

Florida Scenic Highways Program

Martin Grade Scenic Highway



Eligibility
Application

MARTIN GRADE SCENIC HIGHWAY

Eligibility Application

Submitted to:

Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E.
Scenic Highway Coordinator, District 4
Florida Department of Transportation
33400 West Commercial Boulevard
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309-3421

Submitted by:

Lee Jones and Nancy Oliver, Co-Chairs
Martin Grade Corridor Advocacy Group
C/O Sustaining Community Lands, Inc.
P. O. Box 1517
Palm City, FL 34991
info@SCLands.org
(772) 708-3021

I – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Eligibility Application was produced by Sustaining Community Lands, Inc., for the Martin Grade Scenic Highway Corridor Advocacy Group.

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Corridor Advocacy Group acknowledges and thanks the Martin County Board of County Commissioners for their continuing support for the Scenic Highway designation: Doug Smith, Ed Ciampi, Patrick Hayes, Susan Valliere, and Sarah Heard.

The Corridor Advocacy Group also thanks The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, which provided partial funding, and the following elected officials, governmental subdivisions, and community organizations for their assistance and support in completing this application:

- United States Congressman Tom Rooney
- Florida State Senator, District 28, Joe Negron
- Florida State Representative, District 82, William Snyder
- Florida State Representative, District 81, Adam Fetterman

- City of Stuart
- Town of Jupiter Island
- Town of Sewall's Point
- South Florida Water Management District

- Audubon of Martin County
- Business Development Board of Martin County
- Economic Council of Martin County
- Florida Department of Transportation, District 4
- Historical Society of Martin County
- Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society
- Martin County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Palm City Chamber of Commerce
- Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Corridor Advocacy Group also acknowledges and thanks the following for the use of their photographs: Nancy Oliver, Thomas Winter, Tom Claud, Paul Strauss, Robert Dawson, Tommy Markham, the Florida Archives, Sandra Henderson Thurlow, The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, and the South Florida Water Management District.

September 2010

 **SUSTAINING COMMUNITY LANDS, INC.**

P.O. Box 1517
Palm City, FL 34991
www.SCLands.org
(772) 708-3021

II - TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Title	Page
I –	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	i
II -	TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
III -	LIST OF APPENDICES	iv
IV -	LIST OF TABLES, EXHIBITS AND FIGURES	vi
V -	ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION FORM	viii
VI -	MARTIN GRADE CORRIDOR ADVOCACY GROUP	ix
SECTION 2.11 -	SHAC COMMENTS TO LETTER OF INTENT AND RESPONSE.....	x
SECTION 2.12 -	BACKGROUND ASSESSMENT	1
SECTION 2.12.1.A -	ROADWAY DESCRIPTION.....	2
(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #5)	2
SECTION 2.12.1.A –	RIGHT OF WAY DESCRIPTION	8
(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #5)	8
SECTION 2.12.2 -	LAND USE.....	11
SECTION 2.12.3 -	SIGNAGE	16
SECTION 2.12.4 -	SAFETY ISSUES.....	17
(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 3)	17
SECTION 2.12.5 -	TRAFFIC VOLUME/USER TYPES	19
SECTION 2.12.6 -	LEVELS OF SERVICE.....	20
SECTION 2.12.7 -	TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.....	22
SECTION 2.12.8 -	ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	26
SECTION 2.12.9 -	SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.....	27
SECTION 2.12.10 -	TOURISM AND USER FACILITIES	28
SECTION 2.12.11 -	OTHER PROGRAMS.....	33
SECTION 2.13 -	INTRINSIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND DESIGNATION CRITERIA.....	35
SECTION 2.13.1 & 2 -	INTRINSIC CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES.....	36
(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 1)	36
SECTION 2.13.3 -	INTRINSIC ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES.....	38
SECTION 2.13.4 –	RECREATIONAL RESOURCES	39

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #6).....39

SECTION 2.13.5 & 6 - INTRINSIC SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES.....40

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 1); (UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #4); (UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #6).....40

SECTION 2.13.7 – DOCUMENTING THE INTRINSIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT47

 2.13.7.A - CORRIDOR IMPRESSIONS SURVEY SUMMARY47

 2.13.7.B - FIELD INVENTORY FORM SUMMARY49

 2.13.7.C - RESEARCH.....50

 2.13.7.D - UNIVERSAL CRITERIA.....52

 2.13.7.E - RESOURCE ASSESSMENT – SEEKING DESIGNATION IN THE SCENIC
CATEGORY52

 2.13.7.F –CORRIDOR VIDEO.....53

SECTION 2.14 - CORRIDOR VISION.....54

SECTION 2.15 - CORRIDOR MISSION STATEMENT.....60

SECTION 2.16 - INITIAL MARTIN GRADE SCENIC CORRIDOR GOALS61

SECTION 2.17 - THE MARTIN GRADE STORY66

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #2).....66

SECTION 2.18 - CORRIDOR ADVOCACY GROUP73

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 7).....73

SECTION 2.19 - CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM75

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #8).....75

SECTION 2.20 - LOCAL SUPPORT77

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #9).....77

SECTION 2.21 AND 2.23 - CORRIDOR PROTECTION TECHNIQUES & RELATIONSHIP OF
THE CORRIDOR TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN79

SECTION 2.22 - FUNDING AND PROMOTION.....83

SECTION 2.24 - TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR THE DESIGNATION PHASE85

III - LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Description
1	Right of Way
2	Land Use and Zoning
3	Property Ownership and Parcel Size
4	Martin County Comprehensive Plan Policies governing Agricultural Lands
5	Permitted Uses in Agricultural Land Use and Zoning Districts
6	Martin County Land Development Regulations governing Signs
7	Martin County Road Level Of Service Inventory Dated 2009
8	Bird List From "A Handbook For Sportsmen And Settlers" Compiled By Charles Hallock In 1876
9	Martin Grade Bird Lists Compiled By Audubon Of Martin In Quarterly Bird Counts
10	Audubon Of Martin County Letter Of Endorsement
11	Plants Identified By Biologist, Anne Cox, On The Martin Grade Corridor
12	Martin County Chapter Of The Florida Native Plant Society Letter Of Endorsement
13	Inaugural CAG And Advisory Committee
14	Letter Of Intent
15	Scenic Highway Advisory Committee Comments To Letter Of Intent
16	Martin Grade Scenic Highway Project Brochure
17	Martin Grade Scenic Highway Project Executive Summary
18	Local Support Documentation
19	Legislative Support
20	CIS Originals and CIS Summary
21	Draft MPO 2007 Letter of Support
22	Eligibility Application with Agenda Item 8.10.2010

- 23 Field Inventory Summary and Form
- 24 Petition from SMARTS 7.21.2010
- 25 Resolution Making Martin Grade Scenic Corridor
- 26 Martin County BCC Agenda Items March 2008 & August 2010

27 **Electronic Appendices on CD**

- Appendix A Allapattah Flats Brochure With Maps And Regulations
- Appendix B 2030 Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan
- Appendix C Lakeside Ranch Information Presentation By SFWMD
- Appendix D Allapattah Flats Bird List Compiled By SFWMD
- Appendix E Natural Resources Depicted In Photos/PDF
- Appendix F Miscellaneous News Articles Demonstrating Community Support
- Appendix G MGSB Videos
- Appendix H Intrinsic Resources Visual Summary/Aerials

IV - LIST OF TABLES, EXHIBITS AND FIGURES

Figure #	Title/Description
1	Map of Martin Grade shown as Dotted Red Line
2	Photo of Martin Grade's Mystical Twilight by Nancy Oliver
3	Photo of Glimpses of Cattle between the Cabbage Palms along the Martin Grade
4	Photo of Gaps in the Martin Grade Tree Canopy
5	Photo of Allapattah Flats by SFWMD
6	Photo of Trees in the Right-of-Way
7	Photo of Martin Grade by Nancy Oliver
8	Maintenance Survey Cover: Martin Grade shown
9	Map of CERP Lands
10	Table of Land Use Ratios in Martin Grade Area
11	Map of Martin County MPO, Population Increase 2000 - 2030
12	Map of Treasure Coast, Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities and Greenways
13	Table of 2007 Traffic Volumes Along CR 714 (Martin Highway)
14	Map of 2030 Needs Assessment
15	Martin County Proposed Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, AgTEC
16	Depiction of Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area
17	Depiction of Allapattah Flats Fox Brown Road Equestrian Trail
18	Depiction of Allapattah Flats Nature and Biking Trail
19	Depiction of Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST)
20	Photo of Gethsemane Ranch
21	Photo of Approach to Dunklin Memorial Church
22	Photo of Waterspouts during 1928 Hurricane. Tommy Markham Photos
23	Photo of the Martin Grade Tree Canopy by Thomas Winter
24	Photo of Hazy Morning on the Martin Grade by Tom Claud
25	Photo of Early 1900's Hunting Party
26	Photo of a Steamboat on Lake Okeechobee
27	Photo of Sandhill Cranes by Paul Strauss
28	Photo of Wood Stork by Paul Strauss
29	Photo of Fawn at Allapattah Flats by Paul Strauss
30	Photo of Cattle at Allapattah Flats by Paul Strauss

31	Martin County 5-Foot Contour Elevations
32	Photo of Flowers at Allapattah Flats by Paul Strauss
33	Typical Corridor Impressions Survey Form (CIS)
34	Photo of an Allapattah Flats Sunset by Paul Strauss
35	Range Cow in the Morning on the Allapattah Flats. Photo by Tom Claud
36	Photo of Dappled Light through Martin Grade Canopy by Nancy Oliver
37-43	Tables with Goals
44	Depiction of Lake Okeechobee region ca 1820
45	Photo of Martin Grade, circa 1930
46	Photo of Florida Cowboys 1895. Frederick Remington Sketch
47	Photo of an Early Florida Cracker Cabin
48	Photo of a Pineapple Plantation
49	Signed Eligibility Application, CAG List & BCC Agenda
50-54	Martin County Land Development Regulations
55	AGTEC Comp Plan Amendment

V - ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION FORM



STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
ELIGIBILITY APPLICATION
Florida Scenic Highways Program

FORM 650-050-02
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT
OGC - 08/96

Applicant seeking National Designation?
 Yes No

Submission of this Eligibility Application form and its accompanying Eligibility Documentation verifies that designation as a Florida Scenic Highway is being sought for the corridor identified below. Please prepare and submit this application to your District Scenic Highways Coordinator according to the guidance provided in Section 2.7 Eligibility Application and Documentation Format of the Program Manual.

Roadway/Route Number and Name - Provide the state and US road number (if applicable) and the local or any regionally recognized roadway name.

The corridor is a portion of County Road 714 in western Martin County, Florida. It is the far western portion of the road named the "Martin Highway" and it is locally referred to as "The Martin Grade."

Scenic Highway Name - Provide the potential scenic highway name.

We are requesting that the Scenic Highway name be "The Martin Grade Scenic Highway."

Roadway/Corridor Limits - Define the specific roadway/corridor limits (beginning/ending termini) and length using measured distances from recognizable geographic locations and/or mile posts. Refer to the corridor limits definition determined in Chapter 6 - Intrinsic Resource Assessment.

The eastern terminus of the proposed Martin Grade Scenic Highway is the intersection of County Road 714 and State Road 609, which is named "Allapattah Road" and is regionally called "The Citrus Highway." The Corridor runs due west for approximately 12 miles to the intersection of County Road 714 and State Road 710, which is locally called "Warfield Boulevard." At an estimated average visual depth of 1/4 mile on each side, the total scenic corridor area is approximately 6 square miles. However, it provides access to thousands of acres of conservation lands most of which are not visible from the roadway.

We verify that all information stated on this form and/or included in the Eligibility Documentation are, to the best of our knowledge, true representations of the corridor and the resources for which designation as a Florida Scenic Highway is being sought.

Fancy Owen, Co-Chair 8-10-2010
Corridor Advocacy Group Chairperson Date

[Signature] 8/10/10
Local General Purpose Government Representative Date

Sheryl V. G. COUNTY COMMISSIONER, C.A.G. 8/10/2010
Local General Purpose Government Representative Date

Additional Information - On an attached sheet, provide the names, titles, addresses and phone numbers for the following:
1) CAG Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, other officers/committee heads and remaining membership and 2) additional local general purpose government representatives with signature.



VI - MARTIN GRADE CORRIDOR ADVOCACY GROUP

Corridor Advocacy Group Members	Advisory Board
<p>Nancy Oliver, Co-Chair 4502 Wild Turkey Lane Okeechobee, FL 3494 Phone: 772-597-0050 Cell: 561-596-8211 Nancy@OliverDesignGroup.com</p>	<p>Mary Dawson, Chairperson Sustaining Community Lands P.O. Box 1517 Palm City, FL 34991 772-708-3021 medawson@usa.net</p>
<p>Lee Jones, Co-Chair 3505 SW Buckskin Road Okeechobee, FL 34974 Phone: 772-597-3305 Cell: 239-728-7241 leecjones@me.com</p>	<p>David Knight Environmental Planner Stuart, FL david@knight-family.com</p>
<p>Mona Schwall, Secretary 3301 SW Dunklin Avenue Okeechobee, FL 34974 Phone: 772-597-1758 Cell: 772-215-6489 dsfamily6@onearrow.net</p>	<p>Nick Blount FPL Manager, External Affairs Florida Power & Light 1401 SE Monterey Rd Stuart, FL 34994 772-781-3118 N.L.Nick.Blount@fpl.com</p>
<p>Martin County Commissioner Ed Ciampi Martin County Administrative Center 2401 SE Monterey Road Stuart, FL 34996 772-221-1357 ECiampi@martin.fl.us</p>	<p>Bijaya "BJ" Kattel, Ph.D. Recreation Planner Land Stewardship Division South Florida Water Management District 3301 Gun Club Road West Palm Beach, FL 33416 561-682-6640 bjkattel@sfwmd.gov</p>
<p>Brian Powers P.O. Box 8 Indiantown, FL 34956 (772) 597-2268 Fax (772) 597-2068 indgas@onearrow.net</p>	<p>Robert Dawson Scenic Highway Project Manager Sustaining Community Lands, Inc P.O. Box 1517 Palm City, FL 34991 818-720-5212 robertdawson77@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Sub-Committee Members Jorge Sanchez Melissa Powers Rose Bragg Lora Elliott Peggy Hall</p>	<p>Legal Advisor Peggy Wood, Esq Caldwell Pacetti Edwards Schoech & Viator LLP West Palm Beach, FL www.caldwellpacetti.com</p>

SECTION 2.11 - SHAC COMMENTS TO LETTER OF INTENT AND RESPONSE



Florida Department of Transportation

CHARLIE CRIST
GOVERNOR

DISTRICT SECRETARY – DISTRICT 4
3400 West Commercial Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33309-3421
Telephone: (954) 777-4110/Fax: (954) 777-4197
Internet Email: james.wolfe@dot.state.fl.us
Toll Free Number: (866) 336-8435

STEPHANIE C. KOPELOUSOS
SECRETARY

May 8, 2008

Mr. Lee Jones, Chair
Corridor Advocacy Group
3400 SW Corporate Way
Palm City, Florida 34990

Dear Mr. Jones:

**SUBJECT: Letter of Intent for Designation as a Florida Scenic Highway
County Road 714 (Martin Grade)
Martin County**

This letter is to confirm that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) has received and reviewed the County Road 714 (Martin Grade) Letter of Intent for designation as a Florida Scenic Highway in Martin County. It is our understanding that you are proposing the designation from State Road 710 (Warfield Highway) to County Road 609 (Allapattah Rd.), a distance of approximately 12 miles.

The Department, in coordination with the Scenic Highways Advisory Committee (SHAC), has no comments or questions at this time. As detailed in the Florida Scenic Highway Program Manual, the Corridor Advocacy Group's (CAG) next task will be to complete and submit the Eligibility Application.

Thank you for your interest in this program. If you have any questions, please contact Mrs. Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E., District 4 Scenic Highways Coordinator at 954-777-4336.

Sincerely

James A. Wolfe, P.E.
District Secretary
District Four

JAW:bcm

cc: Mariano Berrios, State Scenic Highways Coordinator
Gerry O'Reilly, P.E., Director of Transportation Development, District Four
Gustavo Schmidt, P.E., District Planning and Environmental Engineer, District Four
Paul Lampley, P.E., District Project Development Engineer, District Four
Beatriz Caicedo-Maddison, P.E, District Coordinator, District Four

www.dot.state.fl.us

SECTION 2.12 - BACKGROUND ASSESSMENT

SECTION 2.12.1.A - ROADWAY DESCRIPTION

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #5 – THE ROADWAY GENERALLY SHOULD BE MORE THAN ONE MILE IN LENGTH AND, IF APPROPRIATE, PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE RESOURCES).

The purpose of this Application is to establish that the Martin Grade, County Road 714 between County Road 609 and State Road 710 in western Martin County, Florida, is eligible for designation as a Florida Scenic Highway in the Scenic Category.

The Martin Grade is an arterial route that connects the City of Stuart, which is 15 miles to the east on the Atlantic coast, and Okeechobee City, which is 12 miles to the northwest on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee. Near its center point, the Corridor intersects with Fox Brown Road, which travels ten miles to the south to Indiantown, which is on the Intercoastal Waterway that connects the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean.

Martin Grade Corridor Length and Termini

The eastern terminus of this proposed Scenic Highway is the intersection of County Road 714 and County Road 609, which is named “Allapattah Road” and is regionally called “The Citrus Highway.” The Corridor runs due west for approximately 12 miles to the intersection of County Road 714 and State Road 710, which is locally called “Warfield Boulevard.”

These termini were chosen because they mark the historical termini of the roadway known as the Martin Grade which was a two-rut, cut-and-grub road through woods and swamp from the 1920’s until the 1950’s and a graded sand road from then until the mid-1990’s.

When the road was finally paved over a period of years, it was not paved in a conventional road cross section because the residents of the County demanded that the County find a way to improve the road without destroying its tree canopy. As a result, the termini of the Scenic Corridor have historical significance to the community in addition to marking the ends of a road corridor that is physically and visually different from all of the other roads in the area.



Figure 1: Map of Martin Grade shown as dotted red line

Martin Grade Corridor Width

Viewshed:



Vista depth on the Martin Grade varies depending on the density of the tree canopy which lines the roadway, the density of the vegetation lining the ditches, and the nature of the rural lands that are visible through these visual obstacles. At an estimated average depth of 1/4 mile of viewshed on each side, the total Scenic Corridor area is approximately 6 square miles.

Figure 2: Martin Grade's mystical twilight. Photo by Nancy Oliver.

Gaps:

Although there are gaps in the tree canopy, those gaps do not detract from the scenic nature of the drive. To the contrary, those gaps open up scenic vistas or epitomize the changes in ecosystems due to the changes in the topography the Corridor traverses. Thus, they are "natural" and "cultural" intrinsic resources, because they epitomize the rural landscape, lifestyle, and history of the area.



Figure 3: Glimpses of Cattle between Cabbage Palms. Photo by Robert Dawson.



Figure 4: Gaps in the Martin Grade tree canopy.

