



Memorandum:

To: MHNR CPP Update Advisory Group
From: Jim Klein
Date: 5/15/12
Subject: Outline for MHNR Model Community Design Guidelines*

*The model community design guidelines are intended to be a companion document to the guidelines for the road and right-of-way published in 2006 entitled "Context Sensitive Solutions for Maryland's Historic National Road."

I. Introduction

Describes the context of the Maryland Historic National Road, the relationship of the guidelines to the Corridor Partnership Plan Update, why the guidelines are needed and how to use and adapt the guidelines to a specific community or project.

A. The Maryland Historic National Road in Context: The National Road: A Nation-Building Highway *(text adapted from 2001 CPP)*

Originally called the Cumberland Road, the National Road was the first federally planned and funded highway in the United States. In 1806, Congress approved a national road to connect the port of Baltimore with the burgeoning Northwest Territory. The purpose of the road was to provide a direct overland route by cutting straight across the Appalachian Mountains. The route was seen as a "portage" between the waters of the Ohio River and the Baltimore Harbor. The route west from Cumberland to the Ohio River was constructed with federal funds, a controversial and major internal improvement commissioned by the federal government. A historic marker in Cumberland marks the origin of the National Road.

The connecting Maryland turnpikes from the Baltimore Inner Harbor to the City of Cumberland were privately funded, since many of the pikes already existed or were currently under construction and did not require a federal mandate. This system of pikes eventually became known as the National Pike. Together, the National Pike and the National Road became the Nation's first federally funded highway to the west, often referred to simply as the National Road.

West of Cumberland, the route is generally referred to as the National Road or Cumberland Road. Various segments of the route east of Cumberland have had other names, such as the Bank Road, Baltimore Pike, Frederick Pike, and Boonsborough Pike (former spelling of Boonsboro). On present day street maps, the historic route still has several names, such as the Old National Pike, Western Pike, National Pike, and National Highway. The route is also labeled on highway maps as MD 144, US 40, US Alternate 40, and Scenic US 40 in various segments. In towns, the route became "Main Street".

The Maryland Historic National Road follows one of the most historically and culturally significant transportation routes in the United States. For its first fifty years, the National Road was the most important highway westward. The story of its decline and resurrection over the next 100 years is revealed in the visible layers of building and rebuilding along its entire length. According to the cultural geographer John Jakle: "Here history is thickly layered in surviving veneers of material culture along a highway trajectory of true historical importance" (Raitz 254). The "National Pike Towns" have a new opportunity to envision the next layer of history— one that captures the enthusiasm for the past as a way to imagine the future.

B. MHNR Corridor Partnership Plan Update

Since the original Corridor Partnership Plan was completed in 2001, a number of the original circumstances that formed the basis for the first plan have changed. The plan update is needed to

- Examine the changing external influences on the MHNR corridor including changes in land use, transportation, and trends in heritage-based tourism
- Confirm and/or update the plan's vision and goals based on those changes
- Update and expand upon the land conservation and historic preservation priorities
- Update the primary Byway map to identify existing and publicly accessible points of interest
- Update and expand upon the role of current partners and identify potential new partnerships that may be needed to address changing circumstances and issues
- Update and expand upon high priority actions for implementation, and identify new and potential sources of funding such as water quality initiatives (Chesapeake Bay Program)
- Develop a set of model design guidelines that can be utilized by local governments, property owners and interested citizens to shape new development in a manner that is sensitive to the historic context of Maryland's Historic National Road

C. The Need for Model Design Guidelines along Maryland's Historic National Road

Over the past ten years since the initial Corridor Partnership Plan for Maryland's Historic National Road was written, nearly 5,489 acres of rural land that can be seen from Maryland's Historic National Road (within its "viewshed") were converted to non-rural uses. Of those converted acres, approximately 56% were outside of the Priority Funding Areas (the "Smart Growth" Areas Act of 1997, Chapter 759 of the Laws of Maryland of 1997, requires the State to target funding for "growth-related" projects to Priority Funding Areas – PFAs – beginning October 1, 1998).

Plan Maryland is Governor O'Malley's effort to improve coordination between state agencies and local governments by creating a plan to stimulate economic development and revitalization in towns, cities and other existing communities that have facilities to support growth. The effort will, in part, be implemented by targeting preservation and revitalization dollars through a framework of geographically identified areas called "Planning Areas." There are five planning areas that relate to the original PFAs and the efforts to target resources within those PFAs.

- Targeted Growth and Revitalization Areas - Areas within PFAs including Sustainable Communities and Enterprise Zones
- Established Community Areas within PFAs - Primarily existing stable residential areas
- Future Growth Areas - Areas identified by municipalities and counties for future growth
- Large Lot Development Areas - Areas where development exists on larger lots (outside of PFAs)
- Rural Resource Areas - Areas where development is least preferred, where no public water and sewer service is planned and where agricultural and natural resources are the predominant use

Plan Maryland is intended to provide additional tools to guide growth within the PFAs. GrowthPRINT is a GIS based tool designed to further highlight areas within Priority Funding Areas that are currently being targeted for infill, revitalization and redevelopment.

