Background on Complete Streets:
A “complete street” is a road, street or highway that safely accommodates multimodal users, such as motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and transit users, of all ages and abilities. It is free from hazards like broken pavement and missing street signs and contains safeguards like bicycle lanes and pedestrian crosswalks.

Louisiana commissioned a Complete Streets Work Group in 2009 to research best practices, which led to the development of an internal Complete Streets Policy for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LADOTD).

For every $1 spent on walking and biking trails, there is almost $3 in savings in direct medical costs.¹

Why Louisiana Needs Complete Streets:
In 2013, Smart Growth America conducted a Complete Streets policy analysis for city, regional and state policies.² The report cited the following areas for improvement in Louisiana’s policy:

1. Increase reporting and prioritization of changes
2. Identify and monitor performance measures
3. Further consider flexibility in project design²

• Louisiana has the 5th highest pedestrian fatality rate in the nation.³
• In Louisiana, one out of 3 adults is physically inactive.⁴
• Active travel – walking and cycling – increases daily physical activity and helps protect against obesity and related chronic diseases like hypertension and diabetes.⁵

Example of a State Complete Streets Law:
New Jersey Policy No. 703 (2009) established a Complete Streets policy to ensure safe access and mobility for multimodal users in all state and federal transportation projects. Regional and local jurisdictions are encouraged to adopt policies of their own.

Louisiana’s Overall Health Rank, based on America’s Health Rankings: 48th

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Indicator</th>
<th>Louisiana’s Rank</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Obesity</td>
<td>50th</td>
<td>35% of adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Inactivity</td>
<td>47th</td>
<td>30% of adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiovascular Deaths</td>
<td>46th</td>
<td>319 deaths per 100,000 pop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Projected Costs:
• Studies have found that Complete Streets can be inexpensive and the benefits outweigh the potential costs. For example, pedestrian countdown clocks may cost as little as $2,000 per intersection but will prevent accidents, injuries and fatalities.⁶
• Federal funds are available for state, regional and local Complete Streets projects.

Next Steps for Louisiana:
1) It is recommended that Louisiana adopt a Complete Streets law that fulfills the 10 components of a strong Complete Streets policy:
   • vision and intent, all users and modes, all project and phases, clear, accountable exceptions, network, jurisdiction, design, context sensitivity, performance measures and implementation next steps.²
2) Transportation leaders are encouraged to identify and assist regions, parishes and municipalities with high-needs for improvements to their transportation networks.
## - The Impact -

### Strengths
- Complete Streets projects have been shown to decrease transportation-related injuries, crashes and fatalities and increase cost savings for governing bodies.\(^6\)\(^7\) For example, Minnesota reported a cost savings of $2 million by improving rights-of-way for multimodal users.\(^6\)
- Communities benefit from Complete Streets through enhanced safety, health and social cohesion.\(^6\)\(^7\)
- Complete Streets projects promote active transportation and physical activity (e.g., walking and biking).\(^6\)\(^7\) Over time, increased rates of physical activity can lead to reductions in overweight and obesity and their associated medical costs.\(^8\)
- By adopting a Complete Streets law, the state can demonstrate its commitment to health, safe roads and active transportation.

### Barriers
- Complete Streets projects have less of an impact when implemented without monitoring and evaluation plans.
- An increase in Complete Streets projects may require more of the state Chief Engineer’s time and expertise, as well as support from other state, regional and local transportation employees.
- Communities with less awareness of Complete Streets may not have the public’s support for such projects.
- A state-level Complete Streets policy only applies to state-owned roads.

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**Additional research briefs on Louisiana Public Health Strategies can be found at prc.tulane.edu/publications**

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### References