

# COMPLETE STREETS

## *Policy Manual*

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MERRITT C. BECKER, JR.  
UNO TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE





# Purpose of the Complete Streets Manual

The purpose of this manual--co-produced by the Center for Planning Excellence's CONNECT Coalition and the Merritt C. Becker, Jr. University of New Orleans Transportation Institute, and supported by AARP--is to provide an introduction to the concept of "Complete Streets," to outline a general context for Complete Streets policy adoption and implementation in Louisiana, and to explore in-depth the process that led to the adoption of a comprehensive Complete Streets ordinance in the City of New Orleans in December 2011. This case study examines the various stakeholders and issues involved in developing a Complete Streets program, alerts readers to potential barriers and obstacles which may be encountered, and outlines an equitable, inclusive process for Complete Streets policy adoption and implementation.

The goal of this document is to enhance communities' awareness of Complete Streets policies, and provide a framework for enacting such policies on the local level. Extensive interviews with the individuals quoted in this document were conducted in April 2012 to gain a holistic understanding of the multi-faceted effort to adopt Complete Streets policy in New Orleans, in the hope that these experiences will prove to be applicable in other communities throughout Louisiana.

## About CONNECT

CONNECT, an initiative of Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), advocates for expanded mobility choices throughout the New Orleans to Baton Rouge region that offer improved access to affordable homes, job centers and equitable economic opportunity.

## About AARP

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership that helps people age 50 and over have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole — ways that help people 50 and over improve their lives. Since 1958, AARP has been leading a revolution in the way people view and live life.

## About UNOTI

The Merritt C. Becker, Jr. University of New Orleans Transportation Institute (UNOTI) focuses on the role of transportation in creating a sustainable, livable and resilient future.

UNOTI combines applied research, outreach and education to impact positively the transportation field from the local to the international spheres. The work done at the Institute continues to be integral in the post-Katrina recovery of New Orleans, and vital to the overall sustainability and economic competitiveness of the nation.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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# Contents

## 5 What are Complete Streets?

History and National Policy Framework

National Best Practices

*Benefits of Complete Streets*

Statewide Context

Regional Role

## 12 Complete Streets for Louisiana

Getting Started

*Ten Policy Elements*

Local Case Study: New Orleans

*New Orleans Policy Adoption...Step by Step*

## 26 Getting There

Overcoming Obstacles to Adoption

Conclusion

## 32 Appendices

A. National Resources

B. Louisiana Complete Streets Policy Overview

C. STAC Complete Streets Policy Primer

D. New Orleans Complete Streets Resolution

E. New Orleans Complete Streets Ordinance

# *What are Complete Streets?*

Simply put, a “Complete Street” is a street that is for everyone. It is a street designed and operated to allow all types of users—including but not limited to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit users of all ages and physical abilities—to safely use and traverse the right-of-way. A Complete Streets policy directs communities to ensure that every transportation project undertaken, whether it’s a new road, a major resurfacing project, or a transit investment, takes into consideration the needs of all potential users, and strives to maximize safety for all. Complete Streets policies can be adopted by states, regional governing agencies, counties/parishes, or local jurisdictions, and the goals identified in any given policy should be tailored to reflect that community’s specific needs. A Complete Street in a big city may look very different from a Complete Street in a rural town or in a suburban community. Features common to many Complete Streets include sidewalks, marked or separated facilities for bicyclists, transit facilities, ADA-compliant curb ramps, marked and signalized crosswalks, and many other features that help make the street safer and more accessible—but designs for Complete Streets vary greatly. For example, on a rural highway, a wide, paved shoulder may provide sufficient access and safety for non-automobile users, whereas a busy urban arterial may demand much more elaborate facilities in order to ensure the same level of safety and convenience. In other words, making a street or roadway ‘complete’ does not simply mean applying a prescribed set of design treatments, but rather involves evaluating the needs of the various users—or potential users—of that facility, and identifying steps that can be taken to ensure their comfort and safety.



## What are Complete Streets?

# History and National Policy Framework



For most of the post-World War II period of the 20th century, streets in the United States were primarily designed to move automobile traffic as quickly and efficiently as possible. The movement of goods and people by private vehicle was prioritized, often to the detriment of other road users and modes. Over time, it has become evident that this model of street design has failed to meet the needs of significant segments of the population—older adults, children, disabled persons, and many others who either cannot or prefer not to own and operate an automobile. At the same time, communities have become increasingly concerned with the negative health impacts of obesity and sedentary lifestyles, the cost and political consequences of fossil fuel dependency, and the concepts of environmental sustainability and livability. Over the last few decades, Americans have begun to demand better options for getting around their communities, and communities must fulfill this demand in order to attract residents and remain economically competitive. Out of this demand, the “Complete Streets” movement has emerged as a conceptual framework for a different way of designing and building infrastructure.

While there is no official Complete Streets policy at the federal level, the concept is strongly supported by the federal Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities (a joint initiative of United States Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Environmental Protection Agency).<sup>1</sup>

Federal law and the Federal Highway Administration policy support Complete Streets concepts and encourage the development of active transportation infrastructure at lower levels of government. Federal statute declares that “bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways shall be considered, where appropriate, in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction of transportation facilities, except where bicycle and pedestrian use are not permitted” (U.S. Code, Title 23, Chapter 2, Section 217)<sup>2</sup>. An updated “Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations” released by USDOT in 2010 reaffirms the agency’s support for Complete Streets policy adoption, and provides recommendations for how to achieve transportation networks that are “safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible, and convenient” for all users<sup>3</sup>. Policies have been adopted in 26 states and at least 352 regional or local jurisdictions around the country to date<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Smith, Reed, and Baker (2010). “Street Design: Part 1—Complete Streets.” Public Roads, 74:1. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/10julaug/03.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> Smith, Reed, and Baker (2010). “Street Design: Part 1—Complete Streets.” Public Roads, 74:1. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/10julaug/03.cfm>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> National Complete Streets Coalition: “Complete Streets Atlas.” Retrieved from <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-atlas/>

<sup>5</sup> E.g. ORS 366.514, aka the bike bill, which was passed by the Oregon Legislature in 1971. It requires the inclusion of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists wherever a road, street or highway is built or rebuilt. It applies to ODOT, cities and counties.

<sup>6</sup> McCann, B. (2010). “Happy Anniversary, Complete Streets!” National Complete Streets Coalition. Retrieved from: <http://www.completestreets.org/news/happy-anniversary-complete-streets/>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## LEARN MORE

### National Complete Streets Coalition

Early efforts to institutionalize the development of multimodal transportation facilities that encourage biking and walking date back to the 1970s<sup>5</sup>, but the idea really gained momentum in the early 2000s, when the term “Complete Street” was coined by Smart Growth America’s David Goldberg.<sup>6</sup> Shortly thereafter in 2005, the National Complete Streets Coalition was established, an organization that remains at the forefront of this movement. Early supporters of federal, state, and local Complete Streets legislation involved with the National Complete Streets Coalition included the League of American Bicyclists, America Bikes, AARP, the American Planning Association, the American Public Transportation Association, the American Society of Landscape Architects, and the American Heart Association.<sup>7</sup> This group has continued to advocate for and track the adoption of Complete Streets policy at multiple levels of government, and has developed a multitude of resources to aid communities in doing so.

## What are Complete Streets?

# National Best Practices



The National Complete Streets Coalition, which has been advancing Complete Streets policies and tracking the spread of new policy adoption nationwide since 2005, completed a report in 2010 evaluating all state, local, or regional policies adopted to date. This report defines and analyzes ten key elements (see pages 16-18) that are critical to the development of a strong and implementable policy, and scores each policy according to a rubric based on these elements. While most policies are too recently adopted to comprehensively evaluate their implementation, this guide to good policy development establishes best practices on a national scale, based on the data available so far.

As Barbara McCann, director of the National Complete Streets Coalition, observes, “Complete Streets policies help communities make a clear commitment to planning all future transportation projects to provide for the safe travel of everyone using the road. Once that commitment is made, planners and engineers have a clear direction to develop new processes, design manuals, and on-the-ground solutions that welcome everyone.”<sup>8</sup> However, “a policy must do more than simply affirm support for Complete Streets,” the Coalition explains<sup>9</sup>: it must also provide a roadmap for implementation and present a vision for the future of the community, with measurable benchmarks to track progress toward that vision.

8 Quoted in Smith, Reed, and Baker (2010). “Street Design: Part 1—Complete Streets.” Public Roads, 74:1. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/10julaug/03.cfm>  
9 National Complete Streets Coalition, Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2010: A Story of Growing Strength. <http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-policyanalysis.pdf>

### LEARN MORE

#### National Resources

- » The National Complete Streets Coalition  
[www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org)
- » Alliance for Biking and Walking  
[www.peoplepoweredmovement.org](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org)
- » AARP  
[www.aarp.org/ppi/liv-com](http://www.aarp.org/ppi/liv-com)
- » American Planning Association  
[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)
- » Political Economy Research Institute  
[www.peri.umass.edu](http://www.peri.umass.edu)
- » Transportation for America  
[t4america.org](http://t4america.org)

## BENEFITS OF COMPLETE STREETS



*Transit users in Baton Rouge have a shelter, but no sidewalk.*



*Cyclists in New Orleans risk their safety when there is no dedicated bike lane to ride in.*

### *Safety*

The most frequently cited benefit of developing a Complete Streets policy is the consequent increase in safety. While higher numbers of total crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists tend to occur in cities, safety is a concern for all communities. In 2006, 56% of all traffic fatalities occurred in rural areas,<sup>10</sup> in large part due to higher driving speeds. Older residents are particularly vulnerable to pedestrian related fatalities: while representing 13% of the population, they represented 19% of the pedestrian fatalities in 2008.<sup>11</sup> Pedestrian and bicycle safety is enhanced by the provision of sidewalks, bicycle lanes or separated paths, pedestrian refuge islands (medians), high-visibility crosswalks, and ADA-compliant treatments for pedestrians with physical disabilities and traffic calming (e.g. curb extensions, 'road diets,' and changes in road geometry). All of these measures help reduce vehicle speeds, which can also serve to significantly reduce the incidence of crashes involving two or more automobiles, as well as crashes involving bicyclists or pedestrians.<sup>12</sup>

### *Equity and Access*

After housing, transportation is the second highest household expense for most American families—about 18% of income—and often much more for low-income households.<sup>13</sup> For many families, owning an automobile is a significant financial burden, or is simply out of reach. Increasing opportunities to walk, bike, or use transit increases a family's ability to inexpensively access jobs, services, shopping, and other destinations. Replacing a year's worth of car trips with public transportation

would save an individual on average \$9,581 per year.<sup>14</sup> For low-income households, this represents a huge savings that can be put towards other needs or help families achieve greater financial stability. Communities that provide effective transportation alternatives allow people to save money on transportation while retaining mobility and access to their destinations.

