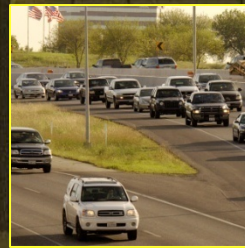




ALAMO RMA  
*Alamo Regional Mobility Authority*

# US 281 Environmental Impact Statement

## Process and Timeline

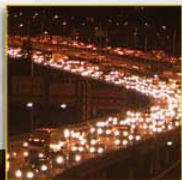


# What is an Environmental Impact Statement?

The National Environmental Policy Act requires an Environmental Impact Statement for actions which could “significantly impact the quality of the human environment.”

An Environmental Impact Statement is:

- a detailed analysis of potential transportation solutions;
- the full disclosure of potential impacts resulting from the alternatives;
- a commitment to comply with all environmental laws and regulations, including mitigation measures; and
- a public involvement, decision-making process

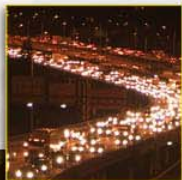


# What is required in an Environmental Impact Statement?

**Coordination Plan** – describes the roles of all agencies, establishes how public involvement will be handled as part of the decision-making process and establishes the need and purpose for transportation improvements

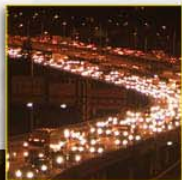
**NOTE:** Document is available online at [www.411on281.com/US281EIS](http://www.411on281.com/US281EIS)

**Need and Purpose** – establishes why the project should be undertaken and what criteria should be evaluated as part of the alternatives analysis



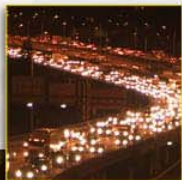
# Why an Environmental Impact Statement for US 281 and Loop 1604?

- Both projects located over some of the most environmentally sensitive areas in our region, including our sole source of drinking water
- Examines potential impacts of all reasonable alternatives to the environment, and to our community as a whole
- Requires plans be developed to address potential impacts so as not to harm our community
- Highest possible level of scrutiny
- High degree of public involvement



# Who is involved in an Environmental Impact Statement?

- Federal, State, Local and Tribal Agencies and Authorities
- Community as a whole
- Peer Technical Review Committee
  - Chaired by the Federal Highway Administration, includes executive representatives from federal, state and local agencies
- Alamo RMA has created two community advisory bodies
  - an enhanced process, not required by NEPA
    - US 281 – Comprised of approximately 30 individuals
    - Loop 1604 – Comprised of approximately 35 individuals
  - Represents a cross section of the community as a whole



# Closer Examination of an Environmental Impact Statement – US 281 Process

July 8, 2009

PUBLISH NOTICE OF INTENT (NOI) TO INITIATE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) PROCESS



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT - EIS SCOPING MEETING  
*NEED AND PURPOSE - AUGUST 2009*

Aug 27, 2009

BEGIN PREPARATION OF DRAFT EIS (DEIS)



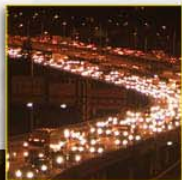
## Need and Purpose

The population in the project area is estimated to more than double by 2035

From 2003 - 2007 the crash rate on US 281 was substantially higher than the statewide average

*Growth*

*Safety*



## Need and Purpose

Over the last decade land development has increased local traffic resulting in a conflict between mobility and accessibility

