

**Advisory Committee
Meeting #1
June 25, 2007
Comments on Cards**

Green – Top Three Assets

Scenic beauty of the trail.
Historic structures still in historic settings.
Proximity to large urban areas accessibility.

Ecotourism.
Maintaining and enhancing historic and cultural heritage.
Recreational advantages.

Theme is appropriate to regions base history. Attractions fully illustrate the chosen theme.
Almost limitless attractions of significance to choose theme.
East side of county possesses abundant beautiful scenery.

Proximity to water.
Strong tourism and heritage program.
Nationally significance of the story of religious tolerance.

Historic

- College of Southern Maryland (on property of former St. Mary's Academy).
- Tudor hall – County seat (Leonardtown).
- Museum (old jail).

Note: More developed historically than the Lexington Park Area – What is the largest area in SMC?

Natural

- Water, water, water.
- Open Space.
- Beautiful Forests.

Nationally significant religious history.
Rural character includes water.
Interesting churches and cemeteries.

Beautiful churches and historic sites which are great sites to visit for pilgrims and tourist interested in the story of religious freedom in America.
Awesome natural and recreational resources such as Nanjemoy area, Zekiah Swamp Islands and Point Lookout and St. Clements.
Still a good bit of unspoiled land-agricultural, forested, etc.

St. Clements Island.
St. Mary's City.
Nanjemoy and Point Lookout and other open space scenic views especially of the Potomac.

St. Mary's City but pretty obvious.
Spectacular views of the Potomac River such as Chapel Point.
An area history that goes back to the mid-1600s (not everybody has that).
CSM.

Potomac River views.
Tiny churches with big history.
Rural setting.

St. Clements (Blackstone) Island Museum.
St. Mary's City.
Christ Church, Chaptico.

of sites.
Diversity of Sites.
Quality of many back roads.

Point Lookout.
St. Mary's City.
MD 224 in Charles County.

Port Tobacco.
Chapel Point – unbelievable view!
Point Lookout.

St. Mary's City.
St. Clements Island.
Leonardtown.

Rt. 234 is very scenic.
There are a lot of beautiful churches w/ a history in the area.
This corridor has some of the most scenic farms in the two counties.

St. Mary's City.
Water Features/Landscape.
Architecture.

St. Ignatius Church.
Friendship Farm Park.
St. Mary's City.

Unique story to tell.
Nanjemoy Natural Area.
St. Mary's City.

Community support for religious heritage preservation.
Remaining view sheds intact.
Numerous structures representative of theme (religious byway).

Historic sites, churches and otherwise.
Interesting shops, restaurants.
Gorgeous scenery.

Historic story is compelling/intact sites.
Proximity/incorporation of water and maritime sites.
Rural nature of much of the road.

Wonderful Maryland Historic Significance.
Point Lookout SP; Civil War Importance.
St Mary's City; Potomac River; US significance.

Port Tobacco Courthouse – reconstructed.
Smallwood State Park.
Churches
- Old Durham.
- St Ignatius.
- Christ Episcopal –Chaptico.
St. Mary's City.

Open Space; scenic landscape.
The many churches
Active recreation areas, water and parks.

Key public access historic sites (Port Tobacco, St. MC).
Well developed and maintained public roads.
Broad community of vocational and professional scholars and those interested in history.

Proximity to Potomac River – provides access to unique/beautiful natural areas.
Abundance of sites of historic and cultural significance to our counties to public lands.

Passes through some small towns with character not yet scarred by development.

Yellow – Three Biggest Challenges

Including the African American History and Culture – There is the “Drayden School” that’s on the byway.

Lack of museums – cultural centers for people to visit.

Patuxent River is not on the byway. It has a large military draw. It is also the home of the African Monument of St. Mary’s County.

No Obvious linear of chronological story line.

Mixed use modern Development.

Geography: Southern Maryland is not on the way to anywhere else.

Uncontrolled growth - commercial and residential.

Uncoordinated transportation improvements.

Poor design w/ future residential commercial and institutional enhancements including churches.

Preservation/development pressure.

Developing sound interpretation.

Key site enhancements.

Traffic.

Road SHA maintenance (lack of).

Threatening development.

Road Design i.e. lane, surfacing, design.

Traffic Flow.

Area Growth/Development.

Development along Rt. 234.

Lack of hotels/places to stay along ---- corridor.

Lack of in interpretive sites in ---area.

Keep MD 5 character as free from development as possible.
Adequate, safe, pull – offs.
Keep Sty. Mary's area as City free from development as possible.

The religious story begins in the middle of the byway.
Religious freedom story not evident in the upper loop.
All the fingers are "out and back" experiences.

Long route - keeping interest.
Available parking at sites.
Safe pull- offs.

Development pressures.
It's share to get inter-county cooperation.
Tendency to allow private i.e. landowner, priorities, to prevail.

