

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the context in which the plan was developed and to explain how community involvement played a critical role in developing the plan's vision and goals.

Michener's Chesapeake

Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway highlights the picturesque waterways, historic waterfront and inland villages, agricultural operations and wide natural expanses found along a series of scenic roads and historic travel routes in Queen Anne's, Talbot, Dorchester and Caroline counties of Maryland's Eastern Shore. As the Mid-Shore section of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway network, it links such small towns and communities as Centreville, Easton, St. Michaels, Tilghman Island, Oxford, Denton, Federalsburg, Cambridge, East New Market, Secretary and Vienna. Visitors learn about and enjoy the rich maritime history, agricultural legacy and natural resources of the region. From birding to bicycling, to boating to arts and crafts and antiques – Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway is the best way to explore it all in the Mid-Shore.



Figure 1-1 View from Granary, Wye Island



Figure 1-2 View from Sandaway in Oxford

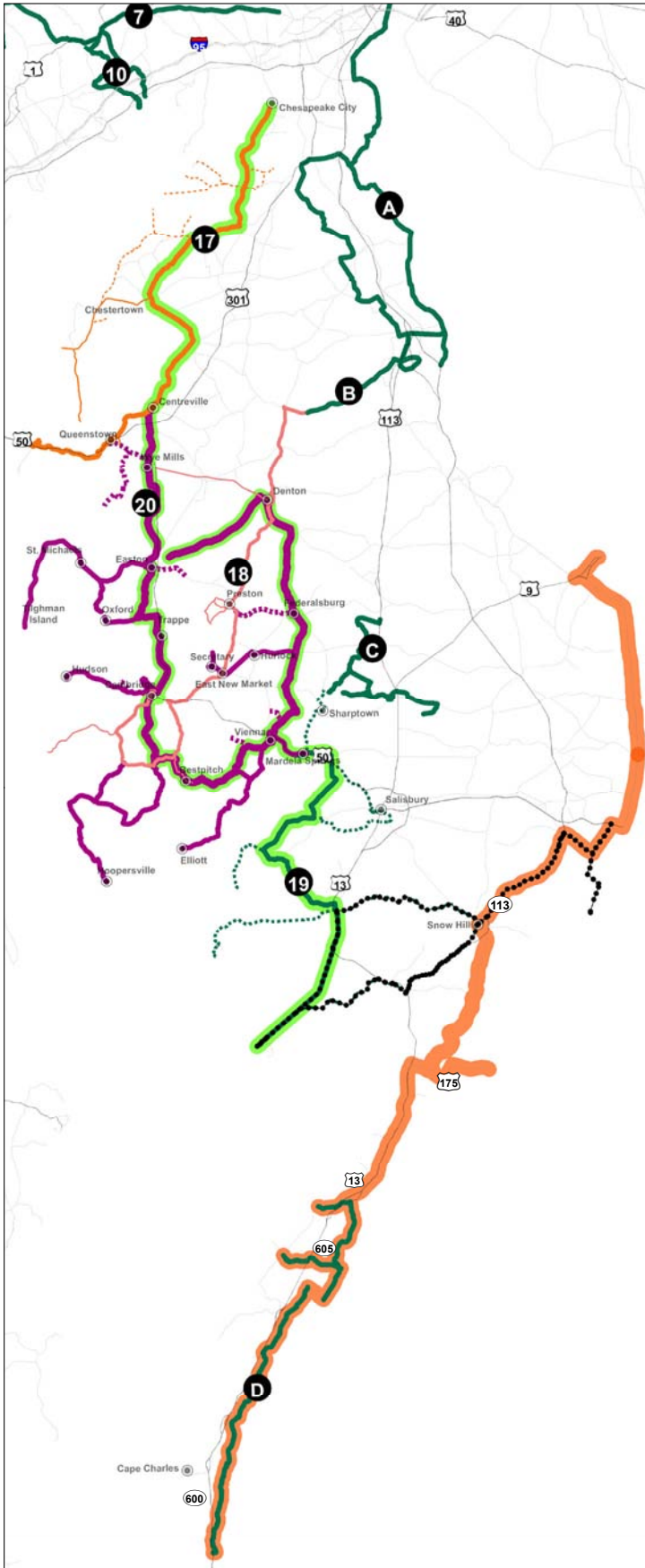
Purpose of the Plan

Queen Anne's, Talbot, Caroline and Dorchester counties are fortunate to have been awarded a grant to develop a Corridor Management Plan (CMP) for the Mid-Shore section of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway network (see page 2 sidebar and map: "Byway Context: The Bay Side of the Delmarva Peninsula"). The purpose of the CMP is to help the four counties and their agency partners (Maryland Office of Tourism Development, Maryland State Highway Administration, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Maryland Department of Planning and the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority) to protect and promote the rich natural and cultural resources found throughout the Byway corridor and to implement strategies for sustainable tourism development based on that heritage.



