



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

### Memorandum:

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To: Randy Williams (UCDD), Dawn Kupferer (UCDD)  
From: Jim Klein, Phil Thomason and Carolyn Brackett  
Date: 10 April 2012  
Subject: **Walton Road Scenic Byway Public Meeting Notes [DRAFT]**

On April 2 and 3, 2012, the Upper Cumberland Development District sponsored four public meetings to provide information about the Walton Road Scenic Byway corridor planning process and to gather ideas about how the byway can help to attract visitors and enhance the quality of life for those that live along its route.

The meetings were held at the following times and locations:

- Monday, April 2nd 12:00pm (CST) at the Crossville Depot
- Monday, April 2nd – 6:00pm (EST) at the Roane Alliance Conference Room, Kingston
- Tuesday, April 3rd – 11:30am (CST) at the Smith County Chamber of Commerce Conference Room, Carthage
- Tuesday, April 4th – 4:00pm (CST), at the First Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, Cookeville

At each of the four meetings, Randy Williams welcomed everyone and gave a brief background on the Upper Cumberland Development District applying for and receiving a grant to develop a Corridor Management Plan for the Walton Road Scenic Byway and the selection of Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects to develop the plan. Mr. Williams also stressed the importance of public involvement in shaping the plan.

Jim Klein gave an overview of the team's previous work on scenic byways and the emphasis he places on working together with local communities to link places along the byway. He explained that in the past few months the team has been doing fieldwork to identify sites along the byway, to understand the area's history and to meet with people who are interested in developing the scenic byway. He asked everyone to introduce himself or herself and to state the organization or group they represented.

Jim then gave an overview of the purpose of a Corridor Management Plan (CMP). A CMP lists actions to increase awareness of the byway, increase economic impact associated with tourism and help to maintain or improve communities' livability. Recognition as a scenic byway is a "seal of approval" that helps with tourism promotion and tells visitors that a trip will be worth their time.

To give meeting participants an understanding of the range of activities that could grow from a scenic byway effort, Jim shared examples from three scenic byways he has been involved with:

- Historic National Road (Maryland section of a six-state route) – The road was designated a National Scenic Byway in 2001 and the six-state route gained All American Road designation in 2002. Partners working on the Maryland Historic National Road received \$1.6 million in new funding within two years for interpretive installations, design

- guidelines, marketing programs and facility enhancements. They placed 66 interpretive signs along the route and developed exhibits at visitor centers. Today they regularly update and print a map and guide. Other activities over the past 10 years include working with the Maryland State Highway Administration to produce *Context Sensitive Solutions for Work on Scenic Byways*, reconstructing a historic stone arch bridge and improving corridors with the removal of billboards and adding more landscaping.
- Journey through Hallowed Ground – This byway travels from Charlottesville, Virginia to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania and is in the boundaries of a National Heritage Area. They have undertaken many projects including development of a Certified Tourism Ambassador program for frontline hospitality industry staff, a summer camp for middle school, annual bike rides along the byway and working with the region’s 13 national park units to share their interpretive expertise.
  - Delaware River Valley Scenic Byway – This byway is located in rural Pennsylvania. Byway planners have developed projects that will benefit the local community including building a “green” welcome center that is a model for anyone interested in constructing a sustainable building. Other projects include promoting local foods and restaurants, educating front-line hospitality industry employees about the natural and cultural history, developing interpretation through the development of a local trail system.

Moving into discussion about the Walton Road Scenic Byway, Jim said the planning process includes asking if there is a theme or identity that should be used to help shape the Corridor Management Plan. He referenced the Cumberland Plateau National Heritage Area Corridor Feasibility Study, which has the primary theme of the “Old Southwest Frontier”.

