



William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway

FDOT / William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway (WBSHH)

Meet and Greet Agenda

December 10, 2025

Meeting Purpose: For WBSHH to meet the FDOT Team and together, to outline FDOT / WBSHH shared goals and opportunities and to understand ways to **work together** to achieve those.

1. Hello and Introductions

2. William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway – A Quick Overview
 - a) Mission: To Protect and Preserve
 - b) Threats
 - c) Opportunities

3. FDOT / St. Johns County Responsibility Areas and Limitations

4. Questions to FDOT Staff (Questions are attached)
 - a) Traffic, Roadway, and Engineering Standards
 - b) Coordination with Utility Companies
 - c) Landscaping (and Beautification Projects)
 - d) Funding and Grants

5. Next Steps

6. Adjournment



William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway (WBSHH)

A Quick Overview

State Route 13 in St. Johns County has been designated as a State Scenic Byway, now commonly known as the William Bartram Scenic & Historic Highway. It is a 17-mile-long scenic highway stretching from Julington Creek at the north, then south through Orangedale past the Shands Bridge (and future First Coast Expressway) to SR16 / SR13. As with all 27 Florida Scenic Highways, its primary mission is to “**Protect and Preserve**” the natural and historic assets that have made it so special.

In St. Johns County, that mission is becoming increasingly difficult. This is the State’s fastest growing County and properties along the Scenic Highway are among the most desirable for potential residential development. For developers, the “Bartram” name is money in the bank, and using County standards for very minimal tree preservation, land areas are virtually clear cut with the resulting subdivisions still selling quickly. Utility companies further clear cut within their easements to provide new power to new subdivisions.

The County and residents have attempted to set standards to limit and control development. In 2010, the County and the William Bartram Scenic & Historic Management Group utilized a \$250,000 grant to conduct community stakeholder workshops and to prepare a **Master Plan**. That Master Plan was comprehensive, setting out ambitious goals, and the Scenic Highway Group continues to work with the County toward achieving those goals.

To see this Master Plan, click <https://www.sjcf.us/growth-management-archives/#plan> and find the 4-volume set in the **Special Projects file**.

A Discussion of FDOT / St. Johns County Responsibility Areas and Limitations

The simple questions are, “Where do FDOT jurisdictional controls begin and end, and where do St. Johns County jurisdictional controls begin and end?” We will have additional discussions in each of the FDOT Staff categories below, but WBSHH would like to know what preservation opportunities are possible so that we can advocate for those and ask the right questions.

For me, the most important jurisdictional questions are regarding traffic. To better protect and preserve the Scenic Highway, it is traffic that must be managed, limited, and controlled. And so, there will be questions including:

- Does FDOT have role in setting and approving “Area Type, Road Type, and Level of Service (LOS) the County uses in its Transportation Analysis Spreadsheet (TAS)?
- Does the State have a statute that limits traffic on State highways, i.e. traffic cannot exceed 110% of design capacity? Other?
- Does FDOT designate which of its highway segments are “constrained”, i.e. cannot exceed 2 lanes?

Coordination with utility companies is also important. Much clear cutting has occurred in easements with the result in severe damage to scenic value. What role does FDOT have in reviewing or controlling actions by utility companies?

And in damaged areas, WBSHH would like to consider replantings and new landscape to restore some beauty and scenic value. Are joint FDOT / SJC efforts possible to achieve this? Can both become signatories on grant applications?

More discussions will happen on questions asked below.

Traffic, Roadway, and Engineering

It is limiting, controlling, and managing traffic that will most help to “Protect and Preserve” the scenic values of the Scenic Highway. Certainly the County plays a major role in the types of uses they approve and in the amount of traffic those uses generate. But it would also be great if FDOT had leverage to limit and control traffic on State Route 13.

Let’s look at some County policies and other conditions and ask questions:

1. Please describe the **FDOT / TPO / SJC** relationship and process for road planning.
2. Does FDOT have role in setting and approving “Area Type, Road Type, and Level of Service (LOS) the County uses in its **Transportation Analysis Spreadsheet (TAS)**?
 - a) <https://www.sjcf.us/departments/transportation-development-division/>
3. Does the State have a statute that limits traffic on State highways, i.e. traffic cannot exceed 110% of design capacity? Other %? Any %?
4. Does FDOT designate which of its highway segments are “constrained”, i.e. cannot exceed 2 lanes?
5. The County calls SR13 Road **Segments 83 and 84** (from Roberts Road south to CR16A) as scenic and in scenic “rural” areas. They are “constrained” road segments, meaning they are limited to 2 lanes. But they have an LOS “D” classification (suburban).
 - a) These segments are among the most scenic. **How can their LOS Classification be changed to LOS C (Rural)?**
6. The 3,000 home Rivertown development has constructed 3 **roundabouts** on “constrained sections” of the Scenic Highway.
 - a) How was FDOT consulted and how were approvals granted?
7. As a part of the Rivertown development, the St. Johns County **School District** widened a “constrained road” and constructed a roundabout at its new school.
 - a) How was FDOT consulted and how were approvals granted?
8. How can the WBSHH Group be **notified and involved** in future FDOT reviews of new projects?
9. Can future **road bumpers** be heavy timber design or weathered steel finish, not shiny galvanized finish? These would better meet the design criteria in our Master Plan.
10. Routine notifications of **upcoming work**
 - a) We are occasionally asked, “What’s happening?” when flag markings and orange cones go up along the highway.
 - b) Can FDOT notify us of upcoming work and location so we can answer?
 - c) Or is there a central office for residents to phone and receive answers?
- 11. Should all future questions go through Amy?**

Coordination with Utility Companies

Coordination with utility companies is also important. Much clear cutting has occurred in easements with the results being severe damage to scenic value.

