



**NEW BRAUNFELS OUTER LOOP TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDATIONS IN RANKED ORDER**

RANKED RECOMMENDATIONS	
Rank	Recommendation
1	<p><i>Need and Purpose</i></p> <p>3. Clearly define the need and purpose of the roadway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clearly define the purpose of the roadway for urban development or thru travel. b. Create limited access/driveways to control development in certain areas. c. Have ample ingress/egress on main intersections. d. Define the actual need. e. Determine whether it is a need or a want. f. Have better traffic studies and forecasts, long term (50-100 years). g. The need and purpose should more accurately describe land use patterns. h. The loop should be a tool for management and direction of growth. i. Options to a loop should be considered up front. Provide evidence/information to support the assertion that building a loop will decrease traffic accidents. j. Provide evidence/information to support the assertion that emergency service provider travel will be enhanced. Example: Seek input from local emergency service provider as how their response time will be effected. k. Clearly define the purpose of the roadway for urban development, industrial development and commercial or retail development planning for all counties involved and how the loop could improve safety and mobility.
2	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>1. Provide sufficient notification of the public meetings to the public and affected stakeholders using a variety of communication methods. Notification should include information about the kind of input being sought from the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Continue to use multiple media outlets to get information out about the public meetings.¹ b. Advertise in the paper and radio the purpose for the community input when announcing public meetings. c. Provide more official-looking notices of public meetings. Use a letter instead of a postcard.

¹ Information listed below the numbered item reflects the more precise wording of the recommendations as made by the Task Force members in their working groups.

3	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be clear and consistent when defining, naming and identifying constraints. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Be consistent in naming the constraints categories. b. Clearly define the constraints before asking the public to rank them. Clarify definitions so that everyone understands them. c. Constraints should be measurable and not so subjective. d. Show all constraints on the maps using specific markers for each one. e. Use a consistent number of criteria for the matrix. We understand decisions have been made using up to 31 different criteria but see only 17 constraints used on the matrix for each section.
4	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Inform each authority that there may be some inconsistencies and inaccurate information in the report. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. After the past 11 months, everything that has been discussed, argued, and identified as an inaccuracy or inconsistency (in anyone’s opinion) must be noted in detail and provided in clear language to anyone wanting a copy of our work.
5	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Be sure to have a good way to communicate with affected landowners. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d. Notification of affected property owners needs to be improved. e. That each owner of farmland that is affected by this loop receive a personal visit from Mr. Rivera or Mr. Kennedy

Screening Process

1. Re-evaluate the screening data.

- a. Each entity (authority) [should] choose to look hard at inconsistencies found in the data (Sec B, C, E, D)
 - b. Please re-evaluate route 7, section C to see if it is possible to reduce the encroachment on the Dietz farm.
 - c. In section B they might want to rethink the change to B23, the power lines are the flattest area to run the road, as well as take into consideration where the new intersection would be has a blind spot area if the interchange is street level.
 - d. They should rethink the crossing over the upper Guadalupe and maybe not allow access to the river.
 - e. In section C they should relook where it crosses 306 going into section B to see if they can find another area to cross.
 - f. In section D, look for an area that does not flood as badly as the area chosen, realizing that all of that general area has some flooding and consider how the properties are crossed as to leave as little impact as possible.
 - g. Have a truly independent and objective group of city planners, transportation experts and road builders evaluate and verify the data and consistency of the use of the data and make recommendations regarding the New Braunfels Outer Loop Study (i.e.: Texas Transportation Institute at Texas A& University).
 - h. Reevaluate all Short list options matrices for accuracy and consistency.
- 6
- i. In Section A, investigate and verify why route options that were eliminated due to residential impacts, etc. were brought back later and in some cases used for the final recommended route.
 - j. In Section B, validate the existence and location of Jerome Schumann's residence at 530 Elm Creek Road located directly in the path of option B-23 and not included in the B section matrix.
 - k. In Section B, investigate why and how 3 houses disappeared off of the New Braunfels Outer Loop Recommended Corridor (West of IH 35) map displayed online after the January 31, 2008 Open House meeting.
 - l. In Section B, investigate why the Viable Options list in the B section with a total of 22 route options was allowed to expand to a total of 27 route options on the Short Options list despite assurances on the New Braunfels Outer Loop web site and verbally by the consultants that the routes would be "refined, narrowed down, eliminated, etc."
 - m. Reexamine and verify the conclusion of the recommended route in regards to the West Side Modification matrix, now that an error in the data regarding a Residence/Sensitive Noise Receiver has been discovered which changes the matrix.
 - n. Investigate why and how the home at 3696 FM 306 was incorrectly placed in the C section map, despite two senior professional engineers obtaining GPS data to locate the home.
 - o. Use an independent environmental consultant to verify the accuracy of the environmental data collected by SWCA for the New Braunfels Outer Loop study.