### *Economic Development*

Bicycle and pedestrian-oriented transportation projects have proven to create more jobs, increase property value, and have a greater overall economic impact per dollar invested than auto-oriented projects.<sup>15</sup> Relatedly, a family that spends less on transportation—particularly in this era of volatile gas prices—has more money to spend on other goods and services, to the benefit of the local economy. Many Complete Street improvements can be implemented at little or even no cost, while reaping long term economic benefits from increased foot traffic around businesses and improved resident mobility. In areas with increasing traffic volumes, Complete Streets provide an excellent means to ease congestion, which may allow communities to forego costly road expansion projects aimed at increasing vehicle capacity. Complete Streets have proven to be an integral asset to main street revitalization efforts: increasing the safety and appeal of a corridor for shoppers, diners, and residents traveling on foot through strategic streetscape improvements and traffic calming helps attract new businesses and visitors, leveraging economic development efforts.<sup>16</sup>

# BENEFITS OF COMPLETE STREETS

## Environment

Traffic congestion costs billions of dollars every year in lost productivity and wasted fuel,<sup>17</sup> and is an increasing problem in urbanized areas throughout the country. In urban areas, half of all trips are less than three miles, while 28% of trips are less than one mile. Even in rural areas, about 30% of trips are two miles or less—distances easily covered on foot or by bicycle for many people.<sup>18</sup> Increasing the share of bicycling from 1% to 1.5% of all trips made—just half a percent more—would save 462 million gallons of gasoline per year.<sup>18</sup> Creating options for residents to replace short auto trips with active modes would reduce emissions, burn less fuel, and improve air quality, all while reducing traffic congestion. Fewer cars on the road benefits everyone—drivers, transit users, walkers, and bicyclists alike.

## Health

Bicycling and walking—including walking to and from transit—is a proven strategy for improving public health outcomes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have cited the adoption of Complete Streets policies as a key strategy to preventing obesity, and found that people who have safe places to walk near their homes are much more likely to meet daily physical activity recommendations than those without safe facilities nearby.<sup>19</sup> In Louisiana, more than 31% of adults and 20% of children and adolescents are now obese, making it the 5th most obese state in the nation.<sup>20</sup> In the last 15 years, the obesity rate has increased more than 80%, and diabetes rates have doubled.

In the same period, hypertension rates have increased from 23.5% to 32.5%.<sup>21</sup> Increasing opportunities for safe active transportation and recreation through Complete Streets is one of the ways to start reversing these alarming health trends.

## Livability

“Livable” communities are vibrant, active places where people want to live, work, and play. Increasing the safety and attractiveness of multiple transportation modes through Complete Streets helps achieve this quality, by maximizing residents’ transportation choices while helping to fulfill other community goals, such as neighborhood revitalization, supporting small businesses, retaining the character and history of a town, or meeting health or environmental targets.

In order to remain competitive and to retain and attract residents, a high degree of livability is essential. Demand for housing near transit and providing travel-to-work alternatives to the personal vehicle, is increasing, particularly among older adults and young professionals. Nationwide, walkable, transit-accessible housing will represent 1/3 of the country’s demand for housing within the next 20 years.<sup>22</sup> In a 2010 regional poll of the New Orleans and Baton Rouge metro areas, the Center for Planning Excellence found that more than 75% of residents view the ability to walk to work or other destinations as important.<sup>23</sup> In order to compete on a national scale, Louisiana must be able to fulfill this demand for greater transportation choice.



*Recent re-striping on Carrollton Avenue accommodates all users, with bike lanes, sidewalks and parking.*

10 Traffic Safety Facts: Rural/Urban Comparison. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2008. <http://www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/810812.pdf>.  
11 AARP Public Policy Institute Analysis of the 2008 FARS Encyclopedia  
12 National Complete Streets Coalition: “Complete Streets FAQs.” Retrieved from: <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq/>  
13 National Complete Streets Coalition: “Transportation Costs.” Retrieved from <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets/transportation-costs/>  
14 National Complete Streets Coalition: “Complete Streets FAQs.” Retrieved from: <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq/>  
15 Garrett-Peltier, H. (2011). Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts. Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Retrieved from: [http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/published\\_study/PERI\\_ABikes\\_June2011.pdf](http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/published_study/PERI_ABikes_June2011.pdf)  
16 Smith, Reed, and Baker (2010). “Street Design: Part 1—Complete Streets.” Public Roads, 74:1. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/10julaug/03.cfm>  
14 Traffic Safety Facts: Rural/Urban Comparison. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2008. <http://www.nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pubs/810812.pdf>.  
17 National Complete Streets Coalition: “Complete Streets FAQs.” Retrieved from: <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq/>  
18 National Complete Streets Coalition: “Transportation Costs.” Retrieved from <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets/transportation-costs/>  
19 National Complete Streets Coalition: “Complete Streets FAQs.” Retrieved from: <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/complete-streets-faq/>  
20 Garrett-Peltier, H. (2011). Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts. Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Retrieved from: [http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/published\\_study/PERI\\_ABikes\\_June2011.pdf](http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/published_study/PERI_ABikes_June2011.pdf)  
21 Smith, Reed, and Baker (2010). “Street Design: Part 1—Complete Streets.” Public Roads, 74:1. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/10julaug/03.cfm>  
22 Center for Transit Oriented Development (2009). Destinations Matter: 24 Building Transit Success. Federal Transit Administration. Data source: 2004 LEHD Data, NTD Q4 2007. Retrieved from: <http://tod.drcog.org/node/116>  
23 Regional poll of residents in parishes intersected by the proposed intercity rail corridor from New Orleans to Baton Rouge. Conducted in November 2010 and commissioned by the National Association of Realtors with the Center for Planning Excellence

## What are Complete Streets?

# Statewide Context



In its 2009 session, the Louisiana legislature passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 110, which directed the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) to facilitate a Complete Streets work group composed of more than 35 stakeholders and agencies, tasked with developing a statewide Complete Streets policy. DOTD conducted a series of policy development meetings with the work group, and together decided that rather than introducing and passing a statewide law, it would be preferable for DOTD to adopt an internal policy built upon the recently completed Louisiana Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

The work group produced a final report in July 2010 thoroughly explaining Complete Streets, and providing a framework for implementation of the DOTD policy. This report also provides extensive information on how to advance Complete Streets throughout Louisiana at the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and local level, and is a valuable resource for local jurisdictions.

DOTD adopted the work group's final Complete Streets policy in 2010, demonstrating a commitment to a Complete Streets approach for all new or substantially rebuilt infrastructure. This policy was recognized as the second best state policy in the country by the National Complete Streets Coalition in 2011 for its strength and comprehensiveness.

DOTD's statewide policy codifies support for Complete Streets principles, and encourages all communities in the state to work toward more connected, accessible street networks for all users. See Appendix B for a comprehensive overview of the Louisiana Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Efforts are currently underway to bring together another Complete Streets work group at DOTD to assist in ensuring that the implementation of this policy is on track. Louisiana House Concurrent Resolution 100, which passed during the 2012 legislative session, orders the work group to reconvene to this end.

### LEARN MORE

#### State Policy Resources

- » Louisiana Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan  
[http://www.dotd.la.gov/planning/highway\\_safety/bike\\_ped/masterplan.aspx](http://www.dotd.la.gov/planning/highway_safety/bike_ped/masterplan.aspx)
- » Senate Concurrent Resolution 110  
<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/policy/cs-la-resolution.pdf>
- » State Complete Streets Work Group Report Final Report  
[http://www.dotd.louisiana.gov/planning/highway\\_safety/documents/Complete%20Streets%20Final%20Report%2007-29-2010.pdf](http://www.dotd.louisiana.gov/planning/highway_safety/documents/Complete%20Streets%20Final%20Report%2007-29-2010.pdf)
- » DOTD Complete Streets Policy  
<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/policy/cs-la-dotpolicy.pdf>

# What are Complete Streets?

## Regional Role

Policies adopted by local governments, who are ultimately the decision-makers for all facilities owned and operated by local entities, represent the majority of all Complete Streets policies adopted nationwide. MPOs, however, are responsible for transportation planning and funding in urbanized areas, and can be integral partners in promoting and implementing Complete Streets. They can also serve to encourage local adoption of Complete Streets principles by “setting regional goals and funding priorities, ensuring that a robust public involvement process includes key local stakeholders, interest groups, and the public. The MPO can also coordinate regional planning with local transportation and comprehensive plans to include not only roadways but also facilities and systems related to transit and non-motorized traffic.”<sup>24</sup>

MPOs can also implement regional policies that “encourage Complete Streets design through a variety of programs and processes, and give funding preference to projects that reflect Complete Streets principles. Each MPO needs to decide if and how it will promote Complete Streets within its region, but its approaches can be creative and tailored to local circumstances.”<sup>25</sup> Technically, in Louisiana, DOTD’s Complete Streets policy will cover all or almost all MPO projects, because they use state or federal funds.

However, Dan Jatres, Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Manager at the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission, observes that “by having the MPO’s staff and board go through the process of developing, reviewing, and approving a Complete Streets policy at the regional level, it does create a higher level of understanding and buy-in to the state policy and serves as a bridge to local communities interested in adopting policies.”

In order to develop a truly complete street network across jurisdictions, the institutionalization of Complete Streets principles are needed at all levels of government and for all agencies involved in transportation planning and funding.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, Reed, and Baker (2010). “Street Design: Part 1—Complete Streets.” Public Roads, 74:1. Retrieved from <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/publicroads/10julaug/03.cfm>  
<sup>25</sup> Ibid.



### LEARN MORE

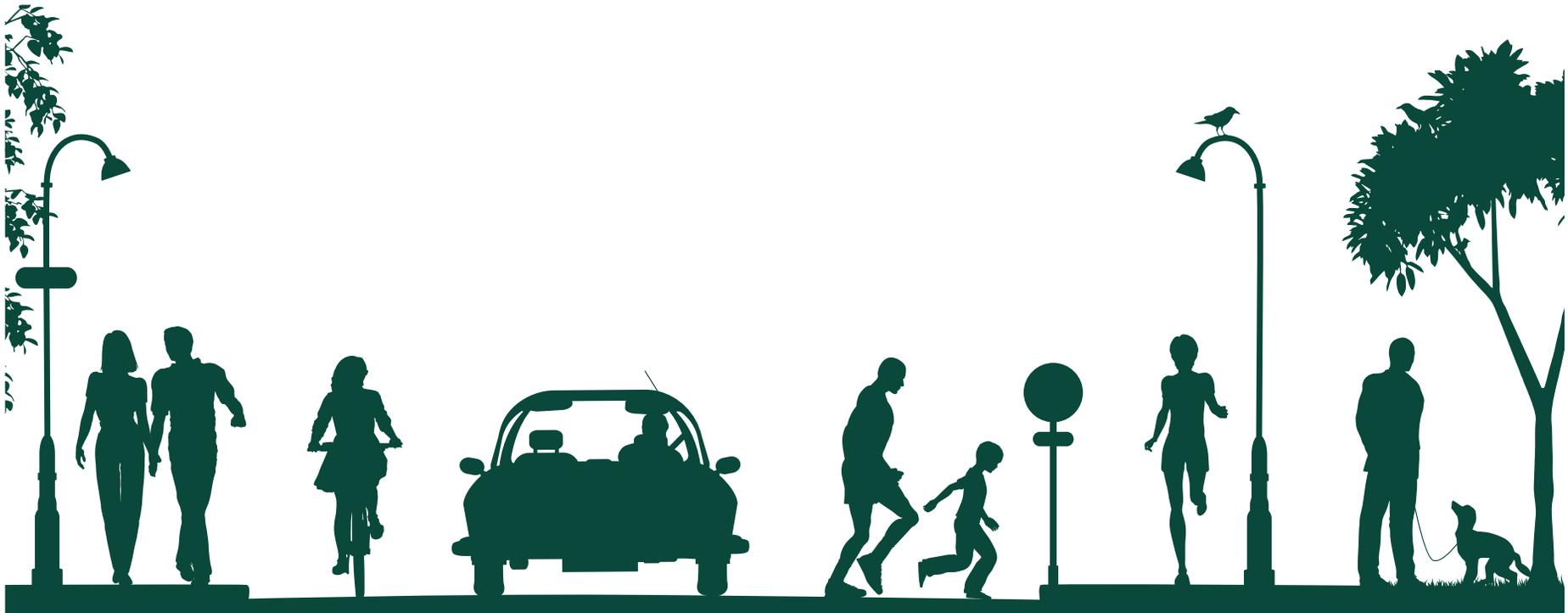
#### MPO Policy Resources

- » New Orleans Regional Planning Commission Pedestrian and Bicycle Program  
[http://www.norpc.org/pedestrian\\_and\\_bicycle\\_program.html](http://www.norpc.org/pedestrian_and_bicycle_program.html)
- » Capital Region Planning Commission Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee  
[http://crpc-la.org/crpc\\_new/Committees/BPAC.html](http://crpc-la.org/crpc_new/Committees/BPAC.html)

# *Complete Streets for Louisiana*

Complete Streets is currently experiencing a genesis in the state of Louisiana. Propelled in 2010 by DOTD's adoption of an internal Complete Streets policy, MPO's, local governments, and community residents are all becoming aware of the benefits inclusive street design can offer neighborhoods, communities, and metro areas. While New Orleans is currently the only locality in Louisiana to have adopted a local policy, a 2010 regional poll by the CONNECT Coalition found that over 75% of Baton Rouge and New Orleans metro area residents view the ability to walk to work and other amenities as very important.

