

**SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE INTERVIEWS
WITH THE
US 281 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

AUGUST- SEPTEMBER 2010

**US 281 EIS COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE INTERVIEWS
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SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

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Background Information

Linda Ximenes and Tim Sueltenfuss, consultants for public involvement and public information, conducted interviews with the members of the US 281 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Community Advisory Committee (CAC) in August and September of 2010. Ms. Ximenes has served as the facilitator for the CAC since its first meeting. Twenty-two of the twenty-nine CAC members participated in the interview. Interviews were conducted in person or by phone.

The interviews were conducted to touch base with the CAC members and to get an idea of what they thought about the EIS process and the public involvement/public information activities that were part of it. The interviews were also done to get a better sense of the issues and concerns of the CAC members regarding the CAC and the EIS process.

This report and how to use it

This report is a summary of the responses to the ten questions posed to the CAC members during the interviews. There is no particular order or priority to the responses and they are deliberately intended not to be attributable to any particular person as much as possible.

In the Summary of Responses section, the question that was asked is followed by the responses loosely grouped together into a category of response. This was done only to be able to get a better understanding of the vast amount of information gathered by the interviews and was not intended to indicate any priority or significance of one grouping over the other.

After the questions and responses, follow some comments made that were not in response to questions asked, then the list of topics suggested for subsequent CAC meetings, and a list of common questions that arose from the interviews.

Summary of Responses

Question 1. What stands out for you about the EIS process in general?

Length and complexity of the process

- The process seems really long.
- Recognize how complex the process is.
- The difficulty of the solutions; there's no easy fix.
- The whole process is longer than it needs to be. It could be improved upon.
- Why is this process so long? It seems like we're going backwards.

- There is a lot more research and study that needs to go in the process because of the environmental and anti-toll groups. They have to go in there a second time to do their due diligence.
- My eyes have opened to the complexity of the process. The breadth and depth of the process, trying to get to a solution and looking at all types of environment.
- Have to be sure that the connection at the bridge at the county line integrates well with whatever is done on 281 south of the county line.

Good meetings: involvement, organization and function

- Meetings have been well organized and kept on track.
- Well thought out
- Getting traction now; got tangible feedback at the last meeting
- Everything is on the table, you know the obstacles.
- Doing a good job. Stay calm when others get mad.
- Meetings are well run and in good facilities.
- Taking input from people in different groups and they are being listened to.
- Seems to be going fine.
- Doing a good job.
- Included a lot of people from the community; represented the different perspectives of the people affected.
- It has been done in a rational, reasonable way.
- The process seems to be going okay.
- People have the opportunity to give input and get comfortable with the direction it's going.
- People at the open houses have been overwhelmingly opposed to toll roads.

Skeptical about the process and the outcome

- Seems like a farce. The decision is already made.
- Hoping for transparency, but it has not been a transparent process.
- Disappointed. Thought it would be more as described. It has become clear that the purpose was to put a rubber stamp on the preconceived notions. There is nothing to indicate the input has been used for something. Had a sour taste from CPS Energy. No access to the source of the traffic counts.
- There hasn't been much turnout because people don't think they have a voice.
- What the transportation community wants is to facilitate growth, so I haven't been coming to the meetings. I'm not sure when we'll get to a mass transit policy.
- Connectivity won't be built into this solution.
- It's damned expensive for the benefit. These studies have already been done. We need a benevolent dictator and mitigate the environmental impacts.
- The point of the EIS is lost in the tolling question.
- Seems that when we have discussions they are influenced toward a tolling solution.

- There's a temptation to eliminate alternatives too soon. They want an alternative that won't create a lawsuit.
- Option 2 without continuous frontage roads would be okay. It would reduce growth. We've tried to negotiate and they've thumbed their noses at us.
- The project area has to be long enough to be toll viable and it isn't now.
- Would like the opportunity to talk directly to people. Not completely convinced that the meetings make a difference.
- Would like for more people to express their opinions in meetings.

Want more facts and information

- Would like more factual information.
- The process is interesting, but too abstract.