Phil Thomason provided examples of places along the route that could help interpret the following potential subthemes for the Walton Road Scenic Byway include:

- Migration Routes – Examples of the original road traces, stands and crossroads are still visible to help tell the story.
- Frontier Landscape – Views can still be found, that certainly have changed, but are somewhat evocative of the ones that pioneers might have found at the time of the Walton Road
- Pioneer Culture and Westward Expansion – Places that tell the story of settlement.
- Contrasting Worlds – How the region evolved in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Looking at the potential for tourism development, Carolyn Brackett gave an overview of available research on who is currently visiting Tennessee. The average age of visitors is 45 years old. Most tourists are Tennessee residents traveling within their own state. The top reason for travel is visiting friends and relatives followed by get-away weekends, vacations and special events. Top activities include dining, shopping, entertainment, sightseeing, nature/eco-travel, national and state parks, historic sites and museum or art exhibits.

Potential audiences for the Walton Road Scenic Byway could be travelers from within the region (Nashville, Knoxville and Chattanooga), travelers interested in culture, heritage and nature-based activities and travelers coming to enjoy weekend get-aways or visiting friends and relatives.

Jim said that one of the goals of the byway is to coordinate interpretation to link places together and encourage visitors to stay longer to enjoy recreational opportunities and special events.

Jim then invited participant discussion by asking three questions:

- Who are the audiences who would be interested in visiting the byway?
- What do you think might be potential themes and sites that would be interesting to visitors?
- What ideas do you have for new things to see and do that could be developed or enhanced along the route to encourage visitors to stay longer or to learn more about the region's history?

Dawn Kupferer told each of the four groups that what goes in the management plan will be decided by the communities. The byway could be a named route only with a few signs or it could go all the way to the top as a National Scenic Byway depending on what they decide.

Randy explained to all four groups that the byway project involves four counties who are all equal partners, and they want each county to be equally as prominent as the other counties.

The following documents the responses and discussion in each of the four meetings.

### **Crossville:**

#### Additional Audiences/Potential Partners

1. People come to Cumberland County to play golf or shop. How do we get the golfers and shoppers interested in other activities?
2. Nature-based activities
3. Sustainability theme might be a possibility to attract a wider audience - Crossville has a sustainability plan for schools – is there a way to tie preservation of sites along the byway with this curriculum?
4. Playhouse visitors – already a user friendly access point
5. Obed Visitor Center – opportunity there

#### Potential Sites and Themes

1. Why don't we write the story? Cumberland Playhouse should produce a play on the Walton Road and Pioneer Life; coordinated at multiple locations along the route to increase awareness, learning about history; Cumberland County Playhouse is a big asset, use to advantage.
2. Tell the story of the history of the road/William Walton/Federal involvement; find user friendly places that tell the story
3. Hiking Trails - Need for hiking trails along accessible sections of the Walton Road; accessibility to all ages and abilities is important for these trails (including ADA compliance)
4. Cumberland Trail State Park – where it crosses the Walton Road in the future may be a potential interpretive opportunity
5. Other state park(s)
6. Hayes presidential travel – 1<sup>st</sup> and only road at the time
7. Wilderness theme
8. Big Foot Spencer Story/Spencer Hill

9. Crab Orchard Inn Story
10. Photography
11. Start with key areas then expand outward
12. Rest area site would be one key area, historic marker sign already there – walking trail from the rest area to Daddy's Creek (location where wagons crossed, less than a mile) afterwards *mention was made of Plateau Properties as possible owners of adjacent land, and that Gordon \_\_\_\_\_, had a copy of plans for the rest area from the 70's when a trail was built, but was closed after a mugging*
13. Crab Orchard Inn is an opportunity site
14. Mammies Creek site near Ozone Falls
15. Crossville Depot may be an opportunity
16. Museum – Living history (e.g. Shiloh) could be at Southwest Point SP

#### Additional Ideas and Challenges, including marketing

1. Need for bicycle trails in Cumberland County. Current road system is not user-friendly.
2. Living History – ideas suggested include:
  - reconstructing a toll house (toll story), covered wagon trail re-enactments (*the National Road covered wagon reenactment might be a good example*)
3. Address visual pollution – maintenance, trash, deteriorated buildings, billboards
4. What should be marketed? Lots of attractions but not much awareness
5. Community stories – example of Howard Springs, Morgan-Bedsoe family .... Story????
6. Standing Stone – confusion between site and state park needs to be clarified (historic marker site could be developed more)

