

Board of County Commissioners
Leon County, Florida

Policy No. 21-5

Title: Designation Procedure for New Canopy Roads

Date Adopted: July 13, 2021

Effective Date: July 13, 2021

Reference: Leon County Code of Laws Sec. 10-6.707

Policy Superseded: None

It shall be policy of Leon County, Florida that a new policy entitled “Designation Procedure for New Canopy Roads” is hereby adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on July 13, 2021, to wit:

Section 1.
Purpose and Intent:

Canopy Roads are a protected conservation feature identified in the Tallahassee-Leon County Comprehensive Plan and regulated by the Leon County Environmental Management Ordinance. This procedure establishes the process by which public roads in Leon County/City of Tallahassee are determined eligible and designated as Canopy Roads.

Section 2.
Program Eligibility

1. The following Criteria shall be utilized to determine eligibility for designating a new road into the Canopy Roads system:
 - a. The road should not be scheduled nor anticipated for major improvements that would change its rustic characteristics.
 - b. The road or section of road should have a minimum length of 1 mile and, preferable, should connect to an arterial or collector road at one end of the route.
 - c. Local community support and/or opposition should be documented.
2. The following Criteria shall be utilized to determine appropriateness for designating a new road into the Canopy Roads system using the Criteria for Canopy Roads (Appendix):
 - a. Historic or Cultural Significance: The roadway should convey a distinctive historical sense of place, retains significant historic features such as historic route,

trees and vegetation, cut banks or other features and has remaining historic resources such as old homes or other structures that contribute to the character of the road.

- b. **Scenic Quality:** The roadway should provide scenic quality consisting of native tree species that form a “tunnel” effect shading the road or a scenic viewshed that provides a pastoral vista, and a variety of native overstory, understory, and ground cover species, where cultural modifications are minimally intrusive.
- c. **Development Intrusion:** The roadway should exhibit limited development intrusion such as new structures, driveway cuts, pavement and non-native vegetation and augmented landscape areas.

Section 3. Program Procedures

1. The Leon County Board of Commissioners may direct staff to initiate the evaluation process, or landowner(s) with road frontage may seek the designation through an application process. The Tallahassee-Leon County Planning Department will provide an application for nomination and will coordinate review by the Canopy Roads Citizens Committee. The applicant must demonstrate local support from affected landowners with canopy road frontage to equal 90% of the frontage of the section of road proposed for designation in order for the CRCC to review the road for recommendation to the Board. Additional support can be demonstrated through letters from local landowners, citizens, businesses, homeowners’ associations, civic groups, commission members, etc.
2. Staff will perform a survey of the roadway to determine if the road or a minimum section of the road meets the eligibility and appropriateness for canopy road designation. The Leon County Attorney’s office will provide a review of legal implication, including any potential fiscal exposure to the County.
3. A public meeting will be held to provide information on canopy roads regulations and to collect feedback from the community.
4. This information will be presented to the Canopy Roads Citizens Committee (CRCC) for its review and recommendation. The CRCC may recommend the following:
 - a. Recommendation that the roadway be designated.
 - b. That additional information be presented at a future meeting.
 - c. That the application for nomination of the roadway be denied.
5. If the CRCC recommends that the roadway be designated, Planning staff will prepare an Agenda Item for upcoming County and/or City Commission meetings. Depending on the jurisdiction of the road or road segment, this recommendation may go before the Board of County Commissioners if within unincorporated Leon County, to the City Commission if within City limits, or to both Commissions if the road spans both jurisdictions.

6. No new designation shall become effective until approval of an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan, and codification of the designation by amending the Leon County Code of Laws by ordinance adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and City Commission.

APPENDIX: CRITERIA FOR CANOPY ROADS

(Adapted from 1992 Canopy Roads Management Plan)

I. Historic Significance

A. Conveyance of a Sense of Place

Good: The road system strongly conveys to the traveler a distinctive historical sense of place, through its visual and aesthetic relationships between landscape, buildings and structures, which unify and define the area.

Moderate: The road system moderately conveys to the traveler a historical sense of place.

