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BikeWalkLee

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BikeWalkLee applauds Complete Streets resolution, urges quick adoption by Lee County Commission

Fort Myers, FL — On June 17, the Lee County Smart Growth Committee recommended a comprehensive "Complete Streets" resolution to the Lee County Commission for action. BikeWalkLee applauds the Smart Growth Committee's work and urges county commissioners to adopt this resolution.

More than 90 communities and 10 states across the country have adopted complete streets policies which encourage planners, engineers and designers to integrate the needs of all road users — pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities — into everyday transportation planning. The resolution before Lee County commissioners would add our county to the growing list of communities working to complete their streets. This is a policy statement which, when adopted, will provide political support for a new way of doing business.

Complete streets policies challenge the concept that the primary use of our public streets is to move more cars and trucks faster. Instead, it says our streets are the meeting spaces of our communities, for all to use. It is a paradigm shift for transportation agencies which requires a broad assessment of the needs of all road users to achieve a balanced multi-modal transportation outcome.

Complete street principles do not mandate any particular design, and result in greatly varied facilities depending on the specific needs of the community. A complete street in a rural area will look quite different from a complete street in an urban area, but both are designed to balance safety and convenience for everyone using the roads. A complete streets policy is not a mandate for immediate retrofit, nor it is a "silver

bullet"; other initiatives will need to address land use, environmental concerns and the reduction of vehicle miles traveled, but complete streets will help.

The county's complete streets resolution has been endorsed by a variety of community groups, including Lee Memorial Health Systems, the Responsible Growth Management Coalition, the state chapter of AARP, the Lee County Sheriff's Office and the Estero Council of Community Leaders.

The Smart Growth Committee was charged in August 2008 with developing recommendations on the Lee Department of Transportation's bike lane policy in the context of complete streets. The committee's complete streets resolution includes the features of the best complete street policies, according to national guidelines:

- It covers everyone using the roadway;
- It specifies that any exceptions to the policy require high-level approval;
- It emphasizes connectivity;
- It applies to all phases of all projects; and
- It directs the use of the latest and best design standards and allows flexibility in balancing user needs.

The resolution requires the county manager to develop guidelines to create a complete streets program and incorporates the actions needed for implementation into the county commission goals and objectives.

Official support for complete streets will demonstrate Lee County's leadership, giving it a head start to implement upcoming federal transportation and climate change legislation.

BikeWalkLee congratulates the Smart Growth Committee for its foresight, and urges county commissioners to put this good idea into action by adopting this resolution as county policy as soon as possible.

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BikeWalkLee is a coalition of local groups and individuals working to complete the streets in Lee County. Representatives are available to provide background and quotes for any media outlet. Contact Dan Moser at 239.334.6417 or dmoser@bikewalklee.org to arrange interviews. Visit the organization's Web site at www.BikeWalkLee.org for more information, statistics and background.