7	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>3. Identify things that are regulated by law, such as environmental, wetlands, species, historic elements, cemeteries, parks, and schools as non-negotiable with special protection.</p> <p>a. Identify which constraints are covered by statutes, regulations, or law and identify those regulations</p> <p>b. Identify things that are regulated by law, such as environmental, wetlands, species, historic, cemeteries, schools, as non-negotiables with special protection.</p>
8	<p><i>Need and Purpose</i></p> <p>1. Have a community-wide discussion on detailed needs to be addressed and to supplement general needs previously identified.</p>
9	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>1. Thoroughly review existing roadways and use of them.</p>
10	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>10. Contact in person all stakeholders in the universe of options early on, even if it involves grouping persons by area and involves many meetings. This should be done early and provide information for ways they can be helpful in the study. Listen to their concerns.</p>
11	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>9. Be sure the details are correct.</p> <p>a. Be sure all maps are as accurate as possible showing Federally Required Constraints, cemeteries, property lines, the aquifer and contributing zones, power lines, homes known, platted properties, etc. All this should be accessible knowledge if given priority as part of the study early in the process. This may mean "feet on the ground" and time but would eliminate much frustration generated when put off until the end of a study...in fact even after the study has been submitted to platting authorities.</p> <p>b. That the cemetery questioned by Mr. Schulze be located, verified and correctly placed on the map</p>
12	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>7. Develop a mechanism that reflects how public input is being used in the study.</p> <p>a. Accept opinions and information of the public as part of the public input process.</p> <p>b. Show the changes based on community input [on the maps].</p>

13	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>11. Give special consideration to historical farms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Texas Dept. of Agriculture Family Land Heritage program should be used as criteria for avoidance, in order to protect historic farms. b. Use criteria established in Farmland Protection Policy Act to evaluate impact to farmlands (Farmland Conversion Impact Rating). Use FPPA criteria to avoid important farmlands before route is chosen. c. Historical land should have the same exempt status as 50 year or older homes
14	<p><i>Facility Type</i></p> <p>3. Clearly explain the different facility types and the impacts each would have on different aspects of community needs and affected property owners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Give a better presentation on the facility types to the public. People need to be aware of the various facilities and how each one will affect their property and lives. b. Show how the facility type/size impact other community needs. c. Provide examples of how small you can make the right of way and still accommodate transportation needs and avoid the constraints. d. Hike and bike should be a separate facility, not a paved symbol on asphalt. e. Create overlays to show varieties of traffic exchanges at major roads on the maps, to scale so property owners and neighboring entities can accurately understand the impact.
15	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>13. A booklet (like one from Tx DOT's Right-of-way division) that is put together by the Environmental Affairs Division detailing NEPA items that the public should be aware of including but not limited to the Consulting Party status, Farmland Protection Policy Act, Antiquities Act (Sec. 106, 4F, pertaining State Laws, etc.), Endangered Species Act and any other Acts cover by NEPA. The Acts do not have to be listed in totality but a reference on the Internet or area library could be given as well as the contact information for the state or area office that could provide further information to the public.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The booklet could also include a diagram illustrating a Project Development Process that is a cross between the one given out on June 15, 2009 and the one on page 129 of the Final Report.
16	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>16. Be sure all data for maps and reports uses the same internet source, such as GIS with overlays from that source: property lines, streams, aquifer recharge and contributing zones, houses, etc so info is up to date and from a consistent resource. Task Force members as well as engineers and others can then reference updates as needed or added by the system. If a different source for data is used in addition, that should be noted.</p>

