

BikeWalkLee 2009 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 year. The following are highlights from 2009:

Coalition building and consensus seeking

- Partnered with 30 stakeholder organizations in the community that want to improve the quality of life and mobility in Lee County—including the university, health care organizations, safety prevention groups, AARP of Florida, citizen and community groups, environmental organizations, planners and smart growth groups, and bike clubs and shops.
 - Collaborated on transit-oriented development and the TIGER commuter rail proposal with Reconnecting Lee.
 - Collaborated with Lee County Health and other health partners to develop a federal grant proposal for Fit Friendly Lee project.
 - Collaborated with safety prevention groups such as the Stay Alive, Just Drive campaign, to prevent and reduce pedestrian and cyclist injuries and fatalities, and with Lee EMS on bike/ped/motorist education efforts.
- Conducted two petition drives in support of a bike/ped-friendly Lee County and a user survey on biking and walking in Lee County. These efforts demonstrated community support to elected officials.
- Enlisted local media in the long-term campaign for a more bike/ped-friendly community, resulting in News-Press editorial support for complete streets policies and publication of BikeWalkLee commentaries, and extensive media coverage by both News-Press and Florida Weekly on BikeWalkLee’s pedestrian safety report, and dangers for pedestrians and cyclists on Lee County streets.

Government policies and funding

- Advocated for Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) policy statement (Resolution 09-05) that all road projects countywide should include accommodations for bike/ped/transit when they are designed. This policy resolution was adopted unanimously by the MPO on August 21, 2009.
 - Monitored road projects under development to ensure accommodations are being built in at the front-end of the process and raising issues to the MPO. BikeWalkLee continues to monitor projects as they are developed.

- Collaborated with Lee County’s Smart Growth Committee on the development of a Complete Streets policy, launched a successful community campaign that led to adoption of a BoCC Complete Streets Resolution. The BoCC unanimously adopted the resolution on November 10, 2009. Evidence of successful engagement included:
 - Broad community support for complete streets resolution demonstrated at the BoCC meeting. 16 citizens from many different perspectives and organizations spoke in support.
 - County gained recognition in media (both local and national) for its adoption of complete streets resolution, and received credit for taking positive action in response to the Dangerous by Design report, which identified Lee County as a dangerous area for pedestrians.
 - Assisted other communities in Florida interested in using the Lee County experience as a model for developing similar complete streets campaign in their areas.
 - Working with the County Manager and complete streets team on implementation plans.
- Initiated the proposal for an MPO countywide bike/pedestrian master plan to effectively connect and integrate bicycle and pedestrian travel on the county’s transportation system. The MPO approved the proposal and work is scheduled to begin in January 2010.
- Advocated for increased investments in bike/ped facilities:
 - Proposed and won MPO approval to direct at least 5% of transportation stimulus funds to stand-alone bike/ped projects. To date, more than 10% of all highway ARRA (stimulus) funds have been dedicated to bike/ped facilities (including those that are part of roadway projects).
 - Projects include biking shoulders on Buckingham Rd., the Sanibel toll booth and access bike improvements, three sidewalk projects in Cape Coral, as well as a shared use path and bike lanes on the Metro extension roadway project. Construction will occur in 2010.
 - Continue to advocate for raising the ranking of 33 remaining bike/ped projects (\$36 million) on the MPO priority list, to be used for additional funds that may become available in 2010.
 - Successfully advocated for bike/ped facilities (Homestead Rd. bike path) in Lee County’s Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG), awarded in December.
 - Successfully advocated for increased Florida DOT investment in bike/ped facilities, as reflected in FDOT District 1’s December 2009 draft work plan for 2010-2015.

Analysis and Action

- Brought focus and media attention to safety of pedestrians and cyclists in Lee County and statewide, with analysis of data in national Dangerous by Design November report, and release of BWL report, “How safe are Lee County streets for pedestrians?” Working with local media and local law enforcement on safety campaign.
- Initiated statewide outreach efforts, writing letter in December requesting Governor Crist to end Florida’s #1 ranking as most dangerous state for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- Developed specific set of actions that can be taken by State Legislature, and presented recommendations to Lee Legislative Delegation in December. Collaborated with other Florida T4-America partners to get support from delegations throughout the state for BWL’s action plan.

BikeWalkLee: 1/27/2010