

FINAL

FIVE-YEAR CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

FLORIDA KEYS SCENIC HIGHWAY

FLORIDA KEYS, FLORIDA

Prepared by:
FLORIDA KEYS SCENIC CORRIDOR ALLIANCE
in cooperation with



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
District Six
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October 2008

FLORIDA KEYS Scenic Corridor Alliance

October 27, 2008

Mariano Berrios, Program Coordinator
Florida Scenic Highways Program
Florida Department of Transportation
605 Suwannee St., MS #37
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

RE: Florida Keys Scenic Highway

Dear Mr. Berrios:

On behalf of the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance, please find attached the Florida Keys Scenic Highway Five-Year Corridor Management Plan (CMP) Update.

For this document we updated the key components of the CMP (Goals, Objectives and Strategies; Action Plan; and corridor Mission/Vision) and hope that you will find it meets the intent of the CMP Update process.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this program.

Sincerely,



Judy Hull, President
Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance

cc: Craig James, FDOT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What comes to mind for the fisherman who seeks an unspoiled body of water or the international tourist who seeks an authentic tropical island experience? The Florida Keys (Keys). Truly one of the world's greatest natural resources. The Keys have everything the local resident or tourist is seeking for a glimpse at the "real Florida." This group of islands has it all: fishing, boating, diving, snorkeling, bicycling, history, restaurants, shopping, nightlife, as well as unsurpassed turquoise waters that surround dozens of beautiful tropical islands. All this and more can be experienced as the traveler makes their way south on US 1 from north of Key Largo to the City of Key West.



The Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) is so proud of their home and so proud of the communities that encompass the Florida Keys Scenic Highway (FKSH). This updated Corridor Management Plan (CMP) will demonstrate to the reader the progress of the Corridor Management Entity (CME) since being designated in 2001 and will outline a plan of action that lays the foundation for future successes.

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has been supportive of this group by allowing one of the world's greatest treasures be recognized and highlighted for its authenticity and beauty. The FKSCA intends to uphold and honor the trust and encouragement that FDOT has provided this group since its inception and has developed a CMP that demonstrates their long-term commitment to this Florida Scenic Highway.

This CMP update was developed by the FKSCA in partnership with its Board members, advisory committee partners and supporters and provides an updated road map for the key elements: Goals, Objectives and Strategies (GOS), Action Plan; along with the other updated information necessary to remain a Florida Scenic Highway.

This CMP update also proposes to extend the limits of the corridor northward to mile-marker (MM) 110. This is an extension of approximately 4 miles (mi) that allows for the inclusion of the beauty of the Upper Keys, including the Jewfish Creek area, Lake Surprise, Everglades National Park and the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

The FKSCA has worked diligently over the last 18 months to re-establish the CME. A new organizational structure is in place that includes strong representation from the five local Chambers of Commerce, supported by the Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC). A series of community involvement events were recently completed that has built a ground swell of support and validation of its GOS. Along with an updated Corridor Action Plan, the FKSCA now has a new and highly focused road map for the future.

Many thanks go out to all those who have participated in the past, present and future of this CME and for the FDOT's support as well. With great anticipation and hope, the FKSCA plans for this unique scenic highway to be around for generations to come.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Florida Keys Scenic Highway (FKSH) is “one of a kind” in the world; surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Florida Bay and the Gulf of Mexico, it stretches out as far as the eye can see and then some! From the highway the traveler can experience vistas of natural beauty with views of spectacular sunrises, sunsets, sparkling stars, moonlit nights and emerald green waters. It is a road that is known around the world and it is a road where travelers from all over the world have come to experience their own adventures in paradise.



The stretch of US 1 from north of Key Largo to the City of Key West (Appendix A) travels through some of the nation’s most spectacular scenery and is part of the “old national road” that starts in Maine and meanders down the East Coast of Florida through the Keys and ultimately to Key West. In addition to outstanding natural beauty, locals and visitors enjoy festivals, sunset celebrations, fishing, boating, SCUBA diving, state parks, recreational areas,

historic sites, museums, artists, island cuisine, sunshine, the laid-back lifestyle, tropical atmosphere, rich cultural heritage and friendly natives of the Florida Keys. US 1 opens the door to these attractions and is the “Main Street” for the Keys community – the daily roadway to work, schools, commercial areas, hospitals and services – all the necessities of life for Keys residents and visitors alike.

In 1996 Clean Florida Keys, Inc. (CFK) a local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc. and Keep Florida Beautiful, Inc. established the FKSH Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) in order to obtain Scenic Highway designation for US 1 from mile-marker (MM) 0 to MM 106.5 – Key West to Key Largo. With the leadership of CFK and support from the original membership, designation as a Florida Scenic Highway was received from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on June 22, 2001.

Upon designation, CFK worked to implement the Goals, Objectives and Strategies (GOS) that were approved as part of the FKSH Corridor Management Plan (CMP). Since designation in 2001 many of the original GOS including an award-winning corridor master plan have been accomplished. Many of these accomplishments are listed in Appendix B.

Over the last 18 months the original CAG has evolved into the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) that has become the Corridor Management Entity (CME) for the corridor. The FKSCA has worked to carry on the traditions of the original CAG, maintain the original corridor vision and ensure that the organization continues to comply with the requirements of the FDOT’s Scenic Highway guidelines as outlined in the Florida Scenic Highway Program (FSHP) Manual.

This CMP update is intended to update the FDOT on this organizational evolution and document previous accomplishments.

More importantly the FKSCA proposes using this CMP update as a road map for the next five years. GOS have been updated, a renewed Action Plan has been developed and the organization is revitalized. This revitalization is reflected in the strong partnerships that have been reestablished with local governments along the corridor and a strengthened relationship with the Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC) through its five local Chambers of Commerce. The FKSCA has developed an organization with Board Members, Advisors and a strong partnership with business and community leaders throughout the Keys.

This CMP update also being used to extend the limits of the corridor northward to MM 110. This is an extension of approximately 4 miles. This extension allows for the inclusion of the beauty of the Upper Keys, north of Key Largo, including the Jewfish Creek area, Lake Surprise, Everglades National Park and the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

The FKSCA applauds the successes of its predecessors while at the same time is looking forward to accomplish its renewed vision for the Scenic Highway. The FKSCA proposes to accomplish this by being a good steward for the Scenic Highway, thinking strategically and partnering with other advocacy groups that share its vision for US 1 and the Florida Keys.

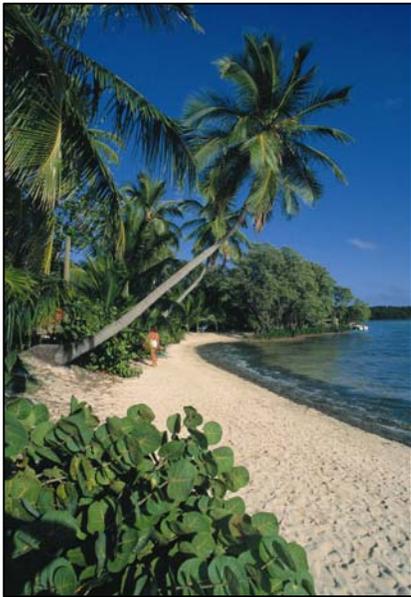
2.0 CORRIDOR VISION/MISSION

2.1 Vision

The Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) has reviewed the original vision statement as presented in the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) and concurs that it remains their vision for the future of the scenic highway. It is presented below:

The Florida Keys Scenic Highway from Key West to north of Key Largo is a magnificent journey across more than 100 miles of unique interconnected islands. The islands abound in rich historical, cultural, recreational, natural and scenic treasures and offer an unrivaled paradise for the mind, body and soul.

The Florida Keys Scenic Highway welcomes residents and travelers on a safe and relaxing tropical journey that conjures up images of bygone eras. Striking views



open to the crystalline turquoise and emerald waters of the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. Native mangroves and tropical hardwood hammocks dominate the roadside landscape with distant barrier islands on the horizon. A magnificent pedestrian and bicycle trail parallels the length of the highway, meandering through a landscape of native plants and trees and across the historic Old Keys Bridges a striking remnant of Henry Flagler's railway of the early 1900s. The trail is a world-class attraction available for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike and provides safe access to shops, restaurants and nightlife – a boon to the local economy. Opportunities for camping, boating, cycling, snorkeling, SCUBA diving and hiking in pristine environments abound.

