



Answers from 2012 BoCC candidates to BikeWalkLee Questionnaire

August 30, 2012--Candidates for General Election

1. In November 2009, the Lee County Commission unanimously adopted a Complete Streets Resolution which calls for streets that are designed, built, operated and maintained for safe and convenient travel for all users—pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and motorists of all ages and abilities. Since its adoption, the BoCC has supported the county administration’s complete streets implementation plan, which requires a paradigm shift in traditional road construction philosophy and requires policy and institutional change.

Question 1: *If you are elected, what will you do to ensure that the county incorporates Complete Streets into the way it does business? How will you measure success?*

Responses:

District 1 candidates:

John Manning (R/Incumbent):

As a sitting County Commissioner I have supported the Complete Streets concept and plan to do so in the future, even in tight financial times. I would not attempt to gain support to reverse the 2009 Resolution or the positive strides embodied in the Lee Plan's EAR process, which I voted for in 2011.

Gerard David, Jr. (write-in):

I would need more information on this matter.

District 2 candidates:

Cecil Pendergrass (R)

As a former police officer, I have witnessed how poorly-planned land use and road conditions can affect the safety and well-being of residents and visitors. As a County Commissioner, I would be cognizant of the need for programs like Complete Streets to provide safe and convenient travel for all users. I would ensure that Complete Streets is incorporated into the way Lee County does business by requiring county staff to closely scrutinize project requests at the approval stage to confirm that all parameters of the program are being met. Success would be measured by requiring designated county staff to continually review the planning process for maintaining roads and new projects. County visitation to jobsites will ensure that developers are in compliance and residents are utilizing alternative forms of transportation. Documentation of safety records to

Question 1: If you are elected, what will you do to ensure that the county incorporates Complete Streets into the way it does business? How will you measure success?

ensure decreased pedestrian and bicycle injuries/fatalities will also confirm success of this program.

John Sawyer(No Party Affiliation):*

Precious: We in the Fiddlesticks Boulevard corridor have been trying to get a bicycle path along Fiddlesticks Blvd. for years. Our District 2 Commissioner, including recently, Brian Bigelow, have addressed our groups and promised to do something about that.

What good is a “Complete Streets Resolution” if those who pass such a thing aren’t the least bit interested in actually enacting it? It resembles Bill Clinton’s pathetic “ahhhhh trahhhhhhd.” Trying doesn’t get it; insincere legislation doesn’t get it either. Get it done or get out of our office !

“Paradigm”, my ass. We allow County Commissioners, who haven’t the negotiation skills of Neville Chamberlain, to make secret deals . . . Oops, “private negotiations” with rich sports team owners to spend hundreds-of-millions of our tax dollars on new spring training baseball facilities - while Daniels Parkway and most of the roads in North and S.E. Lehigh Acres remain in worse condition than roads in such third-world places as Afghanistan, Somalia, and Michigan.

An avid bicyclist, who finally gave up on Michigan potholes and sold his Colnago bike (with all Campagnolo gears and parts - including grip shifts [not those ‘ergo shifter’ clods they make today]), I believe that before we put in bike paths, we need to fix the roads.

Finally, I’ll measure my success with the results this County Commissioner would get from screaming in the face of State Prosecutors who refuse to file charges against someone who admits taking prescription drugs (with warning labels) that advise against drowsiness and swerves over the center line in the car they were advised not to drive on the Sanibel Causeway and kills a fellow bicyclist.

Neal Moore (Write-In): (no response provided)

District 3 candidates:

Question 1: If you are elected, what will you do to ensure that the county incorporates Complete Streets into the way it does business? How will you measure success?

Larry R. Kiker (R)

I have seen first-hand how a street that was unusable during storms, unsafe for pedestrians and bikes can be transformed into a complete street design. Not only does it help the safety, but the infrastructure has to be thought out. In the end, it is more affordable in the long term to do it right.

The paradigm shift exists when there is only the will to figure out a way to do it rather than why it can't be done. The real measurement exists when the funding is 'officially' recognized in our 5 year CIP. That is the only true measurement.

