

Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67



Submitted to the
Mississippi
Department of
Transportation



Submitted to the
Harrison County
Board of Supervisors



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Mississippi Scenic Byways Program



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Cover image credit: Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau (Magnolia); Joshua Anderson, Ohio State University (Pine); and John Fitzhugh, Biloxi Sun Herald (Highway)

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1 Introduction

Purpose

Harrison County has experienced significant growth in its residential, commercial and entertainment sectors in the past two decades. It has grown from a primarily small town/rural setting to an area bustling with commercial and residential growth. This growth is now rapidly expanding northward, especially since Hurricane Katrina, with residents looking for housing on higher land. Urban land uses are expanding outward towards State Highway 67. Local officials, recognizing the demand for new development along the new highway, determined that they needed to take action to protect this unique scenic corridor. Harrison County took the lead in organizing public involvement and committees to work on how best to protect the scenic corridor. *The Harrison County Scenic Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67* (from here on referred to as MS 67) in Harrison County, Mississippi is designed to effectively manage the scenic corridor. The plan provides a roadmap for local and state officials in managing the newly constructed highway along the scenic corridor, and it was created using citizen input and key transportation planning principles.

MS 67 is Harrison County's first highway in the state Scenic Byways program, and it is in keeping with the recent statewide efforts to achieve Scenic Byway status for Mississippi highways. Harrison County's best opportunity to protect MS 67 is through the preparation of a Scenic Byway corridor plan that will help protect and enhance the natural and man-made qualities affected by its

transportation systems. Senate Bill Number 2826 was passed to recognize MS 67 as a highway worthy of Scenic Byway status, and it supports granting this portion of MS 67 the official Mississippi Scenic Byway status (see Appendix A). The corridor management plan described here is the next step in protecting the corridor.

This plan is the work of the Harrison County Beautification Commission and the Corridor Advisory Group (CAG), with the assistance of the Ohio State University, which provided technical support and facilitated the planning process and plan development.

To assist the planning team, Harrison County Supervisor Connie Rockco appointed a Corridor Advisory Group (CAG) of local citizens, which acted as a liaison between the citizens and the planning team. The CAG provided input throughout the planning process and ensured that the Byway planning team addressed citizen concerns and incorporated community goals into the Byway plan. The plans for Harrison County, as well as the plans for the adjacent communities of Biloxi and D'Iberville, were evaluated during the preparation of this plan to ensure compatibility between planning efforts. Additionally, the plans of the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), FEMA long-term recovery plans, and other plans were taken into account.

The Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67 has a long-range perspective. Its purpose is to effectively preserve the important natural and historical



Source: John Fitzhugh, Biloxi Sun Herald

Figure 1-1. This view of State Highway 67 depicts the scenic nature of the corridor.

character of the area while accommodating travel and land use change. The plan serves as a policy guide for Harrison County and MDOT. It does not create any laws or regulations; it only identifies methods that are appropriate for carrying out policies. The implementation of the recommendations in this plan will require a separate public process, through which new laws would be created. It is the responsibility of the CAG, the Harrison County Board of Supervisors, and MDOT to carry the plan through to implementation.

Description of the Planning Process

This plan has been created over a multi-year period, starting with the application to MDOT in February 2004 requesting to become part of the Mississippi Scenic Byways Program. Following Hurricane Katrina, Harrison County undertook a county-wide planning process that included each of the unincorporated communities in the county in which they asked citizens what they would like to see for the future. This resulted in a series of community plans that have been adopted by Harrison County, including the communities

along the MS 67 Corridor. The *Community Plan for Saucier* was adopted by Harrison County in March 2007, and the *Community Plan for Eastern Harrison County* is currently being reviewed by the public and is expected to be adopted by February 2008. The City of D'Iberville undertook the Citizens Master Planning process between 2005 and 2006. The result of the process was the adoption of the *Citizens Master Plan for D'Iberville* in 2006. The City of Biloxi is beginning the comprehensive planning process. As part of this process, the future of MS 67 will be evaluated. As part of the community planning processes, citizens were asked to consider the future of State Highway 67 and policies related to the future development of the corridor.

The planning team conducted field work along the corridor, documenting existing conditions, intrinsic assets, and other conditions. The team reviewed the plans for adjacent jurisdictions, the Mississippi GAP Analysis,¹ plans by MDOT, FEMA long-term recovery plans, and others. In February 2004, a public hearing was held at the Success Community Center to discuss goals for

the Byway and to gather interest and support for implementation. A series of four town hall meetings were held between January 2006 and December 2007 to discuss land use, transportation, and policies related to MS 67 and the surrounding areas in the unincorporated communities. In D'Iberville, public meetings were held between October 2005 and June 2006 to discuss land use, transportation, and policies along MS 15/67.

The planning team drafted goals based on the feedback that citizens communicated during the public meetings and through survey results and additional comments gathered from a web-based discussion forum and a 1-800 number. The planning team researched policies and strategies to enable Harrison County, MDOT, and other partners to implement these goals.

People

The Planning Team

Professor Jennifer Cowley, PhD, AICP, served as the Project Manager. She worked in conjunction with the Harrison County Board of Supervisors; Cindy Simmons, Harrison County Beautification Commission Director; and the CAG. Cowley, who teaches planning at The Ohio State University, assembled the following team to work on the *Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67*.

Joseph Kitchen is a graduate student in the City and Regional Planning program at The Ohio State University and serves as an intern for Harrison County. Paul Barnes is the GIS Manager for the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District and provided mapping assistance for this plan.

The Corridor Advocacy Group

Harrison County Supervisor Connie Rockco and Harrison County Beautification Commission



Source: Robert Lemon

Figure 1-2. The citizens of Harrison County participated throughout the planning process. The citizens of Saucier in a meeting, shown above, supported the designation of MS 67 as a scenic corridor.

Director Cindy Simmons appointed a Corridor Advocacy Group comprised of area representatives to assist in coordinating communication within the county, responding to questions and issues during the planning process, and providing policy direction. The CAG contains committees, including history and environment. The members of the CAG are listed below.

Fleecia Dunn-Burkes is an attorney in Gulfport. She has two daughters. She holds a law degree from the University of Mississippi and a Master's of Law from Tulane University. She serves on the board of directors for a number of organizations, including the Make-A-Wish Foundation in South Mississippi and ARC of the Gulf Coast.

Bob Fairbank has been employed by the Mississippi Power Company for 36 years and currently serves as Manager, Governmental and Environmental Relations. He is a member of numerous civic and environmental organizations and is currently the President of the Wolf River Conservation Society. He is past president of both Keep Mississippi Beautiful and the Mississippi Wildlife Federation. He serves on the boards of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation, Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, and the Gulf

Coast Utility Authority Board. He is married with two daughters and one grandson. He resides in Pass Christian, Mississippi.

Kimberly Fritz is a resident of Biloxi and is married with three children. She and her husband Mike Fritz own Fritz Development, an award-winning residential development and custom home building company. Fritz has over 25 years of marketing and management experience in the tourism and resort industry. She is a member of numerous civic and business organizations in Harrison and Jackson Counties. She is currently a member of Leadership Gulf Coast class of 2007-2008. She serves as a Commissioner on the Harrison County Beautification Commission and on the Board of Directors for the Humane Society of South Mississippi. She is the 2002 recipient of the Top 50 Business Women in Mississippi award. She worked on the Beach Summit as part of the Gulf Coast Business Council's Tourism Committee.

Tyree Harrington has been the District Conservationist for Harrison and Jackson counties with the US Department of Agriculture for the last six years. He is a graduate of Alcorn State University with a degree in Agricultural Education. He is a volunteer with the Harrison County Beautification Commission.

Brynn Joachim is a resident of Biloxi and the owner of BHW Enterprises, an economic development and strategic marketing firm. She advises corporate and real estate clients, including Tradition, Mississippi's largest master planned community. She is a graduate of Louisiana State University. She is also a graduate of the 2000 Class of Leadership Gulf Coast, was named Mississippi's Outstanding Young Careerist in 2003 by the National Business and Professional Women's Association, and was selected as one of the Sun Herald's "Top 10 Business Leaders Under 40."

Dottie Long is a resident of Lyman and has lived in Harrison County for 27 years. She is a

Figure 1-3. The Corridor Advocacy Group is responsible for overseeing the Corridor Management Planning process.



Source: Cindy Simmons

retired teacher, holding a bachelor's and master's degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. She is married and is active in church and community activities. She has been an active volunteer in the planning process for Eastern Harrison County.

John McFarland is the Director of Marketing Services and Interactive Manager for *The Sun Herald*. He also serves as the general manager of *The Journal of South Mississippi Business* and *The Stennis News*. McFarland is a graduate of the University of Dayton and continued graduate studies at the University of Cincinnati, University of Southern Mississippi, and Louisiana State University. He served in the US Army, attaining the rank of Captain. He is married and has one son. He is an active member of the Gulfport Kiwanis Club and is Vice Chairman of the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce.

Angel Middleton was born and raised in Harrison County. She attended Harrison Central High School and received her nursing degree from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. She owns Angel's Autos on State Highway 53. She is married with a son.

Jay O'Neal grew up on the coast and has lived for the last 12 years in the Saucier community. He is married with two sons. He works for Mississippi Power, part of the Southern Company, as a Senior Compliance Specialist at Plant Jack Watson on MS 605. He works on the company's environmental stewardship program, beautification, and other community projects. Jay serves as a Harrison County Beautification Commissioner.

Dr. Jim Randolph is a veterinarian with the Animal General Hospital in Long Beach. Randolph served as a Radio Relay Electronics Instructor for the US Air Force at Keesler Air Force Base and attended the University of South Mississippi. He holds a degree from Auburn University's College of Veterinary Medicine. He is a member of the South Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association and has acted as its Secretary-Treasurer since 1990. Randolph

is the original author of the *Your Pet's Doctor* column on pet care, published in *The Sun Herald* since 1994 and now syndicated nationwide on the McClatchy NewsWire. He is an avid bass fisherman, an active environmentalist, former President of Mississippi Coastal Conservation Association, and has been a member of the Harrison County Beautification Commission since 1995.

Theresa Rea has lived in Harrison County since 1973. She has taught school in the Harrison County School District for 22 years. She holds a Bachelor's and Master's in education and psychology, an endorsement in intellectually gifted, and is pursuing an endorsement in psychology and counseling. She coaches students in robotics and Future Problem Solving and serves as a state and international judge for the Future Problem Solving program.

Tina Schumate is the Director for the Coastal Impact Assistance Program at the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources and is the Director of the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. The National Heritage Area is the only one in the state of Mississippi. She is responsible for the annual Coastal Development Strategies Conference. She is actively involved in efforts to preserve the natural resources of the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Cindy Simmons has served as the Harrison County Beautification Director for the past four years. She has two daughters and one grandson. She lives in Orange Grove and has been a life-long resident of Harrison County. She is involved with numerous community cleanup projects.

Jody Spires is the Assistant County Engineer for Harrison County. He has 17 years experience in civil engineering and county government and is a member of the American Society of Civil Engineers. He is a resident of Orange Grove and a life-long resident of the Mississippi Gulf Coast. He is married.

Acknowledgements

A warm thank you goes out to all of the citizens of Harrison County who participated in the planning process and took the time to share their vision for MS 67 so willingly. It is this commitment to the vision for retaining the scenic MS 67 corridor that made this plan possible.

Thank you to all the CAG members, who provided crucial information gathering and community feedback and were a valuable asset for the planning team. A special thank you goes out to all those who provided information included in this plan.

The planning team would like to extend acknowledgements to the following people who provided assistance to the planning team. Cindy Simmons, of the Harrison County Beautification Commission, who answered numerous questions and worked patiently with our many requests. Jeff Taylor, with the City of D'Iberville, for his efforts in preparing the MS 67 nomination package and ongoing support of the project. Kenneth Yarrow, a Transportation Planner for the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, who provided assistance in answering questions and providing information about the State Highway 67 Corridor. Bob Fairbanks, of the Scenic Byways Advisory Commission, for the thoughtful advice on preparing a corridor management plan and information on the history of the byway process in Harrison County. Senator Hewes, for his strong support of designating MS 67 as a State Scenic Byway. Theresa Rea's middle school class at West Wortham Elementary Middle School for their research on the history of the corridor. Thanks to the Harrison County Board of Supervisors for their ongoing support of the Scenic Byway planning process. Thanks goes to Bridget Troy for assistance with preliminary mapping efforts for this plan and to Nathan Leppo for his design assistance.



Source: Jay O'Neal

Figure 1-4. The Corridor Advocacy Group is responsible for overseeing the Corridor Management Planning process. Shown above is the history committee.

The photographs found in this plan are provided by a variety of organizations, including the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Biloxi Sun Herald, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Babe and Joe Buckley provided aerial photographs taken from their flights over the corridor. Ian Beniston, Joshua Anderson, Justin Goodwin, Matthew Hinkle, Nathan Leppo, and Rickie Yeager, graduate students at The Ohio State University, provided photographs as well. Members of the CAG are also responsible for contributing to the photographs found in this plan.

This corridor plan was funded by a grant from the Mississippi Development Authority and with local match.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Vilella, Francisco J. et al. 2003. *The Mississippi GAP Analysis*. Mississippi State University.

2 Location and Corridor Description

MS 67 is a four-lane state highway located in eastern Harrison County, as seen in Map 1. The highway, which was completed in 2007, is 20.68 miles in length and runs from US Highway 49 to State Highway 15, where it becomes MS 15/67 and continues to Interstate Highway 10.¹ MS 67 runs primarily through unincorporated Harrison County, including the communities of Airey, Saucier, Success, Tradition, and Woolmarket. In addition, it bisects the De Soto National Forest, which is under the management of the National Forest Service. After MS 67 merges with MS 15, 5,137 linear feet of the roadway are in the city of Biloxi, and 3,730 linear feet are in the city of D'Iberville.² For the purposes of this plan, the corridor is defined as the area that lies one-quarter of a mile to each side of MS 67. Where appropriate, land use activities and historic sites outside the corridor are considered; however, the primary focus of the plan will be inside this one-half-mile corridor. The one-half-mile corridor is selected to allow an in-depth study of the existing conditions in the vicinity of the roadway. It is important to note that regulatory measures related to signage and landscaping will apply to properties directly adjacent to the highway and may not apply to all properties one-quarter of a mile away from the highway. A total of 6,254 acres are in the corridor. Map 1 depicts the corridor study area.

MS 67 runs primarily through a beautiful stretch of Mississippi that boasts a diverse mixture of native fauna and flora, historically significant cities and towns, and a variety of local treasures just off the horizon. The corridor consists primarily of forested and agricultural areas.



Source: Jody Spires

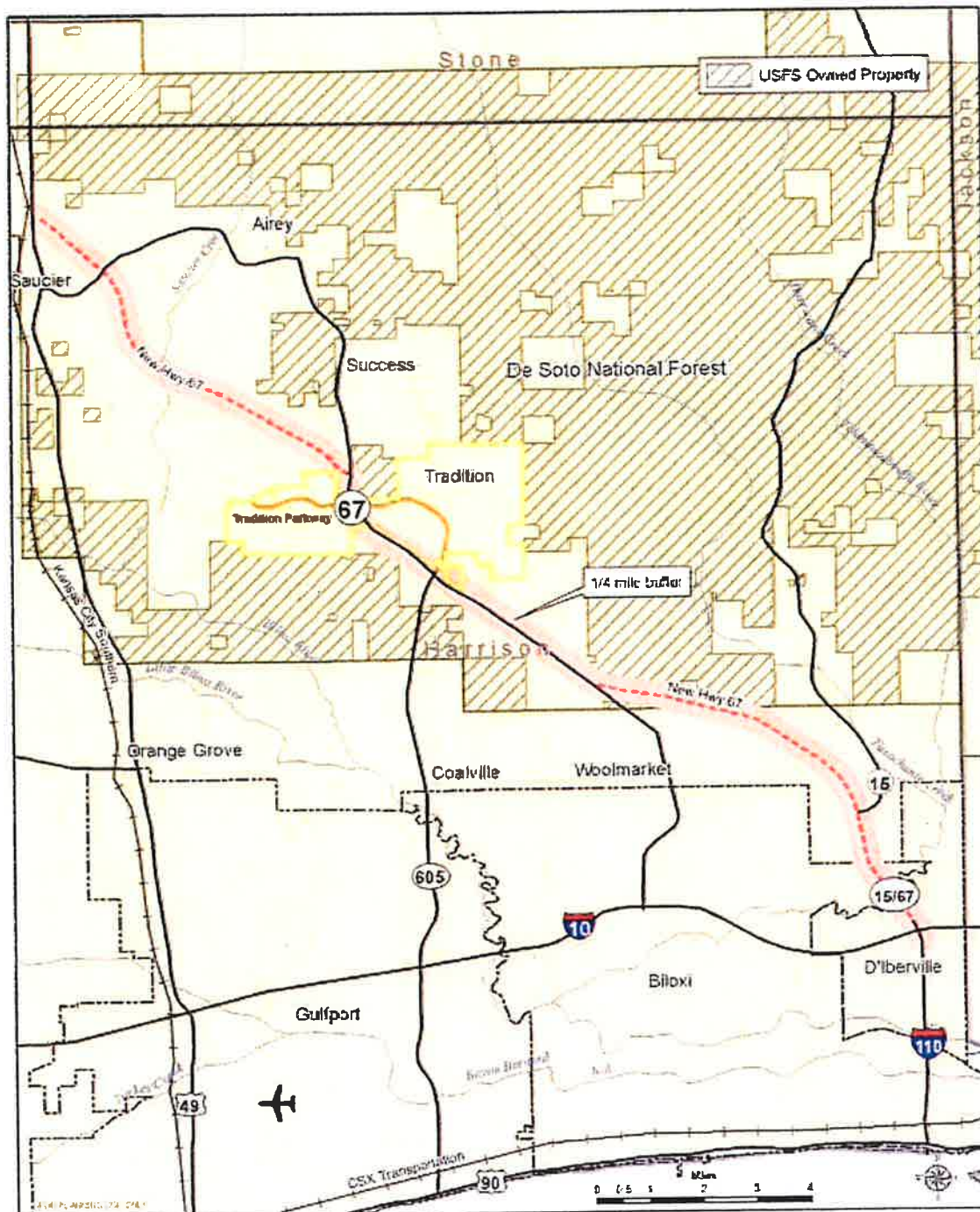
Figure 2-1. MS 67 offers scenic views of forested areas connecting Saucier to D'Iberville.

(Endnotes)

1 Yarrow, Kenneth. (2007). Email correspondence. Transportation Planner, Gulf Regional Planning Commission. November 13.

2 Barnes, Paul. (2007). E-mail correspondence, Mapping Manager, Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District. November 15.

Map 2-1. State Highway 67 runs southeasterly from US Highway 49 to Interstate Highway 10 in Harrison County, Mississippi



Source: Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District

3

Corridor Vision

Entering MS 67 from the north, visitors and residents alike are welcomed by an invigorating panorama of the scenic natural landscape that characterizes the corridor and the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. Corridor travelers pass through the picturesque De Soto National Forest and a variety of other notable environmental treasures, all integral elements of this corridor plan.

