

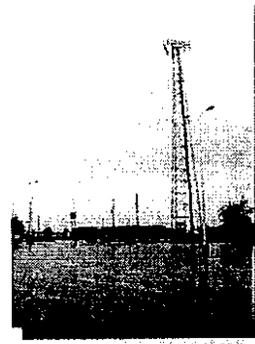
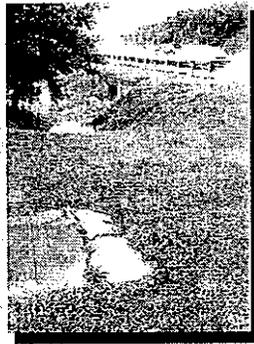
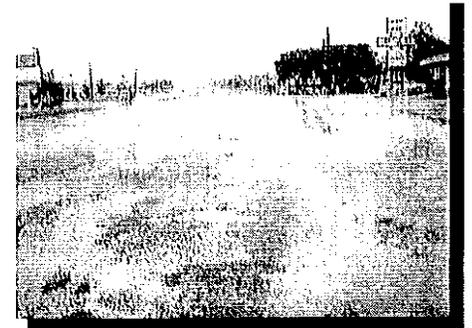
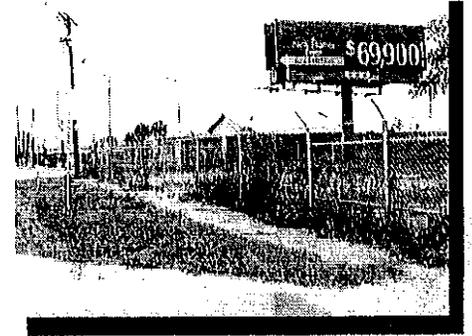
Final Report Abstract

Finding of Necessity for a Community Redevelopment Area

US 17-92 Corridor Seminole County, Florida

May 1997

Seminole County Board of County Commissioners
Ivey, Harris & Walls, Inc.
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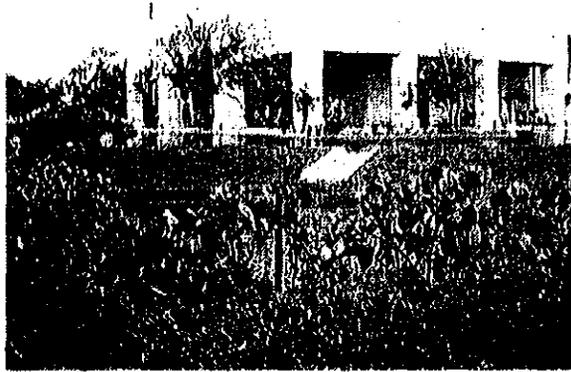
Finding of Necessity for a Community Redevelopment Area

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While new development and, to a lesser extent, redevelopment is occurring along portions of US 17-92, this activity is relatively small scale in terms of the size and frequency of the endeavors.



There are examples, albeit limited, of contemporary design standards and practices at work, to include access controls, orderly internal site circulation and well maintained buildings, signage and site landscaping.



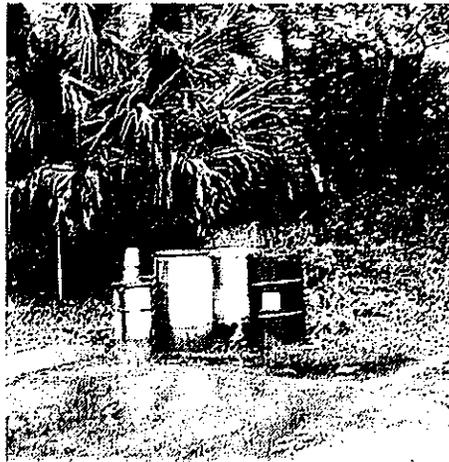
In some cases, the sense of abandonment and dereliction is clearly reinforced by the deliberate steps to "protect" the leftover area.



In contrast, examples of the continued demise of older developed sites are perpetuated throughout the corridor.



Near the southern end of the corridor, the unmaintained empty lot, the derelict billboard skeleton and the visually challenging auto debris site do not provide an impressive welcome to the County's main shopping street.



