POLICY STATEMENT

ASSOCIATION OF PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE PROFESSIONALS

Expertise for Active Transportation

POLICY STATEMENT: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Overview of APBP Policy Statements

The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) supports the community of professionals working to create more walkable, bikeable places through facilitating the exchange of professional and technical knowledge and by promoting fundamental positions that are broadly acknowledged and acted upon by APBP members.

APBP Policy Principles:

1. APBP represents the professional expertise and practical experience of its members in transportation policy discussions to advance active, healthy, and sustainable communities.
2. APBP recognizes the impacts of systemic and institutionalized racism, and we recognize our responsibility to identify and address inequities.
3. APBP endorses active transportation as an integral part of transportation systems through all stages of planning, design, funding, and implementation.
4. APBP supports connected, convenient, accessible, and safe streets and pathways in every community and planning with the input of every member of a community.
5. APBP advances a safe system approach that leverages active transportation to create equitable access for everyone in every place.

Position:

The Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) recommends that transportation agencies and governments consider the needs and desires of all users of the transportation system in line with a commitment to Complete Streets. To accomplish this, APBP recommends the use of multimodal performance measures that reflect community goals.

A holistic set of performance measures should derive from the goals of the community as determined through robust public engagement. Goals should consider the following themes and recognize the ways in which they are interconnected:

- Safety
- Public Health
- Access and Mobility

- Environment / Sustainability
- Economic vitality
- Equity
- Livable places

Performance measures should leverage both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Data collection and analysis methods should recognize that community engagement and qualitative information are valuable. Both types of information help decision makers and the public to understand trade-offs between alternatives and guide decisions that best align with community goals. Furthermore, performance measures and transportation data should be accessible to the public.

Goals and performance measures should apply to a wide variety of project types and at multiple tasks and checkpoints throughout the project.

Context:

Existing current transportation planning and engineering practices often rely solely on vehicular level of service (LOS) to assess existing conditions, determine the feasibility of alternatives, and measure results.

The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) *Urban Street Design Guide* describes the limitations of this practice:

> *LOS measures impact, but inadequately captures a project's potential benefits. As a metric, it is mono-modal, measuring streets not by their economic and social vibrancy, but by their ability to process motor vehicles.*
>
> *LOS is one of many tools that may be employed to assess traffic conditions in cities, but it should never be the only tool used. Cities should strive to integrate varied and holistic performance measures into their development review process, including measures that frame potential benefits, as well as those that capture risk.*

APBP agrees that LOS inadequately captures a project's benefits, and additionally believes that LOS inadequately captures a project's potential costs, including impact to other modes and environmental impact.

APBP believes that it is irresponsible for agencies and governments to prioritize one particular performance measure, such as vehicular LOS, without engaging with the community to understand their goals.

Application:

The AARP/Smart Growth America guide *Evaluating Complete Streets Projects* states that performance measures apply when:

- Undertaking long-range planning efforts
- Selecting projects to fund
- Performing an alternatives analysis
- Finalizing a project's design
- Evaluating the outcomes of a built project

- Displaying the current state of a system

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) *Guide to Sustainable Transportation Performance Measures* applies performance measures the following decision and project types:

- Land use visioning
- Long-range transportation plans
- Corridor studies
- Programming
- Environmental review
- Performance monitoring

Furthermore, the FHWA *Guidebook for Developing Pedestrian & Bicycle Performance Measures* identifies the project and task types to which multimodal performance measures apply at the local jurisdiction, regional planning agency, and state agency levels.

It is essential that transportation decision making processes begin with an understanding of community goals. The following are considerations relevant to each of the seven goal themes identified above:

1. **Safety:** The safety and comfort of all users of the transportation should be considered in transportation projects while centering the needs of vulnerable road users and acknowledging that the perception of safety should be considered alongside crash data.
2. **Public Health:** Transportation has many connections to public health. Transportation investments should increase access to physical activity and active transportation, decrease incidence of fatal injury, reduce the emission of and exposure to pollutants, and provide access to destinations that improve health and well-being. Transportation investments should account for social determinants of health and the health costs and benefits to disadvantaged communities should be of primary concern.
3. **Access and Mobility:** Transportation investments should allow users of the transportation system to reach destinations conveniently, cost-effectively, safely, and reliably.
4. **Environmental sustainability:** Transportation investments should acknowledge, account for, minimize, and mitigate short- and long-term environmental impacts. Short-term impacts include air, water, noise, and light pollution. Long-term impacts include those related to wildlife habitats as well as carbon emissions and contribution to climate change.
5. **Economic vitality and sustainability:** Transportation is related to the existence of and access to jobs and businesses as well as property values and tax bases. Sustainable development is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," [1] and this definition applies to economics as well as the environment.
6. **Equity:** Too often disadvantaged communities and individuals receive a minority of the benefits and a majority of the negative impacts of transportation projects. Projects should acknowledge this while seeking to promote equity and reduce inequality.