Over the last 150 years, the roadway network in Harrison County has evolved from a collection of trails established by Native Americans to wagon roads that enabled trade between Harrison County and the outside world.¹ Today, the county has high quality highways, including the scenic MS 67. The new MS 67 runs its course through Eastern Harrison County, which has a unique history and a range of landmarks.

One of the major purposes of the Scenic Byway status is to maintain a balance between the necessary transportation routes and the wide range of landmarks, wildlife, and unique histories that the corridor has to offer. The Scenic Byway designation will ultimately serve this balance and enhance the picturesque qualities of both the man-made and natural features of the corridor. Visitors may choose to stay overnight in area accommodations, such as the Lofty Oaks Inn, which is nestled into the woods along MS 67. The designation of MS 67 as a Scenic Byway will provide travelers with an opportunity to enjoy a picturesque natural setting and gain an education in the area's history.

A traveler should enjoy the beauty, peace, and tranquility of the region, learning about the

area's rich history and culture while gaining an appreciation for the traditions and working life of local families, farmers, and merchants.²

Once the driver completes the experience of driving southward on MS 67, they will have access to the Gulf of Mexico's gentle waters, nestled against twenty-six miles of white-sand beaches and graceful live oaks. Beyond the beaches they will discover a variety of entertainment options from gaming to local and fine dining, local festivals and world-class entertainment. Historic neighborhoods and landmarks provide culture and lessons in history. Art and history run deep in Mississippi's Gulf Coast. George E. Ohr, the renowned "Mad Potter", was native to Biloxi and collected his clay from the MS 67 corridor. The Ohr-O'Keefe Museum of Art, located in Biloxi, showcases his unique pottery, which is noted throughout the art world. The historic last home of Jefferson Davis, Beauvoir, is a popular tourist destination and is currently being restored due to damage sustained by Hurricane Katrina. Lush fairways, manicured greens, and breathtaking views are just a few of the reasons why Mississippi's Gulf Coast is nicknamed "The Golf Coast." With many championship courses, two of which are located on the MS 67 corridor, there are courses to challenge golfers of all skill levels.³ The Mississippi Gulf Coast is a designated National Heritage Area; the riverine environment and natural areas such as MS 67 play an important role in the heritage area.⁴



Source: Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau

Figure 3-1. The De Soto offers individuals a place to hike and enjoy the area's natural beauty.



Source: Joshua Anderson

Figure 3-2. Pictured above are the white sand beaches of the Little Biloxi River.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Harrison County. (2008). *Draft Community Plan for Eastern Harrison County*. Accessed November 17, 2007: <http://www.co.harrison.ms.us/departments/zoning/downloads.asp>
- 2 Harrison County. (2004). *Harrison County Scenic Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67 Nomination*.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 National Park Service. (n.d.) Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. Accessed November 27, 2007: <http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/areas/miss.htm>



Source: Joshua Anderson



Source: Jody Spires

Figure 3-3. These pine trees and gently rolling hills are characteristic of the views those passing by would encounter.



Source: John Fitzhugh, Biloxi Sun Herald

Figure 3-4. Palmer Creek (pictured above) is one of many creeks that exist adjacent to the corridor.

4

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

The objective of this plan is to evaluate and suggest improvements to aid the citizens in achieving their goal of ensuring that MS 67 retains and enhances its scenic quality. With the completion of MS 67 there will be new travelers on the roadway and interest from property owners in developing their properties to capitalize on their locations along the highway. To manage change along the highway, many options may be considered. The process of developing goals began with an examination of existing conditions, including visual assets, natural resources, land uses, outdoor advertising, and the status of community planning and zoning. Community input, survey responses, and public meetings were all instrumental in drafting the goals, strategies, and action items in this corridor plan. An integral part of the planning process was the formulation of goals that represent the community's vision for the future of the highway.

Through careful alignment, the Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) was able to maintain an appropriate distance from significant intrinsic features. The most significant intrinsic quality of the proposed MS 67 Byway is the surrounding natural environment. The combination of sixty-plus inches of rainfall per year and semitropical weather supports a robust natural environment for many plant and animal populations. Except for the roadway itself, and planned byway improvements and facilities to accommodate travelers, no other man-made features will be located within the corridor right-of-way. The primary focus of the goals, objectives, and strategies is to maintain the scenic nature of this new highway. The Corridor Advisory

Group (CAG) will work closely with the adjacent property owners, MDOT, the Mississippi Forestry Commission, and others to develop and implement the strategies identified on the following pages to ensure that the visual continuity and integrity of the byway corridor is properly managed.

The following goals work towards preserving the scenic character of the highway through the application of sound planning principles that also incorporate the wide range of issues and opportunities identified by community members.

The plan recognizes that a small portion of the highway is located in Biloxi and D'Iberville. At the present time, the City of Biloxi and the City of D'Iberville have petitioned to annex land area currently in unincorporated Harrison County along MS 67. This plan recognizes the potential that an additional portion of the highway could be included in another jurisdiction in the future. Intergovernmental cooperation is necessary in order to ensure long-term protection of the corridor.

The Harrison County community has stated that it would like to:

- Ensure continuity of the roadway between jurisdictions through intergovernmental cooperation;
- Protect the scenic character of the highway;
- Protect and enhance high quality wildlife habitat and natural resource areas;
- Effectively manage signage;
- Develop and expand recreational opportunities; and
- Preserve the enjoyment of the highway driving experience.

GOAL 1. ENSURE CONTINUITY OF THE ROADWAY BETWEEN JURISDICTIONS THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION.

OBJECTIVE A. Present findings in the plan to local government, planners, MDOT policy makers, civic leaders, and business organizations to illustrate the need for cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries.

Strategy 1. Circulate and promote the *Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67* to make residents, business owners, and property owners aware of its policies and recommendations.

Strategy 2. Provide copies of the plan to all surrounding local governments to ensure their knowledge of the plan and implementation measures.

Strategy 2. Educate developers about the designation of the scenic corridor and ordinances designed to protect the appearance of the corridor.

OBJECTIVE B. Develop intergovernmental agreements for coordinating land use decisions along MS 67.

Strategy 1. Develop an intergovernmental agreement to ensure that MS 67 maintains its scenic character where annexation occurs.

Strategy 2. Share planning commission agendas between jurisdictions where a case occurs along MS 67.

Strategy 3. Partner with the Zoning Office and the Tax Assessor's Office to maintain an inventory of planned developments.

Strategy 4. Share and adopt consistent regulatory language to protect visual and natural resources among adjacent communities.

OBJECTIVE C. Host annual meetings with public officials from all of the jurisdictions to discuss progress towards the goals of this plan.

Strategy 1. Organize and hold annual meetings between planners from the different jurisdictions to discuss zoning, land use, and multimodal transportation along the corridor.

Strategy 2. Organize and hold annual meetings between jurisdictions and tourism agencies to promote the scenic byway and its attractions.

GOAL 2. PROTECT THE SCENIC CHARACTER OF THE HIGHWAY.

OBJECTIVE A. Identify and preserve necessary buffer space for landscaping and screening where new development is likely to occur.

Strategy 1. Adopt the recommendations of the Gulf Coast Business Council Scenic Corridor Report, including a scenic setback and maintenance of tree cover along MS 67.

OBJECTIVE B. Preserve open and forested land.

Strategy 1. Encourage property owners to work with land trusts and conservation societies, such as the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, to participate in conservation easement and purchase of development rights programs.

Strategy 2. Adopt an enabling ordinance permitting the use of conservation subdivision design.

Strategy 3. Maintain and improve existing roadway conditions by discouraging abutting uses that are not in keeping with the scenic character of the roadway.

OBJECTIVE C. Establish outdoor lighting standards for development along the MS 67 corridor.

Strategy 1. Adopt a dark skies ordinance to reduce or eliminate glare for the motorist and to enhance the rural scenic nature of the corridor by keeping the night skies dark.

GOAL 3. PROTECT AND ENHANCE HIGH QUALITY WILDLIFE HABITAT AND NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS.

OBJECTIVE A. Institute a forestry management program within the ROW that will improve the health of timberlands and the quality of natural habitats.

Strategy 1. Coordinate with the National Forest Service to manage forestry adjacent to the highway.

Strategy 2. Coordinate with MDOT to harvest over-mature stands, replant with diverse species, and remove falling/fallen timber in the ROW.

OBJECTIVE B. Identify and preserve ecological corridors that cross the highway.

Strategy 1. Utilize the habitat data available through the Mississippi Gap Analysis to identify wildlife corridors.

Strategy 2. Evaluate wildlife crossing points to determine their adequacy.

Strategy 3. Coordinate with MDOT, the Harrison County Soil and Conservation District, and the National Forest Service to identify strategies to enable movement of wildlife through the wildlife corridors to cross MS 67.

OBJECTIVE C. Coordinate natural resource preservation efforts, including water quality efforts between jurisdictions and among natural resource organizations.

Strategy 1. Consult with neighboring jurisdictions and natural resource organizations on natural resource preservation efforts.

Strategy 2. Participate in comprehensive plan updates in neighboring jurisdictions to ensure that natural resource protection along the corridor is addressed.

Strategy 3. Coordinate with watershed protection organizations and land trusts to undertake projects to preserve the corridor.

Strategy 4. Coordinate with the De Soto National Forest as they remove invasive species, reestablish pine species, and conduct controlled burns of forest land.

OBJECTIVE D. Develop and conduct planning workshops that focus on scenic enhancement for local communities.

Strategy 1. Host workshops on natural resource management to educate communities in scenic enhancement.

Strategy 2. Provide development guidelines that highlight visual aesthetics for the corridor.

GOAL 4. EFFECTIVELY MANAGE SIGNAGE.

OBJECTIVE A. Encourage the use of MDOT signage.

Strategy 1. Coordinate with MDOT to enable logo signs for businesses to advertise along the corridor.

Strategy 2. Locate sign markers at the beginning and end of the Scenic Byway to alert travelers that they are entering and leaving a Scenic Byway.

OBJECTIVE B. Enact local controls that limit the construction of large billboards and other off-premises signs.

Strategy 1. Enforce the County Billboard ordinance and encourage adjacent communities to adopt a billboard ordinance.

Strategy 2. Adopt a sign ordinance that controls off-premises signage.

Strategy 3. Enact a sign ordinance that limits the placement of vehicles that serve as signs next to the MS 67 ROW.

OBJECTIVE C. Enact a sign ordinance for on-premises signs that will maintain the scenic character of the corridor.

Strategy 1. Enact local signage ordinances to limit the size, number, appearance and placement of on-premises signs.

Strategy 2. Work with communities to design their own gateways along MS 67 that will create a consistent appearance.

GOAL 5. DEVELOP AND EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

OBJECTIVE A. Improve access to natural features.

Strategy 1. Encourage private land owners to work with the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain and other conservation and restoration groups that aim to acquire and preserve land along Scenic Byways in the Biloxi and Tchoutacabouffa watersheds.

Strategy 2. Work with the De Soto National Forest in designated areas to expand trail access.

OBJECTIVE B. Increase awareness of recreational opportunities available in the De Soto National Forest for travelers on the Scenic Byway.

Strategy 1. Collaborate with the De Soto National Forest to expand marketing of recreational amenities to visitors.

Strategy 2. Encourage the use of signage and wayfinding markers posted on MS 67 to

identify the recreational sites and trailheads in the De Soto National Forest.

OBJECTIVE C. Increase access to recreation opportunities along the corridor.

Strategy 1. Improve the access point at Old Woolmarket Road to allow visitors to easily access the Woolmarket Community Park.

Strategy 2. Work with developers as growth occurs to provide general public access to their recreational amenities, such as parks and hiking/biking trails.

OBJECTIVE D. Identify areas within the right-of-way (ROW) that can be used for future multi-modal transportation needs, such as connecting bicycle paths and hiking trails.

Strategy 1. Develop a map that can be used to identify locations for multi-modal facilities.

Strategy 2. Place projects for multimodal facilities along MS 67 in the Gulf Coast Area Transportation Study as appropriate.

GOAL 6. PRESERVE THE ENJOYMENT OF THE HIGHWAY DRIVING EXPERIENCE.

OBJECTIVE A. Explore sources of funding for additional road and shoulder maintenance along the roadside.

Strategy 1. Apply for grant opportunities that would allow for additional maintenance of the corridor roadways.

Strategy 2. Encourage civic organizations and private businesses to participate in the "Adopt a Highway" program to keep the corridor clean.

Strategy 3. Utilize County Trustees for regular clean-ups along the corridor.

OBJECTIVE B. Hold annual meetings between local communities and MDOT to prioritize future highway maintenance and safety activities.

Strategy 1. Coordinate with MDOT, the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, and adjacent jurisdictions to prioritize maintenance expenditures along the corridor.

Strategy 2. Conduct regular reviews of accident data and visual surveys of the corridor to identify any potential safety problems that should be addressed.

Strategy 3. Review utilization of the multiuse paths and the highway to ensure commercial

traffic is accommodated while ensuring the safety of sightseers, bicyclists, horse riders, and pedestrians.

OBJECTIVE C. Form committees to focus on developing an interpretive program emphasizing the scenic, cultural, and tourism qualities of the corridor.

Strategy 1. Engage historians, naturalists, and tourism experts to provide travelers with an understanding of the natural and historical assets of the corridor.

Strategy 2. Document visitor use data, including access points for highway visitors, where visitors go, types of visitors, expectations of visitors, etc.

Strategy 3. Prepare informational media that presents the interpretive themes to visitors.

OBJECTIVE D. Develop strategically placed visitor facilities.

Strategy 1. Identify locations for pull-offs and signage that inform travelers; are accessible to pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles; and are designed for universal use.

Strategy 2. Coordinate with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, MDOT, Mississippi Division of Tourism, and others to promote tourism in the corridor and to coastal businesses and historical destinations.

Strategy 3. Promote educational opportunities for students and the public to learn about environmental stewardship along the corridor.

Strategy 4. Identify a location for historical markers commemorating the history of the De Soto National Forest and other relevant historical locations.

Strategy 5. Identify a location for a sign announcing the location and date of annual festivals and other events of significance.

OBJECTIVE E. Develop a commerce plan.

Strategy 1. Work with property owners on the design of commercial businesses and shopping centers to ensure that the corridor is protected.

5 Existing Conditions Identification and Evaluation

Developing an accurate assessment of existing conditions along the MS 67 corridor is an important step in the planning process. This chapter identifies existing conditions from US Highway 49 to Interstate Highway 10. It includes a series of maps and photographs that describe the conditions of the community, including the history, land use, transportation, and intrinsic values along the corridor.

The information included in this chapter comes from a variety of sources, including the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, Harrison County, local historians, and others. Map 2 illustrates the location of the intrinsic features along the MS 67 corridor.

History

The region served by MS 67 contains many historic sites dating back to the early 1800s.¹ During the antebellum period, only a few roads existed through the coastal pine forests. East-west travel between New Orleans and Mobile was by way of Wire Road along the 31st parallel (in southern Stone County). Once bridges were constructed over the coastal bays and rivers, the Old Spanish Trail, as it became known, turned into the principal route between the Coast, Mobile, and New Orleans. The north-south routes linking the Coast, Hattiesburg, Jackson, and all points north were virtually non-existent except as wagon trails.²

The earliest routes heading north were essentially logging roads that began in the area of Handsboro, Cedar Lake, and Seymour (present day D'Iberville). These communities were founded on the Back Bay of Biloxi in order to export timber, which was the primary industry for decades.³ The wagon trails ran through Eastern Harrison County. Over time, a series of cities and towns emerged along what is today MS 67. The MS 67 corridor runs through or neighbors the communities of Biloxi, Coalville, D'Iberville, Orange Grove, Saucier, and Woolmarket. Each of these communities offers its own unique history and contributes to the character of Mississippi. Each community boasts a mixture of both old and new structures that have come to characterize this region. Following the discussion of communities, the largest land area, the De Soto National Forest, is discussed, followed by a discussion of George Ohr's connection to the corridor.

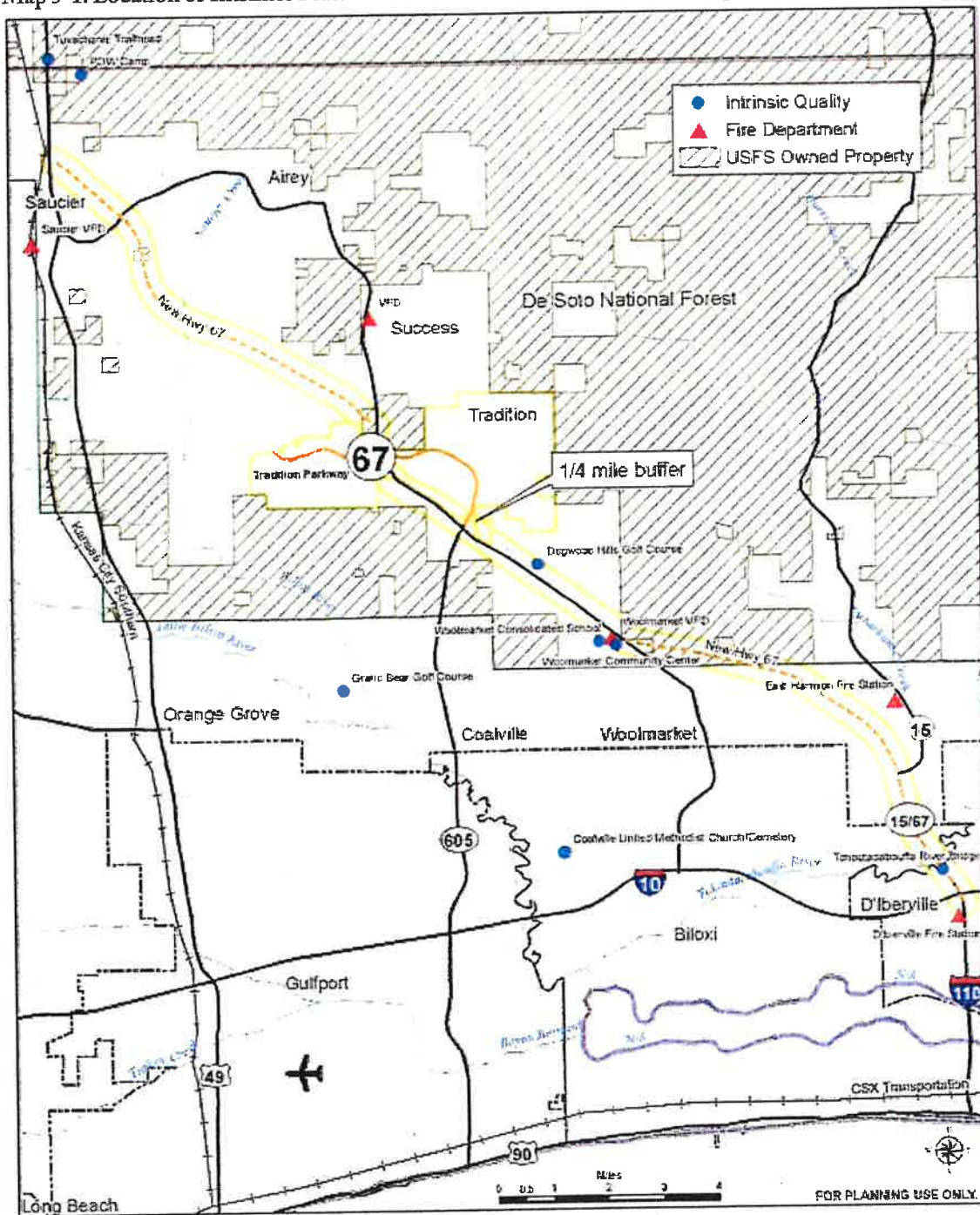
Communities

MS 67 runs through a number of communities, some of which have long histories and others that are newly emerging in Eastern Harrison County. The relevant histories are discussed on the following pages.

