

## 2009 Summary Report for: A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Byway

### Contact Information

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### Corridor Conditions

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

Since 2002 additional park creations and enhancements have occurred at: Bird Island Park in Ponte Vedra; the Ponte Vedra Concert Hall; planned OAR House Trail head at Guana; Nease Beachfront Park at Vilano Beach; completion of streetscaping in Vilano Town Center; opening of Fort Mose in St. Augustine; development of Hamilton Upchurch Skate Park; enhancements at the St. Augustine Amphitheater; completion of the Splash Park at the St Johns County Pier; development and completion of Maratea Boardwalk Beach Access; Windswept Acres Park development, improvements at Bulter Beach Park West, and completion of Green Road Boat Ramp improvement.

In the Flagler sector of the Byway, intrinsic resources remained the same or were enhanced along most of the corridor. The collapse of the real estate market significantly reduced the pressures for commercial and condo development along the corridor. As well, the passage of the environmentally sensitive lands tax in Flagler County in November 2008 and the decline in land prices renewed the possibility of acquiring several parcels to expand the parklands along the corridor. Progress was made toward the goal of removing/improving dilapidated structures. Improvements to existing parks continued.

#### **2) What, if any, intrinsic resources have been degraded or altered?**

The Ocean Palms Golf Course located in south Flagler Beach closed. In the Hammock there was no notable degradation of any of the intrinsic resources in 2008. Ocean encroachment at Summer Haven occurred in the fall of 2008 forming a new natural inlet through the barrier island. Other erosion occurred at Ponte Vedra Beach, South Ponte Vedra Beach, Vilano Beach, and Gamble Rogers State Recreation Area. Beach re-nourishment studies continue among various groups. The Sea Bull Marine Shore Guard project is still in negotiations with FDEP. FDOT officials met with Friends of A1A in October 2008 to educate all on strategies and

approaches.

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

In Flagler Beach the playground and facilities at Wickline Park were remodeled and upgraded and included a new volleyball sand court and walking path. In the Hammock the historic Malacompra plantation site was completed at Bings Landing South, a significant cleanup project removed large quantities of trash and new signage was placed on the trails. Trail work also continued at River and Sea. The gateway monuments at the northern end of the Flagler County byway were completed, along with enhancements. Signage remains incomplete, but work is to begin on a gateway pavilion near these monuments at River and Sea (Oceanside) and on new dune walkovers at Malacompra Park. The initial phase of the work on gateway features.

In St. Johns County planning, development, and phases of construction occurred in a number of county parks. Bird Island Park design phase, county approval and funding was secured. Nease Park funding and design completed. Continued improvement and completion of the Vilano Main Street streetscapes resulted in dedication celebrations in Oct 2008. The new state park, Fort Mose, was officially dedicated. Plans and design for development of a recreational skate park proceeded forward and is now opened across from the Alligator Farm. The St. Augustine Amphitheater management reverted to county management and cultural venues greatly expanded with renowned artists. The County and Chamber completed construction of a new Splash Park at the St Johns County Pier Park. Windswept Acres Park designs, plans, funding and dedication occurred to commence byway headquarter improvements. The park will serve as byway headquarters and an interpretive museum and wayside commemorating post War traveling themes. Designs and funding were secured for improvements at Frank Butler Park West providing improved facilities and boat launching amenities. Restoration construction for The Bridge of Lions in St. Augustine continues through 2010.

Over 700 pounds of wildflowers were planted using a Florida Wildflower Foundation Planting Grant in over 22 locations in both counties. Several sites bloomed and a Paths of Sunshine Award from the Florida Garden Club was received.

In the Hammock, a modest new office building was completed on the east side south of Sea Colony and begun on a building south of Armand Beach Drive. While efforts were made to develop a residential/commercial small development at Cinnamon Grove and infrastructure was developed for an office complex on the property south of this, no new tenants have been identified and no new structures were begun or completed. On the west side, an existing building was remodeled for real estate offices. Initial work did not conform to previously approved plans as reviewed by Scenic A1A Pride and modifications were made to improve the site. Plans were approved for a condo development on the ocean near the existing Surfside, but the site remains undeveloped. It has, however, been cleared of its previous dilapidated

structures and campground facilities.