[1] https://www.iisd.org/topic/sustainable-development

7. **Livable Places:** Transportation projects should center the role of streets as public space and strive to create spaces that improve quality of life for communities.

Smart Growth America's and Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) recommended measures for these themes include some of the following. Many measures apply to multiple themes.

1. **Safety:** Crashes, injuries, fatalities, maintenance, user perception of safety
2. **Public Health:** Active transportation trips, air quality, injuries, fatalities, access to community destinations
3. **Access and Mobility:** Access to community destinations, access to jobs, adherence to accessibility laws, average travel time, average trip length, density of destinations, reliability of trips, level of traffic stress
4. **Environmental sustainability:** Provide and preserve habitat for native species, sustainable sourcing of construction materials, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), street trees, mode split
5. **Economic vitality and sustainability:** Access to jobs, land value, parking utilization, retail vibrancy, life cycle maintenance
6. **Equity:** Analyze any of these measures across geographic/demographic differences
7. **Livable Places:** Density of destinations, maintenance, route directness, building vacancy, public art, resident satisfaction

Overall, multimodal goals and performance measures apply to a wide variety of project and task types at all levels of government, but these decision-making processes should begin with a consideration of community goals.

Recommendations:

APBP recommends that:

- Governments and agencies select holistic performance measures that comprehensively reflect the goals of their communities as determined through robust public engagement.
- Multimodal performance measures appropriately capture the full scale, context, and impact of transportation projects.
- Multimodal goals and performance measures inform the planning and execution of most transportation projects from visioning to evaluation of operation. It is best practice to evaluate conditions one year before implementation of a project and then after one year and after three years.[2]
- Governments and agencies periodically evaluate the alignment of multimodal goals and performance measures with the desires and needs of the community and adjust them accordingly.

Resources:

For further information, APBP suggests these recognized sources:

- Guidebook for Developing Pedestrian & Bicycle Performance Measures (FHWA 2016)

[2] https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/evaluating-complete-streets-projects.pdf

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/publications/performance_measures_guidebook/pm_guidebook.pdf

- Evaluating Complete Streets Projects: A Guide for Practitioners (AARP, Smart Growth America, and National Complete Streets Coalition 2015) https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/evaluating-complete-streets-projects.pdf
- *Urban Street Design Guide* – Performance Measures (NACTO 2013) https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/design-controls/performance-measures/
- Guide to Sustainable Transportation Performance Measures (EPA 2011) https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-01/documents/sustainable_transpo_performance.pdf
- Measuring The Street: New Metrics for 21st Century Streets (New York City Department of Transportation 2012) http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2012-10-measuring-the-street.pdf
- The Economic Benefits of Sustainable Streets (New York City Department of Transportation 2013) http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/dot-economic-benefits-of-sustainable-streets.pdf
- Complete Streets Design Guidelines (Chicago Department of Transportation 2013) https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/complete_streets_chicago.pdf
- Complete Streets Action Plan (City of Saint Paul 2016)

  https://www.stpaul.gov/sites/default/files/Media%20Root/Planning%20%26%20Economic%20Development/Complete%20Streets%20Action%20Plan%202016-3-11.pdf
- Complete Streets Implementation Plan (The Florida Department of Transportation and Smart Growth America 2015) https://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/app/legacy/documents/m2d2-fdot-complete-streets-implementation-plan.pdf

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APBP's policy statement development process/member participation

This policy statement was developed by the APBP Policy Committee. APBP's Board of Directors approved the policy statement on February 20, 2020, and a revision on January 16, 2025. APBP members can suggest changes to any policy statement by contacting the association's executive director, Policy Committee co-chairs, or a board member. For more information, contact: Lauren Santangelo, Executive Director, at lsantangelo@amrms.com.