Airey

Airey has a long history as a campground. It was an important campground on the old Augusta-Pass Christian Caravan Route. The Choctaws used the area as a campground between 1832 and 1835 during the great migration. The area was settled

Map 5-1. Location of Intrinsic Features of the MS 67 Corridor with Fire Departments noted.

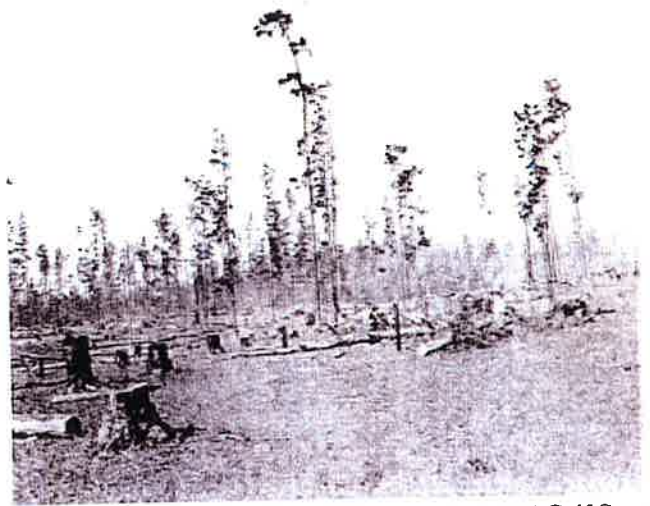


Source: Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District



Source: Dixie Press Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Harvesting of Pines



Source: Dixie Press Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Extensive Deforestation



Source: Babe Buckley

The Desoto National Forest

Figure 5-1. The communities of Eastern Harrison County thrived during the time of lumbering (shown above). After extensive deforestation, the De Soto National Forest was created to restore the forests in Eastern Harrison County.



Source: Joseph Kitchen

Above is pictured the welcoming sign for the Airey Lake Recreational Area located within the De Soto National Forest.



Source: Joseph Kitchen

Airey Lake is a 3-acre lake that offers visitors scenic views and other recreational opportunities.



Source: Joseph Kitchen

Pictured above are tents set up on the camp grounds of the Airey Lake Recreational Area.

Figure 5-2. The De Soto National Forest offers a variety of recreational opportunities, such as the Airey Lake Recreational Area.

in the mid-1800s, with a post office established in 1881.⁴ The community grew as the surrounding farmers grew rice and poultry, which were sent to Biloxi weekly. Today the community is known for its Airey Recreational Area in the De Soto National Forest.

Nearby is the now extinct town of Poplar Head, which had a school.⁵ The community is still home to the Poplar Head United Methodist Church, which has been a fixture in the area since the 1800s.⁶

Biloxi

Biloxi was the former capital of the French New World. It was incorporated in 1850 as a small fishing village.⁷ Today it is a thriving city known for its casinos and beaches. The northern part of the city along the MS 67 corridor is part of the Woolmarket and Cedar Lake communities, both of which are discussed further in this section.

Cedar Lake

Cedar Lake is located along the bottom of the MS 67/15 corridor. Cedar Lake was formed when the Tchoutacabouffa river changed course, forming a lake and leaving an island known as Cedar Lake Island.⁸ This community thrived after a sawmill was established on the island in 1900.⁹ Fishing vessels frequently used the river, which was also one of the locations that George Ohr gathered the clay used in his pottery. The community has been incorporated into what is today the cities of Biloxi and D'Iberville.

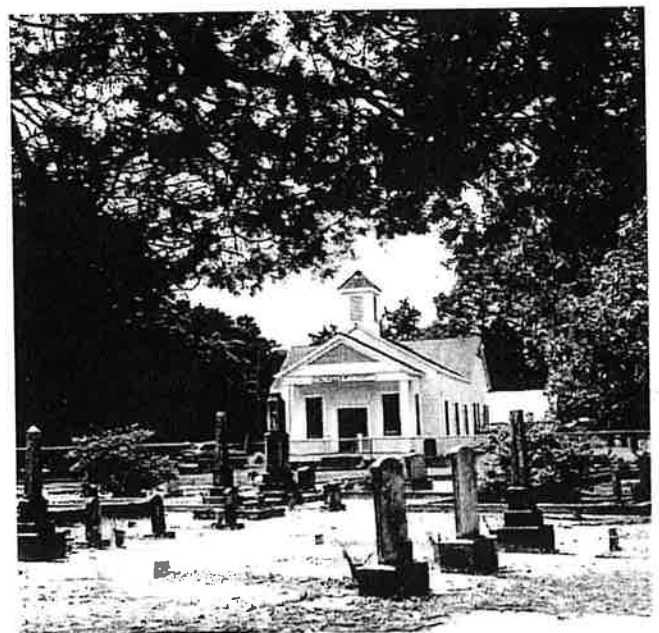
Coalville

The Coalville United Methodist Church has been serving the community of Coalville for over one hundred years. This is a testament to the spiritual commitment of the community over time. The church likely served as a Sunday school prior to 1850, but few records were kept detailing this



Source: Nathan Leppo

Figure 5-3. Buried in the Coalville Cemetery are early settlers of the 67 Corridor.



Source: CCTex Hamill Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Figure 5-4. Coalville United Methodist Church has been a figure in the community since the 1800s.

era of the church. In 1852, Samuel and Muldey Mitchell gave two acres of land (where the Coalville Cemetery is now located) for a rustic, one-room building constructed from logs. The church grew rapidly throughout the late 1800s and was one of the earliest churches in the state.¹⁰ In 1967 the old building was demolished. The new Coalville Methodist Church, including a wooden cross created from the remnants of the old building, was consecrated in 1968.¹¹

D'Iberville

D'Iberville incorporated in 1988. The City took its name from Pierre Lemoyne Sieru d'Iberville who, in 1699, founded the Gulf Coast. The early settlers of the area were French, with Spanish influence.¹² The area of the city along the MS 15/67 corridor is a growing commercial and residential center.

Orange Grove

Orange Grove came about because of the consolidation of smaller settlements. The first settlers were James and Agnes Dale, who purchased land that is now called the Wilson Farm Nurseries. There is a legend that it contains buried treasure placed by a ship captain named Gaius Kibbey, who took refuge in the area. After settling down, Kibbey built a large waterway, known as Kibbey's Ditch, to transport logs to the bayou. Charcoal kilns were numerous in the area during the timber industries boom. Later, many Satsuma and Orange orchards were planted, leading to the name of Orange Grove. However, it has been said that due to a change in climate the orange groves were killed off by a series of cold winters. While there are no longer large orchards of oranges in the area, the name continues to hearken back to the past. It is important to note that most of Orange Grove was annexed by Gulfport in 1993.¹³



Source: Dixie Press Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Figure 5-5. The Success School was founded as a consolidated school.

Success

The Success School was created as a consolidated school.¹⁴ There are a number of historic churches in the Success community, including the Success Baptist Church and Poplarhead United Methodist Church.

Saucier

The unincorporated community of Saucier is located near the northern portion of the MS 67 corridor. The Saucier family settled the area in 1848, when Samuel Bernard Saucier moved north from the coast.¹⁵ Saucier lived from 1835 to 1922 and married Martha Ann Moore, ultimately conceiving nine children. In the early days of the Saucier community the land was used for cattle and sheep. The sheep were taken to Stigletts Ferry in Woolmarket along the Biloxi River for trading.¹⁶ Saucier became a popular stopping point for travelers heading for the coast. Saucier purchased thousands of acres for 25 cents an acre between 1883 and 1895 in upper Harrison County.¹⁷

The Gulf and Ship Island Railroad was built through Bernard Saucier's property in the 1890s. The train traveling the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad stopped in Saucier to transport lumber and turpentine. Saucier was also a major stopping point for passenger trains running the Gulf and Ship Island Railroad. Bernard Saucier established the B. Saucier Lumber Company, a general store, and a drug store, all of which were successful establishments.¹⁸ Saucier established a high school that accepted boarding students from across the county.¹⁹ Today, views of Saucier from MS 67 are primarily of forested areas and rural, single-family homes.

One of the historic locations in Saucier is the Palmer Creek Methodist Campground, which was founded in 1883.²⁰ The campground was sponsored by the Saucier United Methodist Church, Poplarville Methodist Church and the Coalville Methodist Church. The location was selected because of the Palmer Creek, which was described as deep, clear, beautiful, and cool enough for a refreshing drink.²¹ The campground is located along Palmer Creek and has been a location for baptisms, revivals, and other religious ceremonies for more than 100 years. The camp meeting tradition is built on the idea of getting away from civilization to worship. The site started



Source: Jay O'Neil

Figure 5-6. The Palmer Creek Methodist Campground was founded in 1883.



Source: Jay O'Neil

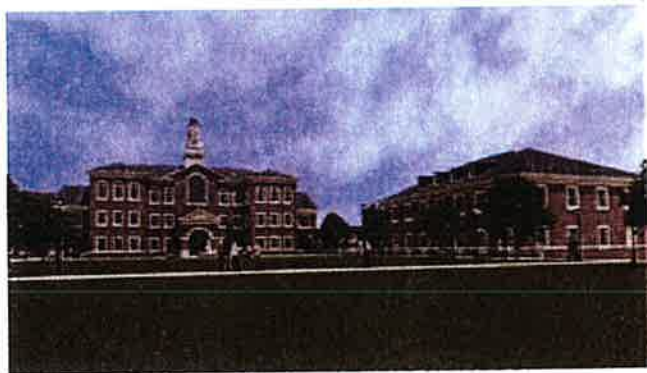
Figure 5-7. The gateway to the Palmer Creek Methodist Campground.

"Palmer Creek has been a location for revivals for 125 years"



Source: Jay O'Neil

Figure 5-8. The campground has a variety of assembly buildings for worship.



Source: Landry and Lewis Architects

Figure 5-9. William Carey College will open its campus in 2009 along MS 67 at Tradition Parkway.

with tents, later primitive cabins were constructed. Today a spring youth retreat is held, camp meetings are held during the summer for children to attend and a revival is held for five days in October.²²

Tradition

Tradition is a Master-Planned Community currently under development. The community is seven-square miles with 4,800 acres. It could have 15,000 homes when built out, as well as a town center. Tradition is currently the home to St. Patrick's High School and will soon be home to William Carey College.

Woolmarket

The community of Woolmarket can trace its history back to the wool industry. At one time, Woolmarket was considered a coastal metropolis.



Source: Ian Beniston

Figure 5-10. St. Patrick's school is located along the MS 67 Corridor at the intersection of new MS 605.

The growth of Woolmarket had much to do with its position as the chief buying point and river shipping point for wool. The community began before the Civil War, when a failed railroad secured and cleared a right of way, which was then turned into a major caravan route. The route served wagon trains that brought in charcoal, rosin, beeswax, and wool. It was said that the caravans could extend beyond a quarter mile.²³

Before the lumber industry cut down the pine forests, they served as perfect protection for open-range sheep grazing. This type of open-range grazing was convenient and economical, and it lent itself to the high quality wool and abundant wool market. Up to 10,000 sheep could be seen in this area grazing at one point in Woolmarket's history. In the spring, a ritual called "Roundup Day" consisted of sheep owners driving all the sheep into the "Parting Pens," where they would be sorted and carted off to auction.²⁴

Another integral part of the prosperity of



Source: Dixie Press Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Figure 5-12. Sheep could be seen throughout Woolmarket in the 1800s.



Source: CC Tex Hamill Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Figure 5-11. Historic photograph of a local Grocery Store once located in Woolmarket.



Source: Nathan Leppo

Figure 5-13. In 1910, Woolmarket established the first consolidated school in the state of Mississippi.

Woolmarket was the Biloxi River, which allowed for the transportation of goods. Woolmarket was located near the head of schooner navigation, serving a 100-mile area for sheep.²⁵ It became a large shipping point after Captain Joseph Marion Stiglets established Stiglets Landing along the Biloxi River. The landing served as a shelter for oxen as well as the location of a store and a fleet of schooners. At that time, Stiglets' operation employed 500 people and became the center of wool trade in south Mississippi.²⁶

Woolmarket, in the years following the wool industry, was the location of a Consolidated School.²⁷ It was the first school in the state to diverge from the one-room schoolhouse, and it was one of the first Consolidated Schools in the entire nation. Founded by J.J. Bawsey in 1910, the school educated approximately 125 students who were brought together from three one-room schoolhouses.²⁸ The building presently in place was built in 1930. The unique history and landmark events surrounding the Woolmarket Consolidated School make it a Mississippi treasure within a short distance of MS 67.

Today, Woolmarket is a rural residential community surrounded to the north by the De Soto National Forest.²⁹ Half of Woolmarket was annexed into the City of Biloxi in the 1990s.

De Soto National Forest

The De Soto National Forest is the result of massive reforestation efforts, by the Civilian Conservation Corps, in the 1930s and 1940s after clear-cutting of vast stretches of southern pine had occurred for years prior.³⁰ A community named Turpentine, where activities such as extraction of turpentine from pine trees and lumbering were commonplace, was once located within the borders of what is today the De Soto National forest. The turpentine camp employed African-Americans from the cotton growing regions throughout the

south. After the pine woods had been cut down many of the workers moved on to other states and others moved closer to the coast to engage in shrimping and shipbuilding.³¹

During World War II, beginning in 1943, German POWs were housed in a camp in the De Soto National Forest. Many of these POWs were assigned the task of planting saplings and clearing land. Many POWs stayed in Mississippi for years after their arrival, and many of those who left have since revisited Mississippi. The site was also used as a military rifle range. The area that once served as a POW camp and rifle range can still be found in the forest, as shown in Figure 11.³² This interesting fact is unique to the history of both the De Soto National Forest and Mississippi.³³

Within the De Soto National Forest is the Harrison Experimental Forest, a part of the U.S. Forest Service's Southern Research Station. The locations for the experimental forest and research station were selected because of the soil conditions and coastal forest land. The experimental forest was created using seeds from residual trees left



Source: Joshua Anderson

Figure 5-14. DeSoto National Forest

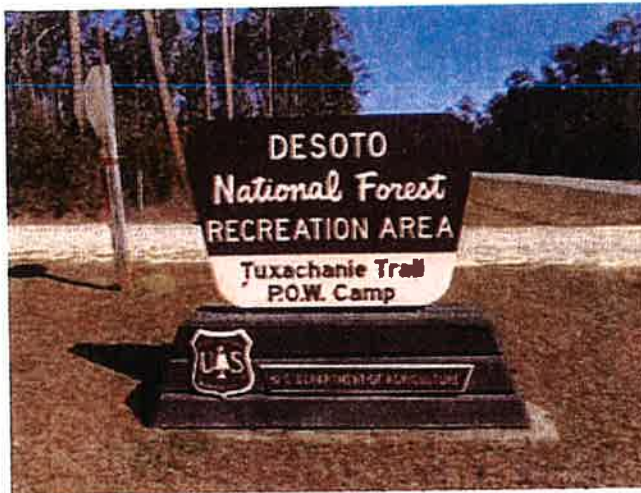
after clear cutting. The research station conducted some of the earliest studies on fire behavior and wood preservation. The researchers at the station pioneered the use of a water spray as a preservative, a technique still used in sawmills today. The researchers also pioneered the use of preservatives on fence posts, starting in 1939. More recently the station has focused on research on regeneration and

seed sources for forests. Today scientists are working towards long-term gene conservation.³⁴ Visitors can see the green houses, nursery, and research buildings.³⁵

In 1954, the Southern Institute of Forest Genetics was formed. Today the Institute is focused on molecular and quantitative genetic studies that will help to produce genetically improved southern pines and other forest trees such as the American chestnut, a species missing from Eastern forests due to blight.

George Ohr

The story of George Ohr is a historical and cultural gem worth highlighting. George Ohr, also known as the “Mad Potter” of Biloxi, is a world-renowned potter with many recognized works of pottery art. His works have been prominently displayed at national world fairs, such as the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, where he was awarded the Silver Medal for his work. His work is currently on display across the country in private collections,



Source: Jennifer Huestis

Figure 5-15. During WWII, German POWs were housed in a camp along the Tuxachanie Trail off MS 67.



Source: Justin Goodwin

Figure 5-16. The building is part of the Harrison Experiment Station. The experiment station conducts research on gene preservation and wood preservation, among other studies.