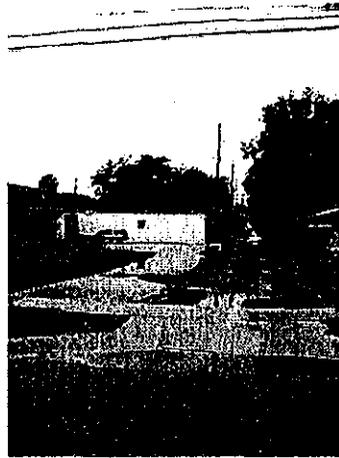
Historically, the preponderance of auto related product facilities and other industrial uses has resulted in documented cases of environmental degradation. The potential for additional problems remains high, as evidenced by these photos taken at a closed and abandoned auto sales and service center.



This particular site, just south of a major cross-street intersection, features the strident cartoon color scheme. The majority of the building is abandoned and completely gutted, piles of trash and other furniture debris were found along the roadside parking lot.



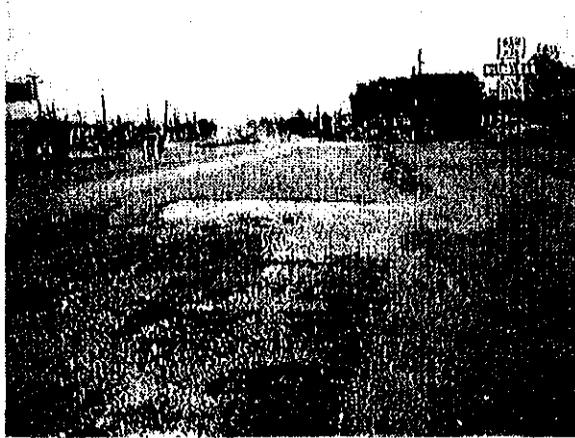
Lakes and other active and passive open spaces are interspersed at several locations along the corridor; rather than serving as positive urban design attributes, they are a largely ignored - and oft times degraded - resource.



The historic pattern of small, shallow lot development is evidenced by inefficiencies in site circulation and access, both in coordination of driveway locations and engineering materials and treatments.



Another example of the combined impact of small lot development patterns and "creative" approaches to solving the site circulation dilemma.



Another common element of the corridor: parcels with virtually unrestricted access; little depth in vehicle operating area; deferred maintenance; missing stormwater management, landscaping and pedestrian circulation improvements.



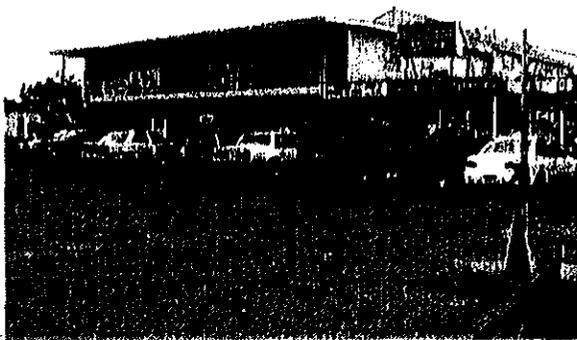
Provisions for alternative travel modes - particularly pedestrians - are at best intermittent along the corridor. This omission constitutes not only a impediment to local mobility, it can also be considered a safety hazard relative to the heavy daily and peak hour volume of traffic along 17-92.



A good example of the small lot development pattern and site discontinuity, a common circumstance that tends to reinforce low intensity site utilization and thwart parcel aggregation and investment in larger scale development efforts.



Underscoring the small lot development patterns, this photo offers an interesting corridor example of creative parking methods, omitted site landscaping, a plethora of unrelated signage treatments and disjointed pedestrian amenities.



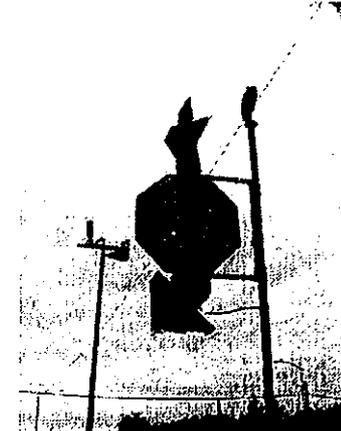
Another example of an anachronistic and undesirable development condition along the corridor.



