



Nov. 9, 2009

— EXECUTIVE SUMMARY —

How safe are Lee County Streets for pedestrians?

In 2007-2008, 1,047 pedestrians were killed on Florida roads, making Florida the most dangerous state for pedestrians—three times more dangerous than the national average. Unfortunately, Lee County is even more dangerous than the statewide rate.

According to a national report, "Dangerous by Design," by the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership (STPP) and Transportation for America (T4America), only eight states have any metro areas with a danger index as high as Florida's average.

The Cape Coral-Fort Myers metro area, which includes all of Lee County, has a higher Pedestrian Danger Index (PDI) than Florida statewide. In fact, Lee County is more dangerous than all the metro areas in 42 states, including the most populous states. Lee County ranks 23rd of all 360 metro areas in the nation when it comes to being hazardous for walkers. Over the past two years, 32 Lee County residents have died and another 422 were injured while crossing the street, walking to school, going to a bus stop, or strolling to the grocery store. *

The national report highlights the rankings of the 52 major metro areas (over 1 million residents). Of the top 10 most dangerous large metro areas, four are in Florida — and Lee County's PDI is higher than every metro area on this list except Orlando-Kissimmee, FL and Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL.

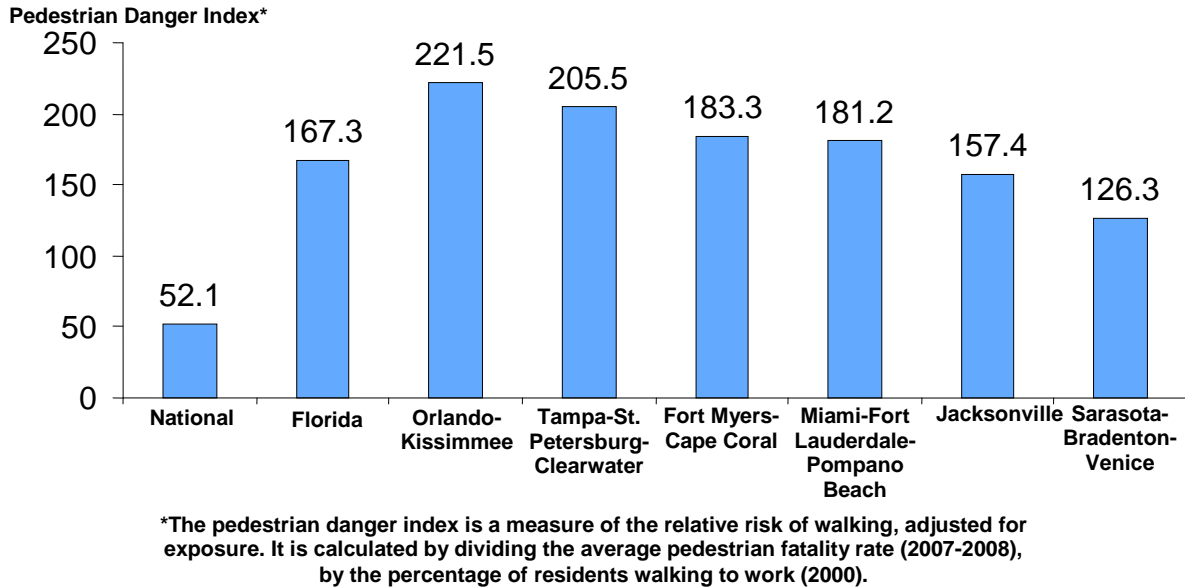
This BikeWalkLee report can be found on

www.BikeWalkLee.org and www.Eco-Voice.org.