Source: www.biloxi.org

Figure 5-17. George Ohr, the “Mad Potter”, collected clay from the Tchoutacabouffa River over which MS 15/67 passes.

the Ohr-O’Keefe Museum of Art, the Smithsonian Museum of American History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Mint Museum, and the Los Angeles County Museum. His work was recognized through the Save America’s Treasures program in 2001 by the National Park Service.³⁶

The story of George Ohr has been passed down through generations of pottery artists. Ohr created over 10,000 original pottery articles between 1879 and 1909, many of which have survived

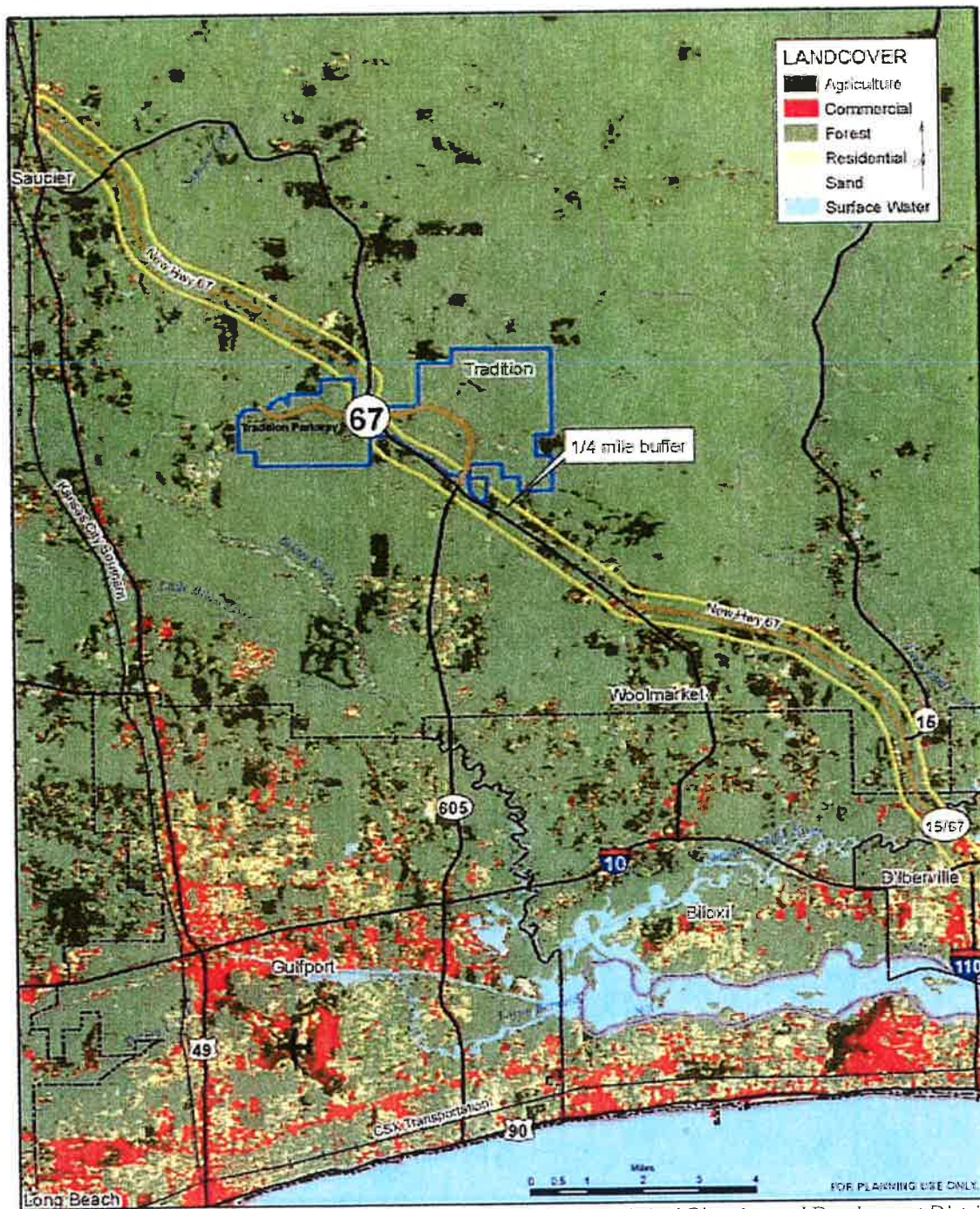
over time and have sold at auction. Ohr is often credited as the first clay artist in the United States, harvesting clay from the “sandy magical” clay of the shores of the Tchoutacabouffa River, the very name of which means “broken pots” in the language of the Native Americans that once populated this area.³⁷ The significance of this jovial and unique historical individual to the character of Mississippi cannot be overstated. The Tchoutacabouffa Bridge, which is part of MS 67, passes over the river, and visitors along MS 67 will be able to view the locations from which Ohr collected clay.³⁸

Current and Future Land Use in the Corridor and Adjacent Areas

Land use along the corridor was determined using the Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District’s Geographic Information System. Land use is divided into six categories that can be found along the corridor: agriculture, forest, rural residential, sand, water, and commercial. Land use along the MS 67 corridor currently consists of primarily forest land (73.4 percent), agriculture (18.9 percent), rural residential (4.0 percent), commercial (2.4 percent) water (0.6 percent), and sand (0.4 percent), as shown in Map 3.

The De Soto National Forest owns 784 acres along the State Highway 67 corridor. A portion of MS 67 travels through the Tradition master-planned community, a seven-square-mile mixed use development in central Harrison County. Columbus Communities LLC worked with Harrison County leaders in 2000 to draft a development agreement that would ensure planned and aesthetically pleasing development along the corridor. The agreement was adopted in February 2001, and the entire 4,800-acre development was zoned with a master planned community designation—the first in its kind in Harrison County. The portion of MS 15/67 within

Map 5-2. Current Land Use in the MS 67 Corridor



D'Iberville passes through some areas that have commercial and residential development. There are also a number of churches and cemeteries, schools, fire stations, a public park, and a community center, among other things, along the corridor.³⁹ The land use plans for the communities along MS 67 call for the continued use of land along MS 67 for forested land and rural residential with nodes of commercial and residential activity.

Land use in the corridor is controlled by the Harrison County Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinances for the cities of Biloxi and D'Iberville. The vast majority of the land is zoned A-1 (general agricultural district). This zoning allows for farming, timber, homes, and agricultural uses.⁴⁰ The second largest zoning designation is E-1 (very low density Residential), which allows for low density residential development. R-1, R-2,



Source: Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau



Source: Joseph Kitchen

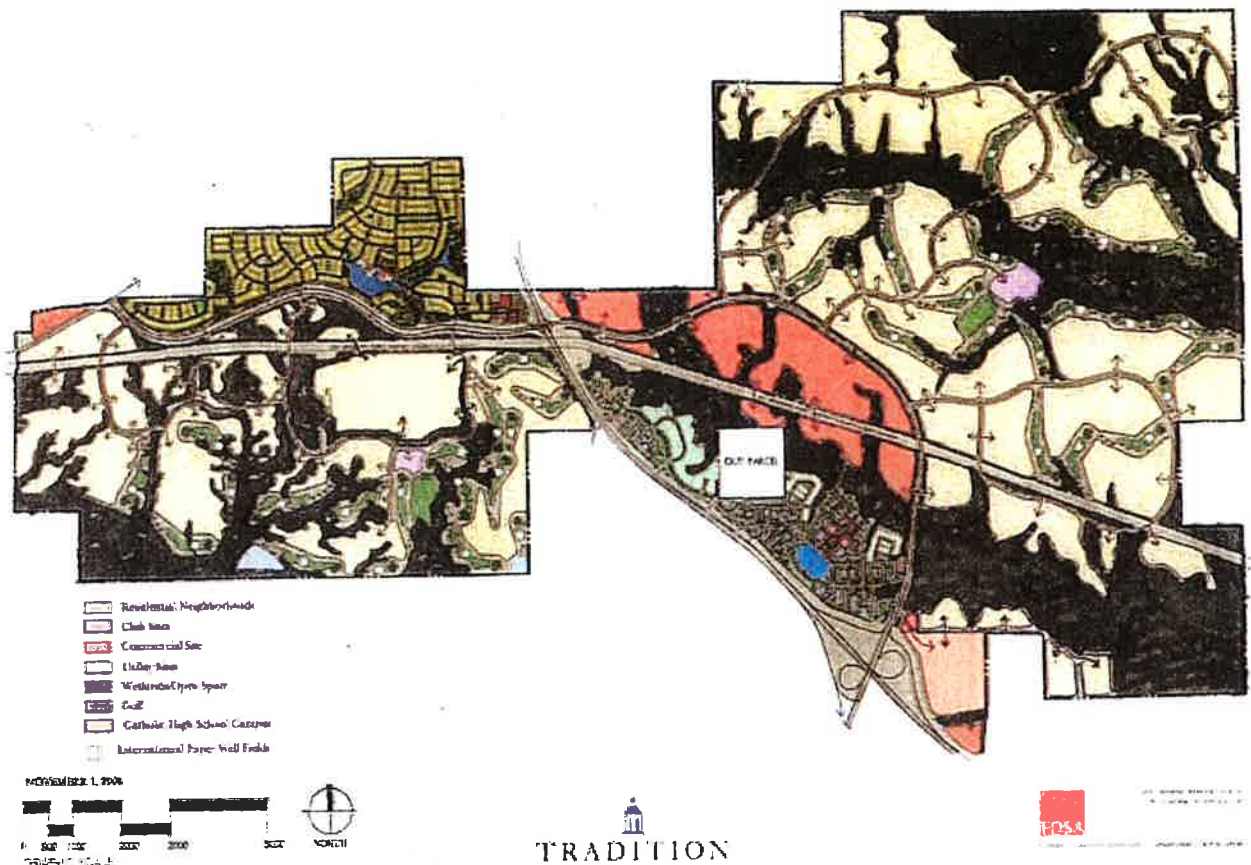
Figure 5-18. MS 67 runs through the De Soto National Forest creating picturesque views along the roadway. The pictures above show views that would be characteristic of those found in the De Soto National Forest.

R-3, C-2, and I-1 make up the remainder of the corridor along MS 67 in unincorporated Harrison County. The portion of land along MS 67/15 in Biloxi is zoned for rural residential and agricultural uses. The portion of land along MS 67/15 is along a commercial and residential corridor and has a mix of zoning designations.

Both the *Community Plan for Eastern Harrison County* and the *Community Plan for Saucier* specifically call for the designation of MS 67 as a Scenic Byway.⁴¹ Protection of scenic corridors is specifically delineated and expanded upon as one vital

strategy to prepare for growth in Harrison County. Designation of MS 67 as a Scenic Byway works in tandem with Goal 1 in this plan as established by the Community Plan for this area. This particular strategy complements the aim of this corridor plan by encouraging protection and enhancement of the MS 67 corridor, even encouraging the community to work with MDOT to plant trees along the median of MS 67 as suggested elsewhere in this Corridor Management Plan.⁴²

In some areas land can be used for more intensive development, but a scenic setback is



Source: Tradition

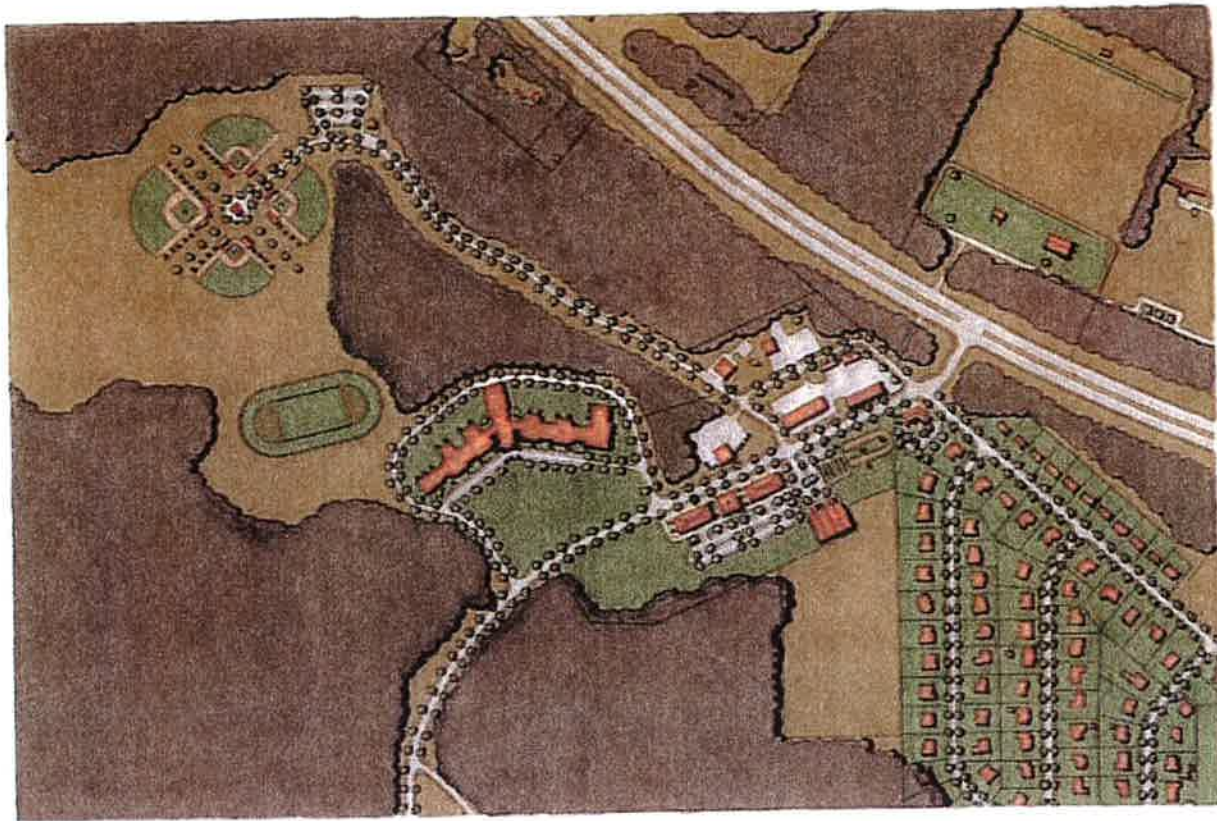
Figure 5-19. The Tradition Master Planned Community is adjacent to MS 67. The development plan calls for protecting views along the MS 67 corridor through signage and landscaping controls.

called for to preserve the scenic appearance of MS 67. Additionally, the community plans for Harrison County call for additional tree planting to enhance the scenic qualities of the corridor.⁴³ The *Citizens Master Plan for D'Iberville* calls for MS 67/15 to become a regional center for commercial activity south of the Tchoutacabouffa River. While encouraging commercial development, the plan calls for design standards to improve the aesthetic quality of the corridor.

Throughout the planning processes in Saucier, Eastern Harrison County, and D'Iberville, citizens expressed support for increasing access to commercial services along major roadways, including

MS 67. These commercial activities will be limited to specific locations, including the intersection of MS 67 and US Highway 49, Tradition, Old Woolmarket Road, and MS 15.⁴⁴ These commercial nodes would be set back significantly from the roadway, have signage limitations, and landscaping standards to ensure that the character of the scenic corridor is protected.

Currently, the US Highway 49 and MS 67 interchange, which is located in the Saucier community, is an undeveloped area. In 2006, citizens of Saucier were asked about their preferences for the future of this interchange. Forty percent of respondents wanted to have the interchange as



Source: Nathan Leppo

Figure 5-20. Old Woolmarket Road is a proposed node for commercial development. Development would be significantly setback from MS 67 to protect the character of the roadway

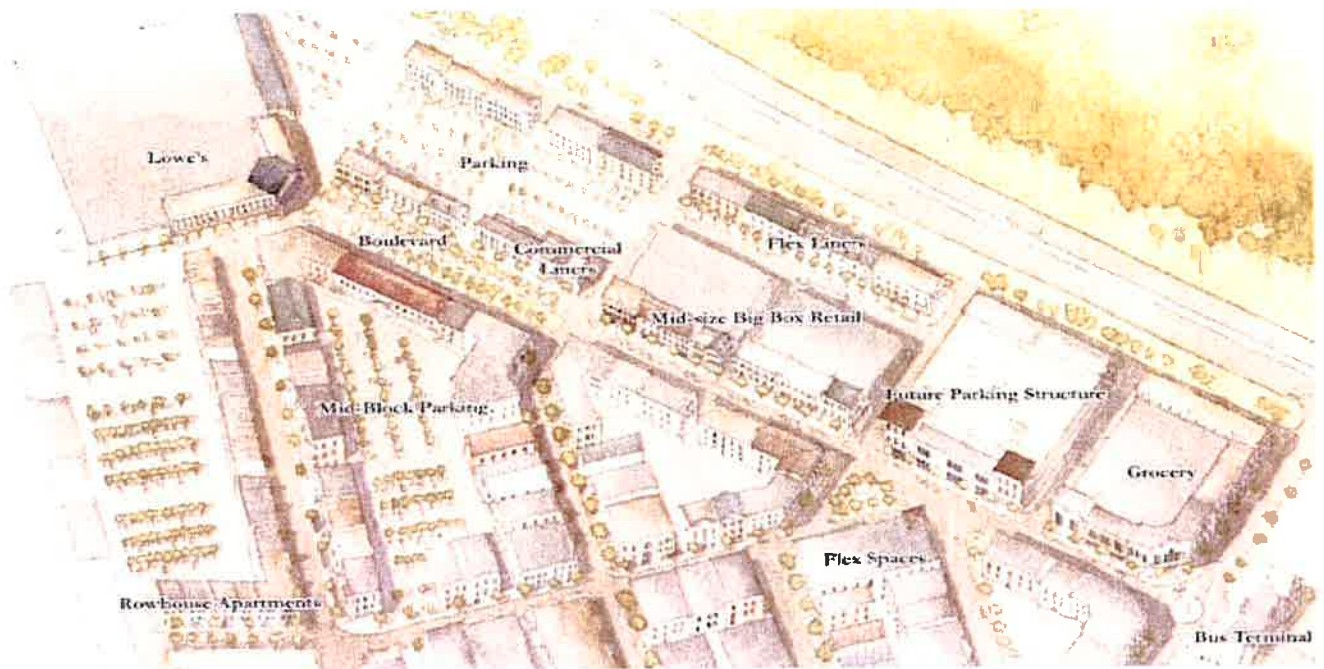
part of a Scenic Byway, with 29 percent supporting controlling development at the interchange.⁴⁵ Based on the feedback from the Saucier community, Harrison County undertook a Saucier Town Center planning process, in which a controlled development proposal for the interchange is included, as shown in Figure 19.

This interchange would be subject to the setback requirements to ensure the preservation of the scenic appearance of the corridor, thereby preserving the natural conditions in the area adjacent to the interchange. This area could be enhanced by planting native ornamental trees in keeping with the natural qualities that currently characterize the MS 67 corridor. The intersection of US 49 and MS 67 marks the northern boundary of the MS 67 corridor, so the beautification of this area will prove vital to give travelers a positive impression of MS 67.

The City of Biloxi, which is currently undertaking a comprehensive planning process, does not have any specific plans for the MS 67 corridor at this time. However, undertaking a comprehensive planning process will allow the city to carefully consider how it can support the goals of this plan.

Natural Resources

Perhaps the most significant quality of the proposed MS 67 Byway is the natural environment. The flora and fauna that can be found along it are typical of Mississippi's coastal plain. The climate is strongly influenced by the warm air from the Gulf of Mexico, producing an average annual rainfall of 60 inches. The weather is often humid and hot. This combination of rain and semi-tropical weather supports a robust natural environment that supports many plant and animal populations.



Source: Andrews University

Figure 5-21. The Saucier Town Center Plan calls for controlling development as shown in this illustration., but providing a buffer and design standards so the traveller does not see parking from the roadway.

MS 67 runs through the De Soto National Forest as well as a series of wetlands. The De Soto National Forest is one of a series of national forests in a system that serves to ensure the availability of forest and forest products serving Mississippi and beyond.⁴⁶ The De Soto Ranger District is the largest district in Mississippi.

Scenic Views

The variety of forests and wetlands along the MS 67 Byway provide area residents and visitors with refreshing scenic views. In addition, they create a scenic screen that can absorb traffic noise, glare from lights, and exhaust pollution. The maintenance and preservation of these natural buffers is important as the area continues to see development.