It is time for Louisiana communities to enact policies that match residents' vision of a healthy, inclusive community. The following section outlines a process for developing Complete Streets policies in Louisiana communities and illustrates the process New Orleans undertook in institutionalizing Complete Streets within the city.



## Getting Started



Once a need for improved policy and/or infrastructure through a Complete Streets approach has been identified, there are three key steps to generating the interest and momentum necessary to find and adopt solutions: 1) building a diverse coalition of supporters of Complete Streets principles who can push the policy effort forward, 2) identifying a political champion who will work on behalf of the coalition to effectively drive legislative or administrative action, and 3) conducting stakeholder outreach and education as needed to ensure that the policy has a broad base of support and that questions and concerns are sufficiently addressed.

### Building a Coalition

A coalition of supporters should be as broad and diverse as possible; it may include planners, academic institutions, public health experts, non-profit advocacy organizations, community groups, business associations, city officials, and ordinary residents. Colleges and universities can be strong, relatively neutral voices and are powerful local stakeholders. Reaching out to and involving the region's MPO is also essential, as is involving the business community through Chambers of Commerce. These are all strong allies who have a recognized interest in the impacts that Complete Streets can have on the community, and the greater the diversity of perspectives, the better.

If there is not currently a group or coalition dedicated to bicycling and walking, it will take some time to build one. "You'll need at least three months of coalition building, strategizing, figuring out what you want and how to get it, and getting everyone on the same page" says consultant Ellen Soll, "...you need to have a few initial meetings just to bring people together and get them talking about the issue." "It's not a quick process," adds Jason Tudor, "it takes discussions with people who have different perspectives than you; it takes cultivating champions in different sectors and coming together on a regular basis to figure out ways to highlight key successes and integrate decision making."

A coalition of bicycling, walking, and transit supporters can begin to press for policy change on their own, or can work with the community's legislative body or a city agency to become an advisory committee—either officially designated or ad-hoc—potentially giving the group greater leverage to make recommendations and enact change than an independently operating body.

"You'll need at least three months of coalition building, strategizing, figuring out what you want and how to get it, and getting everyone on the same page...you need to have a few initial meetings just to bring people together and get them talking about the issue."

**Ellen Soll, AICP**  
Planning Consultant



### Identify a Champion

Once the formation of a coalition of supporters is underway, the next critical step is to identify a political champion who can spearhead a Complete Streets policy initiative and navigate the legislative or administrative processes necessary in order to get the policy adopted. This champion will in large part determine what course of action the coalition should take: in New Orleans, City Councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer emerged as the political champion for the concept, which meant that bringing a legislative ordinance to the New Orleans City Council would be the most effective way to bring about policy change.

A political champion doesn't necessarily need to be a councilmember or legislator; it could also be a planning director, the head of another city department, or the mayor or parish president. In this case as well, the role of the individual pushing the policy forward will impact the type of policy developed. Rather than an ordinance, for example, it may be more appropriate to work on crafting an executive order, or embedding Complete Streets principles in the community's master plan as a preliminary, incremental step toward a full policy. In some communities, securing strong administrative support may be an essential step toward policy adoption.

In some communities, there may already be an internal or departmental champion, at a department of public works, for example, who can advocate for Complete Streets and work to adopt an internal policy, similar to DOTD's, that achieves a similar result. An internal champion can most effectively help educate his or her colleagues, including engineers, about the importance of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and work to change the culture and processes of the department.

When a political champion is not readily apparent, the coalition can start the conversation with local leaders to help them see that this idea is worth the investment of their political capital. 'Selling' Complete Streets as a tool that increases livability helps elected officials see its value and appeal.

## *Complete Streets for Louisiana*

"I see this as not only making the roads safer and more usable, but in the long term, it's going to revitalize neighborhoods because people will have safe access to jobs and amenities..."

**Nicole Webre, J.D.**

Legislative Director for  
Councilmember Gisleson Palmer, District C



## *Complete Streets for Louisiana*

### Outreach and Education

Once a strong and diverse coalition has been established, and one or more political champions have been identified, outreach and education are required to ensure that all stakeholders, as well as the general public, understand the Complete Streets concept and have the opportunity to discuss its impacts.

The first step is to identify a list of organizations, individuals, and departments—particularly those who have a role in implementation—that would be interested in any proposed policy, and arrange to meet with them to discuss Complete Streets. Stakeholders may include utility companies, chambers of commerce, historic commissions, transit agencies, planning departments, health departments, recreation departments, tourism boards, etc.

There are a number of resources available, including free online materials. These can be useful in developing both a basic level of understanding among stakeholders and expanding the knowledge base of advocates. Examples and photos of complete streets—and incomplete streets—have proven to be very useful in this education process.

If resources exist, bringing in national experts at this early stage to conduct workshops can help of the process to bring together stakeholders and provide a thorough introduction to the Complete Streets concept, and help people to begin thinking about how it can impact their community.

Public outreach is also essential, especially if there is resistance or inadequate support for the concept at the government level. Once the public is behind the issue, a petition-based grassroots campaign can be another strategy to enact policy, in lieu of strong political support. Newspaper outlets can sway opinions: letters to the editor can help raise awareness and highlight the positive impacts of Complete Streets on the community. Showing the types of people who benefit from Complete Streets, such as older people, children, wheelchair users, people without cars, etc. can help humanize these concepts. Conducting surveys that evaluate current conditions for walking and biking and allow residents to think about potential improvements can help build support as well.



*AARP volunteers in New Orleans audit neighborhood streets for accessibility.*



*AARP volunteers in Monroe discuss the safety of an intersection with DOTD engineers.*

## TEN POLICY ELEMENTS

“AARP policy states that when appropriate, streets should support multiple modes of transportation and be accessible to all people regardless of age or ability....in Louisiana this is a huge challenge because many of our streets are not accessible to those with mobility limitations.”

**Jason Tudor**

Associate State Director of Outreach,  
AARP Louisiana

### *Sets a Vision*

Any Complete Streets policy should have its foundation in a vision and/or comprehensive plan that reflects the community's desires. It can be helpful for residents and stakeholders to visualize what a Complete Street really is, what it isn't, and how aspects of the design can vary from one street to the next through various descriptions of Complete Streets. Education and outreach to preemptively address questions is essential to building confidence in the community that the policy will result in high-quality, desirable environments.

### *Specifies All Users*

“We believe that streets in this state should be accessible and support all modes of transportation for people of all ages and abilities” advocates Jason Tudor. If this is the case in a community, identifying that there is a problem is the first step. Are there particular corridors or crossings in an area that are unsafe? Does the community fail to construct sidewalks? Can children get to and from school safely? Is the community accessible for people in wheelchairs? Are the streets attractive and comfortable for bicyclists, pedestrians, or transit users? An effective Complete Streets policy should take each of these circumstances into consideration, specifically outlining provisions for all types of users of different ages and abilities.

### *Includes All Projects*

Complete Streets should not be seen as an all or nothing approach to street design, but instead as complementary to any street project. Whether a restriping, repaving or widening project, all projects can be reviewed and analyzed to determine if bike lanes, sidewalks, cross walks, etc. are appropriate additions. Taking into consideration all users on all projects ensures greater accessibility across a community. Complete Streets elements should not be an afterthought or treated as additional costs for projects, but instead be incorporated in the overall design from the beginning of the project.

### *Specifies Exceptions*

Exceptions, in particular, may be subject to adaptation based on community context. In New Orleans' policy, wording was strengthened to make it very difficult to qualify for an exception based on lack of need, because in a fully urbanized area, all non-restricted streets can be presumed to have some degree of need for pedestrian or bicycle access. In a more rural community, this may not be the case, and the policy should not be burdened too greatly with demonstrating a lack of need where common sense might suffice. The policy should clearly specify who makes decisions about exceptions.

## TEN POLICY ELEMENTS

### *Creates a Network*

Complete Streets should not be implemented in isolation, but instead as coordinated steps leading to an integrated network. Ensuring that users can reach various destinations safely and efficiently—without taking long detours or risking personal safety—should be the goal of Complete Streets policies. To that end, coordination with planning and implementation agencies in developing the policy is crucial. In determining where to implement a policy, the overall street network must be evaluated to ensure mobility and multi-modal connectivity.

### *All Agencies, All Roads*

Procedural changes related to the implementation of a Complete Streets policy may be internal, such as establishing checklists for project design (For an example, see PennDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Checklist), and setting up a systematic and clear exceptions process for determining policy applicability. The policy should establish procedures for how the implementing agency interacts with and solicits input from other agencies, including other local governmental departments, the MPO, or state transportation agencies. Improved interagency coordination ensures greater trust and transparency, permits external oversight of departmental activities, and facilitates greater connectivity for all modes and networks of roadways across jurisdictional boundaries.<sup>26</sup>

### *Design Criteria*

As previously observed, the implementation of Complete Streets will require modifications to current design guides for planners and engineers, and in some cases, these documents will need to be substantially rewritten. This was the case in Charlotte, NC, which created its completely new, award-winning Urban Street Design Guidelines (USDG) document after adopting a Complete Streets approach to roadway design.<sup>27</sup> In such situations, it is necessary to provide extensive training for staff to understand and apply the new standards to their work.<sup>28</sup> The guidelines, which should allow for some flexibility, can be enhanced by including pictures and examples of suggested Complete Streets modifications.

### *Context Sensitive*

If resources allow, bringing in national expertise to help develop a community-specific policy in a workshop can jumpstart the process and provide objective input. Pragmatism is key to crafting a policy that fits the community. Goals should be set high, of course, but there must be sufficient leeway in the document to allow the implementing agency the flexibility to do its job. A community may not be able to get the "Cadillac" version of a Complete Streets policy if it includes elements that are not feasible, and must work with the implementing agency to find compromises that still promote progress toward the community's goals.



