



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



TEXAS PEDESTRIAN SAFETY FORUM: INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS HOMELESSNESS ALONG I-35

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TxDOT Austin District – Director of Operations



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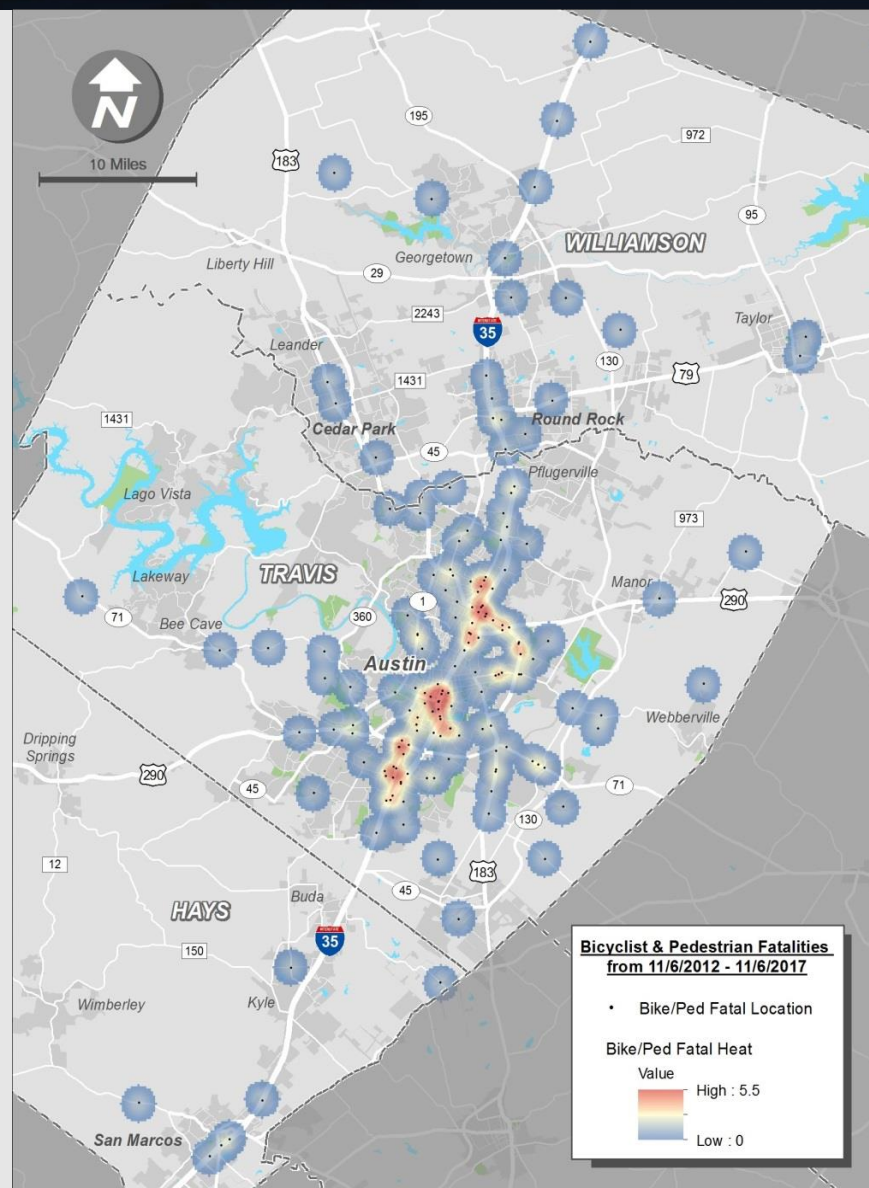
PEDESTRIAN SAFETY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- I-35 (City of Austin):
 - On average, 28 people are killed in an auto-pedestrian incident
 - 3 out of 5 pedestrian fatalities occur on I-35
 - 92% occur at night
 - 8 out of 10 pedestrian fatalities on I-35 involve individuals experiencing homelessness
 - Estimated \$6.5 million annual cost due to pedestrian fatalities on I-35 (both direct and indirect costs)
 - Two in work zones since January 2019
 - 2019 Pedestrian Fatalities Trends
 - Statewide = - 2%
 - Austin District = +28%
 - 2019 Work Zone Fatalities
 - Statewide = -17%
 - Austin District = -40%



