

## **COTI's Position on the Widths of our Shared Use Paths**

The Sanibel Vision Statement, which is part of our City Charter, rests on three values: Sanctuary, Community and Attraction. The Statement establishes a hierarchy of the values in that order. "Sanibel will serve as an attraction only to the extent to which it retains its desired qualities as sanctuary and community."

In keeping with these values, COTI believes that our shared use path system should be regarded as part of the Sanibel's infrastructure. It is designed to facilitate enjoyment of the island by both residents and visitors. However, it should not be treated as an attraction, intended to bring here people who would not otherwise come.

We believe that path design should balance the needs of sanctuary and community. We want our paths to be big enough to fulfill their function, but we do not want to pave our barrier island unnecessarily. Historically the paths have mostly been six or eight feet wide. This pattern has served well, although we believe that safety considerations argue for widening the six foot sections to eight feet as feasible.

Recently the City has moved toward making the paths along the busy part of Periwinkle Way – between Causeway Boulevard and Tarpon Bay Road – ten feet wide. COTI supports that action along this heavily traveled section of road, but continues to believe that eight feet should be the maximum width elsewhere.

In an April, 2007 report, the City's shared use path consultant said that along collector and local roadways, "eight foot paths function acceptably for most casual cyclists." The report pointed to the "traffic calming" effect of the eight foot width, and characterized it as serving a safety purpose. It recommended a minimum eight foot width along the lower speed streets.

COTI supports the consultant's recommendation. We believe that anyone who proposes spending money to put more blacktop than that on our island should bear the burden of demonstrating that it is really necessary and affordable in both construction and maintenance.

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