The City of Flagler Beach obtained an easement for a welcome sign on the CVS property on SR 100. Funding was awarded for Gateway Promenade Improvements for the boardwalk. The City is seeking funding for painting the water tower at the south end of town.

Finally, plans were announced for a 260 mile 5 county bike loop that includes the A1A Byway greenway trails. The St. Johns River to Sea Loop Trail had its inaugural bike riders in November of 2008. Additional trails will need to be constructed in other parts of the loop, but the Flagler A1A segment is complete.

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

In Flagler County there are a number of approved but not yet constructed private projects that, taken all together, could both add significant regular traffic loads to the road and increase the number of relatively high (five to six story) buildings to the view shed. Many of these properties are likely to change ownership before final plans are completed and work begun; these will need close monitoring as the real estate market improves. At the extreme southern end of the segment, the non conforming sign , virtually a billboard, for the Shark House Restaurant which was destroyed by fire remains in place and there do not appear to be any near term plans for replacing the restaurant. Another dilapidated building across on the west side of the southern end has been somewhat cleaned up but remains an unattractive building. Progress is being made further north on removal of the dilapidated structure that once held a florist shop. The property to the north of Bings Landing is for sale and, with the approval of Environmentally Sensitive Lands funding, it is hoped that this land can be added to the park. This small park has a boat ramp, a historic site, a s playground and a large picnic pavilion, making it one of the most heavily used park per acre in the county. Additional space to the north could relieve the pressures on the facility, particularly on weekends. This approval also brings the possibility of adding to the as yet undeveloped Bay Street Oceanfront property, providing real opportunities for both a new oceanfront access point and some relief for the perennial flooding that plagues Marineland Acres to the north of it. New tennis courts are still in the final planning stage and will be completed in 2009. A multi year plan has been developed with the County for continuing enhancements to existing parks, including trails, boardwalks, signage, parking, and waterfront access and we plan to continue to follow it. The County is working on a new billboard ordinance, in part to address the new technologies of changeable signs. The ordinance may also result in a timeline for removal of substantially all off site signage along A1A over time.

The CME continues to participate in both the efforts to develop a new County Comprehensive Plan and to improve the long term deeded protection of park properties in the area.

In St. Johns County the Southwest sector of the county bordering Flagler and the

natural waterways adjoining both are threatened by growth and development. Several planned unit developments are in progress and more being requested. Similarly growth in the Ponte Vedra section remains steady. To mitigate undesired growth, the St. Johns Corridor Management Council monitors permitting through the Neighborhood Bill of Rights Notifications and voices a position to political concerns when situations are undesirable.

## **Corridor Conditions - Photographs**

### **Goals, Objectives and Strategies**

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

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Five, in coordination with the Friends of A1A organization, initiated a strategic planning process in February 2008. The purpose of the project was to develop a Byway Strategic Plan (BSP) for the 72-mile A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Byway (Byway) and unite the three individual CMEs through a collaborative, consensus building process. The strategic planning process was designed to help the Byway board and members focus on a shared mission and work toward a unified set of goals over the next five years. This strategic planning process consisted of four phases: data collection, strategic visioning, action planning, and documentation. The data collection phase consisted of building an inventory of existing plans and reports, interviewing stakeholders, and establishing the Byway Visioning Committee (BVC). The BVC included the Friends of A1A Board members and staff, and at least two other representatives from each CME. The strategic planning team, in conjunction with the BVC, conducted five strategic visioning sessions to develop the mission, core values, goals, objectives, and strategies. To prepare for implementation of the action plan, the BVC also identified priorities, assigned roles and responsibilities, and developed a corridor vision. The results of this strategic visioning process were documented in the 2008 Strategic Plan.

The mission, core values, goals, objectives, and strategies are the basic elements of the strategic plan. The mission of the organization is:

To preserve, protect, promote, and enhance the outstanding resources of the A1A Scenic and Historic Coastal Byway in a manner that provides a unique experience for visitors, and maintains an unhurried lifestyle and Old Florida Ambiance for all.

