



Loop 1604 Environmental Impact Statement  
Community Advisory Group  
March 25, 2010

Corrected Meeting Summary

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Valero Corporate Headquarters

Building F – Room FB 118

One Valero Way, San Antonio, Texas 78249

Attendance:

**Members:** Robert Arias, *Town of Hollywood Park*; William Atkins, *Southwest ISD*; Richard Alles, *Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas*; Mel Borel, *San Antonio Toll Party*; James V. Cannizzo, *Fort Sam Houston/Camp Bullis*; David Hagerman, *Martin Marietta Materials, Inc.*; Barbara Hall, *San Antonio Conservation Society*; Terri Hall, *Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom*; Michael Hogan, *SAAA - HomeSpring Realty Partners*; Shanna Kilgore, *Valero*; J. Douglas Lipscomb, *The University of Texas at San Antonio*; A. David Marne, *City of Shavano Park*; Wade McGinnis, *Real Estate Council of San Antonio*; Dick McNary, *North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce*; Cassandra Miller, *Randolph Metrocom Chamber of Commerce*; Debra Morgan, *Alamo Colleges*; Miguel Sanchez, *North San Antonio Hills HOA*; Chuck Saxer, *Northside Neighborhoods for Organized Development*; Elena Serna, *Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance*; Chesley Swann, IV, *San Antonio Builders Association*; Mike Villyard, *District 9 Neighborhood Alliance*; Marty Wender, *Westover Hills and the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce*; William Skip Merten, *Rogers Ranch HOA*; and Dominic Zickgraf, *Six Flags Fiesta Texas*.

**Members of the Public:** Patricia Gessley, *Rogers Ranch HOA*; Jimmy Robertson, *JACOBS*.

**Alamo Regional Mobility Authority:** Terry Brechtel, Lisa Adelman, Pat Irwin, and Michelle Martinez.

**Michael Baker, Jr., Inc.:** Tim Smith, Matt Barkley, Lorraine Richards, Ken Mobley, Eric Greenman, and Brett Schock.

**RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.:** Linda Vela and Rudy Rivera.

**Rodriguez Transportation Group:** Brock Miller and Mark Rodriguez.



### Meeting Objectives:

- Review the progression of the screening process since the last advisory group meeting
- Review plans for the second round of public scoping meetings
- Request assistance with outreach and advertising of the upcoming public scoping meetings
- Solicit feedback on draft concept alternatives and the screening process

### Handouts:

- Community Advisory Group Agenda
- Corrected Meeting Summary for Community Advisory Group Meeting 2
- Map showing new limits
- DRAFT Public Scoping Meeting Station Guide
- DRAFT Alternatives Handout
- DRAFT Technical Presentation

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Lorraine Richards, facilitator with Michael Baker, Jr., Inc., opened the meeting and introduced two new members to the Community Advisory Group – William Atkins representing Southwest ISD and Miguel Sanchez representing North San Antonio Hills Homeowners Association. After introductions, she invited Terry Brechtel, Executive Director with the Alamo Regional Mobility Authority, to address the group. Ms. Brechtel thanked everyone for attending and informed the group that their feedback was critical, especially at this stage in the process. She said the study team had a good presentation that should invoke discussion. Ms. Richards then asked others in attendance to introduce themselves to the group.

### **Approval of the Meeting Summary**

Ms. Richards said the study team had received one comment on the meeting summary for the second advisory committee meeting. The change was a clarification on page 8 and that the meeting minutes would stand approved as corrected. The corrected summary is included in the meeting handouts.

### **Technical Presentation – Continuation of Alternative Screening Process**

Ken Mobley, facilitator with Michael Baker, Jr., Inc., introduced the technical presentation and facilitated discussions during the technical presentation. Matt Barkley, Deputy Project Manager with Michael Baker, Jr., Inc., delivered the technical presentation that focused on the development of draft alternatives and draft screening criteria to address the existing and future congestion and safety issues along the Loop 1604 corridor. A copy of the presentation is included in the meeting handouts. The first part of the presentation was similar to the one given at the last meeting about the initial qualitative screening, with several changes made based on feedback received from the group. The second part of the presentation included a review of the quantitative screening and was the primary focus of the meeting.



The following table includes comments discussed by the group that pertain to the technical presentation and the responses provided.