CAC has been beneficial

- Good that created the CAC, especially since it wasn't required.
- Wide range of experiences and interests that are represented.
- Have to deal with the dynamics of differing opinions.

It's the environment, stupid!

- This is an EIS, but most of the conversation has been about something else; transportation, modalities, etc. There was information on the recharge zones, but it wasn't that prominent.

Question 2. What have been the highlights of the public involvement process for you to date?

People are interested

- People care about what will happen.
- People came in with a good grasp of what was going on.
- We're smart people and don't get credit for it.

Level of participation

- The participation
- Opportunity to share what I thought.
- Could say what was good and bad about the options.
- Could see where public did or didn't understand.
- Good turnout with quality people.
- Well-rounded group of people on the CAC. They probably have all types of wants and wishes.
- CAC is a good size; workable size group.
- Good representation on the CAC.

It's difficult to get it right with everyone

- Engineering firm came in with a lot of information, but were deficient in others. Should not claim "proprietary information" in order to avoid transparency.
- People are really trying. There are a lot of people who have a tainted view of things.
- There's not enough public input because people don't think it'll make a difference.
- At the last public meeting people were against some of the alternatives and others were not sure. No one was really for any of them.
- The unknown is still what will the real impact of the CAC be beyond the EIS? Where's the public voice in what you really want to do? How to arrive at the end plan.
- The public meetings are a good way to get input, but how do ideas from the meetings feed back into the process?
- This has been an opportunity for me to practice patience. We are responsible to do things in a sensible manner that considers the environment.
- We haven't gotten to the meaty issues. Funding is the major heartache and you can't ignore that.
- Why don't we do things in a piecemeal fashion given the economy?
- There were lots of meetings and more effort to reach out. My fear is that it's political window dressing.
- It was clear at the last public meeting that the second and third alternatives were the ones that would be tolled – all the main lanes.
- Tolling only two lanes isn't viable. We're okay with the added lanes being tolled, but TxDOT in the past manipulated the law making the free lanes into frontage roads. We have a divided highway now. What we need is a controlled access highway.

Chance to review all the options

- That more than one option was considered
- The second meeting- reviewing all the options- included many things.
- Got to go through all the plans [alternatives] in detail. Saw all the proposals.

Looking at all the issues

- Addressed the issues even if you couldn't solve them. Traffic issues couldn't get a quick fix.
- What is happening now?
- Doesn't know enough about how they came to their conclusions. Some data was apparent and others not.
- At the meeting in early November they said it [the information at the public meeting] would be the same as what was done with the CAC. We were told that only the two new lanes in the middle would be tolled. There wasn't supposed to be a discussion of the tolling at the public meeting.

The structure, process and content of the meetings

- Information was presented in a logical fashion.
- Meetings are structured well.
- Michael Sexton's presentation was excellent. The visual aids were good.
- Enjoyed the interactive part.
- No one was left out.
- The public input has been good.
- Nicely run and well advertised meetings that were fairly well attended with appropriate activities.
- Made a couple of suggestions but has never seen them anywhere and never got a response to them.
- Various points of view were expressed and there was an opportunity to consider them. Straightforward process.
- CAC meetings are well run meetings with notes afterwards. Resources are given.
- Public meetings are well run.

Question 3. What about the US 281 EIS keeps you up at night?

Nothing

- Three people responded this way.

Impacts on housing and personal concerns

- This [potential expansion of US 281] is killing our property values.
- We are the closest neighborhood to the highway. We need a noise barrier.
- The process needs to be done but depending on how the EIS comes out it could have a dramatic impact on the housing market here.
- Saw in one of the plans that they would close Sonterra. Didn't see how it would benefit anything.
- Traffic noise can be heard all along the corridor.
- Will the transit option still be available?

Difficulty of getting a good solution

- The length of time it is going to take to get to construction (Two people made the same comment.)
- If cost is the big driver, then last option would be prohibitive.
- Are we going to get somewhere? A final solution that will get done?
- Sustainability is hard since it probably won't be finished for 12-15 years after the Record of Decision.
- The unpredictable economy
- Difficulty of integrating a single process into a regional aspect dealing with all the factors.