Harmful On-Road emissions are expected to increase by 27% by 2014

Limited facilities for alternative modes of transportation



# Suggested Objectives



# Alternatives Evaluation Process

We Are Here in the Process

Screening Level

Number of Alternatives

Level of Analysis

Level 1:  
Fatal Flaw  
Analysis

Large Number  
of Preliminary  
Alternatives

Qualitative  
Analysis

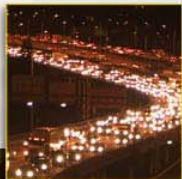
Level 2:  
Detailed  
Modal Analysis

Level 3:  
Detailed Multi-  
Modal Analysis

Small  
Number of  
Alternatives  
for Draft EIS

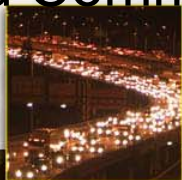
Quantitative  
Analysis

Continued Public and Agency Involvement



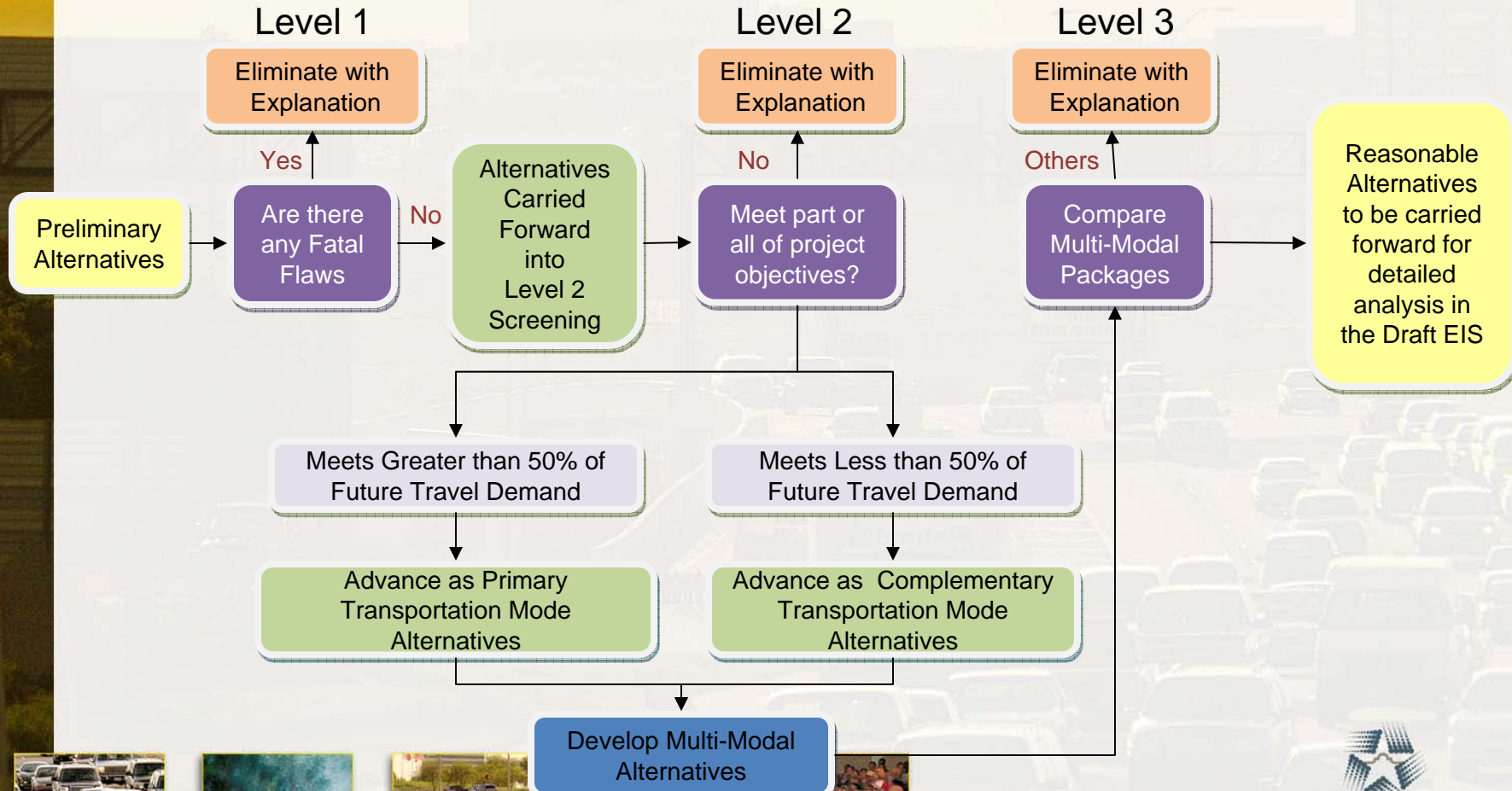
# Alternatives Screening

- Level 1: **Fatal Flaw Analysis** (Qualitative)
  - Evaluate Alternatives for Fatal Flaws:
    - Not compatible with regional plans
    - Unproven technology
    - Major adverse impacts
- Level 2: Detailed Modal Analysis (Quantitative)
- Level 3: Detailed Multi-Modal Analysis (Quantitative)
- All Draft EIS Highway Improvement Alternatives will be analyzed for both toll and non-toll effects
- Public Review and Comment on Reasonable Alternatives