Source: Joshua Anderson

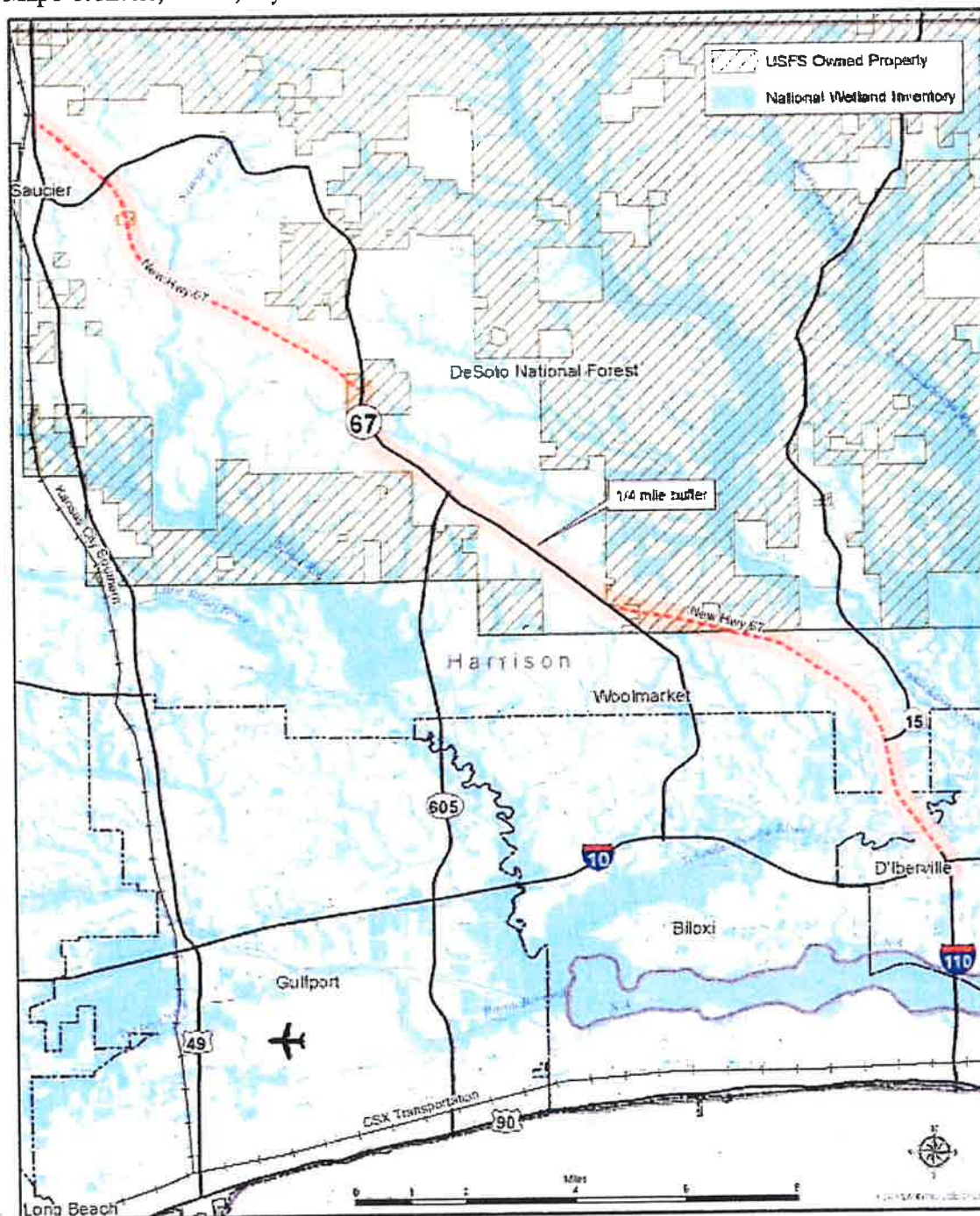
Figure 5-22. Wetlands are found adjacent to MS 67



Source: Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau (flowers), Rickie Yeager and Ian Beniston (roads)

Figure 5-23. Turning onto MS 67 from adjoining roadways reveals views of pine frees and wildflowers.

Map 5-3. Rivers, Creeks, Bayous and Wetlands are a common natural feature of the MS 67 corridor



Source: Southern Mississippi Planning and Development District

De Soto National Forest

The De Soto National Forest is a major point of interest in the Scenic Corridor Plan for MS 67. It is an integral component of the corridor's natural beauty, recreation, and flora and fauna. As such, there exist an abundance of local assets worth discussing.

The streams found within the forest are often tea-colored from tannic acid that leaches from tree leaves and bark. The De Soto National Forest generally contains forest described as "piney woods."

The winding streams form bottomlands that grow hardwood timber especially well. The forest also contains many forms of wildlife that can be found in abundance, including deer, turkey, and quail. Several rivers and streams flowing through the planning area have their headwaters in the De Soto National Forest. Natural scenic features of the forest that can be enjoyed by visitors include a variety of longleaf pines and oak trees common to the region in addition to tupelo/bald cypress swamps and a pitcher plant savanna.⁴⁷

Water Features

There are a number of water features along MS 67, including wetlands, rivers, and creeks, as shown in Map 4.

Wetlands

Wetlands, which comprise a significant portion of the MS 67 corridor, are an important feature of the area. At more than five miles inland, all of the wetlands in the area are Palustrine wetlands. Palustrine wetlands broadly encompass fresh water bogs, marshes, swamps, and bottomland forests, all of which can be found in Southern Mississippi. They are commonly found in the flood plains of inland streams and rivers. Tree species common to wetlands in Eastern Harrison County include

Yellow Poplar, Red Bay, Sweet Bay, Balt Cherry Oak, and Water Oak. The wetlands are also home to wildlife indigenous to the area.⁴⁸

Palustrine wetlands improve water quality by filtering pollutants such as fertilizers and pesticides, are central spawning points for fish, and help control floodwaters.⁴⁹ The Palustrine wetlands of Harrison County are an example of wetlands that help absorb water after heavy rainfalls and hurricane storm surges from the south.

Biloxi River Watershed

There are several rivers and streams in the area adjacent to the MS 67 corridor, and many of them empty into Biloxi Bay and then into the Mississippi Sound. The Biloxi River is one of two primary watersheds in the area and is fed by several streams, including Saucier Creek, Palmer Creek, Tiger Creek, Loya Branch, Rudy Branch, Walker Creek, Mill Creek, and Fritz Creek. The Little Biloxi River, the headwaters of which are in upper Harrison County near the border of Stone County, is also a tributary of the Biloxi River and enters north of Woolmarket at US Highway 49. The Biloxi River watershed is sizable—in its entirety it is 114,657 acres.⁵⁰

Tuxachanie Creek Watershed

The second major watershed is the Tuxachanie Creek Watershed. Even though the Tuxachanie Creek is a tributary of the larger Tchoutacabouffa River, the Tchoutacabouffa River is considered a part of the Tuxachanie Creek Watershed. The total land area of the Tuxachanie Creek Watershed measures 41,970 acres. MS 67 roughly divides the Tuxachanie Creek Watershed and the Biloxi River Watershed.⁵¹

The Tchoutacabouffa River meets the Biloxi River at Big Lake in the Biloxi Bay. The headwaters of the Tchoutacabouffa River are in the De Soto



Source: Joshua Anderson

Figure 5-24. The Biloxi and Little Biloxi Rivers run adjacent to MS 67

National Forest. Several tributaries, including Cypress Creek, Railroad Creek, Ramsey Creek, Hurricane Creek, Bud Branch, Bridge Branch, Raymond Branch, Boggy Branch, Bigfoot Creek, Choctaw Creek, Reed Branch, Long Branch, Hester Creek, Howard Creek, Parker Creek, and Cypress Creek, feed the Tchoutacabouffa. Similar to the Biloxi River tributaries, many of the creeks and branches that feed the Tchoutacabouffa in the northeastern part of the area are interconnected by

a series of wetlands.⁵²

Public access to the rivers and streams of the East Planning Area is limited to the De Soto National Forest. Other areas are confined by private land ownership.⁵³

Ecological Corridors

The scenic corridor has a variety of forestlands and wetlands that serve as habitats for wildlife. Wildlife movement is a concern where “ecological

corridors" occur. In such cases, wildlife need to cross MS 67 to access their habitat. Wildlife such as the tree frogs, alligator, shrews, moles, armadillos, rabbits, squirrels, beavers, and coyotes all have habitats along the MS 67 corridor.⁵⁴ There are a number rare species such as the Gopher Tortoise and Gopher Frog. The Gopher Frog's only known sighting is in a pond in the De Soto National Forest west of MS 67 and south of Tradition.⁵⁵

Recreation

Outdoor recreational opportunities are available within the MS 67 corridor. These include hiking trails, equestrian trails, all terrain vehicle trails, golf courses, parks, and other activities.

Grand Bear Golf Course

The Grand Bear Golf Course is a prime example and tribute to the region's unique environmental qualities. This world-class golf course was carefully designed to complement the physical lay of the land in the Biloxi River watershed. The course is near the MS 67 corridor and represents one of several recreational facilities developed over the years because of the area's growing tourism industry.⁵⁶

The rolling hills of the Grand Bear Golf Course are testimony to the natural beauty of the area. Recreational areas such as this golf course allow residents and visitors alike to enjoy the scenic qualities of the area adjacent to the proposed Scenic Byway MS 67.⁵⁷

Dogwood Hills Golf Course

The Dogwood Hills Golf Course functions as a recreational site incorporating the natural beauty of the area and is located in close proximity to MS 67. It also serves a tourist attraction, accommodating the region's growing tourist industry.



Source: Mississippi Development Authority/Division of Tourism
Figure 5-25. The Grand Bear Golf Course is located near the MS 67 Corridor.

De Soto National Forest

The De Soto National Forest is a major recreational point of interest along MS 67. Visitors can partake in activities such as hiking, wildlife watching, all terrain vehicle riding, and horse riding.

Many recreational activities can be found in the National Forest. One of the most popular activities is floating the winding streams in canoes, rafts, and boats. The Forest's recreational areas are also popular for picnicking, hiking, and camping. The De Soto National Forest is an invaluable recreational resource that is easily accessible through MS 67. De Soto has many trails for hikers, mountain bikers, equestrian riders, and all terrain vehicle riders.⁵⁸

Several rivers and streams flowing through the area have their headwaters in the De Soto National Forest. These waters are used for canoes, kayaks, and recreational fishing. For hunters, there is hunting permitted in the surrounding forestland. The De Soto National Forest also has several



Source: CC Tex Hamill Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College

Figure 5-26 . The Biloxi River has been a popular recreational asset to Eastern Harrison County for many years.



Source: Joshua Anderson

Figure 5-28: The Tuxachanie Trail provides opportunities for residents and visitors to use the De Soto National Forest.



Source: Joshua Anderson

Figure 5-27. The Woolmarket Community park provides opportunities for running, tennis, baseball, and other activities.



Source: Rickie

Yeager Figure 5-29. A hike along the trails in the De Soto National Forest offers the opportunity to explore nature. Above is a colorful mushroom found during a hike through the forest.

permanent picnic and shelter facilities intended for large group gatherings.

The Tuxachanie Trail is part of the De Soto National Forest. The trail contains the remains of railroad trestles built by Irish immigrants in the early 1900s and used by the Dantzler Lumber Company, which had a mill in Cedar Lake.⁵⁹ It is recognized as a National Recreation Trail and is the longest loop trail in the state of Mississippi, at approximately 22 miles in length.^{60 61} It makes up only a fraction of the 170 miles of trails available in the De Soto National Forest.⁶² As one can imagine, these trails offer a wide variety of potential uses for bike riders, hikers, and nature lovers alike. The trails travel through rolling hills and pine forests. While traversing a trail, one is fully immersed in the experience of an authentic Mississippi forest full of life.⁶³

In addition to hiking, the Airey Lake Recreation Area is along the trail. The recreation area includes a three-acre lake with camping sites, picnicking, and fishing for bass, bream, white perch, and catfish. Airey Tower is part of the field

headquarters of the De Soto Ranger District in the De Soto National Forest.⁶⁴ In the past visitors could climb to the top of the tower and experience an outstanding view of the forest. Visitors can also ride horses on the Big Foot Horse Trail, which provides 21 miles of trail along four loops.⁶⁵

Rudy Moran Complex

The Rudy Moran Complex is located at Lamey Bridge Road adjacent to Interstate Highway 110, just south of MS 15/67. This park includes a walking track, softball fields, restrooms, and concession stands.⁶⁶

Tradition Parks

The Tradition community has plans for more than 20 parks and nearly 25 miles of hiking and biking trails available to the public. The community also has plans for two golf courses.⁶⁷

Woolmarket Community Park

The Woolmarket Community Park, at its current location at the intersection of Old Woolmarket Road and MS 67 since 1989, is a



Source: Joseph Kitchen

Figure 5-30. The Airey Lake Recreation Area offers camping, fishing, and picnicking opportunities.



Source: Tradition

Figure 5-31. Tradition has plans for more than 20 parks as part of the new community.

public park that has served the residents of Harrison County. The facilities include four baseball fields, one football field, a tennis court, and a walking track.

The Woolmarket Civic Center is located on the grounds of the Woolmarket Community Park. The Civic Center was built in 1991 and is an 8,000-square-foot facility that included a reception hall and a separate kitchenette area. The Woolmarket Civic Center is used to host weddings, social events, and public meetings.

The Woolmarket Senior Center is currently being constructed as an 8,000-square-foot addition to the Woolmarket Civic Center. The Senior Center is on track to be completed by the end of 2007.⁶⁸

Transportation

As mentioned previously, because MS 67 is completing construction there is limited traffic volume or accident location data to date. An accident did occur at MS 67 and St. Patrick's School, and as a result MDOT investigated the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection.⁶⁹ However, MDOT did record an annual average of 8,200 trips each day on the old MS 67. MDOT projects that by 2030 the roadway will have approximately 40,000 vehicle trips per day.⁷⁰ There are a number of other roadways with which MS 67 intersects, which are described below.

Interstate 10

Interstate Highway 10, a major interstate highway that runs along the southern border of the United States, is the southern intersection for the MS 67 corridor. As such, it provides access to not only residents but many passing through, as well as to others who wish to visit localities within reach of the MS 67 corridor.

Mississippi Highway 605

Mississippi Highway 605 (MS 605) intersects

with MS 67. There are plans to apply for a Scenic Byway designation for MS 605 in the future. The establishment of both MS 605 and MS 67 as Scenic Byways will ensure progress and preservation in the area, allowing both current and future generations to enjoy what the area has to offer.

Old Highway 67

There are future opportunities to seek out Scenic Byway status for the Old Highway 67, which runs adjacent to the newly created Highway 67. Old Highway 67 boasts a variety of historical treasures and buildings with historical character of their own, such as post offices. Since Old Highway 67 is accessible from the new Highway 67, it is possible that there will be future ventures into creating a scenic gateway between Highway 67 and Old Highway 67 to further enhance the experiences of travelers and visitors.

Public Services

Harrison County provides fire service to the area through four districts: North Woolmarket, Saucier, Lizana, and Orange Grove. County Sheriff substations are located at each of the fire stations servicing the area. MDOT has plans for a multipurpose facility off of MS 67 and Old Woolmarket Road.

Advertising Control Compliance

The Harrison County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution prohibiting the placement of all advertising billboards on MS 67. Additionally, Harrison County has passed an ordinance regulating the location of off-premises outdoor advertising signs along highways and roadways outside municipalities within Harrison County. This is the first step in the protection of the scenic and natural qualities along the corridor.⁷¹ There are no existing

commercial billboards along the newly constructed MS 67.

Harrison County is currently preparing a county-wide sign ordinance that controls the size and appearance of signage both on-premises and off-premises. The ordinance will significantly limit off-premises signs. Specific provisions will apply to MS 67, requiring that all signs be monument signs and limited in size.

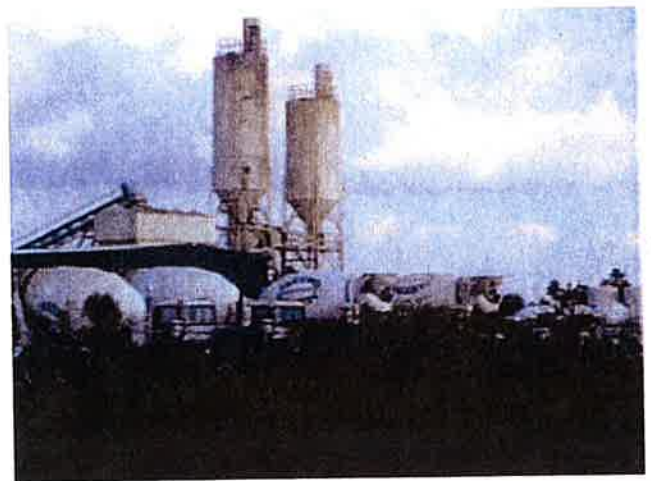
Incompatible Elements

There are limited incompatible elements on the MS 67 corridor. At Interstate Highway 10 and MS 15/67 there are conventional commercial developments that are not scenic in nature. D'Iberville's plan calls for improving this area through design standards. The other potentially incompatible element is located one mile away from the corridor. The Coastal Recycling Rubbish Disposal and the Browning-Ferris Industries Transfer Station are both located along Hudson-Krohn Road southwest of MS 67. These incompatible elements are located one mile from MS 67 and are not visible from the highway. The Coastal Recycling Rubbish Disposal site is a Class II Rubbish Site that accepts limited types of waste, such as natural vegetation, brick, concrete, stone, and asphalt.⁷² Both sites are sufficiently distant from the Corridor to allow the reasonable conclusion that they shall not impede enjoyment of the corridor nor significantly detract from the scenic beauty and character of the byway.



Source: Rickie Yeager

Figure 5-32. The Rubbish Disposal Facilities are not visible from MS 67. In addition they are gated and buffered with landscaping, minimizing the visual impact on the area surrounding the corridor.



Source: Jody Spires

Figure 5-33. The Metro Concrete facilities is located adjacent to MS 67. The facility is off the roadway, but can be seen by those passing by. The addition of landscaping along the right of way could help further shield this facility from passersby.

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6

Protection Techniques

The primary goal of the *Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for MS 67* is to protect the intrinsic resources along the corridor. This chapter provides examples of protection techniques that can be implemented to reach this goal. To achieve it, cooperation is required on the part of Harrison County, adjoining jurisdictions, the State of Mississippi, and land owners along the corridor. Chapter 4 identifies the goals, objectives, and strategies. This section describes many of the protection techniques identified in Chapter 4. These techniques have been reviewed by the Corridor Advisory Group (CAG). The plan covers a five-year period, and it is intended to have high aspirations that can be achieved over the course of this period.

GOAL 1. ENSURE CONTINUITY OF THE ROADWAY BETWEEN JURISDICTIONS THROUGH INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION.

One of the most important techniques in implementing the Corridor Management Plan is the cooperation of governments at the state and local level. A key objective is to present the plan to governments and citizens. The plan can be distributed through both the Harrison County website and a print version. Harrison County staff can also work with CAG to prepare a presentation describing the plan that can be presented at community meetings.

Another objective is to develop outdoor lighting standards for development along the MS 67 corridor. The aim of these standards would be

to reduce or eliminate glare for the motorist and to enhance the rural scenic nature of the corridor by keeping the night skies dark. Often known as a “dark skies” ordinance, the outcome would be the protection of the view of stars at night. The county and surrounding jurisdictions could require developers to use outdoor lighting fixtures that are shielded, directing light downward to where it is needed. MDOT should use top-shielded or flat-lens cobra head style fixtures for highway lighting and at rest areas. Fixtures should produce no skyward glare. The International Dark Sky Association provides guidance on fixtures that are appropriate.¹

GOAL 2. PROTECT THE SCENIC CHARACTER OF THE HIGHWAY.

