

Byway Development

Description

A well-managed scenic byway is an economic development tool as well as an opportunity for the communities through which it passes to maintain and improve their overall quality of life – improving lives by improving transportation. Visitors choose to travel on scenic byways for the same reasons that people choose to live there – because of a unique sense of place or identity.



Bridge tender's house in Greggstown

In order to differentiate themselves from other routes, byway organizations should look for opportunities to create something more than a drive – a travel experience. This means developing byway related facilities and features that help to shape its unique identity and, in turn, create a distinctive destination.

There are **three scales** that should be considered in the development of byway facilities: corridor-wide, community-based, and site-specific.

Corridor-wide facilities include repetitive elements along the route that help to establish a visual identity for the traveler. Travelers recognize a particular element as unique to that byway. This element recognition imbues the traveler with confidence that he is on the right path and helps him find the communities and places that are part of the byway experience. Examples include:

- Gateways – with a consistent graphic identity
- Signage and Wayfinding Systems – showing visitors how to follow the route and find its sites and attractions
- Common roadside details such as a consistent guardrail style or parapet wall style on a bridge

Community-based enhancements focus on the livability of a community while at the same time provide the visitor infrastructure needed to encourage people to linger and stay. Community-scale enhancements help to integrate the byway into the overall transportation system as well as increase the quality of life for the community's residents. A good example might include the ways in which a community can encourage travelers to get out of their cars – and into local businesses – while also fostering social interaction and healthy lifestyles among residents. Other examples might include:

- Enhancing the appearance of the community along the byway corridor to make it more welcoming and friendly to visitors as well as residents
- Establishing a walking or bicycle tour that helps tell the byway story and providing the necessary pedestrian-scaled infrastructure to ensure a safe and comfortable walking or bicycling experience

Site-specific facilities help to establish destinations along the byway that tell its story or provide a unique experience. Sites along the byway may want to expand their interpretive programs, host byway-related events, or develop the needed visitor infrastructure to broaden their appeal. Examples might include:

- A trail providing access to a byway's intrinsic qualities such as to a birding area or vista point
- Interpretive facilities that help to tell the byway story such as a museum or an outdoor exhibit
- Visitor safety/comfort such as a visitor information center or kiosk, restrooms, or picnic facilities

These and other types of byway development activities need to be included within the Corridor Management Plan (CMP). Byway CMPs are an excellent tool to help communities to collaborate among both public and private interests to leverage future investments for projects that improve the quality of live for the resident as well as the quality of the travel experience.

Additional Resources

www.bywaysonline.org/forums/viewattach.do?id=129&name=Livability_-_Examples_for_Byways.pdf

Byway Development

Site Specific Facility

Frederick Visitor Center (Maryland)

By leveraging their resources, pursuing numerous funding opportunities and finding support in some unlikely places, the Tourism Council of Frederick County funded a new visitor center, complete with exhibits and theater.

In 2006, the Tourism Council of Frederick County was awarded their first in a series of grants that led to the new Frederick Visitor Center. Although a stand-alone, independent organization, the Tourism Council of Frederick County is fortunate in that they receive revenue from the state hotel tax. This revenue allowed the Council to put up a match for their first grant. Over the course of the next few years, the Council received several grants at the state and federal levels, as well as from non-profit organizations. These included grants from Preserve America, FHWA's National Scenic Byways Program, the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority, and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network (CBGN) of the National Park Service. By pursuing multiple grants, the Council was able to use state grants as matches for federal grants, federal grants as matches for nonprofit organization grants and so on, leveraging one against another.

Inside the visitor center, exhibits are oriented around the County's two National Scenic Byways, its state scenic river, and its state and national heritage areas.



Before and after of the Frederick, Maryland Visitor Center (photographs courtesy of Tourism Council of Frederick County)