



BikeWalkLee's "Take-Aways" from Tampa Bike Summit

April 14, 2013

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As reported in Friday's blog story about the Bike Safety Summit (<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2013/04/bikewalklee-and-lee-county-staff.html>), BikeWalkLee participated in the April 11th Bike Summit hosted by USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood and came away inspired and energized. While our first post shared links to the local news coverage, a video of the opening session featuring Secretary LaHood, and our photo album, this report focuses on what we learned at the summit that can help us improve the safety of Lee County's roads for cyclists, make a more multi-modal transportation system for our community, and change the culture.

USDOT Announcements of Interest:

TIGER V: Secretary LaHood announced that there is going to be a 5th round of grants for TIGER grants, the highly competitive discretionary grant program to fund innovative multi-modal transportation infrastructure projects. There will be \$475 million available and the grant announcement will be coming out shortly. This is exciting news, since Lee County had a highly ranked complete streets initiative application (\$10 million request) in rounds 3 and 4. As Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn said, it took them 3 tries before they got their Riverwalk project funded (\$10 million) in TIGER IV last year, so the third time is the charm. BikeWalkLee will be requesting the MPO Board to re-submit a strengthened complete streets initiative grant application for TIGER V.

Performance Measures: One of the themes of the summit was the shift to a performance-based transportation system as called for in the MAP-21 Act. USDOT officials announced that the draft regulations for the new performance measurement system will be coming out shortly for public comment and that it will require states to set strong performance measures and targets for reducing pedestrian and cyclist fatality and serious injury rates, something that national, state, and local advocates (including BikeWalkLee) have pressed for. These will require accurate, timely data collection and accountability. This is welcome news and we should start planning now for setting local targets to reduce the rate of bike/ped fatalities and injuries in Lee County. Without the data, performance measures, specific targets and holding officials accountable for achieving these results, it is not possible to achieve the visionary goal of zero bike/ped fatalities and injuries.

Overarching messages: Secretary LaHood's themes can guide our efforts:

- develop zero tolerance for people who don't respect cyclists.

- continue effort until we reduce cyclist deaths and injuries to zero.
- as more people use biking for transportation needs, we have to step up our safety agenda
- bike and pedestrian safety is a long-term campaign that requires cultural/behavior changes, along with laws and enforcement. Think of the successes with the "Click It or Ticket" seatbelt campaign and Mothers Against Drunk Driving...with a combination of tools over a decade or more, the desired behaviors have become the norm. That's the kind of sustained and multi-faceted approach we need for our bike safety campaign.
- This campaign will take collaborative and dedicated leadership in our communities, some financial resources, a public education campaign coupled with comprehensive enforcement, legislatures to pass laws, and communities to install bike lanes and other biking facilities.
- To succeed, we must change the culture in Florida--a long term and systematic shift.
- It takes a strong commitment and leadership from the top and cooperation from officials and staff at all levels to achieve this culture change.
- Secretary LaHood and other officials voiced strong support for Complete Streets policies as a way to make our streets safer for everyone.
- The TIGER grant program has spurred a great deal of innovation and helped change the mindset in the transportation world, with its emphasis on multi-modal transportation and the goal of promoting livable and economically vibrant communities.
- Dave Strickland, NHSTA Administrator, said "the road is a community-wide resource, it is not just for cars and trucks. It is for all, and needs to be observed as such."

Economic Benefits: Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn focused on the economic benefits of investing in biking infrastructure and making it a safe biking community.

- Being a bikeable/walkable city is key to a city being able to compete with other cities for the intellectual capital workers. Saying "We recognize that intellectual capital is mobile and if we don't want to keep losing to Charlotte, Austin, and Minneapolis we need to be competitive, we need to be a connected city. So, we are all in and we are getting out ahead".
- He wants to make Tampa a "hip" and "cool" place to attract and keep smart, talented professionals want to live. Is it a city where you can live, work and play and not get into your car? Biking is a big part of positioning the city to attract those workers. Mayor Buckhorn says, "we are talking about more than a mobility plan, this is a City-wide Visionary Plan."
- This message resonated with the Lee County participants --this is an economic development tool and an important part of positioning our county to be vibrant and sustainable into the future.
- Buckhorn says "We don't have the money to road build our way out of congestion, it has to be multi-modal; walking, biking, BRT, light rail."
- Karen Kress, President of the advocacy organization Tampa BayCycle, indicated that there was a burgeoning bike culture in Tampa, ready to "bust loose" if given the safe and convenient facilities.
- Changes can be economically integrated into resurfacing and state-of-repair projects.