The core values include: Resource Protection, Transportation Planning and Safety, Community and Government Support and Participation, Education and Communication, Economic Development and Tourism, and Organizational Development and Sustainability. Each core value has a goal statement and several objectives and strategies. The mission, core values, goals, objectives, and strategies were developed by consensus. Once the core elements of the strategic plan were in

place, the strategic planning team began to prepare the action plan with roles and responsibilities by initiating a new committee structure and assembling volunteers to serve on the committees. Finally, the BVC developed a corridor vision that provided an artists rendition of what the A1A corridor will look like once they achieve their mission and accomplish their goals. Implementation of this plan commenced in 2008 and is ongoing. Many of the goals have been ongoing with variations by the different highway groups. The completion of several strategies in 2008 has brought the corridor vision much closer to completion. In Flagler County much of the Phase II work was completed at the northern gateway including several picnic pavilions. Several trails at the Bing's Landing Addition were completed. Picnic pavilions and interpretive signage were added completing that area except for a future canoe launch, and bridges across the canal.

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

See Attachment 1 Action Plan with comments. Prior to the consolidated plan, significant goals achieved included:

1. Development of Scenic Corridor Overlay Ordinance and Corridors
2. Development of the Site Review Protocol in Flagler County
3. Development of a Tree Protection Ordinance
4. Organized groups for 100% of Byway cleanups
5. Obtained 501 c 3
6. Preserved Malacompra Plantation Ruins and developed interpretive center
7. Developed Master Plan in St Johns Countys with transportation and wayfinding components
8. Developed website
9. Developed logo and copyright for byway branding

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

Early in 2008 it was decided by FDOT that a series of Goals, Objectives, and Strategies should be written by the Friends of A1A with help from members of the three CME along the byway. These would then apply for the whole byway rather than have each individual CME create their own. This was done by a series of meetings of the Friends concluded in September 2008. Committees were then formed to work on each of the five main sections. They are presented in Attachment 1, and will apply in 2008 and beyond.

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

Flagler County has plans for 2009 to work on the county sign ordinance as it has no protection for digital or animated billboards. A letter from a member of the CME was sent to the County Planning Department Director and alerted the county to this fact. Friends of A1A has plans to create both a Cell Tower and Billboard Ordinance in

2009 usable by any municipalities or counties along the Byway for their protection. Additional recycling and landscaping ordinances are planned. In Flagler Beach a downtown mixed-use overlay was approved by the City. The City supported the referendum to acquire environmentally sensitive land and is looking at their sign ordinance for possible revision and updating. A new Resort (Short-term) Rental ordinance was also approved.

### **9) Are there proposed ordinances/regulations that may aid goals?**

The future sign ordinance may aid our goal of eventually getting rid of Billboards. It is hoped that the county will include amortization of the billboards in the sign ordinance, and define and regulate all types of billboards. The City of Flagler Beach is working on final wording of a new golf cart ordinance as an alternative means of transportation limited within the City.

### **Community Participation Program**

#### **10) Discuss the effectiveness of the Community Participation Program to date.**

Friends of A1A volunteers number in excess of 250 active members with another 750 supporters receiving regular mailings. Each highway group encourages expanded membership and support.

1. Ocean Shore A1A Thirty people attended the Volunteer Orientation in October 2008 and the Adopt a Highway section adopted continues to be cleaned by volunteers. Regular support is provided to the Friends of A1A in byway events up and down the corridor especially in planning committees.

2. River and Sea Trail A1A The community participation program continues to be very effective in several areas. Members have actively taken part as volunteers in community events under the sponsorship of Friends of A1A, and have supported and been active members of the Hammock Community Conservation Corporation (HCCC), and participated in clean-ups along A1A and the beach. The HCCC studies and solves various problems in the Hammock community such as drainage, and possible annexation by Palm Coast. The group assists the Friends by participating in their orientation events designed to advertise and inform people about all intrinsic qualities and what we do to protect them. Also many of our members participate in the ever-growing and very successful Right Whale Watch which is done each year from January to the middle of March. This activity alone is very community driven and a very dedicated one. The CME continued to provide a rest stop and refreshments for the 100-mile bike event, sponsored by Flagler Beach, which is held in May of each year. Another event supported was the Creekside Festival at Princess Place where we have a kiosk with items to sell and lots of information of what we do. The group also supports Washington Oaks State Park with their week-end of celebration for Arbor Day. The A1A Brochures with an excellent map and guide of the whole 72 mile Byway are always a very popular item. These are also distributed to the public by Publix, CITGO Gas Station and Palm Coast Villas Motel located on our River and Sea Trail and by the Palm Coast Public Library in Palm

Coast as well as the Chambers of Commerce and I 95 Visitor Centers.

