



COMPLETE STREETS TOOLKIT



MADE POSSIBLE WITH FUNDING FROM

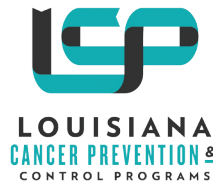


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Other STAC Pilot Project funding support from



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION ACTION COMMITTEE (STAC)

The Baton Rouge Sustainable Transportation Action Committee (STAC) is a joint initiative of AARP Louisiana and the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX), established in 2012 as a coalition of local volunteer partners engaged in making Baton Rouge streets safer and more accessible for all travelers.



AARP Louisiana is a champion for all generations to live their best lives, independently, in their own homes and communities.



The Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) brings people, culture, and planning together to make great communities happen.



COMPLETE STREETS ARE FOR EVERYONE

Complete Streets is a growing movement in Louisiana and across the nation. A “Complete Street” is designed to accommodate all users – pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and physical abilities. Unfortunately, many of our streets are not complete. Many communities were designed with a focus on the movement of cars, without considering the movement of people using other forms of transportation within the same public right away. The result has been transportation infrastructure that often makes active transportation – such as walking, biking, and transit – inconvenient, unpleasant, and unsafe.

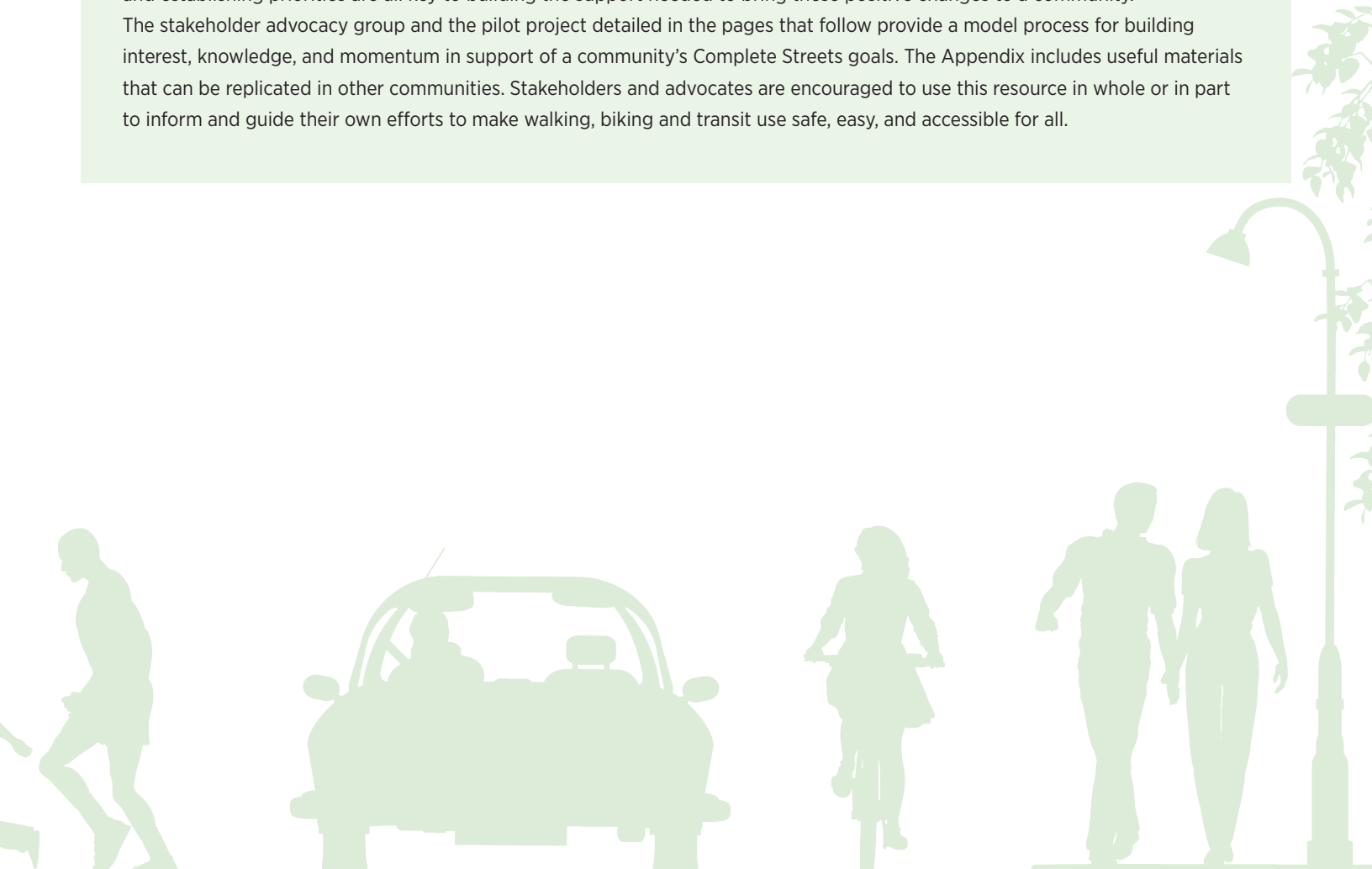
Complete Streets include features such as sidewalks, bike lanes, pedestrian crossings, ADA accessibility, wayfinding signage, and transit stops designed to provide high levels of comfort and safety for users. Complete Streets features also work together to form a network that allows users to make seamless trips between home, work, school and other daily destinations. The benefits of Complete Streets are substantial and far-reaching, ranging from increased safety, improved public health, increases in economic activity and employment, decreases in crime, and increases in property values.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS TOOLKIT