Figure 1-3 Marshyhope Creek, Federalsburg

Implementation of the plan will help to highlight and interpret the region's rich history and accentuate its rural character, maritime culture, and natural resources. Some examples might include strategies for land and resource conservation, development and marketing of theme-based itineraries, and roadside enhancements to make it easier to find and follow the Byway.



BYWAY CONTEXT: THE BAY SIDE OF THE DELMARVA PENINSULA

Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway is part of a larger network of scenic byways and trails within the **Delmarva Peninsula** (the geographic landform that includes Delaware and the Eastern Shores of Maryland and Virginia, with the Chesapeake Bay to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the east).

Approximately two-thirds of the Delmarva Peninsula almost all of the Eastern Shore of Maryland, about half of the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and western and southern portions of Delaware drains into the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

When referring to the watersheds of the Delmarva Peninsula for the purpose of this CMP, the portion of the Peninsula that drains into the Chesapeake Bay will be referred to as the **Bay Side**, and the portion that drains to all other watersheds to the east will be referred to as the **Atlantic Side**. The four Chesapeake Bay sub-watersheds of Maryland's Eastern Shore include the **Upper Bay**, **Choptank**, **Nanticoke**, and **Lower Bay**.

In the context of Maryland's Eastern Shore, the nationally designated **Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway** stretches from Chesapeake City to Kent Island, with an extension to Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge. **Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway**, the primary subject of this plan, meets the nationally designated section at MD 213. To the south Michener's Chesapeake connects with the **Blue Crab Scenic Byway** at US 50 in Mardela Springs. In the context of Maryland's Eastern Shore (referred to as the **Eastern Shore** from here forth), the Chesapeake Country NSB is associated with the **Upper Shore**, Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway is associated with the **Mid-Shore** and the Blue Crab Byway's is associated with the **Lower Shore**.

An important goal of this byway planning effort is to consolidate the three byway's associated with the Bay Side into one primary byway spine that connects the Upper Shore, Mid-Shore, and Lower Shore to be identified as the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway (Chesapeake Country) along its entire length. This combined network of three primary byway routes is highlighted in light green on the "Bay Side of the Delmarva Peninsula" map). The resulting Chesapeake Country spine route extends along the Eastern Shore north to south from Chesapeake City to Crisfield, MD. (See Strategy 3.1 Positioning the Three Regions of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway.)

Byway Context: Bay Side of the Delmarva Peninsula

Legend

- Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway
- Branch
- Sidetrack
- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad (All American Road)
- Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway
- State Scenic Byway
- Interstate Route
- U.S. Route
- State Route
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed*
- River
- Chesapeake Country Spine
- Delmarva Coastal Heritage Byway (proposed)
- Beach to Bay Indian Trail

Maryland Byways

- 7. Mason and Dixon
- 10. Lower Susquehanna
- 17. Chesapeake Country
- 18. Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad
- 19. Blue Crab
- 20. Michener's Chesapeake

Other Regional Byways

- A. Route 9 Coastal Heritage Byway
- B. Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad (DE)
- C. Western Sussex Byway
- D. VA Byways in Accomack & Northampton

Michener's Chesapeake Scenic Byway

Queen Anne's, Talbot, Dorchester, & Caroline Counties, MD

Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.
in association with Shelley Mastran, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, John Milner Associates, Inc., and Daniel Consultants, Inc.

*Chesapeake Bay Watershed boundary approximate

GIS Sources: MDDNR, MD SHA, ESRI, VDOT

Planning Context and Process

The plan proposes strategies for integration of the travel route into an already complex tourism network on the Eastern Shore. Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway (the Byway) is situated between the nationally designated section of the Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway to the north and the state designated Blue Crab Scenic Byway to the south. In addition, the route overlaps with the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway in several locations and it traverses two state heritage areas, Stories of the Chesapeake and Heart of the Chesapeake. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Network overlays the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed and incorporates multiple sites along the Byway. The network, along with the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, which also has some overlap with the Byway, is administered through the National Park Service Chesapeake Bay Office. The resulting efforts of all of these organizations with an interest in heritage and nature-based tourism create a complex web of decision-making for travelers. Careful coordination is needed, particularly with the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Byway, an All-American Road, to ensure that visitors have a clear, seamless and enjoyable travel experience.



