



August 24, 2020

Sent Via E-mail

Texas Sunset Advisory Commission
ATTN: Ms. Danielle Nasr, Project Manager
Robert E. Johnson Bldg., 6th Floor
1501 North Congress Avenue
Austin, TX 78701

Re: Request for Recommendation Item for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Sunset Review

Dear Chairs and Members of the Sunset Commission and Ms. Nasr,

BikeTexas was founded in 1991 with the mission of “advancing bicycle access, safety and education” in Texas. With a special focus on schoolchildren, BikeTexas conducts safety programs for Texas cyclists and pedestrians of all ages. BikeTexas advocates for sidewalk, on-street and greenspace infrastructure, and especially supports the highly successful Recreation Trail Fund operated by TPWD through Federal funding.

Thank you for the work of the Sunset Commission to insure that TPWD remains a highly effective organization in acquiring, operating and maintaining natural outdoor spaces and activities that restore the body and spirit of our growing Texas population. TPWD facilities are a priceless resource that give Texans and visitors a deep sense and appreciation of Texas natural beauty, flora and fauna, history, and culture.

You are surely aware that TPWD facilities are under tremendous strain due to heavy visitation of our rapidly increasing Texas population. BikeTexas has observed the value and success of local and intercity trail programs in other states. Such an intercity trail program already has a start in Texas through two efforts.

1. Texas Transportation Code (TCC) Section 201.9025 was passed and signed into law as a bipartisan effort during the 79th Texas Legislative Session in 2005. This section directs that the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), in consultation with TPWD and other state agencies, shall make recommendations for “Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails” that can also accommodate pedestrians, equestrians, and other non-motorized trail users.

2. The TxDOT report Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails Study, released in July, 2018, outlines a statewide example network of 8,318 miles of bicycle trails, mostly along existing road right-of-ways. A four-page print-friendly summary is provided in addition to the final study.

(<https://www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/modes-of-travel/bicycle/plan-design/tourism-study.html>)

BikeTexas respectfully urges the Sunset Commission to include a recommendation in the TPWD Sunset report calling for review by TPWD, TxDOT and other state agencies to identify one or more pilot or starter projects that can demonstrate the effectiveness of such roadside and/or separate trails.

Such trails can provide expanded outdoor recreation services closer to the homes of our growing population, and provide economic opportunities for communities along the trail routes. This effort can include partnerships between state, county, city and private entities to provide excellent services at an effective cost.

Thank you for your consideration of this important opportunity to better serve the people of Texas. BikeTexas agrees that these comments are public record.

Sincerely,

Robin Stallings
Executive Director
(512) 694-9158 (mobile)/robin@biketexas.org