The complete "Dangerous by Design" report can be found on

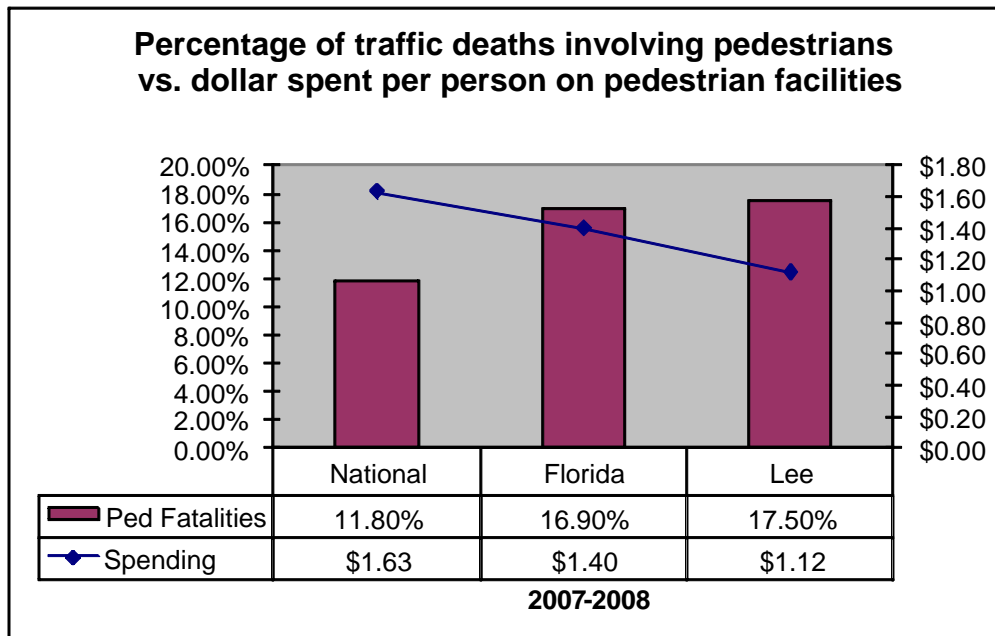
<http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign/>

The risk of walking in selected Florida metro areas



Lee's safety investments are lacking

Lee County spends only \$1.12 per resident on pedestrian (and bicycle) facilities and safety-- less per resident than either the national or Florida average.



A Look at Lee County in the context of Southwest Florida

Lee County leads the other three metro areas in Southwest Florida on the percent of all traffic deaths that are pedestrians, at 17.5%. However, on all other measures, Punta Gorda is more dangerous for pedestrians, with the **highest** PDI in the nation. Sarasota/Bradenton is the worst in Southwest Florida in terms of the average spending per person on pedestrian facilities and safety. Naples/Marco is the safest metro area for pedestrians in Southwest Florida, with a PDI of 105.4 (still twice the national average), which could be a function of its higher than average spending per person on pedestrian facilities and safety (\$2.87). In fact, only one community in Florida (Panama City-Lynn Haven) spends more per person than Naples/Marco.

Southwest Florida Metro Areas							
<u>Metro area</u>	<u>PDI</u>	<u>Pedestrian fatalities</u>	<u>% of pedestrian fatalities per 100K*</u>	<u>% of traffic deaths that were peds</u>	<u>Average spending per person</u>	<u>% walk to work (2000)</u>	<u>2008 population</u>
National	52.1	11623	1.53%	10.62%	\$1.63	2.86%	381,471,417
Florida	167.3	1047	2.87%	15.26%	\$1.41	1.64%	16,988,611
Punta Gorda	398.2	9	3.00%	16.70%	\$0.53	0.70%	150,060
Fort Myers /Cape Coral	183.3	32	2.70%	17.50%	\$1.12	1.50%	593,136
Bradenton /Sarasota	126.3	27	1.96%	12.60%	\$0.00	1.60%	687,823
Naples/Marco	105.4	12	1.90%	13.60%	\$2.87	1.80%	315,258

*Calculated using 2008 population number and number pedestrian fatalities data on this table.

