



Complete



Streets for



Health



Equity



# Report Brief

# New Orleans and Jefferson Parish



Smart Growth America  
Improving lives by improving communities



National Complete  
Streets Coalition



**Complete Streets are built so people walking, biking, riding public transit, and driving can safely share the road. They expand access to opportunities by improving connections between where we live and where we work, learn, play, eat, worship, shop, and socialize.**

Complete Streets can benefit low-income neighborhoods and communities of color that have historically not had investment in biking, walking, and public transit facilities. Members of these communities experience disproportionate rates of chronic diseases, are at higher risk of being struck and killed by cars while walking, and are less likely to own a car. If jurisdictions implement policies that prioritize those most vulnerable to unsafe traffic conditions and health risks, the opportunities for benefits are enormous.

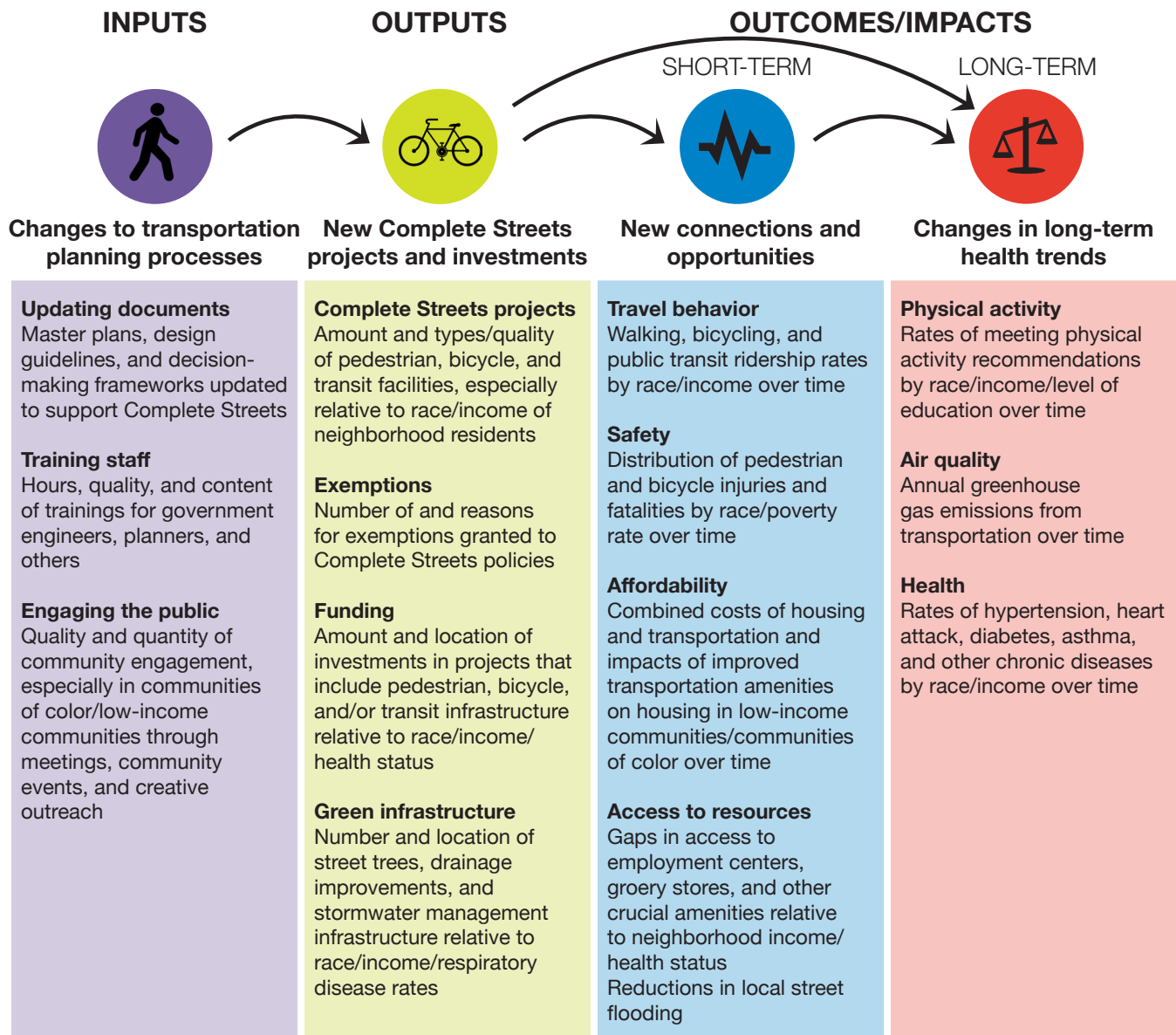
This brief report establishes an approach to evaluate Complete Streets with a focus on health equity for the City of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish. This approach can also be adopted by other jurisdictions around the United States. The analysis identifies those populations facing the greatest health and safety risks and focuses on how Complete Streets can better serve these vulnerable communities.

