

TOOLS TO RE-IMAGINE AND RE-DISCOVER AMERICA'S BUSINESS HIGHWAY
- A TALE FROM FLORIDA'S EAST COAST

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The US 1 Action Plan used Performance-based Planning practices and developed Interactive Screening Tools to refocus transportation investments to support revitalization of the communities along US1. US 1 in Volusia County, Florida has been the subject of more than 140 studies and plans in the past 15 years, ranging from contrasting proposals to widen the roadway to plans to develop it as a Complete Street and enhance bicycle, pedestrian and transit travel. Recognizing the desire to transform the corridor, the River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization (R2CTPO) partnered with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and local governments along the corridor to develop an Action Plan for US 1 to guide this transformation.

History and Transformation of US 1: Early on, US 1 functioned as the main street in the various hamlets and towns that formed at crossroads or rail depots. As the automobile became more prevalent, its effects were felt on Florida's tourism landscape and these small communities. Interstate 95 (I-95) was built to parallel US 1, drawing development and travel away from the corridor. Local governments began leading US1's transformation by designating Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs) along most of the US 1 corridor.

US 1 Action Plan: The US 1 Action Plan used Performance-Based Planning practices to develop a set of corridor themes, goals and objectives which were used to narrow a long list of 425 potential projects (developed over 15 years prior to the Action Plan) to focus on those that best met the collective goals of the US 1 communities. The study team developed an interactive screening tool to map each of the projects and describe their status (i.e. planning, design, funded) and key details so that communities could track their projects and identify potential partnering opportunities to advance and fund various projects. The communities along US 1 varied in context, size and desire. Some were primarily rural communities that wanted to remain rural while others were suburban and urban communities that wanted to be even more urban. While these communities had a shared desired for a more multi-modal US 1, they wanted the roadway to reflect and support their community contexts. Based on both the land use and transportation context of these areas, the study team worked with the communities to define their distinct character along US 1. For each of these Character Districts, various options for US 1 were developed, to facilitate safe and effective travel for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit passengers and how to support economic revitalization through wider sidewalks and on-street parking.

Resulting Actions and Grassroots Movement: An Action Plan was developed to advance projects and to foster continued coordination and outreach with community and corridor stakeholders. Some of the key actions that advanced included increased transit service (which resulted in a 41% increase in transit ridership), key intersection safety improvements, filling of sidewalk gaps, and landscaping and streetscaping along US1. The corridor communities and CRAs also partnered to lead a grass roots effort to help residents and visitors to Rediscover US 1, Americas Business Highway. This Rediscover US 1 initiative has fostered a renewed interest in the history and significance of US 1 through a series of community events (<https://www.facebook.com/Businesshighway1/>). The first was a US 1 Scavenger Hunt – where participants discovered and rediscovered many of the environmental gems, unique waypoints, small businesses and visitor opportunities along US 1.