



CHAPTER 3 – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An enhanced community engagement process was used for this Plan to reach the most people and get the broadest possible community input. In addition to traditional workshops, committee meetings, and open houses, the process included outreach at farmers’ markets and non-MPO public meetings, an interactive map on the Collier MPO website, and a survey in English, Spanish, and Creole. The survey was available online and distributed at outreach events. Appendix 4 provides the public outreach tools used.

The MPO considered the public engagement for this Plan to be a success, as more than 600 comments were received (Figure 8). These comments are described below and are provided in the appendices. Several repeated themes were identified during the process, including the following:

- Increase safety for those walking and bicycling.
- Complete sidewalk, bike lane, and path gaps on major roads.
- Address local sidewalk needs.
- Increase connectivity, particularly to and from the region’s beaches, between existing greenways, and between Immokalee and the rest of the county.
- Develop multi-use paths where possible.



Figure 8. Collier MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Engagement by Numbers

Two open-house workshops were held during the Plan’s development. The first, at Veterans Community Park, was held early in the process to receive input about plan goals and objectives, bicycle and pedestrian facility needs, and the public’s perception of this part of the region’s transportation system. Attendees voted on goal statements that were used to develop the needs and evaluation criteria and also marked up maps to show challenging locations and connections they wanted to see made. A total of 20 people signed in for the meeting, and many comments were received; an additional 15 written comments were received after the open house.

A second workshop, held at East Naples Community Park, was at the end of the Plan development process to affirm that the planning process had captured the feedback correctly and that there was community support for the Plan. Maps of the needs on collectors, arterials, and local roads were presented for review and comment. Attendees were asked to comment on any omissions or proposed additions to the proposed maps and lists. A total of 7 individuals signed in, and 2 written comments were received as were many verbal comments from most of those who attended (see Appendix 5). Public outreach also was conducted at the following locations:



- 4 farmer’s markets—Vanderbilt Beach Road, Golden Gate City, Naples Community Hospital (NCH), Marco Island.
- 2 Community Redevelopment Association (CRA) meetings—Bayshore CRA and Immokalee CRA
- 1 Everglades City Council meeting
- 2 open houses for Commissioner Taylor—Naples City Hall and Livingston Road
- 3 Immokalee CRA meetings—Farm Workers Coalition, Unmet Needs Coalition, and CRA office (outreach conducted by CRA)

Another product of the outreach for this Plan was that the MPO received multiple emails, phone calls, and letters from citizens with questions and comments about the Plan. Appendix 5 contains the comments collected through outreach or by citizens contacting the MPO office.

Interactive Map

Figure 9 depicts a portion of an interactive web-based tool that was used to gather citizen input. Comments could be made about bicycle or pedestrian needs and challenges, needed connections, safety concerns, and potential destinations. Appendix 6 includes a list of all comments received.

