

Scenic Watch

Citizens for a Scenic Florida



News September 2014

FDOT Study: Investigation of Economic Impacts of Florida's Highway Beautification Program



Photo: FDOT - Bridge of Lions Landscape Project

Each \$1 invested in highway landscaping projects returns \$3

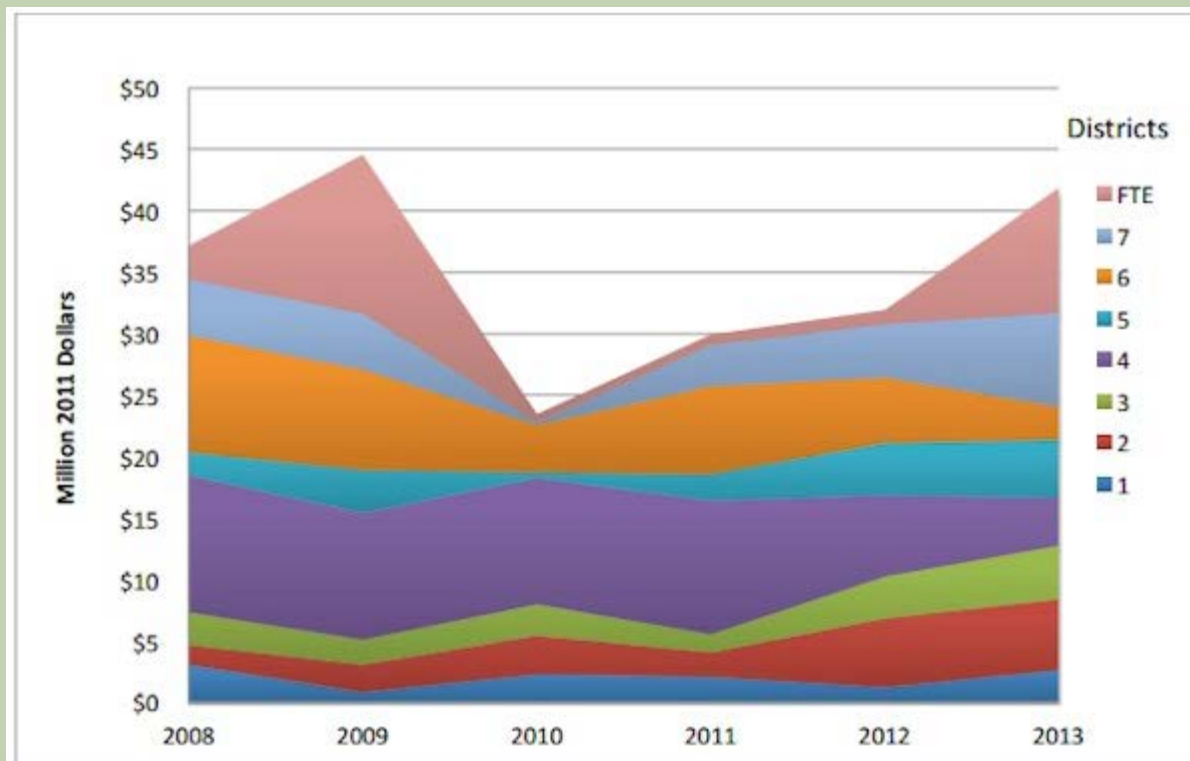
"Landscaping of highway right-of-ways with appropriate trees, shrubs, flowers and groundcover plants is known as highway beautification. In Florida, the state legislature allocates funds for highway landscaping projects each year.

While highway beautification may enhance the driving experience of motorists, it is also presumed to provide monetary benefits by attracting private investment and contributing to the economy, both directly and indirectly. Professionally landscaped and maintained highways also result in greener and more environmentally sustainable road infrastructure.

This study was commissioned by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to estimate the regional economic impacts of highway beautification expenditures within the State. Activities related to highway beautification generate economic impacts in the form of increased industry output (revenues), employment, income, and local and state government tax revenues.

