



Texas Department of Transportation

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January 24, 2011

Deirdre Delisi, Chairman
Texas Transportation Commission
125 E 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Chairman Delisi:

Please accept this letter as notice of my plan to retire from the position of Executive Director of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) effective August 31, 2011.

Until then, as the agency's chief executive officer, I intend to focus on this session of the Texas Legislature; congressional issues, in particular the next transportation reauthorization bill; the Commission's expectations regarding the Restructure Council report; my national AASHTO and WASHTO duties; and continue to manage and guide this great organization to ensure we meet our short and long-term goals and commitments. Most importantly, I also aim to guide our workforce through upcoming changes until you have selected a new executive director.

To that last point, my top priority at the department has been and always will be the wellbeing of my fellow employees. They've never once let this agency down and I want to make certain they have a reliable presence as the agency transitions in the coming months.

In my career at TxDOT I have participated in many important changes that have forever altered transportation and have resulted in Texas being regarded as the true leader in the transportation arena. We are by no means the same department that welcomed me in 33 years ago to start a rewarding career. I have had the honor of coming up through the ranks and working with the most dedicated and unselfish employees and co-workers, been provided opportunities to advance my career, and been chosen to lead the agency through dramatic and challenging times. I will leave this agency with many fond memories and a great deal of gratitude for my TxDOT family.

TxDOT will continue to evolve and I recognize the need to clear a path for the next person fortunate enough to occupy the position of executive director. I stand ready to assist as you bring on a new person to the best job in Texas government.

In the meanwhile I shall continue to execute my duties and am entirely at your service. So enough with the goodbyes for right now—let's go build something.

Sincerely,

Amadeo Saenz, Jr., P.E.
Executive Director

cc: Texas Transportation Commission
TxDOT Administration

THE TEXAS PLAN

REDUCE CONGESTION • ENHANCE SAFETY • EXPAND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY • IMPROVE AIR QUALITY

Statement by Texas Transportation Commission Chair Deirdre Delisi on Amadeo Saenz's August 31 Retirement

"Throughout the course of his career, Amadeo has earned a reputation as a leader and coalition builder, and earned the respect and trust of his peers across the country, our partners here in Texas, and most importantly, his employees.

"Amadeo has served his state with honor and integrity. TxDOT is a better agency today thanks to his leadership.

"From his beginnings in TxDOT's Pharr District 33 years ago to his service as executive director, Amadeo has overseen innovation of TxDOT project delivery methods, served as a national leader among state departments of transportation, and guided his employees through a period of great change and introspection. His leadership has also served the department well during times of great crisis, such as the collapse of the Queen Isabella Causeway in South Texas.

"There is a great deal of work to be done before Amadeo's retirement on August 31, and he has the full support of the Transportation Commission as he carries out his duties as TxDOT's executive director. Amadeo will continue to lead the department through this challenging legislative session, will assist the Commission in implementation of the Restructure Council's recommendations and will help his successor transition into this role.

"Providing strong leadership through periods of great change is always challenging, and Amadeo has consistently risen to meet each challenge. I look forward to working with Amadeo as the Commission prepares for the next chapter in the department's effort to modernize the Texas transportation system."

TxDOT chief executive Amadeo Saenz to resign



2:57 PM Wed, Jan 26, 2011 | [Permalink](#)

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Texas Department of Transportation executive director Amadeo Saenz resigned today, just weeks after a hand-picked panel of advisors urged his bosses to make leadership changes at the highest levels.

He will remain in his spot, however, until Aug. 31.

Saenz, who has been chief executive of the 12,000-employee agency since 2007, is the first hispanic to lead the department, which is famous for its tradition of hiring from within. Saenz joined the department 33 years ago in Pharr District.

"Throughout the course of his career, Amadeo has earned a reputation as a leader and coalition builder, and earned the respect and trust of his peers across the country, our partners here in Texas, and most importantly, his employees.

"Amadeo has served his state with honor and integrity. TxDOT is a better agency today thanks to his leadership," said Deirdre Delisi, the chairwoman of the Texas Transportation Commission, the five-member panel that oversees the agency.

She said Saenz will have the "full support" of the commission while he completes his time in the executive suite. "Amadeo will continue to lead the department through this challenging legislative session, will assist the Commission in implementation of the Restructure Council's recommendations and will help his successor transition into this role."

The commissioners, all of whom were appointed by Gov. [Rick Perry](#), created a three-member restructure council last year following a tough appraisal of the agency's shortcomings by auditing firm [Grant Thornton](#). That audit was called "scathing" last week by Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst.

The restructure council urged the commissioners to find new leadership for TxDOT and change its culture, which both its work and the Grant Thornton audit said was too bureaucratic and too much in the grip of the engineering-dominated mindset of its long-tenured management.

The unusually long lead time for the resignation is likely evidence of the commission's efforts to send a message to the already underway 2011 Legislature that it is willing to make big changes even as it attempts to soften the sting of separation for a lifelong employee.

Saenz, in his letter to the commission, said he's not ready to walk away just yet. "So enough with the goodbyes already for right now. Let's go build something," he wrote.

Morris: While lawmakers focus on TxDOT reform, 'adult conversations' about funding are on hold



12:30 PM Thu, Jan 13, 2011 | [Permalink](#)

Michael Lindenberger/Reporter | [Bio](#) | [E-mail](#) | [News tips](#)

Michael Morris told members of the Regional Transportation Council today that the Legislature is unlikely to abolish the Texas Transportation Commission, despite the 7-5 vote to do just that by the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission in Austin yesterday.

He noted, as we did yesterday and in this morning's paper, that the senators on the panel all voted against the proposal.

Beyond that he said TxDOT will gain traction within the Legislature if it continues to implement changes that have been proposed by critics as well as its own restructure council. The agency's critics often deal with outdated information and fail to give the agency credit for the changes it has made.

"It's amazing the amount of stuff TxDOT has done in just the past year. They are working very hard to change the culture," Morris said.

He also joined others -- including more than one lawmaker I've spoken to -- who have said that the Legislature's insistence that TxDOT be reform can serve as a buffer to real discussions about how to provide the state with the money it needs to keep build roads.

"We have got to get this situation behind us or we are not going to have adult conversations about how e are going to fund transportation," he said. "I am probably going to regret having said that."