



BikeWalkLee 2015 priorities

BikeWalkLee's priority list for local, regional and state governments and agencies in 2015.

■ Integrated planning

VISION: Innovative and integrated land use and transportation planning can enhance our county's livability while encouraging creative new development and redevelopment. The challenge is how to plan and manage for the population growth (1 million population by 2040 — up 370,000) in way that meets the infrastructure needs, need for green spaces, and to locate the growth where infrastructure already exists, while preserving and enhancing the quality of life.

- The Lee County Commission must re-establish its long-term vision and evaluate some of its core policies and programs that have been put on hold. Adoption of the delayed 2035 Horizon Plan is essential, consistent with the vision expressed by the public. The Lee Plan serves as a “road map” for the public to know how the county will address a wide variety of issues. The current Lee Plan encourages unsustainable development and the resulting negative consequences for energy consumption, health, housing and quality of life. The 2035 Horizon vision will move our county in a new direction –sustainable, livable and economically viable.
- The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) board must adopt a 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) based on the land-use scenario adopted in 2014. It should be based on realistic revenue estimates, ensuring highest priority projects consistent with board goals are funded while improving existing facilities before expanding capacity. We welcome innovative approaches such as road diets and roundabouts, a more robust transit system and improved and expanded biking and walking infrastructure, all in support of a balanced multi-modal transportation system consistent with complete streets and livable communities.

■ Quality of life

VISION: Making Lee County an attractive and active community of choice is the most effective way of attracting and retaining quality employers and entrepreneurs to invest in Lee County. Stable and self-supporting economic development needs to support and fund those elements that make this an attractive community for entrepreneurs, businesses and employees — a community worth long-term investment.

- County commissioners must reinstate funding for infrastructure through impact fees with the goal of ensuring that growth pays for growth and that necessary and desirable infrastructure and amenities are in place when newcomers are ready to take advantage of it. This could include a

transition to mobility fees as a replacement for road impact fees, to encourage multimodal transportation options, in-fill development and economic renewal countywide.

- County and local governments must support bike tourism efforts to promote both the county and Southwest Florida. The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau should incorporate bike tourism into Lee County's tourism strategy.
- The Lee County Legislative delegation must support incorporation of bike tourism into Florida's tourism economic development strategy, and supports legislation and funding for the statewide regional connector trails, including the Southwest Coast Connector Trail in Southwest Florida.

■ Transit

VISION: A mass transit system with adequate resources and planning will attract and retain users by being reliable, timely and consistent. Planning now for future transit needs will enable us to proactively prepare for growing transportation needs in a time of drastically shrinking funding.

- Lee MPO must adopt 2040 LRTP that reflects a strategy for expanding and improving our transit system so that it is robust and attracts users.
- All necessary government entities must increase LeeTran funding by at least 5% to improve the services on the current transit system (with increasing headways the first priority), providing an effective option for residents, workers and visitors. In addition, 100% of the fare increase effective January 2015 must be dedicated to improving service on the existing system.
- The Lee County Legislative Delegation must take actions to focus both on how to maintain the existing transit system and how to grow it into a more robust system. Delegation members are urged to support funding for medical transit services and work with local governments and service providers to make permanent changes in Medicaid program to fix this problem.

■ Safety

VISION: A zero-fatality transportation system for pedestrians and bicyclists throughout Lee County (Lee MPO's BPSAP vision, adopted October 2013). Safe walking and biking conditions promote higher levels of activity and facility usage. Our vision is to increase both the real and perceived safety conditions so usage of new public and private facilities will continue to increase.

- Lee MPO must establish a baseline from which to set goals and measure progress towards the Bike/Ped Safety Action Plan (BPSAP) goal of reducing pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and severe injury crashes by 6% in 2015, with the goal moving up a percentage point each year, reaching a 10% reduction goal in 2020. Measuring the county's performance against these numerical goals should be widely communicated with the public and used to reassess strategies if they are not resulting in reducing bike/ped injury and fatality crashes.
- MPO, local jurisdictions and all stakeholders must complete implementation of the MPO's Bicycle/Pedestrian Safety Action Plan short-term action items.
- Local law enforcement leaders, media and other stakeholder agencies (including the MPO and Florida DOT) must undertake an effective and coordinated countywide enforcement and education campaign that raises public awareness and improves the behavior of all road users.

- The Lee County Legislative Delegation must support Florida DOT statewide bike/ped safety campaign and its implementation of the agency’s new “complete streets” policy, including FDOT’s update to traffic laws so they are easier to understand and enforce.
- The Lee County Legislative Delegation must support strengthening a ban on texting while driving by making it a primary offense; support the bike/ped safety bill by Rep. Passidomo and endorsed by the Collier County delegation; and oppose any legislation that would worsen existing road safety problems, such as last year’s bill to raise speed limits on Florida roads.

■ Complete streets

VISION: Lee County becomes a complete streets model community whose integrated and safe cycling and walking network inspires people of all ages, income groups and fitness levels to cycle and walk for transportation and recreation. The complete streets movement is about changing the transportation paradigm from a car-centric focus to a multi-modal focus.

- FDOT’s implementation of its 2014 statewide complete streets policy provides Lee government entities with the motivation and tools to implement their adopted complete streets policies consistent with their adopted action plans and schedules, or the inspiration to initiate the adoption of a policy if one does not yet exist.
- Jurisdictions with complete streets policies (Lee County, Fort Myers, Bonita Springs) must revise their Land Development Codes (LDCs), Administrative Codes, and agency policies and practices required to implement complete streets policies. Complete Streets implementation plans must have timelines and deliverables, with performance against the plan tracked.
- The Lee MPO’s federal TIGER grant Complete Streets Initiative Project must get under way in 2015 and stay on target with the project deadlines, consistent with the key project goals — connectivity and safety — and, with the support and active participation of all stakeholders.

■ Bike/ped facilities

VISION: To develop a countywide network of connected bicycle and pedestrian facilities to transform Lee County into a more bicycle and pedestrian friendly community. Implementation of the countywide bike/ped master plan adopted by the MPO Board in 2011 requires commitment by local jurisdictions and agencies along with increased funding.

- MPO must coordinate the countywide progress towards implementing the recommendations in its Countywide Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan, while local jurisdictions must incorporate the master plan the recommendations into their own master plans – with measurable results.
- Lee County Commissioners must substantially increase funds for stand-alone bike/ped projects (retrofits) to restore funds reduced during the recession, and begin work on the extensive backlog of Bike/Ped Advisory Committee-approved and -prioritized projects.
- Local jurisdictions must increase funding for sidewalk, path, and bike lane projects.
- Florida DOT must increase funding in the work plan for stand-alone bike/ped projects.