



# Insider

News and information to help Florida's aging road users



## March 2020

It's that time of year again! The cold snaps of winter are behind us, and it's time to embrace Florida's beautiful spring weather. There are many ways to enjoy the sunshine while you practice new transportation options that have many health, lifestyle, and financial benefits. This month's newsletter will tell you how to safely stay in shape and participate in Florida Bicycle Month.



**Understand**



**Be Proactive**



**Plan**

### FDOT Update: COVID-19

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is working to help employees, and the public, stay informed on how to protect themselves, their families, and communities from COVID-19. Educational materials on COVID-19 are being posted in FDOT facilities, which include welcome centers, service plazas, and rest areas across the state.

Additionally, the Department of Health (DOH) has a dedicated webpage that is updated in real-time with the latest information and that website, <http://www.floridahealth.gov/diseases-and-conditions/COVID-19/>, is an excellent resource for individuals who have questions.

Information regarding COVID-19 symptoms can be found in the flyer here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/COVID19-symptoms.pdf>

**COVID 19**  
CORONAVIRUS DISEASE

**SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019**

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms\* can include

- FEVER**
- COUGH**
- SHORTNESS OF BREATH**

\*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

**CDC**

For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms)



## Understand

### March is Bicycling Month: Don't Spin Your Wheels – Use Them

Bicycling is not just a rite of passage for kids in the cul-de-sac. It's also a popular activity for older adults that offers many benefits. People who bike can boost their health and discover new ways to get around.

Bicycling is a terrific way to socialize with friends and make new ones. All of these make biking a truly rewarding experience.

Let's talk about exercise, the main reason a lot of people decide to ride their bikes. Biking has a lot of health-related benefits because it's:

- A low-impact activity that keeps stress off your joints and can improve heart health.
- Physical activity that can lead to increased strength, better flexibility, and can help slow down age-related loss of muscle mass.
- Great for brain functions, helping with memory and reasoning skills.

What's more, you do not have to go outside to enjoy these benefits! Hop on a stationary bike to reap the same rewards despite the weather, time, or any physical limitations.

Let's not forget how much fun it is to bike with others. There are so many ways that you can get social with your ride:

- Get family members together for a routine ride.



- Opt for a trail or neighborhood ride to catch up with a friend.
- Check in at local bike shops, where they often have information on nearby rides and events.

Whether you are riding with family, old friends, or new ones, everyone can bond over biking!

Bicycling can be an excellent avenue for exercise or fun. But have you considered including biking into your transportation plan? Consider:

- Purchasing baskets and saddlebags to safely carry items on your bike. Then, you can ride to places like the pharmacy or convenience store for short trips.
- Biking to your nearest transit stop. Many buses and trains allow you to bring your bike on board, and you can travel farther.

Biking not only helps you live a more active lifestyle but also keeps you mobile and independent beyond the driver's seat.

It's easy to see why people are grabbing life by the handlebars. However, none of

these great benefits are worth it if you are not practicing safe riding habits. Rule number one — wear a helmet. Studies show that strapping one on could prevent up to 85 percent of cycling deaths that are caused by head injuries.

How can new riders get started?

- Talk to your health care provider about any health issues that could prevent you from cycling.
- Visit a local bike shop to be fitted for a bicycle made for the type of riding that you will be doing.
- Ask a shop if they know of any training centers in your community. When you have not ridden in a while, some training can help make your first ride safer and more enjoyable.

When ready to get on and go, observe simple pre-ride safety measures:

- Wear the right clothing for the weather.
- Secure loose sleeves or pant legs.
- Make sure shoes fit properly and laces are secured so they do not get caught up in the bike chain.
- As with all activities in Florida, remember to stay hydrated, and wear sunblock and eye protection.
- And, do not forget that helmet — it may be the most important thing you wear!

For more information, download or order a copy of the Bicycling: Tips on Using Transportation Options in Florida booklet from the [Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center](#).



## Be Proactive

## New Ways to Access Florida's Guide to Safe Mobility for Life

We are excited to announce that the latest edition of Florida's Guide to Safe Mobility for Life is our most accessible yet. The guide page on our website provides easy access to the following electronic versions:

### English

- [E-book](#)
- [PDF](#)
- [Apple Book](#)
- [Google Play](#)

### Spanish

- [E-book](#)
- [PDF](#)
- [Apple Book](#)
- [Google Play](#)

You can even access and print the worksheets in both English and Spanish. The worksheets help you create and put your transportation plan into action. If you prefer a hard copy, order a free printed version from the [Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center](#). Take advantage of this great resource, and all of our other materials, today!



## Plan

### Step Up to a Healthy Lifestyle

When it comes to exercise, few things beat walking. It's free, you can do it anywhere, it requires no special materials (short of comfy shoes), and it's a low-impact activity for people of all fitness levels.

Walking is an excellent option to keep us in shape, especially as we get older. It is also an excellent mode of transportation. As we age, we may not be able to safely drive for many reasons. Some would rather avoid the expenses that come with owning and maintaining a vehicle or may want to live a "greener" lifestyle. Walking provides a good solution, especially for those in urban areas that can easily access shopping, restaurants, banks, and other needs on foot.

It's easy to get started but there are a few tips that can make the transition easier. Talk to friends or loved ones about walking with you. Join a local walking group or program to help you stick with it. Most people do not need expensive athletic shoes, although the right shoe can be beneficial for walkers who have structural issues such as flat feet, high arches, or other concerns.

