



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BikeWalkLee receives APA Florida's Outstanding Public Interest Group of the Year Award**



BikeWalkLee receives APA Florida's Outstanding Public Interest Group of the Year Award. From left: Dr. Margaret Banyan and Ann Pierce with BikeWalkLee accepting the "Outstanding Public Interest Group of the Year" award from Florida chapter of the American Planning Association officials, President-Elect Brian Teeple and President Merle Bishop.

At the annual state conference of the American Planning Association Florida Chapter, held in Naples, FL, last week, BikeWalkLee was awarded Outstanding Public Interest Group of the Year. This award acknowledged BikeWalkLee efforts "to help create a culture of planning that works to complete Lee County's streets so that all users of our transportation networks are considered on the front end of any

project or improvement". Accepting the award on behalf of BikeWalkLee were Dr. Margaret Banyan and Ann Pierce.

BikeWalkLee is honored to receive this award as recognition of what the county has collectively achieved – through the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Board of County Commissioners and county administration, and the five municipalities in Lee County -- working in collaboration with BikeWalkLee's coalition of 40 supporter organizations. BikeWalkLee has tried to play a catalyst role, but we would not be successful without the support and cooperation of the many elected officials in Lee County, their agencies and staffs. Lee County is making great strides in implementing complete streets, shifting to more sustainable transportation, providing more transportation choices, and enhancing the economic and social fabric of our community.

In giving this award, Florida APA President Merle Bishop stated: "BikeWalkLee's active transportation focus contributes to the economic health of the community, the physical health of its residents, the environmental health of the region, and the quality of life for individuals and families in Southwest Florida." BikeWalkLee looks forward to a continuation of this collaborative partnership on the long term path towards a more livable, economically resilient, and sustainable Lee County.

Since its launch in 2009, BikeWalkLee's work has been recognized at the local, state, and national levels. BikeWalkLee was a finalist for the News-Press "People of the Year" 2011 award; its efforts were reflected in the October 2011 awards by the Urban Land Institute of Southwest Florida recognizing Lee County's complete streets efforts and the MPO countywide bicycle and pedestrian master plan. Founding members of BikeWalkLee have been recognized as Florida Bicycle Association's Citizen Advocate of the Year in 2010; as finalists in both 2010 and 2011 of Lee County's Paulette Burton Citizen of the Year award; and as *Florida Weekly's* best advocate of the year in 2011. In 2010, BikeWalkLee received Lee County Injury Prevention Coalition's "Injury Prevention Organization of the Year" award. BikeWalkLee's work has also received public recognition by national organizations, such as the National Complete Streets Coalition, the League of American Bicyclists, Transportation for America, and the Alliance for Biking and Walking.

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**ABOUT BIKEWALKLEE:** *BikeWalkLee is a community coalition raising public awareness and advocating 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. For more information, visit [www.BikeWalkLee.org](http://www.BikeWalkLee.org), the BikeWalkLee blog at <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/>, or find us on Facebook and Twitter.*

**ABOUT APA FLORIDA:** *APA Florida provides statewide leadership in the development of sustainable communities by advocating excellence in planning, providing professional development for its members, and working to protect and enhance the natural and built environment. For more information, visit [www.floridaplanning.org](http://www.floridaplanning.org).*