- The cost of doing the Super Street and the cost to go back and get new data.
- We'll end up with a toll road despite all this. We'll end up with the same alternative at the other end. What about the ability to get employees back and forth – tolled vs. non-tolled?

Want more for the CAC

- Wanted the CAC to be more involved in the development of the recommendation and not just be a conduit for input.
- Things might get dropped since we're not involved.
- Under the impression that the content of the ground rules for the CAC came from the RMA, not the stakeholder process.

This will all be for naught

- There are some who are absolutely against expansion and they don't even live in the area. They don't have to deal with the traffic.
- Someone will file a suit when this is all over and delay it even more.
- It's a slice of the big picture and will include a recommendation. It will either be easy to swallow or not.
- We're taking the wrong approach. "Smart retraction;" build into the city.
- It's a waste of money. There is concern about the economic situation at the local, state and national levels. Why are we doing things so protracted?

Not sure about the process or the data

- Some of the data didn't make sense and the source wasn't clear.
- Didn't get the answers I wanted regarding the environmental concerns.
- Didn't understand why they did an EA before.
- Not sure where the tolling issue was in the process.
- Not understanding how the pieces fit together; not clear what the structure is. Who's doing what?
- The general lack of transparency
- Not fairly handling the tolling issue. Should look at all the alternatives whether they are tollable or not.
- Never talked about the weighting factors, so don't know what they are or exactly what the criteria are.

Too much or not enough concern for the environment

- The environmental issues got lost because of the traffic issues.
- Assume the source water pollution issues will get addressed because of the regulations.
- Eighteen lanes are too much, especially over the aquifer.
- People are more concerned about creatures than noise.
- Dynamics may be changing with EPA ozone standards changing. San Antonio will be in non-compliance and that may drive some things.

- We need to protect the water source, and do the due diligence. Use the scientific information to protect the aquifer, but it shouldn't dictate where people live or work. There may need to be some regulations on what people can do.
- I'm not at all concerned about the invertebrate creatures.
- There are tons of water, so we don't need to worry about asphalt over the aquifer.
- It should include the 1604 interchange with it. They all depend on each other because of how the MPO has related the funding and because of the cumulative impacts on the aquifer.
- The focus is on the convenience and molding the physical environment to meet human needs.
- There have been two big sewage leaks on the recharge zone. The less sewage the better. We're urbanizing an area that shouldn't be.
- The alternatives lack vision of what could be and don't recognize the value of the Hill Country.
- Don't want it to result in additional growth. Compare the cost of buying access rights to the cost of building a bigger road. There is the alternate of doing it to protect the environment vs. building road easements. We must take steps to protect the karst aquifer.

Question 4. What about the US 281 EIS excites/pleases you?

That this transportation project will get done

- Anxious to get it done
- Everything's there already; now need to get it done.
- Finally getting to a solution.
- Getting this done and the expansion of Bulverde and Blanco would make a possible good condition.
- Doesn't matter if the funding is public or private.
- That it's happening at all. It was not easily achieved.
- It's a means to an end; to get real traffic relief.
- It's just a process to get through.
- Glad it's finally getting done. It should've been done from the beginning.
- Excited about flyovers and not cooling my heels in traffic.
- Hope that it can't be stopped.

Being able to be involved- the public involvement

- Being involved.
- Truly getting the public involved.
- Seeing people get involved. It represents the political process that needs to happen.

- Being able to report back to the homeowner association from direct involvement and give first-hand details.
- The involvement
- Level of involvement
- Nothing truly excites me, but I have been pleased to see the process unfold- the dialogue and discussions.

Haven't seen enough to get excited about

- Don't want a huge concrete expansion, but things have to change.
- Hard to be pleased with something that goes so slow.
- Can't get excited about the process.
- Nothing's drawn yet that includes different modes: trains, pedestrians, bikes

That the process is proceeding in a good way

- Process has been good.
- At least you all are trying to do it right. The last one wasn't, so that's why it didn't go.
- Balancing out what they want.
- Openness of the public officials, no guardedness.
- They're taking everything and looking at it.

