

Press Release  
For Immediate Attention  
November 23, 2004



## **NEW ORLEANS TAKES THE LEAD – OFFERING BIKE PARKING DOWNTOWN**

Finally, New Orleanians who ride bikes will have designated parking accommodations downtown!

The City of New Orleans was recently awarded \$125,000 by the Louisiana Department of Transportation (LaDOTD) to implement Phase I of the New Orleans Downtown Bike Rack Installation Project. “The goal of the project is to increase bicycle parking options where they are needed most: where people work and do business,” said Jennifer Ruley, Urban Planning Specialist with Step Together New Orleans. ***Step Together New Orleans*** (*Steps*) is a community-based, public health initiative created to help New Orleanians live longer, healthier lives by reducing the burden of asthma, diabetes and obesity. The initiative works to encourage infrastructures that support increased physical activity and bike and pedestrian safety. “Under Phase I, 288 bike racks for public use will be installed in a 36-block area that includes City Hall, the Medical District, and the Warehouse/Museum District,” Ruley said. “We anticipate that the bike racks will be installed and ready for use by early 2006.”

The Project is being funded by LaDOTD’s Transportation Enhancement Program (TEP). This year, more than 8 million dollars worth of projects that promote modally balanced transportation systems (incorporating pedestrians, bicyclists, and the motoring public) were funded throughout the state.

A local monetary match and technical support by the City of New Orleans are required in order to receive the federal match. City Council members recently passed a resolution to provide a monetary match funding program for the maintenance of the bike rack program. “The City of New Orleans thought that it was important to include the

New Orleans Bike Rack Installation Phase I into the program. Councilmember Batt and I showed our support of the project by introducing the resolution at the November 18, 2004 Council Meeting,” stated Councilmember Renee’ Gill-Pratt.

City Councilman John A. Batt, Jr. expressed the same sentiment by saying “I am happy to sponsor the resolution because bike racks not only provide safe and secure places to temporarily store bikes, but they encourage physical and recreational activity that is vital for the citizens of New Orleans.” The Department of Public Works will oversee installation of the bike racks. The New Orleans Regional Planning Commission, City Planning Commission, and the Downtown Development District will assist in the coordination and implementation of the bike rack project.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 27 percent of households in New Orleans do not have automobiles; 1.2 percent travel to work by bicycle, compared to 0.4 percent statewide, 0.3 percent in Atlanta, 0.2 percent in Cleveland, and 0.1 percent in Memphis.

In addition, approximately 85 bike racks will be installed as part of the Canal Street Improvement Project in conjunction with streetscape improvements that are planned along Canal Street between the Mississippi River and I-10. This Project is being funded by the Downtown Development District and the Canal Street Development Corporation. It is anticipated that these bike racks will be installed in the next 2-3 years.

“We are excited that these organizations were able to come together in order to begin to address bicycle parking needs in New Orleans” said Carolyn Fernandez, Program Director of Steps. “Step Together New Orleans is all about promoting healthy lifestyles. By placing priority on infrastructure that supports healthy activities such as bicycling, we hope to positively impact the health of New Orleanians.”

**Step Together New Orleans** (*Steps*) is a community-based, public health initiative created to help New Orleanians live longer, healthier lives by reducing the burden of asthma, diabetes and obesity. A primary strategy of this initiative is to address two related risk factors – physical inactivity and poor nutrition.

**Step Together New Orleans**, a partnership of Louisiana Public Health Institute and the City of New Orleans Health Department, will implement a five-year community action plan to reduce health disparities and promote quality health care and prevention services.

The City of New Orleans was one of the initial seven large cities chosen by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in 2003 to be part of the **Steps to a HealthierUS** initiative.

*Funding for this broadcast/print material was supported by Cooperative Agreement Number 03135 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It's contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Department of Health and Human Services, or the U.S. government.*

For more information about **Steps** visit the web site at [www.steptogethernola.org](http://www.steptogethernola.org).

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