For a more comprehensive evaluation of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, as well as an explanation of how the performance measures were selected, view the full report at [www.completestreets.org](http://www.completestreets.org) or [www.bikeeasy.org](http://www.bikeeasy.org).

# Why evaluate?

Performance measures are vital to analyzing how well transportation investments are achieving their goals. This report focuses on developing specific performance measures that illuminate health disparities and emphasize how changes to the transportation system can help to overcome them.

**Figure A.** Recommended evaluation approach and performance measures



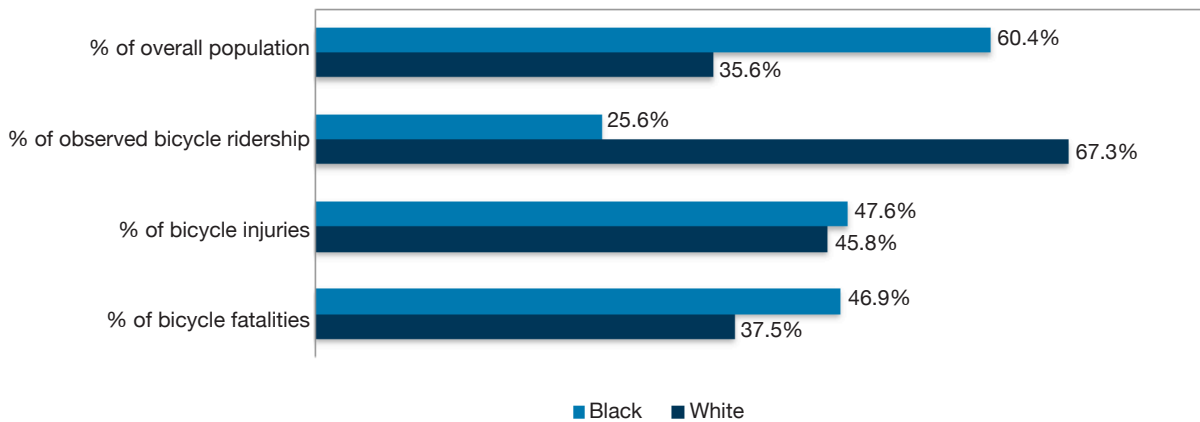
# Why health equity?

By evaluating Complete Streets through a health equity lens, this report brings health equity to the forefront of the conversation on transportation and highlight the importance of providing equitable access to resources and opportunities regardless of age, ability, race, income, or mode of transportation.

**In Louisiana, people earning under \$15,000 annually are approximately three times more likely to have diabetes in their lifetimes than people earning over \$50,000 annually.**

## Black people in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish are at higher risk of being struck and killed while biking.

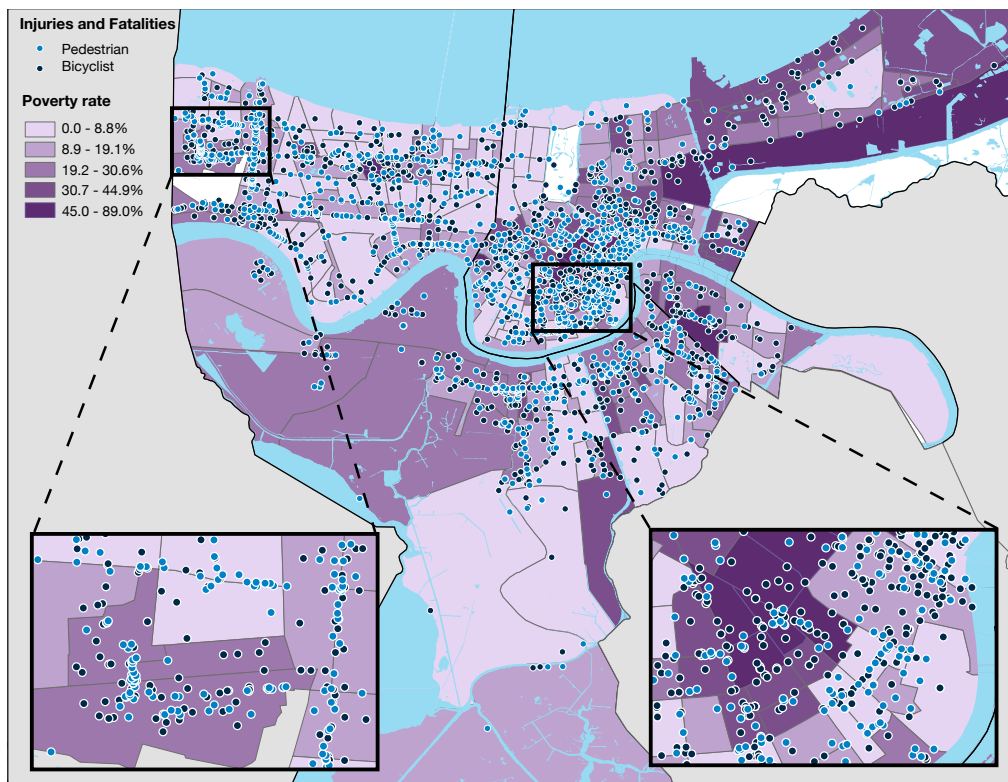
**Figure B.** Comparison of safety, ridership, and population trends by race in New Orleans



(Data sources: American Community Survey 2015 5-year estimates, Regional Planning Commission 2015, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development 2004-2016)

## In New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, 36% of people live in high-poverty census tracts yet over 67% of crashes involving people biking or walking occur in these places.