Corridor Characteristics

Although the Martin Grade is designated an arterial roadway, it is a two-lane road with narrow lanes and narrow shoulders in keeping with the fact that it has also been designated a Martin County Scenic Corridor. It's most distinctive features are the trees that grow in the right-of-way within 12 feet of the lanes of travel to form a canopy over much of the roadway.

Due to its narrow shoulders that are full of obstacles and lack of sidewalks and bicycle lanes, the Martin Grade is neither bicycle nor pedestrian friendly at this time. Planning regarding pedestrian and bicycle facilities is discussed in Section 2.12.4 which addresses safety issues.



Figure 5: Trees in the Right-of-Way

The flora includes pine trees, cabbage and sabal palms, palmetto shrubs, and majestic 100 year-old live oaks that have sprung up alongside the roadway to spread their branches from opposite sides of the Corridor, joining in the middle to form a canopy described by a Palm Beach Post Newspaper writer as a “green cathedral.”

At times, this formation puts parts of the Corridor into an almost mystical twilight.

There are no bridges crossing the road or other non-natural vertical obstructions. As a result, vertical clearance is determined for the most part by the height of the trucks that travel the roadway keeping the trees trimmed in a graceful arch.

Drainage features include rustic, old-style Florida ditches on both sides that were dredged to create the original road bed. There are also culverts that are almost invisible below the road bed, which were installed to allow the water to follow its natural path from northwest to southeast under the road.

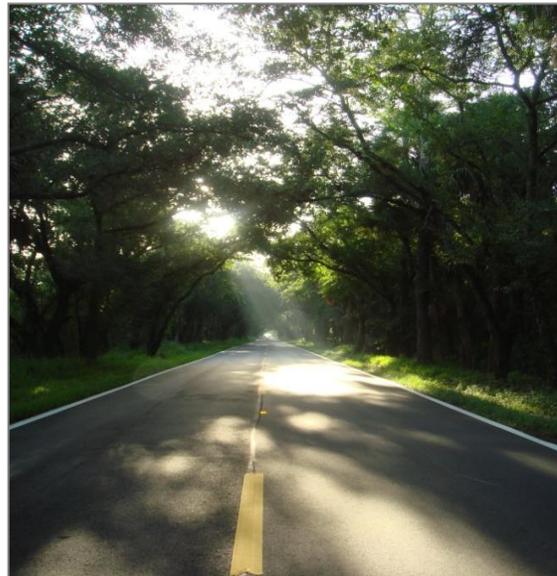


Figure 6: The Martin Grade. Photo by Nancy Oliver.

The only utilities located in the Corridor right of way are on Florida Power and Light poles which provide electricity, phone and some cable service. The line crosses the road at one location near Fox Brown Road. With the exception of a two mile section of the Corridor just east of Fox Brown Road, the FPL utility poles are located well off the roadway on the far sides

of the ditches, near the fences installed at the edges of the traditional right of way by private property owners. In that two-mile section the utility poles are between the ditch and the road requiring regular trimming of the canopy on that side.

There is little landscaping along the Corridor. Most of the beautiful vegetation is volunteers that have established themselves since the roadbed was first elevated over 80 years ago.

The Martin County Engineering Department/Field Operations Division maintains paved roads such as the Martin Grade Corridor. This includes the repair of potholes and pavement edge breaks, bridge construction, lane painting and signage.

Over the years, the Corridor ditches and shoulders have been mowed and cleaned by a private contractor pursuant to a contract with Martin County Engineering Department or by the County. Frequency depends on the conditions.

Hidden Resources

Hidden Public Resources:

The eastern terminus of the Corridor is almost in the middle of the 21,000-acre Allapattah Flats Wildlife Conservation Area, which is a combination of conservation and recreation land. For approximately four miles, the south side of the Corridor between Allapattah Road and Fox Brown Road abuts the Allapattah Flats.



Figure 7: Allapattah Flats. Photo by SFWMD.

This southern portion of the Flats is accessible directly from the Martin Grade through a hiking and hunting trail that begins behind the Flats' administrative buildings which are located approximately half way between Allapattah Road and Fox Brown Road.

There are four access points to the northeastern and southeastern portions of the Flats visible on CR 714 one mile and two miles east of the Martin Grade's eastern terminus.

Access to the Equestrian Trails at the Allapattah Flats is approximately one mile south of the Grade on Fox Brown Road.

To the south and west of the Corridor's western terminus is a new conservation area known as the Lakeside Ranch. Access to that facility is under construction and may change over time.

Hidden Private Resources:

Currently, the Corridor's entire north side and two thirds of its south side are in private ownership. Some of the land owners in the area operate nature-based tourism and adventure enterprises on their property, such as hunting and shooting operations. At this time, some of these operations have created tension in the community. As a result, they are not included as resources open to the public.

Loop Roads and Access Roads

Currently, there are no loop or access roads identified in the Corridor. The off-Corridor access to the Allapattah Flats Wildlife Conservation Area and Lakeside Ranch complexes are all very close to the Corridor and accessible on maintained roadways. Direction and access issues will be addressed through the use of informational signs.

SECTION 2.12.1.A – RIGHT OF WAY DESCRIPTION

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #5– THE ROADWAY GENERALLY SHOULD BE MORE THAN ONE MILE IN LENGTH AND, IF APPROPRIATE, PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE RESOURCES)

There are two different sets of Right of Ways for the Martin Grade in Martin County Records. Martin County Property Appraiser records and plat maps show a Right of Way that varies from 20 feet wide near the western terminus of the Corridor to 200 feet nearer the eastern terminus.

Historical newspaper clippings state that when the Martin Grade temporarily became a State road in the late 1950's or early 1960's, property owners donated right of way to facilitate the State takeover.

This map also includes details of utilities such as Florida Power and Light, Southern Bell Telephone, Adelphia Cable and Indiantown Telephone located in the area.

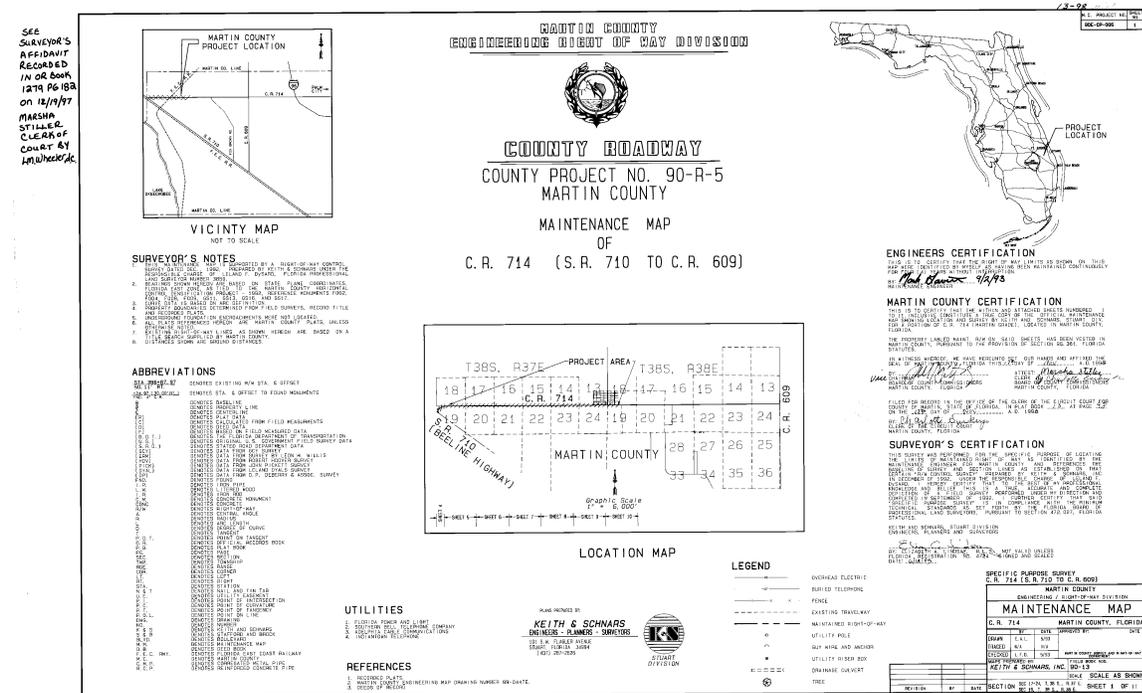


Figure 8: Maintenance Map: Martin Grade shown.

Figure 8, is also found in Appendix 1C. It is a copy of the official maintenance map showing Martin Grade. Appendix 1 provides mathematical and graphic depictions of ROW.

Acquisition of Property Rights

At this time, no property must be acquired for or to facilitate the Martin Grade Scenic Highway. Should it be determined in the future that it is necessary to acquire property related to the Corridor, the CAG will coordinate with the District Right-of-Way Office to assure compliance with the Federal Uniform Relocation and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970, which applies to all property or property rights acquired where FHWA (Title 23) federal funds are to be used in any project phase or where there is anticipation or intent to use FHWA federal funds at some future point in any project phase. The use of FHWA funding or intent to use FHWA funding “federalizes” the Corridor and all subsequent property or property rights acquisition related to the scenic highway regardless of parties involved. (This means that any property acquisition requires the owner be paid “just compensation” for the property.)

At this time, however, the Martin Grade is a local, county road that has not been federalized by the use of federal funds for any purpose. The CAG has no intention to seek federal funding. Any such decision to do so in the future would be solely at the behest of the Martin County Commission.

Located along the Corridor and at its eastern terminal, is the Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area, 21,000 acres of conservation land owned and operated by Martin County, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The Allapattah Flats were once known as the Northern Everglades and are being reflooded and allowed to return to their original natural state as part of the Indian River Lagoon portion of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program. They are open to the public with horse trails, hiking trails, primitive camping and limited hunting opportunities accessible from the Martin Grade Corridor.

The CERP lands are shown in dark green in Figure 9.

The lands marked in blue to the north of the CERP lands represent another approximately 10,000 acres on the north side of the Corridor that are targeted for acquisition, preservation and restoration on the eastern half of the Corridor by a variety of local and state agencies and non-profit organizations.

Designating the Grade a Florida Scenic Highway will create opportunities to acquire this land and to improve and enhance these nature-based amenities through partnerships and community commitment.

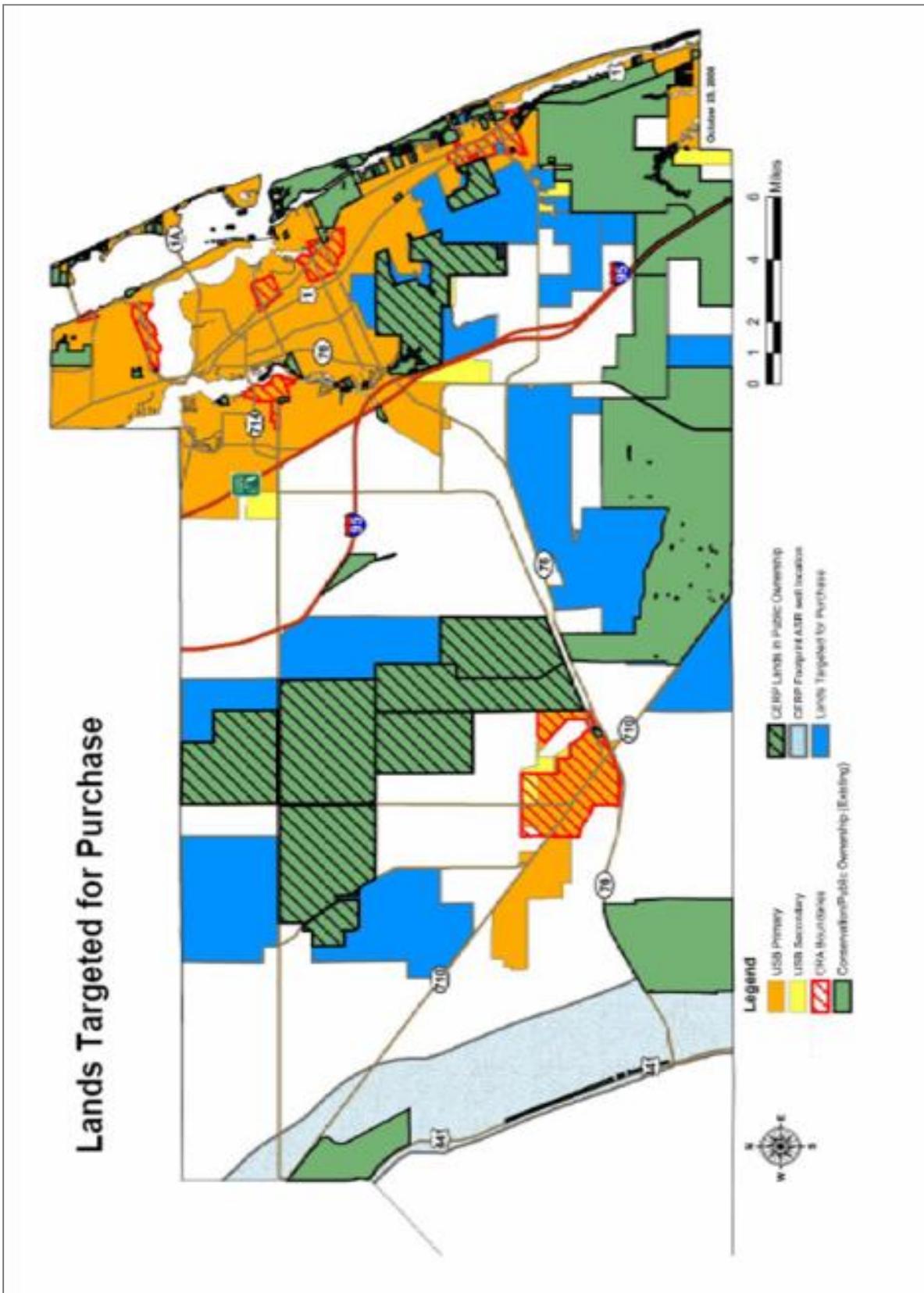


Figure 9: CERP and Targeted Lands.

SECTION 2.12.2 - LAND USE

Existing Land Use

Land Use in Martin Grade Area	
80%	Land use is Agricultural with a minimum 20-acre lot size.
15%	Land use is Conservation.
5%	Land use is Agricultural Ranchette with a minimum 5-acre lot size.

All of the lands within Martin Grade have either a conservation or agricultural land use designation. Land use is broken down approximately as shown in Figure 10. The use of land for agricultural purposes is an acknowledged and prioritized land use in the Martin County Comprehensive Plan.

Appendix 2 provides Land Use Maps.

Figure 10: Land Use Ratios

The Plan also provides for cleaning and distribution of fresh water discharges to the St. Lucie River and Estuary and authorizes the restoration of physical and biologically degraded areas on lands designated for Conservation. It further provides for other water-related needs of the region, including sustainable agriculture, water supply and maintenance of existing flood protection.

The Allapattah Flats and other lands in public ownership fulfill these conservation and water quality purposes and are designated as Conservation land in the Comprehensive Plan. All other lands along the Martin Grade have an agricultural land use designation.

Appendix 4D provides Comprehensive Plan policies generally protecting Agricultural lands.

With the exception of one small section near the middle of the Corridor which has an agricultural land-use designation that allows lots as small as five acres, all of the non-conservation land abutting the Corridor has Agricultural zoning and a land use designation of Agricultural with 20-acre minimum lot sizes. Most of the zoned land is currently used for either pasture or for citrus production.

The section near the middle with the 5-acre lots is dominated by the Dunklin Memorial Church and Camp and other Christian, rural-based activities including a youth rodeo grounds, women's shelter, and missionary training center, which are permitted uses in the Agricultural land use and zoning categories.

Major Ownership and General Development Patterns:

The largest single parcel of land on the Martin Grade is the Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area, which is owned by the South Florida Water Management District and Martin County and operated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The second most significant feature of land ownership is the property near the middle of the Grade that is owned by the Dunklin Memorial Church and Camp, which serves as the core for a number of church-based facilities.

Dunklin Memorial Church lies within the portion that is zoned for 5-acre ranchettes, many of which are privately owned by individuals and their families.

There are two areas west of the Dunklin Memorial Church area that have been subdivided into 20-acre ranchette subdivisions. Lots in those subdivisions are owned by individuals. The 5-acre and 20-acre ranchettes are used predominately as residences with agricultural uses as adjuncts.

The remainder of the land along the Martin Grade is held in larger parcels owned by a variety of individuals, corporations, and trusts. It is used predominantly for agricultural purposes such as grazing, citrus, hunting, and other agricultural uses.

See Appendix 3 for parcel sizes and owners.

Permitted Agricultural Land Uses in General:

With the exception of the urban area of Indiantown which lies off Fox Brown Road ten miles south of the Martin Grade, the Martin County Comprehensive Plan provides almost exclusively for agricultural and conservation land uses on approximately 200,000 acres between the Sunshine State Parkway and Lake Okeechobee.

There are three agricultural land use designations in the Martin County Plan: one with a 5-acre minimum lot size; one with a 10-acre minimum lot size, and one with a 10-acre minimum lot size. Within the 5-acre and 20-acre categories, the Plan also allows clustering of the same number of smaller lots to achieve larger conservation areas.

20-Acre Ranchette Agricultural Land Use Category:

Most of the land along the Martin Grade has an Agricultural Land Use designation. Provisions that govern these agricultural lands are found in section 4.4.M.1.a of the Martin County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan.

Martin County Comprehensive Plan policies governing Agricultural lands are found in Appendix 4A.

Generally, the minimum lot size in the Agricultural Land Use category is 20 acres, and a residential density of one unit per 20-acre lot is allowed.

Areas designated Agricultural on the Future Land Use Map are not eligible for Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning, with the exception of land developed pursuant to section 4.4.E.7 of the Martin County Comprehensive Plan, the Land Preservation Incentives Amendment, which requires a PUD where smaller lots are clustered and more than 50% of the parcel is permanently conserved or retained in agricultural uses pursuant to an easement that limits the use of the land.

Section 4.4.E.7 is found in Appendix 4C.

A wide variety of land-based uses are permitted in the Agricultural land use category. Traditional agricultural uses such as grazing, farming, and groves are the most common uses along the Martin Grade, although churches, schools, and rehabilitation facilities such as those located at the Dunklin Memorial Church and Camp, are also allowed.

Appendix 5 provides Section 3.11 of the Martin County Land Development Code, which defines the uses that are permitted in Agricultural Zoning Districts.