3. St Johns Scenic A1A Orientation occurred in May 2008 and was well attended with volunteers regularly supporting participation in the Lighthouse Festival, Gamble Rogers Festival and other major area events. In October 2008 children were educated in planting wildflowers at a Bird Island Park Event. Participation on Farmers Markets continues in various locations. Support by like minded organizations is strong.

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

1. Ocean Shore A1A - Two workshops were held in Nov. and Dec. to discuss possibilities for a New City Center Town Hall project. Meetings were held to discuss short-term rental issues.

2. River and Sea Trail A1A The final rejection by the Flagler Board of County Commission for a proposed Car Repair Shop and Car Wash was a direct result of our letters and those from the Hammock Conservation Coalition to say nothing of many, many from indignant residents. It was felt the applicant did not have the financial backing to build and maintain a sufficiently clean operation and no adequate way to discharge any waste that such a business would engender. Another major issue we discuss, that has been an ongoing problem for years, is the Florida Power and Light cutting around power lines and into our beautiful live oak tree canopy along the highway. While we know the lines must be free from trees that may fall on them we heartily wish that those same power lines would be put underground. It has been made very apparent by our CME and is always at the top of our Wish List. A continual major issue and perhaps our largest issue is Byways Grant work being done for us by the County. The Grant Applications and the design and construction work which follows has our constant attention and both parties try very hard to work together to obtain the desired results. We are very lucky at present to have a wonderful County Staff who work very hard and take particular pride in the results we are seeing and the plans they are working on. At several of our meetings we have prospective owners present their proposed site plans for us to see, learn about and offer suggestions. If the project is quite large a Site Review Committee is appointed and they meet on the site with the owners and then a subsequent Site Review Committee Report is sent to the Owner and County Planning Department Director. Of course approval comes from the County and our County Codes must be adhered to, but we do like to support and welcome new and responsible development that will fit in and hopefully enhance our corridor. The proposed new Colonial Bank and Solitude Townhomes were such projects this year. Another indignant discussion happened when The City of Palm Coast painted their Logo all over the water tower located on the east side of the Intracoastal Waterway in The Hammock. It was very definitely in Unincorporated Flagler County and not in Palm Coast. It took several months of communication and patience to have the Logo removed. We also had complaints from the public about non code and repetitive signs for a small cafe in

Marineland. As these were in the Town of Marineland we needed to work with the Mayor and the Marineland Resort to have these replaced with something more permanent and acceptable. This has been promised to happen in early 2009.

3. St Johns Scenic A1A EAR development and discussion of the comp plan amendment generated input by volunteers. Letters have been issued to various officials with positive results. Specifically garbage pick up dates were change in the Northern sector of St Johns County after repeated conversations with county staff and vendors. It took nearly a year but results were achieved.

## **Funding**

### **12) Describe corridor funding needs, acquisitions and expenditures.**

Various facility and park improvements are needed along the byway. A funding gap matrix has been developed and funding sources regularly explored. The City of Flagler Beach would like to obtain funds to purchase land for parking lots in the North end of Town. Additional funds to paint the Water Tower are being sought. Properties in the Hammock are targeted for acquisition through the Environmentally Sensitive Land Program. Several sectors of the byway need additional beachfront parking areas. Micklers Landing at Ponte Vedra is particularly popular. Staff support for the CME is an ongoing need. NSB grants were awarded in 2008 for St. Johns and Flagler County improvements.

### **13) Has obtaining funding been a problem?**

Yes  No

### **14) If so, how will the CME attempt to resolve this issue?**

Grant acquisition and private fundraisers are continually planned.