Small-scale buildings hug the water's edge and reflect the scale of the island communities with their funky and informal architecture. Commercial areas are clean, uncluttered and well landscaped. Buffer yards screen industrial areas, large parking lots and unattractive views.

The Florida Keys Scenic Highway links Keys communities with a diverse local, state and national park and refuge system which protects the coral reef, beaches, mangroves and hammocks, and the unique plant and animal species found here. The Florida Keys Scenic Highway is well marked with excellent night lighting, especially at busy intersections. Overall it is well-maintained and litter free, with roadside pull offs and scenic overlooks at points of interest. Rest area facilities and amenities are also provided. Educational kiosks and interpretive information unbury the fascinating tales of the islands and their histories along this fascinating route across the sea.

2.2 Mission

A mission statement is the foundation for an organization. It provides a concise explanation for why a group exists. Although no mission statement was required nor was one developed during the original designation process, the FKSCA believes it important that a mission statement be established so that all interested parties clearly understand the FKSCA's path to accomplishing its vision.

As part of this CMP update the FKSCA has developed the following as our mission statement:

It is the mission of the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance to enhance the scenic image, preserve our heritage and diversity, and promote the natural beauty of the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor.

3.0 CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ENTITY

In 1996 Clean Florida Keys, Inc. (CFK) a local affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc. and Keep Florida Beautiful, Inc established the Florida Keys Scenic Highway (FKSH) Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) in order to obtain designation for US 1 as a Florida Scenic Highway. The limits for the corridor were proposed from mile-marker (MM) 0 to MM 106.5 – Key West to Key Largo. Under the leadership of CFK and with the support of the original members of the CAG, designation as a Scenic Highway was received from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on June 22, 2001.

Upon designation, CFK worked to implement the Goals, Objectives and Strategies (GOS) as outlined in their Corridor Management Plan (CMP). Accomplishments of significance included the funding of a part-time employee through FDOT and Monroe County, identifying funding for CAG activities, and working diligently to accomplish the corridor vision as outlined in their CMP update. Unfortunately, over time, membership declined. Additionally, turnover of the part-time staff member (Monroe County Scenic Highway Coordinator) made it difficult to maintain organizational continuity.

The Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) serving as the Corridor Management Entity (CME) has now assumed oversight responsibility for the Scenic Highway. This transition began in early 2007. Several members of the original CAG remain active in the current organization. This FKSCA maintains the same corridor vision as the original organization.

The FKSCA has renewed and established strong working relationships with a number of advocacy groups in the Keys that share a similar vision for the corridor. These relationships are at the federal, state and local levels. Additionally, the Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC) through the District Chambers of Commerce offices has become a key player supporting the long-term success of the FKSCA. In fact, the current President of the FKSCA is the Director of the Islamorada Chamber of Commerce.

Recently, the FKSCA has worked to formalize their board organization structure (Appendix C). The new organization includes a President and two representatives from each of the five District Area Committees (DAC) located throughout the Keys. This Board also includes a series of Advisors. Advisory Board members represent regional and specialty interests along the corridor.

The FKSCA continues to receive funding from FDOT to provide a part-time staff-member through Monroe County. This staff position was recently filled and provides overall program and administrative support to the FKSCA. FDOT also provides program oversight support through its District Scenic Highway Coordinator. Finally, the long-term success of any organization such as this is dependent upon volunteer support; the FKSCA is no different. The FKSCA works diligently to continue to build its volunteer membership and recently conducted a series of community involvement events that has rekindled community support. There are currently over 100 active supporters and volunteers to the organization. Example of letters of support that have been received as a part of this renewed effort, including each of the local municipalities, can be found in Appendix D.

The FKSCA has also recently updated its Operating Bylaws. These Bylaws formalize Board of Directors membership and organization responsibilities. In addition, these Bylaws outline FKSCA operating procedures including meetings, elections and administrative guidelines. This Agreement is included in Appendix E.

In an effort to be prepared to accept donations, the FKSCA was recently approved as a non-profit organization. 501(3)(c), certification was received late in 2007 (Appendix F). The FKSCA has established a bank account that allows it to receive grants and funds to further its mission for the corridor.

4.0 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

The Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) describes goals, objectives, and strategies (GOS) as "...the building blocks used to...implement the vision for the scenic corridor." The Florida Keys Scenic Highway (FKSH) goals address resource protection, safety, community support, education and economic development and represent the Corridor Vision in manageable pieces; the objectives represent more measureable concepts or ideas for achieving the goals; and the strategies satisfy each objective with measurable activities and techniques that will be implemented through the Corridor Action Plan.

The original GOS were established in 2001 during the designation process. The following updated GOS were developed by the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) and reflect work that has been previously accomplished and current goals for the corridor:

Goal 1: Support the protection, preservation and enhancement of the resources found along the FKSH.

Objective 1.1: Enhance recreational opportunities along the FKSH.

Strategy 1.1.1: Encourage the enhancement of existing roadside parks and the design of new ones including amenities such as boardwalks, picnic areas, hiking trails, and wildlife observation areas where appropriate.

Strategy 1.1.2: Support Monroe County, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) in the restoration of the Old Keys Bridges as pedestrian facilities that include opportunities for hiking, bicycling, fishing, boat ramps, picnicking, etc.

Strategy 1.1.3: Work with responsible agencies to ensure the safety of the corridor by providing secure trailheads, bathrooms, rest stops with shelter, drinking water, periodic call boxes or telephones, and safe travel clearances for all users.

Strategy 1.1.4: Work with responsible agencies to locate and develop safe pull-outs and pull-offs along the scenic highway corridor.

Objective 1.2: Enhance scenic opportunities along the FKSH.

Strategy 1.2.1: Identify specific scenic vistas that warrant preservation and work with local governments to develop land and viewshed protection strategies. Protection of indigenous plant and animal communities shall be taken into consideration when addressing these strategies.

Strategy 1.2.2: Advocate for all design and construction planning activities along the FKSH to be coordinated with affected local governments and state and federal agencies with jurisdictional and regulatory authority within the corridor to ensure consideration of indigenous plant and animal communities.

Objective 1.3: *Ensure that all design and construction activities along the FKSH preserve, protect, maintain and enhance its scenic and natural resources.*

Strategy 1.3.1: Coordinate with local governments, utility and telecommunication facilities providers, and state and federal agencies and encourage the development of aesthetic/design guidelines for the FKSH, including provision for enhanced landscape buffers and medians that assist these entities and adjacent property owners in the design and construction of their projects.

Objective 1.4: *Support vegetation management along the corridor in order to preserve, maintain and enhance the natural resources, scenic views, and recreational areas.*

Strategy 1.4.1: Support a comprehensive vegetation management plan that will maintain the environmental integrity of the corridor.

Strategy 1.4.2: Support the distribution of information directly, or through land management agencies, to private property owners along the FKSH regarding the importance of vegetation management and describing environmentally sensitive land management methodologies.

Goal 2: **Advocate for corridor experiences that enhance environmentally-friendly regional economic development, oriented primarily toward eco-tourism with appropriate recreational and commercial support opportunities.**

Objective 2.1: *Identify and support corridor improvements that will enhance interaction with local businesses along the FKSH.*

Strategy 2.1.1: Encourage amenities such as trailheads, landscape planting, intersection improvements, and rest stops that are strategically placed for maximum connectivity with commercial interests along the FKSH.

Strategy 2.1.2: Participate in the development and implementation of the following local governments' plans for the FKSH within their jurisdictions: Islamorada, Village of Islands; Key Colony Beach; Key West; Layton; Marathon and Monroe County.

Strategy 2.1.3: Coordinate with the Florida Department of Transportation in the development of the Five-Year Work Program for District 6 to ensure that corridor needs are addressed.