Comment	Response
<p>Michael Hogan, representing the San Antonio Apartment Association, said that he thought there was quite a bit of discussion regarding the reservation of a corridor for light rail and not so much <b>heavy rail</b> as an alternative. He asked if the presentation was presenting the results of last meeting or the results of the screening.</p>	<p>The discussion was to present the results of the screening.</p>
<p>Richard Alles, representing the Aquifer Guardians in Urban Areas, said the way he understood the presentation upgrading other roadways and heavy rail drops out. He asked if that meant that no combination of these alternatives would be considered. The selection matrix is weighted heavily towards mobility. He noted that the study team added another mobility category and said that mobility in the Loop 1604 corridor might be at odds with the protection of the aquifer interests. Mr. Alles said that when you talk about transit-oriented development in the Loop 1604 corridor you might be talking about heavy development at specific intersections, which could also be at odds with the protection of the aquifer interests.</p>	<p>Based on the screening, these alternatives would not be considered as a primary mode. There may be a potential for other projects outside of Loop 1604 through the Metropolitan Planning Organization. Since this is a transportation project, mobility/ transportation criteria were very important and that is why they are included. Potential impacts to the Edwards Aquifer will be considered throughout the project development process.</p>
<p>Terri Hall, representing Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom, said that on the US 281 project, the study team was talking about congestion pricing and tolling when they talk about the transportation system and demand management alternative. Ms. Hall expressed a concern that some similar language was used for US 281 but that the Loop 1604 project was not calling out the tolling aspect. Ms. Hall also had a concern regarding the alternative to upgrade other facilities. She said that major upgrades were being done to roads such as Blanco and Wurzbach Parkway and several other arterial roads have the opportunity to be expanded to help alleviate traffic on Loop 1604. She wanted to know if those upgrades had been considered.</p>	<p>For the Loop 1604 project, transportation system management included telecommuting, ridesharing, vanpooling, etc. Congestion pricing and tolling are included under the Multi-modal Upgrade (add lanes to Loop 1604) Alternative. The study team used a travel demand model to forecast 2035 capacity needs along the Loop 1604 corridor. Programmed improvements to roads such as Blanco and Wurzbach Parkway are factored into the model and reflected in the No Build condition.</p>



Comment	Response
<p>Ms. Hall asked if there were any alternatives that added free lanes without them being managed lanes.</p>	<p>General purpose lanes are a subset option of the Multi-Modal Upgrade alternative.</p>
<p>Dick McNary, representing the North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, asked where light rail could be added so as not to create a safety hazard.</p>	<p>Light rail can operate within mixed traffic. The system could be at grade or elevated. Systems that operate in mixed traffic are usually in urban centers with lower speeds and are generally accompanied by campaigns to educate drivers how to interact with the new rail system.</p>
<p>Mel Borel, representing the San Antonio Toll Party, asked if a subset of transit included additional lanes.</p>	<p>The transit option would only include dedicated/separated lanes for transit. Under this alternative, there would be no new vehicle lanes.</p>
<p>Ms. Hall asked if the study team looked at other commuter rail in addition to DART in Dallas.</p>	<p>Census data provided the percentage of people who ride the transit system in Dallas-Arlington-Ft. Worth metropolitan area. This included both DART and the commuter rail (Trinity Rail Express).</p>
<p>David Marne, representing the City of Shavano Park, asked if the different ridership in different locations could be attributed to the density of population. In New York City, the ridership is greater because you can walk to the station. In San Antonio, the density is still not there.</p>	<p>Population density does affect ridership. The 15% ridership represents a high end optimistic scenario for planning purposes. The 3% ridership in San Antonio would likely increase if more transit system infrastructure was available.</p>
<p>Ms. Hall said it makes a big difference whether or not the lanes are tolled because if people do not have free access to them, fewer people may use the facility and it may not meet all of the demand.</p>	<p>Details that are more specific will be added in future steps.</p>
<p>Mr. McNary asked what the green meant in the 2035 transit system in the Anticipated Demand and Capacity slide.</p>	<p>Green indicates that transit as a stand-alone alternative met some of the demand but not all of it.</p>
<p>Mr. Alles asked if the study team evaluated how upgrading existing facilities met future demand. He also expressed concern that additional improvements to other roads beyond what is currently planned were not modeled for comparison.</p>	<p>Upgrading other existing facilities was screened out in the initial screening because it is not included in the 2035 Mobility Plan, would require separate environmental studies, and would have a very high potential for significant environmental impacts, specifically the relocation of residences and businesses. Since it was screened out in the first step, it was not evaluated for how well it met future demand. Improvements to other existing</p>