Charlie Whitehead (no party affiliation):

A common-sense approach like Complete Streets requires real across-the-board buy-in. Every commissioner, manager, engineer, planner and builder must think in terms of moving people, not solely of moving cars. That means building consensus and agreement up front, creating a real understanding that the future must be different from the past. I am a builder of consensus, one who can build real support for new and better ways to do things. Success can only be measured by observing future changes in county culture and thinking.

District 5 candidates: Neither candidate responded to BikeWalkLee's questionnaire

Frank Mann (R/incumbent):

Matthew Shawn Miller (Independence Party)

2. In February 2011, the BoCC adopted an award-winning Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR), an exhaustive review of the county's land use policies. This is a visionary plan with a focus on sustainability and a blueprint for changes in land use that will promote walkable/bikeable and transit-accessible neighborhoods, with complete streets concepts integrated into every component of the plan.

Question 2: The hard work of turning this visionary plan into Comp Plan amendments is a critical task before the BoCC in 2012 and 2013. If elected, how will you ensure that the EAR vision is incorporated into Comp Plan amendments? An important part of the required changes involves revisions to the county's Level of Service (LOS) methodologies and new transportation concurrency approaches, with the intent of achieving a balanced transportation system that increases walkability, multi-modal transportation choices, and compact mixed use communities. What will be your approach to these changes? How would you ensure the integration of land use and transportation planning?

Responses:

District 1 candidates:

John Manning (R/Incumbent):

Since major pieces of the Growth Management Act of 1985 have been disbanded the ability of Lee county to direct the vision of meaningful managed growth has been given to the County Commission. This is a great opportunity to carve our vision of what we, as a Board, want Lee county to evolve into. As the county hopefully begins to emerge from the very long recession we can integrate the linkage of land use planning and transportation planning into a public policy direction that sets in motion a new way of thinking of what communities can look like. Since I am an advocate for incentives for in-fill development in "urban" areas the Board could develop a program to assist developers in building communities in these areas through TDR's and other ways. I have no problem looking into changing LOS standards to evolve into a more sustainable methodology. I would ensure integration by voting to support policy changes that

benefit the county, save dollars in the Transportation CIP, and offering incentives as outlined above.

Question 2: *The hard work of turning this visionary plan into Comp Plan amendments is a critical task before the BoCC in 2012 and 2013. If elected, how will you ensure that the EAR vision is incorporated into Comp Plan amendments?*

Gerard David, Jr. (write-in):

I would work hard to make sure it does happen, along with a plan for Light Rail system, throughout the County. I am for High Speed Rail, so people can park and ride to work or school.

District 2 candidates:

Cecil Pendergrass (R):

I am in favor of exploring methods to determine feasible avenues for incorporating the EAR vision into Comp Plan amendments and would work with the County Commission and Lee County staff to do so. I would approach making the changes within the organization by directing the county manager to educate staff about Lee County's new approach to development/redevelopment and the changes to methodologies and approaches which will focus on 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 county. I would ensure the integration of land use and transportation planning by bringing together staff from Lee County's land use development department with Lee County Department of Transportation and the State of Florida Department of Transportation. The staff will be responsible for educating the public about Complete Streets principles, which should be incorporated at the planning stage of development/redevelopment to establish compliance. Incentive-based programs should be offered to developers, which could be funded through grants.

John Sawyer (No party Affiliation):

When I was a kid (Centuries ago), we were taught about transportation of the future: Cars that would run themselves through central planning; hi-speed elevated rails; etc. Why didn't America adopt these plans? Maybe because then, as now, our elected officials like to talk (and get your vote), while those who would benefit more by maintaining the status quo, would slip money into their pockets to slow down those plans.

To obtain the interest and co-operation of enough Lee Residents to realize these goals, it is incumbent upon Commissioners first to explain in simple terms what we have in mind (not to be confused with "revisions to the county's Level of Service (LOS) methodologies and new transportation concurrency approaches, . . . system that increases walkability, multi-modal transportation choices, and compact mixed use communities.").

I have a 160 I.Q., and I have no idea what you are talking about.

As Commissioner I shall open a storefront office in my commissioner's district, at my own expense, if necessary, so that I can listen to what those who pay our salaries have to say, and to convey to them how we are proposing to spend their tax dollars. I propose single-district voting; a mandatory requirement that commissioners reside in their district; term limits; and having board meetings in the evenings for the convenience of citizens, not commissioners.