Objective 2.2: *Provide corridor specific information to residents, visitors and potential visitors.*

Strategy 2.2.1: Develop standardized private/public promotional and informational materials that promote the services and amenities within the corridor. Coordinate with local and regional tourism-related businesses to distribute this information.

Strategy 2.2.2: Develop an internet website that promotes the services and amenities within the corridor and link this webpage to local, regional, state and international tourism related websites.

Strategy 2.2.3 Develop and implement a signage plan that insures an enhanced visitor experience.

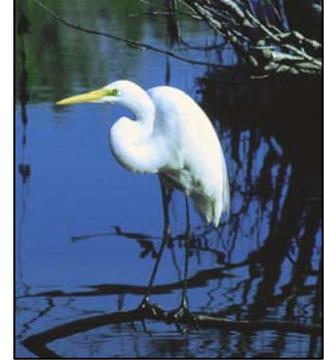
Objective 2.3: *Coordinate promotional campaigns with businesses and tourism-related associations along the highway corridor.*

Strategy 2.3.1: Encourage and support a series of promotional events related to the resources within the corridor that will promote awareness of the corridor. These could include events such as marathons, clean-up days, cultural festivals, bicycle races, fishing tournaments, etc.



Goal 3: Provide educational opportunities that will heighten awareness of the globally unique scenic and recreational elements of the Florida Keys by interpreting the rich and unique historical, archaeological, cultural, and natural resources of the Keys that are united by US 1, the transportation backbone of the region.

Objective 3.1: Promote the FKSH as an outdoor classroom for the Keys' citizens, school children, and visitors advocating for respect for intrinsic qualities found along the corridor.



Strategy 3.1.1: Identify funding for the development and implementation of a interpretive signage and kiosk plan that highlights the intrinsic qualities of the corridor.

Strategy 3.1.2: Partner with other advocacy groups to fund and construct information kiosks that explain the cultural and historical significance of the FKSH.

Strategy 3.1.3: Develop brochures and audio tours for the corridor that emphasize its unique scenic, recreational, environmental culture and history, resources. Encourage that all materials produced are multi-lingual.

Strategy 3.1.4: Coordinate with the federal, state and local preservation agencies and organizations to promote the preservation and interpretation of intrinsic resources in the corridor.

Strategy 3.1.5: Coordinate with the Florida Keys Council of the Arts and other organizations to encourage public art within the corridor that complements the interpretation of its natural, historical and cultural resources.

Objective 3.2: Develop an on-going citizen participation/education program to update citizens on activities of the FKSCA.

Strategy 3.2.1: Participate in a speaker's bureau or similar organization and educate the citizens of the Keys on activities of the FKSCA.

Strategy 3.2.2: Partner with the public schools and colleges to notify students about corridor activities.

Goal 4: Support US 1 as an arterial highway that safely accommodates the needs of vehicular and non-vehicular users, while providing access to natural areas, connecting communities and neighborhoods, and enhancing recreational and scenic resources.

Objective 4.1: Coordinate with FDEP, FDOT and all other local, state and federal agencies in planning activities along the FKSH, or plans that may have an effect on the corridor.

Strategy 4.1.1: Partner in development and implementation of the Overseas Heritage Trail, as an interconnected linear trail for shared use, recreational use, and alternative transportation uses incorporating existing local pathways and the Historic Bridges along the corridor.

Strategy 4.1.2: Participate in the development and implementation of the following local governments' plans for the FKSH within their jurisdictions: Key Largo, Islamorada, Village of Islands: Key Colony Beach: Key West; Layton; Marathon; and, Monroe County.

Strategy 4.1.3: Coordinate with the FDOT in the development of the Five-Year Work Program for District Six to ensure that corridor needs are addressed.

Objective 4.2: Provide for the safety of pedestrians and motorists within the FKSH.

Strategy 4.2.1: Advocate for roadway improvements necessary to promote ease and safety of access into and within the corridor for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Strategy 4.2.2: Monitor accident rates along the highway to help identify future improvement needs.

Strategy 4.2.3: Advocate for accommodating Commerce while maintaining a safe and efficient level of highway service.

Goal 5: Provide residents and businesses of the Florida Keys with a variety of opportunities to participate in the planning and implementation of the FKSH Corridor Management Plan (CMP), based on their interests, skills, and time they can offer to the effort.

Objective 5.1: Provide a variety of opportunities for public involvement in the development and implementation of the CMP.

Strategy 5.1.1: Schedule regular meetings of the FKSCA that are open to and advertised to the public.

Strategy 5.1.2: Encourage FKSCA membership from a wide range of residents and business owners from throughout the Keys.

Strategy 5.1.3: Develop partnerships with other private and public entities to share information and planning activities.

Strategy 5.1.4: Ensure that widespread public involvement is incorporated as an integral element of all FKSCA projects within the corridor.

Objective 5.2: *Develop an on-going citizen participation/education program to update citizens on activities of the FKSCA.*

Strategy 5.2.1: Partner with the public schools and colleges to notify students about corridor activities.

Objective 5.3: *Coordinate promotional campaigns with businesses and tourism-related associations along the corridor.*

Strategy 5.3.1: Encourage and support a series of promotional events related to the resources within the corridor that will promote awareness of the corridor. These could include events such as marathons, cleanup days, cultural festivals, bicycle races, fishing tournaments, etc.

Goal 6: Ensure the long term sustainability and success of the FKSCA.

Objective 6.1: *Develop strong leadership of the FKSCA.*

Strategy 6.1.1: Develop a position description to be supported by FDOT and Monroe County for the Scenic Highway Coordinator position.

Strategy 6.1.2: Hire a Scenic Highway Coordinator to assist with implementing the CMP.

Objective 6.2: *Continue to enhance the FKSCA organization through its membership.*

Strategy 6.2.1: Develop and implement a plan to actively recruit new membership.

Strategy 6.2.2: Promote the mentoring of new members through sharing of existing member's institutional knowledge, passion and diligence.

Objective 6.3: Fulfill administrative duties to maintain Corridor designation.

Strategy 6.3.1: Provide annual reports and periodic updates.

Strategy 6.3.2: Prepare CMP updates.

Strategy 6.3.3: Monitor and update the Strategic Plan.

Strategy 6.3.4: Identify and request funding consistent with the corridors goals and objectives.

5.0 ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan that has been prepared for the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) is reflective of its Goals, Objectives and Strategies (GOS). This plan highlights three key areas: Administration and Coordination, Community Participation and Corridor Enhancements. This Action Plan has been prepared to document attainable milestones for this corridor and is identified by short-term, long-term items, and continued tasks they plan to accomplish that will accomplish the GOS identified.

**Table 5-1
Florida Keys Scenic Highway Action Plan**

Administration and Coordination

No.	Action	Goals, Objectives and Strategies Referenced	Responsibility	Potential Funding Sources and Partners	Product	Time Frame
1	FKSCA Partnership Agreements	1 through 6	FKSCA	FDOT, Monroe County	Implement CMP	Ongoing
2	Amend County and Local Government Comprehensive Plans to reflect Goals, Vision and Strategies	2.1, 6.3	FKSCA	Volunteers	Comprehensive Plan Amendments	2009-2011
3	Encourage developer/local government joint planning efforts for all construction activity along the corridor	1.2, 1.3	FKSCA, Local Government	State/Local Government	Enhanced corridor	Ongoing
4	Identify and apply for grants	6.3	FKSCA	FDOT, FHWA, Private	Enhanced/Preserved corridor	Ongoing
5	Review CMP and Action Plan annually	6.3	FKSCA	FKSCA, Volunteers	Compliance with FDOT Scenic Highway Program guidelines	Ongoing
6	Prepare Annual Scenic Highway Report to FDOT	6.3	FKSCA	FKSCA, Volunteers	Compliance with FDOT Scenic Highway Program guidelines	Ongoing

Table 5-1 (Cont.)