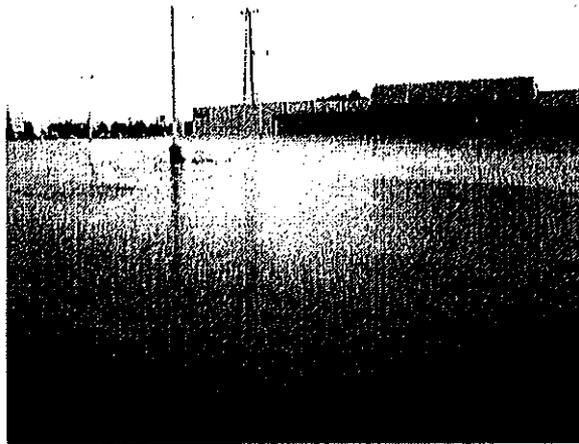
The combination of dated building architecture, small lot vehicle circulation challenges and the lack of contemporary landscaping, parking and stormwater management improvements - a common problem along the corridor - are clearly underscored on this site.



In some cases, land uses and development characteristics in close proximity to the corridor are evocative of an impoverished rural lifestyle and atmosphere.



While there may be inherent historic value with some of the corridor signage, dereliction in the maintenance of many signs lends itself to a visually blighted condition.



This relatively large shopping center along the southern portion of the corridor is characterized by a vacant anchor tenant. The vacant storefront(s), the lack of stormwater treatment facilities and parking lot maintenance and the absence of significant site landscaping work in combination to create an air of urban degradation and abandonment.



A common element of the corridor - small scale auto sales - characterized by minimal investment in site improvements.

Introduction

US 17-92 is one of the most significant commercial corridors in Seminole County. It is the County's "Main Street," the only at-grade roadway that traverses the entire County on its north-south axis.

As such, its physical, economic and functional condition has a great effect on the citizens of several communities. It has been argued that much of the US 17-92 corridor is currently in a state of deterioration, with an associated negative impact on area property values, revenues for government services and the general welfare and quality of life of the area's residents. This circumstance, in turn, limits the communities' potential for higher standards of future land development and economic growth.

The consulting firm of Ivey, Harris & Walls (IH&W) was commissioned to conduct a summary assessment of the US 17-92 corridor in terms of the need for redevelopment. Prepared under separate cover, the study indicates that 'blighted' conditions exist along US 17-92. Thus, IH&W recommends that the Seminole County Commission create a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) whose jurisdiction would generally extend the length of the US 17-92 corridor; that is, from the Orange County line to the southern terminus of City of Sanford CRA and excluding the Casselberry CRA.

Why Establish a Community Redevelopment Agency?

Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes provides local governments with a means to address very complicated issues associated with deteriorating urban environments. In the case of US 17-92, perhaps more important is the ability to cross jurisdictional boundaries using a government entity with the singular purpose of improving the physical and economic condition of the corridor. Hence, the CRA is the best available "tool" to address the complex issues associated with US 17-92.

Study Area Defined

The US 17-92 study area involved 1,269 parcels along the approximate 12-mile roadway corridor.

1992 - 1997 Tax Base Evaluation

A comparison of 1992 and 1997 total just tax values for the entire study area and for Seminole County as a whole shows that both areas have positive growth in the total just value. However, the 17-92 corridor, at only 2.9 percent over the five-year period, substantially lags behind the County value of 16.6 percent overall. This relatively static level of growth supports the consideration of the study area as a blighted locale.

Changes in Total Just Tax Values, 1992 - 1997			
Seminole County vs. 17-92 Study Area			
	1992	1997	% Change
US 17-92 Study Area	266,618,560	274,395,409	2.9
Seminole County	9,994,905,507	11,656,654,143	16.6

Conclusions

The assessment of need study was prepared cognizant of the requirements for such a study per Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes. To the extent possible, the study, relied upon a variety of empirical observations of some 1,250 parcels lying within the US 17-92 study area. The determination, classification and measurement of the statutory criteria-based variables was performed in a consistent manner throughout the study area. While it is possible that there may be site specific errors or disagreement with individual judgment made by the reviewers, the overwhelming majority of the information supports the finding that evidence of blighted conditions exist along the US 17-92 corridor in greater Seminole County, Florida.