I'm in favor of completely revising the public transportation system: smaller buses, fewer routes, lower fares, efficiency. This is the 21st Century, deal with it.

Mixed use communities? Tear it all down and start over? Urban Redevelopment? No? "That that is, is" Wittgenstein. Ft. Myers is not going to change. Gated communities will continue to proliferate, and Gentrification will remain a reality in the larger cities, where land values are at a premium, and good public transportation was a reality decades ago.

Neal Moore (Write-In): (no response provided)

District 3 candidates:

Question 2: *The hard work of turning this visionary plan into Comp Plan amendments is a critical task before the BoCC in 2012 and 2013. If elected, how will you ensure that the EAR vision is incorporated into Comp Plan amendments?*

Larry R. Kiker (R):

EAR improvements are important but the concept in which it existed has less stringent reporting requirements than in the past for state. You are correct to emphasize that direction to staff will sustain any revisions to the LOS including transportation concurrency approaches. My approach is simple, it must be part of BOCC direction to staff to identify and incorporate those changes.

As we are all aware, BOCC is responsible for vision, strategy and direction. Staff should follow, recommend and implement accordingly, in particularly with land use and transportation planning with their recommendations and implementation.

Charlie Whitehead (no party affiliation):

Again, implementing the changes must be done by building real support for the concepts, real understanding of personal mobility as opposed to road capacity and consensus that it is the right approach. Commissioners must truly understand that things must be done differently in the future.

District 5 candidates: (no responses provided)

Frank Mann (R/incumbent):

Matthew Shawn Miller (Independence Party)

3. One of the policies adopted by the MPO Board as part of the 2035 LRTP Plan adopted in Dec. 2010, was “to maximize the use of existing transportation facilities and explore opportunities for improved connectivity before adding new facilities to the MPO’s Plans. “ There have been three recent examples that show the cost savings that can occur from changing the way we think about transportation (5 county road projects in LRTP changed from 4-lane expansions to 2-lanedivided roadway with median and turn lanes; Veterans/Santa Barbara interchange options set-aside to incorporate into multijurisdictional comprehensive corridor planning; and cancellation of the Colonial Expressway project).

Question 3: *What are your views on this approach? How would you go about re-examining other road projects that would save money and at the same time result in roadways that take into account the needs of all users, improve safety, and enhance the livability of the surrounding communities?*

Responses:

District 1 candidates:

John Manning (R/Incumbent):

The projects mentioned in this questioned have saved approximately \$58M in Transportation Capital dollars and because of the outcome of the LOS scenario at the end of the projects, had they gone the route of traditional planning, these dollars can be utilized in other area of the county that adding lane miles are an absolute necessity. I would favor looking at all of the transportation projects in the CIP for similar cost-benefit savings in this upcoming budget year and going forward.

Gerard David, Jr. (write-in):

Sidewalks, and Bike lanes, along with building a Light High Speed Rail System, so Seniors, and children can get to where they're going safety.

District 2 candidates:

Cecil Pendergrass (R)

The County is moving in the right direction. I am in favor of maximizing the use of existing transportation facilities and exploring opportunities for improved connectivity before adding new facilities to the MPO’s Plans. Not only does this incur a cost savings for an already over-extended budget, it makes our roads safer and will promote increased use of alternative modes of transportation. I would continue the process to reduce urban sprawl and promote streets that are designed, built, operated and maintained for safe and convenient travel for all users by holding the Lee County DOT and county manager responsible for reviewing all road improvement projects to explore how the projects can be improved under the Complete Streets program.

Question 3: *What are your views on this approach? How would you go about re-examining other road projects that would save money and at the same time result in roadways that take*

into account the needs of all users, improve safety, and enhance the livability of the surrounding communities?

John Sawyer (No party Affiliation):

A. First fixing the existing roads. The condition of Daniels Parkway and many of the streets in Lehigh acres would give Ponce de Leon pause.