No.	Action	Goals, Objectives and Strategies Referenced	Responsibility	Potential Funding Sources and Partners	Product	Time Frame
7	Prepare Five-Year CMP update	6.3	FKSCA	FKSCA, Volunteers	Compliance with FDOT Scenic Highway Program guidelines	2013
8	Employ a Scenic Highway Coordinator	6.1	FKSCA	FDOT, Monroe County	Long-term sustainability	2009
9	Build membership	6.2	FKSCA	FKSCA, Volunteers	Long-term sustainability	Ongoing
10	Coordinate with FDOT and Local Governments to develop reasonable engineering solutions for highway and pedestrian safety	1.1, 2.1, 2.2, Goal 4	FKSCA, FDOT, Monroe County	FDOT, Monroe County	Enhanced corridor safety	2009-2013
11	Support the funding and implementation a bicycle/pedestrian improvements	1.1, 4.1,	FKSCA, FDOT, FDEP	FDOT, FDEP, Monroe County	Enhanced corridor	2009-2013
12	Encourage the development and enhancement of roadside amenities	1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.2	FKSCA, FDOT	FDOT, FDEP, Monroe County, Advocacy groups	Enhanced corridor	Ongoing
13	Coordinate the safe and strategic placement of informational signage	2.2, 3.1	FKSCA, FDOT, Advocacy groups	FKSCA, FDOT, Advocacy groups	Enhanced corridor	2009-2013
14	Identify long term FKSCA funding strategies	6	FKSCA	FKSCA, FDOT, Advocacy groups	Ensure long-term viability of FKSCA and implementation of CMP	Ongoing

Table 5-1 (Cont.)

Community Participation

No.	Action	Goals, Objectives and Strategies Referenced	Responsibility	Potential Funding Sources and Partners	Product	Time Frame
1	Support the preparation and distribution of information on the importance of vegetation management	1.4	FKSCA	FDOT, Monroe County, Advocacy groups	Corridor enhancement	2010
2	Develop information materials that promote services and amenities along the corridor	2.3	FKSCA, Advocacy groups	FKSCA, Advocacy groups	Enhanced visitor experience	2009-20112
4	Make corridor information available via internet	2.2	FKSCA	FKSCA, Advocacy groups	Enhanced visitor experience	2009-20011
5	Establish a corridor education program	2.2, 3.1, 3.2	FKSCA, Advocacy groups	FKSCA, Private partnerships	Enhanced corridor experience	2009-2012
6	Develop partnerships with local clubs, groups and schools	5.2	FKSCA	FKSCA, Private partnerships	Enhanced corridor experience	Ongoing
7	Conduct timely and strategically located FKSCA meetings for corridor updates and to conduct scenic highway business	5.1, 5.2,	FKSCA	FKSC, Private partnerships	Long-term viability	Ongoing
8	Work with Local Government and Advocacy Groups to support corridor enhancement	All goals	FKSCA, Local Government, Volunteers, Advocacy groups	FKSCA, Local government, Advocacy groups	Enhanced corridor experience	Ongoing

Table 5-1 (Cont.)

Corridor Enhancements

No.	Action	Goals, Objectives and Strategies Referenced	Responsibility	Potential Funding Sources and Partners	Product	Time Frame
1	Identify specific scenic opportunities along the corridor	1.1	FKSCA, Volunteers	Advocacy Groups, Volunteers	Preserved and enhanced view-shed	2011
2	Promote the use of native vegetation	1.2, 1.4	FKSCA, FDOT, Local Government	FDOT, Advocacy Groups	Preserved and enhanced view-shed	2010-2012
3	Support development and use of aesthetic/design guidelines for property owners adjacent to the corridor	1.2, 1.3	FKSCA, Local Government, Local Advocacy Groups	Local Government, Grants opportunities	Preserved and enhanced view-shed	Ongoing
4	Participate in regional and local government efforts related to the corridor	2.1, 4.1	FKSCA	Volunteers	Preservation of the corridor	Ongoing
5	Identify/address corridor safety issues	Goal 4	FKSCA	FDOT, Local Government, Volunteers	Enhanced corridor safety	Ongoing
6	Partner with others to locate and fund informational kiosks along the corridor	3.1	FKSCA, Advocacy Groups	Grants, Local Advocacy Groups	Enhanced visitor experience	2011-2013

6.0 EVALUATION OF PROTECTION TECHNIQUES

The resources found within the Florida Keys Scenic Highway (FKSH) Corridor are afforded protection through the comprehensive plans of Monroe County and its municipalities, as well as development regulations, and the guidelines and policies of the local, state and federal agencies which have jurisdiction over the corridor.

Monroe County and its municipalities all have adopted Comprehensive Plans pursuant to Chapter 163, Florida Statutes (F.S.), containing goals, objectives and policies relating to future land use, transportation, coastal management, conservation, and recreation and open-space management within the corridor in order to fulfill the intent and vision for the future. Some of these plans include policies which relate specifically to the scenic highway corridors or improvements on US 1. The same can be said for land development regulations for the jurisdictions located within the corridor.

Land development regulations from jurisdictions that specifically address corridor preservation, scenic highway activities or US 1 activities are described below.

6.1 The Monroe County Land Development Code

Section 9.5-376 of the Monroe County Land Development Regulations (LDRs) requires that all development of any parcel of land which fronts on US 1 and is designated as a hammock, mangrove or transitional habitat, and is vegetated with plants native to the Florida Keys shall be developed so that a scenic corridor buffer is provided. Any other development of land fronting on US 1 has to provide a major street buffer in accordance with Section 9.5-378.

The manner in which properties are designed for development and the need for access to private property make safety along US 1 a particular concern in Monroe County and its municipalities. In an effort to limit the number of driveways and curb cuts along the corridor, Monroe County's current regulations prohibit the addition of a driveway from US 1 to private property if access from up to 400 feet (ft) away exists (Section 9.5-421, LDRs). Lots that cannot meet the major road access standard in Section 9.5-421, LDRs shall take access from platted side streets, parallel streets or frontage roads.

6.2 Key West

The City of Key West's Comprehensive Plan includes policies that specifically address historic preservation, since a portion of US 1 (Truman Avenue) is located in the historic district of the City.

Several sections of the Key West LDRs address items related to enhancement of the US 1/SR A1A corridor and to historic preservation.

- Article X – Appearance, Design and Compatibility: Includes regulations relating to site location and character of use, appearance of site and structure, protection of historic and archaeological resources and open space.

- Article XI – Environmental Protection: Includes regulations for preservation of wetlands and transitional wetlands, freshwater lens protection, wildlife habitat preservation and protection of flora/fauna.
- Article XIII – Landscaping: Includes regulations for landscaping along street frontages.
- Article XIV – Tree Protection: Addresses specially protected trees, prohibiting their removal on public/private property without a permit.
- Article XVI – Signage and Advertising: Includes specific regulations for Historic Districts and for Boulevard Appearance Zones.

6.3 Key Colony Beach

Key Colony Beach is a small community with minimal frontage on US 1 connected to the highway across a single small bridge at mile-marker (MM) 53.5. Most residences are located on oceanfront property or on canals with quick access to the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean.

Preliminary coordination with Key Colony Beach city staff indicates that there is minimal language in the city’s comprehensive plan on protection techniques for the US 1 Scenic Highway Corridor. The Florida Keys Scenic Highway Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) commits to working with the city staff of Key Colony Beach to ensure that ample and appropriate new language is incorporated into the city’s comprehensive plan that reflects the requirements of the Florida Scenic Highway Manual.

6.4 Marathon

In its transportation element, the City of Marathon encourages bicycle and pedestrian paths in order to provide for bicycle and pedestrian travel that is safe, convenient, and efficient. The policy includes the preparation of a bicycle and pedestrian plan that emphasizes access to schools, parks, and shopping centers, and which supplements the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail Master Plan.

The City of Marathon also, through the LDRs, ensures that development along the scenic corridors of US 1 provides the landscaping and setbacks necessary to minimize impacts on the visual environment.

There are specific right-of-way (ROW) widths for the critical segments of US 1 within the City where ROW planning and preservation measures include the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail State Park and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Corridor-wide Master Plan for District Six.

6.5 Layton

The City of Layton’s Comprehensive Plan includes two policies that specifically address items related to the development of a Scenic Highway Corridor as follows:

- Future Land Use Policy 7.c encourages the State and County to establish a tree planting program in conjunction with bicycle and pedestrian paths along US 1.
- Traffic Circulation Policy 1.g states that the City shall maintain the existing bike/pedestrian path along US 1 and when approving developments along US 1, shall ensure that such development does not interfere with the function of the path.

