



February 26, 2016  
Ron Cunningham

## We Challenge Key West

Bike Florida is pleased to announce that its inaugural \$25,000 Share The Road Challenge Grant has been awarded to the City of Key West. By this grant, Bike Florida enters into a partnership with Key West in an ambitious multi-faceted campaign to improve bicycle safety and promote cycling as a mainstream form of transportation in America's southernmost city.

"Bike Florida is excited to be working with the City of Key West to produce a 'Share the Road Starter Kit,' which will include maps and educational materials to educate bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists on the importance of sharing the road," said Leigh Matusick, President of Bike Florida. "We are excited to partner with Key West in its continued efforts to provide residents and tourists alike a safe and healthy community to live, work, play and visit through the Share the Road Campaign."

Chris Hamilton, Key West's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, said: "The City is very grateful to Bike Florida for jump-starting our fledgling Bicycle and Pedestrian Program. The grant dollars will lay the foundation for a program that we hope will encourage more people to ride bicycles and walk instead of driving and to educate all users of our streets to do so safely."

The \$25,000 Share The Road Challenge Grant is funded by proceeds from the sale of Share The Road license tags. Bike Florida's Board of Directors authorized the grant last year as an incentive for communities to propose innovative approaches to bicycle safety and education. Bike Florida received nine applications for the

first Challenge Grant. Applicants included Orlando, Ft. Lauderdale, Clermont, Gainesville and Sanibel Island. Lake County, Miami's Friends of Ludlam Trail and the Gainesville based Freewheel Project also applied.

"We were very impressed with the depth and quality of the applications we received. The final decision was a tough call for our selection committee," said Bike Florida Executive Director Ron Cunningham. "We encourage applicants who were not successful this year to come back and apply for Bike Florida's next Challenge Grant in 2017."

Key West's application was ultimately selected because its goals and objectives most closely aligned with Bike Florida's own commitment to improving bicycle safety and education in Florida.

"All of the Challenge Grant applications we received were great, and we did try to rate them all as objectively as possible," said Tim Bustos, Bike Florida board member who served on the grant committee. "But in the final analysis, I'm pleased that the City of Key West was the winning applicant. For one thing, they really do need all the help they can get to manage some rather unique bike safety issues. Additionally, Key West has some of the highest bicycle ridership of any city in Florida, so I really feel like these funds will be well spent"

Bicycling is a popular and convenient form of transportation in Key West. But Key West also leads the state in bicycle and pedestrian accidents and fatalities. Determined to confront its bike-led safety problems, Key West recently hired its first Bicycle-Pedestrian Coordinator and will receive state funding this summer to complete a bicycle-pedestrian master plan.

Key West applied for Bike Florida's Share The Road Challenge Grant to help develop a "Share The Road Starter Kit."

"We want businesses and the community to realize that biking and walking is a great transportation option that enhances our community's quality of life and prosperity and that we all need to share our streets safely whether on foot, on bicycle or behind the wheel of a car," the City stated in its grant application. "The Starter Kit" would initiate change by creatively producing an educational campaign and promotional materials to develop public awareness for people who live, work and visit the City. The Kit would also design and implement some 'pop-up' demonstration projects through tactical urbanism that would showcase innovative thinking in enhancing bicycle and pedestrian safety."

The Share The Road Starter Kit will include a Key West Bike Map that will list safer routes and times for walking and biking between various points on the island, print, web and social media-based safety education and a promotional outreach campaign to encourage biking and walking. Key West will also purchase and distribute safety items, such as bike lights, and investigate innovative infrastructure improvements, like bike boxes, bollards and barriers to encourage safe cycling.

"We want Key West to succeed in its desire to become a more bicycle friendly community," said Cunningham. "Ultimately we hope that the lessons learned and the safety improvements achieved in Key West will be adaptable in other Florida communities. That's the objective of the Share The Road Challenge Grant."