



RESPONSES FROM BoCC District 1 Candidates (as of 8/1/10)
(Responses listed in order received)

Questions for BoCC Candidates from BikeWalkLee

1. In November 2009, the BoCC 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.

Question: 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 to #1:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

The BOCC needs to be certain to make clear to the Manager that the Commission expects the Manager's staff to examine every road project, both new and repairs, to determine what is needed to implement Complete Streets. This will, of course, require working carefully with other departments and with the MPO to develop appropriate and cost effective plans and also to find financial resources as needed. And, as plans move ahead, one would hope cooperation with BikeWalkLee as well as with neighborhood associations would be taken seriously. However, it will be important to make certain that all this happens in a deliberate manner, and not as a "spare time" set-aside. I would also hope that there would be links with LeeTran so that the complete streets concept can broaden to include better transit options and transition from transit to biking and walking and streets with appropriate traffic signals and safety for pedestrians and children.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

I will continue to support Complete Streets as I did as a member of the Smart growth committee. Success will be measured by keeping data on pedestrian and bicycle accidents to determine if there is a discernable reduction in such accidents.

John Manning (R—District 1):

I would place Complete Streets language in Ordinance 10-25 which incorporates Compact District language. I would also place the language of Complete Streets in the Lee Plan update and the MPO's 2035 Transportation Plan update.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

I support the Complete Streets Resolution for transportation planning and funding for Lee County. Ensuring that walkers, cyclists, and transit users have safe and secure passage throughout our county must be a goal. Lee County should utilize maximum available state and federal funds to support both the retro-fitting of sidewalks, bike lanes and transit stop areas into existing neighborhoods and the design of similar opportunities into all future roadway plans. Success should be measured by increases in linear miles of bike paths, sidewalks, and number of safe transit stops. It should also be measured in the ultimate measure of success: reduction in pedestrian/cyclist injuries and/or deaths. Lee County ranks among the least safe areas of the country for pedestrians and bicyclists. We can and must do better.

2. The current county approach to funding transportation is heavily weighted toward cars and trucks. It assumes that it is possible to build our way out of congestion rather than encouraging innovative designs and creative solutions. The current approach to funding transportation (89% to roads, 10% to transit, and 1% to bike/ped facilities) is not sustainable.

Question: What do you think is a more efficient and effective mix of transportation spending? How would you propose to move in that direction?

RESPONSES to #2:

Carl Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

Clearly a shift is needed. This is both a statistical question and a political question. The objective here is to move several very large bureaucracies to the point of wanting to help bring us a balanced transportation system. I would not start by picking an arbitrary number off the top of my head—just to please one group or the other. I would start by looking at some of the best examples of balanced transportation across the USA and checking how they allocate their planning dollars as well as their capital dollars. That would be my benchmark for a starter. And we continually evaluate progress. It is most important to note that a simple statistic may be a start, but it isn't enough. The planning funds must be looked at separately. If one never has planners doing developing the necessary plans for complete streets, one will never get the capital expenditures balanced.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

I would start by identifying jurisdictions with greater availability of bicycle/pedestrian paths and study they distribution of transportation funds in these jurisdictions. Where feasible, I would recommend appropriate distributions based on these studies.

John Manning (R—District 1):

As a Cape Coral Councilmember who was the first to gain approval for BP's in the city and the County Commissioner who won approval for the Pine Island off-road BP, I would designate a portion of toll facility revenue to increase funding to the 3-4% range.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

We should move toward the allowable percentage of funds for pedestrians and cyclists, according to federal and state guidelines. We have years of deficiencies in building sidewalks and bicycle lanes to make up for, and our future plans must begin immediately to incorporate those needs as mandatory not optional components. We should aggressively seek out other optional funding sources such as grants, to help speed up the upgrading of our infrastructure. Existing plans that do not yet incorporate these essential components should be modified before they are bid and built. Let the lessons of the Sanibel bridge be well learned. We must incorporate the bike paths now and not continue to face the added cost of later modifications.

3. The County's goals for 2010-11 include **reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)** as a way to reduce greenhouse gases, conserve energy, and reduce congestion.