6.6 Islamorada, Village of Islands

The Islamorada, Village of Islands Comprehensive Plan includes several policies that specifically address items related to preservation and enhancement of the Scenic Highway Corridor as follows:

Transportation Policies

- Policy 2-1.3.10 requires adoption of LDRs, which specify design standards such as encouraging a safe interface between vehicles and pedestrians.
- Policy 2-1.3.13 designates US 1 as a Local Scenic Roadway.
- Policy 2-1.3.14 supports the designation of the US 1 Highway corridor as a Florida Scenic Highway and supports Federal designation as an All American Road.
- Policy 2-1.5.3 ensures continuity of the Overseas Heritage Trail within the City.

Future Land Use Policies

- Policy 1-1.2.3 addresses enhancing the Old Road by promotion of land use and transportation strategies that enhance its safe use as a local traffic and pedestrian friendly corridor.
- Policy 1-4.5.1 provides that LDRs will address management of environmentally sensitive natural systems, dedication of conservation easements, preservation of open space and reservation of strategic points of shoreline for public access.

6.7 State and Federal Protection Techniques

Various state and federal agencies listed below also manage and maintain the conservation and preservation of corridor resources.

6.8 Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) manages 12 state parks in the Keys. Many of these parks are adjacent to the Corridor including the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail. The FKSCA works in partnership with FDEP and other agencies as they implement their programs.

Portions of the waters that surround the Florida Keys are also designated as Florida Aquatic Preserves. This designation affords these waters additional protection. Coupon Bight Aquatic Preserve and Lignumvitae Key Aquatic Preserve were designated in the early 1990s.

6.9 Florida Department of Transportation

The entire US 1 corridor is owned by the FDOT as such it is subject to state regulation. These regulations prevent commercial intrusions incompatible with state transportation goals. Typically, the FDOT is responsible for all maintenance activities within the ROW. The FDOT has entered into a number of maintenance agreements with local and other state agencies relative to management of enhanced landscaping and beautification efforts in place along the corridor.

6.10 Florida Department of Community Affairs

The Florida Department of Community Affairs (DCA) designates Areas of Critical State Concern and protects natural resources and public facilities of major statewide significance through cooperative planning and management.

The Florida Keys were designated an Area of Critical State Concern in 1975 (Section 380.0552, F.S.). Establishing an area of critical concern uses 12 principles for guiding development and every comprehensive plan amendment is required to be consistent with them. Several of the principles are directly tied to the promotion of US 1 as a scenic corridor and the protection of its natural, cultural scenic and heritage resources.

6.11 National Parks Service

The National Parks Service operates a number of National Parks in the area. These include Everglades National Park, Big Cypress Swamp National Park, Biscayne National Park and the Dry Tortugas National Park.

Biscayne National Park protects a coral reef system and is located in Miami, Key Biscayne and Homestead Florida. The Dry Tortugas National Park is located almost 70 miles (mi) west of Key West and is known for protection of bird and marine life. The most famous, Everglades National Park, located at the north end of the corridor, is the largest subtropical wilderness in the United States and has been designated a World Heritage Site, International Biosphere Preserve and Wetland of International Importance.

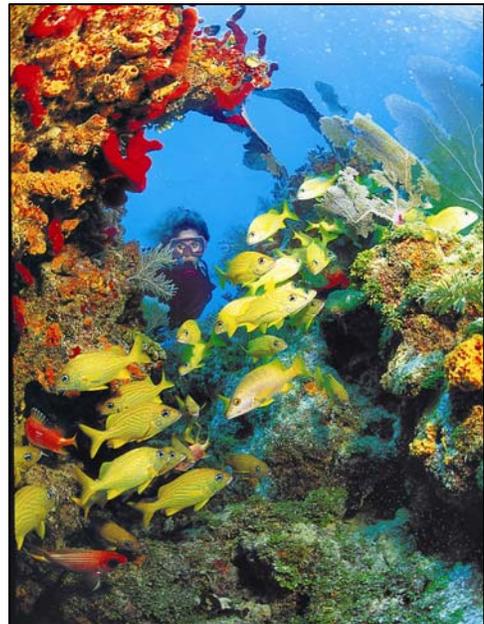


6.12 National Wildlife Refuges

The National Wildlife Refuge system is managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and includes four facilities in the Keys including Great White Heron National Wildlife Refuge, Key West National Wildlife Refuge, National Key Deer Refuge and the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge. The Key West facility of 200,000 acres (ac) is located on Big Pine Key and was the first established in the Keys and one of the earliest in the United States. Great White Heron also is located in Big Pine Key and encompasses almost 200,000 ac of water and islands. Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge is located in north Key Largo and is made up of 6,700 ac, including 650 ac of open water. National Key Deer Refuge is located on 9,200 ac of land on Big Pine Key. All improvements near these facilities must be coordinated with the USFWS.

6.13 National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary encompasses the 2,900 square miles of waters surrounding the Florida Keys and Dry Tortugas. The world famous Looe Key and Key Largo National Marine Sanctuaries became part of the larger Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary in 1990 at the time of its designation by Congress. The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary is managed by a federal/state cooperative agreement between the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and FDEP. This partnership also includes management of two Aquatic Preserves in the lower Keys.



6.14 Local, State, and Federal Permitting Agencies

Any projects undertaken within the FKSH Corridor will require environmental permits from the appropriate permitting agency having jurisdiction over the project location and the FDOT (for any project activity within the US 1 ROW). In addition, permits may need to be obtained from other federal and state agencies that have permitting authority within the corridor.

7.0 FUNDING AND PROMOTION

The funding and promotion of the Florida Keys Scenic Highway (FKSH) is a key component to accomplishing the vision and the long-term sustainability for the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA). This chapter is intended to update new relationships and/or new funding and promotional concepts to be used by the FKSCA.

7.1 Funding

Along with a reenergized FKSCA, there is a reemphasis on establishing partnerships for funding and promotional opportunities that support the vision of the corridor. The Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC), with its considerable resources, will play a critical partnering role in both funding and promotional partnerships.

The TDC's mission is to market and promote the Florida Keys to the world and "put heads in beds." They use the latest technologies and most talented staff to do just this. Advertising in travel publications, newspapers, on the internet and at trade shows around the world are just a few of the ways that they market the Keys to the world.



The TDC is funded in part through a county-wide bed tax. Monroe County collects a bed tax of three cents from each lodging facility in the Keys. The first two pennies are used by the TDC for generic promotion of Monroe County (all of the Keys) as a tourism destination to the Nation and the World. The other one penny is distributed to the District Area Committee (DAC) according to where it was collected (i.e., Key West percentage is always larger than the other Keys because they collect more bed tax). The DAC can use their portion to enhance and support the specific tourism development efforts of the District.

Several broad funding sources are also available for consideration by the FKSCA including:

- National programs
- State grants
- Transportation enhancement grants
- Local benefactors

National Programs

The FKSCA has observed that other designated Florida Scenic Highway's obtain program grants at the national level. Of particular interest to the FKSCA are grants available through the National Scenic Byways Program. As with most funding programs, these are competitively selected from applications received from around the country. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in partnership with state and regional programs has funds available in a number of relevant categories. A second potential funding resource could be federal funding opportunities that become available to resources that have been placed on the National Register

of Historic Places (NRHP). The FKSH has a number of designated resources and a number of potentially eligible resources along the corridor that may be eligible for this funding opportunity.

State Grants

The FKSCA will focus on funding opportunities that are closely aligned with its vision and goals. Of particular interest are funding programs that emphasize the protection and enhancement of the corridors unique resources. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) offers funding for worthy projects including enhancement and corridor signage. Additionally, the FDOT currently funds a part time Scenic Highway Coordinator position through Monroe County.

Local Benefactors

As with every volunteer organization, the FKSCA will look to local benefactors to help support the program and accomplish its goals. The FKSCA recently had a local benefactor create and publish a Corridor Membership brochure that has been used as a marketing tool for funding and volunteers.