B. Monitor the length of time for traffic lights. Did you know that the City of Weston (speaking of “compact mixed use communities”), did not have a single traffic light before they reached a population of 35,000; or that the Florida Keys (pop. 78,000) had only one traffic light between Homestead and Key West (124 miles) until 1986?

C. Complete road projects judiciously. Offer incentive bonuses versus penalties to private contractors to expedite completion dates. I worked on I-75 recently. Trans: get ‘er done. That extension of Metro Parkway, for example, has been going on since Andrew Jackson chased Chief Ocala over them (I rode with Jackson). The road is blocked off, and I never see anyone working on it. It is hot in SW Florida - so rotate workers every four hours, and be more productive.

D. Remember that Cape Coral and Fort Myers are two separate animals. Cape Coral is way better planned and laid out; you have a whole lot of alternative routes if some are congested - especially with the inspired extension of Veterans Parkway a while back.

E. Have fewer (nearly-empty) buses running so many routes in favor of more buses traveling exclusively between (free) centralized parking lots and popular destinations (malls & shopping centers; beaches; downtown; stadiums).

F. Have small shuttle vehicles with shorter and more frequent routes and available to move people who don’t have cars to the centralized parking lots above.

G. Ban texting and driving in Lee County.

Neal Moore (Write-In): (no response provided)

District 3 candidates:

Larry R. Kiker (R):

I am heading a safety task force in Fort Myers Beach. It has become more than clear to me the responsibility to understand and implement changes in new projects as well as identifying short-term adjustments that need to be made to our current roads. Understanding the concepts for safety standards and continuity is the only way that our environment can accept the challenges of our projected growth. Understanding the basic concepts, it is not hard to understand why a safety median should be a requirement in every possible project if appropriate. This should not be an after-thought. It is all about prioritizing and funding.

Charlie Whitehead (no party affiliation):

The obvious common sense of the new language makes me wonder what took so long. How could those charged with creating the transportation network have taken any

other approach but to carefully examine every existing facility for improved connectivity potential?

District 5 candidates: No responses provided

Frank Mann (R/incumbent):

Matthew Shawn Miller (Independence Party)

4. Lee County's transit system (LeeTran) is limited, with long headways (30-90 minutes), limited routes and serves those who don't have cars. At the same time, Lee County's transit ridership percentage increase between 2011 and 2012 was the 2nd highest in the nation (17%). The MPO 2035 LRTP Needs Plan now provides a path forward for transit system that will attract "choice riders" by reducing headways to 15 minutes. This is estimated to increase projected ridership by 450% but would add \$900 million to the Needs Plan.

Question 4: How do you see the link between a robust transit system and economic health in Lee County? What kind of revenue increases would you support to create a robust transit system? Do you believe a county-wide or regional transit authority is wise? If so, why? If not, why not?

Responses:

District 1 candidates:

John Manning (R/Incumbent):

Lee County's transit system and how to end general fund subsidies has been the topic of discussion for many years and in this arena of tight budgets it is all the more so at this time. We do not have the \$900M necessary to bring head ways down to 15 minutes at this time. Having said that, as a Board member I supported setting up a "Transit Task Force" to look into ways to (a) end the General fund subsidies and (b) find viable ways to fund the system on a long-term, sustainable basis. I do not want to commit to increases in revenue to the system at this time while the Task Force is looking at transit from different approaches. I believe that the County Commission has the ability, especially with the very capable staff on hand, to "operate" the system until the aforementioned task force completes this work. The Board has had these discussions in the past and decided to put an Authority in abeyance for now.

Gerard David, Jr. (write-in):

I believe in less "Air Pollution", and killing of our Wild Life. So building a High Speed Rail System throughout, our County and Cities, would be the best way to go. Not only would it save millions of dollars in the long run, but it would move thousands a day to and from Work or School or Travel to the beach. I would pay for it by asking President Mr. Obama, if he gets Re-Elected, for those Millions, of dollars, our Crooked Governor Mr. Scott, turned down. I don't believe we need more government transit authorities, just more great people added to our current Lee Transit authority. I think those Millions, should be used to build and hire people, that are going to run our High Speed Rail, and Train stations, Parking Garages, giving them great and livable salaries, for them, and their families. I believe we have a great Lee way system in place already.. So just a bit of tweaking of it is the way to go, before more Authority's are warranted.

