

# Shared Use Path Along Dunlop: An Upgrade In Safety, Health, And Convenience

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by Herb Rubin, Traffic Committee Chair  
Committee of the Islands*

On June 1, 2010, the Department of Public Works embarked upon a five-month study of the winding road from Palm Ridge to Periwinkle, which runs past BIG ARTS, City Hall and the Sanibel Library. The study was conducted to explore and suggest alternative options for a pedestrian and bicycle path independent of the road, to be funded by approximately \$400,000 already in the current budget. The work was completed by the end of November, and four options were presented to the city council on December 7, 2010, each including the four areas generating the most traffic: the Sanibel Library, City Hall, BIG ARTS and the Historical Museum and Village.

The first two options were deemed least desirable by the Planning and Natural Resources departments, because of their intrusion into wetlands and gopher tortoise habitat, and the endangerment of mature native trees. Most of the public input at that meeting, and the comments of those members of council who spoke, favored the third option, which retained wide islands between the lanes of opposing vehicular traffic. However, the board of BIG ARTS, one of the four major players, had yet to discuss their preference and, at the council meeting of January 4, 2011, the representatives of BIG ARTS and the Bike Club each preferred a different option. Consequently, council approved only the construction of a path from Periwinkle to the Library.

## **Parties Now in Agreement on Option 4**

The BIG ARTS board met on January 25 and approved Option 4, also favored by the Bike Club, and quickly endorsed by the board of the Committee of the Islands. Option 4 allows two-way vehicular traffic on the roadway but separates it from the bike and pedestrian path. It also creates a broader green area in front of BIG Arts and the Historical Museum and Village.

We now have essential agreement among interested parties on a plan that preserves much of our sanctuary area. In addition, it simultaneously both improves the safety of pedestrians and cyclists and encourages residents and visitors to practice heart-healthy travel and to reduce our use of fossil fuel.

As indicated above, the Committee of the Islands endorses this plan and urges community support for it as well. You can help by emailing City Council, before its March 1<sup>st</sup> meeting, at [sancouncil@mysanibel.com](mailto:sancouncil@mysanibel.com), and urging them to adopt Option 4.

*The Committee of the Islands welcomes your opinions and invites you to email us at [coti@coti.org](mailto:coti@coti.org). Previous commentaries on other island issues are also available on our website at [coti.org](http://coti.org).*