

WHEN ARE WE GOING TO GET SOME BIKEWAYS IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD?

Each year, in Florida nearly 5,000 bicycle crashes result in about 100 fatalities and more than 4,000 injuries. Florida crash statistics show that the majority of the riders killed are adults. Crash statistics for the State of Florida can be found at the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles web site:
http://www.hsmv.state.fl.us/reports/crash_facts.html

Bikeways have raised a lot of interest in the past few years. Some agencies have built separate off-road bike paths. Many more have painted bike lanes on streets. Others have installed green "Bike Route" signs without the special lanes.

The cost of both building and maintaining bikeways can be a deterrent to many bike programs. Initial cost can range from a few dollars to paint a lane to a large budget to build a separate path including special bridges where needed.

Before embarking on a bikeway program, responsible agencies should look at the total picture of bicycle operation and safety. Bike lanes and signs alone cannot solve the problem of bicycle crashes; in some places they have increased the problem by giving riders a false sense of security.

An overall bicycle safety program should include: enforcement of traffic laws; bike safety training in the schools at an early age; follow-up training every year in the schools; and involvement of the parents of minor children who violate traffic laws or exhibit dangerous riding habits.

The bike program for a community should include three principle points:

1. Education in safe riding.
2. Enforcement of rules of the road.
3. Development of well-engineered bike lanes and bike paths.

This will involve the active participation of:

1. The schools.
2. Law enforcement agencies.
3. The traffic engineers and,
4. You, the citizen.

For more information contact: State Pedestrian/Bicycle Program; Florida Department of Transportation, 605 Suwannee St. MS 82, Tallahassee, FL 32388-0450; Phone (850) 487-1200 or at web site: http://www11.myflorida.com/safety/ped_bike/ped_bike.htm