Question: What role do you think walking, bicycling, and transit should play in order to meet this goal?

RESPONSES to #3:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

Of course we should move deliberately toward complete streets, as a mechanism for greenhouse gas reduction. But GHG is not the only reason; there are other reasons to develop complete streets. And, bike-ped must not be used as a hiding place for avoiding calculating the health hazards of auto initiated GHG.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

Any plan that reduces the number of vehicles on the road will have a positive impact on the environment.

John Manning (R—District 1):

It should be mandated for all county DRI's that internal BP/Ped facilities will be built. In addition services will be provided to eliminate external auto trips off site. Also, increases in Federal and State allocations for Transit and BRT need to be passed.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

I have previously lived in more walkable communities that were easier to negotiate with transit. I have been an active transit user in Chicago. It is possible to do. The more we can link neighborhoods to shopping and entertainment using bike paths, sidewalks and transit, the sooner we will see some impact on VMT. The other major issue is that in parts of Lee County, people do not live close to the jobs. The pre-platted lands of Lehigh Acres and Cape Coral have been underutilized for commercial and retail development. These communities need more direct access to daily shopping and entertainment needs and to diverse jobs. Economic development policy needs to take that into consideration. If people do not need to drive across the county for commutes to work, VMT will be reduced.

4. With the deep recession in Lee County, there needs to be a focus on revitalizing our economy and broadening its current base of construction and tourism.

Question: What do you believe is the connection between livability and economic competitiveness? How relevant is biking, walking, and transit to a more livable community?

RESPONSES to #4:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

I have spent the last two years working to shift our land use paradigm toward much more inclusion of transit oriented development—walkable communities. There are many reasons to shift this growth paradigm including the reasons that motivate people to use bikes, walking and transit. Of course transit oriented development is a benefit to the beleaguered construction industry in providing new types of product when there is a glut of suburban homes and a demand for walkable-bikeable communities; I am not advocating the abandonment of suburbs. I am simply looking at a reality from the perspective of the construction industry and a reality for segments of the population (young and old) who find suburban living either too expensive or too difficult to maintain.

Transit oriented development is a benefit to the tourism industry because it enables better clustering of development and in turn better preservation of rural spaces and wilderness. Indeed tourism exemplifies the fact that our environment is our economy and—especially at this time of recovery—we need to pay attention to protecting this asset. I am not advocating the elimination of roads; we all need to use them, and we need a system adequate for evacuation in event of hurricanes. I am simply looking at the economic and health and life-style benefits of achieving a balanced transportation system.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

A strong plan that supports the above will, in my opinion, increase the value of homes and communities in the long run. Individuals looking for retirement communities often seek jurisdictions which are pedestrian/bicycle friendly.

John Manning (R—District 1):

This can be another incentive for business relocation. The Office of Economic Development has incentive dollars to lure business relocation/expansion, if communities are built using Compact Development methodologies, this could provide a competitive advantage.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

As an economic development professional, I do believe there is a direct connection between livable communities that espouse high quality of life and the attraction and retention of business. Economic competitiveness starts with the talent pool and people seek out quality of life that includes an active lifestyle incorporating access to biking, walking and transit. I believe that the research of Richard Florida, Professor of Regional Economic Development at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, on what he dubs the “Creative Class” is on point. This newly defined class of workers is very broad and includes artists, musicians, technology workers, medical and science workers, marketing professionals and others who are making life choices

based upon the place they want to live and what it has to offer. These workers want to live, work and play in walkable communities. Many do not even own a car. Many jobs can be done in lots of locations, and the creative class chooses those locations that have the most to offer. Clearly we want to be one of those communities here in Southwest Florida, and build on the substantial representation of the Creative class that we already have here.

5. The MPO is moving forward with transit authority plans and a 1 cent sales tax referendum in 2012 as a way to pay for transit and potentially bike/ped-related improvements.

Question: Do you support the creation of a transit authority? Would you support a referendum on such a sales tax? Would you support the sales tax? Would you commit to ensuring that a portion of the sales tax goes for bike/ped projects?

