

**BAYSHORE HERITAGE BYWAY CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN
PUBLIC WORKSHOP SERIES #1
SALEM COUNTY**

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

MEETING DATE: November 17, 2011

TIME: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

LOCATION: Old Salem Courthouse, Salem, NJ

SUMMARY

Cheryl Reardon of ANJEC and the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition began the meeting by thanking participants for attending and welcoming people to one of the first of several public workshops for the Bayshore Heritage Byway Corridor Management Plan. She provided a brief overview of the byway nomination and subsequent dedication that occurred in 2009. She also thanked Freeholder Laury and Freeholder Acton for their attendance and support.

Jim Turk of Salem County and the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition also provided some brief opening remarks regarding the historical importance of the City of Salem. Jim also thanked the freeholders for attending.

Overview of the Project

Jim Klein, the Project Manager of the Lardner/Klein (L/KLA) Project Team, gave a brief overview of the workshop agenda, the byway corridor management planning process, and provided some recent examples of scenic byway plans or heritage plans that L/KLA had completed. He mentioned that the purpose of today's workshop would be to continue where the 2009 nomination/designation process left off and that the first steps would be to define the corridor and to start formulating the vision and goals of the CMP and the overall vision for the byway.

He mentioned that the project team was working with a Corridor Management Committee (CMC), many of whom had been involved with the byway's nomination and subsequent designation. He said that together, the CMC and the residents and businesses from each byway community to determine what they would like the Bayshore Heritage Byway to become over time, and how the communities will be able to use nature- and heritage-based tourism, and to what scale. Jim stated that the group needed to start thinking about:

- Preservation and conservation strategies along the route, over time.
- Visitor experience and enjoyment.
- The travel route – is it ready for visitors?
- How many visitors are appropriate to the Bayshore region?
- How can we help visitors find all of the unique places along the Bayshore?

He stated that New Jersey has had a Scenic Byway program since the 1990's and that New Jersey Department of Transportation is currently developing a consistent signage program.

Jim also stated that by achieving a national designation (National Scenic Byway or All American Road), the region may get more recognition for the route (almost like the “Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval”). With a national designation, the byway may be eligible to receive additional funding from the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) for enhancements and improvements to the byway route.

Jim explained that the CMP will dictate how the communities want heritage- and nature-based tourism to occur. It will allow the communities along the byway to scale marketing activities to yield the desired experiences. The end result should be a document that spells out specific management for the byway that incorporates “sustainable tourism” – economic opportunities that are consistent with the existing quality of life along the byway.

Jim provided the following examples of scenic byway corridor management plans that his firm has worked on, each highlighting different aspects of the planning process:

- Millstone Valley Scenic Byway – one of two nationally designated byways in New Jersey featuring the region’s history.
- Brandywine Valley Scenic Byway – CMP identified conservation priorities and landscape enhancement plans; successfully collaborated with Delaware Greenways to nominate for national designation.
- Maryland National Historic Road – one segment of six-state All-American Road; CMP led to \$1.6 million in first two years for interpretive installations, design guidelines, marketing programs and facility enhancements.
- Journey Through Hallowed Ground – three-state byway from Monticello to Gettysburg; CMP identified management priorities and an action plan for implementation – partnerships and commitments from three state DOTs, numerous local governments and other organizations were critical to implementation.

Jim also introduced the members of the Project Team:

- L/KLA – Jim also introduced Sarah Couchman, who will be helping with all aspects of the CMP.
- Fitzgerald & Halliday (FHI) – Kristen Ahlfeld, who was present at the workshop, gave an overview of FHI. FHI will be assisting with stakeholder and public outreach processes, as well as assisting with the bicycle and pedestrian facility-related tasks. They will be looking at issues and opportunities for bikes and pedestrians along the byway and helping to develop recommendations to increased/safer access as well as linkages to key natural and scenic resources along the byway.
- John Milner Associates (JMA) – although not present at this workshop, Jim explained that JMA would be taking a closer look at the cultural and historical and archaeological resources along the byway.
- McCormick Taylor – was represented by Joe Bucovetsky at the workshop. Joe explained that McCormick Taylor would be evaluating transportation and land use along the byway and making

sure that land use and transportation policies supported each other, were context-sensitive, and provided safe access to/from byway resources for all modes of travel (multi-modalism).

