



**Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.**

**Memorandum:**

To: Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Advisory Committee and Interested Stakeholders [SHA District and Central Office staff]  
From: Jim Klein  
Date: January 20, 2010 [Committee Draft]  
Subject: Michener's Chesapeake Country CMP  
Transportation Related Goals and Strategies

**Recommended Vision Statement for CMP (first draft - 2010)**

*For reference, below is the initial draft of the vision statement for the byway*

Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway weaves together the multi-faceted layers of maritime heritage – from Native American to the Modern era – reflecting the distinct sense of time and place as captured in James Michener's Chesapeake. The byway serves as the main spine for heritage tourism in the heart of Maryland's Eastern Shore – helping the heritage traveler to find and enjoy its distinctive destinations and beautiful places where land and water merge into the Chesapeake Bay.

The byway also links together the people and places of Talbot, Caroline and Dorchester Counties in their efforts to preserve and enhance their truly unique way of life. The byway helps these communities to maintain the character defining features and the settings of their historic towns, farms, landscapes and waterways. The byway encourages people to linger and learn – contributing added vitality to the livability of the Maryland's Eastern Shore.

**GOAL: Transportation Strategies for the Road Itself**

(for discussion January 2011)

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

**Issues Identified to Date (from Advisory Committee and Public Meetings)**

- *Traffic speed and pedestrian safety, especially approaching rural villages*
- *Managing bicycle use especially where shoulders are narrow*
- *Future of the Dover Bridge/crossing of Choptank River, providing access to the river as part of the reconstruction project*
- *Context sensitive approach for future bridge replacements – maintain open views to water, bridge widths same as lane widths<sup>1</sup>, fishing off bridges as an issue*
- *Wayfinding – consolidating signs, linking route marking with existing numbered route markers to eliminate some signs*

---

<sup>1</sup> This comment from one of our public meetings refers to the need to ensure that bridges fit within their historic, natural, scenic, recreational, archaeological and cultural context and are not built wider than necessary. SHA's Bridge Office indicates, "There is a minimum bridge width criteria that must be met in order to obtain federal funds. Frequently on narrow roads this will result in a bridge width greater than the roadway width. The minimum bridge width does allow bicycle compatibility. Note that bridges have parapets, which cause the driver to operate more towards the center of the road (shy distance). Wider bridges are a good thing. We will design our bridges to meet the acceptable AASHTO criteria." It should also be noted that there is inherent flexibility in meeting AASHTO criteria that allows designers to address the bridge's context in a more sensitive manner.

- *Signage –enforcement of off-premise sign prohibitions on any state designated byway that is also a federal aid primary or NHS route*
- *Access management – minimizing impact of new development access permit requests*
- *Route 50 – new guardrail has taken away some of the rural character of Route 50 [Raised by Talbot County Commissioners]*
- *Coordination of “Tourism Area Corridor Signs” with wayfinding for sites and destinations along the Byway*
- *Sea-level rise and vulnerability of certain portions of the byway to more frequent flooding*
- *Suitability of the route for various types of vehicles (such as RV’s and tour buses)*

### **Potential Transportation Strategies for Consideration**

---

1. Utilize context sensitive solutions approach, as documented in “*Context Sensitive Solutions for Work on Maryland’s Scenic Byways*”, to establish clear and direct lines of communication between and among the Maryland State Scenic Byway Coordinator, SHA District Engineering Staff, SHA Central Office (Access Management, Bridge, OED, Planning) staff and County/Municipal officials as a means of communicating the desire to preserve, maintain and/or enhance the character defining features of the byway corridor as projects and programs are implemented along the roadway.

*Rationale: There is a need to ensure that SHA staff doing work along a scenic byway are aware of its designation, aware of the corridor management plan, and aware of the efforts to manage the route for heritage- and nature-based tourism. The Highway Reference Manual is one potential tool that is routinely consulted at the beginning of every project.*

2. Address speed and safety issues along the byway by utilizing traffic calming, pedestrian safety, access management, and innovative intersection design that are appropriate to a rural, scenic or historic context as a means of generally slowing traffic along the byway and approaching byway communities.

*Rationale: By utilizing methods to increase driver awareness that they are entering towns and to introduce design elements that physically slow drivers down as they enter a town, the driver will increase the amount of reaction time and decision time that is available to avoid conflicts. In addition, the severity of crashes is greatly reduced at lower operating speeds. Design guidance will be discussed for ensuring that these innovative measures are also sensitive to their rural, scenic, and historic context, along with examples of different techniques for consideration. Both will be presented at the meeting including the use of small splitter islands and other adjustments to the horizontal road alignment approaching towns (designed as a self-enforcing method for slowing vehicular operating speeds).*

3. Focus efforts on improving the safety of mapped bicycle routes by first adopting more aggressive roadway maintenance practices to make best use of existing paved surfaces. Start with the strategy that the best bicycle facility is simply a correctly designed, properly built and well-maintained road. The following techniques should be utilized prior to considering any modification to the roadway for bicycle facilities along the Byway
  - Start with the assumption that a state or nationally-designated byway is attractive to bicyclists because of the same characteristics that would be compromised if a road is widened to accommodate them – and therefore has a specific set of constraints that need to be considered prior to adding shoulder width or other bicycling facilities

