

Annual Accomplishments

2011

BikeWalkLee website: www.bikewalklee.org

BikeWalkLee is a volunteer 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.

Its vision is for Lee County to become a complete streets model community whose integrated and safe cycling and walking network inspires people of all ages, income groups and fitness levels to cycle and walk for transportation and recreation, and where public transportation is available and accessible to citizens and visitors alike.



BikeWalkLee

BikeWalkLee was formed in 2009 and hit the ground running, with many successful efforts in its first three years. The following are highlights from 2011:

Coalition building and consensus seeking

A strong coalition has been the strength of the organization and the reason behind its numerous accomplishments.

- Partnered with a growing number of community stakeholder organizations (increased from 30 to 40 this year) that want to improve the quality of life and mobility in Lee County. Partners include Florida Gulf Coast University, health care organizations, safety prevention groups, AARP of Florida, citizen and community groups, environmental organizations, planners and sustainable communities groups, and bike clubs and shops. (See *list of partners at http://bikewalklee.com/BWL_PDFs/BWL_facts/BWLs_upporterlist111225.pdf*)
- Success of partnership with supporter organizations evidenced by the testimony of many of these groups in support of both the MPO bike/ped master plan and MPO's grant application for the federal TIGER III grant for its complete streets initiative (47 letters of support). (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/Resources/TIGER%20III%20letters%20BWL.pdf.)
- Collaborated with the Estero Council of Community Leaders on review of Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) campus master plan, encouraging the university to develop a master plan consistent with county plans and vision that promote sustainability, better land use and a balanced multi-modal transportation. The Master Plan, expected to be adopted in early 2012, incorporated significantly more provisions to encourage multi-modal trips. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/04_1511FGCUMasterPlan.pdf.)
- Collaborated with environmental groups to raise concerns about Governor Scott's transportation plan, including the Heartland Parkway proposal. These plans represent the old failed approach of building new roads absent land use planning decisions, resulting in a recipe for more sprawl. Published a guest opinion in the *Fort Myers News-Press*, "Transportation Plan Already Obsolete" on 9/14/11 (http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/091411_BWLopedGovtranspPlan.pdf), and provided public comment at MPO meetings.
- Participated on the Lee County Transit Task Force to advise the Lee County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) on funding options and transit issues. This task force, composed of 18 members of the community representing larger employers, health care, local universities, transportation and planning professionals and other organizations, including BikeWalkLee, developed a consensus proposal to the BoCC for their action in early 2012.
- Participated in Fit Friendly Southwest Florida Coalition, expanding support for a complete streets approach to promote healthy lifestyles and fight obesity.
- Participated in a coalition of groups, led by the SW Florida Commuter Services, in the "Taking it to the Streets campaign" in April, which encouraged residents and visitors to consider alternatives to drive-alone commuting. LeeTran's free ride day increased ridership by 42%.
- BWL collaborated with safety prevention groups such as the Stay Alive, Just Drive!, the Injury Prevention Coalition, Florida Bicycle Association (through its Cycling Savvy courses), and Southwest Florida Bicycling (SWF Bicycling) to



“3 Feet Please” stickers remind motorists to give bicyclists the three feet of clearance required by law.

prevent and reduce pedestrian and cyclist injuries and fatalities. This year’s efforts included SWF Bicycling’s “3 feet please” campaign aimed at promoting motorists’ awareness of bicyclists. As a result, the CSAC and BPAC recommended the placement of “3 Feet Please” stickers on official county vehicles, sheriff cars, and LeeTran buses. The BoCC agreed and the program is now in the implementation stage.

- Collaborated with Stay Alive, Just Drive!, AARP of Florida, Florida Bicycling Association and many other organizations in support of state legislation to ban texting and other distractions while driving. Wrote letter to Florida Legislative Delegation (Feb. 28, 2011)(See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/Legislature/022611legisTextingLtr.pdf), and testified before County Commissioners. (See

http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/062011distractedLTR.pdf.)

