

**Coalition Opposing Vidor Loop 299**

**HELP STOP VIDOR LOOP 299!**

The Orange County Commissioners are proposing an expensive, destructive loop road around the western edge of the City of Vidor, called Vidor Loop 299. Local citizens and national, state, and local conservation organizations oppose Vidor Loop 299. The cities of Vidor, Orange, West Orange, Bridge City, and Pinehurst, representing roughly 53% of the residents of Orange County, have voted to oppose county funds being used for the road.

**Three things YOU Can Do to Help Stop Loop 299:**

1. **Deadline: NOW!** Contact County Judge Brint Carlton *and* yourcounty commissioner and tell them that you OPPOSE Vidor Loop 299. Urge them to *withdraw* the County’s request to TxDOT to approve FM 299 for TxDOT’s Pass-Through Toll Program.
2. **Deadline: November 21.** Contact the SE TX Regional Planning Commission and ask them to remove Vidor Loop 299 from the long-range plan.
3. **Deadline: December 7.** Contact the Texas Transportation Commission and urge them to *remove* Vidor Loop 299 from the list of TxDOT pass-through projects when they meet Dec. 14-15.

***Note: Contact information to make these contacts is on the back of this page.***

 ***(Google “Who Represents Me?” to learn who your commissioner is.)***

***Talking Points:***

* The loop road is *not needed*. Expansion of I-10, North FM 105 and Hwy 12 has helped redirect some of Vidor’s traffic. Scarce tax dollars would be better spent building an overpass over the railroad tracks in south Vidor and improving Main Street traffic flow.
* The Vidor Loop 299 proposal carries with it too many risks – financial, environmental, and economic.
* Orange County residents cannot afford the increase in taxes that will be needed to front the costs of engineering, environmental assessment, and construction. The outside companies from Dallas and Austin, who are being paid to promote the project, are making the claim that there will be enough economic growth to cover most of the cost. But they have provided no studies or calculations to back up this highly-dubious claim.
* Reimbursements by TxDOT will be based on the amount of vehicle traffic on the road. The traffic projection -- 11,800 vehicles/day when the road opens (date unknown) – fails to take into account the road improvements that have been done to improve Vidor’s traffic flow. This suggests that the project traffic level is likely exaggerated. If so, the costs to the county will go up.

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***Talking Points (continued):***

* By-passing Vidor will draw business away from Main Street, hurting the city.
* If other road projects are any indication, the preliminary cost of $53 million is likely to increase, leaving the county to pay for the cost overruns.
* The entire length of the road would be within the flood-prone area of the Neches River, requiring an enormous embankment, essentially a dam, that would disrupt normal drainage patterns and cause flooding problems.
* The road would have significant negative impacts on the wetlands and wildlife of the Big Thicket National Preserve, an International Biosphere Reserve and element of the National Park System. The Preserve is an economic driver, in 2015 attracting more than 125,000 visitors, who spent $7.9 million and supported 112 jobs, for a cumulative benefit to the local economy of $10.1 million.
* Two-and-a-half miles of the road would run roughly parallel to the Big Thicket National Preserve, coming as close as 340 feet from the boundary. The loop would destroy nationally-important cypress-tupelo swamps and other forests, and would destroy or fragment wetlands that absorb floods and hurricane storm surges. The noise, pollution, and impact on the surrounding wetlands would harm habitat inside and outside the Preserve that is valuable for fish, birds, deer, and other land animals.

Contact info for County Judge and County Commissioners (contact them **now**):

Hon. Brint Carlton, County Judge 409-882-7070 bcarlton@co.orange.tx.us
Hon. Commissioner Precinct 1 David Dubose 409-746-2593 davidd@passassured.com
Hon. Commissioner Precinct 2 Barry Burton   409-745-2223 bburton@co.orange.tx.us
Hon. Commissioner Precinct 3 John Banken   409-882-5308 jbanken@co.orange.tx.us
Hon. Commissioner Precinct 4 Jody Crump   409-769-6724 jcrump@co.orange.tx.us
 Mailing Address for all:  123 South Sixth St., Orange, Tx. 77630

Contact info for SE Tx Region Planning Commission (deadline Nov. 21):

Bob Dickinson, Director, Transportation and Environmental Resources

Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission

2210 Eastex Freeway

Beaumont, TX 77703

bdickinson@setrpc.org

Contact info for Texas Transportation Commission (deadline Dec. 7):

Texas Transportation Commission

c/o James Bass, Executive Director, TxDOT

125 East 11th St.

Austin, TX 78701-2483

***For more information, contact Coalition Opposing Vidor Loop 299***

***409-382-5102, texas@npca.org***