- It was noted that Portland built its entire 300 miles of bikeways for the cost of just one mile of urban highway.

Education:

- The "3 feet please" campaign was highlighted by both Mayor Buckhorn, the Sheriff's representative and City of Tampa Police, as a way to start both educational and enforcement campaigns. It was gratifying to learn that Tampa had implemented a campaign very similar to the one launched by BikeWalkLee, Lee County's BPAC, and Harvey Software, undertaken in 2011-2012. It reminded us that we need to continue that campaign and expand it further.
- Tampa Police is training officers in "3 feet please" law and is advocating for stepped up police academy training in all aspects of bike and pedestrian safety. All city police cars display the "3 feet please" sticker and awareness of the law is being conveyed to citizens through all Neighborhood Watch programs.
- An educational campaign must be very broad-based--drivers, cyclists, pedestrians, law enforcement, judiciary, officials and staff, as well as the general public. The extent to which everyone is ignorant of the rules of the road is astonishing and we have to find better tools to educate everyone. Miami-Dade has a successful 10 year program of teaching "Walk Smart" in elementary schools and newer program "Bike Smart" in middle schools.
- Tampa Police also focused on installing "share the road" signs, digital billboard messages, and sharrows, coupled with active public outreach to raise awareness of the need to consider all road users when you're using the road.
- Bike Share programs are a way of raising awareness of cyclists and also encourages more people to give biking a try, especially for transportation purposes (Tampa is launching one in the Fall).
- Tampa's strategy of handing out lights to cyclists riding at night vs. ticketing them is something Lee County has also done. We should consider redoubling our efforts on this and expanding its reach.
- Police "roll-call" training is one approach. Dan Moser (BWL and FBA) has introduced this approach in Lee County but it hasn't yet been incorporated into our law enforcement procedures...we need to continue to press for this.
- Bus drivers need to be trained in cycling laws. BWL's Dan Moser has worked with LeeTran on making sure our drivers know and follow the laws.
- NJ 'fast-track' educated their engineers in principles of Smart Growth, but to really change their behavior--they matched them up with people who had experience in this new approach and they worked side-by-side in implementing the new approaches.

Engineering: Other Florida communities seemed to be trying more innovative techniques than Lee County in engineering roadways to make them safer for vulnerable road users.

We need to more aggressively consider the use of these tools:

- road diets – Tampa has completed two and has about a dozen more planned

- green bike lanes- FDOT has implemented a pilot project and advocates want FDOT's policy to change to allow them everywhere
- median islands- proven pedestrian and cyclist safety measure
- roundabouts- enable continual traffic flow, allowing for heavier volume on fewer lanes
- HAWK pedestrian safety signals- best device for pedestrian crosswalks
- separated bike lanes - Tampa is installing some of these in the downtown area and advocates pushed for more
- on-street parking- calms and slows through traffic and supports local economic growth
- Transportation used be summed up in road building, it is now building an entire transportation system, connected across modes and requires deep organizational changes.
- Billy Hattaway, FDOT Division 1 Secretary says the biggest barrier to rapidly achieving better roadway safety is “our existing lane patterns”.
- There is no silver bullet--we need to use all the tools.
- Transportation systems alone can't solve the problem, must address our land use development patterns. This message isn't new, but it re-enforces the importance of changes in our Comp Plan that are now underway in the Horizon 2035 Lee Plan.
- "Don't be afraid to ask FDOT"--that was Mayor Buckhorn's advice. He said they're willing to work with local jurisdictions to find creative solutions to issues. Currently working with FDOT to reverse two high speed one-way roads through downtown Tampa.

Enforcement:

- Key to effective campaign is to pair public education messages with consistent enforcement action. That was critical element in seat belt campaign.
- Sheriff's representative noted that other than those from Tampa area, law enforcement personnel were not in attendance at this summit. Need to be an integrated part of this campaign. How do we bring them to the table?
- Hillsborough County model is good one to follow--they have a team of county sheriff, city police, and FHP all working on a coordinated enforcement strategy in one corridor. We need to encourage Lee County law enforcement to come up with a mechanism to do the same approach.
- This tri-agency team has identified and combined patrolling of both crime and crash 'hotspots'.
- Tampa Police ticketing violations of the “3 feet please” law
- Missoula, Montana where a concerted law enforcement campaign immediately dropped crash rate by 10% and over 4 years dropped it 50%. Message – law enforcement's full participation is critical to success.

