Dear Mayor Cantrell,

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. Improving biking, walking, and transit infrastructure will benefit community health and connection, economic engagement with local businesses, as well as improve the resilience of our environment. 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 roadway
- Create meaningful public engagement and accountability mechanisms, including data-driven annual reports that measure implementation success against established performance metrics

We believe deeply that biking and walking benefits communities. With Complete Streets policy at the heart of how we rebuild our roadways we will improve health equity, the local economy, our neighborhoods’ quality of life, the resilience of our local environment, and the safety of all our people in the roadway.

When physically active for at least thirty minutes a day we reduce our risk of heart disease, obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. Providing an array of transportation options in historically underserved low-income neighborhoods reduces health disparities and costs for families. Increasing the ease of walking, biking, with improved transit services leads to less air pollutants, reducing a hazard for those with asthma and other lung diseases. Bike commuter leads to workers taking fewer sick days. Local businesses will also often see improved sales with the introduction of bike lanes and traffic calming measures.
NEW ORLEANS COMPLETE STREETS COALITION
Over 50 Local Organizations in Support

Safety for children, the elderly, and disabled are accounted for in Complete Streets design practices, giving more people the ability to get out and moving throughout their community. This increased activity and mobility of community members, as a result of infrastructure change, has been shown to increase economic vitality, attract more young residents, and is vital to increasing access and equity. As is recognized in the Resilient New Orleans Strategy and #EquityNewOrleans, streets built to be shared in every neighborhood is essential to extending equity to every New Orleans citizen. 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 rely on most in times of crisis, such as the ever-present threat of 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 exposure to heat, and other environmental factors. Complete, green streets mitigate property damage and other 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 reduce subsidence in buildings and the streets themselves, which in turn extends their lifespan, making them more cost-efficient. Trees and native plants create shade to cool city streets, making them more comfortable for biking, walking, and reducing heat-related illness or heat island effects in cities.

With the surge in infrastructure investment underway, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve New Orleans residents’ safety, accessibility, and ease of travelling their city. In doing so we will bolster 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, creating communities where streets are built to be shared by all.

Thank you,

AARP
  Denise Bottcher, State Director
Access Health Louisiana
  Chenier Reynolds, Operations Manager
Algiers Point Association
  Kelsey Foster, President
Bike Law Louisiana
  Charlie Thomas, Founder
Bike Shoppe
  Aaron Newsome, Owner
Blue Bikes
  Geoff Coats, General Manager
Bokah Bikes
  Andres Gabriel Trombatore
Broad Theater
  Brian Knighten, Owner
NEW ORLEANS COMPLETE STREETS COALITION
Over 50 Local Organizations in Support

Byblos Development
  Ayman Jaber, Owner

Center for Planning Excellence
  Elizabeth Thomas, President & CEO

Committee for a Better New Orleans
  Keith Twitchell, President

Community Voice
  Beth Butler, President

Design Jones
  Dr. Austin Allen, Principal

Dig Easy
  Antonio Alonzo, Founding President

DiscoveryFEST Enrichment Program
  Sean Tate, Executive Director

Entergy New Orleans
  Patty Riddlebarger, Social Responsibility Director

Felicity Redevelopment Inc
  Ella Camburnbeck, Executive Director

FinLaw
  T.J. Henry Jr., Owner

Friends of Lafitte Greenway
  Sophie Harris-Vorhoff, Executive Director

Greater New Orleans Housing Alliance
  Andreanecia Morris, President/Chair

Green Coast Enterprises
  Jackie Dadakis, Managing Partner

Higherpower Yoga and Cycling
  Charlie Thomas, Founder

Hollygrove-Dixon Neighborhood Assoc
  Brenda Lomax-Brown, President

HousingNOLA
  Andreanecia Morris, Executive Director

Huber, Slack, Thomas & Marcelle, LLP
  Charlie Thomas, Partner

Jane Place Neighborhood Sustainability
  Breonne DeDecker, Program Manager

LifeCity
  Liz Shephard, CEO

Louisiana Public Health Institute
  Joe Kimbrell, Chief Executive Officer

MACCNO
  Ethan Ellestad, Executive Director

New Orleans Black Social Workers
  Leonetta Terrell, President

New Orleans Boulder Lounge
  Jessica Price, Director of Operations

Parker Barber
  Micah Nickens, Manager

Parkway Partners
  Katie Anousheh, Community Engagement Coordinator

Pax Coffee
  Scott Burlington, Owner

PlayBuild NOLA
  Angela Kyle, Executive Director

Potence Gallery
  Caitlin Waugh, Owner/Maker

Propeller
  Andrea Chen, CEO

Ride New Orleans
  Alex Posorske, Executive Director

Rouler Cycling
  Wes McWhorter, CEO

Semi-Tough Cycling Club
  Townsend Meyers, Founder

Southern United Neighborhoods
  Marie Hurt, Director
NEW ORLEANS COMPLETE STREETS COALITION
Over 50 Local Organizations in Support

Spitfire Coffee  Scott Burlington, General Manager
StayLocal  Meredith Cherney, Program Manager
Stumptown Coffee New Orleans  Kyle Nicholson, Manager
Tulane Canal Neighborhood Dev Corp  Kelsy Yeargain, Executive Director
Tulane Prevention Resource Center  Carolyn Johnson, Director
United Saints Recovery Project  Chris Schottland, Executive Director
U.N.O. Transportation Institute  Bethany Stich, Director
Urban Conservancy  Felice Lavergne, Program Manager
WAMF  Wade Rathke, Founder
Water Collaborative  Nathan Lott, Executive Director
Wisznia Architecture + Development  Marcel Wisznia, Principal
Women With A Vision  Raven Frederick, Community Engagement Coordinator