Statistics

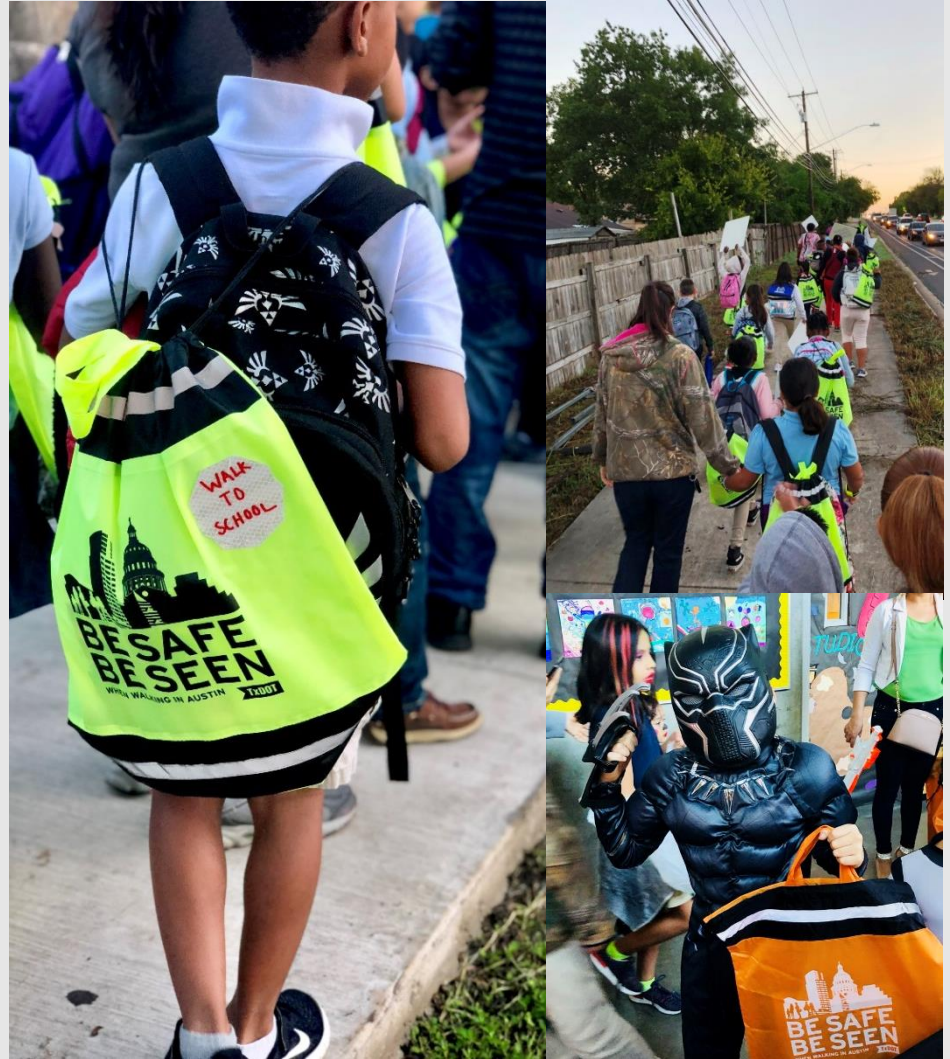
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PEDESTRIAN SAFETY OUTREACH

School Safety Campaign

- Launched Pedestrian Safety Videos in English and Spanish for elementary/middle school and high school students on National Walk and Bike to School Day
- Developed fun lesson plans based on pedestrian safety tips
- Distributed reflective “Be Safe Be Seen” backpacks with nutritious snacks on the first day of school
- Participated in school events and created construction “obstacle courses” to teach students how to walk in a construction zone



Pedestrian Safety Campaign

- In response to the illegal, unsafe crossing choices that pedestrians were making to cross I-35 on foot, TxDOT:
 - Identified pedestrian ‘hot spots’ along I-35 in Austin
 - Partnered with local businesses and law enforcement to distribute pedestrian safety outreach materials
 - Added universally understood “no crossing” signs and created materials in English and Spanish
 - Developed social media campaigns aimed at drivers and pedestrians