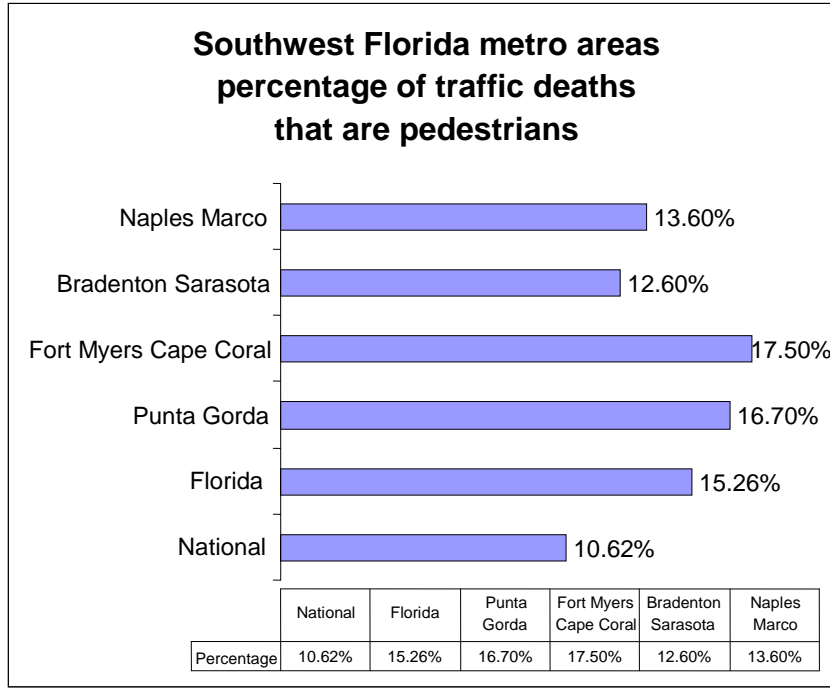
Walking on the decline in Lee County

While Lee County has had lower walking rates than either Florida or the nation since the 1990 Census, the county's relative performance has declined more sharply.

	1990	2000	2008	% decline
	1990	2000	(ACS)	1990-2008
U.S.	3.9%	2.9%	2.8%	-28%
Florida	2.5%	1.7%	1.5%	-40%
Lee Co.	2.0%	1.5%	0.8%	-60%

The decline in walking may be attributed to the decline in safe, convenient and inviting places to walk, a lack of investment in safe pedestrian facilities, and to the increasing number of residents living in places where walking is more dangerous. Many Lee County residents live in sprawling suburban areas, characterized by wide arterial streets with fast-moving traffic, few sidewalks or crosswalks, and stores,

shops and offices accessible only by car. While one might speculate that the recent drop in Lee County’s rate reflects the economic downturn and high unemployment rate in Lee County, the county’s walking to work rate was also 0.8% in 2005, during the boom years. A recent survey of Florida residents found only 25 percent felt it was safe to walk along or to cross their nearest U.S. or state road. *



Pedestrian injuries are also important measures of danger

“Dangerous by Design” focuses only on pedestrian fatalities; however, this is just the tip of the iceberg. For every pedestrian fatality, there are 13 pedestrians injured.*

Lee County is dangerous for cyclists, too!

While this report deals with pedestrian safety, data shows that Lee County is also a very dangerous place for cyclists, with 5.5% of all traffic fatalities being cyclists in 2007-2008 — more than triple the national rate of 1.8%. Again, fatalities represent only a small portion of the problem. For every cyclist killed, 19 more are injured.*

The costs of pedestrian injuries and fatalities

As reported in “Dangerous by Design”, the National Safety Council estimates the comprehensive cost, including both the economic costs and the costs associated with the loss of quality of life, for each traffic death at \$4.1 million, and comprehensive cost for a single non-incapacitated injury is estimated at \$53,000.** Applying these per person costs to Lee County’s 2007-2008 pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries, these crashes are costing our community over \$100 million a year.

Cost to Lee County community of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries (2007-08)

Fatalities:	42 x \$4.1 million = \$172.2 million
Injuries:	612 x \$53,000 = \$32.4 million
Total cost:	\$204.6 million

Given these figures, it's reasonable to say that the money saved by preventing pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities would more than offset any costs of improving Lee County's walking and biking infrastructure — which often can be done for a minimal cost if pedestrian and bicyclists needs are included as part of the initial planning rather than added on after the fact.