#### Questions

What about private property and privacy - concern expressed about trash, vandalism, etc. *Noted that no private property will be taken or sites developed that will infringe on privacy. Locations are being identified that are most suitable. Easements or purchase of land for things such as trails would only be done when an owner is interested and willing.*

#### **Kingston:**

#### Additional Audiences/Potential Partners

1. How far away? Harriman? *As long as it relates to the themes of the byway. The further away the destination the better it has to be as an attraction.*
2. Expo Center – has visitor/events an opportunity site
3. Quilt Trail – people come from far away and are more active retirees
4. Campground – 178 sites, 90-plus are year round residents (workers at TVA and other projects – 70% or so are workers, rest are local that use the campground as a getaway to the lake; some pass through overnights that are web site driven visits)
5. Visitors that want local restaurants on the water – inquiring at the visitor center
6. ATV riders – WINROCK – looking for a primitive camping experience (Roane County Campground has some primitive sites)
7. Boy scouts – Rockwood facility

#### Potential Sites and Themes

1. The Princess Theater in Harriman just opened. Should be a way to connect the Cumberland Playhouse, Palace Theater and Princess Theater together.
2. New Roane County Park at old campground (near bridge)
3. Courthouse museum – being developed by Heritage Commission
4. Rockwood Revitalization – Tennessee Downtown effort
  - A History Museum is coming along with a walking tour. Check Rockwood Revitalization website which is supported by the Merchants Association.
  - Merchants Association participant with park – restrooms to be included and a kiosk
  - Juniors? Restaurant
  - Merchants association (representing more than just downtown) is trying to have longer hours on weekends
  - WiFi coming to downtown
  - Princess Theatre just opened – had Marshall Tucker Band at grand opening – will be an art and education center. *(Could be part of a event tour with the Playhouse, Princess and Palace theaters)*
5. Mt. Roosevelt cleanup – trail coming into town with trailhead in town. Group is currently negotiating with adjoining landowners (once publicly owned, but sold off to private landowners)

#### Additional ideas and challenges, including marketing

1. Event calendar lists annual events - Thunder Road Festival – about 3500; Fall Festival – about 5000
2. Cross promotion is important (Avery Trace mentioned – a lot of gaps and hard to follow)
3. Rockwood 2000 owns the patrol building but few volunteers man it so it is often not accessible to the public
4. Like the idea of interpretive panels along trail – need maintenance agreement for sites where panels are

#### **Carthage:**

#### Additional Audiences/Potential Partners

1. Corps of Engineers – There is a lot of fishing on the Cumberland and Cordell Hull Lake and that should be considered a potential audience [Contact Mark Herd, the local resident manager for the ACOE, and who has been involved with trail projects including the rail trail plan in South Carthage]
2. Other ideas for potential partners included the Gore family who owns property in the county (provides potential access to an historic road trace and John Wagner who is a cemetery expert.
3. An important potential audience could be genealogy researchers who come to the local library to do family research and want to know what else there is to see and do in the area.

#### Potential Sites and Themes

1. Courthouse re-use project - When completed, the building will house the archives and a Civil War exhibit (being developed by the MTSU Center for Historic Preservation). There