Policy/Law/Regulatory Changes: Most of these suggestions came from participants:

- FDOT should adopt a statewide complete streets policy. District Secretary Hattaway's response was encouraging: He supports that idea and is discussing with decision makers in FDOT. BWL

has recommended this approach since 2010. This approach could help shape the culture change needed to make our streets safer for all users, and provide needed leadership and support to the 32 communities in Florida (including Lee County) that have adopted complete streets policies. BikeWalkLee will redouble its efforts, in collaboration with other advocates throughout Florida, to encourage FDOT to adopt a complete streets policy this year.

- Ian Lockwood of AECOM Gladding Jackson stated that MPOs need to stop focusing on "fighting congestion", LOS, and rewarding the through, long trip and instead focus on funding projects that are multi-modal, reward short trips and transit, and support roadway networks, walkable and bikeable vibrant communities . When we measure congestion, we are measuring the wrong variable.
- It's not about "balance"...it's about priorities--transit, walkability, land use. (Note: Ian Lockwood, AECOM Gladding Jackson, was excellent speaker and we should try to get him to make presentation to MPO Board)
- Lockwood also stated that this is a return to traditional values, and that the most 'livable' cities in the world are the highly walkable ones. It is the post WWII modernist values that have depopulated and weakened cities.
- Ten years of FDOT research indicated that new approaches had not resulted in any tort liability suits. . . Billy Hattaway made the case that this "liability fear" barrier needs to be removed.
- Other suggestions made:
 - Florida Legislature should pass vulnerable user law
 - FDOT needs to change its "share the road" signs policy (encourage vs. discourage use)
 - FDOT (and USDOT) needs to change the "85th percentile rule" that means designing our roads for higher speeds rather than designing the road by the environment we want.
 - FDOT needs to change its policy to allow for green bike lanes
 - Need statewide process for encouraging more children to walk/bike to school and the Miami "walk safe" program is a model for other communities
 - The complete streets policy of Temple Terrace, FL was cited as a good example to follow. Was called the "only truly multi-modal city in Florida".
 - The engineers and planners who designed and built the biking facilities should be required to ride them to understand how they work or don't work for cyclists...cyclists need to be consulted in the design of the facilities.
 - FL needs legislation setting mandatory minimums for hit-and-run drivers removing current incentives to leave scene if intoxicated and avoid DUI charges.
 - All elementary and middle schools should have curriculum integrated pedestrian/bicycle safety curriculum, as they have in Europe.
 - To get the other 60% to ride, we have to not only achieve safety but go beyond to a sense of user comfort.

Messaging, Coalition building and Advocacy:

- Advice from local officials--"show up"--show them you care...it really does work.
- Transportation planning and coordination should be a very big tent, bringing together a broad cross section of stakeholders, from law enforcement, public health, schools, injury prevention, to planners and citizen groups.
- We have to "frame the conversation differently" (per Billy Hattaway). When you talk about a road diet, need to convince public that it doesn't "increase delay"...how that higher speeds don't get you there faster. As Billy stated, "if you want to decrease travel time, live closer to where you work!"
- "People will ignore data if their paradigm is auto-oriented and your paradigm is livability", per Ian Lockwood. "Best safety ambassadors are children", said by NHSTA Administrator, David Strickland. We need to find ways to engage children in this safety campaign.
- A key take-away message from the national and local leaders--make sure you stand up, make yourselves heard, participate in the process--it can make a huge difference! Particular emphasis was placed on participating in your regional MPO.

Policy and Data:

- "what gets measured is what gets improved"...data and performance measures and targets are key to long-term success.
- A key to good decision-making is monitoring policies, which requires data and the timely analysis of data, and use of the data to measure outcomes. This is something Lee County needs to work on.
- Use of GIS tools can help us take bike/ped crash data and make smart decisions about how and where to target measures to reduce crashes
- Doing annual bike/ped counts is important, yet few communities are doing it. With new technology, this may become easier in the future.
- Local officials should also conduct regular Bike Audits

Celebrate the Progress we've made

- Beth Osborne, USDOT Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy, made some important points at the end about what's been accomplished in the past 4 years...yes, we've got a long way to go, but we should also realize the progress we're making:
 - four years ago the first bike share opened up and now it's in 40 cities
 - Mayors are now creating economic vibrancy in their cities by focusing on bikeable communities--something that has changed profoundly in 4 years.