

Board of County Commissioners Agenda Request

Date of Meeting: August 2, 2016

Date Submitted: July 19, 2016

To: Honorable Chairperson and Members of the Board

From: Robert M. Presnell, County Administrator
Allara Mills Gutcher, Planning and Community Development Director

Subject: Consideration of Resolution 2016-017 to Adopt the Highway 90 Corridor Plan.

Statement of Issue:

This item is presented to the Board to adopt the Highway 90 Corridor Plan, as developed through a Technical Assistance Grant from the Department of Economic Opportunity.

Background:

Gadsden County applied for a Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) in the spring of 2015. The TAG is provided pursuant to §163.3168, F.S. to provide direct and/or indirect technical assistance to help communities find creative solutions to fostering vibrant, healthy communities, while protecting the functions of important State resources and facilities. Subsequently, the grant was awarded for the creation of a HWY 90 Corridor plan to promote tourism and entice visitors and travelers off of I-10 and onto HWY 90.

As part of the grant process, community meetings with area stakeholders were held in Chattahoochee and Quincy for input into the Plan. A vision statement was developed by the group, which is included in the Plan (Page 1). Other deliverables for the grant included the creation of a calendar of community events, and a resource guide which lists an inventory of historic sites, natural resources, recreation sites, and other social, cultural, and entertainment venues along HWY 90.

Analysis:

This is ultimately a regional effort that will in the future interface with other corridors along Highway 90 in Walton, Holmes, Washington, and Jackson Counties. This Plan outlines strategies to attract travelers through North Florida into the hearts of our communities along Highway 90.

This plan, in draft form, was a deliverable of the grant. Once adopted, staff can begin implementation and will seek various ways to accomplish the goals of the Plan.

Fiscal Impact:

None.

Options:

1. Adopt Resolution 2016-017 to adopt the Highway 90 Corridor Plan and authorize the Chairperson to sign.
2. Do not approve.
3. Board direction.

County Administrator Recommendation:

Option 3

Attachments:

1. Resolution 2016-017 with Exhibit "A".

RESOLUTION NO. 2016-017

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA, ADOPTING THE HWY 90 CORRIDOR PLAN; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners is committed to increasing tourism within Gadsden County; and

WHEREAS, Gadsden County received a Community Planning Technical Assistance Grant pursuant to §163.3168, F.S. from the Department of Economic Opportunity; and,

WHEREAS, Gadsden County developed a HWY 90 Corridor Master Plan for the Gadsden County segment of HWY 90 with the goal of increasing tourism along this corridor; and,

WHEREAS, the plan was developed with the input from several stakeholders throughout the County; and,

WHEREAS, the HWY 90 Corridor Plan was created and outlines goals, objectives, and strategies that, when implemented, will support tourism, build brand equity, create a sense of arrival, and enhance overall visitor experience for visitors in Gadsden County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF GADSDEN COUNTY FLORIDA:

Section 1. HWY 90 Corridor Plan Adopted. The Board of County Commissioners of Gadsden County, Florida (BOCC) hereby adopts the HWY 90 Corridor Plan, as attached hereto as Exhibit A.

Section 2. Effective Date. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

DULY PASSED AND ADOPTED on the 2nd day of August 2016.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
GADSDEN COUNTY, FLORIDA

By: _____
Brenda A. Holt, Chairperson

Nicholas Thomas
Clerk of the Circuit Court

**GADSDEN COUNTY
HWY 90 CORRIDOR PLAN**



August 2, 2016

DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a State of Florida grant funded project, the Highway 90 planning initiative formulated to set goals for the marketing of this corridor not only through Gadsden County, but as a regional effort through north Florida. This is a first step to develop a master plan that would guide the county toward completion of a series of strategic initiatives.

An initial visioning session was conducted on December 7, 2015 at the historic arsenal in Chattahoochee, where 22 stakeholders concluded that the U.S. 90 initiative, if successful, could be a powerful catalyst for tourism and economic development in the region. To that end, the following vision statement emerged:

Our vision is to foster a spirit of partnership that will allow Gadsden County, Florida, via the U.S. 90 Corridor project, to lay the foundation of tourism and economic prosperity for generations to come.

