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**East Baton Rouge Parish Adopts Comprehensive Complete Streets Ordinance to Address Safety and Accessibility Needs**

East Baton Rouge Parish, LA – [June 12th, 2024] – The Metropolitan Council of East Baton Rouge Parish, at the urging of Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome, voted to adopt a Complete Streets Ordinance, a significant milestone in efforts to enhance the safety and accessibility of public, city-owned streets. This ordinance, developed by the Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) in partnership with the Baton Rouge Department of Transportation and Drainage, the Baton Rouge Planning Commission, the Complete Streets Advisory Committee, and the Power Coalition, with support from the American Heart Association, strengthens the existing Complete Streets policy that was unanimously adopted by the Metro Council in 2014, granting it the force of law and marking continued progress toward improving health, safety, equity, and quality of life in the Parish.

Complete Streets are designed to provide safe and convenient access for all road users, including cars, public transit, bicycles, trucks, and pedestrians, including those using assistive devices. This approach ensures that everyone in the community, regardless of their mode of transportation, can travel safely and efficiently. Beyond accessibility, Complete Streets bring a range of benefits to the city such as safety improvements and opportunities for beautification. Complete Streets facilities also serve to increase economic activity, promote healthier living by providing active transportation options, and greater independence for seniors and youth. Complete Streets offer more affordable transportation choices, boosting economic mobility. They're an investment that pays off, generating jobs, increasing property values, and attracting investment, talent, and resources to Baton Rouge.

**Looking Ahead**

The adoption of the Complete Streets Ordinance will serve to institutionalize the best practices that the city-parish has already put in place and represents a significant advance in efforts to create a safer, more equitable, and vibrant East Baton Rouge Parish for the long term. The Center for Planning Excellence and the Office of Mayor-President Sharon Weston-Broome are committed to continuing collaboration with community members, stakeholders, and the Complete Streets Citizens' Advisory Committee to ensure the successful implementation of this ordinance. The ordinance aligns with Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome's commitment to a goal of zero fatalities and serious injuries on our roads and streets by 2040.

“The passage of the Complete Streets Ordinance is a major victory for the safety and well-being of all residents of East Baton Rouge Parish,” said Mayor-President Sharon Weston Broome. “This initiative ensures our streets prioritize not just cars, but people – pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation users as well as drivers. This creates a more inclusive and accessible transportation network, encouraging healthy lifestyles and spurring economic development. Most importantly, this is another significant step towards our goal of eliminating traffic fatalities by 2040. I’m proud to see this vision become a reality and to continue working toward a safer, more vibrant Baton Rouge.”

“We’re very excited about the ordinance,” said Councilwoman Carolyn Coleman, District 10 Council Member and co-sponsor of the ordinance. “Our streets need to be safe for all of us, but especially those most vulnerable, like cyclists and pedestrians. We hope this ordinance helps everyone understand the need for inclusivity and respect as we move along our streets together.”

“The Complete Streets Ordinance mandates that all future transportation projects will prioritize the needs of all road users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, any one not protected by a ‘steel cage’, regardless of age or ability,” said Councilwoman Denise Amoroso, District 8 Council Member and co-sponsor of the ordinance. “This approach ensures that our streets are designed and operated to enable safe and convenient travel for everyone.”

### **Addressing a Critical Need**

East Baton Rouge Parish has experienced alarming rates of bicycle and pedestrian crashes. From 2017 to 2021, there were 1,419 such incidents, including 113 fatal crashes and 138 crashes resulting in severe injury. In 2023 alone, the parish witnessed 2 fatal and 114 severe bicycle crashes and 23 fatal and 60 severe pedestrian crashes.

“Our city streets are valuable public assets that should serve all people and provide transportation choices. Baton Rouge has made so much progress in recent years expanding and improving its Complete Streets facilities – and there remains much work to be done,” said Jessica Kemp, Vice President of the Center for Planning Excellence. “This ordinance will help ensure that this good work continues and accelerate progress toward our long-term goal of having a high-functioning bicycle, pedestrian, and transit network that provides safe passage for all those who rely upon our transportation system. Ultimately, Complete Streets are a key feature of livable communities that attract talent and investment and provide a high quality of life.”

### **Ordinance Highlights**

Highlights of the ordinance include a requirement for relevant City-Parish departments to consider the needs of all road users in their designs. This means sidewalks, bike lanes, and other features will be considered for all city-parish road projects to identify opportunities to build out the existing network, with exceptions for private development, roads not equipped for alternative infrastructure (i.e., interstates), and locations where alternative infrastructure poses budget constraints. Furthermore, the ordinance prioritizes health and equity by focusing new improvements on high-need areas in each district. To ensure resident voices are heard, the ordinance also calls for development of a public participation rubric, encouraging residents to be active participants in shaping the future of their streets. The ordinance was developed with technical support on national best practices from the American Heart Association and Smart Growth America’s Complete Streets Coalition.

“Complete Streets helps make all roadways safer, more pleasant, and more efficient for all roadway users, regardless of their mode of transportation,” said Mark E. Martin, Bike Baton Rouge Founder and Chair of the Complete Streets Advisory Committee. “Who doesn’t want to walk, ride, roll, or drive in a safer roadway network?”

## **A History of Commitment**

The adoption of this ordinance builds on a long-standing commitment to Complete Streets in East Baton Rouge Parish:

2011: The FUTUREBR Plan recommended a Complete Streets Policy for the City Parish.

2014: EBR City-Parish unanimously adopts the Complete Streets policy as a resolution.

2015: Formation of the Complete Streets Citizens Advisory Committee (CSAC).

2018: Approval of the MOVEBR funding program for transportation and infrastructure improvements.

2021: Implementation of the Government Street road diet and complete streets improvements, leading to 26% growth in tax revenue and a 50% drop in monthly traffic incidents along the corridor.

2024: EBR City-Parish adopts the Complete Streets ordinance, the 2nd in the state

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## **About CPEX**

The nonprofit Center for Planning Excellence (CPEX) brings people, culture, and planning together to make great communities happen. CPEX coordinates urban, rural and regional planning efforts in Louisiana, by working towards great neighborhoods and quality places; transportation choices; resilient communities; and civic engagement and education. More information is available at [cplex.org](http://cplex.org).

[\[View the Ordinance\]](#)