there is no revisiting once decisions are made
- Preparation materials be sent out a week ahead of time
- Request to have minutes sent out 10 calendar days or less after the meeting
- Use the Proposal Based Decision-making Process

Ms. Ximenes said she would draft a document for the Procedural Guidelines that will be distributed with the meeting minutes. *(Note: Since all Procedural Guidelines were not set at this meeting the Procedural Guidelines Document will be distributed once it is complete.)* She said that at the next meeting, the Task Force will determine how much information should be distributed in the roster. She also asked all Task Force members to look at the Calendar for meetings and to provide feedback. Ms. Reasor said that she could try to skip the City Council meetings that were overlapping with Task Force meetings in order to make it to the Task Force meetings since all of her alternates would also be on City Council.

The floor was then opened up for Public Comments. At the request of a Task Force member, the public comments started with the youth in attendance.

Agenda Item VII: Public Comments

Andrew Bryant

[Verbatim from Andrew Bryant] “My name is Andrew Bryant I am a junior in High School. I didn’t really know what was going on tonight until a teacher told us we should come to the meeting to find out more about the Outer Loop issue was all about. I might seem a little forward talking about the issue itself since this was just a kick off but I wanted to start off by saying about the Outer Loop issue itself; considering that, like Mayor Bruce Boyer said at the beginning, there have not been funds set aside as of yet to provide for the outer loop. I am assuming that if it is decided to construct it they are going to have means of fund raising or support to pay for it and I don’t think that is going to be a really big issue. But the fact that the space for the road is going to have to come out whether we have space for population growth. Then personally I am here because I don’t think that New Braunfels, New Braunfels wasn’t built in an area suitable for a large city. Considering we have two large cities on either side I think it is kind of ridiculous to make it the same as Austin and San Antonio. I think by putting the Outer Loop there we’re making it easier to facilitate population growth in New Braunfels. I like that we live in small town, relatively. I would like you to raise your hand if you like living in New Braunfels. Now I want to have a vote whether you like living in small city or a big city. I like big cities but I would not like to live in one, at least not in this area. I think that by putting the Outer Loop there it makes it seem to people that want to move here that New Braunfels is open to expand and that would be great if we had a lot of room. Because of the two cities next to us we don’t have as much room as it would seem. And I think it is kind of ridiculous and unwise to change what this city has been for the last 200-300 years and make it grow. We have two cities perfectly suitable for large population less than an hour away. If they did put the Outer Loop there I think, I don’t know if anyone has said when they would be able to start construction. Maybe they said that already, I just didn’t know. Or how long it is going to take to actually complete it? And by the time they do complete it I don’t know if it is going to help the situation on rushing New Braunfels population growth. Because yes, it is inevitable but I think it is unwise to push it to where we expand too much, too quickly.”

Daniel Boone

[Verbatim from Daniel Boone] “It is hard not to applaud when you have a young man who has such good perception and thinks so clearly. However, no complaints. I think it is wonderful what you are trying to do. I do hope that you will consider in your deliberations that one of the problems since the city of New Braunfels is indeed working towards revitalizing and they are concerned about their downtown. That if you have an outer loop one of the things that does happen is that business move out to the outer loop where the people will be. And that will take what you have downtown. And in some cases we have seen where the downtown dies. So I hope this group will consider that in their deliberations and what the effects would be on our downtown. I love downtown New Braunfels and I don’t want to see it die.”

