



February 22, 2011

Lee County Board of Commissioners
2120 SW Main Street
Fort Myers, FL 33901

Dear Commissioners:

BikeWalkLee, a coalition to complete the streets in Lee County, works for a more balanced transportation system. Prior to your review and adoption of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR): New Horizon 2035, we wanted to share with you our views on the report. As we stated in our Jan. 9th letter, we consider the EAR an essential planning tool to facilitate the important land use and transportation changes that need to be made.

The EAR before you is a visionary and bold plan, with a focus on sustainability and a blueprint for changes in land use that will promote transit-oriented development, functional transit, livable communities, walkable/bikeable neighborhoods, and complete streets. It integrates all facets of planning in the county in a holistic way, and lays out a path for achieving a balanced multi-modal transportation system. We are especially pleased to see that complete streets concepts are integrated into every component of this plan.

The plan also benefits from a new collaborative approach of the various county departments working as a team to chart a new path, and reflects the extensive community input they received through dozens of public workshops. It's quite an accomplishment, and the County Manager and her team are to be commended.

The section of the report that analyzes problems with the existing Lee Plan's approach to transportation lays out a roadmap for changes that need to be made in order to have a balanced multi-modal transportation system. We look forward to these issues being addressed during implementation of the county's complete streets plan, especially changes to the transportation planning and budgeting processes that are due in mid-2011. We are also pleased that the report recognizes some existing transportation policies and procedures are detrimental to the safety of pedestrians and cyclists, as seen in the emphasis on traffic calming, speed, and design issues, and making improvements that will encourage more walking, bicycling, and transit use.

We are hopeful that the vision outlined in the EAR will be reflected in the changes to the Lee Plan in the next 18 months, as well as in the years ahead. We are hopeful that elements of the report that are currently not specific enough (for example, policies to reduce driving) will be addressed in more specificity in the plan amendment phase. In other words, the key is how aggressively the vision will be implemented in 2012-13 and beyond. We hope that the Board of County Commissioners will make a commitment to implementing the plan amendments consistent with the vision in this report.

Please feel free to contact either Dr. Margaret Banyan (mbanyan@comcast.net) or myself (dletourneau@bikewalklee.org) should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

/s/

Darla Letourneau
On behalf of
BikeWalkLee

Cc: Karen Hawes, County Manager
Mary Gibbs, Department of Community Development
Kathie Ebaugh, Principal Planner, DCD
Tessa LeSage, Office of Sustainability