Another objective is to preserve open and forested land where possible through purchase of development rights, conservation easements, conservation subdivisions, or other means as appropriate.

A purchase of development rights program allows a property owner to voluntarily sell their rights to develop a parcel of land to a land trust or other organization. This permanently prevents the property from developing. The county could support state legislation for the creation of a Mississippi Conservation Fund. This would provide funding for purchase of development rights programs. The funding for these programs would come from public funds.

A conservation easement creates a legally enforceable land preservation agreement between

a landowner and a qualified land protection organization for the purposes of conservation. It restricts real estate development, commercial and industrial uses, and certain other activities on a property. The decision to place a conservation easement on a property is strictly a voluntary one, where the easement is sold or donated. The restrictions, once set in place, “run with the land” and are binding on all future landowners. The primary purpose of a conservation easement is to protect agricultural land, timber resources, and/or other valuable natural resources, such as rivers or scenic open space, by separating the right to subdivide and build on the property from the other rights of ownership. The landowner who gives up these “development rights” continues to privately own and manage the land and may receive significant state and federal tax advantages by donating the conservation easement. In accepting the conservation easement, the easement holder has a responsibility to monitor future uses of the land to ensure compliance with the terms of the easement and to enforce the terms if a violation occurs.



Source: Randall Arendt

Figure 6-1. Conservation Subdivisions allow for open space to be preserved enhancing views from roadways.

Conservation subdivisions are a way that residents can preserve and protect open space within residentially developed land. This style of subdivision preserves open space through the use of clustered, smaller lots surrounded by large open spaces. Conservation subdivisions allow for the same number of overall houses as regular zoning, but they cluster the homes closer together to preserve large open or natural areas. A conservation subdivision would preserve at least 50 percent of the overall area of a parcel for open space. This tool is also appropriate for land along environmentally sensitive tracts where preservation is desired.

Another objective is to develop design guidelines that provide direction for new development. The Gulf Coast Business Council has developed a report that makes recommendations on design standards for scenic corridors.² These include setbacks, landscaping, and screening for new development sites. Harrison County and adjacent communities should develop a scenic corridor ordinance based on the recommendations of this plan and the Gulf Coast Business Council report.



Source: Matthew Hinkle

Figure 6-2. The Gulf Coast Business Council report calls for increased setbacks along MS 67. This home is Saucier is set distant from the roadway.

Design guidelines can be used in working with private developers as growth occurs. For example, Tradition commissioned a national consultant to design signage and landscape standards for its Town Center and adjacent developments along the corridor.

GOAL 3. PROTECT AND ENHANCE HIGH QUALITY WILDLIFE HABITAT AND NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS.

A key objective is to preserve ecological corridors. Using the Mississippi Gap Analysis, Harrison County and MDOT should evaluate how to effectively preserve wildlife corridors. When ecological corridors are broken by a highway, there may be ways to encourage wildlife to cross under the roadway. Strategies such as plantings can help to guide wildlife to areas where there are opportunities



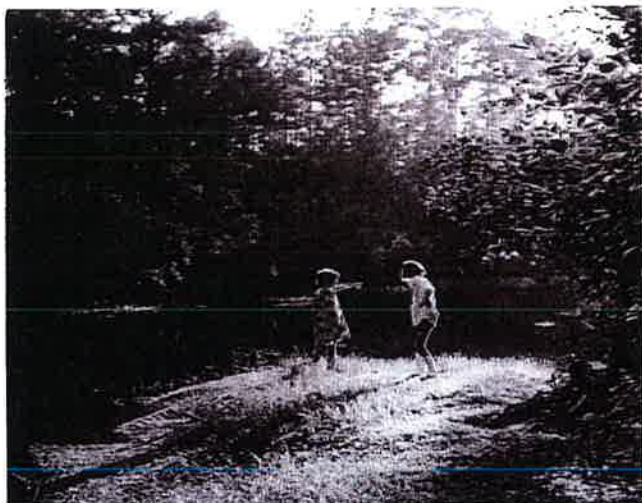
Source: Nathan Leppo

Figure 6-3. This example of signage allows drivers to identify the recreational opportunities along the corridor.



Source: Nathan Leppo

Figure 6-4. This sample sign is an example of how the highway could be enhanced with roadway signage.



Source: CC Tex Hamill Collection, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College.

Figure 6-5. Promotion of tourism opportunities will be part of the charge of the CAG. Below is a historic image of children enjoying the recreational qualities of one of the many rivers adjacent to the MS 67 corridor.

to cross. Where bridges go over water there should be a sufficient distance to allow a land connection for animals to travel under them. Signage can also be incorporated alerting drivers to wildlife crossing locations.

The De Soto National Forest regularly undertakes controlled burns, clear cutting of invasive species, and reforestation efforts. These activities provide the opportunity for interpretive programming to educate visitors about why these efforts are undertaken. These activities should be coordinated and encouraged to aid in reestablishing the native forest species.

GOAL 4. EFFECTIVELY MANAGE SIGNAGE.

Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs (TODS) advertise community attractions and business locations. Local food, fuel, and accommodations businesses should be encouraged to use MDOT



Source: Jody Spires

Figure 6-6. Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs advertise community attractions instead of off-premises signs. TODS should be encouraged along MS 67.

logo signs near interchanges instead of off-premises signs. A key objective is to develop a sign ordinance for on- and off-premises signs along the corridor. Harrison County and the adjacent communities should develop sign ordinances that limit the size, number, style, and placement of on-premises signs.

Interpretive signage should be placed to allow visitors to find their way along the corridor. However, signage of all kinds should not detract from the byway's scenic character. The number and placement of highway and interpretive signs should be planned in coordination with MDOT to ensure that the scenic character is protected.

GOAL 5. DEVELOP AND EXPAND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

A major objective is to improve access to natural and recreational opportunities along the corridor. To achieve this MDOT and the De Soto National Forest can partner to post directional

signage to the De Soto National Forest and its trails. Direction signage to community parks can be added. Pull off areas can be established at locations adjacent to recreation points where appropriate.

GOAL 6. PRESERVE THE ENJOYMENT OF THE HIGHWAY DRIVING EXPERIENCE.

MS 67 has just been completed and will require maintenance over time. As bridges are maintained and upgraded, consideration should be given to designs that protect views. For example, using tube railing rather than solid concrete allows drivers to see the view from the roadway.

In order to enhance visitor experiences, access to information about the byway and coastal tourism opportunities could be achieved through the creation of a Visitor Information Station, which could include information about the natural and historic assets, areas of interest, and opportunities for enjoyment along the corridor.³

MS 67 is part of the Mississippi Gulf Coast National Heritage Area. The Heritage Area's mission is to promote understanding of and to conserve and enhance the heritage resources of Eastern Harrison County by telling the area's nationally significant story to residents and visitors alike. The heritage area works in partnerships that celebrate the area's unique history, people, traditions and landscapes. These partnerships present the MS Gulf Coast's distinctive story in terms of national significance. The Heritage Area works to strengthen the sense of heritage identity, conserve the area's heritage resources and promote and market the Heritage Area. The Heritage Area is recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation who works to increase awareness of the area's significance.⁴ Marketing efforts for the Scenic Byway will be integrated as part of the Heritage Area and vice versa.

As part of the efforts to create a quality experience for visitors, the CAG should be

responsible for creating promotional materials that can be distributed at pull offs, visitors' centers on the coast, and other locations. The CAG should take every opportunity to use the resources of the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce, the Harrison County Tourism Commission, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Harrison County Development Commission, the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and the University of Southern Mississippi in promoting the byway. Currently, tour operators, motor coach operators, travel agencies, and airlines in conjunction with local and state tourism and economic industry businesses and organizations are promoting the Mississippi Gulf Coast as a major tourist destination; therefore, many opportunities exist for marketing the byway through travel and golf packages. The Harrison County Scenic Byway website will also be linked to all agencies and commissions that promote the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Radio, TV, magazine, newspaper, and direct mail advertisement will also be very important tools for byway promotion.⁵

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7 Community Participation Program

The Community Participation Program is a critical element of this plan. Citizens have been involved throughout the planning process, providing ongoing input. The participation process initially focused on identifying whether the community supported the vision for designating MS 67 as a scenic corridor; later it focused on the tools and strategies to be utilized to achieve that vision. Notification and involvement focused on property owners, citizens, and community groups along the corridor, as well as regional organizations such as the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau. A variety of approaches have been taken to solicit input, including the Corridor Advisory Group (CAG) and committees, Town Hall Meetings, citizen surveys, an online discussion forum, and a 1-800 number.

The Community Participation Program team includes the planning team, the Harrison County Beautification Commission, and the CAG. The participation process began in 2004 and continues today. After the adoption of this plan, participation will continue throughout the implementation process.

Established Citizen Participation Program

Harrison County has solicited public input in regards both to the designation of MS 67 as a Scenic Byway and to the tools to be used to protect the highway. Appendix C provides further documentation of the community participation

program.

The CAG formed to make decisions as to who will be responsible for the various duties required to preserve, conserve, and enhance the MS 67 corridor. Within the CAG, a series of committees have formed to work on specific elements of the plan. The CAG includes representatives from the Harrison County Beautification Commission, Harrison County, Mississippi Power, the Biloxi Sun Herald, property owners, a local historian, the development community, and area citizens.

In February 2004 a Town Hall Meeting was held at the Success Community Meeting, with approximately 40 citizens attending, to discuss the intention of designating MS 67 as a Scenic Byway and to build support for the development of a management plan.

A Town Hall Meeting took place in Saucier on January 5, 2006.¹ Approximately 130 citizens attended this meeting. As part of the meeting citizens were asked what they would like to see for the future of their community. They identified their desire to preserve the scenic appearance of the MS 67 corridor and maintain the rural character of their community, but they also supported the idea of allowing new development along MS 67. Citizens specifically stated that they want MS 67 to stay green. A second Town Hall Meeting was held in the Saucier community on March 21, 2006. Approximately 125 citizens attended this meeting. It also established citizen opinion both in support of and opposition to designating MS 67 as a Scenic Byway. Forty percent of participating



Source: Robert Lemon

Figure 7-1. This Town Hall Meeting in Saucier attracted approximately 130 citizens to discuss the future of their community including the new MS 67 highway.



Source: Chris Cunningham

Figure 7-2. A Town Hall Meeting in Woolmarket attracted more than 100 people to discuss the designation of the MS 67 highway as a state scenic corridor.

citizens were in support of the designation, twenty-five percent supported a conventional development, and twenty-nine percent supported nodal growth that would concentrate development at specific locations while leaving the remainder of the corridor undeveloped.²

During September 2006, the Saucier community hosted a design charrette to plan the future development pattern for the MS 67 corridor. Through the design process the community determined that should development come to the intersection of MS 67 and US Highway 49 it should happen in a well-designed pattern that provides a landscaped buffer and buildings that front the highway, rather than parking fronting the highway. The results of the design process were reviewed by the public in January 2007. The Saucier Town Center Plan was adopted by Harrison County in March 2007.

A Town Hall Meeting took place at the Woolmarket Community Center on September 6, 2007. Two hundred people attended the meeting, which, among other things, addressed the issue of designating MS 67 as a Scenic Byway.³ Aggregated survey results from this meeting indicated that 65.9 percent of community participants supported the designation, 22 percent indicated they were neutral on the matter, and 12.1 percent were opposed to it.⁴ Other points of interest included the participants' strong support of the preservation and conservation of forested areas and preservation and conservation of the Biloxi and Tchoutacabouffa Rivers at 81.1 percent and 86.6 percent, respectively.⁵ The preservation and conservation of said resources are inherent in the management plan for MS 67 should it be designated a Scenic Byway. The majority of participants supported the development of recreation and walking/biking trails as well as preservation and conservation of forests and land along the Biloxi River.⁶ The majority did not support the development of wetlands in the area.⁷

The City of D'Iberville has engaged in a series of public meetings inviting citizens to discuss the future of the MS 15/67 corridor. The Mississippi Renewal Forum initiated the planning for this area in October 2005.⁸ Between June 10th and June 16th of 2006, the City of D'Iberville, with the participation of the public and others in the community, held planning events that took place at the City Hall auditorium in order to address portions of the city's master plan. Workshops were also held to address implementation of these plans.⁹ Information was collected from a wide variety of sources, ranging from historians to local residents, to compile community goals and objectives. The result of these efforts was detailed in the *Citizens Master Plan* for the City of D'Iberville in June 2006.¹⁰

On September 6, 2007, seventh graders at North Woolmarket Middle School were invited to discuss what they would like to see at the intersection of MS 67 and Old Woolmarket Road. The school is located just off of MS 67. The students offered a variety of opinions, noting that they would like to have a snowball stand but also emphasizing the importance of keeping trees and keeping the area green. Additionally, a faculty member from West Wortham Middle School in Saucier had her students help with gathering historical information of importance to the MS 67 corridor that has been included in this plan.¹¹

At the beginning of December 2007 the *Draft Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67* was made available for public review. Comments on the draft public plan were accepted in writing and by phone. Citizens in all of the communities along the corridor were invited to use a toll free 1-800 number to voice their opinions on the draft byway plan and the designation of the scenic corridor. Citizens voiced concerns and interest in the planning process and the preservation of the area's rural character.¹² Citizens also contacted the Harrison County Beautification

Commission directly. Comments received included keeping the corridor attractive, preventing over commercialization of the corridor, and concerns expressed about how the plan will impact personal property rights and property values.

The Beautification Commission issued a newsletter in December 2007 and again in January 2008 to keep the public up to date on the planning process. The newsletters contained information about frequently asked questions, how to become involved in the planning process, and information on the plan content.

To further provide a venue for public input and interests, a "Scenic Corridor Discussion Board" was created as part of a larger discussion forum. The forum was created by Harrison County officials to give Harrison County residents a voice in the building and rebuilding of Harrison County. This public forum has been made available at <http://home.learningtimes.net/ms>. The citizens of Eastern Harrison County were also solicited by e-mail to give their opinions on the designation of the

Figure 7-3. Citizens listened and voted on the recommendations of this plan during a public meeting in December.

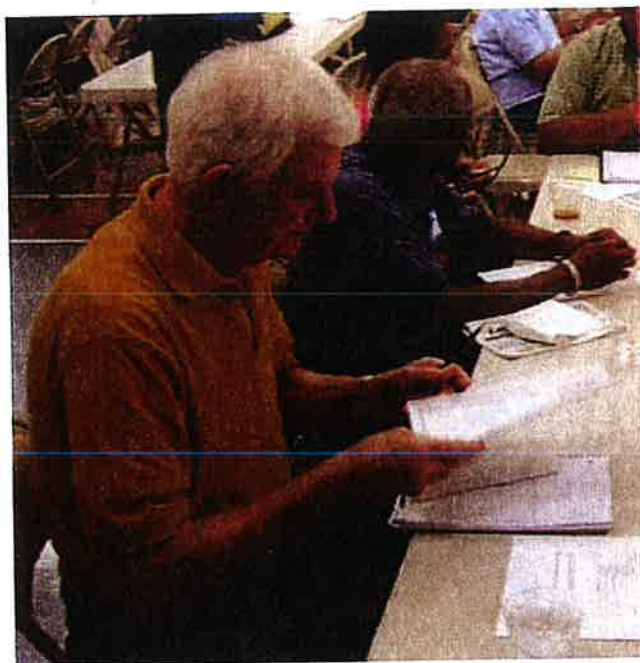


Source: Nathan Leppo

highway as a Scenic Byway. Many community members are in support of the designation of MS 67 as a Scenic Byway. For example, a resident wrote, "By all means every effort should be made to have both these Highways designated as scenic." Another said, "I heard some talk about this months ago, but just passed it off as wishful thinking on someone's part, but I guess there is more to it than I thought it was." Another wrote, "It would be nice if they could get SR 67 and 605 designated as a scenic highways then maybe we would have one or two roads in Harrison County that wouldn't be cluttered up with those ugly billboard and other signs all over the side of the roads." Another said, "Who do I have to write letters to so it will help? I will write those people three or four per week if it will help do the trick."

In addition to phone and online comments, a public meeting took place at the North Woolmarket Elementary/Middle School Cafeteria on Friday December 14th, 2007 to discuss the *Draft Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67* and to receive valuable input from citizens. Approximately 60 citizens attended this meeting. Notifications were provided to citizens through mailings to property owners within one quarter mile of the corridor, newspaper notifications in both the *The Sun Herald* and *Around South Mississippi*, as well as e-mail notifications and flyers. The meeting allowed citizens to voice their opinions on the plan, ask questions and provide other feedback. The feedback has been taken into consideration and will play an important role in completing and finalizing the plan.

A key component in establishing citizen feedback on the draft plan consisted of a citizen vote on the goals and objectives set forth in the plan. After having discussed the ongoing planning process for the Scenic Byway and presenting key intrinsic assets of the corridor, citizens were given



Source: Chris Cunningham

Figure 7-4. Citizens have participated in Town Hall Meetings, on-line discussion, and through a 1-800 number to express their thoughts about the future of the MS 67 Corridor.

the opportunity to vote on the goals set forth in the plan, with 52 people choosing to participate. The following is a summary of the results of voting on the goals and objectives presented at the public meeting.

In regards to the first goal sought to ensure continuity of the roadway between jurisdictions through intergovernmental cooperation, 55 percent supported, 26 percent opposed, and 19 percent were not sure/no opinion.