- Enlisted local media in a long-term campaign for a more bike/ped-friendly community, resulting in a June 2011 series of articles and opinion pieces in the *Fort Myers News-Press* focused on making roads safer for bikes and pedestrians, the MPO bike/ped master plan, complete streets policies and projects (“Formula helps make pedestrian- & bicycle-friendly communities”, June 5, 2011.(See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/NPBWLcommentary110605.pdf.)
- An October 2011 *News-Press* article focused on the MPO TIGER III grant application for complete streets. (http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/NewsPress/Lee%20seeks%20to%20secure%20path%20funds%20%20The%20News-Press%20%20102511.pdf)
- BikeWalkLee worked with *Florida Weekly* on feature article about the joys, benefits, and difficulties in cycling to work in Southwest Florida. (<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/06/florida-weekly-feature-cycling-to-work.html>.)
- BikeWalkLee is often quoted in related media stories, in addition to publishing commentaries and letters to the editor.
- Partnered with several national coalitions and associations that provide BikeWalkLee with valuable national information and strategic advice and a network of national advocates to tap into: The key partners are: Transportation 4 America, Alliance for Biking and Walking, National Complete Streets Coalition, America Bikes, and League of American Bicyclists.

Government policies and funding

BikeWalkLee is active in the various planning arenas in the Lee County, including the Lee County MPO, Lee County BoCC, and local jurisdictions that influence transportation policy. The goal of our efforts is to ensure that gains in one arena (transportation planning) are reflected in other arenas (land use planning) and that they reinforce each other in a way that moves the whole county forward in the same direction. In 2011 BikeWalkLee worked with a broad set of agencies and stakeholders including:

- implementation of complete streets
- transit planning
- Lee County sustainability planning and strategies
- the development and adoption of mandated Evaluation and Appraisal Report and subsequent amendments to Lee Plan
- land use codes and administrative regulations
- the Lee County MPO's bike/ped master plan
- The Lee County MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan, including immediate transportation projects and funding priorities.

Complete Streets Policies & Implementation

Fort Myers Complete Streets Resolution

Worked closely with staff, city committees, and other partners, such as Lee Memorial Hospital System and the Lee Department of Health, to advocate for adoption of complete streets policy by Fort Myers City Council, which was unanimously adopted in December. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/100411fmCSrelease.pdf and http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/Resources/092011_BWLFMcompletestreetsletterFINAL.pdf.)

Implementation of Lee BoCC complete streets policies adopted by Lee County in 2009:



Gladiolus Drive Bike Lane

BikeWalkLee representatives serve on the complete streets working group of the County's Community Sustainability Advisory Committee (CSAC) to collaborate with county staff on complete streets implementation, and the preparation of its 2011 annual report to the Board. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BoCC/2011status_M&P_Attachments.pdf.)

The focus of 2011 efforts was on revising the county's transportation planning and budget process so that complete streets approach is integrated into the way business is done, and there's a holistic approach to integrating mobility, economic, environmental and community needs into planning and design of new transportation capacity.

The group continued to review resurfacing contract projects and identified dozens of opportunities to address the needs of all users when the roads are resurfaced (such as share the road signs, improved crosswalks, reduced speed limits), and identified dozens of other connectivity and bike/ped be addressed through CIP funding, which the CSAC has recommended to the Board and LeeDOT has included in their funding plans. (See http://bikewalklee.com/BWL_PDFs/BoCC/BWLresurf)

[Matrix1120109.pdf](#) for commitments and tracking of these complete streets improvements.)

A tool designed to evaluate resurfacing contracts has been turned into a complete streets GIS tool, to be launched in early 2012, that will be valuable to other Lee County jurisdictions and agencies.

Based on identification of the need for further planning tools by the working group, CSAC recommended that the county develop sustainable transportation criteria and measures to evaluate and guide the funding, planning, design and implementation of road projects with potential increase roadway capacity. (See <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/12/lee-countys-community-sustainability.html>.)

BikeWalkLee honored the Lee County Administration and its Complete Streets Interdepartmental Performance Team (IPT) with its 2011 Complete Streets Champion of the Year Award for its accomplishments in implementing the Board's 2009 Complete Streets Policy. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/110811bwlAWARD.pdf.)

