

Complete Streets Working Group

May 19, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The New Orleans Complete Streets Working Group held a virtual public meeting on Wednesday, May 19, 2021, starting at 10:00am via Zoom. Laura Bryan, Director of the Mayor’s Office of Transportation, and chair of the Complete Streets Working Group welcomed the Working Group membership, thanked them for their time and participation, and turned the floor over to Dan Jatres to proceed with the meeting agenda.

I. Roll Call

A roll call of Working Group members was conducted, with the following members in attendance:

- Office of Transportation: Laura Bryan (Chair);
- Capital Projects Administration: Rodney Dionisio
- City Planning Commission: Joanna Farley
- Office of Economic Development: Jeff Schwartz
- Health Department: Dr. Jennifer Avegno, Django Szilagi
- Office of Human Rights & Equity: Eliza Kauffman
- Mayor’s Advisory Council for Persons with Disabilities: Katherine Hoover
- Neighborhood Engagement Office: Valerie Bouldin
- Department of Parks & Parkways: Mike Karam
- New Orleans Police Department: Lt. Anthony Monaco
- Department of Public Works: Jennifer Ruley
- Regional Transit Authority: Elisabeth Stancioff
- Roadwork NOLA: Sarah Porteous
- Office of Youth & Families: Jack Shaevitz
- AARP Louisiana: Daphne Young
- Complete Streets Coalition: Rica Trigs
- Lighthouse Louisiana: Anne Jayes
- University of New Orleans Transportation Institute: Tara Tolford
- Staff Support: Dan Jatres, Maya Sosland

II. Review of CAO Policy 134 (R) and Complete Streets Working Group

To ensure all members of the Working Group have a common baseline of the background of complete streets in the City of New Orleans, the recent amendments to the Complete Streets Policy - CAO Policy 134 (R), and the role of the Working Group, a brief overview was presented by Dan Jatres.

This overview included a timeline of complete streets milestones since the adoption of the complete streets ordinance in 2011; a summary of major updates to the Complete Streets Policy adopted in late 2020; and an overview of the Working Group membership.

The Complete Streets ordinance was originally adopted in 2011, which led to the Complete Streets Program Management Plan developed by the Landrieu Administration in 2012. This Management Plan guided the integration of best management practices and was ultimately supplemented by the 2015 adoption of the Complete Streets Policy (CAO Policy 134) to further institutionalize a comprehensive policy across departments impacting the public right-of-way. Following the start of the Cantrell Administration in 2018, the existing policy was reviewed and updated in 2020 to incorporate several key changes, including specific tasks for the reconvened Working Group.

The 2020 Policy update addressed five key areas of the policy: 1) establishes specific responsibilities for the Complete Streets Working Group; 2) integrates a community engagement protocol for different scales of projects; 3) introduces specific implementation metrics and reporting protocol; 4) connects with other City efforts and goals including public health, economic development, housing, and resilience; 5) defines five categories of exceptions to the policy.

III. Equity and Complete Streets

Dan Jatres introduced the need for the Working Group to establish a definition for equity as it relates to Complete Streets. He presented information from the City about other equity initiatives. Specifically, that the Equity New Orleans Report offers an approach to equity: “An equitable government acts with purpose to achieve just and fair inclusion, ensuring that all residents participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. It leverages its power and resources to dismantle institutional racism and discrimination wherever they exist.” This is a very general approach, and the true power of defining equity is to apply it to complete streets directly.

The Working Group discussed equity and members highlighted various insights detailed below.

- Making the language accessible, by limiting technical terminology, acronyms, jargon, etc in defining equity and its connection to transportation.
- Consider how the American Heart Association defines equity, by defining low-income and/or underserved communities.
 - “Low-Income Community” means any population census tract that meets one of the following criteria, as reported in the most recently completed decennial census published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census:
 - a. The poverty rate for the census tract is at least 20 percent, or
 - b. In the case of a low-income community located:
 - i. Outside of a metropolitan area, the median family income (MFI) for such tract does not exceed 80 percent of statewide MFI, or
 - ii. Within a metropolitan area, the MFI for such tract does not exceed 80 percent of statewide MFI or metropolitan area MFI.
 - “Underserved Community” means areas with histories of disinvestment or underinvestment, areas with poor health outcomes, and/or areas with diminished access to transportation options.
- Consider Census data as a starting point, but keep in mind that vulnerable populations are often under-represented. Look for ways to supplement with other data sources.
- Consider how other Departments approach equity.

