

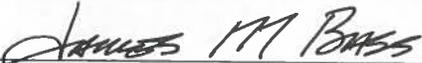
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF STATE HIGHWAY AND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

AASHTO
Transportation Vanguard Award Nomination Form
2018

INFORMATION ON NOMINEE:

Last Name: Williams	First Name: Charon	Date: August 9, 2018	
Email: charon.williams@txdot.gov		Position Title: Utility Portfolio Director	
Department: Utility Portfolio Section, Right of Way Division		Phone: 512-416-2135	
Street Address: 118 E. Riverside Dr.	City: Austin	State: TX	Zipcode: 78704
AASHTO Committee Membership (optional): Member of AASHTO's Subcommittee on Right of Way, Utilities and Outdoor Advertising Control – Utility Project Scoping and Coordination Technical Council			

NOMINATOR INFORMATION:

Last Name: Cannon	First Name: Gus	Date: August 9, 2018	
Email: gus.cannon@txdot.gov		Position Title: Division Director	
Department: Right of Way Division		Phone: 512-416-2852	
Street Address: 118 E. Riverside Dr.	City: Austin	State: TX	Zipcode: 78704
Endorsement of Member Department Secretary/Director: TO BE COMPLETED BY JAMES BASS			
			

INSTRUCTIONS:

Using a maximum of 2 additional single-sided pages, please provide reasoning as to why this individual should be selected as the Transportation Vanguard Award recipient. Please include as much specific information about the candidate as possible, including special projects, personal attributes, dedication, etc.

Send nominations by **Friday August 17, 2018**, via e-mail to pngethe@ashto.org. Nominations must be submitted as a single file in MS Word format using **TVA2018_Nomination_Nominee_Name.doc** as the file name.

Charon Williams embodies countless characteristics and skills required for selection as the Transportation Vanguard Award recipient. She has worked for the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) for 12 years, serving in roles throughout areas such as right of way and utilities; design; local government projects; and transportation planning and programming. Charon has participated in many of TxDOT's program improvement initiatives in diverse areas like partnering, agency modernization, program management, transportation research and software development – earning her the TxDOT Journey Towards Excellence award in transportation, a Quality Service award recognized by the Western Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (WASHTO). She currently serves as an active member of AASHTO's Subcommittee on Right of Way, Utilities and Outdoor Advertising Control – Utility Project Scoping and Coordination Technical Council.

Ms. Williams was appointed as TxDOT's Utility Portfolio Director – responsible for the development, oversight and administration of the state's Utility Accommodations Program policies and procedures. Since taking on this role, Charon has excelled and exhibited unparalleled capabilities as a leader in transportation. She has led the modernization and the implementation of robust, effective utility accommodation strategies to help deliver transportation projects. Through building relationships, resulting from stakeholder partnering initiatives, Ms. Williams has been instrumental in facilitating an increase in statewide acceptance of and compliance with the Texas Department of Transportation's Utility Accommodations Program. Charon is committed to turning the tides of the program, which once realized a backlog of more than \$640M in estimated outstanding payables. Under her leadership, many business process improvements were implemented and numerous tools and training have been introduced to the TxDOT Utilities Community. As a result, the utility accommodation backlog has decreased by 69 percent and *Ready to Let* project trends show a positive trajectory.

Charon has spearheaded key initiatives contributing to TxDOT's Utilities program positive progress. They include:

- **Development and statewide implementation of utility courses, ROW100 – Identifying and Managing Utility Conflicts and ROW101 – TxDOT Utility Coordination**
Both courses are offered to internal and external stakeholders to teach concepts that help to identify critical utility accommodation factors that contribute to inefficiencies in the project development and delivery processes as well as provide the foundational knowledge and understanding of the TxDOT utility coordination process. To-date, approximately 1,700 participants have attended the courses.
- **Implementation of the SHRP2 R15B Utility Conflict Management concepts and tools**
Practical application of the concepts taught in the corresponding course, specifically, early collaboration and the use of the Utility Conflict Matrix while exercising the Avoid – Minimize – Accommodate strategy, has helped TxDOT districts realize significant cost and time savings on transportation projects. District project staff collaborates with utility company representatives to determine the project's impact on existing utility facilities. Where practicable, portions of the roadway profile and alignment are adjusted during the design phase to achieve adequate clearance for utility lines in conflict, rather than having all utilities adjust based on a significantly completed design.
- **Development of the Utility Accommodations Toolkit**
The online toolkit was developed to assist stakeholders and customers navigate the complexities of utility accommodations on transportation projects. It provides comprehensive, organized access to federal and state laws as well as associated policies and procedures for

carrying out utility accommodations activities on transportation projects. There are links to documents such as the TxDOT Utility Manual, Buy America Guidelines, and frequently used forms.

- **Semi-annual TxDOT Utility Industry Workshops**

Workshops include participation of utility industry representatives, Federal Highway Administration personnel, TxDOT staff, local government officials and consultants. They provide an opportunity for networking and information sharing from the TxDOT and utility industry perspectives. During this meeting, high priority projects and TxDOT initiatives that impact utility owners are discussed.

- **Invitation to utility industry representatives to participate on special initiative taskforces**

Special taskforces allow utility industry representatives to serve as partners in the utility accommodations process. They embrace process improvements much quicker because they have a seat at the table and are a part of the decision-making.

- **Development of standard templates to formalize project expectations and communication to utility owners**

Developed templates include:

- Master Utility Agreement
- Notice of Proposed Construction (NOPC)
- Notice of Required Accommodation (NORA)

- **One-on-one, topic-specific workshops at the request of utility owner representatives**

Workshops provide one-on-one knowledge transfer of specific subject matter areas related to utility accommodations on transportation projects.

Ms. Williams is a champion committed to taking extraordinary steps in the field of transportation. As a result of all of the efforts achieved under her leadership, the Texas Department of Transportation has realized several months to a couple of years' time savings as well as cost savings of millions of dollars on transportation projects. In addition, contractor delay claims related to utility conflicts have decreased.

Charon has proven to be a trailblazer, exhibiting creativity and innovation among her peers and other state DOTs. She shares her successes and lessons learned in an effort to provide input on national and local best practices. Charon's strength in areas such as relationship building, strategic thinking, influencing, and execution are truly evident – resulting in far-reaching changes in the way utility owners are accommodated on transportation projects. She is indeed a game changer in transportation.