

SECTION 10 PROTECTION TECHNIQUES

A. Existing Regulatory Techniques

Resources within the Corridor are protected by some extent though the following laws, plans and programs:

- St. Johns County Comprehensive Plan
- St. Johns County Land Development Code
- Northwest Sector Overlay
- Management Plan for County Parks
- Local, State and Federal Agency Programs

The St. Johns County Comprehensive Plan provides for new development to be, among other things, compatible with surrounding land uses. For example, Policy A.1.3.8(a) through (e) places limitations on new commercial development within 600 feet of the centerline of the Scenic Highway (see pages 7-8 through 7-31 for more details).

A combination of other regulatory and non-regulatory techniques is proposed for implementation in order to protect the scenic and historic corridor:

B. Potential Regulatory Techniques

Creation of an Overlay Zone or Zones as proposed by the Corridor Group for the corridor and designated areas, would augment Policy A.1.3.8 and other County policies, and ensure that the visions of the Scenic Highway Program are achieved and maintained. Generally, an overlay zone institutes a special zoning district that implements supplementary development standards for a defined area. These added standards, tailored to the unique planning aspects of the area, should implement community vision for the future of that area. As an amendment to the Land Development Code, an overlay zone must be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. The process for adopting the proposed Overlay Zone might proceed as follows:

1. Define area of Overlay Zone(s).
2. Write the preliminary text of the Overlay Zone(s).
3. Introduce preliminary Overlay Zone concept to appropriate governing bodies.
4. Obtain funding from St. Johns County to have consultant work with Corridor Group.
5. Organize Corridor Group committees to work with consultant to review:
 - a) Comprehensive Plan
 - b) Northwest Overlay Sector Plan
 - c) DRI's
 - d) Local Mitigation Strategy
 - e) County Commissioners input regarding their visions for the William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway development
 - f) Discuss procedural implications from Planning staff

6. Present this concept to developers, homeowners associations, civic associations and others for acceptance and additional input.
7. Define and write the procedure for processing a development permit for the overlay zone(s).
8. Present detailed Overlay Zone document to appropriate governing bodies.
9. Public hearings and approval by appropriate governing bodies.

Other potential regulatory techniques include the following:

1. Develop area plan to address area needs.
2. Create an Overlay Zone Review Board.
 - a) Review applications for development within the overlay zone.
 - b) Monitor implementation of approved development.
3. Require county code enforcement, building department, and other appropriate departments to monitor and to respond to non-conformity by enforcing the overlay requirements.
4. Develop architectural design guidelines for commercial areas.
5. Implement alternative development standards to coordinate with the surrounding landscape and the preservation of scenic vistas.
 - a) Regulate and enforce building heights, fence heights, setbacks, density and road access.
 - b) Employ "adaptive re-use" of abandoned buildings.
6. Consider limitations and enforcement of grandfathering exemptions.
7. Implement parking standards that are sensitive to the vegetation pattern.
8. Develop codes and a permit process that incorporates tree protection and enhancement, plus the maintenance of site topography. The protection ordinance should specify:
 - a) The provision of a tree survey to specify size, exact location, botanical and common name for trees with caliper dimensions.
 - b) Tree removal by permit only.
9. Encourage any new development proposals to provide all underground utilities.
10. Specify mitigation of future development needs for impacts to threatened or endangered species.
11. Limit amount of roadside clearing of scrub for residential drives.
12. Provide incentives to encourage property owners to maintain native vegetation.
13. Develop sign standards.

14. No billboards are to be allowed in the future.
15. Provide incentives to encourage property owners to conform to the new standards, such as providing incentives to businesses to replace non-conforming signs.
16. Develop lighting standards along the corridor.
17. Consider the following for new development and phasing in for the existing developed areas within the watershed:
 - a) Install reuse water lines for residential irrigation while laying sewer pipes.
 - b) Provide treatment at all river stormwater discharge points along the St. Johns River and its tributaries.
18. Develop codes to control adult bookstores and lounges.
19. Develop additional codes to limit cell phone tower encroachment on the view along the corridor.
20. Develop/specify all requirements prior to expecting County departments to monitor.

Once additional protections are incorporated into the County codes, diligent enforcement of those codes determines the future of the scenic corridor.

C. Potential Non-regulatory Techniques

Many good things have been accomplished in a community through non-regulatory means and volunteer efforts. The effectiveness of some techniques may be increased through incentive programs, contests, etc. The Corridor Group has identified some potential steps that may be taken to encourage action on the part of residents and property owners, as follows:

1. Promote controlled naturalization along all rights-of-way, by specifying occasional mowing and selective vegetation removal only to maintain sightlines and healthy growth.
 - a) Specify selective use of chemical and mechanical means to control invasive plants.
 - b) Promote drop-crotch pruning to control tree growth underneath utility lines.
 - c) Promote other pruning techniques to enhance corridor views.
 - d) Clean-up roadside trash.
2. Promote and encourage improvements to existing signs.
3. Promote interpretive signage for nature/heritage resources.
4. Provide color coordinated directional signs directing visitors to St. Johns River Park, Trout Creek Park and Petty Branch Ravine Park.

5. Develop distinctive street signs with the color scheme of the scenic highway logo at major intersection.
6. Create vegetation buffers to screen parking and unsightly areas.
7. Develop beautification programs to encourage local residents to maintain their property along the roadside.
8. Develop incentives for owners and developers in order to restore native topography and vegetation to road margins.
9. Install additional rest shelters with picnic tables along bike path.
10. Promote oak trees and wildflower plantings where appropriate.
11. Develop a bike park.

Sections 7, 12 and 13 provide additional discussion and analysis of protection techniques.