

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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**TO:** Jason Brown; County Administrator

**THROUGH:** Stan Boling, AICP; Community Development Director

**THROUGH:** Phil Matson, AICP; MPO Staff Director  
Rich Szyrka, P.E.; Public Works Director

**FROM:** Andy Sobczak, Senior Transportation Planner

**DATE:** January 25, 2017

**SUBJECT:** Request for Board Authorization for Design of South US Highway 1 Median Landscape Improvements and County Welcome Sign

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It is requested that the information herein presented be given formal consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting of February 7, 2017.

**DESCRIPTION & CONDITIONS**

At the January 19, 2016 Board of County Commissioners Meeting, Chairman Bob Solari introduced an item under Commissioners Matters regarding the addition of a County welcome sign within the south US 1 corridor. During that discussion, Chairman Solari stated that the main concerns among residents along the south US 1 corridor were a county welcome sign and the addition of landscape improvements. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Board directed staff to look into welcome sign options (see attachment 1). Since that time, staff has explored options for the design and implementation of median landscaping improvements and installation of a welcome sign.

Recently, citizens and representatives from several Homeowners Associations (HOAs) associated with subdivisions located along south US 1 provided staff letters of support for improvements to the south US 1 corridor. Specifically, homeowners requested provision of a county welcome sign and landscaping along the recently widened section of south US 1.

Located between Oslo Road and the south county line, the ±2 mile stretch of south US 1 was recently widened by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). During the design phase of that widening project, FDOT revised its guidelines for landscaping. As such, while previous FDOT roadway projects included project-wide landscaping improvements (proportionate to a percentage of the overall project cost) the guideline revisions removed that requirement. In addition, the clustering of landscaping near project focal points, such as at interchanges and

entrances to cities and counties, became the preferred design template in place of a project-wide distribution of landscaping improvements. In the case of the south US 1 project, landscape improvements were clustered near the southern limit of the project where US 1 crosses into St. Lucie County but were not provided along the median, all in keeping with FDOT's revised guidelines.

To provide south US1 median landscaping improvements and a welcome sign at the South County line, staff now proposes that the County secure professional design services and seek grant funding.

## **ANALYSIS**

To obtain funding for median landscaping improvements, staff proposes to obtain professional design services, then submit an application in September 2017 for state grant funding. The grant, known as the Florida Highway Beautification Grant, is a state-wide competitive grant. In order to improve the chances of obtaining the grant, a 100% grant match (totaling \$100,000) will be needed from the County's Tree Ordinance Fund. That fund consists of monies collected from private developers as mitigation for removing trees on development sites. In accordance with County Code Section 927.11(1)(d)(3)(c) money from the fund can be used for 'relocating trees or for planting trees on public-controlled lands', such as the roadway medians of south US 1.

Each year, the maximum Beautification Grant award to any one recipient is approximately \$100,000. Paring a successful grant application with the county's match, a total of \$200,000 may be available for the addition of median landscaping. Since the Beautification Grant is a highly competitive state-wide grant, with a maximum of ten recipients per year, it is possible that grant funding will not be obtained. If so, the project will be limited to the \$100,000 county contribution for landscaping. In either case, it is anticipated that the median landscaping project will be completed by mid-2018.

In addition to a grant match, the Highway Beautification Grant application requires a landscape plan completed by a registered landscape architect. As such, county staff requested a proposal from its general planning consultant, Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc., for completion of a landscape plan and design of a county welcome sign for placement within the project limits (as part of a separate construction project). It is anticipated that the welcome sign design may be used for signs at other entry way locations.

The attached proposal from Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. includes the consultant's completion of a landscape plan meeting all technical specifications for landscape located within roadway medians, permitting of landscape installation through all applicable agencies, such as the Florida Department of Transportation, and the design of a county welcome sign to be constructed within the project limits as part of a separate county welcome sign project. Once designed, construction of the welcome sign could proceed ahead of the median landscaping improvements.

## **FUNDING**

- Design services funding is budgeted in Secondary Roads/Other Contractual Services/Annual Survey Services Account No. 10921441-033490-05007 in the amount of \$65,025.00.
- Landscape improvements funding is budgeted in the County's Tree Ordinance Fund Account No. 11721072-033190 in the amount of \$100,000.00 for the state grant application match; and, if successful, will be paired with \$100,000.00 in funding from the Florida Highway Beautification Grant.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners:

1. Approve the attached Work Order No. 9 to Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. authorizing professional design services for south US 1 median landscape improvements and welcome sign.
2. Authorize the Chairman to execute the attached Work Order No. 9 on the Board's behalf for a lump sum amount of \$65,025.00.
3. Authorize expenditure of \$100,000.00 from the County's Tree Ordinance Fund for installation of landscaping improvement within the south US 1 median and to use such funds as the local match for a state highway beautification grant.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. BCC minutes on previous entry sign discussion
2. South US 1 Aerial Map
3. Work Order No. 9