*Creating a vision through strong design can provide many benefits.*



*Better lighting and dedicated parking enhance safety and convenience.*



*Creating a tree canopy and providing unique designs can spur economic development, like weekend farmers markets.*

<sup>26</sup> McCann, B. and Rynne, S. (2010). Complete Streets Best Policy and Implementation Practices. American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report Number 559. (Retrieved from [www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-bestpractices-chapter5.pdf](http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-bestpractices-chapter5.pdf))  
<sup>27</sup> Charlotte Urban Street Design Guidelines: <http://chameck.org/city/charlotte/transportation/plans/projects/pages/urban%20street%20design%20guidelines.aspx>  
<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

## TEN POLICY ELEMENTS



*North Boulevard, in Baton Rouge recently underwent construction to become more aesthetically pleasing and better accommodate for pedestrians.*



*In other parts of Baton Rouge, however, pedestrian access is limited by construction, large parking lots and lack of crosswalks.*

<sup>29</sup> McCann, B. and Rynne, S. (2010). Complete Streets Best Policy and Implementation Practices. American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report Number 559. (Retrieved from [www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-bestpractices-chapter5.pdf](http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-bestpractices-chapter5.pdf))

<sup>30</sup> Charlotte Urban Street Design Guidelines: <http://charmeck.org/city/charlotte/transportation/plans/projects/pages/urban%20street%20design%20guidelines.aspx>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

### *Performance Measures*

Performance measures provide quantitative and/or qualitative data for evaluating the performance of a given street segment, corridor, or entire network as an indicator of policy implementation success. In some communities, performance measures and benchmarks may be outlined with the community's transportation master plan. If so, this can provide the basis and mechanism for evaluating Complete Streets policy as well. If no such master plan exists, or if it is not specific enough, measurement, evaluation and reporting procedures should be established as part of policy implementation.<sup>29</sup>

Performance measures can be used to assess needs and identify current problems, such as scoring streets based on their safety, accessibility, and comfort for various modes. They may also be used to help rank projects in order to establish funding priorities. They can and should, of course, also be used to evaluate the impact of the policy by measuring performance before and after Complete Streets intervention, by collecting data on traffic volumes of all modes, tracking modal shifts, and evaluating changes in the number of crashes in a given area.<sup>30</sup>

### *Implementation*

A Complete Streets policy should, at a minimum, task the implementing agency (or an affiliated Complete Streets steering committee) with the creation of an implementation plan. In Seattle, for example, a steering committee was established within the city's Department of Transportation to

systematically review all documents that may need to be updated as result of policy adoption, and to define the operational changes needed to fully enact the policy. Other tasks a steering committee might take on include community engagement, coordination with law enforcement, and an educational campaign to address non-infrastructure elements of promoting Complete Streets goals.<sup>31</sup>

If the resources are available, it may be useful to host a workshop, such as those conducted by the National Complete Streets Coalition, to kickstart the process of implementing the policy. MPOs can also support communities at the implementation level. The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission (NORPC) has provided funding for two National Complete Streets Coalition workshops to help member parishes better understand Complete Streets and help them work toward local ordinances. Once additional policies begin to be adopted, MPOs can also help facilitate the implementation process in this way.

Over the long term, it helps to have some kind of advisory group—external to the implementation agency—regularly monitoring policy implementation progress. Organizations and individuals involved with the initial coalition pushing the policy forward should be included as a potential partner for making sure that the policy is making an impact.

## Local Case Study: New Orleans



In Louisiana, New Orleans was the first local jurisdiction to begin the process of developing and adopting a Complete Streets policy, thanks to a strong coalition of advocates, effective political leadership, and a broad outreach campaign designed to educate local elected officials, stakeholders, and the general public about the meaning and impact of designing streets for all users. New Orleans' Complete Streets Ordinance was signed into law in December, 2011.

This section summarizes the actions taken to adopt a Complete Streets policy in New Orleans, outlines the key players involved, and provides a model timeline from conception through implementation. In the case of New Orleans, City Councilmember Kristen Gisleson Palmer's Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC), an ad-hoc advisory body to the City Council Transportation Committee, which was developed explicitly to provide input on Complete Streets and other key issues related to transportation in the city, became the foundation for coalition building around this topic.

STAC began meeting in early 2011, and soon thereafter formed a work group specifically focused on developing and adopting Complete Streets policy. The work group's members included:

- Dr. John Renne, Director of the Merritt C. Becker, Jr. UNO Transportation Institute (Chair)
- Jamie Wine, Executive Director, Bike Easy
- Jason Tudor, Associate State Director of Outreach, AARP Louisiana
- Matt Rufo, KidsWalk Coalition at Tulane Prevention Research Center
- Ellen Soll, AICP, Planning Consultant
- Dan Jatres, Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, New Orleans Regional Planning Commission
- Jennifer Ruley, PE, Pedestrian and Bicycle Engineer, Advisor to the City of New Orleans, Louisiana Public Health Institute
- Tara Tolford, Research Associate, Merritt C. Becker, Jr. UNO Transportation Institute

### LEARN MORE

#### New Orleans Policy Resources

- » Complete Streets in New Orleans: A Case Study (Appendix C)
- » Complete Streets Resolution No. R-11-338 (Appendix C)
- » Complete Streets Ordinance, Calendar No. 28,766 (Appendix C);
- » Sustainable Transportation Advisory Committee Complete Streets Work Group Policy Primer (Appendix C)

## NEW ORLEANS POLICY ADOPTION

“By changing [Complete Streets] to a question of livability, health, and economic competitiveness, it becomes something a politician can relate to. It’s about the vibrancy of your community.”

**Jennifer Ruley, PE**

Pedestrian and Bicycle Engineer,  
Advisor to the City of New Orleans,  
Louisiana Public Health Institute

### **1 Coalition Building**

(Summer 2010 to February 2011)

The first step to developing a Complete Streets Policy in New Orleans was to organize a coalition of the city’s key supporters of bicycling, walking, transit, and improved safety and livability for all residents. In this case, City Councilmember Kristen Gisleson Palmer’s STAC, an ad-hoc advisory body to the City Council Transportation Committee developed explicitly to provide input on Complete Streets and other key issues related to transportation in the city, became the foundation for coalition building around this topic. STAC was chaired by Dr. John Renne, Director of the Merritt C. Becker, Jr. UNO Transportation Institute, and its membership was comprised of advocates and experts working in the transportation field, representing a diverse range of related issues and modes. The list also included stakeholder agencies such as the New Orleans Department of Public Works (DPW), the Regional Transit Authority, and the NORPC. The development of this coalition of supporters, which began informally in the years following Hurricane Katrina and coalesced with STAC, was a critical first step to advancing Complete Streets in New Orleans.

STAC began meeting in early 2011, and soon formed a work group focused on developing and adopting Complete Streets policy.

### **2 Identify a Political Champion**

(Summer 2010 to February 2011)

In addition to a broad coalition of Complete Streets advocates, New Orleans also needed a political champion to steer the policy through the political process. Already, coalition members working within city departments served as invaluable champions for cycling, walking, and transit, and for differently-abled road users of any mode. When Gisleson Palmer was elected to office, she identified transportation—particularly transit and active transportation—as a top priority for her office. Her advocacy and involvement with STAC provided the coalition with the political capital to access administrative officials and to advance legislation through the City Council.

In the first months of 2011, STAC worked with Councilmember Gisleson Palmer and her staff to establish goals for the Complete Streets work group—namely, to provide the City Council Transportation Committee with information on Complete Streets and to draft model policy language for further consideration.

## STEP BY STEP

### **3** *Policy Research and Development* (March 2011 to August 2011)

The STAC Complete Streets work group was tasked with lending their technical expertise to develop strong policy language for the City of New Orleans. They looked at national best practices, as well as the DOTD's recently adopted policy, to identify strengths in model policy language that could be emulated and areas of ambiguity where local policy efforts could be improved. Out of this research, the coalition presented the values of Complete Streets, model ordinance language, and STAC recommendations for how to proceed with policy adoption and implementation to the Transportation Committee. This presentation focused on the basics: what Complete Streets is about, what a policy would do and what questions and concerns about complete streets typically arise.

### **4** *The Complete Streets Resolution* (August 2011)

STAC and Councilmember Gisleson Palmer decided that the most appropriate course of action for smooth policy adoption would be a two part process, starting with a non-binding resolution directing the City Council's Transportation Committee to "review Complete Streets policies and ordinances from jurisdictions and agencies nationwide and draft and submit to the Council for consideration a Complete Streets ordinance."

This would allow STAC and Gisleson Palmer more time to conduct the education and outreach necessary to garner departmental, political, and public support, while serving as a litmus test of the Council's attitude toward the initiative. This way, when the final ordinance was eventually introduced, the council would already have a solid understanding of the topic at hand.

STAC was tasked with crafting a model resolution for Councilmember Gisleson Palmer's review. On August 4th, 2011, after approving and finalizing the resolution's language, Gisleson Palmer introduced the resolution. STAC repeated their introductory Complete Streets presentation for the full City Council as a way to explain what the resolution was about. Essentially, the resolution was an affirmation of the Council's support for the concept of Complete Streets and a directive for the transportation committee to continue to work on developing policy in support of the concept, to be brought before the council at a later date (see Appendix C). The Council did raise some additional questions, highlighting the need for greater outreach and education before an ordinance could be introduced, but the resolution passed unanimously in a 6-0 vote.

## NEW ORLEANS POLICY ADOPTION

### **5** *Education and Outreach* (August 2011-November 2011)

The first step for outreach is to identify a list of organizations, individuals, and departments—particularly those who have a role in implementation—that would be interested in or impacted by any proposed policy, and arrange to meet with them to discuss how Complete Streets might benefit their community. Critically, notes Tudor, “it’s always important to go to the agencies it’s going to directly affect first...elected officials will defer to the agency it’s going to affect: they consider them experts, and they’re the ones doing the work.” Other stakeholders may include utility companies, chambers of commerce, historic commissions, transit agencies, planning departments, health departments, recreation departments, tourism boards, etc.

The STAC Complete Streets work group developed a marketing and outreach strategy for all organizations and entities potentially impacted by a Complete Streets policy, the media, and the public. Ensuring and demonstrating the support of stakeholder agencies was seen as an essential step toward securing City Council support for the ordinance. Meanwhile, Gisleson Palmer agreed to meet with the other council members and certain city officials to help educate them and bring them on board as supporters of this policy. STAC liasons Jennifer Ruley and Matt Rufo, both working within the Department of Public Works, continued to be internal champions for the policy.

Other STAC members reached out to community groups and the media to create ‘buzz’ around the concept of Complete Streets and the proposed policy.

Key stakeholders and community groups with whom STAC met to discuss the proposed Complete Streets policy included:

- New Orleans City Council
- The Mayor and other key city administrators
- Department of Public Works (DPW)
- The New Orleans Chamber of Commerce
- The City Planning Commission (CPC)
- The Downtown Development District (DDD)
- The Regional Transit Authority (RTA)
- New Orleans Health Department
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD)
- Parks and Parkways
- New Orleans Recreation Department (NORD)
- The Levee Board
- City Park
- The Sewerage and Water Board and Utilities Committee
- Friends of Lafitte Corridor (FOLC)
- The Mayor's Advisory Committee for Citizens with Disabilities
- Bike Easy
- AARP

## STEP BY STEP

To discuss and advocate for Complete Streets, the team developed and distributed a simple four-page primer on Complete Streets (see Appendix C) as an educational tool in conjunction with presentations and in-person conversations. AARP also conducted street and sidewalk surveys and other hands-on activities in coordination with the outreach effort to highlight the need for this policy in the community.