As part of the discussion of the second goal citizens were asked whether they would support the adoption of an ordinance implementing screening and landscaping requirements where 51 percent supported, 37 percent opposed, and 12 percent were not sure/no opinion. The second goal also asked



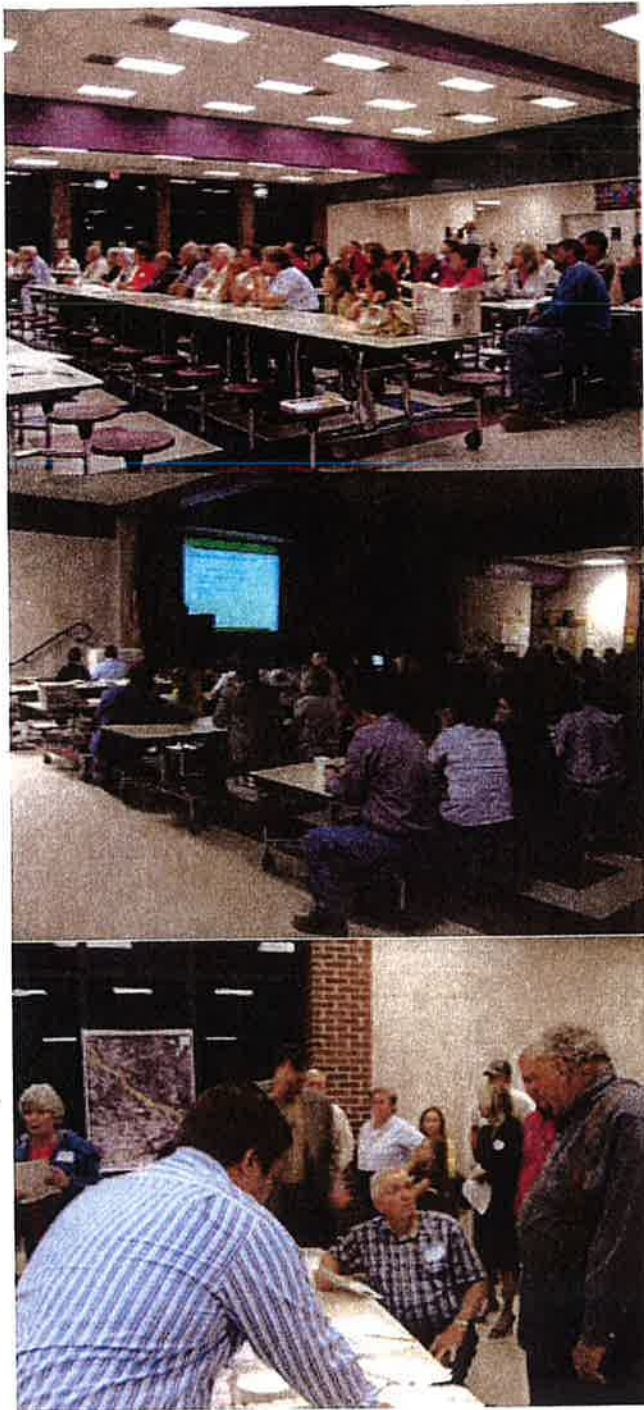
Source: Chris Cunningham and Ellen Marrison

Figure 7-5. Harrison County Supervisor Rockco has hosted meetings for the communities along the MS 67 Corridor to allow citizens to voice their opinion about the future of the corridor.



Source: Bridget Troy

Figure 7-6. Students at North Woolmarket Middle School shared the opinions of their parents. Along MS 67 (shown in black at the top of the picture), students placed buildings with deep setbacks and wants to keep the corridor green.



Source: Nathan Leppo

Figure 7-7. Citizens voiced their opinions about this plan at a public meeting on December 14th, 2007.

whether citizens would support the ability of property owners to voluntarily participate in conservation easement and purchase of development rights programs with 63 percent supported, 27 percent opposed, and 10 percent not sure/no opinion. On the topic of whether or not citizens supported the county in the adoption of an ordinance enabling conservation subdivisions, 69 percent supported, 27 percent were opposed, and 4 percent were not sure/no opinion. Dark skies ordinances seek to preserve the starry sky by requiring shielded lights for new structures along the byway. On this topic, 57 percent of citizens supported, 41 percent were opposed, and 2 percent were not sure/no opinion.

Goal three seeks to protect and enhance the wildlife and natural resources available along the corridor. Some examples of methods used to follow through on this include the preservation of wildlife corridors and conducting planning workshops on scenic enhancement in local communities. On this topic, 56 percent of citizens supported the goal, 38 percent opposed it, and 6 percent were not sure/no opinion.

Goal four aims to effectively manage signage along the MS 67 corridor. This goal includes provisions such as utilizing MDOT signage to indicate pull-offs, etc., limiting off-premise signage, and setting standards for signage along the corridor. The use of MDOT signage along the corridor was supported by 66 percent of citizens and opposed by 34 percent. 62 percent of citizens supported an ordinance controlling off-premise signage on MS 67, 35 percent were opposed, and 4 percent were not sure/no opinion. Thirdly, 59 percent of citizens supported an ordinance controlling on-premise signage along MS 67, with 41 percent having been opposed.

Goal five seeks to further develop and expand recreational opportunities along the MS 67 corridor for citizens. This was met with strong support from citizens at the meeting with 74 percent supporting

this goal, 24 percent opposed, and 2 percent not sure/no opinion.

Goal six aims to preserve the enjoyment of the highway driving experience. This is accomplished through exploring sources of funding for additional road and shoulder maintenance along the roadside, developing interpretive programs emphasizing the scenic, cultural, and tourism qualities of the corridor, and developing a commerce plan. On the topic of establishing interpretive signage along MS 67, 79 percent of citizens were in support and 21 percent were opposed. Establishing a visitor's center to educate visitors and citizens alike on the intrinsic assets of the corridor was met with mixed review, with 48 percent in support, 48 percent opposed, and 4 percent not sure/no opinion.

The meeting concluded with an explanation of what was to come next in the planning process

and an open floor for plan creators and Harrison County officials to receive feedback, questions, and input from citizens. A common concern among citizens was whether or not land would be taken from them, which the county and planners assured would not occur. Citizens were also assured that they would be given the opportunity to provide further input on the implementation of the plan, especially as it relates to the regulatory measures.

In addition to opportunities for public input, the County also organized educational workshops. World-renowned conservationist Randall Arendt presented a one-day workshop on September 5, 2007 for approximately 100 public officials, citizens, developers, and engineers on the principles and tools of using site sensitive design to develop. Representatives from Harrison County, D'Iberville, and Biloxi attended.

Ongoing Citizen Participation Program

A Town Hall meeting is scheduled for December 14th, 2007 for Eastern Harrison County residents. The meeting will once again be held at the North Woolmarket Elementary/Middle School, and it will provide citizens the opportunity to voice their opinions and receive more information regarding the plan. The designation of MS 67 as a Scenic Byway will be addressed in order to receive input and feedback from the Community about the corridor plan.¹³ Property owners within one-quarter of a mile of the byway were notified by letter of the meeting. Flyers were posted in area churches and businesses and notifications were sent by electronic mail to citizens living in Eastern Harrison county. Citizens were provided with the opportunity to provide written comments or leave comments on the 1-800 number. Comments received through the town hall meeting, in writing and by phone were incorporated into the plan.



Source: Nathan Leppo

Figure 7-8. Citizens learned about the Corridor Management Plan through a newsletter about the planning process and about opportunities to engage in ongoing efforts to implement this plan.

Once the plan is adopted by the state, the CAG will be charged with oversight of its implementation. The CAG will form a series of committees to address specific recommendations of this plan. These will include committees charged with litter collection, maintaining accessibility to the established resources, preservation and enhancement of the natural and rural character of the corridor, and assessing financial needs and seeking state and federal funds available for Scenic Byways to make these duties possible.

The committees will establish various rules and guidelines pertaining to signage, plans for multiuse paths, pull-off areas, visitor centers, and visitor promotion. The committees will also create a time line for the realization of said duties and responsibilities.

Citizens of Harrison County will continue their involvement as implementation moves forward. For the implementation measures that require regulatory change, the community organizations representing each of the communities in Harrison County will be notified and asked to provide input. As ordinances are considered for adoption, public hearings will be held. Community meetings will be held as needed to inform citizens of the corridor on progress on implementation of the plan. Focus groups, surveys or other appropriate tools will be used to engage the travelling tourist about their experience along the corridor. These meetings will be held in conjunction with the timeline established in Chapter 8 for implementing this plan.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Harrison County. (2007). *Community Plan for Saucier*. Accessed November 14, 2007: <http://www.co.harrison.ms.us/departments/zoning/downloads.asp>
- 2 Harrison County. (2007). *Draft Community Plan for Eastern Planning Area*. Accessed November 14, 2007: <http://www.co.harrison.ms.us/departments/zoning/downloads.asp>
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Correa and Associates. (2006). *Citizens Master Plan D'Iberville, Mississippi*.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Harrison County Corridor Advisory Committee. (2007). Meeting Minutes from October, 24th, 2007.
- 12 Harrison County. (2007). *Draft Community Plan for Eastern Planning Area*. Accessed November 14, 2007: <http://www.co.harrison.ms.us/departments/zoning/downloads.asp>
- 13 Ibid.

8 Action Plan

In this chapter, each goal is supported by a series of strategies intended to assist the County in focusing its resources. The CAG, the Harrison County Board of Supervisors, and the Harrison County Beautification Commission are the entities responsible for carrying out most strategies. The Board has the authority, for example, to adopt any recommended regulatory measures. In order to assist in the implementation of the plan, however, the CAG is also charged with aiding in implementation. It should solicit grant monies, coordinate local citizen efforts, and undertake other action steps—especially those that are non-regulatory.

This plan is designed to be a living document. It should be consulted regularly by the county and serve as a practical guide to decision making. To begin, this chapter starts with a discussion of the visitor interpretation plan and is followed by the action plan, including the responsible parties and timelines for action.

Visitor Interpretation Plan

MS 67 will experience two types of visitors—those who use the highway as a means to go to and from destinations off the highway and those who specifically drive along the highway and participate in various interpretive and recreational opportunities within the corridor.

MS 67 has not yet opened, so it is not clear how many visitors of each type can be expected. The Gulf Regional Planning Commission projects approximately 40,000 trips per day by 2030.¹

Because travel data is not yet available, this plan is based on estimates made by the planning team. The actions for interpretation are based on the need to accommodate visitor usage and to document interpretation needs.

Visitor Usage

In order to fully understand visitor needs the following information will be collected by the CAG and MDOT:

- Entrance and exit points for highway visitors;
- Visitor destinations;
- Number of visitors;
- Types of visitors; and
- Expectations of visitors in regards to facilities and services.

The CAG and the Beautification Commission will need to undertake a visitor survey approximately one year after the opening of the highway. In coordination with the Gulf Regional Planning Commission and MDOT, the CAG can undertake a study to determine the travel patterns in the region and how they will have an impact on the future of MS 67.

Once the CAG understands the travel patterns and expectations of visitors, it will be possible to determine any needed modifications to the Corridor Management Plan.

Interpretation

This plan recommends that the most appropriate purpose of the highway is to celebrate

and interpret the natural features along the roadway. The following outlines a strategy for interpreting highway resources and for providing visitor information and orientation services. The objectives of the interpretive program are described and interpretive themes and their relative importance are identified. Interpretive media to present the themes will be determined in an interpretive review, which will be prepared as part of the action plan.

The interpretive significance of the highway is its natural resources and historical significance. The combination of themes creates a visually attractive and historically significant environment for visitors. While there are many intrinsic assets along the corridor, the intent is to focus on those that are most important. This allows visitors to have access to an appropriate amount of information and gain an understanding of the most important features during their visit.

The focus of the interpretive plan is for all visitors to understand the importance of the natural resources and understand the history and significance of the De Soto National Forest and the importance of the area's role in World War II.

Visitors to MS 67 need to understand why the roadway is significant, what interpreted sites are of interest to them, and what services and activities are available to them along the roadway. The highway needs to have orientation waysides at major points. Each orientation site will have the following information: an overview of the significance of MS 67; a map of the highway showing major sites, trails, facilities, and a "you are here" indicator; and places where visitors can obtain additional information. The CAG will work to develop the appropriate media format for conveying this information.

At the proposed visitors' center, visitors would be able to receive a wealth of information about the MS 67 corridor. The visitors' center will help visitors understand the events, sites, and natural resources that are important to the corridor.

This information will be presented through an interpretive story. The story will be oriented around major themes. This will allow visitors to understand enough to plan their interpretive stops. Some of the stops could include the De Soto National Forest, the POW Camp, and the Tuxachanie Trail.

Where pull-offs are provided, visitors will be assisted by site signs that clearly and consistently identify the purpose of the pull-off. The signs should be placed ahead of the turnoff to allow visitors enough time to decide whether to stop. The signs will include symbols to indicate whether there are restrooms, trails, picnic areas, or other facilities. Signage should be placed to enhance visitors' understanding of the corridor, but should not detract from the scenic character.

Action Plan

Responsible parties are identified for each strategy, such as the Board of Supervisors, the CAG, MDOT, and other appropriate entities. These parties are noted in the Implementation Timeline Table that follows each goal. Timeframes for implementation are broken down into three categories: short-term, mid-term, and long-term.

The CAG is responsible for overseeing the implementation process to ensure that the plan is implemented. It will be responsible for developing a work plan of activities to implement the plan. The Harrison County Beautification Commission will be the lead agency responsible for preparing the work plan, which will focus on promotion and marketing, interpretation enhancements, community participation, new guidelines, and maintenance strategies, among other things.

In addition to the logistics involving highway signs, corridor markers, byway pull-offs with parking, seating, interpretive signs, outdoor exhibits, and orientation kiosks, the CAG will be involved in: 1) strengthening the identity of the entire Byway; 2) improving the Byway travelers'

experiences; 3) providing early, tangible results; and 4) leveraging other Byway investments.

(Endnotes)

1 Yarrow, Kenneth. (2007). Personal correspondence, Transportation Planner, Gulf Regional Planning Commission. November 12.



Source: Joseph Kitchen

Figure 8-1. The Action and Interpretation Plan call for creating signage that would provide information to enable visitors to interpret the MS 67 Corridor's intrinsic assets. Above is an example of a sign that is currently in place to alert visitors of the location of this particular intrinsic asset located in the De Soto National Forest.

**Table 1. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 1.**

Ensure Continuity of the Roadway Between Jurisdictions Through Intergovernmental Cooperation	Responsible Parties	Short Term Year 1	Mid-Term Year 2-3	Long-Term Year 4-5
Objective A Strategy 1. Circulate and promote the Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67 to make residents, business owners, and property owners aware of its policies and recommendations.	Beautification Commission, CAG			
Objective A. Strategy 2. Provide copies of the plan to all surrounding local governments to ensure their knowledge of the plan and implementation measures.	CAG			
Objective A. Strategy 3. Educate developers about the designation of the scenic corridor and ordinances designed to protect the appearance of the corridor.	CAG			
Objective B. Strategy 1. Develop an intergovernmental agreement to ensure that MS 67 maintains its scenic character where annexation occurs.	CAG, City of D'Iberville, City of Biloxi			
Objective B. Strategy 2. Share planning commission agendas between jurisdictions where a case occurs along MS 67.	CAG			

**Table 1. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 1. (cont'd)**

Objective B. Strategy 3. Partner with the Zoning Office and the Tax Assessor's Office to maintain an inventory of planned developments.	Zoning Office, Tax Assessor's Office, CAG	
Objective B. Strategy 4. Share and adopt consistent regulatory language to protect visual and natural resources among adjacent communities.	Beautification Commission, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville	
Objective C. Strategy 1. Organize and hold annual meetings between planners from the different jurisdictions to discuss zoning, land use, and multi-modal transportation along the corridor.	Harrison County Zoning Office, City of D'Iberville, City of Biloxi	
Objective C. Strategy 2. Organize and hold annual meetings between jurisdictions and tourism agencies to promote the scenic byway and its attractions.	CAG, HCTC, Gulf Coast Business Council	

**Table 2. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 2.**

Protect the Scenic Character of the Highway	Responsible Parties	Short Term Year 1	Mid-Term Year 2-3	Long-Term Year 4-5
Objective A. Strategy 1. Adopt the recommendations of the Gulf Coast Business Council Scenic Corridor Report, including a scenic setback and maintenance of tree cover along MS 67.	BOS, City of D'Iberville, City of Biloxi			
Objective B. Strategy 1. Encourage property owners to work with land trusts and conservation societies, such as the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain, to participate in conservation easement and purchase of development rights programs.	CAG			
Objective B. Strategy 2. Adopt an enabling ordinance permitting the use of conservation subdivision design.	Harrison County Zoning Office			
Objective B. Strategy 3. Maintain and improve existing roadway conditions by discouraging abutting uses that are not in keeping with the scenic character of the roadway.				
Objective C. Strategy 1. Adopt a dark skies ordinance to reduce or eliminate glare for the motorists and to enhance the rural scenic nature of the corridor by keeping the night skies dark.	CAG, MDOT			

Table 3. Implementation Timeline for Goal 3.

Protect and Enhance High Quality Wildlife Habitat and Natural Resource Areas.	Responsible Parties	Short Term Year 1	Mid-Term Year 2-3	Long-Term Year 4-5
Objective A. Strategy 1. Coordinate with the National Forest Service to manage forestry adjacent to the highway.	CAG, USDA			
Objective A. Strategy 2. Coordinate with MDOT to harvest over-mature stands, replant with diverse species, and remove falling/fallen timber in the ROW	MDOT, CAG			
Objective B. Strategy 1. Utilize the habitat data available through the Mississippi Gap Analysis to identify wildlife corridors.	CAG, MDWFP			
Objective B. Strategy 2. Evaluate wildlife crossing points to determine their adequacy.	CAG, MDWFP			
Objective B. Strategy 3. Coordinate with MDOT, the Harrison County Soil and Conservation District, and the National Forest Service to identify strategies to enable movement of wildlife through the wildlife corridors to cross MS 67.	CAG, MDOT, Harrison County Soil and Conservation District, USDA			
Objective C. Strategy 1. Consult with neighboring jurisdictions and natural resource organizations on natural resource preservation efforts.	Beautification Commission, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville			

**Table 3. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 3. (cont'd)**

Objective C. Strategy 2. Participate in comprehensive plan updates in neighboring jurisdictions to ensure that natural resource protection along the corridor is addressed.	Harrison County Zoning Office, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville	
Objective C. Strategy 3. Coordinate with watershed protection organizations and land trusts to undertake projects to preserve the corridor.	CAG	
Objective C. Strategy 4. Coordinate with the De Soto National Forest as they remove invasive species, reestablish pine species, and conduct controlled burns of forest land.	CAG, USDA	
Objective D. Strategy 1. Host workshops on natural resource management to educate communities in scenic enhancement.	CAG	
Objective D. Strategy 2. Provide development guidelines that highlight visual aesthetics for the corridor.	Harrison County Zoning Office, City of D'Iberville, City of Biloxi	

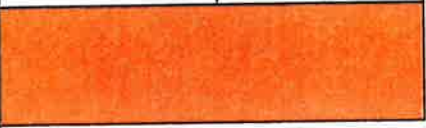
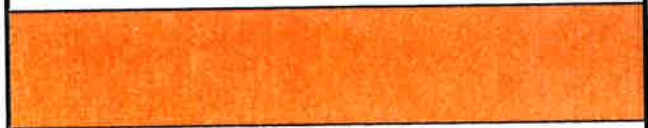
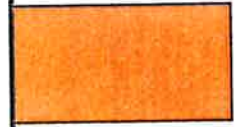
**Table 4. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 4.**

Effectively Manage Signage.	Responsible Parties	Short Term Year 1	Mid-Term Year 2-3	Long-Term Year 4-5
Objective A. Strategy 1. Coordinate with MDOT to enable logo signs for businesses to advertise along the corridor.	CAG, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville, BOS			
Objective A. Strategy 2. Locate sign markers at the beginning and end of the Scenic Byway to alert travelers that they are entering and leaving a Scenic Byway.	CAG			
Objective B. Strategy 1. Enforce the County Billboard ordinance and encourage adjacent communities to adopt a billboard ordinance.	CAG, Harrison County Zoning Office			
Objective B. Strategy 2. Adopt a sign ordinance that controls off-premises signage.	CAG, Harrison County Zoning Office			
Objective B. Strategy 3. Enact a sign ordinance that limits the placement of vehicles that serve as signs next to the MS 67 ROW.	Harrison County Zoning Office			
Objective C. Strategy 1. Enact local signage ordinance to limit the size, number, appearance, and placement of on-premises signs.	Harrison County Zoning Office			

**Table 4. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 4. (cont'd)**

Objective C. Strategy 2. Work with communities to design their own gateways along MS 67 that will create a consistent appearance.	CAG, Beautification Commission	

Table 5. Implementation Timeline for Goal 5.