As with any physical activity, talk to your doctor before starting. Be sure to discuss any pain or problems from walking after you get going. Other than that, stay hydrated and be aware of your surroundings to stay safe. Remember, this is Florida, so use sunblock if you will be out in the sun! Alert Today Florida has tips and materials to make sure you stay safe while reaching your step goal.



## Community Spotlight:

### Hardee County Residents Excited about Safe Mobility



The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition started 2020 with a bang. We spoke to more than 150 people at our largest Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life Workshop to date. It was also our first workshop in Hardee County, at the Crystal Lake Village in Wauchula, Florida.

Everyone received their own copy of Florida's Guide to Safe Mobility for Life. The guide covers the keys to achieve safe mobility, tips for all aging road users, and state and local resource information. Guests also received How to Use Find a Ride Florida tip cards. These will help them locate all their available travel options—a key resource in rural areas where choices are limited.

Crystal Lake Village is a good example of how Florida's rural communities can have options past standard transit. There is no bus or rail service in the area, but FindaRideFlorida.org can help share options. The site presents a list of choices, along with phone numbers, websites, and email addresses to find a ride in three easy steps. It also lists Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Uber or Lyft. This can be a quick and cheap option if you share the cost with friends. Our TNC brochure lists tips on how to use these services safely and with confidence.

Thank you to Crystal Lake Village, the Hardee County Sheriff's Office, and the Florida Department of Transportation's District 1 Office. Their partnership helped this group learn how to plan for a safe, mobile, and independent transportation future.





### Teamwork Brings Training Event to Brevard

Teamwork makes the dream work! That was the motto at last month's Safe Walking for Life Train-the-Trainer Workshop. More than 30 older adults and community members came together at the Eau Gallie Civic Center in Melbourne, Florida.

The first half of the workshop focused on walking. Guests learned about the impact of aging, risks, and benefits and how to stay safe. This half wrapped up with a group walk to observe real-world examples of the things discussed in class, such as [countdown pedestrian signals](#) and the importance of [staying alert in parking lots](#).

Some guests stayed for the Train-the-Trainer portion. Here, they learned how to access the tools needed to host these events on their own. Dana Crosby, Program Administrator for the Florida School

Crossing Guard Training Program, talked about the importance of these workshops and how they tie into [FDOT's Vision Zero strategy](#).

The Safe Mobility for Life Coalition's Megan Case shared all the details, from how to plan and promote an event to where to order outreach materials. The group entered as guests and left as trainers. Now, they are ready to teach others all about safe walking skills.

Kudos to the **FDOT's Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow program**, and the **Space Coast Transportation Planning Organization**. These teams worked hard alongside the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition to make this workshop a reality. Are you interested in a Safe Walking for Life Workshop? Email [Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com](mailto:Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com) for more information.





## Beyond the Driver's Seat:

### It's Never Too Late to Tackle Transit

How many times have you driven by a bus stop or train station and considered taking a ride? Would you even know where to start? It can be confusing trying to figure out how to navigate an unfamiliar transit system. This can keep many people from reaping the benefits of transit, such as:

- Saving money from not owning and maintaining a car.
- Better access to important services and activities.
- Increased physical activity.
- Less traffic on the roads.
- More green travel for the environment.

In February, the Florida Department of Transportation's Safe Mobility for Life Coalition and Florida Public Transit Association (FPTA) worked with Rollins Lifelong Learning Center and the Neighbors Network to host a Safe Transit for Life Workshop in Winter Park, Florida. The goal? Teach attendees how to navigate their local transit systems. In doing so, transit becomes a viable driving alternative that this group can tackle with confidence.

Participants who joined this Central Florida event heard from the Coalition about the keys to achieve safe mobility for life and the importance of planning ahead to meet their future transportation needs. The FPTA talked about the benefits of transit and why people choose to make the switch.



MetroPlan Orlando joined to talk about transportation planning and how the groups' insight paves tomorrow's system. Guests also learned all about their local SunRail commuter train and LYNX bus directly from local experts. One attendee shared that finding out the specific costs and how to navigate each system, as well as getting to experience both firsthand, was the most useful part of their day!

At the end of the workshop, 15 people put their new transit smarts to the test. Each person participated in a guided ride to Downtown Orlando and back, taking both SunRail and LYNX. The group learned how to purchase and present their tickets, make transfers, utilize handicap seating and ramps and request their stops. Most importantly, they learned that traveling via transit can be an easy and comfortable experience. Members of the group are already planning their next adventures via train and bus.



A huge thank you to all the engaged community partners who helped make this workshop a success, including a great lunch sponsored by FPTA.

Looking to take your first transit trip or help an older adult in your community become more comfortable with riding transit? Start by downloading or ordering a copy of the Public Transit: Tips on Using Transportation Options in Florida booklet from the [Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center](#) for helpful tips and information.



To request outreach materials: Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center  
Phone: (850) 644-8426, Email: [Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com](mailto:Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com)

Do you know a group of older adults who would be interested in learning more about the Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life? Email [Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com](mailto:Contact@SafeMobilityFL.com) to schedule a “The Keys to Achieve Safe Mobility for Life” workshop today.



[SafeMobilityFL.com](https://www.SafeMobilityFL.com)



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