Homeless Pedestrian Safety - Problem

- Disproportionate number of pedestrian fatalities are people experiencing homelessness
- More pedestrians walking through active construction zones
- Future development of I-35 will displace hundreds of individuals experiencing homelessness



TxDOT Mission and Values

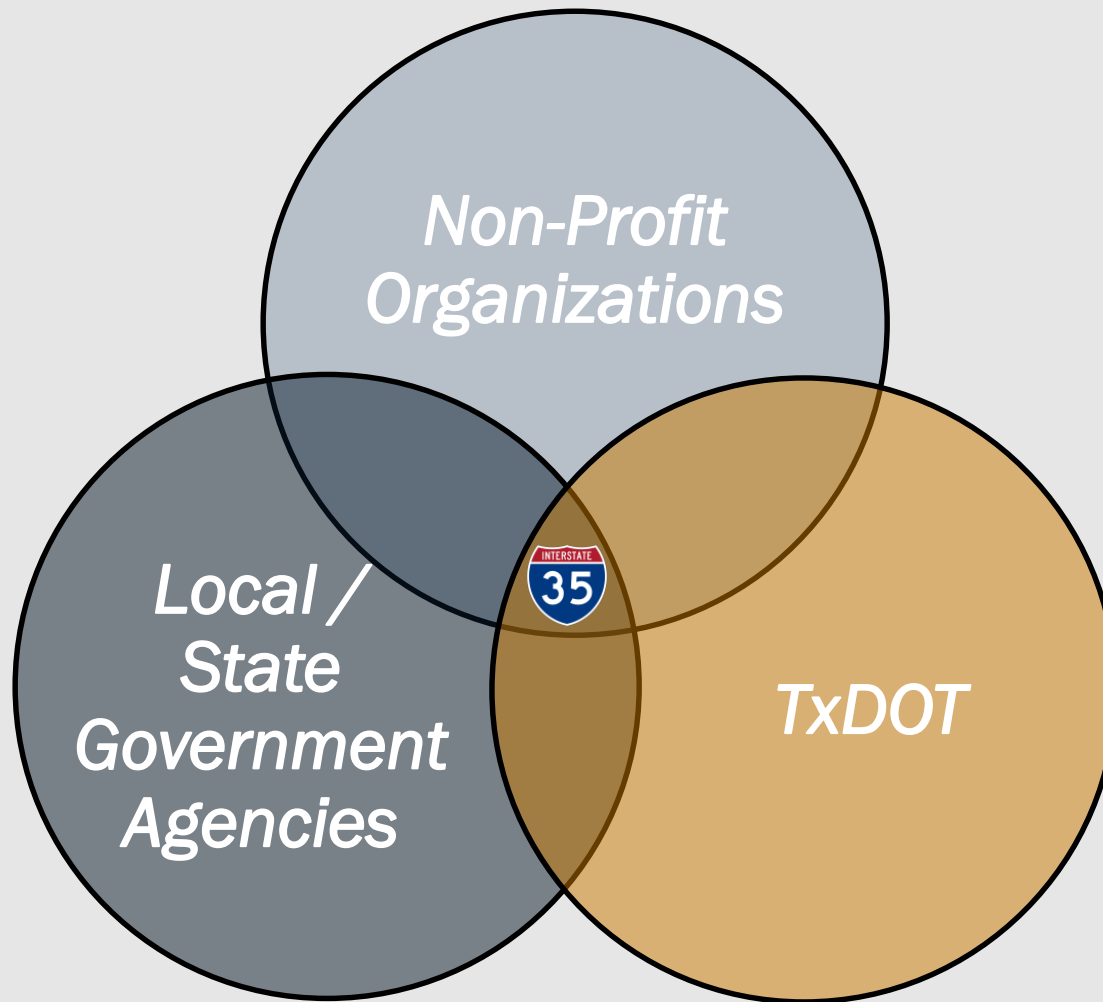
- TxDOT Mission Statement: “Through collaboration and leadership, we deliver a **safe, reliable, and integrated transportation system** that enables the movement of people and goods.”
- TxDOT Core Values #1 - People: “People are the Department’s most important customer, asset, and resource. The **well-being, safety, and quality of life for Texans** and the traveling public are of the utmost concern to the department. We focus on **relationship building, customer service, and partnerships.**”