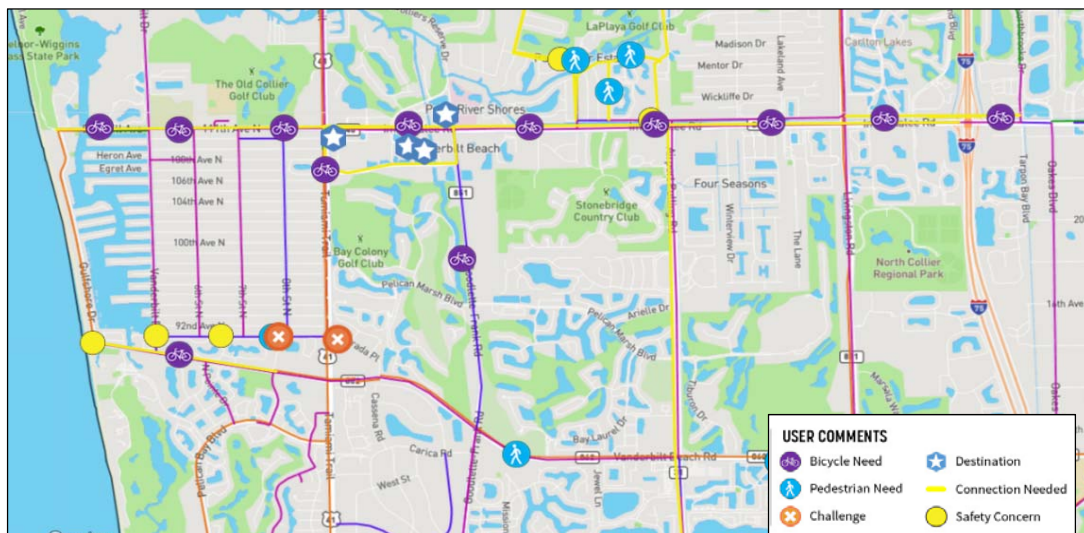


Figure 9. Interactive Wiki Map Used in Public Outreach

Online Survey

An online survey was used to get a sense of the level of comfort people felt when walking or bicycling and to identify areas of concern and desired support. Respondents were asked a variety of questions related to bicycling and walking; several questions allowed multiple responses. Generally, those who responded to the survey expressed discomfort with the bicycling and

A total of 87% of survey respondents stated that there are places they would not bike because of “uncomfortable/unsafe routes or lack of routes.”



walking environment in Collier County. The survey received 327 responses. The complete survey, and responses and other feedback can be found in Appendix 7.

Respondents were asked what makes them feel unsafe when biking or walking (multiple answers permitted). The top three reasons for not feeling safe biking were lack of facilities (81%), driver behavior (78%), and speed of traffic (72%). The top three reasons why pedestrians felt unsafe were lack of facilities (64%), driver behavior (60%), and speed of traffic (55%). Figure 10 shows the responses to these questions.

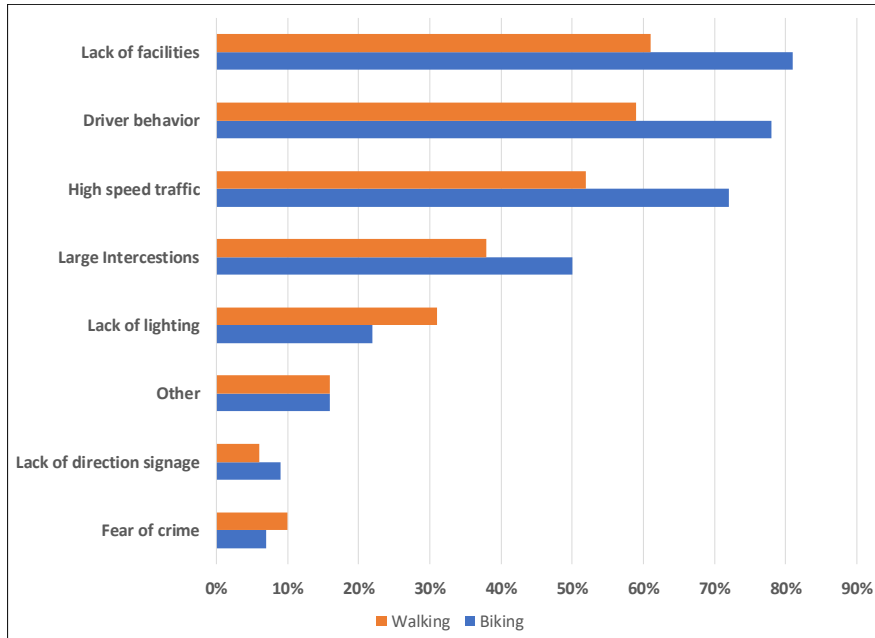
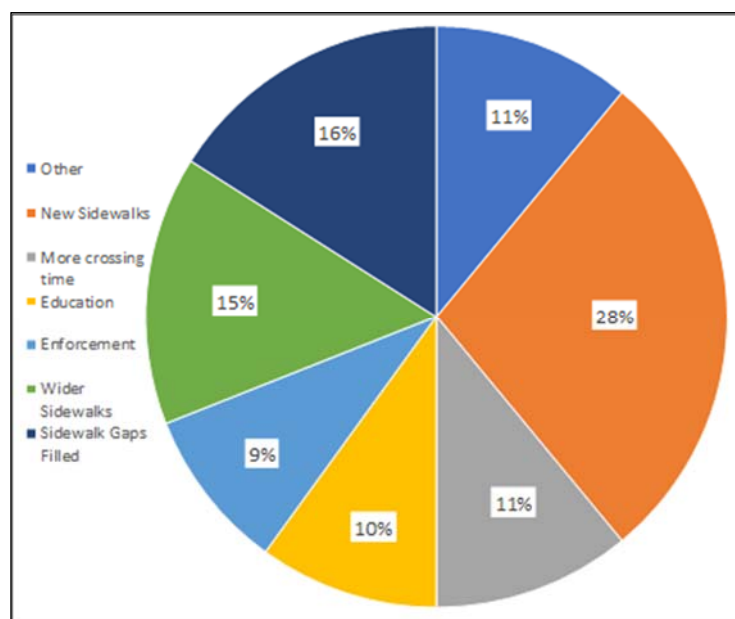


