



May 16, 2011

Peter Brandt
Chair, Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)
Cape Coral City Council

Dear Chairman Brandt:

BikeWalkLee is a community coalition working for complete streets in Lee County—streets that are designed, built, operated and maintained for safe and convenient travel for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. We have partnered with 34 stakeholder organizations in the community that want to improve the quality of life and mobility in Lee County—including the university, health care organizations, safety prevention groups, AARP of Florida, the realtors association, citizen and community groups, environmental organizations, planners and smart growth groups, and bike clubs and shops. Our network of almost 1,000 individual supporters includes many residents of Cape Coral.

We have worked with you, your committee, and other council members to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety in response to two tragic fatalities last year, and have supported the Council's efforts to reduce speeds, especially near schools, as an effort of traffic calming to improve safety. FHWA research shows that complete streets improve safety for all users. That is important because Lee County has some of the highest bicycle and pedestrian fatality per capita rates in the country.

We are writing today in support of the proposal presented by Pat Young of the Southwest Cape Coral Neighborhood Association, to add bike lanes to the following three roadways:

1. Agualinda (from Beach to Cape Coral Parkway)
2. Beach (from Oasis to Agualinda)
3. Cape Coral Parkway from Sands to SW 17th Place

All of these locations provide the desired connectivity to other bike/ped facilities that are critical to a safe and accessible bike/ped network; and are important links to businesses, schools, shopping, transit, and other points of interest.

Research shows that bike lanes improve safety. A recent study found that on-road bicycle lanes reduced injury and crash risk by 50%. In addition, it's a wise investment. A recent study by the Texas Transportation Institute found that paved shoulders/bike lanes have a benefit-to-cost-ratio of approximately 5 to 1. The majority of the benefits accrue to users other than cyclists and to the overall integrity of the infrastructure.

Over the past year, we have been part of the MPO's Project Advisory Committee, with representatives of each of the local jurisdictions (including Cape Coral), which has developed the MPO's countywide

bicycle pedestrian master plan. This important plan comes before the MPO Board for adoption on Friday. A key goal of the plan is to fill the many gaps that exist in the bike/ped network throughout the county. One of the key gaps on the primary bike/ped network in Cape Coral is found on Cape Coral Parkway, one of the areas proposed for bike lanes (see # 3 above). The other two roads (See # 1 and # 2 above) are on the secondary bike/ped network with links to the primary network, and are identified in the plan as gaps that need to be filled. (See Exhibits VV and LL.) Adding the proposed bike lanes in these three areas would be consistent with the plan and would demonstrate the Cape's commitment to the implementation of the MPO's countywide master plan.

In addition, the master plan provides some evaluation criteria for prioritizing bike/ped projects that the City may wish to consider for evaluation of future projects. (See Exhibit YY.) These criteria allow you to assess the project's merits based on the goals of safety, connectivity, mobility, and economic development.

Complete streets foster strong communities, and we know this is something important to the citizens of Cape Coral. A safe walking and bicycling environment is an essential part of improving public transportation and creating friendly, walkable/bikeable communities. According to the recent national Walk Score report, Cape Coral has a walkability score of 31 out of 100 (FL average is 45), so there's much that remains to be done.

We urge you to approve this proposal. We look forward to continuing to work with you to improve the mobility and quality of life for residents of Cape Coral and all of Lee County. Thank you.

Sincerely,

/s/

Darla Letourneau
On behalf of
BikeWalkLee

Cc: Vice Chair McGrail
Mayor Sullivan
Council Member Chulakes-Leetz
Council Member Kuehn
Gary King, City Manager
Persides Zambrano, Acting Transportation Manager
Rashad Hanbali, Traffic Engineer