As part of the process of educating stakeholders, decision makers, and the public about the concept of Complete Streets, several questions and concerns needed to be addressed. The team took the time to anticipate and craft responses to most of these concerns in advance, diminishing concerns and assuring audiences that the concept has been proven and can work for this city as well. Some of the concerns anticipated included basic questions about what Complete Streets look like, and how they benefit communities. These were readily addressed using the resources created by the National Complete Streets Coalition discussed above. Other issues required more in depth discussion and research, including:

- **Costs and Funding:** How much will it cost, and where is that money going to come from? STAC members came prepared to answer questions on cost with quantitative data on costs and benefits, and by explaining how the purpose of Complete Streets is to re-frame how we plan streets: if the operating assumption is that there should be accommodation for all users, active transportation facilities become an integral part of project design and budgeting, rather than an extra expense.
- **What does a Complete Street look like?** A common misperception encountered was that Complete Streets simply means putting a bike lane on every street. STAC members explained that Complete Streets will help ensure high-quality, context-sensitive infrastructure design and a consistent decision-making process, rather than a particular design treatment.
- **Liability and Implementation:** The group recognized that liability is a potential concern to address, although it did not become a major obstacle in the policy process. Relatedly, the team also answered questions about how this policy would impact the contracting and construction process, and who would be responsible for implementation and decision-making related to the policy.

“It’s always important to go to the agencies [the policy] is going to directly affect first... elected officials will defer to the agency it’s going to affect: they consider them experts, and they’re the ones doing the work.”

**Jason Tudor**

Associate State Director of Outreach,  
AARP Louisiana

## NEW ORLEANS POLICY ADOPTION



*As the streetcar system in New Orleans expands to serve more people, creating safe ways to access it must be a priority as well.*

### 6 *Ordinance Drafting and Revision*

*(August 2011-December 2011)*

Ultimately, DPW Director Lt. Col. Jernigan and Deputy Mayor Grant requested that a vote on the ordinance—first introduced November 17th 2011—be pushed back by a few weeks, so that they could have more time to review the document and ensure that it met their needs. Grant and Jernigan were concerned about two main issues: first, that the policy left too much ambiguity as to the role of the City Planning Commission in project-level decision making. They felt this would lead to conflicts and make the policy more difficult to implement. As a result, this language was reworded to ensure that full authority for decision making rests with DPW, with the City Planning Commission serving only as an advisory body. Their second concern was that the ordinance, as written, was not quite ‘complete’ enough, as it dealt only with above-ground infrastructure. The policy was reworded to include utility placement and coordination, and to ensure that implementation of the policy would strongly focus not only on providing for different kinds of users, but on providing infrastructure that would be more durable and sustainable.

### 7 *Ordinance Adoption* *(December 2011)*

Final amendments to the language of the policy were completed in December, and the ordinance went to a vote before City Council on December 15th, 2011. It was approved unanimously. The news received local, regional, and national media attention as the first local Complete Streets policy in the state of Louisiana.

## STEP BY STEP

# 8 Policy Implementation

(January 2012-December 2012)

The final ordinance language stipulated that DPW would have one year to fully adopt the Complete Streets ordinance and integrate Complete Streets into their planning processes. That deadline was added by the Director of the department himself, so as to establish a clear benchmark by which to measure progress. In addition, this implementation deadline ensures that DPW will be on track to consider how the policy will need to be incorporated into the department's 2013 budget proposal to the city.

In March, 2012, DPW and RPC conducted a kick-off workshop, funded by a technical assistance grant from the Environmental Protection Agency and Smart Growth America, to begin developing an implementation strategy. The workshop was attended by representatives from various city agencies and stakeholder organizations impacted by the policy. Out of this workshop, a final report has been produced for DPW that summarizes the workshop outcomes and outlines next steps toward full implementation: what procedures need to be changed, what documents need to be updated, what data needs to be collected, etc. DPW has also appointed a Complete Streets manager within the staff, to oversee development of the implementation plan. By the end of the year, Lt. Col. Jernigan plans to be able to present a comprehensive implementation plan to the city that will ensure that the policy's aims will be achieved.

“How you write the policy has a big impact. If it’s too prescriptive, it takes away the power to think and innovate. You want people to be challenged to think.”

**Jennifer Ruley, PE**

Pedestrian and Bicycle Engineer,  
Advisor to the City of New Orleans,  
Louisiana Public Health Institute

# Getting There

The City of New Orleans is well on their way to becoming a regional and national leader in active transportation infrastructure and policy, and thanks to the adoption of the Complete Streets ordinance, the hard work that has gone into creating opportunities for walking and biking will continue for years to come, through administrative and staff changes, tight budgets, and political shifts. Moreover, observes Dr. Renne, “the New Orleans metro area can be a kind of laboratory to get innovative ideas up and running, and can then work with other cities, parishes, towns, and MPOs to get that information out to communities all over the Gulf Coast. That’s the goal, is to be a resource to the entire state of Louisiana.”

In New Orleans, the process of adopting Complete Streets took time, but went very smoothly; in other communities, there may be additional roadblocks and challenges to overcome. The following section identifies some of these potential obstacles, and outlines a path forward based on the experiences of those involved in bringing Complete Streets to New Orleans as well as those involved in DOTD’s Complete Streets policy process.



# Overcoming Obstacles to Adoption



In New Orleans, there was virtually no public opposition to the policy, and very little pushback from decision makers about the importance and validity of the Complete Streets concept. However, this is in large part due to New Orleans' long history as a city with a high proportion of pedestrians, cyclists, and transit users. The city was used to accommodating these user groups to some extent, and thanks to the efforts of key players like Jennifer Ruley over the last several years, the Department of Public Works had already embraced the basic principles of the movement. Some of the remaining concerns, discussed previously, will be common to all communities seeking to increase accommodation for non-motorized traffic: cost, liability, and failure to understand what Complete Streets really are. In other communities in Louisiana, there may be additional obstacles to overcome, including a lack of departmental capacity to implement the policy, a greater need to re-write design standards or modify city codes, and outright citizen opposition to non-automobile transportation. As more policies are adopted, issues surrounding cross-jurisdictional planning and precedence may also arise.

### Costs and Funding

The costs of incorporating Complete Streets features into roadway designs can vary from nothing to a considerable expense (see Appendix C). As the National Complete Streets Coalition explains, "Complete Streets are sound financial investments in our communities that provide long-term benefits from investments.

An existing transportation budget can incorporate Complete Streets projects with little to no additional funding, accomplished through reprioritizing projects and allocating funds to projects that improve overall mobility. Many of the ways to create more complete roadways are low cost, fast to implement, and high impact."<sup>31</sup> Moreover, "building sidewalks and striping bike lanes have been shown to create more jobs than traditional car-focused transportation projects."<sup>32</sup>

However, in communities where sidewalks are uncommon, it may be very costly to retrofit roadways to include them. In some circumstances, it may be adequate to provide lesser accommodation, such as an expanded shoulder instead of a separated sidewalk. However, full compliance with Complete Streets will, from time to time, require more extensive—and expensive—infrastructure investments. Identifying resources to pay for these facilities will be an important part of the policy discussion, to ensure that routine accommodation is fully integrated into the implementing agency's budgeting process. In rapidly growing communities, it is important to remember that ignoring the needs of potential non-automobile users now may be more costly in the future; future growth may force retrofitting facilities to accommodate those users, which will cost much more than it would have if part of the original design and construction.

31 Complete Streets Policy Brochure, National Complete Streets Coalition. Retrieved from: <http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/cs-brochure-policy.pdf>  
32 Ibid



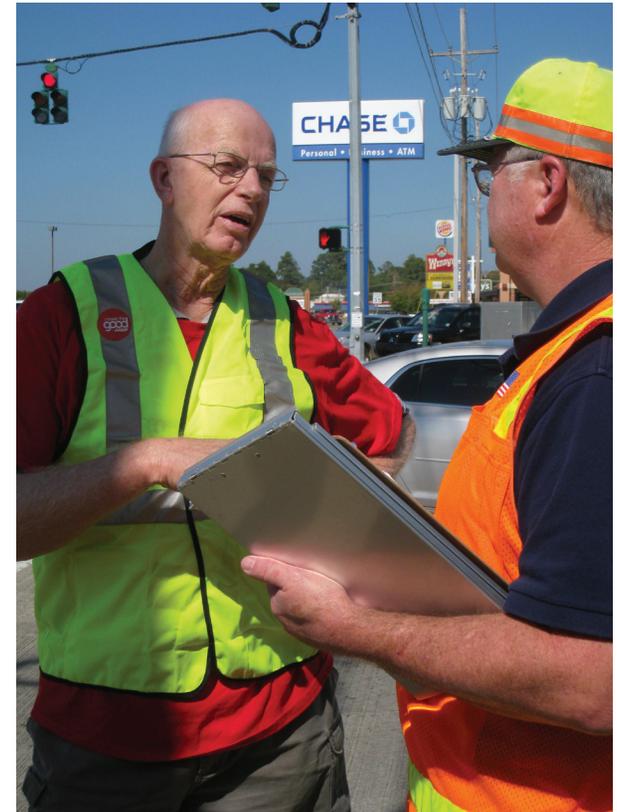
Additionally, as in New Orleans, questions and problems may persist regarding who will pay to maintain sidewalks once constructed. Some cities and towns, such as Colorado Springs, CO and Charlotte, NC, have addressed this issue by reclaiming responsibility for sidewalk maintenance, or instituting programs to assist residents with the burden of sidewalk maintenance and repair.<sup>33</sup>

In these fiscally constrained times, it may be necessary to start by making incremental improvements. While in past years federal programs such as Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, and Recreational Trails programs have provided funding for Complete Streets in communities, the recently reauthorized federal transportation bill, MAP-21, has cut funding for each of these programs by a third, making it even more competitive for communities to access federal money. Under the new funding streams, larger metro areas will receive more federal monies directly and funding for rural areas will depend on state DOT's, making it imperative for rural communities to demand sidewalk and bike lane funding and program prioritization at the state level. In growing communities, a budget-friendly approach to Complete Streets can be achieved by working with private developers to require that new developments include Complete Streets features and pedestrian-oriented design standards.

### Liability

As noted above, there should be no legal basis for communities to be concerned about any additional liability stemming from the construction or enhancement of infrastructure to accommodate all modes and users. Moreover, adds Jason Tudor, “if people are already using the streets, without accommodation, under state law anywhere two streets meet is an intersection, so that’s a potential liability issue...you might have more liability because there isn’t a crosswalk than if you installed one, because people are going to cross anyway. If you don’t put lighting or sidewalks, you have more liability... You as the decision maker need to make the decision that’s best for your constituents, and what’s best for your constituents is giving them the infrastructure they need to live full, independent lives.” Most importantly, in developing and discussing policy with stakeholders, communities should be prepared to discuss this issue and perhaps consult with a legal expert about the specific laws and precedents in their community, so as to be better prepared to answer any questions.

33 McCann, B. and Rynne, S. (2010). Complete Streets Best Policy and Implementation Practices. American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Report Number 559. Retrieved from: <http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-bestpractices-chapter5.pdf>



*An AARP volunteer discusses the state’s Complete Street policy with a DOTD engineer.*



## Getting There

### Understanding the Complete Streets Concept

Showing examples of Complete Streets that are comparable to what could result from a policy in their community helps residents and stakeholders visualize what a Complete Street really is, what it isn't, and how much they can vary from one street to the next. Once again, education and outreach to preemptively address questions is essential to building confidence in the community that this policy will result in high-quality, desirable environments of which the public and officials can be proud.