Many Louisiana residents want to enjoy this range of benefits while living in walkable, safe neighborhoods that connect them to the places they want to go with multi-modal options for getting there – but don’t know where to start.

This toolkit is intended as a resource for advocates and communities that may be interested in enhancing their towns and neighborhoods with Complete Streets. Whether developing a Complete Streets policy or moving forward with implementation of Complete Streets projects, collecting quality data, engaging and educating stakeholders, fostering multi-sector collaborations, and establishing priorities are all key to building the support needed to bring these positive changes to a community.

The stakeholder advocacy group and the pilot project detailed in the pages that follow provide a model process for building interest, knowledge, and momentum in support of a community’s Complete Streets goals. The Appendix includes useful materials that can be replicated in other communities. Stakeholders and advocates are encouraged to use this resource in whole or in part to inform and guide their own efforts to make walking, biking and transit use safe, easy, and accessible for all.



SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION ACTION COMMITTEE (STAC): HISTORY & BACKGROUND

The Baton Rouge Sustainable Transportation Action Committee (STAC) was formed in 2012 as a joint initiative of the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) and AARP Louisiana with the goal of adopting a Complete Streets in East BR Parish. CPEX and AARP identified the need for a broad-based working group and a structured forum to build multi-sector support and establish shared priorities for the provisions of the proposed policy. Once the initial set of stakeholders were engaged, STAC provided opportunities for education and training on Complete Streets; recruited additional members; and developed a shared action plan to guide the group's next steps.

As of November 2017, STAC's diverse membership includes 40 members – 26 local organizations and 14 individual members committed to improving multi-modal transportation options for Baton Rouge.

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Andy Allen

Logan Anderson

Baton Rouge Area Chamber

Coletta Barrett

LOL Regional Medical Center

Peter Breaux

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An important early objective for STAC was to educate city leaders, Metro Council members and key transportation and planning department staff about the legislative and administrative changes potentially required for a new policy. The adoption of a new policy or practice by a local governmental entity typically requires external resources and support, as city staff have a multitude of existing demands on their time and attention. The capacity needed to conduct best practice review, explore policy implications and to analyze gaps in current practices may require external expertise and a process of evaluation – and the STAC working group was able to conduct this work.