1. What **role** does FDOT have in reviewing or **controlling or limiting** actions by utility companies?
 - a. Any **State Statutes** that call for taking care to evaluate and preserve unique conditions?
 - b. This is going to be very, very important for the **Orangedale** area along our Scenic Highway as the First Coast Expressway will create HUGE new development and traffic to the area.
 - c. Are there any State Statutes that might require that utilities be placed **underground** along the Scenic Highway?
2. Does FDOT **regularly communicate** with utility companies to coordinate short and long-term planning?
 - a. How can preservation goals of the **Scenic Highway** be communicated and acknowledged by the utility companies?
 - b. **Should WBSHH regularly meet** with utility company representatives? (semi-annually? Other?)
3. Where are plans showing utility company **easements**?
4. In easement areas already clear cut, what kind of **replanting** is possible?
 - a. If not trees that will become tall, how about certain types of **bush and shrub** plantings? Especially if colorful and “scenic?”
 - b. How about **mulching** for low maintenance and some design and “scenic” value?

Landscaping (and “Beautification Projects”)

The subject of landscaping and “**beautification projects**” has come up and WBSHH will appreciate some discussion about opportunities, examples, and funding.

1. Any status update on the possible **Peanut Grass** plantings in certain medians near Race Track Road?
2. Related to the utility company clear cutting above, are there any replanting project **examples** to look at and consider?
3. Are there FDOT standards for **plant types** to be used within the rights-of-way?
 - a. Or is FDOT open to discussions with Master Gardeners about **indigenous plants**.
 - b. And for the WBSHH, that would include plants observed, collected, and sketched by **William Bartram**.
4. What is the required procedure for **new planting work**?
 - a. FDOT oversight with required drawings, specifications, bids, and contractor-completed work?
 - b. Adopt-a-Highway groups?
 - c. Other?
5. **Funding** - for any plantings of any type anywhere:
 - a. Where can – or where must – funding come from?
 - i. FDOT Budget?
 - ii. WBSHH?
 - iii. Grants?
6. **If Grants**,
 - a. Does FDOT have recommendations? Suggestions?
 - b. Can FDOT lead the effort? Or be a close consultant to WBSHH efforts?
7. Other “**beautification project**” ideas have included **flags, banners, and lighting**.
 - a. How are these introduced and considered by FDOT?
 - b. Similar completed projects elsewhere to look at?
 - c. Could WBSHH write detailed project ideas, including cost estimates, and have those considered for funding through:
 - i. Any FDOT annual beautification funding?
 - ii. State budget funding through FDOT?
 - d. If WBSHH receives donations for projects, how would projects be bid and built?

Attachment: Email from St. Johns County Engineer, Duane Kent

So here goes with some questions, and I thank you for any answers you can provide:

- **Maintenance within the Right of Way (ROW)**
 - Does the **County or FDOT** provide the services for and pay for mowing, tree trimming, emergency pick-up of fallen limbs **(If there is an immediate safety issue County Road and Bridge crew might assist if FDOT crews have yet to respond)** , lighting and lighting maintenance, and drainage swale maintenance within the SR13 ROW? **Not the County.**
 - If any ornamental landscaping, trees, and plantings - who maintains those and pays for maintenance? **Not the County.**
 - Who places and repairs signs and signage? **Not the County Stop signs and street name signs would be the County's to maintain.**
 - Who has review jurisdiction over maintenance activities of JEA and FPL? **Not the County.** Comcast and others? **Not the County.** Is there coordination between utility companies, State, and County? **You need to be more specific because the County, utility companies and FDOT staff speak regularly.**
 - A current project along SR13 is the underground installation of fiber optic lines. Who reviewed, approved, and issued permits for that work? **Not the County.** How is the public notified?
- **Capital Improvements and Permits within the ROW**
 - Who is responsible for approving new underground utilities? **Not the County**
 - Is there coordination between State and County or dual sign-off on approvals? **For Underground utilities, No.**
 - Who is responsible for signs and signage within the ROW? **Not the County**
 - Is there coordination between State and County or dual sign-off on approvals? **For signage, No.**
 - Who is responsible for reviewing and approving any proposed **new landscaping, trees, and plantings** within the ROW? **Not the County**
 - Are County permits required, and if so, how are applications made and permits issued? **No.**
 - Is there communication and coordination between the County and State on these items? **For landscaping, trees and planting, No.**

- The County Comprehensive Plan designates much of SR13 as **"constrained"** meaning that no widening is to occur. Should any new development require an additional ingress lane or turn median, however, who reviews and approves such lanes? **The new development would be required to get an FDOT permit.**
- Who permits and pays for any road repaving? **Not the County**
- Who has reviewed and approved **roundabouts** near Rivertown? **Not the County**
- Who reviewed and approved plans for the **new school** near Rivertown that removed existing trees within the County-required Scenic Edge? **You might ask Dick D'Souza, Growth Management**
- **Levels of Service (LOS) Designations for Road Segments**
 - Certain road segments of SR13 have LOS designations of "C (Rural)" and "D (Suburban)". Who is responsible for setting those LOS designations - FDOT or the County, or both in close coordination? **You might ask Dick D'Souza, Growth Management**
- **Finally, who is our best liason at the County to engage with and discuss goals and plans for Scenic Highway SR13? You might ask Dick D'Souza, Growth Management**