17	<p><i>Need and Purpose</i></p> <p>2. Provide more information to the public on the consequences of building the loop—tax issues, property evaluations, environmental impacts, impacts to downtown, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide more information to the public on the consequences of building the loop—tax issues, property evaluations, environmental impacts, etc. b. Identify the economic impact to downtown New Braunfels in a more specific needs and purpose statement that the city and county need to address. c. Review needs/water supply and contamination.
18	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>12. Minimize impact on small farm properties, by using existing property lines.</p>
19	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>10. Identify all homes that would be affected.</p>
20	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>11. Find ways to acknowledge correspondence from stakeholders throughout the process.</p>
21	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>15. Improve the operations of the Technical Work Group and the Community Work Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The sheet like the Screening Process and Sequence of Events one handed out on Feb. 15, 2010, should have been given out and gone over at the first few Technical and Community Workgroup meetings with specific emphasis given to what exactly would happen at each of the Technical/Community Workgroup meetings. b. Someone from the Environmental Affairs Div. should attend each of the Technical and Community Work Group meetings and do an overview of what NEPA entails for those in the public that are on these work groups. c. All Technical/ Community Workgroup Members should be receiving their materials in advance via e-mail or mail just like the Task Force has. Their materials should include an “Index of Materials” as well copies of the maps that would be presented at the next Public Meeting/ Open House. Members should also be able to see the responses received via Comment Cards, transcripts from the Court Reporter, e-mails or calls to the hotline as well as any minutes from the MAPO meetings and not just be given the data in numbers, percentages, etc. d. All Technical/ Community Work Group meetings should also be advertised for the public to attend, stating that no public comments will be taken but that their comments would be welcomed via e-mail or by phone to the hotline.
22	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>16. The Task Force members should be given an opportunity to see and sign off on the final report and the presentation to be made to each decision making body reviewing the Final Loop Study Report.²</p>

² Please note that Task Force members will have an opportunity to see and give feedback on the report of the Task Force activities, recommendations and findings before it is finalized.

23	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>6. Have data and maps posted in public places for viewing.</p>
24	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>2. Constraints should be tailored to community issues and not come from a generic list from TxDOT.</p> <p>a. List the Edwards Aquifer as a separate constraint.</p>
25	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>6. Develop the study in a way that identifies an area where there are no subdivisions so that a roadway can be built.</p>
26	<p><i>Facility Type</i></p> <p>1. The local community should control the facility type.</p>
27	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>14. Timelines for all meetings/ open houses should be given at the first few rounds of meetings on a sheet like the Screening Process and Sequence of Events one handed out on Feb. 15, 2010. This would give the public an idea of when these events would occur and their sequence and not be as vague as the pyramid (referred to as the Phase one Study Approach – Fig. 3 on page 11 of the Final Report) one that was presented at the meetings/ open houses and printed on the mail outs. On the back of that sheet there could be explanation/definitions for items like “Universe of Options” and Viable Options as well as a listing of the Screening Criteria that will be used.</p>
28	<p><i>Facility Type</i></p> <p>5. Reduce facility size to reduce impacts to all categories.</p> <p>a. Decrease the width of the recommended route to 400 feet in order to accommodate a county road but not an interstate highway.</p>
29	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>2. Do environmental studies early on.</p> <p>a. When TXDOT asks engineers to develop a transportation plan over environmentally sensitive areas such as here in our area, even in the earliest phases, much better environmental impact studies should be required (using contractors NOT related to the engineers or TXDOT) before proceeding with the rest of the design/study.</p>
30	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>15. Sections A-F need to be ranked as to their importance and prioritized for development. At this point, those property owners need to be visited and allowed time to give feedback on what needs to happen to get their support.</p>
31	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>9. Our committee should encourage the decision makers (elected officials, platting authorities, City & County staff, etc.) to make community involvement mandatory before any additional changes or decisions are considered for this Outer Loop development.</p>

32	<p><i>Screening Process</i></p> <p>4. The Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and subdivisions should be included as criteria.</p>
33	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>3. The public meetings should offer more opportunities for dialogue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Have a better dialogue, not lectures. b. Provide multiple maps at public meetings.
34	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>9. Note the total farmland acreage being affected as well as the parcels that are being divided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Note not just the parcels that are bisected, but also the total farmland acreage being affected.
35	<p><i>Facility Type</i></p> <p>2. Customize right of way and facility design per area based on environmental conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Platting authorities should maintain the focus on sensitive areas, i.e., limited access over the aquifer/recharge/contributing zones.
36	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>12. When a stakeholder individual, family, HOA, etc. is visited by TXDOT engineer reps. and given opportunities to voice concerns or to work out possible alternatives to be considered, a follow up visit or at least a phone call to the stakeholder/s should be made if none or few of their concerns are met before these persons are confronted by the changes at a public MAPO meeting.</p>
37	<p><i>Need and Purpose</i></p> <p>4. Address need and purpose issues openly at the Preliminary Design Conference and at the following Press Conference, including all items listed in the Need and Purpose section above, especially Items #2 and #3.</p>
38	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>3. Have more education and information regarding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. NEPA and Section 106 synopsis b. 1906 antiquities law and Texas antiquities laws to date c. Noise abatement d. Biological studies e. Hydrology studies
39	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>14. When the next phase begins, all officials involved in the Outer Loop should use each section as working points with appointed representatives from that section. Smaller groups will allow for fewer disruptions, more confidence and trust in leaders, and positive ownership on the part of the people affected by the loop.</p>