Another key objective for STAC was to identify a political champion who would be helpful in shepherding the policy through the adoption process. In the case of Baton Rouge, it was a councilperson who agreed to co-chair the STAC Committee.

After laying this important ground work, STAC worked closely with City/Parish officials, and Metro Council members to develop a Complete Streets policy – drawing from existing policies in peer cities – that balances the access, mobility, and safety needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and motorists. The policy was unanimously adopted by the Metro Council in November 2014, marking an important step forward for the City/Parish. By recruiting a well-respected Metro Council member as co-chair of the committee, STAC has effectively helped build the political support needed to implement the policy. As a follow up to policy adoption, STAC also worked towards the successful passage of an ordinance creating the Citizens Advisory Committee.

PURPOSE STATEMENT OF BR CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Adoption of the Complete Streets policy was a big win for STAC and East Baton Rouge City-Parish, but it was only a first step toward bringing Complete Streets to Baton Rouge neighborhoods and commercial districts. Facilitating the changes in engineering and design practice, setting project priorities, and securing funding were and remain essential to Complete Streets implementation. In order to continue progress toward implementation in 2015, STAC hosted an implementation workshop and organized walking audits. STAC worked to identify needs in underserved neighborhoods by conducting district tours with Metro Council members and key city staff. STAC also worked to ensure that resident input would have an ongoing role in implementation by successfully advocating for formation of the Complete Streets Citizens Advisory Committee and developing a walking audit tool that enables residents to survey their neighborhoods and identify their own needs and preferences for Complete Streets implementation. A result of these combined efforts was that sidewalk and intersection improvement projects from low-income neighborhoods were included for funding in the city budget for 2016.

More about successful examples of forming Complete Streets Coalitions can be found in the Complete Streets Policy Manual at www.cpex.org/complete-streets-manual

STAC PILOT PROJECT OVERVIEW

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: WHY

The adoption of a Complete Streets policy is only the first step toward improving bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities for all users. The changes called for by a Complete Streets policy take time to institutionalize and implement. STAC recognized that in the absence of a defined process for identifying, designing, and funding Complete Streets projects, progress was likely to lag and opportunities to invest in projects offering the greatest benefits in areas of greatest need may be missed.

WHAT

In order to address these concerns, in January 2017, STAC launched the pilot project to accelerate Complete Streets implementation and ensure that investments impact areas of greatest need. The project was designed to demonstrate how data, resident engagement and input, and multi-sector collaboration can work together to create a set of defensible Complete Streets priority projects and identify funding opportunities for incremental implementation of those projects.

The pilot project was designed around the following objectives:

- 1 To engage key government agencies and community stakeholders in a data-rich process through which they can identify, prioritize, and accelerate implementation of Complete Streets improvements that support walking, biking, and transit use in the defined target area.
- 2 To develop and document the data collection procedures, partnership-building efforts, information-sharing practices, and community engagement activities that shape this process so that they can be replicated in other areas of the city and communities throughout the state.
- 3 Over the long term: to expand access to modes of transportation that enhance mobility, promote independence and active living, facilitate employment opportunities, improve safety, increase property values, and reduce socioeconomic disparities.

WHO

Key partners and collaborators included the City of Baton Rouge, Baton Rouge City-Parish Metro Council members, Capital Area Transit System, Bike BR, the Baton Rouge Planning Commission, Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, LSU School of Public Health- Louisiana Cancer Prevention and Control Program, Healthy BR, BREC (the Baton Rouge Parks and Recreation system), and local stakeholders such as neighborhood associations and Baton Rouge Community College. Baton Rouge City-Parish also has a newly-elected mayor in office who included activation of Complete Streets implementation as a priority item in her agenda. With her as a champion, there was new opportunity to engage residents, create momentum, and secure funding for the Complete Streets projects that will deliver the greatest community benefits.