Given the statewide and local efforts to encourage development within existing cities and towns, there is a need to develop a vision for how this type of development can occur along the Historic National Road. The model design guidelines can help provide that vision by bringing out the kinds of best practices, where available, and by illustrating approaches to community design and development that help to reinforce the character defining features of the Historic National Road where best practices are not readily available.

II. The Character Defining Features of the Historic National Road in Maryland

This section will describe the character defining features of the Historical National Road by period and by geography. The character defining features of each of the eras identified below will be further illustrated with photographs and supporting text

A. **The "Heyday" of the National Road** – This corresponds to the time when the National Road corridor was the primary east-west route and the gateway to the "Old Northwest" (approximately 1810-1850). Many of the repeating elements that were found along the route are still present today, including mileposts, mile houses, inns and taverns and stone arch bridges.

B. **“Agriculture and Trade” Era** – This corresponds to the time associated with the mechanization of agriculture and the expansion of commerce and industry brought about by the railroads and the canal system (approximately 1850-1910). Although during this time the National Road experienced a steady decline, many of this era’s associated resources are still evident, including Victorian mansions and homes, commercial buildings, and well maintained farmsteads that are all visible from the Byway. Several historic districts along the route recognize the significance of this era. Railroad and canal resources are located close to the corridor.

C. **“Revival” Period** – This corresponds to the increase in popularity of the automobile (approximately 1910-1960), resulting in a resurgence of construction of highway-related services such as motels and tourist cabins, scenic overlooks, road houses, garages, and later, early commercial centers. Sometimes, these new services were remodeled or rebuilt at the same locations as the originals.

D. The Growth of Cities and Towns along the MHNH

Beyond the Revival Period, the cities and towns along the MHNH have continued to grow and change. Bypasses were built with commercial businesses following them to the outskirts of town. This resulted in the abandonment of the revival era automobile route. Interstate travel expanded creating new divided highways parallel to the National Road. This further isolated some of the communities where interchanges were not built and further magnified the change where interchanges were built. The result was another era of decline for the original Pike Towns. Efforts to reclaim some of the towns have succeeded, especially where geography, historic preservation, and ingenuity have played an important role, such as in Frederick, Maryland.

E. Guiding Growth Today in Maryland

Today the State of Maryland continues its efforts to direct growth related policies, funds and related public investments towards established communities with conservation related polices and investments focusing on rural areas. Plan Maryland, as it is implemented, will help to both preserve the rural areas and stimulate growth in existing cities and towns.

III. Guiding the Form and Appearance of Growth and Development along the MHNH

This section will provide guidance on how new development can be accommodated along the Historic National Road in Maryland while maintaining its character defining features.

A. Process and Approach

1. Different ways to use the guidelines

- a. Municipality can adopt all or a portion of the guidelines to assist property owners and developers along the MHNH
- b. Non-profit organizations can use the guidelines to work directly with a property owner to educate them about how to preserve or maintain the character defining features
- c. A property owner may want to use the guidelines to think about a future change to their property

2. Determining the Appropriate Context

- a. Rural Areas – areas outside of the PFAs
- b. Transition Areas – areas within PFAs that are planned for future growth (either in rural or low density uses)
- c. Cities and Towns – areas within PFAs and identified in the Growth Print model with existing infrastructure and services in place

3. Determining Design and Management Goals

- a. **Preserve the character defining features** – Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form of identified character-defining features of the corridor. Preservation treatments will

generally apply to the original resources of either the Heyday or Revival periods of the HNR.

- b. **Maintain the character defining features** – This generally applies to the majority of the corridor where the goal is to retain the character defining features of the MHNR's setting, while accommodating the desired growth and development activity.
- c. **Enhance the overall character** – This applies to those areas that no longer have any of the character defining features that are evocative of either the Heyday or Revival periods of the Maryland Historic National Road.

B. Model Community Guidelines

The following topics will be covered by the guidelines and illustrated by best practice examples, photographs, or one of six case studies that explain how the guidelines would apply.

1. Rural Guidelines

- a. Rural – farmstead or homestead
- b. Rural – National Road [feature]
- c. Rural – small-scale commercial
- d. Rural – interchange or crossroads

2. Transition Area Guidelines

- a. Transition – rural but planned for future growth and development
- b. Transition – large lot residential
- c. Transition – large scale commercial
- d. Transition – strip commercial corridor

3. Urban Guidelines

- a. Urban – historic edge of town
- b. Urban – neighborhood
- c. Urban – Historic Main Street
- d. Urban – Downtown

4. Unique Situations

- a. Utilities and Infrastructure
- b. National Road Heyday era resources

C. Best Practice Examples