- Focus on shared use of existing paved surface rather than striping a specific area as a bicycle lane
- Remove encroaching vegetation and built up sedimentation on existing pavement
- Utilize bicycle friendly drainage details
- Providing “share the road signage”<sup>2</sup>
- Consider parallel and low volume routes when available, rather than widening the byway to increase shoulder width

Where feasible, provide additional width of paved surface on those routes with higher traffic volumes or in developing areas in a manner that will not detract from the character defining features of the byway and according the following criteria

- First, develop measures to slow travel speeds to reduce need for additional pavement
- Focus efforts for additional pavement in areas with greatest need (higher volumes<sup>3</sup>, higher density of driveways or intersecting streets, long ascending grades)
- Where additional pavement width is needed, carefully insert alterations to blend with existing topographic and drainage patterns
- In wooded areas, consider preservation of mature roadside trees by minimizing cut and fill sections in critical root zones, or consider alternatives to adding pavement (e.g. share the road section where space is limited)
- Where additional pavement width is needed, consider the potential impact on operating speeds (higher operating speeds typically result from wider pavement)
- Where insufficient roadway pavement width can be obtained due to right-of-way and/or Byway-related constraints, utilize the “share the road” pavement marking system noted above

*Rationale – the byway is a natural magnet for bicycle touring due to both the interesting towns and countryside that it traverses, but also due to the relatively flat terrain. There is a need to manage this use over time to minimize future conflicts between the varying types of roadway users.*

4. Develop byway specific guidelines that utilize context sensitive solutions (CSS) and smart-transportation and smart-growth principles as an approach to ensuring that future modifications to the roadway and to adjoining land uses will retain the character defining features of the byway route. The purpose of the CSS approach is to ensure that the fullest range of issues, including both land use and transportation issues, are identified and addressed together as part of the planning and design process. The guidelines would represent the points of view of the users of the byway and adjoining property owners, giving voice to the Byway in any land use or transportation issue that arises along in the future.

Guidance for the following elements will be provided in the CMP

- desired character of rural areas along the byway
- desired character of transition areas approaching the community entrance

---

<sup>2</sup> According to SHA Guidance, the following are examples of where SHARE THE ROAD signs may be used:

- where bicycling conditions are poor (i.e. locations with high volumes of traffic, operating speeds greater than 35 mph, no shoulder space, or poor pavement condition along roadway edge);
- areas of roadway with poor sight distance;
- transitions to shared travel lanes at the end of shoulders or bicycle lanes;
- where an obstacle prevents bicyclists from continuing on an otherwise rideable shoulder.

<sup>3</sup> Maryland defines low traffic volumes (<1,000 ADT) and/or low speeds (<20mph) Source: Maryland SHA Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidelines,

- desired character of community streets associated with the byway (village or urban)
- maintain character defining features while incorporating modern roundabouts
- maintaining character defining features while incorporating traffic calming measures
- maintaining character defining features while managing access to a scenic byway
- accommodating bicycles on a scenic byway
- alternative treatments for shoulders and guardrails
- alternative treatments for drainage and stormwater management
- maintaining the character of bridges along a scenic byway
- incorporating roadway related signage along a scenic byway (wayfinding)
- addressing off-premise signage issues along a byway
- utility corridors, communication towers, and other potential intrusions
- lighting
- screening

*Rationale – the CMP can help to provide guidance to staff doing work along a scenic byway on different approaches that they can consider in order to maintain the character defining features of the byway while addressing the functional requirements of the roadway. Examples of character defining features and different techniques that can be utilized to maintain those features will be shown at the meeting on January 27<sup>th</sup>.*

5. Develop a specific set of land use and transportation guidelines for transition areas approaching the major byway communities of Easton, St. Michaels, Tilghman's Island, Denton, Hurlock, East New Market, Cambridge, Vienna, and Federalsburg to include locations of speed zones approaching communities, transition areas, entry features, and in-town details.

*Rationale – Most of the pressure for change along the byway occurs at the edges of existing towns*

6. For any byway-related enhancement project utilizing public right-of-way (such as an interpretive wayside, streetscape project, traffic calming or roadside landscape improvements) a 3rd party agreement must be signed and formalized prior to implementing outlining the responsible parties for installation, establishment, and long-term maintenance of the enhancement areas. This must be submitted along with any application for funding.

*Rationale – any investment in roadway related enhancements needs to be maintained over time. SHA does not have the resources to maintain these sites and projects over time. Communities that work hard to gain funding to install enhancements along a Byway sometimes assume that it will be maintained by someone else. The MOA is needed to confirm in writing who is responsible for the maintenance of a particular site.*

7. Signing for the byway will be modified over time to reflect the new signing policy for byways by the Office of Traffic and Safety (OOTTS). A link to this policy has been placed on the web site. Upon receipt of FY 2010 grant funding and in conjunction with the publication of a new statewide guidebook, SHA will begin replacing the existing byway signs to reflect the new sign system. Modifications to the route made through this corridor planning effort will also be reflected in the new sign installations and guidebook.

*Rationale – Consolidating the byway directional sign with the route marking sign will eliminate a large number of the free standing signs, thereby reducing sign clutter, reducing driver confusion, and reducing maintenance costs.*