Excited first, but disappointed later

- Pleased that the CAC was formed, but disappointed later.

Too expensive to get excited

- No one wants to pay huge amounts of money in addition to what they already pay.

Question 5. What works well about the public involvement effort associated with the US 281 EIS?

Outreach, logistics, visual aids

- Signs on the roadway. (Two people made same comment.)
- Visuals make it real, concrete. You realize it could work.
- Exhibits were clear and understandable.
- Graphics were good with a mix of presentations and story boards
- Mailers
- – keep doing them
- Visual aids were readable and understandable. Some were "namby-pamby." The yellow dot on the solution was silly.
- Exemplary exhibits

Got questions answered

- Having someone there to answer questions.
- Having enough people there to answer questions without too much waiting.
- Everyone who had concerns had someone to talk to.
- Wealth of information
- They want to do the right thing. They're really doing their jobs.
- Setting up was good, but may have had too much information or it was too hard to follow.
- Got a plethora of comments and concerns with motives and concerns; a needed element of the process.
- Helped people understand what is being talked about.
- Jimmy [Robertson] has done an outstanding job. He's been so objective and patient with all the positions people have taken.
- Public meetings were well attended.

Had opportunity to discuss things

- Breaking up into groups.
- Small group process (Two people had this response.)
- Opportunity to say things
- Comment cards
- Getting the public input.
- The process was interesting. Something new.
- Rotating the groups around to the different alternatives.
- Working in small groups, hearing from them and the comments.
- Soliciting the feedback. What's going to happen to it is the big question.
- The large group presentations and then the small groups. Everyone would benefit from sharing the feedback and ideas of the small groups. The purpose of NEPA is for all to hear all about the feedback.
- People were engaged in the breakout groups.

Wide range of perspectives represented

- Variety of experience in the room helped to nail down the good and the bad [of the alternatives].
- Having all the stakeholders there
- Who's at the table; it's hard to know who's missing.
- Appreciated the fair and balanced approach.
- People are aware of what's going on, and the public is responding to it.

Number of meetings and the locations were good

- Number of individual meetings in different locations in the area.
- Having the right number of meetings
- Moving locations around the corridor.
- Locations were good for the information presented.

- Locations have been good.

The CAC's participation

- CAC members seem to be disseminating the information, no matter what side of the fence they're on.
- Using the CAC to get feedback on the process.

Question 5. What needs to be changed about the public involvement effort associated with the US 281 EIS?

Nothing comes to mind

- Nothing comes to mind that needs to be changed. (Four others had the same response.)
- Hasn't heard any complaints.

Missing voices or the wrong voices

- You don't hear from the people who aren't directly affected.
- People who don't live in the area shouldn't be on the CAC.
- Low turnout considering the number of people impacted
- What about people on Social Security who work up here? They don't come because it's too hard to get here.
- All you can do is make people aware and hope they'll come.
- Disappointing that people don't come from around the city. Has only the north side been targeted for outreach?

Process and content changes

- No Build isn't really a proposal; it should be alternative "0."
- Be independent of the RMA; not sure how to do that. Been told of other models that are more stakeholder driven.
- Spend more time on the ground rules and what the process would look like before jumping into it.
- Would like to see everyone work on problems [in small groups] report and then scramble the groups and do it again.
- How to get the feedback to everyone.
- When 90 percent of the feedback is already saying no tolls, that alternative should not be moving forward for further evaluation.
- No one has addressed the lack of connectivity in the [development] codes or otherwise.

Clarify the information

- Some of the stations at the first meeting weren't clear.
- Need a way to help people who are just coming into the process to understand what's going on.

- Some of the alternatives that were not going to be considered should have just been removed.
- Need to clarify who is doing what.
- More details on how they got to the overall proposals [alternatives].
- At the first scoping meeting most people didn't know what an EIS means. It needs to be said in a way for people to understand.