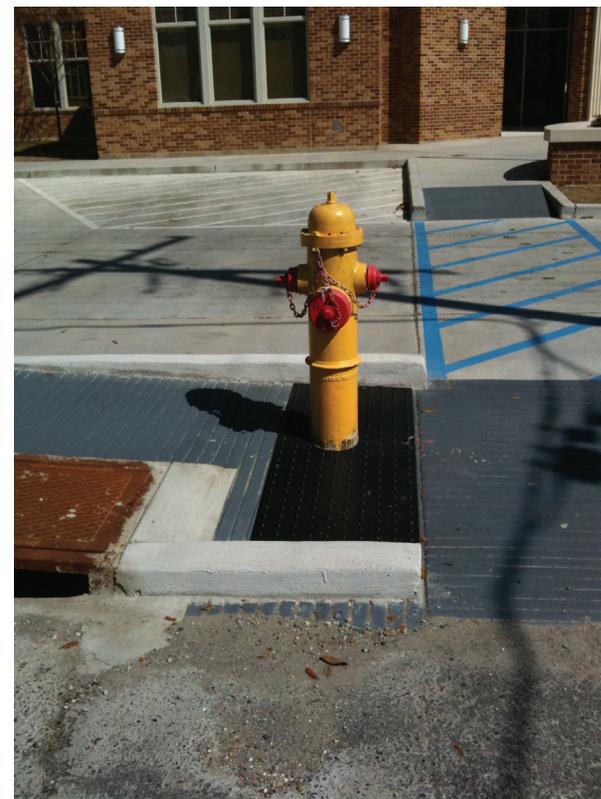
### Lack of Internal Capacity and Training

In communities without dedicated bicycle and pedestrian engineers, staff tasked with implementing this policy may require additional training and education. Departments may generally be reluctant to change their established methods and procedures. Identifying resources to train staff—such as through MPO-sponsored workshops on bicycle and pedestrian design, ADA compliance, stormwater management, or any number of related topics—is essential in order to increase departmental capacity and implement the policy. If you don't currently have the personnel to build Complete Streets, “you need to go look for, recruit, and develop the talent to pull it off,” states Lt. Col. Jernigan.

Furthermore, “education and training is an investment in the culture of your agency and your community,” adds Jennifer Ruley. “If we just had trainings in all the major cities, we would be amazed how much that changes the culture and the acceptance of [bicycle and pedestrian] facilities. A good designer is going to be challenged to try something new.”

### Current Design Standards and Codes

In areas where sidewalks and other pedestrian facilities are not the norm, there will be additional steps in the implementation process to consider: design standards may need to be significantly altered or rewritten; city zoning ordinances and building codes may need to be modified (e.g., to reduce parking requirements, permit residential sidewalk construction, etc). Complete Streets advocates should be prepared to research and address any shortcomings in current regulations that will need to be modified prior to the implementation of a Complete Streets policy. There may also be other environmental or utility challenges different from those encountered in New Orleans that need to be considered as part of a Complete Streets initiative. As the New Orleans process demonstrates, a full evaluation of such needs can be undertaken as part of the implementation process.



*While handicap accessible sidewalks are a crucial component of Complete Streets, obstructions like this fire hydrant must be taken into account as well.*



### Citizen Opposition

In many communities that do not have a history of constructing facilities for walking or biking, there may be community resistance to the idea of building sidewalks or bike lanes. This is particularly the case when doing so requires a taking of private property to expand the right of way, or may simply be born of a desire to preserve the ‘rural character’ of an area. However, the same laws and processes which apply to the construction of auto facilities should also apply to Complete Streets projects, explains Dr. Renne: “In a community, the local government has the Supreme Court mandate to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the community. From a legal perspective, we know we have a right to do these sorts of projects. Whatever the process is for widening roads for highways should be the same process for putting in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. If a project is in the service of protecting the health, safety, and welfare, the community doesn’t have the right to deny that.”

More generally, citizen opposition rooted in a basic opposition to planning and land use regulation may be encountered, and decision makers, resistant to change, may fail to see active modes as valid transportation options and be unwilling to fight for the community’s legal right to serve its citizens in this way. The best solution to this kind of pushback is to involve community leaders and technical experts who are seen as unbiased in the planning and outreach process, and to allow the implementing agency sufficient control to be able to make creative decisions about how to achieve policy goals.

### Inter-jurisdictional Issues

At some point, as more and more policies are adopted at different levels of government, there may be a question as to whose policy takes precedence when planning a road project that intersects or interacts with various jurisdictions, if, for example, a local policy has stricter requirements for Complete Streets adherence than a state or regional policy. This will vary based on each community’s relationship to parish level government, e.g., whether it has a Home Rule Charter. “Having an understanding of how your particular community is legally established and how it interacts with other levels of government is something you need to know in order to frame portions of your policy,” says Dan Jatres.

“Having an understanding of how your particular community is legally established and how it interacts with other levels of government is something you need to know in order to frame portions of your policy.”

**Dan Jatres**

Pedestrian and Bicycle Program Manager,  
New Orleans Regional Planning Commission

# Conclusion

As Louisiana moves into the 21st century, it is paramount for its communities to think of innovative ways of attracting and retaining the creative class, connecting workers of all wage levels to homes and jobs, providing quality of life that enhances family units, and offering infrastructure amenities allowing the elderly to age in place with dignity. Though Complete Streets are only one aspect of creating vibrant and inter-connected places, best practices show that transportation and mobility options underpin much of what a community is able to achieve. Yet policies are only as strong as their implementation, and the example of New Orleans and the State of Louisiana both show the need for engaged champions for Complete Streets in all communities. Having a strong policy framework is the foundation for innovative and inclusive street design, but it is also only the beginning; practitioners must be aware and supportive of a new policy structure, and community members should be engaged enough to hold officials accountable as well. Institutionalizing this kind of paradigm shift is not simple work, but the lasting effects of a healthy, inclusive, vibrant community are well worth the investment.



*Having policies to create streets for all users is only the beginning step in the Complete Streets process.*

# Appendices



## Appendix A

# National Resources

### The National Complete Streets Coalition

[www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org)

- 10 Elements of a Comprehensive Policy  
<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/policy/cs-policyelements.pdf>
- Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2010: A Story of Growing Strength  
<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-policyanalysis.pdf>
- Information on Complete Streets Interactive Workshops  
[www.completestreets.org/workshops](http://www.completestreets.org/workshops)
- Complete Streets Introductory Presentation (downloadable)  
<http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/#slideshow>
- Complete Streets Topical Fact Sheets  
<http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets/>
- Partnership for Active Communities' Model Complete Streets Communications Plan  
<http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/resources/>

### Alliance for Biking and Walking

[www.peoplepoweredmovement.org](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org)

- Updated Guide to Complete Streets Campaigns (2010)  
[http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/Updated\\_Guide\\_to\\_Complete\\_Streets\\_Campaigns.pdf](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/images/uploads/Updated_Guide_to_Complete_Streets_Campaigns.pdf)
- 2012 Benchmarking Report  
[http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012\\_benchmarking\\_report/](http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org/site/index.php/site/memberservices/2012_benchmarking_report/)

### AARP

[www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org)

- Planning Complete Streets for An Aging America (2009)  
[http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-08-2009/Planning\\_Complete\\_Streets\\_for\\_an\\_Aging\\_America.html](http://www.aarp.org/home-garden/livable-communities/info-08-2009/Planning_Complete_Streets_for_an_Aging_America.html)
- The Getting Around Guide. An AARP Guide to Walking, Bicycling and Public Transportation  
<http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/aarp-gettingaroundguide.pdf>
- Sidewalks and Streets Survey Toolkit  
[http://www.chfwcnyc.org/Tools/BroadCaster/Upload/Project13/Docs/AARP\\_Sidewalks\\_and\\_Streets\\_Survey.pdf](http://www.chfwcnyc.org/Tools/BroadCaster/Upload/Project13/Docs/AARP_Sidewalks_and_Streets_Survey.pdf)

# Appendix A

American Planning Association

[www.planning.org](http://www.planning.org)

- Complete Streets Best Policy and Implementation Practices. American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service Report Number 559. Edited by Barbara McCann and Suzanne Rynne. Available for Purchase <http://www.planning.org/research/streets/index.htm>

Federal Highway Administration

[www.fhwa.dot.gov](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov)

- Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Guidance  
[http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle\\_pedestrian/guidance/index.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/index.cfm)

Political Economy Research Institute

[www.peri.umass.edu](http://www.peri.umass.edu)

- Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts. (2011). By H. Barrett-Peltier.  
[http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/published\\_study/PERI\\_ABikes\\_June2011.pdf](http://www.peri.umass.edu/fileadmin/pdf/published_study/PERI_ABikes_June2011.pdf)

Pedestrian Bicycle Information Center

[www.walkinginfo.org](http://www.walkinginfo.org)

- The Power of 25: Advocacy Strategies for Creating Livable Communities (free webinar presentation by Peter Lagerwey)  
[http://www.walkinginfo.org/training/pbic/lc\\_webinar\\_11-12-2009.cfm?training/pbic/webinar\\_11-12-2009.cfm](http://www.walkinginfo.org/training/pbic/lc_webinar_11-12-2009.cfm?training/pbic/webinar_11-12-2009.cfm)

## Appendix B

# Louisiana Complete Streets Policy Overview

### 1. Louisiana Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

In 2009, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD) completed the Louisiana Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, in order to better integrate walking and bicycling into the transportation system statewide. More than 300 community members participated in a series of six public meetings around the state as part of this two-year planning process, facilitated by Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc. and the Toole Design Group, along with a Project Advisory Committee of active transportation advocates and representatives from the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan includes the following key policy recommendations to the LDOTD (as summarized by LDOTD):

#### **Policy 1: Pedestrian & Bicycle Accommodation Policy:**

- The Department will consider the needs of pedestrians and bicycles at appropriate stages during all projects and use current nationally recognized planning and design guidelines, manuals and best practices to ensure facilities are built to appropriate standards.

#### **Policy 2: Pedestrian & Bicycle Safety Policy:**

- The Department will provide for the safety and comfort of pedestrians and bicyclists and make every effort to reduce crashes and injuries associated with these modes.

#### **Policies 3 and 4: Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Policies**

- Restricting bicycle and pedestrian access should not be considered as an appropriate strategy with the exception of those limited access facilities where pedestrians and bicycles are prohibited and other locations where allowing such access would endanger bicyclists and pedestrians.
- The Department will strive to ensure projects do not become barriers to walking and bicycling by providing appropriate safe crossings and ensure transportation projects comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) and the Public Right of Ways Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

Though not explicitly designed as a Complete Streets policy, the concept of Complete Streets is embedded throughout the final plan report, and the plan includes engineering guidance and a policy action plan listing steps that need to be taken in order to implement the above policy recommendations. This plan provides an excellent framework for the state's Complete Streets efforts.

# Appendix B

## 2. Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development's Complete Streets Policy

### **Complete Streets Work Group, 2009-2010**

Without being signed into effect as official policy, however, the state's Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan lacks the authority to ensure that Complete Streets concepts are integrated into the DOTD planning process. Near the end of the bicycle and pedestrian master plan process, interest in "Complete Streets" as a policy catch-phrase took off, and a coalition of supporters, including the Center for Planning Excellence and AARP, began to coalesce around turning this concept into legislation at the state level. At the national level, AARP—also a member of the National Complete Streets Coalition—supports Complete Streets policy as part of their "Livable Communities" agenda.

After conversations with DOTD's Secretary of Transportation, AARP decided that the best approach to achieving policy change in Louisiana was through the formation of a formal DOTD work group with governmental, institutional, and advocacy partners from around the state, tasked with developing an official Complete Streets policy for Louisiana. To that end, AARP's Livable Communities Council formed a Complete Streets Advisory group, which worked to pass a house concurrent resolution requesting the formation of this work group at DOTD. "In Louisiana," observes AARP Louisiana's Associate State Director of Outreach, Jason Tudor, "change happens incrementally... so we decided that the best approach was to pull a work group together with DOTD so that instead of making a policy for them, we were making a policy with them." This resolution (Senate Concurrent Resolution 110) was passed almost unanimously in the house and senate during the 2009 session.