Pedestrian Safety - Challenges

- TxDOT is limited within its mission and function to handle humanitarian and social challenges, such as homelessness
- Major state highways are not a safe place for homeless individuals
 - High percentage of pedestrian fatalities
 - Unclean, unsanitary environment (air/noise pollution, contaminated water runoff)
 - Victimization of the homeless by criminals on TxDOT right of way
- TxDOT can leverage its greatest asset: close working relationships with local/state government and agencies and private/non-profit enterprises

Mobility35 Initiative to Address Homelessness (IAH)



Mobility35 IAH Pedestrian Safety - Goals & Objectives

- Strategic Partnerships: TxDOT developed partnerships to lawfully, humanely and effectively transition individuals experiencing homelessness from encampments along state highways to safe, sustainable housing
 - Housing reduces the probability of pedestrian fatalities
- Formed 3 working groups
- Communication: Share information on upcoming construction activities, safe pedestrian routes within work zones, and provide community resources with reflective “Be Safe Be Seen” bags
- Assessment: Assess individuals experiencing homelessness to identify services needs and ability to transition into temporary or permanent housing
- Shelter & Housing: Identify possible opportunities for temporary and permanent shelter/housing alternatives

Program Partnerships



A Central Health and Seton partnership

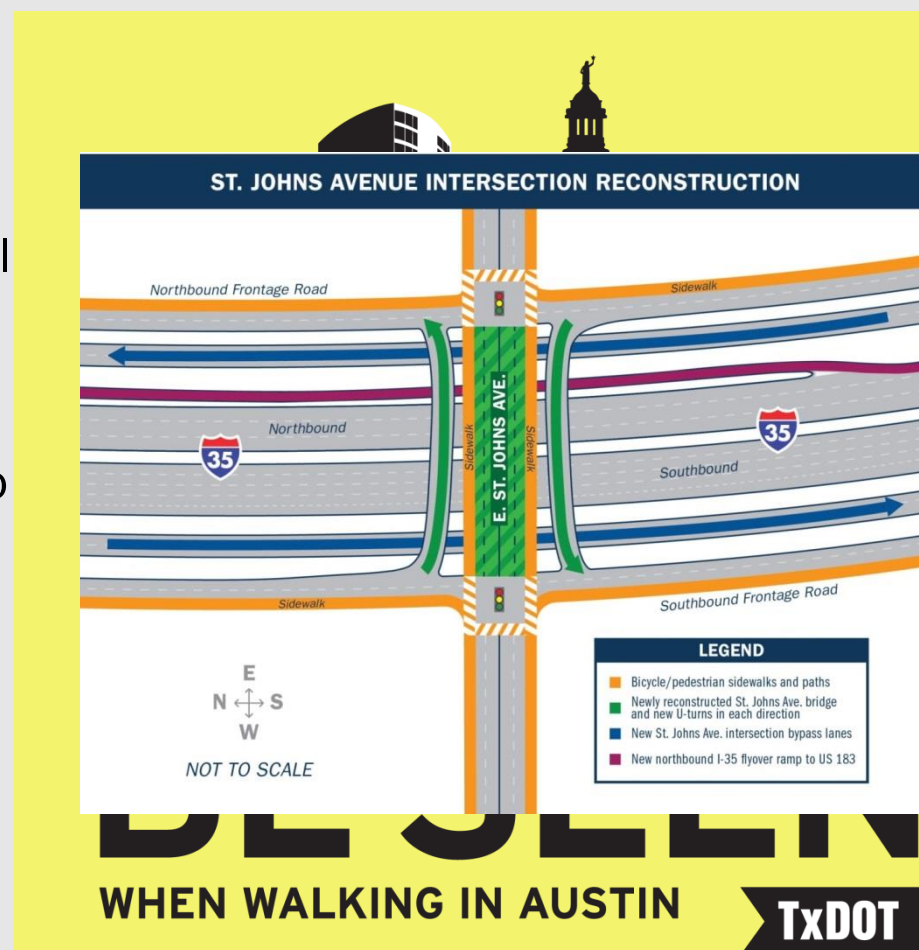


The University of Texas at Austin
Dell Medical School



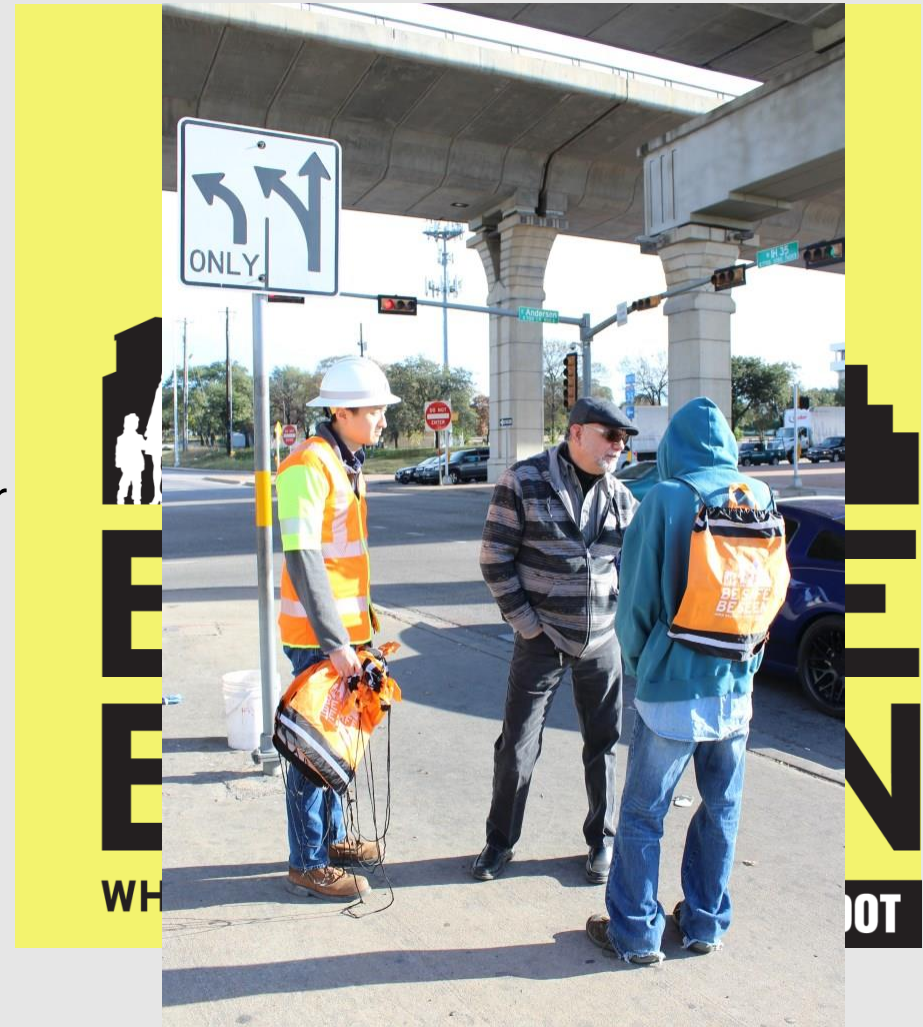
Be Safe Be Seen

- Communication and assessment processes address immediate concern with pedestrian safety
- Communication:
 - Partnered with stakeholders like Integral Care, APD, and EMC services to help with outreach
 - Communicated upcoming construction work zones or other TxDOT operations to homeless individuals and other stakeholders
 - Provided materials with safe pedestrian routes during different phases of construction, including reflective “Be Safe Be Seen” back packs
 - Handed out by assessment team and TxDOT maintenance forces
 - Flyers, signs, message boards, publications



Be Safe Be Seen

- Goal is to eliminate the probability of pedestrian fatalities by assisting and transitioning individuals to temporary or permanent housing
- Assessment:
 - Integral Care and other agencies perform assessments of individuals for services needed to be eligible for housing and employment (temporary or permanent)
 - Assist in obtaining services and vital records
 - Assess and refer for temporary or permanent housing
 - Establish employment opportunities with TxDOT contractor (TIBH)



