



## **NEW ORLEANS COMPLETE STREETS LETTER OF SUPPORT**

Dear Mayor Landrieu,

We, the undersigned organizations, businesses, community groups and associations strongly support improved safety and accessibility for walking and biking in the city of New Orleans. Thank you for your leadership which has done a great deal to improve bicycling, walking, and transit. To keep up the momentum for improving transportation safety and accessibility, we're asking you to *prioritize and strengthen the existing Complete Streets Policy* to:

- Incorporate a focus on improving health equity
- Set higher design standards for low-stress street designs that are safe and comfortable for people of all ages and abilities, no matter how they travel or where they live
- Plan for creating comprehensive walking, biking, and transit networks that integrate with one another and connect people to job centers, parks, schools, healthy food outlets, churches, and more
- Integrate best water management practices into street design, building and repairs, which will reduce flooding and subsidence while extending the life of the streets
- Create meaningful public engagement and accountability mechanisms, including data-driven annual reports that measure implementation success against established performance metrics

More biking and walking benefits us all. Complete Streets improve health equity, the economy, our quality of life, and the resilience of our environment. People who are physically active thirty minutes a day reduce their risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases. Multiple transportation options available in underserved communities of color and low-income areas help reduce health disparities and costs. Commuting by bike leads to more productive workers, who take fewer sick days, and businesses often seeing sales improve when commercial corridors include bike lanes and traffic calming measures. Cities promoting bike friendly infrastructure also see property values increase and attract more young people.

Streets built to be shared by all, in every neighborhood, improve equity, as is recognized in the Resilient New Orleans Strategy and by #EquityNewOrleans. As recently as 2014, over half of unemployed, working-age, African-American men did not have regular access to a vehicle with many citing transportation as an obstacle to finding and holding a job. With almost 20% of New Orleans households having no access to a motor vehicle, improved mobility options can better connect people to jobs, parks, schools, and healthy food.

Our streets are the public spaces we often need most in times of crisis, such as flooding. Ensuring residents can safely travel during and after instances of moderate to severe rainfall is of critical importance. Communities with low rates of car ownership are especially vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions and health risks exacerbated by the likelihood of flooding, prolonged



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exposure to heat, and other environmental factors. Complete, green streets can mitigate property damage and other health impacts of localized flooding. Permeable paving, bioswales in the neutral grounds and rights of way, and similar practices will further reduce flooding and the subsequent damage to property. These approaches will also reduce subsidence in buildings and the streets themselves, which in turn extends their lifespan, making this approach more cost-efficient. Trees and native plants create shade that cools city streets, making them more comfortable for biking and walking.

With the surge in infrastructure investment underway, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve New Orleans residents' safety and accessibility to travelling their city. By doing so we will boost our economy, our health, our environment, and our quality-of-life. Please act with urgency to strengthen the Complete Streets policy of the City of New Orleans.

Thank you,

SUPPORTER OF STREETS BUILT TO SHARE FOR ALL OF NEW ORLEANS