Figure 1-5 Advisory Committee members meeting in Denton

In order to develop strategies for the plan, a Byway Advisory Committee was formed. The committee met a total of seven times over a year-long planning process at different locations throughout the corridor. In addition, two public planning workshops were held to (1) confirm the direction of the planning process and review the initial vision, goals and issues that need to be addressed; and (2) to review the plan's recommended strategies for preserving and enhancing the travel route as an important vehicle for heritage and eco-tourism opportunities. If the group recommends pursuing designation as a National Scenic Byway, and each Board of County Commissioners or County Council concurs, a permanent group will need to be identified to take on the responsibilities of implementing the plan.

All meetings of the Advisory Committee were open to the public, and those with a strong interest in the Byway were invited to join the Advisory Committee. The following topical meetings were held to develop the plan's strategies and recommendations:

AC Meeting #1:	Getting Started with Vision and Goals	May 18, 2010
Public Workshop #1:	Are we headed in the right direction?	June 22 and 24, 2010
AC Meeting #2:	Preservation and Conservation Strategies	July 15, 2010
AC Meeting #3:	Enhancement Strategies	September 23, 2010
AC Meeting #4:	Heritage Tourism Development	October 21, 2010
AC Meeting #5:	Interpretive Development Strategies	November 18, 2010
AC Meeting #6:	Roadside Safety and Signage Strategies	February 9, 2011
Public Workshop #2:	Did we get it right?	Summer 2011
AC Meeting #7:	Implementation Strategies	September 2011

Vision and Goals for the Byway

The following vision and goals for the Byway were developed based upon input from the first Advisory Committee meeting (with related challenges that must be addressed by goal in italics) and updated based upon input provided at public workshops and additional advisory committee meetings conducted throughout the planning process.

WHAT IS HERITAGE TOURISM? A CHALLENGE OF TERMINOLOGY

The term “heritage tourism” was used frequently throughout the planning process as a means of capturing the idea that there is a strong market throughout Maryland’s Eastern Shore for visitors with an interest in the Eastern Shore’s maritime history and culture, its agricultural traditions, its extensive natural areas and bird habitats, and its many opportunities to experience all of the above by boat, by bicycle, on foot, or driving to a destination.

The advisory committee agreed to define all of these activities under the term “heritage tourism” as the best way to describe the many opportunities that are available on the Eastern Shore to share in those experiences.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines cultural heritage tourism as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural and natural resources.”

Heritage tourism is used throughout the text to refer collectively to cultural heritage tourism, agri-tourism, and nature-based tourism.

Key Issues and Challenges

As part of the byway planning process, advisory committee members as well as participants at the public planning workshops for the Byway were asked to identify some of the significant challenges facing the byway. Each participant listed some of these challenges during the meeting on comment cards - and then later read back to the group, without attribution so that the input could be as direct as possible. The following are a representative list of key issues and challenges facing the Byway

Challenges about how to find and follow the byway

- Making the route clear
- Sorting out the overlaps and ambiguities of the Byway
- Long spurs and dead end with no attractions or destinations
- Signage - conflicting and confusing signage
- Using technology (GPS/social media coordination)

Challenges about preserving and conserving intrinsic qualities

- Protection of significant landscapes from suburban sprawl
- Mid-Atlantic Power Project (major transmission line)
- Perception of property rights infringements
- Adapting to sea level rise
- Developing and promoting preservation and conservation incentives

Challenges related to enhancing the Byway

- Gaining public water access
- Creating pull offs in rural areas and wetlands
- Getting people out of their cars
- Lack of comfort and other visitor facilities
- Visitor readiness; improvement of sites; visitor centers
- Funding for new visitor centers and renovating older ones

Challenges related to promoting heritage tourism along the Byway

- Adapting traditional agriculture to the local food movement
- Developing a Community Supported Agriculture program
- Collectively enhancing and promoting the existing regional “Eastern Shore” brand
- Blending agri-tourism, nature-based tourism, and heritage tourism
- Encouraging travelers to seek out inland destinations and strengthening traditional business districts of inland communities using the “Main Street” approach to marketing
- Coordinating community-based and regionally themed events

Challenges related to interpreting the Byway’s many stories

- Creating a unified theme
- Telling the stories; relating the Michener book to the Byway
- Enlist more local residents to tell the story

- Take advantage of emerging social media technology

Challenges to maintaining a safe and enjoyable travel experience

- Controlling traffic, speed and parking
- Controlling autos vs. bicycles; narrow shoulders
- Rehabilitating bridges
- Creating/protecting pedestrian friendly environments

