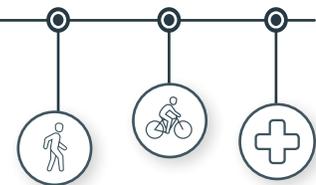




CASE STUDY: BROWARD COUNTY, FL

Healthy, safe & prosperous by design: Building complete streets



THE BOTTOM LINE

Prompted by a need for safer streets, the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) partnered with its member jurisdictions, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and other non-traditional partners, to plan, design, and build more complete streets projects. The Broward MPO began by working with the Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC) and other partner organizations to develop Complete Streets guidelines. MPO staff also trained local leaders on the benefits of complete streets and built regional consensus and political support. As a result of these efforts, 16 of the MPO's 31 jurisdictions have adopted resolutions or guidelines of their own. At the same time, the MPO increased funding for active transportation projects. Since 2012, the MPO has programmed approximately 90 individual bicycle and pedestrian projects totaling \$120 million.

THE CONTEXT

Located in southeastern Florida and including the city of Fort Lauderdale, the single-county Broward MPO encompasses a population of approximately 1.75 million. Only one-third of the land in Broward County can be developed because of geographic constraints like wetlands, including the Everglades.

THE PROBLEM

Two main problems faced the Broward MPO: the extremely high cost of building new roads, and the extreme danger that fast-moving roads pose for people who walk or ride bicycles. With roads primarily designed to move vehicles as quickly as possible, people walking or biking are far more likely to be injured or killed than in other comparable U.S. metro areas. The Miami-Ft. Lauderdale-Pompano Beach metropolitan area (which includes Broward County) ranked as the country's fourth most dangerous metropolitan region for pedestrians in the most recent "Dangerous by Design" report from Smart Growth America and the National Complete Streets Coalition.¹

Addressing these two problems required a new approach that sought to better allocate existing roadway capacity through multimodal solutions and streets designed with a focus on moving people.



Loxahatchee Road: current street view, top, and complete streets rendering.

WHAT THEY DID

Supported by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the MPO developed, adopted, and promoted Complete Streets guidelines in conjunction with the Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC).² The new guidelines provided the region's cities and county with a robust encyclopedia of options that they can tailor into their own Complete Streets policies.

The guidelines also equip local jurisdictions with design guidance to incorporate bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities that would meet the Broward MPO's standards when building new streets, retrofitting/modifying streets with new development, or creating new subdivisions.

HOW THEY DID IT

When implementing the MPO's Transformation 2035 long-range transportation plan (LRTP), the MPO grouped bicycle and pedestrian projects by projected high-activity transit corridor, with the intent of prioritizing the projects that would provide first- and last-mile connections to the existing system to boost ridership, while also laying the groundwork for future enhanced transit.

The Broward MPO is responsible for long-range transportation planning, not the construction of projects. As such, to see the completion of planned projects, successful partnerships are crucial. After setting their long-term priorities and goals, it is vital for the MPO to work in close cooperation with the state DOT and the local transportation



Broward MPO Board members break ground for the first phase of projects from the MPO's mobility program.

agencies to ensure that the projects are feasible and designed well to meet everyone's needs. The Broward MPO established a smoother process to move these projects from the planning phase to programming and implementation by utilizing partnerships with local agencies and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). FDOT has been critical to the success of complete streets projects throughout the county. The MPO and its members relied (and will continue to rely) on FDOT to scope, engineer, and construct all transportation projects within the MPO boundary.

Vetting the project and involving all stakeholders is an important step before it can be programmed for funding. Here's how the relationship works: After the MPO identifies a potential improvement, FDOT, the local municipality, and the roadway owner meet to scope the project to make sure it is feasible. The scoping phase, conducted under the guidance of FDOT engineering staff, gives these projects a strong start.

FDOT provides full-service support by offering to facilitate and walk through the entire process of designing and constructing each one of the MPO's projects.

KEY PARTNERS

BRHPC and the Broward MPO developed Complete Streets guidelines with funding from the CDC. The MPO then conducted trainings for local leaders in Broward's municipalities and county government, developed tools to help MPO members plan, design, and build these projects, and provided other technical assistance to the municipalities and county. The partnerships extended beyond the usual players and non-traditional partners also contributed to these efforts.

For example, the Florida Department of Health assisted with the development of the MPO's Complete Streets Evaluation Toolkit and provided health metrics for measuring the benefits of active transportation. Urban Health Partnerships led components of the Complete Streets Initiative like walking audits and a Safe Streets Summit. The University of Miami WalkSafe program provided educational outreach to elementary schools in the area to promote safe walking behaviors. Finally, FDOT has helped identify opportunities to build complete streets and continues to lend support to local governments to design and construct them.

Partners included:

- Florida Department of Transportation;
- Broward Regional Health Planning Council;
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;
- Broward municipalities;
- Broward County government;
- Non-traditional partners in the MPO's Complete Streets Initiative, such as:
 - > Florida Department of Health;
 - > Urban Health Partnerships;
 - > University of Miami WalkSafe program;
 - > Smart Growth Partnership;
 - > AARP.