RESPONSES to #5:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

When I served as Chair of the MPO we created the transit authority development sub-committee and I helped secure the inter-local between communities to create such an authority. That said, I have a strong disagreement with the consultant driven agenda of this referendum and the timing of the creation of a transit authority. I do not believe that the voting public has yet been provided sufficient examples of why it is a benefit to have better transit; that MUST happen before any item is on the ballot. I do not think it wise to just pass a motion and set afloat a group that will be named as transit authority; all that does is invite failure and set us back a decade. Careful development of this authority and careful thinking of its governance as well as its revenue sources and the service delivery to the public must be planned and initiated before a separate transit authority is 'let loose.' I want it to succeed, not hobble. I do think we need to do a great deal to make our transportation corridors bike and pedestrian friendly; however I do not favor creating new tax for that. I think there is ample room for aggressively planning and implementing these improvements using the current appropriations for roads.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

I cannot support any tax increase during this severe recession.

John Manning (R—District 1):

I could support the creation of an Authority as an advisory board to the BOCC. I would support a ballot question giving the voters a say in 2012. If the sales tax passed I would support designating a portion for Ped/ BP projects. I do not support an increase in the property tax rate.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

I do believe that communities with a transit authority have generally been more successful integrating the role of transit into the overall transportation plans and systems of their communities. It is important to have professional advocates for transit who see the cost-effective implementation of transit options and linkages county-wide as their responsibility. Within the realm of overall transportation, transit is too often an after-thought, or optional

element, but secondary to roadways. To be successful, it must have the strength of a clear mission and mandate. I believe it may be time to go forward with such a referendum and would support asking the voters to decide. I firmly believe that in order for transit to be successful it must include linkages to convenient and safe bike paths and sidewalks, thus such use must be a part of the planned funding to build success.

6. The MPO is working on a **countywide bike/ped master plan** for implementation in 2011. This plan will likely include priority projects for funding, recommendations for policies, and cross-jurisdictional cooperation to ensure that we have a seamless and connected bike/ped network throughout Lee County.

Question: How high a priority will you place on implementation of this plan if you are elected?

RESPONSES to #6:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

Please see my answer to question #1. I would adapt that approach and that indicated in question #5 to discussions within the BOCC and also with my colleagues from the municipalities who are members of the MPO. In addition, I would ask each jurisdiction to ask their TAC members to focus on how best to expedite implementing this network. And, within the BOCC, I would also bring this implementation to the forefront in discussions with other County Departments concerned about community development, parks and trails, etc.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

High, I will support it enthusiastically.

John Manning (R—District 1):

Very High. This master plan could also become a component for Lee County to further increase our Eco-Tourism business. An interconnected plan could get people to places such as Six Mile Slough and other eco attractions.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

I support the MPO plan for a county/wide bike/pedestrian master plan. I am an active walker and biker and would enjoy more options to link throughout the county. I believe we must give such needs a high priority within existing transportation funding and also see the value it provides as a part of our economic development strategy by attracting the Creative Class of workers for the talent pool. It will also help to encourage our citizenry to adopt a more active lifestyle, which will help to reduce numerous disease states from heart disease to diabetes and other health problems such as obesity tied to a sedentary lifestyle. A healthier community will reduce the cost of healthcare for everyone. These can be real benefits and are deserving of high priority for implementation.

7. Bike/ped safety is a major issue in Lee County, with fatality and injury rates 2 and 3 times the national averages.

Question: How would you recommend taking action to address safety issues for bicyclists and pedestrians if you're elected? (Below is a list of some possible actions)

- Support increased use of signage to provide greater safety for walker and cyclists?
- A community safety campaign to lower fatalities and injuries?
- Support intersection and road improvements?
- Marking bike lanes?
- Maintaining bike lanes and sidewalks to ensure their safe use?
- What other actions would you take to improve safety?

