

The Ridge Scenic Highway Annual Report



October 1, 2009

Table of Contents

Corridor Information _____ 2
CME Contact Information _____ 2
Corridor Conditions _____ 2
Goals, Objectives and Strategies _____ 4
Community Participation Program _____ 5
Funding _____ 6
Measuring Success _____ 7
Local Government Comprehensive Plan (LGCP) Relationship _____ 9
Problem Areas _____ 9
Other Issues _____ 9
Appendix A _____ A-1
Appendix B _____ B-1
Appendix C _____ C-1
Appendix D _____ D-1
Appendix E _____ E-1
Appendix F _____ F-1

Corridor Information

Road: State Road 17 (Scenic Highway)

Limits: US 27 to US 17/92

Centerline Miles: 38.7

Scenic Highway Name: *The Ridge Scenic Highway*

Location: Polk County

Date of Designation: February 2005

CME Contact Information

Full Name: Mimi Reid-Hardman

Address: Lake Wales Depot Museum & Cultural Center
325 South Scenic Highway

City: Lake Wales

State: Florida

Zip: 33853

Phone: (863) 678-4209

Fax: (863) 678-4299

E-mail: mhardman@historiclakewales.org

Corridor Conditions

- 1. Discuss the condition of the intrinsic resources and any changes in the corridor since designation. If necessary, provide photographs or other graphical representation of the resources.**

Many of the orange groves along the corridor that were removed for development are being replaced. At this time, most of the area is experiencing a decline in growth. The other intrinsic resources listed in the Corridor Management Plan have not changed since the last annual report.

- 2. What, if any, intrinsic resources have been degraded or altered?**

Over the last year, the orange groves that were taken down (in support of growth) have now been replanted with a new crop of trees.

- 3. Identify and discuss enhancement projects that have been initiated or completed.**

Haines City

Just one block west of the Scenic Highway, Lake Eva Community Park has been completely reconstructed. The grand opening was on July 4th, 2009 with the celebration of "Thunder on the Ridge" a fourth of July celebration. The park includes the following:

1. New Banquet Hall;
2. Two new pools with a splash park;
3. Basketball, Racquetball, and Tennis Courts;
4. Expanded Playgrounds;
5. Open Stage Overlooking the Great Lawn;
6. New Fishing Pier next to the Extended Boat Ramp; and
7. New Addition to the Community Center

Lake Wales

The Rails to Trails project from Kiwanis Park to Buck Moore Road has been completed. See Appendix D, Figure 1 and 2 for photos. The portion from 4th Street to SR 17, Scenic Highway will be paved with a trail. A Transportation Enhancement Grant funded by the FDOT through ARRA funds will cover mitigation of the contaminated property and for construction of the trail. The former railroad bed of the old railroad ties has been cleaned by the City of Lake Wales. Construction is slated to begin in January 2010. A Management Plan has been developed for this property in accordance with the Department of Environmental Protection requirements. The City is subleasing the property till 2056 from the State of Florida, Department of Environmental Protection, office of Greenways and Trails. The Management Plan can be found online at: http://www.cityoflakewales.com/parks/trail_mgmt.pdf.

Babson Park

August 2009 began the construction phase of the Babson Park Safe Routes to Schools sidewalk project. It is a beautiful meandering walkway that links up the neighborhoods on the one and a half mile route along Ridge Scenic Highway to the Dale Fair Babson Park Elementary School. Both school children and residents are enjoying this sidewalk and beautiful addition to the community.

Polk County Transit Authority is providing benches at bus stops along the Scenic Highway for those who use bus transportation. While maintaining a safe environment for bus travelers the benches will enhance the unique rural character of the area for those traveling through Babson Park.

4. Describe plans for future development in the corridor and how this issue will be addressed.

This is the CME's number one Action Plan priority since designation in February 2005, to work with local governments in developing comprehensive plan policies and corresponding land development regulations that truly protect and enhance the corridor, as required in FDOT's Scenic Highway Manual. Currently, much of the land along the corridor is undeveloped; however, very little of this land is publicly-owned adjacent to the scenic highway, so there is no guarantee that the scenic views will remain.

The East Polk Selected Area Study has been initiated by the Long Range Planning Division of Polk County with the City of Dundee. This land use study is for the area east of Dundee to Lake Pierce. The process includes three stages: (1) Existing Conditions Profile (completed), 2) Vision Plan (on going), and 3) Land Use Plan/Policy development and implementation. To obtain additional information on this study please visit http://www.polk-county.net/subpage.aspx?menu_id=286&nav=bus&id=1276#project2 (See Appendix A for the location map)

The Southeast Polk Selected Area Study has been initiated by the Long Range Planning Division of Polk County. The study area includes Babson Park south to Frostproof east of Crooked Lake. The process includes three stages: (1) Existing Conditions Profile (completed), 2) Vision Plan (on going), and 3) Land Use Plan/Policy development and implementation. To obtain additional information on this study please visit http://www.polk-county.net/subpage.aspx?menu_id=286&nav=bus&id=1276#Southeast_SAS (See Appendix A for the location map)

The East Polk County Network Needs Study has been completed by the Polk Transportation Planning Organization. The study area is from Haines City south to just south of Frostproof and from US 27 to the east to Lake Pierce. The plan will include transportation alternatives to US 27 and SR 17, The Ridge Scenic Highway as well as transit opportunities along the study area. To obtain additional information on this study please visit <http://polktpo.com/downloads/category?id=88&page=1> (See Appendix B for the location map)

Polk County has drafted new development regulations and land conservation incentives for the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay corridor for the Land Development Code. (See Appendix C for a copy of these regulations).

The Florida Department of Transportation has completed the Ridge Scenic Highway Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan for the whole 38.7 mile corridor. The Plan is inventory of the existing and potential sidewalks and multiuse trails along the Scenic Highway. A map series has been created to help local governments build these unified corridors or use this Plan in future grant opportunities or road resurfacing projects.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

5. Mention how effective the goals, objectives and strategies have been in accomplishing the Corridor Vision.

The goals, objectives and strategies contained in the CME's Designation Application have been used by the CME as a guide in the CME's efforts to implement the Action Plan. Many of the Action Plan items have been completed or initiated by the CME.

6. Which goals and objectives have been met thus far and how were they accomplished?

Since designation, the CME has completed and/or started to implement the following goals through their annual action plan.

This year's action plan includes the following (check marks = completed):

CME Organization

- ✓ Develop a list of Priorities to be adopted at the Annual Meeting. *These Priorities should be consistent with the CME's Adopted Action Plan and Annual Reports.*
- ✓ Develop Active Committees to help implement Action Plan Priorities
- ✓ Prepare and submit an Annual Report to the FDOT
- ✓ Maintain Active membership
- ✓ Tax Exempt Status
- ✓ Seek grants for events/organizations/other items
- ✓ Corridor Management Plan Update
- Prepare for 2010 State Conference

Education/Awareness/Community Participation

- ✓ Develop a Corridor Brochure-Seek Sponsorship
- Speakers Bureau - Local Gov. and Community Group Presentations
- ✓ Media Coverage/Press Releases
- Website Development/Enhancement
- ✓ Enhance Member and Public Participation
- ✓ Start to Plan for a Scenic Highway Event – Citrus, History, Environmental Theme
- ✓ Public Events: trail, bike, triathlon, yard sale
- Create Planners Forum
- Work with travel agencies to promote The Ridge Scenic Highway

Scenic Highway Enhancement/Protection

- ✓ Support County Focus Group Efforts for County Comp. Plan/LDC Regulations
- ✓ Encourage/Support City Adoption of similar Regulations
- ✓ Encourage and support Grants that are consistent with the CME's Action Plan
- Seek and support protection/Enhancement of key resources of the Scenic Highway (Prominent View Points, Windy Hill, Lake Wales Trail & Trailhead Interpretive Center, Chalet Suzanne, Historic Downtowns)
- ✓ Create master plan for sidewalks and trails along the corridor

- ✓ Participate in Keep Polk County Beautiful
- Participate in Adopt-A-Highway

7. Which goals (unlikely in the first year), objectives and strategies have been or need to be modified in order to attain the Corridor Vision?

At this point no modifications are being suggested. This issue will be best addressed as part of the Corridor Management Plan update in 2010.

8. What new ordinances, policies and/or regulations have been issued as a result of the scenic highway?

See Question 4.

9. Are there proposed ordinances/regulations that may aid goals?

See Question 4.

Community Participation Program

10. Discuss the effectiveness of the Community Participation Program to date.

The CME has been very active in engaging local governments and increasing public awareness. The CME schedules board meetings at a different location every other month and provides opportunity for the public to comment on the CME's plans and programs. The group is well covered by the local newspapers which have published numerous articles about the efforts of the CME.

Haines City and Dundee has their annual 4th of July celebration off the Scenic Highway. Haines City celebrates at the new Lake Eva Park, while Dundee celebrates on Lake Marie. Both celebrations bring the locals and out-of-towners to the activities and fireworks display. Each of the fireworks can be seen very easily from the Scenic Highway and depending on your location along the Highway you can see both fireworks display.

This year was the second "Scenic 17 Sprint Triathlon" held at Webber International University. Alta Vista Sports coordinated the event. This event has brought people from all over the state to recreate on the Scenic Highway and has brought notoriety to the efforts to preserve and enhance the recreation and aesthetic amenities of the highway. Members of the CME were there cheering on the athletes and set up a table to get comments on the Scenic Highway Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan and to promote the scenic highway's historical and cultural locations, birding, fishing, and hiking at the many preserves and parks along the corridor. The Scenic Highway logo was also featured on the t-shirts that were worn by the volunteers, the awards that were passed out, as well as promotional items. Many of the athletes said this was one of the most beautiful and most difficult courses they have competed in. The event had 86 competitors (compared to 39 last year), 200 spectators, and had sponsors from Polk County Sports Marketing, Florida's Natural, FitNiche, Gear For Multisports, Mon-a-vie, Pizzano's Pizza (Lake Wales), and Bernie Little Distributors.

To get more information on the event please visit

<http://www.webberathletics.com/Sports/mcross/2008/scenic17.asp> See Appendix D, Figure 3, 4, 5, and 6 for photos.