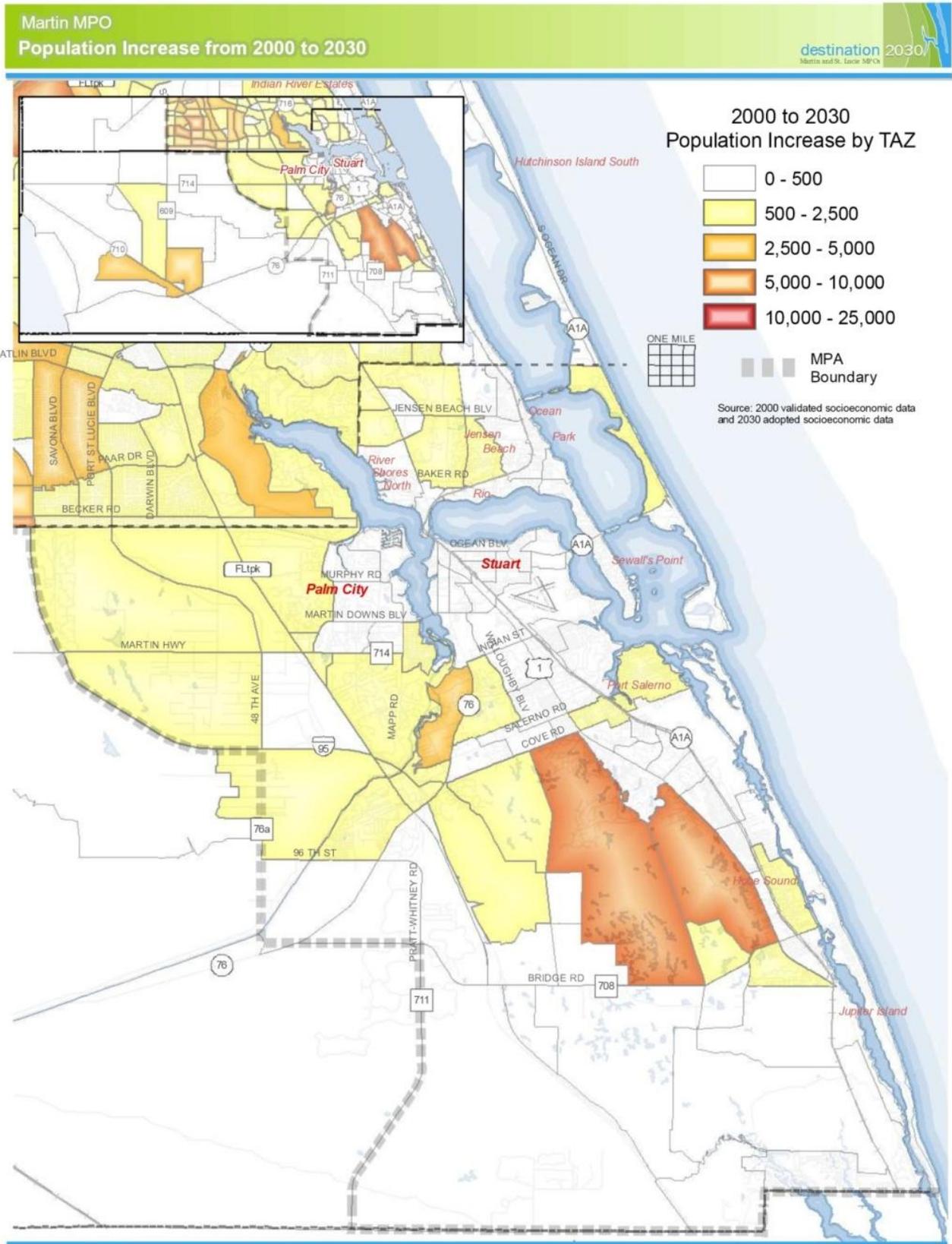
5-Acre Ranchette Agricultural Land Use Category:

Along the Martin Grade there is one small area of 5-Acre ranchettes used for small agricultural operations and open spaces that are consistent with the agricultural character of the area. Land use for these parcels is governed by section 4.4.M.1.c of the Martin County Comprehensive Plan. Lot sizes for Agricultural Ranchettes are limited to a minimum of five gross acres, and one residential unit is allowed per each 5-acre agricultural ranchette. The permitted agricultural uses are generally less impactful than those allowed on larger agricultural lots. Residential development on these lands relates to agricultural uses and maintains the original agricultural and rural character of Martin Grade.

Appendix 4B provides Section 4.4.M.1.c. of the Martin County Comprehensive Plan.

Future Land Use

Martin County has a very strong Comprehensive Plan and a community culture of protecting rural areas by limiting major land use changes. Population increases along the Martin Grade over the next 20 years are projected to be minimal—a maximum of 500 people.



destination 2030 | Martin and St. Lucie MPOs

Figure 11: Martin County MPO, Population Increase 2000- 2030, from the 2030 LRTP

Map 3-9

With the exception of the Rural Services Node recently proposed and tentatively approved for five acres at the Corridor's eastern terminus (with the requirement that it provide neighborhood services compatible with the Martin Grade community), it is anticipated by the Martin County Comprehensive Plan and the community that future land uses along the Martin Grade Corridor will stay very much as they are today for the foreseeable future.

There is, however, hope that more land will be converted to conservation use. More land may also be converted to Church or 20-acre ranchette uses without changing the Comprehensive Plan. But neither change would significantly change or diminish the scenic qualities of the Corridor.

Appendices 2B-1 and 2B-2. provide a visual depiction of the future Land Use map for the Martin Grade area.

SECTION 2.12.3 - SIGNAGE

Signs within the Martin Grade Corridor are compatible with their surroundings, promote the character of the rural community, and promote traffic safety.

Generally, permanent commercial signs and billboards are prohibited on agricultural lands such as the Martin Grade land by section 4 of the Martin County Land Development Regulations.

The Martin County sign regulations are found in Appendix 6.

Currently, the only signs within the Corridor right of way identify the road and inform the public about the speed limit and other potential hazards. Signs on private property are limited to those on the site of local agricultural and rural businesses.

Any signage removal or addition of signage will go through Martin County's and the regular FDOT's permitting process as applicable and will be coordinated with the State Outdoor Advertising Administrator to assure compliance with Section 1046(c) of the ISTEA, 23 USC 131, which precludes the issuing of new permits for outdoor advertising signs within the control zone of the Interstate and National Highway Systems, the Federal Aid Primary System, and the State Highway System along the Corridor.

Signage Protection Techniques

Special rules governing Outdoor Advertising on Scenic Highways are not an issue on the Martin Grade Corridor, because the Martin County sign ordinances are very strict and already prohibit off site signs.

Orders/Agreements Regarding Signage

Because commercial signs are currently not allowed on the Martin Grade, there are no existing signs. No orders or agreements regarding signs exist. Nor are they needed.

SECTION 2.12.4 - SAFETY ISSUES

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 3 – THE ROADWAY MUST BE A PUBLIC ROAD THAT SAFELY ACCOMMODATES TWO-WHEEL DRIVE MOTOR VEHICLES.)

Currently the Martin Grade is neither bicycle nor pedestrian friendly. It is a two-lane, country road with narrow shoulders, which has trees in the ROW and is bordered by steep and deep ditches. The Corridor is paved and can safely accommodate two-wheel drive motor vehicles. It is inappropriate only for regular non-vehicular traffic.

The maximum Corridor speed limit is 50 miles per hour. Along the scenic route there are several posted signs advising drivers not to pass or overtake vehicles. There is only one major intersection, and no portion of the Martin Grade has existing high accident frequencies.

The 2030 Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan identifies the Martin Grade as a roadway with insufficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities. However, there are no plans at this time to improve the road to provide such facilities.

Digital Appendix B provides this diagram from the 2030 RL RTP.

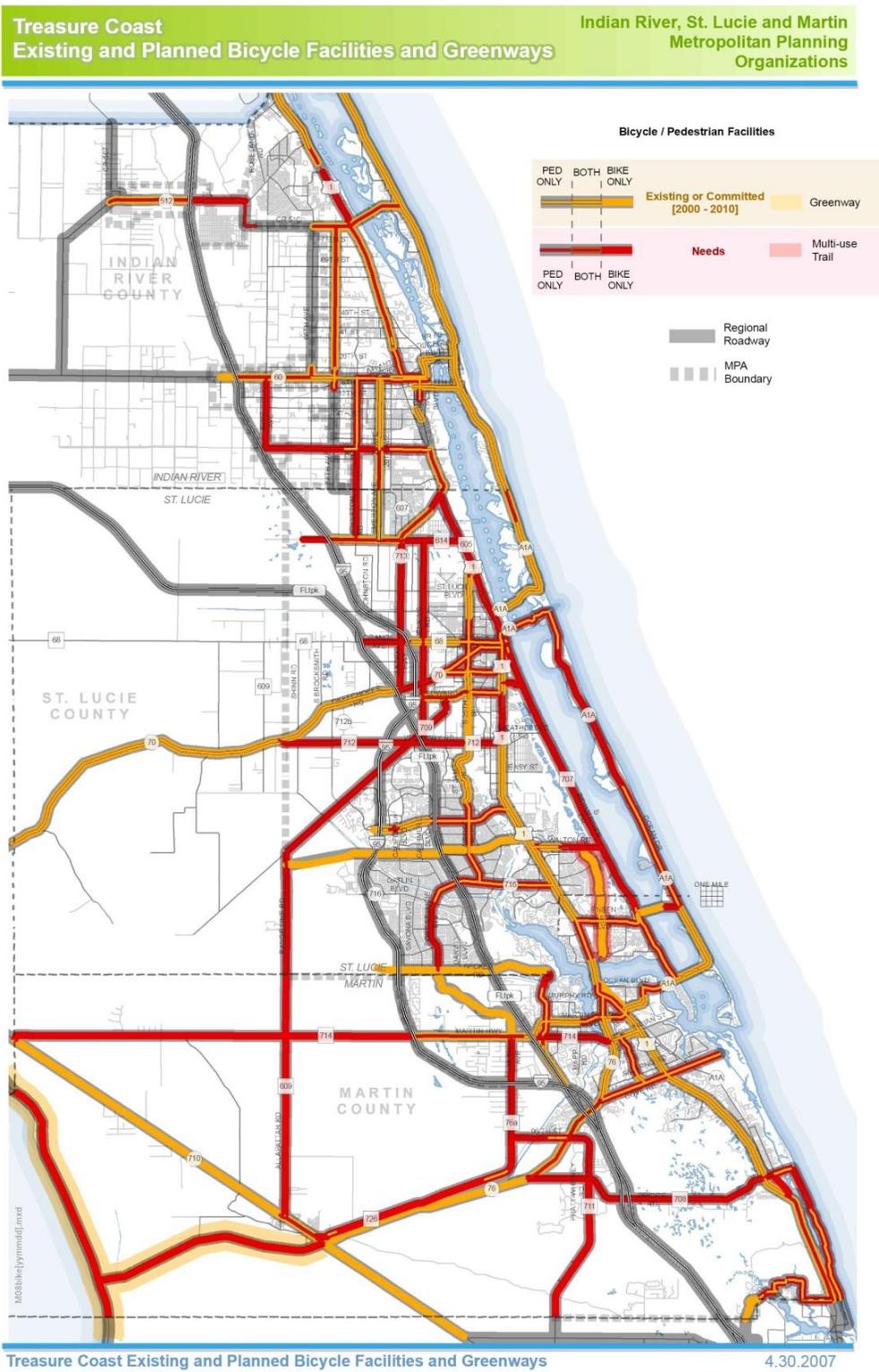


Figure 12: Treasure Coast, Existing and Planned Bicycle Facilities and Greenways, from the 2030 RL RTP

SECTION 2.12.5 - TRAFFIC VOLUME/ USER TYPES

Traffic along the Grade is predominantly from cars and trucks. In 2007, traffic counts reported in the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan averaged fewer than 3,000 trips per day, and its level of service was “B.” Traffic is most heavy during morning and evening commute times. Traffic is low at off hours. On pretty days, one may see motorcycles on the road.

There are currently no regular non-vehicular users and no plans to accommodate them. It is not safe for walkers, runners, bicyclists, skaters or equestrians.

Traffic Volumes		
Roadway	Segment	2008 ADT
CR-714 (Martin Hwy)	SR-710 to Fox Brown Rd is an Uninterrupted Rural Hwy: 2-Ln Undivided with a LOS B and a 4.4% estimated traffic growth rate	2788
CR-714 (Martin Hwy)	Fox Brown Rd to CR-609 is an Interrupted Rural Arterial: 2-Ln Undivided with a B LOS and an estimated growth 5% rate	2759
CR-714 (Martin Hwy)	CR-609 to I-95 Uninterrupted Rural Hwy: 2-Ln Undivided with a LOS of B and an estimated growth rate of 0.6%	3916

Figure 13: 2007 Traffic Volumes along the CR-714 (Martin Highway) from the 2030 RL RTP

SECTION 2.12.6 - LEVELS OF SERVICE

The level of service on the Martin Grade is currently “B.”

Appendix 7 provides Martin County Road Level of Service index.

According to the 2030 Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan adopted by the combined Martin and St. Lucie County Metropolitan Planning Organizations in 2007, there is no need to increase the number of lanes on the Martin Grade through 2030.

The 2030 Plan does, however, call for major improvements to be made to roads that feed into the Corridor. Warfield Boulevard, SR-710, which is the Corridor’s western terminus is scheduled to be improved from two to four lanes. Allapattah Road, CR 609, which is the Corridor’s eastern terminus is a candidate to become a full multi-modal Corridor and, possibly, a greenway. The eastern portions of Martin Highway, SR 714, are scheduled to be improved to four lanes from the St. Lucie River to Interstate 95, a point which is approximately five miles east of the Corridor’s eastern terminus.

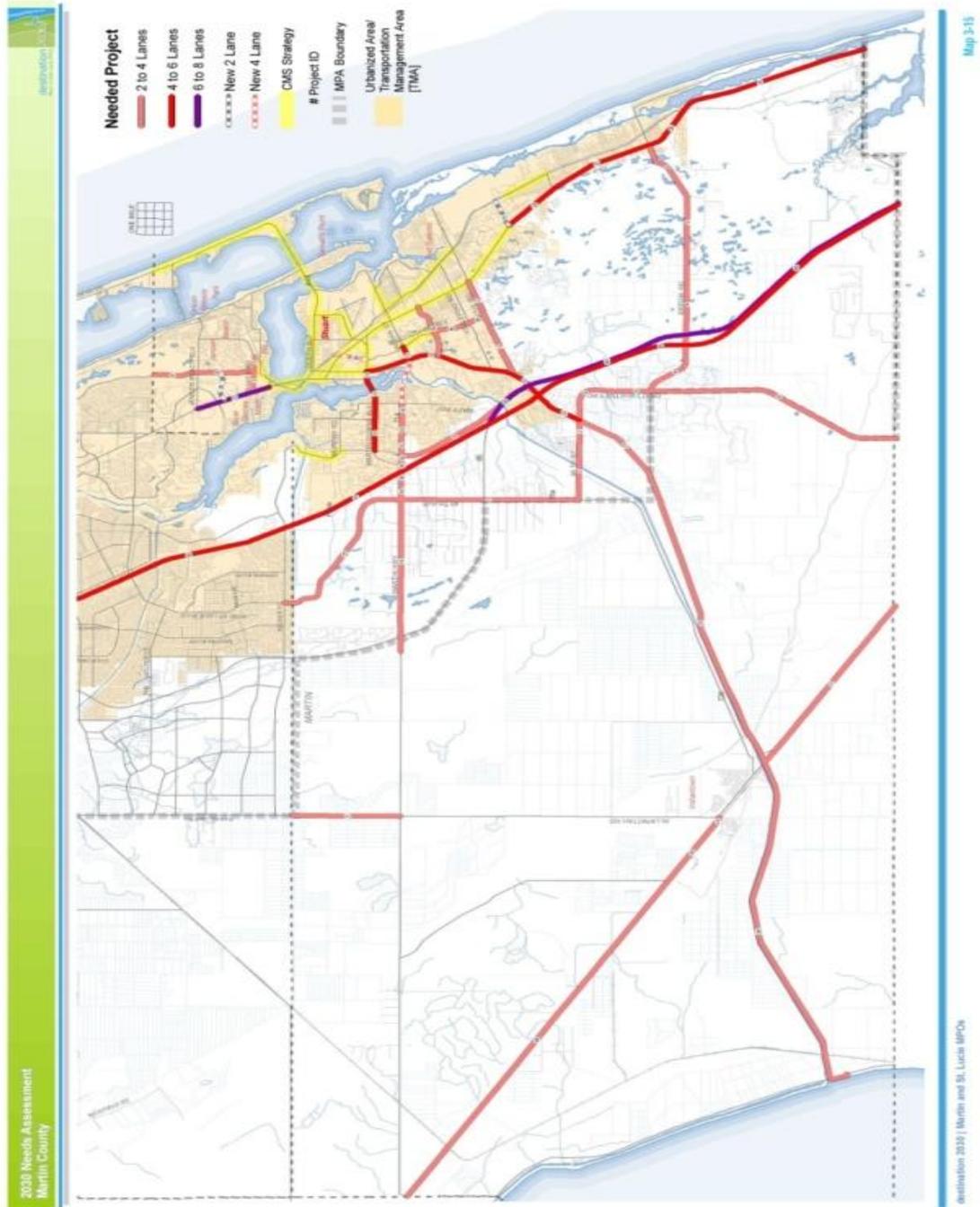


Figure 14: 2030 Needs Assessment, from the 2030 RL RTP

SECTION 2.12.7 - TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

All Agencies Responsible for Plans and Programs Affecting the Martin Grade Support Its Designation as a Florida Scenic Highway.

The Martin County Commission's Support for Designation:

Planning for specific Martin County road projects is done by the Martin County MPO and carried out by the Martin County Engineering Department through the Martin County Comprehensive Plan Capital Improvement Element. Currently, none of these entities have conducted traffic or engineering planning for any mode other than motor vehicle on this two-lane road.

After the citizens began their effort to have the Martin Grade Designated a Florida Scenic Highway in 2006, the first official action taken by any Agency was the unanimous vote of the Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization to supply a Letter of Support for the designation in April 2007. Since then, the Martin County Commission has taken three separate unanimous actions in support of the Scenic Highway Designation.

In May 2007, the County Commission passed a resolution designating the Martin Grade a Scenic Corridor, and in March 2008, it unanimously supported the submission of the Letter of Intent, which was signed by the Chairman of the County Commission. On August 10, 2010, the Commission voted unanimously to support submission of the Eligibility Application.

All of the Agenda Items for all of the above actions described the Florida Scenic Highway Program and the significance of the Eligibility Application in the FSH process. Before the Commission took its August 10, 2010 vote, staff was provided with the Eligibility Application to review, and it recommended not only that the Board authorize the Chairman to sign the Eligibility Application, but that he also be given authority to sign additional Florida Scenic Highway Application documents in the future without requiring formal votes on each separate document. The Chairman immediately signed the Eligibility Application.

The 2007 Draft letter of support that was approved by the MPO is included as Appendix 21.

The 2007 Resolution designating the Martin Grade a Scenic Corridor is included as Appendix 25.

The Agenda Item for the March 11, 2008, Commission vote of support is included in Appendix 26.

The Agenda item for the August 10, 2010, Commission vote of support is included as Appendix 26.

In 2010, a simple majority of the Martin County Commission has voted to provide additional support and protection for the Martin Grade on two separate occasions. As discussed in Section 2.20, in April and again on August 10, 2010, a majority of the Martin County Commission voted to include protection for the Martin Grade Scenic Corridor in the

Comprehensive Plan as part of Plan Amendment 10-05, which is also known as Sunrise Grove. This text amendment created a new AgTEC Comprehensive Plan Land Use Category that expressly requires transportation planning and funding to support the Martin Grade.