Challenges related to managing the byway over time

- Interagency cooperation and engagement
- Public education; getting local buy-in
- Funding and financing byway related programs
- Developing an effective regional organizational structure
- Community involvement and coordination among multiple jurisdictions

Vision and Goals for the Byway

The following vision statement and goals were developed to help paint a picture of what the Byway will be like when the plan has been implemented. The vision helped shape a series of goals that evolved throughout the planning process as a means of steering the development of the plan to address the challenges and build upon the many assets of the Eastern Shore. The goals that follow shape the plan into a series of recommended strategies and actions as described in Chapter 4 of the plan organized by goal topic

Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway weaves together the multifaceted layers of nationally significant maritime and agricultural heritage – from Native Americans to the modern era – reflecting the distinct sense of time and place as captured in James Michener's novel Chesapeake. The Byway serves as the main route for heritage tourism in the heart of Maryland's Eastern Shore – helping heritage travelers find and enjoy distinctive destinations and beautiful places where land and water merge into the Chesapeake Bay.

Michener's Chesapeake Scenic Byway also links together the people and places of Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's and Talbot counties in their efforts to preserve and enhance their unique ways of life. The Byway helps these communities to maintain the character defining features and settings of their historic communities, farms, landscapes and waterways. The Byway encourages people to linger and learn, contributing added vitality to the livability of Maryland's Eastern Shore.



Figure 1-6 Choptank River; Cambridge

Overall Regional Goal & How the Byway Fits into the Region:

Create a seamless travel experience along one byway for the entire length of Maryland's Eastern Shore from Cecil County to Crisfield with coordinated interpretation and wayfinding. Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway will fit in to this regional context by focusing on the preservation, enhancement and interpretation of the region's rich and multilayered maritime heritage.

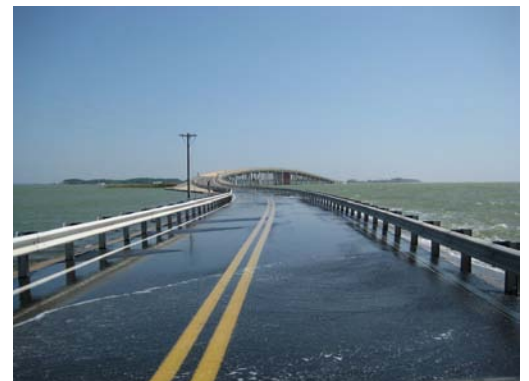


Figure 1-7, MD 335, near Hoopersville



Figure 1-8 Skipton Landing, Talbot County



Figure 1-9 Locally grown in Cambridge



Figure 1-10 Blackwater Wildlife Refuge

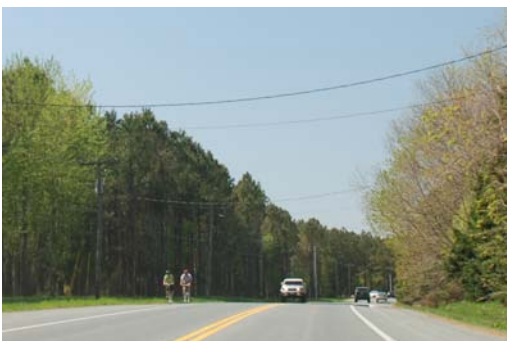


Figure 1-11 Bicycling on MD 33

Preservation and Conservation Goal:

Plan for and implement preservation and conservation measures that will ensure that the Byway's character defining features will be maintained, including its related historic sites, landscapes, towns and shorelines.

Resource Enhancement Goal:

Expand both the number and quality of Byway facilities as needed to interpret the region's nationally significant maritime heritage and provide a distinctive and compelling travel experience, including expanding public access to natural areas, soft landings for hand carried watercraft, and opportunities for supporting non-motorized recreational activities.

Heritage, Agricultural and Eco-tourism Goal:

Establish the Byway as a tool to extend visitor stays by coordinating the storytelling, interpretation and education associated with the region's maritime heritage with opportunities for outdoor recreation and related "farm to table" tours and tastings.

Interpretive Goal:

Use the Byway as a tool to increase awareness of the region's nationally significant maritime heritage by developing a cohesive story that resonates with visitors through the interplay of Native American, African and European Colonial cultures.

Transportation Goal:

Manage the roadway and roadside character in a manner that accommodates the wide range of needs for all roadway users including commuters, visitors, bicyclists, pedestrians and neighbors while maintaining the character defining features of the Byway context.

Management Goal:

Build upon the efforts of the Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway Alliance and formalize the four-county cooperative efforts as part of a larger nine-county Eastern Shore network of heritage areas, byways, water trails, gateways, and natural areas.