The CME spearheaded the first "The Ridge Scenic Highway (SR 17) Used Treasures and Yard Sale" on November 8, 2008. (See Appendix E for the flyer) The goal is to provide local awareness of the Ridge Scenic Highway as a resource for promoting Economic Tourism in the small unique towns and larger city centers. We had three locations set up for the event: Lake Wales, Trail Welcome Center; Lake of the Hills, Community Club; Babson Park, The Former American Bank Parking Lot. The CME asked for a monetary contribution from the proceeds of each yard sale. The event was widely attended and visitors had a lot of compliments on how well it was organized and the scenic views along the highway.

There have been several public meetings along the corridor. The public meetings have been associated with the Selected Area Studies and the Scenic Highway Focus Group as mentioned in # 4 above.

11. Provide a synopsis of major issues discussed at public meetings held in the past year and elaborate on any critical issues that have arisen during these forums and how they were dealt with or will be addressed.

Since the Ridge Scenic Highway was designated, development related issues along the corridor have been the major topics brought up by CME members, as well as public participants.

Some of the other items discussed at the CME's meetings have included unique signage for the corridor, a Ridge Scenic Highway website, public events, roadside pull-offs/parks and additional planning/engineering studies that focus on some of the specific items contained in the Action Plan.

Funding

12. Describe corridor funding needs, acquisitions and expenditures.

The CME has been able to carry out the administration activities (meeting locations, public notices, meeting materials, copies, postage, etc.) without a budget as these items have been provided free of charge. The group has been able to utilize volunteerism and other in-kind services from its members to its advantage.

In implementing the Action Plan, the CME will continue to research grant opportunities. Grants that require a local match may not be feasible in the short term due to the current fiscal situation in many of the municipalities/jurisdictions that comprise the CME. The CME would appreciate advisement and assistance from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) in determining appropriate sources for funding enhancements referenced in the Action Plan.

The CME has received assistance from the FDOT to prepare the update to its Corridor Management Plan (due 2010). Additionally, the CME has discussed various small scale studies/plans that evaluate the feasibility of Action Plan items.

13. Has funding been a problem?

Yes. It seems that most of the grants that are available require local matching funds. Based on the actions taken by the Florida Legislature and Governor earlier this year, the climate is poor for matching local government funds, because they had to cut funding to meet their budget needs. As mentioned earlier, the CME would like to study further some of the items contained in the action plan, but the lack of local funding has hindered their ability to do so.

14. If so, how will the CME attempt to resolve this issue?

Additional guidance is needed from the FDOT. Particularly for funding and grants that do not require a local match. Without a dedicated funding source, the CME and many of the Action Plan items (particularly construction items) are subject to grant availability and local governments willing to support (contribute funding). The CME will continue to be an advocate for the corridor and promote the projects that support the vision, goals and objectives of the Scenic Highway.

15. Are funding sources being pursued?

Yes. Haines City submitted an application to the Polk Transportation Planning Organization for a trail grant. While ranked high, funding was not selected for this project.

Babson Park Beautification Group submitted a grant to the Polk County Builders Association to establish a demonstration garden/landscape projects throughout East Polk County. They indicated in

their application that this garden was along the SR 17, Ridge Scenic Highway and could be used by the Babson Park Elementary School. The Group was awarded the grant.

16. If so, when does the CME anticipate receiving them?

N/A

17. How will the funding be used?

N/A

Measuring Success

18. Traffic Counts Along the Corridor

FDOT Site Location	2007 AADT	2008 AADT	Percent Change
0064 SW of Livingston Lake Rd	2,700	2,300	-17%
5038 S of CR 630 (Frostproof)	7,100	5,700	-25%
5039 N of CR 630 (Frostproof)	3,700	2,900	-28%
0049 N of McCloud Road (Frostproof)	3,400	2,800	-21%
0122 NW of Libby Rd (Babson Park)	6,800	5,600	-21%
0018 S of Bellview Drive (Lake Wales)	4,700	4,100	-15%
5122 SE of Polk Ave. (Lake Wales)	4,700	4,300	-9%
5123 NW of Polk Ave. (Lake Wales)	7,400	7,100	-4%
5124 N of Central Ave (Lake Wales)	9,800	9,300	-5%
0047 S of Mtn. Lake Cut-Off	13,200	11,300	-17%
5212 S of Chalet Suzanne Rd	8,100	7,800	-4%
0048 S of Waverly Road	6,700	6,000	-12%
0071 N of Waverly Road	6,800	6,000	-13%
0092 NW of Lk Mabel Lp Rd (Dundee)	6,500	5,400	-20%
5030 E of Center Street (Dundee)	8,500	6,200	-37%
5031 N of Main Street (Dundee)	8,400	7,900	-6%
0046 S of SR 544 (Haines City)	11,000	6,400	-72%
5049 N of SR 544 (Haines City)	11,700	9,200	-27%
0039 S of US 17/92 (Haines City)	12,000	10,200	-18%

This information was obtained from the Florida Department of Transportation.

19. Corridor Resources

Historical Resources

This will be analyzed with the 2010 Corridor Management Plan Update.

Cultural Resources

This will be analyzed with the 2010 Corridor Management Plan Update.

Recreational Resources

This will be analyzed with the 2010 Corridor Management Plan Update.

Lake Access:

This will be analyzed with the 2010 Corridor Management Plan Update.

Natural Resources

This will be analyzed with the 2010 Corridor Management Plan Update.

Scenic Resources/Vistas

This will be analyzed with the 2010 Corridor Management Plan Update.

- 20. Marketing and Promotional Efforts – Describe any advertising, brochures, posters, banners, roadway signs, etc. that have occurred or been produced during the past year. Be sure to include any numbers associated with these efforts, such as number of brochures produced, banners sold or distributed, etc. Any partnerships with local businesses should be noted.**

The Ridge Scenic Highway CME attended the second “Scenic 17 Sprint Triathlon” held at Webber International University, see number 10 above. At this event, the CME passed out 50 corridor brochures.

The corridor brochure that was developed last year has been distributed at many events, Chambers of Commerce along the corridor, and lobbies of offices around the County.

- 21. Lodging Facilities**

No new lodging facilities have been noted along the corridor.

- 22. Food Facilities**

No new food facilities have been noted along the corridor.

- 23. Chambers of Commerce**

No new Chambers of Commerce has been established since the last update.

- 24. Private Development – Has there been significant private investment along your corridor such as housing developments or new business in the past year? Please explain in greater detail?**

With the slow down of the economy and building boom in Polk County, this area has not seen a large amount of building, especially residential units.

In the Haines City area, Aldi Distribution Center has opened. It was developed with the new landscape provisions for the “CR 544 Scenic Highway Selected Area Plan.” See Appendix D, Figure 7 for photos.

In the Frostproof area, Ferguson’s, the United State’s largest distributor of plumbing supplies, southeast regional distribution center has opened along the Scenic Highway. See Appendix D, Figure 8 for photos.

- 25. Demographic Changes – Has your corridor experienced a change in demographics (ex population, age of population, household incomes) in the past year? Please explain in greater detail.**

There has not been a discernable difference in the areas demographics over the past year.

- 26. Property Value Changes – What has the trend in property values been along your scenic corridor in comparison to the rest of the State of Florida? Have property values increased, kept pace with, or decreased in comparison with the rest of the State of Florida? Please explain in as great of detail as possible.**

Property taxes have not changed much since last year. There are properties along the corridor that are under foreclosure or up for sale. A lot of property owners bought homes/property in the height of the building boom and coincidentally a pricing boom as well. The area, state, and nation are in a recession at this time. The 2010 Corridor Management Plan update will discuss this further.

27. Changes in Tourist Traffic – Has your corridor experienced an increase, decrease, or equal amount of tourist traffic in the past year? Please explain in greater detail.

While this corridor continues to be a popular “scenic” alternative to US 27, especially for motorcyclists and bicycle groups, traffic volumes indicate a decrease in the number of visitors in vehicles. It is hard to say that this volume decrease is a decrease in tourists, without having data to back it up.

28. Other Comments on Measuring Success.

Local Government Comprehensive Plan (LGCP) Relationship

29. Discuss how effective the integration of the CMP into the local government comprehensive plans has been.

At this point, not all of the local governments have incorporated the CMP into the comprehensive plans. As mentioned in previous annual reports, the County has standard policies in their comprehensive plan regarding the Scenic Highway. The policies tie back into the CMP. Most jurisdictions will be adopting policies similar to the County’s in the coming years. Currently the Department of Community Affairs has objected to some recent policy changes from the County and the County is working to correct the objections.

30. Discuss any actions that are underway or are needed to maintain consistency with the LGCP and other plans.

For these policies and regulations to be successful, the local governments need to work closely with property owners and other stakeholders. The Polk County Long Range Planning Division has taken the lead in developing policies and regulations in support of the Ridge Scenic Highway and has formed a focus group comprised of landowners, agriculture and business representatives, citizens, and other stakeholders from along the corridor, as well as CME members. This group has been meeting since May of 2006. The proposed policies were submitted to the Department of Community Affairs and were not accepted. Currently the County staff is working with the Department of Community Affairs to address their concerns. Considering the length of the corridor (38.7 miles) and number of jurisdictions along the corridor (8), these efforts have been time consuming and challenging.

Problem Areas

31. Describe any problems that have arisen regarding the corridor.

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) has found the proposed scenic highway policies of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan them not in compliance with Florida’s Growth Management Act. Their general position is that the amendment for the Ridge Scenic Highway Policies (CPA 09A-08) will open up too much land for development. Currently Polk County is working with DCA to resolve their concerns.

32. Describe present and future actions to resolve these issues.

The CME will continue to work with the Scenic Highway Focus Group and the local jurisdictions to help support their changes to their Comprehensive Plans and Land Development Codes.

Other Issues

33. Describe how well the CME has operated.

The CME has held regular meetings bimonthly since last year. In general, participation has been consistent. The CME is made up of a cross section of various interests. The CME Board is comprised of 17 members. In addition to the 11 positions which represent local governments, five (5) at-large positions were created to diversify the CME membership that include Agriculture, Tourism,

Cultural, Historical, Commercial/Developer and Environmental interests. This year the CME has seen a lack of participation from participants on the Board. This is largely due to the reduction of staff with the local governments and companies along the corridor. The CME continues to reach out to those members that cannot attend the meetings by providing internet access to the meeting materials. The Lake Wales News attended one of our meetings and a copy of the article can be found in Appendix F.

The CME has created a working committee that meets every other month. This working committee meets to resolve various issues and carry out the Action Plan items. This committee has been very successful in completing the action items. The committee provides reports to the CME at their regular meetings.