Stakeholder/Public Outreach

Kristen Ahlfeld (FHI) gave a brief overview of the stakeholder and public outreach processes. Kristen mentioned that as residents of the byway, it will be important for as many people to participate in the planning process as possible so that everyone has an opportunity to shape the future of the byway within their community. She explained that the CMC was going to serve as an advisory committee that will guide the project and provide input to the project team at key milestones. She mentioned that starting in January, the CMC was going to begin meeting monthly; these meetings are open to the public so everyone is encouraged to attend and participate. Several different types of outreach techniques will be used:

- Public workshops – Kristen mentioned that the workshops are the first in a series of three, and that the Project Team will be holding similar meetings in Cumberland and Cape May counties.
- Interactive project website – She stated that the website is “live” and that it will be updated to include the most recent project information. She reminded everyone that the web address was on the back side of their agendas and to check it often for future meeting dates and documents.
- Comment boxes at all meetings – Kristen stated that there will be a comment box at all of the meetings and that attendees are encouraged to leave additional feedback, questions, or input in the box. She pointed out that there was a comment form on the back side of the agenda.
- Online meetings – for those individuals who would like to participate but have a conflict on a specific meeting day, the Project Team may make online meetings available. Kristen mentioned that the Project Team strongly encouraged people to attend the meetings in person and that the logistics of the online meetings were still being worked out at this time.

Kristen stressed the importance of participating in the meetings and requested that the participants pass along contact information for additional people who were not in attendance today. She pointed out that Jim Klein’s contact information was on the back side of the workshop agenda and that attendees could email or call Jim if they had additional questions, comments, or contact information for more those people who may be interested in the project but not in attendance today.

Byway Corridor Management Planning Process

Sarah Couchman (L/KLA) presented an overview of the steps that would be conducted to complete the corridor management plan for the Bayshore Heritage Byway.

1. Inventory and Assessment – required by the New Jersey Scenic Byway program. A visual inventory of the byway was conducted in September. The byway was divided into character areas so that the byway qualities could be assessed more comprehensively. All character areas were given a high or low rating, which helps to better define which areas should be targeted for enhancements or protection/preservation strategies.

2. Protection and preservation strategies. Will be covered at the next CMC meeting on January 19, 2012.
3. Enhancement strategies.
4. Interpreting the byway route – what stories/history makes the places along the byway unique?
5. Devise safety and transportation strategies – how can we accommodate all modes of transportation safely along the byway?
6. Develop heritage and nature-based tourism – we will need to determine the appropriate level of visitation for the byway.
7. Establish an action plan – this will be a “live” document that will include strategies/recommendations, implementing partners or agencies, and potential funding sources or strategies.

Defining the Corridor

Sarah continued her presentation by stating that the byway is not “just the road”. When we talk about the byway, we are also including the view from the road, the places along the road that are related to the byway theme, as well as the presence of regional resources. She then began to identify key issues associated with defining the byway:

- The byway may not be able to accommodate all modes of transportation because of the current road conditions; alternative parallel routes may be needed for bicycle use for example in some areas
- The byway cannot accommodate all modes of transportation because of the current road conditions;
- NPS Coastal Heritage Trail – we will need to determine the status of this facility. Because the funding for this facility expired on September 30th, and because there is so much overlap between the byway and the Coastal Heritage Trail, we may need to be prepared to develop strategies to partner/maintain some of the sites along this facility;
- Coordination with other touring routes – we need to think about ways to cut down on the confusion;
- Level of tourism – what is the appropriate level for communities and infrastructure?

Byway Vision and Goals

Each of the workshop participants was given an index card. They were asked to pretend to be byway visitors and write a postcard describing their experience on the byway to a friend or loved one at home. Participants were told that their experiences could be positive or negative and that these responses would help to shape the goals of the CMP and the overall vision for the byway.

