

**CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE**

POLICY MEMORANDUM NO. 134 (R)

October 5, 2020

TO: All Departments, Boards, Agencies and Commissions

FROM: Gilbert Montaña, Chief Administrative Officer 

SUBJECT: Complete Streets Policy & Program

I. PURPOSE

This memorandum is to establish the City's Complete Streets Policy and Program to create a more comprehensive and integrated transportation network that balances the needs of all of its users in order to promote economic development, improve public safety, foster more livable communities, encourage healthier lifestyles, promote geographic and socio-economic equity, and develop a balanced street ecology for sustainability and resilience.

II. BACKGROUND

As part of the Plan for the 21st Century: New Orleans 2030 (Master Plan), the City set transportation goals that include continued investment in rebuilding and maintaining roads and bridges, integration of land use decision making with transportation projects, roadways that integrate motor vehicle transportation with bicycling and walking, fast and efficient mass transit supported by transit-oriented communities, enhanced intercity transportation, freight transportation systems that serve the economy while respecting neighborhoods, and transportation infrastructure that is resilient to flooding and other natural hazards. In support of these goals, the Master Plan recommends the establishment of a Complete Streets Policy which moves people and freight safely with the prioritization of the non-motorized user through the integration of infrastructure for alternative transportation modes.

III. LEGAL AUTHORITY

Ordinance No. 24,706 M.C.S. of the City Code Section 146-36 requires the establishment of a Complete Streets Program by requiring that all planning, designing, funding, and operation of the City's transportation system accommodate and encourage travel for all users in a balanced, responsible and equitable manner consistent with and supportive of the surrounding community. Section 4-302(5) of the Home Rule Charter authorizes the Chief Administrative Officer to "prescribe accepted standards of administrative practice to be followed by all offices, departments, and boards."

IV. COMPLETE STREETS POLICY & PROGRAM

A. Policy. All City departments in the planning, design, construction, operation and maintenance of all Projects adjacent to or within the public right-of-way, shall take a comprehensive and integrated approach within the context of the City's Complete Streets Program that considers and appropriately balances the needs of all users to include but not limited to: people driving, people using public transportation, people walking, people bicycling, users with disabilities, and including water distribution, sewerage collection, stormwater management facilities and all above- and below-ground utilities to achieve the overall purpose of each project in support of the City's Master Plan and meet the goals of the Complete Streets Program.

B. Policy Goals. The goals of the City's Complete Streets Program are as follows:

1. **Safety.** Reduce hazards and prioritize safety, including during construction and repair work, for all users traveling in the public right-of-way, especially vulnerable users including persons with disabilities, children, seniors, people walking, and people bicycling through best practices and effective countermeasures.
2. **Connectivity.** Increase the connectivity of walking, bicycling, transit, and freight transportation networks to create a comprehensive, efficient, and integrated regional system;
3. **Evaluation.** Regular evaluation and reporting of performance measures including but not limited to ridership, equity, safety, health outcomes, project priorities, community participation, and staff training;
4. **Multi-modal Accommodation.** In planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operation, give full consideration to accommodation of all users, be they people walking, people with disabilities, people bicycling, people using public transit, or people driving to ensure that the public right-of-way is accessible to all users, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.;
5. **Livable Communities.** Foster livable communities and increase public health through vibrant, active, comfortable streetscapes that complement land use and economic development and encourage more walking, bicycling, and transit use, and less driving. Prioritize mixed-use, transit-oriented communities that take into consideration the cultural context of the existing community to support affordable housing and discourage displacement;
6. **Equity.** Ensure equitable funding and implementation of Projects adjacent to or within the public right-of-way, by engaging residents, businesses, schools, and organizations, including neighborhood associations and nonprofit agencies, in each community;

7. **Coordination.** Coordinate and communicate between stakeholders about the Complete Streets Program objectives and metrics;
8. **Sustainability and Resiliency.** Invest in street infrastructure using materials, methods, and design components that improve sustainability and resiliency including environmentally friendly materials, less-energy intensive construction activities, and green infrastructure such as permeable surfaces and trees;
9. **Economic Development.** Support economic development by improving access to opportunity and retail for people using all modes of transportation.