Spending less on Management, and more on equipment, seem like a plan to me.

Question 4: How do you see the link between a robust transit system and economic health in Lee County? What kind of revenue increases would you support to create a robust transit system? Do you believe a county-wide or regional transit authority is wise? If so, why? If not, why not?

District 2 candidates:

Cecil Pendergrass (R):

A primary focus of my campaign is to revitalize our local economy. We must attract new business to Lee County, which will provide much needed jobs to help our area recover. A robust transit system will add to the incentive for businesses to operate in Lee County and also attract new residents. The convenience of biking, walking, and/or using a public transit system within one's community is a great tool for attracting new residents by providing compact neighborhoods where people can live, work, and socialize without having to travel distances by car. I believe livability greatly enhances economic competitiveness because it provides for an enhanced quality of life without the dependence of a personal car for mobility and survival. I would consider researching the feasibility of allocating funds from the current impact fees and fuel tax to support a robust transit system. I believe there is no need for another layer of government to continue efforts toward a robust transit system at this time. With the condition of our local economy and loss of property tax revenues over the past several years, our taxpayers cannot withstand an added burden.

John Sawyer (No party affiliation):

Me thinks your estimated increase in ridership by 450% is nonsense. Nonetheless, as commissioner I would favor benchmarking such public transportation successes as Miami Beach (from where I hail) and Michigan State University (from which I alum). Their systems are comprised almost solely of bus transportation and are enormously efficient.

As for 30-90 minute headways - see answers to Question 4.

I'm not in favor of fare increases or additional taxes to support our existing dinosaur public transportation system. The system is obsolete, poorly planned and incompetently managed. Privatize it.

County - wide or Regional public transportation? SW Florida residents (like most Americans) are obsessed with our cars. That's not going to change. Deal with that.

Neal Moore (Write-In): (no response provided)

District 3 candidates:

Larry R. Kiker (R)

Again, I live on Fort Myers Beach. The transit system and economic health in Lee County is reliant on our approach. Obviously it will be an expensive one, but there are other communities that have dealt with serious situations. The county-wide and regional authority needs to be debated before we make that commitment. The communities need to have the education to allow them to buy in to the concept. This has to have an almost grass route involvement with the commitment that there is funding and the political will to make it move forward.

Question 4: *How do you see the link between a robust transit system and economic health in Lee County? What kind of revenue increases would you support to create a robust transit system? Do you believe a county-wide or regional transit authority is wise? If so, why? If not, why not?*

Charlie Whitehead (no party affiliation):

A real transit system must be part of a bright economic future. Connecting people with jobs and activity centers must mean more than building more roads. A transit authority is a shell game. County commissioners are the transit authority and should not shrug off their responsibility to plan and pay for an adequate system. That responsibility should be shared by the municipalities and all users with the acknowledgement that transit reduces traffic and non-riders also benefit.

District 5 candidates: No responses provided

Frank Mann (R/incumbent):

Matthew Shawn Miller (Independence Party)

5. Lee County has adopted a goal of a balanced multi-modal transportation system, yet elements of its funding system are still focused exclusively on roads. For example, the current road impact fees are restricted to roadway construction expenditures. A recent FDOT report to the Florida Legislature highlighted the need for communities to consider a mobility fee approach which is a charge on all new development to provide mitigation for its impact on the whole transportation system, allowing the funds to be used for roadways, transit, bikeways, and pedestrian walkways. A mobility fee could be designed to reflect and support the growth management patterns adopted in the Horizon 2035 EAR and now being incorporated in the Lee Plan update - aligning transportation and land use planning. Adjusted fee levels can incentivize infill, redevelopment, and denser, mixed use, transit oriented new development, and discourage exurban growth. Click [here](http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_facts/MobilityfeeBWLpaperfinal120615.pdf) to read BikeWalkLee's Background Paper on Mobility Fees. (http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_facts/MobilityfeeBWLpaperfinal120615.pdf)

Question 5: *What are your views on replacement of the current road impact fee with a mobility fee? Given that there are now several county and city models in Florida for us to draw best practices from, how and with what timing would you suggest the county move forward on developing a mobility fee plan?*