- DPW: Bike Equity Index to inform planning process; public health data to understand health disparities, though this can be a challenge at sub-parish geographies.
- NOHD is utilizing Census tract data for their vaccine distribution activities; also working on better understanding how children get to school and how far they are traveling; Long-term metrics of complete streets efforts can look at health indicators.
- OED: Connecting people and access to essential services; supporting black and brown entrepreneurs through place-based economic development which is almost by definition tied to transit and complete streets.
- RTA: The Transit Propensity Index (which included LODES data) was overlaid with parcel maps to dive deeper into the dataset. They also looked at multiple facets including participation, distribution of investments, and mitigating negative impacts of infrastructure.
- OYF: NOLA Kids Databook includes 15-20 datapoints by neighborhood and there is an opportunity to combine this with transit data.
- Reviewing the approach and tools used around equity during the New Links Transit Redesign as a model could serve as a guide.
- Great potential to layer tools and data already being used as opposed to create or collecting new. Focus on the gaps and how to measure those annually and sustainably.
- Include accessible communication about the efforts as a component of equity – blind, deaf, and Low English Proficiency.
- Practical concerns for people living with disabilities having transportation access to food, medical care, other essential services.
- Connect the ADA Transition Plan to the equity discussion.
- Look at chronic health indicators over the long-term by race and income.
- Remember that benefits are not limited to primary audience.
- Consider how reporting can be impacted by the means of collecting concerns – equitable engagement from the community.
- A possible broad Equity definition - Complete Streets infrastructure investments could afford everyone an improved "Quality of Life" for all of our residents and visitors. Crime and safety is of major concern from the law enforcement perspective. What creates quality of life? A person's environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation, social well-being, freedom, human rights and happiness also are significant factors. Quality of Life is the product of the interplay among social, health, economic and environmental conditions which affect human and social development and thus, community development.

The discussion concluded with a call to action to members to look and consider equity metrics and bring any research back to the group for consideration, and the discussion carried to the next agenda item, performance metrics.

IV. Performance Metrics

The discussion around equity blended into the discussion of performance metrics and Dan Jatres explained the need and value of establishing performance metrics for the Complete Streets Program. The Working Group's discussions included potential metrics and datasets or data sources that can be used to establish the performance metrics. The discussion highlights are detailed below.

- Identifying missing data, such as the presence/quality/accessibility of pedestrian infrastructure
- Metrics that focus on prioritizing the movement of people vs the movement of vehicles; create a standard approach that counts people.
- Process change vs outcomes
- Partner entities datasets: ex. AARP has extensive data, but is disaggregated to a local enough level to be of value to this effort
- Metrics
 - Accessible transit stops
 - Transit stops with crosswalks
 - Width of roads
 - Resident feedback to engagement and communication: ex. a survey on the perceptions around transportation and the impacts of complete streets
 - Multi-modal road user data (UNO program as a foundation)
- Datasets/Data Sources
 - Information on user subsets within the data

Dan Jatres wrapped up the discussion and moved to establish a work plan for the Working Group.

V. 2021 Work Plan

In addition to the identified tasks around equity and performance metrics, the Working Group discussed other potential topics to include in their 2021 Work Plan. Discussion centered around the following topics:

- A structure for the Working Group to focus on elements of the work plan and advance efforts between meetings.
 - Additional background work and development of the ideas from today's meeting needs to take place prior to the next Working Group meeting.
 - Meetings around Equity and Performance Metrics will be organized by staff over the coming weeks and months to report back to the Working Group
- An evaluation framework is needed and will likely be a direct next step from identifying the performance metrics.
- Development and drafting of the annual report
 - Determining responsible individuals for collecting, managing, and producing the report and the performance metrics.

Public Comments

The meeting culminated in the reading of public comments submitted to the Complete Streets Working Group. The comments were collected via survey and were read directly into the record by Dan Jatres, Laura Bryan and Maya Sosland. Those comments are attached.