Complete Streets Working Group

August 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The New Orleans Complete Streets Working Group held a virtual public meeting on Wednesday, August 18, 2021, starting at 9:30am 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
- Office of Economic Development: Jeff Schwartz, Courtney Stuckwisch Wong
- Health Department: Dr. Jennifer Avegno, Django Szilagi
- Office of Human Rights & Equity: Eliza Kauffman, Taylor Jackson
- Neighborhood Engagement Office: Valerie Bouldin
- Department of Parks & Parkways: Mike Karam, Tica Hartman
- New Orleans Police Department: Lt. Anthony Monaco
- Department of Public Works: Jennifer Ruley
- Regional Transit Authority: Elisabeth Stancioff
- Roadwork NOLA: Sarah Porteous, David Lee Simmons
- Sewerage & Water Board: Tyler Antrup
- 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.   Approval of the May 19, 2021 Minutes

Dan Jatres updated Working Group members that the draft minutes from the May 19, 2021 meeting were available online and had been shared with Working Group member sin advance of today's meeting. No amendments or corrections were offered by members of the Working Group.

Eliza Kauffman made a motion to approve the May 19, 2021 minutes. Rica Trigs seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

III.   Equity and Complete Streets

Dan Jatres and Eliza Kauffman shared a working definition developed by the Office of Human Rights and Equity based on existing examples from the City of New Orleans and other communities, plus the input of the Working Group at the May 2021 meeting.

Draft Complete Streets Working Group Definition:

An equitable government acts with purpose to achieve just and fair inclusion, leveraging power and resources to dismantle institutional racism and all forms of discrimination wherever they exist. Equity is achieved when identity, status, and ability no longer predicts a person's quality of life in our City.

The City of New Orleans' Complete Streets Program commits to applying an equity lens to all aspects of project decisions. We aim for a process where community perspectives are included and evidence-based decisions can be measured for their impact. By understanding historical disinvestments or harms and focusing strategies to the needs of our most vulnerable residents, our environmental and social circumstances as a City will be improved.

Equity is both an outcome and a process; including equity throughout our Complete Streets initiatives requires:

1) Committing to operating with equity throughout decision-making;
2) Advocating for improvements that advance outcomes for vulnerable community-members;
3) Empowering and prioritizing public engagement, and;
4) Investigating and employing quality data to inform strategies and decisions.

The Working Group discussed the definition and offered the following feedback and thoughts detailed below.

- This achieves the goal of being robust, but specific. But how is a project defined?
    - The Complete Streets Policy defines "Project"
- How do we define vulnerable person or vulnerable community?
    - Underserved, under-invested
    - Clarify who we are talking about, don't leave ambiguity.
- Ensure that complete streets approach is universally applied.
- Have other departments adopted equity definitions and can this definition translate to other departments?
    - This definition is a starting point that seeks to shape the definition from "Equity New Orleans" to the needs of a department. This can and will serve as a roadmap for others.

The discussion concluded with next steps to incorporate these comments into the draft and return in November with a final definition to presented.

IV.   Performance Metrics

Following the equity discussion, Dan Jatres shared a draft matrix of potential metrics built around a framework of four categories: inputs, outputs, short-term impacts, and long-term outcomes. This matrix includes the following:

- Metric Description
- Measurable Performance Metric
- Baseline Metric and Source
- Metric Goal
- Demographic and/or Geographic metric subsets

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.

- General thoughts
  - What data do we already have vs what needs to be collected?
  - Develop spatial inventories to greatest extent possible, rather than just lists.
  - Aspirational list of metrics vs immediate implementation.
  - Establish targets that speak to performance metrics.
  - Rely on subject matter experts to guide metrics, goals, etc.
  - Suggest process metrics.
    - Some processes are established that are useful, but don't automatically improve safety or access, etc
    - Changes in zoning/permitting processes to encourage more CS friendly planning and development.
    - Staff capacity for planning, design, and implementation.
    - Changes in traffic study methodology to prioritize people over vehicle LOS.
    - Develop/adopt a metric for Pedestrian Level of Service (LOS) which should be used whenever vehicle LOS is measured.
  - Existing goals can and should be incorporated.
  - Consider the administration of collecting, managing, reporting these metrics.
  - Funding - let's break this down a bit. What kind of funding? What is it going to? Does it include maintenance? Is it one-time funds or something more sustainable?
  -
- Clarification of suggested metrics.
  - What's the intent for having metrics/goals such as number of pedestrian signals, when Accessible Pedestrian Signals (APS) are the actual goal?
    - This captures existing conditions.
  - Transit Propensity Index and Bike Equity Index might be useful catch all for demographics.
  - Include Ride's SOTR Access to Jobs metric (more meaningful than just physical proximity to a bus stop).
  - % X within ½ mile of transit: more meaningful metric would be within ½ mile of High Frequency transit - coverage is good but it doesn't reflect functional transit access.
- Metrics to Consider adding:
  - Additional metrics around drainage. SWB will share some options as follow up.
  - Benches along walking and bicycling routes.
    - This would likely be part of a list of desired datasets.
  - Useable sidewalks.
  - Length of time of projects – obstructions and detours to roadways and sidewalks.

- o Transit: ensure transit metrics cover what the City is/can do vs RTA's actions.
    - Dedicated transit lanes – bus and streetcar.
    - Transit shelters/benches.
    - Transit Stops.
    - Other transit priority – signal priority, etc.
  - o Access to city amenities: how do we measure; link existing metrics to goals for access.
  - o Obesity as a health indicator.
  - o Ways to measure economic development and quality of life. Quality of Life – citizen input/feedback → perceived satisfaction or safety.
  - o Street trees: alternative to tree canopy is quantity of tress based on 2019 tree inventory.
  - o Metrics from a planning perspective.
  - o Count data! From permanent counters at a minimum, ideally from long-term short duration count program as well once next steps identified.
  - o User satisfaction data (use, safety, etc) - aspirational/through research and advocacy partnerships.
  - o Office of Youth and Families, Kids Databook, YouthForce for school related metrics.
  - o ADA Transition Plan Metrics – beyond APS and curb ramps.
  - o Parking: metric for how many vehicle parking spaces added/removed per year (potentially broken down by specific area, e.g. following policy change).
  - o Level of Service for bus routes: federal funding for dedicated lanes is linked to (poor) LOS - we need to know what our LOS is across the transit network in order to optimize access to these funds.
  - o OTP for transit - use RTA's in-process metric?
    - This is RTA Operations, which isn't necessarily something a City entity would have as a metric.
  - o Miles of dedicated busways.
  - o Lighting - important part of ped environment. Supposedly a street lighting dataset exists we could use
  - o Bus stop shelters - output
  - o Ped signals - sub metric - at bus stop intersections
  - o Schools - % with bus passes through school
  - o Output: signals with transit priority capability/implementation
- Equity Lens
  - o Metric demographic column: analyze not just by council district but also in relation to Transit Propensity/Bike Equity indices or other metric to show targeting of infrastructure in high-need tracts.
  - o Additional input data: demographic representation within public processes: are participants geographically, demographically, and modally representative of the city/neighborhood in question? Potential solution - mentimeter polls for online meetings, check boxes on live comment cards to get a better sense of this and make sure equity lens is integrated into process.

The discussion concluded with next steps to send additional comments to Dan, condense and incorporate these comments into the draft and return in November to move us towards an initial list of 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. Those comments are attached.