Martin Levette, MD

[Verbatim from Martin Levette, MD] “Hi my name is Dr. Martin Levette, I am with Citizens Alliance for Smart Expansion. And I think TxDOT does great things in our state. I enjoy the roads that I travel on. I drive long distances sometimes across state. And I was not anti-TxDOT and had no problems with TxDOT during the initial phase of this Outer Loop study. Then I saw some irregularities. I read that the Task Force was going to do one thing and the results turned out to be something completely different. My group has been accused of disseminating incorrect information. Let me tell you right now that any information that I have given on the radio or to the newspaper is fact based. Anyone here can look at those facts, call those facts. I called the state demographer’s office to find out about population. In thirty years it is going to 165,000. We are building a loop the size of 410 in San Antonio. They didn’t start building theirs till their population rose to about 600,000. Neither did Houston. They built their 1604 loop when their population rose to 600,000. Our population will not need this loop for approximately 150 years. Keep in mind this is being developed for something other than New Braunfels. But my proposal is this. I have two proposals. One, there were two meetings this week and I didn’t see a single ad in the paper by TxDOT. I don’t know that there was a single ad on the radio by TxDOT. I know there were several community service pieces by KGNB. But I think that’s a service to the public. They are not given the same effort that were given for the first set of public meetings which were very well publicized. And two, any information given by TxDOT in a public forum, media and print that should be factual. I think I heard on the radio today Ms. Ximenes that you were not being paid by TxDOT, okay. And you just said you were. I have heard any number of other inaccuracies and I think if you are going to be transparent and consistent, lets’ use facts. Those sides are the facts. And I think your decisions probably should be fact based as well. And that is really all I have to say. Thanks for your time.”

Nancy Krueger

[Verbatim from Nancy Kreuger] “I am Nancy Kreuger. My maiden name is Westmar. I live off of Westmar Road. Our property is 200 acres that is going to be divided in half by this loop and that is very upsetting to me. The reason is we have three barns up on that property and where in the world did you all decide you were going to put that road right through our three barns. You know, you have to own property for a long time to feel that it is part of your family. And that land is part of my... And my daughter is thinking of moving out there. And you all don’t know when it’s going to be. You don’t have any money for it. But somehow I know that that is some ripe developer comes out that they are going to push it through. And we will just be there. And I am so glad to see that there are so many land owners on this Task Force. Because you know exactly what I am speaking of. Some of you others who are planners or work for the City or County and so forth. You are concerned but it is not the same concern that we the landowners have for this land. And that young man who spoke first. He said it ideally. I like the small town. I like New Braunfels. I go to visit my daughter in San Antonio and believe me I am glad when I get back home in New Braunfels where it is a small town. And I too would hate to see downtown New Braunfels. It won’t exist if this Loop happens. Consider the people you are going to be impacting if this happens. And I am talking from my heart. I love my land and I love where I live now and I want you all to think about us. And yeah, I could say, “Well move it over a little bit”. Well then you are going to hit somebody else’s property. And I think. How am I am going to be a good Christian and tell you, “move it over a little bit and hit somebody else’s property”. I think that’s not being a Christian. I am planning on being here at every meeting but Monday’s are horrible. I work. I can not get off on Monday’s. I have planned this and I could not even get here at 6:00PM. And I couldn’t even travel. I asked to be off. I really wish you would think about changing from Monday nights. Or at least stagger so we can hear some.”

Maegan Krueger Blaschke

[Verbatim from Maegan Krueger Blachke] “My name is Maegan Krueger Blachke. I currently live in San Antonio within ½ a mile from 1604 and it is awful. I would actually like the people on the Task Force to raise their hand if they actually own property that is affected by this. Oh, so not even half. Okay. Earlier Mr. Mario made a comment that Comal and Guadalupe County are on pace for record growth. However, according to the US Census Bureau and Real Estate at Texas A&M show differently. Single family home permits in Comal County has been at its all-time low since 2001 and Guadalupe County at it’s all-time-low since 1995. I have the statistics here if you all would actually like to know how it’s gone down. Just to give you an idea. In 2008 there were 1,221 permits sold. 2009 it is projected that only 630

permits will be sold. In Guadalupe County there were 4,916 in 2008. Sorry that was 2007. In 2008 it was 2,703. I was not able to find the 2009 statistics. For that I apologize. A lot of you all don't know me. There are some neighbors here which I am happy to see. I have been attending meetings since I was in elementary school. Just to give you an idea how long. I am currently a masters student and will be finished with that next year. That's a lot of years that I have been here versus a lot of you who just come in and out. As my mother said, I was just wondering when the funds would be allocated to build the road. I started my own family and wish to move to my family's property. Which has been in my family since the development of New Braunfels in 1845. I would like to raise my family on a farm without a major highway going thru it destroying over 200 acres of fertile farm land in Guadalupe County. My husband and I would like to know where the funding and billing is going to begin because we don't want to live in San Antonio so we want to come back to New Braunfels. However if New Braunfels turns into San Antonio we do not want to live here either. And just to quote Andrew earlier the current population of San Antonio is 1 million six hundred people and in 1970 there were 830,000. The projected growth for 20 years in New Braunfels at 5% is only 275,000. So it is no where near what San Antonio actually is. And one of the Mission Goals for the City of New Braunfels is to treasure our unique heritage and natural beauty of our town. So there you go. You say it in your own core values that you want to treasure our land and not destroy it. Thank you."