Get more information out to more people

- Need a way to make information more accessible to people.
- Leave no stone unturned for outreach to the public.
- Everyone in the affected area should be communicated to. Some neighbors didn't get the newsletter.
- Would like to know what's going on.

CAC concerns

- CAC needs to meet more often. The meetings have helped me to be more open.

Remember the environment

- Maybe a gentle reminder that this is about impacts to the environment.
- Have you looked at the carbon footprint for these alternatives?
- The sensitivity of the area is not recognized. That must be included in planning for the construction phase, so crews know what to look for and don't dig where there are sewer lines. Best Management Practices for containing pollution must be used. Monitoring during and after construction must be included. Look at green infrastructure for ideas that could be included. There are lots of things, for example, trees.
- There are endangered species issues.

Question 6a. With whom do you communicate about the EIS?

The people with whom I interact

- Whoever wants to talk about it.
- Clients

Members of the organization or group to which I belong

- HOA board and members (Nine people had this same response.)
- The organization I represent on the CAC (Five people had this response.)
- Other, local HOAs
- Monthly updates to the residents of the neighborhood
- Colleagues from the same organization (Three people had this response.)
- Family and friends

- Neighbors (Three people had this response.)
- At MPO meetings
- See Terri Hall as a resource.
- Friends of Canyon Lake

No one

- No one officially
- Virtually no one

Not much to report yet

- Nothing much to report yet.

Environmental groups

- My superiors and some of the environmental groups- GIAA mostly.
- The environmental community mostly
- Friends interested in environmental issues
- Environmental groups

Political groups

- Politicians in Austin
- Tommy Adkisson
- Comal County League of Women Voters

Question 6b. How might we help you to communicate more easily with them?

The newsletter will help

- I'll pass along the newsletter. (Five responded this way.)
- Got the newsletter and passed it on to others. (Two responded with this.)
- The newsletter would be a big help because I can forward it on easily to people. (Three responded this way.)

Difficulties with the communication vehicles so far

- Too much information is on the flyers.
- The website was hard to navigate the last time I used it a while back.

Need more information more frequently

- Supply information in-between CAC meetings.
- Follow-ups would be good.
- Send me information sooner, more often.

- Give us some facts: in the state of Texas, in the last five years, they have built x expressways, x have been tolled. Show something that demonstrates it doesn't have to be tolled.
- Give suggestions for feedback in a document for members. Say what the labels [on the alternatives] are and what their take is on it - impacts, etc.
- Have a definition of terms with an FAQ. For example, Transportation Demand Management. People need to know what things mean. When certain things are moving forward as part of an alternative or future option that leave the option of tolling vague and lump it with HOV lanes, for instance, it leaves the door open to a bait and switch later. These need to be studied separately, not lumped together. The public may support HOV lanes, but not toll lanes and this term allows them to be lumped together.

Email is good

- Email works well. (Four people had this response.)
- Do email blasts monthly with information.

Postal Service is best

- We don't have an email list, so snail mail is best.
- US mail is best since we don't have emails and other information on renters.

Nothing else is needed

- What you've done so far is good.
- Not sure
- The website has been very helpful.
- Meeting minutes are good.

Question 7a. What does success look like? For the CAC

High level of involvement in the process

- Continued involvement with the oversight of the draft
- "Sneak preview" of the draft to give feedback.
- Communicate so we can pass it on to others.

Know that what is said is being heard

- See that our input was incorporated.
- Convince people that what they're saying is being listened to.
- If people are heard.
- People represented on the CAC understand what's going on and feel like they have a voice in guiding that process.
- Everyone feels they've been heard.

Have a high level of information

- Be in the know about what's going on.
- Get info on other roadway projects so we know what the big picture is.
- Communication is facilitated through the representatives.
- That the constituency is represented at the table.
- Create a matrix to show how much/what the impacts are. The indirect effects are the most important.