The following summarizes the results of that exercise:

- Open space, wildlife viewing, charming villages
- No bathrooms or food
- Views, wetlands, eagles, osprey
- Got lost
- Greenheads

The participants were then asked to discuss the “must see” features of the byway:

- Restrooms
- Food
- Signage/wayfinding
- Visitor centers, information kiosks
- Expanded canoe/kayaking opportunities (very few place to put in)

Still thinking about their “visits” to the byway, the workshop participants were then asked what would have made their visit to the byway better:

- Bayshore Discovery Project
- Patterned brick architecture
- Hancock House
- Brad Street Presbyterian Church (Bridgeton)
- Fort Mott, Elsinboro Point
- Hancocks Bridge Friends Meeting House
- Elsinboro – beach
- Market Street (Salem)
- Salem Oak
- Farm markets, seafood, wineries
- Scarecrow Hollow (corn maze)

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

- Would the Project Team be interested in making a presentation to the Board of Freeholders? ***Jim Klein responded affirmatively and said that he will coordinate that presentation through Cheryl and Jim Turk.***
- How far off the road itself would you include secondary resources or places? ***Jim Klein responded by saying that people need to be able to easily navigate to the secondary places and resources and that these places need to support the themes of the byway and the stories you want to tell.***
- Locals are afraid of people coming in and telling them what to do with their land. They will be concerned if their property is designated as a scenic spot along the byway that they will not be able to sell it to a developer. ***Sarah Couchman stated that hopefully people will see the value of having the byway in their community and that the CMP is not intended to impose regulations on private property owners.*** Jim Klein indicated that the only regulatory requirement is that no new billboards can be constructed.

- The Project Team should probably coordinate with the NJ State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). At one time Salem was being used as a prototype for cataloguing historic resources so there may be GIS data and other surveys available.
- Jim Turk mentioned that the Salem County Historical Commission is launching a cell phone audio-tour called "7 Steps to Freedom" in 2012. The project will feature 7 story-telling sites in Salem City, Elsinboro and Woodstown telling stories of the Underground Railroad and Salem County's African American history. 6 of the 7 sites will overlap the byway and will include a project web site.
- Phil Correll offered that Fran Rappa compiled a document listing all of the international and national environmental/natural resource designations for the Byway. **Cheryl Reardon responded by saying that she has a copy of the document and that she will provide copies to the Project Team.**
- Several participants noted that there was a recent tour in Salem County sponsored by the Pennsylvania Environmental Commission (PEC) and the National Park Service who are looking to possibly establish a National Recreation Area for the Lower Delaware Bay including Salem County.
- Will this study be inventorying public transportation? Some people take vacations by public transit. **Joe Bucovetsky stated that public transportation will definitely be an element of the CMP. The Project Team will be looking for clusters of resources along the byway that are accessible by public transit.**
- In terms of economic impact strategies, the Project Team will need to talk to the communities to get their buy-in on the plan.
- The Project Team should probably speak with the SADC regarding agricultural lands. Farmers do not like tourists. Problems with dogs, litter, and visitors will need to be addressed.
- A lot of people do not want Salem to turn into Cape May. **Jim Klein responded by saying that it all depends on how you promote the byway within Salem so that the benefits can accrue in a more manageable way utilizing the heritage- and nature-based tourism opportunities. This type of visitor is typically active adults with no children. These visitors appreciate the qualities of the place they are visiting and often shop, dine or stay overnight in locally owned businesses.**
- Salem County needs to designate more trails for hiking and biking. **Jim Klein added that along several other byways communities have started "Trail Town" programs and that might be a model to consider, such as the Great Allegheny Passage in Pennsylvania.**

ADDITIONAL NOTES

- The next CMC meeting will be held on January 19, 2012 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.; location TBD. Check the website for more information.
- Workshop attendees will forward names and email addresses of additional byway businesses to Jim Klein and Cheryl Reardon.

- The Project Team will update the website with workshop materials and information, as well as upcoming meeting dates and times.
- Cheryl Reardon to distribute Fran Rappa report to the Project Team.
- Project Team needs to coordinate with NJ SHPO and SADC.