Jensie Madden

[Verbatim from Jensie Madden] "Good evening. My name is Jensie Madden and I am representing the League of Woman Voters of the Comal Area. We are a non-partisan, local organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and we seek to influence public policy through education and advocacy. First, we want to express our appreciation to the Texas Department of Transportation for initiating this review of the previous study regarding the proposed outer loop around New Braunfels. Our members who live throughout the Comal as well as Guadalupe County have long been concerned about the impact of growth to the environment in this area. Beginning in 2003 we undertook the study of land use planning and environmental issues. In 2005 we published our findings in a comprehensive facts and issues which addresses the impact of growth on Comal County's water, air, transportation, residential development, parks and City/County relations. We would like for the Task Force to have a copy of our report. I know they said you all would not be accepting new data but I hope that everybody will take some time to look at this because it has got some really good information in it. After studying these issues our members agree that Comal County needs a comprehensive Land Use Plan that provides protection for environmentally sensitive areas so we are very gratified that this process is in place to take a second look at the proposed plan. Your findings should be very helpful regarding County-wide planning not only for transportation needs. Not only for transportation needs but how to achieve those needs and still preserve our environment. As a result of our study our members concluded that several specific aspects of Comal County are worthy of conservation and should be protected. We ask that the task Force be especially vigilant regarding the following. We are extremely concerned that a large part of the proposed outer loop crosses the recharge zone over the Edwards Aquifer in an area that is not currently developed. All research shows the dangers of potential pollution of this important water resource. Runoff of pollutants from the proposed highway into recharge features could certainly degrade water quality. Why take a chance on a possible catastrophe when preserving this area and protecting the Aquifer is a better alternative. Two, our members also concluded that plans for development should also take into account the potential for downstream flooding. Three, we also ask that the Task Force protect properties of historic value, working farms and ranches and natural areas that provide habitat for wildlife or recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. I will leave the rest of my comments here."

Please see attached for remainder of written comments and also a copy of the document distributed at the meeting.

Cheryl Gilpin

[Verbatim from Cheryl Gilpin] "I am Cheryl Gilpin. I am a former Edwards Aquifer Authority Director elected to New Braunfels. As far as this early planning stage you have some obligations to consider that I have been hearing on the radio and I see on the website for this New Braunfels Loop project that there is this general acceptance of not doing environmental assessments early in this particular project's planning phases. And since there is no funding available you get into a loophole concerning

that. But once you get to other stages, there are certain laws at the federal level, the state level that you cannot get around. And whether or not your funding is going to come later from federal sources or county sources you are still going to have to meet these obligations. Not looking at these things early in the process by having maps that aren't detailed about the Aquifer is inexcusable because detailed maps exist about exactly where our Aquifer recharge zone is as well as it's contributing recharge zones which all contribute to pollution of the Aquifer. One of the federal laws you should consider was passed in 2005. It is called the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2005 they have Section 6001 and 6002 that apply directly to Texas. And Texas happens to be subject to the governments rules regarding sole-source Aquifers and our Edwards Aquifer is one of them. And if this Aquifer is compromised, whether it happens in Comal or wherever it is going to subject our whole region to have this water supply controlled by the federal government as far as land use planning, land uses and pumping of the water. Not only is there a problem in contamination from pollution from the highway and lack of recharge. But there is also the problem of overdeveloping our water supply because too much pumping which is a supply issue leads to water quality issues so we are back here again. I just want you to know that, if our County buys up property based on this corridor they may not have to have the EIS to do so but later when they put the highway through that will be a terrible waste of our money."