### **15) Are future funding sources being pursued?**

Yes  No

### **16) If so, when does the CME anticipate receiving them?**

For the FY2008 Friends of A1A acquired nearly \$200,000 for projects and in FY2009 nearly \$500,000 for projects directly manage. The receipt of funds from grants which result in contracts varies based on the funder and cycle. Funding sources in 2009 include FDOT; FDEP and VISIT FLORIDA and Wildflower Foundation.

### **17) How will the funding be used?**

Funds are targeted for projects identified in the funding gap matrix and to fulfill the six goals defined in the strategic plan.

## **Measuring Success**

## 18) Traffic Counts Along the Corridor

County	Monitoring Site Number	2-Way Traffic Count (# of cars / day)
Flagler	See Attachment 3	See Attachment 3
St. Johns	See Attachment 3	See Attachment 3

## 19) Corridor Resources

Resource Name	Description	Special Circumstances
See Attachment 4	See Attachment 4	See Attachment 4

## 20) Marketing and Promotional Efforts

Marketing and promotion continues through our Scenic A1A Website, regular news releases to local and national outlets, volunteer news and radio appearances. Additionally presentations to civic groups regularly occur. The Flagler Beach Historic Museum Walking Tour Brochure was completed, and the first guided walking tour took place during the Holiday at the Beach event in Dec. The Scenic Byway Website has a Flagler and Beverly Beach link. Scenic Byway brochures including Flagler and Beverly Beach locations and information are distributed at Florida Welcome and Information Centers and businesses. Flagler and Beverly Beach are featured in Magazines. Other promotional events include Flagler Beach Concerts and Competitions on First Fridays at Veterans Park, Family Movies in the Park at Wickline Park and Fourth of July Fireworks and Parade Celebration.

The Beachside Merchants Visitors Center at So. 2nd & So. Central Ave. opened for business. The A1A Brochure has been reprinted three times with over 100, 000 copies distributed to high traffic outlets at Visitor Information Centers and Welcome Centers throughout the state. The Tourist Development Councils and Chambers Routinely disburse them as well. St Johns County similarly has concerts, farmers markets and festivals in which Friends of A1A participate ... 25 events annually.

## 21) Lodging Facilities

**How many lodging facilities are along your corridor:** 50+

**Predominant style of facilities:** Predominantly Large, Chain Facilities

**If other, please explain:**

Predominant style of facilities: Even mix in St. Johns County (Bed and breakfasts and chain; Smaller operations in Flagler County)

## 22) Food Facilities

**How many food facilities are along your corridor:** 50+

**Predominant style of facilities:** Even Mix

**If other, please explain:**

Independents and chains throughout corridor

### **23) Chambers of Commerce**

<b>Chamber of Commerce Name</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Zip</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
St Johns County Chamber of Commerce	1 Riberia St	St Augustine	32084	904 829 5681
FlaglerCounty Chamber of Commerce	20 Airport Road Suite C	Palm Coast	32164	386 437 0106

### **24) Private Development**

In the Hammock there was very little building construction on scenic A1A during 2008. Here is the status of the main projects along the scenic highway. 1) The Solitude Condos owners decided to delay construction beyond 2008. 2) The property where Bova Construction had planned a Medical Center has been up for sale during 2008. 3) Marineland redesign has been delayed beyond 2008. 4) Cinnamon Grove developers installed a monument sign at the entrance, but have delayed any other construction beyond 2008. 5) Tim Conner Attorneys office building located at 5925 N. Ocean Shore Blvd. Will be refurbished in 2009. 6) The Hammock Dunes Renaissance Project has been delayed beyond 2008. 7) Old Hammock Plantation will most likely be up for sale in 2009. 8) Beach Haven has been delayed beyond 2008 because of the poor Real Estate Market. 9) Fred Lewers commercial development located south of the East Coast Realty Office has been delayed beyond 2008. In St Johns County mixed growth occurred in 2008 in all sectors of the county.