To implement the Lee County and MPO complete streets resolutions, BikeWalkLee monitored road projects under development to ensure bike/ped/transit accommodations are

planned and built at the front-end of the process. Planned accommodations were upgraded on several road projects as a result of BikeWalkLee advocacy, including Daniels Parkway around the new JetBlue stadium and Gateway, and the filling of sidewalk gaps on McGregor Blvd. from College Parkway to Colonial Blvd.

As a result of the county's complete streets analysis of future planned road projects, Lee



County staff determined that five road projects slated for widening should be reduced from four-lane to two-lane divided roadways with median and turn lanes. These changes in roadway plans will result in roadways that take into account the needs of all users, improve safety while saving the county an estimated \$58 million in planned future costs.

Lee County Horizon 2035 Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Review (EAR) and Comp Plan Amendments

Advocated for a visionary and bold EAR focused on sustainability and a blueprint for changes in land use that promote transit-oriented development, transit, livable communities, walkable/bikeable neighborhoods and complete streets. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/022111BWLletterEARtoBoCC.pdf.) The BoCC approved it in February 2011. As a result of BikeWalkLee's nomination, the BoCC received Florida Bicycle Association's "Elected Official(s) of Year" award in recognition of this award-winning plan. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/032211BWLpressFBAawards.pdf.)

BikeWalkLee is actively participating in the review of issue papers that are the foundation for upcoming Comprehensive Plan amendments. The goal is to ensure that the EAR vision of integrating complete streets principles in the county's policies and practices are incorporated into the detailed Comprehensive Plan amendments



MPO Bike/Ped Master Plan

Guided the MPO staff on finalization and adoption of MPO's first ever countywide bike/pedestrian master plan to effectively connect and integrate bicycle and pedestrian travel on the county's transportation system. The plan was unanimously adopted by the MPO Board in May 2011, with broad community support and a commitment to implementation. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/052011mpoPR.pdf.)

Initiated request to MPO Board to submit a federal TIGER III grant application for a bike/ped/complete streets project tied to the new countywide bike/ped master plan, linking the three demonstration projects together and filling the gaps in the county's regional network. As a result, local jurisdictions worked with the MPO to develop the proposal, committed local funds to the project, and wrote letters of support for the application, along with other supporter organizations, for a total of 47 letters of support. Although the County did not win the TIGER grant, the process of developing the grant application provides the blueprint and momentum for securing other funds. (See http://bikewalklee.com/BWL_PDFs/Resources/TIGER%20III%20letters%20BWL.pdf.)

BikeWalkLee also assisted MPO's Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinating Committee in expanding and elevating its mandate consistent with the master plan, giving them primary responsibility for implementation of the plan and bringing new players to the table, including representatives from tourism, health, law enforcement, and citizen advocates.

MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

BWL followed through on two resolutions initiated by our organization and adopted by the MPO Board as part of the MPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) (adopted in Dec. 2010), that provided concrete action steps to promote a more balanced multi-modal system; and committed to a major LRTP update in 2012 that will incorporate new plans and enhance the plan development process. As a result of this follow-through:

MPO staff developed a first effort at an integrated prioritization process for setting priorities for transportation projects, using the model created by Hillsborough MPO, and began reporting to the Board on the impact of the various funding decisions before them on the mode mix goals so that they understand whether their actions are supporting their vision for the future.

MPO staff proposed and the Board approved a consultant project to undertake scenario analysis of land use options that can assist all the jurisdictions in the county evaluate how land use options under consideration will affect transportation goals and plans.

Increased investments in bike/ped and transit facilities and operations

BWL successfully advocated for increased Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) investment in bike/ped facilities, as reflected in FDOT District 1's October 2011 draft work plan for 2012-2017. The share of total transportation dollars for bike/ped increased from 2% to 3%--up one-third over last year. The County's 5-year funding plan shows a mode share jump in transit from 11% to 20%, consistent with the LRTP. (See <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/10/funding-for-lee-county-mpo.html>.)

Through the Complete Streets team work as well as efforts by the County's BPAC, the County's 5-year spending plan (CIP) continues to include funds for bike/ped

stand-alone projects as well as bike/ped facilities on all appropriate road projects.

BWL collaborated with a statewide advocacy effort that successfully urged the Governor not to disproportionately cut biking and walking programs in distributing a federal transportation spending cut. As a result, for the first time in many years, Florida protected these programs from spending cuts. (See

http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/042511revisionLTR.pdf.)