Objective A. Strategy 1. Encourage private land owners to work with the Land Trust for the Mississippi Coastal Plain and other conservation and restoration groups that aim to acquire and preserve land along Scenic Byways in the Biloxi and Tchoutacabouffa watersheds.	CAG, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville, BOS	
Objective A. Strategy 2. Work with the De Soto National Forest in designated areas identified to expand trail access.	USDA, CAG	
Objective B. Strategy 1. Collaborate with the De Soto National Forest to expand marketing of recreational amenities to visitors	USDA, CAG	
Objective B. Strategy 2. Encourage the use of signage and wayfinding markers posted on MS 67 to identify the recreational sites and trailheads in the De Soto National Forest.	MDOT, CAG, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville, BOS	
Objective C. Strategy 1. Improve the access point at Old Woolmarket Road to allow visitors to easily access the Woolmarket Community Park.	MDOT	
Objective C. Strategy 2. Work with developers as growth occurs to provide general public access to their recreational amenities, such as parks and hiking/biking trails.	CAG	

**Table 5. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 5.(cont'd)**

Objective D. Strategy 1. Develop a map that can be used to identify locations for multi- modal facilities.	CAG	
Objective D. Strategy 2. Place projects for multi-modal facilities along MS 67 in the Gulf Coast Area Transportation Study as appropriate.	CAG, MDOT	

**Table 6. Implementation
Timeline for Goal 6.**

Preserve the Enjoyment of the Highway Driving Experience.	Responsible Parties	Short Term Year 1	Mid-Term Year 2-3	Long-Term Year 4-5
Objective A. Strategy 1. Apply for grant opportunities that would allow for additional maintenance of the corridor roadways.	CAG			
Objective A. Strategy 2. Encourage civic organizations and private businesses to participate in the "Adopt a Highway" program to keep the corridor clean.	CAG, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville, BOD			
Objective A. Strategy 3. Utilize County Trustees for regular clean-ups along the corridor.	CAG, BOD			
Objective B. Strategy 1. Coordinate with MDOT, the Gulf Regional Planning Commission, and adjacent jurisdictions to prioritize maintenance expenditures along the corridor.	MDOT, Gulf Regional Planning Commission, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville, BOD			
Objective B. Strategy 2. Conduct regular reviews of accident data and visual surveys of the corridor to identify any potential safety problems that should be addressed.	MDOT			
Objective B. Strategy 3. Review utilization of the multiuse paths and the highway to ensure commercial traffic is accommodated while ensuring the safety of sightseers, bicyclists, horse riders, and pedestrians.	CAG			

Table 6. Implementation**Timeline for Goal 6. (cont'd)**

Objective C. Strategy 1. Engage historians, naturalists, and tourism experts to provide travelers with an understanding of the natural and historical assets of the corridor.	CAG	
Objective C. Strategy 2. Document visitor use data, including access points for highway visitors, where visitors go, types of visitors, expectations of visitors, etc.	CAG,	
Objective C. Strategy 3. Prepare informational media that presents the interpretive themes to visitors.	CAG	
Objective D. Strategy 1. Identify locations for pull-offs and signage that inform travelers; are accessible to pedestrians bicyclists, and vehicles; and are designed for universal use.	CAG, Gulf Coast CVB, State Tourism Department	
Objective D. Strategy 2. Coordinate with the Mississippi Gulf Coast Convention and Visitors Bureau, MDOT, Mississippi Division of Tourism, and others to promote tourism in the corridor and to coastal businesses and historical destinations.	MDOT, CAG, GCCVB, State Tourism Department	

Table 6. Implementation**Timeline for Goal 6. (cont'd)**

Objective D. Strategy 3. Promote educational opportunities for students and the public to learn about environmental stewardship along the corridor.	Beautification Commission	
Objective D. Strategy 4. Identify a location for historical markers commemorating the history of De Soto National Forest and other relevant historical locations	USDA, CAG, MDOT	
Objective D. Strategy 5. Identify a location for sign announcing the location and date of annual festivals and other events of significance.	BOD, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville, CAG	
Objective E. Strategy 1. Work with property owners on the design of commercial businesses and shopping centers to ensure that the corridor is protected.	BOD, City of Biloxi, City of D'Iberville, Harrison County Zoning Office.	

9

Appendix A - Legislation on MS 67 as a Scenic Byway

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
2007 Regular Session

To: Highways and Transportation
By: Senator(s) Hewes, Gollott

Senate Bill 2826

(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO DESIGNATE A CERTAIN SEGMENT OF MISSISSIPPI HIGHWAY 67 AS AN OFFICIAL MISSISSIPPI SCENIC BYWAY TO BE KNOWN AS THE "HIGHWAY 67 SCENIC BYWAY"; TO DESIGNATE A CERTAIN SEGMENT OF MISSISSIPPI HIGHWAY 605 AS AN OFFICIAL MISSISSIPPI SCENIC BYWAY TO BE KNOWN AS THE "HIGHWAY 605 SCENIC BYWAY"; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. The following highways, roads or streets located in the State of Mississippi are hereby designated as an official Mississippi Scenic Byway to be known as the "Highway 67 Scenic Byway" pursuant to Section 65-41-1 et seq. as it reaches completion: Beginning at intersection of Highway 67 and Interstate I-10 and travel northerly along Highway 67 to the intersection of Highway 67 and U.S. Highway 49.

SECTION 2. The following highways, roads or streets located in the State of Mississippi are hereby designated as an official Mississippi Scenic Byway to be known as the "Highway 605 Scenic Byway" pursuant to Section 65-41-1 et seq. as it reaches completion: Beginning at the intersection of Highway 605 and U.S. Highway 90 and travel northerly along Highway 605 to the intersection of Highway 605 and Highway 67.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.

10 Appendix B Outdoor Advertising Ordinance

Supervisor Connie Rockco moved the adoption of the following Ordinance:

AN ORDINANCE OF THE HARRISON COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGULATING THE LOCATION OF OFF-PREMISES OUTDOOR ADVERTISING SIGNS ALONG HIGHWAYS AND ROADWAYS OUTSIDE MUNICIPALITIES, AND WITHIN HARRISON COUNTY, AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

WHEREAS, due to the growth in Harrison County- during recent years, there has been an increased demand for location of off-premise outdoor advertising signs, including billboards, along the highways and roadways of Harrison County, lying outside of municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the Harrison County Board of Supervisors ("the Board") has determined that the proliferation of an unlimited number of signs in private, residential, commercial, industrial and public areas of the unincorporated Harrison County would create ugliness, visual blight and clutter, tarnish the natural beauty of the landscape as well as the residential and commercial architecture, impair property values, substantially impinge upon the privacy and special ambience of the community, and may cause safety and traffic hazards to motorists, pedestrians, and children; and

WHEREAS, the best interest of the Citizens of Harrison County would be served if the placement and construction of such off-premise outdoor advertising signs, including billboards, ("the signs") were regulated and, among other things, shall be permitted by right exclusively in the C-2 General Commercial, I-1 Light Industry or 1-2 General Industry Zoning Districts and limited to a maximum size of 300 square feet and a maximum height of 30 feet and shall have a minimum setback from any property line of 75 feet and no billboard shall be erected or constructed within a 1500-foot radius of an existing billboard. No billboard shall be erected within 500 feet of an adjoining agricultural or residential district. No billboard shall be allowed on a lot with less than 100 feet of street frontage. Only one billboard shall be allowed on any lot of record. For properties zoned C-2 General Commercial, I-I Light Industry or 1-2 General Industry which adjoin Interstate 10 and or Highway 49, billboards shall be limited. to a maximum size of 600 square feet and a maximum height of 50 feet and shall have a minimum setback from any property line of 50 feet; and

WHEREAS, the appropriate agency to regulate placement of such signs, including the development and issuance of appropriate permits, would be the Harrison County Code

Administration office ("the Code Administration") with the assistance of the Harrison County Zoning office; and

WHEREAS, the Board further finds that it would be appropriate to provide for a procedure to appeal the granting or denial of the application for the placement and construction of a sign. Such appeal would be to the Board, which would determine whether or not the Code Administration's action in granting or denying the application was reasonable; determine whether or not a variance should be granted in the spacing requirements; or any other relief with regard to this Ordinance and the construction and placement of such signs; and

WHEREAS, provisions should also be made for the regulation of signs, which are in place at the time of the adoption of this ordinance.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF HARRISON COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION I. Any person or corporation desiring to locate an off-premise outdoor advertising sign including billboards, ("the sign") on any highway and/or roadway in Harrison County, located outside the corporate limits of any municipality, shall make application at the Harrison County Code Administration Office ("the Code Administration") on application forms provided by this office.

SECTION II. The Code Administration shall prepare application forms, which shall comply with the provisions of this Ordinance, and such other information as the Code Administration deems appropriate, to secure relevant information from the applicant.

SECTION III. The applicant shall submit a set of plans including a plot plan showing the location of the proposed sign and demonstrating compliance with the provisions of this Ordinance for the proposed sign, stamped and signed by an engineer registered in the State of Mississippi.

SECTION IV. The registered engineer, upon signing off on the proposed sign, shall certify that the sign meets the 100-mph wind load, as required by the adopted model code.

SECTION V. The applicant shall provide the Code Administration with a copy of the deed, lease or tax receipt, sufficient to show the description of the property upon which the proposed sign is to be located or upon which maintenance is to be performed.

SECTION VI. Applicant shall provide such information as the Code Administration may require, to show the total contract price for installation of the sign.

SECTION VII. No permit for such signs, shall be issued unless the application demonstrates that the proposed sign will be located in either the C-2 General Commercial, I-1 Light Industry or I-2 General Industry Zoning Districts and limited to a maximum size of 300 square feet and a maximum height of 30 feet and shall have a minimum setback from any property line of 75 feet and no billboard shall be erected or constructed within a 1500-foot radius of an existing billboard. No billboard shall be erected within 500 feet of an adjoining agricultural or residential district. No billboard shall be allowed on a lot with less than 100 feet of street frontage. Only one billboard shall be allowed on any lot of record. For properties zoned C-2 General Commercial, I-1 Light Industry or I-2 General Industry which adjoin Interstate 10 and or Highway 49, billboards shall be limited to a maximum size of 600 square feet and a maximum height of 50 feet and shall have a minimum setback from any property line of 50 feet.

SECTION VIII. Prior to final approval of the application, the Code Administration shall

determine from the Mississippi Department of Transportation, ("MDOT") whether or not it has any objection to the issuance of the permit. An objection by the MDOT, based upon the fact that the issuance of the permit would be in violation of Department rules and regulations, shall be sufficient of deny issuance of the permit.

SECTION IX. Variance

Applicants for variances to this Ordinance shall be processed in the following manner: An application for a variance from the terms of this Ordinance, signed by the applicant, shall be addressed to the Board of Supervisors. A fee, as determined by the Board of Supervisors and posted for public knowledge, shall be paid to Harrison County for each application to cover the costs of advertising and administrative costs. The application shall contain or be accompanied by such legal descriptions, maps, plans and other information as necessary to completely describe the proposed use, existing conditions and requested variance. The Board shall review the application and determine that sufficient data is contained to adequately describe the situation. If the data is not adequate, the Board shall return the application for additional information. Procedure and Criteria - The Board of Supervisors shall approve or deny variances in the following manner:

The Board shall schedule a public hearing to be held within sixty (60) days of the application filing date. Public notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation not less than fifteen (15) days before the hearing. Notice of the public hearing stating the time, place, request and property description, shall be mailed to all property owners within a 160 foot radius of the subject property, but not less than 15 of the closest property owners to the property in question shall receive notice as prescribed. The Board shall approve or deny the application for a variance after the public hearing. Before any variance is granted, the Board of Supervisors must find that all the following are met: Special circumstances exist which are peculiar to the applicant's land, structure or building and do not generally apply to the neighboring lands, structures or buildings in the same district or vicinity; Strict application of the provisions of this Ordinance would deprive the applicant of reasonable uses of the land, structure or building in a manner equivalent to the use permitted to be made by other owners of their neighboring lands, structures, or buildings in the same district; The special circumstances are not the result of action of the applicant taken subsequent to the adoption of this Ordinance; Relief, if approved, will not cause substantial detriment to the public welfare or impair the purposes and intent of this Ordinance. The following rules will be considered by the Board when approving or denying a variance: Financial disadvantages to the property owner shall not constitute conclusive proof of unnecessary hardship within the purpose of zoning; The Board of Supervisors do not possess the power to grant a variance permitting a zoned use of land or building that is not permitted as a principal use or structure, accessory use or structure in the district involved; In granting a variance, Board may attach thereto any conditions and safeguards it deems necessary or desirable in furthering the purposes of this Ordinance; Unless otherwise specified at the time the variance is granted, the variance applies to the subject property and not to the individual who applied, Consequently, the variance is transferable to subsequent owners, heirs or assigns of the subject property, but cannot be transferred to a different site. A variance shall continue for an indefinite period of time unless otherwise specified at the time the variance is granted, except that when a variance has not been used within one year after the date it was granted, the variance shall be canceled

by the Zoning Officer and written notices shall be given to the property owner.

SECTION X. In the event the Code Administration shall determine a sign is in such a state of disrepair that it could pose a threat to the health, safety and welfare of the Citizens of Harrison County, in that event, the Code Administration shall give the land owner and the sign owner, if different, notice by certified mail, that in the event the sign is not brought into compliance with this ordinance, including the one-hundred (100) mph wind load, as required by the adopted model codes, within sixty (60) days from date of the receipt of the notice, the Code Administration shall remove the sign and cost of removal shall be assessed to the land owner and the sign owner, if different. Once the sign has been removed, under the terms and condition of this Section X the site shall then become subject to all provisions of this Ordinance.

SECTION XI. All signs currently in place shall be "grand fathered in" under the terms of this Ordinance. It is the intention of the Board, and the purpose of this Ordinance, to permit the continued use and maintenance of signs on the sites where they are now in place, subject to future compliance with the terms and conditions of this Ordinance. The land owner and/or sign owner shall have the right to reconstruct, replace, or redesign the signs now in place, provided such is done in full compliance with the design and construction requirements of this Ordinance.

SECTION XII. Any sign, which is removed for any reason, or which is destroyed by any event, or which is damaged to the extent to become subject to Section X of this Ordinance, if such sign is not replaced within one hundred eighty (180) days from the occurrence of such event, the site shall cease to be subject to the provisions of Section XI of this Ordinance and thereafter the site must be in full compliance with all provisions of this Ordinance.

SECTION XIII. Holders of permits for signs issued legally prior to the effective date of this Ordinance may erect the permitted signs within the times allowed by such permits. Such permits may not be extended or amended unless the permitted sign will conform to all of the requirements of this Ordinance.

SECTION XIV. This Ordinance shall be in full force and effect from and after its final adoption.

Supervisor Marlin R. Ladner seconded the motion to adopt the above forgoing Ordinance whereupon the President put the question to a vote with the following results:

Supervisor BOBBY ELEUTERIUS

ABSENT & EXCUSED

Supervisor MARLIN LADNER

AYE

Supervisor LARRY BENEFIELD

AYE

Supervisor CONNIE ROCKCO

AYE

Supervisor WILLIAM MARTIN

AYE

The majority of the members present having voted in the affirmative, the President then declared the Motion carried and the Order adopted on this the 1st day of October, 2001.



SOUTHERN HARDWOOD



SOUTHERN PINE

MISSISSIPPI FORESTRY COMMISSION

January 9, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

As an urban forester and resident of south Mississippi, I enthusiastically support the Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67.

I have read the plan and strongly believe designating MS 67, as a scenic byway, is a positive move for the communities/cities adjacent to the highway and for the Mississippi coast in general. Controlling signage, billboards, lighting, and development surrounding MS 67 will keep the area looking classy, clean, and beautiful, while creating/maintaining tree canopy cover in an area that is increasingly being negatively affected by urban sprawl.

I ask that you give every possible consideration to the Harrison County Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan for State Highway 67.

Sincerely,

Britt Hubbard
Katrina Urban Forest Coordinator

Mississippi Forestry Commission
477 South Gate Road
Hattiesburg MS 39401
601.583.4240
bhubbard@mfc.state.ms.us

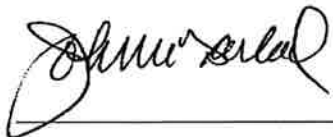


December 20, 2007

After months of research and development of a draft plan, and after hearing public comment to this draft, the Highway 67 Scenic Byway Corridor Advisory Group, representing the Harrison County Beautification Commission, strongly endorses the following Corridor Management Plan for Highway 67 in Harrison County, Mississippi.

We believe the plan allows the new highway to become a scenic gateway to the Mississippi Coast while protecting the history, heritage, environment and the rights of property owners along the route. The plan also promotes continued cooperation between the County and the cities along the route.

For the Corridor Advisory Group:



Members:

Felecia Dunn-Burkes

John McFarland, Chair

Bob Fairbank

Angel Middleton

Kimberly Fritz

Jay O'Neal



HARRISON COUNTY BEAUTIFICATION COMMISSION

PART OF THE KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL SYSTEM

Tyree Harrington

Joanna Hudson

Brynn Joachim

Dottie Long

Dr. James Randolph

Theresa Rea

Cindy Simmons, HCBC

Jody Spires

VISIONS

SERVICE ADVENTURES

P.O. Box 220, Newport, PA 17074 Phone: 1-717-567-7313
E-Mail: info@VisionsServiceAdventures.com

Cindy Simmons, Beautification Director
Harrison County Board of Supervisors
1801 23rd Ave
Gulfport, MS 39571

December 3, 2007

Dear Ms. Simmons:

On behalf of VISIONS Service Adventures, its Directors and summer field personnel, I wish to lend support to the Scenic ByWay on Hwy 67 initiative of the Harrison County Beautification program.

VISIONS is an international summer program for teenagers that is dedicated to fostering global understanding and awareness through cross-cultural community service and immersion. Participants and their leaders live and work in the heart of a host community for one month and undertake ambitious projects that benefit the host community at large.

VISIONS operates program sites in Athabaskan villages in Alaska, on Montana Plains Indian Reservations, in rural communities in Central and South America, in Asia, and for the past two seasons in North Gulfport, Mississippi, where we partner with Turkey Creek Community Initiatives, the North Gulfport Land Foundation and Audubon Mississippi to assist projects that improve the community, including preservation efforts at Turkey Creek, surely a unique jewel of an eco-system.

We believe that the preservation of green and natural spaces is one of our most important obligations to this and future generations.

Sincerely,



Joanne Pinaire, Director
VISIONS Service Adventures