Development pressure.
Amount of traffic.
Diversity of sites.

Maintaining rural character.
Clearly marking route.
Getting visitors here to drive it and then get out of their cars!

Roadway Directions.
Access to locations that need boat/water transportation.
Places to stay/lodge.

Long distances between sites.
Lack of lodging on eastern side of county.

Governmental and public support.
Resources for project.
Transportation system improvement of roadways, public transportation access too remote.

Projected rapid growth of region.
Lack of political will to protect scenic qualities.
Funding to implement programs and improvements.

Ever increasing development pressure from DC-Threatens view-scapes and integrity of natural areas if not managed.
Power plant plans at Indian Head and Swann.
Shoreline degradation from years of building burdened shoreline/traditional storm water conveyance.

Making the theme – Religious Toleration – manifest in a historically accurate, honest and meaningful way; this area and Maryland in general, was not always tolerant.
Vesting the community in the project so that they will contribute to its growth and enhancement; making the byway more than a sequence of signs.
Developing a key node, but long neglected resource, Port Tobacco.

Balancing road safety with keeping the scale of the road at its present level.
Commercial and residential “ugly” areas.
Signs- directional and local advertising sign clutter.

Funding (State and local).
Good lodging and eating establishments.
Upgrading access and entrances.
Cooperation for possibilities.

Story doesn't chronologically parallel the visitor experience unless they start from the water at St. Clements's Island.
Many points of entry for the visitor need orientation and way finding from several points.
Sensitive subject matter religious toleration- but only for Christians.

Signage.
Visitors Centers.
Advertising.

Traffic congestion.
Signage Problems.
Speed of vehicles.

Rural preservation/development sprawl.
Access to water.
Cluttered view sheds-signs, electric lines.

Speed limits fine for locals, not for tourists.
Only Catholic and Episcopal Church? Nature? Or AME?
Lack of political will to protect or acknowledge byway.

Rapidly vanishing view-scapes.
Road quality and size in some areas.
I would list the 1st challenge twice.

Blue Cards – Vision (Describe a visit along the Religious Freedom Byway assuming that the corridor management plan was a success.)

Route 5 (St. Mary's County) – it turns into a single lane highway with the overall feel of a parkway – lower speed limits, interesting access routes to towns/housing/commercial areas that include brick bridges and overpasses or another construction material that is sustainable and speaks to the environment.

My vision – Multicultural experiences for all who travel the Byway- not just a glimpse of some history; It is inclusive. Development of recreational facilities for youth.

Well coordinated driving tour w/ map guidelines, panels at Key sites, web sites, etc.... that tells the significant stories related to this byway. There is a self sustainable organization dedicating to promoting and preserving the resources.

There are multi-modal opportunities tot experience the significant resources. There is an unspoiled travel experience along the entire route. Beautifully enhanced roads, museums, main streets, etc.....

A series of unexpectedly interesting and scenic stops that offer insights into the people, issues and unfolding stories of the struggle for religious freedom in Maryland – and a journey that is well – mapped and relaxing.

Development would be limited on Route 234 so that a 500 foot buffer could be maintained on the road.

The route 5 corridor has maintained its beauty and ease of travel. Development has been slowed.

The byway will have landscaped stopping points with information to describe each asset. Lots of information and handouts to take home.

Dear Kids:

We took a wonderful drive over the weekend along the RFT Byway. We saw spectacular scenery along the Potomac River, even some bald eagles! We spent one afternoon paddling up the Najemoy Creek and topped the day off with a wonderful dinner at Billy! I was impressed with Point Lookout – it was my first visit there! Love you and miss you. Mom

We just spent a wonderful day in Port Tobacco – better than Williamsburg! Great opportunity to see how life was lived in the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th 20th centuries; Native American settlements, farms, small stores – loved the trail to Chapel Point-steep hill – reopened by wonderful view of the river.

A gentle drive to a variety of historical, recreational, and scenic sites all with easy to use interpretation guides, signs etc. In many spots easy access by water even if just small boat. Maybe a land and sea byway.

Post card from future/future view:

What a trip back in time, when the concept of religious freedom was new, still a struggle today, so important to see the history.

We had a wonderful travel experience; we learned about the beginning of Maryland and saw the transformation of 400 years in 4 days.

Water trail and guided tour boat experiences to recreate landing in Maryland to found a new community that is religiously tolerant. An audio tape for self guided visitor tours on land. Orientation film in Visitor's Centers to capture the emotionally complex threads of the storyline. Living history programs w/characters that founded the colony – multiple perspectives.

Hey guys,

Well, this proved to be an interesting trip. We saw some great Potomac River scenery and on a clear day you can see Virginia. I was particularly impressed with the clear directions (unlike a meeting I first attended for the Advisory Board), and guide booklets and printed literature.

