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**FLORIDA TO ADDRESS BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY
Formation of New Council Sets Stage for Statewide Improvements**

TALLAHASSEE, FLA. – The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has announced its plan to establish a statewide initiative on bicycle and pedestrian mobility. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Partnership Council, to convene in early June of this year, will make policy recommendations to FDOT and transportation partners throughout Florida on the state's walking, bicycling and trail facilities. Their mission is to assemble the many different partners needed to make statewide improvements in safety and facilities integration.

“I am tremendously excited and thankful to FDOT for supporting this collaboration and recognizing the important role that walking and bicycling can play in increasing transportation options and helping make our communities healthier places to live,” says Ken Bryan, director of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Florida Field Office, a leading advocate for the state's bicycle and pedestrian policy reform. “This council is uniquely positioned to provide statewide leadership.”

The formation of the Partnership Council is the result of many state leaders aiming to make Florida a national model for bicycle and pedestrian safety. Among the biggest supporters have been State Representative Julio Robaina, State Representative Gary Aubuchon, FDOT Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos and FDOT Assistant Secretary for Intermodal Systems Development Debbie Hunt.

“Our focus is building a partnership to make Florida a more friendly state for pedestrians and cyclists. Everyone on this council has a role in that effort,” says FDOT Secretary Stephanie Kopelousos. “This really will be a collaborative effort to make the Sunshine State a better place to get out and walk or ride your bike.”

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Partnership Council will include representatives from multiple state agencies, local governments and external stakeholders, including walkers, bicyclists and trail users. They will make recommendations on design, planning, safety and other programs involving bicycle and pedestrian issues.

The announcement of the new council came during the 2nd Annual Florida Bike Summit, hosted by the Florida Bicycle Association (FBA) in Tallahassee, Fla. FBA Director Laura Hallam says FDOT's initiative “really sets the stage for this year's summit and will be welcome news to Florida bicyclists.”

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nonprofit organization with more than 150,000 members and supporters, is the nation's largest trails organization dedicated to connecting people and

communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines and connecting corridors. Founded in 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's national office is located in Washington, D.C., with regional offices in California, Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. The Florida Office is a proud recipient of financial support from The Blue Foundation for a Healthy Florida. For more information visit www.railstotrails.org.