7.2 Promotion

The FKSCA has access to the TDC's advertising and marketing resources for regional and worldwide materials distribution in both hard copy and digital media. TDC staff travels all over the world to market the Keys. The FKSCA will work to ensure that all TDC materials make reference to the Florida Keys Scenic Highway.

Currently TDC marketing materials (both hard copy and digital) are printed in multiple languages. The TDC web site allows for review in a variety of languages. The TDC has available for distribution world wide and locally in their visitor centers informational brochures printed in English, Spanish, German, Japanese and Swedish and other key languages to meet visitor needs.

During the designation phase, a promotional video was prepared for the corridor. Although slightly dated, this video provides the viewer with a unique glimpse of the corridor's unique resources. It is anticipated that this or an updated version of the video will be made part of the broad range of marketing materials to be used by the FKSCA for promotion of the corridor.

Other promotional materials include the FKSCA's recently developed marketing/recruitment brochure. The FKSCA has also developed strong ties to the local access television station. A series of interviews were recently conducted that advertised the corridor and a "community re-education program" that is currently being conducted by the FKSCA along the corridor.

8.0 RELATIONSHIP TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

According to the Florida Scenic Highway Manual elements of the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) update must be incorporated into the local government comprehensive plan(s) of participating local governments as part of the designation of a corridor as a Florida Keys Scenic Highway (FKSH). This is important since the comprehensive plan carries the force of law and provides the primary mechanism for establishing an enforceable CMP update. Incorporation of portions of the CMP update into the comprehensive plan fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership and ensures a commitment by local government(s) and partners to implement the actions outlined. Specific elements of the CMP update must be adopted into the local government comprehensive plan or it must be demonstrated that the comprehensive plan already includes provisions to protect the corridor.

As part of this CMP update, a review of the local government comprehensive development plans was undertaken. It was determined that all participating local governments have protective elements in their comprehensive development plans that are related to the FKSH.

8.1 Monroe County

The County completed an update of their Comprehensive Plan in February 2008 which will stand until 2010. Updates and changes occur in January and May. The next hearing cycle is January 21, 2009. Policy 105.1.2 in the Comprehensive Plan states that Monroe County “shall prepare design guidelines to ensure that future uses and development are compatible with scenic preservation and maintenance of the character of the casual island village atmosphere of the Florida Keys.” Currently the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) is working closely with the County Planning staff to recommend language that reflects the Florida Scenic Highway Manual guidance.

The County comprehensive plan currently includes a number of protective elements that afford the corridor protection until the comprehensive plan goes through the next round of updates. For example, objective 105.2 of Monroe County’s Comprehensive Plan states that the County “shall implement with assistance of the state and federal governments a Twenty-year Land Acquisition Program to: secure for conservation and passive recreation purposes any remaining privately-owned environmentally sensitive lands; retire development rights on privately owned vacant lands to limit further sprawl and equitably balance the rights of property owners with the long-term sustainability of the Keys man-made and natural systems. These objectives recognize the finite limits of the natural and man-made systems in the Keys.

The Conservation Element focuses on conservation, protection, and management of natural resources within the County in order to ensure that the highest level of environmental quality is maintained and that natural plant communities are used in all restoration areas. Specific agricultural and stormwater practices are recommended to facilitate and ensure surface water, wetland, and floodplain quality.

The principal purpose of the Monroe County’s recreation land use category is to provide for public and private activity-based and resource-based recreational facilities.

Policy 1201.3.8 states that park master plans shall be designed so as to avoid and/or mitigate adverse impacts of park use upon sensitive natural resources. Such areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

- High quality undisturbed pineland and hammock vegetation.
- Documented habitat of species designated as rare or endangered by the state and federal governments.
- Undisturbed beach/berm.
- Undisturbed mangrove, salt marsh, buttonwood and freshwater wetlands. Public use shall be directed away from or minimized in such areas through controlled access and limitations on permitted activities.

In January 1998, a Preservation Element was completed by Monroe County for inclusion in the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan.

Goal 104 of the plan states that Monroe County shall recognize, designate, protect, and preserve its historic resources. “Monroe County shall establish and maintain a comprehensive inventory of historic and archaeological resources, including buildings, structures, districts, sites, objects, and significant places.”

The Monroe County Growth Management Division has established an inventory of all known historic and archaeological resources using information provided by the Florida Master Site File (FMSF) and the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy surveys of the Keys.

The survey also identifies historic housing and defines the bounds of any potential historic districts such as those identified on Conch Key, in Islamorada, and in Marathon.

This element specifies restrictions on historic districts resulting from local historical designation and establishes exterior architectural standards to evaluate development proposals within designated historical districts with the intent of encouraging compatibility with the architectural features of historical significance to the particular district.

Monroe County has identified the old overseas railroad bridges for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as well as hurricane houses and public buildings (such as the Islamorada Library and the Tavernier Health Department), in addition to the hurricane memorial in Islamorada. All of which are within the FKSH corridor

As stated in the Historic Preservation Element, there are state and federal rules and regulations regarding historic resource protection, which are upheld by Monroe County and its citizens, in accordance with the law.

The Historic Preservation Element recommends the use of legal and financial incentives to assist in the preservation effort; and encourage the use of easements, restrictive covenants, purchase of development rights, rehabilitation tax credits, Community Development Block Grant funds, tax increment financing, and revolving funds to promote and accomplish preservation of significant resources.

While Scenic Highways are not specifically addressed in Monroe County’s 2010 Comprehensive Plan, the Recreation and Open Space Element of the plan does have extensive goals on providing passive community recreation and open space in an environmentally compatible manner. This is stated in goal 1201: “Monroe County shall provide a recreation and open space system to conserve valuable natural resources and to provide recreational opportunities adequate to serve the present and future population of Monroe County, including permanent residents and visitors.”

Monroe County’s Plan is consistently dedicated to the protection of parks, open vistas, and other elements that are compatible with a Scenic Corridor. The Recreation and Open Space element expresses the county’s intent to upgrade and expand existing recreational facilities, to provide educational opportunities related to the county’s natural, historic and cultural resources, and to work to protect, enhance and expand open spaces, environmentally sensitive lands and greenways. In addition, the element contains a commitment to working with various public government agencies and private partners to carry out the development of all parks and programs.

8.2 Key West

Protective elements in the current City of Key West Comprehensive Plan includes general policies that specifically address historic preservation, since a portion of US 1 (Truman Avenue) is located in the historic district of the City, this offers specific protection to the



portion of the corridor that lies within the City. The FKSCA will work with the City planning staff to incorporate additional language that specifically meets the requirements of the Florida Scenic Highway Program (FSHP). The City is currently working to address several growth management/developmental requirements and cannot update their plan until these issues are addressed. This process is ongoing and is expected to be completed in 2010.

8.3 Key Colony Beach

Of all of the municipalities located in the Keys, Key Colony Beach is the only one to not actually be located on US 1. It is connected to US 1 by a single access point and is actually a private island on the Atlantic Ocean side. This city of 800 year-round residents does not have a Comprehensive Plan. Instead, it governs itself with a five-member board of City Commissioners, Land Development Codes and Code of Ordinances. Neither of these regulatory documents currently addresses FSHP policies specifically. The FKSCA will work with the leaders of this community for their support to be documented in the appropriate policies.

8.4 Marathon

The City of Marathon's Comprehensive Plan was adopted July 7, 2005. Current policies support the elements of the FKSH in the areas of traffic, parks and corridor beautification. The FKSCA will work with the planning staff to incorporate current FSHP policies in support of the FKSH.

8.5 Layton

The City of Layton Comprehensive Plan currently includes two policies which specifically address items related to the City's commitment to support the FKSH. These include:

- Objective 7, Policy 7.c: Encourage the State and County to establish a tree planting program in conjunction with bicycle and pedestrian paths along US 1.
- Policy 1.g: The City shall maintain the existing bike/pedestrian path along US 1 and, then approving developments along US 1 shall ensure that such development does not interfere with the function of the path.

The FKSCA will continue to work with the planning staff to incorporate current FSHP policies in support of the FKSH.