RESPONSES to #7:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

All of the above suggestions should be pursued. My other actions would not so much be other actions as they would be finding opportunities to advance the suggestions in the above list— suggestions for different departments within government and collaboration opportunities, suggestions for private sector and for the media to be raised as the opportunity appears.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

All of the above within budget constraints plus the following: I would propose the elimination of right turns on red lights on all major roads such as Del Prado Blvd., US 41, Daniels Parkway, Gladiolus Blvd., Summerlin Road and all such roads in the county. Furthermore, I would propose that school buses not be permitted to make right turns on red lights under any circumstances as is the practice in other jurisdictions.

John Manning (R—District 1):

I would provide solar lighting for communities that are inter-connected so people could utilize night time Ped/BP activities. I would also increase signage at all major intersections that connect with Ped/BP lanes.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

When I moved to Lee County in 2003 I was shocked by the lack of sidewalks and bike paths. I learned quickly that safety was an issue from news coverage of injuries and deaths all too often. I have seen the national news releases on our relative position nationally and believe we owe it to our citizens to correct this situation. I support all the elements you have suggested. Further, we must engage a coalition of community partners, including the media, who share this goal and work together to achieve the progress we desire. Being two and three times worse than the national average is intolerable. Being average is still not good enough. If we want to be a great place to live and work and raise a family, or to vacation, or to retire, we must be better than average.

8. Both the MPO Resolution 09-05 and the BoCC's Complete Streets Resolution, set a policy that bike/ped/transit facilities need to be included at the front-end of the planning for all road projects. Such an approach is intended to reduce the cost of expensive retrofits by "doing it right the first time."

Question: What will you do to ensure that bike/ped/transit facilities are included in all new and improved road projects?

RESPONSES to #8:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

I think I have covered that in the above answers. Always, the elected officials and the advocacy groups must be certain that the policy priorities are implemented by staff and consultants.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

I will request that the Transportation Dept. submit plans to the BoCC with a summary of bike/ped/transit considerations.

John Manning (R—District 1):

Mandate them in the LDC, the Lee Plan update, and the MPO's 2035 Transportation Plans.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

I agree with the MPO Resolution 09-05 and the BoCC's Complete Streets Resolution. I believe in doing it right the first time. As existing road projects move through the process they should be modified to include biking, pedestrian and transit components. They should not proceed without these features. As new projects are planned, the guidelines for the transportation staff to follow for planning must reflect these components. Projects should not be approved without these features.

9. Several surveys of Lee County residents show that there is significant support and utilization for biking and walking facilities.

Question: What will you do to ensure that the needs and desires of citizens in this area are heard and acted upon?

RESPONSES to #9:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

Please see the answer to question #6.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

Attend community meetings and meet with the public any time on this topic. As I have done while serving on the school board, I will be available to constituents at all times and will work toward resolving any serious safety issues.

John Manning (R—District 1):

I've done it. Not only in Cape Coral and Pine Island as a county commissioner, we listened to the people of those communities and ACTED.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

I will pursue the full implementation of the BoCC’s Complete Streets Resolution in transportation planning and contracting.

10. Research shows that biking, walking, and transit users are healthier than those who do not take part in these activities. It has also been proven that biking, walking, and taking public transit decreases the risk of serious illness and obesity.

Question: What kinds of initiatives would you support to ensure that planners and developers prioritize health in the built environment?

RESPONSES to #10:

Carla Johnston (Ind.—District 1):

Advocacy groups must persist. There is nothing at present requiring this consideration. So, it depends on a mix of thoughtful persons in staff and policy jobs and advocacy groups making certain that the topic remains high on the media horizon.

Bob Chilmonik (R—District 1):

I, myself, am very committed to physical exercise as a way to maintain good health. I run several miles a day and run in local races, including mini-marathons, very frequently. I am personally aware of the dangers of walking and running on Lee County streets and will make every effort to raise the awareness of our planners and policy makers with regard to the need to protect our citizens and our environment by making our county more amenable to healthy living.

John Manning (R—District 1):

Mandating facilities in an applicant’s DRI application as well as any PUD application.

Mike Jackson (R—District 1):

If the policy reflected in the Complete Streets Resolution is followed, the direction to planners and developers should be clear and the opportunities for a more active lifestyle will grow. The BoCC must follow through on the execution of the policy as contracts are negotiated for county transportation projects.