4.4.M.1.g.(6)(e)(9) Any PUD zoning within the AgTEC shall, at a minimum, incorporate the following sustainability and environmental design principles:

9. In conjunction with the approval of any PUD within the AgTEC land use category, the developer/owner shall provide a plan for supporting the protection and enhancement of the Martin Grade Scenic Corridor that includes at a minimum providing financial support and helping address traffic impacts on the Corridor by exploring alternative roadway locations, traffic patterns, traffic timing, and roadway designs for the purpose of protecting and enhancing the scenic character of the Corridor.

Figure 15: Martin County Proposed Comprehensive Growth Management Plan Policies, AgTEC

Because this amendment is subject to Administrative and legal challenges, whether it will ultimately take effect is unknown at this time.

However, it is anticipated that, once the Martin Grade is designated a Florida Scenic Highway, future Comprehensive Plan Amendments and development requests may be required to provide similar protection for the scenic and heritage values of the Corridor. The CAG intends to do everything possible to ensure that long-term, permanent protection and support for the Martin Grade Scenic Highway will be included in the Martin County Comprehensive Plan in the future.

In 2008, the Martin County Conservation Division developed a long-range plan which included the creation of a multi-modal greenway connection between the western terminus of the Corridor at SR 710 and the Aallapattah Flats at Fox Brown Road which would create the potential for pedestrian and equestrian use of the Corridor. However, the viability of that Plan is undeterminable at this time, due to the economic downturn and changes in County staffing and priorities.

The Regional Transportation Agency's Support for Designation:

Regional transportation planning in the Martin Grade area is conducted in five-year increments pursuant to federal mandate, and the 2035 Regional Long-Range Transportation Plan is currently being developed by the Joint Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization and St. Lucie County Transportation Planning Organization.

On August 12, 2010, the Joint Martin County MPO and St. Lucie County Transportation Planning Organization, which is the entity responsible for adopting the 2035 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan for the area in which the Martin Grade lies, supported the designation of the Martin Grade as a Florida Scenic highway by voting to adopt the following policy which is presently included in the Draft 2035 RL RTP:

Policy 2.1.15: Require transportation planning and actions to designate and protect the Martin Grade (CR 714) between CR 609 and SR 710 as a Scenic Highway.

Adoption of the 2035 RL RTP is expected in late 2010 or early 2011.

A key objective that was identified by the combined Martin and St. Lucie County MPO in the 2030 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan is to promote greenways along multi-modal Corridors. Preservation of the vegetation and tree canopy along the Martin Grade would help achieve this objective if it is carried over into the 2035 RL RTP.

Potential Realignment of Western Terminus into Okeechobee County

The Martin Grade Team recently became aware that the consultant for the FDOT who is conducting Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study for proposed improvements to SR-710 in Okeechobee County has recommended realigning the western mile of the Martin Grade in a manner that would extend it into Okeechobee County. At this point in time, however, the only local government currently with jurisdiction over the Corridor is Martin County. As such, Martin County ultimately controls all aspects of its planning and all programs relating to the roadway itself.

It is appropriate and necessary to submit the Martin Grade Scenic Highway Eligibility Application on the basis that Martin County solely controls the Corridor because it is undetermined at this point if and when the recommendation to realign its western terminus will become a reality. There are a number of reasons the Corridor may remain entirely within Martin County for an undetermined period of time.

First, it is unknown at this time whether the realignment will ultimately be adopted, because residents of Martin County, many of whom did not participate in the Okeechobee planning

meetings, will soon be meeting to conduct the Martin County portion of the SR-710 PD&E. Second, according to the website for that project, <http://www.sr710-okeechobee.com/> , there is “currently no funding for S.R. 710 in the FDOT’s Five Year Work Program for design, right-of-way acquisition or construction.” And, third, such a realignment will require interlocal agreements regarding issues such as funding for road construction in the two counties and the acquisition of additional Rights of Way in Okeechobee County.

Even before becoming aware of the proposed realignment, however, the Martin Grade Team had begun forging relationships and partnerships in Okeechobee County. Because the two counties share so much history and so many of the tourism amenities available to travelers on the Martin Grade are in Okeechobee County, such multi-county partnerships will continue to grow and flourish, no matter where the western terminus of the Corridor ultimately ends up or how long it takes to do so.

SECTION 2.12.8 - ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS

At this time, no planning is being done for any mode other than motor vehicle traffic on the two-lane road. In 2008, major road improvements in the nature of replacing bridges and repaving were completed. No additional improvements are planned in the near future.

Designation of the Martin Grade as a Florida Scenic Highway may heighten awareness of the potential for non-vehicular users to a level where plans for pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian users may be accommodated.

Roadway improvements in the future will be consistent with the then-existing CMP, the Martin County Comprehensive Plan and Code of Regulations and future Regional Long Range Transportation Plans.

SECTION 2.12.9 - SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The Martin Grade lifestyle is rural. There are only about 200 residents along the Grade at this time according to a study done in support of creating an Essential Service Node at the Martin Grade's eastern terminus. Nonetheless, its social and cultural influences are a microcosm of the different social and cultural trends that make up Florida's recent history. Residents range from small farmers to founding families with extensive agricultural holdings to wealthy newcomers, who use their land for retreats or private hunting preserves, to dedicated Christian Missionaries to middle class workers who are willing to commute long distances because they cherish the rural lifestyle.

With such a diverse group of people living on large parcels of land spread out along a 12-mile road, there is no conformity or uniformity in the Martin Grade community. The two unifying factors are a love for the tree canopy and for living in its rural, natural environment.

Other than agriculture, there are no commercial or industrial users. Income of residents varies, depending on size of property owned and length of time in residence. The only non-agricultural employment centers on the Grade are the church facilities.

Residents predominantly commute to work either south to Indiantown or Palm Beach County, east to Martin County's coastal communities, west to Okeechobee County, or north to St. Lucie County.

The influence of local Christian ministries and the Church is great. The following religious or non-profit entities are located in the Grade: Dunklin Memorial Camp and Church, Gethsemane Ranch Youth Rodeo Arena, a Women's Center, and Missionary training.

SECTION 2.12.10 - TOURISM AND USER FACILITIES

Existing Amenities

The land itself is the greatest tourism amenity along the Martin Grade. It gives a historical perspective, because the natural environment is similar to what it was before 1900. Land is in agricultural uses- predominantly cattle grazing and citrus farming. There are significant wetland areas, and a magnificent tree canopy made up of oaks, cabbage palms, pines, and maples has overgrown at least six of the Corridor's 12 miles.

Currently, there are two public recreational facilities accessible directly on the Corridor.

The Martin Grade Fire Station Park:

The Martin Grade Fire Station Park is a small public park at the old Martin Grade Volunteer Fire Station. It is located on the north side of the Grade just west of Fox Brown Road. Facilities include a small playground and picnic tables. Perhaps most importantly, it is a place to pull off the road safely and enjoy the ambiance.

The Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area:

The 21,000-acre Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area is part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP) and was originally part of the Northern Everglades known as the Alpatiokee Swamp. It is operated by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The Allapattah Flats are being reflooded and encouraged to return to their pre-1900 natural state. The facility offers recreation experiences in keeping with the culture and society of the region in the late 1800's. Activities include biking, hiking, and primitive camping facilities. Seasonal hunting is allowed.

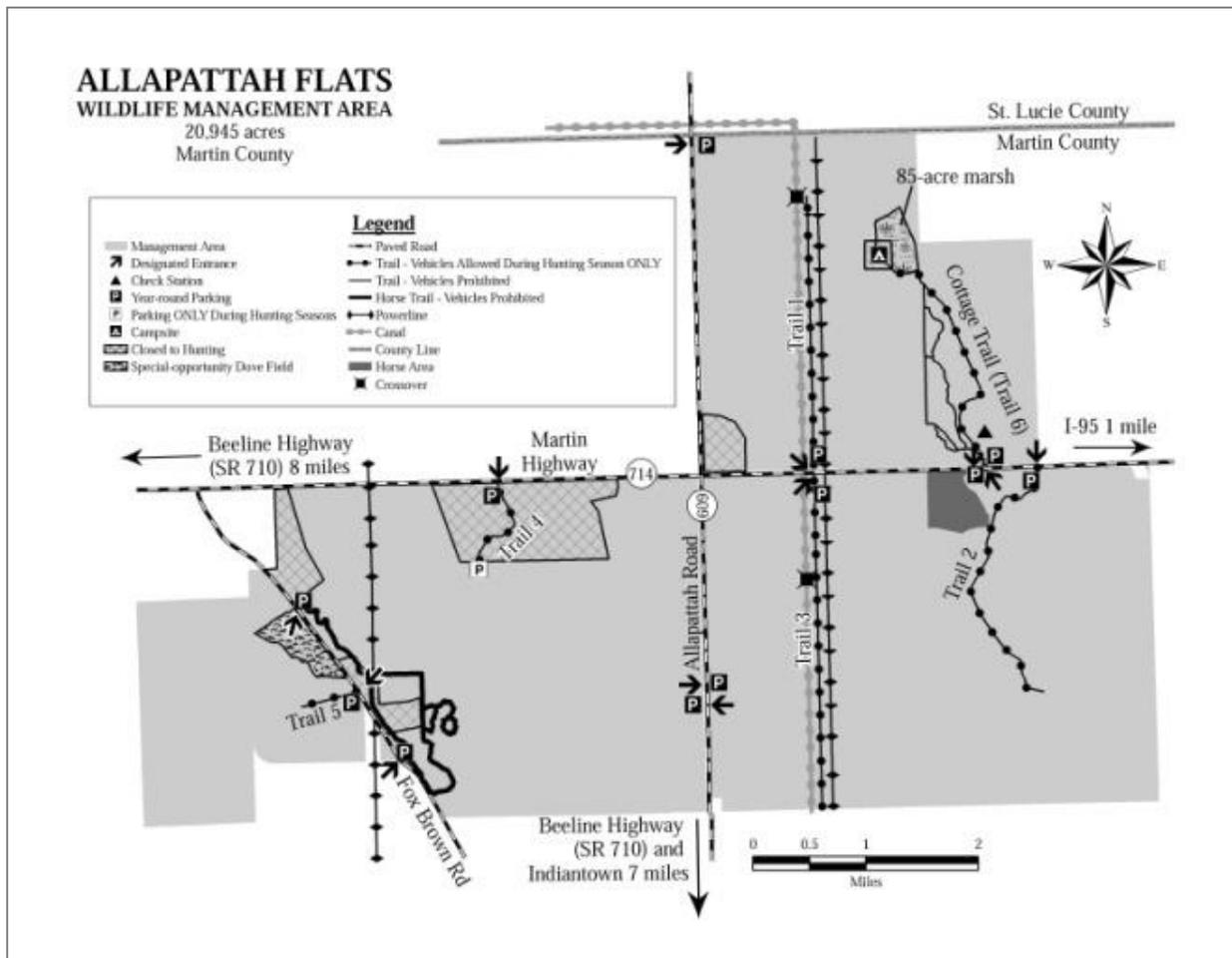


Figure 16: Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area.

Because of these vast areas of land that are left in their natural state in accordance with the CERP project and its historical land use patterns, the area is teeming with wildlife, wild flowers, insects, and birds that are as exotic to visitors today as they were in the 1870's when adventurers described their journeys to the Martin Grade area as if they were traveling in Darkest Africa.

On the south side of the Martin Grade, east of Fox Brown Road, is an entrance to the hiking trails in the southwestern section of the Allapattah Flats

Digital Appendix A is a brochure distributed by the FWC that shows the Allapattah Flats recreation amenities and rules.

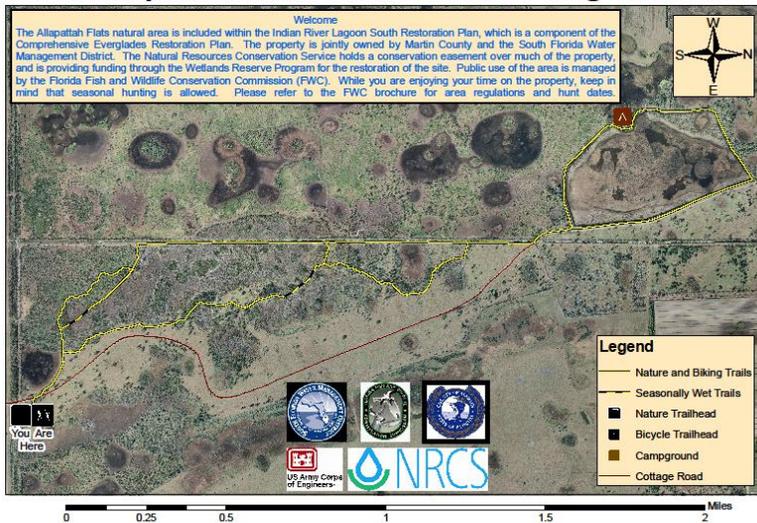
The entrance to the Allapattah Flats Fox Brown Road Equestrian Trail, which provides opportunities for horseback riding in the southwestern section of the Flats, is located on Fox Brown Road, 1.35 miles south of Corridor.

Four more entrances to the northeastern and southeastern Allapattah Flats are located approximately one mile and two miles east of the eastern terminus of the Martin Grade Scenic Corridor on SR 714 (Martin Highway).

Figure 17: Allapattah Flats Fox Brown Road Equestrian Trail.



Allapattah Flats Nature and Biking Trail



The entrances on the north side of SR-714 access hiking trails and a primitive camp ground.

The entrances on the south side access hiking trails and a horse area.

Figure 18: Allapattah Flats Nature and Biking Trail

Opportunities for Addressing Future Tourism for the Corridor

Currently, tourism is not being addressed on the Martin Grade. Existing opportunities for addressing tourism and user facilities for the Corridor include the following:

- Creation of an information center and educational kiosk and picnic facilities at Martin Grade Fire Station with cooperation of the County.
- Addition of scenic highway information at its termini and at entrances to Allapattah Flats.
- Coordination with the tourism entities in Stuart, Indiantown and Okeechobee. Because the Corridor's story is the story of rural, agriculture, natural Florida, it is not the story of a destination so much as the story of a road that connected discrete population centers. As a result, the Corridor information will direct tourism to Stuart, Indiantown, and Okeechobee, which have distinct cultural and historical stories of their own that played a key role in the Corridor's history.

Additional tourism enhancement opportunities will be considered and implemented if approved by the CAG and the community during the Designation Phase of the application process. Future plans, pursuant to the CMP may include the following:

- If the Martin County Commission ultimately approves the Essential Service Node commercial center proposed at the Corridor's eastern terminus, the CME may work with its developer to create education and tourist focal points at that location.
- Work with the County, the SFWMD, and the FWC to enhance access opportunities to Allapattah Flats and to the Lakeside Ranch at the Corridor's western terminus
- Work with the County, and SFWMD, to acquire land, bordering Corridor to the north, that is targeted for acquisition and restoration as part of CERP and to design public access, recreation, and educational experiences on that property.
- Work with the County and private landowners to acquire public access and viewing points on the western half of Corridor through land acquisition, development design, or use of conservation easements.
- Coordinate and partner with property owners along the Corridor, in Indiantown, and in western Martin County to promote their nature-based tourism and adventure businesses and/or their traditional and/or new agricultural and other green businesses.

SECTION 2.12.11 - OTHER PROGRAMS

Designating the Martin Grade a Florida Scenic Highway will create opportunities for the Corridor Management Entity (CME) to cooperate with other groups in the community for the purpose of achieving mutually beneficial goals. Some of these opportunities include:

Tourism

- Designating the Martin Grade a Florida Scenic Highway will create opportunities for the CME to coordinate and partner with tourism entities in Indiantown and Martin County's coastal communities to highlight their historical, cultural, and activity-based tourist attractions.
- The CME will also have opportunities to coordinate and partner with tourism entities in Okeechobee to highlight the Okeechobee Battlefield from the Second Seminole War, its Rodeo and other cowboy-related activities, and the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, a bicycle trail that circumnavigates Lake Okeechobee and is accessible near the Martin Grade's western terminus.

Conservation and Recreation

- Designating the Martin Grade a Florida Scenic highway will make it possible for the CME to coordinate and partner with The South Florida Water Management District and Martin County to help complete the Comprehensive Environmental Restoration Project by helping acquire 10,000 acres of land on the Corridor's north side, and to develop public access and recreation activities on CERP properties on and around the Grade.
- The CME will have an opportunity to promote conservation of privately held land along the Corridor.
- The CME will have an opportunity to design and participate in exotic-removal and native-plant replanting projects.

Economic Development Programs

- The Martin Grade Scenic Highway has an opportunity to play a small, but important role in creating a stable and diversified economy in Martin County by attracting tourists to sustain and encourage nature-based tourism, adventure, traditional agricultural businesses, and new green industries in western Martin County, which are targeted by the County's Economic Development Plans.
- The CME will have an opportunity to work with the Martin County Convention and Visitor's Bureau to create a tourism presence and identity that will help distinguish Martin County from other tourism destinations on Florida's Atlantic Coast in a way that will enhance the attractiveness of its existing tourist destinations.
- By highlighting and promoting a variety of historical, scenic, and nature-based day-trip activities that may be implemented by established tourism providers, designating the Martin Grade a Florida Scenic Highway can encourage visitors to stay in the area for longer periods.
- Because there are no plans to create a commercial destination on the Martin Grade, all visitors may be directed to existing local businesses and tourism facilities, which will benefit from increased revenues and business opportunities generated by the Scenic Highways Program.

**SECTION 2.13 - INTRINSIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND
DESIGNATION CRITERIA**

SECTION 2.13.1 & 2 - INTRINSIC CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 1 – RESOURCES MUST BE VISIBLE FROM THE ROADWAY.)

Although there are no cultural or historical facilities open to the public along the Martin Grade Scenic Corridor, it has a rich history that is reflected in a variety of cultural resources. One of the special qualities of the Corridor is that the different historical and cultural influences that created and make up its community are visible and discernable from the roadway. (UC #1)



Figure 20: Gethsemane Ranch. Photo by Nancy Oliver.

Its western half, which cuts across the high Seminole Ridge, is steeped in the Florida Cracker, Cow Hunter culture. Descendants of original settlers still reside in the area, and neither the land nor the uses to which it is put have changed significantly since those first settlers arrived in the late 19th century. Although not on the Grade, Okeechobee is only 12 miles from the Grade's western terminus, and it hosts a number of annual events centered around this pioneer heritage.

The middle section of the Corridor is dominated by the Dunklin Memorial Church and Camp, which was founded in 1963 on the concept that people may rehabilitate themselves and reclaim their lives through a combination of Christian education and immersion in natural surroundings far from the temptations and distractions of 20th century urban life. A strong land-based, Christian community and ethic has grown up around the Dunklin Memorial Church, including the Gethsemane Ranch Rodeo Arena, which provides instruction in Rodeo Skills to young people.



Figure 21: Approach to Dunklin Memorial Church. Photo by Nancy Oliver.

The southeastern third of the Corridor abuts the Allapattah Flats Wildlife Conservation Area, part of which is being reflooded and returned to the wetland role it played in the 1800's and early 1900's as part of the northern Everglades. The northeastern third is in private agricultural use, but is also targeted for acquisition. These sections epitomize the 21st century cultural focus on conservation and environmental restoration combined with nature-based tourism and recreation activities.