Good level of involvement and a good range of perspectives

- Stakeholders are involved; the appropriate ones are at the table.
- Everyone has a chance to voice their opinion.
- Getting shy people involved.
- Good discussions
- If the group works together and considers the alternatives. Working together is critical. This group is better than the 1604 group.
- Come together for a common cause and agreement to what needs to be done to enhance and expand US 281.
- There has to be give and take. No one will get everything they want.
- Can be a good sounding board and a guide for getting feedback from the public.
- Membership stays consistent and relationships are formed.
- Helpful to dialogue.

Having a viable solution that is supported by most

- Getting consensus on a final project plan; understanding and willingness to accept what it looks like and the environmental impacts.
- An executable solution
- Come up with a conclusion that is well-thought out by the majority.
- Having a viable solution that a majority of the people on the CAC will support. (Two people had this response.)
- The charter is that we give input to the EIS, it can be accepted or not. If everything the CAC recommends is accepted, then it's success. If it's all discarded, there might be questions.

Greater awareness of the challenge

- People realize the consequences of the decision.
- People are seeing the different parts of it [the EIS].

Question 7b. What does success look like? For the EIS

Things that are important to me are addressed

- Chose the alternative I wanted.

- If they care about noise and the footprint of the highway.

The schedule is followed

- Finish early.
- Stay on schedule.
- Know when the end is and the process.
- Keep it moving forward.

An executable solution

- Get through the EIS and construction.
- Have a final solution that can be executed; that is actionable.
- A decision; so people can live with it.
- When they come up with a solution; is it acceptable and implementable?
- Coming up with a viable option that will provide real traffic relief on 281.
- Finalization of a plan to move forward.
- Everyone would understand what it is and why it's the right alternative.
- A Record of Decision and a built road. Soon. Three years would be good.
- An unbiased resolution and an objective solution weighing all the factors

Addresses all the issues

- Get as close to what the public expects as possible.
- Address all the issues even if they're not applicable.
- Making sure the considerations are brought to the public.
- This study has come to the same conclusions as the last one, to show that we wasted a lot of time and money, and the science was good the first time.
- Community input is looked at and used. If not, what's the point?
- The options look good.
- Traffic needs are met.
- Adequately define the long-term consequences. The purpose of this thing is to justify growth, but where is the water? What about the pollution generated? Is it sustainable?
- If it promotes the development of an alternative transportation system. Something that maximizes an alternative other than cars.
- What will it do for retired folks if the solution isn't adequate?
- The adoption of the alternative that is preferred and desired by the general public and not necessarily the alternative desired or preferred by those who profess to know better than the general public.

Protects the environment

- Have a good range of alternatives with mitigation measures.
- Environmental factors should be considered more prominently.
- It looks at the people impacts as well as the other environmental factors.
- It limits growth. Don't want to see continued "sucking."

A defensible solution

- Is this a process that fits the law?
- Have a public vote and they [the public] would win.
- The EIS is acceptable to everyone. It's bulletproof. It has overcome the previous hurdles.
- Everyone says it's on the "up and up."
- The preferred alternative is one that the community, including the general public, can support. A non-tolled, affordable, least invasive alternative in particular.

Question 8. What goals do you have for the CAC? What would you like to accomplish?

Get through it successfully

- Get it over.
- Successful conclusion to the process
- Follow the process that has been set up for us since it's a good process, and have a working solution at the end.

Maintain respect for the CAC members and the EIS team

- Feels confidence in the people who are doing the EIS.
- Team members are extremely respectful with people and let people speak their opinions.

A lot is getting done

- They are accomplishing a lot.
- The last meeting with the alternatives was a great accomplishment.
- CAC continues to serve as an advisory group through design and construction.

Have a plan that's doable and fair

- Incorporate the best of what's out there into a plan that's doable.
- Resolve the situation with a good solution that will be executable.
- Good alternatives; mitigation; the process is on track and on schedule; good input.
- Be a part of improving US 281 for the overall good of the city in a responsible way.
- Find ways around the Endangered Species concerns.
- Cut down on the traffic on 281. People don't come to grips with how bad it is unless they live here.
- Provide feedback to make the EIS successful.