WHERE

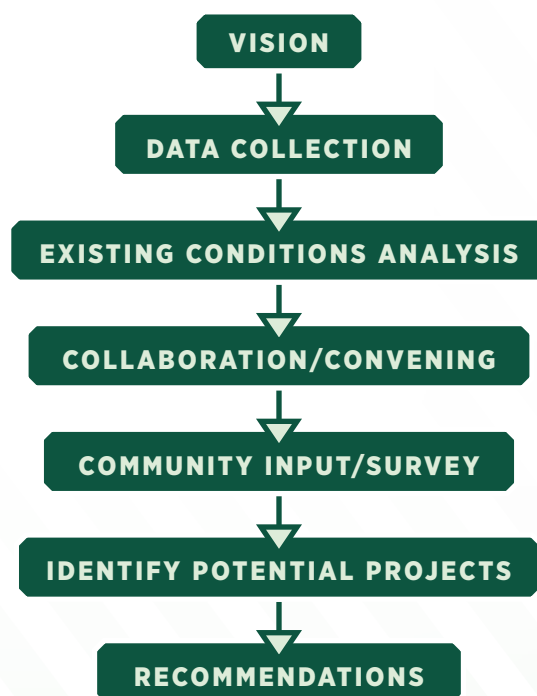
The pilot project targeted a mixed-income area of East Baton Rouge City-Parish comprised of portions of Metropolitan Council Districts 6, 7, and 11 and a population of approximately 14,000 residents. The project area is characterized by heavy transit use, moderate blight, and high rates of income and health disparities, as well as the presence of community assets such as schools, parks, groceries, public services and busy commercial corridors.

RESULTS

The identified target area provided an arena in which STAC, its partners, and community stakeholders could engage in a shared discussion of barriers and opportunities related to health, mobility, and transit access, and explore possible Complete Streets implementation action steps. This collaborative process was essential to facilitating an integrated planning and design approach that considers how all elements of the roadway – streets, utilities, sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, transit stops, bike facilities – must function in concert to provide safety and accessibility for all users. The project ideas that emerged from these conversations provided opportunities for government agencies to collaborate with one another in unprecedented ways and to educate stakeholders about the various review, approval and funding processes required for different types of transportation projects.

Ultimately, the pilot project successfully executed and modeled a replicable, comprehensive approach to implementing infrastructure improvements that provide the safety, convenience, and connectivity needed for people to walk, bike, and ride transit to grocery stores, recreation areas, educational facilities and other daily destinations.

THE PILOT PROJECT Elements of Success



DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

NEED/CHALLENGE:

With limited funding, it is important to determine where investment in transportation infrastructure can have the greatest impact. Although the city-parish allocates funding to Complete Streets projects and completes sidewalk and intersection projects from year to year, the process for determining areas of highest need for these improvements is not clearly defined by a well-understood process. STAC set out to identify the relevant data sets that were freely available and could be used to inform priorities and design, and guide investment.

OBJECTIVE:

A key objective of the pilot project was to establish a process for using data to identify high-needs, high-opportunity areas well-suited for Complete Streets improvements in the public right of way. STAC pilot project partners analyzed existing data in order to identify an area that had both significant needs and disparities as well as assets upon which to build, presenting opportunities to reap strong returns on targeted Complete Streets investments.

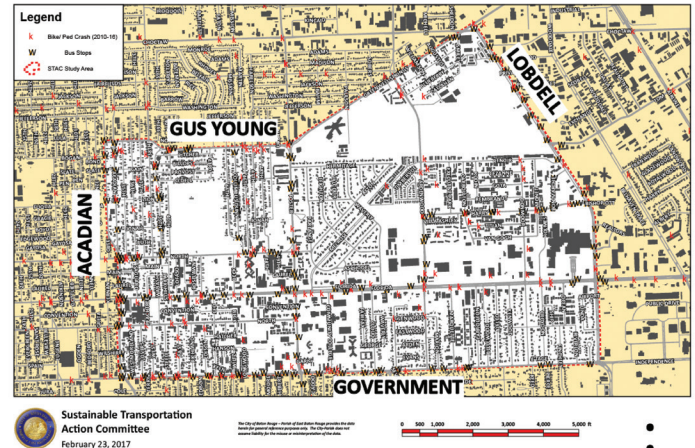
ACTION:

The initial query of data pointed to an area in North Baton Rouge that became the initial study area. Localized data for the study area was compiled from City Key Baton Rouge (<http://www.brcitykey.com/>), the American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t#none>), and CDC's 500 Cities health data. STAC also requested data from the East Baton Rouge Parish Geographic Information System (EBR-GIS) department for the following geographically referenced data layers:

- Bus stops within the study area
- Hospitals, public schools, parks, and other public facilities
- Street crosswalks
- Traffic signals
- Traffic analysis zones
- Bicycle and pedestrian crashes from a 5-year period
- Parish and Council District boundaries
- Census Block data for jobs
- Pedestrian Access within 5-minute walk
- Public parks, libraries, schools, health care facilities, grocery stores and other high-demand destinations
- Future roadway improvements

STAC requested bus ridership counts and route information from the Capital Area Transit System (CATS), which was then analyzed by the EBR-GIS to display thematically. EBR-GIS also analyzed bus and pedestrian crash data provided for the period 2011-2016 by the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (LDOTD). Furthermore, CATS provided information on high-use bus stops which were overlaid within the study area along with pedestrian and bicycle crashes which were compiled from a five-year period and mapped over the two areas of interest. Analysis of this data revealed several "hot spots" where there are significant confluences of heavy transit usage, crashes, poor health outcomes, and proximity to key destinations in the area. With all of this information compiled and mapped, the target area boundaries clearly emerged.

Compiled geographic information was mapped within the study area to illustrate existing conditions and to start the process of identifying specific areas in the vicinity deemed appropriate for further study.



Map indicates locations of pedestrian and bicycle crash incidents between 2010 – 2016 along with locations of bus stops.

The STAC Pilot project intentionally included a focus on healthy neighborhoods since research has shown that the neighborhood you live in, your access to convenient and affordable transportation, along with quality housing jobs, and schools have a greater impact on your health than your genetics or your access to healthcare.

Once the pilot area boundaries were defined, health data was compiled from Baton Rouge City Key (www.brcitykey.com) on the following indicators comparing rates within the target area census tracts with national rates:

- Adults who have had a routine checkup
- Adults without Health Insurance
- Colon cancer screening
- Adults with diabetes
- Adults who are obese
- Adults who are sedentary
- Adults who experienced a stroke
- Adults with Coronary Heart Disease
- Prevalence of High Blood Pressure
- Pap Test in past three years (ages 21-65)
- Prevalence of High Cholesterol
- Adults with Arthritis
- Workers Commuting by Public Transportation
- Workers who walk to work
- Households without a vehicle

This compiled information illustrated public health conditions most of which were worse in the target area as compared to national statistics. It also helped to inform and shape messaging about health risks and opportunities to improve health as part of the outreach process.

RESULT:

The data compiled was used to create maps which identified the location of problem areas for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, and also illustrated opportunities for connections between schools, churches and businesses. By layering the data sets, it became apparent which intersections were the most dangerous and which areas were more highly utilized by transit users. These maps were very important in discussions with city officials about safety improvements and movement patterns by residents.

COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

NEED/CHALLENGE:

Because there are different agencies responsible for different aspects of roadway design, part of the challenge of building a “Complete Street” is coordinating the various agencies responsible for the overall network which can include LA DOTD, the city department of transportation, the transit agency, the MPO and end users. Coordination must begin at the early stages of a project, beginning with project selection, to ensure that needs can be met, design can be coordinated, and construction can take place efficiently. This level of coordination requires a clearly articulated process that defines roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in street design and construction. Each agency has its own set of priorities, funding streams, project timelines and design criteria.

