

Bicycle Use on the State Highway System

Texas Department of Transportation Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program

Presenter: Bonnie Sherman

Thursday, May 6, 2021 to Friday, May 21, 2021

VIRTUAL PUBLICHEARING SCRIPT

Slide 1: Hello! I'm Bonnie Sherman and I'm TxDOT's statewide bicycle and pedestrian program manager. I wanted to share a few of the exciting efforts to support bicycling across the state that are underway. If you'd like to learn more about TxDOT's statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, go to txdot.gov and type the word "bicycle" in the search box.

Slide 2: TxDOT has a long-standing committee of citizen who advise the department on policies that affect bicycling and walking including the design, construction, and maintenance of highways. This year, the committee was formally expanded to include pedestrian issues, so TxDOT will be specifically targeting recruitment efforts this year on representatives of pedestrian and accessibility needs. We accept applications from interested members of the bicycling and pedestrian community annually in May. Visit with your District Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator or check our website to learn more.

Slide 3: One exciting project TxDOT developed with its Bicycle Advisory Committee is the Texas Bicycle Tourism Trails Study. This study identified a potential network of long-distance bikeways to support tourism and economic development across the state. We envision this network as being collaboratively developed, incrementally over time, through local, state, federal, and nonprofit partnerships. A link to the study and maps is included on this slide. Some trail projects presented here today coincide with the bicycle tourism network.

Slide 4: Recently, TxDOT has been working with members of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee to generate recommendations on how to better address the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians when developing roadway projects, including data collection and developing TxDOT District bike plans. This group is also generating guiding principles based on best practices in bikeway design that are informing updates to TxDOT's design guidance as well as other policies and procedures to come.

Slide 5: Last month, TxDOT updated its bicycle accommodations guidance as part of a series of revisions to the state's roadway design manual. The new bikeway design guidance is intended to assist engineers in determining safe and comfortable bicycle accommodations that are appropriate to the land use context and roadway characteristics and accommodate the interested but concerned bicyclists. The guidance was developed based on national research, standards, and guidelines that are rapidly evolving. Projects that are still in the early stages of development must comply with the new guidance, so you will begin to see more separated bike facilities and shared use paths included in TxDOT roadway projects across the state in the near future, replacing the shared lane concepts of the past.

Slide 6: Lastly, my office administers the Statewide Transportation Alternatives Program. TxDOT's TA Program, as it's called, provides federal funding to build walking and bicycling infrastructure in small and

medium-sized communities located outside of major metro areas. Local entities are eligible to apply for these funds. We opened a competitive call for projects in early 2021 and received applications from every TxDOT District in the state. Projects are anticipated to be identified for funding later this fall. In the past, we have funded a number of bicycle and pedestrian projects from the DFW area. Thank you for taking the time to visit this hearing and learn about what's ahead for bicyclists and pedestrians in your community!