The CME holds regular meetings every other month which are noticed a week prior to the meeting. The meetings have minutes prepared and are then approved by the Board. There is an opportunity for the public to participate and offer comments. In an effort to foster participation from all of its members/jurisdictions, the CME rotates the meeting locations.

34. Describe how partnering and coordination efforts have worked.

There is excellent coordination on the CME. The CME and its members work very closely with the local governments and the FDOT in implementing the Action Plan items. The CME has been able to carry out all of these activities without a budget. The group has been able to utilize volunteerism and other in-kind services from its members to its advantage.

The CME has partnered with the following groups:

- Alta Vista Sports, Webber International University - Scenic 17 Sprint Triathlon
- Babson Park Beautification Group – Babson Park Demonstration Garden
- Florida Department of Transportation - creation of the SR 17 Bike/Pedestrian Master Plan
- Polk County Text Change Focus Group – creation of development standards along the corridor
- Haines City – Polk Transportation Planning Organization's Transportation Enhancement grant application
- Local Chamber of Commerce's and main street directors – Annual Yard Sale event

35. Provide discussion of any other issues the CME feels are relevant to the corridor's success.

Continued involvement by all of the jurisdictions and various stakeholders is very important to maintaining success. Funding for improvements/enhancements along the corridor is very important as well.

The CME has submitted the application to trade marking their logo.

The Babson Park Beautification group, a community volunteer group, was one of the recipients of a grant received by the Polk County Builders Association to establish a demonstration garden/landscape projects throughout East Polk County. The garden demonstrates "Florida Friendly" plantings for both residential and commercial use. It included signage to educate the public on nine principles used in creating a heat and drought tolerant landscape. It also has pull off parking with a natural scrub oak hammock, pine trails and benches for the traveling public to enjoy along SR 17, Ridge Scenic Highway. This garden has been included in the outdoor classroom program at the nearby Babson Park Elementary School.

Appendix A

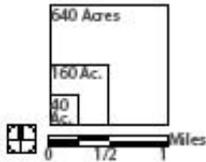
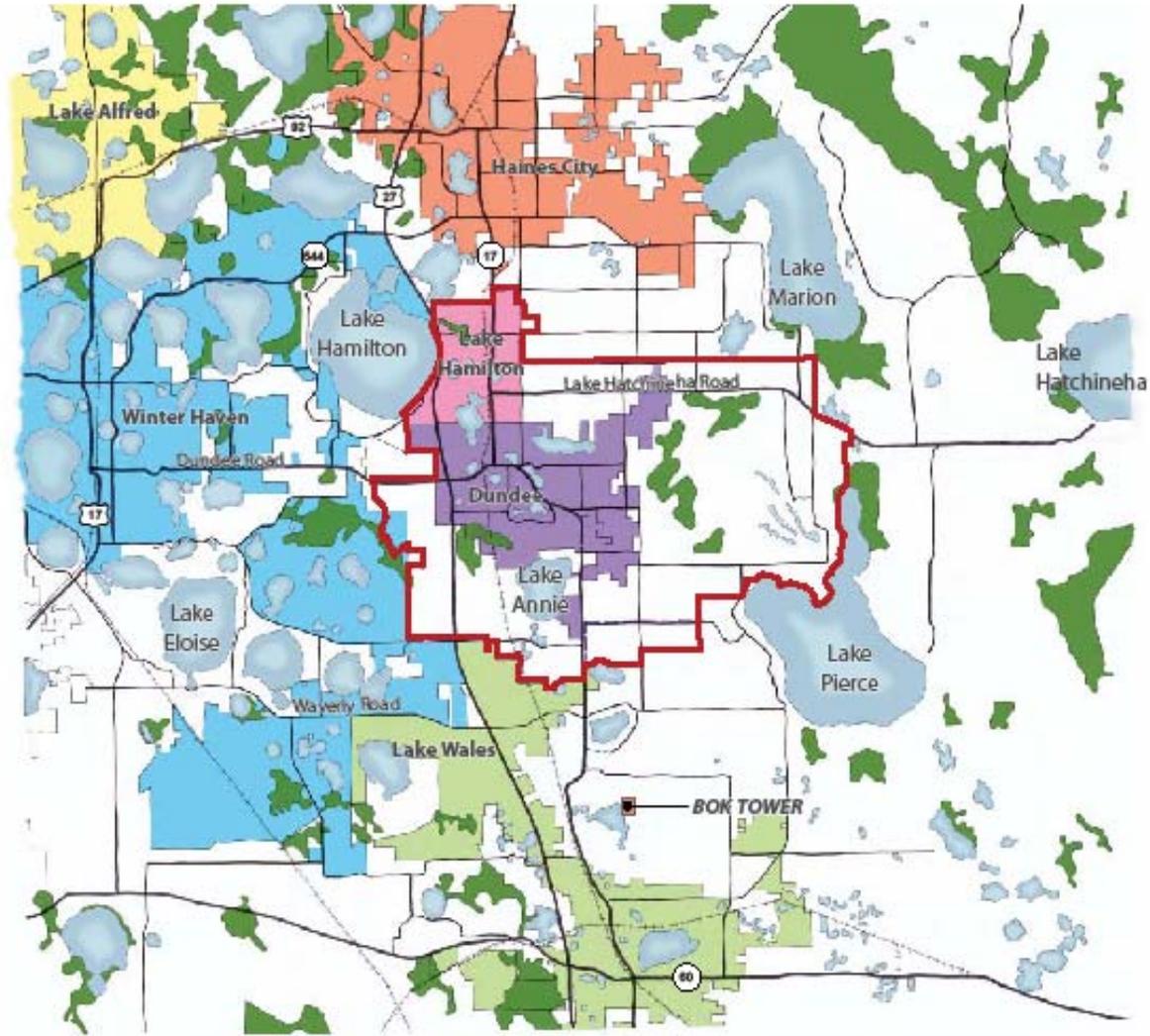
Polk County Selected Area Study Maps

East Polk County Selected Area Study
Existing Conditions Profile

**Polk County/
US 27 Context**

Legend

-  Lakes
-  Simplified Wetlands
-  Major Roads
-  Railroad
-  East Polk Selected Area Study Boundary



GWR 20175

1.6

8/21/07

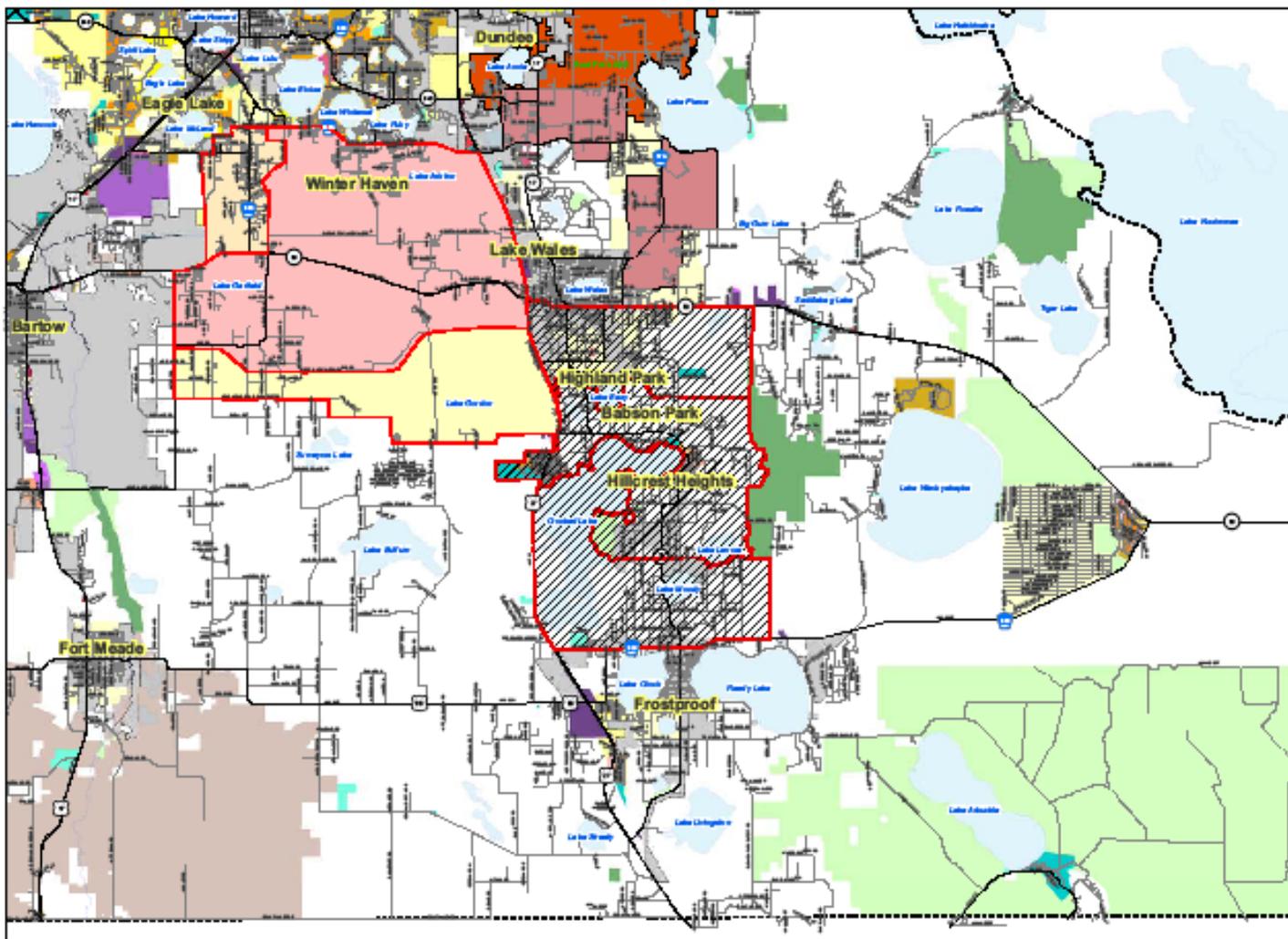
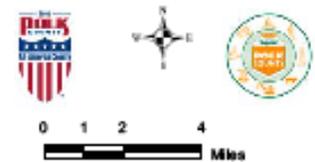
Southeast Polk Selected Area Study

Legend

- Proposed SE Polk SAS
- Proposed Masterpiece SAS
- Proposed East Polk SAS
- Gateway (SR 60) SAS**
 - 1. Core Study Area
 - 2. Modify Existing Plan
 - 3. Conceptual Plan

CITY	LR
LAKES	INST-1
PI	INST-2
CC	ROS
NAC	PRESV
CAC	CORE
TC	RCC
RAC	RCC-R
HIC	RS
TCC	RL-1
LCC	RL-2
CE	RL-3
OC	RL-4
EC	RM
BPC-1	RH
BPC-2	A/RR
IND	DRI
PM	

Prepared by:
Polk County
Board of County Commissioners
Long Range Planning Division
September 24, 2008



This GIS map is a public release of general information. Polk County/BOC makes no warranty, representation or guarantee as to the content, accuracy, sequence, accuracy, timeliness or completeness of any of the data shown. Information is provided herein. The watersheds are not only the data provided herein for any reason. Polk County is fully liable for any representation and warranties, including, without limitation, the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. Polk County shall assume no liability for: 1) Any errors, omissions, or inaccuracies in the information provided regardless of the cause; or 2) Any decision made or action taken or not taken by any person in reliance upon any information or data provided herein.