8.6 Islamorada, Village of Islands

Islamorada, Village of Islands includes US 1 as a scenic highway in its vision statement. Additionally, the comprehensive plan includes several policies that specifically address items related to the preservation and enhancement of the FKSH.

9.0 BACKGROUND CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

The Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP) seeks to designate roadways for the protection and promotion of their resources, yet corridor activities must not hinder the purpose of the roadway, which is to move people and goods in a safe and efficient manner. Therefore, it is essential that the current and future conditions of the road, its right-of-way (ROW) and adjacent land be understood. Knowledge of roadway and ROW physical characteristics, traffic volumes and levels of service (LOS), accident locations and other data help the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) establish various operational factors that allow the road to work in a safe and efficient manner. Additionally, this information will assist the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) and their scenic highway partners in decision-making about where and how to place corridor amenities.

9.1 Roadway/Right-of-Way Description

The transportation backbone of the Florida Keys is US 1. For its 113 miles (mi) extending in a southwesterly direction from north of Key Largo to Key West, US 1 serves as Monroe County's primary vehicular link to the mainland and provides access to all of the Florida Keys including the incorporated municipalities of Islamorada, Village of Islands, Key Colony Beach, Key West, Layton and Marathon. US 1 is located within a half-mile of Florida Bay, the Gulf of Mexico, or the Atlantic Ocean along most of its length, and its 41 bridges provide panoramic views of the water and adjacent keys.

9.2 Functional Classification

US 1, a state Federal-Aid Primary roadway, is functionally classified by the FDOT as an urban principal arterial. However, due to the unusual geography of the Keys, the highway really functions as an arterial, collector and "Main Street" all rolled into one. The majority of the highway is two lanes, with only about 50 mi of four-lane segments (on Key Largo, in Marathon, Bahia Honda Key, Boca Chica Key and Stock Island). About 22 mi of the two-lane segments offer continuous turn lanes, on Plantation Key, Upper Matecumbe Key and Summerland Key.

9.3 US 1 Right-of-Way

US 1 varies in width of ROW from 50 feet (ft) in Key West to an average 700-ft width on the Seven Mile Bridge (mile-marker [MM] 40-47). For the most part the ROW width throughout the corridor is over 100 ft; however, this data is misleading due to the fact that not all of the stated ROW width is upland terrain. Some of the ROW is made up of jurisdictional wetlands or submerged lands, reducing the "usable" portion on either side of the pavement in some situations. Because of the characteristics of the roadway ROW, any activities that occur within its boundaries must be permitted not only by FDOT, but also in some cases by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) (for bridge permits).

9.4 Signalized Intersections

The majority of the intersections along US 1 are unsignalized; however, most of the major intersections provide turn lanes that offer a level of safety for turns. Within the corridor, ten major intersections are fully signalized, and another nine have flashing operation signals for either emergency or pedestrian use (excluding Key West).

9.5 Bridges

There are 41 bridges within the US 1 corridor from Key Largo to Key West. Their combined length is approximately 19 mi, or about 18 percent of the total length of US 1 in Monroe County. Most of the bridges were replaced in the late 1970s and 1980s and remain limited to two lanes, with only the Marvin Adams, Vaca Cut, Bahia Honda, Boca Chica, Cow Key Channel, and Salt Run bridges widened to four lanes.

Within the US 1 corridor, 23 old Keys bridges were abandoned in the 1980s. FDOT converted eight of these bridges into fishing piers, removing some of the spans for safety or navigational reasons, leaving the remaining 15 bridges accessible by foot. In 1997, the Old Keys Bridges Task Force was appointed in response to public demand to use the Old Keys Bridges. The Task Force developed recommendations for upkeep and use of the bridges and changes to legislation that would allow for use as recreational and historical resources. During the 1990s the FDOT completed transfer of title to the abandoned bridges (with the exception of a portion of Seven Mile Bridge between Pigeon Key and Marathon) to the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, which is staffed by the Department of Environmental Protection.

9.6 Pedestrian Facilities

Much of the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail is in design at this time. There are 60 miles of existing bike/pedestrian paths spread throughout the Keys that are included in the project. Most of these trails will be upgraded over the next few years. An additional 40 miles of new trail will be built over the next several years.



9.7 Roadway Maintenance

The FDOT maintains US 1 and the associated vehicular bridge structures in Monroe County. FDOT performs such functions as litter pick-up, shoulder repair, safety set-ups, mowing and brush control. FDOT also manages a variety of contracts for mowing, asphalt repair and striping. Maintenance activities within the scenic highway corridor are compatible and consistent with the FSHP intent to “protect, maintain, preserve and enhance” intrinsic resources.

9.8 Corridor Safety

Recently the Florida Department of Motor Safety did a study of highway safety issues in Monroe County as part of a statewide study. For Monroe County altogether there were 1,409 crashes in 2007, and 208 of those were alcohol-related, while 21 were fatal, according to the report. There were five motorcycle deaths, two bicycle deaths and four pedestrian deaths associated with US 1 in Monroe County in 2007. There also were 70 bicycle injuries and 36 pedestrian injuries.

The report did not encompass each city in the Keys, but did include the larger areas. These include:

- Islamorada: 125 crashes
- Boca Chica: 3 crashes
- Marathon: 130 crashes
- Plantation: 1 crash
- Key Largo: 236 crashes
- Key West: 607 crashes
- Tavernier: 36 crashes
- Layton: 3 crashes

9.9 Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety

Accident data, exclusively for US 1 in Monroe County, were obtained from FDOT for use in the Monroe County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (October 1997).

Almost consistently during the five-year period analyzed, bicycle accidents accounted for two-thirds of the total bicycle and pedestrian accidents on US 1 each of the years. Of the accidents identified, those that took place at intersections of US 1 ranged from 36 percent to 59 percent of the total bicycle and pedestrian accidents each year. Another 12 to 27 percent of the accidents took place at driveways accessing US 1. Very few of the accidents took place on bridges. Most of the accidents took place during the daytime and on dry pavement.

The FKSCA will work with FDOT, Monroe County and local governments to identify unsafe locations along the corridor. Advocating for informational materials to warn residents and visitors of these areas and support the prioritization of funding to address high accident locations as needed. Completion of the Florida Keys Overseas Heritage Trail should help address many of these issues.

10.0 COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

A Community Participation Program (CPP) has been developed by the Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) to outline community participation tools that can be utilized to meet the requirements of the Florida Scenic Highway Program (FSHP) and support the vision and goals of the FKSCA. The objective of this CPP is to inform the general public, special interest groups, local businesses and business groups, local governments, planning organizations and agencies of the FKSCA's efforts to accomplish their vision for the corridor. It is only through community education and interaction that consensus can be built to ensure the success of the FKSCA.

10.1 Public Outreach Tools

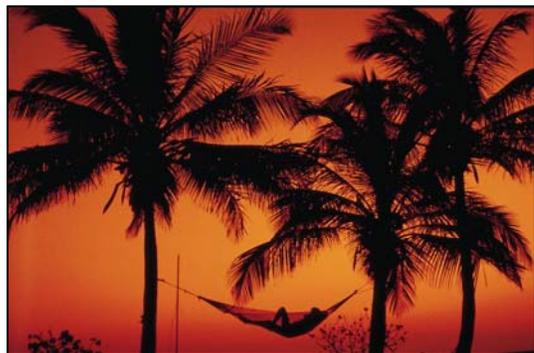
One of the FKSCA's overall goals is to engage the community to the maximum extent possible and to act with the support of the community in the implementation of the Corridor Management Plan (CMP) update. The CPP provides detailed guidance for conducting community awareness and encouraging participation in the implementation of the CMP update.

10.2 FKSCA Meetings

The FKSCA maintains a yearly meeting schedule. Currently meetings are generally held monthly. These meetings are open to the public and are advertised in advance. The meetings are typically held on the first Thursday of each month at the Monroe County Government in Marathon. This facility meets Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. All meetings have an agenda and meeting minutes are prepared and maintained. Minutes are available for review. The By-Laws also specify that an annual general membership meeting be held each February.

