CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY ENDS WITH NO-BUILD OPTION

The article on page 12 called “Eminent Domain on November Ballot—Corridor Environmental Statement STILL Not Released” states, “The Final Environmental Impact Statement on TTC-35, which is expected to show that SH 130 will be the Corridor route through Williamson County, was due out in 2007, but it is STILL not out.”

After the *Herald* was already at the printer, TxDOT announced that it was choosing the “no-build option” or the “no action alternative,” meaning that TxDOT is recommending that TTC-35 NOT be built. This is what so many of us asked in our comments, never thinking it would actually happen--it hardly ever happens--but now it is the final result!

ECTSRPC BLOCKED TTC-35

The reason that TxDOT and the Federal Highway Administration finally had no way to continue with the TTC-35 EIS was the action of the Eastern Central Texas Sub-Regional Planning Commission (ECTSRPC) in Bell and Milam counties. Five small towns and their associated school districts formed their Sub-Regional Planning Commission, and by state law, TxDOT was compelled to “coordinate” with their Commission. This meant that TxDOT had to take into account what the ECTSRPC citizens wanted and cover all required issues in the EIS process. TxDOT had not done this, meaning that the EIS was not legal and could not be recognized as legal by the Federal Highway Administration.

The ECTSRPC announced: “Selecting that option [no build] was exactly what the Eastern Central Texas Sub-Regional Planning Commission (ECTSRPC) forced TxDOT into choosing. . . . The planning commission began a series of what is called coordination meetings in the fall of 2007, by utilizing a little known state statute that forced the behemoth agency to come to Holland, Texas. . . . TxDOT came to Holland on three different occasions where they were asked to explain why they were going to destroy five towns and their school districts with a 1,200 foot-wide, 146 acre per mile toll road.”

ECTSRPC OFFICIALS SPOKE TO COUPLAND CIVIC ORGANIZATION IN MARCH

Ralph Snyder, a founder of the ECTSRPC, ECTSRPC President Mae Smith (who is Holland mayor), and Dan Byfield, who helped form the ECTSRPC, all spoke to the March 2009 meeting of the Coupland Civic Organization.

Regarding TxDOT’s “no-build” decision, Snyder said, “Through coordination, we forced them to our table and then we used the federal NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) statute to box them in a legal corner out of which they could not escape. That's what forced TxDOT to recommend 'No Build' to the Federal Highway Administration because we had shown how TxDOT, as the agent of the federal government, had violated the federal statute in at least 29 ways.”