At BikeWalkLee's initiative, the Lee MPO unanimously approved a resolution in support of the current federal bike/ped programs and in opposition to their elimination in the upcoming transportation reauthorization legislation, which was sent to Florida's congressional delegation. (See http://bikewalklee.com/BWL/BWL_PDFs/MPO/MPOcongressionalLTR.pdf.)

BWL collaborated with a national advocacy campaign that successfully fought efforts in the US Congress to eliminate federal programs that are the primary source of funding for bike/ped projects.



Successful completion of construction of many bike/ped projects throughout Lee County in 2011

Eight major road projects under construction throughout the county, many scheduled to be completed by the end of 2011 or early 2012, include bike/ped facilities. (Including SR 82 from Ortiz to Colonial, Six Mile Cypress widening, widening of Daniels, and new Matlacha Bridge). (See <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/10/new-bikeped-facilities-included-in-nine.html>.)

Throughout the county there are many new sidewalks, bike lanes and shared-use paths that fill gaps in the current network. Highlights include Hickory Blvd. bike lanes in Bonita Springs, new and improved paths on Sanibel, new sidewalks in Fort

Myers in Palmona Park and Page Park, new sidewalks around the Oasis Charter Schools in Cape Coral—part of a total of 12 miles of new sidewalks in the Cape, plus 4-miles of new multi-use paths on Del Prado in the Cape. (See <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/10/update-on-county-local-bikeped-projects.html>.)

BWL advocated for increased investments in transit before both the MPO and the BoCC, including expansion of a bus route to connect Lee and Collier Counties, which was successfully launched in October and is now the second most popular route in the LeeTran system. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BoCC/022711boccTransitLtr.pdf.)

Collaboration with local jurisdictions

City of Fort Myers: Supported the City's successful opposition to a proposal to amend the MPO funding plan to move forward on a proposed one-way extension of Fowler Street in downtown Fort Myers that could have negative impacts on the economic development of this area and be inconsistent with the city's newly adopted complete streets policy. The MPO and City will now undertake a comprehensive study looking at all alternatives in the context of how best to encourage a thriving, healthy residential and business environment in this area. (See <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/10/fowler-street-one-way-extension.html>.)

City of Cape Coral: Worked with City Council to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety in response to recent fatalities, supported Council's efforts to reduce speeds, especially near schools, and successfully worked with the City Council's Transportation Advisory Committee to secure their recommendation to the full City Council in support of two specific bike lanes proposed by a Cape neighborhood association. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/051611bwlCapeBikeLanes.pdf.)



Analysis and action

One of the strengths of BikeWalkLee is that our analysis highlights actions at the federal, state, and local level.

Dangerous By Design Report

BWL partnered with Transportation 4-America in release of national Dangerous by Design report in May 2011, which focused on Florida as most dangerous state for pedestrians. Lee County's positive actions and BikeWalkLee's advocacy efforts on complete streets were highlighted in the national report. (See

<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/05/lee-county-bikewalklee-efforts.html>.)

BikeWalkLee followed up on report with media stories in local NPR station and the Fort Myers News-Press. (See

<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/05/national-report-florida-ranked-most.html>.)

Federal Testimony & Advocacy

BWL submitted testimony to the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and infrastructure in March 2011, which made the case for the need for a federal transportation bill that reflects a balanced multi-modal transportation system vision. The in-depth testimony focused on the importance of the federal bike/ped programs and recommended that these programs be maintained in the reauthorization bill, along with a federal complete streets policy. (See

http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/BWLMi_catestimFINAL110327.pdf.)

BWL successfully advocated for a federal complete streets policy in the Senate Commerce Committee's December transportation bill, resulting in bipartisan support for the measure, including from Florida's two Senators (Sen. Nelson (D) & Sen. Rubio (R)). Published Guest Opinion in the *Fort Myers News-Press*, "Sens. Nelson, Rubio agree: All Floridians deserve safe roads." (See

http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/NewsPress/1222_11_NPBWLOped.pdf.)

