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Streets being redesigned to cater to people, not cars

By [Michael Turnbell](#), Sun Sentinel

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In this car-crazy county, it's not all about drivers anymore.

Some Broward roads will be getting much wider sidewalks, pedestrian lighting, bike lanes buffered from cars and crosswalks with embedded lights. Other roads will go on a "diet" with narrower lanes or, in some cases, lanes will be eliminated to make room for the changes.

Planners have picked stretches of both Hollywood Boulevard and Sunset Strip to be the county's first Complete Streets, a term coined to mean roads rebuilt for more than cars. Design work is set to begin next year, with construction in 2016.

"We were looking for two corridors, one that could fit the urban setting and the other suburban," said Ricardo Gutierrez, bike and pedestrian coordinator for Broward's Metropolitan Planning Organization, a group that prioritizes transportation projects. "We wanted corridors where all the elements could be represented — sidewalks, bike lanes and transit."

Affected will be a three-block stretch of Hollywood Boulevard between City Hall and Dixie Highway; and Sunset Strip from Northwest 72nd Avenue to Northwest 19th Street in Sunrise.

A modified version of the concept is already being tested on a stretch of Bailey Road that straddles the border between Tamarac and North Lauderdale. As the road was being widened, county officials decided to incorporate features for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The street was widened, but its travel lanes — two in each direction — are narrower. There are now wider sidewalks on both sides of the street between State Road 7 and Southwest 64th Avenue. In some areas, there's a two-foot gap between the bike lanes and the travel lanes.

"The fixes, they're fine. It's pretty nice," said Michael Watts, of North Lauderdale.

Josh Travers, who rides his bike to work at a downtown Hollywood restaurant, said the improvements in his area can't come soon enough.

"It isn't a friendly place to ride a bike. I've had people back into me from parking," he said.

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When completed, sidewalks on Hollywood Boulevard will grow from eight to as wide as 12 feet. Angled parking will be replaced with parallel parking, which means some spaces will be lost. Officials, however, are working on putting some parking in the median. Five-foot bike lanes in each direction will have a three-foot buffer from cars.

Sunset Strip, a four-lane road, will lose a lane in each direction between Northwest 72nd Avenue and Northwest 19th Street. But it will gain eight-foot sidewalks and buffered bike lanes.

Crosswalks on both streets could get LED lights in the pavement that activate at night when a pedestrian enters the crosswalk or when the walk cycle begins.

Shelters will be built at bus stops, which will be wired to eventually provide real-time information, such as when the next bus will arrive.

In recent years, Broward planners have put more emphasis on bike lanes, sidewalks and mass transit amid increasing concern about safety and a spike in deaths from accidents.

From 2008 to 2011, 40 bicyclists and 180 pedestrians were killed on [Broward County](#) roads; in [Palm Beach County](#), the toll was 24 bicyclists and 111 pedestrians.

Broward ranks second in the state in pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities; [Palm Beach County](#) ranks fifth. Miami-Dade County is first.

"It's still suicide to ride a bike down here," said Vince Witty, of Deerfield Beach. "It's a good step forward."

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