



## RESPONSES FROM BoCC District 2 Candidates (as of 8/5/10) (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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** I will ensure that the concept of Complete Streets is included in future growth by requiring the County to educate developers about the concept and require them to incorporate safe streets for pedestrians and bicyclists into their comprehensive plan for approval prior to breaking ground. Success will be measured by approval rate of development.

**Dick Ripp:** I would insist that every new development be required to have Multi-purpose paths (like Sanibel) and also insist that such paths be installed along every city and county road (like on Summerlin Road) at a 10% rate for the next 10 years. I will measure this to be successful when an absolutely NO (zero) death rate of our children and adults due to preventable bicycle accidents is reached.

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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** As a society, we must come to the realization that we cannot continue to depend on oil as our main source of energy. Instead, we must concentrate on creating communities that are more transit-oriented and pedestrian friendly to encourage alternative forms of safe transportation such as walking, bicycling, and public transit. As leaders of Lee County, the Commission must set the example for creating this environment. I will work with

the Commission to set feasible funding requirements to place more emphasis on educating about and executing transit oriented development and walkable communities in Lee County.

**Dick Ripp:** You are absolutely correct, the current approach is not the right way. We have a relatively flat area and should be promoting bicycle and mass transportation. I don't have all the answers, but like the Sanibel Bicycle club, I am sure that Lee County and City Bicycle clubs have a wealth of information which if enacted responsibly can solve the problem. When I am elected to the Commission, I will insist that these groups have a very strong voice, and input in matters of Transportation.

**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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** The County is moving in the right direction by setting goals to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled. Use of walking, bicycling, and public transit systems as an alternative to personal car use plays a major role in reducing greenhouse gases, conserving energy, and reducing congestion. Increased use of these alternative forms of transportation will offset the ongoing pollution and environmental destruction we face today from the damaging secondary effects of automobiles including: excessive energy use; air, water, and noise pollution; excessive land use for roads; and destructive impact to our existing roadways.

**Dick Ripp:** If we, together, can increase the usage of walking, bicycling, and mass transportation a reasonable 7% in 2011, we can prove the validity of the thesis reduce Greenhouse gasses, conserve energy and thankfully reduce congestion especially in season. Lethargy and lack of understanding coupled with no perceived incentives are the big foes of this truly necessary program. But, together we can start to make inroads and eventually solve the problem.

**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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** A primary focus of my campaign is to revitalize our local economy. We must attract new business to Lee County and provide incentives for them to be located in Transit Oriented Design communities. 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 livable 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.

**Dick Ripp:** All three, biking, walking, and transit combine with other factors, taxes, safety, etc., to make a community a desirable place in which to live, raise children, work, retire, and bring the economy up with jobs, construction and increasing tourism upon which we in SWFL flourish. A lessening of any one of the parts creates a less attractive, and therefore less vibrant community.

**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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** A transit authority would help to improve the quality of life and mobility of Lee County residents. I would ensure funding allocation for bike/pedestrian projects if a sales tax referendum is passed by the voters in response to support for the transit authority.

**Dick Ripp:** I would not support creation of a Transit Authority at this time. We do not need any more politicians feeding off the public taxes now. I would support a referendum, and if it is the will of the people I would support a plan to significantly fund bike/ped projects. **BUT before we set up any costly frameworks, and before we ask the public to raise a new tax ... WE MUST HAVE A PLAN.** *A citizen-City-County group should meet and develop the plan first. That I support wholeheartedly.*

**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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** Public safety should be an absolute priority in Government. I will support efforts and work together with the MPO to move forward with integrating a seamless and connected bike/pedestrian network for the safety of our Lee County residents and visitors.

**Dick Ripp:** It is a necessity for the benefit of the entire Lee County citizenry. I will support it.

**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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** I have direct experience with this issue. As a Community Police Officer for the City of Fort Myers from 1998 to 2008, I worked closely with several local groups to educate the public about bicycle safety and local traffic laws. I addressed weekly concerns, which mostly included lack of signage issues, lack of bicycle lane markings, and cars parked on private driveways blocking the sidewalks. In taking action, I would first review bicycle and pedestrian accident reports to determine the current problem areas and address them as necessary. Increasing the use of signage will likely be necessary along with visible markings for existing bike lanes/ensuring markings for future road projects, and encouraging enforcement from all local agencies for those violating safety laws. Safety campaigns through local Public Safety and Code Enforcement are also important to provide the public with information on how to be safe.

**Dick Ripp:** All of those actions are important, responsive to the needs and responsible actions to take. HOWEVER, until we treat all the county as Sanibel and Captiva are treated Bike/ped wise with multipurpose paths, all we are doing is only the first steps. I'll help with the first steps, BUT I want more, because WE NEED MORE.

- 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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** I will continue to support the resolution 09-05 and the BOCC Complete Streets Resolution by requiring that bike/pedestrian/transit facilities be included in the developer's comprehensive plan prior to Lee County approving the project.

**Dick Ripp:** I believe in doing "IT" RIGHT the 1<sup>st</sup> time. It is better, safer, more cost effective, and safer. Why has it taken so long for our elected officials to realize what, to me, is self evident.

- 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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** As a highly effective community leader experienced with bringing residents, government, and the issues together for a common solution, I will always have an open door policy. My life's work has been dedicated to improving the quality of life for those I encounter and I am passionate about continuing this work as your County Commissioner. I will always be responsive and use my experience to meet the residents' expressed needs and desires.

**Dick Ripp:** Anything it takes to get the job done.

- 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?

**Cecil Pendergrass:** As County leaders, we must use all of our resources from both the public and private sector including those in the medical field to raise awareness about the benefits of bicycling, walking, and transit use. I will support initiatives that promote such healthy living to the public. As the public generates more interest and demand increases for livable communities, planners and developers will accommodate by developing more compact communities with adequate sidewalks, bicycle paths which in turn will provide for safe and convenient travel thereby encouraging a healthier lifestyle.

**Dick Ripp:** Since our schools have essentially dumped recess and gym, it is up to us as citizens to do the job of making our sons and daughter, as well as ourselves much more fit. I have been walking the precincts, meeting our citizens while running for election to the Commission, and I have lost 22 lbs, and shortened my belt two notches. Walking/biking work to make you healthy.

Government provided tax and legal incentives to home and business developers for the incorporation of physical activity facilities will result in a better, healthier, Lee County, and a better place for people to live and work in. **Our citizens must prod our elected officials to make sure that the developers “do the right thing.”**