

Session 1 – 6:30 PM

Q: How are you tying this project to what is being done on US 281?

A: This project is independent of the US 281 effort and will receive a separate environmental clearance. Ultimately, the Federal Highway Administration is responsible for providing the environmental clearance.

Q: How does the Loop 1604 Super Street concept compare to the US 281 Super Street concept in terms of cost per mile?

A: The cost for this project is comparable to the work we are doing on the US 281 Super Street. It costs a little more overall but it is also for a longer length of road. We just put out the bid on US 281 and hope to beat the \$6 million cost estimate because currently firms are competing for this type of work.

Q: Can you please talk about what they are doing at Braun Road?

A: Braun Road is going to construction in June under the Texas Department of Transportation. The project will include restriping to add lanes. One lane will be added southbound through restriping. They will also be lengthening storage bays. This will allow three through lanes with one of those lanes dropping off at the dual left turns. Northbound they will also be adding a lane and lengthening the queue to improve traffic operations.

Q: Why haven't we opened up the west side of Loop 1604 at Braun Road so that you can go straight?

A: That is part of the Super Street phase and requires a bit more than restriping. It may require shaving the island to allow this movement.

Q: Have you coordinated with the City of San Antonio Capital Improvement Management Services? Guilbeau and Boring Crossing are city streets. This plan provides no way to turn into Boring Crossing which could result in significant cut through traffic on April Bend.

A: Yes, we have coordinated with the City of San Antonio and have a representative from the city at the meeting tonight. The Alamo Regional Mobility Authority will also be evaluating potential impacts of the proposed plan as part of this environmental study.

Q: Has anyone looked at overpasses for this area?

A: Yes, that is being studied through the Loop 1604 Environmental Impact Statement. We are looking at multiple options through that study to address long term needs.

Q: Why are we wasting money on this when what we need are overpasses?

A: Overpasses would cost around \$260 million. We currently do not have those funds available nor do we have the environmental clearance to move forward for a project

of that size and scope. Instead of waiting for congestion to get worse, we want to take advantage of the money that is available and do something to provide some interim relief while we advance the more expansive project.

Q: Will these improvements impact the Loop 1604 study?

A: No, not at all. These improvements will be incorporated into that study.

Q: So what you are saying is that the study to get a highway will be done by 2012 and then we will get a highway?

A: The study will be complete by 2012 and then we will have a plan and environmental clearance. This will allow us to begin the process of allocating the funds to construct the project.

Q: What about all of the traffic that is moving onto SH 151?

A: We will be connecting SH 151 to Alamo Ranch via an underpass as part of a separate project. The Texas Department of Transportation also has plans to provide a fully directional interchange at SH 151 as part of the continued improvements to Loop 410. This project would cost approximately \$1.5 billion. The Honorable Jose Menendez added that due to the scarcity of funds, the Texas Department of Transportation will need to start prioritizing projects according to the needs of the population. He said growth in the area is not going to stop any time soon and that this area would need to be a priority for the Texas Department of Transportation. He further said that San Antonio was lucky to have the \$7.7 million available to spend on these interim improvements. He said that his colleagues on the Texas Legislature would be ecstatic to have that kind of money for their districts.

Q: About 10-12 years ago we voted to fix Loop 1604 all the way around. What happened to those funds?

A: The Metropolitan Planning Organization does different levels of planning. We began to develop a long-range plan for improvements to Loop 1604. The challenge we have faced is that the gas tax which funds highway improvements has been fixed since 1990. Even though there are more vehicles on the road, they are getting better mileage so the revenues to maintain and build roads are actually going down. At the same time, inflation has increased to cost of construction. While we had plans, we were not able to build them due to lack of money for construction. The Honorable Paul Elizondo added that Bexar County has taken a new approach and that is to fund short term projects that can be incorporated into future plans to provide some interim relief while additional funds become available. He said something has to be done or the congestion will only get worse. He said the County is very interested in doing projects that will not become obsolete and that are practical solutions. He said this was not conceived as a Band-Aid approach but rather as an opportunity to make the roadway safer and alleviate some of the congestion experienced by the community.