The spending for highway beautification stimulates additional indirect and induced economic activity through economic multiplier effects. For example, indirect effects occur as landscaping contractors purchase materials and equipment from other businesses in the State, while induced effects occur when households of proprietors and employees of affected businesses purchase goods and services within the State for personal consumption. The combined direct, indirect, and induced impacts of an activity represent its total economic impacts (Miller and Blair, 2009). These impacts occur over the development period of highway landscaping projects, typically 18 to 24 months.

This is the final project report, which **also compares other studies of economic impacts of highway beautification in the United States**, and other studies of economic impacts of infrastructure investment in Florida, with the specific findings on economic contributions of highway beautification expenditures in Florida during the past decade that were provided in interim project reports..."



Florida Department of Transportation highway beautification program expenditures by district, FY 2008-13

FDOT Districts in Florida



Graphic: FDOT

For more information on YOUR district please click on the district graphic above or visit

<http://www.dot.state.fl.us/publicinformationoffice/moreDOT/districts/district.shtm>

Events Around Our State



Fun Festivals and Events

Central Florida

Sept 27 - Oct 26

Busch Gardens' Howl-O-Scream, Tampa Bay

Sept 20 - Nov 2 (select nights)

Universal's Halloween Horror Nights 23, Orlando

Sept 27-28

Ranch Rodeo Finals and Cowboy Heritage Festival, Kissimmee

Sept 27-29

Super Boat National Championship, Clearwater Beach

Study Results:

"...The results showed that total expenditures for highway beautification by the FDOT in all eight districts from 2008 to 2013, generated 2,112 full-time and part-time job-years, \$245.2 million in output or revenue impacts, \$147.6 million in value added contribution to GDP, \$110 million in labor income impacts, \$32.6 million in other property income impacts, and \$5 million in indirect business taxes impacts.

Simple annual average economic impacts of highway beautification expenditures in Florida from 2008 to 2013 amounted to \$46 million in output impacts and \$28 million in value-added impacts.

The impact per dollar of investment was \$1.53 in output, \$0.92 in value added, \$0.62 in labor income, and \$0.03 in state and local taxes, while the employment impact was 13.2 jobs per million dollars of investment."

-- From the Abstract of: Investigation of Economic Impacts of Florida's Highway Beautification Program FDOT Contract Number: BDV31-977-03

Please see the report at the link below for details on methodology, detailed data and conclusions.

There is a large section that contains a review of economic studies on highway beautification in the United States and a summary of each!

[Read Entire FDOT Study Here>](#)

Miami Update:



Oct 5

First Saturday Jam,
Barberville

Oct 4-6

Music Fest, Winter
Garden

Oct 12-13

40th Annual Winter Park
Autumn Art Festival,
Winter Park

Oct 5-6

Melbourne Main Street
Fall Festival, Melbourne

Oct 11-13

39th Annual Bicycle
Festival, Mount Dora

Oct 5-6

Vintage Venture at
Lakeridge Winery,
Clermont

Oct 9-12

Ringling International
Arts Festival, Sarasota

Oct 17-20

Clearwater Jazz Holiday,
Clearwater

Oct 17-20

Biketoberfest, Daytona
Beach

Oct 17-21

Orlando Film Festival,
Orlando

Oct 18-19

Anna Maria Island
Chamber Bayfest, Anna
Maria **Oct 12-13, 19-20,
26-27**

Pumpkin Festival,
Bradenton

[Read more >](#)

South Florida

Oct 3-13

19th Annual Oktoberfest,
Coral Gables

Oct 2

First Saturday Art Walk,
Miami Beach

Oct 5-6

Downtown Delray Beach
Craft Festival, Delray
Beach

Oct 1 - Nov 1

Festival Miami 2013,
Miami

UEL Awards Orchid to Miami Mayor for "Willingness to change his mind regarding the Beckham stadium"

Miami's Urban Environmental League (UEL) is an advocacy organization that supports environmentally responsible development and smart growth. They work to protect the public waterfront, public spaces, and historic and natural areas in Miami-Dade county.