40	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>8. Preserve resources like the Edwards Aquifer.</p>
41	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>8. Constraints that should be evaluated beyond what the study considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Disclose loss of acreage and buildings at proposed intersections. b. Add requirements to preserve quality of life, heritage and community values. c. Identify the boundary lines of properties affected by the Outer Loop that contain an unaffected national registry eligible building on that property.
42	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>18. Recommend that current roadways be utilized as much as possible to avoid the New Braunfels Outer Loop from becoming a toll way.</p>
43	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>20. Better educate small property owners on the process and impact on their property.</p>
44	<p><i>Screening Process</i></p> <p>3. Screening criteria should not include “potential” factors that cannot be quantified.</p>
45	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>7. Keep elected officials informed and visible at the public meetings.</p>
46	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>20. Make sure that as the highway is being designed that flood control and drainage is a top priority.</p>
47	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>8. Use alternate/additional methods like Internet polls and mail-in surveys for gathering data on constraints from the community.</p>
48	<p><i>Screening Process</i></p> <p>2. Make every effort to be consistent in explanations about reasons for changing the route in any of the sections in order that recorded statements made over time do not conflict, causing confusion or skepticism. (For example, c.f. Loop Study Report, 2008, West Side Modification 3.8.2, and minutes from Feb. 15, 2010 Task Force mtg.)</p>
49	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>2. Be sure to avoid community-wide events when scheduling public or committee meetings.</p>
50	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>7. In those cases where the ranking of criteria is the same or very close, use the individual ranking for each criterion rather than considering only the aggregate number, especially when considering splitting properties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Look at the ranking from the various groups individually instead of the average.

51	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>4. Before the study is complete, all conflicts need to be addressed (stakeholders, environmental issues, historical, etc.)</p>
52	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>19. Recommend that all data, maps and announcements by TxDOT and its consultants be made public within a specific period of time (i.e.: 5 business days) of being created or discovered.</p>
53	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>5. Provide more specific (better defined) funding sources for completion of the study, later loop studies and construction.</p>
54	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>12. Recommend that we not add general recommendations away from what has been gone over.</p>
55	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>17. Sections A-F need to be ranked as to their importance and prioritized for development. At this point, those property owners need to be visited and allowed time to give feedback on what needs to happen to get their support.</p>
56	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>5. Written information and someone to answer questions about right of way acquisition should be available at the public meetings. A designated table for the right of way information and several staff to answer questions is more appropriate later in the process than for this study.</p>
57	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>13. Someone from our group needs to get an answer from city officials that makes it clear who asked for this study in the first place. If no one did and an entity or group asked for it, we need to make sure our recommendation states this and is part of the screening process from this point forward.</p>
58	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>5. Indicate the noise impacts outside the designated right of way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Disclose noise levels outside the 800-foot right of way. b. Identify a 300-foot buffer for noise.
59	<p><i>Constraints</i></p> <p>4. Explain the procedure for the compilation of ranking and weighing.</p>
60	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>19. Use eminent domain as a last resort. Try to negotiate fair settlement with property owners before starting legal proceedings.</p>

61	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>18. Recommend that all data, maps and announcements by TxDOT and its consultants be made public within a specific period of time (i.e.: 5 business days) of being created or discovered.</p>
62	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>6. Have data and maps posted in public places for viewing.</p>
63	<p><i>Miscellaneous</i></p> <p>11. Find ways to acknowledge correspondence from stakeholders throughout the process.</p>
64	<p><i>Public Involvement</i></p> <p>17. Validate that all MAPO meetings open to the public met the requirements of the Texas Open Meetings Act.</p>
65	<p><i>Facility Type</i></p> <p>4. Landscaping is a must.</p>