

Regional Planning Commission Complete Streets Policy

The Regional Planning Commission (RPC) Complete Streets Policy will create a comprehensive, integrated, connected transportation network for the New Orleans and St Tammany urbanized areas that balances access, mobility, health and safety needs of motorists, transit users, freight, bicyclists and pedestrians of all ages and abilities, which includes users of wheelchairs and mobility aids. It ensures a fully integrated transportation system, by planning, funding, designing, constructing, managing, and maintaining a complete and multi-modal network that achieves and sustains mobility, while encouraging and safely accommodating pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. This policy will complement the Louisiana Department of Transportation and the Development's (DOTD) Complete Streets Policy, adopted in 2010.

The Complete Streets policy will apply to all projects, including new construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, maintenance and planning, involving federal or state funding. Provisions for all users will be integrated into the project development process for the entirety of all projects using Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS). All projects are to consider facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users in the full project costs. All projects will consider lateral and vertical utility placement to facilitate the best use of space and utility design details which best accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, disabled persons and transit users.

On projects that are preservation only, RPC will only consider improvements that do not require right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation or major construction, such as relocating or enclosing drainage, to provide bicycle or pedestrian accommodations. Retrofits, such as modified cross-sections, restriping and other means of providing improved bicycle and pedestrian access will be considered on preservation projects. When an identified need or candidate requires right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation or major construction, RPC will work with the state and local governments to identify funding for the identified need.

This policy is intended to facilitate the needs of non-motorized users consistent with current, adopted regional and local plans. In the absence of such plans, federal, state and local standards and guidelines should be used to determine appropriate accommodations.

All projects will consider the impact that improvements will have on safety for all users and make all reasonable attempts to mitigate negative impacts on bicycle, pedestrian and transit modes. Restricting non-motorized access should not be considered as an appropriate strategy with the exception of those limited access facilities where pedestrians and bicycles are prohibited. RPC will strive to ensure projects do not become barriers to pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users by providing appropriate safe crossings, providing corridor continuity, and ensuring transportation projects comply with the current accessibility guidelines. Particular attention will be placed on projects involving bridges, underpasses and interchanges to eliminate or minimize the bottlenecks and barriers they present to non-motorized traffic.

RPC will collaborate with and encourage DOTD, parishes, municipalities, transit agencies and other stakeholders to effectively develop, operate, and maintain a multi-modal transportation network for all users. RPC recommends that parishes and municipalities adopt comprehensive Complete Streets policies to complement the state and regional policy and enhance regional connectivity.

Exceptions to this policy may be appropriate under specific conditions upon review and concurrence of the responsible governmental entity. Exceptions may be considered under the following circumstances:

1. Facilities, such as interstates, where pedestrians and bicyclists are prohibited by law from using the roadway. In this instance, a greater effort may be necessary to accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists elsewhere within the same transportation corridor.
2. The cost of providing pedestrian and bicycle facilities would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Excessively disproportionate may be defined as exceeding twenty percent (20%) of the total project cost.
3. A documented absence of current and future need or use of the affected area by pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, and that such an absence would likely continue despite compliance with this policy.

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Facilities will be designed and constructed in accordance with current applicable laws and regulations, using best practices and guidance from the following, but not limited to the most recent versions of the following documents: LDOTD guidelines and manuals, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) publications, the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) publications, the Public Rights-of-Ways Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG), the Highway Capacity Manual and the Highway Safety Manual.

Goals and metrics will be developed in coordination with the RPC Metropolitan Transportation Plan and will be based on recognized best practices including but not limited to the National Complete Streets Coalition Complete Streets Policy Analysis and the American Planning Association Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices.

To facilitate a successful implementation of the RPC Complete Streets policy, the following actions will be undertaken:

- The Complete Streets Advisory Committee will annually review RPC's progress toward implementation of the RPC Complete Streets policy and provide feedback and recommendations to RPC staff.
- Upon adoption of the RPC Complete Streets policy, the policy will apply to projects at or before Stage 0 of the project delivery process and preservation projects meeting criteria as described in paragraph three
- Upon adoption of the RPC Complete Streets policy, RPC will work to use a Complete Streets approach as feasible for projects in the Transportation Improvement Program beyond Stage 0.
- Funding for implementation of Complete Streets project improvements will come from a variety of funding sources and agencies including the RPC, DOTD and other entities, as necessary and appropriate.
- Periodically review and update policies and procedures regarding project review, selection and funding to incorporate complete streets approaches.
- Dedicate sufficient resources to train pertinent staff on content, guiding principles and best practices to effectively implement Complete Streets.
- Dedicate sufficient resources to the collection and analysis of data, such as crash data and multi-modal traffic counts, necessary to guide and inform the decision-making process.
- Continue to support funding for bicycle and pedestrian planning, with special focus on the development of new plans and the update of plans more than five years old.
- Work to develop regional transit stop facility guidelines and standards.
- Work to develop regional PROWAG compliant ADA standards.
- Work collaboratively with relevant agencies and jurisdictions to review all projects for stormwater management best practices.



11-13-12

John Young, Chairman
Regional Planning Commission

Date



11-13-12

Walter Brooks, Executive Director
Regional Planning Commission

Date