What are the most dangerous Lee County roads and intersections for pedestrians?

Attached is a set of Lee DOT's crash maps (which include data from 2005 to May 2009) with separate maps for pedestrians and cyclists. These maps provide a good indication of the "hot spot" areas in the county where the most crashes occur. The national report analyzed the national data (NHSTA) that shows that half of pedestrian deaths are on arterial roads. Although the data wasn't compiled by local jurisdiction, it is apparent that many of Lee's crashes occur on our arterial roads.

Some steps have been taken by Lee County to improve pedestrian safety

1. The local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO — an intergovernmental traffic planning agency for Lee County) voted to devote a greater share of federal stimulus transportation project funds to pedestrian and bike projects. More than 10% of the stimulus transportation funds received to date are going to bike/ped projects (including a shared-use path along the Metro Extension road project), and three more Cape Coral sidewalks will be funded with reallocated stimulus funds.
2. In addition, Lee County commissioners approved other funding for new sidewalks this year: the Homestead Road sidewalk will be built as part of Lee County's \$3 million Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program. In addition, the county commission approved funding this year for the long-delayed Slater Road sidewalk.
3. The MPO unanimously adopted Resolution 09-05 on Aug. 21, 2009, which requests Florida Department of Transportation and local agencies to accommodate all users in the design, construction, and operation of all roadway projects.
4. On June 17, Lee County's Smart Growth Committee recommended a Complete Streets resolution to the county commissioners for approval; this is a policy statement that county roadways should be planned, designed and operated to provide safe access for all users. The BoCC "accepted" this resolution at its Aug. 3 Management and Planning meeting, and it is scheduled for action Nov. 10.
5. In September 2008, the MPO initiated the development of a countywide comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, with the goal of providing a safe accessible and connected bicycle/pedestrian system throughout the county. This is set to get underway next month.

What more can be done to reverse the trend of dangerous streets?

Ensure that Lee's streets take into account all users:

1. Support Lee County commission's Nov. 10 vote to adopt a "Complete Streets" resolution.
2. Encourage intergovernmental coordination in street design.
3. Promote community designs that emphasize alternative transportation options.
4. Incorporate Complete Streets principles into road designs and upgrades.

Fix problem areas:

1. Look at what caused pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities discussed here, and what could have been done to avoid them.
2. Look at what information we're lacking to make better safety decisions based on this analysis, and how could it be better gathered.
3. Look at funding options to make crucial bike and pedestrian roadway improvements.
4. Provide more transparency and accountability in regular reporting and analysis of indicator data and recommendations for action.

Focus on public education for all road-user groups:

1. **Pedestrians/bicyclists:** Learn how to walk/bike safer, how to walk/bike defensively in high-traffic areas and how existing laws affect your actions.
2. **Drivers:** Learn how to be more aware of pedestrians and their safety, and how to avoid unsafe distractions while driving.
3. **Officials:** Learn how to create a more walkable and bikeable community, and why that is important
4. **Media:** Take a role in educating the public, and shine a spotlight on problems and solutions.

