

From: [Sunset Advisory Commission](#)
To: [Cecelia Hartley](#)
Subject: FW: Comments on TxDOT Sunset Commission Report
Date: Wednesday, November 30, 2016 3:54:44 PM
Importance: High

From: Heyden Walker
Sent: Wednesday, November 30, 2016 3:35 PM
To: Sunset Advisory Commission
Subject: Comments on TxDOT Sunset Commission Report

Dear Sunset Commission,

I am a second generation Texan and I am writing to thank you for your thorough review of TxDOT.

I work with community leaders and civic organizations in Austin to encourage TxDOT to think about the needs of the community while they make improvements to I-35. I have met directly with TxDOT staff, and their consultants, many times over many years. I have also served on several TxDOT working groups, including the I-35 Downtown Stakeholder Working Group, the I-35 Aesthetic Working Group, and the Texas Strategic Highway Safety Plan.

The Sunset report does a good job highlighting issues within the agency. I would encourage you to further consider:

1. TxDOT has made important changes and increased its credibility with the public in large part because of recommendations in previous Sunset reports. Please continue this critical oversight by continuing the Texas Department of Transportation and its statutorily created advisory committees until September 1, 2023 (6 years), rather than the recommended 2029 (12 years). The deep structural concerns outlined in this report and the lack of oversight on how taxpayer money is being spent, coupled with the billions in new money coming to TxDOT (doubling their budget over the next 10 years), warrant close scrutiny and review. Please set that review for no more than 6 years.
2. Growing up this agency was the Texas Highway Department, but no longer. The Texas Department of Transportation needs to give serious consideration to all modes of transportation that address the needs of all of the people of the great state of Texas. People in Texas walk, use wheelchairs, ride bikes, push strollers, ride buses, ride trains, etc. We know from clear evidence that we cannot pave our way out of congestion, TxDOT staff remind the public of that fact regularly. We need a state Department of Transportation that addresses, plans for, and funds all modes of transportation. Our state will be healthier and better able to move forward into the future if people have safe transportation choices.
3. While TxDOT's public engagement efforts have improved, they still have a long way to go to actually listen to the community. They hold more frequent meetings these days, but that does not mean they are listening. Providing any meaningful input is

time-consuming, costly, very difficult, and rarely results in change. Many public agencies have public engagement techniques that work well and could be used effectively by TxDOT.

4. TxDOT needs a Vision Zero Action Plan. Texas leads the nation in traffic fatalities, and for every fatality there are 5 times as many incapacitating (permanently life altering) injuries. Traffic is the number one killer of Texans 0 to 24 years old. These are not simply statistics, these people are our family, friends, and co-workers. Texas needs a complete Vision Zero Action Plan that addresses preventable crashes and saves lives. The last time we had a single day in Texas with no roadway fatality was November 7, 2000. That is unacceptable.

Thank you for your attention to these concerns,

Heyden Black Walker

Heyden Black Walker, Urban Planner

2016 Walk College Fellow

[Black + Vernoooy Architecture and Urban Design](#)

208 W. 4th Street, Ste. 3A, Austin, TX 78701