



March 9, 2010

Members of Lee County Legislative Delegation:

BikeWalkLee, a coalition working to complete Lee County's streets, urges you to take action this legislative session to assist Lee County government and to respond to the requests of your constituents to make Lee County and all of Florida a safer place for pedestrians and cyclists. A complete streets approach is needed by the state in designing roads so that they provide safe and convenient travel for all road users—pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders of all ages and abilities.

We are pleased that the News-Press published an editorial on Saturday, urging the State Legislature to act. (See below and <http://www.news-press.com/article/20100306/OPINION/100305049/1015/Make-roads-safer-for-bikes--pedestrians--Editorial>)

BikeWalkLee wrote you on February 22nd ([BikeWalkLee study on FL federal safety programs, pedestrian/bicycle improvements & recommendations for action](#)), with a specific list of the budget-neutral proposals we would like to the Legislature act on this session:

- Urge FDOT to aggressively promote “complete streets” as a statewide approach for design and operations of roadways.
- Require FDOT to allocate all its federal safety funds for safety improvement projects, and then ensure that pedestrian/bicycle safety improvement projects receive a “fair share” of those funds, using the share of all traffic fatalities that are pedestrians and bicyclists (21 percent).
- Enact the strongest legislation possible to prohibit texting while driving.
- Urge FDOT to issue the long-overdue updated road design standards to reflect the latest guidelines for accommodating bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users.
- Reinstate a state-level Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Board that would make recommendations to elected officials and FDOT.
- Encourage another Florida Safety Summit to develop Florida's next five-year plan with goals to reduce traffic pedestrian/bicyclist fatalities by at least 50 percent to bring Florida in line with the national average.

The need for these actions was reinforced by a March 1st featured article in [USA Today: Fla. deadliest state for walkers, cyclists](#). This article quoted a FDOT official who said, "The roadways aren't as dangerous as the (study) would have made it seem,".... "It's not the roads. The roads are just sitting there by themselves."

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Florida has been either the deadliest or the second deadliest state in the nation for walkers and cyclists for the past seven years

(2002-2008). Yet, this quote demonstrates that FDOT refuses to acknowledge that there is a problem with road design, that measures can be taken to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, and that it is its responsibility to take action.

FDOT should be setting rigorous goals to reduce pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities, developing effective strategies for reaching those goals, targeting safety funds to reduce the unacceptable rates, and closely monitoring progress towards those goals to ensure that they are reached.

On November 20, BikeWalkLee sent a letter to Governor Crist asking for a plan of action to reverse this long-standing stain of being the most dangerous state for pedestrians and cyclists. To date, our letter has been met with deafening silence. In the absence of any leadership from the Governor on these issues, we are appealing to the Florida Legislature to direct FDOT to take necessary actions and to hold them accountable for results.

We look forward to working with you to make our roadways safer for all users.

Darla

Darla Letourneau

Steering Group

BikeWalkLee

a coalition to complete Lee County's streets

www.BikeWalkLee.org

dletourneau@bikewalklee.org

239-472-1179

Attachments:

News-Press 3/6/10 editorial: Make roads safer for bikes/pedestrians

Links to related BikeWalkLee documents

Make roads safer for bikes, pedestrians: Editorial

The News-Press Editorial · news-press.com · March 6, 2010

It's past time for Florida — the most dangerous state in the union for pedestrians and bicyclists — to exit the dark ages of road design.

The useful BikeWalkLee organization, which recently persuaded Lee County commissioners to embrace a “complete streets” philosophy, is part of a worthy effort to get the state Legislature to do the same.

Complete streets (and highways) accommodate pedestrians, cyclists and public transit in their design from the beginning, which avoids expensive retrofitting. This makes roads and streets safer for everybody, including motorists. There are also health and tourism benefits from making biking and walking easier, and alternatives to individual vehicles reduce pollution and save resources.

Among other things, the complete streets people want the Legislature to require the state Department of Transportation to actually allocate all its federal safety funds for safety improvements (duh!), and then ensure that pedestrian/bicycle safety improvements receive a share of that money commensurate with the percentage of traffic fatalities made up of cyclists and pedestrians — a whopping 21 percent.

Let lawmakers know you want to make our roads safer, healthier and more inviting for all their many users.

Links to related documents:

- BikeWalkLee's 2/22/10 report: “Analysis of Florida's Highway Safety Programs, Pedestrian/Bicycle Safety Improvements and Recommendations for Action.” (See [full report.](#))
- BikeWalkLee's 2/24/10 commentary in News-Press: [News-Press/BikeWalkLee Commentary: Legislature should act on alarming pedestrian, bicyclists deaths](#)
- [Letter to Lee County Legislative Delegation: Requested Actions to address Pedestrian Safety "Dangerous by Design" report](#) - Nov. 30, 2009: <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2009/11/letter-to-lee-county-legislative.html>
- [BikeWalkLee's letter to Governor Crist requesting action on "Dangerous by Design" report](#) - , Nov. 20, 2009:http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2009/11/bikewalklees-letter-to-governor-crist_20.html
- BikeWalkLee's local report: “How safe are Lee County Streets for pedestrians?” Nov. 9, 2009: www.BikeWalkLee.org (under Resources).
- “Dangerous by Design” (national report): <http://t4america.org/resources/dangerousbydesign/>, Nov. 9, 2009.