- will also be courtyard with brick pavers that can be purchased and engraved. Plans also call for a sandwich shop and tables in the foyer and outside for dining. A history of veterans will also be developed where families can send information for placement on a computer. Public restrooms will be available. A community playhouse is being considered for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor.
2. Plans for the courthouse also include using the third floor for recreating offices for Al Gore Sr. and Al Gore Jr. (both had offices there) and for Cordell Hull (who did not have an office there but is from the region – both Al Gore Jr. and Cordell Hull are Nobel Prize winners).
  3. Walton Hotel was identified as an important site - The small, historic hotel has 10-14 rooms and also has a restaurant
  4. Carthage downtown revitalization – Carthage is a Main Street town and residents want the downtown to be quaint and appealing. Long-range plans include developing a riverfront park.
  5. Battery Hill is a Civil War site that needs to be cleaned up and access provided
  6. Original Walton Road sections are interpretive opportunities (Upchurch Lane); could be a good trail [Gore family owns the parcel to Riverside Ferry], overlook is above
  7. The Smith County Heritage Museum draws local school children, university students doing research and people researching their family's history. They are currently working on a Walton Road exhibit.
  8. Cumberland River and Caney Fork provide recreational opportunities. There are also extensive caves in the area
  9. The South Carthage rail-trail is an existing path that may be an opportunity
  10. Walton Grave is a site with some interpretive opportunities
  11. Other stories and places that were identified as being important were Civil War stories, historic churches and one-room schools.

#### Additional ideas and challenges, including marketing

1. A trail is planned from Defeated Creek to Gordonsville – a 15-mile effort that may be a 10-year project. Planners are looking at the successful Virginia Creeper Trail for ideas. [*Defeated Creek is an historical site where early surveyors were attached and walked away for miles to escape*]
2. There is also interest in cleaning up the Rome Ferry across the Cumberland River.
3. Interest in bringing back “rendezvous on the square”
4. Small towns to the east mostly built around churches and schools [e.g. Methodist Churches evolved/split apart around Civil War era confederate versus union loyalties]

#### **Cookeville:**

##### Additional Audiences/Potential Partners

1. It was noted that Cookeville is a center of visitor services (hotels, restaurants, etc) that should provide opportunities to extend visitor stays
2. Appalachian Center for Crafts is another nearby attraction that would be worthwhile linking to as a means of extending visitor stays and connecting traditional folk craft with the byway

##### Potential Sites and Themes

1. Michael Birdwell said there is currently not a place to interpret the Tennessee maneuvers, which took place from 1942-1945 with General George Patton starting the maneuvers on the Walton Road.
2. Other people who were identified as being important to include in interpretation were:
  - Clara Cox Epperson, a poet and playwright who was Tennessee's poet laureate in the 1930s
  - Rutledge Smith, a leader in mobilization for World War I and World War II, president of the Tennessee, Alabama and Kentucky Railroad Company and founder of the Washington Press Club.
  - Moses Fisk – founder of the first woman's academy west of the Appalachian Mountains
  - David Maxwell – dulcimer craftsman
3. It was noted that in Cookeville parts of the Walton Road are still visible. (10th Street, 12th Street, Sycamore – see red dots on the handout). Calvin Dickinson explained there are also a number of "Walton Roads" in the town that are misnamed. He also said the Avery Trace is a different route and does not cross Walton Road.
4. The planned rail-trail between Cookeville and Monterey (Nashville & Eastern) closely follows the original Walton Road and could easily be interpreted [*trail construction planned for both ends in the near future*]
5. Important places and stories that were identified included:
  - The last stagecoach robbery in Tennessee was in this area. There is a historic marker telling this story [*West of Baxter*].
  - Double Springs was the site of four legal distilleries in the early 20th century.
  - The story of the Tennessee Electric Power Company and Wendell Willkie's fight against the creation of TVA
  - Stories of the New Deal including TVA and the Homestead in Crossville
  - A WWII POW camp
  - The flea market on Highway 111 – has music on Saturday mornings
  - Lots of places to hear traditional "picking" music
  - Bryan Symphony Orchestra – Cookeville is the smallest town in the state with its own orchestra
6. Nearby site of White Plains (Walton House) was identified as an important resource

#### Next Steps

Jim wrapped up each meeting by thanking everyone for attending. He reminded everyone that the next meeting is scheduled for June 5 at the Monterey Depot and will focus on increasing awareness of the significance of the byway's intrinsic qualities.