The Martin Grade's historical resources are related to the cultural influences noted above. The only historical resource directly accessible to the public from the Corridor is the Allapattah Ranch which is now part of the Allapattah Flats. It allows hikers, campers, hunters, and equestrians an opportunity to experience the land and nature the same way that the earliest settlers experienced the land.

The fact that there are few historical resources directly on the Corridor does not mean, however, that the region in which the Martin Grade lies is devoid of historical resources. The Martin Grade itself is a historical resource because it was the connection between three diverse history-rich, small urban areas, all of which are about ten miles away. It is, therefore, an historical artifact from the period when unique and discrete communities were established by settlers with different heritages and lifestyles in the middle of vast vacant tracts of land and connected by rural roads.

The Martin Grade, therefore, serves the same purpose today as it did before it was formally designated a road. To the east, it carries visitors to and from Stuart, the history of which is the history of small towns on Florida's Atlantic coast.

To the south, it carries visitors to and from Palm Beach, where Henry Flagler's Railroad stopped long enough to establish one of the wealthiest communities in America on its way to Key West. On their way, they pass through Indiantown, which was laid out where the Seaboard Air Line Railroad crossed the Okeechobee Waterway in the middle of the wilderness a quarter of a century later and turned out to be the last small Florida town by the great railroad tycoons before the economic bubble burst in the 1920's.

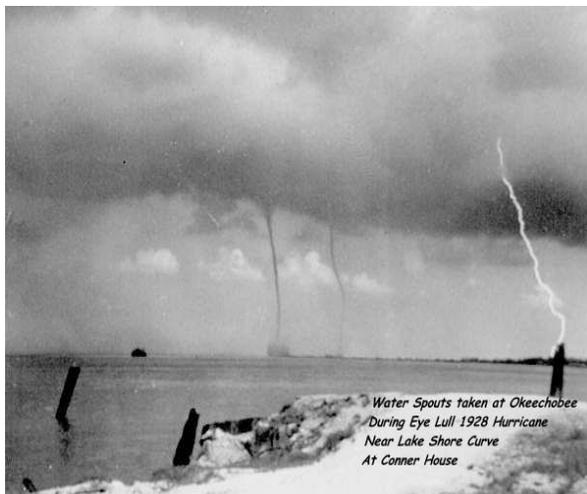


Figure 22: Waterspouts during the 1928 Hurricane. Tommy Markham Photos.

To the northwest, it carries visitors to and from the Okeechobee Battlefield, which was the site of the most important battle of the Second Seminole War in 1837, and Okeechobee City, which is the heart of Florida's Cracker Cowboy Country. Fifteen miles to the southwest lies the Port Mayaca Cemetery, where the unknown dead from the Great Florida hurricane of 1928 are buried in a mass grave, and the Port Mayaca Locks which are part of the history of the response to that hurricane and the draining of the Everglades and which make it possible for boats to travel across Florida from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean.

SECTION 2.13.3 - INTRINSIC ARCHEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Until very recently, the only archeological resource along the Martin Grade Corridor was rumored to be an Indian Mound on private property somewhere along the Seminole Ridge north of the road.

Recently, as part of the Lakeside Ranch project being developed by the South Florida Water Management District, two Indian Mounds were discovered. The Lakeside Ranch property abuts the western terminus of the Corridor, although the entrance for public access will likely be about three miles away.

Details about this archeological resource and potential public access to it are not available at this time. They will, however, be developed as the SFWMD makes the decisions regarding public access to that property and included within the Designation Application or the Corridor Management Plan during the Martin Grade Scenic Highway Program's Implementation Phase.

Digital Appendix C is a presentation created by the SFWMD outlining the most current information about Lakeside Ranch.

SECTION 2.13.4 – RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #6 – A MAJORITY OF THE CORRIDOR MUST EXHIBIT SCENIC OR HERITAGE QUALIFYING RESOURCES. THESE RESOURCES SHOULD BE CONTINUOUS AS POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE CORRIDOR.)

The Intrinsic Recreational Resources are the same resources discussed above in Section 2.12.10, “*Tourism and User Facilities.*”

In summary, the Allapattah Flats Wildlife Conservation Area is the predominant recreational resource on the Martin Grade. It is located along the southeast one-third of the Corridor and at its eastern terminus. It consists of 21,000 acres of conservation land owned and operated by Martin County, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

The Allapattah Flats were once known as Alpatiokee Swamp portion of the Northern Everglades and are being reflooded and allowed to return to their original natural state as part of the Indian River Lagoon portion of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program. They are open to the public with horse trails, hiking trails, primitive camping and limited hunting opportunities accessible from the Martin Grade Corridor.

All of the natural resources found along the Martin Grade are visible and available along the Allapattah Flats trails. That is why the Allapattah Flats provide such an exciting opportunity for nature-based adventures, photographic safaris, and hunting and fishing expeditions during the appropriate seasons. Hikers, bikers, horse riders and hunters can immerse themselves in the physical and visual world of Frontier Florida and come face to face with its natural inhabitants – just minutes away from fine hotels and restaurants with the finest modern amenities. Designating the Grade a Florida Scenic Highway will create opportunities to improve and enhance these nature-based amenities through partnerships and community commitment.

It is anticipated that the Lakeside Ranch at the Martin Grade’s western terminus will provide additional hiking and educational opportunities founded on the Indian Mounds on site and its role as a filter marsh being used in an effort to restore Lake Okeechobee to its former pristine water quality.

Additionally, just a few miles from the Corridor’s western terminus bicycle enthusiasts can access the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail (LOST). LOST circumnavigates Lake Okeechobee for the most part from the top of the historic Okeechobee Dike, which was built after the 1928 hurricanes devastated the area. That trail takes bikers and hikers through or near all of the historic towns on the shores of Lake Okeechobee.

SECTION 2.13.5 & 6 - INTRINSIC SCENIC AND NATURAL RESOURCES

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 1 – RESOURCES MUST BE VISIBLE FROM THE ROADWAY.); (UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #4 – THE CORRIDOR MUST EXHIBIT SIGNIFICANT, EXCEPTIONAL AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE REGION IT TRAVERSES.); (UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #6 – A MAJORITY OF THE CORRIDOR MUST EXHIBIT SCENIC OR HERITAGE QUALIFYING RESOURCES. THESE RESOURCES SHOULD BE CONTINUOUS AS POSSIBLE THROUGHOUT THE CORRIDOR.)

On the Road: The Martin Grade is Simply Beautiful

The most unique and dominant natural and scenic resource along the Martin Grade is its magnificent tree canopy.



Figure 23 : The Martin Grade Tree Canopy. Photo by Thomas Winter

Approximately half of its 12-mile drive is through the dappled shade of the tree canopy. The most dense and memorable section is found where the western half of the Corridor cuts across the Seminole Ridge between the Martin Grade Fire Station Park and the railroad crossing.

The canopy oaks are intermingled densely with cabbage and sable palms, pines, maples, and other native trees. Some sections alongside the road look like primordial swamps, full of ferns and vines, or dense oak hammocks. Visible through the trees

in other sections and in the areas where the tree canopy has not yet grown in are rural scenes such as groves and pastures, rural homes and outbuildings.

The visual experience can be so intense that it is almost mystical. The light in the tunnel of trees is ever changing, depending on the time of day, the time of year, and the weather.

Because the land is so unchanged from how it was when the first settlers arrived, residents and visitors who travel the roadway today are likely to come across much the same variety of native – but rare and exotic – animals, plants, and birds that amazed and thrilled the first American tourists to visit the area in the 1870's.



Figure 24: Hazy Morning on the Martin Grade. Photo by Tom Claud.

Off the Road: Florida as It Was 135 Years Ago

The Past:

Visiting the Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area is like returning to the days just following the Civil War when South Central Florida was first opened up to tourists from America's newly-rich urban centers. In the 1870's, the Martin Grade area was identified as a destination for tourists from America's great, bustling eastern cities – such as Washington, New York, and Philadelphia.

Adventure writers for major magazines toured the Martin Grade area and reported their adventures with alligators, snakes, panthers, bears and Indians. Naturalists recorded lists and drawings of the animals and plants they discovered for publication in scientific journals.



Figure 25: Early 1900's Hunting Party

Even before Henry Flagler built his railroad, visiting this part of Florida, and specifically the area around the Martin Grade, was touted as a reasonable vacation trip for the more adventuresome souls. The area near the Corridor's western terminus was accessible via steamboat down the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee.

Hunters and fishermen regaled their audiences with tales of unimaginable abundance.

Penetrating the Alpatiokee Swamp, which is found at the Corridor's eastern terminus and which was accessible from the Indian and St. Lucie Rivers, was considered an undertaking for only the most hardy adventurers – but one they were willing and eager to undertake.



Figure 26: Steamboat on Lake Okeechobee

Birds:



The Martin Grade area, especially the Allapattah Flats, provide opportunities for birders and photographers to experience many of the same experiences that the visitors in the 1870's experienced. They can explore the land on foot or on horseback and camp in the wilderness to experience the full range of its changeability.

Birds - Members of Audubon of Martin County have been conducting quarterly bird counts as part of the Martin Grade Scenic Highway designation process.

A preliminary evaluation of that list, combined with other local information, indicates that, with the exception of the Ivory Billed Woodpecker and Whooping Cranes, which were fabled to have lived in the area, the same birds that the naturalists found in 1876 may still be seen and photographed today.

Figure 27: Sandhill Cranes. Photo by Paul Strauss.

Whether they are rare or common in Florida, the birds that populate the Martin Grade area are spectacularly beautiful. Many seem exotic to visitors from non-tropical regions. Whether the birds are elusive or brazen in their behavior, with a little patience, visiting the Allapattah Flats will provide bird lovers and photographers with the opportunities and experiences of a lifetime.

Appendix 8 is a list of bird species reported in the area in 1976. Audubon of Martin County Bird Lists are found in Appendix 9. Letter of Endorsement is found in Appendix 10.



Figure 28: Wood Stork. Photo by Paul Strauss.

Animals:



Figure 29: Fawn at Allapattah Flats. Photo by Paul Strauss.

Most of the native Florida animals that seemed so exotic to the visitors in the 1870's may still be seen and experienced firsthand in the wild along the Martin Grade including alligators, gopher tortises, indigo and rattle snakes, deer and feral Spanish hogs. Florida Panthers have been sighted in recent years, and locals tell tales of an occasional bear.

But the predominant animals of the Flats are open-range cattle. The Martin Grade area was once part of the open range for wild Florida Cracker cattle that were descendants of the Andalusian cattle left by the Spanish 300 years before. Today, more modern cattle still roam the Allapattah Flats as part of its management program, giving visitors a small taste of what it was like to be an 1880's Cracker Cow Hunter.



Figure 30: Cattle at Allapattah Flats. Photo by Paul Strauss.

Plants:

The Martin Grade offers plant lovers the opportunity to see an uncommonly wide variety of native plants in one location. In a letter of endorsement for the Martin Grade Scenic Highway Eligibility Application the Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society wrote:

"Several of our members have visited the area and we are impressed with the diversity and size of the native plants that exist in areas adjacent to the highway. The area's floral diversity is related to its location near the northern end of the range of many sub-tropical plants while simultaneously being near the southern boundary of many temperate species. The varying plant communities also provide habitat for a variety of birds and other wildlife."

Appendix 12. provides Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society's Letter of Endorsement. Plant List is found in Appendix 11.

The fact that the Martin Grade cuts across two entirely different Florida ecosystems also increases the variety of plants that thrive there. The western portion is on the high sand Seminole Ridge which is characterized by upland habitat interspersed with high wetlands and which is the yellow and orange area in Figure 17.

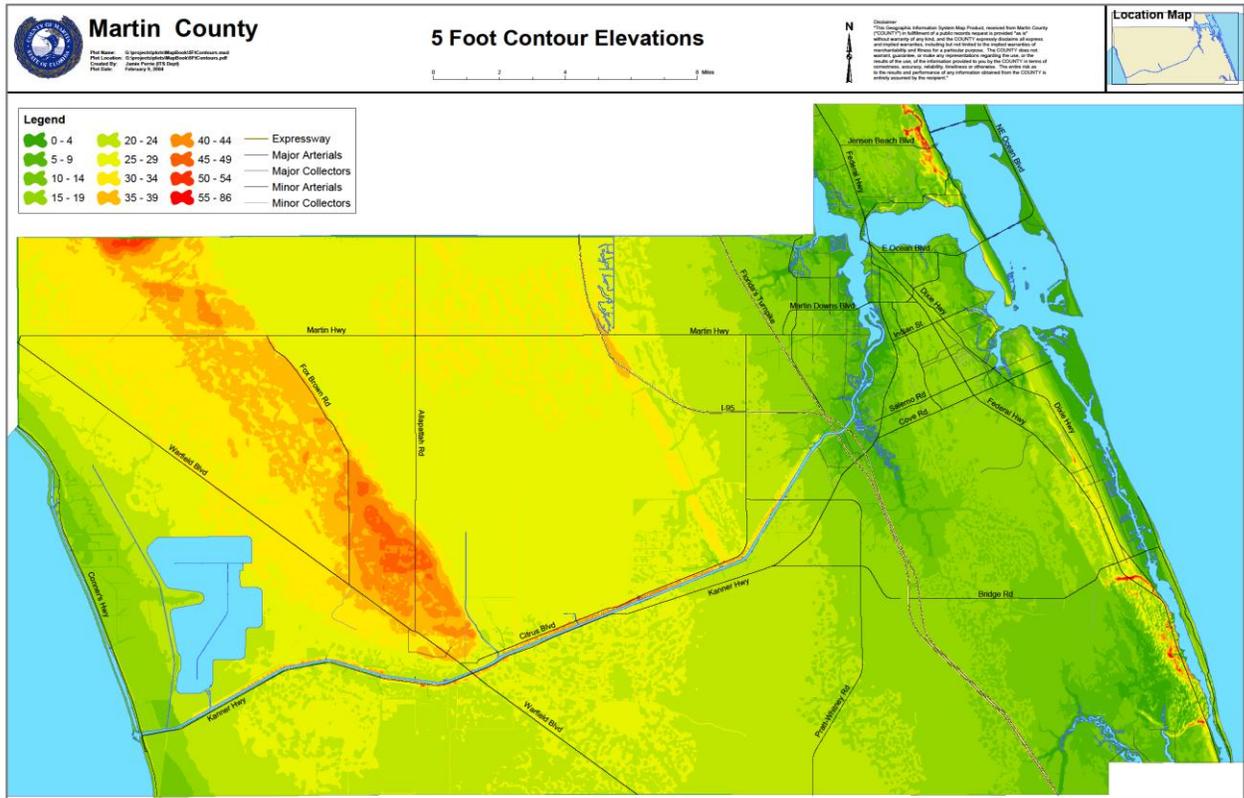


Figure 31: Martin County 5-Foot Contour Elevations.

As the road travels eastward, it drops down about 10-15 feet into the Allapattah Flats, which are a series wetlands, low ridges, and hammocks. The low areas are shown in light and medium green, and the orange areas within that green in Figure 17 show the system of low parallel ridges within those wetlands that are home to hammocks and upland species.

Thus, the habitat for plants in the Martin Grade area not only includes two temperature zones, but also multiple topographical ranges, each with its own soli type and micro-ecosystem. The plants that thrive there vary from the hardy to the fragile, the large to the small, and the common to the unique. Many are exquisitely beautiful.

As part of the Martin Grade Scenic Highway application process a biologist has analyzed the plants that are found along the road.

Appendix 11 is a listing of the flora along the road.

These varied floral micro-ecosystems provide a home for similarly varied animal and insect communities. As a result, a trip to the Martin Grade and Allapattah Flats provides nature photographers with unparalleled opportunities to capture a broad variety of experiences on film.

And, photos do tell the story best. Visitors to the Allapattah Flats have recorded images of their experiences with the natural resources available along the Martin Grade as demonstrated in Figure 32 and digital Appendix E.



Fire Bush



Meadow Beauty



Milk Weed



Moon Flower



Rattle Box



Water Lilly



Lantana



Sabatia

Figure 32: Flowers of the Allapattah Flats. Photos by Paul Strauss.

A larger collection of Martin Grade area photos is also found in Digital Appendix E.

SECTION 2.13.7 – DOCUMENTING THE INTRINSIC RESOURCE ASSESSMENT

The Martin Grade Scenic Corridor does not lend itself to the methods of documenting the intrinsic resources suggested in the Florida Scenic Highway Manual. Its dominant intrinsic resource is the raw physical beauty of its almost primeval tree canopy, which provides a relatively short, but very intense visual experience that many drivers find emotional or spiritual.

As a result, asking drivers to make the detailed evaluations required by the Corridor Impression Survey and the Field Inventory Form is like asking someone who dives into the ocean to stop and describe the experience in detail as he is slicing through the water. The experience is totally breathtaking, but for most people, it is one of total visual and emotional immersion rather than of intellectualized analysis.

The Martin Grade Team supplemented the Corridor Impressions Survey and Field Inventory Forms that were completed with its own Intrinsic Resource analysis. The results of these combined analyses are summarized in a PowerPoint Presentation consisting of 12 aerial photographs with key amenities and issues identified on them on a mile by mile basis. A PDF version of that presentation titled Intrinsic Resources is included in Appendix H.

2.13.7.A - Corridor Impressions Survey Summary

Although the Community Participation program has focused on having people complete the CIS, only a few CIS Forms have been successfully completed and returned to the CAG. The CIS forms that have been completed almost uniformly rate the Corridor in the “High” category for “Vividness” and for “Unity.” Only one form did rate it “Medium” for “Unity.”

There are a number of reasons why only a small number of CIS forms have been completed. The differences between the road segments on the Martin Grade are subtle. There are visible differences in the varieties rural landscape, but the entire Corridor can simply be characterized as lush and rural. The subtle differences add to the richness of the experience, but a typical CIS form tends to read, “Beautiful - More Beautiful,” or “Dense Tree Canopy – Less dense Tree Canopy –

Corridor Impressions Survey Form
Florida Scenic Highways Program

A. Route name/number State Rd. 714 Between Cty Rd. 609 & State Rd 710
 B. Direction of travel _____
 C. Segment Number _____

D. Impressions

Segment # _____
 Segment # _____
 Segment # _____
 Segment # _____
 Begin Segment # _____

This segment of the road is a treasure
The amount of road is determined as follows

Begin Assessment

E. Quality Evaluation (Entire corridor)

	vividness	unity		
High	✓	✓	High --	The corridor is exceptional in its quality of vividness or unity.
Medium			Medium --	The corridor is of average significance and special, yet not exceptional.
Low			Low --	The corridor is not vivid nor displays unity.

Jack and Carl Florin
Students

Figure 33: Typical CIS Form

Needs a Tree Canopy.”

Additionally, two of the strongest visual features of the road are that the shoulders are so narrow and that there are trees in the right of way. As a result, there are few places where drivers feel comfortable stopping to fill out the CIS forms. With few salient land marks and no natural stopping points or destinations, there are also few functional segments to evaluate. Within this context, most of the members of the public who have attempted to complete the CIS Form have found it daunting or overwhelming.

In response to this problem and pursuant to the suggestion in section 6.4.I of the Florida Scenic Highways Program Manual the Martin Grade Team determined that the best method for people who were not comfortable attempting to complete a survey along the Corridor was for them to send the CAG their impressions in narrative form.