Responses:

District 1 candidates:

John Manning (R/Incumbent):

I would be open to considering a Mobility FEE in lieu of a VMT TAX, if the dollar exchange did not increase the amount of the fee versus the impact fee. The problem with transportation impact fees is simple: The 1974 court case that gave birth to Impact Fees stipulated that they could not be utilized for Operations and Maintenance. To me this defeats the benefit of impact fees and creates a burden on county tax payers to fill in the above gaps. I would suggest that Lee D.O.T. staff and senior managers develop a model to be considered for the 2013-2014 budget cycle. That way they could look at other national models as well and not be pressured into moving on a methodology that is "Florida only".

Gerard David, Jr. (R/write-in):

I don't believe in more fee's, for anything. So fee's would likely not be for me. I would allow use of transit monies, be used in all forms of transit idea's, not just for Road Building as mentioned above, but for Bike Lanes, more roads, rail systems, Sidewalks, whatever means of transportation is needed. Isn't that why is called a Transit fund?

District 2 candidates:

Cecil Pendergrass (R)

I am in favor of replacing the current road impact fee with a mobility fee to ensure a feasible distribution of funds to include transit-oriented development which will promote sustainability, better land use and a balanced multi-modal transportation system. I would direct the county manager to review the models being used in our state for the Board of County Commissioners to review and then determine a timeline for implementation.

John Sawyer (no party affiliation):

In 2008, I looked at about 100 homes in Lehigh acres before settling on one on Theodore Vail Ln. The homes I looked at were all new. The roads all over Lehigh Acres, with the exception of Lee Blvd., about which your current County Commissioner, Frank Mann showcases as an example of how he and his fellow commissioners are looking after the folks, were and remain in abominable condition.

The builders of those homes were assessed an impact fee of approximately \$12,000 to \$15,000 to obtain a permit to build those houses. An impact fee provides for the development of needed parks, schools, roads, sewer, water treatment, utilities, libraries, and public safety buildings to the newly developed area.

When it comes to implementing impact fees there is a legal basis that must be considered or followed in order for legal implementation. They must follow the rational nexus and roughly proportional rules or guidelines. There must be a connection between the new development and the need for the new facilities in the region. Also, the impact fee must be able to benefit the person paying the fee along with calculating the fee on a fair proportionate formula for all residents.

Most of these new homes don't have sewers, decent roads, city water, water treatment. Public parks are scarce in Lee County. I have to drive to Charlotte County to fund a basketball court to play on. Where did these "impact fees" go? How did they benefit the builders (and buyers) who paid those fees?

Well, we sure have a nice new \$80 Million ballpark, with two more on the way. Would I trust these commissioners with new, "mobility fees?" Not a chance.

Neal Moore (Write-In): (no response provided)

Question 5: *What are your views on replacement of the current road impact fee with a mobility fee? Given that there are now several county and city models in Florida for us to draw best practices from, how and with what timing would you suggest the county move forward on developing a mobility fee plan?*

District 3 candidates:

Larry R. Kiker (R)

Fees are taxes, I don't favor more. If there are different fees administered then we should look at reducing the road tax in accordance. The allocation should not require separate fees/taxes but a process that fully understands inclusive of the needs you have presented. If you think that there is a misuse of those funds, that is another issue.

Fundamentally, this situation gets back to prioritization and the allocation of funds based on that process. Road project prioritization and funding is mysterious when it should not be. If there is a process that does not incorporate the multi-modal transportation system, then it should be reviewed as whether or not it is an effective process. From what I have seen, that review is emanating.

Charlie Whitehead (no party affiliation)

I would favor a mobility fee over a straight road impact fee. I believe the county should be moving toward that now.

District 5 candidates: (no responses provided)

Frank Mann (R/incumbent):

Matthew Shawn Miller (Independence Party)

***Introductory note from John Sawyer** (District 2 no party affiliation candidate), submitted with responses to BikeWalkLee questionnaire on July 10th:

"Full disclosure: I simply will not tell people what they want to hear, just to get elected. I'll tell what you need to hear, and dare you to vote for me. while some of my responses may smack as those from an old curmudgeon, be advised that I was a curmudgeon when I was young."