Low: The road system conveys little or no historical sense of place.

None: The road system conveys a negative sense of place.

B. Significance & Integrity of Road System

Good: The road is highly significant in Leon County history and culture, and retains significant historic features, such as historic route, trees and vegetation, cut banks or other features.

Moderate: The road is moderately significant in Leon County history, and/or retains significant historic features.

Low: The road possesses little or no significance and few significant historic features.

None: The road has no significance and no historic features.

C. Presence of Remaining Adjacent Historic Resources

Good: Adjacent historic resources contribute significantly to the visual variety and character. These may include significant historic buildings and structures, farm complex, fences, pasture, outbuildings and other aesthetically pleasing remnants of past human habitation.

Moderate: Areas where adjacent historic resources contribute moderately to the visual variety and character.

Low: Areas where adjacent historic resources make little or on contribution to the visual variety and character.

None: Areas where there are no adjacent historic resources to contribute to the visual variety and character.

II. Scenic Quality

A. Canopy Condition

Evaluative Factors:

Good: Pristine, with various species of trees and native understory vegetation that form a tunnel effect; little or no intervention is necessary. (90-100% coverage)

Moderate: Good canopy with younger trees and native vegetation developing. These areas may need reforestation, or augmentation of understory, but still give a sense of screening. (50-90%)

Low: Sparse canopy but sections of good vegetation and some tree line that with extensive management have the potential for canopy development (Less than 50%)

None: Canopy is nonexistent.

B. Scenic View sheds

Evaluative Factors:

Good: Dominant scenic or pastoral views such as pasture land, water bodies, and planted pines that may have little or no canopy but are significant as relatively undisturbed open space, green belts and pastoral view sheds which greatly enhance the overall visual quality.

Moderate: Adjacent scenery moderately enhances the overall visual quality.

Low: Adjacent scenery has little or no impact on the overall visual quality.

None: Adjacent scenery has negative impact on the overall visual quality.

C. Cultural Modifications

Evaluative Factors:

Good: Relatively free from aesthetically undesirable or discordant signs of human influence, such as major development, intrusive power lines, or other features; or areas where signs of human influence contribute to the visual character and variety.

Moderate: Signs of human influence are visible, but they have little or no negative impact on the visual character of the area.

Low: Scenic quality is somewhat depreciated by inharmonious intrusions, but not so extensively that they seriously disrupt the visual character.

None: Scenic quality is very degraded by development or other intrusive features.

III. Development Intrusion

A. Number of Driveway Cuts, Structures, of Deceleration Lanes

Evaluative Factors:

Good: Zero

Moderate: One

Low: Two

None: Three or more.

B. Presence of native vegetation

Evaluative Factors:

Good: Pristine, native vegetation makes up 90-100% of the plant cover, little or no intervention is necessary.

Moderate: Native vegetation makes up 50-90% of the plant cover, some reforestation or augmentation of understory may be beneficial.

Low: Sparse native vegetation exists (less than 50%) and with extensive management the area has potential for improvement.

None: Native vegetation is nonexistent.

C. Amount of Natural Vegetation augmented with Landscaped Area

Evaluative Factors:

Good: No artificial landscaped areas exist; plant coverage consists of native canopy trees and understory vegetation.

Moderate: The canopy road zone has been augmented with landscape material with some natural area or canopy trees remaining, and existing landscape material is historic or does not contribute negatively to native vegetation.

Low: Trees remain, but most understory has been replaced with non-native vegetation.

None: The canopy protection zone has been completely landscaped with non-native vegetation or hardscape.

FIELD SURVEY FORM

Roadway

Address/Parcels/Mile Marker

Criteria		High	Moderate	Low	None	Notes
Historic Significance	Sense of Place					
	Significance & Integrity					
	Presence of Historic Resources					
Canopy Quality	Canopy Condition					
	Scenic View sheds					
	Cultural Modifications					
Development Intrusion	Number of driveway cuts, structures, or deceleration lanes					
	Presence of native vegetation					
	Presence of non-native landscape augmentation					