Appendix B

East Polk Network Needs Study

Appendix C

Draft Polk County Land Development Code Scenic Highway Text

ORDINANCE NO. 09-_____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE AMENDMENT LDC 09T-16, AMENDING ORDINANCE NO. 00-09, AS AMENDED, THE POLK COUNTY LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, ADDING A NEW SECTION 679 TO CHAPTER 6 TO ADD DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS AND LAND CONSERVATION INCENTIVES FOR THE STATE ROAD 17 RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY RESOURCE PROTECTION OVERLAY; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article VIII, Section I(g) of the Constitution of the State of Florida and the Local Government Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulation Act, Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes (FS), as amended, (the Act) Polk County is authorized and required to adopt a Land Development Regulations consistent with the Polk County Comprehensive Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners adopted said Land Development Regulations on March 1, 2000, titled the Polk County Land Development Code; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 9, Section 903 of the Land Development Code requires Land Development Code Amendments to be a Level 4 Review; and

WHEREAS, Chapter 9, Section 907 sets forth the purpose and review process for Level 4 Reviews; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 125.67 of the Florida Statutes, every ordinance shall embrace but one subject and matter properly connected therewith; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 163.3164 of the Florida Statutes, the Polk County Planning Commission conducted a public hearing, with due public notice having been provided, on the proposed Land Development Code Amendment on August 11, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the proposed text amendment to the Polk County Land Development Code shall add a new Section 679 to Chapter 6 to add development regulations and land conservation incentives for the State Road 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay; and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners, reviewed and considered all comments received during said public hearing, and provided for necessary revisions; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of County Commissioners of Polk County, Florida that:

SECTION 1: Chapter 6 of the Polk County Land Development Code, Polk County Ordinance No. 00-09, as amended, is hereby amended to add a new Section 679:

NOTE: The proposed amendment is adding an entirely new Section 679. For clarity, nothing within the new Section 679 has been underlined. The renumbering of Sections has been illustrated by underlined text indicating proposed additions to the current language and ~~strikeout~~ indicating text to be removed.

Sections 671 - ~~679~~678 Reserved

Section 679 Ridge Scenic Highway

A. Purpose and Intent

1. The intent of this Section is to ensure the ongoing conservation, protection, and enhancement of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway, a community asset of scenic, environmental, historic and archeological significance, and to implement the policies of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan. The key elements of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection District Overlay are its Quality Development Regulations and its Incentives to encourage both the construction of the Ridge Scenic Highway multi-modal trail and scenic pull-offs and the protection of scenic vistas.
2. The SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay has been established to protect and enhance the scenic, environmental, historic and archeological characteristics of the highway and surrounding community while continuing to promote economic development opportunities (including new residential communities and non-residential development) on both public and private unincorporated property and within the municipalities that exist along its 39 mile path. While the goals of the Comprehensive Plan have been incorporated into the development guidelines, Polk County recognizes that the impact of development on the road system itself may, from time to time, necessitate improvements along SR 17, such as an increase in the number of travel lanes, intersection improvements, or turn lanes. However, as development occurs in the vicinity of SR 17, agencies shall seek first to build connections out to US 27 before widening SR 17, as the preference is to minimize traffic impacts on the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway. When infrastructure improvements are required as future development occurs, these shall be constructed in a manner which preserves the character along SR 17, and in a manner which does not preclude or degrade the standards in this section.

B. Applicability

1. The Quality Development Standards within Section 679.C shall apply to all new development, and redevelopment, of structures and uses on property abutting the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way and all land associated with a request to utilize the optional incentive program with the exception of bona fide agricultural uses, legally established agricultural-support activities, and residential lots of record (as defined in the Comprehensive Plan).
2. All eligible parcels adjacent to the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way are encouraged to utilize the optional incentives within Section 679.F to set aside land for scenic vistas, pull-offs, and multi-modal trailheads.
3. A development application utilizing the incentives within Section 679.F may, at the option of the applicant(s), include multiple parcels with either common or separate ownership in order to accomplish the Resource Protection goals of this SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Overlay. In order to be included within a development utilizing the incentives of Section 679, at a minimum, all applications utilizing the incentive program shall meet the following criteria:
 - a. All parcels shall have frontage on the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way; and,
 - b. Incentives may be transferred from one parcel fronting the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way to another site within this Resource Protection Area fronting SR 17 provided the two sites are contiguous.

C. *Quality Development Standards*

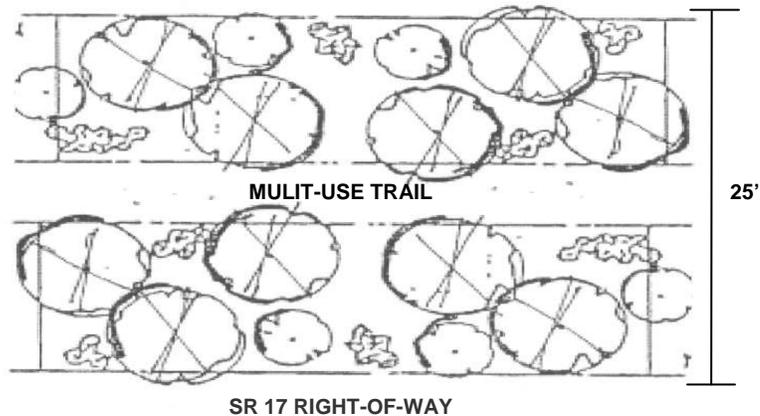
The Quality Development Standards for the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay, which are intended to protect and enhance the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway and surrounding area, are embodied in the following categories; Roadway and Development Landscaping, Landscape Maintenance, Screening, Parking, Building Location and Orientation, Street and Development Lighting, Signage, Walls and Fences, Building Height, Stormwater Retention Facilities, Utilities and Prohibited Activities. All development shall submit a tree survey showing all trees and grading plan prior to land alteration/clearing.

1. Roadway Landscaping

- a. A 25-foot wide landscape/buffer shall be required for all development adjacent to both sides of the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way. This landscape/buffer area shall be provided on the development site, exclusive of dedicated or existing road rights-of-way.
- b. Minimum planting requirements for this landscape/buffer area shall consist of a Type C Buffer (4 canopy trees, 5 understory trees and 20 shrubs for every 100 linear feet of right-of-way frontage) (see Figure A).
- c. Up to a 50% credit towards the planting requirements shall be granted for the conservation of existing Florida Native trees in accordance with the provisions of Section 721.

- d. Only native plantings endemic to the Lake Wales Ridge (e.g. live oak, slash pine, long leaf pine, scrub hickory, turkey oak) shall be used in the landscape and buffer areas.
- e. To ensure species diversification, no single species shall comprise more than 50% of each required planting type (canopy tree, understory tree, and shrub).
- f. All landscaping shall be designed, installed and maintained in a non-linear and informal manner so that it mimics the environment native to the planting's natural setting.
- g. Landscaping shall also be encouraged along road rights-of-way within each development.
- h. Where it can be demonstrated that the required landscaped buffer would impact or reduce a designated Scenic Vista (as described in Section 679.D) viewed from the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway, plantings may be reduced to 25% of the landscape/buffer planting requirement in an alternative planting scheme approved by the Development Review Committee as part of the Level 2 Review process. The remaining 75% of those plantings that have been removed from that portion of the buffer shall be planted in other areas of the buffer or throughout the development site.
- i. An exception to Section 679.C.1.a is available for existing commercial lots of less than 150 feet in depth. In these cases, the applicant shall include as much of the required buffer depth and plant material as practicable.

Figure A – SR 17 Roadway Landscape Buffer with Trail



2. Development Landscaping

All new development shall plant canopy trees native to the Lake Wales Ridge in accordance with the following sub-section. Up to a 50% credit of the required landscaping shall be granted for conserving and maintaining existing Florida Native trees in accordance with the provisions of Section 721. All tree plantings shall be planted in such a manner that will allow the species to reach maturity.

- a. Single-family and duplex residential units shall provide two canopy trees per dwelling unit.
- b. All other residential developments shall provide one canopy tree per unit.

- c. All non-residential development shall provide trees meeting the canopy coverage requirements of Section 720. No more than 50% of the required canopy trees shall be located within required buffer areas and no more than 50% of all required plantings shall be of any one species.

3. Landscape Maintenance

The property owner shall be responsible for the perpetual care and maintenance of all landscape and buffer areas to ensure that plantings are healthy and remain in an orderly appearance, free of refuse and debris. Property owners shall replace any planting that will not recover to reach maturity, including all dead and severely diseased plantings, within 90 days. Vegetation which is required to be planted or preserved by this Section shall be replaced with equivalent vegetation if it is not living. Replacement vegetation may be substituted as long as it is appropriate for the water use zone within which it is proposed to be planted, is native to the Lake Wales Ridge, and meets the other provisions of Section 720 (i.e. canopy coverage requirements). Preserved trees for which credit was awarded, which subsequently die, shall be replaced by the requisite number of living trees according to the standards established by Section 721 and this Section.

4. Screening

The intent of this section is to diminish the visual impacts of uses that, by their nature, may detract from, or have a negative visual impact upon, the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay area and the overall community image.

- a. Loading areas and docks (including delivery truck parking), outdoor storage (retail and wholesale), self storage, parking areas, and trash collection and storage areas shall either be located 200 feet away from the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way or be buffered with a Type A Buffer (as illustrated in Section 720). This buffer is in addition to the landscaping required within the first 25 feet of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way.
- b. Landscape screening shall be provided for rear yards of both residential and non-residential uses adjacent to the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way, except in cases where it can be demonstrated that the plantings would reduce the view to one of the scenic vistas identified on the Resource Protection Overlay.
- c. A Type A Buffer shall be provided around the perimeter of utility lift stations, substations, and other above-ground utilities.