- Help develop and garner support for a consensus alternative (with that community alternative becoming the preferred alternative which ultimately gets built.).
- The CAC would be able to influence the selection of the alternative desired by the public.
- Have a sense of “why we’re here.” Make this more explicit in October.

Be sure everyone is heard and gets information

- Make sure all get heard.
- Nurture the ones who have something to give even if they’re not directly affected.
- Make sure to communicate to the residents of my neighborhood.
- That the group I represent gets its concerns incorporated into the solution.
- CAC representatives are communicating with their people.
- Educate people about the long-term consequences.
- Make sure our group knows what’s going on.
- People consistently show up and speak up; and feel able to speak up.
- See that comments are being used. Identify ways to get comments to the right people after the meetings.

Not comfortable with the process

- Have a model that is not based on everything coming from the RMA.
- Hoped at the start that stakeholders would be able to bring ideas to the table, but that didn’t happen.

Question 9. What organizations and individuals should the RMA brief about the US 281 EIS?

The CAC members recommended that the RMA brief the 32 individuals and organizations listed below.

- Real Estate community/ Real Estate Council (Two people responded this way.)
- Schools
- Women’s Council of Realtors
- Bexar County
- Emergency fire and police
- Corridor newsletter
- Every HOA on the corridor (Twelve people responded this way.)
- North San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
- City of San Antonio (Two people responded this way.)
- Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance (Two people suggested this organization.)
- Sierra Club
- Alamo COG

- Regional Planning Organization- group facilitated by AACOG
- Council of business owners- don't seem to be represented
- Stone Oak Shopping Center and other impacted businesses (Two people suggested this organization.)
- John Clamp- District 10 City Council member- he has a good weekly newsletter
- Camp Bullis
- Edwards Aquifer Authority
- Greater San Antonio Builders Association
- District 9 Alliance
- Real Estate Council- once a preferred alternative has been selected
- Governor Perry
- New Braunfels Mayor and/or City Council
- Bulverde City Council and/or Mayor - a little later in the process
- John Hobson- Bulverde City Administrator
- Area residents, citizens and taxpayers who may be impacted by the 281 decision. (Two people suggested these groups be briefed on the US 281 EIS.)
- Comal County League of Women Voters - re: Hwy 46.
- Parent organizations of the members of the CAC - official word and thank you for participating.
- People who wanted the EIS to happen. People need to understand all the viable alternatives and how to cover the costs, and be a long-term solution.
- Authorities should have strong partnerships with activist groups.
- Find a way to reach the people who are "sitting in their cocoons." Give them something tangible to hook them into the process.
- Emergency responders need to be included. They will have special insights into their needs.

(Several of the CAC representatives indicated they would like for the Alamo RMA to make a presentation to their board and members of the organization. Those are currently being arranged for those who requested them.)

Question 10. If we can use the publications/emails your organization uses to communicate with your members/constituents to inform them of the events and activities for the US 281 EIS, please give us the contact information and deadlines.

All the members of the CAC whose organizations published some sort of news/information for their members were willing to put information in their publications regarding the US 281 EIS.

Other comments made by CAC members that were not a direct response to the questions asked

Related to the Super Street and other roadways, transportation issues

- The Super Street seems like a waste of money.
- It'll be good to see what the Super Street can do.
- Disappointed that Blanco and Bulverde were taken out because of Camp Bullis. Bulverde Road alone was not looked at.
- We should be working on transit. Build a strong feeder system and make it easier for bikers.
- We're planning for nonsense here. It's really about lack of rational planning. Having it all come on one roadway- Encino Park to Bulverde Rd. More arterials and better connections make more sense.
- VIA needs to be involved.
- How will the interchange fit with this project?
- Have transit plans built into the alternative. US 281 is an opportunity for rail transit now.
- Urge the RMA to get with VIA to plan together.

Need to have a broader view

- Doesn't think you'll ever be able to catch up in that corridor because it's so badly designed.
- Need a broader view than just the corridor.
- Should this project be looking at eight lanes to Johnson City? There's no way to put the brakes on. It needs to reflect what's best for the city.

CAC issues

- Would like a tentative schedule of the CAC meetings
- Thought the CAC would be an opportunity to have transparency and be integral to the process.