OBJECTIVE:

Designing streets to effectively ensure the safe and efficient movement of cars, bicyclists, pedestrians, transit and wheelchair users may require specialized engineering and design approaches. Likewise, designing streets to accommodate various modes, along with designing for seamless transfer between these modes, involves the coordination of different responsible agencies. STAC wanted to demonstrate how the increased coordination between various agencies would result in multiple project benefits including accessibility, safety and connectivity.

ACTION:

The Pilot Project convened agencies within EBR City Parish -- particularly EBR Department of Transportation and Drainage and the EBR Planning Commission -- along with CATS and LA DOTD, to work with Council Members and other local stakeholders to compile and review information and resources, establish shared priorities, coordinate efforts. Over the course of six months, STAC convened decision makers represented the aforementioned agencies with an intent to learn about projects and plans underway, and to identify potential sidewalks, bicycle, crosswalk or transit projects to address issues of accessibility and connectivity. By thoroughly reviewing existing conditions, STAC partners were able to identify gaps in the network and opportunities for improvement.

But the real challenge was to identify next steps to make progress on these improvements.

In fact, STAC proceeded with the understanding that implementation will occur incrementally by necessity, contingent upon resources and project development timelines. The objective was to create comprehensive approach to greater overall connectivity and improving safety throughout the Pilot Project area. Such an approach is necessary to ensure that the cumulative effects of individual investments result in a greater whole.

During the convenings with city and state agency representatives, it was important to have a defined agenda, along with an established spirit of collaboration and trust between advocates and officials. STAC members did a considerable amount of research and work to ensure we were not overburdening public officials who have a host of other responsibilities and priorities.

STAC members methodically documented the recommendations with input from volunteer traffic engineers with an eye towards feasibility and potential funding sources. Projects that have been identified as a priority with expressed community support have a better chance of being eligible for funding opportunities.

RESULT:

Two funding opportunities presented themselves during the STAC process and with the compiled project information, the city was well-positioned to submit a grant request that was favorably reviewed based on the data submitted -- which was data collected in the STAC process. In addition, the concerns about high pedestrian fatalities on the state roadway invited the attention of DOTD to conduct a Road Safety Assessment which will identify potential safety measures for addressing intersections and crossings.

Through the creation of the types of collaborations seeded by STAC, the community is in a better position to establish a more inclusive decision-making process.



- East Baton Rouge Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome



Dr. Jeanne George and Councilwoman Donna Collins-Lewis, STAC Co-Chairs



Mika Torkkola – Bike Baton Rouge

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

NEED/CHALLENGE:

Although data can assist in pinpointing issues and informing decision making, it is not a substitute for community input. Projects can result in better outcomes if they incorporate meaningful public input. Residents know their neighborhoods best and it is important to understand how they move about and to have their buy in for potential changes or improvements to existing infrastructure. In many of these neighborhoods, people are unable to use walking, bicycling and public transit as safe modes of transportation because of a lack of connected sidewalks, inadequate signalization and design at intersections to permit safe street crossing, and transit stops that are not supported by safe crosswalks, do not meet ADA requirements, and are often too close to the roadway to be safe.

OBJECTIVE:

The outreach activities were developed as part of the STAC project with the intent to both engage residents in the needs for improved infrastructure while also informing them of current programs and places that are available for active living and health benefits. The outreach materials were designed to increase awareness among residents of the pilot area of existing complete streets and health benefits of active transportation and the opportunities in their area for using active transportation modes.

ACTION:

Throughout the pilot project, STAC members reached out to key stakeholders within the target area such as school, park and civic association leaders. Through in-person meetings and email updates, stakeholders were

informed about the objectives and progress of the pilot project.