5. Parking

- a. In order to minimize their visibility from SR 17, all parking areas shall be located internal to the development, within rear and side yards only, and at least 100 feet from the SR 17 right-of-way. If the parking area is located within a rear or side yard that faces SR 17, it shall be buffered with an additional Type A Buffer. Exceptions may be granted by the Development Review Committee if the applicant can illustrate how the topography, water management issues or permit conditions force the location of the parking area to the front yard, an area visible from, or within 100 feet of SR 17.

- b. While parking areas facing the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway are discouraged, they may be permitted when it can be demonstrated that their placement would provide for additional open space within a designated viewshed or pull-off on the Resource Protection Overlay map.
- c. The parking requirements of Section 708 may be reduced through shared parking agreements and for all mixed-use and interconnected developments with a supporting parking study and by approval of the Development Review Committee as part of the Level 2 Review process without requiring a waiver. Non-residential parking may be reduced by up to 20% alone and 30% if shared with another complimentary use (i.e.- 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. office adjacent to 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. residential).

6. Street Lighting

- a. Roadway illumination of any kind, including street lighting, is prohibited along SR 17 within 25 feet of the SR 17 right-of-way except adjacent to entrance driveways for developments and public roadway intersections with SR 17.
- b. Lighting fixtures shall be limited to 12 feet in height within 25 feet of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way and 16 feet in height within 200 feet of the SR 17 right-of-way.
- c. All lighting shall be fully shielded with cut-off, non-glare fixtures directed only onto the subject site (see Figure B). Non-shielded fixtures without cut-offs are prohibited.

Figure B – Street Lighting



7. Non-residential Development Lighting

- a. Electrical reflectors, spotlights, floodlights and other sources of illumination may be used to illuminate buildings, landscaping, signs, parking and loading areas, on any property provided the illumination is cast downward and the fixtures focus the illumination only onto the building, landscaping, signs, parking and loading areas and prevent illumination upon adjacent property or any public right-of-way.
- b. Lighting shall be directed away from all residentially developed or designated areas.
- c. All lighting shall be fully shielded with cut-off, non-glare fixtures directed only onto the subject site (see Figure B).

8. Signage

a. On-and Off-Premise Signs

In order to emphasize the intrinsic qualities and scenic views of SR 17, signage is more restrictive within the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection area than the existing Land Development Code contained in Section 760. Development within the Overlay shall use signage that is lower in height and smaller in area to protect and enhance the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway area in accordance with the following:

- i. Roof signs and all types of electronic message boards are prohibited.
 - ii. Banners, portable signs, and flapping flags are prohibited. One US flag and one State of Florida flag are allowed for each parcel.
 - iii. Flashing, blinking, fluctuating or otherwise changing light source signage are prohibited. Electronic message boards and light emitting diode (LED) signs are prohibited.
 - iv. Sign lighting shall be downward projecting or backlit. Lighting attached to signage shall be projected directly at the sign and downward using light shields, hoods, and cut-off type fixtures.
- b. On-Premise – Maximum sign area (square footage) and maximum sign height shall each be reduced 25% from the standards permitted in Table 7.16 On-Premises Sign Standards within Section 760 of this Code. Signs with decorative sign boundaries and landscaping along the base for the entire width of the face shall only be subject to a 15% reduction. All other sign standards from Section 760 shall apply.
- c. Off-Premise signs (where permitted by state and local standards)
- i. Are prohibited within 1,000 feet of a Scenic Overlook Pull-Off or Vista as illustrated on the Resource Protection Overlay map;
 - ii. Shall not exceed 30 feet in height;
 - iii. Shall be limited to monopole construction, single sign face height and single sign face width (no stacked or double-wide signs); and,
 - iv. Shall be limited to a minimum of 128 square feet and a maximum of 288 square feet per sign face.

9. Walls (see Figure C)

All walls shall maintain the scenic views and natural character of the area.

a. Materials

Walls shall be constructed of stone, precast concrete, concrete block, or brick in units of uniform length and size. Concrete shall be painted neutral or earth tone colors that blend with the vegetation, roadway landscaping, or vista. Walls that are regularly interspersed with open fencing (such as wrought iron fencing or comparable material in between brick or concrete block posts) and allow views into and through the property are preferred (see Figure C).

b. Location

Walls with greater than 20% opacity shall be prohibited (see Figure C) within the first 50 feet from the SR 17 road right-of-way, or within vistas and pull-off areas. All walls are prohibited within the required 25 foot roadway landscape/buffer. The sole exception to these limitations is for those walls required solely for slope stabilization; these walls shall be allowed provided a Type A Buffer is installed between the required roadway landscape/buffer and the wall.

c. Height

All walls within 50 feet of the required SR 17 roadway landscape/buffer shall be limited to six feet in height measured from the average adjacent grade.

Figure C - Walls



10. Fences and berms (see Figure D)

All fences and berms shall maintain the scenic views and natural character of the area.

a. Materials

Fences shall be constructed of ornamental wrought iron, other ornamental metals manufactured for fences, or wood. PVC fencing, chain link fencing and privacy fencing (more than 20% opaque) is prohibited within 50 feet of the SR 17 right-of-

way unless it is not within a scenic vista and a Type A buffer (section) is installed between the required 25 foot SR 17 roadway landscape/buffer and the fence. When chain link fencing is utilized, only black vinyl coated chain link fencing shall be permitted. Opaque fences along SR 17 shall be prohibited. Fences that are regularly interspersed with openings and allow views into and through the property are permissible.

b. Finish and presentation

Fences must be constructed to present the finished or decorative side of the fence to the right of way if the appearance of the fence is not the same on both sides. Wrought iron and other ornamental metal fences shall be finished in black or white. Other fences shall be painted neutral or earth tone colors that blend with the vegetation, roadway landscaping, or vista and wood fences. Wood fences shall be left natural (unstained), stained in a natural wood color, or painted white or an earth-tone color and shall be constructed as split rail and open pasture type fencing (see Figure D).

c. Location

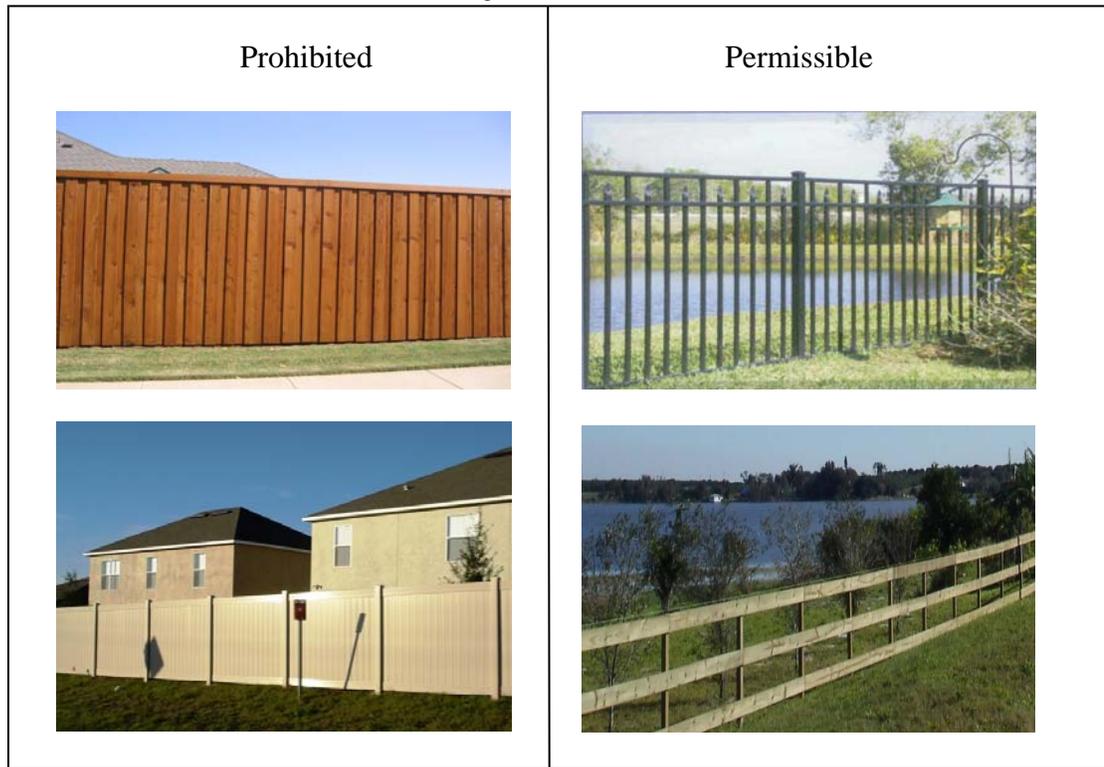
Fences with greater than 20% opacity (see Figure D) and all berms higher than three feet shall be prohibited within the first 50 feet from the SR 17 road right-of-way, within scenic views and pull-off areas. All fences and berms shall be prohibited within the required 25 foot roadway landscape/buffer.

d. Height

All fences within 50 feet of the required SR 17 roadway landscape/buffer shall be limited to six feet in height measured from the average adjacent grade. Other fences within the Overlay shall comply with the following standards:

- i. Single family residential fences shall be limited to a height of six feet from the average adjacent grade.
- ii. Multi-family and non-residential fences may be increased to eight feet provided the fencing is not within a scenic vista and a Type A Buffer is installed between the required 25 foot roadway landscape/buffer and the fence.