Legal Case History

As described in key court cases concerning particular circumstances of a blight study, a finding of blight will be upheld if there is "competent substantial evidence" presented, on the record, upon which the governing body's decision was based. The term "competent substantial evidence" has been defined by the Florida Supreme Court as follows:

"Substantial evidence has been described as such evidence as will establish a substantial basis of fact from which the fact at issue can be reasonably inferred. We have stated it to be such relevant evidence as a reasonable mind would accept as adequate to support a conclusion.... We are of the view that the evidence relied upon to sustain the ultimate finding should be sufficiently relevant to sustain the ultimate finding and should be sufficiently relevant and material that a reasonable mind would accept it as adequate to support the conclusion reached. To this extent the 'substantial' should also be 'competent.'"

Presence of Blight

As described in the Final Report, there is substantial evidence that the US 17-92 corridor study could be characterized as a blighted area. Highlights of the statutory conditions and findings include the following:

- **Defective Street Layout**
 - 56 percent of the developed sites have undefined driveway openings
 - 21 percent of the developed sites feature excessive width in drive openings
 - 63 percent of sites have inadequate queuing area for cars to safely ingress to parcels
- **Faulty Lot Layout in Relation to Size, Adequacy, Accessibility, or Usefulness**
 - 32 percent of the developed sites had unpaved parking areas
 - 78 percent of the developed sites had no provision for cross-access
 - 63 percent of all sites had no public sidewalks
 - 58 percent of the developed sites had no disabled access between parking areas and buildings

- **Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions**

- For those sites with paved parking, 36 percent had some level of pavement deterioration
- For those sites with sidewalks, 20 percent had some sidewalk deterioration
- 23 percent of all sites had trash or other uncontained debris on site

- **Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements**

- Excessive disparity of permitted building materials, or inappropriate use of building materials
- 39 percent of the developed properties had some dilapidation in building cosmetics or conditions
- 81 percent of the developed properties had some level of deterioration in landscape condition

- **Visual Blight**

Signage resulting from ineffective and non-cohesive current regulations within the US 17-92 corridor indicates a blighted condition. This condition is further aggravated by the lack of code enforcement regulations and concentrations of signs in poor or dilapidated condition at major intersections.

- **Accident Statistics**

While six-lane portions of the US 17-92 corridor were substantially below the state's critical accident ratio as of 1995, the accident ratio for the four-lane portion of the corridor almost tripled between 1993 and 1995.

In 1995, the four-lane section exceeded the state's critical ratio for accidents on this type of facility, qualifying the vast majority of the US 17-92 corridor as an unsafe roadway by the Florida Department of Transportation. Transportation safety issue is further evidence of a blighted condition along US 17-92.

- **Static Tax Role**

The five-year growth in the US 17-92 corridor tax role, totaling less than three percent, substantially lags behind the County's five-year change of 16.6 percent overall. This relatively static level of growth strongly indicates a business corridor growing at a rate far inferior rate to that of the balance of the County.

Recommendations and CRA Establishment

Based upon the results of this inventory and analysis, Seminole County should establish the US 17-92 Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA). Establishing a CRA in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 163 of the Florida Statutes presents Seminole County with the best opportunity for accomplishing many long range community goals pertaining to the future of the US 17-92 corridor. Preparation and implementation of the CRA redevelopment plan can provide focus and oversight of the land development process while improving the appearance of the corridor and creating incentives that will allow US 17-92 to compete more effectively with other commercial markets.

Ordinance Creating Agency

Community Redevelopment Agencies (CRA) created under Chapter 163 F.S. are established by ordinance. The Ordinance sets the Agency's mandate for the redevelopment program and assigns the task of preparing a redevelopment plan to the Agency's appointed Board of Directors. The Ordinance also determines the composition of the Agency's Board. The Statutes provide that the Governing Authority, Seminole County, may serve as the Board.

Community Redevelopment Plan

The CRA is responsible for preparing the Redevelopment Plan. Chapter 163.362 F.S. contains a detailed description of the required contents of this Plan. The Plan is intended to address the needs identified in the area wide assessment, define community redevelopment goals and objectives, set forth specific Agency policies and actions, and finally, identify all publicly funded capital improvements, their costs and funding sources.

Tax Base Analysis (TIF)

Using a final legal description the County property appraiser can establish an accurate tax role to analyze the history of the tax base and make projections of future tax increment revenues which can be used for financing capital projects identified in the Redevelopment Plan.

Intergovernmental Agreements

Creating an Agency with jurisdiction crossing municipal boundaries will require intergovernmental agreements defining the terms and conditions of the Agency's authority. Negotiating these agreements will provide valuable opportunities for local governments to build a consensus on proposed actions.