DOTD funded Burke-Kleinpeter Inc. to facilitate this work group as an extension of their work on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The work group consisted of a broad and diverse roster of 35 stakeholders and policy makers, as stipulated within the resolution. The first meeting served as an introduction to Complete Streets for most attendees, and a chance to define the work group's goals and agenda. Work group members included staff from ten DOTD departments, advocates, other governmental agencies, and academic institutions.

Subsequent work group meetings were intended to enhance all attendees' level of understanding regarding Complete Streets and to develop the policy. At the second meeting, DOTD brought in experts from the National Complete Streets Coalition to educate the work group, share a national perspective and experiences, and begin drafting the policy. This included a discussion of how bicycle and pedestrian facilities were already included in the guiding documents (e.g. AASHTO) that DOTD engineers already use.

By the third meeting, the work group evaluated the draft policy language developed with the National Complete Streets Coalition in conjunction with the FHWA's existing policies, the state's Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan, several technical memos developed by work group staff, and combined the most important elements of these to achieve a policy framework firmly rooted in both national best practices and locally identified needs. The work group held a fourth meeting to finalize wording and fine-tune the policy to ensure that all stakeholders were satisfied with the language therein.

# *Appendix B*

## **Policy Adoption and Final Report**

Ultimately, DOTD, with input from AARP and the rest of the work group, decided that rather than introducing and passing a statewide law, it would be preferable and sufficient for DOTD to adopt an internal policy. It was established during the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Planning process that in some instances, DOTD was already including bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure in their projects. However, as with any governmental agency, the needs invariably exceed the resources available, and budget constraints often resulted in these elements being left out in the final design, in order to cut costs. The purpose, then, of a strongly written administrative policy, is to ensure that these elements are not seen as ‘extras,’ and are fully considered and prioritized at all stages of project design.

In 2010, DOTD signed the policy, demonstrating a commitment to a Complete Streets approach to new or substantially rebuilt infrastructure. This policy was recognized as the second best state policy in the country by the National Complete Streets Coalition in 2011 for its strength and comprehensiveness.

The work group produced a final report in July 2010 based on their efforts, thoroughly explaining Complete Streets, and providing a framework for implementation of the DOTD policy. This report also provides extensive information on how to advance Complete Streets throughout Louisiana, and the MPO and local level, and is a valuable resource for local jurisdictions.

## **Implementation**

In order to effectively implement this policy, direction and authority must come from the highest level at DOTD. The work group’s final report included a list of options and recommendations for implementation, based on national best practices as well as previous recommendations identified within the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. However, it’s up to the implementing agency to refer to these planning documents, assign tasks based on these recommendations, and to develop a timeline for when they should occur.

Implementation of the state’s Complete Streets policy is underway, but has been generally perceived as slow. In large part, this is due to the nature and scale of the projects DOTD is responsible for: planning processes are long, and projects designed after the adoption of this policy are only now reaching final design or construction phases. However, certain elements of the implementation process can certainly be improved upon in the future, and provide important lessons for localities seeking policy adoption. Most importantly, a clear implementation plan and timeline should be established, and this should include reporting and benchmarking elements to ensure the agency is on track. Public perception is important here as well; even if it takes a while to see completed projects on the ground, informing the public about how and when the policy is being implemented reassures stakeholders.

Efforts are currently underway to bring together another Complete Streets working group at DOTD to assist in ensuring that the implementation of this policy is on track. Louisiana House Concurrent Resolution 100, which passed during the 2012 legislative session, orders the work group to reconvene to this end.

# *Appendix B*

## **Lessons Learned**

- Change within a large agency is incremental; start with small achievable steps rather than massive overhauls.
- Bringing in unbiased, impartial outside experts helps bring credibility to the issue and ensure that both advocates' and agencies' needs are met.
- Emphasize that Complete Streets ideas are already codified within the guiding documents already in use (e.g. ASSHTO, EDSMS). Speak the same 'language' as your audience.
- One challenge encountered during this policy development process was that in some instances, the delegates sent by agencies to attend the work group meetings were not really the decision makers for those agencies, and insufficient communication between delegates and decision makers occurred. Elected officials and top administrators need to be fully informed about Complete Streets and the issues it addresses throughout the process, so there are no surprises at the end.
- Ensure that there is support for the policy at the top level within the implementing agency, and encourage the prompt development of an implementation plan and timeline within that agency.
- Focus on the community goals identified throughout the process; actions taken to implement the policy should be rooted in those goals and revisited with every project.

## Appendix C

# STAC Complete Streets Policy Primer

### Complete Streets Fact Sheet

#### What are Complete Streets?

- Complete Streets are planned, designed, built and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street.

#### What Does a Complete Street Look Like?

- A Complete Street might include sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible transit stops, frequent, safe and convenient crossings, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, and more. Complete Streets balance safety and convenience for everyone using the road.

#### Who Benefits from Complete Streets?

- **Children:** Complete Streets provide children with opportunities to walk, bike and play in a safe environment. Children are more likely to walk to school when sidewalks are present, and when street crossings are safe. Complete streets encourage kids to walk, bike and be physically active.
- **Older Americans:** By 2025, one in four Americans will be over the age of 65. Complete Streets Policies offer the opportunity to improve travel options for older Americans, allowing them to retain independence and maintain an active lifestyle.<sup>i</sup>
- **Transit Users:** Complete Streets address the first and last mile of every transit trip by connecting people to transit. Improving access to transit can reduce dependence on more costly alternatives, such as private transportation services and paratransit.
- **People with Disabilities:** Streets in our communities must allow safe and comfortable travel for everyone, including people with disabilities, who use wheelchairs, have diminished vision, can't hear well, or for people who move more slowly. Nearly one in five Americans face at least one of these challenges.
- **Motorists:** Complete Streets makes driving safer by reducing travel speeds, making the transportation system easier to navigate, and simplifying visual cues and information. Complete Streets improve safety for not just pedestrians and bicyclists; the implementation of Complete Streets through "road diets" has reduced vehicle-vehicle crashes by 29%.<sup>ii</sup>

#### Who has Complete Streets Policies?

- To date, there are 283 jurisdictions in the United States with Complete Streets Policies, including 25 states. The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) has a Complete Streets Policy, which was adopted in 2010 and has been ranked the #2 state policy in the nation.<sup>iii</sup> The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission established a Complete Streets Advisory Committee in 2010 and is a partner with DOTD in implementing Complete Streets throughout metro New Orleans. They are in the process of developing a regional Complete Streets Policy. Upon adoption of a Complete Streets Ordinance, New Orleans would become the first municipality in Louisiana to have a Complete Streets Policy.

# Appendix C

## New Orleans Complete Streets Policy FAQ

Why is a Complete Streets Policy needed?

- The City has made considerable progress in recent years toward the implementation of Complete Streets such as improving street design standards to be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, expanding the bikeway network, seeking funding for strategic non-motorized safety improvements, expanding transit options, and dedicating local bond resources to non-motorized facilities. Much of this progress was made possible through the support of local advocacy organizations, the assistance of specialized grant-funded professionals, and resources from non-City agencies. A Complete Streets Policy will ensure that this progress is sustainable and that systematic and thoughtful consideration is given to the needs of ALL users.

Does a Complete Streets Policy put the burden of repairing sidewalks on the City?

- Currently the City holds property owners responsible – though not accountable - for repairing sidewalks. The City’s sidewalk maintenance policy could be reviewed to ensure consistency with the goals of a Complete Streets Policy.

Which City agency would be responsible for implementing Complete Streets?

- While the Department of Public Works is primarily responsible for overseeing streets projects, a Complete Streets Policy could and should, systemize interagency coordination with agencies such as City Planning Commission, Parks and Parkways Department, Capital Projects Administration, Safety and Permits, and others.

How will property owners be affected by a Complete Streets Policy?

- Complete Streets requirements primarily impact the public right of way, and not privately owned lots/parcels. However, zoning and planning reviews should look beyond the needs of cars and include high-quality non-motorized facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

How does a Complete Streets approach help the City implement the Master Plan?

- Adopting a Complete Streets Policy and approach will implement Goal 3.A of chapter 11 of the Master Plan, which calls for the City to establish and adopt a Complete Streets Policy.

Are off-street trails considered part of Complete Streets?

- Every Complete Street will look different, depending on the context of the road and surrounding uses, the existing and intended future users and other factors. Off-street trails compliment, support, and enhance a strong Complete Streets network. In many cases, off-street trails can connect users to and from useful on-street walking and bicycling facilities or provide a safe and convenient bypass around treacherous intersections or crossings.

How can the Department of Public Works implement Complete Streets?

- Written policies and procedures that give engineers and other staff consistent guidance on creating Complete Streets can make it easier to ensure compliance with the policy, and ensure that it is successfully implemented. This can take the form of checklists or decision trees. Because the DOTD has already adopted its own Complete Streets Policy, some, but not all, future road projects in New Orleans will already follow such a procedure. The DOTD procedure can serve as a useful foundation for a procedure that is tailored to New Orleans’ preferences and unique environment.

# Appendix C

## Complete Streets Costs and Economic Considerations

### What are the cost considerations and who pays for them?

In recent years, local bond funds and federal funding sources have supported Complete Street projects. Examples of recent City of New Orleans projects demonstrate that non-motorized treatments are incidental costs already included in projects. For example, S. Carrollton Avenue from Claiborne Avenue to St. Charles Avenue (1.2 miles) was recently repaved under the FHWA Submerged Roads Program. Federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds were applied to add a bike lane, replace broken sidewalks, and install Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant curb ramps. The total cost of these components as a percentage of the total construction cost (\$3.4M) amounted to 13% (partial sidewalk replacement-11%; curb ramps-2%; and bike lane and signage-0.3%). Inevitably there may be times when adding a non-motorized improvement to a street project in order to make it a “Complete Street,” will increase the cost of a project. A Complete Streets Policy can and should include a provision for an exception in cases where the cost for the bicycle or pedestrian improvement will be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. This exception is in line with Federal Highway Administration guidance and with best practices for Complete Streets Policies.

### Do Complete Streets Cost More?

There are many examples of low cost and no cost Complete Streets solutions. Consider the following examples:

- Many examples of New Orleans Complete Streets simply involve adjusting lane widths through restriping.
- When drainage grates are replaced, they can be turned perpendicular to the direction of traffic. This no cost decision prevents bicyclist from being thrown if their tire is trapped or from swerving into traffic to avoid the grate.
- Traffic signals can be re-timed to provide additional crossing time to pedestrians. In some cases, a bulb out or median island can be added (a low cost solution) to balance the needs of the pedestrians with those of the motorists. Pilot studies have found a 52% pedestrian injury collision rates with the installation of pedestrian countdown signal heads.

### Complete Streets pay dividends

Improving opportunities for walking, biking and transit use has economic benefits for communities which range from improved health of citizens, reduced fatalities, reduced household transportation costs and increases in property values and business sales. Complete Streets create vibrant places for economic activity. The following points illustrate just a few of the economic benefits that communities have seen as a result of these investments:

- Walkability has been found to raise housing values. A study of 15 metropolitan areas found that houses in communities with above average walkability command on average, \$4,000 to \$34,000 over similar areas with average levels of walkability.<sup>v</sup>
- Traffic Calming and Bicycle Lanes increase sales. Sixty-six percent of merchants located in the Mission District of San Francisco believed that bicycle lanes had a positive impact on their business or sales.<sup>vi</sup>
- Bicycle Friendliness attracts young professionals. Results of Portland, OR surveys found that bike-friendliness was a factor in 62% of respondent’s decision to move there and 78% of people’s decision to visit there.<sup>vii</sup>

i National Complete Streets Coalition, Fact Sheets: Older Adults. <http://www.completestreets.org/complete-streets-fundamentals/factsheets/older-adults/>.

ii Federal Highway Administration, Evaluation of Lane Reduction “Road Diet” Measures on Crashes. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/10053/10053.pdf>.

iii National Complete Streets Coalition, Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2010: A Story of Growing Strength. <http://www.completestreets.org/webdocs/resources/cs-policyanalysis.pdf>.

iv Federal Highway Administration, Policy Statement on Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure, 2000. <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ENVIRONMENT/bikeped/design.htm>.

v CEO’s for Cities, How Walkability Raises Home Values in U.S. Cities, August 2009.

vi Drennan, Emily, Economic Effects of Traffic Calming on Urban Small Businesses. December 2003.

vii Bike Portland. <http://bikeportland.org/2009/01/28/60000-free-bike-maps-a-look-at-transportation-options-survey-results/>.