### **25) Demographic Changes**

Flagler County has been the fastest growing county in the US for multiple years over the past decade. From 2000 to 2007, the annual growth rate topped 9% moving to double digit growth rates for several years. It is expected that growth in the county will continue at a strong yet decreasing rate through 2010 because of the economic situation in the state and overall US. The coastal community around A1A consists of mostly people over 65 years of age and that age group is expected to increase through the planning horizon of 2030. The aged dependency ratio for the nation in 2000 was .21, meaning that for every retirement aged person, there were five adults of working age. Flagler County had a ratio over twice as high as this in 2006, with only two adults of working age for every person over 65 years of age. While there are many retirees in the A1A area that demand specific age-related services, especially age appropriate recreation, health care, and transportation, they provide a significant economic boost to the local economy.

Florida population growth data from the Economic Yearbook reflects projected increases for Flagler County over 10 percent in the next five years. Growth in St Johns

is projected at a slower 3 percent.

## **26) Property Value Changes**

Home sales and median house prices in Flagler County continued to decline in 2008, with median sales prices reaching levels not seen since 2004 to a level of \$145,000. Nearly two-thirds of sales were foreclosures and/or short sales. The commercial construction that kept 2007 assessed valuations and tax receipts at nearly stable levels in 2007 slowed in 2008 and total assessed valuation fell by 16.2%, despite substantial project completions in Palm Coast. While values have also fallen in the A1A corridor, the area continues to be a desirable location for residences and some businesses. Still, a number of projects have been delayed and some businesses are clearly struggling. Similar patterns are evident in St Johns.

## **27) Changes in Tourist Traffic**

For the first time in seven years fewer people came to Florida. Florida tourism saw an overall drop off in 2008. The state experienced a 2.9 percent increase in the number of visitors in the first half of the year, but the second half and mostly the last quarter the tourist traffic dropped significantly. The fourth quarter of 2008 reflects the full impact of the economic downturn that every industry experienced. More than 3.8 million Floridians took a pleasure trip in the fourth quarter, according to Visit Florida, but many were sticking closer to home, with in-state trips increasing overall by 22.9 percent in 2008. Overseas travel to Florida during the fourth quarter was down 8 percent. Surprisingly Canadian travel to Florida was up 14 percent in 2008. We expect that the scenic byway experienced the same drop in tourist traffic that the state experienced. A visitor profile study in Flagler County was done between May and October 2008. 59 percent of the visitors surveyed live in Florida and 30 percent live more than 150 miles away. Of the 41 percent out of state visitors 96 percent were domestic visitors. Canadian visitation was up 3.3 percent from 2006. 20 percent of the respondents cited that the economy affected their trip. Most people travel to Flagler County by car and only 16 percent of the visitors to the county fly from another state or country. Trend data suggests number of tourists is expected to decline in 2009 over 2008 by 1.2 percent.

## **28) Other Comments on Measuring Success.**

The River and Sea Trail has successfully become a part of the St Johns River to Sea Loop, a 260- mile bicycle trail through northeastern and central Florida. Five counties, Volusia, Flagler, Putnam, St Johns, and Brevard have each committed funding for the project along with Florida Forever funds, and work has begun by the counties acquiring land and developing more trails to complete the loop. Most of the work in Flagler County is complete as the trail will traverse both the River-to-Sea Trail and the Ocean Shore Scenic Highway. Volusia, St Johns, and Putnam Counties still need work done and the 220-miles remaining will cost about \$500,000 per mile. The group spearheading the project hopes to have 500,000-multiday users on the trail by 2015. It is critical that the project be finished by 2013, as that will mark Florida's quincentennial, which is expected to be a statewide celebration

## **Local Government Comprehensive Plan (LGCP) Relationship**

### **29) Discuss how effective the integration of the CMP into the local government comprehensive plan(s) has been.**

The process of integrating the corridor Management Plan (CMP) into the Flagler County Comprehensive Plan progressed very slowly in 2008. Since the county has taken the approach of integrating protective statements concerning A1A into the Goals, Objectives, and policies section of each element of the Comprehensive Plan, the integration only occurs when an element is revised. During 2008 the Transportation Element was completed, and approved by the Board of County Commissioners. The element contained a goal B5. Goal B5 states to preserve the SRA1A River to Sea Trail Scenic Highway as an irreplaceable historic resource and protect its state designation as a Florida Scenic Highway, protect its state designation as a Florida Scenic Highway, and its national designation as one of America's Byways. Policy B5.1.1 states that the county has designated A1A as a constrained facility from the Volusia Line to the St Johns County line. This policy deems the corridor ineligible for future roadway widening projects. (This is important as it keeps A1A a two-lane road) Policy B5.1.2 states that all applications for development within the designated area of the scenic corridor Overlay District must adhere to the development regulations identified in Ordinance Number 2001-26 and Ordinance Number 2004-11 (This policy requires all development along A1A to meet the requirements of the scenic overlay ordinance). In St Johns County Comprehensive Plan Development and EAR Amendments progressed faster than Flagler.