Comment	Response
	facilities that are currently planned are included in the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization model and reflected in these traffic numbers.
Mr. Hogan said he did not think that taking parallel roads and adding lanes would make a significant difference on Loop 1604.	Once you are a certain distance from Loop 1604, the improvements to parallel roads are serving non-Loop 1604 trips.
Mr. Alles asked if gas prices had been considered in the demand projections.	Gas prices are not reflected in the traffic model.
Mr. Borel said he thought the gas prices could change the demand.	The demand is projected by the traffic model. Gas prices are not reflected in that model.
Debra Morgan, representing the Alamo Colleges, asked if four lanes met the demand based on what is currently being built on Loop 1604.	The model used to project future traffic accounts for area growth. Along the Loop 1604 corridor, some areas may benefit from more than two lanes, but on average two lanes in each direction would accommodate projected future traffic.
Mr. McNary asked if the study team had met with the school districts because they are very good about making population projections.	The study team will be meeting with the school districts as part of the Indirect and Cumulative Impacts Analysis and will further evaluate the demographics through continued coordination with the Metropolitan Planning Organization.
Mr. Hogan asked if the study team felt the model was aggressive enough and asked where the 80,000 VPD came from. He stated a concern with the density that was assumed in the model. He said he wanted to know if the density was aggressive as compared with other models. He asked if 80,000 was a moderate number. Mr. Hogan said the study team should learn from what happened on Loop 410. He asked if the model has been updated recently and urged the study team to consider the fact that the inner loop has already been expanded three times.	The vehicles per day shown are for traffic in one direction. This projection comes from the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization model for the highest traffic section in the corridor based on current projections for the no build. The Metropolitan Planning Organization is tasked with looking at land use and densities through 2035 for the metropolitan area and involves each community in the process. All transportation studies in the region are required to utilize Metropolitan Planning Organization projections. Use of the traffic model is an iterative process where information from the model is confirmed and refinements are included as the study team receives more information. It was suggested that a representative from the Metropolitan Planning Organization attend the next Community Advisory Group meeting to present and discuss their planning efforts and traffic-forecasting model.



Comment	Response
Mr. McNary asked if the study would consider cost and what is affordable.	Cost is considered in the study.
Mr. Atkins asked if the Metropolitan Planning Organization model has a margin of error. He asked if this information could be provided.	The Metropolitan Planning Organization’s model is a predictive tool based on a number of assumptions on future traffic patterns and population growth and densities. As such, future traffic projections have a level of uncertainty, but this model is the best tool available to assess traffic conditions 25 years in the future. This model must be used for the regional or corridor wide analysis; however, the study team will also be developing a sub area model working closely with the Metropolitan Planning Organization in order to conduct additional segment analysis for specific issues, such as weaving movements from traffic entering and exiting the facility, as part of the more detailed design.
Mr. Arias asked if the model could be revised and wanted to understand if the study team will have some certainty that the final projections and analysis will provide the best solution relative to what can potentially happen in 25 years.	The Metropolitan Planning Organization just updated their traffic model in late 2009. Federal planning regulations require the use of this model for the Environmental Impact Statement, as well as other regional planning projects. Refinements are made as explained previously, and the study team will be looking at individual sections in more detail to address localized traffic-related issues.
Mr. McNary asked if it was part of the Community Advisory Group’s scope to go into the final design.	The group will continue to be involved in the review of information through the completion of the Environmental Impact Statement.
Ms. Hall asked if adding two lanes defines the multi modal upgrade alternative.	Yes, the multi modal upgrade includes adding lanes.
Mr. Alles said that he gets a different score for upgrading existing facilities because it should have received a positive score for protecting endangered species, which it would since you would improve roadways away from the recharge zone. He said the aquifer recharge zone does not extend very far south of Loop 1604.	Upgrading other existing facilities was eliminated because such actions are not included in the <i>2035 Mobility Plan</i> , they would require separate environmental studies, and they would have a very high potential for substantial environmental impacts, specifically the relocation of residences and businesses. The study team did not assume that the roadways improved would be off of the aquifer recharge zone since it is such a large area. Once you are a certain distance from Loop 1604, the improvements to parallel roads



Comment	Response
	are serving non-Loop 1604 trips. Therefore, the roadways that would need to be upgraded would most likely be over the aquifer recharge zone. In further discussions with Mr. Alles' after the meeting, he mentioned specifically upgrading Wurzbach Parkway and Huebner Road. These actions would have substantial environmental impacts, including relocations and impacts to the recharge zone of the Edwards Aquifer.

Following the presentation, note cards were distributed and group members and Mr. Mobley asked them to write what they liked, what they did not like, and what was missing from the presentation. The group was given time to record their responses. Mr. Mobley collected the cards and read a few to the group. The following table documents the written responses received from group members as part of this exercise.