Furthermore, STAC conducted outreach and collected community feedback through a resident and stakeholder survey that assessed preferences and perceptions regarding existing infrastructure, active transportation, and priorities for improvements. Residents were provided with information regarding health, safety and economic benefits of active transportation and complete streets infrastructure. The survey was posted on a website and publicized through civic association networks. (The survey is available for replication as an appendix to this toolkit) However, the most effective method of collecting survey results was a volunteer effort that canvassed five neighborhoods with a door-to-door in-person survey. Also, volunteers rode on CATS buses to elicit survey input from transit riders. The resulting 300+ survey results provided invaluable qualitative information about the preferences and concerns of residents in the target area.

The project culminated with a well-publicized bus tour of the pilot area to allow stakeholders to experience first-hand the challenges of disconnected, inadequate pedestrian, bicycle and transit infrastructure and to hear about the proposed solutions. The tour was followed by a press conference that included the Mayor and Council members. The event also included a Block Party hosted for neighborhood and project stakeholders.

RESULT:

The energy and enthusiasm generated by the tour, press conference and block party added a sense of momentum and support for the recommendations. It is also important to acknowledge the efforts of public officials and volunteers to obtain commitments for advancing implementation.



Safety Audit on Ardenwood by DOTD



Bike Tour by project stakeholders



Trolley tour of STAC target area by project partners and community stakeholders

COMPILED RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of the pilot project, STAC generated a report that presents the data that was analyzed, the need for infrastructure improvements identified by the data, suggested solutions for addressing those needs and the recommendations for the target areas to be prioritized for incremental funding. Many of the recommendations included in the STAC Report were small-scale projects, such as completing gaps in the sidewalk network, changing light synchronization to allow for longer period of time for pedestrian crossings, and striping crosswalks. The approach was to create linkages across modes and continuous pathways between destinations.

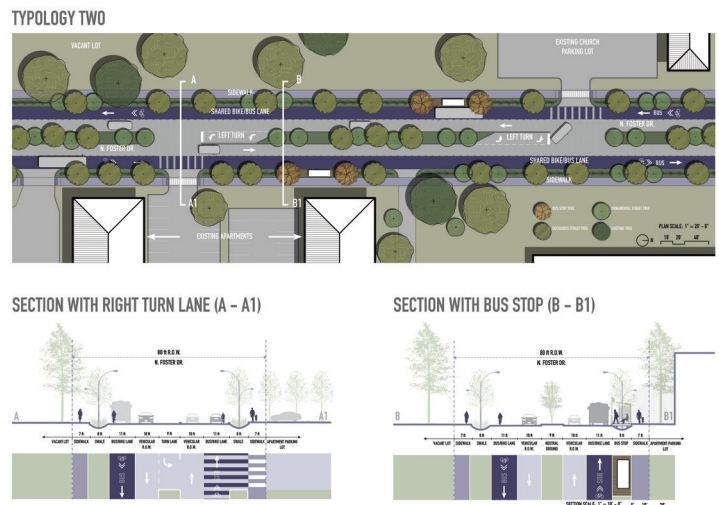
The report was released at the press conference and drew the attention of the media in order to reach a broader audience. The presentation of the report at a Metro Council meeting also helped solidify the recommendations into a set of anticipated actions. The number and types of projects recommended for immediate action will be determined by projected cost estimates and identifiable sources of funding, and will be subject to the selection procedures of the funding sources pursued. The identified problem areas that are not targeted for prioritization as part of the pilot will be compiled into a list of projects that can be considered subsequently as sources of funding become available. STAC is committed to following through and holding officials accountable for progress on these recommendations.

As stated previously, this process can be replicated in your community, but it requires the essential ingredients of partnerships and collaborations, along with data and outreach. We hope this toolkit provided some ideas and steps that will be helpful in implementing Complete Streets projects.

These graphics by LSU Landscape Architecture students provide a visualization of infrastructure improvement opportunities along the Foster Corridor



STAC Final Recommendations Report



Concept Typology for North Foster Drive – by Hagan R. Doyle, 5th Year BLA Candidate at LSU's Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture



Concept Typology for North Foster Drive - by Matthew Poche, 5th Year BLA Candidate at LSU's Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture

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