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

In Flagler County during 2008 a Steering Committee formed of selected county citizens and a CME member worked with a consultant and county planning staff. Their task was to rewrite the comprehensive plan. The Comprehensive Plan becomes an important mechanism for the built resources, the timely provision of public facilities and services, and the adoption of equitable funding mechanisms to pay for the public costs that new growth brings to bear on the existing community. The purpose of the Steering Committees work is to arrive at a clearly articulated preferred alternative that will implement the Comprehensive Plans policies with respect to these fundamental issues, the final Comprehensive Plan may greatly affect the individual elements.

In St Johns County public meetings were held for input to plans as well.

## **Problem Areas**

### **31) Describe any problems that have arisen regarding the corridor.**

a) Budgetary issues at all levels of government continue to present increasing challenges to the development of resources in the corridor. Equally troubling is the

challenge of staffing for maintenance of parks, bike trails and water features. Flagler County property tax revenue is not likely to soon return to 2006 levels even with recovery, as values and, therefore, tax receipts, were substantially inflated during the boom years. This is almost certain to slow the continuing work on park enhancement and also tends to lead to staff turnover and communications breakdowns.

b) Signage continues to be a concern. While one billboard was removed by the Mantanzas Shores Homeowners Association in 2008, the County has still to complete work on a new billboard ordinance. New technology allows more electronic and changeable signs, which would seem inappropriate to this location. As well, the Florida law requires that billboards be visible from a distance of 500 feet, resulting in substantial curbing of foliage around them. We would like to see off site billboards reduced and even eliminated on this roadway.

c) We have not yet been able to get appropriate deed restrictions on county public land in the area to increase the impediments to future sale for development. A difficult point has arisen with respect to one small area, which is currently not public land but is surrounded by such lands. A trade of that parcel for some that is contiguous to developed land seems desirable to some and suggests that denying the right to all such trades may not be appropriate.

d) We continue to be plagued by the R/C zoning classification.

### **32) Describe present and future actions to resolve these issues.**

The CME has members who follow through with the County on project plans and, particularly, grant funded projects and the County has responded by assigning staff to the A1A projects and coordination with the CME. Patient follow through appears to be the best solution to most of these issues.

### **Other Issues**

### **33) Describe how well the CME has operated.**

In 2008 Friends of A1A met to decide major issues related to projects, improvements and community participation. The majority of the year was devoted to strategic planning. Staff remained level with two support staff for the board. This changed in 2009 from 2 to 9 with acquisition of grant funds to pay for staff and more projects. The CMEs reviewed their structure and continue to meet to focus on details of local issues. The new goals and committee structure have solidified the organization. A stronger community presence is apparent.

In late 2008 the Scenic Conservation Workshop planning commenced which strengthened the ties within the communities even further. Funding is an ongoing challenge. Volunteers remain strongly committed and a large contingent of Friends of A1A attended the May 2008 Florida Scenic Highways Conference to continue learning new approaches. The D5 FDOT Organizational Assessment Report completed by Corridor Solutions in early 2008 concluded that Friends of A1A is

functionally sound in operating practices as a non-profit entity.

**34) Describe how partnering and coordination efforts have worked.**

The River and Sea Trail CME has partnered very closely with the Hammock Community Conservation (HCC) group. Many of our officers and members are also either officers or members of the HCC, and many of the topics discussed at their meetings are discussed at our meetings. This provides us with twice the power to comment on issues within the byway. Between the two organizations we can attend the commissioner meetings and comment on issues, or gather together and write letters to government representatives.

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

Political and community support are essential to success.