UEL will host it's annual "Orchids and Onions" party on September 30. They will recognize Honorable City of Miami Mayor Tomas P. Regalado with one of their coveted "Orchid Awards" for changing his initial position on supporting a move by developers lead by soccer star David Beckham to turn one of the key scenic waterfront parks into a soccer stadium.

Scenic Miami-Dade and many other organizations in the city rallied around the cause and have saved the park! Congratulations to everyone who worked so hard on saving the park in conjunction with their Mayor and other elected officials.

[Visit UEL site here>](#)

Legal:

James C. Rinaman Jr., a former general counsel of the city of Jacksonville wrote a guest column in the Florida Times-Union

"Billboard bill shows contempt for the will of the people"

"... When I was president of JCCI in 1985, we did a study of visual pollution in Jacksonville, which recommended that our billboards be subject to stricter regulation as to size, number and location. In 1987, after the City Council failed to take effective action on the issue, JCCI supporters created Capsigns Inc. and gathered 18,000 voter signatures to hold a referendum on a charter amendment banning new billboards in Jacksonville and removing all billboards from local roads by June 1992. This allowed five years of amortization. The referendum garnered 59 percent of the vote.

In 1991 and 1992, the billboard industry filed suits to abolish the charter amendment. The city decided to negotiate agreements with 12 billboard companies to avoid the cost of litigation, which extended removal for some billboards until later years.

Scenic Jacksonville (formerly Capsigns) became a party to that litigation. It

Oct 11-13

Pirate Festival, Fort Myers Beach

Oct 11-13

Summerset Regatta, Fort Myers Beach

Oct 13

Miami Carnival Parade and Festival, Miami

Oct 19-20

48th Annual Cedar Key Seafood Festival, Cedar Key

Oct 19

Wine on Harvest Moon, Miami

Oct 17

Downtown Gallery Walk, Punta Gorda

Oct 18-27

Fantasy Fest, Key West

Oct 18-20, 25-27

Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

Oct 18 - Nov 11

Fort Lauderdale International Film Festival, Fort Lauderdale

Oct 26-27

Edible Garden Festival, Coral Gables

Oct 19-20

Las Olas Art Fair with Oktoberfest Beer Garden, Fort Lauderdale

Oct 25

Jazz at MOCA, Miami

Oct 29- Nov 1

Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show, Fort Lauderdale

[Read more >](#)

North Florida

Oct 6-13

Amelia Island Jazz Festival, Fernandina Beach

Oct 10-12

Sixth Annual Fall Palatka Bluegrass Festival, Palatka

Oct 4

First Friday Art Walk, St. Augustine

Oct 11-13

Annual Greek Festival, St. Augustine

Oct 12

joined with the city's Office of General Counsel to negotiate the agreements and was a party to the agreements with the right to independently enforce them.

Since the mid-1990s, after the agreements were completed, most billboard companies violated their agreements.

In the mid-1990s, the billboard industry failed in several consecutive sessions to persuade the Legislature to preempt local regulation of billboards.

From 1992 to Dec. 2, 2010, the Office of General Counsel worked with Capsigns and then Scenic Jacksonville to enforce the charter amendment and the 12 agreements. The general counsel advised the billboard companies and city sign regulators that many new billboards were illegal and that the digital billboards that CBS and Clear Channel wanted to build were not allowed under the charter or the agreements.

GENERAL COUNSEL'S ROLE

Under General Counsel Rick Mullaney, attorney Tracey Arpen was in charge of billboard regulation until he retired in December 2008 and was replaced by Shannon Eller. She wrote comprehensive legal opinions in August 2009 to CBS and Clear Channel, ruling that digital billboards were not allowed under the charter or the agreements.

In 2010, Cindy Laquidara replaced Rick Mullaney as general counsel, although she had been there as chief deputy general counsel for several years.