Expansion of Advocacy & Outreach

In an effort to expand our coverage of bike/ped decisions made in local jurisdictions, BikeWalkLee

announced representatives in each of the local jurisdictions. These individuals serve as our "point persons" who lead the local advocacy efforts and keep the BWL network informed about what's happening in their jurisdiction. This year's accomplishments reflect the expanded work of our network through these local representatives. (See http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_PR/022011communityReps.pdf.)

Maintained network of about 1,000 advocates and supporters through BikeWalkLee's frequent postings on its blog (<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com>), its website (www.BikeWalkLee.org), and its bi-monthly newsletter. BikeWalkLee upgraded its newsletter and launched Facebook and Twitter pages in an effort to find new ways to connect with our supporters, with an increasing number of followers.

Coalition is kept up-to-date on local bike/ped/transit developments and news, upcoming government meetings, and action alerts and opportunities for input. Continue to receive positive feedback from both advocates and government officials about its quality and usefulness.

BikeWalkLee coalition members also sit on various committees in the county and local jurisdiction—the County's BPAC, CSAC, community planning panels; the MPO's BPCC, CAC, TOMC, along with working groups, task forces, and committees attached to the various county agencies, and local jurisdictions. Through hands-on participation, BikeWalkLee is committed to being part of making change happen.

Advocacy Work Recognized Locally & Nationally

BikeWalkLee is a finalist for the News-Press "People of the Year" 2011 award, to be awarded in Jan. 2012. (See

<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/12/bikewalklee-finalist-for-news-press.html>.)

BikeWalkLee's efforts were reflected in October 2011 awards by the Urban Land Institute of SWFL

recognizing Lee County's complete streets efforts and the MPO bike/ped master plan. (See <http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/10/urban-land-institute-uli-of-swfl-2011.html>.)

One of BikeWalkLee's founding members was a finalist for Lee County's Paulette Burton 2010 Citizen of the Year award, presented by the BoCC in February 2011. (See

<http://bikewalklee.blogspot.com/2011/02/lee-countys-2010-paulette-burton.html>.)

BikeWalkLee's work also received public recognition by national organizations, such as the National Complete Streets Coalition, the League of American Bicyclists, Transportation 4 America, and the Alliance for Biking and Walking.

Previous BikeWalkLee Accomplishments Reports

2010 accomplishments: http://www.bikewalklee.org/BWL_PDFs/BWL_facts/BWL_2010accomplishments.pdf

2009 accomplishments: http://bikewalklee.com/BWL_PDFs/BWL_facts/BWLaccomplishments2009.pdf



BikeWalkLee Champions of the Year Award at Lee County BoCC

Thanks to our BikeWalkLee supporter organizations!

- AARP of Florida
- Acme Bicycle Shop
- American Institute of Architects of Southwest FL
- Audubon Society of Southwest FL
- Bike Route, Inc.
- Billy's Bike Shop
- Bonita Bay Bicycle Club
- Brooks Concerned Citizens
- Caloosa Riders Bicycle Club
- Engels Bicycles International
- Ensite, Inc.
- Estero Council of Community Leaders
- Fit Friendly Southwest Florida
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Florida Wildlife Federation
- Fort Myers Schwinn Cyclery Inc.
- Geared Up! Coaching and Triathlon Training
- Gooderham & Associates, Inc.
- Goodwill Industries
- Harvey Software, Inc.
- Injury Prevention Coalition
- Stay Alive! Just Drive!
- Lee Mental Health
- Lee Memorial Health System
- Missing in America Veterans Recovery Program
- Naples Pathways Coalition
- Paradise Bikes
- Realtor Association of Greater Fort Myers and the Beach, Inc.
- Reconnecting Lee
- Responsible Growth Management Council
- River of Grass Greenway (ROGG)
- Sanibel Bicycle Club
- Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation
- Sierra Club of Southwest Florida
- Southwest Florida Events
- Spikowski Planning Associates
- Start Walking! Campaign (AHA)
- SustainabLEE
- Southwest Florida Bicycling
- Trek Bicycle Store of Estero
- YMCA of Fort Myers

http://bikewalklee.com/BWL_PDFs/BWL_facts/BWLsupporterlist111225.pdf