Judy French

[Verbatim from Judy French] "These comments are made on behalf of the 45-member organization of the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance. The Alliance represents citizen organizations and individuals that have a deep and abiding interest in protecting and preserving the quality and quantity of water flowing from the Edwards Aquifer wells and springs. GEAA's concerns regarding this project are chiefly predicated by the fact that the western and the northern portions of the proposed New Braunfels Outer Loop, approximately ½ of the project area are located fully within the area of the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone, which is designated as one of the most environmentally vulnerable regions of the entire United States. Since the agencies governing the study's area which include the Edward's Aquifer Authority, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the City of New Braunfels have neither implemented nor enforced regulatory measures that we believe are adequate to prohibit major impacts on water quality. GEAA would oppose any project that encourages this growth within this environmentally fragile area. They would be happy to furnish pertinent studies and scientific data upon request for your consideration and inclusion in the scope of the work of this process. We ask that all of you on this board seriously reconsider the necessity of the outer loop and examine possible alternatives that would not endanger the Edwards Aquifer or endangered species habitat. This is an opportunity for innovative transportation planning that takes into consideration all the factors that make this portion of Texas unique and precious."

Carlos Cedillo

[Verbatim from Carlos Cedillo] "I have been a resident of New Braunfels for many years and have family that lived in New Braunfels for a couple of generations and I really like New Braunfels the way it is. I think this is a great idea to have this Task Force and really glad that TxDOT and the City of New Braunfels got this together. I am a little concerned when they say that every proposal that you come up with here are just going to be tacked on as an amendment to what TxDOT proposes. And it seems to me like TxDOT and the City seems to think this is a done deal -- that the Loop is a done deal. And last year I was at the big meeting here and it seemed like here is the loop we are going to build and the public participation part of it was just for show. This Task Force should afford itself a little more power than to just be tacked at the end of whatever TxDOT proposes. You should probably vote yourself a little more influence than that. And be really sensitive to real citizens' concerns. And citizens' should have more of a voice in this and find an alternative to the loop idea in the first place and not think that it is a done deal. We should really all try to keep New Braunfels the place that we love. It is beautiful hill country up here. The rivers. This loop is going to go right over the Guadalupe River at the second crossing and that is just going to totally change what anybody comes here for and you should really consider just giving yourselves more authority than being an appendix. And you should try to call in TxDOT officials here and try to get some straight answers on why this outer loop was just thrust upon us. That is all I have to say."

Laura Bertinot

[Verbatim from Laura Bertinot] “Hi, I am Laura Bertinot with CASE. I wanted to continue this important GEAA e-mail that Judy was reading to you. She didn’t have enough time to finish it. GEAA submitted comments on the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study in support of the position of Citizens Alliance for Smart Expansion. We are gratified that CASE has been represented amongst the members of this Task Force and hope that their participation is meaningful and respected. GEAA’s concerns regarding this project are chiefly predicated by the fact that the western and northern portions of the proposed New Braunfels Outer Loop, approximately ½ the project area, are located fully within the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone which is designated one of the most environmentally vulnerable regions in the state. Unique Cretaceous rock structure of the Aquifer does not filter water entering through conduits in the form of sinkholes, caves, fault lines and fractures in the land surface in the recharge zone. Due to the highly permeable nature of the recharge zone, the Aquifer is particularly vulnerable to nonpoint source pollution and rainwater runoff. Since agencies governing the study area including the Edwards Aquifer Authority, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and the City of New Braunfels have neither implemented nor enforced regulatory measures that we believe are adequate to prohibit negative impacts on water quality. GEAA would oppose any project that encourages growth within this environmentally fragile area. Regardless of how stringent the developments plans for pollution abatement are research and past experience show that allowing high impact commercial use of property located on the recharge zone will contribute to water pollution. Options for mitigating adverse impacts on the Aquifer include low impact development techniques, offsets of developed land with park land on either open space to reduce (unintelligible) impervious cover. I would like to repeat that at this point TxDOT with the Outer Loop is covering 40% of the sensitive Edwards Aquifer. 40% of the Loop is covering the sensitive Edwards Aquifer recharge zone at this point. And there are, at this point, no plans for any environmental studies nor are there any plans that we know of at this point, for the roads for any feasibility studies. And I think it is very serious. These things need to be taken into great consideration. And I am not the only one that thinks so as GEAA’s email has stated.”

Ms. Ximenes then thanked all of those in attendance for their comments. She announced that the next meeting is scheduled for May 18th and adjourned the meeting.