Figure D – Fences



11. Residential Building Height and Location

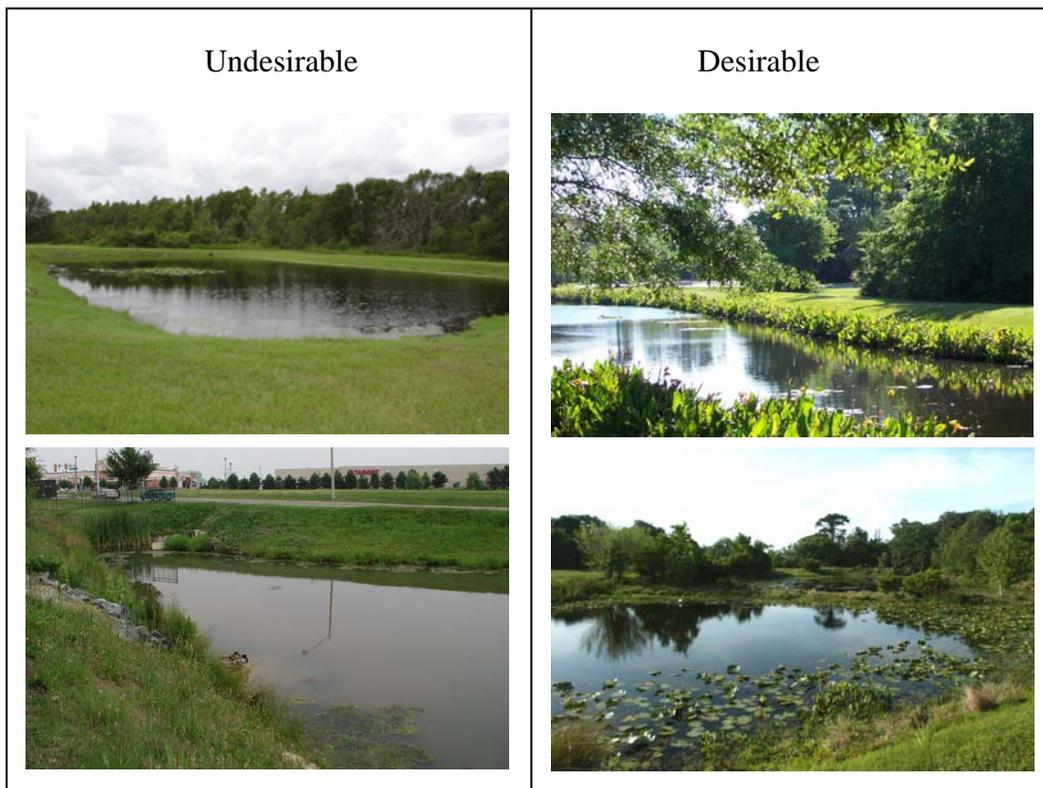
Buildings shall be located and designed to preserve views from the right-of-way both along SR 17 and through properties where identified. Buildings shall comply with the following height limitations in order to preserve existing viewsheds and to avoid a “tunnel” effect along the Ridge Scenic Highway:

- a. Building heights within 0 to 40 feet of the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way shall be limited to one story (17 feet).
- b. Building heights within 41 to 50 feet of the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way shall be limited to two stories (35 feet).
- c. Building heights more than 50 feet from the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way shall follow existing Land Development Code building height regulations.
- d. Where a vista has been identified on a property, buildings shall be encouraged to locate outside of the vista by clustering the buildings and utilizing administratively permitted (Level 2 Review) impervious surface ratio increases up to 25%. Variances of up to 50% of the standard side and rear building setback requirements shall be permitted administratively (as part of the Level 2 Review) if the applicant can demonstrate how the variance will contribute to the enhancement of a viewshed on or through the property.
- e. Infill lots and redevelopment within historic areas and urban cores (including Lake-of-the-Hills and Babson Park community downtown areas) shall be exempt from these requirements provided the proposed structures meet the average setback of existing adjacent structures.

12. Stormwater Retention Facilities

- a. All development shall require a grading plan. Site preparation including clearing, grubbing, grading and excavation shall not be permitted prior to Level 2 Review approval.
- b. All stormwater retention facilities and drainage areas within the SR 17 Resource Protection Overlay district shall be naturally shaped (curvilinear, not basic geometric shapes) and landscaped with species native to the Lake Wales Ridge along the edge of bank and within the pond area (see Figure E). The number and type of plantings along the edge of bank shall be consistent with Type A Buffer requirements; however, plantings shall be grouped and dispersed to present a natural distribution rather than installed in a linear distribution.

Figure E – Stormwater Retention



13. Utilities

Distribution and/or collection systems for power, gas, water, and wastewater utilities within new development shall be located underground unless explicitly required to be above ground by the utility provider.

14. Prohibited and Conditional Uses

As of the effective date of this Code, the following uses and activities are either prohibited or conditioned within the set distances from the Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay district boundary.

- a. The following uses shall be prohibited within 750 feet from the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way: salvage yards, adult uses, car washes, hazardous waste transfer/storage, vehicle sales, mobile home sales, vehicle repair, drive-in movie theatres, power plants, landfills, communication towers greater than 75 feet in height, and truck stops.
- b. The following conditional uses shall require a Level 3 Review when proposed within 500 feet of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way: outdoor storage, motor freight terminals, self-storage, and non-residential/retail greater than 20,000 square feet in building size. Applicants shall demonstrate how these conditional uses have been designed to be compatible and consistent with all other policies of the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway. The most intense activities shall be located on the site where they are farthest from the SR 17 right-of-way and where they minimize the reduction of views through the site.
- c. Commercial vehicle parking shall be prohibited within 250 feet of the SR 17 right-of-way and within identified viewsheds or pull-offs unless the vehicle is parked temporarily in association with an active agricultural use.

15. Non-Residential Development

- a. Building Height - Buildings shall be located and designed to preserve views from the right-of-way both along SR 17 and through properties where identified. Buildings shall comply with the following
 - i. Building heights within 0 to 40 feet of the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way shall be limited to one story (17 feet).
 - ii. Building heights within 41 to 50 feet of the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way shall be limited to two stories (35 feet).
 - iii. Building heights more than 50 feet from the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way shall follow existing Land Development Code building height regulations.
- b. Incentives for Scenic Conservation - Non-residential uses along the SR 17 right-of-way shall dedicate land and construct the multi-modal trail in accordance with Tiers 1 and 2 of Section 679D(1)(a. & b.). In exchange for this dedication and construction, non-residential development may waive the Impervious Surface Ratio (ISR) and vary the minimum setback requirements as established in Table 2.2 of this Code in the following manner:
 - i. Impervious Surface Ratio (ISR) – Non-residential development shall be permitted to a 25% increase in ISR by approval of the Development Review Committee as part of the Level 2 Review process without requiring a variance or waiver.
 - ii. Minimum Setback Requirements - Non-residential side and rear yard building setbacks (as established in Table 2.2) may be reduced by up to 50%, provided

they are not adjacent to, or within 100 feet of, the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way.

D. *Ridge Scenic Highway Incentive Program*

The following voluntary incentive program was established to provide the means for land owners and developers to receive development bonuses for contributing to the conservation of land (in perpetuity) and construction of public improvements that maintain and enhance the scenic, environmental, historic and archeological qualities along the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway. While this program is limited to the intensities or densities outlined in the Future Land Use Element of the Polk County Comprehensive Plan and the available infrastructure (concurrency), it provides an alternative way of achieving the maximum density/intensity within each land use district by utilizing a unique credit system that is based upon the community's desire to have land developed in a manner that respects these qualities of the Ridge Scenic Highway. This credit system may also be used to add additional density on top of a Level 3 Review, provided the final density for the proposed development does not exceed the density of the underlying land use district.

The following section outlines when and how each voluntary step of improvements is exchanged for a corresponding development bonus. These steps range from land donation to the construction of a multi-modal trail or pull-off park along the Ridge Scenic Highway. Because the scenic viewsheds, pull-off areas, historic sites, and areas suitable for beautification have been identified on the SR 17-Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay (of the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Series) and the trail alignment location has been identified by the Florida Department of Transportation, only land that corresponds to these location-specific scenic resource markers may take advantage of those particular bonuses. A Comprehensive Plan Amendment shall be required to consider adding additional resources to this map.

1. *Incentives*

There are four Tiers (levels) of incentives within the Ridge Scenic Highway Incentive Program. All participation is voluntary. Compliance with the criteria established under Tier 1 must be met before proceeding to Tiers 2-4. Participation in Tiers 2-4 is dependent upon the availability of the attribute being incentivized. For example, if the trail alignment is on the opposite side of the highway and there are no recognized scenic viewpoints or pull-off locations on the property, the land owner/developer cannot participate in Tiers 2-4 and may only utilize Tier 1 bonuses. Incentives are granted upon the completion of a Level 2 Review process after the applicant illustrates that all requirements for the proposed Tier have been met. Each bonus that is attained is applied to a previously approved bonus or Planned Development approval. Incentive bonuses expire with the expiration of the Level 2 plans.

a. Tier 1

In exchange for a gross density of one unit per acre through a Level 2 Review process, Tier 1 requires:

- i. full participation in the Scenic Highway Overlay Quality Design Criteria;

- ii. installation and maintenance of the required roadway buffer as defined in this section;
 - iii. utilization of centralized potable water for the development; and,
 - iv. a minimum of 30% open space within the project with 70% of that open space adjacent to the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way.
- b. Tier 2
- In exchange for the construction of a multi-modal trail along the entire Ridge Scenic Highway frontage and the donation of the trail infrastructure and land to a public entity for maintenance and public use, Tier 2 entitles the applicant a 10% Density Bonus through a Level 2 Review process for every 1000 linear feet of SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way frontage of trail construction. The total percentage of Density Bonus shall be calculated in fractional measurements (for example, 500 feet of linear frontage = 500 feet of trail constructed = 5% Density Bonus).
- c. Tier 3
- This Tier requires the applicant to donate land for a Scenic Overlook Pull-Off in one of the locations illustrated on SR 17-Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay (of the Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map Series).
- i. Because multiple parcels are adjacent to, or associated with, the locations identified on this Overlay map, the applicant shall request and pay for a pre-application conference with the Development Review Committee by submitting an application with an explanation of how the proposed project will contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the selected viewshed or site attribute.
 - ii. Upon approval, the applicant shall be permitted to participate in Tier 3 and shall be permitted a 10% Density Bonus able to be utilized as part of the Level 2 Review process.
- d. Tier 4
- This Tier requires the applicant to build the infrastructure and related support facilities for a Scenic Overlook Pull-Off.
- i. Because there are multiple potential configurations of the parking lot and options for the related support facilities for a scenic pull-off, the applicant shall request and pay for a pre-application conference with the Development Review Committee by submitting an application with an explanation of how the proposed project will contribute to the preservation or enhancement of the selected viewshed or site attribute for approval as part of the Level 2 Review application.
 - ii. Upon approval, the applicant shall be permitted to participate in Tier 3 and shall be permitted a 20% Density Bonus able to be utilized as part of the Level 2 Review process.