○ A CLOSER LOOK: HOLLYWOOD BLVD.



The Hollywood Boulevard Complete Streets Demonstration Project in Hollywood, FL will spur economic development with the transformation of an underutilized thoroughfare into a more walkable main street boulevard. Full reconstruction of the existing roadway will provide wider sidewalks, buffered bicycle lanes, buffers with native landscaping and medians on a portion of the street that has historically been neglected.

Above: Hollywood Boulevard existing street view.

Following page: Complete streets rendering and proposed re-configuration.

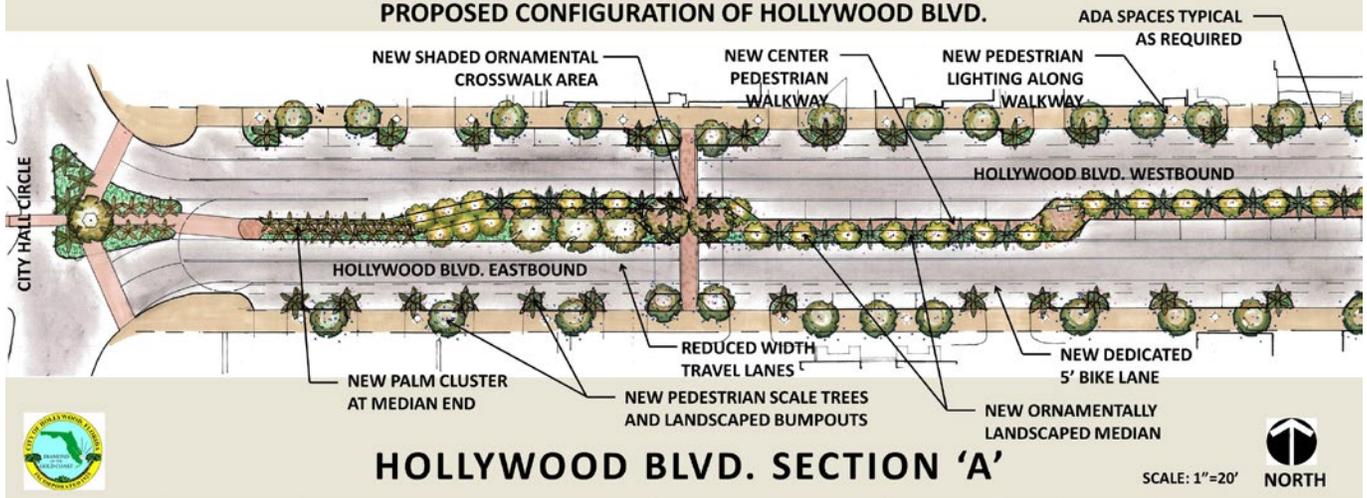


A CLOSER LOOK: HOLLYWOOD BLVD.

EXISTING CONFIGURATION OF HOLLYWOOD BLVD.



PROPOSED CONFIGURATION OF HOLLYWOOD BLVD.



◎ BARRIERS ALONG THE WAY

Local partners were concerned that the MPO guidelines had no “teeth” or enforcement measures. In addition, without local agencies’ incorporation of the guidelines in their own planning processes, the guidelines might have just sat on a shelf.

To ensure successful implementation, the MPO established a Complete Streets Initiative under the guidance of a technical advisory committee, which included local government representatives and non-traditional partners (noted above). The committee continues to develop tools to help local jurisdictions plan complete streets in their community and provide a platform for municipalities to learn from each other through that process. These tools include a model plan, model ordinance, and model policy for municipalities. Building safer, more complete streets is often not a technical problem but rather a political one. The MPO ensured the guidelines had “teeth” by building political support through a model ordinance, which has had tangible impacts on actual design requirements. For example, the MPO’s efforts influenced Broward County to modify its engineering

standards and municipal codes to incorporate complete streets.³

Through the initiative, Broward MPO staff delivered presentations to inform local leaders and planners about the benefits of complete streets. Their emphasis on the benefits for health and local economies have played a significant role in encouraging approximately 50 percent of Broward’s municipalities to adopt their own guidelines or resolutions. Staff also provided technical assistance by conducting community walking audits, assisting peer agencies in identifying internal resources, providing data and template materials like posters, and developing tailored action plans. This has helped local governments conceptualize these projects to better design streets for all users.

Furthermore, MPO staff hosted trainings with experts for elected officials and technical staff from municipalities. The presentations, assistance and trainings have helped build ownership of the Complete Streets guidelines, making a tangible difference in planning and designing projects.

“The Broward MPO’s Complete Streets Initiative has involved non-traditional partners, from the Broward Regional Health Planning Council to AARP, to include health, economic, and environmental factors into our complete streets planning process. Safe and accessible streets can only be created by adopting this multifaceted approach – our 100 million dollar investment has been a testament to our enduring partnership with the community.”