### Results of Technical Presentation Written Exercise

LIKE	DISLIKE	WHAT'S MISSING?
Open to answering our questions, did your best to explain the nuances/inadequacies	Language to label various alternatives is confusing doesn't seem to describe what it is clearly enough	Gaping hole is cost to access the upgrades (tolling, gas price are huge factors to consider the alternative's ability to relieve/solve congestion)
Screening Criteria generally clear and well thought out	Capacity and demand models unclear	Data on the models. What criteria did MPO use
Realistic alternative of multi modal is the only possible solution for San Antonio	Inability to justify VPD [Vehicles Per Day] numbers from MPO	Any possible funding possibilities
The presentation outlines the process well, and the graphics work fine in delivering the message.	In presenting this to the public, more clarification on terms is required. Need to improve consistency on terminology on alternatives.	How does the model or trips per day deal with heavy and light traffic? A concern for my organization is moving our trucks effectively through traffic.
I don't get the impression that the answer is already decided.	3 years seems like someone is getting paid by the hour! Why will this process take 3 years?	Specific #'s what will 2035 look like?
	Input from other agencies not at table being added without discussion from Advisory Group.	The definition of No Build is not do nothing, but not do nothing includes all other MPO projects that are planned. Not clear at beginning.



LIKE	DISLIKE	WHAT'S MISSING?
	Provide less surveys	Other than that it was a good evening.
Graphs - get right to the point	Presentation a bit dry	The general public will need very simple info - they cannot process the high level technical info - must be "dumbed down"
Planning ahead as far as light rail, Bus Rapid Transit. We need to plan for that now - not as an alternative -	Under estimating 2035 80,000 VPD	“?”
Anticipated capacity and demand graph was easy to read and understand - just need to be more clear in explaining the slides preceding it (especially #24). Next step slide was helpful - I wondered when the environment would come into play.	Confused about how slides 20 and 21 are related - part of same option? Separate? Could've been more clear about what "multi-modal upgrade" entails	Need clarification about MPO projections and how aggressive they are (or aren't)
I appreciated the alternative screening process that quickly eliminated alternatives that are not viable (e.g., parallel road or heavy rail).	Not understand the "base line" assumptions on future capacity (although that was eventually addressed when the MPO model was explained)	1) Timing...certain solutions will add capacity quicker (e.g. tolling) 2) That new/better water quality sedimentation/filtration structures built w/ new capacity may "help" water quality.
1) Alternative Screening Chart, 2) Criteria involved, 3) Logic involved in process	1) Lack of specificity in projection data, 2) MPO should have been present	“?”
		Slide 16, explain why some alternatives don't have ratings
Explanation of options and conclusions, slides 23-25		
The results from the screening process seem to have taken the correct criteria and established the most reasonable and logical solution. I also agree with the ability to have a secondary.	Some of the criteria used in the screening was not initially explained or brought to our attention, but was explained eventually.	The graphs help show/explain and more maybe needed to depict #'s
Alternative screening and evaluation criteria	Presentation needs more references to where the information was obtained	



LIKE	DISLIKE	WHAT'S MISSING?
Scoring seemed a bit clearer. Am I the only one who thinks light rail is a good solution.	Washington DC and New York City have a couple of the oldest and best systems in the country. It seems like San Antonio will get further and further behind if we continue to project a solution based on more lanes of gasoline powered vehicles as opposed to light rail	4 more lanes of traffic presumes automobile use. Can we afford the pollution this will create?
Discussion/clarification of presenters for a better understanding and to foster more input. Slides may need some additional wording/clarifications.	Did not like the lighting for vision and also the sometimes interrupting voices causing one to look for what was being said.	Further clarifications on slides regarding question brought forth because the general public may not have [as much] information as the select.
Neutral		Traffic projections based on growth. Comparison of utilization of facilities based on various cost factor - i.e. traffic versus fuel cost; traffic versus toll cost; economic impact of National Debt.
Facilitation was effective	Scoring of "upgrade other facilities" (slide 16) is incorrect. Correct score is pass (70%) Evaluation criteria seemingly overweighted toward congestion relief and safety.	location map should show aquifer recharge zone
Screening process to arrive at probable solutions	Possible design restrictions relative to MPO model population projections and the possibility of revising/upgrading these projections	Concerned that not building enough capacity. Missing environmental impacts such as noise and light increases at night.
Good presentation and process	Use a range or margin of error when predicting future, otherwise group gets caught up in ensuring the one number is right.	Consider peak time issue and possible solutions. Start of school and end of school.