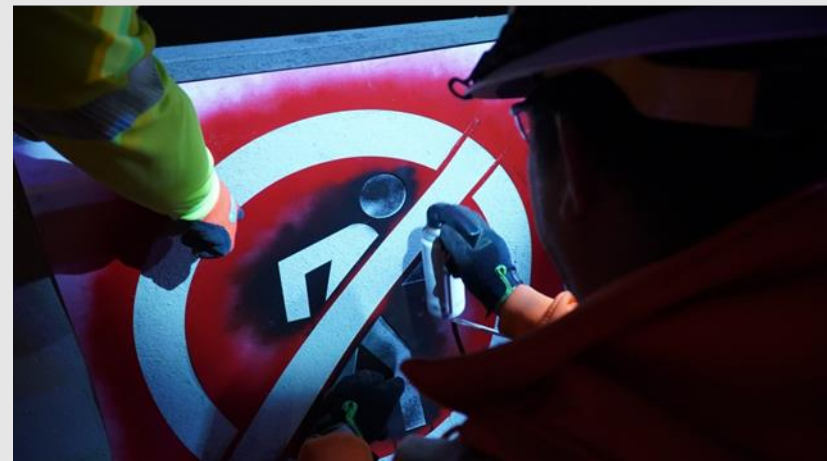
Mobility35 IAH Materials and Training

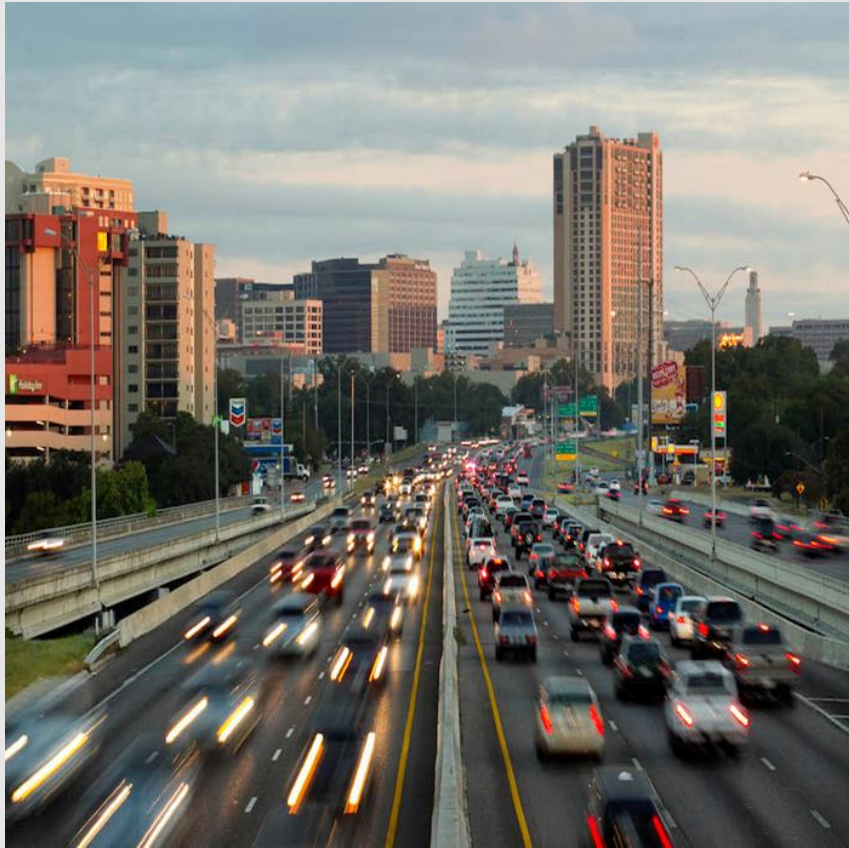
- Trained approximately 70 TxDOT maintenance and construction employees and contractors in Mental Health/First Aid Services by Integral Care
- Training the TxDOT Austin District Guidelines for Addressing Homeless Encampments with TxDOT ROW
 - Goal: Perform our operations humanely, respectfully on TxDOT ROW where homeless encampments exist



Campaign Milestones and Achievements

- Held seven ‘Initiative to Address Homelessness’ Workshops
- Distributed over 8,000 “Be Safe Be Seen” Reflective backpacks
- Connected over 120 individuals experiencing homelessness to services
- Over 40 individuals transitioned to housing
- Installed permanent no pedestrian signs on I-35 frontage road to remind pedestrians it is unsafe to cross the highway on foot
 - Stay Alive, Don’t Cross I-35
- More than 60 businesses in the 51st Street area have been provided with “Be Safe Be Seen” materials to alert customers that crossing I-35 on foot is unsafe





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