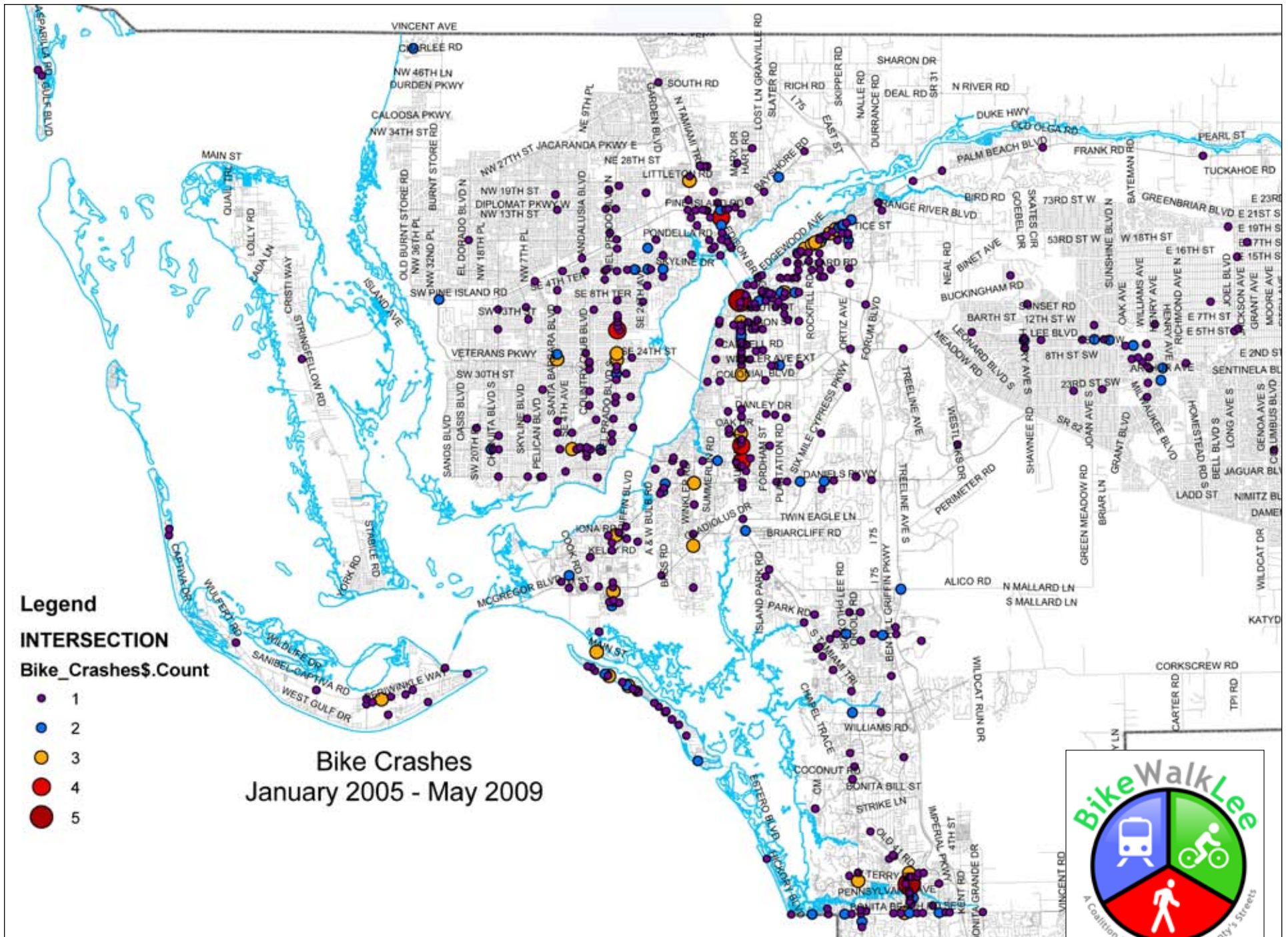
Enhance enforcement of existing laws

1. Well-publicized strategic enforcement of existing laws on pedestrian and cyclist safety by the Lee County Sheriff's Office and local law enforcement agencies is often the best way to educate the public about the rules and to promote voluntary compliance.

