

BikeWalkLee 2010 Accomplishments



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.



BikeWalkLee was formed in 2009 and hit the ground running, with many successful efforts in its first two years. The following are highlights from 2010:

Coalition building and consensus seeking

- Partnered with 30 community stakeholder organizations that want to improve the quality of life and mobility in Lee County, including Florida Gulf Coast University, health care organizations, safety prevention groups, AARP of Florida, citizen and community groups, environmental organizations, planners and sustainable communities groups, and bike clubs and shops.
 - Partnered with the Sierra Club of Southwest Florida to advocate for increased funding and expanded transit services for Lee County.
 - Joined forces with Council for the Blind to successfully fight cuts in Lee County's transit budget.
 - Participated in formation of the new Fit Friendly Southwest Florida Coalition, expanding support for a complete streets approach to promote healthy lifestyles and fight obesity.
 - Collaborated with safety prevention groups such as the Stay Alive, Just Drive! and the Injury Prevention Coalition to prevent and reduce pedestrian and cyclist injuries and fatalities.
 - Collaborated with Stay Alive, Just Drive!, AARP of Florida, Florida Bicycling Association and many other organizations in support of state legislation to ban texting and other distractions while driving.
- Collaborated with community businesses and citizens who opposed the proposed Colonial Expressway road project and supported a more balanced transportation approach.
- Hosted a successful kickoff for Lee County's countywide bike/pedestrian master plan development, bringing together county bikers and walkers to share input with county staff, which was used in the development of the plan.
- Enlisted local media in the long-term campaign for a more bike/ped-friendly community, resulting in *News-Press* editorial support for making roads safer for bikes and pedestrians and complete streets policies and projects, and publication of BikeWalkLee commentaries on safety, distracted driving, and complete streets.

Government policies and funding

- Implementation of complete streets policies adopted by Lee County in 2009.
 - As result of BWL request, Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was first elected body in the country to endorse the U.S. Secretary of Transportation's March 2010 policy statement embracing a complete streets approach. Lee County's action inspired other communities around the country to take similar action—including Lee County, MS.
 - To implement the Lee County and MPO complete streets resolutions, BikeWalkLee monitored road projects under development to ensure bike/ped/transit accommodations are planned and built at the front-end of the process. Planned accommodations were upgraded on several road projects as a result of BikeWalkLee advocacy (Metro Parkway; Six Mile Cypress; Colonial Blvd at I-75 interchange; SR-82 at Ortiz).
 - BikeWalkLee worked with the Lee County manager, the Lee County Complete Streets Implementation Team, and the Community Sustainability Advisory Committee on the development of the first annual report to the Lee County Commission (BoCC) in October 2010. This report covered the implementation status of the complete streets program, including the action plan, specific deliverables, and timetable. The report was adopted by the commission and the county is now implementing the action plan with BikeWalkLee involvement and oversight.
- Advocated for the Lee County Department of Transportation's (LeeDOT) resurfacing projects to reflect complete streets principles, resulting in LeeDOT's analysis and recommendations to BoCC for each project. At the end of 2010, Palomino Road was resurfaced, "share the road" signs were installed, the speed limit was reduced and the restriping narrowed the lanes.
- BikeWalkLee sent complete streets questionnaires to all BoCC candidates in the 2010 election cycle. All candidates responded and answers were shared with the BikeWalkLee network.
- Advocated for a 21st century balanced multi-modal transportation system throughout the development of the MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).
 - BikeWalkLee participated in every phase of the development of the LRTP, challenging the MPO and staff to move in a new direction and framing the issues for the members and public.
 - BikeWalkLee was recognized by the *News-Press* as an important resource in the LRTP process.
 - Led successful effort to have the LRTP Needs Plan assume a comprehensive transit program that promotes choice riders, providing a path forward for an efficient and effective transit system.
 - Initiated two policy resolutions adopted by the MPO as part of the adoption of the LRTP: (1) to provide concrete action steps to promote a more balanced multi-modal system; and (2) agrees to a major LRTP update in 2012 that will incorporate new plans and enhance the plan development process.