2. *Density Bonuses*

- a. The Density Bonuses available for Tiers 1, 2, 3, and 4 may be combined when calculating total permissible development potential.
- b. If a development application includes multiple parcels (679.B.3), the density bonuses available for Tiers 2, 3, and 4 shall be calculated on the frontage and acreage of the combined parcels.

3. *Submittal Requirements*

If an applicant desires to participate in the Ridge Scenic Highway Incentive Program, the development application and supporting documentation shall include a notarized letter indicating the applicant's intention to participate in the program and the following (as applicable):

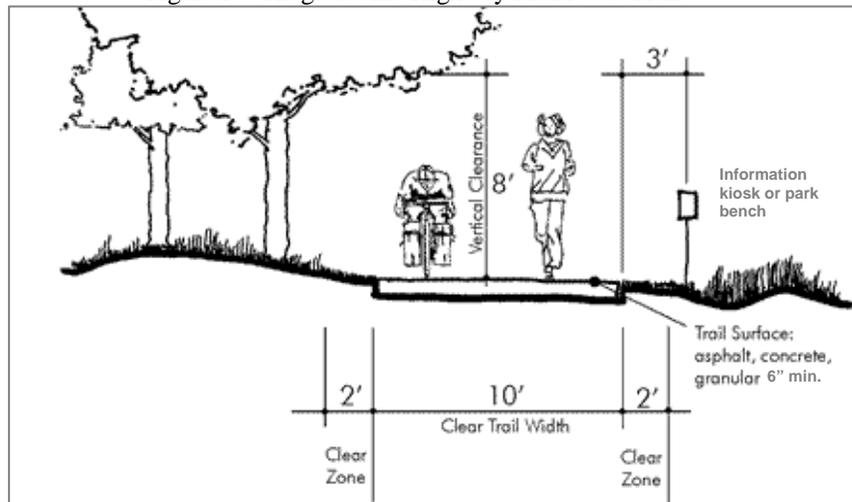
- a. A commitment to full participation in the Ridge Scenic Highway Incentive Program and the specific Tier (Tier 1 - Tier 4) of participation,
- b. The legal description and acreage included in the proposed multi-modal trail and a written commitment to construct the multi-modal trail to current Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) specifications, and no less than those illustrated in Figure F, across the entire Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way frontage of the property,
- c. The legal description and acreage included in the proposed Scenic Overlook Pull-Off,
- d. A written commitment to construct a Scenic Overlook Pull-Off and a description of the number of parking spaces (paved and unpaved) and related support facilities proposed for the property.

4. *Ridge Scenic Highway Multi-Use Trail*

A Multi-Use Trail shall extend the entire length of the Ridge Scenic Highway adjacent to the existing right-of-way.

- a. It is anticipated that the Multi-Use Trail will be located on at least one side of the right-of-way.
- b. The location and alignment of the trail shall be coordinated based on adjacent development and the Greenway plan map (where applicable). Where topography or water body locations prohibit trail/pathway development, an alternate connection shall be provided for pedestrian usage.
- c. At a minimum, the Multi-Use Trail shall be paved using either concrete or asphalt pursuant to best practices and FDOT standards, 10-12 feet in width, and located within the required 25 foot roadway landscape/buffer (see example in Figure F).

Figure F – Ridge Scenic Highway Multi-Use Trail

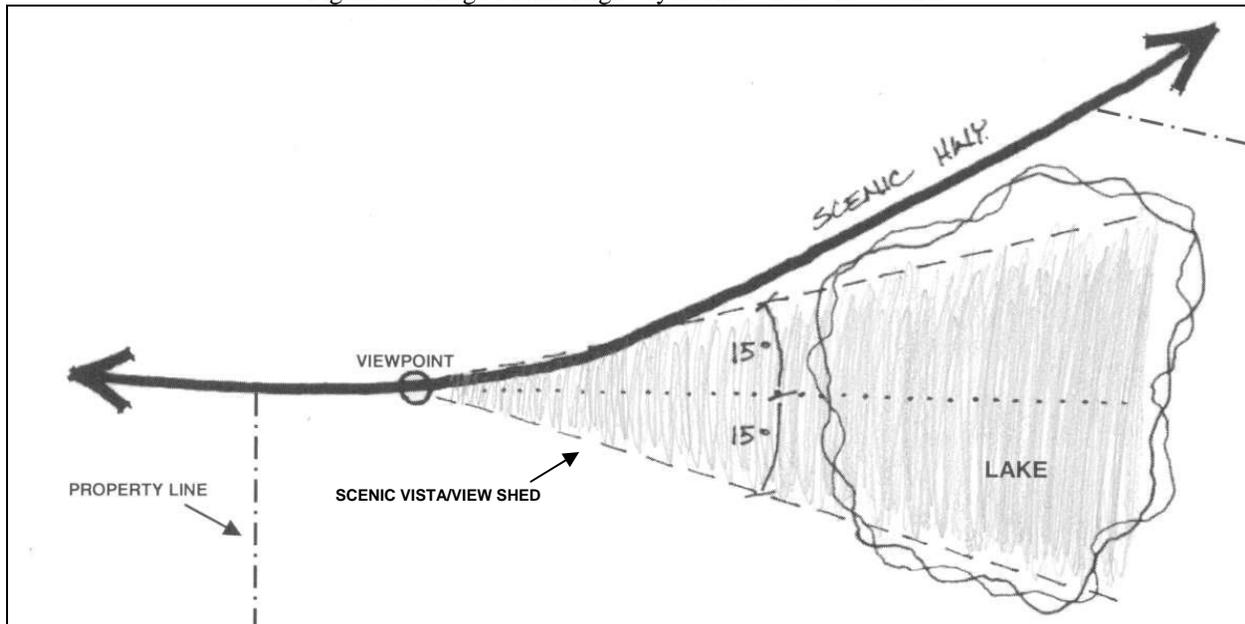


5. Scenic Vistas

A Ridge Scenic Highway Scenic Vista (Scenic Vista) is a viewpoint from the Ridge Scenic Highway. While most of them have been identified on the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay map, others may be discovered or reported and added to this map through the Comprehensive Plan Amendment process. Scenic Vistas shall be regulated by the following criteria:

- a. Development shall be offered bonuses and incentives such as FAR & ISR increases, clustering, lot size reductions 50% smaller than the clustering provisions pursuant to Section 753 of this Code, and a 50% setback reduction to limit the intensity or transfer it out of view of the Scenic Vista. However, in no instance shall the Ridge Scenic Highway Overlay provisions preclude development within the Ridge Scenic Highway Scenic Vistas.
- b. Each of the Ridge Scenic Highway Scenic Vistas resemble cones and are established as a 30-degree angle measured in equal 15-degree angle segments measured from the Ridge Scenic Highway right-of-way to the primary vista amenity of interest (see Figure G).
- c. Where the primary vista amenity is a specific landmark, such as Bok Tower, the Scenic Vista is established by drawing a line between the viewpoint and the landmark. The vista is 15% to both sides of the line between these two points (see Figure G).
- d. Where the Scenic Vista is simply the natural terrain and vegetation, the Scenic Vista shall be limited to the distance where topography and/or where line of sight dissipates due to terrain and vegetation on the property. In no case shall the Scenic Vista extend beyond 1,000 feet except where a primary vista amenity or landmark (such as the Bok Tower) has been established (see Figure G).

Figure G - Ridge Scenic Highway Scenic Vista View Cones



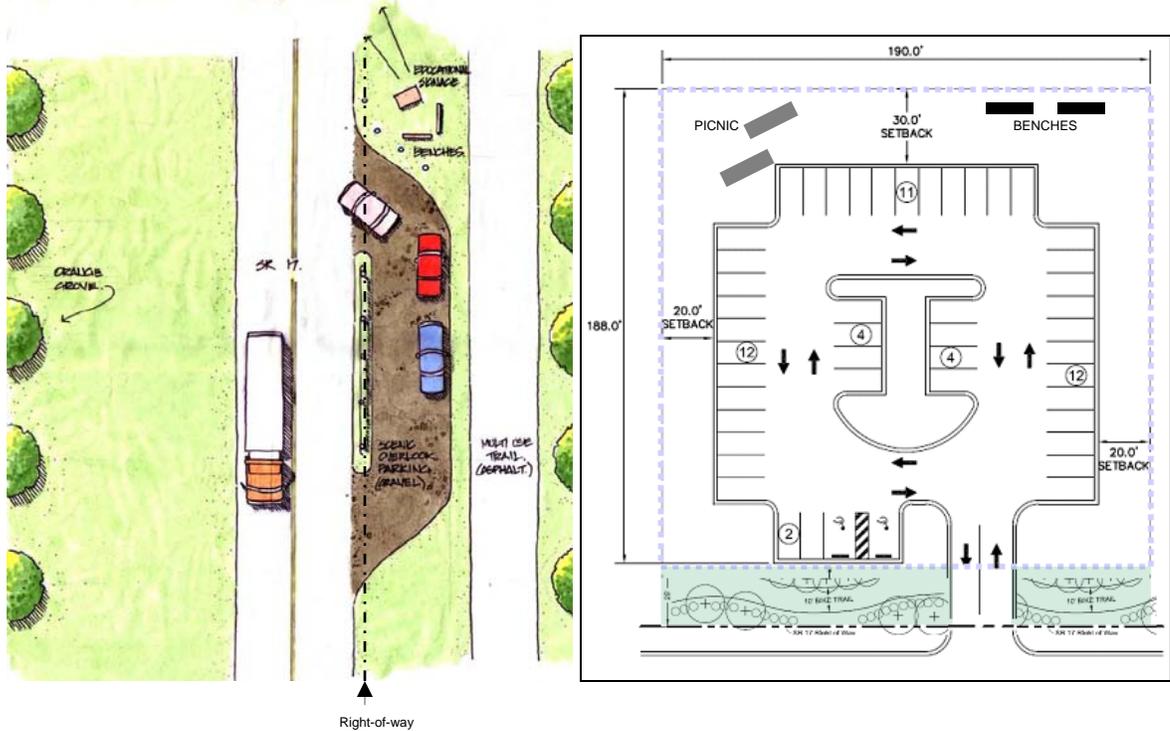
6. *Overlook Pull-Off*

Combined with parking and access to the multi-use trail, Scenic Overlook Pull-Offs provide opportunities to highlight scenic advantage points and educate travelers/visitors on the area and services available. While most of them have been identified on the SR 17 Ridge Scenic Highway Resource Protection Overlay map, others may be discovered or reported and added to this map. Scenic Overlook Pull-Off locations shall provide views of historic structures, governmental buildings, cultural facilities, recreational facilities, public art, entrances to area towns and villages, prominent citrus groves and agricultural areas, and views of cattle grazing lands that are typical to Polk County. Scenic Overlook Pull-offs shall be regulated by the following criteria:

- a. Scenic Overlook Pull-Offs shall have a minimum size to serve the purpose intended. At a minimum, Pull-Offs shall not be less than ½ half acre (21,780 square feet) in size.
- b. All parking areas shall provide parking lot landscaping and buffering consistent with the requirements of Section 720.
- c. Scenic Overlook Pull-Off parking areas shall provide parking at a ratio suitable for the purposed intended. With the exception of driveways and drive aisles, parking spaces may be left unpaved, provided the soil is stabilized and covered with groundcover plantings, mulch, gravel, or shellrock and wheelstops to define each space.
- d. Each Scenic Overlook Pull-Off shall include, at a minimum, support facilities including at least one bike rack, covered picnic area with two tables, and signage related to the Ridge Scenic Highway. All materials shall meet minimum construction standards for recreation areas utilized by the Polk County Leisure Services division.
- e. Parking areas and structures shall be prohibited from locating within the 25 foot right of way setback buffer.