Put safe walking and biking into a broader context

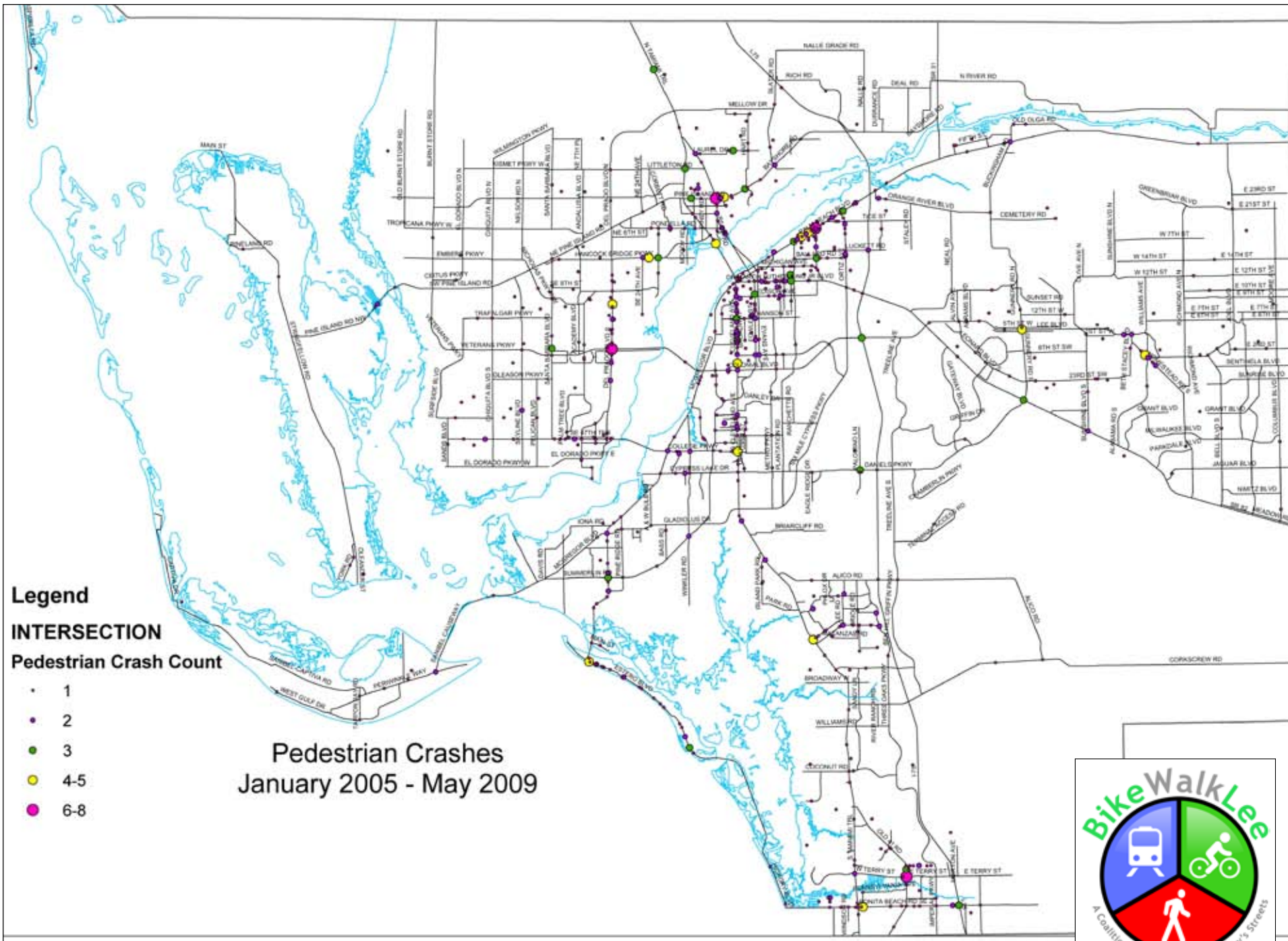
1. Encourage biking and walking as a transportation alternative as appropriate
2. Recognize the public health benefits of enhanced bike/walk facilities and use.
3. Encourage the Lee County School District to promote walking and biking to school.
4. Recognize the economic benefits of better bike/walk facilities for tourism, economic development and "smart growth" policies

NOTE: 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. We envision a Lee County that is 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. Public transportation is available and accessible to citizens and visitors in Lee County. Our 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 our community.



SOURCE: Lee County Department of Transportation





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