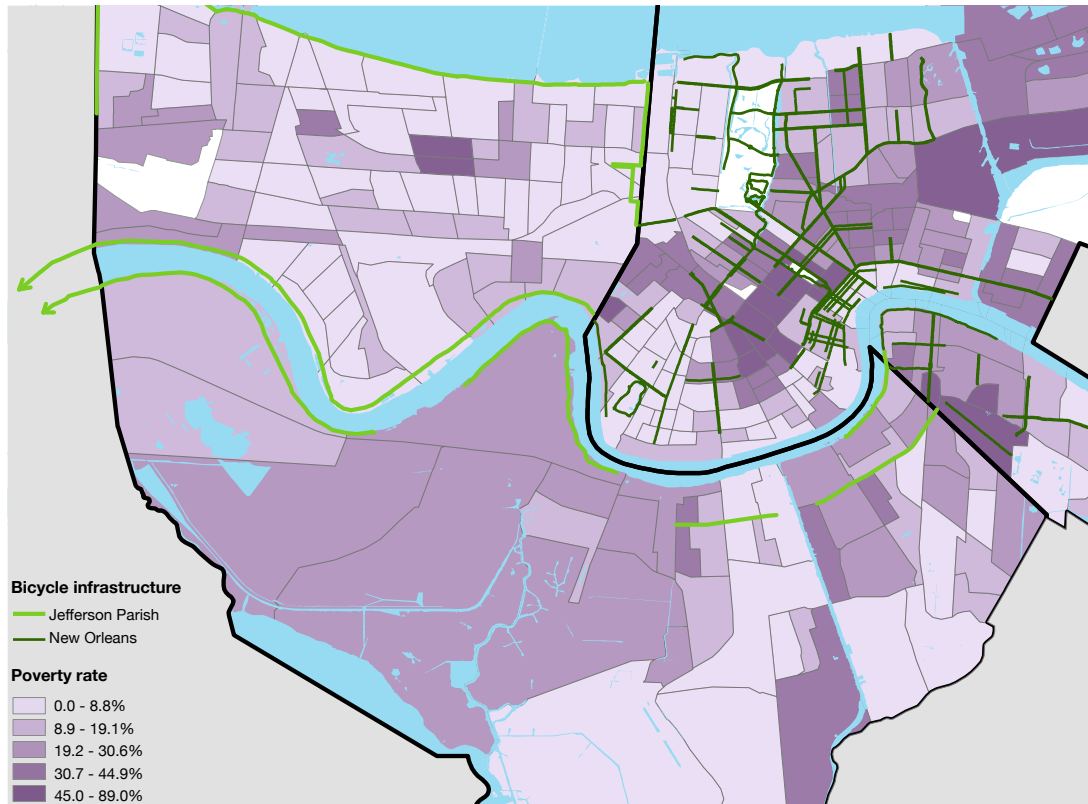
**Figure C.** Location of pedestrian and bicycle crashes relative to poverty rate, 2004-2016 (N=3,009)



(Data sources: Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, American Community Survey 5-year estimates)

**Since adopting a Complete Streets ordinance in 2011, New Orleans more than doubled its mileage of bicycle facilities, but gaps in the bicycle network persist in high poverty areas in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish.**

**Figure D.** Bicycle infrastructure relative to poverty rate in New Orleans and Jefferson Parish, 2016



(Data sources: Regional Planning Commission, New Orleans Open Data portal, American Community Survey 5-year estimates)

## Recommendations

### Recommendations for New Orleans

- Adopt Complete Streets performance measures that prioritize health equity and publicly report progress regularly
- Ensure meaningful community engagement and transparency at all levels of decision-making
- Create a framework to prioritize high-quality Complete Streets connections to the places they are needed most

### Recommendations for Jefferson Parish

- Institute a comprehensive Complete Streets Program
- Expand the bicycle network to high poverty residential areas
- Work to embed Complete Streets in routine transportation decisions
- Encourage more staff trainings
- Proactively intervene to protect vulnerable users from traffic crashes

### Recommendations for the region

- Collaborate with local and regional health organizations
- Conduct qualitative interviews about the barriers to physical activity and wellness
- Continue to develop and refine an approach to evaluate successes in stormwater management
- Collaborate across city/parish lines