



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – HAPPENED TODAY! May 6, 2016

For more information:

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**SAN CARLOS PARK ELEMENTARY STUDENTS “MAKE TRACKS” TO SCHOOL
TO SHOWCASE NEW TIGER GRANT SIDEWALKS, BIKE SAFETY MONTH**

EVENT HAPPENED TODAY, MAY 6TH

May 6, 2016—San Carlos Park Elementary School students, families and others took part in the **TIGER Walk and Bike to School on Friday, May 6th** to spread the excitement about the new sidewalks in the San Carlos Park community. The Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization, Lee Memorial Health System and Safe Routes to School partnered together to make the walk a success and heighten awareness of pedestrian safety and healthy choices. The Lee County Sheriff’s office accompanied the group as they walked on the new constructed sidewalks to school.

This event showcased a portion of the completed first phase of the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Complete Streets Initiative, which is funded through a federal TIGER Grant. The improvements include more than three miles of newly-constructed sidewalks and safety features in San Carlos Park, among many other enhancements in Lee County.

The TIGER Walk and Bike to School event also marked the start of National Bike Safety Month and will help emphasize a healthy lifestyle for Lee County students and families. To help encourage students and their families to use these sidewalks as part of a healthy lifestyle, the Lee MPO is partnering with the Healthy Lee Movement and the Safe Routes to School program, among many others for this event.

Students will left Karl Drews Park at 7:15 a.m. and walked and biked together along Lee Road to San Carlos Park Elementary School on the brand new sidewalk. Students were also encouraged to join in along the way and TIGER “I walked to school” stickers were distributed to all students walking to school.

The **Lee County MPO Complete Streets Initiative** is a series of projects designed to connect the Lee County community and help make it an attractive place to work, live and play, while also improving safety. The Lee County MPO Complete Streets Initiative provides connectivity on bicycle and pedestrian paths, filling gaps in the existing network and giving Lee County residents more transportation choices.



The program is funded with a Federal Highway Administration TIGER Grant (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) awarded in 2014. The selective TIGER Grant program funds transportation capital improvement projects. These grants are awarded by the Federal Government for projects that have significant impact on the nation, a region or metropolitan area such as Lee County.

In addition to new transportation infrastructure, the improvements include road and safety features, such as solar-powered school zone flashing warning signs and lights, a refuge island, handrails along the sidewalk over the canals, and ADA accessible bus stops with ramps. Storm water improvements were also installed along sections of the projects.

Lee Memorial Health System encourages community efforts that ensure the sustainability of Southwest Florida. Since 2007, the Lee Memorial Health System has supported a diverse group of community leaders in the Healthy Lee initiative which conducts research and implements initiatives to improve our community's health status and our health care delivery system. The Healthy Lee movement was created to empower and inspire the people of Lee County regarding healthy lifestyle choices through education and action. The initiative reflects Lee County's comprehensive sustainability strategy, promoting the integration of healthy lifestyle choices into the daily routines and the built environment, and supports the message of transformation based on free choice.

Safe Routes to School is a nationwide program dedicated to improving the health and well-being of children by enabling and encouraging them to walk and bicycle to school. The program helps make bicycling and walking to school safer and more appealing transportation choices for children and their families.

For more information about the Lee County MPO Complete Streets Initiative, please visit <http://leecompletestreets.leempo.com> or call 239-826-1185.