

Make roads safer for bikes, pedestrians: Editorial

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It's past time for Florida — the most dangerous state in the union for pedestrians and bicyclists — to exit the dark ages of road design.

The useful BikeWalkLee organization, which recently persuaded Lee County commissioners to embrace a “complete streets” philosophy, is part of a worthy effort to get the state Legislature to do the same.

Complete streets (and highways) accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and public transit in their design from the beginning, which avoids expensive retrofitting. This makes roads and streets safer for everybody, including motorists. There are also health and tourism benefits from making biking and walking easier, and alternatives to individual vehicles reduce pollution and save resources.

Among other things, the complete streets people want the Legislature to require the state Department of Transportation to actually allocate all its federal safety funds for safety improvements (duh!), and then ensure that pedestrian/bicycle safety improvements receive a share of that money commensurate with the percentage of traffic fatalities made up of cyclists and pedestrians — a whopping 21 percent.

Let lawmakers know you want to make our roads safer, healthier and more inviting for all their many users.

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