Figure 10.
What makes pedestrians and bicyclists feel unsafe?



Respondents were also asked about walking support (Figure 11) and could select as many options as desired. New sidewalks had the most support (28%), followed by filling gaps in existing sidewalks (16%) and wider sidewalks (15%). Items in the “Other” category included lighting, maintenance, and mid-block crossings.

Figure 11. Desired Pedestrian Facility Support



Respondents were asked what types of facilities or bike support they would like to see more of and could select as many options as desired. Paths were noted by 34% of respondents, and bike lanes were noted by 21%. Items in the “Other” category included protected bike lanes, wider bike lanes, green-painted bike lanes, and bike parking (see Figure 12.)

MPO Board and Advisory Committee Meetings

The MPO Board and three of its advisory committees— Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)—were updated regularly on the Plan’s development and provided meaningful direction and comment. All MPO meetings are open to the public, and additional public comment was gathered at these meetings. Advisory Committee and Collier County Transportation Planning comments are provided in Appendix 8.

Stakeholder Group

A stakeholder group, comprising agency and advocacy groups for users of the bicycle and pedestrian system as well as MPO committee members, was convened twice to solicit feedback on the Plan’s focus and direction and goals and objectives. In addition to providing feedback, the group acted as a voice for people who regularly walk and bike but whose voice may not have been heard through the other public engagement efforts. Stakeholder comments are provided in Appendix 9.

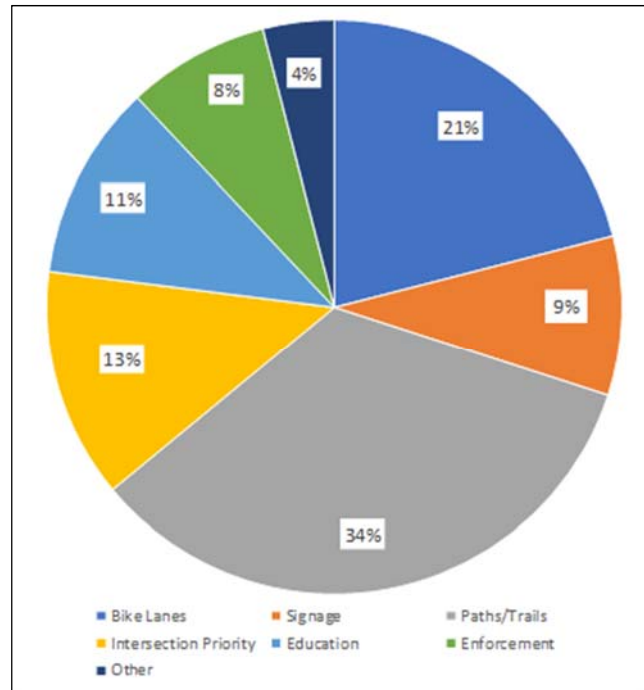


Figure 12. Desired Bicycle Facility Support