- f. The developer shall deed or dedicate these pull-offs to FDOT, Polk County, city (whichever is the jurisdiction controlling the property), or a quasi-governmental entity capable of maintaining these properties.

Figure H – Ridge Scenic Highway Pull-Offs



7. *Conflict Section*

When there is a conflict between the Ridge Scenic Highway Overlay regulations and other regulations of this Code, the Ridge Scenic Highway Overlay regulations shall guide and regulate development.

SECTION 2: SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Ordinance is held to be illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction the other provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 3: EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall become effective upon Comprehensive Plan Amendment (“CPA”) 2009A-08 becoming effective and upon the ordinance being filed with the Department of State. If CPA 2009A-08 does not become effective, then this ordinance shall be null and void.

ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF POLK COUNTY,

FLORIDA this _____ day of _____, 2009.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
POLK COUNTY, FLORIDA

STATE OF FLORIDA)
)
COUNTY OF POLK)

I, Richard M. Weiss, Clerk and Auditor to the Board of County Commissioners of Polk County, Florida, hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of Ordinance No. 09-_____, an amendment to the Polk County Land Development Code, which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners of Polk County, Florida on the _____ day of _____, 2009.

WITNESS my hand and official seal on this _____ day of _____, 2009.

(SEAL)

By: _____
Kathryn Courtney
Deputy Clerk

Appendix D

CORRIDOR PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1. Rails to Trails at Kiwanis Park



Figure 2. Rails to Trails at Buck Moore Road



Figure 3. CME Members and Family at the 2nd Annual Scenic Sprint Triathlon

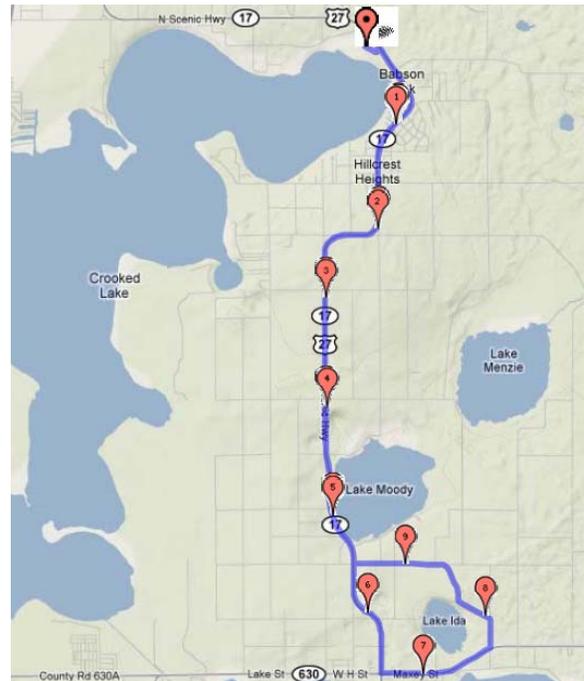


Figure 4. Bike Ride in Triathlon

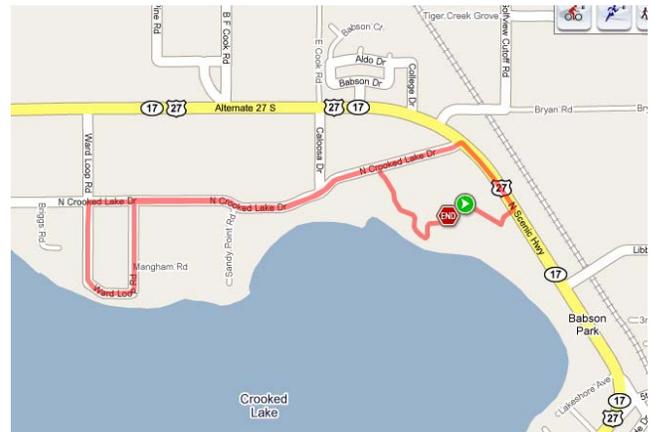


Figure 5. Run Portion in Triathlon



Figure 6. Swim Portion in Triathlon



Figure 8. Ferguson Distribution Center



Figure . Aldi Distribution Center

Appendix E

RIDGE SCENIC HIGHWAY USED TREASURES AND YARD SALE FLYER



Three Great Locations:

Lake Wales: Trail Welcome Center
450 N Scenic Highway
Lake Wales, FL 33853

Lake of the Hills: Community Club
47 East Starr Avenue
Lake Wales, FL 33898

Babson Park:
The Former American Bank Parking Lot
1050 N Scenic Highway
Babson Park, FL 33827

**The Ridge Scenic Highway (SR17)
Used Treasures & Yard Sale
November 8th
8am to 12pm**



Sponsored by the Ridge Scenic Highway
Corridor Management Entity Inc.

DONATIONS WELCOME

Contact: Susan Welborn: sueonthelake@aol.com
or (863) 638-7308

Jennifer Naneek: jnaneek@cityoflakewales.com
or (863) 678-4209

Edward Esteve: eedesteve@tampabay.rr.com
or (863) 676-8015

Appendix F

ARTICLE IN THE LAKE WALES NEWS PAPER

Corridor entity eyes Scenic Highway

LW NEWS April 15, 2009

By **KATHY LEIGH BERKOWITZ**
Staff Writer

Outside the Trail Head Center in Lake Wales, they parked their cars for Monday's meeting of the Ridge Scenic Highway Corridor Management Entity.

One look at their vehicles suggested a few of them belonged to people considered activists.

Bumper stickers such as "I brake for butterflies," "Eat more possum," "No farms, no food," "Peace Voter," "Share the Road," and "Save the manatee" all indicated their various passions.

But when they gathered together collectively, they had one thing on their minds — preserving and enhancing the

Scenic Highway.

Among them were city planners and representatives from Babson Park, Highland Park, Lake of the Hills, Dundee, Frostproof, Hillcrest Heights, Lake Hamilton and Haines City.

Also in attendance were those who work for the Polk Transportation Planning Organization, the Polk Land Development Division, the Board of County Commissioners, the Central Florida Regional Planning Council and the Lake Wales Depot Museum.

Some meetings are eventful, others just a chance to update the other members on various happenings in each city along the highway.

They discuss trails and

grants, opportunities for community fellowship, land development and transportation planning.

With nothing new to report regarding annexations into the city, treasurer Ed Esteve said Lake of the Hills welcomed the previous discussion they had with the City of Lake Wales about incorporating routes along the Scenic Highway and Chalet Suzanne Road, giving "no opposition."

Esteve said they were pleased with getting better law enforcement coverage, since that area proved to be a boundary between the Polk County Sheriff's Office and the Lake Wales Police



(Photo by Kathy Leigh Berkowitz)

Members of the Corridor Management Entity arrange their paperwork for their April 13 meeting. Haines City planner Joe Sortland, Highland Park board member Martha Sehl, and Lake Wales representative Bob Dioguardi look over the meeting agenda.

PLEASE SEE:
SCENIC, page A3

SCENIC, from Page A1

Department, as to who would respond to calls there.

Having not been at February's meeting due to family emergency, president Mira Hardman was present and gave an update about the future Trail Head Center.

Hardman said she hopes the development of the piece of property just across the center, which was obtained from the Department of Environmental Protection will be capped.

The portion of the trail was owned by CSX at one time, a place where the trail turned around, she said.

Curis Knowles of the Polk Transportation Planning Organization, said the grant that had been submitted for the trail was under consideration as a "top trail priority."

The money received would extend the trail from Point's Street down to Scenic Highway.

"So you can get on your bike here and you can ride all the way to Buck Moore Road," Hardman said.

Bob Dioguardi, a Lake Wales State Street representative who frequents the CME meetings, reiterated what is usually

his mantra, but "trails are good, they help you, but you can't go across the state with trails."

Dioguardi, a bicycle activist, teaches respect for bicyclists on the road and bicycle safety.

Other matters discussed concerning the highway were trash pickup and future yard sales.

Johanna Brasher, a board member who lives in Lake of the Hills, noted that maintenance men from Mountain Lake have been keeping the portion of highway from Mountain Lake to Masterpiece clean and free of debris, so that people who walk or bike can pass without running over trash.

Buscher also reminded the group of the upcoming Saw 7 Scenic Highway Yard and Used Furniture Sale, a sale which many of the Scenic Highway cities have decided to take part.

Last year Lake of the Hills made a profit of some \$100, Buscher said, a percentage of which they donated to the Scenic Highway entity.

"We were very heartened by it and we thought it was a very good beginning to this enterprise," she said.

Their goal this year is that each city on the highway take part on the same day, so it is one continuous stream down the corridor.

Community involvement by the entity is something the CME seeks to incorporate as much as possible.

Besides representatives from the various cities, they also encourage members "at large" who have ties to the agricultural, tourism, historical, commercial and environmental aspects.

Esteve suggested expanding the group to include a representative from each Chamber of Commerce, an idea the group heartily approved.

"It's really a very good organization," Esteve said, "we get a lot of good publicity, we try to do a lot of things for the Scenic Highway."

Lake Wales Main Street Manager Len Frevatt said she would help the CME set up an e-mail and a website that would make things easier in that regard.

The next meeting of the CME is to be held on May 11 at Susan Welborn's house in Babson Park.

Wilborn is the vice president of the CME group.