Q: You mentioned the gas tax. How much of that actually goes to roads?

A: Approximately 20 cents of the gas tax goes to the states and 18.4 cents goes to the federal government. Texas currently gets back about 50% of the gas tax collected to work on highways. Approximately, 5 cents are diverted to education and some of it goes to fund the Department of Public Safety.

Q: Nobody answered her question. Where did the funds that were voted on for Loop 1604 go?

A: The answer is that we began the planning but the funding never materialized. There was never a public vote on funding. That is not how the process works. Most likely, it was a public meeting or public hearing about improvements to Loop 1604 but funding was never allocated for the project.

Q: We were told there were going to be overpasses. What happened to that?

A: Again, that was in the planning stages. We did not have the actual funds to make it happen.

Q: The overpasses at SH 151 need to be given priority. Will you be giving them a higher priority than everything else?

A: The Texas Department of Transportation and the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority are doing a separate Categorical Exclusion and pursuing environmental clearance. We are breaking out projects and going after pieces of funding because dollars are limited. We will continue to be very aggressive in pursuing funding but the projects will also need to be done much more piecemeal.

Q: Have you consulted with the City of San Antonio because they might be able to chip in funds?

A: The city intersections you referred to earlier are within Loop 1604 right of way so we have the ability to do the work on them within our project. We currently do not need City of San Antonio funds for this project. The City has plenty to do with regards to maintenance. The Honorable Jose Menendez said that San Antonio has long been short changed by the Texas Transportation Commission. He said he hoped that would change with the new structure of the commission. He also commended the County for stepping up to help with funding for this project. He ended by reiterating that this would not be a perfect solution but it would provide some much needed relief sooner than the long-range plan for Loop 1604.

Session 2 – 8:00 PM

Q: What is happening at New Guilbeau?

A: We will be restricting turning movements through the addition of a concrete median. We will also be adding a u-turn to allow access to Loop 1604.

Questions and Answers from the May 25, 2010 Open House / Public Meeting on the
Loop 1604 Super Street Project

Q: Have you been over here on Saturdays? How are we supposed to do that? I come to Guilbeau because there is a signal light and I feel like I can merge more safely onto Loop 1604.

A: We will be removing 2 phases from the 6 phase traffic signal. This will allow more traffic to travel through the light.

Q: What about buses? How will they make those movements?

A: The signal will remain there. It will not be removed. [OK, that works for me. Just do not remove the signal light.]

Q: For SH 151 you were saying there will be an underpass?

A: Yes, but that will come later as part of a separate project. For now, those movements will be accomplished through traffic signals.

Q: What you're proposing is to eliminate left turns and put traffic onto congested frontage roads.

A: Yes.

Q: What about all the communities that are out there?

A: They will still have access. There will be a separate public meeting for the underpass project later this summer.

Q: Are there any existing Super Streets in Texas?

A: None in Texas. There are 50 in North Carolina.

Q: Is this going to address the potholes?

A: No, only in areas that get new pavement.

Q: What type of engineering simulations have been done?

A: VISIM

Q: In comparison, is our area of Loop 1604 worse than Loop 1604 between IH 10 and US 281?

A: Yes, because that section already has mainlanes and frontage roads.

Q: So long term you are looking at taking mainlanes all the way to US 90?

A: We are currently looking at a variety of alternatives through the Loop 1604 Environmental Impact Statement including the No Build, adding general purpose lanes to the inside, adding managed lanes to the inside, and adding managed lanes to the outside on elevated structures. The recommended alternative has not yet been determined but should be identified by 2012.

Q: So the reason you did not extend the project was due to funding?

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A: Yes. Funding is a major problem right now. The funding provided by the gas tax is not sufficient to meet the demands on our highway system.