Trust issues

- The meeting in February with the MPO. Seemed like the decision was already made.
- Be careful to be open and listen to the public.
- What could we do to restore trust? Show the whole equation, not just the solution.
- If the public is opposed to toll roads, what gives TxDOT, the Alamo RMA and the MPO the right to overwhelm that?
- Need to explain what happened to the funding from the prior years. There is a general lack of trust so you need to put the cards on the table.

- The biggest problem is that the RMA is doing the EIS. The feds said it couldn't be TxDOT, but the RMA doing it makes it hard to get the public to see how it wouldn't be tolled.

Issues are still unresolved

- If people are not being heard, then [they] will go with the lower expressway and the lower access roads would be tolled. You need to say up front that it won't be tolled.
- People at meetings say they want the freeway that also caters to businesses. Some don't understand a 7-mile tollway [they're used to much longer tolled roads]; others just want to get through here fast.
- It's [the EIS] a tremendous underutilization of all the funds.
- They don't have a solution for Evans and Stone Oak.
- If you go to EIS process documents, you will see there are other solutions. Why didn't they do an EIS for I-10?
- Lots of people won't be able to afford the toll roads.
- You can't do just overpasses; there has to be access. Backage roads have worked in lots of places. Florida has backage roads everywhere. The developers can pay impact fees. It can be worked out with the city and the county.

Other political concerns

- Convince the RMA and Rick Perry that we don't need 18 lanes of traffic. Only doing it that way to be able to toll. Build what's needed.
- The overwhelming thought from the people I've talked to is that it's [the EIS] a farce. Governor Perry wants a toll road and there's not enough funding. They would rather spend money on other things besides roads.
- It's not open for a democratic vote.

Topics suggested for the CAC meetings

CAC members were asked to suggest possible topics for upcoming CAC meetings. Below are the topics they suggested.

- Status updates- what has been eliminated? What is on schedule? Can we have input into the first draft or are we just recipients like everyone else?
- Update on the process- what needs to be addressed and still needs to be done
- Using input from citizens on the alternatives.
- Updates on other roadways in the area.
- Tolling/non-tolling
- Impacts to the aquifer – Best Management Practices (BMP)
- Get an engineer to talk about what will need to be done.
- Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone Protection Plan – permanent Best Management Practices (BMP) will be a requirement because of the disturbance.
- Transit costs

- Factual information—the good, the bad and the ugly about the alternatives still being considered.
- Stay on current developments
- Cost estimates- need to talk about where the funding is coming from. People will “stiffen up” on foreign support.
- Who’s doing what- the people involved in the process.
- Economists more than biologists
- Briefings by people with significant impact
- Show simulation software at work instead of just telling us about the simulation.
- Rights of way acquisition information- mechanics of getting it done
- The true impacts of no frontage roads
- Traffic volumes for SH 130 around Austin compared to through Austin
- The long-term ramifications if the demand for overbuilding occurs
- How to incorporate transit alternatives into whatever is going to be done.
- How to build in demand reduction, minimize growth.
- The alternative of purchasing access rights, conservation easements. Purchase property owner’s road cuts so they won’t develop in that area. Bill Barker is a resource. This area is Karst Zone 1.
- Explicit information about the environmental impacts of an alternative. Show how the environmental issues are being addressed. Show how it’s an upfront concern.
- Opportunities to use green structures to mitigate noise. Tools to minimize impacts on nearby residents, etc.
- Tools to look at this project and make it better environmentally.

Common questions to answer

In reviewing the comments from the CAC, the following questions were identified as ones that came up several times and would be helpful to answer:

- What happened to prior year’s overpass funding?
- What is the structure of the EIS process?
- Who is in charge of decision making within the EIS process?
- Who has the power to decide on the selected alternative?
- Who is the power broker working behind the scenes who will determine the outcome of the EIS?
- How does the RMA relate to the MPO and other organizations?
- What is the timeline for the EIS?
- Does the EIS process comply with the law?
- Can existing lanes be tolled?