Following the initial sessions, a 22-page resource guide was developed to not only serve as a narrative trip advisor for travelers, but also a detailed “things-to-do” menu of all there is to enjoy along the U.S. 90 Corridor in Gadsden County, Florida.

On April 26, 2016, at the Gadsden Arts Center in Quincy, Florida, 19 stakeholders again gathered to discuss what goals the U.S. 90 master plan should incorporate. As many topics and ideas were discussed, three primary objectives became the focus. These include: start working on the foundations of a 5- to 10-year action plan for the corridor and region (Goal One), begin moving forward on larger (but necessary) initiatives that will begin to elevate the U.S. 90 Corridor to “destination” status (Goal Two), and capitalize on assets that currently exist along U.S. 90 in Gadsden County (Goal Three).

This Plan provides strategies, or action items, to accomplish these goals and objectives. Highlights of the recommendations covered in the master plan include the development of a brand identity (name and logo) for the U.S. 90 Corridor; the launch of an initial communications platform (rack card/brochure, website, social media, and visitors map); sense-of-arrival signage/landscaping in Midway and Chattahoochee; black heritage/history research and interviews; wayfinding and historic marker signage; U.S. 90 roadside/visitor stops; a brick and mortar tourist information center; a black history museum; designated bike paths along U.S. 90; trail-oriented recreational greenways; and Agri-tourism.

Conceived in 1915 as the shortest route between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, the Old Spanish Trail (U.S. 90) took nearly 15 years to complete. Representing a piece of this amazingly historic highway, our collective goals is to expand Gadsden County’s framework of opportunity and draw more visitors to the destination and region.



THE CORRIDOR PLAN

Goal One: Support Tourism Economic Development Initiatives.

Objective 1.1: Motivate positive economic development within the U.S. 90 Corridor in Gadsden County, Florida.

Strategy 1.1.1: Actively work and participate with the Gadsden County Development Council.

Objective 1.2: Create a regional corridor plan.

Strategy 1.2.1: Develop a regional committee or partnership to coordinate efforts with the multi-county effort of establishing the HWY 90 Corridor.

Goal Two: Build Brand Equity.

Objective 2.1. Elevate U.S. 90 in Gadsden County and throughout the region to a historic highway status.

Strategy 2.1.1: Work with the other regional partner counties; Holmes, Walton, Washington, and Jackson Counties, to develop a branding and marketing initiative, to include naming the corridor.

Strategy 2.1.2: Create a logo for the regional corridor.

Goal Three: Create a Sense of Arrival.

Objective 3.1: Capitalize on the assets that currently exist along U.S. 90 in Gadsden County.

Strategy 3.1.1: Complete an Asset Audit.

Strategy 3.1.2: Conduct interviews with residents and stakeholders who have a deep knowledge of the history of the region.

Objective 3.2: Improve the arrival gateways.

Strategy 3.2.1: Improve signage and landscaping at the entry points to the Corridor.

Strategy 3.2.1: Create and install transitional signage as you enter the Corridor from other points within Gadsden County.

Goal Four: Enhance the overall visitor experience.

Objective 4.1: Help visitors find their way creating a clear and cohesive system of direction/signage.

Strategy 4.1.1: Implement a wayfinding signage program.

Exhibit A Resolution 2016-017

Strategy 4.1.2: Develop and publish self-guided walking and driving tours along HWY 90.

Strategy 4.1.3: Develop and maintain a resource guide for distribution to visitors.

Strategy 4.1.4: Conduct a study of the historic places along HWY 90 to discover where additional historic markers may be placed.

Strategy 4.1.5: Seek funding for historic markers, where not currently installed.

Objective 4.2: Act as a natural extension to Gadsden County, Florida's ongoing tourist development efforts.

Strategy 4.2.1: Create and distribute rack cards, brochures, and a visitor's map.

Strategy 4.2.2: Seek funding to create and maintain a website and social media.

Objective 4.3: Communicate by developing multiple touchpoints of information that will allow visitors easy access to all that is U.S. 90 in Gadsden County.

Strategy 4.3.1: Develop a basic, foundational communications platform.