This was a successful approach which generated numerous responses. One surveyor wrote:

“The Corridor is exceptional in its quality of vividness or unity: High for both

I can honestly say I don't remember ever seeing a more beautiful stretch of road and hope that the State of Florida will see its way clear to designate this as a scenic byway and that it can be preserved in its current beautiful and historic state.”

Appendix 20 provides copies of the original CIS forms and CIS Summary Sheet, plus a sample of these narrative letters that have been received. They are amazingly uniform in their impressions of the road, and this unsolicited testimonial from a local Email Newsletter captures their tone and spirit:

“So beautiful, it must be preserved

We're talking about Martin Grade, a magnificent canopy of 100-year old oaks on County Road 714, between Allapattah Road and State Road 710. It's a thrill just to drive under that canopy.

Some civic-minded residents have been devoting themselves, not only to preserving Martin Grade, but to getting it officially designated a Scenic Highway. To learn more about this wonderful and unique part of our natural heritage, and to view a video tour, go to: www.SCLANDS.org.

Thus, the Team was able to fulfill the purposes for completing the CIS that have been identified in section 6.2 of the Florida Scenic Highway Manual, which are to ask “local citizens and interested persons to travel the Corridor and contribute their opinions and observations on what they see, think and feel” for the purpose of helping “identify for the CAG those corridor features which stand out to the general community and those less familiar with the area.”

Appendix 20 provides copies the original CIS forms and Summary Sheet, plus narrative impressions of citizens who chose to use the alternative method.

2.13.7.B - Field Inventory Form Summary

According to Section 6.5 of the Florida Scenic Highway Program Manual the purposes for completing Field Impression Forms to the locate of “all features within the Corridor that should be considered, not just those that are noticeable at first,” to “produce a detailed listing of the resources within the viewshed of the proposed corridor,” and to “assist the CAG in determining the intrinsic resources to research, in finalizing the definition of the Corridor’s limits, and in preparing a video and graphic depiction of the candidate roadway.”

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Team achieved those purposes primarily by using a different, methodology to identify the Martin Grade’s intrinsic resources and features than the methodology suggested by the Manual. Its research-based methodology is described in section 2.13.7.C. Field Inventory Forms were utilized to verify and quantify the results. The Forms were filled out by a two-person team that divided the Grade into one-tenth-of-a-mile increments. Copies of the Field Inventory Forms and Summary are included in Appendix H.

The primary conclusion supported by the Field Inventory Forms is that, traveling from east to west, the tree canopy does not start for the first 3.7 miles of the Corridor. However, within the western 8.3 miles of corridor, there are ten canopy sections totaling approximately 5.7 miles in length. The largest section of dense canopy is approximately 2.9 miles long. The next largest is approximately one mile long, and four sections are 0.3 miles in length or longer.

The location of the densest canopy is logical, because the western 8.3 miles of the Corridor traverse the higher elevations of the sand ridge, where upland tree species abounded prior to the creation of the raised road bed. The eastern 3.7 miles traverse the Allapattah Flats which are lower with a swamp and slough ecology. However, it appears that once the road bed was raised, upland trees began to fill in on the man-made uplands. As a result, absent human intervention, the canopy would likely eventually extend the entire length of the Corridor. There are already trees in the ROW for most of the Corridor’s length. In the sparsest areas to the east, they are mostly cabbage and sabal palms. As the Corridor moves west, young pine trees and then oak trees are starting to fill in.

The second conclusion to be drawn is, even though there is no tree canopy on the eastern 3.7 miles, the views of orange groves, pastures, and native wetlands and uplands are beautiful examples of Florida’s rural landscape. They are scenic, natural, and cultural.

The third conclusion is that the exotic species and high grasses in some areas are blocking what would otherwise be a dramatic view of pristine lands and fertile farmland. In some areas, they

are also threatening the health of the trees. This has created a heightened sense of urgency for establishing programs to control exotics and to promote the health of the trees.

The fourth conclusion is that none of the recreational amenities are visible from the road. Nor are, for the most part, the rural agricultural operations or the private home sites. All that is visible from the road are trees, grasses, exotics, and vistas of open land. Directing travelers to the recreational amenities can be addressed with proper signage.

Appendix 23 provides copies of the original Field Inventory Forms and Summary Sheet.

2.13.7.C – Research

The Martin Grade Team’s Research-Based Methodology:

Initially, the CAG and the community focused entirely on the tree canopy with the firm belief that such an extensive stretch of raw natural beauty was sufficient to qualify the Corridor in the Scenic Category.

After Martin Grade Team members had preliminarily identified the physical features of the Corridor by scrutinizing aerial photographs and ground-truthing them with on-site visits. Team members then undertook the massive research project necessary to answer all of the questions posed in the Eligibility Application. During that process, they compiled almost three gigabytes of information, aerials, and photographs which comprised the raw data from which this Application has been crafted.

The Team began by contacting local historian, Sandra Henderson Thurlow, who is the author of Stuart on the St. Lucie, A Pictorial History. Ms. Thurlow provided old photographs and information that has been used in this application. In addition to providing advice and encouragement throughout the process, she also helped identify long time area residents to interview for the Video.

The Team conducted several video interviews with those and other residents to give the proper flavor to the endeavor, and the videographer toured the Corridor with a number of different groups to capture its nuances and beauty. Martin County and South Florida Water Management District shared information and ideas and worked closely with Team members to design and build the Allapattah Flats Equestrian Trails, as a major amenity for the Scenic Highway.

Members of local organizations also contributed meaningful information. For example, Audubon of Martin County conducted quarterly bird counts in the Martin Grade area for use in the Application. The Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society provided the

first formal Letter of Support that included an explanation for the variety of flora that can be found there. A biologist, who is a member of that organization, evaluated the roadway and provided the list of plant species that is included in the Appendices. Similarly, an Okeechobee Resident who is a member of the Okeechobee Battlefield Organization provided useful information about the Battlefield, the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, and other recreational amenities in Okeechobee County.

Some of the historical information was gathered in person from Newspaper Archives in the Public Libraries and local news paper buildings. Other information was gathered from the Clerk of the Court's Martin County Commission Records. Much of the technical data was, however, collected using the internet.

For example, the websites of Martin County and the Martin County Property Appraiser provided most of the information about the Martin County Comprehensive Plan, land use, zoning, and property ownership. Aerials and maps were also downloaded from those websites, as was the full 2030 Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, which is the source for much of the transportation data on which the Application relies. The websites of the SFWMD and FWCS were a source of information about the recreational amenities accessible from the Grade, including brochures and presentations that are included in the Appendices.

The internet also provided access to documents held by State and local historical societies, newspaper archives, local and state libraries, colleges and universities, environmental agencies, parks and recreation departments, cultural groups, and forest and park services.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the internet research was that it provided access to the full text of newspaper and magazine archives from all over the country and whole collections of materials dating back as far as the mid 1800's. Many of these sources were published elsewhere, even though the topic was the Martin Grade area, and more traditional research methodologies would not likely have revealed them.

As they worked their way through the process, however, team members made lists of amenities and features and collaborated with representatives of Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District to identify recreational opportunities. It was only as the Team was researching the history of the area so that it could tell the Martin Grade's Story that it started to recognize and articulate the Corridor's historical and cultural features. It has identified and described those features in detail in this application.

But, the individual features do not tell the tale. There are no public historical or cultural destinations along the Corridor's length. The only way to experience its historical and cultural features is to feel them with the heart and eyes while passing through.

So, although the Martin Grade has an amazing story to tell, that story remains simply the story of a road rather than a destination. A road through the wilderness, which started as such a trial and tribulation that it deterred its use, but which has evolved into a visual experience of such startling beauty that it affects the other senses and the imagination.

Yet, it remains predominantly a path along which the traveler can catch glimpses of the life and times of its community through the trees while passing by. It is simply different than all the other paths available to travelers today, and that difference is greater than the sum of its individual segments.

2.13.7.D – Universal Criteria

The Universal Criteria have been addressed in this application in the following locations in this application:

UC #1 is addressed in Sections 2.13.1, 2, 4, 5 and 6

UC #2 is addressed in Section 2.17

UC #3 is addressed in Section 2.12.4,

UC #4 is addressed in Sections 2.13.5 and 6

UC #5 is addressed in Section 2.12.1.A

UC #6 is addressed in Sections 2.13.4, 5 and 6

UC #7 is addressed in Section 2.18

UC #8 is addressed in Section 2.19

UC #9 is addressed in Section 2.20

UC #10 is addressed in Section 2.24

2.13.7.E - Resource Assessment – Seeking Designation in the Scenic Category

After consideration of all of the Intrinsic Resources found on the Martin Grade and exploring its historical and cultural amenities, it has been determined that the Martin Grade's raw, natural beauty is its strongest resource. As a result, the CAG is seeking to have the Martin Grade designated a Florida Scenic Highway in the Scenic Category.

2.13.7.F –Corridor Video

The Martin Grade CAG has produced two different videos of the Martin Grade all of which are viewable via DVD in Appendix G as well as on YouTube. The primary video for purposes of this Eligibility Application is titled “Martin Grade Scenic Highway Video.”

The other video, the “Martin Grade Virtual Drive” is the first video that was done as part of the Intrinsic Resource evaluation and simulates a drive down the Corridor.

SECTION 2.14 - CORRIDOR VISION

VISION STATEMENT I - The Martin Grade Time Machine: *The Land Remembers.*

If a time machine could bring the first Americans who settled near Lake Okeechobee's north-eastern shore in the 1890's back to the Martin Grade area in 2030, they'd feel right at home on the land.

The high sand Seminole Ridge just east of the lake is still forested with live oaks, slash pines, and cabbage palms, and deer, turkeys, and other game still hide among the palmettos. People are still few and far between, and sunlit pastures dotted with grazing cattle and citrus groves fill the gaps in the woods. Sometimes cool breezes smell like orange blossoms and pine trees, but when the air is still, the dry sandy heat releases a hint of sage.

As the time travelers move a few miles to the east, the land still drops 10 to 15 feet into the Alpatioke Swamp. In the wet season, this portion of the Northern Everglades still cuts a broad swath of slow moving fresh water up to four feet deep between the high Seminole Ridge and the Atlantic Ocean.

The visitors can hardly see where the Swamp has healed the wounds it suffered by being drained in the 20th Century, because it was reflooded during the Great Northern Everglades Restoration and has regenerated itself. Its new name, the Allapattah Flats, sounds close enough to the original Seminole word for alligator that they recognize it instantly as the Alpatiokee Swamp they dreaded crossing so fiercely.

The Allapattah Flats are no home to man. Even the Seminoles had built their town high above them at the south end of the western ridge. The wetlands in the Flats teem with alligators and wading birds. Florida panthers stalk deer and hogs on the low ridges and in the shade of oak hammocks that are delicately decorated with bromeliads and wild flowers. Eagles soar above, and the rattling trumpets of sandhill cranes echo across the freshwater wetlands announcing both dawn and dusk.



During the day, our visitors pass undisturbed through woods and wetlands, on horseback or on foot, just as they always did. At the end of the day, they watch a fiery sunset with fellow travelers at a primitive campground and then huddle around campfires and gaze up at a timeless sky.

If the air is soft and warm, water droplets hover and dance in the firelight and a rainbow encircles the moon. If it is cool and dry, the stars twinkle like diamonds and, with no other lights to disturb the eye, the glow of the Milky Way reveals a ghostly path across the night sky. They hear the sound of the land breathing in the night as they always did.

Figure 34: Sunset on the Allapattah Flats. Photo by Paul Strauss.

The one thing that has changed over the 140 years since these time travelers first arrived on Florida's last frontier is the Martin Grade, itself. It is no longer a narrow, winding path worn by boots and moccasins between Lake Okeechobee and the settlements along the St. Lucie River.

In 2030, the Martin Grade runs straight as an arrow east and west. It is two lanes wide, and its smooth asphalt surface is a real improvement over the two-rut road that plagued the earliest automobiles that followed these first settlers into the woods not long after they got here.

Yet, the Martin Grade also feels familiar. As it cuts across the western Seminole Ridge, hundred-year-old trees crowd against its edges. Their limbs still join together overhead creating a natural tunnel that protects travelers from the sun and the rain, like the comforting shade of an ancient oak hammock.

To the east, our visitors marvel at the modern bridges and culverts that allow them to cross the Allapattah Flats without having to wade through chest-deep wetlands on the lookout for alligators, panthers, and bears. They smile at the younger trees that line this section of the road, seeing the canopy they will become over the next 100 years in their mind's eye.

Other than the road and the fancy new motor vehicles that use it, little seems to have changed. Even though almost a thousand homesteaders now live along the ridge, they are still private folk with their homes set back out of sight from the road. The land is still used for hunting, farming, or grazing.



Figure 35: Range cow in the morning on the Allapattah Flats.
Photo by Tom Claud

Although some of the newcomers have closed off the open range, cattle still roam almost 40 thousand acres of open land protected by the government.

The big surprise comes when our visitors leave the Grade and discover that the rest of Florida has left the land and spirit of the frontier so far behind. At first they would not recognize Lake Okeechobee to the west.

The cypress forests and sandy beaches that used to echo with crashing waves were replaced by a dike in 1939 to tame its raging floods. From the top of the dike, the visitors watch with awe as bass boats fly across the grassy flats to take credit for their record catches. Gone are the steamboats loaded with supplies and people out for Sunday gatherings. They have no way of knowing that the “Big Water” once ran black with pollution because, on that day in 2030, it looks just as bountiful as it did when they first saw it.

To the south, the Seminoles have abandoned their Seminole Town at the south end of the high sand ridge to catch the breezes blowing across the Flats. It has been transformed into the thriving community of Indiantown, with its solid industrial jobs and pleasant family neighborhoods. They are surprised to learn that the Seminoles now run ranches, rodeos and casinos just west of Okeechobee City.

The time travelers are not totally surprised that the community they called Tantie has been renamed and has grown into the world-renowned ranching and fishing community of Okeechobee City, with its stately city squares that were laid out in the open prairie north of the Lake by modern urban planners for Henry Flagler’s railroad which arrived around 1915. They always had ambition for their community and had hoped that Flagler might bring his railroad down to the Lake’s north shore after he completed the Overseas Railroad to Key West. What they do not realize is that it took 100 years for Flagler’s vision for their community to become reality.

To the east, Stuart on the St. Lucie River seems much closer than it used to be, because they no longer have to circumnavigate the Alpatiokee Swamp to get there. Stuart still feels like a small town, however, with its friendly people and familiar general store standing on the banks of the St. Lucie River.

Yet, 20th Century bridges tower over the rivers and the pineapple fields that provided the region's major cash crop have been overcome by the hustle and bustle of 21st Century civilization. With an odd sense of reverse nostalgia, they begin to yearn to be back on the Grade – back in the beauty of nature, back in the quiet of their own time.

It is only then that our visitors from 1890 begin to understand why, in 2030, like-minded people from all over the world seek out the serenity and beauty of the Martin Grade. It takes these newcomers back to the Florida frontier our time travelers crossed the wilderness to find – the frontier that felt like it would last forever.



Figure 36: Dappled light through Martin Grade Tree Canopy. Photo by Nancy Oliver.

At first, they don't understand why time seems to have stood still on the Martin Grade. But, as they head for home, they stop at the Way Stations along the Grade to read its history. By reading about their future, they begin to grasp how the dreams they brought with them were achieved, but at a cost much greater than they anticipated. They realize how much damage had been done and how deeply the people of Martin County had to love the land, because it took so much effort to protect what was left and to restore so much of what had been lost.

Their last stop is at a picnic area in the shade of the oldest and deepest trees.

There, the time travelers linger a while with modern-day visitors who gaze with reverence at the light filtering through the canopy as if it were shining through the stained-glass windows of a green cathedral.

After a moment of silence, that light takes them back in time and they are home, knowing that, in 2030, the Florida frontier that they love will survive along the Martin Grade because the people of Martin County care, and through it all, the land remembers.

VISION STATEMENT II – Goals Achieved

In 2030, all of the initial goals of the Martin Grade Corridor Advocacy Group have been achieved. The people of Martin County are thrilled that the addition of the Martin Grade to the Florida Scenic Highway program has been such a success.

One of the reasons is that, although the Martin Grade is the best known and most beloved of Florida's Scenic Highways, it is truly a scenic highway with an emphasis on the quiet, rural

lifestyle of the 19th and 20th Centuries. As a result, it is not a high-volume destination for tourists seeking excitement and flashy adventure. Rather, it attracts only visitors who share the values of the residents. They come to view the tree canopy, to hike and camp at primitive campsites in the Allapattah Flats, and to ride the Fox Brown Equestrian trails. These visitors are more like good neighbors than like tourists.

The initial six miles of tree canopy, mostly west of Fox Brown Road, have become the iconographic symbol of Martin County's unique commitment to maintaining the quality of life of its residents. As a result, protection for the Martin Grade's scenic values has phenomenal support from the people of Martin County and is a key part of the Martin County Comprehensive Plan which has been renowned as one of the best in Florida since 1990.

Because Martin County's commitment to protecting the tree canopy has also received the support of citizens groups in other parts of Florida, Martin County has been able to negotiate inter local agreements with surrounding counties to divert traffic generated by new development off the Grade. As a result, all needs for widening the roadway have been removed from local and regional long-range transportation plans. Additionally, all local governments and the state have agreed that all road improvements will be achieved in the manner that has the least possible negative impact on the tree canopy and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Pursuant to the Corridor Management Plan, arborists and other environmental professionals have evaluated the health of the trees, and the CME has initiated programs to implement their recommendations. This includes programs for environmentally sensitive ditch cleaning and shoulder mowing. Exotic plants have been removed, and a program for keeping them at bay has been implemented. Where appropriate, replacement trees have been planted along with understory. Additionally, the Corridor Management Entity, working with Martin County, and numerous civic groups and individuals, has planted an additional five miles of roadway with new trees that will expand the canopy to most of the Corridor's length when they mature.

The CME has also worked with Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District to acquire all of the land targeted for acquisition to complete the Indian River Lagoon portion of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. It has also assisted in completing the acquisition programs of other agencies. As a result, over 40,000 acres of land that borders the Martin Grade is in public conservation. The Allapattah Flats have successfully been rehydrated and have regenerated themselves into a functional part of the Northern Everglades. The rest of the Indian River Lagoon Plan is also fully functional, with the result that both Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie River are regaining their health.

The CME has worked closely with the government agencies involved to create additional public access to these properties along the Grade. Using these facilities, the CME helped expand the

nature-based recreational opportunities along the Grade for its residents and visitors alike, and numerous new Way Stations have been created to tell more of the Martin Grade's Story.

The CME has also enjoyed a very close working relationship with the owners of the Becker Groves Country Store and Rural Service Center that is located at the eastern entrance to the Martin Grade. The Country Store complex was designed to capture the spirit of the Martin Grade, and, in combination with the Way Station located there, it gives visitors a strong sense of history and place. The welcoming, rural atmosphere of its café and other shops give campers, hikers, and other visitors an opportunity to get to know each other and residents of the Grade, who consider it their place.