### Review Approach to Upcoming Public Scoping Meetings

Ms. Richards noted the order of a few items on the agenda had changed. She explained that they would complete agenda items 4 and 6 (Review Approach to Upcoming Public



Scoping Meetings and Wrap-Up and Next Steps) and then allow the group members to spend some time reviewing the draft concept alternatives in the back of the room at their own pace for item 5 after the formal part of the meeting is adjourned. She then reviewed the approach to the upcoming public scoping meetings and public meeting handout materials given to the group in their meeting handout package. A modified version of the technical presentation would be presented at the station called “Seeking the Solution”. The alternatives handout explains the screening process, each of the draft concept alternatives, and further details about managed lanes to help explain and clarify what could be included or considered as part of a managed lane. The following table captures the brief discussion that followed.

Comment	Response
<p>Ms. Hall said she felt it needed to be made abundantly clear that managed lanes involves tolling. She said there needs to be truth in taxation. Point #3 says additional lanes will meet demand but this cannot be stated since the study team has not modeled how much toll lanes will carry. Most toll studies show 6-8% of traffic will use the tolled lanes. The study team should not say that additional capacity can meet demand when the issue of toll lanes has not been thoroughly analyzed. She also asked if she could get the percentage of users who will drive on the managed lanes.</p>	<p>Further evaluation of the differences specific to tolling will be evaluated and documented in the Environmental Impact Statement. The managed lane concepts will be explained at the scoping meeting and will note that collecting a user fee or toll is an element of this concept.</p>
<p>Dominic Zickgraf, representing Six Flags Fiesta Texas, asked if the information was being shown to the public.</p>	<p>The public will be reviewing the draft concepts. It is understood that the group’s concern is that the public needs to be clearly told that we do not know at this stage how various types of managed lanes affect the ability to meet demand. This type of detail will be addressed in the next steps.</p>
<p>Mr. Lipscomb said he saw that managed lanes had options for inside and outside but that the same was not provided for general purpose lanes. He wanted to know why this was.</p>	<p>Having the lanes down the center is the most logical fashion for general purpose lanes because you want to keep your existing ramps and weave patterns. Managed lanes are handled differently and would probably require changes to ramps and weave patterns.</p>
<p>Wade McGinnis, representing the Real Estate Council of San Antonio, asked how the advisory group member comments would be weighed against the public comments.</p>	<p>The comment process is not a voting process but rather a balanced review of all the comments received. The primary difference between the advisory group members and the general public is that the study team is meeting with the group more frequently and the discussion includes more detailed information than with the public.</p>



Following this discussion, Ms. Richards then asked if the advisory group members had received a notice of the upcoming public scoping meetings and everyone raised their hands. She asked how many of them had posted it on their websites or through other methods. Many raised their hands and others noted that they intended to. Mr. Atkins said he needed information to post.

**Wrap Up and Next Steps**

Ms. Richards said the study team had not yet scheduled the next Community Advisory Group meeting but expects it to be held on a fourth Thursday of the month. She also reminded the group that the study team is available to present to their respective organizations. Ms Richards thanked the group for their time and encouraged them to call in between meetings if they needed anything. Mr. Mobley then invited them to visit the draft concept alternative drawings and maps at the back of the room.

**Review Draft Concept Alternatives**

This portion of the meeting was held in an open house format where participants were able to discuss the renderings and plots of the draft concept alternatives with study team members on an individual basis. Prior to members of the group breaking up to visit the draft concept alternative maps, the following comments were raised.

Comment	Response
<p>Mayor Marne asked if any decisions had been made regarding exits on Loop 1604, specifically if they would be adding or removing any of the on and off ramps. He said that in Europe if you miss an exit on the autobahn it takes 30 minutes to get back because they are spaced out. He asked if the study team had considered this.</p>	<p>The study team will be looking at that and in particular the managed lane concepts.</p>
<p>Mr. Hogan asked if the environmental impact statement would really take three years to complete.</p>	<p>The project schedule is to complete the environmental impact statement process in three years. The group then discussed how long an environmental impact statement remains valid. The shelf life of the environmental impact statement varies depending on the project itself and is largely dependent upon future growth and associated changes in traffic and the environment. If substantial changes were to occur between the end of the Loop 1604 environmental process and project implementation, the Federal Highway Administration may require an update of the original Environmental Impact Statement.</p>



Additional comments marked on maps include the following:

- Aerial photography does not show the recently constructed Walgreens at the southwest corner of Loop 1604 and Heubner Road.
- Future site of elementary school at the northeast corner of Loop 1604 and Heubner Road.
- Concern about bicycle access from Alamo Ranch to Northwest Vista.
- Concern about access, I-10 from Loop 1604 with no entrance before Lockhill Selma after Military. Truck traffic from plant.

### **Adjourn**

This concluded the third meeting of the Loop 1604 Environmental Impact Statement Community Advisory Group.