C. Definitions.

1. "Complete Streets" are public rights-of-way that are planned, designed, constructed, operated, and maintained in an equitable way to allow for safe use by people of all ages, incomes, abilities and disabilities. Complete Streets create a comprehensive and connected transportation network that considers the needs of all users, including without limitation: people walking, people bicycling, people with disabilities, transit users and vehicles, and people driving.
2. "Policy" means the policy enacted by this memorandum requiring Complete Streets principles to be incorporated into all Projects.
3. "Project" means the construction, reconstruction, resurfacing, repair, restoration, rehabilitation, and/or other to streets, roadways, highways, bridges, tunnels, sidewalks, trails, and other parts of the transportation network when a project covers 25 percent or more of the total pavement surface area of the block for asphalt or covers 75 percent or more of the total pavement surface area of the block for concrete. "Project" does not include minor routine upkeep or interim measures on detour routes.
4. "Working Group" means the Complete Streets Working Group established in section V. Governance.

D. Program Management. Within six (6) months of this policy's adoption the Director of the Department of Public Works, in consultation with the Complete Streets Working Group and the Mayor's Office of Transportation shall develop a Complete Streets Program within the City. This Program shall be incorporated into the workflow of each Project and shall include a thorough review for Complete Streets components.

The Complete Streets Program should include effective, consistent, and appropriate means of guiding and tracking decisions related to complete streets implementation.

1. **Community Engagement Protocol.** When a Project is anticipated to involve a major operational change to a roadway, at least one community engagement meeting will be required during the design phase of the Project. Any community engagement meetings will require at least two weeks notification prior to the meeting. Notification could include one or a combination of methods for a reasonable impacted area around the Project. All community engagement meeting content will be posted to the City's website.

E. Reporting Requirements. On an annual basis the Director of the Department of Public Works, in consultation with the Director of the Mayor's Office of Transportation, shall provide a written report to the Chief Administrative Officer on current and planned program goals, objectives, metrics and program achievements. Metrics shall address inputs, outputs, short-term impacts and long-term outcomes of the Complete Streets policy through an equity lens. The annual report shall include a listing of all exemptions provided. The annual report shall be publicly accessible on the City's website.

V. GOVERNANCE

A Complete Streets Working Group ("Working Group") is established, in accordance with Section 4-104 of the Home Rule Charter, to be chaired by the Director of the Mayor's Office of Transportation or their designee, to ensure that the Complete Streets policy is applied in the planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance of all Projects, to monitor execution of the Complete Streets Program, and to provide input, as appropriate, into policies, procedures, and regulations as they are developed within the context of the Complete Streets Program. The Working Group shall include representatives from the Department of Public Works, City Planning Commission staff, Capital Project Administration, Health Department, Police Department, Office of Neighborhood Engagement, Department of Parks and Parkways, Sewerage and Water Board of New Orleans, Regional Transit Authority, community stakeholders and other relevant agencies, departments, and constituencies as required.

The Complete Streets Working Group shall:

- Recommend an evaluation framework and specific performance metrics to gauge short-term and long-term outcomes of the Complete Streets Program;
- Review plans, procedures, regulations, and decision-making processes to identify and recommend revisions needed in order to accommodate all users;
- Recommend the revision of internal design policies and guides (and/or the adoption of specific design guidelines);
- Recommend equity-focused project selection criteria to prioritize funding for projects;

- Assist the Director of Public Works in seeking funding for Complete Streets improvements;
- Recommend a community engagement plan directing specific strategies for engagement in project scoping, selection, design, and implementation processes that are inclusive, accessible, and intentionally seek to overcome barriers to engagement for underrepresented communities;
- Identify and recommend opportunities to encourage private development projects to follow a Complete Streets approach;
- Identify and recommend specific opportunities for staff training.

VI. EXEMPTIONS

A. Exemptions. The Chief Administrative Officer, in consultation with the Director of the Department of Public Works, may approve Projects for exemptions from the provisions of the Complete Streets Program. These exemptions may include Projects in which:

- a. Accommodation is not necessary on corridors where specific users are prohibited, such as interstate freeways or pedestrian malls. Exclusion of certain users on particular corridors should not exempt projects from accommodating other permitted users.
- b. Cost of accommodation is excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use.
- c. A documented absence of current and future need exists.
- d. Emergency repairs that require immediate, rapid response.
- e. Routine maintenance of the transportation network that would not change the roadway geometry or operations.

B. Documentation. All approved exemptions for Projects will list the exempted Complete Streets provisions and provide documentation supporting which of the Subsection A exemptions apply to the provisions. All approved exemptions shall be listed in the annual reporting requirements of Article V, Subsection E.

VII. INQUIRIES

Questions concerning this memorandum should be addressed to the Chief Administrative Office at (504) 658-8600.