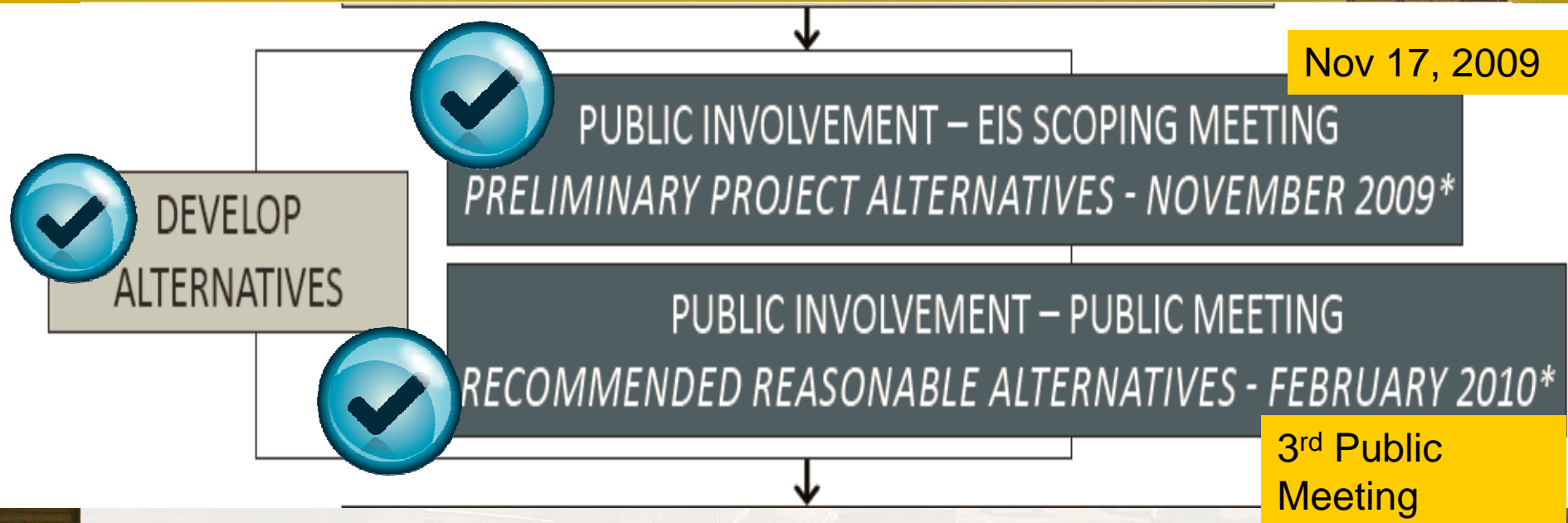


# Detailed Alternative Screening Process

Continuing Public and Agency Involvement



# Closer Examination of an Environmental Impact Statement



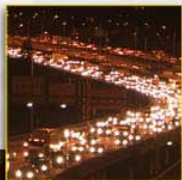
# Alternatives Recommended for Elimination

- Alternatives with **Fatal Flaws**:
  - Heavy Rail
  - Commuter Rail
  - Monorail
  - Automated Guideway Transit
  - Personal Rapid Transit
  - New Parallel Corridor

*Not compatible with regional plans*

*Unproven technology*

*Major adverse impacts*



# Alternatives Recommended to be carried forward for Level 2 Screening

- No Build
- Light Rail
- Streetcars
- Fixed Route Bus
- Express Bus
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Grade Separated Intersections
- Add Lanes to Existing US 281\*
- Expand Parallel Corridors
- Upgrade US 281\* to an Expressway
- HOV/ HOT Lanes
- Growth Management
- Bike/Pedestrian Facilities
- Transportation System Management
- Transportation Demand Management

\* North of Loop 1604



# Closer Examination of an Environmental Impact Statement

COMPLETE PREPARATION OF DEIS

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) REVIEW OF DEIS  
AND APPROVAL FOR CIRCULATION

PUBLISH NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY IN  
FEDERAL AND TEXAS REGISTERS

DISTRIBUTE DEIS TO LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCIES  
(AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES)



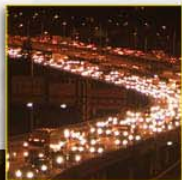
# Closer Examination of an Environmental Impact Statement



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT – PUBLIC HEARING  
*DEIS - APRIL 2011\**



RECEIVE, ANALYZE AND ADDRESS COMMENTS



# Closer Examination of an Environmental Impact Statement

DEVELOP PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE AND  
PREPARE FINAL EIS (FEIS)



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT – PUBLIC MEETING  
*IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE - AUGUST 2011\**



# Closer Examination of an Environmental Impact Statement

FHWA REVIEW OF FEIS

PUBLISH NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY IN  
FEDERAL AND TEXAS REGISTERS

DISTRIBUTE FEIS TO LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCIES  
(AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES)

FHWA ISSUES A RECORD OF DECISION (ROD)  
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVAL - FEBRUARY 2012\*





ALAMO RMA  
*Alamo Regional Mobility Authority*



[www.AlamoRMA.org](http://www.AlamoRMA.org)