On the western half of the Grade, the CME's emphasis has been to work closely with private landowners and local, state, and federal agencies to protect and preserve the tree canopy and the rural quality of the scenic vista. The CME has helped land owners who wanted to develop their land, rather than preserve it, design their projects in a way that is consistent with Martin County's Land Development Regulations that protect the Grade's scenic qualities. It has also assisted other land owners place conservation easements over their land so that they can keep it in their families for generations to come.

Because they play such large roles in the Martin Grade's Story and because the Grade offers only nature-based recreation and tourism opportunities, the CME has worked closely with the tourist agencies in Stuart, Indiantown, and Okeechobee City to direct over-night tourists to hospitality facilities in those communities. As a result, the Martin Grade has become an integral part of a regional nature-based tourism industry.

As a result of the successful partnerships the CME has developed with land owners, governments, and major components of the private sector, it has enjoyed and will continue to enjoy steady and reliable funding from a variety of sources. This has made it possible for the CME to maintain a visible and positive presence in the region and to stay actively involved in all aspects of planning and development within a 40-mile radius around the Grade. As a result, the CME has been able to identify issues that could potentially affect the roadway and to proactively alleviate any potential impacts.

Building on its successes, which are shored up by the commitment of Martin County to maintain the Florida Scenic Highway designation on the Martin Grade, in the future the CME will continue to focus on maintaining and improving the scenic values of the roadway and developing amenities along the Grade that are compatible with the neighborhood and with its Story, while assisting land owners along the Grade to achieve their goals. This will require eternal vigilance and a marketing plan that is carefully crafted to attract the kinds of visitors who will respect and appreciate the results of all their labor.

SECTION 2.15 - CORRIDOR MISSION STATEMENT

The Martin Grade Corridor Advocacy Group came into being because there was a threat to the Martin Grade's 6-mile long tree canopy, which makes it one of the most beautiful roads in the United States. After discussing a variety of options in a number of community meetings, the CAG limited its purpose and mission to one thing: Having the Martin Grade designated a Florida Scenic Highway for the purpose of protecting and enhancing the tree canopy.

A corollary aspect of that mission is to complete the FSH application and to manage the roadway after it is designated a FSH in a manner that is compatible with the rural and scenic nature of the Martin Grade and its surrounding neighborhoods.

Although the FSH designation will not prohibit 4-laning of the Martin Grade, which is the most significant threat to the tree canopy, protecting the tree canopy is already a high priority for a large number of the citizens of Martin County. The CAG will complete its mission by utilizing the Community Participation Program that is part of the FSH application process to solidify that support so that the Martin Grade tree canopy becomes the instantly-recognized symbol of Martin County's commitment to the quality of life of its residents. This support will translate into a Corridor Management Plan that makes it possible for the residents to care for and enhance the tree canopy long into the future.

Once the Grade is designated a FSH, the Corridor Management Entity's mission will be to implement the Corridor Management Plan that the Community created as part of its application. In doing so, the CME will keep the electorate involved with the land and informed and engaged on the issues so that the citizens of Martin County will protect the trees at the polls if necessary. The CME will also forge partnerships and work to have policies that protect the rural, scenic nature of the Martin Grade included in the Martin County Comprehensive Plan and other legal documents.

SECTION 2.16 - INITIAL MARTIN GRADE SCENIC CORRIDOR GOALS

Goal 1: <i>Resource protection, maintenance, preservation and enhancement - Protect and enhance the Martin Grade Tree Canopy.</i>	
1.1. Objective:	Ensure that protection for the Martin Grade is included in the Martin County Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.
1.2. Objective	Evaluate the health of the trees and implement programs to improve their health. <i>1.2.1. Strategy: Improve mowing techniques.</i> <i>1.2.2. Strategy: Improve ditch cleaning techniques.</i> <i>1.2.3. Remove intrusive exotic species.</i>
1.3. Objective:	Develop and implement a program for enhancing the existing Martin Grade Tree Canopy that may include infill and understory planting.
1.4. Objective:	Extend the length of the tree canopy through new plantings.

Goal 2: <i>Resource protection, maintenance, preservation and enhancement - Support environmental preservation and restoration programs for lands in the Martin Grade.</i>	
2.1. Objective:	Completion of the Indian River Lagoon Plan as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration program.
2.2. Objective:	Acquisition of all lands near the Grade that are targeted for conservation by other agencies or environmental groups from willing sellers or donors.
2.3. Objective:	Creation of conservation easements over all lands along the Grade where private owners want to create such easements.

Figures 37 – 43: Initial Martin Grade Scenic Corridor Goals

<p>Goal 3: <i>Resource enhancement and Community support and participation</i> - Enhance recreational opportunities on lands abutting the Martin Grade that are compatible with the rural and scenic character of the roadway and community.</p>	
<p>3.1. Objective:</p>	<p>Development and improvement of public access on the lands that abut the Scenic Corridor and are owned by other governmental entities, such as the Allapattah Flats at the eastern terminus of the Scenic Corridor, the Fox Brown Equestrian Trails near the middle of the Corridor, and the Lakeside Ranch Water Treatment Area at the western terminus of the Scenic Corridor.</p>
<p>3.2. Objective:</p>	<p>Partnership with Martin County that creates low-impact, Scenic-Highway-oriented recreational opportunity on the Martin Grade Volunteer Fire Station Park.</p>
<p>3.3. Objective:</p>	<p>Acquisition of land or easements on the part of the road with the deepest part of the canopy and the creation of a low-impact recreation or viewing opportunity.</p>

<p>Goal 4: <i>Education and Corridor story and Community support and participation</i> - Educate visitors and local residents regarding the natural and historical resources along the Corridor.</p>	
<p>4.1. Objective:</p>	<p>Development of a comprehensive system of Stations that describe the resources and history of the Martin Grade.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">4.1.1. <i>Strategy: Partner to locate Way Stations at all property and recreation facilities owned and operated by governmental entities.</i></p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">4.1.2. <i>Strategy: Partner to locate signage and extensive Way Stations within the Becker Groves General Store complex at the eastern entrance to the Martin Grade and at the western entrance.</i></p>
<p>4.2. Objective</p>	<p>Establish a Media presence that tells the Martin Grade history and provides information about its natural resources.</p>
<p>4.3. Objective:</p>	<p>Develop and implement a Community Outreach Program that keeps the scenic, historical, and recreational values of the Martin Grade in the public eye in Martin County, the region, and the state.</p>

<p>Goal 5: <i>Transportation planning and safety</i> - Make sure that driving across the Martin Grade is a safe and enjoyable experience through transportation and safety planning.</p>	
<p>5.1. Objective:</p>	<p><u>Planning:</u> Partner with all governmental entities in the region to ensure that support, enhancement, and protection for the Martin Grade Scenic Highway is included in local Comprehensive Plans and regional transportation plans.</p>
<p>5.2. Objective:</p>	<p><u>Planning:</u> Partner with all governmental entities in the region, private land owners, and developers to reduce traffic impacts on the Martin Grade, so as to avoid having to widen the road due to increased traffic.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">5.2.1 <i>Strategy: Assist in the designation of new road corridors.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">5.2.2 <i>Strategy: Encourage the utilization of traffic timing techniques.</i></p>
<p>5.3 Objective</p>	<p><u>Planning:</u> If improvements are required for the roadway, partner with Martin County, private land owners, and developers to devise innovative and environmentally-sensitive roadway designs and engineering schemes to eliminate or minimize the impact on the Martin Grade tree canopy.</p>
<p>5.4 Objective</p>	<p><u>Safety:</u> Make drivers aware that the Martin Grade is a narrow roadway with large trees in its narrow shoulders and steep ditches along its sides, and educate them about the conduct required to drive safely on such a road.</p>
<p>5.5 Objective:</p>	<p><u>Safety:</u> Partner with Martin County through the Corridor Management Plan to monitor road conditions, to schedule maintenance and repairs, and to implement improvements that are compatible with the county's transportation needs and the scenic character of road, including any pedestrian, bicycle, or other facilities desired by the community.</p>

<p>Goal 6: <i>Economic development and tourism</i> – Use the Martin Grade Scenic Highway designation to enhance tourism in a manner that is compatible with the rural nature of the community.</p>	
<p>6.1. Objective:</p>	<p>Brand and market the Martin Grade so as to attract low-impact, nature-based tourists who share the values of the Grade community and Martin County.</p>
<p>6.2. Objective:</p>	<p>Partner with the Chambers of Commerce and tourism agencies in Stuart, Indiantown, and Okeechobee City to develop a tourism package that develops interest in the Martin Grade region and highlights the unique attractions and experiences available in each of those communities.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">6.2.1. <i>Strategy: Develop compatible signage that directs tourists to each community.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">6.2.2. <i>Strategy: Describe each community and how it influenced the history of the Martin Grade in the Way Stations.</i></p>
<p>6.3. Objective:</p>	<p>Partner with the Becker Groves General Store complex at the eastern entrance to the Scenic Corridor to assure that it creates an ambiance that reflects the story of the Grade and support the General Store’s economic viability by encouraging tourists who travel Grade to stop in and savor the experience.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">6.3.1. <i>Strategy: Help assure that the General Store is stocked with provisions that support hiking, primitive camping, and freshwater fishing on the Allapattah Flats as well as equestrian supplies for the users of the Fox Brown Equestrian Trails as well as the local residents.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">6.3.2. <i>Strategy: Help develop a Community Outreach Program that encourages local residents to purchase agricultural supplies and home provisions from the General Store.</i></p>

Goal 7: *Economic viability of Martin Grade Scenic Highway CME and CMP – Ensure the fiscal stability of the CME and CMP.*

7.1. Objective:

Create a fiscally sound funding base that supports the CME’s implementation of the CMP throughout the years.

- 7.1.1. *Strategy: Form business partnerships with private entities*
- 7.1.2. *Strategy: Form partnership with Martin County, the Martin County Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, and the Martin County Tourist Development Council.*
- 7.1.3. *Strategy: Form partnerships with similar entities in Okeechobee and St. Lucie Counties.*
- 7.1.4. *Strategy: Continue to maximize Community Participation Program that maximizes private contributions.*
- 7.1.5. *Strategy: Pursue grant opportunities.*

To the east, the City of Stuart lies on the banks of the St. Lucie River near the Indian River Lagoon, the St. Lucie Inlet, and the Atlantic Ocean. It is the last small town on Florida's east coast and its atmosphere harkens back to the cosmopolitan fishing village that first attracted wealthy northern tourists more than a hundred years ago. Although the distance between the two is small and both seem to be throwbacks to an earlier era, they are two different worlds.

Between them lies the Martin Grade.

Although the early settlers of Okeechobee and Stuart began arriving about the same time, they came from different places, traveled different paths to get there, lived different kinds of lives, and had little to do with each other. For the first 50 years, they were separated by an almost impassable portion of the Northern Everglades now known as the Allapattah Flats.

When the Martin Grade first forged through that wet wilderness to connect them in the 1920's, it was a dirt and sand track raised above the swamps by dirt dredged from the ditches at its side.



Figure 45: Martin Grade, circa 1930's

By then, the fortunes of Stuart and the newly formed Martin County were linked by rail and sea to the Atlantic Coast, and their residents turned their back to the coastal backlands except for picnics and fishing expeditions. As a result, the Martin Grade remained a cut-and-grub road and then a sand track for 70 years – through storms and wars, booms and busts, and law suits.

There were few settlers in either area before 1880, due to a combination of hostile Indians, geography, and unfortunate timing. First, Florida belonged to Spain. Right before Spain ceded it to the United States in 1819, however, the First Seminole War broke out. At its end, the Seminoles were given most of central Florida by a treaty, and the threat of Indian attack limited settlement in the area along the banks of Lake Okeechobee and the Indian River for the next 40 years.

The army linked the forts it constructed on the Kissimmee River and near the Indian River and Jupiter Inlets by building military trails, but then the Second Seminole War broke out. It ended after the decisive battle of Okeechobee in 1837, and, in 1842, Congress offered 160 acres of land to any homesteaders who were armed and prepared to defend themselves. But the threat or renewed Indian attack had driven most of the new homesteaders away before the end of the third Seminole War in 1858.

With the main body of the unconquered Seminoles moving into the southwestern Florida Everglades in 1858, the Martin Grade area was opened for new settlement, but, once again the possibilities were dashed by bad timing. The rest of the nation was gearing up for the Civil War which started in 1860, and Florida joined the Confederacy a year later.

As the war wore on, displaced southerners looked south for their fortune. Cut off from northern investors, Florida's major industry became feeding the Confederate Army by capturing wild hogs and cattle that had been set free by the Spanish three hundred years before. Thus, the Cracker Cowboy/Cow Hunter heritage was born, and it has dominated the culture of the great prairies north of Lake Okeechobee ever since.

These pioneers were often poor and carried all they possessed with them as they traveled. Those who settled in the Martin Grade area led a traditional frontier life, hunting and farming for food, relying on horses and oxen for transportation, and building their homes of rough sewn timbers, even as tall buildings and trolleys were transforming cities such as New York and Philadelphia into major metropolitan areas in the Gilded Age.

Modern settlement did not begin in the Martin Grade area until the coming of the railroads, and they were a long time coming. In 1855, the United States had turned over all of its "swamp and overflowed lands" in Florida to the State for the purpose of reclaiming them, and the new State of Florida had offered free land as an incentive to railroad and canal builders to develop Florida. But railroad building was not a top priority during the Civil War.

In 1869, not long after the War ended, the Golden Spike had connected the Atlantic Seaboard with the Pacific Coast by rail. Nonetheless, railroad building in Florida lagged behind during the Reconstruction Era of the 1870's.

It did not begin in earnest until 1881, when Hamilton Disston, a rich Philadelphia industrialist, refinanced Florida's Internal Improvement Fund by buying 4 million acres in central Florida – including most of the first Seminole Reservation between Orlando and Lake Okeechobee – for 25 cents an acre.

Disston also reached agreement with the state to drain all of the lands overflowed by Lake Okeechobee and the Kissimmee River in exchange for half of the reclaimed land. He began dredging a series of canals to drain the Everglades and, in the 1880's, he opened steamboat routes from Lake Okeechobee west through the Caloosahatchee River to the Gulf of Mexico and north up the Kissimmee River to the Atlantic Ocean.

Disston started the first true Florida land rush, and from that day forward the history of the Martin Grade region was linked to the fortunes of wealthy industrial capitalists living in

northern states along the Atlantic Seaboard. But, due to logistics and geography, it took another quarter century for the canals and trains to reach the Martin Grade area, itself.

By then, three independent groups of newcomers had set the region on its path to the future. They shared the area peacefully with the remaining Seminoles, who had never left the area and who lived in Seminole Town about ten miles south of the Martin Grade, where the community of Indiantown would ultimately be created.

One group of settlers, many of whom became Florida Cowboys, were from north Florida or southern states. They worked their way south, down the center of the state to the northeastern shores of Lake Okeechobee. These hardy men and women settled near the old forts and military trails and soon adopted Florida Cracker ways. In the settled areas, they operated ferries and general stores and began to civilize the region.



Figure 46: Florida Cowboys 1895 by Frederick Remington.

In more remote areas, they became Cow Hunters who rounded up herds of wild Cracker Cattle in the Kissimmee River valley, using bullwhips from which they got their “Cracker” nickname, to keep the cattle under control.



When not hunting cattle, they planted vegetables and citrus on the high ground, hunted deer and turkeys, fished in the rivers and the lake, and built homes out of rough-cut, virgin cypress that kept out the alligators, panthers, bears, and poisonous snakes.

Figure 47: Early Florida Cracker Cabin.

The land was bountiful, but communication and commerce with the outside world was difficult, and their Florida Cracker culture developed in the freedom of relative isolation.

Less than forty miles to the east as the egret flies, a different breed of settlers began taking title to the lands along the St. Lucie and Indian Rivers that had been abandoned in the Indian scare of

1849. With immediate access to the outside world on navigable waterways leading to the ocean, settlers along the coast had always been able to rely on the transportation opportunities created by the rivers and ocean to market their goods to cities on the east coast.



Figure 48: Early Pineapple Plantation on the Indian River

Many earlier settlers had laid out pineapple and citrus plantations before abandoning their claims during the Indian Wars. Many of the new settlers along the Indian and St. Lucie Rivers were businessmen and entrepreneurs who rekindled those commercial dreams and gave new breath to those industries.

In the 1880's, settlers from New York and Germany started a town on the banks of the St. Lucie River, where Stuart is today. One of the first settlers made his living building boats, which started an industry for which Stuart remains famous in the 21st Century. Soon, there was a store, and the foundations of a new town were laid.

The third group of newcomers were harbingers of change who ushered in the modern era. They were the tourists and adventurers who published tales of their journeys into Florida's east-coast wilderness in popular magazines during the 1870's. The stories of their explorations into the country's southernmost frontier – which included the Martin Grade area - read like Livingston's travels in darkest Africa.

They described encounters with giant alligators and writhing snakes, killing panthers in mangrove swamps with Bowie knives, shooting bears on the beach while hunting turtle eggs, eating gopher tortoises cooked with swamp cabbage with the Seminoles, shooting wild turkeys that weighed 25 pounds, catching 12-pound bass by the boatload, and waves that crashed like thunder or artillery shells on Lake Okeechobee but remained unseen behind an impenetrable cypress forest.

Their tales of adventure amidst abundance tantalized east coast sportsmen with money in their pockets, time on their hands, and a taste for exotic adventure. One of the key allures of darkest south-central Florida was that it was just a short steamboat trip down the east coast from the wealthy cities of the coming Gilded Age. Newly-wealthy residents of the northeast could experience such wondrous adventures on short vacations. It was even accessible to the not-so-wealthy, as one writer touted how to take a three-month trip to Florida for \$100.

These writers also reveled in the winter weather which they described as a cure for anything that ailed the modern eastern city dweller. In response, the first "Snowbirds" started coming

to Florida to spend the harsh northern winters hunting, fishing, and soaking up the sun. Thus, the seed was sown for Florida's number one industry, tourism, even before the railroads reached the Treasure Coast where the Martin Grade area lay sleeping.

Within this bubbling melting pot that was Florida at the turn of the 20th Century, the Martin Grade started out as a "cut and grub" path through the wilderness that was impassable during the wet season. After Martin County became the last county created on Florida's East Coast in 1925, it announced that it would build the Martin Highway which would become Florida's newest road connecting two county seats – Stuart and Okeechobee City. It was proudly named for the governor who had helped create the County.

This was the height of the 1920's Florida land boom during which the Okeechobee Canal was completed and the Seaboard Airline Railroad was built to connect Tampa to Okeechobee City and West Palm Beach. Where the two crossed, near the old Seminole Town on the high sand ridge that bordered the Alpatiokee Swamp, the new town of Indiantown was created. The future was coming at last! And then the bubble burst.

Only then was the true nature of the Martin Grade Story revealed. The Martin Grade became Florida's forgotten highway. It was not even graded as a county road until the 1950's. Even then it was left alone on Florida's sleeping bosom – almost untouched by modern man, living and breathing in the soul of nature.

By the early 1990's, nature had built a linear oak hammock along its raised roadbed. This created a Green Cathedral of trees that sheltered the road and those of God's creatures who crossed or traversed it. When plans were laid in the 1990's, to make the Grade what appears to have been the last highway in Florida directly connecting two county seats to be paved, the people of Martin County recognized the gift they had been given by time and nature and demanded that the road be paved in a manner that did not destroy the tree canopy.