- Worked closely with MPO staff and consultants on development of MPO countywide bike/pedestrian master plan to effectively connect and integrate bicycle and pedestrian travel on the county's transportation system. BWL representatives served on the Project Advisory Committee, led "ground-truthing" project to validate existing facilities are as described or listed. (Completion and adoption of plan will be priority in 2011.)
- Advocated for increased investments in bike/ped facilities:
 - Successfully advocated for increased Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) investment in bike/ped facilities, as reflected in FDOT District 1's December 2010 draft work plan for 2011-2016.
 - Part of state advocacy effort that successfully fought to defeat a legislative proposal to cut funding for Florida's Greenways and Trails Office.
- Successful completion of construction of stimulus and other funding bike/ped projects:
 - **Sanibel Causeway tollbooth bike facilities project:** Worked with LeeDOT to ensure that project safety concerns were resolved before completed, and celebrated its completion with a ribbon-cutting event with MPO elected officials, receiving extensive media coverage. Lee County Commissioner Ray Judah received BikeWalkLee's Complete Streets Champion of the Year award at this event.
 - **Buckingham Road shoulders:** Worked with LeeDOT to get deficiencies corrected before project completed.
 - **Gladiolus Road project:** Worked to include bike lanes, sidewalks, and sharrows, the first use of this in Lee County. Participated in ribbon-cutting ceremony, with media coverage/education re: sharrows.
 - **Several sidewalk projects in Cape Coral** were completed, with several more under construction, including one near Challenger Middle School where a student was killed while biking this summer.
- Served on the Florida Department of Transportation's 2060 Transportation Plan Advisory Group: Community Livability, Environmental Stewardship and Mobility. BikeWalkLee advocated for the state to develop a bold vision for a 21st century transportation system and provided comments on the draft plan.
- Participated in development of FDOT's new 5-Year Safety Strategic Plan, submitting BikeWalkLee's Safety Funding study to summit participants.

Analysis and action

- Followed up on the 2009 national Dangerous by Design report. Wrote and released BWL report, "How safe are Lee County streets for pedestrians?" BikeWalkLee issued a study in February 2010: "Analysis of Florida's Highway Safety Programs, Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Improvements and Recommendations for Action." The study found that although Florida is the most dangerous state for bike/peds, FDOT has not been effectively using the federal transportation safety funds to address the problem.

- Based on this 2010 safety funding study, initiated statewide effort to advocate for pedestrian/bicycle safety projects. Initiated statewide advocacy efforts and wrote letters requesting Florida's governor and Legislature to take specific actions to support complete streets and improve safety for bike/ped, including “fair share” of federal highway safety funds.
- Brought focus to FDOT’s decision to take the bulk of the federal transportation rescission from bike/ped programs. Prepared an analysis and wrote to the governor. BikeWalkLee’s analysis and letter were used by advocates throughout Florida, with thousands signing the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s online petition to the governor in opposition to this action.
- Brought focus and media attention to safety of pedestrians and cyclists in Lee County.
 - Issued “How to improve safety for pedestrians & cyclists” paper, with suggestions identified in various research reports as effectively improving safety.
 - BWL and Stay Alive! Just Drive partnered to enlist media attention to safety issues, resulting in several *News-Press* editorials about bike/ped safety and BWL commentaries, and a September feature on distracted driving.
 - Advocated for LeeDOT to expand its planned safety improvements at the Del Prado intersection in Cape Coral, where a 13-year-old cyclist was killed, and worked with the media and others in the community to push for action.
- Supported Sanibel’s successful efforts to receive national designation by the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) as a Bicycle Friendly Community, one of only six communities in Florida and the first in Southwest Florida.
- Maintained network of over 1,000 advocates and supporters through BikeWalkLee’s frequent postings on its blog (<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com>), its website (www.BikeWalkLee.org), and its bi-monthly newsletter. Coalition is kept up-to-date on local bike/ped/transit developments and news, upcoming government meetings, and action alerts and opportunities for input. Received positive feedback from both advocates and government officials about its quality and usefulness.
- BikeWalkLee’s advocacy work was recognized in 2010 by awards from both the Florida Bicycle Association and Lee County’s Injury Prevention Coalition. BikeWalkLee’s work also received public recognition by national organizations, such as the National Complete Streets Coalition, the League of American Bicyclists, Transportation 4 America, and the Alliance for Biking and Walking.

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