On Dec. 2, 2010, Assistant General Counsel Steve Rohan sent an email to city regulators reversing the position of the Office of General Counsel. Since 1992, the general counsel's position was that it represented the city by enforcing the charter and the agreements. Rohan's position was that the Office of General Counsel would defend any officials who issued permits for digital billboards, a complete "flip flop" (a term adopted by federal judge Tim Corrigan in federal litigation).

In recent years, Scenic Jacksonville had to file suit against CBS Outdoor Inc. and Clear Channel Outdoor Inc. to force them to remove their illegal billboards and pay fines of \$500/day, totaling millions of dollars, to the city's general fund.

Since 2011, the Office of General Counsel has sided with the billboard companies, ignoring the city's right to collect millions of dollars in fines and filing motions to prevent Arpen, who negotiated the agreements on behalf of the city, from testifying about his communications with the billboard companies during negotiation of the agreements.

The Office of General Counsel should be enforcing the charter and the agreements and seeking millions of dollars in fines for billboard violations, not purporting to defend city employees for issuing illegal permits contrary to the office's legal advice since 1992 and attempting to prevent the best and most knowledgeable witness, Arpen, from testifying.

In 2012, for reasons best known to him, Councilman Richard Clark filed the ordinance now before City Council. It was written and amended by billboard lawyers.

It would rewrite the 1987 Charter Amendment and destroy the intent and effect of the charter and the agreements.

Artrageous Artwalk,
Amelia Island

Oct 17-20

Blast on the Bay
Songwriter Festival, Port
St. Joe

Oct 17-27

Pensacola Interstate
Fair, Pensacola

Oct 18-20

Boggy Bayou Mullet
Festival, Niceville

[Read more >](#)



Note from the Editor

Suggestions for improvement are
always welcome.

That would put the billboard industry back in control, contrary to the 1987 vote of the people and the consent agreements.

Those companies have complained that anti-billboard proponents want to "put them out of business." That was the intent of the voters in 1987 in regard to any new billboards and removal of all billboards on local roads by 1992.

The 12 agreements simply allowed some billboards on local roads to remain until dates after 1992 (a few as long as 2019).

No less than 250 cities in Florida, including Gainesville and West Palm Beach, have long ago said no to new billboards.

A QUESTION OF BENEFITS

Our citizens do not benefit from billboards. The only support for the proposed rewrite of the charter comes from billboard companies and their suppliers and a very few of nonprofits who get free billboard space. Most of our nonprofits, who had free billboards in the past, do not support the proposed charter revision.

Television advertising is bothersome, but it does allow us to have free television programming.

What benefit are billboards to the community?

Billboard supporters argue they can put safety information on the billboards, but television, internet and cell phones are much more effective for that purpose and do not distract drivers.

Drive out San Jose Boulevard, J. Turner Butler Boulevard or AIA in Ponte Vedra to see how beautiful and relaxing a drive it is without trashy billboards contaminating the landscape.

EFFECTS OF PROPOSED BILL

The Clark ordinance would:

1. Negate the 1987 voter approved charter amendment, which now binds the companies in litigation who have written and vigorously lobbied the proposed charter revision.
2. Negate the agreements that allow a declining number of billboards through gradual attrition and allow for a certain number of new billboards in perpetuity.

But for the agreements, the 1987 charter amendment would have banned new billboards after 1987 and removed all of them from local roads by 1992.

Those agreements are not "expiring," only maturing.

Without the Clark ordinance, there would continue to be fewer billboards in Jacksonville each year and no new digital billboards.

3. Allow new billboards, especially new digital billboards, which are not now allowed.
4. Remove the right of taxpayers to enforce the rules if the city does not enforce them.
5. Remove all fines and other penalties for violation of billboard regulations.

6. Remove any consideration of traffic safety in permitting billboard sites.

7. Undermine the pending litigation by Scenic Jacksonville to enforce the charter and the agreements

There is no need to amend the voter approved charter and implementing rules as to billboards.

If any changes are needed, they can be done by renegotiating the consent agreements."

-- Guest Column by James C. Rinaman Jr., Florida Times-Union

[Read entire article here >](#)