A RESOLUTION PROMOTING STRATEGIES THAT SUPPORT SAFE AND CONVENIENT TRANSPORT ALONG ALL MODES OF TRANSPORTATION, INCLUDING BIKING AND WALKING, FOR ALL USERS

WHEREAS, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes that our constituents face a growing burden of largely preventable chronic illnesses, such as heart disease, stroke, obesity, and diabetes;

WHEREAS, engaging in daily physical activity reduces the risk of obesity, coronary heart disease, stroke, hypertension, diabetes, and some types of cancer;

WHEREAS, some low-income communities and communities of color have lacked well-maintained routes to parks and schools, roads, bike lanes, and sidewalks for decades, and in many cases they simply do not have transportation options at all; and the same neighborhoods often experience higher rates of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease;

WHEREAS, the NBCSL has previously adopted policy resolutions recognizing the importance of physical activity and social determinants of health, such as HSE-15-05 “RECOGNIZING THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND URGING THE CREATION OF HEALTH-IN-ALL-POLICIES TASK FORCES IN THE STATES”;

WHEREAS, one study has concluded that streets with sidewalks on one or both sides of the street are significantly more common in high-income communities (89 percent) than they are in middle-income (59 percent) or low-income (49 percent) communities, while another study concluded that children from low-income and households of color, are more likely to bike or walk to school than whites or higher-income students;

WHEREAS, researchers concluded that African Americans suffer a 60 percent higher rate of pedestrian fatalities when compared to white counterparts;

WHEREAS, researchers concluded that sidewalks contribute to safety and a pedestrian friendly environment and can increase walking within a community;

WHEREAS, investments in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure create more jobs per million dollars spent when compared to highway projects;
WHEREAS, a study published in Social Science and Medicine, shows that people in walkable neighborhoods generally get about 35 to 45 more minutes of moderate intensity physical activity a week and are less likely to be overweight or obese than those in low-walkability neighborhoods; and

WHEREAS, physically active children may perform better academically and evidence suggests that physical activity among children is related to better mental health.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBCSL) recognizes the importance of access to safe and convenient transportation in communities;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NBCSL applauds the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Safer People, Safer Streets initiative and for available funding for transportation projects throughout the country under the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NBCSL urges the creation of plans and goals to ensure successful implementation of walking & biking projects in low-to-moderate income communities and identification of barriers and solutions;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NBCSL recommends supporting state and local financing mechanisms that create long-term funding for bicycling and walking projects;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NBCSL urges the U.S. Department of Transportation to adopt performance measures that focus not only on vehicular traffic but also performance measures around equitable design tied to walking, biking, rolling, and other active forms of transportation; recognizing that these performance measures help local and state agencies determine where funding should be prioritized;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NBCSL urges states and communities to pass complete streets policies in order to create a safe multimodal transportation network through the strategy of requiring that road construction and reconstruction projects make a street safe and comfortable for all users, and that these states and communities develop plans for the equitable implementation of complete streets; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary and other federal and state government officials, as appropriate.
ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION, AND ENVIRONMENT
Resolution ETE-17-11

SPONSOR: Senator Rodney Ellis (TX)
Committee of Jurisdiction: Energy, Transportation, and Environment Policy Committee
Certified by Committee Co-Chair: Representative Billy Mitchell (GA)
Ratified in Plenary Session: Ratification Date is December 3, 2016
Ratification is certified by: Senator Catherine Pugh (MD), President