10.3 Identifying the Community

The FKSCA currently maintains a mailing list of all stakeholders that have an interest in the designation and the long-term success of the corridor. The FKSCA will continue to update and expand this stakeholder list to include other potentially interested parties and organizations as appropriate. At a minimum, this database will be updated on a yearly basis. Additional, potential additions to this expanded list could include:



- Agencies with jurisdiction over portions of the corridor
- Business Owners
- Chambers of Commerce
- Specific advocacy groups (e.g., historic, biking, ecotourism)

- Churches/Religious Groups
- City Halls
- Civic Centers
- Civic/Fraternal Organizations
- Clubs and Other Special Interest Groups
- Economic Development Agencies
- Elected Officials
- Employers of large local companies
- Environmental groups and conservation organizations
- Governments with jurisdiction over portions of the corridor
- Historic Sites
- Home Owner's Associations
- Land Developers
- Libraries
- Regional Planning Council
- Schools/Local School Boards
- Visitors' Centers/Tourism Agencies

10.4 Public Meetings

Public meetings may be scheduled, as necessary, to present and implement the goals of the group, inform the public of the designation status, receive input, and request community consensus and support. For significant issues, an informational public meeting may be considered to collect additional input. These meetings would be in addition to regularly scheduled meetings. Public meetings require significant planning and preparations and the following list of items that are considered.

Date, Time and Location

Public meetings should be scheduled on a day/evening during the work week, Monday through Thursday, to facilitate maximum opportunity for the public to participate. An attempt should be made to ensure that the meeting is held during a time of year when seasonal residents are most likely to be in the area.

The meeting facility should be based on anticipated attendance, proximity to the project, community involvement, safety (such as adequate parking lot lighting), availability and easy accessibility. The meeting should also be held at a site that is ADA compliant and provide "reasonable accommodation" and access for physically handicapped and disabled persons wishing to attend and participate. The meeting room should have ample open space to accommodate workstations, display boards, mingling, and some seating. A sound system should be available to insure all attendees are able to clearly hear and understand the speaking portions of the meeting as well as the presentation. Outdoor signage should be provided to direct attendees to the meeting location.

Meeting Format

The format for an informational meeting should be one that facilitates good interaction and communication with the attendees. A brief PowerPoint presentation may be developed and display boards and project documents regarding the designation process and status of the corridor should be made available for review and discussion. Handouts should be provided; outlining the meeting purpose/agenda as well as corridor specific information.

Visualization Techniques

Examples of visualization techniques include sketches, drawings, artist renderings, physical models and maps, simulated photos, videos, computer modeled manipulation and computer simulation. Visualization techniques will be developed, as appropriate, for the public meeting. The FKSCA has developed a Corridor Video that works well as an information tool.

Survey/Comment Forms

One way to monitor public support is to administer an opinion survey to local residents and visitors. Questions may be asked such as: “What is your impression of the corridor?” or “What corridor resources warrant recognition and protection?” Survey questionnaires may be developed and made available at the public meeting with additional space for personal comments. Survey questionnaires could also be mailed out with the invitational letters/newsletters.

Follow-up

At the conclusion of the public meeting, meeting minutes should be prepared to document the meeting and summarize the communities’ participation. The minutes should contain an account of the overall activities and techniques utilized to involve the local communities. Results of the public meeting should then be made available for public review.

10.5 Information Exchange

The FKSCA will develop and issue pertinent information regarding the corridor on an “as needed” basis. Formats could include; newsletters, brochures, fact sheets, video, and press releases. The distribution list for these materials will be based on the stakeholder distribution list and the identification of other issue specific interested parties.

10.6 Corridor Video

The FKSCA previously developed a Corridor Video as part of the State designation process. This video could be used as an information tool to educate interested groups on the corridor and the goals of the FKSCA Uses for this video include:

- Group meetings
- Speakers bureau presentations
- Public access channel

- Monroe County Tourist Development Council (TDC)
- Grant applications
- Visit Florida
- Potential sponsors for the corridor

10.7 Speakers Bureau

FKSCA members will be available to provide information on the corridor at outside meetings and community gatherings. Arrangements and approval for the speaking engagements will be coordinated and approved beforehand through the FKSCA President. These gatherings are good opportunities to distribute corridor brochures and present the corridor video.

10.8 Website

The FKSCA currently has a basic corridor website. The site includes documents prepared for designation of the corridor and photos of the corridor. It is proposed that this site be upgraded and ultimately tied into the TDC website and others to provide far-reaching information on the corridor.

10.9 Sponsorships of Community Events

The FKSCA will support local events that highlight the Corridor. These events may include corridor clean-up, fund raising, festivals and other events that are consistent with the Goals, Objectives, and Strategies.

10.10 Newspaper/Press Coverage

Because of its world-wide reputation the FKSH Corridor has the potential for significant exposure to newspaper and press coverage. It is possible that media personnel will seek out members of the FKSCA. It is also possible that the FKSCA will need to call upon the press to obtain coverage of key events and milestones. When dealing with the news media it is important to maintain a consistent story. All requests for interviews should be cleared through the FKSCA President.

10.11 Letters/Newsletters/Flyers

In order to distribute information about the upcoming public meeting; letters, newsletters or flyers will be forwarded to organizations such as local civic groups, churches, schools, neighborhood associations, etc. These organizations may publish the information in their newsletters as well as upload the information to websites. Any such correspondence will be coordinated through the FKSCA. Additionally, letters or newsletters will be mailed to individuals on the stakeholder list and other parties or organizations expressing an interest in the particular issue being discussed.

10.12 Guiding Principles

- Florida's Sunshine Law: All public participation activities and events will follow Florida's Sunshine Law (Section 286.011, Florida Statutes). This law requires that meetings must be open to the public, reasonable advance notice of the meetings must be given, and that meetings and/or other public involvement activities will be documented.
- Plain Language: All forms of notification to the public should comply with the Governor's Plain Language Initiative (Executive Order 07-01). The Executive Order requires clear language containing only necessary information presented in a logical sequence. The reader should be able to understand what the purpose and need of the project is. It also calls for short sentences written in the active voice that make it clear who is responsible for what.
- ADA Compliance: The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 requires that all facilities and programs provide for accessibility to persons with disabilities. The ADA stipulates that any place of business, regardless of size or number of employees, both public and private, must provide equal access and "reasonable accommodations" for both the general and disabled public.
- FSHP: Follow all FSHP and other applicable Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Manual instructions for advertising and conducting public meetings.

11.0 CORRIDOR EXTENSION

The Florida Keys Scenic Corridor Alliance (FKSCA) also proposes to use this update to extend the limits of the corridor northward from its current end point at mile-marker (MM) 106 to MM 110. This is an extension of approximately 4 miles (mi). This extension allows for the inclusion of the beauty of the Upper Keys, north of Key Largo, including the Jewfish Creek area, Lake Surprise, Everglades National Park and the Crocodile Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

In support of this proposed 4 mi extension, the FKSCA has prepared a brief inventory and corridor assessment of the segments strengths and weaknesses based on methodology recommended in the Florida Scenic Highway Manual.

11.1 Corridor Impression Survey

The purpose of this survey is to record the travelers impressions of the proposed corridor and its featured resources. This survey identifies important features and assesses the quality of the corridor. For this proposed corridor addition the survey noted the newly constructed high-level bridge at Jewfish Creek and the associated wetland/open water viewshed that it offers. The survey also noted the negative impact on the viewshed that powerlines along the bayside of the roadway present. A summary of results of this survey by MM are included in Appendix G.



11.2 Field Inventory

The Field Inventory attempts to locate all features within the corridor that should be considered, not just those that are noticeable at first. In essence, the inventory highlights factual information about the corridor. It accounts for the individual features or resources within the corridor and measures their frequency of appearance and their visibility and/or accessibility from the roadway. This inventory attempts to identify positive and negative features of the corridor. For this proposed corridor addition, the survey noted the newly constructed high-level bridge at Jewfish Creek and the associated wetland/open water viewshed that it offers as a positive while remaining construction activity associated with the project as a negative. A summary of results of this inventory by MM are included in Appendix G.