– Greg Stuart, Director, Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization

RESULTS AND BENEFITS

As a result of this comprehensive approach, municipalities began building safer, more complete streets. For example, the City of Fort Lauderdale began incorporating Complete Streets strategies into nearly every project and worked across departments to build quality projects. The city has become a successful example to and source of inspiration for peer municipalities. Other jurisdictions took the approach of first adopting a Complete Streets resolution and then incorporating these safer designs into their maintenance projects before making them a part of their newer, more comprehensive transportation projects.

By the end of 2015, 16 of the MPO's 31 jurisdictions adopted Complete Streets resolutions or their own guidelines, codified through their public works or engineering departments.

Broward County's current regional long-range transportation plan, Commitment 2040, allocates **27 percent of all funds to complete streets or to building new bicycle or pedestrian projects** – about \$571.6 million over the life of the plan and \$22.8 million per year. Since 2012, the MPO has **funded 90 bicycle and pedestrian projects.**



A recently constructed sidewalk funded by the MPO's five-year, \$120 million Mobility Program, which has awarded about 90 projects.

Broward jurisdictions are now more equipped to design and build complete streets projects with state and local funds and 17 cities have incorporated complete street designs into their local investments.

Broward County also developed an evaluation toolkit which allows local municipalities to use publicly available data to measure the positive impact of these projects.⁴

They can evaluate how certain street improvements would lead to increased safety (e.g., fewer crashes, lower vehicle speeds), economic vitality (e.g., increased business revenue, less vacant property, greater property value), health and sustainability factors (e.g., more physical activity, reduced vehicle emissions and less fuel consumption), and balanced mobility (e.g., wider mode share, more transit ridership, more facilities). To help ascertain the tangible impacts of complete streets, the MPO will also conduct counts of those traveling on foot and bicycle before and after the installation of bicycle and pedestrian improvements.



Kids are fitted for bicycle helmets at a public event sponsored by the Broward MPO.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Broward MPO offers the following advice to other MPOs:

1

Incorporate complete streets designs into the scoping phase.

Scoping is the phase that occurs before engineering commences, before the project is programmed into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and before the project is added to the MPO's work program. As the phase with the most robust public outreach, scoping is the best point at which to incorporate complete streets designs into a project because it allows maximum buy-in from the public, agency staff, and elected officials during an earlier phase of a project.

2

Focus on messages that resonate.

The MPO found that by using the lens of health impacts, the following messages most effectively resonated with elected officials and decision-makers:

- Focus on the benefits that pedestrian and bicycle investments provide for drivers. Sidewalks and bike lanes improve safety for drivers as well as those travelling on foot and bicycle. For example, studies show that when traffic speed decreases, all crashes and fatalities decrease;
- No matter how a person commutes, everyone is a pedestrian at some point;
- A sizable share of the public cannot drive and about a third of the community relies upon other ways to get around;

- Traffic calming and complete streets improvements benefit local businesses. Increases in foot traffic and streets that encourage window shopping are shown to result in increased revenue for businesses.

3

Leverage existing processes and resources.

Political buy-in is key for developing regional support for complete streets. Consider how one can build support through model ordinances, engineering standards, or municipal codes. Work to get local municipalities, advocacy partners, and local groups involved early in the process, and leverage other resources and agencies. For example, the MPO utilized FDOT as its construction arm for its mobility projects.

CONCLUSION

To save money and help stem the tide of injuries and fatalities for people walking or biking – which disproportionately harm low-income people and minority communities – the Broward MPO has been successfully planning, designing and building safer, complete streets within the MPO’s one-county area by developing new guidelines, training local leaders on the benefits and building regional consensus and political support.

As a result of these efforts and using the MPO’s guidelines as a starting point, 16 of the MPO’s 31 jurisdictions have adopted Complete Streets resolutions or guidelines of their own, and 17 cities have incorporated these street designs into their local investments. And for the MPO, since 2012, 90 individual bicycle and pedestrian projects totaling \$120 million have been programmed and/or funded.

“The Broward Regional Health Planning Council (BRHPC)’s TOUCH Initiative is proud to have provided the funding and support for the initial phase of the complete streets movement in Broward County. BRHPC is committed to working with our community partners to promote opportunities for healthier living for our residents and visitors by supporting increased access to multiple modes of transportation and safer, more walkable and bikeable streets. We also commend the Broward MPO for their investment of \$100 million to ensure implementation of complete streets in our community.”

–Michael De Lucca, President & CEO, BRHPC

NOTES

1. Based on data of pedestrian fatalities from 2008-2012. www.smartgrowthamerica.org/research/dangerous-by-design
2. <http://www.browardmpo.org/index.php/broward-complete-streets-guidelines>
3. View some of Broward's implementation materials at: <http://www.browardmpo.org/projects-studies/complete-streets/broward-complete-streets-initiative-2/materials>
4. The evaluation toolkit is available at <http://browardmpo.org/index.php/broward-complete-streets-evaluation-toolkit>

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WHO WE ARE



Transportation for America is an alliance of elected, business and civic leaders from communities across the country, united to ensure that states and the federal government step up to invest in smart, homegrown, locally-driven transportation solutions. These are the investments that hold the key to our future economic prosperity. www.t4america.org