



BWL Blog report 2/19/11

Complete streets and resurfacing contracts

The county's complete streets policy requires that accommodations for bike/ped/transit be made at all phases of road projects, including resurfacing/improvements. As part of the complete streets action plan the County Commissioners approved in November, the County's complete streets team has been evaluating the roads on the 3 annual resurfacing contracts (arterials/collectors; Lehigh local roads; and other county local roads) to see what opportunities exist to address the needs of all users when the roads are resurfaced. The evaluation of each contract list of roads has been reviewed by the complete streets work group of the Community Sustainability Advisory Committee (CSAC) and each time the CSAC has endorsed the recommendations of the County's complete streets team.

Each of the three sets of recommendations has contained some small interim measures that can be taken without widening the road surface (e.g., share the road signs, improved crosswalk, etc.). In particular, the last contract for Lee County local roads contained over a dozen spots where connectivity issues that will be further evaluated by staff. **Click here for the list of all the commitments made by the County as part of this process.** We will be following up to track the implementation of these commitments.

It became clear to the CSAC as it reviewed these recommendations that the evaluation of roads on the resurfacing contract list was coming too late in the process. Therefore, they recommended, and the BoCC adopted, that this process be used for review of resurfacing contracts for the next 2 years, and at the same time, it should be used for **advance planning** of resurfacing projects beyond 2013.

The Committee also made it explicit that the funds for meeting the complete streets needs on these streets "should not be limited to a percentage of impact fees or taxes", i.e. holistic budgeting. The Committee also recommended that the items committed to further evaluation actually be implemented by the county.

With the adoption of these recommendations, the future resurfacing schedule for each road should serve as the decision point for addressing improvements to meet the needs of all users. This process has highlighted the need for the county to revise its planning and budgeting processes (a deliverable in mid-2011 in the county's complete streets action plan) in order to look at the roadway holistically and address the needs of all users in the most cost effective way.

Kudos to the County Manager and her interdepartmental complete streets team that are working creatively to look at our roadways in a new way.