## Appendix D

# New Orleans Complete Streets Resolution

### RESOLUTION

NO. R-11-338

CITY HALL: August 4, 2011

BY:  COUNCILMEMBER GISLESON PALMER

#### SECONDED BY:

**WHEREAS**, the New Orleans 2030 – A Master Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century calls for City of New Orleans to establish and adopt a Complete Streets Policy; and

**WHEREAS**, a Complete Streets Policy ensures a fully integrated transportation system, by planning, funding, designing, constructing, managing and maintaining a complete and multi-modal network that achieves and sustains mobility, while encouraging and safely accommodating pedestrian, bicyclists, transit users and motorists regardless of age or ability; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) promotes and encourages state and local governments to adopt Complete Streets policies in order to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems; and

**WHEREAS**, more than 200 jurisdictions and agencies across the country have adopted Complete Streets policies including state Departments of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, counties and municipalities; and

**WHEREAS**, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) adopted an internal Complete Streets Policy in July 2010 that applies to all transportation projects that involve federal or state funding or approval; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Complete Streets Coalition's Policy Analysis 2010 Report identified DOTD's Complete Streets Policy as the second best statewide policy in the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the current DOTD Complete Streets Policy does not apply to local streets or locally funded projects; **NOW, THEREFORE**

**BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS**, that the New Orleans City Council hereby requests the Transportation Committee to review Complete Streets policies and ordinances from jurisdictions and agencies nationwide; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the New Orleans City Council hereby requests the Transportation Committee to draft and submit to the Council for consideration a Complete Streets ordinance.

**THE FOREGOING RESOLUTION WAS READ IN FULL, THE ROLL WAS CALLED ON THE ADOPTION THEREOF AND RESULTED AS FOLLOWS:**

**YEAS:**

**NAYS:**

**ABSENT:**

**AND THE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED.**

# New Orleans Complete Streets Ordinance

ORDINANCE  
(AS AMENDED)  
CITY OF NEW ORLEANS

CITY HALL: November 17, 2011

CALENDAR NO. 28,766

NO. 24706 MAYOR COUNCIL SERIES

BY: COUNCILMEMBERS GISLESON PALMER, CLARKSON, GRANDERSON,  
GUIDRY, HEAD, HEDGE-MORRELL AND JOHNSON

AN ORDINANCE to amend and re-ordain Article II of Chapter 146 of the Code of the City of New Orleans to establish a Complete Streets program for the City of New Orleans, to provide guiding principles and practices requiring that all transportation improvements are planned, designed and constructed to encourage walking, bicycling and transit use, while also promoting the full use of, and safe operations for all users of the City's transportation network.

WHEREAS, according to the 2009 American Community Survey, approximately 20% of New Orleans households do not own a personal automobile; and

WHEREAS, the City Council, with the Mayor concurring adopted Resolution R-11-338 that endorses Complete Street principles; and

WHEREAS, the Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: New Orleans 2030 expressly states that developing "roadways that integrate vehicle transportation with bicycling and walking" is a transportation goal of the City of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, the Plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: New Orleans 2030 directs the City of New Orleans to "[e]stablish and adopt a 'Complete Streets' [program] that moves people and freight safely by integrating various transportation modes" as a strategy for achieving this goal; and

WHEREAS, a Complete Streets program will balance access, mobility, health and safety needs of all users, which include pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users of all ages and abilities, as well as buses, streetcars, and commercial and private motorized vehicles; and

WHEREAS, a Complete Streets program will create a comprehensive, integrated and connected transportation for the City of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, in 2010, the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD) adopted an internal Complete Streets program to "create a comprehensive, integrated, [and] connected transportation network for Louisiana that balances access, mobility, [and] health and safety needs of motorists, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities"; and

WHEREAS, numerous state transportation agencies including LADOTD, multiple Metropolitan Planning Organizations, counties and municipalities nationwide have adopted Complete Streets programs; and

WHEREAS, transportation improvements on City streets and bridges that have been recognized as contributing to a Complete Streets program include an array of facilities and amenities, such as sidewalks, bike lanes, bike racks, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, street and sidewalk lighting; targeted pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements; access improvements in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act; public transit facilities accommodation including, but not limited, to pedestrian access improvement to transit stops and stations; street trees and landscaping; drainage and storm water management; and street furniture and other amenities; now therefore,

1           **SECTION 1. THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS HEREBY**  
2 **ORDAINS**, that Article II of Chapter 146 of the Code of the City of New Orleans is hereby  
3 amended and reordained to read as follows:

# Appendix E

4 “Sec. 146-36 – Complete Streets program.

5 (a) Purpose. The Council of the City of New Orleans shall establish and implement a  
6 Complete Streets program by requiring that all planning, designing, funding,  
7 operation and maintenance of the City’s transportation system to accommodate and  
8 encourage travel for all users in a balanced, responsible and equitable manner  
9 consistent with, and supportive of, the surrounding community.

10 (b) Definitions.

11 (1) Crash data, as used in this section, means data, including but not limited to,  
12 location, severity and demographics regarding crashes involving vehicles  
13 and/or pedestrians.

14 (2) User mode share data, as used in this section, means the number of users or  
15 percentage of users for particular modes of transportation, such as private  
16 motor vehicles, public transit, bicycling or walking.

17 (3) Vehicle, as used in this Section, means every device by which persons or  
18 things may be transported upon a public street, highway, or bridge. A bicycle  
19 or a ridden animal shall be a vehicle, and a trailer or semitrailer shall be a  
20 separate vehicle.

21 (c) Scope. The Complete Streets program shall apply to all phases of design,  
22 development and implementation. It shall also apply to the entirety of transportation  
23 facilities’ lifetimes, including planning, design, construction, funding, operation and  
24 maintenance.

25 (d) Establishment of Complete Streets goals, metrics, policies, standards and guidelines.

- 26 1. The director of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and director of the City  
27 Planning Commission (CPC) shall develop goals and metrics for the Complete  
28 Streets policy based on recognized best practices including but not limited to the  
29 National Complete Streets Coalition Complete Streets Policy Analysis 2010 and  
30 the American Planning Association Complete Streets: Best Policy and  
31 Implementation Practices.
- 32 2. The director of DPW shall adapt, develop and adopt departmental policies,  
33 design criteria, standards, and guidelines based upon recognized best practices in  
34 street design, construction and operations including but not limited to the latest  
35 editions of American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials  
36 (AASHTO) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets; AASHTO  
37 Guide for Planning, Designing, and Operating Pedestrian Facilities; AASHTO  
38 Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities; Institute of Transportation  
39 Engineers (ITE) Designing Walkable Urban Thoroughfares: A Context Sensitive  
40 Approach; National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO)  
41 Urban Bikeway Design Guide; U.S. Access Board: Public Right-of-Way  
42 Accessibility Guidelines; Highway Capacity Manual and Highway Safety  
43 Manual. In doing so, DPW shall consider methods of providing development  
44 flexibility within safe design parameters, such as context-sensitive design  
45 solutions. DPW shall also attempt to employ all solutions consistent with and  
46 sensitive to the context of the project.

# Appendix E

- 47 (e) Collaboration. DPW shall work with all appropriate agencies as necessary to  
48 effectively develop, operate and maintain bicycle and pedestrian networks. Such  
49 agencies include, but are not limited to, LADOTD, the New Orleans Regional  
50 Planning Commission, City Planning Commission, and Regional Transit Authority.
- 51 (f) Exemptions. DPW and the City Planning Commission may exempt part of all of a  
52 specific roadway segment from the requirements of this Section by issuing in  
53 writing, documentation. Such exemptions must be approved in writing by the  
54 directors of DPW and City Planning Commission. Exemptions may be granted:
- 55 (1) If the project involves a roadway on which non-motorized use is prohibited  
56 by law. In this case, DPW and City Planning Commission shall make a  
57 demonstrable effort to accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and other non-  
58 motorized users elsewhere;
  - 59 (2) If DPW and the City Planning Commission document an absence of current  
60 and future need or use of the affected area by pedestrians, bicyclists, and  
61 other non-motorized users, and that such an absence would likely continue  
62 despite compliance with this Section;
  - 63 (3) If DPW in consultation with City Planning Commission conclude that the  
64 cost of accommodation of all users is excessively disproportionate to the  
65 need or probable use of the affected area. Under this Section, excessively  
66 disproportionate may be defined as 20% or more of the total project cost; or
  - 67 (4) If DPW in consultation with City Planning Commission conclude that the  
68 project involves routine, minor maintenance activities designed to keep the  
69 City's transportation assets in serviceable condition, including but not

- 70 limited to, cleaning, pothole and catch basin repair, or temporary measures on  
71 detour or haul routes. Under this Section, overlay projects shall not qualify  
72 as routine, minor maintenance activities.
- 73 (g) Implementation. In support of the Complete Streets program, DPW in consultation  
74 with City Planning Commission shall:
- 75 (1) Assign the Design Advisory Committee oversight or create an entity tasked  
76 with oversight of the implementation and progress of the Complete Streets  
77 program;
  - 78 (2) Develop, modify and update City plans, manuals, rules, regulations and  
79 programs in accordance with this Section;
  - 80 (3) Dedicate sufficient staff to implement Complete Streets guidelines and  
81 practices into City projects;
  - 82 (4) Dedicate sufficient resources to train pertinent staff on the content, guiding  
83 principles and best practices to effectively implement the Complete Streets  
84 program; and
  - 85 (5) Dedicate sufficient resources to the collection and analysis of data, such as  
86 crash data and mode share, necessary to guide and inform the decision-  
87 making process.
  - 88 (6) Ensure the Complete Streets Program for the City of New Orleans is fully  
89 implemented not later than 1 December 2012.

# Appendix E

90 (h) Complete Streets program performance evaluation. In support of the  
91 Complete Streets program, DPW and the City Planning Commission shall  
92 establish a reporting procedure that annually measures the success of the  
93 Complete Streets program.

ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW ORLEANS DECEMBER 15, 2011

JACQUELYN B. CLARKSON  
PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL

DELIVERED TO THE MAYOR ON DECEMBER 16, 2011

APPROVED:

~~DISAPPROVED:~~ DECEMBER 22, 2011

MITCHELL J. LANDRIEU  
MAYOR

RETURNED BY THE MAYOR ON DECEMBER 27, 2011 AT 2:55 P.M.

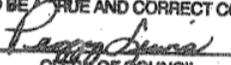
PEGGY LEWIS  
CLERK OF COUNCIL

ROLL CALL VOTE:

YEAS: Clarkson, Gisleson Palmer, Granderson, Guidry, Head, Hedge-Morrell, Johnson - 7

NAYS: 0

ABSENT: 0

THE FOREGOING IS CERTIFIED  
TO BE TRUE AND CORRECT COPY  
  
CLERK OF COUNCIL

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