Clear signage with pull over sites that interpret significant views between sites. Trail passes that a one stop purchase, will allow visitors into all attractions.

10 – 20 years.

Enhancement of living areas along the Byway. Small towns where mostly rural areas are now.

A day long drive or bike ride along the trail stopping at key spots, to enjoy the natural or historic features.

Visit in 10-20 years:

A beautiful, picturesque site/byway that characterizes southern Maryland rather than development and DC suburb. Preserved/maintained sites of historic significance. An increased regional appreciation for History and Nature evident in local residents' enjoyment of the byway.

Can't afford the postage, so I will go with vision: A truly public resource serving residents as well as visitors that tie into such local programming as lectures, panels, debates, festivals, and exhibits that don't just celebrate, but explore the development and continuing tensions of religion, race and class.

We traveled the Religious Freedom Byway and it is amazing how all the history dovetails so well. We never got lost and feel like we discovered a world so different than anywhere we've been before.

Some things are as they had to have been; Rt. 6, 224, Chapel Point Road, 234, 238. Still farming going on. Open space – farms, wetlands.

Too many houses. Crowded. Decrease in large farms.

Smooth ride with gentle transitions through levels of rural to urban development. Easy, well marked access to sites. Visitor amenities – restaurants, inns, etc. that compliment the byway experience.

Dear future,
Congestion along the byway and overdevelopment in some areas.

Thank you for recognizing that alone among the 1st three settlements in the new World, St. Mary's City was the community that acted upon the freedoms America stands for. I especially appreciate roads, bike paths, and water trails that accommodate a slower paced discovery of our heritage.

Southern Maryland is beautiful! We toured the Nanjemoy Environmental Area and saw bald eagles at Friendship Farm Park. We learned a great deal about Maryland and its religious history ending our journey at St. Mary's City. You must see it!! And bring the kids.

Dear Tom,
Just got back from Purse State Park fossil hunting. Can you believe there are still trees there? I thought you had to see them in a museum. You must plan a visit, soon! I also saw a farm, an arrowhead and saw eagles. Love Jayanna

Pink Cards - Important Physical Enhancement

Work with State parks to make Point Lookout better accessible after new rip-rap to prevent flooding.

Designate Pt. Tobacco Historic Area – restrict (oh-ok-“guide”) development.

Cooperation of many different government and private groups with very different agendas.

Single project: Interpretation that is timeless in its ability to educate and remind people that this freedom was hard fought and precious to keep.

Roadside appeal for divers. Must buffer all new development with forests and make farm land that's converted to houses in forests (residue).

St. Mary's Court: Monument Park Cultural Center – specifically (1) A tribute to the United States colored troops – Medal of Honor Winners who served in the Civil War – display all medal of honor winners from St. Mary's County – I think there were only 3 – the African American men were James Harris, William Barnes.

Physical Enhancement – Significant reduction in traffic congestion and unsightly modern intrusions.

Great opportunities to touch vistas on Universal issues-freedom of expression at all entry points. Way finding signage, multiple kiosks and orientation exhibits at Visitor's Centers w/ film and audio tours that captures the emotion behind the story. Brochures, self guided and guided tours, audio tours, living history water trail tours on a historic boat - recreate the experience and tensions that led to the settlement of Maryland.

Physical enhancements for easily getting into St. Mary's City or Jefferson and Peterson Park.

Clear directional signage with mileage indicators.

Cooperation among entities. Community endorsement.

Protection of the scenic qualities of the trail through land conservation, zoning and proper subdivision design.

- 1 – Easement to take control of viewscape.
- 2 – Managed development in adjacent communities.
- 3 - Development in towns – multi-use, preservation of each town's character, etc.

Port Tobacco is a critical resource on the western end of the proposed byway. It was the long time capital of the County, an important seat of the Anglican Church in the county, and – as county seat- the scene of a number of controversies over rights of all sorts. This, potentially, is a major tourist destination.

A collection of interpretive and marketing items that include:

- detailed map guide
- waysides
- audio guide (downloadable)
- interactive website
- tour guides

To make project successful; Establish a permanent management system; Create a strong story that links the history; and also featuring active recreation. Good signage that is regularly maintained and updated.

Vision and mechanics to get the word out about what is here.

Slow growth. Decay of road beds. Stop removing trees cover on roadways.

Guidelines to manage development along the corridor.

Idea from Rural Legacy – “Byway Legacy”.

Controlling traffic speed and making possible casual stops along the byway.

Key site coordination and enhancement. In Charles County; Port Tobacco Historic District.

Develop protection of rural areas to protect natural resources.

Road design: 1 – Access/2 – Materials/ 3-Landscaping

Consistent on interpretive signs of the various historic churches.

Signing so people can easily follow route.