So, the story of the Martin Grade is not the story of a road that brought the disparate groups of settlers together in Florida's 20th Century melting pot to form the new Florida.

It is the story of how those settlers, the land around them, and the road that connected them ignored the rest of the world as it rushed past them and drifted as if lost in time and space, maintaining their separate cultures and life styles for 100 years.

Today, at the start of the 21st Century these communities are beginning to come together – but not with the thought that they are one community with a single heritage. Instead, they recognize each other as unique and respect and honor each other's history.

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway stands as the symbol of that coming together – that linkage between the uplands and the shore, the east and the west, the slow and the fast, the old and the new. The one thing they all agree on is that the tree canopy that grew up to shelter them through this transition epitomizes the best of all of them. It is too beautiful to lose.

SECTION 2.18 - CORRIDOR ADVOCACY GROUP

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA # 7 – A CORRIDOR ADVOCACY GROUP (CAG) MUST BE ORGANIZED TO SUPPORT THE SCENIC HIGHWAY DESIGNATION.)

The Martin Grade Corridor Advocacy Group (CAG) came into being in 2006 after the Joint Metropolitan Planning Organization for Martin and St. Lucie Counties conducted a series of public meetings at which it became evident that the Joint MPO was considering including 4-laning the Martin Grade in its 2030 Long Range Regional Transportation Plan.

The citizens realized that 4-laning the Corridor using a traditional four-lane-highway cross section would destroy every tree in the Martin Grade's 6-mile long tree canopy. After discussing a variety of options in a number of community meetings, the CAG limited its purpose and mission to one thing: Having the Martin Grade designated a Florida Scenic Highway (FSH) for the purpose of protecting and enhancing the tree canopy.

Representatives of the Florida Department of Transportation Scenic Highway Division attended the first community meeting and explained the FSH Program to the residents. Fully aware that the FSH designation would not prohibit 4-laning the road, the residents nonetheless concluded that other benefits from having the Martin Grade designated a FSH would maximize their ability to protect the tree canopy into the future.

Specifically, the citizens decided that the adoption of a Corridor Management Plan for improving and maintaining the scenic qualities of the Corridor and the creation of a Corridor Management Entity dedicated to implementing that plan would create opportunities to address transportation planning issues proactively and to build and maintain community support for protecting the trees, even if the road capacity must ultimately be increased.

Four private citizens volunteered to serve as the inaugural CAG, and a number of other citizens, plus a liaison from Martin County, a representative of the SFWMD, and a representative from Florida Power and Light volunteered to serve as an advisory body to the CAG.

Appendix 13 is the inaugural CAG and advisory committees.

Sustaining Community Lands, Inc., a non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization volunteered to serve as consultant to the CAG, to raise funds for the project, to draft the Eligibility Application, and to manage the Scenic Highway process.

The CAG held a series of meetings during which it adopted minimal operating procedures in keeping with its small size and volunteer nature. SCL organized and publicized CAG meetings pursuant to the Sunshine Law. Information about SCL and this process is found at www.SCLands.org.

In April 2007, the CAG made a presentation to the Martin County Metropolitan Planning Organization's Technical and Citizen's Advisory Committees and to the MPO, itself. It received unanimous support for submitting its Letter of Intent.

The CAG then submitted its Letter of Intent to Martin County for review. While it was under review, the Martin County Commission passed a resolution designating the Martin Grade a County Scenic Corridor.

After the Martin County Staff reviewed the issue and FSH program for a year, the Martin County Commission voted unanimously to support the submission of the Martin Grade Letter of Intent. It was signed in March of 2008 and submitted to the Florida Scenic Highway Advisory Committee for review.

Appendix 14 is the Letter of Intent.

The co-chairman of the Martin Grade CAG and the Chair of SCL attended the Florida Scenic Highway Conference held in Naples in the spring of 2008, where they learned that the Letter of Intent would be accepted. On May 8, 2008, a letter was sent by the District Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, District 4, informing the CAG that the SHAC had no comments or questions regarding the Letter of Intent and authorizing the CAG to complete and submit the Eligibility Application.

Appendix 15 is the SHAC response.

Once the SHAC authorized the CAG to complete the Eligibility Application, SCL was awarded a grant by the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties for the purpose of compiling the data and drafting the application. Although the CAG met few times while SCL was completing these chores, SCL kept its members apprised of its progress.

In 2010, SCL received additional funding from private and governmental sources for the purpose of conducting the Community Participation Program and completing and submitting the Eligibility Application. As the first step toward expanding and broadening the reach and expertise of the CAG, in July 2010, Martin County Commissioner Ed Ciampi, in whose District the Martin Grade lies, became a member of the CAG, as did Brian Powers, who has close ties with the urban area of Indiantown. At that meeting, the CAG approved completing and submitting the Eligibility Application to the SHAC in time for its October 13, 2010 meeting.

SECTION 2.19 - CORRIDOR COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #8 – A COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM MUST BE DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED.)

The Martin Grade Community Participation Program is a multi-faceted program designed to gain the support of community leaders and the general public in Martin, Okeechobee, and St. Lucie Counties. It is designed to begin before the Eligibility Application is submitted to the SHAC, to use the SHAC's approval as a springboard to start the Designation Phase, and to build during the Designation Phase to give the CME and CMP a firm foundation on which to go forward into the Implementation Phase.

The CPP takes advantage of the absolute beauty of the Corridor's tree canopy and the unanimous and universal support in the community for finding a way to protect the trees. The CPP has a number of areas of focus.

Public Relations

A key aspect of the CPP is to keep the Martin Grade Scenic Highway project in the public eye. To that effect, a number of key events have been planned, and a public relations firm has volunteered to formulate and distribute press releases regarding every significant facet of the program. This has created a buzz in the community about the scenic highway application project.

Coverage by the local newspaper, the Stuart News, has been consistently strong and supportive. In July 2010, it included several articles in which the project was mentioned and an editorial supporting the project. Representatives of the project have been invited to meet with the Stuart News Editorial Board to generate even greater support.

Digital Appendix F is a sampling of newspaper coverage favoring the Martin Grade Scenic Highway designation.

Publicity Materials

The Public Relations campaign also prompted local artists to donate their work for use in the program. SCL has created grassroots, first generation publicity and marketing materials utilizing these iconographic images to gain the attention of the public and public officials.

One of these donations is a 26X40 inch gliclee art photo of the tree canopy that is used as the backdrop for Martin Grade Presentations. That and other artistic contributions are highlighted on the Martin Grade Website, in the Newsletter, and in this application.

Other materials include a variety of powerpoint presentations, an Executive Summary of the FSH program, a tri-fold Martin Grade Brochure to be handed out at events and meetings, a tri-fold mailer, a post card, and banners.

Appendix 16 is a copy of the Martin Grade Scenic Highway Brochure.

Appendix 17 is a copy of the MGSB Executive Summary.

Social Media

The Martin Grade is featured on the SCL website, www.SCLands.org. The Martin Grade Scenic Highway has a Facebook page, <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Martin-Grade-Scenic-Highway/101101293272425?filter=1> . That page can also be accessed by Googling “Martin Grade Scenic Highway.”

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Facebook Page has links to two videos relating the Martin Grade. The “Martin Grade Virtual Drive” video may also be seen on www.SCLands.org Virtual Tour of the Trees Page and on YouTube.

The Martin Grade Team has started sending out an email newsletter. The June 2010 issue can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/25gwnmu> and the July 2010 Newsletter: <http://tinyurl.com/22vrddb>.

Outreach to Individuals and Organizations

Representatives of the Martin Grade project are attending meetings and making presentations to a wide variety of local social and business organizations. They will also attend community events such as festivals.

SECTION 2.20 - LOCAL SUPPORT

(UNIVERSAL CRITERIA #9 – STRONG LOCAL SUPPORT MUST BE DEMONSTRATED.)

Local support is demonstrated by the plethora of articles in local publications supporting the Martin Grade project.

It is also demonstrated by the statements of support that have been received from the following organizations:

The Martin Grade Scenic Highway Corridor Advocacy Group acknowledges and thanks the following elected officials, governmental subdivisions, and community organizations for their assistance and support in completing this application:

- United States Congressman Tom Rooney
- Florida State Senator, District 28, Joe Negron
- Florida State Representative, District 82, William Snyder
- Florida State Representative, District 81, Adam Fetterman
- Board of County Commissioners, Martin County, Florida: Commissioners - Doug Smith, Ed Ciampi, Patrick Hayes, Susan Valliere, and Sarah Heard

- City of Stuart
- Town of Jupiter Island
- Town of Sewall's Point
- South Florida Water Management District

- Audubon of Martin County
- Business Development Board of Martin County
- Economic Council of Martin County
- Florida Department of Transportation, District 4
- Historical Society of Martin County
- Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce
- Martin County Chapter of the Florida Native Plant Society
- Martin County Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Palm City Chamber of Commerce
- Stuart/Martin County Chamber of Commerce
- The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties

Representatives of the Scenic Highway project have also met with the executive directors of the Okeechobee County Business Development Board, Okeechobee City Main Street Program, and the Okeechobee County Economic Council. They were very supportive and are in the process of fashioning partnerships.

Emails and letters of support from individuals have also been received.

On August 10, 2010, the Martin County Board of the County Commissioners voted to support designation of Martin Grade as a Florida Scenic Highway. Heads of the County Engineering Department and County Administrators have also voiced their support for the project.

Digital Appendix F is a sampling of newspaper coverage favoring the Martin Grade Scenic Highway designation.

Appendix 18 is a sampling of letters and emails of support, and pages from the BCC Agenda Item Summary.

SECTION 2.21 AND 2.23 - CORRIDOR PROTECTION TECHNIQUES & RELATIONSHIP OF THE CORRIDOR TO THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Existing Protection

Currently, the Martin County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan offers the greatest protection for the Martin Grade’s Intrinsic Resources. The land uses along the Martin Grade are restricted by that Plan and the Martin County Land Development Regulations that implement it. The scenic values along the Corridor fall within the general Plan provisions acknowledging the importance of scenic vistas summarized in Figure 49.

Martin County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan	
Section 4.4.E.2.a.(2)	Requires the “use of scenic highway Corridor overlay zones to protect the natural beauty and scenic vistas that exist along roadways that serve as major access ways, gateways and canopy routes through Martin County.
Section 4.2.A.6.d	Identifies “scenic values” as one of the “public benefits” to be achieved by the Comprehensive Plan.”
Section 4.4.I.6.a	Provides that “[s]pecial attention shall be given to enhancing scenic vistas along major transportation Corridors.”
Section 4.4.E.1.a.(9)	Requires that “future land uses” and “site plans protect scenic assets, natural features and natural systems.”
Section 9.3.A.1	Requires the “[p]reservation of native trees and vegetation along roadway Corridors with natural scenic qualities” as part of a “long-range master plan for acquiring and managing large open space areas for conservation and recreational purposes.”
Section 9.4.A.11	Requires “an aggressive program to identify, ensure preservation of and provide appropriate public access to areas of natural beauty and scenic importance.”

Figure 50: Martin County Comprehensive Growth Management Plan

Section 4.4.E.I of the Comprehensive Plan requires the adoption of Land Development Regulations to implement Plan Policies. As a result, the following Land Development Regulations and ordinances expressly protect Scenic Corridors and Canopy Roads.

Section 4.66I.C of the LDR’s provides the following definitions:

Land Development Regulations’ Definitions	
4.66I.C Canopy road tree protection zones:	All lands within 100 feet of the centerlines of existing roads where trees form a continuous canopy over the roadway are to be treated as canopy road tree protection zones.
Scenic Corridor:	Any Corridor classified by the board as a Scenic Corridor in order to preserve, maintain, protect or enhance the cultural, historic, or environmental character of the Corridor.

Figure 51: Martin County Land Development Regulations, Section 4.66I.C

In 2007, the Martin County Commission passed a resolution naming the Martin Grade a County Scenic Corridor pursuant to Section 4.849 of its Land Development Regulation.

Land Development Regulations	
4.849 Scenic Corridors: Some roadways, due to their cultural, historic, or environmental amenities, may warrant special protection. Examples may include canopy roads or roadways with special scenic or historic qualities. The purpose of this section 4.849 is to provide for the designation and protection of such roadways or roadway segments in Martin County as historic or Scenic Corridors.	
4.849.A. County Scenic Corridors:	The Board of County Commissioners may classify segments of County-maintained roadways as Scenic Corridors through roadway classification or the use of a Corridor overlay zone. Such designation shall extend for a specified distance on either side of the roadway and allow for the adoption of special Corridor overlay regulations to preserve, maintain, protect, or enhance the intrinsic character of the Corridor. The adoption of a Scenic Corridor classification shall be by resolution of the Board of County Commissioners and shall include justification for the preservation, maintenance and protection of the facility.

Figure 52: Martin County Land Development Regulations, Section 4.849.A.A.

The Martin County Land Development Regulations also specifically acknowledge the FSH program and Florida Scenic Highway Designation in Section 4.849.B:

Land Development Regulations	
<p>4.849.B.</p> <p>Scenic Corridors on the State Highway system:</p>	<p>Any citizen, group of citizens, or local government wishing to designate a Corridor on the State highway system as a Scenic Corridor may do so in accordance with the procedures of the Florida Scenic Highways Program (FSHP). All potential applicants are directed to reference the Florida Scenic Highways Program Manual, available through the local FDOT District Scenic Highways Coordinator.</p>

Figure 53: Martin County Land Development Regulations, Section 4.849.B

Protecting the tree canopy on the Martin Grade falls within section 4.666 of the LDR's.

Land Development Regulations	
<p>4.666.A.</p> <p>Protected trees:</p>	<p>The following native trees are protected and shall not be removed or damaged without the approval specified below.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * *</p> <p>Any tree within a canopy road tree protection zone, except prohibited trees.</p>

Figure 54: Martin County Land Development Regulations, Section 4.666.A

Section 4.666.B of the LDR's requires identification of protected trees, and section 4.666.C prohibits the removal of protected trees unless it is necessary for the safety of persons, property, or the health of the ecosystem, or for reasonable use of property where there are no other alternatives.

In keeping with these provisions, section 4.843 which defines roadway design standards treats Scenic Corridors as a special category of road with their own standards that are defined by what is "required to maintain the character of the roadway based on a Scenic Corridor resolution."

Future Protection

The greatest scenic element of the Martin Grade is the tree canopy. The flaw in the protection for the scenic values of the Martin Grade provided by Martin County Plans and Ordinances is that they protect the tree canopy only from private entities, while the ultimate threat to the tree canopy is that it will be destroyed by the County itself in order to provide better transportation facilities, by destructive maintenance practices or by exotic vegetation that deteriorate the health of the trees.

Consequently, the greatest protection that the FSH designation can provide for the Martin Grade's scenic values into the future is the creation of a Corridor Management Plan and Corridor Management Entity that focus on helping solve regional transportation issues in a manner that protects the trees and keeps the public informed and involved in the process and maintaining the health of the trees.

SECTION 2.22 - FUNDING AND PROMOTION

The Status quo will be funded in the future as it is funded today. Because the Martin Grade is totally within the control of Martin County, the County will remain responsible for its basic maintenance and operation. Similarly, the SFWMD and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will continue to oversee the Allapattah Flats Wildlife Management Area and Lakeside Ranch, and private property owners will maintain their properties in compliance with Martin County Codes.

New funding sources must be identified for improvements such as Scenic Highway signage and Way Stations with educational kiosks, as well as for improvements in right of way maintenance techniques that improve the health of the trees and removal of exotic plants that detract from its health and scenic values. It is anticipated that such funding will come from a variety of sources.

Long term funding of the CME and CMP will always be an issue and are not resolved at this time. However, having the FSH designation will create an identity, entity, and structure that will make acquiring such funding possible.

Private Partnerships

One source of funding will be the development of partnerships with private entities. One example of the kinds of partnerships that could be used to support the Corridor may set the tone for the future. In 2010, the Consolidated Citrus Corporation filed an application to amend the Martin County Comprehensive Plan to allow a mix of agricultural and technological uses on 1,700 acres fronting Martin Highway five miles east of the Martin Grade Scenic Corridor's eastern terminus. This project, known as the AgTECH project, included language in its Comp Plan amendment that requires the project to support the Martin Grade Scenic Corridor by providing funding and conducting a variety of traffic planning tasks. That policy is provided in section 2.12.7 and is still in the review process. It exemplifies, however, one model that the CME may choose to use when engaging other private entities.

Another partnership opportunity that arose during the spring 2010 Comprehensive Plan Amendment processes is the request of the Becker Groves Holding Company to add language to the Comp Plan that would allow a 5-acre Essential Service Node at the Martin Grade's eastern terminus at its intersection with Allapattah Road. The County Commissioners approved language that would allow a country-store type of facility that is compatible with the community to serve the rural area. If this Plan change is finally approved, it is anticipated that the CME will negotiate actively to include Scenic Highway amenities within the country store or on the property and to promote Scenic Highway products.

Martin County is a community with a large number of affluent residents and privately-funded local foundations. It is anticipated that the CME will make every effort to attract the attention of one or more of them and that there will be opportunities to apply successfully for grants from these foundations for enhancement of the health and beauty of the tree canopy and the road in general.

Public Partnerships

One very logical partnership would be to align the CME with the Martin County Convention and Visitor's Bureau, which is funded by the Martin County tourism development tax. A scenic highway, with a spectacular tree canopy, unique recreational activities, and a cultural and historical story will be an adjunct to the CVB's efforts to market Martin County to high-quality tourists.

Its proximity to existing and targeted properties that are part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project increases the possibility of partnering to acquire grant funding for acquisition of thousands more acres of land along the Corridor.

A relationship may be established with Keep Martin Beautiful, which is concerned with maintaining quality rights of ways within the county.

Traditional Fundraising

The CME will likely either become or align itself permanently with a non-profit charitable organization for the purpose of applying for government and other grants.

It will also likely conduct regular fundraising events. Because the Grade is already a favorite with motor cycle enthusiasts, the possibility of exploring an event targeting cyclists is already under discussion.

Because the tree canopy is so spectacular and photogenic, there are numerous opportunities to establish a small but steady funding stream selling items depicting its beauty. One artist has already suggested selling art prints of the canopy with a significant portion of the profits going to the Scenic Highway project. Such items as calendars and note cards have also been suggested.

Conducting an ongoing Community Participation Plan will be an essential aspect of this kind of fundraising as will the internet advertising and sales utilizing programs such as PayPal.

SECTION 2.24 - TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR DESIGNATION PHASE

SCL and the Martin Grade CAG intend to start working on the Designation Phase and creation of the CMP as soon as the final version of the Eligibility Application is submitted to the SHAC.

It is anticipated that CME and CMP development will get into full swing during 2011. Because this is a 12-mile long Corridor that lies within only one governmental jurisdiction and which is entirely surrounded by conservation and agricultural land uses that are compatible with its scenic values, its recreational opportunities, and the Martin County Comprehensive Plan, it is not anticipated that developing the CMP will be extraordinarily difficult.

As a result, it is anticipated that the CMP will be completed in time to submit it to the SHAC during the first half of 2012 at either its first or second meeting in 2012.